Introduction

Nearly 620,000 Slovaks immigrated to the United States during the period of mass migration (about 1880 to 1914). Some Slovaks left their homeland for economic reasons, others to escape political repression. The majority of the immigrants to the United States arrived before World War I. Many returned home after earning enough money to buy land back home, but eventually some 500,000 Slovaks settled permanently in the New World.

In 1990, the U.S. Census Bureau issued a Supplementary report to the Census of Population that included people’s self-reported ancestry. Over 1.8 million people indicated that they are of Slovak descent. The numbers represent people who do not necessarily know the Slovak language, but are conscious of their ethnic background. The report shows a large number of the U.S. population who indicated they are of Slovak ancestry.

Perhaps you are among those nearly 2 million Slovaks interested in finding out more about your ancestors through genealogical research. This article provides an overview of traditional and online resources essential to doing Slovak research, and describes the challenges and pitfalls that are unique to researching this area of Eastern Europe.

While searching for Slovak roots, there is often a tendency to want to search for records in the place of origin. This article, however, will emphasize how to first search home and family sources here in the United States for determining the ancestral village, and how to utilize church and civil records available on microfilm through the Family History Library (FHL). In addition, resources for writing to Slovak archives and finding professional researchers will be cited, along with tips for networking with others searching for Slovak ancestors to gather information, share stories and solve common research problems.

Fig. 1 - Slovakia, 1918. Courtesy of John Hudick
Where is Slovakia?

Slovakia is a small, mountainous country situated in the heart of Europe, landlocked between Poland, Ukraine, Hungary, Austria and the Czech Republic, with a current population of less than 5.5 million people.3

Slovakia is a country rich in history and culture. This country’s history is one of the most fascinating in all of Europe and also one that is quite complex. For the purposes of this article, only a brief summary will be provided on the key events. Those desiring detailed information on the history of Slovakia are encouraged to consult the Short Chronological History of Slovakia, prepared by the Slovak historian Anton Hrnko available online at <slovakia.eunet.sk/slovakia/history-politics/anthem.html>.

Brief historical background4

Beginning with the time of the Samo Empire (623-665) through Great Moravia, the Turkish invasion, Magyarization, and communism, and even until its separation from the Czech Republic in 1993, Slovakia has struggled to be recognized as a nation state.

The earliest evidence of people living in Slovakia comes from a Neanderthal skull molding found in the village of Ganovce which dates back around 200,000 years. Other archaeological discoveries indicate that Celtic tribes came to Slovakia at the beginning of the Iron Age and that the Romans invaded the region in 6 CE. There is a Roman inscription from 179 CE still visible on the rock of Trencin Castle that marked the most northern point of the Roman Empire at that time. Following the fall of the Roman Empire, the region that is now Slovakia was raided by various tribes, including the Huns, the Lombards, the Avars and the Germanic Goths (events commonly known as the “migration of people”).

It is not known for certain when the true descendants of Slovaks, the Slavs, first came to Slovakia. It is known that they had become the dominant race by the 7th century. The Samo Empire (623-665), named after its ruler, Prince Samo, was the first organized community of Slavs in the region that is now Slovakia. Prince Samo’s death in 665 left no capable heir to his throne and Slovakia was ruled by the Avars (who came from the Steppes of Asia), until they were defeated by
the Emperor Charlemagne, in 799. The year 833 saw the beginning of Great Moravia, which was later destroyed in 907, and the Magyar tribes made their way into Slovakia. In the year 1000, Slovakia became a part of the Hungarian State. Invasions by the Tatars in 1241 and the Turks in 1530 followed.

After a Turkish victory at the Battle of Mohac, the Kingdom of Hungary was soundly defeated and found itself divided into 3 separate parts: the territory that is present day Hungary under Turkish rule, Transylvania, a Turkish protectorate controlled by the Ottoman Empire, and Slovakia. The Hungarian king, Louis II, died during the battle. His brother-in-law, Ferdinand I of Austria, made a claim for the Hungarian throne that was contested by many of the Hungarian nobility. Once Ferdinand I was finally recognized as the ruler of the area that is now Slovakia, or “Royal Hungary,” as it was known, the Kingdom of Hungary became a part of the Habsburg Empire. Slovakia managed to withstand the Turkish invasion, but found itself the center of the Hungarian state and all important Hungarian administrative, political and religious institutions moved to Slovakia.

From the 10th century right up to 1918, Slovakia was part of the Kingdom of Hungary. In the 16th century, Hungary, including Slovakia, became an associated state of the Habsburg Empire. Between 1804 and 1867 the Habsburg Empire was renamed the Austrian Empire, then between 1867 and 1918 the Austrian Empire was restructured into a double state called Austria-Hungary. In this state, Hungary, including Slovakia, had its own government, parliament, army, and citizenship. Inhabitants of Austria-Hungary were considered either Austrian or Hungarian citizens. Since all Slovaks lived in the Hungarian half of the Empire, they were all Hungarian citizens.

For most genealogists, this time period holds the greatest significance for the research process. Because of the changing geographical and political borders, researching Slovak ancestors can often be more challenging than looking for other European kin. One must be aware of both the Slovak and Hungarian names changes for towns, villages and counties, etc. and take this into account when searching for documents such as church and civil vital records, census returns and other important genealogical sources.

Following the end of World War I, the Czechs and Slovaks formed their own republic in October 1918, but Slovakia’s partnership with the Czechs was not an equal one. During World War II, the first Czechoslovak Republic was forced to split, with Nazi Germany forming the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, and the Slovak Republic. In 1945, the second Czechoslovak Republic was formed and in 1948 communist power enforced. The end of communist power came in 1989; and on January 1, 1993 the independent Slovak Republic was established.

Overview of Slovakia’s history

623-685, Samo’s Empire, the oldest state formation.
824-828, The consecration of the first church at Nitra.
833, beginning of Great Moravia.
863, arrival of Slavic apostles Constantine and Method.
894, Svatopluk the Great Moravian emperor died.
907, destruction of Great Moravia.
1000, Slovakia becomes a part of the Hungarian State.
1939, origin of the Slovak Republic.
1943, legalization of the Slovak literary language.
1848, demands of the Slovak Nation to the Emperor’s Court.
1848-1849, Slovak Uprising.
1861, Memorandum of the Slovak Nation.
1848, demands of the Slovak Nation to the Emperor’s Court.
1918, Martin Declaration of the Slovak Nation.
1918, origin of the first Czecho-Slovak Republic.
1939, origin of the Slovak Republic.
1944, Slovak National Uprising.
1945, Second Czechoslovak Republic.
1948, communist power enforced.
1969, signing of the Decree on Czecho-Slovak Federation.
1989, end of communist power.
1993, foundation of the independent Slovak Republic.

Language issues

Slovak is the official language of the Slovak Republic. The official Slovak written language was adopted in 1843 by Ludovit Stur based on the dialect spoken in Central Slovakia. The Slovak language holds a central position among Slavic languages. It is a west Slavic language, but in the east it borders on Ukrainian and Ruthenian and, before the arrival of Magyars (Hungarians) in the Danube basin, it had direct ties with the south Slavic languages (especially Slovene), and still retains some of its features today. Slovakia’s central geographic location and other factors have made it very easy for other Slavs to understand Slovak.

The printed and written Slovak alphabet (abeceda) or “letters” are basically the same in Slovak as their counterparts in English. The difference is that some Slovak letters have special accents, or diacritical marks written above or to the right side of the letter. These marks change the phonetic value or pronunciation of the letter. In general, all letters are pronounced as they are written. The letters q, w, x are not in the official Slovak alphabet, although they are used in some foreign words.

Basic alphabet and pronunciation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter</th>
<th>Pronunciation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A a</td>
<td>Like u in but</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B b</td>
<td>Same as in English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C c</td>
<td>‘ts’ like in cats, zz in pizza</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D d</td>
<td>same as in English</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DZ dz  Like ‘ds’ in odds
E e  ‘e’ as in bet
F f  same as in English
G g  ‘g’ as in good
H h  ‘h’ as in hand
Ch ch  as in German ‘ch’ as in Bach
I i  ‘i’ as in sit, same as y
J j  ‘y’ as in yes
K k  Same as in English
L l  Same as in English
M m  Same as in English
N n  Same as in English
O o  ‘o’ as in lost
P p  Same as in English
Q q  Only found in foreign words
R r  Rolled
S s  Same as in English
T t  Same as in English (without aspiration)
U u  ‘u’ as in put
V v  Same as English
W w  Only found in foreign words
X x  Only found in foreign words
Y y  Same as i, as in sit
Z z  Same as in English

**Long vowel Pronunciation**

Á á  ‘a’ lengthened as in car
É é  ‘e’ lengthened as in bare
Í í  ‘i’ lengthened as in feel
Ĺ ́ l’ as little
Ó ó  ‘o’ lengthened as in ‘call’ or ‘fore’
Ŕ r’ pronounced as ‘r’ above
Ú ú  Lengthened as in ‘pool’
Ý ý as i in feel
Letters ‘l’ and ‘r’ can function either as a vowel or consonant

**Plus soft consonants Pronunciation**

Č č  ‘cz’ as in Czech
Ď d̆ like ‘du’ in duty
DŽ dž  as in ‘g’ in George
Ľ l’  ll as in million
Ň ň as in ‘ne’ in new
Š š  ‘sh’ as in shell
Ť t̆  as in Tuesday
Ž ž  ‘s’ as in pleasure

**Other Pronunciation**

Ô ô  ‘ow’ as in woe
Â ã  Pronounced as a broad ‘e’ as in area

**Numbers**

The Slovak language uses the same Arabic numeral system as the English language, but with some unique differences. For some numbers there are different gender endings, e.g. the feminine form of “first” is prvá as opposed to the masculine form of prvý. In English, “first” is used for any situation. The short forms of ordinal numbers in Slovak are represented by a period after the number, e.g. 3. equates to 3rd. Large numbers are separated by a blank space (1 976 324), rather than by a comma, as in Enlish.

Overall, the numerical system appears more complicated, but once learned, the rules are no more difficult than any other western numbering system. You can find a listing for Slovak Language courses on the Internet by searching for “Slovak language” on a search engine, or by visiting the Czechoslovak Genealogical Society International at <www.cgusi.org>. In addition, many publications such as **Jednota** (The Official Publication of the First Catholic Slovak Union of the U.S. and Canada) often announce courses being taught in many cities and towns throughout the United States. You may also want to investigate the following Internet sites:

- <www.slovak.com/language>
- <www.slavism.com/slovak/hungarian/words.htm>

**Slovaks and religion**

For Slovaks, religion was above all else in importance and the church was the place where all of life’s significant events such as baptisms, weddings and funerals took place. Prince Pribina of Nitra is credited with first introducing Christianity to the Slavs in 828; however, more notable are the efforts of Cyril and Methodius, two Byzantine monks, who beginning in 863 spread Christianity and became known as the “Apostles to the Slavs.” Over the course of the next several centuries, grand churches of various faiths, Roman or Greek Catholic, Orthodox and Evangelical Lutheran, began to develop in villages throughout Slovakia.

The Greek Catholic (Uniate) Church was founded somewhere between 1596 and 1646. The Orthodox Church definitively split from the Catholic Church in 1504, and Constantinople became the seat of the Patriarch, who was no longer connected to Rome. The Byzantines had always maintained a great deal of independence but still belonged to one formally united Catholic Church, and had their unique rituals, retained married priests (although celibacy was still preferred-they could stay married if they did so before becoming deacons) and used the Greek language for Mass. In Slovakia, the people used Old Slavonic as a liturgical language after Saints Cyril and Methodius went on a mission to convert the Slavic peoples of central Europe.

The Greek Catholic Church (Uniate or Byzantine in America) was a part of the Orthodox Church that reunited with Rome. This occurred after lengthy negotiations in the year 1596 and was concluded in the Union of Brest. The Polish King Sigismund III Vas (1587-1632) wished to lower the number of pro-Russian Orthodox Ukrainian and Belorussian subjects in his realm. This was only valid in Poland, but was later adopted in the Austrian Habsburg Empire. The Union of Uzhgorod (1648) recognized the Roman pontiff and many Carpatho-Rusyns and Slovaks and later (1697) Transylvanian Romanians became reunited with the Catholic Church.
The Greek Catholics, as they were called in Europe, retained their liturgical rites. Controversies ensued, and pockets of Orthodox faithful remained in Hungary, but most adhered to the union, and are therefore termed Uniates. Most of the Balkan Slavs (Bulgarians, Serbians, etc.) and the eastern Slavs (Russians, Ukrainians, Belorussians, Rusyns,) were Christianized by Constantinople in the 9th and 10th centuries. Thus, they became Orthodox Christians. Many of these, under various political pressures, later united or reunited with Rome (hence the name “Uniates”). Many of the Ukrainians and Belorussians united with Rome at the Union of Brest of 1596. The Rusyns united with Rome at the Union of Ungvár/Uzhgorod/Uzhhorod of 1646. It was in consequence of these unions that they became Greek Catholics (Uniates), or Byzantine Catholics, as they have been known in the United States since the late 1920s. The Greek Catholics have retained much of their liturgy, liturgical language, and married priesthood (except in the United States), and are officially called “Catholics of the Byzantine Rite” versus “Catholics of the Roman Rite”. The Rusyns and some eastern Slovaks were Greek Catholics/Byzantine Catholics, and thus they were part of the Catholic World and not of the Orthodox Christian World, such as the Russians, Serbians, Bulgarians, etc.6

Today, in Slovakia, you will find a number of religions practiced including Roman Catholic, Greek Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, and Orthodox.

### Slovaks and family

After religion, family life is next in importance to Slovaks. Families in Slovakia were often extended. Parents, grandparents, children, aunts, uncles, cousins and in-laws lived under one roof. This practice often continued in the New World as immigrants came to the United States and often settled in the same towns as family members or relatives, with many even living under the same roof. Family life was generally closely intertwined with religious beliefs and rituals.

### Leaving home: a glimpse at Slavic immigration

During the early part of the 19th century, the Slovak economy grew slowly due to a worldwide economic slump. The Industrial Revolution came later to Slovakia than to western Europe and the Czech lands. While the Czech lands at the time were industrialized, Slovakia remained an economy primarily based on agriculture. As a result, Slovak immigration to the United States increased rapidly at the end of the 19th century as many Slovaks became dissatisfied with local conditions. By 1900, Slovakia had lost over 300,000 of its population to emigration.

Searching for Eastern European roots is often more difficult than trying to locate ancestors from areas such as England, Ireland, or Italy. The process of locating the ancestral village for Slovak immigrants who came to America prior to 1918 can be challenging and frustrating. Before 1918, Slovakia, Ruthenia and elements of Ukraine and Galicia existed as part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

In 1918, the Hungarian place names for most Slovak and Ukrainian villages were changed to Slovak and Ukrainian equivalents. Thus, you will find that most of the documents and records for Slovak immigrants who arrived prior to 1918 are in Hungarian. When searching for information you will want to note both the new Slovak, Romanian or Ukrainian name, and the old one from the Kingdom of Hungary.

If your ancestor was a Czech (be sure not to confuse this with the generic term Czechoslovak) and s/he came to America before 1918, then s/he was an Austrian citizen and typically listed in the ship’s manifest or passenger record as emigrating either from Austria, Bohemia, Moravia, or Silesia. It is important to note that under the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia were provinces of Austria. After World War I the Empire was broken up and Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia were formed together with Slovakia into Czechoslovakia. As mentioned in the historical background above, Slovakia was part of northern Hungary in the Austro-Hungarian empire and was reformed after World War I into Czechoslovakia along with Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia. If your ancestor came to America prior to 1918, s/he was a Hungarian citizen and listed on the ship’s manifest or passenger record as emigrating from Hungary. If your ancestor emigrated after 1918, then s/he would be listed as emigrating from Czechoslovakia.

### Starting stateside

In researching our immigrant ancestors, it is tempting to look for information on the village of origin and dive into searching for Slovak records. A more appropriate process, however, is to start stateside and then work back to the country and village of origin. Why? First of all, you may miss important details that could save you from obtaining incorrect information or from making critical research mistakes down the line. For example, you could end up researching the wrong family line if your surname is a common one from Eastern Europe, or you could spend hours obtaining and researching church records for a village that your ancestor may have said s/he was from, but if fact was not actually were s/he was born. In this case, you will not find a trace of the person in the records!

### Beginning your genealogical research

In general, there are a few guidelines to keep in mind when beginning your Slovak genealogy:

- Start by researching records on this side of the ocean and work backward
- Be flexible and open to alternate spellings, a variety of languages, alphabets, etc.
- Anticipate/expect confusion, this especially applies to place of origin and dates, and names!

A good way to approach your research is to develop a strategy or plan. Using the diagram below (p. 56), think about your research as going in cycles. First, begin with the...
immigrant’s name and date of birth. Next, gather family details about the immigrant and identify your ancestor’s town or village of origin. Then, search U.S. records for surnames and places followed by finding the name and location of the village of origin today. Continue your research by checking for other available records including the FHL and its holdings; Once you have exhausted all possibilities in North America you will want to move your research back to the “old country” by establishing contacts in the town or village, and finally, possibly by writing to the Slovak archives and/or hiring a professional researcher.

Learn details about your immigrant ancestor(s)

First, obtain the immigrant’s name and date of birth. You can do this by talking to the immigrant, or by interviewing immediate family members. The general rule when beginning genealogy is to “start with yourself” and work backward in time by filling in as much information as you can on a pedigree chart or ancestor chart.

Pedigree/ancestor charts

An ancestor chart records the ancestors from whom you directly descend, those for whom you intend to compile a complete and correct family unit. It shows at a glance the progress you have made towards this goal and what remains to be done. This is also often referred to as a pedigree chart. I prefer the term ancestor chart, but whatever you choose to call it, the important thing is that you compile one! You can download additional copies of an chart free from Ancestry at: www.ancestry.myfamily.com/save/charts/anchart.htm>.

Family group sheets

Each piece of information concerning a pedigree ancestor and his/her family is placed on a worksheet, commonly known as a family group sheet. This is where you will record children, brothers, sisters, etc. Since the end result of your research efforts will be to compile complete, correct and connected families, the use of family group sheets from the beginning will make the compilation much easier. When you’re done, you’ll know who’s missing in your family tree. For each missing person, you will need to obtain the following information: 1) full name (including maiden names for women); 2) approximate dates for vital events (birth, death, marriage, residence, etc.); 3) locations for vital events.

It is also important to ask individuals where events happened to get an understanding of “place,” remembering that location is a key component in genealogical research. Ask about documentation for these events in home and family sources such as documents, Bibles, diaries, school report cards, early correspondence (especially from the Slovakia), photographs, family heirlooms, oral history interviews, and miscellaneous items (military documents/records, dog tags, funeral books and sympathy cards, etc. autograph books, home and/or business receipts).

Key U.S. sources

For the most part, once Slovak immigrants came to the United States, they remained for the rest of their lives. Some even obtained United States citizenship. There are instances of a loved one returning to his or her homeland and perhaps dying there, but most often if your ancestor settled in the
United States, he or she died here. Some of our ancestors even married here, and most had jobs and owned property. Their children were likely born in the United States and probably attended some form of schooling or formal education. All this to say that unless your ancestor purposely tried not to be found or leave a paper trail, then his/her time in the United States should be a matter of public record. This time should be documented in one or more of the following: immigration records, census records or vital records. With a bit of digging and a great deal of persistence, you should be able to locate one or more of these records.

Pennsylvania and Ohio ranked first and second among states reporting Slovak ancestry in the 1990 U.S. Census. Of the 619,866 Slovaks who came to the United States before 1920, 296,219 settled in the Keystone state, where Slovak men found work in steel mills and coal mines. Ohio was second with 78,982, followed by New Jersey (48,857), New York (46,209), Illinois (44,010), and Connecticut (21,204). These states offer a large number of resources for researching one’s Slovak ancestors. There are also a number of printed and online U.S. sources that should be consulted in the genealogical research process.

Civil vital records

Vital records, i.e. birth, death, divorce and marriage certificates, and adoption records, are some of the best resources available to genealogists. As a general guideline, when searching for birth, marriage, death and divorce documents you should start with your most recent ancestors. It may seem futile or repetitive to request records when you already know the facts, but what you think is true may actually be incorrect. Vital records may also include pieces of information that will either corroborate your research or lead you in new directions.

In the United States, vital records were first kept by churches, then towns, and finally the counties. There is no a national vital records office. In 1914, however, a federal law was passed requiring each state to establish a system of keeping vital records and maintaining a repository for the records. While many states had already established a State Department of Health (or equivalent) by 1914, it was not until 1930 that all states complied with this law. The process and cost for obtaining vital records varies from state to state, and the year each state began death registration.

How to obtain vital records

There are basically 3 ways to obtain vital records information:

1) Write to the county or state (or visit in person). Information on how and where to write for vital records is available for each state, using:
   - The Handybook for Genealogists (10th ed.) by Everton Publishers <www.everton.com>
2) Search the FHL <www.familysearch.org> using the “Search” tab and “Research Guidance” tabs.
3) Searching other various Internet sites, including:
   - <www.vitalchek.com/>
   - <vitalrec.com/index.html>
   - <www.genealogybulletin.com/archives/HTML/current2.html>
   - <www.cdc.gov/nchs/howto/w2w/w2welcome.htm>
   You can also perform a blanket search by State on your favorite search engine “State” birth index. For example, search for: “Pennsylvania state marriage index.”

You may want to search Joe Beine’s Online Searchable Death Indexes for the USA, which will give you a good place to begin in finding what’s available and will tell you what databases are free and which require a fee-based subscription, as well as county level resources:
   - <home.att.net/~wee-monster/deathrecords.html>

Death records

While it may be tempting to start your vital records search with a birth record, you should consider looking for a death record first. The death record is most recent, and therefore should be available. Death records are in most cases easier to obtain than birth records, and usually contain the person’s name, date of death and place of death. Death records may also contain: age of death, cause of death, exact time of death; current residence, occupation, date and place of birth; parents’ names and birthplaces; spouse’s name (maiden for wife); marital status; name of funeral home and cemetery; name of physician or medical examiner; name of informant and their relationship to the deceased; and officials or witnesses present at the death.

Other vital records you can search in addition to death records are birth records, marriage certificates and license applications, divorce and adoption records.

Birth records

Birth records are sometimes more difficult to obtain depending on the state and its privacy laws. Birth records usually contain: name of the child; race of the child; gender
Adoptions are a bit more challenging to research as some states have laws that seal adoption records. Check state by state for requirements and what information can be disseminated. Fortunately, there are many Internet sites that can assist you. Start with the “Adoption” section on Cyndi’s List at <www.cyndislist.com/adopt.htm>. The article, “About Adoption Research” by Maureen Taylor is a very good resource available at: <www.genealogy.com/genealogy/69_taylor.html>.

You may discover interesting occurrences and mistakes, as official documents are not exempt from error.

Special considerations regarding vital records research

With the growing interest in genealogy, some vital records departments do not have the staff to carry out extensive searches. They may require more exact information in order to provide you with a certificate. Before sending a request, you should research the specific requirements of the office you are contacting so as not to waste your time or theirs. Fees and turn around time to receive the certificates will also vary widely from location to location. In addition, during the last year genealogists have unfortunately discovered that several states have closed or limited access to previously available online vital records indexes.

What if the civil record is unavailable?

If you are unable to locate the civil death record, try searching for cemetery records, church burial records, funeral home records and memorial cards, headstone inscriptions, lodge or fraternal organization burial or insurance records and obituaries.

You should look at obituaries and/or funeral home records for information on your ancestor(s). Obituaries give more detail than death notices, and are a news item usually written by newspaper staff from information provided by the funeral home. Some are more detailed than others, but watch out for errors. Obituaries often contain incomplete or incorrect information, depending on the informants familiarity with the deceased. Some good online resources for obituaries include:

- **Cyndi’s List**<br> <www.cyndislist.com/obits.htm> Links to sites with obituary data, cemetery transcriptions and funeral home records.
- **funeralCENTRAL**<br> <www.funeralcentral.com> Publishes funeral notices similar to those submitted by funeral homes to newspapers. It’s a fee service, but the funeral home must send the notice for inclusion in the database.
- **Funeral Net**<br> <www.funeralnet.com> Locate cemeteries and funeral homes, as well as search for obituaries. The database of funeral homes was compiled from The National Yellow Book of Funeral Directors.
• Obituary Central
<obitcentral.com/obitsearch> locates, categorizes and presents obituaries online. The “Links” page is arranged by state and county, with thousands of links to obituaries, cemetery transcriptions and death notices.

• Obituary Daily Times
<www.rootsweb.com/~obituary> Lists not only newspapers that are being indexed, but those that are in need of indexers. If the newspaper has an Internet site, there will be a link to it.

• Obituary Lookups
<freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~obitl> A community of researchers from all over the world willing to look up obituaries for free.

Cemetery resources
Cemeteries are a valuable source of information that can be easily overlooked by a researcher. If you determine where your ancestor was buried from using the above sources, you can often visit the cemetery or sometimes order records from the FHL. In addition, there are a number of Internet sites springing up with virtual cemeteries or lists of headstone transcriptions. For example, go to Genealogy.com at <www.genealogy.com> and take a look at “Virtual Cemetery,” an interesting database with location specific tools.

Fig. 6 - Headstone of John Alzo and Elizabeth Fenčak Alzo, the authors grandparents. Courtesy of Lisa Alzo

Newspaper databases
There are a number of newspaper resources available online:

• Newslink - <www.newslink.com> will allow you to search for a particular publication online. Many newspapers now have online editions. Some publications have online searchable, indexed archives; others do not. For those that do not, sometimes there are instructions for obtaining copies from archives or back issues (usually buried somewhere on the Internet site). Some will refer you to another site that houses archives of newspaper collections across the U.S. (many will allow you to download copies of relatively recent obituaries from $1-$3 each).

• News Library - <www.newslibrary.com> points you to newspapers from major and midsized U.S. cities. For example, I clicked on Pennsylvania and searched for my last name, “Alzo.” The search netted several results, including articles on the publication of my book, Three Slovak Women, as well as my mother’s death notice from 2000.

• Random Acts of Genealogical Kindness - <www.raogk.org> volunteers around the world will look up copies of obituaries from various locations. Please be sure to read the introductory information carefully before making a request of a volunteer. This is not a site where someone will do all of your researching for you for free!

In addition to obituaries in English newspapers, you will also want to check foreign language newspapers, obituary notices in religious newsletters or newspapers (e.g. Catholic Universe Bulletin), and fraternal newspapers (e.g. Jednota), etc. Fraternal organizations or lodges may also have burial or insurance records. A good source for this information is the Immigration History Research Center in St. Paul, MN, <www1.umn.edu/ihrc/slovak.htm#top>.

Probate court records
As a genealogist you want to investigate court records. Consider searching wills, civil or criminal records. Sometimes the information may not shed a positive light on your ancestor, but there may be valuable information buried in a court record that can give you clues. Wills provide information on a spouse, next of kin, etc. and Voter Registration cards will list addresses and possibly other useful information. Again, availability of such records will vary by location, but a good place to start is the local or county courthouse where your ancestor lived. Again, Ancestry.com has some probate records among its database collection. Also, check Cyndi’s List under “U.S. Courthouses”: <www.cyndislist.com/courthouses.htm>

Online public records
A good site for searching property and tax records is Public Records Online. This database can be a bit patchy (some counties represented and others not). Also, content sometimes disappears due to recent concerns over privacy issues, but it is still worth a look for potential genealogical value. Cf. <www.netonline.com/public_records.htm>

Land records
Land records often contain valuable information for the genealogist, including names of spouses, parents, children and previous residence(s). Before the Internet, you would have no choice but to visit or write to the place where your ancestors bought and sold land. Thanks to online technology, you may not have to leave home or travel from
one courthouse to another in order to research their land records. There are a few basic steps you can follow to help your search.

Start at home
Identify what you are looking for. In other words, focus on a single research problem (your grandfather’s farm, or great-grandma’s boarding house, for example). Next identify components of the deed search: write down the family, location and time period.

Location, location, location
Confirm that you are looking in the right place. Specifically, if you identify that the house, farm, etc. is in a specific county (for example, Allegheny county), but that county as it is defined today may have been in located in a different county in your ancestor’s day. A critical step before you begin your research is to investigate the place and time because it can save you hours of research effort and avoid the receipt of a negative response from the wrong county courthouse. You can determine county formations from several printed sources including Ancestry’s Red Book, The Handy Book for Genealogists. These will tell you the year the count was formed, the county or counties from which it was formed, the county seat, the zip code of the county courthouse, the year for which the county has land records, as well as maps showing present day boundaries; and the Map Guide to the U.S. Federal Censuses 1790-1920, which visually depicts the county formation process in 10-year snapshots. It is important to note that in some areas deeds are found at the town level. You can also learn about county basics through the FHL by searching the catalog online for county formation, names of any parent counties and record losses.

Deed books
Deed books originally belonged to the jurisdiction that created them (usually the county). As populations grew in counties, so did the number of record books. Because land ownership is considered an important asset and the basis for tax collection and for identifying roads, land records (especially deeds) were rarely thrown out. Some counties moved records to another jurisdiction, while some established regional and state archives systems for the safekeeping of older records. Because there is no set standard for a record transfer process, you need to take this into account when conducting research for land records. You also should be prepared to view old records on microfiche or microfilm. The largest coordinated effort for land record microfilming has been undertaken by the Genealogical Society of Utah. Thes microfilms are available through the FHL. You can check their Internet site at <www.familysearch.org> to see what land records are available through your local Family History Center (FHC). Locate your county of interest. Then, look under the topics for LAND AND PROPERTY and LAND AND PROPERTY - INDEXES.

Published abstracts
Check with the local or regional genealogical society in or near your county (or town) of interest. You may have a stroke of luck that a society volunteer or other genealogist may have already abstracted the indexes or deed books into published periodicals held by the society. In addition, abstracts may also appear in periodicals. You can use the electronic version of the Periodical Source Index (PERSI) to search for abstracts. PERSI was developed by the Allen County Public Library in Fort Wayne, IN and originally published in book form with annual updates. In 1999, the library collaborated with Ancestry.com to produce an electronic version of the database. Many libraries have PERSI on CD-ROM, or a subscription to Ancestry.com that will allow you access to the database of 1.7 million records.

Online land records
Because of sheer volume, few land records are actually available online. This is especially true for records at the county level. In some cases, county offices or state archives have placed indexes online, or volunteers have abstracted deed indexes and posted them to Internet sites. Three major sites to check, especially for indexes done by volunteers, are:

- Cyndi’s List <www.cyndislist.com>
- RootsWeb <www.rootsweb.com>
- USGenWeb <www.usgenweb.org>

You may still have to search for deeds the old-fashioned way, either by a visit to the courthouse in the county of interest or by letter. If you plan to write to a courthouse, you can find contact information through printed sources such as The Ancestry Family Historian’s Address Book or the County Courthouse Book. Cyndi’s List is also a great source for current information. Look under Libraries, Archives & Museums; Societies & Groups; or the United States Index for the locality you’re researching.

If researching your direct ancestors does not uncover a town of origin, you should then consider widening your search to include the immigrant ancestor’s brothers and sisters, and their children. Most immigrants tended to immigrate in clusters, almost always arriving first in an American community where they had family members or acquaintances from their European home. If city directories or censuses show a neighbor came from the same country as your ancestors, note what town the neighbors came from; it may be your ancestors’ home town as well.

U.S. and state censuses, mortality schedules
Census returns in the United States are available for the years 1790-1930. excepting 1890 (you can check Census substitutes, not yet available for all areas). Returns were taken every 10 years and the data is held for 72 years before release to the public. The most recent to be released is the 1930 census (April 1, 2002).
While not likely to show an exact place of origin (for example, Austria is likely to be listed in earlier census returns both for Czechs or Slovaks), census records often provide a good picture of a family at a specific time period and can give you clues for obtaining other documents such as naturalization papers immigration records such as passenger or customs lists which may contain specific information on an ancestral town or village (although the information may not be accurate). For Eastern and Central European immigrants, the 1850-1930 censuses are extremely valuable. Census records are available in both microfilm and digital formats. Consult the following Internet sites for information on how to use census records and their availability:

- Cyndi’s List: <www.cyndislist.com/census2.htm>
- Census-Online: <www.census-online.com>
- Census Links: <www.censuslinks.com>

Census records have been digitized and you can access them either on CD-ROM or via online subscription.

- Ancestry.com <www.ancestry.com>, the first company to offer online access to the complete U.S. census - digital census images for all census years 1790-1930. Includes indexes for the years 1790-1850, 1880, 1920, and 1930, partial indexes for 1860-1870, an index for 1890 (fragment) and images only for 1900 and 1910.

- Heritage Quest Online <www.heritagequest.com>, joined with Proquest in early 2002 to launch their U.S. Census collection as part of HeritageQuest Online. It is marketed to libraries, not individual subscribers. Many libraries have purchased the Heritage Quest Online collection and offer it as a free resource for their members. Individuals can purchase CD-ROMs of Census images through Heritage Quest.

- Genealogy.com <www.genealogy.com>, this site’s U.S. Census subscription contains records for 1790-1930 with searchable indexes for 1790-1820; 1860-1870, 1890, 1900 and 1910.

- The FHL offers a searchable index of the 1880 U.S. Census at <www.familysearch.org>

Social Security Death Index

The Social Security Death Index (SSDI) is a great tool for genealogists, with limitations, of course. This database is an index to basic information about persons with Social Security numbers whose deaths have been reported to the Social Security Administration (SSA). The death may have been reported by a survivor requesting benefits. It may have been reported in order to stop Social Security Benefits to the deceased. Funeral homes often report deaths to the SSA as a service to family members. Beginning in 1962, the SSA began to use a computer database for processing requests for benefits. About 98% percent of the people in the SSDI died after 1962, but a few death dates go back as far as 1937. Because legal Aliens in the U.S. can obtain a Social Security card, their names may appear in the SSDI if their deaths were reported. Some 400,000 railroad retirees are also included in the SSDI.

The SSDI is not an index to all deceased individuals who have held Social Security numbers, or all deceased individuals who have received Social Security benefits, or whose families have received survivor benefits. The index is taken from the U.S. SSA’s Death Master File. It contains the records of deceased persons who possessed Social Security numbers and whose death had been reported to the SSA. In most cases a report of death was made in connection with Social Security death benefits.

The SSDI works best for finding information about individuals who died in the mid-1960s or later. This index is compiled by the SSA and is available at no charge to the user on many Internet sites, such as Rootsweb <ssdi.genealogy.rootsweb.com>, Family Tree Legends <www.familytreelegends.com/ssdi> or the FHL <www.familytreelegends.com/ssdi> or the FHL <www.familysearch.org/Eng/Search/CensusLinks/search_census_links.asp>

Finally, you might want to refer to the date of last update of the particular Internet site’s database that you are viewing. While the SSDI is available on a number of sites, not all regularly or consistently update their copy of the database. The recent updates will have recent deaths, but can also occasionally include information about earlier deaths as well. You should always check the date of the last update.

The SSA makes copies of the original Social Security application form (the SS-5) available to third parties who request information on a deceased individual. The SSA currently charges $27.00 for each individual application if the Social Security number is known, and $29.00 if unknown. This request should be in writing and include the following information: full name, state of birth, and date of birth to:

Social Security Administration
OEO FOIA Workgroup
300 N. Green Street
P.O. Box 33022
Baltimore, Maryland 21290-3022

Providing names of parents is also helpful, especially with common surnames. Be sure also to provide proof of death, since records of living individuals are not publicly available.

Naturalization records

Depending on when your ancestor arrived in America, naturalization records can give you the precise date and port of arrival, as well as the name of the ship, the port of departure and the immigrant’s date and place of birth. Not all naturalization records will provide all of the above information. Some records may give only a year when the immigrant arrived. Between 1776 and 1790, each state
established laws, procedures and residency requirements for aliens to become naturalized United States citizens. The first federal naturalization law was passed in 1790, and since that time, a series of Acts have changed restrictions and requirements.

Before the 19th amendment to the U.S. Constitution was ratified, women became citizens by marrying a citizen or through their husbands becoming naturalized. After 1922, the federal government began keeping separate naturalization records for married women. Children under 16 are listed on the father’s naturalization records. If you are searching for naturalization records, check first at either municipal, county, state or federal courthouses where the immigrant arrived and settled. Also, check city, county, and state archives, as well as with the FHL to see if the records and/or indexes have been microfilmed for the area you are researching. If you are unsuccessful with searching the above locations, pre-1906 naturalization records may be found at the local county courthouse, county or state archives, or the National Archives (NARA), if the immigrant was naturalized in a Federal Court.

If your ancestor immigrated to the U.S. after 1906, you can request a copy of your ancestor’s naturalization records under the Freedom of Information Act. For a naturalization that took place after 27 September 1906, you must make a formal request using form G-639 from the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). This form is available from the INS at <www.ins.usdoj.gov/graphics/formsfee/forms/g-639.htm>. To have the forms mailed to you, fill out the form at <www.ins.usdoj.gov/graphics/exec/forms/index.asp>. In your letter and on the envelope, you will want to include in writing “FOIA/PA request”, and mail your request to:

Immigration and Naturalization Service, Headquarters
ATTN: FOIA Unit
425 “I” Street, NW
Washington, DC 20536

Immigration and emigration records

Immigration and emigration records can be quite helpful for locating an individual’s place of birth or last place of residence. You should search both the place of departure and arrival as records sometimes exist in both locations.

Immigration arrival records (customs or passenger lists) are often good sources of information. Passenger lists from 1820 to ~1891 were known as “customs lists.” These lists were usually printed in the United States, completed by the ship company personnel at the port of departure, and maintained primarily for statistical purposes. The data was really “bare bones” information (name, ship, ship master, departure and arrival ports, passenger’s name, sex, age, occupation, nationality).

Arrival records created from approximately 1891 to the 1950s are called “immigration passenger lists.” Like customs lists, these were printed in the United States, but completed in the ports of departure and then filed in the United States once the ship docked. The information provided in immigration passenger lists varied over the decades, as did the number of columns of information (for example 21 columns in 1893 compared to 33 columns in 1917). In addition to place of birth and personal details, the later passenger lists provide clues that you may not find in other records you search. For example, “last residence,” “final destination in the United States,” “if going to join a relative and the relative’s name and address,” “name and address of closest living relative in the native country.”

Passenger arrival lists after 1900 are often the best because they show town of origin, next of kin in Europe and destination. The drawback, however, is that they can often be tedious to search, especially if you are looking at unindexed arrivals.

Prior to the mid 19th century, the United States had no immigration inspection station. In 1855, Castle Garden opened and served as immigrant inspection station until Ellis Island opened in 1892.

Most original passenger arrival lists from 1820-1957 have been microfilmed and are available through NARA or the FHL and local FHCs.

The regional records facilities of NARA have films for the ports in their jurisdictions. Go to <www.archives.gov/facilities/facilities_by_state.html> for information on NARA regional facilities.

You will also want to check out a handy NARA guide called Immigrant and Passenger Arrivals: A Select Catalog of National Archives Microfilm Publications at <www.archives.gov/publications/microfilm_catalogs/immigrant/immigrant_passenger_arrivals.html>. This catalog details more fully the availability of records and indexes for each port.

Another useful NARA link is Immigration Records (Ship Passenger Arrival Records) at <www.archives.gov/research_room/genealogy/immigrant_arrivals/passenger_records.html>. The information you can obtain from passenger record often varies.

Prints of microfilmed passenger lists may be obtained by mail from NARA for a fee. You should check with NARA for current prices. Passenger lists must be requested using a NARA NATF Form 81. Forms may be requested either in writing by phone/fax, or online. To request forms in writing, send a letter to:

National Archives and Records Administration
ATTN.: NWCTB Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20408

To request by phone or fax:
Telephone: 202-501-5235
or (toll free) 866-325-7208
Fax: 202-501-7170

Request forms can also be found online at <www.archives.gov/global_pages/inquire_form.html>

NARA will not perform research for you. You will need to provide as much information as possible when requesting
passenger arrival records. The minimum information required for a search of the index is: the full name of the person, the port of arrival and the month and year of arrival. Additional facts, such as the passenger’s age, and names of accompanying passengers may also be helpful. If a list is not indexed, more specific information is needed, such as the exact date of arrival and name of the ship (see section below on how to obtain the name of a ship). Ship arrivals on microfilm are also available through the FHL ordered through FHCs.

If your ancestor came through the port of New York (Ellis Island) then you have an advantage thanks to the American Family Immigration History Center (and thousands of volunteers of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints) - the ability to search a free online repository of transcribed ship manifests known as the Ellis Island Database (explained below). Note that the Ellis Island Database only covers the Port of New York and the years 1892 - 1924.

Searching the Ellis Island Database (EIDB)

This April 17th marked the 2nd anniversary since the launch of the EIDB <www.ellisislandrecords.org> by the American Family Immigration History Center. If you are searching for Slovak ancestors, this database provides a wonderful research tool for the more than 100 million Americans whose ancestors made their way through Ellis Island. This online database contains transcribed “ship manifests” of more than 22 million immigrants who came to the United States through the Port of New York between the years 1892-1924, as well as links to digital images of original ship’s manifests and photographs of actual ships provided by NARA.

The database is free, but you will have to register online with a user name and password to fully use it. There are some fee based features, such as ordering printouts of ship’s manifests. The Ellis Foundation subscriber bonus (for a minimum $45 donation) allows users to create or maintain a Family History Scrapbook and annotating passenger records.
in the Community Archives. These features are explained in detail on the site.

The site has been greatly improved since its launch, allowing for searches for alternate spellings of surnames, as well as other search criteria such as year of arrival, ethnicity, port of departure, name of ship or name of town could be used (provided these details are known) to further narrow the search.

**EIDB search tools**

If you experience difficulty locating your ancestors through a direct search of the database, you may want to use some of the search tools developed by Stephen P. Morse to assist genealogists search the EIDB using criteria, such as age, ethnicity, or year of immigration in one step. These tools can be accessed at <www.stevemorse.org> or <www.jewishgen.org>. Morse’s tools enable users to search for immigrants by town name (something not possible in early versions of EIDB), as well as conduct soundex searches. There is also a search to locate ship manifests.

Morse’s site does not maintain the data, but provides a powerful alternative user interface. There are three forms from which to choose: 1) Ellis Island Database, white form, searches all passengers and has limited locality search capabilities; 2) Ellis Island Database (Jewish Passengers), blue form, searches for Jewish passengers only, and has unrestricted locality search, unrestricted soundex search, and supports some additional search parameters; 3) Ellis Island Database (Short Form), gray form, searches all passengers with unrestricted locality search and unrestricted soundex search, but lacks some of the other search parameters. Another bonus is that the gray one-step form does not have any limitations (unlike Morse’s previously simulated search-by-town facility on the white one-step form). You can use the gray form from the Internet Explorer, Netscape 6, and Macintosh computers.

**Port of departure records**

Hamburg and Bremen were the most common departure ports for Eastern European (and Slovak) immigrants. They may have traveled to the country of destination directly or indirectly (via another country such as England). Unfortunately, the Bremen records were destroyed in WW II. However, there is an effort underway to reconstruct from port of arrival records). Bremen Passenger Lists, 1920-1930 are currently being transcribed and uploaded to the Internet at <db.genealogy.net/maus/gate/shiplists.cgi>

The FHL has the Hamburg passenger lists on microfilm. Search the Family History Library Catalog (FHLC) online at <www.familysearch.org> under Germany, Hamburg—Emigration and Immigration: Auswandererlisten 1850-1934. When researching the Hamburg lists, one should note that there is a distinction between “direct” and “indirect” lists, so it is important to check both during your search so that you will not overlook your ancestor.

The Hamburg State archive now offers a database with emigration lists of Hamburg. The database is a work in progress, initially covering the years 1890 to 1914, and expanding to include all years between 1850 and 1934. There is a small fee for the service. The “LinkToYourRoots” project can be found at <www.hamburg.de/fhh/behoerden/staatsarchiv/link_to_your_roots/english/>

Another great source is the Immigrant Ships Transcriber’s Guild, a group of volunteers dedicated to making ancestors’ immigration records easy and convenient to find. Their mission is to make ship passenger lists available online at no cost to the researcher. Since its beginning in September 1998, more than 5,000 ship
passenger lists, citing over 500,000 passenger arrivals have been transcribed. The site can be found at: <www.immigrantships.net/>

Some other useful Internet sites for passenger lists:
Finding Passenger Lists 1820 to the 1940s (Joe Beine) <home.att.net/~wee-monster/passengers.html>
Czech Immigration Passenger Lists (Leo Baca) <www.angelfire.com/tx5/texasczech/References/Leo%20Baca.htm>

Canadian records
There were occasions when Slovaks immigrated first to Canada and then crossed the border to settle in the United States. If this is a possibility with your ancestors, you will want to check Canadian immigration records. You can locate sources for Canadian immigration records online at the National Archives of Canada <www.archives.ca/02/02020204_e.html>, inGeneas <www.ingeneas.com>, Canadian Immigration Records, Ancestry.com <www.ancestry.com>, Immigrants to Canada <ist.uwaterloo.ca/~marj/genealogy/thevoyage.html>, and the FHL (under Canada) <www.familysearch.org>.

Locating the ancestral village
If you are searching for a town in Slovakia and you know the name of the town, you will want to determine its location (both today and during your ancestor’s time). You can do this several different ways.

1) Check maps, printed gazetteers and/or atlases (see the sections on maps, gazetteers and atlases below)
2) Check an online Gazetteer (the Slovak Gazetteer, is available on the Internet at <www.iarelative.com/gazateer.htm>)
3) Use Shtetlseeker, an outstanding tool which also can be used to derive place names. This is an excellent resource and often lists both the old and new name of the town.

Maps
You will definitely want to consult historical maps for Slovakia and Hungary, but contemporary maps can also be very useful for your search. The Library of Congress Map and Geography Reading Room has copies of a series of maps from old Hungary. These maps are County (or Varmegye) maps made before 1918. They are colored and laminated in various sizes. Contact:

Geography and Map Division
Library of Congress
Washington, DC 20540-4650
e-mail address: maps@loc.gov

Some Hungarian County Maps prior to 1918 are available online at <lazarus.eltu.hu/hun/maps/1910/vmlista.htm>
Other Hungarian County Maps prior to 1918 can be found on microfilm. For example, the old Hungarian County maps listed below are available on FHL film 1,181,575 item 2. This film includes the localities of Abauj-Torna, Esztergom, Gomor, Gyor, Hont, Komarom, Novgorod, Nyitra, Pozsony and Zemplen.

Modern road maps
Below are some road maps published by Freytag and Berndt. Check your local bookstore or college bookstore for the following maps, or the Internet sites below:
<maps.guidesandmore.com/results.html?search_string=Kummerly+%26+Frey+Maps>

Other useful maps
1. U.S. Army Topographical Maps of Europe
Topographical Maps of Eastern and Western Europe
Series M501 and N501, Scale 1:250,000, circa 1955.
Published by the Corps of Engineers, U.S. Army, Washington D.C.
Copies of these maps are in the
The Free Library of Philadelphia
Maps Department
1901 Vine Street
Philadelphia, PA 19103-1189
Map Dept: (215) 686-5397, Main Library: (215) 686-5322, Internet site: <www.library.phila.gov>

A location of these maps is on the web at <www.iarelative.com/nl3303.htm>

2. Maps of Slovakia. Expedia Map of Slovakia and other parts of Europe. Allows you to zoom in for detail: <maps.expedia.com/pub/agent.dll?gsc=mrdr&lats1=48.679893&lons1=19.683341&alts1=650&ofsx=0&ofsy=0&ntid1=8f&place1=Slovakia&wpst1=1&regn1=1&fnmp=1&nsz=982976870747>


Maps can also be found online at <www.Yahoo.com>, <www.google.com>, and <www.ebay.com> (search under: Everything Else:Genealogy:Maps)

Printed gazetteer and atlases
The FHL has an extensive collection of gazetteers of Eastern Europe both in book form and on microfilm. A brief list is given below. For the best results, search the FHLC at <www.familysearch.org>.

Gazetteers of Hungary
Below are some of the best gazetteers available for researching both former and contemporary areas of Slovakia and Hungary.
1. Atlas and Gazetteer of Historic Hungary, 1914 (2nd ed. Administrative Atlas of Hungary, 1914) “Magyarország közigazgatási, along with an Index of Village names used in 1910 to 1914. For each village, the population, ethnic and religious makeup is provided. It can also give you clues when trying to determine what church your family went to and where it could have been located.

2. Magyarorszag Geographiai Szotara, 1851. [Hungarian Gazetteer of 1851]. Two volumes of old Hungarian towns in alphabetical order. It gives a description of each town, lists the nearest post office, lists the number of inhabitants by religion and lists the features of each town (in Hungarian, of course). Be careful, words that are now spelled with “C” were then spelled with “CZ” and there is a separate section for “CZ.” The same is true for certain vowels that have accent marks. They follow the unaccented vowels. FHL film 844,956. Descriptive terms include Nagy: large, big; Kis: small, little; Also: lower; Felo: upper; Nemet: German; (Var)megye: county.

3. Magyarorszag Helysegnevture, 1877 (Gazetteer of Hungary) by Janos Dvorzsak, comp. Budapest, FHL call number Reference 943.9 E5d v. 1 Index, FHL film #599,564: v. 2, FHL film #973,041: v. 1 and 2 on fiche number 600840 (19 fiche). I find microfiche are faster and easier to use than the films. Most libraries keep this resource as a core holding. I have not used it but have read that it is an inexpensive alternative and easily accessed for those hard-to-find villages. The first volume is an alphabetical index which leads to a county, district, and locality in volume 2. The gazetteer indicates the sort numbers for each religion found in the village and the closest parish denizens would have worshiped.

4. Gazetteer of Hungary, 1944. Last section contains an alphabetical listing of localities in Austria, Slovakia, Transylvania and Yugoslavia; FHL call number Reference 943.9 E5m, 1944, FHL fiche number 6053520.


For gazetteers of the Czech Republic prior to 1918, use gazetteers of Austria or Austria-Hungary.

Other gazetteers/atlases

1. Pfohl, Ernst. Ortslexikon Sudetenland (Nümerg: Preufler, 1987 reprint; originally Orientierungs Lexicon der Tschechoslowakischen Republik, Liberec, 1931). 698 pages (Order from Helmut Preufler Verlag, Rotherburger Str. 25, 8500 70, Nümerg, Germany; cost is ~$35.00; Best one-volume source; Gives German, Czech, Hungarian and Slovak town name with cross-reference.


Online gazetteers/atlases


2. UC Davis: <www.lib.ucdavis.edu/govdoc/MapCollection/gazetteers.html>


4. Information on other Slovak Gazetteers can be located online by searching Cyndi’s List <www.cyndislist.com>


Step 3 (Shtetlseeker)

The word shtetl (Shteh’-t’l) n. (Yiddish) (pl. shtetlach) means little city, town, or village. It is often used to refer to the small Jewish communities of Eastern Europe where the culture of the Ashkenazi flourished before World War II. Shtetlseeker is a searchable site for towns in Central and Eastern Europe, using exact spelling or the Daitch-Mokotoff Soundex system. This search will display latitude and longitude for each location, the distance and direction from the country’s capital city, and a link to a map. You can use this site to search for towns by location or list all of the towns within a certain distance of a given latitude/longitude coordinates. You may find these coordinates using the above town search. To access Shtetlseeker, go to the Jewish Genealogy Internet site at <www.jewishgen.org/ShtetlSeeker/loctown.htm> N.B.: This method is not 100 percent reliable. Although Shtetlseeker contains many old place names, it does not contain them all. It appears that only larger villages or cities may have a completely correlated set of names.

Place name Hungarian-contemporary conversions

There may be occasions where you will need to convert between contemporary place names and old Magyar place names. Also, you may encounter the problem of similar town names for some town names occur in more than one
district. In addition, watch for the terms: Nová Ves “new town”; Hradište “castle site” and Brod “ford,” etc. To help with these conversions, refer to:

1. Majtán, Milan. Názvy Obcí Slovenskej Republiky (Names of Villages, Slovak Republic), Milan Majtan, 1997. This is a recently published book which identifies all the names and locations for all Slovakia villages from year 1773 to 1997. This is probably the most reliable method of obtaining the various place names. Cost is U.S. $75.00; to order visit: <www.slovakheritage.org/Shopping/Books/nazvyobci.htm>

2. Dictionary of Hungarian place names: Magyar helységnév-azonosító szótár by György Lelkes, Talma Publishers. Useful if your search includes Slovakia, Carpatho-Ukraine or Hungary.

3. Check the Carpatho-Rusyn Society’s Internet page. This page is quite helpful, if you are seeking villages in Northeastern Slovakia, because it lists the Presov Region Greek Catholic Records available via the FHL which contains Slovak, Rusyn and Hungarian names for about 200 villages. While it is limited in scope to this small portion of Slovakia, it is still an excellent online resource. Cf. <www.carpatho-rusyn.org/films2.htm>.

4. You may want to consider posting to one of several discussion groups and ask if someone online has a copy of Nazvy obci Slovenskej Republiky and is willing to do a lookup for you. Most participants in these forums do not mind helping with one or two look-ups, but try not to ask for 10 villages or places at once!

Records available for Slovakia

In eastern Slovakia, church and the land were 2 of the most important aspects of everyday life. The types of records available for genealogical research in Slovakia include vital records (civil transcripts of church records), census records, local histories, military records, nobility documents and tax lists. There are usually 3 vital records kept for a person: birth or baptismal record, marriage record, and death record.

Local parish records

The records from 1895-1900 to the present are still with the priests of the local villages. Until 1950, the churches held all of the official village records for birth, marriage and deaths. After this time, civil registration was initiated (which means that the government keeps the records.) In 1950, the church records prior to 1895 were transferred to the State Archives. There are some exceptions. For example, in some cases, records only until 1890 were

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Fig. 9 - Greek Catholic baptismal record, 1878

Fig. 10 - Greek Catholic marriage record, 1874
transferred. In other cases, records as late as 1940 can be found in the archives.

Before the 1800’s most records were hand written. These can be very difficult to scan as the data is not columnar in nature. While it can be frustrating to search for a surname with this format, it is not impossible. In the 1800’s, the Hungarian rulers attempted to put some discipline into the record keeping by instituting a tabular recording method (the actual date varies by parish).

Most of these records are written in either Hungarian, Ukrainian or Slovak (sometimes in Cyrillic script). The invention of the Cyrillic alphabet is ascribed traditionally to Cyril, a Greek missionary sent by Byzantine Emperor Michael III to the Slavic people in the territory of the current Slovakia in the late 9th century. Cyril created the Glagolitic alphabet, based on the Greek alphabet, adding new characters to denote Slavic sounds not found in Greek. So far as is known, no writing in a Slavic language was preserved from the 9th century. The oldest Slavic texts to survive are in Old Church Slavonic and date to the 10th and 11th century.

When you first see this type of record, you may feel intimidated by the language, especially with regard to tabular records. However, once you identify the column headings, the data contained therein is fairly standard: dates, given names, surnames or place names, which typically require no translation. Some of these words are not presently in use, and may not be found in modern dictionaries.

Records microfilmed by the FHL

The FHL in Salt Lake City is one of the best sources for microfilmed records from Slovakia.

Church records

Most records more than 100 years old are now kept in state regional archives and later records are maintained at the vital records sections of local city offices. These records are accessible for genealogical research by writing to the appropriate republic or by personally visiting the archives there.

For Slovakia, records in eastern archives have been filmed by the FHL. Bratislava and Nitra archives in southwestern Slovakia have not yet been completely filmed. The available records are listed in the FHLC at <www.familysearch.org> You can order the films at your local FHC and view them there (for about 4 weeks) and make photocopies from the microfilm (for about 25-50 cents per copy), depending on the center.

Index of Slovak State Archives church records

The document Prehlad matrík na Slovensku do zostátnenia matricnej agendy (Survey of parish registers in Slovakia up to the time of civil registration) was prepared by the Slovak State Archives in 1992 and filmed by the FHL. It is a cross reference of which Slovak Republic villages are contained in each church register stored in the Archives. N.B.: this is a comprehensive list of all church records in the Slovak Republic Archives, but the FHL has not filmed all records at this point. You can order the microfiche (FHL # Fiche 6000786) as an inexpensive alternative to microfilm.

Searching the online FHLC

Once you access the FHLC you can do a search on the place name. Click on the “Library” tab and then click on “Family History Library Catalog”. Next, click on “Place Search” to search for matching place names. As you begin your search, you need to be aware that the particular town or village you are searching for may not be found. Sometimes church records for several villages were kept in another parish perhaps in a larger nearby town.

How to read and interpret birth, death and marriage records

Because of the variety of languages used to record birth, death and marriage records, they can often be difficult to read and interpret (as noted above). In your search, for data prior to 1895, you are likely to find data written in Church Slavonic, or Hungarian. Latin is found quite frequently in
Roman Catholic records but infrequently in Greek Catholic records. Slovak is most often found in ledgers from western Slovakia. I am not going to elaborate on language interpretation because it is not my area of expertise. Rather, I will refer you to an excellent Internet site by John J. Jaso that goes into great detail about church records and their translations in English, Hungarian, Latin and Slovak (with examples of the columns for each type of record: baptismal, death, and marriage).

Another helpful resource is the Genealogy Library: Reference Table (Common Foreign format. Czech and Hungarian Word Lists are available in PDF directly from the FHL or your local FHC. Fortunately, the word lists can be downloaded in PDF format. Others just have a description, so you will have to purchase these lists from the online catalog on the FHL Internet site with often more than one settlement name per film. The films may or may not have their present day asset.

The census was recorded in Hungarian. Some versions contain only Hungarian, while others include a combination of Ukrainian and Hungarian. Other areas of present day Slovakia, especially in the west, may contain other languages such as Slovak. The lists contains one entry for each residence. Each entry contains three parts: buildings, people and livestock. All data is presented in columnar form. Check the Survey of Holdings: 1869 Magyar Census Data for Slovakia at the FHL.

The present FHLC does not include the settlement names for those listed in the census. The settlement names are listed in alphabetical order, by 1869 Hungarian name, on the film titles, with often more than one settlement name per film. The films may or may not have their present day Slovak name listed parenthetically in the title. Below are two sample 1869 census pages for Osturna Szepes.
Fig. 12 - 1869 census forms (p. 1-2) for house no. 20, Figlyar family

Fig. 13 - Transcription of 1869 census forms shown above. Courtesy of John Hudick

1869 Hungary Census of Osturna, Szepes County

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Osturna House #</th>
<th>20</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nr.</td>
<td>Surname</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Figlyar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Figlyar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Figlyar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Figlyar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Figlyar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Figlyar</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The 1869 Hungarian Census can prove quite valuable in your research. In some instances, you may be able to obtain at least the year of birth for some of your ancestors when the information is not available in the church records.

**Other Records**

**Local Histories**

Books are often published that include the history of individual cities, towns or villages. Some are available through the FHL. Search the Family History Catalog under the town name - HISTORY.

**Military Records**

Muster rolls and qualification lists are available from the 1700s through 1915. Military records have been microfilmed by the FHL. The films are mostly of Austrian records, but some Hungarian records are available. These include alphabetically arranged lists of officers and some common soldiers who were not ethnically German. These records are only of value if you know the regiment to which your ancestor belonged. There are over 2600 titles for Austrian military records in the FHLC. About one half of them are personnel and regimental records and the other half are military church books. All of the records are in German and all of them use German places names when there was one (for example, Slowakai = Slovakia). Cities, towns and villages may also have German place names. Search the FHLC under AUSTRIA - or HUNGARY - MILITARY RECORDS. In addition, Karen Hobbs has worked extensively in the area of Austrian military records. She has published articles for the Czechoslovak Genealogical Society International and the German-Bohemian Heritage Society.8

**Nobility records**

The FHL has nobility documents (dating from the 1600s) for most of the old Kingdom of Hungary including Slovakia.

**Tax Lists**

Lists of taxpayers are available. Austrian records were first compiled in 1654, then in 1684, 1746, 1757, and 1792. The lists include only the heads of families who own taxable property or have a trade and are helpful when an ancestor is known to have been in a taxable status. Tax lists are in various archives, but not readily available to researchers. The FHL has a collection of unindexed tax lists all written in Czech. Search the FHLC under CZECH REPUBLIC - or SLOVAKIA - LAND AND PROPERTY.

**Slovak State Archive Records**

In February 1784, a law required churches to make civil transcripts of births, marriages, and deaths for state use. All churches in Austria and Hungary had to record of births, marriages and deaths and such information was the property of the state. The law required that all records be kept in German, Hungarian, or Latin. After 1790, all vital records had to be indexed (the accuracy to which this was done varies). Duplicate copies of vital records were then soon required by law to be deposited in the bishop’s consistory archive (1799 for the Czech Lands and 1827 in Hungary). Civil registration in Hungary (including Slovakia) was not introduced until 1895. After World War I and the formation of Czechoslovakia, new policies were instituted for the keeping of vital records. Civil registration became the official registration in 1920, and church registers were no longer considered publicly valid.

**State Regional Archives**

Most records more than 100 years old are now kept in state regional archives (statni oblastni archivy); later records are maintained at the vital records sections (matricni oddeleni/oddelenie) of local city offices. For the old counties of Zemplen and Saros, they are stored in Presov. For Szepes (Spis), the are stored in Lubica. These centers are open to the public by making prior arrangements or by having the right connections. For more details about the Slovak Archives, refer to Genealogical Research in the Czech Republic and Slovakia by Daniel Schlyter.9

If you are planning a research trip to another country, make sure you do the initial legwork first (research all U.S. sources, check the FHL, etc.) so you don’t waste time trying to locate records you could have searched in America. Network with other in an ethnic genealogical society or other group (or online) who have made trips to the homeland for research and travel tips.

**Research by mail**

In the Slovak Republic, the Ministry of the Interior and the Environment is responsible for the administration of archives. If your ancestor was from the area formerly governed by Hungary (Slovakia) sen your request directly to the Slovak archival administration:

Slovak Ministry of Interior and Environment
Archivná Správa
Krizková 7
811 04 Bratislava
Slovak Republic

The archival administration will arrange for searches of birth, marriage, and death registers deposited in the state archives. The only records available for genealogical research by mail (with rare exception) are parish registers of births, marriages, and deaths. Researchers at the archives will conduct the research and send you a report of what has been done. Costs for this type of research will vary, but you can estimate approximately $55.00 to $85.00 (U.S.). Other records, such as census or land records are difficult to access by writing, but can be researched if you schedule a visit to the archives yourself. There are some online references for the Slovak Archives, including:
Helpful tips for mail requests

There are some general guidelines to follow when requesting genealogical information by mail from a foreign country.

When writing to a foreign record repository, write the letter in the language of the country, whenever possible. You can find templates for form letters in several genealogical guidebooks and on the Internet. The FHL has an excellent Letter Writing Guide (Czech and Slovak) available for download (PDF format) from the Research Guidance section of their Internet site (see fig. 14-15). Ask for only 1 or 2 items at a time and note the response time and type of response before requesting additional records. Include with your inquiry 2 postal International Reply Coupons, available from any post office. There is no need to send a return envelope. List all the pertinent information about the person, name, date of birth, place of birth, mother, father, religion, etc. Also, request information in the form of “Extract of Birth Record”, Extract of Marriage Record”, etc. and specifically state that you do not want “Duplicate Birth Certificate”, “Duplicate Marriage Certificate”, etc., otherwise you will find yourself being billed for duplicate certificates of your ancestors’ siblings that you don’t want. You should request that they research all direct line ancestors and specify a cost limit of so many dollars. When the research is completed they will notify you with an invoice. If you need to send a postal money order or a money order from your bank in the country’s currency.

Look at unlikely sources for information

Before you go to the trouble of preparing, translating and sending correspondence to the State Archives in Slovakia, ask yourself if you have really explored all of your options here in the United States. Have you contacted Slovak societies and church groups to see if anyone has researched your village or town of interest? Are there any groups or family associations out there that you could join? What about online information? The beauty of the Internet is that you can find just about any type of information, but be certain to always verify the quality of the source. Check Cyndi’s List <www.cyndislist.com> and RootsWeb <www.rootsweb.com>. Do a search on Google <www.google.com> for the town or village. You may be surprised at what you will find! There are many researchers out there who have put a great deal of time and effort researching particular surnames and/or villages, and a number of them extend genealogical kindness and post their findings on the Internet so that other researchers can benefit from the work they have already done.

The point here is to investigate all possible leads to save time and money. If you do find that someone has already located information that you have been seeking, you should thank them in whatever way you feel is appropriate (e-mail, monetary donation to offset research costs, donation of time to add or edit information to their Internet site, etc.).

Networking: finding others

You can network with others searching for their Slavic roots in a number of ways. First, you can join one or more ethnic or general genealogical societies, historical societies, or other groups. Most of these organizations have regular membership meetings and local or national conferences. These conferences are definitely worth the money and time spent. Not only will you often have a chance to hear expert speakers on a number of genealogical topics, these gatherings also provide you with an opportunity to meet others doing similar research. Nothing beats old-fashioned networking! All of the major genealogy and family history magazines list upcoming conferences as do the Internet sites of all the major organizations. You can also check Cyndi’s List under the “Societies & Groups Index” at <www.CyndisList.com/society.htm>

Using the Internet

Message boards and forums such those located at Ancestry.com <www.ancestry.com> and Genealogy.com <www.genealogy.com> are great places to post queries about surnames and localities you are researching. Both of these sites have message boards specific to Slovakia. There are a number of other discussion groups on the Internet related to Slavic Research. Again, check Cyndi’s List (Help from Others Section) at <www.cyndislist.com/topical.htm#Help>. Another good site is the Slovak Republic Mailing Lists (John Fuller) at: <www.rootsweb.com/~jfuller/gen_mail_country-slo.html>

Establishing contacts in the ancestral village (mayor or priest)

If you decide to research in Slovakia, it could be to your advantage to locate families living in Slovakia who have the surname you are researching and write to the village mayor or priest. The easiest way to do this is to search the Internet on for you village name and surname.

Next, assemble a list of names common to the village (not just the obvious surnames for your family but other common names, you never know they could be relatives) and try to find the name of the mayor or priest

Other ways to find out common surnames

• Contact churches in immigrant communities (clusters) for names
• Search phone and e-mail directories <www.infobel.com/teldir/>
• Search foreign phonebooks, especially those in Slovakia for names, postal codes, etc. (most public libraries have a collection
• Contact mayor/priest in village or town
• Look for Hungarian surnames on the Internet site <www.bogardi.com/gen/index.shtml>
ŽIADOSŤ O GENEALOGICKÝ VÝSKUM V SLOVENSKEJ REPUBLIKE
[Request for Genealogical Research in the Slovak Republic]

For Slovak ancestors, send to: Ministerstvo vnútra SR
odbor archívnicťa a spisovej služby
Križkova 7
811 04 Bratislava
Slovak Republic

Žiadam o poskytnutie genealogických informácií o tejto osobe [I am requesting genealogical information about the following person]:

- Priezvisko [Last name]:
- Meno [Given name]:
- Dátum narodenia [Birth date]:
- Miesto narodenia [Birthplace]:
- Blížšie určenie miesta narodenia (pošta, farský úrad, okres, blízke váčšie mesto) [Further details about the birthplace, such as the post office, parish, county, or nearest larger city]:

- Vierovyznanie [Religion]:
- Meno otca [Father’s name]:
- Meno matky za slobodna [Mother’s maiden name]:
- Ďaľšie informácie (nie je záväzné) [Other information (optional)]:

Příbuzní osoby, ktorá je predmetom výskumu (je nezáväzné, ale často veľmi užitočné) [Relatives of the person being researched (this is optional but often very helpful)]:

Manžel alebo manželka [Husband or wife]:
- Meno [Name]:
- Dátum narodenia [Birth date]:
- Miesto narodenia [Birthplace]:
- Dátum sobáša [Date of marriage]:
- Miesto sobáša [Place of marriage]:

Deti narodené pred vystúpením [Children born before emigration]:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meno [Name]</th>
<th>Dátum narodenia [Birth date]</th>
<th>Miesto narodenia [Birthplace]</th>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Bratia a sestry [Brothers and sisters]:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meno [Name]:</th>
<th>Dátum narodenia [Birth date]</th>
<th>Miesto narodenia [Birthplace]</th>
</tr>
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</table>

**Tiež žiadam informácie o nasledujúcich osobách** [I am also requesting information about the following persons]:

- Všetci predkovi priamej linie [All direct-line ancestors]
- Iba predkovi mužskej linie (rovnaké priezvisko) [Paternal-line ancestors only]
- Súrodenci predkov priamej linie [Siblings of the direct-line ancestors]
- Manžel/manželka [Spouse(s)]

**Rozsah správy** [Scope of research]:

- Prosím, zaznamenajte informácie získané výskumom na genealogických formulároch. [Please report the information you find on the genealogical forms.]
- Žiadam doskové opisy záznamov s udaním použitých prameňov. [I request complete transcriptions of the original records.]
- Žiadam fotokopie záznamov s udaním použitých prameňov. [I request photocopies of the documents pertaining to my ancestors.] This option may involve extensive cost.
- Žiadam výpyty z matrik na matricných formulároch s udaním použitých prameňov. [I request extracts from records on modern vital statistics forms.] This option may involve extensive cost.

Najvyššia čiastka, ktorú zaplatím za genealogický výskum je $__________. Zavádzame sa zaplatiť všetky poplatky spojené s genealogickým výskumom. Beriem na vedomie, že správa mi bude doručená po prijati úhrady.

[My limit on research fees is $__________. I am obliged to pay the applicable costs for the genealogical information, for which the archival administration will bill me in connection with the reply. I understand that the genealogical report will be sent only upon the receipt of my payment.]

**Žiadateľ** [Person requesting the information]:

- Značka predchádzajúcej korešpondencie [Reference number of any previous correspondence]:

- Meno [Name]:

- Adresa [Address]:

Dátum [Date]: ______________  Podpis [Signature]: ______________
When to Hire a Professional Researcher

You may decide that you have hit a roadblock in your research, or perhaps you do not have the time to devote to searching records, especially in another state or country. This is where a professional genealogist or researcher can assist you. Advantages to hiring a professional include: they are familiar with the area’s history and geography and know where to look for the records and most likely have established relationships with the personnel at the archives, and possess the expert knowledge of what and how to research. Some of the disadvantages of having someone else do the research are: cost (research time and often travel expenses); they are not familiar with your family and will research only on the facts you provide not knowing the nuances or details that you do; you must wait for results based on this individual’s timetable.

If you want to hire someone, you will first want to check out his or her credentials and fees. You can do this online by visiting a number of sites. First check out the Association of Professional Genealogists in America at <www.apgen.org>

Look under country or ethnic group of interest for researchers specializing in a particular heritage. A few other sites you can check are:

- Board for Certification of Genealogists, <www.bcgcertification.org>
- Cyndi’s List (Professional Researchers, Volunteers & Other Research Services), <www.CyndisList.com/profess.htm>

Conclusion

Researching your Slovak genealogy may appear a daunting task at first, but fortunately if you have Slovak ancestors you are actually one of the lucky ones because of the wealth of resources available through the FHL and other sources in the United States.

If your ancestor called this county “home” for 1 year, 5 years or 30 years, there should be some documentation about his or her time in this country through one or more of the following: census records, immigration records, land/ probate records, the Social Security Death Index, vital records, etc. In addition, information is available from the Slovak archives in person or via mail, or through the efforts of reputable professional genealogists. Whether you choose to conduct research on your own or hire someone to do the research for you, there are a variety of Slovak records readily accessible both in this country and abroad to guide you along the path to your ancestors.

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Passenger and Immigration Lists Index: A Guide to Published Arrival Records of More than 3,806,000 Passengers Who Came to the New World between the


Conference Proceedings


Dictionaries

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Genealogical Handbooks


History

Maps
City Maps of Slovakia (in Slovak, Zobrazit’ mapu = Get Map) <mapy.zoznam.sk/browser.pcgi?M=20>
Expedia Map of Slovakia and other parts of Europe. Allows you to zoom in to finer detail: <maps.expedia.com/pub/agent.dll?qscr=mrdr&lats1=48.679893&lons1=19.683341&alts1=650&osfx=0&osfy=0&ntid1=8&fpece1=Slovakia&wpst1=1&regn1=1&fmap=1&zz=982976070747>

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Lisa Alzo was raised in Duquesne, Pennsylvania and currently resides in Ithaca, New York. She earned a Master of Fine Arts degree in Nonfiction Writing from the University of Pittsburgh in 1997, and has spent 12 years researching her family’s history. Her first book, Three Slovak Women, was published by Gateway Press in 2001 and she was the recipient of the 2002 Mary Zirin Prize given by the Association for Women in Slavic Studies to recognize the achievements of independent scholars and to encourage their continued scholarship and service in the field of Slavic Women’s Studies. Lisa teaches Slovak and Eastern European Genealogy for MyFamily.com’s online training program, and was an invited speaker at several conferences in 2003 including: The Society for Czechoslovak Arts & Sciences (SVU) in Cedar Rapids, Federation of East European Family History Societies (FEEFHS) in Salt Lake City, and the Czechoslovak Genealogical Society International (CGSI) in Houston.