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Accessing Czech Records

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Explores prerequisites for finding records of ancestors in the Czech Republic: (1) knowing original family and personal names, (2) knowing the town of origin, (3) having enough family dates and relationships to positively identify the ancestor(s), and (4) methods for searching Czech indexes and record sets. Includes links to major Czech archive websites.

FAMILYSEARCH

FamilySearch Research Wiki
Everything addressed in this course and much more is explained in the FamilySearch Research Wiki and linked from the Czech Republic Genealogy page:

https://familysearch.org/wiki/en/Czech_Republic

Czech Courses in the FamilySearch Learning Center
The FamilySearch Learning Center presently includes 12 online courses about Czech family history research:

https://familysearch.org/learningcenter/results.html?fq=place%3A%22Czech%20Republic%22

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW …
- Determine the actual name of your ancestor
- Determine the place of origin
- Determine the record keeping jurisdiction
- How to locate family records

Determine the actual name of your ancestor

Czech alphabet and alphabetization

A, a, Á, á, B, b, C, c, Č, č, D, d, Ď, ď, E, e, É, é, ě, F, f, G, g, <u>H, h, Ch, ch ,</u>

I, i, Í, í, J, j, K, k, L, l, M, m, N, n, Ň, ň, O, o, Ó, ó, P, p, Q, q, R, r, Ř, ř,

S, s, Š, š, T, t, Ť, ť, U, u, Ú, ú, ů, V, v, W, w, X, x, Y, y, Ý, ý, Z, z, Ž, z

Given Name Translations

Latin → German → Czech
Wenceslaus → Wenzel → Václav
Adalbertus → Albrecht → Vojtěch
Josephus → Joseph *→ Josef*

Surname Translations

Czech → German
Černý → Schwarz
Nový, Novák, Nováček, Novotný, Novotníček → Neumann

Surname Spellings

Ancestor's surname altered to fit the spelling and grammar of the language used in the parish register:

Čermák → Tschermak	*Schultz → Šulc*
Šebek → Schebek	*Schreier → Šrajer*
Havlíček → Hawlitzek	*Schmidt → Šmid*

Surname Gender Variations

Petr *Novák* and Františka *Nováková*
Jan *Mikulecký* and Anežka *Mikulecká*
Jan *Sýkora* and Kateřina*Sýkorová*
Pavel Mrázek and Jana Mrázková

Inflection

The Czech language is highly inflective – words have different endings depending on usage:

Josef, syn Antonína Ryby a Anny roz. Novákové
→ Josef, son of Antonín Ryba and Anna Novaková

Manželství mezi Michalem Dostalíkem a Anežkou Marii Seidlerovou
→ Marriage between Michal Dostalík and Anežka Marie Seidlerová

Determine the Place of Origin

Borders, empires and countries changed, but the cities, towns, and villages did not:

- *1526 – 1918 Hapsburg Rule*
- *1918 – 1938 Czechoslovakia*
- *1993 – Present Czech Republic*

Czech Family History Records are Local Records

Even if you find what looks like your ancestor in an indexed record, assure that firm evidence beyond having the same name verifies that it is the same person – most names were common. A place of origin (city, town, village) named in a verifiable U.S. record is almost a necessity.

Gazetteers

- A *Gazetteer*, a geographical dictionary, tool for identifying places
- Start with the sources created in the country of immigration
- Place names are misspelled in American sources
- Exact town of origin must be known before research in Czech records can begin

If you have an obscure place name, try:

- ISODP Project Fuzzy Gazetteer: http://dma.jrc.it/services/fuzzyg/
- Czech Vanished Localities database (in Czech or German only):
  http://www.zanikleobce.cz/index.php?menu=93
- JewishGen.org Communities Database using the "sounds like," "starts with," and "contains" options.
- Various regional gazetteers available at the Family History Library.

Gazetteer Hints:

- Many locality names are comprised of two or more words:
  Česká Lípa – look under Česká and also under Lípa.
- Different names in different languages: Karlové Vary → Karlsbad.
- Diacritic marks omitted: Štěpánov → Stepanov.
- Many localities have similar names that may be easily confused:
  Kámen, Kamenec, Kamenica, Kamenice, Kamenička, Kamenický, Kamenka, Kamenná, Kamenné, Kamenný, Kamienka
- Over 100 places in the Czech Republic called Nová Ves!

Determine the Record Keeping Jurisdiction
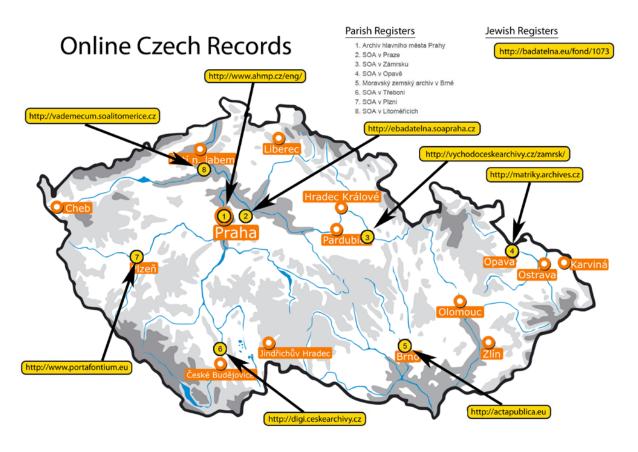
Online Gazetteer "GenTeam.at"

- Register (free), log in, and select "Gazetteer" at left, search for city, town, or village.
- On finding the place name, select the "Details" icon.
- Details page includes former names, *(1)* **present location name**; *(2)* **parish**; start dates for births, marriages and deaths records; former parish; judicial district; crown land; and *(3)* **a link to the archive's Internet page**.

How to Locate Family Records

Archive Web Sites

- English instructions the main Czech archive websites are linked from the FamilySearch Wiki "Czech Republic Online Genealogy Records" page:
  https://familysearch.org/wiki/en/Czech_Republic_Online_Genealogy_Records
  Look in the section "Available through Czech Archives" for links to the instructions.
- All archives *except Zámrsk* work in a similar fashion:
  1. A path is provided for finding parish register inventories alphabetically or by search
  2. Images are available online one-by-one
- *Zámrsk is different:*
  1. Download a single PDF of the inventory
  2. Find your parish in the inventory
  3. Follow hot links in the PDF inventory to download entire church books (long download times)

Archive	Website
Brno	http://actapublica.eu – Select "Search," "MZA Brno."
Litoměřice	http://vademecum.soalitomerice.cz – Select vital records, then "here" link.
Opava (Olomouc)	http://matriky.archives.cz – Use popup search form.
Plzeň	http://www.portafontium.eu – Select "Matriky," then select record set.
Praha City	http://www.ahmp.cz/eng – Select "On-line resources," "Parish Books."
Praha Regional	http://ebadatelna.soapraha.cz – Select "Search," enter parish.
Třeboň	http://digi.ceskearchivy.cz/ – Select "Parish Registers," then select record set. Find parish alphabetically.
Zámrsk	http://vychodoceskearchivy.cz/zamrsk Hover over "Matriky | Parish Registers," then select "Iventární Seznam …." Download PDF using the red link: "**II. INVENTÁRNÍ SEZNAM / inventory of …**"
Jewish (all regions and localities)	http://www.badatelna.eu/fond/1073 Select "Rejstřiky" and then find Jewish community alphabetically.

Online Czech Records

Parish Registers
1. Archiv hlavního města Prahy
2. SOA v Praze
3. SOA v Zámrsku
4. SOA v Opavě
5. Moravský zemský archiv v Brně
6. SOA v Třeboni
7. SOA v Plzni
8. SOA v Litoměřicích

Jewish Registers
http://badatelna.eu/fond/1073