

Finding Your Hungarian Roots

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Getting Started

Researching your Hungarian ancestors can be tricky because you need to know the town where they were living to find the records. This can be difficult because of the changing boundaries and in some cases, town names, over the years. The Austro-Hungarian Empire (1867-1918) included many areas of Eastern Europe including what is now Austria, Bosnia, Croatia, Czechia (Czech Republic), Herzegovina, Hungary, Italy, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, and the Ukraine. After World War I, some areas in Hungary in the Austro-Hungarian empire, were given to other countries including Austria, Croatia, Italy, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, and the Ukraine. Some regions may be split over country borders, so you might need to check records in both countries. Your ancestor's origins may be listed as Hungary or the new country depending on the record date and boundaries at that time.



The first step to tracing your Hungarian ancestors is to identify the town of origin. There are many U.S. records that may list the town name or provide clues to it such as:

- Oral history
- Naturalization records (check all three – there may be clues in one that are not in the others)
- Ship passenger lists (might actually list the town name instead of just the country)
- Government records (vitals, World War 1 & 2 Draft cards)
- Church records (look for clues on origins of witnesses / godparents)
- Cemetery records (might list the town on the tombstone or in the interment records)
- Funeral home records (similar clues as in cemetery records)
- Obituaries (might list town or year of immigration)
- Probate records (use to find extended family members)
- Census records (probably just lists the country or origin)
- Clues using cluster research for the origins of extended family and friends

If you need more help, check out the following resources:

Learning Center <https://www.familysearch.org/en/help/helpcenter/learning-center>

Community Groups <https://community.familysearch.org/en/group/13-austro-hungarian-empire>

Resources <https://community.familysearch.org/en/discussion/107045/austro-hungarian-empire-research-resource-links#latest>

Where Is It?

Once you know the town your ancestor came from, you need to determine where it is before you can find the record. The country may have changed after World War I. You will need to determine which area they resided in before you can find the church records. Most church records will be arranged by the specific region's archive. Many church records are available on FamilySearch in the catalog.

Type your town name into Google maps to find its proximity to other towns. Use a Google search to find a Wikipedia page for the town or the larger district it is contain in should describe the district and region within the Czech Republic the town is found in.

The screenshot shows the Wikipedia page for Čaňa. The page title is "Čaňa" and it is identified as a village and municipality in the Košice-okolie District in the Košice Region of eastern Slovakia. The page includes a navigation sidebar on the left with links to Main page, Contents, Current events, Random article, About Wikipedia, Contact us, Donate, and various tools. The main content area features a "Contents" table of contents with 12 items: History, Geography, Ethnicity, Government, Economy and facilities, Culture, Sport, Transport, Genealogical resources, See also, References, and External links. A "History" section is also visible, noting that the village was first mentioned in 1164. A photograph of a church in Čaňa is shown on the right side of the page. The page also includes a "Caňa" redirect notice and a request for additional citations for verification.

Most church records in Eastern Europe are arranged by town. There will be church books covering specific periods of time. Sometimes the baptisms, marriage, and burials will be all combined and grouped together by each specific town within a larger parish. Other times the records will be divided by event such as all the baptisms for all the towns arranged by date in the single larger parish noting the town within the specific page entry.

Start by searching the records on FamilySearch: www.familysearch.org

- Historical records – browse by collection <https://familysearch.org/search/collection/list/>
- Historical records – browse by location <https://familysearch.org/search/location/list/>
- Catalog <https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog>
- Images <https://www.familysearch.org/records/images/>
- Research Wiki https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Main_Page

If the records aren't on FamilySearch, then search for other online repositories:

- FamilySearch's Hungary Online Genealogy Records links https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Hungary_Online_Genealogy_Records
- Link from the FamilySearch Wiki page for a specific archive or library
- Link from Wikipedia page for a specific town or municipality
- Google search www.google.com
- Archion (Lutheran) https://www.archion.de/en/browse/?no_cache=1
- Matricula (Catholic) <https://data.matricula-online.eu/en/>

Not all records are online. You may have to hire someone to go to the local archive and copy the records for you. Researchers can be found on LinkedIn and the APG website. Make sure you set the filter for those who reside in the country close to the archive you need. This will help reduce travel expenses they will charge you.

Hungary Websites https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Hungary_Websites

Hungary Research Page <https://www.familysearch.org/search/location/continental-europe/hungary>

Tools

Once you find the record, you may need help reading the entry. FamilySearch's Wiki page has many free resources for you to use. Hungary Genealogy https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Hungary_Genealogy

Word Lists

- Hungarian https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Hungarian_Genealogical_Word_List
- German https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/German_Genealogical_Word_List
- Latin https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Latin_Genealogical_Word_List
- Polish https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Polish_Genealogical_Word_List

Handwriting

- Old German Script Generator <http://www.deutsche-handschrift.de/adsschreiben.php#schriftfeld>
- Suetterlin Script <http://www.suetterlinschrift.de/Englisch/Sutterlin.htm>
- BYU Script Tutorial. <https://script.byu.edu/>