

# Researching Your Ukrainian Roots: An Introduction

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## Research Guides, Gazetteers, and Histories:

- 947.71 M27HI A history of Ukraine : the land and its peoples by Paul R. Magocsi
- 929.19 M27O Our people : Carpatho-Rusyns and their descendants in North America by Paul R. Magocsi
- 947.71 P63U Ukrainian genealogy : a beginner's guide by John D. Pihach
- 943.8 L547G Genealogical gazetteer of Galicia by Brian J. Lenius

## Getting Started:

- Identify and document what you know:
  - Do you know who your immigrant ancestor was?
  - When did they arrive?
  - Do you know the port of entry or the name of the ship?
  - What do you know about your parents and grandparents?
  - Where did they live? What was the family's religious tradition?
  - Are there any family documents floating around your house?
  - Photos of ancestors in traditional embroidered clothing? The pattern might help place the region that they came from
  - **Research your family as much as you can in the states first, before seeking out records in eastern Europe.**

## Online Resources:

- FamilySearch
  - Utilize the catalog to search for place names. You can search at the country, oblast, district, city, or village levels to see what is available in the area where your ancestors were from.
    - Many times you will find Greek Catholic, Jewish, or Roman Catholic metrical records
    - If your ancestors are from an area of present-day Ukraine that was part of the Austrian empire, military service was compulsory. There

are military registration cards in the FamilySearch catalog! Search place name: Austria, Galizien. Then look under Military Records.

(Here is a direct link:

<https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/1713234?availability=Family%20History%20Library>)

- Utilize the FamilySearch Wiki pages!
  - Here is a link to the wiki page for Ukraine:  
[https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Ukraine\\_Genealogy](https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Ukraine_Genealogy)
  - List of online Ukrainian Genealogy Records:  
[https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Ukraine\\_Online\\_Genealogy\\_Records](https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Ukraine_Online_Genealogy_Records)
  - Link to FamilySearch Wiki page for Ukraine Gazetteers:  
[https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Ukraine\\_Gazetteers](https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Ukraine_Gazetteers)
- Utilize FamilySearch word lists:
  - Latin Word List:  
[https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Latin\\_Genealogical\\_Word\\_List](https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Latin_Genealogical_Word_List)
  - Ukrainian Word List:  
[https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Ukrainian\\_Genealogical\\_Word\\_List](https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Ukrainian_Genealogical_Word_List)
- Geshher Galicia: <https://www.geshhergalicia.org/>. Geshher Galicia is a “non-profit organization carrying out Jewish genealogical and historical research on Galicia, formerly a province of Austria-Hungary and today divided between southeastern Poland and western Ukraine. Their work involves the acquisition and indexing of a range of archival records, prime among which are vital records and census books”. There is a section exclusive to members, but many resources are also free, such as the town locator tool and historical maps.
- Hal Gal: <http://www.halgall.com/>. Hal Gal is a site with a lot of valuable information relating to the former area of Galicia in present day Western Ukraine and Eastern Poland - where to find records, maps, definitions, etc.

#### **Names:**

- Carpatho-Rusyn naming traditions:
  - The first born son was usually named after the father, the next son might be named after the paternal grandfather, then the maternal grandfather, then after another male relative or biblical name.

- For girls, sometimes you will see this pattern: First girl named Mary, then Anna, then Helen, then the next girl might be named after another female relative or another biblical name.
- Many families did not follow this pattern exactly.
- There is a large variety in spellings!
  - This stems mostly from the use of the Cyrillic alphabet by Ukrainians and the resulting transliteration...whether it was transliterated from Ukrainian to Polish, then to English, or Ukrainian to Russian, or Ukrainian directly to English, etc.
  - Transliteration is the representation of a word written in one alphabet using the characters of another alphabet.
  - Ukrainian surnames tend to have a Polish orthography in records of the Greek Catholic Church written in Latin because the Latin alphabet is used in Polish.
    - There is a difference when names are transliterated into Polish first vs being directly transliterated into English.  
Here is an example: федчак - this is the name in Ukrainian cyrillic  
Fedczak - this is the name transliterated into Polish  
Fedchak - this is the name transliterated directly into English from Ukrainian
- What is the correct spelling of my surname? Technically, the spelling in Ukrainian cyrillic is the only correct spelling. There is no definitive answer to a correct spelling in English - there are several systems of transliteration and it is not always possible to have a perfect match.
- Consult the Pihach Ukrainian Genealogy book for more information on names and spellings!

### **Locating the Ancestral Town:**

- Citizenship documents and passenger lists are valuable for finding the town of origin.
- Use gazetteers, like the Galicia gazetteer by Lenius, or the town locator tool on Geshet Galicia, etc. to locate the modern town
- Other tools to help locate the ancestral town can include obituaries, vital records, passport applications, military records, and sometimes, censuses.

### **Archives:**

- Ukraine has a network of central, oblast and institutional archives

- A couple of the central archives that might be of interest are: [Central State Archives of Lviv \(TsDIAL\)](#) and [Central State Archives of Kyiv \(TsDIAK\)](#)
- An example of oblast archives are the State Archives of the Lviv Oblast: <https://old.archives.gov.ua/Eng/Archives/ra13.php#:~:text=State%20Archives%20of%20Lviv%20Region,of%20Lviv%20Regional%20Department%20of> or the State Archives of the Ternopil Oblast: <https://old.archives.gov.ua/Eng/Archives/ra19.php>.
- Consult the Ukrainian Genealogy book by Pihach for more information on archives within Ukraine.
- You may also locate some Ukrainian records in the Central Archives of Historical Records in Warsaw. Search their holdings here: <https://www.szukajwarchiwach.gov.pl/>

#### **Resources at the Genealogy Center:**

- Reference books and gazetteers listed on page 1 are available at the Genealogy Center. Search others in our catalog: <https://acpl.lib.in.us/genealogy>
- 23 on-site databases: <https://acpl.lib.in.us/explore-genealogy/our-resources>
  - Ancestry
  - NewspaperArchive
  - Newspapers.com
  - And much more!
- PERSI: Our periodical source index contains over 3 million citations of local history and genealogy periodicals. A couple of interest might be:
  - Eastern European Genealogist (a publication of the East European Genealogical Society based in Manitoba)
  - The Galitzianer (a publication of Gesher Galicia)
  - Search PERSI here: <https://www.genealogycenter.info/persi/>