Czech and Slovak Republics: Jewish Family History Research Guide

Brief History

From the Middle Ages to the 19th century, the lands that now make up the Czech Republic (Bohemia and Moravia) and the Slovak Republic were provinces of the Hapsburg Empire, later called the Austrian Empire, with its capital in Vienna. In 1867, the Hungarians won greater autonomy under the "Dual Monarchy," and the territory of Slovakia came under Hungarian administration. The Austro-Hungarian Empire lasted until the end of World War I, when independent Czechoslovakia was formed from Bohemia, Moravia, Slovakia, and parts of Silesia.. In 1993, Czechoslovakia peacefully divided into the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic. For detailed historical maps, see

Magosci, Paul Robert. *Historical Atlas of East Central Europe*, U. Washington Pr., 1993.
Genealogy Institute G 2081 .S1 .M3

Finding Your Ancestral Town

To make the best use of this guide, you should first follow the general guidelines in our fact sheet on starting your family history research, and if necessary use our fact sheets on immigration, naturalization, census, and vital records to identify your ancestral town. The following sources may help you find the name of your ancestral town and locate it on the map:

Auslander, Jordan. *Genealogical Gazetteer of the Kingdom of Hungary* (Avotaynu, 2004). English translation of 1877 gazetteer.
Genealogy Institute DB 904 .G387 2004

Czechoslovakia: Official Standard Names. Division of Geography, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1955.
REF DB 194.5 U5

Lelkes, Gyorgy. *Magyar Helysegnev-Azonosito Szotar* (Talma Konyvkiado, 1998). Modern gazetteer with cross-reference indexes in 9 languages.
Genealogy Institute DB 904 .L44

Magyarorszag Helysegnevtara ket Kotetben, 1877. LDS microfiche #6000340-1, microfilm #s 599564 (v.1) and 973041 (v.2). Gazetteer provides each town's Jewish population and synagogue location.

Majtan, Milan. *Nazvy Obci Slovenskej Republiky*. Bratislava: VEDA, 1996.
Genealogy Institute DB 2708 .M34 1998

Mokotoff, Gary and Sallyann Amdur Sack with Alexander Sharon. *Where Once We Walked: A Guide to the Jewish Communities Destroyed in the Holocaust—Revised Edition* (Avotaynu, 2002). Provides map coordinates of the town and an estimate of the pre-WWII Jewish population.
Genealogy Institute DS 135 .E83 M65 2002

ShtetlSeeker Database (www.jewishgen.org/ShtetlSeeker/). Allows you to search for towns using either the exact spelling or the Daitch-Mokotoff Soundex. Soundex searches find similar sounding names with variant spellings. Links from the database connect each town name to online mapping sites (such as Mapquest.com).

Finding Records

Family History Library (FHL) of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (LDS)

The FHL has microfilmed some vital records for towns formerly in Hungary. To identify the relevant microfilms, do a "Place Search" in the FHL Online Catalog, **www.familysearch.org/Eng/Library/FHLC/frameset_fhlc.asp**, using the town name, and again using the province name. For a list of microfilms on long-term loan at the Ackman & Ziff Family Genealogy Institute, see **www.jgsny.org/microfiche.htm**. Additional films are available through our short-term loan program, or at any LDS Family History Center (FHC).

Czech Archives

For a detailed overview of the many records available for Bohemia and Moravia, see the article "Getting Started with Czech-Jewish Genealogy," on the website of the Austria-Czech Special Interest Group, a group of researchers with roots in the region, at **www.jewishgen.org/AustriaCzech/** . The main source of vital records, books of Jewish families in particular towns, and other records is the State Central Archives:

State Central Archives in Prague

Records up to 1850:   Records since 1850:
Statni ustredni archiv   Narodni archiv v Praze
Tr. Milady Horakove 133   Archivni 4
CZ-1662 Praha 6   149 01 Praha 4 - Chodovec
Czech Republic   Czech Republic
                                                             www.nacr.cz/

For addresses of regional Czech archives, see the "Gundacker List" at
www.jewishgen.org/AustriaCzech/towns/gundframe1.html.

The Jewish Museum of Prague also holds many Jewish records:

Jewish Museum of Prague
Zidovske muzeum Praha
U stare skoly 1
110 01 Praha 1
Czech Republic
Phone: +420 2 24819456
Fax: +420 2 24819458
office@jewishmuseum.cz
www.jewishmuseum.cz/aindex.htm

For a detailed listing of the museum's holdings, see Jan Herman, "The Jewish Community Archives from Bohemia and Moravia," *Judaica Bohemiae*, Vol VII.
LBI DS135.C95 J82, YIVO 15/9038

Slovak Archives

For the holdings of archives in Slovakia, see:

Jewish Vital Statistics Records in Slovakian Archives. Index to Jewish birth, marriage and death records located in archives of Slovakia, listing Jewish records alphabetically by town.
YIVO microfiche

Kollarova, Zuzana and Jozef Hanus. *A Guide to the Slovak Archives.*(Universum, 1999)
Genealogy Institute CD 1169.6 .K65

Saramanyova, Jane. *Cirkevne Matriky na Slovensku Zo 16.-19.* (Odbor Archivnictva Ministerstva Vnutra SR, 1991). Provides a list of parish registers—including Jewish registers—in Slovakia from the 16th to the 19th century. This book can be consulted at the New York Public Library Humanities and Social Science Library, Fifth Avenue at 42nd Street.

The Slovak National Archives address is:

Slovensky narodny archiv
Drotarska cesta 42
817 01 Bratislava
Phone: +421 2 67298111, 62801178,-81,-83,-85
Fax: +421 2 6280 1247
archiv@sna.vs.sk
www.civil.gov.sk/snarchiv/

Sources at the Center for Jewish History

Below is a partial listing of genealogical and historical sources relating to the Czech and Slovak lands at CJH. Many additional family histories, memoirs, historical works, photographs, and sound recordings can be found in the collections of the CJH partners. To locate further resources, consult the various catalogs and reference staff.

In particular, the Leo Baeck Institute (LBI) possesses many memoirs and other archival materials from or about the German-speaking Jewish communities of Bohemia, Moravia, Slovakia, and Silesia. Catalog records for these materials incorporate many finding aids, including box lists, folder lists, and inventories, along with extensive subject headings for names of places, families, and individuals. The Center for Jewish History online catalog is available at **http://catalog.cjh.org.**

Archives

Rabbinical and Historical Manuscripts Collection, 1567-1930. While most of this collection of mixed provenance consists of rabbinic bound and unbound manuscripts, correspondence, responsa, and other items, there are some community records. These include inscriptions from tombstones in Mislic, 1785-1877 and Prague, 1740-1785. There is an inventory in English. **YIVO Archives RG 128**

Territorial Collection for Czechoslovakia. This collection includes materials on the Theresienstadt ghetto (Terezin), including birth and death records for 1942. There is an inventory in English.
YIVO Archives Record Group 116—Czechoslovakia

Books and Articles

Herman, Jan. "Jewish Community Archives from Bohemia and Moravia; Analytical registers to the catalogues of archive materials from Jewish Communities with the exception of that of Prague." *Judaica Bohemiae.* Vol. 7, No. 1, 1971.
YIVO 15/9038

Buechler, Yehoshua Robert. "The Jews of Slovakia: Some Historical and Social Aspects." *Review of the Society for the History of Czechoslovak Jews,* Vol. 1, 1968-87, pp. 167-176.
LBI DS 135 .C95 L453

Gundacker, Felix. *Matrikenverzeichnis der Juedischen Matriken Boehmens* (Register of Jewish Vital Statistics in the Czech State Archives pertaining to Bohemia). Felix Gundacker, 2000. In German and English.
LBI q HB 1001 G83

Gundacker, Felix. *Matrikenverzeichnis der Juedischen Matriken Maehrens* (Register of Jewish Vital Statistics in the Czech State Archives pertaining to Moravia). Felix Gundacker, 2000. In German and English.
LBI q 69

Herman, Jan. *Jewish Cemeteries in Bohemia and Moravia*. Council of Jewish Communities in the CSR, 1982.
YIVO /93049

Iggers, Wilma Abeles, editor and translator. *The Jews of Bohemia and Moravia: A Historical Reader*. Wayne State University Press, 1992.
YIVO /85404

Society for the History of Czechoslovak Jews. *The Jews of Czechoslovakia*. 3 volumes. Jewish Publication Society, 1968-1984.
LBI DS 135 C95 J45 or YIVO 3/69075

Web Sites

Austria-Czech Special Interest Group (SIG): **www.jewishgen.org/AustriaCzech/**

Czech Research Outline: **www.shon.150m.com/czechhtm.htm**

Hungarian Special Interest Group (H-SIG – includes Slovakia): **www.jewishgen.org/Hungary/**