

---

# Getting Started on your Galician German Research

---

---

© 2013 Dave Gorz for the  
Galizien German Descendants

---



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 Unported License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/)

This guide is a collection of links from the Galizien German Descendants (GGD) web site that will help you get started on your Galician German research. Be sure to explore the web site to see what's available and for links to other web sites with information that can help you in your research. Here's the link to the GGD web site home page:

<http://www.galiziengermansdescendants.org/>

**Maps:** The maps of Galicia available for download, along with an index of the villages found on the maps, will give the Galician German researcher a starting point for understanding the layout of Galicia and the relationships of the various villages. The index also includes information about the parish affiliation for many of the villages. Parish affiliation is necessary to locate microfilms of church records from the Family History Library (FHL) or to use the on-line church records discussed below in the AGAD section. The links to the maps are:

[http://www.galiziengermansdescendants.org/Data/galicia\\_map\\_west.pdf](http://www.galiziengermansdescendants.org/Data/galicia_map_west.pdf)

[http://www.galiziengermansdescendants.org/Data/galicia\\_map\\_east.pdf](http://www.galiziengermansdescendants.org/Data/galicia_map_east.pdf)

The index is here:

[http://www.galiziengermansdescendants.org/Data/village\\_and\\_parish\\_index.pdf](http://www.galiziengermansdescendants.org/Data/village_and_parish_index.pdf)

A larger scale, one piece map can be downloaded here:

<http://www.semanchuk.com/gen/maps/unterschutz.html>

Links to maps available on other web sites are also included on the GGD web site (see the next section).

Not every village that is associated with your family will be found on the Galicia maps. Though there were a large number of villages founded by the German settlers, many Germans later moved to other villages that were either predominately Ukrainian or Polish. For those villages, you will have to use the on-line gazetteer and the finding aid available on the GGD web site.

In the more heavily populated western end of Galicia, the Germans tended to settled in enclaves in existing Polish villages and towns.

**Gazetteer:** A German language gazetteer (Gemeindelexikon) can be found here:

<http://wiki-de.genealogy.net/w/index.php?title=Datei:Oesterreich-12.djvu&page=1>

The Gemeindelexikon contains information about Galicia recorded during a census taken in 1900. In addition to a listing of the villages and information about the inhabitants, the appendix of the Gemeindelexikon also contains information on the school district and parish for the villages.

The finding aid can be found here:

[http://www.galiziengermansdescendants.org/Data/galizien\\_village\\_finding\\_aid.pdf](http://www.galiziengermansdescendants.org/Data/galizien_village_finding_aid.pdf)

The finding aid includes a map showing the Lutheran parish boundaries, so after locating your village, either on the Galicia map or via the gazetteer, you should be able to track down the parish. The Roman Catholic or Greek Catholic parish can be found in the appendix of the gazetteer.

Available for members of GGD are the index pages of the towns from the Gemeindelexikon in pdf format. The index documents, as well as the link to the Gemeindelexikon, can be found on the GGD web page that discusses finding a village in Galicia. Click on the “Maps of Galicia” link in the menu on the left side of the main page and then click on the “Finding Your Village in Galicia” link. This page also contains links to other maps that may be downloaded, many of them very detailed.

Additional help with using the Gemeindelexikon can be found on the HalGal web site here:

<http://www.halgals.com/gemeindelexikon.html>

If you get seriously involved in researching Galicia, you may wish to buy Brian Lenius’ *Genealogical Gazetteer of Galicia*, available here:

<http://www.lenius.ca/Gazetteer/Gazetteer.htm>

Brian’s gazetteer has additional information that the serious researcher will find useful. Sample pages can be found on the HalGal web site:

<http://www.halgals.com/ggglenius.html>

Brian’s gazetteer uses a later administrative district division than the Gemeindelexikon, which is noted in the finding aid.

**Transcribed Church Records – the Ortsfamilienbücher:** These transcriptions are probably the most important resource available to Galician German researchers, next to the actual church records themselves. The church records will be discussed in the AGAD section below.

A dedicated group of researchers in Germany, led first by Ernst Hexel and now by Manfred Daum, has been systematically transcribing the Galician church records, augmented by data that they have in their own collections. Although concentrating on Lutheran and Reformed records, Roman Catholic and Mennonite data has been included when available. They have transcribed the birth, christening, marriage, death, and burial information for over 100,000 Galician Germans and have entered that data into a genealogy database, linking all the members of a family together. Often you will find your immigrant ancestor and then you can work your way back through the generations, perhaps to the original settler from Germany. In many cases, but not all, the village of origin in Germany is noted.

The link to the transcriptions is found on the left hand menu of the GGD home page as “Galician German Familybooks on CDROM”. Clicking on that link will take you to a page where you can view or download the list of Ortsfamilienbücher (OFB’s) available for purchase and you will find additional links that will allow you to look at the index of people in each OFB or use a dedicated search page for the surnames appearing in all the OFB’s as well as the Resettlement Records, discussed in the next section.

One thing to keep in mind is that in order to maintain an orderly group of records, variant spellings found for surnames have been standardized whenever possible. The version of the surname used in the transcribed records usually corresponds to the spelling used by the family in Galicia in the early twentieth century. As an example, the family recorded as Kendel in the OFB’s has also been found as Kentel in the early records, Kändel (not to be confused with Kandel without the umlaut, which was a different group of families), Kenthel, Kentl, etc. All the variant spellings found associated with a person in the church records are noted in their entry in the OFB. The married surname for women is also noted.

Not all of the available church records have been transcribed at this time. However, records at the Polish archives in Warsaw that are publically available under European data laws have been microfilmed and, as discussed in the AGAD section below, most are now available on-line.

One thing you will find is that there is a lot of overlap between the OFB's. Just about any event, such as a birth, christening, marriage, death or burial that occurred for an individual in a village will cause that person and their family to appear in the OFB for that village. So if an individual was born in one village, was married and had children in a second village, and died and was buried in yet another village, he or she will probably appear in three OFB's. Check the on-line indexes to find the village that contains the person that you are researching and that also has the largest number of other family members (family group numbers are enclosed in square brackets, i.e., [3] ). That will be the OFB that you should start with, and then you can order others as your research expands.

Also keep in mind that the people from the main German villages, such as Gelsendorf or Ugartsthal, would move into smaller surrounding Ukrainian or Polish villages looking for land or perhaps to practice a trade. If enough of them did that, then an OFB for that small village often appears separately from the main village of origin and includes the "transplants". So check the OFB indexes for your person of interest and make sure that he or she is not an isolate in a small village when most of that person's line is from one of the larger, nearby villages. Consult the Galicia map to see how the villages are related.

If your village of interest is not included in the list of OFB's, use the surname search engine to determine which OFB's contain people with the surname you are searching for, then look through the OFB indexes to see if you can find the person you're searching for.

**Resettlement Records:** At the outbreak of World War II, Poland was partitioned between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. Galicia was, at that point, a part of Poland again, for Poland had been "rebuilt" as a country at the end of WWI. Most of what was western Galicia ended up under Germany's control, but the eastern portion ended up under Soviet control. The German government did not want ethnic Germans to be living under the Soviets, so they started the Resettlement program.

The Resettlement program had two aims: first, to remove ethnic Germans from Soviet controlled territory; and second, to establish a post-war German presence in the part of Poland controlled by Germany. However, with the loss of WWII by Germany, the Polish government expelled the Germans who had been placed on Polish farms, etc. and the Germans moved to what became either East or West Germany, or they emigrated to other countries.

Every German who resettled from Galicia was required to provide documentation on their German heritage and those records were captured at the end of WWII by the U.S. Although the Resettlement records are for Germans who were alive in 1939 - 1940, their ancestral information, the Ahnenpass, often provides information on family members from two or three generations earlier.

The GGD conducted a transcription of a great many, but not all, of the Resettlement records, which are available on microfilm from the FHL in Salt Lake City. The Resettlement records are found by clicking on the left menu link on the GGD home page "Researching our Galizien Germans" and then clicking on the link "1939 Resettlement Records". In addition to the transcribed records available on the web site, there is also information about obtaining the microfilms of the original records from the FHL.

The Resettlement records will be of interest primarily to researchers in Europe, but researchers in North and South America may find extended family members listed in the Resettlement records or information about relatives of people who emigrated in the late 1800's and early 1900's.

**The AGAD Records:** Now available to Galician researchers are images of the old church records that have been placed on-line by the Polish State Archives. You will have to deal with web pages in Polish, but it's worth the effort. Whereas in the past you had to rent microfilms from the FHL to view the old church records, many of them are now available, for free, on-line.

The FHL has put together a guide to using the AGAD records and it can be downloaded from the FamilySearch.org web site here:

<https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/images/7/7e/AGAD.pdf>

After downloading the pdf just follow the step-by-step instructions. You will be guided through what links to click, and how to find your parish if it's included. Villages affiliated with a parish are often noted.

The starting point for all the records is here:

<http://www.agad.gov.pl/inwentarze/testy.html>

The link to the Lutheran and Reformed records is:

<http://www.agad.gov.pl/inwentarze/KEAH299xx.xml>

Roman Catholic records can be found here:

<http://www.agad.gov.pl/inwentarze/KMLw301.html>

<http://www.agad.gov.pl/inwentarze/Kprze437x.xml>

Also available are Mennonite and Jewish records and records for areas such as Volhynia and Lithuania; see the starting page and the list given in the FamilySearch pdf.

For those just getting started on their research, here are the basic Polish words to know when using the web site, courtesy of GGD member John Kaminski: skan = scan; galeria ze skanami = picture gallery with scans; urodzeń = births; chrztów = christening; ślubów (or małżeństwa) = marriage; zgonów = deaths; zapowiedzi = announcements (often marriage banns), and konfirmacji = confirmations.

You can also look at the FHL Polish genealogy word list for additional help:

[https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Poland\\_Genealogical\\_Word\\_List](https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Poland_Genealogical_Word_List)

The bulk of the images available on the AGAD web site are for Lutheran and Reformed parishes in eastern Galicia. That part of Poland stayed under Soviet control at the end of WWII, becoming part of Ukraine, so the old records were moved to the Central Archive in Warsaw. Parish records from western Galicia typically stayed in the regional archives in Krakow and Przemyśl, discussed next. Although some Roman Catholic records are available, due to restrictions placed by the Vatican on microfilming the older Catholic records, many from Roman Catholic church archives are unavailable.

**Other Archives:** In addition to the central archive in Warsaw, there are regional branches in Krakow and Przemyśl. English language web pages for these two regional archives can be found here:

<http://www.ank.gov.pl/en>

<http://www.przemysl.ap.gov.pl/history-archive.html?lang=en>

The archive in Krakow holds the Lutheran records for the Stadlo, Neu Sandez, and Neu Gawlow parishes. A small portion of those records are also in the central archive in Warsaw and have been microfilmed.

To find what records may be available in the other archives, you can consult a document on the GGD web site, here:

[http://www.galiziengermansdescendants.org/Data/Polish\\_archive\\_holdings.pdf](http://www.galiziengermansdescendants.org/Data/Polish_archive_holdings.pdf)

You can also use the search engine on the Polish State Archives web site, here:

<http://baza.archiwa.gov.pl/sezam/pradziad.php?l=en>

This search engine will allow you to search for any religion in numerous towns or provinces. Again, for the new researcher, ewangelicko-augsburskie = Lutheran; ewangelicko-reformowane = Reformed; rzymskokatolickie = Roman Catholic; greckokatolickie = Greek Catholic; and mojżeszowe = Jewish.

There also is a Roman Catholic archive in Przemysl, but access is very restricted. Betty Wray, the editor of the GGD newsletter, has this to say about the archive, which is headed by Ks. dr. Henryk Borcz:

*“Borcz requires a professional researcher to do any research. He also requires documentation from the person proving they are related to the surnames they wish researched. I had to show copies of my driver’s license, birth certificate, my parent’s marriage records, my grandparent’s marriage records, etc. to take me to the point of surnames found in the village I was searching.”*

Betty has offered her assistance to people wishing to have research done at the RC archive in Przemysl and has the name of a professional researcher who has worked there before. The address for the archive is:

Ks. dr. Henryk Borcz, Archiwum Diecezjalne, Pl. Katedralny 4Am37-700 Przemysl, Poland

For Roman Catholic parishes in what is now Ukraine, most of the records are found in the central archive in L’viv or at the parish itself. The FHL has gained access to the archive in L’viv and has done microfilming there. Consult the FHL catalog to discover what is available.

<https://www.familysearch.org/catalog-search>

All of the above assumes that you know the village of origin for your Galician ancestor. For many, even that’s a mystery. But it’s a problem facing many researchers of all areas, and numerous books and magazine articles have been devoted to helping track down the origin of one’s ancestors. For many people researching Galicia, their ancestor emigrated in the late 1800’s or early 1900’s. Fortunately, the ship’s manifests were better organized at that time and the immigrant’s entry will often include a village of birth, or the location and name of an old world contact. So manifests are one thing to check, as are official documents generated in the new world, either civil or church.

In summary, the GGD web site has a great many research aids available, and links to more. The church record images on the AGAD site are a boon for researchers, especially those who don’t live near a Family History Center. And the gazetteer and maps will let you track down, with a little work, that elusive ancestral village.