

# Ten Things Every Eastern European Genealogist Should Know

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## Overview

Learn how to maximize your Eastern European genealogy research with the ten key things to know before you even begin.

### **1. Names and Naming Practices**

- Ancestor's original name (spelling) before immigration and name changes.
- Suffixes and naming practices and patterns.

### **2. Place of Origin**

- Must know the name of your ancestral town or village to get records.
- Best records on this side of the ocean to check for information.

### **3. Geography 101**

- Current vs. historical geography.
- Maps, atlases, gazetteers, and other tools.

### **4. Recordkeeping**

- Church parish registers are the most popular and useful source.
- Civil registration records (local offices).
- Border and Administrative changes (where do the records reside today?)
- Dates (Julian vs. Gregorian Calendar; Jewish or Muslim calendar).

### **5. Privacy Laws and Restrictions**

- 100 years (typical) in most countries; 50/75 years (some records).
- Limited information in records before late 1800s; destroyed records.

### **6. Where to Find Records Online**

- FamilySearch historical records collection and catalog.
- Subscription websites.
- Archival databases and other websites.

## **7. Reading and Interpreting Records**

- Languages (Key words and phrases).
- Basic understanding of alphabets and handwriting/script.
- Books and language dictionaries.
- Word lists and guides
- Translation tools.

## **8. Finding Records “Over There”**

- What to expect when you cross the pond.
- Utilizing archives, civil registration offices and other repositories.
- Hiring a professional researcher.
- “Immersion Genealogy” (heritage travel).

## **9. Leaving “Virtual Breadcrumbs”**

- Planting your family tree online.
- Sharing DNA results.
- Blogs and social media.

## **10. Citing Sources and Recording Information**

- Research plans and research logs.
- Constructing proper citations. See <https://evidenceexplained.com>

## **Articles, Books, and Courses**

- *Going Home: A Guide to Polish American Family History Research* by Jonathan D. Shea, (Language and Lineage Press) <http://www.langline.com>
- *In Their Words: A Genealogist’s Translation Guide to Polish, German, Latin, and Russian Documents: Volume I: Polish; Volume II: Russian Volume III: Latin* compiled by Jonathan D. Shea and William F. Hoffman (Language & Lineage Press) <https://langline.com>
- “Mutilation: The Fate of Eastern European Names in America” (Article) by William F. Hoffman <https://pgsa.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Mutilation-of-Surnames.pdf>
- *The Family Tree Polish, Czech, and Slovak Genealogy Guide* by Lisa A. Alzo <http://amzn.to/2q4Zvc5>
- *Ukrainian Genealogy: A Beginner’s Guide* by John D. Pihach <http://bit.ly/1k54dIW>

## **Societies**

Czechoslovak Genealogical Society International

<https://cgisi.org>

East European Genealogical Society

<https://eegsociety.org/Home.aspx>

Foundation for East European Family History Studies

<https://feefhs.org>

Polish Genealogical Society of America

<https://pgsa.org>

Polish Genealogical Society of Connecticut and the Northeast

<https://pgsctne.org>

## **Selected Websites**

Acta Publica

[https://www.mza.cz/actapublica/matrika/hledani\\_obec](https://www.mza.cz/actapublica/matrika/hledani_obec)

Ancestry.com (\$)

<https://www.ancestry.com>

Archiv

<https://ags.cuzk.cz/archiv>

Association of Professional Genealogists

<http://www.apgen.org>

ChatGPT

<https://chatgpt.com>

Cyndi's List

<https://cyndislist.com>

FamilySearch

<https://www.familysearch.org>

Genealogy Indexer

<https://genealogyindexer.org>

Genealogy Slovakia

<http://www.cisarik.com>

Geneteka

<https://qeneteka.genealodzy.pl/index.php?op=se>

**Genealogy of Halychyna/Eastern Galicia**

<http://www.halgal.com>

**Genealogical Translations on Facebook**

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/GenealogicalTranslations>

**Google Translate**

<https://translate.google.com>

**Hungaricana**

<https://hungaricana.hu/en>

**Immersion Genealogy**

<https://immersiongenealogy.com>

**JewishGen**

<https://www.jewishgen.org>

**Julian to Gregorian Calendar Converter (Ancestor Search)**

<http://www.searchforancestors.com/utility/gregorian.html>

**Legacy Family Tree Webinars (members-only search under Eastern Europe)**

<https://www.lisaalzo.com/familytreewebinars>

**MyHeritage**

<https://www.myheritage.com>

**One-Step Webpages**

<https://stevemorse.org>

**Porta fontium (Church registers: Plzeň (Pilsen), Czech Republic)**

<https://www.portafontium.eu>

**Poznan Project**

<http://poznan-project.psnc.pl>

**Slovakia Genealogy Research Strategies**

<http://www.iabsi.com/gen/public/index.htm>

**State Archives of Poland**

<https://www.archiwa.gov.pl/pl>

**Yandex**

<https://yandex.com>