



# The Austro-Hungary Buffet

COURSE 2: Locating Ecclesiastical Resources

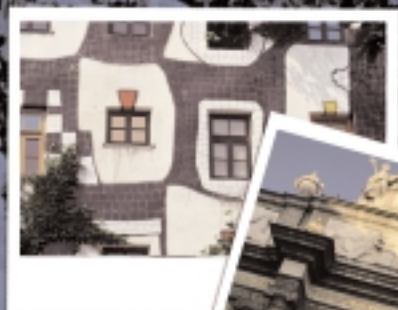
by E. Wade Hone

ONE QUICK GLANCE AT THE AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN MENU AND IT BECOMES OBVIOUS THAT ECCLESIASTICAL RECORDS ARE THE STAPLE OF EXISTENCE IN GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH. THESE CHURCH RECORDINGS WERE

often the only efforts to track vital events (births/christenings, banns/marriages, deaths/burials) until the approach of the twentieth century, and are certainly the most signifi-

cant source for pre-20<sup>th</sup> century research in Europe. This diet of deity will likely consume 75 percent or more of the total calories burned during the course of documenting

an Austro-Hungarian lineage, though there are substances of this source that are not as straightforward as we'd like. Historical flavor and "shopping" advice is certainly in order.





## History a la carte

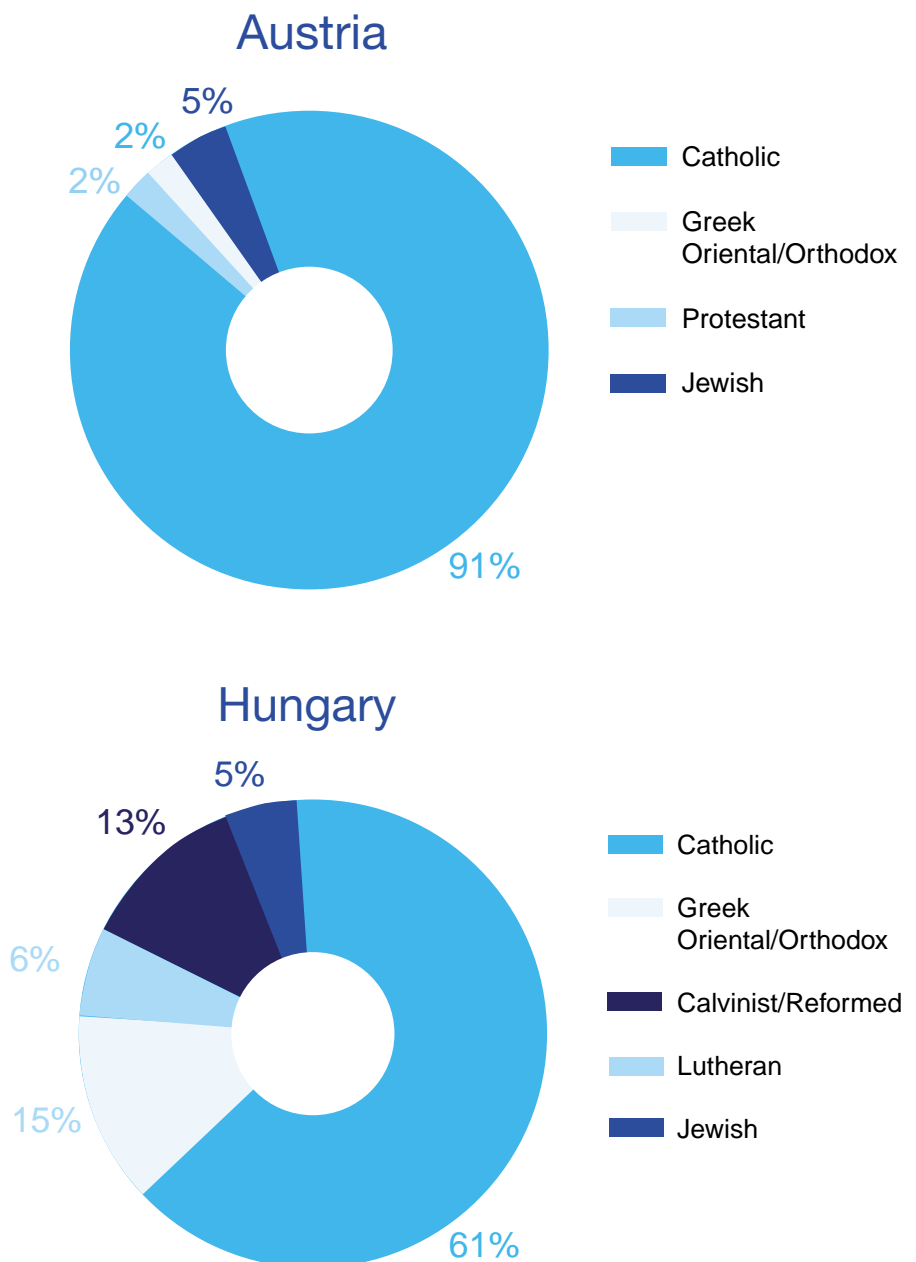
Upon creation in 1867, the Austro-Hungary Monarchy contained over 240,000 square miles of land diverse in timber, mining, agriculture, and impending industry, and housed the political strengths of diverse nationalities, occupations, languages, and cultural arts, and even managed to harness disparate military objectives under a unified system. It was an area only slightly smaller than the entire state of Texas. Not surprising, there was also religious diversity as well. The options were fewer in the Austrian portion of the empire and, yet, nowhere was religious diversity more prevalent in all of Europe than in the Kingdom of Hungary—further highlighting the personality differences between the two cooperative sovereigns.

The Habsburg Empire was dominantly Roman Catholic from the very beginning in 1276, and often found ways to integrate themselves politically in the affairs of the church. It was another two hundred and fifty years before the religious reformation of the early sixteenth century brought the first real challenges to that established and state-sanctioned theology. Protestantism began in the early 1500s as proposed reforms to Catholicism were greeted by a variety of people in an even wider variety of ways. By the mid-1500s, Lutheranism in particular had flourished in the Habsburg's holdings. One source suggests that active Catholicism, or those taking Mass, had been radically reduced to a mere two hundred in the Styrian capitol of Graz. Since this was the very origins of the Habsburgs, who were staunch Catholics, it is certainly representative of the shift by the entire empire during this era. However, that denominational shift was short lived.

The Peace of Augsburg in 1555 stated that “the subjects of any king or prince within the empire (and there were over three hundred of them), had to follow the religious faith adopted by their ruler,” a doctrine ironically endorsed and promoted by Luther himself. Thus, by the latter part of the sixteenth

century, there was an abrupt but forced resurgence of Catholicism, powered by the Habsburgs. They destroyed Protestant churches “by the hundreds,” and burnt their books “by the tens of thousands.” This anti-protestant nature of the Habsburgs created more of a tangible boundary and segregated

Religious affiliation in the Austro-Hungary Empire circa 1910.



them further from the large protestant population of the Kingdom of Hungary than any geographical or topographical boundaries ever could. Even among the still dominating state-religion of Roman Catholicism in Hungary, it only fueled their pursuit of independence.

Lutheranism started strong in Transylvania as well, though was eventually overtaken by the Calvinist views. The Protestant environment, in general, flourished in Transylvania from 1557, when the Diet in Torda pronounced that everyone should live in any religion of their choosing—a philosophy that continues even today. In this sense, Transylvanians had surpassed their peers in terms of religious freedoms from a very early period, and served as a gauge that was carefully monitored by others throughout Europe for the next two hundred-plus years. While individual communities could be weighed toward one particular theological view, such as Greek Orthodox or Calvinism, the balance of religious affiliation in aggregate is more evenly dispersed in Romania than most Eastern European nations of that era, except Hungary.

While some clergy had already begun to track ordinances such as baptisms from the earliest part of the sixteenth century, the Council of Trent (1545-1563) mandated that all Roman Catholic parishes maintain baptism and marriage registers for their respective domains. Most registers for the first century of this regulation have failed to survive except in select circumstances. It was not until 1614 that an additional ruling also directed that deaths be recorded. Obviously, the regions of the Ottoman Empire and other non-Christian possessions were uninfluenced by these decrees. Overall, records actually begin over a two hundred year span for various areas within the former Austro-Hungarian Monarchy.

The mid-eighteenth century eventually brought efforts by the Austrians to more closely monitor and control religious adherence in the outer regions of the empire, especially in the Hungarian lands. However, in October of 1781, it was

Joseph II who finally decreed the Tolerance Act which permitted protestant groups (particularly the Lutherans and Calvinists) to formally practice their faiths in communities containing at least one hundred families of that specific

An old church in Austria.



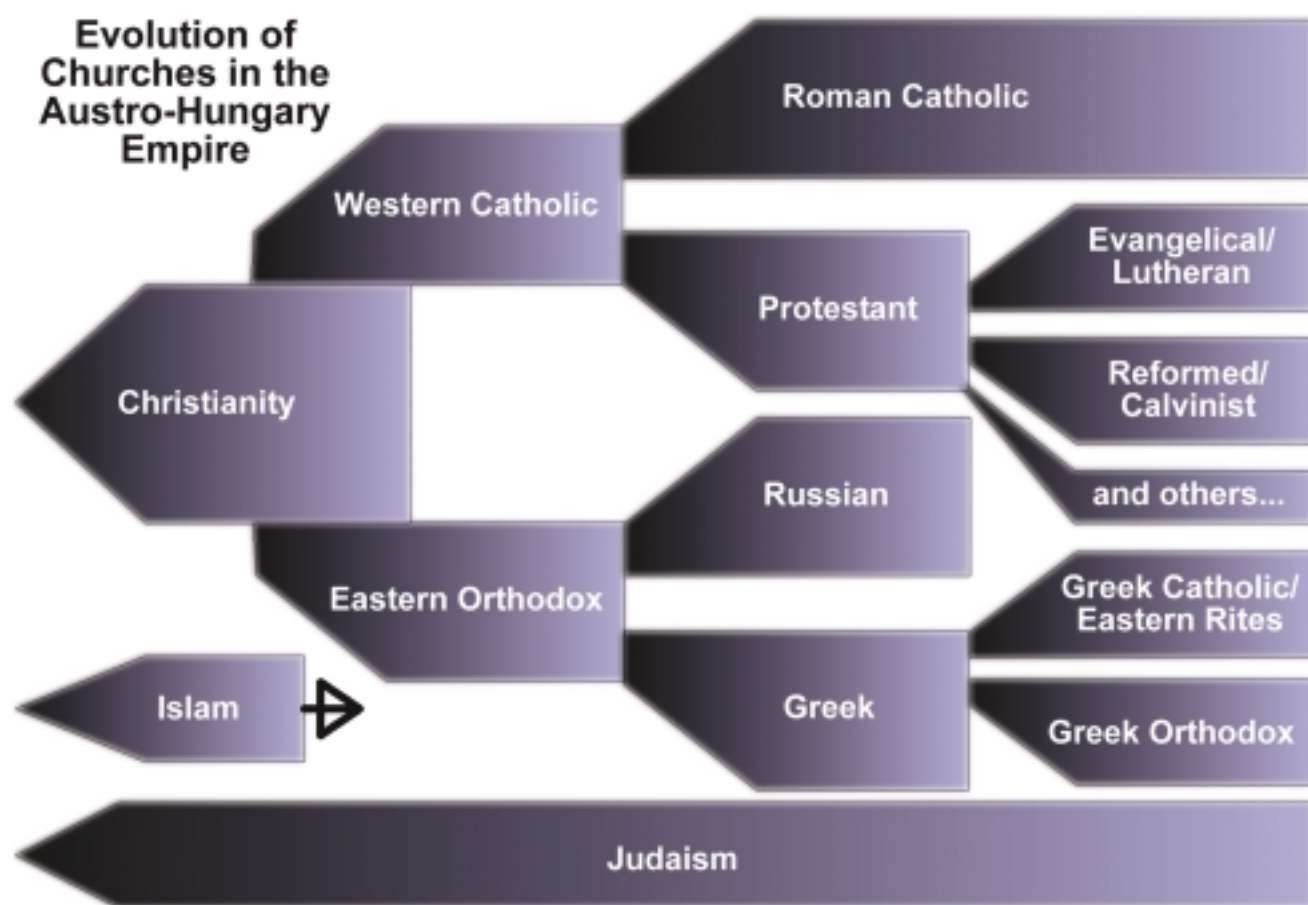
Photo courtesy of James A. Berheim, European Focus, Inc.

faith. Despite this dictum, Roman Catholicism was still heavily pushed among the general population, simply in less blatant methods. In 1783, all schools, “episcopal and monastic, for the training of clergy were abolished, and general seminaries were founded...,” further pressing religion into more closely monitored environments despite the cosmetics of the Tolerance Act.

required all ministers of any religion to keep registers of births/christenings, marriages and deaths. This was the beginning of a more uniform preservation of ancestral legacy among the common people, though there are Lutheran and Eastern Orthodox registers found for a variety of locations prior to this date, especially the more populous towns in present-day Austria, Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary.

than for a few fragmented localities.

In 1848, a parliamentary proclamation in the Kingdom of Hungary effused state-endorsed religion and equally recognized all “lawfully received” denominations—initially Roman Catholics, Greek Catholics, Lutherans and the Reformed Church (Calvinists). Though Judaism also benefitted from these relaxed criteria, it was not until 1867 that the Jewish citizenry was more fully



Church evolution chart: Basic evolution of ecclesiastical denominations, reflecting major faiths within the regions of the former Austro-Hungarian Monarchy.

Prior to the Tolerance Act in 1781, the Catholic church was required to keep the records for all other faiths in the empire, even those for the Jewish congregations. By 1784, another decree further enforced the Council of Trent from over two centuries earlier and

Some date back to the late 1600s and often are more detailed and inclusive than those submitted to the Catholic Church for transcription. Exceptions are found in Galicia, Bukovina and Dalmatia, where the late eighteenth century brings the first available Christian registers other

relieved of heavy restrictions through an emancipation act of sorts. At that time, as the joint Austro-Hungarian Monarchy was formally created, a Fundamental Law of the State guaranteed religious freedom to all inhabitants as long as the empire legally recog-



nized the formation of the sect in question. By 1874, the monarchy also consented to continually review and evaluate new theologies for recognition as sanctioned religions.

Following the dualism solidified in 1867, the Austrian portion of the empire consisted mainly of Roman Catholics, the Jewish community, and those subscribing to Evangelical Lutheranism. The Old Catholic Church of Austria was recognized in 1877, and Islam was introduced in 1912 a few years after the empire formally annexed the region of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Unlike the Kingdom of Hungary, which had separated state and religion as early as 1848, the Austrian Empire still merged politics and ecclesiastical affairs to the very end—the close of World War I. The result was the overwhelming dominance of a single religious class for practically the entire Austrian portion of the empire.

By 1895 there were four categories for ecclesiastical denominations for the Kingdom of Hungary: legally received, recognized, tolerated, and banned. Catholic, Lutheran, Reformed, Eastern Orthodox, Unitarianism, and Jewish congregations constituted the legally received groups. Before the conclusion of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, Baptists, Muslims and many of the smaller creeds were added to the second tier of “recognized” religious affiliations. Among the tolerated faiths were the Adventists, Methodists, Mormons (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints), the Millennialists and the Nazarenes. Those succinctly banned at that time were the Jehovah’s Witnesses and Pentecostal associations. Despite select banned beliefs, religious freedoms had taken an enor-



The interior of an Austrian church.

mous step forward for the first time since the religious reformation of the 1500s. Unfortunately, there remained extreme setbacks still to suffer long after the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy ceased to exist. This, however, is the atmosphere in which the Monarchy itself concluded.

## Seating Assignments

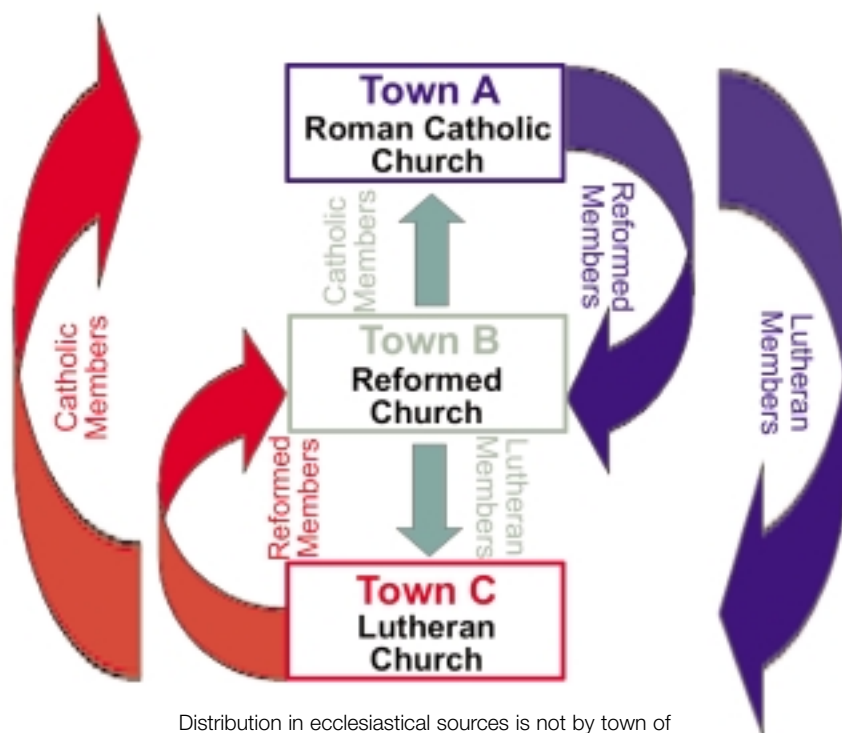
As observed previously, in the first course of the Austro-Hungarian Buffet, the understanding of where to sit for whichever meal desired is absolutely critical to achieve even a meager amount of success, particularly in the Hungarian possessions

of the empire. Although a town of origin might be known, research of the church records for that location may be entirely void of a single instance of the surname sought for. Often, however, there are logical explanations for these misleading and disappointing results.

Within each community, especially post-1780s, there can be found a variety of religious adherence. A population of 800 in the town of “A” might have been hypothetically segregated as follows:

- 438 Roman Catholic;
- 284 Reformed (Calvinist);
- 14 Evangelical Lutheran;
- 4 Izraelite (Jewish)

There may have been only a Roman Catholic church in the town of “A,” with the residents of other faiths assigned to neighboring congregations of their respective denominations. As well, Roman Catholic residents from the nearby towns of “B” and “C” may have been assigned to the church located right there in “A.” The Reformed residents of “A,” however, would be



Distribution in ecclesiastical sources is not by town of residence, but by location of assigned congregation.

only be found in the records of the congregation of “C,” despite having been born, married and buried, all in the town of “A.”

Taking a paragraph from the previous article: “The *Magyarország Helységnévtára* is a collection of

placed on microfiche and made available through the Family History Library. It includes all areas under the former Kingdom of Hungary, including those in present-day Slovakia, Slovenia, Romania, etc., ...” This does not, however,

Where the Roman Catholic population of 543 attended services.

Place of residence.

The congregation assigned to the Jewish population of seven.

- 6) Járás — *Besirk*: **Pétervásár.**
1. Aranyos [Bataj p.], rk. 543 Bátor, izr. 7 Pétervásár.
  2. Bakta (Heves-), RK. 991 Eger, gk. 1 —, ref. 1 Gerse, izr. 14 Pétervásár.
  3. Balla (Balta), [Tardona p.], RK. 830 Eger, ág. 3 —, ref. 1 —, izr. 18 Pétervásár.
  4. Bátor (Nagy-), [Firibes, Felső-Lengyend, Alsó-Lengyend, Kis-Bátor p.], RK. 948 Eger, gk. 1 —, kg. 3 —, ág. 29 —, ref. 11 —, izr. 27 Pétervásár, egyéb 1 —.
  5. Bátor, [Kis-Bátor p.], RK. 484 Eger, ág. 1 —, ref. 1 —, izr. 29 Pétervásár.

A sample of the *Helységnévtára* (place-name gazetteer).

found in the records of “B,” and those of the Lutheran and Jewish faiths might be found in “C,” where there was both a Lutheran Church and a Jewish Synagogue. Thus, a Lutheran ancestor from “A” would

place names, governing jurisdictions, population counts, religious affiliations and the assigned religious jurisdiction. The most popular one dates about 1877, and is most widely used due to its having been

include Croatia-proper or the Slavonia regions of present-day Croatia.

This *Helységnévtára* (place-name gazetteer) can be found in various repositories in Hungary, dating back to at least 1795 and



perhaps earlier. The earlier versions contain less information, though all can be helpful in determining the church jurisdictions as more churches are built during each new period between volumes. The Veszprém County Archives, for example, contain volumes dating back to 1805 in excellent condition, though some are in a Fraktur script and can be difficult to read for those unfamiliar with such print. A search of an 1805, 1832, 1850, and 1877 can illustrate an evolution of congregations as new churches were being built and the ecclesiastical populations were then meeting in new locations. Using this gazetteer, one can quickly determine where the residents of any denomination actually would have attended services at a particular time.

A similar, yet less detailed gazetteer is available for Austria, dated 1900-07. The *Gemeindelexikon der in Reichsrath vertretenen Königreiche und Länder* segregates the religious affiliation of the inhabitants within a given location as Catholic, Lutheran, Jewish or "other," and describes the parish or congregation assigned to that location for each denomination. However, these parish or congregational assignments are not found in the tables of the general section of the book, but are found in the appendix located between the main gazetteer and the index of each volume. Included are Dalmatia and Istria, now part of present-day Croatia.

To learn more about these and other gazetteers for many of the modern-day countries involved in the former Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, refer to the September-October 2003 issue of *Heritage Quest Magazine*. This issue also described resources for determining alternate spellings of the locations

encountered. All of these components will play a role in determining the correct church location an ancestor would have been assigned to.

## Placing Your Order

Once "seated," it's time to order the meal we've chosen. Menu selection

is contingent on several factors. Have the records survived, or is that particular item no longer available? Will it be served in microfilm format directly from the kitchen, or is it a "specialty dish" requiring correspondence or on-site visitation? Of immediate concern then: What are

Old church house outside of Nagyvazsony, Hungary.



Photo courtesy of E. Wade Hone.



“today’s specials,” and how long will the order take?

## Austria

Research of most church records for Austria will require on-site research, either through personal travel or through an agent, or will require correspondence to the appropriate facilities. Roman Catholic records for the Austro-Hungary periods and

prior are kept in one of eight applicable diocese divisions: Burgenland, Carinthia, Lower Austria, Salzburg, Styria, Tirol, Upper Austria and Vorarlberg. Detailed information of these dioceses can also be found at [www.catholic-hierarchy.org/county/at.html](http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/county/at.html), which includes newer diocese listings and the actual contact information for all current jurisdictions, and even defines historical divisions no

longer intact. Individual Web sites for each diocese are also identified and linked.

There is a multi-volume inventory series produced circa 1960-1970, titled *Austria Sacra*, that

A church interior in the Czech Republic.



Photo courtesy of James A. Derheim, European Focus, Inc.

## Inventory & Contact Quick Reference Guide

### Austria

Austria Sacra Series, Archdiocese of Salzburg: Hermann, Karl Friedrich. *Die Seelsorgestationen der Erldiözese Salzburg*. Wien : Verlag Herder, 1961 (FHL# 943.6 B4a ser. 1 v. 2 pt. 6).

Austria Sacra Series, Evangelical: Zimmermann, Harald. *Die Evangelische Kirche A. und H. B. in Österreich*. Wien : Verlag Herder, 1968. (FHL# 943.6 B4a ser. 1 v. 2 pt. 11a).

Austria Sacra Series, Burgenland: Homma, Josef Karl. *Die Seelsorgestationen der Apostolischen Administratur Burgenland*. Wien : Verlag Herder, 1960. (FHL# 943.6 B4a ser. 1 v. 2 pt. 5).

details church records available throughout the present-day country. Multiple authors present different Roman Catholic dioceses, with an additional volume for Protestants, primarily Evangelical Lutheran. This collection identifies the name of the town, the earliest dates available for births, marriages and deaths, as well as any dependant branches (towns) under the jurisdiction of the parish. Other miscellaneous ecclesiastical information is also recorded, including when the church was first erected. *Austria Sacra* can be found in state repositories in Austria, but only four stray

volumes of this resource have been acquired by the Family History Library at this time. Diocesan archives for Burgenland, Gurk (Corinthia), and Salzburg are available, as is a volume for Evangelical churches.

version option on their homepage, though it does not include the listing of parishes. For that listing, choose "Gemeinden" under the category of "Kirche" in the left-hand column.) If the needed location is not found on

as any other congregation was required to. Also, the Burgenland region of Austria was part of Hungary during the dual monarchy, and most of the Catholic, Reformed and Lutheran registers for that

Austria Sacra Series, Diocese of Gurk (Corinthia): Rainer, Johann. *Die Seelsorgestationen der Diözese Gurk*. Wien : Verlag Herder, 1962. (FHL# 943.6 B4a ser. 1 v. 2 pt. 7).

Catholic diocese directory and contact info: [www.catholic-hierarchy.org/country/at.html](http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/country/at.html)  
Lutheran Church: [www.evangel.at](http://www.evangel.at).

### Croatia

Archives in Zadar: Strgacic, Ante. *Inventar fonda maticnih knjiga drzavnog arhiva u Zadru*. Zagreb : [s.n.], 1959. (FHL# 949.72/Z2 A5i).

Historical Archives in Split: *Inventar zbirke maticnih knjiga u historijskom arhivu u Splitu*. Salt Lake City : Filmed by the Genealogical Society of Utah, 1980. (FHL# 1290619 Item 14).

Unknown Archive (Northwestern Croatia): *Arhive Hrvatske: Inventar Zbirke Maticnih Knjiga Rodenih, Vjencanih i Umrljih*. (FHL# 949.72 V23).  
Archive listing and contact info: <http://zagreb.arhiv.hr>.

### Czech Republic

There are many, and they are not consolidated. The best way to view the listings is to use the FHL catalog at [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org) and under keywords type: "statni archiv v." A listing of the various archive inventories will be shown.

Contact info: [www.cgsi.org](http://www.cgsi.org)

### Hungary

[www.natarch.hu/mol\\_e.htm](http://www.natarch.hu/mol_e.htm) (National Archives in Budapest) Includes inventory and contact info. Most on microfilm at FHL: [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org) (choose catalog)

### Poland (Galicia)

Diocese listing: [www.amen.pl/katalog/diecezje.html](http://www.amen.pl/katalog/diecezje.html)  
State Archives Inventory: [www.archiwa.gov.pl/sezam/pradziad.eng.html](http://www.archiwa.gov.pl/sezam/pradziad.eng.html)  
Archdiocese Archives Parish Inventory: [www.tchr.org/arch/eng/arch.htm](http://www.tchr.org/arch/eng/arch.htm)

### Romania

Varga, E. Árpád. *Erdélyi Etnikai és Felekezeti Statisztikája*. Budapest: Pro-

Print, 1998. (FHL# 949.8 X4e). Not an inventory. See Romania within main article.  
Sample letter: [www.geocities.com/gangler/letter.html](http://www.geocities.com/gangler/letter.html)

### Slovakia

Sarmányová, Jana. *Cirkevné matriky na Slovensku zo 16.-19. storočia*. Bratislava: Odbor Archívnictva Ministerstva Vnútra SR, 1991. (FHL# 943.73 K23s).

Contact info: [www.cgsi.org](http://www.cgsi.org)

### Slovenia

Izdala Skupnost arhivov Slovenije. *Vodnik po maticnih knjigah za območje SR Slovenije*. Ljubljana: Skupnost arhivov Slovenije, 1972. (FHL# 949.73 K23v).  
Con't info: [www.pokarh-mb.si/home.html](http://www.pokarh-mb.si/home.html)

### Ukraine (Galicia)

Himka, John-Paul. *Galicia and Bukovina: A Research Handbook About Western Ukraine, Late 19th and 20th Centuries*. Alberta: Alberta Cultural & Multiculturalism Historical Resources Division, 1990. (FHL# 943.86 H27h).

One of the best sites for individual diocese and parish information is the Local Catholic Church and Family History & Genealogy site at [http://home.att.net/~local\\_catholic-austria.com](http://home.att.net/~local_catholic-austria.com). This site is not uniform throughout, but incorporates various existing Web sites and designers to achieve its objectives. Individual parish contact information for most areas is its greatest strength, though it also provides histories and biographies, and photographs of the church buildings can often be found.

A listing of all Lutheran parishes in Austria can be found at [www.evangel.at](http://www.evangel.at). (There is an English

microfilm at the Family History Library, and Austria Sacra does not provide the answers sought after, contact the Evangelical Church in Austria, Severin Schreiber Gasse 3, A-1180 Vienna, Austria. They can also be reached via email at [office@okr-evangel.at](mailto:office@okr-evangel.at).

Select Evangelical records for present-day Austria have been microfilmed and are available through the Family History Library, as are most of the church records by army chaplains for the various garrisons of the Austrian Empire. These chaplains were instructed to keep their own set of registers just

region are available on microfilm at the National Archives in Budapest, in addition to the Family History Library.

### Hungary

Copies of all ecclesiastical registers for present-day Hungary are housed at the National Archives in Budapest, and almost all have been microfilmed and are available through that organization as well as the Family History Library and its branch centers. These include Roman Catholic, Greek Catholic, Evangelical Lutheran, Reformed, Orthodox, and select Jewish congregations. They generally begin



with the earliest volumes available and continue until at least September of 1895. At that time, civil registration began in the Kingdom of Hungary, and the acquisition efforts by the Genealogical Society of Utah shifted to civil documents. Microfilming was mostly done by the Hungarian National Archives, and the films have even been available for purchase by individuals directly from that facility.

Archives can be found on their Web site at [www.natarch.hu/mol\\_e.htm](http://www.natarch.hu/mol_e.htm). There is a parish register inventory found under “database,” though it is diacritically sensitive, making it difficult to use without inserting foreign characters. To circumvent this, type in any set of consecutive letters within the place name that do not require diacritics, you will be able to search for all names that include that combination, whether

pertains to all denominations, including the Jewish congregations and other record jurisdictions. Also, copies of church registers within each county are often found in the county archives as a secondary source of preservation.

## Slovakia

The majority of present-day Slovakia has been microfilmed, at least up to 1895, and is available

Parish	<b>Parndorf, Pfarre</b> (einst hl. Benedikt, h. hl. Ladislaus), Diöz. einst Raab, 1922 AABgld.; ma. Pf. (1430 genannt), nach Neubestiftung vor 1572 wieder Pf.
Starting dates for births, marriages, and deaths.	<i>Patr.</i> : Herrschaft Bruck a. d. Leitha. <b>T. 1685, Tr. 1711, St. 1697.</b>
Other locations encompassed by this parish	<i>Quell.</i> : BA. Raab; HA. Ungarisch-Altenburg; HA. Bruck a. d. Leitha; Bgld. LA.; PFA. (DiözA. Eis.); KSch. Raab; KStA. Bgld. <i>Lit.</i> : Arch. Köz. 10, 40; Bednar, MBHNV. II (1928), 83, III (1929), 4, 32, IV (1930), 41; BFs. 79; Dehio I, 367; Erl. II/3, 23; M. Vukovich, Geschichte von Parndorf (Ungedr. Hausarbeit 1951, Bgld. LA., PVH. II/a, 204); ALT. (I), 326 ff.; Rittsteiner, Klosterratsakten, 355. <b>Fil.</b> : Neudorf bei Parndorf, Refz.

Example taken from Austrian Sacra.

If the church records for an area within present-day Hungary have not been microfilmed for valid dates prior to 1895, they have likely been lost or destroyed. Exceptions usually involve Jewish documents that are constantly surfacing from a variety of locations and repositories. An inventory of church records at the Hungarian National

at the beginning, middle or end of the name, (e.g. to get information about the churches in Hódmezővásárhely, type “dmez,” a set of letters between characters requiring diacritics.) More than one option may appear, but they will be few and can easily be sorted through. Though the search is called a “parish register” search, it

through the Family History Library. Few, if any, have been filmed beyond that date. There are select locations around the country that have not been microfilmed for one reason or another. These records generally, but not always, exist, although they were not properly housed at the central repository when the microfilming took place.

District	<b>HYBE, okr. Liptovský Mikuláš</b>
Location	<b>R. kat. farský úrad</b>
Denomination - (Roman Catholic)	Farský obvod: Hybe, Kráľova Lehota, Východná
Records availability:	<b>Matriky: n. 1675—1923</b>
Birth,	<b>a. 1675—1923</b>
Marriage,	<b>r. 1675—1923</b>
and Death	
Denomination - (Evangelical)	<b>Ev. a. v. farský úrad</b>
	Farský obvod: Hybe; do r. 1861 Liptovská Kokava; do r. 1868 Pribylina; do r. 1783 Liptovský Peter (dnes súčasť obce Liptovský Hrádok)
	<b>Matriky: Hybe — samostatne vedené matriky:</b>
	<b>n. 1731—1895</b>

From church records inventories for Slovakia.



Photo courtesy of James A. Derheim, European Focus, Inc.

Efforts are now under way by the Genealogical Society of Utah to finish those locations missed during earlier endeavors and update their availability at the Family History Library.

Meanwhile, there is an inventory that identifies all churches, their records, and where they are housed. The *Cirkevné Matriky na Slovensku zo 16.-19. storocia* (by Jana Sarmányová), a copy of which is available through the Family History Library, describes each town, its district, and all of the applicable denominations extant for that location. The version on microfilm is divided according to regional archive, rather than alphabetical by the entire country as a later un-microfilmed version is. The surviving periods of records are noted, including gaps of any measurable amount, and it provides the name of the regional archive to which the locality is assigned. This designated archive is the primary key for any correspondence or on-site research of the church registers.

For the most up-to-date addresses and correspondence information for regional archives in Slovakia and the Czech Republic, see [www.cgsi.org](http://www.cgsi.org). This is the Web site of the Czechoslovak Genealogical Society International, and has some very useful on-site research tips for both novice and advanced researchers. Choose “research,” then “using archives,” and finally “archive listing” for archival contact information. Advance permission is required for on-site research, and there are limits to the amount of materials viewed during a single day.

## Romania

The present-day country of Romania, including the Transylvania

Left: This beautifully carved crucifixion statue, famous throughout Europe, can be found in the Czech Republic.



region that once was held by the Kingdom of Hungary, has only a very small handful of towns that have had their church records micro-filmed. Church registers for all religions were gathered after World War II in order to distribute “identity cards.” During the 1960s, they were then transferred to the county archive of each appropriate area. In theory, the registers continue to be deposited with the county archives when they have reached one hundred years of age. Those within the last one hundred years can either be found in the local church or, occasionally, already deposited with the county archives. A listing of these archives can be found in *Romanians in the United States and Canada* (by Vladimir F. Wertsman, see pp. 151-52).

Approval from the National Archives in Bucharest is required to research in the county archives of Romania, and advance preparations must be made. A sample letter can be found at [www.geocities.com/ganglerj/letter.html](http://www.geocities.com/ganglerj/letter.html), and requests can be made to this address:

Arhivele Nationale ale Romaniei  
Bulevardul Regina Elisabeta nr. 49,  
sector 5  
Bucuresti 1, Cod 050013  
Romania

Though inventories of church records are likely available for each of the county archives, and a central listing may also exist, there is no current information on these being available to the public or, if so, where they can be acquired from. The sample letter above can be altered to inquire of the existence of records within a given facility. There is a publication at the Family History Library that provides some statistics on the ecclesiastical affiliations of the population for each town as of 1869, 1880, 1890, 1900,

1910, 1930 and 1992. The multi-volume *Erdélyi Etnikai és Felekezeti Statisztikája*, (by E. Árpád Varga) breaks down the local population counts of former Hungarian counties now in Romania and denotes Greek Catholic, Roman Catholic, Reformed/ Calvinist, Evangelical Lutheran, Unitarian, Jewish, Baptist, Adventist and more. This will at

least give a general idea of the possible religion that an ancestor may have subscribed to when such is unknown or uncertain.

## Croatia

The 1950s and 1960s required most church records to be deposited in local municipal offices in Croatia for government identity purposes.

A beautiful religious monument found in the Czech Republic.

Photo courtesy of James A. DeHein, European Focus, Inc.



These records have then found their way into a wide variety of repositories throughout the country, including state archives, diocese archives, historical archives, district church archives and more. It is estimated that nearly 75 percent of the applicable church records within present-day Croatia prior to 1945 have now been microfilmed by the Genealogical Society of Utah, though continued efforts are minimal following the Kosovo conflict in the Baltic region. Many of the registers for the Croatia-proper and Dalmatia regions are now available through the Family History Library. The far eastern portions of Slavonia are most noticeably absent as of yet, though this region was the most affected by civil war and encountered disorganization, if not outright destruction in some limited cases.

An inventory of ecclesiastically-generated vital records for "Croatian Archives" is found in *Inventar Zbirke Matičnih Knjiga Rodenih, Vjenčanih i Umrljih*, (author listed simply as Arhive Hrvatske in the FHL catalog). Though the exact facility being inventoried is not identified anywhere in the publication, the contents suggest it pertains primarily to the Croatia-proper region in the northwestern corner of this wishbone shaped nation—the former Hungarian county of Varasdin and its neighbors. The inventory identifies the name of the town, dates of birth, marriage and death registers in the archives, and occasional miscellaneous notations. The single volume includes Roman Catholic, Greek Catholic, Russian Orthodox, Jewish, Military, and the Reformed Church, and is the only one available through the Family History Library. All state archive facilities have such inventories though they are only available through their applicable repositories. As well, the central

archives in Zagreb has inventories of all state archives, and can help direct inquiries of church records to the appropriate holding facility.

The Croatian State Archives can be referenced at <http://zagreb.arhiv.hr>, where an English version is under way but not yet useable. Choose "Arhivi u Hrvatskoj i Sveugetu," then "Držanvi arhivi u Hrvatskoj," for a listing of the thirteen state archives throughout present-day Croatia and their contact information. Advance permission is highly recommended, if not fully required, in most state repositories. Another area of the site worth reviewing, if language skills permit, is to choose "Izbor iz Istraživačkih Tema" from the home page. Next, click on "Genealogija."

## Czech Republic (Bohemia and Moravia)

Church records for Bohemia and Moravia have been organized and inventoried and are available through a well-managed system of archives throughout the Czech Republic. Though these records are essential for individuals seeking further ties to their cultural origins, almost none have been microfilmed or made available through the Family History Library. Given the difficulties of on-site research by the descendants of Czech emigrants around the world, hope still reigns that these wonderful resources will eventually be made more accessible.

The Czech Republic is one of the few countries to have consistent indexes for all church records. Indexing of the registers prior to 1802 was done retroactively at a later date and the integrity should always be questioned if the ancestor is not found. Those after 1802 are deemed much more reliable, and were assembled as the registers were created. This often makes Czech registers more easy to use than those of their Austro-Hungarian counterparts.

Each archive has an inventory published or updated at differing times. There are district archives and regional archives, with the former holding most individual parish registers, regardless of denomination. The Family History Library has inventories for numerous archives under the *Pruvodce po archivních fondech* series, which provides the name of the town, its ecclesiastical parental jurisdiction, if applicable, and the names of those towns included within its own supervision. It also defines the denomination, dates for births, marriages and deaths, and whether an index exists. Gaps within the periods of records are also generally noted. Within the FHL catalog at [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org) choose "keyword search" and type "statni archiv v" to get a comprehensive listing of the inventories.

As with Slovakia, further reference for up-to-date addresses and correspondence information can be found at [www.cgsi.org](http://www.cgsi.org), the Web site of the Czechoslovak Genealogical Society International. On-site agents are extremely useful for church record research in the Czech Republic, since a bureaucratic process is usually involved with gaining permission to research any of the larger repositories.

## Slovenia

Many of the church records for Slovenia have been microfilmed, though very few are available through the Family History Library. This filming has been done mostly by the government of Slovenia, and the quality can vary, but their endeavors benefit all who descend from this historically rich region. *Vodnik po matičnih knjigah za območje sr Slovenije* (by the Izdala Skupnost arhivov Slovenije) is a three volume inventory set that describes the towns, existing vital



records of the different denominations, and the archives in which they are housed. Volume one contains the inventories of the Roman Catholic churches A-O. Volume two finishes that sect, and identifies the same information for Evangelical Lutheran, Calvinist/Reformed, Russian Catholic, Serbian Orthodox, Greek Catholic, Jewish, Muslim, and Military congregations. The third volume is dedicated to civil records. This set is dated 1972, and some changes have occurred, though the referenced administrations are always helpful in directing inquiries to the new jurisdiction.

Present-day Slovenia represents regions of both Austria and Hungary. Those for Hungary have been microfilmed and are part of the Family History Library collection. They include the former southern and southwestern portions of Vas and Zala counties in the Kingdom of Hungary.

Many of the records are contained in parish archives as well as civil repositories. For this reason, visits on-site in Slovenia may not involve a single central repository, but will almost always be rewarding. Transcripts of parish registers are often found at the Archdiocese Archives in Ljubljana. Contact information for the most major archives can be found at: [www.pokarh-mb.si/home.html](http://www.pokarh-mb.si/home.html). This is a central site and is presented in English.

## Poland and Ukraine (Galicia)

Though some church records from the Krakow Diocese have been microfilmed and are available through the Family History Library, most are only available on-site or through correspondence. Civil transcripts of the Catholic church records between 1784-1875 are housed at the state archives and

## For Further Reference

Brook-Shepherd, Gordon. *The Austrians: A Thousand-Year Odyssey*. New York: Carroll & Graf Publishers, 1997, 2002.

Taylor, Alan John Percivale. *The Habsburg Monarchy, 1809-1918: A History of the Austrian Empire and Austria-Hungary*. Reprint. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976. (FHL# 943.6 H2ta).

Dvorzsák, János. *Magyarország helységnévtára tekintettel a közigatási, népességi és hitfelekezeti viszonyokra*. Budapest: Havi Füzetek Kiadóhivatala, 1877. (FHL# 943.9 E5d). Hungarian place-name gazetteer.

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Wertsman, Vladimir F. *Romanians in the United States and Canada*. North Salt Lake, UT: Heritage Quest, 2002.

Reingrabner, Gustav. *Protestanten in Österreich : Geschichte und Dokumentation*. Wien : H. Böhlhaus Nachf., c1981. (FHL# 943.6 K2rg). Protestants in Austria.

Mecenseffy, Grete. *Geschichte des Protestantismus in Österreich*. Graz : H. Böhlhaus Nachf., 1956. (FHL# 943.6 K2m). Protestants in Austria.

Böhm, Anto. *Katholischer Glaube und Deutsches Volkstum in Österreich*.

Salzburg : Anton Pustet, 1933. (FHL# 943.6 K2). Catholic Church in Austria.

Catholic Church in Austria: [www.kath-kirche.at](http://www.kath-kirche.at)

Byzantine-Ruthenian Catholic Church: [www.dreamwater.org/edu/passaic/byzruth.htm](http://www.dreamwater.org/edu/passaic/byzruth.htm)

Catholic Encyclopedia of 1913: [www.newadvent.org/cathen/00002a.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/00002a.htm)

RCNet (Roman Catholic): [www.rc.net](http://www.rc.net)

Greek Catholic Church of Slovakia: <http://grkat.nfo.sk/eng/index.html>

Roman Catholic Church in the Ukraine:

[www.rkc.lviv.ua/Cx11.php3?L=e&I=i](http://www.rkc.lviv.ua/Cx11.php3?L=e&I=i)

Baptists in Slovakia:

<http://home.nextra.sk/averill/bapt.html>

Hungarian Reformed Church:

[www.reformatus.hu/english/english.htm](http://www.reformatus.hu/english/english.htm)

provide a central location for research during that era of the western Galician region. There is virtually no Jewish material for that area available through the Family History Library, and there is a struggle to locate and acquire Lutheran material.

For parish register and civil transcript inventories, [www.archiwagonv.pl/sezam/pradziad.eng.html](http://www.archiwagonv.pl/sezam/pradziad.eng.html) is an excellent resource. This is a database division of the main Web site for the State Archives. Read the "searching guidelines" carefully to avoid misleading results. Included are all state archives, the Archdiocese Archive in Poznań, the Diocese Archive in Drohiczyn, and the Jewish and Roman Catholic parish registers from the Civil Registration Office in Warsaw. By choosing "main menu," then clicking on "database" in the left column, the additional database of SEZAM can be accessed. This database adds the National Archive holdings in state archives, though also includes other repositories not necessarily applicable to church record pursuits.

Also visit [www.tchr.org/arch/eng/arch.htm](http://www.tchr.org/arch/eng/arch.htm), the site of the Archdiocese Archive in Poznań. This site allows an inventory search of their holdings by parish. It also offers microfilm numbers for their collections. For Web sites, addresses and other contact information for dioceses in Poland, see the listing at: [www.amen.pl/katalog/diecezje.html](http://www.amen.pl/katalog/diecezje.html).

The former east Galician region now embraced by the Ukraine is best referenced in *Galicia and Bukovina: A Research Handbook About Western Ukraine, Late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries* by John-Paul Himka.

## Jewish Records

The obvious deficiency of references to Judaism in this article is not without acknowledgment. However, it would be improper to

address this subject in the current limited setting, where the courtesy of a more complete discourse is significantly hindered. Nuances of Jewish research deserve entire articles of their own, (See Barbara Krasner-Khait articles Jan/Feb 1999 through 2004 in *Heritage Quest Magazine*) and future columns, by myself and others, will be directed to this subject without distraction. Know that inventories are not centralized; documents have been confiscated and placed hundreds if not thousands of miles from their original creation, then perhaps moved again on numerous occasions thereafter; and, at times, other religions were required to keep the vital registers of the Jewish congregations. Efforts are constantly underway to return them to their rightful jurisdictions and preserve them in a way that can be inventoried, microfilmed and/or digitized, then made available for research by the millions of descendants world-wide. However, it is a long and arduous task, needing the help of everyone from all cultures and in all nations. I commend it, I support it, I promote it whenever possible, and my intent is to respect it by reserving it for other, subject-specific articles. There are some effectual Web sites that can help initiate your research. Visit them and begin learning more about Jewish ancestry and their ecclesiastical sources:

Federation of East European Family History Societies: [www.feeffhs.org](http://www.feeffhs.org)  
 Route to Roots Foundation:  
[www.rtrfoundation.org](http://www.rtrfoundation.org)  
 JewishGen: [www.jewishgen.org](http://www.jewishgen.org)  
 Also see Barbara Krasner-Khait article p. 97

## Additional Observations

Correspondence for most European research requires patience, and perhaps justifiably so. The reply to genealogists' requests is not the primary function of applicable agencies—they have an entirely different purpose within their country's own infrastructure. A constant repeating of requests and/or chastising the lack of response will not bring about the desired action. A global overnight/express delivery program is well worth the cost of tracking the receipt of the package by the intended party. Wait at least 90-120 days before sending a duplicate request. Correspondence has been known to take well over a year, then a response suddenly arrives "out of the blue," and four to six months is often the norm. If a second attempt fails, try utilizing an agent that will travel there and perform the research on-site, or incorporate the research into your own travels.

Most archives are usually accommodating and polite about letting a qualified agent or direct family members research in the facilities. *Do not* just drop by and expect to be accommodated in whimsical pursuits. Many require advance notice and

permission for research, and need time to retrieve the documents before-hand. Learn the hours of operation, and respect them, in both opening and closing. Facilities can be small, equipment may not work properly, copies may not be permitted, limits to the amount of materials that can be viewed are common, odd hours of operation, mid-day closures, and even staff attitudes on any given day can all affect even the most well-planned research trip. Regardless of your encounters, always be humble, courteous and, above all else, grateful when researching on-site. Never make demands, and never attempt to use your nationality or religion to influence access. Such tactics can backfire without any forewarning. A future course of the Austro-Hungarian Buffet will address on-site travels in more detail.

As is being learned, there is more to Austro-Hungarian research than simply looking up the answer. Gradually, with each course of our meal, we have more in the pot with which to stir. In the next issue, an "eating etiquette" is presented for researching church records in the former Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. Contrary to popular belief, language is not the primary barrier between success and failure when researching foreign church records. Creativity and an extensive level of due diligence is generally the key to most

Location	Župa	B i s a g	
Births	47. Matična knjiga	rođenih	(1779-1837)
Marriages		vjenčanih	(1779-1849)
Deaths		umrlih	(1779-1799)
	48. Matična knjiga	umrlih	(1800-1840)

Example from an inventory in Croatia.



successful and accurate endeavors, (i.e. it's not what we eat, it's how we eat.) Numerous examples, direct from the church registers, will be shown and various methodologies will be evaluated. We'll finally be eating!

## Correction

The previous issue mistakenly identified the *Gemeindelexikon der in Reichsräte vertretenen Königreiche und Länder* under the title of the first individual provincial volume of that set, "*Gemeindelexikon von Oberösterreich*." Secondly, it indicated

that this multi-volume publication did not provide the parish location of ecclesiastical affiliation for inhabitants of a specific town. References within this article credit the work appropriately and accurately. I apologize. ■



**E. Wade Hone** is currently establishing the Eurogins Research and Education Foundation, devoted to European and foreign language

research, and the promotion of European history, geography, and cultural tolerance, in addition to other academic objectives. He recently concluded a thirteen-year tenure as senior partner of Heritage Consulting and Services in Salt Lake City, and has been professionally involved in history and genealogy since 1984. His educational background is in world history and linguistics. He is a national speaker and the author of *Land and Property Research in the United States* and has also produced numerous multimedia presentations on a variety of genealogical subjects. He lives in the Salt Lake valley and spends portions of most years in the former Austro-Hungary regions doing research, inventory and preservation work to compliment that which can be done from the Family History Library in Salt Lake City. He can be reached via email at [wadeh@eurogins.org](mailto:wadeh@eurogins.org) or through the web site of [www.eurogins.org](http://www.eurogins.org).



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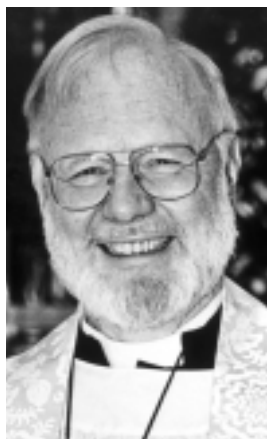


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