



Czechoslovak Area Genealogy Club of Southern California Newsletter

Newsletter Jan 2026

The Czechoslovak Area Genealogy Club (CAGC) is a non-profit, volunteer organization, dedicated to genealogical research of peoples of the geographical area formerly known as Czechoslovakia. This includes Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia, Slovakia and Ruthenia. CAGC encourages cooperative research, but does not provide professional (for fee) research services. Website: Cagc-ca.org/
Meetings are usually held bi-monthly on the first Saturday of the month at 1:30pm, Zoom hybrid meetings, in-person & Zoom at the Orange FamilySearch Library (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints/Mormon) on Yorba St. If you aren't doing any research but just want to meet some very nice people from the Czech and Slovak lands attend meetings anyway! We try to make the programs fun and interesting for everyone. We hope to see you all at future meetings.

For those Slovaks who use Cisarik's website:

You may have heard that Juraj Cisarik passed away, but his family was keeping up the website, well, I tried to find it a few times & thought it was gone forever, until I found it on the Internet ARCHIVE (it's back again today, but you may want to BOOKMARK this archive website: www.web.archive.org/cisarik.com/

Original website:

https://www.cisarik.com/0_all-villages-A.html

MARK YOUR CALENDARS:

Looking ahead to our 2026 meeting dates:

Feb 7th, Apr 4th, June 6th, Aug 1st, Oct 3rd, Dec 5th Annual CAGC Christmas in-person Luncheon.

FUTURE EVENTS:

- Roots Tech March 5-7

<https://www.familysearch.org/en/rootstech/>

BOARD MEMBERS 2026

President: Mary Shade

Vice President: Farah Takriti

Treasurer: Farah Takriti

Secretary: Mary Shade

Webmaster: Mary Shade

Virtual Coordinator: Linda McMahon

Board Member: Stacey Smith

Board Member; JoAnn Jones

Board Member: Emeritus: Frank Vogel

Reminder:

Our Vice President, Farah Takriti, has an active Bookclub on Facebook:

Czech and Slovak Culture book club:

<https://m.facebook.com/groups/667259275344121/?ref=share&mibextid=S66gvF>

President's Message:

Ahoj! Dobrý deň!

I hope you are all doing well and enjoyed the holidays! Mimi's Tustin did not disappoint for our Christmas party, nice customer service and plenty of room to spread out. A warm welcome to our 4 new members Milena, Nancy C., Natalie & Alex. Thank you to the CAGC Board members who have helped keep this club running. I was sad when I heard about the passing of two of our long-term CAGC members in the fall, John Sustacek & Marion Smith. They will be missed.

Thanks to Farah for a new idea/resource, we are trying something new in CAGC with a demo of something from our cultural heritage, Embroidery, but this time Embroidery Painting for our February 7th meeting. Even though this is not genealogy, we may include other topics like Pysanky egg decorating or cooking, based on interest of the group.

The Cottage in Balboa Park, House of Czech & Slovak Republics is still temporarily closed due to the tree falling on it about a year ago, but they think it will be open by Feb 2026. (Yay!)

Good news! CGSI President J. Cadek sent an invitation to offer help to our CAGC Group. He said he found us from our website. Cagc-ca.org. We will keep you posted.

RootsTech is coming up quickly on March 5th, it's free. You can filter for the "online" classes; filter on all different topics and I saw 18 classes on DNA, 7 classes on AI; Nothing for Czech or Slovak, but do have 1 on Hungary, Germany, Poland & Ukraine this year; a few others caught my eye:

<https://www.familysearch.org/en/rootstech/session/its-just-an-index-finding-the-images-of-records-online-hungary> (? if Slovakia)

<https://www.familysearch.org/en/rootstech/session/tracing-your-jewish-roots-navigating-modern-european-records-19th-20th-century>

<https://www.familysearch.org/en/rootstech/session/tracing-transnational-lives-bridging-records-between-countries>

<https://www.familysearch.org/en/rootstech/session/picture-this-50-image-ideas-to-enrich-your-family-history-story>

<https://www.familysearch.org/en/rootstech/session/how-to-preserve-text-messages-emails-photos-videos-and-journals-as-family-history-friday>

<https://www.familysearch.org/en/rootstech/session/practical-digital-strategies-for-family-historians>

<https://www.familysearch.org/en/rootstech/session/planning-and-organizing-research-findings-for-tough-problems> Unfortunately, some classes are "in-person" only.

We would always like feedback on our activities. We have not tried the suggestion to experiment with Breakout Rooms in Zoom as time permits. We didn't get the chance to test it at our Aug meeting due to the settings, but hope to try again in the future.

Thank you for all of your support. Mary Shade, CAGC President.



WELCOME NEW CAGC MEMBERS!

Milena
Nancy C.
Alex
Natalie



CZECHMOVIE

This is a shopping website (disclaimer, we are not paid to advertise for them), but it may **give you ideas** of Czech movies, books, music and **foods**, etc. to explore:

www.czechmovie.com/products/

2025 – REVIEW- PAST CAGC MEETINGS

Feb 1, 2025, Travel tips – Czechia & Slovakia
–Speakers: Mary Shade, Farah Takriti.
A. Gathright discussed additional tips including how to use technology on her trip to Czechia.

Apr 5, 2025, Speaker: Karel Pažourek
Deputy Head of Mission, Consul
Consulate General of the Czech Republic in
Los Angeles Topic: “Czech Citizenship by
Descent”.

Jun 7, 2025, Topic: "Exploring Food", Mary
Shade showed Restaurants, websites and
recipes that have Czech and Slovak food or
similar German and Polish food.

Aug 2, 2025, Brick walls meeting – Mary
Shade demonstrated Czech records lookup on
GenTeam.at and Slovak records on
FamilySearch.org

Oct 4, 2025, Speaker: Miroslav Koudelka,
Topic: “ABC’s of Czech and Slovak History
for a Czech/Slovak-American Genealogist”.
Mirek gave an excellent presentation on our
history with rave reviews from members.

Dec 6, 2025, CAGC Christmas Luncheon at
Mimi’s café. We were happy to see Kathy
attend in-person and a special surprise, George
& Mona generously donated ceramics from
Slovakia to attendees. M. Shade brought
kolache from the Holy Angels Byzantine
Catholic Church in San Diego. An excellent
time!

Newsflash!!

CGSI President Jason Cadek
sent an invitation to offer help to our
CAGC Group. We will keep you posted.
Jason Cadek, President
Czechoslovak Genealogical Society
International

GOT SUGGESTIONS?

Since we no longer are limited by geography we can consider speakers from other areas, parts of county and the world, so suggestions for topics and/or speakers outside the area would be most welcome.

CGSI Quarterly Czech & Slovak Research Discussion Group:

Unfortunately, this group falls on the same dates as our CAGC meetings.

Sat, Feb 07, 2026, from 1 – 3 pm CT via Zoom

Who: Open to CGSI Members Only

CGSI continues its opportunity for members to meet and share resources and discoveries. Moderated by CGSI Education Chair **Iveta Blahútová**, the format is informal, with participants sharing information about themselves, their family history, and their genealogy research, as much as they are comfortable. The goal is to have an open, inclusive discussion where participants can learn, share, and connect.

WEBINARS:

Legacy Family Tree Webinars has a webinar list showing: [Familytreewebinars.com-Future](https://familytreewebinars.com/Future)
The Legacy webinars are free for a week after live presentation.

https://familytreewebinars.com/archived_webinars_bydates.php

Did You Miss These RootsTech Classes??

RootsTech had several talks about topics that are now online from 2022-2024. See links:

2022 Czech-Speaker McKenna Cooper

<https://www.familysearch.org/en/rootstech/session/3-reading-czech-parish-registers-deaths>

2023 Moravia:

Family Research in Moravia - opportunities and challenges-Speaker Jurgen Sturma

The presentation is mainly addressed to people who are researching their German part of the family tree. It gives a brief introduction into the history of Moravia. The main sources for genealogical researchers, where to find and how to use these documents, like census lists, land records and newspapers. Moravia was a region with German and Czech speaking inhabitants, one part of the presentation will be about those challenges and the difficulties after the expulsion of the German inhabitants.

<https://www.familysearch.org/en/rootstech/session/family-research-in-moravia-opportunities-and-challenges>

2024 Land Records in Bohemia-Speaker Birgit Briol

Land records are a great additional source for family research beside the matrikels. To be able to have a look inside the books we start with basic knowledges and learn some basic words, find archives in the internet, and get to know old maps that might help us get to know the places we are researching

<https://www.familysearch.org/en/rootstech/session/early-landrecords-in-bohemia-and-moravia-content-and-examples-b>

<https://www.familysearch.org/en/rootstech/session/early-land-records-in-bohemia-and-moravia-general-introduction>

37th Miss Czech Slovak US 2025 Pageant & 30 Years of Kroj:

This link shows the whole program in Nebraska with 9 participants for the Miss Czech Slovak US Pageant from Aug 2025; they have a kroj, talent component and a connected “little sister” link expires July 2026: <https://evt.live/2025-miss-czech-slovak-us-pageant?guest=c19f7b70-52fa-42d1-b4d0-06175d8c4019>

Here are the 9 participants, unfortunately, none from California:
Texas won, Miss Czech Slovak US 2025-2026
Madelyn Karstedt

If you like looking at the beautiful designs of Kroj, this website shows pictures from the pageants:

Introduction of Parents, Sponsors & Little Sisters of Queen Candidates

Gracelyn Baumert, Nebraska
Steve and Melissa Baumert, Clarkson, NE
Nebraska Czechs Inc

Ella Ingwersen, New York
Bill and Candy Ingwersen, Ransomville, NY
Grandma Donna Ingwersen, the Vana Families, and my parents, Bill and Candy Ingwersen

Madelyn Karstedt, Texas
Bonny Karstedt and John Karstedt, La Grange, TX
Czech Heritage Society of Texas

Sarah Langridge, Minnesota
Brian and Diana Langridge, Savage, MN
Minnesota Czech-Slovak Pageant Board

Megan Moucha, Wisconsin
Linda Hanson and Dan Moucha, Eau Claire, WI
Miss Czech-Slovak WI Pageant

Denisa Pecan, Illinois
Dana Pecan, Bloomington, IL
United Moravian Societies

Kate Rex, Oklahoma
Kim Rex and Chris Rex, Yukon, OK
Oklahoma Czechs Inc

Katie Rozen, Michigan
Brad and Lisa Rozen, St. Johns, MI
Joan Smolka

Isabel Sherman, Iowa
Peter Sherman and Radka Danova Sherman, Cedar Rapids, IA
Czech Heritage Foundation

Roster of Miss Czech-Slovak U.S. Queens

1987 – Annette Vanek, Nebraska	2006 – Sarah Middlebrook, Texas
1988 – LaRana Skalicky, Colorado	2007 – Michelle Wiedel, Nebraska
1989 – Constance David, Minnesota	2008 – Sandy Ptak, Alaska
1990 – Susan Kokes, Colorado	2009 – Brianna Tichy, New Jersey
1991 – Rhonda Nemecek, Colorado	2010 – Stefanie Vocasek, Nebraska
1992 – Stephanie Goodnight, Oklahoma	2011 – Christy Dowling, Kansas
1993 – Angela Young, Texas	2012 – Jennifer Salva, Kansas
1994 – Angie Vaca, Nebraska	2013 – Anna Hand, Kansas
1995 – Edith Lazar, Illinois	2014 – Morgan McMichen, Missouri
1996 – Jessica David, Minnesota	2015 – Meagan Kurlmel, Nebraska
1997 – Kristin Vavrina, Nebraska	2016 – Michaela Steager, Nebraska
1998 – Marisa Schleis, Minnesota	2017 – Madeline Hecker, Oklahoma
1999 – Andrea Kassik, Oklahoma	2018 – Janae Buckley, Nebraska
2000 – Karina Molacek, Nebraska	2019 – Anna Tombazzi, California
2001 – Lisa Volesky, Iowa	2021 – Lauren Gerik, Texas
2002 – Jennifer Vollmar, Minnesota	2022 – Monica Pechous, Missouri
2003 – Stasia Krivanek, Iowa	2023 – Destiny Hollingsworth, Texas
2004 – Erin Tycz, South Dakota	2024 – Trinity Pesko, Wisconsin
2005 – Anna Grigon, Florida	

<https://files.secure.website/wscfus/8064267/33125682/30-years-kroj.pdf>

VA Database BIRLS Database “Fail”-FOLLOW-UP of Unfortunate Changes! By Mary Shade
Don't bother wasting your time!! I wrote about this new tool last summer and it's a bummer! They changed their policy and I received **useless** information back from the 5 FOIA requests I submitted for BIRLS of deceased veterans. I didn't receive the C-file as originally advertised. The information that they returned was the **same** information they requested on the FOIA, with maybe a marriage date added. (These BIRL files have C-files that are different than the USCIS C-files. And you can make a Freedom of Information Act FOIA request to ask for records), but I would no longer recommend it. They received so many requests; they decided not to send us the military files. ☹️
<https://www.birls.org/>



Newspapers:

Jurgen Sturma from RootsTech recommended this Austrian newspaper: <https://www.onb.ac.at/en>
 Interesting idea....this Website offers prints of various newspapers, maybe not for our relatives, but maybe we can use a similar idea for other newspapers that you are familiar with in CZ or SK?
 Like Arcanum Eastern European Newspapers, <https://adt.arcanum.com/en/>
 You can search for Free, but if you want to see the newspaper, it's ~13 EU/month.
<https://www.onb.ac.at/en/library/reproduction-options-and-anniversary-newspaper/anniversary-newspaperswspapers> **Austrian Newspapers:** *Are you looking for a suitable present for special occasions such as birthdays, company anniversaries, weddings or retirements? Commission us to create a reproduction of a newspaper from days gone and make a personal gift.*

History:

by Mary Shade
 For fun, for those of you who like history, this is a very interesting 1-minute reel if you happen to have Facebook: The Evolution of Czech Republic CZ. It gives a very fast

history; I had to stop it every few seconds to read and absorb the graphics. After Miroslav's Koudelka's class, you might see that they may have left out some parts? Enjoy!
<https://www.facebook.com/reel/1406617087855448>

Update: New Travel Screening ETIAS-Coming at End of 2026: European Travel Information and Authorization System.

I wrote about this last summer; here is some additional information (*& refresher info).

ETIAS will become mandatory for U.S. citizens starting in the last quarter of 2026. This means that travelers will need to obtain ETIAS authorization before traveling to the Schengen Area, which includes 30 European countries. There will be a **6month transitional period** during which travelers can cross the external border without ETIAS, followed by a **6-month grace period** for first-time visitors only. Full enforcement of ETIAS is expected to occur in **April 2027**.

Why Countries Use Digital Pre-Travel Authorizations

European countries now screen travelers before they leave home. These systems check personal details against multiple security databases to prevent unauthorized or high-risk entries.

The aim is to make entry procedures faster without lowering safety standards. Most of these programs apply to short stays, usually [90 days within a 180-day window](#).

In the past, visitors would simply show a passport on arrival. Today, travelers must complete an online form, pay a small fee, and wait for a decision before booking a ticket.

Countries such as Greece, Lithuania, **Poland, and Slovakia** now rely on this model. The same goes for Slovenia and Cyprus, both of which are part of the **Schengen zone** that ETIAS covers.

Pre-approval means shorter wait times and fewer surprises on arrival. But it also means

your information must be accurate, or you could be denied before boarding.

Countries see these tools as a way to balance open travel with safety. As threats evolve, digital security checks give border agents better tools to act quickly.

However, the EU is wanting to strengthen its border security as well as digitally screen and track travelers entering and leaving EU countries.

The system will check the security credentials and charge a fee to travelers visiting EU member countries for business, tourism, medical or transit purposes. Travelers who currently visit Europe visa-free are able to enter EU and Schengen Member countries cost-free and without any digital security screening prior to their arrival to Europe. ETIAS is not a visa, and is more accurately referred to as a visa-waiver. The ETIAS, like the ESTA, is a travel authorization for travelers not requiring a visa to visit Europe. Under the ETIAS, these visitors will undergo additional security checks prior to being permitted to enter the EU. The ETIAS will be mandatory for citizens of such countries as the United States, Australia, and Canada.

www.etias.com/



Do-It-Yourself Tree of Life

by Mary Shade

I was watching “Long Lost Family”, the UK TV show on the Roku channel that helps adoptees connect with their birth family, and one person made a “Tree of Life” for her family member. This got me interested, and it appears very easy to do if you have patience and watch the YouTube videos. Here are a few examples:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0fQ0wesk8AM>



Rad Creative Art



<http://www.facebook.com/groups/dtcrafts/Tree%20of%20Life>

This one on FB actually has beads on the “roots” and shows supplies used.

Cook’s Corner:



by Mary Shade

I attended one of the Christmas classes taught by Tom the Chef at <https://www.tomthechef.com/>. His name is Tom Slepicka from the Czech Republic. It was reasonably priced at \$39 and he has on-going classes. I chose the Gingerbread House class so I could see an authentic version of a Czech Gingerbread recipe and a glue that works. I thought it was well done. I didn’t realize that all these years I’ve tried to make gingerbread houses without a floor, and his house had a floor. This gives it more stability. So, all these years, I’ve been making gingerbread huts! Contact me for more details.

NEW SOFTWARE: Tree Crossing New Genealogy Tool---Intro by Lisa Louise Cooke:

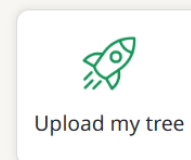
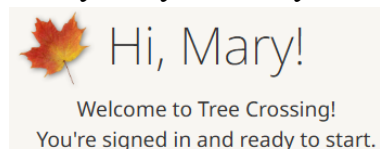
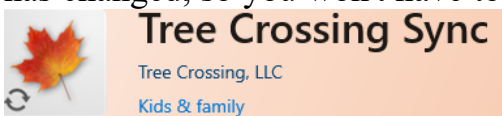
Tree Crossing was created by Bob Meyer & David Pugmire and Lisa Louise Cooke has introduced it. It helps create an easy way to look at the family tree, so that Genealogists can share their tree information with their family members. Note: the family member can't edit it, because it is coming from your own software, i.e. RootsMagic, FamilyTreeMaker, Legacy, etc. So, then you have a "Sync" app on your computer that you run, to keep the new "shared" Tree Crossing tree up-to-date. You can display 2 trees together without actually merging the data, for example, if someone gets married. Below is the pricing:

<https://lisalouiscooke.com/2025/12/15/beginners-guide-tree-crossing/>

Free	Basic	Everyone
For family members who want to view trees shared with them, and genealogists who want to share one tree with a few people	For genealogists who want to include more photos and documents and share with more people	For genealogists who want to share their trees with the whole family, with plenty of storage for high quality photos and documents.
Free	Practically free	Totally reasonable
No payment now or later	\$2.50/month \$15 for 6 months	\$5.00/month \$30 for 6 months
Get started	Select this plan	Select this plan
1 tree	2 trees	5 trees
50 MB	500 MB	5 GB
5 people	15 people	all the people

Tree Crossing Sync (from their website <https://treecrossing.com/syncapp>)

You have to download their app from the Microsoft Store. It allows you to securely upload and sync your family tree, photos, and documents. The Sync app reads your genealogy database on your computer, looking for new or updated information that hasn't been synced yet. It then updates your online tree with any changes it finds. No changes are **ever** made to any files on your computer. Your copy is **always** the master copy, so you are always in control. It's easy to sync, and you can do it as often as you want. The Sync app is smart enough to only upload what has changed, so you won't have to upload your entire tree very



[I want to create a family tree](#)

what time.

NEW SOFTWARE: Tree Crossing (cont.)



RootsMagic file
D:\TCDemo\trees

This tree is up to date.

People in this tree

528

Last modified

1 hr ago

Last sync

53 min ago

Sync options

Include living people
17 selected (0 new)

Include photos and documents
36 files total (13.4 MB, 1 not found)

Coming soon

Include sources and notes

Include LDS details

Screenshot of a sample of the Sync app above.

Group members

Choose which people should be visible to the group, then invite people to join.

✓ Common ancestors (2)

Mich [redacted] S Invite

Ruth [redacted] (deceased)

✓ Children and spouses (7)

Ar [redacted] (deceased)

Er [redacted] S Invite

Ability to control who is visible before you invite family members to view your tree above.

NEW SOFTWARE:
Crossing (cont.)

Tree

You're invited!

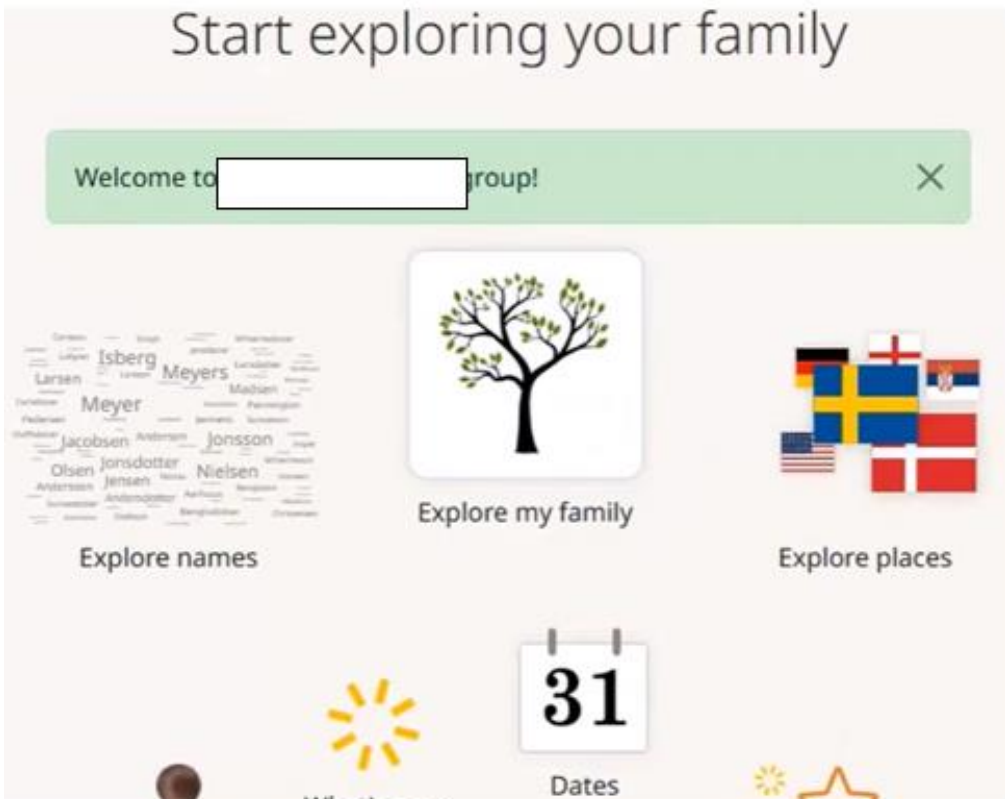
Tessa Meyers (tessa.demo@treecrossing.com)



Invites you to explore your family tree with this group:



You'll be joining the group as:



This is the family member's view above

RESOURCES: Online

Facebook Grp: Czech & Slovak Americans Genealogy Soc. of Illinois:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/2087105394887086>

Hosting Student Exchange from Czech Republic: www.greenheartexchange.org/host-exchange

Passenger lists: <https://stevemorse.org/>

Czech Gazetteer for villages: https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Czech_Gazetteer_K

Austrian research guide — www.feefhs.org/sites/default/files/guide/austrian_research.pdf

Beginner's Czech blog: www.czechgenealogy.nase-koreny.cz/p/contact.html?m=1

ICARUS church books & local history — www.icar-us.eu/en/

Moravian Heritage Society — www.czechusa.com/index.html

FEEFHS Slovakian page — www.feefhs.org/resource/slovakia

FEEFHS Czech Republic page — [www.Czech Republic Resources | FEEFHS](http://www.Czech_Republic_Resources_|FEEFHS)

Pathfinders.cz -do research, but also will obtain just a record in Czechia, have partner for Slovakia

Archives: Austrian-focused genealogy database — www.genteam.at

Czech Archives webinar: [www.Introduction to Czech Archives - YouTube](http://www.Introduction_to_Czech_Archives_-_YouTube) (Sokol Milwaukee)

[Matriky - ACTA PUBLICA \(mza.cz\)](http://Matriky - ACTA PUBLICA (mza.cz))

Austrian genealogical forum — www.forum-ahnenforschung.eu

Pilsen-Munich archives Sudetenland project (English) — www.tinyurl.com/mj6v6r7

www.Holocaust.cz

Historical Atlas of Czech towns: [www.Historical Towns Atlas | Historický atlas měst \(cas.cz\)](http://www.Historical_Towns_Atlas_|Historický_atlas_měst_(cas.cz))

Passenger lists Bremen: [www.Bremen Emigrants \(passengerlists.de\)](http://www.Bremen_Emigrants_(passengerlists.de))

Czech newspapers —

www.digitalniknihovna.cz/

www.tschechien-online.org

www.prag-aktuell.cz

www.pragerzeitung.cz

Slovakia Newspaper — www.spectator.sme.sk/

Slovak dictionary: www.slovake.eu/en or [www.Slovak dictionaries \(savba.sk\)](http://www.Slovak_dictionaries_(savba.sk))

Slovak genealogy website Bill Tarkulich: www.iabsi.com/gen/public/

Beginner's Slovakia Research: www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Slovakia_Beginning_Research

Bohemian church registers — www.tinyurl.com/gsp6ykr

Surname database www.SlovakPride.org

PODCAST » [Slovak Ancestry \(slovak-ancestry.com\)](http://Slovak_Ancestry_(slovak-ancestry.com))

[www.Arolsen Archives.org](http://www.Arolsen_Archives.org) for Holocaust

www.Mapy.cz for both Czech and Slovakia locations

[www.Arcanum Maps - The Historical Map Portal](http://www.Arcanum_Maps_-_The_Historical_Map_Portal)

www.zanikleobce.cz website for vanished towns

www.slovník.juls.savba.sk Historical dictionary for Slovakia

www.kdejsme.cz for places where Surname is common.

www.portafontium.eu/ for PILSEN records or German Bohemians (Bavarian)

Mapire.eu

MEMBERSHIP

Members receive the newsletter, meeting notices, periodic mailings from the club, handouts from meeting presentations and programs, and receipt of genealogical research assistance from club members. Donations are always welcome, mail to Treasurer: Farah Takriti. Please email Mary Shade with questions: meshade@gmail.com

CZECHOSLOVAK AREA GENEALOGY CLUB

We support the Czechoslovak Genealogical Society International (CGSI). Visit them at www.cgisi.org.

And we support the Southern California Genealogical Society (SCGS). Visit them at www.scgsgenealogy.com.

