A Beginner's Guide to Austrian Research: Using gazetteers, church records, military records and population registers to find your ancestors

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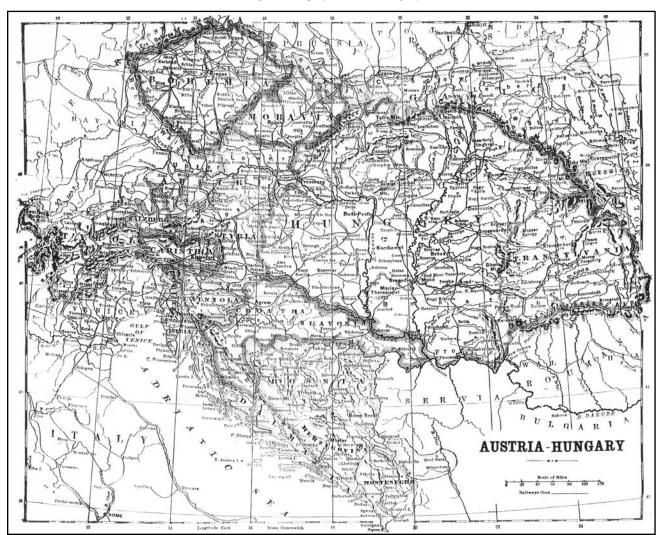
Introduction

Genealogical research in Austria is possible when you know the name of the place of origin of your ancestor. Records available in the United States and other countries can assist you in finding the name of this place. There are only a few possibilities for locating the name of the place of origin in Austrian records. The newly acquired soldiers' personnel files may be used to locate a surname within a given state. These files are arranged alphabetically by soldier's name within each state. A perusal of all states may be necessary if the state cannot be determined. Also the alphabetical index of military officers may help in locating a surname in Austria. These records are discussed later in this article. Immigration from Austria to the Americas began in the late 1700's and early 1800's but remained comparatively light until the 1880s when it reached it's peak, and continued strongly until the early 1920s.

Try to find out the name of the place your ancestor came from. Search through old letters and documents to find references to the name of the place of origin. If you can't read them take them to an expert who is familiar with languages and place names. All your other searching could be unsuccessful if the place name is not found.

Write or visit relatives or acquaintances who might remember something about the place of origin, or may have records that might show the place name. Search records such as naturalization records, passenger lists, church

Fig. 1 - Map of Austria-Hungary



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records, LDS Church files such as the International Genealogical Index for possible places where your ancestor might have come from.

Once you have the name of the place of origin of your ancestor you need to learn which records were kept for that place. There are tools available that show church and civil jurisdictions for every place in Austria. Then searches the records available for those places can be made. If the records have been microfilmed, this can be done at the Family History Library or at its branch family history centers. If the records have not yet been microfilmed, they will need to be earched in Austria.

Using Gazetteers and Maps to Find Places

Once you have learned the name of the place where your ancestor lived, you are ready to look for records that may have been kept for that town. All towns didn't keep their own records. The residents of each town were assigned to a particular Catholic, Protestant or Orthodox parish, or Jewish synagogue in the area. Depending on the religion of your ancestor, the events of birth, baptism, marriage or burial for family members were recorded in the town where the appropriate office was located.

A useful tool to help determine these jurisdiction is the Austrian *Gemeindelexikon*, a valuable detailed gazetteer for

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Fig. 2 - Pages from the Gemeindelexikon of the state of Tirol. Shown are civil and church affiliations for the town of Sand, an incorporatated town whose entirely Catholic population belonged to the parishes of Taufers and Luttach

Background

Austria was subject to numerous boundary changes and political alignments throughout the history of Europe. For centuries Austria was part of the Old German Empire. It came into its own at the demise of the German Empire in 1806. The Austrian Empire existed until 1867 when it became known as the Austro-Hungarian Empire (or Dual Monarchy of Austria-Hungary), which lasted until the end of World War I in 1918. At times it contained all or part of the present countries of Austria, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Poland, the Ukraine, Croatia, Slovenia, Serbia, Romania and Italy. that outlines each of the fourteen states of the Austria portion of the Austro-Hungarian Empire that existed from 1867 to 1918.

• Gemeindelexikon der im Reichsrate vertretenen Königreiche und Länder bearbeitet auf Grund der Ergebnisse der Volkszählung vom 31. Dezember 1900. Wien : K.K. Hof- und Staatsdruckerei, 1905-1908. 14 v. (FHL microfilm # 1187925 items 2-4 [Niederösterreich, Oberösterreich, Salzburg], 1187926 [Steiermark, Kärnten, Krain, Küstenland, Tirol, Vorarlberg]; #1187927 [Böhmen, Schlesien], #1187928 items 1-3 [Galizien, Bukowina, Dalmatien], #924736 item 1 [Mähren]). Each volume is indexed. The main section of each *Gemeindelexikon* volume shows every town within the state, and which towns had churches or synagogues. A section in the back shows Roman Catholic jurisdictions for every town. The volumes for Galizien, Bukowina and Dalmatien also show Greek Catholic, Orthodox and/or Jewish jurisdictions. Population data are given for each town. The *Gemeindelexikon* are used for the form and spellings of names in the *Family History Library Catalog*. Often place names are shown in more than one language in these gazetteers.

A corresponding gazetteer for 1900 with an alphabetical index for the entire Austria portion of the Austro-Hungarian Empire of 1867-1918 is as follows. Use this gazetteer to find in which state your place belonged:

• Allgemeines Ortschaften-Verzeichniss der im Reichsrathe vertretenen Königreiche und Länder nach den Ergebnissen der Volkszählung vom 31. December 1900. Wien : Alfred Hölder, 1902. (FHL microfilm #1186712 item 1).

"Mayerhofer's" is another gazetteer that shows religious jurisdictions for the entire Austro-Hungarian empire. It shows the location of all Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox parishes and Jewish synagogues, and affiliated towns that belonged to each office. Included are Hungary, Bosnia and Hercegovina:

• Mayerhofer, Hans. Oesterreich-ungarisches Orts-Lexikon; enthaltend die Pfarrorte, Cultusgemeinden und Filialen aller Confessionen Oesterreich-Ungarns, Bosniens, und der Herzegowina. Wien : Carl Fromme, 1896. 906 p. (FHL microfilm #1256324 item 4).

"Raffelsperger's" is a gazetteer of the Austrian Empire that existed from 1806 to 1866. It shows all towns in the Empire in one alphabetical sequence, and designates which towns had parish churches and other data. A drawback is that place names are often not spelled consistently, and may be difficult to find in this old and very large gazetteer. Hungary is included:

• Raffelsperger, Franz. *Allgemeines geographischstatistisches Lexikon aller österreichischen Staaten.* Wien : K.K. Typo-Geographischen Kunstanstalt, 1845-1853. 9 vols. (FHL microfilm #1187928 item 4 - 1187933)

Dvorzsák's excellent gazetteer covers the Hungarian portion of the Austro-Hungarian Empire of 1867-1918 except for Croatia-Slavonia. It shows church jurisdictions for every denomination in every town. It has a complete index. Often applicable German, Romanian and/or Slovak place names are indicated:

• Dvorzsák, Johann. *Magyarország Helységnévtára* = *Orts-Lexikon von Ungarn*. Budapest: Verlag Havi Füzelek, 1881. 2 v. (FHL microfilm #599564 item 3, #973041).

A gazetteer of the kingdom of Hungary prior to the World War I which includes a section for Croatia-Slavonia is the following. This gazetteer shows which towns had parishes and civil registry offices, but does not show church jurisdictions for every town. Hungarian and Croatian place name equivalents are indicated: • *A Magyar Szent Korona Országainak Helységnévtára 1913.* Budapest : Pesti Könyvnyomda-Részvény-Társzág, 1913. 1,712 p.

A standard gazetteer of modern Austria is the following: • Ortsverzeichnis von Österreich, bearbeitet auf Grund der Ergebnisse der Volkszählung vom 21. März 1961. Wien: Österreichisches Statistisches Zentralamt, 1965. 565 p. (FHL microfilm #1181555 item 7).

Detailed maps of the Austro-Hungarian Empire are the following:

• *Militär-Landesaufnahme und Spezialkarte der österreichisch-ungarischen Monarchie*. Wien: Militärgeographisches Institut, 1879-1928. Scale 1:75,000. 600 maps. (FHL microfilm #1045395).

More convenient are the maps of Central Europe which include Austria:

• Generalkarte von Mitteleuropa. Scale 1:200,000. Wien: Bundesamt für Eich- und Vermessungswesen, 1889-1967. Scale 1:100,000. 249 maps. (FHL microfilm #1181580 item 1).

Using Church Directories

For a description of the available parish registers for modern Austria see the inventories published in the following series. The volumes are arranged by diocese or other church designation:

• Austria sacra; II Bd. Quellen und Literaturkunde zur österreichischen Kirchengeschichte. 1960- . 12 v. (v.1 General; v.2 Erzdiözese Wien; v. 3. Diözese St. Pölten; v.4. Diözese Linz; v.5. Diözese Eisenstadt/Burgenland; v. 6. Erzdiözese Salzburg; v.7. Diözese Gurk; v.8. Diözese Graz-Seckau; v.9. Diözese Brixen/Innsbruck-Feldkirch; v.10. Orden, Klöster, und Spitäler; v.11.1. Ev. Kirche A. und H.B.; v.11.2. Die Andere staatlich anerkannten christlichen Gemeinschaften; v.12. Register.

For further information on parish registers see also:

• W. Bergmann, "Alter der Matriken in den österreichischen Kronländern", in: Archiv für Stamm- und Wappenkunde 8 (1907/08), p. 35. [Age of registers in the Austrian crownlands].

• Hans Jäger-Sunstenau, "*Das Matrikenwesen in Österreich*," in : *Adler* (1948), p. 157-164. [Discussion of parish registers in Austria].

• Alfred Lorenz, "*Das Matrikenwesen in Österreich*," in: *Monatsblatt der Heraldischen Gesellschaft Adler V* (1901-1905), p. 270. [Discussion of parish registers in Austria].

For local coverage of parish registers and other records see the following.

Banat (Region under Turkey 1552-, Austria 1718-, Hungary 1779-, Austria 1849-, Hungary 1860-;divided between Romania and Yugoslavia-Voivodina 1918). For a description of church records in the Banat see:

• Josef Schmidt. *Die Banater Kirchenbücher*. Stuttgart : Institute für Auslandsbeziehungen, 1979. 67 p. [Church records of Banat].

• *"Banater Kirchenbücher,"* in : *Das Standesamt* 5 (1952), p. 119. [Church records of Banat].

Carinthia (Kärnten):

• Ernst Samonigg, "Überblick über die Pfarrmatriken in Kärnten," in: Blätter für österreichische Familienkunde 11 (1937), p. 29- . [Overview of the parish registers of Carinthia]. (FHL microfilm #1125017 item 17).

Lower Austria (Niederösterreich):

• Gustav Schuster, *Die Matrikenbestände der römischkatholischen Pfarren Niederösterreichs und Wien*, 1937. Also in: *Unsere Ahnen*, 1935, Folge 3, 1936/37, 52 p. [Registers of parishes in Lower Austria and Vienna]. (FHL microfilm #1183572 item 2.

Upper Austria (Oberösterreich):

• G. Grüll, "Die oberösterreichischen (katholischen) Pfarrmatriken," in: Monatsblatt der Heraldisch-Genealogischen Gesellschaft Adler X (1926-1930), p. 486-491, XI (1931-1934), p. 167. [Catholic parish registers in Upper Austria].

• Georg Kuhr/Carl Seidel, "*Oberösterreichische Kirchenbücher in Listen*," in: *Blätter für fränkische Familienkunde* 11, 8 (1982), p. 333-335, 10 (1983), p. 445-447. [Parish registers in Upper Austria].

Salzburg

• Rolf Farnsteiner, *"Kirchenbuchforschungen im Salzburgischen,"* in: *Altpreußische Geschlechterkunde* N.F. 2 (1954), p. 4 *seq.* [Research in parish registers of Salzburg].

<u>**Transylvania**</u> (Siebenbürgen, Erlely). For a description of Protestant records in Transylvania see:

• Gustav Arz, *Die Matrikeln der evangelischen Gemeinden A.B. in Siebenbürgen.* Berlin, 1939. 43 p. [Registers of Protestant parishes in Transylvania]. (FHL microfilm # 496720 item 2).

• Alfred Csallner, "Die Matrikeln und Familienbücher der Siebenbürgisch-Sächsischen Kirche," in: Sippenkunde des Deutschtums im Ausland 3 (1938), p. 43-53. [Parish registers and family books of the Saxon-Transylvanian Church].

Styria (Steiermark):

• Konrad Brandner, "Überblick über die Pfarrmatrikel in Steiermark," in: Blätter für österreichische Familienkunde 1 (1926), p. 18; 2 (1927), p. 41- ; 2 (1928), p. 11; 3 (1929), p. 10, 37. [Overview of the parish registers of Styria]. (FHL microfilm #1125017 item 15-17).

<u>Sudeten</u> (border areas of Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia; included many Germans; part of Czechoslovakia):

• *"Verzeichnung der Kirchenbücher,"* in: *Sudetendeutsche Familienforschung* 1 (1928/29), p. 21-, 64, 173. [List of parish registers of the Sudeten]. (FHL microfilm #896821 item 1).

• Heinrich Ankert, "*Die Matriken der altkatholischen Gemeinden Nordböhmens*," in: *Sudetendeutsche Familienforschung* 4 (1931), p. 65. [The parish registers of the Old Catholic parishes in North Bohemia]. (FHL microfilm #896821 item 4).

• Erhard Marschner, "*Die Kirchenbücher des nördlichsten Böhmen*," in: *Ostdeutsche Familienkunde* II, 6-9 (1958-1961), p. 241-243, 308. [Parish registers of northernmost Bohemia].

• Hans K. Puhrer, "*Die Matrikenbestände der an Niederdonau angegliederten Gebiete von Böhmen und Mähren*," in: *Adler* 2 (1940), p. 12-14, 76-77. [Metrical registers of the Sudeten parishes]. (FHL microfilm #1505988 item 9.

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Fig. 3 - Latin baptismal register showing name, day, hour, town, house number of event; parents, godparents of child

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Fig. 4 - German language death record for the parish of Altschwendt in Upper Austria, 1893. Column headings list from left to right: death and burial year, month and day; place and house number; name, condition, residence, birth place, parents of those under 24, name of spouse, religion, last rites, age and birth date, burial place, priest

Hans Swoboda, "Böhmens Matrikenbestände," in: Die Matrikel 1 (1935), p. 24-35, 43-47, 51-52, 55, 79; 2 (1936),
H. 3, Beilage, p. 1-4. [Bohemian parish registers].

• Julius Röder, "*Das Diözesan-Matrikenarchiv zu Olmütz*," in: *Sudetendeutsche Familienforschung* 2 (1930), p. 7-12, 122-126, 153-156. [Registers of the diocese of Olmütz]. (FHL microfilm #896821 item 2).

<u>Tirol</u>

• Wilfried Beimrohr, "Die Matriken (Personenstantsbücher) der Diözese Innsbruck und des Tiroler Anteils der Erzdiözese Salzburg," in: Tiroler Geschichtsquellen 17 (1987), 175 p. [Parish registers of Tirol in the Dioceses of Innsbruck and Salzburg].

Church records

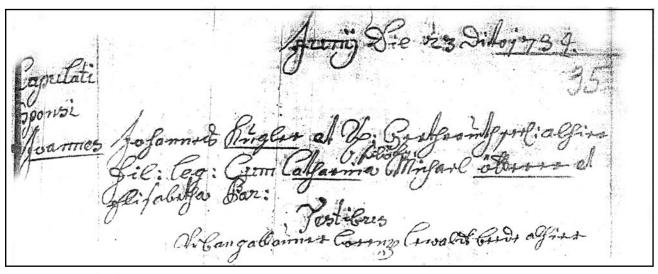
Original Church records for Austria are the most important sources for locating genealogical information on your ancestors, and for extending your pedigree. Good collections of parish registers have been filmed in Tirol and Vorarlberg. Limited filming has taken place in other areas including Lower and Upper Austria.

After locating the appropriate parish and its records, searches of baptismal or birth entries, marriage entries, and death entries for your ancestors in the available records is possible. Linking ancestors from one generation to the next is possible when direct evidence is available, such as the listing of parents names in the marriage record. With this important link, it is more likely that the actual birth record of your ancestor can be determined from among the large number of possible birth records for a particular name. Often the extraction of every entry for a particular surname is necessary to ensure that proper connections are made.

Military Records of the Austrian Empire

The *FEEFHS Journal*, v. 9 (2001), p. 72-82 contains an introduction to military records of significance in Austria. The following records may be useful to supplement and enhance your search of the parish registers.

Fig. 5 - Latin marriage record from the parish of Grossgöttfritz in Lower Austria, 1734. Recorded are the bride and groom and their places of residence. Sometimes the bride's father is also mentioned



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The major collections in the Vienna War Archives have been microfilmed and are available in the Family History Library and Family History Centers. Indexes to some of the records are available, particularly if your ancestor happens to be an officer, staff member or official. Approximately 10% of soldiers were officers. Enlisted men can be located when the name of the regiment or military unit, or place of recruitment can be discovered.

Major Collections of Significance

<u>Background sheets</u> (*Grundbuchblätter*), 1780-1930. 616 rolls of film. Personnel sheets of soldiers born within the states of the modern Republic of Austria during the years 1800-1864. Includes Vienna (Wien), Lower Austria (Niederösterreich), Upper Austria (Oberösterreich), Styria (Steiermark), Carinthia (Kärnten), Salzburg, Tirol, and Vorarlberg. Sheets are arranged alphabetically by surname within each state. A list of the film numbers was included in the *FEEFHS Journal*, v. 9 (2001), p. 77-79. Documents show year of birth, place of birth, religion, occupation and record of service. Parents' or spouses' names or other family relationships are generally not listed.

<u>Muster rolls and formation tables</u> (*Musterlisten und Standestabellen*), 1740-1820. 5,104 rolls of film. These records are filed and cataloged by the name of the regiment or unit. Most regiments have individual indexes, but there is no general index for all units. Information for each soldier includes name, age, birthplace, religion, occupation, and marital status. Occasionally children's names and birth dates, and spouse's names are given.

Background and formation lists (*Grundbücher und Stellungslisten*), 1820-1869. 2,884 rolls of film. These are arranged and cataloged by the name of the regiment. Each regiment or unit has its own name index and is arranged by date of mustering out. Information for each soldier includes name, age, birthplace, religion, occupation and marital status. Occasionally children's or spouse's names are given.

<u>Officers' service records</u> (*Dienstbeschreibungen und Qualifikationslisten*), 1823-1918. 3,408 rolls of film. These records are filed alphabetically and supplement the muster and background books with more complete information concerning the actual service of each officer, official or staff. These records give the exact birth dates and special duties and other events noted. Some information about parentage is occasionally given as well as the units in which the officer served.

Officers index (Kartei für Musterlisten und Standestabellen), 1740-1820. 29 rolls of film. An alphabetical file of officers' names showing the regimental unit numbers in the muster lists.

<u>Military church records</u> (*Militärkirchenbücher*). 1654-1922. 551 rolls of film. Church records were kept for each

Map	State	Population	Ger	Cze	Hun	Pol	Rut	Rom	<u>SCr</u>	Slo	<u>Ita</u>	Oth
14-50	Böhmen	5,560,819	37	62	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
26-48	Bukowina	571,671	22	-	1	4	41	31	-	2	2	1
16-44	Dalmatien	476,101	1	-	-	-	-	-	93	1	3	2
23-50	Galizien	5,958,907	3	-	1	54	42	-	-	-	-	-
14-47	Kärnten	348,730	73	-	-	-		-	-	25	2	
15-46	Krain	481,243	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	93	1	-
14-45	Küstenland	647,934	5	-	1	-	-	-	20	29	45	-
17-49	Mähren	2,153,407	28	71	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
16-48	Niederösterreich	2,330,621	91	4	4	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
14-48	Oberösterreich	759,620	98	1	-	2	-	2	2	1	2	2
13-47	Salzburg	163,570	96	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	-
18-50	Schlesien	565,475	45	22	1	32	-	7	-	-	-	-
15-47	Steiermark	1,213,597	67	-	2	-	-	-	1	30	-	-
11-47	Tirol	805,176	55	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	44	1
10-47	Vorarlberg	107,373	93	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	1
	Austria	22,144,244	36	23	1	16	12	1	3	5	3	-
21-47	Hungary	13,749,600	26	14	39	-	4	10	6	-	-	1
	Austria-Hungary	35,893,844	32	20	16	10	9	4	4	3	2	-

Table 1 - Language preference of the states of Austria-Hungary in 1880

military unit, hospital and garrison. They are cataloged under the name of the unit and by location where the unit was stationed if applicable. These records contain mostly death records, but a surprising number of births and marriages were also recorded. Only volumes that did not extend past 1886 have been microfilmed.

<u>Military church records directory</u> (*Militär-Matriken-Index*) 1740-1922. 5 rolls of film. Index of regiments, units, hospitals, alternate names, and places where the military parishes were stationed or garrisoned. Shows dates of the available records, names of regiments and names of places. Film numbers 1442862-1442866 item 1.

An essential guide to determining the name of the regiment in which a soldier served was shown in the *FEEFHS Journal* v. 9 (2001), p. 80. This guide shows the location where each regiment was recruiting throughout Austria.

City Population Registers

Records significant for the entire country as well as for the capital city of Vienna are the population registers and family registers. A discussion of these records appeared in the *FEEFHS Journal*, v. 8 (2000), p. 69-73. Population registers for a number of cities have been microfilmed and are available. In addition to Vienna, the following cities have been microfilmed: Graz, Krems an der Donau, Linz, Salzburg, Sankt Pölten, and Urfahr. Film numbers for these records appear in the current *Family History Library Catalog* under the name of the city followed by the subject heading "Population."

These records serve as a substitute for civil registration, which did not begin in Austria until 1938. These records begin in the early 1800s and extend into the 1900s. The arrangement is alphabetical, although often males and females are filed in separate sequences. Records include names, birth dates and places, parents' names, residence, spouse and children's names. In Vienna there are two series of records. One for individuals, and a second series which includes entire families. For Vienna alone there are several thousand rolls of microfilm.

Vienna death records are another valuable source of general information. These are contained on over 800 rolls of microfilm and cover the years 1648-1920. These are arranged alphabetically by year of death and show names, date and place of death, residence, age, spouse's name, sometimes parent's names.

	Eastern Orthodox, Jews, Other.										
Map	State	Population	Cath.	Prot.	Orth.	Jews	Other				
14-50	Böhmen	5,560,819	96	2	-	1	1				
26-48	Bukowina	571,671	15	3	69	13	-				
16-44	Dalmatien	476,101	84	-	16	-	-				
23-50	Galizien	5,958,907	88	-	-	11	1				
14-47	Kärnten	348,730 94	6	-	-	-					
15-46	Krain	481,243	99	-	-	-	-				
14-45	Küstenland	647,934	99	-	-	-	1				
17-49	Mähren	2,153,407	95	3		2	-				
16-48	Niederösterreich	2,330,621	92	2		5	1				
14-48	Oberösterreich	759,620	98	2	-	-	-				
13-47	Salzburg	163,570	99	1	-	-	2				
18-50	Schlesien	565,475	85	13	-	2	-				
15-47	Steiermark	1,213,597	99	1	-	-	÷				
11-47	Tirol	805,176	99	-	-	-	1				
10-47	Vorarlberg	107,373	99	1	-	-					
	Austria	22,144,244	91	2	2	5	-				
21-47	Hungary	13,749,600	58	23	14	5	1				

Table 2 - Religious preference of the states of Austria-Hungary in 1880