Czech Genealogy Online Resources by Roger Liska, 9/22/18

Before you get started

Check your local library for

- Genealogy resources they may have
 - You are most interested in they have Ancestry.com on their library computers
 - You are most interested if they have access to newspapers and their obituaries on the library computers
- Genealogy resources they may also provide online
- Genealogy programs they may sponsor
- Genealogy newsletters they may provide or produce

Sign up to use http://www.familysearch.org. The sign up is free. You will discover that this site has a lot of records.

Learn where the LDS Family History Center closest to you is located. Naperville has one. 1320 Ridgeland Rd Naperville, IL 60563

https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Naperville Illinois Family History Center

Consider a trip to the LDS Family History Center in Wilmette, Illinois. This location actually has the most records available for copying and printing of any other LDS Illinois site I know.

2727 Lake Avenue, Wilmette, Illinois

http://wilmettefhc.org/ Also Facebook site: https://www.facebook.com/wilmettefhc

Did you know?

- Tabor Hills Community in Naperville began elsewhere as the Bohemian Home for the Aged and the Bohemian orphanage - http://taborhills.com/index.php/a-brief-history-of-tabor-hills/
- Illinois Benedictine University and Benet Academy are schools begun along with St. Procopius Abbey and Cemetery. All are associated with the religious order that served St. Procopius Catholic Church in Chicago (one of the early Bohemian churches in Chicago). http://www.procopius.org/history
- The Saint Joseph Bohemian Orphanage was located in Lisle. The property and some structures became Benet Academy. https://www.genealogycenter.info/search_benetacademy.php
- The Czechoslovak Heritage Museum, once located in Oak Brook, is planning on opening in Cicero, Illinois. http://czechoslovakmuseum.com/

Genealogy is not perfect!

- Do not expect:
 - To find all records with your last name of interest spelled the same female names can have "ova" attached at the end.
 - To find all records with the first name of the person spelled the same
 - o The first name of a person to always be the same one used in all records
 - Wencel, Wencil, Wenzel, Vaclav, Waclaw, Jas, James
 - Alzbeta, Elsie, Elizabeth
 - Albert, Voytech, Votech, Vojtech, Adalbert
 - Josefa, Josepha, Josefine, Josefina, Zozafina
 - Census takers to be correct with all information they recorded
 - Paper to digital transcribers to be correct with all information they recorded (that is one of the hardest of tasks to accomplish)

- Birth day, month, year to remain the same through all records
- o Countries change
 - Bohemia Austria Galacia Czech Republic
- Towns change
 - Kralovice Kralowitz Kralovec Kralowit Kralovec

Searching for information – Variations on a search

- Wildcard searches
 - Three letters and an * can be used in Family Search and Ancestry
- Try the strangest name in the family of interest to narrow search results
- Try no name, just place of birth, limit time of birth, limit search location
- Try to use a child to find the family
- Try a known address in Ancestry, wildcard the name, or try without a first or last name or any name at all; just place of birth, limit time of birth, limit search location
- Try a different census period with the same information
- Address instead of name In Ancestry, for some census decade records, you can add the street name
 as part of the search. This helps with records in which the names have been badly recorded.
- Address to find the Census record. http://www.alookatcook.com/ Your person of interest lived at an address in 1910 and 1930, but you cannot find them in the 1920 census. Perhaps the information or transcription has some errors. You can use A Look at Cook to find that address, its tract and ward information. Once you have done that you can use Ancestry to find that tract and ward and do a page by page search. It is a slow process, but it can work for you.
- City Directories http://www.chicagoancestors.org/ A Newberry Library web site contains a number of Chicago directories from past decades. http://www.chicagoancestors.org/tools/streets-and-directories They can be used to find people and addresses listed between census periods, along with spellings of names used at that time. The 1871 Directory also contains a bit of census related information.
- Street Names http://www.chicagoancestors.org/tools/streets-and-directories the same web site also contains street guides. Many Chicago streets have been renamed. It can be confusing to be listing and searching for someone on Robey St., only to find in later years it became Damen. Many more like this http://www.alookatcook.com/ A look at Cook web site has a pdf file of street name changes and street number changes.
- Newspaper birth announcements
- Newspaper marriage announcements

Has Someone Already Done Some Work For You?

- Has someone already created?
 - A family tree at Ancestry
 - o A family tree or more information at Family Search
 - A family tree at Genealogy
 - A family tree posted as a personal web site
 - o A family tree posted at a blog site

Resources for the Chicago area

Immigration Arrival - Records

- Census Records Several of the earlier Census decade records list the year of immigration. But these can vary from record to record as that info is given by the person providing the data for that census.
 - Family Search has census records
 - Ancestry has census records

- https://www.libertyellisfoundation.org/ Ellis Island records are online here. Free to use, just register, and that is also free. Not only could you find the person you are looking for if they entered via New York, but hopefully they may have provided information on their location in Europe.
- Leo Baca Czech Immigration Lists Nine volumes, one of the most comprehensive listing of early Czech immigration information available. They can be found in several location.
 - o Ancestry cites them in their Immigration and Travel searches.
 - LDS Family History Centers may have them call to verify.
 - https://www.cgsi.org/research/intro/records The Czechoslovak Genealogical Society International has some online, available to their membership
 - http://www.csagsi.org The Czech and Slovak Genealogy Society of Illinois has the Leo Baca volumes available at their Paul Nemecek Collection within the Riverside, Illinois, Public Library
 - Naturalization Records A naturalization record can be very useful. Usually filled out by the
 person applying for naturalization, it contains a birth date, usually a town of birth, and the date,
 location, and ship for arrival in the United States.
 - Denni Hlasatel Obituaries If you are lucky, the Denni Hlasatel obituary can mention how many years a person lived in the USA, to help narrow the time they may have arrived in the USA. The obituary could also mention the village, or area, they were born in.
 - Chicago Voter Registration Records This might be of use. Ancestry has Chicago Voter Registration Records. One piece of information recorded for a person is their length of residence. This might narrow down your search for the time that they entered the USA.
- http://www.chicagoancestors.org/tools/streets-and-directories Compare two city directories to see if your person of interest arrived between those time periods. At least that can hopefully narrow down the search time for you.
- Do You Already Know The Village? Family Search and Ancestry let you search by residence and birth locations. Example below
 - https://www.familysearch.org/search/record/results?count=20&query=%2Bresidence_place%3A smolec~
 - o https://www.familysearch.org/search (Starting Page)

Naturalization Records

- If you have a membership to Ancestry.com or use Ancestry at the library, this site has the easiest access to naturalization records for all states. To see all states, you just need to select the Search button at the top of the screen and choose Immigration and Travel. Your multiple choices then appear. Too see just Illinois naturalization records, you could select the Search button at the top of the screen and choose Card Catalog. When that appears, type in Illinois in the title box. When the screen changes, select Immigration and Travel. The naturalization records for Illinois are listed. You can view, save, or print them out.
- https://www.archives.gov/chicago National Archives and Records Administration Chicago
 South Pulaski Road, Chicago, IL 60629-5898. Check the hours. You can go here to find a naturalization record and have it printed out for you as you wait. They had computers there when I last visited. It is best if you already have information.
- https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/United States Naturalization Online Genealogy Records Family Search lists naturalization records by state. Illinois has five listed. You need to use an index to get the record number.
 - Illinois, Northern District Naturalization Index, 1840-1950 https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1838804
- Then you will use another database of the actual records to find the one you wish. You can view, save, or print them out. (You will need some patience in browsing to find the record.
 - o Illinois, Northern District Petitions for Naturalization, 1906-1994
 - o https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/2212212

Declarations of an Intent to seek Naturalization

The Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County has a web site that lists many who filed "an intent to become naturalized". I use it to check on people, as some times it lists the town or area of Bohemia the person came from. http://www.cookcountyclerkofcourt.org/NR/ - Some records can be ordered, but Cook County (in my opinion) charges a hefty fee.

Cook County - Birth Certificates, Marriage Licenses, Death Certificates

http://cookcountygenealogy.com/ - Cook County Clerk – Genealogy Online. If you want those records quick and downloaded directly to your computer, and you do not mind spending upwards of twenty dollars for each one. This web site is for you. Registration is free. More records have been added, but everyone is (at least in my opinion) still not available here. Be sure you have the right person before you push the pay and then download button.

Consider a trip to the LDS Family History Center in Wilmette, Illinois. This Family History Center has the most actual records (birth, death, marriage) available for copying and printing of any other LDS Illinois site I know.

2727 Lake Avenue, Wilmette, Illinois

http://wilmettefhc.org/ Also Facebook site: https://www.facebook.com/wilmettefhc

http://www.cookcountyclerkofcourt.org/?section=RecArchivePage – The Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County is the keeper of many records. This web page describes their holdings, information on how to access them, and an order form for a record. This process takes some time, and comes with a fee as part of the process.

Sam Fink's Marriage and Death Index Cook County 1833 – 1889 – This is available for Ancestry subscribers – Information below from its web page.

"Sam Fink compiled these indexes from marriage and death notices in Chicago newspapers, plus Cook County death records. Marriages cover the years 1833–1871. Death records are extracted from newspapers for the years 1856–1889 and from Cook County death records as well for 1878–1884.

Marriage entries include names, marriage date, and source. Death entries extracted from newspapers include name, death date, and source. Fink's indexes were extracted from 10 newspapers."

http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/archives/databases/homicide.html -Chicago Police Department Homicide Record Index, 1870–1930.

http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/archives/databases/cookinqt.html - Cook County Coroner's Inquest Record Index, 1872–1911.

State of Illinois Birth - Death - Military Database

http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/archives/databases/home.html - The State of Illinois has database listings.

Lake County Indiana Records – Just across the border, Lake County, for several decades was the place to go to get married quickly. Many Illinois residents did this. Just Google "Lake County Indiana Vital Records" and a number of Family Search web pages will provide the detailed information

Illinois Wills and Probate Records

- Ancestry has these records included for their members.
- https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Cook County, Illinois Genealogy#Probate Records Family Search has some too.

Obituaries

You need to use obituaries. They are, many times, the greatest source of information on the individual and other family members you may find. They also usually list the cemetery. Remember this for http://www.findagrave.com and the Family Search Catholic Burial Records for Cook County.

Your local library – Everyday that I do some genealogy research, I go to my library or my library web site. I have access to the Naperville Public Library and constantly use "America's Obituaries and Death Notices", or the "Chicago Tribune Historical Archive".

NOTE: There is a tween time. For example, say 1950. Tom Czech may have died in 1950 and should most likely be listed in the "America's Obituaries and Death Notices." (I am using the Naperville Library) Once in a while he may only be listed in the "Chicago Tribune Historical Archive." Be sure to check both.

Czech and Slovak specific Obituaries

Many Czechs and Slovaks did not use English language newspapers to post an obituary. For those of us seeking information on the "old country" that could be a good thing.

Denni Hlasatel - One of the Czech language newspapers was the Denni Hlasatel. While this takes time. It can be very rewarding. Based in Cicero, Illinois. The newspaper began publishing in 1890 or 1891. Copies of nearly all those newspapers can be found. But, before you find the newspaper, you need to find the publication date of the obituary for the person of interest.

The Denni Hlasatel Index can be found in several locations. Family Search lists that they could have copies in some Family History Centers. CSAGSI, the Czech and Slovak Genealogy Society of Illinois has published that 1891 to 1995 index. They most likely have a copy at their Paul Nemecek Collection within the Riverside Public Library in Riverside, Illinois. They have it for sale because I bought a CD years ago. They have it online for their members because I eventually joined and see it there. http://www.csagsi.org

Once you have the publication date, you can now find how to get a copy of the obituary.

<u>http://www.csagsi.org</u> – This society has been collecting copies of DH obituaries provided by their members.
So far, they have over 8,000 stored at the Paul Nemecek Collection.

https://www.illinois.gov/alplm/library/genealogy/Pages/RequestingGenealogicalResearch.aspx - The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum in Springfield, Illinois has the most complete collection of DH newspapers in this area. I have driven there and used the microfilm readers to view and print out obituaries. I think you can still also have work done for you. The process has most likely changed. Visit their site for the best information on how to do this.

I found this at the Family Search web site. I have not explored further.

"If your Czech ancestors were members of Western Fraternal Life Association (WFLA), as many Czech people have been, chances are their obituaries were printed in the monthly *Fraternal Herald, Bratrský věstník*, a publication of this organization. The home office in Cedar Rapids, IA has original copies of this publication back to 1890. Copies are also on microfilm at the Nebraska Historical Library in Lincoln, NE and the Wisconsin Historical Society Library in Madison, WI."

Kostka Eulogy Cards - In the Chicago area Frank Kostka became a sought after speaker at many Czech funerals. He spent a great deal of time gathering information about the deceased before making his presentation. He made note cards for each presentation. Some note cards contain valuable information on the person and associated family members. Some even include birth locations in the "old country". The Paul M. Nemecek Genealogy Collection at the Riverside Library houses the index and copies of those eulogy cards.

Catholic Church Records

Family Search has a large collection of Chicago area Catholic Church records online. Birth, death, marriage records vary by church. Some records predate the Chicago Fire when many other sources of these records were destroyed. Many list additional family members. Some are real gold as they list the birth place of the individual in Bohemia.

http://genealogytrails.com/ill/cook/churches_1905_page3.html - A list of churches in Cook County is a good thing to have.

https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1452409/ — Family Search has a large listing of Catholic Churches in Cook County. The earliest immigrants tended to settle in areas of Chicago with their fellow immigrants from the same country, so many neighborhood Catholic Churches reflected that nativity. Catholic Churches, such as; Saint Wenceslaus, Saint Procopius, Saint Ludmilla, Saints Cyril and Methodius along with Saint Agnes of Bohemia would usually have more records for immigrants from Bohemia. Check the census record address for the person you are interested in. Check the listing of churches in Cook County. Start with the Catholic Church closest to that person's address, and especially if it was a church which seemed to provide services for immigrants from Bohemia and their descendants.

Not All Czechs Were Catholic

- Czech Regional Archives have listings for other religions
- Family Search has listings for other religions
- https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1554443 Slovak records which include several religions
- Ancestry has listings for Lutheran Chicago Area Churches

Not All Czechs Were That Religious

Some Czechs, once in the United States and not subject to the nobility or church in control of the area they lived in while in Bohemia, became less interested in religion. (They could have always been that way!) For those of us trying to find our family, they made it harder as they sought marriage, death and burial in other than Catholic services whose numerous records are becoming more available.

One example is the often repeated story of the Bohemian National Cemetery on Pulaski Road in Chicago. The refusal of religious leaders, for various reasons, to bury a Czech in a Catholic cemetery, is the beginning of the creation of the BNC which had a much less restrictive policy. One of the more famous groups to not have a religious connection were the Bohemian Society of Free Thinkers.

http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/487.html

http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/153.html

Cemetery Records

Cemetery records can help:

Knowing where one person is buried, may lead you to other family members buried in the same cemetery. Some cemetery record postings are not just a posting of name and date.

https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1503083 - Family Search has online - Illinois, Archdiocese of Chicago, Cemetery Records, 1864 -1989. If you find one family member in a cemetery, you can just continue to scroll left or right and explore if other family members are there. Usually the plot information is given. If so, it is easier to link family members together. If you have that information, it also makes actually traveling to that cemetery to find the headstone a bit easier.

Kiosks at Chicago area Catholic Cemeteries – An increasing number of local area Catholic cemeteries have a kiosk at their business office. You can enter the information and a map and location can be printed out. You can enter a name, and the kiosk computer will list all burials with the same last name on the screen.

https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Illinois, Cook County, Obituaries (FamilySearch_Historical_Records) – "The collection consists of an index and images to obituaries from various newspapers in southern Cook County, Illinois, compiled by the South Suburban Genealogical and Historical Society in South Holland, Illinois. The collection also contains obituaries from Hammond, Indiana. The collection covers the years 1970 to 1990."

https://billiongraves.com/ https://www.findagrave.com/

Billiongraves.com and findagrave.com could prove helpful. Both can be browsed. One can register at both if you wish to add information.

Headstone images, obituaries, links to other family members, and other information can be found there. I post to findagrave.com. Every once in a while I get contacted by someone and we discover we have a family relationship. This leads to more information discovered, more leaves on the trees added.

There are several ways to find a certain house in Cook County.

Google

- Get to Google
- Select Maps
- Enter in the Cook County address
- Many times the map will automatically show that address in the picture screen on the left side of the map
- Click on the picture and Google will open a full screen version
 - o This will only work if Google went on that street and photographed it
- Or you may be able to grab the little person on the bottom right of the map screen and drop him on the street
 - o This will only work if Google went on that street and photographed it

Office of the Cook County Assessor

http://www.cookcountyassessor.com/Search/Property-Search.aspx - Many homes are pictured at this web site. You have to provide some basic information for the search. What is nice about this web site is you might find information on when the home was built, and you will find its current assessed valuation.

Resources for Czechia

(formerly the Czech Republic and before the separation – Czechoslovakia)

(Many records stored under, or searchable using "Bohemia")

Just Beginning – Been Doing This For A While? – Suggested Reference

<u>http://czechgenealogy.nase-koreny.cz/</u> - Blog site of Blanka Lednicka – This is the go to site to learn all things related to Czech genealogy resources in Czechia.

Original Birth - Marriage - Death Records for Czech Cities - Towns - Villages

This is one of those resources that makes one happy to have some Czech blood or ancestors. An unbelievable number of records are online. Some are pretty easy to reach, others require a lot of patience and a really good download speed.

The most used Czech records are the parish birth, marriage, and death records. The most online are Catholic. That said these record sites contain much more than that.

- First you need to know the name of the place of interest. Remember village, town, and city spellings are not always what you imagine, and they could be in German.
 - o Where do I get a town name from?
 - Denni Hlasatel Obituary
 - Naturalization Petition
 - Birth record Hopefully parents listed their place of birth
 - Immigration Record
 - Ellis Island records after 1900 have many listed
 - Hamburg Departure Records have many listed
 - Hopefully an immigration record listed at Family Search or Ancestry may have that information
 - Did you ever check on Ancestry for someone already having that person listed in their family tree?
- https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Czech_Republic_Parish_Finder Family Search has a web site which lists most of them, the parish name, its location, and the district it is located in. This can be confusing as many times there are similarly named parishes in different districts across Bohemia. When you think you have the correct parish, you need to get to that district's web site.
- https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Czech_Republic_Archives_and_Libraries This Family Search web site explains the archive regions.
- http://czechgenealogy.nase-koreny.cz/2011/09/czech-archives-on-internet.html Blanka Lednicka's Blog site does a good job explaining the archive regions and how to access each one.
- http://czechgenealogy.nase-koreny.cz/search/label/archives Blanka's 21 postings on the archives
- http://www.wwjohnston.net/famhist/czech-research.htm Wes Johnston has been researching his Czech family for a long time. He has posted some good "how to" information.
- http://www.czechfamilytree.com/archives.htm This web site does a good job of showing you the various regions and the districts which are part of that region. This web site also contains information on how to find other records at some of these districts.
 - Find your chosen district.
 - When the screen changes, you will find a variety of choices for sources of information.
 - Right now, we are seeking birth, marriage, death records; so choose "Parish Registers"
 - The Roman Catholic Church records are the ones I usually choose first, thinking that the majority of inhabitants were still Catholic.
 - The screen clears and you see letters of the alphabet. Select the one you need.
 - o Clicking on the letter, the screen changes to the parish towns. Choose the one you need.
 - o The screen clears and the right side of the screen shows all the records available.
 - One last check of the parishes in this group at the top of the screen is a good idea.
 - Grab some coffee, and start your search. Hopefully you have already narrowed it down by a possible relative date and village
 - NOTE some record books separate towns into sections of pages, so look at the top of the page to see if you are looking at the correct village. Look at the village name in the individual records to see if they are all the same (you are probably in the correct section) or if there are a number of village names, then this book of records may not separate towns into sections of pages.
- Still missing or not sure of the district your chosen parish is located within?
 - I Google the name of the parish and check the Wikipedia information.

Czech Republic Church Books

https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1804263 - Czech Republic Church Books, 1552-1963 — "Images and some indexes of baptisms/births, marriages, and deaths that occurred in the Roman Catholic, Evangelical Lutheran, and Reformed Church parishes, as well as entries in those registers for Jews. These images are of original parish records created by local priests of each parish and by Jewish rabbis now stored in the regional archives of Litoměřice, Opava, Třeboň, and Zámrsk. Some locality names are written in Polish, especially in the Silesia area. Births are available through 1906, marriages through 1936, and deaths through 1948."

https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1475346 - (described as incomplete) - Czech Republic, Northern Moravia, Opava Archive Church Books, 1571-1905 – "Images of baptisms/births, marriages, and burials that occurred in the Roman Catholic, Evangelical Lutheran, and Reformed Church parishes, as well Jewish congregations, under the jurisdiction of the Provincial Archives (Zemský archiv v Opavě) of Northern Moravia in the Czech Republic. These images are of original parish records created by local priests of each parish and by Jewish rabbis."

Translations and Penmanship

- For me, the older the record, the harder it is read. I know I have missed records because I cannot read them.
- When I look for records I take note of the house number on those records I can read, and hope that the
 person lived in the same house over time, so I can just search for the house number. It has worked a
 number of times for me.
- Translate –

Czech Census Records

https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1930345 - Czech Republic Censuses and Inhabitant Registers, 1800-1990 – "Census images and inhabitant registers for the Czech Republic. Currently includes only those for Northern Bohemia housed in the regional archive of Litoměřice, for Eastern Bohemia housed in the district archive of Trutnov, for Southern Bohemia housed in the regional archive of Třeboň, for Southern Moravia housed in the regional archive in Brno, and for Northern Moravia and Silesia housed in the regional archive of Opava. Also includes images and indexed records for the Zámrsk area taken from the Zámrsk Archive."

Can you see your Bohemian village on Google?

https://www.en.mapy.cz

Can you find a Cadaster / Cadastral map of your Bohemian village?

https://www.cgsi.org/sites/default/files/finding castral maps slavnosti 38-39.pdf

CGSI PDF file online explaining Cadastral maps.

http://czechgenealogy.nase-koreny.cz/2014/07/stabile-cadaster-maps.html - Read Blanka Lednicka's posting on instructions to reach the cadaster map site and get to the map you wish to see.

Czech Genealogy and related web sites – Facebook sites

http://www.csagsi.org - Czech and Slovak Genealogy Society of Illinois

http://www.cgsi.org - Czechoslovak Genealogical Society International

http://www.wiczechs.com/index.html - Wisconsin Czechs

https://afocr.org/czech-culture/czech-genealogy - American Friends of the Czech Republic

https://czechschoolchicago.org/ - T.J. Masaryk Czech School in Cicero, Illinois

http://www.czechevents.net/ - Czech Events Network

http://www.ncsml.org/ - National Czech and Slovak Museum in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

<u>http://www.genea.cz/</u> - Genealogy Web Site in Czechia – All in Czech!

http://www.loc.gov/rr/european/imcz/ndl.html - Library of Congress - Czechs in America (short history)

https://www.facebook.com/groups/czechgenealogy/ - Public Group

https://www.facebook.com/groups/175133529856/ - CSAGSI member's group

https://www.facebook.com/cgsi.org/ - CGSI - Public Forum

https://www.facebook.com/groups/172137532881368/ - Czech Bohemian Ancestry / Genealogy

https://www.facebook.com/groups/489047961143544/ - Genealogy and Ancestry for Slovakia and the Czech Republic – Closed Group

https://www.facebook.com/events/731339300241448/ - Czech American Congress

Czech Genealogy on You Tube

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HjShFfYdw9l&list=PLHArYBM_vgNO3d4heza_t63NvoT7VzXT1 - Mary Sramek Levesque, a frequent contributor to the open forum of Facebook – Czech Genealogy – has a whole series of "How To" posted at You Tube

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCRFWxIqpkwMZatSWov0B2-w - Mary Sramek Levesque You Tube Start Page

Food

http://www.czechcookbook.com/ - Authentic Czech recipes converted to English