

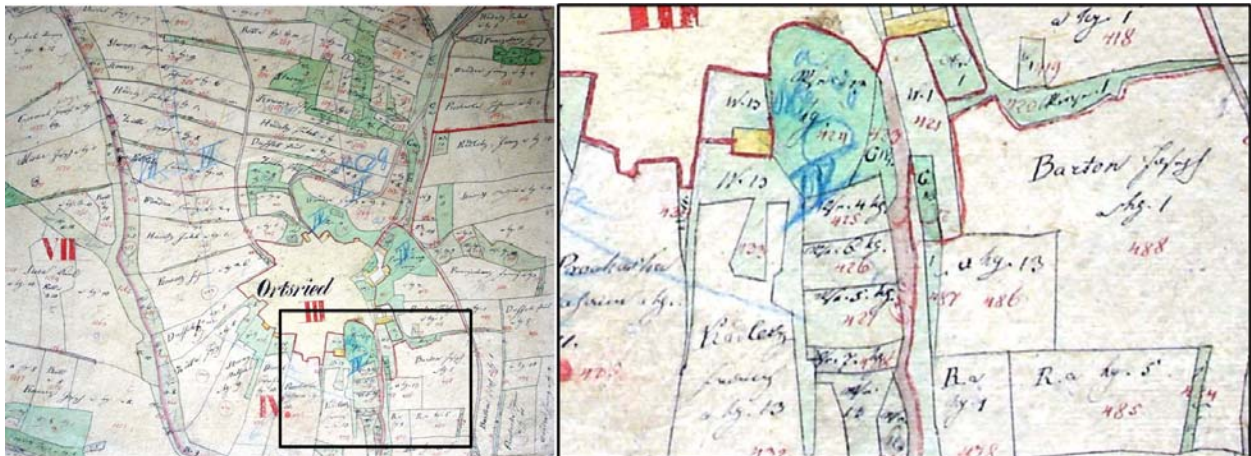
Pavučina Corner – By Tony Kadlec

For this column, I am pleased to be able to reprint the next in a series of articles that were written by Mr. Gene Aksamit, a member of the Board of Directors of the Czechoslovak Genealogical Society International (CGSI) and resident of the Twin Cities.

THE CZECH ARCHIVES

The Czech archives have done a wonderful job of preserving a wide range of records. Through a myriad of old records, it is possible to extend your family tree to the early 1700's/late 1600's and to get a glimpse of the personal lives of your ancestors. This article overviews the Czech archival system, as many records are available but not all are stored in the same archive.

National Archive – The National Archive (Národní archiv), the central archive for the Czech Republic, is located in Prague. Administrative records for the Czech lands as well as territories that are no longer part of the Czech Republic are held here. However, the records of most interest to genealogists include the two oldest Czech cadasters (land registers) – the 1654 *Berní rula* and the early 18th century *Theresianum*, the well-known 1651 *List of Subjects According to Their Religion*, tax rolls, and old cadastral maps. While the Christian parish registers are stored in the regional state archives, all of the Jewish birth, marriage and death records are held at the National Archive.



Cadastral maps of Czech villages like this one of Velké Tresné show the land owners and their house numbers, such as the Franz Kadletz (Kadlec) family of House No. 13 and their neighbors, the Josef Barton Family of House No. 1.

Regional State Archives – The place to start your Czech genealogical research is at the regional state archive for the region in which your ancestral village (parish) is located. There are seven regional state archives; five in Bohemia: Prague, Třeboň, Plzeň, Litoměřice and Zámorsk and two in Moravia: the Moravian Regional Archive in Brno and the Regional Archive in Opava. These archives hold the *matriky* – registers of birth, marriage and deaths – the basic information needed to build the family tree. Catholic parish priests were instructed to keep the registers in the late 16th century but most registers were not consistently maintained until

the early 18th century. The oldest registers are in Latin while Czech and German were the languages most commonly used in the 18th century.

Manorial records kept under serfdom are held in the regional state archives. Of interest to genealogists are records of forced labor (robot) and other feudal duties owed by serfs to their overlord as well as judicial records.

District State Archives – These archives, which became a part of the regional state archives in 2005, hold many records directly pertaining to the lives of our ancestors. The “grundbücher”, or land-books, recorded all transfers of real estate between owners whether by sale or inheritance. Other examples include censuses, school registers, passports and identification cards.



Sample images from the Brno archive website, which you can access using the instructions presented at the end of this article.

Accessing Archival Records – Although it is possible to submit research requests directly to the archives, for most it is best to retain a professional researcher as the archives’ response is not timely due to workload. The CGSI website contains a list of researchers found acceptable by members. Although it is possible to personally visit the archives, the language of the records can be an issue for many.

I have just touched on the most common archival records for genealogical research. A comprehensive description of records in all Czech archives can be found in Dr. Lenka Matušíková’s article *The Czech Archive Network and Its Less Well-Known Holdings for Genealogical Research* published in the February 2008 special edition of *Naše rodina*, the CGSI periodical.

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ACCESSING THE ONLINE BRNO ARCHIVES (MORAVSKÝ ZEMSKÝ ARCHIV V BRNĚ)

Your ability to find your family information in the Czech archives ultimately depends on the location of your village, as that will dictate specifically which regional archive holds your family records (one location does not hold all of the records!).

Since many of the Czech immigrants to Silver Lake came from a fairly concentrated area in Moravia, just north of Brno, you are very fortunate, as the Brno archives are online and may be accessed for free.

Here is what you do:

- 1) Download Google's "Chrome" browser (which has a built in language translator which will automatically translate Czech text to English) from this link:

<http://www.google.com/chrome>

- 2) Go to the Brno archives website and create a username and password:

<http://www.actapublica.eu/registrace>

- 3) Go to the Brno archive and log into the site:

<http://www.actapublica.eu/prihlaseni>

- 4) Start entering your village name into the "Obec" (or "community") box and see if your village name comes up (in Czech language characters) as you progressively type each English character into the box.

- 5) Click the button that says "Hledat" (or "search"). Štěstí! (Good luck!)

Mluvíte Česky? Do You Speak Czech?

pavučina – ('PA-vu-chee-na') – spiderweb

národní ('NAH-rohd-nee') – national

obec ('OH-betz') – community

naše rodina ('NAH-sheh ROH-dee-na') – our family

Štěstí! – ('SHTYEH-stee') – Good luck!

As a rule, you should always stress the first syllable of a Czech word!

SILVER LAKE SURNAME-VILLAGE ORIGIN DATABASE

If you would like your surname(s) and your family village(s) to be included in an online database or need assistance in finding your ancestral village, please contact me by email: tkadlec@gmail.com or call me: (651) 271-0422 or send your letters to my attention: 1408 Fairmount Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55105.

Děkuji! Tony Kadlec