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Workshop name: A Place by Any Other Name Won't Merge
Workshop by Sigrid Perry, Lublin Database Extractor and Gary Warner, SGGEE Databases Manager
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Prologue

SGGEE became a society in 1998. Since that time, we have had a Master Pedigree Database that was created by merging of data from both original records and member provided data.   Data from these various sources does not always agree with each other, but surprisingly, most family histories seem to match the historical records so far as family structure- that is who the father and mother are, and who the children are.

What has plagued us from the beginning, however, is that locations described in the original records often <u>dramatically</u> do not match the locations provided by our members, and even when they partially match, they are still two different locations that do not merge.   Not merging the locations was the way we first handled this problem, but as you might imagine, while two different locations in the place field was messy, if we had three or four locations for the same event, the place field became a catastrophe.

So, we decided to fix the problem.   But when we put our heads together, especially when one of the heads was a person who still lived in Germany, and who knew a great deal more of the history of Germany, Poland and the Ukraine than those of us in other parts of the world, we discovered why the village names from various sources did not match each other!   The biggest reason is that Poland and the Ukraine, and part of Germany have been ruled by different masters over some or most of their existence.   That discovery was a bit discouraging in that there appears to be no simple solution to our problem, since names of villages given by each master often were not even close to the same.   After a lot of discussion, we decided the following:

1. <u>A correctly named village should make it easier to find the original records for that village</u>. That is, if the original records are German language records, then the village name should also include the German name for the village, if it existed. If the village name was always a non-German village name (the usual case in central Poland and the Ukraine), then we would use the non-German name.
2. <u>A correctly named village should be able to be found on a modern-day map (if the village still exists).</u> To that end, we have included coordinates in all of our village naming so that there is no question where the village is, since it can then be found using Legacy maps, Google Earth, or other apps that allow the entry of coordinates.

To that end, we developed our Location Guidelines, and also gazetteers to make the process a bit easier to follow.   See the first several items at https://sggee.org/research/village_maps.html). Since the history of eastern Germany, central Poland and the Ukraine is difficult, it turns out that the guidelines are also a bit difficult, especially when you first begin using them- that is in part why we have gazetteers to help you.   We are hoping that this presentation will additionally assist you in correctly entering village names, <u>AND their coordinates</u>, so that they can be merged.   What helps immensely in you processing of you data, is for you to look at the village names from each country in your data as a separate dataset from all of your other village names. Doing so will often explain how your ancestors met each other.

So, let's go through this from simple to difficult

A.   The United States of America

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1. Use Legacy's Geo Location List (paid version only)- it will find most places in the USA, and will automatically add counties and coordinates.
2. For hard to find USA locations, use http://geonames.usgs.gov/apex/f?p=136:1:0::::: It will find almost all locations, and will give you the county and coordinates.
3. If you still cannot find the location you seek, try http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?search=&button=&title=Special%3ASearch
4. When all else fails with a USA location, then try doing a Google search to see what others say about that location. It is amazing what you can find using this method, especially if the place no longer exists, or the name has changed. This is the method I used to finally find a small village called Silberfeld in Russia.   It is now Serebropol, , Altai Krai, Russia.   The Russian and German names both mean Silver field.

B. Canada
1. Use Legacy's Geo Location List (paid version only)- it will find most places in Canada, and will automatically add coordinates, but not the counties.   Canada does have counties, but very few people use them, and they are hard to find, and so we have elected to do as Legacy does, and omit them altogether. If you do supply the Canadian counties, we will not delete them, if we can confirm the county name.
2. For hard to find Canada locations, use http://www4.rncan.gc.ca/search-place-names/name.php It will find almost all locations, and will give you coordinates, but no counties.
3. If you still cannot find the location you seek, try http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?search=&button=&title=Special%3ASearch
4. When all else fails with a Canada location, then try doing a Google search to see what others say about that location. It is amazing what you can find using this method, especially if the place no longer exists, or the name has changed.

C. Central Poland (Congress Poland or Russian Poland)
1. First, you need to recognize that there are almost always **many** villages of the same name in Poland. In order to find the correct one, you need to know which larger town is near to that village you seek.
2. The Polish language has 32 letters, including 9 letters with diacritics (letters we have difficulty entering with a North American keyboard). There are no letters Q, V, and X.
3. Use the virtual keyboard at http://translate.google.com/#pl/en/ to search websites that require you to use diacritical letters.
4. DO NOT use Legacy's Geo Locator, as it does not find the powiat (county), which is a necessary part of the location name. It may also not find the correct village of the name you seek.   Ditto Legacy's Bing mapping feature.
5. Use http://mapa.szukacz.pl/ as a first attempt, as it does not require the use of diacritical characters, and that website always loads. Enter the complete village name (just the beginning letters will not do) in the field "Miejscowość." If you find the location, then use the location (without diacriticals) as shown in the box at the right of the search screen (but use the powiat without the ski or other ending- that is, use the large town name with a similar name on the map near the village you find.   Find coordinates by selecting "współrzędne" at the bottom of the search screen.   Use the coordinate line that says "w stopniach, minutach, sekundach i ułamkach sekund." Note

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that in Europe the comma and period are the exact opposite of the way North Americans use them in numbers.

6. If you still cannot find the village you seek, then use http://mapy.geoportal.gov.pl/imap/ for the search. This site now allows the entry of English alphabet letter, but the site is thus far a bit flaky, since it does not always load. If this site is working, there are two pluses when using this website: 1.) It has all places that currently exist in Poland, AND 2.) It will find all places that begin with the letters you enter (you do not need the complete location name, but you do need to know the beginning letters). You can help yourself immensely in the search on this website if, after you open this website, you **first zoom into the general area where you expect to find the village**.   This will then show the **pin icons** only in that area, and you can ignore all villages the website finds that are outside of the area you have zoomed into. Hover over the pins to find what location that pin represents. **Let's find Łódź using the the two websites noted.   Next, let's find Żychlin (the one near Kutno). Finally, let's try and find Konce near Chodecz-it cannot be found on either of the websites for Poland mentioned so far.**

7. If you still cannot find the village you seek, then go to our online gazetteers. For Poland, this is https://sggee.org/research/Gazetteer_Poland.pdf   Note that you can scroll through the list to try and find what you seek, or, a better way is to use your browser's Find feature. **Use it here to find the Konce we could not find above**. The gazetteers were developed by Frank Stewner in Germany by comparing many old maps to find villages that once existed, but are no longer in existence. Another little gem- in our gazetteers, if you highlight and copy both the latitude and longitude fields at once in the **pdf** version of the gazetteer, you can paste them both into the latitude field in Legacy, and it will automatically move the longitude to the correct field! This works best with Google Chrome.

D. **All of Europe and Russia that was at any time under German rule**
    1. Again, please recognize that there are many villages of the same name throughout all of Europe. This is the most difficult area in which to name locations.
    2. All of the area outside of central Poland is very difficult to name, so we suggest that you use our gazetteers as both a first and last resort when dealing with European locations that are not in central Poland.   These gazetteers are by no means complete, but they continue to grow, and they are very valuable tools.   See for :

    a.   Congress Poland- https://sggee.org/research/Gazetteer_Poland.pdf

    b.   German Empire- https://sggee.org/research/Gazetteer_German_Empire.pdf

    c.   Russian Empire- https://sggee.org/research/Gazetteer_Russian_Empire.pdf

    d.   Austrian Empire- https://sggee.org/research/Gazetteer_Austrian_Empire.pdf

    e.   Galicia- https://sggee.org/research/Gazetteer_Galicia.pdf

    f.   Volhynia- https://sggee.org/research/Gazetteer_Volhynia.pdf

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3. Use http://gov.genealogy.net/search/index to help you find the correct village, including both the German and other language spellings, the correct County (or Kries, or Oblast), and the coordinates. This website also finds Polish villages, but is not useful in that part of Poland that was not part of the German Empire, since it does not give the county (powiat).
   In the GOV website, you can enter in either the German or the other language village name, but do not use English versions of umlauted letters (that is, either use u or ü, but NOT ue).
   In the GOV website, once you enter a village name and search, if there are search results, there will be a list of places found. The list is from many countries and provinces that may not be even close to the place you seek, so look at the "Type" column (for Ort, Landgemeinde, town, or municipality) and the "Superordinate objects" column for country and province to narrow down the possibilities. If the list is long, you can also narrow down the candidates by entering in a few letters in the filter box at the lower right corner of that results screen (like ttemberg, if the place is in Baden-Wuerttemberg). Once you think that you have a candidate, select the candidate in the "Name" column. You will now be taken to another screen that shows all the names that location is known by, and also the coordinates, and a small map to confirm where this location is. Under all that is a box with a line sketch connecting bubbles- this is most important, as it tells you what the country and county are today for that location.
   Let's try Legnica in Western Poland- an area in present-day Poland, but historically under German rule (this means that the birth, death and marriage records will most likely be in German). This town was German until 1945, and is now part of Poland. Because the main point of naming villages is to be able to find birth, marriage and death records using the name found in the original records, we would list this place by its German name, followed by its Polish name, and then continue the naming for modern-day Poland. Thus this place would be Liewgnitz (Legnica), Legnica, Donoslaskie, Poland.
4. If you simply cannot find a location, or are having difficulty naming it, send a message to databases@sggee.org, and we will help you.

Locating German Villages in Eastern Europe-Sigrid Pohl Perry (perry1121@aol.com)

Exploring maps at SGGEE: https://www.sggee.org/research/village_maps.html
Browse various maps to see general changes in government & political boundaries
- Examine specific maps of interest to Germans in Eastern Europe, e.g. Gilly (1802-3), P.G.S.A. powiat maps (1907), Breyer (1938), Lutheran parishes (1939)
- Special regional maps: South Prussia, Lubelskie, Jerry Frank's maps of Volhynia

Maps with search functions:
- Google Maps or Google Earth
- Searchable index to some SGGEE scanned maps
- Jerry Frank's searchable maps for German settlements in Poland and Volhynia
- Polish road map which does NOT require diacritical markings: http://mapa.szukacz.pl/
- Mapster (Mapy archiwalne Polski I Europy Środkowej) has many maps & a search utility: http://igrek.amzp.pl/mapindex.php?cat=WIG100
- JewishGen Gazetteer allows Daitch-Mokotoff Soundex for villages if spelling is poor:

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http://www.jewishgen.org/Communities/LocTown.asp

Central Poland (Congress Poland or Russian Poland)
- Do NOT use Legacy's Geo Locator or Bing
- There are MANY Polish villages with the same name or similar names
- Find the nearest larger city to locate & browse
- Determine proper spelling even without diacritical marks to use online search engines
- If you need to "browse," use the SGGEE gazetteer for Russian (Congress) Poland
- Use Mapster's "search" feature for "begins with" or "contains" if you are certain of some letters:
  http://igrek.amzp.pl/mapindex.php?cat=WIG100
- LDS Wiki site on Poland: https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Poland_Websites
  Historical Maps of Poland: https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Poland_Maps
    Poland 960 – 992
    Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth 1569–1648
    Partitioned Poland 1772 – 1795
    Napoleon's Duchy of Warsaw 1807 – 1815
    Congress Poland 1815 – 1831 (Semi-autonomous part of Russian Empire until 1917)
    Congress Poland 1907
    Interwar Poland 1920, the Polish Corridor
    Modern Poland 1945 – Present

Reconcile conflicting data and verify information:
- Find the record with vital information in the same era or one close in time to the event
- Look for common family villages in one of the SGGEE databases and make a migration map
- Request Family Group Sheet (FGS) from databases@sggee.org for sources such as LDS films
- Contact SGGEE members who are sourced to find out who has records or form a research team
- See if parish records exist: https://www.sggee.org/research/parish.html
- For common place names or odd spellings, look for other places mentioned in the record or for neighboring villages in the same region; browse the area on a detailed map
- Contact databases@sggee.org to add or fix locations if you verify the correct place or to ask location questions