How do you know when you have been spending too much time in Europe doing genealogy?

Don’t worry . . .
Your spouse will let you know!
Agenda

• Europe
• Prior planning
• Research
• Bring it on home
Why Do Genealogy in Europe?

• Critical Contacts
• Learn insider information
• Records & resources
  - More available locally
  - Indexes & finding aids
• Get feel for people & customs
• Understand the geography
• Connect with ancestors
Location Location Location

• You must identify a locality
  – Family sources & traditions
  – Immigration & naturalization records
  – Ethnic associations
  – Church records
  – Census enumerations
  – Death records & obituaries
  – Published & manuscript histories

• Internet resources
  – Maps
  – Bulletin boards
  – Other contacts
Contacts

• It’s all about local contacts!
  - Institutional contacts
    • Staff, volunteers, priests, historians, etc.
  - Individual contacts
    • Friends, relatives, fellow researchers, etc.

• Share what you are looking for
  - Talk with people openly . . .
  - Where you research & what names
  - Ask questions often, don’t be bashful
  - Always listen for what people know

• The broader the net is cast . . .
  the greater the catch!
Prior Planning

• Electronics
• Documentation
• Attitude
• Gifts
• Culture
• Language
• Travel
• Accommodations
• Schedule
Electronics

• Consider all your potential gear
  - Laptop computer
  - Digital camera
  - Battery recharger
  - External hard drive
  - Lights
  - Portable printer
  - PDA
  - Cell phone
  - Digital card reader
  - Personal care items
European Standards

• Europe uses several different . . .
  – Electrical currencies
    • 220 volt vs. 110 volt
  – Sockets & plugs
    • Plug adapters

• Countries need unique assessment

• Hardware evaluated individually
  – Input requirements (voltage)
  – 100-240 V
Transformers & Converters

- Light duty voltage converters
- Voltage transformers
- Step down vs. step up
  - 220/240v ↔ 110/120v
- Watts vary based on load
  - Multiple outgoing sockets
  - Estimate max load +
- $30 very respectable model
- Purchase wired for your country
- Don’t forget socket adapters!
Documentation

- Passport
- International drivers license
- Regular drivers license
- Medical information
- Photocopy everything (front & back)
  - Credit cards & financial instruments
  - Passport & IDs
  - Airline tickets
Finances

- EU countries all use Euro
- Currency exchange
  - ATMs & credit cards give best rates
  - Airports & banks worst rates
- Don’t bring currency
  - Confirm use of ATM card
  - Call credit card company
  - Bring a few emergency $ 
- Credit card benefits
- Import/ export duties
Attitude & Gifts

• Be humble & gracious
  – It ain’t America - get over it!
  – You have much to learn
  – Don’t be an ugly American

• Bring gifts
  – Research facility staff
  – Those who help you
  – Cash contributions to institutions

• What do they like?
  – Fine American chocolates
  – Tee shirts & American stuff
Culture

• Learn local culture & customs
• Enjoy their foods & beverages
• Bring your own drugs (legal ones)
• Follow their laws
  – Speed limits & parking regulations
  – Travel permits/ stickers
• Don’t find fault or be critical
• Many travel guides available
• Calories don’t count in Europe!
Language

• Learn as much as possible before
  - CD & cassette tape instruction
  - College & BOCES classes
  - Language & travel books

• Familiar genealogical vocabulary

• People will help you
  - Many folks speak some English
  - Varies from country to country
  - English spoken more in cities
  - Bring good dictionary

• Make it a point to learn language
Getting to Europe

• Seasonal airlines prices
  – January thru April best discounts
  – Summer is most expensive
  – Spring & Fall are reasonable

• Shop all the carriers for sales

• Some European airports cheaper
  – Munich vs. Vienna
  – A little driving in Europe may save $

• Last minute ticket deals

• Ticket hawkers
Travel within Europe

• Good public transportation
  - Will it get you into the Hinterwald?
  - Will it give you needed mobility?
  - Consider a mix

• Rental cars
  - Not cheap . . .
    • Shop for sales & discounts
    • Compare final prices (watch for add ons)
  - Simple to drive throughout EU
  - Rent with credit card for benefits

• Travel permits & stickers
Accommodations

• Go local!
  - Stay away from touristy lodging
  - Long-term accommodations cheaper
  - Live with friends or contacts

• Many hotels on Internet
  - Ask questions
  - Get pricing
  - Learn about availability
  - Make reservations online

• Be flexible, but make reservations
Schedule

• Not your last trip to Europe
  – You won’t finish it in one visit
  – Think long term & plan accordingly

• Schedule is based on budget
  – Longer you stay the more it costs

• Use time wisely . . .
  – Maximize research time
  – Minimize down time

• Schedule important appointments

• Be flexible with contingency plans
Scheduling Research Visits

• Contact each repository
  – Introduce yourself to staff
  – Make them aware of your plans
  – Share your research objectives
  – Learn their rules & restrictions
  – Determine services they provide
  – Ascertain their schedule
    • Research hours
    • Special closings
  – Ask questions
  – Make reservations where needed
Travel Binder

• **Blue brain organizes trip**
  – Chronological order as needed
    • Airlines ticket
    • Car rental
    • Map from airport
    • Hotel reservation
    • Contact information
  – Schedule
  – Copies of legal & fiscal docs
  – Records repository info
  – Research guide
    • Objectives
    • Finding aids
    • All things . . .
Research

• History
• Preparatory research
• Maps
• Records
• Consultants
• Research methods
• Research aids
• Repositories
History

• Understanding history is key
  – European, national, regional & local

• All aspects of history
  – Governmental, religious, socio-economic, military, etc.

• History supplies context

• Provides helpful clues
  – History of parish may lead to older records in earlier neighboring parish
Preliminary Research

• Learn all you can prior to trip
  – Study detailed maps of area
  – Become familiar with locality names
  – Understand governmental structure
  – Search available microfilmed records

• Use Internet to immerse yourself

• Develop research objectives

• Organize every needful thing . . .
  – Existing genealogical data
  – Document everything you learn
  – Write down every hunch & question
  – Match research objectives with scheduled visits
Maps

• Modern research maps
  – Loose detailed maps
    • 1:50,000 or 1:35,000
  – Bound book maps with gazetteer
    • 1:100,000

• Online interactive maps
  – MapQuest Europe
  – Specialty interactive maps

• Historical research maps
Records

• Identify every available record
  - Where are they stored?
  - What information do they contain?
  - Are there restrictions on their use?
  - How may I reproduce them?
    • May I digitally film them?
    • Other reprographic services available?

• Where do I learn this?
  - Published guides
  - Repository staff
  - Email
  - Internet sites

• Talk to everyone

• Ask in different ways over & over
Deciphering the Records

• Original foreign records challenging
  – Different language
  – Unique vocabulary
  – Local adaptations & usage
  – Foreign handwriting scripts
  – Each changed in different periods

• Find a mentor
• Study aids
• Experience is best teacher
Hiring a Consultant

- Advantages
  - Skilled with local records & repositories
  - Know all resources available
  - Provide additional contacts
  - Can teach & mentor you
  - Experience may save $ in long run

- Disadvantages
  - Can be very costly, for example . . .
    - $50/ hr. is not uncommon in Europe
    - Plus travel time & expenses
  - May not help find anything
Research Methods

• Where will you focus your time?
  - Extract focused data
  - Duplicate records & materials

• Research cycle is critical
  - What specific information do I need?
  - In what record will I find it?
  - Extract or duplicate record
  - Do supplementary records exist?
  - Repeat research cycle

• Focus on best record sources 1st
Research Aids

• Many aids available to help
  – Collection guides
  – Publications
  – Detailed finding aids
  – Indexes
  – Online catalogs

• Spend time to see what’s what

• Duplicate finding aids & guides
  – Help you plan for tomorrow . . .
  and for next year’s visit
Repositories

• Where is every record stored?
• Learn about their collections
  – Finding aids & catalogs
  – Online listings
  – Ask questions
• Figure out their game
  – What are their research hours?
  – How may records may I use?
  – May I use a laptop, camera, etc.
  – Pencils vs. pens
• Plumb depths of every collection
Walk Ancestor’s Land

- Find ancestral home sites
- Locate distant relatives
- Slow down to appreciate
- Can be spiritual adventure
- See some sights
- Take pictures to . . .
  - Document localities
  - Share with family
  - Post on website
Bring Home Treats

• Share your experience with family
• Bring home . . .
  - Chocolates & candy
  - Foreign foods
  - Clothing
  - Toys & games
  - Fun stuff from your trip . . .
• Remember to thank those who assisted you in Europe
When You Return Home

- The real work begins . . .
  - Sorting through tons of paper
  - Organizing digital images
  - Extracting genealogical data
  - Studying your finds

- Continue to learn

- Stay in contact with associates

- Soon you will feel urge to return
  and plan your next trip!
Questions?
The End

Thank You!