

# Genealogy Research in the Austrian State of Carinthia (Kaernten)

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## Congratulations!

You have landed on the right web page if you are looking for information on researching Genealogy in the Austrian Province/State of Carinthia! <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carinthia>

Before diving into your research it is wise to become aware that researching your family name and history is not as simple as doing a web search! You are about to embark on a series of "finds" that may over time help you on your personal journey!

Many of us have been researching for decades and can say now is among the best time for finding new and interesting sources of information thanks to digitization efforts by the Austrian Churches, State Archives and the National Library in Vienna! All these definitive sources will lead you to new sources of information and tips!

## How to start?

Everyone has their own methodology, you can either start with structure using a tool such as a [GEDCOM](#) database, a spreadsheet or using an unstructured approach such as a Word processor to write your findings. Our recommendation is to use what works best for you that has "search" capabilities and can be easily altered (Consider using freeware such as the tool from <https://www.ancestris.org> or <https://www.bkwin.org/> ).

For some of you this will be frustrating. Austrian genealogy sources are not uniform between Provincial States and districts. You will gain valuable insights into your forefathers by learning the "context " of the times and their lives. What was life like in Carinthia and Austria in the 1700-1800-1900s ? What was the job market like? What was the political situation? How did the multi-ethnic fabric of the Austrian empire impact the lives of its citizens? Understanding the sociology of the time will lead you to new sources of information.

Let's start by gathering what you know. What is the family name you are investigating? What hard facts do you have (names, dates, locations)? Has the name changed spellings - often typos will reference the same name. If you are researching in the south of Carinthia, there is a high probability your name will have been influenced by the Slovenian populations of areas such as the Rosental. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carinthian\\_Slovenes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carinthian_Slovenes)

## What are the best sources to start researching?

The first is the most obvious: Google and Bing. Use <http://www.google.at> we recommend setting the "location" from your country to the Austrian version (google.at) this may yield a few different sources.

(PS: if you do not have German or Slovenian language skills use <http://translate.google.com> )

Second source: If you have a solid lead (name, location, dates, life event: Birth, Marriage, Death) Go to the appropriate church book: <http://data.matricula-online.eu/en/oesterreich/>

**NOTE:** using Matricula is often a better source of information than the official Austrian Church sites. Such as for Carinthia <https://www.kath-kirche-kaernten.at/home/> Why is that? Its because of the portals that provide you with access to the digitized records. Some may not list scanned records post 1938. While in some others such as from Matricula I have found death entries from the 1970s or beyond. Different interpretation of the rules around publishing information within the last 50 years. So use Matricula. For the Province/State of Carinthia you will be primarily searching for records from the Catholic Diocese of Gurk <http://data.matricula-online.eu/de/oesterreich/gurk/>.

In many cases it can get to be confusing when someone has moved from their local parish to a different one. The concept of a central residency registry ("meldeamt") as primarily in the urban areas such as Klagenfurt or Villach. In earlier eras people would attend the parish close to where they resided. If you have address information (for example from the city registry "meldestelle/meldeamt") then you can search the Matricula for the street or locale. This may help refine where you are looking. Also note that when people died it was often communicated back to their parish of birth and in many cases an entry will be made into the original birth entry.

One other area that may frustrate you is once you have located a birth surname, then looking over to the right for the parent's entry you are unlikely to find specific details about the parents other than name, address location at time of birth. But it was common to mention who the grandparent would have been. So for example Father 'Franz + Surname' was the child of 'grandfather'. That may help you in your research. If they came from a different parish that was also often mentioned.

### Words of advice:

**1)** Resist aimless wandering through the church books, you will become easily frustrated! Use the 'index' lists this will help you to identify where to invest your time

example: The capital city of the Austrian Province/State of Carinthia is Klagenfurt. There are eight (8) main church parishes that have records online. Looking at just one Klagenfurt-Dom:

<http://data.matricula-online.eu/en/oesterreich/gurk/klagenfurt-dom/>

You will find 108 digitized books. Start by narrowing the time scale you are looking for. Then look for the birth index in that range, example:

**"K13\_006-2 Index zum Geburtsbuch 1. Jan. 1820 - 31. Dez. 1828".**

Geburtsbuch = Birth book

Taufbuch = Baptism book

Traungsbuch = Marriage book

Sterbbuch = Death book

Do not be surprised to see a surname mentioned in the "index book" and then you are unable to locate the actual entry in the church book. It is frustrating, it happens, and is often the case where a book has been copied.

**2)** Remember that in that era a lot of births were illegitimate (unehlich = out of marriage), this means that when you look at the church record the fathers (Vater) name will not be listed.

Speaking of names, things get tricky here. Often the Surname took the name of an estate or the building where the family resided or even the name of the previous owners of the building ("[vulgo](#)", "[recte](#)" are terms you will come across).

You will often start down a research path based on the last known name and as you trace it backwards you will hit a brick wall because the name has changed. Best to keep a separate column in your lists and reference by dates and locations.

Also once a female married previous reference to her maiden name will be found in death entries or in marriage books, but this can be inconsistent.

**3)** The written 'script' has changed over the years you will come across '[kurrent](#)' in handwritten records and '[gothic](#)' in pre-1945 printed records for German language (such as digitized newspapers).

When working through the church books one thing to note is the house addresses. You may not be initially able to match all the family names that you are researching. But when you get a match look to the left and note the house address, often it will be the community name plus a house number. Then you can scan through the church registers for that address and spend a bit more time looking for names of interest.

#### 4) Online Newspapers

We have mentioned Google.at and the Church records. Two other sources you need to become familiar with includes the Online Austrian newspapers project known as: "[Anno Austria](#)" from the Austrian National Library (ONB).

Typically once a month the ONB digitizes tens of new or updates previously digitized sources primarily Austro-Hungarian empire newspapers some dating back to the 1600's. Be aware that the Austrian privacy laws often will mean that no newspapers since 1949 will be searchable. We make it a habit of revisiting that site monthly. This can be daunting if you are researching a common name (Mueller etc) but it can be very interesting for uncommon names, more on that in a moment.

What will you find in the newspapers? Many interesting records including Births, Marriages, Deaths which will often indicate the parish, this will help you to refine your searches using the church records. But you will also find some unique references such as for criminal proceedings (court records), natural events (property damage), elections (communal or organizations ("vereine")) this source of info may lead you to new names and refine locations. In the early 1800s you will come across lists of names indicating draft roles for young men these are interesting in that they provide you with a name, location, age and house number.

The big obstacle in church records is the "Kurrent" handwriting, many of us have difficulty with that. To help, you may find some bulletin boards with communities willing to help or facebook groups. Consider joining!

When you really hit a wall the best way forward is often to pay for a professional researcher of which there are some very good ones in Austria.

On the subject of "Gothic" characters ,over time you will learn these "Anno Austria" uses character recognition and this will start you to narrow down leads.

One 'tip' when using the "Anno Austria" search, consider the "?" wildcard symbol for vowels or special characters because often typographical errors occurred in newspaper typesets.

Another tip: the most common first Letter in South Carinthian surnames is the letter 'K', but in the 1500-1600s it was often written with a 'C'. So substitute that as well in your searches.

Still reading? Up to know we have spoken about google.at, the church records (known as 'matriken') and 'Anno Austria' digitized newspapers. What other interesting sources exist?

## 5) Search Engines

The Austrian State Archives may have some physical records such as court probate records. You won't be able to access the actual record, but you can identify their existence and use that info for asking the State Archive to produce a record (often at a cost to you).

The online archive search system name is called 'KLAIS' and available at <https://landesarchiv.ktn.gv.at/klais/> (see bottom of document for similar search engines in Styria and Vienna).

To use it type your search string into the "Volltext Suche" box and select 'Suche'. Should your search return some results this can be useful in that you get more context information (names, locations, dates) that will help you with the other search sources we previously discussed.

A lot of information so far and not the only sources! [Geni.com](http://Geni.com), [familysearch.com](http://familysearch.com) will all be useful, but they are not definitive sources often the same name is duplicated multiple times.

One last piece of information to consider: Learn about the city/village names in the south of Carinthia they will often be referenced in Slovenian or in German. Also based on the ethnicity of the region some names will end in "-.ar" (Slovenian) or in "-.er" (German). As you trace your name further backwards you may discover that the source of the family was on one side of the "Krain" border. Occasionally you will come across a few interesting sources such as this one from 1942 when the Nazi occupiers mandated Slovenian to German name usage, you will find a long list of typical Slovenian spellings translated into their German language equivalents [here](#) (follow the [link](#)).

One source we have not discussed is the Police registry record 'meldeamt'. There are few available sources in Carinthia (unlike the City of Graz in Styria where for a fee you can return records for the 1820-1920), This is particularly useful to determine economic migration within Austria over the decades.

### War Deaths research

One other are we have not discussed is the Military roles, again the National Library has digitized many of the records in partnership with the UpperAustria Start Archive.

Three good sources we have identified that may be of use to you include:

There is also the National pre-1918 Military Archive (Kriegsarchiv) in Vienna which can be of use to you follow this link for details: <https://www.statearchives.gv.at/kriegsarchiv>

For those who fell during the Second World War the Volksbund.de has an online grave site search which includes the many Austrians who were conscripted into the 1938-1945 German armies, follow this link: <https://www.volksbund.de/en/graebersuche?>

### **“Urbar” books**

This is an interest area of research. As mentioned earlier it will help you to understand the context where your search targets lived and what the socio-political situation was. For example if the persons you are researching were farmers (“bauer”) and then they seem to have disappeared from a region such as after 1870 when agricultural prices made that profession very difficult, a lot of people fled the land and went to the cities where factories started to need people. A lot of rural people from Carinthia went to Villach or Klagenfurt and then on to Graz in the state of Styria.

So where to look prior to church records? One source is the Urbarbooks. These were records of landholdings and servants who managed the lands. Understanding pre-1700’s Austrian history will help. The Habsburg Emperor sold some of his land holdings to local nobles. Or some noble families sold their estates as the result of the lack of an heir. What would happen is a recording would be made of the land holding and who owed what to the margrave or who had a contractual obligation to the estate. One example was in 1636 for the area south of the Karawanken Mountains in what is now Slovenia (formerly Krain). Many of these records are held by the State/Provincial archives, some of published books on the topic such as <https://www.manz.at/list.html?isbn=978-3-900531-94-2>

Historical property deeds have also been digitized for much of Austria but be aware that these are often licenced to private publishing companies who will charge you for a title search. Example: <https://dienste.jusline.at/LandAustria/Lands>

Over the next decade more and more digital sources will come online and be available to you so give yourself time and revisit your sources regularly!

***Thank you for reading and good luck in your research! We hope this helps!***

### Other valuable sources:

General information on Austrian Genealogy: <https://www.austria.org/genealogical-research>

User forums: <https://forum.ahnenforschung.net/forumdisplay.php?f=26>

Facebook: <https://hi-in.facebook.com/GenTeam.Die.genealogische.Datenbank/>

Professional researcher: <http://www.felixgundacker.at/felix/genteam/genteam.shtml>

Genteam databases: <https://www.genteam.at/>

Austrian-Jewish Genealogy: <https://www.jewishgen.org/austriaczech/ausguide.htm>

Book from 1974 listing archives in German speaking countries [LINK](#)

Austrian State of **Styria (Steiermark) Provincial Archive** Online search [LINK](#)

Austrian City State of *Vienna (Wien) Archive* online search [LINK](#)

GEDBAS online search (primarily for Germany) [LINK](#)

Slovenian Genealogy Resources <https://feefhs.org/resource/slovenia>

### City of Graz Meldeamt

<https://www.graz.at/cms/beitrag/10265478/7744229/Meldeauskunft.html> \*will require fees for each search\*

City of Klagenfurt Meldeamt <https://www.klagenfurt.at/service/persoentliche-dokumente/meldeservice-1.html>

### Historical community names in Carinthia (in German)

[https://www.oeaw.ac.at/fileadmin/subsites/Institute/VID/PDF/Publications/diverse\\_Publications/Historisches\\_Ortslexikon/Ortslexikon\\_Kaernten.pdf](https://www.oeaw.ac.at/fileadmin/subsites/Institute/VID/PDF/Publications/diverse_Publications/Historisches_Ortslexikon/Ortslexikon_Kaernten.pdf)

**Findbuch.at** (has many telephone directories digitized) <https://www.findbuch.at/home>

**Electoral Records in old Austria** <https://books.google.ca/books?id=66gVAQAAIAAJ&q=>

Google has digitized many of the old **School Annuals** such as this one from Krainburg <https://books.google.ca/books?id=CJo2HRnuiK8C&pg=PP59&dq=#v=onepage&q&f=false>

### Google Book: **The Invisible Slavs in the Middle Ages**

[https://books.google.ca/books?id=T82YAqAAQBAJ&pg=PA191&lpg=PA191&dq=slovenian+urban&source=bl&ots=bl3y43\\_NM6&sig=ACfU3U2MMu5QvhE8Zr9cGwojKq6ZitswWQ&hl=de&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwi7oeqFuYTnAhXKPn0KHUVhAfMQ6AEwAHoECAkQAQ#v=onepage&q=slovenian%20urban&f=false](https://books.google.ca/books?id=T82YAqAAQBAJ&pg=PA191&lpg=PA191&dq=slovenian+urban&source=bl&ots=bl3y43_NM6&sig=ACfU3U2MMu5QvhE8Zr9cGwojKq6ZitswWQ&hl=de&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwi7oeqFuYTnAhXKPn0KHUVhAfMQ6AEwAHoECAkQAQ#v=onepage&q=slovenian%20urban&f=false)

