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1. Difficulties to overcome when looking for living relatives

With the destruction of the Jewish communities through the Holocaust and with the several thousand dissidents leaving the country during communism, it is almost a miracle to find living relatives in Hungary today.

While a non-Jewish family who used to lived in the countryside a hundred years ago usually still has offsprings in the same tiny village, the Jewish families from the countryside from the early 1900s have descendants almost only abroad.

Only in Budapest do we have good chances to find living relatives – living still in Budapest.



1. Difficulties to overcome when looking for living relatives

Privacy protection

Had we access to all existing records, our troubles were less. But there are barriers placed all over to protect private information:

- Vital records – 30/60/90 years of protection
- Need for an official document to get access to certain information
- Data protection is everywhere – social community sites also protect their users



2. Starting point

Information from the pre-war times

The last pieces of information where we have to start our research come from the pre-war times:

- Vital records from 1895-1940
- Holocaust data (the name of the town the family was deported from, the address under which they survived the war)
- Other personal information (the said person was a lawyer; or a letter with an address from before the war, etc.)



3. Resources to check first

Vital records

If you have located the family in the pre-war civil vital records, look out for the „UB”s. They are post notes in the birth- and marriage records referring to changes in the status of the person.

- Post notes in the birth records – they refer to change of religion, change of name, adoption, death
- Post notes in the marriage records – they refer to divorce or the death of one of the partners

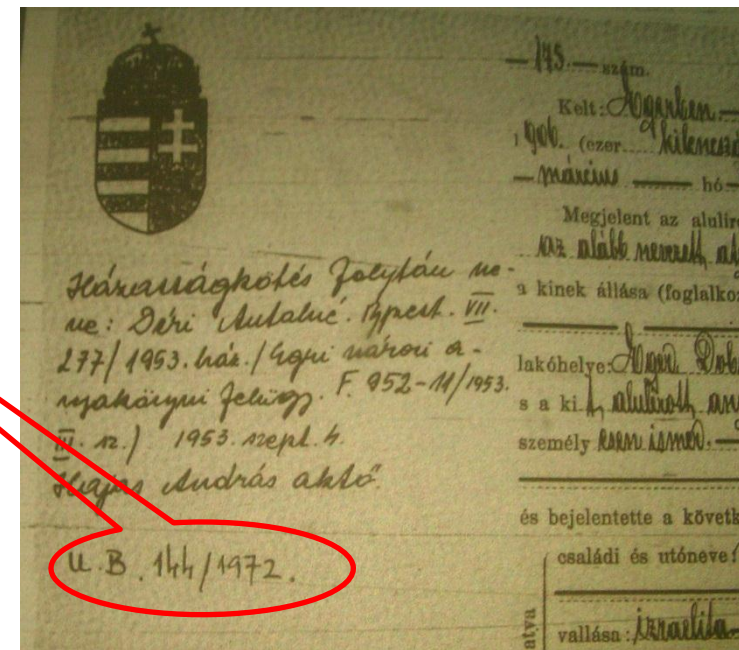


3. Resources to check first Vital records 2

If you have found an „UB” -> the archivist will tell you what event hides behind this post note and where you have to continue to look for the relevant document.

For example: 144/1972 -> refers to her death in Budapest in 1972

- Now you have a married name (for women), might have the last address, the exact date of death



3. Resources to check first

Holocaust databases – Yad Vashem

[illegible]



3. Resources to check first Holocaust databases - Neveklarsfeld

With Neveklarsfeld, the Budapest survivors' pages are very helpful.

Home Search About Contact	
Record from survivors list	
Reference	SURVIVOR - BUDAPEST 1946
Registrant's Family Name	ERDOS
Registrant's First Name	GYORGYNE
Maiden Family Name	HECHTMANN
Maiden First Name	MARGIT
Gender	F
Date of Birth	1914
Place of Birth	BUDAPEST
Mother's Family Name	GYORI
Mother's First Name	HERMINA
Address Street	GODOLLOI
Address Number	6
Spouse's Family Name	ERDOS
Spouse's First Name	GYORGYI

- Now you have the survivor's married name (for women), his/her birthyear, his/her mother's maiden name and his/her address from 1946



3. Resources to check first

Cemetery database - Öröklét

For 20th century living relatives' research, www.oroklet.hu is useful because of its list of burials in the Kozma utca main Jewish cemetery in Budapest. (Not all the Jewish cemeteries from Budapest are listed here!!!)

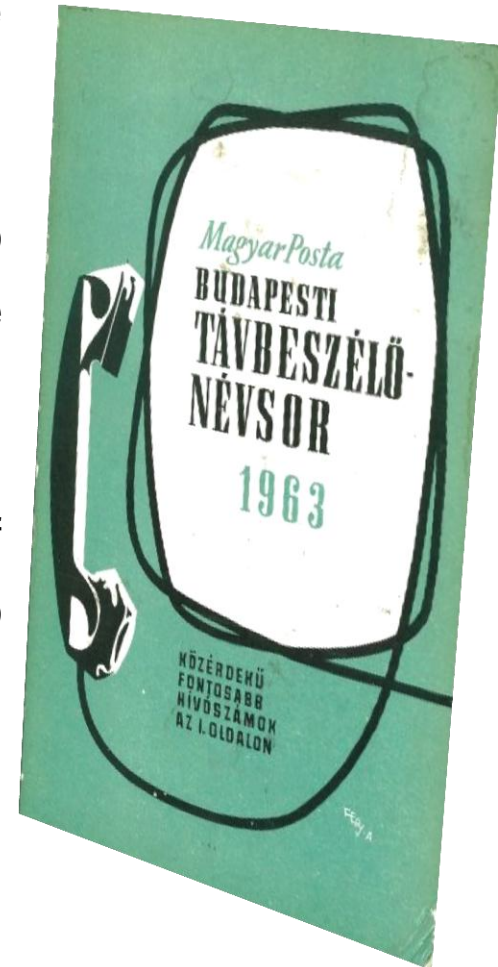
If you find somebody in the cemetery database listed, you immediately have a year of death – with some additional research of the civil death records of that year, you have the deceased's death record.



3. Resources to check first Phone books

Phone books come very handy – you can check them at the Fővárosi Szabó Ervin Library for the years 1930-1990. Telephone connections were regulated by the state during communism/socialism and people often had to wait decades to get a phone connection. So if you do not find a person in the phone books, it does not mean anything.

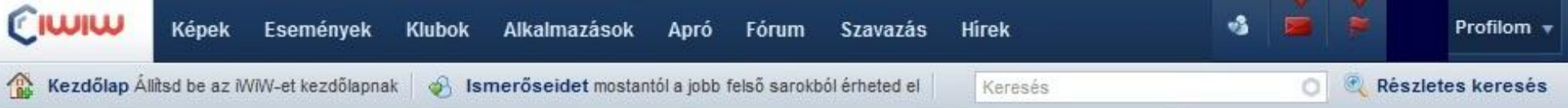
But if you find the person listed, you will have his address and if he disappears from the telephone books from one year to another, you can suspect he died then.





4. What to do with the information gathered

Internet search; FB and iwiw



First to do is a general Google search of the name – never underestimate its usefulness!

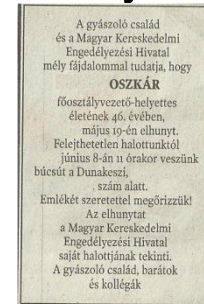
Beside Facebook (several success stories through FB) the „Hungarian-FB”: iwiw (www.iwiw.hu) is to be checked, too. In some ways it is better than FB – you can search for people by age and location, too. Elder Hungarians are more likely to be found on iwiw than on FB.

Hungarian Jewish Roots

4. What to do with the information gathered

Date of death -> death announcements

The daily newspaper Népszabadság has to be checked for a death announcement if you know when the person you are researching died.



- There might be no such announcement for him
- Or only one stating he died
- Better is if it is mentioned that „a son” or „her daughters” mourn the deceased
- Even better is if it says „son Gyula” or the „Reiner family” mourn him
- The best is if it also gives the address of the mourning family for condolence messages



4. What to do with the information gathered

Addresses -> property deeds

For a payment of only USD 30, you can request an official extract of the property deed of any house or apartment at the competent regional or local Property office (földhivatal).

- The document will reveal the owners of the house (with mother's name and address)
- You will learn when the house was sold or inherited
- If it was inherited, you have the heir's personal details – and he/she is also a family member

Belterület		/1/A/35 helyrajzi szám			
1116 BUDAPEST XI.KER.				3. emelet. ajtó:35.	
				I. RÉSZ	
1. Az egyéb önálló ingatlan adatai:					
megnevezés	terület m2	szobák száma egész/fél	eszmei hányad	tulajdoni forma	
lakás	45	1 1	454/100000	magán	
Bejegyző határozat: 246850/1998/1998.12.29					
lakás	45	1 1	46/10000	magán	
Bejegyző határozat: 999991/1999/1999.03.29			törölő határozat: 246850/1998/1998.12.29		
2. bejegyző határozat: 500011/142/1997/97.07.14					
Társasház					
Az önálló ingatlanhoz tartoznak az ala pító okiratban meghatározott helyiségek.					
				II. RÉSZ	
3. tulajdoni hányad: 1/2					
bejegyző határozat, érkezési idő: 73961/1991/1991.04.22			törölő határozat: 63477/2/2009/09.02.18		
jogcím: adásvétel					
jogállás: tulajdonos					
név : K		György			
szül. : 1918					
a.név : L		Malvin			

Hungarian Jewish Roots

4. What to do with the information gathered

Addresses -> neighbours

When somebody left a house or apartment even twenty years ago, somebody might remember this person and tell us – for example – if he had kids and what their names were. You would have to try to contact:

- 
- One of the neighbours
 - The caretaker of the house might have a book on old tenants
 - The person who bought the house or flat might give us further information on the old owners



4. What to do with the information gathered

When everything else fails

Having checked all the references mentioned so far and still missing the relative – there is one more thing to try. For another USD 30 you can give a letter to the state authorities („lakcímnnyilvántartó”) and ask them to send it to a person you name.

If you know the person's name and birth details (mother's name is a plus) and the person is alive in Hungary, they will send out the letter. Then it is up to him or her to contact you.

I have tried to find a person three times this way and in all three cases they contacted me.

Hungarian Jewish Roots

5. A recent success story – step by step



I.) Starting point: a marriage record from Budapest from the 1930s.



II.) Neveklarsfeld showed the couple had a daughter – her name and birthyear was revealed.



III.) Google search found her being a doctor, the site also showed where she had her consultancy but also told us she died some twenty years ago.



IV.) From the telephone books we learnt her last address.



V.) The caretaker of the house where she lived when she died remembered she had a daughter living in Israel and also remembered her full name.



VI.) She is listed on both Facebook and iwiw and replied to my emails she saw on both sites.

