

Foundation for East European Family History Studies

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FEEFHS News

*The Foundation for East European Family History
Studies - March 2018*

In celebration of our 25th Anniversary Year, we are including feature articles about various aspects of the organization's history. This month, we feature the history of the FEEFHS web site.

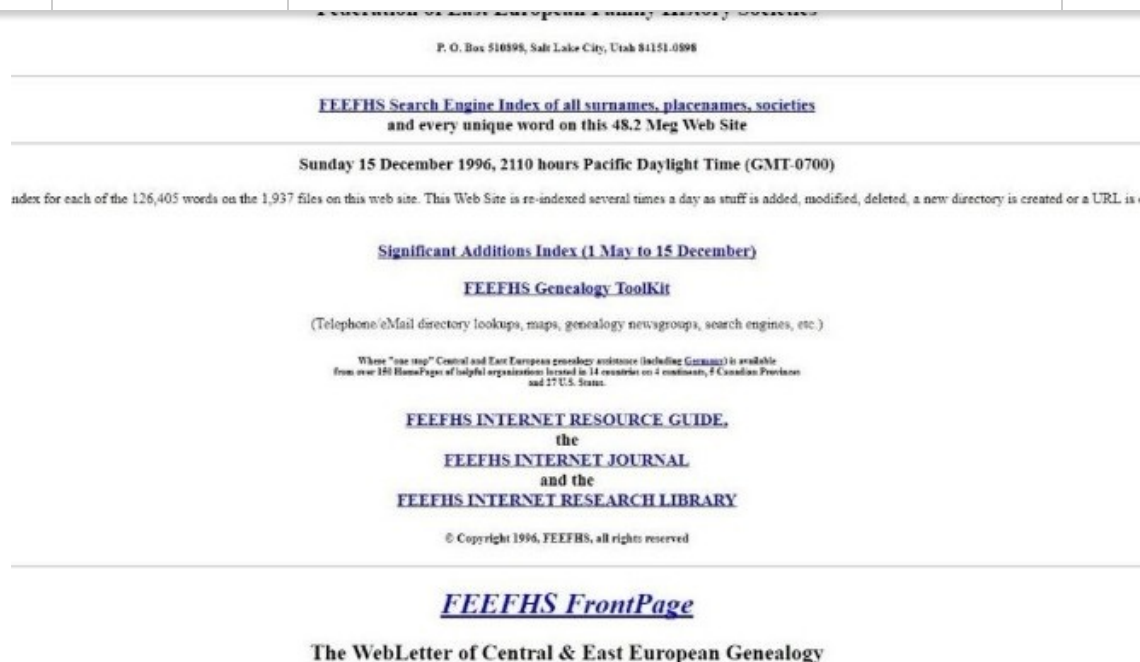
History of the FEEFHS Web Site

by Milan Pohontsch

Early beginnings

An interesting fact about the FEEFHS website is that it was the first genealogical Web portal. Under the leadership of the founding president Charles M. Hall, John Movius established the FEEFHS website in May 1995. There are no screenshots available for the early versions of the site. The website was text-oriented; containing no graphic images. It was hand-coded in lite-html. The website was immensely popular because FEEFHS provided to its member organizations a Web presence based on low monthly costs. In the mid-nineties the large majority of genealogical organizations also did not have access to affordable html programmers. FEEFHS on the other hand was able to provide such a service.

Here are a few early statistics. In December 1996 there were 230,183 visits to the FEEFHS website, in January 1997 already 300,172. These are large numbers, especially in light of the fact that the Internet user had to pay the provider for every minute being online. In February 1997 the internal website index listed 138,225 unique words in 2,158 files, 12 months later it jumped to 192,846 unique words in 3,266 files.

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[Screenshot of the front page from December 19, 1996 – the very first we were able to find]

FEEFHS was conceived as an umbrella organization for the individual genealogical societies worldwide. Focus was on east and central Europe, without ethnic, religious, or social distinction. FEEFHS conferences were held all over North America, focusing on local sources available in the area. Over time the focus changed to providing classes and one-on-one instruction related to performing successful research for conference participants. Since 2010 the meeting point for the annual conference was fixed in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Major changes in design and subject focus over the past years

The FEEFHS website underwent major changes over the past years. Repositories of documents were added or replaced by links to materials on other websites. In March 2003, the FEEFHS landing page received some color, its first graphic image, and maps.

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FEDERATION OF EAST EUROPEAN FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETIES

Address: P.O. Box 2347, Salt Lake City, Utah 84110-2347
 Please note that no correspondence regarding FEEFHS should be directed to
 P.O. Box 2660, Salt Lake City, Utah 84110-2660 or to
 P.O. Box 510898, Salt Lake City, Utah 84151-0898

Officers 2002-2003

Irmgard Hein Ellingson, Grafton Iowa: President
 Laura Hanowski, Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada: First vice President
 Kahile B. Mehr, A.G., Centerville, Utah: Second vice President
 Marsha L. Gustad, Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Third vice President
 Teresa Reese, Sandy, Utah, Secretary
 Miriam Hall-Hansen, Salt Lake City, Utah: Treasurer

Plan now to participate in European Past of the American Present, a unique, exciting family history convention at the Holiday Inn, 999 South Main, Salt Lake City, Utah, July 18-20, 2003. The Federation of East European Family History Societies (FEEFHS) was organized in 1992 as an umbrella organization that promotes family research in eastern and central Europe without any ethnic, religious, or social distinctions.

It provides a forum for individuals and organizations focused on a single country or group of people to exchange information and be updated on developments in the field. While it primarily serves the interests of North Americans in tracing their lineages back to a European homeland, it welcomes members from all countries.

Salt Lake City is the location of the world famous Family History Library and provides an opportunity unequalled elsewhere in the world for doing European genealogical research at minimum expenditure of time and money. It houses thousands of microfilm rolls from many sites in central and eastern Europe. The convention will give you the tools and knowledge to mine this vast resource.

The topics at FEEFHS conferences always include genealogical resources, research techniques, databases, projects in all European countries east of and including Germany and Austria. Within this general format, specific lectures and workshops, U.S. immigration records, European emigration records, Germanic and Slavic genealogy, internet resources for eastern European genealogy, web page design, eastern European databases, and Polish, Belarus, Ukrainian, Moldovan, Russian, Baltic, and Balkan research.

If you have questions about 2003 Convention, please e-mail the 2003 convention chair, Kahile Mehr, at mehrkb@ldschurch.org or call him at (801) 240-4756


2003 SLC CONFERENCE

European Past of the American Present

Friday 18 July 2003 -
Sunday 20 July 2003

Kahile Mehr
Convention Chair

Registration Packet
2003



[Screenshot from March 30, 2003]

Also in March 2003 the Google search engine replaced the internal Web Portal Index, that had grown to over 1 million unique words in over 6,000 files. In October 2004 the FEEFHS logo was changed and additional colors were added.



[Member Webpages](#) [Databases](#) [Maps](#) [Religions / Ethnic](#) [FEEFHS Journal](#)



FEDERATION OF EAST EUROPEAN FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETIES

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Address: P.O. box 510898 SLC UT 84151-0898

info@feefhs.org

Meet the Officers 2004-2005

Thank You, *Family Tree Magazine* The FEEFHS website has been named as one of their annual 101 best family history web sites in the August 2004 issue. Look for FEEFHS in the International & Immigration category



New Databases and Site Updates

BLITZ : Russian State Historic Archive (RGIA) TO CLOSE
 BLITZ : LIST OF SURNAMES FOUND BY BLITZ IN 2003
 T. P. Miller's Galician Family Study Mennonite Galician Database
 Sonja Hoeke-Nishimoto's WISCHNITZ PARISH REGISTER
 Barbara Starkey's Parish Records [Index of Veli Losini \(Lussingrande\), Croatia](#)

FEEFHS News

FEEFHS News
July 2003

2004 DETROIT CONFERENCE
What Is Past Is Prologue

FEEFHS / PGSM International Conference
What Is Past Is Prologue
October 1-3, 2004

FEEFHS Journal

Thomas K. Edlund

[Screenshot from September 2, 2004]

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[Screenshot from October 17, 2004]

In 2005, the first e-News was sent out via a distribution list. After the 2008 conference held in Pittsburgh, the first photographic images found their way onto the FEEFHS website. Improvements in graphics and user-friendly navigation within the content was introduced in early spring 2012.

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<p>FEEFHS</p> <p>Diversity Unity Harmony</p> <p>Download the latest E-News</p> <p>e-News Summer 2008 No. 14 e-News Spring 2008 No. 13 e-News Spring 2007 No. 12 e-News New Year 2007 No. 11 e-News Winter 2006 No. 10 e-News Autumn 2006 No. 9 e-News Summer 2006 No. 8 e-News Spring 2006 No. 7 e-News 2005 No. 6 e-News 2005 No. 5 e-News 2005 No. 4 e-News 2005 No. 3 e-News 2005 No. 2 e-News 2005 No. 1</p> <p>Best viewed with Acrobat</p> <p></p> <p>Another download!</p> <p>Finnish Research Guide</p>	<p>Member web pages Databases Map Room Regions/Ethnic FEEFHS Journal</p>  <p>Thanks for a successful conference in Pittsburgh!</p> <p>Above: Members of the Pittsburgh Slovaks, the oldest Slovak cultural group in the Pittsburgh area, performed at our Saturday banquet. Founded in 1956 by Roman Niznik, the group is under the direction of Rudy and Sue Ondrejco, assisted by Bozena Hilko, Suzy Ondrejco, Sue Stafura and Mike Columbus. The conference was held at the Airport Marriott on August 1-3.</p> <p>Conference Information (PDF) (Word) Speaker List (PDF) (Word) Program (PDF) (Word) Sunday Tour Information (PDF) (Word) Conference Video (YouTube) Conference Blog (Blog)</p> <p>Watch for news in September about our 2009 event!</p>
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[Screenshot from August 20, 2008]

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The FEEFHS website has once again been named one of the 101 best for genealogy.

Thanks to
Family Tree Magazine
for the honor.

Join us! Salt Lake City, July 12-14

[Flyer \(PDF\)](#) | [Program \(HTML\)](#) | [Program \(PDF\)](#) | [Speakers](#)
[Workshop information \(PDF\)](#) | [Travel information \(PDF\)](#)
[Registration form \(PDF\)](#) | [Register online](#)



The Salt Lake Plaza Hotel at Temple Square in downtown Salt Lake City, Utah

Do your ancestors come from Eastern Europe? Do you have records that you cannot read? Are you aware of the vast collection of genealogical records from Eastern Europe on microfilm in the Family History Library, located in Salt Lake City, Utah? Do you know about the images of original church, census, and tax records found on the

[Screenshot from March 19, 2012]

In 2015, two major changes were introduced: 1) the new FEEFHS logo representing the four political empires that dominated Europe, and 2) the name change from the Federation of East European Family History Societies to the Foundation for East European Family History Studies.

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FOUNDATION FOR EAST EUROPEAN FAMILY HISTORY STUDIES

[Map Library](#) | [Resource directory](#) | [Selected websites](#) | [Journals](#) | [Conferences](#) | [Calendar](#) | [News](#)



Joe Everett works with a participant at a previous conference.

Mark Your Calendars:

2016 Eastern European Family History Conference
August 8-12, 2016
Plaza Hotel, Salt Lake City, Utah

[Archived Conference Information](#)

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Organizations:
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[Subscribe to the Conference Blog](#)



FEEFHS - Name and Focus

Under the direction of Thom Edlund, President, FEEFHS changed its name to the Foundation for East European Family History Studies in 2014. Formerly called the Federation of East European Family History Societies, FEEFHS was organized in 1992 as an umbrella organization for many organizations that focused their research efforts on areas of East Europe and Transcaucasia. The Federation provided a Web portal and published a journal distributed to members. As technology evolved and member societies grew, these services became less relevant, and FEEFHS discontinued the journal and membership fees in 2009.

With this change, Edlund will "direct the energies of the organization toward indexing and other record discovery projects," expanding the offerings of the FEEFHS Web site as a resource to all East European researchers. As a Foundation, the organization will be able to "coordinate and collaborate its efforts with others wishing to participate with or fund such projects." FEEFHS will continue to place a high level of emphasis on providing educational opportunities to researchers.

[Screenshot from November 20, 2015]

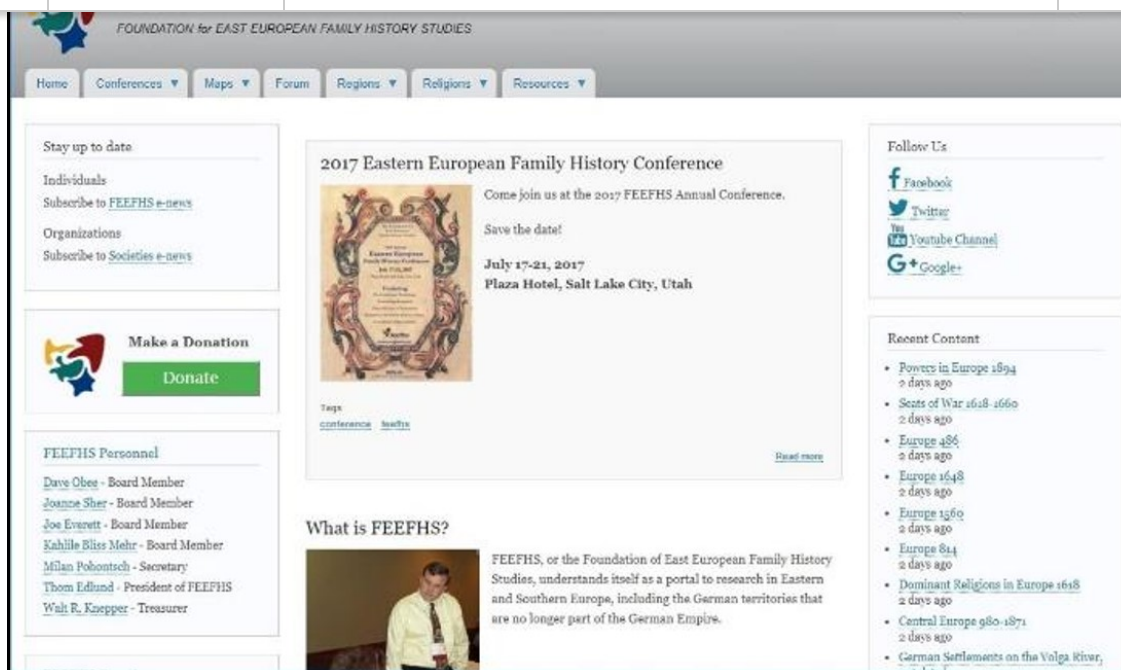
Switched to Drupal in early 2017

Since January 2017, the FEEFHS website used the Drupal content management software. This has advantages and disadvantages. The biggest advantage was, that maintaining a website in Drupal is not difficult. Content can be added or deleted very easily without the constant uploading of files to the hosting server. This cuts down the costs of maintaining our website – especially since FEEFHS was and still is a non-profit organization. The biggest drawback of switching to Drupal was the loss of uniqueness. The Drupal structure is rather rigid, custom modifications are possible through the use of user-contributed modules, but there may not be a module for a desired feature. After the first Drupal-based site went live, it was decided to utilize more color in the website theme.

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[Screenshot from March 1, 2017]



[Screenshot from May 30, 2017]

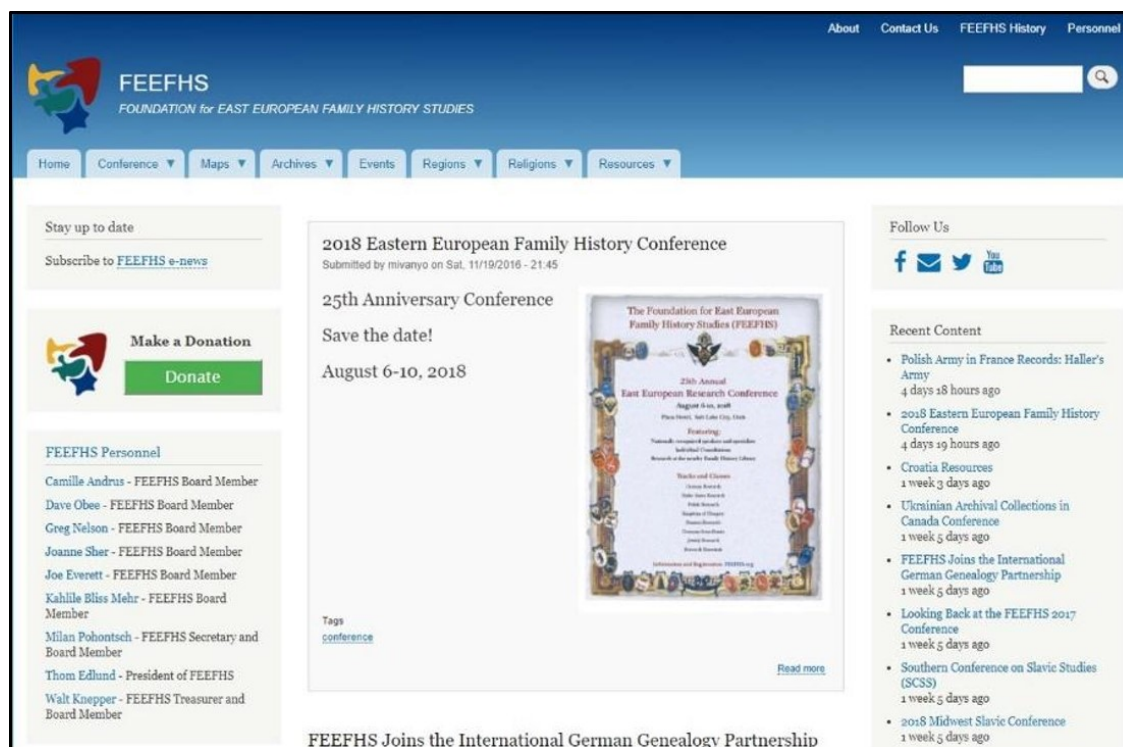
User accounts for forum

The first version of the Drupal-based site contained a forum for exchanging research-related information among registered users. It took only a few weeks to realize that the majority of new account requests were being made by spambots, instead of genuine users. Usually 3 to 5 spam requests were made per week. After about one year, the FEEFHS

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Latest website and what it presently offers

The website today still focuses on Eastern European research and grants access to resources of various countries, regions, specific nationalities, religions, and miscellaneous topics. Its external links are continually checked and updated, as needed. There are also various maps, some of which are high resolution and can be downloaded. The archive section of the website provides access to the FEEFHS journals that were published from 1998 to 2008. Prior to volume 6, the official publication was the FEEFHS Newsletter. These are also included in the archive. The website is also used to promote the annual FEEFHS conference next held in early August 2018 in Salt Lake City. Another section of the website is devoted to announcing conferences and events related to genealogical research in east Europe.



[Screenshot from November 8, 2017]

What will be added in the future?

In the future, a visitor to the FEEFHS website will find more and more content, including keyword search in various publications. The number of external links to various sources are constantly growing. Another page will be created to provide access to various webinars or online classes. A section with access to various online gazetteers will also be introduced. Additionally, it is planned to have pages related to the research of small Slavic minorities, such as the Sorbs (a.k.a. Wends) or Kashubes.

All these changes are time consuming and are done by volunteers only. Therefore, it may

FamilySearch Community Pages Update



As noted in February, FamilySearch has recently created a new FamilySearch Community where people can obtain free genealogical help from anywhere in the world. The geographic coverage of these groups continues to grow and now includes major Slavic countries in addition the Germanic countries previously announced. In these groups, you can ask questions about records, get translation help, learn about upcoming learning opportunities, and more.

FamilySearch is also calling for experts to participate in these community groups to help share information and answer questions about Eastern European countries in these community groups. If you have some expertise in research for any of the geographic areas, you are invited by FamilySearch to sign up and start sharing what you can to help others in their research. Those involved with FEEFHS are particularly invited to join the Central and East European groups, including the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Germany, Poland, Russian Empire, and Switzerland.

For more information about these Community Pages see the [FamilySearch Genealogy Research Community](#) article in the FamilySearch Wiki, where you will also find links to the individual community research groups.

Early Bird Registration for the FEEFHS 2018 25th Anniversary Conference is Now Open

[Registration](#) is now open for the [FEEFHS 25th Annual East European Family History Conference](#) to be held August 6-10, 2018. The program will be at the Salt Lake Plaza Hotel, convenient to the nearby Family History Library for research.

Celebrate FEEFHS 25th anniversary with us and learn from the experts in Slavic, Germanic, and other aspects of East European Genealogy.

This year's program features tracks in German, Polish, Austro-Hungarian, Czech, Slovak, Russian, Jewish, and DNA research. Pre-Conference Workshops are offered on August 6-7 on Finding the Village of Origin, Cyrillic for Beginners, Navigating Internet Resources, and German Document Recognition. You can [preview the conference schedule here](#).

Please visit the [conference website](#) for full details and [registration](#) information. Reserved lodging at the [conference hotel](#) is available at a special discounted rate for early-bird registrants.

Please forward this information to family members, friends, colleagues, and members of



Click on the flier image to go to the FEEFHS Conference page, where information about the conference is posted. Check back for more information as the 2018 conference nears, including early-bird registration information, hotel details, and more.

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