



" A German Genealogy Group for Poland and Volhynia"

Submittal Standards of family data for the Master Pedigree Database (MPD)
(Released on January 9, 2009 and replacing Submittal Standards issued on March 4, 2008)

Dear SGGEE Members:

This document is the main document that covers submittal standards to SGGEE. In addition to this document, there are several supplemental documents as noted in the text below.

As the Master Pedigree Database (referred to in this document as MPD) becomes larger and larger, the management of that database, specifically the merging of new data with existing data, becomes more and more challenging. Occasionally we receive a member's file that is quite unintentionally, riddled with errors. Legacy, the genealogy program that we use, has the capability to detect many errors that other similar programs are unable to detect. The integrity of the MPD is at risk if we accept erroneous data, and all members will be disappointed if we do not take some action. We have, therefore, undertaken the writing of this letter to provide an in-house guide for us to make corrections, but we hope that you will also use this guide to make your data better for your own use and before you submit your data to us. While we will make all of the types of changes noted below to any data that you submit to us, we reserve the right to return a submitted file to the owner for corrections if we consider it to have significant errors that are far too difficult or time consuming for us to correct. We hope that if a file is returned to you, however, that you will make the changes needed and resubmit it to us for inclusion in the MPD.

We describe the specific issues that need to be addressed before a file is submitted for merging with the MPD. **SPECIAL NOTE - If you read nothing else in this letter, please read at least Item 6 below.**

1. Location fields that are not true locations: Information such as "St. Valentine's Day", "Baptized by Pastor Schmidt", "Died of Influenza", "Home", "70 years, 6 months, 5 days", etc. are not locations, yet we frequently see this type of data entered intentionally or unintentionally in location fields.

When a merge is undertaken between the data you submit and the data in the MPD, these locations show up as conflicting data with locations submitted by other members and must be edited out manually for the merge to continue. The same is true when you enter a location of a town or city, but spell the location differently each time you enter it - each different spelling is a conflict. Some conflict in locations is inevitable, given that much of our family data comes from sources of varying reliability, but we really need to reduce the conflicts to the smallest possible number.

Because it takes time to resolve conflicts, we ask that you carefully review the data that you intend to submit to SGGEE and transfer all non-location data to Notes or the proper location fields of the Events fields and, consolidate the different spellings of location names.

We recognize that towns were abandoned by their inhabitants but for genealogy purposes, they are valid locations. If you are aware that a location has become a ghost town, please record the location in your file as in this example "Manhaven (no longer exists), North Dakota, USA". By taking this action, time and effort will be saved in verifying locations before we merge your file with the MPD.

You may use whatever genealogy program that you care to use to make such changes, but you may find it difficult to find all of these aberrations in your data unless you use a program that has a Master List of Locations and Lists which records are associated with that Location entry. It will be difficult in a program without a Master Location List because there are many fields in all genealogy programs that can contain location fields. Apart from Legacy, available free at <http://www.legacyfamilytree.com/Download.asp>, we are not aware of any genealogy programs that have this capability.

2. Given names, or suffixes of surnames as surnames. When we merge data, we compare surnames with surnames, and given names with given names. If your data incorrectly shows a given name as a surname, then no matches will be found, and we will have spent time doing the merge with no reward for either you or us.

There are genealogy programs that make it difficult for you to make such name errors, and there are programs that promote you to make such errors (generally programs with a single field for an entire name cause such problems). We do not have a comprehensive list, but we know that Family Tree Maker is one such program that promotes such errors.

Again, you may use whichever genealogy program that you care to use to make such changes, but you may find it difficult to find all of these aberrations in your data if your program has only one field to enter both the given name and surname. We strongly recommend that you use a genealogy program that has a Master List of Surnames that will aid in discovering such name aberrations. However, any program that allows you to look at data alphabetically by surname should also allow you to discover such aberrations. Whether your program has Master Lists or not, each incorrect record found must be changed one record at a time by moving the false given name to the given name field (single name entry field genealogy programs require you to add \\ after the given name).

3. Persons with multiple sets of parents We cannot finish the merge process if any person in the database has more than one set of parents. We realize that some people have biological parents and also adoptive parents. If you know both sets of parents, we ask that you record the adoptive parents only in Notes and not link a person to more than one (1) set of parents.

We recognize that occasionally there are input errors that cause a person to unintentionally have multiple sets of parents. Apart from Legacy, available free, we are not aware of any genealogy programs that will find records that contain more than one set of parents.

The reason for this essential requirement is that our website has all records linked by families. If a record is uploaded to our website that has multiple parents, our website search routine cannot display any parents of such individuals.

4. The merge process requires a comparison of given names. During a merge of your data with the MPD, the program matches up given names for each corresponding surname.

The Legacy program does not have a Soundex merge function to merge given names. For a merge to be successful, therefore, it is necessary that the given names match letter for letter for the first six (6) letters of the given name, or for the full length of the given name if it is shorter than 6 letters. There is no requirement for second names to match, nor is there a requirement for names to match beyond the 6th letter.

As the program will not recognize any variation in the given names as a match, we elected to change all names in the database we maintain to the most common form of a German given name. If you provide names like Elizabeth we will change it to Elisabeth, Rudolph to Rudolf, Bertha to Berta, John to Johann, Kristine to Christine, etc.

We are not expecting you to make this particular change in your personal file. However, if you do elect to help us by making the changes yourself in the data you submit, you are welcome to list the most common German name first and then list the Polish or other language spelling of the given name next, as in Elisabeth (=Elzbieta). If you know that the person in the record went by additional given names, then please add them the (), for example Elisabeth (=Elzbieta or Elizabeth or Betty).

Accompanying this letter is a list of German Given Names that we use (titled 'German spellings of Given Names'). This it is not a comprehensive or complete list of Given Names but as we receive new information, it will be updated and made available to members. You can also visit <http://www.sggee.org/AlternateChristianNames.pdf> from time to time for updates to this list.

Please note that unless you change each record one at a time, you will need a genealogy program that allows global changes in given names to make these changes. The programs Legacy and PAF have user friendly functions that can facilitate such changes.

NOTE: Each of you, as you research your family, need to be aware that both given names and surnames often changed as your family moved from country to country. They also varied depending on the language used, and who was providing the information and making the entry of the birth, baptism, marriage, death or burial. While we at SGGEE are making changes in names simply to provide better merging of your data with that from others, your success in finding your relatives will be directly related to how readily you can accept that the spelling of the names in your family are usually going to be different in the original records than you expected.

5. The merge process requires a comparison of surnames During a merge of your data with the MPD, the program matches surnames using the (American) Russell Soundex System (this is the only sounds-like merge available to us).

The Soundex merge compares names like Mueller and Miller (essentially compares spellings without the vowels), but it is generally impossible to compare Polish names to the German version of the same name if they are significantly different - for example the

comparison of Czarnecki to Schwarz, Kowalski to Schmidt, Wisniewski to Kirsch or Kirschbaum, etc.

We will endeavor to make these types of surname changes in your database, but you can assist us by knowing that such alternate surnames exist and, if you know it, changing the Polish or other language surname to the German version of the surname in your database before you submit your data. Please make the amendment in this format Schwarz (=Czarnecki).

You can gain some insight into the alternate surnames by reviewing our alternate surnames lists at <http://www.sggee.org/AlternateSurnamesDatabaseSubstantiated.pdf> . The process of looking for alternate surname should make you a better researcher of your own family by knowing which Polish records may be yours. Again, it will help greatly if you use a genealogy program with a Master Surname List (Legacy has this capability). You can also use a program like PAF to make global changes (assuming that you have spelled all of your surnames the same way), or you can manage it less efficiently if you wish to change each name, one at a time.

6. The data does not contain dates. If data is submitted to us without dates, then it makes the process of merging data all the more difficult, since there are fewer specifics to compare your data to other data in the Master Pedigree Database. **MORE IMPORTANTLY, if records have no birth date, then we must assume that the person in that record is deceased, and all data for that individual will show on our website. IF YOU DO NOT WANT A SPECIFIC RECORD TO SHOW ON OUR WEBSITE, then you MUST include a birth date that is less than 80 years ago.** We will guard your data, but if you are sensitive about anyone knowing specifics about any individual in your data, then use a bogus date (for birth and if applicable, marriage) to hide that individual on our website. Be aware, however, that if you exclude an individual from viewing by anyone on our website, then you have eliminated any possibility that other SGGEE members can determine that the person in that record is related to them.

Thank for your understanding and assistance.

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