

GENEALOGICAL TOURISM, A MODERN FORM OF ALTERNATIVE TOURISM IN BANAT

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***Abstract:** Genealogical tourism is an alternative form of modern tourism, which knows a moment of blossoming on national and international plan, because more and more travel agencies include in their packages offered travels for those who want to find their roots. The genealogy is meant to gather the evidence and information necessary for the formation of a genealogical tree, for the Banat Germans who lived in these places and immigrated to different parts of the planet. The descendants of these emigrants want to discover their genealogical identity, to know their predecessors' history and to know their distant relatives, keeping the family traditions alive. Those who want to see how their German ancestors lived can still see in the Timis villages, houses and households of German settlers in this multicultural space that is Banat.*

***Keywords:** Banat, alternative tourism, Germans, genealogical tourism*

INTRODUCTION

Genealogy is the study and discovery of a genealogical tree. For this it is necessary to gather the names of the living and deceased relatives and to establish relations between them on the basis of evidence and corroboration. So, travel agencies from Romania have developed a new type of tourism, genealogical tourism, which has attracted more and more tourists from England, Scotland, and Germany, etc.[1,7,9]

By searching for genealogy, family traditions remain alive.[13]

A new type of alternative tourism, the so-called genealogical tourism, is experiencing a moment of blossoming in Romania, where more and more travel agencies include in their packages offered travels for those who want to find their roots.[2,10,11,15]

In this "hunt" to gather all the information necessary for the formation of a family tree, the Romanian tourist agents have saw the chance of developing a new type of tourism, which for many years acquired fanatical fans in the UK, Scotland, etc.[3,4,12]

Among the thousands of emigrants from Central and Eastern Europe to the US and Canada, at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century there were hundreds of thousands of Romanian citizens, of different nationalities and religious confessions. A new wave of emigration took place in late 1940, when Communism was built in Eastern Europe. Today, the descendants of these emigrants, widespread on various places of the planet, want to discover their genealogical identity, to know the history of their predecessors and, why not, find relatives (far or not), of whose existence they have ignored. [5, 6, 8, 14]

MATERIAL AND METHOD

In this paper we aim to find opportunities for practicing the genealogical tourism in Banat by identifying the localities that are suitable for this form of tourism, improving the services so as to meet the needs of those who practice this kind of tourism.

This study aims at highlighting the historical traces of the Swabian colonists who lived in this area and who have put their mark on architecture and culture in Banat.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The German traditions in Banat are attested and the Germans who want to see how their ancestors lived can still see in the Timis villages, houses and households of German settlers such as Giarmata, Sandra, Uihei or Liebling.



Figure 1. Swabian houses in Banat

The state archives regarding births, marriages, deaths, and other important documents for the historical identity of a human being are well-guarded at the State Archives of Romania and are made available to the researchers. Documents issued before 1890 are deposited at the County Directorate of National Archives, and documents issued after 1890 can be found at the Civil Status Office of each city hall.

When someone searches for roots, it is useful to know the name of the city or village whose authorities have issued a document, and also the date of its issue.

We propose for Banat cultural area a route on the Cenad - Biled, Timis County, a genealogical tourism activity for the Germans who left the country or whose relatives left from Banat and who want to see the places of childhood or to search for their own identity.

Cenad is a settlement separating itself into Cenad or Cenadul Mare and the German Cenad or Cenadul Vechi, colonized with Germans in the period 1746-1765. The ties of the Swabians with Cenad are testified to both the German seals of the Cenad and the many German publications that have appeared lately. The old emblem of Cenad Episcopacy is

precious because it also speaks about the architectural and cultural development of this place and of the role of the German colonists who have passed through this multicultural area that is the Banat.

The 1880 data show that 3166 Germans and 1,495 Serbs lived in the area and in 2002 there were only 48 Germans and 266 Serbs.

Although they have immigrated to Germany, the Germans from these places have not forgotten their places of origin, and those who want to find the history of the Swabians can visit the Roman Catholic Church, the Hibel Quarter, the German House, the Roman Catholic Cemetery, the Cenad School, or by participating at the Roman Catholic Prayer on September 24th.

Another Timis County commune colonized with Swabians from Cenad and from other Banat towns in 1785 is Lovrin. The ties of the Germans, willing of genealogical tourism with Lovrin, are certified by the German seals of the locality as well as by the interest of the ethnic Germans immigrating to this locality.

The Sandra receive in 1833 approximately 700 German colonists, which makes that even today to exist the illustrative houses in the style of the Swabian Baroque countryside, ornamented with rosettes, wreaths and garlands, so from all Banat localities that are suitable for genealogical tourism, this locality is the most representative, being considered a historical monument.

The village of Biled is colonized by the Germans since 1765, the links of the Swabians with this locality being certified by the German seals of the locality. The National Port from Biled as well as the rest of the localities has as its common feature the Tschurak - the sober kerchief with which the married women covered their heads.

Specialists' searches for roots, it is useful to know the name of the city or village whose authorities have issued a document, and also the date of it issue.

In Romania, the county directorates especially help those interested in genealogical research, offering a lot of services to those interested, from a simple Xerox copy of a document to a specific subject. Of course, services are offered at logical prices if one considers that a Xerox copy costs \$ 0.14 and research on a theme 18\$.

So, all those interested in finding the traces of their predecessors in Romania can contact the nearest information office of a travel agency from Romania.



Figure 2. Popular Swabian port from Banat

CONCLUSIONS

On this genealogical route, we meet ethnic Germans seeking their roots, even if they do not have houses with rural baroque architecture in their propriety. They go to the cemetery, to the museum or the church, just to see how their ancestors lived and to find their roots. They can also participate in Kirvei, which signifies the celebration of the community, as well as the ministry that is being held in that same day at the Roman Catholic Church from the locality.

The Swabian houses in these areas are high-value genealogical cultural heritage attractions that must be put in value by the specialists, tour operators and tourism officials. The fronts of Swabian houses that mention the name of the one or those who built the house and the year in which it was built define an architectural style practiced for nearly a century.

Searching for relatives in life often leads to family reunions, of both distant and separated relatives, and to the reunification of families separated from war, emigration or adoption.

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