

The Havran Family of Ujak/Udol

by, Jenny Havran

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1. John Hawran and Mary Gasior on their wedding day in 1914 in Chelsea, Massachusetts.

2. Michal Havran, Sr. taken abt. 1911, when he came to Chelsea, Mass to visit his children.

3. The 5 Havran children who came to America between 1902-1914.

Back row: John Hawran, Annie Havranova Biss, Stefan Hawron

front row: Mary Havranova Jaskulka, Michael Harvan

When I decided to look into my husband's genealogy for the benefit of our three young daughters, I had no idea what a challenging and fascinating trip it would be. Being of German and English descent myself, I was rather spoiled at the abundance of information, and the ease of immigration I found while researching my own brood. When I took on the Hawran family I was humbled at the struggles these brave people fought both in Europe and here in America.

Researching these people I found that family memories varied...although many of the miscommunications came from the immigrants themselves who were uneducated, scared of retribution if they expressed their true nationality, and just plain secretive.

The name: My first hurdle. Of the 8 children born in my husband, Fred's, grandfather's family, 5 came to America--3 brothers and 2 sisters. The sisters married, and at first, no one could recall how they spelled their maiden name. And the brothers. Well, they all spelled the family name differently--and insisted, with great Rusyn tempers, that their way was the true way. Fred's, grandfather, John, spelled it HAWRAN. John's oldest brother Michal spelled it HARVAN. And the youngest brother to come over spelled it HAWRON.

I soon discovered that the family name was HAVRAN.

A brief overview:

Eight children were born to Michal Havran and Mary Suchanovska in Ujak, Slovakia.

1. **Michael Harvan** (1885-1974) (arrived in America 1902)
2. **Mary Havranova Jaskulka** (1886-abt. 1945) (arrived in America pre-1902)
3. **Anna Havranova Biss** (1888-1960) (arrived in America 1902)

4. **John Hawran** (1894-1967) (arrived in America 1911)
5. **Stefan Hawron** (1897-1963) (arrived in America 1911-1914)
6. **Maria Havranova Dopirakova** (1903-1978)
7. **Mikulus Havran** (1907-unkn)
8. **Peter Havran** (1909-1995)

All of our relatives settled in the Chelsea, Massachusetts area. A very unusual thing for anyone from the village of Ujak. Mary Havranova Jaskulka was the first to come over with her husband, Paul pre-1902. We assume they passed through the Passaic, New Jersey area where most of the immigrants from Ujak had settled. It seems likely they moved up to Chelsea because of job prospects for Paul. The siblings that followed; Michael, Anna, John and Stefan, all went up to the Chelsea area after coming through New York.

Eventually, Anna Havranova married John Biss and migrated south to West Hartford, Connecticut, where there were many factory jobs available. Anna encouraged her brothers, John and Stefan to move down to Connecticut as well, where they would find steady work. They did--and both settled in Hartford where they married and raised their families.

The elder Havran parents and their 3 youngest children remained in Slovakia for the remainder of their lives. Father, Michal Havran, Sr. came to America around 1914 to check on his 5 children. They each gave their father money they had earned to take back to Slovakia with him. The story goes that Michal went back like a rich man, and bought up several acres of land with that money. As far as we can determine, Michal Sr. and his wife, Maria Suchanovska, died in Ujak and are buried in the old cemetery.

Daughter Maria Havranova, married Michal Dopirak in 1920 and moved to Orlov, Slovakia. She died in 1978. Maria used to correspond with a relative in West Hartford, Connecticut until the 1960's. The family had lost touch with them until I made contact with Maria's daughter, Irena, in 1997.

Son, Peter Havran was "relocated" (this term was used by his daughter, Helena) to Ukraine in the 1940's with his wife and 6 children. Helena found me on the Internet, via a friend of hers who works at a state office in Bratislava, Slovakia. Helena recalls her father telling her and her siblings that they had to move because the Czech people were tired of working the fields for the Russians and now they could go home. The Russians still needed someone to work the fields, though, so they wanted the Slovaks and the Rusyns to do it.

Second to the youngest son, Mikulus, also was "relocated" to the Ukraine in the 1940's. His descendants still live there (in Rovno, Prospekt Mira), but the family has lost touch with them. We are trying to find them once again so they can tell us what has happened in their lives since the family left Ujak.

Included in this write up is a photo of the 5 Havrans who came over to this country between 1902 and 1914. They faced many hardships here. Choosing to migrate north to Chelsea, Massachusetts was a unique decision, as I said. They settled in an predominately Polish and Italian area of Chelsea. The family remained a strong and united clan that frequently got together for weddings, baptisms, and funerals. They were a colorful and lively group. The arguments and strife were as frequent as the joyful tears and great hugs.

I continue to research them, and have already instilled in our three daughters what intelligent and hard working people their ancestors were to have traveled away from the only home they knew, to a start all over again in a land they had never laid eyes on before.

For those of you who are a spouse to someone of Rusyn ancestry, I urge you not to shy away from delving into this research because you are afraid you don't know enough about the culture. I knew NOTHING about the Rusyn culture. But I had a desire to learn for the sake of the history I knew I wanted to hand down to my children. The Internet was invaluable. If it weren't for it, I would have never connected with the many people who grew up in this culture, and who have been so patient and tolerant of my lack of knowledge.