

The Schimko Family



This is the Simko family: my great-grandfather Samuel Schimko and his wife Johana Schimkova in the middle with their children and relatives. My name is unusual for a Jewish family [Jews living on Slovak territory before World War II had mostly German surnames, which is closely tied to the reforms of Jozef II [1](#) - Editor's note], which is why I decided to investigate its origins. I pondered where it could possibly originate, and came upon one thing. During the time of Austro-Hungary, my great-grandfather lived in Halic [Halic: later Galicia, is a historical territory in today's southeastern Poland and northwest Ukraine. During the years 1772 - 1918 it belonged to Austro-Hungary - Editor's note]. This means that the name Simko is probably of Polish origin. But it's quite possible that my great-grandfather changed his original Jewish name in Halic, because the name Simko isn't Jewish. According to documents that I have, my great-grandfather must have spoken German, as back then our name, Simko, was written Schimko and was written in German Schwabacher [also called Gothic, or black-letter script].