

**Title:** The Americanization of Russian Old Believer Surnames in the Eastern U.S., Part II:  
Pronunciation

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The issue of “Americanizing” Slavic surnames is extremely complex: phonetically, orthographically, and sociolinguistically. Attempting to reflect Slavic sounds with the (American) English phonetic and orthographic systems can be daunting, and the results can be unpronounceable and even indecipherable both for Americans in the general public and for those back in the Old Country trying to find their relatives in the United States. The situation is further complicated when the language of origin uses a Latin-based alphabet (Czech, Polish, Croatian, etc.): the pronunciation of the Slavic Latin letters often does not correspond exactly or even similarly with their American English counterparts, and Slavic diacritics are often simply dropped entirely when a surname crosses the Atlantic. Add to this other practices used in the Americanization of foreign surnames (translation, calquing, truncation, simplification of spelling or pronunciation, etc.), and the results are quite different from the original Slavic surname.

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