JEWS OF GALICIA UNDER AUSTRIAN-POLISH RULE, 1869-1918

This article was adapted by Ruth Chernia and is based on a presentation by Prof. Piotr Wrobel, holder of the Konstanty Reynert Chair of Polish Studies of the University of Toronto's Department of History.

Although in the 17th century, 75 percent of all Jews in the world lived in Polish-Lithuania, few histories have been written about the Jews of Poland. A recent bibliography lists only four titles written since the war. Some scholars, relying on outdated works, have perpetuated errors of earlier works. And many authors have concentrated only on the assimilated, German-speaking Jewish population, ignoring the hundreds of thousands who lived in small shtetls.

There are three periods of Galician history. From 1772 to 1848 it was part of the absolutist Hapsburg Empire. From 1848 to 1867 there were periods of revolution, counterrevolution and struggles for democratic changes. After the reorganization of Austria into the Dual Monarchy with Hungary, from 1867 to 1918 it was an autonomous province administered by an oligarchy of Polish nobles. Polish became the official language and Galicia became a centre of Polish culture.

However, it was far from Vienna, across the Carpathian Mountains and was the largest and poorest province of Austria. In the late nineteenth century it contained over a quarter of its population and territory but only 9.2% of all industrial enterprises and 4% of the whole of Austrian industrial production. Its share of state revenue was about 10%; its share of expenses over 16%. The average life expectancy was 28 years and 67% of the population was illiterate.

Among the approximately 2,000 Polish noble families, 400 controlled almost 43% of the arable land and over 90% of the forests.

At the end of the eighteenth century there were 150,000 Jews in the Hapsburg lands outside Galicia: 80,000 in Hungary and the rest in Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia. No Jews lived in Austria proper. The Jewish population of Galicia at this time was over 215,000, 9 percent of the population.

In 1764, Jewish self-government in Poland had been abolished. Wars on Polish territory during that century left the government weak and the Jewish population in Galicia was divided into at least two groups: those who admired the Baal Shem Tov and adherents of orthodoxy.

Empress Maria Theresa created a new autonomous board of trustees (Generaljudendirektion) to collect the heavy taxes she imposed on the Jewish population. Her successor, Jo-seph II was an admirer of the Enlightenment. He abolished some feudal privileges, abolished the Generaljudendirektion and established the Toleranzpatent in 1789, a decree of tolerance that abolished the autonomy of the kahals (rabbinical courts) but still kept Jews living in ghettos. Joseph allowed Jews to enter new professions but they were forbidden to hold leases on mills, inns, breweries and estates or even to live in rural areas. They had to serve in the army and were declared members of the communities where they lived. However, all this came with new taxes, including a marriage tax that was intended to limit family growth. During the next half-century many of the reforms were overturned. Secular education and abandonment of traditional dress were encouraged. But essentially this was a time of the status quo.

The revolution of 1848 "The Springtime of Nations" brought a period of accelerated changes. Jews took part in the revolutionary events throughout the Empire, demanding changes for themselves. They were granted civil rights and the right to buy real estate. Semi-feudal estate taxes were abolished as were taxes on kosher food and candles. However, these rights were more on paper than actual. Jews remained in their ghettos in the large cities of Lwow and Crakow until 1867.

In This Issue

UPCOMING EVENTS

Programs organized by the Jewish Genealogical Society of Canada (Toronto) at the Shaarei Shomayim Synagogue - 470 Glencairn Avenue
Doors open at 7:30, program begins at 8 p.m.

All members will receive further details either by email or by telephone.

Wednesday, September 24, 2003

Program to be announced

For further information visit our website at www.jgstoronto.ca or watch the "What's New" column in the Canadian Jewish News.

MEMBERS AND FRIENDS OF SHEM TOV

We want to wish you all a pleasant summer and hope to see you in September. This is also a reminder that we are interested in relevant material for Shem Tov. If you have something to report, don't hesitate to contact us at: **shemtov@jgstoronto.ca**

The Austrian constitution of 1867 granted Jews equal rights, terminating all feudal restrictions. Since 1861 Jews could be elected to the Sejm and four Jewish deputies were elected. However, again, theory and practice diverged. During the rest of the century the number of Jewish deputies rarely exceeded five (of the 150 to 155 deputies). Jews were rarely admitted to the civil service or universities.

Jews were not considered a nationality but a religious group. Therefore they were not granted the limited rights of a nationality. Yiddish was not approved for use in the schools. All Jews had to belong to a religious community (Religionsgemeinschaft). These communities were responsible for the entire religious life of the local population and were legal bodies but had the right to tax their members. In the 1890's there were 253 Religionsgemeinschaften in Galicia.

In the years before WWI, Jews were the fifth largest "nation" in Austria after the Germans, Czechs, Poles and Ukrainians. And by 1900 the Jews of Galicia made up 66.2 percent of all the Jews in Austria. Ethnically, Galicia consisted of two halves: the west was predominately Polish and the east, Ukrainian. Jews were more numerous in urbanized eastern Galicia: over half a million in the east compared with 170,000 in the west.

These same years saw the beginning of vast waves of emigration. A bad economic situation coupled with the continued limits on social opportunities led some three million people from Austria to emigrate to the United States between 1881 and 1910. Of these 9.1 percent were Jews and the main source of the latter was Galicia: 236,504 left the province during this time. Some did go to other parts of the Empire, especially Hungary and the city of Vienna, which came to have a Jewish community second only to Warsaw.

Assimilation also led to a slowing of the increase of the Jewish population of Galicia. Unlike in Russia, Polish culture and education was at first heavily German in nature. Supporters of the Haskalah dominated Galician Jewish elites until the 1860's. Many decrees encouraged and even mandated the use of German language and education. As a result, progressive Jews were "Germanophiles" until WWI, believing that Franz Joseph protected Jews from racism. These worked vigorously to modernize Jewish life. In 1846 they established a reform synagogue in Lwow, led by a rabbi educated in Germany. In 1867 they formed the first Jewish political organization in Austria, Shomer Israel and elected four Jewish deputies to the Viennese parliament in 1873. Towards the end of the century assimilation was influenced by Polish patriotism and that language superceded German after Galicia achieved autonomy. New political organizations, such as the Zionists and Socialists, used Polish. All this was also enhanced by the growth of secular education that saw the number of Jewish children in secular schools grow from 408 in 1830 to 110,000 in 1900. Similarly in 1867 there were 760 Jews attending university; by 1900 there were thousands. However, unlike the situation in Germany, very few of these assimilated Jews converted to Christianity.

The autonomy of Galicia also brought economic changes. Landowners realized that industrialization could be good for the country. The first Jewish gentry appear. Most still worked as artisans and in trade and a large percentage were involved in transportation.

The assassination of Tzar Alexander II of Russia in 1881 led to a wave of pogroms in that country. In their panic, refugees moved westward into Austria. Many believed that their natural destination should be Israel and this idea spilled over into the assimilated Jewish intelligentsia in Austria, who were affected by a wave of anti-Semitism there too. In 1882 the first Austrian association for the colonization of Palestine was established, Ahawath Zion (Love of Zion). It included modernized Jews and orthodox rabbis. Other organizations that promoted Jewish emancipation within the Hapsburg Empire were also formed at this time. All these groups contributed to an intensive political life, especially after 1918.

Life with the non-Jewish population was complex and difficult. Although assimilated Jews were gradually accepted by Polish society, Jewish emancipation provoked suspicion. Political leaders wanted the Jews to be a balance between the Polish and Ukrainian populations. But Polish peasant parties used anti-Semitism. Elections were inevitably accompanied by conflicts particularly in 1911.

The outbreak of WWI was a surprise for the Austrian Empire. In the first month the Russian army occupied Galicia and came close to Crakow. Fleeing the known anti-Semitism of the Russian army, hundreds of thousands of people became refugees, a large majority of whom were Jews. It is hard to come up with the exact figure but between the 1910 and 1921 censuses, Galicia lost over 20 percent of its population. Most went to Hungary and Austria where they lived in camps. Entire communities fled. Large numbers also went to Vienna where they remained for a time. After the war, most were deported eastward. They returned not to the poverty of Galicia but to the larger cities of Poland where they also experienced anti-Jewish riots.

By 1943 Jewish Galicia had disappeared. The last traces of that world live on in other Jewish communities around the world.

One question that came up during Prof. Wrobel's presentation was the origin of the name. Prof. Wrobel explained that it had originated in the thirteenth century. It was Halicz or Galicz in Latin. It seems to have come from a Hungarian word. Hungary had once owned that territory. ✿

We Welcome These New Members to Our Society

Paul Fisher   Jason Meshwork

Ellen Monheit   Sonny Monheit

Dorothy Pullan

Success with Ellis Island One Step
Cynthia Surprise

I hope my experience will give some encouragement and ideas to those who are searching for their ancestors' Ellis Island arrival records. I had searched unsuccessfully for the record of my grandmother, her three sisters and their father since the first day the Ellis Island website started. From my grandmother's naturalization records and family oral history I believed they had arrived as a group in August 1901. I also knew their names and approximate ages. The family name was Rapaport, but of course I knew there were several possible spellings. I also realized that my grandmother's memory of the date of arrival may not have been accurate. Using Stephen Morse's one step program, I tried many possible ways to find the family, but naturally I was always looking for a name similar to Rapaport.

This morning using the short, gray form, I did a town search for Letichev, which was shown on my grandmother's naturalization papers as being her last residence. I used "sounds like" rather than exact spelling. Then, instead of looking at the names that resulted, I scrolled down looking for 1901. I saw a listing for a man of 50 (the right age for my great grandfather) whose first name was Srol. My great grandfather's name was Israel (Yisroel) and could easily have been heard as Srol. Listed below his name were four girls of my grandmother's and great aunts' ages and their first names matched perfectly. The only problem was that the last name, Eibtmann, sounded nothing like Rapaport. When I looked at the manifest and saw that they were going to Boston and the name and address of the relative they were joining, I knew beyond any doubt that I had found my family. I have no idea where the name Eibtmann came from, but maybe some day I'll figure that out. Meanwhile, I'm very grateful to the creators of the amazing one step search program.

Editor: The great resource from Stephen Morse can be found at: **http://www.stevemorse.org**

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http://kipp.tau.ac.il/Archive/skins/Palestine/navigator.asp

This project is the initiative of The Laura Schwarz-Kipp Institute for Advanced Technology in the Humanities in Tel Aviv University.

I find it as a very useful tool to learn about day by day life in Mandatory Palestine and later on Israel in general and in particular to us the roots searchers. For example: Almost any vessel that entered the ports of Palestine and Israel during those years is recorded in the newspaper.

How to find a library that has what you want...
Robert Friedman

This entry is from the H-SIG discussion group.

Many academic and research libraries have online access to OCLC WorldCat and/or RLIN, two mega-databases of library materials. According to RLIN, the following libraries have "Magyarorszag tiszti cim- es nevtara" for various years:

Library of Congress
Columbia University
NY Public
University of Chicago

If you're at home, try **http://www.rlg.org/eureka.html** for a free trial lookup in RLG (Research Libraries Group) databases. The databases offered for free trial rotate from time to time, but they often let you search the Union Catalog and/or the Serials File. Thus you can check all major US research libraries in one search.

Searching for the title "Magyar Varosok Monografiaja" yielded 13 results: Volumes 1-6, 8-11, 13,14, and 16.

For European libraries, another mega-search site is provided by UB Karlsruhe at **http://www.ubka.uni-karlsruhe.de/hylib/en/kvk.html.**

The Gabriel Gateway to European National Libraries is at **http://www.lib.helsinki.fi/gabriel/index.html.**

ULI - The Israel Union Catalog is at **http://libnet1.ac.il/~libnet/uli/uli.htm**

Libweb - Library Servers via WWW has individual links to libraries on the web throughout the world at **http://www.kb.nl/infolev/libweb/**

German life insurance owners who were murdered
Barbara Algaze, Los Angeles

German life-insurance companies have published the names of 363,000 policyholders who died in the Holocaust, to help surviving relatives lodge claims worth millions of dollars from pre-World War II policies.

The names can be found on the Web site of the International Commission of Holocaust-Era Insurance Claims: **www.icheic.org.**

The entire article is at: **http://www.nypost.com/news/worldnews/74665.htm**

Warsaw Ghetto Death Card Database Now Available
Hadassah Lipsius
Coordinator, Warsaw Ghetto Death Cards project
Jewish Records Indexing - Poland

On the eve of Passover, April 19, 1943, German troops and police entered the Warsaw ghetto to deport its surviving inhabitants. For nearly a month, seven hundred and fifty ghetto fighters fought valiantly. On May 16, 1943 the uprising came to an end. Of the more than 56,000 Jews captured, about 7,000 were shot, and the remainder were deported to killing centers or concentration camps.

In Commemoration of the 60th Anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, Jewish Records Indexing - Poland in conjunction with the Jewish Historical Institute and Jewish Genealogical Society, Inc (NY) are pleased to announce the completion of the Warsaw Ghetto Death Card indexing project and the availability of the entries in the JRI-Poland database.

The Warsaw Ghetto Death Cards collection at the Jewish Historical Institute (JHI), Warsaw, provides a remarkable view into the lives and deaths of almost 10,000 individuals, mostly Jews. While their origins are clouded in mystery, and it is uncertain how they ended up in the JHI, historians and archivists have concluded that the Death Cards were likely found in the ruins of the Mayoral Office that was virtually destroyed during the Warsaw Uprising.

The cards were usually filled by two individuals:

1. A doctor who recorded the last and first name, date of death, and sex of the deceased. On the reverse side, he wrote the cause of death (in Polish or Latin), signed his name and put an official stamp.
2. A clerk, who - depending on available information - filled the balance of the card - including first names of parents, birth dates (usually the year only), denomination, address, marital status, and occupation.

Occasionally, dates of hospitalizations were given. In some cases, details included living conditions of the deceased, date of marriage, and the spouse's age. Sometimes, this part of the card was filled by a relative.

Those who died in the Warsaw ghetto in 1941 mainly came from the poorest segments of the Jewish community as witnessed by their occupations: porter, peddler, laborer or domestic. The profession of women is often stated as a housewife and in the case of older persons as a dependent. Many were residents of refugee centers and homeless shelters.

The database can be searched on the JRI-Poland database at: **www.jri-poland.org**

To limit your search to Warsaw records of all types, click on "Search the database" and enter Warszawa in the Gubernia field.

Further details on the Warsaw Ghetto Death Card database including images of typical cards can be found by clicking on the "Jewish Historical Institute" link on the JRI-Poland home page at: **www.jri-poland.org** and then scrolling down to project #10.

JRI-Poland extends its gratitude to Professor Feliks Tych, Director, Jewish Historical Research Institute for giving us the opportunity to index their holdings and JGS (NY) for assisting in the funding of this project.

"Palestine Post" online search 1932-1950 in English
Eyal Ziffer, Tel Aviv

I would like to introduce you to the online intelligent retrieval tool for the 40,000 pages of the "Palestine Post" daily newspaper published in Israel in the English language between December 1932 and April 1950.

Legal Immigrant to Palestine during Mandate
Sallyann Amdur Sack, Editor, AVOTAYNU, The International Review of Jewish Genealogy

The Central Zionist Archives in Jerusalem is the body that holds the archives for the Jewish Agency. CZA has a huge (approximately 450,00) collection of files (and an index to them) of individuals who made and/or requested immigration to Palestine between the years 1923 and 1963. With help from the Israeli Defence Force, CZA has been slowly digitizing the index. Details of the collection may be read in "Jerusalem, Spring 2001" (AVOTAYNU 17, no. 2 (Summer 2001) and "Israel, Spring 2002" (AVOTAYNU 18, no. 2 (Summer 2002). IAJGS has donated $1,000 to this project from the Malcolm Stern Fund but much more is needed if the project is to be finished in time for the 2004 Jewish genealogy conference in Jerusalem.

When I visited the CZA last summer, 74,000 names had been indexed--only up to gimel (the third letter of the Hebrew alphabet). The archivists, Rahel Rubinstein and Batya Leshem, emphasized that the files are closed because some information concerns health and other deeply personal matters. They may be viewed only by direct relatives. Those who cannot come to the archives in person will need to complete a declaration that he or she is personally related to the immigrant and will be allowed to deputize a local agent to do the research.

Legal Immigrant to Palestine During the Mandate
Rochelle Rubinstein, Central Zionist Archives, Jerusalem

Anyone searching for immigrants to Palestine/Israel is invited to write to the Central Zionist Archives in Jerusalem.

I'm afraid that the information at http://www.jafi.org.il/care/relatives.htm is no longer valid as the Relatives Search Bureau of the Jewish Agency no longer exists as a part of the Jewish Agency's Immigration Department. Its databases and lists have been transferred to the CZA.

The CZA holds the following genealogical resources relating to immigrants:

Lists of immigrants to Palestine/Israel (1919-1968 arranged chronologically, according to date of arrival and divided by ship/plane. On the down side, please note that if you do not have a fairly exact date of arrival (month and year) we will not be able to search for your family information. On the up side, the lists also include tourists, so if you know the exact date of arrival of a family member as a tourist, the lists might be able to help.

Please note that the lists are not one hundred percent complete and there is a chance your relative will for reasons that are not absolutely clear to us not be found on the lists. In other words, if the relative is not found on the lists it is not proof that the person did not immigrate.

A huge card catalogue of candidates for immigration to Palestine/Israel (1920-1948) and accompanying files is arranged alphabetically according to name. The cards record information of people who notified the Immigration Department of the Jewish Agency of a family member overseas interested in immigration. Each card has information about the person making the request and the person being requested. The accompanying files contain the correspondence, and at times, also served as the immigrant's personal immigration file after his/her arrival here. They are closed to everyone but direct relatives, as they often contain personal information.

The actual files to which the data base relates are kept at the Jewish Agency's Record Center out of Jerusalem but are ordered to Jerusalem in order to answer queries.

All these data bases are in Hebrew. With the help of Bat AmmiNational Service workers we are able to answer remote queries of these resources.

Please email, write or fax to:
Central Zionist Archives
PO Box 92
Jerusalem 91920

ISRAEL
E-Mail: cza@jazo.org.il
Fax: 972-2-6204837

You are more than welcome to contact us with queries. But as this posting will no doubt release a flood of queries, please be patient! As many of you probably know, the CZA holds many other databases and resources of value to the genealogist.

Toronto Star Archives Now Online
Hilary Henkin

The Toronto Star newspaper has recently digitized its entire archives, back to 1892 <**http://thestar.pagesofthepast.ca/**>. They are completely searchable by keyword, or browseable by day. Access to the indexes is free, access to the actual images is very reasonable in cost, by the hour, day, or week. As an introductory offer, the year 1945 is free. Note: the system seemed to overload on a Saturday afternoon U.S. EST, but eased up by early evening. If you try it, and it doesn't seem to work, wait a while. (What better way for a genealogist to spend a Saturday night than search the internet for mention of relatives ?)

The scanning was done by a company called "Paper of Record", <**http://www.paperofrecord.com/Default.asp**>. They've digitized dozens of other newspapers, mostly in Canada and Mexico, but other places as well. Prices seem to vary according to the newspaper, but are very reasonable. Their goal is "building the world's largest searchable archive of historical newspapers".

London Synagogue Marriage Records
Harold Lewin, Jerusalem

Genners who are researching their London roots may be interested to learn that the basic information from the marriage registers of the Great Synagogue, Dukes Place, London, has now been computerized and indexed for the period 1791-1882. However, many of the patronymics for this period are still being entered and another three years of marriages (up to 1885) await computerization. Kindly note that the data is not (and probably will not be) available on-line. The goal is to publish the records in book form together with New Synagogue marriages when the project is complete.

This is an update on the previous message on this subject in Shem Tov, March 2003

Two Historic Polish Directories Now Online

Ronald D. Bachman

T he Library of Congress has digitized two historic Polish directories and made them available to the public at the internet addresses below. The rare and fragile items were felt to be of sufficiently broad interest to historians and genealogists to merit digitization in this pilot project. Eventually the items will be linked to their entries in the Library of Congress online catalog (http://catalog.loc.gov/). The presentation is via "page-turner" display. They are now available for immediate use at the following URLs. (Note: these are "handles" or permanent" URLS that have been established for these materials.)

1. "Handlowa ksiega adresowa Polski i Gdanska," a 1923 commercial directory for the entire country, including Gdansk (Danzig), totalingabout 700 pages. http://hdl.loc. gov/loc.gdc/scd0001.20020613002po.2

    Table of Contents: Front matter (including advertisements and a map of Polish railroads)

    Part I.
    -- Timeline of Polish history
    -- Administrative districts of the Republic of Poland
    -- Constitution of the Republic of Poland
    -- Officials of the Republic of Poland
    -- Polish diplomatic missions abroad
    -- Polish consulates abroad
    -- Foreign diplomatic representatives in Poland
    -- Foreign consulates in Poland
    -- Statistical data on the Polish economic situation
    -- Historical sketch of Gdansk (Danzig)
    -- Treaty of Versaille provisions concerning the Free
        City of Gdansk (Danzig)
    -- Officials of the Free City of Gdansk (Danzig) and the
        Supreme Commissioner of the League of Nations in
        Gdansk (Danzig)
    -- Port of Gdansk (Danzig)
    -- Economic organizations in Poland and Gdansk
        (Danzig)
    -- Polish Information Bureau for foreign commerce in
        Gdansk (Danzig)
    -- Index of branches of industry and products listed in
        Part II.
    -- Alphabetic index of branches of industry listed in Part
        III.

    Part II.
    Enterprises [grouped by economic sector, enterprises are arranged alphabetically, and street addresses are included; this is the heart of the directory]

Part III.
Advertisements

Part IV.
Index of advertisers

2. " Spis abonentow warszawskiej sieci telefonow." http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gdc/scd0001.20020611001wa.2 This is a 540-page white pages directory of Warsaw and environs on the eve of World War II, along with a listing of businesses and advertisements arranged by product or service, e.g., office machines, sporting goods, physicians. This directory should be of special interest to researchers who lost relatives, friends, and/or property during the war.

Comment from: Robert Friedman
Please note that the section in English containing the table of contents and introductory material can be found on images 118-134. The Index of Branches and Goods runs from image 126-133.

Research Your Polish Jewish Roots and Prepare for a trip to Poland at the Same Time!

by Robinn Magid

Robinn Magid is a board member of the Jewish Records Indexing - Poland project and has been a member of the SFBAJGS [San Francisco Bay Area JGS] for over ten years. Using vital records, she has documented eleven generations of her family. She is researching: Cygielman and Klawir (Lublin, Poland); Kohn (Ostrow Mazowiecka and Zambrow, Poland); Drix, Fischer (Komarno and Lwow,.Ukraine) Winakur (Radomyshl, Ukraine), Kur (Kupiskis, Lithuania), Magid, Weitzman (Teofipol, Ukraine); Senderowsky (Dyatlowo, Belarus); Katz, Pazol, Karklin (Pazelva & Ukmerge, Lithuania); and Gawronsky (Klykoliai, Lithuania).

In a presentation on February 23, 2003 at the Berkeley‑Richmond Jewish Community Center she demonstrated how much a person can accomplish in a short time by being well prepared.

The audience gasped at the end of my PowerPoint presentation when they learned that I had been in Poland for only eight days. I traveled to Poland alone in May, 2001 and was able to find large numbers of family documents with the help of a terrific guide whom I met through the Jewish Record Indexing ‑Poland project.

A productive trip starts with the basics of genealogy research. The following include both basic research tips and those that apply particularly to Jewish genealogy research in Poland:

1. Contact your family and trace their migration.
   Verify the exact towns that your family came from in Poland/Europe. Could be Poland, Ukraine, Belarus or Lithuania today. Many towns share a name. Watch for generalities. We could say we're from San Francisco, but that's not actually my town!

   Family stories are good, but document them to be sure: search naturalization records, census records, Social Security Applica-tions/Death index, Ellis Island Database, Hamburg Passenger Lists, HIAS lists, other port of entry lists.

2. Contact other researchers from your town.
   JewishGen: Family Finder and Shtetl‑Links projects. Subscribe to and post an inquiry on JewishGen's Discussion Group. Subscribe to and post an inquiry on the Jewish Records Indexing‑ Poland (JRI‑Poland) discussion group.

3. Look for other websites on your town.
   Local historians/graduate students and tour guides often have their own sites. Town maps and guidebooks can be found on the Internet. E‑bay (website) may have items of interest. Searches of the American Booksellers Exchange **www.abe.com** or **www.addall.com** may turn up autobio-graphies, yizkor books or other reference books an your town.

4. Learn what vital records and other documentation exists for your town.
   Routes to Roots Foundation (Miriam Weiner).
   JewishGen's FAQ pages and Infofiles.
   Family History Library Catalog (LDS).

   Yizkor books, landsmenschaften, pages of testimony (Yad Vashem).
   Old Yiddish local papers (YIVO Archives).

5. Search Polish Jewish Databases on the Internet for tidbits on your family.
   Jewish Records Indexing‑Poland Database.
   The 1929 Polish Business Directory Project (JRI‑Poland).
   Polish Aliyah Passports.
   Ghetto Records.
   Newspaper death and marriage announcements.

6. Contact your town's local Jewish community, local museums (Jewish and civic), and local historians ‑for example, "Le Jardin," the Jewish bookstore in Krakow.

7. Find out the status of the town cemeteries (International Jewish Cemetery Project).

8. Find historical addresses: Polish business directory, vital records, tariffa.

9. Visit the Jewish Historical Institute and their bookstore (contact them in advance).

Notes: Records in Polish State Archives are over 100 years old. Many have been microfilmed by the Mormons. Local town hall archives have more recent records. See Infofile by Warren Blatt on JewlshGen.

Travel Tips for Poland

Most places take credit cards. Some family-owned businesses may not, but there are automated teller machines all over Poland. Restrooms are clean and well‑stocked. There are quite a few unisex toilets, unusual to us Americans. Most young Poles speak English. Many Poles over age 40 say they do not-- but they seem to understand English anyway. Many older Poles speak French. The food is great and familiar. Whoever told me that there is lard and fat in all Polish food was quite wrong. I found fresh fruit and vegetable salads everywhere. Soups are terrific, and Jewish cooking is mixed

into many restaurant menus. I had been worried because I don't eat pork, but I found plenty of acceptable choices everywhere I went.

I wasn't sure how to dress. I had no problem in casual attire. Poles are cosmopolitan, thin and stylish. Bring gifts and treat Poles like Californians. Gourmet foods, chocolate, fancy coffees...return a clerk's kindness with something tangible and you'll make the path easier for travelers who follow you.

Remember that Judaica can often be found for sale in Poland, and be aware that it's illegal to take Judaica out of Poland because of its designation as a "national treasure."

Genealogy Research Travel Tips

Remember that you're a goodwill ambassador for every American, every Jew and every genealogist.

Be interested in non-Jewish as well as Jewish Poland. Poland is an incredibly beautiful place, despite our very strong preconceptions of it. Consider the possibility that Poland is more than a bone yard.

Talk to local people about their life, and not only what we lost. Don't merely USE your contacts- help the local Jewish community and the people you meet.

Take a digital camera that uses AA batteries. This gave me the ability to judge the photo immediately, and I could upload them to my computer every night and label the photos while I still remembered what they were.

Prepare the night before. Make lists of places, people, questions - things you are curious about. Mark pages in guidebooks and maps and review them the night before.

Carry alphabetized surname lists for methodical searches when an opportunity appears. Carry extra copies to leave behind if you get an offer of help.

Sign guest books in memory of your family by listing your family surnames. Consider leaving your E-mail address.

This article appeared in the May 2003 edition of ZICHRON NOTE, the Journal of the JGS of the San Francisco Bay Area.

Portugal Launches Jewish Website

The Portugese National Tourist office has created a Web site for travellers dedicated to Portugal's Jewish heritage. The site offers history, travel itineraries, travel information and contacts in Portugal's Jewish communities. For more information visit:

http://www.geocities.com/portjew/

Book Review:
Life is With People – The Culture of the Shtetl
by Mark Zborowski and Elizabeth Herzog with forwards by Margaret Mead and Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett.
Published in the years 1952, 1960 and 1980.

Reviewed by David Price, Librarian JGS of Canada (Toronto)

Recently Bill Gladstone donated over 90 books and readings to the JGS Toronto book collection held at 6th floor in the Central Library located on Yonge Street beside North York City Hall. One of them was recommended on jewishgen.org's discussion group as the foremost reference on East European Jewish culture of the shtetl. I decided to read it not for its value as a genealogical source but to understand the lifestyle of the ancestors I do my family tree of.

"Life is With People" was the first anthropological study of the Jewish culture of the shtetl. In the shtetl, life revolved around religion, cheder, yeshiva and tradition, in one word: yiddishkayt. The shtetl was an island culture sustained for a thousand years by isolation, hostility and resistance to change. It could adapt to pogroms, poverty, famine and instant uprooting. The classic era was about 1880 to 1914 but disappeared from the face of the earth from 1914 to 1939. Had someone not written about it by interviewing those who still remembered it such as this book's authors did, the shtetl would have been forgotten. Margaret Mead also commented that anti-semitism could be countered with books which explain about Jewish culture and religion.

I was raised by a traditional Jewish mother. This book explains my mother's traditions and also strange practices and sayings. She never taught me Yiddish but I could use hundred's of Yiddish sayings in the correct context from hearing her repeat them often. Now I know what they literally mean.

There are humorous items in "Life is With People" as well. For example there is a chapter called "From the Cheder to the Grave". Since I am a teacher by profession, the description of a melamed as the lowest of low in society, i.e. a failure at anything else, the stigma of making a living off children, paid just a little more than starvation level, sadistic and could not teach either did not help my morale. Also, the account of the Jewish wife's preparation for the Sabbath was like a Keystone Cops rush to do about 50 chores in order before dark with no consideration for mid winter shortened days.

The chapter about 'prosteh yidn' (the common Jews) could not have been written with a straight face. As opposed to the 'shayneh layt' (the beautiful people) the prost were described as uncouth, un-mannered, unseemly, rough, loud, coarse, vulgar, 'beard without a Jew' among others.

Other chapters include the role of the rebbeh as the centre of the shtetl, another one I felt described the shtetl as the only true socialist entity that I have ever heard of that works because of the Jewish practice of tsdokeh (charity) and a chapter on arranged marriages. They rarely resulted in divorce with the motto 'first you marry, then you love'.

Finally, one of the authors, Mark Zborowski, has a connection with the death of Trotsky and me! Born in Uman, Russia in 1908, he studied anthropology at the Sorbonne in France. Somehow he became a Soviet KGB agent under the names Etienne and Tulip. He infiltrated Trotsky's family in France and found out where Trotsky was hiding in South America. This information led to Trotsky's assassination. Zborowski came to live in the United States in 1941 and was convicted as a spy and jailed for four years. Where do I come in on this? His biography was written by someone with a very unusual name, DAVID PRICE! I have no idea if we are related.

The Restoration of the Cemetery of Ozerov

While the idea of redeeming our ancestors graves by restoring the ancient Jewish Cemetery in Ozerov (see the March 1997 issue), had originally been initiated by The International Ozerover Newsletter, it is due to the initiative of a few inspired individuals, that Phase I of this project was brought to a successful conclusion. First and foremost is Dr. Norman Weinberg, of East Amherst, New York who took it upon himself to coordinate the Ozarow Cemetery Restoration Project (OCPP). This project was commenced in the spring of 2001 and completed with remarkable swiftness by mid-October of that year.

One must keep in mind that it included fund raising, making connections with the mayor of Ozerov, the U.S. Commission for the Preservation of America's Heritage Abroad, the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw and Lodz, the Jewish Community of Poland and local contractors to carry out the work which actually started in the beginning of July. This is a truly outstanding achievement.

The plan included the cleaning up of the cemetery, the resetting of fallen matzeivos (gravestones) onto secure bases, rebuilding the wall, and the return of tombstones taken by the Germans for fortifications against the Russians from a field by the Vistula river about 10 miles away. Finally, a commemorative monument was erected to the victims of the Holocaust, including those murdered by the Nazis and buried in a mass grave in the Ozerover Cemetery.

Among the gravestones retrieved from the field was the matzeivah of the third Ozerover Rebbe, Rabbi Arye Yehudah Leib Epstein, called Rabbi Leibush the Second (1837-1914). The unique text of this matzeivah praises the Rebbe both as a kabbalist and as a master of rabbinical law (Halachah). We are now anxiously awaiting the reconstruction of his Ohel (sepulcher) and the Ohel of the two Talmidei Ha-Ari (disciples of the Ari-Zal, Rabbi Yitzchalk Luria, 1534 -1572) buried in Ozerov. In the same field was also found half of the

The matzevah of Rabbi Leibush of Ozerov in the Ancient Cemetery of Ozerov

matzeivah of Rabbi Yalkov "Rozvadover" Epstein (a son of Rabbi Leibush the Second).

Another surprise during the Ozerov cemetery cleanup was the discovery of many gravestones buried under 60 years of debris and overgrowth. When the actual construction began about mid-August, two more gravestones, one dating back to 1715 and the other to 1800, were found near the old cemetery wall. These are the oldest gravestones found in the Ozerov cemetery to this day.

Two more exciting discoveries were the gravestone of Rebbetzin Chayah Rochel, the wife of Rabbi Yechiel Chaim Epstein (the second Ozerover Rebbe, 1820-1888) who passed away in 1879, and the gravestone of Rebbetzin Chanah, the first wife of the late Ozerover Rebbe, Rabbi Moshe Yechiel Epstein, who passed away in 1919 while helping the victims of a typhus epidemic in Ozerov.

The restoration project came to a climax on October 15th 2001, when a bus load of 25 descendants of Ozerov - from Israel, Canada, France, England and the U.S.- traveled from Warsaw to Ozerov. These included the Ozerover Rebbe, Rabbi Tanchum B. Becker, his two oldest sons, Rabbis Yechiel and Arye Becker, Colonel Rabbi David Zalis. a US military chaplain, Dr Norman Weinberg, Mrs. Mark Milgrom (Detroit), Barry Green (Toronto), Hartley Garshowitz (Toronto), Martin Rutte (Santa Fe), Henri Ciukrman (Paris), Yehuda Zisapel (Tel Aviv) and a group of direct descendants of the Rabbinical Dynasty of Ozerov from New York, Mr. Joseph Morgenstern and Mr. and Mrs. Larry Levine. The delegation was welcomed by about 500 people from the city of Ozerov, headed by the mayor.

Afterwards, the Rebbe and the delegation visited the cemetery reciting special tfilos (prayers) for Klal Yisrael, in these very turbulent and difficult times. Later, the Rebbe, his sons and the delegation visited the old Synagogue of Ozerov (now a plumbing warehouse) and a minyan was spontaneously organized for minchah (the afternoon prayer). It was probably the first time since the deportation of the Jews in mid-October 1942, that a Jewish prayer was heard within these walls.

300 Year Old Graves at the Ancient Cemetery

Moshe Gold's Tzitzis

Mr. Moshe Gold was lucky enough to be among those who traveled to Ozerov last October to visit the newly found grave of his maternal grandfather, Reb Moshe Aaron Safir, better known as Moshele Shames. His name also appears in the civil record at the city hall, where he used to testify to births, marriages and deaths.

Moshe Gold's paternal grandfather, Reb Yonah Goldblum, an Ozerover and a baker by profession, was commonly called "Yonah the baker". When his grandson Moshe was born in Canada in 1932 Reb Yonah sent him a tiny talis (tzitzis) just right for a newborn infant. This is indeed unusual since we find mention of such tzitzis only in Chassidic dynasties. It is told for instance that the sons of Rabbi Yisrael of Rizhin (1797- 1851) had tzitzis put on them at a month old (Esser Oros, Pietrkov, 1906, p.146). Reb Yonah, the baker's story is a statement about the deep religious commitment of the Jews of Ozerov. What is even more amazing is that Moshe Gold, his grandson, kept these cherished tzitzis for so many years and actually brought them with him on his trip to Ozerov.

During his last visit to Canada, the Rebbe asked Moshe Gold to bring the tzitzis in order to measure them. In June, 2002, Moshe Gold drove from Dundas (Ontario) to Toronto to visit with the Rebbe. He brought with him the treasured tzitzis from Ozerov. Exact measurements were taken and found to be a mere 15 inches long and 6 inches wide!

Editors Note:
The articles entitled The Restoration of the Cemetery of Ozerov and Moshe Gold's Tzitzis are reprinted from the International Ozerover Newsletter, published in December 2002 by the Esh Dat-Ozerov Rabbinical Seminary in Bnei Brak, Israel.

At the 23rd IAJGS International Conference on Jewish Genealogy held in July 2002 in Toronto Dr. Norman Weinberg made a presentation on the subject: Restoration of Jewish Historical Sites in Poland: The Ozarov Cemetery Restoration Project (OCRP).

He is at present involved in numerous other similar projects in Poland. Messrs. Moshe Gold and Hartley Garshowitz are members of our society.

A Searchable Index for Manitoba

Effective January 1, 2003 the Vital Statistics Act was proclaimed providing unrestricted access to the following records:
Births: More than 100 years ago
Marriages: More than 80 years ago
Deaths: More than 70 years ago.
 http://web2.gov.mb.ca/cca/vital/query.php

From DorL'Dor, May 2003, the newsletter of the Jewish Genealogical Institute of British Columbia.

"Nu? What's New?"

News about Jewish Genealogy from Avotaynu

Routes to Roots Foundation Database Has New Material

New information has been added to the Routes to Roots Foundation database. It consists of an index to all known Jewish holdings of the archives in Belarus, Lithuania, Moldova, Poland and Ukraine. The site is located at http://www.rtrfoundation.org.

For Ukraine, there is added data from the Vinnitsa Oblast Archives, specifically, birth and recruit records for the towns of Brailov, Dzyunkov, Gorishkovka, Kalinovka, Knyazhe, Komargorod, Kopaygorod, Mizyakov, Pikov, Stanislavchik, Strizhaka, Timanovka, Tomashpol, Tyvrov, Vinnitsa, Voroshilovka, Yanov, Yuzvin and Zhmerinka. Also from the Kiev Historical Archives for towns in Kiev oblast and Cherkassy oblast.

For Belarus, data has been added from the Grodno Historical Archives for towns in Grodno uezd represented in the 1897 All-Russian census. From the Minsk Historical Archives data on towns in Slutsk and towns Novogrudok uezds. Also census lists in the Lithuanian State Historical Archives noted below.

For Lithuania, census lists for the years 1765 (90 towns) and 1784 (140 towns). Many of the towns in the 1784 census list are now located within the current borders of Belarus.

Ukrainian Archives Expands Its Web Presence in English

There is now considerable information in English about the State Archives of Ukraine at their site:
http://www.scarch.kiev.ua/Eng/.
There are now pages devoted to information about news and announcements, contacts (including e-mail addresses), list of regional archives, genealogical inquiries, programs and projects of the State Archives, other on-line resources, archival guides (most in Ukrainian), Ukrainica abroad, and frequently asked questions.

You Never Know… or
Why Family Tree of the Jewish People is Such a Valuable Resource

Merle Kastner

It all started when I began to put together my Kastner family tree, which extended to my grandfather's nine siblings, some of whom were previously unknown to me. Through careful research and interviews of some older relatives, I learned about Israel Kastner (b. 1870), one of the older brothers of my grandfather, David Kastner (b. 1884, Radauti, Bukovina, Romania). Israel, his wife Malka, their two sons, Janku (Jakob) and Avrum, Janku's wife Klara and Schanika (Shaindel), the little daughter of Avrum, all perished. Avrum's wife Edith survived. This was during the period between 1941-44 in Transnistria, the region to which the Jews in Bukovina were deported to live under dreadful conditions.

Later, I learned that Klara and Edith had been sisters and that their maiden name was Schwamenthal. They, too, were born in Radauti. In 1944, when Russia overran Bukovina, Edith took the surviving children of the two couples, her own son Maurice and the two children of her sister Klara, Osias and Bella, and returned to Radauti, where she raised them with her mother Gisela Schwamenthal, who also survived.

In the summer of 1998, my good friend, Bruce Reisch, made a business trip to Hungary. He took advantage being in that part of Europe to follow up with a two-week genealogy fact-finding trip to Bukovina, our common ancestral shtetl. After the trip, where he took numerous photographs, he wrote an account of his journey, which appears on his comprehensive Radauti Shtetlinks website. [i]

Among the photographs that Bruce took, were some of the Radauti Jewish cemetery, and two of these were of a beautiful, white marble headstone, bearing the following inscription: *"David Schwammenthal, gest. Nov. 1941, Moghilev, Schwammenthal Gisela, 1876-1965, and Klara Kastner, geb. Schwammenthal, gest. In Moghilev – 1942, im alter von 38 jahre"*. These were Klara and her parents. [Moghilev was one of the ghettos that comprised the area that was Transnistria, during that period.] Families that returned often had the names of their loved ones carved in stone, even though their remains rested in Transnistria. It was not until Bruce sent me this photograph, that I learned the maiden names of the two sisters who had married the two Kastner brothers. In addition to this, I also learned the names of the two sisters' parents and documented them.

Around this time, I discovered the whereabouts of Bella Kastner, now married to Samy Anker. They had lived in Israel for a number of years after their marriage, but were now living in Frankfurt-am-Main, Germany. Bella was delighted to be contacted, having known that there were Kastner cousins in Canada, but nothing more about them. So, little by little, I pieced together this part of the family, and even wrote an article about how Bella was found. [ii]

On Saturday, March 3, 2001, I received an email from Mihaela Schwamenthal, Kefar Aviv Settlement, Israel. In her short message, with a subject line, *"Family Tree of the Jewish People"*, she wrote:

> *Hello,*
> *My name is Mihaela, my mother's name was Iulie (Lilly). I live in Israel, but I was born in Romania. I am desperately seeking my roots. Hope you might help. Sincerely, Mihaela"*

I immediately answered her email with all the information that I had compiled, a laser copy of the two photographs of the tombstone, and the article that I had written. Accompanying this were addresses for all three of the surviving Kastner cousins, Bella in Germany, Mauricio and Osias in Israel, as well as a telephone number for Bella.

None of this would have been transmitted to Mihaela, if she had only searched on the JewishGen Family Finder[iii], which is the first step for all informed Jewish genealogists, nor if I had not uploaded my family tree to FTJP. As good as it is, JewishGen would not have shown the fact that I had information on the Schwamenthal family, but only the family names that I am actively researching. However, by searching on Family Tree of the Jewish People[iv], Mihaela had access to my entire database of names, and it was through this, that she was able to contact me. It is also important to note that FTJP contains approximately 1.85 million names currently being researched.

As genealogists, we are always reminded to leave no stone unturned, overlook no resource – luckily for her, Mihaela followed this advice. ✡

Merle Kastner (merlek@videotron.ca) is a member of the JGS of Montreal

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[i] http://www.shtetlinks.jewishgen.org/Radauti/radautz.html
"Back to Bukovina - a Trip to my Roots in Radauti and Sadagura", by Bruce I. Reisch, Copyright © 1998

[ii] *"How Email Helped Find a First Cousin, Thought Lost in the Holocaust"*, Rom-SIG News", Vol. 6, No. 4, Summer 1998.

[iii] http://www.jewishgen.org/jgff/

[iv] http://www.jewishgen.org/gedcom/

Schwamenthal Monument in the Radauti Jewish Cemetery