PATHFINDER 13

EASTERN EUROPEAN

ALLEN COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY
Genealogy Department
HOW TO BEGIN
Until the fall of the Iron Curtain and the dissolution of the Soviet Union, genealogical research in portions of eastern and southeastern Europe remained at best a daunting task. The changing political climate has led to the opening of more records, making genealogical research feasible for the first time in countries where it was impossible only a short time ago. Microfilming efforts by the Genealogical Society of Utah have begun in some areas, while new guidebooks and periodicals have appeared to assist with research in unfamiliar languages and record groups.

To begin research in Eastern Europe, one must first determine the birth date of the immigrant and his or her exact place of origin. If the ancestor was a 20th century immigrant, passenger lists will usually list the town. For earlier arrivals, the genealogist may need to consult family Bibles, church records (especially marriage and burial registers), newspaper obituaries, and county histories, as well as interview living family members, for clues.

After determining the name of the country and specific place of origin, the researcher will need to become familiar with the major record groups and resources for the country of interest. The sources listed in this pathfinder are designed to assist with that search.

USING THE DEPARTMENT CATALOGS
There are several ways of locating material on Eastern European genealogy in the online catalog. The best strategy is to check the catalog under the specific country or locality to determine the availability of sources.

The "International" drawers in the Microtext Card Catalog contain other European references and sources; check under the name of the country or ethnic group (such as Jewish records). The PERiodical Source Index, available online, offers an article index to many periodicals with an eastern European focus.

The Genealogy Department owns few primary source materials for Eastern Europe. Some vital records and census returns for the German colonies of Russia and Ukraine may be found by searching under the keywords "Bessarabia," "Gluckstal," and "Saratov" in the online catalog. For more in-depth research, the Family History Library in Salt Lake City offers records for many areas. The Family History Library Catalog is available online at www.FamilySearch.org. Here one can find a variety of church and civil records for towns in Eastern Europe. These microfilmed records can be borrowed from the Family History Library in Salt Lake City to use in the Historical Genealogy Department for a modest handling fee.

GUIDEBOOKS
The following books offer general assistance for research in various countries in Eastern Europe and should be the first place the researcher should look before examining the records of that country. Many of the guides center around certain religious denominations, usually Roman Catholic or Jewish.


_________. *Poland/Prussia: How to Find Vital Records of Former Prussian Areas of Poland in the Genealogical Library*. Buffalo Grove, IL: Genun Publishers, 1982. /Gc 929 P75/


_________. *In Their Words: A Genealogist’s Translation Guide to Polish, German, Latin, and Russian Documents*. New Britain, CT: Language & Lineage Press, 2000-. /Gc 929 Sh3in/


**PASSENGER LISTS**

The department's microfilm collection includes ship manifests for major U.S. ports for the 19th and early to mid 20th centuries. Passenger lists from the 20th century offer an important first step in eastern European research.


MAPS AND GAZETEERS


Cohen, Chester G. Shtetl Finder: Jewish Communities in the 19th and Early 20th Centuries in the pale of Settlement of Russia and Poland, and in Lithuania, Latvia, Galicia, and Bukovina, and with Names of Residents. Los Angeles: Periday Co., 1980. /Ge 947 C66s/ Alphabetic list of Jewish communities, giving locations and sources where mentioned.


Podrobny auto atlas, Slovenska republika: 1:100 000 [Slovak Atlas]. Harmanec: Vojensky Kartograficky Ustav s.p., 1995. /Ge 943.7 V87g/

Rumania! Rumania! Family Finder. Greenwich, CT: Sam Elpern, 1996. /Ge 949.8 R863/ Jewish family names with ancestral towns in Romania, Moldavia and southern Ukraine.

Strassenkarte Polen. Dietzenbach Germany: Höfer Verlag, 1999. /Ge 943.8 St81/ Maps listing both Polish and German town names.

SURNAME


**YIZKOR BOOKS**

The Historical Genealogy Department houses a very significant collection of Yizkor books. Yizkor books, or Books of Remembrance, are testaments and histories to the communities, the people and places in Eastern Europe that were destroyed during World War II. These are very important books in Jewish genealogical research, containing pictures, necrologies and histories.

These Yizkor books can be found in the library’s online catalog. The catalog entries typically detail the place of coverage of the book, the original title, English title, publisher, when and where published, the editor of the volume, the language of the book, and the ACPL call number. A challenge in using these books is that the majority of them are written in Hebrew or Yiddish. English sections are limited, covering only at times an introduction, or a short history in the volume. Through efforts within the Jewish Genealogical community, translations are beginning to appear. If not the whole text of the book, the necrologies, table of contents, and indexes are beginning be available to the researcher. Translations not found among the department’s holdings may be found online at the JewishGen site <www.jewishgen.org>.

**MISCELLANEOUS SOURCES**

The researcher will occasionally find compilations of original records, bibliographies, and other useful materials for some areas of Eastern Europe. The following is a sampling of some of the more useful.


Davison, Mary Lou. *Slovenian Genealogy Society's Every Name Master Index: An Every Name Master Index to the Society's Collection of Slovenian Church, Community, and Fraternal Books*. Camp Hill, PA: Slovenian Genealogy Society, 1995. /Gc 929.11 D295s vol. 1/ Index of Slovenian-Americans from various Catholic church records in the U.S. Future volumes will index other sources.


04/2003