What’s New in Jewish Records Indexing - Poland

24th Annual Conference on Jewish Genealogy

Jerusalem
6 July 2004

Stanley M. Diamond, Executive Director
“the holdings of the Polish State Archives are now wide open to foreign researchers”

Professor Jerszy Skowronik
Director-General, Polish State Archives
Jerusalem, May 1995
Warsaw, October 1995

A remarkable number of Jewish vital record registers of Poland have survived the ravages of time and the upheavals of history. Moreover, many of these registers -- generally covering the years 1808 to 1865, and in some cases beyond -- have been microfilmed, making the records accessible in Family History Centers of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) - Mormons. Miriam Weiner's Routes to Roots Foundation, Inc. website <http://www.rtrfoundation.org/archdta1.html> presents an inventory of the surviving Jewish vital records of Poland and brings to light the millions of additional records not microfilmed by the LDS.

Jewish Records Indexing - Poland (JRI-Poland)
The goal of Jewish Records Indexing - Poland (JRI-Poland) <http://www.jewishgen.org/jri-pl> is to create searchable on-line indices of Jewish records from current and former territories of Poland. Where such records are available, they may include towns that are now part of Lithuania, Ukraine and Belarus. The project was an outgrowth of Stanley Diamond's need for broad-based access to the Jewish vital records of the former Łomża Gubernia for genetic research purposes. Responding to the suggestion that such an initiative was possible, the project was founded in 1995 by Steven Zedeck of Nashua, NH and Michael Tobias of Glasgow, Scotland. Zedeck and Tobias not only had a deep interest in the records of this area, but also had the technical skills to bring the project to life. Diamond became Project Coordinator in January 1997. JRI-Poland is managed by a board of volunteers.

The majority of the indices in JRI-Poland come from two major sources. The first is the indexing of the LDS microfilmed records, comprising about 2,000 films from more than 500 towns and villages. The second, launched in early 1998, is the JRI-Poland / Polish State Archives Project. While the LDS films contain approximately two million records, there are an estimated additional five to seven million pre-1902 records that were not filmed. Generally, these cover the last 25-35 years of the 19th century, when many of our grandparents and great-grandparents lived in Poland. Only records more than 100 years old are available for this indexing project and some records for 1902 are now in the database.

To supplement information in vital records or substitute other sources for towns whose records are missing, JRI-Poland now includes a growing number of additional types of records. These range from indices to burials in cemeteries, to gravestone files, Polish passports, and birth, marriage and death announcements in newspapers in Poland. Instructions about how to get further details or background information about each particular group of listings are at the bottom of the JRI-Poland search results.

The database continues to grow at a rapid rate and now includes indices to nearly two million records from nearly 350 towns. Most of the work on the microfilmed records is done by volunteers organized into Shtetl CO-OPs; some of the difficult Cyrillic script entries (from the post-1867 Russian years' registers) are in the main transliterated by professionals whose work is funded by contributions from both individuals and groups of Jewish genealogists. Indexing of records in Poland is by Warsaw-based professionals, funded by researchers around the world.

JRI-Poland has been recognized by the international medical and scientific community because of the potential benefit of the database for Ashkenazic families trying to trace their medical histories, particularly those at increased risk for hereditary conditions and diseases.
Research Guide in English, French, Hebrew and Spanish

Take a tour of the JRI-Poland website
What’s New in Jewish Records Indexing – Poland?

‘the largest database of Jewish vital records on the Internet’
LDS microfilms of Polish Jewish records

- 587 towns
- 1836 microfilms

Shtetl CO-OP status report

Shtetl CO-OP meeting
July 2003 Washington
Shtetl CO-OP status report

- 182 Shtetl CO-OPs complete or active
- 89 towns full indexed
- 592 LDS films indexed
- 700 more partially indexed or in progress
- More Shtetl CO-OPs needed!

Shtetl CO-OP “Step by Step”

Step-by-Step Guide for the Shtetl CO-OP Coordinator

INTRODUCTION

To many genealogists, the ability to search for family records among the Jewish autonomous or settled Jewish community is nothing short of miraculous. The Jewish Records Indexed Project (JRI) and others will benefit from the massive amount of genealogical records around the world and the increased quality of the database developed through the volunteer's understanding of how to transfer these details into the LDS microfilm collection. In addition to the JRI CO-OP, there may be a group of volunteers offering to keep in the actual data.

This document is designed to provide an introduction to the entire process involved in setting the records into the LDS database and tips on the types of questions a Shtetl CO-OP Coordinator will have during the project. It also adheres how to coordinate and train volunteers who are working under the guidance of a Shtetl CO-OP leader. However, it is recommended that the actual records of Poland were not kept in a consistent manner throughout time or place, many or works in Poland have been subject to much change, in which case, an experienced CO-OP leader or a Shtetl CO-OP leader should be consulted.
Polish State Archives System

- Records indexed in 35 branches
- Archive Coordinators needed
- Fundraising
- Qualifying Contributors
- Excel file – a valuable research tool
New volumes for towns previously indexed
From more than 350 towns
from 35 archive branches

ERRATA!
The ongoing challenge
- Missing records
- Duplicate Akt numbers
- Illegible names
- Cut-off Akt numbers
JRI-Poland Errata Macro

Errata sheet with entries corrected on site at archives

JRI-Poland Macro Results
Non ‘Shtetl-Specific’ databases

Data from all of Poland

Polish Aliyah Passports
(1930 – 1939)

Monitor Polski
Motions to the courts for official recognition of a person’s death were filed and published as court announcements.

Indices to 5,000 new entries added to the JRI-Poland database in June!

Databases from Częstochowa-Radomsko Area Research Group

Surviving Jews in Częstochowa (published about 1945)

This database of 1,500 names was compiled in late 1944 by the Jewish Council for the Częstochowa Federation in Warsaw. The pogroms in the city in March 1943 and April 1944 reduced the Jewish population by about 80%, which was the motivation for compiling this list.

It is believed that the database may contain errors or omissions.

The database is currently not accessible online. It can be requested online by an individual who has knowledge of the Częstochowa region.

Surviving Jews in Lublin, 1945

This database of 35,000 names was compiled in July 1945 by the CentralAgency (Zentralverwaltung) of the Jewish Council for the Lublin region. The list contains names of Jews who were present in Lublin before the Holocaust but were not identified in any previous list.

The database is not currently accessible online. It can be requested by an individual who has knowledge of the Lublin region.
Extending the records of Żarki

Data currently online:
Year, Akt Number, Type, Surname, Given Name

Data being added:
Father Name, Mother Name & Maiden Name,
Ages, Witnesses and other Towns

Death Records of Rawicz
formerly Rawitsch, Germany
Survivor Cards

Indices to surviving gravestones
“Thank you for the hard work you are doing to help the memories of those who died in the Holocaust remains with us.

We are trying to learn what happened to my father-in-law's family. He escaped from Warsaw to Argentina, leaving behind his mother and six married brothers and sisters, who all perished…

The family name was GABRIELEW.”
Warsaw Ghetto Death Cards
Database Search Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Surname</th>
<th>Givenname</th>
<th>Died</th>
<th>Signature</th>
<th>Alt</th>
<th>Cardnum</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Father</th>
<th>B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GABRIELEW</td>
<td>Liba Dworja</td>
<td>29-Aug-41</td>
<td>O 3</td>
<td>1929</td>
<td>34765</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>e</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“That woman Liba Dworja GABRIELEW was my husband's grandmother, and we never knew how long she lived or where she died. My husband's twin sister was named for her. It was an amazing find for us.”
“Unfortunately we have never had any pictures of her. All we have is a kiddish cup she gave to Mark's father before he left Warsaw in '38 or '39. My mother-in-law gave it to my son Jonah at his Bar Mitzvah, and we used it for Kiddush after the service and every Shabbat since. It was truly different using it this past Shabbat, as she is more real to us now having found out where and how she died.”

JRI-Poland
Order Processing Center

- 1000 separate orders from 550 researchers
- Orders from 18 countries
- 75% from USA, 10% from Israel, 5% from UK
- 4200 records ordered
- 5 researchers ordered more than 50 records.
JRI-Poland
Order Processing Center

Mark Halpern
Order System Processing Coordinator

Michael Tobias
JRI-Poland Database Manager

A Turning Point – the story of Matthew
JRI-Poland has been recognized by the international medical and scientific community because of the potential benefit of the database for Ashkenazi families trying to trace their medical and genetic histories.
Email from Daniel Schlyter

“Stanley, I found the birth:

Child: Elka 1865
Father: Zyskiel Szachi, merchant age 28
Mother: Chaia Szyfer, age 22

with the names of her parents and their ages I checked the JRI-Poland database and found the Lublin marriage of Elka’s parents

SZAICKI Zyskiel 1865 M 138 1861 Mordko Sosia Wlodowa
SZYFMAN Chaja 1865 M 138 1861 Nuta Ruchla Zolodawie

The Szacki family originates from Wlodowa.”
“The Szacki family originates from Wlodowa.”

Matthew to Gersz
born ca 1784
Email from Shawn Harris

“…word is getting out. I sent an e-mail to all of my contacts, along with a list of all living descendants of Hershel Shatsky; so that they can forward the information (about Matthew)...

These are the things that really matter in life.”

Shawn
Search for SZACKI and ARBESS families leads to more dramatic developments

Warsaw, March 2004
Express Service

- Fax order & credit card information to Order Processing Center
- Order e-mailed to PSA branch
- PSA branch processes order
- PSA e-mails record within 3 days
Mission

To assist patient suffering from diseases best treated by a matching stem cell donor.

“Our experience in working together on the ARBESS case is a perfect illustration of how your work and our work mesh. As a result of your efforts, it has been possible to reconstruct a large portion of the family in just a few days.”
“In 1996, our second born child died of an undiagnosed neurological disorder.

We learned that the disease was Niemann-Pick Type C.

In 2001, our youngest child died of the same disease.”
Subj: Re: Genealogy to help save lives.
To: SMSSDIAMOND
Stanley,

I met Mrs. Jaworska of Bone Marrow Foundation. She dreams about applying JRI-Poland type research to find closest family in those cases when there is no match in her bank. She asked me whom she could ask to be of assistance to families struck with that problem.

I figured that members of Warsaw Genealogy Society fit it best.
http://www.giftoflife.org/article.asp?ID=90

Ministry of Interior

Annuals letter of support for beta-thalassemia research project
Warsaw

October 2001… October 2002

Our mission deserves the support of the government of Poland…

Warsaw, March 2004
To All Managers of Vital Records Registry Offices:

“I respectfully ask you to render assistance to persons authorized by the Jewish Records Indexing-Poland organization…”

Lublin Civil Records Office
14 – 16 June 2004
1904-1905 Lublin USC indices received
4 July 2004, 11:15 pm
Russian Years converted to Polish

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>ACT #</th>
<th>TYPE</th>
<th>SURNAME</th>
<th>FIRST NAME (S)</th>
<th>Father</th>
<th>Mother</th>
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<td>416</td>
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<td>Zalda</td>
<td>Gerszak</td>
<td>Baja</td>
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<td>Abram</td>
<td>Fradla Wita</td>
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<td>Szlama Major</td>
<td>Wolf</td>
<td>Liba</td>
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<td>407</td>
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<td>Gersz</td>
<td>Gena</td>
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<td>ARBESFELD</td>
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<td>Moszek</td>
<td>Krajna</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>ARBESFELD</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>Szymoni</td>
<td>Cyowa</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>ARBIETMAN</td>
<td>Sura</td>
<td>Gersz</td>
<td>Chana</td>
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<td>1905</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>ARBUZ</td>
<td>Gandla</td>
<td>Aron Szama</td>
<td>Chana Lala</td>
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<td>335</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>ARENERROOT</td>
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<td>Josif Szlama</td>
<td>Lea Sura</td>
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<td>201</td>
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<td>-</td>
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<td>Iosek</td>
<td>Rozja</td>
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<td>David</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>ASPIIS</td>
<td>Wolf Genoch</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Ruda</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Responsibilities
JRI – Poland
Medical/Genetic database

• Totally separate indices
• Limited access
• Controlled searches
• Formal applications

How can I get my town’s records indexed?
So, what’s new in Jewish Records Indexing – Poland?

- 300,000 more indices online
- Data from new sources, more archives, more towns
- Express Service – records via e-mail
- Access to records in Civil Records Offices (UCSs)
- JRI-Poland medical / genetic database
- Partnership with Gift of Life Foundation
- Outreach to Bone Marrow Foundations in Poland
- PSA commitment to help in life-saving matters
- Data-checking macro

The JRI-Poland Discussion Group

Click on the home page link

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- Archived messages

Judy Baston
JRI-Poland Organization

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- Howard Fink

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- Judy Baston

Order Processing Center
- Mark Halpern

Data Manipulation Team
- Volunteers

Archive Mgrs.
- Volunteers

LDS Film Inventory Coordinator
- Position Open

JRI- Poland volunteers
In Memoriam

Aliza Kolker 1948 – 2003
Chelm Shtetl CO-OP

Harold Nissenthall 1939 – 2003
Toronto Copy Center
“I extended my family tree knowledge three generations”

“I found a treasure trove of relatives records indexed by JRI-Poland”
“As someone who found wonderful records as a result of the enormous work you and your team have been doing, please accept my thanks.”

Helene Kenvin,
Trembowla and Skala Podolskaya researcher

“Many thanks to JRI-Poland for providing genealogical information in an instant…it it truly a dream”

Esther Minars, Australia
Lublin PSA project supporter
The role you can play

- Archive Coordinator
- Town Leader
- LDS Film Inventory
- Data Entry
- Shtetl CO-OP Coordinator
- Quality Control
- Database Manipulation