



## **The Indexing Process: From LDS Films: The Shtetl CO\_OP Initiative**

Shtetl CO-OP volunteers (see Page 4) index the Latin script pre-1868 records while professionals, funded by individuals and groups of Jewish genealogists, transliterate Cyrillic script entries from the post-1867 Russian era registers.

### **From the Polish State Archives**

Indexing takes place on an archive-by-archive basis, beginning with the designation of a volunteer to serve as "Archive Coordinator", who selects "Town Leaders" and coordinates the creation of an inventory of the microfilmed records for all the towns in the branch archive. This ensures that index pages for all years/types not previously filmed by the LDS are ordered. JRI-Poland purchases index pages for the non-microfilmed years for all towns in the branch archive. As funds are raised by Town Leaders, the Warsaw-based JRI-Poland team indexes records for each town. The post-1867 records are in Russian and the data entry is done in Cyrillic. A custom software program transliterates entries to Latin characters and the entries are then added to the JRI-Poland online database. The database now includes indices from towns in 17 of the 67 branches in the Polish State Archives system.

### **How to Use the JRI-Poland Database**

No more scrolling through LDS microfilms to first find your family name in the index and then back-track to the actual record entry. No more overlooked entries because of spelling variations. From among the millions of Jewish vital records for thousands of Polish towns and villages, the JRI-Poland database can give you quick insights into the locations where your family records may exist. The database offers search capability using the Daitch-Mokotoff soundex system, giving you access to sound-alike entries.

Using the JRI-Poland database is a great first step in your research efforts. While the database does not contain actual vital records, successful searches will give you an index entry with the name, record number, the year the event was recorded (but not necessarily when it actually occurred). Search results include the LDS microfilm number so you can order the film and review the actual record at your local Family History Center. For records not filmed by the Mormons, follow the on-line instructions that include an easy-to-use form, for ordering directly from the Polish State Archives.

### **A Treasure for Genealogical, Genetic and Other Research**

The database searches surnames within a specific town or broader geographic area. This not only benefits individual genealogists and those seeking to reunite families separated by the Holocaust, but wider community as well. 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 histories, particularly those at increased risk for hereditary conditions and diseases. The story of JRI-Poland was featured the Spring, 2001 issue of Avotaynu (Vol. XVII, No.1), the International Review of Jewish Genealogy.

### **Surname Lists**

The JRI-Poland web site includes "Surname Lists" extracted from the vital records indices of each town that has been indexed. All variations, as written by the town registrar in the civil records, have been included in each surname list. This feature is an aid to researchers who may not initially recall all the names in their various family branches, but whose memories may be sparked by scanning the list.