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IN THIS ISSUE

JewishGen Ukraine Research Division Project to Preserve Archival Records Scanned by Alex Krakovsky

by Gary Pokrassa

Alex Krakovsky, a Jewish Ukrainian, is using his country's court system and laws to force archives to allow him to scan their records, something never before permitted. He posts the scans online to a wiki page on the Wikipedia site (Ukraine version), yielding a massive amount of raw data for the Ukraine researcher. Krakovsky uses high resolution equipment to scan virtually all records in an archive, posting to a wiki just for Jewish records (although he also scans and posts non-Jewish records on separate wiki pages).

Spending considerable time and his own money, constantly battling a difficult government system, Krakovsky also has received donated state-of-the-art scanners, now in use in most Ukraine archives, as well as funds donated toward fees he must pay to archives. His work and underlying belief that all archived records should be available and free to the public supports the JewishGen Ukraine Research Division's goal to provide as many online and searchable records for the Ukraine researcher as possible. The data captured, along with the Division's new translation project techniques, are game-changers for Ukraine research that will greatly increase a researcher's ability to identify and locate records of interest.

Obstacles Faced

Archives constantly refuse Krakovsky access, with the result that he has sued archives several times, winning virtually all court battles. Archive directors then have found other ways to again block him. Krakovsky and press accounts describe his encounters with archive personnel as follows. "Unfortunately, in Zhytomyr he has found the criminals [sic] running the archives are not adhering to the law, which allows researchers to take photographs of documents with their own cameras without having to pay any fees."

Alex Krakovsky

Shortly after winning a court battle against the Kyiv archives last summer, Krakovsky sent a request to this archive to digitize the rest of Jewish documents of other towns of Kyiv gubernia, not yet digitized by the archive. He notes:

> To my surprise, this archive instantly shut down ALL of the Jewish fonds because they [sic] actually Jewish [records] …. The only reason is "for technical reasons." They suddenly had to change boxes in which documents were stored. They needed to check if documents existed etc. Of course, the only

real reason they did this is just to not let me copy these documents. It seems that we now have no other option but to go to the court and sue this archive and State Archives Service once again.

Time is an enemy here. Many archives are not keeping these documents under proper conditions and priceless, irreplaceable records are crumbling and rotting. Krakovsky is preserving the data electronically while the records themselves are perishing. There is, however, only one Alex Krakovsky. He has had some limited assistance from others to do the scanning, but mainly posts his own work. Early on, he worked at several other archives, particularly in Zhytomyr. Lately, however, his work has been confined primarily to the voluminous DAKO (Kyiv region) archive, and to a lesser degree to the CDIAK state archive in Kyiv, where he resides. Further, he has also posted improved documents from other archives, such as the Kherson regional archive, taking the scans made by the archives and updating them for easier use.[1]

A further obstacle is the global COVID-19 pandemic, which has led the Ukrainian government to shut down the archive reading rooms, forcing Krakovsky to halt his scanning, at least temporarily. Here is an example of what Krakovsky is seeking to save. It is an example of the urgent need to scan. It is an archive shelf with Kamenets-Podilsky fire damaged documents now at the Khmelnytsky archive.

Records Preservation Effort

Fire-damaged documents

The Ukraine Research Division (formerly the Ukrainian Special Interest Group [SIG]), under a team headed by data acquisition director Gary Pokrassa, is working to capture and preserve Krakovsky's scanned files on the JewishGen server. They include some index files for Kiev and Zhytomyr, and several smaller areas, as well as thousands of unindexed files. Primarily metrical records and revision lists, they also include other records such as education data and rabbinic election data.

As of late May 2020, the URD has loaded 700,000 pages of documents and 4,100 files on our server, but Krakovsky uploads new files constantly, and we must work hard to keep pace with him. These are massive files which should exceed

one terabyte of information when complete, perhaps more.

We want these files on the JewishGen server in part as insurance lest the Ukraine government delete Krakovsky's wiki page, given the archives' attitude towards his project, and also to better direct researchers to relevant files. These files are priceless and irreplaceable to researchers. In a Facebook post May 19, 2020, Krakovsky wrote what looks like a major reversal, but it still seems prudent to put the files on the JewishGen server as well:

> For the last couple of years the real bottleneck was Ministry of Justice and their awful State Archive Service since they tried to block any scanning project in the country. But tables have turned. We won all the lawsuits. And now they ask us to scan more.

How to Navigate the Wiki

This section is intended for those interested in pursuing translation projects needing to start with the raw records as posted. I will first describe how to locate the raw data files on multiple wiki pages, which are in various formats. Krakovsky has a main wiki file and at least 17 separate wiki pages with metric records, revision lists and many other files of interest.

Main Wiki Page

Krakovsky's main wiki page, with approximately 2,000 lines of file references with some town and settlement details may be accessed at: https://uk.wikipedia.org/wiki/Єврейське_містечко. An alternate URL (use Google Chrome to translate; it is all in Ukrainian) is http://tinyurl.com/WikiUkrShtetls.

The page is well organized by province and then by district/county within each province. The documents, however, include only sporadic data about towns or settlements. Many hold data from multiple towns or settlements all in one file as they encompass an entire district within the province. JewishGen Ukraine Research Division has just embarked on a project to create such an index of towns/settlements.

Below is the index to Krakovsky's main wiki page as translated by Google translate, showing just the provincial headings. Each province does have detailed county or district subheadings not shown here for brevity. In the original wiki page, the town and district index listings actually represent a link to the section referenced and will display that desired page on the screen.

Content.

- 1. History
- 2. Demographics of the Jewish population of Ukraine
  - 2.1 Bratislava Voivodeship
- 3. Volyn province
- 4. Transcarpathia
- 5. Katerynoslav province
- 6. Kiev province
- 7. Podolsk province
- 8. Poltava province
- 9. Stanisław Voivodeship
- 10. Kherson province
- 11. Census of different localities

Portals in Main Wiki Leading to Separate Pages

Since early 2019, Krakovsky has begun to create separate wiki pages or portals for many areas with large numbers of files, and he has moved some files from the main wiki into these portals. The majority of new files posted since Spring 2019, are indeed posted to the separate wiki pages.

Krakovsky uses several different formats. Below is a separate wiki page in matrix format specifically for all metric records from Kyiv that Krakovsky has posted, https://uk.wikisource.org/wiki/Архіви/ЦДІАК/1164/1#Київ. The Metric Books columns refer to linked files; numbers in a smaller font (1877, 1878) are not linked. This is just the top portion of the page, which has been cropped.

Recently, Krakovsky also has used a wiki page created by the DAKO Kyiv regional archive and added his scanned files as links. In the online version, some links are in blue; some in red. Those in red have no linked file. The version below does not show the difference in color, but references through

Kyiv [Ed.]

Metric books and alphabetical indexes of the Jews of Kyiv

Year	Metric books				Alphabetic indexes			
	Birth	Marriage	Divorce	Death	Birth	Marriage	Divorce	Death
1863	Ref. 132	-	-	-				
1864	Ref. 148	Ref. 149	Ref. 150	-				
1865	Ref. 170	Ref. 171 Ref. 172						
1866	Ref. 177	-	Ref. 189	-				
1867	Ref. 201	-	Ref. 202	Ref. 206				
1868	Ref. 218 Ref. 222	Ref. 216	Ref. 223					
1869	Ref. 242	Ref. 243	Ref. 244	-				
1870	Ref. 263	Ref. 264	Ref. 265	-				
1871	Ref. 291	-	Ref. 292	-				
1872	Ref. 320	Ref. 321	Ref. 322 Ref. 307	-				Ref. 535
1873	-	Ref. 346 Ref. 347	Ref. 348	Ref. 349				
1874	Ref. 361	Ref. 370	Ref. 371	Ref. 372				
1875	Ref. 388	Ref. 389	Ref. 390	Ref. 391				
1876	Ref. 392		Ref. 393					
1877	Ref. 394	Ref. 395	Ref. 390	Ref. 396				
1878	Ref. 397		-					

50 are in blue and linked; all references following that are in black and are unlinked. Krakovsky updates this page constantly, so that there currently are more linked items than shown here.

An example of a page created by the archive and used by Krakovsky may be found at https://uk.wikisource.org/ wiki/Архіви/ДАКО/1248/1. This represents the archive's inventory of all records and documents for a particular county/district for the designated type of records. For example DAKO 1248-1 as mentioned is described as Tarashcha city

magistrate, Tarashcha, Tarashcha district, Kyiv province. Although many lines refer to unlinked files, its use has many benefits, e.g.,

- It is more convenient and less time consuming for Krakovsky.

- It represents the complete physical inventory of all documents in that section of the archive, whether scanned and online or as yet unscanned, along with the archive's detailed description of the document contents.

- In the future when previously unlinked lines are scanned and uploaded, they simply get posted to an existing line which already contains the archive reference number and full description of that document's content.

- It also allows the researcher to see a complete inventory of what is physically stored in the archive's shelves for that geographical area and type of record.

Unlinked File

The archive format represents a complete, detailed inventory for that record group held by that particular archive, but the files scanned and linked online are only a small portion of these file listings. As a result, the archive format has many listings with no linked scanned file. In such cases, the link is red and a click on that link produces the message, "You have reached a page that does not yet exist."

Kyiv Portal; Revision Lists 1782–1858

This page in the wiki holds files from all extant Jewish Revision Lists for Kyiv city and province scanned by Krakovsky with references to sub-portals for each year from 1782 to 1858. The collection is huge, with almost 100,000 pages of data in these portals alone. The URL is https://uk.wikisource.org/wiki/Портал:Ревізькі_казки_Київської_губернії. Click on the year to see a detailed page for the revision lists of that year.

Kyiv 1834 Revision List Portal

An example is the 1834 Kyiv Revision List portals, translated by Google Chrome. Near the top, in a separate box, there is a detailed index listing, first by district and detailed town/settlement list within district. Shown is the top of a long list organized by districts numbers 1 to 12 as summarized in the box at the top of the page.

Some listings of the towns or settlements included in these documents are sporadic and inconsistent as can be seen in the second-row case 522 as translated from the Cyrillic by Google Chrome. The numbers represent the PDF page numbers where that town's data begins. The Ukraine Research Division is starting a project to create an index of the town and settlement details where posted.

Krakovsky has started to revise the Kyiv portal pages to include the archive name. An example is a single-year portal page for 1795 Kyiv revision lists in which he has added a new column on the left side listing the archive that holds these files. When you look at this screen, note that Google translates "revision list" as "fairy tales" or "auditory tales."

General [ed.]						
Stock	Description	Case	The name of the case	Year	Number of sheets	Summary
280	2	421	Audit fairy tales of the fellows of Zvenigorod, Chigirin and Radomyshl counties	1833		
280	2	522	Auditory tales of the Jews of the Kiev district of 1811, of Vasylkov city of 1834, and of additional auditory tales of the peasants of Lipovetsky, Uman and Radomyshl counties of 1812.	1834		1834: 1-3 Vasilkov 1811: 12-21 Rzhishchev 104-111 Makarov 114-121 Borodyanka 124-126 Ignatovka 130-141 Byshev 144-154 Gostomel 158-162 Ignatovka 181-188 Yasnogorodka 190-194 Dimer 196-197 Borodyanka

Portion of index of town and settlement details

A discussion of Google translate quirks, of which these are two examples, follows.

Typical File Entry in Alex's Wiki

In Ukrainian, the original file is entitled Ревізькі казки євреїв Житомирського повіту. 1850 // ДАЖО. Ф. 118. Оп. 14. Спр. 53. Google Chrome translates it as Auditory tales of Jews of Zhytomyr county. 1850 // RAIN. F. 118. Op. 14. Ref. 53. Based upon the archive reference for this specific document, Krakovsky has written the file name as DOGO/118-14-53.
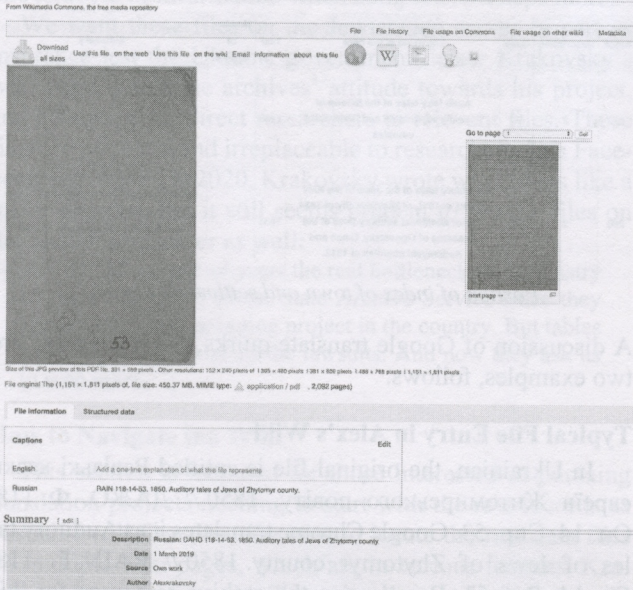
Most Eastern Europe archives use a similar reference identification system that allows an archivist to locate any document in its holdings in which every document is assigned a unique number. The format is Archive/fond/opis/delo or dela (plural). Sometimes "case" is used as an alternate for delo. In Western archival usage, fond is a record group, opis is an inventory of the files within the fond and delo or dela is an individual file or book.

Google Chrome Quirks

Google Chrome first will try to translate a word. If it cannot find anything close, it will transliterate. Sometimes, however, a transliteration and not a translation, is needed. For example, a town name invariably should be transliterated and not translated. When they are translated, the result is frequently totally inaccurate and sometimes humorous.

Archive names are represented by a four to five-character acronym in Cyrillic that never should be translated. The example above cites the archive acronym translated to RAIN. Revision lists usually are translated as either "Fairy tales" or "Auditory tales." "Alphabet" is the Google translation for an "Index file." The only indexes I have seen are for Kyiv, Kyiv district and Zhytomyr metric records as listed for Kiev at https://uk.wikisource.org/wiki/ Архіви/ЦДІАК/1164/1 and Zhytomyir at https://uk.wiki source.org/wiki/Архіви/ ДАЖО/67/3.

Those who have found a record of interest from a search in an online database of translation projects, or if one can read the indexes directly in the Russian, one may wish to find the original record to learn more. A reference to the original file where the record is residing should be in the search results. Unlike Polish files, which typically include an index with each set of metric records, Ukrainian files rarely do.

File: DOGO 118-14-53. 1850. Audit Tales of the Jews of Zhytomyr County.pdf

Typical Screen for a File

Most of Krakovsky's wiki pages include a few English words amid mostly Ukrainian text. Google Chrome cannot proceed if it reads any English words. Instead, it shows a pop-up box with this message: "This page could not be translated." Do not click on "Try Again;" it will not change. Instead click on Options and get a pop-up box marked "Options." Click on page language and select Ukrainian from the dropdown. Then click on Translate and it will work.

Alternate first screen. Sometimes the link to a specific file in Krakovsky's wiki shows an alternate first screen as below; which screen appears seems to follow no pattern. A click on either the blue link above the thumbnail or on the thumbnail itself, will pull up the previously shown typical (standard) screen.

Go the standard screen, which has the download links to download a file or a page A click on the link to a specific file, will yield either the standard or the alternate screen. If the alternate screen appears, proceed as above to the standard screen.

How to Download a File

Click on the download link above the thumbnail. A popup box marked "download this file, will appear. Click on "full resolution" in the download popup box. Save the file to your computer.

Finding a Relevant File and Specific Records in Krakovsky's Files

Once a translation project is uploaded and searchable on the JewishGen database how does a researcher obtain the record? As an example, select an index listing from the Kamyanets-Podilski metric records 1875–1888 project with the following data from the index:

- PDF page number 33.

- Record Number F25
- DOB 25 Mar 1879 SHEYTLBOYM, Yenta Patronymic Yosif
- Source: Archive/Fond/List/Item = DAHMO/277-1-17
- Image pathname = Metric Book of the Jews of Kamenets-Podilsky. 1879 // DAHMO. F. 277. Op. 1. Ref. 17.
- The records are usually duplicated; the left side of the page is written in Russian, the right side is in Hebrew. If one entry is illegible, it may still be possible to read the item in the other language.

The relevant wiki page for the entire file as translated by Google Chrome is File: 1879 metric records Kamenets-Podilsky DAHMO 277-1-17. This page can be reached using the URL image path name described above which is in the Main wiki file.

In the "go to page" box click on your desired PDF page number – in this case 33. Because the files are large, a single page may be slow to load. You now have your desired page on the screen. To download the single page: click on the resolution desired in the lower line, just below the large thumbnail, selecting the highest resolution available, shown as 2,500 x 3,333 pixels.

Here is the record, downloaded as a single image jpeg file Record F25. An alternate method would be to search by record number instead of by PDF page number. Births are in two sequences, males on the left; female on the right. Although males and females are in separate sequences, the records should be in sequential order for each. Simply scroll through and find your record within the desired M or F sequence.

Finding Data From a Town; Main Wiki

No index exists by town or settlement within the district. In the main wiki, Krakovsky sometimes (but irregularly)

posts the towns included in a file. Sometimes the detailed listing of towns contained in a portal is treated somewhat inconsistently depending on the page format used.

Sometimes Krakovsky has added a second line in the main wiki listing the towns with data included in the record on a separate line, not linked to anything. Numbers indicate PDF page number reference where that town starts. Below is an example from Letychiv County in the Main Wiki.

If you cannot locate your town using the detailed file descriptions in the relevant section, and you can read Russian or Ukrainian, find the main area/district in the wiki and go through the files one by one.

Town Detail in Kyiv 1834 Portal

Listings of the towns included in a specific record (case or delo) are in Cyrillic alphabetical order. See the portion of the 1834 Kyiv Portal to the right that shows some town details. Here you will find several files which do have town listings and some that are unfortunately blank. The Ukraine Research Division has begun a new project to capture town data and to create a searchable index database.

Conclusion

Alex Krakovsky's work greatly expands the possibilities for Jewish research in Ukraine records. Until now, it has largely has been a one-man operation as he works primarily in regional and state archives in Kyiv. JewishGen's Ukraine Research Division has undertaken to secure copies of all of those records and has contributed to payments Krakovsky must make to the archives. We hope he or others will scan records at other Ukrainian archives, as there is a dearth of records available to researchers from all Ukraine archives. Time is of the essence; archives are not properly storing their files, many are decaying and still suffering the effects of fire damage without preservation efforts by the archives themselves. Krakovsky

Summary

Antonivka 126, Safe 681, Bertniki 277, Bykovka Dam 654, Bila Tserkva 140, Biryuk 543, Bloshchintsy 714, Vasyliv 536, Vasilkov 9, Veprik 90, Volitsa 664, Glushki 419, Settlement 703, Combs 433, Scaffolding 202, Dmitrovka Doroginka 560, Rye Mountains 321, Kozhanki 531, Kozhaniki 548, Koshchyivka 625, Krasnolysya 380, Kudeli hamlet 743, Leshchinka 186, Mazepintsy 440, Makeevka 207, Mala Polovetska 389, Maryanovka 70, Matyushi 458, Customs House 215, Motovylivka Ozerna (Yezarna) 492, Oksentivka 191, Oliynykova Sloboda 700, Olshanitsa 553, Olshanka Belotserkovskaya 697, Island 648, Bishop's Office 733, Palyanchyntsi 737, Pilipchy 728, Roosters 428, Sand 403, Childbirth 44, Potivka 565, Tailoring 354, Prussia 607, Rosalievka 194, Rakitna 328, Chamomile 425, Savarka 618, Savinka 630, Saliha 635, Sinyava 166, Skryhalivka 316, Snegivka 116, Snytinka 711, Sokolovka 83, Sokolovka .

101 - Vasylkiv, 185 - Vasylkiv Jews displaced from Kiev, 234 - Byshiv, 270 - Makariv, 301 - Yasnogorodka, 342 - Ignatovka, 368 - Gostomel, 396 - Dimir, 415 - Borodyanka, 447 - Bila Tserkva, 756 - Rokytne, 818 - Fastov

Portion of the 1834 Kyiv Portal shows some town details.

has made an enormous contribution to the availability of records for Ukraine research, although the voluminous data he has so far made available is but a small amount of the totality of relevant Jewish records in Ukraine.

Pokrassa is retired from a 46-year career ending as CFO. He is the Data Acquisition Director for the Ukraine Research Division-JewishGen, Treasurer and Director of JRI – Poland, and a member of JGS of Long Island. He is town leader for four shtetls. Pokrassa lives in Roslyn Heights, NY.