

Kremenets Shtetl CO-OP formed to index vital records

Date: Sun, 06 Aug 2000 20:25:17 -0700 From: "Ronald D. Doctor"
rondoctor@earthlink.net rondoctor@earthlink.net Subject: Kremenets Shtetl CO-OP
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A couple of days ago, I sent a message to about 110 researchers known to be interested in Kremenets, Ukraine. We are forming a Kremenets Shtetl CO-OP to enter Kremenets vital records for the Jewish Records Indexing-Poland on-line searchable database. We also hope to translate the Kremenets Yizkor Books, and other documents, and to create a computerized name and place index that would be put on-line. We will need volunteers to help with this effort and we will need to make paper copies of the records. If you are interested in helping in any way, or if you just want to be kept informed of our progress, please read on.

First, let me introduce myself. I'm Ron Doctor, President of JGS of Oregon. My paternal ancestors are from Kremenets, Ukraine and from a couple of nearby shtetls. While attending the IAJGS Conference in Salt Lake City this year, I had an opportunity to examine the 7 rolls of Kremenets microfilms that the Mormons have produced. The films cover Jewish records for the period 1870 to 1907. To my great joy, I found birth and marriage records for a number of my ancestors. (Haven't yet examined the death records.) The records in these films are an incredibly rich source of information. Typically, they include not only the given names of the child, but also the given name of the mother and the father's given name, surname and sometimes his patronymic. Some records include the father's social class. Some show the town or shtetl in which the father is registered. This often is different from Kremenets, but usually is nearby.

Unfortunately, the records are in Russian and Yiddish cursive writing, and there is no index to them. With some difficulty, practice, and a lot of help from IAJGS mavens at the Family History Library, I was able to recognize some of my family names and struggle through translation of a few of the records. But there is a much more practical way to extract the information for ourselves and for future generations of Kremenets researchers.

At the Conference, I met Sheree Roth, another Kremenets researcher, and as we talked we came up with the idea of forming a Shtetl CO-OP to index the Kremenets vital records. I spoke to JRI-Poland's Stanley Diamond and Hadassah Lipsius about our idea. Because Kremenets was in Poland between the wars, it is eligible to be included in the Jewish Records Indexing – Poland database. Stanley and Hadassah agreed to help guide our efforts to produce the Kremenets database

Our first task was to produce an inventory of the contents of the LDS Kremenets microfilms. With great determination, Sheree scrolled through all 7 microfilm rolls and tabulated the number of records of each type, for each year. I converted her Kremenets data to a series of Excel spreadsheets. This inventory soon will be available on the JRI-Poland web site.

The microfilms contain about 15,000 records, mostly birth and death records. The left side of each ledger page is in Russian. The right side presents the same data (sometimes with additional information) in Yiddish. Some years are incomplete or missing. There are about 5,000 pages in each language!

Here are the steps we are proposing:

- Make paper copies of the microfilmed pages. This will require volunteers who have access to a Family History Center.
- Distribute the pages to volunteers who will transliterate and/or translate them. We can provide some guidance on this. If we do not have sufficient volunteers for this task, we will have access to fee-based professionals.
- Enter the information into an Excel spreadsheet. A minimum of computer competence is needed for this task.
- Proof-read the computerized data before we put it on-line. This will be another volunteer effort.

While it is a separate project, and requires different skills, I would like to introduce the idea of translating the two Yizkor Books for Kremenets. (One is in Yiddish and the other is in both Yiddish and Hebrew.) We would like to start with the necrology and the Table of Contents; volunteers will be needed for this task as well.

We have a list of about 110 people interested in Kremenets. For now, Sheree and I will serve as Shtetl CO-OP leaders for the JRI-Poland project and Coordinators of the Yizkor Book project. But, we welcome the participation of everyone, and, hopefully, volunteers will step forward who will take leadership roles in these projects.

I'm sure there are points I've missed in explaining the projects. Feel free to communicate with either Sheree or me to tell us your thoughts about it. Sheree's e-mail address is ssroth@pacbell.net. Mine is rondoctor@earthlink.net.

We would greatly appreciate hearing from you and having your response to the following questions:

1. Do you want to receive e-mail updates about the Kremenets Shtetl CO-OP and the Yizkor Book translation project?

2. Are you willing to volunteer some time for either of these initiatives? If yes, on what task(s)?
3. Is there anything else that we should be doing to get these projects underway?

Our success will depend on your cooperation and assistance. If you want to advance your own Kremenets research AND help others at the same time, please become a partner in this effort.

I am looking forward to hearing from you.

Ron Doctor

Portland, Oregon