

September 14, 2000

Dear Kremenets Researchers:

I am very excited about all the positive developments in our Kremenets Shtetl CO-OP. In this first of what I hope will be monthly updates, I'll try to tell you about all that has happened in the month since we first announced formation of the CO-OP.

Our Group

We currently have 105 people on our e-mail distribution list. Of these, 64 people have responded to our Announcement message. That is our core group. Almost all of the 64 have volunteered to help with one task or another. Nine of us have volunteered to help translate the vital records and 6 have volunteered to help translate the Yizkor Books. Six of us either have, or have easy access to, at least one of the Yizkor Books. Thirty-one of us have made a financial commitment to the project. So far, 12 of us have donated a total of \$970 to the project. We have not yet drawn any expenses from that fund.

These are phenomenal results! We are a dedicated group. In a very real sense we are the inheritors of the Kremenitzers who left our ancestral town so many years ago. It gives me enormous pleasure to be associated with you.

Inventory of LDS Microfilms for Jewish Kremenets

As you know by now, the Mormons filmed the Jewish vital records of Kremenets for the period 1870 to 1907. There are 7 rolls of microfilm containing about 15,000 records on about 10,000 pages. Half the pages are in Russian handwriting. The other half are a mirror image in Yiddish, but sometimes with different or additional information. Sheree Roth scrolled through all those films and tabulated the number of records of each type for each year. I put Sheree's data in a set of spreadsheet tables. That Inventory now is available on the JRI-Poland web site. To look at the Inventory, go to: <http://www.jewishgen.org/jri-pl/jri-plin.htm>. That will take you to the Shtetl CO-OP Initiative page. Scroll down to Kremenets, and click on the town name. At the end of the second paragraph of the Introduction document there are links to the various Inventory pages. Our Q&A message also is on this site.

Discussions with LDS' Family History Library

Until now, we have delayed a mass attempt to translate the vital records pending the outcome of discussions with a representative of the Mormon Family History Library. Those discussions are continuing, albeit slowly.

We are trying to get LDS permission to take the films out of the FHL/FHC system so that we can make paper copies of the records for our translators with greater ease and less expense. It is not practical for our translator volunteers to sit in front of a microfilm reader while translating these hard to read records. It also is expensive make the paper copies we need at the Family History Centers. If we can get permission to borrow the films outside of the FHCs, then we can get the copies made less expensively. We also are considering some variations on this theme, but so far nothing definitive has emerged from the discussions.

Our "fallback" position is to make the copies ourselves, piecemeal, or all at once by having a crew of volunteers meet in Salt Lake City. The advantage of a SLC trip would be that we would get good quality copies on 11x17 paper. (The copies we make at most FHCs are smaller images on 8-1/2x11 paper.)

While we hope for success with the LDS discussions, we are proceeding with a small-scale piecemeal approach. Even though this may not be the most efficient way to go, we believe that it is important to keep the project moving ahead. If the LDS comes through with a positive response, we'll terminate the piecemeal copying approach. I'll keep you advised when we get some definitive word from the LDS.

In the next sections, I'll describe what we have accomplished so far, but for now, I need to ask you to volunteer some time. **WE NEED VOLUNTEERS** who will order one or more microfilms into their local FHC, go to the FHC when the films arrive, and make copies of them. Once you volunteer, I will assign you a particular film and a particular set of records on that film to copy. The Project will reimburse you for your out of pocket expense ... unless you want to donate that to the cause. :-)

We have done a test translation

Al Bell, one of our group of Kremenitzers, volunteered to do some test copying, translating and data entry. Al made copies of the 1870 birth records and the 1870 and 1871 death records from the first film, and translated the 263 birth records as a test. Data entry of the birth records is complete. The good news is that, despite the need for a few adjustments, the system works. Sheree looked over the records and found a

previously unknown sister of her ggf. Al found 5 relatives. I found 4 relatives ... and all this from only part of one film.

We are now preparing to proof-read and edit the resulting table ... and Al is pressing ahead with translation of more records. When proofing and editing is done, we will submit the records to JRI-Poland for display on their searchable website. That probably will take two to four weeks. In the meantime, while proofing proceeds, I will ask JRI-Poland to post just the surname list so that you will be able to check for family names. And, I will e-mail the surname list to those of you who have donated (cash, copies, or time) to the project. This early release to our donors is one of the few ways we can say thank you for helping.

So, if you haven't yet contributed to the project, now is the time! We need cash donations (see below for more info on this); We need volunteers to make paper copies of the microfilm records; And, we especially need volunteers to help translate and to proof-read the records. For those who have indicated that you will (or may) volunteer for one task or another, I will be in touch with you personally over the next couple of weeks to ask you to take on a specific piece of work. We will provide volunteer translators and proof-readers with templates for data entry and with special guides for recognizing cursive Russian and Yiddish writing, as well as guides for transliterating the Russian and Yiddish records. And, maybe we can prevail on Al to provide some experience-based hints for copying and translating the records.

By the way, Al tells me that after getting used to the handwriting on the first film, translation required only 2 to 3 minutes per record. Not all of us will be able to go that fast, but what this experience indicates is that the task is eminently do-able.

Yizkor Books

JewishGen's Yizkor Book Project lists two Yizkor Books for Kremenets. Pinkas Kremeniec, Stein A.S. (ed.), 1954. 1 volume, 453 pp., Hebrew & Yiddish. Published in Israel. Kremenits, Vishgorodek un Pitshayev; yisker-bukh (Memorial Book of Krzemieniec). P. Lerner, editor. Published by former residents of Kremenits and vicinity in Argentina. Buenos Aires, 1965. 1 volume, 468 pages. Yiddish. In addition, I have a 58 p. softcover book. It appears to have Yizkor Book-like material throughout. Kol Yotzei Kremeniec Be-Yisrael Ve-batfutsut, booklet no. 11, 1974. Willim Kagan (6828 Juno Str., Forest Hills, N.Y.) and Marcos Katz (Ciudad de la Paz, 1465, I.D. Buenos Aires, Argentina). 58 pp., Hebrew & Yiddish. If I'm translating the title correctly, it is "Everyone depart Kremenits, to Israel and the Diaspora". :-). The back cover also has a title that reads, "Kremenitzer Landslayt Shtime, in Yisrael, in Iceland".

The task ahead of us is to translate these books. We will align this part of the project with JewishGen's Yizkor Book project. That means we will follow their guidelines for translating the books and putting the translations on-line. JewishGen requires that we keep fundraising for this part of our project separate from the JRI-Poland part of the project. Sometime within the next month, we will establish a Kremenets account with the JewishGen Yizkor Book Project. In the meantime, if you want your donation to go to the Yizkor Book project exclusively, please let us know that when you make your donation to JRI-Poland. We'll arrange to transfer the money after the Yizkor Book account is established. Both are 501(c)(3) Projects, so donations to either are tax-deductible in the U.S.

The Yizkor Book Project recommends starting with the Table of Contents and Necrology (if any). I think we also should translate the captions under photos, and the section headings within the chapters. That would provide us with a good guide to the structure of the books and would allow us to quickly create an index of names appearing in the books.

We need volunteer translators to begin the project. Please contact either Sheree or me and let us know if you are willing to volunteer. If you don't have access to one of the Yizkor Books, we will send you copies of the pages you need to begin. We also will send you a transliteration guide so that we maintain consistency in the spelling of names that appear in the books.

Kremenets Landsmanshaftn

It looks like there were three major landsmanshaftn for Kremenets: in New York, Israel, and Argentina. All three are out of business. The Israel and Argentina groups each produced a Yizkor Book (see above).

Apparently, after WW2, a fairly large number of Kremenitzers migrated to Argentina and established a community there. I have been in touch with Paul Armony, President of the Argentina JGS. He tells me that all the original immigrants are deceased, but many of their descendants still live in Argentina. Paul is translating our Announcement and Q&A message to Spanish and will distribute it to his e-mail list.

I also have been in contact with Norman Kagan. Norman's father, William (Wolf) Kagan, was Secretary of the New York Kremenitzer Volyner Benevolent Society. Norm has many of the records that his father possessed. He is going to donate them to YIVO, and we will get copies of the records. Our task will be to translate Yiddish records, catalog them and index any names appearing in the records. It is likely that there are some documents in the collection that would be suitable for our Web site

(more on this below). Norm also has several photos of Kremenets that his father took when he visited in 1929-30 and 1932. Norm has given us permission to put those photos on our Web site as well. In addition, Norm has an elderly cousin, Moshe Kagan (and his wife Tunia) who were born in Kremenets and now lives on a kibbutz in northern Gallilie in Israel. Moshe may be willing to help on our project. Norm located one member of the NYC Kremenitzers. He is 83 years of age. We will be in touch with him. I'll keep you posted on this.

Finally, in an e-mail message to me, Norm included the following list of names. It is from a document dated 27 April 1973 and may be the membership list at that time. Are any of your ancestors on this list?

"Regarding the materials my father had, I came across a handwritten list of 21 names, dated April 27, 1973 which I believe was the membership of the Society at that time (it was written on stationary which read, in part: Ribal Lybrary of Haskalah - in memory of the matrys of Kremenetz, Volyn at the Teachers' State College"Seminar Hakibutzim" Tel Aviv, Bnei Efraim Str. 1) { #6 and #18 may be the same }

1. J. Waxman, NY 2. David Rappaport, Bronx 3. Emanuel Bronfeld, Bronx 4. William Kagan, Forest Hills 5. Isidore Salmonitz, c/o D. Rappaport 6. G. Brodsky, Brooklyn 7. Jack Barshop, Bronx 8. Mr. & Mrs. Weinlery, Brooklyn 9. Harry Kecel, Lakewood, NJ 10. Chaim Teitcher, Brooklyn 11. Herman Kremen, Fresh Meadows 12. Sam Kaplan, Brooklyn 13. Samuel Fuchs, New York 14. Mrs. Daniel Roth, Bronx 15. J. Trachtenbery, New York 16. Mrs. Milda Chacny, c/o J. Freed, Bronx 17. Henry Kessler, c/o J. Kessler, NY 18. Gea Brodsky, Brooklyn 19. S. Rosenfeld, Forest Hills 20. Hilda Shwartzapel, Scarsdale 21. Dr. Marc Kac

"Also, not on this list but on some of the Society's stationary is: Jack Chasky of Brooklyn, and Mr. & Mrs. Harry Wiener of the Bronx" More on this front as we examine other records.

Our Web Site

Sheree Roth is in the final stages of getting a web site established on JewishGen's ShtetlLinks. Sheree's son Max has been hard at work creating a prototype of the site including a photo of Kremenets. We need your suggestions as to what should be put on the Web site. Here are some ideas:

Our basic documents (the Announcement message, Q&A, links to the Inventory)

List of surnames

Photos of Kremenets

Histories of Kremenets

Anecdotes and stories about Kremenets and Kremenitzers

Stories of discoveries made in the Vital Records

Excerpts (including images) from the Landsmanshaft records

Short biographies of individuals in our group

What else do you suggest?

Donations

As I mentioned earlier, total donations to-date amount to \$970. Considering the short time we have been up and running, that is wonderful. However (you knew this was coming, didn't you?) we need more. If we have to make and pay for copies of all the microfilm pages, we will need about \$2,000. We also will need funds for copying Yizkor Book pages, mailing paper copies, and possibly for paying professional translators (especially for the Yizkor Book part of the Project). I estimate that very roughly we will need a total of \$3,000 to \$4,000 before we are finished. So, we are about 1/3 to 1/4 of the way to the total. If you are able to make a donation to the project, please do so now. Here is the information about how to make your donation.

Your donation can be by check, bank draft, money order, or Visa Card. See <http://www.jewishgen.org/jri-pl/visa.htm> for additional information. Checks should be made out to "Jewish Records Indexing - Poland", and you should write "Kremenets Shtetl CO-OP" on the check.

Send your contributions or address your questions concerning donations to:

Jewish Records Indexing, Inc.
c/o Sheila Salo, Treasurer
5607 Greenleaf Road
Cheverly, MD 20785 USA
Telephone / Fax: (301) 341-1261
E-Mail: ssalo@capaccess.org

Visa contributions also may be telephoned to Sheila Salo. (Only between the hours of 8:00 am to 8:00 pm Eastern Daylight/Standard Time, please).

Jewish Records Indexing - Poland, Inc. is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. Contributions to Jewish Records Indexing - Poland are tax-deductible in the U.S. to the extent permitted by law. When you make your donation be sure to specify that the donation is for the Kremenets Shtetl CO-OP, otherwise Sheila Salo, JRI-Poland's treasurer, will not know that the money is earmarked for our use. Also, to enable us to

track contributions, please send me an e-mail message (rondoctor@earthlink.net) or letter telling me how much you have donated.

Sheree and I thank you more than we can say. Your e-mail messages have been so supportive and encouraging, it has been pure pleasure to work on this project. Now that we are beginning to see the fruits of our initial labors, our motivation levels are soaring. We hope you will feel the same way when you first see the name of one of your ancestors on our lists.

We want to hear from you, so please, if you have a few minutes, send us a message and tell us a little about yourself.

Best regards,

Ron Doctor
Portland, Oregon USA