

UKRAINE JOURNAL

A GENEALOGICAL JOURNEY TO WARSAW AND UKRAINE

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Photos by Ronald D. Doctor and Kenneth J. Doctor

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Dr. Ronald D. Doctor
10 July 2003

SECTION 1: OVERVIEW & WARSAW

Overview

This Journal describes a visit that my brother Ken and I made to Ukraine in September 2002. I had several objectives in making this trip: First, to try to discover documents relating to our family history and to walk the ground where our ancestors lived; Second, to make contact with officials in Kremenets regarding documentation, restoration and maintenance of the Jewish Cemetery there; and Third, to try to gain some understanding of Jewish life in today's Ukraine. Ken empathized with these objectives, and in addition, wanted to see some of the tourist sites in Ukraine and to gain some understanding of how Ukraine was making the transition to western values.

I've written this in a "Journal" format to try to capture our sense of adventure and excitement as we traveled through Ukraine and met some remarkably helpful and friendly people.

We started our visit in Warsaw. Alex Dunai (our exceptionally capable and affable guide, translator, driver, bodyguard and, I hope, our friend) met us there after we had spent a few days in the city. We had opportunities to visit the reconstructed "old Warsaw", and some Jewish sites. We met with Yale Reisner at the Jewish Historical Institute and I obtained some documents from him that I didn't know existed ... passports for 11 people who left Kremenets for Israel in the 1929 - 1939 period. At Yale's suggestion, I visited the AGAD, Ancient Acts Archive of Poland, and obtained copies of portions of two 18th century Kahal documents for Kremenets. While I was doing this research at the Institute and AGAD, Ken went on a tour of Jewish Warsaw and Treblinka.

Alex drove us across the border into Ukraine. We spent a night in Lviv, and then drove on to Ternopil. We used Ternopil as a base for our visits to Kremenets and nearby ancestral villages. And, at the Archives in Ternopil, we obtained some unexpected census documents (Revizskaya Skazka) that push our family history back to the years before 1735. These documents added 5 generations to our Vurer family line, and 2 generations to the Doctor family line, besides adding several collateral lines. We visited Kremenets, met with Mayor Andriy Andriyovich Huslavskiy and Larisa Klyuch (Coordinator for the 20 person Jewish community of Kremenets) about the Jewish cemetery restoration project, and, we visited Novy Oleksinets and discovered several previously unknown (to us) tombstones from the Jewish cemetery. We shared a Rosh

Hashonah dinner with the Jewish community of Ternopil, and met the leaders of the community.

From Ternopil, we drove to Kiev. Did some tourist stuff there, and met with Olga Muzychuk, Director of the Central State Archives of Kiev. Olga presented me with the results of some research that extends our Kazdoy line back another generation. While I recovered from a bout of TD, Ken and Alex spent a rainy day seeing some of the sights around Kiev.

Onward, from Kiev to Uman and Odessa. In Uman, we visited two of the cemeteries, one old, and the other new. The gatekeeper at the new cemetery allowed me to photograph the pages of their burial register. As far as I know, the Register has not been generally available. It now is available on the JewishGen Online Worldwide Burial Registry. In Odessa, while Alex and I obtained records on my Kazdoy and Dubinski lines at the Archives (in the old Brodsky Synagogue), Ken walked around town.

Ken returned to the US from Odessa, and Alex and I drove back to Ternopil where we met again with Mayor Huslavskiy and with Larisa to follow-up on our previous discussions. The meetings were promising, but the cemetery restoration project will require time, patience, and some considerable money.

We also visited Yampol, another ancestral town, and discovered a new building (an Ohel) erected over the gravesites of two Rabbis. A man named "Moishe" from New York paid for the construction. Construction was completed just one week before we visited. Three weeks before our visit, the workmen, on their own initiative, retrieved 25 matzevot that had been thrown into the river by the Soviets during communist rule. I got close up photos of each. And, we visited Vishnevets, where I photographed about 65 matzevot in the old Jewish cemetery.

I spent a little less than 3 weeks on this trip. Between us, Ken and I took more than 1400 photos with our digital cameras. We have a heavy editing job ahead of us. I have included selected photos in this Journal. The Journal comprises five sections. The first four correspond to major segments of our travels. The last offers some observations about traveling in Ukraine.

Section 1: Overview and Warsaw

Section 2: Over the Border and into Ukraine – L'viv, Ternopil', Kremenets, & Novy Oleksinets

Section 3: Kiev, Uman, and Odessa

Section 4: Return to Ternopil and Kremenets; Yampol and Vishnevits

Section 5: Some Observations about Preparing for and Traveling in Ukraine

We begin in Warsaw.

Warsaw

Saturday, August 31st

Arriving in Warsaw

Yesterday, I flew from Portland, Oregon to San Francisco, connected to a flight to Frankfurt, and then flew on to Warsaw without a problem. Arrived in Warsaw Saturday afternoon. It took a while to get through passport control in Warsaw, mostly because I got in the line for "all passengers". Should have used the line that was for Poles and Europeans AND "all passengers". It moved faster. No problem, though, in getting through passport check. Then I headed for the door that said "Nothing to Declare". No one stopped me, so I walked out into the terminal. Grabbed a cab (only \$10 ... a pre-arranged limo would have cost about \$34), got to the hotel (Hotel Mercure, in downtown Warsaw) and checked in without a hitch. Ken had made a reservation for me through the Internet (poland@hotelspoland.com). Internet rates are one-half to two-thirds of the rate you would pay if you made the reservation directly with the hotel, but you have to pay the entire hotel bill "up front" with your credit card.

No problem checking in. My room is like an American hotel room, about standard size, double bed, very clean. The toilet is literally a "water closet". It is alone in a very small closet-like room. The washroom and shower/tub is in a separate room, and is just fine. Lighting is dim, but adequate ... a little better than American hotels.

When I first got to my room from the airport, I was dying of thirst so I drank about half a glass of tap water, and brushed my teeth with tap water. That may have been a mistake ... but no effects yet. Then I thought, this is foolish, and I called the desk to ask about the water purity. The desk guy was quite definite, "Don't drink the tap water". Whoops. Found a refrigerator in the room and bought a bottle of bottled water from it ... 11 zlotys (about \$3.00) for a very small glass bottle, not refillable. Later, a large 1-1/2 liter bottle at a nearby deli cost me 1.30 zlotys, about 45 cents.

I showered, then collapsed and slept for 2 hours.

Got up and went for a walk. Managed to find the river front, and the re-created old part of the city, but without a guide or guidebook I didn't know what I was looking at. Still, the old part of the city is a treat. (See Figure 1 through Figure 5.) They did a very good job of recreating the buildings and plazas as they were before the Nazis leveled the town in WW2. The streets were teeming with people, mostly Poles out for Saturday night. Lots of young people, but lots of "older folks" too. Reminded me of Prague ... but without the German overlay.

Ukraine Journal: A Genealogical Journey to Warsaw and Ukraine
Section 1: Overview and Warsaw



Figure 1 - The Plaza at the entrance to Warsaw's Old Town



Figure 2 - Entering Warsaw's Old Town



Figure 3 - A Street in Warsaw's Old Town



Figure 4 – A bear statue at the entrance to a museum in Warsaw's Old Town
This statue was destroyed by the Nazis and restored after WW2.



Figure 5 - "The Liberation of Warsaw"
A monumental sculpture in a plaza outside a government building.



There are many street vendors (I bought a small loaf of bread for emergency rations ... 1.5 Zloty), musicians, lots of restaurants etc. Ended up walking around for about 2-1/2 hours.

Had a pizza and beer for dinner at a sidewalk café (about a 7", very flat, plain cheese pizza). Total cost was under \$5. Then walked back to the hotel. Stopped at a "deli" and bought a couple of large bottles of water and a small bottle that I will refill and carry around with me. Good thing I got two. I've already used up one.

Tomorrow, I'll try to find out about a city tour.

I haven't figured out how to get on the Internet through the hotel's phone system. The phone adapter plug that AAA sold me is totally wrong. It is for the "old style" telephones. Doesn't work on the new ones. So, I can't connect my computer ... yet. There is an RJ-11 type phone jack on the phones, but the wires look different from my phone line wires (they have 4, mine looks like it has three, and the color coding is different), so I'm afraid to plug in lest I burn out my modem. It's too late now to check on this, or to try to buy the right kind of adapter, so I'll wait until morning. It's also not clear what number I would dial. I think the number the desk guy gave me just connects me to American long distance. That could get to be a very expensive e-mail.

They provide Internet via the TV, but it is very hard to use, slow, and the screen is almost unreadable because the resolution is so low. And, they charge 0.7 zlotys per minute, that's more than \$11 per hour. I tried to get into Earthlink's Webmail, got in once, but then the system bombed and wouldn't let me in again. So, tomorrow, I will try to find an Internet Cafe. [NOTE: Hotels in Warsaw now offer easy access high speed Internet service, and, in some cases, wireless access. Typical cost is US\$10 to \$20 per day.]

Sunday, September 1st

Ken arrives in Warsaw

Went to bed last night around 11 pm, Warsaw time, and got up at 7:30 this morning. Maybe the time adjustment will go smoothly. I'm keeping my fingers crossed.

Breakfast this morning (included with the room) was a feast! Tons of food. Large variety. Small plates. Nice dining room. I ate moderately. It's hard avoiding milk. Don't know what to drink, so I drank tea and brought my bottled water. I'll find an "Apteka" today and buy some calcium pills because, without milk and cheese, I think Calcium supplements are advisable.

This morning I took my computer to the front desk, along with my phone cords, and my adapter. The desk guy and the valet were very helpful, but nothing they tried

worked. Couldn't get a dial tone. The valet came up to my room to try there. Still didn't work.

I asked about an Internet Cafe, and he sent me to the Central Railway Station, about a 10-minute walk from the hotel. So, I'm sitting here in a small, narrow room that has about 6 computers. People (mostly young people) come and go. A young man who tends this place tried to help me connect my computer to their DSL line, but he is just a clerk and didn't know how to configure the machine for their line. He'll get a friend to come to the Cafe to help me ... tomorrow. The price here is a lot more reasonable than at the hotel, 5 zlotys per hour (about \$1.35) and they use real computers, not TV sets.

Ken arrived this afternoon. He was one tired brother. Slept only about 2 hours on the plane and was sorry that he chose LOT for the long distance flight from JFK. He was in first class, but the seats were the old style, large but not fully reclining. After he got cleaned up at the hotel, we went out walking for a bit, then had some dinner. Walked around an upscale section of town, not far from the hotel ... lots of shops, cafes, coffee bars, etc. I had wanted to go to a Polish-Jewish restaurant, but that was too much of a walk for Ken after his long flight. We got about 2/3 of the way there when we gave up. So, we ended up at the same cafe where I had pizza the night before. This time I had spaghetti napoleana ... and another beer. The beer about knocked me out for the night.

Monday, September 2nd

The weather here is very changeable. It was shirtsleeve weather during the day yesterday, but by the time we went out walking, it had turned cold and windy. Today was the same, with a touch of rain to boot. So, I wore my sweater and hat, and ended up with my jacket as well.

Today was a remarkable day. Around 10 am I walked over to the Internet Café. Ken was still sleeping, so I left a message for him. At the Internet Cafe they won't let me hook up my computer to their DSL line because that would mean they would have to give me their id and password. I guess I don't look trustworthy enough. So, I can't download any messages to my machine. I'll get to the cafe again sometime tomorrow (Tuesday) afternoon to check messages.

Around noon, Ken was up and about, and we took a bus to old town. (A 24-hour bus pass cost about \$1.50.) We spent a couple of hours walking around, taking lots of photos, and stopped for lunch at an outdoor restaurant in a plaza near old town ... VERY expensive (relatively) to eat there (it's a tourist area), but lunch was good.

The Jewish Historical Institute

After lunch, we walked over to the Jewish Historical Institute. In the morning I had called Yale Riesner. We had met at the Toronto IAJGS Conference in August and he remembered that. Yale was quite friendly on the phone. He said to just stop by

whenever I could this afternoon, no need for an appointment. Hopefully, I'll be able to access some of the Kremenets records that are at the Institute and also get his help in setting up an appointment with the Chief Rabbi of Ukraine. We didn't get there until about 3:30, but Yale spent the rest of the afternoon with us. Ken took lots of notes because he wants to write an article or two about this trip. He was impressed by Yale and now wants to do an in-depth article about him and the Ronald S. Lauder Foundation. That's a non-profit foundation that has been pouring money into Eastern Europe in an attempt to revive Jewish life here. Yale works for them.

The Institute also runs a Jewish Museum, and sells a book on Jewish Warsaw (*A Guide to Jewish Warsaw* by Jan Jagielski and Robert Pasieczny, 1995). I will try to do their walking tour. Don't know how much I can walk though. I've already developed a blister on my foot. I'm hoping a band-aid will take care of it.

Yale was quite helpful. He came up with some aliyah records for people from Kremenets. Those are records concerning people who emigrated from Kremenets to Israel (then Palestine) mostly in the 1929-1939 period. He also has records of a handful of Kremenets child survivors (now no longer children, of course) who at one time or another were seeking relatives after the Shoah. For privacy reasons he can't give me their full names, but he gave me their surnames. Then he promised more info for the next day (Tuesday). He also told me that there are Kremenets Kahal (Jewish self-government) records for the mid 1700's. They are at the Archives of Ancient Acts here in Warsaw. By the time we were done at the Institute though, it was too late to go to the Archives. I'll leave that for Tuesday.

Yale introduced us to Jan Jagielski, Director of History and Documentation. He is the "heart and mind" of the Institute. Jan has an amazing amount of information in his head as well as in his office, and he is very well organized. He pulled a book from his shelves that has photos of tombstones in the Kremenets cemetery, plus other photos of the town. He made copies for me, and allowed me to photograph them. (I took more photos on Tuesday when I returned to the Institute.)

The Old & New Synagogues

After leaving the Institute we walked over to the "new" Synagogue (the Nożyk's Synagogue). The Nazis destroyed the old one, which dated to the early 1800s. It seems that the Germans were so furious about the Warsaw ghetto uprising that they resolved to level everything Jewish in Warsaw. So there they were, losing the war, the Russians were advancing on Warsaw, and they took 10 days and hundreds of troops to plant dynamite charges in and around the Synagogue and surrounding buildings to be sure that it is absolutely destroyed. Still, some of the concrete/marble flooring survived, and now is the entryway to the Institute. The site where the old Synagogue once stood now is a tall blue glass office building, the Peugeot building.

So, we walked over to the new Synagogue (see Figure 6 through Figure 11). Before the war, there were 400 synagogues and prayer houses in Warsaw. Only this one, named



Figure 6 - Renovation at the Nożyk's Synagogue, Warsaw



Figure 7 - The Nożyk's Synagogue, Warsaw

after Riwka and Zalman Nożyk, (and a recently discovered prayer house) survived. During World War II, the Germans used the Nożyk's Synagogue as a horse stable. After the war it was restored, and now is "the only surviving and active Synagogue in Warsaw." The new Synagogue was built from 1898 to 1902.



**Figure 8 - The Nożyk's Synagogue, Looking toward the *Bimah*.
Note the screened women's section on the left**



**Figure 9 - The Nożyk's Synagogue, view from the *Bimah*
Note the screened women's section on the right**



Figure 10 - The Nożyk's Synagogue Bimah



Figure 11 - The Nożyk's Synagogue Women's Section



Figure 12 - Kosher Market at Nożyk's Synagogue



Figure 13 - Coming Events at Yiddish Theater

We walked around and took pictures. The front of the building is being renovated. One of the outbuildings has a basement grocery store that sells kosher food ... the only place in Warsaw like it (Figure 12). Another building houses the Jewish Theater of Warsaw. The upcoming stage show was "Fiddler on the Roof" (Figure 13). It would have been uniquely satisfying to see *Fiddler* in Warsaw, but, alas, we would be gone before the first performance took to the stage. Other buildings housed the Jewish Cultural Center (which has a child care center) and offices for the Ronald S. Lauder Foundation.

As we walked around, a security guard kept looking at us. Eventually he asked, "What are you doing here?" I explained, and asked if we could go inside the Synagogue. He showed us the entrance. We found the caretaker, paid 5 zł. each (a little more than \$1) for "admission" and went inside. I got some good photos. Ken got better ones (he has a better photographic eye than I do) and I have both his photos and mine on my computer. (Together we took about 100 photos yesterday.)



Figure 14 - The Warsaw Geniza

It was very interesting inside the Synagogue. There are a number of informative placards in the old entryway. Ken learned a few things about the religion (like storage in the *Geniza* before ceremoniously burying old prayer books) and he was very interested in some of the explanatory placards about Jewish life in old Warsaw.

One of the placards noted that it would be more accurate to call this storage basement the *Poland Geniza*, rather than the *Warsaw Geniza* (Figure 14). The placard went on to explain:

"It was in this place that holy scripts from all over Poland were collected, some battered and some in good condition. They arrived here because they were useless. Those who prayed over them had ceased praying a long time ago – they were killed or went away. At a certain time it turned out that there were more Jewish books in Poland than Jews themselves."

As we left, we placed donations into their *tzedakah* box. The money is used to restore and renovate the Synagogue.

Finishing the day

We came back to the hotel, cleaned up and took a cab to dinner ... at an Israeli restaurant that serves "Polish food with a Jewish flavor". It was ok, but nothing to rave about. On the way over there, it seemed to me that the cab was going in a very roundabout way. Sure enough, the tab was 15 zł. going, but only 10 zł returning ... just another tourist rip-off.

Tomorrow, Ken is going on an all day tour of Jewish Warsaw and Treblinka. That package cost \$150, but he will have a private tour guide from "Our Roots Travel", a company housed in one of the buildings around the New Synagogue. I decided to pass. There are other things I must do here. If there is time, I may take a 4-1/2 hour bus tour of Warsaw. Cost is about \$45 US.

Alex will arrive Tuesday evening. We'll have dinner with him. Then, Wednesday morning, we hit the road with Alex to Ternopil' in Ukraine, and our genealogy journey begins. Still haven't heard from Larisa Klyuch, so I don't know if we have an appointment with her and the Kremenets Mayor or not. I'll ask Alex to call her on

Wednesday morning before we leave to see if we can pin down an appointment. Otherwise, we'll just wing it.

I closed out the day by transferring photos from my digital camera's compact flash card to the computer, and then erased them from the compact flash so that it will be ready for tomorrow. This system is working out very well. I'm gradually learning how to use the camera better.

Tuesday, September 3rd

More Kremenets data from the Jewish Historical Institute

This morning after breakfast (too much food), I walked back to the Institute, while Ken went on his tour. Yale again was very helpful. He had pulled 11 different Kremenetser passports out of his archives, and let me photograph the key pages in each. These are passports of Kremenetsers who immigrated to Israel (it was then Palestine) in the 1929 to 1939 time period (Figure 15 through Figure 17.) Once they arrived in Israel, the passports had to be returned to Poland. Each had a photo of the person, in addition to useful info about them. These are the people named on the passports:

- Chones, Tauba, born 1910
- Lande, Ginda, b. 1896
with child Lucja
- Margulis, Jozef, b. 1903
with wife Ginendla, b. 1908
and child Synem Awruhem
- Pruluka-Prełucki, Elo, b. 1915
(from Szumsk), with wife
Riwka, b. 1913 (from Szumsk)
- Rajter, Sara, b. 1874
- Szac, Matla, b. 1913
- Sznajder, Malka-Lifsza, b. 1910
(from Novy Oleksinets)
- Sznajder, Nachman, b. 1909
(from Szumsk)
- Szpiegel, Abram, b. 1915
- Szpiegel, Syma, b. 1876
- Zejger, Mejer, b. 1908
with wife Chaja-Ita, b. 1910

Unless otherwise indicated, Kremenets is the registration town for the people on this list. These will be good additions to our Kremenets Shtetlinks website, and will be cherished by any descendants who might come across them.

Yale and I talked a bit. He gave me more Kremenets data (from Polish business directories for 1929 and 1932) and he looked up some of my family names in his files. When I mentioned the name Lerner (wife of my paternal grandfather's brother, Max Doctor), Yale told me that there is a woman in Warsaw, who called him this week. She was inquiring about her Lerner ancestors. So, I gave him the info I have and he will relay it to her. Hopefully, I'll hear from her. Yale also gave me the surnames of six Kremenets child survivors of the Shoah. He is searching for them or their descendants. I promised to put the names on our website and in messages to JewishGen lists.

The surnames are:

Daniuszewski	Dugim	Jung
Kranc or Krant	Keitelmacher	Narczyz

Turns out that there is a Dr. Jan Doctor working at the Institute. He is an historian and archivist. Yale introduced me to him. We chatted awhile, but he doesn't appear to be related.

The Ancient Acts Archive (AGAD)

After the Institute, I walked over to the Ancient Acts Archive (*Archiwum Głównie Akt Dawnych* - AGAD). On the way, I passed a World War II memorial that celebrated the liberation of Warsaw (Figure 5). It was in a plaza in front of a government building. The bigger-than-life metallic statues were remarkably impressive. You could feel the movement and tension in the depictions of soldiers moving among shattered buildings. People had placed votive candles and flowers around the base of the statues.

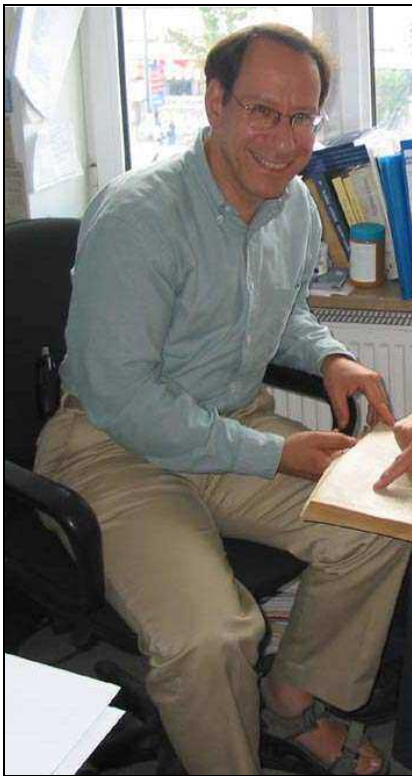


Figure 15 - Yale Riesner, JHI-Warsaw



Figure 16 - British Visa to Palestine
for Malka Sznajder



Figure 17 - Polish Passport for Malka Sznajder, from Novy Oleksinets



Figure 18 - The Archives of Ancient Acts of Poland (AGAD)

On a row of shops and government buildings, I found AGAD (Figure 18). You enter the AGAD through a double wooden door set into the outside wall of the building. That takes you into a long, wide, and dark corridor. Not a soul in sight, and no identifying signs. But near the end of the corridor, set into the side wall, is a small door. This takes you into a vestibule, and, there on the left, is a guard's room. You check in at the guard desk. The guard doesn't speak English. However, by pointing, and showing him the title page of the document I was seeking, I was able to make myself understood. He

summoned an English-speaking archivist, a young man by name of Alexander Woysik. Alexander spoke English haltingly, but he turned out to be remarkably helpful. He helped me fill out the forms to request the Kremenets Kahal documents. They have to retrieve the documents from storage in another building, so I won't be able to look at them until tomorrow, the day we will be leaving Warsaw. AGAD opens at 9:00 am and I plan to be there at opening time. They will make copies of any pages I want, except that one of the documents is old and they will first have to microfilm it, and then make copies from the microfilm. No photos allowed. Cost is 2 zł. per copy (about \$.50) plus 2.5 zł. for the microfilm copy. That won't be too bad if there are only a few pages. No way to know until tomorrow morning.

Since we leave tomorrow for Ukraine, I'll pack tonight, and be ready to check out when I return from the Archives. I'll probably just take a cab over there and back to save time. The cab ride is only \$3 or so.

The Warsaw Ghetto

Ken booked a personal tour of Jewish Warsaw and Treblinka with "Our Roots", a Jewish organization in Warsaw that guides visitors to sites of Jewish interest. Three hundred eighty thousand Jews lived in Warsaw before WW2. They constituted 30% of the city's population. Today, there are only 7,000 to 8,000 Jews in all of Poland. The Nazis herded the city's Jews, along with others from outside Warsaw, into a ghetto surrounded by a wall 3 meters high. Remnants of the Wall still exist. Memorial plaques and a map showing the layout of the large and the small ghettos are on the wall at an entrance to the Ghetto (Figure 19). Windows of ghetto buildings along the wall were bricked in to keep the Jews from escaping. An overpass over Aryan Warsaw connected the large and small ghettos (Figure 20 and Figure 21).



Figure 19 - The Warsaw Ghetto Wall, with Plan Map of the two Ghettos



Figure 20 - Bricked-in windows in ghetto wall



Figure 21 - The overpass connecting the large and small ghettos, then and now

Dr. Janusz Korczak (Henryk Goldszmit) was Director of the Jewish Orphanage. He developed many innovative techniques for raising and educating children and was well-known throughout pre-war Warsaw. When the Nazis came to remove the children from the orphanage to Treblinka, Dr. Korczak decided to go with them, even though the Nazis offered to spare him. Despite a campaign by Poles to protect him, Dr. Korczak accompanied his 40 to 50 children to the death camp, where they all were murdered. After the war, the Poles built a monument to Dr. Korczak. It stands in front of the rehabilitated Children's Orphanage (Figure 22). Another monument to Dr. Korczak stands in Treblinka (Figure 23).



Figure 22 - Monument to Dr. Janusz Korczak in front of the Children's Orphanage



Figure 23 - Holocaust Memorial to Dr. Janusz Korczak

Warsaw's old Jewish Cemetery & the Holocaust Memorial

The Jewish Cemetery at Okopowa Street was opened in 1798. It contains about 200,000 graves, and most of the matzevot still are readable. Many famous Polish Jews are buried there, including Elsa Kaminsky, a famous Jewish actress (Figure 24 and Figure 25). The cemetery still is in use.

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Figure 24 - Warsaw's Jewish Cemetery at Okahpova Street



Figure 25 - Grave of Elsa Kaminsky, famous Jewish actress

The Holocaust Memorial Plaza has several monuments. One, a circle set in the ground (Figure 26), represents the sewers through which the remnants of the Jewish ghetto



Figure 26 - Holocaust Memorial representing escape through the sewers



Figure 27 - Israel Youth Gathering at Warsaw Holocaust Memorial Plaza

fighters tried to escape. Another serves as a gathering place for visitors to the Memorial Plaza (Figure 27). A massive monument by Natan Rapaport depicts 6 Jewish ghetto fighters. The central figure is Arnie Levitch, one of the leaders of the 1943 Ghetto uprising (Figure 28). Copies of this monument are at Yad Vashem and at the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C.



Figure 28 - Monument to the Ghetto fighters from the Mila bunker

Treblinka

The death camp, Treblinka, is 65 miles from Warsaw (Figure 29). What the Nazis built at Treblinka, they demolished as defeat became inevitable. In its place are memorials to

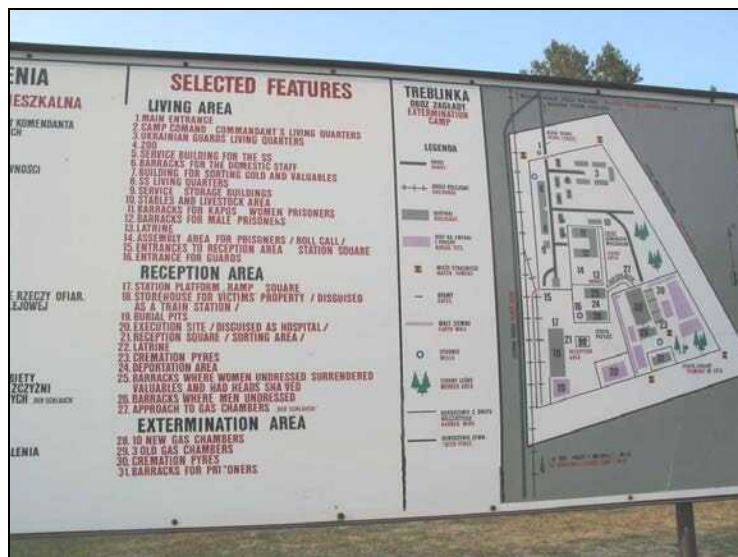


Figure 29 - Treblinka, Layout of the Death Camp

the 800,000 Jews who were murdered and cremated there, 300,000 from Warsaw and 500,000 from other occupied areas. This was not a labor camp. Between July 1942 and August 1943, new arrivals were removed from the death trains and taken directly to the burning pits where they were machine gunned, or, later in the war, to gas chambers. Only a very few managed to escape.



Figure 30 - Stones on the paths & forests & fields represent 800,000 murdered Jews



Figure 31 - Treblinka Field of Stones

The foreground stones memorialize Jews murdered in the burning pits. The field of stones in the background memorializes the 17,000 shtetlach from which the Jews who were murdered here were uprooted.

Stones placed on the pathways and in the forests and fields symbolize those who were murdered here (Figure 30). Stones in the field of stones are of all shapes and sizes. Each is inscribed with the name of one of the 17,000 towns and shtetls from which Jews were



Figure 32 - Field of Stones

uprooted and brought here to their death (Figure 31 and Figure 32). In the midst of this field of stones, within several yards of the burning pit, stands a massive stone memorial to the Treblinka victims (Figure 33). It bears an inscription, “Never Again” in six languages.



Figure 33 - The Treblinka Holocaust Monument



Exciting discovery finishes the day

Tonight, Alex arrived. We met and had dinner at the “99”, a very nice restaurant within an easy walk of the hotel. Alex is very impressive. I think we’re all going to get along very nicely for the next two weeks. During a break in the conversation, Alex pulled out three pieces of paper. He already had done some of my research at the Archives in Ternopil’. He located a record from the 10th *Revizskaya Skazka* (Census) in 1858 that takes my Doctor line back two more generations to my 4th great-grandfather, Hirsh Diokhter, born about 1771. And, the new record extends the family horizontally as well. This means that my Doctor family lived in Novy Oleksinets for at least 130 years before my grandfather Abram and grandmother Reyzl left for America in 1900.

Alex also found an 1858 Census record for the Vurer’s, my paternal grandmother’s family. This takes my Vurer line back two more generations, to my 3rd great-grandfather, Yos’ Vurer, born about 1807. They lived in Yampol’. There also was a document listing a Gitelman family, back to about 1800, but I haven’t yet figured out how they fit into our Gitelman family tree. Perhaps that will get worked out if we find more documents in the Ternopil’ archives. This trip is working out very, very well so far ... and we have only just begun.

Warsaw is a very likable city... very cosmopolitan, and western, lots of shops, interesting buildings, and plenty of sightseeing to do. If I come back here in the future, the thing to do would be to rent an apartment in the old town. That would be less expensive and more picturesque than staying at the hotel.

Time has passed quickly. It's hard to believe that I have been here for 3 days already, and that tomorrow we leave for Ternopil'. We'll base there for our visits to Kremenets and our other ancestral towns in the area.

Wednesday, September 4th

Today we will leave Warsaw for Ukraine. But first, I returned to the AGAD to take a look at the two Kremenets documents they have.

Back to AGAD

I got up early, had breakfast, and took a cab over to the Archives of Ancient Acts. Yesterday, I requested two documents that were created by the Kehila Kahal of Kremenets (Jewish community governing body) in the mid 1700s. The archivists had to retrieve the documents from their "stacks", and that couldn't be done while I waited. Alex had doubts that the documents would actually be there today, but they were. So, I looked through them.

One “document” was a 250-page book, handwritten in Polish (Figure 34). As I turned the pages (no gloves required to page through this 250 year-old document), I was able

to spot a few names in it, but of course couldn't even begin to translate it. So, I asked them for a copy of the book. No, can't do that, they said. I could have only a selection of pages. Ok, then, can I photograph the pages? No. Flashbulb might hurt the old document. What if I don't use flash? No. NO PHOTOGRAPHY. So, I figured that they are after the copying fees. What if I pay the copying fees, but take photos ... without flash. NO! Only they can make copies. So, I ended up asking for copies of about 27 pages (the first section or chapter) ... actually 54 pages because each page number represents a double page. Sorry, they said, we cannot make copies of documents from

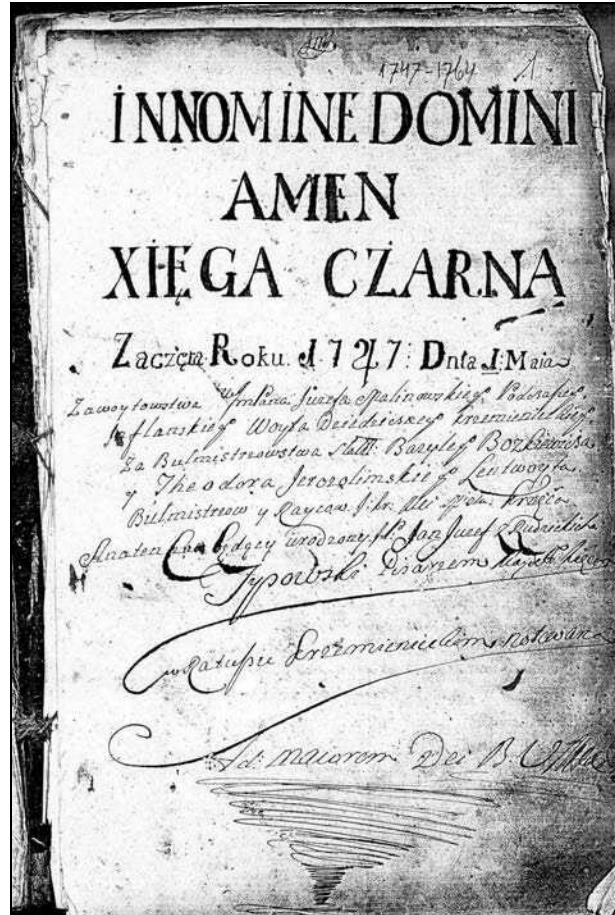


Figure 34 - A Kremenets Kehila Kahal document from 1747

before 1800. So, how do I get this, I asked. Well, first they have to microfilm the document, and then they will send me copies made from the microfilm. Microfilming cost is 2.5 zł. per page, plus the cost of copies. Ok, I say, let's do that.

I looked at the other "document". It already was on microfilm, and it was in Hebrew, but it was 90 pages long, and my time was limited. I ordered paper copies of the first 20 pages, at 2.0 zl. per page. Total cost including postage to the U.S. for both items was \$115 zl., about \$30 ... not bad. Hopefully, these will arrive at home within the next couple of months. (Note: When I got home on 18 September, the documents already

had arrived, so all the horror stories I had heard about slow delivery from this Archive didn't apply in my case.)

By noon, we were on the road headed for the Polish-Ukrainian border (Figure 35).

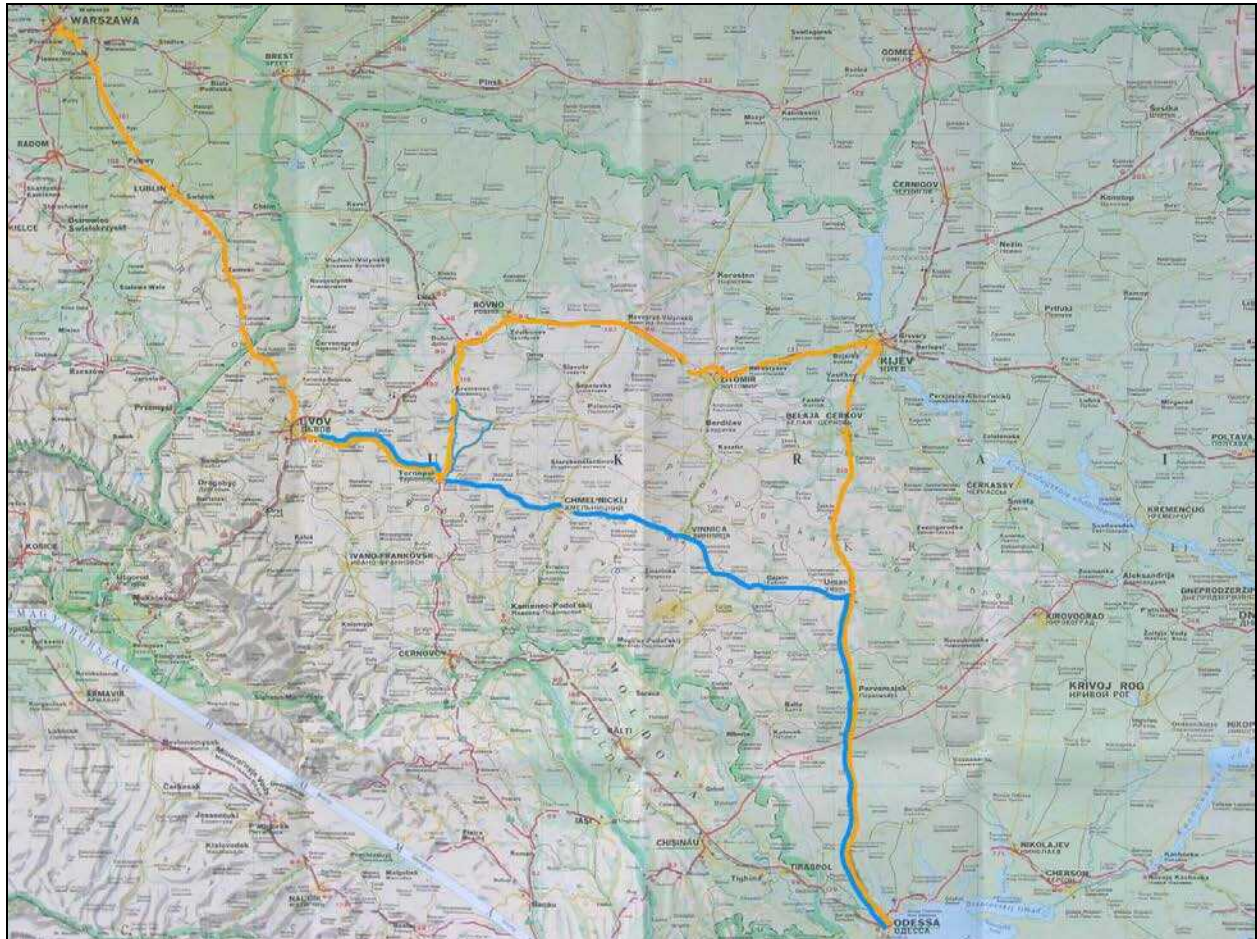


Figure 35 - Map showing our route

Orange line shows route from Warsaw to L'viv, Ternopil, Kremenets, Kiev, Uman & Odessa.
Blue line shows return route from Odessa to Uman, Ternopil & L'viv, with excursions to Vishnevets & Yampol.

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Wednesday, September 4th

I returned to Hotel Mercure from AGAD around 11 am, and at noon we left for Ukraine. It was a long drive. Got stuck for 15 minutes at a railroad crossing. Unfortunately, on the drive through Poland, radar-equipped Polish police stopped us twice. One time, Alex was exceeding the speed limit by 5 km/hr (about 8 mph). He paid a fine on the spot, in cash. The second time, we were going only 2 km/hr over the speed limit, and Alex talked his way out of that ticket.

In both Poland and Ukraine, we saw lots of police along the sides of the highways, usually in areas where there is a sudden reduction in speed limit. Some have radar guns to check speeds, some don't. If they figure you are speeding, they stand at the side of the roadway and wave a baton to indicate that you must pull over. Generally you pay the fine on the spot. Motorists coming from the opposite direction often will flick their headlights at you to indicate that there are police up ahead.

Crossing the Border

The border crossing was an experience. Got stuck for about 1-1/2 hours on the Polish side of the border (Figure 36). There are supposed to be lanes, but drivers cut in and out of the lanes, then stop their cars cross wise to prevent other drivers from cutting in on them. Same for trucks, except that they take up several lanes. Alex did some fancy maneuvering on the Polish side, and then managed to talk us through the Ukraine side without incident. He is really good.



Figure 36 - Waiting at the Polish border



Figure 37 - Pumping up a flat tire at the border

I asked permission to take photos of the border crossing, but when the guard had apoplexy about that ("*Nie photo! NIE photo!*"), I backed off. Still, while the guard was diverted, Ken managed to get a couple of photos. While we were waiting in line on the Polish side, a car a bit ahead of us in our lane developed a flat tire. The owner got out and pumped up the tire instead of changing it (Figure 37). That worked (for a while), and when the opportunity came up, we changed lanes.

On the Ukrainian side of the border, Alex approached the border guard, and after some discussion, first with one, then with another, worked his way up to an officer. They went into a little shack, and when Alex came out we sailed right through the border crossing, while others waited.

There is a marked difference between Poland and Ukraine. The houses look different. The roads are not quite as good. There were many more people in the fields. In both countries, there doesn't seem to be a lot of farm machinery. Instead, they farm the old way; with manual labor ... stoop labor. Many women were out there, working side by side with the men. Along the roadside, every once in a while, there are buckets of apples, or pears, or potatoes. If you want something, you stop, and someone appears to sell you a bucket full ... but without the bucket. No paper or plastic sacks to put them in. You are expected to have your own container. There were many horse-drawn wagons on the road ... flat bottom, V-shaped wooden wagon-bed over large rubber tires, drawn by one, sometimes two horses.

Also along the road, especially near the larger towns and villages, we frequently see several women standing at intersections of side roads with the main roads. These are prostitutes. Their main customers are the many truck drivers who carry cargo between the rural areas, towns and cities.

L'viv

It was too late to drive to Ternopil before dark (Alex said that it is unsafe to drive in the dark, because there are many people walking on the road, bicyclists, and wagons without lights or reflectors), so we stopped in L'viv for the night. We stayed at the Grand Hotel, the best in L'viv, owned by an American Jew. The public areas of the hotel are well-done, glitzy, pseudo-elegance. We made arrangements with Alex to meet in the morning for the drive to Ternopil. Ken wanted a late departure (9:30), I wanted an early start (8:00). We settled on 9:00 am. Alex went home for the night. (He and his family live in L'viv.)

The rooms (Figure 38) are miniscule (about 1-1/2 stretched arm lengths in width), but very clean. The bed was acceptable ... a long single. There was a small bottle of champagne and two free bottles of mineral water (gaz, ili nie gaz ... with gas or no gas). Cost was \$95 per night, including full breakfast. Ken and I went to our rooms,



Figure 38 - My room at L'viv's Hotel Grand

got cleaned up, and then went out to dinner, to the Amadeus, a place Alex had recommended. We sat outside and had wonderful dinners of chicken and beef shashlik with a side of mashed potatoes. A Canadian couple nearby heard us talking and said hello. The woman was just starting to trace her Ukrainian roots (not Jewish), and the man was attending an eastern European environmental conference. It turns out Michael (Irish roots, and about 50) is from Montreal and apparently is an active environmentalist/curmudgeon who has

been able to make significant land use improvements there. When the woman (I don't remember her name) learned I was doing genealogy, she started asking a lot of questions, and they ended up inviting us to sit with them so we could talk over dinner. The food came. Dinner was good, and conversation was interesting.

Walked a few blocks after dinner, and then back to the hotel. L'viv is a city I could enjoy ... old buildings, lots of shops -- at least in the downtown areas -- many parks and open green spaces, many people walking around, even at night. Population is about 900,000. Back to the hotel, and to bed.

Thursday, September 5th

Ternopil

Thursday morning, I went downstairs for breakfast (included), cleaned up, checked out and met Alex in the lobby at 9:00 am. We didn't get started out of town until 9:45. It was a two-hour drive to Ternopil (Figure 39). Once there, we had our choice of two hotels. One is more of a B&B (without breakfast), on the outskirts of town. The other is "the best hotel in Ternopil", in the city center. Since Alex and I would be spending time at the Archives, we chose the Hotel Ternopil so that Ken will be able to walk around the city center area (Figure 40). Cost is \$50 for each room, including breakfast.

I don't know how to describe this hotel, but I'll try. The receptionist is behind a glassed-in counter at one end of a long lobby. Most of the lobby is dark, but the area around the receptionist is lighted (Figure 41). The hallways are dark. I have a "suite" ... entryway, living room, bedroom, and bathroom, and a balcony. On the way up to my "suite" we pause on a landing that has a large picture window overlooking the lake. The city of Ternopil is in the distance, across the lake (Figure 42). The rooms are large (Figure 43). The style is *Soviet Communist Primitive*. There is one small framed print of fruit and flowers ... hung high on the living room wall. The furniture is rock hard and

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Figure 39 - Ken and Ron at Ternopil road sign



Figure 40 - Hotel Ternopil



Figure 41 - Lobby of the Hotel Ternopil

covered in the most G-d-awful two-tone brown velveteen with an abstract design ... 1950s style. The floors have threadbare oriental rugs over nice wood. The TV sets on a 50s-style fiberboard cabinet, with the trim peeling off. Here and there, paint is peeling off the moldings, and you can see areas where there was water leakage. There are two twin beds pushed together, but made up separately, and separated by a hard wood barrier. The bed is like sleeping on a sheet of plywood. Under the bedspread, I discovered a top sheet and blanket neatly folded up, but none of the sheets fit even this small bed. All are too short for the bed in all directions, by about 6 inches. There are NO decorations of any kind in the bedroom. The bathroom is nicely tiled. There are two lights over the sink, but one is burned out and I haven't been able to get it replaced yet. There is a small plastic shelf over the sink, resting lightly on two screws, so it is easily knocked off. Better not place any glass there, or anything valuable that might disappear down the sink drain (no built-in stopper). There is no toilet paper. (I asked for some and they brought it, but the roll of rough paper has no center opening so it can't fit on the holder.) There is a bathtub with a hand held shower device, but no shower curtain. There is hot water from 6 am to 9 am, and from 6 pm to 10:30 pm ... sometimes. The lights flicker occasionally.



Figure 42 - Ternopil, across the lake from Hotel Ternopil

The telephone is an old rotary dial phone. All calls go through the hotel operator. I won't even try to connect to the Internet from here. There is an Internet Cafe ... someplace ... but we haven't had time to find it, and I'm not sure when we'll get there, or whether I'll be able to hook up my computer once I do get there. We'll check it out tomorrow.



Figure 43 - My "suite" in the Hotel Ternopil

I had to get some laundry done, so Alex checked on laundry service. Hotel cost is \$18 for four tee shirts, four shorts, and 4 pair of socks, all except the socks ironed. But when the woman who does the laundry picked it up, I told her no ironing. She said, "You pay me directly?" I said, yes. She said, "I take home. Bring back after 3 pm." And she did. Cost was \$7.50 ... and she ironed it anyway. That's the way the economy works here. Everyone is out to make a personal buck. Bypass the hotel, and do the work less expensively, and you pocket the money.

Ternopil is a city of about 250,000 people. It has a surprising number of fairly good restaurants. We're at the "best" hotel ... and that is a very sad commentary. However, we're within an easy walk of the city center, so that's good. The only problem is that there is no safe public parking here. Alex won't leave his car in an unguarded area. He says if he does, it is certain to be stolen or broken into overnight. So, he parks it in a guarded area about a mile away from the hotel, then walks back. Fortunately, he is an expert in martial arts, so he knows how to defend himself if he has to.

After getting cleaned up, we went into town and had a delightful lunch at an outdoor cafe on the "promenade". We counted 3 bridal parties. Apparently it is the custom to go to the church for a wedding ceremony in decorated cars. The bride, in a white gown, of course, and groom and attendants then stroll up and down the promenade for everyone to see. The female attendants hold the bride's gown off the ground. The sights from our outdoor table were interesting ... gypsy kids running around begging, and raising hell, taunting an old crazy woman - great sport for them - lots of people out and about. They are all slender, even the older ones. This place looks like a fashion show. The women, young and middle aged, are fully made-up, dressed as if they just stepped out of a fashion magazine. Most of the women wear 3-inch spike heels. Those in designer pants look as if they are poured into them. Skirts are short and tight. Obviously the women's movement has not yet arrived in Ternopil. The young men are dressed like Italian fashion plates. The younger men have buzz cuts. The older (30s or so) men have more conventional haircuts. None of the men have long hair, except for an occasional hippy backpacker. Very few of the young people have brightly colored hair or body piercing.

After lunch we went to the State Archives of Ternopil Oblast (an Oblast is like a state or province) to meet the Director, Bohdan Khavarivsky, and to make arrangements to research some of the records held there.

The Ternopil Archives

The Archives are in an old Orthodox Church (Figure 44). The Church still is in use, but the Archives occupy an unused wing of it. We enter through a massive front door (Figure 45) that leads into a dark vestibule ... electricity is in short supply at the Archives. To the left is a closed door that leads into the Church. To the right is another closed door (*all doors are closed!*), a steel-plated door (Figure 46), leading from the vestibule into a hallway.



Figure 44 - The State Archives of Ternopil Oblast is in an Orthodox Church



Figure 45 - Outside Entrance to Ternopil Archives



Figure 46 - Ken tries to open the steel door into the Archives

The first thing we encounter is a man at a desk. He is the "guard" ... somewhat unkempt and unshaven, and no clothing or badge or anything like that to indicate that he is a guard ... but you know that he is. Alex exchanges a few words with him ... the key word being "the Director" ... and we are allowed to pass. The hallways are semi-dark, walls lined with large frames containing museum-like photos. We are there to meet with the Director of the Ternopil Archives, Bohdan Khavarivsky ("the Director"). Alex asked the Director's secretary to tell him we are there. She was a little curt, but eventually, she goes into his office and announces us. He is *busy*, so we all wait on wooden chairs in the semi-dark hallway outside her office. After about a half hour, Alex goes back to the Secretary. When he returns, he says that the Director will see us now, but first he wants to meet privately with Alex.



Figure 47 - Toilet and Toilet Paper in Ternopil Archives

While we wait, I venture off to find the toilet. It is around the corner at the end of another dark hallway. The wall and floor of the restroom are tiled (Figure 47). Water pipes run along the floor. The toilet has no seat. On a shelf is the “toilet paper” ... a printed book from which you tear out pages as needed.

Back to the bench. Another 10 minutes passes. Eventually, Ken and I are allowed into the Director's Office. First, into the Secretary's office, then she opens a metal door that swings into her room. Behind the metal door is a wooden door that swings inward into the Director's office. The Director appears to be pleasant (Figure 48 & Figure 49), but we learn quickly enough (from Alex and from experience), that you get nothing from his Archive without his permission ... and you don't get his permission unless you agree to his fees.



Figure 48 - Alex and Director Khavarivskiy

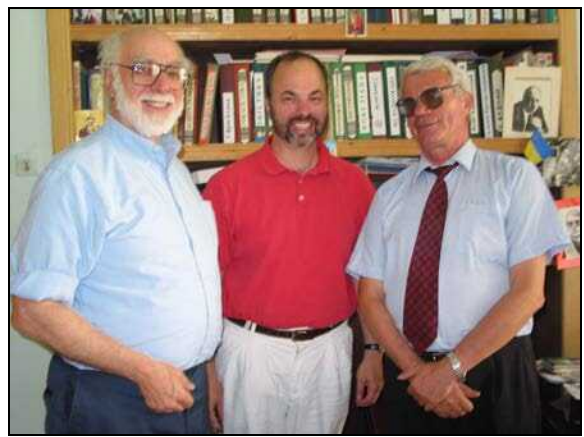


Figure 49 - Ron, Ken, and the Director

We enter, exchange pleasantries and small talk, give him a few small gifts, and explain what we are trying to find and why. He says, of course we can have access to the records, but that we will have to pay a fee for copying, and it could be expensive, depending on how many records we want. And, he keeps saying, these records are

"unique". Kept using the word "unique" to describe the records. Apparently that is a "code word" to indicate that a significant payment will be required.

The Director appears to have been all ready for us. He pulls out a map of Kremenets. He shows us several books he has on his desk about Kremenets. He shows us one of the 19th century census lists. (The records we want to start with are "Revizskaya Skazka" lists, census records, from various years in the 19th century. Russian censuses are not like American. They were not taken at set intervals. But they can be a rich source of information. For this part of Ukraine, post-partition census records are available for the years 1794-96, 1811, 1816, 1834, 1850, and 1858.) From the side of his desk he pulls out a very large book, one of the archival books of Kremenets records, allowing us to glance through it and photograph the title page. When we ask if we can examine the book more closely, he said we can, but we will have to do it in his office. That isn't practical, so Alex asks if we can examine the census and family lists in the reading room. After considerable discussion, the Director allows us to do that. But first, he will have to order retrieval of the other records we want to see and arrange for a worker to be in the room with us. (He is afraid we will take photos of the records, Alex said.) So, we agree. Can we do it now? No. It's too late. Come back tomorrow!

During our initial conversation the subject of the LDS microfilming project came up. (The LDS Kremenets microfilms are of Jewish vital records that are in this Ternopil Archives.) I had assumed that the Director signed off on the LDS project, but apparently that wasn't the case. The Director opposed the LDS microfilming project. The State Committee on Archives of Ukraine forced the Project on him. He believes that the Mormons are making money from "his" records and his Archive is not getting a share of those profits. I tried to explain that the Mormons don't profit financially from these microfilms, but the Director simply doesn't believe it. The LDS has a public relations problem here, especially if there are other Archive Directors who share Director Khavarivsky's view.

Kremenets - First visit

We still had a few hours of daylight after our first visit to the Archives, so we decided to drive out to Kremenets to look around. The countryside is mostly flat farmland, not huge farms that stretch for miles like in the US, but much smaller plots of land, about the size of two large residential lots in the US. There are no fences. Everyone knows which land belongs to whom. This is a legacy of the communist system where the state owned all the land and no fences were necessary. After all, it has been only 10 years since Ukrainian independence. It will take time for all this to change, but the country *is* changing.



Figure 50 - Ken & Ron at the Kremenets roadsign



Figure 51 - The Fortress atop Gora Bona

As we approach Kremenets (Figure 50), the countryside changes to rolling hills. Soon, we are in a hilly, forested area. Very pretty. Kremenets stretches through a valley and along the hillsides. Mt. Bona, with its mountaintop fortress, looms over the town (Figure 51). The town is a mix of new (1950s-1970s) and old (19th and early 20th century) buildings. One main street curves all the way through the town. At the town center is a large park. In the

park, near the main street, set between towering willow trees, there is a small fountain with a statue of mythical lovers in the center. Later, we learn that this used to be one of the Jewish areas, and the Great Synagogue was located here (Figure 52 and Figure 53). There used to be another street in front of the Synagogue, running parallel to the main



Figure 52 - The Great Synagogue, 1925



Figure 53 - The City Center Park, where the Great Synagogue once stood, 2002

street. And there were individual houses along these two streets. All that is gone now. Synagogue and houses were destroyed in the war. Much building renovation is going on (Figure 54). New paint is brightly colored. Many people are out and about. Alex starts asking people about the Jewish cemetery. We get conflicting directions, but soon we are on an old dirt road heading up the hill to the right of the main road. The road is pocked with potholes. Alex fears for the health of his car. We pull aside onto a grass edge. We see an old woman working the land across a ravine. Alex calls to her and asks about the cemetery (Figure 55). "Up the hill", she says.



Figure 54 - Kremenets City Hall, under renovation

Interesting. *Which* hill, and how do we get up it? She gets very agitated when we apparently head the wrong way. Here comes a car, heading downhill. Alex flags it down and asks directions. "Up the hill", the guy says. Which hill? Alex asks. He points to one. We start off in that direction, but the woman across the ravine is yelling, "no, no, not there". We go anyway. Then, off to our left, up the hill, we see the first tombstones. Alex and Ken climb up. I go a little slower. (After all, I *am* an old guy!) I get up over a rise in the hill, and there is the Jewish cemetery (Figure 56).



Figure 56 - Up the hill, we find the Jewish Cemetery

matzevot (Figure 58 through Figure 61). We walk through the cemetery. Alex says he never has seen one this extensive. It's starting to get dark, so we head back down the hill to the car, and Alex gingerly proceeds down the "road" (Figure 62). Tomorrow (Friday) we'll return to the Archives, and Saturday we'll return to Kremenets to meet with the Mayor.

Victor Boyko, one of our Kremenetsers from Switzerland, had visited Kremenets in the past few weeks and at my request had made contact with the Mayor and with Larisa Klyuch. Larisa tends to the Kremenets Jewish Community and



Figure 55 - Alex asking directions to the Jewish Cemetery

It is huge. It stretches from near the base of the hill in the valley close to town, all the way up to the top, and this is steep terrain. The brush is more overgrown than I thought it would be (Figure 57). I stand there trying to figure out how we are going to attack this project. I don't have a clue. Obviously though, my plan to take a lot of pictures of individual tombstones will not work. It would be a helter-skelter approach, and I think it is important to be more systematic in documenting the cemetery. Ken does get a number of good photos of the terrain and of individual



Figure 57 - Overgrown brush in the Jewish Cemetery



Figure 58 - Ron in the Jewish Cemetery



Figure 59 - A Jumble of matzevot



Figure 60 - A readable matzeva in the Kremenets Jewish Cemetery

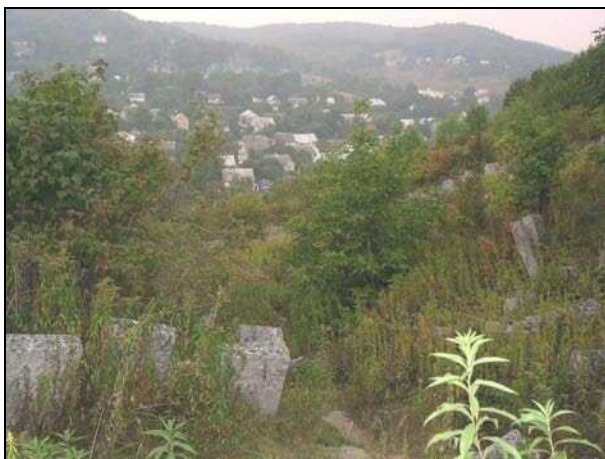


Figure 61 - Looking toward Kremenets from the cemetery

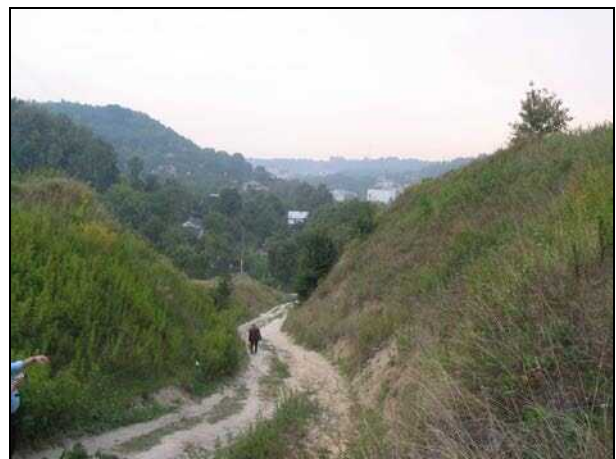


Figure 62 - The road between Kremenets and the cemetery

coordinates her efforts through a group in Ternopil that is responsible for the Jewish community of the entire Oblast of Ternopil. Alex called Larisa. She will be in Ternopil on Friday. She says the Jewish community of Ternopil is going to have a Rosh Hashonah community dinner Friday evening (Rosh Hashonah begins at sundown on Friday) and we all are invited to attend. Ken and I both are interested, so we accept.

We made it back to Ternopil just before dark. Had a good dinner at the "Diana Restaurant", and then returned to Hotel Ternopil. I discovered that I had left one of my electrical converter plugs in the hotel in L'viv. Alex says we can find another one in town in the morning, before we go to the Archives. Alex and I arranged to meet for breakfast at 8. Ken will sleep in and will meet us at the Archives at noon.

That evening, I got an interesting phone call. The woman on the line didn't speak very good English, so she put another woman on the line. This one spoke some English, but barely. All I could make out was, "I come to your room?" No thanks, I said, and she hung up. Alex also got one of these calls. He says these are prostitutes, and they get the room numbers of guests from the hotel. It's fairly common.

I'm off to try to sleep on my plywood slab ... alone.

Friday, September 6th

Back to the Ternopil Archives ... Another Exciting Discovery

Early Friday morning, Alex and I return to the Archives. Ken will walk around and see the town. (He got lots of good photos.) He'll meet us at the Archives in a couple of hours. The Director has not yet appeared, so the staff won't bring us the records. Finally, a half hour later he comes to work. But, it turns out he has not yet asked his staff to retrieve the records. He and Alex have another private session. While we wait, I catch a glimpse of some women in a small office. They are huddled around a tea service, certainly not working. Alex explains later that people here haven't been paid in months. So, as in many places in Ukraine, they do "pretend work for pretend pay".

Soon, our records appear and we settle into the reading room, watched, not too carefully, by a young woman who is totally bored. We get to work on the records. Alex works on one set of books. I work on another. These "books" are 1-1/2 to 2 feet thick (Figure 63). They contain original census records (not copies) from 1858, the 10th *Revizskaya Skazka*. Some pages are bound; most are loose. So, here we are handling 150-year-old paper, without gloves. When we find a record we want, we insert



Figure 63 - Alex with Census Records

pieces of paper to mark pages that we want copied. Time flies by. Ken shows up, and begins looking through another book. Even though he does not read Russian, he does "pattern matching", comparing names in the records with a list of handwritten family names that I previously had prepared. Before we know it, it is lunchtime, and we must leave the Archives. We have found a number of records, but there still is much to do. The books we're using are placed in a locked cabinet and we head out to lunch, but not before Alex shows me a record he found from the 6th Revizskaya Skazka for 1811 (Figure 64). This is a census record for my Vurer family from Yampol. It takes my Vurer line back to my 6th great-grandfather, Aron Vurer, born before 1735! The Vurers lived in Yampol for more than 270 years before my grandmother Reyzl emigrated. I am so excited I can hardly contain myself. This is success beyond my wildest dreams!

13 Янкель Аронав вурер	54	умер	
Янкель сын Бун	32	1807 года	
Бун сын			37
Давид Аизик	8		13

Figure 64 - 1811 Revizskaya Skazka record showing family of Yankel Aronov Vurer

Household No. 13 houses Yankel (Yakov), son of Aron Vurer, age 54, who died in 1807,
 Yankel's son Bun', age 37 in 1811 and 32 in the previous census
 Bun's son Duvid Aizik, age 13 in 1811 and 8 in the previous census

At an outdoor café, we have a good lunch of Ukrainian borsch and potato varynikis, and enjoy people-watching. About an hour and half later, we returned to the Archives to continue our research. This time, Ken goes walking around town while Alex and I pore over the census records. It seems that we have just resumed our work, when suddenly, our room monitor announces that the Archive will close in 15 minutes. The Archives closes at 3 pm on Friday. Alex enters some intense discussions in rapid Ukrainian. He ends up marching to the Director's office while I continue searching for records. When he returns, he says, we have to close up everything, and take the books that have the records we want to the Director's office. There we will get the records copied ... after hours.

Everyone leaves. The Archives is locked up. We are alone. The Director comes out of his office into the Secretary's office where the copy machine is. Alex shows him what we want copied. In all, there are about 25 records on 50 pages. The Director says something in Ukrainian, which Alex translates as, "So *many* pages. This will be very expensive.

These records are *unique*." "How much?" we ask. He hems and haws and finally says, "\$100 ... American". Alex looks at me. I look at Alex. I'm not sure what to say since I don't know how much English the Director understands. So, I say, that sounds like an awful lot of money. Alex indicates to me that we can't bargain with this guy. So, I agree, and the Director says, "you have to pay in advance ... now." Out comes my wallet. I put a \$100 bill on the desk in front of the Director. He picks it up. Now he is all smiles and very agreeable.

He looks at the first page to be copied. It contains about six records, including the one we want. He puts the page on the copy machine. Then he pulls out two pieces of paper to mask off everything except the one record we want. Alex explains to me that the Director is concerned that we will sell the other records on the page, so he doesn't want us to have them. He makes the copy ... but he copied the wrong record. So, he goes through the process again. This goes on for about 3 copies. Then he stops, turns to Alex, and says, this takes more time than he thought it would, and "there are so *many* records, and they are *unique*." I can feel my wallet getting ready to jump out of my pocket. Sure enough, he says, he can't finish this today; we'll have to come back on Monday, and the cost will be a little higher. How much higher? Not much. Certainly less than \$50. Ok, we agree. Alex explains that we can't come back on Monday. They negotiate, and settle on Sunday morning. We will meet the Director at the front door at 10 am.

We leave the Archives and Alex leads me to a store that he says sells adapter plugs. (I accidentally left the one I was using to recharge my camera in the hotel in L'viv.) The store does have adapters, but not the one I need. Ukrainian electrical plugs have two round prongs. American plugs are flat bladed, and some American plugs have one blade wider than the other. That's the problem. The store we visited doesn't have a plug that can accept the wide flat blade. They send us to another store. That one sends us to still another. We walk up three flights of stairs into what would be a small, very narrow office except the walls are lined with electronic gadgetry, some in packages, some in bins. The "store" is jammed with people. There is hardly room to turn around. Alex talks in rapid-fire Ukrainian to the woman who runs this operation. She pulls out a plug. It is too small for the wide blade. Alex pulls out his pocketknife, and proceeds to cut away the plastic until the wide blade fits. I try the plug. It works. Problem solved. This incident was pretty typical of Alex's resourcefulness on the entire trip. He made difficult situations appear easy.

The Jewish Community of Ternopil, Erev Rosh Hashonah

Back to the hotel to rest and clean up a bit. Then we head off to the Jewish community's Erev Rosh Hashonah dinner. We're supposed to meet Larisa at the Chasidic Center. We have some difficulty finding it, and when we get there we learn Larisa has already left. We get directions to the "hall" where the Rosh Hashonah gathering is. Have to stop and ask directions several times. We pull alongside an elderly couple walking on the sidewalk. They point up ahead and tell us where to go. We try to find the turnoff, but

miss it, so we turn around and head back. We spot the elderly couple still walking. It occurs to me that they may be headed to the community dinner. So we pull alongside again, and Alex asks them if they are going to the Rosh Hashonah gathering. They are. We offer a ride, but they decline. Once again they tell us where to turn. This time we find the spot.

The address is a building that is tucked behind a school. There is no street going to it. Only a driveway-like lane that winds around a school play yard. We ask some workmen where it is and they point the way. Finally we arrive.



Figure 65 - Erev Rosh Hashonah Community Dinner in Ternopil

The hall is filled with tables and the tables are filled with people (Figure 65). Apparently the dinner is a potluck affair. Everyone brings food, lays it out on the table in front of them, and invites others to help themselves. There are about 100 to 150 people here ... out of about 400 in the Ternopil Jewish community. Most are elderly, but there are some middle-aged people, and about a dozen teenagers. Notably missing, except for a handful, are people in their 20s and 30s. Later, we're told that age group has immigrated to Israel, and they continue to emigrate. So, the community keeps getting older and older.

We are directed to a wooden bench that has a few vacant seats. Alex, Ken and I are given yarmulkas to wear, but Alex doesn't need one. He pulls one out of his pocket. (He did this too, whenever we visited a Jewish cemetery.) It's hard to make conversation since the people around us (all elderly) don't speak English and my Russian is not sufficient to hold a conversation. The man across from me tries to speak to me in Yiddish, but I don't understand, and neither does Alex, so he reverts to Russian. Alex sits between Ken and me and tries to interpret two running conversations. Ken is next to a middle-aged woman (she's not Jewish, but her son is in Israel), who bends his ear. But he perseveres. She pulls out dozens of photos of her son in Israel. She seems to want Ken to try to contact someone for her in California. Alex bravely tries to interpret. Ken bravely tries to be courteous.

There are some people giving inspirational talks at a microphone in front of the hall. We can't see them. A pillar blocks our view. And there is a women's choir singing songs like *Jerusalem of Gold*, to an electronic keyboard accompaniment. The choir (about 15 women of all ages) actually is pretty good, but speakers and choir are ignored as everyone is talking to everyone else. (Jewish gatherings are the same the world over!) There is not a trace of a religious service for Rosh Hashonah ... not even when one of the two Chasidic young men in attendance takes the microphone. Doesn't matter. No one is listening anyway. Then there is a Shabbat candle lighting ceremony. Two young women and an older woman say the prayers over the candles and bread. No one pays attention. Still no sign of a Rosh Hashonah service. After some more songs by the choir and a couple of solos, the dinner comes to an end. People begin to drift out.

We manage to escape from the benches and go outside where we stand around talking to Larisa and to the leaders of the Jewish community. A group of teenagers stands nearby, curious about us. One of the kids is wearing a tee shirt that is a bit strange. The writing is in English. It says, "We are all one". When I look closer, I see that this is a "Jews for Jesus" tee shirt. I don't know if the kid understands that. I point it out to Ken. No one else seems to notice.



Figure 66 - Larisa Klyuch, Ken, David Feinstein, Daniel Lubyi, unknown woman, & Ron

We meet the leader of the Jewish Community, David Feinstein (Figure 66). He is recognized by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (which distributes food and money) as the leader of the Jewish community of Ternopil Oblast, including the 20 or so Jews in Kremenets. Ken arranges to interview Feinstein on Sunday, after Alex and I finish getting our copies at the Archives.

Larisa, as a representative of the Kremenets Jewish community, works with Feinstein. Feinstein distributes some of the funds he gets from the "Joint" to Larisa, and she

redistributes the aid to Kremenets Jews. There is no Rabbi for the community. The nearest Rabbi is in L'viv, about a two-hour drive. No Rabbi has conducted services in Ternopil in years. We arrange to meet Larisa and Tamara Senina on Saturday in Kremenets. Tamara is the woman I corresponded with re Isaac Stern and the Kremenets Museum. Larisa also has arranged an appointment for us with the Mayor on Saturday morning.

The evening ends, and we return to Hotel Ternopil and my plywood bed slab.

Saturday, September 7th

Kremenets

This is our day to meet the Mayor and other folks in Kremenets. We get an early start and are in Kremenets just before our 10:00 am meeting with the Mayor, Andriy Andriyevich Huslavskiy (Figure 67). On Kremenets' main street, we find the Municipal



Figure 67 - Kremenets Mayor Andriy Andriyevich Huslavskiy

Building, which is undergoing renovation. We meet Larisa again, and now Tamara Senina is with her. Tamara is associated with the Museum. I previously had sent her some material about Isaac Stern. He was born in Kremenets. Tamara is building a museum exhibit about him. We are all sitting around a conference table in the Mayor's office. The Mayor is at one end of the table. Alex sits on the Mayor's right and translates. I sit on the Mayor's left. Ken is next to me. Larisa and Tamara are further down the table.

The Mayor is a fairly young man, tall and distinguished looking. He has the politician's ready smile, a strong handshake, and a welcoming personality. After some small talk, we get down to business and talk about restoring the Jewish cemetery. The Mayor explains that he wants to create a Kremenets historic district that will include the Jewish cemetery. They want to put up plaques at locations of historical interest. They have done an inventory of such places. Ken asks how many Jewish sites are in their inventory. None. We ask about the Great Synagogue. It no longer exists. The site now is part of a park. Hmmm. I had been told that the Great Synagogue is now a bus station. No. What is now the bus station was a different Synagogue.

They want our Kremenets group to pay for plaques at former Jewish sites. The estimated cost starts out at \$50 per plaque and gradually escalates to a couple of hundred dollars each, depending on how large they are and what materials they are made of. We must seem like millionaires to them. I understand the desire for this, but

I'm more interested in taking care of the cemetery first. We're not going to have money to do everything they would like us to do.

In the end, we agree to do the cemetery project on a "phased" basis. The Mayor will have his staff work up a cost estimate for clearing the cemetery of brush and mapping the layout. Larisa may be able to get some Kiev students who can transcribe the Hebrew on the tombstones. The Mayor's staff will draft a letter for me to review and sign. He figures my endorsement will help get an historic district created. If that can be done, then there may be Ukrainian federal money available for parts of the project. Our Kremenets Shtetl CO-OP will begin a fundraising effort, probably by seeking a foundation grant. I expect the total cost will be between \$50,000 and \$75,000. We won't go ahead with restoring downed tombstones until these preliminaries are done. We agree that there should be a local supervisor for the project, and that once funds are available, they will be disbursed from a dedicated bank account. Larisa wants the account in a local bank so that disbursements can be controlled. I think it would be best to have a US account disbursing funds to a local Kremenets account. There is a high risk of funds being ripped off. I asked Alex to make it clear to them that we do not have the funds for this now, and that we need a detailed plan for the project before we can seek a foundation grant. I'm not sure they fully understood this. We agree to meet again when I return to Kremenets near the end of my trip. Hopefully, the Mayor will have the cost estimate ready by then.

During the conversation, the Mayor wanted to know where we are staying. In Ternopil, we said, so that we can be near the Archives. He told us that there is a hotel in Kremenets and that it has rooms that have been renovated. He suggested that when we return, we should stay there. We hedge a bit and say we'll consider it. We have heard that the hotel in Kremenets is pretty shabby, and not suitable for Americans. But, if they really have fixed it up, then it might be a good place to stay on future trips that focus on the cemetery project. It turns out that there are two hotels in Kremenets. Later in the day, Larisa and Tamara will take us to the other one.

At the end of the meeting, I present the Mayor, Larisa and Tamara with the baseball caps I brought. I didn't think much about which one I was giving to who, so I ended up giving the Oregon State University Beavers cap to Larisa, the Oregon cap to Tamara, and the University of Oregon Ducks cap to the Mayor. I explain that the beaver and duck are the mascots of the universities' football teams. The Mayor seems unimpressed. And after a few minutes, he exchanges his Ducks cap for the plain green Oregon cap that Tamara has. We exchange more goodbye pleasantries, and then the Mayor goes to a closet. He comes back with a wooden carving, which he presents to me (Figure 68). It is about 15 inches by 10 inches, and 4 inches thick. Carved out of a single block of wood by a local artisan, it is a bas-relief carving of the face of Jesus! I don't know what to say. Eventually, I explain that my mother-in-law is Christian and she will greatly appreciate this fine gift from him.



Figure 68 - Mayor Huslavskiy presents me with a gift

Afterwards, Larisa, Tamara, Alex, Ken and I have lunch at a local outdoor cafe. Larisa tells us a little about herself. She works for an insurance company that has an office in Kremenets. Her mother's mother married an Orthodox Christian. The family and the Jewish community were not happy about that, and essentially cut her off from the community. In time, her grandmother converted to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. During the war, the conversion didn't matter, and the family was forced into the Jewish ghetto, but they escaped before the ghetto was liquidated and the Jews were murdered. Larisa related stories about how they all survived during the Nazi occupation. When Larisa was a little girl she was removed from her parents care and sent to live with her grandparents. She remembers her grandmother performing what she now recognizes as Jewish rites (Sabbath candle lighting, chanting Jewish songs, etc.), but Larisa was raised in the Church. Her grandmother never talked about being Jewish. In time, Larisa recognized her Jewish roots. Now she works for the Jewish community of Kremenets. She relates stories about some of the people she helps. One of the very elderly couples living in poverty has a small apartment ... unheated and no toilet or bathroom. They have to hike a distance to an outhouse at the foot of Mt. Bona. I don't know how much of this is true, and how much is exaggerated.

When the bill comes, I pay it and leave a 10% tip. Larisa grabs up the tip, and returns it to me. She says she doesn't want to spoil the local people with tips.

We walked over to the site where the Great Synagogue once stood. It used to front on a street that was full of Jewish houses. That street and the Jews now are gone, and the park that replaces it fronts on the main street of Kremenets, right across from City Hall.



Figure 69 - Tamara Senina & Ron in the Kremenets Museum

From there we walked over to the Museum. It is rather dark, but Tamara turns on a few lights. They have done a remarkably good job of putting together WW II exhibits (Figure 69 & Figure 70). There are exhibits about the partisans, and exhibits about the Jews of Kremenets. We got lots of photos. I don't know how much of the exhibit is Tamara's work and how much is the work of others, but this museum could be a significant tourist attraction, yet no one outside of Kremenets knows about it.



Figure 70 - Kremenets Museum Holocaust Exhibits



We encountered this kind of situation throughout our trip. The smaller towns and villages have an enormous wealth of sites of historic – and tourist – interest, but they are underdeveloped and unpublicized. If Kremenets (and the towns around it) were to create a brochure describing what they have, I expect significant numbers of tourists, especially Jewish tourists, would come to visit. So, maybe the Mayor's idea of an historic district is a good one.

Tamara insists that we MUST hike to the top of Gora Bona (Mt. Bona) to see the fortress ruins. We politely decline. She continues to be very insistent. Ken is not interested in doing that and, in truth, we just do not have enough time to go. All the time in Kremenets, Tamara keeps insisting that we climb the mountain. We can drive to within about 300 meters of the top, but the road is rough and Alex isn't too thrilled about the

effects on his car. Finally, we tell Tamara very firmly that we will not be climbing Mt. Bona this time around. She is not happy.



Figure 71 - Memorial to 15,000 Jews murdered in 1942 by the Nazis at this mass grave site



Before the Nazis, about 15,000 Jews, both refugees and long time residents, lived in Kremenets. They were 40% of the population. Only a few escaped the Nazi roundup. All the others were massacred at this site.

Next stop is the site of the mass grave of the Jews murdered by the Nazis. A monument marks the site (Figure 71). There are scratches on the plaque where vandals have tried to deface it. The monument site is pretty stark. It is surrounded by small farm plots and is in an industrial area, off a dirt road. It is pretty well isolated from the populated areas. Larisa tells us that funds had been appropriated for the monument and the site was supposed to be made into parkland. However, local officials (*before* the current Mayor) siphoned off the money for other projects. What was left was enough only for the monument we saw. Larisa and Tamara are pretty unhappy about this. This is why they want to be sure there is control over disbursements for the cemetery project.

Standing in front of the Memorial, Ken and I put on our kippot (and Alex puts his on) and we say the Mourners Kaddish. Tamara is very emotional. She explains that most of her life she has had a mystical feeling about Judaism, and it is this feeling that has driven her to help recognize the Jewish history of Kremenets. She believes she has a Jewish spirit.

In a cluster of trees and bushes, behind the Mass Grave Memorial, is another Memorial (Figure 72). This one was erected in Soviet times to memorialize the citizens of Soviet Russia who died here. It does not mention Jews.



Figure 72 - Russian Heroes Memorial at the Jewish Mass Grave Site

Ken and Larisa pick up a couple of rocks (Figure 73). These rocks are flint, which is what *kremen* means in Russian. Kremenets used to be a major source of flint in olden days. I pack away a couple of samples to take home.



Figure 73 - Flint Rocks at Kremenets Mass Grave Site

We get some photos, then drive Larisa and Tamara back toward town. First we stop at the "other" hotel. It is a bit out of town, on a country road, surrounded by small farm plots. Chickens and ducks are running loose all around us. We decide we don't want to be this far out of town, and so, we say our goodbyes.

Novy Oleksinets

Next stop is Novy Oleksinets, ancestral town of our Doctor (Diokhter) family (Figure 74). As we approach town we see a Soviet-era World War II Memorial (Figure 75). Memorials like these are at the approaches to most Ukrainian towns.



Figure 74 - Ron & Ken at Novy Oleksinets Sign



Figure 75 - Soviet-era WW2 Memorial



Figure 76 - Ksenia Dmytriana Khanenko
& granddaughter



Figure 77 - Farmer on Novy Oleksinets road



Figure 78 - Novy Oleksinets City Hall, Town Center

We spot an old woman and a child coming up the road (Figure 76). They are leading four cows. An old man, leading two more cows, follows them (Figure 77). He carries a foldup canvas stool. This is a fairly typical sight in the countryside. Children and old people take the livestock out to graze and sit nearby to watch them. We chat with the woman and learn that in the early 1940s, the Mayor of Novy Oleksinets was a man named Dokhter. He was a good mayor, good to the people, we're told. As day ends, they drive the cattle home.

We drive into the center of town and park near city hall, a Soviet-era concrete building (Figure 78). While Ken and I take pictures, a horse-drawn wagon comes clopping up (Figure 79). These wagons are common throughout Ukraine. They are kind of V-shaped,



Figure 79 - Horse-drawn wagon in Novy Oleksinets

but with a flat bottom. Some have old wooden wheels, but most have rubber wheels that look like small auto tires. There is a bench seat in front, and some have a bench seat that runs the length of the wagon. The man driving the wagon is Vasyl Tymofiyovych Shtokalo. His tanned face is rough and leathery; his hands are hardened by farm work, (Figure 80). A young boy (maybe 9 or 10) and a woman are in the back of the wagon. We ask if we can take pictures of them. They happily agree. (Throughout the trip, people have been very friendly and cooperative whenever we ask directions or ask permission to take photos.) We talk with them ... through Alex. Are there any Jews in town? No. The last one left some years ago. (In a side remark to us, Alex relates a story to the effect that when the last Jew leaves, there are 20 Jews to see him off.)



Figure 80 - Vasyl Tymofiyovych Shtokalo & son,
Novy Oleksinets

Is there a Jewish cemetery? (I had not found any reference to one in my research). This elicits a lot of rapid conversation. A couple of women amble up and join the discussion. No, there isn't a Jewish cemetery anymore, but there used to be one. After more discussion, Alex convinces the man to show us where the cemetery was. He wants to take us there in his wagon, but Alex says we will drive, and he can ride with us. He was reluctant at first, but then he jumps into the car, and leaves the boy in the wagon. He assures us the boy will be ok, but his woman friend is not too happy about Vasyl leaving the boy (Figure 81).



Figure 81 - Vasyl Tymofiyovych jumps in the car. His woman friend is not pleased.

Off we go in search of the site of the Jewish cemetery ... off small dirt roads, into farmland. We pull up near a small corn patch. He points out the site to us (Figure 82 and Figure 83). It is all farmland. Not a sign of the cemetery. The Nazis destroyed it, he said.



Figure 82 - Dirt road to the old Jewish Cemetery



Figure 83 - The old Jewish Cemetery site, now a cornfield

Down the road comes an old farmwoman, on foot. When she approaches we get in a conversation with her. She remembers the cemetery, she says, but it wasn't right here. It

was about 100 feet more up the road. We go look ... more cornfields, but still no indication that there ever was a cemetery here. We ask permission to take her picture.



Figure 84 - Farmwoman in Novy Oleksinets

She readily agrees (Figure 84). When we show her the picture on the digital camera screen, she is ecstatic. "You are like lords", she says. And, she gives me a big hug. Close up, I can see little spiders crawling around in her kerchief. The conversation continues, rather animated. She says there are tombstones remaining from the cemetery "up near the dam". Now Vasyl Tymofiyovych remembers, and he says he'll show us. So, off we go again to an area near a small earthen dam.

Sure enough, a few tombstones are lying there, half buried by mounds of undergrowth and debris (Figure 85). I use my hands to clear some of the moss from the face of the tombstone. I can't see any readable inscription. So, I start pulling some of the weeds growing from another part of the stone. Big mistake. A short time later, my hands start stinging and burning. Alex says it is a toxin put out by the weeds I pulled. It's not dangerous and will wear off in a day or two. I use a handi-wipe to try to remove any residue from my hands. The stinging continues. It's not too bad, but it is pretty annoying. It did pretty much disappear the next day, and was completely gone the day after that. Next time, I'll be more careful. Anyway, even after that, there are no readable inscriptions. It's pretty humbling to think that one of these tombstones might well have been for one of my ancestors.



Figure 85 - Road to the old dam ... and one of the brush and moss-covered matzevot

Before we get back in the car, I give Vasyl Tymofiyovych 20 Hryvnas (a little less than \$4) in appreciation for his help. He is very appreciative. He grabs my hand and kisses it. Then he gives me a bear hug. Ken gives him a San Francisco Giants baseball cap. It immediately goes on his head. He probably will be wearing that hat for the next 10 years. We drive back to the town center. The woman is there waiting for him. He proudly shows off his new hat. I ask if I can take some pictures. He agrees, but the woman is a little shy, so he starts horsing around with her and teasing her. This sends her into a giggle fit. I got some good photos (Figure 86), and then showed them to her. She was all smiles. I guess this is a day that Novy Oleksinets will remember as the day the crazy American Jews came to town.



Figure 86 - Vasyl Tymofiyovych celebrates his new hat

Vasyl Tymofiyovych points us to a nearby area that he says was the market square in olden days (Figure 89). It is in the middle of what used to be the Jewish area, right in the center of town. There is no sign that a vibrant Jewish community once existed here. Where the old Synagogue once stood, there now is a small grove of apple trees (Figure 87 and Figure 88).



Figure 87 - An abandoned building in the old Jewish section of Novy Oleksinets



Figure 88 - An apple tree grows where the old Synagogue once stood



**Figure 89 - The old Jewish Marketplace in
Novy Oleksinets**



**Figure 90 - The water well in the Jewish section of
Novy Oleksinets**

The town's water-well is across the road from it (Figure 90 and Figure 91). It is still in use. We go over to the well, and pull up a bucket. The water is clear and cold. Alex says it is safe to drink, but I'd rather not tempt fate. So, we settle for using Novy Oleksinets well water to wash our hands. In a little while an old, bent woman ambles up. She is carrying two buckets. She draws water from the well and fills her buckets (Figure 91). Before she leaves, Alex gets in a conversation with her. She and her husband moved here from another town.

Her life is hard. We ask permission to take her picture and get several good photos. As she leaves, we can just imagine our ancestors coming to market and hauling up a bucket of chilly water.



Figure 91 - Ken and an old woman at the Novy Oleksinets water well

It's late in the day now, and time to drive back to Ternopil so that we can get back before dark. Alex doesn't like to drive in the dark because there are so many people walking the road, and there are many horse-drawn wagons without reflectors ... no streetlights or highway lights in these parts of Ukraine.

Tomorrow morning we return to the Archives. I hope the Director keeps his word about copying the records.

Sunday, September 8th

Back to the Ternopil Archives ... Again

The days have been packed with emotion-laden events. This trip really is overwhelming, but in a good kind of way. There are so many sights and sounds and events to absorb.

Today, we are supposed to meet the Ternopil Archives Director at the Archives at 10 am so that he can make copies of the records we selected. Ken is going to walk around town, and then, at noon, will return to the Archives to meet David Feinstein, the leader of Ternopil Oblast's Jewish communities so that he can interview him. Alex will serve as translator.

We are outside the Archives a little before 10. Ten a.m. passes. No sign of the Director. Alex is getting a little anxious. 10:15, 10:30. Alex checks the back and sides of the building in case the Director went around that way. Nope. Not there. I remember that I have his business card. We look at it and see his home phone number. So, Alex goes to call him. When he returns, he says the Director had been tied up with personal matters, and he will be here shortly.

About 15 minutes later, he shows up. We go upstairs, into his Secretary's room, where the copy machine is. He looks at the stack of documents. He looks at us. Then he and Alex get into a discussion. There are so *many* documents, he says, and they are "*unique*". Uh-oh. There is that word again. I know what's coming. He says, "This will cost more than I estimated on Friday." How much, I ask. On Friday, he had said "less than \$50." Now he says it will cost \$90. I almost start bargaining with him, when I catch a glance from Alex. No bargaining. And, he wants the money in advance. So, I just make a comment about this being too much money. But, I'm prepared for this. I previously had taken a couple of hundred in dollars from my money belt and put it in my wallet. I take out my wallet, and start looking through the Hryvna. The Director blanches, and says something to Alex. As I pull a \$100 dollar bill from my wallet, Alex tells me the Director thought I was going to give him Ukrainian Hryvnas instead of dollars. I put the \$100 on the desk. The Director picks it up. There is more discussion with Alex.

Now the Director goes to the copy machine and starts the whole masking/copying process again. When he mistakenly includes an additional record on the copy, he takes out a pair of scissors and cuts out the record that isn't ours. Alex gets each copy from

the Director, checks to make sure it is the one we want and hands it to me. I mark it to indicate the source of the record, and stack the copies in my folder.

When the Director sees the Census records from Yampol, he remarks that he didn't know his Archives had Yampol records. In the 19th century, Yampol was in Volhynia Guberniya, but now is in Khmel'nitski Oblast. So, the Director figured all Yampol records would be in the Khmel'nitski Oblast State Archives. This is a situation we encounter repeatedly in Ukrainian Archives. There are so many records in these Archives, and in the past there has been so little interest in them, that the Archivists really don't know what they have. Until funds become available for comprehensive indexing projects, this situation is likely to continue. The message to genealogists is, don't assume that records you seek are not in an Archive. There is a reasonable likelihood that records exist but are not recorded on any lists, indexes, or catalogs.

About halfway through this process, a couple of the Director's buddies arrive. They are friends who are visiting from out of town. After chatting with them a bit, they leave, and the Director resumes copying. Soon he takes a break, makes coffee, and sits down to sip it. In time, he resumes making copies, and eventually, all our copies are safely tucked away.

Alex and I previously had talked about getting access to more records when we return to Ternopil next week. The problem is that the Director will be gone then. So, as we chat with the Director after the copying is completed, Alex asks about getting access. The Director sends me out of the room again. Then after a few minutes, Alex calls me back in. Yes, the Director has agreed we can look at some records when we return. But not Census Records because those are "*unique*". However, we can look at the Family Lists. He will leave written instructions with his staff to allow us to review the lists.

The Jewish Community of Ternopil Oblast revisited

Ok, we're finished here, but it now is a half hour later than we planned. David Feinstein and Ken are waiting outside. They can't have much of a conversation because of the language barrier, and because Alex is with me. We go downstairs and agree to meet over at the Jewish Community Center. On the wall of our meeting room are photos from WW2. They picture Jews who fought with the partisans and they show Jewish landmarks devastated by the Nazis. A large map shows the mass-grave sites, where Nazis mass-murdered the Jews of Ternopil Oblast in 1942 (Figure 95 and Figure 96). Feinstein has some men from the community there to meet with us. This apparently is the "governing board" of the Jewish community of Ternopil Oblast, but there is no doubt that Feinstein is in charge (Figure 92). We meet everyone, and Ken conducts his interview. I sit quietly (difficult for me) and listen. Feinstein sits behind a table with Daniel Lubyi at his right. The rest of us are sitting on folding chairs arrayed in front of Feinstein. Alex translates. Ken records the interview and takes notes (Figure 93 and Figure 94). After Ken finishes the interview, I ask about Jewish services. Do they have

Shabbat services? No. There is no Rabbi. But there is an engineer in the community who is familiar with the service, and he occasionally acts as a Rabbi.

A repeating theme is that they need money. The "Joint" (the Jewish Agency's Joint Distribution Committee) provides some funds, but not enough. So they need to raise more money. I expect that is true. They have a very difficult job to do ... dealing with a Jewish community that for the most part does not know Jewish traditions or ritual. Also, there are many people who step forward and claim to be Jewish, because that would allow them to emigrate to Israel or the US. There just are too many people here who are living either in poverty or right on the edge of poverty.

Toward the end of the interview, Daniel Lubyi speaks up. It turns out that he is an engineer, and he is willing to help with the cemetery project. Does he have any experience with this? No. But he can help hire workers and manage them. I promise to keep his offer in mind. There also is a lawyer in the group, and he can help us draft any agreements regarding the cemetery project. They want to know what else they can do. I tell them that we need people who can read Hebrew to transcribe the Kremenets tombstones. They don't have anyone who can read Hebrew, but they might be able to find somebody. We exchange contact information and promise to remain in touch. Alex offers to serve as an intermediary to provide translation of any messages. He'll do this at no charge.

Before we leave, Ken and I each donate \$50 to the community. They bring out a glass "tzedakah" box with a lid containing a slot. It holds other donations they have received. We deposit our contribution into it.

The rest of the day is uneventful. Next is Kiev.



Figure 92 - Ron & Ken with the leaders of the Jewish Community of Ternopil Oblast



Figure 93 - David Feinstein, leader of the Jewish Community of Ternopil Oblast



Figure 94 - Ken interviews David Feinstein and Daniel Lyubi; Alex translates.



Figure 95 - Ternopil Synagogue, destroyed by the Nazis, 1942



Figure 96 - Map showing Nazi mass murder sites, mass graves in Ternopil Oblast

SECTION 3: KIEV, UMAN AND ODESSA

Monday, September 9th

On the road to Kiev

We're glad to be on the road again (Figure 97). The drive from Ternopil to Kiev is a long one (6 to 7 hours), but the highway is pretty good and we make good time ... except when cattle herds are crossing the road. I'm surprised at the large number of gas stations along the highway, and especially at the many new stations under construction. Gasoline is a little more expensive than it is in the U.S., about \$1.75 per gallon for 89-octane. (Regular gas was about \$1.30 in the U.S. at the time.)

We pass through many small towns. Smaller towns have marketplaces that usually consist of small booths, each selling one or two particular items ... dried fish, meats, a small assortment of vegetables, bottled water and soft drinks, etc. Looks like the beginnings of capitalism. The booths that sell dried fish and meats have their wares covered with cloth. As you walk by, the people in the booths uncover the products to show you what they have. No refrigeration here. Alex says you are taking a chance on buying things that might spoil without refrigeration, because you don't know how long they have been out there. Larger towns have small stores in addition to the booths, and the stores sell a larger variety of goods.

Many of the people we see have gold teeth. I've never seen so much gold. Alex tells us this is because gold teeth became a fad in the early 1990s. Some people even had perfectly good teeth replaced by gold ones.

Every once in a while we pass a bus shelter. The public bus system is a primary means of transportation. Around the time of the Moscow Olympics, many bus shelters were renovated and covered with mosaic tiles in various patterns. Now, many of these are pretty run down ... missing tiles have not been replaced. But some are miniature works of art, and are well maintained.

With the fall of Communism, religious life has revived. There are new churches everywhere. Most seem to be Ukrainian Orthodox. Many have tiled or gold domes. The Pochayev Monastery is especially impressive. It is massive (Figure 98).

Between Zhitomer and Kiev, potato, vegetable, and watermelon vendors line the roadside (Figure 99). It's a pretty incredible sight ... piles of watermelon, 30 feet long and 3 to 4 feet high. We stop for photos near a woman who is selling brooms (*miyetla*) and birch beaters (*viyenik*). All her products are handmade from tree branches and foliage.

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Section 3: Kiev, Uman and Odessa



Figure 97 - Ron & Ken on the road to Kiev



Figure 98 - Pochayev Monastery & Shrine



Figure 99 - Roadside vendors - birch beaters & brooms, watermelons & produce

We ask permission to take her picture, but she declines. (She is the only person who has said no on the whole trip.) Alex talks with her. She previously worked at a nearby factory that made measuring instruments. Four years ago, the factory closed, and 2,000 people were thrown out of work. Now the factory makes tombstones, but with many fewer people. She is still unemployed, so she survives as best she can, making brooms and viyeniki for a living.

Many people here suffer from grinding poverty. Alex says the official unemployment rate is about 30%, but unofficially it is more like 70%. People make do however they can ... lots of bartering, lots of gratuities for services rendered to foreigners. It's easy to understand why we must seem like millionaires to some of the rural folks.

Kiev, the Central State Historical Archives

Kiev is a huge city, population about 2.6 million. We're staying at the Hotel Dnipro (Figure 100). This hotel is ok, quite upscale. At least the bed is long enough to allow me to stretch out. Couldn't do that in the other Ukrainian hotels where we've stayed so far. (That's why my back is acting up.) And the bed is a little wider than the singles that we have had. This is fortunate, because I'm destined to spend some considerable time in that bed while we're in Kiev.



Figure 100 - Hotel Dnipro, Kiev

While Ken wandered around town shooting pictures, Alex and I went to the Kiev Central State Historical Archives to meet Olga Muzychuk, the Director. I had written an e-mail message to her listing the records I'm seeking, but she had not yet responded. Alex called her when we got to Kiev, and she said, come over any time that afternoon. She will not be there the rest of the week because she has to attend a meeting of all the Archive Directors in Ukraine. This probably is the same meeting the Ternopil Director is attending.



Figure 101 - Olga Muzychuk,
Director, State Central
Archives of Kiev

So, we go to meet Olga. The Archives is in an old building. As usual, the hallways are very dimly lit. We make our way through the corridors, and find Olga's office. She is a tall, striking, young woman, modishly dressed, with a man's tie hung loosely over her blouse (Figure 101). Her fingers are covered (literally) with rings, some of which cover an entire finger so that there was no way she could bend the finger (like when typing). She remembers me from Toronto.

She did receive my message. Her staff came up with one record, an Uman birth record (Figure 102). The given names, dates and places don't quite match those of Duvid Kazdoy (my maternal great-grandfather, born in 1844), but there is no surname in the record. Duvid's San Antonio tombstone lists his name as Duvid Eliyah Kazdoy, son of Shlomo, born in Uman about 1844. The Uman record Olga found lists Yekhiel Duvid, born in 1844, son of Shlome and Lamie from Linitse. We haven't managed to locate Linitse yet. The lack of a surname is interesting. Apparently surname adoption had not penetrated this part of Ukraine in 1844. This record probably is for a brother of my great-grandfather, but I can't be sure without further data.

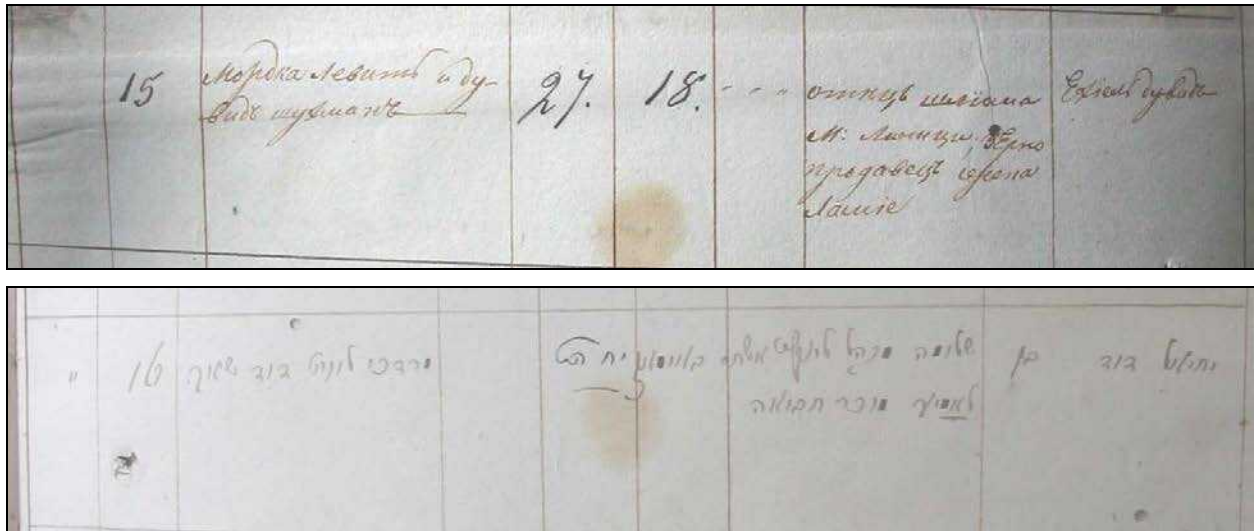


Figure 102 - 1844 Uman birth record for Yekhiel Duvid, son of Shlome and Lamie from Linitse

Olga found the record in a database that is not known to the Jewish genealogy community. Her staff is building a searchable computer database of the events, names and places in the holdings of her Archives. This is the most forward-looking project we have encountered yet in Ukraine. They were able to search by given name to come up with this record. Unfortunately, the database is far from complete, and they were not able to find any of the other records I'm seeking. I'll have to be patient.

We talked about the possibility of putting a surname and given name index from her database onto JewishGen so that researchers can more readily locate records about their ancestors. Then, they could order the records from her Archives and this could be a significant source of revenue for her Archives. She didn't quite understand what I was suggesting until I showed her what we are doing with the Kremenets vital records. Then she got it. But, she says this would have to be approved by the State Archival Committee. The problem is, the Committee currently is without a Chairman. It may be sometime next year before a Chairman is in place. At that time, she will be willing to bring a web-based index proposal forward.

Tuesday, September 10th

Around Kiev ... but not for me

Our hotel has a "business center" which provides Internet access. With a little help from the hotel's computer guru, I was able to hook up my computer to their network. Cost for hotel Internet service is \$10 per hour, with a half-hour minimum. We also found an Internet Cafe in the railway station, a short distance from our hotel. Cost there is only about \$2 per hour, charged on a per minute basis. The hotel is more expensive, but it also is more convenient. In addition, Alex told me that people can buy an "Internet Card" that allows you to dial in using a local telephone number. Cost is \$5 for 10 hours, but the card is good only in Kiev.

My stomach had not been feeling very good all day today. By the time we got back to the hotel, I felt a case of Traveler's Diarrhea (TD) coming on. Sure enough, that night it hit. Started taking Cipro and Immodium A-D. That brought it under control, but the next day, I stayed in my room, and slept. I ended up sleeping about 14 hours overnight, then another 11 hours during the day. By the second day, I was feeling well enough to get around a bit, but by then it was time to leave Kiev. As a result, I had to give up on my plan to meet with the Chief Rabbi of Ukraine about the Kremenets Jewish Cemetery Project. That will have to wait until my next visit.

While I was sick, Ken and Alex did tourist things (see Figure 103 through Figure 106 for a selection of Ken's photos). They had intended to go to Babi Yar and to a re-creation of Ukrainian villages from the 14th through 17th centuries. I would have liked to see that, but I just couldn't make it. Unfortunately, the weather turned bad today; it rained heavily all day (while I slept), so they were not able to go to the places they had planned. Ken also met with the Publisher of the Kiev Post, an independent (and successful) English language weekly newspaper. The publisher is an American Jew. Through this interview, Ken gained some insight into newspaper operations in Ukraine.



Figure 103 - Churches of Kiev



Figure 104 - Street Vendors in Kiev



Figure 105 - Kiev Street Scenes, Baskin Robbins sign & a news kiosk



Figure 106 - Street Scenes, Kiev

Ken is taking advantage of the hotel facilities and is getting a Ukrainian massage. Alex is in his room relaxing. They are going to a Turkish restaurant tonight. I'm staying in the hotel and will eat salted crackers that Alex bought for me. The store he went to also sold matzo, but Alex decided not to buy it, as the minimum size was a 5 lb. Box.

Wednesday, September 11th

Uman and its Jewish cemeteries

I felt a lot better this morning, and was able to eat some breakfast. Ken and I checked out of the hotel while Alex retrieved the car. The sky is still overcast, and we hit rain occasionally on the way to Uman, an easy two-hour drive south of Kiev. At intervals along the roadside, there still are piles of watermelons, big and small. Each stack of farm produce is tended by a farmer or by a *babuchka*. Some of the farmers have erected temporary tent-like shelters alongside their produce piles. Many cars stop to buy the watermelon. Some fill their trunks and then transport them back to the city for re-sale. Every once in a while a large truck pulls up and negotiates a purchase. Looks like a primitive kind of distribution system for farm products, but Alex says it works.



Figure 107 - Hotel Uman, old section

Our plan was to spend the night in Uman, ancestral town of our Kazdoy families. The Chasidim have been in town for Rosh Hashonah and all the "good" hotels are still booked. (Many Chasidim gather in Uman at Rosh Hashonah to honor Rabbi Nachman, whose tomb is there.) Alex had made a reservation for us at the Hotel Uman on the outskirts of town. The hotel is inside Café Sytlana, dark and dusty (Figure 107). Even Alex was skeptical about these rooms.



Figure 108 - Hotel Uman, the new section

So, they showed us rooms in the "new" part of the hotel ... only \$14 per night. The old adage, "you get what you pay for" certainly applies here. Although the rooms are neat, they are sparsely furnished, the beds are short, the floor of the room is bare concrete, and there is no seat on the toilet (Figure 108). We decide to pass on this hotel. We'll just stop for lunch in Uman, and then drive on to Odessa.



Figure 109 - The Druzhba Restaurant in Uman

The Druzhba restaurant looks quite plain on the outside, but inside, we walk past an atrium filled with greenery and marble statues (Figure 109). The menu is surprisingly diverse (Figure 110). After lunch, we ask around about the location of the Jewish cemeteries. There are three in town, but the most important is not accessible to visitors. It is the week between Rosh Hashonah and Yom Kippur and the Chasidim are in town to memorialize the birth of Rabbi Nachman who is buried here. However, we do get directions to the other two cemeteries and head out for them. Afterwards, we plan to drive on to Odessa. Alex figures we can get in before dark. (We did.)

Дендропарк "Софія" НАН України. Близько обслуговування туристів.
Menu in Druzhba restaurant. (Dendro-park Sofiyivka) - 2001

Description	Quantity, gram	Price, hryvna
Cold dishes / Холодні закуски		
1. Tongue in aspic / язик у желе	75/125	4.55
2. Boiled tongue with mayonnaise / язик відварений з майонезом	100/50	5.83
3. Open sandwich with red caviar / бутерброд з червоною ікрою	10/5/30	4.51
4. Sturgeon in aspic / осетрина у желе	72/125	8.16
5. Assorted fishes (salmon, crab sticks, olives, lemon) / асорті рибних (оселець, крабові палички, оливки, лимон)	1/185	15.56
6. Stuffed fish (after preliminary order) / риба фарширована (за попереднім замовленням)	1/100	6.53
7. Fillet of sturgeon, cold cured / філет осетрини з/х	1/100	23.17
8. Crab sticks / крабові палички	1/100	3.98
9. Open sandwich with smoked sausage / бутерброд з ковбаски з/х	30/30	1.83
10. Open sandwich with cheese and butter / бутерброд з сиром і маслом	30/5/30	3.10
11. Open sandwich with sprats / бутерброд зі сардинками	30/30	1.39
12. Open sandwich with pork / бутерброд зі свининою	30/30	1.44
13. Meat assorted (sausage, fillet, cold boiled pork) / асорті м'яса (ковбаси, філет, вареного свинини)	1/190	6.83
14. Pork fillet / філет із свинини	1/100	4.70
15. Fried pork, larded with garlic / свинина смажена, фарширована часником	1/100	4.72
16. Beef in aspic / яловичина у желе	75/125	4.91
17. Boiled eggs stuffed with codfish liver and mayonnaise / яйця фаршировані печеною тріскою з майонезом	1/130/30	4.45
18. Fried liver in pancake / печені смажені в клярі	100/200	2.27
19. Liver pike (after preliminary order) / печені із тріски (за попереднім замовленням)	1/100	2.50
20. Olives / оливки	1/100	7.33
21. Dense cheese, of Bukovina / сир твердий буковинський	1/100	3.54
22. "Julien" out of mushrooms / "Жюльєн" із грибів	1/150	6.02
23. Salad "Mimosa" / салат "Мімоза"	1/145	3.07
24. Salad "Delicate" / салат "Делікатесний"	1/145	2.42
25. Salad "Ogonyok" (flame) / салат "Огоньок"	1/100	3.58
26. Salad "Uman" recipe / салат по-уманськи	1/135	2.95
27. Salad of fresh tomatoes with fillet / салат із свіжих помідор з філетом	100/50	5.76
28. Salad mingled, with fillet / салат змішаний з філетом	100/100/50	6.02
29. Canned mushrooms with onion / гриби консервовані з цибулею	100/10/30	6.51
30. Boiled lard, seasoned with garlic / сало варене, приправлене часником	1/100	3.14
31. Fowl, Uman' recipe / птиця по-уманськи	200/10	5.33
32. Fried chicken / куря смажена	1/100	4.17
33. Salad "Stolychny" (capital city) / салат "Столичний"	1/145	3.73
34. Salad of meat / салат зі свинини	1/145	2.66
First course / Перші страви		
35. Borsh with cabbage, potato and meat / борщ з капустою, картоплею і м'ясом	300/30	2.26
36. Broth and toasted bread / бульйон з гренками	300/20	1.15
37. Pampushka (cookie) moistened with garlic juice / пампушки з часниковим соусом	100/30	0.49
38. Soup with vegetables and meat / суп овочевий з м'ясом	300/30	2.13

Page 1 of 4

Figure 110 - A page from the Cafe Druzhba menu

We find an "old" and a "new" cemetery, side-by-side, but separated by a fence (Figure 112 and Figure 113). Each has its own gatekeeper. The new cemetery is completely fenced. The old one is open. It is a goat and cow pasture (Figure 114). You get to it by walking through a "driveway" and behind a house. An older man, who lives in the house, acts as a gatekeeper of sorts (Figure 111). Very few tombstones are still standing in the old cemetery, and only a few of those are readable. The cemetery was remarkable in that there are a few tombstones for Rabbis, each of which has a small fence around it. The Chasidim maintain these few sites, but they don't maintain the rest of the cemetery. Depressions around some graves are filled with cans, paper trash, garbage, etc. ... literally a garbage dump. It's pretty disgraceful. I don't understand why the Chasidim maintain the graves of their rabbis, and leave the rest of the cemetery to become a garbage heap (Figure 115).



Figure 111 - Caretaker at the old Jewish Cemetery, Uman



Figure 112 - Uman, The old Jewish Cemetery



Figure 113 - Uman, the new Jewish Cemetery



Figure 114 - Cattle grazing in the old Jewish Cemetery of Uman



Figure 115 - Trash and toppled matzevot in the old Jewish Cemetery of Uman



Figure 116 - Entrance to the new Jewish Cemetery of Uman



Figure 117 - Matzevot in the new Jewish Cemetery of Uman



Figure 118 - Plaque at entrance to the new Jewish Cemetery of Uman



Figure 119 - Title Page of Uman Burial Register, New Cemetery

We walk over to the "new" cemetery (Figure 116 to Figure 118) and find the caretaker. Alex asks him if there are any burial records. Yes, there are, and he pulls out a book, and gives me permission to photograph the pages (Figure 119). So, I place the book on a tree stump. Alex holds the pages flat, and I photograph each page. As far as I know, no one in the Jewish genealogy community even knows this book exists. The records and tombstone inscriptions are in Russian. Many of the tombstones are of marble. Most have engraved photos on them (Figure 117). I've never seen a Jewish cemetery like this one. I give the caretaker some hryvna and thank him for being so helpful.

Onward to Odessa.

September 12th and 13th

Being a tourist in Odessa

Odessa is a huge and dynamic city. Slowly, they are restoring the fine old buildings. When we pulled into Odessa last night (a day ahead of schedule), we went to the Krasnaya Hotel, where Alex previously had made a reservation for tomorrow night. It is supposed to be one of the best, and it certainly looks impressive from the outside. However, on the inside, half the lights in the reception area were off. The hallways were dark. The rooms were small, and, I would say, a bit on the dingy side. They certainly

were no worse than the places we have been staying, but a room here would have cost us \$167 per night. I smelled a rip-off. So did Ken. So we said thanks, but no thanks.

Ended up at the Mozart Hotel, across from the Opera House (Figure 120). It is new (about 1-1/2 years old), owned by Austrians, very nice. Cost is \$142 per night, including breakfast. All the furnishings and fixtures are new. It is working out ok. The view from my window provides a stark contrast to the luxury of this hotel (Figure 121).

Walking around the streets (Figure 142 through Figure 146), we are struck by the huge changes in society that have occurred since independence in 1990-1991. Movie posters advertise American movies, like Tom Cruse in *Mission Impossible 2* ... all in Cyrillic. (American movies are dubbed in Ukrainian.)



Figure 120 - The Mozart Hotel, Odessa



Figure 121 - The view from my Mozart Hotel room

The main streets are broad and tree-lined, with very wide sidewalks, ideal for a walking city. A lane for walking on the sidewalks is sandwiched between buildings housing western style stores and sidewalk cafes lining the street side of the sidewalk. Here and there are large kiosks that sell breads, sweet rolls, and stuffed pastries of various kinds. Alex tells us that *none* of these stores, cafes, and kiosks was here in Soviet times. Now the streets are teeming with people ... all ages. It's hard to imagine the starkness of Soviet times when these streets were bare, and the stores were empty.

We spend some time walking around doing tourist things. Ken and Alex climb down, then up the Potemkin steps, all 192 of them, leading down to the waterfront (Figure 122

and Figure 123). I wait at the top and do some people watching ... very pleasant day to just sit and observe.



Figure 122 - Potemkin Steps, looking toward Port of Odessa on the Black Sea

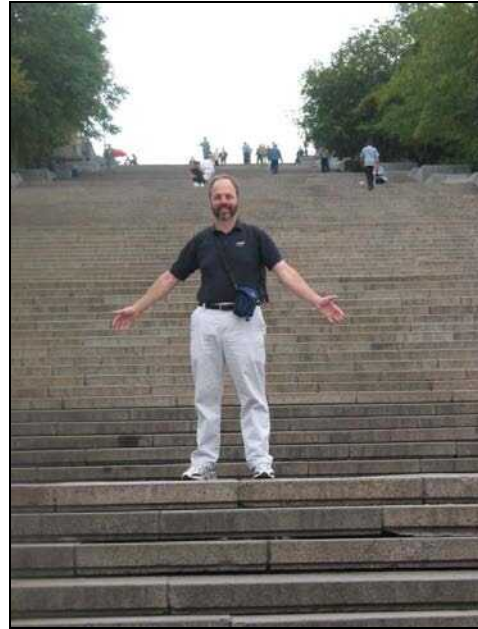


Figure 123 - Ken on Potemkin Steps



Figure 124 - Odessa Opera House



Figure 125 - Odessa Opera House, ticket booth

As we walk along the street near our hotel, we admire the outside of the Opera House (Figure 124). The front is being renovated, but you can see the splendor of this building from the sides. The building is strikingly beautiful. When they finish renovation, this will be a landmark building. The Opera House puts on different performances every night ... opera, symphony, ballet. Tomorrow night is opera ... Tchaikovsky's *Iolanthe*. This is a very busy opera company. Within a two-week period, they have scheduled performances of *Iolanthe*, *Carmen*, *La Traviata*, *Madame Butterfly*, *A Masked Ball*, *Pagliacci*, and *Lucia di Lammermoor*. The ticket office is outside, in a very small metal shed. There is a 3x4 foot cutout in one wall. Inside this cutout an old woman sits and she is the lone ticket seller (Figure 125). A half dozen people are in front of the “window”, waiting their turn to buy a

ticket. Ken has never been to an opera, but he wants to experience this. So, while Alex rests up, Ken and I go to the opera. Tickets in 5th row orchestra, in the off-center section, were less than \$5 each. We have good, unobstructed seats ... could actually see the faces of the performers.



Figure 126 - A panoramic view of the interior of the Odessa Opera House



Figure 127 - The Odessa Opera House Stage



Figure 128 - The main chandelier and ceiling, Odessa Opera House

The inside of the opera house is spectacular ... four tiered balconies and boxes reaching almost to a massive domed ceiling, a dramatic ceiling fresco surrounds a huge chandelier that is blazing with light, gold paint and red velvet everywhere you look. Got lots of photos (Figure 126 through Figure 128). Acoustics are excellent, good full sound, and the orchestra's volume was just right even though there were only about a dozen instruments. The house is only half full, mostly people who have arrived on tour buses. The opera was good ... and short - only 1-1/2 hours. The baritone would have been exceptionally good any place in the US, including the Met. The other singers were ok. Very enjoyable.

Before the performance, Ken went to find the toilet. There is *one* toilet in the Opera House. It is backstage, amidst the performers getting ready to sing. No toilet seat. We're getting used to this by now, but it still comes as a surprise, here in this grand Opera House.



Figure 129 - Partisans' Museum, at Nerubayskoye



Figure 130 - Our guide at the Partisans' Museum



Figure 131 - Socialist Realism Sculptures at the Partisans' Museum are bigger than life

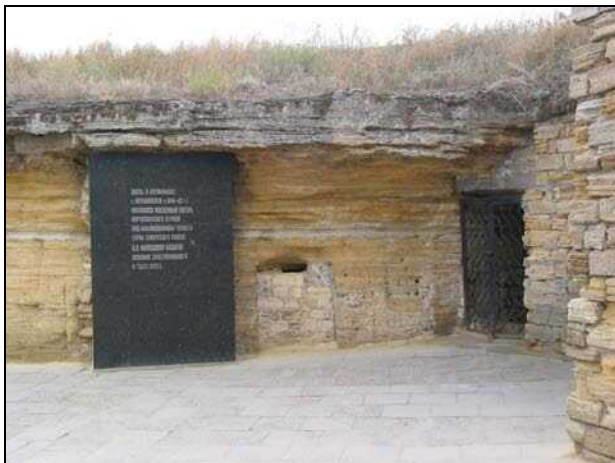


Figure 132 - Catacombs entrance ... and a catacomb filled with trash

On Friday, we drive to the outskirts of Odessa, about 35 km from town, to the village of Nerubayskoye to see the *Museum Of Partisan Glory* (Figure 129). Beneath this area are 400

kilometers of catacombs. The catacombs are carved into shell rock, built under Odessa. These catacombs are notable because they sheltered Soviet partisans during World War II. A museum memorializes the partisans, but it is locked. A massive sculpture of partisans with weapons is in front of the museum, as if to guard it. The statues are in Socialist Realism style (Figure 131). We approached a couple of men near the museum and the catacombs entrance. They are caretakers for the museum. First, they offer to get the Curator for us. We say that isn't necessary. Both men leave while we walk around looking at the catacombs and wondering if we really want to go into them. It later turns out that if we want to enter the catacombs, one of the men will accompany us and he will carry a torch so that we can see while we're in there. Standing on tiptoe, we are able to peer through protective bars into one of the catacombs. It is filled with litter ... glass and plastic bottles and trash (Figure 132). Literature about the catacombs says, "This pastime is not for those who have claustrophobia." We decide to pass up this opportunity.

Soon one of the caretakers returns with a key and offers to give us a tour of the museum. We accept. We are the only visitors there. The museum has a large decorative stained glass window in front. That's fortunate, because it is the only light in the place. Our museum guide (Figure 130) manages to turn on one light, but he is unable to get light to the back of the museum, so we look at the exhibits in semi-darkness. He explains the history of partisan resistance to the Germans as if the events took place yesterday. Alex translates. Afterward, standing on the steps outside, a car drives up and an officious man gets out of the car and enters the museum. I thank our guide, shake his hand, and discretely hand him 20 hryvna. He pockets the money. But, as we walk away, I notice another man jumps out of the car and runs inside to fetch the official who was in the museum. Apparently he saw me hand our guide the money. Both men come out and they confront our guide. An animated discussion ensues. Our guide pulls the money I gave him from his pocket and hands it to the official. As always in Ukraine, people make do the best they can. Our guide will have to share his cash with the Official ... if he gets anything at all,

Back in Odessa, Alex found two Internet cafes near our hotel. One is filled with kids waiting to play computer games. The other is in Mick O'Neill's (written in Cyrillic) Irish Pub. It has a single computer, and no one is near it. The pub plays cool American country and western music ... softly. I have lunch there and catch up on e-mail. While I do that, Alex and Ken are out at an archeological museum that Ken wanted to see. When they return, Alex and I will head over to the Archives, and Ken will wander over to a large open-air market in a park. They sell everything from tourist mementos to food and clothing.

Odessa Archives

The Archives building is in the old Brodsky Synagogue (Figure 133 through Figure 138), an easy walk from our hotel. We pass a gatekeeper without difficulty and locate Galina's office. Galina has been doing fee-based searches for people on the Odessa Jewish Genealogy Discussion List.



Figure 133 - The Brodsky Synagogue, 1901



Figure 134 - The Brodsky Synagogue, now Odessa Archives, 2002



Figure 135 - Entrance to the Archives Compound



Figure 136 - Entrance to the main Archives Building



Figure 137 - Up the Archives circular staircase



Figure 138 - Window at the top of the stairwell

Last March, my number came up and I submitted a number of search requests for my Kazdoy and Dubinski lines and paid the fee. I hadn't heard anything about my searches at the time we left on this trip. But, Galina knew we were coming, so she did my searches and presented me with the results. She found an 1893-1897 census record that seems to be for my great-grandfather's cousin and his family (Figure 139). She also has found many more records scattered across a dozen or so record books. She has only a couple of the books in her office. To get the other records she will have to request delivery of the other books to her office, but that will take several days. Payment of a 20 hryvna fee (a little less than \$4) expedites the process. Sure enough, the next day, the books are there, and we are able to copy the records. All of the records are in Russian only, no Hebrew. Several look like they are right on the mark, but we don't have time to evaluate them.

[illegible]

Figure 139 - An 1894 Census Record for Yankel Shulimiov Kozydoj, b. 1852

This Census record notes that Yankel Shulimiov has two names. The other is Duvid Yankel, son of Shulim (or, in Hebrew, Duvid Yakov, son of Shalom). Duvid Yankel probably is a cousin of Duvid Eliyah Kozodoj, my great-grandfather. The Census record plus other records obtained in Odessa identify Duvid Yankel's wife as Khaya (b. before 1862). The records also identify their children as Dina (b. 1894, d. 24 Dec 1903), Aron Shlioma (Aharon Shlome, b. 10 Mar 1880), Gershon (b. 19 Apr 1882), Ita (b. 14 Jan 1886, Perel Tsivye and Tsalel (twins, b. 2 May 1891) and Mordko (Mordekhay, b. 25 Nov 1888, d. 12 Jan 1899). Note the signature at bottom left of the form: *Duvid Kozidi*.

Later, after reviewing the records, we were pleasantly surprised. All together, Galina found 21 Kozodoy records containing information for about 34 previously unknown Kazdoy ancestors. These records included my 2nd great-grandfather, Shlome Kozodoy, born in 1826. In addition, she found 23 records for my Dubinski and Mandel lines.

We chatted awhile with Galina and discovered that she uses a computerized database to do the searches. If we could get an index to the names in the computerized database to post on the Odessa website, many more people would order records, and the Archive could develop a significant source of income. This is something that we will have to discuss at a later date. I thank Galina, give her an Oregon cap, and take some photos.

Farewell to Odessa

Back to the hotel for some much needed rest. Tomorrow, Ken returns to the U.S., so tonight Ken, Alex and I are going out for a special “farewell to Ukraine” dinner. Alex found a rather upscale theme restaurant, the “Déjà Vu”, near the Potemkin Steps and within walking distance of the hotel (Figure 140 and Figure 141). The theme is part 1930s American gangster and part Russian revolution ... separate “halls” for each theme ... good (and interesting) decorations in line with the themes throughout the restaurant, and the waiters and help are dressed to match the themes. We sat in the American gangster section. The food was ok, nothing to rave about. I ate simply. Ken and Alex feasted. Halfway through dinner, a live combo started playing. Good jazz. A female singer with them was pretty good. That was a nice ending to our Odessa visit. (See Figure 142 through Figure 146 for additional photos from Odessa).

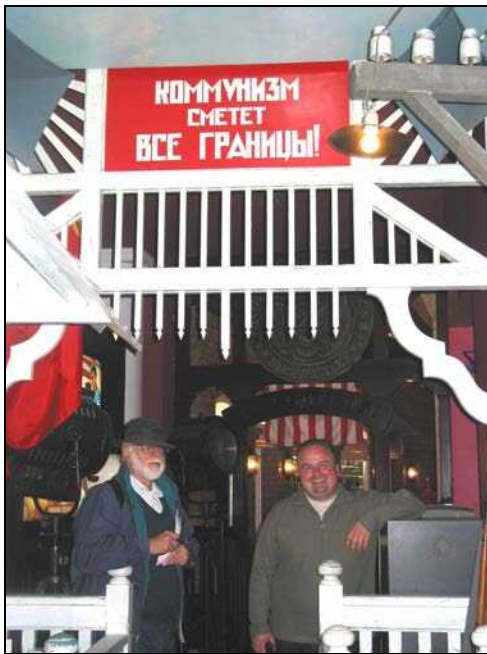


Figure 140 - Ron and Alex at Deja Vu Restaurant



Figure 141 - The band in Deja Vu's NY gangster section

Tomorrow (Saturday) we will drop Ken off at the airport, see him off, and then head on to Ternopil. It's a long drive and we will have to spend the night on the road. We'll spend a couple of days in Ternopil and Kremenets following up on loose ends at the Archives and with the Mayor. We also will visit Yampol and Vishnevets (See map in Figure 35).

Odessa Street Scenes



Figure 142 - Parkway leading to Potemkin Steps



Figure 143 - Streetside Advertising Boards



Figure 144 - Magazine Stand on Street



Figure 145 - Wooden Doll Vendor in Park



Figure 146 - Farewell, Odessa

SECTION 4: RETURN TO TERNOPIL AND KREMENETS; YAMPOL & VISHNEVETS

Saturday & Sunday, September 14th and 15th

On the road again ... Odessa to Ternopil

Before heading out to the Odessa airport for Ken's 2:20 pm flight to Warsaw, we decided to take one last walk through the bazaar area of town. Alex figured that if we leave for the airport by noon, we would have plenty of time. It is a pleasant, sunny day. Good day for a walk. The bazaar is in and around a large park a few blocks from our hotel. Saturday is a busy day there. The park and walkways are full of people. The lanes are lined with small booths. They offer all kinds of goods from tourist items to clothing, and of course there are many food booths offering a wide variety of Ukrainian fast food. We wandered around, taking in the sights, sounds and aromas. Ken made a few last minute purchases, and we meandered back to the hotel and checked out.

We took Ken to the airport. That turned out to be a bit of a challenge. We took a wrong turn someplace and ended up on a market street (this is Saturday). Picture this. This is a narrow street ... if you can call it a street ... it is unpaved and pockmarked with deep potholes, many filled with muddy water from the rains. Market booths line both sides of the "street". There are people EVERYWHERE. Trolley tracks run down the center of the street, and there is a trolley ahead of us. There is no lane for cars, even if the people moved aside to make room for cars. Alex is straddling the trolley tracks, creeping along, trying to keep his car from falling into the potholes. We don't know where to find a turnoff to get off this street. And, the clock is ticking toward Ken's departure time. Finally, Alex manages to turn around, and moving against traffic, swerving first this way, then that, gets to a paved area, and back on the main street. He stops a couple of times to ask directions. (Alex is good at getting directions from strangers.)

Finally, we arrive at the airport ... with time to spare. It is a very large building ... lots of people around. Inside is a huge lobby area. At the back of the lobby, there are two small doors with old electronic signs above them. Each sign has a number on it ... the flight number. No other identification. Ken figures out what his flight number is; we go to that door. There is a mob around it. No lines. Everything inside the door is dimly lit, but inside is a small table with a person checking tickets and passports. We work our way up to the entrance, and Alex elbows a few people aside so that Ken can get in. I wait in the lobby. Alex makes sure that Ken is safely checked in and on his way to the gate, and then he comes out to the lobby. I wait outside to watch the car. Alex waits inside to be sure that Ken has no unexpected problems. Eventually, he figures it is safe for us to leave.

We left, but Ken still had to wait for his plane. While waiting he encountered yet another situation. Here it is, in his words.

“As I was in the boarding area at the airport, after you dropped me off, a uniformed man came into the large room, with maybe 60 people waiting. He made an announcement in Ukrainian, and nothing happened. Then he made another announcement, and I thought I heard the word "Doctor". Then there was laughter. So I walked up to him, asked if he spoke English and he said he did. I asked him if he had mentioned the word "doctor", and he said he did. He was looking for "Ron Doctor". I took out my passport and told him I was your brother, but then you were long gone on the road to Ternopil. He told me that the Mozart Hotel had called, saying you still owed 200 hryvna on the bill. So big city/ small town, only one flight out of the country, and not hard to track down miscreants. I told him the best thing was for the hotel to send you a bill at your home address and explain the money they believed owed.

And then I found out he had gotten a laugh, with that age-old, hackneyed line -- delivered in Ukrainian for the first time in my earshot -- ‘Is there a doctor in the house?’”

(A month later, I still hadn’t received a bill.)

Originally, our plan was to spend another night in Odessa. But, we have finished everything I wanted to do here, and I'm eager to get back to Ternopil. We still have to see Yampol (where the Vurers, my paternal grandmother's family comes from), continue our research at the Archives, and have another visit with the Kremenets Mayor to get a cost estimate from him re cemetery restoration. So, we're off to Ternopil, but it is too late to make it all the way. We'll stop for the night some place along the road. That “someplace” turns out to be Vinnitsa.

The most direct route would be to cross through Moldova, but Alex says that is not safe. Bandits, some in uniform and some not, prey on lone vehicles on Moldova’s roads. Alex has been advised that it is safe to travel the roads from Ukraine to Moldova’s border towns, because there are many police on those roads, but it is not safe to drive much beyond the border. So, we return to Uman, and instead of continuing on the road to Kiev, we turn left onto the road to Vinnitsa.

The drive is uneventful, but interesting. The roadside is lined with farmers who have stacked their produce to sell (Figure 147). There are piles of watermelon, squash, pumpkins ... tons of watermelon. Further out, in the countryside, along the road beside each farmstead, we see many old women (sometimes old men) standing (sometimes leaning on a cane or stick), watching over a bucket or two of potatoes or grapes or tomatoes or apples or pears that they are selling. All along the roadside, cows and goats



Figure 147 - Watermelon & produce farmers on the road to Vishnevets

are grazing. They are tethered so they can't wander onto the road. At the end of the day, old, stooped men and women will pull the cows by a rope or chain and drive them back home. There also are hundreds of loose chickens, roosters, geese, and ducks along the roadside near the houses we pass. I don't know how they figure out who owns what. When it rains, deep puddles form, and the ducks and geese head for the newly formed "ponds". Surprisingly, there also are many turkeys along the roadside. As dusk falls, the chickens and turkeys climb up on the fences and tree stumps and roost for the night. In America we pay extra for "free-range" chickens or turkeys. Here they are the norm.

We get to Vinnitsa. The first hotel we check is full. The next one is "new" and is pretty nice. That's where we stay for the night. Cost is about \$40 each. This is one of the nicest places we've stayed on the entire trip ... and one of the least expensive.

Sunday morning, we drive on to Ternopil. Alex suggests that we try a different hotel. The one he has in mind is wayyyyyy out in the countryside, in the middle of a large number of new single-family houses. Single-family housing is relatively new in Ukraine. Many people who had steady jobs began building these houses after Ukrainian independence in 1990. But when the economy tanked they had to leave the houses unfinished. In this area of Ternopil, about 1/3 of the houses are unfinished. The "hotel" we go to is like an Inn. Alas, they have only one room available. So, on we go to Hotel Ternopil, where we stayed last time we were here. No luck. There is a conference in the hotel. The hotel is full. Alex finds a couple of other places, but they are full too. Then we go to the "other side of the lake", where there is a hotel that Alex says is not very good, although it will be good eventually because they are renovating.

The same group that owns Hotel Ternopil owns Hotel Halychyna. They have rooms, but only for tonight. Alex talks to them some more. Then the manager comes by and he and Alex have an intense discussion. We can have the rooms for two nights. Cost is \$45 for me, and \$30 for Alex. His room is a little smaller than mine, but it has a view of the lake and has a balcony. My room actually is quite large, a suite. The bedroom is sparsely furnished

but the furniture is new. The anteroom is unfurnished except for an armoire. Good idea, but imperfectly executed. There are no shelves or poles in the armoire yet. But loose boards are stacked inside for installment.... eventually. The bathroom is new ... very nice - even has a bidet. The shower is modern, good water pressure, but small. Hot water is available from 6:30 to 10:30 am ... sometimes ... and 6:30 to 10:30 pm. The "double bed" is two twin beds pushed together, each separately made up, and with wood frames between them. It is adequate ... especially since nothing else is available. We crash for the night.

The weather has turned much cooler, and my room is cold. When I check with Alex, he tells me the hotel has central heating but they don't turn it on until October. He offers to try to get them to turn on the heat for me. I decline. I have a sweater and there are two thick blankets for the bed. Besides, I can turn on all the lights in the place to warm things up when I'm working at the desk. One has to adjust in Ukraine.

Yampol ... an unexpected surprise

With some daylight remaining, we decided to visit Yampol today (Figure 148). This is where at least 7 generations of my Vurer ancestors lived, spanning a period of more than 270 years. Yampol is a little larger than Novy Oleksinets, but much smaller than



Figure 148 - Entering Yampol

Kremenets. It is located on a meandering river, the River Gorin (Figure 149). The Center for Jewish Art at Hebrew University in Jerusalem had visited Yampol in 1999. They learned that the Soviets had destroyed the Jewish cemetery and tossed the matzevot into the river. People from the Center were able to retrieve one or two matzevot at low tide. So, I had no hope of finding a Jewish cemetery in Yampol. Still ... it wouldn't hurt to ask.



Figure 149 - The River Gorin

We drove around a bit to get a feeling for the town. It is quite picturesque, even more so than Novy Oleksinets. Gently rolling hillsides surround the town. The River Gorin curves into and around the town center. As usual, we stop to ask a couple of women where we might find the Jewish cemetery (Figure 150). Up the road, they pointed. So, up the road we go. We find another woman outside her house. "The Jewish cemetery?", she asks, "Just turn left here and go up this road. It's not far. It's next to the Synagogue." The SYNAGOGUE? We're more than a little curious now.



Figure 150 - Where is the Jewish Cemetery?
The Cemetery? No, but there is a Synagogue up that road.

Well, we can't turn here because the road has been dug up, and a dirt and rock pile blocks our access. So, we get out of the car, and begin walking. A little ways up the road, we ask another elderly woman about the cemetery. She tells us to continue on the road. It's around the next bend. And, she points to a nearby house where the workmen live who built the "Synagogue." Sure enough, up the road is a small, obviously new building. It has a Hebrew inscription above the doorway, "Habitation of Tsvi Kestenboym" (Figure 151).



Figure 151 - The Yampol Ohel that Moshe Built

It turns out this isn't a synagogue, but an Ohel, a structure built over the graves of two Rabbis. The site overlooks the river. While Alex goes in search of the workmen, I walk toward the river, hoping to spot one of the tombstones that the Center had salvaged. To my surprise, I encounter 13 matzevot and matzevah fragments, neatly laid out in rows in a field on a small bluff above the river. I start snapping photos.



Figure 152 - A bend in the River Gorin where the matzevot were recovered



Figure 153 - Yampol matzevot on a hillside bluff above the river where they were recovered

Alex calls to me from the building. He is with three workmen and a boy. This is their story. A Jew by name of Moishe from New York has made several visits to Yampol. He paid for construction of the shelter over the graves and gave the workmen a design to work from. They just completed the shelter one week ago. On their own initiative, they retrieved the 13 matzevot and fragments from the river only 3 weeks ago (Figure 152 and Figure 153). They don't know what to do with the matzevot and are waiting for Moishe to return to advise them.

Panchuk Ivan Nikolayevich, Nick, Valery, and Andrei invite us to view the inside of the building (Figure 154). There are two graves, side by side. On the wall behind each grave is a stone inscribed in Hebrew. One lists 8 generations of ancestors; the other lists 7 generations. I will get these (and the outside matzevot) translated when I return to the U.S.

We chat with the men and exchange contact information. When Moishe contacts them again, they will give him my name and tell him how to contact me. I'm looking forward to hearing "the rest of the story."



Figure 154 - Panchuk Ivan Nikolayevich, Nick, Valery, and Andrei
The Yampol workmen who recovered the matzevot & built Moshe's Ohel

If we had made this trip a few weeks earlier, as I had originally intended, we would have missed this Yampol experience. This stuff is going to make a believer out of me yet! What an exhilarating way to end the day!

[Note: A month after I returned home, I received an e-mail message from a man named Moshe Landau. In searching for information about Kremenets he saw my name associated with the Kremenets Shtetl CO-OP website. We made telephone contact and chatted for a while. I told him about my recent visit to Kremenets and nearby ancestral villages, like Yampol. As his interest in Yampol became apparent, I suddenly thought ... Moshe ... Moishe from Yampol? No. This couldn't be! But it was! I was on the phone with Moshe Landau, *the* Moishe from New York who built the *ohel* in Yampol. Since then, we have chatted several times. It turns out there is *another* Jewish cemetery in Yampol, and *it* wasn't destroyed. Moshe Landau is restoring it. In time, he will get photos of the matzevot, which date to the 19th century.]

Monday, September 16th

The Ternopil Archives ... again

Early Monday morning we head out to the Archives. Before going, I leave a bunch of laundry to be done. They promise they'll return it later on Monday, since we're leaving on Tuesday. The day starts badly. Alex's car has a flat tire. We spend the next two hours finding a place to fix the flat tire. There are two such places in town. The first one is

closed. By stopping to ask people walking along the streets, we locate the other place and get the tire fixed. Busy place. While we are there, four more customers come in needing their tires repaired.

Off to the Archives. Last time we were here, the Director said we could return to look at the "family lists", but not the census. He said he would leave instructions to give us access. After waiting for a half hour to find someone who would talk to us, Alex finally gets the Director's secretary to talk to him. She tells him the Director has left instructions that while he is gone no "foreigners" are to be allowed to see documents ... no documents at all ... and specifically no foreigners (that's us!). Alex corners the Assistant Director. He confirms that the Director left that order, and says he can do nothing about it. Alex tries to get a phone number in Kiev where we can call the Director. No one has a contact number for him. Alex is embarrassed, but this is what I expected, so I'm not really too surprised.

Despite this disappointment, I have obtained a genealogical bonanza from Ternopil Archives. I obtained records for 166 direct and collateral ancestors in my Doctor and Vurer family line, and in these records I discovered the maiden names (Averbakh and Korenfeld) of my paternal great-grandmothers along with names of their siblings and ancestors.

Followup in Kremenets ... the Cemetery Project

Plan B ... we call the Kremenets Mayor's office and arrange to see him at 4 pm to follow up on our previous meeting about the cemetery project. In the meantime, we go back to the hotel so that I can put copies of the Kremenets vital records on cd-rom for Larisa, as I had promised. She will try to get people to transcribe the Russian handwriting.

We head out to Kremenets in plenty of time for the meeting. Alex is really tired. Didn't sleep much last night. In Kremenets, he takes a nap in the car, while I walk around until we get closer to meeting time. Lots of renovation going on here. They are fixing up the old buildings, replastering, and painting. New stores are opening along the main street. This town has significant potential. I suspect all the activity is a result of having a young and smart Mayor, Andriy Andriyovich Huslavskiy. There is an anti-Kuchma political rally going on in the park across from city hall. An Orthodox priest is blessing the rally. Various speakers harangue the crowd of about 50-70 people. A couple of police officers stand around on the fringe of the crowd. I got some good photos (Figure 155 and Figure 156).

The meeting with the Mayor was good. He has been in Kiev since we were last here, and he spoke to the Commission that is responsible for creating historic districts. He wants to include the Jewish cemetery in the Kremenets historic district. That, he believes, will bring in some government money for fixing and maintaining the cemetery. He and the Commission will draft an endorsement letter for me to review



Figure 155 - Priest blesses anti-Kuchma political rally



Figure 156 - Police keep an eye on anti-Kuchma political rally

and sign. They'll relay it to me through Alex. The Mayor estimates that clearing and removing the brush will cost about \$2,000. Alex says that is a reasonable cost, considering the steep, hilly terrain that we are dealing with. However, I want to check with people who have done similar projects to find out what they paid for each phase of restoration. Also, I don't want to start a brush-clearing project until we have people who can get in there and transcribe the Hebrew on the tombstones that are readable. And, I don't want to pay for clearing until we have an agreement in place to *keep* the cemetery cleared of brush. Alex explains all this to the Mayor, and he agrees. He also says we should have a local person to manage/oversee the project, and he suggests Larisa Klyuch. I agree. We'll be meeting with Larisa later, and I'll talk to her about it. The Mayor gives me a gift ... a small, brown ceramic relief of a highly stylized Kremenets, neatly packaged in shrink-wrap. It shows a dozen churches with prominent crosses. It also shows the Orthodox Church cemetery, with several crosses. No Star of David in sight. No indication that there ever was a Jewish community here, even though Jews were as much as 40% of the population.

I asked if there is a drawing or sketch showing the layout of the cemetery. The Mayor says he thinks there is one in the city hall archives, so he calls in the deputy Mayor (another young man) and sends him out to check. There may be such a plan, but they can't find it right now. They'll keep looking and will get back to me.

The Mayor makes a point of telling me that on September 11th, Kremenets had observed a minute of silence in recognition of 9/11. I'm touched by this gesture, and express my gratitude to him.

The Mayor had invited the publisher of Kremenets' newspaper, a weekly, to sit in on the meeting. The newspaper began publishing 3 years ago, at the Mayor's behest. The publisher gives me a stack of back issues. I thank him, but I don't know what I'm going to do with them. They are all in Ukrainian.

The Kremenets Jewish Community

After the meeting with Mayor Huslavskiy, we meet with Larisa. She takes us to her office (she represents an insurance company), where she has cut-fruit, chocolates, and Kremenets apples all laid out for us. All around this area, the trees are loaded with apples. There are apple trees everywhere you look. The apples are a bit tart, but wonderful. Larisa has invited two of the Jewish women from town to meet with me. These women identify as Jews, but like others we have met, they are not observant, even by American standards. Apparently this is pretty typical of the 20 Jews who live in Kremenets. One of the women used to host a gathering of the community's Jews on Friday evenings, but because her mother is seriously ill, she doesn't do that anymore. The other woman has a son in Israel. It seems that half the Jews we meet have close relatives in Israel.

We have an intense discussion about how to proceed with the cemetery project. Larisa previously had said she could get some students from Kiev to come to Kremenets to transcribe the tombstones. Now, she says that isn't likely to happen. I asked her about overseeing the project. She is reluctant to take it on. Alex is surprised. We will have to come up with another plan and wait to see how this develops.

What Larisa suggests is that we get her a digital camera, and she will arrange to take photos of all the readable tombstones. She has a guy in Lviv who is documenting Jewish cemeteries, and she thinks he will "volunteer" to transcribe the Hebrew. My guess is that volunteering in this case requires a fee of some kind. We'll see.

[**Note:** Larisa Klyuch died of a brain tumor in 2006. She was unable to get adequate medical treatment in Ukraine. She is buried in the Monastery cemetery. Larisa was a good woman, totally dedicated to the small Jewish community of Kremenets. On my visit in 2007, I visited her gravesite with her sister, and said the Mourner's Kaddish. May her soul be bound in the bonds of eternal life.]

Tamara is in the meeting too, and she continues to insist that we MUST climb Gora Bona (Mt. Bona) to see the ruins. I hate to disappoint her, but that is not on my agenda for today. Although I try to explain, she is greatly disappointed. On my next visit to Kremenets, I will be sure to make time to climb Gora Bona.

Vishnevets

With our business in Kremenets wrapped up for now, Alex and I drive out of town. Vishnevets is on the way back to Ternopil, so we decide to stop there and inquire about whether or not there is a Jewish cemetery. Vishnevets is where my Gittelman relatives are from. They married with the Vurers, and possibly with the Mandels. We were able to pick up quite a few Vishnevets records containing the Gitelman name on our last visit to the Archives. Alex stops and asks a couple of people if there is a Jewish cemetery. They give us directions ... behind the school, they said ... and sure enough, there it is, on a hillside behind the school.

Up the hill we go. My camera is clicking all the way as I find readable tombstones, and some not so readable. I estimate there are 300 to 500 stones here, less than a quarter of them have inscriptions that we might be able to read. Many of the stones are face down, or are buried under mounds of debris and brush. I get about 65 photos (Figure 157 through Figure 159).



Figure 157 - Vishnevets Jewish Cemetery, up the hill



Figure 158 - A farm and farmhouse border the cemetery



Figure 159 - An apple orchard borders the old Jewish cemetery in Vishnevets

Before dark settles in, we drive back to Ternopil, have dinner, and call it a night. My laundry is back, but it's still wet. They can't deliver it to me until tomorrow. This presents a bit of a problem since we leave tomorrow morning, so Alex discusses it with our "floor monitor". She promises that she will have it for me by 8 am tomorrow. At

11:30 that night she knocks on my door and delivers my shirts, but not my pants, underwear, or socks. She'll bring those in the morning.

Tomorrow morning we leave for L'viv. I'll try to catch the afternoon flight from L'viv to Warsaw and hopefully on to Frankfurt. I've done everything I can do here ... and I'm ready to go home.

Tuesday, September 17th ... Homeward Bound

L'viv to Frankfurt via Warsaw

As promised, my laundry was ready at 8 this morning. Cost was around \$4 for 4 shirts (ironed), 3 sets of underwear, a couple of handkerchiefs and a couple of pair of socks. I finish packing and finish making some data disks for Alex. While I did that, Alex went out and changed some dollars to hryvna for me so that I can pay the hotel bill. (They don't accept Visa here.) Alex and I then sit down and figure out how much I owe him. I pay him, and we are out of the hotel at 10 am, right on schedule. My flight from L'viv to Warsaw is at 2:40 pm.

The drive to L'viv is uneventful. We get to the airport a little before noon. It is a fine old building, nice architecture, sculpture, and murals, and very well maintained. It is almost empty. I have been carrying my wooden Jesus carving in my backpack. That made 3 bags. I figure I'm going to have trouble getting on the plane with three bags. I had better repack and try to get down to 2 bags. (That turned out to be right). So, I got Jesus off my back, packed a change of underwear and socks into my jacket pockets, and made room for Jesus in my bag. As long as I don't have to open the bag (it's packed pretty tightly) things will be fine.

I ask Alex where the toilet is. Hmmm. It's in a separate building about 300 meters away. No toilets in the airport terminal. Alex watches my bags while I hike to the toilet building. A man sits inside the door to collect 50 hryvna (less than 10 cents). I pay, and he points me to a lone roll of toilet paper setting on a shelf and says, "*papier*". Apparently the 50 hryvna not only gives you access to the toilets, but also allows you to tear off a few sheets of toilet paper. Quite a system.

Eventually, check-in for my LOT flight to Warsaw begins. Through the door I go. The guy behind the desk asks for my passport and ticket. He assigns me a seat, and tells me to put my two bags on the scale. I do. They weigh 30 kilos. He informs me that I can carry my tote, but I have to check my suitcase. The limit for carry-on is 5 kilos. No arguing with this guy. So, reluctantly, I check my bag. He checks it all the way through to Frankfurt. I hope I see it again.

At customs, they want to know how many American dollars I am taking out of the country. You have to declare anything over \$1,000 cash. (Travelers checks don't count.)

He also wants to know whether I am carrying any antiquities. Neither applies to me, so he clears me. I guess I look honest.

The waiting room is clean and neat, but sparsely furnished. Gradually it fills with people. After another hour wait, we begin boarding. Our plane is a turboprop, two by two seating. My seat is 13A, and I thought I sat in the right place, but apparently not. Turns out I was in 14A, the first row of Business Class. (The last three rows on this plane are business class.) The flight attendant looks in 13A and sees someone else there, so she tells me, it's ok. I can stay where I am. Good thing too. The coach section was full. I have a whole row to myself. I see why they restricted carryon luggage. The bins are miniscule, and there is hardly any room under the seat. The flight was smooth. I napped a bit. We had a reasonable, but small, lunch.

In Warsaw, the LOT agent at the International Transfers desk had some difficulty with my ticket to Frankfurt. It seems they gave me the wrong ticket in L'viv. Took about a half hour to straighten it out, but she managed to do it by changing my name. Then she gave me a seat assignment, a window seat. I asked (nicely) if she had any aisle seats. She did and she changed the seat assignment. So, here I sit in the "waiting lounge" waiting for my flight to Frankfurt. Boarding is in about 45 minutes. I'll overnight in Frankfurt, and fly out on United in the morning. Don't know where I'll be staying in Frankfurt, but I'm sure I can get some help to figure it out once I get there.

Frankfurt

The flight went smoothly. They served another meal ... same one as on the flight from L'viv to Warsaw. The airport in Frankfurt is HUGE. It would be easy to get lost. Onward to baggage claim and customs. On the way I spot a sign for the Red Carpet Club. Up the escalator I go. The sign next to the door says they closed an hour ago. But a typed sign taped to the door says they have new hours and they are open for another hour and a half. The woman at the desk was helpful. She checks hotels for me. The Sheraton at the airport is full. There is a big conference in town. She calls several other hotels and all are full. So, she tells me there is a desk in the lobby with people who can help find me a hotel.

Now down to customs and baggage claim. I sail through customs. And, it's miraculous! My bag is waiting there for me. (I always consider it a miracle when my luggage arrives on the same flight I do.) Off I go to find a hotel. After a little wandering around, I find the hotel reservations service. There is a lineup ... too many people, too few rooms. Finally my turn comes. No hotel rooms near the airport. The nearest available hotel is a 1 hour cab ride away. She calls. They are full. Both women on the desk are dialing one hotel after another. No success. The airport is open all night, so stretching out across a couple of waiting room seats is a last resort option.

Finally, a call comes in. The Hotel Post has two rooms a double and a triple. I take the double ... \$140 Euros (including breakfast) plus a 3 Euro fee to the service. Have to pay the service 14 Euros deposit and the 3 Euro fee in cash. Off I go to the currency exchange. Got \$250 changed ... much more than I need, but I don't know if the hotel takes Visa. This hotel is still running their shuttle service. A half-hour later, I'm on their shuttle, and now I am in a very nice hotel room, a 15-minute shuttle ride from the airport. It's in a little village-like town. Best of all, the city's water supply is purified. I can drink tap water and use tap water for brushing my teeth ... first time in almost 3 weeks. Pure luxury. Next morning, breakfast is a feast.

The Hotel Post in Frankfurt turns out to be very nice indeed. The bed is comfortable. The room is large and is neat and clean with modern fixtures. I have a balcony, but the view isn't wonderful and there is lots of construction noise from around town. The balcony door is interesting. Turn the handle one way, and the door pivots open along the bottom edge, so that only the top is open. Like a door-sized transom. Turn the handle the other way and the door opens like normal. Nice design, and solidly built.

The hotel has in-room Internet service and I have a local number for Earthlink. Problem is the hotel charges \$1 per minute for telephone use, and that's on top of the international fees that Earthlink would charge. So, I won't try to retrieve and send e-mail until I get to the US.

Clearing German Customs

Got to the airport a little after 11:00 am for a 1:45 pm flight to San Francisco. Had a little difficulty locating UAL, but finally found the check-in desk. Managed to get checked in, then off to passport control. Stood in line for more than an hour at baggage screening. Loaded my luggage on the x-ray machine, went through the scanner, and this burly German security guy dressed entirely in black, hefting a pistol on his hip, stops me. He frisks me. Very rough frisking. If I were sensitive, I'd really object to the way he did this. "TAKE OFF YOUR SHOES", he orders. At the same time, the x-ray security person instructs me to open my bag. The Shoe Monitor is impatient when I turn to the Bag Woman and ask, "Which do I do first?" She tells me to do the shoes first. She'll wait. Good thing, because the Shoe Guard is beginning to froth at the mouth. I take my shoes off. He grabs them and starts walking away with them. I stand up to see where he is going with my shoes. Are my pants next? He puts the shoes through the x-ray machine. Doesn't like what he sees, so he puts them through again. Finding nothing, he comes back and practically throws the shoes at me.

In the meantime, I've walked over to the Bag Woman and opened my bag. She points to the basket that contains my watch, coins and nail clipper. She pulls out the clippers and with sign language and broken English tells me that either I must break off the little nail file thing, or she will take the clippers. I break off the nail file. Now, she starts feeling around in my bag. I sit down and put my shoes on. She can't find whatever she's

looking for. So, she keeps removing more and more items from my tightly packed bag. She carries the bag back to the x-ray machine and puts it through again. And, she does this twice more. She takes out more clothes. Now, my wooden Jesus is uncovered and most of my clothes, papers and personal items are strewn all over the counter. I ask, "what's the problem?" Now that Jesus is exposed, she is acting a little nicer, and she tells me there is a knife in my luggage. A knife? She tells me she will show me on the x-ray machine. So I follow her behind the table, get some hostile glares from the other security people who want to know why I am back in their area, and she puts my bag through the machine again. Sure enough, there is the outline of a butter knife. I had appropriated it from one of the hotels so that I could spread peanut butter on crackers. I thought I had removed it, but apparently not. We search the suitcase again. Everything is out of it, and still we can't find the knife. Then she looks under the lining and there's the knife. I feel like a criminal. Now I have to repack the entire bag. That takes me about 15 minutes more. She gingerly hands Jesus to me and helps me press on the bag so that I can close the zipper.

Finally, I'm on the plane, comfortably seated and we're on our way. The flight is uneventful. Next stop San Francisco. Then, on to Portland. Home will look very good indeed.

SECTION 5: SOME OBSERVATIONS ABOUT PREPARING FOR AND TRAVELING IN UKRAINE

When we began planning our trip, Ken and I didn't know what to expect. Each of us had been to Prague, but neither of us ever had been into the heart of Eastern Europe. Let me offer a few observations about preparing for travel in Ukraine.

Picking a Guide, Setting an Itinerary

We agreed to travel together to Ukraine in August 2001, a year before we went. Serious planning began in September. We used the Web extensively to get information about Ukraine, and about preparing to travel there.

[**Note:** JewishGen's ShtetlShlepper website is a good place to get planning information (<http://www.jewishgen.org/ShtetlSchleppers/>). After you enter the site, go to the bottom of the page to the section labeled "Some other important links to follow." There you will find web links to information regarding: Centers for Disease Control, Passport Information, Visa Information, US Government State Department Travel Advisories, Lonely Planet Destination Guide, Universal Currency Converter, World Time Zones, and Insurance.

[**Note:** As of September 2009, ShtetlShleppers was not in operation.]

JewishGen and other Jewish genealogy discussion lists have messages from people who recently have traveled to Ukraine. I searched the archives and found a few recent messages. Contact with these people produced some good advice, and, more important, the names of Ukrainian guides they had used. The name Alexander Dunai (dunai@dunai.lviv.ua) kept popping up, and remarks about him were uniformly good. So, in September, I contacted Alex via e-mail. He responded quickly. His terms and fees seemed reasonable so we asked for his references. Each reference we contacted praised Alex highly. Ken and I decided to engage him for our trip. Between September and February, we agreed on tentative dates for our visit, and developed a tentative itinerary. Our itinerary was driven by my desire to gather genealogical information and by Ken's desire to see some of the tourist attractions of Ukraine. We both wanted to walk the ground our ancestors had walked.

We had many questions for Alex. He answered all of them quickly and completely. By the beginning of February, we had pinned down our flight arrangements. By the end of February, we had begun processing our Ukrainian Visa applications. (No visa was required for Poland, where we would begin our visit and meet Alex.).

[**Note:** A visa no longer is required for Americans to enter or leave Ukraine.]

During the summer, I sent Alex a list of family names, dates and places that I wanted to research. He was able to do some of the research before we arrived, and as I noted in

the first section of this Journal, he found some wonderful census records that greatly extended our family tree back in time.

In August I attended the annual meeting of the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies (IAJGS) in Toronto, where I gathered additional information for our trip. Alex made hotel recommendations for Warsaw. Ken checked out the Warsaw hotels and made our reservations using the Web. Making reservations via the Web is considerably less expensive than making them directly with the hotel. However, through the Web you have to pay in advance (with a credit card), and there are restrictions on refunds if your plans change. Ken also scouted out the various tourist attractions that we would be interested in seeing. We had some last minute questions for Alex. He answered them promptly.

Our experiences with Alex were shared by others who used his services. A couple of weeks after we left Ukraine, Boomi Silverman and Sol Sylvan visited and use Alex as their guide. They had the foresight to interview Alex to get some of his personal history. With Boomi's permission, her interview with Alex is included as an attachment at the end this Journal.

Getting a Ukrainian visa [No longer required for Americans]

Ukraine's embassy and consulates in America operate websites that provide much data for prospective American travelers. They also provide links to Ukrainian websites, many with English language options that provide everything from historical information to conventional tourist information about individual towns and regions. We downloaded the application form for a Ukrainian visa along with instructions for filling it out and mailing it (<http://www.ukremb.com/consular/visareqs.htm>). Basically we could apply for 3 types of visas: single, double, or multiple visit. Prices and duration of validity vary with each. Fees also depend on whether you elect standard or expedited service. You should check the Ukrainian Consulate website for up-to-date information. I applied for a multivisit visa, but ended up with a double visit visa. Multivisit visas are available only for business travelers. Alex can arrange for an appropriate business letter of invitation, but I didn't know that at the time. Also, it wasn't clear from the Embassy website whether or not we needed a letter of invitation even for single and double entry applications. Alex thought that was an older requirement and we didn't need one. But not wanting to delay the visa, we asked Alex for letters of invitation. They cost \$25 each, plus postage. Later, we learned that Alex was correct. Ukraine no longer requires letters of invitation.

I received my visa at the end of April, about 3 weeks after sending in the application form with a cashier's check. (A postal money order would be ok also ... and less costly.) For an additional fee, the Embassy or Consulate will expedite processing of the Visa application. See the website for a list of all fees.

Medical Issues

It is advisable to be immunized against several diseases before you go to Ukraine. Some immunization shots must be given at least a month apart, so be sure to get started on your immunizations early. Most American cities have at least one travel clinic. Ken went to one in San Jose, and I went to the Providence Hospital Travelers Clinic in Portland. Your medical insurance may or may not cover the cost of these shots. The travel clinic will advise you about what shots you should get, and they will provide you with a wealth of information about what to do if you do get sick while you are in Ukraine.

I got these immunizations: polio booster, typhoid, hepatitis A, and hepatitis B. The hepatitis B immunization is given in a series of 3 shots at 0, 1 and 6 months. You should get all three shots in advance, if possible. However, if you have time for only the first two shots, you will be about 80% protected. Talk to your doctor or travel clinic advisor about this. A year ago, I had been given a tetanus/diphtheria shot so I didn't need another one. However, if you haven't had DPT within the past 10 years, you should ask about getting it.

Ken and I obtained "Comprehensive Protection Travel Insurance" from *Travel Insured International, Inc.* This includes a variety of protections, the most important being removal from Ukraine to a western Europe hospital if you should need serious medical care. We had been advised by a number of people to avoid Ukrainian hospital care. It is far below American and western European standards. Cost for the insurance policy was about \$50. Ken bought his on the web. I bought mine through a telephone call to the company. The web address is www.travelinsured.com. Their phone number is 800-243-3174.

In addition, you might want to look at the latest edition of "*International Travel Health Guide*" by Stuart R. Rose, M.D. My copy is the 12th Edition, published in 2001. It has just about everything you would want to know about traveling abroad. Highly recommended.

Traveler's Diarrhea (TD) can be a very real problem. Estimates are that 60% of travelers will get TD. Some will have a mild case. Some will be in agony. Rose's book deals with ways to prevent it and to treat it, and your travel clinic probably will give you an informative brochure or flyer. I made sure to pack a double prescription of Cipro and enough Immodium A-D for a small group. I was glad I did. When I started getting TD (about halfway through the trip), I began the recommended Cipro and Immonium A-D regimen. That (and a lot of sleep) worked, and I was only mildly ill for just a day and a half.

I carried an assortment of other medications as well ... vitamins, ibuprofen, aspirin, Band-Aids, cortisone cream, insect repellants, medicated hand wipes, etc. The ibuprofen

came in especially handy when my aging back objected to sleeping on what seemed like a plywood slab in several hotels.

Odds and Ends

Here are some of the questions we had, along with our actual experiences in Ukraine.

- **Is the water safe to drink? How about tea and coffee?**

No. Most definitely, NO for water. While in Ukraine (and even in Warsaw) be prepared to drink bottled water. It is plentiful and inexpensive. You will have your choice of mineral water and plain water, water with gas and water without gas. Cost typically was 1 to 2 Hryvna (about 20 to 40 cents) for a 1.5 to 2.0 liter plastic bottle. Be sure the bottle you buy is sealed. Stores in the smallest villages sell bottled water, although sometimes they will have only one kind. Tea and coffee probably are ok because the water used to make them is boiled. We drank a lot of tea on this trip, and it didn't bother us.

- **Is milk safe to drink?**

I don't know. If the milk is pasteurized and has been adequately refrigerated there should be no problem. Alex says this is the case, at least in the cities. I wasn't so sure, so I avoided milk during the trip.

- **Is the food safe to eat?**

Yes, no, and maybe ... depends on the food. Ken and I avoided fresh salad because we couldn't know what kind of water was used to wash the greens and vegetables. At one point, Alex recommended avoiding "fresh" sardines, because the waters in which they are caught are polluted. Cooked meats and vegetables in most restaurants probably are ok. Meat filled pastries from street kiosks should be avoided because you don't know how long the meat has been unrefrigerated. I often ordered borsch in restaurants, and that worked out ok. Fruits (apples, pears) from roadside farmers are ok, but wash them with bottled water before eating them. Most small groceries have a very wide variety of packaged crackers available. These became a good source of emergency food when we had to eat and couldn't get to a restaurant right away. We kept a supply of crackers in the car. In many of the food kiosks, I was surprised to see American Snickers candy bars. On occasion, that really hit the spot. Coca Cola (regular and light) and Fanta are in most stores and kiosks, but I never did see any root beer. Alex had never heard of root beer. Apparently this is an American drink that has not yet made it to Ukraine.

- There is a wonderful assortment of food and drink available in most restaurants and cafes. Even reasonably good pizza is readily available. Prices are low ... typically \$4 to \$6 for a full meal that has more food than you would get in America for double to triple that cost. Be prepared to take time to read the large, multipage menus. Many

cafes have English language descriptions of their food. And, many of these descriptions are quite humorous.

- **Is it advisable to bring our own toilet paper?**

Yes, if you need the luxury of American soft toilet paper. I had been told that toilet paper in Ukraine is like newspaper. That's not quite true. The toilet paper we found in hotels (even the lower cost hotels) was quite acceptable, but it is *not* American style. (But, see the next question.)

- **Are public restrooms (toilets) available? How about availability on long drives between cities?**

Yes. Public toilets are available in restaurants, roadside cafes, public areas (like train stations, airports, and bus stations), and gasoline stations. There are many gas stations along the main highways, and in cities and towns. Many of these are new and have good facilities. Sometimes you will have to pay a small fee. One evening we were on the highway approaching Vinnitsa and had to stop to use a toilet. Went into a service station. As I came out of the toilet, a very big, burly security guard stood in front of me and said something I didn't understand. Alex quickly came inside and translated. He wanted me to pay 50 kopeks (about 10 cents) for using the toilet. I paid, and we left.

The *quality* of toilet facilities varies widely. Our upscale hotels had modern fixtures. Toilets in restaurants were mixed. Some were clean, some not. In some places, there was a toilet, but no toilet seat. (This was the case in the Ternopil Archives and in the Odessa Opera House.) In other places, the toilet was literally an open hole in the floor or ground, sometimes on a raised platform, and sometimes not. We encountered this in some gasoline stations and roadside cafes, and of course in outhouses. In most city places, Ukrainian toilet paper was available, but it was missing from some toilets. (As mentioned in an earlier section, at the Ternopil Archives, there was no toilet paper ... but a book was provided and you tore pages out of that book.) Don't count on finding toilet paper in rural places. In some places you could wash your hands, but there was nothing to use to dry them. I strongly suggest that you carry packages of medicated, moist towelettes with you when you are travelling. They are hard to find in Ukraine, so buy them in the U.S. and pack them in your luggage. Both Ken and I left our unused packets with Alex.

- **How much money should I take? How much should I convert to local currency? Can I use my credit card? How about travellers checks?**

Before leaving the U.S. estimate your total expenses while away from home, then add 50%. Upscale hotels in large cities will accept your American credit card, and you will get the official exchange rate for your charge. You can use your credit card for meals in most upscale restaurants too. You will need cash for almost everything else. Sometimes, you can pay in dollars, and that is much appreciated by the local

folks, but be sure you know the local exchange rate. (The exchange rate in Ukraine varied from 5.1 Hryvna (Ukrainian currency) to the dollar at the airport to 5.36 Hr to the dollar in Kiev.)

There are money changers all over the cities and towns. In one town, I needed to change money to pay the hotel bill, and it was a Sunday morning. We went to a street-side market and Alex started asking about moneychangers. He easily located one, got the dollars changed, and we were on our way. Ken used ATM machines to boost his supply of Hryvna when needed. I took about a third of my total estimated currency requirement in travellers checks. I didn't use any of them. I used my credit card wherever I could, but paid most of my bills in Hryvna. Alex prefers to be paid in dollars, but he also accepts Hryvna. We paid a substantial portion of Alex's bill in advance ... through his arrangement with JewishGen, and I paid Alex's hotel and restaurant bills and gasoline for the car as we travelled.

- **How good is the telephone system?**

Hard to say. You can buy calling cards in Ukraine. Alex was a big help in that regard. Ken was able to place several calls home using a calling card he bought at one of the telephone centers. Except for one hotel, all the telephones we encountered were rotary dial, not touch tone or digital. In most of the hotels we used, calls had to be placed through the hotel operator; no direct dial.

- **How about Internet connections?**

Mixed. Don't expect to use your notebook computer to connect to the Internet from your hotel room. Even where this is possible, costs are very high. However, there are several other options. First, large upscale hotels (like Hotel Dnipro in Kiev) have business centers. You can use the business center computers to connect to the web directly, or you can ask hotel staff for help to connect your notebook computer to their network. Cost is about \$10 per hour. Second, you can go to an Internet cafe. Almost all cities and towns have at least one. They are easy to use, and typically they have a half-dozen to a dozen computers available. To access your e-mail, be sure to set up a web-based e-mail account (like Earthlink and Yahoo offer) before you leave home. I use Earthlink as my Internet Service Provider, and all I had to do was to point the Cafe's web browser to webmail.earthlink.net, then login using my id and password. Cost is about \$2 per hour, usually in per minute increments. Internet cafes often are located in central train stations. Third, you can buy an "Internet card" for various amounts of minutes. These provide local dial-up access which you supposedly can use from any phone, including hotel phones. Cost is about \$.50 per hour. I bought one in Kiev, but was not able to get it working.

- **What kind of computers are in use in Ukraine?**

I was surprised to find that the computers being used there were very much like

American computers, perhaps one or two generations behind us. All the machines I saw used Windows 98. Larisa's office machine had Office 2000 on it. That machine had a cd-rom drive. But the machine that Larisa uses at home does not. Of course, computers are not as widespread in Ukraine as they are in the U.S., but there were many computer stores in the cities we visited.

- **Is it necessary to have a translator? Can I get along without one?**

Yes, and yes. Unless you speak fluent Russian or Ukrainian, I'd say it is necessary to have a translator. Yes, you can "get along" without one by using a phrase book and pointing a lot, but if you get into a situation of even moderate complexity, or if you want to carry on a conversation, a translator is essential. When Alex was with Ken and I was on my own, I was able to use my phrase book, and a few words that I knew, along with pointing and sign language to get along. But when I tried to conduct even a small "conversation" with Larisa and Tamara, it was very hard for us to understand each other, even though Tamara understands a little English. Frustration level rises, and that aggravates the situation. And, although Olga at the Kiev Archives can communicate reasonably well in English, it was necessary for her and Alex to talk in Ukrainian occasionally. Even if you have no intention of learning Russian or Ukrainian, I strongly suggest that you learn the Cyrillic alphabet and the sounds of the letters. If you can sound out words, you often can understand what they mean. This is especially useful when you are trying to read highway signs, signs on storefronts, and restaurant menus.

A Note about Ukraine, its People and its Archives

Ukraine is a nation in transition. It has been only 12 years since Ukrainian independence from Soviet Union communism. Signs of democracy and entrepreneurial capitalism are everywhere, even among ordinary people in the small villages. In smaller towns and villages, shops were rare. Unemployment and lack of hard currency seem to have taken a toll, but people everywhere seem to be active and not fearful of criticizing the government.

Walking through the small villages felt like stepping back in time 100 years. People seem to be just "getting by". Life in these villages and small towns is very different from life in the cities and larger towns. In the cities, there were many restaurants and cafes, enough autos on the street to cause traffic jams, a large number of western style stores and smaller shops with plenty of goods for sale and many people buying them. Although the cities show signs of much "deferred maintenance", there is considerable renovation going on, especially in larger cities like L'viv, Kiev and Odessa. These cities have a dynamic air about them.

Infrastructure is well below the level we are used to in America. This shows up in the shortage of quality hotel accommodations, antiquated telephone service, relatively poor

roads, and lack of pure drinking water. There are plenty of private automobiles in the cities and towns, almost none in the villages. Transportation between towns and villages seems to be dependent on an extensive bus system. Within the villages, transportation is centered on the horse-drawn wagon. We saw very few farm vehicles, and very little farm machinery in the fields. Stoop labor seems to be the norm on farms; horse and wagon is the primary means for transporting farm products, and people, from field to market. Everything works. It just doesn't work quite the way we are used to. On the other hand, good food is plentiful and inexpensive. Services (like hotel laundry service) also are inexpensive. Theater tickets (like Odessa Opera) are remarkably low cost.

We found the people of Ukraine to be wonderfully helpful and cooperative. We encountered no obvious anti-Semitism. Whenever we stopped to ask villagers about the location of the old Jewish section of town, or the Jewish cemetery, they answered readily and in a friendly manner, and they often would volunteer information that proved useful. Still, Ukraine is not a modern western country, and visitors there should be prepared to deal with the artifacts of Soviet rule, especially in working with some of the archives and archivists.

In some archives (like Ternopil) you should be prepared to make payments in advance to facilitate delivery of the record books you are researching, and you should be prepared to pay very high fees for copying records you find. Sometimes these fees are paid legitimately to the archive. Sometimes they are paid directly to the archivist or Director. Don't expect to receive a receipt. If you want the records, be prepared to work with a system that is very different from American archive and library systems. On the other hand, some archives (like Kiev and AGAD in Warsaw) are very responsive and businesslike. Still, archives are near the bottom of Ukraine's funding priorities. In many cases, even the best archives don't know what they have. The better archives are struggling with this and are trying to improve their finding tools. Be patient ... and be flexible ... and be prepared for the worst. That way, when you do get records that stretch your family back in time, you will experience that sense of exhilaration and connectedness that keeps us going in our genealogical pursuits.

/----- End of Section 5 -----/

ATTACHMENTS

A Note about Alex Dunai

Boomi Silverman (boomi@earthlink.net) interviewed Alex Dunai when she and her cousin Sol Sylvan visited Ukraine on October 5-13, 2002. The following is from her Journal, *A call from our ancestors: Ukraine & Poland*. It is reproduced here with her permission, but with minor editing.



Figure 160 - Alex Dunai

Alex Dunai is a graduate of the History Faculty of the Kiev State University. He is the only son of Orest and Natalia Dunai. He is married to his childhood sweetheart, Nataly, a cardiologist. Their children are Andrew, 11-1/2 years old, and Nataly, almost 3 years old. They live in Lviv. He is fluent in Ukrainian, Russian, Polish and English.

Boomi: What brought you to your interest in Jewish history?

Alex: During the senior year of my education at the University, I began to realize that the “vision of history taught by the professors was done so from a political angle, and not from true history. I learned later that one of the major pieces of history of the Ukraine had not been included in our studies. The missing portion was the Jewish history of this country.

It was not something that I was completely unfamiliar with. My grandparents spoke about the Jews. I knew my grandfather had a flourmill before the war and that he dealt with Jewish people, many of whom were great traders in this business. He never discussed many details, like how large the Jewish communities were, and how active Jews were in the trade and in business. My parents and I lived with my grandparents during the Soviet period. They would not talk about “the old days” too much, because not only was it politically dangerous to be a Jew, it was just as dangerous for anyone to talk about anything relating to Jews!

- Boomi: What years was it “politically incorrect” to discuss Jews?
- Alex: After the war period, at the governmental level, there was strong anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union. To be a Jew was to be as if you were a member of some illegal organization!
- Boomi: When did that attitude end?
- Alex: On the governmental level, I can tell you for sure that it stopped after the Soviet Union was broken up and Ukraine came into its own. That was in 1991.
- Boomi: What about when you were in college studying history, was there any mention of the Jewish population?
- Alex: Nothing at all. We only studied the Middle East’s ancient history of 1000-2000 years ago. Maybe longer.
- Boomi: Your history classes did not involve anything about the 19th or 20th century?
- Alex: Not about Jews. Jews were not mentioned at all. Individuals who were Jewish could be mentioned if they were active, for example, in the Communist movement or building of the Soviet Union or if they were active Marxists. We could learn from somebody else, that a certain person was a Jew, but we never were told about this in class or in books. Jews were also part of the Bundt Party. That was an anti-Bolshevik party, which broke up the solidarity of Communists. This was negative. Jews were mentioned only in those few cases to show that they were anti-Communist, anti-proletariat. But nothing else was mentioned about the Jews. The Holocaust was never mentioned.
- Boomi: Please tell me when you started your research business. What brought you to that stage?
- Alex: It's partly coincidence, partly goodwill, and my wish to assist people. After graduation, I worked for a governmental institution that dealt in different kinds of educational and cultural projects. This also involved attending the Student Exchange Organization at conferences. In the beginning, it was interesting, and I hoped that it would be possible to somehow develop myself and help the Organization's goals. Approximately 3 years into this position, I realized that what I was doing was something I didn't want to do for the rest of my life.
- Boomi: Exactly what type of research were you doing then?
- Alex: It was not all research. I was a clerk in the educational department. I also acted as an interpreter and a project translator for state institutions, in particular, the International Center for Education, Science and Culture.

Boomi: How did you get into research and involved with JewishGen?

Alex: I was looking for some other business and job opportunities. A close friend of mine and I got together and organized conferences in Lviv for professors of European Universities. The conferences proved to be interesting and, more importantly successful. The professors liked the city, they liked how we prepared and organized the conferences. This opened the door to what I am currently involved in. My friend recommended me to one of his professors, a person who was interested in job opportunities that involved research and history.

Some time passed, and in 1995, I was contacted by an American, Phyllis Simon, who planned to be in Lviv. She offered me the job of researcher for individual Jewish people in the U.S. It was of great interest to me. I knew it was something that was not possible to do before because the Archives were closed completely to anyone except for KGB officials and the like. We signed an agreement that I would do research for this group of people. And so it began. Initially, I was contacted by a Mr. Nathan Abramovits. He was my first client and he became my very dear friend. He died several weeks ago. One day I will visit the U.S. The first thing I will do shortly after arrival is visit the cemetery where Mr. Abramovits is buried.

Boomi: Who was he, and through what organization did he contact you?

Alex: He contacted me as a member of the Society of Gesher Galicia. He hired me to find and finish research that he had paid another "researcher" to do, but received nothing in return. I took on the assignment, and accomplished the research he was looking for. He was very satisfied.

In those early days, I didn't have a computer. We corresponded by "snail mail". Mr. Abramovits also called me weekly to ask how the research was going. We got to know each other through this type of connection prior to meeting in person. He was very satisfied with the research I did for him and he recommended me to other people. Other members of Gesher Galicia contacted me and I did research for them. They, too, recommended me to others. That's how my research business began.

Later, Susannah Juni, a person who I had done extensive research for contacted me to fulfill her dream of visiting the land of her ancestors. She asked me to be her guide. I had a car and I spoke English. I knew it would work. She arrived in the Ukraine and enjoyed the trip very much.

Boomi: Where did Susannah come from? What area was she researching?

Alex: She came from New York City. She visited the Galicia area. It was mostly Stanislawow, which is now Ivano-Frankovsk, Bolekhov and Kalush. I did my best and she was very satisfied. She recommended me as a researcher and guide.

Being a researcher and guide is a good combination. I enjoy doing both. I have

the opportunity to work with the documents first and then meet the people who have commissioned me to do this work. When they travel here and we visit their shtetls, I get to see what they have come for from their point of view, and to see the places their ancestors came from. In no other job, would I have such an opportunity.

Boomi: JewishGen. How long have you been with them?

Alex: How long? To tell you the truth, I don't remember the year. I think it was 1998. I was contacted by Susan King, the founder of JewishGen.

I participated at the first meeting in Warsaw, along with other guides and researchers from Lithuania, Bellarus, Poland, Hungary, and from Kiev. I represent JewishGen in the Western Ukraine. There are people who conduct tours, but don't offer research. I do research not only in Galicia, but in other cities of the Ukraine.

Boomi: How did it start out with JewishGen together with your own business?

Alex: By then I was already pretty busy. I had many customers. With JewishGen, we developed a good relationship. It works very well.

Boomi: You didn't have much of an understanding of Jews prior to becoming a researcher and guide for them.

Alex: No, I didn't.

Boomi: When you brought us to our shtetl's massacre site and cemetery, you saw that Sol did not have a kipah and gave him yours to wear while we said the Kaddish.

Alex: I consider it respectful to the people who are buried there. It is self-respect also. I consider it not just a tradition for Jewish people, but for others who visit here. As you know, if somebody goes to the church, they will take off a hat they are wearing. If you go to a Jewish cemetery, you should put on a kipah.

Boomi: Prior to becoming involved with Jewish research, you had very little contact with Jews, am I correct?

Alex: When I got involved in Jewish research and dealing with Jewish people, my relatives started to talk sometimes about this, and that. For instance, what was the background of the family? It could be that my father's grandfather was Jewish. We know only that my great-grandmother's 2nd husband may have been Jewish. There is also my mother's cousin; we know that cousin is Jewish. I'll tell you, it's funny. My mother's cousin, he is unusual. His name is Phillip. When he was 20 he began growing a beard, and at the age of 27 or 28, the beard just got longer and longer. It was a curled black beard; his hair was also black.. He didn't know if he really was Jewish. Not so long ago, I learned that his father was Jewish. He is very bright in mathematics and physics.

Boomi: Regarding this research, how do you propose to use it for your future? After all this is a business. This is your livelihood.

Alex: Certainly, I want to develop it. What I really would like is to have a few persons who could help me do research and also conduct tours. I would like to do this on a more professional level. It would depend on the number of tourists traveling here. The people who work for me now part-time have regular jobs. The amount of tourists currently coming to the Ukraine is not enough to sustain full time tour guides. I hope the number of tourists will increase. This would help in having those people working as a guide on a full time basis. Then they would become professionals. There are tour guides who are very talented and that customers have recommended to me. These guides are not familiar with doing research work. Many people advise me to become more involved in tourism. If I do, I won't give up the research.

I just don't want to conduct huge groups and drive on the bus, and say, "to the right is this, to the left is this." What I do is different. I like to deal with small groups and individuals. It really gives me the opportunity to become involved with them and to help them gather the information they traveled to my country to find.

Boomi: Thank you, Alex, for all you have done for us and for this opportunity to interview you.

Alex Dunai's Russian Army Incident

Boomi Silverman recorded the following interview with Alex on October 9th 2002, driving from Ternipol to Lviv. Alex began talking about his time as a soldier in the Russian Army, and he told me a very interesting story of his so-called co-soldiers, that really weren't, and what the situation was.

Boomi: How old were you at the time when you were conscripted into the army?

Alex: I was 18 years old. I finished my first year in the University. I was then drafted into the Soviet Army in 1986. I was in the army service for 2 years. I was sent to Charkov; the 2nd largest city in Ukraine after Kiev. I was there for 3 months for basic training. It was called "The School of Young Soldiers." We didn't even have time to brush our teeth!

Boomi: That is the normal basic training of soldiers everywhere. After basic training, where were you sent?

Alex: I was sent to Odessa. Although the camp I was stationed at was on the outskirts of Odessa, I only visited that city twice in the 2 years I was stationed there. Nice place. But the camp situation was another thing. I had been brought up to be a very polite "home grown boy.." What I was to experience at that camp was a

completely different world. It is fortunate that for several years before entering the army, I had trained in Judo.. I was physically well prepared, but the world I entered was extremely unusual to me.

Boomi: Why was it unusual?

Alex: I couldn't visit my family, nor anywhere else during the time I was in the Soviet army.

Alex: The hardest thing of the first year of my service is that our unit had a special location. There were two military units on the same base. One of the units was called "The Black Battalion." It was a Battalion that consisted mostly of Muslims from Abkhaz and Chechnya, and some other Caucasus Republics of the Soviet Union. These were really dangerous men. Real murderers. They were born to kill. These soldiers didn't want to work; they didn't want to do what a soldier is supposed to do.

Boomi: Like what?

Alex: Well, we shared a kitchen and dining room. We had to change shifts. One day, preparation of food and washing of dishes was our unit's responsibility, and the next day, was the responsibility of their unit. They never wanted to do "women's jobs," that is, to wash dishes or cook or serve. They tried to force us to do that.

There were other reasons. One was having to share the same military base with them. It always causes some problems because in our unit, there was just Slavs, a few Jews, and only one Georgian and one Uzbek. Basically, non-Muslims. In the other unit, there were all Muslims, except for one Jew and one Slav. These two men were made to suffer. They were always hungry, and were always treated as "servants" in the Muslim unit. They were beaten by what was supposed to be their "fellow soldiers." The Muslims behaved towards these two poor men as if they were their lord and masters, rather than fellow soldiers.

Boomi: What about their officers? The Muslim officers.

Alex: Their officers were non-Muslim. They suffered almost as much as the Jew and the Slav. Not quite, but they were afraid of their Muslim soldiers. Those soldiers would never obey their officer's orders. The officers would just come there, spend time, and tried not to order the Muslims to do anything. There was one guy who could deal with them. He was a sub-officer, something like between a Sergeant and an Officer. In the Russian Army, they call it "prahpershick." He was a big guy, with huge hands. Very physically strong. He was bigger than anybody else in the unit, and he could deal with them. He would just beat them up if they disobeyed him. But he was the only one who could do that. He wouldn't mess with them if it wasn't necessary. The Muslims thought they were kings. They acted as if they weren't soldiers. They wouldn't do anything. They would cause all sort of problems to those who weren't Muslims.

Boomi: Tell me what the incident was that you were involved with and what was the aftermath?

Alex: It so happened that me and the guy from the Muslim unit, (I don't quite remember whether he was from Azerbaijan or Chechnya), were supposed to serve in the dining room and in the kitchen one day. That meant wash dishes and other normal jobs you're supposed to do when on kitchen duty. Everybody has to do this. The Muslim tried to force me to do his job. I didn't want to do this. We started to argue, and then started to fight. Then, two other Muslim guys from his unit came into the kitchen. Of course, they didn't care who was right, who was wrong. They were just happy to have this kind of "opportunity" to fight against a non-Muslim. Then the 2 joined the first in the fight. There was no thought of equality here. I was just one and there were 3 of them. I couldn't take them all on. I was able to run away from the kitchen into my barracks. One of our Lieutenants asked, "What's the problem, Dunai?" I said, "It's the Muslims." I explained what had happened. He asked me where he could find them. I told him that the last I saw of them, they were in the kitchen.

He went to the kitchen. Then, our Colonel, a Jewish man, who was very physically strong and tall and whom everyone liked, followed the Lieutenant into the kitchen. (I liked him even more after what happened! Much more! We became friends.) They went into the kitchen and then, after a few minutes, I followed them. When I came into the kitchen, I saw that the Lieutenant and the Colonel were beating the 3 Muslims who had tried to force me to do what I wasn't supposed to do. The officers were very successful!

After they beat up the Muslims, the Colonel told them that if they ever attempted to beat up "his soldiers" again, he would take care of them! I told my platoon what the Colonel had done. They respected the Colonel prior to this incident, but even more so, when they heard what had happened.

That was basically the incident that occurred, but it still wasn't the end of the story. There were several more events like this. It became almost non-stop. We eventually built our own dining rooms, our own kitchens, and we became totally separate units. We would have our own food and not share it, and did not change shifts with the Muslims, from that point on.

Sometimes, there were some incidents, but this helped solve most of the problems. We didn't care what they did. After we divided the units from being involved with each other, the poor Jewish and Slavic guys were forced to do everything for them.

Boomi: And the Army did nothing about that?

Alex: Nothing. Nothing. Nothing.

/----- End of Journal -----/