

April 2009

Dear Fellow Kremenetsers,

You are long overdue for an update about our activities. Although we have posted much new material on our website in the past year, and Sheree has been active in sending record extracts to many of you, I have been lax in providing you with a report of what we have been doing. Let me try to bring you up-to-date with highlights of our most important work since last Spring.

VITAL RECORDS. Since we began in 2000, our flagship project has been the Vital Records Translation Project. As you know we obtained more than 15,000 Kremenets vital records covering the period 1870-1907 (with some missing years) from the Mormons. Over the years we have made steady progress in translating and making these records available to you. Within the next few months this project will be complete. Our translator, Judith Springer, has only two year sets to go, 1892 and 1893 death records.

CONCORDANCE. We have entered all personal names from the translated records into our Indexed Concordance of Personal Names and Town Names. The Concordance is freely available on our website, <http://www.shtetlinks.jewishgen.org/Kremenets/web-pages/index.html>). (Click on the Research item on the menu that is on the left side of the web page.) The Concordance currently contains 65,874 entries (57,337 from the 14,961 vital records, 250 from the Revision Lists, 4,308 from documents obtained from the Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People, 3,461 from the Yizkor Books, Booklets and other sources, and 501 "see" and "see also" references).

REVISION LIST TRANSLATION PROJECT. When Judith finishes the vital records, she will shift her attention to the Revision List (Revizskaya Skazka) Translation Project. In addition, we have negotiated with Alex Dunai for a reasonable price for his services translating the Revision Lists. These Russian Census records cover the period from 1806 to the early 1860s (except for the 1834 Census ... for which Jewish records seem to be missing from the LDS collection). We have about 40,000 records on more than 13,000 pages. They contain more than 150,000 names and they cover almost all of the towns of former Kremenets Uyezd (District). We have sufficient funds to begin the project, but we will have to raise about \$12,000 to keep the translation effort going to completion. More about this later.

YIZKOR BOOK TRANSLATION PROJECT. As you know, after WWII, the Kremenets Landsmanshaftn in Tel Aviv, New York, and Buenos Aires produced two Yizkor Books and a series of 18 booklets. In addition, there are Yizkor Books for Vishnevets, Pochayev, Shumskoye, and Yampol.

- "*Pinkas Kremenets*", edited by A.S. Stein, and published in Tel Aviv in 1954, has 271 pages in Hebrew and 180 pages in Yiddish. All of the Hebrew and 4 Yiddish pages have been translated.
- "*Kremenets, Vyshgorodok, and Pochayev: Yizkor Book*", edited by P. Lerner and published in Buenos Aires in 1965, has 431 pages in Yiddish, a 32 page Necrology in Yiddish (complete with photos), and 5 pages in Spanish. The Necrology, the Spanish section, and 65 pages of Yiddish text have been translated.
- The 18 Booklets total 1,020 pages, about half in Hebrew and half in Yiddish. They were published in Tel Aviv from 1967 through 1982. Translation of all the Hebrew and about 20% of the Yiddish pages is complete.
- "*Sefer Vishnevets*", edited by Chayim Rabin and published in 1970 has 546 pages, 286 in Hebrew and 260 in Yiddish. Translation is complete for the Hebrew sections and 3 pages of Yiddish.
- "*Jewish Partisans and Fighters of Volyn: In their memory*" is a 120 page book, published in 1997 by the Council for the Commemoration of the Jewish Partisans and Fighters of Volyn during the Second World War. The 96 pages in Hebrew, 8 page Necrology, and 14 pages in English include stories and names of many Jews from Kremenets District towns and villages. Thanks to Sara Mages and Shalom Bronstein, translation is complete and edited. Name and place indexes have been prepared and are being formatted and proofread.
- The Pochayev, Shumskoye, and Yampol Yizkor Book translation projects are independent of ours. We have helped by adding name indexes to these translations.

So, our volunteers have translated about 1,300 pages of Yizkor Books! This is a remarkable volunteer effort and I am bursting with pride at the accomplishments of our volunteers. If we had to pay professional translators for this work, we would have needed more than \$26,000!!! All of the books contain many photos of people, artifacts, and places. We have added name indexes to all translations, and have added all personal names to our Concordance. All translations that have been proofed and edited are online at the JewishGen Yizkor Book Translations website. Now, we need volunteers skilled in Yiddish to complete the Yiddish sections of our Yizkor Books.

CENTRAL ARCHIVES FOR THE HISTORY OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE. During the past several years, Susan Sobel and Rachel Karni, two of our Israeli members, visited the Central Archives and obtained an assortment of documents relating to Kremenets District towns. On my visit to Israel in August 2008, we returned to the Central Archives and obtained even more documents. Now, we have a collection of 201 documents (or extracts of documents), which we have prioritized for translation. Translation is complete for 16 of the 36 Priority 1 documents, mostly documents from the Interwar period, immediately before the Shoah. They are posted on our website. Names extracted from the translated documents are included in the Concordance. To give you a better idea of what we have, here are the short titles to the documents that have been translated.

- Doc 152, 1835, Kremenets fire losses, HM 2-8967.3
- Doc 031, 1837-1841, Illegal Fundraising Trial, Kremenets and Vishnevets
- Doc 146, 1840-1841, Conscripted Jews
- Doc 042, 1849 Beit Midrash Registers, Dubno etc.
- Doc 082, 1927-1934 Kremenets Jewish Woman's Association
- Doc 124, 1928, Orphans and Abandoned Children
- Doc 131, 1930-1939 Kremenets Jewish Management Committees
- Doc 091, 1934 Kremenets Tarbut School, Students, Teachers, Parents
- Doc 094, 1934 Zionist Revisionists, Kremenets & Lanovets
- Doc 096, 1934-1936, Religious Education of Orphans and Poor Children, Kremenets
- Doc 099, 1934-1936 Kremenets Tarbut School
- Doc 095, 1935, Kremenets Feepayers List
- Doc 102, 1936, Kremenets Feepayers List
- Doc 141, 1936, Shumsk Feepayers
- Doc 174, 1936, Vishnevets Feepayers List
- Doc 110, 1938 Kremenets German-Jewish Refugees

For a complete list of our Central Archives documents point your web browser to:
<http://www.shtetlinks.jewishgen.org/Kremenets/web-pages/central-archives-document-translation.html>
We will post additional translations as they are completed, formatted and proofread.

KREMENETS DISTRICT CEMETERY PROJECT. As you know, we have been trying to obtain foundation funding to restore the Kremenets and Vishnevets Jewish Cemeteries. We received a grant from the Rothschild Foundation, Europe for Phase 1 of this project. We used the grant and your contributions to document the cemeteries' visible gravestones, produce formal surveys of all three cemeteries, and to develop plans for restoring the Kremenets cemetery and conserving the stones. The reports resulting from all of this work are on our website:

<http://www.shtetlinks.jewishgen.org/Kremenets/web-pages/kjcp.htm>

The website also has complete copies of our key grant applications.

The database of matzeva inscriptions still is being processed. It will be completed by the end of this year and posted on the web. That database results from the initial photography project. Unfortunately, we were unable to photograph the additional stones (more than 4,000 of them) that were revealed after excess vegetation was cleared in 2006. In 2007, Rothschild awarded us an additional grant of about \$20,000, but that amount was not sufficient to do meaningful work toward the objectives detailed in our grant application. Through 2008, we tried, but failed, to obtain supplementary grants. As a result, we had to decline the Rothschild grant. The restoration project and additional photography currently are on hold, pending a re-evaluation of our objectives and foundation recovery from the current economic recession. I would like to hear your opinions about how we should proceed with this project ... if at all.

CENTER FOR JEWISH ART, HEBREW UNIVERSITY, JERUSALEM. In the 1990s, the Center for Jewish Art conducted several expeditions to Ukraine to collect examples of Jewish art in synagogues and cemeteries. Kremenets, Vishnevets, and Yampol were among the places they visited. During my August 2008 visit, I met with Dr. Vladimir Levin and Dr. Sergei Kravtsov, senior researchers at the Center. They provided me with much material, including hundreds of photos of Kremenets gravestones from the Center's various expeditions. Most of these stones date to the mid-1500s and early 1600s. For the most part, these are stones that are not in our photo collection, and so they are invaluable. The Center has transcribed the inscriptions on these photos. These await processing. We need a volunteer or two to translate the transcriptions and enter the data into an Excel spreadsheet.

Sergei also gave me a copy of a wonderful photo showing the Holy Ark of the Great Synagogue of Kremenets in the early 19th Century. It is spectacular! The Ark and the Synagogue were destroyed by the Nazis in WWII. The photo soon will be posted to our website.

YAD VASHEM NAME EXTRACTIONS. On my visit to Israel in August 2008, I met with Zvi Bernhardt at Yad Vashem. Zvi very generously extracted 8,390 Kremenets District records, mostly Pages of Testimony, from Yad Vashem's Shoah database. We have two versions of the extract, one in a Hebrew Excel spreadsheet, the other in English. Later this year we will process these records and add the names to our Concordance. Since, on the eve of the *Shoah*, the Jewish population of just the town of Kremenets was well over 8,000, the fact that Yad Vashem has only 8,390 records for all the towns of the Kremenets District means that a very large number of Shoah victims from our area are not in the database. If you have any ideas for identifying additional Shoah victims please let me know ... or better yet, let's start a discussion of this on our Kremenets Discussion Group. Just post your message to UKR-KREMENETS@rootsweb.com.

In addition to Pages of Testimony, Zvi provided us with an Excel spreadsheet listing 113 other records for Kremenets District towns. These include:

- Records of the Russian Extraordinary State Commission to Investigate German-Fascist Crimes Committed on Soviet Territory
- Personal Testimonies from the Department of the Yad Vashem Archives
- Documents from the Central Historical Commission (CHC) of the Central Committee of Liberated Jews in the US Zone, Munich
- Documents from the Collection of Various Testimonies, Diaries and Memoirs
- Documents from the Jewish Historical Institute, Warsaw
- Documents from the War Criminals Department, Legal Division of the Central Committee of Liberated Jews

- Documents from the Nuremberg Military Tribunals
- Testimonies from the Gathering of Holocaust Survivors held in 1981
- Documents from the The Bialystok Ghetto Underground Archives (Mersik-Tennenbaum Archives)
- Documents from the Ilya Ehrenburg Collection
- Documentation from the Central Archives for Public Organizations in the Ukraine, Kiev
- Documentation of the Central Government Archive of the Ukraine
- Documentation from Regional Archives in the Ukraine
- Documents from Archives in Belarus
- Personal Files of SS Members from the Berlin Document Center
- Nazi documentation
- Register of Holocaust Victims
- Documents from the Collection about the Soviet Union
- Documents from the Institute for the Documentation of Austrian Resistance
- Documents from the Yad Vashem Collection of Miscellaneous Documents

As you can see, this is an extraordinary collection of *Shoah*-era documents. To process this properly, we need volunteers to obtain the individual documents from Yad Vashem. Some are available online, but in most cases, a visit to Yad Vashem will be required to examine long documents and to copy pages that are relevant to Kremenets-District towns. Please let me know if you can volunteer for this project.

INCORPORATION OF KREMENETS DISTRICT RESEARCH GROUP. As you know, we began our activities in 2000 as the Kremenets Shtetl CO-OP, an affiliate of Jewish Records Indexing-Poland (JRI-Poland). Through this affiliation, we have come under JRI-Poland's non-profit, 501(c)(3) status so that donations to our group are tax-deductible in the US and Canada. This affiliation has served us well. JRI-Poland has been, and still is, very tolerant of our idiosyncrasies and independent spirit. We owe them a deep debt of gratitude. Over the years, as our emphasis has shifted to activities other than vital records translation, we sometimes found ourselves in an ambiguous situation, especially in terms of applying for and administering grants for our work. In addition, as I get older, I get more and more concerned about continuity of our group and its activities.

In 2007, these twin concerns led us to incorporate in the state of Oregon as the *Kremenets District Research Group (KDRG)*. The Kremenets Shtetl CO-OP now is an activity of the KDRG, as well as being affiliated with JRI-Poland. Tax deductible donations still can be made to JRI-Poland for our account. Our next step is for KDRG to apply to the US Internal Revenue Service for independent 501(c)(3), non-profit status, so that we can receive grants and donations directly as a charitable organization. This requires By-Laws, elected officers, and a more formal designation of "membership" than we have had in the past. In the interim, I have drafted a set of By-Laws and three of us (the minimum

required by Oregon law) have agreed to serve as members of a provisional Board, pending elections:

- Ronald D. Doctor, Interim President
- Sheree Roth, Interim Vice President
- Ellen Garshick, Interim Member of the Board

If we proceed, we face a process that is complex and costly. It is one on which we need your feedback, especially with regard to how we designate "membership". I will discuss our options in a follow-up message within the next few days. In the meantime, please take a look at the draft By-Laws attached to this message. I welcome your comments and suggestions. [Note: The By-Laws were approved unanimously in August 2009. They are on our website. ... RDD]

As I mentioned earlier, we have to raise about \$12,000 to ensure completion of the Revision List translations. I know the current state of the economy has made life difficult. However, if you can contribute, will you please take a moment and make a donation?

Contributions to "Jewish Records Indexing - Poland" may be made by check, bank draft, money order, or credit card. Be sure to specify that your contribution is for the Kremenets Shtetl CO-OP. Send your donation or credit card information to:

Jewish Records Indexing - Poland, Inc.
c/o Sheila Salo, Treasurer
5607 Greenleaf Road
Cheverly, MD 20785 USA

Telephone: (301) 341-1261
Fax: 1-810-592-1768 (24 hours)
E-Mail: ssalo@capaccess.org

Be sure to specify that your donation is for the Kremenets Revision List Project, or that it is for the Kremenets General Fund. And, if you send a donation, please send me an e-mail message to let me know the amount you donate, and the date of mailing so that we can be sure the donation gets applied properly.

The Kremenets Shtetl CO-OP is affiliated with Jewish Records Indexing - Poland, Inc. (JRI-Poland), which is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. Your contributions are tax-deductible in the U.S. and Canada to the extent permitted by law.

If your employer has a matching gift program, please think about matching your donation through that program.

Thank you in advance for your support.

Ron Doctor

Co-Coordinator, Kremenets Shtetl CO-OP/Jewish Records Indexing-Poland

An activity of the Kremenets District Research Group