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President
Marvin R. Zektzer

Ms. Miriam Weiner
Routes to Roots
136 Sandpiper Key
Seacaucus, New Jersey 07094

August 5, 1999

Dear Miriam,

I cannot thank you enough for all that you did to make our journey to Poland and Ukraine the very special experience that it was. I knew when I found you that you were just the right person who was going to help me find my way back to the towns where my family came from and to the members of my family whose names were hidden in archives that were unknown. Sure enough, you did that and so much more. For all of your help and guidance and assistance I am very grateful.

From the moment when I first spoke to you on the phone I knew that I was in the guiding hands of a true professional who knows her business. You assisted me in every way and gave me good, honest, and helpful advice. You had a sense of what I wanted to accomplish and you led me in the proper direction right from the start. It didn't matter if it was travel arrangements or archival research, you knew what to do. And you did it with a sense of wanting to help and with enthusiasm for the goals that my cousins and I wanted to accomplish.

As you know, we set out trying to make a journey to Sassov and Zelochev in the Ukraine. We also wanted to find archival information on our family. So now we have returned from ten extraordinary days. First to Poland to get a sense of the past and to visit Warsaw and Lublin and then on to L'vov and Kiev. From the moment that we arrived we knew that we were in welcoming hands and that we were safe under the guidance of your staff, Mariola in Poland and Vitaly in Ukraine. We could not have asked for better.

Mariola was a treat. She was enthusiastic and helpful and patient and encouraging and we felt as though she was treating us like family. Everything went beautifully. And when she brought us the birth record of my grandfather, all of us were deeply touched. Vitaly was a gift to us beyond our expectations. From the moment that he met us at the airport he guided us through every stage of our journey. He introduced us to archivists and mayors. He knew how to help us find information and people and places. We always felt that his only concern was for us and our safety and that we would accomplish all of our goals. In addition, his driver was very professional and also served as a "body guard" to ensure our safety.

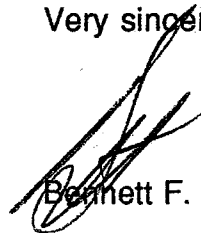
Miriam, what more can I say beyond the sincerest gratitude and appreciation that I have for you. I now feel that I have made a very special new friend and it is a friendship I will always treasure. You have truly touched my heart and the heart of my two cousins who joined me on our journey. We will forever be grateful to you.

I also want to thank you for the very thorough archival and genealogical research that you did. We now have a record of our family that goes back a few more generations. That is of enormous help to us. You are truly a blessing.

On another note I want to congratulate you on the publication of your book. I felt as though I went through the birthing moment with you. It is not only a wonderful book but also a very important contribution to the world of Jewish genealogy. It will prove to be an important resource for those wishing to discover their ancestral heritage and your labor of love for this work is evident in every single page. I look forward to receiving my bound copy as soon as it comes out.

So thank you again and again and again. I wish you continued success in your work, look forward to your being here at our congregation in September, and wish you a very happy and healthy new year.

Very sincerely,



Bennett F. Miller, Rabbi

*Harvey M. Krueger
201 East 80th Street
19th Floor
New York, New York 10021*

March 12, 2003

Miriam Weiner, President
Routes to Roots
136 Sandpiper Key
Secaucus, NJ 07094

My dear Miriam:

When we first met in 1993 to discuss my efforts to discover my family's history, I doubt that either of us had any idea of the impact that discussion would have on each of us.

Your first research trip to Poland on my behalf produced a treasure trove of documents about my direct ancestors and others who were subsequently connected to my family. You traced my wife's ancestors back to her great great-grandfather, born in 1802 in Tarnow, Poland. This and other information gathered by you has led to a tree with over 2500 entries dating back to the 1500's.

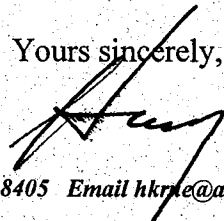
I was able to find previously unknown relatives in the United States who had been hidden by a Polish family during the war. This resulted last autumn in a dinner in New York honoring the surviving member of that Polish family and the five sisters whom she had helped save. Seeing her receive the "Righteous Gentile" award was an emotional experience of profound intensity for her, for the sisters and their families and for me and my family. The audience, which included you and hundreds of others, was, I am sure, equally impacted.

My growing interest in genealogy and participation in genealogical activities and projects results, in part, from what began with you ten years ago. I have also seen what you have accomplished with your two books and the Routes to Roots Foundation website. It has been my privilege to assist you, both morally and materially, with these projects and I am delighted with the results.

I know what you have done for my family and those of some of my friends. More importantly, you have provided the Jewish people throughout the world resources that have not heretofore been readily available.

I look forward to the next ten years of our collaborative efforts and friendship. Thank you very much, from both Connie and me, for helping to re-connect us to our roots.

Yours sincerely,



Telephone 212 452-5345 Facsimile 212 628-8405 Email hkrue@aol.com

CENTER FOR JEWISH HISTORY

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April 28, 2014

Miriam Weiner, President
Routes to Roots
73 Harbor Key
Secaucus, NJ 07094

Dear Miriam:

As my tenure comes to a close at the **Center for Jewish History**, I am reminded of our first encounter at a meeting of the *Advisory Committee* to the *Genealogy Institute* where you were representing YIVO. It was clear to me early on that you had a fantastic grasp of what our goals were for the Center's Genealogy Institute and your input was invaluable during those meetings.

I have watched your connection with the Center and YIVO evolve during the past nine years via your important contribution of archival material and a significant portion of your library to both YIVO and the Center. Your two highly-acclaimed books (*Jewish Roots in Poland* and *Jewish Roots in Ukraine and Moldova*), co-published with YIVO in the early 1990s have remained THE source of identifying surviving Jewish records in the archives of those countries.

I am very grateful to you for helping me become excited (and knowledgeable) about my own ancestors and as my family grows, it has been very meaningful to know that they will some day have this information – that you have discovered and preserved tracing my Glickman family back seven generations to Anyksciai, Lithuania and the Isler family back eight generations to Tarnow, Poland!

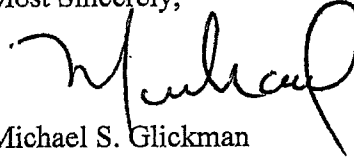
Additionally, as a consultant to the Ackman & Ziff Family Genealogy Institute at the Center for the past seven years, you have traced the family history of a dozen of our major donors and board members. I have been present for most of your presentations and it was amazing for me to see their enthusiasm and excitement at your discoveries. When you came into the room with suitcases full of documents, family tree charts, research reports and other material, it was always quite a sight. Everyone has relished in what you have found and it has left a mark on their lives.

The work you do is truly a “mitzvah” and the Center is fortunate to have you doing these genealogy projects for us. As you know, we continue to expand the Genealogy Institute and it draws thousands of people to the Center each year. We are pleased that you have selected us as the “home” for the Routes to Roots Foundation website and databases where so many can benefit from your 25 years of research and work in Poland and the former USSR. Additionally, we are proud to have you serving as the *Senior Advisor* for the Institute.

Working with you has been a great pleasure and privilege. Thank you for your friendship, dedication and enthusiasm. On a personal level, you can always count me as one of your fans!

All best wishes and thanks.

Most Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael S. Glickman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "M" and a long, sweeping tail that loops back under the name.

Michael S. Glickman

Trudie Jollek Prior

P.O. Box 6100

St. Thomas VI 00801

(809) 774-2260

Fax: (809) 774-7790

October 6, 1996

Miriam Weiner
Routes to Roots
136 Sandpiper Key
Secaucus NJ 07094-2210

Dear Miriam:

It has been about a month since we returned to St. Thomas from our trip to Poland, Ukraine and Czechoslovakia. Unfortunately, hurricanes and work have prevented me from writing until now to tell you what an incredible experience we had thanks to you and your colleagues. There is no doubt that visiting Ukraine requires insider knowledge. I have planned many trips, but without your assistance, this trip would never have gotten off the ground. Without Vitaly Chumak's advance trips and superb shepherding of our flock from the moment of our arrival to our departure, I would not have the memories to cherish that I have today. He even did a splendid job of preserving those memories on video tape!

You had warned us about the inconveniences we would encounter and we prepared ourselves mentally for the worst. To be honest, I don't think any of us ever worried about a thing once we landed in Lviv and Vitaly took charge. The pre-trip planning by you and Vitaly and the on-site attention we got from Vitaly and Slava erased any concerns from our minds. In particular, we never worried for a moment about our safety.

As you are well aware, our trip was unusual in several respects. This was going to be a very emotional trip for me. My parents were Holocaust survivors, and I was born in a displaced persons camp in Germany, but most of our family were killed during the war. I did not realistically expect to find survivors, but I hoped to find some older residents of the towns my parents came from who might remember something of my family. Also, there were places I needed to visit, some of them with unpleasant connections like the forced labor camp where my parents were interned for a time, which were not readily located by looking at a map. Because of Vitaly's advance work -- visiting these towns, securing the assistance of the mayors, speaking to some of the old people and identifying potentially knowledgeable individuals to be interviewed -- we were able to fill in some of the gaps in my knowledge. Although almost nothing physical remains to be seen of my parents' former life, I came away knowing that I had found, with Vitaly's help, everything there was to find. There were times when even I was ready to give up, but Vitaly pressed on, not satisfied to leave this village or that without finding someone who might have a kernel of information.

In addition to fulfilling my personal search, Vitaly had a number of special needs and desires to contend with and, despite the tall order, with Slava's help he addressed all of them. My daughters are vegetarians, but food turned out never to be a problem although we had been apprehensive. Our biggest problem was getting them to cook the eggs to the right degree of doneness at the Grand Hotel. The matter of the eggs became a big joke within our group and was the comic subject of the video footage Vitaly took our last morning in Lviv. Since we spent six nights in Lviv, for variety, Vitaly even found us a couple of restaurants outside the Grand Hotel that were very satisfactory. On the road, Vitaly and Slava managed to put together plentiful picnics where restaurants were not possible. And we never worried about what we could or could not eat because they took such good care of us.

My husband and I love music and make a point of taking in as many concerts, recitals or operas as we can when we travel. I did not really expect that would be possible in Ukraine, but Vitaly surprised us again. We attended two marvelous recitals and, as part of our tour of the magnificent Opera House, we were treated to a rehearsal of Aida. As I sat in that Opera House, I recalled the stories my mother had told me of the elegance of Lviv, especially the Opera House, and how she loved to visit the big city when she was a young woman.

My husband and older daughter are runners; the rest of us like to take a brisk walk in the morning. Vitaly and Slava were up at the crack of dawn every morning to take us to a different park each day for our exercise before getting on the road. We all agreed it turned out to be a great way to see Lviv.

I could go on for pages. The ways in which you and Vitaly combined to make our trip a success are really too numerous to mention. We will be forever grateful for your efforts.

I must tell you also how much we appreciate your arranging to have Mariola Jesziak be our guide in Poland. Like Vitaly, Mariola is a gem. Although we had less than two full days in Poland, and despite our jet lag, Mariola made sure we saw all of Warsaw's highlights in addition to a trip to Majdanek. She is extremely knowledgeable as well as utterly charming. When I think of what we accomplished in Poland, I can hardly believe we did it all in less than two days. Our very rewarding albeit brief visit to Poland is a testimonial to Mariola's skill and energy.

Thank you from all of us.

Warmest regards,



Trudie J. Prior

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Attorneys and Counselors at Law

Roy P. Kozupsky
Laurence J. Lebowitz*
Paul J. Sowell*
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Of Counsel
Mark N. Bloom
Seth L. Marcus

August 9, 2000

Miriam Weiner
President
Routes to Roots
136 Sandpiper Key
Secaucus, New Jersey 07094

Dear Miriam:

I want to take this opportunity to thank you on behalf of both my mother and myself for the most extraordinary trip which you arranged for us to Poland and Ukraine. Frankly, I am not sure any words of praise are adequate to express the feelings my mother and I experienced as a result of the work put into the trip by you and our guides Mariola and Vitaly.

For my mother, who left her small village on the outskirts of Lvov in 1939, just before the outbreak of the War, the experience was both joyful and bittersweet. Remarkably, upon her return she met and visited with many of her childhood friends who have lived there continuously for more than 60 years. Although her childhood home had been destroyed, we visited many of the homes she played in as a child. As an observer, I felt as if the clock had been turned back and I was watching events which occurred so long ago being revisited as if it were yesterday. On a more somber note, we were also able to learn the fate which befell the members of our family who remained after my mother left for America.

That this visit was so successful was, in my opinion, entirely the result of Vitaly doing the "advance work" necessary to locate my mother's friends and otherwise make traveling so easy. In addition to the professionalism and genuine kindness he showed my mother, the fruits of his labor prior our arrival and the instances of his assistance once we got there are too numerous to recount.

Miriam Weiner
President
Routes to Roots
August 9, 2000
Page 2

By way of example, my mother had a photo of two of her aunts taken in a neighboring town called Lubien. She also knew that her grandmother had gone there but was unsure why. In response to our desire to "find out about" Lubien, Vitaly, and our driver Vasily, (who was also wonderful) took us to Lubien. Upon our arrival, Vitaly took us to the Mayor's office. He had set up a meeting with the Mayor, who then spent a significant amount of time with us discussing the history of Lubien,

One look at the photo and the Mayor advised us that it had been taken at a local spa which, before the War, was world renowned as a rheumatism clinic. The Mayor then called the director of the Clinic (now a State Hospital) and not only arranged for a visit, but accompanied us there. Since both my mother's aunts and grandmother suffered from arthritis the "mystery" of Lubien was solved.

Vitaly's advance work also streamlined our trip as he was able to locate all of the buildings we wished to visit in Lvov (the homes and businesses of my mother's family) prior to our arrival. As the street names had been changed at least twice since the War, this advance work saved us many hours of driving around looking for old addresses.

Similarly, our private trip to the National Archives was fascinating. I cannot say enough about the archivist, Natalia Tsariova. Aside from the fact that she is the Chief of her Department, her personality was warm and friendly and she was genuinely sincere in helping us locate links to our past.

We were able to review land, business and education records related to my mother's family and discovered that her great grandfather was a significant landowner. As a result of Natalia's involvement we were also able to visit the ancient archives in the basement of the archives building which are not otherwise open to the public. As a result we were able to locate a reference to my mother's family in an Austrian Court Record dating from 1773.

Whatever praise we have for Vitaly, I can only repeat for Mariola and the work she did in Poland. She was sweet, kind and at all times more than helpful. The same was true of our drivers, her fiancé, Romek, and her cousin, Artur.

By way of example, while my mother and I were in Ukraine, Mariola, by looking through old telephone books from the City of Lodz, was able to locate the wife of my mother's late cousin, with whom she had last had contact in 1956. She then facilitated a telephone conversation between them.

ramler

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8th September 2001

Ms Miriam Weiner, President
Routes To Roots
136 Sandpiper Key
Secaucus, NJ 07094
United States Of America

Dear Miriam,

Re: Our Trip To Ukraine – May 2001

I am writing on behalf of my father and brother to thank you most sincerely for enabling us to share what can only be described as one of the most rewarding experiences of our lives.

When we started thinking about going back to Europe with our father, Paul and I were unsure in regard to how, where and with whom. Then I stumbled across your wonderful book, *Jewish Roots in Ukraine and Moldova*, with a 1920 photo of Kolomya, my father's town, clearly showing our family name 'Ramler' across a shopfront. Within four months of my first enquiry to you, you organised our entire journey back to the Ukraine with a mammoth amount of associated archival research. In doing so, you unlocked a chapter in the history of our family, which allowed the three of us to share some truly remarkable moments.

Your attention to detail was evident in the preparatory work done to ensure that the itinerary exceeded our expectations and that we were well armed with sufficient knowledge to gain a better understanding of our past. We received information prior to our departure, on arrival in the Ukraine, and even more impressive was the continuing archival research done after we returned.

Our journey through the Ukraine was faultless as a result of the planning that had obviously preceded our arrival. Your associate, and our incredibly knowledgeable guide, Vitaly Chumak, was inspirational in his commitment to ensuring that we were exposed to as much as could physically and emotionally be taken in within the time constraints we allowed.

Vitaly gained access for us into historic archives and local synagogues as well as providing introductions to a variety of people – all of which greatly enhanced our experiences. At times he was certainly matched by our father's incredibly memory of past events, places and names, and he knew when to take a leading role and when to allow us some space to take those more private steps into our past.

As frequent travellers, we were also extremely impressed with the fact that as far as our itinerary was concerned in a country not widely visited by tourists, we had no surprises. Everything was included and it was all done in style, comfort and safety. From our vehicle and skilled driver to the quality of our accommodation, we were continually impressed.

We returned from our trip with many poignant memories, most of which involved actually seeing for ourselves the places and images of our father's childhood. To see the tiny house where he was born, walk the streets where he went to school, say Kaddish in the secluded forest where his family perished, visit national archives rarely seen by outsiders – the list of our vivid memories goes on and on.

We have recounted our experiences to many of our friends and I am confident that some will contact you to make their own inquiries. You can also feel free to use our names as a reference as we have no hesitation to highly recommend the excellent service of Routes to Roots.

Our visit to the Ukraine in May 2001 was exactly 60 years to the day that our father fled Kolomya on his 19th birthday. To celebrate his 79th birthday 'back home' was indeed an incredible experience that has touched our lives forever.

Once again, thank you for all your efforts, time and planning.

Yours Sincerely,



Garry Ramlar

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NEW YORK, N.Y. 10022

TELEPHONE (212) 223-4747

FAX (212) 755-5702

August 12, 2004

Ms. Miriam Weiner, President
Routes To Roots
136 Sandpiper Key
Secaucus, New Jersey 07094

Re: The Reich Family Genealogical Project

Dear Miriam:

I want you to know how much my family appreciates your superb performance in helping us learn about our family history. We are deeply grateful to you for your wonderful work.

You were highly recommended to me by the genealogical authorities at the "Center For Jewish History" in New York. You exceeded our hopes and expectations.

We began with sketchy information, consisting of my recollections of things my Parents had talked about. No one in that generation is still alive. It looked like a "dead end" situation.

At that point you took over.

My wife and I now have a complete history of all four branches of her and my family, going back to the 1700's. You did research both in the United States and Eastern Europe. We discovered new branches of our family, including uncles, aunts, cousins, and previous generations. We have six thick looseleaf books of important documents, including census records, ship manifests, birth certificates, death certificates, marriage certificates, and many others.

Our children were anxious to know about our family history. They now have a complete set of family trees, with all supporting and resource materials.

You performed a miracle.

My warmest personal regards and thanks.

Sincerely,



Seymour Reich



HOBART AND WILLIAM SMITH COLLEGES

Geneva, New York 14456-3397 315:789-5500



October 14, 1996

Miriam Weiner
Routes to Roots
136 Sandpiper Key
Secaucus, NJ 07094

Dear Miriam,

I want to thank you again for making possible one of the greatest experiences of my life. My journey to Ukraine to visit the birthplaces of my grandparents fulfilled a life-long dream. It is not a trip that would have been remotely possible without your intercession, organization, advice, and most of all your connecting me with the wonderful guide and translator Vitaly Chumak.

Vitaly is a remarkable man who reliably served my every need with generosity, intelligence, grace, and discretion. He had efficiently organized my itinerary in advance as I'd requested, contacted my cousin, thought through every contingency, and yet remained flexible about my spur-of-the-moment desires and unforeseen circumstances. He is an ideal guide (as well as photographer!). And more, he is a real gentleman, a fine human being. That he knew even more than I did about Jewish life in the Ukraine was also an unexpected treat.

In practical terms, the trip was even more challenging than I'd anticipated. I don't think we Americans can begin to imagine what we will meet there, how difficult the conditions are for travel, how dependent we need to be on a native guide to negotiate every requirement. Vitaly and his driver, Slava, met the inevitable obstacles with humor and efficiency. As a woman on my own with them, I had imagined I might at times feel awkward, but this was never the case. I couldn't have been more pleased with the experience. It was an honor to have spent a week with Vitaly. I will never forget him and the journey he made possible. I am very grateful to you both.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Deborah Tall'.

Deborah Tall



The Ziegelman Organization
152 West 57th Street
New York, N.Y. 10019
Telephone: (212) 468-2766
Telefax: (212) 468-2622

October 6, 1995

Miriam Weiner
President
Routes to Roots
136 Sandpiper Key
Secaucus, NJ 07094-2210

Dear Miriam:

I can't thank Ernie Michel enough for introducing you to me. After meeting with you in your office and discussing the Luboml Exhibition Project, we agreed that you would visit Luboml a few weeks prior to our arrival to locate and interview people who could be helpful to us, arrange meetings with government officials and make arrangements for our accommodations, transportation and security.

Upon our arrival in Lwov we met Vitaly Chumak, your Ukraine coordinator for "Routes to Roots" who was our translator and facilitator and our chauffeur Slava Rimar.

Vitaly wears a multitude of "hats" including translator, guide, photographer, video camera operator and Jewish mother.

I cannot say enough about your and your staff's professionalism. There are deficits of everything in Ukraine but you made sure that we had food, linens, medical supplies, bottled drinking water and cases of soft drinks. Everything possible was done to insure that we were comfortable and safe during our travels.

The success of this trip was due in large to the advance preparation and services of "Routes to Roots."

Sincerely,



Aaron Ziegelman

August 27, 2008

Benjamin D. Zitomer
59 West 12th St
Apt. 2E
New York, NY 10011

Ms. Miriam Weiner, President
Routes To Roots
136 Sandpiper Key
Secaucus, New Jersey 07094

Dear Miriam,

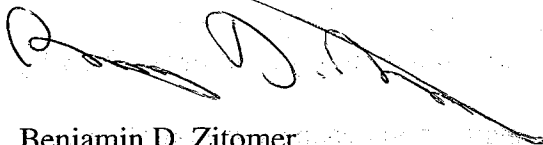
I would like to extend my sincerest appreciation and gratitude for the work you have done in researching my family history. Prior to your efforts, knowledge of my family's roots only extended back to my great-grandfather, who came to New York from Russia in 1909. As a result of the many hours each day that you spent combing through the archives in Ukraine under extremely difficult working conditions, I now have a family tree that includes hundreds of names and extends back to the late 18th century! I was astounded that you were able to discover well over a hundred documents with my family names, including census, birth, marriage and death records. And as a result of your research, I now have over a dozen new family names to track.

The biggest surprise for my family was your discovery of previously unknown siblings that my great-grandfather had. This has opened up many new avenues for future research.

I also am deeply appreciative of the many hours you spent with me upon your return, both in person and on the phone, carefully explaining the significance and meaning of each document. And although your research time exceeded your advance estimates, you generously and graciously absorbed those costs.

You are a true professional and a wonderful person. You have far exceeded my hopes and expectations. I look forward to working with you again in the near future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Benjamin D. Zitomer", written over a horizontal line.

Benjamin D. Zitomer

Jeffrey K. Cymbler
94-01 64th Road
Rego Park, New York 11374

March 9, 1993

Miriam Weiner
136 Sandpiper Key
Secaucus, NJ 07094-2210

Dear Miriam:

When you left on your last trip to the Ukraine with my wish that you find some documents from Mosciska on my maternal grandmother's Berg family, I really did not think that you would be able to locate any documents from this now Ukrainian-Polish border town. Next month will mark my tenth year as a genealogy addict. For the past ten years I have exclusively researched my father's side of the family. One of the main reasons that I have not pursued my mother's side of the family is that the records, if any, were to be found in the "iron vaults" of the former Soviet Union. In addition, I was not certain that vital records were even maintained in Mosciska before World War I. Furthermore, I was not even certain if my grandmother's parents were even born in Mosciska. She refused to tell me anything about the family and so I only knew the names of my great-grandparents -- nothing more.


I cannot begin to express to you in words how much it means to me that you were able to locate over 40 documents on my Berg family from the Lvov archives. I was able to create a family tree out of these records. However, I was not certain how my branch of the family fit into the tree because I did not know my great-great grandfather's name. Until now my grandmother refused to give me this information. When I told her about your trip and I relayed to her portions of the Berg tree that I was able to put together, she gave in and told me that her grandfather was Abraham Hersch Berg. The mystery link was solved and I can now go back six generations on my Berg line. From the records that you located I was able to tell my grandmother that she was named after her paternal grandmother. I also learned the surnames of an additional five of my ancestors from Mosciska. Well, I guess with your help I can spend the next 10 years researching my mother's side of the family!

Accordingly, I am enclosing two authorization letters that you requested together with a pedigree chart for my grandmother showing how the additional surnames that I want

researched are related to me. In addition, I am enclosing a list of some of the documents that you previously photographed which I would like to receive photocopies and/or translated extracts.

Please call me if you have any questions. Bon voyage. I can't wait to see what you are able to uncover this time.

Forever indebted,


Jeffrey K. Cymbler

4 August 2017

To Whom It May Concern

It is a pleasure to write about Miriam Weiner and my professional experience with her.

In addition to Miriam having made a significant positive difference in the field of Jewish, especially Eastern European, genealogy, she has had a similar impact on my own genealogical research, and ultimately, on the life of my larger family, and on me.

In her publications, Miriam Weiner was the first to publicize the specific Jewish holdings of important European archives, something which the archives themselves had never done. By establishing those vital records publicly she created international accountability for them and thus stabilized those holdings for future researchers.

In the days before on-line availability of vital records from Poland and Austria-Hungary (my own ancestral lands), Miriam researched and supplied birth/marriage/death records that allowed my research assistant and me to discover family branches we had only vaguely suspected and to construct family trees we had only hoped possible. From there we were able to locate living descendants, numbering now in the hundreds, who formed the invitation list of our first international family reunion. Not all could attend, but 230 cousins did come from all over North America, Western Europe, and Israel. We gathered for a long weekend, many meeting each other for the first time. Miriam was a featured speaker at that reunion. Teenagers from different countries sat up half the night, intensely getting to know each other and integrating the surprise that they were blood relatives and members of the same fascinating, international family.

After that reunion the family changed forever in a way never imagined. We now see ourselves through cosmopolitan eyes. We continue to meet periodically in the States and in Israel, all stemming from that early work made possible by Miriam's help in locating and supplying essential, basic documentation.

Several years after beginning work with Miriam and the first international family reunion, she then changed me and my own view of family and self. She arranged a trip for me and a friend to visit all the ancestral towns and villages in Western Ukraine where various family branches had lived. She engaged an excellent driver of a comfortable van and a multi-lingual guide experienced in working with American tourists. Through the guide we met with local mayors, town officials and numerous villagers. He translated skillfully so conversations were accurate, rapid and easy. And, he was a competent video photographer.

We now have videos of all the family's ancestral towns and many interviews with older people who, as children, remembered Jews from before the war. Several even told us about some members of our family before the Holocaust and pointed out houses where they had lived.

In all we traveled to 32 towns, met and photographed countless locals. Thanks to Miriam, I remain deeply impacted to this day by the experience. Like my larger family after their first reunion, I too never saw my world in the same way again.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "William H. Fern". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

William H. Fern, Ph.D.



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August 2, 2004

Miriam Weiner,
President
Routes to Roots
136 Sandpiper Key
Secaucus, NJ 07094

Dear Miriam:

Barely two months ago, Peter Geffen suggested that I contact you about planning a tour to the Ukraine with eight members of my family to visit our ancestral town of Vinnitsa. Although you were leaving within a few days for Ukraine yourself, you were able to schedule a meeting with me and my son, Peter Joseph. During that meeting, it was clear that we were referred to THE correct person. Your pre-planning involved the Ukraine visas, van rental in Ukraine, hotel accommodations in both Kiev and Vinnitsa and most important, arranging for your colleague, Vitaly Chumak to be our guide.

I cannot say enough about your preparations. Our group members did not arrive or depart at the same time and yet you arranged a smooth transfer to/from airports and even provided VIP service to the door of the plane! Traveling in the former Soviet Union is still unpredictable and at times uncomfortable, yet we felt or saw little of this personally, due to your special efforts.

Of course, safety is a primary concern in travel and during our entire trip there was never a moment that I was concerned about any member of my family. The drivers were careful, vehicles in excellent condition and Vitaly watched out for us as if we were his

Ms. Miriam Weiner

August 2, 2004

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own family. I know that you phoned at least daily to inquire if everything was OK and I appreciate knowing that you were in continual contact.

I particularly appreciate your efforts in providing food baskets in the Vinnitsa hotel and a huge suitcase full of food for the trip. You anticipated well that teenagers can eat at all times and, in fact, all of us at one time or another could be found inspecting/noshing from the "food cache."

The packet of information you provided to me before departure, which included general information about Ukraine, photographs, maps and specific information about the current Jewish community in Vinnitsa, as well as its history, was a very good preparation for the trip.

Returning to the "old country" to walk in the footsteps of our ancestors was long a dream of mine, based, in part, on stories told to me by my parents. During our time in Vinnitsa, we had meetings with various Jewish community members arranged by Vitaly prior to our arrival. During our local tour in the town, we were able to find specific places that my father had described to me many years ago. This experience was very satisfying and emotional for me and I am very grateful to you and Vitaly for arranging this. It was especially meaningful since I shared this with my children and grandchildren.

The research into my family tree that you have done in the United States has been amazing. I know more about my family in this short two months that I have known in all my life. I know you are scheduling archive research for our family in the Vinnitsa Archives during your next trip and my family is very excited in anticipation of what you will find.

Again, thank you for everything.

Cordially,


Marc Joseph

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June 26, 1997

Miriam Weiner, President
Routes to Roots
136 Sandpiper Key
Secaucus, N.J. 07094-2210

Dear Miriam,

Sandy and I want to thank you for preparing the trip of a lifetime for us. From the very first time that I saw you at the Genealogical Society meeting in Boston, I knew that you were the person to arrange our trip to our ancestral towns! You and your people handled the logistics of visiting Poland, Belarus and Ukraine flawlessly.

The advance archival research that you did for us about my family from Rohatyn and Knyazhnychi was instrumental in finding relatives in Israel and California. The property and vital records for these two towns proved to me that my Brodbar, Hirschenfang and Streichler families had been in those towns for at least 200 years.

The advance research you suggested was very fruitful. Your associate and our guide in Warsaw, Mariola, arranged for cemetery research and as a result, we found my husband's great-grandmother's grave in the Warsaw Jewish cemetery where we also found 9 other Krotenberg graves. This was a treasure trove that I'm still in the process of sorting out.

Mariola did some fabulous sleuthing when she found a woman in Lutowska who showed us a book about the town that listed my husband's mother's family and maps of the town in 1852. These maps showed the location of their houses. Mariola then tracked down the author of the book working in a nearby town and arranged a meeting for later in the day where we met and discussed the history of the area. The autographed book is one of the many items we brought home for the trip which directly relate to our family roots.

Both Mariola and her driver, Andrew were great. They made sure we had everything we needed. It was obvious that Mariola is very experienced both as a guide and working with American Jews. She is knowledgeable about Jewish sites and made sure we saw important historic places.

In planning our trip to Belarus and Ukraine, we knew it could be uncomfortable at times, but you prepared us and with the help of your staff we coped with it. Security was really foremost in our minds and I want you to know that your staff in the former Soviet Union were all that we had heard from previous clients and even more. Your associate, Vitaly (our translator and guide) and his driver, Slava were unsurpassed in all that they did with us and for us. We had requested advance trips to Rohatyn and Knyazhnychi which you and Vitaly did for us two months prior to

our arrival. The mayors were expecting us, greeted us warmly and did all they could to help us. Vitaly arranged for us to visit the archives in Minsk (Belarus) and Lvov (Ukraine) where we met with the head archivists. In Lvov, because of Vitaly's persistence, I got some additional records for my family and maps of both Ukraine towns showing houses where my family once lived. Seeing these archives and the actual record books was a special surprise for us. It was good to have the actual research done in advance, but it was fascinating to visit the archives and see the contrast between our modern facilities in America and the antiquated buildings and lack of modern technology they must endure there.

The car we used was a brand new Dodge Grand Caravan (mini-van) and was very comfortable. Vitaly carried snacks and drinks for us. My husband and I never felt unsafe or uncomfortable for a moment. Vitaly is a very charming, intelligent, resourceful man who could converse with us about any topic. He watched us always and was very concerned about our needs. Our mothers could not have done a better job of watching over us.

It was comforting that you contacted us in almost every place that we stayed and always called one of our children so that they knew what we were up to and where we were.

Aside from the genealogical aspects of the trip we enjoyed the privilege of talking extensively with 5 mayors. These were no-holds-barred meetings where no subject we were interested in was not explored. To give you an example of our experience: In the town of Rubli we woke the Mayor up on Sunday morning. When he came to his office to meet with us, Vitaly showed him how to work his new fax machine. The mayor invited us to lunch at his home where his charming wife made us cheese blintzes. In Lvov we had box seats at the opera where we saw "The Elixir of Love" by Donizetti sung in Italian and "The Barber of Seville" by Rossini sung in Ukrainian.

These days, many people think about traveling to the former Soviet Union to visit ancestral towns. We are so glad we decided to have "Routes to Roots" arrange this trip for us. You took care of the visas, planned our itinerary with us, arranged for us to be met at the airport and personally escorted through the entire trip. Vitaly took photographs and video for us, arranged cultural events in the evening at our request, and because this was our own private tour, we were free to make adjustments in the itinerary depending upon what we discovered in our ancestral towns. Political and economic conditions in these places create situations where having the right person with us saves a lot of time and potential problems. Because Vitaly is a former Mayor himself, he is able to communicate as a "colleague" with government officials.

My husband and I have traveled all over the world. This trip stands out as a highlight for so many reasons. It is clear that in this part of the world, we needed the personal service that your team provided. We would be happy to speak with anyone who is contemplating such a trip.

Joan M. Krotenberg

