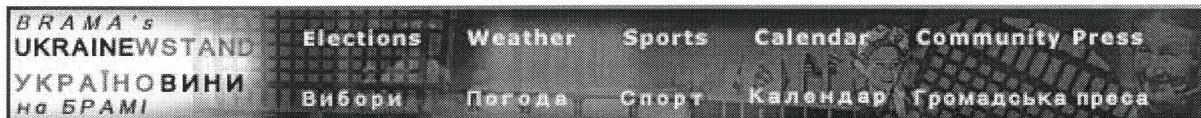


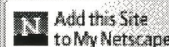
News from and about Ukraine & Ukrainians: Ukrainian Community Press Releases



Now we know where the **GOLD**
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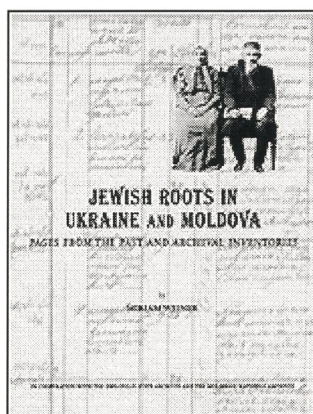


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Ukraine opens its archives and a new book is born



Author
Miriam Weiner



***Jewish Roots in
Ukraine and Moldova
Pages from the Past
and Archival
Inventories***

NEW YORK – Prior to Ukraine's independence, efforts to research one's past were severely restricted and to a great extent impossible due to the lack of publicly accessible information in the Soviet Union. One aspect of Ukraine's emergence as an independent nation is that access to archival information has greatly improved. Those whose roots bind them to this country can now learn about their heritage and trace their ancestral histories much more easily. One such quest to document a family history led author Miriam Weiner to Ukraine. Her extensive research resulted in the just published book titled Jewish Roots in Ukraine and Moldova, a publication which falls into several categories -- "reference book, travel guide, Holocaust history and genealogical handbook."

Ms. Weiner's book has been officially endorsed by Dr. Ruslan Pyrih, Director of the State Archives of Ukraine. Ms. Weiner spent 7 years working together with Dr. Pyrih and the previous director, Borys Ivanenko, and also with more than one hundred archivists throughout Ukraine to compile and decipher records that were heretofore not only classified, but poorly organized. According to Dr. Pyrih, Miriam Weiner was a tough taskmaster with high expectations that fostered an equally high level of professionalism in the archivists with whom she worked. He credits her efforts as an important contribution toward



*Foreign Minister Tarasyuk
accepts a copy of the book
from author Miriam Weiner at
the General Consulate of
Ukraine*

**ISBN: 0-9656508-1-2
(600 pages, 960 color
photographs, 20 color
maps, 115 document
examples), \$60.**



*General Consul
Bohaievsky speaks at
the Republic National
Bank reception*



*G.C. Bohaievsky and
V.R. Deputy Hennadiy
Udovenko at RNB*



credits her efforts as an important contribution toward improving the accessibility of the archives in Ukraine to all of us today.

Her recent whirlwind book launching tour in the New York area included a presentation by Dr. Pyrih at the Family History (Genealogy) Center of the Church of Latter Day Saints, a celebration and awards ceremony at the Republic National Bank, and a special reception in her honor at the Consulate of Ukraine in New York. At the Family History Center, Dr. Pyrih addressed a primarily Jewish audience about the current status of the archives throughout Ukraine. He explained that the vast majority of existing records have been transferred to regional archival centers (previously concentrated in the capital, Kyiv), except in the case of documents having national significance. That is to say, birth, marriage, death certificates and the like, are now found in the regional offices, typically the Oblast capital or possibly in the "raion" offices from which they originated. Also, Dr. Pyrih explained that records that had been salvaged (transported to Eastern Ukraine) from Western Ukraine during the Nazi occupation have been returned to the areas of origin, although sadly, many of those archives were lost during the conflict.

Dr. Pyrih was asked why the Ukrainian government has "refused to permit" the Church of Latter Day Saints (a.k.a., the Mormon Church) to film the archives and add them to its Family History Center databases. The Archives Director assured everyone that there is, in fact, no ban at all against anyone or any group in particular accessing and utilizing the archives in Ukraine -- they were and remain

completely accessible even to the Mormon archivers. However, a controversy did develop with respect to acquisition of records by the Mormons due to objections of a religious nature raised by certain groups in Ukraine. The Mormon belief system permits the "baptism" of dead ancestors as a means for those souls to attain entry into heaven.

Reluctance over having one's ancestor's religious affiliations compromised in any



*Dr. Ruslan Pyrih, Miriam
Weiner, Vitaly Chumak at the
Mormon Family History
Center*

Dr. Pyrih's comments about the
Ukrainian State Archives
as published in Jewish Roots

...
Ukrainian CP1251
Transliterated
English

H.E. Ambassador Ion Botnaru, Moldova at the Ukrainian Consulate



Foreign Minister Borys Tarasyuk and author Miriam Weiner at the Ukrainian Consulate

way have opened a polemic about the issue, and is a concern for any religious group. According to our sources, microfilming by the Mormons has continued unimpeded although the controversy remains unresolved.

If you happen to find yourself in Ukraine and wish to look up your family history on your own, Dr. Pyrih advises that you begin your search in the Oblast Archival Center that governs the area or town where you believe your family's roots to be. Researching is a painstaking and slow process even today because of the lack of technical aids. Unfortunately, the records are still kept in their original form in ordinary file folders, making research a labor-intensive procedure. Even something as basic as a birth certificate could take up to a week or two to locate. The staff at the Archival Centers take each request submitted, and literally do a manual search through the thousands of folders to find the desired item. Computers are desperately needed to speed up the process of finding the multitude of records that may be associated with a single family tree. Costs for record retrieval depend on the type of records requested, length of time spent on searching and on the success of the search. The rates have been standardized, according to Dr. Pyrih, and are publicly available at the individual Oblast archive offices. He highly recommends Miriam Weiner's book Jewish Roots in Ukraine and Moldova as a guide for anyone searching for their family history.

But, you needn't necessarily travel to Ukraine to conduct your research, according to Consul Bohdan Yaremenko in New York. For a small fee, any Ukrainian consulate (go to the Consulate website for contact information, or the

Government of Ukraine page for locations in your area) can help you with your application for information. You may need assistance, for example, with the names of towns which have often changed over time, transliterations and translations, and other information which they will send to the appropriate location in Ukraine for processing. If you are an *individual* searching for particular records such as a birth or marriage certificate, and you don't speak Ukrainian (or Russian), this may be the most practical and efficient option. The Consulate does not, however, offer general genealogical research.

Various dignitaries and members of the Ukrainian Diasporan community attended the ceremony held at the Republic National Bank on September 23rd, 1999. The evening of speeches, awards, cocktail reception and musical program was sponsored by the Joseph S. and Diane H. Steinberg and Republic National Bank as a celebration of Miriam Weiner's book, Jewish Roots in Ukraine and Moldova. Among the featured speakers were H.E. Ambassador Ion Botnaru, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Moldova to the UN, the Hon. Yuriy Bohaievsky, Consul General of Ukraine in New York, and Dr. Ruslan Pyrih. Special honors were given to Dr. Pyrih for his invaluable contribution towards the completion of the book, and to Ms. Weiner's indispensable and tireless friend and partner, Vitaly Chumak. Mr. Chumak, a Moldovan, has an



Miriam Weiner and General Consul Bohaievsky at RNB

uncanny ability to speak a multitude of languages with near perfect fluency. He currently conducts heritage tours with Ms. Weiner throughout Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus.

At an invitation-only reception at the Consulate of Ukraine in New York, Miriam Weiner was honored by Consul General Bohaievsky for her undaunted zeal in pursuing her goals despite the obstacles. In gratitude for the tremendous support and assistance given by Ukraine and Moldova towards the effort of compiling data for her book, Ms. Weiner presented copies of the new publication to Borys Tarasyuk, Foreign Affairs Minister of Ukraine, and to UN Ambassador Botnaru of Moldova. Among those present at the reception were Rabbi David Lincoln, a long-time friend of the Ukrainian-American community, Evhen Stakhiv and Stefa Charczenko of the Society of Ukrainian Jewish Relations (SUJR), Andrij Lastoweckyj of the Ukrainian American Coordinating Council and SUJR, Mykola Haliv of the Shevchenko Scientific Society in New York, and Oleksandr Burakovsky of SUJR.

For further information about the book and how to purchase it, please go to the Routes to Roots website.

A. Krill, BRAMA, Inc.,
October 8, 1999

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