

## The Central State Historical Archive in L'viv and Polish Genealogical Research

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In the Spring 2001 issue of *Rodziny* I read an account of one member's experience at a Ukrainian archive. I would like to provide another, more positive account, as well as to introduce an archive with relatively unknown resources available to genealogists researching Polish roots.

Last summer I revisited Ukraine to continue research, both at my ancestral villages Czeremosznia and Usznia (near Biały Kamień, about 35 miles east of L'viv), and at the Central State Historical Archive of Ukraine, in the city of L'viv—in Ukrainian *Центральный Державний Історичний Архів України, у місті Львові*, [*Tsentralnyi Derzhavnyi Istorychnyi Arkhiv Ukrayiny, u misti L'vovi*], also known by its acronym ЦДІАА (*TsDIAL*, pronounced “Tseh-dee-al”—henceforth I will refer to it as *TsDIAL*). Of course, such visits remain the epicenter of my research. In our ancestral village one realizes the product of one's work with great intensity and emotion. But the purpose of this article is to relate my experience at *TsDIAL*, describe the immense holdings pertinent to Polish genealogy, and report on ways to obtain important documents.

First, do not make the mistake of thinking that an archive in Ukraine would have nothing to do with Polish genealogy. Before World War II, there were over 2 million ethnic Poles<sup>1</sup> living in the region of what is now western Ukraine. At that time, this region was called Eastern Galicia. Poland controlled the region from 1919 to 1939, which it divided into three provinces or *województwa*: *Lwowskie województwo*,

administrative center in Lwów, now Львів, L'viv; *Tarnopolskie województwo*, administrative center in Tarnopol, now Тернопіль, Ternopil'; and *Stanisławowskie województwo*, administrative center in Stanisławów, now Івано-Франківськ, Ivano-Frankivsk. Before that, from 1772 to 1919, the Austro-Hungarian Empire had ruled the area. Even under foreign rule, the Poles had ever-increasing power and influence in the Galician province. This is true even in the eastern half of Galicia, where Poles were the minority.

### Population figures based on Religion in 1910 Austrian Census<sup>2</sup>

(R. C. = Roman Catholic; G. C. = Greek Catholic)

	R.C.	G.C.	Jewish	Other
Province of Galicia	47%	42%	11%	
Eastern Galicia	25%	62%	12%	1%

These statistics illustrate the dynamic eastern Galician culture, as well as portray the potential and ever-present racial strife. (There are a number of English-language resources on the history of Eastern Galicia one can read. Only I caution the interested reader to keep an open mind and read the subject material from all viewpoints, i. e., Polish, Ukrainian and Jewish, in order to get a proper understanding.) One need know only a little history to see how intertwined the Polish and Ukrainian cultures are.

Specifically, that connection is centered in the city of L'viv, which currently lies close to the Polish border. L'viv, known as *Lwów* in Polish, *Lemberg* in German, *Leopolis* in Latin, and Львов, *L'vov*, in Russian, began its history as an important Polish cultural center in 1349, when Polish King Kazimierz the Great seized the city and surrounding region from the local Ukrainian prince. Even when the city was taken by the Austrian Empire in 1772 during the First Partition of Poland, L'viv remained Polish in character.

After Poland gained independence after the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire at the end of World War I, it controlled Eastern Galicia, and the Polish presence grew in L'viv/Lwów and the region. In 1931, the city's population was made up of 63.5% ethnic Poles, 24.1% Jews, and only 11.3% of Ukrainians<sup>3</sup>. In September 1939, however, L'viv's history would change forever. Soviet troops entered the city on

### 1907 Statistics for the city of L'viv/Lwów

By Religion:		By Language:	
Roman Catholic	82,597	Polish	120,634
Greek Catholic	29,327	Ukrainian	15,159
Jewish	44,258	German	20,409
Other	3,695	Other	759
Total	159,877	Total	156,961

September 22, 1939 and began setting up a repressive regime and conducting deportations to Siberia. In June 1941, Nazi Germany took over the city from the Soviets, but the terror continued. Most of the Jews and some nationalistic Poles and Ukrainians were sent to concentration camps. When the Soviets retook the city in 1944, they began resettling ethnic Poles from the city and surrounding region to western Poland, in territories annexed to Poland from Germany. Before World War II, there were over 2 million ethnic Poles living in L'viv and Eastern Galicia<sup>4</sup>—by 1959 there were only about 93,000 ethnic Poles remaining in this region of Ukraine.<sup>5</sup>

Today, L'viv, a city of almost 800,000, is considered the cultural capital of western Ukraine and is the center of Ukrainian nationalism. Whereas the eastern part of Ukraine, a country of 50 million, is largely Russified, L'viv and western Ukraine retain its Ukrainian spirit. Although Russian is understood by a majority of the city's population, Ukrainian is by far the predominant language.

The Central State Historical Archive of Ukraine in the city of L'viv (TsDIAL) is located in the heart of downtown L'viv, in what is known as the Old City. Most of the buildings in the Old City predate the 19th century, some going back as far as to the 16th century. Most of the streets are cobblestone. Don't let L'viv confuse you as a typical city of the former Soviet Union. In this, the heart of the city, you'll find architecture ranging from medieval to Renaissance to neo-classical. Wealthy Polish families invited architects and artisans from western Europe. For centuries Lwów/L'viv was a serious contender for the title of the most beautiful of Polish cities.

TsDIAL is located in the heart of the Old City, in what was the Bernardine Monastery. (To this day it is still sometimes referred to as the "Bernardine Archive"). Construction on the Bernardine Monastery began in 1600. The Austrian government opened the archive in 1784 as a central repository for the entire region. Its collection was boosted by adopting older existing documents from various nearby archives. Over the decades the collection grew and became an important resource center for the Austro-Hungarian province of Galicia, and that continued during the days of the Polish Republic, after World War I.



*A view of the Old City, with the Church of the Bernardines in the background.*

As you approach the Archive you sense the immense history of the city. As you pass through the thick medieval doors into the foyer you feel as though you are stepping back in time! You then must climb the large wooden staircase—its stairs warped and worn over time. As you get to the top there's a turn in the stairwell where you must bend down to continue through the low archway. Through the top doors you find a long wide hallway, dimly lit and musky. This creates the perfect atmosphere to research long lost relatives of centuries past!

The archive is perhaps the most accessible in all of the former U.S.S.R. Before Ukrainian independence, access to the archive for foreigners was restricted to relatively few scholars—and then most of the collection was still off-limits. During Soviet times, no one knew to what extent the church records had been maintained. When Ukraine first gained its independence, the archive's director, Dr. Orest Matsiuk, had the foresight to open the archive to the world. The wealth of documents, especially those of interest to genealogists, is astounding. After the untimely death of Dr.



*Panoramic view of the Old City of L'viv.*

Matsiuk, Dr. Diana Pelts took over management of the archive. She continues with the progress laid out by her predecessor. Today, the archive is open to genealogists who are researching their own families.

It is recommended that you write the Archive ahead of time before your arrival. This will give the archivists some time to prepare documents that might be of interest to you. Upon entering the Archive, you must meet with the Director, Dr. Diana Pelts. She is an extremely polite and knowledgeable person. She is fluent in Ukrainian, Russian and French, and has a pretty good knowledge of English.

Explain to the Director what interests you have, whether they are vital records, church records, maps or historical information on your ancestral villages. Tell her how long your trip will be and how often you plan on visiting the Archive. The Director will give you written permission, which you must bring to the reading room down the hall from her office. The extremely friendly and approachable staff will assist you in filling out request forms and explain the entire process of retrieving and returning documents.

There are a few important items to keep in mind. The official language of use in TsDIAL is Ukrainian, of course. However, the qualified staff will be able to work with you in Russian and Polish. If you don't

know any of these languages, it is recommended that you bring an interpreter.

Next, you must be very patient. If you've ever visited Eastern Europe or the former U.S.S.R., you know exactly what I mean; if you never have, you'll soon find out. Decades of the apathetic, state-run environment have left their mark on independent Ukraine. Mind you, once you get to know the Ukrainians, you'll find them to be most hospitable. But be aware of the position they are in. Although ecstatic about their independence and throwing off communism,

the people of L'viv are enduring very difficult economic times. Unemployment is very high. At the time of my trip, the average monthly salary was 50 US dollars. Keep in mind that prices, although lower than in the U.S., are exorbitant to the average Ukrainian. Customer service, although improved since Soviet days, is still in its infancy. And how can you blame them, with such salaries?!

The point of this discussion is to tell you that you'll need to give yourself a lot of time in the archive. My three weeks went by so fast that I didn't get to see everything I had planned. Keep your goals simple. Although there's an incredible amount of accessible documents, time is clearly your worst enemy. As the stacks are closed to visitors, only archival employees can retrieve documents. Expect a day or two for your request to begin to be filled. You will not get everything at once—which is not unreasonable. You all know how long it takes to pour through records or scroll microfilms! But imagine yourself carefully flipping through the actual record books!

Be patient with the staff. Be extremely kind to the staff! They work long, hard hours, with low pay under poor economic conditions. Their passion for history and preservation is strong. They do not need harassment from demanding foreigners. Patience and kindness go a long way.

Once you've gained permission from the Director to research at the Archive and you've introduced yourself to the staff in the reading room, you should ask to see the card catalog room. The card catalog is divided first by type of document, then by village or town. If you're interested in vital records kept by the church, ask to see the indices—there's one for the Roman Catholic archdiocese and one for the Greek Catholic archeparchy. A decree set forth by the Austrian government in 1784 stated that the Catholic church—specifically the Catholic parish priest—was assigned to keep records of births, deaths and marriages. A copy of these record books was to be made and supplied to the bishop's office. You'll find in the archive either the original or copy, or even both, for various villages. Lutherans began their own record keeping in 1849, while the Jews had to wait until 1868 for their rabbis to keep official documents.

Keep in mind that Roman Catholic and Greek Catholics often intermarried. In 1927, over 16% of the marriages in Eastern Galicia were of such mixed marriages.<sup>6</sup> In certain parts of the region, the average was much higher. Thus it is a very good idea to check both these churches' books when researching your relatives.

One should know the general structure of the archival cataloging system. This will help you understand how material is kept by the archivists and, most importantly, how to fill out request forms.

Фонд – *Fond*  
Опис – *Opys*  
Справа – *Sprava*  
Аркуш – *Arkush*

The largest grouping is called a *fond*, plural *fondy*. Some *fondy* are rather extensive and contain thousands of books or documents. Within a *fond* there are sub-groupings called *opysy* (plural); within each *opys* are sub-groupings called *spravy* (plural). The smallest unit in the archival system is the *arkush*, plural *arkushy*; an *arkush* can be one page of a book, one single map in a series of maps, one letter in a writer's collection. *Arkushy* are grouped together in a *sprava*. Several like *spravy* are grouped into an *opys*. And several like *opysy* are grouped in a *fond*. When you are researching at TsDIAL, it is good to keep

this structure in mind. Of course, the staff will be there to help.

The vital records of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese are found in *Fond* 681, together with all documents pertaining to the Roman Catholic church. *Opys* 2 is the specific grouping of all vital records—the birth, marriage, and death record books kept by the church. Each bound book of records (called a metrical book, in Ukrainian *метрична книга*, *metrychna knyha*, in Polish *metryczna ksiązka*) is a separate *sprava*—and there are over 2,600 *spravy*. Some of these *spravy* contain over 200 *arkushy* or pages.

Vital records of the Greek Catholic Church are kept in *Fond* 201, *Opys* 4a. There are also well over 7,000 *spravy* or parish books in this collection. At the time this article was written, the Family History Library has already microfilmed 35% of the Greek Catholic parish registers. (The most recent information on this collection of microfilms can be found in the East European Genealogical Society's publication, *East European Genealogist*, Volume 9, Number 3).

### Cadastral Records

Another great resource for the genealogist is the collection of cadastral records and maps. There are several different types of these documents that are often confused. Two surveys were commissioned by the Austrian crown upon first gaining control of the region. The Josephinian Cadastral Survey, taking place between 1785 and 1788, is found in *Fond* 19. A second survey, the Franciscan Cadastral Survey, compiled between 1819 and 1820, is found in *Fond* 20. Although a detailed description of each of these is beyond the scope of this article, I would like to provide you with an overview of a third cadastre.<sup>7</sup>

The cadastral maps and documents are actually a series of maps and related documents for a particular village or town produced at different points through the 19th century and into the early 20th century. For example, the village of Білий Камінь, Bilyi Kamin' (Polish name *Biały Kamień*) had cadastres drawn up for 1844, 1850, 1879, and 1905. They were commissioned for legal purposes, to prove land ownership. The maps and documents may cover a period of several years.

Fortlaufende Nummer.	Benennung der Section.	Des Eigentümers.		Anmerkung.
		Haus Nr.	Name, Stand und Wohnort.	
17	4		<u>Gulka Kazimir 74 Lufman</u> <u>von Czeremosznia</u>	
	VI	49	50 51 57 58 66	
	III	426		
	I-III	427 428		
	I	429		
	III	472		
	III-IV	472 571		
	D-IV	612 662		
	VI	661		
	III	712 800 812		
	VI	994 1102 1104		
	IV	1112 1112		
	V	1171		
	V-IX	1172		
	IX	1205 1206 1224 1217 1218		
	IX-III	1295		

Sample cadastral records from TsDIAL for the village of Czeremosznia. Above is an 1844 cadastre listing of land-owners showing all plots owned by each one—in this case, by Kazimir Gulka, house #4. Below, a listing by last name, first name, and house number of Land- und Haus-Besitzer (land- and house-owners); Kasko/Kazimir Gulka is the 5th entry from the top. Note that the information is in German.

Land- und Haus-Besitzer							
Nummer	Nachname	Vorname	Haus Nr.	Stand	Wohnort	Grundbesitz	Andere Bemerkungen
1	Siza	Petro	27	Landbesitzer	Czeremosznia		
2	Siza	Petro	28	Landbesitzer	Czeremosznia		
3	Grabowski	Josif	64	Landbesitzer	Czeremosznia		
4	Gulka	Kazimir	4	Landbesitzer	Czeremosznia		
5	Gulka	Kazimir	4	Landbesitzer	Czeremosznia		
6	Gulka	Kazimir	4	Landbesitzer	Czeremosznia		
7	Gulka	Kazimir	4	Landbesitzer	Czeremosznia		
8	Gulka	Kazimir	4	Landbesitzer	Czeremosznia		
9	Gulka	Kazimir	4	Landbesitzer	Czeremosznia		
10	Gulka	Kazimir	4	Landbesitzer	Czeremosznia		
11	Gulka	Kazimir	4	Landbesitzer	Czeremosznia		
12	Gulka	Kazimir	4	Landbesitzer	Czeremosznia		
13	Gulka	Kazimir	4	Landbesitzer	Czeremosznia		
14	Gulka	Kazimir	4	Landbesitzer	Czeremosznia		
15	Gulka	Kazimir	4	Landbesitzer	Czeremosznia		
16	Gulka	Kazimir	4	Landbesitzer	Czeremosznia		
17	Gulka	Kazimir	4	Landbesitzer	Czeremosznia		
18	Gulka	Kazimir	4	Landbesitzer	Czeremosznia		
19	Gulka	Kazimir	4	Landbesitzer	Czeremosznia		
20	Gulka	Kazimir	4	Landbesitzer	Czeremosznia		
21	Gulka	Kazimir	4	Landbesitzer	Czeremosznia		
22	Gulka	Kazimir	4	Landbesitzer	Czeremosznia		
23	Gulka	Kazimir	4	Landbesitzer	Czeremosznia		
24	Gulka	Kazimir	4	Landbesitzer	Czeremosznia		
25	Gulka	Kazimir	4	Landbesitzer	Czeremosznia		
26	Gulka	Kazimir	4	Landbesitzer	Czeremosznia		
27	Gulka	Kazimir	4	Landbesitzer	Czeremosznia		
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35	Gulka	Kazimir	4	Landbesitzer	Czeremosznia		
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98	Gulka	Kazimir	4	Landbesitzer	Czeremosznia		
99	Gulka	Kazimir	4	Landbesitzer	Czeremosznia		
100	Gulka	Kazimir	4	Landbesitzer	Czeremosznia		

It is difficult to determine the strategy behind the Austrian government commission on making the cadastral maps. Previous articles on the subject suggest that the maps were done in intervals. First, a rough drawing was made of the village, indicating various houses and plots of land. A second map was drawn based on the original rough sketch; the names of the owners were written out right on the particular plot. A final map was made in color. However, the actual names of owners were replaced by numbers. The series of accompanying documents must be used in order to fully understand these maps. I've found these documents sometimes completed several years after the maps. One document lists each number on the map and its equivalent house number.

Don't assume that the number on the map is the house number you've seen on vital records. (As those of you familiar with Galician record-keeping from the Austrian period already know, house numbers were usually supplied by the priest for each birth, marriage and death record.) Another document lists each head of household in alphabetical order with the numbered plots of

*Kreis Zolochow* *Staroborski & Bialy Kamien* *24*  
*Amende Czeremosznia*

*Häuserverzeichnis*  
*abzumachen* *Seconde*

der Hausbesitzer					
Haus-Nr.	Nachnamen	Vornamen	geborene	Eigenschaft	Abzumachen
1	Percynybede	Johann	Johanna	geborene	
2	Sachowski	Janko	Johanna	geborene	
3	Gulka	Wawrzyn	Wawrzyn		
4	Gulka	Kasko	Kasko		
5	Rudnicki	Janko	Johanna	geborene	
6	Dubowy	Kubko	Kubko	geborene	
7	Sachowski	Janko	Johanna	geborene	
8	Gulka	Janko	Johanna	geborene	
9	Koryeay	Janko	Johanna	geborene	
10	Dubowy	Maryen	Maryen		
11	Rudy	Janko	Johanna	geborene	
12	Percynybede	Michal	Michal	geborene	

*amende*

At left is a third 1844 cadastral document preserved at TsDIAL for Czeremosznia (or as it's called in these records, Czeremosznia). This Häuserverzeichnis (list of houses) gives Hausbesitzer (house-owners) arranged by house number, followed by Zunamen (last names) and Vornamen (first names), given first in their forms in der russ. Sprache (in Ukrainian) and then in their forms in der deutschen Sprache (in German). Kasko/Kazimir Gulka is listed under house #4. The fifth column is for Eigenschaft, character or nature of ownership.

land and houses owned. Another document lists each plot of land and its owner, which is listed by plot number. These cross-referenced documents can be quite large, depending on the size of the village.

I must relate my own personal experience with using these cadastral maps. I found the house numbers from vital records I looked at earlier. I cross-referenced these house numbers with the plot number that appears on the map. From there I went directly to the final version colored map and found the plot in relation to the street, church and other landmarks. The staff of TsDIAL made excellent black-and-white copies for me.

The next day I took a train out to my ancestral village of Czeremosznia, located about 35 miles east of L'viv and about 3 miles north of Zolochiv, next to the town of Bilyi Kamin' on the road between Zolochiv and Olesko. Armed with photocopies of the maps, I set to searching for the homes of my relatives! Unfortunately, the houses in one section of the village, including the house of my grandfather, were destroyed shortly after World War II to make room for the collective farm. I did, however, see the land of both my great-grandmother and great-grandfather. In Czeremosznia, a rural village of only about 300 people today,

very little has changed from when the maps were first drawn in 1844. Villagers were amazed at how I was pointing out where families had lived—in most cases, the land was still owned by the same family! Although the houses were new, the land on which they stand has stayed in the these families for generations!

### Using TsDIAL Resources

Now, the first thing you'll ask yourself when reading this article is how to take advantage of all that TsDIAL has to offer. The three usual choices available to genealogists apply. One can 1) visit TsDIAL and research in person, 2) hire a researcher to do the work for you for pay, or 3) contact TsDIAL yourself by mail (the address is on page 16). My experience proves that the most efficient and rewarding way is to visit the archive in person, if possible.

Hiring a researcher is often a critical question for any genealogist. If you do go this route, please research your options very carefully. Get as much feedback from other clients as possible. Most importantly, if you think there's something "fishy" about a hired researcher, go with your instincts before losing a lot of time and money.

The third option of researching through the mail is relatively new to Ukraine and



should be explained. When conducting research via the mail with TsDIAL, you must keep the following points in mind.

First, the mail service is not always the most reliable. Although I personally have never had a problem with lost mail, I have heard others' negative experiences—tales of mail lost, both Ukraine-bound and North America-bound, and reports of mail being opened and tampered with. There's no way to avoid these inconsistencies without having someone traveling to Ukraine mail the letter for you from within the country.

Also, never send money in the mail. As TsDIAL's Director states in the interview on page 15, the Archive has an account to which you can wire the fees; some, however, have reported having difficulties with this account number. At the time of the interview, Dr. Pelts told me that they have been successfully receiving money wired to their account. Such inconsistencies serve as examples of the condition of doing business in Ukraine.

This is not meant, however, to discourage you from researching in Ukraine. My words of advice are meant to caution you to be patient, but persistent. The interview with Dr. Pelts explains in detail the costs and process of mail inquiries.

I invite you to research in Ukraine. The time has never been better. Ukraine is a beautiful and resource-rich country. Although enduring post-Soviet effects of high unemployment, low wages and critical shortages, the people are warm and friendly. Everyone I met made me feel at home, offering me extravagant meals and entertainment. Their love of their country is evident by their enthusiasm in showing you the best Ukraine has to offer!

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Skrzypek, Stanisław. *The Problem of Eastern Galicia*. London. 1948. These figures are from the 1931 census.

<sup>2</sup> Rudnytsky, Ivan L. "The Ukrainians in Galicia Under Austrian Rule," from *National Building and the Politics of Nationalism: Essays on Austrian Galician*. Editors Andrei S. Markovits and Frank E. Sysyn. Harvard University Press. 1982.

<sup>3</sup> Skrzypek, Stanisław, *op. cit.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> Magocsi, Paul Robert. *Galicia: A Historical Survey and Bibliographic Guide*. University of Toronto Press. 1983, page 225.



Above is a fourth cadastral document from the TsDIAL collection for Czeremosznia/Czeremusznia: an actual map of the village, with individual plots drawn and numbered.

(Figures from various sources give conflicting exact data. This inconsistency is based on the various ways statistics were kept, either by ethnicity, religion, primary language.)

<sup>6</sup> Skrzypek, Stanisław, *op. cit.*

<sup>7</sup> A detailed report on these first two cadastres, John-Paul Himka's "A Neglected Source For Family History in Western Ukraine: The Josephinian and Franciscan Land Cadastres," can be read in *East European Genealogist*, the publication of the East European Genealogical Society: Volume 1, Number 2. An extremely detailed article concerning the third cadastre, written by John D. Pihach and entitled "Galician Cadastre Maps: Land Surveys of 1849 and 1874," accompanied by samples of maps and documents, can be read in the same publication, Volume 2, Number 4.

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**An Interview with Dr. Diana Pelts,  
Director, TsDIAL (Central State Historical  
Archive of Ukraine—City of L'viv)**

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*[The interview was conducted by Matthew Bielawa on July 4, 2000. The questions by Mr. Bielawa are marked MB, and answers by Dr. Pelts are marked DP].*

**MB:** When was the archive first founded?

**DP:** The archive was founded in 1784. The Austrian government, which had just gained control of Galicia, mandated that a section of the Bernardine Monastery be made into an archive. Documents from villages and towns in the entire region were to be centrally located here.

**MB:** What are the earliest documents you have?

**DP:** The first floor contains documents from the city [городський, *horods'kyi*, in Ukr.] and village [земський, *zems'kyi*, in Ukr.] courts. The documents range from 1423 to 1784. Books of the L'viv Magistrate range from 1382 to 1787. There exists a document from 1224 made from animal skin, which is so thick that it is still in good condition. The oldest document in the collection, made from tree bark, dates back to the 11th century.

**MB:** How large is the entire collection?

**DP:** There are over 12 kilometers of documents.

**MB:** What kind of documents do you have pertaining to Polish genealogy?

**DP:** The main source is the metrical books (*Author's note: church record books. See article.*) There are 2,600 Roman Catholic metrical books in all, ranging from 1600 to 1948. There are over 3,000 villages and towns represented in the collection. However, a majority of the books are from the mid-1700's to the beginning of this century. From 1948, there are, for example, only 3 books. Within this collection there are more than just birth, marriage, and death records. For instance, there are documents which pertain to the changing of one's religion, or Catholic rite. Also, there are documents from educational institutions, including lists of teachers and students. Such lists often include their birth date and places. In such collections, there are also certificates of graduations, diplomas and personal files.



**MB:** What is the progress of the LDS microfilming of the Greek Catholic (a.k.a. Ukrainian Catholic) records?

**DP:** The Mormons are currently microfilming. They've been microfilming for the past 5 years. So far they have completed less than half of the Greek Catholic metrical books. (*Author's note: currently, the first 2,607 out of the 7,401 books, or 35%, are available on microfilm through the Family History Library*). The process is very slow going. First of all, the records are in such bad condition—the pages and bindings are delicate. Some books are stained and damaged by water. In addition, there are different color inks and pages used over the years. All this makes it difficult to shoot quality, readable film. Secondly, the technical equipment is expensive to run and there is limited staffing. Currently, there's only one operator of the machine, an employee of the archive. There isn't enough money at the archive to hire more operators and quicken the pace of the filming.

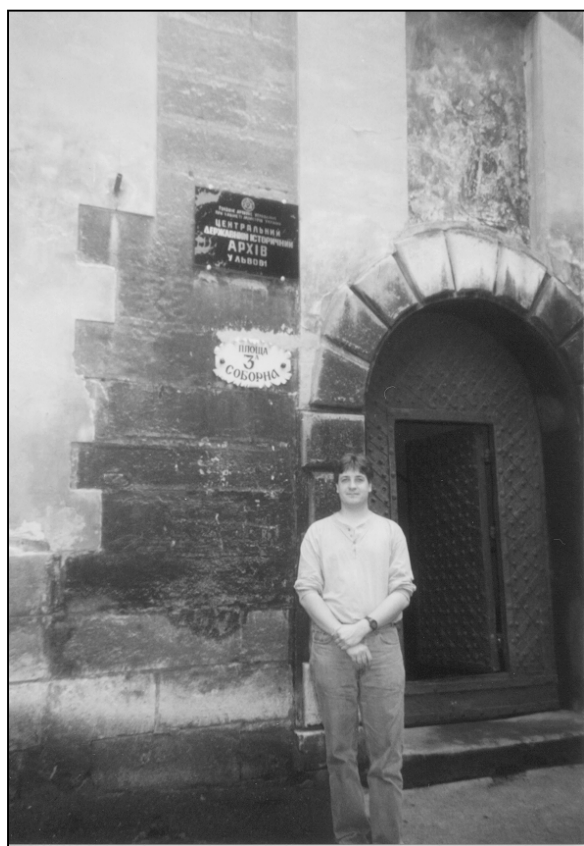
**MB:** What is the status of microfilming the Roman Catholic records?

**DP:** Currently we are not microfilming the Roman Catholic metrical books, but concentrating on the Greek Catholic ones. We plan on microfilming the Roman Catholic books after we complete the Greek Catholic ones.

**MB:** Can genealogists write to TsDIAL to request information and photocopies of documents?

**DP:** Yes, of course. The person can write in any language he wishes, including Polish and English. The only problem is that the response will be in Ukrainian. My staff will





*Matthew Bielawa stands at the entrance to the Archive. Its address is:*

**Центральний Державний Історичний Архів у Львові  
290008, Львів - 8  
пл. Соборна 3-а  
УКРАЇНА**

do research for the person. Of course, it will help if you have information such as names, places or dates. The more information you have, the lower the cost of the research. For example, one can write for research on an entire family to make a complete family tree. We'll write down all the names, places and dates of births, marriages and deaths. And if we don't have any information, we'll give you advice on where to go. We'll also make photocopies of records. Of course, only if the books are in good condition.

I suggest that an interested person first send a letter including as much information as they know in regard to names, places, which is most important, and dates. We'll reply as to what we have and determine payment. The current pricing, which may change, is \$5 an hour for research, \$10 an hour for photocopies. The average cost is \$75-\$100 per research request. These costs may change based on the performance of the Ukrainian economy.

And of course, one can come to L'viv and visit the archive for research, like you! L'viv is such a beautiful and historic city!

*Author's note: I'd like to express my sincere thanks to Dr. Diana Pelts and her entire staff for making my visit to their Archive comfortable and extremely enriching. My research was a complete success due to their persistence and hard work. 🍀*