



Researching Our German Roots in Poland and the Russian Empire

EWZ: What is it, will it help my genealogical research, and how do I access and understand these records?

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(40 minute drive from the

National Archives II, College Park, MD)

EWZ

1. What is it?
2. Will it help my genealogical research?
3. How do I access and understand these records?

EWZ – What is it?

Einwandererzentralstelle

Einwanderer – immigrant

Zentralstelle – center

Immigration Central Office

Some Helpful EWZ Vocabulary

Umsiedlung – resettlement

Warthegau – the region around the Warthe River in Posen where many Germans were resettled to

Stammblatt – ancestral page

durchschleusen – process through the system

Einbürgerung – citizenship

Einbürgerungsurkunde – certificate of citizenship

verschleppen – to displace (take away)

Kartei – index cards



- - - - Grenze Polens vor dem 01.09.1939
- - - - Grenze des Freistaates Danzig vor dem 01.09.1939
- Deutsch-Sowjetische Grenze gemäß dem Hitler-Stalin Pakt
- Ostgrenze des Deutschen Reiches bis 1918

Reichsgau Wartheland (1939 bis 1945)

How we got EWZ Records

- In 1945 as the war was ending US troops discovered a treasure-trove of documents related to activities of the Nazi party.
- Most documents provide details on members of the Nazi party, SS officers, and even personal information on Germans applying for various certificates (marriage, business, etc) = RuSHA series
- The EWZ records were included in this cache of documents.
- It is estimated 80,000 EWZ records may have been destroyed before the arrival of the US troops.
- All records were duplicated on microfilm which can be found at the Berlin Document Center and at the National Archives II in College Park, MD.

EWZ Microfilms

Full Applications (alphabetical)

EWZ 50 – USSR (pre-WW II boundaries)

EWZ 51 – Romania

EWZ 52 – Poland (includes Polish Volhynia & Galicia)

EWZ 53 – Baltic States

EWZ 5410 – Yugoslavia

EWZ 5420 – France

EWZ 5430 – Bulgaria

EWZ 57 – E/G Kartei series (alphabetical)

EWZ 58 – Stammbblätter (ancestral pages, usually includes a photo of the applicant)

EWZ Microfilms

Full Applications (alphabetical)

EWZ 50 – USSR 110K files on 843 films

EWZ 51 – Romania 82K files on 700 films

EWZ 52 – Poland 100K files on 701 films

EWZ 53 – Baltic States 73K files on 587 films

EWZ 5410 – Yugoslavia 23K files on 150 films

EWZ 5420 – France 14K files on 223 films

EWZ 5430 – Bulgaria 700 files on 6 films

EWZ 57 – E/G Kartei series (alphabetical)

EWZ 58 – Stammbblätter (ancestral pages & photos)

7,320 films total

Alphabetical Ordering of EWZ Records

Ordered in this sequence:

1. Last Name*
2. First Name
3. Date of Birth

* Married women filed under their married name.

EWZ – Will it help my genealogical research?

Did any of your relatives live in these locations at the outset of World War II ?

- Poland (eastern half)
- Soviet Union (western portions where Nazi troops progressed deep enough to reach them)
- Romania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Baltic States

EWZ – Will it help my genealogical research? (continued)

What if my ancestors moved to North America long before World War II?

- Did they have siblings, cousins, aunts/uncles, etc that remained in these regions of eastern Europe?
- Have you thought of hunting for long forgotten relatives your family lost contact with? Rare surnames can yield some interesting leads.
- Perhaps looking at people still residing in the towns your ancestors lived in may reveal new connections.

Who was processed through EWZ?

- Persons of primarily German descent (or in fortunate circumstances spouses of a German).
- Everyone 15 years or older was given a certificate of German citizenship. Children were recorded with their parents or guardians.
- The parents of all people processed are included on their Stammbblatt including birth dates, birth places, and death locations if applicable (either from records or by memory of the applicant).
- Later EWZ records from the USSR may also include grandparents.

How far back might you go in EWZ?

- The age of the applicant and when his/her parents were born is the determining factor.

Example: Year 1940 / age = 80 years
 $1940 - 80 = 1860$ (birthyear)

If the parents were 40 when he/she was born then

$1860 - 40 = 1820$

Note – this is an unusual case. Most families can go back to 1850s-1870s.

- How many generations can be found in one ancestral line?
3 generations are on the Stammblatt of applicants with families.
(applicant(s), parents, children)

If any parents were still alive then another generation will be given on the parents' Stammblatt. Very often 4 generations of genealogical information can be extracted from EWZ.

(grandparents, **parents**, **applicants**, children)

- Information on deceased children is normally not given.

EWZ - How do I access and understand these records?

Microfilm Access

- Family History Library (EWZ57 and 58 only)
- National Archives II, College Park, MD (everything)
- Berlin Document Center (everything but very restricted access)

Online Database Resources

- Odessa Digital Library (pre WW II Soviet Union, nearly complete)
- Galizean German Descendants (concentrates around Galicia but expands to other regions sporadically)
- SGGEE Master Pedigree Database – much of the Lublin area

(see <http://volhynia.com/res-ewz.html>)

Reliability of the Data?

Where can errors or inaccuracies be introduced in the data reported?

1. Transcription or typographical errors (particularly dates off by one digit)
2. Relying on the memory of an applicant (approximate dates or locations outside of their local area – often they may guess at locations)

Let's look at some EWZ records!!!

- An example of a card file (Kartei) from EWZ57
- Full application from Poland.
- Full applications from USSR.
- Examples: How trustworthy is this information?
 - birthdates that don't agree
 - "A Place by any other name won't Merge!"
- Live examples of searching online databases.
 - SGGEE Master Pedigree Database
 - <http://www.galiziengermansdescendants.org/>
(Go to the 1939 Resettlement Records > Resettlement Database)
 - Odessa Digital Library (ODL) (pre-WW II Soviet Russia)
<http://www.odessa3.org/search.html>
(See September 2008 issue of SGGEE Journal)