

Fire at the Kamenets Podolskiy Archives in Ukraine

UPDATE

(October 22, 2004)



ДЕРЖАВНИЙ КОМІТЕТ АРХІВІВ УКРАЇНИ

вул. Солом'янська, 24
м. Київ, 03110

Fax: 38(044)275-36-55,
38(044)275-34-44
Tel: 38(044)275-27-77
E-mail: mail@archives.gov.ua
Web: <http://www.archives.gov.ua>
Код ЄДРПОУ 00018490

STATE COMMITTEE ON ARCHIVES OF UKRAINE

24 Solomjan'ska str.,
Kyiv-110, Ukraine, 03110

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REPORT on the Identification, Restoration and Re-Construction of Documents Formerly located in the Kamianets Podilsky Archives By Hennadii Boriak, Director General State Committee on Archives of Ukraine

I have received numerous inquiries for an updated status report of the document devastation and destruction resulting from the tragic fire in the Kamenets Podolskiy Archives in April, 2003. I would like to report now on the extensive efforts to salvage and restore the surviving documents as well as efforts to reconstitute these documents from other sources.

As a result of this fire, the surviving books and all damaged documents were transferred to the State Archive of Khmel'nitsky while the former archives in Kamianets Podilsky has now been reorganized as a municipal city archive with no historical documents prior to c. 1980.

Immediately following the fire, we received extensive advice, cooperation and financial assistance from individuals and institutions worldwide. The most pressing and immediate problem was to process the «dried» documents which were heavily damaged by water. Some **two tons** of documents which were totally water-logged, were frozen in a standard process used by archivists and librarians in similar situations (floods, for example).

The defrosting process began six months after the fire and as a result, many documents were salvaged and completely dried.

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The title pages of the foregoing two groups of documents were lost and as a result, it is impossible to identify most of the documents by file number, geographic origin and type of document. The archivists are faced with the daunting process of re-creating the sections of each book by trying to identify the remnants, sometimes page by page. The second step is the restoration of the documents and the third step is to try to obtain copies of as many lost documents as possible from other archives.

We are pleased to announce the generous grant of \$27,196 in a recent contract signed between the U.S. Embassy in Kyiv and the State Archive of Khmelnytsky Oblast for restoration equipment. This restoration process involves the actual re-creating of documents is time-consuming, which we, of course, hope to complete as soon as feasible, but realistically could take a number of years

Additionally, documents not directly damaged by fire suffered other destructive elements and we are hopeful that these documents will be accessible sooner rather than later.

We are asking for assistance from **institutions, organizations, archives and individuals** who have received photo copies of any documents from this archive. We would appreciate receiving the best quality photo copy of any documents you may have. We will need identifying information for each document sent including: *Fond*, *Opis* and *Delo* numbers.

In case you have copies requested and are ready to send it to Ukraine, please write the identifying information on the reverse side of the document copy. Also, it would be helpful if you can provide page numbers and any other identifying information you may have for each page you submit. Please submit your material by mail and send to the address above:

Please inform us first of your mailing to: disaster@archives.gov.ua

Please provide your e-mail address with your submission so that we can acknowledge your submission. Your assistance will help us to re-constitute these files and the lost heritage for so many people throughout the world.

Hennadii Boriak

