

*Proceedings*

*of the*

*35<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention*

*of the*

**Association of Jewish Libraries**

*Washington, DC*

*June 18-21, 2000*



**Association of Jewish Libraries**

15 East 26<sup>th</sup> Street New York NY 10010-1579

**"ALL IS NOT LOST"**  
**PRESENTATION OF THE 1999 ASSOCIATION OF JEWISH LIBRARIES, RESEARCH  
AND SPECIAL LIBRARIES DIVISION REFERENCE BOOK AWARD**

**Presented by Robert Singerman**

**(Read by David Hirsch, Chair of the R&S Awards Committee, and Vice President and  
incoming President of the Research and Special Libraries Division; he also introduced both  
the presenter and recipient of the Reference Book Award)**

Miriam Weiner, *Jewish Roots in Ukraine and Moldova: Pages from the Past and Archival Inventories*. In cooperation with the Ukrainian State Archives And the Moldovan national Archives. Secaucus, N.J.: Miriam Weiner Routes to Roots Foundation; New York: YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, 1999.

It is my distinct pleasure to present the AJL Research and Special Libraries Division Reference Award. This year's award has been funded by Dr. Greta Silver. I would like to take this opportunity to thank her for her continued support of this important AJL award.

This year's award goes to Miram Weiner for her new book: *Jewish Roots in Ukraine And Moldova; Pages from the Past and Archival Inventories*.

The reader of Miriam Weiner's latest book, following by a mere two years her highly commendable *Jewish Roots in Poland*, is quickly overtaken by the author's deep sense of mission; indeed, a mission of both pilgrimage and rescue of records long-thought to have been destroyed in countless upheavals and pogroms culminating in the Jewish Holocaust. Turning the pages, we absorb the views of towns in Ukraine and Moldova that were once predominantly Jewish: the vintage reproductions of texts from documents, diplomas, passports, and the like, convey a rich sense of history of the lands where our ancestors once walked. Most of us will likely never visit the birthplace of a grandfather or grandmother, and even if one is not overtaken by a personal commitment to documents our family's genealogy, this new volume can very well function in an unintended way as a memorial book. As I'm sure Miriam will explain, Jews remain today in Ukraine and Moldova, though emigration to Israel and other countries has decreased the Jewish population in those countries. An all-important point is that these are functioning Jewish communities today, not just the destroyed cemeteries that are photographer here in abundance.

*Jewish Roots in Ukraine And Moldova*, with an emphasis on recording extant archival holdings in those countries, is by its nature a complex work involving a considerable amount of collaboration with local authorities and archivists. They assisted in the detailed process of identifying and describing the range of their documentary holdings, such as birth, marriage, and death records, in a variety of local languages depending on the shifting political boundaries over recent centuries. Given the obvious fact that archivists in Ukraine and Moldova need tools to control their collections, Miriam planned her work in cooperation with these specialists and even donated a fax machine to Ukraine's Main Archival Administration to facilitate the joint enterprise that we are celebrating today.

I only recently learned of Miriam's interesting past employment which has served her well in her genealogical research. She previously worked as a private investigator in Los Angeles, in addition to serving as road manager for Bobby Gentry.

We congratulate Miriam Weiner for the successful completion of this book, though the project, so important to family historians in particular, will continue as corrections and additions are made to her database. Thank you, Miriam, for your fine work over many years, and also for adding this most valuable book to our reference collections.

## **ACCEPTANCE OF 1999 ASSOCIATION OF JEWISH LIBRARIES RESEARCH AND SPECIAL LIBRARIES DIVISION REFERENCE BOOK AWARD**

**by Miriam Weiner  
Routes to Routes Foundation**

This award is very special to me because of the recognition from professionals who understand the significance of the book's subject matter. I am deeply grateful to the many Jewish librarians who have written to me about this book and particularly to you, the Association of Jewish Libraries, for giving me this award. I also want to acknowledge the co-publishers, the Routes to Roots Foundation and YIVO Institute for Jewish Research. Along the way, there were many mentors who provided encouragement and advice. I would like to thank Peggy Pearlstein, for her guidance in the early years. Both Pearl Berger and Adaire Klein have been very supportive of my work. I would particularly like to thank Zachary Baker for his many years of patience with my numerous questions and for sharing his vast knowledge with me.

As you may know, *Jewish Roots in Ukraine and Moldova* is the second book of the "Jewish Genealogy Series." The first book, entitled *Jewish Roots in Poland* is in a similar format and together, the books took ten years to research and publish. In 1989, I visited Poland for the first time and negotiated an agreement with the director of the Polish State Archives which would permit me to publish, for the first time, a town-by-town inventory of Jewish and civil records in that country's archives. In 1990, I traveled to Ukraine and Moldova which resulted in similar agreements.

For many years, there was this conception that "all the documents were destroyed in the Holocaust." This book goes a long way towards refuting this misconception with the archive inventories covering 1,400 cities and villages. I also understood that a reference book with only this data would have a limited audience. Therefore, I proceeded to expand the project to include 1,000 color photographs, more than 100 document examples, 20 color maps and chapters written by respected scholars, librarians and archivists throughout the world. I have an extensive collection of antique postcards of both town views and Judaic sites from before World War I. The books combine these old postcards with current views to provide the reader with a graphic picture of what was and what remains.

Many of you have asked about the working conditions in libraries and archives in the former Soviet Union. Electricity is a problem throughout this region and often there are so few light bulbs and with such low wattage that one must carry books over to a window and hope that the natural light is enough. Very little of this material has been microfilmed which makes the security issue even more

critical. Copy facilities are primitive when they exist at all. I am speaking here of Ukraine and Moldova specifically. With the exception of the Main Archival Administration in Kiev, it is difficult to find people who speak English. Of course, the limited finding aids are generally in Russian.

The actual research process for *Jewish Roots in Ukraine and Moldova* began in 1990 and culminated with publication last August. During these ten years, I traveled to these countries several times each year, often for two months at a time. I eventually bought an apartment in Ukraine where I could leave my computer, fax machine, scanner, copy machine, printers, etc. etc. For many years, hot water, heat and electricity were rationed and never knew when or if I would have any or all of these items that we take for granted. Now, I have a new electric hot water heater in my apartment there that is wonderful. Of course, this is all depending upon the electricity which goes off and on regularly.

Learning how to live and function in a world so unknown to me would not have been possible without the tremendous cooperation of so many. I am very grateful to archivists and librarians throughout both countries who shared their knowledge and verified this material for the book. During these ten years, I have visited literally hundreds of towns and villages there and was overwhelmed with the hospitality and cooperation I encountered everywhere.

The Routes to Roots Foundation has contributed 75 copies of the book to various archives, libraries and Jewish organizations throughout Ukraine and Moldova. I am hoping to find sponsorship for an additional 100 books to be distributed to Jewish communities in both countries. I was so surprised to see how interested Jewish community leaders in small towns were in this book. These people have serious concerns such as pensions not being paid for months, a shortage of fuel, electricity, medical supplies and always not enough money. I never anticipated they would have such a hunger for these old photographs and an intense interest in archive documents about their Jewish heritage.

My acknowledgments in the book cover four full pages in small type and every person or institution named there made a valuable contribution. I am grateful to every one of them and they share this award with me. Thank you again, all of you, for this wonderful honor.