How to Search and Understand
the EWZ Records on the Odessa Library

By Karl Krueger

Einwandererzentralstelle (EWZ) was an organization instituted by the Nazi regime to facilitate repatriation and resettlement of ethnic Germans from other countries in Europe just before and during World War II. Near the end of the war these records, along with many other secret records of Nazi officials, SS members, and other military matters were discovered and confiscated by American troops. The entire collection of EWZ records is available on microfilm at the US National Archives II in College Park, Maryland. A subset of these films can be accessed through the Family History Library. Genealogists who have relatives that were processed through EWZ can benefit greatly through research of these records. An extensive set of EWZ films have been indexed and deposited in the Odessa Digital Library. The data contained in this database covers almost in its entirety EWZ records arising from Soviet Russia (based on its pre-World war II boundaries) with nominal sporadic coverage of Romania and the Baltic states.

EWZ Background

For someone to be processed through EWZ they would have to demonstrate German ethnicity and be resettled from their residence to a location within the occupied German boundaries of that time. Sometimes Germans with spouses of other nationalities were permitted to resettle together. EWZ was active from late 1939 until early 1945. Germans from different countries were assimilated at different periods during this time. For example, the Baltic states have the earliest EWZ records. These are followed chronologically by Polish Volhynia and then eastern Poland as most of this country was seized by Nazis in the earliest stages of World War II with Soviet Russia taking possession of Polish Volhynia. The nonaggression pact between Hitler and Stalin thus allowed the ethnic Germans from Polish Volhynia to be granted safe entry into the hands of the Reich. As German troops would progress through eastern Europe additional countries or regions would follow with the resident ethnic Germans being processed through EWZ. Germans from Soviet Russia are among the latest EWZ applicants because this represents the furthest extent that the German troops advanced into eastern Europe.

EWZ applications are available for Germans still alive behind the front lines of the German troops when EWZ was able to access them. Their parents or sometimes even grandparents can be found among their records. If someone had died or was deported to Siberia prior to this, a EWZ application for them will not be found, although their name may still be found among the records of other family members who had filed through EWZ. In general, Germans living east of the Volga River will not be found since the Axis forces did not penetrate that deep into Russia.

EWZ Microfilms

At the National Archives II the EWZ microfilms are organized by different series, but references to only several of these series will be found in the Odessa Library. The series are specified as EWZ50 to EWZ58 and in Odessa one will find references to EWZ50, 51, 53, 57, and 58. It is important to first describe how these series are organized and what distinguishes them.

The most informative series are EWZ50 – EWZ54. These contain full applications from each person and are ordered alphabetically by surname / given name and then by birth date. Each series corresponds to the country of origin from which the Germans were being resettled as listed below:

EWZ50 – Pre World War II Soviet Russia
EWZ51 – Romania
EWZ52 – Pre World War II Poland (includes Polish Volhynia)
EWZ53 – Baltic states
EWZ54 – Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and Romania
EWZ58 contains Stammblaetter (ancestral pages) organized chronologically in the order people were

registered through EWZ. These pages are usually accompanied by a photograph of the applicant. These records have a wealth of familial information covering two to four generations including birth dates/locations, death locations for parents if deceased, and marriage data for husband and wife of the primary family concerned. The Stammblatt for each applicant should still be represented in series EWZ50-EWZ54 if the full application is present. In principle, any record within EWZ58 should be found in series 50-54, but there are rare instances where a Stammblatt is found in only one of these collections.

Another series worthy of mention is EWZ57 despite the fact that it provides little information of significance to this report and limited information of value to the genealogist. This series is ordered alphabetically by name without respect to country of origin. In EWZ57 one will only find cards used during the filing process describing physical features of the individual, indications of the presence of other relatives still alive, and the applicant's corresponding Stammblatt number.

Only series EWZ57 and EWZ58 films can be ordered through the Family History Library. If you restrict yourself to using Family History Library resources you would have to first order the EWZ57 film that contains the person of interest, determine their Stammblatt number, and then order the corresponding EWZ58 film. This process would take minimally weeks and usually months before ancestral information is obtained. At the National Archives this can be completed in a matter of minutes. Furthermore, records on films from series EWZ50-54 must be obtained at the National Archives or from another source that has purchased a copy of a particular film from the National Archives.

Because the Odessa Library concentrates on Germans from Russia, the EWZ database includes primarily EWZ50 and some information from EWZ51 and EWZ53. EWZ52 information is not included in the Odessa Library as of yet so Germans from Polish Volhynia will not be found in this database. Some references to EWZ57 and EWZ58 files can also be found in the Odessa Library. Note that a EWZ58 film reference would directly indicate which film one could order from the Family History Library to find the respective Stammblatt.

To gain a broader understanding of EWZ review the website hosted by Dave Obee (http://www.volhynia.com/ewzmain.html) which discusses in greater detail beyond the scope of this article, many important aspects one should be familiar with in researching EWZ records. An index of EWZ57 and EWZ58 records is also provided at this website providing a convenient online resource for those wishing to order films from the Family History Library.

Anatomy of the Stammblatt
The Stammblatt is one of the most important components of the EWZ. Throughout the entire time span that EWZ was active essentially two categories of Stammblatt formats are observed. During the early years the only format used was completely typewritten on a blank page. The Figure for Stammblatt 772495 shows one such example. To anyone who understands German this page is immediately understandable except for some EWZ coding and notations. Every repatriated person 15 years of age and older should have a Stammblatt. The example provided here shows the Stammblatt for Wassili (Vassili) Shawtschenko as the head of his household. The top lines of information list his marital status, occupation, birth date/birthplace, and religion (in this case orthodox). The next grouping states where his current citizenship was at this time (prior to EWZ filing) and his marriage date/place. Following this, information on his parents is provided including birth & death details. Next his wife is listed with the same level of information followed by her parents. Note that Vassili's wife is Roman Catholic (indicated as r.k.). Finally all their dependent children are included. Towards the bottom this form shows that this family was first registered in EWZ on 9 Nov 1943 at a local station (Kirowograd) near their home and later this application was fully processed on 19 Jan 1944 in Litzmannstadt (Lodz). Note that the daughter Regina, just short of her 15th birthday, was also given a Stammblatt number at this time (772497). The mother/wife has her own Stammblatt corresponding to number 772496. If the entire family filed at the same time the Stammblatt numbers for each family member normally are contiguous. If the father or any children were filed at a different time

then their Stammblatt number(s) would be assigned separately based on their time of filing.
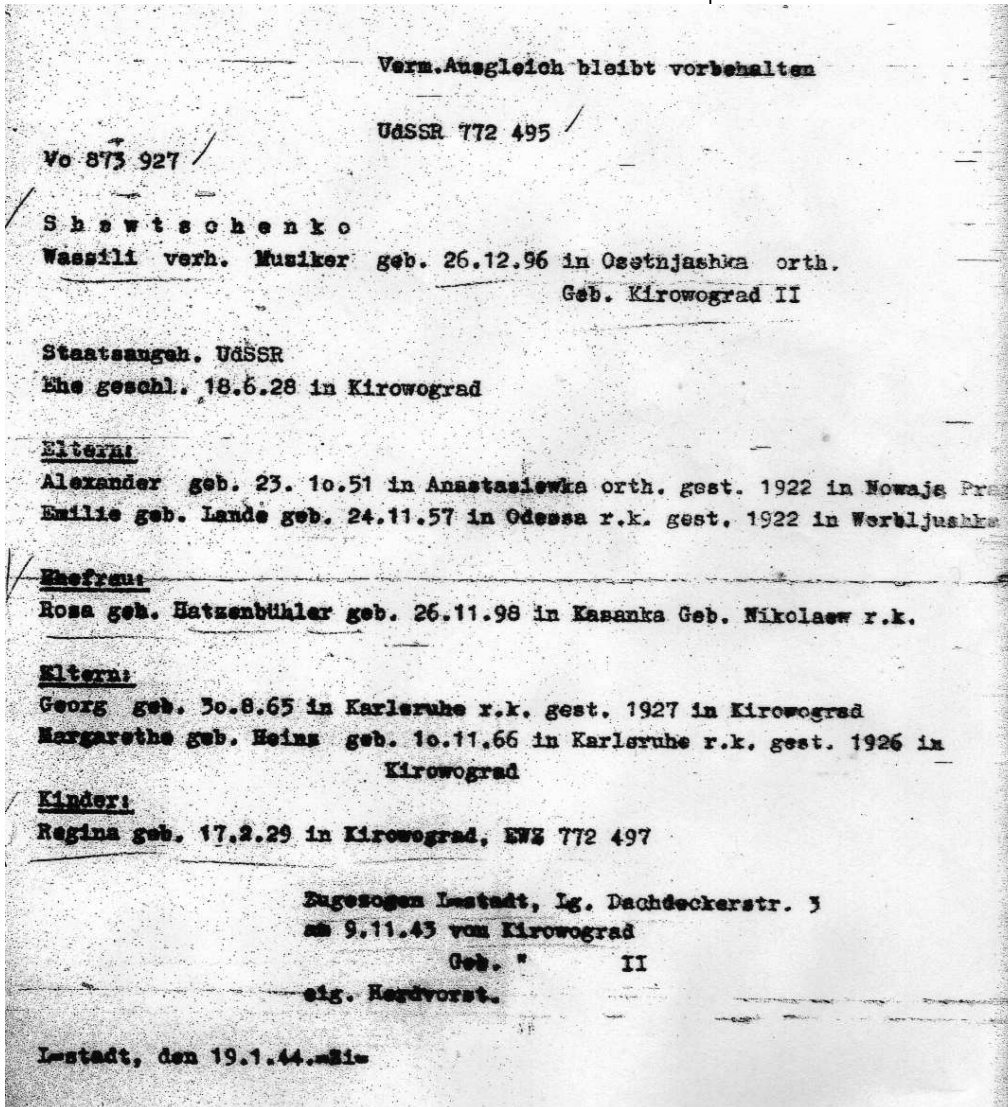
The most informative Stammblatt (see Stammblatt #772,495) from the family is often that of the head of household since it typically contains information from both sides of the family. The mother's Stammblatt in many cases may only include herself and her parents, whereas a child's Stammblatt would include themselves with their parents (information already provided on the head of

household's Stammblatt).

Because EWZ was intended to provide a mechanism to repatriate ethnic Germans and offer them land closer to German borders, one might question how someone by the name of Vassilli Shawschentko of orthodox faith is being admitted

by EWZ. Here is a case where EWZ had relaxed strict adherence to subjects being completely German. Vassilli's mother appears to be of German descent based on her name. Furthermore, Vassilli's wife, whose parents were born in Karlsruhe, appears to be completely German. In this case another page within the EWZ50 application indicates the percentage of German ancestry for both the head of household and his wife.

Most of the records in EWZ50 contain a different style Stammblatt as exemplified by number 957,223 (next page). These are printed forms called a Personalblatt that were filled out on a typewriter. The Personalblatt can either be a single page or two pages (as shown in this example). As the process of EWZ matured, these forms facilitated the process of recording important ancestral information. The same general scheme is used as seen on the previous format but a few enhancements developed. Space is given to include grandparents of the husband and wife. Entries for percentage of German ancestry are also specified. In this case both applicants, husband and wife, going up through their grandparents are completely German. The second page shows the children in this family. Fortunately, enough detail is provided to indicate that the two oldest children were from the husband's first marriage, each with their own Stammblatt number.

The examples provided here give a clear illustration of the information found in EWZ. Anyone who filed through EWZ, with references to their parents and possibly grandparents, should be found

Personalblatt

EWZ Nr.:UdSSR.957223 | Umsiedl.-Nr.: 976355 | Vermerke:

Name: SCHEUFFELE   geborene: Vorname: Johann

Geburts- Tag 18. Monat 1. Jahr 98 | Ort: Bergdorf | (Rayon) Grigoriopol(4) | Glaubens-Bekenntnis:
Gemeinde: —"—   (Gebiet) (ASSR)Moldau(22)II.   ev.

Fam.-Stand: verh. | Ehe geschlossen: (am) 29.4.1930 | in: Neuland. | Beruf: Landwirt

Herkunftsland: UdSSR. | Letzter Heimatort: Neuland | (Rayon) Grigoriopol(4)
Gemeinde: Bergdorf | (Gebiet) (ASSR)Moldau(22)II.

Staatsangehörigkeit: (bisherige): UdSSR. | nachgewiesen durch: lt. Angaben

Abstammung: deutsch | Deutschstämmigkeit in Prozenten:

Vater: Scheuffele,Jakob | geb. am: ? | Mutter: Vorname: Katharine geborene: Lämmle | geb. am:

geb. in: Bergdorf | Gl.-Bek. ev. | gbt-gest.-in: Bergdorf | geb. in: Bergdorf | Gl.-Bek. ev. | gest.-in: Bergdorf

Abst. deutsch 100 % | Abst. 100 %

Großvater: Scheuffele ? | Großmutter: ? | Großvater: Lämmle, ? | Großmutter: ?

Abst. deutsch | Abst. 100 | Abst. 100 | Abst. 100

Ehefrau (geb.?): EWZ-Nr.: UdSSR.957224 | gest.:
Vorname: Karoline | geborene: Erlenbusch | in:
geb. am: 9.2.07 | in: Nisselrot | Kreis: Kotowsk(8) | Gl.-Bek.: ev.
Gemeinde: " | Staat: UdSSR.

Abstammung: deutsch | Deutschstämmigkeit in Prozenten: 100 %

Vater: Erlenbusch,Wilhelm | geb. am: 13.11.76 | Mutter: Vorname: Christine geborene: Hoffmann | geb. am: 8.3.77

geb. in: Hoffnungstal | Gl.-Bek. ev. | gefallen 1915 | geb. in: Bergdorf | Gl.-Bek. ev. | gest.-in: Nisselrot

Abst. deutsch 100 % | Abst. deutsch 100 %

Großvater: Erlenbusch,Mathias | Großmutter: Christine geb. Sauer | Großvater: Hoffmann,Wilhelm | Großmutter: Karoline geb. Meitinger

Abst. deutsch 100% | Abst. deutsch 100 | Abst. deutsch 100 | Abst. de... 100

Familienabstammung: Deutsch 100

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at: http://www.odessa3.org/search.html An illustration of this site is shown at the bottom of this page.

Before doing a search note that if you scroll to the bottom of the search page additional links are found describing the various databases. The section dealing with *War Records* shows that this data includes EWZ, Deutschland Ausland Institut Records, and Village Records. Following the link to War Records provides a page with additional hyperlinks giving more information on each of these. If you follow the second hyperlink to *EWZ Film Indices in the Odessa Library* (http://www.odessa3.org/collections/war/ewz/ewzindex.html) a listing of all EWZ films extracted and entered into the database is presented. The vast majority of these are EWZ50 films. This entire series at the National Archives contains 842 films. The listing provided on this Odessa index indicates that nearly 800 EWZ50 films have been extracted. This means about 95% of the entire EWZ50 collection is represented in the Odessa Library. You thus have a high probability of finding your person of interest in Odessa if they are represented in EWZ50.

if their records were not destroyed or lost prior to the Americans capturing these records. It is also possible to find a reference to a deceased or missing person in EWZ if they had a spouse or child who was processed through EWZ. Relatives often disappeared during the Stalin regime when they were arrested without legitimate cause.

How to Search EWZ Records on the Odessa Site
With a basic knowledge of the Stammblatt and the nature of the information found on these forms we are now ready to go to the records in the Odessa Library at the Odessa 3 search web site

ODESSA 3 SEARCH

Searching the Odessa Library

Query String: [   ] Submit Query

Data Category: Bessarabian Collection
- Bessarabian Collection
- Bibliography
- Cemetery Records
- Census Lists
- Church Records
- Family Histories
- Gedlist Files
- History Books
- Land Records
- Obituaries
- Prussia - Poland
- Reference Data
- Ship and Immigration Records
- St. Petersburg Archives
- Village Compilations
- War Records

Inspecting the Odessa L

Term Prefix: [   ] Prefix

Select "War Records"

Contacting an Odessa A

Author Surname: [   ] Submit Surname

HELP contacting an Odessa author

We will try to find Karoline Erlenbusch who has Stammblatt number 957224 and is the wife of Johann Schueffele on Stammblatt 957223 (see the last Stammblatt example). When you select "War Records", type in Erlenbusch in the search query box, and click the Submit Query icon a very long list of hits is obtained. This is because many Erlenbusches are found in EWZ. The results are grouped together based on films in which they are found. The largest list of Erlenbusch hits is found on EWZ50 film B048. This is where the families with the surname Erlenbusch will be found. All other hits found on other films will be from people with a different surname, either through marriage or through a parent with the surname Erlenbusch. Since Karoline was married to Johann Schueffele we do not expect to see her on film B048 but rather on the film that has the surname Schueffele. This is found on film H032. The results from this film are shown below with a description of each column given in red above it.

Since this search was done for the term Erlenbusch, this term is highlighted in a brown color on each hit. Karoline is found on the bottom line under her married name with her parents on the two lines above her. Comparing the Stammblatt provided earlier it should be obvious where the different entries on the form are listed on these hits from the database. Under *Notes* (the right-most column), the abbreviation "geb." stands for " geborne" or translated as "maiden name" Erlenbusch. By the same reasoning the maiden name for Karoline's mother was Hoffmann. Note that after the film (EWZ50-H032) the number 0480 is

The "Bessarabian Collection" is the default database to search on this site. When you click on the ARROW on the right of this box, a menu is revealed. To search EWZ records (and other war-related records in the Odessa Library) select the bottom item - "War Records". Once the War Records database has been selected you can then enter any term in the Query String entry box. Normally this will be a surname.

Last, First   Birth date Town of Birth   Film/Frame Notes

File: 339,291 [EWZ Index for Miscellaneous Films 138 (E. Wise)](#)

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Erlenbusch, Christine 8 Mar 1877 Bergdorf, Moldau   A3342EWZ50-H032 0480  geb. Hoffmann
Erlenbusch, Wilhelm  13 Nov 1876 Hoffnungstal        A3342EWZ50-H032 0480
Scheuffele, Karoline  9 Feb 1907 Nesselrode, Moldau  A3342EWZ50-H032 0480  geb. Erlenbusch
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shown. This represents the frame number of the film where the record is found. All three entries in this example have the same frame number since they are all on the same Stammblatt. It is unfortunate that the grandparents are not listed in this database. This little extra bit of effort would have added another generation of data to many people in this database. Furthermore, the information for deaths is not given.

Digging Deeper into the EWZ Search Results
With the example provided above one should now have the skills to search for a specific person, and once found, have an understanding what each field of data means. The next exercise will introduce a more advanced skill to maximize your use of the Odessa search utility. For this example it is convenient to search for the name Kinast because of the infrequency with which this name is present in the database. The result output for every occurrence of Kinast is shown on the previous page.

The individual hits found on films F065 and G057 represent women with the maiden name of Kinast

who were married. The larger grouping of hits on film D076 indicate this film has all EWZ families with the last name of Kinast. Several families are given among this collection of people evidenced by the fact that several frame numbers are given. Without having any prior knowledge of these families the structure of each family can be deduced by rearranging the grouping according to frame number first and birth date second as shown below:

Husband: Johann Kinast with parents Wilhelm Kinast and Josefine nee Lang
Wife: Margarethe nee Seibel
Children: None

Husband: Reinhard Kinast (no parents listed)
Wife: Olga nee Polinowski
Children: Ida Kinast

After organizing the data in this way, the following summaries of each family can be made:

Husband: Andreas Kinast with parents August Kinast and Rosalie nee Stohl

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Last, First　　　　　　**Birth date Town of Birth**　　　　　　**Film/Frame Notes**

File: 306,133 EWZ Index for Miscellaneous Films 156 (E. Wise)

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Mueller, Leopoldine  7 Feb 1877 Tromschyn, Kalisch  A3342EWZ50-F065 0778  geb. Kinast
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File: 248,282 EWZ Index for Miscellaneous Films 216 (E. Bischoff)

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Kinast, Adina          7 Jan 1936 Turtschinka           A3342EWZ50-D076 2752
Kinast, Andreas       13 May 1899 Stawezkaja-Sloboda  A3342EWZ50-D076 2752
Kinast, August            1870 Kiew                    A3342EWZ50-D076 2752
Kinast, Eduard            1906 Gustantinow             A3342EWZ50-D076 2770  kidnapped[1]
Kinast, Else           1 Dec 1912 Sarnowka             A3342EWZ50-D076 2770  geb. Mueller
Kinast, Ida           12 Jul 1939 Tschernjchow         A3342EWZ50-D076 2813
Kinast, Johann         Jun 1915 Spartski               A3342EWZ50-D076 2790
Kinast, Josefine          1874                          A3342EWZ50-D076 2790  geb. Lang
Kinast, Margarethe        1918 Belogwesh               A3342EWZ50-D076 2790  geb. Seibel
Kinast, Marie          1 Mar 1897 Fassowaja-Rudnja     A3342EWZ50-D076 2752  geb. Zimmer
Kinast, Olga           8 Sep 1903                       A3342EWZ50-D076 2812  geb. Polinowski
Kinast, Olga          14 Apr 1933 Sarnowka             A3342EWZ50-D076 2771
Kinast, Reinhard      23 Dec 1909 Tschernjchow         A3342EWZ50-D076 2812
Kinast, Reinhold      29 Jan 1937 Sarnowka             A3342EWZ50-D076 2771
Kinast, Rosalie           1870                          A3342EWZ50-D076 2752  geb. Stohl
Kinast, Selma         16 Mar 1932 Sarnowka             A3342EWZ50-D076 2771
Kinast, Wilhelm           1872                          A3342EWZ50-D076 2790
Mueller, Leopoldinr  7 Feb 1877 Tromschyn              A3342EWZ50-D076 2770  geb. Kinast
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File: 314,816 EWZ Index for Miscellaneous Films 75 (E. Wise)

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Schenkowskij, Elisabeth    1877 Posen                  A3342EWZ50-G057 1096  geb. Kinast
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Wife: Marie nee Zimmer
Children: Adina Kinast

Husband: Eduard Kinast (no parents listed proba-bly because he was taken away from his family)[1]
Wife: Else nee Mueller

Children: Selma Kinast and Olga Kinast
Other: Leopoldine Mueller nee Kinast is likely the mother of Else and may also be related to Eduard

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[1] The database transcriber indicated that Eduard Kinast was kidnapped. This word is misleading as the term used in German was most likely "verschleppt" which carries the meaning of "taken away". This was common during the Stalin regime and few families escaped from having someone falsely accused of crimes and forcefully removed from their homes.

File: 248,282 EWZ Index for Miscellaneous Films 216 (E. Bischoff)

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Kinast, August            1870 Kiew             A3342EWZ50-D076 2752
Kinast, Rosalie           1870                  A3342EWZ50-D076 2752  geb. Stohl
Kinast, Marie      1 Mar 1897 Fassowaja-Rudnja  A3342EWZ50-D076 2752  geb. Zimmer
Kinast, Andreas   13 May 1899 Stawezkaja-Sloboda A3342EWZ50-D076 2752
Kinast, Adina      7 Jan 1936 Turtschinka       A3342EWZ50-D076 2752

Mueller, Leopoldinr 7 Feb 1877 Tromschyn        A3342EWZ50-D076 2770  geb. Kinast
Kinast, Eduard            1906 Gustantinow       A3342EWZ50-D076 2770  kidnapped1
Kinast, Else       1 Dec 1912 Sarnowka          A3342EWZ50-D076 2770  geb. Mueller
Kinast, Selma     16 Mar 1932 Sarnowka          A3342EWZ50-D076 2771
Kinast, Olga      14 Apr 1933 Sarnowka          A3342EWZ50-D076 2771

Kinast, Wilhelm          1872                   A3342EWZ50-D076 2790
Kinast, Josefine         1874                   A3342EWZ50-D076 2790  geb. Lang
Kinast, Johann       Jun 1915 Spartski          A3342EWZ50-D076 2790
Kinast, Margarethe       1918 Belogwesh          A3342EWZ50-D076 2790  geb. Seibel

Kinast, Olga       8 Sep 1903                   A3342EWZ50-D076 2812  geb. Polinowski
Kinast, Reinhard  23 Dec 1909 Tschernjchow      A3342EWZ50-D076 2812
Kinast, Ida       12 Jul 1939 Tschernjchow      A3342EWZ50-D076 2813
```

Except for the apparent mother of Else nee Mueller, the parents of the wives do not show up on these results since they do not have the surname Kinast. With the results found here another search can be performed on the surname of the wife to determine her parents and other potential relatives. This would be a good exercise to try on your own to develop the skills you learned in this article. In this exercise it is possible to propose additional information from the presence of Leopoldine Mueller nee Kinast found on film F065. This is the proposed mother for Else nee Mueller. Because the Mueller families are found on films F063 - F068 as indicated on the Odessa EWZ film index, it is likely that a sibling or the father of Else nee Mueller is found on this record. Certainly it would be prudent to expand a search to that record to obtain further information on this sibling or Else's original family.

Pay close attention to any birth places during 1915 – 1922. These years correspond to the period of deportation during World War I and thus may give hints of where the family was deported to at that time. Many families returned to their homes by 1918 but many others were displaced until 1922.

For surnames where a greater number of hits are obtained it might be possible to study the towns of birth to get clues for other people who may be related to your family of interest. With the principles that you have learned to this point you should now be better equipped to search the EWZ records in Odessa and understand how these data fit together. It is always recommended that you do not rely completely on the results you find in your searches of the Odessa Library. It is best to confirm these findings by obtaining the original records. I have found several instances where an expected individual was not on the Stammblatt indicated. The indexers are human and can make mistakes. It is unclear (I would venture to say doubtful) if the extracted data was proof checked by a separate person before being deposited into the database. The missing spelling of Leopoldine on film D076 frame 2770 in the example above exemplifies this likelihood. It is most probable that errors in reference would be made on the frame number of the film where the individual is found rather than on the film number.

What if I can't find my person of interest?
As described earlier, based on the extent of data collected from EWZ50 there is around a 95% chance of finding people of interest, if they are in EWZ50. What about the 5% chance of missing someone on films still not extracted? Two scenarios should be considered if you cannot find a particular person.

Scenario 1: This person did not file through EWZ – In this case it would help to know if there is a spouse or child that has filed through EWZ and look for that person. It is important to remember that married and widowed women are filed under their married surname. If you know of an appropriately related person but still cannot find him/her either, then consider Scenario 2 below. If you do not know of anyone related to your original person of interest then your only hope is that they will eventually show up in the remaining 5% of films to be extracted.

Scenario 2: You are quite sure this person filed through EWZ – In this case you need to look at the Odessa EWZ film index described previously showing the films included in the database. EWZ50 is ordered alphabetically by surname. If the surname you are searching for is within the ranges provided for all films represented then chances are this person may not be within EWZ50. This would then require that you try to find the range of Stammblätter for others who may have filed with your person of interest, like people from the same town, and then screen the appropriate EWZ58 films covering this range of Stammblatt numbers. If you are lucky the Stammblatt may be found in this collection.

If the surname you are searching for is not within the ranges of indexed EWZ50 films then you would need to search the microfilms at the National Archives or contact a researcher to find the record for you. One example fitting this last possibility of falling within a gap in the database is the film containing the surname Schimann. film H033 ends with Schikowskij while film H037 begins with Schitikow. This indicates that all records where the family name is represented as Schimann are somewhere on films H034-H036 remaining to be indexed.Θ