Finding Elusive Roots in Eastern European

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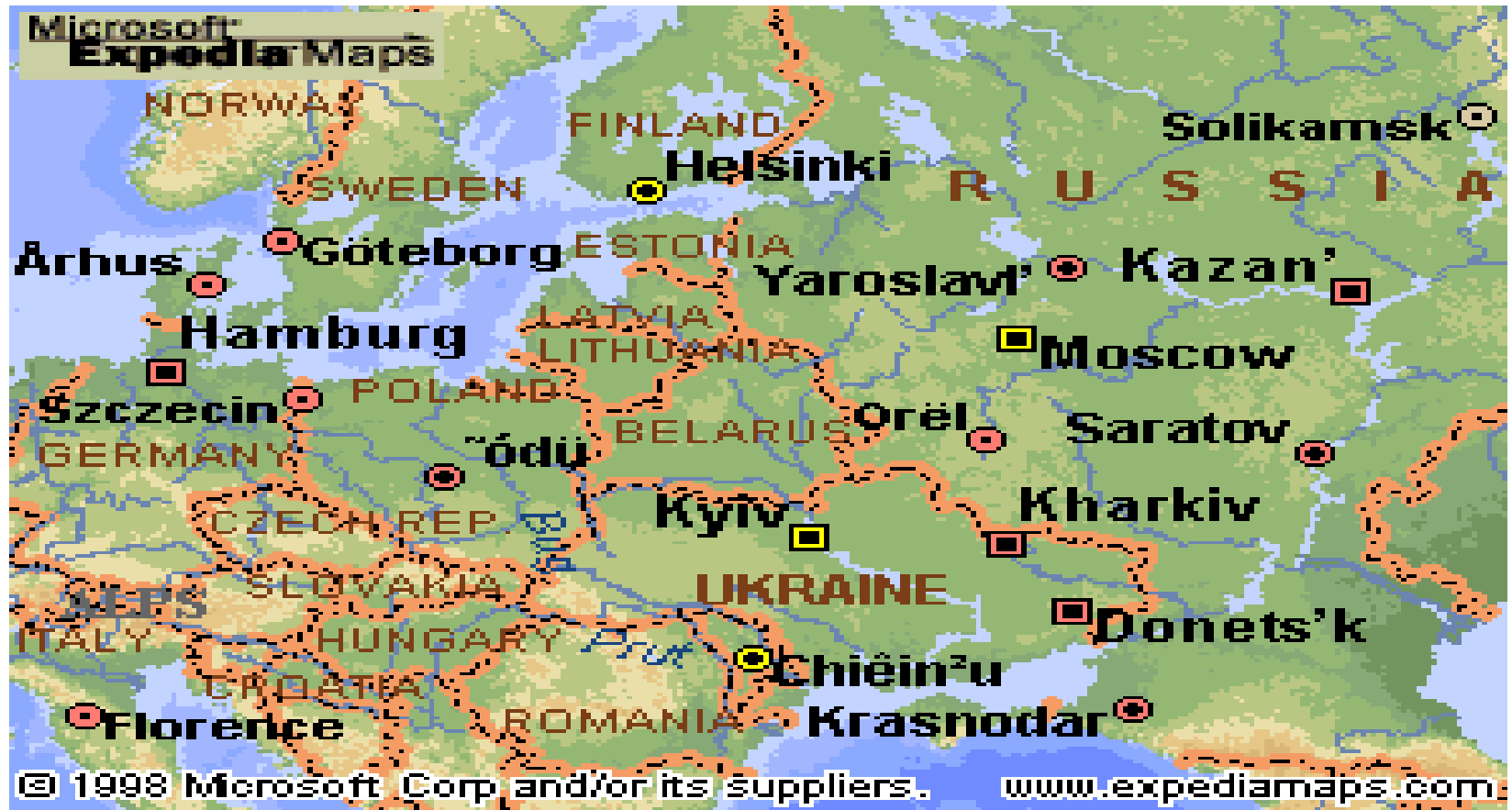
Challenges in Research

- Multiple changes to borders & maps
- Multiple changes to governments
- Multiple changes to names of countries
- Multiple changes to names of areas
- Multiple changes to village names
- Multiple changes to people's names

And that is just the beginning!

Differences Abound

- 30 different languages from Albanian to Yiddish
- Cyrillic, Roman, Arabic alphabets & numbers
- Different calendars – Roman, Julian, Gregorian
- Different religions, different ethnic groups
- Different customs, clothing, food
- Misunderstood outside of ancestral location
- Tried to fit in & lose identity
- Didn't want to talk about "old country"

The Other Europe

Interactive map at http://www.rootsweb.com/~easeurgw/

Eastern Europe   4

Borders Today

Outline Map

EE Countries

- Albania
- Austria
- Belarus
- Bohemia
- Bosnia Herzegovina
- Bukovina
- Bulgaria

- Croatia
- Czech Republic
- Estonia
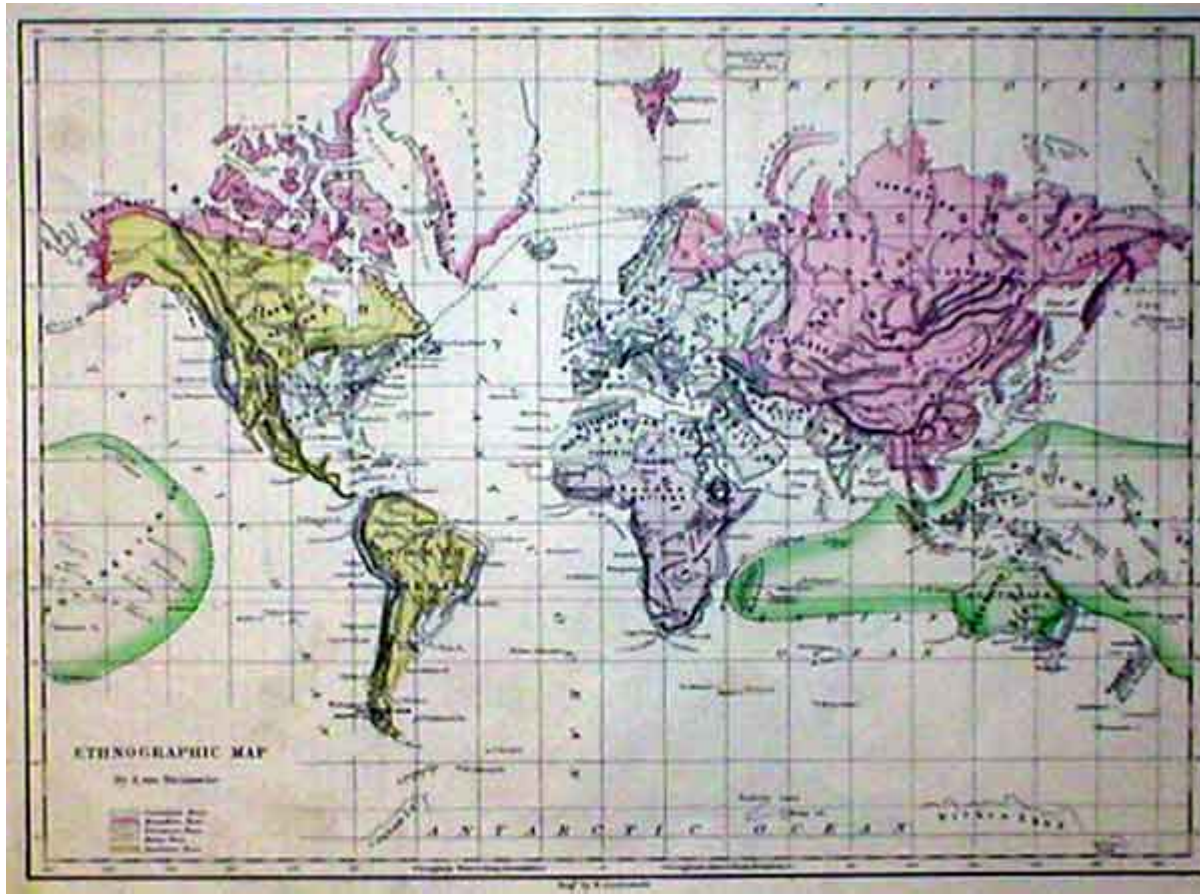- Finland
- Galicia
- Hungary
- Latvia

More Countries

- Lithuania
- Macedonia
- Montenegro
- Moravia
- Poland
- Romania

- Russia
- Serbia
- Slovak Republic
- Slovenia
- Ukraine
- Yugoslavia

Main Ethnic Groups

- German
- Ukrainian
- Polish
- Czech
- Dukobour

- Slovakian
- Jewish
- Mennonite
- Romanian
- Russian

Ethnographic Map

Main Religions

- Roman and Greek Catholic
- Lutheran
- Judaic
- Mennonite
- Ukrainian and Russian Orthodox
- Bohemian / Moravian Brethren

As Easy As ABCD 1234

1. Start at home

2. Locate gateway ancestor & ancestral village/religion/parish

3. Find out how, when and where records were kept before he/she left old country

4. Determine where those records are now & how best to obtain them

Gateway to Success!

Don't start in Eastern Europe before you know your "gateway" ancestors'

- Names & variations

- Ancestral village

- Exact location – according to political and religious divisions

- Religious, ethnic background

Start at Home

- Use basics of good research anywhere
  - Work backwards
  - Interview elders
  - Copy documents in their possession
- Fill in the gaps
  - Obtain vital records in latest homeland
  - Find homestead records
  - Locate work records or reports
  - Trace immigration
  - Determine place of origin

What I've Found So Far

- Starting with 1st Generation = Me
- 2nd Generation = my mother
- 3rd Generation = my mother's parents
- 4th Generation = my grandparents' parents (both sides)
- 5th Generation = my grandfather's maternal grandparents
  - Many details about their lives, siblings…

Eastern Europe

What I Found First

- Parents
  - Newspaper entry for marriage, genealogical copy from Edmonton
- Mother and siblings
  - Birth records, recollections
- Grandfather
  - Saskatchewan homestead record, entry in various directories, CNR job information, death record, cemetery record
- Grandmother
  - Cemetery record, Death record, cause of death, hospital record

What I Found Next

- ## Mother
  - School records from Detroit, recollections of family members

- ## Grandaunt
  - Diary started in Ukraine, continued in Canada and US, stated birthplace, obituary, her children's BMD, SSDI

- ## Grandaunt's husband
  - Obituary, death record, SSDI

What I Found Later

- Grandfather
  - Immigration and naturalization records

- Grandfather
  - Baptism record from Russia
  - Military record from Vienna

- Family members
  - Cousins in US, Canada and Poland

- Census records from Ukraine

Locate Ancestral Village

- Basic Political Divisions
  - Oblast
  - Raion (rayon)
  - Towns & villages
- Basic Religious Divisions
  - Oblast
  - Raion
  - Deanery
  - Parish

Y U Kan't Phind Yur Ancesters

- Misspeld Knames
- 30 languages from Albanian to Yiddish
- Illiteracy or more commonly
  - different literacy
- William Thorndale in *The Source:*

  "An enormous amount of genealogical research fails because people do not take simple precautions in searching for spelling variants."

Sum Commun Speling Airors

- *Calligraphic look-a-likes/aka different handwriting:* Kandia misread as Kapdia
- *Phonetic equivalents:* Xenia = Ksenia
  Szach = Schach, Shock, Schacht
- *Translations:* Szach = King, Chess
- *Truncations: Boghanski* = Bogdan or Dann
- *Internal spelling variants:* Szach = Zak, Sach
- *Anglicizations:* Szach = Shack, Shaw
- *Nicknames:* Xenia = Sanka

What Are the Possibilities?

- Hawryluk = Haverlock, Howerluke, Haverluck, Kozak (adopted mother's name)
- Mickelchuk = Michels, Michael, Mickey
- Camelious = Camel, Camellia, Carmel
- Buyckuck = Buick, Buck, Buyck
- Kaminsky = Kaminska, Kaminski, Camin

Challenge!

- If the name is now Castle, how many name variations can you imagine?

- What are your name variants?

- First or last or middle!

Political Divisions

- **Oblast** – equivalent to county (there are 26 oblasti) – ends in **'s'ka' or 'z'ka –** e.g. **L'vivs'ka (L'viv)**

- **Raion** – (sometimes rayon) is a municipal region within oblast – between 11-27 per oblast – population of each 100K-300K – sometimes ends in **skyi**

- **Towns (townships) & Villages**

Religious Divisions

- **Oblast** – same as political
- **Raion** – same as political
- **Diecezja (Diocese)**
- **Dekanat (Deanery)**
- **Parafia (Parish)**

Significant Periods

- Pre 1400
- 1400-1772 Various empires, countries
- 1772-1918 – Austrian-Hungarian Empire
- 1917 – Russian Revolution
- 1918 – end of WWI
- 1945 – end of WWII
- 1991 – End of Soviet/USSR

Eastern Europe

Just One More Place to Look

- 1991 collapse of the U.S.S.R - various states gained independence
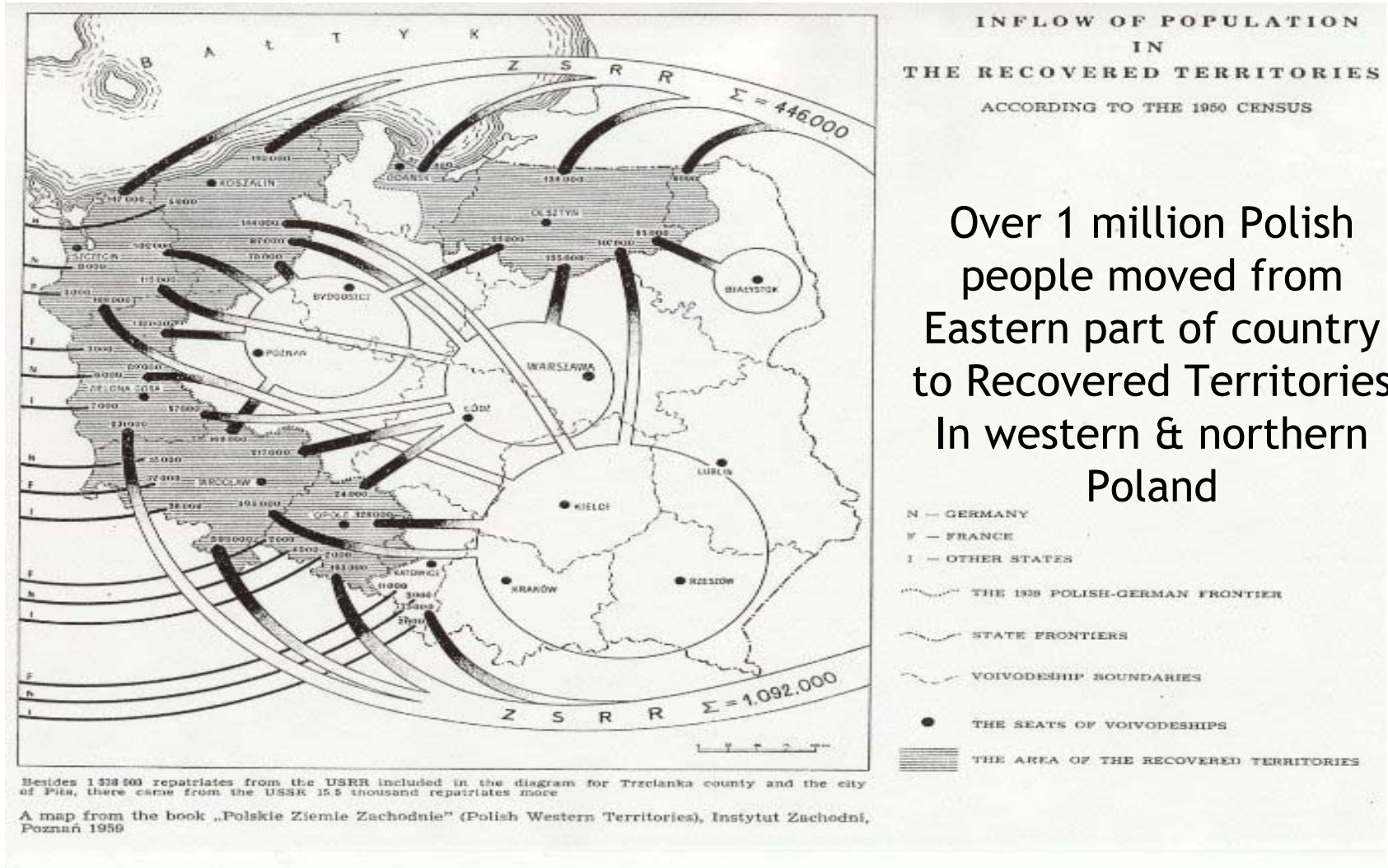- Names changed, borders changed

Look for other places

- Gubernias of Russia (equivalent to North America's States or Provinces)
- Uezds (equivalent to our Counties or Regions)

Maybe Polish

- 1569, the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania united as the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, and western Ukrainian lands were placed under Polish control

Repatriation of Poles – 1950

Over 1 million Polish people moved from Eastern part of country to Recovered Territories In western & northern Poland

Maybe Russia

- By 1795, western Ukrainian lands were under the control of Austria and eastern Ukrainian lands were under the control of Russia.

Maybe Austrian

- In 1772, Russia, Prussia, and Austria partitioned the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, and several Ukrainian areas were made part of Galicia, a province of Austria

- Also Crown Colonies of Austria (Galicia, Bukovina or Subcarpathia)

Eastern Europe

Maybe USSR or Ukrainian SSR

- By the end of WWI, Ukrainian lands were within the borders of the Ukrainian SSR (a constituent republic of the U.S.S.R.), Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Romania

- After Soviet victory in WWII, the borders of the Ukrainian SSR expanded westward to include the Ukrainian areas of Galicia