

The Journal



**THE SOCIETY
FOR GERMAN GENEALOGY
IN EASTERN EUROPE**

*“A German Genealogy Group for Poland
and Volhynia”*

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Storks signal the arrival of Spring in Volhynia

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The Story of the Old NKVD Records

By Peter von Pazatka Lipinsky

The research into the history of my Sparschuh family is an ongoing undertaking, to obtain from time to time, new names and dates. Information was recently discovered in the form of old NKVD records dating back to 1947. These records almost added another chapter to the Sparschuh family history story. One has to go back to 1957, when I first met and married my wife Christine. Besides my wife, I now had a brand new mother-in-law, together with sisters-in-law and one brother-in-law. But no father-in-law. I was told by my wife, that her father Adolf Sparschuh, born 18. September 1899, was taken away by the Russian Army in the spring of 1945, never to be seen again. My mother-in-law, with the help of the German Red Cross, applied in 1950 and again in 1959 to the Russian Red Cross to obtain any information as to what happen to her husband, Adolf. The Russian Red Cross replied by the end of 1959 that Adolf had died on July 30, 1947 in Russia and to quote the Russian Red Cross, "Adolf Sparschuh died on the territory of the USSR" No specific cemetery, village or anything else was mentioned with no cause of death stated. Not much information for the Sparschuh family about their husband and father. It took many more years, 55 years almost to the day and some advice (believe it or not) from Moscow, to finally receive all the details about my

wife's father, which had eluded the family for so many years. How did the story about Adolf Sparschuh continue?

Early in 2014, I saw a posting on the SGGEE message board. Some Cyrillic letter were shown and a request for some information was posted. It was signed by Natalia Y. and what caught my attention was the added sentence in German: "Moskau, Internationaler Verband der Deutschen Kultur" which translates as "Moscow, International Society for German Culture". This was duly noted, but no action was taken for approximately one month or so. I was doing my community volunteer shift at the LDS Family History Center when a couple came to the LDS Family History Center to look for some information on some relatives who had lived in Russia. I remembered the German greeting from the SGGEE message board and I contacted Natalia in Moscow on behalf of this couple from the Family History Centre. Natalia replied within twenty-four hours and we were on our way to help another patron at the LDS family History Center. My dentist's secretary, who I have known for many years, was also doing family research and again here was another case of German relatives having lived at one time in Russia. The same story happened here as well. I contacted Natalia in Moscow on behalf of her and she

Department of the NKVD of the USSR for the Affairs of Prisoners of War and Internees

Inventory File # _____ Department # _____ Date of Arrival _____
 Gender _____ Camp # _____ 194__

Questionnaire
 of the Internee, Conscript, Arrested Person
 (underline applicable) Form #1

1	Name	
2	Given Name and Father's Given Name	
3	Year of Birth	
4	Place of Birth	
5	Last Address	
6	Exact Address, Family Members (Name, Given Name and Given Name of Wife's Father, Children or Parents, Occupation	
7	Social Origin – Class Affiliation (Class of Parents' Property)	
8	Class of Internee's, Conscript's, Arrested Person's Property	
9	Nationality	
10	Confession (Religion)	
11	Party Membership, if available: when and where, how long, Reason for Leaving	
12	Mother Tongue	
13	List Knowledge of foreign Languages	
14	Citizenship	
15	Occupation and Area Specialty (Years of Occupation) before Arrest/Conscription	
16	Education: a) general b) occupational c) military	

Page 1 of the Translated NKVD Questionnaire

received eleven pages of material on her family within 48 hours. She is still working on having the information translated from Russian to English. At this point, I had to sit back for a moment and collect my own thoughts, that is to say, that if this lady in Moscow can help two people I know, maybe she can help me solve one of the mysteries in our family research, namely: what happened to my father-in-law, Adolf Sparschuh so many years ago in Volhynia? So, I sent another email to Moscow – this time on our family's behalf. And wouldn't you know it! Natalia couldn't help me because my case would involve some of the old military NKVD records dating

17	Residency within the USSR (where, when and exact Details about Occupation)	
18	Relatives and Acquaintances in the USSR (Name, Given Name, Father's Given Name, Age, Place of Occupation and Type, Place of Residence	
19	Court Proceedings/- prosecutions or Remand Investigation: when, where, which Court, prosecuted for what, where was the penalty served	
20	Residence in other Countries (except own Country and the USSR) From when to when, Occupation	
21	Date and Location of Arrest or Conscription	
22	Exact Information of Practical Experience prior to Arrest or Conscription (when to when, Details of Position)	

Signature of Internee

_____ 194__

APPEARANCE: Height _____ Body _____ Hair Colour _____

Eye Colour _____ Nose _____ Face _____

SPECIAL FEATURES: _____

Signature of Staff Member who completed the Questionnaire (Position is mandatory)

Page 2 of the Translated NKVD Questionnaire

back during and shortly after WW II. But these military NKVD records were handed over in the mid-1990's to the German Red Cross. Natalia suggested that it would be easier for me to get the information that I was looking for from the German Red Cross rather than from Moscow. An Internet search provided me with the address of the German Red Cross and the application form and another email went out to the them.

The German Red Cross provides their services in German, French, Russian, and English. So there wasn't any language barrier for me. About six weeks later, I received a large enve-

lope containing a letter from the German Red Cross and five pages of old NKVD records with information on Adolf Sparschuh. Of course these Russian records had to be translated to be of any use to me. But thanks to the SGGEE message board and its readers, I received all the translation help I needed. Thank you all who have helped me. I cannot even begin to tell you how much I appreciated all the help that I received. This is another shining example of the quality of the people who participate on the message board. The five pages of NKVD records were very informative and gave me the information I didn't have before. My wife would tell me sometimes that when she was a little girl, she and her siblings would play in the farm yard. Of course, my wife had no idea how large or how many acres her father's farm was or anything else, like livestock, etc. The NKVD records consist of 5 pages in questionnaire format with 22 questions. This provided us with information that was never available to us before. The form itself was translated from Russian into German by the German Red Cross. The German version of the questionnaire was translated into English here in Edmonton. So now it was easier to read the questions posed by the NKVD and also the answers given by Adolf Sparschuh.

The English version of the questionnaire is shown on Pages 22 and 23 with the answers to the 22 questions appearing below. Only by showing the complete translation of all documents, can the reader really appreciate the value of these documents.

The Long Awaited Answers

As can be seen on pages 22 and 23, the questionnaire would reveal to us the information we

had been wondering about all these years. The following is what was translated:

- #1: Shparshuh
- #2. Adolph Germanovich
- #3. 1899
- #4. Poland, village Postomyt, Orokhov district , Lutsk region (today - Pustomyty district Gorokhov, Voynskaya Region)
- #5. village Postomat, Horohov district , Lutsk region (today - Pustomyty district Gorokhov, Volynskaya Region)
- #6. Wife, Shparshuh Lydia Germanovna (1907), village Cicavica, (today - Zhukovets, Gorokhov District, Volynskaya Region) farmer
 Daughter Julia 15 years
 Daughter Erna 8 years
 Daughter Anna 12 years
 Daughter Christina 6 years
 Son Herman 1 year
 Daughter Irma 3 years
- #7. Peasants, 10 hectares of land, 4 cows, 2 horses, own house
- #8. 4 hectares of land, a house of their own, cows, 1 horse
- #9. German
- #10. Evangelical
- #11. Nonpartisan
- #12. German
- #13. Russian, Ukrainian, Polish
- #14. Germany
- #15. Carpenter
- #16. a) illiterate
 b) no
 c) no
- #17. Haven't lived
- #18. None
- #19. Was Not

#20. Nowhere

#21. 4 March 1945 the village of Zhakovisty (today - Zhykovets, Gorokhov district, Volynskaya Region)

#22. 1917—1920 city of Orenburg in the Red Guard
1920—1936 vial Smorgova, (today - Smorzhow Gorkhov Distrit, Volynskaya Region) agriculture
1936-1939 village Pustomyty (today - Pustoyty, Gorokhov District, Volynskaya Region) on his farm
1939—1945 the vaillage of Zhakovictsy (today - Zhukovets, Gorokhov District, Volynskaya Region) on his farm

Physical Portrait: height 163 cm, build - slim, hair color - blonde, eyes - blue, nose - flat,

face -thin, Special features - none

History of Russian Security Services

Thanks to one of the message board readers, who pointed out that the KGB was dissolved in 1991 and was split between the Russian Federal Security Service and the Russian Foreign Intelligence Service. The old NKVD was in existence from 1934-1943 and prior to that was known as the GPU. From 1943-1953 it was called NKGB and MGB and from 1954-1991 it was the infamous KGB.

Now, what did the NKVD records reveal on new information which I didn't have before? We knew that Adolf Sparschuh died on July 30, 1947 in Russia. But we never knew where he died,



German Military Cemetery, Kharkiv, Ukraine

where he was buried, or the cause of his death. Now we knew that Adolf Sparschuh was buried in the Smejwster cemetery, grave site #30 in the city of Kharkiv, Ukraine (Charkow in Russian – editor’s note). On the outskirts of the city of Kharkiv, there is a cemetery for WW II casualties from the Russian, Ukrainian and German armies.

It could be that Adolf Sparschuh was re-interred in this cemetery. At this time, I'm in touch with a German organization, the "Volksbund Deutsche Kriegsgräberfürsorge, e.V." (German Society for the maintenance of graves sites for German war casualties). I want to find out what happened to Adolf Sparschuh's remains and if his remains are now in the new, larger cemetery. If so, some day my wife and I can travel to the city of Kharkiv, Ukraine and take a large bouquet of nice flowers to his grave site.

What else did the NKVD records reveal?

Adolf Sparschuh arrived at the labor camp #1553 on March 27, 1945 and was interrogated by the NKVD. The spelling of some of the names on the questionnaire are different because of the difference between the Russian and the German alphabet. Under #1 and #2 of the questionnaire, you see that Sparschuh is spelled Shparschuh and Adolf Hermann is spelled Adolf Germanovich. Adolf’s second given name was Hermann. (Editor’s note – there is no H sound in the Russian alphabet so in the Cyrillic alphabet, the G is used as its replacement). Also daughter Irma, 3 years old, should read Erika, 3 years old. All the names and ages of the children that are stated are almost correct.

This information would come in handy if no other documents survived the war, as proof of age for individuals in later years. This could be very helpful with pension applications in Germany, Canada or the USA. Don't think this sort of thing doesn't happen. Any reasonable document would often be used to establish one's date of birth or date of death because some people lost every document they ever had. The cause of death for Adolf Sparschuh is listed as Dystrophy 3, which is only a cover for starvation. A lot of POWs on all sides starved to death in the camps. How can anyone feed so many prisoners when even the civilian population had nothing to eat?

My Comments on the Questionnaire

#7 on the questionnaire: These are the parents of Adolf Sparschuh: These are peasants Hermann Sparschuh and his wife, named Maria Weinert and they were the “Besitzer”/owner of ten hectares of land, 4 cows, 2 horses and 1 house. Hermann was by Russian standards, at the time, a capitalist. #8 on the list is Adolf Sparschuh and he was the Besitzer/owner of 4 hectares of land, a house, 2 cows and 1 horse. (Not bad, a lesser capitalist)

#21, Adolf Sparschuh was arrested on March 4, 1945 in the village of Zahkovitsy. I was always under the impression that the Sparschuh's lived in the village of Pustomyty until the end of WW II (spring of 1945). According to the NKVD records, the Sparschuh's lived in the village of Pustomyty from 1936 to 1939 and then moved to the village of Zhakovitsy and lived there from 1939-1945.

#22. I still have a few question in regards to Adolf Sparschuh being in the City of Orenburg from 1917-1920 and also in a place

called Smagova from 1920-1936. The names don't match with the names of the places where the two oldest daughters were born.

According to the NKVD records, more research is warranted. The Sparschuh's moved to Pustomyty in 1936 and had some good land holdings. Only three years later, in 1939, the Sparschuh's moved from Pustomyty to Zhakovitsy with no land holdings shown. Taking the time frame into consideration, 1939 -1945, perhaps the German Government resettled the Sparschuh's to Pustomyty and from Pustomyty to Zhakovitsy on Polish farms to Germanize the occupied territory.

Yes, I know, I have more work and more searching ahead of me. For the longest time, there was no new information on the Sparschuh family available. But with a little bit of luck and a lot of

perseverance, things will come my way.

In conclusion, I would like to thank a few people for helping me to overcome a few more hurdles in my quest to solve some of the Sparschuh family research questions.

My heartfelt thanks go to:

Natalia Yudina, Moscow, Russia,
Karin Fiedler, Analyst, German Red Cross,
Munich, Germany

Kate Wertmiller, Kiev, Ukraine

All SGGEE List readers, who immediately, after I sent my SOS out for help, went into action to help me with all sorts of information and advice. Thank you. Without you, the list wouldn't exist.



German Military Cemetery, Kharkiv, Ukraine



СССР

ИСПОЛНИТЕЛЬНЫЙ КОМИТЕТ
СОЮЗА ОБЩЕСТВ
КРАСНОГО КРЕСТА И КРАСНОГО ПОЛУМЕСЯЦА

Москва, К-31, Кузнецкий мост, д. 18/7

Телефон Б 8-20-22

№ ОС/2162 - з

Москва, " " ноября 1959 г.

Д е л о :

Германскому Красному Кресту
г. Бонн

С П И С О К

ЛИЦ, В ОТНОШЕНИИ КОТОРЫХ БЫЛИ ПОЛУЧЕНЫ ЗАПРОСЫ ОТ СЛУЖБ РОЗЫСКА
КРАСНОГО КРЕСТА В ГАМБУРГЕ И КОТОРЫЕ УМЕРЛИ НА ТЕРРИТОРИИ СССР.

13. ШПАРШУ, Адольф Херманн, 1899 года рождения, уроженец Пустомыт,
Волынской области. Умер 30 июля 1947 года.

С уважением

Н. ЧИКАЛЕНКО

Член Президиума Исполнительного Комитета
Начальник Управления Внешних Сношений

Ü B E R S E T Z U N G

U d S S R

Е x e k u t i v - K o m i t e e
der Allianz der Gesellschaften vom
Roten Kreuz und Roten Halbmond

Moskau K-31, Kusnezkiy Most Nr. 18/7

Telefon B. 8-20-22

Nr. ос/2162-з
Акте:

Moskau, " " November
1959

An das
Deutsche Rote Kreuz
Stadt Bonn.

L I S T E

ÜBER PERSONEN HINSICHTLICH WELCHER ANFRAGEN VOM SUCHDIENST DES
ROTEN KREUZES AUS HAMBURG EINGINGEN UND DIE AUF DEM TERRITORIUM
DER UdSSR GESTORBEN SIND!

13. SPARSCHUH Adolf Hermann, geb. 1899, gebürtig aus Pustomit,
Wolhynskaja Oblast'. Gestorben am 30. Juli 1947.

Hochachtungsvoll

N. TSCHIKALENKO

Mitglied des Präsidiums des Exekutivkomitees
Leiter der Verwaltung Auswärtiger Beziehungen

b/w

Letter received in 1959 from the Russian Red Cross Stating that Adolf Sparschuh had died 30 July 1947

Society for German Genealogy in Eastern Europe (SGGEE)

**“Researching Our German Roots in Poland and
the Russian Empire”**

2015 CONVENTION - August 7, 8, & 9, 2015

Registration Opens at 7 p.m. August 6 with Research Help available

**Ramada Plaza Manoir du Casino
75 rue d' Edmonton Street, Gatineau, Quebec**

A convention for people of German origin interested in the genealogy, culture and history of their ancestors who migrated through Poland, Volhynia, and surrounding areas.

Convention registration form and a detailed list of Speakers and Topics will be posted on the www.sggee.org website.

Friday afternoon 4 p.m. – Annual Meeting

Saturday evening - Banquet

We will have a research area at the convention with the following:

- Wireless Internet access with your laptop to our various databases.
- Access to hundreds of thousands of names from Poland and Volhynia, many of which were extracted from Polish church books and which are not available in any other database. They contain more detail than is available on the SGGEE website.
- Eastern Volhynian records - 1941 to 1944 for marriages, confirmations and birth records with some birth records back to 1920.

Help will be available to assist in translation of documents and offering general information on further research.

The Research Room will be open during most of the convention.

We invite you to join us for a weekend packed with genealogy sessions and networking.

Bring your albums, journals, stories, family histories and any reference books or local history books you may have. Share experiences and swap stories with others.