

## **RUSSIAN IMMIGRATION AND SETTLEMENT RECORDS IN THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES**

The National Archives of Australia is the custodian of the records of the Commonwealth government therefore most of the record holdings relating to the Russian community were created after Federation.

We hold a large number of policy files in our National Office in Canberra which relate to Australia's relationship with Russia and the former Soviet Union, and the Russian community in Australia.

### **Defence Service records**

One of the most popular records series for genealogy are the defence service records. We have a number of World War 1 defence service dossiers for members of the Australian Imperial Force who were born in Russia. All of our WW I defence service dossiers have been digitised on the RecordSearch collection database on our internet site. Examples include the dossier for Alexis Kouvaldin who was born in Moscow and enlisted in Sydney, Alex Alexandroff who was born in Vladivostok and enlisted in Sydney and Evaschkevicht Cheslav who was born in Odessa and enlisted in Melbourne.

We also hold World War 2 defence service dossiers for members of the Australian Army and Australian Airforce and record of service cards for Navy personnel. These include service personnel who were born in Russia. Examples include army servicemen Alec Roodakoff who was born at Grodikov, Russia and enlisted in Cairns; Gregory Simon Koshnitsky who was born in Besarabia, Russia and enlisted in Paddington and John Vishnevsky who was born at Vladivostock and enlisted in Sydney. Airforce servicemen include Vladimir Alexandrovich Lubimoff who was born at Astrakan Russia and enlisted in Brisbane and navy servicemen include Michael Kazuro who was born at Hamtsova and enlisted in Melbourne.

In most cases, records created relating to the Russian community held in the National Archives relate to the administration of entry and arrival in Australia, naturalisation and war-time security measures such as the registration of aliens and the security investigation of individuals which continued in the post-war period.

### **Passenger lists**

The first group of records I will discuss are our holdings of immigration passenger lists. The National Archives holds ship's passenger lists for the Port of Sydney from 1923 onwards. An early example is the passenger list for the arrival of the ship Orcades in Sydney on 4 January 1923 from London. Included in this passenger list is the Russian passenger Mrs R Rosenbloom a housewife. A later example is the passenger list for the vessel Eastern Queen which arrived in Sydney on 10 October 1956 from Japan. Included among the

passengers on the first page of the passenger list are Russian passengers Gurevich, Chernikoff, Grusdeva and Chijoff who embarked at Hong Kong. On a continuation page are details of further Russian migrants including the Bogdanova, Urtakff, Popoff, Chernous, Shevchenko, Grishenko, Kalashnikoff, Pozdniakova, Riazantzeff, Stassienevitch, Baclitsquii, Blohina, Aleshin, Engel, Varbola, Chipisuboff families.

Our holdings of inward aircraft passenger lists for Sydney date from 1936. Ship's passenger lists for other ports include Newcastle from 1865, Melbourne from 1924, Brisbane from 1852, Fremantle and Darwin from 1898 onwards and Adelaide from 1941 onwards.

In addition to these passenger lists the National Archives also holds copies of nominal rolls for immigrants arriving in Australia during 1947-1955 under resettlement schemes sponsored by the International Refugee Organisation. An example is the nominal roll of immigrants departing from the Philippines on the ship "SS Haven" which arrived in Sydney on 12 June 1949. Details on the nominal roll include name, nationality, religion, marital status, sex, date of birth, country of birth and occupation, religion, marital status, sex, date of birth, country of birth and occupation. Listed on the first page of the nominal roll are the Abramoff, Akiloff, Alles, Amosoff, Ankudinoff, Antipeva, Antonoff, Babianski, Baksheef and Biazigin Russian families. The full nominal roll comprises 10 pages.

### **Migrant Selection documents**

After World War 2, Australia made agreements with Britain, some European countries, the International Refugee Organisation and the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration to accept migrants. From 1954, the General Assisted Passage Scheme gave financial assistance to a large range of nationalities not covered by a special national or refugee scheme.

Migrant selection documents, held by the National Archives, are the personal dossiers that were compiled overseas when a migrant applied for assistance. The National Archives Sydney Office holds migrant selection documents for a small quantity of European migrants disembarking in Sydney however the bulk of these documents are held in the National Archives in Canberra.

The names of over 125,000 non-British European migrants who arrived in Australia between 1951 and 1965 have been entered onto our RecordSearch database. An example is the migrant selection documents of Alexander Mezencev who came to Australia under the General Assisted Passage agreement. His documents include a Registration Form to the Provisional Intergovernmental Committee for the Movement of Migrants from Europe. The form records that Alexander was Russian but was born in Belgrade in Yugoslavia on 9 October 1935 but his current citizenship status was Stateless. On the second page of the form are details of his employment history. He had attended studies in Belgrade from 1945 to November 1950 and since November

1950 he had attended a training school at the Displaced Persons Camp. There are also details of his education. He attended primary school in Belgrade from 1941-1945 and then Secondary School from 1945-1948 also in Belgrade. The fourth page of the form notes he can speak Russian and Serbian. In relation to work he prefers it notes he has experience as a radio technician. His registration form is dated November 1953 at Trieste.

His documents also include an Interview Report completed by the Interviewing officer from the Australian Legation, Migration Branch Rome and some Migration medical documents which include a photograph.

### **Naturalisation records**

The function of naturalisation was passed from the States to the Commonwealth in 1903 with the passing of the Naturalisation Act. The National Archives holds Commonwealth naturalisation records from 1904. Duplicate copies of Commonwealth naturalisation certificates issued before 1962 are held in our Canberra Office. An example is the naturalisation certificate for Isaac Goulstein who was 53 years old when he was naturalised in February 1904. He was originally from Kasielsk in Russia. His certificate was numbered certificate No 46 under the new Commonwealth naturalisation legislation.

The National Archives also holds naturalisation files. Naturalisation files are an excellent starting point for migration information. Because a period of residence was a prerequisite, there is usually some arrival information that you can use to trace passenger entries or migrant selection documents. An example is the naturalisation file for Alexander Bes. On his file is his Application for Certificate of Naturalisation form completed in 1960 He was living at Broken Hill, NSW. Alexander Bes had been a former Miner at the North Mine Ltd for 15 years. He was born at Chriskianzco in South Russia in October 1897. His parents Alexander and Mary were also from South Russia. He had first arrived in Australia on the vessel Yuka Maru in 1913.

### **Alien registration records**

The National Archives Sydney Office has very large holdings of alien registration records. These records document the arrival of "aliens" (non-British, non-naturalised people) in Australia and any travelling to and from Australia. These records also deal with the control of resident aliens during wartime, including internment. World War 1 applications for alien registration are arranged alphabetically by nationality and there is 10 Boxes for the Russian nationality. An example is the World War 1 Aliens registration form for Michael Goflin who was born in the Crimea in Russia in 1881 and arrived in Australia in 1915 when he was 36 years old. He was living at Chatswood and he was employed at the Arcadia Picture Show in Chatswood as a musician.

Alien registration was re-introduced during World War II under the National Security (Aliens Control) Regulations 1939. The information on these forms is

similar to that shown on the World War I registration forms but also include a photograph. One series is arranged by nationality (there are 2 boxes for the Russian nationality and a further 2 Boxes for persons who were stateless that also includes Russian people) and two series are arranged simply by surname. An example is the alien registration form for Helen Boris Andreevsky who was born in Harbin China of Russian background in 1923. She arrived in Australia in November 1939 when she was 16 years old. She was living in Crown Street Surry Hills and her occupation is shown as Factory Girl.

After passage of the *Aliens Act 1947* aliens registration became the responsibility of the Department of Immigration and continued until the 1971. In the main series of aliens arrival registration forms which is arranged alphabetically by nationality for the period 1948 - 1968 there are 16 Boxes for the Russian nationality. An example is the Application for Registration by Alien entering Australia completed by Serge Florevitch Babkin who was born in Kursk Russia in 1873 and arrived in Australia by aircraft in February 1951. He arrived in Australia from Shanghai under the Auspices of the International Refugee Organisation. He was intending to live with a Mr Palun in Brisbane. He was a carpenter by occupation.

### **Investigation files**

During WWI some files were created by the Special Intelligence Bureau NSW on persons considered having enemy sympathies. This security screening of persons continued into the inter war period and were often created when an individual sought naturalisation or when a resident of Australia sought to nominate a relative to migrate to Australia. An example is the file for Vladimir Nicolas when he applied for naturalisation in 1926. Mr Sergieff was living in York Street Sydney.

Again, during WWII the Security Service NSW compiled dossiers for investigations of persons (aliens, Australian born and naturalised citizens) or organisations suspected of enemy sympathies. All the NSW WW II investigation files and investigation dossier are listed on the National Archives RecordSearch database. I have identified 119 investigation dossiers for Russian people living in NSW. An example is the dossier for Barbara Pulman which provides useful genealogical information. Barbara Pulman was a widow who lived with her daughter Mildred and son Samuel in Bondi. She was born in Leningrad Russia in 1888 and was educated in that city. At the age of 19 she married a Mr Pulman, a British born subject. Mr Pulman died in Russia in 1917 and the family migrated to Vladivostock three years later. From 1920 to 1925 Mrs Pulman was employed by the British Consulate in Vladivostock but owing to the trouble in 1925 the Consulate left Russia and took all the staff to Manilla where they were discharged from service four months later. Mrs Pulman and her family arrived in Australia in 1925.

The investigation of some persons by the Investigation Branch led to their internment. They are usually more detailed files compiled for those persons

who were interned.

Files created by the Commonwealth Investigation Service after World War 2 are held on individuals or groups who came under investigation for activities or ideologies seen as a potential threat or risk in some way to the security of the Commonwealth eg membership of left wing organisations - and some Russian people did come under investigation

ASIO was established in 1947 to undertake internal security functions. ASIO files on individuals can also be accessed through the National Archives.

The primary published finding aid for family history research is "Finding Families : The Guide to the National Archives of Australia for Genealogists". This publication provides much more detail on the various types of records available for genealogical research.

Our internet site <http://www.naa.gov.au> also contains considerable detail about the collection such as the full text of all Guides and Fact sheets. A major feature of the site is the availability of our collection database RecordSearch. RecordSearch contains details of all agencies that create commonwealth records and all registered record series. It also contains the details of a growing number of record items.