Yizkor Books

The memorial books are the fruit of the impulse to write a testament for future generations. They constitute an unprecedented, truly popular labor to record in writing as much as possible of a destroyed world.

Jack Kugelmass and Jonathan Boyarin, *From a Ruined Garden*

Definition

Yizkor books are memorial books that recollect Eastern European Jewish communities, and were typically created by *landshmașhaftn* (societies of immigrants from the same town) after the Holocaust. Usually written in Hebrew or Yiddish, most Yizkor books were compiled by ordinary people who remembered life in their hometown, not by professional writers, editors, or historians.

Yizkor Books as a Genealogical Resource

Because the production of Yizkor Books was a grassroots phenomenon, the books vary in their usefulness for family history research. Most, however, have at least some focus on families and individuals, and contain many names and information about family relationships. Many also contain necrologies, or lists of Holocaust victims, from one or more towns. Yizkor books convey the culture and feeling of Jewish life in Eastern Europe before the Holocaust through personal narratives, photographs, maps, and drawings.

Where to Find Yizkor Books

Yizkor books can be found at the Center for Jewish History’s Ackman & Ziff Family Genealogy Institute, the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research (http://www.yivo.org/yizkor), the New York Public Library, the Jewish Theological Seminary Library, the Yeshiva University Library, Yad Vashem, and many other Jewish libraries. You can search for Yizkor books on the Center for Jewish History’s online catalogs at http://search.cjh.org. See the following sources for more information:


Genealogy Institute DS 135 .P6 F77

Ackman & Ziff Family Genealogy Institute • Center for Jewish History
15 West 16th Street, New York, NY 10011 • (212) 294-8318 • http://genealogy.cjh.org

Genealogy Institute Z 5313 .U6 N524 2003

In Memoriam (Sdu Uitgeverij Koninginnegracht, 1995). This book is a listing of Jews from the Netherlands that were killed in the Holocaust. You can browse the book at the Center for Jewish History or search through it online at http://www.joodsmonument.nl/index.php.

Genealogy Institute DS135.N4 15 1995

Memorial to the Jews Deported from France, 1942-1944: Documentation of the deportation of the victims of the Final Solution in France, by Serge Klarsfeld (Beate Klarsfeld Foundation, 1983). The book lists those victims of the Holocaust deported from France, including detailed information about specific convoys that left France to the various concentration and extermination camps.

Genealogy Institute DS135.F83 K4313 1983

JewishGenYizkor Book Project, www.jewishgen.org/Yizkor/
This site has a database of Yizkor books, showing the libraries that possess each book, and Yizkor book translations submitted by volunteers. Also included is a Necrology index where you can search through the lists of Holocaust martyrs published in the translated Yizkor books.

650 of the 700 postwar Yizkor books at the New York Public Library have been scanned and are now accessible online.