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Review of the book International Vital Records Handbook, 3rd ed.

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BOOK REVIEW

International Vital Records Handbook, Thomas Jay Kemp, 3rd edition. Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1994. \$29.95, softcover.

Reviewed by John A. Drobnicki, [REDACTED],
[REDACTED]

Thomas Jay Kemp, the author of numerous genealogical publications, has revised this excellent source in an attempt to provide the most current information and to reflect recent political developments in the world. Divided into two sections, the first covers every state and territory of the U.S., providing addresses, the most recent schedules of fees, a brief description of when civil registration began there, and, most importantly, the actual relevant forms. Thus, if one needs a birth certificate from Oklahoma, the form is right there, ready to be photocopied.

The second half of this handbook deals with the rest of the world, from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe, and it is here where the information is in some cases sketchy. In many countries, civil registration of vital records is still incomplete, so Kemp can only supply an address; for others, he again supplies reproducible forms and fee schedules. In the case of Poland, Kemp correctly says to write to the Civil Registration Office where the event occurred, or also to the National Archives in Warsaw, but since he is dealing only with civil registration he does not mention the value of writing to local parish churches. When appropriate, the author also refers the user to the LDS Family History Library.

PGSA members, of course, are not going to learn anything new from this book about Polish records; but who among us is one hundred percent Polish, especially the way borders have been shifted over the years? This book should prove valuable for tracing the other lines in our families that came from other countries, whose vital records system(s) we might be less familiar with.

Aside from its genealogical value, Kemp's book can also be used for practical purposes: for those who have moved around during their lives, tracking down certified copies of birth and/or marriage records should no longer be a problem, even if you're living in Florida and the event occurred in Montana. ☺