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Workshops: *Histories from the drawer. Stories from Warmia and Masuria*, Olsztyn, 27–28 June 2023

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Originally written in Polish, translated by Language Room Agata Wiącek.

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The *Histories from the Drawer. Stories from Warmia and Masuria* workshops were held on 27–28 June 2023 and were organised by the National Archives in Olsztyn (APO) and the Wojciech Kętrzyński Northern Institute (IPWK). The workshops were aimed at people active and working professionally in social archives and dealing with oral history, as well as those for whom it is a passion pursued 'after hours.' The event was held in cooperation with the Centre of Community Archives and the 'Remembrance and Future' Centre/Depot History Centre in Wrocław.

The two-day meeting was aimed primarily at integrating the community of social archive studies and people recording biographical interviews, notes, or memories. Equally valuable was the creation of opportunities for dialogue and cooperation between APO and IPWK and non-governmental organisations, local government institutions and private individuals operating in Warmia and Masuria in the field of community work, through professional assistance in developing their competences and professionalising their activities. The last, but no less important, task was to create a broad platform for the exchange of thoughts, experiences, and inspirations, as well as to initiate joint activities activating the local community for the cultural, social and tourist development of the region.

The workshops were held in a face-to-face format: on the first day, at the headquarters of the Olsztyn Archives; on the second day, in the building of the Northern Institute. The participants were welcomed by Dr. Jerzy Kiełbik, director of IPWK, and Agnieszka Gorajczyk, deputy director of APO. A number of archive employees also spoke: Karol Maciejko, Ewelina Gołębiowska and Marta Zbrzeźniak. These presented the APO's activities in the fields of: cooperation with entities from the sphere of non-state archival resources (including substantive assistance in the field of archiving, office and archival norms, and submitting materials to the Archive); securing, developing and sharing audiovisual documentation; and popularising archival resources. The main point of this day was the training conducted by Małgorzata Pankowska-Dowgiało and Adriana Kapała from the Centre of Community Archives. During the training session, topics related to the creation and functioning of social archives were discussed, i.e. how to collect and secure testimonies of the past; what legal issues regulate the functioning of a social archive; how to finance the activities of an archive; how to use its resources in cultural, educational projects and awareness activities; and how to effectively present and popularise archives in an interesting and creative form. At the end of the session, the participants had the opportunity to see what the work of a state archivist looks like from the inside. Archive employees showed the guests around those parts of the building that are inaccessible to users (i.e. the digitisation workshop and storerooms, which contain seven kilometers of files) and presented valuable archival materials not normally made available to

the public. The culmination of the first day of the workshops was a visit to the exhibition *Sacrifice in a Shade of Silver* prepared by the Northern Institute.

The second day was entirely devoted to the theory and practice of oral history and securing photographic documentation. At the beginning of the session, the director of the Institute briefly presented the activities of IPWK, and Marcelina Zaniewska referred to her own experience and oral history projects implemented by the Institute. The first workshop session was led by Katarzyna Bock-Matuszyk, representing the 'Remembrance and Future' Centre/Depot History Centre in Wrocław. The speaker introduced the participants to the topic of oral history, paying particular attention to the definition of basic concepts, the development of oral history in Poland, and ethical and legal issues. She also talked about the biographical method, as well as good practices related to recording memories, including the technical side of recording accounts, developing a questionnaire and report records, the practice of asking questions, and the principles of transcribing recordings.

The next item on the programme were workshops prepared by the Centre of Community Archives. Adriana Kapała explained the secrets of recording witnesses to history and suggested what could be done with such recordings in the future, while Małgorzata Pankowska-Dowgiało discussed the principles of the proper handling of archival photographs and documents.

Twenty people participated in the workshops, varying in age, place of residence, professional profile, and research interests. The attendees also included social archivists (from archives that have existed for many years and from those that have just been created) and practitioners of oral history. Meeting in breakout groups and workshops not only provided the opportunity to meet people with similar passions, but also facilitated the exchange and discussion of ideas for participants' own projects. The workshops were a prelude to a series of meetings devoted to social archiving and oral history. The activities planned for the future will primarily involve an invitation to this growing group of oral history researchers, social archivists, enthusiasts, and regionalists to jointly build a local identity.