

## Fellows



### **Alison Frank**

Fulbright/IFK\_Senior Fellow

Duration of fellowship

01. October 2003 bis 31. January 2004

## **Alison Frank**

### **PROJECT TITLE**

The Business of Building a National Economy: Oil, Land and Development in Austrian Galicia

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

Few remember today that Galicia (a province of the Habsburg Empire in the nineteenth century, now part of Poland and Ukraine) was the third-largest producer of oil in the world for the two decades preceding the First World War. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, backward, rural Galicia drew great numbers of men looking for adventure, profitable investments, or both. It also drew a good number of women – some of whom were simply looking for men. Ukrainian peasants, Jewish businessmen, and Polish magnates were joined by French and Belgian bankers, German and Czech engineers, Canadian and Irish drilling experts. Alison Frank's research shows how these people – so disparate in social and national origin – were all connected by oil. She uses archival sources from Vienna, Lviv, Krakow, London, and Paris, as well as numerous contemporary journals and newspapers in German, Polish, Ukrainian and French, to demonstrate that the oil industry became increasingly international in an age of burgeoning nationalism, and that the conflicting goals of its various participants hampered its ability to bring lasting economic benefit to Galicia. In so doing, this research draws an important link between the development of industry in Western and Eastern Europe, and reveals the extent to which western capital reached even this most capital-poor of provinces. It also attempts to introduce into Eastern European historiography the examination of human influences on natural and environmental "givens" that has proven so fruitful for French and German historical research.

## **CV**

Assistant Professor for History at the University of Wisconsin-Madison

## **Publications**

U. a. "Austrian El Dorado": A History of the Oil Industry in Galicia, 1853–1923