



Kishinev – my native town: History of Jews and Genealogy

Yefim A. Kogan
Masters of Jewish Liberal Studies

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yefimk@verizon.net

JewishGen Bessarabia SIG Coordinator and webmaster -
www.jewishgen.org/Bessarabia

Bessarabia on a map of Europe



Kishinev – my native town: History of Jews and Genealogy

Brief history of Jews in Kishinev, Bessarabia, Moldavia

- History of Jews in Kishinev in Moldavia/Ottoman period, until 1812
- History of Jews in Kishinev in Russian Empire period, from 1812-1918
- History of Jews in Kishinev in Romanian period from 1918-1940
- Jews in Kishinev during the war and after the war

Statistical information on Jews in Kishinev

Archival holdings on Kishinev Jews

- Records available at the Moldovan State Archive
- Materials in St.Petersburg's archives
- Information collected at JewishGen.org

Other information on Kishinev Jews

- Cemetery records
- Education records
- Material from Bessarabia Annual Books-Calendars

Jewish life in Kishinev today

Internet resources on Kishinev Jews

History of Jews in Kishinev in Russian Empire period, from 1812-1918

- Demetrius Kantemir, *Descriptio Moldaviae*, 1714
- Burial Society, 1774
- Census in 1770s
- Hayyim ben Solomon Tyrer (1760-1816), Rabbi in Kishinev

History of Jews in Kishinev in Russian Empire period, from 1812-1918

- Kishinev – main town of the Bessarabia oblast, province
- Kishinev – part of the pale
- At the beginning of 19 c, Zalman ben Mordechay, Shargorodskiy, follower of Baal Shem Tov, became a Rabbi
- In 1838 followers of Haskalah movement (enlightenment) opened first Jewish school. In 1859, in addition to two official government Jewish schools and one private women's school were 46 cheders, and from 1860 a Chasidic Yeshiva was founded.

History of Jews in Kishinev in Russian Empire period, from 1812-1918

The first **Big Synagogue** was built tentatively in 1812 in the lower part of Kishinev not far from the bank of river Byk. Around it, there also used to be **Jewish Cemetery** that was called Old in the do



History of Jews in Kishinev in Russian Empire period, from 1812-1918

- At the beginning of 20 c in Kishinev were 77 synagogues and prayer houses. Choral



From collection of Aaron Shneer

History of Jews in Kishinev in Russian Empire period, from 1812-1918

Talmud-Torah was an older building (1872) whose construction was financed by Jewish welfare societies.



From collection of
Aaron Shneer

History of Jews in Kishinev in Russian Empire period, from 1812-1918

Zionists of Bessarabia were represented at the First Zionist Congress in **1897** by Jacob Bernstein-Kogan of Kishinev.

Toward the close of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th, a line of poets and authors emerged on the cultural scene in Bessarabia, many of whom were to play an important role in Yiddish and Hebrew literature, including Eliezer Steinbarg, Judah Steinberg, S. Ben-Zion, Jacob Fichman, Samuel Leib Blank, and Hayyim Greenberg.

The chief rabbi of Bessarabia in the beginning of 20 century was **Leyb Moiseevich Tsirelson**, who wrote many halakhic works. Since 1908 Leyb Tsirelson was the spiritual and the official rabbi of Chisinau (Bessarabia). In 1910 he was elected chairman of the All-Russian rabbinical committee (Vaad harabonim) and held this position until 1917, when the commission was disbanded. As the authorized representative of the leadership of Jewish Religious Communities in Russia he appeal to the authorities on various matters relating to the Jewish population of the country.

History of Jews in Kishinev in Russian Empire period, from 1812-1918



Monument to Tsirelson at the
Jewish cemetery in Kishinev.

The remains of Yeshiva



History of Jews in Kishinev in Romanian period from 1918-1940

- During this period the Jews of Kishinev suffered from anti-Semitism, but their numbers increased at the expense of the Jews who had escaped from the Ukrainian pogroms during the Civil War.
- Romanian Citizenship (1924). Depriving many of the Jews of Kishinev (as in the whole of Bessarabia) Citizenship (1924), the authorities are dooming them to poverty.
- Zionist organizations - He-Halutz, helps a lot halutzim from the Soviet Union to immigrate to Eretz Yisrael
- Cultural organizations – Makkabi, Hatarbut, "Unser Zeit" – Yiddish newspaper

Jews in Kishinev during the war and after the war

1940. After the transfer of Bessarabia under the authority of the Soviet Union (1940), the majority of Jewish institutions were closed in Kishinev and Zionist activity is prohibited. Among the many inhabitants of Kishinev, arrested and deported at that time, there were thousands of Jews.

July 16, 1941 German-Romanian troops occupied Kishinev. Part of the Jewish population was able to evacuate. July 17 Eynzatsgruppen unit "D" and a part of the Romanian Gendarmerie killed about fourteen thousand Jewish men. On August 1 were selected for allegedly sent to work 450 young men and women, 411 of them were shot in a few days, once again under the pretext of sending to work was gathered 500 people, 300 of them were shot.

Jews in Kishinev during the war and after the war

On July 25 Romanian commander of Kishinev ordered the creation of ghettos. According to the Romanian documents, on August 11 in the ghetto lived 10,578 people. By the middle of September 1941 the number of prisoners of the ghetto increased. In the ghetto were sent the Jews from the surrounding villages. From August 5, the Jews of Kishinev had a distinctive sign - a six-pointed star.



Statistical information on Jews in Kishinev

- In 1867 in Kishinev lived 18,000 Jews, and in addition to a synagogue were 28 prayer houses
- 1897 All Russian Census. Number of Jewish farmers, middle class, merchants
- 50,000 Jews lived in Kishinev in 1900, which was 46% of the total population. Kishinev was the 5th largest city by Jewish Population in the Russian Empire after Warsaw, Odessa, Lodz and Vilna.
- Estates population of Kishinev according to the census was divided into the following groups: hereditary and private honorary citizens – **173**; farmers – **190**; merchants – **1208**; middle class - **47,446**.
- Merchants in Kishinev from Revision Lists of 1848, 1854 and 1859:
 - Merchants of 1st Gild – 8 Jews / 1 family
 - Merchants of 3rd Gild – 425 Jews / 111 families
 - Middle Class lived on owned land – 195 Jews / 111 families
 - Middle Class lived on the town land – 4244 Jews / 1957 families

Statistical information on Jews in Kishinev

- In 1898 according to the Jewish Colonial Society from 38 factories and plants in Kishinev 29 were owned by Jews, from 7 mills, 6 were in Jewish hands, 5 Publishing companies, 4 were owned by Jews
- In 1898 in Kishinev were 16 Jewish schools, more than 2000 people, among them 4 Talmid-Torahs.
- From 1886 in Kishinev was organized a group חֲבֵי צִיּוֹן (Chovevei Tsion) with a leader M. Dizengoff (first mayor of the Tel Aviv from 1921-25, 1928-1936)
- From 1897 – Zionists with leader Bernshteyn-Kogan, and in the beginning of 20th century – organization of Bund and Aguddat Israel.

Statistical information on Jews in Kishinev

Honorary Citizens (hereditary or private) –
173 hereditary and private honorary citizens in Kishinev in 1897,
among them

- Leyb Moiseevich Tsirelson, rabbi and spiritual leader of Kishinev and Bessarabia Jews, see <http://www.answers.com/topic/yehuda-leib-tsirelson>
- Abraham son of Naum Katlovker (1844-1907, Kishinev), a Jew from Soroca, a teacher, a secular member of the fifth session of the Rabbinical Commission under the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Empire in 1893-1894 years, the official government rabbi and an **hereditary** honorary citizen.

Brief history of Jews in Kishinev, Bessarabia, Moldavia

From Birth Records

Name	Father, Grandfather Mother, Grandfather Mother Maiden Surname	Date of Birth Hebrew Date	Town Uyezd Gubernia	Comments	Place Registered Year Record	Microfilm / Item # Image # Archive / Fond
GALPERIN, David	Shmuel Yosef / Shmul-Yosif / Shulim-Yosif, Mordekhai / Mordko Pesya	17/10/1910 27 Tishri	Kishinev Kishinev Bessarabia	Mohel Moshe / Moshko GOLDENBERG. Father - a Hereditary Honorary Citizen. Father's name changed from 'Shmul-Yosif' to 'Shulim-Yosif' by a decision of the Bessarabian Gubernian Government on October 14, 1911.	Kishinev 1910 M552	2292605 / 1 209 NARM/211/11/37 6

From death records:

KATLOVKUR, Abram / Avraham	Naum / Nakhum - - - -	Kishinev Government appointed Rabbi of City of Kishinev, honorary citizen by birth	24/2/1907 23 Adar 62 Chronic pneumonia	Kishinev v Kishinev v Bessarabia	Kishinev v 1907 M109	2292609 2 42 NARM 211/1 1/394
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From marriage records:

Kishinev / Kishinev / Bessarabia	18/10/1895 12 Kheshvan	KAUSHANSKY, Moshko SHEYNBERG, Idis Ratsa	Ruvim Kishinev Leyb	23/2022	Groom was Kishinev 2nd guild merchant's son, witnessed by Kishinev City court 15-Dec-1894 #2030, bride was daughter of honorary citizen by birth, Dowry of 48 Rubles	Shlema KH ASILEV Shmul AVE RBUKH	Kishinev 1895	Marriage 323	2255903 6 00889 95 NARM 21 1/11/238
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Brief history of Jews in Kishinev, Bessarabia, Moldavia

Archival holdings on Jews in Kishinev

Records available at the Moldovan State Archive:

1. Birth, death, marriage records. Many translated and available at JewishGen
2. Revision Lists, Jews residents of Kishinev, merchants, middle class. Some records translated and available at JewishGen
3. Alphabetical books and lists of petty-bourgeois or Middle Class, (1910)
4. Educational records, some translated at JewishGen
5. Voters list 1918-1941, Lists of Jewish residents of the region who became Romanian citizens as well as the lists of those who were refused in the citizenship.
6. Records related to 1918-1944 period, during which Bessarabia was part of Kingdom of Romania. Among them lists Jewish residents who became Romanian citizens as well as the lists of those who were refused in the citizenship. Also among these documents are very commonly found voters' lists from many cities and villages of Bessarabia.

Brief history of Jews in Kishinev, Bessarabia, Moldavia

Archival holdings on Jews in Kishinev

Records available at the Moldovan State Archive:

7. Records of nationalized properties owned by Jews, compiled by Romanian authorities in 1941-1944 and also compiled by the Soviet Union in 1945
8. Pogrom-related information can be found in the Bessarabian numerous newspapers - Bessarabskie Oblastnye i Gubernskie Vedomosti, Bessarabija, Bessarabskaja pochta, Bessarabskoe Slovo, Drug, published mainly by prominent Jewish people.
9. Materials of Archive commission "History of anti-Jewish pogroms in Russia"(1919), which include documents on Kishinev and Dubossary pogroms of 1903. Edited by S.M. Dubnov and G. Ya. Kranshiy-Admoni. (p.21)
10. Podolia census of 1875, where some Jewish residents were assigned to various towns, including Kishinev.
11. Personal files and documents of various kinds from previously classified records of the Bessarabian Police, including records from all of the local police departments.

Brief history of Jews in Kishinev, Bessarabia, Moldavia

Archival holdings on Jews in Kishinev

Materials in St. Petersburg's archives:

From "Jewish documentary sources in Saint Petersburg Archives", S.P., 2011. Most of holdings on Jews in Bessarabia and Kishinev are in Russian State Historical Archive.

- a. Materials of Archive commission "History of anti-Jewish pogroms in Russia"(1919), which include documents on Kishinev and Dubossary pogroms of 1903 (p. 21)
- b. F.1263 Committee of Ministers (p. 119) The enhanced protection of Chisinau and declaring it an exceptional situation due to existing between Christians and Jews, extreme aggravation of relations. 1902
- c. F.1330. General Assembly of the Senate Departments. On the taxation of residents of Chisinau with candle tax.
- d. Many documents on Kishinev pogrom of 1903, including documents on compensations on destroyed property, arrest the instigators of pogroms, etc.
- e. F. 744, Supreme Decrees, p. 381 To restrict or prohibit admission of Jews in male and female gymnasium

Brief history of Jews in Kishinev, Bessarabia, Moldavia

Archival holdings on Jews in Kishinev

Materials in St. Petersburg's archives:

- f. Personal files and documents of various kinds from previously classified records of
the Bessarabian Police, including records from all of the local police departments,
including Kishinev
- h. Of misconduct of members of Jewish communities, including the case of Kishinev
residents on trial for noise during vote in kahal in a general meeting and police official present.
- h. Many other material on Kishinev

Brief history of Jews in Kishinev, Bessarabia, Moldavia

Material collected at the JewishGen and at Bessarabia SIG:

www.jewishgen.org/bessarabia

- Maps and schemas of Kishinev and surrounding area, including a map with photos of survived buildings
- Duma Voter's list, 1906, 1907
- Business directory of 1924
- Yizkor Books, Religious personnel
- Photo Gallery
- Bessarabian Landsmanshaften: First Kishinever Progressive Society of New York;
Kishinev Sick Benevolent Society
- Kishinev historical museum, article
- Family Trees, Memoirs, Stories, Travel, Theater
- Bessarabia Annual Books, show the page

<http://www.jewishgen.org/Bessarabia/files/projects/30AnnualBooks/BessarabiaCalendarAsOfMay2013.htm>

- Find Search for people from Kishinev in Lithuania, Belorussia, other databases!

Brief history of Jews in Kishinev, Bessarabia, Moldavia

Other information

- Russian Jewish Organizations, catalogue of Jewish Organizations
 - Jewish Memorial websites of died or missing in the war
 - Dor le Dor – non-commercial fund, Kishinev
 - Russian Jewish websites
 - Holocaust on the territory of USSR, Encyclopedia, Moscow, 2011
 - “Stalin” lists – people killed in 1930s, 1940s
 - Movies on Jewish Kishinev
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- See great collections of Jewish Kishinev photos at <http://picasaweb.google.com/106995678358404531836> Aaron Shneer Gallery

Jewish life in Kishinev in 2013

- 15 thousand Jews live today, from presentation of Natalia Alhazov, Chicago, 2008

(from Natalia Alhazov. **Where Kishinev Pogrom of 1903 Was: Past and Present of Jewish Moldova.** Presented at the International Jewish Genealogical conference in Chicago in 2008)

- Cemetery records in the book: “House of Eternity”, Kishinev, “Dor le Dor”, 2004, in Russian, published by charity foundation “Dor le Dor” www.dorledor.info There is a second book published (in Russian) with Names of the buried at the cemetery (not full yet).

Jewish cemetery, containing 40.000 burials on the territory of 11 hectares. The cemetery is one of the oldest in Kishinev; the older gravestones have stela or sarcophagus shape, some combining both. The inscriptions are in Hebrew, Yiddish, Russian and Romanian; among graphical signs predominant are menorah, shofar, palm branch, lion or bird and pitcher. The size of the graveyard was drastically reduced in 1959 when on the decision of the City Council its oldest part was turned into a park. Besides the majority who died their natural death - doctors, lawyers, merchants, manufacturers, craftsmen and common people, here are entombed the victims of 1903 and 1905 pogroms, those killed by bombings during World War II, 400 Jews executed by shooting during the occupation and Jews who died in Kishinev ghetto.

Jewish life in Kishinev in 2013



Jewish life in Kishinev in 2013

- **Museum of History of Moldovan Jews** with its collection started in 1991. It is located in the *mikva* part of the Jewish Campus and includes authentic materials, exhibits and documents reflecting Jewish life in Moldova with special emphasis on the pogrom of 1903 and the Holocaust of 1941-44.
- **I. Manger Jewish Library**
- There is now a Rabbi Tsirelson Street where the ruins – the remains of Yeshiva and Almhouse connected with the names of S. Perelmutter and his son-in-law M. Kligman who financed the construction and maintenance of the buildings.

Internet resources on Kishinev, Bessarabia

- Bessarabia SIG website: www.jewishgen.org/bessarabia
- Bessarabia Annual Books: <http://www.jewishgen.org/Bessarabia/files/projects/30AnnualBooks/BessarabiaCalendarAsOfMay2013.htm>
- Aaron Shneer Gallery: <http://picasaweb.google.com/106995678358404531836>
- Jewish News portal : www.dorledor.info (Russian)
- Graduates from Kishinev pro-gymnazium: <http://www.petergen.com/history/kisgim.shtml>
- Rabbi Yehuda-Leyb Tsirelson: <http://www.answers.com/topic/yehuda-leib-tsirelson>
- My town Kishinev: <http://oldchisinau.com/> (Russian)
- Centrul Istoric al Chisinaului: <http://www.monument.sit.md/> (Romanian)
- Jewish Memory: <http://www.jewishmemory.md/eng/> (English, Russian)
- All about Bessarabia: <http://www.bessarabia.ru/> (English, Russian)
- Jewish Encyclopedia: <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/3185-bessarabia>
- Historical Maps of Moldova: http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Maps_of_the_history_of_Moldova

Internet resources on Kishinev

- Jewish theologians of Moldova: <http://www.lechaim.ru/ARHIV/162/VZR/k05.htm> (Russian)
- Jewish Cemeteries of Kishinev and Orgeev: <http://www.pavetex.md/>
- Bessarabian Jews: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Bessarabian_Jews
- The Bessarabian Problem, by CHARLES UPSON CLARK: <http://www.tkinter.smig.net/romania/FriendsOfRoumania/Ch09/index.htm>
- Bessarabia by CHARLES UPSON CLARK:
http://depts.washington.edu/cartah/text_archive/clark/mobile.html
- Preserving Jewish memory Centropa: <http://www.centropa.org/>
- Jewish Genealogical portal: <http://forum.j-roots.info/index.php?sid=4f479bc2a4d784c2e65bbe30e695a8d8> (Russian)
- Bessarabian Maps: <http://www.wwii-photos-maps.com/bessarabianmaps/index.html>
- Forum – My town Kishinev <http://oldchisinau.com/forum/index.php> (Russian)
- Memorial: <http://www.obd-memorial.ru/html/index.html> (Russian)
- Memory Book: <http://www.nekropol.com/Holokost.htm> (Russian)
- Stalin's killing lists: <http://stalin.memo.ru/> (Russian)



Photo by Jay Sage, 2012

Monument ghetto prisoners

Synagogue,

Jewish center, tablet in memory of Ikhil Shraybman, Jewish writer

Jewish Kishinev

Questions?