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Hyperlinks in blue take you off site to other websites, often JewishGen, for more information.

A search string in red indicates the exact text to put into Google, JewishGen or the Belarus SIG search.

⭐	For informational text that is historical or technical that you want to save, you might want to Bookmark or Make Notes	Q&A	Q&A are direct questions and answers from the JewishGen Discussion or SIG Archives

> ✚ **The JewishGen All Belarus Database is also known as the "ABD"**
> ✚ **The Belarus SIG's Belarus Records Inventory is also known as the B·R·I**

Where Once We Walked

Welcome

The Belarus SIG, established in 1998, promotes Jewish genealogy research in Grodno, Minsk, Mogilev and Vitebsk Gubernii as well as the Lida and Vileika uyzeds (districts) of Vilna Gubernia.

Focus on the SIG

- ➡ A SIG is records
- ➡ A SIG is search for surnames

- ➡ A SIG wants to help you find your family in time and place
- ➡ A SIG wants to help you find your town

- ➡ A SIG relies on records to unite you with your family in time and place
- ➡ A SIG reacts in theory to the understanding that a visiting researcher looks first for a SURNAME
  and then for a PLACE

- ➡ For each of us, research is at a different stage: some of us are First Timers, Beginners, or New to the SIG. Some of us are Old Timers, Experienced, Stuck or Looky-Loos.
- ➡ The Belarus SIG understands that when PRIMARY RECORDS are scarce, SECONDARY SOURCES and SECONDARY SEARCHES may bring us closer to putting our family tree together.

- ➡ Whether you know WHO and WHERE or whether you need help to make connections, the Belarus SIG website sets out to work with you— From **Search for Ancestors** to the **Help Desk**.

An Advanced Researcher will be able to search from the Home Page. An Old-Timer may want to take a Tour. A visitor or a moderately new researcher will want to visit the Navigation, Get Started tabs on the toolbar before jumping into the site. The following overview and introduction is meant to give all visitors an understanding of Jewish Belarus, Records and Border changes.

Welcome to the Belarus SIG Site

The Belarus SIG website is full of information aimed at providing research tools for helping people locate their ancestors, and their ancestral shtetls. The website consists of an active newsgroup (list serve), over 800 pages, many small databases and contains more than 500,000 records. If you cannot find your ancestors name on our website, we hope that you can find enough information to know where else to look.

Welcome from the SIG Coordinators: David, Sharon, Paul and Ruth

What you can hope to find on any SIG website

Just as JewishGen, our parent organization, is an all volunteer-member driven service, each SIG operates in a similar mode: a group of fellow researchers determine a need and as volunteers they create a way to find answers.

A SIG's organization grows in response to member interactions.

Genealogy and family history research became popular after 1970 when much of the world was still rising from the effects of World War II. Many former Lithuanian-Polish states whose boundaries were brought into the Pale of Russia were later subsumed under the collective government of the U.S.S.R.

As a result, in Belarus until 1990, the openness of archives and the search for family could not proceed. In many places two wars, record removal and destruction made it impossible for records to be found, organized or returned to the district of origin. Records dumped or stored for safety were lost, damaged or destroyed.

It's all about records, records, records: what are they and where are they