Kishinev – my native town: History of Jews and Genealogy

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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 documents of the 18 century.
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
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 were required to wear 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

Brief history of Jews in Kishinev, Bessarabia, Moldavia
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 אצְיָה חֹבֵבֵי בֵּיתֵי בָּנֹיע (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


- 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Father, Grandfather</th>
<th>Town</th>
<th>Uyezd</th>
<th>Comments</th>
<th>Place Registered Year</th>
<th>Microfilm / Item #</th>
<th>Image #</th>
<th>Archive / Fond</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GALPERIN, David</td>
<td>Shmuel Yosef / Shmul-Yosif / Shulim-Yosif, Mordekhai / Mordko Pesya</td>
<td>17/10/1910</td>
<td>17/27 Tishri</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>Kishinev 1910</td>
<td>M552</td>
<td>2292605 / 1 209</td>
<td>NARM/211/11/376</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## From death records:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Naum / Nakhum</th>
<th>Kishinev Government appointed Rabbi of City of Kishinev, honorary citizen by birth</th>
<th>Kishinev</th>
<th>Kishinev 1907</th>
<th>Kishinev 1907</th>
<th>Microfilm / Item #</th>
<th>Image #</th>
<th>Archive / Fond</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KATLOVKUR, Abram / Avraham</td>
<td>- - -</td>
<td>24/2/1907 23 Adar 62 Chronic pneumonia</td>
<td>Kishinev</td>
<td>M109</td>
<td>2292609</td>
<td>2 42</td>
<td>NARM 211/1/394</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## From marriage records:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Kaushansky, Moshko SHEYNBERG, Idis Ratsa</th>
<th>Ruvin Kishinev Leyb</th>
<th>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</th>
<th>Shlema KH ASILEV Shmul AVE RBUKH</th>
<th>Kishinev 1895</th>
<th>Marriage 323</th>
<th>2255903</th>
<th>6 00889</th>
<th>95 NARM 21 1/11/238</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kishinev /</td>
<td>18/10/1895 /</td>
<td>Kishinev 12 Kh</td>
<td>23/2/1895 20 22</td>
<td>Kishinev /</td>
<td>Bessarabia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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.
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.
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.
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
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](http://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

- 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

• 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


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 Tsiirelson Street where the ruins – the remains of Yeshiva and Almhouse connected with the names of S. Perelmuter 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


• 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

Internet resources on Kishinev

- Jewish theologians of Moldova: [http://www.lechaim.ru/ARHIV/162/VZR/k05.htm](http://www.lechaim.ru/ARHIV/162/VZR/k05.htm) (Russian)
- Jewish Cemeteries of Kishinev and Orgeev: [http://www.pavetex.md/](http://www.pavetex.md/)
- The Bessarabian Problem, by CHARLES UPSON CLARK: [http://www.tkinter.smig.net/romania/FriendsOfRoumania/Ch09/index.htm](http://www.tkinter.smig.net/romania/FriendsOfRoumania/Ch09/index.htm)
- Memory Book: [http://www.nekropol.com/Holokost.htm](http://www.nekropol.com/Holokost.htm) (Russian)
- Stalin’s killing lists: [http://stalin.memo.ru/](http://stalin.memo.ru/) (Russian)
Monument ghetto prisoners
Synagogue,
Jewish center, tablet in memory of Ikhil Shraybman, Jewish writer
Jewish Kishinev

Questions?