

34th IAJGS International Conference on Jewish Genealogy, July 27 – August 1, 2014

Panel Discussion

“Ask the Bessarabia Moldova experts on geography, history, archive, genealogy and culture.”

December, 2014

Transcription was done by members of Bessarabia SIG

Moderator Yefim Kogan: Welcome to our panel discussion. It is “Ask the Bessarabia Moldova experts on geography, history, archive, genealogy and culture.” and probably many more.

Thanks for coming, I wanted to put your names on the list, that I will know who was here. If you already signed one of the slips before today, or yesterday, then only put your name. If you didn't, put your name and your email address if you don't mind, then I can contact you.

We are missing one panelist though. We still need to go ahead otherwise we will have problems later.

Let's start. I am quickly going to introduce our experts, saving them the trouble. And I will start with myself; you probably know everything about me. I am a mathematician by education and a software developer by profession. In 2012 I received a master's degree in Jewish Liberal Studies with focus on Jewish History in Eastern Europe. I did it in Boston Hebrew College. You know that I am the coordinator for the Bessarabia SIG although my wife prefers “president”...why.....because in this case she is first lady.

I started my family genealogy research after my family immigrated from the Soviet Union 25 years ago. I am involved in a number of projects and did some Kehila links websites for three towns etc.

Now our panelists: **Alla Chastina**, lives in Kishinev, Moldova. She graduated from Leningrad St Petersburg State University, department of history.

Alla worked as a senior researcher in the national archives in the Republic of Moldova for 13 years and since 2005 Alla is working at the Institute of Cultural Heritage of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Moldova and is a participant in the internet genealogical project “Romania Moldova Bessarabia Transnistria.”

By the personal notes, I met Alla for the first time in Paris conference in 2012, where she presented on a topic of archival documents referring to Jewish roots in Moldova. You can read excerpts from that presentation at our website. There is a conferences section in our website “Conferences”.

Alla and the Bessarabia SIG are working together on a project to identify records our members may need to get from the archives. I think her presentation of the newspapers was very valuable to us. Today we will hear about Jewish businesses in the 19th century

Alex Denisenko is not here, I don't know, maybe he will come later.

Unidentified: Do you have his cell phone?

Yefim: I don't actually. Do you know him? Please call if you know his phone.

Terry Lasky from Colorado USA. Terry has been doing genealogy for over 25 years. He has documented over 2000 people in his family tree and has written family history books.

In 2002 Terry started volunteering for Jewish Gen and over the years did a lot of Jewish Gen transliterations like 150,000 entries from Duma List. When you look at the Duma list, think about Terry because I think he did it alone, right?

Terry: there were two other people.

Yefim: There were two, well this was a terrific job, and everyone can appreciate it. Also he photographed and translated documents all Jewish burials in 10 states, and in three Moldovan cities-towns and one Canadian province. Over 30,000 photographs, he did and about 150,000 entries submitted to JOWBR. I know how difficult that is. Terry has been an active member, a board member and a presenter for the Jewish Society of Colorado for the last 15 years.

Terry is a very active member of Bessarabia SIG. He is on the board of our SIG and worked on a number of projects including revision lists, Kishinev Doyna cemetery and others. He organized a project to translate the 216 page Yizkor book of Orhei, Moldova from Hebrew and Yiddish to English. I think now that book is in print.

I want to thank all panelists. Did you talk to Alex? No, well, ok, we will not wait. We will go ahead. Here is the format of our discussion, you will be able to ask questions right here, at a microphone. I also received a number of questions online in advance. I told our panelists that they could think a little about these questions and some questions were directed toward a particular person.

The first question is from **Yoni Kupchik** from Israel, and I know he is not here. A few years ago, Alla Chastina mentioned, at the conference in 2012 which was in Paris, about the finding of some vital records from the 1840s from several towns. His question is: are those books available for search? And also is Jewish Gen trying to obtain copies of those records? And maybe most important, what are the chances of finding more such documents in the archives, especially interested in Orgeyev.

Alla: Yes, a few years ago I told about these documents at the Paris conference. These vital records of 1830s from several Bessarabian towns and villages are available for search. I think

that Jewish Gen can try to order copies of these records. As for me, I am ready to give all archival information connected with these records. People must use it too. As for the chances to find more such records, I don't know, but there are a lot of various documents in the national archives of Moldova and maybe we'll find new documents, maybe you will find.

Yefim: We have to be clear about these answers. You are saying that there are vital records from 1840s from different towns including Orgeyev?

Alla: Yes, including Orgeyev.

Yefim: Because I don't think we have it now among the (Vital) records.

Alla: But you must demand.

Yefim: I understand

Terry: Currently I think we have 1854 and 1859 and 1875 revision list from Orgeyev. I don't think we have anything from the 1840s.

Yefim: No we are not talking about revision lists. We are talking about vital records.

Alla: Vital Records.

Yefim: We don't have vital records (for Orgeev). But according to Alla, we may get them.

The first task now is going to be to check if those microfilms were copied and digitized here in Salt Lake City. This is the first task, and we will do it and definitely we will find some. If they didn't, then we will order from whatever towns we will find Jewish records.

Question: What towns are available?

Alla: Many town: Khotin, Novoselitsa, Orgeyev, Kishinev.

Yefim: We translated already Kishinev records definitely. I think 100,000 already in this vital record data base done for Kishinev, Bendery, Beltsy. But some of them are not on the list. You can find a list of all available records in the Bessarabia vital records data base.

Does anyone have a question (on this topic)?

No, let's go ahead. Another question from **Michael Richmond**, actually a very active person, translated many revision lists. I met him at a number of conferences.

He's asking what kind of business records might be at the Moldovan archives for the late 19th century, early 20th century period." I am told that my great- great grandfather Aaron Schwartzman owned property in Falesht area, possibly including a mill, but that is all I know."Maybe, Alla, you will talk about business records later in your presentation.

Alla: I think if we have some information about property, we can find this information in our archive. But we must know the date, the time, and the name of the owner. If we have this information, I will find.

Yefim: You are talking about land documents, correct? Land properties, the properties, what was owned. I know that they are there, they exist for some towns.

Alla: Yes.

Another question is from **Olivia Jivcovi** -a very interesting question. Under what circumstance would a Jewish person abandon their faith and even convert? And what is the status of the converted with his or her ties to the Jewish community? And are there recordings of marriages between Jews and non Jews at the end of the 19th century? **Terry**, do you have any input for that?

Terry: I don't have a lot of input in that. I know of several cases and I don't think this happened very often but it has to do with conscription into the army. Most people renamed their surnames of their children to different surnames so they wouldn't get conscripted because they would always take the second oldest person, they wouldn't take both brothers. Some people also converted, outwardly converted in order to not have their children conscripted into the army. They probably kept their traditions hidden. I don't know what the reaction of the Jewish community was, I have no idea on that.

Yefim: That's interesting, I've never heard that. They converted, but the Russians, the Romanians, the Moldovans were also conscripted into the army.

Terry: But not for 35 years.

Yefim: For 25, at the most. Alla, do you have any input?

Alla: I know that if a Jew wanted to marry a Moldovan or Russian he must refuse from his religion. It was legislation in Bessarabia. I found many documents about refusal of religion by many Jews for marriage. This was legislation in Bessarabia.

Yefim: I can add a little bit. First of all, in the revision lists, there is a column "departed from" or "left the community." But that means the person died and it would not be reported in the next revision. But it would be reported, say the revision first was in 1848, and the person died in 1850, and the next revision in 54, it will be checked that the person left and the reason why... died. But also that reason was converted. Ok, converted was a reason that the person left, basically left the community. I saw it in many cases, the reason probably marriage, probably some other reasons. This is one piece of information.

Also in the records of 1824, this is what we did lately, 1824, in the towns of the north: Khotin, Bricheni, etc. There is a small section of Jews converted. It is about ten people on that list, and it

is not only for Jews , but there are Moslems that converted to Christianity. This is the whole list of people and some of them are Jews who converted. This is the only list I know of that nature. Any other ideas from the audience?

Question: My grandfather lived in Bricheni. My grandmother was born in Mogilev Podolsk. They were married in the early 1880's. Where the marriage was most likely performed and where would the vital records be showing their marriage?

Yefim: One person lived in Mogilev Podolsk, right? And the other was where? Bricheni?

Question: Where were weddings traditionally performed, in the groom's city or the brides?

Yefim: That I cannot answer, what I can tell you is some people lived for example in Bricheni or somewhere but the marriage was performed in Kishinev. That was a possibility. Why? Because Kishinev was a big city, probably that couple was a very rich couple and they came to Kishinev to do this marriage. It might be done probably in any of those places or even in a third place, it's a possibility.

Question: Do you think it might be Mogilev Podolsk- that was a big center.

Yefim: Bricheni was also a big center. Definitely, it's not like the bigger the better though. It depends.

Question: My name is **Adrienne Iskow**. People have told me that there could be many places where births were documented or not documented at all. In the late 1800s what would be the place if any, that a birth would be documented?

Terry: I am going to give the same kind of answer that Yefim did. It could have been documented any place. In some of the bigger cities, obviously you would document it there. I know that my grandmother had four children born over there and she never documented any of them until she wanted to leave, then she got to document them in order to get papers to leave, get the rabbi to document them. Many people never documented them at all but if you were in a bigger town, you would probably document them in that town. If you were in a smaller town, I don't know if you would even document it.

Yefim: I think Terry is right. The only thing that I have seen documents for smaller towns too, it's not like only for bigger towns, and small shtetl's like with 1000 or 500 Jews-a record. And what it says that the town where the baby was born and also it gives father's and mother's names and what was the status, the class of the father. Like merchant class, or middle class, bourgeois, or farmer, or maybe something else, there are a few more.

Terry: In the kinds of cases that I was talking about like with my family, it wasn't done by the city, it was done by the rabbi documented it and therefore it wasn't a city document in a lot of the cases that I've seen, it was just by the rabbi.

Yefim: Right, rabbi signed the documents definitely, by law of 1835, Jews had to keep 2 copies of birth records, two copies, one in the synagogue, in the town, and another one in some government offices, maybe in the town or in a district. This is how it is, and sometimes we have both of those copies and sometimes they are the same and sometimes a little bit different.

Question: My father never knew his birth date, he came from Beltsy, I am not sure why. My father said he never knew his birth date and he made one up when he came to the United States, or his family did. I don't know the reason for it but his father was supposedly a merchant, would that make any difference?

Alla: I can say there are a lot of documents on Beltsy, in the archives, and maybe I will find.

Yefim: The question is why he did not know.

Alla: I don't know why.

Terry: It's no different, when my grandmother registered hers, it was 2 or 3 years after they were born, she just guessed on a date, just absolutely guessed. Yes, most of them did not necessarily register right when they were born.

Yefim: I think it is also a Jewish tradition that the birth date was not of a big significance, this is in my opinion. My grandmother did not know exactly, she even did not know exactly the year, she knew that it was before Yom Kippur.

Merle Kastner: There are a lot of instances where births were recorded as the first candle of Chanukah, or the second day of Sukkoth, that kind of thing. So this is very common, even in Montreal records which I am very familiar with, there's a lot of that. The rabbis had written records, tons of them like that. So it was only really in the 20th century when it became a more important thing to do.

Yefim: Thank you. Let's take one more. Your name please?

Sara Webber: I just want to ask Alla, if there are records from the rabbis or from the Jewish community, where we still have access to them, do they still exist or would they be in the archive at all?

Yefim: Are you talking about birth records? What records, or any?

Sara: Any Jewish community records that may not be part of government records, but are just kept within the Jewish community, because if they, I am thinking for instance, if there were Jewish schools, first of all if there was a bris, the most common thing for there to be some record, or in a Jewish school, if a child passes a grade, some local records.

Terry: I can't answer that for some place like Kishinev. I can't talk about it but I can talk about Orgeyev.

There is only one Jewish synagogue left in Orgeyev, one small one and they don't have any documents whatsoever. Whether they've been destroyed or what happened to them as the other synagogues closed, I don't know. They still may exist someplace but they surely do not have any of them in there. It may be different in Kishinev where there are bigger synagogues and they may have kept some of the records from the rabbis and stuff of that nature. I will suggest though that there is probably more information in the Yizkor books than you are going to find any place in documents back there from a lot of the people who wrote Yizkor books. Can you talk about Kishinev? First of all about the bris you will have information there that the baby was born on such and such date, and when the bris was performed and who performed it. This is all in the birth records on those two copies that I talked about.

Now, schools, I am pretty sure that the records are kept in archives for Jewish schools, right?

Alla: Yes, there are many documents on schools, Jewish schools, in the archives of Moldova.

Yefim: We don't have them yet except maybe one gymnasium in Kishinev. I found on line and we transcribed it like several hundred names but not yet the rest, there were many of those in Kishinev.

Alla: Yes, we can find documents with photos of your relative and with marks of your relatives too.

Yefim: Can you imagine Alla found a (school) document for me, from 1936- 37 for my mother and father. In my father's document, it was a picture of him when he was 6 or 7. That was really interesting. And this document had grades. When I showed my mother her grades she said oh no, this is wrong, I was better!

Let's go one question from the list I have. **Joan Forman** is here, right? This is a question from you. Is there a cemetery in Beltsy or would my grandfather be buried in nearby towns?

I should tell you that in Beltsy there is one of the biggest (Jewish) cemeteries in Bessarabia. We started, we did a few things (projects) over there and now there are more coming. It's probably 6000, 7000, 8000 graves. There is a very old section that has probably 500 or more graves that will be very hard to translate because they are in disarray and it is very hard even to make pictures of them.

Question: What is the name of the place?

Yefim: Beltsy.

Question: Was it bigger than Kishinev?

Yefim: Not bigger than Kishinev, no, but it's big enough.

Question: I am **Myra Waddel** from South Australia. These school records, that you mentioned, are they likely to be online at any time?

Alla: No, only in the informational archives. Maybe Jewish Gen will order them (and translate them).

Yefim: This is exactly the case. What we need, we need a person who will start this project, advertise it, find out the cost, get donations from us. But we need somebody. It cannot be done otherwise. I will not be able to lead that project. But if you want, that is a good project. And of course you will get all the help from me, think about this.

Another question from **Jonathon Weiner**- from Jerusalem. Very interesting, he's asking what we know about Turkish Jews in Bessarabia. Were they all Sephardim, where can I find out more about this subject from the family story, grandmother's family was Abullak of Turkish origin. The family immigrated from Karpach and Yedinetz, (I do not know what is Karpach), in about 1915, 1920.

Alla: In the archive of Moldova there are some documents, some records of strange Jews. Strange, I mean foreign Jews. I met Turkish Jews, Austrian Jews, and other origins. These documents are written from 1875.

Yefim: I can add a little bit. First of all, in all the documents, birth records, revision lists, especially in birth records, if a father was a citizen of another county, it will be listed right there. And we have in birth records, citizens of not only Turkey, but Austria, we have citizens of Holland, they came to marry in Bessarabia. This is good, Bessarabia is good land, and also citizens of Romania. We are talking 19th century, Romania was a separate country and this is all listed. If you know, let's say that your relative is of a Turkish origin, you can do a search in Romania-Bessarabia database asking for the word Turkey in the comments, because that will be put in the comment section. What we'll do is say father citizen of Turkey, ask for that, you will get all the list of Turks. The problem with Turks, they did not have last names until late 19th century, even 20th century. They just listed, in the Jewish way "Haim Ben Abraham". No last name. It was not required in Turkey, and because they were citizens of Turkey. Any other questions?

Question: Name? My question is my great -great grandmother started out in Soroki to Keiles, to Bricheni, then to Akkerman, all within probably, I am guessing, 30 years. I don't know what would cause that type of movement, if that was just my family, I don't know how close these towns were to each other?

Yefim: Bricheni, Akkerman, what else?

Question: Soroki and Kilas.

Yefim: What is the last one?

Question: Kilas

Yefim: Kalarash?

Question: Maybe it is in the Ukraine

Yefim: Kilia?

Alla: Maybe Kilia. This is in Akkerman district.

Yefim: Your question is why they moved?

Question: Yes

Yefim: Well, they moved as we move now. They moved to get a job. This is one biggest reason of movement. The second reason is they want to get married, they moved. And the reason is, one of the reasons is if it's a big family, it's a small place, not a big, small place, Jewish place, and it was Kogan family there with 8 sons, those 8 sons cannot marry in that place by law. They would have to get out, it was a law that maybe 1 or 2, or something like this, it was definitely limited for the same name sons can marry in the small place. At some point they limited but then a little bit loosened up, this is how it was.

Question: Why would they do this?

Yefim: Why? They were afraid we would cheat them, on the conscription list, same names, and same last name, maybe even first names, etc. This might be a big deal of confusion, that's why they didn't want that. Any other additions to this?

Question: My name is **Edwin Fortus**. My mother's side of the family came probably from Kishinev probably around 1890 to England. But this is more of a geography question. The family came from Kishinev, Moldova is a fairly small country, Kishinev's a pretty big city, relatively speaking. I guess I have got a Tevye kind of vision of the rest of the country, which is small little towns, railroad stations out in the middle of nowhere. What did the place look like?

Yefim: Okay, any insights?

Terry: The only insight I have is reading the stories in the Yizkor books and things of that nature, about what it was like in those days. Some of those other towns were not that small. Orgeyev, in those days had 6-8 thousand Jews in the town, and so did Beltsy and a whole bundle of other towns. They were not just little way stations. The majority of the people in a lot of those towns were Jewish, sometimes as much as 80% or 90% of the town. There were still a lot of farming and small little shtetls all over the place but there were big towns all over in those days, now I'm talking 1880s, 1890s and 1900s maybe not before that. My only knowledge would be from what I've read in the history books and the Yizkor books.

Question: I'm from Los Angeles, and from Santa Barbara to San Diego there is nothing but civilization, but if you leave Salt Lake going south once you get to Ogden, there's nothing. That's the kind of place I am thinking of

Terry: It was like that in between the bigger cities, but there were still big cities back in those days, but in between, it would be farming communities back in those days, agricultural communities.

Yefim: Right, actually, it was interesting to discover this year with the 1824 revision lists. I was under the impression that the Jews in those years lived only in kind of a larger place like maybe 5, 10 places in this region. Wrong, it appeared Jews lived in one district in the north of Bessarabia in 200 localities: one family, three families, ten families, fifty families and on and on. Basically in every single village was Jewish presence in those days. I suggest reading the stories in Yizkor and also in family stories. Maybe it is not going that far but at least you will find some information.

Jay Sage from Boston and I have a geographic question also, probably a little obscure, I haven't been able to find an answer. My grandfather left Kishinev in 1900, I had his passport, it has his exit stamp that gives the place as Graev. I have not been able to find that place.

Yefim: He used to live in Kishinev?

Jay: He lived in Kishinev.

Alla: Do you have this document?

Jay: I don't have it with me.

Terry: But the stamp is from leaving?

Jay: Immigration

Terry: From where he took the boat from where he left?

Jay: It's what it says on the passport. It would either be where he left the country or maybe where he left the continent. He probably travelled someplace...

Terry: But you don't have the boat record then, right?

Jay: Yes, this is not the kind of name, it looks, I think it's Russian.

Yefim: Well, Graev might be but still we would know.

Jay: It doesn't ring any bells?

Yefim: No, it's nothing in Bessarabia like that name, or Ukraine, I'm not sure.

Terry: I think it would be more or have something to do with the port that he left from.

Jay: He left from Hamburg, that's not Graev.

Terry: I agree with that.

Yefim: That is an interesting question, it may require a little more digging.

Jay: If I would have thought about it ahead of time I would have brought the passport.

Yefim: Yes, was it written in Russian?

Jay: I am trying to remember.

Yefim: What kind of a language?

Jay: In Cyrillic.

Terry: Put it on View mate.

Victor Leonard. Just wanted to clues, or places where you can look for clues. The Library of Congress has a map division; I think it is one of the best in the world. If you are looking for a name of a place, if they can't find it, then it doesn't exist. And then there's another idea, they are just amazing at the kind of work that they do. There's another idea, I am from South Africa and if I looked to see where the town that I've spent some time in was on Google, and Google has got images. I was amazed they've got photographs of this town reaching back to the 19th century. I don't know how they can do it, but obviously, it is very easy to do, to look, to see if there, put in the name of the town, put the word images, I think that's how it works.

Yefim: Google Images.

Victor: Yes, Google images. It's amazing what they have.

Yefim: You can add, like for example, Jewish Orgeyev, and if you click on images you will get everything, all the images, some from the cemetery, and some from Jewish Gen.

Terry: I would continue with that suggestion because I've done it especially for Orgeyev for example but I've typed Orgeyev as about 12 different spellings and I got different things from every single one from the different spellings.

Question: How do you spell Orgeyev?

Yefim: It depends when and what language it is in. In Russian we say Orge'ev..This is how we pronounce it. But the Jews will say Or-Hay or Orif. This is the proper in Yiddish. In Romanian it's Or-hay. See, it's a matter of when.

Question: Since I live in Washington, if you have requests of something that I can do in Washington I will be able to go down to the Library of Congress.

Yefim: Thank you. I should add actually about Library of Congress, I agree completely, it's terrific. I shall tell you a story. When I started, when I came here 25 years ago, somebody said Library of Congress, the best library, there is a map division, etc. And I just told them that I just came as an immigrant from this place and my parents from these villages; do you have any maps for this? In a short while, maybe a month or two, I got a package from them. Big like this, maps like this big, copies of topographical, German maps during the World War II, maps of those villages. This really was amazing.

Terry: They will send you the maps.

Yefim: And they did it for free, maybe now they charge.

Terry: I've heard that they still do it for free.

Diane Hall: I have a geographical question. We traveled and we went through Ataki and also Otacy and we were told that the Jewish community, the big Jewish community before, was in Otacy. And we went to the cemetery there, however, we did not find the surname if it's there, we didn't find it. Is there, does anybody know about that area?

Yefim: Do you mean about this specific town?

Diane: Yes, they are both still there but Ataki is very small village and apparently we're told that the Jewish community was not there, but that's where the location of the ancestors is.

Terry: I guess I am a little confused because the Ataki that I know is way south, the Ataki or Otacy is way north. Is there a small Otacy way south?

Yefim: Otacy is if I am not mistaken, is right across Mogilev Podolsk

Diane: Right, yes.

Yefim: And this is where the Jews lived?. This is the same thing, same town, different pronunciation, and different languages, whatever. It is the same thing Ataki, Atachi, where the Jews lived like in a separated, maybe Jews lived in a section of that village. This is what happens sometimes. But this is the same Ataki, the same place.

Terry: Yeah, but when I did `

Diane: It's on the border though. It's right close.

Yefim: Yeah, but how close are they, they're very close, right?

Diane: Yes, very close.

Yefim: It used to be the same place but for some reason, this is the same Ataki.

Terry: I agree, I did the Duma list somewhere down by Kilia or Akkerman there was also a small town called Ataki with an A, down in that area. It was a real tiny one.

Yefim: I know, there is Ataki, another village of Ataki, close to Hotin. Definitely I know that because the Jews, I think I am not sure how many, maybe 20 families in 1824 used to live there.

Question: So there were 3 (places with the same name)?

Yefim: There may be even more, but if you know that your Ataki is across Mogilev Podolsk, it's one place. But if you do not that (the district), that might be a problem.

Terry: That's the problem, just like in United States you can name a town and there are 20 of them and if you don't know which gubernias, used, province it's in, then it becomes a little bit more questionable.

Yefim: There are many, many places with the same name. For example, Novoselitsa, you can find Novoselitsa in many, many districts in Bessarabia.

Question: Having relatives from what was known as Utik, I am just disturbed to hear that I could be wrong as to where it is. Are all those places including the smaller places also known as Utik or just the one across from Mogilev Podolsk?

Yefim: Well, the thing is that Utik is probably a Yiddish pronunciation of that and it probably belonged to the big one across Mogilev Podolsk because it has large Jewish population and etc. The others, I didn't see those names for the others but no 100%.

Frances Waxman. I have total confusion over Mogilev Podolsk and Mogilev. Is it two different places, because my Lithuanian grandfather in some census it says Mogilev, and then I hear Mogilev Podolsk. I don't know, are they the same place, in the same country, or if it's a case if where we have more than one?

Yefim: Do you want to answer, go ahead?

Audience Member: There's Mogilev Podolsk (Ukraine), I think it's about 50 miles north of Beltsy on the Dniest river. There's also Mogilev, in Belarus,

Yefim: Yes, but, there is also a but. The one what is Podolia (people) will name Mogilev (too, without Podolsk).

Question: Is the plain Mogilev in Belarus, was it ever in Lithuania?

Yefim: Well, it depends what time you are talking about. The whole thing was Lithuanian commonwealth including Belarus, at some point in 18th century or before that.

Question: In that time period it would have been in Belarus, the other Mogilev, not the big Podolsk one.

Yefim: It is in Belarus right now and it was in the Russian Empire. Mogilev is the center of Gubernia in Belarus, it's a big town.

Question: My name is **Judy Wagner** and I am researching for my husband, his grandfather's family was from Khotin or Hotin, what kind of things are available for there?

Alla: We haven't vital records on Hotin but maybe for only earlier period of time. But we have revision lists on Hotin.

Yefim: They are already translated, many of them.

Terry: I am going to make a general statement here. If you go to the Bessarabia SIG page, there are two different places that are really key, one of them is called "Research Projects", I think it's the second one, and the whole entire list, and the other one is way down, about number 33 that is a list of all microfilm that exist and if you take a look at those two lists, it lists every single microfilm that we have of any kind and exactly what town they're from, what year it's from, and what the status of it is and that's what Yefim has talked about, and if you look at that you will see what it is that we have currently. It doesn't mean that there isn't more like Alla said, but that's what we have currently. It also tells us what the status is, and if you find things that you really like and you really want done, and they aren't being done, contributions always help.

Yefim: The only thing that list of microfilms only includes revision lists.

Terry: But still, it still tells what we have.

Yefim: We did a lot, and we have a lot more for Hotin which I typed, but because Hotin is so huge, I think it was like 6 or 7 thousand records. If we are starting a town, we need to finish it in a year otherwise, but it's tough to finish it.

Question: When I visited Hotin in 1998 there were records that I got from the archives in Czernowitz

Yefim: What place?

Question: Czernowitz. The archives are there, you have to request any records in Hotin at the Czernowitz archive and I was able to get some vital records that way.

Yefim: This is good information because, but this is what years, when Hotin was under Romanian, right, between the wars?

Question: I believe so.

Yefim: Yes, from 19th century you couldn't find it, it would be in Kishinev.

Question: It was early 20th.

Yefim: This is the border change because Hotin together with Czernowitz in between the wars was under Romania. And Czernowitz was a center, that's why the documents for that period are in Czernowitz.

Question: My name is **Larry Bassist**. My question is about the school lists, do you have them for Tiraspol? Kishinev?

Alla: Kishinev, Orgeyev, Bendery, Beltsy but for Tiraspol we haven't any.

Yefim: What time frame?

Alla: I don't know.

Yefim: That needs to be discovered, that needs to be researched.

Alla: I must search this information.

Question: This is a story that my grandfather told, I don't know if he just made it up, or if it's real, but he said that his father went and had the records, I don't know how to translate to Russian, fudged, changed, to say that they were from Turkey to avoid the draft for the kids. Russia had a war with Turkey so that neighbor would have been in trouble, so he had them changed again. This is the story, and I've seen some records from Russia and I am wondering how could they change the records? Did they tear the pages? Did they write on top of it, what did they do?

Yefim: Any insight? This is easy; I can tell you what it is actually. It probably cost some money, a good amount, and the record, the old disappeared, and the new appeared, no problem. This is exactly what it is, I'm pretty sure.

Terry: They took a page out and put a new page in.

Yefim: Of course, they glue a page and no one saw the previous one.

Question: I would like to ask a geography question to find out the name of this town. I don't know if I am pronouncing it correcting. U-n-g-u-e-n. This is an emergency passport application.

Yefim: U-n-g-u-e-n.

Question: It says he was born there in 1892.

Yefim: Ungheni-. Yes, it's a border town with Romania.

Question: Is this the right name?

Yefim: Ungheni, or something.

Terry: On Google maps, it's U-N-G-H-E-N-I

Yefim: Because it's a Romanian, it doesn't matter but it's in Jewish Gen Town database among the towns because it's a big one.

Question: Very good, thank you.

Yefim: Ungheni actually was an interesting border town and the train in my time, went from say Kishinev to Bucharest, in Ungheni, they changed the rail because it's a different size of a rail, and they had a crane that they would put a wagon in the air and they would move. I wasn't in Romania, I never crossed the border, because I was not allowed, but my parents went to immigrate to Israel, through Romania and I saw that from far, how that was. It took probably a couple of hours to do it for the whole train.

Question: I know you talked about Akkerman, right? Have you ever been there, do you know what the current status is? Have most of the Jews left? And then, Jewish records, do you know of any or the state of the cemeteries?

Terry: All I can tell you is Ukraine was very, very closed as far as their records. However, I have heard that Family History has now made some inroads. Kalia did work some things and they are over there photographing some things, I think some things but as to what's happening right now, with everything that's going on there, I don't know, but they did actually make some inroads and have digitized. They're supposedly going to bring them back and actually digitize them before they index them now, it's a different approach. I don't know where they are on that because he presented that to us two years ago, but they have made inroads. Kalia is no longer in charge of that. He's from Family History Library and he was in charge of all of those countries over there as far as getting things. I don't know who is in charge now but if you go to the Family History Library they will probably be able to answer it.

Audience member: The lady who is, they actually took his job and split it in two, and the lady who is now in charge of that, she was here yesterday. She's a young gal.

Yefim: As far as Akkerman records, you are asking, right? There are some revision lists for Akkerman and they are from this library and some were translated, but not many, we need more translators for Akkerman. And you also asked what that town is? It's a fortress town. There is a big fortress, I know that because I visited it a number of years ago. We spent time on the Black Sea and had a small tour to Akkerman. My children played in this fortress of Akkerman. There are good beaches there on the Black Sea too.

Terry: I have a suggestion for you. There is a presentation, I believe it is tomorrow afternoon on Ukrainian archives, and I don't know who is giving it, it might be that woman you talked about. I think it's in the afternoon tomorrow.

Yefim: But Terry, I think all of the information should be in Kishinev archive because it was in Bessarabia.

Terry: It depends what area of Ukraine you are talking about.

Yefim: Are you talking about Ukraine in general or Akkerman.

Yefim: Kilia, that is in Kishinev. We already have Kilia translated, a lot of records. If it's another Ukrainian city, it might be different of course.

Question: Are there any cemetery records?

Yefim: There is a cemetery there, Kishinev definitely we're starting, Akkerman, we're not doing yet anything but if you want to start, I told a little bit before how to start it. How to start, we need somebody to take care of the first sum, to count how many graves there are, etc. Ok, I think we need to stop at some point because we have lunch at noon and we need to move somewhere, I'm not sure where yet.

Question: I'm trying to get information about a woman, so I'm wondering what you might advise on what records might exist, and how to follow that. They're harder, and for one thing, are there women on the revision lists?

Terry: I can only talk about the revision lists I've seen so far, the older revision list that I looked at from 1854 did have women on them. The ones from 1875 did not. However, because the 1875 ones that I looked at there were only males. However, it so happened that on the one that I found on my family even though they only had males, over on the right hand side it had a little thing giving the name of the mother, and I don't know why, just on that particular one, but the 1854 did have women in it, the 1875 did not, the ones that I saw, now he's seen more than I have.

Yefim: Yeah. 1835 and 48 and 54, 58, all have the whole family—women, children, they're all there. 1824 only have head of households, or in case if they had died, then a widow would be listed there, if her son can work in a farm on the land, this is the header of those lists, this is the agricultural places and if nobody can work in the land, they will not even list that.

Thank you all very much.