


Bessarabian Jewish Records: What our group has translated and what's new


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Bessarabia SIG was organized at the Jewish Genealogical Conference in Washington in 2011. Before that all Bessarabian research was part of Romania SIG. Bessarabia SIG covers the territory of the former Bessarabia Gubernia and also parts of the current Republic of Moldova which were previously in Podolia and Kherson Gubernias.

There are many sets of records which were discovered, obtained, translated and are now available at Jewishgen. All Bessarabian records are part of Romania (and Bessarabia) Database, and also Ukraine Database. There are several sets of records which are only available at Bessarabia SIG website.

Information about records below is as of April 2015.

- **Duma Voters Lists, Bessarabia, 1906-07**
128,000 voters in Bessarabia, who were eligible to vote in the Russian Duma elections in 1906 and 1907. Project Coordinator: Terry Lasky.
- **Bessarabia Vital Records**
More than 160,000 Jewish birth, marriage, divorce and death records for Bessarabia – primarily for Kishinev (now Chişinău, Moldova), but also for Beltsy (Bălţi), Novoselitsa (Novoselytsia), and other places. Project Coordinator: Bob Wascou (z'l).
- **Bessarabia Revision Lists**
More than 80,000 records from *Reviskaya Skazka* — 19th century Czarist tax censuses - for 30 places, including: Akkerman (Cetatea Albă), Alexandreny (Alexăndreni), Beltsy (Bălţi), Bendery (Tighina), Brichany (Briceni), Khotyn (Hotin), Lipkany (Lipcani), Orgeev (Orhei), and Teleneshty (Teleneşti). Project Coordinator: Yefim Kogan.
- **Bessarabia Business Directory, 1924**
More than 13,000 entries for Jewish businesses, in 705 localities in Bessarabia, from a 1924 Romanian business directory. Project Coordinator: Harvey Kabaker.
- **Chişinău Commercial Directory, 1940** 
Nearly 1,300 apparently Jewish names among government officials, professionals and owners, listed in a 1940 Chişinău commercial yearbook. Project Coordinator: Harvey Kabaker.
- **Vsya Rossiia 1895 Business Directory**
1,500 Jewish businesses in Bessarabia, from this 1895 Russian business directory. Project Coordinator: Bert Lazerow.
- **Jewish Religious Personnel in the Russian Empire, 1853-1854**
281 Jewish religious personnel in Bessarabia Gubernia. Project Coordinator: Bert Lazerow.

- **Yizkor Book Necrologies**
28,000 entries from lists of Holocaust martyrs in Yizkor Books for towns in Romania and Moldova. Bender (91 entries), Bricheva (726), Brichany (63), Căprești (329), Dubossary (631), Lipcani (713), Mărculești (272), Orgeyev (728), Otaci (397), and Teleneshty (443 entries).
- **JewishGen Holocaust Database**
320,000 names from various datasets with information about Holocaust victims and survivors.
 - **Soviet Extraordinary Commission** 
Index to testimonials on over 60,000 Holocaust victims. (Number of Bessarabian records unknown.)
 - **Jewish Refugees in Tashkent**
Data on 152,000 Jewish refugees from the Soviet Union who were evacuated to Tashkent and other localities in Uzbekistan, 1941-42. (Number of Bessarabian records unknown).
 - **Leova Holocaust Period Records**
Information on 438 Jews living in Leova before the war, and 118 citizens exiled to Siberia.
 - **Jews Killed in 1941 in Dubossary**
Records of 2,984 Jews killed in Dubossary, Moldova/Transnistria, in autumn 1941.
- **JewishGen Online Worldwide Burial Registry**
For 12 cemeteries in Bessarabia – 28466 burials, 2 cemeteries in Kherson gubernia with 2541 burials.

Sets of records which are not yet added to JewishGen, but available at Bessarabia SIG:

- **Jewish Soldiers killed and wounded in WWI**
1559 records of Jews from Bessarabia were found among thousands of records of killed and wounded in WWI. Translation, transcription was done by Terry Lasky
- **Kamenka, Podolia Gubernia, 1913 Business Directory**
Information on 75 Jewish businesses
- **List of people who were involved in Yiddish Theater**
79 Jews who were born and lived in Bessarabia. From Lexicon of the Yiddish Theater. You can see photos and biographies.
- **Bessarabia Annual Books, 1862 – 1914.** It is a collection of information on Jews in Bessarabia from 1862 to 1914 who held government positions. There are 23 books available for research and translation. The information includes statistics of birth, death, marriages per year, list of Rabbis in towns and shteitlekh, list of people working in Jewish Hospitals, Jewish schools, and more. Project Translator - Yuriy Daylis.

There are also many sets of records which are only partially translated or even not yet translated, and many of them are not yet acquired from the Archives:

- **Educational Records.** Only one project was done on them, and also privately I know that there are many such records available at the Moldovan Archives. Will show some examples.
- **Land Records.** It tells who owned what in the shteitle or town. Not sure what towns have these sets. A sample of such records going to be presented.

- Permission for Travel abroad. Such documents might have photos inside and personal information on all family members.
- Conscription lists. There are such lists from 19c Russian Army and also from 1930s in the Romanian Army.
- Voters records. In addition to Voters lists already translated, there are Voter's records from 1930s, 1940 in Romanian language.
- Lists of Jewish Doctors and Jewish Teachers. Lists from 19c from many towns and shteitlach exist at the Moldovan Archive.

We will also discuss how good the existing records are...

Yekhezkel Kotik, a highly acclaimed Yiddish writer of the beginning of 20 century wrote in his Memoirs, published in 1912: *"Kamenets consisted of 250 households and people registered in the Revizskie Skazki were only 450! You can logically ask: on 250 households, to have only 450 people, how can it be? The answer is simple. Before 1874, when a new recruitment system was introduced, about two thirds of Jewish population were not registered!"* I personally do not think that 2/3 of the Jews were not registered. Definitely some of the children were not registered, but there is no definite information about it yet. We only know that some of the Jews were not present at the time of the Revisions of 19c, but as was written in the comments of the Revision they were "On the Run" or "On unknown leave".

There are different kinds of lists included in Revision project: Family Lists, Conscription Lists, Common Lists, Alphabetical Lists, and more. Samples will be presented and discussed at the lecture.

Our plan for Bessarabian Vital records Project is to finish all sets which were started by our distinguished colleague Robert Wascou (z"l). According to the latest information there are only 5 sets of records not completed by Bob's team. The plan is to finish these records, also to research at LDS and Moldovan Archives for sets of records we did not obtain.

Also, our researchers who are interested in the Transnistria region (Tiraspol, Kamenka, Rybnitsa, Grigoriopol, Dubossary, Slobodzeya, and other smaller places) did not have yet any Vital or Revision records. There is a group of our members interested in this region and they have already started researching what is available. We are planning to get sets of records for this region.

Cemetery records were our primary focus for several years. The reason is that the tombstones at the Jewish cemeteries are disappearing. There are about 70 Jewish Cemeteries in Bessarabia / Moldova. You can see the list of Jewish cemeteries at the Bessarabia SIG website, Cemetery section. In the coming two years our group will complete work on Bricheni, Lipkany, Kiliya, Rybnitsa, Dubossary – old cemetery, Rezina, Soroki, Main Kishinev Jewish cemetery, and it will also work on cemeteries in Leovo, Kamenka, Grigoriopol, and others.

Kishinev records are of the most interest and importance for many of our members. Last year in Salt Lake City we received a number of microfilms of the Kishinev Revision lists.

Our group is ready to work with all available records: Vital, Revision, Educational, Land, Commerce, Cemetery records, and many others, but we need your help. In order to research and translate more of the variety of records we need enthusiastic volunteers with research and coordination skills to become a project coordinator, and also we always need translators from Russian and Hebrew.

Yefim Kogan, 2015