



**36th IAJGS International Conference on Jewish Genealogy**

**August 7-12, 2016 ♦ Seattle, Washington**

*Local Host: Jewish Genealogical Society of Washington State*

# When, Why and Where did the Jews arrive to Bessarabia/Moldova

Yefim A. Kogan

Masters of Jewish Liberal Studies

August 11, 2016

[yefimk@verizon.net](mailto:yefimk@verizon.net)

JewishGen Bessarabia SIG Leader and Coordinator

[www.jewishgen.org/Bessarabia](http://www.jewishgen.org/Bessarabia)

[www.jewishgen.org/Bessarabia/files/conferences/2016/MigrationToBessarabia.pdf](http://www.jewishgen.org/Bessarabia/files/conferences/2016/MigrationToBessarabia.pdf)

# Bessarabia on a map of Europe



# When, Why and Where did the Jews arrive to Bessarabia/Moldova

- Migration in My family: why they moved and how I know that
- How do we know where the Jews came from into Bessarabia? What are the sources of information?
- What regions/countries did our ancestors come from?
- Why they arrived to Bessarabia?

# Migration in my family



Some of the relatives were among the <i>halutsim</i> to work on the land in Israel, others went to study in France	My parents and many relatives evacuated to Uzbekistan, Siberia to survive the war, the Holocaust	I moved from Kishinev to Moscow to study mathematics	All of my family, including distant relatives migrated from the USSR to USA, Israel, Australia	
1930s	1941-1945	1970	1974-1980	1988-1995

# Migration in my family (continue)



## My mother family

My great grandfather Shloime decided to try his life in America, but after 6 months he returned back - did not like it here	Two sisters of my mother's grandmother emigrated to New York, and communicated with family in Bessarabia until 1940. In 2006 I met a grandson of one of these sisters	Mother's father moved from Kaushany to Tarutino to get married	My mother was born in 1923 and in 1925 her family moved to Galatz, because a relative promised work	Work ended in Galatz and my mother's grandfather offered the family a house in his courtyard
1904	1906	1920	1932	1930s

# Migration in my family (continue)



<p>My mother's side of the family lived for many years in Kaushany, definitely in 1835, probably before that</p>	<p>My father's mother side moved from Dubossary, Kherson Gubernia to Kaushany, Bessarabia. Most likely my great grandfather moved to get married. His father was well known Jewish scholar and Rabbi</p>	<p>My father's father side moved from Akkerman to Kaushany, where my great-great grandfather was a manager of a Landowner's Estate</p>
<p>1835</p>	<p>1880-1890</p>	<p>c1880</p>

# How do we know where the Jews came from into Bessarabia? What are the sources of information?

- Work of historians and travelers
- Look into the History of Bessarabia
- Newcomers to Bessarabia
- Jewish records: birth, marriages, revisions, other
- Jewish surnames: toponymical (geographical surnames)
- Other

# From prominent historians

- Semen Dubnov:

Mixed communities of Sephardim and Ashkenazim were established in to principalities of Moldavia and Walakhia in 17-18 centuries (from S.Dubnov, History of Jews in Europe, vol. 4)

Near Sephardim population of Balkan peninsula, at the end of 18 century grow colonies of Polish Ashkenazim in Moldavia and Walakhia (from S.Dubnov, History of Jews, vol.1)

# From prominent historians

- Antony Polonsky “The Jews in Poland and Russia”, Vol 1, 1350-1881  
“... Jews also moved to areas in the tsarist empire where fewer people were conscripted or where, when they were conscripted, it was less onerous, such as Kingdom of Poland and Bessarabia...”
- I.N Pilat “Is istorii evreystva Moldovy”, (Russian), 1990, Kishinev  
“From 1812, many residence of Bessarabia were afraid of Russia’s serfdom, run away to Principality of Moldova (right bank of River Prut), which later became Romania.”

# Look into the History of Bessarabia:

## Jews in Bessarabia before 1812

- The earliest references of Jews in Bessarabia are dated from the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Some of them were of the **Sephardic** origin and came to do business in the territory of Moldova Principality and used the Dniester River to do go to Poland
- Poland in those years was a neighbor of Moldova Principality, having on a border Dniester River! Also there are a number of Ashkenazic Jews settled in Moldova Principality, who were invited by Moldavian Boyars. Polish Rabbis mentioned Rabbinical court in Akkerman (Bessarabia) in 16 and 17 centuries

# Look into the History of Bessarabia:

## Jews in Bessarabia from 1812

- 1812. The eastern part of the Principality of Moldavia became part of Russian Empire. It happened after the Russo-Turkish wars 1806-1812, by the Treaty of Bucharest, 1812)
- Nomadic Tatars from the southern region of Bessarabia, Budjak, were banished from the territory, leaving the region almost deserted!
- Russia tried to entice foreign settlers to populate the area and work the farms, since her own farmers were mainly serfs. The goal was to establish agriculture on the rich soil of Bessarabia region

# Newcomers to Bessarabia

- Many Bulgarians settled in Bessarabia too, especially in the south, Budjak region, now in Ukraine

They came at the end of 18c- beginning of 19c. Some of them support Russian army, in the wars of 1806-1812, 1828-1829 and because of that they were compromised in the eyes of Ottomans. Also Russian propaganda tried to convince them to settle in Bessarabia.

# Newcomers to Bessarabia

- 1813, Tsar Alexander issued a manifesto, in which he promised **Germans** settlers privileges:
  - ✓ Interest-free credit
  - ✓ Exemption from taxes for 10 years
  - ✓ Freedom of religion
  - ✓ Exemption from military service
  - ✓ Autonomy
  - ✓ more
- Germans arrived to Bessarabia from 1814, and lived until 1940

# Many Jews were newcomers too: why they came to Bessarabia

1818. Kishinev became a center of Bessarabia, some of the taxes for Jews were removed. There is no any more objections of building houses, taverns, inns for Jews. Synagogues were built, Jewish Schools

In 1819-1819 in the First Town Duma was elected a Jew – Leyb Litmanovich

1823 – Craftsmen and people involved in trade were allowed to settled in the region

# Many Jews were newcomers too

1828. After liquidation of Bessarabian autonomy, the Jews who wanted to settle in Bessarabia, were given many privileges (10 or 15 years not to pay taxes)

1839. People who built factories, plants, even stores were exempt from taxes, and even conscription. That was needed for the economic development of the region.

1830-1850s many Jewish Agricultural colonies were created. Jews were allowed to buy a piece of land for agriculture

# Records to proof the origin of Jews to Bessarabia

- Vital records for many families have information of where the parents came from (see samples on the next pages):
  - Birth records are telling where father was registered if in Russia or from other country
  - Marriage records are telling where the parents of the groom and in some case of the bride are from or registered from
  - Death records are telling where the deceased was from or his father
  - Revision Lists are telling where the head of household was registered

# When, Why and Where did the Jews arrive to Bessarabia/Moldova

From Birth Records. Fathers were from Austria

<b>BIRENBOYM, Aron</b>	Shulim Ekheved Leya / Yokheved Lea	15/2/1877 14 Adar	Kishinev Kishinev Bessarabia	Mohel Moishe BRIMER, father from Austria	Kishinev 1877 M131	2086523 / 2  NARM/211/3/267
<b>SHTAKGAMER / SHTOKHAMER, Moishe Gersh / Moishe Hirsh</b>	Yosif Genya / Henya	26/2/1877 25 Adar	Kishinev Kishinev Bessarabia	Mohel Shmul AVERBUKH, father from Austria	Kishinev 1877 M155	2086523 / 2  NARM/211/3/267
<b>RAPAPORT, Ester Gudlya / Ester Hodel</b>	Yankel Gersh / Yakov Hirsh Khaya Bayla	11/3/1877 9 Nissan	Kishinev Kishinev Bessarabia	Father from Austria	Kishinev 1877 F94	2086523 / 2  NARM/211/3/267

From Marriage Records. Grooms were from Grodno Gubernia, Russian Empire

Kishinev / Kishinev / Bessarabia	3/4/1886 10 Nissan	<b>LEV / LIOVA, Khaim / Chaim</b> <b>VAYNSHTEYN / WEINSTEIN, Khana / Chana</b>	Getzel M. Gorbatsa Khobrin Uezda, Grodno Gub. Anchel / Antshel Kalarash / Kalinesht?	39 20	wife and husband were Petty Bourgeois	Zelman I Srul Kha Khaim S
Kishinev / Kishinev / Bessarabia	27/8/1886 8 Elul	<b>KAMENETSKIY / KAMENILKA?, Aron Solomon / Aharon Shlomo</b> <b>DIVAK, Sheydlya / Sheindel</b>	Gersh / Hersh M. Gorodtsa Kobrin Uezda, Grodno Gub. Mordko / Mordechai Bristovich, Grodno Gub.	27 24	wife and husband were Petty Bourgeois	Nakhma Gersh R Yankel M

# When, Why and Where did the Jews arrive to Bessarabia/Moldova

Death records. Deceased were from Turkey

<b>TRACHTENBERG</b> , Gersh/Hersh	Duvid/David	Turkey citizen of Turkey	8 Adar 10 months lung infection/ pneumonia	Kishinev Kishinev Bessarabia	M70	2292608 6 211/11/393
<b>ABRAMOVITCH</b> , Zlata	Itsko/Yitzhak	Turkey	14/2/1904 11 Adar 3 months brain inflammation	Kishinev Kishinev Bessarabia	F65	2292608 6 211/11/393
<b>KOGON / COHEN</b> , Moyshe Elya / Moshe Malin	Shulim / Shalom	Turkey Father was Turkish citizen	3/1/1880 2 Shevat 1 diarrhea	Kishinev Kishinev Bessaraiba	Kishinev 1880 M8	2292607 3 3 NARM/211/11/38

Revision List records. Registered in Kovno gubernia, Russian Empire

Teleneshty Orgeev Bessarabia	MEDNER	Shmul	Yos		M 12	1875	Registered in Serednik, Kovno gub.. Middle Class.	1875	529	Special List MoldSA/134/2/567 2375787
Orgeev Orgeev Bessarabia	KAGAN	Gersh	Yankel	Head of Household	M 44		Place of Registration Kovno gub., Teleshevskiy uezd; Middle Class	20 October 1875	14 55 84	Common List MoldSA/134/2/740 2377238

# Statistics from the Bessarabian Death records (41,734), Jews registered in another gubernia or citizens of another state

Death Records	41,734
Podolia	750
Kiev	340
Volynia	280
Grodno	150
Kherson	110
Minsk	80
Vilna	70
Vitebsk	20
Lyublin, Poland	20
Kovno	10
Siedlce, Poland	10
<b>citizen of</b>	
Moldova/Romania	568
Austria/Galicia	161
Turkey	144
Greek	5
Holland	3
	2721

Jewish surnames: toponymical (geographical surnames)

Jewish surnames of toponymical group can be useful telling where did the family come from.

Most likely if a surname is Dubossarsky, that the family at some point before acquiring the surname (end of 18c, beginning of 19c) lived in Dubossary, Kherson Gubernia

If the surname was Barskiy, it is clear that the family lived or was registered in the town of Bar, Podolia Gubernia

# Toponym surnames derived from Revision Lists of 19 c (81,000+ records) and Cemetery records (19,000+ records).

These surnames indicate that the receiver of these surnames, at the time the surnames were given, most likely were from that town, region or their ancestors were from that town, region.

Gubernia, Region	Revision Lists		Cemetery Records	
	Number of surnames from the region	Number of people with these names	Number of surnames from the region	Number of people with these names
Bessarabia	238	3699	97	539
Podolia	93	1566	56	409
Germany	51	1202	20	184
Vilna	57	552	20	65
Kiev	44	804	36	181
Volhynia	35	483	22	119
Kovno	40	323	12	21
Grodno	37	467	19	117
Galicia	32	331	15	111
Minsk	26	384	17	85
Romania	17	191	8	37
Austria	16	239	9	54
Vitebsk	14	152	-	-
Poland	13	214	9	72
Kherson	3	212	12	106
	716	10819	352	2100

# Most popular Toponymic surnames in Bessarabia from Revision Lists of 19 c

Surname	Occurrences	From town, region	District	Gubernia, region
AKERMAN, AKKERMAN, AKKERMON	479	Akkerman	Akkerman	Bessarabia
AVERBUKH, AVERBOKH, AVERBAKH, AVERBAUKH	328	Auerbach	Bavaria	Germany
BARSKIY	208	Bar	Mogilev-Podolsk	Podolia
CHERTKOV	202	Chertki	Vitebsk / Orsha	Vitebsk / Mogilev
OCHAKOVSKIY	180	Ochakov	Odessa	Kherson
BENDERSKIY	134	Bendery	Bendery	Bessarabia
SHARGORODSKIY	123	Shargorod	Mogilev-Podolsk	Podolia
LANDA	115	Landau	Pfalz	Germany
DULITSKIY	104	Dulitskoe	Vasilkiv	Kiev
BERSHADSKIY	103	Bershad	Olgopol	Podolia
CHOBRUTSKIY	91	Chobruch	Tiraspol	Kherson
KAUSHANSKIY, KAVUSHANSKIY	87	Kaushany	Bendery	Bessarabia
SVERDLIK	84	Sverdlikovo	Uman	Kiev
VOLMAN	84	Volma	Minsk	Minsk
YAROSLAVSKIY	79	Yaroslavka	Berdichev	Kiev
RASHKOVSKIY	75	Rashkov	Soroki / Olgopol	Bessarabia / Podolia
KOLKER	75	Kolki	Lutsk	Volhynia
SADAGURSKIY, SADEGURSKIY, SADOGURSKIY	72	Sadagora	Chernovitz	Bukovina
TALMAZSKIY	72	Tolmazy	Akkerman	Bessarabia
DORIN	70	Dory	Minsk	Minsk

# Why our ancestors rushed in the land between rivers Prut and Dniester?

The Jewish population increased from 20,000 in the beginning of 19c to 225,000 at the end.

=== the laws of the land (Bessarabia, Russia) were changed, sometimes in favor of Jews...

- Was there a better life in Bessarabia/Moldova of Russian Empire then life in the lands the people came from? Did our ancestors see opportunity in that land?

=== the life in towns, shteitlakh in Galicia or Grodno, Bessarabia, and other regions was very hard, and our ancestors always looked to better places, better opportunities. In 1823 in Bessarabia artisans were allowed to settle, of course many Jews moved to Bessarabia from other areas in the Pale. And when 19 agricultural settlements were created in Bessarabia, where Jews could even own a piece of land, many arrived from all around the Pale.

# Conclusion

All the sources:

family research, historians, records, surnames are indicating that most Jews arrived to Bessarabia from a number of regions in the Russian Empire: Podolia, Grodno, Vilna, other gubernias, and also from a number of countries: Germany, Austria (mostly Galicia), Turkey, Moldova Principality/Romania, Holland.

The reasons for the Jews to come was also in many ways similar looking back to 1920-30s or going further to 18 century: get a job, create a business, get married.

# Bibliography

- Jacob Lestchinsky *Jewish Migration for the past hundred years*, YIVO, 1944.
- Semen Dubnov *History of Jews*, 1937-1939, reprinted Moscow, 2002
- Charles King, *The Moldovans. Romania, Russia, and the Politics of Culture*. Stanford University, 2000
- I.N Pilat “Is istorii evreystva Moldovy” (Russian). *From History of Jews in Moldova*, 1990, Kishinev, Moldova
- “*Internal Jewish Migration to Agricultural Colonies in the Russian Empire*” by Alan Shuchat, lecture on 26 Feb, 2012, JGSGB

# Internet resources on Jewish Bessarabia

- Bessarabia SIG website: [www.jewishgen.org/bessarabia](http://www.jewishgen.org/bessarabia)
- Aaron Shneer Gallery: <http://picasaweb.google.com/106995678358404531836>
- Jewish News portal : [www.dorledor.info](http://www.dorledor.info) (Russian)
- 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](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Maps_of_the_history_of_Moldova)
- Jewish Cemeteries of Kishinev and Orgeev: <http://www.pavetex.md/>
- Bessarabian Jews: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Bessarabian\\_Jews](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Bessarabian_Jews)
- Preserving Jewish memory Centropa: <http://www.centropa.org/>
- Bessarabian Maps: <http://www.wwii-photos-maps.com/bessarabianmaps/index.html>
- Memorial: <http://www.obd-memorial.ru/html/index.html> (Russian)
- Memory Book: <http://www.nekropol.com/Holokost.htm> (Russian)

# When, Why and Where did the Jews arrive to Bessarabia/Moldova

Questions?