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Estate and other categories of Jews in Bessarabia, Russia in the 19th century

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Estate and other categories of Jews in Bessarabia, Russia in the 19th century

- **Estates in Russian Empire in the 19th century**
- **Estates of Jews in Bessarabia, statistics**
- **Estates of Jews in Bessarabia, what privileges did these estates grant?**
- **Town, where people registered for an estate**
- **How could Jews change their estates, if at all?**

- **Questions?**



Estates in Russian Empire in the 19th century

- **Купцы (Kuptsy) – Merchants**
- **Мещане (Meshchane) – Townsmen, Petty Bourgeois, Bourgeois, Tradesmen, Middle Class**
- **Земледельцы (Zemledeltsy) – Farmers, peasants**
- **Бурлаки (Burlaki) – Temporary workers**



Estates in Russian Empire in the 19th century

- **Почётные Граждане (Pochyotnye Grakhdane) -
Honorary Citizens (hereditary or private)**
- **Дворяне (Dvoryane) - Nobility (hereditary,
private)**
- **Иностранцы (Inostrantsy) – Foreigners**
- **Военные (Voennye) – Military
some other estate – clergy, etc.**



Estates of Jews in Bessarabia, statistics

Russia, as of 1897:

- 95.0% belonged to the Middle Class
- 1.7% were Merchants
- 0.15% reached the status of Honorary Citizens
(hereditary or private)
- 2.75% were Farmers



Estates of Jews in Bessarabia, statistics

Kishinev, as of 1897

Total number of Jews – 50,236 (46.3% of total population)

- 173 - Hereditary and Private Honorary Citizens
- 190 – Farmers
- 1208 - Merchants
- 47,446 - Middle Class



Estates of Jews in Bessarabia, what privileges did these estates grant?

Merchants: live and conduct business outside of the Pale. Different guilds had different privileges

Farmers: could lease or buy piece of land, some had 10 or 25 years of relieve from taxes, conscription to the military



Estates of Jews in Bessarabia, what privileges did these estates grant?

Burlaki – Temporary workers.

Burlaki were hard working labor force. In Bessarabia mostly they worked as peasants on the land. The Russian word ‘burlak’ means people who were walking on the beach pulled with twine riverboats upstream.

Ilia Efimovich Repin (1844-1930)

Burlaki na Volge –

Volga_Boatmen (1870-1873)





Honorary Citizens (hereditary, private)

Honorary Citizens Estate was established for Jews in 1832.

- Those who bought land and settled 50 Jewish families received Private Honorary Citizens
- Who settled 100 Jewish families received Hereditary Honorary Citizens
- Merchants of 1st gild for 10 years, Merchants of 2nd Gild for 20 years
- Active in social Jewish life, philanthropists



Nobility (hereditary, private)

Some Jews from 1856 on the basis of the common rules acquired hereditary nobility with getting into a rank of “действительный статский советник” - Actual Civil Councilor / Actual State Councilor.

According to the All Russia Census of 1897 **108** Jews received hereditary nobility estate and **2905** received private nobility estate.



Honorary Citizens, Nobility

Honorary Citizens:

Leyb Moiseevich Tsirelson – Kishinev Town Rabbi

Abraham son of Naum Katlovker, from Soroki

Shteinberg Moyshe-Leyb, Hirsh, Ovshiy, Borukh, Kishinev,
found at JewishGen

Jewish Nobility:

Gunzburg, Efron, Polyakov, Brodsky, Vysotsky – well-
known Jewish nobility families

Teytel Yakov Lvovich from Podolia, lawyer, public figure



Town, where people registered for an estate

Бендерский Мещанин – “Benderskiy Meshchanin” -
should be usually translated as a Middle Class
person from Bendery according to Russian/
English translation, but in fact it is Middle Class
person who was **Registered** in Bendery!

Many people lived in the towns they were registered,
but not all. Small towns may not even have a
society of Middle Class to register to, or a
Merchant Society.



How could Jews change their estates, if at all?

Revision lists note when Jews changed their estate. Sometimes the whole Revision list is about a number of families changing their estate from one to another.

For example:

1853 in Kaushany over 80 families of Middle Class in town were granted landholdings by the state, and they were reclassified as farmers, but in 1864 due to difficult economics they were permitted to return back to Middle Class.



How could Jews change their estates, if at all?

Revision List, 1854, Teleneshty, Orgeev uezd

BERNSHTEYN Berko Srul Farmers. By the decree of Chamber of Commerce relisted as Merchant of Orgeev;

Revision List, 1854, Romanenko colony, Bendery uezd

AKSMAN Gershko Itsko Farmers. Family was relisted to Middle Class in Kishinev.

Revision List, 1848, Izmail

BLANK Abram Motl Middle Class. Old Jewish Society. By Chamber from January 31, 1859 relisted to Kishinev Merchants.



How could Jews change their estates, if at all?

There are records with notes of changing estates among
Revision Lists from

Middle Class and Farmers to Merchants;

Middle Class to Farmers;

Farmers to Middle Class.

In rear cases the estate was not changed, but the town of
registration was changed.



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