

The 1910 Family List for Kishinev

Throughout the 19th century, the Russian government conducted occasional Revision Lists (ревизская сказка) of many towns and cities. Many of these lists (similar to a census in the U.S. and other countries) have been microfilmed by the Church of Latter-Day Saints and translated by a corps of volunteers under the leadership of Yefim Kogan. They can be accessed through the Bessarabia SIG website and other sources. So far, we have comprehensive lists from 1835, 1848, 1854, 1859 and 1875, and some limited lists in other years.

Based on the way the data is organized, it seems likely that government officials went from house to house gathering the data. While the information collected varies slightly from one revision to the next, there are many similarities. All of them contain:

- Surname
- Given name
- Father's name (patronymic), mostly for men
- Relationship to head of household
- Age at this revision
- Age at the previous revision, mostly for men

If a person appeared in the previous revision, but not in the current revision, some reason is often provided. In most cases, the person died, but sometimes they entered the military or were in "an unknown place" (в неизвестной отлучк). Similarly, if a person was in the current revision but not the previous one, some reason may be given. The most likely reason is that they were born during the intervening years, but a few also returned from military service. The year of birth, death, disappearance or return is usually given.

Recently Yefim acquired a much more recent list. It is called a Family List (посемейный список) and was collected for the middle class (мещанин) in Kishinev in 1910. At first glance, it seems similar to the previous revision lists, with all of the questions above included. However, upon closer inspection, several significant differences become apparent.

This list is based on the 1859 revision (for some reason, not on the 1875 revision). A typical family might have 20 - 30 members spanning as many as five generations. It seems highly unlikely that the data was collected by going from house to house. Rather, they started with the 1859 list and added everyone who had been born since, based on birth records. This is useful because, in most cases, particularly for the men, it gives the actual date of birth, rather than just the year as in past revisions. Similar information is given for those who had died since 1859. However, it seems that if there was no actual death record, the person was presumed to be alive! Consequently, a significant number of people are listed as being over 100 years old. In previous revisions, it was unlikely to see a person over age 80. Even with medical advances over the intervening 50 years, it seems reasonable to assume anyone listed as being over 100, and probably most of those over 90, is deceased. So, unless a specific death notation is given, there is no way to know exactly who was alive in 1910.

The women's side is somewhat different. No earlier revisions gave the woman's previous age and there were very few death notations. That's also true for this family list. Generally, once a woman was married, she no longer was listed with her family. Presumably she would appear

elsewhere with her husband's family. In this list, all women that appeared in 1859 are also here. That includes the wife, daughters, granddaughters, etc. of the head of the household. Also listed are those who are married to one of the sons, grandsons, etc. In some cases, the date of the marriage is given, presumably obtained from a marriage record. However, some of the direct female descendants are at least in their 70's and, almost surely, would have married at some time in the previous 50 years. It's possible that they are also listed elsewhere, as part of their husband's family. There's no way to find them, since maiden names are never recorded. Also, as with the men, some of them might be deceased.

Here is part of the listing for the BERENSHTEYN family:

Name	Father	Relationship	Age	Previous	Comments
Duvid	Leyzer	Head	109	59	
Khaim	Duvid	Son	81	31	
Shlioma	Duvid	Son		13	Died 1/21/1896
Shulim-Gersh	Khaim	Grandson			Born 9/26/1862
Meer	Khaim	Grandson	38		
Zelman	Khaim	Grandson	37		
Rakhmil	Shlioma	Grandson	41		
Gersh	Shlioma	Grandson			Born 3/26/1876
Zelda		Wife	106		
Shendlya		Daughter-in-law	80		Wife of Khaim
Khana	Khaim	Granddaughter			Died 1868
Asna	Khaim	Granddaughter			Died 1869
Kheyne	Khaim	Granddaughter	55		
Malka	Khaim	Granddaughter	48		
Yakhna	Khaim	Granddaughter	41		
Perlya	Khaim	Granddaughter	42		
Khava		Granddaughter-in-law	36		Wife of Meer
Rukhlya		Daughter-in-law			1st wife of Shlioma Died 10/25/1867
Rivka		Daughter-in-law	70		2nd wife of Shlioma
Zelda	Shlioma	Granddaughter	38		
Golda	Shlioma	Granddaughter	37		
Dvosya	Shlioma	Granddaughter	27		

There are also 11 children of Rakhmil (7 boys and 4 girls), some born after 1910. Some of these must have been added at a later date, since the handwriting is different from the earlier names.

Of the 22 names listed, four are confirmed dead. Surely, Duvid and his wife Zelda are also deceased. But what about some of the others? Perhaps Khaim or his wife Shendlya are deceased. We know Shlioma and his first wife Rukhlya are deceased, but what about his second wife Rivka? There is no way to know.

If any of the grandsons other than Meer were married, their wives would most likely be listed among the females. But there are seven living granddaughters, all of whom are of marrying age. We have no way of knowing whether any of them are (except in a few cases where there is the notation замужня meaning “married”). It’s also possible that there are other daughters and granddaughters who are married but are listed with their husbands’ families.

There is no doubt that this Family List is an important resource since it provides the most recent information about Jewish residents of Kishinev. Much of it is in greater detail than all the previous revisions since, in most cases, it gives dates of birth, death and marriage. But as described above, there are many instances where the information is either out-of-date or inconclusive.

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