Jewish records in Iasi reveal ‘Sudits’ of Romania

Researchers found in Cluj, Bacau

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Volume 3, Number 1

Fall 1994
... but first, a word from your editor

This is a momentous issue because of the huge strides taken this summer to break the barrier in obtaining information about our ancestors from Romania.

From Romania itself, in three different locales and in three different ways, several of our members have made contacts that are most encouraging, most optimistic for the future development of resource materials to come from Romania.

In this issue, we feature Paul Pascal's two weeks in Romania, where he uncovered news of both genealogical and historical significance from his ancestral home of Iasi, where once 43,500 Jews (1921) lived. He visited the state archives as well as the Iasi Jewish museum where he uncovered little known information about the Jews who settled in this part of Romania. We devote most of this issue to his remarkable story and the photographs and documents that are part of his narrative. His story begins on page 5.

Another member, Stephen Rosman, also visited his relatives' home in Transylvania in central Romania, where almost 17,000 Jews lived prior to World War II. Rosman's account, which will appear in greater detail in a future issue, involves the befriending of a Jewish scholar at the University of Cluj, who has agreed to find vital information for ROM-SIG members seeking information from that area.

Two other members asked us to find out about another researcher, Carol Marcusohn, in Bacau. Just before putting this issue "to bed", we received an answer to our inquiry about him.

The details of these and other developments in our efforts to find researchers will be found on the following page.

We have a new addition to our Advisory Board. Marlene Zakai of the Washington, D.C., area joins us to strengthen the editorial content of RSN. Aside from having access to sources in our capital, Marlene is fluent in Hebrew and will begin featuring information from her sources in Israel with our next issue.

Your editor has been using Internet these past few months and discovering a new world of communication. A few "conversations" have been struck up with ROM-SIG members from coast to coast, and I have "talked" to people in England, Israel and Argentina. It is fascinating, much faster than regular mail and costs less than a postage stamp.

All it takes is a computer, a modem, and a hook-up with any of the commercial services like Compuserve, Prodigy, American On Line, etc., or a local bulletin board service (BBS).

I thought it might be good to set up an Internet directory of ROM-SIG members to encourage an interchange of information. If you're interested in learning more about Internet and how it can enhance your genealogical research, drop me a line. And if you are now using Internet, why not send your "address" to my Internet address:

gene.starn@cornucopia.oau.org

ROM-SIG has joined FFEEIF (pronounced "feif"), an umbrella organization of more than 60 genealogy groups interested in research in eastern European countries. In its resource guide, FFEEIF provides names of translators, researchers, etc., that specialize in our area of the world.

There have been some suggestions that we should change the name of our journal. If it were called "RUMANIA! RUMANIA!", like the popular Yiddish song, says one reader, it would better reflect the area we cover. We're open to suggestions and your wishes. Should we keep the name "ROM-SIG NEWS" or change it to "RUMANIA! RUMANIA!"? What do you think?

And finally, one more thought. Our thanks to each of you for your support of ROM-SIG NEWS during the past year. Your contributions have been what has kept us going. One of our members, Bill Firestone, suggested that being a contributing publication, we should include in our masthead ... "With a staff of hundreds!"

Please send all communications -- including articles, information, photographs, manuscripts, subscription information, checks, family finders, etc., etc., should be sent to:

ROM-SIG NEWS
P.O. Box 520583
Longwood, FL 32752

Phone: (407) 788-3898
FAX: (407) 831-0507

Internet:
gene.starn@cornucopia.oau.org

Articles and information should be submitted written clearly or printed, preferably typewritten, double-spaced, or on IBM compatible disk. Please do not send original photographs or documents, send copies. Any material submitted will be returned upon request.

We thank all of those who contributed to this issue of ROM-SIG NEWS. Their name appears alongside the article, letter, photo or information, etc.

NEXT ISSUE: January 15, 1995
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PLEASE NOTE: Proper Romanian accent marks are still missing from most articles in this issue. We are still trying to find a solution for future issues, and we're getting closer.
Giant strides made in hunt for Romanians to search archives

Researchers in Cluj, Bacau and Iasi ready to hunt ancestry

by Gene Starn, Editor

Patience and persistence is beginning to pay off in our attempts to ease the difficult research possibilities in Romania. A number of resources have been developed in Cluj, Bacau and Iasi, with hopeful signs appearing in other parts of Romania.

Stephen Rosman (Commerce, MI) has arranged for a Jewish academician in Cluj to research the archives of this Transylvanian city for members of ROM-SIG. Rosman spent a week there this summer and was successful in obtaining vital certificates for members of his family. He also arranged for others to use his source, Professor Ladislau Gyemant (Gee'-ah-mahnt), director of the Dr. Moshe Carmilly Institute for Hebrew and Jewish History at the University "Babes-Bolyai" of Cluj-Napoca. The 47-year-old history researcher was born in Oradea, Romania, and speaks English, French, German, Hungarian and Latin besides Romanian.

Rosman and Dr. Gyemant had agreed to a $20.00 charge for copies of each certificate obtained from the archives. This figure was arbitrarily arrived at, according to Rosman, because of the excessively high costs today for photocopying, faxing, etc. In other words, a birth, marriage and death certificate for one person would cost $60.00 American funds.

In speaking to Dr. Gyemant after Rosman informed us of his arrangements, he said, "We will try to go slowly at first and make adjustments as we go along."

Rosman spoke highly of the professor, who said if this works out satisfactorily the academician would attempt to establish similar research with other university professors in other Romanian cities.

All inquiries should be sent to him at the following:

Prof. Ladislau Gyemant,
Str. Tarnita 1, Bl. B5, Sc. III, ap. 23
3400 Cluj-Napoca
Romania

Include $20.00 for each certificate desired, together with the name(s), and information available and the certificates you want him to research.

If no certificates are found, no money would be returned, but Dr. Gyemant says he will submit a full written report of his efforts and what he did manage to locate. The money would be used to pay for his time and efforts.

Any special negotiations should be handled directly with Prof. Gyemant.

Use researchers at your own risk, ROM-SIG can't vouch for anyone

We caution all of our readers to proceed cautiously with researchers. All we can do is to tell you of the experiences that others have had. And sometimes even if the reports are good, they may have come under different circumstances than yours.

Many of us remember getting our fingers singed by the glowing letters and recommendations of Dan Regenstein. We can avoid a repetition by proceeding cautiously.

PLEASE let us know what results you get, pro or con, so we can keep our members informed of both the good and the bad.

Copies of two letters, received here within days of each other, from Joel Shield (Brookline, MA) and Bill Firestone (Santa Cruz, CA), asked for information about a researcher in Bacau, Carol Marcusohn of Bacau. In each letter he asked for $300 for his time and expenses to cover the tasks they had asked.

I wrote to Mr. Marcusohn and received a reply just before press time. Just a few days before that I had received word he was being recommended by the Jewish Romanian Historical Society of Bucharest. Marcusohn is not conversant in English, but manages. He is Jewish and a pensioner. You can write to him at the following address:

Exp. Carol Marcusohn,
Str. Erou Gr.Rusu nr. 4
Sc. D Ap.6
5500 Bacau
Romania

From Robert Hull (Sacramento, CA) I received the name of another researcher in Iasi, Dan Jumara, to whom I have written a letter of inquiry. His reply came just as we were closing this issue.

He replied that he is a qualified archivist, "so I'm supposed to be able to do almost any kind of research in the archives."

He does need some clues, such as name, year (or a period of about five years) when the person was born or died and the place.

He charges $25 per hour for research, plus expenses, but generally, Jumara says his fees run about $200 if in Iasi and about $300-$350 if travel outside Iasi is involved.

Jumara requests $10 plus two international reply coupons in advance for preliminary inquiries and "for answering whether the research is possible or not." His address is:

Dan Jumara
Str. Sulfinei, NR.5
Iasi 6600,
Romania

He can be reached by phone: 0040-32-116723, but remember, Romanian time is seven hours earlier than ours.

Rosanne Leeson (Los Altos, CA) contacted me via E-mail in July with the name of a young American working in Hungary who made a number of trips into Romania researching klezmer music. I have written, but have heard nothing up to this point.

Continued on next page —>
Researchers in Cluj, Bacau, Iasi ready to hunt for ancestors (Continued from the previous page)

Another possible source comes from Dr. Philip Leonard (Austin, TX) who may be making some headway via correspondence on Internet. He has told me about a group that meets "regularly" including some students or professors in Romania.

And just this week another researcher name came to me from someone inquiring about Romanian sources. He had received our name from the Jewish Historical Society of Romania in Bucharest along with Carol Marcusohn's name and another person. I will contact the historical society to see if they have any other sources.

Meanwhile, Carol Rombro Rider (Baltimore, MD) has sent some pages from Everton's "Genealogical Helper" showing sources for Romanian genealogical research including the name suggested by Hull, along with a genealogy group with her comment, "Look who's listed!" It turns out to be our friend, Dan Regenstreif.

As for "Paul", the Jewish researcher recommended by "Marion", the media man in Bucharest, Paul Pascal met with him for several hours on his trip to Romania. We may give him some new assignments, searching for names in Bucharest cemeteries or finding membership lists and the like within the Jewish community. But "Paul" does not have the background or experience for archival research.

Again, we remind you that if you are interested in taking part in our search by submitting the names of any possible researchers, or by offering to pay the expenses to a researcher we uncover as a test of his/her skills, we ask that you let us know as several of you already have.

From what we have heard up to now, it is virtually impossible to procure any data by way of mail inquiries. It must be done in person, either by a personal visit or by having someone visit the archives for you. On the other hand, David Roth of London, England, writes that he has been asked to forward $15.00 American for certificates found in the state archives.

More than a year ago, Sept. 1993, he had written to the state archives for "records to discover the origins of my Romanian grandparents, Cume Rotimberg and Sabina Rosenfeld." He also gave them approximate birth years (between 1879 and 1886) and asked for certificates and sent a copy of his father's birth certificate and "related papers." Lol he received an answer saying they had found the certificates. Roth wasted no time in getting the money off to them.

Israeli woman finds lost relatives, nephew, niece living in Brooklyn

"I was very surprised and excited to open the summer '94 issue of ROM-SIG NEWS and recognize the names and pictures of the parents of my cousin's wife."

That's how Bruno Segal's letter of Aug. 24th began. The "parents of my cousin's wife" turned out to be the nieces and nephew of Feiga Rozental, the Israeli woman who wrote for help in finding her brother-in-law's family in America.

She found them, thanks in part to people like ROM-SIG members who came up with clues and suggestions on how to locate them.

Shlomo and Miriam Rozental (now Rosenthal) live in Brooklyn. Their father, Feiga's brother-in-law, passed away some years ago. It seems the family had been out of touch for quite some time.

Your editor phoned a Miriam Rozental in California, thinking she might be the long, lost relative.

"I wish to be her," said the California Miriam with a heavy, rich accent, "but I was born in Latvia."

Our thanks to those who sent us phone lists and who wrote to Feiga in Israel.

Bruno also wrote in his letter, "I am still very excited to know that I knew the whereabouts of a person whom somebody was searching for. What this means, especially as our membership grows, is that we are becoming a network of information for each other."

Pres. Clinton names Alfred Moses as new U.S. ambassador to Romania

Alfred H. Moses, president of the American Jewish Committee, has been named the new U.S. ambassador to Romania by President Clinton.

Moses, an attorney in Washington, D.C., has been active in American-Romanian relations for many years. During the Ceausescu period he represented the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations in negotiating with Ceausescu and his government to facilitate Jewish emigration and to preserve Jewish institutions in Romania.

He also worked on behalf of Romanian dissidents including those imprisoned for pro-Christian activities. His efforts led to the printing in Romania of the New Testament used by Baptist congregations. He also served in the White House in the last year of the Carter administration as Special Advisor and Special Counsel to the President.

Born in Baltimore in 1929, he received his B.A. degree from Dartmouth College, did graduate work at the Woodrow Wilson School of Intl. Affairs at Princeton Univ. and received his J.D. Degree from Georgetown University Law School. He was on active duty as an officer in the U.S. Navy from 1952 to 1956.

He is married to the former Carol Whitehill and currently resides in McLean, Va.
Jewish records in Iasi reveal 'Sudits' of Romania

Volumes available for genealogical research in community, state archives

by Paul Pascal
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Jewish family research in Romania is not like Jewish family research in America. This is an understatement.

My experience this past summer was, at least for me, a circuitous, serpentine and sometimes clandestine act, occasionally resembling a Grade B movie, often resembling a slog through dense jungle. Though sorely tempted to machete my way through the endless frustrations and obstacles, I learned early that this does not work -- that the only hope in making any headway was to thread my way through it as best I could. I learned as I went along, and I will attempt in this article to chronicle some of that learning.

Let me say first of all that my experience with government archives in Romania had a decidedly Kafkaesque tone to it: vicious internal intrigues among archives employees (based either on the most serious political considerations or on petty personality rivalries, or both), sloppy and grossly inefficient service coupled with arbitrary bureaucratic roadblocks, payoffs at times expected and at times given (whether in cash or in kowtowing), rigid pecking orders at every turn, and -- in the midst of all this -- good work, genuine and generous help, and courageous risk-taking by some individuals for the sake of honest research.

A taste of the shadow-world I entered: I was visiting the office of a person I had met some days earlier, someone of obvious integrity, highly knowledgeable in Romanian Jewish history and increasingly helpful to me in my research. There were only the two of us in the building. Within the general area of Jewish research, our topics were far-ranging, but when we touched on a particular topic (and quite honestly I cannot remember what that topic was), this person begged forgiveness, then walked across the office, turned on a radio, and then sat down again to resume our conversation. Our newspapers tell us that Romania had a revolution in 1989, but the fear in the populace remains.

I will try not to dwell any further on the darker side of my visit to Romania. There is so much that I learned when I did come to "clearings in the jungle", that I will now focus on that. I began this article by contrasting Romanian research with research on this side of the Atlantic. In actual fact my first important lead in my Romanian expedition came here, not there.

In a conversation with Rick Bercuvitz, a member of ROM-SIG from Vermont, who had gone on an expedition of his own earlier in the year, I learned that three censuses had been done of the Moldovan region of Romania (though Romania had not yet coalesced as an independent country) in the years 1822, 1836 and 1849. I learned further that in these censuses the Jewish inhabitants had been listed separately from other Romanians, and that these censuses existed intact at the State Archives of the County of Iasi, in the City of Iasi, but were difficult to access. This knowledge gave me a mission and framework within which I might seek some of my specific family information. If I could find and somehow access these censuses, it could prove invaluable not only for my personal research, but perhaps for others as well.

But when I arrived in Iasi, instinct told me to approach the Jewish community first, before attempting to penetrate the State Archives. True, I had acquired (with great difficulty) official permission from Bucharest, to do research in the Iasi archives; but something told me it would be important to make personal connections first. And I was right.

Aside from learning first-hand how intact the structure of the Jewish community is in Romania (ironically, despite its shrinking to less than 5 percent of its 1945 population), I was able to form connections and even friendships with a number of Jews with the knowledge, contacts or positions of leadership that either opened doors for me or helped me navigate through the maelstrom. I will describe three of these personalities here.

Odette Caufman Blumenfeld is professor of American literature at the University of Iasi, and the daughter of the late Simon Caufman, head of the Iasi Jewish community until his death three years ago. With her help, I was given entree to the Jewish cemetery of Iasi as well as its "key" -- the Chevra Kadisha register books at the Jewish community offices, which recorded
meticulously the burials and their locations in that cemetery over the past century, perhaps earlier. She also introduced me to the other two rather amazing individuals in this description.

Prior to leaving on this trip, Gayle Schlissel Riley, a California member of ROM-SIG, had told me about Odette and how to reach her. She also asked me if I could find out how to purchase a book she had heard rumors of, *Jewish Cemetery Inscriptions in Iasi*, by an Itsig Kara.

As I sat in a small dingy room in the Iasi Jewish *Communitate* offices, combing the *Chevra Kadisha* register books, a teenage boy sat at the next table, painstakingly learning to read Hebrew under the guidance of an impish-looking man evidently in his eighties. When I took a break, Odette introduced me to him.

It was Itsig Kara!

When I returned day after day to that little room (for these register books represented no simple task), Kara was there each time. Soon we formed a relationship independent of simply being in the same place at the same time. I found out, among other things, that his book on cemetery inscriptions is not yet complete, but should be soon. I learned also that this book is but one of 15 that he has written, among the over 750 written pieces he has published since 1923 (he is 88 years old), in Romanian, Yiddish, English and French, on the history and folklore of Romanian Jews, as well as fictional work.

At his home I was treated to his own collection of Jewish archival material -- books, monographs, letters and other materials pertaining to the history of the Romanian Jewish community -- and I grew aware of their importance to the Jewish world at large. I came to understand that this unassuming man with the twinkle in his eye is one of the intellectual and spiritual giants of Romanian Jewish life today. (Incidentally, when I came to services at the synagogue on Friday night and Saturday, Kara, of course, was there, in a position of prominence; but leading the service with fluidity and confidence, nuance and old-world intonation, was his teenage student! There was no evidence of the painful laboring that characterized his Hebrew reading in his tutoring sessions. In prayer this boy was somehow blessed with complete mastery, as if he had taken on within him the *Sibbuk* of Kara or even Kara's grandfather!)

When Odette had me show up at the side of the Iasi synagogue one day, to view the Jewish Community Museum, I did not appreciate how significant would be my introduction to the curator of that museum.

Dr. Silviu Sanie took me through the museum at a rapid pace, trying, it seemed, to give me an overview of his labor of love. The pace, however, was frustrating for me, since each museum piece I saw seemed to hold secrets of past Jewish life in Iasi and its surroundings, both in general and in particular, and I wanted to explore it, to record it, to absorb it. When I explained my difficulty to Sanie, he slowed down enough to indulge me somewhat.

I met with Sanie several times during my twelve days in Romania. In the course of this time, he seemed to me to be a very sensitive, internal person, perhaps painfully so. By the time I left Romania I felt he was my friend.

Sanie is head of the scientific research in history and archaeology at the prestigious Academia Romana of Iasi. Although his daughter and brother have, like most Romanian Jews, moved to Israel, and although a strong Zionist himself, Sanie feels he cannot just abandon the remnants of Jewish historical life to be uncared for and undocumented.

"There is so much that is left to do," he says. "Ours is the last generation of Jews here. Who will complete the task after us?"

Sanie has been working under the auspices of the Diaspora Research Institute of Tel Aviv University, to document a particularly beautiful and ancient Jewish cemetery at Siret, Romania, but it is a painful process for him. The grant is sufficient for documentation, but not for preservation. He is also well aware that, although special in its age and beauty, it is but one of many, many such Jewish cemeteries in Romania that will soon be beyond saving unless they get an infusion of financial and physical help.

Among the many fascinating items in the Jewish museum at Iasi, four items caught my particular attention. One was a book written sometime before his death in 1908 by Dr. Mayer A. Halevy, entitled (in Romanian) *The Jewish Communities of Iasi and Bucharest to 1821* (Vol. I). Like virtually every other artifact in the museum, this book was sealed under glass -- all I could do was look at the cover.

"But Kara has a copy," Sanie informed me. Later that day, incredibly, Kara lent me his copy and I photocopied the entire book! (I have yet to explore it, a particularly problematic issue since I do not read Romanian).

The second item was another book in Romanian, *History of Jews in Iasi in Records and Documents*, by Beno Wachtel Ghelber. Kara, apparently, had a copy of this one, too, somewhere,
but I took his word for it that it was not as germane for our purposes as it appeared from the title.

The third item was a copy of a set of pages from a 1774 census of Jews in Iasi from the Minister of Internal Affairs. These copies were samples from the complete set comprised of about 200 pages, a full copy of which exists at the Academia Roman's A.D. Xenopol Institute of History. Incredibly, with everything else that was on my plate, I somehow let this amazing find just slip by without further pursuit. I hope, however, to follow up now in trying to obtain copies of at least a few pages of this treasure.

The last item (which really represents several such items in the museum) was a handwritten book called In Memoria Fratilor Decedati din Comunitatea Sinagogeii Mare din Trg. Cucului, Iasi, 1 Aug. 1932 (In Memory of Deceased Brothers of the Great Synagogue Congregation of Cucului [the Jewish district] Iasi, Aug 1, 1932).

Another such book translates as Record Book for the Synagogue of Bucket Carriers, 1928. As valuable as such books could be to genealogists, they were simply not physically accessible. Perhaps with great effort they could have somehow been removed from their cases for perusal, but the design of the glass cases did not lend itself to that.

Sanie's museum, despite its deficiencies, had opened up new possibilities of exploration. In the course of getting to know Sanie himself, even more possibilities opened up, particularly growing out of two pieces of specialized terminology he taught me, pertaining to the study of Jews in Romania: catagraphy and sudits. I now understand that these two terms (particularly the second one) are so integral to the study of our ancestors in that country that it seems amazing to me not to have somehow come across them before.

To be fair, though, the first term is not to be found in the huge Oxford English Dictionary, and the second is nowhere to be found in the authoritative Encyclopedia Judaica.

Catagraphy is the term Romanian historians use to refer to a fiscal census of the populace. It has been used to refer also to any census, not merely a fiscal one, though some purists among the Romanian historians object to that. Perhaps it is used by other historians, but I've never seen it in any other context. The Romanian word is caagrafia, but they translate it into English as catagraphy, not "census" or any form of that.

Sudits is a very narrow term referring to foreign citizens living on Romanian territory under the protection of a foreign power, originally by special arrangement between the Ottoman Empire which governed "Romania" (between the fifteenth and early nineteenth centuries) and the various European states. As I learned from Sanie, the majority of Jews who lived in Romania in the nineteenth century were recently arrived Sudits!

This is an incredible discovery, in my view, and as I have already said, it seems to me amazing that this has not been common knowledge among us researchers of Jewish Romania (at least the ones in our group)! I had been laboring under the assumption that because some Jews had arrived in Romania with Roman legionnaires in the second century, therefore my (and most of our) ancestry theoretically goes back that far in Romania.

Wrong, wrong, wrong.

Most of our Romanian ancestors came there relatively recently from some neighboring European state! An observation I made in the Jewish cemetery of Iasi seems indirectly to corroborate this. I saw many, many inscriptions for the deceased, even into the twentieth century, written in German! My great-grandmother's death certificate (issued in Canada, 1932) listed her father's birthplace as Austria; nobody in my family could explain or believe this -- it came as a complete surprise. Now I understand that this kind of thing was the norm for Jews in Romania.

During my visit to Romania and with Sanie this summer, he was in the last stages of co-editing a book of articles about the Jewish Sudits of the last century. This seminal work, entitled Studia et Acta Historiae Judeorum Romaniae Vol. I, is coming out in October. A joint project of Sanie's institute and the Diaspora Research Institute in Israel, it explores the whole topic of Jewish Sudits which, it explains, have until now never been the subject of a full study.
This book, I am sure, will be a goldmine for genealogists of Jewish Romania, certainly those whose center of exploration is the Moldovan region of the country.

But here's the kicker. This book is based upon Catagraphy of Sudits in Romanian Moldavia (1824-1825)!

Could this have been one of the censuses Rick Bercuvitz told me about (despite the discrepancy in the date by two or three years)?

I had to find out. Never published, and found only in the State Archives of Iasi, this huge register of Jewish catalogaphy consists of 585 pages, bound in a red cardboard box under the call number "Transport 166, Opis 1184, No. 23". (These details I learned as I perused the manuscript to Sanie's new work). When I finally got to the State Archives in Iasi (remember, I decided to contact the Jewish community first), I now had something very specific to ask for.

Well, I never did see any other Romanian census in the Iasi Archives besides the Sudits ones, and I do believe these are the censuses Rick was referring to, but I am not absolutely sure. I do know that this material is a blockbuster. If I have any kind of luck, some samples of it and its index will be sent to me on microfilm from the archives sometime this fall (though, to tell the truth, I experienced enough of the "dark side" of Romania to say, "I'll believe it when I see it.")

Sanie permitted me to copy just a few samples of this 1824 catalogaphy from the appendix of his soon-to-be-published manuscript (which he had translated into English), and I'm here excerpting one or two, to whet your appetite:

#383 Litman Stern, born in Camenitza, Russia; currently residing in Jassy (Iasi); nationality - Jewish; religion - Mosaic; under Russian protection; arrived in Moldavia 10 years ago; age - 24 years old; civil status - tenant; costume - Jewish; observations of the census commission - he is a Sudit.

#177 Hersh Faighelesi, born in Brody, Galicia; currently residing in Jassy; nationality - Jewish; religion - Mosaic; under Austrian protection; arrived in Moldavia 25 years ago; age - 36 years old; civil status - married with a woman from Brody; occupation - fabric merchant; material status - he has a rented shop; costume - Jewish; observations of the census commission - free to leave the country.

INTO THE IASI ARCHIVES

My subsequent entry into the bowels of the State Archives in Iasi, where I then saw the originals of this catalogaphy, was not done on my own. In fact, I would probably not have gotten very far had I attempted it on my own. Odette came with me, ran interference for me, translated for me, and after a bit of cloak-and-dagger on the steps of the archives, managed to secure for me an audience with an upper middle-ranking official -- Prof. Silviu Vacaru. A man in his mid-thirties, but loyal to the rules of "official policy", he surprised me by permitting me to record the interview, which I present here in edited form. Odette translated for both him and me, and occasionally added her own comments:

Pascal: Could you tell me, in general terms, what the State Archives here in Iasi holds, and then more specifically, what your holdings are with regard to genealogical research?

Vacaru: Yes. We can offer you almost anything in terms of history of [Romanian] Moldova, from 1399 to 1970. That is, we hold specifically, material pertaining to the history of Moldova but not other parts of Romania.

Pascal: Could you please explain how detailed this history is? Are we speaking of history of the common people, i.e., social histories, or of the regimes that governed them?

Vacaru: Both. Everything. Like ordinary records of sales and purchases, on the one hand, donations given by rulers on the other and so on.
Pascal: So, for example, I might be able to find an exchange of property between an ordinary vendor and an ordinary buyer from, say the year 1505?

Vacaru: Yes, oh yes.

Pascal: Amazing. Can you tell me, then, how these things are arranged in the archives?

Vacaru: Yes. We have a collection of documents, very old documents, and there are other fonds, specific to Moldova, from the Supreme Court, where such records can be found; there are property records, of boyars [aristocracy] and of ordinary people, going up to 1900.

Pascal: Are there indexes to these records?

Vacaru: We don't have indexes, we have inventories.

Pascal: And is there any system to these inventories?

Vacaru: They are hard to locate easily, because they are not in chronological order. They were just placed in the archives as they were acquired.

Pascal: This book that you are now showing me, Documenta de Romania Istorica, is it the catalog of your holdings?

Vacaru: No, it's just a very small part of it. We have about 70,000 to 80,000 documents pertaining to this area of Romania. But there is no chronology to its organization. It needs to be explored visually.

Pascal: But this book, is it not a listing of at least some of the archives holdings?

Vacaru: Yes, yes. Everything from Moldova held in the archives for the year 1634 is here. They are not only here; they could be in other archives in Moldova, and even abroad. And we have also a list of lost documents.

Pascal: Are there books like this for every year?

Vacaru: For 1632-33, there is another volume. There are about 21 volumes, up to 1634.

Pascal: And after?

Vacaru: At the history institute [where Sanie works] there are volumes going up to 1642.

Pascal: And after that?

Vacaru: After that such volumes are necessary, but financially we cannot afford to publish them.

Pascal: Do they exist in any form—even unpublished?

Vacaru: Yes. There are various lists made by different researchers, according to the problems they are researching. They make lists for themselves, on their topics of interest. But there is nothing like this book here.

Pascal: Do the results of this private research exist in your archives?
Vacaru: Yes, quite a lot of it. But the subjects are very specialized.

Pascal: So if someone wishes to come to the Iasi archives and research something that has been researched before, is there some systematic way of gaining access to what has been done before, without having to reinvent the whole process?

Vacaru: Yes. Every document has, at the front, a sheet of paper stating when, how, for what purpose, and by whom it was used.

Pascal: Are these papers kept in some central location in the archives?

Vacaru: No. They are kept at the front of their respective documents.

Pascal: So if I wanted to do a study, for example, of Sudits in the city of Roman in the year 1814, where do I begin?

Vacaru: I don't know of any Sudits that were in Roman in that year.

Pascal: No, I mean as an example. If I come to the archives and I don't know what you have or where it is -- I don't know the way the archives is laid out -- what should I do in order to find out if something was done on such and such a topic?

Vacaru: Ah, yes, I understand. We had German researchers who came here to research Sudits. They researched all the families who came to Moldova from other countries and who did not receive citizenship.

Pascal: But this is only an example. I'm trying to find out what a person such as myself can do, coming fresh to the archives and not knowing how it is organized, what can I do to find material on a specific topic? Where do I begin?

Vacaru: You just ask for what you want. The person in charge on duty will then go and get you the inventories and documents that you want.

Pascal: Oh, so there are other inventories?

Vacaru: Between about 1850 and 1859 there were censuses made of the population. And we can get the results of these censuses for you.

[If you notice an occasional lack of connection between some of the answers and their respective questions, then you may appreciate how I felt from time to time during this interview.]

Pascal: But you have this information in your head! How does a researcher, who does not work in the archives, know where to go, in order to find what you have in your head?

Vacaru: You just ask the person in charge for the documents you want.

Pascal: And when the person in charge dies? All this knowledge of where things are in the archives presumably dies with him!

Odette: No, everyone who works here knows this information.

Pascal: But there is nothing on paper? Are there no finding aids?

Vacaru: We have the inventories.

Pascal: Are they centralized?

Vacaru: Yes, in what is called "the Study Room" [probably, the Reading Room].

Pascal: But these inventories can be accessed only by the archives employees?

Vacaru: No, by everybody. But be aware that up to 1860 everything is in Cyrillic.

Pascal: I understand. Well, that basically ends my general questions. Is there anything more you can tell me about the organization of the archives that I should know?

Vacaru: Just that it is organized by fonds, according to historical institutions or by families, and so on. The fonds are divided up by opis. And each opis is made up of inventories.

Pascal: I see. Thank you. Now I'd like to get specific. I believe that there were three censuses in Moldova in the nineteenth century -- 1822...

Vacaru: No, 1832-34, 1839-46, 1859.

Pascal: Very well, I'd like to look at all three censuses for Tighina and Moinesti, to begin with. And I would like to make copies, so that I can study them in depth.

Vacaru: That's fine. But we don't do photocopying here. We do microfilming. It will take an hour or two to find your material. But in your letter from Canada to the main archives in Bucharest, you were interested also in Roman and Bacau, I believe. We told Bucharest at the time that we have documents pertaining to the areas of your interest.

Pascal: How interesting! Bucharest didn't bother letting me know they even received my letter!

[The implication of this bizarre state of affairs is this: After I wrote the main archives in Bucharest for permission to do research in several branch archives, they informed the Iasi branch archives (and probably the other branch archives, as well) which gave clearance, from their end, to the main branch. But the main branch itself never mailed me their permission to use the Iasi archives, and without it I could do nothing.

Indeed, not only did they not acknowledge my letter, sent three months in advance, but when I appeared to them in person at the beginning of my expedition, they acted as if they'd never heard of me! Meanwhile, because of my request letter to Bucharest, Vacaru knew every detail of my intended search!

So why, I can't help wondering, was I told to wait at the far end of the archives courtyard, while Odette spent...]

How interesting, Bucharest didn't even bother letting me know they even received my letter!
close to an hour verbally sparring with an armed guard at the archives door, before I was allowed to be spirited into the building, and into the inner sanctum of Vacaru's office, who acted up until this point as if Odette had brought me there from out of the blue? Aiee, Rumania, Rumania!

Pascal: Thank you. I have no idea of the quantity of this material, but if the amount is reasonable, I would like to make a copy of all of it.

Vacaru: There are 585 pages! And it's half a dollar a page! And it goes beyond just 1825.

Pascal: Well, for now I'd like the pages on Tirgu-Ocna and Moinești, anyway. Until what year does it go?

Vacaru: Until 1849. There are three censuses. I will get the material for you in a couple of hours, and you can decide then what you want from it. If you are still in Iasi in another two days, you can get the microfilm. You'll need the proper papers to take the microfilm across the border, and they will be ready by then.

Pascal: I will no longer be in Iasi two days from now. Could you do just a small portion for me today?

Vacaru: You have to pay in a special place, then you have to come back to make an account of the transaction with a receipt -- it will take a whole day just to do the financial side of this. But you could leave the money with a third person in trust, approximating the amount based on what you choose. They would pay when the microfilm is ready and it would be sent to you in Canada through the Romanian Embassy.

Teacher's report for Josef Pascal (a relative of the author?), 1897, Iasi Jewish community school. The year before he received a "repeat" but this year was "retired."
Pascal: This is a lot of work for somebody.

Vacaru: No, no, not if it's done this way.

Pascal: Wonderful. Now let's consider another scenario. Suppose I am sitting at home in Canada, and I realize there is another store of material that I have interest in here in the Iasi Archives. Can I prearrange a system now, whereby I would send you money, along with a letter spelling out what I need -- as we are doing now, except it would be "long distance"?

Vacaru: Everything can be done through the Romanian Embassy.

Pascal: But I know all the complexities involved in getting permission upon permission. It was hard enough to get this far in person. How much more difficult to do it long distance and through intermediaries!

Vacaru: I'll give you the details when you come back this afternoon.

Pascal: Okay. I'd like to ask something else. From the material which you are gathering for me today, may I photograph a few of them with my own camera?

Vacaru: No.

Pascal: Can I make notes about them?

Vacaru: Yes.

Pascal: And the microfilm, is it in negative or positive?

Vacaru: Negative.

Pascal: One more question, if I may. Where can I find military records, soldiers' records, for Iasi in the nineteenth century; are they in this building?

Vacaru: You'll find such records only up to 1862 here. After that in the Military Archives in Bucharest.

Pascal: Are the records in Bucharest classified?

Vacaru: They are secret.

Pascal: I wonder then how this material was released (showing my grandfather's draft release notice from the Romanian army, 1891).

Vacaru: How did you get it?

Pascal: When my grandfather was alive, he ordered it himself. He was in Canada by then.

Vacaru: If your grandfather ordered the material -- probably in this case from the Minister of Defense, though of course there are also birth certificates, marriage certificates, and so on -- they have to respond. And so they sent it.

Vacaru: Today is July 11. The microfilm might even arrive in Canada before you return there on August 19.

[The writing of this article was finished on September 11, two months later. Nothing has arrived. However, a telephone call to Odette revealed that she is in possession of the microfilm and of the release papers, which were delayed when Vacaru went on vacation, and that she will be in New York in October, at which time she will bring them with her for me.]

Vacaru: Meanwhile, here are the materials. Each page of this material makes up one frame of microfilm. If you order more than 100 frames, the cost is 620 lei per frame. If you order fewer than 100, it costs 1,200 lei per frame.

[At the time of this interview, 17,000 lei = $1 (U.S.), making the costs roughly 4 cents and 7 cents per frame, respectively. Note the vast discrepancy with the figure quoted earlier, of half a dollar per frame. Don't ask me why; it's one of the many mysteries of Romania. Despite

...including records of the infamous Iasi pogrom of June, 1941.

The truth is, the Romanian army itself, probably took part in the pogrom, though the "official line" is that it was carried out only by the Germans.

I was also unable to find any listings for the victims of this pogrom in the cemetery record books of the Iasi Jewish Community. This is also possibly due to the chaos that reigned at that time, or the difficulty in retrieving bodies quickly. (Ironically, and poignantly, there is one entry under 1941 which reads: "Necunoscut prizonier rus evreu" -- recording the death of a captured Jewish soldier from the Soviet Army, name unknown.)

At the Iasi cemetery itself, there is a mass grave for the victims of the pogrom, with one large monument, but no names. There are also some individual graves at the cemetery which include in their dedication a commemoration to individual family members of the deceased who were themselves killed in Transnistria, an area northeast of present-day Romania (between the Dniestr and Dniepr Rivers).

The events in Transnistria account for the fifty percent of Romanian Jewry who did not survive the Holocaust, about 400,000 individuals, deported to the camps of Transnistria mostly from the Bukovina and Bessarabia regions, which were under Romanian control between the two world wars. The only place I saw any list of names from the Iasi pogrom of 1941 was in Sanie's museum, a memorial citing a few of their names.]

[Sanie later told me that the Romanian military archives are in Bitesti, 200 km. from Bucharest, not in Bucharest itself, as Vacaru had said. They are, Sanie surmised, open for inquiries for 100 years ago but difficult, if not impossible, to access for the World War II pe
my curiosity, I was not about to question the huge reduction.]

(We look through some of the material together. He has not, it turns out, brought me all of the materials, but a sampling, including the specific towns of my ancestors. Perhaps it is too massive.

It becomes clear that few of the entries in the sampling include family names, and I am reminded that Jews of Romania, at least in the Moldovan region, often did not acquire true family names until late in the nineteenth century. When I met new/old Romanian relatives later, in Israel, I learned some of them did not have family names until the middle of the twentieth century! I was surprised to realize that this very basic problem -- how to link up my family with names in the census that had patronymics but not permanent, transferable, family names -- seemed new to Vacaru. I had to explain the system to him, whereby Jewish children -- and perhaps Christian, as well, for all I know -- in Romanian legal documents, used their father's first name, and sometimes also their grandfather's first name, too, as their own last name.

Wives had the same last name as their children, because they used their husband's first name, and sometimes their father-in-law's, as well -- as their legal last name. Obviously, by this method, "surnames" are not passed on from one generation to the next because each generation has a different father than the previous one. This system seemed complete news to Vacaru.)

Pascal: Please explain the format of these books.

Vacaru: The books are arranged by town. Sometimes the smaller towns are grouped together into a single book for a region. And the catagraphy books have an index, in a separate book. The catagraphy and its index are both written in the Romanian language. However, the census itself uses the Cyrillic (Russian) alphabet, while the index material uses the Latin alphabet!

[Aside from the difficulty of the Cyrillic alphabet for us researchers without a background in Slavic languages, the catagraphy information presents the double problem of being written in a florid handwriting and in strongly-fading ink. It is decipherable by someone who works hard at it and has learned the alphabet, but any fantasies I had of having material faxed across the Atlantic Ocean went out the window when I looked at this material in person.

Another reason why it could not be faxed is that it is bound in stiff books, and could not therefore go through a fax machine; photocopying first is impossible because, incredibly, there is not a single photocopy machine in the entire archives!]

Pascal: The catagraphy for Tirgu-Ocna and Moinesti, my grandparents' towns, seems small enough that I could order the whole thing, and then take my time in Canada looking for ways of linking up individuals in the census with each other and with my family.

Vacaru: If you write down on paper the names and dates that you want, then in two days I will be able to tell you which pages these are on and how much it will cost.

Pascal: I was under the impression that this information is why we were meeting right now . . .

Vacaru: Yes, but it takes time to read it. Nothing is in order. It has to be researched.

[I was getting the feeling that I was in general not making myself understood. Or maybe something was getting lost in the translation. Or maybe I was just tired (or dense!). Or, as my suspicious nature was wont to wonder, perhaps there was a concerted effort "not to understand" me.]
Pascal: Okay, let's try it this way: I'm beginning to form an idea of how to approach this. I would like this index, for sure. Secondly, anything in the censuses for Targu-Ocna and Moldoveresti in the Baco county book for 1836 and 1852, I want absolutely. Oh, but I don't see the census for Targu-Ocna here. It may not exist, is that right?

Vacaru: It might be there, we'll have to look more closely.

Pascal: Well, then for sure both censuses if they exist, please, and the index. And if I decide, from studying the index, that there is more I wish to order, I can do this through the Romanian Embassy?

Vacaru: Yes, yes, of course.

Pascal: Okay, now something else. You know how, at the hotels I've been staying at, there were two price lists for rooms -- one for local people and one for foreigners? Prices for foreigners were four times as high as for local people. I had mentioned this earlier, and it's acknowledged as a fact of life here. Well, I want to avoid the same problem when I come to the Romanian Embassy in Canada to pay for your services. I don't want them to quote me exorbitant prices, after you have quoted me other prices. I want to have an agreement now as to the cost of these services.

Vacaru: No, no. You'll pay at the official rate of exchange between lei and the dollar.

Pascal: What I mean is, can we have the agreement on paper, so that I will have something to take with me and show them?

Vacaru: You have to send to the general archives in Bucharest, and then they'll send it to Iasi, and then . . .

Pascal: I'll never be able to make this connection to your archives again from Canada, or get clearance to do this same kind of research from there. I know this. Look. I sent a letter to Bucharest three months ago, requesting permission to research in your archives once I got here, and I never heard a word back from them. Only when I arrived in person at the main archives in Bucharest did I stand a chance of getting any authorization, and that was difficult enough. Unless I have this all on paper now, I seriously doubt that I will ever make contact with this archives again, much less be quoted reasonable prices. And a request for microfilm through the Romanian Embassy? Forget it, unless I already have authorization in hand before I leave this country.

Vacaru: I can give you approval, in principle, to request more such information from us, even though you're in Canada. But you might write a very precise, formulaic letter, Romanian. First, you must write such a letter here and now, for the specific material you are requesting now. And from Canada, you must write the same kind of formulaic letter, with the exact information that you request from there, also in Romanian. There is no other way.

[Vacaru dictated, and Odette wrote out, on my behalf, the letter requesting clearance for the microfilm I was ordering that day. I left this letter with Vacaru, who would then pass it on to the proper authorities.

Unfortunately, it did not occur to me at the time to ask exactly who these authorities were; I assume they are the same people in the main State Archives in Bucharest who, when I arrived in person, eventually gave me the permission I needed to explore specific State Archive regional branches, such as this one in Iasi, but I can't be sure.

What seems now like the most obvious question to ask, that is, where this letter was going, got lost in the "whirlwind" -- not always being on the same wavelength with Vacaru, the flood of unfamiliar information coming at me, and the maneuvering I felt I needed to do. I hope to secure this information in the course of my future communications with Vacaru and/or the Romanian Embassy. Whoever these authorities were, it seemed important to Vacaru that the wording of the letter to them be very precise.

The formula of it, in translation, appears below (As I've already mentioned, I left the only copy of the Romanian letter itself with Vacaru -- and the archives had no photocopier -- but I asked Odette to read it into my tape recorder in English and Romanian. However, until I find a Romanian-speaker to transcribe the Romanian version onto paper, I can only provide the English version):

Archivelor Statului (State Archives)
B- Dl Georghe Gheorghiu -Dej
NR29 Bucharest
Romania

My name
My address

Please approve the microfilming of the index to the catagraphies of Sudits in the year ____, call number Tr. ____. Op. ____, as well as the pages referring to the towns of ____________, to be found in the catagraphies of the County of ____________, call numbers Tr. ____. Op. ____. No. ____. and Tr. ____. Op. ____. No. ____. and other pages to be found in the catagraphies of the County of ____________, concerning the same two towns in the Nineteenth Century.

Yours truly,

Pascal: Supposing I look through the microfilms that I receive in Canada, and say I then discover that I need the same type of information as the letter requested, but from a town that
was not specifically mentioned in this original letter. Could we word this letter in such a way that it covers such a possibility, so that I don't have to go through the complicated channels all over again to acquire that permission?

**Vacaru:** For additional microfilm, you have to ask again, because they only approve very specific requests, not general ones. You'd have to stay here two weeks, maybe more, and look at the material very closely, in order to know what you really need.

**Pascal:** Yes. Unfortunately, I don't have two weeks left in my stay here. And everything is much more difficult from Canada; this is why I want to do whatever is possible to prepare now, for my requests from Canada.

**Vacaru:** It will only take a month, a month and a half, for you to get the microfilm in Canada.

**Pascal:** Yes, but what I mean is, finding what I need is relatively easy now that I'm here, but I can't stay long enough to complete the task -- finding the material that is relevant and going through all the proper channels to be allowed to extract this information. From Canada, the whole process would be much more difficult. Perhaps you know of someone who is a reliable researcher that I, or my colleagues in America, could hire, from there, on a regular basis, to do research for me, or us, here in these archives?

**Vacaru:** The man I mentioned earlier, Ungureanu, he is a postgraduate student, who also teaches. He knows English. He studied at Oxford for six months. He could do it, or a student of his.

**Pascal:** How can we arrange this?

**Odette:** I can check at the University how to find him. Then we can ask him.

**Pascal:** Wonderful!

**Vacaru:** He might be in Germany right now. On the other hand, I know that on the 24th (of July) he is going to get married, so we can try.

**Pascal:** And if we are not successful, what is our next step?

**Vacaru:** Another alternative is, there is an association of former archive workers, historians, who are retired, who can do very good work here. They no longer work in the archives, yet they have access here. They did research of this kind.

**Pascal:** Do they speak English, perhaps?

**Vacaru:** French.

**Pascal:** How can I connect with them?

**Vacaru:** They are two old ladies. We can try both ways, let's say in September or October, in the autumn, we can try both ways and compare how they work.

**Pascal:** I would do this by mail? I would contact them by mail?

**Vacaru:** Yes. This association has regular meetings. I will talk with them and see what they say. Leave your address and I'll write you with their names and particulars, if they're willing.

**Pascal:** Thank you. Now I'd like to change gears for a minute. I am looking for the death certificate of my grandfather's brother, and I know only very approximately when he died, within the last 50 years, but I know for sure that he died in the City of Iasi. Is it possible to find such information?

**Vacaru:** After 1900, such information is located at the Municipality of Iasi, the primaria -- the mayor's office. The archives here go till about 1895.

**Pascal:** Before I leave today I'd like to know how to address letters to you. Do you have a business card, perhaps?

*Continued on Page 20*
Photographs by Paul Pascal

"A sheet from the Bacau Jewish community accounts book. Shows the outgo and income and the list of contributors. Notice the grand illuminations prepared on almost every sheet in the book."

"The main Jewish cemetery at Tirgu Ocha. On the far left and right is the non-Jewish custodial couple to the cemetery. In the center is the driver of the Bacau Jewish community. Maybe you can make out the goat to the right of the woman custodian."

"At the Bacau Jewish cemetery stands this monument to the Jewish victims of the Holocaust in Bacau, written in Hebrew, Romanian and Yiddish. The Yiddish version reads: 'In memory of the martyrs, you brothers, O nations, in the struggle for a new world.'"
EDITOR'S NOTE: I asked for additions and corrections to the complete Romanian Family Finder as published in the last issue ... and I sure received many corrections, so many, in fact, that we will be republishing what we hope will be a corrected list in the very next issue. Again, we're only human; we do make mistakes. Please tell us when we go wrong.

SEARCHING FOR: FROM:
BLUMENFELD .......... Iasi, Pascani, Podul Ilie
GREENBERG .......... Bohanse? (not sure of spelling), Podul Ilie
GOODMAN ............ Podul Ilie
GOLDBERG ............ Pascani
SUSSMAN ............ Podul Ilie
Mrs. Phyllis Berman Blumenfeld,
2224 East 14th Street,
Brooklyn, NY 11229

FAIBISCH, Moritz .... Vasuli
ZIBBOLIS ............ Braila
SISLER, Marcelle .... Bucharest
KAHANE, CAHANE .. Bucharest, Galatz
Daniel S. Friedman
1919 S.W. 170th
Seattle, WA 98166

HERSCHKOWITZ ...... Roman, Iasi
WAGNER .............. Roman, Iasi
JULIUS .............. Roman
BROCKSMEVERY .... Iasi
LICHTMAN .......... Iasi
CHAMEIDES .......... Czernovitz
Roberta Wagner Berman
1263 Pearl Street
La Jolla, CA 92037

BERCOVICI .......... Raducaneni
FRANCO .............. Craiova, Bucharest
DAVID ............... Craiova
RIZO ................. Bucharest
NAHMIAS .......... Bucharest
Gerard Bercovici
70 rue du Javelot
75013 Paris (France)

HABER ............... Roman
KLEIN .............. Mihaileni, Namaloasa
SCECHTER .......... Siret, Romania
J. Michael Eisner
312 Oliver Rd.,
New Haven, CT 06515

SEARCHING FOR: FROM:
KLEIN ............. Bucharest, Rosiori de Veda, Pitesti, Iasi
STEINER .......... Bucharest (before 1900),
FINKELSTEIN ...... Bucharest (early 1850s)
Bernard Margolis
6629 E. Calle Cavalier
Tucson, AZ 85715

MARCUS .......... Bucharest
ABRAMOVICI .... Botosani
ABRAMSON ......... Botosani
ZELICOVICI .... Iasi
ENTE .............. Bucharest
WALDMAN .......... Bucharest
Wayne Marcus
19411 Sierra Chula Rd.
Irvine, CA 92715-3808

BLANK, BLANC ....... Czernowitz
ROSENBACH .......... Czernowitz
LUTTINGER .... Czernowitz
GUTTMANN .......... Czernowitz
WURMBRANDT ...... Czernowitz
Arlene Rich
996 Eastlawn Dr.
Cleveland, OH 44143

COPI ....... Tirgu Frumos
ITZKOWITZ .......... ?
KODEL .......... Bucharest, Montreal, Que.
Andrea stone
5350 Broad Branch Rd., NW
Washington, DC 20015

SEGAL .............. Botosani
KOENIG .......... ?
BERNSTEIN .......... ?
SCHLEICHER .......... ?
Josephine Rosenblum
3340 Lamarque Dr.,
Cincinnati, OH 45236
**Family Stories**

**FRANCO - BERCOVICI**

My mother Amelia Franco's family, was Sefardi. They lived in the Spanish quarter of Bucharest. In 1900 they lived in Street Carol, 144. They spoke Ladino.

There was also a parent, whose name was Nahmiias, who killed himself when the Germans invaded Romania. He was a banker. My grandfather was born in Craiova.

They came from Greece. According to a family tradition, there was an ancestor Franco who was a pasha in the Ottoman Empire; another one would have been an ambassador in Egypt.

The family of my father, Isaac Bercovici, was Ashkenazi. He was born in 1896. The house of my grandfather, Haichel Bercovici, was in Reducanenu, close to Iasi. He had 12 children. My father went to France in 1917. He had a cousin who emigrated to the USA along before World War II. The survivors of the Holocaust went to Israel.

Gerard Bercovici
70 rue du Javelot
75013 Paris (France)

**BLUMENFELD**

An interesting and comical note.

My mother-in-law was pregnant with twins, one of which was my husband. She was detained for two days at the border because they said she had an abdominal tumor! She never mentioned it and now I wonder how they released her as I understand you were not allowed to board ship for the USA if you were pregnant.

She arrived in New York on Nov. 1, 1922, and she gave birth on Dec. 25, 1922, so it must have been quite noticeable. Maybe they let her in because she was travelling in a 2nd class cabin.

Phyllis Berman Blumenfeld
2224 East 14th St.,
Brooklyn, NY 11229

**HABER - KLEIN - SCHECHTER**

Those of my ancestors who lived in Romania were Jewish and lived in four towns -- Roman, Mihaileni, Namoloasa and Siret.

Namoloasa is a small town on the Siret River, not too far from Focsani and west of Galati. It is in the Province of Vrancea. It is not on too many maps. Perry Garsomke, who teaches at the Univ. of Nebraska and runs an exchange program with Romania, found it for me on a map shown to him in Iasi by the Romanian airlines. Apparently, a major battle was fought there during WWII. Perry also found a Haber in the Roman phone book, but was unable to reach that person. (Perry is married to a woman who is divorced from a Haber second cousin.)

Siret is near Mihaileni in what is now northern Romania.

J. Michael Eisner
312 Oliver Rd.,
New Haven, CT 06515

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**COPIL - ITZKOWITZ - KODEL**

I recently learned the original name and hometown of my grandfather. He arrived as an infant in New York in May 1900 under the name of Taivel Copil from the town of Tigu Frumos in eastern Romania. His mother's maiden name was Rebecca Itzkowitz. I am interested in any people there with those surnames and am particularly interested in any relatives who may have died in the Holocaust.

In addition, my husband's maternal relatives came from Bucharest, settling in Montreal. Their surname was Kodel and one ancestor is said to have been a prominent cantor there.

Andrea Stone
5350 Broad Branch Rd., NW
Washington, DC 20015

**YOUNG - SELTZER**

My father, Nathan Young (born 1910 in Boise, Idaho) was the third child of Julius Young/Young and Tonia Seltzer Young. Although he seldom spoke of his childhood, this is one incident he related to me.

When he was growing up in Montana, Queen Marie of Romania toured the U.S. by train and Montana was one of her stops. My father, whose mother had been born in Romania, was chosen as a local representative of the Romanian people to give the queen a bouquet of flowers. I believe my father said his picture had appeared in the newspaper.

According to her 1904 marriage certificate, my father's mother was born in or near Bucharest. Queen Marie spent part of Mon., Nov. 8, 1926 in Great Falls, Montana, where my father was then living so I believe it likely that my father saw the queen.

Both of the newspapers in Great Falls covered the queen's visit in considerable detail, but I found no picture nor mention of my father giving flowers to Queen Marie.

(Mary) Tonya Young
909 Tijeras N.W. #307
Albuquerque, NM
87102-2960.

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**ROM-SIG still needs your help!**

For those who have written to tell us their stories about their family, their genealogical adventures, or have written us about resources or sent us old photos of relatives they are trying to locate, anything proves interesting and helpful to our readers... we say "Thank you, thank you, thank you."

Remember, ROM-SIG NEWS is a contributory journal that exists only upon the material that its members submit. So don't be bashful. And who knows, you just may stumble upon a good lead as a result.

Next issue's deadline is: December 25, 1994...
SEEKING TIES TO SIBIU
Do any of you have historic ties to the Judetul (county) of Sibiu? The Transylvanian Judetul of Sibiu is located near the center of Romania and includes the cities of Sibiu and Medias. Can you recommend any researchers from this area?
Robert Hull
954 Howe Ave., #110
Sacramento, CA 95825

HELP IN FINDING ROZENTAL RELATIVES
I was very surprised and excited to open the summer '94 issue of ROM-SIG NEWS and recognize the names and pictures of the parents of my cousin's wife. In that issue you printed a translation of a letter along with pictures, where an elderly Israeli woman was searching for her nephew Sollo Rozental. I could not wait to call my cousin's wife and tell her about the article that I just read.

I am still very excited to know that I knew the whereabouts of a person whom somebody was searching for. What this means, especially as our membership grows, is that we are becoming a network of information for each other. ROM-SIG NEWS is becoming a forum or bulletin board for people looking for their Romanian relatives. I am sure that other names and pictures will appear in ROM-SIG NEWS that will be recognized by one of your readers.

Since I was born in Romania and speak Romanian fluently, can you tell me how and where I can purchase the book about the Jews of Dorohoi and vicinity in Romanian. How much does it cost?
Yasher koah on a great job! Shana Tova to you and all our readers.
Bruno Segal
4021 N. 40 Ave.
Hollywood, FL 33021

EDITOR’S NOTE: Information about the Dorohoi book, if copies are still available, can be obtained by writing to David Shlomo, president, Society of Descendants of Dorohoi and Surroundings, P.O.B. 134, Kiriath Bialik 27101 Israel.

WANTS INFO ABOUT GUTTERMANS, MAMALIGA
Your message on Jewish Genealogy on Fidonet didn't mention the cost of joining ROM-SIG. While I haven't done too much work on them, I am interested in Guttermann family which originated in Bucharest and immigrated in the mid 1880s (I think), settling in NYC where their daughter, Clara, my grandmother, was born in 1898.
I also have to know the truth about mamaliga.
Peter Zavon
30 Woodline Dr.,
Penfield, NY 14526-2414

HEARD ABOUT ROM-SIG ON INTERNET
Found your post on Internet in Israel. Jewishgen. Please send me information on subscribing to your publication and tracing Romanian genealogies.
My family on my father's side is originally from Focsani with an alleged name of Rivonson, ribonson or something similar, eventually changed to Robinson. Should you have any information on this name or town in particular, that would be welcome. My uncle has been researching our family tree for some time but we have little information on this branch.
Richard A. Robinson
2 Stern Grove Court
San Francisco, CA 94132

DOES YAD VASHEM HAVE E-MAIL ADDRESS?
At least four members of our Wind family from Braila are listed in Who's Who in World Jewry so far. I also looked in the Yad Vashem index and saw that the man who wrote the article about Braila during the Holocaust is a Z. Sommer. My great-grandfather Wind had a twin brother and other siblings that I would be interested in finding.
Do you know how I can get copies of the records from Yad Vashem or find out who the author of the article is. Is there an E-Mail address to Yad Vashem in Israel?
Dr. Phillip J. Leonard
7400 Stonecliff Cove
Austin, TX 78731
internet: mike@order.ph.utexas.edu

DISCOVERS ROM-SIG COVERS BUKOVINA
I didn't realize that ROM-SIG has been dealing with Bukovina. Maybe you need to publicize that more. I've had many letters and checks (which I've returned) from people wanting to join Gesher Galicia because they assumed we covered Bukovina. Had I known about your focus, I certainly would have referred people. Today I referred someone and will do so in the future.
I'll also put a note in the next issue of our newsletter.
Suzan Wynne
Gesher Galicia
3128 Brooklawn Terrace
Chevy Chase, MD 20815

EDITOR’S NOTE: In case any of our readers weren't aware, Suzan publishes The Galitzianer, an excellent journal that covers some of the territory that has overlapped ours from time to time in history. I heartily recommend subscribing, if any of your interests lie in that part of Europe that includes Austria-Hungary and a part of Poland. Some Romanian records might possibly be located in that area.
Jewish records in Iasi reveal 'Sudits' of Romania
Continued from Page 15

Vacaru: No. But you can just write me care of these archives.
Pascal: And your title?
Vacaru: Professor. [in Romanian, "Profesor"]

Professor Silviu Vacaru
Filiala Archivelor Statului judetul Iasi
Oras-Iasi
ROMANIA

Pascal: Thank you for everything.

In my telephone conversation with Odette today, she told me that nothing has happened to date regarding the two leads for possible research at the State Archives in Iasi. She promised to bring me more information when she comes to New York in October.

Costs higher than expected, Annual dues raised to $20
Blame it on increased printing costs or more than expected expenses in trying to locate researchers in Romania, but it has been necessary to increase annual ROM-SIG NEWS subscriptions to $20 a year effective immediately.

Renewals received before Oct. 1 were allowed at the old rate, but any new subscriptions or renewals after Oct. 1st will be at the new rate.

We are hopeful that costs can be contained at this level for the foreseeable future. Our efforts will continue to bring to our readers the best possible materials available.

ROM-SIG joins special federation
ROM-SIG is one of first Jewish or Romanian genealogical groups to join the Federation of Eastern European Family History Societies (FEEFHS), a relatively new multi-national organization whose objective is to serve all ethnic and religious groups and genealogists with ancestors in Eastern Europe.

Prime focus of FEEFHS (pronounced "feifs") is on the parts of Eastern Europe settled or controlled by two or more ethnic groups and where modern border changes have occurred.

Among some of the benefits will be resource lists for special tasks such as interpreting, etc. More details will be announced as they become available.