

*Where We Lived*

**44th IAJGS International Conference  
on Jewish Genealogy**

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# **JewishGen Bessarabia SIG Research Meeting**

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# Bessarabia on a map of Europe





# Bessarabia Special Interest Group (SIG) – history and projects



Bessarabia SIG explores historical region of Bessarabia and part of Moldova Republic which is on the left bank of Dniester River – Transnistria unrecognized territory.

**Bessarabia** is combination of **Yellow** and **Purple**

**Republic of Moldova** is combination of **Yellow** and **Green**

**Pridnestrovie (Transnistria)** is **Green**  
**Purple** - parts of Ukraine

# Brief geography and history of the region

1812 – Russian Empire occupied this land after Russia-Turkey war and Bucharest agreement.

For more than 100 years it was part of the Russian Empire, and in December of 1917 the area established a national assembly which proclaimed the **Moldavian Democratic Republic**, but in April of 1918 legislative body voted for unification with Romania. It was under Romanian rule until 1940, when it was occupied by the Soviet Union, see Molotov-Ribbentrop pact of 1939.

1941 Romanian and German army invaded the region, until Soviets took it back in 1944. After that Bessarabia was under Soviet Union control, and South and North parts were added to Ukraine Soviet Republic and the rest to Moldova Soviet Republic.

# Brief geography and history of the region

## Brief history of Jews in Bessarabia

**1812** – only 5,000 families or 20,000 Jews lived in Bessarabia. In less than 100 years, in **1897** Jewish population had grown to 225,000, 11.7% of total population.

**1903** – pogrom in Kishinev. 47 Jews killed, 424-wounded. In 1903 and 1904 there were **20 pogroms** in Bessarabia towns.

More about Jewish history you may hear in sessions at the symposium or at many articles from the resource guide. Here is one of them:

<https://www.jewishgen.org/Bessarabia/files/HistoryOfJewsInBessarabia15-19c.pdf>

## **Bessarabia Special Interest Group (SIG) – history and projects**

Bessarabia SIG was organized in 2011, at the IAJGS conference in Washington. Before 2011, Bessarabia was part of RomSIG.

About 15 years Bob Wascou (z"l) started and administered a large Bessarabia Vital Records project. We continue to work on this project.

We are receiving Vital records directly from Kishinev, we are waiting for records for 1923

We started many other projects since 2011.

## Bessarabian databases

Yefim Kogan

as of June 2024

added in June 2024

Bessarabia Vital Records	<a href="#">Bessarabia Birth Records</a>	Bessarabia	106,824	2,483	
	<a href="#">Bessarabia Marriage and Divorce Records</a>	Bessarabia	33,636	888	
	<a href="#">Bessarabia Death Records</a>	Bessarabia	43,975	2,259	
Revision Lists	<a href="#">Bessarabia Revision Lists</a>	Bessarabia	286,296	12,137	
	<a href="#">Tiraspol uezd Revision Lists</a>	Moldova	7,801		
Business Directories	<a href="#">Bessarabia Business Directory 1924</a>	Bessarabia	13,144		
	<a href="#">Vsya Rossiya Business Directory for Bessarabia</a>	Bessarabia	2,618		
	<a href="#">1916 Kishinev Business Directory</a>	Bessarabia	651		
	<a href="#">1940 Chisinau Commercial Yearbook</a>	Bessarabia	1,278		
	<a href="#">1901 Klyachkin Business directory</a>	Bessarabia, Moldova	544		
	<a href="#">Jews Involved In Public Life In Bessarabia</a>	Bessarabia	2,431		
	<a href="#">Surviving Jews in Bessarabia, After WWII</a>	Bessarabia	1,782		
Holocaust	<a href="#">Book of Memory - Moldovan Victims of Soviet Oppression 1941-1951</a>	Bessarabia, Moldova	3,847		
	<a href="#">Răutel Camp Listings</a>	Bessarabia, Moldova	2,070		
	<a href="#">Jews Killed in Dubossary, Moldova / Transnistria</a>	Bessarabia, Moldova	758		
	<a href="#">Leova Mayoral Election List 18 May 1937</a>	Bessarabia	1,929		
	<a href="#">Mass Deportation from Moldova 13-16 June 1941</a>	Bessarabia, Moldova	2,517		
	<a href="#">Lists of Romanian Jews from Bucovina and Bessarabia</a>	Romania, Bessarabia, Moldova	2,420		
	<a href="#">The JewishGen Yizkor Book Master Name Index - Bessarabia</a>	Bessarabia	1,512		
	<a href="#">The JewishGen Yizkor Book Necrology Database - Bessarabia</a>	Bessarabia	5,958		
	JOWBR	<a href="#">JewishGen Online Worldwide Burial Registry - Bessarabia</a>	Bessarabia	73,764	
	Other databases	<a href="#">Russian Jewish Fallen Soldiers of WWI - Bessarabia</a>	Bessarabia	1,559	
<a href="#">1921 Jewish Refugees at Romanian Border</a>		Bessarabia	445		
<a href="#">Bessarabia Duma Voters List</a>		Bessarabia	128,148		
<a href="#">Miriam Weiner Routes to Roots Collection: Bessarabia Records</a>		Bessarabia	4,884		

Here is a link to this list:

<https://www.jewishgen.org/bessarabia/files/databases/BessarabiaAsOf2024June.pdf>

Every database has a link to its Introductory pages.

# What we did from July 2023 to July 2024

(two uploads to JewishGen database)

**Vital records:** **8,101** records

**Revision Lists:** **21,428** records for **4,557** families

**Cemeteries:** **Klishkivtsi New cemetery** - **261** burial records with **77** images

**Kaushany** – Old Jewish cemetery, **DEMOLISHED** - **31 records**

**Kaushany** – New Jewish cemetery, **DEMOLISHED** - **50 records with**

**10 images** collected from family members, also included Jews killed in town in 1941 (report is available now, JOWBR will add records in December, 2024)

**Vertuzhany** – Jewish cemetery was photographed, but not yet indexed

**Gershunovka** – Jewish cemetery was photographed, but not yet indexed

**Kishinev and Beltsy** cemeteries are in progress



## **Thanks to all Volunteers of Bessarabia SIG**

**We have a terrific group of Volunteers - dedicated people who are working hard on our multiple projects.**

**Without Volunteers our research and progress would be very limited.**

**Thank you very much!**

# What is next for Bessarabia SIG

**Revision Lists** – I am retiring from Project Leader of this project. We need 1 or 2 people co-lead to continue with the project

**Vital records** – this project is the oldest for our Bessarabia SIG, and in order to speed it up we need more translators from Romanian (after 1918 most of the records written in Romanian), and also someone who can do “second” readings.

**Here is what we received in June of 2023 and no one was interested to work on them:**

1. Family lists of Merchants of Yassy (Beltsy) uezd, 1874... there records for Beltsy and Skulyany
2. Information about foreigners who live in Soroki uezd, 1881
3. List of Jews from Kishinev who did not receive Romanian citizenship, 1939

# What is next for Bessarabia SIG

This one might be of interest to Ukraine SIG

4. Jewish census of out-of-town Jews registered in Bessarabia in 1875 and temporary lived in

- Balta and Balta uezd of Podolia gubernia
- Mogilev uezd
- Tiraspol and Tiraspol uezd, Kherson gubernia
- Ananiev uezd, Kherson gubernia
- Odessa uezd,
- Elisavetgrad uezd
- Olgopol uezd
- Taganrog
- others

# What is next for Bessarabia SIG

- **Archives.** Finding more Jewish records at the Kishinev, Soroki, Czernovits, Kherson archives, and acquire them.
- **Cemetery Projects.**
  - Continuing photograph gravestones and indexing of Kishinev and Beltsy Jewish cemeteries
  - Index Vertuzheny Jewish Cemetery.
  - Ryshkany, Beltsy uezd, about 100
  - Kremenchug, Soroki uezd, about 20 tombstones remained
  - Tsybulyovka, Transnistria. It seems demolished cemetery, but there are some parts of stones on the ground.
  - Onitskany, Kishinev uezd. Cemetery was demolished, but there are 4 stones laid on the ground.



# What is next for Bessarabia SIG

- **Destroyed Cemeteries.** Start working on a new initiative – collect names of Jews who were buried in DESTROYED Jewish Cemeteries. That project was started, and we want to continue it
- **Yizkor Books.** Initiate more Yizkor Books translations:
  - “**The Jews in Bessarabia. Between the World Wars 1914-1940**” (Tel Aviv, 1973) – book is three quarters translated!
  - “**Upon the Land of Bessarabia; Studies, Memoirs, Articles, Documents and Essays Depicting its Image**” Tel Aviv, 1959. **Not translated!**
  - Many more books waiting to be translated.

To accomplish this project, we need to find more volunteer translators from Hebrew.

## What is next for Bessarabia SIG

- **KehilaLinks websites.** We have KehilaLinks websites for 19 towns/shtetlakh in Moldova and 7 in Ukraine.
- For many large towns we do not have a KehilaLink website. For example: **Lipkany, Kagul, Rashkov, Vad Rashkov, Soroki, etc.**
- We need a person who will oversees all Bessarabia/Transnistria Kehila Links websites.
- Our Bessarabia/Transnistria region should have at least **100+** **KehilaLinks websites.** If anyone wants to help, please contact me.

## **What is next for Bessarabia SIG**

- **Business Directories.** Find more Business directories for Bessarabia or excerpt information from All Russia Business directories for Bessarabia we did not have yet.
- **Expand Gallery of Famous Jews:**
  - 122 writers
  - 48 Painters, Sculptors, Architects
  - 93 Composers, Singers, Actors
  - 18 Scientists
  - 12 Religious leaders

**Any volunteers to continue this work will be much appreciated!**

## What is next for Bessarabia SIG

- **People's stories.** I am sure that every Jewish family has a story to share. We have only 25 stories at our website. I believe it should be **250** or more.
- **Travel Reports.** We have only 10 such reports.
- **Family Trees.** Only 7 at our website.
- **Emigration from Bessarabia stories.** Only 4.

We need a **volunteer** who will publish such stories and encourage our members to send their stories, travel reports, and family trees to our website.



## **Thanks to all Volunteers of Bessarabia SIG**

**As you can see, we have many exciting projects in progress that cannot be accomplished without Volunteers.**

**If today I have convinced 1-2 (I used to write 2-3) new people to come forward to work with us on projects, the conference is a success for me.**

# Bessarabia SIG Meeting

## Resources

### **Main collection of Bessarabia Resources**

<https://www.jewishgen.org/bessarabia/files/conferences/2022/BessarabianResources.pdf>

### **Slides and recordings from Bessarabia SIG Winter Symposium, December 2022**

[https://www.jewishgen.org/bessarabia/PTM\\_Article.asp?id=219](https://www.jewishgen.org/bessarabia/PTM_Article.asp?id=219)

### **Slides from prior JewishGen Conferences, including this one**

[https://www.jewishgen.org/bessarabia/PTM\\_ArticleList.asp?attid=16&ord=D](https://www.jewishgen.org/bessarabia/PTM_ArticleList.asp?attid=16&ord=D)

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**Q & A**

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