

There are some major challenges to genealogy research in Romanian Moldova, as opposed to, say, limitrophe areas like (Russian) Bessarabia or (Austrian) Bucovina:

- a) Extreme “fluidity” of Surnames: while use of surnames was legalized from 1860s, in practice for most of the 19th century and in some cases as late as 1948, Jews used surnames, which varied, from record to record and within same family and from year to year. Same person may have been registered, say, with a German/Yiddish surname, with a Romanian occupational name, with a traditional Jewish X son/daughter of Y, with some specific Romanian toponymic or a specific Romanian patronymic or matronymic.
- b) Lack of Census input data forms: while country-wide censuses were done every 10 years since 1859 the only ones preserved are from after 1930. There are a few specific in several places or for foreign subjects but offer in general limited information.
- c) The non standard type for civil records (B M D): while their content has been stated in the 1866 Civil Code, the records are in a narrative form, where the order of information varies from place to place and from year to year. This, and the use of many archaic, fallen of use words, makes the work of transcribing the records much more complicated than for places where the data is in a Fixed format. However, there is a particular advantage of Romanian Births and sometimes Marriage records where the Civil Office kept them up to date with notations for other events: marriage, emigration, name change, death. Obviously such information is lost in case one accesses the Archives developed index (not always available or correct).
- d) Civil records started in 1865/66 only: the community kept records (metrical) have been preserved only for limited years and places. Also they contain bare-bones information. I also note that civil records are NOT separated by religion so in order to find Jewish records one has to look thru at least twice and in many case multiple times pages of registers.
- e) LDS Church has not been allowed to access and copy records. As a result there has been almost no information online on major genealogical sites like Ancestry and Family Search. At the time our group started the research in 2008 or so, the only collections available on Jewishgen were some Cemetery Burial records and the 1942 Jewish Males Census. More recently Jewishgen has acquired civil records form several places.

Due to all these factors, serious genealogical research which attempts to find information for an extended family, as important data may be revealed only that way, has to employ a specific methodology we have developed:

- a) Acquire ALL the civil records
- b) Transcribe the Jewish records using forms specifically designed to capture all significant data to allow a comprehensive search
- c) Generate a database and a specific search engine allowing to search multiple places via very flexible search keys.