

# ROM-SIG NEWS

## JEWISH GENEALOGICAL SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP FOR ROMANIA

### ROMANIAN JEWS IN 19th & Early 20th CENTURIES

Studies in the History of Rumanian Jews in the Nineteenth and the Beginning of the Twentieth Centuries was written for YIVO (Yiddish Scientific Institute) in 1944 by Dr. Joseph Kissman. It is chock-full of detailed descriptions and analysis of Jewish living conditions, motivations, immigration patterns, values, and social movements, from the period that is being researched by many of the readers of this newsletter. Since it is written in Yiddish, ROM-SIG News has translated excerpts that may help some readers flesh out the story behind the dates in their family history:

"...The loss of civil rights by Jews in Romania was a direct result of official government and ruling class antisemitism. Antisemitism was not a PEOPLE's movement in old Romania...  
...Peasants and Jews worked and lived side by side daily in the towns and villages, but there was no direct economic competition between them. Because Romania remained a feudal country even into the first world war, the overriding social antagonism on the part of the landless peasants was toward the landed gentry (boyars), not the Jews...



Part of a "Feess-geher" group  
bidding farewell at their town cemetery

"Jews were first pushed into the role of "aliens" after the Berlin Treaty of 1878, in which, ironically, Romania agreed (in Art. 44) to give Jews full civil and political equal

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INSERT:  
MEMBER QUESTIONNAIRE

#### MAILING INFO

Send dues (\$15),  
family names and  
towns researched, cor-  
rections & additions,  
articles about research  
successes and disappoint-  
ments, questionnaire  
answers, etc. to

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# TRANSLATION OF ROMANIAN

Researchers into family history in Romania sometimes find themselves with a document done entirely in longhand, either because it was requested and transcribed before the invention of (or access to) photocopiers, or because forms had not yet been standardized when the life event was first recorded. If you are not familiar with Romanian, this then presents a double problem: besides having to translate the document, you first have to decipher the handwriting. It often has flourishes and peculiarities which Anglophones are not used to--such as u's and w's indistinguishable from n's and m's, z's that look like d's or f's, and so on--and the English-speaking researcher may not have enough acquaintance with Romanian to provide context clues. Even when documents were pre-printed and standardized, the blank spaces were still filled in by hand, by clerks who may themselves have been semi-literate, and who certainly did not intend them to be read by foreigners thousands of miles from Romania, a hundred odd years later, if indeed they cared at all.

I have had to slog my way through such documents, and I offer here one such attempt, with my own (albeit imperfect) "double translation"--first into legible Romanian, then into English. (I, a non-speaker of Romanian, have permitted myself the chutzpah of correcting the clerk's spelling errors!)

Primăria Comunei G. S. S. S. S.

Județul Galați

Extrat

Din Registrul de Nașteri pe anul 1869

N. 2

Act de Naștere

David Pascal  
Religie: Muzare

Din anul Unu mie opt sute șezzeci și unu, luna  
Ianuarie Zina s-a născut ocol de-a drămușilor. --  
Act de publicitate Căminare, proscutată  
într-o d. David Pascal doborâșească  
născut în la ora opt seara Casa parohială  
din strada Pieței. --

Fiu d. David Pascal soț d. Anu David  
și al Ana David soția d. Anu David. --  
După declarația făcută de tatăl. --

Justiciarul Notar Ghelolușă de optzeci și unu  
și dimitește la dușor de patruzeci și unu. --

Com. au subscris acest act după ce li-a  
citat născutul. Cu noi și eu deosebit  
constatăm după lege de noi Petrușcă Justiciarul  
opțional Steiu Ghelolușă la casa parohială unde  
s-a născut. --

Declarația d. David Pascal

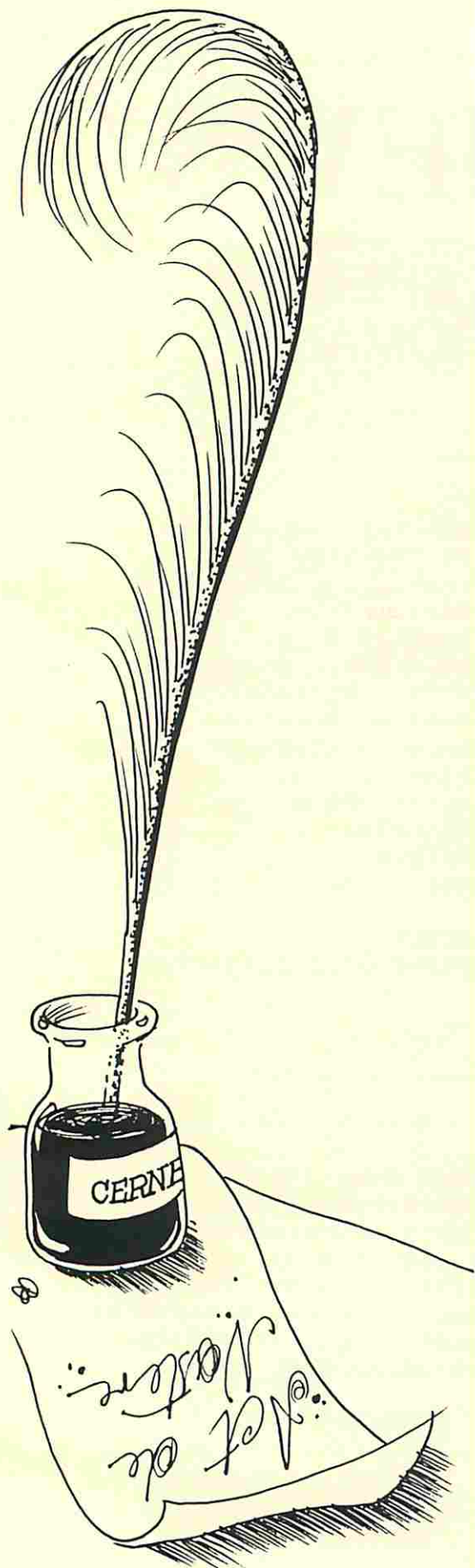
Notar. n. Ghelolușă

n. Dumitru Radușcu

G. S. S. S. S. S. S.

Romania

Primăria Comunei G. S. S. S. S.  
Județul Galați



# BIRTH CERTIFICATES

Primeria Comunei Tg. Ocna  
Judetul Bacau

Extract

Din registrele de nasteri pe anul 1869

No. 2

Act de Nastere

Din anul una mie opt sute sasezeci și nouă, luna Ianuarie ziua șase orele zece dimineata.

Act de publicația casatoriei proiectată (protectată?) între Dl. David Pascal de sex barbătesc nascut in la ora opt seara casa parinților sai din strada Tisești.

Din Dlui. Pascal David de ani treizeci si al Ana David douazeci opt ani.

După declarația facuta de total.--Intâiul martor Golda Sura de optzeci ani si Dimitrie Paduraru de patruzeci ani. Care au subscris acest act după ce li-am cetit împreună cu noi și cu declarantul constatat după lege de noi Petrarchi Antonescu, ofițerul stărei civile la casa parinților un de ne -am transportat.

Declarant sig. Pascal David

Mortori sig. Golda Sura

sig. Dimitrie Paduraru

J. 12-Civile sig. P. Antonescu

România

Primaria Comunei Tg. Ocna

Județul Bacău

Town Hall of the Municipality of Tîrgu Ocna (lit. "market of the saltmines")

District of Bacău

Extract

From the register of births for the year 1869

(Book) No. 2

Certificate of Birth

From the year one thousand eight hundred sixty (and) nine, the month of January, sixth day, hour of ten in the morning.

Published certificate of marriage (sic. I am assuming this is either a clerical error or that a marriage certificate was required to validate the legitimacy of the birth.--Ed.) projected onto (or, protecting?) Master David Pascal, sex male, born at the hour of eight in the evening, in the parental home on Tisești Street.

From (i.e., born to) Mr. Pascal David, thirty years old, and Ana David, twenty-eight years old.

Following the declaration made by the father: First witness, Golda Sura, eighty years old; and Dimitrie Padoraru, forty years; who have signed this document, according to which it is binding; together with us and with the declarant (testifier) making a statement according to the law. From us, Petrarch Antonescu, officer of the Civil County Court, one of us has dispatched this to the parental home.

The declarant: sealed (or signed), Pascal David

Witnesses: signed, Golda Sura

Signed, Dimitrie Paduraru

12th Civil District (?): signed, P. Antonescu

Romania

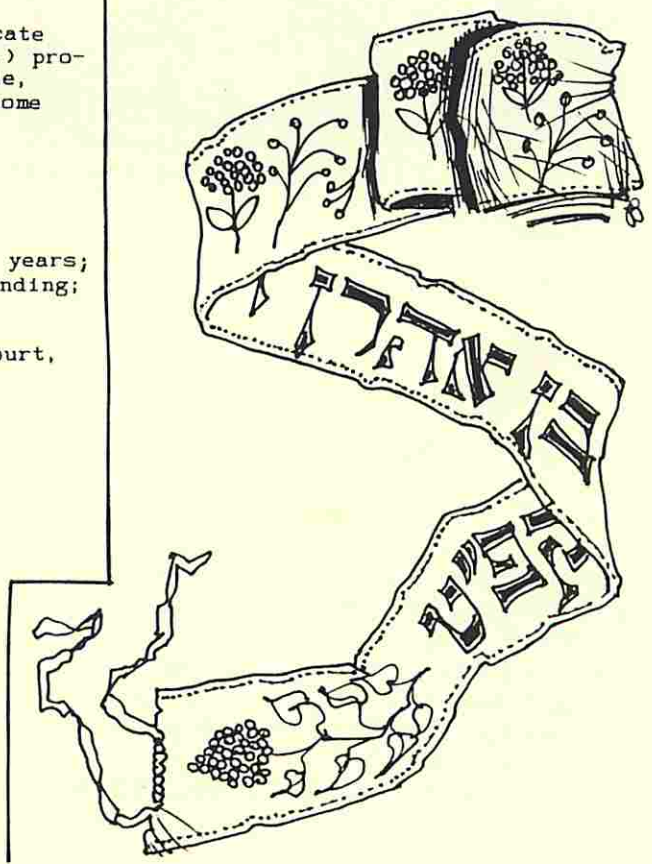
Town Hall of the Munic. of Tîrgu Ocna

District of Bacău

This "double translation", even if imperfect, may help others with similar documents, but it leaves at least two mysteries which are particular to this example, and which no translating can clarify. First: it appears that David Pascal was born on January 6, 1869, at 10 a.m. Further down we learn that he was actually born at 8 p.m. We must therefore

assume that the first date and time refer to the registration of birth, rather than the birth itself. Unfortunately, the clerk, so meticulous to enter David Pascal's TIME of birth did not bother to record his DATE of birth--it can't have been the same day as registration, since registration was in the morning and the birth was in the evening. And the second mystery: how is it that David Pascal was born to Pascal David? Was this yet another clerical error? I used to think so. The answer brings up the whole topic of Jewish given names and surnames in Romania, a discussion begun elsewhere in this issue.

A final note: recently discovered relatives suggest that Ana was 15 years old when she married Pascal David, aged thirty or so, an age difference of at least fifteen years, in contrast to the birth certificate, which gives them a two year age spread. That her son David was the oldest or second oldest of fifteen children seems to give credibility to the family legend as opposed to the official document; a photograph of the couple in later life appears to be that of a woman of middle age and a man in old age, further supporting the legend over the "hard data". The familiar moral: be prepared to question the accuracy of Romanian documents. Jews had plenty of good reasons to have to fudge the truth to the authorities. (See article: Romanian Jews in 19th & Early 20th Centuries.) ●



David Pascal  
Religie Mozaica

David Pascal  
Mosaic Religion

# MAPS OF ROMANIA

&

# ITS TOWNS

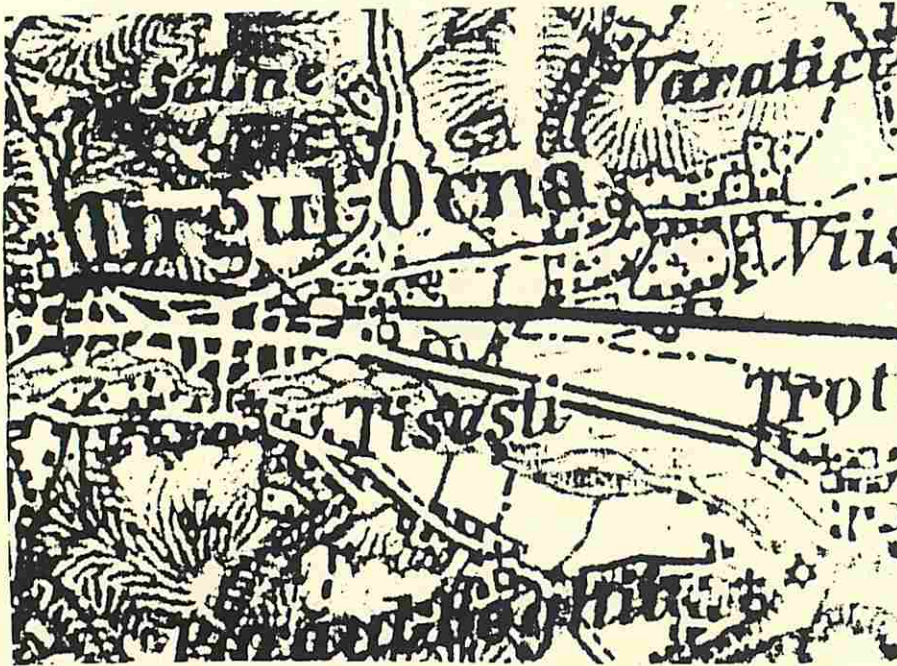
Last issue ROM-SIG News included a town plan of Iași, and a map of Romania in which the Jewish Communities and congregations were featured. This issue, we offer FOUR maps, three specialized ones of Romania and one which isn't quite a town plan, but is headed in that direction.

The three Romanian maps contain the following: (a) Waves of Jewish Immigration to Romania from 7th to 19th Centuries C.E.; (b) Sizes of Jewish Settlements in Romania prior to World War I; (c) Cities, Towns and Villages

and the Provinces to which they Belong. There is one "catch" to maps a and b. They are mainly in Hebrew! It proved to be too difficult to re-do the maps in English for this issue; however, English or Romanian transliteration (perhaps a little ragged) was added or substituted in some places, to give you a hand.

The "almost" town plan is a work in progress, and a potential vehicle for other researchers. Many villages in Romania have no street maps available, making it difficult for us get a sense of the physical environment in which our ancestors lived; the villages were probably too small to bother mapping. But area maps, if the scale is big enough, can often provide us with a lot of information that a town map does.

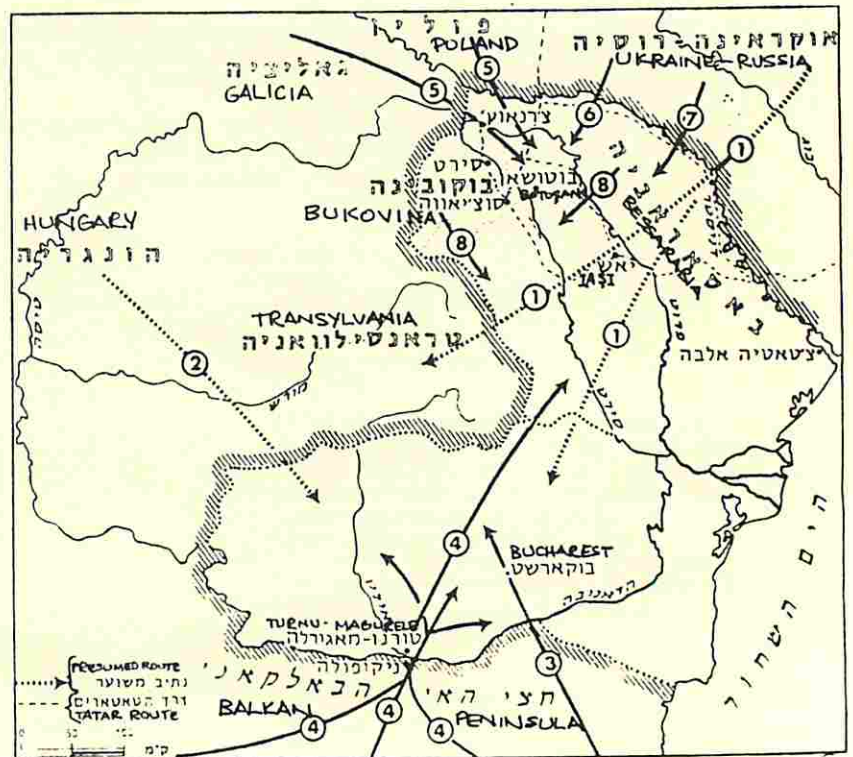
The current example, in which Tirgu Ocna is featured, was part of an area map found at the New York Public Library, Map Division. Up on a ladder provided by the librarian (!) I photographed the area that included Tirgu Ocna, on the huge map below me on the table, using a magnifying filter on my lens. I later enlarged the photo on a photocopier. The results actually show the layout of the streets! And not far from town a Star of David indicates the location of the cemetery. Just north of town, the word "saline" (saltworks) confirms the family legend that a saltmine existed just outside of town. My next step will be to find a way to identify the street names. Perhaps with luck the streets mentioned on my grandparents' birth certificates will show up on this make-shift "town plan".



TIRGU OCNA and Vicinity

Map (a)

- 1 Kuzaris in 7th Century C.E.
- 2 Expulsion of Jews from Hungary 1367
- 3 "Romanitus" or "Romantis" from Romania, 15th Century
- 4 Sephardic exiles, by way of the Balkans
- 5 From Poland and Galicia, 15th to 17th Centuries
- 6 17th Century
- 7 19th Century
- 8 Expulsion of Jews from Bessarabia and Bukovina after their accession to Austria and Russia



Map (b)

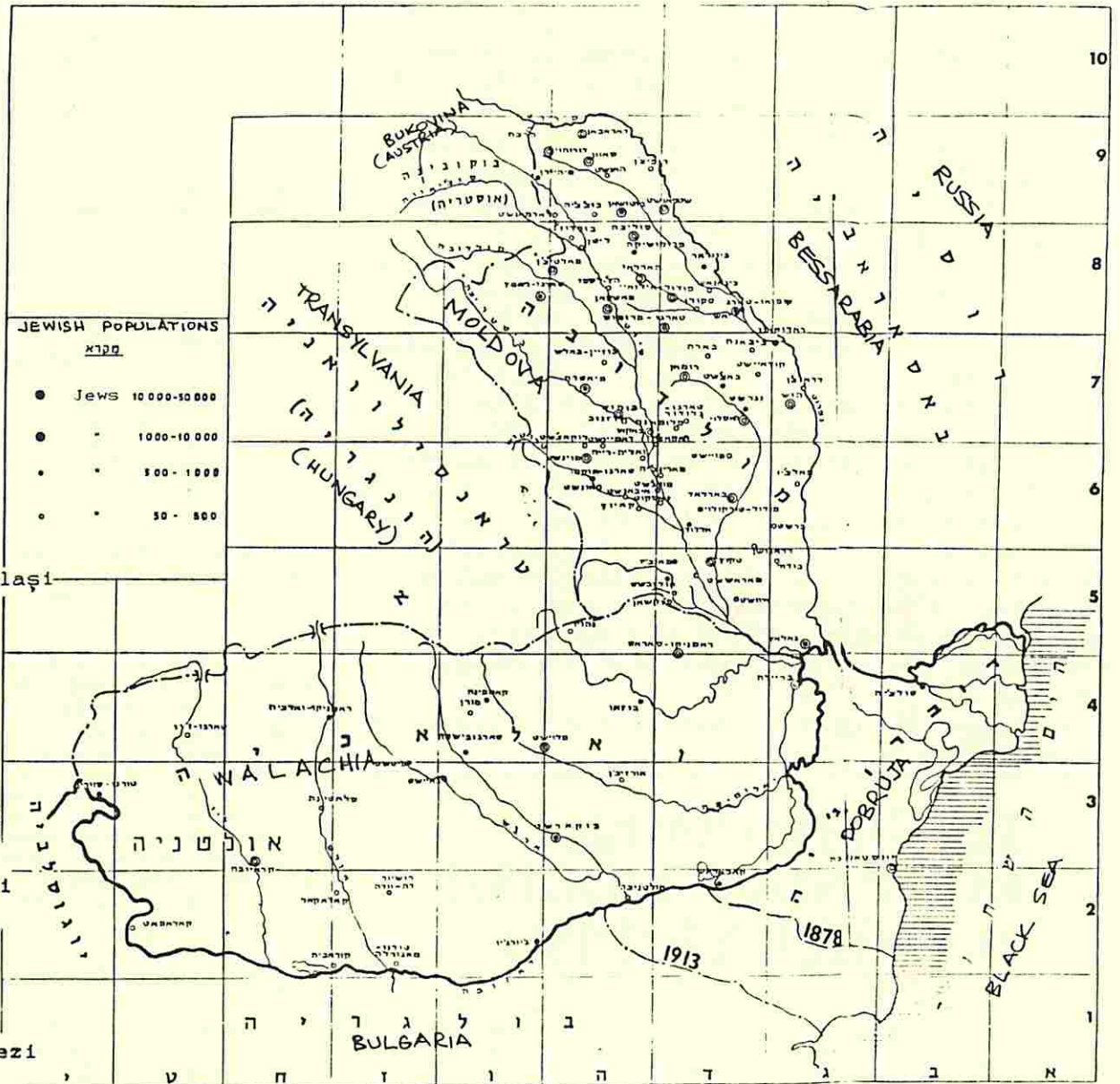
PRE -  
WORLD WAR I

TOWNS

- 6/ד אדז'וד Adjud
- 5/ד אדובשט Odobești
- 2/ה אולטניצה Oltanița
- 6/ה אונשט Onești
- 3/ה אורז'ין Urziceni
- 6/ה איבאנשט Ibanești
- 5/ד איושט Ivești
- 7/ד באצ'שט Bacești
- 7/ה באקאו Bacău
- 7/ד בארה Bara
- 6/ד בארלאד Bîrlad
- 7/ה בוהוש Buhuși
- 4/ה בוזאו Buzău
- 5/ג בוז'ור Buzor
- 7/ה בוז'ין-באלש Buzein-Balași
- 9/ה בוטושאן Botoșani
- 9/ה בוצ'צ'יה Bucecea
- 3/ה בוקארשט Bucharest
- 9/ה בורדו'ן Bordoiani
- 8/ד ביולאר Bivolari
- 4/ג בריילה Braila
- 6/ג ברשט Braești
- 3/ו גאישט Gaiesti
- 5/ג גאלאץ Galați
- 2/ו ג'ורג'יו Gheorghiu
- 6/ה דאמינשט Damienști
- 9/ה דארבאן Darabani
- 9/ו דארמאנשט Darmanești
- 9/ו דורוה'ו Dorohoi
- 6/ה דראג'ושן Drăgășani
- 7/ג דראנצ'ין Drănceni
- 9/ה האנשט Hanești
- 8/ה הארלאו Hîrlău
- 7/ג הש Huși
- 8/ה ה'לספו Haci-Lespezi
- 9/ו הרצה Hirța
- 6/ה ואלה-ראיה Valeia-Raia
- 7/ד ואסל'ה Vaslui
- 6/ה טארגו-אוקנה Tîrgu-Ocna
- 4/ה טארגובישט Tîrgoviște
- 7/ד טארגו-גלודור Târgu-Galodori
- 4/ס טארגו-ז'יו Tîrgu-Jiu
- 8/ה טארגו-ניאמץ Tîrgu-Neamț
- 8/ד טארגו-פרומוס Tîrgu-Frumos
- 4/ב טולצ'יה Tulcea
- 2/ו טורנו-מאגורלה Turnu-Magurele
- 3/ו טורנו-סברין Turnu-Severin
- 5/ד טעק' Tecuci
- 8/ד יאש Iași
- 8/ה ליטן Litani
- 5/ד מאראששט Marașești
- 6/ה מוינשט Moinești
- 4/ו מורן Murani
- 9/ו מיהילן Mihaileni
- 7/ד נג'רשט Negrești
- 5/ה נהו'יו Nehoiu
- 9/ה סאנון Saveni
- 6/ד סאקוט Săcuti

JEWISH POPULATIONS

מקרא	
●	Jews 10 000-30 000
●	1000-10 000
●	500 - 1000
●	50 - 500



- 8/ה סוליצה Solița
- 3/ה סלאטינה Slatina
- 8/ד סקלון Seculeni
- 8/ה פאלטיצ'ין Falticeni
- 6/ג פאלצ'יו Falciu
- 5/ד פאנצ'יו
- 6/ד פאר'ינצ'יה Parința
- 8/ה פאשקאן Pașcani
- 8/ד פודו-ילוה'י Podu-Iloaiei
- 6/ד פודו-טורקול'ו Podu-Turcului
- 6/ד פוינעש'ט (?) Poieniști
- סולטשט
- 6/ה פונג'שט Pungești
- 5/ד פוקשאן Focșani
- 7/ה פיאטרה-ניאמץ Piatra-Neamț
- 3,2/ו פיטשט Pitești
- 4/ה פלויש'ט Ploiești
- 7/ד פלופאנה Plopana
- 8/ה פרומשיקה Promușica
- 7/ד צ'יבאנה Țibana

- 8/ד ז'יגאנאש Țiganași
- 6/ה קאיוץ Caiuți
- 2/ד קאלאראש Calarași
- 2/ס קאלאפאט Calafat
- 4/ו קאמפ'ינה Campina
- 2/ו קאראקאל Caracal
- 7/ד קדאיישט Codaesti
- 3,2/ב קונסטאנצה Constanța
- 8/ד קופאו-טארג Cupou-Târg
- 2/ו קוראביה Corabia
- 3/ח קראיובה Craiova
- 7/ד ראדוקאנו Raducaneni
- 4/ה ראמניקו-וואלצ'יה Ramenico-Valecia
- 5,4/ד ראמניקו-סאראט Ramenico-Sarati
- 6/ה ראקאצ'יון Racacion
- 7/ה רוזנוב Roznov
- 7/ד רוטאן Roman
- 2/ו רושיור-דה-וידה Roșiori-de-Vede
- 9/ה ריפ'יץ Ripiciani
- 7/ה ס'טפאנש'ט Ștefanești

Continued p. 8

# ROMANIAN-JEWISH NAMES

My father's maternal grandmother was always known, he told me, as Zelda Izenfeld. My father, a "kohen" (hereditary priest in Judaism), had always respected the tradition of the kohen and never entered a cemetery, and so he had never visited her grave (she is buried on this side of the Atlantic). Had he done so, he would have been surprised to see her name on the stone spelled "Eisenfeld". In fact, when told this was so, he WAS surprised, but insisted the family had always spelled it "Izenfeld". Such "conflicts" are nothing new to genealogists. This is why Soundex was invented, after all. So it is not so unusual that on the stone of Zelda's son Abraham, whose grave lay next to hers and who died within three years of her, the name was spelled yet a third way--"Isenfeld". But the discovery that, on my father's mother's Romanian birth certificate, there is no mention of "Izenfeld" by ANY spelling, not for Zelda the mother, her newborn daughter, nor the father, intrigued me. It also led to some interesting discoveries that have more general application.

## YIDDISH NAMES: ROMANIAN YIDDISH VS. OTHER YIDDISH

Yiddish given names appearing in vital documents of Romanian Jews are sometimes more obscure to modern researchers than they need to be. One obstacle is a lack of familiarity with Yiddish sound patterns in general and with the Romanian pronunciation of Yiddish in particular. This article will attempt to make the obscure more familiar, by presenting a kind of primer to the Yiddish and Romanian-Yiddish sound patterns.

The Yiddish language, which is approximately nine hundred years old, has about four main dialects, with some sub-dialects, none of which is "more correct" than any other. However, certain informal standardization took place over time, particularly in the decades around the turn of this century, when mass migrations caused admixtures of accents and when, at the same time, Yiddish literature was, ironically, at its height. Impetus to this standardization was given by the Yiddish Scientific Institute (YIVO) of Vilna and later New York, which adopted a form of the Lithuanian (Litvak) dialect as the "standard". The other dialects include Western Yiddish (basically west of Poland), central Yiddish (most of Poland), and southeastern Yiddish, of which Romanian Yiddish is a sub-category, but which also includes the Yiddish spoken in Ukraine, eastern Galicia and south-east Poland.

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Here is the pertinent information I found on the birth certificate:

Given Name: Feiga Ruhla  
Surname: Itigu sin Avram  
Daughter of: Itigu sin Avram  
And of: S--?-a Itigu sin Avram

I was fairly sure that the illegible given name of the mother on this document was "Selda" (Zelda), but this "Itigu sin Avram", repeated three times in three different contexts, presented a few problems.

What was I to make of this "It-ee-goo", for starters? The "u" ending is an inflexion, or grammatical ending, used on some masculine nouns in Romanian, like in the names Ceausescu and Lupu, and was therefore not part of the root word. The letters "g" and "b", when appearing at the end of words in most European languages, are pronounced like their unvoiced counterparts, i.e., "k" and "p", so the entire "goo" syllable boils down to a simple "k". And finally, the "t" in "Itigu" has an accent mark underneath it, which in Romanian gives it the sound "ts". And so "It-ee-goo" was transformed into "Itsik".

What about the middle word, "sin". In Romanian, "sin" and "sina" mean "breast" and "rail", respectively. Neither of these makes sense here, unless I was to assume that "sin Avram" meant something like "the bosom of Abraham", a reference perhaps to being Jewish or to being a child of Abraham. These were long shots. And I was sure the child's father was not named Abraham, because her BROTHER was named Abraham. (Romanian Jews, like most Ashkenazi Jews, did not name children after their parents, or in fact after anyone still living.)

This word was equally a puzzle to Romanian speakers to whom I showed the document. If the Romanian word "sin" had been related linguistically to the English word "son" and the German "sohn", then we might have something. But the word for "son" in Romanian is "fiu".

Eventually, the obvious dawned on me. The word "sin" wasn't Romanian, it was Yiddish! The obvious had been obscure to me, because the word "sin" or "zin" in "standard" Yiddish means "sons", a plural which certainly didn't fit here. The singular for "son" would be "soon" or "zoon". However, in the ROMANIAN dialect of Yiddish, an "oo" becomes an "i", "soon" becomes "sin", and "sin" means "son".

Since I now understood that Itigu sin Avram was Itsik son of Avram, it seemed clear that for Romanians, or at least Romanian Jews of that time and region (1868 Moldavia), the name of the "head of the household" in its ENTIRETY, doubled as a surname for all the other members of the household. Feiga Ruhla Itsik son of Avram was my grandmother's full name BECAUSE Itsik son of Avram was her father's name. Another variant I have seen omits the "son of" reference, i.e., "Feiga Ruhla Itsik Avram." Yet another version drops the father's given name as well, as on my grandmother's marriage certificate, where she

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# PILGRIMAGE TO ROMANIA

MY FIRST VISIT TO MY  
GRANDFATHERS TOWN

by Arye Barkai

In 1967 I took a leave of absence from my job to travel. I flew to Portugal, the westernmost part of Europe and began an eastward trek that would eventually take me to Afghanistan.

Halfway between Lisbon and Kabul was Istanbul. Istanbul was the city of my imagination --not only because of its fantastic skyline of minarets and mosques, or because it straddled two continents. Istanbul was part of my family heritage. No, I am not Sefardi, although when I was young I believed I was.

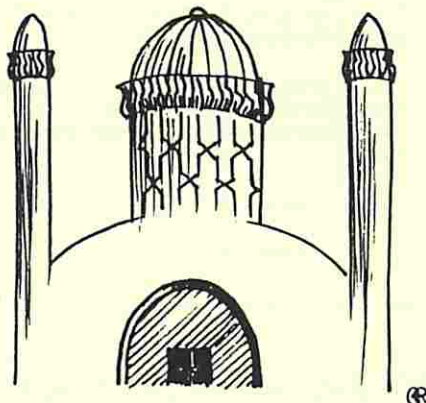
My father's father was born in Vaslui, Romania, where he was employed as an accountant by an Italian stonecutting firm. My grandfather often got a free trip to Istanbul (Constantinople, to many people before the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire) on the company ship. When my grandfather eventually settled in Canada and began his family, he told his son stories of fabulous Istanbul--its music, its cuisine, its history. His son, my father, passed those stories on to me.

Somehow, with the stories of Romania and Turkey, I got the idea that I was Sefardi. I believed that my ancestors were among those Jews expelled from Spain, welcomed to Turkey and settled in Moldavia, a province of the Ottoman Empire.

Exhausted from the long trip across Europe, I stayed with a Moslem Turkish family who had befriended me. The parents couldn't speak English and I began learning Turkish. After all, it was part of MY heritage, too. My father, a furrier, also told me stories about Afghanistan that his Central Asian furrier friends had related to him. To visit Afghanistan was also in my plans, but to cross Turkey, Iran and Afghanistan would be an exhausting trip. Airplane fares were not part of my budget. I looked at my map and saw that Vaslui was not that far from Istanbul. If I could travel by surface to Vaslui from Istanbul in a short amount of time, it would PROVE

that my heritage, at least on my paternal side, was Sefardi rather than Eastern European.

If I had not been able to leave my heavy suitcase with friends I could trust, for an indefinite time, side trips from Istanbul would have been impossible. Historically, before the European discovery of the Western Hemisphere, Istanbul was the strategic center of the Old World. It lay midway between Europe and Asia, and halfway between Russia and the known South. It was the starting point of my side trips.



So, one clear summer morning, I said goodbye to my Turkish family. I carried a single shoulder bag that was light with but a few days' clothing and took a bus for Edirne--Adrianople in history. Edirne was close to the Bulgarian frontier. I walked into Bulgaria and began hitch hiking. With each wave of my hand, a car or truck stopped and took me to another town. I passed Tarnovo, Bulgaria's medieval capital. Then I veered toward Ruse, a town along the Danube River.

I walked over the long bridge that spanned the Danube and set foot on Romanian soil. It was the first time in my life I was in a country where my immigrant grandparents were born. The immigration official asked me if I was transit or tourist. "Transit? Tourist?" he demanded impatiently. How was I to answer him? I was neither transit nor tourist. I was a pilgrim! Finally I

responded with the only phrase in Romanian that I knew (I had memorized it): "Bunicul meo este originar din Vaslui, Romania..." ("My grandfather was born in Vaslui, Romania.") The stern official melted. "Simpati," he said. He passed me on to a truck driver who took me to Bucharest.

In Bucharest I was surprised at the cost of hotels. They were way above my budget; I had left my job several months ago and expected to travel several months more. It seemed that for hotels, Romanians paid one price, while foreigners, with their dollars, paid another. "My grandfather came from Romania," I railed. "Now I know why he left!"

It was better for me to take the all-night train to Vaslui. An English-speaking Romanian helped me buy a ticket. He was amused that I had just arrived in Romania and was going directly to Vaslui. I supposed it was like a European arriving in New York on his first trip to the United States and immediately departing for Oshkosh.

Early in the morning I arrived at the railroad station of Vaslui. "VASLUI", the sign spelled out in large letters--and my first reaction was to photograph the sign. Several people spoke to me and I figured out that they were asking me why I would want to photograph a sign. I knew no Romanian. I answered in the few words of German I had picked up: "Mein grossvater geboren hier."

Finally it came out that I was Jewish and they introduced me to a Jew. I had thought there were no more Jews in Vaslui. I had imagined that after the Holocaust there were no more Jews in any of the places my grandparents were born. The Jew knew no English and I knew no Yiddish. (My parents never taught me Yiddish and I never wanted to learn; after all, my ancestors "were Sefardim".) But it turned out we both spoke Hebrew--I had worked on a kibbutz for six months after completing college.

Continued p. 8

PILGRIMAGE

Continued from p. 7

"It's a good thing you can speak Hebrew or you could never speak to any one here," the man chided. Apparently he was not happy about an American Jew visiting a Communist paradise. He spoke to a swarthy man and then told me that the man was a "tsiganeh", a gypsy. A gypsy! Vaslui seemed to have many gypsies. Perhaps this is why I liked to travel.

"Were the Jews of Vaslui descended from Sefardin?" I asked.

"No!" he answered. "We are Ashkenazim."

"But Vaslui was part of the Turkish Empire," I insisted.

"All the Jews here were Ashkenazim," he said adamantly.

A life-long fantasy was destroyed in one instant. (Much later, back in the comforts of New York, I read in Encyclopedia Judaica that

the Jews of Vaslui were descendants of Russian Jews fleeing the severe Czarist draft laws.)

I told the man that my original paternal family name was Finkelstein, and he introduced me to an elderly couple with that surname. Do you remember the episode of the TV series "Route 66" where the hero, whose origins are unknown, comes to a town, somewhere in the U.S.A., in which everyone has the same eyes as he does? I was reminded of that episode when I met this elderly couple. They resembled people from my father's family.

"What was your father's name?" I asked. The man answered with a name unknown in my family. "And your grandfather's name?" Another unfamiliar name. He did not know my grandfather or great grandfather.

"There, you see, you came to Vaslui for nothing," my interpreter said to me impatiently.

As we left I turned and asked in a final desperation, "What was your great grandfather's name?" I was surprised that he knew it, but again, it was not a name in my family. (Years later, when the research of Jewish "roots" was "in" and I learned from "how-to" books to proceed more methodically, I found my great grandfather's death certificate on a later visit to Vaslui--in the archives. I learned that my great great grandfather's name was Moses, a different name than my father told me. My father had transposed HIS father's paternal and maternal lines! How I wish I could now be hypnotized, to remember the names that the elderly couple had told me. Perhaps they WERE relatives!)

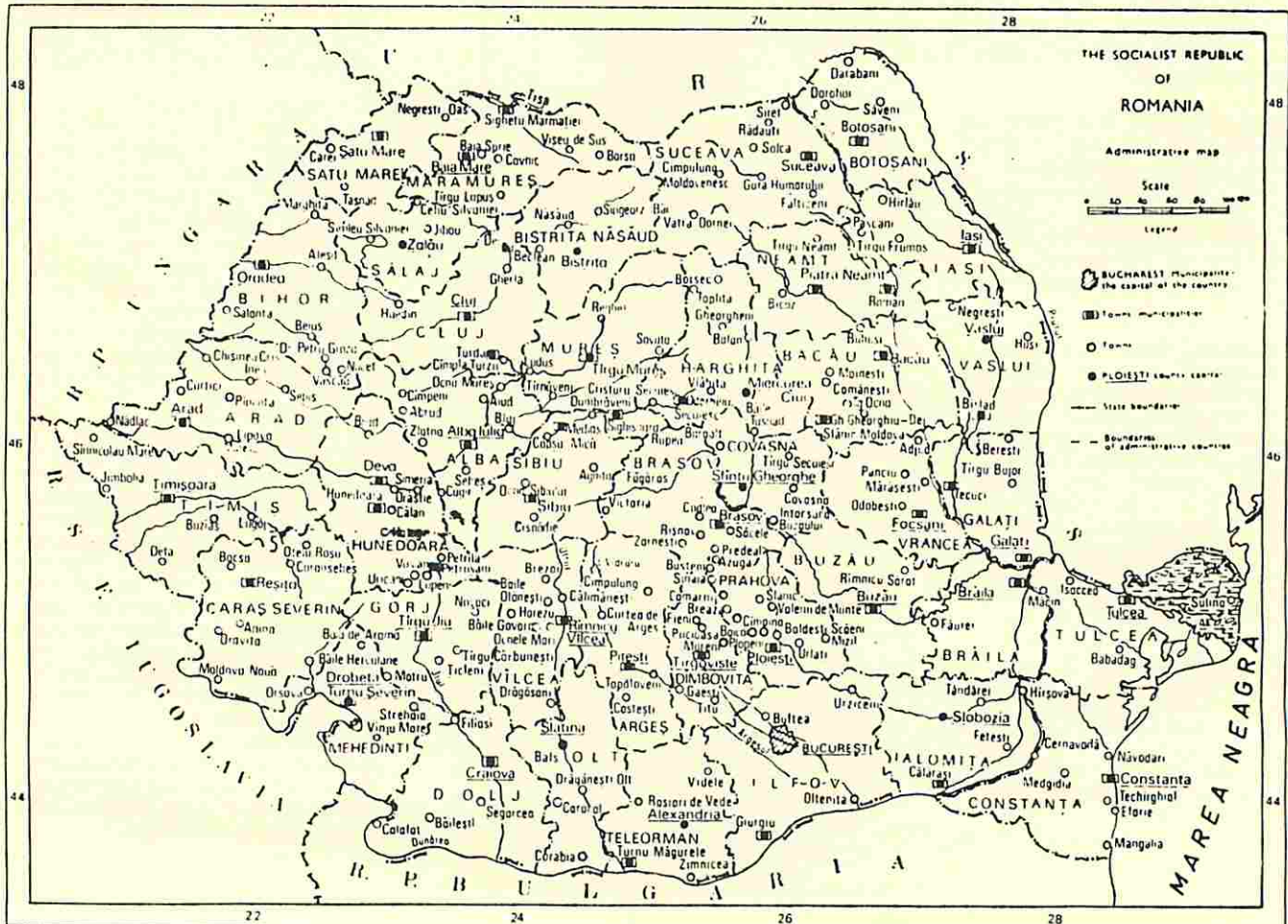
After we left the home of the Finkelstein couple, my interpreter called on another Jew. The second man told me that he remembered my great grandfather Copel Finkelstein, and that he had held a very important position.

Continued p. 14

MAPS

Continued from p. 5

Map (c)





## ROMANIAN JEWS IN 19th & 20th CENTURIES, cont'd from page 1

rights! Until then Jews in Romania's constituent regions of Moldavia and Walachia were already thought of as de facto citizens (notwithstanding the persecutions and mass murders they often endured...) But the Romanian government managed through various tricks to stand Article 44 on its head, giving it a meaning opposite to its intent. The bottom line: Jews were declared foreigners who could acquire citizenship only individually, through an act of parliament plus the king's permission...

"A list of some of the restrictions against Jews as "foreigners": Jews not permitted to own land in towns...not permitted into civil service on the national or municipal level, not as workers, not as clerks, but also not as freelance tradesmen...not permitted in the legal profession and an array of other professions...not permitted to deal in tobacco...Jews allowed into hospitals only in the case of clear danger, and never if their number exceeds 10 per cent of the Romanian patients (ed.: even in towns where the Jewish population is in the majority)... Jewish children allowed in Romanian schools only if there are left-over openings, and never if their number exceeds 20 per cent of Romanian students; in any case, fees are higher for Jews...Jews do not have the right to be in the country, they are merely tolerated... (and so on, ad nauseum)...

"The first big wave of Jewish emigration from Romania came following a law forbidding "ambulatory trade" (peddling) in 1884... except by special permission--permission which Jews were not given. Through this edict the livelihood of 5,000 Jewish peddlers and their families--20,000 souls--was brought to an abrupt halt. Thousands of Jews took up their walking sticks and left Romania on foot, in the hope of eventually reaching America; thousands of others left by train or river steamer...

"The years 1899 and 1900 were terrible harvests, resulting in a severe national crisis. Romanian Jews had endured economic crises before and had survived, staying put. Administrative repressions were also not new to them, as we have seen, yet they remained. In the 1890's, however, the official repressions against Jews took on an entirely different character than before, and the combination of economic crisis and political repression utterly destroyed Jewish life...

"The old antisemitic laws were now exacted with a particular savagery... In parliament, bloody incitements were staged, with antisemitic deputies haranguing about the "Jewish danger"... Jews were under the real threat of being banned entirely from every form of livelihood, as had been done already to the peddlers and certain other professions... On top of all that, hooligan excesses flared up in the towns and shtetls. On May 31, 1899, a pogrom took place in Iasi, organized by the prefect of the district, a known antisemitic leader named Cananau... That pogrom cast a bloody light upon the situation of the entire Jewish population of Romania, and the Jewish populace was suddenly set into motion...

"In 1899 there began such a tidal wave of emigration as had not been seen in the history of Jewish migration from any country. One had the impression that the entire Jewish population of Romania had suddenly lifted itself up from its place en masse. It was referred to as the "Romanian Exodus".

### "FEESS-GEHERS", THE AVANT-GARDE OF THE "ROMANIAN EXODUS"

"One particular sector of the emigrating populace left its stamp on the entire movement, right from the start of the great migration; these were the "Feess-gehers" (lit., "foot-walkers"; pronounced "fooss-gehers" in Litvak Yiddish). In cities and shtetls emigrants organized themselves into groups with the resolve to travel on foot as far as Hamburg and from there to sail to America.

"The Feess-gehers of 1899 were of a different nature than previous emigrants. First of all, the stock of people was drawn not from the poor, worn-out peddler class, but rather, were young, healthy people, mainly workers and people with trades, and a smaller per cent, business employees. The way in which they stood together and organized themselves in their groups, in itself bears witness to the idealism and youthful romanticism with which this movement was undertaken.

"It took weeks and months before such a walking-group was put together. All possessions were sold, money was gathered penny by penny, members taught themselves how to march long distances, and comradeship was solidified. Some of the groups gathered together in the synagogue before leaving, and took a holy vow to share even their last piece of bread along the way as well as afterward in America. Other groups dressed up in distinct uniforms, which the tailors among them sewed for all their walking-comrades. The Viennese Zionist weekly Die Welt described one group as follows: "They are wearing long 'sandals' (peasant



A group of Feess-gehers pause on their trek from Romania to America

### ROMANIAN-JEWISH NAMES

Continued from p. 6

is "Feiga Ruhla Avram". The beauty of the first format is that it permits you to learn the names of three generations in one fell swoop.

This inquiry also helps explain a mystery mentioned elsewhere in this issue of ROM-SIG News, namely, how David Pascal could be the son of Pascal David. David Pascal was David son of Pascal (Pascal is a Romanian substitute for the Hebrew name, Pinchos); his father was Pascal son of David. I learn from this: (a) that my grandfather was named for HIS grandfather, and (b) the name of my great-great grandfather. The old Romanian-Jewish system of naming has allowed me to go back one more generation.

But what about Izenfeld, or Eisenfeld, or even Isenfeld? It appears on no Romanian documents in my possession, but appears for the first time on my grandmother Zelda's passenger list to this country in 1904. Where did it suddenly come from, and why Eisenfeld, of all names? In Yiddish and German it can mean either "ice field" or "iron field". Neither the first, and certainly not the second, sense of "eisenfeld" has any apparent significance in family lore and legend.

But an article by Alexander Beider in Avotaynu last year concerning the formation of Jewish surnames in RUSSIA, may have provided a clue. He states that in parts of Russia surnames that end in berg, feld, shtein or tal, and have Jewish given names as their first part, e.g., Eliasberg, Aronshtein, or Hirshfeld (Girshfeld in Russian form) should be considered as "patronymic-ornamental" names, since they were formed artificially by adding ornamental extensions to a male given name. In other words, the extensions have no literal meaning in themselves. Beider's purview is the Russian empire, but this method may have been used in Romania as well; to be sure, he is aware that it was not used exclusively in

Continued on page 10

Continued on p. 10

## ROMANIAN JEWS IN 19th & 20th CENTURIES, cont'd from page 9

shoes, made in Romanian cottage industry, called 'opinci'), on their shoulders they carry satchels and skins of water. They walk with sticks in their hands, and each group carries several tents and lanterns."

"The first to set out on their way was a young group from the shtetl of Birlad, Moldavia. A young man by the name of Ginsberg had organized the group of 94 men. It gave itself the name "The Wayfarers of Birlad" ("de vagn-gehers foon Berlad"). This was prior to the Iasi pogrom. Birlad became a byword throughout Romania. All over the country young people prepared to follow Birlad's example. After the Iasi pogrom, Feess-geher groups from scores of cities and shtetls set out, and young women began organizing themselves into their own groups, as well.

"The folk culture of the time also felt the idealistic spirit of the Feess-geher movement, its youthful momentum. In many different quarters, the close connection between this movement and Jewish theater, for better or for worse, was drawn. Not only did the Feess-gehers have a strong impact on professional Jewish theater, but individual Feess-geher groups soon made a name for themselves all over the country as actors. In the towns and shtetls they passed through, they would arrange concerts, scenes from Jewish plays, and sing Jewish folksongs and, reportedly, original walking songs. At the concerts collections would be made to help with the expenses of the journey.

"The Feess-gehers also created their own "press". Each group had the ambition of putting out its own newspaper. In it they would print appeals for help, various short articles in which the "Gehers" said goodbye to their former home, and not infrequently included songs as well. Dozens of such newspapers came out at that time, but presumably not more than one issue of each. Regrettably, they were not collected. Possibly a few editions could be found in the Bucarest Academy or in the possession of former Feess-gehers now living in America... In the Romanian-Jewish press of the time as well as later publications we encounter quotations from Feess-geher gazettes... Based on what we know of Romanian-Jewish writing, all of these newsheets would have been written in Romanian. This shows that they would not have been written directly by the walkers, but rather by urban intellectuals; the Feess-gehers themselves, particularly those from Moldavia, did not know how to write in Romanian...

"The number of Feess-geher groups there were and the numbers who organized this movement--these are things we do not know. No one registered them, no one counted them. Below are the names of some of the groups, about whom mention was made in the Romanian-Jewish and foreign press: the previously mentioned Birlad Wayfarers; Bucarest Foot-wanderers; Artisan Foot-wanderers of Bucarest; Paint and Dye Workers of Bucarest; Students, Workers and Business Employees of Galati; "Lev Echad" (=one heart), of Galati; Wandering Jew; Fixe (the name is meant to convey the idea that membership is restricted to a fixed number); Romanian Exodus. Of the female groups, one was known as "Bas Ami" (=daughter of my people) and others without specific names. The numbers in each group varied widely. Rarely did a group have less than a hundred members, and we have heard of groups of two and three hundred. It was once claimed in Viennese newspapers that a group arrived there with five hundred men, but this is obviously a mistake because we are never told of such a strong group in the Romanian-Jewish press, unless two or three groups amalgamated along the way. There was virtually no town or village from which a group did not organize and leave. The larger towns, like Bucarest, Iasi, Galati, Braila, and others, each had several groups.

"It would be a mistake to base an estimate of the number of Feess-gehers on the impression formed by the Romanian and foreign public. By the sober calculations of living witnesses, no more than a few thousand people altogether set out in this way, and not all of them followed the Feess-geher path to the end. But from what we have said earlier, it is clear that estimates must include more than this number.

"In every Jewish community reached by a Feess-geher group, the town was roused to action. They shared bread with them and the best foods, set up sleeping accommodations for them in the synagogues. Regarding the first Feess-geher group, the one from Birlad, it is told that when they reached the town of Iasi, the police set up a blockade and didn't let them into town. So they set up camp in the open fields, and the entire town--men, women and children--came out to them. The whole day was taken up with the coming and going of hundreds, perhaps thousands of Jews, greeting the Feess-geher, giving them small presents and warm blessings for the journey. The government behaved similarly with other groups as well, preventing their entry into towns. But each time the answer from the Jewish townspeople was the same: the marchers were met at edge of town, and the character of the trek was impressed upon the townspeople all the more graphically.

Continued next column

"A surprise to the government was the attitude of the peasant population to the wayfarers. On the dusty paths and roads, the peasantry--themselves destitute, dejected, and subjugated--waited for the Feess-gehers, bringing them fresh water, bread, milk, and taking leave of them with tears in their eyes. There are no written documents on

**ADIO!**  
el grupului de emigranții funcționari comerciali

FEESS-GEHER  
NEWSPAPER  
from 1900  
Botoșani

EXODUL

this, but in certain Jewish circles in Romania they talked about this until the final years, of how there were cases where the rural population, in a holy procession, with the priest and the church icons at the front, approached the Feess-gehers and begged them not to leave, trying to tell them better times were ahead. The peasants were very frightened by the 'Romanian Exodus'."

### ROMANIAN-JEWISH NAMES

Continued from p. 9  
Russia--it was in use for example in Prussia, too. Under the heading "Jewish Given Names in the Russian Empire", Table 5 in his article, Beider's data has included "Aizik" ("Ajzik"), pronounced like the English "Isaac", as a variant of Itskhok, and Itsik as a diminutive form. I was frankly surprised to see an "English" form of this name used in that cultural milieu, but I have since found more than one Romanian-Jewish "Eisik" or "Aizik" on ships' passenger lists.

I speculate from all this that, sometime after my grandmother's birth, and before the family's arrival in North America, the family surname was changed from "Itsik son of Avram" to "Eisenfeld" by a simple modification of "Itsik" plus a little decoration at the end. (The dropping of the "ik" is not surprising--"Yitz" is yet one more form of Yitzkhok or Itsik). If this is true, then it is a safe bet that Jews of the Moldavian region of Romania, or at least the Bacau district of Moldavia, were acquiring, or being made to acquire, permanent surnames (as opposed to ones which change with each generation) sometime between the two milestones of my family's history cited above--1868 and 1904. It remains to be studied whether or not Beider's data concerning the acquisition of Jewish surnames in Russia can be generalized in application to Romania.

# JETZIAS-ROMANIA

## Die Auswanderung von Rumänien

שבעה מאת השנים מני ישראל

הנהגת המערכת  
דאס ליינד פון דעם פערטן עולה הנל  
צו דענען מיט דעם טיילונג פון דער ישיבה

מנוחה ובריאות  
דאס פערטן חוב פון דעם פערטן חוב  
צו דענען מיט דעם טיילונג פון דער ישיבה

דאס ליינד פון דעם פערטן עולה הנל  
צו דענען מיט דעם טיילונג פון דער ישיבה  
מנוחה ובריאות  
דאס פערטן חוב פון דעם פערטן חוב  
צו דענען מיט דעם טיילונג פון דער ישיבה

# ROMANIAN LANGUAGE

(continued from last issue)

### Notes on pronunciation:

Using the pronunciation guide from last issue, and bearing in mind that a final "i" following a consonant is usually not pronounced, while an "e" at the beginning of a word is pronounced "yeh", here are some practice names to get you into full gear deciphering those Romanian documents:

- București = "Boo-koo-resht"
- Moinești = "Moi-nesht"
- ofițer = "off-ee-tser"
- Ceaușescu = "Chow-shess-koo"
- nouă = "no-wah"
- judetul = "zhoo-deh-tsool"
- Moșe Herșcu = "Moy-sheh Hersh-koo"
- Șulemowici = "Shoo-lem-ovich"
- evreu = "yev-ray-oo" (Jew)
- Îași = "Yash"

### Notes on grammar:

Romanian is an inflected language. This means its nouns change endings according to their function in a sentence. Nouns can have four cases, or functions: nominative (subject), accusative (object of the verb), genitive (possessive), and dative (object of a preposition). Here is one example, played out in its eight forms (four in the singular, four in the plural):

SINGULAR: the brother

Nominative:	fratele
Accusative:	pe frate
Genitive:	fratelui, a fratelui, a fratelui ("the brother's...", however, word order may be reversed)
Dative:	fratelui (e.g., "to the brother")

PLURAL: the brothers

Nominative:	frații
Accusative:	pe frați
Genitive:	a fraților, fraților
Dative:	fraților (e.g., "to the brothers")

There is more to be said about inflection. Consider this an introduction.

### Notes on numbers:

1 = un, una	12 = douăsprezece	20 = douăzeci
2 = doi, două	13 = treisprezece	30 = treizeci
3 = trei	14 = patrușprezece	40 = patruzeci
4 = patru	15 = cincisprezece	50 = cincizeci
5 = cinci	16 = șaseșprezece	60 = șaizeci, șasezeci
6 = șase	17 = șaptesprezece	70 = șaptezeci
7 = șapte	18 = optsprezece	80 = optzeci
8 = opt	19 = nouăsprezece	90 = nouăzeci
9 = nouă		100 = sută
10 = zice		1000 = mie

### And the months:

Ianuarie Februarie Martie Aprilie Maiu Iunie Iulie August Septembrie  
Octombrie Noembrie Dechenvrie

### Personal Pronouns:

I = eu	me = mie
you = voi (singular)	you = vouă (singular)
he = el	him = lui, pe el
she = ea	her = ei, pe ea
we = noi	us = pe noi
you = vouă (plural)	you = pe voi (plural)
they = ei, ele	them = lor, pe le ●

# RESEARCHER FINDS ROMANIAN FAMILY

## ROM-SIG MEMBER ALLEN GREENBERG EXPLAINS HOW HE LOCATED

**RELATIVES FROM ROMANIA:** "In 1978 I was able to locate relatives on my paternal grandfather's side, the **GOLDENBERG** family, who came from Galați, Romania, by writing a letter to the present occupant of the pre-1930 addresses listed on the business stationery of a great-uncle who was in a commercial business in both Galați and Bucharest.

"One of the letters was returned to me unopened, marked 'undeliverable'. A week later, the second letter was returned with the same notation. Finally, a letter arrived from a Mr. Wittal in Bucharest who had opened the letter that I sent to the Bucharest business address. Mr. Wittal had read the letter and made numerous phone calls until he finally found a lady who knew the present address--in New Jersey--of the children of this great uncle.

"The children, my cousins, had come to America two years earlier, and had tried to make contact with my family at an old Brooklyn address they had saved, but were unsuccessful. I immediately called my newly-found cousins in New Jersey, we got together very quickly, and this started a friendship that has continued through the years.

"One of the elderly cousins gave me an address of another cousin still in Romania. I wrote to her and learned the names and addresses of all the descendants of my great-grandfather, Iancu Goldenberg of Galați. I traced a cousin in Toronto and found other cousins in Israel, all through this information.

"I have not been as successful in going backwards to the ancestors of Iancu Goldenberg. I have written to the American

Embassy, to the Jewish synagogue in Bucharest, to the town official in Galați, and to the Romanian ambassador to the United States, but no responses have ever been received."

*Submitted by Allen Greenberg*

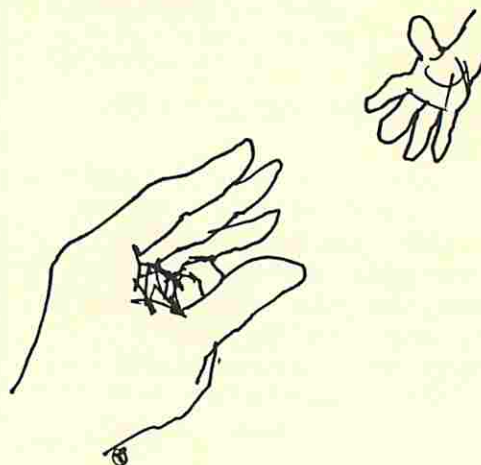
**THE ARTICLES LISTED BELOW WERE PUBLISHED IN THE AMERICAN JEWISH YEARBOOK FOR 5662 (1901-1902)** by the Jewish Publication Society of America. Allen Greenberg has offered to copy these articles for interested researchers for just the cost of photocopying and postage. (A suggested amount to cover copying and postage follows each title):

1. Schwarzfeld, "*The Jews of Roumania from the Earliest Times to the Present Day.*" (19 copies; \$3.00)

2. Schwarzfeld, "*The Situation of the Jews in Roumania Since the Treaty of Berlin (1878).*" (25 copies; \$2.25)

3. Hermalin, "*The Roumanian Jews in America.*" (15 copies; \$1.35)

Send your check to Allen Greenberg, 500 East 77 Street, Apt. 1208, New York, NY 10162. ●



# TEXTUAL RESOURCES FOR JEWISH ROMANIA

Following the cataclysm of the Holocaust, the survivors of a number of shtetls, as well as larger towns, attempted to memorialize their ancient, now extinct, homes with books which recorded as much as they could remember and gather, of their way of life, the people and personalities who lived and died there, maps, photos, events, and so on. With the majority of European Jewry wiped out, these "yizkor books" often provided the only resource for those wanting to learn about their forebears and the environment they inhabited. More than 600 of these yizkor books have been published, many for shtetls in Poland, but with relatively few for Romania. (1)

In recognition of such painful voids, and in the same spirit of needing to salvage at least something from the life of European Jewry which is no more, Yad Vashem in Jerusalem set out to document as much as possible of the history and life of Jewish communities in Europe up to and including the Holocaust itself. Entitled Pinkas Hakehillot (2) (Encyclopedia of Jewish Communities), its very first volume (a tome of over five hundred pages and published in 1969) deals exclusively with Romania. A second volume on Romania, of comparable size, came out in 1980. The approach is, by the very nature of the two types of book, more scholarly and less personal than the yizkor books.

As a result, people remembered simply because they were friends or neighbors, as you can find in yizkor books, are absent; this is a loss for researchers hoping to find the names of relatives who were not newsworthy but who were important because they existed. On the other hand, the researcher gains in being able to see in a more systematic way the history of sometimes even quite small shtetls in Romania, and sociological trends for Jews on local, district, and national scales, that may have had a very direct, personal impact on the life choices of the "little people" they are researching.

The down side, at least for English speakers, is that the Pinkas Hakehillot series is written in Hebrew. Nevertheless, charts, maps and photos render much of the information more accessible and make this an invaluable resource for any Jewish genealogist of Romania. Here is a sampling.

This table was prepared from Romanian census records

YEAR	NUMBER OF JEWS IN ROMANIA	% OF TOTAL POP.
1803	30,000 (taxpayers)	2.0
1859	135,000 (people)	3.0
1899	266,652	4.5
1910	245,064	
1912	239,967	3.3

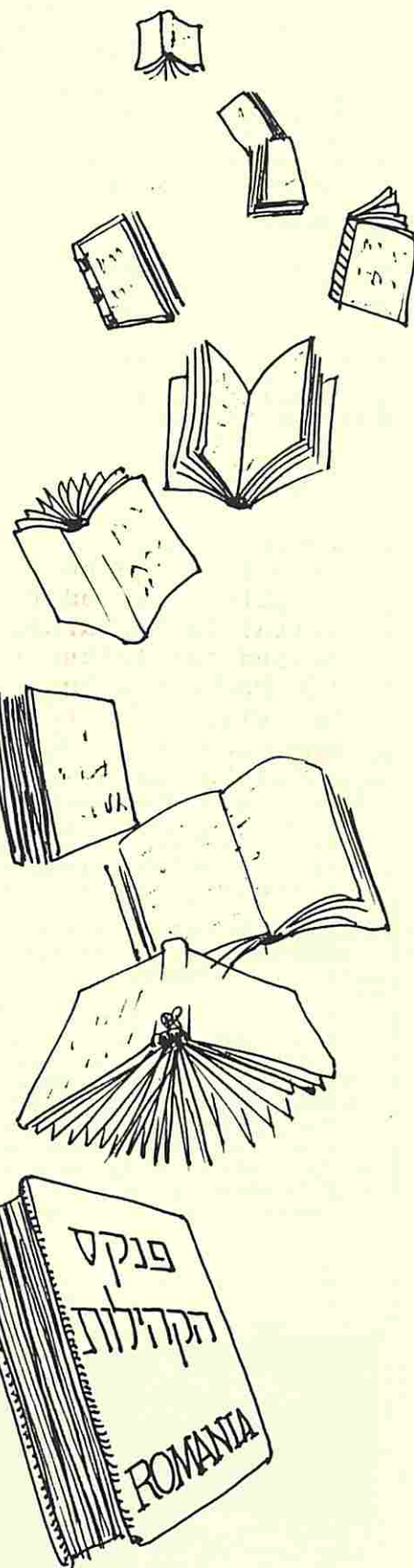
Jewish Population Breakdown According to Region in 1904

REGION	% OF GENERAL POPULATION	% IN VILLAGES
Moldova (Moldavia)	10.6	3.6
Walachia	2.2	0.04
Oltenia	0.4	0.02
Dobruja	1.6	0.17

Breakdown of Occupations of Jewish Population of Romania in 1913

OCCUPATION	NO. OF JEWS	BY %	% WITHIN GEN. POP. IN THE SAME FIELD
Farming	2,245	2.5	0.1
Industry & trades	37,514	42.5	12.2
Commerce	33,410	37.9	31.3
Communic. & transp.	3,092	3.5	4.3
Clerical & freelance	2,858	3.2	4.3

Small towns are dealt with in depth in Pinkas Hakehillot, and even "dry" statistics tell stories of pathos and upheaval. The little town of Moinești, for example, shows a huge influx of Jews between the 1820's and the turn of the century, rising to 50% of the total population, only to drop dramatically in half by the early 1930's. Ocna's change is even more stark: from four per cent in 1859, up to twenty per cent by 1899, and then, with half the Jewish population leaving within the next TEN years, down to two per cent of the total population by 1924. What tales are told in those numbers!



Continued p. 15

# YIDDISH

Continued from p. 6

When it comes to making connections between different "incarnations" of a particular Jewish name, it is important to have some understanding of the accent changes among the dialects, and (to complicate matters even further) between these varieties of Yiddish and Hebrew, when there is such a connection. Thus, for example, we may make a pretty good guess that the Romanian-Yiddish name "Ruhla" is a form of the name we know as Rachel ("Rah-khel" in modern Hebrew), but this may not have occurred to us at all, or it may be difficult for us to see just HOW the name transmogrified. But there are pronunciation guidelines, some of which are presented here:

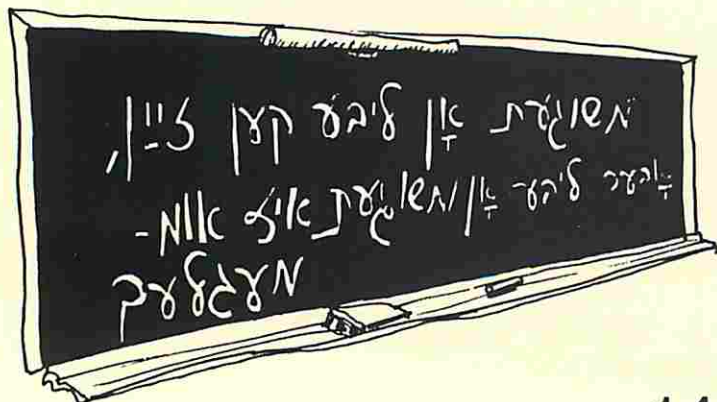
LITVAK YIDDISH	ROMANIAN YIDDISH
"oo", as in "tsooker" (sugar)	"i" or "ee", as in "tseekeer"
"aw", as in "dawss keend" (the child)	"oo", as in "dooss keend"
"ai", as in "vait" or "vight" (far)	"aah", as in "vaaht"
"eh" (i.e., like the "e" in "elbow") as in "gevehzzn" (was)	"ei" (i.e., like in "day"), as in "geveizzn" (sometimes)
"oy", as in "groy" (gray)	"o", as in "grō" (sometimes)
"ah", as in "cahlt" (cold)	"o", as in "cōlt" (sometimes)

Words which have become "American Yiddish" are usually of the Litvak variety--"koogl", for example, which in the Romanian dialect is pronounced "keegl". This is true even of words which entered Yiddish from the Hebrew. "Mezuzah" (mezOOzah), a Hebrew word which has long been part of Yiddish vocabulary too, was/is pronounced "mezEEzah" by Romanian Jews.

Names follow the same pattern. Thus, Samuel, which is "Shmuel" in Hebrew as well as in Litvak Yiddish, becomes "Shmeel" in Romanian Yiddish (no relation to "Shlemeel", incidently!). Rafael and Israel in modern Hebrew (and, more or less, in English), are rendered R'foel and Isroel in Litvak Yiddish, and R'foel and Isrool in Romanian dialect. Female names Guta, Fruma, and Menukha in "standard" Yiddish, become Geeta, Freema, and Meneekha in the Romanian variant.

Written Hebrew was, of course, readable to East European Jewry, including Romanian Jews, for centuries before it was lingua franca in modern Israel, but pronounced with some differences. The "ah" of modern Hebrew has two different symbols, but East European Jewry pronounced each symbol differently. One was "ah" (as in modern Hebrew), but the other was either "o" (Litvak Yiddish) or "oo" (Romanian Yiddish), unlike modern Hebrew. Thus, Rachel, which is "Rakhel" in modern Hebrew, is "Rokhl" in Litvak Yiddish and "Rookhl" in the Romanian version. (Note also that modern Hebrew stresses the final syllable, while European Yiddish de-emphasizes it.) The "t" in modern Hebrew has two different letters, but in eastern Europe, one of them was pronounced "s" in certain instances. Thus, Nathan, which is "Nahtahn" in modern Hebrew, is "Nossn" in Litvak Yiddish, and "Noosn" in Romanian Yiddish. These are the main differences.

Continued on p. 15



# PILGRIMAGE

Continued from p. 8

"Yes, he was a shochet," I said, remembering another of my father's anecdotes that one of his ancestor's was a kosher slaughterer.

"I doubt that your father's grandfather was a shochet," my interpreter said. I didn't understand why he was so negative.

"We are sorry we can't show you the Jewish cemetery," another Vaslui Jew told me in broken Hebrew. "The cemetery is not open."

"Isn't there a place where records are kept?" I tried to ask. At that time I didn't know the Hebrew word for documents.

"No, there's no place like that in Vaslui," my interpreter answered sourly, as he directed me to the railroad station.

On my second trip to Vaslui I knew to ask for "Archives", an international word. Even on my second trip, though, Vaslui Jews held me back from going to the Archive Office. One of them insisted that for a large sum of money he could find my great grandfather's grave, and he kept delaying me until I was afraid that the Archive Office would be closed.

But I WAS rewarded in the Archive Office, once I got there, with an entry devoted to my great grandfather: I not only learned his parents' names, but I found he was born in Tirgu Neamz, a town I had heretofore never heard of, and with an exotic sounding name. Gone was my fantasy of, somehow, having ancestors present when Stefan Cel Mare defeated the Turks in Vaslui in the fifteenth century.

I didn't know at that time that my father still had first cousins living in Bucharest. (Years later, when I would meet them on a second visit, they would give me a photo of my great grandfather.) Perhaps in 1967 they would have remembered anecdotes that in their later years they had forgotten. I learned the hard way that to visit one's ancestral homeland one must be well-prepared. Had I questioned my father more methodically, queried his cousins, and taken notes in Vaslui (as, for example, when I met the old Finkelstein couple), my first trip to Vaslui would have been much more rewarding. ●

# YIDDISH

Continued from p. 14

Yiddish diminutives, tagged onto the end of names, were common; they include "eleh", "l", "la", "ka", "inka", "ik", "ush" (the last four of these were more prominent among Jewish immigrants to Romania from Slavic lands), and many others. Names pronounced as Dahvid, Rakhel, and Sarah in modern Hebrew, can become Doovid'l, Rookhla, and Sooreleh by the time they have donned the mantels of Yiddish + Romanian accent + diminutive. (Rookhla is, of course, the "Ruhla" cited earlier--there is no way of showing the Yiddish/Hebrew sound "kh" with Romanian letters other than a simple "h").

Men tended to have given names derived from the Hebrew more commonly than women did, although it was also a practice among men to have double names, one a Yiddish translation or variant of the other, Hebrew, one. Thus, for example, Dov-Ber (or in the Romanian version, Doov-Ber) is a Hebrew-Yiddish pairing, both parts of which mean "bear"; Tsvi-Hirsh, both parts of which mean "stag"; and Menakhem-Mendl (here the relation is a phonetic one).

Since many Hebrew names are familiar even to non-Hebrew speakers through their entry into western languages by way of the Bible; and since many Yiddish names would be familiar even to non-Yiddish speakers due to their being cognate (linguistically related) with English words through the German--as long as these non-Yiddish speakers understood some of the dialect patterns within Yiddish; therefore it should now be easier for researchers to relate to many otherwise arcane Yiddish and Yiddishized Hebrew names, including their Romanian renditions.

Below is a short list of a few such names, each one presented first in a Romanian-Yiddish form, and then gradually revealing its more universal form. The reader might want to cover all but the Romanian-Yiddish at first, to see whether or not s/he can decipher the name:

Vroomeleh	--->	Avroomeleh	--->	Avromeleh	--->	Avrom	--->	Avraham
Sroolka	--->	Srool	--->	Isrool	--->	Isroel	--->	Israel
Sooreleh	--->	Soorl	--->	Soora(Sura)	--->	Sora	--->	Sara
Geetl	--->	Gootl	--->	Goot	--->	good		

Graduate level challenge:

Itka --> Ida ("Eeda") --> Y'hida --> Y'hidess --> Y'hudess-->Judit!

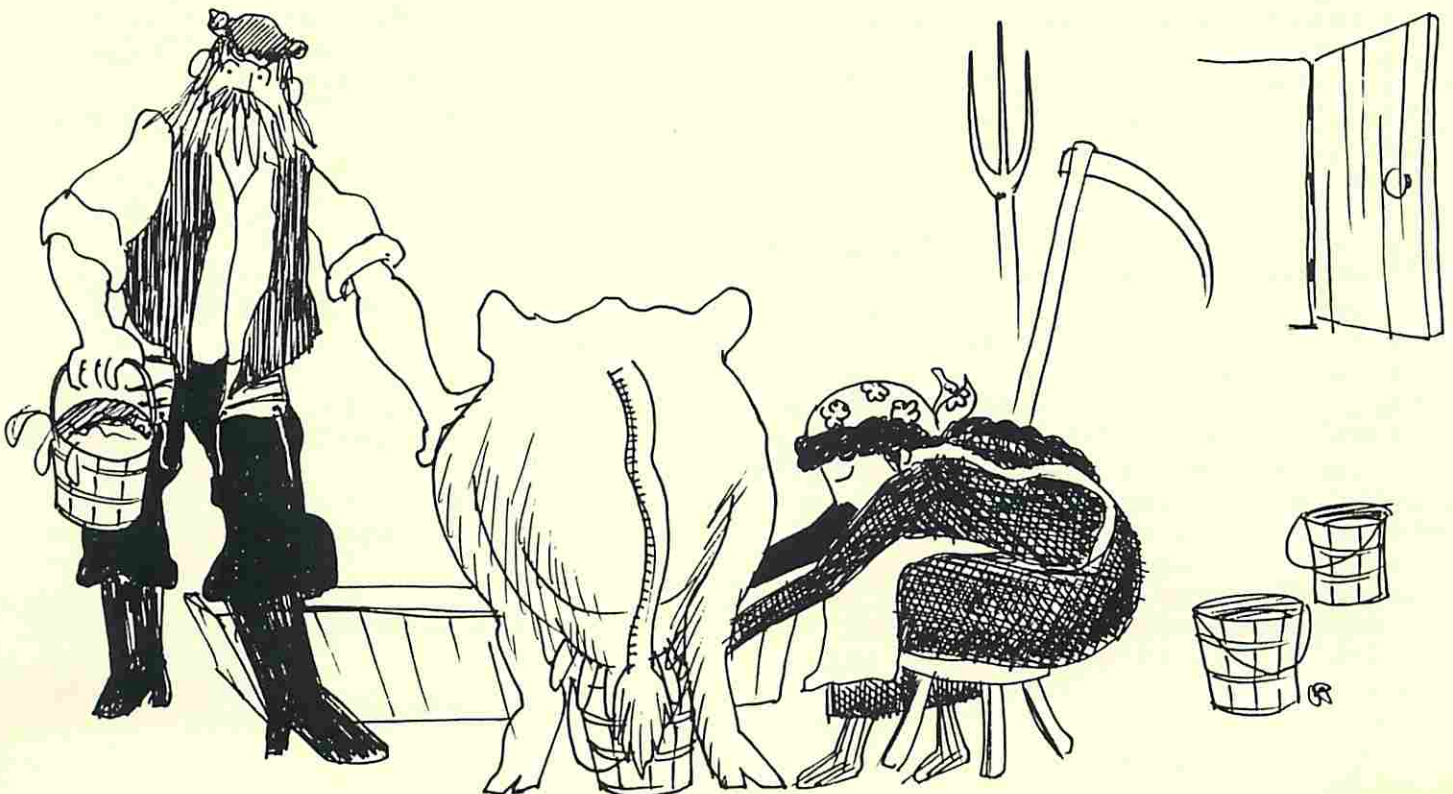
## TEXTUAL RESOURCES

Continued from p. 13

A great deal is explained once we know the Jewish history of those years in Romania: in 1902 the Romanian government passed the "Artisan's Bill" requiring "strangers" (read: Jews) to have special authorization from the authorities to carry on ANY TRADE, and this authorization was to be given only upon production of their foreign passports (as if Jews stopped to pick up their passports as they fled the previous country's pogroms!) and upon proof that in their "respective countries" reciprocal rights are accorded to Romanians. Between 1803 and 1903, there were 64 separate laws passed in Romania (or the provinces that were to become Romania) restricting Jewish rights.

(1) The most complete collections of yizkor books in North America can be found in the Jewish Division of the New York Public Library, and at the YIVO Institute (also in New York). A bibliography of them was prepared by Zachary M. Baker for Toledot magazine thirteen years ago, based on one compiled for Yad Vashem Studies by David Bass in 1973. An updated version appears in the appendix of From a Ruined Garden: the Memorial Books of Polish Jewry, translated and edited by Jack Kugelmass and Jonathan Boyarin (N.Y.: Schocken Books, 1983, paperback 1985), while the most current version was prepared by Baker for Genealogical Resources in the New York Metropolitan Area, edited by Estelle M. Guzick (N.Y.: Jewish Genealogical Society, Inc., 1989).

(2) Pinkas Hakehillot, Encyclopedia of Jewish Communities, Rumania Vol. I, published 1969, and Rumania Vol. II, published 1980 (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem). ●



# EDITORIAL

With the publication of this, our second issue of ROM-SIG NEWS, it is clear that, while possibly helpful, and perhaps even enjoyable to read, our periodical has not yet truly begun to fulfill its mandate.

The excitement generated by the inaugural meeting of the Jewish Genealogical Special Interest Group for Romania (at the JGS Summer Seminar in New York last July) showed that we needed a forum in which we could continue to dialogue, cross-pollinate, compare research experiences, and pool efforts. That we all have a common, very localized, ancestry, gives these goals a high degree of focus, and the forum for these goals a high possibility of bearing fruit. ROM-SIG NEWS is that forum. "I look forward to this much-needed, long-awaited exchange of information on Romania," writes one member, echoing the feelings of many.

Our little publication is a new-born, and new-born babies need a little "potch" on the "tush" to start breathing. So Gert Ogushwitz did the obstetrics on the first issue, and Paul Pascal on the second (with the assistance of a few nurses, whom we do sincerely thank). But now that the little critter is alive and kicking, it's time he got out and earned his keep!

Starting next issue, ROM-SIG NEWS will stand or fall on the input of its subscribers, rather than that of one or two people. That is its purpose, after all. On the other hand, to ask members simply to "start dialoguing" is too vague. So we are creating a kind of framework, to give members a starting point. Once members have taken advantage of this framework, we are hopeful that an ongoing dialogue will continue on its own momentum. If it can't, then perhaps we really didn't need this forum as we had thought.

The framework is simply a kind of questionnaire. We are asking EVERY MEMBER to choose any five of the listed questions to respond to. We know that we are all leading busy lives, so the trick will be to find a balance in your responses between the extremes of a one-word answer versus an all-consuming answer. If you can't find five questions to your liking or situation, modify any questions you want, or even answer questions that have NOT been posed, if applicable to our group. The questionnaire is on an enclosed sheet. Please remember that ROM-SIG NEWS depends for its existence on your response.

## OUR MEMBERS WRITE

I was thrilled this summer when Dr. (Alexander) Beider informed me that (my aunt) Elke's maiden name, Percian, was a corruption of the name Persuyan, found in Kiev, and meaning "from Prussia". I am not sure whether she was born in Kiev or Bucharest. (Ed.: Please add this variant to ROM-SIG FAMILY FINDER).

There are two mistakes in the listing (ROM-SIG FAMILY FINDER, in last issue): My mother's name was ARGINTEANU (not Agr...). And on p.7 the name should be SILBERSTEIN (not Sily...).

Sophie Minkoff

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Additions to ROM-SIG FAMILY FINDER:

GOLDENBERG--Galați; 45.27/28.03  
Researcher: Greenberg

GRUNBERG--Galați; 45.27/28.03  
Researcher: Greenberg

Allen Greenberg  
NEW ADDRESS: 500 E. 77 St.  
Apt. 1208  
New York, NY  
10162



# OUR MEMBERS WRITE

My husband's grandfather, Solomon Margulis, emigrated from Birlad, Romania, in 1900 and settled in Key West, Florida. Later he moved to Ybor City, an area of Tampa. Apparently, most of the Jews that settled in Key West and Tampa were from Romania, according to Jack Einhorn, a leader in the Jewish community who gave my husband and I a tour of Jewish Key West when we visited there in 1990.

Rita Krakower Margolis  
11112 Arroyo Drive  
Rockville, MD  
20852-32602

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More for the ROM-SIG FAMILY  
FINDER:

REGENSTREICH

Variants:

REGENSTREIF

REGEN

REGENT

REGENSTAFF

--from Mihaileni & Dorohoi.

Researchers: Gene & Elaine Starn

Gene Starn  
PO Box 520583  
Longwood, FL 32752  
Tel. (407) 788-3898

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Concerning the family of my wife, Rivca Cohn, in the ROM-SIG FAMILY FINDER, I would like to make the following corrections and changes in her listings:

BRAUMSTEIN--should be eliminated

BRAUN--original town name: Vaslui;

current town name: Vaslui;

researcher: Cohen

Please change the locations to Vaslui and Brooklyn, NY, and the researcher's name to Cohn

BRAUNSTEIN--Vaslui; Vaslui; Cohen  
Please change the locations to Vaslui and Piatra Neamtz, and the name to Cohn

GOLDENSTEYN--Vaslui; Vaslui; Cohen  
Please change the locations to Herlou and Iasi, and the name to Cohn

GOLDSTEIN--Piatra Neamt; Piatra Neamt; Cohen. Please change the locations to Herlou and Piatra Neamtz, and the name to Cohn

MOSKOWITZ--Iasy; Iasi; Cohen  
Please change the locations to Iasy and Brooklyn, NY, and the name to Cohn

I look forward with pleasure to reading future issues of the NEWS.

Warren Cohn

EDITOR'S NOTE: Thanks to Mr. Cohn's letter, we are able to clarify two important aspects of our ROM-SIG FAMILY FINDER which we left open to misunderstanding in our first issue:

1. When we referred to "Original Town Name" and "Current Town Name", we're talking about the same town. Towns change pronunciation and name with time and sovereignty, and this is why we created two headings for the town name rather than one. The second heading "Current Town Name", does not refer to the name of the current town lived in, but rather the current name of the town once lived in. Confused? Perhaps better headings might have been: "Town Formerly Called..." and "Town Currently Called..." And so Mr. Cohn's letter gives us additional information; namely, the town to which the family in question later IMMIGRATED. This is also useful.

2. We are adopting the policy of standardizing the spelling of Romanian towns to the ROMANIAN spelling, wherever possible, unless the context requires a different spelling (e.g., English transliteration or the Yiddish form of the name is sometimes necessary; if the location is no longer under Romanian sovereignty, the spelling or transliteration of the name currently in use is sometimes clearer; etc.) Using Mr. Cohn's examples, Piatra Neamtz would drop the "z", because the Romanian spelling uses an accent mark under the "t", to make "t" into "tz". An exception, perhaps, would be the spelling of Bucharest the English way instead of the Romanian "București", because of its common usage.

--Ed.

# OUR MEMBERS WRITE

Please add to the ROM-SIG  
FAMILY FINDER:

BACAL (Avram)--Buçecea, Romania  
Researcher: June Moscovitz  
And change my address to:  
FDR Sta.  
PO Box 8526  
New York, NY 10150-8526

Researching in August in Jerusalem can be frustrating and fruitless. Everyone's away on vacation.

Went to Ben Zvi Institute (tel. 02-639-201). A grad student whom I met recommended that I see a "genius and a mensch" in the field of genealogy, a Mr. Hatal.

The library and archives are in a separate (unmarked) building diagonally across on the third floor. Mr. Hatal read my query re the Ottoman era Montefiore census in Palestine, and disappeared for an hour and a half. His secretary said he hadn't told her where he was going. I was about to leave when he returned with the English paperback book on the census. He had READ it, and told the secretary to xerox the applicable material.

Then he tackled my second query re a cemetery in Tiberias where my grandfather's grandfathers were buried. He told me to call Yad Shitrit where they had a listing of all Jews buried in the Tiberias cemetery.

I called, and was shifted from one person to another, and no one knew anything, but I should call back two days later and I'd get a definite answer.

Well, it seems Yad Shitrit is now a film institute!

In Tel Aviv I called the Dorot Genealogy Center (03-528-3065). No answer! Then I went to the Tourist Bureau for help. It was packed with young European students, but air conditioned, so I waited.

The interviewer called Yad Shitrit in Tiberias for me (against the rules), but couldn't get any re-direction. I asked her to call the Tiberias mayor's office. No answer! Then the Chevra Kadisha. No answer! At home I wrote to Teddy Kollek's office. No answer! And the mayor of Netanya. No answer! At least they're consistent!

June Moscovitz

I have been trying for several years to locate records of the BELDNER family in Romania but have met with no success whatsoever.

My ancestors originated in both Focșani and Bucharest. (Please add to ROM-SIG FAMILY FINDER.--Ed.) I have written a number of letters to places and people in that country but in most cases, I cannot even get a reply to my letters. I have offered to pay for such service, but even that has been to no avail.

I would appreciate it very much if you could furnish me with any information or records that would help me in my search. I would like to keep in touch with someone who is interested in the same matter.

Oscar Beldner  
14194 Parliament Dr  
Chesterfield, MO.  
63017  
(314) 469-3337

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## THANK YOU

A sincere thank you to members who sent in letters, contributors (whose names accompany their articles), Gertrude Ogushwitz for organizational help, and Sam and Joy L. Elpern for printing, mailing, and membership upkeep.

Paul Pascal  
Acting Editor

# BOOK REVIEW: AIEE, ROMANIA-ROMANIA! (and Bulgaria, and Hungary, and...)

Jewish Heritage Travel: A Guide to Central and Eastern Europe, by Ruth Ellen Gruber, is a goldmine of information for students of the Jewish world that once inhabited those lands. Genealogists of Jewish Romania will find the chapter on Romania alone worth the price of the book.

More than a travel guide for readers seeking Jewish traces; more than a history book connecting events of local Jewish life; more than a directory of current, surviving Jewish institutions and contacts, Gruber's book is all three and then some. Primarily a journalist, she began the book after an assignment to Romania in which she accompanied the chief rabbi to towns and villages all over the country. She found that she was deeply touched by the old synagogues and cemeteries, by members of the still extant Jewish community, and by unexpected remnants of her own family history in Romania, and these feelings eventually grew into the present book, which was published just this past year.

Gruber has combined her skills on the one hand as a trained journalist, capable of ferreting out obscure nuggets and of writing about them articulately and succinctly, and on the other hand as a sensitive and knowledgeable researcher of Jewish history and civilization, to weave a work which is both informative and personal.

She asserts that "this is a guide, not an encyclopedia or a genealogical handbook", yet she has gathered an immense array of material, much of it of invaluable use to the genealogist. Furthermore, she has organized it intelligently, making it much more useful to genealogical pursuit (particularly on-site investigation, but not only). Where her work is not encyclopedic is in its warmth and sensitivity of treatment.

Covering the countries of Poland, Czechoslovakia (subdivided into Bohemia, Moravia and Slovakia), Hungary, Romania, Yugoslavia (also subdivided) and Bulgaria, each section is introduced with an incisive history of the Jewish presence in the country, up to the present, tips to the Jewish traveler (including addresses and phrases

genealogists would find useful), and an overview of Jewish heritage in the country. But the bulk of each chapter is devoted to a close up view of individual towns and villages throughout the country, seen from a Jewish perspective. In this section, she has garnered addresses and phone numbers of CURRENT Jewish Communities and kosher restaurants for many of these towns! Conditions of cemeteries, how to get there, details of the old Jewish quarter--these are all covered, and much more.

Particularly exciting for Romanian researchers is the discovery that, unlike in most of these countries, Romania's cemeteries and synagogues remain largely intact, often maintained by the local Jewish community. There are, Gruber tells us, 17,000 Jews still living in 158 cities, towns and villages in Romania, with organized Jewish communities and active synagogues in about 60 of them. And she provides us with an extraordinary list of several of these Jewish communities (excerpted here, but without the kosher restaurant listings):

Bucharest	Fed. Jewish Com'ties Str. Lapusna 9-11 Tel. 131-782; 143-008
	Jewish Com'ty Buchar. address as above Tel. 157-441
Arad	Str. Tribunalul Dobra 10 Tel. (966) 16097
Bacău	Str. Alexandru cel Bun 11 Tel. (931) 34714
Baia Mare	Str. Somesului 3 Tel. (994) 11231
Botoșani	Calea Nationala 220 Tel. (985) 14659
Brașov	Str. Poarta Schei 27 Tel. (921) 43532
Cluj-Napoca	Str. Tipografiei 25 Tel. (951) 16677
Constanța	Str. Sarmisegetuza 3 Tel. (916) 11598
Dorohoi	Str. 6 Martie 16 Tel. (986) 13424
Galați	Str. Dornei 9-11 Tel. (934) 13662

Iași	Str. Elena Doamna 15 Tel. (981) 14414
Oradea	Str. Mihai Viteazul 4 Tel. (991) 34843
Piatra Neamț	Str. V.I. Lenin 7 Tel. (936) 23815
Ploiești	Str. Basarabilor 12 Tel. (971) 26017
Roman	Str. Sucedava 131 Tel. (937) 26621
Satu Mare	Str. Decebal 4 Tel. (997) 11728
Sighet	Str. Viseului 10 Tel. (995) 11652
Suceava	Str. Armeneasca 8 Tel. (987) 13084
Timișoara	Str. Gheorghe Lazar 5 Tel. (961) 32813
Tîrgu Mureș	Str. Braila 10 Tel. (954) 15001
Tîrgu Neamț	Str. Cuza Voda 160 Tel. (936) 62515

A list like this feels like an impossible dream, after the Holocaust and after the scourges of a communist dictatorship--but there it is. Furthermore, Gruber tells us "there are known to be nearly 750 Jewish cemeteries in 660 localities... Each active Jewish community is responsible for the upkeep of Jewish cemeteries in surrounding areas where Jews no longer live... In many cases, non-Jewish peasant families living near or on the cemetery grounds care for the graveyards in return for either payment or the right to use the grass, and so on, to feed their animals and to cultivate empty parts of the cemetery grounds. These people, though not Jewish, take their responsibility very seriously and many provide water and towels so that the rare visitor can wash his hands after visiting the graves."

Nuggets such as these abound in this book, helping us to fine-tune our sense of the countries our forebears once called home. They were NOT all the same. Antisemitism in Romania was not the same antisemitism as in Poland. We have been immensely enriched by Gruber's sensitive treatment of "die alte heim". (Jewish Heritage Travel: A Guide to Central & Eastern Europe, by Ruth Ellen Gruber. John Wiley & Sons, Inc. 1992) Reviewer: PP ●