



Resource Guide: Searching your Jewish Ancestors from Romania

By: Marcel Glaskie

To help those who are researching Jewish roots in Romania, I have put together this brief resource guide which might be helpful. Much of this information is based on a lecture given to the JGS of Manchester, UK, on March 23, 2014. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me by my e-mail: marcelg.romgen@gmail.com.

I. CIVIL RECORD REGISTERS: GENERAL INFORMATION

- The most popular source of genealogical data is usually found in the registers of civil records, which contain the declarations of births, marriages and deaths.
- Prior to 1865, registers were kept by the Orthodox Church, the Catholic Church and the Jewish Synagogue. From that time, there was compulsory state registration.
- The privacy of civil records is governed by the 100 year rule and within that period public access is not permitted. Certified copies are only available to proven family members.
- Every city, town and village has a registry office, which is affiliated with the municipality and is housed either in the city or town hall or in an annex building: the email address can be found on the internet.
- Civil registers which are more than 100 years old are usually deposited in the county archive of the particular city, town or village. But, in some instances, the municipality may continue to retain volumes for several more years before transferring them for storage in the county archive.
- From time to time, county boundaries in Romania changed so that in some cases, a search should be directed to the county archive that covered the location at the time in question. In most cases, the new county archive has most of the data.
- The way to conduct the search depends on the purpose and the means involved.

II. PRACTICAL GUIDELINES

- To obtain documentation to prove that your family was Romanian to allow the possibility of claiming Romanian E.U. citizenship, all requests should be directed via the Romanian embassy in the country where you reside.
- To find genealogical data, a request can be made directly by email to the relevant county archive. The [National Archive of Romania](#) has 42 regional branches, one in each county



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of Romania and one in Bucharest. The email addresses can be found by [clicking here](#).

- The request should be very brief, giving only the name of the city, town or village, and the year in question. You should state if you are looking for information re: a birth, marriage or death, give the full name of the person and the names of the parents, and offer to pay any fees. Applications may be submitted in English but take care not to use American terminology; in Romania, they use British English.

III. PERSONAL SEARCH

A personal search for information must be requested in advance. It takes two days to gain access to any registers. The procedure is as follows:

1. Write to the archive and tell them that you intend to visit them stating the date, the purpose of the visit and a request to photograph the civil record. Specify the area in question and ask if that material is available to the public. Be sure to include a copy of your passport data to identify yourself.
2. On the approved day, go early to the archive with your passport and request a reader's card, then make a written request on the appropriate forms for the required record books, which will only be made available the following day.
3. There are restrictions on the number of files that can be seen on any visit; sometimes the archive will allow more files for visitors from overseas but the request should be made in advance. Be prepared to spend a few full days at the archive.
4. Be aware that on each day at the archive there are many official forms to be filled in and submitted, and there is a daily fee which sometimes has to be paid at the city treasurer's office, not in the archive. The receipt has then to be presented to the librarian.
5. Photography of records is allowed but without flash or flood light, using only the lights of the reading room or the daylight from the windows.
6. If your approach is exceptionally polite and warm, the librarian in charge of the reading room may offer you some assistance with the filling in of the mass of obligatory paperwork, which is all in Romanian.

The declarations which were hand written by the registrars in the civil records are very extensive, and give names, ages, occupations, and addresses of the families and of the numerous witnesses that accompanied them. A certified certificate issued by the registrar is only an abstract of all that data.

IV. SCHOOL RECORDS

The school registers and admission books are usually still available in the individual school archives. After obtaining permission from the school authorities, I traced many Jewish students from this source. However, the school grades for individual students are kept confidential.

V. PROPERTY DEEDS



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Many local people are afraid to reveal information about property, fearing that outsiders will come to claim back property that was appropriated in the period of the Holocaust and after the fall of the Communist administration.

But those citizens who have rightful title are sometimes willing to produce the documentation, which reveals the names of many previous Jewish owners. There are registers of the sale of property, but it is difficult to access them.

Unfortunately the province of Moldavia was not under the Austrian Empire, so there is much less information available there than, say, in Transylvania. The Romanian Cadastre Office was only opened in the 20th century, so there are no early files. The names of streets and direction of numbering have changed many times during the 20th century.

VI. MATERIAL IN PRIVATE HANDS

A great source of data is still in private hands in the form of passports, and military pass books, I have been sent copies by families originally from Romania who are now living around the world. Ask around your family to see if they have such material.

VII. CENSUS DATA

Although there were many national censuses in Romania, in most cases the census returns are reported to have been destroyed, with only the analysis remaining. Further research is required on this subject.

Podu Iloaiei, a small and poor town in the Moldavian region of Romania, does not appear on many maps. It is about 17 miles west and slightly north of the city of Iasi. Yet a book of 168 densely printed pages about this town's Jewish life was published in 1990, describing (in Romanian) its history, local economy, cultural activities, synagogues, rabbinical traditions, etc. Of special interest to genealogists, the book also contains several censuses of the Jews living in this town. The earliest was dated 1824 and the latest 1898. It is the 1898 census, consisting of some 723 names and taking up just 26 pages that have been extracted and translated. Search [the JewishGen Romania Collection](#) for more information.

II. ROMANIAN BUSINESS DIRECTORY 1924-1925

The Business Directory for all Romania covers every city, town and village and records the names and occupations of many of the inhabitants, many of whom were Jewish. This publication can be found by [clicking here](#).

IX. CEMETERY EPITAPHS

A search of inscriptions on the Jewish grave stones and an attempt to match them with the information from civil death records often reveals a lot of interesting information. When checking the dates, remember that before 1919 Romania used the Julian calendar, so the



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calculation of the date should be made accordingly.

XI. SECURITAT

The archive of the CNSAS Securitate in Bucharest is available for researching individual files; requests should be made in writing. However, if it is not your direct family you need to be an accredited researcher.

XII. YAD VASHEM

In order to search for relatives, the “Pages of Witness” in Yad Vashem, Jerusalem can often supply information. Survivors of the Holocaust, and relatives and friends who had immigrated from Romania before the Holocaust, filled in forms giving details of their relatives who had perished. The names and addresses of those bearing witness are given in the forms which are freely available on the internet.

I hope this has been helpful and welcome questions and feedback [via email](mailto:marcelg.romgen@gmail.com).
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Thank you,
Marcel Glaskie

PS. Please visit my websites:

www.romgen.org

Kehilinks site for the town of Raducaneni.

<https://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/raducaneni/>