THE PALE OF JEWISH SETTLEMENT





The Pale of Jewish Settlement was the western area of the Russian Empire in which Jews were allowed to live. It began with the first partition of Poland in 1772 and survived until the beginning of World War I in 1917. This area is of special interest to Jews, as the vast majority of their ancestors lived there. This timeline provides a chronology of significant

events related to the Pale. For further background, the reader may wish to refer to the Encyclopedia Judaica (New York: Macmillan, 1971–1972), Simon Dubnow's History of the Jews in Russia and Poland from the Earliest Times Until the Present Day (New York: Ktav, 1975), and Salo Baron's The Russian Jew Under Tsars and Soviets, 2nd ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1976).

TIMELINE OF THE PALE OF JEWISH SETTLEMENT (1770–1820)

1780	1790	1800	1810		
1772: First partition of Poland. 27,000 Jews in Vitebsk (then Polotsk) and Mogilev are incorporated into Russia.	last three pro- up New Russi government i their coloniza merchants are	overment is in Vinebsk, 1801 terinoslav, Faurida (these vinces make ia, and the s interested in ticol). Jewish e no knger	1801: Paul I is killed; Alexander I becomes tsar. 1804: The study initiated by Paul is completed, and a decree is issued aiming to better integrate Jews into general society by causing them to use civil languages and dress. It also calls for the uprooting of all Jews from small villages to towns by 1807. Astrakhan and the Northern Caucasus are added to the Pale.		
1774: The formerly Turkish areas of New Russia are added to the Empire. This area contains few Jews, mostly Karaite.	(then Brats) (then area is		lia (then and Poltava are added to the side. Russia now		
	1786: A decree is issued limiting to one-third the number of town councilors in any town who can be Jewish. In practice, few Jews become councilors at all.	1795: Third partition. Grodno, Kovno and Vilna are added to the Pale. Russia now contains about one million Jews. Decrees are issued endeavoring to move lews from villages to towns to restrict		nd Duchy is expanded tern Galicia. abia is taken in an ith Napoleon on finence and added	
		1796: Tsar Catherine (the Great) dies and i becomes tsar. Paul ini studies on how to de with the Jews.	Paul I is dissolved, with mos trates territory incorporated in Russian Empire as Co Poland, comprised provinces. Technically, I	t of its nto the mgress 4 of 10 Poland	
		1799t Fan rawages po the Pale. J innkeeper blamed, at are dispos Courland I to the Pale	rtions of ewish s are d many essed. s added Alexander I issues a decr the unfounded spreas libels. But such accusat to be made and pursued.	inder rules. 1817: ee forbidding ding of blood ions continue Government	
			efforts are initiated convert. Converts are pro New Russia. The effo abands	mised land in	



A distraught father tends to family members killed during a pogrom in Russia, c. 1917

24

TIMELINE OF THE PALE OF JEWISH SETTLEMENT (1820–1870)

1820	1830	1840	1850	1860	1870
1820: Jews comprise 1.6 million of Russia's 46 million inhabitants. 1827: 25-ye Jewish taken then t Jewish when	1827: Jewish life in Kiev is s 25-year military obligation f Jewish youth is initiated. Un taken away from the commu- then to begin their 25 years Jewish males are impressed i when it is effectively ended. many others convert to lesser	mile-wide w Pale. This wa exclude only resided in th control of the second second or draftees, the Cantonist progra for it, Jewish boys as young as nity to be educated in military of military service at age 18. Up no this program between 182. Many die from the harsh condi	tion to a Russia's 61 m am. for 12 are schools and p to 60,000 7 and 1856, tions, and	omprise 2.4 million of illion inhabitants. 1855: Tsar Nicholas dies and is succeeds by his son, Alexand II, who is favorably disposed toward the Jews and wishes the integrated into the Empire. 1856: The Canto suspended, altho	m ovement, the right to own property and the 1 right to testify in court ed on an equal footing er en mist program is
	ha im	rebellion The put little	mall villages and some cities. I ind language codes, and a min	Schools and the then univer- sities are pro- opened to Jews, and their participation is encouraged. t t ated. It f in c immun	 Merchant members of first estate are allowed to de in the inner Russian vinces. 1861: A decree bans the conversion of Jewish children under age 14 without their parents' permission. University graduates and obysicians with medical degrees are allowed to reside zutside the Pale.
	iđi the (h un UN wi	ntifying what provinces make : Northern Cancasus from it. Ti linsk, Mogilev and Vitebsk), Bed d Vilna), New Russia (Kherson raine (Chernigov, Kiev, Podolia lich was not technically part of mza, Lublin, Piotrikow, Plock, I	it up and removing Astrakhan ne Pale now consists of Beloru ssarahia, Lithuania (Kovno, G , Taurida and Hkaterinoslav), a , Poltava and Volhynia). Polea the Pale, consists of Kalisz, Ki	and ssia rodno nd elce,	1865: Skilled craftsmen are allowed to reside outside the Pale, as long as their movement is approved by their home province and they remain gainfully employed.
	1820–1870: A tota	l of 7,500 Russian and	Polish Jews emigrate (to the United Sta	ites

Hal Bookbinder has been writing and lecturing on genealogical and Jewish historical topics for over a decade. He has served as chair of an annual Seminar on Jewish Genealogy (Los Angeles, 1990), president of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Los Angeles (1991–1993), and treasurer and then vice-president of the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies (1994 to present). He has extensively researched his own family, tracing several lines into the early nineteenth and late eighteenth centuries, when they lived in the area known as The Pale of Jewish Settlement. Mr. Bookbinder was raised in the Catskills of New York State, absorbing its unique "Borscht Belt" experience. After obtaining degrees in mathematics and operations research from New York University and in business from the University of Northern Colorado, he and his wife, Marci, settled in the Los Angeles area. Their four adult children live in or around Los Angeles. Mr. Bookbinder manages computing and telecommunications for UCLA Healthcare and is an instructor of mathematics and statistics at the University of Phoenix.

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TIMELINE OF THE PALE OF JEWISH SETTLEMENT (1870–1917) 1870 1880 1890 1900 1910 1920 1881: Tsar Alexander II is 1890: Jews 1897: A census of the 1910: Jews comprise 5.6 comprise 4 assassinated on March 1 and is succeeded by Pale shows 4,899,300 million of Russia's 130.8 million inhabitants. The million of Jews. They constitute one Alexander III, a vehement Russia's 86 out of every nine resi-dents; 99% claim Yiddish 1871: A massive pogrom occurs in Odessa. A tsarist commission blames the Jews. four Jewish members of million anti-Semite. the Duma (the Russian inhabitants. as their native tongue. legislature) propose a bill to disband the Pale. 1884: Decrees are 1874: The 25-year conscription and Cantonist laws are repealed. Jews are now to be drafted with issued limiting 1891-1892; Jewish partici-It is ignored. Thousands of Jewish craftsmen and their 1903: Several hundred villages that had grown pation in the schools and uniobligations similar to those imposed on the rest of the families are expelled from Moscow. versities and in land ownership. in size are declared population. towns, allowing Jews to reside in them. 1887: The towns of Rostov and 1879: Medical professionals (dentists, nurses, midwives) are allowed to Taganrog are excluded from the Pale. 1911: Mendel Beilis is accused of ritual reside outside the Pale, murder in Kiev. He is 1903-1906: with or without university 1888: Constantin Petrovich acquitted in 1913. Horrific pogroms across the Pale take place in 64 towns and 626 villages. Pobedonostsev, Tsar degrees. Alexander's confidant, writes 1914-1915: that the only solution for the World War I begins and the territory of the Pale is 1875: Jewish These are supported by Jewish question in Russia is the government as a way to combat revolutionaryouth across that "one-third should emi-Russia, includinvaded by a foreign army for the first time in 100 years. The destruction results in tens of grate, one-third become 1881-1884: ies. There are no pogroms in Poland or Lithuania. About 1,000 ing Congress Poland, are Pogroms begin in Christian, and one-third Elizavetgrad, and spread across South should perish." registered for thousands of Jews moving from the Pale into old Russia. Though military Jews die, thousands are injured, and tens of thou-Russia, Ukraine, and 1889: A decree is issued service still a legal entity, the Pale ha even to Warsaw. Over that severely restricts Jewish lawyers, allowing few to practice law. sands are ruined. de facto, ceased to exist. the next few years, viclence occurs across the breadth of the Pale. 1917: The Jewish emigration is 1893: The town of Pale, along with all anti-1905: Jewish veterans of the Russo-Japanese War are allowed to settle outside of the encouraged Yalta is excluded from the Pale. Jewish statutes, is abolished by the Provisional Pale (later, when these veterans are drafted for service in World Government of Russia, led by Prince Georgi Lvov and Alexander Kerrenski. 1894: Alexander III War I, their families are forced to dies and is succeeded by move to the Pale). 1882: "May laws" are promulgated prohibiting Jews from conducting business on Sundays and Christian Nicholas II, who will be the 1905-1916; Some 2,837 anti-Semitic books and last tsar of holidays, from moving between pamphlets are published in Russia, Russia. villages, and allowing for their expulsion from villages where the with the tsar underwriting much of the cost. Christian community so wishes it. 1881-1890: 135,000 Russian 1891-1900: 280,000 Russian 1901-1910: 704,000 Russian 1911-1920: 350,000 Russian 1871-1880: 4,000 Russian and Polish Jews emigrate to the United States. and Polish Jews emigrate to the and Polish Jews emigrate to the United States. and Polish Jews emigrate to the and Polish Jews emigrate to United States. the United States. United States.



THE RUSSIAN GUBERNIYA AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY

by Hal Bookbinder

PRUSSIA Contraction States

Understanding the geographic history of an ancestral town can provide us with clues as to where to search for records, how they might be organized and in what languages they may have been written. It may also shed light on the environment in which our ancestors lived.

Consider Volhynia. The oldest records of Jews in Volhynia date to the twelfth century, when the Volhynian Chronicles note that resident Jews mourned the death of a prince of Volhynia. At that time, Volhynia was an independent principality. In 1452, Volhynia was absorbed by the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. In 1569, it was transferred to the Kingdom of Poland. In 1793, the eastern portion of Volhynia was incorporated into the Russian Empire; in 1795, Russia took the rest. In 1917, Volhynia became part of an independent Ukraine. By 1921, Poland had taken the western two-thirds of Volhynia. The 1939 partition of Poland between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union resulted in all of Volhynia being incorporated into the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (SSR). Finally, with the 1991 breakup of the Soviet Union, Volhynia became a part of independent Ukraine.

The borders of Volhynia have not been static either; they have tended to shift to the east over the centuries. In the thirteenth century, the principality of Volhynia included lands that are currently in eastern Poland. The eastern portion of Volhynia, including the city of Zhitomir, was joined to it only in the 1790s, after the partition of Poland. Prior to the partition, Lutsk was the traditional capital of Polish Volhynia. Under Russia, Zhitomir became the capital. From 1921 to 1939, Lutsk was the capital of Polish Volhynia (Wolyn), while Zhitomir was the capital of Soviet Volhynia.

When Polish Volhynia was incorporated into the Ukrainian SSR in 1939, it was divided into two oblasts. The western portion was designated Volhynia Oblast, and the eastern portion became Rovno Oblast. They, with Zhitomir Oblast, which had been a part of the Ukraine since 1917, comprise most of historic Volhynia. These three oblasts remain today, with their respective capitals of Lutsk, Rovno and Zhitomir. Some smaller portions of Volhynia were included in other oblasts. For example, the town of Kremenets went to Tarnopol Oblast, and the town of Shepetovka went to Khmelnitskiy Oblast (formerly Proskurov).

My ancestral town of Dubno is currently in Rovno Oblast, Ukraine. So it might be logical to look for records in Rovno or in Kiev, the Ukrainian capital. However, recognizing that Dubno was in Russian Volhynia from 1795 to 1917, I should not overlook Zhitomir and Moscow. And, since Dubno was in Polish Volhynia from 1569 to 1795 and from 1921 to 1939, I probably should not overlook Lutsk and Warsaw either.

The information that follows provides an overview of the political geography of the Pale of Jewish Settlement in the 1890s, when most of our ancestors were living there.

The Pale of Jewish Settlement consisted of the vice-regencies of Belorussia, Bessarabia, Lithuania, New Russia and Ukraine (Poland was a separate legal entity). Each vice-regency was composed of one or more guberniyas (provinces). Each guberniya was made up of a number of uezdy (districts). Normally, the name of a uezd was the same as its chief town. When the town had a different name, it is shown as "uezd/ town" (see facing page). The population figures are from the 1897 Russian census, as shown in the *Atlas* of Modern Jewish History by Evyatar Friesel (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990). The list of uezdy by guberniya is from the Great Soviet Encyclopedia, A. M. Prokhorov, ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1973– 1983). The contemporary names shown in parentheses are from Where Once We Walked, by Gary Mokotoff and Sallyann Amdur Sack (Teaneck, NJ: Avotaynu, Inc., 1991).

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List of inhabitants for the town of Dubno, 1850. Entry #3 is for Berko Bukhbinder (1786–1848), son of Shlomo. Also shown are Berko's son Abram Itsko (born 1823), married to Khava-Serla (born 1826), and their daughter, Ester (born 1848); and Berko's second son, Shimon (1832–1837).

THE PALE OF JEWISH SETTLEMENT with 1897 Population Data				
Vice–Regency; Jewish Population; Jews as Percentage of Total Population	Guberniya (Year Formed); Jewish Population	Uezd (Contemporary Name); * = Guberniya Capital		
Belorussia 724,500 13.6%	Minsk (1793–1795, 1796) 345,000 Mogilev (1773–1778, 1802) 203,900 Vitebsk (1802) 175,600	Bobruisk, Borisov, Igumen (Cherven), *Minsk, Mozyr, Novogrudok, Pinsk, Rechitsa, Slutsk Bykhov, Chausy, Cherikov, Gomel, Gorki, Klimovichi, *Mogilev, Mstislavl, Orsha, Rogachev, Senno Drissa (Verkhnedvinsk), Dvinsk (Daugavpils), Gorodok, Lepel, Liutsin (Ludza), Nevel, Polotsk, Rezhitsa (Rezekne Sebezh (Sebeza), Velizh, *Vitebsk		
Bessarabia 228,500 11.8%	Bessarabia (1873)	Akkerman (Belgorod Dnestrovskiy), Beltsy, Bendery, Izma Khotin, *Kishinev, Orgeyev, Soroki		
Lithuania 697,400 14.7%	Grodno (1801) 280,000 Kovno (1842) 212,700 Vilna (1795–1797, 1802) 204,700	Bialystok, Bielsk, Brest Litovsk (Brest), *Grodno, Kobrin, Pruzhany, Slonim, Sokolka, Volkovysk *Kovno (Kaunas), Novoaleksandrovsk (Zarasai), Panevezy Raseiniai, Siauliai, Telsiai, Vilkomir (Ukmerge) Disna, Lida, Oshmyany, Svencionys, Trakai, Vileika (Nanjoji Vilnia), *Vilna (Vilnius)		
New Russia 501,800 8.0%	Ekaterinoslav (1802) 101,100	Aleksandrovka, Bakhmut (Artemosvk), *Ekaterinoslav (Dnepropetrovsk), Mariupol (Zhdanov), Novomoskovsk, Pavlograd, Slavianoserbsk/Lugansk (Voroshilovgrad), Verkhnedneprovsk		
	Kherson (1803) 339,000 Taurida (1802) 60,800	Aleksandriya, Ananyev, Elizavetgrad (Kirovograd), *Kherson, Odessa, Tiraspol Berdyansk, Dnepr/Aleshki (Tsyurupinsk), Feodosiya, Melitopol, Perekop, *Simferopol, Yalta, Yevpatoriya		
Ukraine 1,425,500 9.7%	Chernigov (1796) 114,500	Borzna, *Chernigov, Glukhov, Gorodnya, Konotop, Kozelets, Krolevets, Mglin, Nezhin, Novgorod Severskiy, Novozybkov, Oster, Sosnitsa, Starodub, Surazh		
	Kiev (1708–1781, 1796) 433,700	Berdichev, Cherkassy, Chigirin, Kanev, *Kiev (Kyiv), Lipovets, Radomyshl, Skvira, Tarashcha, Uman, Vasilkov, Zvenigorodka		
	Podolia (1796) 370,600	Balta, Bratslav, Gaysin, *Kamenets Podolskiy, Letichev, Litin, Mogilev Podolskiy, Novaya Ushitsa, Olgopol, Proskurov (Khmelnitskiy), Vinnitsa, Yampol		
	Poltava (1802) 110,900	Gadyach, Khorol, Konstantinograd (Krasnograd), Kovelya Kremenchug, Lokhvitsa, Lubny, Mirgorod, Pereyaslav (Pereyaslav Khmelnitskiy), Piryatin, *Poltava, Priluki, Romny, Zenkov, Zolotonosha		
	Volhynia (1796) 395,800	Dubno, Izyaslav, Kovel, Kremenets, Lutsk, Novograd Volynskiy, Ostrog, Ovruch, Rovno, Starokonstantinov, Vladimir Volynskiy, *Zhitomir		

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