

GENEALOGICAL RESOURCES IN THE CENTRAL STATE HISTORICAL ARCHIVES OF UKRAINE IN KIEV (KYIV)

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This article serves as an introduction to the Genealogical Resources in the Central State Historical Archives of Ukraine in Kiev and a guide to genealogical research in the collections of Ukrainian archives.

Archival System of Ukraine

The network of State archives in Ukraine includes some 680 institutions including:

- Seven Central State Archives of Ukraine;
- Scientific Reference Library of Central State Archives of Ukraine
- State Archive in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea;
- Twenty-Four State Oblast Archives
- State Archives for the cities of Kiev and Sevastopol;
- 487 archival departments of region (oblast) state administrations; and
- 157 local archives.

The archival system of Ukraine employs more than 3,000 archivists and other staff members. Archival institutions under the State Committee on Archives of Ukraine preserve more than 55 million files (units); 74,000 video documents, more than one million photo documents; 30,000 audio documents and 613,000 items of scientific-technical documentation, all included in the National Archival Fond as one of the most important components of the national information resources and national historical heritage of Ukraine.

Within the network of archives throughout Ukraine, there are many millions of documents that together form a national documentary heritage of all peoples of Ukraine through ten centuries of “written history” as reflected by the papers of individuals, records of organizations, and government institutions. Depending upon the period and geographic region, these documents are recorded in many languages including Russian, Ukrainian, German, Polish, Hungarian, Hebrew and Yiddish. A huge mass of documents, mainly from the 15th–18th centuries, is recorded in Latin, Church Slavonic, Old-Ukrainian and Old-Polish languages.

The State Committee on Archives of Ukraine is the central body of executive power in the field of archival affairs and document preservation, created by Presidential Decree on December 15, 1999 as successor to the Central Archival Administration of Ukraine.

Since 1956, the State Committee on Archives of Ukraine has been a member of the International Council of Archives, a non-governmental professional organization and acting under UNESCO.

By special Decree of the President of Ukraine in 1998, a professional holiday was established: “Archivists’ Day,” which is celebrated annually on December 24.

On December 13, 2001, the Parliament of Ukraine passed a new law entitled “National Archival Fond and Archival Institutions.”

Historical Overview of the

Central State Historical Archives of Ukraine and its Collections

In the system of Ukrainian archival institutions, the Central State Historical Archives of Ukraine located in Kiev (TsDIAK) is one of the oldest and richest archival repositories in the country. In October 2002, we celebrated our 150-year anniversary. Our Archive was founded in 1852 as the Archives of Early Acts at the Kiev University of Saint Vladimir.

At the present time, more than 1,600 fonds (record groups) and approximately 1.5 million files are preserved in the TsDIAK of Ukraine).

Unique written documents at the Archives reflect the long history of Ukraine, with items dating from the thirteenth century until 1917. They are preserved in fonds of central and local institutions that operated during the occupation of Ukrainian lands by the Great Lithuanian Principality and Polish nobility, institutions of the Cossack administration and the Tsarist institutions established after Ukraine was annexed by Russia.



Olga Muzychuk, director of the Central State Historical Archives of Ukraine in Kiev (photo credit: Miriam Weiner, 2002)

The oldest documentary material in TsDIAK is the manuscript of Gospel in Greece dating from the thirteenth century. The earliest documents consist of miscellaneous charters dating from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The oldest charter dates from 1369.

The next group of records dates from the Polish period in Right-Bank Ukraine (west of the Dnieper River). Most important are the early court records from Kiev, Volhynia, Podolia and specifically from Bratslav, Zhytomyr, Lutsk, Volodymyr, Kamenets and Kremenets. Records of municipal magistrates, self-governing under Magdeburg law, date from as early as 1519 in the Right Bank-Ukraine, and from 1651 in the Left-Bank Ukraine (east of the Dnieper River).

Documentation from the Ukrainian Cossack and Hetmanate periods includes most surviving records of the New Zaporozhian Sech, General Military Chancery, General Military Court, records of the chancery of hetman Kyrylo Rozumovsky, military-administrative records from the polky and sotny.

From the 18th century, in the Russian administrative organs, records remain from the First and Second Collegiums of Little Russia and some gubernia's chanceries. Of particular importance for socio-economic, geographic, demographic history and genealogy are the records of the cadastral census dating from 1765–1769, called General Survey of Left-Bank Ukraine.

From the period after the annexation of Russia, there are records from the Chancery of Governor General of Little Russia

and from the Chancery of Governor General of Kiev, Podolia and Volhynia. Other large groups of documents are judicial and fiscal records of Kiev High Court, Kiev United Chamber of Criminal and Civil Court, Kiev and Odessa Judicial Chambers, Kiev, Odessa and Kharkov Military District Courts.

TsDIAK keeps the records of gubernia-level gendarme administrations and secret police in Kiev, Volynia, Podolia, Chernigov, Poltava, Kharkov, Odessa, Katerinoslav and Kherson.

Records of educational and cultural institutions, societies and organizations are kept in the Archives. There are documents of Educational Districts of Kiev and Kharkov and the Kiev Theological Academy.

Records of religious institutions include those of Kiev and Pereyaslav-Borispol Ecclesiastical Consistories, numerous fonds of Kiev and other Ukrainian monasteries and churches, rabbinate, catholic and protestant churches.

Archives of many important gentry families from Ukrainian lands are held in TsDIAK: Branicki, Halahan, Khanenko, Mniszech, Poniatowski, Potocki, Radziwill, Rzewuski, Skoropadsky, Tereshchenko, Hrushevsky, Potebnia, Sumcov and others.

Among all of these general fonds, there are numerous documentary sources on the history of the Jewish people who have lived on the territory of the present-day Ukraine for many centuries. These documents tell complicated and sometimes dramatic stories about the lives of Jews in Ukraine.



Frontal view of the Central State Historical Archives in Kiev (photo source: TsDIAK, 2002)

A large number of Jewish names are found in the most valuable part of the documentary collection of the Central State Historical Archives of Ukraine in Kiev – record law books from the fifteenth-eighteenth centuries of the courts and estate institutions of the Right-Bank Ukraine; city, district and confederate courts (which resolved issues between jurisdictions within the Russian Empire); and city governments. The acts were written in old-Ukrainian, Polish and Latin. They concern sales, leases, tenancy, transfer or division of property, contracts about mortgages and family, the lives of citizens, notes on the laws of Kiev and Volynia regions, information on taxes paid and lists of people and their duties in the specific region.

This collection is a priceless resource for studying the history of Ukraine in general, and more specifically, the Jewish history of Ukraine. The TsDIAK under the Agreement with the Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People (in Jerusalem) is now preparing the indexes of documents and microfilms from these fonds with information about Jewish life in the middle ages in Ukraine.

The period from the end of the seventeenth to the beginning of the twentieth century is more favorable for research on Jewish genealogy in Ukrainian archives and, particularly, in TsDIAK. In 1786, by Edict of Catherine II, an area known as the “Pale of Jewish Settlement” was established on the territory of Ukraine and Poland which is why our Archives possess vast numbers of documents relating to these subjects.

The most important resources for studying Jewish genealogy are the metrical books of synagogues in Kiev and Kiev Province, stored in our Archives. These books total approximately 1,500 units dating from the mid-nineteenth century to 1920.

These registers include the civil acts of the Jewish people: birth, marriage, divorce and death records. If a person was born and lived in a town with a synagogue, there is no problem in locating the relevant books, if the books still exist (have survived the Holocaust). If the town or village was not large enough to have a synagogue, the researcher must locate the nearby larger town that had a synagogue and search the metrical books of this larger town.

Unfortunately, many towns were only able to preserve the metrical books (or only fragments of books) for a limited time period.

Additional important resources for Jewish genealogy are the fonds of administrative and economic institutions of Gubernias. Rich genealogical material is found in the fond of Administration Office of the Board of Education. Ukraine had a wide network of schools, gymnasiums (high schools), colleges and institutes, and universities where Jewish young people received their education. The archives of educational establishments contain documents from Cheders, Talmud-Torahs, Yeshivas, Melameds (teachers), official Jewish schools, the Zhitomir Rabbinate School and others.

Administrative fonds of the Office of Governor and Governor-General include census information for certain

towns and estates. The annual reports of provincial governors represent the data of the number of enterprises, factories and workshops in Jewish hands, materials about the development of industry, handicrafts and agriculture. Jewish participation in economic life is found in the documents of the All-Russian Society of Sugar Owners, the Brodsky Family of Sugar Plant Owners, and the government body of the Steamship Navigation Company on the River Dnieper, and others.

The documents of police and gendarmerie institutions and prison include information about political activities of Jewish parties such as the Socialist Jewish Worker’s party, Jewish people’s party, Poalei Zion party, Zionist-Maximalists and Zionist-Socialists party, their congresses, publications, local organization and more. Also, we preserve a police card index for Jews who participated in the anti-government movement.

Relations between the Jews and Christians are described in documents about Jewish pogroms, in the fond of the Kiev Ecclesiastical Consistory.

TsDIAK keeps some personal archives of Jewish political and cultural leaders and deputies in the Russian State Duma: Harkavi, Bramson, Margolin, Friedman, Nisselovich and Gurevich.

Also, we conserve the documents of the Jewish Historical and Archeographical Commission that describe various aspects of political, economic, cultural and religious life of Jews in Ukraine from the period of 1519–1917.

A collection of Torahs is also conserved in our Archives. Eighteen items from this collection are now in use in the Central Synagogue (Brodsky’s synagogue) in Kiev.

In all of the foregoing documents, there is genealogical information.



■ Photograph of students from the Technical School in Vinnitsa.

Genealogical Research: Step-by-Step

Genealogical research is an important part of the Archives' activities. Each year we receive many inquiries from those whose ancestors once lived in Ukraine and who want our assistance in searching their family history.

Research of this data is still a very complicated matter. It was not until 1988 that genealogy research was officially permitted throughout the archival system of the former Soviet Union. In modern Ukraine, genealogical research is not well established for that reason, but also due to the lack of computer systems and other technological advances throughout the archival system.

The administrative subordination of Ukraine's territory changed so many times, especially during the twentieth century, that archival documents about residents of the same town could be stored in several different archives (and in more than one country).

Additionally, many Jews did not register in their own small towns, but instead, in large cities such as Kiev and Pereyaslav, etc. In this case, research is possibly only by family name in our database (which is in the beginning stage of development and does not include all names).

The Central State Historical Archives of Ukraine in Kiev is preparing a database of records of the metrical books of synagogues, beginning with the Kiev Rabbinate. At this time, we are able to search birth information of more than 34 percent of the registered births in Kiev.

For the last ten years, archivists in Ukraine have been cooperating with Miriam Weiner (president of the Routes to Roots Foundation), to compile a town-by-town inventory of archival documents to be accessible in a searchable database. In May 2002, this database was posted at the Foundation website (www.rtrfoundation.org). This website includes extensive information about our archival documents as well as several chapters written by Ukrainian archivists.

We thank Ms. Weiner for her outstanding (and continuing) work in publishing the first guide and creating the on-line database of archival inventories of Jewish genealogical information in Ukrainian State Archives. Now, researchers are able to find information about Ukrainian towns that had Jewish communities, the availability of metrical books and other documents, and for what years the books exist and where they are stored.

To request genealogical research by Ukrainian archivists by mail, one should consult the contact list of archives at our website, which include postal addresses, e-mail addresses (where available) and telephone/fax numbers of Ukrainian State Archives.

In each inquiry, the following information should be provided:

- a. Historical region of Ukraine (Kiev, Galicia, Transcarpathia, Volhynia, Podolia, etc.) where the ancestors once lived.
- b. Exact name of village or town
- c. Surname of ancestor (original surname), including maiden names of women

- d. Dates of birth, marriage and death
- e. Inquirer's name, postal address, e-mail address and fax number.

The precise data about the historical region of Ukraine (Galicia, Bukovina, Transcarpathia, Volhynia, Podolia, etc.) where the inquirer's ancestors lived is very important for a successful search. Each regional state archives keeps the metrical books for its own region and many inquiries are forwarded from this archive to the appropriate regional archives.

The State Archives conducts genealogical research on a fee basis. The research fee depends on the time and complexity of research and is determined by the general price list. In general, the average fee for an uncomplicated search does not exceed \$500 (excluding copy costs). However, the total amount could be higher depending upon the number of surnames searched, how common they are, how many archives have the material and how many towns are involved. Each inquirer should be prepared to sign an individual research agreement with the State Archives. Payment of fees is by bank transfer to the State Archives' currency account or by mail remittance (not cash). At this time, we do not accept payment by credit card.

In preparation for a visit to Ukrainian archives, you should consult the following books (in English) for example:

- Grimsted, Patricia Kennedy. *Archives and Manuscript Repositories in the USSR: Ukraine and Moldova.*
- Weiner, Miriam. *Jewish Roots in Ukraine and Moldova: Pages from the Past and Archival Inventories* (and also see: www.rtrfoundation.org).

Note: both of the foregoing publications were prepared in official cooperation with Ukrainian archivists.

For researchers who have located relevant documents in the above resources and who then decide to work themselves in our reading room, here are step-by-step instructions.



Olga Muzychuk, director of the Central State Historical Archives in Kiev, with one of dozens of Torahs in the archive's collection (photo credit: Miriam Weiner, 1992)



Photograph of students from one of the technical schools.

If you search your own roots, you must write an official application to the office of the director of TsDIAK (24 Solom'ianska Street, Kiev). This application should include the following information:

- Name/address of researcher
- Original surname of ancestor, including maiden names of women
- Exact name of village or town
- Some known dates of birth, marriage or death

For a successful search, you must provide useful information about your ancestors.

If you are making a search on behalf of someone else, you must have an official permission letter from this person which has been notarized.

The visitor/researcher is asked to complete a registration form in the reading room and then to place an order for indexes or books from the archival library. Unfortunately, there are NO finding aids in English. You should ask some in the archive for **limited** assistance in translating the available materials or bring your own translator.

In our archives, as in many larger archives, there are archivists who speak English, French or German, but they

may not be available to assist researchers because of their other duties. In any event, they could only spend a brief amount of time during the research process. If the researcher is not fluent in Russian or Ukrainian, they must provide their own translator for the research process, preferably someone who is experienced with archival research.

In our archives, we have a system of card indexes: by geographic name, by theme and by family names of famous people; however, only 25 percent of archival documents can be found in these cards.

Usually, it takes less than one hour to receive indexes, surveys or books from the library. Major guides and many inventories are available in the reading room and are accessible quickly. The specific files of archive documents requested will be delivered the next day or the time may be shortened, if possible, to accommodate the visitor's schedule. However, the general procedure is to deliver actual files of documents or books the day after the order is placed.

All documents in our archives are accessible. Only the poor physical condition of some files prohibits their use by researchers. TsDIAK does not make photocopies of these

documents because of the negative influence of copy machines on the old original texts (damage to binding, etc.). The solution for us is a digital copy of records. Or the searcher may make a copy in our reading room with a photo camera (without flash).

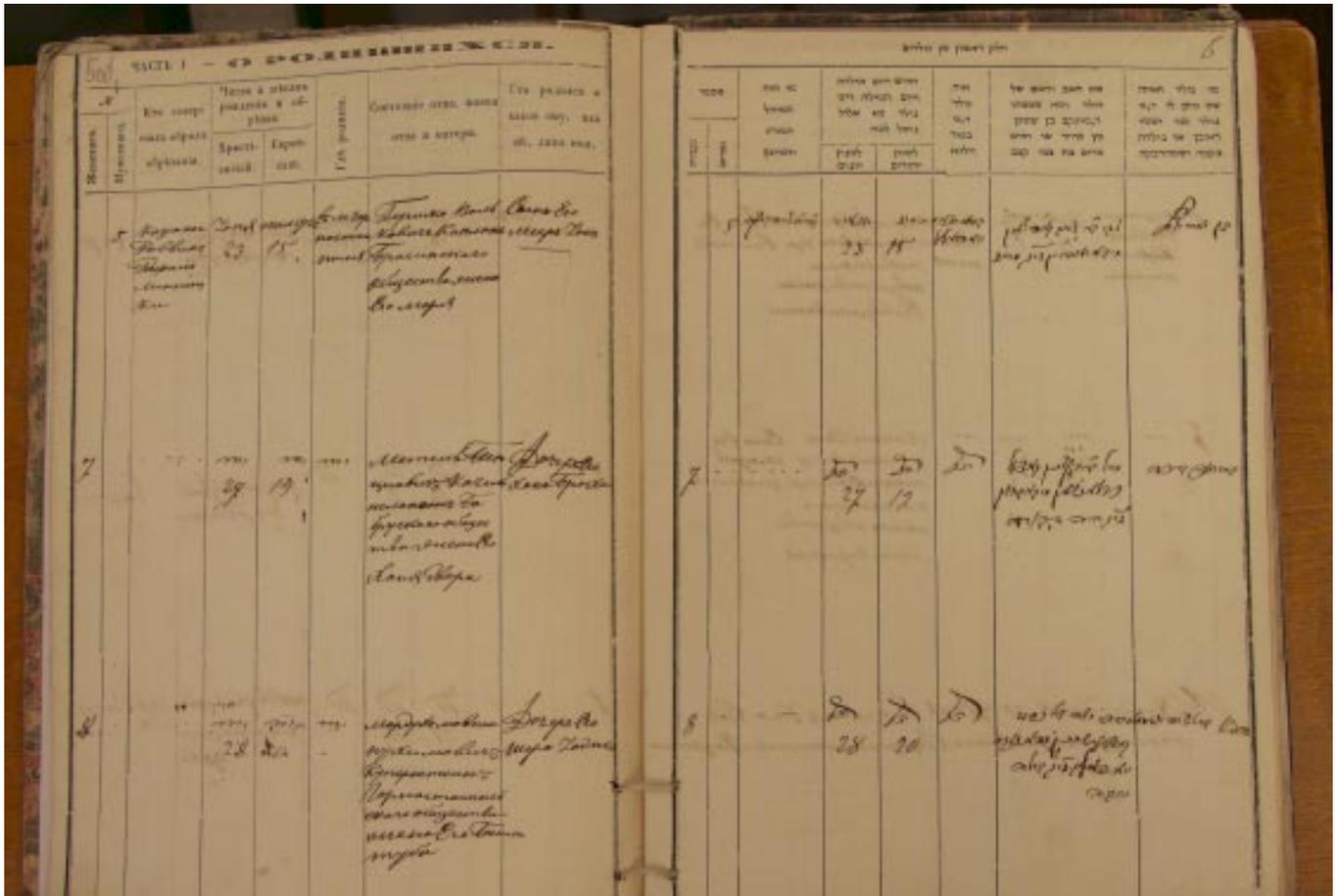
Please note there are new Rules of Work in the reading rooms of the State Archives of Ukraine, adopted in 2001. According to the new Rules, the only restriction regarding equipment is for scanners or portable copy machines which are usually forbidden because they may damage the unique medieval documents or book bindings. Therefore, before using a scanner or portable copier, the researcher should obtain permission from the chief of the reading room.

Any other equipment (including laptop computers, cameras and video cameras) is permitted. Visitors who plan to use equipment that operates on both battery and electricity, should be prepared to use the batteries rather than electrical outlets.

We would like to encourage visitors to come to our Archives. There are many skilled and qualified people, most of them working as archivists for many years, so any request

will be handled by staff with extensive knowledge and experience. Younger archivists have some language skills that will be helpful for those who do not speak Ukrainian or Russian. We are doing our best to help researchers and visitors.

Olga Muzychuk was born in Kiev in 1965 and is the current director of the Central State Historical Archives of Ukraine in Kiev. In 1987, Ms. Muzychuk graduated from Shevchenko University in Kiev with a degree in history and archives. That same year, she also began working as an archivist in the Central State Historical Archive of Ukraine. She then became chief of the section on using archival information, and from 1995, she has served as vice-director of the foregoing archives. Ms. Muzychuk studied archival procedures in France, where she graduated from the International Technical Archive School in Paris. She is a member of the Committee on Outreach and User's Services of the International Council on Archives.



Page with three birth records (1868) from Gornostaypol Jewish metrical book.