

# **The Growth of the Russian Jewish Population From Early Historical Data through the 1897 Census**

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## I. Russian Gubernia History

In legislation ordered by Tsar Peter the Great in 1708, eight governors (Russian: gubernator) were established to govern areas of Russia, which became known as gubernias, and stretched from European Russia to Siberia.

Among the original eight gubernias, Astrakhan, Azov, Kazan, Kiev, Moscow, Siberia, Smolensk and St. Petersburg, Jewish populations were found in five towns, and records of individuals have been found in four other cities prior to 1708.

By 1719, there were 50 gubernias, created by dividing the initial eight.

When the Pale of Jewish Settlement was created by Tsarina Ekaterina II in 1794, it contained 25 gubernias. Records of Jewish populations have been found in over 175 towns and cities up to that time.

## II. Reviskie Skazki

In ten attempts to enumerate the Russian population, from 1719 to 1859, lists of households, and later people, were gathered. As they were revised over several years, they became known as revision lists (Russian: reviskie skazki).

First Revision: 1719-1724, with corrections through 1727.

Second Revision: 1743-1747 with returns as late as 1757.

Third Revision: 1761-1767

Fourth Revision: 1781-1787

Fifth Revision: 1794-1808

Sixth Revision: 1811

Seventh Revision: 1815-1825

Eighth Revision: 1833-1835, revised through 1851.

Ninth Revision: 1850-1852

Tenth Revision: 1857-1859

Population data on Jews has been found in kahal records and the Eighth, Ninth and Tenth Revisions, with over 700 town citations based on the Eighth Revision in 1847.

## III. The Russian National Census of 1897

This one-day census for all of Russia collected data on individuals in 14 different categories, including name, age, marital status, estate, creed, native language and education. Although data on individuals was destroyed, except for records of a few towns, summary data for the categories can be found in existing records. This includes data on general and Jewish populations for many towns in all of Russia. The original summary data is available in LDS films and the Russian-language *Jewish Encyclopedia (Evreiskaya Entsiklopedia)*. Records of Jewish and total town populations of over 2,000 towns and cities is being excerpted by the author.

#### IV. Russian Laws Concerning the Jews

From 1649 to 1873, over 70,000 Russian laws were promulgated. Over 1,000 had direct bearing, mostly detrimental, on the lives of Jews in Russia. The Jewish-based material was collected and published in a rare book authored by Vitaly Levanda.

#### V. Resources: Books

*Complete Collection of Laws of the Russian Empire*. St. Petersburg: 1830 Microfiche in Law Library of Library of Congress; 115 volumes.

Dubnov, Simon *History of the Jews in Russia and Poland*. Philadelphia: JPS, 1916.

*Evreiskaya Entsiklopedia (Jewish Encyclopedia)*. St. Petersburg: Brokhaus & Efron, 1907-1913.

Graetz, Heinrich, *History of the Jews*. Philadelphia: JPS, 1891-1898..

Levanda, Vitaly *The complete chronological collection of laws and legal positions concerning the Jews: from the Legal Code of Tsar Alexsei Mikhailovich to the present time, 1649-1873. Excerpts from the Complete Code of Laws of Imperial Russia*. St. Petersburg: 1873.

Levitats, Isaac *The Jewish Community in Russia, 1844-1917*. Jerusalem: Posner and Sons, Ltd., 1981.

Shea, Jonathan and William Hoffman *In Their Words: A Genealogist's Translation Guide to Polish, German, Latin, and Russian Documents. Volume II: Russian*. New Britain, CT: Language and Lineage Press, 2002.

#### IV. Resources: Articles

Dunai, Alexander "The 1897 All-Empire Russian Census." *Avotaynu*: XXIV: iii, 12-14 (Fall, 2008).

Edlund, Thomas "The Russian National Census of 1897." *Avotaynu*, XVI, iii, 29-39 (Fall, 2000).

Feldblyum, Boris "Russian Revision Lists: A History." *Avotaynu*: XIV, iii, 59-61 (Fall, 1998).

Soshnikov, Vladislav "Sources for Genealogy In the Archives of the Former Soviet Union." *Avotaynu*: XI, ii, 13-14 (Summer, 1995).

ibid. "Sources for Jewish Genealogy in Belarussian Archives: New Discoveries from Recent Research." *Avotaynu*: XI, iii, 31-32 (Fall, 1995).