

Resources and Links for Researching Belarus

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Historically, as with many of the areas of eastern Europe, the country that is now the Republic of Belarus (since 1991, after the breakup of the Soviet Union) includes areas that are now parts of a variety of present-day countries, including civil and administrative states that are today part of Russia, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and Ukraine.

A good very brief history of Belarus is in the Center for Jewish History (CJH) Resource Guide on Belarus (see below under CJH).

An extensive and comprehensive “History of the Administrative Division of Belarus” (www.archives.gov.by/eng/index.php?id=989746) — in English — is included in the excellent website of the State Archives of Belarus (see below).

Selected Resources

JewishGen (online)

www.jewishgen.org

If you are researching the areas that are now included in Belarus, you should start with the Belarus SIG pages on jewishgen.org : www.jewishgen.org/Belarus/

This set of comprehensive and continually updated pages includes information on the following provinces (gubernias) : Grodno, Minsk, Mogilev, Vitebsk, and the Lida and Vileika districts (uyezds) of Vilna.

The information includes history, borders, maps, databases, links to archives, cemeteries, and translation and transliteration aids. [Please note that some of these pages were created in the 1990s and early 2000s and are useful but often have been superseded by more recent and thus more comprehensive information.]

You should join the Belarus SIG discussion group : www.jewishgen.org/Belarus/membersh.htm — Once on this page, click on the **Click here** link that will take you to the discussion group management page, where you can join the group. (If you are not already a JewishGen registered member you will be asked to register.)

The JewishGen Info Files (www.jewishgen.org/InfoFiles/#Belarus) include links to a variety of useful Belarus resources, including the following:

- the list of communities that are included in Belarus (kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/Belarus.html)
- the section of the Eastern European FAQ (EEFAQ) on Belarus (www.jewishgen.org/InfoFiles/eefaq.html#BELARUS).

A reasonably up-to-date and useful page is “How to use the Belarus SIG website to find your Belorussian ancestors and their shtetls” : www.jewishgen.org/Belarus/research_tool.htm

The most up-to-date and comprehensive information on records and resources of Belarus are contained in the following pages compiled by Nancy Holden:

- “A list of vital records microfilmed and cataloged by the Family History Library in Salt Lake City” www.jewishgen.org/Belarus/lds_records_minsk.htm
- An extensive and comprehensive “Outline of Archival Resources in the Repositories of Belarus” www.jewishgen.org/Belarus/outline_of_archival_resources_in.htm
- For a clear and full outline of the civil and administrative history of Belarus: “Timeline Consequences of Border Changes: The History of the Administrative-Territorial Division of Belarus” www.jewishgen.org/Belarus/borders_timeline.htm

LDS (Mormon) Family History Library (FHL) (online)

www.familysearch.org

The FamilySearch wiki has a section on Jewish Belarus research and resources. You should continue to check these pages over time, as new content is often included.

Jewish Research

familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Belarus_Jewish_Research

In addition to the Belarus-specific information in the main section, the left sidebar entitled “Jewish Research Topics” contains extensive and useful content about resources relevant to Jewish genealogical research.

Center for Jewish History (some online; New York City)

www.cjh.org

Visit this page to find many useful and valuable research guides, including one on Belarus:

www.cjh.org/p/60

To access the PDF of the Belarus guide:

—click on **All Research Guides**

—then click on **Belarus**

(click on the Belarus link to download the pdf of the guide)

A good brief history of the area can be found in this document, as well as up to date information on the relevant archives in Belarus and Lithuania, the holdings of the Family History Library, and a variety of useful web resources.

Routes to Roots Foundation (online)

www.rtrfoundation.org

The information on Belarus includes:

Articles and essays on Jewish Belarus resources: www.rtrfoundation.org/archps5.shtml

A list of archive contacts: www.rtrfoundation.org/archdta2.shtml

A variety of historical maps: www.rtrfoundation.org/maps4.shtml

Several digital books about the archives and their resources: www.rtrfoundation.org/acknow5.shtml

You can search for a town and the database will show what documents (record groups) are available and the years that are covered in each record group, with the name of the archive where the records are kept and the archive file number:

www.rtrfoundation.org/search.php

State Archives of Belarus

The state Archives of Belarus has many pages in English to help you with research and resources.

www.archives.gov.by/eng/index.php?id=12

It includes comprehensive descriptions of the collections that are available and useful information on how to access both online records and how to proceed with onsite research.

jewishbelarus.org

The website of the Jewish community of the Republic of Belarus has information about history, research, and travel to Belarus.

www.jewishbelarus.org

Ancestry (online)

www.ancestry.com

Belarus information and records on Ancestry:

search.ancestry.com/places/europe/belarus/default.aspx