

How do I find my great-grandfather's ancestral town?  
Part 11 - Putting it all together: Reaching back to the 1700s  
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Last month, I showed you how I used vital records from the Russian Empire to get information about my 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> greatgrandfathers, Duvid and Meshulam Vurer, both from Yampol, Ukraine, as well as another greatgrandfather, Meir Volf Korinfeld from Poritsk, Ukraine. The vital records microfilms are available from the Mormon Family History Library. This month we'll dig deeper into Mormon microfilms. We'll see how information I found in Russian censuses (Revizskie Skazki, or Revision Lists) took me back to my 6<sup>th</sup> greatgrandfather, Aharon Vurer of Yampol, who was born sometime before the mid-1730s.

In the 1700s and 1800s most European nations conducted periodic censuses of their populations. They used these censuses to levy taxes and to identify young men for military conscription. The first Russian census in the Kremenets District was in 1811. Subsequent censuses were conducted in 1834, 1850, 1858 and 1874, with Supplemental Lists in intervening years. With assistance from a Ukrainian researcher, I obtained records directly from the Central State Archives in Ternopil for some of my family names. The original records are voluminous. (Figure 1 shows me with a Ukrainian archivist and one small set of Revision List records.) What we found whetted my appetite for more.

In 2003, the Mormons released 54 microfilms of these censuses of Kremenets District towns. The entries are organized successively by year, town name, social class, and household. Jews and non-Jews are intermixed. There is no index of names. Fortunately, Jews appear in only a few of the many Russian social classes, and Jewish names are easily distinguished from those of non-Jews. For example, Jews are listed as merchants, artisans and even agriculturalists, but not as nobility, peasants or citizens. The Kremenets District Research Group began a project to identify, translate and index the Jewish records. That project is ongoing, but it already has produced some treasures for me.

Recall from last month that vital records said my greatgrandfather Duvid, son of Meshulim/Shulim Vurer lived in Kremenets but was registered in nearby Yampol. Now, in an 1858 Census, I found Duvid as a 6 year old in his father's Yampol household. (See Table 1). The record identified Shulim as a son of Yosef. It named Shulim's wife (my 2<sup>nd</sup> greatgrandmother), Reyzya, and 4 of their children (Hinde, Ber, Duvid and Tsimil, ages

18, 11, 6, and 3, respectively. Yehoshie had not been born yet.). Since Shulim was 33 in 1858, his father Yosef, my 3<sup>rd</sup> ggf, would have been born before 1807.

An 1816 Supplemental Census was interesting. My 3<sup>rd</sup> ggf, Yosef son of Shmuel Vurer, was listed, along with his wife Ita, daughter of Bun Vurer. Yosef and Ita were cousins. They were only 16 and 15, respectively, when they married. Ita's parents, Bun and Leya, and Yosef's father, Shmuel, were my 4<sup>th</sup> greatgrandparents. Bun was 41 in 1816, so his birthyear was 1774-1775. A notation next to Yosef's name said that he was "missed" in the 1811 Census, when he would have been 11 years old. I have found this kind of notation in many early census records. Hiding Jewish children was a common practice in those years.

Before 1827, military conscription took four conscripts for each 1,000 subjects in each community. Children from age twelve were subject to conscription. Married males were exempt. However, Jews were *not permitted* in the Russian army. Jewish youths were counted, but were not drafted. This was a mixed blessing, because in place of 25 years of military service, the Jewish community had to pay 500 rubles for each exempted Jewish recruit (even though the exemption was mandatory). By hiding their children, the total number of potential conscripts was reduced and the Kahal's payment in lieu of service was minimized. The payment also was minimized if the young men subject to conscription were married. Perhaps this is why Yosef was "missing" in the 1811 Census and married to his cousin by the time he was 16. For more information about Jews and Russian military conscription, see Wikipedia (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cantonist>), Online Jewish Encyclopedia (<http://tinyurl.com/ydq9hqb>), and Dan Leeson's JewishGen InfoFile (<http://www.jewishgen.org/infofiles/ru-mil.txt>).

Ita's father, Bun Vurer, also appeared in the 1811 Census, along with his son Duvid Ayzik. They lived in the household of Bun's father, Yakov, son of Aharon. The 1811 Census notes that Yakov, my 5<sup>th</sup> ggf, was 54 in the previous Census (1806) and that he died in 1807. So, Yakov was born about 1752, and assuming at least 18 years between generations, my 6<sup>th</sup> greatgrandfather, Aharon, would have been born before 1734.

Only three Census records took me from 1858 back to the mid-1730s, from my 2<sup>nd</sup> greatgrandfather, Duvid Vurer to my 6<sup>th</sup> greatgrandfather, Aharon Vurer. Three additional records added more greatuncles, greataunts and distant cousins ... 32 people in all.

In this series of columns, I have tried to show you how I traced my ancestors back to the early 1700s. I have focused on the Kremenets records. You may be able to do even better. Once you know your greatgrandfather's ancestral town, you can use the resources

that organizations like JRI-Poland, the Mormons and many others have made freely available. For example, if your family history traces to Ukraine, the Mormon Family History Library has vital records on microfilm for about 120 Jewish communities, multi-reel microfilms with census records (revision lists) for towns in more than 160 districts throughout Ukraine, and 24 multi-reel microfilms sets of Jewish community (Kahal) records. To check on whether any of these include your ancestral town, go to the Family History Library Catalog, <http://tinyurl.com/yz5hqh>. Do a Keyword search using the terms <Ukraine Jewish> and <Ukraine Revision Lists> for vital records (metrical books) and Census records, respectively.

Next month we'll shift gears. I will discuss genealogical DNA testing and how it can help you expand your family history. In preparation for that, try to attend the April 20th meeting of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Oregon. Emily Aulicino will give a presentation on *Genetic Genealogy*. The meeting begins at 7 pm at Ahavath Achim Congregation.



An archivist delivers part of the 1858 Kremenets Census to Ron Doctor  
Central State Archives, Ternopil Oblast (Province), Ukraine, 2002

**Table 1 - Revision List (Census) Records for Vurer from Yampol (Ternopil Central State Archives)**

**Note: All names are the Russian form (Hebrew in parentheses) and all have the Vurer surname.**

Year of Census	People in Household	Relationship	Age	Birth Year	Notes
1858	<b>Shulim</b> <b>Reyzya</b> Ginda (Hinde) Berko (Ber) <b>Duvid</b> Tsimlya (Tsimil)	son of <b>Ios (Yosef)</b> wife of Shulim daughter of Shulim son of Shulim son of Shulim daughter of Shulim	33 32 18 11 6 3	1825 1826 1840 1847 1852 1855	<b>Yosef</b> is my 3 <sup>rd</sup> greatgrandfather <b>Shulim (Meshulim) and Reyzya</b> are my 2 <sup>nd</sup> greatgrandparents. <b>Duvid</b> is my greatgrandfather
1816	<b>Bun</b> <b>Leya</b> Duvid Ayzik Elka Berko (Ber) <b>Ita</b> <b>Ios (Yosef) Vurer</b>	son of <b>Yankel (Yakov)</b> wife of Bun son of Bun wife of Duvid Ayzik son of Bun daughter of Bun son of <b>Shmuel Vurer</b> , and son-in-law of Bun, and husband of Ita	41 40 17 16 4 15 16	1774 1776 1798 1800 1811 1801 1800	<b>Bun and Leya</b> were my 4 <sup>th</sup> greatgrandparents  <b>Ita and Yosef</b> were my 3 <sup>rd</sup> greatgrandparents. <b>Shmuel</b> , Yosef's father, was my 4 <sup>th</sup> greatgrandfather. He was born before 1782. Yosef was "missed" in the previous (1811) Census.
1811	<b>Yankel (Yakov)</b>      <b>Bun</b> Duvid Ayzik	son of <b>Aron (Aharon)</b>      son of Yakov son of Bun	54 in 1806     37 13	1752      1774 1798	<b>Aharon</b> , my 6 <sup>th</sup> greatgrandfather was born before 1734. <b>Yakov</b> was my 5 <sup>th</sup> greatgrandfather. He died in 1807 <b>Bun</b> was my 4 <sup>th</sup> greatgrandfather