

<http://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/Moskva>

Understanding Russian Archives

There are more than 170 major archives in the Russian Federation, the majority of which are located in Moscow or St. Petersburg. While almost all archives have a website (in Russian), few offer documents in digital form. An umbrella organization, the Federal Archive Agency of Russia, known as "Rosarchiv," directly administers 15 of the largest repositories, including the State Archive of the Russian Federation "GARF," which contains some 19th century vital records, as well as pre-revolutionary and Soviet-era documents. Records of interest to genealogists are also found in individual state archives, such as the Central Historical Archive of Moscow, known as "TsIAM" or "CIAM," which holds documents from the Moscow Jewish community. Federal agencies, universities, museums and libraries hold specific collections, as do private organizations such as the Memorial Scientific Information and Enlightenment Center, with its database naming those executed or sent to the Gulag during the Soviet era, and the Holocaust Scientific Education Center with its "Arkhib Kholokost."

The best way to get a sense for what's available is to skim the [ArcheoBiblioBase](#) (below), go to an archive's website and then use an online translator (such as the one built into the Google Chrome browser) to learn about the specific holdings. We have heard that some archives accept research requests by mail, but have no first-hand reports on this method, as yet; other archives can only be accessed in person.

If you have successfully contacted a Moscow archive by mail, or have had good results from a professional researcher who personally works in Russia, please contact the Moskva KehilaLink and share your experience with us!

[ArcheoBiblioBase](#) (2011).

<http://www.iisg.nl/abb/index.php>

(This superb database by Patricia Kennedy Grimsted, a U.S. academic based in Moscow, provides an overview of all the major document archives in the Russian Federation. A web address, contact information, description of documents held and time-period covered is given for each of approximately 170 institutions.

[Archival Reference Bibliography](#) (1997, updated 2011)

(An annotated list of print and online resources that augments the information given in the [ArcheoBiblioBase](#). Sources related to Jewish history are listed on pages 12-13.)

http://www.iisg.nl/abb/rf_print.pdf

Berry, M.J and Ilic, M.J. (2002) [Using the Russian Archives - A Practical Guide for Beginners, Based on Users' Experiences](#). British Academic Committee for Collaboration with Russian Archives in association with Centre for Russian and East European Studies, The University of Birmingham.

<http://tinyurl.com/czmw4gy>

<http://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/Moskva>

(If you are dreaming of taking a trip to Moscow to find your own family records, or if you are thinking of hiring a researcher and wonder what skills that person should have, you should first peruse this Guide. The 'know this before you go' advice is clearly founded on decades of dusty, grueling academic toil. Some of the links are outdated, but the advice is still relevant).

CIAM (2012) Central Historical Archive of Moscow

<http://www.mosarchiv.mos.ru>

(The Central Historical Archive of Moscow, abbreviated 'CIAM' or 'TsIAM' holds historic documents for the city and its surrounding districts, including [Jewish historic records of the 19th and early 20th centuries](#). Among these are files from the Moscow Synagogue, records of Jewish community organizations and rabbinical collections.

Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (2012) Archives in Russia - Sources for Genealogy / Family History. International Institute of Social History. Retrieved on 12 July 2012 from

http://www.iisg.nl/abb/abb_genealogy.php

(The IISH is primarily a center for academic research. This page, however, recommends genealogical services of interest to family historians. The Institute also holds a fascinating collection of posters and documents related to European social and economic issues).

Weiner, Miriam (May 2012). Archive Results for Moscow. The Miriam Weiner Routes to Roots Foundation. Retrieved 11 July from

<http://www.rtrfoundation.org/results.php?townName=MOSCOW>

(Weiner provides a list of the years for which Moscow birth, census, death, divorce, immigration and marriage records are available in the State Archives of the Russian Federation or "GARF").

Weiner, Miriam (2011). Key to Russian Terms for Genealogical Research. The Miriam Weiner Routes to Roots Foundation. Retrieved 11 July from

<http://www.rtrfoundation.org/keyrus.shtml>

(Here, Weiner explains abbreviations and terminology used in the archives.)

ZAGS Moscow(2012). Vital Statistics and Records for Residents of the Moscow Oblast: Contact Information. Retrieved 18 July 2012 from

http://www.zags.mosreg.ru/contact_info/

(This is the Moscow public records office, known as "ZAGS." It holds vital statistics (birth, marriage, death) for inhabitants of the Moscow Oblast (and earlier Guberniia) from September 1918 to the present. In addition this archive contains copies of vital statistics from Russian consular and embassy offices around the world, but only since 1978).