

UNDER EMBARGO UNTIL: October 10, 2023

From Handwritten in Russian Centuries Ago to Easy Discovery in English Today – in Record Time
Foundations Harness AI-enabled Handwriting Recognition Technology to Reveal Jewish Documentary Heritage

Vero Beach, FL: L’Dor V’Dor Foundation (LDVDF) and Tsal Kaplun Foundation (TKF) are collaborating to train artificial intelligence (AI) to read historic handwritten documents from the Russian Empire.

Millions of records have been digitized in recent years including those in a race to preserve and protect vulnerable records in Ukraine. Yet, the wealth of information within each digitized document still is hidden from the majority of those who seek to find their ancestors and understand the context of their lives.

The reason is, these documents are handwritten in Russian and are not yet searchable online.

And that is why **LDVDF and TKF have teamed up to train AI** with transcriptions of handwritten historical documents – records of life events and circumstances, community affairs, legal proceedings, religious events, relocations, conscriptions, and more from as early as the 18th century.

Once trained, **AI can “read” hundreds of thousands of documents an hour** producing a machine-readable transcription that a computer can translate from Russian to the native language of the reader. Ancestry and FamilySearch processed the 1950 U.S. Census, consisting of more than 150 million records, in 9 days using similar handwriting recognition AI technology.

*“Through collaborations such as this, we accelerate putting AI to the task – to achieve our goal to process historical records in all languages throughout the Diaspora, and to **reconnect our lost past**”*
– Marlis Humphrey, CEO LDVDF

*“With AI for handwriting recognition, the information is no longer just accessible, but becomes understandable and usable for family history research **revealing our ancestors and the stories of their lives.**”* – Joseph Menaker, Managing Member TKF

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Multimedia Gallery

Images/video are available for download ldvdf.org/media.

About L'Dor V'Dor Foundation

The [L'Dor V'Dor Foundation](http://ldvdf.org) (LDVDF) is advancing ancestral discovery for anyone with interest in Jewish family history and heritage. LDVDF is rescuing lost Jewish heritage through its Documentation of Jewish Records Worldwide (DoJR) project. DoJR's goal is to discover every existing document of every Jew who ever lived – Ashkenazi, Sephardi, Mizrahi, Crypto, Rabbinic and more – in a massive, free, online searchable catalogue called JCat.

About Tsal Kaplun Foundation

The [Tsal Kaplun Foundation](http://tsalkaplun.org) is preserving Jewish culture, communities, and heritage in ex-Soviet lands. Since 2016, TKF seeks to celebrate the lives of our ancestors and to commemorate the victims of pogroms, the Holocaust, and other grave historical crimes. TKF's goal is to report and contextualize the suffering of millions of Jewish families, and to preserve their history for the enlightenment of future generations.

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