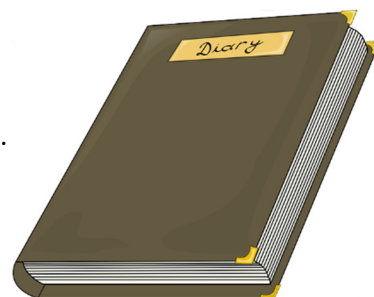


Jewish Genealogical Research

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Where do I start?

- Jewish research is like all research: always start with YOU! Home sources are likely to bear enormous fruit, particularly when tracing immigrant ancestors.
 - Interview older members of your family who may know something.
 - Gather all diaries, letters, journals, photos, postcards, and other “home” documents that may contain clues.
- Work your way back down that Jewish (or possible Jewish) line, validating all the research from yourself back to that person and collecting as many documents about those individuals as possible.
 - Go beyond birth, marriage, and death – collect religious documents, work records, newspaper articles, obituaries, wedding announcements; documents from *all* parts of a person’s life.



Specific things to keep in mind about Jewish research:

- Names can be challenging!
 - Many Jews simply used patronyms that were sometimes adapted based on what country/culture they lived in or among.
 - Different countries required Jews to take surnames at different times; check the FamilySearch wiki article for more information: https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Jewish_Names_Personal.
 - Sephardic and Ashkenazic Jews have different given name naming patterns, so make sure you understand them.
- Just like other immigrants, they didn’t change your name at Ellis Island!
 - Documents were created in the home country, not upon entry here.
 - Names were often Anglicized once here in America or when moving to another country to fit in with that country’s culture.
- Headstones can be *very* helpful!
 - Jews usually have their own burial ground or are buried in a specific part of the cemetery
 - Hebrew names on headstones often reflect their name from the old country – use this name to check ship’s manifests.
 - May contain the Hebrew name of the person’s father
- DNA testing: the Jewish researcher’s blessing and curse
 - Can definitely help you find family, but may help you find *too* much family.
 - Endogamy, or marrying within the community, complicates using DNA for Jewish genealogical research, but it can be done!



THE website for Jewish research: <http://www.JewishGen.org>

- Contains many, many valuable databases for doing Jewish research:
 - Jewish Online World Burial Registry (JOWBR) - <https://www.jewishgen.org/databases/Cemetery>
 - JewishGen Communities Database (used to be ShtetlSeeker) - <https://www.jewishgen.org/Communities/Search.asp>
 - JewishGen Family Finder - <https://www.jewishgen.org/jgff>
 - JewishGen Family Tree of the Jewish People - <https://www.jewishgen.org/gedcom>

Jewishgen.org (continued)

- Memorial Plaques Database - <https://www.jewishgen.org/databases/Memorial>
- Yizkor Books Database Project - <https://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor>
- Holocaust Database - <https://www.jewishgen.org/databases/Holocaust>
- Online Genealogy Classes - <https://www.jewishgen.org/Education>
- Various Special Interest Groups (SIGs) for regions around Eastern Europe

Other great websites

American Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC) Archives - <http://archives.jdc.org>

Ancestry.com's Jewish Family History Collection - <http://www.ancestry.com/cs/jewishgen-all>

Avotaynu (publisher of books and journals on Jewish genealogy) - <http://www.avotaynu.com>

FamilySearch Jewish Research Wiki - https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Jewish_Genealogy_Research

Gesher Galicia - <https://www.geshergalicia.org>

Jewish Genealogical Society of British Columbia - <http://jgsbc.ca>

- Check out their *Resources* page: <http://jgsbc.ca/resources> for other Canadian Jewish organizations

JRI-Poland - <http://www.jri-poland.org/index.htm>

The Knowles Collection - <http://knowlescollection.blogspot.com>

Steve Morse's One-Step Webpages - <https://www.stevemorse.org>

Ukraine Special Interest Group (SIG) - <https://www.jewishgen.org/Ukraine>

Yad Vashem (World Holocaust Memorial Center) - <http://www.yadvashem.org>

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