

# Jewish Genealogy

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## INTRODUCTION

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This outline introduces records and strategies that can help you learn more about your Jewish ancestors. It teaches terminology and describes the content, use, and availability of major genealogical records.

### Using This Outline

This outline will help you evaluate various records and decide which records to search as you trace your Jewish ancestors. Records that are uniquely Jewish are listed, as are other general sources, that may contain the information you are searching for. These record sources are often created by the government or other organizations and list details about all people.

This outline discusses in alphabetical order many major topics used for genealogical research, such as “Archives and Libraries,” “Civil Registration,” and “Military Records.” “Church Records” are discussed because many churches, which were state churches of various countries, recorded information for Jews in certain time periods. Furthermore, where there were few Jews, Jewish births, marriages, and deaths were recorded by the local churches.

At the end of this outline you will find a list of additional subject headings under “Other Records,” a short bibliography of sources under “Further Reading,” and a glossary.

## JEWISH SEARCH STRATEGIES

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Those doing research on Jewish families should first follow the genealogy strategies and methods for the area where the family was from. Research outlines and other research aids can help you learn about records and formulate strategies. In addition to general sources, which list all of the population including Jews, there are many books, indexes, and other resources that have been created for Jewish research in particular. This is not a comprehensive listing of Jewish records available at the Family History Library but does list examples of the major types of records available.

The following basic steps for genealogical research will help get you started:

### **Step 1. Identify What You Know about Your Family**

Begin your research at home. Look for names, dates, and places in certificates, letters, obituaries, diaries, and similar sources. Ask relatives for any information they may have. Record the information you find on pedigree charts and family group record forms.

### **Step 2. Decide What You Want to Learn**

Choose an ancestor to research for whom you know at least a name, the town where he or she lived, and an approximate date of birth. The more you know about your ancestor, the more successful you will be with further research.

It is best to begin by verifying the information you already have. Then you can decide what else you want to learn about that ancestor. You may want to ask an experienced researcher or a librarian to help you choose a goal.

### **Step 3. Select a Record to Search**

Effective researchers first find background information. Then they survey compiled sources and finally they search original records. "For Further Reading" in this outline has a list of genealogy how-to books, both general and geographically specific, that give information about tracing Jewish ancestors.

**Background Information Sources.** You must have some geographical and historical information. This will help you focus your research in the correct place and time period.

- Find the place of residence. Use maps, gazetteers, histories, and other place-finding aids to learn about each place where your ancestor lived. Identify governmental and ecclesiastical jurisdictions, local Jewish congregations, cities, counties, and other geographical features.
- Review local history. Jewish history and the history of the area your ancestor lived in affected the records about the Jews. See "Gazetteers" and "Jewish History" in this outline for more information. If there is a research outline for the country or state where

your ancestor lived, see "Gazetteers" and "History" in that outline.

- Learn about the jurisdictions of the places where your ancestors lived. You will need to know about civil and often church boundaries. See "Gazetteers" in this outline for more information.
- Use language helps. Jewish records may be in Yiddish, Hebrew, or in the language of the country of residence. Some church records for Jews may be in Latin. See "Language and Languages" in this outline.

**Compiled Records.** Surveying research already done by others can save time and reveal valuable information. Check compiled sources such as:

- Private collections of family histories and genealogies deposited in historical and genealogical societies and other libraries
- Printed family histories and genealogies
- Family histories, genealogies, and abstracts or transcripts of records on the Internet
- Compiled records of the Family History Library
- FamilySearch™ International Genealogical Index (IGI)
- FamilySearch Personal Ancestral File
- *Vital Records Index British Isles* and *Vital Records Index North America*. See "Genealogy" in this outline for details about these sources. Similar indexes for other countries are in production.
- *Pedigree Resource File*

These records are described in "Biography," "Genealogy," and "Societies" in this outline. Remember, information in compiled records may have some inaccuracies, and the information in them should be verified.

**Original Records.** After surveying previous research, you can begin searching original documents, which are often handwritten and copied on microfilm or microfiche. Original documents provide first-hand information recorded at or near the time of an event by a reliable witness. To do thorough research, you should search:

- Jurisdictions that may have kept records about your ancestor.
- Records of Jewish communities.

Most researchers begin with civil registration, census records, church records, or probate records.

#### Step 4. Use the Internet

Many individuals and organizations have made family history information available on the Internet. This is particularly true of records pertaining to the Jews. Internet sites often refer to information others have placed on the Internet. These sites, also called home pages or web sites, are connected with other sites to create the World Wide Web (www). Each site on the Internet has an address that enables you to go directly to that site. The most popular starting sites for genealogists include:

<http://www.familysearch.org/>  
<http://www.cyndislist.com/>  
<http://www.usgenweb.org/>  
<http://.worldgenweb.org/>  
<http://homepages.rootsweb.com/>

For Jewish research, the most helpful sites are:

<http://www.jewishgen.org/>  
<http://www.feefhs.org/>

You can use search engines to search a broad range of Internet sites that contain certain keywords. For example, if you want to find Jewish cemetery records for a certain place, type in “Jewish” and “cemetery” and “Berlin” in a search engine, which will present a list of sites that contain these words. Different search engines search in different ways, so you may want to try more than one.

Many books about using the Internet are available at libraries and bookstores. Some list Internet sites of interest to genealogists. Guides listed in this outline can be purchased from:

Distribution Center  
1999 West 1700 South  
Salt Lake City, UT 84104-4233

LDS Distribution Centre  
399 Garretts Green Lane  
Birmingham B33 0UH  
England

You can also order Family and Church History Department resources through the Internet at:

<http://www.familysearch.org/>

#### Step 5. Find and Search the Record

**Suggestions for Obtaining Records.** You may be able to get the records you need in the following ways:

- Family History Library. The Library is open to the public and charges no fees for using the records. For more information, write to:  
  
Family History Library  
35 North West Temple Street  
Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3400
- Family History Centers. The Family History Library can loan copies of most records on microfilm to thousands of family history centers worldwide. There is a small duplication and postage fee for this service.
- Local Archives and Libraries. Although the Family History Library has many records on microfilm or microfiche, others are available only at local or national archives and libraries. See the “Archives and Libraries” section of this outline for more information.
- Libraries and Interlibrary Loan. Public, academic, and other research libraries may have some published sources for Jewish research. Many provide interlibrary loan services that allow you to borrow records from other libraries.
- Look-Up Exchange. There are lists of people on the Internet who will search various types of records for certain areas free of charge. You can locate these lists through Internet sites such as:  
<http://www.genuki.org/> (for the British Isles)
- Jewish Genealogical Societies. Jewish Genealogical Societies around the world have information about their respective Jewish communities. Such information includes the history of, and relevant resources for, that locality. Some societies will do limited local research for you. A list of these societies can be found at:

<http://www.iajgs.org>

- Jewish Genealogical Special Interest Groups (SIGs). Jewish Genealogical SIGs focus on a common area of interest. Often this is geographic (e.g. Galicia or Lithuania). But some focus on other areas (e.g. Sephardim or Rabbinic). Most SIGs maintain online discussion groups that you can use to ask others relevant questions to assist you:

<http://www.jewishgen.org>

- Professional Researchers. You can hire a researcher, many of whom specialize in Jewish research. Others specialize in research in various countries or states. Lists of qualified professional researchers for various geographical areas are available from the Family History Library. Archives or family history societies may also provide lists of people who can do research for you. Jewish and other genealogical periodicals usually contain names and addresses of people or companies that do research for hire. Researchers can also be found on genealogy Internet sites.
- Photocopies. The Family History Library and some other libraries offer limited photoduplication services for a small fee. Books protected by copyright cannot be copied in their entirety. However, a few pages can usually be copied for personal research (you must specify the exact pages you need). The library does not copy large portions of a microfilm. To get a copy of a major portion of a film, write to the archive where the original material is stored for permission and then contact the library with your request.

To contact libraries or professional researchers or any other family historian, write a brief, specific letter. Enclose a self-addressed, stamped, long envelope when writing within your own country. When writing to a foreign country, enclose three international reply coupons (available from your post office). You will usually need to pay in advance for photocopy or search services.

**Suggestions for Searching Records.** Follow these principles as you search records for your ancestor:

- Search for one generation at a time. Do not try to connect your family to others who have the same surname if they lived more than a generation earlier than your proven ancestor.
- Search for your ancestor's entire family. Records may contain clues for identifying other family members. Search other record types and in other localities to find a missing family member.
- Search each source thoroughly. A small piece of information in a record may provide the clue needed to continue your research.
- Search several years before and after the date you think an event occurred. Dates in some sources may not be accurate.
- Do not make assumptions. Your ancestor may not have been born in the place or the year that your records indicate. And the name you knew him or her by may not be the legal name recorded in official government documents.
- Use indexes. Although not every record has been indexed, many have been. Look for an index that includes the time period, event, and place you need. Many indexes include only some of the people mentioned in the record. Make sure you check the original records after using an index.
- Be aware that most Jews did not have surnames prior to 1800. Before surnames were adopted, Jews used a patronymic naming system.
- Watch for spelling variations. Spelling was not standardized until the late 1800s, and names were often written phonetically. Also, if a family moved to a new country with a new language, they often changed the spelling of their name to phonetically conform to that country's language.

## Step 6. Use the Information

**Evaluate the Information You Find.** Decide if the information you find is complete and accurate. Ask yourself the following questions:

- Who provided the information? Did that person witness the event?
- Was the information recorded near the time of the event or later?
- Is the information logical and consistent with other sources about the family?
- Does it suggest other places, events, time periods, or records to search?

**Record Your Searches and Findings.** Copy the information you find and keep notes about each record you search. Note where and by whom the records were made, even those that provide no information.

**Share Your Information with Others.** Your family history can become a source of enjoyment and education for yourself and your family. You may want to compile your family history and share it with family members or other people.

The *Family Tree of the Jewish People* is an Internet site where you can contribute your own genealogy as well as search the database of Jewish genealogies that have been submitted by others. This resource is available at:

<http://www.jewishgen.org/gedcom/>

Information can also be submitted to the Pedigree Resource File at:

<http://www.familysearch.org/>

## **FINDING JEWISH RECORDS IN THE FAMILY HISTORY LIBRARY CATALOG**

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The key to finding Jewish records in the Family History Library's collection is the Family History Library Catalog. The catalog describes each of the library's records and provides its call number. The catalog is available on compact disc (Windows version) as part of the FamilySearch computer program, and on the Internet at:

<http://www.familysearch.org/>

Click on *Custom Search* on the home page, then click on *Family History Library Catalog*.

The CD Windows version of the catalog is available at the Family History Library, family history centers, and some other libraries and archives. You can also buy the Windows version at the Distribution Center (see "Introduction" for the address).

Because there are two different versions of the catalog, including the one that is available on the Internet, there are several different ways to search. Be creative when using the catalog.

The Windows version of the Family History Library Catalog has eight types of searches:

- Title Search
- Author Search
- Film/Fiche Search
- Place Search
- Surname Search
- Keyword Search
- Call Number Search
- Subject Search

The Family History Library Catalog on the Internet currently has five types of searches:

- Author Search
- Film/Fiche Search
- Place Search
- Surname Search
- Call Number Search

### **Subject Search**

One of the most effective ways to locate Jewish records in the fiche catalog is by Subject Search. Many Jewish records are found under the subject headings Jewish History and Jewish Records. Other subject headings that should be searched include: Church Records, Civil Registration, Concentration Camps, Genealogy, Holocaust, Inquisition, and Minorities. All these records have geographical tracings, which enables you to choose the record by place that is appropriate to your research.

The Windows CD version of the Family History Library also contains a Subject Search option.

### **Place Search**

Another effective way to locate Jewish records is by the Place Search. The Place Search lists records according to geographical area. The records are listed by the name of government jurisdictions from the largest to the smallest reference. Different countries refer to these levels by different names; however three levels are generally used in the Family History Library Catalog:

**Largest:** Continents, regions, or countries

**Middle:** Countries divided into administration areas such as states, provinces, counties, and departments

**Smallest:** Each administrative area divided into local areas such as parishes, municipalities, townships, towns, and cities

An exception to this system is the United States and Canada, where the state or province is listed on the largest level, the county on the middle level, and the town or township on the smallest level.

For example, in the Place Search look for:

- The *place* where an ancestor lived, such as:

EUROPE (by continent)  
GERMANY (by country)  
AUSTRALIA, NEW SOUTH WALES  
(by country, state)  
FRANCE, BAS-RHIN, ROSENWILLER  
(by country, department, parish)  
POLAND, GDANSK, GDANSK  
(by country, county, city)  
CHILE, TALCA, MOLINA  
(by country, province, municipality)

- Then choose the *record type* you want, such as:

JEWISH RECORDS  
CEMETERIES  
CIVIL REGISTRATION or VITAL RECORDS

For example:

EUROPE – EMIGRATION AND  
IMMIGRATION – INDEXES  
This search by continent lists the Württemberg emigration index

GREAT BRITAIN – JEWISH RECORDS  
This search by region lists the Isabel Mordy collection of Jewish pedigrees

UNITED STATES – CENSUS – 1890  
This search by country lists the surviving 1890 census or population schedules

GERMANY, BADEN – CENSUS  
This search by country and state lists the 1939 non-Germanic minority census for that state

ILLINOIS, COOK, CHICAGO – JEWISH  
RECORDS  
This search by state (United States), county, and city lists synagogue and other Jewish records in Chicago.

## Keyword Search

The Keyword Search, found only in the Windows version of the catalog, is an easy and effective way to search for Jewish records. This powerful tool allows you to search for records using keywords. For example, you may type in “Jews census” or “Census of Jews” to locate census records that are unique to the Jews. Circumcision records can be found using the keywords “Jewish records” or “circumcision.” The key words “Church records Jews” locate synagogue records of Jews in Quebec, Canada, that were turned in as part of civil registration.

You can also do a wildcard search using “Jew\*.” This search brings up all the records in the Library that have this word (including Jewish and Jews) in the title, in catalog notes, or in a catalog reference citation.

Use several different keywords or combination of keywords in looking for specific record sources. The way they are listed or described in the catalog affects how you find them by Keyword Search.

## Jewish Records in the Family History Library Catalog

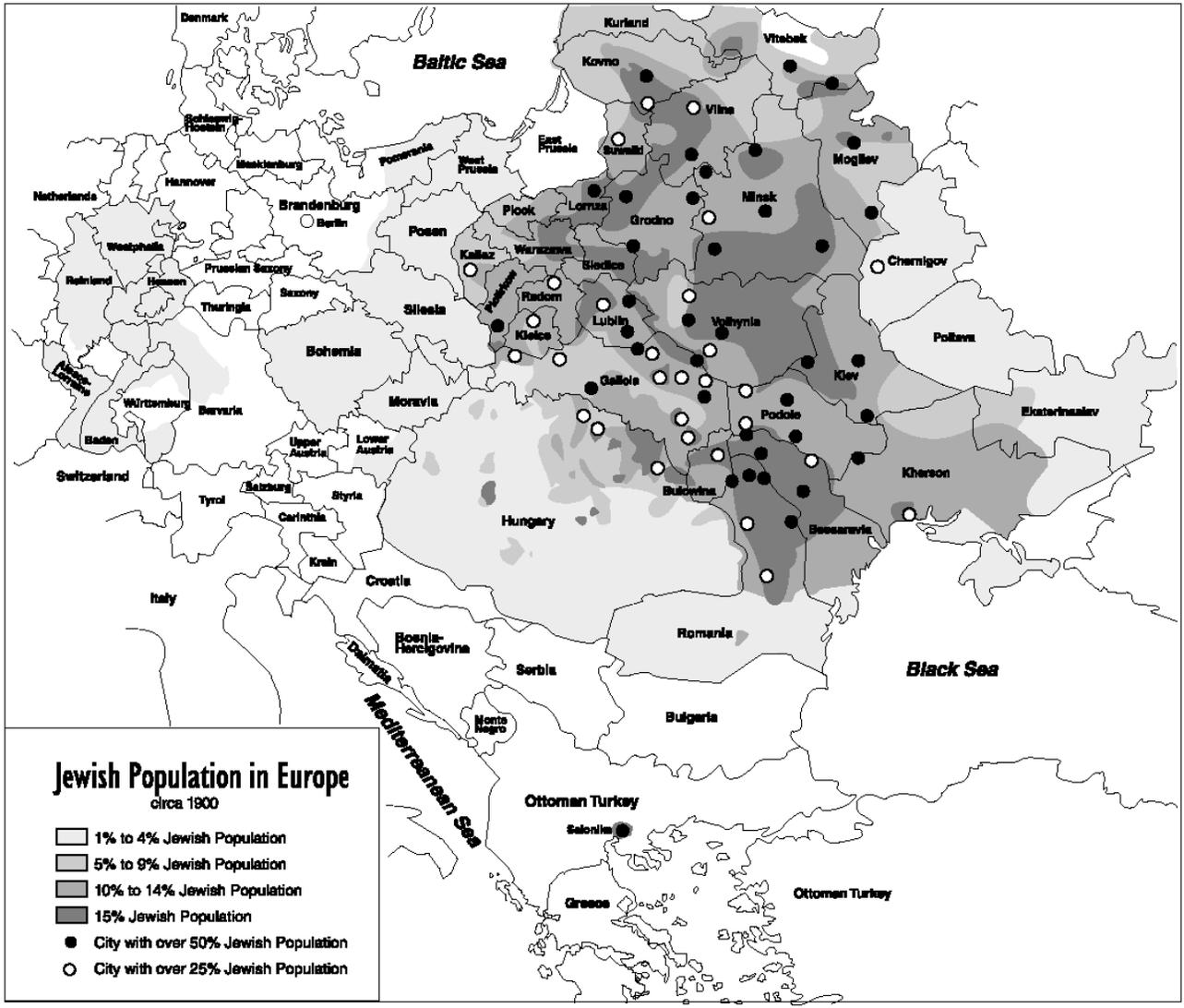
The database “Jewish Records in the Family History Library Catalog,” prepared for the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies (IAJGS) is an inventory of microfilms, microfiche and books, that are specifically Jewish genealogical sources, and that are available at the Family History Library. The first stage of this database was completed in 2000; it has been updated with additional sources. Researchers should, however, check for current resources using techniques described elsewhere in this publication, for materials that have not yet been included in the database as well for other materials that are valuable genealogical sources that includes Jewish people along with others in the population (see the Sections: Census, Passenger Lists, Vital Records, etc.) The “Jewish Records in the Family History Library Catalog,” can be found at:

<http://www.jewishgen.org/databases/FHL/C>

# The Pale of Jewish Settlement 1772-1917



Gray area shows the western area of the Russian Empire in which Jews were legally allowed to live. This ruling began with the first partition of Poland in 1772 and ended after World War 1.



## **ARCHIVES AND LIBRARIES**

Archives collect and preserve original documents created by organizations such as governments or religious institutions. Libraries generally collect published sources such as books, city directories, and maps. Many of the records discussed in this outline are deposited in archives and libraries throughout the world. This section describes the major repositories housing records that may be used for Jewish historical and genealogical research.

If you plan to visit one of these repositories personally, first contact the organization and ask for information about their collection, hours, services, and fees. Ask if they require you to have a *reader's ticket* (a paper indicating you are a responsible researcher) and how to obtain one.

Remember, the Family History Library may have a printed or microfilmed copy of the records you need.

The following publication lists addresses and telephone numbers of many local and state archives:

*Archivum: Revue Internationale des Archives Publiée avec le Concours Financier de l'UNESCO et sous les Auspices du Conseil International des Archives* (Archivum: International Listing of Archives Published with Financial Assistance of Unesco and under the Authority of the ICA). Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1992. (FHL book 020.5 Ar25 v. 38). Much of the text is in English.

There are many Internet sites that have information about archives and libraries. One site that lists details about various archives and libraries by geographical locations (country and state) is:

<http://www.cyndislist.com>

Many archives and libraries house significant collections on subjects relating to Jewish history, historical events, and people. Staff at many archives and libraries usually will not undertake genealogical research. However, they may be able to locate and copy documents in their collection if you are reasonably specific in your request.

## **YIVO Institute**

The YIVO Institute was established to preserve East European Jewish heritage and is currently the world's leading research center for East European Jewish studies. Among its holdings are the world's largest collection of Yiddish books and materials relating to the history and culture of Eastern European Jewry. They also have extensive resources to aid in the genealogical research of Eastern Europe including encyclopedias, gazetteers, *yizkor* books (Holocaust town memorial books), reference books on the geographical distribution of Jewish family names, biographical directories, and *Landsmanshaft* records.

You can contact the YIVO Institute at:

YIVO Institute for Jewish Research  
Center for Jewish History  
15 West 16th Street  
New York, NY 10011  
Internet: [www.yivoinstitute.org](http://www.yivoinstitute.org)

## **Leo Baeck Institute**

The Leo Baeck Institute is dedicated to preserving the history of Jewish communities of German-speaking nations. All geographic areas where German was spoken are documented in the Institute's library and archive. Its collections date from the 17th century to the Holocaust and include family pedigrees, family histories, memoirs, and Jewish community histories. The institute has a Family Research Department to help genealogists.

You can contact the Leo Baeck institute at:

Leo Baeck Institute  
Center for Jewish History  
15 West 16th Street  
New York, NY 10011  
Internet: [www.bi.org](http://www.bi.org)

The Institute also operates offices in England and Israel:

Leo Baeck Institute  
4 Devonshire Street  
London W1N 2BH  
England

Leo Baeck Institute  
33 Bustanai Street  
91082 Jerusalem  
Israel  
Internet: [www.leobeck.org](http://www.leobeck.org)

## Holocaust Memorial Museums

Yad Vashem is the major repository in the world for information about the Holocaust. The Yad Vashem library contains more than 85,000 volumes documenting the Holocaust and includes the world's largest collection of *yizkor* books. Also at Yad Vashem are the only publically available copies of the records of the International Tracing Service, a manuscript collection called *Pages of Testimony* that identifies more than three million Jews murdered in the Holocaust, and many oral or written testimonies of Holocaust survivors.

You can contact the Yad Vashem library at:

Yad Vashem Martyrs and Heroes  
Remembrance Authority  
P.O. Box 3477  
91034 Jerusalem  
Israel

Online information about Yad Vashem is available at: <http://www.yadvashem.org/>

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum provides access to archived material relating to the Holocaust. Its Survivors Registry and other resources such as transport lists, death lists, *yizkor* books, personal papers, and oral histories can be used to determine the fate of Holocaust victims and survivors. Most materials are in English, German, Polish, Russian, Yiddish, or Hebrew.

Library staff will not do genealogical research. An online catalog of their holdings is available at:

<http://www.ushmm.org/>

You can contact the museum at:

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum  
100 Raoul Wallenberg Place, SW  
Washington, DC 20024-2150

## Other Libraries and Archives

The Library of Congress houses hundreds of *yizkor* books as well as an extensive collection on the Holocaust and all aspects of Jewish history and culture. An online catalog is available at:

<http://www.loc.gov/>

You can contact the Library of Congress at:

Library of Congress  
101 Independence Ave. SE  
Washington, DC 20540

The Hebraic Section is located in the Adams Building at 110 2nd Str., SE Washington, D.C.

The Jewish Public Library of Montreal has a large collection of *yizkor* books and the largest public collection of Judaica in North America. Reference and catalog information is available in English, French, Hebrew, Yiddish, and Russian. The collection documents all major aspects of Canadian Jewish history and maintains a large genealogical resource collection.

You can contact the Jewish Public Library at:

Jewish Public Library of Montreal  
5151 Cote St. Catherine Road  
Montreal  
Quebec H3W 1M6  
Canada

The New York Public Library is an excellent place for research because most Jewish immigrants to the United States lived in New York for a time. The library has borough directories, census records for the greater metropolitan area, back issues of *The New York Times*, maps, atlases, gazetteers, community histories, *yizkor* books, indexes to some of the U.S. federal census returns, vital records for New York City, and ship passenger lists.

The library's Jewish Division has one of the most significant collections of Judaica in the world, including bibliographies, reference works, periodicals, and newspapers. The collection is only available in the Jewish Division's reading room. About 40 percent of the Division's holdings are in Hebrew; the remainder are in other languages, primarily English, German, Russian, and French.

An online catalog of material cataloged after 1972 is available at:

<http://www.catnyp.nypl.org/>

Pre-1972 materials are described in the *Dictionary Catalog of the Jewish Collection*, published in 14 volumes in 1960; the 8-volume *First Supplement*, published in 1975; and the 4-volume *Hebrew-Character Title Catalog of the Jewish Collection*, published in 1981.

You can contact the New York Public Library at:

New York Public Library  
42nd Street & 5th Avenue  
New York, NY 10018

The American Jewish Archives has organizational records, family and personal papers, and synagogue records (many of the synagogue records have been filmed by the Family History Library). An online catalog of the Archives' holdings is available at:

<http://www.huc.edu/aja/>

You can contact the American Jewish Archives at:

American Jewish Archives  
Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion  
3101 Clifton Ave.  
Cincinnati, Ohio 454220

### Historical and Genealogical Societies

The Jewish community has established many historical and genealogical societies. Some societies maintain libraries and archives that collect valuable records. See the "Societies" section of this outline.

### Inventories, Registers, Catalogs

Virtually all archives and libraries have catalogs, inventories, or guides that describe their records and how to use them. Many of these repositories have online catalogs on the Internet. If possible, study these guides before you visit or use the records of these repositories so you can use your time more effectively. Many books have been published that list inventories of Jewish records in various regional archives. These include:

Bernard, Gildas. *Les Familles Juives en France XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle–1815, Guide des Recherches Biographiques et Généalogiques* (Jewish Families of France 14th century–1815, Guide to Biographical and Genealogical Research). Paris: Archives Nationales, 1990. (FHL book 944 D27bg.) An inventory of Jewish records in the Departmental Archives of France.

Elyashevich, Dmitri A. *Документальные материалы по истории евреев в архивах СНГ и стран Балтии* (Documentary Sources on Jewish History in the Archives of the CIS and the Baltic States). Sankt-Peterburg: Akropol', 1994. (FHL book 943 A3e.) This is an inventory of records for the countries of the CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States, which includes all the former Soviet Union except the Baltic states) and the Baltic states.

Gundacker, Felix. *Matrikenverzeichnis der Jüdischen Matriken Böhmens* (Register of Jewish Vital Statistics in Czech State Archives Pertaining to Bohemia). Wien: Felix Gundacker, 1998.

Guzik, Estelle M. *Genealogical Resources in the New York Metropolitan Area*. New York: Jewish Genealogical Society, 1989. (FHL book 974.71 A3ge; fiche 6,100,654.)

Rhode, Harold and Sallyann Amdur Sack. *Jewish Vital Records, Revision Lists, and Other Jewish Holdings in the Lithuanian Archives*. Teaneck, NJ: Avotaynu, 1996. (FHL book 947.5 F23r.)

Sallis, Dorit and Marek Web. *Jewish Documentary Sources in Russia, Ukraine & Belarus: a Preliminary List*. New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1996. (FHL book 947 A3sd.)

Weiner, Miriam. *Jewish Roots in Poland: Pages from the Past and Archival Inventories*. New York: YIVO, c 1997. (FHL book 943.8 F2wm.)

Weiner, Miriam. *Jewish Roots in Ukraine and Moldova: Pages from the Past and Archival Inventories*. New York: YIVO, 1999. (FHL book 947.71 F2w.)

The Family History Library has copies of other published guides, catalogs, and inventories of some archives and libraries. Check for these records in the Family History Library Catalog. Volunteers at the Family History Library are also making an inventory of Jewish records in the collection.

## BIOGRAPHY

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A biography is a history of a person's life. In a biography you may find the individual's birth, marriage, and death information and the names of his or her parents, spouse, children, or other family members. Biographies can include descriptions of family traditions, places where he or she has lived, military service, and activities within the community; stories; photographs; and clues about an ancestor's place of origin. Use this information carefully because there may be inaccuracies.

Biographies are divided into two types: individual and compiled. In addition to general biographies, which often include Jews, there are also Jewish specific biographies.

## Individual Biographies

Thousands of biographies have been written about specific people; copies may be at local historical societies and libraries. Public libraries have lists of published biographies for many countries. If there is a research outline for the country or state where your ancestor lived, see the “Biography” section of the outline.

The Family History Library has acquired some individual biographies. These are listed in the Surname Search of the Family History Library Catalog under the individual’s name. Also contact other family members for unpublished life histories they may know of.

## Compiled Biographies

Compiled biographies, sometimes called biographical encyclopedias or dictionaries, contain biographical sketches that have been collected and published. These are generally collected according to a particular theme, such as prominent individuals in a particular country, state, or county. One example is:

Konopczyński, Władysław. *Polski Słownik Biograficzny* (Polish Biographical Dictionary). Kraków: Polska Akademia Nauk 1935–1974. (FHL book 943.8 D36p; film 1,044,531–1,044,549).

Other compiled biographies are for specific professions (such as: *The Courts and Lawyers of New Jersey, 1661–1912*) or other themes.

## Jewish Biographies

Jewish specific biographies include biographies of prominent or well-known Jewish citizens of a particular country. Others feature biographies of specific groups of people such as:

Spira, Roman. *Rabbis and Jewish Scholars in Poland in the 16th, 17th, and 18th Centuries*. [S.l.]: R. Spira, 1985. (FHL book 943.8 F2sr.)

Examples of biographical collections of Jews compiled by location include:

*The Encyclopedia of Russian Jewry: Biographies*. Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, 1999. (FHL book 947 D36e.)

*Jewish Biographical Archive/Jüdisches biographisches Archiv* on 781 microfiche. New York City: K.G. SAUR Verlag, 1994–1996. (FHL microfiche 6,137,099–6,137,108, 6,142,109–6,142,116, and 6,144,954–6,144,980.)

Levi, John Simon. *The Forefathers: A Dictionary of the Jews of Australia, 1788–1830*. Sydney: The Australian Historical Society, 1976. (FHL book 994 D3lj.)

Winger, Salomon. *Grosse jüdische National-Biographie: mit mehr als 8000 Lebensbeschreibungen namhafter jüdischer Männer und Frauen aller Zeiten und Länder; ein Nachschlagewerk für das jüdische Volk und dessen Freunde* (The Great Jewish National Biography: with more than 8000 Biographies of Prominent Jewish Men and Women of All Ages and for All Countries: a Reference Work for the Jewish People and their Friends). Zug, Switzerland: Inter Documentation AG, 1975 (FHL film 1,608,860–01 and 1,608,864; fiche 6,041,316 [83 fiche].)

Many major libraries, including the Family History Library, have excellent collections and indexes of national and regional compiled biographies. These libraries can help you locate additional biographical sources listed in published bibliographies. To find biographies at the Family History Library, check the Family History Library Catalog.

You can also find biographical information in local histories and encyclopedias and dictionaries. See “History” and “Encyclopedias and Dictionaries” in this outline and in outlines for other countries and states you are researching.

## **BUSINESS RECORDS AND COMMERCE**

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Records of businesses usually list names, addresses, company owners and shareholders, and financial information. Life insurance, pension (for some railroad companies in the U.S.), bank, and under-taker records may include biographical information.

For some vocations, trades, or businesses there are occupational records or commercial directories that may be helpful in compiling a family history. See “Directories” and “Occupations” in this outline for further details.

Business and commerce records are often kept by the company or may be in archives or libraries in the area where the company is located. The Internet also contains searchable databases of business records. One example is the New York Emigrant Savings Bank. This database has information on many Jewish emigrants including name, place of birth, residence (most lived in New York City), occupation, names of relatives, and immigration information. You can find this database at:

<http://www.genexchange.com/>

The Family History Library has some business-related records. Because of their limited value, these type of records should be searched after other sources such as civil and vital records, Jewish records, and obituaries have been searched.

## **CEMETERIES**

Jewish religious customs require that Jewish burial sites be held in reverence. The religious duty (*mitzvah*) of burial is the responsibility of a decedent's children or spouse. If there are no children or spouse, it is the responsibility of the closest relative. According to Jewish law, burial should take place promptly, preferably on the day of death, but within three days at the most.

For Jews a grave site is permanent and once established cannot be violated. In most other cemeteries in Europe grave plots are reused, so while other Europeans will not find old tombstones of their ancestors, Jews often will.

When Jews founded cemeteries, they routinely attempted to purchase land on a permanent basis. Because local laws often made this difficult, bodies were sometimes transported a considerable distance to secure a permanent burial site.

Different Jewish groups have different traditions about gravestones. Ashkenazic Jews have vertical gravestones; Sephardic Jews have horizontal ones. Sephardic stones often have angelic figures and biblical images while images were not permitted on Ashkenazic stones. Today both groups make frequent use of classic Jewish symbols: the star of David, the menorah, the Book of Life, or a candle.

Families that belonged to the priestly class (*kohanim*) were forbidden to go inside the gates of a cemetery because that would violate laws of ritual purity. Their gravestones usually bear the

symbol of two hands with thumbs touching and fingers spread out in a priestly blessing.

For further information about Jewish cemeteries and burial customs, see the chapter "Jewish Cemeteries" in:

Kurzweil, Arthur. *From Generation to Generation: How to Trace Your Jewish Genealogy and Family History*. Updated edition with online resources. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 2004. (FHL book 929.1 K967f 2004.)

Jewish congregations with a large membership usually maintain their own cemeteries and burial registers. Smaller congregations reserve a section within other cemeteries.

There are two major types of cemetery records:

- **Gravestone inscriptions.** Information recorded on gravestones or monuments, including transcripts of this information, provide at least the decedent's name, death date, and name of the father. Other information may be listed. Jewish gravestones are usually inscribed in Hebrew. The information may be duplicated on the stones in English or in the language of the country in which they are found.
- **Cemetery registers.** Information kept by cemetery officials or caretakers include registers, plot books and maps, grave-books, and public (municipal) cemetery records. Information provided in these records includes names, ages, marriage information, sometimes dates and places of birth, who paid for the burial, and names of people (often relatives) buried in the same plot.

To find gravestones and cemetery registers, you need to know where an individual died or was buried. The person may have been buried in a community or private cemetery or in a cemetery maintained by the local synagogue where the deceased lived. You can find clues about burial places in obituaries, funeral notices, synagogue records, and death certificates.

You can find cemetery information in:

*Jewish Cemeteries Throughout the World*. [S.l.]: International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies. (FHL fiche 6,334,783.) Two microfiche sold by Avotaynu, Inc. which list 7500 cemeteries in 79 countries.

***Cemeteries of the U.S.: A Guide to Contact Information for U.S. Cemeteries and Their Records.***

1st ed. Detroit, Michigan: Gale Research, 1994. (FHL book 973 V34ce.) Lists over 22,000 cemeteries alphabetically by state, county, and cemetery name. Entries may list geographical location or mailing address, phone and fax numbers, contact information for cemetery record keepers, years of operation, and religious and other affiliations.

Information from many Jewish cemeteries can be found on the Internet. Use a search engine and search the topics: cemetery, Jewish, (name of town).

The mission of the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies' (IAJGS) International Jewish Cemetery Project is to catalogue every Jewish burial site throughout the world. Jewish cemetery or burial sites are listed by town or city, country, and geographic region, based on current place designation. Information under each listing includes history, size, exact location, etc. Some listings include links to other websites with additional information such as burial lists or contact information. The project is ongoing. The IAJGS International Jewish Cemetery Project can be found at:

<http://www.jewishgen.org/Cemetery/>

The JewishGen Online Worldwide Burial Registry (JOWBR) is a database of names and other identifying information from cemeteries and burial records worldwide, from the earliest records to the present. As of October 2006, this database lists a total of 1,447 cemeteries and a total of 629,986 burials; the project is ongoing. The JewishGen Online Worldwide Burial Registry can be found at:

<http://www.jewishgen.org/databases/cemetery>

Other sites that have information for cemeteries are:

- <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com> (you can access information for every U.S. state at this site; many of the state sites include contacts for people who have transcribed cemetery records and tombstone inscriptions)
- <http://www.cyndislist.com>
- Other sources to check for cemetery records include:

- The present cemetery caretaker, synagogue, or funeral home.
- A local library, historical society, or local historian. If they don't have the records, they can help you locate obscure family plots or relocated cemeteries.
- Cemetery associations, which sometimes publish inventories or transcripts for their areas.
- Transcripts of gravestone information that are published by genealogical periodicals or by others in individual books.
- Records of Jewish burial societies (*khevrah kadisha*). Burial societies in Jewish communities were responsible for burying the dead. Records they may have kept would be similar in content to those kept by cemetery caretakers. Names of society members and the amount of dues they paid may also be recorded.
- Lists of soldiers' graves described in the *U.S. Military Records* research outline (34118).

### Records at the Family History Library

The Family History Library has copies and indexes of many cemetery and tombstone records but has limited records of Jewish cemeteries. Examples of published Jewish cemetery records include:

Margolinsky, Jul. *Transcript of 298 epitaphs from the Jewish Cemetery in St. Thomas, W.I., 1837–1916, with Index.* [s.l.: s.n.], 1957. (FHL film 1,013,426, item 18.)

Muneles, Otto and Milada Vilímková. *Starý židovský hřbitov v Praze* (Old Jewish Cemetery in Prague). Praha: Státní pedagogické nakladatelství, 1955. (FHL book 943.71/P3 V3m; film 1,181,638, item 6.) Tombstone inscriptions from the old Jewish cemetery in Prague. Includes pictures of tombstones. Another book on the same cemetery was published in 1903 (FHL book 943.71/P3 V3j; film 1,181,915, item 9.)

Weyl, Robert. *Le Cimetière Juif de Rosenwiller* (The Jewish Cemetery in Rosenwiller). Strassbourg: Editions Salde, 1988. (FHL book 944.3835/R1 V3w.) Includes pictures of tombstones with inscriptions recorded in Hebrew, French, and German and notes about each one. From the town of Rosenwiller in Alsace-Lorraine (now in France).

Wolf, Egon. *Sepulturas de israelitas – II: Uma pesquisa em mais de trinta cemitérios não israelitas* (Jewish Burials: a Search in More than Thirty Non-Jewish Cemeteries). Rio de Janeiro: Cemitério Comunal Israelita, 1983. (FHL book 981 V3w.)

Check for records of this type in the Family History Library Catalog.

For information about inscriptions published in periodicals, see “Periodicals” in this outline. If there is a research outline for the country or state where your ancestor lived, see “Periodicals” in the outline.

If there is a research outline for the country or state where your ancestor lived, see “Cemeteries” in the outline.

### Funeral Home Records

Funeral directors or undertakers in the area where your ancestors lived may have records similar to death and cemetery records. Most of the addresses for those in the United States are found in:

*American Blue Book of Funeral Directors*. New York: National Funeral Directors Association, biennial. (FHL book 973 U24a.)

The Family History Library has some funeral home and undertaker records, which are listed in the Subject Search of the Family History Library Catalog under “Business and Commerce” or “Cemeteries.”

## CENSUS

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A census is a count and description of the population of a country, territory, province, state, county, city, or congregation. Census records usually list a large segment of the population and include names; relationships; ages; birthplaces; marital status; and occupations. Other information may be listed such as religion, ethnicity, and native language.

Censuses were taken to:

- Determine the demographics of the population, such as sex, age, religion, and education.
- Determine the number and identities of eligible voters.
- Determine potential tax base.
- Count potential military conscripts.

The enumeration can document an entire population or only specific classes of persons such as males, property owners, or Jews. However, there are few censuses that were taken specifically of Jews.

Other records were made that are similar in intent to census records, such as population registrations, communion lists, tax lists, and voter registration lists (see “Church Records” and “Population” in this outline). The information in some of these records may come from official census records. Revision lists from the Russian Empire are sometimes referred to as census records; see “Taxation” in this outline.

When using census records, consider the following:

- In countries that have primary sources, such as church records and civil registration or vital records, census records should be used to supplement information in these records.
- In countries where civil registration or vital records begin late and other records are lacking, census returns may be the only source of information available for specific time periods.

**National Census.** Most nations periodically take a census of their population. The United States has taken a census every decade since 1790. The Russian Empire, on the other hand, has only one national census (1897).

Some countries conducted censuses specifically of the Jewish population. Germany, for example, had a census of Jews in 1939. Microfilm copies of these census records are found at the Family History Library on 292 reels, 130 of which are for the city of Berlin. A register showing what films cover which parts of the German empire is:

Edlund, Thomas Kent. *The German Minority Census of 1939, An Introduction and Register*. Teaneck, NJ: Avotaynu, Inc., 1996. (FHL book 943 X22e.)

In addition to censuses of the general population, Hungary also took a special national census of Jews in 1848:

*Conscriptio Judaeorum, 1848* (Census of Jews, 1848). Budapest: Magyar Országos levéltárban történt, 1970. (FHL film 719,823–719,828, 754,368 item 2.) This census gives the name, age, and specific

birthplace of all members of the household. The birthplace is particularly useful in tracing families that have moved from another area or country.

**Provincial.** Some censuses, both general and Jewish specific, were carried out by province or other region. The following is an example:

*Dénombrements nominatifs des Juifs en Alsace, 1784* (Enumeration by Name of the Jews in Alsace, 1784). Colmar: Jean-Henri Decker, 1785. (FHL film 1,069,535 item 3.) Includes names all the Jews of Alsace-Lorraine (Elsaß-Lothringen [German] or Bas-Rhin [French]) in the year 1784 and 1785 by town. Has an index to towns with the number of Jews in each town in the region.

**Local.** In some cases a census was taken on a local level. An example is the census of the inhabitants of the city of Debreczen, Hungary, taken in 1870. It includes a separate Jewish conscription list:

*Népszámlálás 1868–1870* (Censuses, 1868–1870). Budapest: Magyar Országos Levéltárban történt, 1970. (FHL films 722,259–722,302.) This census is arranged by house numbers and includes surrounding communities. A conscription list of Jewish males is on films 722,262–722,263.

Another example is an 1814 census of Jews for many individual towns in Denmark. These are listed in the Family History Library Catalog under each town. The Jewish census of the town of Skælskør, Sorø, Denmark on FHL film 41,007 is representative.

## Census Indexes

Some census records are indexed. Indexes may be arranged by names of individuals or by localities, such as streets. When indexes are available, it is best to use them before searching the actual census records. However, the information in an index may be incomplete or transcribed incorrectly. If you have reason to believe your ancestor should be in the census, search the census regardless of the information in the index.

Some major examples of census indexes include:

- Name indexes by state to the heads of household for all the 1790–1850 (and often later) census returns of the United States.

- Soundex indexes listing every person in the 1900 and 1920 United States census returns for each state and for some states in 1910. Also a soundex for the 1880 census of every state; it includes only those households where children ten years and younger are present.
- Street-finding aids for many cities in the United States that identify census wards for these streets.
- Names indexes to many of the 1851 and some of the 1861–1891 censuses of England, Scotland, and Wales.
- An every-name CD-ROM index to the 1851 census for the counties of Devon, Warwick, and Norfolk, England and an every-name CD-ROM index to the 1881 census of England, Wales, Scotland, Channel Islands, and Isle of Man.
- Street indexes for many cities in England, Scotland, and Wales (1841–1891 censuses), and in Ireland (1901 and 1911 censuses).

In addition to these general indexes, some indexes have been made that extract only Jewish names in census records. Examples are:

Freedman, Murray. *List of the Jewish Residents, 1891 census, Leeds*. Leeds, England: M. Freedman, 1994. (FHL book 942.74/L1 X22f 1891.) This census does not identify the religion of the population. The index includes people with Jewish-sounding names.

Eker, Glen. Eker has published several volumes of indexes containing information for Jews (when identified in the census) from the 1851–1901 returns of all provinces in Canada. He has also produced a similar index to the 1921, 1935, and 1945 censuses of Newfoundland. See the Author Search of the Family History Library Catalog for details.

Various web sites on the Internet also contain census indexes and abstracts. As examples:

- Volunteers are creating research databases for various U.S. census returns. To access these indexes or participate in the project, go to:

<http://usgwarchives.net/census/>

- An index to people with Jewish-sounding names enumerated in the 1851 and 1891 censuses of South Wales is available at:

<http://www.jewishgen.org/databases>

### Searching Census Records

When searching census records, remember that:

- Ages may be inaccurate.
- The name on the census may not be the same as the name recorded in vital records, Jewish records, or other sources.
- Place-names may be misspelled.
- Names may be spelled as they sound.
- Individuals missing from a family may be listed elsewhere in the census.
- The information provided may have been deliberately or inadvertently falsified.

### Census Records at the Family History Library

The Family History Library has an extensive collection of census records and indexes from around the world. In addition to the ones previously mentioned, its holdings include all available federal (United States) census returns prior to 1920 and many censuses taken by individual states, pre-1911 censuses of Canada, pre-1901 censuses of Great Britain, and census returns for several countries in Latin America and Europe. Check for these records in the Family History Library Catalog using the Place Search and Keyword Search.

If there is a research outline for the country or state where your ancestor lived, see the “Census” section of the outline.

The One-Step Webpage includes very useful ways of searching for census records. See:

<http://stevemorse.org/>

### Census Records Online

It is now possible to obtain many census records online. Ancestry.com includes all U.S. Censuses and some from Canada and the United Kingdom. The Findmypast website provides access to censuses taken in the United Kingdom in 1841, 1861, 1871, and 1891. Searches can be made by “person” or “address.” Both of these require payment for use. You can reach these resources at:

<http://ancestry.com>  
<http://findmypast.com>

## CHRONOLOGY

In the Hebrew calendar the years are counted from the creation of the world, which is considered to have taken place 5760 years ago as of the year 2000. Days are reckoned from evening to evening. The Jewish civil year begins in September or October with the festival of Rosh Hashanah (the first day of Tishri).

The calendar is based on 12 or sometimes 13 lunar months that adjust to the solar year. The 12 months are Tishri, Kheshvan, Kislev, Tevet, Shevat, Adar, Nisan, Iyar, Sivan, Tammuz, Av, and Elul. The 3rd, 6th, 8th, 11th, 14th, 17th, and 19th years in every 19-year cycle have a 13th month. This extra month of 30 days, Adar II, is added after Adar.

The months and years of the Hebrew calendar do not correspond with the Gregorian calendar, which is the calendar in common use in the world today. The Gregorian calendar is based on the birth of Jesus Christ and uses the abbreviations a.d. (year of our Lord) and b.c. (before Christ). When Jews date events in accordance with the Gregorian calendar they use c.e. (common era) and b.c.e. (before the common era).

The Gregorian is a correction of the Julian calendar, which had been in use since 46 b.c.e. Leap years had been miscalculated in the Julian calendar; by 1582 the calendar was 10 days behind the solar year. Pope Gregory XIII corrected the calendar by dropping 10 days. The new calendar was adopted by the Catholic church in 1582 but at later dates in non-Catholic countries. Russia did not accept the new calendar until 1918. In Russia and part of Poland, the Julian calendar was generally used throughout the 1800s, when the difference had accumulated to 12 days. Polish vital records often give both the Julian and Gregorian dates. This can be confusing to beginning researchers. When both dates are given, use the later date (the Gregorian) for your record keeping.

Many Jews lived in nations where other calendars were prevalent. Most notable is the Muslim calendar, which reckons time from the date Muhammad and his fellow Muslims emigrated to Medina in 622 c.e. The French calendar was used in countries ruled by Napoleon (France and bordering countries to the north and east) from 1793–1805 and has to also be converted to the Gregorian calendar. See the guide *French Republican Calendar* (34046).

Resources and conversion charts have been published that convert dates to the modern Gregorian calendar. Many of these are available free through the Internet, including:

Calendar Conversions by Scott E. Lee:

<http://www.rosettacalendar.com/>

This is an online conversion freeware program that will convert days from the Julian, Hebrew, and French Republican calendars to the standard Gregorian calendar. It will also convert backwards from the Gregorian to the Julian calendar.

Tarek's hijri (Muslim)/Gregorian/Julian Converter:

<http://bennyhills.fortunecity.com/elfman/454/calindex.html>

This online conversion program converts days from Muslim, Gregorian, and Julian calendars. Simple to use; no download necessary.

Over 50 other calendar freeware and shareware programs are available for converting dates from the Gregorian, Julian, Hebrew, Muslim, French Republican, and Chinese calendars and can be found on the Internet at:

<http://www.calendarzone.com/Software>

## **CHURCH RECORDS**

In many countries the established national church (such as Catholic, Orthodox, or Lutheran) was appointed as the official record keeper of births, marriages, and deaths for the entire population, including Jews. The clergymen already recorded christening, marriage, and burial records for members of their parishes. As most people belonged to the established church, it was easier for the government to require the clergymen to include the birth, marriage, and death information for people of other religions in their parishes rather than have the government keep a separate record. Therefore, it can be important to check records of Christian churches when researching Jewish ancestors.

This is particularly true of Central and Eastern Europe in the period prior to 1826–1840, when the governments of most countries in this area required separate records be kept of the Jews. Copies of the church records in many of these countries were sent to the government. These records are known as metrical book transcripts and parish register transcripts. Eventually most governments developed a separate system for registering births, marriages, and deaths, called civil registration. For

a more lengthy explanation of how church records, civil registration, and Jewish records interrelate, see “Vital Records” in this outline.

Countries where Christian church records were used by the government as a form of civil registration and where Jews are likely to be recorded include Poland, the Russian Empire, and other central and eastern European countries.

The Inquisition in Spain, Portugal, and Latin American countries also resulted in recording Jews (*conversos* or *marranos*) in Christian church records. See “Inquisitions” in this outline.

Two other reasons why Jews may appear in records of Christian churches are:

- If there was no rabbi or synagogue in an area where a Jewish family chose to settle, events associated with that family are sometimes recorded in another church.
- If a Jew voluntarily left the Jewish religion, future records of that individual and his family may appear in a Christian church.

If there is a research outline for the country or state where your ancestor lived, see the “Church Records” and “Civil Registration” sections of the outline.

### **Finding Church Records**

Many original church records are still at the local church. Others have been deposited in church or government record centers or archives. The Family History Library has an extensive collection of church records for many countries. Use the Place Search to locate church records. The catalog listings for church records sometimes include a notation that the record contains information for Jews.

## **CIVIL REGISTRATION**

Records of births, marriages, and deaths are commonly referred to as “vital records” because they document essential events in a person’s life. Civil registration are vital records that are recorded by most governments in the world. The Family History Library Catalog uses the subject heading *Vital Records* for these records in the United States and Canada. See “Vital Records” in this outline.

Civil registration records are very important to genealogists because they often are the primary source of information for names, dates, and places of births, marriages, and deaths. These records are usually indexed and include most of the population of a country. Unfortunately, many people, including Jews, never registered these events with civil authorities even though it was mandatory.

Governments used church records or transcripts of church records as their earliest forms of civil registration. Later they required Jews to keep separate registers. Eventually most governments set up independent civil registration offices where birth, marriage, and death records were kept separately from religious denomination. These independent civil registration records are the primary topic of this section. For more information about the relationship between civil registration, church records, and Jewish records, see “Vital Records” in this outline.

Most civil registration records are divided into separate volumes by event (birth, marriage, and death). Some countries also kept separate civil registration records of Jews. These records are usually listed in the Family History Library Catalog under *Jewish Records*. See “Jewish Records” in this outline.

In addition to births, marriages, and deaths, civil registration may include documents required for marriage as well as records of stillbirths, deaths occurring in other cities or countries, name changes, and acknowledgments of paternal responsibility.

### General Historical Background

As governments needed accurate information about the population for military conscription and taxation purposes, they began keeping records of births, marriages, and deaths.

The commencement dates of civil registration vary from country to country. Sometimes they vary from region to region within a country. The Baltic states did not have civil registration until 1940, which is quite late for Jewish research in those countries. Countries such as Poland and the Russian Empire used transcripts of church records, which included Jews, before they had a separate government civil registration system. General dates of the beginning

of civil registration in countries with significant Jewish populations are:

Austria (Republic). . . . .	1938 (transcripts 1784)
Belgium. . . . .	1793
England. . . . .	July 1837
France (Republic). . . . .	1792
German Empire. . . . .	1876 (some 1792)
Greece. . . . .	1925
Hungary. . . . .	1895 (some 1867)
Italy. . . . .	1860–1870 (some 1806)
Netherlands. . . . .	1811 (some 1795)
Poland. . . . .	1821 (transcripts 1719, 1784, 1794)
Prussia. . . . .	1874 (transcripts 1794)
Romania. . . . .	1865 (transcripts 1831)
Russian Empire. . . . .	(transcripts 1719)
Soviet Union. . . . .	1918
Spain. . . . .	1870

### Information Recorded in Civil Registers

Information listed in civil registration records varies from country to country. The following descriptions list what you may find in these records. Be aware that information in these records is not always accurate. For example, the birth date and place and names of parents listed on a death record may not be accurate because the informant often did not have first-hand knowledge of the decedent’s birth.

#### Births

Birth records generally give the child's name, sex, date and place of birth, and the names of the father and mother (frequently including her maiden surname). Many of the early records and most of the later records provide additional details such as parents’ birthplaces, ages, and occupations.

Births were generally registered shortly after the event by the parents or another person present at the birth. Corrections to a birth record may have been added as a marginal note. Frequently these notes provide information concerning marriage and death.

#### Marriages

Marriages usually took place in the town or city where the bride lived. Some governments required a civil marriage in addition to the religious ceremony. When available, search both types of records as one may contain details not found in the other.

The following records may be found in connection with a marriage:

*Marriage Registers.* Civil officials recorded the marriages they performed. If the marriage was performed by an ecclesiastical authority or justice of the peace, that person was required to report the marriage information to civil authorities. Marriage registers give the date of the marriage and names of the bride and groom and witnesses. Other information could include ages, birthplaces, residences, occupations, and names of parents.

*Marriage Certificates.* The individual who performed the ceremony or the civil office where it was recorded may have given the couple a certificate of marriage listing the names of the bride and groom, the marriage date and place, and the name of the person who performed the marriage. Certificates are often in the possession of the family.

*Marriage Documents.* In many countries, such as the Netherlands and those of Latin America, you will find supplemental documents submitted at the time of marriage. These may include birth certificates for the bride and groom, death certificates for parents if not present to give permission, proof of military service, and so on. Such documents often provide much genealogical information.

*Marriage Intentions.* Countries had different laws concerning marriage. Many had requirements that couples had to comply with before getting married. Documents generated from these requirements for various countries included:

- *Proclamations or Allegations.* The couple had to announce their intentions a few weeks before their marriage to give anyone the opportunity to raise any legitimate objections to the marriage.
- *Marriage Applications.* A bride and groom obtained a license to be married by applying to the proper civil authority. These records often contain more information than the marriage record itself.
- *Marriage bonds.* In many countries two men were required to sign a statement that they personally knew the bride and groom and could certify that there was no reason why they should not be married. Such men were called *bondsmen* and were often relatives or friends.

*Marriage Contracts.* When a marriage occurred between people of different social status, a

marriage contract may have been made to stipulate how the property was to be divided if one of them died. These are not documents that will generally be found among court records. They are similar to the pre-nuptial agreements people make today.

## Deaths

Death records often provide information on the decedent's birth, spouse, and parents. Death records can exist for people who have no birth or marriage records. Deaths were usually registered with civil authorities.

Early death records generally give the decedent's name, date, and place of death. By the latter 19th century death registers also included age, sometimes the date and place of birth, residence, occupation, names of parents and spouse, cause of death, burial information, and details about the informant.

## Locating Civil Registration Records

Civil registration records are kept at town or city, district, or municipal registration offices. Some civil registration records have been deposited at city or state archives.

If there is a research outline for the country where your ancestor lived, see "Archives and Libraries" and "Civil Registration" for directions on locating civil registration records for that country.

## Records at the Family History Library

The Family History Library has microfilmed the civil registration records and indexes of many countries, including fairly complete collections of most of the countries of Latin America and Western Europe. Examples of records that include Jews as well as the rest of the population are:

**Civil Registration, 1914–1941.** Thessaloniki, Greece: Lixiarheion Archive, 1989. (On 235 FHL films beginning with 1,690,717.) Birth, marriage, and death records from the city of Thessalonica from 1914–1941.

**Registers van de Burgelijke Stand, 1811–1940** (Registers of Civil Registration, 1811–1940). 's-Gravenhage: Algemeen Rijksarchief, 1954–1997. (On 2498 FHL films, beginning with 1,138,940.) Birth, marriage, death, and other civil records for Amsterdam 1811–1940.

Specific holdings for civil registration records and indexes can be found in the Family History Library Catalog using the Place Search. Remember also to check for civil registration records under the headings “Jewish Records” and “Church Records.”

### **Obtaining Civil Registration Records Not at the Family History Library**

Birth, marriage, and death records may be obtained from local civil registration offices or archives in the country of interest. To protect the rights of privacy of living persons, civil authorities often place restrictions on their records.

When requesting a certificate by mail, determine who has jurisdiction over the records for the time period you need, and write a brief request to the appropriate office. Send the following:

- Full name and the sex of the person sought.
- Names of parents, if known.
- (Approximate) date and place of the event.
- Your relationship to the person.
- Reason for the request
- Request for a photocopy or transcript of the complete original record.
- Check or money order to cover the required search fee and postage.

You can access civil registration records or order them for some areas over the Internet. For example, a searchable database is available to some civil registration indexes for the Netherlands and Poland. The Scottish Registrar General has provided a searchable database of their indexes from 1855 to 1897 and has an online ordering service for certificates. To find these types of resources, search for the area where your ancestor lived at:

<http://www.cyndislist.com/>

Also check the list of databases that are included on the JewishGen web site at:

<http://www.jewishgen.org/>

## **CONCENTRATION CAMPS**

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Concentration camps were internment centers established to confine minority and national groups and political prisoners. During World War II the Nazi government of Germany administered several concentration camps and relocation facilities. The camps were of two general types:

- Death or extermination camps where virtually everyone who arrived was immediately killed.
- Camps where people who arrived were either immediately killed or assigned to labor camps.

Camp officials kept records of Jews who were used for slave labor. Some of the concentration camp records that survived the war were seized by British, Soviet, and U.S. military forces. In the United States these records can be found at:

United States Holocaust Research Institute  
100 Raoul Wallenberg Place, SW  
Washington, DC 20024-2150

National Archives and Records  
Administration  
Pennsylvania Avenue and 8th Street NW  
Washington, DC 20408

Documents of camps in Poland are found in the Polish State Archives, the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw, and in archives of the State Museum of Auschwitz-Birkenau in Oświęcim and the Majdanek Museum Archives in Lublin. There are also university libraries, regional museums, local archives, collection of private individuals, and other sources from concentration camps.

There are a few databases on the Internet with information about people in concentration camps, and more information is being added. See the following web sites for information:

<http://www.jewishgen.org/>

This site has information from yizkor books, including a list of Austrian Jews in concentration camps.

<http://www.ushmm.org/>

This site is for the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Under the topic “Collections and Archives” is a searchable database of prisoner registration forms from Auschwitz.

The Family History Library has some concentration camp records. For example, death registration records from the Mauthausen, Austria, camps are available on microfilm:

*Totenbuch, Konzentrationslager Mauthausen, Jan. 7, 1939–Apr. 29, 1945* (Death Register, Concentration Camp Mathausen, Jan. 7, 1939–Apr. 29, 1945). Washington, D.C.: National Archives, 19–. (FHL film 812,876–812,877.)

Records associated with concentration camps and Nazi persecution of Jews are discussed in “Holocaust, Jewish (1939–1945)” in this outline. An example of these, which is listed in the catalog under Concentration Camps is:

*War Crimes Case Files, 1945–1959.* Suitland, Maryland: National Archives and Record Administration, 1992–1994. (On 45 FHL films, beginning with number 1,788,042.)

Check for similar types of records in the Family History Library Catalog.

## **COURT RECORDS**

Court records contain information about people involved in litigation or other court matters. These records include names of people who were parties to court action, family relationships, places of residence, occupations, descriptions of individuals, and other family information. The records to be searched are determined by the country you are researching. See “Court Records” in the outlines of the countries or states you are researching.

The Family History Library has some court records. Check for these records in the Family History Library Catalog.

Because of their importance to family history research, probate and naturalization records are discussed in separate sections in this outline.

## **DIRECTORIES**

Directories are alphabetical lists of names and addresses. These often list all the adult residents or trades people of a city or area. Beginning in the 20th century there are telephone directories.

The most helpful directories for genealogical research are city directories. These can identify a street address where an ancestor lived, which may be needed to locate his or her family in a census record. Depending on the area, directories may also be for a much broader area, such as state-wide directories for Australia. These types of directories are generally published annually and may include an individual’s name, address, and occupation; a spouse’s name; and other helpful facts. An individual’s address can be very helpful when searching in a large city, especially if there are records such as unindexed censuses that need to be searched. Directories sometimes have city maps and may include addresses of synagogues,

cemeteries, civil registration offices, and other locations of value to the genealogist.

Some trades, such as the medical profession, publish their own directories. For example, annual medical directories for the British Isles have been published since 1845. Trade directories can be particularly valuable for Jewish research. They often list advertisements and personal information that may help you compile your ancestor’s history. A summary about Russian business directories is found in:

Gostin, Ted. “Russian Business Directories.” *Syllabus*. Salt Lake City: FEEFHS 1997: 55–58. (FHL book 940 C4f; film 1,183,732 item 3.)

Information from some directories can be found on the Internet. One such searchable database is for 19th century London Jews compiled from several London trade directories and other sources. Another database is the 1923–1925 Lithuanian medical directories and includes information for over 800 Jewish medical personnel. Information listed on the Internet from these medical directories includes name, place of residence, professional specialty, citizenship, year of birth, and the source and date of the medical degree for the people who are listed. A web address that contains information about Jews listed in several directories is:

<http://www.jewishgen.org/databases/>

Some places have directories that list only Jews. For example, England has directories of Jews beginning in the 19th century.

The Family History Library has many directories that date from the late 1700s to the present day. Some directories list only certain types of trades people or businesses. Check for these records in the Family History Library Catalog. Most will be listed in the Place Search section of the catalog under the name of the city where your ancestor lived.

You can use modern telephone directories to locate relatives or organizations that can help with your research. An Internet site that has links to telephone directories for various states and countries is:

<http://www.infobel.com/en/world/>

If there is a research outline for the country or state where your ancestor lived, see the Directory section of the outline for further information about records in specific geographical areas.

## **DIVORCE RECORDS**

Depending on the time period and place, divorces before the mid-20th century were often uncommon, illegal, or allowed for specific religious groups only. Civil officials in the Russian Empire kept divorce records only for Jews. While divorce was an accepted practice among Jews, records of divorce were seldom kept by the synagogue.

Divorce records are often not open to the public. The Family History Library has some records of divorce in its collection. Most divorce records are found in the civil registration or vital records office of the town or county where the divorce took place or in court records. See “Civil Registration” and “Vital Records” in this outline and in the outlines of the countries or states you are researching.

## **EMIGRATION AND IMMIGRATION**

Emigration and immigration sources list the names of people leaving (emigration) or coming into (immigration) a country. Because Jews emigrated at various time periods throughout the centuries and went to many different countries, the records that were kept vary from time period to time period and place to place. Records prior to the 18th century, if they exist at all, are generally less detailed.

Most emigration and immigration records of the 19th century and later consist of passenger lists, permissions to emigrate, records of passports issued, lists of people deported, and alien registers. Information found in these later emigration and immigration records usually include the name, age or birth date, occupation, destination, and place of origin or birthplace of the emigrant.

Perhaps the greatest genealogical value of these records is information about where your ancestor came from. In order to successfully research your ancestry, you have to determine exactly where the immigrant ancestor was born or lived and search the records of that place. For detailed information about how to trace an immigrant ancestor, including a description of various emigration and immigration records, see *Tracing Immigrant Origins* research outline (34111) and the “Emigration and Immigration” sections of the state and country research outlines where your ancestors lived.

These records can also help in constructing family groups. If you do not find your ancestor’s name,

you may find information on your ancestor’s family members or neighbors. People who lived near each other in their country of origin often settled together after they emigrated.

Depending on the country and the record source, emigration and immigration records may list the name of the ship of arrival or the name of the person to whom the immigrant is going (often a relative or friend from the previous place of residence). Many of these records are indexed.

Most countries made records of passengers who arrived in their country. These were generally kept by port authorities. Jews are included in these records along with all other immigrants. The records of arrivals at New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Boston, New Orleans, and other U.S. and Canadian ports are excellent sources of information about immigrants to these countries.

Records of departure are of equal or even greater genealogical value as they are even more likely to provide your ancestor’s place of origin. The major European ports Jews emigrated from were Bremen, Hamburg, Liverpool, and LeHavre. Many Jews also sailed from Odessa in Russia.

Most of the records of Bremen and Liverpool have been lost. Fortunately, the passenger lists of the port of Hamburg are preserved and accessible. For research for 1850–1934, see *Hamburg Passenger Lists, 1850–1934* (34047). Another good card index to these records from 1850–1871 is:

*Index von Karl Werner Klüber zu den Passagierlisten der Auswandererschiffe 1850–1871* (Index by Karl Werner Klüber to the Passenger Lists of Emigration Ships 1850–1871). Hamburg: Staatarchiv, 1994. (On 48 FHL films, beginning with number 1,961,710.)

An alphabetical listing of emigrant Jews who returned to Hamburg from 1905–1907 and Jewish orphans from Russia in 1906 are also among the Hamburg passenger lists (FHL film 1,732,431, items 6, 11). There is also a listing of Jews who sailed from Bremen from 1 November 1913 to 31 Dec 1914 (FHL film 1,568,852 item 2 and 1,568,871).

An index to the emigration lists for the port of Hamburg from 1850 to 1934 is being compiled. For further information, see the following web site:

<http://www.progenealogists.com/germany/hamburg>

In addition to the sources discussed in these publications, other emigration and immigration sources, which may or may not be at the Family History Library, are:

- Records of the Russian Consular Offices in the United States, containing information about people from Eastern Europe, mostly Jews, who came to the United States during the latter half of the 19th century and early part of the 20th century.
- Locally kept 20th century alien registers of England.
- Copenhagen, Denmark, Police Records of Emigrants, consisting of 90 ledger books that list details about people leaving Denmark from 1868 to 1940.
- Records of the Poor Jews' Temporary Shelter in England. Information contained in these records includes the name of the person who was sheltered, date of arrival, age, marital status, number of children accompanying the person, place from which the person came to the shelter, occupation, port of entry into England, length of stay at the shelter, date leaving the United Kingdom, where the person was going, and the name of the ship on which the person sailed. A searchable database that lists information about Jews who stayed at the shelter between 1895 and 1914 while on their way to South Africa is found at:

<http://chrysalis.its.uct.ac.za/shelter/shelter.htm>

Some emigration and immigration sources are on the Internet. The Immigrant Ships Transcribers Guild is one web site that lists details from ships' passenger lists and can be found at:

<http://www.immigrantships.net/>

There are also searchable databases of limited emigration and immigration sources, such as United State Department of State Consulate records for Jerusalem, Jaffa, and Haifa and lists of Germans, Swiss, and Austrians deported from France. Check the following web site for these records:

<http://www.jewishgen.org/databases/>

Unique to Jews are records kept by Hebrew Immigrant Aid Societies and other Jewish associations in the United States. See "Societies" in

this outline for further information about the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Societies.

The library has many emigration and immigration records, including some records of the Hebrew Immigration Aid Society. Check for these records in the Family History Library Catalog.

It is now possible to make online searches of passenger lists from, for example, Ellis Island, Castle Garden, Baltimore and San Francisco. Most useful for making such searches are the One-Step Webpages found at:

<http://www.stevemorse.org/>

## **ENCYCLOPEDIAS AND DICTIONARIES**

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Encyclopedias provide information on all branches of knowledge, usually in articles arranged alphabetically. They often contain information of great interest for genealogical research, including articles about towns, places, prominent people, minorities, and religions. They can give information about diverse topics such as record-keeping practices, laws, customs, commerce, occupations, costumes, and archaic terminology.

The Family History Library has general-knowledge encyclopedias from countries throughout the world. Similar collections of encyclopedias can be found in most research and university libraries. Examples of two general-knowledge encyclopedias are:

*Great Soviet Encyclopedia*. 31 vols. New York: Macmillan, 1979. (FHL book 030.47 G798s.) Translation of the third edition of Bol'shaia Sovetskaia Entsiklopediia.

Orgelbrand, Samuel. *Encyklopedja powszechna* (Universal Encyclopedia). Warszawa: Archiwum Dokumentacji Mechanicznej, 1974. (FHL film 997,501-997,518.)

There are several Jewish-specific encyclopedias. The following may be particularly helpful in your research:

Kurzweil, Arthur and Miriam Weiner. *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Genealogy Vol. 1: United States and Canada*. Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson Publishers, 1991. (FHL book 929.1 En19e.)

*Encyclopaedia Judaica*. 17 vols. Jerusalem: Keter, 1972, 1982. (FHL book 296.03 En19j.) This encyclopedia is now online and may be searched by name, subject, town, etc. Go to:

<http://jewishencyclopedia.com>

**Jewish Encyclopedia**. 12 vols. New York City: Funk and Wagnalls, 1901–1906. (FHL book 296.03 J556.)

*Pinkas Hakehillot* (Encyclopedia of Jewish Communities). Various editors. Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1969–date. These volumes are in Hebrew and cover many different countries as defined by pre-WWII boundaries. Jewish communities with a population of over 100 are discussed in each volume. The countries covered to date include Romania (2 vols.), Germany (5 vols.), Hungary, Poland (7 vols.), Netherlands, Yugoslavia, Latvia and Estonia, Lithuania, Greece, and Libya. The Family History Library collection of this reference is incomplete.

Region	FHL book
Netherlands	949.2 F2m
Romania	949.8 H26ph
Bavaria	943.3 H26ph
Hungarian	943.9 H26ph
Poland-Lodz	943.8 H26ph v.1
Poland-E.Galicia	943.8 H26ph v.2

Language dictionaries are discussed in “Language and Languages” in this outline. Historical dictionaries of most countries have also been published by Scarecrow Press, Inc. in Metuchen, N.J. and by the Federal Research Division of the Library of Congress (Country Studies). These books give valuable background information on many of the smaller countries of the world.

## **GAZETTEERS**

A gazetteer is a dictionary of place-names. It describes towns, villages, rivers, mountains, and other geographical features. It usually includes the names of places that existed when the gazetteer was published. The place-names are generally listed in alphabetical order, similar to a dictionary.

Gazetteers may also provide information such as:

- Present-day administrative jurisdictions, such as counties, provinces, and districts.

- Religious jurisdictions, such as locations of Jewish congregations and Christian parishes.
- Statistics about the population, often including the population of Jews and other religions.
- Reference to local commerce, major cities in the vicinity, and sometimes historical notes.

You can use a gazetteer to locate where your family lived and determine the jurisdictions where records may have been kept. Gazetteers can help determine the county jurisdictions used in the Family History Library Catalog.

When learning about a place for genealogical purposes, you should use both old and modern gazetteers. Old gazetteers have information about older jurisdictions, Jewish communities that no longer exist, and town names as they existed over the years. Some names have changed several times as the boundaries and governments of a country have changed, and the name may be different in family documents from how it is listed today.

On the other hand, modern gazetteers are also important for genealogical work. They can be used to determine how the town name is spelled today, which may be crucial for finding the town on a map. It is necessary to know how the town name is spelled today and where it is located in order to write letters requesting records.

The Family History Library has an outstanding collection of gazetteers from all over the world. These can be categorized into two groups: general gazetteers and Jewish gazetteers. Some examples of both types are given here.

Although many of these gazetteers may have been compiled after your ancestors left these countries, location of towns changed very little during the 18th and 19th centuries. A gazetteer from 1914 will list the same towns that existed there a century earlier. There was often more than one variation of the town name, depending on the language and ethnic group, but the location seldom changed.

### **General Gazetteers**

Most gazetteers are written for a general audience, not specifically for Jews. Generally, gazetteers list all localities in a country and may give information that pertains to the Jewish population. Because most Jews lived in cities and not rural

areas, a general world gazetteer can often be of help. The following is a good general gazetteer:

*The Columbia Gazetteer of the World*. Ed. Saul B. Cohen. New York: Columbia University Press. 1998. (FHL book 910.3 C723.)

Some of the best gazetteers are for specific states or countries. Country-specific gazetteers described here also list references to Jewish communities and synagogues. Although this section has descriptions of several specific gazetteers, the Family History Library and other libraries have many gazetteers not listed here. For other countries, refer to the Family History Library Catalog and descriptions of gazetteers found in research outlines, if available, for the countries where your ancestors lived.

### Country-Specific Gazetteers

Because most Jews trace their origins to Central and Eastern Europe, the references cited in this section are for this area only. Following is a description of gazetteers from the former Austrian, Hungarian, German, and Russian Empires. Poland was part of the Austrian, Prussian (German), and Russian Empires and will be included in the gazetteers mentioned under those headings.

#### Austrian Empire

In the late 1800s Austria contained a large portion of eastern Europe, including parts of present-day Poland, Ukraine, Romania, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, and Croatia. Many Jews were displaced from towns and cities in this part of Europe.

The following gazetteer for this region was based on the 1900 Austrian census. The volume for each province is arranged by district and includes an index to German and local place-names. If you do not find the town on the page listed in the index, check the footnotes. Parishes and synagogues are not listed in the main text but are in an appendix located between the main text and the index of each volume. The appendix is arranged alphabetically by district and sub-district. The synagogues and parishes are given in the last column: Standort der röm.-kath., gr.-kath. und isr. Matrikelstellen (location of the Roman Catholic, Greek Catholic, and Jewish Place of Registration):

*Gemeindelexikon der im Reichsrate vertretenen Königreiche und Länder* (Gazetteer of the crownlands and Territories Represented in the Imperial

Council). 14 vols. Vienna: K.K. Statistisches Zentralkommission, 1903–1908. (FHL book 943.6 E5g; film [see below].)

1,187,925	Item 2	Vol. 1	Niederösterreich (Lower Austria, now part of Austria)
1,187,925	Item 3	Vol. 2	Oberösterreich (Upper Austria, now part of Austria)
1,187,925	Item 4	Vol. 3	Salzburg (Salzburg, now part of Austria)
1,187,926	Item 1	Vol. 4	Steiermark (Styria, now part of Austria and Slovenia)
1,187,926	Item 2	Vol. 5	Kärnten (Carinthia, now part of Austria, Italy, and Slovenia)
1,187,926	Item 3	Vol. 6	Krain (Carniola, now part of Slovenia)
1,187,926	Item 4	Vol. 7	Küstenland (Coastland, now part of Italy, Slovenia, and Croatia)
1,187,926	Item 5	Vol. 8	Tirol und Vorarlberg (Tyrol and Vorarlberg, now part of Austria and Italy)
1,187,927	Item 1	Vol. 9	Böhmen (Bohemia, now part of the Czech Republic)

924,736	Item 1	Vol. 10	Mähren (Moravia, now part of the Czech Republic)
1,187,927	Item 2	Vol. 11	Schlesien (Silesia, now part of Poland and the Czech Republic)
1,187,928	Item 1	Vol. 12	Galizien (Galicia, now part of Poland and Ukraine)
1,187,928	Item 2	Vol. 13	Bukovina (Bukovina, now part of Romania and Ukraine)
1,187,928	Item 3	Vol. 14	Dalmatien (Dalmatia, now part of Croatia)

### Hungarian Kingdom

Hungary was a large empire in the late 1800s and early 1900s. It included large portions of present-day Austria, Croatia, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Ukraine.

A useful gazetteer of this entire region, which lists places where Jews in each town worshiped, is:

*Magyarország Helységnévtára* (Gazetteer of Hungary). 2 vols. János Dvorzák, comp. Budapest: "Havi Füzetek," 1877. (FHL book 943.9 E5d; film 599,564 [Vol. I] and 973,041 [Vol. II]; fiche 6,000,840.)

Volume I is an alphabetical index of localities. Entries in the index are followed by the name of the old Hungarian county and a set of numbers, which refer to the entry in volume II. The first number is the number of the county; the second is the number of the district; the last is the number of the place. Town names have spelling variations in parentheses following the Hungarian standard spelling.

Use the numbers from the index to find the entry for your town. Population figures are given

according to religion. The following abbreviations are used:

izr.	Izraelita	Jewish
rk.	Római Katholikus	Roman Catholic
gk.	Görög Katholikus	Greek Catholic (Eastern Orthodox)
kg.	Keleti Görög	Greek Orthodox
ag.	Agostai	Augsburg Evangelical Lutheran
ref.	Reformatus	Reformed
un.	Unitárius	Unitarian

If the village had a parish church (or synagogue for Jews), the abbreviation for the religion will be in **boldface** capital letters. The diocese will follow, also in **boldface** type. If the people attended church or synagogue elsewhere, the abbreviation of the town for the nearest congregation for that religion will be in lower case. The name of the parish or congregation location follows the population figure. If a dash (—) follows the population figure, it means members of that religion belong to no particular congregation.

### German Empire

In the late 1800s many people left the German Empire for other countries. At that time the Empire (including Prussia) was a much larger territory than it is today and included areas now located in Poland, Russia, Ukraine, Lithuania, Denmark, and France. As records of these emigrants often refer to towns by their German names, it is helpful to locate the town today in a German gazetteer from that period. An excellent gazetteer based on the 1910 census of the German Empire is:

Utrecht, E., comp. *Meyers Orts- und Verkehrs-Lexikon des Deutschen Reichs* (Meyer's place and Transportation Directory of the German Empire). 2 vols. Leipzig: Bibliographisches Institut, 1912–1913. (FHL book 943 E5mo; film 496,640–496,641; fiche 6,000,001–6,000,029.)

This gazetteer is written in the old Gothic script, and towns are listed alphabetically. It gives the 1871–1918 political jurisdictions and indicates whether the place had its own parish or synagogue. The following abbreviations are used:

Evangelical parish: **евѡфк.**  
Catholic parish: **kath. ѡфк.**  
Jewish synagogue: **Сѡн.**

A multi-volume gazetteer was compiled for the provinces of the former Kingdom of Prussia based on the 1905 census. It includes statistical information about the number of Jews living in these provinces and other valuable information:

*Gemeindelexikon für das Königreich Preußen: auf Grund der Materialien der Volkszählung vom 1. Dezember 1905 und anderer amtlicher Quellen* (Parish Dictionary for the Kingdom of Prussia: Based on the Material of the Census of 1 December 1905 and Other Official Sources). 15 vols. Berlin: Verlag des Königlichen Statistischen Landesamts, 1907–1909. (FHL book 943 E5kp; films 1,181,005–1,181,006.)

## Russian Empire

The Russian Empire in the 1800s and early 1900s comprised most of eastern Europe, including areas of high Jewish concentration: Ukraine, Belorussia, and Poland. There are many gazetteers for this area and for individual countries that were once part of it. Two general gazetteers for this region are:

*Списки населённых мест российской империи* (*Spiski Naseleennykh miest Rossiiskoi Imperii* = List of inhabited places of the Russian Empire). Zug, Switz.: Inter Documentation Co., 1976. (FHL fiche 6,002,224, parts 1–420.) This gazetteer is used as a standard for place names of the Russian Empire in the Family History Library Catalog. Separate books were published for each province (Gubernia). This does not list the entire Russian Empire and is missing information on the Baltic States and Belarus.

*Russisches geographisches Namenbuch* (*RGN*) (Russian Geographical Name Book [RGN]). 12 vols. Wiesbaden: O. Harrassowitz, 1964–1988. (FHL book 947 E5r.) Alphabetical listing of places within the Russian Empire, including Belarus and

other frontier regions. Written in German and Russian.

Separate gazetteers in the above series exist for Belarus but are listed in the Family History Library catalog under the name of the province (*Gubernia*). For example there are gazetteers for Minsk (FHL film 1,923,576 item 1), Vitebsk (FHL film 1,923,576 item 3), and Mogilev (FHL film 1,923,576 item 2 from 1908–1910). Another gazetteer for Minsk is dated 1924 (FHL film 2,044,163 item 1).

As a result of persecution, many Jews left or were displaced from Russian Poland, which included large sections of Ukraine and Belarus. The following gazetteer may be particularly helpful in identifying a place of origin in this region:

Sulimierski, Filip. *Słownik geograficzny Królestwa Polskiego i innych Krajów Słowiańskich* (Geographical Dictionary of the Kingdom of Poland and Other Slavic Countries). 15 Vol. Warsaw: Władysław Walewski, 1880–1902. (FHL book 943.8 E5c; films 920,957–920,972.) Arranged alphabetically with text in Polish. Usually indicates whether a town had a Jewish population and a synagogue.

In addition to the ones mentioned, the Family History Library has many other gazetteers. The U.S. Board on Geographic Names has published gazetteers for each country in the world, which are generally excellent reference sources. Check for these books in the Family History Library Catalog.

## Jewish Gazetteers

Because Jewish historical reference books include alphabetical listings of Jewish communities, they may be used as gazetteers. Information found in these books includes local history, the Holocaust, remarks concerning record-availability, and alternative spellings.

The following books are a guide to Jewish communities in Germany, the former Austria-Hungary Empire, and the Russian Empire. They include place-name spelling variations, modern country jurisdiction, proximity to larger towns (not always in the same jurisdiction), number of Jewish residents prior to 1945, and references to various other sources where a given locality is mentioned:

Cohen, Chester G. *Shtetl Finder – Jewish Communities in the 19th and Early 20th Centuries in the Pale of Settlement of Russia and Poland, and in Lithuania, Latvia, Galicia, and Bukovina, with names of Residents*. Los Angeles: CA, Periday Co., 1980. (FHL book 947 F24s.)

Mokotoff, Gary and Sallyann Amdur Sack. *Where Once We Walked—A Guide to the Jewish Communities Destroyed in the Holocaust*. Teaneck, NJ: Avotaynu, Inc., 1991. (FHL book 940. E5 ms.)

Mokotoff, Gary. *WOWW Companion: A guide to the communities surrounding central & eastern towns*. Teaneck, NJ: Avotaynu, c1995. (FHL book 940 E5mg supp.)

The JewishGen Internet site includes a gazetteer with 350,000 towns in 24 countries in Central and Eastern Europe. It is based on the Geographic Names Database (GNDB) compiled by the U.S. Defense Mapping Agency, which was also used extensively in the compilation of *Where Once We Walked*. It has links to maps showing where various towns are located in Europe. This system searches by the Daitch-Mokotoff Soundex (see the glossary), which may help you find a town name even if it is spelled slightly differently from the gazetteer. The web address is:

<http://www.shtetlinks.jewishgen.org/>

This same database is available on microfiche in three indexes: alphabetical, in the Daitch-Mokotoff Soundex, and by grid location:

*Gazetteer of Central and Eastern Europe*. 21 fiche. Teaneck, NJ: Avotaynu, c1995, 1998. (FHL fiche 6,312,315, 6,310,076, 6,306,695.) These fiche cannot be circulated by the Family History Library.

For those who read Hebrew, a multi-volume work has been compiled that gives a detailed history and description of Jewish communities of Europe, along with maps, photographs of synagogues, and well-known rabbis and community leaders. It is called *Pinkas Hakehillot* (Encyclopedia of Jewish Communities) and is explained in greater detail in “Encyclopedias and Dictionaries” in this outline.

## **GENEALOGY**

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The term *genealogy* is used in this outline and in the Family History Library Catalog to describe a variety of records containing compiled family information. These records are often gathered by individuals, other researchers, societies, or archives. They may include pedigree charts, correspondence, ancestor lists, research exchange files, record abstracts, and collections of original or copied documents. Genealogies can be a time-saving source of information, but they must be carefully evaluated for accuracy.

### **Major Collections and Databases**

The Family History Library has several sources that contain previous research or can lead you to others who are interested in sharing family information. These sources include:

- *International Genealogical Index*, which lists the names of deceased individuals from all over the world. This index includes names extracted from birth and marriage records and from submissions of private individuals. While it may include only limited information on Jewish families, it is certainly worth searching.
- *Ancestral File*. This file, part of FamilySearch and on the FamilySearch.org Internet site, contains family history information linked in family groups and pedigrees that has been contributed by patrons since 1979. Although it contains the names of millions of people, few are of Jewish descent. Ancestral File allows you to print pedigree charts, family group records, details about the submitters, and individual summary sheets for any person in the file.
- *Vital Records Index British Isles*, and *Vital Records Index North America*. These two CD-ROM indexes contain information from millions of birth, christening, and marriage records for the British Isles (1538–1888) and the United States and Canada (1631–1888). Both indexes can be purchased from the Distribution Center (see “Introduction” for the address).
- *Pedigree Resource File*. This CD- and DVD-ROM database contains more than 650 million names in lineage-linked pedigrees that have been submitted by researchers. These pedigrees contain unedited notes and sources.

Charts and reports can be printed from the data. The set also includes a master index to the names. It can be purchased from the Distribution Center (see "Introduction" for the address).

These databases are also found at most family history centers and on the Internet at:

<http://www.familysearch.org/>

## Family Histories

Some Jewish families have produced histories or newsletters that include genealogical information, biographies, photographs, and other excellent information. These usually contain several generations of the family. An example is:

Freedman, Chaim. *Eliyahu's Branches: the Descendants of the Vilna Gaon (of Blessed and Saintly Memory) and His Family*. Teaneck, NJ: Avotaynu, 1997. (FHL book 947.5/V1 D2f.)

The Family History Library has many published Jewish family histories contributed by Jewish genealogists throughout the world. To find family histories in the Library, look for the family name in the Surname Search of the Family History Library Catalog. Also consult bibliographies of Jewish genealogies such as:

Zubatsky, David S. and Irwin M. Berent. *Sourcebook for Jewish Genealogies and Family Histories*. Teaneck, N.J.: Avotaynu, 1996. (FHL book 296 Z81s.)

Genealogical information on Jews in a given community has also been compiled. The following are examples of compiled genealogies for Jews:

Stern, Malcolm H. *First American Jewish Families, 600 Genealogies 1654–1988*. 3rd ed. Baltimore: Ottenheimer Publishers, Inc., 1991. (FHL book 973 F2frs.) This book contains alphabetically-arranged pedigrees of prominent Jewish families whose ancestors settled in the United States before 1840.

Cavignac, Jean. *Dictionnaire du Judaïsme Bordelais aux XVIIIe et XIXe Siècles: Biographies, Généalogies, Professions, Institutions* (Dictionary of Judaism in Bordeaux in the 18th and 19th centuries: Biographies Genealogies, Professions,

Institutions). Bordeaux: Archives départementales, 1987. (FHL book 944.71/B1 F2c.)

Willigsecker, Alain. *Chroniques blithariennes: La communauté israélite de Grosbliedestoff aux 18ème et 19ème siècles* (Blitharian Chronicles: the Jewish Community of Grosbliedestoff in the 18th and 19th Centuries). Forbach: Cercle Généalogique de Moselle-Est, 1994. (FHL book 944.3825/G2 D2w.)

## Genealogical Collections

Genealogical collections include published and unpublished family histories and lineages as well as the research files of prominent genealogists. A major Jewish genealogical collection is:

Mordy, I. *Collection of Jewish Records*. (FHL film 994,068 item 11 contains notes on the use of the indexes; 1,279,240–1,279,250 contain the indexes). Microfilm copy of original records held by Isobel Mordy in England. It includes compiled pedigrees of Jews and three indexes to the pedigrees by name, date, and locality. The name index is arranged alphabetically and gives pedigree reference numbers.

The Internet has information about genealogical collections, such as the American Jewish Historical Society's online catalog of their manuscript collection. Their holdings include personal manuscripts that contain genealogy collections of specific individuals or families. Access their catalog at:

[http://www.ajhs.org/reference/online\\_catalog.cfm](http://www.ajhs.org/reference/online_catalog.cfm)

There are also collections of genealogical materials about non-Jewish people that include information about individual Jews. Several family papers and unpublished genealogical collections are at local libraries and archives in the United States. Many of these collections are listed in:

*National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections* (NUCMC). Annual. Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 1959–. (FHL book 016.091 N21.)

An index to 200,000 names in the collections is found in:

*Index to Personal Names in the National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections, 1959–1984*, 2 vols. Alexandria, Va.: Chadwyck-Healey, 1988. (FHL book 016.091 N21 Index 1959–1984.)

## Genealogical Indexes

Indexes are excellent tools for genealogists. Many organizations and individuals compile indexes to various genealogies and records, including ones by name or place. If an index applies to your research, it can save you many hours of searching. The Family History Library has some of these indexes. The following are some examples:

Kaminkow, Marion J. *Genealogies in the Library of Congress: A Bibliography*, 2 vols. 2 supplements, 1972–76, 1976–86. Baltimore: Magna Charta Book, 1972. (FHL book 016.9291 K128c.) The *Complement* lists genealogies at 45 other libraries.

The newest supplement is:

*Genealogies Cataloged in the Library of Congress since 1986*. Washington, D.C.: Cataloging Distribution Service, Library of Congress, 1992. (FHL book 016.9291 L616g.)

## Research Coordination

Many organizations, such as family history societies, publish directories listing the research interests of individuals. These directories are excellent tools for finding others researching the same family lines who may have information about your family. The following is one major example:

Johnson, Keith A., and Malcolm R. Sainty. *Genealogical Research Directory*. Sydney: Genealogical Research Directory Editors, 1996. (FHL book 929.1025 G286grd.) Search all editions since it is published yearly and specific family names may appear in only one edition.

Thousands of Jews worldwide are researching their family histories. The Jewish Genealogical Society created a database of surnames and towns that are being researched by genealogists. You can write to these individuals to coordinate your research efforts and find out what they have already learned. This published database is:

Jewish Genealogical Society. *Jewish Genealogical Family Finder*. New York, New York, 1992–. (FHL book 940 F2 [1992]; microfiche 6,334,925 [1998].)

An Internet version, called the JewishGen Family Finder, contains tens of thousands more entries. It is located at:

<http://www.jewishgen.org/jgff/>

Other Internet sites that help bring together people working on the same family lines include:

<http://www.familysearch.org/>  
<http://rsl.rootsweb.com/cgi-bin/rslsql.cgi>  
<http://genforum.genealogy.com/>

The Family History Library has many of the sources discussed in this section. Check for these records in the Family History Library Catalog.

## HOLOCAUST, JEWISH (1939–1945)

The term *Holocaust, Jewish (1939–1945)* is used in this outline and the Family History Library Catalog to describe various records and publications that document the genocide of European Jews during World War II. Before WWII over 80% of the world's Jews lived in Central and Eastern Europe. During WWII Jewish communities in these areas were systematically destroyed. The Holocaust [shoal in Hebrew], migration issues, and naming patterns are three major obstacles in Jewish genealogical research.

Following the war, the Jewish community began several large-scale undertakings to document the towns and people destroyed in the Holocaust. Three records of great importance to genealogical research are *Yizkor* books, *Pages of Testimony*, and lists of victims and deportees.

*Yizkor*, or memorial books. These publications are usually written in Hebrew or Yiddish and include the history of a Jewish community, memories of the community's survivors, information from friends about families that had no survivors, a list of Holocaust victims from the town, and names and addresses of survivors. *Yizkor* books are usually privately printed in small publication runs. The following archives have significant collections of *yizkor* books:

- Yad Vashem
- YIVO Institute for Jewish research
- Library of Congress
- Jewish Public Library of Montreal

See “Archives and Libraries” in this outline for addresses and other information about the Jewish collections of these and other archives.

JewishGen has an ongoing project to facilitate access to *yizkor* books. Information is available at:

<http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/>

*Pages of Testimony.* These manuscripts were compiled by the Yad Vashem from 1955 to the present under authority of *The Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Law*. This collection has information on over 3 million Jews murdered in the Holocaust. Each page of testimony records the individual's name, year and place of birth, names of parents and spouse, place of residence before the war, places of residence during the war, and circumstances of death (place, date, and so on). Each form is signed and dated by the person giving the testimony. Pages of Testimony are available only through the Hall of Names at the Yad Vashem.

Lists of Victims and Deportees. Included in this category are names of Jews (reported by survivors) who were born in various countries and died during the Holocaust and lists of Jews who were deported from various countries. Some published books listing holocaust victims and deportees are:

*Gedenkbuch, Opfer der Verfolgung der Juden unter der nationalsozialistischen Gewaltherrschaft in Deutschland 1933–1945* (Memorial Book, The Victims of Jewish Persecution under the National Socialist Regime in Germany 1933–1945). 2 vols. Frankfurt/Main: Johannes Weisbecker, 1986. (FHL book 943 V4g.) Lists German Jews alphabetically with place of residence, date of birth, date of death or missing, and cause of fate due to persecution (usually the name of the concentration camp).

*Lijst van nederlandse joden, gevangenen, en vermiste personen die gestorven zijn in concentratie kampen gedurende de tweede wereld oorlog: bijvoegsel tot de Nederlandse Staatscourant van donderdag 1949–1962* (List of Dutch Jews, prisoners, and missing persons who died in concentration camps during the second world war: supplement to the Netherlands State-Newspaper every Thursday 1949–1962). 3 vols. 's-Gravenhage: Staatsdrukkerij en Uitgeverijbedrijf, 1949–1950. (FHL book 949.2 V23n; film

1,045,357 item 1, 1,181,856 item 1, 1,183,644 item 11.)

Klarsfeld, Serge. *Le memorial de la déportation des Juifs de France* (Memorial of the Deported Jews of France). Paris: Beate et Serge Klarsfeld, 19—. (FHL book 944 F2k.) Lists alphabetically names of Jews transported in over 75 convoys to concentration camps in Germany and Poland. Includes name, birth date, and other information.

Many groups are compiling information about survivors of the Holocaust. For example, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum has a national registry of survivors of the Holocaust who came to the United States after WWII. Information about people on this list can be obtained at the museum. See “Archives and Libraries” in this outline for further information about this repository.

The Family History Library has a few *yizkor* books and other information about the Jewish Holocaust. Check for these records in the Family History Library Catalog. Other sections of this outline that discuss records of Jews during the Holocaust include “Census” and “Concentration Camps.”

A guide to researching Holocaust families is:

Mokotoff, Gary. *How to Document Victims and Locate Survivors of the Holocaust*. Teaneck, NJ: Avotaynu, 1995. (FHL book 940 F2mo.)

### **Holocaust Lists Online**

A number of organizations now provide information and lists about Jewish individuals who perished in the Holocaust.

The Yad Vashem website lists three million names of victims found in various sources as well as online access to Pages of Testimony submitted in the memory of those who died. Yad Vashem's Shoah Victims' Database Search can be done at:

<http://www.yadvashem.org/>

The Document Centre of Austrian Resistance has a searchable online “Registration by Name”-Austrian Victims of the Holocaust database with more than 62,000 names and documentation on

the Shoah of the Austrian Jews. This database can be found at:

<http://doew.at/>

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum has an online name search for victims and is found at:

<http://ushmm.org/namesearch/>

A sample of other Holocaust related lists of victims (and survivors) are:

<http://www.jewishgen.org/Registry/>

<http://jewishgen.org/databases/holocaust/>

The JewishGen Holocaust Global Registry provides a central place for anyone searching Holocaust survivors, for survivors searching family members or friends, and for child survivors searching clues to their identity. See:

<http://www.jewishgen.org/registry/>

## **INQUISITION**

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The term *Inquisition* refers to Catholic courts that were established to find and punish heretics. During the persecution of Jews in Spain in the 1390s, thousands of Jews accepted baptism to save their lives. These converts were called *conversos*, Neo-Christians, or *marranos*. They retained their love of Judaism and many secretly observed Jewish laws and customs. This aroused the hatred of Catholic fanatics and clergy and the greed of others.

Spain began the Inquisition in 1480 and conducted it for nearly 300 years, spreading it to Portugal and Spanish and Portuguese colonies. Many *conversos* fled Spain and returned to Judaism. Some remained Catholic and successfully hid their Jewish activity. Some Jewish traditions were lost over time and many descendants lost all knowledge of their Jewish identity. Other practices were retained and even today Catholic descendants continue family traditions such as not eating pork or not lighting fires on Friday night and Saturday.

Documents created during the Inquisition contain details on the investigations conducted, names of the accused, and details of their heresy. Some may include family relationships and a detailed descendancy from a *converso*. Other references to the family may appear in sources such as church, court, and notarial records. These records are difficult to use and are seldom indexed.

A web site that describes various Inquisition records and lists archives where records are deposited is found at:

<http://www.orthohelp.com/geneal/inquis.htm>

The Family History Library has many Inquisition records for Mexico, Portugal, Columbia, Peru, and some for other South American countries. For example, documents of trials of Jews from Brazil and Portugal and from Mexico can be found on microfilm at the Family History Library:

***Inquisição de Lisboa*** (Inquisition of Lisbon). Lisboa: Laboratórios Fototécnicos, 1975. (On 77 FHL films, beginning with 784,501.)

*Indice del Ramo de Ynquisición* (Index of the Branch of the Inquisition). 2 vols. México City: Archivo General de la Nación, 1978. (FHL book 972 A5mi; film 1,149,544.) The manuscript gives a summary of the various cases tried during the Inquisition.

***Procesos del Santo Oficio de México, 1522–1820***, Salt Lake City, Utah: Genealogical Society of Utah, 1952–1954. (On 322 FHL films, beginning with 34,797.)

To find these and other similar records in the Family History Library Catalog, use the subject search under the topic “Inquisition.”

## **JEWISH HISTORY**

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Effective research requires understanding historical events that affected your family and the records about them. Learning about governments, laws, wars, migrations, and religious and economic trends helps you understand political boundaries, family movements, and settlement patterns. These events may have led to the creation of records about your family, such as taxation and military documents.

Your ancestors will become more interesting to you if you also use histories to learn about the events that were of interest to them or that they

may have been involved in. For example, by using a history you might learn about the events that occurred in the year your great-grandparents were married.

Since Roman times Jews were found in many cities throughout the Mediterranean region. After the fall of Jerusalem in 66 c.e., Jews were scattered even wider. This scattering of the Jews is called the Diaspora, which means dispersion in Greek. The Jews that settled in Spain [*Sepharad* in Hebrew] came to be called the *Sephardim* or Sephardic Jews. They lived among the Islamic Moors and the Catholic Spanish. This influenced their language and culture. These Jews came to speak a language related to Spanish called Ladino.

Other Jews migrated north from Italy and by medieval times were settled among the Germanic peoples of central Europe. These Jews came to be known as the *Ashkenazim* or Ashkenazic (*Ashkenaz* means German in Hebrew) Jews. The language that developed among them was closely related to German and called Yiddish.

Some key dates and events in Jewish history of interest to the genealogist are:

1492	Jews are either forcibly converted or expelled from Sardinia, Sicily, and Spain. They settle in the Netherlands, France, Italy, the Balkans, and North Africa. Later many European Jews flee to Poland, which has become far more tolerant of religious diversity than other nations. After the expulsion of Spanish Jewry and the continued persecution of Jews in western Europe, Poland and Lithuania (united into one kingdom in 1569) become the new cultural center of Jewish life in Europe. The Jewish population grows and flourishes in Poland. In some cities Jews constitute over 50% of the population.
1654	The first Jewish settlement in North America is established at New Amsterdam (New York).
1784	Austria introduces official registration of births, marriages, and deaths by Catholic clergy. Jews are recorded in Catholic registers and are required to adopt fixed surnames.

1791	French Jews are granted full rights and declared citizens. Russia establishes the Pale of Jewish settlement, an area of western Russia where Jews were permitted to live. The borders of the Pale are modified from time to time.
1804	In his "Statute Concerning the Organization of the Jews" Russian czar Alexander I expresses the dual policy of forced assimilation and expulsion from villages. The goal is to draw Jews into the general stream of Russian economic and cultural life. Jewish residence in villages is prohibited, and expulsions begin soon afterward.
1808	The Duchy of Warsaw introduces civil registration of births, marriages, and deaths under Catholic supervision. Jews are recorded.
1813	Prussian law requires Jews to take fixed surnames.
1826	The Polish government requires all religions to keep their own registers of births, marriages, and deaths.
1827	Reinterpretation of Russia's Conscription Law mandates 31 years of military service for Jews, beginning at age 12, in another effort to assimilate the Jews.
1835	A strongly enforced Russian law requires Jews to take fixed surnames and register with the Crown Rabbinate.
1848	Revolutions and riots in Central Europe, especially Germany, spur increased Jewish immigration to America.
1861	Russian laws free the serfs. Russian Jews are gradually allowed to settle in villages outside the Pale.
1867	The Jews of Austria and Hungary receive full civil rights.
1873	Reform Judaism in the U.S. establishes the Union of American Hebrew Congregations.

1881	The “May Laws” in Russia result in Jews being forced to live only in the Pale of Settlement. These restrictions and the pogroms (organized massacres of innocent people) that spread throughout the southwestern region in Eastern Europe mark the start of mass migrations of eastern European Jews.
1890	The Jews of Great Britain receive full civil rights.
1908	The Jews of the Ottoman Empire receive full civil rights.
1917	As a result of the Russian Revolution, Soviet Jews receive full civil rights
1918	The end of WWI. European borders are redrawn, and many Jews now live in the new Republic of Poland.
1939–1945	World War II and the Jewish Holocaust occurs.
1948	The State of Israel is proclaimed. Jews begin immigrating to Israel.

The Family History Library and many other public and private libraries have many books on Jewish history or histories that include information about the Jews. Some examples are:

Cohn-Sherbok, Dan. *Atlas of Jewish History*. London: Routledge, c1994. (FHL book 296 C661a.)

Patai, Raphael et al. *The Vanished Worlds of Jewry*. New York: MacMillan, 1980. (FHL book 296 P27v.)

Potok, Chaim. *Wanderings: Chaim Potok’s History of the Jews*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf 1978. (FHL book 296 P849w.)

## Local Histories

Some of the most valuable sources for Jewish family history research are local histories. Even if these books do not discuss your ancestors, information on other relatives may be included that will provide important clues for locating your ancestors. A local history may also give you ideas of other records to search. In addition, local histories should be studied and appreciated for the background information they can provide about your family’s life-style and the community and environment your family lived in.

General local histories describe the settlement of the area, churches, schools, and local economy and may include information about the local Jewish community. Other histories focus specifically on the Jewish community and give additional information about the founding of synagogues, yeshivas (an academy of Jewish learning and scholarship), and businesses, including maps and photographs. *Yizkor* books, which are discussed in “Holocaust, Jewish (1939–1945)” in this outline, also contain information about the history of Jewish communities. Examples of some local Jewish histories include:

Berkley, George E. *Vienna and Its Jews, The Tragedy of Success, 1880s–1980s*. Cambridge, MA: Abt Books, 1988. (FHL book 943.613/W1 F2b.)

Emmanuel, Isaac S. and Suzanne A. *History of the Jews of the Netherlands Antilles*, 2 vols. Cincinnati: American Jewish Archives, 1970. (FHL book 972.986 F2e.)

Gans, Mozes Heiman. *Memorbook, History of Dutch Jewry from the Renaissance to 1940: with 1100 Illustrations*. Baarn: Bosch & Keuning, 1977. (FHL book 949.2 F2g.)

Kayserlin, Meyer. *Historia dos Judeus em Portugal* (History of the Jews in Portugal). São Paulo: Livraria Pioneira Editora, 1971. (FHL book 946.9 F2k.)

Wachstein, Bernhard. *Urkunden und Akten zur Geschichte der Juden in Eisenstadt und den Siebengemeinden* (Records and Documents on the History of the Jews in Eisenstadt [Austria] and the Seven Congregations). Wien: Wilhelm Braumüller, 1926. (FHL book 943.615/E1 B4w Vol. 2.)

## JEWISH RECORDS

Jewish records, including synagogue records, contain information specifically about Jews. These include vital records (births, marriages, divorces, and deaths) prepared by or for Jewish communities, registers of name changes, account books of congregations, circumcision records, and burial records. Synagogue records are listed in the Family History Library Catalog under Jewish Records, but they have a separate section in this outline.

Jews generally did not keep vital records unless required to do so by law. In most countries Jews are recorded in the civil registration or vital records along with people of other religions. For example, when civil registration started in France in 1792 and the Netherlands in 1795, Jews were recorded with the rest of the population.

Some countries required separate Jewish vital records be kept. After 1826–1835, many countries of Europe required separate registers to be kept of Jews. Although these separate registers were a form of civil registration, they are listed in the Family History Library Catalog as Jewish Records.

For information about the relationship between Jewish records, civil registration, and church records, see “Vital Records” in this outline.

Records kept of Jews are not the same from country to country or from time period to time period. Even within the same country Jewish records can vary from region to region. An example from Austria is given at the end of this section.

Many records of Jews kept by local governments or by Jews themselves, especially for cities of Europe that had significant Jewish populations, have been microfilmed. For example, there are Jewish records at the Family History Library for marriage contracts [*ketubah*], circumcision records [*bris*], burial and cemetery records, and other Jewish records from Amsterdam that date back to 1580. Excellent records of German and Portuguese Jewish communities during the 18th century are found in cities such as Bordeaux, France. Other Jewish records include:

***Matrikel, 1826–1938*** (Metrical Books, 1826–1938). Wien: Niederösterreichischen Stadt und Landesarchive, 1980. (On 236 FHL films, beginning with 1,175,370.) Registers of births, marriages, and deaths in the city of Vienna from 1826–1938.

***Matrykuła, 1826–1866*** (Metrical Books, 1826–1866). Warszawa: Genealogical Society of Utah, 1968. (FHL films 689,510–689,556.) Registers of births, marriages, and deaths in the city of Warsaw from 1826–1866.

***Juden und Dissidenten-Register, 1812–1874*** (Jews and Dissidents’ Register, 1812–1874). Berlin: Staatsarchiv, 1938. (On 44 FHL films, beginning with 477,280.) Registers of births, marriages, and deaths in the city of Berlin from 1812–1874.

Examples of some published Jewish Records are:

Attal, Robert. *Registres Matrimoniaux de la communauté juive portugaise de Tunis aux XVIIIe et XIXe siècles* (Marriage Registers of the Portuguese Jewish Community of Tunis [Tunisia] from the 18th and 19th Centuries). Jérusalem: Institut Ben-Zvi, 1989. (FHL book 961.1 F2a.)

Margolinsky, Jul. *Jødiske dødsfald i Danmark 1693–1976* (Jewish Deaths in Denmark 1693–1976). København: Dansk Historisk Håndbogsforlag, 1978. (FHL book 948.9 V22m.)

### **An Austrian Example**

The following example shows how laws in parts of the Austrian Empire affected the keeping of Jewish records. The availability and genealogical value of Jewish records varies for the time periods mentioned and in the different regions (Bohemia, Silesia, and the rest of the Austrian Empire).

Some circumcision registers were kept in Austria since the early 1700s (officially designated as *Matrikeln* [vital records] in 1722). These records, written mostly in Hebrew, had no legal validity.

Although a law was made in 1766 requiring birth registers be kept in Bohemia, there was not widespread compliance. In 1784 the Austrian vital registration system was revised; standardized forms were made for recording births, marriages, and deaths. The rabbis were now required to keep Jewish vital records for their congregations.

In 1788 Austria passed a law requiring records be in German. Jews had to take fixed surnames and a given name selected from a list of German names. Larger Jewish congregations began keeping records, which were not considered legal unless verified and approved by Catholic clerical authority.

In 1797 Jewish registration in Bohemia came under Catholic clerical supervision. Because there were no rabbis in Silesia, tax collectors in this area kept the Jewish records.

Laws in 1837, 1843, and 1846 gave the responsibility of keeping accurate Jewish records to civil registrars with Catholic oversight. In July 1868 Jewish records finally received full recognition as legally valid without Catholic supervision.

## Locating Jewish Records

The Family History Library has filmed many Jewish records, including extensive collections from Hungary and Slovakia. Search for Jewish records in the Family History Library Catalog for the town or region where your ancestors lived under the topic Jewish Records.

## LANGUAGE AND LANGUAGES

Most records used in Jewish research are written in the language of the country. In past centuries Jews did not generally keep birth, marriage, and death records unless required to do so by the laws of the country of residence. These laws also dictated the language records were to be kept in. Depending on the time period, information for Jews who appear in church records may also be in Latin. You do not need to speak or read these languages to do Jewish research, but you will need to know some key words and phrases to understand the records.

Some languages have grammatical structures which may affect the way names appear in genealogical records. For example, in Polish the name *Icek* [Isaac] may be grammatically changed to *Icka*, which means “of *Icek*.” In Czech, a female with the surname Neumann would appear as Neumannová.

Spelling problems make some records difficult to interpret. Family names and place names were often spelled phonetically, which would alter the spelling from record keeper to record keeper. This problem is further complicated by spelling names in different languages that have different spelling rules or even different alphabets. For example, foreign words with an *h* are generally rewritten in Russian with the letter *g* [г]. The Russian letter *ѵ* (pronounced as a “v”) is written in English as *v* but in German as *w*. The Family History Library has genealogical word lists that include suggested spelling variations. You may want to become familiar with the spelling rules of the languages in the areas you research.

### Hebrew Alphabet

Jewish records may be in Yiddish, Hebrew, or the language of the country of residence. Yiddish, Hebrew, and Ladino are all written in the Hebrew alphabet. Synagogue records, other records kept by Jews, and tombstone inscriptions are often written in the Hebrew alphabet.

Hebrew is written from right to left. Vowels were used to mark grammatical form and were not

originally written. Diacritical marks and subscript signs are now used to represent vowels. The following chart shows the 22 Hebrew consonants and how the letters are transcribed into the Roman alphabet. Each of the 22 consonants also represents a number value, which is also shown.

Hebrew	Number	Roman
א	1	' (or disregarded)
ב	2	b or v
ג	3	g
ד	4	d
ה	5	h
ו	6	v (if consonant)
ז	7	z
ח	8	kh
ט	9	t
י	10	y (if consonant)
כ (final) ך	20	kh
ל	30	l
מ (final) ם	40	m
נ (final) ן	50	n
ס	60	s
ע	70	'
פ, (final) ף	80	p or f
צ, (final) ץ	90	ts
ק	100	k
ר	200	r
ש	300	sh or s
ת	400	t or th (in Yiddish, s)

Thousands are designated by a single quote next to the letter:

‘א	=	1000
‘ה	=	5000

A double quote between the last two letters signifies a year:

תש”ו represents 706 and year (5)706

Vowels are indicated by modifying the preceding consonant. The following example, using the first letter of the alphabet, shows how this is done:

Hebrew	Roman
א	ha
אי	hai
אח	ha, ho
אה	he
איי	he
אח	he
אחי	he (hej)
א	hi
אי	hi
אח	ho

אוי	ho
אױ	hu
אױ	hu
אױ	he or disregard vowel
אױ	ha
אױ	he
אױ	ho

Hebrew months are written as follows:

תשרי	Tishri
חשוון (מר חשוון)	Kheshvan (Mar Kheshvan)
כסלו	Kislev
טבת	Tevet
שבט	Shevat
אדר	Adar (א, אדר ב, Adar II, Adar I during leap year)
ניסן	Nisan
אייר	Iyar
סיון	Sivan
תמוז	Tammuz
אב (מנחם אב)	Av (Menakhem Av)
אלול	Elul

A few other Hebrew abbreviations you often find on tombstones include:

פ״נ	Here lies interred (Poh Nitman)
פ״ט	Here lies buried (Poh ta-mun)
ר׳	Honorific, does not mean Rabbi (Reb)
מרת	Mrs/Miss
בת	Daughter of
בן	Son of
ב״ר	Son/Daughter of (Ben/Bat Reb)
מו״ה	Our Teacher, Rabbi (Moreinu)
הכהן	The person was a Cohen
הלוי	The person was a Levi
תנצב״ה	May his/her soul be bound up in the bonds of (everlasting) life (acronym)
לפ״ק	The Hebrew year without the 1000s number
אמינו	Our Mother
ר״ה	New month (Rosh hodesh)
אר״ה	First day of the new month

## Language Aids

The Family History Library has genealogical word lists for many languages, including German, Polish, and Latin. These can be very helpful in reading the records that pertain to your ancestors. The Library also has a good collection of dictionaries. Those that have not been microfilmed cannot circulate. Check for dictionaries for the countries you are researching in the Family History Library Catalog. Foreign dictionaries are also available at many bookstores, including bookstores on the Internet.

If there is a research outline for the country or state where your ancestor lived, see the “Language and Languages” section of the outline.

## MAPS

Maps are an important source for locating places where your ancestors lived. They identify political boundaries, names of places, geographical features, cemeteries, synagogues and churches, and migration routes. Historical maps are especially useful for finding communities that no longer exist and for understanding boundary changes.

Maps are published separately or in collections called atlases. Maps may also be included in gazetteers, guidebooks, local histories, directories, and history books.

Different types of maps will help you several ways:

- Historical atlases describe the development of countries. They show boundaries, migration routes, settlement patterns, military campaigns, and other historical information.
- Topographical maps show elevations and include physical and manmade features.
- Road atlases show a lot of detail.
- Ordinance maps show specific areas of a country in great detail.
- City or street maps are useful in researching large cities, such as Berlin, London, or Minsk.

If there is a research outline for the country or state where your ancestor lived, see the “Maps” section of the outline.

## Using Maps

Use maps carefully for the following reasons:

- Often several places have the same name. For example, there were more than 800 towns called Александровка (Aleksandrovka) in the Russian Empire.
- The spelling and even the names of some towns may have changed. This is particularly true of eastern European countries whose boundaries have changed. For example, the town presently known as Zagreb in Croatia was called Agram before the Austrian Empire was dissolved.

- Foreign place-names are often misspelled by record keepers of other countries. Sometimes difficult names were shortened and important diacritical marks omitted.
- Political and local boundaries are not always clearly indicated on all maps.

### Finding the Specific Place on the Map

To do successful genealogical research, you must identify the place where your ancestor lived. Because many localities have the same name, you may need some additional information before you can find the correct place on a map. Search gazetteers, histories, family records, and other sources to learn all you can about:

- The country, state or province, county, and town of your ancestor's birthplace or residence.
- The location of the synagogues or churches in these areas.
- The size of the town.
- Your ancestor's occupation (this can indicate the size or industries of the town).
- Nearby localities, such as large cities.
- Industries in the area.
- The dates the town existed, if and when it was renamed, and other names it was known by.
- Geographical features, such as rivers and mountains.

Use gazetteers to identify the government district your ancestor's town was in. This will help you distinguish it from other towns of the same name and enable you to locate it on a map. For further information, see "Gazetteers" in this outline.

### Finding Maps and Atlases

Collections of maps and atlases are available at historical societies, county record offices, libraries, and on the Internet. The Family History Library has a good collection of maps and atlases for most countries of the world. Check for these records in the Family History Library Catalog.

Because of boundary changes, the dissolution of empires, and the changes in place names, it is especially important to use maps in researching Central and Eastern European countries. Some helpful maps for these areas include:

*Eastern Europe*. Scale 1:250,000. Washington, DC: Army Map Service, 1956–1959. (FHL map 947 E7e; film 1,183,629.) This map comes with a two-volume place-name index

that lists the sheet number and longitude and latitude for each place (FHL book 947 E7e index; fiche 6,001,727–6,001,728). A grid map at the front of the film also shows what sections are on which maps. References to this map are found in gazetteers of this region published by the U.S. Board on Geographical Names.

*Generalkarte von Mitteleuropa* (General Map of Central Europe). Scale 1:200,000. Wien: Bundesamt für Eich-und Vermessungswesen, 1889–1967. (FHL book 940 E7bm; film 1,181,580.) This map includes the region from middle Germany to western Ukraine and down to Greece, an area of high concentration for Jews. The grid map at the beginning of the film lists numbers across the top and at the left. The section maps use the top number plus the left number together as a map number.

*Militär-Landesaufnahme und Spezialkarte der österreichisch-ungarischen Monarchie* (Military Topographical and Specialized Map of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire). Wien: Das Institut, 1879–1928. (FHL book 943.6 E3am; film 1,045,395). Includes all of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire except for modern Austria. Overview map at the first of the film gives map numbers.

*Karte des Deutschen Reiches* (Map of the German Empire). 647 Maps. Berlin: Königlichen Preussischen Landesaufnahme, 1914–1917. (FHL film 68,814.) Overview map at the first of the film shows map numbers in the top right corner.

Recently published road atlases for each central and eastern European country have alphabetical indexes and show how town names are listed today. They can be found at public libraries or bookstores.

A historical atlas can be very helpful in visualizing your ancestor's homeland and may resolve research questions. Historical atlases are available at most libraries. The Family History Library has several historical atlases including:

Magocsi, Paul Robert. *Historical Atlas of East Central Europe*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1993. (FHL book 942 H2ho vol. 1.)

## **MILITARY RECORDS**

Military records identify individuals who served in the armed forces or who were eligible to serve. Evidence that an ancestor served in the military may be found in family records, biographies, census returns, probate records, civil registration or vital records, obituaries, records of veterans' organizations, and church or synagogue records.

In some countries military service or military registration was mandatory. Russia and Austria used the military as a way to assimilate Jews. Most people served for only a short period of time while others made it their lifetime career. Officers usually came from the upper classes while soldiers usually came from the general population. Jews were able to serve as military officers in many countries.

All military organizations (army, navy, coast guard, marines, militia, fencibles, yeomanry, and territorial armies) kept records. These records contain details about a person's military service including conduct, duty assignments, military schooling, pay, pension, and promotions. They also include genealogical information such as age or birth date, birthplace, occupation and residence prior to joining, physical description, and sometimes information about other family members. Military conscription rolls in countries such as Denmark and Germany listed all males from the time of their birth until they reached the age of service (about 18–21) or were too old to be eligible for military service (about 34–40).

To use military records, you must first find out the country, province, or state your ancestor lived in at the time he or she may have served in the military. Then learn what branches of the armed forces were found in these localities. Finally, determine what records were generated by the military, when they begin, and where these records are located.

The *U.S. Military Records* research outline (34118) provides extensive information about federal and other military records and search strategies. If there is a research outline for the country or state where your ancestor lived, see the "Military Records" section of the outline.

The library has extensive military records for countries such as Austria and the United States but little for others. Look in the Place Search (by country, state, county, and city where your ancestor lived) of the Family History Library Catalog under the topic Military Records.

Information on people who served in the military may also be found on the Internet. For example, there is a searchable database of Jewish veterans of the American Civil War taken from an 1895 Jewish directory. To find this database go to:

<http://www.jewishgen.org/>

### **Austrian Military Records**

The Family History Library has more than 1500 Austrian military records, mostly for the years 1740–1870. These contain valuable genealogical information.

The Austrian Empire began universal conscription in 1868. Military records from the Austrian Empire include documents from parts or all of present-day Austria, Bosnia, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy, Montenegro, Poland, Rumania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Ukraine.

Documents are divided into two large collections, the records of the Central Command and those of individual military units. Many types of records are found in both these categories, some including more genealogical information than others.

The Central Command records include the following types of records:

- *Military Commissions*. Lists officers' appointments, commissions, and instructions.
- *Nobility Grants*. Includes land or property grants awarded for valor.
- *Vital Certificates*. Records births to and marriages and deaths of military personnel.
- *Wills*.
- *Army Rank and Regiment Schematics*. Lists military personnel by rank and unit.
- *Pension and Assistance Records* in four areas:
  - a) Pension records
  - b) Invalid Office records
  - c) Orphans' Commission records
  - d) Soldier Orphans records
- *Payment Books*. Records wages and salary data and includes some biographical information.
- *Marriage Bonds*. Lists family members' names and occasionally has spouse's place of origin.
- *Military School Records*. Includes biographical information.
- *Military Court Records*. Includes probate information for military personnel.

Records of individual units include:

- *Muster Rolls*. Lists soldier's name, birthplace, age, religion, occupation, marital status, and names of dependant children.
- *Foundation Books* (muster rolls compiled locally). Summarizes soldier's career, including age, postings, and marriage information.
- *Service Records*. Supplements and muster rolls with information about a soldier's actual service record. Includes name, rank, birth date, marriage information, religion, education, place and date of induction, and decorations.
- *Religious Vital Registers of Individual Units*. Lists birth, marriage, and death information.

For more information about Austrian military records at the Family History Library, see:

Schmidl, Erwin A. *Juden in der k.(u)k. Arme 1788-1918 = Jewish in the Habsburg Armed Forces*. Eisenstadt: Österreichisches Jüdisches Museum, 1989. (FHL book 943.6F2). Text in German and English.

Blodgett, Steven W. *Great-grandfather was in the Imperial Cavalry: Using Austrian Military Records as an Aid to Writing Family History*. Salt Lake City: Corporation of the President, 1980. (FHL book 929.1 W893 1980 v. 7 pt. 4; fiche 6,085,770.)

## MINORITIES

From the time of the Diaspora to the creation of the Jewish state of Israel, Jews have been considered a religious minority wherever they lived. When they left their homelands, they were also considered part of the ethnic minority of the place they immigrated from. It is important to learn the history of the ethnic groups your ancestors belonged to. For example, you might study a history of the Russians in New York, Germans in Wisconsin, or the Poles in Canada. This historical background could tell you where your ancestors lived and when they lived there, where they migrated, the types of records they might be listed in, and other information that would help you understand your family's history.

For some minorities there are unique records and resources available, including histories, gazetteers, biographical sources, settlement patterns, and handbooks. Examples of resources for minority studies that include information about the Jews are:

Arkin, Marcus. *South African Jewry: A Contemporary Survey*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1984. (FHL book 968 F2am.)

Hagen, William W. *Germans, Poles and Jews: The Nationality Conflict in the Prussian East, 1772-1914*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980. (FHL book 943 F2hw.)

Hardwick, Susan Wiley. *Russian Refuge: Religion, Migration and Settlement on the North American Pacific Rim*. Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, c1993. (FHL book 979 F2h.)

Kuropas, Myron B. *The Ukrainian Americans: Roots and Aspirations 1884-1964*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991. (FHL book 973 F2mb.)

The Family History Library has many records of minorities. Check for these records in the Family History Library Catalog.

## NAMES, PERSONAL

Understanding Jewish surnames and given names can help you find and identify your ancestors. This section discusses the origin and development of Jewish names and naming patterns.

### Surnames

Until mandated by laws enacted in the late 18th and 19th centuries (the date varies by country), most Jews did not use fixed surnames. Jews with a common given name were often distinguished by a *patronym*, meaning that a father's name was used in addition to a given name. For example, Jacob the son of Abram was called Jacob Abram or Jacob ben [son of] Abram. If this was not enough to distinctly identify a person, a nickname was used. Such nicknames described a person in some way, such as a physical characteristic, occupation, or place of origin. A Jew named Abram ben Maimon might also be called Abram the copper merchant or Abram red-beard. These nicknames were not permanent or inherited. They changed from one generation to the next. Fixed surnames often developed from these patronyms and nicknames.

Naming customs for two groups of Jews were established at different times and are therefore discussed separately in this section:

- Sephardic Surnames—hereditary surnames date back to the 1500s
- Ashkenazic Surnames—in many areas did not take hereditary surnames until the early 1800s

Surnames often were formed four ways, examples of which are given in the following sections:

- Patronymic
- Occupational
- Places
- Descriptions

### Sephardic Surnames

Sephardic Jews, those who originated in Spain, first began using hereditary surnames in the 1500s. The Arab and Spanish cultures were the two major influences on Sephardic surnames. Spain was under Moorish Moslem rule from the 700s to the 1200s, and Jewish family names developed under the influence of Arab custom.

Surnames of patronymic origin commonly used the Arabic term *ibn* for “son of.” *Ibn* was placed in front of the father’s name, such as in *Ibn Baruch*. Arabs sometimes reversed the patronym, using the term *abu* for “father of,” such as *Isaac abu Jacob*.

After the Arabs were driven out of Spain, Jews made their Arabic-sounding names sound more like Spanish. Among Spanish Jews we find the family name *Avinbruch* which corresponds to *Abu Baruch*. The Hebrew word for son, *ben*, was also used; the son of Elisha became *Benelisha* or *Belish*. Sometimes Jewish given names were translated into their Spanish form and used as a surname. For example, *Mendel*, a common Jewish given name, became *Mendez* and *Chaim*, a Hebrew given name meaning “life,” became the Spanish surname *Vital* or *Vidal*.

Surnames of occupational origin include *Chazan* [Cantor], *Gabbai* [synagogue official], *Dayan* [rabbinic judge], *Coffen* [Cohen], and *Tibbon* [flax merchant].

Surnames of place origin are *Toledano*, *Cordoza*, *Espinoza*, and *de Castro*.

After the Inquisition, Sephardic Jews emigrated to other countries, and their surnames came to fit the language and culture of their new homelands: Greece, Italy, Holland, France, England, and North Africa. In areas where they were in the majority, they were able to impose their Spanish-Arabic language and naming customs on the existing Jewish community, as they did in the Greece and the Balkan states. Where they were in the minority, as in North Africa, they assimilated the language, culture, and naming customs of the Jewish communities they joined.

### Ashkenazic Surnames

Some Ashkenazic Jews, those who originated in the central and eastern part of Europe, used hereditary surnames as early as the Middle Ages, although the custom was uncommon. The practice was limited to German Jews who had business dealings with the gentile world. These early Jewish surnames were often the same as Christian family names.

By the 17th and 18th centuries Ashkenazic Jews, especially those in Western Europe, moved increasingly into mainstream life. The adoption of fixed surnames became more and more important.

Most Ashkenazic surnames were patronymic, many having the German ending *-sohn* or the Slavic *-wicz* and *-vitch*, which mean “son of.” These yielded names like *Abramsohn*, *Berkovitz*, or *Szmulowicz*. Other surnames were derived from localities (*Frank* for someone from France), occupations (*Schneider*, the German for tailor), or descriptions (*Klein*, meaning small). Some Germanic Jewish names came from house signs, which served in place of house numbers in many cities during the 16th and 17th centuries. For example, *Strauss* [ostrich] comes from the house with an ostrich plume sign.

Most Eastern European Jews were isolated from their gentile neighbors and rarely used surnames. Until the end of the 18th century the use of a family name was left to the discretion of the individual Jew. The bulk of the Ashkenazic Jews in Germany and especially in Eastern Europe still followed the custom of using only a given name and the patronymic (Joseph, son of Isaac).

The political status of European Jews changed dramatically at the end of the 18th century. Many countries freed Jews from restrictive laws and gave them limited or sometimes full civil rights. At the same time laws required Jews to adopt permanent family surnames for taxation and conscription purposes. Jewish surnames were to be registered by a government commission. If a Jew refused to select a surname, the commission could impose one. Records of the registration of Jewish surnames were kept in France, Netherlands, and other countries. Following is an example of these records:

*Registres des déclarations faites par les Israelites* (Registers of Name Declarations Made by the Jews). Strasbourg: Archives départementales à Strasbourg, 1973. (FHL films 1,070,259–1,070,263, 1,070,123.)

Laws requiring Jews to take surnames were passed at different times by different countries. The following dates are when these changes took place in different parts of Central and Eastern Europe:

- Baden, Germany (1790).
- French Empire, including Belgium, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Italy, Westphalia, the Confederation of the Rhine, Duchy of Warsaw (1808).
- Prussia (1812), now Germany and parts of Poland. As Prussia acquired additional territory, it was necessary to restate this requirement. The family name requirement was extended to Posen in 1833 and to all other parts of the Prussian state in 1845.
- Bavaria, Germany (1813).
- Mecklenburg, Germany (1813).
- Kingdom of Poland under Russian administration (1821). A decree requiring family names was issued in 1821, but it was not enforced. Polish law again required surnames in 1833, but it was only in accordance with the Imperial Russian statutes of 1835 and 1844 that all Polish Jews adopted permanent family names.
- Württemberg, Germany (1828).
- Saxony, Germany (1834).
- Russia (1844). Statutes of 1804 and 1835 decreed that Jews were not permitted to alter their family names, but these statutes did not require them to adopt fixed names.
- Oldenburg, Germany (1852).
- Switzerland (1863).

By the 1820s most of the small states in western Germany had extended civil rights to Jews, usually requiring them to adopt surnames at the same time. Often the Jews resisted the imposition of last names, and the edicts had to be enforced over and over again. In many areas, patronyms continued to be used in addition to surnames.

Ashkenazic Jews continued to choose surnames from localities and vocations. In many cases restrictions were placed on the choice of names. Some governments forbade the adoption of Christian-sounding names or names of famous families. French laws forbade Jews taking names based on localities or to adopt Old Testament names. Hebrew names were generally not allowed. Since Jews considered Hebrew names sacred, a Yiddish, German, or Polish version that often had a symbolic association was generally used.

Many Hebrew given names have a symbolic connection with animals. For example, the German word for deer is *Hirsch* or, in some dialects, *Herz* or *Hart*. Hence we find surnames such as *Hirsch*,

*Hirschsohn*, *Herz*, *Hirschberg*, *Hartwig*, and *Herschel*. The Slavic version of deer [hind] is *Jellinek* and in French is *Cerf*.

Jews also used given names as part of a surname. From Aaron, for example, comes the surnames *Arnstein*, *Arndt*, *Ahrens*, *Ehrens*, *Ehrenstamm*, *Ehrlich*, and *Ohrenstein*. A man with a wife named Perla could have taken the surname *Perlmann*.

But the most common names were ones that were cleverly disguised. Often the German name chosen had a different meaning to the Jew than it did to the German official who recorded it. For example, the acronym of the Hebrew words *kohen ha-tzedek* [righteous priest] produced *Katz* (German for cat), a name acceptable to German officials. This same abbreviation of form is found in *Bach* [German for brook] from *ben Chaim* [son of Chaim].

Family names were often derived from place-names. Place-names chosen by Ashkenazic Jews may represent a recent place of origin or may go back to some ancestral home (real or supposed) the family was expelled from in the Middle Ages. Thus we find such names as *Amsterdam*, *Lemberger* (from Lemberg, L'vov), *Halpern* (from Heilbronn), *Dreyfus* (from Trèves), and *Shapiro* (from Speier). Some names are less specific like *Westermann* (from the West), *Unger* (from the Hungarian county of Ung), *Schlesinger* (from *Schlesien* [Silesia]), and *Hess* (from Hessen [Bavaria]).

Occupations were also a source for family names, including *Schneider*, *Kravitz*, or *Portnoy* [tailor], *Kaufmann* [shopkeeper], *Schuler*, *Schulmann* or *Szkolnik* [sexton, beadle], *Singer* [cantor], *Metzger*, *Reznick*, *Schlachter*, or *Schochet* [ritual slaughterer], and *Klopman* [one who knocks on the shutters to wake people for morning worship]. Many surnames reflect priestly or levitical heritage. One of the most common of all Jewish surnames is *Kohen* [priest] and its variations, *Cohen*, *Kahn*, *Kogan*, and *Katz*. Surnames showing Levitic or priestly heritage include *Levy*, *Levinsky*, *Levin*, *Lewek*, *Lewenberg*, and *Segal* (an abbreviation for *segan leviah* [member of the Levites]).

Many Jewish names are based on personal traits, including *Gross* [big], *Kurz* [short], *Krummbein* [cripple], *Rothbart* [red-beard], *Weiss* [white], and *Lustig* [merry].

Jews often combined elements of languages, such as Hebrew with Yiddish and German or Slavic roots with Yiddish or Slavic endings. Thus, Jewish names are often found with various spellings depending on the languages that influence them. In Russian, for example, the *h* sound is substituted with *g*. This factor creates such diverse spellings as:

*Rothstein and Rotstejn*  
*Glückman and Glikman*  
*Warschauer and Varsaver*  
*Aschermann and Ojzerman*  
*Himmel and Gimmel*  
*Kohen and Kogan*

The process of surname development continued with the emigration of Jews from Europe. In the United States many changes in surnames can be attributed to an ignorance of European languages on the part of American officials and registrars. The immigrants' ignorance of English also contributed to the creation of numerous new surnames and variations. Changes may have been minor, such as a slight adjustment in spelling to make the name easier to pronounce, such as Wallace from Wallisch or Harris from Hirsch. Or the name may have been shortened to make it sound less Jewish or foreign, such as Rosenzweig changed to Rose or Ross. A surname may have been translated into English, such as Schneider to Taylor, or it may have been discarded and replaced with a new name altogether.

### **Daitch-Mokotoff Soundex Coding**

The Daitch-Mokotoff Soundex System was created to apply soundexing to Slavic and Yiddish surnames. To learn more about this system, go to:

<http://www.jewishgen.org/jos/jossound.htm>

To calculate a name into soundex codes using the Daitch-Mokotoff system, go to:

<http://www.jewishgen.org/jos/jossound.htm>

### **Given Names**

Jews often took their given names from the languages of the countries they lived in and kept Hebrew names for "sacred" purposes (Bar Mitzvah, marriage, and blessings associated with reading from the Torah). The spelling of their names varied considerably depending on the spelling rules of the language and culture they lived in.

Ashkenazic Jews often adapted Hebrew given names to fit the country they were living in. In America, for example, the name Avraham (Hebrew) or Avrum (Yiddish) could be anglicized to Allen, Allan, Albert, Alvin, or Arnold; Chaim could become Hyman, Herman, Herbert, or Charles; and Feigla could be Fanny, Faye, Fran, or Victoria.

### **Naming Patterns**

Sephardic Jews usually named their children in honor of living grandparents. There was a specific order in which this was done. The first son was generally named after the father's father, the second son after the mother's father, the first daughter after the father's mother, the second daughter after the mother's mother. Successive children might be named after living siblings or other relatives of the father and mother.

In the Ashkenazic tradition children were named after deceased rather than living relatives. Usually a child was named after the closest deceased relative for whom no one else in the immediate family was already named. For example, if a mother died in childbirth and the baby was a female, she was almost always named after the mother.

Relatives were not the only source of names. A child born during Passover might be named Pesach. One born on the Purim holiday could be named Mordechai or Ester. If it was feared that a child might die in infancy, they might receive the name Chaim or Chaia, which means "life."

Several books can help you understand Jewish names and naming customs, including:

Beider, Alexander. *A Dictionary of Ashkenazic Given Names: Their Origins, Structure, Pronunciation, and Migrations*. Bergenfield, New Jersey: Avotaynu, 2001. (FHL book 940 D46.)

Beider, Alexander. *A Dictionary of Jewish Surnames from Galicia*. Bergenfield, New Jersey: Avotaynu, 2004. (FHL book 943.86 D46.)

Beider, Alexander. *A Dictionary of Jewish Surnames from the Russian Empire*. Teaneck, N.J.: Avotaynu, Inc., 1993. (FHL book 947.2 D46b.)

Beider, Alexander. *A Dictionary of Jewish Surnames from the Kingdom of Poland*. Teaneck, N.J.: Avotaynu, Inc., 1998. (FHL book 943.8 D46b.)

Feldblyum, Boris. *Russian-Jewish Given Names: Their Origins and Variants*. Teaneck, N.J.: Avotaynu, Inc., 1998. (FHL book 947 D4f.)

Gorr, Shmuel. *Jewish Personal Names: Their Origin, Derivation, and Diminutive Forms*, ed. Chaim Freedman. Teaneck, N.J.: Avotaynu, Inc., 1992. (FHL book 929.4924 G683j.)

Guggenheimer, Heinrich W., and Eva H. Guggenheimer. *Jewish Family Names and Their Origins: An Etymological Dictionary*. Hoboken, N.J.: Ktav Pub. House, 1992. (FHL book 296 D46g.)

Lévy, Paul. *Les Noms des Israélites en France, Histoire et Dictionnaire* (The Names of Jews in France, History and Dictionary). Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1960. (FHL book 944 D46l.)

Menk, Lars. *A Dictionary of German-Jewish Surnames*. Bergenfield, New Jersey: Avotaynu, 2005. (FHL book 943 D46.)

The Family History Library has some books about names. Check for these in the Family History Library Catalog.

## **NATURALIZATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

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Naturalization is the process of granting citizenship privileges and responsibilities to foreign-born residents. Privileges granted to citizens vary from country to country but usually include the right to live in a locality without being expelled, the right to engage in business, the right to vote, and other protections under the law.

Although immigrants were not required to become citizens, many did. Evidence that an immigrant completed citizenship requirements can be found in censuses, court records, voting registers, military papers, and other sources. Even if an immigrant did not complete the process to become a citizen, he or she may have filed an application or declaration of intention to become one.

Citizenship was usually a three-step process. First, a declaration of intent was filed. After a period of time, the immigrant then filed a final petition for citizenship. Once the requirements for citizenship were met, the immigrant received a document granting citizenship.

Naturalization records also include lists of aliens and other records of aliens. For example, the Jews' Temporary Shelter in England dealt with Jewish refugees from Eastern Europe during the first half of the 20th century. Jews passing through England on their way to other destinations were temporarily housed in the shelter. See "Emigration and Immigration" in this outline for further information about the shelter. The Family History Library does not have this source, but it does have some records of aliens for other countries.

Information found in naturalization records varies from country to country. Generally the later the time period of naturalization, the more information given, including the name of the applicant, birth date and place, occupation, and date of arrival. Other information that may be found in these records is a physical description of the person, names of other family members who immigrated, the port of arrival, and the name of the ship.

Beginning in 1906, naturalization in the United States was handled by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). The *United States Research Outline* (30972) has a detailed section about the naturalization and citizenship process in that country and how to find records. If there is a research outline for the country or state where your ancestor lived, see the "Naturalization and Citizenship" section of the outline.

### **Locating Naturalization Records**

Naturalization was handled through national, state or province, county, or local courts that had the authority to grant citizenship. Usually records were processed at the state or province, county, or local court level. Many records, especially United States naturalization records before 1906, are still held by the courts where naturalization was granted. In some countries records are deposited in local, county, state or province, or national archives.

The Family History Library has many naturalization records for the United States and a few records for other countries. Check for these in the Family History Library Catalog for the area where your family settled.

## NEWSPAPERS

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Newspaper publication usually began soon after the initial settlement of a locality. Newspapers may report family information in notices of births, marriages, obituaries, and local news. Some Jews also put ads in newspapers trying to find relatives and friends. To find information in newspapers, you will need to know the place and an approximate date of the event.

In addition to local newspapers, Jewish newspapers were established in areas where there were large Jewish settlements. They may be in the language of the country they were published in or in Hebrew or Yiddish. Local newspapers and Jewish newspapers, if they exist, should both be searched.

You may also find it helpful to place a notice in a local newspaper in order to contact others who may have information about your family.

To find the names and locations of newspapers, use the following sources available at most libraries:

*Newspapers in Microform: United States, 1948–1983.* 2 vols. Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 1984. (FHL book 011.35 N479 1984; film 1,145,942;.) This is a geographically-arranged list of newspapers on microform and the repositories where the microforms are available. Most of these can be borrowed through interlibrary loan.

*Newspapers in Microform: Foreign Countries, 1948–1983.* Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 1984. (FHL book 011.35 N479f; fiche 6,085,887.) This is a geographically-arranged list of foreign newspapers and the repositories where the microforms are available. Most of these can be borrowed through interlibrary loan.

*United States Newspaper Program National Union List.* 4th ed. Dublin, Ohio: Online Computer Library Center, 1993. (FHL fiche 6,332,710–14 [set of 70].) Many states are collecting and microfilming the newspapers published in their state. The microfilms are often available at the state archives, state historical society, or major libraries within the state. They can usually be borrowed through interlibrary loan at your local library. This list is an inventory of newspapers that have been collected by the Library of Congress and 20 states as of 1985.

An accompanying booklet by the same title contains instructions and the key to repository codes. (FHL book 973 B32u 1989.)

Brigham, Clarence Saunders. *History and Bibliography of American Newspapers, 1690–1820.* 2 vols. Worcester, Mass.: American Antiquarian Society, 1975. (FHL book 973 A3bc.) This lists the locations of collections of newspapers published from 1690 to 1820. Most of these newspapers are available at the American Antiquarian Society, 185 Salisbury Street, Worcester, MA 01609-1634.

Gregory, Winifred. *American Newspapers, 1821–1936.* 1937. Reprint, New York: H.W. Wilson, 1967. (FHL book 970 B33a 1967; film 483,713.) This lists newspapers published from 1821 to 1936, including those that are no longer published. It identifies where copies of the newspapers were located in 1936.

*Gale Directory of Publications: An Annual Guide to Newspapers, Magazines, Journals, and Related Publications* (formerly *Ayer Directory of Publications*). Annual. Detroit: Gale Research, 1969–. (FHL book 970 B34a 1987.) This lists currently published newspapers. Most newspaper publishers will not search their files for you but some will make a copy of an article if you can provide a specific date and event.

A list of Jewish newspapers is found in volume 1, pages 193–219 of the following source:

*Encyclopaedia Judaica.* 17 vols. Jerusalem: Keter, 1972, 1982. (FHL book 296.03 En19j.)

The American Jewish Press Association has a web site that lists, by state, published Jewish newspapers with descriptions and contact information. The Internet address is:

<http://ajpa.org/>

The Newspaper Library in London, England, has a large collection of newspapers, including some Jewish newspapers. Other libraries throughout the world may have newspaper collections. You can access the catalogs of many of these libraries on the Internet to see what is in their holdings. Finally, contact local libraries in the area where your ancestor lived to locate existing newspapers.

Information from a few Jewish newspapers can be found on the Internet, such as a database of wedding announcements from the Boston *Jewish Advocate*. Check the following web site for information about databases for Jewish newspapers:

<http://www.jewishgen.org/>

One project to index announcements in German-language newspaper is the Aufbau Indexing Project. *Aufbau*, published in New York, printed announcements of birth, engagement, marriage, death and other special occasions that appeared between 1934 and 2004. It also printed numerous lists of Jewish holocaust survivors located in Europe from September, 1944 to September 27, 1946. Issues of *Aufbau* from the beginning in 1934 to December 1950 have been scanned and are online. To search the database and access the online material, go to:

<http://www.calzareth.com/aufbau/index.html>

Indexes to obituaries from Jewish newspapers are also found on the Internet. See “Obituaries” in this outline for further information.

The Family History Library has few newspapers in its collection. It does acquire published indexes and abstracts of obituaries, marriages, and other vital information found in newspapers such as:

Berger, Doreen. *The Jewish Victorian Genealogical Information from the Jewish Newspapers 1871–80*. Witney, England: Robert Boyd Publications, 1999. (FHL book – on order.)

*Index to Palestine Gazette*. Teaneck, N.J.: Data Universal, 1984. (FHL fiche 6,334,296.) From 1921–1948 the official government publication listed legally changed names. Over 27,000 entries are listed during that period, most being Jewish.

Check for these records in the Family History Library Catalog. Indexes are listed under Newspapers – Indexes. Abstracts from newspapers may also be listed under Vital Records.

If there is a research outline for the country or state where your ancestor lived, see the “Newspapers” section of the outline.

## **NOBILITY**

The nobility is a class of people who had special political and social status. Nobility is inherited or granted by the Crown as a reward to people who

perform a heroic deed, achieve greatness in some endeavor, or hold a prominent government position.

Some Jews became part of the nobility class in several countries, including England, Germany, Austria, Russia, and Italy. European kings found it advantageous to have a prominent Jewish banker or trader in their service who could quickly raise money and equipment in times of war. An example is the Rothschild family of Germany. Members of this family were granted German hereditary nobility in 1816. Several Jewish families were also ennobled in the 1860s in the Italian state of Savoy.

Many genealogies have been published for members of the nobility; see “Genealogy” in this outline. If there is a research outline for the country or state where your ancestor lived, see the Genealogy section of the outline.

## **NOTARIAL RECORDS**

In countries outside the British Isles and North America, notaries perform the services typically offered by lawyers, solicitors, and attorneys in those areas. The duties of notaries vary from country to country, but one responsibility they usually have is copying important documents such as wills, land and property transactions, marriage and other contracts, and custody records of minor orphans.

Of particular interest to Jewish research are the notarial records of western European and Latin American countries. These records have been kept for centuries; for example, the notarial records in Spain date back to the 1200s.

Notarial records are recorded in the language of the country where the notary lived. The records are seldom indexed and therefore difficult to use, but they include many important genealogical documents. As these records become more widely known, additional indexes may be available. An example of an index of notarial records is:

Fleury, Jean. *Contrats de mariage Juifs en Moselle avant 1792: recensement à usage généalogique de 2021 contrats de mariage notariés* (Marriage Contracts of Jews in Moselle since 1792: List for Genealogical Research of 2021 Marriage Contracts from Notarial Records). Plappeville: J. Fleury, 1989. (FHL book 944.3825 V29f.) Includes marriage contracts from Metz and the department of Moselle, which is part of Alsace-Lorraine. It includes bride and groom indexes.

Because many countries licensed their notaries, notarial records are often considered the property of the government. In some countries notaries may have retained their own records or passed them on to their successors. Notarial records are most often found in local, state, and provincial archives and repositories.

The Family History Library has some notarial records for a few countries. For additional information, see the country research outline for the area where your ancestor lived or check for these records in the Family History Library Catalog.

## **OBITUARIES**

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Obituaries are useful genealogical sources because they often contain birth dates and places; names of parents, siblings, spouse, children, and other relatives; death information; and place of burial. Local genealogical and historical societies, public libraries, and some newspaper publishers maintain clipping files of obituaries. Printed abstracts of obituaries can also be found in various published sources such as genealogical periodicals. A bibliography of published obituaries for the U.S. is:

Jarboe, Betty M. *Obituaries: A Guide to Sources*. 2nd ed. Boston: G. K. Hall, 1989. (FHL book 973 V43j 1989.) An appendix describes obituary indexes available at major libraries.

There are some searchable databases on the Internet for obituaries found in Jewish newspapers, such as an index to obituaries from the Boston *Jewish Advocate* from 1905 to November 1998 located at:

<http://www.jewishgen.org/databases>

A cumulative index of obituaries of over 3,000 notable Jews published in various volumes of the *American Jewish Year Book* between 1948 and 1998 is located at:

<http://www.jewishgen.org/databases/USA/>

The Family History Library has collected some obituaries and published lists of obituaries. Check for these in the Family History Library Catalog.

## **OCCUPATIONS**

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Jewish occupations were largely determined by the restrictions placed on Jews by the countries where they lived. Farming, for example, was not common among Jews because of various restrictions on the holding of land. There were many trades Jews were barred from because they were controlled by guilds.

The purpose of guilds was to train apprentices and regulate the practice of its trade. Depending on the time period and the country, Jews were admitted into some guilds. Records of guilds include lists of members, information on journeymen as they advanced in the trade, marriage information of guild members, and names of relatives.

Often the occupations of Jews were determined by religious considerations. Butchers were needed for kosher meat and printers for prayer books. Jews were often tailors, weavers, silversmiths, day-laborers, and bakers. Many Jews worked in business and commerce as bankers, pawn brokers, importers, retailers, wholesalers, merchants, tradesmen, shopkeepers, innkeepers, tavern-keepers, traders, dealers, peddlers, hucksters, and hawkers.

Until the 16th century, Catholics were forbidden by their church to engage in money lending. Jews, who were excluded from other business, often became money lenders. In some cases they were compelled to do so by the Christian authorities. Some Jews gained considerable prominence in the field of banking and commerce; however, most remained very poor, struggling to provide for their families.

Records of guilds, businesses, and commerce and trade directories can be found in local archives such as city or county record offices, in modern guilds, or in libraries. Books about guilds and occupations usually describe the life of a person employed in that occupation or trade and sometimes list records that may survive.

An example of a source containing information about an occupation that included many Jews is:

Naggar, Betty. *Jewish Pedlars and Hawkers, 1790–1940*. Camberley, Surrey: Porphyrogenitus Limited, 1992. (FHL book 942 F2nb.)

An example of a trade directory is:

Culme, John. *The Directory of Gold and Silversmiths: Jewellers and Allied Traders 1838–1914 from the London Assay Office Registers*. Poughkeepsie, NY: Apollo Book, 1987. (FHL book 942.1/L1 D3c.). Lists the business history of gold and silversmiths in England. Includes biographical information.

If there is a research outline for the country or state where your ancestor lived, see “Business and Commerce” and “Directories” in the outline.

## **ORPHANS AND ORPHANAGES**

Orphans are children who were either parentless or homeless because the parents were dead or could not care for their children. While many cities had Jewish orphanages, not all Jewish children were placed in these orphanages. Some went to orphanages run by city, county, or state governments or to private or nonsectarian orphanages. The records of many orphanages have been lost, especially those destroyed during the Holocaust.

To find orphanage records, first determine what orphanages existed in the areas your ancestors lived in at the time they lived there. Local histories and directories often contain this information. Once you locate the orphanage, determine if records survive. If the orphanage is still operating, it would likely have records. If it no longer exists, records may be in local, state, or national archives or libraries.

Some Internet sites have information about orphanages. One example is the Hebrew National Orphan Home, which includes a list of Jewish orphanages in the U.S. with details about their histories and how to access records, information about orphan trains, a database of orphans and foundlings buried in New York area cemeteries, and lists of children living in Jewish orphanages as enumerated in various United States censuses. The web address of the Hebrew National Orphan Home is:

<http://www.hnoh.com/>

When searching for records of non-Jewish orphanages throughout the world, look for genealogical how-to books or genealogical web sites for the area. For example, for information about orphans and orphanages in Australia, see:

Vine Hall, Nick. *Tracing Your Family History in Australia: A Guide to Sources*. 2nd ed. Albert Park, Victoria: N. Vine Hall, 1994. (FHL book 994 D23v.)

The Family History Library has records of a few orphans and orphanages for some countries. Check for these records in the Family History Library Catalog. Also check under school records because many orphanages established their own schools.

## **PERIODICALS**

Most genealogical and historical societies throughout the world publish magazines and newsletters. The articles often include:

- Family genealogies and pedigrees.
- Transcripts of emigration sources, vital records, census returns, and cemetery records.
- Helpful articles on research methodology.
- Information about local records, archives, and services.
- Book advertisements and book reviews.
- Research advertisements.
- Queries or requests for information about specific ancestors that can help you contact other interested researchers.

### **Genealogical Magazines of General Interest**

Some general periodicals contain basic how-to instructions, advertisements, book notices, and queries. These seldom include record transcripts or compiled genealogies. Examples include:

*Heritage Quest: The Genealogy Forum*. 1985–. [Published by Heritage Quest, P.O. Box 329, Bountiful, Utah 84011-0329. Telephone: 801-298-5358. Fax: 801-298-5468.] (FHL book 973 D25hq.)

*Genealogical Helper*. Logan, Utah: Everton Publishers, 1947–. (FHL book 929.05 G286.)

### **Genealogical and Historical Journals**

Genealogical periodicals or newsletters usually provide more in-depth instruction, book reviews, record transcripts, case studies, and compiled genealogies. Historical periodicals usually include articles of a historical nature, including Jewish history. These periodicals are usually published quarterly by genealogical or historical societies

and may focus on a region, state, county, or time period. Examples include:

*Newsletter of the Federation of Eastern European Family History Societies (FEEFHS)*. (FHL book 940 C4f.)

**The New Zealand Genealogist**. Auckland, New Zealand: The New Zealand Society of Genealogists Inc. (FHL book 993.1 B2na.) This journal contains articles on research methodology in New Zealand and the British Isles, articles of genealogical interest, book reviews, queries, and other items of interest. There is a general yearly index published that includes an index to member queries.

### Jewish Periodicals

In addition to genealogical and historical periodicals, several Jewish genealogical periodicals are published quarterly and focus on tracing Jewish ancestors. These periodicals usually provide more in-depth instruction, book reviews, record transcripts, and queries pertaining only to Jews. Examples include:

*Avotaynu: The International Review of Jewish Genealogy*. Published by Avotaynu, Inc., P.O. Box 99, Bergenfield, New Jersey 07621-1742. (FHL book 296.05 Av79.)

*Bulletin, Cercle de Généalogie Juive* (Bulletin, Association of Jewish Genealogy). Paris: Le Cercle, 1985-. (FHL book 944 D25b.)

*Misjopoge: verenigingsblad van de Nederlandse Kring voor Joodse Genealogie* (Misjopoge: Periodical of the Netherlands Circle for Jewish Genealogy). Baarn: De Vereniging, 1988-. (FHL book 949.2 D25mi.)

Most Jewish genealogical societies throughout the world publish genealogical periodicals or newsletters. A list of Jewish genealogical societies with names and addresses of contact people and either e-mail or web site addresses can be found at:

<http://iajgs.org/Member-Index.htm>  
<http://iajgs.org/Yearbook.pdf>

### Indexes

Most magazines have annual or cumulative indexes. Two major composite indexes that include Jewish periodicals are:

*PERiodical Source Index*. Fort Wayne, Ind.: Allen County Public Library Foundation, 1988-1998. (FHL book 973 D25per; fiche 6,016,863 [1847-1985], 6,016,864 [1986-1990]; compact disk no. 61.) Partially indexes over 5,000 English-language and French-Canadian family history periodicals and has many references to articles about Jews. Microfiche indexes are cumulative; book indexes since 1986 are year-by-year. For further details see the *Periodical Source Index Resource Guide* (34119).

**Genealogical Periodical Annual Index**. Bowie, Md.: Heritage Books, 1962-. (FHL book REF 973 B22gp.) An annual index, starting in 1962, of 150 to 260 currently published periodicals.

### Obtaining Periodicals

Copies of periodicals are available from the local societies that publish them. Major archives with genealogical collections will have copies of many periodicals, particularly those representing the area they serve. Jewish archives will have copies of many Jewish periodicals.

The Family History Library subscribes to numerous periodicals, including several Jewish genealogical and historical periodicals. Check for these periodicals in the Family History Library.

If there is a research outline for the country or state your ancestor lived in, see the "Periodicals" section of the outline. Also see "Societies" in this outline.

### POPULATION

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In the late 1800s and early 1900s, governments of Central Europe began keeping track of their citizens using *Population Registers*. Offices were set up for people to register when they moved in or out of a community. In large cities cards were filled out for each person or household with notes listing the various addresses where they lived in the city at different times.

These registration cards and records often include valuable genealogical information. Besides identifying where a person lived at various times, they often list a person's name, birth date, birthplace, marriage date and place, military service, parent's names, occupations, permissions granted for work permits, trips a person made, and so forth.

Population Registers have been filmed for some of the large European cities where Jews lived. They list all inhabitants of the city including Jewish residents. They are listed in the Family History Library Catalog under the name of the locality and the topic *population*. Following are examples from Leipzig, Germany and Vienna, Austria:

*Einwohnermelderegister 1811–1893*

(Inhabitant Register 1811–1893). Leipzig: Stadtarchiv, 1985. (On 97 FHL films, beginning with number 1,417,354.) Lists families and includes cross-references to earlier and later registration records.

*Melderegister, 1890–1949* (Notification Register, 1890–1949). Leipzig: Zentralstelle für Genealogie, 1991. (On 3706 FHL films, beginning with number 1,767,397.) Includes both a male and a female register of people living in Leipzig, Germany. The male register includes names, birth dates and places, and relationships for each household, along with marriage dates, death dates, places of residence, and other added notes. Listed alphabetically with two sets for each letter of the alphabet: the regular set and a supplement set (nachtrag).

*Meldezettel, 1850–1920* (Registration Notes, 1850–1920). Wien: Stadt und Landesarchiv, 1981–1995. (On 3060 FHL films, beginning with 1,277,212.) Lists heads of families, wives, children, birth dates, occupations, religions, and new and old addresses for each household in Vienna. Cards are listed phonetically, skipping the first vowel and grouping the consonants that sound alike together (for example letters D, T, Dh, and Th are all filed together).

*Meldezettel, 1910–1920* (Registration Notes, 1910–1920). Wien: Stadt und Landesarchiv, 1981–1995. (On 108 FHL films, beginning with 2,015,756.) Lists heads of families, wives, children, birth dates, occupations, religions, and new and old addresses for each household in Vienna. Cards listed phonetically.

*Meldekartei 18.–20. Jahrhundert*

(Registration Cards 18th–20th Centuries). Wien: Stadt und Landesarchiv, 199–. (On 1148 FHL films, beginning with 1,916,011.) Household registration for residents of greater Vienna, which included 26 districts (Bezirke) in 1938. Cards listed phonetically.

Population Registers kept for Copenhagen were called police censuses and were taken twice a year in May and November. The later police censuses referred to where the family or individuals were living in the previous census. These records are listed in the catalog under Copenhagen and *Census*.

*Mandtaller, 1866–1881* (Census, 1866–1881).

København: Stadsarkivet, 1961. (On 908 FHL films, beginning with number 322,451.) Copenhagen bi-annual police censuses. Includes an alphabetical index by district showing names of all the people on a given street grouped by the first letter of the alphabet. Censuses do not include children under 10 years old.

*Mandtaller, 1882–1899* (Census, 1882–1899).

København: Stadsarkivet, 1961. (On 1613 FHL films, beginning with number 324,021.) Copenhagen bi-annual police censuses.

*Mandtaller, 1900–1923* (Census, 1900–1923).

København: Stadsarkivet, 1961. (On 3984 FHL films, beginning with number 330,507.) Copenhagen bi-annual police censuses.

## **PROBATE RECORDS**

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Probate records are court records dealing with the distribution of a person's estate after death. Information in the records may include the death date, names of heirs and guardians, relationships, residences, an inventory of the estate, and names of witnesses. Usually when a person died, an account of all their debts and credits had to be made to ensure debtors were fairly compensated and heirs fairly represented. In most countries this created a record that can be searched for genealogical information. Where available, probate records can be useful for Jewish genealogical research since they may pre-date vital or civil registration records and can help establish relationships.

While probate records can be an accurate source of genealogical evidence, they should be used with caution. For example, they may not mention the names of deceased family members or those who previously received an inheritance. A surviving spouse mentioned in a will may not be the parent of the children mentioned. Also, probate records were not created for every person who died. Local laws and customs dictated how these records were kept. In countries where probates were not required, they are more likely to be found for people who had real estate or personal property. Although Jews in Europe generally did not own land, they were often among the tradesmen and merchant classes and therefore may have owned considerable personal property. Unfortunately, probate records rarely exist or may be difficult to locate in the Eastern European countries many Jews come from.

Laws concerning keeping probate records as well as the dates such records were kept vary from country to country. In some places probate records were not kept, are mixed with other types of court records, or are not well organized or indexed. In other countries they are well indexed and easy to use.

You will need to learn the local customs and laws of the country or region where your ancestor lived to determine whether probate records exist, how they are arranged, and where they are kept. If there is a research outline for the country or state where your ancestor lived, see "Probate Records" in the outline. See also "Notarial Records" in this outline.

The Family History Library has an excellent collection of probate records for many countries and few for others. Check for probate records in the Family History Library Catalog for the place where your ancestors lived.

## **SCHOOLS**

If your ancestor was educated in a school or university, he or she may have been recorded in matriculation or other records of that school. Some of these records have been published.

These records may contain valuable information about your ancestor such as name, age, residence, and date of enrollment or graduation. Sometimes they contain birth date and place and names of parents. Alumni records may have names of spouse and children. Many universities have published lists of students who attended their schools and when. Although school records may include only

limited genealogical information, they can add much when compiling the family history.

Original records and any published versions may be at the school or university. In some areas local or state archives may have these records.

Information from school records may also be found on the Internet. For example, a searchable database containing information for Krakow (Poland) Lyceum school children from 1874 on can be accessed from the following web site under "Other Jewish Krakow documents":

<http://www.ics.uci.edu/~dan/genealogy/Krakov/index.html>

The Family History Library has collected some school records. Check for these records in the Family History Library Catalog.

## **SOCIAL LIFE AND CUSTOMS**

A Jew is any person whose mother was a Jew or any person who has gone through the formal process of conversion to Judaism. Being a Jew is not a matter of belief. According to Jewish law, even if a person believes everything that Orthodox Jews believe and observes every law and custom of Judaism, he or she is not considered a Jew unless he or she meets the requirement of a Jewish mother or formal conversion. A person born to a Jewish mother who is atheist and does not practice the Jewish religion is still a Jew. In this sense, being Jewish is more like a nationality than a religion.

Effective family research requires some understanding of the society your ancestor lived in. Learning about everyday life, religious practices, customs, and traditions will help you appreciate your ancestor and the time he or she lived in. This information is particularly helpful if you choose to write a history of your family.

Research procedures may be affected by local customs and traditions, including marriage customs. Jews sometimes married close relatives, marriage among first cousins being legal among the Jews. Such marriage unions were more common among Sephardic Jews than among the Ashkenazic. Until the 20th century Jews commonly married early: young men between 15 and 18 and young women between 14 and 18. Marriages were often arranged by the families, even across the ocean.

Naming customs can also affect your research. These varied between Sephardic and Ashkenazic Jews. See “Names, Personal” in this outline for specific details about naming traditions.

The Family History Library has collected a few sources which discuss a variety of subjects related to Jewish social life and customs. Check for these records in the Family History Library Catalog. Books on this topic are also available through most Jewish publishers and bookstores.

## **SOCIETIES**

Jews are members of many types of societies. You may be able to obtain help with your family history research from the following types of societies:

- Family associations

Many family organizations are gathering information about their ancestors and descendants. Some organization are gathering information about all individuals with a particular surname.

- Fraternal organizations

These types of societies, associations, and lodges include people with common interests, religions, or ethnicities. Membership records and other records that they generated may be useful in tracing your family history. Examples of fraternal organizations include Ancient Free and Accepted Masons (Freemasonry), Knights of Pythias, and Order of Odd Fellows.

- Lineage and hereditary societies

Lineage and hereditary societies are for people or their descendants who were associated with prominent individuals or events, for example National Society, Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), and Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R.). They generally are involved in educational, cultural, social, and other programs to preserve the documents and memories of the past and often maintain libraries and museums that can help you in your research. Most publish a periodical or newsletter.

- Historical and genealogical societies

These types of societies may have records and services to help you with your research. Many countries throughout the world and each state and most counties in the U.S. have organized societies. They generally collect historical

documents of local interest, publish periodicals, and have special projects and compiled indexes.

The Federation of East European Family History Societies (FEEFHS) includes individuals as well as genealogy societies, heritage societies, surname associations, book or periodical publishers or resellers, archives, libraries, institutions, and other groups. One of their goals is to share information about new developments and research opportunities in Eastern and Central Europe. Included in their Internet site are notices of new publications put out by its member societies; information about the services and activities of FEEFHS and their member societies; and online databases of pertinent resources. Many of these databases include Jews while some are Jewish specific. For membership information, contact them at:

Federation of East European Family History Societies  
P.O. Box 510898  
Salt Lake City  
Utah 84151-0898  
Internet: <http://www.feeffhs.org/>

If there is a research outline for the country or state where your ancestor lived, see “Societies” in the outline to find out more information.

In addition to these general types of organizations, many societies were formed specifically for Jews. These societies are generally located in areas with a significant Jewish population. Some focus on Jewish genealogy and are able to help members with genealogical research. Others focus on local Jewish history or a common place of origin. Many publish helpful journals and newsletters.

### **Jewish Genealogical Societies**

Membership in a genealogical society can give you access to resources and support. Most genealogical societies publish periodicals, compiled genealogies and may have special indexes, collections, and projects. Many genealogical societies emphasize Jewish research. The International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies (IAJGS) is a non-profit umbrella organization for Jewish Genealogical Societies around the world. Among many activities, there is the IAJGS Annual International Conference on Jewish Genealogy. Information about the IAJGS and the Annual Conference can be found at:

<http://iajgs.org>

There are many Jewish genealogical societies (JGSs) worldwide; they hold meetings, carry out projects, produce publications including newsletters, some have websites, and all welcome members. They may also publish inquiries regarding Jewish ancestors or maintain a list of members' research interests. For a list of Jewish Genealogical Societies, their contact information, web addresses, etc. see:

<http://iajgs.org/Member-Index.htm>  
<http://iajgs.org/Yearbook.pdf>

### Special Interest Groups

Many Special Interest Groups (SIGs) have formed to focus on Jewish genealogy research in particular localities or subjects. Examples of such groups are: Austria-Czech SIG; Belarus SIG; Bailystok Region; Early American SIG; Glacia SIG; German-Jewish SIG; Grodno SIG; Latvia SIG; Sephardic SIG; Southern Africa SIG; Hungary SIG; and Rabbinic Genealogy SIG. Most SIGs have web sites and E-mail list serves. For a more complete listing of SIGs, and information about them, see:

<http://iajgs.org/orgdigest.pdf>

### JewishGen: The Home of Jewish Genealogy

JewishGen, Inc. is the primary internet source connecting researchers of Jewish genealogy worldwide. Its most popular components are the JewishGen Discussion Group, the JewishGen Family Finder (a database of 400,000 surnames and towns), the comprehensive directory of InfoFiles, ShtetLinks for over 200 communities, Yizkor Book translations, and databases such as the ShtetlSeeker and All Country Databases. JewishGen's Family Tree of the Jewish People contains data on more than three million people. The web address for JewishGen is:

<http://www.jewishgen.org>

### Jewish Historical Societies

Historical societies can be valuable sources of information. They generally collect information about Jewish history in particular areas. Some may have information about specific individuals. Many societies have books and manuscripts about Jews that may be difficult to find in libraries and archives. Most publish historical periodicals. You may be interested in the services, activities, and collections of these groups.

The American Jewish Historical Society maintains a list of local Jewish historical societies in North America and national Jewish historical societies overseas. This list is found on their Internet site at:

<http://www.ajhs.org/>

The American Jewish Historical Society has relocated to the Jewish History Center, 15 West 16th Street, New York, NY 10011.

### Landsmannschaften [Societies of Fellow Immigrants]

A Landsmannschaft is an organization formed by people from the same town, shtetl, or region in Eastern Europe for political, social, and financial activities. Originally their benefits included maintaining a cemetery and providing sick benefits, interest-free loans, and life and burial insurance for members and their families.

Many Landsmannschaften published *yizkor* (memorial) books as a tribute to their old homes and the people who died during the Holocaust. These books are some of the best sources for learning about Jewish communities in Eastern and Central Europe. More information about *yizkor* books is found in "History" in this outline. A list of Landmanshaftn is found on the Internet at:

<http://www.shtetlinks.jewishgen.org/Belchatow/>

Help in finding *yizkor* books and translations is also available on the Internet at:

<http://www.jewishgen.org/Yizkor/>

### Immigrant Aid Societies

The Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society [HIAS] was founded in 1902 in New York as a Jewish shelter home for immigrants in New York City. It began operations in Europe in 1915 to help families emigrate. Families that were assisted before this date may have had help from the Baron de Hirsch Institute, which operated out of Montreal, Canada, and had offices in Paris, London, and some other large European cities.

Records of the HIAS archives from 1903 to 1961 have been deposited with the YIVO Institute in New York City. These records include genealogical information and leads for finding European origins for your ancestors. The Family History Library has some filmed HIAS records,

including shipping lists, passport records, other immigration documents, and some indexes. See “Emigration and Immigration” in this outline for further information.

## Locating Records at the Family History Library

The Family History Library has records for some societies, including periodicals they publish. See “Periodicals” in this outline and in research outlines of other states and countries for further information. Check for society records in the Family History Library Catalog.

## Other Online Resources

There are many online resources now available for Jewish genealogy researchers. Here are just two:

Jewish Records Indexing - Poland (JRI-PL). This project aimed at indexing all the Jewish vital records in Poland and providing a means for individuals to obtain copies of those records. There are now more than 3 million records from 450 Polish towns now indexed in a searchable database. For more about JRI-PL, see:

<http://www.jewishgen.org/jri-pl/>

The Routes to Roots Foundation focuses on tracing Jewish Roots in Poland, Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus. You can find a searchable database of vital records available in these countries, and additional information about the Jewish communities that once existed there at:

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

## SYNAGOGUE RECORDS

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Records kept by officials of the synagogue varied from place to place. In the United States and some other countries these records often included:

- Minute books of congregational, board, and other meetings.
- Account books containing lists of members.
- Congregational and communal histories.
- Vital records including birth, circumcision, bar and bat mitzvah (coming of age ceremony for boys and girls), marriage, and death records.

Not all synagogues have these types of records. Many have been lost or destroyed or never existed. Those that did survive may be with the synagogue or may have been deposited in a Jewish archive or historical society.

The term *Synagogue Records* is not a library catalog subject heading. Synagogue records that are part of the Family History Library are cataloged under the subject Jewish Records. Many synagogue records from the American Jewish Archives in Cincinnati have been microfilmed (see “Archives”). Examples of synagogue records include:

### *Synagogue birth records, 1786–1954.*

Cincinnati: American Jewish Archives, 1972. (FHL film 882,930.) Birth records from the Jewish congregation on St. Thomas.

*St. Thomas, Virgin Islands: Records of Jews from Various Sources.* Kingston, Jamaica: Genealogical Society of Utah, 1977. Records of births, circumcisions, marriages, and burials from St. Thomas and Jamaica.

Check for these records in the Family History Library Catalog using the Place Search, Subject Search, and Keyword Search.

## TAXATION

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Governments collect taxes from the citizens of their countries, including such taxes as poll or head taxes, property taxes, and taxes on various commodities such as food, hearths, and windows.

In addition to these general taxes, Jews in some countries paid special taxes. Some governments did not allow Jews to own real estate, so taxes were assessed on other items. For example, in Eastern Europe a tax was taken on Sabbath candles to support Jewish education. The box tax was assessed on every pound of kosher meat sold by a butcher and purchased by a Jew and on every slaughtered animal. Before 1827 Russia assessed a head tax on young Jewish men. Conscription into the army for a period of 25 years took the place of this head tax.

Revision lists from Russia are a valuable research tool for genealogists. A taxation list similar to a census record, these lists date from 1795 through the later 19th century and often have a separate section for Jews in an area. These records include

names, ages, family relationships, gender, marital status, occupations, and so on. They are listed in the Family History Library Catalog under the Russian province or the town name and the topic Taxation or Census.

Tax records vary in content according to the purpose of the assessment. They usually include the name and residence of the taxpayer and may list other details such as occupation, description of real estate, or number of children or farm animals.

Many tax records have been deposited in local, county, state or province, or national archives. Some Jewish web sites include databases extracted from tax records, such as the one for Kelme, Lithuania. See various Jewish databases at:

<http://www.jewishgen.org/databases/>

The Family History Library has taxation records for many countries. Check for these records in the Family History Library Catalog.

## **VITAL RECORDS**

Vital records are sources of information for names; dates; and places of birth, marriage, and death. These records are called vital records because they refer to essential events in a person's life.

Birth, marriage, and death records kept by the government in English-speaking areas of the United States and Canada are listed in the Family History Library Catalog under Vital Records. These include town (mostly in New England and New York), county, and state or provincial records. The same records for other parts of the world are listed under Civil Registration.

Although vital records for Jews in Europe and Latin America are all forms of civil registration, they are listed in various ways in the Family History Library Catalog. This can be understood historically in three steps:

1. Governments required the church books of the country's established religion be the official record of births, marriages, and deaths. In some cases transcripts of these church records had to be sent to government offices. The established religion kept track of birth, marriage, and death records of all people in their areas, including people who did not belong to their church (like Jews). Church records served the needs of the church and the government. These records are listed in the Family History Library Catalog under Church Records.

2. Between 1826–1835 Poland, Russia, and other Central and Eastern Europe countries required separate Jewish birth, marriage, and death records be kept in areas where several Jewish families lived. These records, along with church books for the rest of the population, made up civil registration; however, when such books have been microfilmed, they have been listed in the Family History Library Catalog under Jewish Records.
3. Eventually most European countries set up local government offices to keep track of birth, marriage, and death information. These offices kept records separate and distinct from records kept by religious groups. These records have been listed in the Family History Library catalog under Civil Registration.

Depending on the time period and area you are researching, you may need to look for records in the catalog under all of the preceding headings. See each section in this outline for specific details. The rest of this section deals mostly with vital records kept in English-speaking areas of North America.

Because these records are indexed and include most of the population of a state or province, they are primary sources for genealogical research.

## **General Historical Background**

The practice of recording vital statistics developed slowly throughout the United States and Canada. Marriages were generally the first vital records to be kept; the recording of births and deaths usually came later. Depending on the state or province, vital records may not exist prior to the early 1900s.

The earliest vital records usually consist of brief entries recorded in register books. Issuing certificates became a common practice beginning in the 20th century. Record keeping—whether by town, county, state, or Canadian province—was often incomplete until many years after each state or province created a statewide or province-wide registration system.

Information contained in vital records is similar to what is found in civil registration. See “Civil Registration” in this outline for details. Also see the *United States Research Outline* (30972), the *Canada Research Outline* (34545), and individual state and province research outlines in the areas where your ancestors lived for specific details about vital records.

## Locating Vital Records

To obtain copies of birth, marriage, and death records, contact the state or province office of vital records or the appropriate clerk's office in a city or county courthouse. Genealogical and historical societies and state and provincial archives may also have copies or transcripts of these records. To protect the rights of privacy of those living, restrictions are placed on the use or access of records. Some offices provide information only to the person whose records are sought or to family members when the person's proof of death is furnished.

Details about how to obtain vital records can be found on the Internet by state and province. See Cyndi Howell's web site for the area of interest:

<http://www.cyndislist.com/>

Individual state and province research outlines also have addresses of where to write. Two publications that list addresses for obtaining vital records are:

*Where to Write for Vital Records: Births, Deaths, Marriages, and Divorces* (for the United States only). Hyattsville, Md.: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, March 1993. Some addresses and fees are outdated. This booklet can be purchased from the Super-intendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402-9328.

Kemp, Thomas J. *Vital Records Handbook*. 3rd ed. Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing, 1994. (FHL book 973 V24k 1994.) This includes samples of application forms that can be sent to government offices to request copies of vital records. It also provides telephone numbers for ordering for most offices. Payment by bank card is generally accepted.

For information on how to write for vital records, see "Civil Registration" in this outline.

## Records at the Family History Library

The Family History Library has copies of many vital records (primarily those before 1920) and vital records indexes. Vital records included with town records are found in the Family History

Library Catalog under Town Records and Vital Records.

A CD-ROM index—which includes birth, christening, and marriage information for the United States and Canada—is discussed in the "Genealogy" section of this outline.

The Social Security Death Index contains over fifty million records of deaths reported to the Social Security Administration from 1937 to 1998. The bulk of the records are from 1962 and later. The index provides the decedent's names, birth date, social security number, state where the social security card was issued, month and year of death, state of residence at death, zip code, and state where the death benefit was sent. The index is available as part of FamilySearch™ at the Family History Library and most family history centers. It is also on the Internet or on compact disc from commercial companies. For details about the FamilySearch version see *U.S. Social Security Death Index Resource Guide* (34446).

## VOTING REGISTERS

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Electoral rolls or voting registers list people who were eligible to vote. Information listed in these records varies from place to place but generally includes the name of the voter and a place of residence. Some registers also list an occupation, when a person obtained citizenship, and occasionally other details. The 1912 Grodno Gubernia (Russia) voters list includes the name of the voter, his father's given name, and the district and sometimes town where the voter lived. In Australia and New Zealand electoral rolls usually list the names of the voters, residences, and occupations.

Lists of voters are sometimes published in newspapers. See "Newspapers" in this outline.

Information about Jewish voters from limited voting registers can also be found on the Internet. A web site that contains some searchable databases listing Jewish voters is:

<http://www.jewishgen.org/databases>

The Family History Library has some voting registers. Check for these records in the Family History Library Catalog for the area where your ancestors lived.

## **OTHER RECORDS**

There are many other types of records not discussed in this outline that may be useful in tracing your Jewish ancestors. These records are listed in the Place Search and Subject Search of the Family History Library Catalog. For example, see the following topics:

BIBLIOGRAPHY  
DESCRIPTION AND TRAVEL  
FUNERAL HOMES  
HANDWRITING  
HERALDRY  
LAND AND PROPERTY  
MEDICAL RECORDS  
MIGRATION, INTERNAL  
NAMES, GEOGRAPHICAL  
OFFICIALS AND EMPLOYEES  
PENSIONS  
PUBLIC RECORDS  
TOWN RECORDS

## **FOR FURTHER READING**

Mokotoff, Gary and Warren Blatt. *Getting Started in Jewish Genealogy*. Bergenfield, N.J.: Avotaynu, 1999. (FHL book 973 D27.)

Mokotoff, Gary and Sallyann Amdur Sack. *Avotaynu Guide to Jewish Genealogy*. Bergenfield, N.J.: Avotaynu, 2000.

Mokotoff, Gary and Sallyann Amdur Sack with Alexander Sharon. *Where Once We Walked: A Guide to the Jewish Communities Destroyed in the Holocaust*. Rev. ed. Bergenfield, New Jersey: Avotaynu, 2002 (FHL book 940 E5 2002.)

Sack, Sallyann Amdur. *A Guide to Jewish Genealogical Research in Israel*. Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1987. (FHL 956.94 D27s.)

Schleifer, Jay. *A Student's Guide to Jewish American Genealogy*. Phoenix, Ariz.: Oryx Press, c1996. (FHL book 973 D27oje.)

Wenzural, Rosemary. *A Beginners Guide to Jewish Genealogy in Great Britain*. London: The Jewish Genealogical Society of Great Britain, 2000.

Wynne, Suzan Fishl. *Finding Your Jewish Roots in Galicia: A Resource Guide*. Teaneck, N.J., Avotaynu, c1998. (FHL book 943.86 K37w.)

Wynne, Suzan Fishl. *The Galitzianers, The Jews of Galicia, 1772-1918*. Wheatmark, 2006.

Jewish genealogy researcher should check Avotaynu, Publisher of Works on Jewish Genealogy at its website for additional resources:

<http://www.avotaynu.com/>

## **COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS**

The Family History Library welcomes additions and corrections that will improve future editions of this outline. Please send your suggestions to:

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Family History Library  
35 N. West Temple Street  
Salt Lake City, UT 84150  
USA

We appreciate the archivists, librarians, and others who have reviewed this outline and shared helpful information.

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# Glossary

**Ashkenazi** – Yiddish-speaking Jews who originated in Central and Eastern Europe. One of the two divisions of Jews.

**Bar mitzvah** – A ceremony for Jewish boys at about 13 years of age. Literally means “Son of the covenant.” A bat mitzvah in the ceremony for girls.

**Bris** – Ritual circumcision.

**Cantor (chazzan)** – The person who leads a Jewish congregation in prayer. The cantor usually has a trained and pleasing singing voice because much of the Jewish religious service is sung.

**Chasidic (Hasidic)** – A branch of Orthodox Judaism that maintains a lifestyle separate from the non-Jewish world and emphasizes personal experiences and mysticism as well as a strict rabbinic interpretation of Jewish law.

**Circumcision** – A Jewish rite performed on male infants as a sign of inclusion in the Jewish religious community.

**Civil registration** – The official government recording of births, marriages, and deaths. In some cases church records were the primary registration of a locality (see “Civil transcripts”).

**Civil transcripts** – Government mandated copies of birth, marriage, and death records made by church officials or appointed Jewish officials.

**Concentration camp** – Places of incarceration where those detained had no due process and where the regular laws of the land were not recognized.

**Confirmation** – A ceremony performed in some Reform and Conservative synagogues to replace or supplement the bar mitzvah.

**Conservative** – A traditional movement of rabbinic Judaism whose adherents observe Jewish law but believe the law should adapt to modern culture while retaining the values and ethics of Judaism.

**Converso** – A Spanish Jew converted to Christianity, usually by force; also a descendent of a converted Jew.

**Diaspora** – Greek word meaning “dispersion.” Refers to the Jewish settlement outside Israel. Can be applied to the dispersion of any race or people.

**Eastern Jews (Oriental Jews)** – Jews descended from ancient communities in Islamic lands, North Africa, Persia, Arabia, Yemen, and Turkey. This term is often applied to Jews who do not fit into the Ashkenazic or Sephardic distinction. These groups are relatively small and not many of them have emigrated to North America.

**Holocaust, Jewish** – The genocidal murder of European Jews by the Nazis during World War II, 1939–1945.

**International Tracing Service** – An organization founded in 1946 and operated since 1955 by the International Red Cross. The aim of the ITS is to collect information on those who were missing, deported, or incarcerated in concentration camps.

**Karaites** – A minority branch of Judaism that believes in strict interpretation of scriptures without rabbinic interpretation.

**Ketubot** – A marriage contract, often handed down from one generation to another within a family.

**Kohen (kohan, cohen)** – a descendant of Aaron, a priest charged with performing various rites in the Temple in connection with religious rituals and animal sacrifices. (Recent DNA research found that Jews in three different countries identified as kohens have common elements in the *y* chromosome, indicating that they have a common male ancestor.)

**Kosher** – Fit for use according to Jewish law.

**Ladino** – A Romance language, usually written in Hebrew characters, used by Sephardic Jews, especially in the Balkans.

**Landmanshaftn** – Organization of Jews from the same town or region.

**Levite** – A descendant of the tribe of Levi. They performed certain duties in connection with the Temple.

**Marrano** – A Jewish convert to Catholicism in medieval Spain or a descendent of a convert. This derogatory term is derived from the Spanish word for swine and implies that the conversion was not complete.

**Mitzvah** – A commandment. It can also refer to any Jewish religious obligation, or more generally to any good deed.

**Mohel** – A Jew who performs the ritual of circumcision.

**Orthodox** – A major movement within Judaism that follows a strict interpretation and observance of Jewish law from both the Torah and Talmud commentaries. Orthodoxy includes modern Orthodox Jews who integrate into modern society and the Chasidic Jews who live separately and dress distinctively.

**Pages of Testimony** – A preprinted form available from Yad Vashem that documents a Jewish person who died in the Holocaust. The forms are filled out by people who are able to provide information on the fate of Holocaust victims.

**Pale of Settlement (Pale of Jewish Settlement)** – Western area of the Russian Empire where Jews were legally allowed to live. It began with the first partition of Poland in 1772 and existed until WWI.

**Pinkas** – A register of a Jewish community in which the proceedings of and events related to the community are recorded.

**Pogrom** – Russian for destruction. An organized attack against helpless people, usually with government help, often directed against Jews.

**Rabbi** – A Jew educated in Jewish law and tradition and qualified to instruct the community, answer questions, and resolve disputes regarding the law; the leader of a Jewish congregation.

**Rabbinic** – Pertaining to a rabbi. Rabbinic ancestry means having rabbis among your ancestors; “Rabbinic Judaism” is a branch of Judaism that follows the teachings and interpretation of a rabbi.

**Rebbe** – The spiritual master and guide of a Chasidic community; sometimes translated as

“Grand Rabbi,” but literally it means “my rabbi.” A Chasidic rebbe is considered to be a *tzaddik* (righteous one). The position is usually hereditary. Outside the Chasidic community the term is sometimes used to refer to any rabbi a person has a close relationship with.

**Reform** – A modern rabbinical movement of Judaism believing in a liberal interpretation of Jewish law but retaining the values and ethics of Judaism along with some of the practices and the culture.

**Rosh Hashanah** – Solemn festival that marks the beginning of the month of Tishrei, the beginning of the Hebrew Year.

**Sephardic** – Descendants of the Jews who lived in Spain or Portugal before 1492. The term is now often applied to Jews of Arabic and Middle Eastern background who are more accurately called Eastern Jews.

**Shtetl** – A Jewish town or community, especially in Eastern Europe.

**Synagogue** – A Jewish house of worship and study.

**Talmud** – The collection of the Jewish oral tradition and rabbinical commentary interpreting the Torah.

**Torah** – The biblical books of Moses: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

**Yeshiva** – An academy of Jewish learning and scholarship.

**Yiddish** – A language very similar to German, usually written in Hebrew characters, that was spoken chiefly by Ashkenazi Jews in Eastern Europe and the areas where those Jews migrated to.

**Yizkor books** – Memorial books published by Holocaust survivors from a particular town or region.

## NOTES

## NOTES

## NOTES

THE CHURCH OF  
**JESUS CHRIST**  
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS



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WORLD  
CONFERENCE  
ON RECORDS

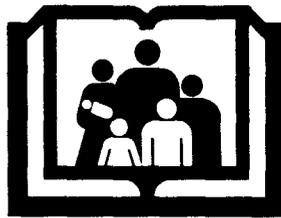
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American Jewish Family  
History

Malcolm H. Stern

Series 355

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## AMERICAN JEWISH FAMILY HISTORY

Malcolm H. Stern

Born in Pennsylvania. Resides in New York City, New York. Director, Rabbinic Placement for Reform Judaism (retired). D.H.L., Hebrew Union College, honorary degree. Author, genealogist, lecturer.

One of the major, long-standing arguments among Jews is: How do we define a Jew? Are we a religion, race, or nationality? A high percentage of Jews have no affiliation with a synagogue and do not consider themselves religious. While the majority of Jews belong to the white race, there are black Jews in Ethiopia and in the Caribbean, brown Jews in India; historically, there were yellow Jews in China, and a long held theory makes the red Indians descendants of the ten lost tribes of Israel. So, despite Hitler's attempt to identify us as a race, we do not fit that definition. With the destruction of Jerusalem's Temple by the Romans in the year 70 of the Christian Era, the Jewish state came to an end to be reborn in 1948 as the State of Israel. But the majority of the world's Jews live outside Israel and consider ourselves nationals of the lands in which we reside.

In the early Middle Ages when all life was precarious and Jews were often exposed to extra dangers, the rabbis solved the problem of paternity by answering the question "Who is a Jew?" by stating "The son of a Jewish mother." This remains the answer for religiously Orthodox Jews today, but it is a designation that is equally unsatisfactory to the government of Israel and to contemporary Reform Jews. The Reform Jewish group, to which I belong, has long held that a child's Jewish identity is determined by the religion in which he or she is reared. Recently, Rabbi Alexander Schindler, President of our Union of American Hebrew Congregations, the national lay body of Reform Judaism, enunciated the principle

that the child of a Jewish father, even with a non-Jewish mother, has the right to be considered a Jew, if parents and child so choose. This has raised its own storm of protest among more traditionally-minded Jews. The English language has found the term "ethnic" convenient for classifying all groups which are outside the white Christian majority.

I have a simple answer to the question "Who is a Jew?" My definition, understandably, is genealogical. I believe that anyone claiming descent from Abraham, whom the Bible calls the first Hebrew, can be considered a Jew. When a person converts to Judaism, he or she is known in Jewish tradition as "son or daughter of Abraham." Even George Washington, replying to a letter of salutation from the Jewish congregation of Newport, Rhode Island, in 1790, referred to us as "children of the stock of Abraham." I am saying that the Jews are literally a family. We have family traditions and customs, even family jokes.

The concept of family has been central to Jewish life since Bible times. A number of our rituals involve the family, and even non-observant Jews may often preserve the traditional rites of the Friday evening Sabbath family dinner or the Passover banquet we call "Seder." (It was the Seder which Jesus and the Apostles were observing at the Last Supper.)

In my own family, during all my growing-up years until I went off to a theological seminary, we gathered every Friday evening at my maternal grandmother's home, where three generations joined in

blessing the candles, the cup of wine, and the bread, as part of the grace before the meal and a special grace afterwards. Rather unique to our family has been the Passover celebration. More than fifty years ago, my two grandmothers united their families for the Seder feast, and since no home could hold forty of us, we rented a country club. As my own generation grew and produced children and grandchildren, some of the branches held their own Seders. Invariably others, from both sides of my family, join together at the same country club each year. In today's mobile existence, a number of my cousins and I have wandered far from our Philadelphia roots, but some of us make it a point to return each year for Seder.

Jewish parents in every age have demonstrated great concern about the mates chosen for or by their children. The family into which a son or daughter marries often becomes extended family. English has no word equivalent to the Hebrew mehutan or its plural, mehutanim, which Yiddish twisted into machatanim, meaning "child's in-laws." There is even a special word for a child's mother-in-law, machatenesta. Thus for many Jews, marriage brought new relatives not only to the bride and groom, but to their parents as well. Until very recent times it was not unusual for the generations to live under one roof. When my grandfather died, leaving my grandmother a widow at age fifty, despite the fact that she had four grown children still at home, she brought back into the house her oldest daughter, the latter's husband, and newborn infant. That branch of the family remained together until my grandmother died at ninety-two and when my grandmother annually rented a summer home in Atlantic City, her two married daughters, their spouses (who had to commute to New York and Philadelphia), their children, and assorted other grandchildren joined the household. The ramifications of my family now spread from coast to coast, but all of us take it for granted that we are welcome in one another's homes for

meals or lodging, for such has always been the family pattern. This personal picture is not at all unusual among Jewish families.

With such a strong sense of family, you might expect Jewish family histories to be abundantly available, but such is not the case. Until fairly recently no Jewish family histories--in the true sense--have been published in America. And even in Europe, during the two millennia that Jews have dwelled there, family history per se was rarely recorded. Why? Because a people on the move, often hounded from one country to another, do not have the time or the inclination to write a history of their own doings. Furthermore, in Jewish tradition there has always been such respect for the printed word that Jews would have considered it chutzpah (presumption) for any individual to publish his family's record unless the family could trace to some distinguished rabbi or other historic personage. In that case, the family might produce a yichus brief, a genealogy, although the claims on a particular ancestor--such as King David of the Bible--might be impossible to verify.

It is only as Jews have found security in America that they have begun to set down what might pass for family history, or at least provide some of the materials from which family history can be written. Much of this material remains in manuscript form in the growing archives that are currently proliferating around America. Let me point out what is available in print, because it demonstrates the kinds of information one needs for family historiography.

In 1968, the American Jewish Historical Society, headquartered on the campus of Brandeis University in Waltham, Massachusetts, published Letters of the Franks Family, 1733-1748.<sup>1</sup> This is the earliest collection of data about an American family. It consists of correspondence between Naphtali Franks, an American sent to London to work with relatives, and his parents in New York and brother David in Philadelphia. Most of the letters were

written by the mother, Abigail Franks, and they provide a remarkable view of colonial social life and customs in a wealthy Jewish family.

For the rest of the eighteenth century and all of the nineteenth century we have only bits and pieces. In the genre of letters we have Letters of Rebecca Gratz, published in 1929.<sup>2</sup> Rebecca Gratz (1781-1869) was the daughter of a Philadelphia merchant and the granddaughter of the pioneer Jew of Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Her letters addressed to the first and second wives of her brother Benjamin, in Lexington, Kentucky, provide much detail for a family history as well as comments on life and letters of her day. A tradition states that Rebecca was the model for her namesake in Sir Walter Scott's Ivanhoe.

Dr. Jacob Rader Marcus, teacher and the founder of scientific American Jewish History and of the American Jewish Archives of Cincinnati, has put together for us three volumes entitled, Memoirs of American Jews, 1775-1865,<sup>3</sup> bringing together the writings of some fifty-nine individuals. Many are reminiscences written for the benefit of children and grandchildren. Some are diaries or letters. Most are excerpts from manuscripts in the American Jewish Archives or other sources indicated in the book. Only a few are derived from printed sources. Individually and collectively they provide us with a picture of Jewish experiences in early America, family life, and America's wars—the Revolution, War of 1812, and the Civil War—as seen through Jewish participants.

Biographies of some important Jews are available, and these, of course, provide some family background information, but none of these is a contemporary creation, all having been published in this century.<sup>4</sup> Autobiographies, also, are a twentieth-century development. One such may well be the first attempt at an American Jewish family history, The Bernheim Family, privately printed in Louisville, Kentucky in 1910. The author, Isaac Wolfe Bernheim, was a

German-born successful whiskey distiller and generous philanthropist. His book places him in the category of what one person called "a self-made man in love with his maker." I am not belittling Bernheim's benefactions, since I am a direct beneficiary. He contributed the funds which built two successive library buildings on the campus of the Hebrew Union College of Cincinnati. The older of the two buildings now houses the American Jewish Archives, where I serve as volunteer genealogist. Bernheim's book does allude to ancestry and to other members of his family, but it is chiefly autobiographical.

In 1912, Lippincott and Company of Philadelphia, printed a limited edition of one hundred copies of Records of the Samuel Family, by one of its descendants, J. Bunford Samuel. The author was the long-time librarian of the Library Company of Philadelphia (founded by Benjamin Franklin). He was primarily interested in a sixteenth-century ancestor, Saul Wahl. A family tradition states that Saul Wahl was King of Poland for one day, when the electors were unable to make a choice, and the then Count Radziwill gave the royal regalia to Wahl for safekeeping. This volume has nothing of the American history of the Samuel family, although the author's grandfather had arrived here in the 1820s.

A more authentically American document is Records of the Myers, Hays, and Mordecai Families, privately printed for the compiler, a descendant, Caroline Cohen, in Washington, D.C. in 1913. This slim volume is primarily a genealogy of three families of colonial Jews all of which produced patriots in the Revolution. There is little biographical detail. Mrs. Cohen points out that she is one of two remaining descendants still considering themselves Jews, since the majority of others had married out and left Judaism.

Twenty-two years intervened between Mrs. Cohen's book and the next attempt at American Jewish family history. In 1935 appeared The Touro Family in Newport, by

Rabbi Morris A. Gutstein.<sup>5</sup> The author was then serving Newport's historic Jewish congregation, and later produced several works on the history of that Rhode Island Jewish community. This book deals with two generations of the Touro family: the father, Rev. Isaac Touro, functioned for the local congregation when it erected in 1763 what is now the oldest surviving synagogue building in North America. Rev. Touro was a Tory sympathizer when the Revolution broke out and left Newport for British-occupied New York, then went to Jamaica and died. His widow and four young children moved into the Boston home of her brother. Two of her sons, Abraham and Judah, became prosperous merchants, Abraham in Massachusetts and Judah in New Orleans. Both died unmarried and left remarkable philanthropic wills. Abraham left money to preserve Newport's synagogue and Jewish cemetery; Judah left funds not only for the support of the synagogue's clergy, but also for every Jewish institution established in America as well as for aid to Christian institutions. As a result of these bequests, the Newport synagogue and cemetery, as well as the street that connects the two, bear the name of Touro.

The next four publications are, again, primarily genealogies rather than family histories, although all of them begin with some recounting of the family's origins. They include:

Cecilia Felsenthal Felsenthal's The Felsenthal Family<sup>6</sup> is the record of a German-American family located primarily in Chicago and Memphis. The author's double name is the result of her having married a Felsenthal cousin. Chester J. Teller's The Teller Family in America, 1842-1942<sup>7</sup> celebrated the centennial of the arrival in America of a family prominent in Philadelphia a generation ago. Family Facts and Fairy Tales, by Evelina Gleaves Cohen, has only one chapter out of five that deals with Jews—her husband's Cohen ancestors, and she does give details of

incidents in their lives. Henry Aaron Alexander's Notes on the Alexander Family of South Carolina and Georgia and Their Connections was privately published in Atlanta in 1954. The author is the first one I have mentioned who actually offers documented evidence on his ancestry, which is traceable in this country to 1698.

Let me add, parenthetically, that because Mr. Alexander was so careful, he led me astray in my first genealogical book, Americans of Jewish Descent,<sup>9</sup> when I copied his genealogy verbatim and discovered, through later research that a certain ancestor of his, Moses Michael of New York and Curacao, was not the son of another colonial merchant, Asher Michael.<sup>10</sup> Alexander does recount whatever is known about each of his ancestors and many of their descendants, and he appends a very useful list of all known descendants with their addresses at the time he went to press, indicating by a system of numbers from which progenitor each descends.

It was 1960 before a professional writer attempted an American Jewish family history. Alexandra Lee Levin, a member of the Lee clan of Virginia fame married into a Jewish family noted for its rabbis and scholars and especially for an aunt of her husband's, Henrietta Szold. Miss Szold, a woman of great personal dynamism and energy, was the founder of Hadassah, the Zionist women's organization, which played an important role in creating and building the State of Israel. Hadassah continues to support hospitals, health projects, and youth activities in Israel. Alexandra Levin's book, The Szolds of Lombard Street: A Baltimore Family, 1859-1909, is truly a family history.<sup>11</sup>

Jewish families in the South have long been proud of their history and of their contributions to the region. One of the most widespread of Southern Jewish clans in the family descended from Abraham Moise, a French Jew, who in 1791 fled the black uprisings in Haiti to find refuge in Charleston, South Carolina. From

there his descendants have spread all over the United States. Details of the lives of many of them, together with an extensive genealogy, was published in 1961 by Harold Moise of Sumter, South Carolina under the title, The Moise Family of South Carolina and Their Descendants.<sup>12</sup>

A more modest publication, dealing with the first Jewish family settled in Los Angeles, was the creation of one of the descendants, Leo Newmark, who wrote California Family Newmark, An Intimate History.<sup>13</sup>

An unusual family history is Copper for America: The Hendricks Family and a National Industry, 1755-1939, by Maxwell Whiteman.<sup>14</sup> The Hendricks family traces to Uriah Hendricks, who arrived from England in 1755, and began trading with English and American merchants in metals. This eventually led his son Harmon to purchase an abandoned copper rolling mill in Belleville, New Jersey, where he became one of America's leading processors of copper, especially for the use of our expanding U.S. Navy. In so doing, Harmon founded a fortune and a family, both of which still survive. The author had access to many accumulated family records and tells the family's history in great detail.

So far I have told you about families that were well established on the American scene, some going back to colonial times, others of the pre-Civil War German migration. With few exceptions, every one of these families contained individuals who left their mark on America and consequently are considered important in American Jewish history.

In 1972 there appeared a work, unusual in many respects: It is written by the child of immigrants, and those immigrants were among the largest migration of Jews to America—that which came between 1880 and the outbreak of World War I from the Russian Empire. The author is a Los Angeles-based professional writer, Yaffa Draznin, and she called her work, It Began with Zade Usher: The History and

Record of the Families Bernstein, -Loyev/ Lewis—Mazur.<sup>15</sup>

Zade (rhymes with maida) is the Yiddish word for grandfather. Mrs. Draznin shows how it is possible to penetrate the Iron Curtain that exists for most Jewish families of Russian origin when they seek their roots. No registers of any sort were created in Russia before 1900. The Jews, frequently the victims of massacres, tortures, or, at the very least, subject to draft for the worst positions in the Czar's army, avoided any lists of names that might have fallen into official hands. And for many Jews even their own birth-dates were forgotten or falsified or pegged to the Hebrew calendar which bears no relationship to the calendar we follow. As a consequence, Mrs. Draznin was compelled to rely on checking oral reminiscences and traditions of many relatives against one another, aided only slightly by clues from a journal kept by her grandfather, Nuchem or Nathan Bernstein, who came to America in 1902. The Zade or Grandfather Usher of her title was this grandfather's grandfather and the earliest ancestor alluded to in the journal. As Mrs. Draznin points out, her family were unknown and ordinary people. Out of her experience in compiling this genealogical history, the author subsequently published The Family Historian's Handbook,<sup>16</sup> a handy paperback designed to help anyone compile his or her family record.

Israel's surprising victory over her massed neighbors in the Six-Day War of 1967 coincided with the publication of a new genre of collective American Jewish family histories, Stephen Birmingham's Our Crowd; The Great Jewish Families of New York,<sup>17</sup> which became a best-seller. It dealt with the prominent Wall Street banking families and leading money-makers like the Seligmans, Schiffs, Warburgs, Lehmans, etc. All these families originated in Germany and developed a sense of exclusiveness patterned after New York's socialite 400. In response to Birmingham's success came the Russian immigration's answer under the title Poor Cousins,<sup>18</sup> by Ande Manners, whose book

jacket reads "The three million 'other Jews' from beyond the Pale (the Pale of the Settlement was the section of Russian to which most Jews were relegated by the Czars)—and how the elite of 'Our Crowd' tried to Americanize them."

Southern Jewry found its spokesman in Eli N. Evans, the son of the long-time Jewish mayor of Durham, North Carolina, who combined the story of his own family with a journalist's tale of other revealing incidents of Southern Jewish life in The Provincials: A Personal History of Jews in the South.<sup>19</sup> Mr. Evans brought his completed manuscript to me for suggestions and corrections. I pleaded with him to change his title to Growing Up Jewish in the South, but his editor was eager to capitalize on the popularity of Stephen Birmingham's books about Jews, for a second successful one had appeared from the latter's pen. Entitled The Grandees: America's Sephardic Elite,<sup>20</sup> it was, I discovered when I was asked to review it, based on my aforementioned Americans of Jewish Descent. Birmingham, with the investigative reporter's love of finding skeletons in people's closets, had taken the genealogies in my book, told the family tales of many of them after interviewing some of their descendants, and took special delight in pointing out to socialites that they have Jewish blood in their veins.

The newest publication, and one of the best, in this array of professionally written collections of American Jewish family histories is Leon Harris's Merchant Princes: An Intimate History of Jewish Families Who Built Great Department Stores.<sup>21</sup>

As I have demonstrated, there are now a number of books in print dealing with American Jewish families, written from a variety of approaches. The interest in family history and genealogy was just beginning to reach the masses of American Jews when Alex Haley's Roots made genealogy into America's leading indoor hobby. As a consequence, more family histories and genealogies are turning up each day. A Jewish Genealogical Society (of which I

am the second president) has been formed in the New York metropolitan area with a growing national membership, and several other Jewish communities have started their own societies. Oral history projects, taping the reminiscences of older citizens, especially immigrants, are on the increase, and so are how-to books.<sup>22</sup>

Jewish researchers are rediscovering such institutions as the fraternal organizations which proliferated at the end of the last century and the beginning of this one.<sup>23</sup> Many of these were so-called Landsmann-schaften, i.e., associations of people from the same town. These groups banded together out of their common background not only for socializing, but also for mutual aid, for the purchase of cemetery lots, and to assist newer arrivals with loans to help them get started in business.

One phenomenon of the great migration from Russia has been the organized development of Family Circles and Cousins Clubs. Professor William E. Mitchell, an anthropologist, made a study which he published using the Yiddish word for "family" as his title: Mishpokhe: A Study of New York City Family Clubs. In it, Mitchell points out that while many groups, Jewish and non-Jewish, hold family reunions, and even have organized gatherings on a regular basis, the Russian-Jewish immigrants and their descendants are the only people to organize to the extent of having officers and dues.<sup>24</sup>

The tools for researching family history are available. How-to books can point directions. All of us are intensely obligated to the Latter-day Saints for the superb job they have done in collecting the world's vital records on microfilm and in generously making these records available at local church libraries. For Jewish researchers there is a valuable finding aid to the Mormon microfilms of Hungary, Poland, and Germany. This is in the splendid periodical Toledot: The Journal of Jewish Genealogy, published quarterly in New York<sup>25</sup> by Steven Siegel and Arthur Kurzweil. There is no

better place for me to stop than here, researcher can find useful guides to  
for in this magazine any would-be family where to search.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Leo Hershkowitz and Isidore S. Meyer, editors, The Lee Max Friedman Collection of American Jewish Colonial Correspondence: Letters of the Franks Family (1733-1748) (Waltham, Mass.: American Jewish Historical Society, 1968).

<sup>2</sup>Rabbi David Philipson, ed., Letters of Rebecca Gratz (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1929).

<sup>3</sup>Jacob Rader Marcus, Memoirs of American Jews, 1775-1865, 3 vols. (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1955-56).

<sup>4</sup>Examples of biographies of prominent American Jews are:

- a) Donovan Fitzpatrick and Saul Sapphire, Navy Maverick: Uriah Phillips Levy (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1963).
- b) Isaac Goldberg, Major Noah: American-Jewish Pioneer (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1936).
- c) Charles Edward Russell, Haym Salomon and the Revolution (New York: Cosmopolitan Book Corporation, 1930).

<sup>5</sup>Morris A. Gutstein, The Touro Family in Newport (Newport, R.I.: Newport Historical Society, 1935).

<sup>6</sup>Cecilia Felsenthal Felsenthal, The Felsenthal Family (Memphis, Tenn.: Goldberger Printing and Publishing Co., 1939).

<sup>7</sup>Chester Jacob Teller, Teller Family in America: Record of a Hundred Years (Philadelphia: Cousins' Publishing Committee, 1944; Supplement, 1948); and New Teller Generations (1953).

<sup>8</sup>Evelina Gleaves Cohen, Family Facts and Fairy Tales (Wynnewood, Penn.: privately printed, 1953).

<sup>9</sup>Malcolm H. Stern, Americans of Jewish Descent: A Compendium of Genealogy (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1960), 2nd printing, New York: Ktav Publishing House, Inc., 1971 and (revised and enlarged as) First American Jewish Families: 600 Genealogies, 1654-1977 (Cincinnati: American Jewish Archives; Waltham, Mass.: American Jewish Historical Society, 1978).

<sup>10</sup>German and Polish Jews of the Colonial Era did not have family names in the lands of their birth, but were usually designated by patronymics. Thus Moses Michael would have been born, Moses, son of Michael; whereas Asher Michael's children, in the lands of emancipation for Jews like Holland, England, and America, had the family name of Asher.

- <sup>11</sup> Alexandra Lee Levin, The Szolds of Lombard Street: A Baltimore Family, 1859-1909 (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1960).
- <sup>12</sup> Harold Moise, The Moise Family of South Carolina: An Account of the Life and Descendants of Abraham and Sarah Moise Who Settled in Charleston, South Carolina, in the year 1791 A.D. (Columbia, S.C.: R. L. Bryan Company, 1961).
- <sup>13</sup> Leo Newmark, California Family Newmark: An Intimate History (Santa Monica, Calif.: Norton B. Stern, 1970).
- <sup>14</sup> Maxwell Whiteman, Copper for America: The Hendricks Family and a National Industry, 1755-1939 (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1971).
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- <sup>17</sup> Stephen Birmingham, "Our Crowd": The Great Jewish Families of New York (New York: Harper & Row, 1967).
- <sup>18</sup> Ande Manners, Poor Cousins (New York: Coward, McCann and Geoghegan, Inc., 1972).
- <sup>19</sup> Eli N. Evans, The Provincials: A Personal History of the Jews in the South (New York: Atheneum, 1973).
- <sup>20</sup> Stephen Birmingham, The Grantees: America's Sephardic Elite (New York: Harper & Row, 1971).
- <sup>21</sup> Leon Harris, Merchant Princes: An Intimate History of Jewish Families Who Built Great Department Stores (New York: Harper & Row, 1979).
- <sup>22</sup> Among the how-to books on Jewish genealogy that have appeared are:
- a) Dan Rottenberg, Finding Our Fathers: A Guidebook to Jewish Genealogy (New York: Random House, 1977).
  - b) David Kranzler, My Jewish Roots: A Practical Guide to Tracing and Recording Your Genealogy and Family History (New York: Sepher-Hermon Press, 1979).
  - c) Arthur Kurzweil, From Generation to Generation: How to Trace Your Jewish Genealogy and Personal History (New York: William Morrow and Co., 1980).
- <sup>23</sup> National Jewish organizations are listed annually in American Jewish Year Book, published annually since 1899. Fraternal "orders" are abundant in the earlier volumes. Local organizations are also listed in these volumes: 1899-1900; 1900-1901; 1907-8; and 1919-20.
- <sup>24</sup> William E. Mitchell, Mishpokhe: A Study of New York City Family Clubs (London: Mouton Publishers, 1978).

<sup>25</sup>Toledot: The Journal of Jewish Genealogy, published quarterly at 155 East 93rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10028.

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JEWS IN ... (name of locality)

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# Documents Released from Soviet Archives Now Available for Inquiry

By Miriam Welner

For thousands of family history "buffs" with Russian roots, a great frustration has been the lack of access to Soviet archives where we hope to find such documents as birth, marriage and death records for our ancestors. Although we assumed there was much more, we never anticipated a wealth of material for the Holocaust period which is now accessible by inquiry.

**In a gesture of cooperation unprecedented in the 45 years since World War II, the Soviet Union opened its archives.**

In a gesture of cooperation unprecedented in the 45 years since World War II, the Soviet Union opened its archives and shared with the Red Cross material recovered by the Soviet Army during the liberation of the camps at the close of World War II.

The recently microfilmed material includes 46 Sterbebucher (Death Books) containing nearly 70,000 death certificates from Auschwitz. These death books represent deaths from "natural causes" as opposed to those who perished in the gas chambers. In addition, there are lists of names for 130,000 prisoners used for forced labor in various German firms and 200,000 names of victims in other camps, including Sachsenhausen, Gross Rosen and Buchenwald.

The documents are being housed at the International Tracing Service (ITS) in Arolsen, West Germany, which is working in conjunction with the International Committee of the Red Cross. There are 46 million documents pertaining to 13

million individuals already on file in Arolsen.

On September 24, 1990 the Central Maryland Chapter of the American Red Cross announced the opening of the Holocaust and War Victims Tracing and Information Service. Individuals can contact their local chapter of the American Red Cross where the appropriate inquiry forms may be completed. All requests will then be sent to the Baltimore Center, where they will be translated into German and forwarded to the ITS in West Germany. There is no charge for the search request.

At the press conference, Holocaust survivor Emmy Mogilensky spoke about her experiences with the Red Cross in which she described leaving Germany on a children's transport in 1939, never to see her parents again. Finally, in late 1942, the message sent to her parents through the Red Cross came back "addressee unknown." Later, in 1946, the Red Cross confirmed that Emmy's parents had perished in the Piaski ghetto, outside Lublin, Poland. Emmy described her feelings:

"The pain of not knowing where they were, where they had been sent and what

**The pain of not knowing haunts you, it is with you constantly.**

happened to them—it haunts you, it does not let you rest, it is with you constantly. Can anyone doubt the value of these 409,000 records now released by Russia and available for research through the Red Cross."

The ITS records include names of people in displaced person camps, survivors and victims of concentration camps, deportation lists, name lists of children who were separated from their parents or close relatives during or immediately after the



War, and search requests from throughout the world—which continue to arrive at the rate of close to 100,000 per year.

As the years pass, the likelihood of matching a search with a living relative becomes less and less. Therefore, the probable result of a successful match between a search request and International Tracing Service files will be a reply indicating the individual's date and place of death. However, in my genealogy research, I have had occasion to research the ITS files and it is clear to me from what I found and responses received by others that there is some hope, small though it may be.

If you can picture in your mind 46 million file cards, you can understand why it is important that as much detailed information as possible be provided in a search request. It is not possible to process a request for information about "all the people named Goldberg from Minsk" or "Abraham Shapiro" from Warsaw. Many more details are necessary, such as date and place of birth, names of parents, last known address and your relationship to the person sought.

The records of the ITS are not complete. Many documents were destroyed by the SS before liberation or during the evacuation of the camps, or were lost because of wartime conditions.

APOLSKA

## JEWISH ROOTS AND SHOOTS

As the 400,000 newly-released names are incorporated into the 46 million documents currently on file, attempts to match these names with outstanding search requests will be made and, we can hope, will in some answers for those who have waited so long.

Should the ITS receive new or additional information long after an inquiry has been made, it will—even years later—inform the inquirer. In May, 1990, the American Red Cross announced the recent reunification of a woman in Moscow with a daughter now living in Illinois. If you made an inquiry in the past and have since moved, it is recommended that you submit a new inquiry.

In addition to the tracing service, the ITS processes requests for proof of internment in labor camps, to determine eligibility for payments. It will issue a certificate to the inquirer documenting the dates and location of incarceration.

A search of these newly-released documents from the Soviet Archives along

with the millions of documents already on file at the ITS is an unprecedented opportunity for Jews all over the world to learn the fate of family members. ■

Miriam Weiner is a columnist and lecturer on Jewish genealogy. For more information on this subject, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to Weiner at 136 Sandpiper Key, Secaucus, NJ 07094.

Trace Your Irish Ancestors  
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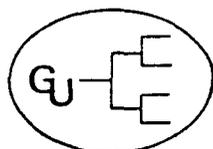
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## HEBREW

Square	Rabbinical	Cursive	Name	Phonetic value	Numeral value
א	א	א	Aleph	Silent	1
ב	ב	ב	Veth	v	2
ג	ג	ג	Gimel	g	3
ד	ד	ד	Daleth	d	4
ה	ה	ה	Heh	h	5
ו	ו	ו	Vav	v	6
ז	ז	ז	Zayin	z	7
ח	ח	ח	Cheth	{ch, as in German doch	8
ט	ט	ט	Teth	t	9
י	י	י	Yod	y	10
כ	כ	כ	Chaph	{ch, as in German doch	20
ל	ל	ל	Lamed	l	30
מ	מ	מ	Mem	m	40
נ	נ	נ	Nun	n	50
ס	ס	ס	Samekh	s	60
ע	ע	ע	Ayin	Silent	70
פ	פ	פ	Feh	f	80
צ	צ	צ	Tsadi	ts, as in pets	90
ק	ק	ק	Koph	k	100
ר	ר	ר	Resh	r	200
ש	ש	ש	Sin	s	300
ת	ת	ת	Thav	th, as in both	400

The final forms of the letters chaph, mem, nun, feh, and tsadi for the square, rabbinical, and cursive alphabets, respectively, are shown at their immediate right.

### III. NUMBERS

#### I. CARDINAL NUMBERS

זָכַר וְנִקְבָּה <i>m. &amp; f.</i>			נִקְבָּה <i>f.</i>		זָכַר <i>m.</i>	
שְׁלֹשִׁים	30		אַחַת		אֶחָד	1
אַרְבָּעִים	40		שְׁתַּיִם (שְׁתֵּי)		שְׁנַיִם (שְׁנֵי)	2
חֲמִשִּׁים	50		שְׁלֹשׁ		שְׁלֹשָׁה	3
שִׁשִּׁים	60		אַרְבַּע		אַרְבָּעָה	4
שִׁבְעִים	70		חֲמֵשׁ		חֲמִשָּׁה	4
שְׁמֹנִים	80		שֵׁשׁ		שֵׁשָׁה	6
תְּשַׁעִים	90		שִׁבְעַת		שִׁבְעָה	7
מֵאָה	100		שְׁמֹנֶה		שְׁמוֹנָה	8
			תְּשַׁע		תְּשַׁעָּה	9
			עֶשֶׂר		עֶשְׂרֵה	10
			אַחַת עֶשְׂרֵה		אֶחָד עָשָׂר	11
			שְׁתַּיִם עֶשְׂרֵה		שְׁנַיִם עָשָׂר	12
			שְׁלֹשׁ עֶשְׂרֵה		שְׁלֹשָׁה עָשָׂר	13
			אַרְבַּע עֶשְׂרֵה		אַרְבָּעָה עָשָׂר	14
			חֲמֵשׁ עֶשְׂרֵה		חֲמִשָּׁה עָשָׂר	15
			שֵׁשׁ עֶשְׂרֵה		שֵׁשָׁה עָשָׂר	16
			שִׁבְעַת עֶשְׂרֵה		שִׁבְעָה עָשָׂר	17
			שְׁמֹנֶה עֶשְׂרֵה		שְׁמוֹנָה עָשָׂר	18
			תְּשַׁע עֶשְׂרֵה		תְּשַׁעָּה עָשָׂר	19
			עֶשְׂרִים		עָשָׂרִים	20
			עֶשְׂרִים וְאַחַת		עָשָׂרִים וְאֶחָד	21
			אֶלֶף			
	1000					

המספרים

2. ORDINAL NUMBERS

	נְקֻבָּה	זָכָר
first	רֵאשׁוֹנָה	רֵאשׁוֹן 1
second	שְׁנִיַּת	שְׁנִי 2
third	שְׁלִישִׁית	שְׁלִישִׁי 3
fourth	רְבִיעִית	רְבִיעִי 4
fifth	חֲמִישִׁית	חֲמִישִׁי 5
sixth	שִׁשִּׁית	שִׁשִּׁי 6
seventh	שְׁבִיעִית	שְׁבִיעִי 7
eighth	שְׁמִינִית	שְׁמִינִי 8
ninth	תְּשִׁיעִית	תְּשִׁיעִי 9
tenth	עֲשִׂירִית	עֲשִׂירִי 10
eleventh <sup>1</sup>	הָאֶחָד עָלָהּ	הָאֶחָד עָשָׂר 11

<sup>1</sup> Beginning with number 11 and above, the ordinal numbers are the same as the cardinal numbers, with the definite article added.

The calendar

The Hebrew calendar was given its present fixed form by Hillel II about 360 A.D. It is based on a year of 12 months, alternating 30 and 29 days, with an intercalary month of 29 days in an embolismic or leap year. These months, with their corresponding periods in the Gregorian calendar, are as follows:

Tishri	תשרי	September-October
Heshvan	חשוון	October-November
Kislev	כסלו	November-December
Tebet	טבת	December-January
Shebat	שבט	January-February
Adar	אדר	February-March
Veadar	ואדר	Intercalary month
Nisan	ניסן	March-April
Iyar	אייר	April-May
Sivan	סיון	May-June
Tammuz	תמוז	June-July
Ab	אב	July-August
Elul	אלול	August-September

The year begins on the first day of the month of Tishri, which is the day of the Molad, or appearance of the new moon, nearest the autumnal equinox. The actual date is, however, sometimes shifted one or two days, according to specific regulations; thus, New Year may not fall on either Friday or Sunday, since that would conflict with the observance of the Sabbath; nor, for a like reason, may it come on Wednesday, since that would cause Atonement Day to come on a Friday.

To convert a given year (Anno Domini) into its corresponding Hebrew year (Anno Mundi), add 3,761 to the former, bearing in mind, however, that the year begins in September. As the Hebrew calendar omits the thousands, the year 5696, corresponding to the Christian year 1935, is represented in Hebrew characters by תרצ"ו, 696, these characters, as already explained, denoting 400—200—90—6, respectively.

The days of the week are referred to as First Day, Second Day, etc., the seventh being termed Sabbath (שבת). The holidays, festivals, and fasts, with their dates, are as follows:

Rosh Hashana (New Year, Tishri 1)	ראש השנה
Tsom Gedaliah (Fast of Gedaliah, Tishri 3)	צום גדליה
Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement, Tishri 10)	יום כיפור
Sukkoth (Tabernacles, Tishri 15-22)	סוכות
Simhath Torah (Rejoicing over the Law, Tishri 23)	שמחת תורה
Hanukkah (Feast of Dedication, Kislev 25)	חנוכה
Asereth B'tebet, Fast of (Tebet 10)	עשרת בטבת
Purim (Feast of Lots, Adar 14)	פורים
Pesach (Passover, Nisan 15-21)	פסח
Shabuoth (Feast of Weeks, Sivan 6)	שבועות
Tishah B'ab (Fast of Ab, Ab 9)	תשעה באב

Abbreviations

In Hebrew, abbreviations are set as follows: If of one character, but one prime (') is used after the character; if of more than one character, a double prime (") is used just before the last character. Masoretic points are always omitted. The abbreviations most frequently used are as follows:

Sir, Master, Mr.; thousand	א' אדון; אלף
Aleph Beth (the alphabet)	א"ב, אלף בית
Said our learned ones of blessed memory	אחרל, אמרו חכמים
	זכרתם לברכה
The land of Israel (Palestine)	א"י, ארץ ישראל
God willing	א"י, אם יצא השם
Synagogue	בהכ"ז, בית הכנסת
Sons of Israel, the Jews	ב"י, בני ישראל
In these words, viz	בוה"ל, בזה הלשון
The author	ב"ע, בעל מחבר
Gaon (title of Jewish princes in the Babylonian exile), His Highness, Majesty.	ג' טון

## Abbreviations—Continued

The laws of Israel	ד"י דת ישראל
The Holy One, Blessed be He (the Lord)	הקב"ה, הקדוש ברוך הוא
Destruction of the First Temple	חב"ד, חרבן בית ראשון
Destruction of the Second Temple	חב"ט, חרבן בית שני
Exodus from Egypt	יצי'ם, יציאת מצרים
As it was said	כמ"ס, כמו כונאמר
As it was written	כמו שכתב
A.M. (Anno Mundi)	לבי"ע, לכריאת עולם
The Holy Language (Hebrew)	לה"ק, לשון הקודש
Good luck; I congratulate you	מו"ט, מול טוב
The Sacred Books	סה"ק, ספרים הקדושים
The Holy Scroll	סה"ת, ספר תורה
May he rest in peace	ע"ה, עליז השלום
In the hereafter	עוה"ב, עולם הבא
New Year's Eve	ערה"ו, ערב ראש השנה
Sabbath Eve	ע"ס, ערב שבת
Verse, chapter	פ', פסוק, פרק
The judgment of the court	סב"ד, פסק בית דין
Saint (St.), Zion	צ', צדיק, ציון
Recognition of God's justice	צה"ד, צדוק הדין
The reading of the Scroll	קה"ח, קריאת התורה
First of all	קכ"ד, קדם כל דבר
Our Rabbis of Blessed Memory	רד"ל, רבותינו זכרותם לברכה
Rabbi Moses son of Maimon (Maimonides)	רמב"ם, ר' משה בן מימון
Catalog	רס"ס, רשימת ספרים
Year, line, hour	ש', שנה, שורה, שעה
Sabbath days and holidays	שו"ס, שבתות וימים טובים
As stated	כנ"ו, כונאמר
Babylonian Talmud	ת"ב, תלמוד בבלי
The Books of the Law, the Prophets, and Hagiographa (Old Testament)	תנ"ך, תורה, נביאים, כתובים

## Cardinal numbers

one	אחד, אחת	twenty	עשרים
two	שנים, שתיים	thirty	שלשים
three	שלושה, שלוש	forty	ארבעים
four	ארבעה, ארבע	fifty	חמשים
five	חמשה, חמש	sixty	ששים
six	ששה, שש	seventy	שבעים
seven	שבעה, שבע	eighty	כמנים
eight	שמונה, שמונה	ninety	תשעים
nine	תשעה, תשע	hundred	מאה
ten	עשרה, עשר	thousand	אלף

In forming the numbers from 11 to 19, the terms עשרה in the feminine, and עשר in the masculine are used, preceded by the proper unit number. For 21 and upward, the term corresponding to the proper tenth digit is followed by the proper unit term preceded by the conjunction ו and: twelve עשרים, twenty-four עשרים וארבע, etc.

## Ordinal numbers

first	ראשון	sixth	שישי
second	שני	seventh	שביעי
third	שלישי	eighth	חמישי
fourth	רביעי	ninth	תשעי
fifth	חמישי	tenth	עשירי

After ten the ordinals are similar in form to the cardinals with the addition of the definite article ה, thus, העשירי, the twentieth.

## Seasons

spring	אביב	autumn	סתיו
summer	קיץ	winter	חורף

## Time

hour	שעה	month	חודש
day	יום	season	מועד
week	שבוע	year	שנה

## Hebrew Numbers Simplified

### Hebrew numbers

א	1		ל	30
ב	2		מ	40
ג	3		נ	50
ד	4		ס	60
ה	5		ע	70
ו	6		פ	80
ז	7		צ	90
ח	8		ק	100
ט	9		ר	200
י	10		ש	300
יא	11		ת	400
יב	12		תק	500
יג	13 ... and so forth to		תר	600 (dates 1840-1940)
יט	19		תש	700 (dates 1940-2040)
כ	20		תת	800
כא	21		תתק	900
כב	22		' א	1000
כג	23 ... and so forth		' ב	2000 ... and so forth

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CONFERENCE  
ON RECORDS

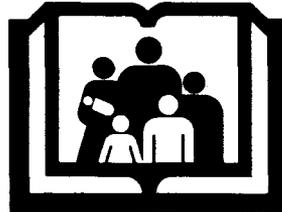
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Jewish Families:  
Their Assimilation into  
North American Culture

Malcolm H. Stern

Series 327

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## JEWISH FAMILIES: THEIR ASSIMILATION INTO NORTH AMERICAN CULTURE

Malcolm H. Stern

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Two forces have played almost equal roles in the survival of the Jewish people: tradition and assimilation. To have moved from Abraham's Ur of the Chaldees, four thousand years ago, to present-day America, required an adaptability, an ability to absorb from the culture of others and to give what has been absorbed a Jewish flavor. I described this process at the 1979 Annual Meeting of the American Jewish Historical Society this way:

I see the history of the Jews as resembling a great warm Gulf Stream in the sea of other peoples' history. Individual Jews are like so many creatures and Jewish communities like so many islands in that Gulf Stream. From time to time there have been attempts to dam up the Gulf Stream and thousands—even millions—of Jews have been lost, but the Gulf Stream has persevered. At other times Jews have found the colder waters of the larger ocean more appealing and have left the warm influences of native habitat. Ocean currents and tides have influenced the Jewish Gulf Stream, and other cultures have been warmed by the Jewish current. And within the Gulf Stream we have developed customs and traditions, values and ideas.

This paper will attempt to describe the ebb and flow as it affected the Jews settling in America.

The first Jew of record literally could not be assimilated. He was Salomon Franco, who came from Amsterdam to Puritan Boston in 1649 with a consignment of goods from a Jewish merchant in Amsterdam to Major

General Edward Gibbons of the Boston militia. There seems to have been some question as to who was responsible for paying Franco, and while the argument went on, the ship which brought Franco sailed away and the Puritan city fathers were left with a Jew on their hands—the first that any of them had ever seen. (The Jews had been driven out of England by Edward I in 1290 and were not readmitted until 1655, six years after Franco's arrival in Boston.) In this connection you should know that the Puritans considered themselves latter-day Children of Israel. They studied Hebrew—even inscribed it on their tombstones. They spoke of themselves as fleeing from Pharaoh, King James I, across the Red Sea of the Atlantic Ocean to the Promised Land of the New World. But a live son of Israel they could not absorb, so they voted to keep him at public expense up to ten weeks with the proviso that he depart by the first available ship.

A more lasting settlement of Jews occurred in Dutch New Amsterdam in 1654 with the arrival of twenty-three refugees from Dutch Brazil who were met not only by Peter Stuyvesant's prejudice but by two other Jews whose arrival had preceded them. Even though this group was enlarged a year later by Jewish traders from Amsterdam, the majority were gone by the time the British took over in 1664 and renamed the Colony New York. Indeed, only one Jew was left to sign the oath of allegiance to the British crown which was required of all residents. This was Asser Levy, a refugee from Brazil of German origin, who not only can be called America's first permanent Jewish settler, but also the first to assimilate into America.

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As early as 1655, he and Jacob bar Simson, a fellow-Jew, insisted on their right to join the guard on the town wall rather than pay the tax to support the guard. Two years later, Levy demanded his so-called "burgher" right—the right of citizenship—and got it. In 1660 he was licensed as a butcher, and by 1662 succeeded in overruling the law against Jews owning property when he purchased the first of three houses he was eventually to own.

His status as a citizen, business man, and man of repute grew so that he was used by the courts to administer estates, by fellow-citizens as witness to wills. In 1671, his reputation was invoked by a Jewish pedlar in a Hartford court, Jacob Lucena, who was on trial for "wanton dalliance with a lady." The fine was £20. Lucena pleaded incapable of paying, so the judge "because the defendant was a Hebrew" cut the fine to £10, which Lucena was still unable to pay, so he invoked the name of Asser Levy and the fine became £5. By 1678, Levy had built a slaughterhouse and entered into partnership with a non-Jew. While much of what I have described about Asser Levy concerns the winning of rights, it does demonstrate a gradual adjustment to contemporary American life.

Asser Levy's death on 1 February 1682, and burial point up another area of internal tension among Jews which led to accommodation and assimilation of a kind. The colonial Jewish immigrants were of two backgrounds and cultures. One group, labelled "Sephardic" (from the Hebrew word for Spain) originated in Spain and Portugal and reached the New World by migration through Holland, England, the Caribbean, or Latin America. The second group were called "Ashkenazic" and originated in Germany and Poland, whence they migrated to the New World, also, via Holland and England. The Sephardic Jews had been

forcibly converted to Catholicism in Spain before 1492 and in Portugal in 1497, so that their descendants became highly assimilated to Christian patterns of living before they ever came to America. The German-Polish Ashkenazic Jews were far more strict in their adherence to ancient laws and customs which they were able to preserve because their European homes were in segregated ghettos of German and Eastern European towns. Thus the Sephardic group looked down on the Ashkenazic as social and cultural inferiors, while the Ashkenazic group looked down on the Sephardic as religiously inferior.

In the growing New York community both these groups were represented. Asser Levy's successes had attracted his Ashkenazic family from Europe. Joseph Bueno de Mesquita, a West Indian Sephardi, must have decided, when Asser Levy was buried in the small cemetery which Stuyvesant had reluctantly granted the Jews, that he would not wish to be buried next to Ashkenazim. So de Mesquita purchased a new plot in which he buried his father the following year. This plot, incidentally, is not only the oldest surviving Jewish cemetery in North America, it is also the oldest man-made relic in New York City.

By the 1720s the Ashkenazic Jews in New York outnumbered the Sephardic, but economic necessity forced the Ashkenazic to assimilate into the Sephardic when they dedicated their first synagogue building in 1730. To secure the funds needed for the building, appeals went to the well-established Sephardic congregations of Amsterdam, London, and the Caribbean (Curacao, Barbados, Jamaica, and Surinam had larger Jewish communities than New York). Furthermore, surrounded as they were by non-Jews, the New Yorkers recognized that the Sephardic forms of worship—more orderly and dignified than the Ashkenazic—would be more appropriate for the New World. So until 1825, when the first Ashkenazic congregation was established by new immigrants from Holland, Germany, and England, the so-called Spanish

and Portuguese Congregation "Shearith Israel" was the only one in New York.<sup>2</sup>

By 1700 a form of assimilation which was to become very prevalent among later Jewish arrivals was already in evidence. I refer to the pattern of changing names. The first instance I can find for an American Jew occurred with the first known Minister of the above-mentioned New York congregation.

Let me state parenthetically, that the early congregations in America did not have rabbis. They were too small to support full-time clergy, and therefore developed a pattern of using anyone who could chant the traditional prayers in a manner that suited the congregation. Most of these officiants were part-time, earning the bulk of their livelihoods as pedlars or shopkeepers. Their title in the synagogue was chazan, meaning "cantor." Protestant influence led to calling them Reader or Minister, and by 1840, when the first ordained rabbi settled in the United States, these earlier clergy had totally changed the role from that of scholar and teacher of rabbis to pastor<sup>3</sup> and preacher—another form of assimilation.

New York's first Minister of record came from a family named Pardo, which had supplied rabbis to the Sephardic congregations of Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and Curacao. One of their number, Saul Pardo, arrived in Newport, Rhode Island by 1677, but moved to the New York by 1685. Already in Newport, he had anglicized his name Pardo to its English translation, Brown.<sup>4</sup>

In later American history, changes of surname became even more a commonplace. The more unpronounceable the name, the more likely it was to be changed. In the years when Ellis Island was the immigrants' gateway to America and the great masses of Jews were pouring in from the old Czarist Empire, it was not unusual for the registering agent to bestow an "American" name on the immigrating family. My in-laws derived their family name when settling in Buffalo in the late 1860s, my father-in-law and his siblings enrolled in public school.

On arrival the name had been Bertman, but the school registrar wrote it down as "Bergman." The children reported to their parents that this was their "American" name, and it has been Bergman ever since.<sup>5</sup>

One of the early differences between the Spanish-Portuguese and the Ashkenazic Jews was in naming customs. The Sephardic Jews, having lived among Christians—and as Catholics—had received baptismal names. When they reverted to Judaism in lands of freedom, they took Biblical first names and either kept their Spanish or Portuguese-sounding family name or chose some ancestral family name. The Jews of Germany and Eastern Europe did not have hereditary family names. Occasional descendants of a famous rabbi might preserve his name as their family name; or the rare Jew who achieved a position at the court of the local ruler might have a surname bestowed on him. But the masses were merely known by their given name as son or daughter of their father. Upon arrival in Holland, England, or America, these Jews would usually take their patronymic and make it into a last name; e.g., Jacob son of Isaac became Jacob Isaacs. But this change evolved at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Earlier we have the situation of Asser Levy's nephew-by-marriage, Asher Michael, whose son was known as Michael Asher, a naming pattern typical of Dutch influence.<sup>6</sup>

Not only last names were subject to assimilation, but given names as well. The Revolution may have sparked a bit of this. We can see the transition from the characteristically Biblical first name to more contemporary ones in the family of Baruch Judah, who was in New York by 1700. His children all bore Biblical names. His grandchildren seem to have also been given Biblical names at birth, starting with Benjamin, born in 1760. As they grew up, Benjamin's siblings, Jekuthiel and Falk, replaced their given names with Cary and Walter, while other brothers and sisters retained their Biblical Sarah, Rebecca, Jacob, Aaron, etc. The next generation, born in the opening years of the nineteenth

century, went even farther afield with Henrietta, Celestine, and De Witt Clinton, scattered among the more Biblical ones.

The 1840s saw a large migration from Germany which continued unabated until the Civil War closed America's ports. That war had its own Americanizing effect. Patriotic American names were already appearing when the Hofheimer brothers, five immigrants from Germany, settled in Virginia. The youngest of the brothers dropped his Biblical given names of Abraham Isaac in favor of Andrew Jackson, and the next generation saw Herman become William Henry Harrison, while others of that generation were dubbed Henry Clay, Benjamin Franklin, and Jefferson Davis, plus such historical names as Julius Caesar and Alexander.

Another difference worth noting between Sephardic and Ashkenazic naming customs is the fact that the Sephardim, like the Dutch, had a tradition of naming the oldest son after his paternal grandfather; the oldest daughter after the paternal grandmother; the next children after maternal grandparents, and from then on after other relatives, living or dead. The Ashkenazim had a superstition about naming after living people and a compulsion to name after deceased grandparents. The twentieth century has seen third, fourth, and fifth generation American Jews copying the British social tradition of naming people after parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents. Thus, in my Stern family, with the third American-born generation, my father's two brothers and two sisters each named a son, Junior, and one branch has a III.

Religiously the majority of the early Jewish arrivals in America were strictly Orthodox. In Europe this meant that the synagogue ruled their lives. Those who came to these shores found few synagogues, except in the better established cities. It took at least ten adult males to carry on Orthodox worship. Those Jews who left the city for the hinterland had to make adjustments and compromises, especially in the areas of worship, diet, marriage, and

burial.

Traditional observance requires the adult male to pray in the synagogue twice each day, morning and evening. In the ghettos of Europe this observance was easily fulfilled as the entire community lived within walking distance of the synagogue. Easy access to the synagogue was also made necessary by the prohibition against riding on the Sabbath. In America, where most of the Jews for the first two hundred years made their livelihood as itinerant pedlars or traders, these observances were impossible. Even when they settled in some growing community, most Jews found it necessary to wait a number of years for a sufficient group of fellow-Jews to join them to create a congregation. So unless family pressure in the city they came from prevailed on them to maintain a tenuous affiliation with the city's congregation, many became totally lost to Judaism.

Kosher food was an important part of Jewish religious observance. This required that cattle be slaughtered by a specially trained functionary, that meat be drained of blood, that meat and dairy products not be consumed at the same meal. The week of the passover required the preparation of matzos, the removal of all leaven from the home, separate dishes and cooking utensils. Obviously, for a Jew away from the organized Jewish communities, this too became a difficulty. Kosher laws do permit the eating of some foods such as dark bread, eggs, fish (but not shellfish), and vegetables without ritual supervision, and many an itinerant Jew of yesteryear survived on these in his effort to be observant. Others found the requirements too burdensome and gave up "keeping kosher."

One of the cornerstones of Jewish survival has been the aid Jews give one another. The State of Israel exists because Jews all over the world contribute heavily to its support. Similarly, almost every impoverished Jewish immigrant arriving in America has relied on fellow-Jews to help him or her get established in America. This inter-

dependence, born, not out of either relationship or even acquaintance, but only from a common history of suffering, has made Jews very sensitive to whatever threatens Jewish survival. To most Jews nothing does this so much as marriage with a non-Jew, for implicit in interfaith marriages is the probability that the children of such a marriage may not be reared as Jews and the strength of the Jewish people will be consequently diminished.

Until the end of the nineteenth century Jews constituted less than one-tenth of 1 percent of America's population; even today we are less than 3 percent. Therefore, it is not surprising to find that probably one out of every four marriages of a Jew is with a non-Jew. And while some of the non-Jewish partners do convert to Judaism, or even without conversion agree to rear their children as Jews, the loss of Jews through intermarriage, is a serious concern to the Jewish people.

The effect of America on this mixed marriage situation and other aspects of traditional observance is illustrated by the story of Mordecai Moses Mordecai (1727-1809). He was a native of Tels, a Lithuanian town noted for its rabbinical school, where he evidently received some grounding in ritual law, although there is no evidence that he completed the course. He migrated to America about 1761, married a Jewish girl in Easton, Pennsylvania, wandered through Pennsylvania in a somewhat unsuccessful attempt to earn a living. The Revolution found him in Philadelphia where he was a part-time functionary in the local synagogue. His wife's niece, Judith Hart of Easton, eloped with a Scottish-born resident of Easton, Presbyterian James Pettigrew, a Lieutenant in Washington's army. The girl's Jewish father promptly disowned her, but when the young couple's first baby was on the way, the girl's mother prevailed on her Philadelphia brother-in-law, Mordecai Moses Mordecai, to come to Easton and perform a Jewish marriage ceremony.

Let me state, parenthetically, that there

was no civil marriage in colonial America. All marriages were performed by the clergy, and in the case of interfaith marriages the couple usually lived in common law relationship without benefit of clergy. Common law marriages were recognized under English law, but we have many wills of colonial Jews recognizing their offspring by so-and-so, a common-law wife.

In performing the Pettigrew-Hart marriage, Mordecai seems to have secured an agreement that any male offspring would be reared in the father's faith as Presbyterians, any female children would be reared in their mother's Jewish faith. This eventually happened, for the three Pettigrew sons became Christians (one of them, Samuel, became a mayor of Pittsburgh), and the three daughters married Jews. The marriage ceremony required the signature of a witness, so another brother-in-law, Ber Levy, was imported from Philadelphia. When Levy returned to Philadelphia he reported the tale to the elders of the congregation and Mordecai M. Mordecai was immediately non grata with the synagogue leadership.

Two years later, an elderly blind Jew, who had been living in common law relationship with his Christian spouse, died. His desire was to be buried in the Jewish cemetery of Philadelphia. The synagogue, lacking a rabbi, was dependent on the opinions of its elected leaders who endeavored to maintain as strict an orthodoxy as they could. They ruled that the deceased could be buried in a corner of the cemetery, but without the traditional ritual bathing and shrouding and without ceremony. When the president of the congregation went to check on the burial, he was horrified to find Mordecai M. Mordecai, in defiance of the ruling, performing full rites for the deceased. This precipitated a letter from the leaders of the synagogue to the Ashkenazic Chief Rabbi of Amsterdam, recounting Mordecai's violations of tradition. They end the letter with this plea, which summarizes what I have been trying to convey about America's assimilative erosions:

We are expectantly looking forward to your reply, for the matter touches the very roots of our faith, particularly in this country where each acts according to his own desire; unfortunately, many marry Gentile women... (others are) completely irreligious people who profane the name of God publicly; all this has to be seen to be believed. The congregation has no power to discipline or punish anyone, except for the minor punishment of excluding them from the privileges of the synagogue and not counting them for a minyan (the quorum of ten needed for worship). Nevertheless these evil people pay no heed and come to the synagogue, since it is impossible to restrain them from so doing because of the usage of the land.

The Amsterdam rabbi seems to have had no answer to America's assimilative<sup>10</sup> effect, because no answer was forthcoming.

Attempts to modify orthodoxy to meet American Jews' needs became formal in 1824 in Charleston, South Carolina, at that time the largest Jewish community in the United States with about six hundred identifiable men, women, and children. In that year, forty-seven heads of family petitioned the leadership of the synagogue to modify the rituals by introducing English translations of the Hebrew prayers, curtailing the length of the services, and the introduction of regular sermons in English "like all other ministers." The leadership debated the petition and tabled it. Recognizing that they could not get a satisfactory response, a group organized what they called "The Reformed Society of Israelites."

The members of the society were largely English-speaking by birth, some of them second and third generation Americans. They began with approximately a dozen members, but eventually rose to fifty. They wrote their own prayerbook, translating the traditional prayers into English as well as several of the traditional hymns. They even raised funds to build a

synagogue, but a financial depression in Charleston and the subsequent departure of some of their chief leaders led the remainder to rejoin the old synagogue by 1837. Two years later the synagogue burned in one of the conflagrations to which Charleston was prone. In the process of rebuilding, the Reform element sought to introduce an organ and a bitter battle ensued that eventually landed in the courts. When the Reformers won their right to have an organ, another secession took place to form an orthodox congregation.

By the end of the 1840s other Reform groups had been established in Baltimore (1843), New York (1845), and Philadelphia (1847). These were established largely by new immigrants from Germany, where Reform Judaism had its birth in 1809. The Civil War hastened the Reforming process and so did the rise of anti-Semitism which followed the Panic of 1873. For the non-dominant German-born Jews and their children—many of whom had fought on both sides in the Civil War—the solution lay in becoming as Americanized as possible. They greeted with enthusiasm the proclamation of a platform issued by a group of Reform Rabbis out of a meeting held in Pittsburgh in 1885. The platform stated that any externals which separated the Jew from his non-Jewish neighbor, such as dress, food, and most ceremonials, were outmoded, as was the influence of ancient rabbinic law. They denied the need for any Jewish nation, identifying themselves purely as a religious group. They also denied the belief in an individual Messiah yet to come, but looked toward a Messianic Age of peace and brotherhood for all. This platform so captured the sentiments of the majority of America's established Jews that it dominated Jewish thinking, especially among Reform Jews, until World War II, when Hitler's Holocaust, destroying six million Jews, and the birth of Israel out of the ashes of European Jewry, led to a strong re<sup>12</sup>thinking of many of these attitudes.

One of the motivating factors of the Reform revolt against Orthodoxy, manifested in the

Pittsburgh Platform, was the arrival of a growing group of refugees from Czarist Russia, which included all or part of present-day Poland, Latvia, Czechoslovakia, and Rumania. The majority of these immigrants lived in medieval conditions in segregated areas of towns and villages. They had had none of the civilizing effects of exposure to Western culture which the earlier arrivals from Germany and other parts of western Europe had experienced.

As nearly two million of these Russian-Jewish immigrants raised the Jewish population ten-fold, the more established Jewish settlers found themselves hard-pressed to absorb or even relate to these newcomers. In self-protection, the dominant German Jews (as they call themselves, to distinguish them from the Russian newcomers) created institutions to Americanize the immigrants as rapidly as possible. A floundering rabbinical school, the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, was given infusions of funds to train rabbis who could converse in Yiddish, the language of the Russian newcomers. Settlement houses and educational centers were established to teach skills, English language, and even American manners and customs.

As the newcomers and/or their children prospered, they moved out of the crowded tenements of East Coast cities into better housing or newer communities.

Attempts to relieve the overflowing tenement areas also included the development of agricultural colonies in various parts of the United States, none of them too successful. To stem the tide of immigration to the Eastern seaboard a plan was developed to

ship boatloads into the Gulf of Mexico thru the port of Galveston, Texas, and many Jews who landed there spread out through the southwest and western communities.

The First and Second World Wars had strong Americanizing effects on the Russian Jewish young men in uniform, who, for the first time in their lives, found themselves in totally non-Jewish environments and learned that they could live successfully among non-Jews, but often at a sacrifice of Jewish traditions. The 1950s saw America's great moves to suburbia as the returning veterans demanded new sites for homes. The patterns which earlier Jewish settlers went through of adjustment to American mores became the route the new Jewish suburbanites followed.<sup>13</sup>

The empathy of many Americans for the growing state of Israel, and especially, Israel's remarkable victory in its Six-day War against its Arab neighbors, led many gentile Americans to a new curiosity about Jews and Judaism. This, in turn, led Jews to be more assertive of Jewish distinctive customs, so that through the 1960s and 1970s our young people, notably, have been intensifying their own interest in things Jewish. Many of them spend time in Israel or at youth camps in America, absorbing Jewish music and folkways, leaving their more assimilated American parents a bit bewildered by what they view as a return to tradition. Thus, the age-old tension between tradition and assimilation goes on daily in American Jewish life, with some Jews opting for one side against the other. And for the foreseeable future both forces will continue to influence American Jewish life, with neither dominating the other.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Abram Vossen Goodman, American Overture: Jewish Rights in Colonial Times (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1947), Chapter 2; and Jacob Rader Marcus, The Colonial American Jew, 1492-1776, 3 vols. (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1970), p. 300f.

<sup>2</sup> For early New York Jewish history and the record of its first congregation, see David and Tamar de Sola Pool, An Old Faith in the New World: Portrait of Shearith Israel, 1654-1954 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1955); David de Sola Pool, Portraits Etched in Stone: Early Jewish Settlers, 1682-1831 (New York: Columbia University Press 1952) and Malcolm H. Stern, "Asser Levy—A New Look at Our Jewish Founding Father," American Jewish Archives 26 (April 1974), pp. 66-77.

<sup>3</sup> Pool, An Old Faith, Chapter 5.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p.159f.; Pool, Portraits, p. 443ff.

<sup>5</sup> For a full description of Jewish naming patterns, see Arthur Kurzweil, From Generation to Generation: How to Trace Your Jewish Genealogy and Personal History (New York:

<sup>6</sup> Kenn Stryker-Rodda, "New Netherland Naming Systems and Customs." Paper presented at the World Conference on Records and Genealogical Seminar, Salt Lake City, 1969.

<sup>7</sup> Malcolm H. Stern, First American Jewish Families: 600 Genealogies, 1654-1977. (Cincinnati: American Jewish Archives, and Waltham, Mass.: American Historical Society, 1978). JUDAH I (1), p. 139.

<sup>8</sup> Malcolm H. Stern, The Descendants of Moses son of Naphtali of Hofheim or Moses Hofheimer ("Moshe Hoffer") (1781-1862) (Norfolk, Va: privately printed), May 1964.

<sup>9</sup> Malcolm H. Stern, "The Function of Genealogy in American Jewish History," Essays in American Jewish History: To Commemorate the Tenth Anniversary of the Founding of the American Jewish Archives under the Direction of Jacob Rader Marcus (Cincinnati: The American Jewish Archives, 1958), Part 2, Exogamy: Jews Absorbed by Inter-marriage with non-Jews, pp. 82-97; Rabbi Sheldon Zimmerman, and Barbara S. Trainin, editors, The Threat of Mixed Marriage: A Response, Proceedings of a Conference, 1976 (New York: Commission on Synagogue Relations, Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York, 1978); Rabbi David Max Eichhorn, Jewish Inter-marriages: Fact and Fiction (Satellite Beach, Fl: Satellite Books, 1974); "Explorations in Inter-marriage," American Jewish Year Book, 1973 (New York: The American Jewish Committee, and Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1973), v. 74, pp. 292-306.

<sup>10</sup> Malcolm H. Stern, "Two Jewish Colonial Functionaries in Pennsylvania," American Jewish Historical Quarterly 57 (Sept. 1967), No. 1, part II: Mordecai Moses Mordecai (1727-1809), pp. 35-48.

<sup>11</sup> Barnett A. Elzas, The Reformed Society of Israelites, of Charleston, S.C. (New York: Bloch Publishing Co., 1916.)

<sup>12</sup> David Philipson, The Reform Movement in Judaism (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1931); Malcolm H. Stern, "Reforming of Reform Judaism—Past, Present, and Future," American Jewish Historical Quarterly 63 (Dec. 1973), No. 2, pp. 111-37.

<sup>13</sup>Irving Howe, World of Our Fathers: The Journey of the East European Jews to America and the Life They Found and Made (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1976).



Miriam Weiner

## Jewish Genealogy

By Miriam Weiner, C.G.

### JEWISH GENEALOGY 'BY THE BOOK'

"Where do I start?" That is the question asked most frequently of genealogists.

Fortunately for the family historian and those learning about their Jewish roots, the number of books on this fascinating subject is increasing as interest in this field grows. The first major publication was Dan Rottenberg's *Finding Our Fathers*\*. It includes a country-by-country guide to tracing Jewish ancestors abroad; a guide to Jewish sources and public records in the United States; and a description of archives in Israel along with their holdings. Also included is a list of 8,000 Jewish family names, giving their origins, sources of information about each family, and the names of related families whose histories have already been recorded.

The one person who has perhaps the most influence on the growing field of Jewish genealogy is Rabbi Malcolm Stern, the genealogist of the American Jewish Archives and an expert in early American Jewish history. His *Americans of Jewish Descent* is a collection and compilation of genealogies of Jewish families who were in North America prior to 1840. The book traces these early American Jewish families from their arrival in America to the present.

An updated version of Rabbi Stern's book has been published under the title *First American Jewish Families*\*, which consists of 600 genealogies from 1654 to 1977. The index contains more than 40,000 names. Unfortunately, both of these books are out of print and can only be found in libraries.

For those trying to locate their ancestral homes in eastern Europe, the *Shtetl Finder* by Chester G. Cohen is a good place to start. This gazetteer (145 pages) includes a listing of Jewish communities in the 19th and early 20th centuries in the Pale of Settlement of Russia and Poland, and in Lithuania,

Latvia, Galicia, and Bukovina, with names of residents. Mention is also made in the town entries of additional references in the *Encyclopedia Judaica*, Berl Kagan's book on *Hebrew Subscription Lists*, and *Wooden Synagogues* by Maria Kazimierz Piechotka. At the end of Cohen's book is a listing of obituaries which appeared in the Hebrew newspaper *Hatzefira* in Warsaw from 1875 to 1896.

The history of Sephardi Jewry is told in *The Road from Babylon: The Story of Sephardi and Oriental Jews* by Chaim Raphael. Numerous illustrations and several maps, along with a survey of the life and culture of the Jews of Spain under Islam and Christianity, make this ambitious volume a valuable source for those with Sephardic roots.

Rabbi Marc D. Angel, rabbi of the Spanish-Portuguese synagogue in New York, writes about the Sephardic experience in America in his book *La America*. In 1971, Stephen Birmingham wrote *The Grandees: America's Sephardic Elite*\*, based largely on the genealogies available in Rabbi Malcolm H. Stern's *Americans of Jewish Descent*. Birmingham tracked down many of the present-day descendants of early Jewish Americans and retold their stories.

In 1984, David S. Zubatsky and Irwin M. Berent published *Jewish Genealogy: A Sourcebook of Family Histories and Genealogies*, a comprehensive compilation of Jewish families that have already been researched. The listings refer the reader to archival repositories and libraries where one can find Jewish genealogies, both published and unpublished, family histories, and individual family names. The introduction contains a list of genealogical sources and valuable hints for the beginning and experienced researcher.

A work which has been described as the definitive guide for Jewish genealogists is Arthur Kurzweil's *From Generation to Generation*\*. Published in 1980, it helped spark the growing interest today's generation has in our past and in the Jewish lives of our ancestors. In addition to the detailed description of archival sources and procedures for beginning research, the reader is treated to the author's warm and personal account of his own experience in discovering the links to his past and the richness of his heritage.

In *My Generations: A Course in Jewish Family History*, Kurzweil has produced a book written especially for children which contains both things to read and things to do. There are spaces for photographs, documents, family recipes, yahrzeit (memorial) records, and family trees. This unique book, which has been used by Jewish groups of all ages as a tool for the exploration of our Jewish past, presents a wonderful opportunity for parents and children to share a project together.

In 1984 the first International Seminar on Jewish Genealogy was held in Jerusalem. The chairwoman for that event was Dr. Sallyann Amdur Sack, the

founding president of the Jewish Genealogy Society of Greater Washington. Her outstanding guide to research in Israel, which was researched and prepared for the conference, resulted in *That We May Remember*. Now Dr. Sack has updated her work and has recently published *A Guide to Jewish Genealogical Research in Israel*.\*

In her book, Sack includes sections on Yad Vashem, the Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People, the Jewish National and University Library, the Israel State Archives, the Jewish Agency's Search Bureau for Missing Relatives, the Central Zionist Archives, the Jerusalem Municipality Historical Archives, and chevrot kadisha (burial societies), as well as sources outside of Jerusalem and valuable appendices of Yizkor books, Landmanshaftn societies and location maps for the various archives.

According to Kurzweil, "Sallyann Sack has not only written what is surely the most thorough guide to genealogical sources in Israel. She has also offered an absolutely convincing case that a trip to Israel will serve the Jewish family historian well. And, at the same time, she has transformed the genealogical quest from a pastime into a pilgrimage." Now that her book exists, many Jewish genealogists will wonder how we got along without it.

\* \* \* \* \*

*For an extensive bibliography on Jewish genealogy, Jewish history, and genealogy in general, send a self-addressed stamped envelope and \$2.50 to Miriam Weiner, 136 Sandpiper Key, Secaucus, NJ 07094. Ms. Weiner spoke at the Society last May 31 on researching eastern European families.*

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*\*Books so marked are currently in the NEHGS collections.*



## JEWISH GENEALOGY

### GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

1. As recently as 1900, 81 percent of the world's Jews lived in Europe. Now over 50 percent of all Jews live in English-speaking lands, particularly in North and South America.
2. The great majority of Jews as a group have come from Poland. Lithuania and Poland were among the last countries that were Christianized. "While the land of Israel may be the ancient ancestral homeland of the Jewish people, Poland is the more immediate ancestral homeland of most of today's world Jewish population." (Finding Our Fathers: A Guidebook to Jewish Genealogy, by Dan Rottenberg, p. 44).
3. Most of the older Jewish documents and manuscripts are in Hebrew. However, the dominant spoken language of the Jews today is English.
4. The beginning steps in searching for your American Jewish ancestors are basically the same as if you were searching for gentile ancestry in America, i.e., consulting: relatives, cemeteries, vital records of the county, state and church, Federal census records, probate records, National Archives collections, immigration and naturalization records, obituaries, etc.
5. Two major problems encountered in Jewish research are those associated with 1) names and naming customs, and 2) group and individual migrations.
6. The Genealogical Society in Salt Lake City recently microfilmed the material in the American Jewish Archives in Cincinnati, Ohio, which is one of the great libraries in the western hemisphere for Jewish manuscripts of many sorts. The Genealogical Society has on microfilm an excellent collection of Jewish records from Poland, Hungary, France, and Germany.
7. Arthur Kurzweil offers a consulting service for Jewish research by correspondence. The address is JEWISH GENEALOGY RESEARCH SERVICE, P.O. ~~Box 126, Flushing, New York 11367.~~ Check TDLODOT; *A Journal of Jewish Genealogy*
- 8.
9. A suggested general approach to American Jewish research would include the following:
  - a. Learn the normal research strategies associated with locating record sources in America.
  - b. Study the history and culture of Jewry and note particularly Jewish naming customs and migrations as they might relate to your own ethnic background.
  - c. Learn of the available reference sources peculiar to Jewish research, such as guidebooks, encyclopedias, periodicals, family histories and special bibliographies.
  - d. Acquire knowledge of the major Jewish libraries in the country, i.e., the main subject holdings, size of collection, accessibility of materials, access tools for locating genealogical information, special services, their address, and determine whether or not the Genealogical Society has similar materials on microfilm.

JEWISH GENEALOGY  
GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS (cont'd)

- e. Consult with professionals when necessary.
- f. If applicable, learn Hebrew.
- g. Subscribe to Toledot.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

1. The DIASPORA - Diaspora is a Greek word meaning "dispersion", which has been applied since classical times to the Jewish settlements outside of Palestine. The existence of such Jewish groups goes back to the close of the First Temple period. The Jews were scattered at the time of the overthrow of the Kingdom of Judah into approximately 127 provinces of the Persian Empire. (The Standard Jewish Encyclopedia, 1959 ed., p. 556)
2. Two Major Ethnic Groups:

- a. SEPHARDIC - These are the Spanish-Portugese Jews who were named after the Asiatic region of Sepharad which was located north of Palestine where they initially settled. This group moved into Spain and in the Middle Ages was given the name of Sephardi. Those that were expelled from Spain in 1492 during the Inquisition were officially known as Sephardi.

They then settled on the coasts of North Africa (Morocco), some in Egypt, Palestine, Syria, the Balkans, Salonica, and Constantinople (Northern and Eastern Europe). Many refugees also went to England and Holland from Portugal.

The so-called Oriental Jews are usually grouped with the Sephardic because of the similar characteristics. The Sephardim have darker complexions than the Ashkenazim. They speak Judeo-Spanish known as Ladino. They use the pronunciations of ancient Judea, which is the official dialect of modern Israel.

The earlier traditions of the middle ages have dwindled considerably so as to minimize the relative importance of the ethnic group. The earliest Jewish settlements in America were made by the Sephardim in 1654.

It is estimated that there are approximately 1,000,000 Sephardic Jews in the world today. Characteristically, this group of Jews generally mark their graves with flat horizontal stones rather than vertical or upright stones as do the Ashkenazim.

- b. ASHKENAZIC - These are the German-Polish Jews who came from Babylonia and Mesopotamia by way of Southern Russia and settled in Germany, Poland and other parts of eastern Europe during the Middle Ages. The Ashkenazic generally include all Jews of European origin and customs and hence Western Jewry with the exception of the small Spanish-Portugese Sephardic groups.

## JEWISH GENEALOGY HISTORICAL BACKGROUND (cont'd)

"These two main divisions of world Jewry have persisted to the present. Despite the generally successful attempt to weld the State of Israel into one cohesive national entity, the present population is still divided into these two well-defined groups, the ASHKENAZIM from Europe and the countries of Western civilization and the SEPHARDIM from the countries of the Orient and Northern Africa, and the difference is marked in such spheres as religious customs, Hebrew pronunciation, and synagogal cantillation." (The Encyclopedia of the Jewish Religion, 1966, by Dr. R. J. Zwi Werblowsky and Dr. Geoffrey Wigoder, p. 45).

Before 1933 the Ashkenazic constituted approximately nine-tenths of the Jewish population (15,000,000 out of 16,500,000). The Holocaust of 1939-45 lowered it to 9,500,000 out of 11,500,000.

### THE HEBREW CALENDAR

"The Hebrew calendar was probably designed by the patriarch Hillel II in the fourth century C.E. He calculated the age of the world by computing literal ages of Biblical characters and other chronological references in the Scriptures and came up with a calendar that began 3,760 years before the Christian calendar.

"Thus, to translate Hebrew dates to Christian-era dates, subtract 3,760 from the Hebrew date. To translate Christian to Hebrew, add 3,760. The Christian year 1977, for example is the Hebrew year 5737. Since the Hebrew year begins in the preceding September or October, the dates listed for the months of Tishri, Heshvan, Kislev and sometimes Tebet must be read in the Christian calendar as applying to the preceding year. In other words, for those months, subtract 3,761 from the Hebrew year to arrive at the Christian year. (The terms B.C.E. and C.E. are the Jewish variations of B.C. and A.D. respectively. B.C.E. stands for "before Common Era," and C.E. stands for "Common Era." They are simply the form Jews use for referring to dates in the Christian calendar without using the name of Christ.)

*Historical Dept. Library.*

"The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia has a perpetual Hebrew-Christian calendar covering the Christian years 1800-2000. The Encyclopedia Judaica has a perpetual calendar covering 1900 to 2000. These enable you to translate precise Hebrew dates into precise Christian dates. The Jewish Encyclopedia provides a formula for converting any precise Hebrew date into a precise Christian date; see its article on Calendars." (from Dan Rottenberg's Finding Our Fathers: A Guidebook to Jewish Genealogy, p. 46). Ref 940 D25r

### FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS AND CUSTOMS

Culturally, and partly out of necessity, Jews have married close relatives. First cousin marriages were common and legal among the Jews. In the past, marriages were also common between uncles and nieces, and aunts and nephews. Such marriage unions were more common among Sephardic Jews than among the Ashkenazic. These types of marriages simplify genealogical research to some degree in that fewer direct lines need to be traced. However, calculating unsuspecting relationships may prove to be perplexing.

JEWISH GENEALOGY  
FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS AND CUSTOMS (cont'd)

Up to about 1900 it was common for Jews to marry early. Although not customary, marriages of young men occurred between the ages of 15 and 18 and young women between 14 and 18. Some marriages occurred at an earlier age but the newlyweds did not live together until the middle or late teens.

The Jews believe in the divine injunction to "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth." Birth control practices were shunned. Because their culture espoused words of wisdom regarding good personal hygiene and the eating of certain foods, the infant mortality rates have been relatively low. However, the mortality rate from persecutions has impeded the normal expected growth rate of Jewish populations.

JEWISH ONOMATOLOGY (Naming Customs)

1. Prefixes - The term "Ben" in Hebrew means "son of" which is a literal reference to the blood father. The term "Bat" means "daughter of" which is a literal reference to the blood father. Example: Isaiah Ben Elijah is translated as Isaiah the son of Elijah.

In Arabic the term "Ibn" or "aben" means "son of" and is often associated with the name of some early ancestor. Example: The Ibn Ezra Family, theoretically can trace its genealogy to the Biblical Ezra, the scribe.

2. Name of Children - The Ashkenazic and Sephardic, as with many cultural groups, name their children after their ancestors. Historically, the Jews have given their children two names, a religious name which is used in the synagogue and a secular name (non-Jewish) which is used in everyday life. The non-Jewish names were generally Christian names which conformed to the naming traditions of the Gentile community.
3. Family Surnames - For many centuries back through time it was optional among the Jews whether or not to assume a family surname. It was not until the early 1800's that most Jewish families were encouraged and in some instances forced by the civic governments to be identified with a family surname.

Under the Edict of Toleration in 1781, Emperor Joseph II of Austria was the first to require Jews to have family surnames. Many emperors followed suit shortly thereafter, Napoleon in 1808, Prussia in 1812, Russia 1804 and 1835. Depending on the emperor and location, some Jews were forced to give up so-called Christian names, and others could not use names of locations or names of famous families, while on the other hand, some were permitted to use place names and Christian names.

As with most popular surnames today, Jewish names can also be traced to occupations, descriptions of family characteristics, local place names, patronymics, and family symbols. Some unusual sources for Jewish names have come from animals and acronyms.

**JEWISH GENEALOGY**  
**JEWISH ONOMATOLOGY (cont'd)**

4. Onomatology - The study of the origin of names (forenames and surnames) is known as onomatology. With respect to Jewish onomatology the following interesting naming customs can be studied for background and pleasure: naming after ancestors, peculiar naming customs of the Sephardic and Ashkenazic, use of Biblical names, modern naming customs, translations of names, sources of names i.e., patronymics, place names, vocation or occupational, etc., telescoped names, apheresis, apocopation and diminutives, agglutinations, double names, unusual spellings, invented names, etc.

**JEWISH LIBRARIES**  
**for**  
**GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH**

**JUDAICA LIBRARIES (Top Ten)**

	<u>Judaica volumes*</u>
YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, 1048 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10028. . . . .	300,000
Klau Library, Hebrew Union College, 3101 Clifton Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio 45220. . . . .	250,000
Jewish Theological Seminary, 3080 Broadway, New York, New York 10027. . . . .	200,000
Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138. . . . .	150,000
Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540 . . . . .	150,000
Jewish Division, New York Public Library, Fifth Avenue and 42nd Street, New York, New York 10018 . . . . .	135,000
Yeshiva University, Mendel Gottesman Library of Judaica and Hebraica and Archives, Amsterdam Avenue and 185th Street, New York, New York 10033. . . . .	100,000
University of California at Los Angeles, 405 Hilgard Avenue, Los Angeles, California 90024 . . . . .	90,000
Hebrew Union College, Jewish Institute of Religion, 40 West 68th Street, New York, New York 10023. . . . .	90,000
Brandeis University, Waltham, Massachusetts 02154 . . . . .	78,000

\* Estimates are from the **American Jewish Yearbook**

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**PUBLIC AND PRIVATE LIBRARIES (Top Ten)**

- The Genealogical Department Library of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 50 East North Temple, Salt Lake City, Utah 84150
- Local History and Genealogy Division of the New York Public Library, Fifth Avenue and 42nd Street, New York, New York 10018
- The Genealogy Room of the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540
- Boston Public Library, Copley Square, Boston, Massachusetts 02117

JEWISH GENEALOGY  
PUBLIC AND PRIVATE LIBRARIES (cont'd)

The New England Historic Genealogical Society Library, 101 Newbury Street,  
Boston, Massachusetts 02116

The Newberry Library, 60 West Walton, Chicago, Illinois 60610

The Los Angeles Public Library, 320 West Temple Street (mailing address Box 111),  
Los Angeles, California 90053

The Virginia State Library, Capitol Street, Richmond, Virginia 23219

The Indiana State Library, 140 Senate Avenue, Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

The Pennsylvania State Library, Walnut Street and Commonwealth Avenue, (mailing  
address is Box 1601), Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17126

JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETIES

Jewish Historical Society of Southern  
California  
6505 Wilshire Blvd.  
Los Angeles, California 90048

Jewish Historical Society of New  
Haven  
1156 Chapel Street  
New Haven, Connecticut 06511

Jewish Historical Society of Greater  
Hartford  
335 Bloomfield Avenue  
West Hartford, Connecticut 06117

Jewish Historical Society of  
Delaware  
204 Hitching Post Drive  
Wilmington, Delaware 19803

Jewish Historical Association of  
Southern Florida  
4200 Biscayne Blvd.  
Miami, Florida 33137

Jewish Historical Society of  
Indiana  
215 E. Berry Street  
Ft. Wayne, Indiana 46892

Jewish Historical Society of  
Annapolis  
24 Romar Street  
Annapolis, Maryland 21403

Jewish Historical Society of New  
York  
1 West 70th Street  
New York, New York 10023

Columbus Jewish History Project  
Ohio Historical Society  
1-71 and 17th Avenue  
Columbus, Ohio 43211

Oregon Jewish Historical Society  
c/o Oregon Jewish Oral History  
and Archives Project  
6651 S.W. Capitol Highway  
Portland, Oregon 97219

Rhode Island Jewish Historical  
Assn.  
130 Sessions Street  
Providence, Rhode Island 02906

Jewish Historical Society of Greater  
Washington  
4501 Connecticut Avenue N.W., Apt. 807  
Washington, D.C. 20005

Southern Jewish Historical Society  
c/o Congregation Beth Ahadah  
1111 W. Franklin Avenue  
Richmond, Virginia 23220

Jewish Archives Project  
University of Washington Libraries  
Manuscript Collection  
Seattle, Washington 98195

**JEWISH GENEALOGY**  
**JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETIES (cont'd)**

Jewish Historical Society of  
Maryland  
5800 Park Heights Avenue  
Baltimore, Maryland 21215

Jewish Historical Society of  
Michigan  
163 Madison Avenue  
Detroit, Michigan 48226

Wisconsin Jewish Archives  
State Historical Society of  
Wisconsin  
816 State Street  
Madison, Wisconsin 53706

Jewish Historical Society of  
Trenton  
999 Lower Ferry Road  
Box 7249  
Trenton, New Jersey 08628

**JEWISH AGENCIES AND INFORMATION**

1. For early American Jewry consult Malcolm H. Stern, author of **Americans of Jewish Descent**. Rabbi Malcolm H. Stern, Central Conference of American Rabbis, 790 Madison Avenue, New York, New York 10021.

2. Jewish Genealogical Newsletters:

Toledot: The Journal of Jewish Genealogy

Published by Toledot Press, 808 West End Avenue, Suite 1006, New York, New York 10025. \$8.00/year Vol. 1 began in 1977. Publishes book reviews, articles on naturalization records, Jewish names and source material and acquisitions of the Genealogical Society in Salt Lake City, Utah. Low-level, informative and a must for the would-be Jewish researcher.

Jewish Historical Society of Canada Journal

Published by the Jewish Historical Society of Canada. Subscriptions should be sent to Canadian Jewish Congress, c/o Congregation Beth El, 2525 Mark Avenue, Windsor, Ontario N9E 2W2. \$6.00/year Vol 1 began in 1977. This is a scholarly publication which contains extracts and articles from professionals delivered at Laval University. Good references are noted plus excellent illustrations.

3. For Czechoslovakian Jews, consult the Society for the History of Czechoslovakian Jews, 25 Mayhew Avenue, Larchmont, New York 10538.
4. For Hungarian Jews, consult the Work Federation of Hungarian Jews, 136 East 39th Street, New York, New York 10016.
5. For locating Jewish communities, which are known as LANDMANSHAFTEN societies, consult local telephone directories. The YIVO Institute for Jewish Research (1048 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10028) also serves as a good source of information.
6. For immigrations after 1911, consult with HIAS (Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society) 200 Park Avenue South, New York, New York 10003.
7. For tracing missing Jews, consult the following: \*
  - a. "Search and Location Department" United HIAS Service, 200 Park Avenue South, New York, New York 10003.

JEWISH GENEALOGY

JEWISH AGENCIES AND INFORMATION (cont'd)

- b. Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Memorial in Israel (Har Hazikaron, P.O. Box 84, Jerusalem), provides a service that registers Holocaust victims who were either killed during World War II or are thought to be living somewhere in the world. It has lists of people who came from Europe to Israel after the war, and in some cases addresses.
  - c. The International Tracing Service in Arolsen, West Germany, specializes in tracing Holocaust survivors. It is the best of such tracing organizations, and has millions of names on file. Most of its records are also available at Yad Vashem in Israel.
  - d. The Jewish Agency has a section that traces missing relatives in Israel. Its address: Missing Relatives Department, P.O. Box 92, Jerusalem.
  - e. Americans and Canadians Aliyah (53A Hayarkon Street, Tel Aviv, Israel) also traces missing relatives in Israel.
- \* Dan Rottenberg's Finding Our Fathers, p. 82-83

## JEWISH MIGRATION AND SETTLEMENT IN THE UNITED STATES, 1654-1860

Colleen Gwynn\*

Jews in the New World go back to the days of the man who proved the world was round—Christopher Columbus. Though some people have set aside the theory that he was of Spanish-Jewish origin, it is known that Luis de Santangel who helped finance Columbus' first voyage was a Jew and so were members of that crew.<sup>1</sup> Thus was their beginning—it had occurred! Some years would pass before there would be others.

Mass migrations of Jewish people in the Colonial period are not heard of, and for good reason; few came with a family—most were young and unmarried. During this time period only two landings are considered as having a significant number of people. The first was to New Amsterdam in 1654 with twenty-three people aboard, and the other not until 1733 when less than 100 arrived in Savannah, Georgia. It would not be until the 1880s that real mass movements of Jewish people would begin.<sup>2</sup>

Most Jews coming to America prior to 1720 were of Spanish-Portuguese stock—the European Sephardim—from Holland, England, and their Caribbean extensions, and also Italy. There were very few who came directly from the Iberian Peninsula. Ethnically and ritually those immigrants afterward were of Ashkenazic “stock” meaning that their ancestors were originally from Central and Eastern Europe, and that “they or their parents spoke Yiddish, a German dialect.”<sup>3</sup>

Most Jews who came to British North America sailed from British ports, usually London. Therefore, England outstripped any other land in providing Jewish immigrants. Though sailing from England, it must be realized that Jews from Eastern Europe had been migrating into England for some years prior to migration to the New World, so not all who came were “native” to England.<sup>4</sup> For the genealogist, this is a key point to remember.

A prominent author of Jewish history, Jacob R. Marcus, stated, “The motivation that determined Jewish settlement was not a greater or lesser degree of religious tolerance or freedom, but rather economic advantage. Weak in capital, but strong in ambition,” the largest number of Jewish immigrants who sailed to America were “economically venturesome businessmen.”<sup>5</sup>

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Farming was not a natural ability for them, though there were a few Jewish plantation owners in the South, but by and large they were urban people” who “typically hugged the fringes of the tidewater.”<sup>7</sup> It should be noted here that because of their commercial activities they moved about frequently during the colonial period—not by choice, but rather by the very nature of their daily work. Also for those who desired to maintain their religious interests, it was necessary to remain as near a Jewish community as possible.<sup>8</sup>

There were some defections, especially those isolated in the inland posts. Those who married Christian wives lost their children to the faith of the mother—their children were raised as Christians not as Jews.<sup>9</sup>

Unlike other immigrants, Jewish people came with several languages: Portuguese, Spanish, German, and Yiddish. Hebrew was never a language they used in common, it was for sacred purposes. Those who arrived in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries struggled to acquire the dominant tongue, but in their homes and among themselves, they used the mother tongue.<sup>10</sup>

It has been said that in counting Jews among the total population studies, the good Jewish names could not always be determined without some difficulty. The whole business of Jewish names is quite confusing since there was a definite tendency on the part of the immigrants to drop their Spanish and their German Jewish names while in England thus appropriating English names. Thus in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, we find them using “Phillips, Brown, Rice, Hays, Henry, Laney, Simpson, Jones. . . .”<sup>11</sup> Also as was common among all people at that time, a man in writing a document might spell his name several different ways.<sup>12</sup>

“Almost always the acquisition of a graveyard has been the first step in the founding of a new Jewish community . . . [in] Newport the cemetery deed furnishes . . . evidence—the names of the two Jews who acquired a tract of land for burial purposes. . . .”<sup>13</sup> Goodman goes on to say, “The cemetery, by the way, has become a famous landmark of Newport, and its dead have been immortalized in a poem by Longfellow.”<sup>14</sup> The cemetery was first but the synagogue came later, sometimes many years later. Whether or not their tradition of “burying their dead within twenty-four hours”<sup>15</sup> of their death had anything to do with it, I have not determined.

These “unsung, unremembered”<sup>16</sup> people “survived as Jews and became Americans, ceasing to be German, Spaniards, Poles and Britons.”<sup>17</sup> As our “‘America, the Melting Pot’ . . . implies . . . we are a nation of many nationalities, from each other in tradition, background, customs and in some instances in outward appearance.”<sup>18</sup> Though minor in numbers in those formative

years, if one is interested in the imprint of the Jew of that time, he needs only to be diligent in the pursuit.

#### *Settlements*

*New Amsterdam—New York:* The Hudson River September 1654—Brazilian-Dutch-Jewish refugees landed in New Amsterdam and held religious services there long before the majority of Protestant sects had established themselves in this country.<sup>19</sup> There were twenty-three in this group, and “whether the coming of these men was carefully planned or was accidental” is not known, but it was “one phase of the steady movement of Jewish emigration from the East toward the West.”<sup>20</sup> These new arrivals were described as “healthy but poor”<sup>21</sup>—so poor that they could not pay their passage and were taken to court by the Ship’s Captain. The court ruled that their possessions should be taken for payment, but even that did not satisfy the bill, so two were to be held in jail as sureties until the bill was paid.<sup>22</sup> It can be said: the Jews were not welcomed.

Peter Stuyvesant’s solution was that they must go. And though the order was out, no note is found that it was carried out. Soon another group came from Holland—the Municipal Court declared they must go. However aggravating it was to the community, the Jews were still not expelled. There were those who maintained the Jew’s greed and religion would damage others of the community spiritually and economically.<sup>23</sup> Though they were not granted the right to establish a synagogue, a “special burial ground was set aside for their dead.”<sup>24</sup>

In New Amsterdam the Jews were forbidden to purchase homes, practice a craft, sell retail or trade with outlying settlements and the Indians. They were also not to stand guard in the militia, hold public religious meetings, hold public office nor to vote.<sup>25</sup> The reader might well ask, “What was there left to do?” There is, however, in court records evidence of active commercial domestic trade.<sup>26</sup>

As indicated above, though they were not allowed or called on for military duty in 1655, males ages 16-60 exempted from such duty were taxed, which the poor could not afford.<sup>27</sup> The last of what might be called “medieval restrictions”<sup>28</sup> was that the Jews were denied citizenship.

In 1685 they were still refused the right to public worship and without a synagogue they continued to worship in their homes as they had from the time of their arrival in New Amsterdam. The year 1695 did bring a change for them—a synagogue, one of the first in the English Colonies. Though they had been under English rule since 1664, New Amsterdam at that time became New York, their overall situation had not changed that much. It was not until 1784 that the congregation was permitted to incorporate.<sup>29</sup>

It is important for the genealogist to know that the Revolutionary War disrupted the community in New York.<sup>30</sup> Also “most of the Jewish businessmen who settled in the villages of Long Island and Connecticut had originally come from the Jewish metropolis on the Hudson.”<sup>31</sup>

*Georgia:* Though not presented in its time sequence of settlement, Georgia was the area which received in 1733 the other migration group noted as largest in number prior to the 1880s. Though Georgia originally hoped to maintain a Protestant Colony, the Jews were, in the beginning, only “grudgingly tolerated.”<sup>32</sup> But by 1735 there were more foreigners than British—a “motley colony”—a Noah’s Ark of English, Germans, Irish, Salzburgers, Moravians, Scotch Highlanders, and Catholics. So Jews were not noticed too much, and Georgia’s governor had welcomed them. They had all started out as farmers, but within a year or two of their arrival, a number of the Jews had switched to shopkeeping and the coastal trade. In Georgia, they were accorded civil rights and served in the militia.<sup>33</sup> But in 1740, difficulties in Georgia caused the early settlers to leave. Of those who left, South Carolina, New York, and Pennsylvania were the states they generally departed to. Then again in 1750, the Jews were returning to Georgia.<sup>34</sup>

The genealogist should be aware that the majority of Jews who came into Georgia were of the “Spanish Portuguese” stock.

*Newport, Rhode Island:* It was the “largest and busiest harbor” in the country; a natural for the Jews. Tradition has them there in the 1650s and it is known that in 1677 they had purchased land for a cemetery. Their origin, probably, Barbadians. When Newport Jewry disbanded in 1685, some went to New York.<sup>35</sup> It did, however, grow again.

Without taking the oath of allegiance, they could not vote or hold office, though they did enjoy “equal economic opportunity and freedom of worship.” Naturalization of two Jews was refused to 1762 so one went to Massachusetts and the other to New York for a period of time.<sup>36</sup>

In 1776 Newport was captured by the British which caused the community of Jews to go into exile—many of the refugees went to Leicester, Massachusetts. Some returned after the war, but many of the merchants had settled in New York with others going to Philadelphia, Charleston, and Savannah.<sup>37</sup> It has been suggested by Marcus, perhaps the creation of a congregation was what attracted other Jews to settle in Newport—some who might otherwise have settled in Boston.<sup>38</sup>

It is interesting to note here that “Sentiment caused the descendants of many of the original families to direct that their remains should be buried in the old cemetery, where entombments show interments during the entire period down to 1855.”<sup>39</sup>

*Pennsylvania:* Jewish traders arrived and settled in South-eastern Pennsylvania before Penn’s arrival in 1682.<sup>40</sup> Geograph-

ically, Jewish groups established settlements in Easton, Lancaster, Reading, and Philadelphia. A survey conducted in Easton revealed the following occupations: "Clerk of Court, Lawyer, Carpenter, Smith, Ferryman, two Tavern Keepers, Baker, Butcher, Mason, and Shopkeeper."<sup>41</sup> Heidelberg and other villages and townships by 1750 were also residences for "isolated families, or groups." They could be found as far west as the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Lancaster had a little community and a cemetery.<sup>42</sup>

Goodman relates the following:

"An old newspaper account describes the celebration of Independence Day in Philadelphia when the Constitutional Convention was gathered there in 1787. Because of the import of the day and the prominence of the delegates assembled, a special observance was in order. Accordingly, a great parade was organized, and the committee on arrangements noted that this was the first time Philadelphia had seen "the Clergy of different Christian demoninations with the Rabbi of the Jews, walking arm in arm."<sup>43</sup>

**Maryland:** Historically each colony determined its policies concerning the Non-Conformist and alien. Therefore, during this period of history, the Jews' legal status varied from colony to colony. Briefly, according to law, Jewish residents in Maryland were without civil rights, though in practice they were allowed a number of undefined privileges. Because of this many Jews tended to avoid Maryland as a place of settlement. Though allowed freedom of worship in North Carolina, they were disqualified as office holders. Because of religious freedom in New Jersey, freedom was granted to all except papists, few Jews settled there.<sup>44</sup>

Though previously defeated in 1819, the Jew Bill did pass in 1826—blotting out "forever the stain upon Maryland's Constitution." Prior to that time Jews had been denied the rights of citizenship.<sup>45</sup>

**North Carolina:** Though Colonial and Revolutionary North Carolina did not give "political and religious liberties" to the Jews, it really was not the total reason for their lack of interest in the area. A better evaluation would be that the "coast was bad, proprietors were negligent, the government inadequate, and pirates abounded . . . problems of land holding . . . few markets and towns . . ." but "by middle of the eighteenth century individual Jews were found scattered in the principal towns."<sup>46</sup>

1665 was the earliest date for Jews in North Carolina. Some people came as refugees from Barbados. In the very early days of the colony Jews found or had business connections with relatives in the Carolinas which perhaps is the reason for the fol-

lowing: "A resident of New York . . . about to set out to sea, makes his will in South Carolina."<sup>47</sup>

**South Carolina:** Individual Jews came to Charleston as early as 1695. But it was not until 1730-1740 that Jewish settlers of any number began to arrive. It was not an area of rapid growth and expansion.<sup>48</sup> "Although German or Ashkenazic Jews were in the minority in Charleston, they were by no means less important . . ." "Many years later history would indicate that in the South, Charleston had "sheltered the largest Jewish Community."<sup>49</sup>

**Virginia:** Though individual Jews moved in and out, the oldest and most populous colony, Virginia, was the last to establish an organized Jewish community, the first being at Richmond after the Revolutionary War.<sup>51</sup> Many years later, the Germans would establish another in 1839 and those from Poland another in 1856.<sup>52</sup>

**Other places to note:** ". . . new centers of Jewish life . . . by 1860 had sprung up across the continent." New York being the port of entry, accounted for 40,000 and Philadelphia 20,000. The communities of Charleston and Savannah showed no such growth. Boston, Massachusetts 1842; in New York—Albany, Syracuse, Rochester, and Buffalo; New Haven and Hartford in Connecticut in 1840s; New Jersey—Paterson late 1840s and Elizabeth 1857; Pennsylvania—Easton 1839, Pittsburgh 1846, Wilkes-Barre, Harrisburg, and the pre-revolutionary community of Lancaster had gone out of existence, but new area opened again in 1856; Maryland—Baltimore had two congregations in 1838 and others by 1853; North Carolina had a burial plot in 1852; South Carolina in addition to older settlement—Columbia in 1860; Georgia—in addition to older settlement, Augusta 1850, Columbus 1854, Macon 1859; Ohio Valley—Cincinnati in 1824, in 1839 Cleveland, and in 1840s arriving Germans formed another in Cincinnati, in 1860s Columbus, Dayton, and Akron; St. Louis in 1836 but these were not the first Jews to the area, earlier ones were so isolated that they had intermarried and were "lost to the faith"; Kentucky—Louisville in 1842 and those from Poland established another in 1856; Alabama—as early as 1785, but the first congregation was at Mobile in 1844 and Montgomery in 1852; Illinois as early as 1818, 1845 German immigrants have burial plot; Indiana—Fort Wayne, LaFayette, Evansville, in 1856 the first congregation in Indianapolis; Iowa: reported suffering an invasion in the first decade of statehood, those from Eastern Europe established one center and those from Germany another; Wisconsin—in Milwaukee "Forty eighters" arrived soon after 1848; Michigan—Detroit in 1850 and in the 1860s divided and formed another; California—San Francisco with ten congregations prior to Civil War, Sacramento one, and in the mining areas, a dozen appeared and vanished; Oregon—Portland

in 1858; and Texas—Houston, San Antonio, Galveston all prior to the Civil War, with individuals coming much earlier.<sup>53</sup>

*Summary:* A quick glance for the genealogist will somewhat summarize some of the above areas, "Though by 1820 eleven new states had been admitted, Vermont, Kentucky, Tennessee, Ohio, Louisiana, Indiana, Missouri, Illinois, Alabama, Maine, and Missouri no Jews were known to have been living there at that time.<sup>54</sup> Individuals might have, but not groups.

An additional step back in time: 1790 following the Revolution, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Connecticut had only scattered families, and Delaware, New Jersey, Maryland, and North Carolina also did not have Jewish communities—each had only a "very few," a "handful" or "scattered families."<sup>55</sup>

Jewish migration effects upon populations summarized below:

1820	estimated	4,000	Jews in country
1850	"	50,000	" " "
1860	"	150,000	" " "

It is estimated that between 1850-1860 two million migrants flowed into the United States and that the Jewish people represented only 5 percent of that total.<sup>56</sup> Their movement within the United States was reflected in the various places noted under that paragraph heading.

*Source Materials:* The genealogist should be aware that though the records are "not complete"—those available indicate Jews were naturalized in the following colonies: Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, and possibly Maryland.<sup>57</sup>

Marcus states, "Printed sources dealing with Jews of the colonial and early national days are by no means plentiful. Letters . . . supplement the printed documentary data . . . and are a prime source of information." Though not always available because they " . . . no longer exist—or we cannot find them. Furthermore, few have been published, and there is no union list of manuscripts."<sup>58</sup>

Recent strides continue to be made in this area, Dan Rotenberg's book, *Finding Our Fathers: A Guidebook to Jewish Genealogy* is an excellent reference tool for how-to-do and where-to-find. He has noted libraries and historical societies in the United States and Abroad. He also indicates, Malcom H. Stern's book, *Americans of Jewish Descent* is being updated and corrected.<sup>59</sup> It should not be overlooked, as it is a very valuable source.

Another excellent source which should be included and has a background to its compilation and printing is Simon Wolf's book, *The American Jew as Patriot, Soldier, and Citizen*. As genealogists we need to be aware of the effort and dedication of others who made and continue to make available records which would otherwise be lost or destroyed. It is in appreciation for

individuals everywhere who have been so dedicated and selfless that I share the story which generated Simon Wolf's book.

A printed letter in 1891 in the *North American Review* regarding the services of American Jewish citizens as soldiers in the Civil War caught his attention:

. . . I cannot remember meeting one Jew in uniform, or hearing of any Jewish soldier . . . and after . . . twenty-five years . . . (of) traveling . . . among old soldiers . . . I have never found any who remembered serving with Jews. . . . If so many Jews fought so bravely for their adopted country, surely their champion ought to be able to give names of the regiments they condescended to accept service in. . . .<sup>60</sup>

Upon reading the above letter, Wolf states, " . . . I determined to give to the world, as complete as I might find possible, a list of American citizens of Jewish faith who had 'stood shoulder to shoulder on the field of battle.'<sup>61</sup> He originally started with the intent that it would take "no more than six months" to compile the material—but the project took four years of continuous work to complete. In conclusion, he states of his work, "It is now conclusively shown that the enlistment of Jewish soldiers, north and south, reached proportions considerably in excess of their ratio to the general population."<sup>62</sup>

If we only had more in the world so interested in preserving some portion of the heritage that is theirs. I am grateful for Simon Wolf and others past and present for contributions that continue to live so many years after, opening doors which otherwise would not have opened to us.

The following thoughts expressed by Peter Wiernik in his preface appropriately summarizes a fact not thoroughly understood by many:

Where we thrive we take root. . . . The earliest problems of Jews in a new country is not how to make a living, but how to escape being completely absorbed by the native population. The history of the Jews in a locality therefore begins with the effort to strengthen Judaism to organize communal life to achieve a lasting adjustment as Jews. . . . The continuity of our identity as a religious community. Local history really begins with the formation of a congregation.<sup>63</sup>

If the genealogist can grasp this concept, especially as it relates to Jewish migration and settlement in the United States, tracing the whereabouts of the Jewish family might be somewhat easier.

CITIES IN 1860 WITH JEWISH COMMUNITIES<sup>64</sup>

Akron, Ohio	LaFayette, Illinois
Albany, New York	Lancaster, Pennsylvania
Augusta, Georgia	Louisville, Kentucky
Baltimore, Maryland	Macon, Georgia
Boston, Massachusetts	Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Buffalo, New York	Mobile, Alabama
Chicago, Illinois	New Haven, Connecticut
Cincinnati, Ohio	New Orleans, Louisiana
Cleveland, Ohio	New York City, New York
Columbia, South Carolina	Paterson, New Jersey
Columbus, Georgia	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Columbus, Ohio	Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
Dayton, Ohio	Portland, Oregon
Elizabeth, New Jersey	Richmond, Virginia
Evansville, Indiana	Rochester, New York
Fort Wayne, Indiana	St. Louis, Missouri
Galveston, Texas	Sacramento, California
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania	San Antonio, Texas
Hartford, Connecticut	San Francisco, California
Houston, Texas	Savannah, Georgia
Indianapolis, Indiana	Syracuse, New York
Keokuk, Iowa	Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania

FOOTNOTES

- <sup>1</sup>Jacob R. Marcus, *Early American Jewry* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1951), Vol. 1, p. ix.
- <sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 380, 392.
- <sup>3</sup>Jacob R. Marcus, *Early American Jewry* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1955), Vol. 2, pp. 256, 258, 390-91. See also Vol. 1.
- <sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 261.
- <sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 388, 391.
- <sup>6</sup>Rufus Lears, *The Jews in America: A History* (New York: KTAV Publishing House, 1972), pp. 34-35.
- <sup>7</sup>Jacob R. Marcus, *The Colonial American Jew, 1492-1776* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1970), Vol. 1, p. 292.
- <sup>8</sup>Marcus, *Early*, Vol. 2, pp. 393, 396.
- <sup>9</sup>Lears, *The Jews*, p. 38.
- <sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 37.
- <sup>11</sup>Marcus, *Early*, Vol. 2, pp. 249, 392.
- <sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, p. xv.
- <sup>13</sup>Abram Vossen Goodman, *American Overture* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1947), p. 38.
- <sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*
- <sup>15</sup>Marcus, *Colonial*, Vol. 1, 292.
- <sup>16</sup>Anita Libman Lebeson, *Pilgrim People* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1950), p. xii.
- <sup>17</sup>Marcus, *Early*, Vol. 2, p. 508.
- <sup>18</sup>*The Jews in American Life*, Edited by Rachel Davis-Dubois and Emma Schweppe (New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1935), p. 13.
- <sup>19</sup>Marcus, *Early*, Vol. 1, p. ix.
- <sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 22.
- <sup>21</sup>Goodman, *American*, pp. 74, 76.
- <sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*
- <sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 77, 79-80.
- <sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 85.
- <sup>25</sup>Marcus, *Early*, Vol. 2, pp. 34-42.
- <sup>26</sup>Goodman, *American*, p. 90.

- <sup>27</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 87.
- <sup>28</sup>Marcus, *Early*, Vol. 2, p. 42.
- <sup>29</sup>Goodman, *American*, pp. 96, 102, 104, 105.
- <sup>30</sup>Lears, *The Jews*, p. 42.
- <sup>31</sup>Marcus, *Colonial*, Vol. 2, p. 578.
- <sup>32</sup>Marcus, *Early*, Vol. 2, p. 387.
- <sup>33</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 285, 287.
- <sup>34</sup>Lebeson, pp. 107-9.
- <sup>35</sup>Marcus, *Early*, Vol. 2, p. 386 and *Colonial*, Vol. 1, p. 307.
- <sup>36</sup>Goodman, pp. 54-58.
- <sup>37</sup>Lears, p. 32.
- <sup>38</sup>Marcus, *Early*, Vol. 1, p. 117.
- <sup>39</sup>Peter Wiernik, *History of the Jews in America* (New York: Jewish History Publishing Company, 1931), p. 101.
- <sup>40</sup>Lears, p. 33.
- <sup>41</sup>Lebeson, p. 94.
- <sup>42</sup>Marcus, *Early*, Vol. 2, p. 5.
- <sup>43</sup>Goodman, p. 203.
- <sup>44</sup>Lebeson, pp. 119-20.
- <sup>45</sup>Joseph L. Blau and Salo W. Baron, *The Jews of the United States, 1790-1840: A Documentary History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963) pp. 45-55, 64.
- <sup>46</sup>Marcus, *Early*, Vol. 2, pp. 271-72.
- <sup>47</sup>Lebeson, p. 103.
- <sup>48</sup>Marcus, *Early*, Vol. 2, p. 386.
- <sup>49</sup>Lebeson, p. 107.
- <sup>50</sup>Marcus, *Early*, Vol. 2, p. 272.
- <sup>51</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 165, 188.
- <sup>52</sup>Lears, p. 68.
- <sup>53</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 66-75.
- <sup>54</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 53.
- <sup>55</sup>Marcus, *Early*, Vol. 2, pp. 519-20.
- <sup>56</sup>Lears, pp. 64-65.
- <sup>57</sup>Marcus, *Early*, Vol. 2, p. 516.
- <sup>58</sup>Marcus, *Early*, Vols. 1, 14, 15.
- <sup>59</sup>Dan Rottenberg, *Finding Our Fathers: A Guidebook to Jewish Genealogy* (New York: Random House, 1977).
- <sup>60</sup>Simon Wolf, *The American Jew as Patriot, Soldier, and Citizen* (Philadelphia: Levytype Co., 1895), p. 1.
- <sup>61</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 8.
- <sup>62</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 10.
- <sup>63</sup>Wiernik, pp. ix, x, xi.
- <sup>64</sup>Lears, pp. 70-71.

## JEWISH SYNAGOGUE RECORDS

### Minute Books

Some European synagogues and most American ones kept minutes of either congregational meetings or meetings of the board of trustees. These rarely date from the founding of the congregation, but only from the period when the community erected its synagogue. But synagogue fires often occurred or the secretaries frequently kept the records at home, so many of these are lost.

### Account Books

These share the history of the minute books. They may often be included among the minutes. The accounts are, of course, valuable for the lists of names they provide. They also may indicate how long a specific individual resided in that community, although the individual may not have been identified with the synagogue for the entire duration of his sojourn. A special type of account book is often kept in the Orthodox synagogue to conform to those traditions which prohibit the carrying of money on the Sabbath yet require the auctioning of ritual privileges in the synagogue during the Sabbath services. A book listing the entire membership of the congregation is provided with a series of tabs which can be bent or folded to indicate the amount of that individual's pledge.

### Communal or Congregational Histories

Most congregations on the occasion of a significant anniversary publish a history of the congregation or Jewish community. The majority of these are products of the last seventy-five years and they vary in value with the ability of the author to research the available source material and to create a scientific record.

### Birth and Circumcision Records

A few synagogues have maintained birth records. Our chief knowledge of births is derived from records kept by the ritual circumciser (Hebrew Mohel) who performed this "covenant of Abraham" on all Jewish males. Traditionally the operation is performed on the eighth day after birth unless the health of the child or the family's medical history indicated a delay. The infant's Hebrew name is given to him at this time and the record indicates also his father's Hebrew name. If one is fortunate, the record may also indicate the family name.

### Bar Mitzvah and Confirmation

Traditionally, at age thirteen the Jewish male is considered sufficiently adult to assume his ritual responsibilities in the synagogue. On the Sabbath nearest his thirteenth birthday, he demonstrates this by the ceremony of Bar Mitzvah (Hebrew Son of the Covenant) during which he reads a scriptural passage in Hebrew in the synagogue. In contemporary America, this ceremony has taken on much significance because of the social trappings which attend it and the periodic synagogue bulletin will list the name of the boys parents. In the mid-nineteenth century Reform Judaism introduced confirmation for both boys and girls, and conservative and Orthodox Judaism have adopted the custom for girls. This is a class ceremonial with the individual participants listed with their parents' names on a printed program, as well as in the synagogue bulletin announcing the confirmation. Unfortunately, little has been done about preserving either the synagogue bulletins or the confirmation programs at the local synagogue or in a national archive.

### Marriage Records

Some congregations have these. Sometimes, the officiating rabbi kept his

own record, but the preservation has been sporadic.

#### Death Records

A few congregations have kept death records. Those congregations which owned cemeteries often kept mortuary records. Most frequently, lists of dates of death are kept so that descendants can be reminded of the traditional obligation to recite the prayer for the dead on the anniversary of the death. In the more traditional synagogues, these memorial dates are kept according to the Hebrew calendar listing the day and the month, but not the year of the death. Unless the year can be ascertained from some other source, it is impossible to ascertain the Gregorian calendar equivalent of the date of death. Many synagogues have memorial tablets on the walls of the synagogue; on these interested relatives can upon payment of a donation or fee, have the name of the deceased inscribed. Sometimes the date of death also appears. In a few instances, history-minded individuals have made complete records of some of the older Jewish cemeteries.

## Memorial Books

A Memorial Book is a volume issued by the survivors of European towns from the smallest to the biggest, all about their home. There are well over 500 Memorial Books which have been published, representing over 600 towns, and in most cases they have been written and published by Landsmanschaften, which are organizations consisting of people from the same towns. For example, the book on Dobromil was published by the Dobromiler Society in New York and the Dobromiler Organization in Israel.

The Memorial Books, which are also known as Yizkor Books, deal with the history of the towns, the people who lived there, the fate of the town and its residents during the Holocaust, as well as other topics relating to the town. Often Memorial Books have a list of Holocaust victims from the town.

Most of the Memorial Books are listed in Yad Vashem Studies on the European Jewish Catastrophe and Resistance, IX, Jerusalem 1973. Most of the Books may be found at the Yivo Institute for Jewish Research, 86th Street and 5th Avenue, New York City; the New York Public Library Jewish Division and the Jewish Theological Seminary Library, 3080 Broadway, New York City.

In the period when surnames were adopted, popular Jewish names were chosen by many unrelated families. Thus, the more common a name, the less likely that those bearing it are related. To complicate matters, there are many cases in which brothers are known to have taken totally different last names. In other cases people adopted prestige names like Rothschild or Mendelssohn.

Because most Jewish names are derived from the spoken language of the area from which the families come it is often difficult to distinguish between Jewish and non-Jewish names. Many names are shared by Jews and German Christians (Mayer and Krauss) or by Jews and Poles (Kozłowski and Lewandowski). Sometimes the names, though sounding alike derive from different sources. Christian Meyers derive their name from an old word for dairy farmer or steward of an estate while Jewish Meyers derive their name from a Hebrew first name meaning bringer of light. The Jewish Cohen and Irish Cohan sound alike but are totally unrelated. Jacobson or Davidson may sound Jewish but are in fact common Scandinavian names, while the Jewish sounding name Alfred Rosenberg belonged to a leading Nazi war criminal.

The fact that Jewish and non-Jewish names were so hard to distinguish raised difficulties for the Nazis. In order to insure that they could tell the difference, they issued a law in 1938 requiring all Jews whose first name was not on their list of typically Jewish names to take the middle name of Israel or Sara.

# Jews In Early America

by Janice Mendenhall Regenstein  
3303 Cleveland Ave.  
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Many Americans have assumed that it is difficult if not impossible to trace their ancestry because their ancestors came over in the last century, and most of the Jewish records were destroyed when the European synagogues were burned during World War II. While many records were indeed destroyed, there are still vast holdings of Jewish genealogical materials in existence. Some Jews, upon researching their genealogy, will be surprised to find that their ancestors helped to found America.

There were Sephardic Jews (of Spanish-Portuguese descent) in North America as early as 1654. From then until about 1825 the first large wave of Jewish immigration took place, with increasing numbers of German Jews coming over. A still larger influx of European, especially German, Jews followed this until, in 1880, there were 280,000 Jews in the U. S. By 1925, the vast immigration from Eastern Europe, inspired by economic hardship and religious persecution, had increased the American Jewish population to four and a half million.

A fascinating exhibit on the important role that Jews played in the early days of America - shaping colonial society, fighting for the American Revolution, and helping to build our new nation - was on display last year at the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) Museum in Washington, D.C. Former President Gerald R. Ford dedicated the exhibit, entitled "The Jewish Community in Early America: 1654-1830."

Cartographer John Speed's "Map of the World, 1651" accompanied a description tracing the migrations of large numbers of Jews in the 15th to the 17th centuries. In the Middle Ages, the Catholic Church had forced the conversion of many non-Christians. This became a particular problem in Iberia (Spain), which had a large population of Moors and Jews. In 1492, the same year that

Christopher Columbus set sail for the new world, King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella expelled Jews who would not convert to Christianity, 150,000 in number. Many of them went to Portugal, then on to Holland, England, and Recife, Brazil. In 1654, when the Dutch lost control of Brazil to the Portuguese, many Jews left Recife to go to Holland. One of the ships eventually landed at New Amsterdam (now New York City).

One of the original 23 Jewish arrivals in America, Asser Levy was the only Jew in America to sign the oath of allegiance to the Crown of England when Britain gained control of New Amsterdam from the Dutch in 1664. He requested burgher rights (citizenship), which were granted. The inventory of his estate at the time of his death in 1682 forms an interesting record of the furnishings in a prosperous household of that day.

In July of 1655, the Jews in New York petitioned for a community burial ground. The request was not granted until Feb. 1656, when they were given "a little hook of land situate (sic) outside of this city." Records of the location of this first cemetery have been lost, but the second cemetery still stands on St. James Place off Chatham Square. The first reported burial there was of Benjamin Bueno de Mesquita in 1683, whose tombstone still stands today and was pictured in the exhibit.

The **DAR Patriot Index** of Revolutionary heroes and heroines lists over a dozen Jewish American Revolutionary soldiers. For instance, over 75 DAR members have joined by tracing their ancestry directly back to Marks Lazarus (1756-1835) of Charleston, South Carolina, a Private and a Sergeant Major at the sieges of Charleston and Savannah (and my husband's great - great - great grandfather). Another patriot, Haym Salomon, Polish by birth, opened a brokerage and commission merchant's busi-

ness. Included in the exhibit was a 1783 Philadelphia newspaper wherein he advertised his services. At various times he personally loaned large sums of money, totaling over \$700,000, to the American government, and his personal reputation did much to maintain the credit of the early revolutionary government. However, these loans were never repaid. Salomon's personal fortune and health declined, and he eventually died almost penniless in 1785. A portrait of his wife's great-uncle, Moses Levy (1665-1728), hangs in the exhibit. Another ancestor of my husband's, Levy had the honor of being the first Jew elected to public office, a judgeship.

One especially striking portrait on display was the full-length figure of the handsome Capt. Uriah Phillips Levy (1792-1862) in naval uniform on board a ship. He joined the U. S. Navy in 1806, against his parents' wishes. He became one of the first naval officers to advocate promotion based on ability rather than social standing, and he put an end to the disciplinary practice of flogging. A great admirer of Thomas Jefferson, Levy donated the statue of our third President which now stands in the Capitol. He later purchased Monticello, Jefferson's home, and restored it as a memorial.

The oldest portrait (ca 1750) in the exhibit was of Rachel Levy Seixas, daughter of Moses Levy. Among her and Isaac Mendes Seixas' children was Gershom Mendes Seixas (1745-1816), who was chosen to serve as cantor and rabbi for the Shearith Israel Synagogue in New York City, the oldest synagogue in America. In 1776, when the British attacked New York, he fled to Philadelphia where he helped to found Mikveh Israel Synagogue. He was the first American rabbi to preach sermons in English and was one of the trustees of King's College, now Columbia University in New York City.

A spectacular Thomas Sully portrait of the legendary Rebecca Gratz of Philadelphia showed her in a yellow turban. On a visit to Sir Walter Scott, author Washington Irving described how she had nursed Irving's dying fiancée. Scott was so impressed by the story that when he wrote *Ivanhoe*, he modeled the heroine Rebecca, "the beautiful Jewess", after Rebecca Gratz.

In addition to the portraits, one of the most useful areas of the exhibit was the section on documents, most of which are on loan from the private Judaica collection of E. Norman Flayderman. Several letters chronicle significant events in Jewish and American history. Included is the incorporation Document for the United Illinois and Ouabache Land Companies, 1780, one of the earliest business groups to operate in the American frontier. Among the 45 partners in the company were five signers of the Declaration of Independence: James Wilson, Robert Morris, William Paca, Samuel Chase and Charles Carroll; and five Jews: Michael Gratz, Barnard Gratz, Aaron Levy, O. W. Pollock, and David Franks.

The portraits, miniatures, silver pieces, documents and letters relate to early Jewish communities in Newport, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Richmond, Norfolk, Charleston, and Savannah. This exhibit is the first major loan exhibition that the DAR Museum has sponsored. Part of the exhibit is in permanent display at the Fraunces Tavern at Pearl and Broad Streets in New York City.

In 1975, John L. Loeb, Jr., a New York investment banker and philanthropist, initiated this project with the Fraunces Tavern Museum, the house where George bade farewell to his officers after the American Revolution. "The exhibit provides a very positive story of Jewish life in this country before, during, and after the Revolution," Loeb says, pointing out that in contrast to other countries where "Jews were relegated to trade or money lending," those of Revolutionary days "did everything. They were craftsmen, soldiers, farmers, and business people."

According to Jean Taylor Federico, Curator of the DAR Museum, "Borrowing exhibit items from

museums and private collections involved many DAR staff members. This, our first major loan exhibit, marks a turning point in the DAR Museum exhibits."

For interested persons who were unable to attend the exhibit, which ran from December 1980 through March 1981, there are several related items for sale. Upon request, the DAR will send free of charge a 23-page description of all of the objects on display (send a 9½"x12" stamped self-addressed envelope (SASE) to the DAR Museum, 1776 D Street, NW, Washington, DC 20006.) The DAR is also selling for \$10 *Portraits of Jews by Gilbert Stuart and Other Early American Artists* by Hannah London. It contains biographical data and prints of 58 portraits, covering many members of the Gratz, Seixas, Franks, Etting, Levy and other early Jewish American families.

Cachets (envelope with an engraved likeness and brief biography) are available on some Jews covered in the exhibit: Uriah P. Levy and Rebecca Gratz, described above; Abigail Levy Franks (1696-1856), the first well-known American Jewish woman; and Mordecai Sheftall (1735-1797), a patriot leader of Georgia. (Send \$1.25 and a legal-sized SASE to B'hai B'rith Philatelic Service, 906 Playford Lane, Silver Spring, MD 20901, night phone 301-593-2798.)

The DAR exhibit thus provides a rich and fascinating account of the role of early Jewish patriots, and the valuable contribution many of them made to early colonial life and in helping the American Revolution to succeed and prosper. The exhibit should also help inspire those of us with Jewish ancestors in early America to learn more about our historic forebears - a task that is much easier than is commonly believed.

If one's Jewish ancestors are more recent arrivals, as is more likely, there are still vast amounts of information available.

#### Names

In tracing Jewish ancestry, some familiarity with customs and the development of names is essential. Early marriages were common among Jews; with brides sometimes as young as 14 and grooms 16. Since the Jewish population in a town might be small, family intermarriage was common,

even uncle-niece marriages. And in contrast to modern times, Jews tended to have large families.

Since the 12th century, it has been a tradition among Sephardic Jews to give children both a religious and a secular name. They began using family names as early as the 11th century, many of the names taken from local place names. The common practice among many Eastern European Jews (Ashkenazi) of naming a child after a deceased instead of a living relative is a great help in tracing the death dates of ancestors.

Before Jews used family names, a man would be known as the son of his father, e.g., Aaron ben Moshe (Aaron, son of Moshe). "Ben" and "bar" were used to denote "son of", as well as "ibn" borrowed from the Arabic; "bas" and "bat" were used for "daughter of." When populations in an area were small, this was a sufficient form of identification.

In 1785 Holy Roman Emperor Joseph II of Austria first required that Jews take family names, and this practice was followed throughout Europe, with Switzerland in 1863 being the last country to impose such a requirement. The assignment of surnames by the civil authorities had three aims: to facilitate tax collection, conscription of eligible males, and assimilation of the Jews.

Choosing a name to be used by one's family for generations was quite a challenge, and some families took months to decide. In some places, Jews who were unwilling or unable to pay the required fee for a more prestigious name were given undesirable ones, e. g., Fresser (glutton) or Lumpe (hoodlum). Jews who could afford the "fee" got more expensive names, such as Rosenthal or Goldstein. Under this arrangement, Jewish family names were derived from eight main sources, as discussed in detail in the Kurzweil and Rottenberg books.

1) Patronymics (derived from father's name) - Benelisha (son of Elisha), Abramowitz (son of Abraham), Jacobsohn (son of Jacob); 2) Local places - Berliner, Léon, Hollander, Sulzberger, Oppenheimer, Cardozo; 3) Vocations - Cantor (cantor), Metzger (butcher), Kaufmann (merchant), Levi and

Cohen (priest), Schneider (tailor); 4) Family symbols - Rothschild (red shield), Kahn (boat), Eisen (iron), Blum (flower), Baer (bear); 5) Animals - Lowe (lion), Lopez and Wolff (Wolf), Hirsch and Cerf (stag), Adler (eagle), Hahn (cock); 6) Characteristics of the family members - Selig (happy), Klein (small), Jaffa (beautiful), Schwartz (dark), Weiss (white); 7) Matronymics (derived from the mother's name) - Perls (Pearl), Rose; 8) Acronyms - Katz ("Kohen tzeddek", priest of righteousness), Segal ("segan leviyyah", assistant to the priest), Rokeah (from the literary work "Roke'ah" by R. Eliazer b. Judah).

#### Research Ideas

One of the most complete sources of original records on Jews is the collection of the Mormon church. Mormon historians have been allowed into some of the Communist countries of Eastern Europe to microfilm documents that other researchers have been denied access to. For instance, only the Mormons have records for births, deaths, and marriages in Hungary before 1895. Some records for Eastern European countries go as far back as the late 1700's and note religion in the record. The Mormons plan eventually to microfilm records in all Eastern European nations, but this project has not yet been completed. *Toledot*, the magazine of Jewish genealogy, is publishing an inventory country-by-country, town-by-town of all of the Jewish records held by the Mormon Library. (*Toledot*, 155 E. 93rd St., Suite 3c, New York, NY 10028; back issues are available.

If you know which synagogue your ancestors belonged to, it is worth checking its records for 1) minutes of congregational meetings; 2) account books with lists of members; 3) congregational and communal histories; and 4) vital records of births, deaths, marriages, and bar and bas mitzvahs. Personal visits to Jewish cemeteries can also be useful since Jewish tombstones traditionally give the father's name.

People from the same European town often gathered together in the U.S. to start a "landsman-schaft", a group that carried on the traditions and memory of their home village. Sometimes they published a Memorial Book, which

described the town and the people who lived there. Most of these are local histories of small Jewish communities, mainly in Poland and usually written in Yiddish. They are especially valuable for researching the period prior to World War II. Zachary Baker reports that these books typically contain the following sections: 1) early history of the town; 2) description of the town before World War I; 3) the period between WWI and WWII, including communal institutions; social, religious, and political movements; prominent personalities and rabbis; 4) the nearby towns and villages; 5) first-hand accounts of the Holocaust; and 6) perhaps a translation into English.

#### The Holocaust

A major - and understandable - emotional barrier to Jews' tracing their ancestry stems from the murder of their relatives in the Holocaust, as well as the assumption that all records were destroyed. However, the Memorial Books (see David Bass' compilation) often carefully list all of the persons from their town who perished in the Holocaust. The National Tracing Bureau, established in 1943 to help World War II refugees locate their missing relatives, has evolved into the International Tracing Service (ITS) which has copies of many death records and other vital data. Administered by the International Committee of the Red Cross, the ITS has a phonetic master index on some 40 million cards. The ITS will send a copy of any records that they have for an individual, but will not trace surnames. (International Tracing Service, D-3548 Arolsen, Federal Republic of Germany).

After the end of World War II, many survivors were encouraged to write down remembrances about people they knew before the war and who perished in the Holocaust. Information about this is available from the Pages of Testimony Dept., Yad Vashem, P.O. Box 3477, Jerusalem, Israel. The National Archives has war records captured by American soldiers when they overran Germany in 1945, such as an unindexed listing of the 100,000 persons who died at the Mauthausen concentration camp, listed by date of death.

#### Locating Places

The history of the 19th and 20th centuries in Europe has been a turbulent one, full of constant change, instability, and upheavals. The revolutions, war, and conflicts of the last 150 years, the period with which the genealogical researcher is first concerned, have resulted in many changes to the names, locations, and borders of countries and cities. Arthur Kurzweil gives the pertinent example of his father's birthplace, Dobromil, which during his grandfather's time was in Austria, during his father's time was in Poland, and is now in Russia.

Because of all of this, it is essential that the researcher first become familiar with the general history of the area or region in which he or she is interested. It is important to consult maps printed during the period you are tracing to ascertain which country the town was in at that time. Two definitive articles on this subject, "Eastern European Jewish Geography: Some Problems and Suggestions" by Zachary M. Baker appeared in the Winter 1978-79 and Spring 1979 issues of *Toledot*, including a helpful bibliography.

One of the most important aspects of tracing your Jewish ancestors back to Eastern Europe is getting the correct names of the towns from which your ancestors came. A person might think his grandmother came from Indura, which is actually Amdur, or from Kazimierz, which is Kuzmir. The town name might have changed when the ruling country changed, have been misspelled in official records or in family correspondence, have been transmitted orally resulting in misspelling, be known only in Yiddish and not in the local language, or be one of several towns with the same name.

Memorial Books for many towns in Eastern Europe have been compiled. David Bass' 1971 bibliography is quite helpful, and it has been updated by Zachary M. Baker in the Winter 1980 issue of *Toledot*. Copies of many of the Memorial Books can be found at the New York City Library or the Library of Congress.

Two comprehensive publications on Jewish genealogy are the annotated bibliographies *Jewish Genealogy Worldwide* (\$8.00) and

**American Jewish Genealogy** (\$4.00) available from the Family Heritage Institute, 2751 Rivera, Wichita, Kansas 67211. They list over 750 books and 300 books, respectively, on subjects and local place histories of interest to Jewish genealogists.

#### Research Facilities

Dozens of libraries and archives of Jewish materials exist in the United States, the largest of which are:

#### East

Boston Public Library, Copley Square, 666 Boylston St., Boston (mailing address: P.O. Box 286, Boston, Mass. 02117)  
 Wyden Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass. 02138  
 Sterling Library, Yale University, 120 High St., New Haven, Conn. 06520  
 Brandeis University, South Street, Waltham, Mass. 02254  
 American Jewish Historical Society, 2 Thornton Rd., Waltham, Mass. 02154  
 YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, 1048 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10028  
 Jewish Theological Seminary, 3080 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10027  
 Jewish Division, New York City Public Library, 42nd St. at Fifth Ave., New York, N.Y. 10018  
 Leo Baeck Institute, 129 E. 73rd St., New York, N.Y. 10021  
 Zionist Archives and Library, 515 Park Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10022  
 Yeshiva University Library, Yeshiva University, 500 W. 185th St., New York, N.Y. 10033  
 Hebrew Union College, Jewish Institute of Religion, One W. 4th St., New York, N.Y. 10012  
 Library of Congress, 2nd and Independence Sts., SE, Washington, DC 20540  
 Dropsie University, Broad and York Sts., Philadelphia, Penn. 19132  
 Virginia State Library, 11th and Capitol Sts., Richmond, Va. 23219

#### Midwest

Klau Library, Hebrew Union College, 3101 Clifton Ave., Cincinnati, Ohio 45220

Newberry Library, 60 W. Walton, Chicago, Ill. 60610  
 Indiana State Library, 140 N. Senate, Indianapolis, Ind 46204

#### West

University Research Library, Jewish Studies Collection, University of Southern California at Los Angeles, 405 Hilgard Ave., Los Angeles, Calif. 90024  
 University of Judaism, 15600 Mulholland Dr., Los Angeles, Calif. 90024  
 Los Angeles Public Library, 630 W. 5th St., Los Angeles, Calif. 90071  
 Main Library, University of California, Berkeley, Calif. 94720  
 Western Jewish History Center, Magnes Museum, 2911 Russell St., Berkeley, Calif. 94705  
 Genealogical Society of Utah, 50 E. N. Temple St., Salt Lake City, Utah 84150

#### Overseas

Yad Vashem, P.O. Box 3477, Jerusalem, Israel  
 Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People, Hebrew University Campus, Sprinzak Building, P.O. Box 1149, Jerusalem, Israel

Following is a short bibliography of related books. The Kranzler Kurzweil, and Rottenburg books are detailed and informative books on tracing one's Jewish ancestry.

If you want to trace your Jewish "roots", give it a try! There is a wealth of material available that may be of immense help to you, and you might be happily surprised at what you are able to turn up.

Bass, David, "Biographical List of Memorial Books Published in the Years 1943-1972," *Yad Vashem Studies on the European Jewish Catastrophe and Resistance*, IX Jerusalem, 1973.

Blau, Joseph L. and Baron, Salo W., *The Jews of the United States, 1790-1840: A Documentary History*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1963, 1034 pp.

Dubnov, Semen M., *History of the Jews in Russia and Poland*, Ktav Pub. House, New York, 1975; Jewish Publication Society, Philadelphia, 1916-20, 3 vol.

Family Heritage Institute *American-Jewish Genealogy* and *Jewish Genealogy Worldwide*, 2751 Rivera, Wichita, KS 67211, 1981, 27 pp. and 79 pp. - two annotated bibliographies of books on Jewish local history and related subjects.

Friedman, Lee M., *Jewish Pioneers and Patriots*, Jewish Publication Society, Philadelphia, 1942; Books for Libraries Press, Plainview, N.Y., 1974, 430 pp.

Kaganoff, Benzion C., *A Dictionary of Jewish Names and Their History*, Schocken Books, New York, 1977, 250 pp.

Kranzler, David, *My Jewish Roots*, Sepher-Hermon Press, New York, 1979, 88 pp.

Kurzweil, Arthur, *From Generation to Generation: How to Trace Your Jewish Genealogy and Personal History*, Wm. Morrow and Co., New York, 1980, 353 pp.

Rosenbloom, Joseph R., *A Biographical Dictionary of Early American Jews, Colonial Times through 1800*, University of Kentucky Press, Lexington, Ky., 1960, 175 pp.

Rosenstein, Neil, *The Unbroken Chain: Biographical Sketches and the Genealogy of Illustrious Jewish Families from the 15th - 20th Century*, Shergold Publishers, New York, 1976, 716 pp.

Roth, Cecil, *A History of the Jews in England*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1941, 1964, 306 pp.

Rottenburg, Dan, *Finding Our Fathers: A Guidebook to Jewish Genealogy*, Random House, New York, 1977, 401 pp.

Rubin, Eli, *700 Years of Jewish Life in Poland*, W. & G. Foyle Ltd., London, 1944

Stern, Malcolm H., *First American Jewish Families: 600 Genealogies 1654-1977*, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio, and American Jewish Historical Society, Waltham, Mass., 1977, 419 pp.

## Outline for Jewish Research

Tracing Jewish Roots with an Emphasis  
on Collections at the Genealogical Library of  
the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

For centuries Jews were persecuted and forced to flee from country to country. Their records were often destroyed, their synagogues burned, and their cemeteries desecrated. These factors combine to make Jewish genealogical research difficult. It is further complicated by the fact that most Jews did not adopt surnames until compelled to do so in the late eighteenth century. Despite such problems, Jewish research can be a meaningful, interesting, and successful experience.

There are three major divisions of the Jewish people. The Ashkenazim [from Ashkenaz, medieval Hebrew for Germany] are descendants of Yiddish speaking Jews who spread throughout Germany and into Eastern Europe, especially into Poland and Russia. Most American Jews descend from this lineage. The Sephardim are the Jews whose ancestors in the middle ages lived in Spain [Sepharad in medieval Hebrew]. After their expulsion from Spain (1492), they settled in Portugal, Italy, France, Greece, and other Mediterranean countries. Some Portuguese Sephardim later migrated to England and the Netherlands. Many of the Sephardim who were forcefully converted to Christianity in Spain reconverted to Judaism in the Netherlands. The third division is Oriental Jewry, descendants of Arabic speaking Jews of the Middle East and North Africa. These are closely related to and often categorized with the Sephardim.

Although there were Jews who came to America during the colonial period,

the ancestors of most American Jews came to the United States in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century.

This paper includes suggestions on genealogical research for Jewish Americans with emphasis on those of European descent. A special effort has been made to point out those resources available utilizing the facilities of the Genealogical Library. The Genealogical Library, among its other genealogical material, has an excellent collection of records pertaining to both American and European Jews. The majority of the library's holdings are available on microfilm and can be used at the main library in Salt Lake City or ordered at one of its branch libraries. The address of the branch library closest to you can be obtained by writing:

The Correspondence Section  
Genealogical Library  
50 East North Temple Street  
Salt Lake City, Utah 84150

### BEGINNING RESEARCH

Home Sources. Your genealogical research should begin at home. Search for family records, old letters, journals, scrapbooks, diaries, biographies, photographs, passports, certificates of birth or death, newspaper clippings, memorial or funeral cards, prayer books, obituaries, military and school records, and marriage documents.

Locating Relatives. Older family members can be a valuable source of information. Write to all known relatives. To help you locate others with a similar surname, telephone directories are often available in local libraries. When you contact someone, supply them with the basic information you have: names, dates (approximate dates, at least), places, and relationships. State exactly what information or documents you would like to obtain.

#### RESEARCH IN THE UNITED STATES

After locating your family records and interviewing relatives, you will want to expand your research into other records of genealogical value to determine when your immigrant ancestor came to this country and from where. Historians estimate that during the nineteenth century more than eighty-five percent of the world's Jews lived in Europe. The majority of these resided in Poland and Russia. Thus, most Jewish family trees can be traced to Europe within a few generations.

To begin genealogical research in European records, you will need the exact locality or congregation from which your ancestor came. You must search all available records where your ancestors lived in the United States to determine their place of origin. The following records may list an exact place of birth or residence as well as enhance your knowledge of your ancestors.

Vital Records--Civil. In the United States, marriages and divorces were usually recorded by a county officer. Write to the county courthouse for information. Births and deaths were sometimes recorded by a county officer, but the State Department of Health has custody of the records. Addresses are in "Where to Write for Vital Records: Births, deaths, marriages, and divorce," which is available in many libraries or by writing:

Superintendent of Documents  
U.S. Government Printing Office  
Washington, D.C. 20402

Vital Records--Synagogue. A few American synagogues kept account books, birth and circumcision records, Bar Mitzvah and Bar Mitzvah records, marriage, and burial records. On the occasion of a significant anniversary, many congregations publish a history of the local Jewish community. To obtain information, write to the synagogue your ancestors attended.

Census Records. The United States has conducted censuses every ten years since 1790. Early censuses listed heads of households. Since 1850 the censuses list the name, age, and birthplace (state or country only) of each member of a household. More recent censuses give more information. For example, the 1900 census lists name, month and year of birth, state or country of birth, birthplace of parents, occupation, year of immigration, and whether naturalized. The 1790-1850, 1880, 1900, and much of the 1910 censuses are indexed by state. Census records are on film in the National Archives, National Archives branches, the Genealogical Library, and other genealogical libraries. They may also be found in state archives and in public and university libraries. Census information beginning with 1920 is confidential; however, the government will release information on parents and direct-line ancestors. Write for Form BC-600, Application for Search of Census Records, available from:

Bureau of the Census  
Pittsburg, Kansas 66762

Naturalization Records. Although immigrants were not required to become U.S. citizens, many filed a declaration of intention and a petition to become a naturalized citizen. These records may give the place and date of birth, date of

emigration, port of entry, and date of arrival. For records before September 1906, write to the county or district court where your ancestor lived. Naturalization records of some counties are found in the collection of the Genealogical Library. In 1906, the U.S. government established the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization.

Office of Immigration  
and Naturalization  
425 I Street, N.W.  
Washington D.C. 20530

U.S. Passenger Lists. These generally show names, ages, and countries of origin. Relatively few United States lists prior to the 1890s show the town or city of origin. The Genealogical Library has microfilmed copies of passenger records for major ports prior to 1900. Records for New York City are available through 1919. The National Archives in Washington, D.C. has the most complete set of passenger lists and indexes. They will send a copy of a passenger list entry providing it is older than fifty years. Write to:

Reference Services Branch (NNIR)  
National Archives & Records Service  
Eighth & Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, D.C. 20408

Hamburg Passenger Lists. Many Jews from Central and Eastern Europe came through the port of Hamburg, Germany, on their way to America. The Hamburg Passenger Lists, available on microfilm from 1850 to 1934, are indexed and may help you in finding your ancestor's place of origin. These lists are available at the Genealogical Library and any of its branch libraries.

#### RESEARCH IN EUROPE

Genealogical research sources in Europe include printed local histories and memorial books, family histories, city documents, synagogue records, and civil vital records.

The most valuable genealogical sources are vital records; such as registers of birth, circumcision, marriage, and death or burial kept by congregations or civil authorities. A few towns and congregations started keeping records as early as the eighteenth century, but others did not keep records until the early twentieth century. The quality and preservation of Jewish records varies from country to country. Wars, anti-Semitism, and inconsistent preservation over the years make it difficult to locate Jewish records in some areas, especially in Romania and the Soviet Union. The Genealogical Library has acquired extensive Jewish records of birth, marriage, and death from Poland, Germany, and Hungary. Once you have determined the specific place of your ancestor's origin, you can check the catalogs in Salt Lake City or at any branch genealogical library to determine what records are available for that particular locality.

Austria. Before the First World War the Austrian Empire included areas now in the Republic of Austria, Czechoslovakia, Italy, Poland, Yugoslavia, and the Soviet Union. Austrian Jews were required to keep vital records after 1788 but the Jews rarely complied with this requirement until the mid-nineteenth century. For Austria, the Genealogical Library has only a few Jewish records from the area of Galicia. This area is now part of Poland. However, the Library has microfilmed detailed maps and gazetteers of the Austro-Hungarian Empire which can help you locate the exact place in Austria from which your ancestors came and determine what country the place is in now. Some Jewish records and documents from Austria may have been deposited in institutions in Israel.

Britain. The modern Jewish community in England dates from 1656. London had congregations of both Sephardic and Ashkenazic Jews, but Portuguese Sephardic Jews predominated until the nineteenth century. Synagogue records date from the end of the seventeenth century. These

were written in Portuguese and Yiddish. Marriage records seem to be complete, but many births were not recorded. Civil registration of all births, deaths, and marriages was introduced in 1837. The Genealogical Library has some synagogue records and the index to civil registration. The actual civil registers are available only in England.

Czechoslovakia. During the Second World War, Jewish records from throughout the Czech lands were centralized in Prague. Records from the formerly Hungarian area of Slovakia were gathered to Bratislava. These records have not been microfilmed by the Genealogical Library, but are readily accessible through research services in Czechoslovakia. To obtain genealogical information from Czechoslovak archives write to:

Embassy of the  
Czechoslovak Socialist Republic,  
Consular Division  
3900 Linnean Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20008

France. Napoleon began civil registration of all births, marriages, and deaths in France, including Jews, in 1792. French civil registration records of births, deaths, and marriages have been microfilmed by the Genealogical Library for some departments (counties). Eventually records of all departments will be microfilmed. For those areas not yet microfilmed, you may write to the local departmental archive and hire a researcher.

Germany. The German Empire is now divided between two German Republics, Poland, France, and the Soviet Union. Civil registration of Jewish births, deaths, and marriages began at various times in different parts of the empire. Some places began keeping records on Jews in the early and mid-nineteenth century. Civil registration was not consistent throughout Germany until 1875. Many of these records are now in Israel. The Genealogical Library has microfilmed many German Jewish records in Germany and in Poland, and is continually adding to the collection.

The Summer 1978 issue of Toledot magazine included a listing of the Library's Jewish collection for Germany. Many records have been added since. The Genealogical Library's collection also includes maps and gazetteers that can be quite helpful to researchers. Jewish documents and congregational records from Germany are available in some institutions in Israel and the U.S., some of which are noted in this article.

Hungary. The former Kingdom of Hungary included areas now in Czechoslovakia, the Soviet Union, Romania, Yugoslavia, and Austria. The Genealogical Library has filmed all available Jewish records in possession of modern Hungary up to 1895, including the 1848 Jewish Census for several old Hungarian counties, some of which are now in Czechoslovakia and the USSR. A listing of the Hungarian Jewish collection at the Genealogical Library is found in the Winter 1977-78 issue of Toledot magazine.

Netherlands. Many Christian Sephardim, including numerous wealthy and prominent merchants, settled in the Netherlands as refugees of the Spanish inquisition and reconverted to Judaism. These Spanish and Portuguese Jews were later joined by Ashkenazim fleeing anti-Semitism in less tolerant nations of Europe.

Genealogies have been compiled for many Jewish families in Holland. The following organizations have many such genealogies and will answer correspondence:

Netherlands Joods Familienarchief  
Amsteldijk 67  
Amsterdam,  
THE NETHERLANDS

Centraal Bureau voor Genealogie  
Postbus 11755  
2502 AT 's-Gravenhage,  
THE NETHERLANDS

Valuable historical and genealogical articles are published in Studia Rosenthaliana: Journal for Jewish Literature and History in the Netherlands.

published by the University Library of Amsterdam. It is indexed in the International Index of Periodicals found in most libraries.

After 1811, Jewish births, marriages, and deaths in the Netherlands were included with other religious groups in local civil registers. Prior to this, each congregation was responsible for its own records. The Genealogical Library has filmed all civil registers up to 1882 and some as late as 1912. Many early congregational records have also been filmed.

Poland. The earliest registration of Polish Jews was in the former Austrian territory of Galicia in 1787; however, it was not enforced until the mid-nineteenth century. The Duchy of Warsaw, which later constituted the Russian territory of Poland, began civil registration in 1808, including Jews in Catholic registers. After 1826 separate civil registers were kept for Jews. In areas under German rule, Jews were required to prepare transcripts of vital records beginning in the early 1800s. The Genealogical Library has an extensive microfilm collection of Jewish vital records from the former Russian and German areas of Poland, making it a significant resource for Jews with ancestry in these areas. Very few Jewish records are microfilmed yet from the Austrian area.

The Polish State Archives have many records that are not yet microfilmed. Also, in most cases Polish records that have been filmed are available only up to about 1870. Records not filmed may be available by writing to the headquarters of the Polish State Archives.

Naczelną Dyrekcja  
Archiwów Państwowych  
ul. Długa 6 s.p. 1005  
POLAND

A listing of the Genealogical Library's Polish collection was published in the Spring 1978 issue of Toledot magazine. Many records have been added since.

Romania. Civil registration was introduced in the Romanian principalities in the 1830s but it is not clear when Jewish communities began records. In the former Hungarian area of Transylvania, Jewish registers began in the 1830s and 1840s. The Genealogical Library has no Jewish records from Romania. If preserved, such records may now be in the Romanian State Archives. You should write to the archives in Romanian or French. It is possible some records could be in Israel or some other Jewish collection outside Romania.

Arhivelor Statului din  
Republica Socialista România  
București, Sect. VI  
Bdul Gh. Gheorgiu-Dej nr. 29  
ROMANIA

Soviet Union. Many Jews trace some ancestral lines to areas now in the Soviet Union. The Genealogical Library has not microfilmed records from any Soviet archives. Since the 1918 Revolution, births, deaths, and marriages have been registered in local offices of the USSR Ministry of Internal Affairs. Prior to 1918, the Russian Empire had no government offices to keep vital records. It is possible that the Czarist government kept some lists of Jews, but this has not been substantiated. In some cases, Jewish communities kept circumcision books, registers of marriages, and deaths, or cemetery lists. In most cases, however, Jews carefully avoided keeping records that might later be used against them. Some city governments also kept vital records of Jews beginning in the late nineteenth century. For Jewish research in the Soviet Union we can only hope that some of these few records that were kept have been preserved in Soviet archives. Research in Soviet archives, however, is strictly limited and no provisions are made for searching Jewish records nor even to determine what records the archives do or do not have. Eventually this may change, but for now researchers must depend on alternate sources. Among these are limited synagogue and vital records presently in Israel, Western Europe, or the U.S.; memorial books; and family traditions.

Vital records for official purposes can sometimes be obtained by writing to:

Embassy of the United States  
in Moscow  
c/o Department of State  
Washington, D.C. 20521

If you are not a United States citizen, contact the Soviet Embassy in your country. Unfortunately, they will not answer genealogical inquiries.

Other Countries. The book, Finding Our Fathers, listed in the bibliography of this paper, includes suggestions for research in countries not covered here. The Genealogical Library has Jewish vital records from some localities in Western Europe not noted above. Catalogs of specific holdings are available at the Genealogical Library and at branch libraries.

#### ORGANIZATIONS

The following organizations preserve documents, letters, memorial books, and local histories, manuscripts, family histories, and genealogies about Jews. These sources can be of great value especially when vital records are not available or accessible. They cannot do research for you but can tell you whether they have records for the locality or family you want.

• Organizations Pertaining to American Jewry

American Jewish Archives  
3101 Clifton Avenue  
Cincinnati, Ohio 45220

Hebrew Union College Library  
Hebrew Union College  
Cincinnati, Ohio 45220

The American Jewish  
Historical Society  
2 Thornton Road  
Waltham, Massachusetts 02154

Western Jewish History Center  
Judah L. Magnes Memorial Museum  
2911 Russell Street  
Berkeley, California 94705

• Organizations Pertaining to European Jewry

Central Archive for the History  
of the Jewish People  
P.O.B. 1149  
91010 Jerusalem, ISRAEL

Yeshiva University Library  
Yeshiva University  
500 West 185th Street  
New York, New York 10033

YIVO Institute for Jewish Research  
1048 Fifth Avenue  
New York, New York 10028  
(concentrates on East European Jews)

Leo Baeck Institute  
129 East 73rd Street  
New York, New York 10021  
(concentrates on German  
and Austrian Jews)

These are only a few of the larger institutions. Consult the books on Jewish research noted in the bibliography of this paper for a discussion of additional organizations.

#### MEMORIAL BOOKS

A memorial book is a history of a particular Jewish community in Europe. Many interesting details are often given, including maps, photographs, local history, the fate of the town and its residents during the Holocaust, and often a list of those who perished in the Holocaust. The books are written primarily in Yiddish and Hebrew.

Hundreds of memorial books have been written, especially for Eastern European communities. The Genealogical Library has not collected these works. The New York Public Library has an excellent

collection, as do YIVO Institute, Yad Vashem, University of California at Los Angeles, and the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York City.

#### TRACING VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS OF THE HOLOCAUST

Yad Vashem is a national institution dedicated to perpetuating the memory of victims of the Holocaust. They will not do research for individuals but will let you know if a particular name is on file as having perished. Their "Pages of Testimony" department may be able to help you learn the fate of individuals missing in the Nazi Holocaust if you can provide sufficient information. Write to:

Yad Vashem  
P.O. Box 3477  
Jerusalem, Israel

After the Second World War, the International Tracing Service (ITS) was established to help Jewish people locate family members displaced in the Holocaust. They have gathered all available concentration camp records as well as other documents relating to the fate of individuals during the war. The ITS is under the direction of the International Red Cross. Please note that service can be provided only if you can give full names and, if possible, place and date of birth. Write to:

International Tracing Service  
3548 Arolsen  
Federal Republic of GERMANY

In order to find persons living in Israel you may contact one of the following:

The Computer Department  
Minister of the Interior  
HaKiriah Romena  
Jerusalem, ISRAEL

Bureau for Missing Relatives  
Yisheyahu Press  
Street 6  
Jerusalem, ISRAEL

#### JEWISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETIES

You may benefit from membership and association with one of the Jewish genealogical societies. Many of these groups provide help sessions and seminars that allow members to share problems and solutions. Many publish interesting and helpful newsletters. For information about a Jewish genealogical society near you write to the following:

Jewish Genealogical Society, Inc.  
300 East 71st Street, Apt. 5R  
New York City, NY 10021

#### PRESERVING YOUR HERITAGE

In some cases, adequate records were not kept or are presently unavailable to trace some ancestral lines more than a few generations. You may want to record the things you know and learn about your family in the form of a family history. It might include biographical sketches of yourself and of your ancestors, places of birth and birth dates, the story of how your family came to this country, and other interesting historical events. This will preserve the family traditions and stories that have been handed down from generation to generation. Such a record will be appreciated by your descendants and will provide a basis for further research should additional records become available in the future. If you would like to share your family history with others we suggest you type the material, list your sources of information, and include a name index. Then submit a copy to the American Jewish Archives (address on page 6) or:

Acquisitions Department  
Genealogical Library  
50 East North Temple Street  
Salt Lake City, Utah 84150

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Utah Valley Regional  
Genealogical Library  
4386 HBLL, BYU  
Provo, Utah 84602  
801/378-6200

## The Evolution of Jewish Names

If you are of Ashkenazic background (that is, your family comes from the Yiddish or Germanic-speaking Jewry of Central and Eastern Europe), you probably will find less than 8 generations with your last name. If you are Sephardic (originally from Spain) or of Italian Jewish origin, you might be able to go back further but you would also reach a point where your name ceased to exist.

In the days of the Bible or Talmud, family names were unknown. Moses, Hillel, Jeremiah, or Deborah, for example, did not have last names. If a single name was not enough, the father's name would be mentioned, for instance, Moses ben (son of) Amram, Esther bat (daughter of) Avihail. Sometimes the name of the tribe to which the person belonged was added. In the Ashkenazic tradition this system of naming is still used in calling persons to the reading of the Torah. The Sephardic tradition, on the other hand, uses family names.

A community with more than one individual with the same first name usually used one of four chief methods to distinguish between them--use of a parent's name, the town from which one came, one's profession, or a nickname. Many of the names so derived resemble true family names, but they were not yet fixed and could be changed from one generation to the next.

By the 17th and 18th centuries use of ben was usually skipped in common speech and sometimes replaced by the word meaning son in the local Jewish or non-Jewish language. So Jacob son of Abraham was no longer called Jacob ben Abraham; he became Abramsohn (in Germany), Abramovitch or Abramowicz (in Eastern Europe), and Abrami (in Italy). Often such forms as Jacob Abraham

or Jacob Abrahams were used. The mother's name was sometimes substituted for the father's and made into a surname (for example, Sirkes from Sarah and Chaneles from Chana).

Very often the regular Hebrew form was translated into the vernacular. If for example the father's name in Hebrew was Ze'ev (wolf), the child might be called Jacob Wolf. Here are some examples of Ashkenazic names based on the father's name: Jacobowitz (son of Jacob), Beilis (son of Bella), Moskowitz (son of little Moses), Berkowitz (son of little bear), and Smulovic (son of Samuel). Sephardic first names commonly derived from last names include Saadia, Nahmias, Ben Soussan and Vital.

Place names are especially common among Jews. Since Jews moved around more than non-Jews, it was not uncommon for them to take town names from past residence. German cities have given rise to such common names as Berliner, Shapiro, Frankfurter, and Kissinger. Horowitz, Pressburger, and Lipnick come from the names of towns in Czechoslovakia. Polish and Russian towns yield the names Warschauer, Wilner, and Rieger. Names of countries or regions have been the source of such family names as Deutsch (German), Unger (Hungarian), and Pollock (Polish). Italian Jewish names also stem from specific locales, but they sound very different from the ones to which most of us are accustomed. They include Treves, Lattes, Terracini, Tedesco, Pollacca, and Luzzatti. Similarly Sephardic names like Toledano, Muriciano, Bagdadi, and Romani come from place names.

Common names derived from occupations include Schneider (tailor), Metzger or Reznick (butcher) Schlachter (ritual slaughterer), Goldschmidt (goldsmith), Kowalsky (blacksmith), Handelsmann or Kaufmann (businessman or merchant), Weber (weaver), Schreiber (scribe), Rossman (horse dealer), Schermann (cloth cutter).

Many Jewish names began as nicknames based on personal traits. Some common examples are: Gross (big), Lang (tall), Klein (small), Kurz (short), Krummbein (cripple), Rothbart (red-beard), Schwarz (black), Geller (blond), Weiss (white).

Sephardic Jews and Jews in Italian-speaking and some Arabic-speaking countries adopted fixed family names fairly early. The largest branch of Jewry--the Ashkenazic branch--did not generally have fixed last names until the beginning of the 19th century when governments, finding it difficult to keep track of Jews, ordered them to choose family names. In some countries, taking last names was made a condition for acquiring increased civil rights. The first law requiring family names, issued by the emperor of Austria in 1787, limited Jews to biblical first names. It was followed by laws in France (1808), various parts of Germany (1806-1813) and Russia and Poland (1804, reissued in 1835).

In many countries the Jews were given a time limit to choose a family name. Where the government assigned names such as Galicia officials often dispensed funny or insulting names unless they were paid a suitable bribe. In most German states the government compiled lists of Jews with both their old and new names.

In choosing final family names, many European Jews picked one that seemed stylish or beautiful by the standards of their time. "Stylish names" of the early 19th century used such prefixes as Rosen-(rose), Blumen-(flower), Loewen-(lion), and Stern-(star); -stein (stone), -feld (field), -berg (hill), -thal (valley), -baum (tree), and -blatt (leaf) were popular name endings. Names of animals were also very desirable--Falk (falcon), Adler (eagle), Elefant (elephant), Fisch (fish), Soloveichik (nightingale).

A few names are found almost exclusively among Jews. One type is derived from the old priestly and tribal names Cohen (priest) and Levy (Levite). These names have many variants. For Cohen there is Kohn, Cohn, Kahana, Kahn, Kagan, Kaganovitch, Cowen, and Sacerdote (Italian for priest). For Levy there is Levi, Levin, Levitt, Levinson, Loewy, and Lowenstamm.

Another type of Jewish name was originally derived from Hebrew abbreviations such as Katz (abbreviation of Kohen Tsedek, "righteous priest"), Shatz (from Shaliach Tzibur, "cantor") and Shalit (from Sheyichyeh Leorech Yamin Tovim, "may he live many good years").

In America we consider Ashkenazic Jewish names based on German, Yiddish, or Russian (like Rosenberg, Horowitz, Shapiro) are typical. In other countries this would not be the case. In Italy common Jewish names are Fano, Finzi, Luzzatti, Lattes, Pacifici, Ascoli, and Cassuto. In North Africa one finds names like Kalifa, Atlan, Ben Soussan, Toledano, Abitbol, and Benamosegh to be typically Jewish. In Greece and Turkey names like Arditti, Najjari, Fortas, Sedaca or Alkalay are borne only by Jews. In Holland, where many Sephardic Jews came from Portugal and Spain, such names as Castro, Nunez, and Sanchez are not uncommon among Jews.

American immigration officials were often unable to spell or pronounce difficult Jewish names like Shepselowitch, Katzenellenbogen, or Mlotek, so they assigned either what they thought were typical Jewish names like Greenberg, Silverstein, or Cohen or American names like Morris, Smith, or Brown. Many families changed their names for easier spelling or to sound less Jewish by shortening them (for example Braunschweiger to Brown or Katzenellenbogen to Katz) or by translating them into English (for example Steinberg to Stonehill and Blaustein to Bluestone).

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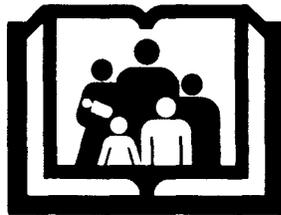
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PRESERVING OUR HERITAGE

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August 12-15, 1980

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The Holocaust and  
Family History

Arthur Kurzweil

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## THE HOLOCAUST AND FAMILY HISTORY

Arthur Kurzweil

Born in New York. Resides in New York City. Author and lecturer. M.A. (library science), Florida State University. Editor.

Editor's Note" This paper was originally published by Morrwo Press in 1980 as chapter 3 (pp. 128-53) of a comprehensive volume. **From Generation to Generation:**

**How to Trace Your Jewish Genealogy and Personal History,** authored by Mr.

Kurzweil. The original title of the Chapter is "Six Million Jewish People Is One Jewish Person—Six Million Times." It is published here and was presented at the World Conference on Records, with the consent of the copyright holder, Morrow Press. Minor editorial changes have been made.

Six million Jews were murdered in the Holocaust.

That phrase, "six million," slips out of our mouths so quickly so easily, too often even thoughtlessly. Six million. We speak the number as if . . . as if we know what six million human beings means. As if we can understand such proportions of death through murder.

Six million. The number is unfathomable.

Six million Jews were murdered in the Holocasut.

That word, "murdered," is spoken without difficulty, as if we can grasp those murders, as if they are calculable. We say "murdered" but we do not mean simply murdered. Not like the killings we see so often on our televisions where life is taken every few moments without pause.

And "Holocaust." Its nine letters are supposed to add up to the six million murdered, as if . . . as if a word, any word, can grasp, can include, can measure

the loss, the tragedy, the meaning of what happened. We speak the word "Holocaust: often, but some things should remain nameless, since no name or word will do. No label, no phrase, no sentence, can measure the unmeasurable.

When something is named or defined, it is imprisoned by the very limitations of the combination of letters tacked on to it. As if it can now be filed away, dealt with, understood, grasped.

Six million Jews were murdered in the Holocaust.

Yes. But, no—it was more than that. So much more that to say just this is to perhaps betray the lives of the victims. There are no graves for the victims. No markers stand as their memorials. Yes, throughout the world there are monuments, museums, posters, plaques, statues, and sculptures commemorating their lives and paying tribute to them. But who were they? Who were six million murdered in the Holocaust"?

Some names ought to be given, some ought not.

Perhaps the deaths in total of six million Jews should remain nameless.

But the people should not remain nameless.

Have we made a mistake by naming the Event but not naming the murdered?

We have labeled the murders, added them up, written about them as if they were a phenomenon, but do most of us know the

names of those in our families who were stolen from us and killed?

Education about the facts of the Jews during World War II is inferior enough. Schools often spend too little time on it; when it is discussed, the terms are broad and therefore, vague. We learn about the Holocaust as a subject, as a phenomenon, as an historical event with causes and results.

What shall we tell our children? How shall we explain to those who do not remember the event, or, as time goes by, are farther and farther removed from it? In what way shall we keep the memory alive?

Elie Wiesel, survivor of the Death Camps, taught a course at City College in New York on the Holocaust. One day, a student asked, "What shall we tell our children?"

"And what if they don't believe us?" a girl in the class added.

"They won't," a third student answered. "I'm convinced that in a few years, a few generations, it will all be forgotten."

"I am not sure I can agree," Wiesel said. "I have heard a theory, a fascinating, intriguing theory. Irving Greenberg told me this. He said that when one considers the Exodus of the Hebrews from Egypt, to those Hebrews, their exodus did not have much of an impact. But consider the impact it has had since. Consider the impact of the Exodus on Jews today. This observation might be applied to the Holocaust. Who can know? It may be the same."

"But, since we weren't there, what should we say to the next generation?" A young man asked. "You have said that we will never understand what happened. If so, how can we tell people about it?"

"Yes," Wiesel said. "You will never know. But you will know that there was something. You will know one incident. One tear. That will be yours to tell."

Wiesel went on. "In my books. I don't like to repeat stories. Once I did. One story I told in two books."

He then told the legend, Chassidic tale. It was a tale that contained many of the Chassidic Masters. It began with the founder of Chassidism, the Baal Shem Tov, the Master of the Good Name. It seems that when there was a disaster about to strike, the Baal Shem went into a certain spot in the woods, lit a candle and said a prayer—and the disaster was prevented. Then, a disciple of his was faced with a disaster. He knew where the special spot in the woods was located, he knew how to light the candle, but he did not know the prayer. But the disaster was averted. Then another disciple was faced with calamity. He knew where the spot in the woods was located, but he did not know how to light the candle, and he did not know the prayer. But the disaster was prevented. Then a final disciple was faced with a disaster. He did not know how to light the candle, he did not know how to say the prayer, and he did not know where the spot in the woods was located. All he knew was how to tell the story. And then, too, was the disaster avoided.

The Chassidic tale was instructive to the class, but Elie Wiesel wanted to be even more explicit in response to the question. So, when a student said, "What is the story we should tell?"

Wiesel responded: "In a few years, a very few years, there will not be one survivor left. Not a single survivor will be alive. Their numbers are decreasing at a very fast rate. Soon, there will be no one who was there."

"What can you tell your children? Tell them that you knew the last survivors. As the survivors were alive when it happened, you were alive to hear their story. Tell them that: You knew the last survivors."

"They will listen. And they will ask the same question: What shall we tell our children? They will tell them: We knew

did not?" will surely have passed through many minds. Remember to tape or write down the names of the Holocaust victims in your family, and to determine what their relationship to you is. It is best to do this in the form of a family tree. Not only will this permit you to see the relationships among relatives better, but the family tree will also become the memorial to these people.

Not only survivors, but also other family members as well will remember people in your family who were killed. Often after the War, families in the United States made inquiries to try to locate family members. It was at this time that people began to discover who did not survive. Try to locate the people in your family who were involved with these inquiries. They will be your best resources for discovering the answer to your questions. You will watch the branches of your family tree grow when you are doing this research. But never forget that if not for your inquiries and your research, the names which you are gathering will be lost in another generation. You are making an effort to keep the memory of these deaths and the Holocaust alive. It is one thing to know about "the six million" and quite another to have the names of the people in your family who were there and who were murdered.

#### The Search for Victims and Survivors

In 1943, the Committee on Displaced Populations of the Allied Post-War Requirement Bureau, located in London, observed the obvious: As a result of the war and particularly because of persecution, there was extensive displacement of populations. They decided, therefore, to establish the National Tracing Bureau in different countries with the aim of locating people who were missing or who had been deported. In 1944, the Supreme Headquarters of the Allied Expeditionary Forces, known as SHAEF, gave orders to register all displaced persons on index cards, to aid in the location process. By 1945, SHAEF established a tracing bureau which was given the task of collecting name lists of displaced

persons as well as persons incarcerated in concentration camps. This effort was aided by the United National Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) and was located in Versailles. Together, however, UNRRA and SHAEF relocated to Frankfort on Main.

In July of 1945, SHAEF was dissolved and the Combined Displaced Persons Executive, known as CDPX, established a collecting center for documents as well as a tracing bureau. This Central Tracing Bureau had as its goals to trace missing persons—military and civilian—of countries which were members of the United Nations, as well as to collect and preserve all documents concerning non Germans and displaced persons in Germany. It was also given the task of assisting in the reuniting of families that had been separated by the War.

In 1946, the Central Tracing Bureau moved from Frankfort on Main to Arolsen. It was renamed the International Tracing Service, as it is still called today.

At present, and since 1955, the International Tracing Service has been directed and administered by the International Committee of the Red Cross.

In its beginning, this organization was involved mainly with displaced persons. However, when the International Tracing Service (ITS) came into possession of concentration camp documents, the function of the organization changed. Suddenly, ITS became involved with furnishing proofs of death that occurred in the Death Camps. It is mainly this function of ITS that concerns us here.

The historical background of the International Tracing Service has the most acceptable information of concentration camp victims and displaced persons in the world. While it is true that Yad Vashem Archives in Jerusalem has a complete duplicate collection provided by ITS, Yad Vashem is not set up to do the kind of research for people that ITS is financed to do. In fact, Yad Vashem directs many inquiries to ITS. To be

clear, ITS will, under the right circumstances which we will explain. Provide information for you free of charge.

The International Tracing Service has, as perhaps the most important feature in its archives, a Master Index. This index is a file, by name of individual, of all names appearing on all the documents in the archives. The reference cards include the name, personal data available, and the description of the document in which the name is mentioned. At present, this Master Index contains 39,700,000 cards. It is interesting to note that the index is not filed alphabetically but rather phonetic-alphabetical in order to account for different spellings of the same surnames. Another rather remarkable resource used by ITS in this regard is a two-volume set of books listing first names and their many variations. This is obviously useful for location of individuals. The list of first names contains 48,096 forms of names.

The Master Index is, however, just the axle about which the collections within the archives revolve. A closer look at the contents of the archives will show how useful ITS can be.

In the International Tracing Service Archives the following are contained:

Indexes and name lists of concentration camps.

Indexes and name lists of Gestapo and Sipo Offices.

Name lists of persons.

Deportation lists of Jews.

Index Cards and name lists of towns and communities, district magistrate offices, labor offices, health insurance firms, etc., concerning foreigners who were registered during the War in Germany, mainly in the area that is now West Germany.

Index cards and name lists concerning

children who had been separated from their parents or close relatives during the War or immediately after the War.

While the holdings of ITS archives are vast, one should not think that the material is complete. For example, while the concentration camp material in the archives is the largest, it is not a collection of all concentration camp material that existed. ITS rates the completeness of its concentration camp collection as follows:

Buchenwald	almost complete
Dachau	almost complete
Flossenburg	incomplete but quite numerous
Mauthausen	trivial gaps
Mittelbau	trivial gaps
Natzweiler	not complete but quite numerous
Stutthof	not complete but quite numerous
Niederhagen- Wewelsburg	not complete but quite numerous
Ravensbruck	incomplete
Auschwitz	very incomplete
Gross-Rosen	very incomplete
Sachsenhausen	very incomplete
Neuengamme	very incomplete
Lublin	very incomplete
Krakow-Plaszow	very incomplete

According to ITS, there are 3,735,000 individual documents in the collection just described.

Another collection of ITS is the Post-War Documents which generally concern displaced persons who were registered from 1945 to 1951. Included in these documents are lists of the inhabitants of the DP camps.

The Historical Section of ITS archives is also of great value. Here are contained documents of a more general nature including concentration camps, Jewish towns, Nuremberg trial records, and information of the persecution of Jews in different countries. If you are interested in certain Jewish communities in Europe during the Holocaust, you will

find these archives at ITS to be excellent.

The International Tracing Service is currently in the process of establishing a subject index to its concentration camp material for use by researchers. They are also publishing a volume on concentration camps detailing the inner workings of each of the camps.

One might think that the "tracing" function of the International Tracing Service has outlived its usefulness, but ITS reports that during the last five years the average number of inquiries per year has been 8,000. After more than thirty years, people are still looking for lost relatives--and are sometimes finding them. It is sad to note, of course, that often ITS offers verification regarding the concentration camp deaths of individuals.

Finally, the International Tracing Service has a staff of personnel who can answer inquiries in the following languages: Czech, Dutch, Estonian, Finnish, Greek, Hungarian, Italian, Lithuanian, Polish, Russian, Serbocroatian, Slovakian, Spanish, English, French, and German. Inquiries in Hebrew and Azerbaijan can also be answered with the aid of other organizations, reports ITS.

I once naively thought that my family had escaped the Holocaust. It was my belief that since I was born in the United States and since my parents were in the United States, and since even my grandparents were not in Europe during the War, our family "got out in time."

It was not until I found an old family photograph and asked by great-uncle to identify people in the picture that I realized how wrong I was. The photograph contained twenty-one people and included my great-grandfather, who also came to America, as well as my father, aunt, uncle, great-uncle, and grandmother. That added up to six people of the twenty-one whom I could recognize from the photograph. Who were the others?

I didn't think much about the other people in the photograph when I first found it. After all, my grandmother and her three children were in it, and I knew all of them. Perhaps I was also pre-occupied with the fact that my grandfather was not in the picture. He was already in America at the time, earning enough money to send for the rest of the family.

Yes, "the rest of the family." Since my grandmother and her three children were finally sent for five years after my grandfather came to America, I always thought, as I said, that we "missed it."

Today, I know the truth: In addition to the six people whom I recognized in the photograph, only one other person survived the Holocaust. The other fourteen people were murdered. Out of twenty-one family members, two thirds were killed.

When I asked my great-uncle Sam who the other people in the picture were he said, "This is my brother Elya, his wife Dobroh, and their two children. This is my brother Hersh, his wife Anna, and their five children. And this is my sister Reisl, her husband Shimon, and their two children. Only Mechel, the oldest son of Hersh and Anna, survived. You know him. The others were all killed."

As I looked at the photograph, I thought again of my grandfather in America, working to earn the money which would bring his wife and three children, one of whom was my father, to this country. Had my grandfather stayed, had he continued his life with his brothers and sisters in the town in which they were born and raised, his family, like the others, would have probably been killed.

In all, at least 103 people in the Kurzweil family alone were murdered in the Holocaust. That's just one branch of my family.

And I thought we escaped it.

## HOLOCAUST RESEARCH

The International Tracing Service

As has been described, the International Tracing Service is the best source for locating information about Holocaust victims. While Yad Vashem has a duplicate collection of the International Tracing Service's holdings, it is ITS which will be more helpful. This is because ITS has, as its function, the role of doing research for individuals for free, while Yad Vashem does not do research for persons. If you write to Yad Vashem, they will suggest you contact ITS.

If you know the name of a relative and you want to find out his or her fate during the Holocaust, write to ITS and give them as much information about the person as you can. They require more than just a name since their files contain so many duplicate names. ITS usually asks for a person's name and birthdate, but if you do not know that (even an approximate date will help) then try to supply any other information which will narrow the field for the researcher.

What ITS will not do is send you information on everyone in their files with a certain surname. Remember: it is a tracing service of individuals.

The ITS has all the available records kept by the nazis at the concentration camps but, as noted, its collection is not complete. It also has a great number of other types of records. This means that its files include not only Holocaust victims who were killed, but also others who survived.

It usually takes a few months for ITS to fill your request, but it is their policy to send you a note telling you that they have received your inquiry. However, even this note takes several weeks to arrive. Nevertheless, when you do receive their final reply, it might include some extremely meaningful information.

As we have mentioned, ITS also has information concerning the fate of towns during the Holocaust. Along with your inquiry pertaining to individuals, you might want to ask about certain localities.

When you write to ITS, simply state that you are interested in knowing whatever they have in their files on your family members and then list those individuals along with additional information as explained earlier. Again, ITS, which is under the auspices of the International Red Cross, does not charge for its research-nor should it.

Write to:

International Tracing Service  
D-3548 Arolsen  
Federal Republic of Germany

The one million Jewish children murdered in the Nazi holocaust died not because of their faith, nor in spite of their faith, nor for reasons unrelated to faith. They were murdered because of the faith of their great-grandparents. Had these great-grandparents abandoned their Jewish faith, and failed to bring up Jewish children, then their fourth-generation descendants might have been among the Nazi executioners, but not among their Jewish victims. Like Abraham of old, European Jews sometime in the mid-nineteenth century offered a human sacrifice, by the mere minimal commitment to the Jewish faith of bringing up Jewish children. But unlike Abraham they did not know what they were doing, and there was no reprieve. This is the brute fact which makes all comparisons odious or irrelevant. This is the scandal of the particularity of Auschwitz which, once faced by the Jewish believer, threatens total despair.

Emil L. Fackenheim

### Mauthausen Death Books

The National Archives in Washington, D.C., has two rolls of microfilm which contain seven volumes known as the Mauthausen Death Books. These books recorded the deaths of about 100,000 victims at that Nazi death camp. The volumes are chronological-by death (1)-and include such personal data as name, date of birth, date of death, and other comments.

These volumes were introduced by the U.S. prosecution staff before the International Military Tribunal, commonly known as the Nuremberg Trials.

There is no index to these death books, so it is quite difficult to find specific names. However, if you have reason to believe that family members were killed in Mauthausen, and you care to do the research, these rolls of microfilm are available. You can also view these rolls of microfilm if you want to witness a frightening example of Nazi sickness.

These and other National Archives holdings are available to you on interlibrary loan. The code number for the death books is (T 990). Ask your local library for details concerning the interlibrary loan of these materials.

### Yad Vashem

Yad Vashem is a national institution in Israel dedicated to perpetuating the memory of the victims of the Holocaust. Their stated goal is "to gather in material regarding all those Jewish people who laid down their lives, who fought and rebelled against the Nazi enemy and their collaborators, and to perpetuate their memory and that of the communities, organizations, and institutions which were destroyed because they were Jewish. . . ."

In addition to administering a museum devoted to the Holocaust, Yad Vashem is a research institution which collects material and published books and periodicals in Hebrew and English. Yad

Vashem also aids in bringing Nazi war criminals to trial through the information which it provides to legal authorities throughout the world.

While Yad Vashem will not endeavor to do research for individuals with general requests, one department of Yad Vashem is of great interest to those who wish to locate information about Holocaust victims. This is the Pages of Testimony Department. Yad Vashem has thousands of pages of testimony, written by individuals, regarding Holocaust victims. The testimony is arranged by name, and if you can supply the names of persons whom you believe were murdered by the Nazis, or if you do not know the fate of individuals who were in Europe during the Holocaust, the Pages of Testimony Department might have information on these persons.

A useful aspect of the pages of testimony is the fact that not only is the name of the Holocaust victim on file, but so is the name of the individual who made the testimony-(i.e., the person who filled out the form). If you find the name of a victim who was in your family, you can also find the name, possibly, of a living person who knew the victim. Relatives who lost contact with each other have found one another through the written recording of a Holocaust victim!

To make a request for pages of testimony, write to:

Yad Vashem  
Pages of Testimony Department  
P.O.B. 3477  
Jerusalem, Israel

Note that the Pages of Testimony Department works both ways- giving information and receiving information. If you already have names and other facts about people who were murdered during the Holocaust, you will want to ask Yad Vashem for blank pages in order to send them your testimony.

Everything new must have its roots  
in what was before.

-Sigmund Freud

### Memorial Books as Sources for Learning about Holocaust Victims

If you can find a memorial book devoted to a town from which your family has come, you might find a listing of Holocaust victims from that town. Often memorial books publish lists of individuals murdered during the Holocaust, in order to keep their memory alive. Even if you think your family left its ancestral home before the Holocaust, these listings might provide names of family members who stayed. While you cannot assume that people with the same surname as yours appearing on these lists are related, there is a good chance that they are—especially if it was a small town. If you find names in memorial books which are familiar, you should ask your relatives, particularly your older relatives, if they remember them.

Landsmannschaften can also be a good source for learning about the fate of your family and your ancestral towns during the Holocaust. Often the members of landsmannschaften are survivors and have much to share regarding this part of your family experience.

### Locating Survivors

I write this section of this book with great hesitation. While it is nearly thirty-five years after the Holocaust, I have met many people who still have hopes that one day they will find their relatives who have been missing since the War. Every once in a while a news item will stimulate more of this hope. "A brother and sister, separated by the Holocaust, find each other decades later." While these stories are true, they are few and far between. Nonetheless, if the hope is there, a distant dream might one day be fulfilled.

Yet, I write this section with hesitation because I do not want to raise false hopes. I do not want to give the impression that one can easily find lost relatives. I do not want to add to the thought that "they might be alive" only

to bring on greater disappointment when they are not found.

So, I ask the reader to understand the situation: hope of finding a list relative is very slight. yet, if the possibility exists and if you have the strength to pursue the question, you may want to attempt the research. Finally, before I describe this next source, you should understand that the odds are greatest, sadly, that your missing relative is not alive and was murdered.

After the Holocaust, a major activity of Jews around the world was searching for missing relatives. The question in everyone's mind was, "Who was killed and who survived?" Immediately after the War, Jews were asked to return to their hometowns. This was, perhaps, the best way to find out the fate of one's family and friends. If everyone returned "home," even for a short time, the survivors could learn the fate of their loved ones. In addition, if any of the family's personal effects were still there, this would be an opportunity to claim them.

There are an enormous number of post-War horror stories relating to this very subject. How often a surviving Jew returned to his or her village only to be murdered—after the War!—by anti-semites in the town. In my family, there are eye-witness accounts by many people of just this situation. A cousin of mine returned to our shtetl only searching for his missing relatives and was killed by the local people.

For the Jews who returned to their homes, their experience was mixed with joy and sadness. In many cases a survivor's wildest dreams were fulfilled—others in his family survived. But in most cases, perhaps every case, the death of many loved ones was discovered.

But not everyone returned home. Some refused ever to go back to the towns they were originally from—not even for a day. Others were physically unable to travel great distances to return home. Still

others were too ill to make the journey. Other circumstances also prevented many Jews from going "home." In addition, usually a person had family in several different towns. A survivor could not be in all places at once. Yet the survivor was desperately anxious to learn news about his family.

Because of this situation, various agencies attempted to aid in the search for missing relatives. The Jewish Agency for Palestine in 1945 established the Search Bureau for Missing Relatives. The World Jewish Congress established the Division for Displaced Persons. Other organizations, such as the Czechoslovak Jewish Committee, the Relief committee of Jews from Czechoslovakia, the American Federation for Lithuanian Jews, Inc., and many others, also joined in to help Jews find survivors.

The major effort of these organizations was to gather and publish information about survivors in the form of alphabetical lists of names. The Jewish Agency for Palestine's Search Bureau for Missing Relatives published a 300-page book in 1945 called Register of Jewish Survivors. It was a list of 58,000 Jews in Poland in June of that year.

But this was just one of many such published lists. Here is a list of titles of some of the published lists:

Surviving Jews in Warsaw as of  
June 5th 1945

Surviving Jews in Lublin

List of Persons Liberated at  
Terezin in Early May 1945

List of Children at Terezin

Displaced Jews Resident in the  
Czechoslovak Republic 1948

List of Jews Residing in Riga

Jewish Refugees in Italy

Jews Liberated From German  
Concentration Camps Arrived in  
Sweden 1945-6

Surviving Jews in Yugoslavia as of  
June, 1945

A List of Lithuanian Jews Who  
Survived the Nazi Tyranny and  
Are Now in Lithuania, France,  
Italy, Sweden, Palestine, 1946

Jews Registered in Czestochowa

An Extensive List of Survivors of  
Nazi Tyranny Published So That  
the Lost May Be Found and the  
Dead Brought Back to Life

These are just some of the lists which were published. The titles of many of the lists are, in themselves, quite moving.

Where are these lists? At the present time I am aware of only one place where a large collection of these books is gathered and that is at YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, 1048 5th Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10028. Be aware that the YIVO staff cannot do research for you. They cannot look in these books in search of names. However important this search might be to you, the YIVO does not have the staff to do searches.

How can these lists serve you? While the International Tracing Service has all available data on Holocaust victims and survivors, I have already explained that ITS is a tracing service. In other words, if you give it a name of a person (and additional identification) it will check to see if it has information on the person. However, what if I am looking, for example, for information about people with the name Kurzweil? The International Tracing Service cannot and will not supply me with information on every Kurzweil in its files. As they have told me through correspondence, their files have information about more than two hundred Kurzweils! They cannot send me all of that information, but they can

check their files if I ask them about certain specific names. Again, they are a tracing service of individuals.

This is where the lists come in. If I check the survivors lists for the surnames which I am interested in, I might find people with the same surnames. The names of the towns are also listed. These towns are the ones where the people were at the time the lists was compiled. Since most Jews registered in their hometowns, this is often the town where they lived before the Holocaust. If the town matches one in your family history, you may be on the right track in locating a relative. Once you find a listing of interest, you can photocopy the page and ask family members if they recall this person. Then you can send it to the International Tracing Service. They will check their files for the name. Finally, you can check phone books and you might match the name on the list with a listing in the Israeli phone books, for example, or other phone directories as well.

Once again, these lists are a way to possibly locate missing people. While the lists were published more than three decades ago, they might be an aid in discovering some valuable information. On the other hand, I must repeat that the chances are still slight, and your hopes must not be raised too high.

#### Missing Relatives in Israel

If you are looking for a missing relative in Israel, the following organization would be of help:

The Jewish Agency  
Missing Relative Department  
P.O. Box 92  
Jerusalem, Israel

#### Deportations from France during the Holocaust

A remarkable book was published in 1978 that should be of great interest to anyone researching Holocaust victims in France. Titled *Le Memorial de la departation des Juifs de France*, and

written and compiled by Serge Klarsfeld, this book lists all of the Jews deported from France during World War II. The book contains the names, birthdates, and birthplaces of nearly eighty thousand Jews who were deported.

This large volume costs thirty dollars and is available from the Beate Klarsfeld Foundation, 515 Madison Avenue, New York, New York 10022.

#### Death Books

At YIVO Institute for Jewish Research in New York, along with their collection of lists of survivors, are a few examples of lists of murdered Jews. There are not gravestones for the millions murdered. These lists, in effect, become their memorials.

Examples of such books are two volumes published by the Jewish Labor Committee in 1947. The titles of the two books are: *Memorial Dates of the Martyred Jews and Dachau-Jews Born in Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and White Russia*, and *Memorial Dates of the Martyred Jews of Dachau-Jews born in Poland*. Both books were compiled by Jeseff Lindenberger and Jacob Silberstein, themselves Dachau survivors.

These kinds of lists, while being possible sources for reserach also serve as a further inspiration. We must try our best to learn about those members of our families who perished during the Holocaust. We ought to know their names and to write them down on our family trees. We ought to print these family trees and distribute them to our family members so that everyone knows who perished and how we are connected to them. Their memories must live. "Whoever teaches his son teaches not only his son but also his son's son-and so on to end of generations." Talmud: Kiddushin, 30a

#### Holocaust Calendar of Polish Jewry

According to Jewish tradition, the anniversary of the death of a family

member is to be observed. On that day, each year, a candle is lit in memory of the individual who has departed.

The Holocaust, which stole six million Jews from our families, caused most of our families to observe these death anniversaries. The problem, of course, is that in most cases we do not know the exact date of death. Whole towns were often destroyed at once with nobody to recall the date. Many Jews were marched or taken to concentration camps. The precise date an individual Jew died is nearly impossible to determine.

Desiring to fulfill the religious obligation to observe the anniversary of the death, many Jews who have family members who were killed during the Holocaust will use the date that the town was attacked or evacuated as the day to remember.

In 1974, Rabbi Israel Schepansky published an eighty-eight page book called Holocaust Calendar of Polish Jewry. The Holocaust Calendar is essentially a town-by-town list of communities in Poland. The book provides the name of the town, the population, the dates and ways of "liquidation," as the author puts it, and in many cases other information about the town. Rabbi Schepansky is a well-respected scholar, the editor of the Jewish magazine Or Hamizrach, and on the editorial board of the Talmudic Encyclopedia.

The Holocaust Calendar is available for \$3.50 from Rabbi Israel Schepansky, 2220 Avenue L, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11210. Be aware that the book is in Hebrew. Nonetheless, you can surely find someone who can translate for you, if it is Polish Jewry that is your interest.

Unfortunately, there is no single reference source for the dates of other Jewish communities in Eastern Europe. Some dedicated scholar ought to do the same thing for Hungary, Czechoslovakia, etc., that Rabbi Schepansky has done for Poland.

On the other hand, as you do research on

the histories of your European communities, you will find these dates and other information about your towns during the Holocaust. The day that the Nazis destroyed your town is an important date for you to remember and to keep as a part of your family history.

Mid-nineteenth century European Jews did not know the effects of their actions upon their remote descendants when they remained faithful to Judaism and raised Jewish children. What if they had known? Could they have remained faithful? Should they? And what of us who know, when we consider the possibility of a second Auschwitz three generations hence. (Which would we rather have our great-grandchildren be-victims, or bystanders and executioners?) Yet for us to cease to be Jews (and to cease to bring up Jewish Children) would be to abandon our millennial post as witnesses to the God of History.

-Emil L. Fackenheim

#### Pre-Holocaust European Phone Books

The New York Public Library Research Division attempts each year to obtain current phone books from all over the world. They also save their old phone books.

One day I wondered how far back the oldest Polish phone book went in the library's collection. The New York Public Library Annex on 43rd Street keeps these books. At the annex I found two volumes of the 1936 Polish telephone directories.

Since most of my family who came to America arrived in the early part of the 1900s, and since even those who came later arrived before the Holocaust, one might wonder why these phone books would be of use to me. In addition, you might ask, "What Jews had telephones in Poland in 1936?!"

In answer to the second question, the fact of the matter is that many Jews in Poland in 1936 had phones. The myth is that every Eastern European Jew was as poor as Tevye the Dairyman. As for my family being in the U.S. before 1936, the truth is that many cousins did not come to America—and were murdered in the Holocaust.

Upon examining the 1936 Polish phone books, I discovered that the books were arranged by town. Some towns had only two phones. Others had more. In one of the towns in my family history there was a listing of about twenty phones. Two of the names, to my great surprise, were slightly familiar to me. I photocopied the page and brought it to a man in the family who was from the same town and who in fact had the same last name as the people listed. When I asked him if he knew who the two people listed were, he said, "Of course. One is my uncle and the other is my father."

They were both killed during the Holocaust, but in 1936 both had telephones. My cousin was then able to tell me about some of the other people who were listed as having phones in the same town. It was an excellent way to discover new people as well as to stimulate a memory to recall stories about people who had not been seen for thirty-five or more years.

The following is a listing of pre-Holocaust telephone books in the New York Public Library Annex:

**Austria:**

Vienna, 1928-30, 1932-34, 1936-38  
 Niederosterreich  
 Burgenland  
 Oberosterreich  
 Salzburg  
 Steiermark  
 Karnten

Tirol  
 Vorarlberg

**Czechoslovakia:**

Prague, 1932-38, 1940  
 Bohemia, 1934/35, 1935/36, 1936/37, 1938/39  
 Moravia and Silesia, 1932, 1933, 1936  
 Slovakia and Russian Lower Carpathia, 1934, 1935

**Germany:**

Berlin, 1913, 1926-38  
 Dusseldorf, 1931-36  
 Frankfurt, 1928-37  
 Hamburg, 1927, 1930-35  
 Munchen, 1932-37  
 Stuttgart, 1936

(It is interesting to note that many people who do research to claim war reparations as well as to hunt Nazis use these rare pre-Holocaust German phone directories.)

**Hungary:**

Budapest, 1913, 1928-34, 1936-38, 1940

**Poland:**

Waraw, 1931-35, 1936/37  
 All districts except Warsaw, 1936

**Yugoslavia:**

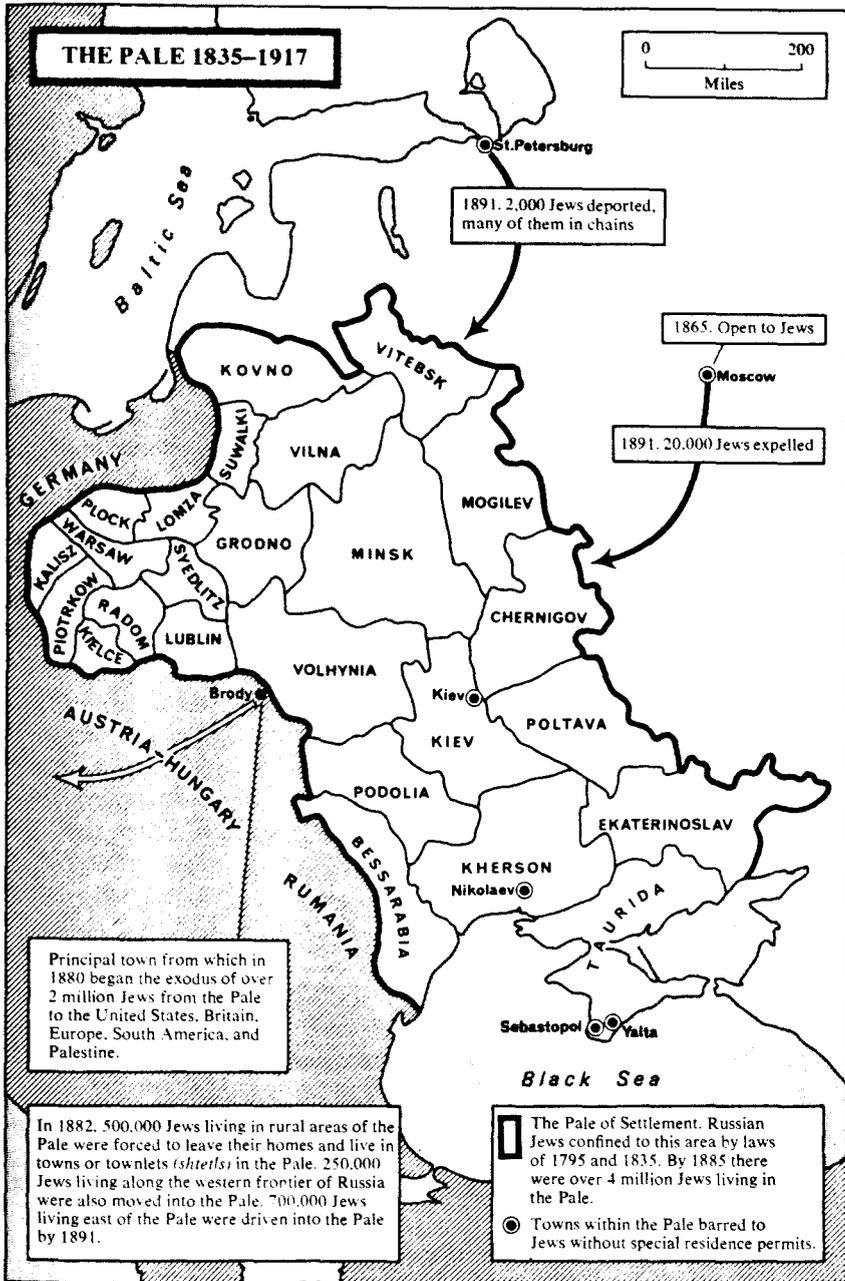
Belgrade, 1934

This is an incomplete list of cities and countries, of course.

The New York Public Library also has post-Holocaust phone books which may aid in tracking down missing relatives.

All our ancestors are in us. Who can feel himself alone?

-Richard Beer-Hofmann,  
 Schalfied fur Miriam,  
 1898



## Other Resources Jewish Research

Cyndi's List Jewish Resources

<http://www.cyndislist.com/jewish.htm>

Jewish Genealogy Research on Family Search including Research Guides and Helpful Links

[http://www.familysearch.org/eng/default.asp?page=home/welcome/site\\_resources.asp%3FwhichResourcePage=Jewish](http://www.familysearch.org/eng/default.asp?page=home/welcome/site_resources.asp%3FwhichResourcePage=Jewish)

Guide to Israel's Archives

<http://www.research.co.il/israeli.html>

Beginners Guide to Austrian Jewish Genealogy

<http://www.jewishgen.org/databases/AustriaCzech/>

JewishGen France Database

<http://www.jewishgen.org/French/>

German Jewish Special Interest Group

<http://www.jewishgen.org/GerSIG/resources.htm>

JewishGen UK Database

<http://www.jewishgen.org/databases/UK/>

JewishGen Hungary Database

<http://www.jewishgen.org/databases/Hungary/>

Israel Genealogical Society

<http://www.isragen.org.il/>

Genealogy Resources-Jewish Latvia

[http://www.rumbula.org/genealogy\\_resources\\_jewish\\_latvia.shtml](http://www.rumbula.org/genealogy_resources_jewish_latvia.shtml)

Jewish Genealogical Data for Courland (Mainly Jewish Province in Latvia)

[http://www.jewishgen.org/Courland/data\\_by\\_sources.htm](http://www.jewishgen.org/Courland/data_by_sources.htm)

Jewishgen.org Jews in Estonia page

<http://www.jewishgen.org/Latvia/estonia.html>

LitvakSIG (Lithuanian Jewish) Database

<http://www.jewishgen.org/litvak/>

Polish Jews.org-History and Research Resources

<http://polishjews.org/>