JewishGen FAQ – Frequently Asked Questions

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This document, the JewishGen Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ), attempts to answer some of the basic questions about Jewish genealogy.

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1. GETTING STARTED

Jewish genealogy, or family history, is not Jewish history, nor should Judaism begin to define family history.

- Kenneth Ackerman, *From Generation to Generation: How to Trace Your Jewish Genealogy and Personal History*, Updated Edition, Dan Pinchas Cohen (ed.), Avotaynu, Inc., 2004, 2nd edition, 400+ pages, ISBN 1-886223-23-8.
- Dan Pinchas Cohen (ed.), *Jewish Genealogy: Adventures in Family History*, Avotaynu, Inc., 2000, 1st edition, 400+ pages, ISBN 1-886223-11-4.
- Richard M. Gaur, *Getting Started in Jewish Genealogy*, (Bergenfield, NJ: Avotaynu), 2nd edition (first ever, 2004), 64 pages, (Rev.), (Bergenfield, NJ: Avotaynu), 2010, ISBN 1-886223-21-1.
- Rhoda Miller, *Discovering Your Jewish Ancestors*, (Bergenfield, NJ: Avotaynu, 2008), 400+ pages, ISBN 1-886223-20-3.
- Kenneth Alfandary, *Discovering Your Jewish Ancestors*, (Tel-Aviv, Israel, 1.T. Herzliya Center, 2001), 145 pages, (Rev.), ISBN 0-9-66-0-0-1.

Start with your relatives. Search for documents, photos, and other information in your family's possession. Interview the oldest members of your family.

- Interview your relatives. Write up what you learn from your family members. Ask them about family names, where they lived, what they remembered, what stories they told.
- Check the U.S. Federal Census. Census every 10 years. The most Census is the most recent available. Available in the U.S. National Archives and at its regional branches.
- Check other records. Vital Records, Birth, Marriage and Death records (See Vital Records), Naturalization Records, Passenger Lists, Census records, Cemetery records, etc.
- Coordinate with other genealogists researching the same family names and towns. Consult the JewishGen Family Finder (JGFF).
- Join your local genealogical society (JGS).
- Subscribe to Avotaynu.
- Attend a conference on Jewish Genealogy.

2. PUBLICATIONS

Avotaynu, the International Journal of Jewish Genealogy is a quarterly publication, founded in 1986, devoted to Jewish genealogical topics, and covering all aspects of Jewish genealogy worldwide. Avotaynu is the only publication devoted to Jewish genealogy. Avotaynu also publishes many other genealogy publications concerning the Jewish family.

Avotaynu subscriptions are Dues Free Subscriptions to Kol Ha'ir (Voice of the Jewish Community) and JewishGen members.

Avotaynu, Inc.
P.O. Box 900
Teaneck, NJ 07666
Phone: 201-692-0404 or 800-295-9556
Fax: 201-692-0402
E-mail: info@avotaynu.com
Web: http://www.avotaynu.com

To order publications online from the Avotaynu Online Bookstore, a secure, standard shopping cart, is available at their web site. The contents of the Bookstore are updated every 24 hours. Avotaynu also accepts orders by telephone, fax, and mail.

Above Jewish International Bookstore (JIBS) and Avotaynu Special Interest Groups (SIGs) are available. Contact Avotaynu.

3. JEWISHGEN FAMILY FINDER (JGFF)

The JewishGen Family Finder (JGFF) is a database of surnames and towns currently being researched by people who are doing genealogical research. A surnames entry lists a JGFF member's surnames, towns, and dates of interest, and, optionally, contact information. The JGFF is a database of surnames and towns, not a database of family trees. It does not contain any family information.

Researchers can decide for themselves if they want to publish their contact information, and the amount of information. The JGFF is a database of surnames and towns, not a database of family trees. It does not contain any family information.

Searching: You can search the JGFF online at http://www.jewishgen.org/jgff.

Contributing your surnames, towns, and contact information to the database is the JGFF. See of about. All JGFF genealogists are encouraged to contribute their surnames, towns, and contact information to the JGFF.

For a quick introduction about the JGFF, see the JGFF FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions about the JGFF).

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4. BOOKS

Genealogy Reading Lists:

- Dan Pinchas Cohen (ed.), *Jewish Genealogy: Adventures in Family History*, Avotaynu, Inc., 2000, 1st edition, 400+ pages, ISBN 1-886223-11-4.
- Rhoda Miller, *Discovering Your Jewish Ancestors*, (Bergenfield, NJ: Avotaynu), 2008, 400+ pages, ISBN 1-886223-20-3.
- Kenneth Ackerman, *From Generation to Generation: How to Trace Your Jewish Genealogy and Personal History*, Updated Edition, Dan Pinchas Cohen (ed.), Avotaynu, Inc., 2004, 2nd edition, 400+ pages, ISBN 1-886223-23-8.
- Richard M. Gaur, *Getting Started in Jewish Genealogy*, (Bergenfield, NJ: Avotaynu), 2nd edition (first ever, 2004), 64 pages, (Rev.), (Bergenfield, NJ: Avotaynu), 2010, ISBN 1-886223-21-1.
- Jewish Genealogy Society of Philadelphia, *Jewish Genealogy Resources in Philadelphia*, (Philadelphia, PA: Jewish Genealogy Society of Philadelphia), 2000, 1st edition, 100+ pages, ISBN 1-886223-17-3.
- Gary Mokotoff and Sallyann Sack, *Where Once We Walked: A Guide to the Jewish Communities Destroyed in the Holocaust*, 3rd edition, Avotaynu, Inc., 2010, 1st edition, 1000+ pages, ISBN 1-886223-24-6

14. OTHER ARCHIVES

The following organizations preserve documents, letters, local histories, manuscripts, etc. pertaining to Jewish communities and organizations. Most of their material is arranged by locality and organization. They cannot do research for you, but can tell you whether they have records for a specific organization or locality.

- **American Jewish Historical Society**
  15 West 16th Street
  New York, NY 10011
  (212) 294-6160 (877) 840-8310
  American Ivory
  For an article on AJHS' geographical holdings, see the JuDaYle "aha" or see Avotaynu XI:3 (Fall 1995), pages 33-41. The AJHS' Manuscript catalog is searchable online.
- **Leo Baeck Institute**
  15 West 16th Street
  New York, NY 10011
  (212) 744-6400
  German Ivory
- **YIVO Institute**
  15 West 16th Street
  New York, NY 10011
  (212) 246-6080
  East European Ivory

  NOTE: All three of the above institutions have moved to a new facility at 15 West 16th Street in New York. "The Center for Jewish History", which opened in the Summer of 1999.
- **American Jewish Archives**
  3101 Clifton Ave.
  Cincinnati, OH 45220-2488
  (513) 221-1875
  American Ivory
- **American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee Archives**
  Worldwide Ivory
- **Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People**
  Hebrew University
  P.O. Box 1020
  91010 Jerusalem, ISRAEL
  972-2-535-3705
  Worldwide, but strong collections on French, Italian, German, and Austrian Ivory

There are many other **local Jewish Historical Societies and Archives**, which focus on a particular city, state or region (e.g., Chicago, Philadelphia, Rhode Island). A comprehensive listing of them is in the 1994 edition of Jewish Genealogy Families by Rosalie Osterweil, Appendix B, pages 132-136, as well as in Kartuvot (see Gesher Galicia's pages 103-105). On the Web: http://www.geocities.com/useful/other/ Sort, see site

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15. HOLOCAUST RESEARCH

The Holocaust has been called the most documented event of the 20th century. Tens of thousands of books and resources exist. However, the overabundance of information has not been recently organized for genealogical research: there are few general indexes, and most material is not in English. The most complete book on Holocaust research is:

- *Mokotoff, Gary. How to Document Victims and Locate Survivors of the Holocaust.* (Teaneck, NJ: Avotaynu, Inc., 1995). 194 pages. (ISBN: 0-964074-9-8. Selections available online.

Yad Vashem is the principal repository of information about the Holocaust. Located in Jerusalem, Yad Vashem has a museum, a library, an archive, and a special memorial called the "Hall of Names". The library of 200,000 volumes includes over 1,000 richer books (see below), and the archive contains many unique source material, much of which is organized by town. See Guide to Unpublished Material of the Holocaust, Volume 3-6.

The "Hall of Names" houses the "Pages of Testimony", a manuscript collection of information about victims. More than two million Pages of Testimony have been filled out by relatives of Holocaust victims. Each Page of Testimony contains names of parents, spouse and children; birth and death dates and places; and name, address and relationship of person submitting. For more information see the JuDaYle, "Genealogical Research at Yad Vashem", or write to:

Yad Vashem
P.O. Box 3477
91034 Jerusalem
Israel
972-2-675-5211
WWW site: http://www.yad-vashem.org.il

Some books which contain information about Holocaust victims:

- Gudenbach (Goldman), Sibylle and Naftali. Lost Jewish Communities of Eastern Europe. A list of over 170,000 survivors and their children in the U.S. and Canada, maintained by the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington (see below).
- HIAS (Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society), 333 Seventh Ave., New York, NY 10001-5004 (212) 967-4100. HIAS assisted more than 70,000 Holocaust families in the years and 1950s. They maintain case files on these persons, and will search for a fee. E-mail: info@hias.org
- International Tracing Service (ITS), Grosse Allee 5-9, 34454 Arolsen, Germany. Set up by the International Red Cross after the war. Maintains 40 million index cards, mostly of survivors. They are willing to answer genealogical requests — very slowly (1-2 years). Yad Vashem has copies of these records on microfilm, for personal searching.
- Holocaust and War Victims Tracing and Information Center, American Red Cross, 4700 Mount Hope Drive, Baltimore, MD 21215-3215. (410) 580-3700. Listen for U.S. residents forwarding search requests to the ITS (see above). See JuDaYle site.

The U.S. National Archives Military Archives Division has microfilm of many passenger records from World War II, including some concentration camp records.

The **U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum** in Washington (opened 1993) has a library and archive of Holocaust research material, including documents recently microfilmed in the former Soviet bloc. They also have a cooperative agreement with Yad Vashem. Contact the Museum at: 100 Raoul Wallenberg Place SW, Washington, DC 20024-2126. Tel. (202) 488-0400. http://www.ushmm.org

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16. FAMILY TREE OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE (FTJP)

The FTJP is a database of individuals on family trees submitted by Jewish genealogists. While the JewishGen Family Finder (JGFF) contains only surnames and towns, the FTJP contains data on individual people (with dates and places, death dates and places, marriage dates and places, with links to parents, spouses) and children.

Family trees in GEDCOM format can be submitted for inclusion in the FTJP without charge. All Jewish genealogists are encouraged to participate. You can upload your GEDCOM file to the JewishGen FTJP, at http://www.jewishgen.org/ftjpshtl.

The FTJP is available on the web at http://www.jewishgen.org/ftjpshtl.

The FTJP began in 1990 as the "Jewish Genealogical People Finder" (JGPF), which was published on microfiche.

The JewishGen online FTJP currently contains information on over five million individuals, submitted by over 4,500 Jewish genealists.

Another place which is collecting Jewish family trees is the Douglas E. Goldman Jewish Genealogy Center at Beit Hatfutsot (Museum of the Diaspora) in Tel Aviv. The Center (formerly known as "Dorot") opened in April, and as of mid-1999 is accepting family trees from individuals on more than 1,500 family surnames listed in its database. This database can be accessed in person at the museum in Israel, or by sending written enquiries with a $5 check to the address below. The Center also maintains a database of 50,000 Jewish Holocaust victims, and 100,000 photographs. Contact the Center at: Douglas E. Goldman Jewish Genealogy Center, P.O. Box 39359, Tel Aviv 61392 ISRAEL. Telephone (03) 646-2664. Fax (03) 646-2134. WWW: http://www.bh.org.il

The FTJP and Bet Hatefutsot databases are similar, and indeed overlap, because many genealogists have submitted their trees to both. There are current agreements in place to exchange data between the two databases, and if the individual submitters agree, make their accessible via the JewishGen website.

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17. JEWISH NAMES

This is a very complex subject. It is difficult and hazardous to generalize, because of all the languages and regions involved, so only some brief pointers and references will be given here.

Reference books:

- Kaganoff, Benzion C. *A Dictionary of Jewish Names and Their History.* (New York: Schocken Books, 1977). 250 pages. (Hc): ISBN 0-8052-0544-4. Contains Ashkenazic surnames's roots, last name prefixes and references given.
- Beider, Alexander.
  - *A Dictionary of Jewish Surnames from the Russian Empire.* (Teaneck, NJ: Avotaynu, Inc., 2008). Revised Edition. 1,008 + 118 pages. (Hc/dj): ISBN 1-886223-23-8; OCLC #272147779. and
  - *A Dictionary of Jewish Surnames from the Kingdom of Poland.* (Teaneck, NJ: Avotaynu, Inc., 1997). 608 pages. (Hc): (Table of Contents). OCLC #37599427. and
  - *The Russian-Jewish Surnames from Galicia.* (Bergenfield, NJ: Avotaynu Inc., 2004). 624 pages (HB): (Table of Contents). OCLC #55266436.

  (The most comprehensive scholarly studies of Jewish surnames in Eastern Europe).
- Singerman, Robert. *Jewish Given Names and Family Names: A New Bibliography.* Edited by David L. Gold. (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2002). 245 pages. ISBN 9004124837. (A subject-organized list of over 3,500 books and articles on Jewish given names and family names throughout history. Earlier editions were published as *Jewish Onomastics. A Bibliography.* (New York and London: Garland, 1977). 132 pages. ISBN 0824208181.)
- Guggenheimer, Heinrich W. and Eva H. *Jewish Family Names and their Origins: an Etymological Dictionary.* (Hoboken, NJ: Ktav, 1992). 282-ii[8] pages. (Hc): ISBN 0-88125-397-9.

SURNAME ADOPTION:

Most Jews did not have fixed hereditary surnames until the early 19th century. Before that, people were known only by their first name and a patronymic, i.e. their father's given name, e.g. "Isaacs ben Shmuel", meaning "Isaacs the son of Shmuel".

Jews were required to take surnames at various times: Austrian Empire (1787), Russian Pale of Settlement (1804, not enforced until 1835/1845), Russian Kingdom of Poland (1821), West Galicia (1826), Prussia (1845), various German states: Frankfurt (1807), Baden (1809), Westphalia (1812), Prussia (1812), Bavaria (1813), Württemberg (1828), Posen (1832), Saxony (1836).

GIVEN NAMES:

- **Patronymics / Matronymics**: based on a parent's given name:
  - Slavic suffixes "-ович", "-ович", "-ич", "-вич"
  - Germanic suffix "-son":
    - "Isaacson" = son of Isaac.
    - "Mendelssohn" = son of Mendel
- **Toponyms**: Based on a geographic place name:
  - Slavic suffix "-ski" (Germanic suffix "-er"
    - "Warshawski" = one from Warsaw.
    - "Berliner" = one from Berlin. "Wilner" = one from Vilna.
- **Occupational**: Based on vocation:
  - "Schneider", "Portnoy", "Portnoi", "Portnoi", "Portnoi" = tailor.
  - "Shochet" (German/Yiddish), "Schochet" (Polish/Ukrainian), "Portnoy" [Russian] = tailor.
- **Personal description** or characteristics:
  - "Schwarz" = black; "Weiss" = white, "Klein" = small...
- **Religious**:
  - "Cohen" ("Kahn", etc.), "Levine", "Segal", "Katz"...
- **Artificial**: Fanciful or ornamental names:
  - Many names ending in "-berg", "-stein", "-feld"...
    - "Rosenberg" = mountain of roses.
    - "Finkelstein" = glittering stone.

Spelling is irrelevant. The consistent spelling of names is a 20th century invention and obsession. Names were almost never spelled in a standard way in Europe, even by the bearer, let alone by others. Spelling was phonetic, based on the local pronunciation of the name. Jewish scribes in Eastern Europe always check all possible spelling variations when doing research. Transliteration from one language to another creates further spelling variances, e.g. Yiddish "ש" became Russian "ш", English/German "sh" became English "s", etc.

Only a few families had surnames before 1800. Historical families: Rappaport, Auerbach, Rothschild, Katzenellenbogen, Horowitz, etc. See The Unknown Chain: Biographical Sketches and the Genealogy of Sharansky Jewish Families from the 15th-19th Century, by Neil Rosenstein. (Elizabeth, New Jersey: Computer Center for Jewish Genealogy, 1990). Revised edition (1994). 1,000 pages. (Hc): ISBN 0-9625338-1-4. (Table of Contents).

Just because two people have the same surname, it does not necessarily mean that they are related. Very few Jewish surnames are monogenetic, i.e. there was one original bearer of the surname who passed it on to his descendants. Most Jews in 1800 or 1850 did not have surnames. Jews in Austria, Hungary, Poland, Ukraine, Belarus, and most parts of Russia were **extremely** common, such having tens of thousands of bearers. Common names sprang up in many non-related families throughout Eastern Europe. So doing surname matches alone is not always productive. Geographic matches are often more important than the surname matches.

GIVEN NAMES:

- Beider, Alexander. *A Dictionary of Ashkenazic Given Names: Their Origins, Structure, Pronunciation, and Migrations.* (Teaneck, NJ: Avotaynu, Inc., 2002). 728 pages. (Hdbg). ISBN 1-886223-12-9. (The most comprehensive work on East European Jewish given names).
- Gorr, Shmuel. *Jewish Personal Names: Their Origin, Derivation, and Development.* (Jerusalem: Rubin Mass, 1948). (Teaneck, NJ: Avotaynu, Inc., 1992). 152 pages. (Hc): ISBN 0-9625372-2-7.
- Kolatch, Alfred J. *The New Name Dictionary: Modern English and Hebrew Names.* (New York: Jonathan David, 1984). 328 pages. (Hc): ISBN 0824603251. (A revision of the author's earlier works *Three of the Same Names* (1948) and *The Name Dictionary* (1967)).
- Feldheim, Rivki. *Russian-Jewish Given Names.* (Teaneck, NJ: Avotaynu, Inc., 1997). 144 pages. (Hc): ISBN 1-886223-07-6. (based on a 1911 work on Jewish given names used in Czarist Russia).
- "Jewish Given Names in Eastern Europe and the U.S.", by Warren Blatt, in Avotaynu XIV:3 (Fall 1998), pages 9-15.
- Additional bibliography on Jewish given names.

Addiotnal naming patterns: East European Jews would typically name a child after a deceased ancestor or relative, to keep the name alive. This custom gives clues as to who someone died. (More info).

Name changing after immigration — most immigrants changed their first names, usually to something with the same initial letter or sound, e.g. Benzion becomes Ben, Binyamin becomes Bernard, Baruch becomes Barry, Berl becomes Burl, Berel becomes Burel, Beryl, Bernice, Bernie, Bernard, Bernice, etc. Jewish rules regarding these transliterations, the names dont "translate" or "mean" anything. People were free to choose whatever name seemed fashionable. (More info). The best way to determine an immigrant ancestor's European given name is to check the Hebrew inscription on their tombstone.

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18. JewishGen DISCUSSION GROUP

The JewishGen Discussion Group is a computer-based Forum devoted to Jewish genealogy. Users can request help with genealogical problems, post information about new sources for research, and network with other Jewish genealogists (globally).

The JewishGen Discussion Group is accessible to two different ways: An Internet mailing list, and an Internet mailing list.

1. The Internet newsgroup is soc.genealogy.jewish.
2. The Internet mailing list is accessible to anyone who has Internet e-mail access.
   - To **subscribe** to the JewishGen mailing list on Internet, see the web subscription form at http://www.jewishgen.org/InterNetLists/.

     You can choose to subscribe in either "mail mode", where you will receive up to 50 email messages per day, or in "digest mode", where you will receive only one message per day, a "digest" of all of the day's messages.
   - To **unsubscribe** from the Internet list, use the web subscription form.
   - To **submit** a message to the JewishGen Discussion Group, address it to jewishgen@lists.jewishgen.org.

     All subscribers will receive your message. All messages sent to JewishGen from any access method (usenet or mailing list) will appear in both networks.

For assistance, see the JewishGen Support Center.

For more information about the JewishGen mailing list, see the JuDaYle "Introduction to the JewishGen Discussion Group".

For a description of the JewishGen Discussion Group's rules and posting guidelines, see the "JewishGen Discussion Group Rules and Guidelines" InfoFile.

There are currently over 3,000 subscribers to the JewishGen Discussion Group mailing list, plus many usenet readers.

An archive of all incoming messages posted to the JewishGen Discussion Group since 1993 may be searched on the Web.

JewishGen maintains a "Family Finder" database of over 200,000 surnames and towns, which is searchable on the Web. Note that are benefiting and using JewishGen for their research, it is cool to make a small donation to help defray some of the cost of the site. Please make checks payable to JewishGen Inc. Museum of Jewish Heritage, 36 Battery Place, New York, NY 10280. JewishGen is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation, a division of the Museum of Jewish Heritage - A Living Memorial to the Holocaust.

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19. COMPUTERS AND GENEALOGY

Computers can be used in several ways to enhance your genealogical research.

- Help organize your data, print trees and charts (see Computer Software Programs, below).
- Communicate with other genealogists, via e-mail (see JewishGen Discussion Group).
- Access to online resources.

COMPUTER SOFTWARE PROGRAMS:

There are many computer software programs available to help you organize your family records, print charts and trees, etc. There is an Internet usenet newsgroup devoted to genealogical software issues, soc.genealogy.computing, so software issues should generally not be discussed in the JewishGen Discussion Group. Some of the more popular programs used by Jewish genealogists, by adding custom fields such as Hebrew name, nameondo (where someone is named after), Yahrzeit date, Immigration date, etc.

Some popular shareware and commercial programs and genealogy can be found in:

- Genealogical Computing, a quarterly, $25 annually.
- Genealogy Sofware Report, $35 for 12 issues.
- Gardner's Online Genealogy Newsletter, a weekly online newsletter.
  http://www.gesa.com.

There are dozens of programs on the market. Whichever you choose, be sure that the program includes a GEDCOM capability. GEDCOM is a file format that allows information to be exchanged between programs and shared with others. You also need GEDCOM in order to submit your data to the Family Tree of the Jewish People.

My personal recommendations are:

- ***Family Tree Maker***: 2002 Version, for Windows. $39.95.
  Available at most software stores. Very easy to use. Highly recommended for beginners.
  Broderbund Software
  WWW: http://www.familytreemaker.com
- ***Reunion*** (for Macintosh): Version 6.0S. $99 from various vendors.
  Best genealogy program for the Macintosh. Very powerful program, with incredible chart-making capabilities.
  Leister Productions, P.O. Box 289, Mechanicsburg, PA 17055
  (717) 766-0611
  E-mail: info@LeisterProd.com
  WWW: http://www.leisterprod.com
- ***Brother's Keeper***: Version 6.x for Windows. $45 shareware fee.
  Popular shareware program. May be intimidating to computer novices. Available for downloading from the Internet.
  John Stuppy (Author) (Thunder Bay, Ontario, Canada)
  (807) 344-3202
  E-mail: 70743.1374@compuserve.com
  WWW: http://www.bkeep.com
- ***Personal Ancestral File*** (PAF): Version 5.x for Windows, downloadable freeware.
  Mormon genealogy software of the Mormon Church. A bit outdated and not entirely appropriate for Jewish genealogy, but inexpensive and was widely used.
  Salt Lake Distribution Center, 1999 West 1700 South, Salt Lake City, UT 84104-4273
  (801) 240-1984.

Other sophisticated programs include:

- ***The Master Genealogist***: Version 7.0, for Windows. $99 / $99.
  Wholly Genes Software, Inc., 3154 Plyerstaff Court, Columbia, Maryland 21044
  (410) 992-9292
  E-mail: Wholly.Genes@compuserve.com
  WWW: http://www.whollygenes.com
- ***Legacy Family Tree***: Version 7.5, for Windows. Standard Edition: Free. Deluxe version: $29.95 and up.
  Millennia Corporation, PO Box 18904, Denell, WA 98001
  (425) 355-5151
  E-mail: info@MillenniaCorp.com
  WWW: http://www.LegacyFamilyTree.com

A program specifically designed for Jewish genealogy is:

- ***DataTree***. Version 6.0x, for Windows. $39.
  The only software built from scratch for Jewish genealogy, with many special features for Jewish genealogy. Enables both English and Hebrew text, with user interface in English, Hebrew, French, Spanish and Portuguese.
  Jewish Software, 9 Deerfield Drive, Dayton, NJ 08810 (732) 329-2555. Fax: (732) 329-2630.
  Telephone: On the US: (212) 726-1929. In the UK: (0181) 554 8356. In France: (01) 53 01 1500 about. In Israel: (03) 576 8789 (800 in Israel).

ONLINE RESOURCES:

Databases:

JewishGen has dozens of searchable databases on its web site, at http://www.jewishgen.org/databases. Among the more popular databases are the JewishGen Family Finder (JGFF), the Family Tree of the Jewish People (FTJP), the JewishGen Gravesites, the JewishGen Discussion Group message archives, the JewishGen Online Worldwide Burial Registry (JOWBR), and the "All Country" databases.

JewishGen maintains the Avotaynu Consolidated Jewish Surnames Database (CJSD), an index to 500,000 Jewish surnames from 34 sources. The CJSD is available online at: http://www.avotaynu.com/csn/csn_home.html.

JewishGen InfoFiles:

Over 200 JewishGen "InfoFiles", containing information about various aspects of Jewish genealogy, are available on the JewishGen web site. There are InfoFiles about New York City vital records, research in Eastern Europe, microfilms from Belarus, research in Poland, and dozens of other topics. For an index of all InfoFiles see http://www.jewishgen.org/InfoFiles.

Library Catalogs:

Most public and university library card catalogs around the world can be accessed via the Internet. Some of the larger catalogs include the Library of Congress, Harvard University, and the New York Public Library.

World Wide Web (WWW):

There are many guides to genealogical resources on the Internet, both in print and on-line. They are all quickly outdated. Among the on-line guides are:

- Chris Gaunt and John Fuller's Genealogy Resources on the Internet

Here are a few World Wide Web (WWW) starting points for genealogical resources:

JewishGen Home Page:
http://www.jewishgen.org
U.S. National Archives:
http://www.archives.gov
Cyndi's List of Genealogy Sites on the Internet:
http://www.CyndiList.com
Genealogy Home Page:
http://www.genhomepage.com
Genealogy Toolbox:
http://www.genealogytoolbox.com
Yahoo Genealogy Index:
http://dir.yahoo.com/arts/humanities/history/genealogy/

With diligent research, it is possible to trace a Jewish family back many generations, even in Eastern Europe. Your genealogical search will be a very rewarding experience.

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20. GLOSSARY, ABBREVIATIONS

Glossary

חרם, herem
[Hebr.] = circumcision ceremony.
חרם, herem
[Hebr.] = burial society.
פטרונים, patronym
[Gr.] = patronyms of the Russian Empire, pre-1917. There were 15 patronyms in the Pale of Settlement, plus 40 gubernyias in the Polish Kingdom (Kingdom of Poland). Click here for list.
אשכנזי, ashkenazi
[Hebr.] = Jewish community.
אשכנזי, ashkenazi
[Hebr.] = marriage contract, document usually written in Aramaic.
אשכנזי, ashkenazi
[Hebr.] = Ashkenazi, someone from the same town.
אשכנזי, ashkenazi
[Hebr.] = township society; organization of people from the same ancestral town/village.
אשכנזי, ashkenazi
(Heb/Yid) = family.
אשכנזי, ashkenazi
(Heb/Yid) = town, village.
אשכנזי, ashkenazi
(Heb/Yid) = anniversary of death, using the Hebrew calendar.
אשכנזי, ashkenazi
(Heb) = genealogy; pedigree; family background
(Yid) = family status/prestige.
אשכנזי, ashkenazi
(Heb) = memorial.

For additional definitions of Yiddish and Hebrew words, see the JuDaYle "dict".

Abbreviations:

AJHS	American Jewish Historical Society
FHC	Family History Centers™ (LDS Church library)
FHL	Family History Library, in Salt Lake City (see LDS Family History Centers)
FHLC	Family History Library Catalog™ (see LDS Family History Centers)
FTJP	Family Tree of the Jewish People
HIAS	Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (see Holocaust Research)
IAGO	International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies (IAGOS)
INS	U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (see the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS))
JGFF	JewishGen Family Finder (JGFF)
JGS	Jewish Genealogical Societies (JGSs)
LDS	Latter-day Saints, the Mormon Church (see LDS Family History Centers)
LOC	Library of Congress
NARA	U. S. National Archives and Records Administration
SIG	Special Interest Group (see Jewish Genealogical Societies (JGSs))
SSDI	U.S. Social Security Death Index (see Holocaust, LDS Family History Centers)
USCIS	U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (see Naturalization Records)
USHMM	United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington DC (see Holocaust)
WOW	Where Once We Walked, the quarterly (see Books)

This FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) document is available on the web at http://www.jewishgen.org/InfoFiles/faq.html.

Suggestions, additions and corrections to the FAQ are encouraged.

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