

# Getting Started with Jewish Genealogy



The poster features a light blue background with a stylized city skyline of Philadelphia in the bottom right, including the Liberty Bell and Independence Hall. A blue speech bubble points to the date and location. The IAJGS logo is in the top right, and the JGASGP logo is below it. The website URL is in the bottom left.

*Where We Lived*  
**44th IAJGS International  
Conference on Jewish  
Genealogy**  
**Aug 18-22, 2024  
Philadelphia**  
*Save the date!*  
**iajgs2024.org**

**IAJGS**  
JGASGP  
JEWISH GENEALOGICAL  
AND ARCHIVAL SOCIETY  
OF GREATER PHILADELPHIA

*"Whoever teaches his son teaches not only his son but also his son's son –  
and so on to the end of generations." -Talmud: Kiddushin*

*"Blessed is he who remembers what is forgotten!" - S. Y. Agnon*



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b><i>Introduction .....</i></b>	<b><i>5</i></b>
<i>Nu, So Let's Get Started...? .....</i>	<i>5</i>
<b><i>Getting Organized .....</i></b>	<b><i>6</i></b>
Forms .....	6
Gathering and Recording Information.....	6
Files or Notebooks? .....	6
Organizing Records .....	6
Genealogy Software.....	6
Backup Checklist .....	7
<b><i>Tools To Get You Going....</i></b>	<b><i>8</i></b>
Talk to Your Relatives! .....	8
Frequently Asked Questions, Brick Walls, and Bubbe Maysehs.....	9
Spelling Variations - so what was our name, really, and how did they spell it? .....	9
How do I find my ancestral town? .....	9
Using Online Databases to Find Records .....	10
Understanding Primary vs. Secondary Sources.....	12
Using the Search Box.....	12
Visiting Archives .....	12
<b><i>Types of Records in Genealogical Research .....</i></b>	<b><i>13</i></b>
Birth, Marriage, and Death Records (BMD) .....	13
Cemetery Records/Tombstones .....	13
Census Records .....	14
City Directories .....	15
Death Certificates .....	15
DNA Testing.....	15
Facebook Groups .....	16
Family Trees .....	16
Holocaust .....	16
Landsmanshaft .....	17
Legal Records.....	17
Marriage Records.....	17



## Jewish Genealogical and Archival Society of Greater Philadelphia

<b>Military Records.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Naturalization Records.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Newspapers &amp; Periodicals .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Obits/Death Notices .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Passenger Lists.....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Photographs .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Property Deeds.....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Ships .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Social Security Death Index .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Unions.....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Voting Records.....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b><i>Written Materials.....</i></b>	<b><i>Error! Bookmark not defined.</i></b>
<b>Forms .....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b><i>Website Links .....</i></b>	<b><i>22</i></b>
<b>Links for Pennsylvania records .....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b><i>Jewish Cemeteries and Funeral Homes in the Philadelphia Area .....</i></b>	<b><i>24</i></b>
<b><i>Resources .....</i></b>	<b><i>25</i></b>
<b>Ackman &amp; Ziff Family Genealogy Institute (AJHS).....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>American Jewish Archives .....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>American Jewish Historical Society (AJHS) .....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>American Sephardi Federation .....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Annenberg Research Institute .....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Arolsen Archives .....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Avotaynu.....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Balch Database .....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Castle Garden .....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Center for Jewish History (CJH).....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Deciphering Jewish Tombstones.....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Division of Vital Records at PA Department of Health .....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Ellis Island.....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Family History Center and FamilySearch Affiliate Libraries .....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Free Library of Philadelphia.....</b>	<b>29</b>



## Jewish Genealogical and Archival Society of Greater Philadelphia

<b>Genealogical Society of Pennsylvania (GSP)</b> .....	<b>29</b>
<b>Historic Society of Pennsylvania (HSP)</b> .....	<b>29</b>
<b>Holocaust Records</b> .....	<b>29</b>
<b>Immigrant Bank Records</b> .....	<b>29</b>
<b>International American Jewish Genealogical Society (IAJGS)</b> .....	<b>30</b>
<b>International Tracing Service (ITS)</b> .....	<b>30</b>
<b>The Forward</b> .....	<b>30</b>
<b>Jewish Exponent</b> .....	<b>30</b>
<b>JewishGen.org</b> .....	<b>31</b>
<b>JOWBR Burial Registry</b> .....	<b>31</b>
<b>JRI-Poland</b> .....	<b>31</b>
<b>Libraries</b> .....	<b>31</b>
<b>Museum of Jewish Heritage, A Living Memorial to the Holocaust</b> .....	<b>32</b>
<b>National Archives and Records Administration (NARA)</b> .....	<b>32</b>
<b>Naturalizations</b> .....	<b>33</b>
<b>National Museum of American Jewish History</b> .....	<b>33</b>
<b>Newspaper and Database Center</b> .....	<b>33</b>
<b>Philadelphia City Archives</b> .....	<b>33</b>
<b>Philadelphia County Records at City Hall (Local Courthouse)</b> .....	<b>34</b>
<b>Pennsylvania Department of Vital Records</b> .....	<b>34</b>
<b>The Philadelphia Jewish Archives Collection</b> .....	<b>34</b>
<b>Pier 53 Immigration</b> .....	<b>34</b>
<b>Routes to Roots Foundation</b> .....	<b>35</b>
<b>SteveMorse.org</b> .....	<b>35</b>
<b>Synagogues</b> .....	<b>35</b>
<b>United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM)</b> .....	<b>35</b>
<b>Webinars</b> .....	<b>35</b>
<b>World Zionist Organization, Central Zionist Archives</b> .....	<b>36</b>
<b>Yad Vashem</b> .....	<b>36</b>
<b>Yiskor (Memorial) Books Project</b> .....	<b>36</b>



## Introduction

*Why is Jewish genealogy different from other genealogy?* There are a lot of other beginner's guides out there for people who want to trace their lineage, and eventually you really should read some of them. This guide aims to focus a bit more on Jewish genealogy and Philadelphia. Everyone faces the typical challenges that dates seem arbitrary and "my family didn't spell their name that way," but we learn to go with the flow. But it can be more challenging tracing our Jewish ancestors. You may discover that your great-grandfather (GGF) had a Hebrew name, a Yiddish name, a Russian name, and an Americanized name! The old records we seek are usually in a language you can't speak or read. Records from Eastern European countries are not made freely available (yet), and you can't just go visit the archive in a foreign country and find Aunt Sadie's records in English. To add insult to injury, countries changed names as borders changed! You may not know where to find a Philadelphia cemetery that was bought out by another cemetery decades ago. You may get tangled up in DNA when you realize that your great-aunt married her cousin. To quote Avotaynu:

Two major events shaped Jewish life of the past two hundred years: migration and the Holocaust. Few Jews today live where their ancestors lived a century or two ago. As a result, many Jews believe they cannot trace their family roots because:

- My family name was changed (at Ellis Island)
- No one in my family knows about the past
- No one is left alive to tell me about my family's past
- All the records were destroyed in the Holocaust
- My town was wiped off the face of the map

These statements are myths. Jewish genealogy today is highly organized and therefore help is available to dispel these myths. There are many resources available to help you trace your Jewish family heritage.

- Databases exist on the Internet to get you started
- There are more than 80 genealogical societies throughout the world where you can meet other people tracing their roots
- There are books on Jewish genealogy; Avotaynu is the leading supplier of these books
- There is a strong presence of Jewish genealogy on the Internet, including Facebook

Welcome to Jewish genealogy! So...where do we start? Our goals are:

- To begin finding your ancestors
- To accurately document your findings
- To better understand the context of their lives
- To begin identifying the cultural issues that shape us today
- To present specific resources for Jewish research and Philadelphia

### ***Nu, So Let's Get Started...?***

Just think about the heritage you're leaving your children!

- Overcome inertia, begin NOW!
- Success fuels effort
- The journey has value
- Remember the context of Jewish peoples' lives
- Ask questions, meet members, and seek help at JGASGP meetings
- Enroll family members to help
- Write and share your results with your family

## Getting Organized

### Forms

Forms are freely available from Ancestry, Cyndi's List, Family Tree Magazine, and FamilySearch (the LDS Church). Start with the links at the end of this handbook for several forms and some invaluable handouts for getting started! The *Five-Generation Ancestor Chart* is a good place to start, along with the *Pedigree Chart*, *Family Group Record*, and *Research Log-Checklist* to track what you find (and don't find!).

### Gathering and Recording Information

What do you know about your mishpokhe so far? Begin your research by writing down the names of your ancestors on a Pedigree/Ancestral Chart. Start with yourself and your immediate family and work outwards from there. Fill in the dates and locations of Birth, Marriage, and Death (BMD). Use the maiden names of female relatives. Use a "?" if you don't know a specific fact. Gather any documents that you have or can obtain from relatives. Be sure to record these documents on the Records Checklist form.

**TIP:** If you have printed out a form, use a pencil instead of a pen. As your research progresses, old information will undoubtedly need to be corrected.



### Files or Notebooks?

Loose-leaf binders or manila folders? There is no right or wrong answer, it's a matter of personal taste. And you may find that you'll change your mind over the years or use a combination of techniques, start scrapbooking, or hang framed photos on your wall. If the documents will be handled, as in a binder, be sure to use acid-free/lignin-free plastic protectors to prevent deterioration over the years...especially for any originals you may acquire!

### Organizing Records

Organize by surname and break it down by family, geography, or whatever seems most reasonable depending on your research. You can number each document like in a library, and create an index, or use a checklist to see what you have and what you still need. Your memory is not a sufficient storage device! Record conversations, family lore, newspaper clippings, etc., and mark each with *Who? Where? When?? What? Why?* There will be far too much to remember as time goes on. And remember that names, spellings and dates may change over time. Just pick a system that works for you so you can re-find whatever you're looking for.

### Genealogy Software

Genealogy computer software provides the best method to store, search, share, correct, and print reports and charts. It's far simpler than the dozens of scraps of paper you'll have all over your desk! There are several popular software packages on the market, and they should all be able to create a GEDCOM, which is a standardized format you can use to move from one platform to another if you need to upload a tree or move your data if you ever change your software program.

Here are some tree-keeping options:

<https://www.familytreemagazine.com/premium/online-tree-vs-genealogy-software/>

For PC: Family Tree Maker, Heredis, Heritage, Legacy, Roots Magic, Family Tree Builder, Family Historian







## Jewish Genealogical and Archival Society of Greater Philadelphia

For Mac: Family Tree Maker, Heredis, Mac Family Tree, Reunion, Roots Magic, Family Tree Builder  
And here are some software comparisons:

<https://www.americanancestors.org/education/learning-resources/read/genealogical-software-programs>  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comparison\\_of\\_genealogy\\_software](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comparison_of_genealogy_software)

It is possible to create and maintain a tree online only, but if the Internet is flakey, the company goes out of business, or you decide not to continue paying for a subscription service, you may no longer have access to your tree and research. It's far safer to save everything your computer, and software programs exist that link to the online tree. And don't forget to make regular backups! You can't afford to lose your valuable research!

### Backup Checklist

If you use a cloud backup service with storage limit, you may be looking for files to eliminate from your online archive. You probably don't need to back up every single file, but do use caution when excluding: Better to back up a file now than wish you had done so later. —Denise May Levenick

### BACK UP THIS...

scanned old photos and documents	digitized versions of paper pedigrees, family group sheets, notebook files
current family photos and videos	spreadsheets and other files created by programs you use regularly
audio and video files of family history interviews and associated transcriptions	genealogy email messages
ancestor photos and record images downloaded from the internet	DNA raw data files, spreadsheets and associated emails
genealogy database file (as a GEDCOM) and companion folder of linked media	passwords and software registration keys
research logs, planners, notes and charts	homework from genealogy courses and institutes

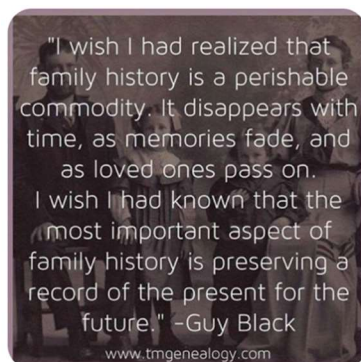
### ...NOT THAT

digitized books and audiobooks that can be replaced
conference syllabi that also are available online
society journals, magazines and articles available online
early drafts of writing projects (archive the final version)
to-do lists and notes about research problems you've since resolved



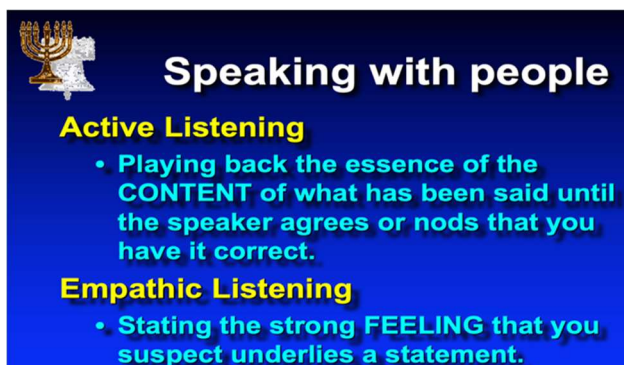
## Tools To Get You Going....

### Talk to Your Relatives!



towns, remembrances and stories, documents and photos. Aim for more than just birth, marriage, death information...gather stories to bring your family members to life! Plan and organize and be sure to write everything down! Begin a gentle conversation with *What?* or *How?* and avoiding making them feel like they're being interrogated.

Don't wait 'til Pesach or Thanksgiving! It is every genealogist's lament that they should have asked questions when they had the chance, when their older relatives were still living. So short of holding a séance, *now* is the time to pick up the phone and get to know your extended family members on a new level, starting with oldest relatives on all sides *first!* It's a sad fact of life that those who can answer your questions are a dying resource. Visit if you can, and plan on more than one conversation or visit for follow-up. If you have a recorder and camera (*your cell phone!*), bring it. Ask about names, dates,



**Speaking with people**

**Active Listening**

- Playing back the essence of the **CONTENT** of what has been said until the speaker agrees or nods that you have it correct.

**Empathic Listening**

- Stating the strong **FEELING** that you suspect underlies a statement.

Encouragement and follow-up questions are critical. Convey that this is a pleasure, not a task, and not to be intimidated by the amount of questions. Start with what they remember most... childhood, parenthood, schools, family holidays/celebrations, the house the family was raised in, everyday life, favorites, military, romance, careers, adult life, entertainment, community, moods, attitudes and philosophies, travel, leisure. It makes sense not to bombard yourself or others with too many questions at once, it's overwhelming. This is a long process, so it's never too soon to begin.

If you're lucky enough to start with the immigrant generation, here are some sample questions to get you started:

- What town did they come from?
- When did they immigrate to America?
- What was the name that they used in the old country?
- How many children did they have? What were their names?
- Were they married before they came to America? How did they meet?
- Did they have other relatives that came to this county?
- Where did they live when they first came to the U.S.?
- What was the neighborhood like?
- Did they belong to a synagogue? Were they religious? Did they keep kosher?
- Where are family buried?
- Did they belong to a landsmanschaft (a supportive organization of people from the same hometown in "the old country")?
- Can you tell me some interesting family stories?
- What were their occupations and hobbies?
- What foods did they like to eat? Do you have any family recipes?
- Can you describe the personality of your family members?
- Do you know of family members lost in the Holocaust? (*If so, get all the information you can!*)





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- And very important...do they have any old records and photos? Take pictures of everything they find for you, including a nice one of them for the portrait thumbnails in your family tree. Photo or photocopy documents (*promise and don't forget to return them!*).

### Frequently Asked Questions, Brick Walls, and Bubbe Maysehs

(*Hey, if you don't like my spelling, check Leo Rosten's Joys of Yiddish*). "Our name was changed at Ellis Island...." No, it wasn't. *Really*...that's a bubbe mayseh. Name changes frequently occurred at the embarkation point when our ancestors signed up for their passage. Shipping companies had employees who spoke multiple languages, so they probably didn't misunderstand what they heard. More likely, your relative turned to the person in front of him in line, asked his name, and gave that when they were asked...to sound more American! Whatever went into that ship's log is what was handed to officials when they arrived in Castle Garden, Ellis Island, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Galveston, Canada, or wherever. If they didn't change their name yet, they likely Americanized it after they got here, and just as likely didn't do any legal paperwork to do so (*what, leave you a paper trail?!).* Or they could have legalized the new name choice in court during the naturalization process.

### Spelling Variations - so what was our name, really, and how did they spell it?

If you don't know your ancestor's name, start with a more recent generation. Records of recent ancestors typically lead to records of earlier generations. Remember, your ancestor's name may not be listed the same way in all records. Sometimes they spell it differently even within the same document just to give you shpilkes! Look for variations and Hebrew, Yiddish, country (Russian/Polish/Ukrainian) equivalents or English transliterations. Zayde Jacob may have traveled as Yankel. When using online family trees, if footnotes and sources are given, copy them into your research log. These may lead to additional information about your ancestor. And by the way, have I mentioned that spelling doesn't count?

<https://www.jewishgen.org/InfoFiles/faq.html#Names>

*Wildcards* – have you ever used wildcards? No, not deuces. Regardless of whether you're in Google or Ancestry or wherever, if you can't spell the name, use a "?" to replace a single letter that you're not sure of, or "\*" for one or more letters. Ex: if you can't figure out if the last name is spelled Rosenzweig or Rozencwajg or Rozentzwayg or any number of spelling variations, try replacing unknown letters. "Ro?en\*g" will show all of those and more. The "?" will give you results with the needed S or Z, and the "\*" will result in all the missing letters between the N and G. And be aware that your relatives probably used many different given names just to confuse you. For example, a woman named *Ester Rivka Cohen* is listed as the bride on a marriage record in Poland. In the U.S. she is listed on census records as *Rebecca* or *Becky*. On her son's Philadelphia birth record, she is listed as *Ester*. Go figure. See JewishGen's Knowledge Base (below) for information on names.

### How do I find my ancestral town?

I'll bet now you're sorry if you didn't ask Bubbie when you had a chance! Look here: and you'll find the JewishGen FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) for a wealth of help with finding your ancestral town...<https://www.jewishgen.org/InfoFiles/faq.html#Towns> and Jewish names, Holocaust research, and lot of other valuable topics. JewishGen's Knowledge Base also includes "How to Read a Hebrew Tombstone," "Jewish Genealogical Research in Eastern Europe," "Manifest Markings – A Guide to Interpreting," and "U.S. Passenger List Annotations." And remember, Jews moved around and may have lived in shtetls (Jewish suburbs) surrounding the towns you may have been told. And to add insult to injury, names changed frequently, especially every time Poland was acquired by a new conqueror, like after WWII. And just for fun, check this site to see if your family surname is associated with a town name: <https://www.mygenealogyaddiction.com/counties>



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### Using Online Databases to Find Records

- Explore – the more you look, the luckier you get
- Try the free sites or promo periods first
- Spelling does not matter – try lots of alternatives and use Soundex systems. A Yiddish name, written in the Hebrew alphabet, was transliterated to a close approximation of the original, so Cohen could become Coen, Cowan, Cohan, Cone, Kon, Kohn, Kaan... without consideration to errors or poor handwriting. Be creative when you search.
- Sometimes family lore is only partly true
- Primary records resolve discrepancies
- European borders frequently changed! And some European places were both cities and states/counties with changed spelling. Keep in mind that even Philly is both a city and a county.

FREE	SUBSCRIPTION
<p><a href="https://www.ancestry.com">Ancestry.com</a> – 2-week free trial with limited access to their collections. Check a wealth of learning guides, their Facebook page, training videos on YouTube, a comprehensive collection of databases of genealogical records. Holocaust records are <i>always</i> free.</p> <p>Paid subscriptions include <i>U.S. Discovery</i>, <i>World Explorer</i>, or <i>All Access</i> to records including basic level access to <a href="https://www.newspapers.com">Newspapers.com</a> and <a href="https://www.fold3.com">Fold3.com</a>. It also enables you to email other family tree owners to share information.</p>	
<p><b>Center for Jewish History</b> - located in NYC, a partnership of major institutions: American Jewish Historical Society, American Sephardi Federation, Leo Baeck Institute, Yeshiva University Museum; genealogy research library.</p>	
<p><a href="https://www.familysearch.org">FamilySearch.org</a> (LDS Church) has innumerable genealogical databases and millions of records, the world's largest collection of family trees, records, catalogs, books, images, a research wiki, pedigrees, etc. on microfilm and online. Be aware that trees can be edited by anyone. Type "Tracing Your Jewish Ancestors" in the search box (?) for a few thousand articles.</p>	<p><a href="https://www.familytreemagazine.com">Familytreemagazine.com</a> - great articles in their magazine and online on a large variety of genealogy topics.</p>
<p><a href="https://www.gedmatch.com">GEDmatch.com</a> – the most comprehensive site to upload your DNA test, regardless of where you test, to find DNA matches from ALL other sites, offering you a much larger collection of matches. Optional Tier 1 tools offer more capabilities at low cost.</p>	<p><a href="https://www.heritagequest.org">HeritageQuest.org</a> can be found on the Free Library of Philadelphia website, free to card holders. Records for the U.S. (including City Directories) and Canada.</p>
<p><a href="https://www.geni.com">Geni.com</a> – this is a shared world family tree</p>	<p><a href="https://www.jgsny.org">JGSNY.org</a> – website for the Jewish Genealogical Society of New York, Burial Society information, etc.</p>
<p><a href="https://www.geshergalicia.org">GesherGalicia.org</a> – vital records, census records, archives for towns in Galicia, a former province of the Austrian Hungarian Empire. Publishes a periodic journal.</p>	<p><a href="https://www.jri-poland.org">JRI-Poland.org</a> – has Polish Jewish vital records (BMD), resident lists, etc.</p>



## Jewish Genealogical and Archival Society of Greater Philadelphia

<p><a href="http://JewishGen.org">JewishGen.org</a> is the first source to go to for Jewish genealogy. The website has extensive Jewish databases you probably won't find anywhere else: <u>Family Tree of the Jewish People</u> (FTJP, where you can upload your GedCom), <u>JewishGen Communities Database</u> (finding your ancestral town), <u>European Records</u>, <u>Immigrant Bank Records</u> where our relatives may have saved to buy ship tickets to bring family members to America (look for Blitzstein, Lipschutz/People's, and Rosenbaum Bank records), <u>JewishGen Online Worldwide Burial Registry</u> (JOWBR), free foreign language translations (ViewMate), <u>Jewish Exponent Obit Index</u>, a <u>Memorial Plaques</u>, <u>Names Database</u>, <u>Yizkor book translations</u>, <u>SIGs</u> (Special Interest Groups), a <u>Jewish calendar calculator</u>, <u>First Timer videos</u> for beginners, and specific records for those researching relatives that lived in Philadelphia, etc. The site is free, but a \$100 annual subscription offers the most comprehensive search tools.</p>	
<p><a href="http://JGASGP.org">JGASGP.org</a> - <u>Jewish Genealogical &amp; Archival Society of Greater Philadelphia</u> offers this free <u>Getting Started With Jewish Genealogy</u> guide, lists resources like links to the <u>Jewish Exponent Obituary Database</u>, <u>Temple University Special Collections Resource Collections Resource Center</u>, <u>Immigrant Bank Records</u>, etc.</p> <p>JGASGP Membership also includes the updated <u>Philadelphia Resource Directory</u> (an exhaustive collection of resources for Philadelphia cemeteries, funeral directors, synagogues, etc.), forms and resources to help you dig in, monthly notices and heads-up about online events on other sites, meeting summaries, the award-winning quarterly publication <u>Chronicles</u> featuring stories and tips on how our members research, and a vibrant group of genealogists willing to share their expertise and give you helpful tips on how to find your missing relatives. <a href="https://jgasgp.org/2022-phila-area-resource-directory">https://jgasgp.org/2022-phila-area-resource-directory</a></p>	
<p><b>Museum of Family History:</b> <a href="https://www.museumoffamilyhistory.com/index.html">https://www.museumoffamilyhistory.com/index.html</a></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Living in America, The Jewish Experience, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: <a href="https://www.museumoffamilyhistory.com/ija-main.htm">https://www.museumoffamilyhistory.com/ija-main.htm</a></li> <li>2. The Jewish Quarter in Philadelphia: <a href="https://www.museumoffamilyhistory.com/mfh-jqp.htm">https://www.museumoffamilyhistory.com/mfh-jqp.htm</a></li> </ol>	
<p><a href="http://MyHeritage.com">MyHeritage.com</a> has databases of international genealogical records. Limited access to their collections is available with a free account.</p>	
<p><a href="http://Rootsweb.com">Rootsweb.com</a> – family trees, mailing list archives, message boards, obituary Daily Times index, family history wiki.</p>	<p><a href="http://Newspapers.com">Newspapers.com</a> is the largest online newspaper archive of over 20,200 newspapers from the 1700s-2000s.</p>
<p><a href="http://SteveMorse.org">SteveMorse.org</a> – has easy-to-use custom designed database tools for finding census, immigration, vital records, translation of foreign languages, maps, calendar, etc.</p>	<p><a href="http://OneGreatFamily.com">OneGreatFamily.com</a> – online family tree. 7-day free trial.</p>
<p><b>NON-GENEALOGY SEARCH SITES</b>  <a href="http://Anywho.com">Anywho.com</a> (people, business finder),  <a href="http://Facebook.com">Facebook.com</a>, <a href="http://Google.com">Google.com</a> (search engine, maps, images, translation of foreign languages,  <a href="http://Intelius.com">Intelius.com</a> (people search, background checks, etc.), <a href="http://LinkedIn.com">LinkedIn.com</a>, <a href="http://Mapquest.com">Mapquest.com</a></p>	<p><a href="http://Rtrfoundation.org">Rtrfoundation.org</a> –website of the renowned researcher Miriam Weiner, lists record archives for towns in Ukraine, photos and postcards, maps and articles</p>



## Jewish Genealogical and Archival Society of Greater Philadelphia

### Understanding Primary vs. Secondary Sources

*Primary sources* are those created shortly after an event by someone with personal knowledge. For example, a birth certificate provides a much more accurate birthdate than subsequent records because it's prepared closer to the time of the event. You'll be surprised at how many documents supply different birthdates for the same person! This is Jewish genealogy... "in the old country" a rabbi may have submitted birth records months or even years after the occurrence, and it isn't surprising to learn that grandpop was born "during Passover." Fact or fiction? Even primary information should be scrutinized. *Secondary sources* are compiled from Primary Sources or from memory well after the event, and therefore needs validation. For example, the informant (*who was it?*) who answers a census taker's questions may not know or accurately remember the person's age, and often the informant can't provide an undertaker with the decedent's mother's maiden name.

### Using the Search Box

When searching records online, inputting as much information as you can in the Search Box may eliminate some false results, but sometimes less is better if you're trying to find a record that just won't come up. For the same reason, if you check the box to Exact match, you could end up with no results. A lot of records pop up when you let the search engine be creative with spelling. For example, I once found my great-grandfather (GGF) *William* listed as *Tom*! The census taker wrote "Wm" in script, and the transcriber thought it looked like Tom; I had to agree when I looked at it. And if you can't find Uncle Yankel (known as Jacob to us Americans!) from Wolhynia, Ukraine, try filling in only the town without his name. You should get a list of residents of that town, Yankel may have had a different last name, or you may find additional relatives!

Soundex is a system that codes the phonetic sound of a name since there are many potential spellings. Each letter or sound is assigned a number, focusing on consonants, and as you can see in this example, two similar but differently spelled names both result in the same Soundex code number. JewishGen took it a step further, using coding that works better with Slavic and Yiddish surnames and includes refinements independent of ethnic considerations. This assures that searches will bring up multiple possibilities of spelling your ancestors' names, increasing the likelihood of your finding their records.

AUERBACH = 097500

A	U	E	R	B	A	CH
0	NC	9	7	NC	5	Pad
0		9	7		5	00

OHRBACH = 097500

O	H	R	B	A	CH	
0	NC	9	7	NC	5	Pa
0		9	7		5	00

### Visiting Archives

Most archives have rules about what you can and can't bring in with you. Many require written requests and have listed charges and restrictions. Check websites or call to get application forms, costs, and rules. Expect waiting times for phone calls. You will probably need to check your coat and purse in a locker. Do not bring any originals; if you're looking for something based on records you already have, bring a photocopy! You may use pencils, not pens. Your laptop and a notebook or tablet for notes are ok. You may or may not be allowed to use your phone for photos, and if you want copies you may need to bring lots of change for photocopiers or viewers. Some allow you to save files to a USB drive. Some records may not be in English. Since your first visit may not be as productive as you'd like, plan on at least ½ day and making multiple visits. Expect to have all your folders and belongings checked when you leave since theft of original records means nothing remains of those records for others doing the same research.

## Types of Records in Genealogical Research

### **Birth, Marriage, and Death Records (BMD)**

Engagement announcements and marriage records are also printed in newspapers. BMD records provide some level of information about other family members. Marriage records give the name of the bride and groom and provide details about the wedding day, including family members and friends in attendance and more.

BMD records are also referred to as Vital

Records. <http://vitalchek.com> or

<https://www.gocertificates.com/new/Index.aspx>



**Records**

**Obtain and Document Family Records**

- Birth, Marriage and Death Records
- Census Records
- Immigration Records
- Citizenship Records
- Social Security Records
- City Directories
- Others

### **Cemetery Records/Tombstones**

You'll find a list of Philadelphia area Jewish cemeteries in the Appendix, our JGASGP Resource Guide for the Philadelphia area, and on our website, <https://jgasgp.org/>. If/when you plan to visit, keep in mind that it's best done during the week, Monday through Friday morning, when the office is open and can give you a map and direct you to where you'll find your family members. They'll close early for shabbat, so expect to finish early on Friday afternoons for the weekend. Check out Find-a-Grave.com, BillionGraves.com, Cyndislist.com category for Cemeteries, and <http://www.iajgs.org/cemetery>

There is no substitute for actually visiting the cemetery. Information you can get from visiting the office include the name (and maybe address) of who paid for the plot and perpetual or ongoing care, the undertaker's name (also found on the Certificate of Death), dates of death (needed if you want to apply for death certificate) and burial, a map of the cemetery and directions to the plot(s). When you visit the grave, always note the father's Hebrew name on the inscription ("*so-and-so son/daughter of so-and-so*") to take your tree another generation back! Family plots were sometimes purchased from Landsmanshaftn or synagogues that secured large blocks of graves for their members; that may give you more information about their lives, so also pay attention to neighboring graves that may give clues to extended family. Pay attention to any symbols or graphics on the tombstone that may indicate affiliations or give you clues about the deceased. But if you can't go to the cemetery in person, many cemeteries will take a photo of your relatives' tombstones for a small fee. [Jewishgen.org](http://Jewishgen.org) can give you information on reading tombstones and the meanings of the symbols at the top of tombstones. In addition, under Tools you'll find ViewMate, a wonderful resource for free translations of many languages by international volunteers!

While most funeral homes have no problem accommodating genealogists in their requests for relatives' records, keep in mind that funeral home records are private records, and they are within their rights to restrict or deny access. Also, the content varies from one funeral home to another and from one time period to another. Their records often list next-of-kin, pallbearers (often relatives), and other valuable information. Records of defunct funeral homes might be archived at a local historical society or library. To locate the funeral home, check our Resource Guide and/or try searching for it online. Or use the following reference guides to help you locate funeral homes: American Blue Book of Funeral Service (Kates-Boylston), the National Yellow Book of Funeral Directors (Nomis) and The Redbook (National Directory of Morticians), <https://www.redbookfuneraldirectory.com/>. One of these directories should also be available in your public library's reference section. If the funeral home is no longer in business, online research may reveal it was bought by another funeral home—possibly along with its records. You could also check old city directories to see if a funeral home of a different name suddenly pops up at the same



address as the home that handled your ancestor's arrangements. If you can't track down what happened to the home, the local historical society or library may be able to help. These organizations sometimes have old records of local businesses such as funeral homes.

Download free apps for your smartphone *Find-a-Grave* and/or *Billion Graves* ([FindaGrave.com](http://FindaGrave.com) and [BillionGraves.com](http://BillionGraves.com)) and take pictures of every stone you need...and more if you have spare time. They have extensive collections of searchable records with names, dates, etc. "carved in stone" shown as a photograph. (Any other information they provide should not be considered primary.) Billion Graves has a subscription fee. These websites help researchers find graves even if they live too far away to visit the cemetery. Others may have done the same for you and you may have help/luck finding your relatives! [AncestorsatRest.com](http://AncestorsatRest.com) has some interesting links, such as databases of coffin plates, funeral cards, and other searchable sites. You never know, you may find some great information "buried" in these sites!

When planning a cemetery trip, it pays to be prepared. These items will prevent frustration and having to return better equipped:

For the office visit, if you have a portable scanner, digital recorder, or magnifier, bring them. And don't forget a tip and a thank you for the office personnel's help.

For your comfort, wear sturdy shoes and sunscreen, and a hat in summer, bring drinking water and a snack, gardening gloves, something to sit/kneel on, a Kaddish card, pebbles to leave on the stone, and a small first aid kit, just in case...we have a couple of cemeteries where walking is hazardous.

For recording your findings, charge and bring your phone or a camera for pictures and a tablet and pen or pencil for notes.

Practical items include a trash bag, a shpritz bottle of plain water, a towel or paper towels, hand pruners for overgrown vegetation blocking the stone, a soft brush (optional for shmutz on the stone), and maybe aluminum foil for making an impression of a tombstone that is difficult to read (opt.).

TIP: when tombstones are hard to read or the sun is not cooperating, there are a couple of ways you can get a decent photo. This experiment was done on a sunny day for a stone in the shade. A flashlight (or flash on your cell phone or camera) shining perpendicular to the stone will highlight the letters to make them more readable. The photo of the stone on the left was taken without the flashlight, the one on the right is the same marker with the flashlight shining on it. Another technique is to lightly shpritz *plain water* on the whole front of the stone before taking the shot (never use anything other than plain water since chemicals hasten the aging of the stone!).



## Census Records

Start with the most recent records that your family members will appear in and work backwards through the decades. This will help you find more family members before they aged out and moved away from their parents. Jews lived in Jewish neighborhoods, so be sure to read the other names on their street; you might find other relatives or neighbors who married into your family. Census questions varied from one decade to another, but will typically give you an address, whether they rented or owned their home, family relationships, a close approximation of age, whether they could read and write English, their education, country of origin, language spoken at home, occupation, etc. Census records from 1900 to 1930 list the year of immigration and naturalization status. This will help you find Naturalization records





## Jewish Genealogical and Archival Society of Greater Philadelphia

and ship manifests (passenger records). Note: dates may not be exact, and ages depend on when their birthday falls, before or after the census date, plus margin for error (they didn't always know exactly when they were born, sometimes they lied, and it's funny...people frequently tended to get a couple of years younger as the decades went by according to the census!). Censuses are released when they reach 72 years old, so the 1960 census will be released in April, 2032. They are best found on Ancestry, MyHeritage, FamilySearch, SteveMorse, and other websites.

### City Directories

Long before phones and phone books, we had directories of who lived where, typically listing an occupation, wife's name, and whether it was a home or place of business! Just be careful you've got the right one! (*Would you believe there were FOUR Abraham Goldmans who were tailors in Philadelphia in 1904?!*) Temple University Library has Philadelphia City Directories online at

<https://guides.temple.edu/c.php?g=525412p=3591413>

### Death Certificates

This is where you *might* get lucky finding full names of parents, depending on who the informant was who supplied the funeral home with the personal information of the decedent. It could just as easily have an approximate (*wrong*) birth date and where s/he was born. Note the address, health history and cause of death, the informant's name (typically a family member), date of death and place of burial. With that information you can get information from the cemetery.

### DNA Testing

There are a few kinds of tests: Autosomal, Y-DNA, and mtDNA. We get 22 autosomes from our father and 22 from our mother. A 23<sup>rd</sup> chromosome from each is the sex chromosome, *Y* for males and *mt* (mitochondrial) for females. Y-DNA is passed down from father to sons through the generations, so only men can take that test (if you're Y-challenged, test a brother, father, or paternal relative in that line). mtDNA is passed down the mother's line to both males and females, but only females can pass their mtDNA down to the next generation since we all get our mtDNA from our mother's mother...not our father's mother. Autosomal testing is the cheapest and most popular test, which tests the autosomes from both parents...but it's only accurate for a handful of generations back. After that it's too dispersed to be really helpful.

Where to test? There are several testing companies: 23andMe, Ancestry, FamilyTreeDNA, MyHeritage, etc. At the time of this writing, all testing companies do Autosomal tests, but only [FamilyTreeDNA.com](https://www.familytreeDNA.com) offers the *Y* or *mt* tests. Look for sales around Mother's Day, Father's Day, and the holidays.

Ancestry has done such a good job of hyping DNA testing on TV that millions are testing just to find out if they should wear a lederhosen or a kilt. Most Jews have a reasonable idea of where we came from in the past few generations, so we need a better reason. Do it if you want to research more cousins to help you build out your family tree and hopefully track it back further. Reach out to good matches. The "DNA tourists" probably won't have a family tree or may have just themselves and their parents, so if they're not interested in a tree, they probably won't even respond to you if you email them. That can be frustrating unless you already have an idea of where they fit into your tree. cM (centimorgans) is a unit of measurement of DNA, and a guideline of how close the matches are to you. Focus on the good matches (~100cMs or more), not the distant (4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> cousin matches).

If you're going to take an Autosomal test, do it first on Ancestry since they won't accept uploading data from other testing sites and they have the largest number of genealogists testing. You can download your DNA results and upload them to other sites, and, in particular, to the site with the largest database and



## Jewish Genealogical and Archival Society of Greater Philadelphia

best DNA tools: [GedMatch.com](https://www.gedmatch.com). They accept test kits from all the other sites, so you can find matches with people all over the world regardless of where they tested.

Just a word about endogamy...Jews had a limited pool of potential marriageable partners, so it was not uncommon for cousins to marry. As a result, you will likely find you're related to some matches on both your maternal and paternal sides, making you appear to be more closely related than you actually are. It makes it harder to research. And btw, GedMatch can tell you if your parents were related by comparing both sides of each chromosome to see if they match.

On the subject of Y-DNA testing, the Y chromosome has at most 200 genes, over 57 million base pairs. Looking at only 111 markers is like looking at a drop of water to determine the contents of a swimming pool. Get the Big-Y, and convince other male descendants to also get the Big-Y.

Here's a good site to start learning more about DNA:

<http://www.whodoyouthinkyouaremagazine.com/news/what-dna-test-should-you-take>

### Facebook Groups

Jewish Facebook groups: <https://jewishgenealogysurnameproject.com/facebook-groups/>

Online Jewish Communities like *JewishGen*, *Tracing the Tribe*, *Blood and Frogs*, *Jewish Genealogy Surname Project*, *Jewish Genealogy Portal*, *Jewish DNA for Genetic Genealogy and Family Research*, *Ancestry.com*, *Family Tree Maker Users*, local synagogues, local Jewish Genealogical Societies like ours, and a lot more if you just type in Jewish. Take a peek at *Twisted Twigs On Gnarled Branches Genealogy*, too, and *Genetic Genealogy Tips & Techniques*, *Genealogy Tips and Links*, and *Gedmatch and Genetic Genealogy* if you're into DNA research.

### Family Trees

When looking at other people's trees, always keep in mind that you must verify everything you find. Just because it's online does not mean it's accurate! We well-meaning amateur genealogists make blunders and sometimes "bark up the wrong tree." Why is that a problem? Because others who see it will assume you were right and add it to their tree, spreading misinformation like a virus. It's best to be sure before you post, (or at least add something to warn others that you're still researching and aren't sure yet: "???").

### Holocaust

If you think your whole family survived the Holocaust, you have another "think" coming! To quote Arthur Kurzweil's book From Generation to Generation,



*"The Talmud says that when the Temple in Jerusalem was destroyed, then the Jews did their family trees. Sometimes if you want to go forward, first you have to go backward. You see where you are coming from, and you know where you are going. Thank God we are here today as Jews, because our ancestors who survived that cataclysm did their family trees. I believe, as I am sure you do, that we are in that same kind of situation today. We are a rebuilding generation. We come after two of the worst moments of Jewish history--one, of course, the Holocaust when a third of our people were murdered, and two, the mass migration of Jews when our families were torn apart. There is probably not a family here this evening that if you go back two or three generations, you will not see that family torn apart--brothers and sisters never saw each other again, husbands and wives, grandparents and grandchildren. And I believe that in the same way that the Talmud says that when the Temple was destroyed, they rebuilt by doing their family trees, in our generation we have the same task. As a rebuilding generation, we are doing our family trees to rebuild, to put the pieces*



## Jewish Genealogical and Archival Society of Greater Philadelphia

*back together again, to take that shattered people and to bring them back together again. Our work is mitzvah work. I think we are doing a good job.”*

There are several links in the References section: Yad Vashem, USHMM Holocaust Survivor and Victims Resource Center Database (HSV), ITS/Arolsen, JewishGen.org, etc. You'll also find more on this subject on our website under archived meeting notes, such as November 2019, “*Out of the Whirlwind: Finding your family lost in the Holocaust*” by Deborah Long.

### **Landsmanshaft**

A landsmanshaft (*plural landsmanshaftn*) is a mutual aid society, benefit society, or hometown society of Jewish immigrants from the same European town or region. It was a social group whose members shared a common communal memory, values, challenges, life experiences, and a connection to their hometown in “the old country.” In the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries they provided help in learning English, coping with transition, meeting people, helping find employment, learning democratic culture, assisting with financial loans, helping with medical expenses, and creating burial societies (Chevra Kadisha) which bought a tract of cemetery property and sold graves to their members, friends and associates. Many groups published newsletters, held meetings (minutes, dues register, programs). Check YIVO's Landsmanshaft Collection and the Philadelphia Jewish Archives in Philadelphia and JGS NY's Burial Society Database at <https://jgsny.org/index.php/searchable-databases/burial-society-databases/burialsoc-joodb> Also be sure to check the Landsmanshaft in Israel. Many of them wrote Yizkor books and have burial sites in Israeli cemeteries.

### **Legal Records**

Many types of legal records are made public in newspapers. Probate records, court case records and name change records contain valuable genealogical information such as ancestors' names, relatives, places of residence, and more.

### **Marriage Records**

Marriage records are stored in Orphan's Court, City Hall room 405. Records are retrieved over ten days to two weeks, so plan to make two trips; they cannot be ordered online or over the phone. Be prepared with ID to sign into the building and pass security. There is no divorce docket since the Department of Records destroyed divorce records for privacy reasons.

### **Military Records**

Information included height, weight, eye color, everything from the name of a family contact on Draft Registrations to how and where your family member served in Military Records. You can find these on Ancestry, FamilySearch, Fold3, etc. as well as <https://www.archives.gov/research/genealogy>

### **Naturalization Records**

See the “Finding Jewish Records.pdf” file in the Appendix. There are four documents involved in naturalization: Declaration of Intention, Petition for Naturalization, Oath of Allegiance and Certificate of Naturalization, as well as the requirement for study to learn U.S. history and laws. Becoming a U.S. citizen was hard work, and our ancestors took great pride when they became Americans. Pay attention to who witnessed their forms, you may find a sibling or cousin!

## Declaration of Intent

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
DECLARATION OF INTENT  
Made on 20 persons who have arrived at the port of New York  
District of New Jersey  
The United States of America, District of New Jersey, County of Hudson, ss.  
I, **Dr. Albert Einstein**, of the County of Hudson, State of New Jersey, do hereby declare my intention to become a citizen of the United States of America.  
I was born on **March 14, 1879**, at **Ulm, Germany**.  
I am of the **Hebrew** race and **German** nationality.  
I was married on **April 6, 1917**, at **Berlin, Germany**, to **Elsa Einstein**.  
I have two children: **Albert** born **May 14, 1905**, and **Eduard** born **June 28, 1910**.  
I last resided in **Bermuda** on **March 3, 1935**, on the **SS Queen of Bermuda**.  
I have no other persons to declare.

District Court, Trenton, NJ  
Dr. Albert Einstein  
112 Mercer St., Princeton, NJ  
Professor, Age 56  
Brown Eyes, Grey Hair 5'7" 175lbs  
Race: Hebrew Nat: German  
Born Ulm, Germany 3/14/1879

Wife: Elsa Married: 4/6/1917 Berlin  
Born: Hechingen, Ger. 1/18/1877

Two Children: Albert born 5/14/1905  
Eduard born 6/28/1910  
Born and reside in Switzerland

Last Foreign Res: Bermuda  
Entered NY as Albert Einstein on  
6/3/1935 on SS Queen of Bermuda

of Greater Philadelphia  
Workshop

27

## Petition for Naturalization

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
PETITION FOR NATURALIZATION  
Made on 20 persons who have arrived at the port of New York  
District of New Jersey  
The United States of America, District of New Jersey, County of Hudson, ss.  
I, **Maria Augusta Von Trapp**, of the County of Hudson, State of New Jersey, do hereby declare my intention to become a citizen of the United States of America.  
I was born on **January 11, 1884**, at **Salzburg, Austria**.  
I am of the **Austrian** race and **Austrian** nationality.  
I was married on **January 12, 1905**, at **Salzburg, Austria**, to **George Singer**.  
I have three children: **Rosemarie** born **February 28, 1908**, **Eleanor** born **April 14, 1910**, and **Johannes** born **January 17, 1913**.  
I last resided in **Stowe, VT** on **March 3, 1944**, on the **SS Queen of Bermuda**.  
I have no other persons to declare.

District Court, Burlington VT  
Maria Augusta Von Trapp  
Luce Hill, Stowe, Lamolite, VT  
Singer, Age 43  
Blue Eyes, Br. Grey Hair 5'7" 160lbs  
Nationality: Austrian  
Born Vienna, Austria 1/28/1905  
Husband: George  
Married: 11/26/1927 Salzburg, Aus.  
Born: Zara, Dalmatia, Aus 4/4/1880  
Entered US Niagara Falls 12/30/1942  
Died 5/30/1947  
3 Children: Rosemarie born 2/28/1908 &  
Eleanor born 4/14/1910 Salzburg  
Johannes born 1/17/1913 Philadelphia  
Reside in Stowe, VT  
Last Foreign Res: Salzburg, Austria  
Entered NY as Maria Augusta Von Trapp  
on 12/30/1942 via CNRR  
Declaration file Burlington 1/21/1944  
Petition Filed 3/12/1948  
Petition Approved 3/26/1948  
Witnesses: Craig Burt, Lumberman,  
Stowe VT & Alfred Mausoff, Architect,  
Stowe VT

of Greater Philadelphia  
Workshop

28

## Certificate of Arrival

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE  
IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION SERVICE  
No. 3 262261  
CERTIFICATE OF ARRIVAL  
I HEREBY CERTIFY that the immigration records show that the alien named below arrived at the port, on the date, and in the manner shown, and was lawfully admitted to the United States of America for permanent residence.  
Name: **Maria Augusta Von Trapp**  
Port of entry: **Niagara Falls, N. Y.**  
Date: **Dec. 30, 1942**  
Manner of arrival: **U. S. S. S.**  
I FURTHER CERTIFY that this certificate of arrival is issued under authority of, and in conformity with, the provisions of the Nationality Act of 1940 (Pub. No. 853, 76th Cong.), solely for the use of the alien herein named and only for naturalization purposes.  
IN WITNESS WHEREOF, this certificate of arrival is issued.  
JUN 10 1943

RECEIVED  
JUN 10 1943

## Certificate of Naturalization

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
No. 11761244  
ORIGINAL  
I HEREBY CERTIFY that the alien named below has been lawfully admitted to the United States of America for permanent residence, and that he is now a citizen of the United States of America.  
Name: **Maria Augusta Von Trapp**  
Port of entry: **Niagara Falls, N. Y.**  
Date: **Dec. 30, 1942**  
Manner of arrival: **U. S. S. S.**  
I FURTHER CERTIFY that this certificate of naturalization is issued under authority of, and in conformity with, the provisions of the Nationality Act of 1940 (Pub. No. 853, 76th Cong.), solely for the use of the alien herein named and only for naturalization purposes.  
IN WITNESS WHEREOF, this certificate of naturalization is issued.  
JUN 10 1943

RECEIVED  
JUN 10 1943

The first two are most valuable. They give ship name and dates of embarkation and arrival, occupation, date and place of birth, and details on spouse and children. Children under 16 and a wife automatically became citizens when their husband/father did until September, 1922; after that women needed to apply separately. Records are easy to search after 9/25/1906.

## Newspapers & Periodicals

Old newspapers are found on many of the sites mentioned and offer everything from obituaries to engagements and parties for visitors. Check Google, <https://www.newspapers.com/> or the Card Catalog on Ancestry, Fold3, MyHeritage, [Chronicling America](https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/newspapers/), The Free Library, etc.

## Obits/Death Notices

These are excellent sources of genealogical information. They contain your deceased ancestor's date of death and burial place and often provide details about their spouse, children, and parents as well as members of the extended family.

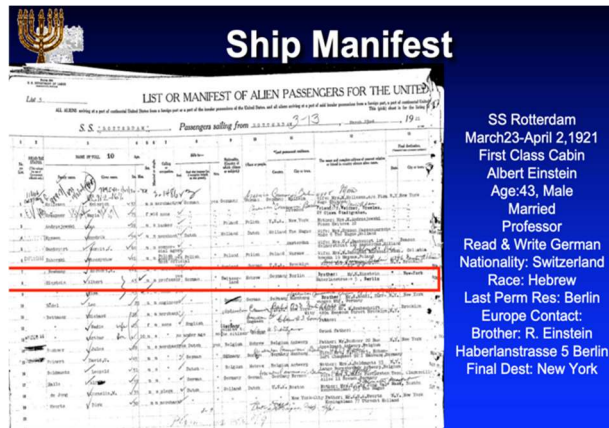
<http://news.google.com/newspapers>

<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/newspapers/>



## Passenger Lists

Since the days of stagecoaches traveling across the frontier to passenger ships arriving at naturalization ports, several types of passenger lists are printed in newspapers. These lists contain the names of our traveling ancestors, where they boarded and landed, and maybe a contact left behind and who they're meeting at their destination, which can lead you to names and addresses to research! Passenger lists can be found at NARA (National Archives & Records Administration) in Philadelphia, online databases such as Ancestry.com, Ellis Island and Castle Garden. See the resources at the end of this handbook.



SHIP MANIFEST	
LIST OR MANIFEST OF ALIEN PASSENGERS FOR THE UNITED STATES	
S.S. ROTTERDAM, March 23-April 2, 1921	
First Class Cabin	Albert Einstein
Age: 43, Male	Married
Professor	Read & Write German
Nationality: Switzerland	Race: Hebrew
Last Perm Res: Berlin	Europe Contact: Brother: R. Einstein
Habermanstrasse 5 Berlin	Final Dest: New York

## Photographs

Check Ancestry, Facebook, LinkedIn, SnapChat, Twitter, and any other resources where your family members socialize online. Newspapers record many of life's special moments. As such, you may find pictures of your ancestors in wedding photos, family reunion photos, birthday photos and old photo illustrations and sketches often printed in newspapers. And believe it or not, there's a [deadfred.com](http://deadfred.com) genealogy photo archive you can peruse.

## Property Deeds

If your family bought a home instead of renting, this will give you more information on who, what and where! See *Tracing Philadelphia Property Deeds.pdf* on our website, <https://jgasgp.org/> Records are available at City Hall, and the link to do a public search of the deed book indices can be found at <https://epay.phila-records.com/phillyepay/eagleweb/historicalIndex.jsp>. You should know the date (month, day, year) when the property was bought. This information may be found in the local newspaper (*The Philadelphia Inquirer*, *The Evening Bulletin*, *The Daily News*) under *Real Estate Transactions*.

## Ships

[Ancestry.com](http://Ancestry.com) has made a lot of information available online, but if you want more.... Morton Allen Directory of European Passenger Ship Arrivals (in large libraries) gives year-by-year listing of arrivals of ships, dates, exact names of steamships to New York 1890-1930, and Philadelphia, Boston, and Baltimore 1904-1926. The National Archives has 11,000 reels of microfilm with copies of passenger lists since 1820 (\$3/page). If you're 50+ years old, you can research yourself in Washington, D.C. FamilySearch has lists of passengers leaving from Hamburg (many non-German Jews came through there) between 1850-1934. Lists give passenger names, occupation, date of birth, residence, age, sex, name of vessel, captain's name, destination, and date of departure. Ship photos can be found at the Mariners Museum, 100 Museum Drive, Newport News, VA 23606 (contact for price list and details). Large libraries may have the Catalog of Marine Photographs. Check the Steamship Historical Society, 414 Pelton Avenue, Staten Island, NY 10310 for information. The University of Baltimore Library collection contains more than 30,000 photos at 1420 Maryland Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21201.

## Social Security Death Index

At <https://www.healthcare.gov/people-with-disabilities/ssdi-and-medicare/> and on many websites, such as <https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1202535>



## Jewish Genealogical and Archival Society of Greater Philadelphia

### **Unions**

Unions became popular as a result of incidents like the deplorable conditions leading to the tragedy of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire. You may want to check into any records they may have for your ancestors. For example, Philadelphia was a major clothing/textile hub on the east coast, in some areas of the industry bigger than NYC. Many of the professional tailors who opened their own business shops were shuttled by the Jewish community into labor unions. There were various unions: needle-worker unions; garment manufacturing unions; tailor unions, etc.

### **Voting Records**

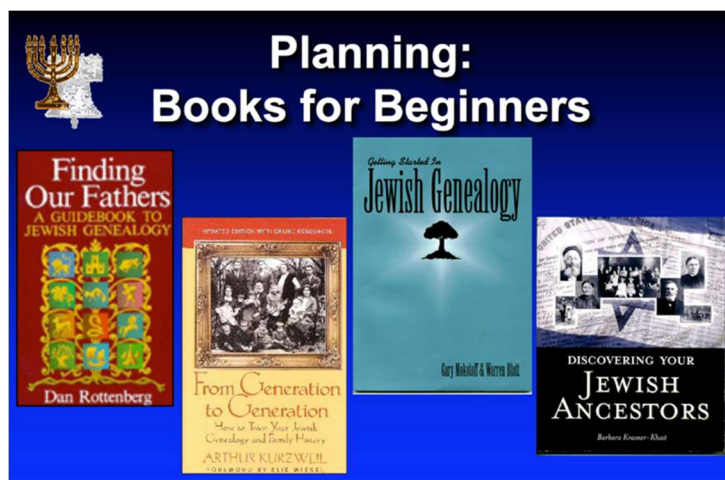
These can be found in newspapers, manuscript collections, vertical files, local county archives, historical societies, genealogical societies, state archives, university and college libraries and archives, and museums. Search online databases at <https://archive.org/> (the Wayback Machine), <https://beta.worldcat.org/archivegrid/>, <https://books.google.com/>, <http://www.loc.gov/coll/nucmc/>, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov>, <https://www.loc.gov/>, <https://www.archives.gov/>, <https://www.familysearch.org/>, <https://www.myheritage.com/>



## Books

- Rottenberg: Finding Our Fathers
- Kurzweil: From Generation To Generation
- Mokotoff & Blatt: Getting Started in Jewish Genealogy
- Krasner-Khait: Discovering Your Jewish Ancestors

You'll also find some excellent reference books when you come to JGASGP meetings. One example is Where Once We Walked by Mokotoff, Sack & Sharon to help locate shtetls.



JGASGP's Chronicles is another helpful journal, published quarterly. Members can find back issues on our website.

Avotaynu is a helpful journal and has a large selection of Jewish genealogy books and much more available on their website at <https://www.avotaynu.com/>

Encyclopedia Judaica (16 volumes) - finest source to begin research on most Jewish subjects. Check index for reference to items which may not have a full article written about them. Bibliographies for each article can give more sources of info.

Pamphlet: "Research Outline: Jewish Genealogy" – 56-page PDF from [https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/img\\_auth.php/2/24/Jewish\\_Genealogy\\_Research\\_Outline.pdf](https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/img_auth.php/2/24/Jewish_Genealogy_Research_Outline.pdf)

## Forms

Family Group Sheet.pdf - [https://www.ngsgenealogy.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Family\\_Group\\_Sheet\\_NGS\\_Final.pdf](https://www.ngsgenealogy.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Family_Group_Sheet_NGS_Final.pdf)

Blank Census Forms:

1900: <https://www.mymcpl.org/sites/default/files/MGC-1900censusblank.pdf>

(or substitute 1910, 1920, 1930, or 1940. 1950 is not there.)

Research Log: <https://www.mymcpl.org/sites/default/files/06-0005%20Research%20Log.pdf>

Purchase Charts - <http://misbach.org/#/charts>

A lot of *free* forms can be found at <https://familytreemagazine.com/free-genealogy-research-forms/>  
<https://www.familysearch.org/en/help/helpcenter/search?q=Tracing%20Your%20Jewish%20Ancestors>  
 (this one is no longer on FamilySearch's website, so it's uploaded to ours (source credited) , and there are plenty of Jewish results on this search page worth checking out!)

A sample of a quick and easy Records Checklist.pdf is on the next page. Feel free to duplicate copies.



## Jewish Genealogical and Archival Society of Greater Philadelphia

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Born \_\_\_\_\_  
Married \_\_\_\_\_  
Died \_\_\_\_\_  
Social Security # \_\_\_\_\_  
Birth Certificate      Adoption/Foster/Guardianship  
Marriage Certificate      Divorce Record  
Death Certificate      Obituary Notice.      Cemetery Record

### Census Records (cross out years found)

1790 1800 1810 1820 1830 1840 1850 1860  
1870 1880 1890 1900 1910 1920 1930 1940 1950  
1960 will be available in 2032

### Immigration/Naturalization

Certificate # & Location \_\_\_\_\_  
Declaration of Intent      Petition for Naturalization  
Certificate of Arrival      Certificate of Naturalization  
Date of Arrival & Ship \_\_\_\_\_

### Military Records

WW I Draft Registration      WW II Draft Registration  
Enlistment      Pension  
Dates of service \_\_\_\_\_

### Other

Tax Records      Land Records      Church Records  
School Records      Pension Records.      Probate Records  
Photos      Grave Photos      News Clippings

### Notes

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Born \_\_\_\_\_  
Married \_\_\_\_\_  
Died \_\_\_\_\_  
Social Security # \_\_\_\_\_  
Birth Certificate      Adoption/Foster/Guardianship  
Marriage Certificate      Divorce Record  
Death Certificate      Obituary Notice.      Cemetery Record

### Census Records (cross out years found)

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### Military Records

WW I Draft Registration      WW II Draft Registration  
Enlistment      Pension  
Dates of service \_\_\_\_\_

### Other

Tax Records      Land Records      Church Records  
School Records      Pension Records.      Probate Records  
Photos      Grave Photos      News Clippings

### Notes

## Website Links

Here are some very helpful links on our JSASGP website:

<https://jgasgp.org/2024-phila-area-resource-directory>

<https://jgasgp.org/cemetery-data>

<https://jgasgp.org/ethnicimmigrant-bank-passage-order-book-indexes>

<https://jgasgp.org/jewish-exponent-obituary-index>

<https://jgasgp.org/jgasgp-library>

<https://digital.library.temple.edu/digital/collection/p16002coll16> for Steamship Ticket Purchase

Ledger Books

<https://jgasgp.org/links> - links to a wide variety of genealogical research sites!

### Links for Pennsylvania records

- [Pennsylvania Death Records, 1900-Present - Archives.com](#)
- [Pennsylvania Obituary Records, 1900-Present - Archives.com](#)
- [Pennsylvania Birth Records, 1900-Present - Archives.com](#)
- [Pennsylvania Marriage Records, 1900-Present - Archives.com](#)
- [Pennsylvania Vital Records, 1900-Present - Archives.com](#)
- [Pennsylvania Obituary Records, 1719-1995 - GenealogyBank.com](#)



## Jewish Genealogical and Archival Society of Greater Philadelphia

Note: the Pennsylvania Archives has relocated to a new facility at 1681 N. Sixth Street, midtown Harrisburg, PA. (William Penn founded Pennsylvania in 1681).

Pennsylvania residents who do not have a paid subscription to Ancestry.com can access free records on the website of the Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission at <https://www.phmc.pa.gov/Archives/Research-Online/Pages/Ancestry-PA.aspx>



## Jewish Cemeteries and Funeral Homes in the Philadelphia Area

**Cemeteries** (more in the JGASGP Resource Directory available to members on [www.JGASGP.org](http://www.JGASGP.org)):

ADATH JESHURUN CEMETERY, 1885 Bridge Street, Philadelphia, PA - (215) 743-2524  
CHEVRA BIKUR CHOLIM, 1853 Bridge Street, Philadelphia, PA – (215) 342-6113  
CRESCENT BURIAL PARK, Pennsauken, NJ - (856) 662-6313  
HAR HASETIM CEMETERY / GLADWYNE JEWISH MEMORIAL CEMETERY, Conshohocken State Road, Gladwyne, PA – (years 1890-1945) [Gladwynejewishcemetery.org](http://Gladwynejewishcemetery.org)  
HAR JEHUDA CEMETERY, 8400 Landsdowne Avenue, Upper Darby, PA - (610) 789-2104  
HAR NEBO CEMETERY, 6061 Oxford Avenue, Philadelphia, PA - (215) 535-1530  
HAR ZION CEMETERY, 1201 MacDade Boulevard, Collingdale, PA – (215) 726-1146  
HAYM SALOMON MEMORIAL PARK, 200 Moores Road, PO Box 1218, Frazer, PA - (215) 644-1100  
KING DAVID MEMORIAL PARK, 3594 Bristol Road, Bensalem, PA - (215) 355-9917  
LOCUSTWOOD MEMORIAL PARK, Route 70 West, Cherry Hill, NJ - (856) 429-0500  
MIKVEH ISRAEL CEMETERY, 1114 Federal Street or 55<sup>th</sup> & Market Street, Philadelphia, PA – (215) 922-5446 (synagogue phone)  
MONTEFIORE CEMETERY, 600 Church Road, Jenkintown/Rockledge, PA - (215) 663-1250 - [www.montefiore.us](http://www.montefiore.us)  
MT. CARMEL CEMETERY, 5700 Frankford Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19135 - (215) 535-1530  
MT. JACOB CEMETERY, 700 West Oak Lane, Glenolden, PA - (610) 583-1462  
MT. LEBANON CEMETERY, 1200 Bartram Avenue, Collingdale, PA - (610) 583-3151  
MT. SHARON CEMETERY, 502 S. Springfield Road, Springfield, PA - (610) 543-8900  
MT. SINAI CEMETERY, 1901 Bridge Street (at Cottage Street), Philadelphia, PA - (215) 886-8430 -  
ROOSEVELT MEMORIAL PARK, 2701 Old Lincoln Highway, Trevose, PA - (215) 673-7500  
SHALOM MEMORIAL PARK/ FOREST HILLS, 25 Byberry Road (at Pine Road), Huntingdon Valley, PA - (215) 673-5800 - <https://www.dignitymemorial.com/funeral-homes/huntingdon-valley-pa/forest-hillsshalom-memorial-park/0355>  
WEST LAUREL HILL CEMETERY, 225 Belmont Avenue, Bala Cynwyd, PA - (610) 668-9900 - <https://westlaurelhill.com/webcemeteries/records>

**Funeral Homes** (more in the JGASGP Resource Directory available to members on [www.JGASGP.org](http://www.JGASGP.org)):

Berschler & Shenberg Funeral Chapels, 1111 S. Bethlehem Pike, Ambler, PA - (215) 329-2900  
New Jersey chapels available - (856) 665-5401 – [berschlerandshenberg.com](http://berschlerandshenberg.com)  
Goldstein's Rosenberg's Raphael-Sachs - <https://www.goldsteinsfuneral.com/>  
6410 N Broad Street, Philadelphia, PA - (215) 927-5800  
310 2<sup>nd</sup> Street Pike, Southampton, PA 18966 - (215) 927-5800  
Pacific & New Hampshire Avenues, Atlantic City, New Jersey - (609) 344-9004 - <https://www.rothgoldsteins.com/>  
Joseph Levine & Son Memorial Chapel, Inc., 7112 N. Broad Street, Philadelphia, PA - (215) 927-2700 - <https://www.levinefuneral.com/about-us.html>  
4737 Street Road, Trevose, PA 19053 – (215) 942-4700  
2811 West Chester Pike, Broomall, PA - (610) 325-2000  
Haym Salomon Memorial Park, 200 Moores Road, Frazer, PA - (610) 644-1100  
1002 West Skippack Pike, Blue Bell, PA – coming late 2020  
Platt Memorial Chapels, Inc., 2001 Berlin Road, Cherry Hill, NJ - (856) 428-9442 – [plattmemorial.com](http://plattmemorial.com)



## Resources

### **Ackman & Ziff Family Genealogy Institute (AJHS), The Center for Jewish History**

<https://genealogy.cjh.org/about>

Newsletters, etc. can be found on Ancestry, Fold3, and many other sites. CJH.org – click on examine research guides. Largest repository outside of Israel: sound records, artwork, histories, memoirs, personal papers, etc. Access to the full range of genealogical resources of the CJH partners' collections. The Institute has developed fact sheets and guides for beginning and advanced researchers. An extensive microfilm collection includes microfilms of birth, marriage, and death records on indefinite loan from the Family History Library. Digital microfilm readers enable patrons to save images as JPGs, PDFs and other image file formats and also allow for printing. Genealogy librarians are available six days a week (Sunday through Friday) to assist patrons. No appointments are necessary. Reference services may be reached by phone at (917) 606-8217 or by e-mail to [GI@cjh.org](mailto:GI@cjh.org)

### **American Jewish Archives**

The Jacob Rader Marcus Center - 3101 Clifton Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio 45220

Founded in 1947, devoted to collecting historical documents related to American Jewry...family trees and histories. AJA also has a large collection of synagogue records (mostly Reform) and town research. Send them a copy of a family tree and/or history to make it available to others (referred to in their publication American Jewish Archives). They also answer inquiries through mail and often photocopy relevant material. Email [gi@cjh.org](mailto:gi@cjh.org)

### **American Jewish Historical Society (AJHS)**

2 Thornton Road, Waltham, Mass 02154

Founded in 1892, AJHS is the oldest national ethnic historical organization in the U.S. Its holdings include records dating from 1654 to the present of the nation's leading Jewish communal organizations. Collections include orphanage records (subject to 70-year privacy laws), immigrant aid organizations, military records, court records, and personal papers including family collections with genealogies and papers of rabbis and mohels.

Library and archive, most helpful are synagogue records, published family histories, genealogies, Jewish organization records and US town histories. Indexed and published collections online. Put AJHS in keyword search on [Ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com) as well as on AJHS's web site. Orphan records: Brooklyn Hebrew Orphan Asylum (1879-1960), Sheltering Guardian Society of NY, Home for Hebrew Infants (1922-1943). Jewish Military Records: American Jewish Committee, Ofc. of War Records, Questionnaires of Jewish WWI servicemen (1918-1921). A 1973 fire destroyed about 17 million personnel files at the National Personnel Records Center, so these sites may be your only sources of Jewish records for WWI and WWII. Discharge papers, casualty records, etc., including some photos, are available on [Ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com). National Jewish Welfare Board WWII Service Files documents 85K files and over 300K Master Card Index. Correspondence, etc. Immigration Assistance Records: Baron de Hirsch Fund 1870-1991, Industrial Removal Office 1899~1920? (non-profit employment agency and immigrant placement records), and Jewish Immigrant Information Bureau >1914 in Galveston, Texas. List of Jewish Farmers.

### **American Sephardi Federation**

<http://americansephardi.org/> - Books, archival collections, periodicals, online community records. Vital records, marriage records and ketubot, circumcision records, cemetery records, family trees, notarial records, holocaust deportation lists.



## Jewish Genealogical and Archival Society of Greater Philadelphia

### **Annenberg Research Institute**

420 Walnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19106 - (215) 238-1290

Annenberg Research Institute is a postdoctoral research institution devoted to Judaic and Near Eastern Studies. It is the successor to Dropsie College and is an institution of theological and nondenominational character. Especially rich in Esoterica Judaica dating from the last century. The institute holds over 100,000 volumes relating to Judaic and Near Eastern Studies, including:

- Most Jewish journals and old newspapers
- Yizkor books
- Ancient and medieval manuscripts
- Rare, printed books from the 15th and 16th centuries
- Archival materials
- Archaeological artifacts

### **Arolsen Archives**

In Bad Arolsen, Germany, the Arolsen Archives was formerly known as the International Tracing Service under auspices of International Red Cross. Submit an inquiry about Holocaust victims to ITS/Arolsen.

The Arolsen Archives has 30 million original documents and 50 million reference cards, the largest worldwide archive on the Shoah, available for free. It includes items like:

- Displaced persons
- Concentration camps, ghettos, Nazi penal institutions
- Transport and prisoner lists from various camps
- Children's records
- Central name index
- Partnership with Yad Vashem. <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/?lang=en> Search by name in English! Check every few years as more new records become available. Records are available for free.
- Ancestry introduced a Holocaust Database in the summer of 2019 freely available to all without subscription.

### **Avotaynu**

Publishes journals, books, videos, and other sources to assist in Jewish genealogy research.

Journals, "5 Minutes Guide to Jewish Genealogy Research" <https://www.avotaynu.com/journal.htm>.

### **Balch Database**

18 South 7<sup>th</sup> Street, Philadelphia, PA 19106 - (215) 925-8090. Pennsylvania Historical Society, Ancestry, and major libraries and NARA. Includes Russians emigrating to America from 1834-1897. Most arrival docs are for NY, but Baltimore, Boston, New Orleans and Philadelphia are included. The records were culled from ship passenger lists independently and contain a lot of errors.

### **Castle Garden**

Nearly 12 million people arrived between 1870-1900, more than 70% through New York City. Castle Garden opened in 1855. Before that immigrants just walked off the gangplank into the new world. Castle Garden became the primary immigration processing center, greeting immigrants to Battery Park until it was replaced in 1892 by Ellis Island. Records were actually recorded by 1820 when the federal government mandated that customs start tracking immigration at the ports. The Immigration Act of 1882 imposed new immigrant screening requirements for which the facility was ill-equipped. Dishonest employees made things worse for immigrants, too. Castle Garden wasn't always the safe haven it was meant to be. Some of the chaos can be chalked up to so many new arrivals crowding together from so many different countries. In 1890, the federal government took over immigrant processing, citing





## Jewish Genealogical and Archival Society of Greater Philadelphia

corruption at Castle Garden as one reason. Castle Garden's Emigrant Landing Depot closed. A temporary facility opened from 1890-1891 at the nearby Barge Office while the new [Ellis Island Immigration Station](#) was being built. When that facility opened in 1892, it ushered in an even more massive wave of migration with records available from 1892-1924. Use Steve Morse's website, <https://stevemorse.org/>, for more effective searching. If your ancestors arrived in New York before, during, or after, you can also research records from <https://www.familysearch.org/en/blog/ny-castle-garden-ellis-island>.

### Center for Jewish History (CJH)

15 West 16<sup>th</sup> Street, New York, NY 10011 - <http://www.cjh.org>

Center for Jewish History and partner collections span five thousand years, with tens of millions of archival documents (in dozens of languages and alphabet systems), more than 500,000 volumes, as well as thousands of artworks, textiles, ritual objects, recordings, films, and photographs. The Center's experts are leaders in unlocking archival material for a wide audience through the latest practices in digitization, library science, and public education. As one of the world's foremost research institutions, the Center offers academic fellowships, symposia, conferences and lectures as well as a wide array of cultural, educational and genealogy programs for the public. Home to five partner organizations:

- *American Jewish Historical Society*
- *American Sephardi Federation*
- *Leo Baeck Institute*
- *Yeshiva University Museum, Amsterdam Avenue & 185<sup>th</sup> Street, NYC 10033*
- *YIVO Institute for Jewish History, 1048 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, NYC 10028*

### Deciphering Jewish Tombstones

How's your Hebrew? Inscriptions on tombstones can give you a lot of information, including the name of the father of the decedent, taking you back another generation! Here's a website by Madelaine Isenberg of the University of California that offers her free downloadable PDF, "*Reading Jewish Tombstones for Dummies*," that will help you decipher and understand this valuable resource!

[https://www.academia.edu/30354800/Deciphering\\_Jewish\\_Tombstones?auto=download&email\\_work\\_card=download-paper](https://www.academia.edu/30354800/Deciphering_Jewish_Tombstones?auto=download&email_work_card=download-paper)

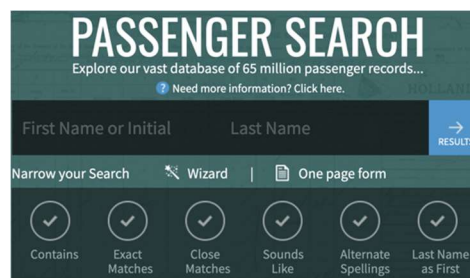
### Division of Vital Records at PA Department of Health

P.O. Box 1528 New Castle, PA 16103 – (724) 656-3100. This is where you order BMD (Birth, Marriage and Death certificates). Be sure to see the Genealogy Fact Sheet for information on who can request records, what to do if you don't know the death date, and cost of birth and death certificates.

<https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/certificates/Pages/Vital%20Records.aspx> Here is their fact sheet: <https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/Documents/Certificates%20and%20Records/Fact%20Sheet%20-%20Genealogy.pdf>

## Ellis Island

Need I say more? (212) 561-4588. Go to <https://www.statueofliberty.org/discover/passenger-ship-search/> to create a free account and begin searching. They charge \$30 for a manifest printed on acid-free archival paper, approximately 9"x14", \$20 for additional ones. What will you get in your search? Records are available from 1892-1924, showing names of passenger by original name (if changed in U.S. – it's frequently helpful to search by Yiddish name!), maiden name, year of birth, ship of travel, port of departure, where the passenger lived in the US, name of spouse and children. As of mid-2020, for a \$30 donation the foundation began offering a free digital copy of the Ship Manifest displaying your ancestor's arrival, and will follow up with a hard copy on archival paper (they used to charge \$25 for this, so this is a good deal of you have relatives coming in through Ellis Island). If your search is unsuccessful, you will receive a 10% promo code for anything they sell in their shop. Also see Castle Garden for records from 1821-1891. See <https://www.libertyellisfoundation.org/ellis-island-history>



## Family History Center and FamilySearch Affiliate Libraries

FamilySearch is a non-profit organization that provides genealogical records, education and software to help you trace your family history. Although it is operated (but not owned) by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (LDS Church), yes, they do have Jewish records and a free downloadable file on Jewish Genealogy:

[https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/img\\_auth.php/2/24/Jewish\\_Genealogy\\_Research\\_Outline.pdf](https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/img_auth.php/2/24/Jewish_Genealogy_Research_Outline.pdf)

They currently have mutually beneficial agreements with hundreds of archives and have worked with more than 10,000 archives in over 100 countries throughout the world. It partners with archives in order to share best practices as well as to broaden user access to valuable historical records. FamilySearch safeguards more than 3.5 billion images on microfilm, microfiche, and digital media. Their purpose is simple: to help people connect with their ancestors through easy access to historical records. As permitted by law and contractual obligations, you can access the information and records in FamilySearch's collection at an increasing number of places throughout the world, including the Family History Library in Salt Lake City, Utah, an extensive network of 5,400 Family History Centers worldwide (including some here in the Philly area), and other genealogical and educational institutions as well as on the Internet. Family History Library has digitized millions of microfilmed historical records, though they may not be fully indexed and searchable. They began digitizing records in 1998 to make the genealogy website freely available to the public. The microfilm lending program discontinued in 2017 to fully digitize their collections. Since 2011, they have also organized RootsTech, one of the largest family history conferences in the world, held in Salt Lake City each year. To find a FHC near you, go to <https://www.familysearch.org/help/fhcenters/locations/>

Philadelphia Pennsylvania Family History Center, 4720 North Broad Street Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19141-2106. This family history center does not have microfilm circulation privileges.

Philadelphia Pennsylvania Metro Family History Center

2072 Red Lion Road, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 19115 (215) 673-2770

Valley Forge Pennsylvania Family History Center, 721 Paxon Hollow Road Broomall, Pennsylvania 19008-3423 - (610) 356-8507. See the Wiki page for details for classes and events.

Salt Lake City, UT Family History Library, 35 North West Temple Street, Salt Lake City, UT 84150 - (801) 240-6996



## Jewish Genealogical and Archival Society of Greater Philadelphia

### Free Library of Philadelphia

1901 Vine Street, Philadelphia PA 19103 - (215) 686-5396 - Free public library branches are throughout Philadelphia area. Also check Temple University's Charles Library and/or University of Pennsylvania's Van Pelt Library. Apply in person for a free library card to gain access to a fine collection of genealogical indexes, books, maps, gazetteers, interlibrary loans, vital records indexes, city directories, newspapers, free Internet access, and other sources in a special section of shelves. Ask staff for assistance in locating these and individual family genealogies. Many titles are in closed stacks. Ask reference desk staff for a copy of *Researching Your Family History*, Social Science and History Department. It will assist you in your search. At this same desk, order reverse directories. There is about a fifteen-minute wait. They are received in the Literature Department across the hall. This department contains the Map Department (atlases, gazetteers, globes, maps, books such as *Wards of Philadelphia* going back to 1800s).

Explore Pennsylvania Historical Newspaper Database (from 1600-1922) at  
<http://search.freelibrary.org/advSearch.cfm>

### Genealogical Society of Pennsylvania (GSP)

2100 Byberry Road, Suite 111, Philadelphia PA 19116 – (267) 686-2296 - [info@genpa.org](mailto:info@genpa.org)  
Great for OLD families in Pennsylvania. Researchers are available for assistance. Call first.

### Historic Society of Pennsylvania (HSP)

1300 Locust Street, Philadelphia - (215) 732-0422, <https://hsp.org> – Founded in 1824, this is one of the nation's largest archives of historical documents. Philadelphia's Library of American History, with over 21 million manuscripts, books, and graphic images encompassing centuries of US history. As a member, you can access certain records online, such as HSP's records on Ancestry.com—Pennsylvania and New Jersey Church and Town Records, etc. You will also have full access to their genealogical databases. Additionally, there are microfilms (like cemetery records for cemeteries that no longer exist, such as Bellvue), paper sources, and electronic databases that are only available when you're in the library, such as the Historic Newspaper Index, JSTOR, and HeritageQuest, to name a few. They also have a research service, Research by Mail, in which you can hire a researcher to search their archives for you. While the service is available to both members and non-members, you do get a substantial discount if you are a member. Also, members have access to the "premium" service in which a researcher can go to other local repositories for you (ex. Marriage Records at City Hall, City Archives, etc.). If you'd like to see more about that service, please take a look at this page of their website: <http://hsp.org/collections/library-services/research-by-mail>

### Holocaust Records

See Yad Vashem, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM), the Holocaust Database on <https://www.JewishGen.org/Holocaust/>, and you can also find a "List of Websites to locate Holocaust Survivors" on our website, [jgasgp.org](http://jgasgp.org), under Archives > Meeting Summaries and Handouts (*January, 2020 by Frederick Blum*).

### Immigrant Bank Records

When our families were coming to America long ago, the US family members may have saved money to purchase steamship tickets to bring relatives to "the new country." Go to <https://www.jewishgen.org/databases/USA/> and scroll down, on right to find *Blitzstein Bank Passage Order Records*, *Lipshutz/Peoples Bank Passage Order Records*, and *Rosenbaum Bank Passage Order Book Records* or if you have a subscription to Ancestry you can also find records under *Philadelphia Bank Immigrant Passage Records, 1890-1949*. The actual ledgers are stored in the HIAS Pennsylvania collection at Temple University Libraries (including the Rosenbluth Brothers, which is not



## Jewish Genealogical and Archival Society of Greater Philadelphia

listed on JewishGen). Temple gives an interesting description of Immigrant Banks on their website. Here's a bit of it:

During the immigration boom of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, community banks, often referred to as immigrant banks, were informal establishments which served Eastern and Southern European immigrant communities across America during the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century up until the Great Depression. Unlike traditional banking institutions, they often operated in other businesses such as grocery stores, butchers, saloons, and other natural gathering places for immigrants. The banks kept deposits, facilitated money transfers abroad, and provided lending and notary services for immigrant newcomers in addition to routine business functions. Most notably, immigrant banks acted as agents for steamship lines, facilitating the sale of tickets and arranging transport from Europe. The creation and ultimate success of immigrant banks was a result of the failure of existing banks to relate to newly arrived immigrants and offer the ancillary services they needed most. Immigrant bankers easily gained the trust of immigrants and subsequently their patronage through their shared language and ethnic and cultural camaraderie.

Although steamship agents and immigrant banks in Philadelphia were plentiful, few records of their activities are known to have survived with the exception of four steamship agents who primarily served the Eastern European Jewish population. These four steamship agents recorded the sale of tickets purchased by their customers in ledgers listing the sales transactions. Unlike passenger lists which document an immigrant's entry into port, these ledgers record details about the purchase such as the name of the ticket purchaser, the individual(s) for whom tickets were purchased, the name of the steamship line, fees, and travel itinerary. These details reveal information about the passengers, the family members who were arranging passage, and the associated costs of travel. In the 1940s, HIAS Pennsylvania, formerly the Association for the Protection of Jewish Immigrants, an organization dedicated to providing legal and supportive services to immigrants and refugees, acquired the steamship ticket purchase ledgers. HIAS Pennsylvania utilized these ledgers to verify immigration information when assisting individuals with the naturalization process or facilitating passage for family members seeking asylum. In 2009, Temple University Libraries acquired HIAS Pennsylvania's records and the collection of steamship ticket purchase ledgers.

### **International American Jewish Genealogical Society (IAJGS)**

IAJGS offers annual week-long conferences every summer. Past conferences have been in Philly, D.C., Cincinnati, Warsaw, and other host cities, online when coronavirus prevented us from visiting San Diego, will be in London in 2023, Philadelphia in 2024, and Fort Wayne, IN in 2025. You can find more information each year from JGASGP or on their website, [IAJGS.org](https://iajgs.org).

### **International Tracing Service (ITS)**

See Arolsen Archives.

#### ▪ **The Forward**

*The Forward*, originally called *The Jewish Daily Forward* (but called "*The Forverts*" by our ancestors) was a newspaper published in Yiddish as a daily socialist newspaper. See [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Foward](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Foward). Early on, there were lots of local stories, classified ads (wives looking for deserting husbands!). By mid-20th century the international scene became more important. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, *The Forward* is a digital magazine.

### **Jewish Exponent**

The Philadelphia area Jewish newspaper - 2100 Arch Street, Philadelphia PA 19103 - (215) 832-0700, Records can be found on <https://www.jewishgen.org/>



## Jewish Genealogical and Archival Society of Greater Philadelphia

### **JewishGen.org. \*\*\***

Search tens of millions of Jewish records, discover your ancestral town, explore what life was like for your ancestors, connect on the JewishGen Discussion group, get involved and join the volunteer team. Family Finder, Discussion Group, KehilaLinks, Town Finder...have old items that need to be translated? Under the Connect menu, select ViewMate for free help from around the world! If you donate \$100/year to support their important work, there are even more tools to aid in your research.



### ▪ **Jewish Genealogical & Archival Society of Greater Philadelphia (JGASGP) -**

<https://jgasgp.org/> This lively group meets monthly at Keneseth Israel, 8339 Old York Road, Elkins Park, PA 19027 -or- Main Line Reform Temple, 410 Montgomery Ave, Wynnwood Pennsylvania 19096. Attending meetings will teach you new things, to think outside the box, and gives you a place to ask for suggestions on where to look next! Board members are available to answer your questions for the 30 minutes before meetings. The JGASGP Library is housed at the Historical Society of Philadelphia.

NOTE: throughout the COVID pandemic, meetings were held virtually every three weeks. Members received emails with Zoom information. Thanks to their success, we'll continue using Zoom during winter months to avoid travel in nasty weather.

### **JOWBR Burial Registry**

The JewishGen Online Worldwide Burial Registry is a database of more than three million names and other identifying information from cemeteries and burial records worldwide.

<https://www.jewishgen.org/databases/Cemetery/> or the International Jewish Cemetery Project at <https://iajgscemetery.org/>

### **JRI-Poland**

<https://jri-poland.org/> – This site is the largest fully searchable database of indexes to Jewish vital records accessible online, images of more than 2.2 million records and 6.1 million records from more than 550 Polish towns. More are being added every few months. They feature work of the famous genealogist Miriam Weiner and her Routes to Roots Foundation, listed separately below.

### **Libraries**

See [Free Library of Philadelphia](#), and here are some additional good libraries:

Temple: Charles Library

U of P: Van Pelt Library

Gratz College: Tuttleman Library

And for those of you with New York relations:

New York Public Library - Jewish Div., Room 84, 42nd Street & 5th Avenue, NYC 10018

Columbia University





## Jewish Genealogical and Archival Society of Greater Philadelphia

### **Museum of Jewish Heritage, A Living Memorial to the Holocaust**

Edmond J. Safra Plaza, 36 Battery Place, New York, NY 10280 - [www.mjhnyc.org](http://www.mjhnyc.org). JewishGen is an affiliate member.



### **National Archives and Records Administration (NARA)**

Philadelphia City Archives Division, 14700 Townsend Road, Philadelphia, PA 19154-1096 - (215) 305-2044. Questions: [Philadelphia.archives@nara.gov](mailto:Philadelphia.archives@nara.gov) or [inquire@nara.gov](mailto:inquire@nara.gov) or email [Philadelphia.archives@nara.gov](mailto:Philadelphia.archives@nara.gov). <https://www.archives.gov/research/start/online-tools>. The complete National Archives are in Washington, DC, which houses the Library of Congress, reference books, a map room, and knowledgeable librarians. See <https://www.archives.gov/research/genealogy>

But Philly records are in Philly: <https://www.phila.gov/departments/departments-of-records/city-archives/> shows what's available, including Births, City Directories, Deaths, Deeds, Marriages, Naturalizations and the dates covered.

Archival Research Room, Microfilm Research Room. Free access to Ancestry, Fold3, FamilySearch, Castle Garden, Ellis Island, ArchivesUSA, ProQuest Direct, and more. The NARA Townsend Road location is open for researchers wishing to use original records (that is, paper and photographs; not digitized or online). Researchers must make an appointment; NARA cannot accommodate researchers without an appointment.

Search for federal censuses, ship records, naturalization records, military records and maps. Censuses: 1790-1870, 1880, 1900-1940 include some Soundex indexes (most of 1890 was destroyed by fire); 1910 includes Soundex indexes for 21 states. 1850 is particularly useful for German Jewish families that arrived at the beginning of the wave of immigration to America. Many National Archives branches and genealogical libraries have these. Records of U.S. District Courts, U.S. Court of Appeals, U.S. District Circuits, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Navy. They do not have state and local court records. There is a small fee for microfilm and paper copies. Call (215) 685-9400 for a recorded listing of partial records and dates:



Start Your Family Research	Browse Popular Topics
 <p>Learn how you can use the resources at the National Archives to explore your family's ancestry.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Start Your Genealogy Research</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Genealogy Resources</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Genealogy Research Using Military Records</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Reference Reports</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Records Digitized by our Partners</a></li> </ul>	 <p>Explore genealogy resources related to specific topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Census Records</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Ethnic Heritage</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Military Service Records</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Immigration Records</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Land Records</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Naturalization Records</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">More Topics</a></li> </ul>

## Naturalizations

Eastern District (Philadelphia) Index 1795-1951; petitions 1790-1930

There are a few stages to Naturalization, so you may find forms for:

- I. Declaration of Intent
- II. Petition for Naturalization
- III. Certificate of Arrival
- IV. Certificate of Citizenship

These records can be found in the Philadelphia Index:

- Delaware: Wilmington 1797-1991
- Maryland: Baltimore 1792-1972
- Pennsylvania: Philadelphia 1790-1991
- Virginia
- West Virginia

Ship Passenger Lists: Philadelphia Name Index 1800-1906, Soundex Index 1883-1948, Book Index by date 1906-1926, Baltimore Name Index 1833-1866, Soundex Index Federal list 1820-1897, Book Index by date 1897-1952. Philadelphia has multiple indexes to US ports ranging from 1800-1906 (National Archives – microfilms M360); from 1820-1874 (NARA microfilms M334); Lists 1883-1945 (NA microfilms T840)

## National Museum of American Jewish History

101 South Independence Mall East Philadelphia, PA 19106-2517 - (215) 923-3811 -

<https://www.nmajh.org/>

## Newspaper and Database Center

The Free Library of Philadelphia has a Newspaper and Database Center on the 2nd floor, next door to Social Sciences. City directories from 1785-1936 on microfilm are listed alphabetically by name, occupation, address, and in later years, spouse. Also list by occupations such as butchers, grocers, and tailors. Research is self-service. Printing is performed by staff. Newspapers are on microfilm and date back to approximately the 1860s. Ex: The Public Ledger, Inquirer, Bulletin, and The Philadelphia Record. A manual lists holdings.

## Philadelphia City Archives

548 Spring Garden Street, Philadelphia, PA 19123 - (215) 684-9401 Here's an overview of their vast collection of all City records not in current use which possess historical, administrative, legal, research, cultural or other important value. <https://www.phila.gov/phils/records.htm> and <https://www.phila.gov/Records/Archives/Archives.html>



## Jewish Genealogical and Archival Society of Greater Philadelphia

### Philadelphia County Records at City Hall (Local Courthouse)

Plan a visit in person. The city provides access to marriage and divorce records (Orphan's Court), wills and probate records (Register of Wills), some birth and death records, real estate records, business records, voter registrations, and some archives. Some records are retrieved over a week or two, so plan to make two trips; they cannot be ordered online or over the phone. Be prepared with ID to sign into the building and pass security.

### Pennsylvania Department of Vital Records

Department of Health, Bureau of Health Statistics & Registries, Division of Vital Records, P.O. Box 1528, New Castle, PA 16103 - (724) 656-3100

<https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/certificates/Pages/Vital%20Records.aspx> – be sure to see the *Genealogy Fact Sheet* for information on who can request records, what to do if you don't know a death date (they can do a 10-year search for \$25) forms, and cost of birth and death certificates.

### The Philadelphia Jewish Archives Collection

#### Special Collections Research Center (SCRC) at Temple University, Charles Library

PJAC was formed through the efforts of the Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia and the American Jewish Committee in 1972. Its mission was to collect, preserve, facilitate research and share the story of the Jewish communities of the Greater Philadelphia area. The Archives accumulated ethnic bank records, HIAS records, Jewish newspapers (Exponent and several in Hebrew and Yiddish), synagogue records, and created the Jewish Exponent Obituary Project. In 2009 the holdings of PJAC were transferred to the Special Collections Research Center (SCRC) at Temple University Libraries. With the support of many philanthropic individuals, an archivist position has been endowed by PJAC. PJAC combined with Jewish Genealogy Society of Greater Philadelphia, (JGASGP) to form the Jewish Genealogy & Archival Society of Greater Philadelphia (JGASGP). With our new name and mission, the core mission of PJAC continues. Donations can also be made through the library website: <https://library.temple.edu/scrc>

The Archivist is Casey Babcock, [tuj63359@temple.edu](mailto:tuj63359@temple.edu). You MUST call to request items to view prior to visiting. Be patient as the items need to be located and brought over to the reading room. Responses may take 24-48 hours. Library hours M-F 8:30-5:30. 1900 N. 13<sup>th</sup> Street, Philadelphia, PA 19122. Contact for an appointment: (215) 204-8212 or [scrc@temple.edu](mailto:scrc@temple.edu)

### Pier 53 Immigration

*Philadelphia had a pier?!* Yes! Pier 53 was Philadelphia's immigration pier from 1870 to 1915. There is no searchable website, to try [Ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com) to search for records. Check out 'Pennsylvania Passenger Lists' and scroll to the list at the end of the drop-down menu, then plug in relevant info (name, date, etc.) If you find them and the ship is either the American Line, the Red Star Line, or the Hamburg-American Line, then they came in through Pier 53. Happy hunting! For some history, see

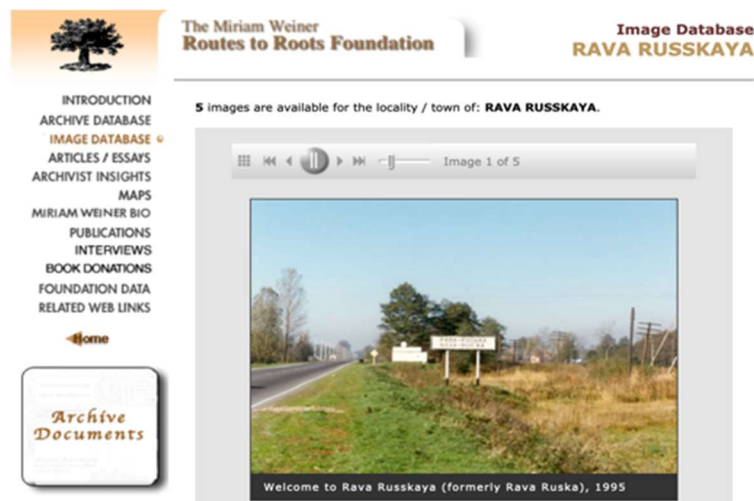


<http://washingtonavenuegreen.com/> and  
<http://washingtonavenuegreen.com/06pierproject/06pierproject.html>

## Routes to Roots Foundation

Based on her 30-year career of genealogical research, Miriam Weiner single-handedly created Routes to Roots Foundation and has worked in the archives of Poland and the former Soviet Union since 1989. It is an incredible resource for researchers, recently updated with the new Surname Database and so much more:

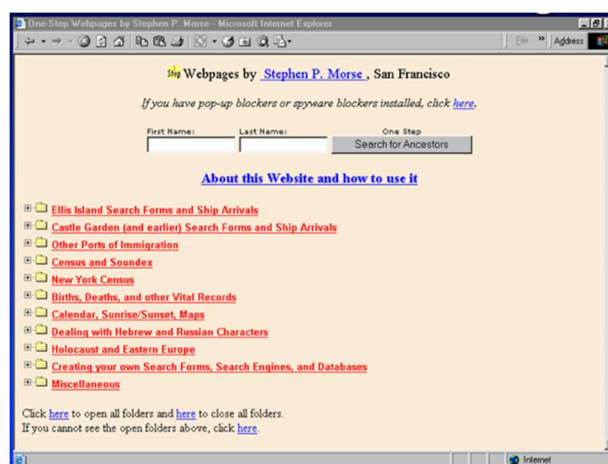
<https://rtrfoundation.org/>



## SteveMorse.org

Steve Morse, a brilliant database designer, found most search engines too inefficient to do his complex searches, so he designed his own powerful search engine. Luckily, he shared it with all of us! This site may help you find those records hiding from you.

<https://stevemorse.org/index.html>



## Synagogues

An excellent resource for Philadelphia area synagogues can be found in the Jewish Genealogical & Archival Society of Greater Philadelphia's Resource Directory available in the Members Section on [www.JGASGP.org](http://www.JGASGP.org). At one time there were many synagogues in Philadelphia; many have disbanded, leaving no records.

## United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM)

100 Raoul Wallenberg Place, SW, Washington, DC 20024-2126 - <https://www.ushmm.org/>

Do not miss this museum! Make the trip.

## Webinars

Here are some fantastic websites for webinars and handouts on any genealogical topic you can think of!  
 Ancestry – [Ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com)

Boston Family History Library - <https://fh.lib.byu.edu/classes-and-webinars/online-webinars/>

Family Tree Magazine - <https://university.familytreemagazine.com/>



## Jewish Genealogical and Archival Society of Greater Philadelphia

Legacy Family Tree Webinars - <https://familytreewebinars.com/beginners>

### World Zionist Organization, Central Zionist Archives

Search Bureau for Missing Relatives:

<http://www.zionistarchives.org.il/en/AttheCZA/AdditionalArticles/Pages/ChipushKrovim.aspx>

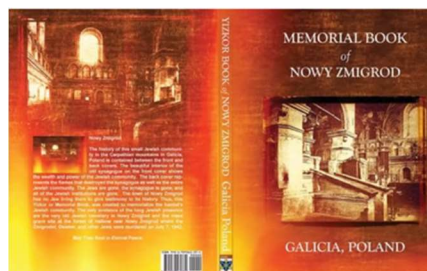
### Yad Vashem

Yad Vashem Martyrs and Heroes Remembrance Authority (Holocaust records)

P.O. Box 3477, 91034 Jerusalem, Israel - <http://www.yadvashem.org/> - you can submit as well as find millions of records of victims of the Shoah, the world's largest searchable database of Holocaust victims' names and information. And if you go to Jerusalem, be sure to visit the museum!

### Yiskor (Memorial) Books Project

See [JewishGen.org](http://JewishGen.org) for this vital project to identify and remember people in death.



For even more detailed resources, be sure to check out the Resource Guide on our [jgasgp.org](http://jgasgp.org) website!



Now I know why my Bubbie seems to be hiding in witness protection!!!



