

Ancestry Pathways

Introduction to Jewish Genealogy

By Linda Carlson

1. **Primary Sources** - Locate as many primary sources as possible – Birth, Marriage, Death records from family members.
2. **Online sources** – look at originals, not just indexes.
3. **Marriage records** usually contain names of parent of bride and groom.
 - a. New York Marriages - New York, New York, Marriage License Indexes, 1907-2018 <https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/61406/>
4. **Death records** often provide place of birth.
 - a. Social Security Death Index, 1935-2014-present - FamilySeach.org, Ancestry.com
 - b. Death Certificates (Information provided by informant who may not know details)
 - c. Get the death certificates from city, state, funeral home or cemetery office.
 - d. Find-a-Grave www.findagrave.com. Can request photo of grave.
 - e. Billion Graves <https://billiongraves.com/get-started>
 - f. Contact cemetery office.
 - g. Visit the cemeteries, take pictures. Father's Hebrew name on stone.
 - h. Search for obituaries online.
 - i. Obituaries (survivors, married names of sisters and daughters). City, town, funeral home. Newspapers Online
 - a. CT State Library - Microfilm and some available from home with library card
 - b. Newspapers.com – subscription \$74.90 for 6 months
 - c. Chronicling America – Library of Congress - <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/search/titles/>
 - d. Many papers have searchable archives online or by contacting them.
 - e. Fulton History has some old newspapers from a variety of states: <https://www.nypl.org/collections/articles-databases/fulton-history-old-new-york-state-historical-newspapers>
 - f. Ancestry.com Newspapers with Deluxe subscriptions.
 - g. GenealogyBank.com – subscription
5. **U.S. Census Records** - every 10 years since 1790 to 1940 except 1890 which was mostly burned.
 - a. Number of years in the United States or Alien (1890 thru 1940)
 - b. If naturalized or an alien living in the United States (1890-1940)
 - c. If naturalization papers have been filed (1890, 1900, 1910, 1940)
 - d. Year of immigration to the United States (1900-1930)
 - e. Year of Naturalization (1920)
 - f. 1890 Schedule Lost
 - g. New York – every 10 years between federal census years 1825 to 1925 (1885 and 1895 combined, taken in 1892)

6. Regions of the World:

- a. **Ashkenazi** - originated from the Jews who settled along the Rhine River in Western Germany and Northern France in the Holy Roman Empire. Then moved eastward in the Middle Ages.
- b. **Sephardic** – Jews of Spain and Portugal who were expelled in 1492 (Spain) and 1496 (Portugal). Went to Amsterdam, North Africa, the Middle East and the Americas, often posing as Christians. Kept family traditions and artifacts.
- c. **Mizrachi** - Descended from local Jewish communities of the Middle East from biblical times into the modern era.
- d. **Ethiopian**
- e. **Silk Road**
- f. **India**
- g. **Bukharian from Uzbekistan, Iraq**

7. Locating Towns

- a. Where Once We Walked: A Guide to the Jewish Communities Destroyed in the Holocaust, edited by Gary Mokotoff and Sallyann Amdur Sack, 2002
Book: available at the Jewish Genealogical Society of Connecticut Library at Temple Sinai, Newington CT www.jgsct.org
- b. The JewishGen Communities Database and JewishGen Gazetteer– online database of over one million locations in Europe, North Africa, Middle East.
<https://www.jewishgen.org/Communities/Search.asp>

8. Jewish Census Records – LDS – www.familysearch.org/locations/

- a. 1848 Census of the Jews in Hungary – Index from JewishGen on Ancestry.com
- b. 1897 Census of Jews in Russia
- c. Family Search.org
<https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/352982?availability=Family%20History%20Library>

9. Naturalization Documents

- a. Prior to 1906 – any “court of record” (municipal, county, state, or federal) could grant U.S. citizenship
- b. **Declaration of Intention** (first papers) – Previous name, arrival information, country of origin, name of wife and children, name of ship, picture. Renounce ties to country of origin. (Note document numbers to get copies from National Archives)
- c. **Petition for Naturalization** (final papers) – filed after required waiting period of 2 to 7 years after Declaration of Intention. Has the most information, certificate of arrival confirmed by government.
- d. **Certificate of Naturalization** – Given to new citizen to take home. Not much information, Certificate number is useful for locating the other court documents.
- e. National Archives and Records Administration - 12 regional offices. Some records still in the city or county court. <https://www.archives.gov/>
- f. National Archives – Ordering Documents - <https://tinyurl.com/NARA-Orders>

10. Search Ship Passenger Records with Original Name – since 1820 (Ancestry.com, Ellis Island, FamilySearch.com)

- a. Name, age, country of origin, after 1890, town of origin, place of last residence and/or birth, contact person in country of origin, contact person in U.S.

- a. Castle Garden – 1820 to 1892, 11 million immigrants – search online www.castlegarden.org
- b. Ellis Island – 1892 – 1954, deportations began in 1918, (FamilySearch.org)
- c. Jews who returned to Hamburg from 1905–1907 (FamilySearch.org)
- d. Jewish orphans from Russia in 1906 are also among the Hamburg passenger lists (FHL film 1732431, items 6, 11).
- e. Jews who sailed from Bremen from 1 November 1913 to 31 Dec 1914 (FHL film 1568852 item 2 and 1568871).
- f. Netherlands Passenger Lists Holland-America Line, 1900-1974 (Familysearch.org)
- g. Hebrew Immigration Aid Society Records (FamilySearch.org)

11. Americanization of Names

<http://www.nypl.org/blog/2013/07/02/name-changes-ellis-island>

12. Military Records

- a. World War 1 and World War II Draft Registration Cards
- b. 98% of men born after 1872
- c. Abstract of WW1 Military Services – Ancestry.com, Fold 3 – Army serial number, address, where inducted, place of birth, where they were serving, grades, when sent overseas, discharged, disabled.
- d. WW1 Veterans Questionnaires –CT State Library
<https://libguides.ctstatelibrary.org/hg/militaryrecords/wwi>
- e. National Archives – Enlistment, Service Record, Discharge.
- f. Library of Congress – Search for AAD – Prisoners of War, German Immigrants, Enlistment
- g. WW II Draft Registration
 - a. “Young man’s draft”- 1940 ages 21 to 45, born 1895 to 1919
 - b. “Old man’s draft” – born from April 28, 1877 to February 16, 1897.

13. Holocaust

- a. **Yad Vashem** – World Holocaust Remembrance Center - Central Database of Shoah Victims’ Names
- b. **Yizkor Books** - books published by former residents or landsmanshaftn as remembrances of homes and people lost during the Holocaust.- JewishGen.org
- c. **The International Tracing Service (ITS) – Now Arolsen Archives**
<https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/>
- d. **World Memory Project** on Ancestry.com - <https://www.ushmm.org/online/world-memory-project/>
- e. **East Europe, Registers and Listings from Ten Jewish Ghettos, 1939-1942 –**
[Ancestry.com/search/collections/1459/](https://ancestry.com/search/collections/1459/)
- f. Joint Distribution Committee - [Archives.jdc.org](https://archives.jdc.org) - Search “Our Names Index”

14. Cemeteries

- a. At the top of most Jewish tombstones is the abbreviation פ'נ' which stands for *po nikbar* or *po nitman*, meaning "here lies".

The Hebrew word בן, *ben*, means "son of".
The Hebrew word בת, *bat*, means "daughter of".

b. ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

t'hay nafsho/ah tzrurah b'tzror hachaim

I Samuel 25:29

"May his/her soul be bound up in the bond of life."

15. Where were they buried?

- a. International Jewish Cemetery Project –
<https://www.iajgsjewishcemeteryproject.org/connecticut-ct/index.html>
- b. JewishGen Worldwide Burial Registry -
<https://www.jewishgen.org/databases/cemetery/>

16. Jewish DNA

- a. Ancestry.com
 - b. FamilyTree
 - c. 23 and Me
 - d. My Heritage
- Jscreen.org – medical – checks for genetic mutations <https://jscreen.org/>

17. JewishGen.org

- a. Link to Social Security Death Index.
- b. Calendar conversion tool.
- c. Soundex codes.
- d. **JewishGen Online Worldwide Burial Registry** (JOWBR)
<https://www.jewishgen.org/databases/cemetery/>
- e. **Special Interest Groups /Research Divisions**
<https://www.jewishgen.org/JewishGen/ResearchDivisions.htm>
- f. **Jewish Records Indexing** projects –accepting donations for your town.
- g. **JewishGen Community Databases**
- h. **Family Tree of the Jewish People** contains data on over one million people
- i. **JewishGen Family Finder** (JGFF).
- j. **Holocaust Database**
- k. **Yiskor Books**

18. New York City Vital Records

- a. Birth Records **with confidential report** less than 126 years old:
Spouse, Domestic Partner, Parent, **Child, Sibling**, Grandparent, **Grandchild**,
Informant listed on the certificate, Executor,
 - b. Birth Records **without confidential medical report** less than 126 years old:
Same as above, Funeral director within 12 months of death, Legal reasons.
- Check New York Genealogical and Biographical Society for more information -

<https://www.newyorkfamilyhistory.org/new-york-birth-marriage-death-vital-records>

19. Other Resources

- a. City Directories (local libraries),
- b. Real estate/probate records (county court)
- c. HIAS landing cards (indexed online for Boston).

20. Internet Resources

- a. Ancestry.com
- b. Cyndi's List of Genealogy Sites <https://www.cyndislist.com/us/>
- c. Center for Jewish History <https://www.cjh.org/>
- d. Facebook - Jewish Genealogy Portal with JewishGen – Help with translations
- e. FamilySearch.org – LDS – Family History Centers
- f. The German Society for Computer Genealogy – Search at: <http://meta.genealogy.net>
- g. International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies – Annual Conferences
- h. International Tracing Service – Archives ITS Arolsen then Digital Collections – registration cards for Jews 1938-1941 (only 30,00 remain.)
<http://www.iajgs.org/blog/conferences/past-conferences/>
- i. Jewish Genealogical Society of Long Island - <http://jgsli.org/youtube/>
- j. Library of Congress: Newspapers: <http://Chronicalingamerica.loc.gov>
- k. National Archivers <http://archives.gov>
- l. Newspapers: www.Fultonhistory.com/Fulton.html
- m. The Munich Gedenkbuch – Biographies of inhabitants in Munich 1930-1945 who met their death as a result of Nazis. In German but easy to navigate.
www.muenchen.de/rathaus/gedenkbuch/gedenkbuch.html
- n. The Museum of the Jewish People at Beit Hatfutsot <https://dbs.bh.org.il/>
- o. Olive Tree Genealogy – Some links to Ancestry.com
<https://www.olivetreegenealogy.com/ships/tousa1630-1640.shtml>
- p. Routes to Roots – Databases of archives in Eastern Europe in old Russian empire. Tells you what records exist and how to access them.
- q. Steve Morse's Site <https://stevemorse.org>
- r. Tracing the Tribe on Facebook
- s. Yad VaShem – Database of victims, Pages of Testimony about victims, search by name, place. You can fill out a form for people not listed. 4 million entries.
- t. YIVO Institute for Jewish Research <https://www.yivo.org/>

21. Publications

- a. AVOTAYNU. The International Review of Jewish Genealogy.
<http://www.avotaynu.com/>

22. 5 Things You Should Do With Every Record

- a. Record the source of the record.
 - b. Examine the image, not just the index, check the next page.
 - c. Record ALL points of genealogical importance
 - d. File your notes and the image so that you can find them again later.
- Ancestry.com – 5 minute Finds <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WL6ZK4vz8Jw>