

# Jewish Genealogy Research Essentials Part 1

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## Getting Started

- Choose and use family tree software
  - Decide on YOUR criteria and wish list for selection
  - Research best genealogy software and online programs like: <http://genealogy-websites.no1reviews.com/>
- Write what YOU know about your family members
  - Record full names, birth, marriage, and death dates and places, and spouses' full names
- Call your relatives with basic/easy research questions
  - Full names, birth/marriage/death dates and places of their immediate family members
- Gather documents and pictures
  - Marriage, Birth, & Death Certificates, Wills, Naturalization Papers, Diaries, Letters, Pictures, etc.
- Evaluate the documents/sources
  - Primary source
    - i. Generated at time or immediately after event and for a specific purpose
  - Secondary source
    - i. Generated after event or for an alternative purposes
  - ALWAYS evaluate accuracy of information and resources
  - **Get the most out of every document you discover** by not just using the index
    - i. Carefully reading the front and back and/or reviewing the previous and next pages
    - ii. Record all relevant information
  - Read: *Advanced Research Tip: Five Things You Should Do With Every Record* By Anne Mitchell at [http://blogs.ancestry.com/ancestry/2013/10/29/advanced-research-tip-five-things-you-should-do-with-every-record/?utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=Feed%3A+ancestry+%28Ancestry.com+blog%29#sthash.Uq11e6iE.dpuf](http://blogs.ancestry.com/ancestry/2013/10/29/advanced-research-tip-five-things-you-should-do-with-every-record/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+ancestry+%28Ancestry.com+blog%29#sthash.Uq11e6iE.dpuf)
- Cite Your Sources: Record sources of information collected; where & when found, title, page, etc.
- Organize your materials: Software, Folders, Notebooks, Portable Research "kits"
- Develop research logs to record both success & disappointments or use premade logs from sites like <http://lgdata.s3-website-us-east-1.amazonaws.com/docs/1074/198149/census%5B1%5D.pdf>

## Interviewing Relatives

- Pace & record your interviews; don't judge or disagree; ask clarifying questions; let them talk
- Tools for interviewing; Telephone, SKYPE, Tape recorders, video, lap top, camera, paper and pencil
- Basics First
  - Put them at ease; then request Full Names, Birth/Marriage/Death Dates and Places, Occupations, Religious/Synagogue Affiliation
- More questions
  - Hebrew/Yiddish names, info on Aunts, Uncles and Cousins, immigration-dates, ports, and steamship name, town/city emigrated from and why, cities lived in and dates, burial dates and sites, community service organizations, hobbies
  - Request any documents or family memorabilia or pictures, etc. to copy or see
- Stories Next
  - Memories about family members, holiday and life cycle celebrations
  - Ask open-ended questions and clarifying questions to get more information
  - Suggested Resources: *TIPS FOR INTERVIEWERS* from Willa K. Baum, <http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/libraries/bancroft-library/oral-history-center/oral-history-tips>
  - *20 QUESTIONS TO ASK THE IMPORTANT WOMEN IN YOUR LIFE* from Jewish Women's Archive, <http://jwa.org/stories/how-to/20questions>

**Tips on Jewish Names:** Spellings vary; misspellings are common; translated/shortened names

### Typical Ashkenazi Naming Tradition

- New Born named after deceased ancestor like baby's departed grandparent
- Children had Hebrew names, given names, Yiddish/nick names, and/or Americanized names
- First born male maybe called "Alter" (means "old" in Yiddish)

### Typical Sephardic Naming Tradition

- First born son named after paternal grandfather and first born daughter named after paternal grandmother; second boy named after maternal grandfather; second girl named after maternal grandmother; next child named after paternal uncle or aunt, next child after maternal uncle or aunt
- A deceased grandparent or sibling took precedence over typical naming tradition
- Children had Hebrew names, Ladino/nick names, and/or Americanized names
- First born maybe called "Bohor" for boys and "Behora" for girls (means "first born" in Ladino)

### Jewish Names Search Sites and Resources

- *Jewish Given Names JGSWS* Handout by Warren Blatt: [http://www.jgsws.org/Handouts/5-7-2007\\_GivenNames\\_handout.pdf](http://www.jgsws.org/Handouts/5-7-2007_GivenNames_handout.pdf). Provides given names listed in Russian, Polish and Hebrew
- *The Origins and Meanings of Ashkenazic Last Names* Article posted by Bennett Muraskin on 11-13-12 <http://jewishcurrents.org/the-origins-and-meanings-of-ashkenazic-last-names-12849>
- Search *Sephardic Names Translated Into English From 21 Languages*: [http://www.sephardim.com/html/translated\\_names\\_b.html](http://www.sephardim.com/html/translated_names_b.html)
- Documented Medieval Spanish Jewish Surnames That Have Survived into the Current Diaspora Database by Mathilde Tagger: <http://www.sephardicgen.com/databases/MedievalSurnames.html>
- Use *Sephardic Names Search Engine*: <http://www.sephardim.com/search.shtml>
- *SephardicGen Resources Consolidated Index Sephardic Surnames*: <http://www.sephardicgen.com/databases/indexSrchFrm.html>
  - Search over 130,000 names from different databases
  - Provides option to search "Sounds like" (American Soundex) and "is phonetically" (Morse-Beider's new phonetic matching for Sephardic names)
- *Avotaynu Consolidated Jewish Surname Index (CJSI)*: <http://www.avotaynu.com/csi/csi-home.htm>
  - Search 699,084 primarily Jewish surnames accessed from 42 different databases
  - Sequenced phonetically (not alphabetically) so surname spelling variants that sound the same are grouped together

### History of Jewish Surname Adoption Recommended Resources

Some Sephardic surnames were used since Babylonian times. Over the last 900 years, every country or region or monarchies or principalities required and enforced Jewish surname adoptions using varying processes at different times.

- Jewish Genealogical Society of Washington State (JGSWS) Library offers many books & resource materials; Galicia, Germany, Poland, Russia, Sephardic, etc. <http://jgsws.org/library.php>
- *Jewish Names and Genealogies* by Jeffrey S. Malka at <http://www.sephardicgen.com/yohasin.HTM> Focusing on evolution of given and surnames starting with Biblical and ancient Jewish Society through the 12<sup>th</sup> Century in Spain
- *How Jews Got Their Last Names in Europe in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries*, Auditory Lecture by Marlene Schiffman during the Association of Jewish Libraries 2010 Conference: <http://www.jewishlibraries.org/main/Resources/Podcast/tabid/89/ID/1098/How-Jews-Got-Their-Last-Names-in-Europe-in-the-18th-and-19th-Centuries.aspx> Focusing primarily on France, Germany, Polish and Russian governments

### Research

- **The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) Offers:** <http://www.archives.gov/research/genealogy/index.html>

- Permanent repository of historical records for US government which has Two WA DC facilities, 14 regional archives & 12 Presidential Libraries and is free to the public  
(<http://www.archives.gov/locations/index.html> provides address to regional archives , etc.
  - Digitized Original Records, 35 Million Pictures & Posters, 18 Million Aerial Photos, 5 Million Maps
  - US Federal Census from 1790-1940 (USA Census not made public for 72 years)
  - Microfilmed City Directories
    - Similar to telephone books; privately printed without phone numbers since early 1800's
    - Contain alphabetical lists of the names of the heads of households, their addresses, and occupational information, included widows with their deceased husband's name
  - Naturalization Papers covered by regional branch (offer indexes for other states too)
    - Declaration of Intention/First Papers: intention to become citizen
    - Petition for Naturalization/Final Papers: formal application
    - Certificate for Naturalization: proof of naturalization given to citizen
    - Naturalization papers filed after September 26, 1906 were standardized
    - September 22, 1922, passed the Married Women's Act; "law finally gave each woman a nationality of her own... Prior to this, if a US-born woman married a man who was foreign-born, she lost her citizenship. If he was later naturalized, she then regained it, since women and children before this time were granted citizenship with their husband/father." (M.L. Smith)
  - Some State Census AND International Census
    - Canada and Great Britain census become public after 100 years so 1911 census is available
  - US Passenger Arrival Manifests and Indexes
    - Manifests are written records of people immigrating from foreign ports into US ports
    - Records maintained since 1820 and available on microfilm
    - Usually provide name, age, country of origin prior to 1905
    - After 1905 arrival date based on port of entry, also provides place of last residence, birthplace, passenger's destination, name of US relative going to join, occupation
    - After the requirement of visas in 1924, passengers were required to have travel documents and/or proof of birth, age, etc.
  - Important NARA Online Finding Aids for Databases and Records of Digitized Documents, Photos, Maps and Electronic files on NARA website which are available for free downloads and research – <http://www.archives.gov/research/start/online-tools.html>.
  - Online Public Access (OPA) – New online portal to all of the data and digitized records from ARC, also all the web pages from Archives.gov and from Presidential Libraries, some AAD and over 1 million electronic records from Electronic Records Archives (ERA) with results grouped into categories <http://www.archives.gov/research/search/>
  - Search Tips for OPA and Discover Locations of Archival Materials – <http://www.archives.gov/research/search/help/search-tips.html>
  - Microfilm Catalog – 3,400 numbered microfilm publications - Order reproductions at <https://eservices.archives.gov/orderonline/start.swe>
  - Federal Records Guide – high level including executive, judicial, and legislative branches. <http://www.archives.gov/research/guide-fed-records/>
  - Archival Records Database (ARC) – national holdings, use key words, person, etc. use this OPA URL <http://www.archives.gov/research/search/>
  - Access to Archival Databases (AAD) – search electronic holdings by person, date, etc. <http://aad.archives.gov/aad/>
  - Resources for Genealogists – <http://www.archives.gov/research/genealogy/>
    - Most NARA branches offer free [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com), [www.heritagequestonline.com](http://www.heritagequestonline.com) and [www.fold3.com](http://www.fold3.com) (Footnote) access
  - All Regional NARA have volunteers to help you with your research
  - Print copies of documents for a nominal fee (so take change)
  - Request research for 1-4 family members at a time for a fee
- **Old Newspapers** serve as "diaries of local communities and their inhabitants"

- Death Notices and Obituaries
- Marriage, Birth, B'nai Mitzvah announcements
- Articles about or written by family members
- Find in libraries on microfilm or library online databases, or local newspaper archives
- Databases and newspaper archives like Library Of Congress [www.loc.gov/rr/news/](http://www.loc.gov/rr/news/)
- Find online for a fee OR free at many libraries and National Archives Branches
  - ProQuest® <http://www.proquest.com> then enter "Genealogy" and "Go" in Products & Services
  - HeritageQuest™ <http://www.heritagequestonline.com/hqoweb/library/do/index>
  - MyHeritage.com <http://www.myheritage.com/>
  - Ancestry.com or Ancestry Library Edition <http://www.ancestry.com>
- **Join Genealogical Societies**
  - Your Local, State or National Jewish and Secular Genealogical Societies
  - Special Interest Groups (SIGs) by geographic region of origin or topic like JewishGen's Regional Special Interest Groups described on <http://www.jewishgen.org/JewishGen/sigs.htm>
  - Offer educational programs, private libraries, research and translation assistance

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