

Jewish Genealogy

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INTRODUCTION

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

Using This Outline

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

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

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

JEWISH SEARCH STRATEGIES

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

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

Step 1. Identify What You Know about Your Family

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

Step 2. Decide What You Want to Learn

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

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

Step 3. Select a Record to Search

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

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

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

- Use language helps. Jewish records may be in Yiddish, Hebrew, or in the language of the country of residence. Some church records for Jews may be in Latin. See "Language and Languages" in this outline.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Step 4. Use the Internet

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

site. The most popular starting sites for genealogists include:

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

For Jewish research, the most helpful sites are:

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

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

Many books about using the Internet are available at libraries and bookstores. Some list Internet sites of interest to genealogists. A resource guide called *Family History and the Internet* has been produced by the Family History Department. This and other guides listed in this outline can be purchased from:

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

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

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

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

Step 5. Find and Search the Record

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

- Family History Library. The Library is open to the public and charges no fees for using the records. For more information, write to:

Family History Library
35 North West Temple Street
Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3400

- Family History Centers. The Family History Library can loan copies of most records on microfilm to thousands of Family History

Centers worldwide. There is a small duplication and postage fee for this service.

- Local Archives and Libraries. Although the Family History Library has many records on microfilm or microfiche, others are available only at local or national archives and libraries. See the "Archives and Libraries" section of this outline for more information.
- Libraries and Interlibrary Loan. Public, academic, and other research libraries may have some published sources for Jewish research. Many provide interlibrary loan services that allow you to borrow records from other libraries.
- Look-Up Exchange. There are lists of people on the Internet who will search various types of records for certain areas free of charge. You can locate these lists through Internet sites such as:

<http://www.genuki.org/> (for the British Isles)
<http://www.posom.com/hl/>

- Jewish Genealogical Societies. Many Jewish genealogical societies will do local research for you. A list of these societies can be found at:

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

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

To contact libraries or professional researchers or any other family historian, write a brief, specific

letter. Enclose a self-addressed, stamped, long envelope when writing within your own country. When writing to a foreign country, enclose three international reply coupons (available from your post office). You will usually need to pay in advance for photocopy or search services.

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

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

Step 6. Use the Information

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

FINDING JEWISH RECORDS IN THE FAMILY HISTORY LIBRARY CATALOG

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

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

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

Both the fiche and CD catalogs are available at the Family History Library, Family History Centers, and some other libraries and archives. You can also buy the Windows version at the Distribution Center (see "Introduction" for the address).

Because there are several different versions of the catalog, including the one that is available on the

Internet, there are several different ways to search. Be creative when using the catalog.

The DOS version of the Family History Library Catalog has five types of searches:

- Locality Search
- Locality Browse
- Surname Search
- Film Number Search
- Computer Number Search

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

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

The Family History Library Catalog on microfiche is divided into four major searches:

- Locality Search
- Subject Search
- Surname Search
- Author>Title Search

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

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

Subject Search

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

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

Locality Search or Place Search

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

Largest: Continents, regions, or countries

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

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

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

For example, in the Locality Search look for:

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

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

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

JEWISH RECORDS
CEMETERIES
CIVIL REGISTRATION or VITAL RECORDS

For example:

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

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

UNITED STATES – CENSUS – 1890

This search by country lists the surviving 1890 census or population schedules

GERMANY, BADEN – CENSUS

This search by country and state lists the 1939 non-Germanic minority census for that state

ILLINOIS, COOK, CHICAGO – JEWISH RECORDS

This search by state (United States), county, and city lists synagogue and other Jewish records in Chicago

Keyword Search

The Keyword Search, found only in the Windows version of the catalog, is an easy and effective way to search for Jewish records. This powerful tool allows you to search for records using keywords.

For example, you may type in “Jews census” or “Census of Jews” to locate census records that are unique to the Jews. Circumcision records can be found using the keywords “Jewish records” or “circumcision.” The key words “Church records Jews” locate synagogue records of Jews in Quebec, Canada, that were turned in as part of civil registration.

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

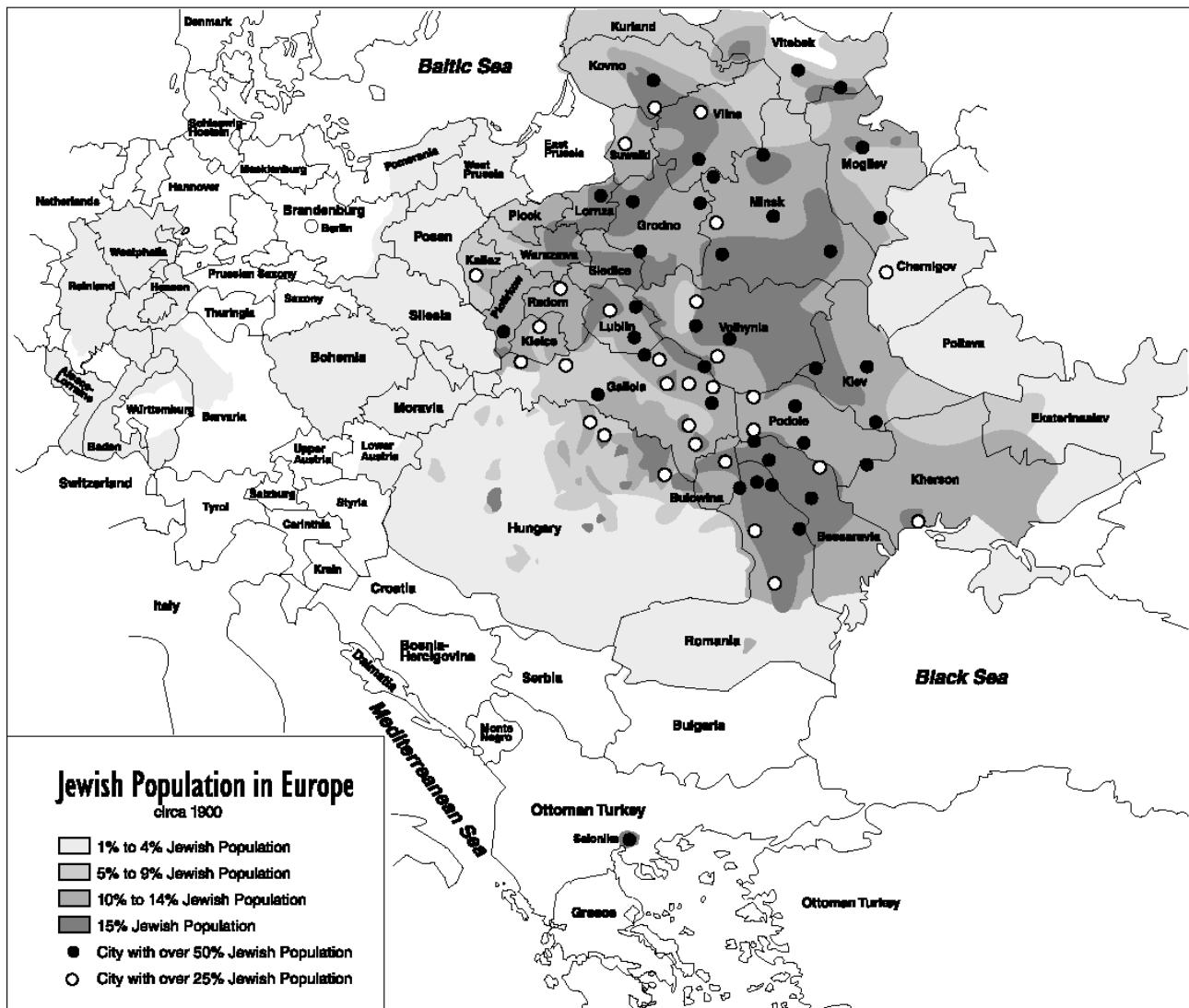
Use several different keywords or combination of keywords in looking for specific record sources. The way they are listed or described in the catalog affects how you find them by Keyword Search.

The Pale of Jewish Settlement

1772-1917



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



ARCHIVES AND LIBRARIES

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

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

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

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

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

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

<http://www.cyndislist.com>

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

YIVO Institute

The YIVO Institute was established to preserve East European Jewish heritage and is currently the world's leading research center for East European Jewish studies. Among its holdings are the world's

largest collection of Yiddish books and materials relating to the history and culture of Eastern European Jewry. They also have extensive resources to aid in the genealogical research of Eastern Europe including encyclopedias, gazetteers, *yizkor* books (Holocaust town memorial books), reference books on the geographical distribution of Jewish family names, biographical directories, and *Landsmanshaft* records.

You can contact the YIVO Institute at:

YIVO Institute for Jewish Research
Center for Jewish History
15 West 16th Street
New York, NY 10011

Leo Baeck Institute

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

You can contact the Leo Baeck institute at:

Leo Baeck Institute
Center for Jewish History
15 West 16th Street
New York, NY 10011

The Institute also operates offices in England and Israel:

Leo Baeck Institute
4 Devonshire Street
London W1N 2BH
England

Leo Baeck Institute
33 Bustanai Street
91082 Jerusalem
Israel

Holocaust Memorial Museums

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

Jews murdered in the Holocaust, and many oral or written testimonies of Holocaust survivors.

You can contact the Yad Vashem library at:

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

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

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

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

You can contact the museum at:

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

Other Libraries and Archives

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

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

You can contact the Library of Congress at:

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

The Hebraic Section is located in the Adams Building at 110 2nd Str., SE Wash., DC.

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

You can contact the Jewish Public Library at:

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

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

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

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

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

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

You can contact the New York Public Library at:

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

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

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

You can contact the American Jewish Archives at:

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

Historical and Genealogical Societies

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

Inventories, Registers, Catalogs

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

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

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

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

Guzik, Estelle M. *Genealogical Resources in the New York Metropolitan Area*. New York: Jewish Genealogical Society, 1989. (FHL book 974.71 A3ge; fiche 6100654.)

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

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

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

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

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

BIOGRAPHY

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

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

Individual Biographies

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

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

Compiled Biographies

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

Konopczyński, Władysław. *Polski Słownik Biograficzny* (Polish Biographical Dictionary). Kraków: Polska Akademia Nauk 1935–1974. (FHL book 943.8 D36p; film 1044531–1044549).

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

Jewish Biographies

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

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

Examples of biographical collections of Jews compiled by location include:

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

Jewish Biographical Archive/Jüdisches biographisches Archiv on 781 microfiche. New York City: K.G. SAUR Verlag, 1994–1996. (FHL microfiche 6137099–6137108, 6142109–6142116, and 6144954–6144980.)

Levi, John Simon. *The Forefathers: A Dictionary of the Jews of Australia, 1788–1830*. Sydney: The Australian Historical Society, 1976. (FHL book 994 D31j.)

Wininger, Salomon. *Grosse jüdische National-Biographie: mit mehr als 8000 Lebensbeschreibungen namhafter jüdischer Männer und Frauen aller Zeiten und Länder; ein Nachschlagewerk für das jüdische Volk und dessen Freunde* (The Great Jewish National Biography: with more than 8000 Biographies of Prominent Jewish Men and Women of All Ages and for All Countries: a Reference Work for the Jewish People and their Friends). Zug, Switzerland: Inter-

Documentation AG, 1975 (FHL film 1608860–01 and 1608864; fiche 6041316 [83 fiche].)

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

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

BUSINESS RECORDS AND COMMERCE

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

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

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

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

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

CEMETERIES

Jewish religious customs require that Jewish burial sites be held in reverence. The religious duty

(*mitzvah*) of burial is the responsibility of a decedent's children or spouse. If there are no children or spouse, it is the responsibility of the closest relative. According to Jewish law, burial should take place promptly, preferably on the day of death, but within three days at the most.

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

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

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

Families that belonged to the priestly class (*kohanim*) were forbidden to go inside the gates of a cemetery because that would violate laws of ritual purity. Their gravestones usually bear the symbol of two hands with thumbs touching and fingers spread out in a priestly blessing.

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

Kurzweil, Arthur. *From Generation to Generation: How to Trace Your Jewish Genealogy and Family History*. Revised edition. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1994. (FHL book 929.1 K967f.)

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

There are two major types of cemetery records:

- **Gravestone inscriptions.** Information recorded on gravestones or monuments, including transcripts of this information, provide at least the decedent's name, death date, and name of the father. Other information may be listed. Jewish gravestones are usually inscribed in Hebrew. The information may be duplicated on the stones in English or in the

language of the country in which they are found.

- **Cemetery registers.** Information kept by cemetery officials or caretakers include registers, plot books and maps, grave-books, and public (municipal) cemetery records. Information provided in these records includes names, ages, marriage information, sometimes dates and places of birth, who paid for the burial, and names of people (often relatives) buried in the same plot.

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

You can find cemetery information in:

Jewish Cemeteries Throughout the World. [S.l.]: International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies. (FHL fiche 6334783.) Two microfiche sold by Avotaynu, Inc. which list 7500 cemeteries in 79 countries.

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

Information from many Jewish cemeteries can be found on the Internet. Use a search engine and search the topics: cemetery, Jewish, (name of town). The International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies is trying to identify every cemetery in the world where Jews are buried, and volunteers are contributing data on people interred in these cemeteries. For more information see:

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

Other sites that have information for cemeteries are:

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

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

Records at the Family History Library

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

Margolinsky, Jul. *Transcript of 298 epitaphs from the Jewish Cemetery in St. Thomas, W.I., 1837–1916, with Index.* [s.l.: s.n.], 1957. (FHL film 1013426, item 18.)

Muneles, Otto and Milada Vilímková. *Starý židovský hřbitov v Praze* (Old Jewish Cemetery in Prague). Praha: Státní pedagogické nakladatelství, 1955. (FHL book 943.71/P3 V3m; film 1181638, item 6.) Tombstone inscriptions from the old Jewish cemetery in Prague. Includes pictures of tombstones. Another book on the same cemetery was published in 1903 (FHL book 943.71/P3 V3j; film 1181915, item 9.)

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

Wolf, Egon. *Sepulturas de israelitas – II: Uma pesquisa em mais de trinta cemitérios não israelitas* (Jewish Burials: a Search in More

than Thirty Non-Jewish Cemeteries). Rio de Janeiro: Cemitério Comunal Israelita, 1983. (FHL book 981 V3w.)

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

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

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

Funeral Home Records

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

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

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

CENSUS

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

Censuses were taken to:

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

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

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

When using census records, consider the following:

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

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

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

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

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

Conscriptio Judaeorum, 1848 (Census of Jews, 1848). Budapest: Magyar Országos levéltárban történt, 1970. (FHL film 0719823–0719828, 0754368 item 2.) This census gives the name, age, and specific birthplace of all members of the household. The birthplace is particularly useful in tracing families that have moved from another area or country.

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

Dénombrements nomitatifs des Juifs en Alsace, 1784 (Enumeration by Name of the Jews in Alsace, 1784). Colmar: Jean-Henri Decker, 1785. (FHL film 1069535 item 3.) Includes names all the Jews of Alsace-Lorraine (Elsaß-Lothringen [German] or Bas-Rhin [French]) in the year 1784 and 1785 by town. Has an index to towns with the number of Jews in each town in the region.

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

Népszámlálás 1868–1870 (Censuses, 1868–1870). Budapest: Magyar Országos Levéltárban történt, 1970. (FHL films 0722259–0722302.) This census is arranged by house numbers and includes surrounding communities. A conscription list of Jewish males is on films 0722262–0722263.

Another example is an 1814 census of Jews for many individual towns in Denmark. These are listed in the Family History Library Catalog under each town. The Jewish census of the town of Skælskør, Sorø, Denmark on FHL film 0041007 is representative.

Census Indexes

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

Some major examples of census indexes include:

- Name indexes by state to the heads of household for all the 1790–1850 (and often later) census returns of the United States.
- Soundex indexes listing every person in the 1900 and 1920 United States census returns for each state and for some states in 1910. Also a soundex for the 1880 census of every state; it includes only those households where children ten years and younger are present.
- Street-finding aids for many cities in the United States that identify census wards for these streets.

- Names indexes to many of the 1851 and some of the 1861–1891 censuses of the England, Scotland and Wales.
- An every-name CD-ROM index to the 1851 census for the counties of Devon, Warwick, and Norfolk, England and an every-name CD-ROM index to the 1881 census of England, Wales, Scotland, Channel Islands, and Isle of Man.
- Street indexes for many cities in England, Scotland, and Wales (1841–1891 censuses), and in Ireland (1901 and 1911 censuses).

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

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

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

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

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

<http://www.usgenweb.org/census/>

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

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

Searching Census Records

When searching census records, remember that:

- Ages may be inaccurate.
- The name on the census may not be the same as the name recorded in vital records, Jewish records, or other sources.
- Place-names may be misspelled.
- Names may be spelled as they sound.

- Individuals missing from a family may be listed elsewhere in the census.
- The information provided may have been deliberately or inadvertently falsified.

Census Records at the Family History Library

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

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

CHRONOLOGY

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

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

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

The Gregorian is a correction of the Julian calendar, which had been in use since 46 b.c.e. Leap years had been miscalculated in the Julian calendar; by 1582 the calendar was 10 days behind the solar year. Pope Gregory XIII corrected the calendar by dropping 10 days. The new calendar was adopted by the Catholic church in 1582 but at later dates in non-Catholic countries. Russia did

not accept the new calendar until 1918. In Russia and part of Poland, the Julian calendar was generally used throughout the 1800s, when the difference had accumulated to 12 days. Polish vital records often give both the Julian and Gregorian dates. This can be confusing to beginning researchers. When both dates are given, use the later date (the Gregorian) for your record keeping.

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

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

Calendar Conversions by Scott E. Lee:
<http://genealogy.org/~scottlee/calconvert.cgi>
This is a online conversion freeware program that will convert days from the Julian, Hebrew, and French Republican calendars to the standard Gregorian calendar. It will also convert backwards from the Gregorian to the Julian calendar.

Tarek's hijri (Muslim)/Gregorian/Julian Converter:
<http://bennyhills.fortunecity.com/elfman/454/calindex.html>

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

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

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

CHURCH RECORDS

In many countries the established national church (such as Catholic, Orthodox, or Lutheran) was appointed as the official record keeper of births, marriages, and deaths for the entire population, including Jews. The clergymen already recorded christening, marriage, and burial records for members of their parishes. As most people belonged to the established church, it was easier for the government to require the clergymen to include the birth, marriage, and death information for people

of other religions in their parishes rather than have the government keep a separate record. Therefore, it can be important to check records of Christian churches when researching Jewish ancestors.

This is particularly true of Central and Eastern Europe in the period prior to 1826–1835, when the governments of most countries in this area required separate records be kept of the Jews. Copies of the church records in many of these countries were sent to the government. These records are known as metrical book transcripts and parish register transcripts. Eventually most governments developed a separate system for registering births, marriages, and deaths, called civil registration. For a more lengthy explanation of how church records, civil registration, and Jewish records interrelate, see “Vital Records” in this outline.

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

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

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

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

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

Finding Church Records

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

CIVIL REGISTRATION

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

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

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

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

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

General Historical Background

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

The commencement dates of civil registration vary from country to country. Sometimes they vary from region to region within a country. The Baltic states did not have civil registration until 1940,

which is quite late for Jewish research in those countries. Countries such as Poland and the Russian Empire used transcripts of church records, which included Jews, before they had a separate government civil registration system. General dates of the beginning of civil registration in countries with significant Jewish populations are:

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

Information Recorded in Civil Registers

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

Births

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

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

Marriages

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Marriage Contracts. When a marriage occurred between people of different social status, a marriage contract may have been made to stipulate how the property was to be divided if one of them died. These are not documents that will generally

be found among court records. They are similar to the pre-nuptial agreements people make today.

Deaths

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

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

Locating Civil Registration Records

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

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

Records at the Family History Library

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

Civil Registration, 1914–1941. Thessaloniki, Greece: Lixiarheion Archive, 1989. (On 235 FHL films beginning with 1690717.) Birth, marriage, and death records from the city of Thessalonica from 1914–1941.

Registers van de Burgelijke Stand, 1811–1940 (Registers of Civil Registration, 1811–1940). 's-Gravenhage: Algemeen Rijksarchief, 1954–1997. (On 2498 FHL films beginning with 1138940.) Birth, marriage, death, and other civil records for Amsterdam 1811–1940.

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

Obtaining Civil Registration Records Not at the Family History Library

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CONCENTRATION CAMPS

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

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

Camp officials kept records of Jews who were used for slave labor. Some of the concentration camp records that survived the war were seized by

British, Soviet, and U.S. military forces. In the United States these records can be found at:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Totenbuch, Konzentrationslager Mauthausen, Jan. 7, 1939–Apr. 29, 1945 (Death Register, Concentration Camp Mathausen, Jan. 7, 1939–Apr. 29, 1945). Washington, D.C.: National Archives, 19–. (FHL film 0812876–0812877.)

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

War Crimes Case Files, 1945–1959. Suitland, Maryland: National Archives and Record Administration, 1992–1994. (On 45 FHL films beginning with number 1788042.)

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

COURT RECORDS

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

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

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

DIRECTORIES

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

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

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

Gostin, Ted. "Russian Business Directories." *Syllabus*. Salt Lake City: FEEFHS 1997:

55–58. (FHL book 940 C4f; film 1183732 item 3.)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

DIVORCE RECORDS

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

Divorce records are often not open to the public. The Family History Library has some records of divorce in its collection. Most divorce records are

found in the civil registration or vital records office of the town or county where the divorce took place or in court records. See “Civil Registration” and “Vital Records” in this outline and in the outlines of the countries or states you are researching.

EMIGRATION AND IMMIGRATION

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

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

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

These records can also help in constructing family groups. If you do not find your ancestor’s name, you may find information on your ancestor’s family members or neighbors. People who lived near each other in their country of origin often settled together after they emigrated.

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

Most countries made records of passengers who arrived in their country. These were generally kept by port authorities. Jews are included in these

records along with all other immigrants. The records of arrivals at New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Boston, New Orleans, and other U.S. and Canadian ports are excellent sources of information about immigrants to these countries.

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

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

Index von Karl Werner Klüber zu den Passagierlisten der Auswandererschiffe 1850–1871 (Index by Karl Werner Klüber to the Passenger Lists of Emigration Ships 1850–1871). Hamburg: Staatsarchiv, 1994. (On 48 FHL films beginning with number 1961710.)

An alphabetical listing of emigrant Jews who returned to Hamburg from 1905–1907 and Jewish orphans from Russia in 1906 are also among the Hamburg passenger lists (FHL film 1732431, items 6, 11). There is also a listing of Jews who sailed from Bremen from 1 November 1913 to 31 Dec 1914 (FHL film 1568852 item 2 and 1568871).

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

[http://www.hamburg.de/LinkToYourRoots/
english/welcome.htm/](http://www.hamburg.de/LinkToYourRoots/english/welcome.htm/)

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

- Records of the Russian Consular Offices in the United States, containing information about people from Eastern Europe, mostly Jews, who came to the United States during the latter half of the 19th century and early part of the 20th century.
- Locally kept 20th century alien registers of England.

- Copenhagen, Denmark, Police Records of Emigrants, consisting of 90 ledger books that list details about people leaving Denmark from 1868 to 1940.
- Records of the Poor Jews' Temporary Shelter in England. Information contained in these records includes the name of the person who was sheltered, date of arrival, age, marital status, number of children accompanying the person, place from which the person came to the shelter, occupation, port of entry into England, length of stay at the shelter, date leaving the United Kingdom, where the person was going, and the name of the ship on which the person sailed. A searchable database that lists information about Jews who stayed at the shelter between 1895 and 1914 on their way to South Africa is found at:

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

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

<http://istg.rootsweb.com/>

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

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

Unique to Jews are records kept by Hebrew Immigrant Aid Societies and other Jewish associations in the United States. See "Societies" in this outline for further information about the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Societies.

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

ENCYCLOPEDIAS AND DICTIONARIES

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

keeping practices, laws, customs, commerce, occupations, costumes, and archaic terminology.

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

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

Orgelbrand, Samuel. *Encyklopedja powszechna* (Universal Encyclopedia). Warszawa: Archiwum Dokumentacji Mechanicznej, 1974. (FHL film 0997501-0997518.)

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

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

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

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

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

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

Language dictionaries are discussed in "Language and Languages" in this outline. Historical diction-

aries of most countries have also been published by Scarecrow Press, Inc. in Metuchen, N.J. and by the Federal Research Division of the Library of Congress (Country Studies). These books give valuable background information on many of the smaller countries of the world.

GAZETTEERS

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

Gazetteers may also provide information such as:

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

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

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

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

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

Although many of these gazetteers may have been compiled after your ancestors left these countries,

location of towns changed very little during the 18th and 19th centuries. A gazetteer from 1914 will list the same towns that existed there a century earlier. There was often more than one variation of the town name, depending on the language and ethnic group, but the location seldom changed.

General Gazetteers

Most gazetteers are written for a general audience, not specifically for Jews. Generally, gazetteers list all localities in a country and may give information that pertains to the Jewish population. Because most Jews lived in cities and not rural areas, a general world gazetteer can often be of help. The following is a good general gazetteer:

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

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

Country-Specific Gazetteers

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

Austrian Empire

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

The following gazetteer for this region was based on the 1900 Austrian census. The volume for each province is arranged by district and includes an index to German and local place-names. If you do not find the town on the page listed in the index, check the footnotes. Parishes and synagogues are not listed in the main text but are in an appendix located between the main text and the index of

each volume. The appendix is arranged alphabetically by district and sub-district. The synagogues and parishes are given in the last column: Standort der röm.-kath., gr.-kath. und isr. Matrikelstellen (location of the Roman Catholic, Greek Catholic, and Jewish Place of Registration):

Gemeindelexikon der im Reichsrat vertretenen Königreiche und Länder (Gazetteer of the crownlands and Territories Represented in the Imperial Council). 14 vols. Vienna: K.K. Statistisches Zentralkommission, 1903–1908. (FHL book 943.6 E5g; film [see below].)

1187925	Item 2	Vol.1	Niederösterreich (Lower Austria, now part of Austria)
1187925	Item 3	Vol 2	Oberösterreich (Upper Austria, now part of Austria)
1187925	Item 4	Vol 3	Salzburg (Salzburg, now part of Austria)
1187926	Item 1	Vol 4	Steiermark (Styria, now part of Austria and Slovenia)
1187926	Item 2	Vol 5	Kärnten (Carinthia, now part of Austria, Italy, and Slovenia)
1187926	Item 3	Vol 6	Krain (Carniola, now part of Slovenia)
1187926	Item 4	Vol 7	Küstenland (Coastland, now part of Italy, Slovenia, and Croatia)
1187926	Item 5	Vol 8	Tirol und Vorarlberg (Tyrol and Vorarlberg, now part of Austria and Italy)
1187927	Item 1	Vol 9	Böhmen (Bohemia, now part of the Czech Republic)

924736	Item 1	Vol10	Mähren (Moravia, now part of the Czech Republic)
1187927	Item 2	Vol 11	Schlesien (Silesia, now part of Poland and the Czech Republic)
1187928	Item 1	Vol 12	Galizien (Galicia, now part of Poland and Ukraine)
1187928	Item 2	Vol 13	Bukovina (Bukovina, now part of Romania and Ukraine)
1187928	Item 3	Vol 14	Dalmatien (Dalmatia, now part of Croatia)

Hungarian Kingdom

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

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

Magyarország Helységnévtára (Gazetteer of Hungary). 2 vols. János Dvorzák, comp. Budapest: "Havi Füzetek," 1877. (FHL book 943.9 E5d; film 0599564 [Vol. I] and 0973041 [Vol. II]; fiche 6000840.)

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

Use the numbers from the index to find the entry for your town. Population figures are given according to religion. The following abbreviations are used:

izr.	Izraelita	Jewish
rk.	Római Katholikus	Roman Catholic

gk.	Görög Katholikus	Greek Catholic (Eastern Orthodox)
kg.	Keleti Görög	Greek Orthodox
ag.	Agostai	Augsburg Evangelical Lutheran
ref.	Reformatus	Reformed
un.	Unitárius	Unitarian

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

German Empire

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

Utrecht, E., comp. *Meyers Orts- und Verkehrs-Lexikon des Deutschen Reichs* (Meyer's place and Transportation Directory of the German Empire). 2 vols. Leipzig: Bibliographisches Institut, 1912–1913. (FHL book 943 E5mo; film 0496640–0496641; fiche 6000001–6000029.)

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

Evangelical parish:	evPfk.
Catholic parish:	kath. Pfk.
Jewish synagogue:	Syn.

A multi-volume gazetteer was compiled for the provinces of the former Kingdom of Prussia based on the 1905 census. It includes statistical

information about the number of Jews living in these provinces and other valuable information:

Gemeindelexikon für das Königreich Preußen: auf Grund der Materialen der Volkszählung vom 1. Dezember 1905 und anderer amtlicher Quellen (Parish Dictionary for the Kingdom of Prussia: Based on the Material of the Census of 1 December 1905 and Other Official Sources). 15 vols. Berlin: Verlag des Königlichen Statistischen Landesamts, 1907–1909. (FHL book 943 E5kp; film 1181005–1181006.)

Russian Empire

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

Списки населённых мест российской империи (Spiski Naselennykh měst Rossīiskoi Imperii = List of inhabited places of the Russian Empire). Zug, Switz.: Inter Documentation Co., 1976. (FHL fiche 6002224, parts 1–420.) This gazetteer is used as a standard for place names of the Russian Empire in the Family History Library Catalog. Separate books were published for each province (Gubernia). This does not list the entire Russian Empire and is missing information on the Baltic States and Belarus.

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

Separate gazetteers in the above series exist for Belarus but are listed in the Family History Library catalog under the name of the province (*Gubernia*). For example there are gazetteers for Minsk (FHL film 1923576 item 1), Vitebsk (FHL film 1923576 item 3), and Mogilev (FHL film 1923576 item 2 from 1908–1910). Another gazetteer for Minsk is dated 1924 (FHL film 2044163 item 1).

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

Sulimierski, Filip. *Słownik geograficzny Królestwa Polskiego i innych Krajów Słowiańskich* (Geographical Dictionary of the Kingdom of Poland and Other Slavic Countries). 15 Vol. Warsaw: Władysław Walewski, 1880–1902. (FHL book 943.8 E5c; film 0920957–0920972.) Arranged alphabetically with text in Polish. Usually indicates whether a town had a Jewish population and a synagogue.

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

Jewish Gazetteers

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

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

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

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

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

The JewishGen Internet site includes a gazetteer with 350,000 towns in 24 countries in Central and Eastern Europe. It is based on the Geographic Names Database (GNDB) compiled by the U.S. Defense Mapping Agency, which was also used

extensively in the compilation of *Where Once We Walked*. It has links to maps showing where various towns are located in Europe. This system searches by the Daitch-Mokotoff Soundex (see the glossary), which may help you find a town name even if it is spelled slightly differently from the gazetteer. The web address is:

<http://www.jewishgen.org/ShtetlSeeker/loctown.htm/>

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

Gazetteer of Central and Eastern Europe. 21 fiche. Teaneck, NJ: Avotaynu, c1995, 1998. (FHL fiche 6312315, 6310076, 6306695.) These fiche cannot be circulated by the Family History Library.

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

GENEALOGY

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

Major Collections and Databases

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

- *International Genealogical Index*, which lists the names of deceased individuals from all over the world. This index includes names extracted from birth and marriage records and from submissions of private individuals. While it may include only limited information on Jewish families, it is certainly worth searching.

- *Ancestral File*. This file, part of FamilySearch and on the FamilySearch.org Internet site, contains family history information linked in family groups and pedigrees that has been contributed by patrons since 1979. Although it contains the names of millions of people, few are of Jewish descent. Ancestral File allows you to print pedigree charts, family group records, details about the submitters, and individual summary sheets for any person in the file.
- *Vital Records Index British Isles*, and *Vital Records Index North America*. These two CD-ROM indexes contain information from millions of birth, christening, and marriage records for the British Isles (1538–1888) and the United States and Canada (1631–1888). Both indexes can be purchased from the Distribution Center (see “Introduction” for the address).
- *Pedigree Resource File*. This CD-ROM database contains more than 5 million names in lineage-linked pedigrees that have been submitted by researchers. These pedigrees contain unedited notes and sources. Charts and reports can be printed from the data. The set also includes a master index to the names. It can be purchased from the Distribution Center (see “Introduction” for the address).

These databases are found at most Family History Centers. Except for the *Pedigree Resource File*, they can also be found on the Internet at:

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

Family Histories

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

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

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

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

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

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

Cavignac, Jean. *Dictionnaire du Judaïsme Bordelais aux XVIIIe et XIXe Siècles: Biographies, Généalogies, Professions, Institutions* (Dictionary of Judaism in Bordeaux in the 18th and 19th centuries: Biographies Genealogies, Professions, Institutions). Bordeaux: Archives départementales, 1987. (FHL book 944.71/B1 F2c.)

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

Genealogical Collections

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

Mordy, I. *Collection of Jewish Records*. (FHL film 0994068 item 11 contains notes on the use of the indexes; 1279240–1279250 contain the indexes). Microfilm copy of original records held by Isobel Mordy in England. It includes compiled pedigrees of Jews and three indexes to the pedigrees by name, date, and locality. The name index is arranged alphabetically and gives pedigree reference numbers.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Genealogical Indexes

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

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

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

Research Coordination

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

Johnson, Keith A., and Malcolm R. Sainty. *Genealogical Research Directory.* Sydney: Genealogical Research Directory Editors, 1996. (FHL book 929.1025 G286grd.) Search all editions since it is published yearly and

specific family names may appear in only one edition.

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

Jewish Genealogical Society. *Jewish Genealogical Family Finder.* New York, New York, 1992–. (FHL book 940 F2 [1992]; microfiche 6334925 [1998].)

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

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

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

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

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

HOLOCAUST, JEWISH (1939–1945)

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

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

Yizkor, or memorial books. These publications are usually written in Hebrew or Yiddish and include the history of a Jewish community, memories of the community's survivors, information from friends about families that had no survivors, a list

of Holocaust victims from the town, and names and addresses of survivors. *Yizkor* books are usually privately printed in small publication runs. The following archives have significant collections of *yizkor* books:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Lijst van nederlandse joden, gevangenen, en vermist personen die gestorven zijn in concentratie kampen gedurende de tweede wereld oorlog: bijvoegsel tot de Nederlandse Staatscourant van donderdag 1949–1962 (List of Dutch Jews, prisoners, and missing persons

who died in concentration camps during the second world war: supplement to the Netherlands State-Newspaper every Thursday 1949–1962). 3 vols. 's-Gravenhage: Staatsdrukkerij en Uitgeverijbedrijf, 1949–1950. (FHL book 949.2 V23n; film 1045357 item 1, 1181856 item 1, 1183644 item 11.)

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

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

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

A guide to researching Holocaust families is:

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

INQUISITION

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

Spain began the Inquisition in 1480 and conducted it for nearly 300 years, spreading it to Portugal and Spanish and Portuguese colonies. Many *conversos* fled Spain and returned to Judaism. Some remained Catholic and successfully hid their Jewish activity. Some Jewish traditions were lost

over time and many descendants lost all knowledge of their Jewish identity. Other practices were retained and even today Catholic descendants continue family traditions such as not eating pork or not lighting fires on Friday night and Saturday.

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

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

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

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

Inquisição de Lisboa (Inquisition of Lisbon).
Lisboa: Laboratórios Fototécnicos, 1975. (On 77 FHL films beginning with 0784501.)

Indice del Ramo de Ynquisición (Index of the Branch of the Inquisition). 2 vols. México City: Archivo General de la Nación, 1978. (FHL book 972 A5mi; film 1149544.) The manuscript gives a summary of the various cases tried during the Inquisition.

Procesos del Santo Oficio de México, 1522–1820.
Salt Lake City, Utah: Genealogical Society of Utah, 1952–1954. (On 322 FHL films beginning with 0034797.)

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

JEWISH HISTORY

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

Your ancestors will become more interesting to you if you also use histories to learn about the events that were of interest to them or that they may have been involved in. For example, by using a history you might learn about the events that occurred in the year your great-grandparents were married.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Local Histories

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

JEWISH RECORDS

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

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

in 1792 and the Netherlands in 1795, Jews were recorded with the rest of the population.

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

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

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

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

Matrikel, 1826–1938 (Metrical Books, 1826–1938). Wien: Niederösterreichischen Stadt und Landesarchive, 1980. (On 236 FHL films beginning with 1175370.) Registers of births, marriages, and deaths in the city of Vienna from 1826–1938.

Matrykuła, 1826–1866 (Metrical Books, 1826–1866). Warszawa: Genealogical Society of Utah, 1968. (FHL film 0689510–0689556.) Registers of births, marriages, and deaths in the city of Warsaw from 1826–1866.

Juden und Dissidenten–Register, 1812–1874 (Jews and Dissidents’ Register, 1812–1874). Berlin: Staatsarchiv, 1938. (On 44 FHL films beginning with 0477280.) Registers of births, marriages, and deaths in the city of Berlin from 1812–1874.

Examples of some published Jewish Records are:

Attal, Robert. *Registres Matrimoniaux de la communauté juive portugaise de Tunis aux XVIIIe et XIXe siècles* (Marriage Registers of the Portuguese Jewish Community of Tunis [Tunisia] from the 18th and 19th Centuries).

Jérusalem: Institut Ben-Zvi, 1989. (FHL book 961.1 F2a.)

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

An Austrian Example

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

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

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

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

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

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

Locating Jewish Records

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

LANGUAGE AND LANGUAGES

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

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

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

Hebrew Alphabet

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

Hebrew is written from right to left. Vowels were used to mark grammatical form and were not originally written. Diacritical marks and subscript signs are now used to represent vowels. The following chart shows the 22 Hebrew consonants and how the letters are transcribed into the Roman alphabet. Each of the 22 consonants also represents a number value, which is also shown.

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

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

א' = 1000
ה' = 5000

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

ת"ש"י represents 706 and year (5)706

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

<u>Hebrew</u>	<u>Roman</u>
א	ha
א'	hai
אָ	ha, ho
אָָ	he
אָָָ	he
אָָָָ	he
אָָָָָ	he (hej)
אָָָָָָ	hi
אָָָָָָָ	hi
אָָָָָָָָ	ho
אָָָָָָָָָ	ho
אָָָָָָָָָָ	hu
אָָָָָָָָָָָ	hu
אָָָָָָָָָָָָ	he or disregard vowel
אָָָָָָָָָָָָָ	ha
אָָָָָָָָָָָָָָ	he
אָָָָָָָָָָָָָָ	ho

Hebrew months are written as follows:

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

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

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

Language Aids

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

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

MAPS

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

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

Different types of maps will help you several ways:

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

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

Using Maps

Use maps carefully for the following reasons:

- Often several places have the same name. For example, there were more than 800 towns called Александровка (Aleksandrovka) in the Russian Empire.
- The spelling and even the names of some towns may have changed. This is particularly true of eastern European countries whose boundaries have changed. For example, the town presently known as Zagreb in Croatia was called Agram before the Austrian Empire was dissolved.
- Foreign place-names are often misspelled by record keepers of other countries. Sometimes difficult names were shortened and important diacritical marks omitted.
- Political and local boundaries are not always clearly indicated on all maps.

Finding the Specific Place on the Map

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

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

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

Finding Maps and Atlases

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

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

Eastern Europe. Scale 1:250,000. Washington, DC: Army Map Service, 1956–1959. (FHL map 947 E7e; film 1183629.) This map comes with a two-volume place-name index that lists the sheet number and longitude and latitude for each place (FHL book 947 E7e index; fiche 6001727–6001728). A grid map at the front of the film also shows what sections are on which maps. References to this map are found in gazetteers of this region published by the U.S. Board on Geographical Names.

Generalkarte von Mitteleuropa (General Map of Central Europe). Scale 1:200,000. Wien:

Bundesamt für Eich-und Vermessungswesen, 1889–1967. (FHL book 940 E7bm; film 1181580.) This map includes the region from middle Germany to western Ukraine and down to Greece, an area of high concentration for Jews. The grid map at the beginning of the film lists numbers across the top and at the left. The section maps use the top number plus the left number together as a map number.

Militär-Landesaufnahme und Spezialkarte der österreichisch-ungarischen Monarchie (Military Topographical and Specialized Map of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire). Wien: Das Institut, 1879–1928. (FHL book 943.6 E3am; film 1045395). Includes all of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire except for modern Austria. Overview map at the first of the film gives map numbers.

Karte des Deutschen Reiches (Map of the German Empire). 647 Maps. Berlin: Königlichen Preussischen Landesaufnahme, 1914–1917. (FHL film 0068814.) Overview map at the first of the film shows map numbers in the top right corner.

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

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

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

MILITARY RECORDS

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

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

usually came from the general population. Jews were able to serve as military officers in many countries.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Austrian Military Records

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

The Austrian Empire began universal conscription in 1868. Military records from the Austrian Empire include documents from parts or all of present-day Austria, Bosnia, Croatia, Czech

Republic, Hungary, Italy, Montenegro, Poland, Rumania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Ukraine.

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

The Central Command records include the following types of records:

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

Records of individual units include:

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

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

Blodgett, Steven W. *Great-grandfather was in the Imperial Cavalry: Using Austrian Military Records as an Aid to Writing Family History*. Salt Lake City: Corporation of the President,

1980. (FHL book 929.1 W893 1980 v. 7 pt. 4; fiche 6085770.)

MINORITIES

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

NAMES, PERSONAL

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

Surnames

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

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

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

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

- Patronymic
- Occupational
- Places
- Descriptions

Sephardic Surnames

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

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

After the Arabs were driven out of Spain, Jews made their Arabic-sounding names sound more like Spanish. Among Spanish Jews we find the family name *Avinbruch* which corresponds to *Abu Baruch*. The Hebrew word for son, *ben*, was also used; the son of Elisha became *Benelisha* or

Belish. Some-times Jewish given names were translated into their Spanish form and used as a surname. For example, *Mendel*, a common Jewish given name, became *Mendez* and *Chaim*, a Hebrew given name meaning “life,” became the Spanish surname *Vital* or *Vidal*.

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

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

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

Ashkenazic Surnames

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

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

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

Most Eastern European Jews were isolated from their gentile neighbors and rarely used surnames. Until the end of the 18th century the use of a

family name was left to the discretion of the individual Jew. The bulk of the Ashkenazic Jews in Germany and especially in Eastern Europe still followed the custom of using only a given name and the patronymic (Joseph, son of Isaac).

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

Registres des déclarations faites par les Israelites
(Registers of Name Declarations Made by the Jews). Strasbourg: Archives départementales à Strasbourg, 1973. (FHL films 1070259–1070263, 1070123.)

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

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

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

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

Many Hebrew given names have a symbolic connection with animals. For example, the German word for deer is *Hirsch* or, in some dialects, *Herz* or *Hart*. Hence we find surnames such as *Hirsch*, *Hirschsohn*, *Herz*, *Hirschberg*, *Hartwig*, and *Herschel*. The Slavic version of deer [hind] is *Jellinek* and in French is *Cerf*.

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

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

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

Occupations were also a source for family names, including *Schneider*, *Kravitz*, or *Portnoy* [tailor], *Kaufmann* [shopkeeper], *Schuler*, *Schulmann* or

Szkołnik [sexton, beadle], *Singer* [cantor], *Metzger*, *Reznick*, *Schlachter*, or *Schochet* [ritual slaughterer], and *Klopman* [one who knocks on the shutters to wake people for morning worship]. Many surnames reflect priestly or levitical heritage. One of the most common of all Jewish surnames is *Kohen* [priest] and its variations, *Cohen*, *Kahn*, *Kogan*, and *Katz*. Surnames showing Levitic or priestly heritage include *Levy*, *Levinsky*, *Levin*, *Lewek*, *Lewenberg*, and *Segal* (an abbreviation for *segan leviah* [member of the Levites]).

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

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

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

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

Given Names

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

spelling rules of the language and culture they lived in.

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

Naming Patterns

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

NATURALIZATION AND CITIZENSHIP

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

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

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

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

Information found in naturalization records varies from country to country. Generally the later the time period of naturalization, the more information given, including the name of the applicant, birth date and place, occupation, and date of arrival.

Other information that may be found in these records is a physical description of the person, names of other family members who immigrated, the port of arrival, and the name of the ship.

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

Locating Naturalization Records

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

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

NEWSPAPERS

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

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

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

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

Newspapers in Microform: United States, 1948–1983. 2 vols. Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 1984. (FHL book 011.35 N479 1984; film 1145942.) This is a geographically-arranged list of newspapers on microform and the repositories where the microforms are available. Most of these can be borrowed through interlibrary loan.

Newspapers in Microform: Foreign Countries, 1948–1983. Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 1984. (FHL book 011.35 N479f; fiche 6085887.) This is a geographically-arranged list of foreign newspapers and the repositories where the microforms are available. Most of these can be borrowed through interlibrary loan.

United States Newspaper Program National Union List. 4th ed. Dublin, Ohio: Online Computer Library Center, 1993. (FHL fiche 6332710–14 [set of 70].) Many states are collecting and microfilming the newspapers published in their state. The microfilms are often available at the state archives, state historical society, or major libraries within the state. They can usually be borrowed through interlibrary loan at your local library. This list is an inventory of newspapers that have been collected by the Library of Congress and 20 states as of 1985. An accompanying booklet by the same title contains instructions and the key to repository codes. (FHL book 973 B32u 1989.)

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

Gregory, Winifred. *American Newspapers, 1821–1936.* 1937. Reprint, New York: H.W. Wilson, 1967. (FHL book 970 B33a 1967; film 483713.) This lists newspapers published from 1821 to 1936, including those that are no longer published. It identifies where copies of the newspapers were located in 1936.

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

of an article if you can provide a specific date and event.

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

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

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

<http://ajpa.org/2/direct.html>

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

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

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

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

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

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

Index to Palestine Gazette. Teaneck, N.J.: Data Universal, 1984. (FHL fiche 6334296.) From 1921–1948 the official government publication listed legally changed names. Over 27,000 entries are listed during that period, most being Jewish.

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

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

NOBILITY

The nobility is a class of people who had special political and social status. Nobility is inherited or granted by the Crown as a reward to people who perform a heroic deed, achieve greatness in some endeavor, or hold a prominent government position.

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

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

NOTARIAL RECORDS

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

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

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

Fleury, Jean. *Contrats de mariage Juifs en Moselle avant 1792: recensement à usage généalogique de 2021 contrats de mariage notariés* (Marriage Contracts of Jews in

Moselle since 1792: List for Genealogical Research of 2021 Marriage Contracts from Notarial Records). Plappeville: J. Fleury, 1989. (FHL book 944.3825 V29f.) Includes marriage contracts from Metz and the department of Moselle, which is part of Alsace-Lorraine. It includes bride and groom indexes.

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

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

OBITUARIES

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

OCCUPATIONS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

An example of a trade directory is:

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

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

ORPHANS AND ORPHANAGES

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

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

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

<http://www.scruz.net/~elias/hnoh/welcome.html/>

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

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

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

PERIODICALS

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

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

Genealogical Magazines of General Interest

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

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

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

Genealogical and Historical Journals

Genealogical periodicals or newsletters usually provide more in-depth instruction, book reviews, record transcripts, case studies, and compiled genealogies. Historical periodicals usually include articles of a historical nature, including Jewish history. These periodicals are usually published quarterly by genealogical or historical societies and may focus on a region, state, county, or time period. Examples include:

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

The New Zealand Genealogist. Auckland, New Zealand: The New Zealand Society of Genealogists Inc. (FHL book 993.1 B2na.) This journal contains articles on research

methodology in New Zealand and the British Isles, articles of genealogical interest, book reviews, queries, and other items of interest. There is a general yearly index published that includes an index to member queries.

Jewish Periodicals

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

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

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

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

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

<http://www.jewishgen.org/iajgs/ajgs-jgss.html>

Indexes

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

Periodical Source Index. Fort Wayne, Ind.: Allen County Public Library Foundation, 1988–1998. (FHL book 973 D25per; fiche 6016863 [1847–1985], 6016864 [1986–1990]; compact disk no. 61.) Partially indexes over 5,000 English-language and French-Canadian family history periodicals and has many references to articles about Jews. Microfiche indexes are cumulative; book indexes since 1986 are year-by-year. For further details see the *Periodical Source Index Resource Guide* (34119).

Genealogical Periodical Annual Index. Bowie, Md.: Heritage Books, 1962–. (FHL book REF

973 B22gp.) An annual index, starting in 1962, of 150 to 260 currently published periodicals.

Obtaining Periodicals

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

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

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

POPULATION

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

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

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

Einwohnermelderegister 1811–1893 (Inhabitant Register 1811–1893). Leipzig: Stadtarchiv, 1985. (On 97 FHL films beginning with number 1417354.) Lists families and includes cross-references to earlier and later registration records.

Melderegister, 1890–1949 (Notification Register, 1890–1949). Leipzig: Zentralstelle für Genealogie, 1991. (On 3706 FHL films beginning with number 1767397.) Includes

both a male and a female register of people living in Leipzig, Germany. The male register includes names, birth dates and places, and relationships for each household, along with marriage dates, death dates, places of residence, and other added notes. Listed alphabetically with two sets for each letter of the alphabet: the regular set and a supplement set (nachtrag).

Meldezettel, 1850–1920 (Registration Notes, 1850–1920). Wien: Stadt und Landesarchiv, 1981–1995. (On 3060 FHL films beginning with 1277212.) Lists heads of families, wives, children, birth dates, occupations, religions, and new and old addresses for each household in Vienna. Cards are listed phonetically, skipping the first vowel and grouping the consonants that sound alike together (for example letters D, T, Dh, and Th are all filed together).

Meldezettel, 1910–1920 (Registration Notes, 1910–1920). Wien: Stadt und Landesarchiv, 1981–1995. (On 108 FHL films beginning with 2015756.) Lists heads of families, wives, children, birth dates, occupations, religions, and new and old addresses for each household in Vienna. Cards listed phonetically.

Meldekartei 18.–20. Jahrhundert (Registration Cards 18th–20th Centuries). Wien: Stadt und Landesarchiv, 199–. (On 1148 FHL films beginning with 1916011.) Household registration for residents of greater Vienna, which included 26 districts (Bezirke) in 1938. Cards listed phonetically.

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

Mandtaller, 1866–1881 (Census, 1866–1881). København: Stadsarkivet, 1961. (On 908 FHL films beginning with number 0322451.) Copenhagen bi-annual police censuses. Includes an alphabetical index by district showing names of all the people on a given street grouped by the first letter of the alphabet. Censuses do not include children under 10 years old.

Mandtaller, 1882–1899 (Census, 1882–1899). København: Stadsarkivet, 1961. (On 1613 FHL films beginning with number 0324021.) Copenhagen bi-annual police censuses.

Mandtaller, 1900–1923 (Census, 1900–1923).
København: Stadsarkivet, 1961. (On 3984
FHL films beginning with number 0330507.)
Copenhagen bi-annual police censuses.

PROBATE RECORDS

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

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

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

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

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

SCHOOLS

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

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

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

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

[http://www.ics.uci.edu/~dan/genealogy/
Krakow/index.html](http://www.ics.uci.edu/~dan/genealogy/Krakow/index.html)

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

SOCIAL LIFE AND CUSTOMS

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

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

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

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

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

SOCIETIES

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

- Family associations

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

- Fraternal organizations

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

- Lineage and hereditary societies

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

- Historical and genealogical societies

These types of societies may have records and services to help you with your research. Many countries throughout the world and each state and most counties in the U.S. have organized societies. They generally collect historical documents of local interest, publish periodicals, and have special projects and compiled indexes.

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

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

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

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

Jewish Genealogical Societies

Many genealogical societies emphasize Jewish research. JewishGen maintains a list of all Jewish societies that are members of the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies and coordinates several projects, including databases, for Jewish research. The web address is:

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

The International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies (IAJGS), a non-profit organization, coordinates the activities of some 80 local Jewish genealogical societies around the world. Many of the societies that belong to this organization have their own Internet sites. The web address of IAJGS is:

<http://www.ijewishgen.org/ajgs/ajgs-jgss/>

Most genealogical societies publish periodicals, transcripts, and compiled genealogies and may have special indexes, collections, and projects. They may also publish inquiries regarding Jewish ancestors or maintain a list of members' research interests. For further information about periodicals published by societies, see "Periodicals" in this outline.

Jewish Historical Societies

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

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

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

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

Landsmannschaften [Societies of Fellow Immigrants]

A Landsmannschaft is an organization formed by people from the same town, shtetl, or region in Eastern Europe for political, social, and financial activities. Originally their benefits included main-

taining a cemetery and providing sick benefits, interest-free loans, and life and burial insurance for members and their families.

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

<http://www.jewishgen.org/infofiles/landschaf.txt/>

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

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

Immigrant Aid Societies

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

Records of the HIAS archives from 1903 to 1961 have been deposited with the YIVO Institute in New York City. These records include genealogical information and leads for finding European origins for your ancestors. The Family History Library has some filmed HIAS records, including shipping lists, passport records, other immigration documents, and some indexes. See "Emigration and Immigration" in this outline for further information.

Locating Records at the Family History Library

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

SYNAGOGUE RECORDS

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

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

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

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

Synagogue birth records, 1786–1954. Cincinnati: American Jewish Archives, 1972. (FHL film 0882930.) Birth records from the Jewish congregation on St. Thomas.

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

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

TAXATION

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

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

Revision lists from Russia are a valuable research tool for genealogists. A taxation list similar to a

census record, these lists date from 1795 through the later 19th century and often have a separate section for Jews in an area. These records include names, ages, family relationships, gender, marital status, occupations, and so on. They are listed in the Family History Library Catalog under the Russian province and the topic Taxation or Census.

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

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

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

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

VITAL RECORDS

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

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

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

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

Family History Library Catalog under Church Records.

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

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

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

General Historical Background

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

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

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

Locating Vital Records

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Records at the Family History Library

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

A CD-ROM index—which includes birth, christening, and marriage information for the

United States and Canada—is discussed in “Genealogy” in this outline.

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

VOTING REGISTERS

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

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

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

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

The Family History Library has some voting registers. Check for these records in the Family History Library Catalog for the area where your ancestors lived.

OTHER RECORDS

There are many other types of records not discussed in this outline that may be useful in tracing your Jewish ancestors. These records are listed in the Locality Search and Subject Search of the Family History Library Catalog. For example, see the following topics:

BIBLIOGRAPHY
DESCRIPTION AND TRAVEL
FUNERAL HOMES
HANDWRITING
HERALDRY
LAND AND PROPERTY
MEDICAL RECORDS
MIGRATION, INTERNAL
NAMES, GEOGRAPHICAL
OFFICIALS AND EMPLOYEES
PENSIONS
PUBLIC RECORDS
TOWN RECORDS

FOR FURTHER READING

Blatt, Warren. *1996 Guide to Jewish Genealogical Research & Resources: Frequently Asked Questions*. Newton Highlands, Mass.: Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Boston, Inc., c1996. (FHL 929.1 B613g.). This book is out of print. It has been expanded and replaced by Mokotoff and Blatt’s book.

Mokotoff, Gary and Warren Blatt. *Getting Started in Jewish Genealogy*. Bergenfield, N.J.: Avotaynu, 1999.

Mokotoff, Gary and Sallyann Amdur Sack. *Avotaynu Guide to Jewish Genealogy*. Bergenfield, N.J.: Avotaynu, 2000.

Sack, Sallyann Amdur. *A Guide to Jewish Genealogical Research in Israel*. Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1987. (FHL 956.94 D27s.)

Schleifer, Jay. *A Student’s Guide to Jewish American Genealogy*. Phoenix, Ariz.: Oryx Press, c1996. (FHL book 973 D27oje.)

Wenzural, Rosemary. *A Beginners Guide to Jewish Genealogy in Great Britain*. London: The Jewish Genealogical Society of Great Britain, 2000.

Wynne, Suzan Fishl. *Finding Your Jewish Roots in Galicia: A Resource Guide*. Teaneck, N.J., Avotaynu, c1998. (FHL book 943.86 K37w.)

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We appreciate the archivists, librarians, and others
who have reviewed this outline and shared helpful
information.

Glossary

Ashkenazi – Yiddish-speaking Jews who originated in Central and Eastern Europe. One of the two divisions of Jews.

Bar mitzvah – A ceremony for Jewish boys at about 13 years of age. Literally means “Son of the covenant.” A bat mitzvah in the ceremony for girls.

Bris – Ritual circumcision.

Cantor (chazzan) – The person who leads a Jewish congregation in prayer. The cantor usually has a trained and pleasing singing voice because much of the Jewish religious service is sung.

Chasidic (Hasidic) – A branch of Orthodox Judaism that maintains a lifestyle separate from the non-Jewish world and emphasizes personal experiences and mysticism as well as a strict rabbinic interpretation of Jewish law.

Circumcision – A Jewish rite performed on male infants as a sign of inclusion in the Jewish religious community.

Civil registration – The official government recording of births, marriages, and deaths. In some cases church records were the primary registration of a locality (see “Civil transcripts”).

Civil transcripts – Government mandated copies of birth, marriage, and death records made by church officials or appointed Jewish officials.

Concentration camp – Places of incarceration where those detained had no due process and where the regular laws of the land were not recognized.

Confirmation – A ceremony performed in some Reform and Conservative synagogues to replace or supplement the bar mitzvah.

Conservative – A traditional movement of rabbinic Judaism whose adherents observe Jewish law but believe the law should adapt to modern culture while retaining the values and ethics of Judaism.

Converso – A Spanish Jew converted to Christianity, usually by force; also a descendent of a converted Jew.

Diaspora – Greek word meaning “dispersion.” Refers to the Jewish settlement outside Israel. Can be applied to the dispersion of any race or people.

Eastern Jews (Oriental Jews) – Jews descended from ancient communities in Islamic lands, North Africa, Persia, Arabia, Yemen, and Turkey. This term is often applied to Jews who do not fit into the Ashkenazic or Sephardic distinction. These groups are relatively small and not many of them have emigrated to North America.

Holocaust, Jewish – The genocidal murder of European Jews by the Nazis during World War II, 1939–1945.

International Tracing Service – An organization founded in 1946 and operated since 1955 by the International Red Cross. The aim of the ITS is to collect information on those who were missing, deported, or incarcerated in concentration camps.

Karaites – A minority branch of Judaism that believes in strict interpretation of scriptures without rabbinic interpretation.

Ketubot – A marriage contract, often handed down from one generation to another within a family.

Kohen (kohan, cohen) – a descendant of Aaron, a priest charged with performing various rites in the Temple in connection with religious rituals and animal sacrifices. (Recent DNA research found that Jews in three different countries identified as kohens have common elements in the Y chromosome, indicating that they have a common male ancestor.)

Kosher – Fit for use according to Jewish law.

Ladino – A Romance language, usually written in Hebrew characters, used by Sephardic Jews, especially in the Balkans.

Landsmanshaftn – Organization of Jews from the same town or region.

Levite – A descendant of the tribe of Levi. They performed certain duties in connection with the Temple.

Marrano – A Jewish convert to Catholicism in medieval Spain or a descendent of a convert. This derogatory term is derived from the Spanish word for swine and implies that the conversion was not complete.

Mitzvah – A commandment. It can also refer to any Jewish religious obligation, or more generally to any good deed.

Mohel – A Jew who performs the ritual of circumcision.

Orthodox – A major movement within Judaism that follows a strict interpretation and observance of Jewish law from both the Torah and Talmud commentaries. Orthodoxy includes modern Orthodox Jews who integrate into modern society and the Chasidic Jews who live separately and dress distinctively.

Pages of Testimony – A preprinted form available from Yad Vashem that documents a Jewish person who died in the Holocaust. The forms are filled out by people who are able to provide information on the fate of Holocaust victims.

Pale of Settlement (Pale of Jewish Settlement) – Western area of the Russian Empire where Jews were legally allowed to live. It began with the first partition of Poland in 1772 and existed until WWI.

Pinkas – A register of a Jewish community in which the proceedings of and events related to the community are recorded.

Pogrom – Russian for destruction. An organized attack against helpless people, usually with government help, often directed against Jews.

Rabbi – A Jew educated in Jewish law and tradition and qualified to instruct the community, answer questions, and resolve disputes regarding the law; the leader of a Jewish congregation.

Rabbinic – Pertaining to a rabbi. Rabbinic ancestry means having rabbis among your ancestors; “Rabbinic Judaism” is a branch of Judaism that follows the teachings and interpretation of a rabbi.

Rebbe – The spiritual master and guide of a Chasidic community; sometimes translated as “Grand Rabbi,” but literally it means “my rabbi.” A Chasidic rebbe is considered to be a *tzaddik* (righteous one). The position is usually hereditary. Outside the Chasidic community the term is sometimes used to refer to any rabbi a person has a close relationship with.

Reform – A modern rabbinical movement of Judaism believing in a liberal interpretation of Jewish law but retaining the values and ethics of Judaism along with some of the practices and the culture.

Rosh Hashanah – Solemn festival that marks the beginning of the month of Tishrei, the beginning of the Hebrew Year.

Sephardic – Descendants of the Jews who lived in Spain or Portugal before 1492. The term is now often applied to Jews of Arabic and Middle Eastern background who are more accurately called Eastern Jews.

Shtetl – A Jewish town or community, especially in Eastern Europe.

Synagogue – A Jewish house of worship and study.

Talmud – The collection of the Jewish oral tradition and rabbinical commentary interpreting the Torah.

Torah – The biblical books of Moses: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

Yeshiva – An academy of Jewish learning and scholarship.

Yiddish – A language very similar to German, usually written in Hebrew characters, that was spoken chiefly by Ashkenazi Jews in Eastern Europe and the areas where those Jews migrated to.

Yizkor books – Memorial books published by Holocaust survivors from a particular town or region.

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