



Genealogy Resources and Q&A Genealogical Websites

Jewish Cemeteries of Greater Cincinnati: <https://jcemcin.org/>

Ancestry: www.ancestry.com

Subscription-based family tree software with comprehensive record search capabilities and DNA testing

Military Records: <https://www.fold3.com/>

Can link search results to Ancestry.com or use independently

Hamilton County Genealogical Society: <https://hcgsohio.org/cpage.php?pt=123/>

International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies: <https://www.iajgs.org/>

Tracing the Tribe: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/tracingthetribe/>

Good resource for translation assistance

Jewish Genealogy Portal: <https://www.facebook.com/JewishGenealogyPortal/>

Family Search: www.familysearch.org

Free family tree software; free access to census data, vital statistics (birth, marriage, death), and naturalization records

JewishGen: www.jewishgen.org

Comprehensive databases on towns/shtetls and worldwide burial; tool to facilitate Ellis Island ship manifest searches

Lithuanian Jewish Special Interest Group: www.litvaksig.org

Subscription-based. Contain extensive vital record translations

Poland research: www.jri-poland.org

Free access to 30+ million records across 550 Polish towns

Avotaynu: www.avotaynu.com

Extensive publications on Jewish genealogy

Lara Diamond's website: <https://larasgenealogy.blogspot.com>

Helpful information about Jewish genealogy and DNA research

Census Data

Census reports and information about them can be found at the Census Bureau's decennial census website:

https://www.census.gov/history/www/genealogy/decennial_census_records/census_records_2.html

However, individual census records are not released to the public for 72 years after the census, in order to protect privacy. The most recent data on individual Americans you can get is from the 1940 census, and it has been uploaded to the internet (<https://1940census.archives.gov/>). The 1950 census will be released on April 1, 2022. If you need census records from 1950-2010, you can apply to get a copy of that information, provided you are either mentioned in the requested record (for instance, you are listed as living at the same address or as a family member) or you are the individual's legal heir.

All individual census records from 1790-1940 are held and managed by the National Archives and Records Administration (<https://www.census.gov/prod/www/decennial.html>). Most of these records need to be accessed through subscriptions (free on <https://www.familysearch.org/en/>), but your public library likely has a subscription that you can use.

Organizations

Where do you start looking into genealogical information and/or conduct genealogical research (besides typing names into a search box)? Where do you go once you have a few names or leads, but want to find more?

JCGC website: <https://jcemcin.org/genealogy-2/>

The database on the JCGC website contains records inherited from all the cemeteries that formed the JCGC, dating back to 1821, plus information on those buried since the JCGC was founded in 2008. There are Hamilton, Ohio, cemetery records, as well as those for the Greater Cincinnati area. JCGC also has documents in its office, which have not yet been made available to the public online. If you would like to schedule time to review documents at our office, please call 513-961-0178.

The Jacob Radar Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives:

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

The American Jewish Archives (located on HUC's campus in Cincinnati) as well as other archives, are a great resource. There are options to search the catalogue on the website. Especially if your initial searches seem to turn up nothing, sometimes it just takes starting to dig back through an aspect of their lives, like "where did they go to shul?" The AJA has a lot of resources, including those from many synagogues and communities across America (including synagogues and communities that no longer exist and/or who merged with other synagogues, whose records now reside at the AJA).

Genealogical Societies, meetings and events

Hamilton County Genealogical Society (HCGS) has open membership, and you can join online (<https://hcgsohio.org/cpage.php?pt=123>). It is \$15 for an online membership, which includes access to Weil Funeral Home records. Weil's Jewish records are in the paid section. However, under the page "Jewish Genealogy Interest Group," there is a "Jewish DNA Interest Group," which is a part of the free content.

The International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies (<https://www.iajgs.org/blog/>) is having their next annual meeting in Philadelphia from August 21-25, 2022. They are aiming for an in-person

conference but the last two have been virtual. You can register at <https://s4.goeshow.com/iajgs/annual/2022/index.cfm>

The world's largest genealogy conference is hosted by RootsTech in affiliation with Family Search. The conference is online and free; sessions are also recorded and available after the conference. This year's conference will be March 3-5, 2022 and feature 1000+ breakout sessions in addition to keynote events. There is something for everyone at RootsTech! Registration is at <https://www.familysearch.org/rootstech/next/>

There used to be a group called the Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Cincinnati (JGS-GC), which disbanded a few years ago. The old group had a publication called "Ancestry," and there are some libraries in the Cincinnati area that still have copies.

The JGS-GC has recently been restarted. Jonathan Jacobs is trying to organize people for this rebooted group. They have had about 10 meetings so far for people interested in Jewish Genealogy. You can find the new group on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/Greater-Cincinnati-Jewish-Genealogical-GroupSociety-160625951330122/>).

DNA Testing

DNA testing companies return a lot of data with your test results, but it can sometimes be hard to read and understand the results, especially because of terminology. Is there a reference to help a layperson better read the results?

The websites of the companies do a great job explaining everything. We are not very disciplined with reading them. The companies go through a lot of effort to explain the results, not just numbers. So most of the information is already on the company's website.

Genealogical DNA Test Companies:

There are several companies offering DNA testing. JCGC is not endorsing any of these, and they are not listed in any particular order:

Ancestry DNA (with <https://www.ancestry.com/>): <https://www.ancestry.com/dna/>

Cellular Research Institute (CRI) Genetics: <https://www.crigenetics.com/>

My Heritage DNA testing: <https://www.myheritage.com/>

23 and Me: <https://www.23andme.com/>

Family Tree DNA: <https://www.familytreedna.com/>

Living DNA: <https://livingdna.com/>

GEDmatch: www.gedmatch.com is a free site that is effectively an aggregator of DNA test results. People who have tested from one of the major DNA testing sites can upload their results to GEDmatch. This expands the universe of potential DNA matches beyond the company you pay for testing with.

Other points:

Especially when you have scant information about an ancestor, try to look for the whole family/family unit (to verify you are looking at the right “Aaron Cohen,” make sure the wife’s and children’s names match too). This is really helpful with census records and ship manifests etc. Obituaries can be very unreliable. Tombstones, however, can be a great help, since can sometimes have “son/daughter of” lines. Census records are great, but be careful because for records currently available online to the public (through 1940), data was still self-reported. The New York Public Library also has some census information that has not yet been uploaded to the internet, but that you can look at if you visit their central branch in person.

It is important to trace ancestors, but you also need to trace descendants. Distant cousins can be a wealth of information. They might have all kinds of information because some knowledge or story might have been carried down through their line that was not passed down your own. So, as you trace ancestors back generations, also then trace down descendants of siblings of your ancestors. The more descendants you have, the more information you might gain.

Lara Diamond’s website (<https://larasgenealogy.blogspot.com/>) contains a lot of information on DNA testing with a focus on Jewish genealogy. There are also helpful examples of applied research.

Further Reading

Here is a list of resources copied from an article on <https://www.familytreemagazine.com/>, “Must-Read Jewish Genealogy Books” by Shelly Talalay Dardashti. (<https://www.familytreemagazine.com/premium/jewish-%20genealogy-books>). According to the article, Avotaynu, a publisher of Jewish genealogical research resources (<https://avotaynu.com/>), sells many of these titles.

For beginners

- *Abraham’s Children: Race, Identity and the DNA of the Chosen People* by Jon Entine (Grand Central Publishing)
- *Avotaynu Guide to Jewish Genealogy* edited by Sallyann Amdur Sack and Gary Mokotoff (Avotaynu)
- *A Field Guide to Visiting a Jewish Cemetery* by Rabbi Joshua L. Segal (Jewish Cemetery Publishing)
- *Finding our Fathers: A Guidebook to Jewish Genealogy* by Dan Rottenberg (Genealogical Publishing Co.)
- *From Generation to Generation: How to Trace Your Jewish Genealogy and Family History* by Arthur Kurzweil (Jossey-Bass)
- *A Practical Guide to Jewish Cemeteries* by Nolan Menachemson (Avotaynu)
- *A Genealogist’s Guide to Jewish Names* by Connie Ellefson (Family Tree Books)
- *Finding Our Fathers* by Dan Rottenberg

- *Getting Started in Jewish Genealogy* by Gary Mokotoff, 2020 edition (Avotaynu). Available at <https://www.avotaynu.com/books/GettingStarted.htm>

For Sephardic and converso researchers

- *Dictionary of Jewish Surnames from Galicia* by Alexander Beider (Avotaynu)
- *Dicionario Sefaradi de Sobrenomes (Dictionary of Sephardic Surnames)* by Guilherme Faiguenboim, Paulo Valadares and Anna Rosa Campagnan (Avotaynu)
- *The Forgetting River: A Modern Tale of Survival, Identity, and the Inquisition* by Doreen Carvajal (Riverhead Books)
- *Guidebook for Sephardic and Mizrahi Genealogical Resources in Israel* by Mathilde Tagger and Yitzchak Kerem (Avotaynu)
- *The Jewish Nation of the Caribbean: The Spanish-Portuguese Jewish Settlements in the Caribbean and the Guianas* by Mordechai Arbell (Gefen)
- *The Journal of Spanish, Portuguese and Italian Crypto Jews* (Florida International University)
- *Juggling Identities: Identity and Authenticity Among the Crypto-Jews* by Seth D. Kunin (Columbia University Press)
- *Sangre Judia* (vols. 1 and 2) by Pere Bonnin Aguilo
- *Secrecy and Deceit: The Religion of the Crypto-Jews* by David Gitlitz (Jewish Publication Society of America)
- *Sephardic Genealogy: Discovering Your Sephardic Ancestors and Their World* by Jeffrey S. Malka (Avotaynu)
- *Sephardic Horizons* journal
- *To the End of the Earth: A History of the Crypto-Jews of New Mexico* by Stanley M. Hordes (Columbia University Press)

For Eastern European and Ashkenazi researchers

- *A Dictionary of Ashkenazic Given Names: Their Origins, Structure, Pronunciation, and Migrations* by Alexander Beider (Avotaynu)
- *A Dictionary of German-Jewish Surnames* by Lars Menk (Avotaynu)
- *A Dictionary of Jewish Surnames from the Kingdom of Poland* by Alexander Beider (Avotaynu)

- *A Dictionary of Jewish Surnames from the Russian Empire* by Alexander Beider (Avotaynu)
- *Encyclopedia of Jewish Life Before and During the Holocaust* edited by Shmuel Spector and Geoffrey Wigoder (New York University Press)
- *Genealogical Gazetteer of the Kingdom of Hungary* by Jordan Auslander (Avotaynu)
- *German Name-Change Gazetteer* by Otto Kredel and Franz Thierfelder (Avotaynu)
- *History of the Jews in Russia and Poland* by Simon M. Dubnow (Avotaynu)
- *Jewish Personal Names: Their Origins, Derivation and Diminutive Forms* by Rabbi Shmuel Gorr (Avotaynu)
- *Jews of Lithuania: A History of a Remarkable Community 1316-1945* by Masha Greenbaum (Gefen Publishing House)
- *Russian-Jewish Given Names: Their Origins and Variants* by Boris Feldblyum (Avotaynu)
- *Where Once We Walked: A Guide to the Jewish Communities Destroyed in the Holocaust* by Gary Mokotoff and Sallyann Amdur Sack with Alexander Sharon (Avotaynu)