

# Jewish Genealogy Research Essentials Presentations Part 1

## By Nancy JG Adelson © 2012

### Getting Started

- Choose and use a family tree software
  - Decide on your criteria for selection
- Write what YOU know about your family members
  - Record full names, birth, marriage, and death dates and places, and spouses' full names
- Call your relatives with basic/easy research questions
  - Full names, birth/marriage/death dates and places of their immediate family members
- Gather documents and pictures
  - Marriage, Birth, and Death Certificates, Wills, Naturalization Papers, Diaries, letters, etc.
- Evaluate the documents/sources
  - Primary source
    - i. Generated at time or immediately after event and for a specific purpose
  - Secondary source
    - i. Generated after event or for an alternative purposes
  - Evaluate accuracy of information and resources
- Cite Your Sources: Document sources of information collected
- Organize your materials: Folders, Notebooks, Portable Research "kit"
- Develop research logs

### Interviewing Relatives

- Pace your interviews
  - Record the Interviewee; don't judge or disagree; ask clarifying questions; let them talk
- Tools for interviewing
  - Telephone, Tape recorders, video, lap top, camera, paper and pencil
- Basics First
  - Full Names, Birth/Marriage/Death Dates and Places, Occupations, Religious/Synagogue Affiliation
- More questions
  - Hebrew/Yiddish names, info on Aunts, Uncles and Cousins, immigration-dates, ports, and steamship name, town/city emigrated from and why, USA cities lived in and dates, burial dates and sites, community service organizations, hobbies
  - Ask for any documents or family memorabilia or pictures, etc.
- Stories Next
  - Memories about family members, holiday and life cycle celebrations
  - Ask open-ended questions
  - Suggested Resources: *TIPS FOR INTERVIEWERS* from Willa K. Baum, <http://bancroft.berkeley.edu/ROHO/resources/rohotips.html>  
*20 QUESTIONS TO ASK THE IMPORTANT WOMEN IN YOUR LIFE*  
<http://www.jwa.org/discover/inyourlife/20questions/twentyquestions.html>

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

### Typical Ashkenazi Naming Tradition

- New Born named after dead ancestor like baby's departed grandparent
- Children had Hebrew name, given name, Yiddish/nick name, and/or Americanized name

### Typical Sephardic Naming Tradition

- First born boy is named after father and first born daughter is named after mother; second boy is named after mother's father; second daughter is named after mother's mother
- Children have Hebrew name, Ladino/nick name, and/or Americanized name

### Research

- **The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) Offers:**  
<http://www.archives.gov/research/genealogy/index.html>
  - Permanent repository of historical records for US government which has Two WA DC facilities, 14 regional archives & 12 Presidential Libraries and is free to the public (<http://www.archives.gov/locations/index.html> provides address to regional archives , etc.
  - Digitized, Online Original Records
  - 35 Million Still Pictures and Posters, 18 Million Aerial Photos, 5 Million Maps
  - US Federal Census from 1790-1930 (1940 Census available in 2012—not made public for 72 years)

- Microfilmed City Directories
    - Similar to telephone books but privately printed without telephone numbers since early 1800's
    - Contain alphabetical lists of the names of the heads of households, their addresses, and occupational information
  - Naturalization Papers covered by regional branch (may offer indexes for other states too)
    - Declaration of Intention/First Papers: intention to become citizen
    - Petition for Naturalization/Final Papers: formal application
    - Certificate for Naturalization: given to citizen
  - Some State Census and International Census
    - Canada and Great Britain census become public after 100 years so 1911 census is available
  - US Passenger Arrival Manifests and Indexes
    - Manifests are written records of people immigrating from foreign ports into US ports
    - Records maintained since 1820 and available on microfilm
    - Usually provide name, age, country of origin prior to 1905
    - After 1905 arrival date based on port of entry, also provides place of last residence, birthplace, passenger's destination, name of US relative going to join, occupation
    - After the requirement of visas in 1924, passengers were required to have travel documents and/or proof of birth, age, etc.
  - Important NARA Online Finding Aids for Databases and Records  
<http://www.archives.gov/research/start/online-tools.html>
  - Online Public Access – New online portal to all of the data and digitized records from ARC, all the web pages from Archives.gov and from Presidential Libraries, some AAD and over 1 million electronic records from Electronic Records Archives (ERA). <http://www.archives.gov/research/search/>
  - Digitized Documents, Photos, Maps and Electronic files on NARA website which are available for free downloads and research
  - Microfilm Catalog – 3,400 numbered microfilm publications - Order reproductions at [https://eservices.archives.gov/orderonline/start.swe?SWECmd=GotoView&\\_sn=Fv1g-Pp50lyMPOZ7IDwo68dzInERrG78ITP.r-9wK.I\\_&SWEView=GPEA+Microfilm+Landing+Page+View+MIF&SWEHo=eservices.archives.gov&SWE TS=1350797634&SWEScreen=GPEA+Microfilm+MIF](https://eservices.archives.gov/orderonline/start.swe?SWECmd=GotoView&_sn=Fv1g-Pp50lyMPOZ7IDwo68dzInERrG78ITP.r-9wK.I_&SWEView=GPEA+Microfilm+Landing+Page+View+MIF&SWEHo=eservices.archives.gov&SWE TS=1350797634&SWEScreen=GPEA+Microfilm+MIF)
  - Federal Records Guide – high level including executive, judicial, and leg. branches  
<http://www.archives.gov/research/guide-fed-records/>
  - Archival Records Database (ARC) – national holdings, use key words, person, etc.  
<http://www.archives.gov/research/arc/> better use <http://www.archives.gov/research/search/>
  - Access to Archival Databases (AAD) – search electronic holdings by person, date, etc.  
<http://aad.archives.gov/aad/>
  - Most NARA branches offer free [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com) and <http://www.fold3.com/> (Footnote) access
  - All Regional NARA have volunteers to help you with your research
  - Print copies of documents for a nominal fee (so take change)
  - Request research for 1-4 family members at a time for a fee
- **Old Newspapers**
    - Death Notices and Obituaries
    - Marriage, Birth, B'nai Mitzvah announcements
    - Articles about or written by family members
    - Find in libraries on microfilm or library online databases, or local newspaper archives
    - Databases and newspaper archives
    - Find online for a fee OR free at many libraries and National Archives Branches
      - ProQuest® <http://www.proquest.com> then enter "Genealogy" and "Go" in Products & Services
      - HeritageQuest™ <http://www.heritagequestonline.com/hqoweb/library/do/index>
      - Ancestry.com or Ancestry Library Edition <http://www.ancestry.com>

Answer Questions and Select Bibliography provided with request to [nancyadelson@comcast.net](mailto:nancyadelson@comcast.net).