

Using the Internet for Jewish Genealogical Research

By Mary Kathryn Kozy

First steps/before you start:

- Get a genealogy software program (Legacy, Family Tree Maker, RootsMagic, Ancestral Quest, Reunion, etc.) – Test and see what’s right for you!
- Create a plan for your research

What can I find on the Internet?

- Original documents (NOTE: These are *not* exhaustive lists!)
 - ✓ Census (Ancestry, FamilySearch, MyHeritage, HeritageQuest)
 - ✓ Naturalization records (Ancestry, state archives, National Archives)
 - ✓ Ship’s lists (EllisIsland.org, Bremen passenger lists, Ancestry, MyHeritage)
 - ✓ Marriage records (Ancestry, FamilySearch, MyHeritage, Various state/national archives)
 - ✓ Military records (Ancestry, Fold3, HeritageQuest)
 - ✓ Land records (BLM site, some USGenWeb projects)
- Cemetery records (Jewish Online World Burial Registry (JOWBR), FindAGrave, BillionGraves)
- Photos (Dead Fred, FamilyOldPhotos.com, Flickr Genealogy Group)
- Historical Societies (Google your locality)
- Mailing lists/Message Boards (RootsWeb/Ancestry, GenForum, Cyndi’s List)
- Social Networking (Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest)
- Other people’s research (PROCEED WITH CAUTION!!!)

What websites should I visit?

General and specific Jewish genealogy sites

- **JewishGen (<http://www.jewishgen.org/>) – MAJOR SITE!!**
- SephardicGenealogy.com (<http://www.sephardicgen.com/>)
- Avotaynu (<http://www.avotaynu.com/>)
- Synagogue Scribes (<http://www.synagoguescribes.com/>)
- Federation of Eastern European Family History Societies – FEEFHS (<http://www.feefhs.org/>) - great map room!
- Center for Jewish History (<http://cjh.org/>)
- Ancestry’s Jewish Collection (<http://www.ancestry.com/jewish/>)
- Jewish Record Indexing (JRI)-Poland (<http://www.jri-poland.org/>)
- Virtual Shtetl (<http://www.sztetl.org.pl/>)
- Ukraine Special Interest Group (SIG) (<http://www.jewishgen.org/Ukraine/>)

General interest sites:

- Cyndi’s List (<http://www.cyndislist.com/>)
- MyHeritage (<http://www.myheritage.com/>)
- Find My Past (<http://www.findmypast.com/>)
- Ancestry (<http://www.ancestry.com/>)
- Heritage Quest (<http://www.heritagequestonline.com/>)
- FamilySearch (<http://www.familysearch.org/>)
- Rootsweb (<http://www.rootsweb.com/>)
- The USGenWeb Project (<http://www.usgenweb.org/>)
- World Vital Records (<http://worldvitalrecords.com/>)
- Various archive websites (e.g., <http://www.digitalarchives.wa.gov/>)
- Library catalog sites (<http://www.kcls.org/>, <http://www.lib.washington.edu/>, <http://www.acpl.lib.in.us/>, <http://www.loc.gov/>)
- Family Tree DNA, 23andMe, and Ancestry DNA

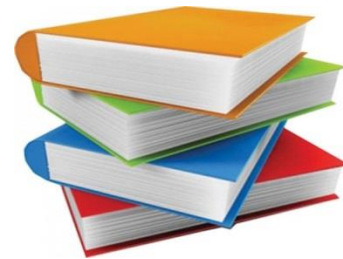


Tips about writing queries:

- Keep it simple, but BE SPECIFIC
- Give the receiver as much information as you have (but not your entire research history)
- Write a good, descriptive subject line (e.g., "COHEN, Solomon (1845-1921), Germany>Cook Co., IL>Seattle, WA)

Other tips to remember:

- Remember to be skeptical of others' research and VERIFY!
- Document where AND when you saw what you find with appropriate source citations
- Educate yourself using resources on the web:
 - ✓ Getting Started (<http://www.jewishgen.org/JewishGen/GetStarted.html>)
 - ✓ Tracing Your Jewish Ancestors (<http://www.feefhs.org/links/jewish.html>)
 - ✓ Jewish Genealogy Research (https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Jewish_Genealogy_Research)
 - ✓ A Beginner's Primer in Jewish Genealogy Research (<http://www.avotaynu.com/jagenealogy.htm>)
 - ✓ National Genealogical Society
 - ✓ Board for Certification of Genealogists
 - ✓ ICAPGen
 - ✓ Utah Genealogical Association
 - ✓ New England Historic Genealogical Society
 - ✓ Progenealogists.com
 - ✓ National Institute for Genealogical Studies
 - ✓ BYU Independent Study
 - ✓ Ancestry.com
 - ✓ FamilySearch.org

**Blogs/Podcasts/Webinars**

- Blood and Frogs (<http://www.bloodandfrogs.com/>)
- JewishGen Blog (<http://jewishgen.blogspot.com/>)
- Chaim Freedman Blog (<http://chfreedman.blogspot.com/>)
- DearMYRTLE's Genealogy Blog
- Geneabloggers – Great resource to hundreds of blogs
- Genealogy Gems Podcast – Lisa Louise Cooke
- The Genealogy Guys – George G. Morgan & Drew Smith
- Legacy Family Tree Webinars (<http://www.familytreewebinars.com/>)
- Geneawebinars.com – Great calendar of upcoming webinars

**Do's and Don'ts:**Don't

- ... believe everything you read! Be skeptical!
- ... forget your sound research techniques
- ... forget to cite where you found the information
- ... be afraid to write the webmaster/submitter and ask for more information or ask questions
- ... plagiarize someone else's work – give credit where it's due!

Do

- ... use the same methodology you use as if there was no Internet
- ... check sources found on sites on the Internet
- ... analyze what you find in light of what you already know and documents you have
- ... share what you have with others
- ... have fun and enjoy the hunt!

