

A Guide to Online Genealogy Research

Top Tips:

- Search backwards:** We don't always have our parents' or grandparents' original names, i.e., how the given names or surnames were spelled "in the old country," upon arrival, and upon "assimilation." For example, the surname Jablonowicz (a lovely Polish spelling), could become Yablonowitz, could become Yablow (this is a shortened version of what really happened); McGuinnis could be McGiness, Maginnis, Maginess, Magenis, MacInnis,...
 - Start with the 1930 Census (the 1940 will be available in 2012) and based on the information you find, go further back and/or search for immigration records or military records (WWII).
 - Utilize family oral history for "names," and places, but do NOT rely on it
- Use soundex** or Daitch–Mokotoff Soundex, the name-variation alternatives (they are choices within many "searches" in any given site), whenever feasible/possible, AND, when stuck, search for the most unusual name of any family member (e.g., Moshe might seem unusual but Itzak, or America, is better).
- Ages and birth years are generally unreliable.** Our ancestors might have not known the exact year of their birth, or they might have altered their birth year for marriage, birth, employment, or military reasons. Always start with a "known" year and then extend it +or- 1 or 2, and then +or- 5.
- Google/search-online your ancestors** because you may find someone else's research on a website, blog, or forum post; or you might find an ancestor's name in an ebook ("County Histories" were a popular item in the early 20th century, and many have been digitized) or in an online article (from an ancestry-oriented publication).

General Searching

The GenWeb Projects

- USGenWeb Project (free): www.usgenweb.org
“Organization is by county and state, and this website provides you with links to all the state genealogy websites which, in turn, provide gateways to the counties. The USGenWeb Project also sponsors important Special Projects at the national level and this website provides an entry point to all of those pages, as well.” Iowa GenWeb is a plentiful site (<http://iagenweb.org/>), other States and/or Counties are not so great but they are ALL worth a look.
- WorldGenWeb Project (free): www.worldgenweb.org
“The WorldGenWeb Project is a non-profit, volunteer based organization dedicated to providing genealogical and historical records and resources for world-wide access!”
Try Poland GenWeb <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~polwgv/polandgen.html>;
Ukraine GenWeb <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~ukrvgw/>; and others

Other sites (prices listed are subject to change, and you must read each sites’ *Terms and Conditions*)

- Ancestry.com (paid subscription): www.ancestry.com
United States -- \$24.95/month, \$249.00/year (no contract, cancel anytime)
International -- \$29.99/month, \$299.00/year (no contract, cancel anytime)
- Footnote, now Fold3 (paid subscription): www.fold3.com
\$79.95/year or \$11.95/monthly
- Ellis Island Foundation (free, registration recommended): www.ellisland.org
- Family Search, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (free, registration recommended): www.familysearch.org
- U.S. Department of the Interior -- Bureau of Land Management (BLM), General Land Office (GLO) (free): www.gloreCORDS.blm.gov

- U.S. National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) Resources for Genealogists (free): www.archives.gov/research/genealogy
- HeritageQuest Online (only available and free through many libraries, and low-cost through many genealogical societies): www.heritagequestonline.com
- Rootsweb, a division of Ancestry.com (free, registration recommended): www.rootsweb.ancestry.com
- Find a Grave (free, registration recommended): www.findagrave.com
Invaluable, as many of us add biographical information to headstones we submit or add to those submitted by others. “Find the graves of ancestors, create virtual memorials, add 'virtual flowers' and a note to a loved one's grave, etc.”
- Dead Fred Genealogy Photo Archive (free, or pay for extra features): www.deadfred.com \$19.95/year for extra features
- Interment.net - Free Cemetery Records Online (free): www.interment.net
- Sorted by Name (free): www.sortedbyname.com
- The Italian Genealogical Group (free, and much more than its name implies): www.italianguen.org
- German Genealogy Group (free, and much more than its name implies): www.theggg.org
- Archives (paid subscription): www.archives.com \$39.95/year
- My Heritage (free, registration required): www.myheritage.com
- NewspaperARCHIVE.com (paid subscription): www.newspaperarchive.com \$71.88/year

PORTALS: Sites which link to many other sites -- Free, but they link to sites which may be free, by registration, OR by paid-subscription

- Family History and Genealogy: USA .gov:
www.usa.gov/Citizen/Topics/History_Family.shtml
- Access Genealogy: www.accessgenealogy.com
- Ancestor Hunt: www.ancestorhunt.com
- About.com Genealogy -- Free Genealogy on the Web:
www.genealogy.about.com/cs/free_genealogy
- Cyndi's List (a huge portal, long-standing and highly regarded):
www.cyndislist.com

Jewish Ancestry

- JewishGen (free, registration recommended): www.jewishgen.org
The premier site for Jewish ancestry research. It is vast, and many other sites link to it.
- IAJGS International Jewish Cemetery Project (free):
www.iajgsjewishcemeteryproject.org
- Polish Jews Heritage (free, but a little difficult to use):
www.polishjews.org/home.htm
- Polish State Archives (free, but a little difficult to use. Be sure to click “English” in the upper left corner): www.archiwa.gov.pl

Jewish Ancestry PORTALS

- Louis Kessler's Jewish Genealogy Links: www.lkessler.com/jglinks.shtml

- List of Internet World Wide Web Sites For Jewish Genealogy Research: www.avotaynu.com/wwwsites.html
- Jewish Genealogy Links (many/most of the sites link to JewishGen): www.pitt.edu/~meisel/jewish/
- Jewish Genealogy Links (the main sites, and some unusual sites. Well worth a look): www.zchor.org/linkgen.htm

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