

Getting the most out of JewishGen!

<http://www.jewishgen.org>



1. Register

- 1.1. You will need to register to use JewishGen. It is free but you will get emails asking for donations. Your donations help to acquire and index more records – so if you benefit from using JewishGen consider donating. It will also permit you to do more complex searching.
- 1.2. Login each time you want to use JewishGen – you can search without logging in but you cannot see search results unless you are logged in – so it is easier to login at the beginning.

2. Go to the 'Get Started' tab

- 2.1. Here you will find some FAQs; Info files (a bit dated but still useful); and useful tools such as a Calendar Conversion tool which calculates dates to/from Gregorian and Jewish calendars, and a perpetual Jewish Calendar which displays all Jewish holidays for any Gregorian or Jewish year. Our ancestors often referred to events as happening at Pesach or on Rosh Hashanah – this will help to identify the date.

3. Go to the 'Databases' tab

- 3.1. **The Family Finder (JGFF)** <http://www.jewishgen.org/jgff/> – find others researching the same family name(s) and towns and connect with them. If there is more than one of interest, contact those with more recent logins first. The automatic order for displaying results is by date the researcher joined JewishGen. A combination of an early JGID Code and recent login usually means an experienced and active researcher! Register your own names and towns so that others can find you. As you find more information, review and edit your entries.
- 3.2. **The Family Tree of Jewish People (FTJP)** <http://www.jewishgen.org/gedcom/> – see if anyone has already pieced together your family – or parts of it. This database seems to have been largely overtaken by MyHeritage and ancestry.com as preferred locations for Jewish family trees. It is still worth looking at FTJP as many of the early JewishGenners uploaded their extensive trees.
- 3.3. **The Town Finder** <http://www.jewishgen.org/Communities/Search.asp> and **JewishGen Gazetteer** <http://www.jewishgen.org/Communities/LocTown.asp> will help you locate your family towns and much information about the town and surrounding communities. Husbands and wives did not always come from the same town so knowing which towns with Jewish communities were nearby, is often very useful.
- 3.4. **The Holocaust Database** <http://www.jewishgen.org/databases/Holocaust/> searches 190 datasets and can be searched by name or by town. Consider using it in conjunction with the USHMM: https://www.ushmm.org/online/hsv/person_advance_search.php; Yad Vashem: <http://yvng.yadvashem.org/>; ITS: <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/>; and the JDC archives: <http://archives.jdc.org/search-the-archives/>
- 3.5. **The Online Worldwide Burial Registry (JOWBR)** <http://www.jewishgen.org/databases/Cemetery/> – while many countries have 100-year privacy rules governing access to vital records, there are no restrictions on recording burial registers and headstones. This can be a good place to search for people born after 1917 but who have subsequently died. If the indexer has recorded the Hebrew name of the deceased, you may also get the father's name.
- 3.6. **The complete list of databases** <http://www.jewishgen.org/databases/> has links to many additional resources, by country and by topic.

4. Go to the 'Research' tab

- 4.1. **Yizkor books** <http://www.jewishgen.org/Yizkor/> – Find the Yizkor book for your town(s). Most have at least some chapters translated into English. These books detail life in these towns and villages

up to the end of WW2. You may find your family mentioned, at the very least you will know a bit more about how they lived.

- 4.2. **KehilaLinks** <http://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/> are town pages of variable quality. The good ones (e.g. Odessa <http://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/odessa/index.asp>) have all manner of information and links to archives, other databases, town history, links to other researchers, photos of town and people etc. Others do nothing more than link to the Wikipedia entry for that town.
- 4.3. **Family pages** <http://www.jewishgen.org/Family/> – many of these pages are now links to trees on MyHeritage and ancestry.com, but some are standalone family websites. It is still growing and around 50 new pages were added in the past year.
- 4.4. **Viewmate** <http://www.jewishgen.org/ViewMate/> is a fabulous resource for photo identification and small translations (vital records, headstones, postcards). Upload your images or browse those in the gallery and offer your assistance if you can.
- 4.5. **Special Interest Groups (SIGs)** <http://www.jewishgen.org/JewishGen/sigs.htm> – groups for a specific geographic area e.g. Ger-SIG (Germany) or a specific topic e.g. Rav-SIG (rabbinic genealogy). Join one of these SIGs to receive information about new records and indexes, or to post your queries. Joining the discussion forums is always free. Some SIGs levy an annual/biennial fee to purchase more documents/translators. Paying the fee gives you access to indices 18 months earlier than they are uploaded to the JewishGen site

5. Tips

- 5.1. Don't get too fixated on spelling. Remember that most indexes have been transliterated and/or translated from another language. So apart from your relatives' accents when reporting an event to an official, you have an indexer's interpretation of what is written. Try all possibilities – soundex, phonetic and fuzzy can produce different results.
- 5.2. Be flexible when it comes to country – the borders in Europe have changed many times over the last 300 years. Your relative may have always claimed to be Polish but their town of origin is now in Ukraine. JewishGen will use the current location for its classification of documents to be searched.
- 5.3. Even if different websites seem to have the same records, search each site because they don't use the same search engine – results may be different. Example: JewishGen Holocaust database, USHMM and Yad Vashem index many of the same record sets but they search the indexes differently.
- 5.4. Continue to revisit JewishGen – most databases are updated quarterly so a record that was not there previously may have been uploaded since you last investigated.

6. If you need assistance

Australian Jewish Genealogical Society

Website: <http://www.ajgs.org.au>

Email: society@ajgs.org.au

AJGen – <http://au.groups.yahoo.com/group/AJGen/> post your queries about Australian Jewish genealogy – see AJGS webpage for how to join.