

A COMPARISON OF THE GENEALOGY GIANTS:  
AN OVERVIEW OF JEWISH RECORD COLLECTIONS AND RESEARCH TOOLS ON  
ANCESTRY, FAMILYSEARCH, FINDMYPAST, JEWISHGEN & MYHERITAGE  
**Jewish Genealogical Society of Connecticut – December 19, 2021**

**Ellen Shindelman Kowitt**  
[SoleSearching@EllenKowitt.com](mailto:SoleSearching@EllenKowitt.com)  
[www.EllenKowitt.com](http://www.EllenKowitt.com)

---

### **Ancestry.com**

- Partnerships with American Jewish Historical Society, American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, Arolsen Archives, JewishGen, Miriam Weiner Routes to Roots Foundation, USC Shoah Foundation, and US Holocaust Memorial Museum.
- “Jewish Records Landing Page” at <https://www.ancestry.com/cs/jewishgen-all> is a portal to search Jewish Community Locator; Jewish Name Variations by Country; and to see list of Free Jewish Collections.
- Card catalog has 388 databases with keyword *Jewish*. Searching *Jewish* in title results in 105.
- A Jewish ethnicity option is available under “Collection Focus” when searching all collections.
- Jewish Roots Message Board: <https://www.ancestry.com/boards/topics.ethnic.jewish.jewish-roots>.
- Ancestry digitized two of many Arolsen Archives’ record sets. This German-based repository is an international documentation center on Nazi persecution and liberated survivors. Two record sets that Ancestry houses are:
  - Europe, Registration of Foreigners and German Persecutees, 1939-1947 *in German* (19.2M)
  - Africa, Asia and Europe, Passenger Lists of Displaced Persons, 1946-1971 *in German* (1.7M)
- “European Jewish” DNA ethnicity category breakdowns for “Western & Central Europe” and “Central & Eastern Europe” <https://www.ancestry.com/dna/ethnicity/european-jewish> (all regions)
- Fold3 Holocaust Collection <https://www.fold3.com/browse/115/> contains 2.5 million NARA records including Nuremberg Testimonials, Dachau Entry Registers, and State Department Records for Russia.
- Newspapers.com “Jewish” results in title include 16 papers in CO, IL, MO, NY, OK, TX, VA, WI, Canada, and England.

### **FamilySearch.org**

- Jewish Genealogy Wiki at [www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Jewish\\_Genealogy](http://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Jewish_Genealogy).
- Article about searching for Jewish records in FamilySearch Catalog at [https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Jewish\\_Records\\_in\\_the\\_FamilySearch\\_Catalog](https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Jewish_Records_in_the_FamilySearch_Catalog).
- 8546 digital image collections are in catalog with keyword *Jewish*. Over 3100 are online.
- Sampling of Jewish collections include:
  - Québec, Ile-de-Montreal, Register of British subjects professing the *Jewish* Faith above the age of 21, 1832-1889.
  - Sokółka (Sokółka), Białystok, Poland civil registration of births, marriages, deaths 1835. Includes Jews.
  - Hertsa, Hlyboka, Chernivtsi, Ukraine civil registration of births, marriages and deaths 1869-1931. Now Herta, Dorohoi, Romania. Includes Jews.
  - Netherlands, Gelderland Province, Church Records, 1405-1966. Many indexes.
- “Todd Knowles Collection” includes 1.4 million Jewish names in six separate family trees. Search > Genealogies. Enter a name and select Community Trees near Search button. See <http://knowlescollection.blogspot.com/>. A list of all sources is not currently online.
- Utilize 3<sup>rd</sup> party Steve Morse One-Step Webpages [www.stevemorse.org](http://www.stevemorse.org) to search Jewish names on FamilySearch free, and on Ancestry with a subscription. Translation and Jewish calendar tools are also available.

## Findmypast.com

- Jewish family history landing page at <https://www.findmypast.com/jewish-family-history>.
- Kindertransport records for children rescued from Nazi-occupied Europe, including Jewish children.
  - Browse-only (41 volumes from government depts) and indexed collections.
- Other resources are:
  - British Jewry Book of Honour 1914-1920
  - Palestine Conflict British Deaths 1945-1948
  - Greater London Marriage Index including synagogues
  - Manchester Naturalisation Society 1896-1909
  - Britain, Enemy Aliens and Internees, First and Second World Wars
- PERSI (Periodical Source Index) includes 53 titles with *Jewish* in title including JGS and Avotaynu publications.
- The British Newspaper Collection includes the *Jewish Chronicle* 1850-1899.

## MyHeritage.com

- Partnerships with BillionGraves, Israel Genealogy Research Association (IGRA), Israeli State Archives, JewishGen, and Litvak SIG.
- Grave markers at 95% of cemeteries in Israel are digitized, searchable, and indexed on BillionGraves and MyHeritage. Search in English and get the image and gravestone inscription in multiple languages. On IGRA's paid database, there is an index in Hebrew and English, but no images.
- New Jewish record collections:
  - ***Austria, Vienna Jewish Vital Records, 1835-1938***
  - ***Lithuanian Jewish Records from Litvak SIG, 1795-1940***
  - ***JDC Index Jewish Displaced Person & Refugee Cards: Munich, Vienna, Barcelona, Hungary, & Warsaw***
- In MH tree, you can select Holocaust as cause of death. Profile page will add a yellow star.
- Global Name Translation search tool translates names across 42 languages, including Russian, Polish, Czech, German, Hebrew, Yiddish.
- MyHeritage DNA ethnicity analysis includes five major Jewish groups and 55 sub-groups.

## JewishGen.org

Ancestry and JewishGen are two separate entities that entered into a partnership in 2008, resulting in an agreement that Ancestry would host JewishGen servers, and JewishGen would provide a specified number of records to be available at no cost on both sites.

1. Some databases hosted on JewishGen are not on Ancestry.com, such as the JewishGen Gazetteer, JewishGen Family Finder, JewishGen Memorial Plaques Database, KehilaLinks, message archives, full-text translation of the Yizkor Book Project, Jewish Records at the FHL and Family Tree of the Jewish People.
2. Many databases continue to be updated on JewishGen but have not been updated regularly at Ancestry.
3. JewishGen offers more search options and more flexible search results for the complexities of Jewish names.
4. On Ancestry, you can directly attach records to a family tree. On JewishGen, although you can upload a family tree in GEDCOM format to the Family Tree of the Jewish People (FTJP), you cannot attach records to it. Records found on JewishGen can only be downloaded to a hard drive or mobile device.
5. Family trees (FTJP) on JewishGen are shared with Israel's Beit Hatfutsot family tree collection and vice versa with permission of tree owner.
6. Ancestry.com has divided some JewishGen databases into smaller collections for search flexibility.
7. JewishGen offers a Discussion Group with 20,000 subscribers at <https://groups.jewishgen.org/g/main>.

Site	Basic Annual Options	All-Access Annual	Other
Ancestry.com	\$189 (Country) \$299 (Worldwide)	\$389 Includes Fold3 + Newspapers.com <i>Publishers Extra</i>	<b>Free records</b> include USHMM, Arolsen, & JewishGen collections <b>Payment options:</b> monthly, quarterly, 6 mos, annual
FamilySearch.org	FREE	FREE	FREE
Findmypast.com	\$129 (Essential British+Irish)	\$179 (Ultimate British+Irish)	“PayAsYouGo” Micropayments: \$14.95/100; \$37.95 for 300; \$82.95 for 900  5 - 60 credits for unlimited views of a record for 90 days
MyHeritage.com	<b>Family Tree:</b> <b>Free / \$129 /\$209</b> <250 /<2500 /unlimited people <b>Data Plan:</b> <b>\$189</b> all historical records	\$299 (Unlimited family tree; access to all historical records)	<b>Discounts for 1<sup>st</sup> year subscribers</b> <b>Free records</b> include IGRA, BillionGraves, Litvak SIG, and select Holocaust collections
JewishGen.org	FREE	FREE	\$100 annual suggested <b>donation</b> for additional search functionality; is <b>tax-deductible</b> in the U.S.