Harnessing the Power of Genetic Genealogy to Help Holocaust Survivors Find Family Rootstech 2025

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DNA Resources:

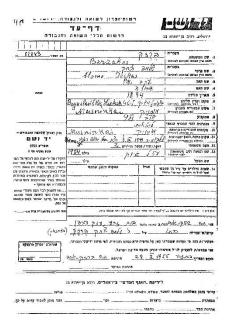
- As an endogamous population, Ashkenazi Jews have thousands of DNA matches that will be completely untraceable, but there are strategies to help determine researchable matches
- "No, You Don't Really Have 7,900 4th Cousins: Some DNA Basics for Those With Ashkenazi Jewish Heritage" by Jennifer Mendelsohn https://clevertitletk.medium.com/no-you-dont-really-have-7-900-4th-cousins-some-dna-basics-for-those-with-jewish-heritage-857f873399ff
- DNA Painter for tools the Shared cM Project, and "What are the Odds" tool: https://dnapainter.com
- Facebook resources: <u>The Jewish DNA Group</u>. For a solid grounding DNA methodology, including conducting unknown parent search techniques, we recommend DNA Detectives and Genetic Genealogy Tips and Techniques.

General Resources:

- <u>The JewishGen FamilyFinder</u>: a simple but effective tool to connect with people searching for certain surnames in certain locations.
- Facebook genealogy groups: Tracing the Tribe, Jewish Genealogy Portal
- For translations, https://www.facebook.com/groups/GenealogicalTranslations

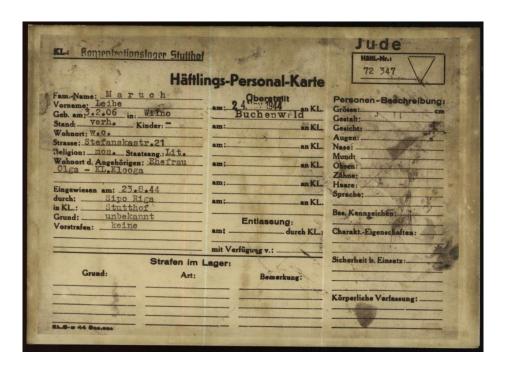
Major Databases & Repositories

- JewishGen / www.jewishgen.org
 - o Look at the country databases for where your family was from
 - USC Shoah Foundation Survivor Interviews
 - Yizkor books, Yizkor Book Necrology Database
 - Can provide social history and names of family
 - Findings at other sites like Yad Vashem, Arolsen Archives, Israel Genealogy Research Association (IGRA), JRI-Poland, Gesher Galicia
- Yad Vashem / www.yadvashem.org
 - o Most popular is probably The Central Database of Shoah Victims' Names
 - Pages of Testimony
 - Examples of Other Records include Evacuation and transport lists, passports

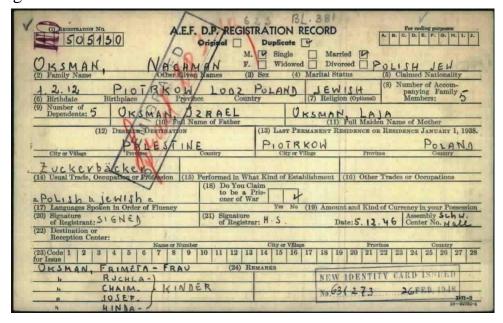


- United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) / www.ushmm.org
 - Try the Holocaust Survivors and Victims Database
 - Searching on site isn't the most forgiving, so try many variations for names of interest
 - When a record is found online, can be sent immediately to your inbox
 - o ITS search availability

 Below is example of records readily available at USHMM, while others need to be requested



- Arolsen Archives / https://arolsen-archives.org/en/search-explore/search-online-archive/
 - o Over 30 million documents with information on 17.5 million people
 - Focus on Displaced Persons (example below), Concentration camp, ghetto records



- ITS Searches
- International Tracing Services (ITS)
 - o International Tracing Services, originally only available through Arolsen Archives
 - o Now, institutions worldwide can perform ITS searches
 - o Examples: USHMM, Yad Vashem, Wiener Holocaust Library
 - Worth requesting search at multiple locations because each repository may have unique records and records may be updated regularly
 - o It's free, but survivors are priority

Other Databases and Repositories of Interest

- Ancestry, MyHeritage draw from other sites as well as have unique databases, trees of interest
- FamilySearch
 - o Many JewishGen records indexed lead to here
 - Use catalog for area of interest
 - Also, make sure to check Wiki for record availability in your place of interest
- European Holocaust Research Infrastructure Project (EHRI) Portal
- WorldCat
- Country/regional sites
 - o E.g., for Poland, JRI-Poland, Jewish Historical Institute (JHI)
- National Archives (NARA) at College Park, Md
- USC Shoah Foundation
- Yizkor books also available through Yad Vashem, YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, New York Public Library, Library of Congress
- Israel Research Genealogy Association (IGRA)
- Search Engines
 - o Google! You never know what you might find
 - Use wildcards *, quotation marks "", AND/OR, and different combinations in your search
 - o Try searches in different languages
 - Can use Google Translate to assist you
- Tips for success
 - Try different spelling variations, broaden searches (e.g., last name instead of full name)

- o Don't rely on a single site
- Some sites can be temperamental in searches, so best to try the same search in multiple places
- Learn the social history
- o Don't rely solely on the index
- Not everything is online!

Case Examples in the Press

The Jackie Young story:

- Times of Israel article: https://www.timesofisrael.com/uk-man-who-survived-concentration-camp-as-baby-finally-learns-his-familys-identity/
- Interview on WBUR "Here and Now" https://www.wbur.org/hereandnow/2022/12/15/holocaust-dna-family-history
- The Jewish Chronicle: https://www.thejc.com/news/holocaust-survivor-rebuilt-lost-world-dna-testing-to52c4cm

Polish Jewish Sisters:

• https://www.thejc.com/news/polish-jewish-sisters-orphaned-and-separated-80-years-ago-are-reunited-by-dna-test-u6i9jn8f

Washington Post feature on The Holocaust Reunion Project:

• https://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/2023/12/13/holocaust-survivors-dna-test-ancestry-genealogy/

Boston Globe cover story on Vilunya Diskin:

• https://www.bostonglobe.com/2024/12/31/metro/vilunya-diskin-holocaust-survivor/