

Why Form a Jewish Genealogical Society?

Today, there are a large number of Internet-based resources available to those researching Jewish genealogy. You can access hundreds of websites to search for records, lists, and published family trees. Taking it to the next level, you can also join mailing lists and blogs where topics of interest to Jewish genealogists are discussed. You can “listen in” or actively participate in the cyber conversation.

While a cyber conversation is typically short lived, joining a society is ongoing and lasting. Society members participate in an ongoing community of fellow researchers and build relationships with mentors in a collaborative and supportive environment.

The Internet is a great enabler, easing access to databases and expertise. However, nothing replaces going on a journey with like-minded people. Reap the rewards of pursuing genealogical research as part of a local society.

As a society, your members will interact in multiple ways that enrich their Jewish genealogy research experience and elevate the knowledge of Jewish family history within your community:

- **Learn** – Most societies hold monthly educational programs addressing topics of special interest to Jewish genealogists including: census, city directories, immigration & naturalization, military records, vital records, researching foreign records, Internet search, organization, using family tree software, how to interview, history of Jews in various geographies, using JewishGen databases, and much more. Many societies also hold annual workshops for beginning genealogists and refreshers for advanced genealogists. Some societies will also allow special time to meet with and ask questions of a panel of mavens. Many societies have a library of excellent Jewish genealogical books. Societies provide all these resources to people who are searching and discovering their Jewish roots – some not initially knowing that they had Jewish ancestors. Learning is enriched in a society.
- **Share** – Many societies will assign a mentor to each new member. Many societies publish a newsletter filled with articles sharing the latest Jewish genealogical research methods, records sources, tools, and case studies. Many societies will also allocate time for members to share success stories including how they broke through a brick wall and made a hard-found discovery. Not everyone can appreciate the challenging road travelled to such success stories as fellow society members can. Sharing is enriched in a society.
- **Contribute** – Many societies take on community projects to make available their local Jewish history to researchers from afar. Recording cemetery photos and data, transcribing Yizkor plaques, indexing obituaries from local Jewish newspapers are only some of the projects societies undertake. Contributing back to other Jewish genealogy researchers is enriched in a society.

Help your community of researchers start the journey with like-minded people.

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