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# Research techniques: Review of Jewishgen's FTJP database

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A “thank-you” goes out to our Chronicles editor, Evan Fishman, for a very good idea: a research techniques column review. Each issue of Chronicles will feature a column devoted to highlights of software, databases, websites, or special research techniques. Members of the society are invited to email me if they have any tech questions.

For our first column topic, I will briefly highlight a few areas of the website ([www.Jewishgen.org](http://www.Jewishgen.org)). As many readers know, there are quite a number of useful websites for genealogy research. I chose to review a component of the Jewishgen website as I feel it is an important primary website for those who are working on Jewish genealogy.

What is Jewishgen? Wikipedia states that JewishGen is, “a non-profit organization founded in 1987 as a resource for Jewish genealogy. In 2003, JewishGen became an affiliate of the Museum of Jewish Heritage. Jewishgen provides amateur and professional genealogists with the tools to research their Jewish family history and heritage” (1).

More than 1000 volunteers throughout the world actively contribute to JewishGen’s ever growing collection of databases, resources and search tools. JewishGen has more than 4000,000 users worldwide and has become “the central online destination for Jewish genealogical research, with more than 20 million Jewish records, hundreds of translated Yizkor (memorial) books, research tools, family finders, educational classes, historical components, and other resources” (2).

JewishGen’s brochure states that it” allows users to search more than 14 million online records, in databases for Poland, Belarus, Ukraine, Germany, Lithuania, the USA, and other regions. JewishGen also has a searchable database of two million Holocaust records, which includes registrations from ghettos, transport lists, concentration camp records, and survivor lists” (3).

Within the Jewishgen website, the primary research databases include: the JewishGen Gazetteer (formerly the "ShtetlSeeker"), the JewishGen Communities Database, the Worldwide Burial Registry (JOWBR), the Holocaust Database, Country Databases, the JewishGen Family Finder (JGFF), and the Family Tree of the Jewish People (FTJP). Projects include the Yizkor Book Project, the KehilaLinks Project, the Family Pages Project, and the ViewMate Project.

There are “Discussion Groups” which provide researchers with the opportunity to connect, ask questions, exchange information and learn from others. Discussion groups are categorized by general and specific areas/topics of interest. There is a helpful “Table of Contents” on the website (4).

There are a number of databases within Jewishgen, each of which could be discussed at length. In this column I will briefly focus on the one database which I feel is very helpful for locating individuals and their associated family trees: the Family Tree of the Jewish People (FTJP).

The (FTJP) is a searchable compilation of family trees submitted by individuals, and is searchable by a variety of methods. The FTJP is a project to “centralize the collection of family trees for Jewish people, in order to provide a powerful resource to connect individuals researching the same Jewish family branches” (5).

According to the Jewishgen website, in 2010, the FTJP initiated a partnership with MyHeritage.com to provide a special facility for Jewish genealogists to create their family tree on (MyHeritage.com). This agreement also allows MyHeritage.com users to see the FTJP data (6).

The central purpose of the FTJP is to “enhance the ability of researchers to locate and identify family tree branches which are being researched” (7). As of December 2010, JewishGen’s FTJP database reached over 5 million names, from 4,200 contributors (8).

Jewishgen describes this database as ”a project to centralize the collection of Jewish family trees, to provide a powerful resource to connect individuals researching the same Jewish family branches, to re-connect their families, and to increase interest in Jewish genealogy” (9).

With the FTJP database, Jewishgen has created a powerful and rich resource for genealogists whom desire to locate and identify distant relatives. It enables researchers to submit their trees to the FTJP database. It also permits researchers to contact those authors whom have already submitted family branches to the database. Those users whom have submitted a copy of their trees can be contacted from within the database via a secure and anonymous email forwarding system.

The database works as follows: A) Users submit a gedcom file (example: james.ged) by uploading them onto the Jewishgen website. These gedcom files are files which most genealogy software programs can create as a file output. B) Registered members of Jewishgen (registration is free) can log into the FTJP website, type in the names they are looking for within the search engine, and click on the desired name.

The database search can be performed using the following two steps: A) users subscribe and become members of Jewishgen (10). B) Users can then log-in using their email and password to enter the site (11). They then perform name searches on the FTJB database .

Searches have three areas for customizable searching: A) Given (first) name or town/country, B) Type of search either exact or using the Daitch-Mokotoff soundex system, C) Order results by.

I usually select given name for my searches. Then I usually select the “Surname- Exact Spelling” option. See image #1 below:

### ***The Family Tree of the Jewish People***

Surname	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Given Name <input type="radio"/> Town OR Country	Type of Search	Order Results by
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="&lt;optional&gt;"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Int Surname -- Exact Spelling Surname -- Daitch-Mokotoff Soundex Surname -- Exact Spelling Surname -- Starting with this Spelling	Given Name

For example, I searched for Nathan Steinberg who was my grandfather. As I want this precise name, I chose to use the “exact spelling” search option. The next option is the results order. I chose to order the results by given name. See Image #2 below:

## The Family Tree of the Jewish People

Surname	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Given Name <input type="radio"/> Town OR Country	Type of Search	Order Results by
<input type="text" value="steinberg"/>	<input type="text" value="nathan"/>	Surname -- Exact Spelling	Given Name Given Name Surname + Given Name Parents Gedcom Date (Backwards) Gedcom Date (Forwards) Submitter Code

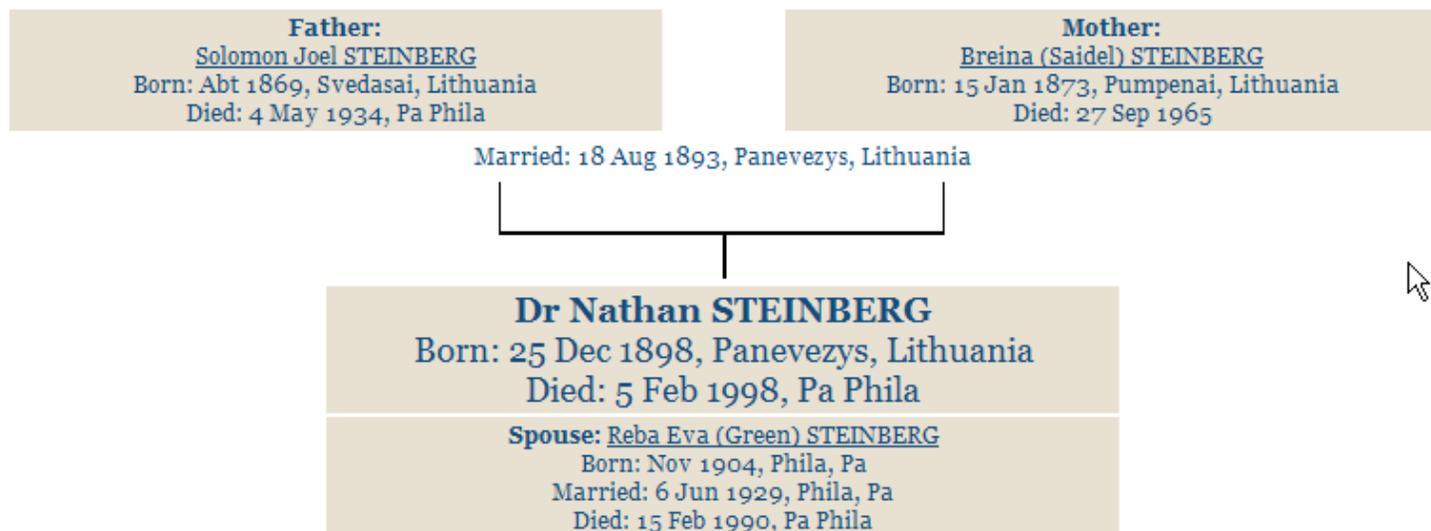
Include my data in search results

search for all families from a particular town or shtetl by leaving the surname blank, entering a town name and clicking the "search" button. NOTE however that you are limited to a maximum of 1000 matches doing such searches.

The partial search results are (see Image#3 below):

Searching for Surname STEINBERG + nathan						
Total hits: 16						
Run on Friday 30 November 2012 at 22:20:49						
	Name	Born	Died	Father + Mother	Code	Last Updated
	<a href="#">STEINBERG, Aron Nathan</a>	1833	1907	Nathan Aron + Bluemchen Herz Berghausen	132112	20 Feb 200
	<a href="#">STEINBERG, Dr Nathan</a>	1898	1998	Solomon Joel + Breina (Saidel) Steinberg	2913	17 SEP 20

The FTJP database returned 16 entries, including one from my Sept 2011 gedcom submission. Jewishgen identifies your submissions with grey coloring of the entry. The little purple image to the left of my entry indicates that a viewable tree is available. Lets click on my hyperlinked entry, Nathan (see Image #4 below):



As you can see, it shows part of Nathan's tree. This is a partial screenshot of the entry. At the top is a clickable button for users to contact the submitter (see Image #5 below):

[Databases](#) » [The Family Tree of the Jewish People](#)

## Family Display: Dr Nathan STEINBERG

[Contact the Person who submitted this data by email](#)

In summary, the FTJP is a very useful primary resource which can be of help to Jewish genealogy researchers. As I have found, it doesn't hurt to check this and the other databases on Jewishgen for periodic updates. By the way, it looks like I need to update my gedcom file!

About the author: James recently graduated with a Master of Library & Information Science (MLIS) from Drexel University. He has been working on his family tree since the early 1990's, and is a periodic contributor to various genealogy newsletters. James also has a genealogy website (12). He can be reached at: [navistar96@yahoo.com](mailto:navistar96@yahoo.com)

### References:

- (1) Wikipedia: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/JewishGen>
- (2) Ibid.
- (3) Jewishgen Brochure: [http://www.jewishgen.org/jewishgen/press/jg\\_brochure.pdf](http://www.jewishgen.org/jewishgen/press/jg_brochure.pdf)
- (4) Jewishgen index: <http://www.jewishgen.org/InfoFiles/faq.html>
- (5) Ibid.
- (6) Jewishgen: <http://www.jewishgen.org/gedcom/>
- (7) See footnote 1.
- (8) See Footnote 1.
- (9) Jewishgen: <http://www.jewishgen.org/gedcom/faq/>
- (10) Jewishgen: <http://tinyurl.com/jewishgen-register>
- (11) See Footnote 6.
- (12) James Gross website: <http://tinyurl.com/gross-steinberg>

Images 1-5: Courtesy Jewishgen FTJP database and family tree (gedcom) data from the author