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President's Shpiel

by Kim Sheintal

Unlike pandemics of the past, people can stay in touch with family around the world virtually. Are you spending lots of time staying in touch with relatives and doing genealogical research during the pandemic? Please share your recent connections with relatives, genealogical progress, and tips to klapshein@aol.com.

I recently discovered Quora as a place to gain and share knowledge about genealogy. Quora is a question-and-answer website where questions are asked, answered, and edited by Internet users. I was curious as to what people had to share about their ancestors who spoke Yiddish. See what people have to say as to whether or not their ancestors spoke Yiddish at <https://www.quora.com/Did-any-of-your-ancestors-speak-Yiddish>

Growing up in Chicago with my parents and younger sister, I was blessed to have four grandparents and a great grandmother living nearby until age 12. My great grandmother passed away on my first day of seventh grade. I have many fond memories of family gatherings as a child. My maternal grandmother was born in Chicago. Three of my grandparents and my great grandmother were born in Eastern Europe and immigrated to United States as young adults. All spoke English, some better than others. My great grandmother couldn't read or write English. She read the Forward in Yiddish. The Forward was launched as a Yiddish-language daily newspaper on April 22, 1897. According to the Forward, "With the end of World War II the Forward entered a period of decline. The vast, Yiddish-speaking world of Eastern European Jewry was no more."

Did any of your ancestors speak Yiddish?

Jewish Genealogical Society of Southwest Florida

MISHPOCHOLOGY

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www.jgsswf.org

<https://www.facebook.com/JGSSWF/>

JGS OF SW FL Meeting Cancellations

Sunday, March 15, 2020 (1:00 PM) with Peggy Jude
Using the DNA Websites CANCELLED

Sunday, April 19, 2020 (1:00 PM) with Baila Miller
Yiddish Radio Project CANCELLED

See last page for genealogy activities during Pandemic.

Wonderful World of Websites

<https://www.avotaynu.com/csi/csi-home.htm>

Consolidated Jewish Surname Index

<https://www.americanancestors.org/membership/wyner-family-jewish-heritage-center-membership>

Wyner Family Jewish Heritage Center at American Ancestors

<https://www.jweekly.com/2019/11/29/who-is-a-jew-dna-home-testing-trend-adds-new-wrinkle-to-age-old-debate/>
Who is a Jew? DNA home tests adds wrinkle to age-old debate

<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2019/jun/12/what-does-it-mean-to-be-genetically-jewish>
What does it mean to be genetically Jewish?

<https://medium.com/@CleverTitleTK/no-you-dont-really-have-7-900-4th-cousins-some-dna-basics-for-those-with-jewish-heritage-857f873399ff>

Ashkenazi Jewish Heritage and DNA Results

<https://dnainter.com/tools/sharedcmv4>

DNA Painter

<https://dna-explained.com/2018/08/28/family-tree-dna-step-by-step-guide-how-to-upload-download-dna-files/>
How to Upload-Download DNA Files

<https://www.jewishgen.org/JewishGen/Support.htm>
JewishGen Support Center

<https://www.jewishgen.org/JewishGen/sigs.htm>
JewishGen Regional Special Interest Groups

<https://www.jewishgen.org/education/>
JewishGen offers online, interactive courses open 24/7

www.iajgs2020.org

Updates for IAJGS Conference on Jewish Genealogy

Navigating JewishGen www.jewishgen.org

“JewishGen serves as the global home for Jewish genealogy. Featuring unparalleled access to 30+ million records, it offers unique search tools, along with opportunities for researchers to connect with others who share similar interests. Offered as a free resource, JewishGen.org has facilitated thousands of family connections and success stories, and is currently engaged in an intensive expansion effort that will bring many more records, tools, and resources to its collections.” Go to home page.

Click “ABOUT”

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In the middle of the page are:

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Success Stories
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Click “BLOG”

In the middle of the page is JewishGen Blog.

Click “BEGINNERS”

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In the middle of the page are:

First Timer
FAQ
InfoFiles
Tools
Online Classes

Click “SEARCH”

At the top of the page are:

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ABOUT US

Mission
Leadership
Activity & Press
Volunteer
Success Stories
Help Center
Search Website

GET STARTED

First Timer
FAQ
InfoFiles
Tools
Online Genealogy Classes

DATABASES

Unified Search
Family Finder (JGFF)
Family Tree (FTJP)
Town Finder
Holocaust Database
Burial Registry (JOWBR)
Completer List of Databases

RESEARCH

Yizkor Books
KehilaLinks
Family Pages
ViewMate
Discussion Groups

DONATE

Donate Now

The following JewishGen videos will teach and inspire you:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f1krRERkE8k>
(Discovering the Power of JewishGen)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nASSn4rDXh4>
(This is JewishGen)

The following will teach and inspire you some more:

- <https://www.facebook.com/JewishGen.org/>
(JewishGen Facebook Page)
- <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/JewishGen>
(JewishGen on Wikipedia)
- <https://www.ancestry.com/cs/jewishgen-all>
(Ancestry.com Partners with JewishGen)

Family Tree Magazine lists best 25 genealogy websites for beginners at <https://www.familytreemagazine.com/premium/25-best-genealogy-websites-for-beginners/>. JewishGen is on this list.

AARP lists 15 great websites for genealogy research at <https://www.aarp.org/relationships/genealogy/info-05-2011/online-genealogy-resources.html>. JewishGen is on this list.

Lifewire lists 8 best free genealogy websites for 2020 at <https://www.lifewire.com/best-free-genealogy-websites-4163831>. JewishGen is on this list.

My Name is Amowitz

by Susan Schlossberg



Yitzak Amolovicz, Susan's great grandfather



Yitzak's granddaughter (age 105) in 2020 taking DNA test



Susan Schlossberg (middle) with newly found third cousins

Genealogy was always a big deal to my parents as they felt it was important to understand where we come from and to embrace our ancestors and whatever stories we could glean.

My maiden name is Amowitz and we were told that we were the only ones in the world with that last name. Nonetheless, there were always rumors of a 'branch' living in America. Growing up in the Depression and loving his job as a country dentist, my father did not take long vacations and, if we traveled, it was usually to visit my maternal grandparents in NYC or for a long weekend in Virginia Beach. Wherever we stopped, he would immediately peruse a phone book looking for these long lost cousins.

I cannot recall how we obtained this rare photo of Yitzak Amolovicz. I memorized our relatives' faces with the help of my mother, who was nothing short of amazing collecting mementos.

My father died suddenly when I was 16 years old. He was my best friend and connecting with hidden branches took on new meaning. Through the decades with the advent of computers and help from sites such as Ancestry, my brothers and I were able to link my mother's extensive family members, but we hit a wall when it came to our father's family.

A few years ago, we discovered on Facebook a mother and daughter with the last name of Amowitz, but we had no idea how we were related. They had discovered a relative from Detroit who was an amateur genealogist, Marilyn (whose last name I will omit for now). While my DNA had linked to the Amowitz daughter, it did not connect with Marilyn.

We are only a few months living in Sarasota and one of the first groups that I joined was the Jewish Genealogy Society of Southwest Florida. January's speaker was a genealogist who explained how Jewish DNA is different from non-Jews. It makes sense given the centuries of our religion living in one region continuously. I always laugh when I fill out doctor's forms and am asked if I am of Ashkenazi descent because my family has pretty much every health issue that we are prone to have! Anyway, the speaker was explaining how to upload our DNA. Once I was finally able to figure out how to do so, my missing branch showed hundreds of new relatives waiting to be discovered. My great-grandfather, Yitzak Amolovicz, had two brothers. Who knew?! They had come to America and settled in the Detroit area, which was never on our radar back when my father was living! I now found how I was linked to the Amowitz daughter on Facebook as well as Marilyn, who had set up a family tree group. It was very exciting to make these discoveries and introduced myself on the webpage. Some of these distant relatives visit Florida for a week to escape the Midwest cold including a pair of sisters, who are my newly discovered third cousins. We met in Punta Gorda for lunch in February and plan to stay in touch.

While I was waiting for them to arrive at the restaurant, I asked a few couples waiting outside if they were my 'long lost cousins' and one of them replied, "Only if I'm their rich aunt!" While I may not be rich, I am very rich in knowing that my father is smiling from above that we finally made this connection! (The best news is that no one appears to be a murderer or rapist!)

JewishGen Recommendations

**to find people researching specific Jewish surnames
or to find information about specific Jewish surnames**

<https://www.jewishgen.org/jgff/>
JewishGen FamilyFinder

<https://www.jewishgen.org/databases/all/>
JewishGen Unified Search

<https://www.jewishgen.org/JewishGen/Search.asp>
JewishGen General Search

<https://www.jewishgen.org/gedcom/>
JewishGen Family Tree of the Jewish People

<https://www.jewishgen.org/JewishGen/DiscussionGroup.htm>
JewishGen Discussion Group



**November 3, 2019 Shalom SRQ Live
Jewish Organizations of Our Vibrant Jewish Community**
JGS of SW FL members Willa Lewis and Leah Cook



**January 19, 2020 Program by Lara Diamond
DNA Successes in and in Spite of Endogamy**
Robert Zavos (Vice President of JGS of Pittsburgh), Lara Diamond (President of JGS of Maryland), Doug Cohen (Treasurer of IAJGS, JGS of Greater Boston and JGS of SW FL member), Jeff Knisbacher (JGS of Maryland and JGS of SW FL member), and Vic Cohen (Treasurer of JGS of Greater Washington DC)



**November 17, 2019 Program by Sandy Prindle
Judah P. Benjamin: How He Succeeded through his Lineage**
Howard Finkel (JGS of SW FL Program VP), Sarah Clark (Aviva staff), and Sandy Prindle (author, speaker)



**February 16, 2020 Program by Corky Stern
Stumbling Stones of Europe**



**December 15, 2019 Program by Scott Mandel
Now That I Started, What Do I Do with the Information?**
Scott Mandel with father William Mandel

Genealogy Resources/Activities during Pandemic

Genealogy Sites Providing Free Resources during Pandemic

<https://familyhistorydaily.com/free-genealogy-resources/free-genealogy-resources-pandemic/>

- My Heritage offering unlimited use of My Heritage in Color and Free Census Records
- Ancestry.com partnered with National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) to offer free temporary access to the NARA's incredible database.

Eight Family History Activities to do at Home

<http://www.whodoyouthinkyouaremagazine.com/news/coronavirus-8-family-history-activities-do-home>

Genealogy-focused Quarantine Activities

<https://www.legacytrees.com/blog/coronavirus-quarantine-activitiesvities>

Free Genealogy Activities for Cooped Up Kids

<https://abundantgenealogy.com/free-genealogy-resources-for-cooped-up-kids/>