

Resources for working with Jewish personal, family, and town names

Following the Paper Trail: A Multilingual Translation Guide, Shea & Hoffman (available at Avotaynu)

Two articles from *Avotaynu Guide to Jewish Genealogy*:

Sack, Sallyann Amdur, "Family Names," 30-34.

Blatt, Warren, "Jewish Given Names," 35-42.

A series of books on Jewish names, published by Avotaynu:

Dictionary of Ashkenazic Given Names, Alexander Beider

Dictionary of Jewish Surnames from the Kingdom of Poland, A. Beider

A Dictionary of Jewish Surnames from the Russian Empire, rev. ed., A. Beider

Handbook of Ashkenazic Given Names and Their Variants, A. Beider

Dictionary of Jewish Surnames from Galicia, A. Beider

Russian-Jewish Given Names: Their Origins and Variants, Boris Feldblyum

A Dictionary of German-Jewish Surnames, Lars Menk

Dictionary of Sephardic Surnames, 2d ed., Guilherme Faiguenboim, et al.

Articles in *Avotaynu* on Jewish names:

Beider, A. "Jewish Patronymic and Metronymic Surnames in Russia." *Avotaynu* VII:4 (W 1991), 3-15.

Beider, A. "Jewish Given Names in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania." *Avotaynu* XIII:2 (Su 1997), 20-25.

Blatt, Warren. "Jewish Given Names in Eastern Europe and the U.S." *Avotaynu* XIV:3 (F 1998), 9-15.

Useful web sites and links:

- Warren Blatt's slide presentation on "Jewish Given Names":
www.jewishgen.org/InfoFiles/GivenNames/
- "The Names of the Jews: A Preliminary FAQ," Joachim Mugdan old (1994-1995) but still useful commentaries on various issues in Jewish names
www.jewishgen.org/InfoFiles/namfaqo.htm
- Male and female given names in Russian (Cyrillic), Polish (Latin), and Hebrew alphabets:
www.jewishgen.org/infofiles/poland/FemaleNames.gif
www.jewishgen.org/infofiles/poland/MaleNames.gif
- Use www.stevemorse.org to help you figure out how to search for names
- To learn about the changing civil geography of your towns, see the Eastern Europe FAQ on JewishGen: www.jewishgen.org/InfoFiles/eefaq.html
- Use the JewishGen Communities Database (aka Town Finder) to search for your town by Sounds Like:
www.jewishgen.org/Communities/Search.asp

Some approaches and solutions:

- Spelling doesn't count, spelling doesn't count, spelling doesn't count
- Be creative about figuring out how a name might have been spelled
- Be creative about figuring out how a name might have been mis-indexed
- Learn to use Soundex (fuzzy) searches for names and towns
- Use personal naming conventions (different for Ashkenazi and Sephardi)
- Learn to recognize the "holy" and vernacular variants of your ancestors' names
- Be aware of the alternate surnames your ancestors might have used
- Learn to recognize patronymics
- Check the names on matzevot (gravestones)
- Learn to "hear" in Yiddish
- Learn how your ancestors' names would have been spelled in the old country
- Learn strategies for using online searches to find name variations
- See if your ancestors are buried in a landsmannschaft cemetery
- Use JewishGen's Town Finder (aka Communities Database) to identify your towns

The Jewish Given Names Databases:

“The Given Names Databases (GNDBs),” www.jewishgen.org/databases/GivenNames/
 Read the page on How to Search: www.jewishgen.org/databases/GivenNames/howto.htm
 The main search engine: www.jewishgen.org/databases/GivenNames/search.htm
 You can search one direction or the other at a time:

Searching for Leib from Poland:

1. EUROPEAN-TO-FOREIGN SEARCH

European Country:

SearchName:

SearchField:

Search Type:

Foreign Country:

<p>Legal/Hebrew: Aryey Leyb\Leyba\LEO\LEON Gender: M Legal Origin: Calque < LEIB/"NEW" names Click here for more details</p> <p>Yiddish: Arye / / LEO / LEON / Leyb / Leybe</p> <p>Yiddish Origin: < Yiddish/German 'lion'</p> <p>Yiddish Nickname: / / Levek / Levik / Levin / Levke / Levko / Leybl / Leybela / Leybele / Leybish / Leybka / Leybke / Leybo / Leybush / Liba / Libe / Lebele / Liva</p> <p>Local Secular: Arja / Arij / / Laib / Lajb / Lajba / Lejba / Lew</p> <p>US Name: / / Louis</p>
<p>Legal/Hebrew: Elyaqum Leyb\Leyba\Leybln\Lebln\Lebn Gender: M Legal Origin: Talmud: Avoda Zara 58a Click here for more details</p> <p>Yiddish: Alyokum / Elyokum / Elyukum / / Leyb / Leybe</p> <p>Yiddish Nickname: Kume / Lyokum / Yakum / / Lebn / Lebln / Levek / Leybele / Leybln</p> <p>Local Secular: Alokum / Eljakum / / Laib / Lew</p> <p>US Name: / / Louis</p>
<p>Legal/Hebrew: Leyb Gender: M Legal Origin: < Yiddish 'lion' Click here for more details</p> <p>Yiddish: Layb / Leyb / Leyba / Leybe</p> <p>Yiddish Origin: < Yiddish 'lion'</p> <p>Yiddish Nickname: Laybke / Laybl / Laybus / Laybush / Lebl / Leblin / Lebln / Lebush / Lefke / LEIBer / Levek / Levik / Levke / Levko / Leybele / Leybish / Leybka / Leybke / Leybko / Leybl / Leyblin / Leybtshe / Leybtshik / Leybus / Leybush / Leyby / Leyp / Leyshe / Leyskhe / Leyve / Lyove / Lyovke</p> <p>Local Secular: Laib / Laiba / Lajb / Lajba / Laywa / Lejb / Lejba / Lejbe / Lejby / Lew / Lijba</p> <p>US Name: Leo / Louis</p>

Displaying matches 1 through 5 of 10

Searching for Louis in US for possible names in Poland:

2. FOREIGN-TO-EUROPEAN SEARCH

Foreign Country:

SearchName:

Search Type:

European Country:

Searching for Text LOUIS	
Number of hits: 25	
Run on Saturday 9 April 2011 at 02:14:02	
<p>Legal/Hebrew: Arie Gender: M Legal Origin: Hebrew calque < Lejb Click here for more details</p> <p>Yiddish: Arie / Ariya</p> <p>Yiddish Nickname: Ari / Lejb / Lew / Lewe</p> <p>Local Secular: Arie / Arij</p> <p>US Name: Alfred / Arthur / Harry / LOUIS / Leo</p>	
<p>Legal/Hebrew: Arie Leyb\LEO\LEON Gender: M Legal Origin: Hebrew calque < Lejb/'NEW' names Click here for more details</p> <p>Yiddish: Arie / Ariya / / LEO / LEON / Leyb / Leybe</p> <p>Yiddish Nickname: / / Levek / Lew / Lewe / Leybele / Leybus</p> <p>Local Secular: Arie / Arij / / Lajb / Lajba / Lejb / Lejba / Lejbisz / Lew</p> <p>US Name: Alfred / Arthur / Harry / LOUIS / Leo</p>	
<p>Legal/Hebrew: Aryey Leyb\Leyba\LEO\LEON Gender: M Legal Origin: Calque < Leib/'NEW' names Click here for more details</p> <p>Yiddish: Arye / / LEO / LEON / Leyb / Leybe</p> <p>Yiddish Origin: < Yiddish/German 'lion'</p> <p>Yiddish Nickname: / / Levek / Levik / Levin / Levke / Levko / Leybl / Leybela / Leybele / Leybish / Leybka / Leybke / Leybo / Leybush / Liba / Libe / Lebele / Liva</p> <p>Local Secular: Arja / Arij / / Laib / Lajb / Lajba / Lejba / Lew</p> <p>US Name: / / LOUIS</p>	

The Consolidated Jewish Surname Index:

“Consolidated Jewish Surname Index”: www.avotaynu.com/csi/csi-home.htm

When you first access the site, read the short, important instructions

Use the Advanced Search Option, give you many powerful options for how to search

Advanced Search Option

This option is meant only for people that are familiar with soundex searches. If you enclose characters of the name being searched in brackets it signifies that the letter should not be soundexed but must appear as is. For example, searching for the name Tartacki will provide all elements of the database that have the soundex 393450 including those names that start with the letter "D" which has the same soundex code as "T." However, if you request a search of [T]artacki, you have specified that the initial letter *must* be "T." Any number of consecutive letters may be bound in brackets. Any number of sets of characters can be bound in brackets. Users should be reminded that attempting to reduce the number of false positives may, in fact, eliminate true positives, so the feature should be used judiciously.

Enter Surname to be Searched:

Avotaynu Soundex Search Result

mn shows the codes for the various databases in which the surname appears. Scroll the screen down below the list of surnames to database, there is its code, followed by a brief description. This description has a link to a more detailed description of the database. Some databases are on-line, others are in books or microfiche.

Searching for surname CHODOSH with soundex code 534000.

Soundex	Name	Databases
534000	CADES	Kp
534000	CADICH	W
534000	CADITZ	J
534000	CADIZ	HJKY
534000	CADOCH	Yf
534000	CADOCH	P
534000	CADOS	Pf
534000	CADOSH	KPf
534000	CADOTZ	J

The codes in the Databases column show what database to visit to search for the corresponding name in the Name column.

List of Databases and Number of Surname Entries in CJSI

Visit our [Home Page](#) for more information about Avotaynu

- A. [Jewish Records Indexing - Poland](#) (231,973 surnames). An index to over 2,400,000 Jewish birth, marriage, divorce and death records located in the archive database
- B. [All-Poland Database](#) (79,327 surnames). An additional 600,000 records for Poland, from a variety of sources, including: vital records, business directories, sources. *Online database*
- C. [All Lithuania Database](#) (46,656 surnames). More than 400,000 records from many different sources, including Revision Lists (censuses), vital records, tax, updated. *Online database*
- D. [All Belarus Database](#) (55,652 surnames). More than 300,000 records from many different sources, including vital records, voter lists, business directories, g database
- E. [All Latvia Database](#) (8,188 surnames). 75,000 records from many different sources, including vital records, voter lists, tax lists, recruitment records. An on-
- F. [All UK Database](#) (1,409 surnames). More than 50,000 records for England, Scotland and Wales, from a variety of sources, including: marriage and cemetery continuously updated. *Online database*
- G. [All Hungary Database](#) (26,426 surnames). 240,000 records from many different sources, including vital records, census records, property tax records, etc..
- H. [All Romania Database](#) (45,240 surnames). More than 190,000 records for Romania and Moldova, from a variety of sources, including: voter lists, census records, yizkor books, and others.--continuously updated. *Online database*