

Ellen Shindelman Kowitt Lectures updated 6/6/2022

Erie, Colorado, USA

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- 20-90 minute presentations that are informative and educational.
- Optional Q&A period and handout available.
- Content is flexible and can be delivered as stand-alone lecture, ongoing course, workshop, mentoring, or other formats.
- Ellen will travel out of state, conduct live webinars, or provide mp4 recordings.
- Speaking fee is \$250-\$1600 per lecture depending on whether lecture is newly developed or existing topic, size of audience and organization, lead time, and other factors.
- Please inquire about travel expenses.

Additional lecture topics can be developed upon request.

Bio: Ellen Kowitt (*pronounced KO-witt, like KO-dak*) is Director of JewishGen's USA Research Division and National Vice Chair of the DAR Jewish Specialty Research Team. She is past president of Jewish Genealogical Societies in Colorado and Greater Washington, DC, and she served for three years on the IAJGS board of directors. Ellen publishes articles in *Family Tree Magazine* and *Avotaynu: The International Journal on Jewish Genealogy*. She has completed the ProGen Study Group, attends genealogy institute programs, and is a member of the Colorado Chapter Association of Professional Genealogists. For upcoming lecture dates or more information, visit www.EllenKowitt.com.

- I. ***An Overview of Jewish Records in the Golden Medina/USA***
- II. ***Documenting Jewish Families in America: The Early Years 1654-1880***
- III. ***Exploring Jewish Families in DAR.org Genealogy Resources***
- IV. ***In Development! Researching Jews in the American South***
- V. ***In Development! U.S. Synagogue Records***
- VI. ***In Development! Surfing USA: Jewish Archives***
- VII. ***In Development! Desperately Seeking Selma Through Five Name Changes***
- VIII. ***NEW! Rising from the Ashes: Ukrainian Records Access Grows***
- IX. ***Documenting Jewish Families or Communities Lost in the Holocaust by Bullets***
- X. ***In Development! The Untold Story at Babi Yar: Soviet Jewish Prisoners of War***
- XI. ***Updated! New Jewish Resources on the Giant Genealogy Websites***
- XII. ***Tips & Tricks for Navigating JewishGen***
- XIII. ***In Development! Treasures Hidden in JewishGen's Research Divisions/SIGs***
- XIV. ***The Case of the Missing Ancestors: Genealogy Tips from Nancy Drew***

XV. *Secrets for Researching Jewish Genealogy Revealed (alternate titles: What's Jewish About Jewish Genealogy; Getting Started Tracing Your Jewish Roots; Introduction to Jewish Genealogy)*

XVI. *Tracing Jews Who Coughed Their Way West*

I. *An Overview of Jewish Records in the Golden Medina/USA*

Documenting Jewish communities in the United States not only includes Jewish cemeteries and synagogue memorial plaques, there are congregational records including vital records and Sephardic-liturgy Escabot lists, mohel registers, Jewish hospital and funeral home records, Jewish clubs and organizational materials, and more to be uncovered. This lecture showcases search techniques and websites where these Jewish genealogical gems may be found in archives, newspapers, rare books, or elsewhere. Featuring examples from the American Jewish Historical Society, the American Jewish Archives, regional Jewish historical society archives such as The Bremen Museum and DU's Beck Archive, state archives, *FamilySearch*, *WorldCat*, and more.

II. *Documenting Jewish Families in America: The Early Years 1654-1880*

Similar to *An Overview of Jewish Records in the Golden Medina/USA*, this lecture focuses on resources and strategies for researching early American Jewish families.

III. *Exploring Jewish Families in DAR.org Genealogy Resources*

Considering application in the Daughters of the American Revolution lineage society but didn't think your ancestors qualify? DAR's current efforts to *Rise and Shine for America* actively encourage new applications from a variety of heritage groups including women descending from African-American, Native American, Jewish, Spanish, French, and German settlers. Come hear about the Lineage Committee Specialty Research Task Forces actively developing resources and assisting in the location of documentation for daughters and prospective members descending from populations typically not emphasized in the past. DAR materials for genealogical research will be outlined and online access for members and non-members discussed.

PUBLISHED ARTICLE:

"Bridging Daughters of the American Revolution and Jewish Genealogists" Fall 2020 *Avotaynu: The International Review of Jewish Genealogy*

IV. *In Development! Researching Jews in the American South*

Overview and historical timeline of Jews in America featuring Richmond, with descriptions about Jewish archival collections and other resources. To include

timeline of Jews in America 1654-present; Earliest Jewish Synagogues; Earliest Jewish Cemeteries; Jews in the American Revolution; Jews in the Civil War; Jewish Archival Collections; Other resources for researching Jews Jews in the South; and The Jewish History of Richmond.

V. *In Development! U.S. Synagogue Records*

VI. *In Development! Surfing USA: Jewish Archives*

VII. *In Development! Desperately Seeking Selma Through Five Name Changes*

Estranged from family, tracing my great grandmother Selma from her 1893 East Prussian birth to an unknown demise in Chicago post 1941 was challenging. Explore U.S. and Prussian resources, methodology and strategies used including family lore, skipping a generation, timing, the kindness of strangers, filling in the story, and lessons learned.

VIII. *NEW! Rising from the Ashes: Ukrainian Records Access Grows*

Records access was already exploding in Ukraine prior to the 2022 Russian-Ukrainian Conflict beginning. Now, cameras are actively digitizing even more. Learn about efforts by the Ukrainian State Archives, FamilySearch, Alex Krakovsky, SUCHO, JewishGen's Ukraine SIG, and others. Additional useful websites and partnerships will be outlined and challenges in language addressed. Takeaway strategies to update your research plan for success.

IX. *Documenting Jewish Families or Communities Lost in the Holocaust by Bullets*

English speakers can now learn details about what happened to relatives or a community in the Holocaust by Bullets. Knowing and sharing your story is more important than ever in a world of continued genocide, and as a generation of survivors and eyewitnesses pass away. Review documentation from this important era including access to Russian Extraordinary Commission files; Yahad-In Unum eyewitness video; USC Shoah Foundation and other recorded survivor testimonies; Yizkor Books; Yad Vashem; USHMM; National Library of Israel; local community resources; and more.

PUBLISHED ARTICLE: "Yahad-In Unum Documents Holocaust Mass Gravesites in Nine Countries" Feb 2019 *Avotaynu: The International Review of Jewish Genealogy*

X. *In Development! The Untold Story at Babi Yar: Soviet Jewish Prisoners of War*

XI. *Updated! New Jewish Resources on the Giant Genealogy Websites*

Enjoy this updated comparative overview of Jewish record collections and research tools found on the global powerhouse websites referred to as “Genealogy Giants.” Comparing Ancestry, *FamilySearch*, *Findmypast*, and *MyHeritage*, this lecture includes many substantive record examples. Learn how each site can be helpful for documenting Jewish families, and get tips on each site’s best features or challenges. Current *JewishGen* partnerships with *Ancestry* and *MyHeritage* are featured.

PUBLISHED ARTICLE: “Jewish Resources on the Giants: Ancestry.com, FamilySearch.org, Findmypast.com, and MyHeritage.com” Aug 2019 *Avotaynu: The International Review of Jewish Genealogy with Sunny Morton*

XII. *Tips & Tricks for Navigating JewishGen*

JewishGen.org is the global home for Jewish genealogy with over 30 million searchable records and indexes, educational and language tools, networking, and more. This free website contains a wealth of treasures to navigate through the complexities of Jewish names and origins, but where to begin? Or, what are you missing? Some geographical resources are valuable for researchers of any faith background and should not be overlooked. Join veteran Jewish records pro and Director of JewishGen’s USA Research Division, Ellen Kowitt as she provides an overview and shares examples of hidden gems to help maximize your time and search.

XIII. *In Development! Treasures Hidden in JewishGen’s Research Divisions/SIG*

This introduction and overview of 24 JewishGen research divisions (also known as special interest groups or SIGs) will detail strengths, features, and differences on each website and database.

XIV. *The Case of the Missing Ancestors: Genealogy Tips from Nancy Drew*

For fans of the girl sleuth, or newcomers to her mysteries, this entertaining “then and now” lecture showcases genealogy resources found in the text of the classic Nancy Drew series which may have profoundly influenced generations of future genealogy enthusiasts. Contemporary digitized records, photographs, and maps, as well as archival collections, cemeteries, and newspapers that Nancy would likely use today are detailed. Join us on an adventure around the world exploring old and new tools of the trade including tackling foreign languages and finding clues and records in non-traditional places!

PUBLISHED ARTICLE: “The Case of the Missing Ancestors: 8 Genealogy Tips from Nancy Drew” Jan/Feb 2021 *Family Tree Magazine*

XV. *Secrets for Researching Jewish Genealogy Revealed (alternate titles: What's Jewish About Jewish Genealogy; Getting Started Tracing Your Jewish Roots; Introduction to Jewish Genealogy)*

Starting with yourself and working back through civil records is the same strategy for Americans of all faiths, but that's when the *meshuganah* fun begins with Jewish records. After identifying an immigrant and jumping the pond can be challenging with multiple languages, geographic border changes, and religious traditions to navigate. Explore strategies and resources for tracing Jewish families in the US and abroad including definitions of lifecycle events, naming patterns, archival collections, newspapers, web resources featuring *JewishGen* and elsewhere, documenting victims and survivors of the Holocaust, rabbinic dynasties, and more!

XVI. *Tracing Jews Who Coughed Their Way West*

An overview about the history and records for two Jewish sanitariums in Denver, Colorado, and why Jews from across North America travelled for the treatment of tuberculosis beginning in the 1890s and lasting until the widespread use of antibiotics became common. The JGS of Colorado was awarded the IAJGS Stern Grant in 2003 to index early JCRS patient application records starting in 1904 that contain significant genealogical material held at the University of Denver. Updates and completion of the index through the 1940s is expected soon.