

## American Jewish Historical Society: Family History Research Guide

### AJHS

The mission of the American Jewish Historical Society (AJHS) is to foster awareness and appreciation of the American Jewish experience and serve as a national scholarly resource for research through the collection, preservation and dissemination of materials relating to American Jewish history. Founded in 1892 as a membership organization, research library, archives, and museum, the American Jewish Historical Society is the oldest ethnic historical organization in the United States.

### Genealogical Resources at AJHS

The AJHS archives has valuable records of American Jewish organizations and personal papers of individuals and families. Collections of personal papers (mainly of well-known personalities and rabbis) are given "P-" numbers, while institutional records are given "I-" numbers. The AJHS library collection includes local histories of many Jewish communities around the country.

You may search the Center for Jewish History's online catalog at <http://search.cjh.org> by author, title, or subject (such as a town name) to locate relevant books or archival collections. Detailed guides to archival collections are available online at <http://www.cjh.org/p/93>. For several of the collections described below, volunteers have developed online indexes that may be searched at <http://www.cjh.org/p/61>.

### Orphanage Records

Each of the orphanages listed here has a different institutional history, but they all eventually merged with the **Jewish Child Care Association of New York**. AJHS holdings include the following:

- **Brooklyn Hebrew Orphan Asylum, I-230**: Holdings include admission and discharge records, 1879-1953.
- **Hebrew Infant Asylum of the City of New York, I-166**: Holdings include indexed admission and discharge records, 1895-1908.
- **Hebrew Orphan Asylum, I-42**: Holdings include admission applications, 1862-1879 and 1901-1924, and discharge records, 1899-1940.
- **Hebrew Sheltering Guardian Society of New York, I-43**: Holdings include unindexed admission and discharge records, 1907-1942.
- **Home for Hebrew Infants, I-232**: Holdings include unindexed admission and discharge records, 1922-1953. I-232

### Military Records

Military records at the AJHS relate to Jewish soldiers in the American armed forces. They include:

- **American Jewish Committee, Office of Jewish War Records, I-9**: Holdings include questionnaires sent to Jewish servicemen after World War I. Data on over 4,000 Jewish soldiers is organized by branch of service, rank, originating city, or status (wounded, etc.). To research this material, it is helpful to know a soldier's rank, branch of service, and status after the war. An online index to this collection is available on the CJH website at [www.cjh.org/collections/genealogy/onlinepbs.php](http://www.cjh.org/collections/genealogy/onlinepbs.php).
- **National Jewish Welfare Board, Bureau of War Records, I-52**: Holdings include data cards on individuals in the service, 1940-1969, ordered alphabetically.

## Immigration Assistance Records

Immigration assistance records include a large collection of records of various departments of the Baron de Hirsch Fund, the philanthropy of the great Jewish banker and philanthropist Baron Maurice de Hirsch. In addition, the AJHS possesses records of the Jewish Immigrant Information Bureau in Galveston, Texas, relating to the Galveston Immigration Plan, a joint project of several organizations to bring Jewish immigrants into Texas. One of those organizations was the Industrial Removal Office, devoted to encouraging Jews to settle in the interior of the U.S. Finally, AJHS holdings include records of the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society in Boston.

- **Baron de Hirsch Fund, I-80:** Includes administrative records, deeds and property transfer records, files of student aid recipients, and a list of Jewish farmers. Also in this collection are records of the **Jewish Agricultural Society** (with loan applications by Jewish farmers), the **Woodbine Colony** in New Jersey, the **Woodbine Agricultural School**, and the **Baron de Hirsch Trade School**.
- **Industrial Removal Office, I-91:** Includes approximately 44,000 records of immigrants relocated from big cities to the interior of the U.S. and correspondence from relocated immigrants. The collection is unindexed and arranged by state.
- **Jewish Immigrant Information Bureau (Galveston, TX), I-90:** Includes internal correspondence of JIIB staff, correspondence between JIIB and other organizations, and ship passenger lists of immigrants who came through Galveston from Germany. A searchable name index to this collection, created through a grant from the Jewish Genealogical Society of New York, can be found at <http://findingaids.cjh.org/?fnm=JIIBGalveston02&pnm=AJHS>.
- **HIAS Boston, I-96:** Includes alphabetically arranged arrival records of immigrants who arrived in Boston or Providence, Rhode Island from 1882 to 1929, and an incomplete chronological list of ship arrivals and ships' passenger lists for 1904 to 1953. This collection is housed at AJHS's facility in Newton Centre, MA.

## New York County Court Records

These records are duplicates of records in the Hall of Records at 31 Chambers Street in New York City, in which the litigants had Jewish-sounding names. They include **Mayor's Court Briefs, from 1674 to 1860, I-151**, indexed by last name of the litigant, approximately 500 Declarations of Intent to Become a Citizen and related **naturalization documents, from 1816 to 1845, I-152**, indexed by last name of the declarant; **Insolvent Debtors Cases, from 1787 to 1861, I-153**, indexed by last name of debtor; and **Incorporation Papers, from 1848 to 1920, I-154**, of approximately 10,000 organizations, indexed by the name of the organization, the type of organization, and the related European town.

## Contact Information

General inquiries: [info@ajhs.cjh.org](mailto:info@ajhs.cjh.org)

Reference inquiries: [www.ajhs.org/reference/reference\\_request\\_form.cfm](http://www.ajhs.org/reference/reference_request_form.cfm)

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