Michael Tobias | Genealogy 101 A Beginner's Guide to Tracking Your Roots

- So everyone, welcome to Michael. Michael Tobias is co-founder and board member of Jewish Records Indexing Poland, 1995, president of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Great Britain, Honorary Research Fellow for Genealogical Studies, and former vice president of Programming of JewishGen, Inc. From 1995, he was there from 1995 until 2018. He was a database matching consultant for the International Commission of Holocaust Era Insurance Claims. Michael received the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Society's Lifetime Achievement Award in Washington in 2011, and he was awarded the OBE for services to the Jewish community in the Queen's 2021 New Year's Honour List. So Michael, thank you very much for joining us. We're thrilled to have you and we are very much looking forward to hearing from you. Thank you.

- Okay.

- And thank you, as always, Laura.

- Okay, so I've got a lot to say tonight and I'll probably be going at quite a speed, partly because I'm Scottish and all Scots talk very quickly. A lot of information to give, whether there'll be time for questions at the end, I'm not sure yet, we'll see, but I have listed my email address at the bottom of the video and if you have any questions, feel free to email me and I'll do my very best to help. So, researching your family tree, and I'm aware that the audience in this session may be complete beginners or you've maybe done a little bit of work. You may be experts, in which case you may disagree with what I'm going to say.

But how do you start? Well, we recommend, wherever you are in the world, you probably will be starting in the same way and the kinds of documents I'll be mentioning may vary slightly from country to country and time period to time period, but they're probably all very similar and the availability of the documents is probably similar as well. So you're probably going to start out in roughly the same place. What we always recommend is interview your older generation, speak to your parents, speak to your grandparents if you're lucky enough still to have them. Get as many stories recorded as possible. Get as many papers together as you can. Have they got certificates, especially if they've got them from the old country where your family came from, any old letters, anything in Yiddish, any photographs, anything that could help you with the task ahead. Get all the names, dates, places together. Because the main problem with doing Jewish genealogy, there are two real issues. One is surnames because Jews haven't had surnames for very long and we tend to change them regularly. Therefore even if you know your surname where you're living now, do you know what the

surname was in the old country? Maybe not. And where did your family come from? You may only know it was somewhere in Russia, which was probably Russian Empire rather than Russia proper. So finding out where the family came from, that's going to be a bit tricky at times. And if you don't have some of the certificates where you're living now, if your family, if your parents or grandparents married or passed away where you are, then try and order their certificates in the countries where you're living to get as much information as possible. I'm just actually going to switch off some of the noises which are dangling in the background here. Yeah, that's someone at the door, I'm not going to answer it.

So what documents, and I've got a long list here of the documents which you may have available. The first point are usually the vital records that's birth's, deaths, marriages, and the information contained in them will vary dramatically from country to country and in the completeness and accuracy. Don't always believe what you read on these certificates because often there are errors. I always like to mention Scotland, because I believe the system of vital record registrations is really superb over here. It's better than it is in England and Wales for example. And sometimes the documents have enough information to give you clues to the ancestral origins. For example, in Scotland, all of the birth registrations not only tell you the name of the child and the name of the parents, but they also tell you the date and the place where the parents were married. And so for the first generation immigrants you can get a clue as to exactly where they've come from. Of course, realise that the names of the towns listed, and the towns aren't always listed. It might just say Russia or Poland or Hungary or Germany. But if a town is listed, it's probably been written down phonetically as it's sounded to the clerk who recorded the information. But normally it's good enough to make a guess at where they're talking about. Similarly, Scottish death certificates will actually give the names of the parents of the deceased, which you don't often get in other countries. But then take that information with a pinch of salt. It depends who the informant was. If the informant was a grandchild or a distant cousin, then they may not know for sure exactly what the parents' names were and they may have guessed and got someone else in the family but not the correct parents. There might be synagogue records. Synagogues tended to keep their own records, so they may have their own information regarding birth, deaths, marriages, that will have Hebrew names, which will give you one more generation back for the names of the fathers. Does your family have copies of the ketubahs that will be useful and they may have ketubahs from the old country, which will give information about where your family came from. In the UK, and I'm not quite sure if you have this elsewhere, there are things called UK marriage authorizations. And this is where if a couple wanted to get married in an orthodox synagogue in the UK that was affiliated to the chief rabbi's office, the United Synagogues in London, then before the marriage could take place, they get had to get authorization, they had

to prove they were halachically Jewish and a form was filled in and sent to the chief rabbi's office with the other documentation. And then the chief rabbi's office would say yes or no, you can get married in the synagogue.

Now those forms, which have been fairly standard from 1880 onwards, if they're completed fully, can give you an incredible amount of information about the family, the parents' names, brothers of the groom perhaps, and exactly where they were born. So good clues, and I'll give an example later. Censuses and revision lists. Revision Lists are censuses, especially in the Russian Empire that were done regularly but not as regularly as every 10 years that you might be used to where you're living now. And these were lists or censuses which were continually upgraded and updated to keep the information up to date. So censuses, check to see if it says anything about where the family were from. I know in the USA it'll sometimes tell you the languages they spoke. It might not tell you where they were from. In the UK there is a space to say where they were born. It might just say Russia, it might be blank, or it might have a town name, which again, has been badly mangled based on what it sounds like rather than how it's actually spelt in the modern country. Army and military records, there may be service records if they served in the military. Naturalizations, another fantastic document source where you're looking for the ancestral origins. Again, the format of these papers tends to vary not only by country but in the USA it tends to vary by state. The information there will tell you hopefully where the person was born, their date of birth. Again, it might just say Russia or Poland, but it might mention a town. In the UK there are also background papers called supplementary papers which are held at the National Archives in Kew in London. And those papers leading up to the naturalisation certificate being granted can run to dozens and dozens of pages. I think the largest file I ever got a copy of was something like 73 pages, 74 pages. And those background papers give lots of information about the family and how they got to the UK. Lots of information about where they lived, what work they did, witness statements, vouching for the person, police reports possibly. So a lot of useful information there as well as names of parents and possibly where the family came from. School records can be a great use. In Glasgow there were many schools in the areas where the poorer immigrants started to arrive in the late 19th and early 20th century. And some of these schools were 50% plus Jewish students. And the registrations, the attendance registers will normally give the dates they started the school, it may tell you the date they left the previous school and where that school was, and if they left school and went to a different school because they moved house, it will give the date they left. But it will give the student's dates of birth which is really useful for the immigrant generation because you can then get the correct dates of birth for some of your family where you don't have any other way of finding it because you don't know exactly where they were born and even if you do know, you may not be able to locate

their birth certificates. In my family we found some cousins where they left school and it told you the date they left and why they were leaving because they were leaving to emigrate to Argentina. Cemetery and burial records. Very useful to get the Hebrew names so you know the father's names. Also, you'll sometimes get information about other family members who arranged for the burials, the different families involved. There are also some documents called burial authorizations in the UK, mostly in the London area, and again associated with the chief rabbi's office where before you could get buried in certain Jewish cemeteries, you had to prove you were halachically Jewish. And so a lot of information is recorded in these authorizations which can be really useful because if you go to the cemetery and discover there isn't a stone, maybe the family were so poor they couldn't afford a stone, or the stone is badly damaged or badly worn, you can't read it. The information on the burial authorizations will actually repeat a lot of the information that would've been on the stone had there been one. So very useful to look at them. I know in the USA and I think possibly some places in Canada, some of the large cemeteries are so large that they're split into different sections and a lot of those sections belong to different burial societies and some of them are town based. So in some towns, especially in new around New York, you may get sections belonging to different Łomżer groups or Białystoker groups. And these groups were set up by people who originally came from the towns of Łomża and Białystok. There's no proof that everyone buried in those sections came from Łomża or Białystok. They may have married into a family or simply knew families from that area and decided to get buried in those cemeteries. But it's a clue, another clue as to where they may have come from. Memorial boards and synagogues, are your family listed? It'll give Hebrew names, father's names. Check the newspapers for birth deaths match announcements often, especially for death announcements, you'll get information posted by different family members all around the world. So you may learn about branches of your family you weren't aware of and where they were living at certain times. Also check information for engagements and marriage announcements where sometimes the parents will be mentioned and the order of the children, it might say it's the marriage of the only son of a couple or the second daughter, et cetera. And so it gives you information about the family and what other children you might be missing when you're doing your research.

Shipping lists are really important. Very difficult in the UK unfortunately, any ships which left Europe, the mainland, and arrived in the UK, those records weren't kept, sadly. There are a very few surviving at the archives in Kew in London, but most of them were simply not kept and they were destroyed. In the USA it's much better. And also in Canada I believe, especially in the USA around New York, obviously Ellis Island, huge numbers of immigrants and before that Castle Garden. So lots of useful information there. The information varied depending on the time period. Some of the sheets go on for two pages and you get lots of information including the names of the

passengers, where they've come from, the person in the family or the contact they're going to in the USA, the person in the family left, they left from in the old country. So really useful if you can find those documents. But of course knowing what name to look for is can sometimes be difficult because the names could also appear on these lists in a very different form from what you expect. I would also should mention at this point things called direct passages and indirect passages. Mostly in the 19th century, ships leaving Europe for the USA and Canada were called indirect because they did not go direct. They actually stopped on the way. Mostly because very few ships could travel the Atlantic in one go from mainland Europe. But also it was very expensive and a lot of our ancestors couldn't afford to go by those routes. It's a bit like these days when you're flying somewhere, you'll usually find it's much cheaper to fly if you change flights several times rather than flying direct. So in, mostly, in the 19th century, ships leaving Europe would probably land in the east coast of the UK or possibly some of the Dutch ports and they would then continue their journeys. Sometimes you would leave the boat in the UK, get a train to the west coast, jump on another boat and then go to America. And so they were called indirect routes and that was the bulk of the routes were indirect in the 19th century. Later in the 20th century, as we got into the 20th century, more and more direct roots were introduced and at that point fewer and fewer families came to the USA via the UK. They didn't have to any more. So that's something to watch out for and I'll show some examples later. So if you're living in the UK or you're tracing your family who you know came to the UK from Europe, you won't find their arrival records. So the only thing you can do then is look for records in Europe of the ships leaving. Again, not a lot of them have survived for various reasons. One of the largest complete sets are the Hamburg shipping lists. Hamburg was one of the most important, if not the most important port for those leaving Europe. So well worth searching the Hamburg shipping lists. There's not a huge amount of information on the lists and I'll show you an example later from my family, but worth searching for them and you'll find them on the Ancestry website. It's not really a document here, but I just thought I'd give a warning of family stories.

Many stories have been passed down our families, there's usually some element of truth in the stories, but don't take them as 100% accurate. And for example, many families talk about how their father, their immigrant generation arrived in Ellis Island where they had their name changed, they arrived, they were asked what their name was, they said the name in a very, very strong Yiddish accent. The person who was waiting for them didn't have a clue what they were saying, said, I'm sorry, I don't understand what you're saying, I'll just call you Cohen or whatever. And that simply did not happen. And if your family insists that happened, I'm sorry, it really didn't happen. The passenger manifests were created in Europe before they left on the boat. They were entered onto the manifests by multilingual members of

staff who spoke all different languages, including Yiddish. In fact, it was a very sophisticated, almost travel agency at that time. When you bought your tickets in Europe to come west, you would often buy a ticket for your ship from Hamburg to the UK, a ticket for the train that took you from the east coast to the west coast and a ticket for your second ship, which took you to America. And all of the information was recorded by people who understood you precisely and wrote down your name. When you arrived in Ellis Island, eventually, your name was already on the manifest. You also had a tag attached to your clothing, which had your name exactly as it appeared on the manifest. And the clerks who were there to meet you did not ask you your name. They simply looked at the tag, checked the list and made sure you were on that list and that was you. You did not have to give your name and they didn't have to speak to you. So your name was not changed. So many families will still have these stories and what they probably mean is, or what their family meant was they arrived in Ellis Island and they changed their name, they changed their name themselves and it wasn't at Ellis Island, it was after they arrived in the US. And I have had arguments over the years with people who insist this happened. But whenever I've done research with them and for them, I've managed to show that it simply didn't happen. So for example, if you know the year when your family arrived in Ellis Island and you've got the manifest, I would always go to the next census in the USA and look for the family. And you'll quite often find they're there in the census and they're still using the original name. You may then find them using a different name if they came to naturalise and it'll say on the naturalisation papers what the original name was and what they changed it to. So it's just something to be we be aware of that these stories may have been passed down in your families but it really didn't happen.

A similar story in the UK is that families arrived in the UK and they were told by the ship, by the crew, oh, here we are, America. And they pushed them off the boat and left, leaving these poor people thinking they were in America actually in the UK. And again, that simply didn't happen. If it did, it was a pure accident, because people had bought their tickets, they knew they had a ship to the UK, a train to the west coast and another ship. They knew exactly what they were doing and where they were going. They weren't just pushed off the boat in the UK and told it was America. And there are lots of societies around the world who were town based, lots of groups of individuals who had come from the same towns or the same areas in Poland, banded together, especially for friendship societies or aid societies. A lot of them based on towns. So for example, one of my ancestral towns was Ostrołęka in northeastern Poland, and a lot of those societies don't exist any more. They've been wound up. But many of them have deposited their papers, their files with YIVO in New York. And so it may be worthwhile checking with YIVO to see if they have any of the society documents for the town that your family came from. There might be some hospital records, there are various directories online, lots of old

business directories including business directories in Europe. Ghetto lists, voters and citizenship lists. There may be documents relating to passports. Some copies were kept. Yizkor books and necrologies. Some of you may never have heard of a Yizkor book or a necrology. I'll show an example later as well. Basically after the Second World War, families who had left Europe well before the Second World War, and some survivors who had left afterwards decided that they wanted to commemorate and memorialise the towns they had come from. And so they got together and began to write these books which had lots of photographs of the town, lots of information about the families in the town, chapters about the history of the town, the famous people, the communities, the social groups, you name it. And these books are incredible. Some of them are quite small, some of them run to 600, 700 pages or more. In some towns there were so many people involved that there are multiple different books that were published all around the world, and most of these books were published in the 1950s and 1960s. And I'll show you an example later. There are over 1000 that were published over time and if you're looking for a copy for your town, look at the New York Public Library online because they have digital copies of over 1000 of them. The problem you then have is can you read Yiddish? Because most of them are written in Yiddish. Some have a little bit of Hebrew, some have maybe a, an introductory chapter in English. And most of these books at the very end of the book have what's called an necrology, which is simply an alphabetical listing of those people known to have perished during the Holocaust. Again, don't always take them as factual because some of these books were written in the '50s and '60s, lists of those who were assumed to have perished are in there and only later did some people come forward and say, no, I actually survived. So there may be some people listed here who didn't perish and there may be some people who did perish who are simply not on the lists. But it's worth checking the books, you may find your families mentioned, you may find old photographs of your family members. Books of residents, a lot of the things I'll be referring to just now are to do with Poland. That's one of my main interests. Six of my eight great-grandparents were from Poland and I think it's estimated that 70% to 75% of all Ashkenazi Jews have at least one Polish branch. And I apologise to anyone out there who is totally Sephardic. I won't be saying a great deal about Sephardic families, but I will be mentioning them slightly as we go through.

Books of residence in some of the towns in Poland were simply massive books which were kept street by street, town by, house by house, apartment by apartment, town by end, and listed the names, dates of birth of all the people living there. And the information in these books was completely updated. So if somebody, if a new child was born, they would be added to the book. If somebody died, they'd be scored out and it would say that they'd perished. If somebody left to go to America, it would say that they'd left on a certain date to go to the USA. It might even say that they had renounced their polish citizenship because they'd become American citizens on a certain date

and it would give the reference number of the American naturalisation. So incredible information in these books. More documents, there might be tax documents, membership lists, various transport and deportees, survivors and victims. Have you used Yad Vashem who have collected information since after the war for mostly victims but they also have information on survivors. Again, if you don't know where your family came from but you know some of the members of your family perished, search for them on Yad Vashem, you may discover that another member of your family submitted a page of testimony for your family and it may give not only their names and who their parents were and who they were married to, it may also give the town they were born, the town they were living at the time of the war. So very useful to search for these on Yad Vashem. Some concentration camp lists survived. The Red Cross collected a lot of information after the war, it then became Bad Arolsen and most of that information has now been released and there's at least one institution in most countries who have copies. The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington has a copy. There's a copy in the Wiener Library in the UK. If you go onto the Arolsen site, I think they will tell you the various archives in the world that have copies. And a lot of that information is now being digitised and made searchable on the internet. And there might be prison lists, obituaries, lots of newspapers these days have been digitised. You can go in and search for your family to see if they're listed for any reason. Circumcision lists, some of them kept their documents, so you might get information which will tell you the names of maybe more boys who were born in your family you weren't aware of. Refugee lists, name adoption lists. I've seen some of them from Germany where you can see Jews adopting surnames for the first time and what names they took. Police records, often in Europe, when our immigrant ancestors arrived at the ports to continue their journeys to the west, they quite often had to report to the police in the port towns and you may find that those police records, those police files still exist. So worth checking. And as I said earlier, you may find some police records and police reports in UK naturalisation supplementary papers. Family photos, I'm sure many of you have got boxes full of old photographs that have been passed down the family. And probably if you're like me, you'll have all these photographs and if you look in the back there's nothing written so you have no idea who these people are, but they're probably related. So look for clues. It might mention names and Yiddish in the back. It might mention the towns. Also check the front of the photographs. Maybe they were taken in a photographic studio. The studio name might be there. The town for the studio might be there. If there's no town listed but you have the studio name, search some of the business directories online to see if you can locate where that studio was located. If you were lucky enough to be descended from a rabbinic line, the rabbinic lines tend to be what I would call Jewish royalty. A lot of the famous rabbinical lines were very keen on keeping traffic track of exactly who was who and they wanted to make sure that their children married into other famous rabbinical lines. And so they used to keep their own genealogies of exactly how they

were descended. And if you were lucky enough to link eventually into one of these rabbinic lines, you can go back a very long way. In one of my family lines, one of my surnames is Krochmal, which is a Polish word which means starch. And I've traced that line back to the mid 18th century, but there's a 50 year gap and I can't get back to a famous Krochmal rabbi line. There was a Nachman Krochmal and his four great-grandfather was Menahem Mendel Krochmal born in 1600 in Kraków and I would love to get, to link into that family. I don't think I ever will, but if I could you can trace that family back through one of the female lines back to Barcelona in the 11th century.

So good luck with the rabbinic lines. The one warning I will give about rabbinic lines, there tend to be different versions of rabbinic trees online and elsewhere. You may find yourself lucky to be, to connect to one of these, but if you check carefully, you'll find there may be three or four different versions of the tree, which are all quite different. There's very little source documentation to prove these trees. Also there are lots of reference books to check, the company Avotaynu based in the USA, published lots of books over the years. They may or may not be publishing still, I think they may have retired now. One book is WOWW, "Where Once We Walked," and that will help you locate your town in Central or Eastern Europe. There are also lots of dictionaries of surnames and given names explaining what the meanings of some of these surnames and given names were and where they came from. Some books were based on voters list in the Russian Empire and if your name that you're searching is quite a rare name and it appears in the voters lists in the Russian Empire, it may point to a very, very strictly narrow location somewhere in the Russian Empire where your family surname appears. And I'll also show later for Poland a tool called the surname mapper where you can type in your surname if you came from somewhere in Poland and you will see precisely where Jewish Records Indexing – Poland have located documents for that surname. There are also many online family trees on most of the major genealogy websites. You may find somebody somewhere in the world has already done a lot of work on your tree and then you don't have to do quite so much. I would only warn you, be careful, check the trees on these genealogy sites. Are there sources? Do they have links to different documents, births, deaths, marriages, censuses, naturalizations? Do they show exactly where they got the information from? Because if they didn't then they probably copied it from somewhere else. You'll find many trees on Ancestry, for example, and elsewhere where you have multiple trees all with the very same information, with clear errors that have simply been copied from one tree to the next. Once an error gets in there, it's copied multiple times and chasing these people and saying, oh, by the way, you've got a member of my family in there and you've got the marriage to the wrong person and they've got the wrong parents, you'll probably never get an answer. And even if you do, they'll probably say, well, I'm sorry, I don't know where I got that information from. I copied it from someone else. So be careful and try and correct things if you

can, but it can be difficult.

Now, I'll just mention briefly some of the main genealogical websites, but there are hundreds out there. I can't possibly mention them all in the time tonight. The main ones for searching documents, searching records are Ancestry, it costs dollars, FindMyPast cost dollars, MyHeritage cost dollars. A free one is Family Search. They have a lot of the information that you'll find on the others and it's free of charge. There are also lots of Facebook groups. A lot of things have moved off the websites and gone to Facebook. There are several for those interested in the Jewish family. So we have the Jewish Genealogy Portal which is associated with JewishGen. We have Tracing the Tribe. And if you do have documents, maybe you've got some old births, deaths, marriages in Polish or Russian or German and you may have old letters written in Yiddish, you can up upload some of these documents to a group called Genealogical Translations where volunteers will translate them for you. All they ask is you don't bombard them with 100 pages of letters, but you can do one a day and you'll get back excellent translations. For Jewish research, I would always suggest number one as JewishGen, JewishGen, almost acts as an umbrella where most people will go when they're starting off and it has links to some other organisations. So JewishGen has its own databases which are worthwhile looking at and I'll show a few of them later. It also hosts some other organisations. So for example, if you're interested in Lithuania and there's an organisation called LitvakSIG, which is independent of JewishGen, but they have their databases hosted by JewishGen. So you'll go there to search the data. Jewish Records Indexing - Poland, which I co-founded in 1995, concentrates on records from what I call Greater Poland. It's somewhere that was ever in Poland and I'll show a map later to indicate where that is. Although they're now hosted by themselves, we have our own website, the data can still be searched through JewishGen. Similarly, there's an independent organisation called Gesher Galicia, which concentrates on the area of Galicia, a large overlap with GRI-Poland. And they have their own database, their own website. But again, some of the information can be searched via JewishGen, which will point to results in the Gesher Galicia data and give you links which go directly to the Gesher Galicia database. Interested in Sephardic families, check out SephardicGen, although also some Sephardic data now is on JewishGen and you will find some information there. For those coming to Jewish research and some Jewish genealogists aren't actually Jewish but they have maybe a Jewish branch or several Jewish branches. And although they may be experienced genealogical researchers when they come to do Jewish research, they find that there are new problems and new features which they haven't come across before. And I'll mention some of them here. First of all, for Jewish families, you may not be aware that Jewish surnames are very recent, probably only around 200 years that our families have been using surnames. Most of us.

So for example, in the areas of Galicia, our families didn't have

surnames until 1780s, 1790s. In Russian Poland or Congress Poland surnames were not used until 1821. A few families may have used them slightly earlier. Prussian Poland and in Germany it varies, but it could be as late as the mid 1800s. So basically our surnames are very recent, and variable, in Russian Poland in 1821, my three great-grandfather Shemek had to choose a surname. He was already in his 40s, he was born in 1780, thereabouts. He chose the surname Tobias. Why did he choose the surname Tobias? Because his father's given name was Tobias and he chose that in memory of his father. Now, families were very large in those days, Shemek, my three great-grandfather, probably had several brothers and sisters and I haven't a clue who they are because they probably all took different surnames. You didn't have to take the same surname as your brothers. Also, some families took surnames and weren't sure if they liked the surname and over the next 10 or 20 years they would use one surname, then try another surname, sometimes the records show two surnames because they weren't sure which ones to use and eventually they would decide, right, we're going to finalise on this surname. And that's a surname they used thereafter. Also, when you're doing searches online on databases, a lot of the databases when they first began on index cards, they used the system called soundex so that you could do searches for names which were spelt differently but were the same name. But they used a soundex system which produced a code for what the name sounded like and they were based on Anglo-Saxon names, which was really no good at all for Jewish surnames from Central and Eastern Europe. And when we went online onto databases on the internet, this was the soundex that was built in. And so it wasn't really useful for locating Jewish records. Another problem you will have are with given names, with the first names of Jewish families, who would use Yiddish names, they'd use Hebrew names, they may use names in civil society in Poland for example. And of course when they came to the West they would change their names to something that would fit in more. And you'll have various names for the same person. Let me just go back actually, and I'll give an example later. We also have problems with calendars. The Russian Empire was one of the last places in the world to modernise their calendar. They stuck with the Julian calendar until the end of the First World War. So whereas everywhere else was using the Gregorian calendar, in the Russian Empire, it was Julian. That means if you find a record from the 19th century in Poland, you may sometimes see in the record that two dates are given. It will refer to the date that the person arrived at the record's office or the synagogue, it will say the date the person with the child was born and there'll be pairs of dates and the dates were 12 days apart because that's the difference between the Gregorian and the Julian calendars. The Gregorian dates, the ones we use, are the later date. They're 12 days after Julian. In the 20th century, before the First World War, the dates were 13 days apart. So if you do find records in the old country and you think, well, it's very close to who I'm looking for, but their date of birth isn't right, just be careful because of the date of birth is 12 or 13 days out, it's definitely your family. It's

simply that we're using a different calendar. Also beware late and missing registrations. Our families were very wary of the civil authorities in Central and Eastern Europe and did not like registering anything. And so you will find in some towns, Jewish families tried hard not to register any births. And we've actually done some research in the city of Lublin in Poland and we estimate in the early 20th century that as many as maybe a third of all births were never registered because we can see the people listed in the books of residence, where they were living in the town and yet we don't find them in the birth records. There were good other reasons for not registering births, especially for boys. If you registered the birth of boys, then the authorities might come looking for them when they reached 18 or 21 to drag them off into the army. And that was one reason why you wouldn't want to register the boys. Now in some towns you could go for years without registering, but occasionally the authorities would do a catch up. They knew what was going on and they decided we've had enough. We want you to register your children. And the father would then go along to the office and he would register every single child all at the same time. So when you get to a record in a book of records in Poland and you find six consecutive birth records, these were not sextuplets, these were simply a family catching up, registering the entire family. Number six was probably a recent birth, number one was probably the oldest one. And it's not rare to find births registered 20 years after it took place. And it might have been done because someone was getting married and they had to prove who they were before they could get married so they had to register their birth. They may be wanting to get a passport to leave the country, again, they would register their birth to prove who they were. So if you do, if you're lucky enough to locate your family, you know the town they were born, you find that are records in existence, you find that the record books, if you know your great-grandfather was born in 1871, don't just look in the book for 1871, you want to look in all of the books following 1871 because he may appear 5, 10, 15, even 20 years later. Of course we know that town names changed, borders changed, languages changed, the countries changed. So even if you find a town listed on a document, it's probably not that name any more. Our families were huge numbers of immigrants, they were more mobile than you think. You may think your family lived in a very small shtetl all of their lives, but it was very common for families to intermarry and for marriages to take place between families who lived maybe 50 miles apart, 100 miles apart, they knew each other and they were more mobile than you might think. Of course they would then have Holocaust problems. We have dispersals of families, branches ending up where nobody else knew they were, people changed their names. A lot of families who survived and went to Israel, for example, changed their surnames and became totally different surnames from what they were in Europe. Also, people doing research in the Holocaust have different priorities. A lot of genealogists coming to this, a lot of people wanting to trace their families do this because they want to create a nice family tree. Other people come to this because they want to trace

what happened to their family in the Holocaust, can they find people still alive around the world from other branches where everyone thought they'd perished but maybe they didn't all perish? So they're not interested in going back a few hundred years and producing a nice tree, they're much more interested in the last hundred years or so and trying to locate branches and find living family. Recently, over the last 20 years or so, DNA has come in and is incredible for finding long lost family. I've used this a lot in recent years, for example, helping people who discover, who know, who don't know one of their birth parents or both of their birth parents, and they may have been child survivors and they know nothing about their family. But doing DNA tests you can help find the families they belong to. And in some cases you can exactly figure out the precise parents and that's really incredible.

One thing to watch out for in Jewish families is a thing called endogamy, which actually is a, it leads on from a thing called pedigree collapse. It doesn't happen very often these days, but in a lot of Jewish families in Central and Eastern Europe had continual cousin marriages. Families were continually intermarrying between themselves and it was allowed. And so you've got lots of cousin marriages, and if first cousins marry, it means you don't have eight great grandparents, you've only got six different great-grandparents. And it means from those two who you're descended from two different ways, you've inherited twice as much DNA from them as you have from the others. And so when you have cousins marrying over several hundred years, this is called endogamy and it means that most Jews are related to each other, when you do a DNA test and you're Jewish, you'll find over 100,000 matches online, mostly distant cousins. And it's because we are all connected in some way. And in fact it has been estimated that most Ashkenazi families in the world today are descended from just a few hundred Ashkenazi Jews who lived in Europe in the Middle Ages. So we are all related. And endogamy can mean that sometimes the DNA matches look stronger than they actually are when you're trying to find close relationships. I'm now going to give a couple of examples of various forms. This is a marriage authorization I talked about in the UK where you had to prove you were Jewish for the chief rabbi before you could get married in the synagogue. This is a typed up version of what the information that was stored. And this is from 1887. So this is not what the form actually looks like, but this is what was contained in the form. And if I can just go through it quickly. So you have a date of application, the date of marriage in the Hebrew and English. The name, the Hebrew name of the bridegroom, which is useful, it takes you back to the father. Where's the bridegroom living? Where was the bridegroom born? This is fantastic. If it's completed, often it's blank. Sometimes it just says Russia, but it might give the town where the bridegroom was born. Has the person been married before? That could be interesting. Even more interesting, is the groom related to the bride? This could be fascinating. Brothers, this is interesting too. Names of brothers in

Hebrew. And this is for the purpose of a thing called Yibbum. Yibbum doesn't take place any more, but the forms still asked for it just for continuity. Yibbum is where a man would marry and if he then passed away without any children, it was the duty of one of his unmarried brothers to marry the widow and have a family so that the branch of the deceased brother could continue. And it was a mitzvah for one of the unmarried brothers to marry the widow. So it's not done any more. But for tradition, the information has still been asked for. And so it's useful because you can learn the names of brothers that you may not have known, and where are the brothers living? And then for the bride, we have the bride's name in Hebrew, where is she living? Where was she born? Really interesting. Married before, name of the synagogue, et cetera. So if the forms are completed fully, this is incredible information. Sadly, the further away from London you get, the forms tend to be completed in less completeness. And by the time you get to Scotland, the forms are almost entirely blank. And in fact there's documentation of correspondence between the chief rabbi in London and the rabbis in Glasgow complaining that many marriages were taking place without any authorization whatsoever. And I estimate from my research that maybe a third of all Jewish marriages in synagogues in Scotland took place without any authorization from the chief rabbi's office.

Now, here is an example from 1887 and we have, if you can read it, the dates, here is the Hebrew name, which is in Hebrew script, which can be really difficult to read depending on how good the handwriting is. And then we have Simon Franks, his address in Whitechapel, native of, and it's completed, and it says Plotzk R.P., P-L-O-T-Z-K. That's actually the town of Płock, P-L-O-C-K. And R.P. must, I assume, mean Russian Poland. Married before, no, related to bride, second cousin. Well that's useful. It might take us a while to figure out the precise relationship, but we know it. Brothers, if any. Well, there's something written there, but I'm not 100% sure what it is. I'd have to get someone who can read that to tell me. And then we have the bride and it gives her Hebrew name and she's Sarah Lipman, had the same address, it looks like. No, it's number 26, not number 24. She's a native of the same place. She's also from Płock. And that happened quite regularly in the UK and possibly happened in the US as well and Canada, that families who came from the same areas of Poland tended to congregate and live together or very close by in London and elsewhere when they were living there. And so the families probably knew each other in the old country. And for all we know, the Franks and Lipman families may have been intermarried several times back in Poland as well as in the UK.

Now, not so much for a laugh, but just for a bit of amusement, I came across the next marriage authorization by chance during a chat at a genealogy conference. And I thought I'd show it. And here we have a marriage authorization from 1894. And if you look here carefully, you'll see the groom is Abram Chicken and the bride is Jane Pluck. Now

we all giggled basically when we saw this and we couldn't believe it. Is this a joke or is it real? Abram Chicken was from Wilna, which is in Lithuania. Jane Pluck was from Tavrik, which is the town of Tauragė in Lithuania, which is one of my ancestral towns. And they were married in East London Synagogue in 1894. So just to check the accuracy of this, I decided I would order the civil marriage certificates for this couple just to check exactly what were the surnames. And sure enough, here is the marriage certificate and it really is Abram Chicken, Maureen Jane Pluck. I was hoping Abram would be a poulter but sadly no, he's a boot machinist. His father Jacob was a fruiter, Jane's father Moses Pluck was a traveller. The witnesses were Israel Greenberg and A. Winkel, which is also a little amusing. So you do occasionally find interesting records that make you laugh. I did try to trace the Chicken and Pluck families, but they do disappear. They must have crossed the road. Another example here, here's a Hamburg shipping list. I mentioned the shipping lists earlier. Here we have a Hamburg shipping list and this is for my great-grandfather. This is the information which appears on the Hamburg shipping list data. So we have Tobias Tobias. Yes, believe it or not, that's my great-grandfather's name. He was known as Tuvia or Tevia, in the UK he was known as David. He was 22 years old. He was travelling alone here, born about 1864 from Ostralenka, Russland, which is Ostrołęka in Poland. He was departing 14th, May '86 from Hamburg. And it says, actually it says at the top it's America via Glasgow on the ship Breslau. And it was travelling via Leith. So this was an indirect route. I mentioned indirect routes. The ship was leaving Hamburg, it was going to Leith in Scotland, which is the port of Edinburgh. He would then travel by train to Glasgow where he would jump on a totally different boat and go to America. His occupation says schneider. This is in German, a tailor. If it had been written in Polish, it would say krawiec, which is Polish for tailor. Now, the interesting thing about this is, and I'll zoom in closer. This is his entry. Tobias Tobias, it actually doesn't say he came from Ostralenka, but it says ditto. And the person above was from Ostralenka. And you do tend to see whole groups of people travelling from the same area. And if I actually go back a second, I don't believe he was heading for New York, you'll see in the column of where they were going, it says New York on the first line then ditto, ditto, ditto, ditto, ditto, and I think the clerk was simply a little bit lazy and decided to enter all that. I don't believe my great-grandfather was heading for New York because he stayed in Glasgow. Was that a mistake? Well, I don't think so. I don't think he was going to New York because his elder brother Abraham was already in Glasgow and had been living here for a couple of years. So why would my great-grandfather, knowing his brother was here, decide to buy a ticket to go to New York, even though he is going through Glasgow? End result, my great-grandfather didn't go to New York, he stayed in Glasgow. At some point he must have gone back to the old country or sent money back to bring his wife and children over. I have never managed to find those records. They may have sailed in a totally different route and maybe those records

don't survive. Here's a photograph of my great-grandparents and some of the children. This was taken around 1896 in Glasgow. So here's David or Tobias Tobias, his wife, my great-grandmother, Kate or Kayla. Her maiden name was Dorfman. And these are five of their 10 children. My grandfather had not been born yet. Interestingly, there were three sets of twins in this family and we were always worried in case twins could continue to run the family, but they haven't since. Interestingly, this is Leah and Rachel, or it might be Rachel and Leah. I'm not quite sure which of the twins they are. They're interesting because they have different birthdays. Leah was born just before midnight and Rachel was born just after midnight. And I guess if you're going to be a twin, it's great to have your own birthday. At the back we have the eldest children, Nelly and Sarah. They were born in Poland, as was the boy in the front who's George, I think he was named. But Nelly and Sarah, we do know their precise dates of birth because they went to school when they arrived and the school registers list their dates of birth. Next, an example of a page of testimony from Yad Vashem. Before the Yad Vashem database went online, they asked me if I would do some beta testing, see if I could break the system before it went live. And I was in the USA at the time. I'd been at a genealogy conference. And I'd tagged on a holiday, a family holiday afterwards and we'd flown off to Los Angeles. And so I was sitting in my hotel in Los Angeles and I thought, I've got some spare time, I'm just going to sit down and do some testing. And of course when I do this, I start to type in family names that belong to my family. And so I typed in one of my family names, Dynaburska or Dynabursky. The female version has an A at the end, the male version has a Y at the end. And I was interested in this family for two reasons. I was sitting here in Los Angeles, I was visiting my late uncle, my late mother's brother who descended from one of the Dynaburska branches. Also living in Los Angeles, was a man called Ben Dean, who originally Borukh Dynabursky, who was born in Łódź. He trained as a rabbi in his teens, but then did not proceed with that. But he'd originally gone to Canada, his branch of the family went to Canada and then the USA while our branch of the family came to England, our branch arrived in England before the First World War. Ben's family arrived between the wars in Canada and the USA and there was a third branch of the Dynaburska family that we knew of and had researched. And as far as I knew, they'd completely perished. They were wiped out in the Holocaust. So I did a search for Blima Dobra Dynaburska, and we even have a photograph attached. And she was my late grandmother's first cousin. And I was interested to see this and to see a photograph. And it told us that her mother's name was Dwojra Leja Bornsztejn. Her father was a Efroim Dynabursky. Her husband was Gawriel Zelman. But what got me surprised, and I was actually shaking when I saw this, was the information at the bottom. The person who submitted this information was a man called Marion Zelman living in Seattle in 1996. And he said this was his mother, Marion Zelman was the son of Blima Dobra Dynabursky. And this was on the branch I thought had perished. And suddenly I now know that it didn't perish.

And we have a Marion Zelman who in 1996 was living in Seattle. So I panicked a little and I contacted a friend I had living in Seattle and I said, can you please go around to this address and see if you can find Marion Zelman? He did. And later on that day, I got an email from him saying, I've been to the address. Marion used to live there, but he left six months ago. Dammit. But I spoke to one of the neighbours and I know exactly where he is gone. Where has he gone? He's gone to Los Angeles. So here I was sitting in my hotel in Los Angeles now knowing that somewhere in the city we have all three branches. I tried to locate him during that visit and I failed. But Ben was very keen to try and find him. Ben was not well at that time, he had cancer and he asked me, please, do your best to find him before it's too late. And I did. And in 2004, I found them all and I grabbed my mother and we flew off to Los Angeles for long weekend, which is not a good idea. And here we have a Zelman Dynabursky reunion. My mother and my uncle are not in this photograph, but in this photograph we have Ben Dean or Borukh Dynabursky. He was in his 90s. We have Marion Zelman in the middle, he was losing his sight at that point. And we discovered that Marion had an elder brother Kube, who was also living in Los Angeles. So we had all three men there. As soon as they met, they were very energetic. They were talking to each other away in Yiddish. I had no idea what they were seeing. It turns out, from the books of residence and from what they knew, all three men had actually lived in the same apartment block, the same tenement building in Łódź in Poland between the wars. And they even remembered going to some of the same family simchas and they hadn't seen each other since, well, probably 70 years earlier, probably more. So it was a fascinating and incredible attempt to get them together. I'm glad we managed it. Sadly, within the next year, all three had passed away. But I am just so glad that I managed to get them together that one time. And this, although it's becoming more rare, the number of Holocaust survivors is dwindling, it's still possible and you still read the occasional incredible story of how families have been reconnected. Next, naturalizations, this is a naturalisation from Scotland and I just chose this one at random and then found a strange coincidence. I have over 1000 of these for families in Scotland. I'll just expand that a little so we can read it better. So here we have Shimon Bershadsky known as Samuel Barnes. So obviously he had westernised his name. He was living in Glasgow, his place and date of birth, Stawisht, Kieff, Russia, 10th April 19th, 1891. Obviously Kieff must be Kiev. We must be talking about Ukraine. Stawisht, I know how to find out what town that is now. He's Russian, he's married. His wife is Minnie. Actually many of the naturalizations in the UK don't even mention the wife. They mention the man, they mention his dependent children, but they don't mention the wife and names and date nationalities of parents. The parents are Nathan and Rachel Bershadsky, also known as Barnes. So, well, that's interesting. Let's see what else we can find. Well, I went to the JewishGen Family Finder where we have a database of researchers who submit what surnames and what towns they're researching.

And I highly recommend if you're doing research, go to the Family Finder. Enter, well first of all, search for your family name, search for your name and town. You may find other people there all around the world who have done research on your family or have done research on your town. And there'll be excellent information to contact. They may know everything about the town and where to find the records or they may be related to you. So I went onto the JewishGen Family Finder and I searched for Stawisht, and I found these records. I've removed all the ones that didn't match this particular name, but here we have 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 researchers. I've blanked out some of the postal addresses for anonymity. We have Deborah Ann Levinstein, who last logged in in 2014. She's researching her name Betzatsky in Stawisht. Well, Betzatsky isn't too far away from Bershadsky. It could be easily confused. E. Randall Schoenberg is researching Butzarsky. Robert Barnes... Oh, that rings a bell. Robert Barnes, Shimon Bershadsky was known as Samuel Barnes, but I think this person was in America. Is this another branch? He's researching Bershadsky in Stawisht and he's called Barnes. What about Elba Muler de Fidel, he was researching Berchadsky. Neil Appleton, Bershadski in Stawisht. Stuart Ian Morris researching Barshadski in Stawisht. I believe all of these people must be connected in some way. Of interest here, given I chose this record at random out of 1000 plus, is E. Randall Schoenberg. Some of you may know Randall or better known as Randy. Randy Schoenberg is the lawyer whose story was told in the "Woman in Gold." He was the lawyer who reclaimed the Klimt paintings from the Australian government. And he's a very keen researcher who's been doing research for well over 20 years. I also then plugged all the information into my family tree of Scottish jury. I've been researching the Jews of Scotland for over 10 years now. I've built a family tree over 105,000 people of all Jews who I think spent some time in Scotland between 1770 and the present day. And so here we have Samuel Barnes, born in Stawisht, married to Minnie. Her maiden name was Morris. I've got the names of Samuel's parents, Nathan and Rachel. I know her maiden name because Nathan and Rachel also came to Scotland, died here and are buried here. So I know from their death certificates the names of their parents. Although I don't know Goldey's maiden name. I also know from the births of the four children that Samuel and Minnie were married in the 20th of July, 1913 in Antwerp. And I wonder if the family lived there for some time. Maybe they just were staying there temporarily, got married while waiting for a boat, who knows? But that's the kind of information that you can find in the Scottish records. I don't have Samuel Barnes's death there, but I do have his wife's death. So I wonder what happened to him. I'll have to go and check for that.

Yizkor books I thought I would mention briefly. These were published all around the world as I mentioned earlier. This is the Book of Ostrolenka, published in 1963 in Tel Aviv. And it's mostly in Yiddish. Most of them are in Yiddish. Sometimes they have a bit in Hebrew, sometimes a very small piece in English. I got this via my uncle in Israel. I asked him if he could go to one of the secondhand bookshops

who specialise in Yizkor books, and he put his name down so that if ever a book, a copy of this book ever materialised, they would contact him. And lo and behold, it did materialise and he purchased it for me. Thank goodness. And I now have a copy of this book, although you'll find a digital version on the New York Public Library website. I actually also have two other versions of this book, this town is quite unique, it has so many different versions of the same book. There's a historical society in the town of Ostrołęka, non-Jews, and they wanted to commemorate the Jews of the town because they had such an important part of the history of the town. And they decided to arrange for the book to be translated from Yiddish into Polish. And so we have one of the very few books, Yizkor books written in Polish and I have a copy of the Polish book. Then a few years later, the Ostrołęka Society in Israel decided they would translate it to English because fewer and fewer people could read the Yiddish. And so I now have a copy of the English version of the book. So I actually have three copies of the same book. The English translation is interesting because it has additional information at the back relating to more recent visits to the town and additional information that's come to light since 1963. So, interesting books. You'll find the handwritten maps of the town, which normally show the positions of the synagogue, the cemetery, the yeshivas. Here's a photograph of the synagogue, which is useful because the synagogue doesn't exist. It was one of the many synagogues razed to the ground by the Nazis. So this is the only place you'll see what it looks like. And interestingly, I actually know what the synagogue looks on the inside because one of my Tobias distant cousins was a cabinet maker who came to live in Glasgow for a short while with his eight sons. And then they all left to go to New York where seven of the sons were admitted, one son was sent back because he had an eye disease. And so he was left living in Scotland while the rest of the family were living in America. And the cabinet maker decided to build a model of the inside of the school, which we have photographs of and the model still exists in New York. So amazing to have that. There are chapters about the rabbis. So here's one of the famous rabbis in Ostrołęka. Families submitted pages of photographs of people who had perished with the names. And so we have page upon page of photographs of the families who perished and who they were. And then at the end of the book, and you can see this is page 565, where the necrology starts. And the necrology is a list of those who perished. And so alphabetically, we have a list of all those believed to have perished. But beware, this might not be accurate. Some of these people may have survived, but in 1963 they were thought to have perished and some people may have perished who are not listed here. And this is what a typical Yizkor book looks like. So if you can find out eventually where your family came from, the towns that came from, see if there's a Yizkor book. There's a Yizkor book database on JewishGen. Go to JewishGen you'll find out what books exist, where you can find them. And JewishGen are gradually translating more and more of these books. You can find translations online. Once the entire book's translated, JewishGen will then actually do a print on demand of the English

copies of the books if you're interested. So well worth looking for.

Now, surnames and soundex. I have already mentioned that surnames were adopted late. For example in Congress Poland, 1821. The spelling is totally irrelevant. Please, if you're searching for your surnames online, don't type in the spelling and say, I only want the exact spelling. I'm not interested in other spellings. Spelling means nothing. There were early variations, as I explained. Some people couldn't decide what surname to use and kept changing. Also conscription, I talked earlier about births of boys not being registered because they wanted to avoid army conscription. It was also the case in many places that the eldest son was exempt from army duty. And so in some towns where there may have been childless couples, some boys pretended to be the sons of a childless couple so they could avoid conscription. They adopted the surname of that couple so they could pretend to be their son. And some of them kept that surname and never ever changed back to the original surname. So you may find another, that's another reason why they may have changed surname totally and you may have difficulty locating them. You'll also find occasionally written into the documents, the letters v or the word vel, which is Latin for also known as. And this is usually found where people couldn't decide which version of the surname to use and so they'd be listed as one name vel the other name. You may even find that in given names because they used multiple given names and they used either or, and so the vels listed. In Galicia, you will often find two surnames separated by the word recte or false meaning rightly or falsely. And this goes to civil registration. And let me try and explain this one briefly. If you're researching Galicia, which is southeastern Poland and western Ukraine, southwestern Ukraine, many of the Jewish families there were happy to get married in the synagogue and didn't bother having a civil registration. Civil registrations cost money. And also Jewish families said, well, I've married in synagogue, the rabbi's married me, that's all I need. Unfortunately, the civil authorities did not recognise the religious marriages. And so if you were married in synagogue and had children, the civil authorities would treat all the children as being illegitimate. It therefore meant when you went to register the births, it would say the child was illegitimate. And it would might only mention the mother because the child was illegitimate. Some of the clerks knew fine well who the father was and the father might be written in a column, comments column, or they might even write the father's name in the father's column because they understood exactly what was going on. But it meant you had a child and sometimes a surname was given, sometimes it wasn't given. Sometimes the child was registered under the father's surname, sometimes under the mother's surname because strictly the child was illegitimate, and you will then find families of lots of boys and girls, some using the surname of the mother, some using the surname of the father. And it changed over time. And of course it then gets even more complicated because if they didn't have a civil wedding and the child was illegitimate, he's registered under possibly the

mother's surname, but the mother's parents were maybe not civilly married and so the surname listed for the mother is maybe her mother's surname. So this can go on forever and good luck with your research. But you do like a challenge, don't you? I've already mentioned the thing about soundex, the original soundex was designed mostly for Anglo-Saxon names, which was useless for Jewish names.

Two Jewish genealogists, Randy Daitch and Gary Mokotoff came up with a new version of soundex called Daitch-Mokotoff soundex, which was much better at dealing with Central, Eastern European Slavic based names. But it did produce lots of false positives when you were doing searches, you would often get back names which were obviously wrong. The spelling was so different, it was not your family. It was easy to tell. Later, Sasha Beider and Stephen Morse, two more Jewish genealogists came up with a much more sophisticated system called Beider-Morse Phonetic Matching, which is now used not just by a lot of Jewish databases, but a lot of non-Jewish sites use it as well because it's so accurate. It gets rid of lots of the false positives. However, it will occasionally, sometimes get rid of some genuine matches because it can't handle certain combinations of letters. So I always recommend, when you're searching databases online, try every single possible search type, try phonetic, try soundex, try various wild cards, and try a thing called fuzzy. Just to give you an example of name variations, one of my friends, Warren Blatt, gives this example in his family. Here is a marriage registration from 1881 in Nowogrod, which is Northeastern Poland in Lomza Gubernia. At that time the records were kept in Russian Cyrillic, although it was Russian Poland, the records were kept in Polish up until 1866. There was then an uprising and as a penalty the local authorities insisted everything was kept in Russian thereafter. And the documents remained in Russian until the First World War and then reverted to Polish. So this handwritten record would've registered the marriage of Lejbka Gerszkiewcz Dembor. This is him, Lejbka Gerszkiewcz surname Dembor. There's no letter H in Russian, so it'll be written as a G. And he was Leib, the son of Hersh, Leib, the son of Hersh. This ewicz, the owizh or ewicz endings is a patronimic, which means son of or daughter of or wife of or whatever. So we know his name on the marriage was Leib, son of Hersh, Dembor. Now he goes to America, gets married, has a family, he dies in Brooklyn and he is buried. And on his tombstone in Hebrew it says Mordechai Yehudah ben reb Tzvi, here we are, Mordechai Yehudah the son of Tzvi. This is the same man. How can this be the same man? Well, let's forget Mordechai for a minute because that's totally confusing. But Yehudah and Leib are known pairs. Yehudah is Hebrew, Leib is Yiddish, they both mean lion. They both mean the same thing. In fact, actually Yehudah does mean lion. Yehudah is Judah, the tribe of Judah had a mascot of a lion. Leib often goes with the name Aryeh, which also means lion. Similarly, Hersh in Swiss, Hebrew, Hersh is Yiddish, they both mean the animal, the deer. And so you'll often find these pairs of names, one Yiddish, one Hebrew, which both mean the same thing or some other association with Leib and Yehudah. So there

are other ones like Dov Ber, there's Aryeh Leib and Yehudah Leib as I've mentioned. So look for them. The trouble is this man probably had two names. I believe he probably was Mordechai or Morke or Morkalib. But on his marriage he only used one name. And that's the problem when you have someone with two given names. On some records you'll see both names, on some records, just one, on some records, just the other. On some records you might find both names, but the other way around. So Mordechai Yehudah, he was actually Mordechai or Mortek or Mort Kalib, and son of Swiss, he goes with Hersh. That's fine. So what was he known as in every daylife in America? Well it's obvious, isn't it? He was known as Max Goldman. How do we trace Max Goldman? Anyone looking for Max Goldman now when wanting to trace back to Poland is going to have a problem. Most, well, not most, but many families when they wanted to westernise their given names, their first names would just choose the first letter of their old or Hebrew name and choose something more Western. So Mordechai kept the M and became Max.

- [Host] Okay, Michael, thank you so much. I think that's probably a-

- Is that enough?

- Stopping point.

- [Michael] I think I was almost finished anyway.

- [Host] There's so much interesting material here and we would love to have you back to continue walking us through all the different ways you can track your genealogy.

- Okay.

- [Host] But this was absolutely fascinating and it was such a pleasure to have you on. So thank you to everyone for joining us, and Michael, hopefully we will see you again soon.

- [Michael] Okay. Anyone who wants to ask questions, my email's on screen. Okay?

- Thank you so much, take care everyone.

- Thank you.

- Bye.