

The Jewish Genealogical Society of Great Britain



French-Jewish Genealogy



Edition No. 1 - 01/2012

Issued for JGSGB

by

JGSGB Education & Mentoring

JGSGB 33 Seymour Place London W1H 5AP

Email <education@jgs.gb.org.uk>

© JGSGB January 2012

The Jewish Genealogical Society of Great Britain - 33 Seymour Place London W1H 5AP
Registered Charity No. 1022738 www.jgs.gb.org.uk

The Jewish Genealogical Society of Great Britain



French-Jewish Genealogy

Introduction

This document has been created to help you to research your Jewish ancestors in France, and in particular in the run up to the 32nd IAJGS International Conference on Jewish Genealogy which takes place in Paris from 15-18 July 2012 and will be hosted by the Cercle de Généalogie Juive, see www.paris2012.eu/

History of the Jews in France

The community dates back to Roman times, (Jews settled in Gaul over 2000 years ago) and the earliest communities (5th century) were in Provence, in Brittany, Valence and Orleans. Jews first lived in Paris in the late 6th century and prospered until the times of the crusades. By the time of the Second Crusade, French clergymen preached against the Jews and the first Blood Libel took place in 1171. Many Jews were murdered at this time or forced to convert to Christianity. The situation continued to worsen until the Jews were finally expelled from France in 1182. The Jews were recalled in 1198, only to be expelled many more times.

Despite persecution and expulsion, the Jews of France continued to flourish. The community took in many of those who fled persecution in Portugal and Spain, as well as from further east in Europe, from where Jews began arriving in the middle of the 17th century. In the late 1700's the present day communities were established in Paris, with Sephardi Jews on the left bank and Ashkenazi Jews on the right bank.

After the French Revolution, Jews were finally granted French citizenship in 1791. The remainder of the 19th century saw good and bad for the Jews, the worst event being the scandalous Dreyfus Affair. During the Holocaust many anti-Jewish measures were passed and the Jews of France suffered the same fate as the rest of European Jewry. It is estimated that 76,000 French Jews perished in the Nazi death camps.

After World War II and the liberation, things changed for French Jews. France became a haven for Jewish refugees and the Jewish population tripled. During the 1950's and 1960's many Jews from North Africa settled in France. Today France has the third largest Jewish population behind Israel and the United States. It is estimated that there are about 600,000 Jews residing in France.

The Jewish Genealogical Society of Great Britain



French-Jewish Genealogy

How the French records are Organised

French genealogical research is relatively easy to research online. Many records have been digitized and a wide variety of genealogical databases exist for viewing, browsing and online searching. France is a country with excellent genealogical records, and it is very likely that you will be able to trace your French roots back several generations once you understand how and where the records are kept.

Before you begin your search for any civil record in France, you will need to know the name of the person, the place where the event took place and the date of the event. In larger cities, such as in Paris or Lyon, you will also need to know the Arrondissement or district too.

Before the French Revolution, France was divided into provinces, now known as regions. Then, in 1789, the French revolutionary government reorganized France into new territorial divisions called Départements. There are 100 Départements in France, and each has its own archives that are separate from those of the national government. Most French records of genealogical value are kept at these departmental archives, so it is important to know the Département in which your ancestor lived. Genealogical records are also kept at local town halls (Mairie). Large towns and cities, such as Paris, are often further divided into Arrondissements - each with its own town hall and archives. The addresses can get quite complicated because Arrondissements are sub-divided into cantons, in which are found communes: e.g. cities, towns, villages, hamlets, etc.

All the Départements do it differently and using Google is one of the best ways to find if a particular city or village has their archives online. Use the town's name and "archives communales" or "archives municipales".

Alternatively you can consult the map of archives on line in France www.archivesdefrance.culture.gouv.fr/ressources/en-ligne/

The website also provides information about the classes of documents that are available and a listing of what has or has not been digitised. www.archivesdefrance.culture.gouv.fr/ressources/en-ligne/acces-par-type-de-documents/

Many of the French departmental archives have been digitizing their records and making them available online - generally at no cost for access. Quite a few have their birth, marriage and death records (actes d'état civil) online, or at least the decennial indexes. Generally you should expect to find digital images of the original books, but no searchable database or index.

The Jewish Genealogical Society of Great Britain



French-Jewish Genealogy

Online Indices

Some genealogical societies and other organizations have published online indexes, transcriptions and abstracts taken from French civil registers. Genactes, see www.geneannuaire.net/Genactes-10.html maintains a good list of links to many of these databases, organized by Département. Subscription-based access to transcribed pre-1903 actes d'état civil from a variety of genealogical societies and organizations is available through the French site Geneanet.org www.geneanet.org at On this website, you can search by surname across all Départements and results generally provide enough information that you can determine whether a particular record is the one you seek before you pay to view the full record.

Writing to a Mairie

If you need to write to a local Mairie, they may agree to do a small amount of research for you and to send you photocopies of some records, although usually this is only if you know exactly what you are looking for. When writing, you should be as accurate as possible and include 2 international reply coupons. Make sure you address the letter properly and include the post code. The online directory of postal codes of French Towns, see: <http://www.france-codepostal.fr/en/>

Visiting a Mairie

If you plan to visit the Mairie in person, then call or write in advance to establish that they have the registers that you are looking for and to confirm their hours of operation. Be sure to bring along at least two forms of photo ID, including your passport if you live outside of France

Always remember that the town hall (Mairie) is under no obligation to respond to your request for help. Be courteous and polite – you may be the last genealogist they will ever offer to help. It is good practice to thank them and to offer a donation for their time and expense.

National Archives www.archivesdefrance.culture.gouv.fr/

The French National Archives (Archives Nationales) known as the CARAN in Paris has 3 floors
The lower floor is the finding aids floor (Salle des Inventaires)
The middle floor is for viewing original documents

© JGSGB January 2012

The Jewish Genealogical Society of Great Britain



French-Jewish Genealogy

The top floor has microfilm readers and films

As a rule, genealogists should expect to spend most of your time on the lower floor using the various finding aids.

CARAN is the place to visit if you want to use internment files

GenAmi has a guide in English that you may also find helpful: www.genami.org/en/countries-of-your-roots/research-guides/France.php

It's Different in Paris!

Paris genealogical research is more difficult, not only have streets changed, some have been abolished or covered over, newer ones have been created, names duplicated, streets renamed many times over. FranceGenWeb has a subsection called Paris Portal which has a section on the streets of Paris through time, giving an account of the streets, parishes, quarters, arrondissements, etc., with some maps, see www.francegenweb.org/~wiki/index.php/Portail:Paris

Paris is presently divided into 20 Arrondissements or districts, each one with its own Mairie which keeps its own vital records, but before 1859, there were only 12 districts. In order to obtain a document from a Mairie, you need to write to the appropriate district. If you do not know the correct Mairie, you can contact the Mairie du 1er arrondissement at 4 Place du Louvre, 75001 Paris, asking for your letter to be circulated to each of the 20 districts.

Records from before 1903 are held by the "Archives de la Ville de Paris". Unfortunately the archive burned down in 1860 and all records were lost, although about 30% have been reconstructed from other sources.

GenAmi's Paris Guide: www.genami.org/en/countries-of-your-roots/research-guides/Paris.php

Civil records from Paris archives on line: http://canadp-archivesenligne.paris.fr/archives_etat_civil/index.php

This website is for records rebuilt until 1859 (destroyed after the fire of 1871), and the decennial lists and records until 1902.

Records by Département http://fr.geneawiki.com/index.php/D%C3%A9tail_des_archives_num%C3%A9ris%C3%A9es

© JGSGB January 2012

The Jewish Genealogical Society of Great Britain



French-Jewish Genealogy

Alsace/Lorraine

Top Tip: Early civil records in Alsace and part of Lorraine may be in German, and will almost certainly be written in Gothic Script. After WW1, Elsaß-Lothringen (Alsace-Lorraine) was returned to France in 1918

In 1789 some 5000 Jews lived in southwest France, 1800 in the southeast, and 1700 in various other cities, including Paris. In Lorraine, in and around the city of Metz, there were about 7000 Jews and in Alsace about 23000.

The largest settlement of Jews in France was in Alsace. They were spread out in hundreds of small village communities, as Jews were not allowed to live in towns. The villages near large towns, e.g. Bischheim next to Strasbourg, were the most populated, as the Jewish merchants did most of their business in the towns, entering them in the morning and leaving before curfew.

In 1784, Louis XVI ordered a general census of all Jews in Alsace, which is available to researchers. Combined with the name adoption lists of 1808, the 1784 census forms a genealogical bridge from the 19th back to the 18th century.

Lorraine - The French kingdom, after conquering the "three bishoprics" (Toulouse, Verdun and Metz) in the mid-16th century, favoured the settlement of Jews in Metz. These Jews did not generally reach great wealth, but the community was a centre of attraction for Jewish scholars. In the course of progressive conquest of the region, several communities were founded in small places, part of them speaking French, the other part German. Vital registration documents, as well as tax registers and notary deeds, are available for periods since the 18th century. In particular, marriage contracts (tenaim) registered with the Royal Notaries, have been indexed. They are held in the A.D. du Département de la Moselle (Metz) and also in municipal archives.

Archive Départementale of the Bas-Rhin, in Strasbourg <http://archives.cg67.fr>

Civil records on line for Alsace: archives of Bas-Rhin <http://etat-civil.bas-rhin.fr/adeloch/index.php>

Haut-Rhin www.archives.cg68.fr/Services_Actes_Civils.aspx

Alsace www.genami.org/en/countries-of-your-roots/Alsace/guide.php

© JGSGB January 2012

The Jewish Genealogical Society of Great Britain



French-Jewish Genealogy

Lorraine www.genami.org/en/countries-of-your-roots/research-guides/Lorraine.php

French Colonies

These records are not available in Paris, they're in the south of France in Aix-en-Provence at the Centre des Archives d'Outre Mer or CAOM – see www.archivesnationales.culture.gouv.fr/anom/fr/

This is also the place to research if your family had roots in North Africa.

Sephardi Records (in French only)

GenAmi has a guide or those who are researching Sephardi families, see: www.genami.org/pays-de-vos-origines/recherches/fr_sefarad.php

Further information for those researching their Sephardi family in France is available on Jeff Malka's website, which signposts to a wide range of other relevant resources, see: www.sephardicgen.com/france_sites.htm

Holocaust

Jewish Traces www.jewishtraces.org/

Jewish Traces Ordinary exile presents the story of Austrian and German Jewish refugees in Europe. The website provides information about all people who are interested in European History of the 1930's and 1940's, it provides a deeper outlook on exile, request for asylum and on the status of the Jewish refugees from the third Reich territory in France and in Belgium.

Mémorial de la Shoah is the largest research centre on the history of the genocide of the Jews during the Second World War and is located in the 4th arrondissement of Paris. The research room and library are on the fourth floor and are free to use. The bookshop sells a wide variety of publications, some in English. The link goes direct to the English version of the website www.memorialdelashoah.org/getHomeAction.do?langage=en

© JGSGB January 2012

The Jewish Genealogical Society of Great Britain



French-Jewish Genealogy

Internment

Internment files are held at the CARAN – the French National Archives in Paris.

Blogs

Blogging is just starting to take off among French Genealogists. One of the best blogs for those researching their French-Jewish families is:

Anne Morddel's French Genealogy Blog <http://french-genealogy.typepad.com/genealogie>

Anne blogs in English, she is an American long term resident in France. Her blog has frequent features of Jewish genealogical interest. The blog also has a large number of useful links and explains how a non-French speaker can undertake genealogical research in France.

Other (French language) blogs that you may find useful are:

France GenWeb Blog www.francegenweb.org/blog/index.php?

Fédération Française de Généalogie (FFG) Blog <http://leblog-ffg.over-blog.org>

French-Jewish Genealogical Societies

There are two, both organisations have useful websites containing resources both in French and in English.

The Cercle de Généalogie Juive (CGJ) was founded in 1984 and has almost 600 members. The society is a member of IAJGS and the Fédération Française de Généalogie (FFG) www.genealoj.org/

GenAmi – L'association de la généalogie juive was founded in 1997. The society is a member of IAJGS and the Fédération Française de Généalogie (FFG) www.genami.org/

© JGSGB January 2012

The Jewish Genealogical Society of Great Britain



French-Jewish Genealogy

Avotaynu

Avotaynu Journal has over 100 articles about French Jewish genealogy www.avotaynu.com/subindex/indexf.htm The most recent are in the Fall 2011 (Volume XXVII, No. 3) issue and have been written by Anne Lifshitz-Krams from the Paris Conference Organising Committee. They are:

- Basics of the 2012 IAJGS Conference
- Jewish Genealogical Resources in France
- Some Useful Addresses for French Research

JewishGen Resources

French Special Interest Group www.jewishgen.org/French/

The group's prime objective is to provide a forum for questions, exchange of information and discussion of matters involved in doing Jewish genealogical research in France, other French-speaking areas such as Belgium, Luxembourg, and Switzerland, and in former French colonies such as Tunisia, Algeria etc. The website contains a wide variety of resources and is available to all those registered to use the JewishGen website.

France Info Files www.jewishgen.org/InfoFiles/#France

JewishGen also has an information section for those researching family in France, which contains useful familiarisation records for those starting out with French-Jewish genealogy.

Civil Registration – Birth Marriage & Death (BMD) Records

The 1791 revolution introduced compulsory Civil Registration in France. This means that from September 1792 to date, Jews and everyone else in France have their birth, marriage and death events registered in civil vital registers.

The civil registers still exist from "Year One" of the French Revolution, (22 September 1792) and are generally available. There are exceptions however, the most important being the Paris Town Archives before 1860, which were destroyed in 1871 during a revolution.

© JGSGB January 2012

The Jewish Genealogical Society of Great Britain



French-Jewish Genealogy

Access to civil vital records is free of charge. All records older than 100 years are accessible without restriction, as well as death records less than 100 years old. Birth and marriage records more recent than 100 years are only open to direct descendants who can prove their descent..

The best genealogical resource to start off your French family tree is the registres d'état-civil (records of civil registration). These BMD records are typically held in registries in local town halls (Mairies). Copies of the registries are deposited each year with the local magistrate's court and then, when they are 100 years old, they are placed in the archives for the town's Department, (Archives Départementales).

Recent documents (within 100 years) are provided only to the closest family, so you should be expected to prove how you are related before asking for these documents.

Top Tip – when asking for a copy of a document, make sure you ask for a “copies intégrales d'actes civils” which are certified photocopies of the original records, otherwise, as a matter of course, you will be given an extract from the record instead, and this provides only just more than the basic information.

The Mormons have filmed extensively in France and you can order copies of microfilms of civil registration from 1793 to 1902.

Civil registers are the most important genealogical resource in France. Civil authorities began registering births, deaths, and marriages in France in 1792. Some communities were slow at putting this into motion, but soon after 1792 all individuals who lived in France are recorded. Because these records cover the entire population, are easily accessible and indexed, and cover people of all denominations.

Indexes to Registers – the Tables Annuelles and Tables Décennales

At the end of every year, the registrar, or officier de l'état civil, is required to make a list of the names and dates of each of the categories of event: birth, death, marriage. The list is in alphabetical order and has a reference to the entry number in the register. These are the tables annuelles.

The tables annuelles are collated every ten years to form the tables décennales. For these, the registrar is required to list all names in each category alphabetically or at least grouped by letter and then chronologically, giving first name, last name and date. Using the tables can help when searching for records of family members.

© JGSGB January 2012

The Jewish Genealogical Society of Great Britain



French-Jewish Genealogy

The local Marie and the archives both also maintain duplicates of the decennial tables, (starting in 1793).

Tables annuelles are usually located at the end of each year's records and tables décennales after the records of the tenth year.

Top Tip: These tables give the day of registration of the event, which is not necessarily the same date that the event took place.

Births (Naissances) A birth record is "acte de naissance",

One more bonus of French civil records is that the birth records often include what is known as "margin entries." References to other documents on an individual (name changes, court judgments, etc.) are often noted in the margins of the page containing the original birth registration. From 1897, these margin entries can often include marriages. You'll also find divorces after 1939, deaths from 1945, and legal separations from 1958.

Marriages (Mariages)

After 1792, marriages had to be performed by civil authorities before couples could be married religiously. The civil registers usually acknowledge any children born before the marriage took place. With Jewish marriages, a record will always state that it was a religious marriage. Information is provided as certification of a religious marriage. Jewish Marriages have been recorded since 1823, stating surnames, given names (not always), addresses, class of marriages. After 1873, the dates and places of birth appear (not very precise). Not all Jewish marriages took place in synagogues, and if they did not then their records will not be held in the records of Jewish marriages.

Deaths (Décès) a death record is "acte de décès"

Death registers start in 1882 and list surname, first name, name of the spouse, address, age, cemetery, class.

Obituaries

Obituaries are a modern practice in France, and only the most recent will commonly name the cause of death. Most earlier obituaries laud the deceased but are silent about their cause of death. Finding obituaries can be hard because older issues of French newspapers are not yet

© JGSGB January 2012

The Jewish Genealogical Society of Great Britain



French-Jewish Genealogy

widely available online. One of the best sources for those that there are is Gallica, the digital library of the Bibliothèque nationale, see <http://gallica.bnf.fr/?lang=EN>

Cemeteries

In France, tombstones with legible inscriptions can be found from as early as the 18th century, and numerous books detailing French burial listings have been published. Details and further information can be found on the IAJGS Cemetery Project Page for France, see www.iajgsjewishcemeteryproject.org/france/index.html

Separate Jewish cemeteries exist in Alsace, Lorraine and several other places in France, but generally there is usually a Jewish plot in most general cemeteries and burials are frequently not in any specific area. This may be because France has laws regulating the reuse of graves after a set time period. In most cases the grave is leased for a given period - usually up to 100 years - and then it is available for reuse.

Cemetery management is considered a public concern, so most French cemeteries are well maintained and the local cemetery office (usually at the Town Hall) will be able to provide details so long as you know the person's full name and date of birth and death. Cemetery records may include the name and age of the deceased, the birth date, death date, and place of residence. The cemetery keeper may also have records with detailed information and even relationships.

Paris has 8 possible cemeteries, so you will need to write in advance giving as much information as you can to The Conservateur en Chef des Cimetières de Paris, 16 rue du Repos, 75020 Paris. You should explain your connection to the deceased in your letter, and it is good practice to include an international reply coupon with your letter.

Please contact the keeper for any local cemetery before taking pictures, as it is illegal to photograph French tombstones without permission.

Census

Censuses with names began in 1772, but until 1836 contained only the number of people living in a household, and did not list people by name. Censuses with names have been taken every five years in France since 1836. These contain the first and last names of all members of a

© JGSGB January 2012

The Jewish Genealogical Society of Great Britain



French-Jewish Genealogy

household, together with their dates and places of birth (or age), nationality and profession. A census was also done in 1872 and the one in 1916 was delayed due to WW1.

Census records in France are not often used for genealogical research because they are not indexed so it is very difficult to find family names in them, and research using these records can be very time consuming. French census records are located in departmental archives, and some have been digitised and are available online.

The Consistoire of Paris holds several census reports of Paris Jews:

1809, which was only discovered some years ago in the USA! For each of the 2914 individuals, it lists given name, surname, address, year and place of birth.

1852, which contains only the details of the head of household, the address, often the profession, and sometimes the date the person or their family arrived in Paris.

1872 - this is arranged by arrondissement, in alphabetical order (only for the first letter). It gives the surname, name, profession, and address for the head of household, the first name of the wife, and the number of minor sons and daughters. Only in the 11th arrondissement are the children named.

The Mormons have filmed extensively in France and you can order copies of microfilms of the 1841, 1851-1856, 1866-1876, and 1886-1906 censuses.

The Jewish Traces website <http://jewishtraces.org> has a copy online of the 1940 census of the Jews in Pas de Calais

Jewish Community Organisations

The Alliance Israélite Universelle (AIU) www.aiu.org/ was founded in France in 1860. From then until WW1 they published a regular bulletin which, because it listed so many of its members and their contributions, is of enormous value in French-Jewish genealogy. Every issue contains detailed lists of AIU members in every city, on local committees, lists of donors or contributors, and more. It is available at the

© JGSGB January 2012

The Jewish Genealogical Society of Great Britain



French-Jewish Genealogy

National Library of Israel <http://web.nli.org.il/sites/NLI/English/Pages/default.aspx> under the category Historical Jewish Press, see www.jpress.org.il/publications/Bulletin-en.asp . The description and search pages are in Hebrew, English and French.

The Archives of the Consistoire de Paris www.consistoire.org (9th Arr. appointment required) Before seeking to research here, one must have first collected details of all relevant civil records, because only then will information be made available by this unique and very traditional archive. Visitors should attend prepared to photograph any records provided to them. The consistoire holds Paris synagogue marriage records and burial and cemetery records from 1882 onwards as well as the names from the lists of various censuses of Jewish people in Paris.

Rabbinic Ancestry in France?

There is a 1000 page book which seeks to list every rabbi of 19th century France, including Alsace-Lorraine and Algeria. It has over 2800 names, some with photographs of the individual, nearly all with a biographical article about the Rabbi, and includes information from civil registrations, education records, other religious and family records, and records of associations. For anyone researching French Jewish ancestry, this book is valuable not only for those seeking to know more about a particular rabbi, but for those who wish to trace a family which included a rabbi and those wishing to follow rabbinical traditions in a certain locale.

Source: Dictionnaire biographique des Rabbins et autres ministres du culte israélite en France et Algérie du Grand Sanhédrin (1808) à la loi de séparation (1905) www.cfaj.fr/publicat/promo_dico_ie.html

Notary records (Actes Notaires)

Notary records in France can be fruitful sources of genealogical information, Anne Morddell's blog describes how. She notes that "most French notary records are not indexed, which can make research in them difficult, and the majority are located in the departmental archives arranged by the name of the notary and his town of residence. It is almost impossible to research these records without visiting the archives in person, or hiring a professional genealogist.

After 100 years these records are usually sent to the local archive, where they can be inspected, but not photocopied. Occasionally, they are retained at lawyer's offices. After the start of the civil registration, the existence of a pre-marriage contract was usually cited in the marriage record, with its date and the name of the notary in charge. Notary registration of the pre-marriage contract was compulsory for Jews in Alsace

© JGSGB January 2012

The Jewish Genealogical Society of Great Britain



French-Jewish Genealogy

and Lorraine from the 18th century onwards and in addition to pre-marriage contracts, many other acts of daily life were registered by notaries, such as: purchase and sale of real estate, wills, IOUs, etc.

Naturalisation Records

Files for naturalisations before 1900 are kept at the National Archives in Paris but later 20th century files are in Fontainebleau which is 60 km SE of Paris. They are only opened for use after 60 years, but exceptions can be granted for special cases: academic research, or access to one's own file.

Naturalisation files usually include important genealogical material, but getting hold of the files is complicated and is best undertaken using an experienced local researcher because the filing systems used are complex and then the necessary waiting time is long, often many weeks.

As shown on the JK Rowling Who Do You Think You Are programme, after Alsace and Moselle were annexed by the German Empire in 1871, their inhabitants had the opportunity to move to France and to confirm or recover their French citizenship. This is known as applying for "re-integration" and the process for accessing such files is similar to naturalisation files.

Migration & Shipping

Some ship's passenger lists dating from as early as 1820 are available from The Immigrant Ships Transcribers Guild see <http://immigrantships.net/> they are mainly for ships which left French ports and went to New Orleans.

Mass emigration from mainland Europe took place from 1820 to 1871. This was caused chiefly by economic hardships, including unemployment and crop failures. Some emigrants, especially from Germany also left to avoid wars and military service and in other cases, government encouraged their citizens to leave or to emigrate. This was particularly true in Alsace & Lorraine. The Alsace Emigration Indexes exist for those who emigrated from or through Alsace or Lorraine from 1817 to 1866.

About half the names on the index are from southern Germany. The alphabetical index gives the emigrant's name, age, occupation, place of origin, residence, destination, passport and date, but not everyone who emigrated via Alsace is in this index.

© JGSGB January 2012

The Jewish Genealogical Society of Great Britain



French-Jewish Genealogy

For the period from 1850 to 1891, 16 percent of German emigrants left via Le Havre in France, however passenger lists such as are found for Hamburg do not exist. The only lists available are lists of crews and passengers on commercial cargo vessels. The lists are not indexed.

Military and Foreign Legion Records

French military records can be an important source of information about people who served in France. Some records are held by the Army and Navy Historical Services which are located in suburban Paris at the Château de Vincennes, see <http://en.chateau-vincennes.fr/rubrique?ID=1003632>

Other service records are located at local departmental archives and are poorly indexed. See also the Department of Defence and Veterans Affairs www.memoiredeshommes.sga.defense.gouv.fr

Legal Issues & Records Access

The law of access and data protection is very strict, in order to protect the privacy of living individuals and their families. For consultation by the general public:

- electoral lists are available immediately
- censuses naming the individuals may be seen after 30 years
- police files may be seen after 60 years
- actes d'état civil and notarial records may be seen after 100 years from the date of the record.
- court judgements may be seen 100 years after the closure of the case
- personnel files may be seen 120 years after the birth of the person of the file
- medical records may be seen 150 years after the birth of the person who is the subject of the file

The Jewish Genealogical Society of Great Britain



French-Jewish Genealogy

Who Do You Think You Are?

French genealogy featured in Series 8 of Who Do You Think You Are? and featured the story of when Harry Potter Author Joanne Rowling travelled to France seeking out her French roots. This episode might certainly be a useful grounding in some of the challenges for those seeking their French roots, particularly if your family lived in Alsace/Lorraine.

Naming & Onomastics

In 1808 Napoleon issued a decree that that all Jews should adopt last names. The new and original names were registered at each Mairie where there was a local community. Most of the name adoption lists have survived. The lists provide a detailed listing of the French-Jewish community of that time and can help to facilitate family reconstruction because usually all family members are also listed as well as other information, especially for children and occupations. Anne Morddel's blog shows a copy of the 1808 Decree, See <http://french-genealogy.typepad.com/genealogie/2010/10/french-jewish-genealogy-pick-a-name.html> French Family Names, see also www.geopatronyme.com/

The Republican Calendar

The French Republic introduced a new calendar, and details can be found online. The Republican calendar was used from 22 September 1793 to 1 January 1806. The Republican calendar was also used in areas under French rule including Belgium, Luxembourg and parts of Germany, the Netherlands, and Italy. See Steve Morse's website for a calendar convertor <http://stevemorse.org/jcal/french.html>

FamilySearch - The Mormons www.familysearch.org

The FamilySearch Research Wiki contains really useful free-to view and use resources for French genealogy, including information on letter writing and guides to research. "Through the France page www.familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/France you can learn how to find, use, and analyze French records of genealogical value." Of particular use is the 171 page French Records Extraction Manual - www.familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/FRENCH_RECORDS_EXTRACTION_MANUAL as well as resources to help you to learn to read old French handwriting www.familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/French_Handwriting. The Mormons have microfilmed civil registration records from about half of the Departments in France up to 1870, and some Departments up to 1890. You will generally find nothing microfilmed from the

© JGSGB January 2012

The Jewish Genealogical Society of Great Britain



French-Jewish Genealogy

1900s due to the 100 year privacy law. The Family History Library also has microfilm copies of the decennial indexes for almost every town in France. Some census records have also been microfilmed, and you can order copies of microfilms of the 1841, 1851-1856, 1866-1876, and 1886-1906 censuses.

Further Information - General Genealogical Sources for France

Bignet	www.bigenet.fr
Fédération Française de Généalogie (FFG)	www.genefede.org
France GenWeb	www.francegenweb.org
Genea Net	www.geneanet.org
Généalogie.com	www.genealogie.com
Geneawiki	http://fr.geneawiki.com
La France Généalogique	www.cegf.org
Le portail officiel de la généalogie en France	www.france-genealogie.fr/
Projet Familles Parisiennes	www.famillesparisiennes.org
Cyndi's List	www.cyndislist.com/france

SoS Généalogie An organisation of professional (paid for) genealogists www.sosgenealogie.com/pages/accueilpag.html
Please note, using this organisation is at your own risk and JGSGB bears no responsibility for costs or outcomes.

Can you help?

If you have a suggestion for an update to this information, please send your suggestion to education@jgs.gb.org.uk Thank you.

Jeanette Rosenberg
JGSGB Education & Mentoring

© JGSGB January 2012