The AJGS (Vic) Newsletter, September 2025

Dear members

Welcome to this newsletter and I hope you enjoyed the one in June 2025. Don't forget that if you have any suggestions as to items you would like to see included in future newsletters, please contact Terry Ashton at ajgsvictoria@gmail.com

With the help of our donors, AJGS-(Vic) is keeping the membership fees as before, having not changed for 10 years. Fee renewal notices have been emailed to members.

Who we are

The Australian Jewish Genealogical Society (Vic) Inc (AJGS Vic) is a non-profit society passionate about encouraging and assisting people in researching their Jewish ancestry. We welcome everyone with an interest in this research area, regardless of ethnicity or background, whether you are researching your family history for connections to Jewish heritage or studying this fascinating and important area of history.
We provide access to the AJGS (Vic) research library and the expertise of our specialised researchers; we hold regular meetings; provide workshops and events to support members and provide practical assistance for research on such topics as DNA, using JRI Poland and more.

Welcome to new members

AJGS (VIC) welcomes the following new members:
- Michael Black
- Rosemary Cowen

AJGS (VIC) also welcomes Andrea Cooper to the committee

Recent updates

Passing of Gary Mokotoff
Sadly, Gary Mokotoff has passed away. Gary was a central figure in the history of IAJGS (The International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies). From 1989 to 1995 he served as the founding president of IAJGS, and in 1998 he was the first recipient of the IAJGS Lifetime Achievement Award.
Gary's enthusiasm for Jewish genealogy coupled with his technical skills as a computer software pioneer led to the creation of many genealogical innovations such as JewishGen's Family Finder and the Daitch-Mokotoff Soundex system.
His vision and drive took him into the world of communications as both an author and as publisher of the journal *Avotaynu: The International Review of Jewish Genealogy*.
Gary also served in leadership roles for JewishGen, the Federation of Genealogical Societies (FGS) and the Association of Professional Genealogists (APG).
Gary opened the door to genealogy research for many in the Jewish community through organized trips to the FamilySearch Library and the Arolsen Archives. His passion for genealogy ignited that passion in others as well. Gary will be deeply missed.

2026 RootsTech Events

FamilySearch July 2025 Update | New Free Historical Records from 8 Countries
SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH—FamilySearch has expanded its free online collections in June 2025, with more than 30 million new records from 8 countries. Some of the exciting new additions include 16 million Italian birth, marriage, and death records (civil registrations, 1804 to 1943), 5 million Brazil cemetery records (1799 to 2024), and nearly 1 million records from the American Medical Association (AMA) of deceased physicians (1864 to 1968). See the full list of collection updates in the FamilySearch Newsroom.
Other countries with significant record additions in June include the following:
- Belgium
- Colombia
- Ecuador
- France
- Ukraine

    FamilySearch continues to add millions of new records each week to its online collections from countries around the globe. Today, more than 20 billion historical records and images can be searched freely at FamilySearch.org.

JewishGen's Holocaust Database: Holocaust Database Increases Access by More Than 1,750,000 Records
JewishGen is proud to announce its 2025 annual update summary for the Holocaust Database. The Holocaust Database can be found at https://www.jewishgen.org/databases/Holocaust/
The database includes information from a variety of records including, but not limited to; ghetto census reports, transport lists, forced labour lists, camp lists, victims' lists, survivor lists, post-war transport lists and displaced persons camp lists.
Over the last year, the Holocaust Database added access to more than 1,750,000 records from approximately 50 different data sets. This update brings the total number of Holocaust Database records to more than 6 million. A significant agreement with the Arolsen Archives

(https://arolsen-archives.org/en/) now gives JewishGen researchers the ability to search our centralized database and find records of interest in Arolsen's "Red Line Card Inquiries" database and their "List of Austrian Holocaust Survivors Returned to Vienna". Actual records and source documents are kept at the Arolsen Archives.

Thanks to Randy Schoenberg, JewishGen researchers can now locate records on Geni (Geni.com) family trees that indicate individuals who were connected to Auschwitz and Theresienstadt.

JewishGen volunteers will complete the indexing of close to 100,000 records from The Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) French office records located at the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research (YIVO) (https://www.yivo.org/). These lists include passenger manifests from the late 1930's through the post-war 1950's, various refugees and survivor lists, victim lists, and displaced persons (DP) lists. It even includes a list of Jewish "Discharged Members of the French Foreign Legion in the Les Milles French Internment Camp 1940". Although the majority of these records are currently online, continuing work on these records will take place through year-end.

Finally, an increasing number of individual researchers share their results with us. This includes information on specific towns, projects, discovered camp records and other Holocaust related material. We want to express our appreciation to our data donors. And a very big thank you to all of our JewishGen data-entry volunteers who work tirelessly to transcribe records from source documents of varying quality to create the searchable databases that all JewishGen researchers can benefit from.

For a complete listing of the individual data sets in the Holocaust Database, please see https://www.jewishgen.org/databases/Holocaust/

Nolan Altman, Director of Data Acquisition and Coordinator of Holocaust Database, JOWBR (Burial Registry), and Memorials & Plaques Project, July, 2025 NAltman@JewishGen.org

IGRA Has Added Three New Databases

IGRA has added three new databases and updated three others, adding over 49,712 new listings, many with images. With a variety of subjects, from immigration to military, from the Ottoman period to the Israel times after the British mandate, the following preview will give you a good idea about our latest additions. Find your family records in the search engine. https://genealogy.org.il/AID/

Before viewing and searching the databases, please register for free on the IGRA website: http://genealogy.org.il/

Forthcoming AJGS-VIC Events, 2025:

AJGS committee member, Viv Bayer will speak on how to use records to find families in Galicia	Sunday October 12th 2025 @ 2.30-4.00 p.m., Glen Eira Town Hall
AJGS' annual AGM, followed by speaker, Sidra Moshinsky, Director and CEO at the Jewish Museum of Australia, will discuss the Roots project and how it has developed within Jewish schools	November 9th 2025 @ 2.30-4.00 p.m., Glen Eira Town Hall
AJGS archivist and librarian Liz James, will present an introduction about researching Jewish genealogy	February the 10th, Lamm Library at 6.30 p.m.
Rachelle Unreich, a journalist for over 37 years, will speak on the importance of recording one's personal history, touching on the story of her mother, a Holocaust survivor	March 15th 2026 @ 2.30-4.00 p.m., Glen Eira Town Hall

Update on Past Events

July 20th 2025: Translating, Transcribing and Summarizing Documents using AI

American Thomas MacEntee spoke via zoom on "Translating, Transcribing and Summarizing Documents Using AI." A genealogical 'Rock Star,' Thomas MacEntee used his IT knowledge to improve the genealogical research experience for our members.

August 17th 2025: Tombstones-The Stories They Tell

Zvika Oren from Israel, is the son of Holocaust survivors from Hungary. His parents arrived in Israel after the war and kept silent about their wartime experiences, leaving Zvika and his siblings with little knowledge of their roots.

Using advancing digital tools, Zvika uncovered his genealogy going back six generations in Hungary.

With more than thirty years as a high-tech professional—including over two decades at a global Israeli hi-tech company—Zvika delivered a zoom presentation for members on "Tombstones-The Stories They Tell."

September 7th 2025: 35 years of researching a family history

Claire Bruell from New Zealand spoke to members on the 35 years of researching her family history

Resources and Links: The Lamm Jewish Library of Australia has over 46,000 books and includes the collections of the Australian Jewish Genealogical Society (Vic) and the Australian Jewish Historical Society.

To help with your genealogical research, here are some genealogical sites, relevant to Czechoslovakia:

Czech Jewish Records
https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Czechia_Jewish_Records/
Czech National Archives
https://www.nacr.cz/en/
Czech portal, Czech Republic, Bohemia, Moravia – Geni
https://www.geni.com/projects/Czech-portal-Czech-Republic-Bohemia-Moravia-Geni/42660/
Czech Republic Censuses and Inhabitant Registers – FamilySearch Historical Records
https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Czech_Republic_Censuses_and_Inhabitant_Registers_-_FamilySearch_Historical_Records/
Czech: Births, Marriages & Deaths
https://www.badatelna.eu/
Czechoslovakia, Selected Jewish Holocaust Record, 19939-1941 (USHMM) – Ancestry – Free
https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/2429/
Jewish Communities in Bohemia and Moravia, Czech Republic – (Geni)
https://www.geni.com/projects/Jewish-Communities-in-Bohemia-and-Moravia-Czech-Republic/12452/
Jewish Families from Prague
https://www.geni.com/projects/Jewish-Families-from-Prague/7995/
Jewish Records in the Czech Republic
https://cgsi.org/jewish-records-czech-republic/
JewishGen Austria-Czech Database
https://www.jewishgen.org/austriaczech/czechguide.html/

JewishGen Online Worldwide Burial Database
https://www.jewishgen.org/databases/Cemetery/
National Library of the Czech Republic
https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/2429/
The JewishGen Holocaust Database
https://www.jewishgen.org/databases/jgform.php/

And A Final Note

The High Holydays will be here very soon, so on behalf of the AJGS (VIC) committee, we wish you and your families, a happy Rosh Hashanah; well over the Fast and a joyful time over Sukkot, Simchat Torah and Shemini Atzeret.

Stay in touch with us via any of the following:

Email: ajgsvictoria@gmail.com
Website: http://www.ajgs-vic.org.au/
Facebook: Australian Jewish Genealogical Society-VIC

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