



# CHAPMAN FAMILY RESEARCH CENTER

at the Museum of the Southern Jewish Experience

## SOUTHERN JEWISH RESOURCES

The Museum of the Southern Jewish Experience's Southern Jewish Family Research Center is a hands-on resource for researchers, family historians, and visitors who are doing the important work of exploring and preserving Southern Jewish history. With an emphasis on the connections between Jewish families across the South, the Center brings a distinctly Southern flavor to "Jewish Geography." The archives included below is not an exhaustive list of archives that hold southern Jewish sources but is a good place to start.

### STATE-BY-STATE

#### Alabama

**Alabama Department of Archives and History** - <https://digital.archives.alabama.gov/>

The Alabama Department of Archives and History offers online access to a full catalog, digital collections, and electronic records collections of a wide range of materials related to Alabama history. These are keyword searchable, or they can be navigated through several indexes and databases, which include newspapers, maps, and church and synagogue records. Other Jewish-related materials include oral histories, organizational records, and correspondences.

**Birmingham Public Library** - <https://www.cobpl.org/default.aspx>

The BPL Archives holds one of the most extensive collections in existence documenting Jewish history and life in Birmingham and Alabama, including online collections of the Birmingham Jewish Federation Oral History Interviews, Knesseth Israel Oral History Interviews and Temple Emanu-El Scrapbooks.

#### Arkansas

**Arkansas Digital Archives** - <https://digitalheritage.arkansas.gov/>

The Arkansas Digital Archives feature the digitized collections of the Arkansas State Archives, which include family papers, government records, maps, newspapers, and more. The website also offers searchable databases, resource guides, finding aides, and catalogs of collections available in-person at the ASA, including a guide to "Arkansas' multicultural heritage" with descriptions of the ASA's Jewish community holdings.

**Butler Center for Arkansas Studies** - <https://cdm15728.contentdm.oclc.org/>

Virtually every aspect of Arkansas history is represented in the UA Little Rock and Butler Center collections available in the Roberts Library, through books, periodicals, manuscripts, microfilmed administrative and military records, and digital resources. Staff members can assist researchers in using indexes to locate resources for vast numbers of Arkansas places and events.

## Florida

### **Jewish Museum of Florida** - <https://jmof.fiu.edu/>

The JMF is the only institution dedicated to collecting and preserving Florida Jewish history, with over 100,000 items in its collection dating back to 1763.

### **Florida State Archives** - <https://dos.fl.gov/library-archives/archives/research/>

The Florida State Archives contains about 50,000 cubic feet of materials, including government records, private collections, photographs, and a genealogy collection. The genealogy collection contains local histories, immigration lists, census records, and more related to Florida and other southeastern states. Its online catalog can be searched by archival records, indexes, and collections. While most records are only available in-person, remote researchers may also contact FSA staff for some research help

## Georgia

### **Breman Museum Cuba Family Archives** - <https://www.thebreman.org/Research/Southern-Jewish-Archives>

With over 20,000 archival materials, the Breman Museum houses the largest collection of Jewish archives in the Southeast, including manuscripts, photographs, artifacts, textiles, oral histories, and more. These materials cover nearly 300 years of Jewish history in the South, mainly Georgia.

### **Georgia Archives** - <https://www.georgiaarchives.org/>

The Georgia Archives collects historical documents from Georgia dating back to 1733. Its website features the Virtual Vault, a searchable database of digitized materials; these contain some Jewish-related documents such as family papers, organizational records, and synagogue records. Online finding aids describe in-person-only records, which include a book catalog, and an index of personal names found in the Archives. Genealogy researchers may also take interest in the Archives' online guides for genealogy research.

## Kentucky

### **Filson Historical Society** - <https://filsonhistorical.org/collections/>

The Filson Historical Society, which preserves the history of Kentucky and the greater Ohio Valley region, has curated a Jewish collection since 2017. Collections are cataloged online, though most are not digitized. Those digitized include oral histories of Jewish elders in Louisville; a membership register for a Louisville Jewish fraternal organization starting in 1860; and two of Louisville's Jewish newspapers now fully searchable, dating back to 1913. In-person researchers are suggested, though not required, to make an appointment; research is \$10/day, or free for students and members.

## Louisiana

### **German-Acadian Coast Historical and Genealogical Society** - <https://gachgs.com/>

The GACHGS preserves, compiles, and publishes records of genealogical and historical records, with emphasis on Louisiana's St. Charles, St. James, and St. John the Baptist parishes. *Les Voyageurs*, the GACHGS's journal since 1980, is searchable by topic or name index; while the issues are not digitized, the GACHGS website does list public libraries with copies, most of which are in Louisiana. Copies may also be ordered online. The website also features an Genealogical Query form with two free submissions per year, as well as links to resources for general and Louisiana-specific genealogical researchers.

**Historic New Orleans Collection** - <https://www.hnoc.org/research>

The Historic New Orleans Collection houses more than 30,000 library items; two miles of documents and manuscripts; 500,000 photos, prints, drawings, paintings, and objects; and a microfilm collection covering the history of the Gulf South, mostly New Orleans and Louisiana. Much of its collection is also available in an online catalog.

**New Orleans City Archives and Special Collections** - <https://nolacityarchives.org/>

The New Orleans City Archives & Special Collections preserve centuries of archival materials from New Orleans and its surrounding areas, including a category of New Orleans' Jewish community which contains records of Jewish organizations, families, and more. Genealogical researchers will be particularly interested in the collections' city directories, obituary indexes, vital records, court records, and more. The website's catalog is free to search, though many records are only available to view in-person.

**Tulane University Special Collections** - <https://library.tulane.edu/tusc>

The Tulane University Special Collections contains nearly 2,500 archival, over 100,000 volumes of rare books dating back to the 13th century, and more materials that speak to the history of the New Orleans area. Jewish history researchers will find records of numerous Jewish organizations with operations in the area, such as the Jewish Children's Home, the Jewish Federation, and the National Council of Jewish Women; of genealogical interest are family and notable individuals' papers, congregational records, and burial records.

## Mississippi

**Mississippi Department of Archives & History** - <https://www.mdah.ms.gov/collections>

The Mississippi Department of Archives and History collects archival records, historic objects, and archaeological artifacts that span 15,000 years of Mississippi history. These are searchable in their catalog, and while most materials are not digitized, those that have been compiled in the website's digital archives. The website also features a page of genealogy resources, such as death records, county records, and enumerations of educable children.

## North Carolina

**Duke University Archives and Manuscripts** - <https://archives.lib.duke.edu/>

The William R. Perkins Library, Bostock Library and Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library comprise the main West Campus library complex, which is joined by Lilly and Music libraries on East Campus, the Pearse Memorial Library at the Duke Marine Lab and the separately administered libraries serving the schools of Business, Divinity, Law and Medicine. Together they form one of the nation's top ten private university library systems. Duke Libraries collections include Jewish Heritage Foundation of North Carolina and Freeman Center for Jewish Life Records amongst other Jewish collections.

**Jewish Heritage North Carolina** - <https://jewishnc.org/>

JHNC is the only statewide organization that preserves North Carolina's Jewish history and culture. Its website features a list of 19 different cities/regions of North Carolina with links to learn more about the Jewish communities of each, and they publish articles about history, organizations, and notable figures. JHNC's Down Home project, which tells the Jewish history of North Carolina largely through personal stories, is available in several forms, including a digital exhibit, a documentary, and a book. JHNC's

archives, which include synagogue records, family papers, photographs, graphic arts, oral histories, and more, can be accessed in-person at the Duke University Perkins library.

**The Southern Folklife Collection** - <https://library.unc.edu/wilson/sfc/>

The Southern Folklife Collection is an archival resource dedicated to collecting, preserving and disseminating traditional and vernacular music, art, and culture related to the American South. We do this to advance the study and public recognition of these art forms, and support the educational, research and service missions of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

**University of North Carolina Asheville** - <https://specialcollections.unca.edu/>

Special Collections was founded in 1977 as the Southern Highlands Research Center with the mission of collecting resources that document the diverse culture and history of Asheville and Western North Carolina, a mission we continue to this day. Our collections include manuscripts, books, oral histories, photographs, and other materials. University Archives includes records, photographs, and publications documenting the history of the University of North Carolina Asheville. Jewish collections detail Jewish life in Western North Carolina.

## Oklahoma

**Oklahoma Historical Society** - <https://www.okhistory.org/index.php>

The Oklahoma Historical Society has been collecting, preserving, and sharing our history and culture since 1893. Through exhibitions, publications, museums, and historic sites, we strive to illuminate Oklahoma's complex and fascinating past. The Gateway to Oklahoma History is a project of the Oklahoma Historical Society Research Division, in partnership with the University of North Texas Libraries' Digital Projects Unit.

**Oklahoma State Archives** - <https://oklahoma.gov/libraries/state-government/archives-and-records/state-archives.html>

The official state library of Oklahoma contains records of Oklahoma history from the 1890s to the present. Researchers who cannot visit in-person can browse their online catalog of digitized materials, as well as finding aids and a guide to federal resources for genealogical research.

## South Carolina

**College of Charleston's Center for Southern Jewish Culture** - <https://jewish-south.charleston.edu/>

The College of Charleston's Center for Southern Jewish Culture seeks to broaden public knowledge and inspire conversations about the southern Jewish experience. It brings together the resources of the College's Jewish Studies Program, Addlestone Library's Jewish Heritage Collection, and The Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina.

**Jewish Heritage Collection at the College of Charleston** - <https://jhc.cofc.edu/>

The Jewish Heritage Collection documents Jewish history and culture in the American South, with an emphasis on South Carolina, from colonial times to present day. Content includes oral histories, manuscripts, artifacts, photographs, genealogies, memoirs, home movies, and other primary sources.

**Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina** - <https://jhssc.org/>

The Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina collects oral histories, manuscripts, artifacts, photographs, genealogies, memoirs, home movies, and more primary sources, cataloged and searchable

on the website. These materials tell the story of Jews in the South, with a focus on South Carolina, from colonial times to the present. Also on the website are word-searchable PDFs of all the JHSSC's magazine issues, which was first published in 1994, and documentation of Jewish burial grounds and Jewish merchants across South Carolina.

## Tennessee

### **Annette Levy Ratkin Jewish Community Archives -**

<https://www.templenashville.org/about/library/inventory-of-archives-of-the-jewish-federation-of-nashville-and-middle-tennessee/>

Since 1979, the Annette Levy Ratkin Archives has collected the records of families, businesses and institutions of the Jewish communities of Middle Tennessee, many having origins in the mid-19th century. Housed in the Gordon Jewish Community Center, the archives include the records of such local organizations as the Nashville Section of the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW), Hadassah, Woodmont Country Club, B'nai B'rith, the Jewish Community Council, the congregations, Jewish Family Service, and more.

### **Tennessee Virtual Archives -** <https://teva.contentdm.oclc.org/customizations/global/pages/index.html>

The Tennessee Virtual Archive is the digital repository of the Tennessee State Library & Archives, containing thousands of records relating to Tennessee history. Jewish-specific materials include correspondences, death certificates, and photographs of Jewish businesses and temples. The TVA also links visitors to the full catalog of TSLA collections, as well as research guides and resources, including some for genealogical research.

## Texas

### **Dallas Jewish Historical Society -** <https://djhs.org/>

The Dallas Jewish Historical Society's mission is to preserve and protect collections of written, visual and audible materials that document the history of the Dallas Jewish community, to make these materials available to the public and researchers, and to keep the past as a living legacy for our community.

### **Galveston and Texas History Center -** <https://www.galvestonhistorycenter.org/>

The Galveston and Texas Center's archives contain manuscripts, photographs, books, maps, architectural drawings, and more relating to Galveston history from 1839 to present, as well as some Texas history from Spanish colonization to the Civil War. Materials relevant to local Jewish history include papers of Jewish residents and families, accounts of Jewish immigration to Galveston, and Galveston synagogue records. The archives also contain a wealth of genealogy resources, such as birth, death, and marriage records, cemetery records, and passenger and naturalization records; onsite researchers can also gain special access to databases such as Ancestry and Newspaper Archive through the Rosenberg Library computers.

### **Galveston Immigration Database -** <https://www.galvestonhistory.org/sites/1877-tall-ship-elissa-at-the-galveston-historic-seaport/galveston-immigration-database>

The Galveston Historic Seaport has compiled the nation's only computerized listing of immigrants to Galveston, Texas. The museum's immigration exhibit features text and historic photographs illustrating Galveston's role in immigration history and the major organized immigration movements of the 19th and 20th Centuries. Computer terminals in the exhibit area allow visitors to search for information taken from ships' passenger manifests pertaining to their ancestors' arrival in Texas.

**Joan and Stanford Alexander South Texas Jewish Archives** - <https://jewishstudies.rice.edu/joan-and-stanford-alexander-south-texas-jewish-archives>

The STJA is dedicated to preserving the Jewish history of South Texas, with a focus on the Houston area. Collections include synagogue archives, oral histories, family papers, and more, with materials ranging from radio programs and restaurant menus to newsletters and scrapbooks. Digitized materials are freely accessible online.

**Texas Digital Archives** - <https://tsl.access.preservica.com/>

The Texas Digital Archives contains millions of digitized records from the Texas State Library and Archives Commission. These are organized in a searchable online catalog, as well as into collections including government documents, manuscripts, and prints and photographs. The website can also direct visitors to non-digitized collections and research guides at the TSLAC.

**Texas Jewish Historical Society** - <https://txjhs.org/>

The TJHS archives materials relating to Texas Jewish history from 1824 to the present, cataloged online and housed at the University of Texas at Austin. The archives are sorted into 9 categories: TJHS administration, communities, family histories, rabbis and cantors, Jewish organizations, published materials, photographs, audio, and video and film. For those interested in tracing deceased family and others, the TJHS website also features a searchable database of over 47,000 Jewish burials in over 275 Jewish cemeteries in Texas.

## Virginia

**Beth Ahabah** - <https://www.bethahabah.org/bama/archives/>

The archival collection details the history of the Jewish community in Richmond from its founding in 1789 through today. Documents, photographs, letters and other items have been donated to the Archives by individuals and Jewish organizations. The holdings include the records of the sixth Jewish congregation established in the United States, Kahol Kadosh Beth Shalome, and Congregation Beth Ahabah (its successor.) Additional collections include The Jewish Community Federation of Richmond, Jewish Family Services, The Carole and Marcus Weinstein Jewish Community Center and Beth Sholom Lifecare Communities, plus other congregations, organizations and many individual families.

**Capital Jewish Museum** - <https://capitaljewishmuseum.org/>

The Capital Jewish Museum curates and collects over 13,000 records documenting the Jewish experience in Washington, DC, suburban Maryland, and Northern Virginia since 1850. Their searchable online catalog is largely digitized, but in-person researchers can access more materials by making an appointment with the museum.

**Library of Virginia** - <https://www.lva.virginia.gov/>

The Library of Virginia houses more than 130 million items related to Virginia history, culture, and government. Visitors can search the library's online catalog for books, newspapers, government documents, manuscripts, maps, and more, though many have not been digitized. The website also offers many research guides and indexes, including some for genealogical researchers, as well as webinars that explore the library's genealogy resources.

## SOUTHERN REGION

### **Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life - Encyclopedia of Southern Jewish Communities** - <https://www.isjl.org/encyclopedia-of-southern-jewish-communities.html>

The Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life (ISJL) supports, connects, and celebrates Jewish life in the South. The ISJL Encyclopedia of Southern Jewish Communities is designed to present a history of every organized Jewish community in the U.S. South. The ISJL's Oral History project collected hundreds of audio and video interviews with Jewish Southerners from all over our region. These recordings offer present and future users a unique resource for learning about the personalities, experiences and memories of Jews in the American South.

### **Southern Jewish Historical Society** - <https://www.jewishsouth.org/>

The Southern Jewish Historical Society, located within the College of Charleston Special Collections, contains SJHS records as well as some materials documenting Jewish families, communities, and synagogues of the South. Additionally, the SJHS website features a bibliography of published work on Southern Jewish history, categorized by theme and region (Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, West Virginia, and Washington, D.C.), as well links to archival resources related to the Jewish history of Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, South Carolina, Tennessee, and West Virginia. Researchers can also browse the first 14 volumes of the SJHS' journal for free online; later publications may be purchased.

## UNITED STATES

### **American Jewish Archives** - <https://www.americanjewisharchives.org/>

AJA is dedicated to preserving the history of Jews in the Americas, mainly the US. Approximately ten million pages of archives span over 400 years of American Jewish history, with strengths in early Jewish communities in the US and Caribbean and in congregational records. All of this is cataloged and searchable online, though only a small amount has been digitized. The AJA is also home to over 1,000 family genealogy files.

### **American Jewish Archives Journal** - <https://sites.americanjewisharchives.org/publications/journal/>

The AJA has published this journal since 1948, providing readers with scholarly articles, document analyses, and review essays relevant to American Jewish history and life. All AJAJ issues are fully digitized, freely accessible and searchable.

### **American Jewish Historical Society** - <https://ajhs.org/>

The AJHS holds over 30 million archival documents and 50,000 books, photographs, art, artifacts that speak to the history of Jews in the U.S. since 1654. Holdings are particularly strong in the subjects of notable Jews in public life and culture; Jewish organizations; Jewish immigration; gender and Jewish family structures; anti-Semitism; Zionism; and regional and local histories. Its online searchable database within the Center for Jewish History Collections also grants access to the archives of the American Sephardi Federation, the Leo Baeck Institute, and the Yeshiva University Museum.

### **American Jewish History Journal** - <https://ajhs.org/scholars/ajhs-journal/>

This journal is among the top resources for scholarly voices on American Jewish history, published by the AJHS since 1892. All of its publications have been digitized; some are available for free, and others require a subscription to JSTOR.

**Ellis Island Passenger Search** - <https://heritage.statueofliberty.org/>

The Ellis Island Passenger Search is a database of over 65 million records of passengers who arrived at the Port of New York between 1820 and 1957. These records are freely searchable online by name and other biographical or travel information—or in-person at the Ellis Island National Museum of Immigration. The website also includes other helpful research resources, including genealogical research tips, user-submitted family histories, and an oral history project comprising nearly 2,000 interviews, most of which are digitized.

**Library of Congress** - <https://www.loc.gov/>

The Library of Congress is the largest library in the world, dedicated to preserving materials from the U.S. and around the world, with its oldest materials dating far back into B.C.E. Its searchable catalog online contains over 20 million records. Genealogic researchers may be interested in the LoC's copyright records, synagogue records, or the website's Genealogy Research Guide; a Jewish Studies Research Guide also offers resources for various subjects of research, such as Hebrew- and Yiddish-language documents, minority service in American wars, and notable Jewish historical figures. For items not digitized, copies may be requested for a fee.

**National Archives** - <https://www.archives.gov/>

The National Archives holds historical U.S. government documents, with 43 facilities across 17 states. For remote research, its searchable catalog online contains descriptions for 95% of their records, which include records of censuses, military service, immigration, naturalization, federal employment, and more. Though many of these are not digitized, most can be ordered either online or by mail for a fee. Their website also offers a number of resources for genealogical researchers, such as tips for beginning research, articles sorted by subject, and access to research forums.

**National Archives Census Records** - <https://www.archives.gov/research/census>

The National Archives' census records date from 1790-1950 and are searchable by place and name. Most of these are digitized; though many are only available through the National Archives' partners, such as Ancestry or FamilySearch, they are in the process of being made available in the National Archives' catalog. Copies may also be ordered online for a fee.

**United States Holocaust Memorial Museum** - <https://www.ushmm.org/collections/the-museums-collections/about>

The Museum's David M. Rubenstein National Institute for Holocaust Documentation houses an unparalleled repository of Holocaust evidence that documents the fate of victims, survivors, rescuers, liberators, and others. Our comprehensive collection contains millions of documents, artifacts, photos, films, books, and testimonies.

**Weitzman National Museum of American Jewish History**- <https://theweitzman.org/>

The Weitzman is the only museum in the US exclusively dedicated to exploring the American Jewish experience. Their more than 30,000 archival materials, some of which are digitized, can be searched through their online catalog. Though the Weitzman does not hold resources such as vital records or censuses, other genealogy-related materials like family papers may be of interest to researchers, who must make an appointment ahead of in-person research.

## GLOBAL

### **Yad VaShem Digital Collections** - <https://www.yadvashem.org/collections.html>

Yad VaShem has one of the largest Holocaust archives in the world, and its Digital Collections are organized by various material type, including photo and document archives, survivor testimonies, and a database of approximately 4.8 Holocaust victims' names and biographical details.

### **Shapell Manuscript Foundation** - <https://www.shapell.org/>

The Shapell Manuscript Foundation preserves thousands of letters and documents relating to US and Holy Land history from the late 18th to late 20th century, hundreds of which are digitized and searchable online. Collections of note include papers of American presidents; notable figures such as Albert Einstein, Theodore Herzl, and Mark Twain; and Jewish themes such as early Zionism and Jewish Civil War soldiers. Genealogical researchers may be interested in the SMF's roster of Jewish Civil War soldiers, which is searchable by name. The SMF website also publishes scholarly articles and a podcast, available for free.

### **Sephardic Genealogical Society** - <https://www.sephardic.world/>

The Sephardic Genealogical Society website features a free compendium of Jewish genealogy talks since 2020, as well as a list of useful links for further international research into Sephardic genealogy. Their holdings include the archives of Kevin Martin, a researcher into Sephardic genealogy and history, and the Julian Kempier Archive of the De Sola Family, which includes correspondences, family trees, and Inquisition processes, though neither archive has yet been made available online.