



זכרון ZichronNote

The Journal of the San Francisco Bay Area Jewish Genealogical Society

Volume XIX, Number 2-3

May/August 1999

CALENDAR OF GENEALOGICAL EVENTS

Meetings of the San Francisco Bay Area Jewish Genealogical Society

Please note: Unless otherwise indicated, the meeting schedule is as follows:

- San Francisco:** **Sunday, Doors open 12:30 p.m. Program begins at 1 p.m.**
Fort Mason Center, Marina Boulevard at Buchanan Street, Building C, Room 205
- Palo Alto:** **Monday, 7:30 p.m.**
Congregation Kol Emeth, 4175 Manuela (near Foothill Blvd. and Arastradero Road)

- Mon. Aug. 23** **Palo Alto:** *Nuts and Bolts of Publishing.* If you've decided what to publish, don't know how to publish, or are intimidated by the whole process, don't miss this panel discussion. Learn the details about paper, printing, publishing photographs, binding, and more. **(Note date change)**
- Sun. Sept. 26** **San Francisco:** *Is Your Neighbor Your Landsman?* Discover which SFBAJGS members share your research interests as we form special interest groups, share resources, and take advantage of our common research interests.
- Mon. Oct. 18** **Palo Alto:** *TBD*
- Sun. Nov. 21** **San Francisco:** *14th Annual Jewish Genealogy Workshop.* 1 p.m. - 4 p.m. As in previous years, our annual workshop will feature classes, one-on-one assistance, translators, and extensive library resources. Mark your calendar to make sure you don't miss this exciting day of research, resources, and sharing expertise!
- Mon. Dec. 20** **Palo Alto:** *Second Annual Special Interest Group Meeting.* Building on last year's successful December meeting, we will identify common research interests among our members and facilitate sharing of information.

More Genealogy Meetings of Interest on Page 4

Special Double Issue!

ZichronNote

Journal of the San Francisco Bay Area Jewish Genealogical Society

ZichronNote is published four times per year, in February, May, August and November. The deadline for contributions is the 1st of the month preceding publication. The editor reserves the right to edit all submittals. Submissions may be made by hard copy, 3-1/2" floppy disks or email to dLkurtz@ix.netcom.com.

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People Finder queries are free to Society members. Non-members may place queries for \$5 each, limited to 25 words not including searcher's name, address, telephone number, and email address.

Back Issues are available for \$5 per issue. Requests should be addressed to the SFBAJGS at the Society address below.

Display Advertising is accepted. The rate for a business card-sized (3-1/2 x 2 inch) insertion is \$10 per issue, quarter-page ad \$20, half-page ad \$35, and a full-page ad, \$60. Ads must be camera-ready, relate to Jewish genealogy and be in good taste.

Membership is open to anyone interested in Jewish genealogy. Dues are \$20 per calendar year. The Society is tax-exempt pursuant to section 501(c)(3) of the IRS Code. Make your check payable to "SFBAJGS" and send to: Sita Likuski, Membership, 4430 School Way, Castro Valley, CA 94546.

Society Address:

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ZichronNote Editor: Dana L. Kurtz

Copy Editor: Gordon Fine

Meetings: **Odd-numbered months**-3rd Sunday of each month, 1 p.m. at Fort Mason Center (Marina at Buchanan), San Francisco. **Even-numbered months**-3rd Monday of each month, 7:30 p.m. at Congregation Kol Emeth, 4175 Manuela Avenue (near Arastradero and Foothill), Palo Alto.

SFBAJGS Web Site: www.jewishgen.org/sfbajgs

President's Message

by Rodger Rosenberg

These last few months have been very busy in the world of genealogy and especially for our Society's educational and outreach efforts. We held our first workshop on the Peninsula, hosted by the Society and Congregation Beth Am in Palo Alto. The workshop was well attended and resulted in a number of new members. Our thanks for all their hard work go to Jerry Delson and his committee, and the speakers, who made it happen! Jerry, Ilan Blech and Carole Dorshkind have kept up the spirit of the workshop with once-a-week drop-in sessions (see page 22). Again we appreciate all your efforts!

Once again, we participated in the annual California Genealogical Society's genealogy fair, which was well attended. Thanks to the many volunteers who staffed our booth, provided information and answered questions for the many folks who stopped by our table. We welcomed the genealogists who joined the SFBAJGS at the fair, and we made some rewarding contacts. One incident that I would like to share involved genealogist Sheila Benedict. Sheila stopped by our table to discuss an unusual Polish surname, which she has been researching for some time. SFBAJGS member Jan Engel recognized the name and was able to explain its meaning. When Sheila learned the origin of her family name, she was emotionally overcome. These types of connections make our efforts worthwhile!

In May, a few of our members presented a four-session introduction to Jewish genealogy at the Berkeley-Richmond Jewish Community Center. David Abrahams, Judy Baston, Gordon Fine, and Vivian Kahn provided the East Bay class with research techniques; discussed resources such as immigration and naturalization records, vital records (birth, marriage, and death), U.S. census information and European records; and shared stories from photographs. The students, including our own Thalia Broudy, brought their own family records, photographs and research questions.

The National Archives' exploration of a move to centralize its repositories and replace its regional facilities with microfilm reading rooms has come to a fortunate conclusion. David Abrahams reports in this issue of a meeting between John Carlin, Chief Archivist of the United States, and representatives of genealogical and historical organizations (see page 25). Mr. Carlin reassured us that consolidation efforts would cease. Appreciation is due to Congressman Tom Lantos and our many members who wrote letters to

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SOCIETY NEWS

Email Address Updates

Please note the following updates to email addresses listed in the recently distributed SFBAJGS Membership Roster.

| | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Bill Ellenburg | billellenb@aol.com |
| Shirley Maccabee | maccabee@lmi.net |
| Treva Jo Marcus | tjm@infoasis.com |
| Ellen Weisberg Massie | ellenm626@aol.com |

If you have an email address but have not been receiving occasional SFBAJGS email messages, or your email address has changed, send a message to dLkurtz@ix.netcom.com so we can keep you up to date.

Address Updates

Please note the following additions and updates to contact information listed in the recently distributed SFBAJGS Membership Roster.

Judi Chesler
4050 25th Street, San Francisco, CA 94114
jsheer@mindspring.com

Harol Hodes
4170 Manuela Avenue, Palo Alto, CA 94306
(650) 941-6820; focusharol@aol.com

Frances Spanton Meng
4 Regulus Court, Alameda, CA 94501-1015
fbandjd@aol.com

Robert Weiss
10671 Baton Rouge Avenue, Northridge, CA 94326
(818) 368-6432

Morjorie Winograd and Abraham Flatau
3330 Vernon Terrace, Palo Alto, CA 94303-4302
(650) 494-7795

Welcome New Members

Contact information for these new members can be found in the recently published SFBAJGS Family Finder or below on this page.

| | |
|---|-----------------|
| Gerald August | Palo Alto |
| Sheila Becker | El Cerrito |
| Sally Brown | Livermore |
| Judi Chesler | San Francisco |
| Joanne Donsky and Stuart Oremland | Portola Valley |
| Geri Finkelstein | San Jose |
| Louise Ginsburg | Los Altos |
| Pierre M. Hahn | San Francisco |
| Harol Hodes | Palo Alto |
| Rhoda and Lester Kaplan | Atherton |
| Jerome Marks | Roseville |
| Donn R. Martin | Los Altos |
| Frances Spanton Meng | Alameda |
| Evelyn and Sol Miller | Los Altos |
| Sadie Miller | Palo Alto |
| Sherry Oppenheim | Menlo Park |
| Merle Orelove | Palo Alto |
| Howard F. Sachs | Kansas City, MO |
| Ed Scheeline | Redlands |
| Marilyn Shulman | Grass Valley |
| Michael Stadlen | Los Altos |
| Jay K. Stern | Oakland |
| Miriam Weissman | Alameda |
| Morjorie Winograd and Abraham Flatau | Palo Alto |

President's Message, cont'd. from page 2

their representatives. However, decisions in Washington change with the winds (and personnel change with elections), so it is vital that we continue to make our interests known to our elected representatives, and participate in developing NARA's record-retention policies.

I also want to announce the retirement of a "local hero" to many of us. Neil Thomsen, of the San Bruno branch of NARA, has announced his retirement. Neil has assisted many of us through the years and he

will be missed. We wish him and his wife the best in a well earned retirement.

We hope all of you are having a great summer. For those of you lucky and intrepid enough to venture to Manhattan in August for the Annual Jewish Genealogy Conference, we look forward to hearing about your successes!

Rodger

CALENDAR, cont'd.

More Genealogy Events

Local

Sat. September 11, **California Genealogical Society, University of California Berkeley Library, speaker Barbara Hill, Librarian.** 1:30 p.m. - 3 p.m. 1611 Telegraph Ave., Suite 200, Oakland. (510) 663-1358.

Thurs. September 16, **Santa Clara County Historical & Genealogical Society, Organizing your Genealogical Records.** 7 p.m. Santa Clara City Central Library, Community Room, 2635 Homestead Rd., Santa Clara. www.katpher.com/SCCHGS/

Tues. September 21, **San Mateo County Genealogical Society, Photography as a Tool for Genealogy, speaker Ron Willis.** 7:30 p.m. Belmont Central School, 525 Middle Rd., Belmont. genealogy.org/~smcgs/

Sat. September 25, **Sonoma County Genealogical Society, Techniques for Solving Difficult U.S. Research Problems, speaker Karen Clifford.** 1 p.m. Santa Rosa Junior College, Lark Hall, Room 2009. www.scgs.org/

Sat. November 13, **California Genealogical Society, New England Research, speaker Frederick Sherman.** 1:30 p.m. - 3 p.m. 1611 Telegraph Ave., Suite 200, Oakland. Tel: (510) 663-1358.

Regional

Mon. September 27, **Jewish Genealogical Society of Sacramento, Methods and Media for Sharing Your Genealogical Information.** 7 p.m. Albert Einstein Center, 1935 Wright St., Sacramento. (916) 486-0906, ext. 361; www.jewishgen.org/ajgs/jgs-sacramento/

National/International

Fri. - Sun. September 24-26, **The Federation of Eastern European Historical Societies (FEEFHS), Fifth International Convention.** Airtel Plaza Hotel, Van Nuys, CA. Write: P.O. Box 510898, Salt Lake City, UT 84151; webmaster@feefhs.org.

Thu. - Thu. November 4-11, **Salt Lake City Jewish Genealogical Research Trip**, led by Gary Mokotoff and Eileen Polakoff. Pre-trip literature, introductory class and workshop, group discussions and problem-solving sessions, individual research consultations, and on-site guidance. Cost: \$695, double occupancy accommodations included. Write: SLC Genealogical Trip, 155 N. Washington Ave., Bergenfield, NJ 07621; (201) 387-7200.

Call for Library Volunteers and New Expanded Hours at the Library

The Masonic Institute in San Francisco has graciously provided the SFBAJGS with a home for our library so that our members, as well as the public, may use our reference works between meetings. The Mason's library is located at 1111 California Street, between Jones and Taylor Streets at the top of Nob Hill in San Francisco. (Parking is available in the garage of the Masonic Lodge.)

Hours previously were Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m. In order to make the library more accessible to the public, the Masons have expanded the library's hours to Monday through Friday, from 3 p.m. until 8 p.m. Saturday hours have been added, from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. However, the SFBAJGS is obligated to provide a regular volunteer for at least one four-hour slot, to make possible these longer, later, and weekend hours.

Joel Springer, Assistant Grand Master, has already met with a group of SFBAJGS volunteers for library training so that they may fulfill our hourly obligations in order to retain our library space. Our first group of volunteers is Judy Baston, Jim Koenig, Connie Levy, Rodger Rosenberg, Michael Witkin, and Eugene Zauber. Not only do our volunteers "pay the rent" for our library space, they get to use our complete library for their own research during their "shifts." More volunteers are needed. Please contact Gordon Fine at (415) 346-4856 or Marc Seidenfeld at (415) 667-8520 for more information.

Have You Thought About This?

Illiana Jewish Genealogical Society Newsletter, Summer 1999

Great Idea for the 2000 Census

After completing the information on your 2000 Census form, make a copy for your genealogical files. These census records won't be released until 2075. Ask all your family members to photocopy their census records for your data too.

Reading Poor and Faded Documents and Microfilm

To read faded writing more easily, try reading in the direct beam of a black light. If you are trying to read poor microfilm images, place a sheet of pink or green paper on the projected surface. The pastel colors seem to make the films easier to read.

Success Story: Who Was Fanny Vickers?

by James Koenig

James Koenig is a retired geologist, who has been searching for information about his family for the past four years. His father's family name was originally **KOENIGSFEST** (variant spellings: **KONIGSFEST**, **KOENIGSFEST**, **KONIGSFEST**, **KENIGSFEST**). Other family names are **VYKHODZ** or **VYKHOS** (the subject of this article), **FEDELMAN** (from the southern Ukraine) and **VOLODARSKY** (also from Ukraine). He can be reached by fax at (510) 234-3320.

It is a truism among genealogists that the first piece of family data to be lost is the maiden name of a great-grandmother. Often the maiden name of a deceased grandmother also is lost, especially if she never came to America and had no brothers. In the case of my father's mother Fanny, it wasn't that she had no brothers, or had never come to America. Rather, there was a multiplicity of documents in the United States, each giving a different maiden name.

Fanny's oldest son, my Uncle Eli, insisted that her maiden name had been Vickers. He even spelled it for me shortly before his death: V-I-C-K-E-R-S. However, when I checked her death certificate, and the birth certificates and marriage license applications of her five children, I learned something very different. Eli, at his first marriage, had listed his mother's maiden name as Vichods; for his second marriage she was Victus. My Uncle Irving had written Pearlman, and his brother Joe had written Perlmutter. My Aunt Ethel had simplified the name to Pearl. But to top it all, my father had listed his mother's maiden name as Gottlieb! Fanny's death certificate said Wichots. Aunt Ethel's birth certificate said Wiechars. Uncle Joe's said Wishots. My father's birth certificate said Perlmutter. What was I to make out of this?

The first piece of explanatory evidence came from Grandmother Fanny's tombstone. In Hebrew, at the top, it gave her name as Feige bat Gotlib. Her father's given name apparently had been Gottlieb. That at least explained why my father had written Gottlieb on his marriage license application. The next important evidence came from a reminiscence by a cousin. Grandmother Fanny's brother Leib had taken his wife's surname upon marriage: Perlmutter. "Probably he was in trouble with the law," said my lawyer father. More probably Leib had adopted Perlmutter as a means of avoiding the draft in Czarist Russia. In any event, this anecdote explained why Uncles Irving and Joe, and Aunt Ethel had believed their mother's maiden name to be, respectively, Pearlman, Perlmutter and Pearl. (A later generation of Perlmutters had shortened the name to Pearl.)

I could ignore the obvious Anglicization to Vickers. This narrowed the search to something that sounded like Vichods-Victus-Wichots-Wieshars-Wishots. What

these names essentially had in common was an initial 'v' sound, a middle consonant sounding like 'k,' 'sh,' or 'kh,' and a probable final sound of 'ds' or 'ts.' We knew that her family had come from the Russian Empire. What Russian Jewish surnames could possibly fit those sounds?

The next search was to determine where Grandmother Fanny's family had originated. Perhaps that would provide a clue. Grandfather had been born in Jelgava, Latvia, but had met Grandmother Fanny while serving in the Russian army somewhere in the interior, maybe in Vilnius, Lithuania. One clue was that Uncle Eli's marriage application stated that he had been born in Minsk, now the capital of Belarus. Was that Grandmother Fanny's hometown, or had they merely been billeted there by the army? The next clue came from cemetery records; Grandmother and Grandfather had belonged to the Minsker burial society in New York. Minsk was looking more like a good bet as Grandmother's hometown.

I then turned to Alexander Beider's volume *A Dictionary of Jewish Surnames from the Russian Empire*. In the soundex at the back of the volume, I found two possible matches for the consonant sounds: **VYKHOS** and **VYKHODZ**. More importantly, Beider listed these names as being found in 1912 only in the Minsk guberniya (province). Both names probably were derived from the name of one or two small villages in the region. It looked as though we were on the right track. I wrote to Beider, and asked for his source material. Alas, he could not provide that for the family Vykhodz. For Vykhos there were two persons listed as voters in 1912, neither an obvious relative.

My next act was to do some rudimentary calculation of probable birth years. Grandmother Fanny had been born about 1862, give or take a year. She was not the oldest child, there being at least two older, a sister who had died as a young adult, and a brother who, according to family legend, had run off to join a circus. Based on these data, and assuming that Fanny's parents had begun their family while in their mid-twenties, I calculated that Great-grandfather Gottlieb and his wife Esther had been born in the 1830s, possibly in the early 1830s.

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Fanny Vickers, cont'd. from page 5

Alexsandr Feigmanis had previously done very fruitful research on my father's family in Latvia, finding data going back two and a half centuries. I wrote to him, asking if he would undertake a search in Minsk, maybe a wild goose chase, for the family of a man possibly named Gottlieb Vykhodz, married to a woman named Esther, both born possibly in the early 1830s. I gave him all the background data, with all its underlying assumptions. He promised nothing, but trudged off to Minsk on my behalf.

His findings confirmed my fondest hopes: the family name was indeed Vykhodz. Gotlib Vykhodz had been born in 1829, and his wife Etki in 1825. They had five children, with documentation of the birth of son Feitel (the one who had run off, never to be heard of again) for whom my father was named. My Grandmother Fanny apparently was the youngest.

Feigmanis even was able to provide information about Gottlieb's father Moshe, born probably about 1795, and his wife Rashe, born in 1800. Another line of the family also was identified, although their exact relationship remains uncertain.

Thus I have gone from a situation in which my Grandmother's maiden name and hometown were unknown, to a point where not only are these known to me, but there also is information about her parents and grandparents, back to at least the year 1800.

What are the lessons of this story? First, accept no single piece of historical information as authoritative and final. Birth certificates, marriage licenses, death certificates, census records, all can- and do- contain errors. Each piece of evidence must be confirmed by another source. Otherwise I might still think that my grandmother's maiden name was Perlmutter.

Second, continued searching does pay off. Errors and obvious inconsistencies can be caught and eliminated. The answers may not come immediately; but the search should not be abandoned just because a review of the most obvious sources is fruitless. If you don't know where next to look, ask your colleagues at the JGS for ideas.

Third, be imaginative in your extrapolation outward from the known and proven data to the unknown. Construct possible and probable scenarios to fit the existing data, and then test these hypotheses by further searching. In my hypothesis, I assumed Minsk as the hometown, Vykhodz as the surname, and the early 1830s as the birth years for my great-grandparents, Gottlieb and Esther. Luckily, I was right. If I had been wrong, I would have repeated the process, using different assumptions.

Fourth, when the source material in the United States has been exhausted, take the search overseas.

INTERNATIONAL RESOURCES

Central Archives in Jerusalem

Ed Ehrlich, JewishGen

The Central Archives of the Jewish People, located on the Givat Ram Campus of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, consists mostly of European community records. While the German communities are very well covered, there is less material on those from East Europe.

There are two card indices (nothing has been computerized), and they're both organized by country and city. In other words, before doing any research you need to know the name of the community *and* in which country it was located between World War I and World War II.

The general procedure after finding a document of interest in one of the card catalogues is to fill out a simple form. There is generally a 60-minute wait while the staff retrieves the material. (While you wait, I suggest that you go to the nearby National Library, which has excellent resources, particularly in the Judaic reading room on the second floor.) After receiving the requested material, you can read it in a small but comfortable room, which has a limited number of microfilm readers.

By the way, although the archive has many microfilms it also has a great deal of original material. I remember perusing through a mohel book printed in the beginning of the 18th century. I didn't find what I was looking for, but it was exciting anyway.

Apparently there is vastly more data stored in the archives of the former Soviet Union and neighboring countries than has previously been imagined. But only someone with access to the archive sources, and with knowledge of the languages in which they are written, can do the job properly. Use a qualified researcher.

Fifth, and last, share your findings – and the processes you have used – with others. That desire, in part, is the reason for this article. Your story may inspire the next person. And feedback from others may enable you to expand your searches productively.

Now I am again in the situation that I mentioned at the beginning of this article. My Great-grandmother Esther's maiden name is unknown.

What's happening in your research? As Jim notes, we all have experiences to share. Perhaps you've had a recent success or maybe you're stuck at a brick wall. Why not publish your story in ZichronNote? You never know whom you may inspire or who may provide just the clue you need to break through. -Editor

Genealogical Resources at Sutro Library

by Randy Stehle

Randy has been pursuing his genealogical interests for more than 20 years. He is researching **POOL** from Amsterdam and Rotterdam; **FRANK** from Uithoorn, Holland; **BIERMAN, MULHEIM, BLITZ, KOEKOEK** and **DE HOND** from Amsterdam; **OPPENHEIM** from Zaandam, Holland; **EMDEN** from Emden, Germany; **BRILLIANT** and **SABELOVITZ** from Kovno, Lithuania; **GREEN** and **MARKMAN** from Prussia; **WOLFF** and **FISHMAN** from Sombar, Galicia; **GROSS** from L'vov, Galicia; **RAFALIN** or **RAPHAEL** from Puns, Poland; **GINESHTER** from Puns, Sejny, and Miroslaw, Poland; **WEJSIEYSKA** from Sejny, Poland; and **NICIANSKI** and **POMRANSKY** from Filipow, Poland.

One of the best sources for genealogical information this side of Salt Lake City can be found at Sutro Library. Located at 480 Winston Drive (near the Stonestown shopping center off of 19th Avenue) in San Francisco, it is a branch of the California State Library system. Sutro is open Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. until 5 p.m. Recently, the library received funding for one year (until July 2000), enabling it to open on Saturdays, also from 10 a.m. until 5 p.m. At the end of the year, the value of the weekend hours will be evaluated. If there is funding for the year 2000 and the evaluation warrants it, Saturday hours will continue for another year. The library is closed on all state holidays. For additional information contact the library at (415) 731-4477.

The Sutro Library, formerly housed on the campus on the University of San Francisco, moved to its present location in 1983. In 1987, the genealogical collection at the Main San Francisco Public Library was incorporated into the holdings of Sutro Library. I used Sutro when it was at USF as well as the Genealogy Room at the old Main Public Library. It is much easier to have all the resources in one location, and have room to spread out. An added benefit is the easy parking.

Catalogs: Electronic and Card

Sutro has both an electronic catalog, accessed through one of many of its computer terminals, and an old-fashioned card catalog. The electronic catalog can also be accessed at the State Library's web site (www.lib.state.ca.us). This catalog lists the holdings of both the Sutro Library and the State Library in Sacramento.

The card catalog basically duplicates the list of Sutro holdings, and is divided into two major sections: surname and geographic. These two sections not only pick up the surname/location in the title of the resource, but also many other references mentioned in the work. Sutro has many family histories, so this is a good place to check at the beginning of one's research. There are also smaller sections on censuses, ethnic groups, handbooks, passenger lists and wars. The subject card catalog was closed in July 1992, and even though it has not been touched in almost seven years, a search is still worthwhile. Its strength is that the indexers put in as many leads and cross-

references as they could. These leads do not appear in the electronic catalog.

Microfilm Holdings

Sutro's extensive microfilm holdings include all the Federal censuses from 1790-1920 as well as the soundex indexes. (See "Microfiche Holdings" below for the 1910 Federal census cross-reference, and "Hard Copy Holdings" for the printed Federal census indexes.) Several state and city censuses and vital records indexes can also be found, including the 1905 state census for New Jersey and Wisconsin, as well as the 1897 Los Angeles city census. Washington State is represented by a death index covering 1907-1979 and a marriage index for 1891-1920. Various counties in this state have filmed censuses for a variety of years between 1883 and 1892. A 1949 filming of all Connecticut vital records is also here. There are also many local (state, regional, county, and town) histories.

There are more than 450 city directories, some as recent as the 1930s and 1940s. The three-page list of all these cities is found in a folder on top of the metal filing cabinets. (The hard copy telephone books from the 1940s to date have been removed to storage and are not available for viewing.)

Passenger ship lists for various dates are available for the ports of: Boston, New York City, New Orleans, Baltimore, Philadelphia, and San Francisco. Some of these lists are indexed. Naturalization records from the U.S. District Court, Eastern District from 1876-1908 are the only sizable holding of this type.

Microfiche Holdings

The microfiche collection includes numerous local histories and a large set of Phonofiche. Hundreds of cities are represented in the Phonofiche, some beginning in the 1970s, with many of them present-day. Sutro also has the extremely useful 1910 Federal census cross-reference. This fiche cross-references every street address with its enumeration district for approximately the largest 20 cities in the country.

The California Death Index holdings cover the period 1940-1993, and the California Groom Index covers

Continued on page 8

Sutro Library, *cont'd. from page 7*

1960-1985. The San Francisco Chronicle newspaper is indexed from 1950-1980. The most useful index for researchers with local roots is the San Francisco Newspaper Index. Its covers the years 1904-1959, and references all three daily papers (Examiner, Chronicle, and Call Bulletin).

CD-ROM Holdings

All the CD-ROM titles available at most Mormon Family History Centers are available for viewing on Sutro's two computers. These include the IGI (International Genealogical Index), Ancestral File, Geographic, the Social Security Death Index, and the Korean and Vietnam War Death Indexes. A large selection of Genealogical Research System (GRS) disks is also here. These disks tend to focus on the period before 1880, and are worth spending some time reviewing if you did have relatives in the U.S. during this time. A wide variety of other titles is available, covering Federal censuses, state vital records and land records.

Hard Copy Holdings

The hard copy holdings are divided into six major sections. The largest section is geographical, split between the U.S. and elsewhere. These materials include local histories, city directories, vital record indexes, etc. The U.S. section is arranged by state, beginning with a general section and then sorted alphabetically by city or county. The foreign section is arranged alphabetically by country. The second largest section is family histories, which are arranged in alphabetical order. Smaller sections exist for various ethnic groups, U.S. wars, genealogical journals and handbooks. All the major emigration and immigration indexes can be found at Sutro. The more useful ones include:

- Germans to America, 60 volumes, January 1850-May 1891
- Dutch Households in U.S. Population Censuses, three volumes, 1850, 1860, and 1870
- Dutch Immigration in U.S. Ship Passenger Manifests, two volumes, 1820-1880
- Wuerttemberg (Germany) Emigration Index, six volumes, 19th century, part or all of 39 of 64 oberamts (counties) done. Last volume completed in 1992. Authors are working on volume seven
- Migration From the Russian Empire, four volumes (volumes five and six should be in by the time this article is in print), 1875-June 1891

Sutro has most of the printed Federal census indexes for censuses taken before 1870, and many others from the 1870 and 1880 censuses. You will also find a few of the mortality schedules and even some Canadian census indexes. Sutro has the best selection

of this material in the Bay Area after the Oakland Family History Center. Sutro has posted a list of Bay Area census index holdings next to these bookshelves.

There are many other items that should be helpful to the Jewish researcher. Such obscure books as the three-volume "West Virginia Jewry" can be found here. I was looking at this book several years ago when I was approached by our then-President, Dana Kurtz. She introduced herself, talked to me about the SFBAJGS, invited me to a meeting and gave me her card. I joined our group about a year later. Some of the other useful items include the following:

- Consolidated Surname Index, Avotaynu, 1989 (also available on fiche)
- Russian Consular Records Index and Catalog, Sallyann Amdur Sack, 1987
- A Guide to Jewish Genealogical Research in Israel, Sallyann Amdur Sack, 1987
- Genealogical Resources in the New York Metropolitan Area, Estelle Guzik, 1989
- Jewish Genealogy: a Sourcebook of Family Histories and Genealogies, David Zubatsky, 1984
- From Generation to Generation: How to Trace Your Jewish Genealogy, Arthur Kurzweil, 1980
- Finding Our Fathers: a Guidebook to Jewish Genealogy, Dan Rottenberg, 1986
- Germanic Genealogy: a Guide to Worldwide Sources and Migration Patterns: with a chapter on Jewish genealogy, Edward Brandt, et al., 1995
- Roots-Key, quarterly publication of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Los Angeles, vols. 2-9, 1982-89
- The Origins and History of the Family and Branches of the Berliners of Hannover, 1720-1997, Philipp Goldmann, 1997
- The Belmont-Belmonte Family: a Record of 400 Years, Put Together From the Original Documents in the Archives and Libraries of Spain, Portugal, Holland, England and Germany as Well as From Private Sources, Richard Gottheil, 1917
- The Unbroken Chain: Biographical Sketches and the Genealogy of Illustrious Jewish Families From the 15th-20th Century, Neil Rosenstein, 1976
- Scattered Seeds: the Descendants of Rabbi Israel, One of the Martyrs of Rozanoi, Who Perished on the Second Day of Rosh Hashonah 5420 (Friday, September 9, 1659), George Sackheim, 1986
- Guide to the Western Jewish History Center, 1987

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LOCAL RESOURCES

The San Francisco Public Library

by Gordon Fine

The San Francisco Public Library has many genealogical reference works, including the materials described below. The new library at 100 Larkin Street is a wonderful, attractive building. Its holdings are readily available to the public; it's free; and it's convenient to public transportation on BART (Civic Center stop), MUNI, and parking is available at the nearby Civic Center parking lot.

The library's hours are: Monday, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.; Tuesday through Thursday, 9 a.m. - 8 p.m.; Friday, 11 a.m. - 5 p.m.; Saturday, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.; and Sunday, 12 noon - 5 p.m. Call for additional information: (415) 557-4400.

Of particular interest to genealogists are the microfilm and microfiche holdings on the fifth floor section for newspapers and magazines. Microfilms of newspapers, mostly from California, are:

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>Alta California, 1849-1891 California Star, 1847-1848 Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, 1855-1900 Frank Leslie's Illustrated Weekly, 1892-1908 San Francisco Shipping Guide, 1906-1966 San Francisco Independent, 1988-1995 San Francisco Progress, 1949-1955 San Francisco Bulletin, 1855-1929 San Francisco Daily Morning Call, 1863-1914 San Francisco Call Post, 1914-1929 San Francisco Call Bulletin, 1929-1959 San Francisco News, 1930-1958 San Francisco News Call Bulletin, 1958-1965 San Francisco Chronicle, 1865-present San Francisco Examiner, 1865-present</p> | <p>Los Angeles Times, 1881-present (with indices 1973-present) Los Angeles Daily Herald, 1878-1881 Los Angeles Evening Express, 1980-present Los Angeles Southern Californian, 1854-1855 Los Angeles Southern News, 1861-1862 London Times, 1785-present National Observer, 1962-1977 New York Times, 1851-present (with a full set of bound indices) USA Today, 1982-present Wall Street Journal, 1889-present (with indices 1957-present) Washington Post, 1969-present (with indices 1979-present)</p> |
|---|---|

The San Francisco Public Library also has a series of microfilms for city directories from 1861 to 1881. Those city directories (listed below) include Los Angeles, Oakland, San Francisco, and Sacramento. The library also has San Francisco city directories from 1850 to 1861 on microfiche, and San Francisco telephone directories from 1898 to 1992 on microfilm. The 1861-1881 city directories on microfilm are for:

| | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| <p>Albany, NY Baltimore, MD Brooklyn, NY Boston, MA Buffalo, NY Burlington, VT Charleston, SC Chattanooga, TN Chicago, IL Cincinnati, OH Cleveland, OH Columbus, OH Dallas, TX Davenport, IA Dayton, OH Denver, CO Des Moines, IA Detroit, MI Erie, PA Evansville, IN</p> | <p>Fall River, MA Fort Wayne, IN Galveston, TX Grand Rapids, MI Harrisburg, PA Hartford, CT Indianapolis, IN Jersey City, NJ Joliet, IL Kansas City, KS Lexington, KY Little Rock, AR Los Angeles, CA Louisville, KY Lowell, MA Manchester, NH Memphis, TN Milwaukee, WI Minneapolis, MN</p> | <p>Mobile, AL Montana Nashville, TN Nevada New Haven, CT New Orleans, LA New York, NY Newark, NJ Norfolk, VA Oakland, CA Omaha, NE Paterson, NJ Peoria, IL Philadelphia, PA Pittsburgh, PA Portland, ME Portland, OR Providence, RI Reading, PA</p> | <p>Richmond, VA Rochester, NY Sacramento, CA Salt Lake City, UT San Antonio, TX San Francisco, CA Savannah, GA Scranton, PA Seattle, PA St. Louis, MO St. Paul, MN Syracuse, NY Toledo, OH Topeka, KS Troy, NY Utica, NY Washington, DC Wilmington, DE Worcester, MA</p> |
|---|--|---|--|

The Hastings Law Library

by Gordon Fine

Do you have lawyers in your family? The UC Hastings Law Library is two blocks from the San Francisco Public Library at 200 McAllister Street. On the fifth floor are back volumes from Martindale, later Martindale-Hubbell, Law Directory, a national directory of lawyers. Hastings has volumes from 1924 to the present. Information about each lawyer is arranged alphabetically according to the geographic location. (Don't expect to find an attorney practicing in Palo Alto listed under San Francisco.) The information varies from year to year, but generally includes name, date and place of birth, year of admission to the bar (of that state as well as other jurisdictions), undergraduate college and law school, years of graduation, and office address. Apart from these specific types of information obtainable from one volume, a run of these volumes for many years may be used much like city directories to trace an individual's career over a number of years. Martindale-Hubbell information can also be used to provide information needed to search for birth certificates (from the date and place of birth); alumni information from the attorney's educational institutions; and application information from the state bar. More recent editions also list such things as law review articles and memberships in various organizations.

Finding the volumes is not easy. When you enter the building, nod to the security guard and explain you're using the library. From the entry hall, take the elevators on the left, to the fourth floor. Exit to the right, pass through the turnstile to enter the library and take a left down a long hallway. Half way down the hallway, turn left into another hallway with another bank of elevators. Take these elevators (or the stairs) to the fifth floor. Exit to the left, then take another left down the stacks. Finally, on your left, you'll see a series of brown volumes with black and red bindings with gold lettering.

The library's hours vary according to the school term so call in advance: (415) 565-4750. As you might expect of an educational institution, especially a law library, Hastings frequently has late and weekend hours. More information, including hours and a searchable online catalog, is available on the library's web site at www.uchastings.edu/library.

NATIONAL RESOURCES

How to Obtain a Veterans Administration Claim Number

by Arlene Swartzberg Weiss

Though my father never spoke to me about his Army Service, I knew that he participated in World War I. I also knew that he incurred a minor back injury while in the Army and visited a Veterans Administration (VA) hospital in the 1930s when I was a child. Unfortunately I never had his Army service number or VA claim number, never knew what infantry division he was in or any other pertinent information. I had been told that without this information, records could not be located.

Earlier this year I decided to call the VA to try to find out more information. The clerk told me to "forget about it" as it was too long ago. I insisted that he look my father up in the computer. I provided an exact name and birth date, which are essential, and my father's social security number which helps to confirm the identification of the person found. And what do you know? My father was listed along with those precious numbers, both the Army service number and his VA number. Using the required Standard Form 180, I requested my father's army and veteran records.

The records I received were astounding. All the paperwork ever filled out about my father, between 1917 and his death in 1985, was included! I learned the name of the Lithuanian shtetl from which my father immigrated, when he arrived in the U.S., where he enlisted (Fort McDowell in San Francisco), the dates and places where he served in World War I. Also included were names of siblings, including those that remained in Europe. The treasure trove also provided pay stubs, hospital visit data, and official correspondence. I also received a copy of his death certificate and funeral expenses. These records were all the more exciting, as I had been unable to find any official documents about my father.

If you have an exact name, birth date, and Social Security Number, you can call the VA at (800) 827-1000, to obtain a Veterans Administration claim number. Using its database, the VA should be able to provide you with both the VA claim number and a service number. Request that you be sent Form 180 which you will need to complete to request military and VA records. The form can also be downloaded from www.nara.gov/regional/mpr.html. The records are just waiting in the archives to be researched.

It Must Have Been “Bashert”

by Evelyn Zarchy Miller

Evelyn and Sol Miller recently joined the SFBAJGS. However, as you can tell from her story, Evelyn has long been interested in her family's history and finds relatives in the most unexpected ways! We hope the JGS can make the Millers' research even more fruitful, and that they will continue to share their discoveries. Evelyn and Sol are researching **BERSON, DEVINOFF, GASARCH, MIRIN, POTASHNIKOV, and ZARCHY** from Velizh, Belarus; **BRAININ** from Vitebsk, Belarus; and **DRATWIN, ESTERMAN, MAZUR, MILCAITE, and PALANSKY** from Veliouna, and Jubarkas, Lithuania.

This is a story about my mother's family that starts in Russia almost 100 years ago and unexpectedly resumes at the present time in California. Some background biographical notes will help in understanding the full impact of this most improbable sequence of current events.

The history of my mother's family around the turn of the century is much like that of many other Russian Jews of the time. They lived in the “shtetle” (a little village or ghetto area) of the small town of Velizh, not far from the city of Vitebsk, in what is now Belarus. It was at the height of a period of great emigration to the U.S.

My grandparents, Maier and Beilya **BERSON**, had nine children, seven girls and two boys. Three of the sisters came to the U.S. and settled in New York City: my mother Anna, my Aunts Bessie (Basha) and Celia (Chippa). The other family members remained in Velizh. When they bid farewell to one another, not one of them expected that they would never again see each other.

My mother had told me many stories about her childhood. Her father, who had red hair, was known as “Maier der geller.” He was a musician, a pianist and a Klezmer, who was often called upon to give command performances for visiting dignitaries. There were always several pianos in their living room because he also repaired and tuned them. She described their house: where they slept; the food they grew, stored, and ate; and various details of housekeeping. However, there was one story, which I have retold to just about everyone, that obviously had a great impact upon her and subsequently upon me. It involves her younger sister Sonia who was a child prodigy.

Sonia played the piano, by ear, as a very young child, so small that she had to reach the keyboard by getting up on the piano bench on her knees. The mayor of the town walked to his office daily. As he passed mother's house he could hear Sonia playing the piano. One day, the mayor and his wife visited my grandmother and asked her to “GIVE” them this most talented child. They had no children of their own, and since Jews were not permitted in the “public” schools, they offered the incentive that they

could give her the education she deserved. Furthermore, they said, “You have so many children, what difference does it make if you have one less?” In response to which, grandmother was said to have held up her two hands, with fingers outstretched, and said, “See, I have ten fingers, but I would not give up any of them.” From that day on the shutters of the house were kept tightly closed for fear that Sonia would be *taken* away. I was told that, later on, when Sonia was older, my grandfather took her to one of the big cities, to live with a cousin who had a non-Jewish husband, so she could attend school and further her study of music.

Aunt Bessie, the youngest of the three sisters in the U.S., had retained her fluency in the Russian language and corresponded with the family until it became too difficult to do so under the Communist regime. Consequently, as I grew up, I knew rather little of the whereabouts and well-being of most of our Russian Berson Family. However, because of the earlier correspondence, our family was certain that my grandmother and at least some of my mother's sisters still lived in the hometown of Velizh at the time of the start of World War II. We felt equally certain that Sonia was living in Leningrad by that time.

The last we heard of Sonia was by way of an indirect recounting of a visit with her by a “landsman” (someone who was originally from Velizh, but now an American) after the end of World War II. At the time, my husband Sol and I lived on the East Coast and my parents on the West Coast. We never knew this “landsman,” nor his name. We were told that he had gone to Russia as soon as he could after the war ended, and somehow met with Sonia on a park bench in Leningrad. It was the only place that wouldn't be “bugged,” although there was no assurance that they weren't “observed.” We were delighted to learn that she had survived the war, but we did not learn her surname, whether or not she had married, or had children. We also had an inaccurate idea that she was a professor of music at the Conservatory in Leningrad where she had, indeed, actually studied. We, of course, assumed that my mother and aunts knew all the answers. When one is young, there is a natural tendency to leave matters of family history

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Bashert, cont'd. from page 11

to the elders, with the proverbial and unrealistic assumption that they will always be there to answer questions.

We also learned that my mother's youngest brother, my Uncle Zalman, was alive after the war. There was excitement at our house, while the three sisters regularly sent packages to him. It ended abruptly when we received a letter, not in the usual Russian, but in Yiddish, asking us not to send Zalman any more packages because it was making him look bad with the authorities, and to please send them to the letter writer of whom we had never heard. Needless to say, we ceased sending packages, and had no way of finding out what happened to Zalman after that. Any number of scenarios would have been plausible under the conditions that prevailed in the Soviet Union at that time, including that he was possibly no longer alive and the stranger planned to keep the packages.

In January of 1942 the *New York Times* carried a one-paragraph news item telling of the Nazi invasion of the town of Velizh. My grandmother should have been in her late nineties at the time. That description, engraved in my memory, was that the residents were herded into a barn and burned alive. During a recent trip to France, Sol and I saw graphic proof that this was standard procedure for the invading Nazis everywhere they went. The French government has preserved the remains of the entire burned out town of Oradour-sur-Glane, exactly as the Germans had left it in 1944, to serve as a permanent monument to it's slain residents. As we solemnly strolled through the silent cobblestone streets, past stone foundations and charred metal remains, including sewing machines and bed frames, we recalled the similar fate of my family in Velizh.

Last fall, Moscow television aired a documentary on the invasion of Velizh which included movies taken by the Germans themselves. The *New York Times'* terse report had neglected to say that the residents had been herded into not only one barn, but wooden residences as well, that windows were boarded and nailed shut before the buildings were torched, and that Nazi soldiers stood by and shot anyone who managed to break out. Such were the memories of my mother's family – The Bersons of Velizh!

With that as background, let me take you to Congregation Beth Am, Los Altos Hills, California, where we have been active members since 1960. In 1988, we were fortunate to witness the beginnings of another influx of Russian-Jewish émigrés to the U.S. On Yom Kippur of that year a fellow congregant asked for volunteers to help the newcomers learn

our language and everything else that they would need to know in order to be able to function in our very different society. Sol and I heeded the call and proceeded to meet with this wonderful group of people. They all reminded us of the relatives and "landsleit" we knew as children. They even prepared the same foods. We've enjoyed our interaction with them immensely and have made treasured friends.

As we would meet new émigrés I would always ask where they had come from in the former Soviet Union. After listening to their answer, I'd follow by recounting that my family had come from a little town near Vitebsk. In ten years of asking "where are you from?" we'd met no-one who had come from or near, Vitebsk, and certainly not anyone from Velizh. We even went to piano recitals given by newly arrived émigrés who had studied at the Conservatory in Leningrad, and pursued possible news of Sonia. But all we could do was inquire about a pianist named Sonia, of the previous generation, whose surname was unknown to us. It was rather frustrating and pretty hopeless!

This brings us to the conclusion of my story. Each year, we buy four season tickets to the San Jose Repertory Theater. We use two for us and two for family and émigré friends, rotating guests as appropriate for the work to be shown. The final play of the season was to be on June 3, 1998. At about noon on that day I received a telephone call that started a most unexpected, unusual, and improbable, sequence of events.

Our son David called to say that he and his wife, Eva, were not going to be able to join us at the theater that night. Eva had been looking after her daughter's nine-month old twins and was utterly exhausted! I phoned Polina, one of our émigré friends, told her about David's telephone call, and said that since another émigré couple had come with us last time, it was now their turn; were she and Ilya free? She replied that she was, Ilya was not. I was on my way out for the remainder of the day. I asked Polina to please invite anyone she cared to, and said that we would pick them up that evening on our way to the theater.

We pulled up in front of Polina's apartment to find her accompanied by a tall, handsome gentleman whom she introduced as Alex Levi: a friend she had known in Leningrad who is now a neighbor in Mountain View. His wife wasn't feeling well that evening and chose to stay at home. Polina had a hard time convincing him to use a theater ticket paid for by people whom he did not know. She prevailed and he joined us.

Outside the theater, the brightly lit marquee displayed "COLE," the title of the play which we were to see. I was surprised to have Alex ask: "Which one

of Cole Porter's plays is this? He wrote many." Before getting to our seats, I only had time to reply that this was not *one* of his plays, but a play *about* him and his life. I thought of his question throughout the first act.

When we got to the lobby for intermission, I asked Alex how come he knew about Cole Porter. The émigrés we have met have known very little about American composers and their music. At this point Polina and I simultaneously laughed and noted that everyone knew Gershwin's Porgy and Bess, for the obvious reason that it showed poverty in America, which suited the Communist government's propaganda. However, she continued to tell us that Alex is a musician, and that we *must* hear how beautifully he plays the piano without ever having had any formal musical training. Alex modestly explained that his mother had been a professional pianist and although she had always wanted to teach him to read music, he had declined. He then added, by way of further explanation: "my grandfather had also been a musician, a true Klezmer." Up to this point the interchange was rather casual and sedate. We were just making polite conversation, passing the time until the second act curtain call. Continuing in that manner, even though Polina had introduced him as a friend from Leningrad, I asked my inevitable question: "where are you from?" At which point, the calm conversation changed into the following very rapid, very emotional exchange.

Alex: I'm from Leningrad, but I was born in a small town near Vitebsk.

Evelyn: Really? My parents came from a small town near Vitebsk. What was the name of the town?

Alex: Velizh.

Evelyn: My parents also came from Velizh. What was your mother's family name?

Alex: Berson.

Evelyn: My mother's family name was also Berson! *(Practically screeching, excitement rising, experiencing chills and sweats but, nevertheless, in absolute, total, disbelief that there could possibly be any significance to this strange coincidence of the same surnames.)* What was your mother's name?

Alex: Sonia.

Certain, now, that this would be the definitive fact that would disprove that we *might* be related, Sol added: "What was your grandfather's name?"

Alex: Maier.

Sol & Evelyn *(in unison)*: MAIER DER GELLER???

Alex: Yes! Maier der geller!

Polina: *(Holding her head in her hands)* Oh my God!

Evelyn: It can't be! It's impossible! I don't believe it!

The second act curtain call sounded and as we walked sideways down the aisle, returning to our seats, Alex said "You know, my mother had three sisters who went to the United States: Anna, Basha (Bessie) and Chippa (Celia). As a matter of fact, Bessie's letters to her cost me my job – more than once!" I, in a daze, repeating over and over replied, "I don't believe this is really happening!!"

I am still repeating that phrase and retelling the story with great joy, excitement and disbelief, but there is no longer any doubt. ALEX AND I ARE FIRST COUSINS! OUR MOTHERS WERE SISTERS! HE IS THE SON OF THE SISTER SONIA IN MY MOTHER'S TALES OF HER CHILDHOOD!!

We chattered excitedly all the way back to Mountain View, with the five of us "driving," a bit worried about paying proper attention to the freeway traffic, and even then taking the wrong exit. Still in shock and continuing to question, we went to Polina's apartment for a cup of tea. Alex rejoined us after stopping to tell his wife, Simona, what had just occurred. We continued our animated conversation, each telling of the family members in the country of our birth and upbringing. It was more than we could sort out and absorb in one late night session.

At approximately 1 a.m., the telephone rang and Alex went to his apartment where Simona had taken out some family photographs for him to show to us. There was a group photo of my Grandmother and five of her six children who had remained in Russia, including Alex as a baby, with his mother, father and older brother. Both Sol and I exclaimed in surprise that we have a copy of that photograph but we couldn't identify any of the people. We reluctantly said goodnight about 3 a.m., but not one of us really slept that night.

The final surprise came after I realized that the very beautiful woman in that group photograph, whom Alex had identified as his mother, was also in a photograph that I had in my unidentified files. I had actually put it in the file of Sol's family! The three-quarter view of her face and hairstyle were unmistakable. She was accompanied by a man and only one child. I rushed to show it to Alex, but was unprepared for his emotional response and excitement. It was, indeed, a picture of his mother, with his father and older brother, taken about 75 years ago, before he was born. It obviously had been sent to the sisters in the U.S., and he had never seen it!

And so the excitement has continued: 75 - 100 year-old pictures and stories; the charting of a family tree, with much of it made up of the Russian Berson family

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SFBAJGS Elections and the Future of the Society

Dana Kurtz, SFBAJGS Vice President, Past President, ZichronNote Editor

It's Summer in the Bay Area and so my thoughts naturally turn to the year 2000. This December marks the end of the two-year term of the current officers of the SFBAJGS. Therefore, it is time to begin thinking about the future of the Society.

The JGS has grown in recent years and it is essential that more members contribute to its ongoing success. I would like to ask each of you to think about what you want from the JGS and how you can participate in making and keeping the Society strong. Not all commitments require significant amounts of time.

Elected officers are:

- President
- Vice President
- Treasurer
- Corresponding Secretary
- Recording Secretary

Other opportunities can be managed by an individual or shared by a committee. They include:

- Membership
- Program coordination
- Publicity
- ZichronNote (our newsletter)
- Librarian/Library committee/library staffing volunteers
- Web page maintenance and enhancement
- Hospitality (e.g., arranging for cookies at meetings)

I would like specifically to address production of this newsletter. You may have noticed that you did not receive a May issue. We hope this "double" issue makes up for it. Simply put, the two of us who compile, compose, seek authors, design the layout, label and mail *ZichronNote* have professional commitments that no longer afford us the time to prepare the newsletter by ourselves.

We need volunteers to notice interesting postings on JewishGen, write a few paragraphs about what is or isn't working in your research, and solicit articles from others. If you've got desktop publishing skills, or would like to learn, **we need you**. None of the tasks that go into putting *ZichronNote* together is difficult, and no one will be forced to "go it alone." However, without new volunteers, *ZichronNote* will languish.

This notice serves as the first call for nominations for elected positions. You may nominate yourself or another member. I also strongly encourage you to volunteer, in any way that interests you. You will certainly get more out of the Society as an active participant. All of us who have volunteered can attest to that.

If you would like to know more about any of the opportunities, or are ready to participate, please give me a call, or drop me a note or an email: Dana Kurtz, 2201 Pacific Ave., #402, San Francisco, CA 94115, (415) 921-6761, or DLKURTZ@ix.netcom.com.

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we in the U.S. had never known; first cousins, scattered about the U.S. and Europe, whom we have yet to meet; family members in the U.S. we have yet to introduce to Alex and Simona; and finding photographs, like that of Aunt Bessie, that had been sent to the family in Russia, which now have come back to the U.S. with the new émigrés. Perhaps most surprising is finding that my Uncle Zalman's wife, Masha, is alive and well, at age 90, living in Minneapolis, with their two children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. It seems as though we will never catch up.

Unfortunately, however, along with all of our joy and happy discoveries, has come the sad confirmation that my Grandmother Beilya, Aunt Riva, Aunt Sora,

her husband, and two of their children were among those killed in Velizh on January 29, 1942.

With the help of modern technology, scanners, computers, and email, we will all be richer for sharing our heritage, but how can we *ever* explain the unrelated, incongruous chain of events that brought us together, and not even in New York, where the American sisters were known to have lived, or Los Angeles, where my parents later settled, but in Northern California – *San Jose* – of all places!

Our parents would have said it was "bashert" (loosely translated from Yiddish as pre-ordained). Alex says that he, for one, now believes in "FATE." I *STILL* CAN'T BELIEVE IT!!

Some Resources for Genealogical Research in New York City

Compiled by Dana L. Kurtz, July 1999

This listing was compiled using information from various web sites. The holdings outlined do not represent the entire collection of the repositories, nor is any assurance made as to the accuracy of the data presented. Some conflicts regarding hours and fees were found. Please contact the individual facilities to confirm all information. Web sites reviewed include:

Ancestry - www.ancestry.com

Everton's Genealogical Helper - www.everton.com/usa/ny.htm

Family Tree Maker - www.familytreemaker.com

JewishGen - www.jewishgen.org/infofiles/

JGS-NY - members.aol.com/nyc99conf/

National Archives and Records Administration - www.nara.gov

New York Public Library - www.nypl.org

NYC Dept. of Health - www.ci.nyc.ny.us/html/doh/html/vr/vr.html

NYC Municipal Archives - www.ci.nyc.ny.us/html/doris/html/archives.html

Vital records info online - vitalrec.com/ny.html

Many of the facilities will provide some research services by mail, telephone or fax. Please contact the individual repository for more information.

New York City Municipal Archives

31 Chambers Street, Room 103, New York, NY 10007; (212) 788-8580

Hours: Monday - Thursday, 9 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., Friday 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Holdings include:

Census

- Manhattan - 1890 New York City (Manhattan only) "Police Census"
- Brooklyn - New York State Census, Kings County, 1855, 1865, 1875, 1892, 1905, 1915. Not indexed; listed according to ward and/or assembly district, and enumeration district number.
- Richmond (Staten Island) - New York State Census, Richmond County, 1855, 1865, 1875, 1892, 1905, 1915. Not indexed; similar as Kings County Census above.

City Directories

- Manhattan - 1873-1913, 1915-1918, 1920, 1922, 1924, 1931, 1933
- Brooklyn - 1796, 1802, 1811, 1822-1826, 1829-1910, 1912-13, 1933

Vital Records

Manhattan

Births: July 1847-1848; July 1853-1909

Deaths: 1795; 1802-1804; 1808; 1812-1948

Marriages*: June 1847-1848; July 1853-1937

Brooklyn

Births: 1866-1909

Deaths: 1847-1853; 1857-1948

Marriages*: 1866-1937

Queens, Richmond (Staten Island), Bronx (The Bronx was not a separate borough until 1898. For earlier records search Manhattan.)

Births: 1898-1909

Deaths: 1898-1948

Marriages*: 1898-1937

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*Heath Department marriage certificates and indexes for all boroughs prior to 1938 are available on microfilm; Index to City Clerk marriage licenses for all boroughs, 1908-1929, available on microfilm; licenses 1908-1929 have not been microfilmed; license copies are available only by special order.

Voter Registration Records

- New York County: records of naturalized voters, 1872-1878; registers of voters, 1872-1922 (with gaps)
- Queens County: registers of voters, 1898-1948
- Richmond County: registers of voters 1898-1956

Other Records (including but not limited to)

- Potter's Field records, a burial site for indigent people
 - Almshouse, 1758-1953
 - Assessed Valuation of Real Estate, 1789-1979
 - Department of Buildings, 1866-1975
 - Courts, 1684-1940
 - District Attorneys Office, ca. 1790-1966
-

City of New York Department of Health

Division of Vital Records, 125 Worth Street, Room 133/144, New York, NY 10013; (212) 788-4520

Hours: Monday - Thursday 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., Friday 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Holdings include:

- Birth Indexes, 1857-1909, Old Town and Health Department
- Birth Records, 1847-1909, Old Town and Health Department
- Birth Index, 1880-1904 for Manhattan hospital births
- Births, 1898-1909, Soundex indexes for all boroughs
- Birth Indexes, (all boroughs) 1910-present
- Birth certificates, 1910-present
- Brides' and Grooms' Indexes, 1866-1937, Old Town & Health Department
- Brides' and Grooms' Indexes, 1908-1929, City Clerk, all boroughs
- Marriage Indexes, Brides and Grooms, 1908-1937
- Marriage Certificates, 1908-1929, City Clerk, all boroughs (must be ordered)
- Death Indexes - Health Department, 1848-1948
- Death Records - Health Department, 1795-1948
- Death Indexes (all boroughs), 1949-present
- Death certificates, 1949-present
- Death certificates for U.S. soldiers in Cuba and Puerto Rico, 1898 - May 1, 1900
- Geographic indexes by street address for births in Manhattan, 1895-1909, and for the other four boroughs, 1898-1909

Basic Information (according to the New York Department of Health web site):

Birth records are only available to the individual of record and/or a direct descendant. If the individual is deceased, a copy of the death certificate must accompany the request. If the person of record is living, the request must be accompanied by a notarized letter of authorization from that individual, naming the person who may request a copy of the record.

At least two pieces of information about a deceased person (other than information found in the indexes) should be included in the application for a death record. Be sure to indicate your relationship to the deceased person on the application.

For birth records (other than your own) and death records, a copy will not be provided immediately even if you come in-person. Allow 6 to 8 weeks for a return reply by mail.

Birth records from 1920 to the present are available in shortened computer form. These short forms do not include parents' ages, place of birth, occupation or number of children previously born to the mother. The short forms cost the same \$15. You must specifically ask for the long form if you wish this additional information for post-1920 records.

No records (except your own short form birth record) can be obtained immediately.

National Archives and Records Administration (NARA)

North East Region, 201 Varick Street, 12th Floor, New York, NY 10014; (212) 337-1300

Hours: Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and every third Saturday (microfilm use only)

Holdings include:

Census

- Federal Census records indexes, 1880, 1900, 1910, 1920
- Federal Census Records, 1790-1920 (1890 fragments)

Immigration

- Passenger arrival list indexes for the Port of New York (except 1847-1896, 1948-1957)
- Passenger arrival lists for the Port of New York, 1820-1847, 1897-1948
- Also: Galveston, 1896-1951; Philadelphia (index 1883-1948); Canadian Border Entries through Small Ports in Vermont (index 1895-1925); St. Albans Vermont District through Canadian Pacific and Atlantic Ports, 1929-49 (index 1924-52)

Naturalization

- Declarations of Intent, 1792-1959 (New York City area)
- Naturalization Records, 1792-1958 (all New York City courts)
- Petitions for Naturalization:
 - U.S. District Court, Eastern District, 1865-1991
 - U.S. District Court, Southern District, 1824-1992
 - U.S. Circuit Court, Southern District, 1906-1911

Military Records

- Revolutionary War; War of 1812; Civil War (Union)
- World War I Draft Registration for New York, New Jersey, Puerto Rico

Other Resources

- New York City directories
- Concentration camp records (limited)
- Vital Records indexes - New York State Health Department (New York City not included)
 - Birth Indexes: 1881-1921
 - Marriage Indexes: 1881-1907, 1908-1914, 1915-1939, 1940-1946
 - Death Indexes: 1881-1939, 1940-1946 Soundex
- 1910 Census Street Guide for New York City (Queens not included), and Elizabeth, Newark, and Paterson, New Jersey

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New York Public Library

Fifth Avenue at 42nd Street, New York, NY 10018; (212) 930-0828 (Genealogy), (212) 930-0838 (Microforms)

Hours: Vary by division. You are encouraged to contact the library or check their web site for further information concerning hours and holdings.

Basic Information:

Many different divisions hold resources of interest to the genealogist. These include:

- Rose Main Reading Room (Room 315)
- U.S. History, Local History, and Genealogy Division (Room 100)
- Map Division (Room 117)
- Jewish Division (Room 84)
- Slavic and Baltic Division (Room 217)

Holdings Include:

New York City Vital Records Indexes (Brooklyn, Queens, and Staten Island (Richmond) are not included until 1898)

- Birth Indexes: August 1888-1915, 1921 (film); 1898-1975 (fiche); 1916-1982 (books)
- Marriage (Health Department) Grooms' Indexes: 1888-1937
- Death Indexes: August 1888-1956 (film); Manhattan - 1798-1865 (film); 1957-1982 (books)

Other Vital Records

- Barbour Collection of Connecticut Vital Records to 1850
- Massachusetts Vital Records Microfiche Series

United States Census and Soundex Index

- New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, 1790-1880
- New York, 1900
- New York, New Jersey, Conn., Puerto Rico, 1910
- New York, Puerto Rico, 1920

New York State Census

- New York County, 1855 and 1905 (includes Bronx), 1915, 1925
- Bronx County, 1915, 1925
- Kings County, 1855, 1865, 1875, 1892, 1905, 1915, 1925
- Queens County, 1915, 1925; Richmond County, 1865, 1875, 1915, 1925
- Nassau County, 1915, 1925
- Suffolk County, 1915, 1925
- Westchester County, 1905, 1915, 1925

Other Census Records

- "Police Census" - New York City (Manhattan and Bronx only), 1890
- New Jersey State Census, 1855, 1865, 1875, 1885, 1895, 1905

Immigration (NARA microfilm)

- Passenger Lists (Index) for the Port of New York, 1820-1846
- Passenger Lists (Index) for the Port of New York, 1897-June 30, 1902
- Passenger Lists (Soundex) for the Port of New York, July 1902-1943
- Passenger Lists for the Port of New York, 1820-1910
- St. Albans District Manifest Records of Aliens Arriving from Foreign Contiguous Territory: Arrivals at Canadian Border Ports, January 1895-June 30, 1924
- Holland-America Line passenger indexes, 1900-1940

Naturalization and Passport

- Index (Soundex) to Naturalization Petitions, 1792-1906 (New York, Kings, Queens, Richmond counties)
- Alphabetical Index to Petitions for Naturalization of the U. S. District Court for the Eastern District of New York, 1865-1957
- Passport Application Registers and indexes, 1810-1906

U.S. Military Sources

- Indexes to military service and pension records in the National Archives
- Revolutionary War Pension and Bounty-Land Warrant Application Files
- Index to War of 1812 Pension Application Files
- Index to Mexican War Application Files
- Index to Compiled Service Records of Volunteer Union Soldiers Who Served in Organizations from CT, ME, MA NH, NJ, NY, RI, VT
- Index to Compiled Service Records of Volunteer Soldiers Who Served During: War of 1812, Indian Wars, Mexican War, Spanish-American War, Philippine Insurrection
- General Index to Pension Files, 1861-1934

Newspapers and Newspaper Indexes

- New York City and Brooklyn newspapers from the colonial period to the present
- New York City ethnic newspapers
- The New York Times Obituaries Index, 1858-1978
- Personal Name Index to *The New York Times Index*, 1851-1989
- Deaths Taken from the *Brooklyn Eagle*, 1841-1880
- Marriages taken from the *Brooklyn Eagle*, 1841-1880
- Deaths - *New York Evening Post*, 1801-1890
- Marriages - *New York Evening Post*, 1801-1890

City and Telephone Directories

- New York City (from 1786), Brooklyn (from 1796), Queens, and Staten Island (collection almost complete)
- Extensive collection of directories for more than 300 major U.S. cities

Map Division

Outstanding collections dating from the 1600s.

- Maps and gazetteers of many European countries and towns; U.S. localities
- New York City Maps, sheet maps and atlases
- Property maps of New York City (including maps at the block and lot level from the 1850s)
- Property evaluation and ownership data for all five boroughs are available on microfiche
- Antiquarian Maps from the major early European mapmakers

The Dorot Jewish Division

"... one of the world's great collections of Judaica." Slightly less than half the holdings are written in Hebrew, the remainder in English, German, Russian, French, and other languages.

- Yizkor books
- Holocaust survivor lists
- Rabbinic genealogies
- Rabbinic responsa
- 19th and 20th century foreign-language Jewish newspapers
- English language newspapers and periodicals (including the *Jewish Daily Forward*)
- Histories of Jewish communities around the world
- Bibliographies
- Hebrew and Yiddish literature
- Oral histories

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Slavic and Baltic Division

- Books and other materials in Slavic and other Eastern European languages
 - Newspaper collection including the Minsk Guberniya Gazette and published indexes to journals and publications of more than 500 scholarly organizations predating 1917
 - Guides to libraries and archives in the former Soviet Union, Poland, and Czechoslovakia
 - Polish and Russian business directories
-

Center for Jewish History

15 West 16th Street (between 5th and 6th Avenues), New York, NY 10011

Basic Information:

The Center is comprised of the American Jewish Historical Society, the Leo Baeck Institute, YIVO Institute For Jewish Research, and the Yeshiva University Museum.

American Jewish Historical Society (AJHS) www.cjh.org/partners.html#AJHS

Holdings Include:

- 40 million archival documents
- 30,000 books
- Thousands of paintings and memorabilia related to Jewish life in the Americas

Leo Baeck Institute www.cjh.org/partners.html#Baeck

Holdings Include:

Records pertaining to the life and history of Jews in German-speaking countries. Examples:

- Some records of births, circumcisions, deaths, and marriages
- Library includes 60,000 volumes, covering many Jewish communities in Germany
- Family histories and business reports
- 19th and 20th century periodicals
- Individuals, families and organizational documents including family histories

YIVO Institute For Jewish Research www.cjh.org/partners.html#YIVO

Basic Information:

The world's largest collection of books and materials on the history and culture of Eastern European Jewry, and their descendants in the United States.

Holdings include:

- Large collection of yizkor books
- Landsmanshaftn records (more than 800 organizations)
- Genealogies
- Holocaust victim and survivor lists
- Photograph collection includes images of street scenes, organizations, individuals, occupations, and schools in Eastern Europe.
- Non-Eastern European holdings include records of the Union Generale des Israelites de France which include lists of persons in and outside of concentration and written testimonies
- Holocaust period materials for Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Lithuania, and elsewhere
- Births and deaths in Theresienstadt

Yeshiva University Museum (YUM) www.cjh.org/partners.html#Yeshiva

Basic Information:

Exhibits, festivals and other events, based on the Center's collections.

Office of the City Clerk – Manhattan

City Clerk's Office, Municipal Building, 1 Centre Street, Room 252, New York, NY 10007; (212) 669-8170

Hours: Monday – Friday, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m..

Holdings include:

- Marriage indexes, 1908-1937, Brides and Grooms
- Marriage records, 1908-1937, Brides and Grooms
- Marriage applications, 1908-present
- Marriage Indexes, all boroughs, 1930-present.
- Marriage Records, all boroughs, 1930-present.

Note: Indexes not open to researchers. Only records more than 50 years old can be requested.

County Clerk's Office – New York County

State Supreme Court - N.Y. County, Division of Old Records, 31 Chambers Street, 7th Floor, New York, NY; (212) 374-4376, 4781. Mail: N.Y. County Clerk's Office, 60 Centre Street, Room 161, New York, NY10007

Hours: Tuesday and Thursday, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m., 2 p.m. - 5 p.m. Other times by appointment.

Holdings Include:

- Divorce, separation, annulment cases brought in N.Y. County, 1784-1940. Only available if more than 100 years old. Indexes are open.
 - Divorce, separation, annulment cases brought in N.Y. County, 1941 to the present. Matrimonial cases are closed except to the involved parties or their attorneys. Indexes are open.
-

New York Genealogical and Biographical Society

122 East 58th Street, New York, NY 10022-1939; (212) 755-8532

Hours: Tuesday - Saturday, 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Fees: Entry fee - \$10; annual membership - \$50

Basic Information Private library. Full access to the library's open shelves, microform and manuscript collections for members only. Non-members may use the catalogs to request books

Holdings Include:

Collection focuses on New York, New Jersey, and New England, especially colonial New York.

- New York City vital records indexes
- City directories
- New York State censuses, 1855 to 1925, for all counties in the state
- Federal censuses for New York State and the Federal Mortality, Industry and Agriculture Census Schedules, 1850-80
- Genealogies, biographies, and histories, more than 25,000 manuscripts, deeds, and wills

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LDS (Mormon) Family History Center

125 Columbus Avenue at 65th Street, New York, NY 10023; (212) 873-1690

Holdings Include:

- Large collection of vital records of European-Jewish communities on indefinite loan from Salt Lake City
 - Hamburg passenger departure lists and indexes (complete), both direct and indirect, 1850 - 1934
 - 1938 German Census of Non-Aryans (mostly Jewish)
 - New York City vital records indexes, including the Health Department bride and groom marriage indexes through 1937
-

New York State Archives

11th Floor, Empire State Plaza, Albany, NY 12230; (518) 474-8955

Hours: Monday – Friday, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Basic information:

Privacy and security considerations preclude transcription and copying of the indices. A directory of local vital records registrars and copies of the Health Department certificate order forms are available to assist researchers who want to order copies of actual certificates.

Holdings include:

- New York State birth records indices, 1880-1924
 - New York State marriage records indices, 1880-1949
 - New York State death records indices, 1880-1949 are available for public use
-
-

Peninsula “Drop-In” Genealogy Sessions a Great Success

by Jerry Delson

Following the April 18th Workshop at Congregation Beth Am in Palo Alto, a series of seven drop-in sessions has been held, each on a Tuesday morning at the Beth Am Library. The drop-in sessions are a joint effort of Congregation Beth Am and the San Francisco Bay Area Jewish Genealogical Society, organized by Jerry Delson. Congregation Beth Am publicized the sessions to all of its members in their monthly packet of fliers, and an article appeared in two of their monthly bulletins.

SFBAJGS members Carole Dorshkind and Ilan Blech have served as docents or “staff” to the attendees. Jerry August came for help and was soon helping others. There were four to seven people at each session, and some attended two or three of the sessions. Four who were not able to attend requested help by email or telephone. The atmosphere has been most congenial, and we’ve really enjoyed ourselves.

The facilities at the Beth Am Library include a set of the most recent books and journals on Jewish genealogy, including a Jewish encyclopedia and reference books. *[See page 27 for a list of genealogical reference holdings in the Congregation Beth Am Library.]* The library also has a computer with Family Tree Maker genealogy software. The Social Security Death index is available as well as a photocopier.

In a typical session we might start as a group sitting at a round table and then break into pairs helping each other. Subjects have included helping someone organize his or her material; translating Hebrew, German, or Yiddish records; identifying the location of a town using a gazetteer; searching the Social Security Death Index; and finding addresses of agencies that might have specific information being sought.

Highlights of the sessions include welcoming members of Beth Am who joined SFBAJGS as a result of the sessions; and Carole Dorshkind led a successful field trip to Sutro Library in San Francisco in April, and had another scheduled for July. We hope the drop-in sessions will resume in fall after the high holidays. For information, please call Jerry Delson at (650) 493-0404.

Preparation for Travel to an Ancestral Town

by Judy Baston

Judy Baston, who works part-time at the Jewish Community Library and is Librarian of the SFBAJGS, serves on the Board of Jewish Records Indexing-Poland and the Litvak Special Interest Group (Litvak SIG). Among the families she is researching are, in Poland, **JASKOLKA** from the elusive Usza Szczuka, **STOLOWICZ** from Nur, **KAWIOR** from Lomza and, in Lithuania, **KAGANOVICH** and **BASTUNSKI** from Eisiskes (Eishishok).

Now that more and more people are considering a visit to their ancestral towns, it's never too early to consider some preparation that will make this once-in-a-lifetime trip as meaningful as possible.

In 1997, I went to Lithuania with a group of *landslayt* from Eishishok, the town in which my father was born, and then briefly to Northern Belarus with a guide. In 1998, I went to ancestral towns in Northeast Poland with two cousins from Israel and a guide who had previously done some research for me in Poland.

In both cases, having an excellent guide, and arranging the trip so that I had enough time to spend in the ancestral towns was crucial to a successful trip. But so was the preparation I did in advance. Even if you consider going to different countries, some of the steps I took before my trips may prove useful.

For both Poland and Lithuania/Belarus, I had collected every map I could find, over the past few years, that showed my towns and villages of interest. Most helpful in both cases was a series of sectional maps of Inter-war Poland from 1937, which are available at the Library of Congress. Part of the set may also be found in the UC Berkeley map collection and at the LDS Family History Library in Salt Lake City (but not in local Family History Centers). Because much of what is now Lithuania and Northern Belarus was part of Inter-war Poland, it was included in this series, which includes tiny villages that are not found in either *Where Once We Walked* or the JewishGen ShtetlSeeker.

Like many researchers, for years I had been told of a town whose precise location eluded me. My father spoke of what he called a "ranch" in Sokoly. Years ago when I discovered the Sokoly in Poland, near Bialystok, I thought I'd found the town. But then I realized it was 200 miles from Eishishok, an unlikely distance for a place the family would visit in the summer.

I then asked two cousins who said they had been to the village, to tell me where it was. One had lived near there, and another was survivor of labor camp near the Vilna Ghetto, who had visited during summers. One said the town was near Bastuny, the other, near Voronovo. When I got large-scale map

from the Library of Congress, and looked for those towns, I found "my" Sokoly for first time.

There were more villages for me to locate in Poland because of the great availability of vital records and the additional information provided in Polish records. On the large-scale map, and even in the Polish Travel Atlas, I found dozens of the tiny villages that had been listed as the homes of my ancestors. I was able to find all the towns that were listed in records except for Usza Szczuka, the town listed as birthplace of my **JASKOLKA** family members in the 19th century. On the map I found Usza Wielka and Usza Mala, but no Usza Szczuka.

I began to think that some clerk had made a mistake 150 years ago, but then I checked in the 14-volume *Słownik Geograficzny Polski*, a massive gazetteer that was published in 1891 and is available for research at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University. It listed Usza Szczuka along with the two other Usza villages, and noted that in 1827, there had been two houses and 19 inhabitants of the village. This enabled me to know, when I drove through the villages, that this was definitely where my family had lived, even if it was no longer on any map. For other countries, I suggest checking the bibliography of atlases and gazetteers in *Where Once We Walked*, to help you find any elusive villages that you have trouble locating.

Obviously, I wanted to see as many of the actual remaining houses in which my family members had lived. I gathered return addresses in Eishishok from letters that my grandfather had written to my father, and in Vilna from letters written by my uncles. When I was in Vilna, I was able to obtain a copy of the 1942 Vilna Ghetto census, which listed my uncles' address in the ghetto.

I also asked cousins and a friend whose father had been born in Eishishok for addresses. The friend sent a photo of her grandfather's house and the name of the street. It was still there and I took a picture for her.

No matter how prepared we are, we have to expect that various geographical changes will have taken place in our ancestral towns that might make it difficult for us to find what we are seeking. Street names themselves may well have changed. Streets that had political names during the Communist

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period may no longer be called “Leninska” or “Sovietska.”

Border changes dictate street name changes, too. My cousin who lived in Vilna told me, in Yiddish, that her family lived at “29 Brayte Gas,” 29 Broad Street. A listing in the 1938 Vilna Almanac, recently reprinted, listed her father, a furrier, at “Ulica Wielka, 29,” with *wielka* meaning “big,” and now, in Lithuanian, the street is called “Didjoi,” for big. Fortunately, the building at Number 29 Didjoi still stands.

When I asked my cousin whose parents had been born in Lomza, Poland whether she knew their addresses, she remembered a postcard written in German during World War I to her aunt at “Number 10 Wasserstrasse.” When she mentioned it to her mother, she was told, “It wasn’t Wasserstrasse – it was Woziwodzi,” which, of course, also means “Water Street.” And checking the Hebrew town map in the Lomza Yizkor Book, the street was listed as “Rehov Mayim,” Hebrew for ... you guessed it: Water Street.

It is also essential to try to look through your town’s yizkor book, if one exists, before you visit the town; even if it is in Yiddish or Hebrew and you can’t read these languages, there may be a pre-war map of the town that shows various locations where Jewish life took place. Hundreds of yizkor books are in the collection of the Holocaust Center of Northern California, 601-14th Avenue, San Francisco. Call them at (415) 751-6040 and see if they have the book for your town.

Frequently, house numbers have also changed since World War II. While I was walking up Vilna Street looking for Number 23, the address on my grandfather’s letters, we started to pass what is now Number 12. Two Holocaust survivors from Eishishok who were with us stopped me and said, “*Dos iz geven ayere zayde’s hoyz*,” this was your grandfather’s house. It was one of many ways in which traveling to an ancestral town with pre-war Jewish residents made the trip especially meaningful.

In addition to letters, cards and personal family material, it is sometimes possible to find 20th century addresses in a variety of other sources. Among the ones I used:

- The Polish Business Directory, which gives actual addresses for larger towns. A hard copy of the 1926 volume is available at Stanford University.
- Books of residence that have survived for some towns, which not only list addresses in that town, but if a person moved, shows the town and address to which they moved.

- A listing for my family in Vilna, which I found in records of the Extraordinary Commission to Document Nazi Crimes in Soviet Territory at the Washington D.C. Holocaust Research Institute at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum.
- An address from the May, 1942 Vilna Ghetto Census.
- An address I obtained from Alexander Beider, author of *Dictionary of Jewish Surnames in the Kingdom of Poland*. He had a listing in his database from the 1930 Warsaw City Directory for my great-uncle, Jankiel Jaskolka, living at 25 Twarda Street.

For a more general sense of the history of the towns I was to visit, I reread books about Eishishok and Vilna, and read through Miriam Weiner’s *Jewish Roots in Poland* for information about sites of Jewish historical interest in other towns such as Lomza and Warsaw. Fortunately, Tomas Wisniewski’s book, *Guide to Jewish Bialystok*, was published just before my trip and I was able to take it with me. I also would recommend checking through *The Jewish Traveler* by Alan Tigay, a compilation of excellent columns from **Hadassah** magazine.

It’s definitely worth checking the IAJGS Cemetery Project database on the JewishGen website (www.jewishgen.org) for listings about a cemetery and/or memorial site in your ancestral towns. You might even want to take a few pebbles from your own garden to place on a tombstone or memorial if you are able to find one.

For me, the key to successful and meaningful ancestral trips was finding that almost magical balance between preparation and focus on the one hand, and on the other, being open to the unexpected, whatever may happen as I retrace the steps of my ancestors. Our history is in these towns, on these roads, in these archives, and following through on what may begin as a chance encounter or casual conversation could just lead to information you never dreamed existed.

Ride Sharing

Many members have indicated their desire to attend JGS meetings, but feel the drive is too long, too difficult in the dark or otherwise inconvenient to be undertaken alone. We would like to help members make a connection for sharing rides.

If you are interested in attending a meeting and would like a ride, or can occasionally offer a ride, please call Dana Kurtz at (415) 921-6761 or e-mail <DLKURTZ@ix.netcom.com> to make arrangements.

Whither Go the A-Files?: United States Immigration Records Update

by David Abrahams

David has been researching his family for the past 12 years and has been very active in locating their immigration and naturalization records in the United States. Because of this interest, he now lectures at genealogy meetings and seminars on this subject. David has also become interested in the preservation of our immigration and naturalization documents, and has participated in meetings that hopefully will lead to the ultimate goal of preservation and protection of our history and heritage.

Last year, the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) announced plans to investigate consolidating the holdings of its 13 regional branches at a centralized facility, and transforming the regional branches solely into microfilm reading rooms. As a result of public meetings, and input from genealogists and historians around the country, NARA determined that it would not go forth with the consolidation plans.

At a meeting last year with NARA officials held at the San Bruno branch of the Archives, a group of genealogists and historians in the San Francisco Bay Area urged that the Archives retain historically significant immigration and naturalization records that had been created in this region between the years 1940 and 1970. This collection is known as "Alien Files," more commonly known as "A-Files." Many of these "A-Files" contain rare family histories, photographs and documents seldom found in any other resource. They reflect the social history and global migration of our nation's diversity just before and after World War II.

On April 30th, the Archivist of the United States, John Carlin, met with several representatives of Bay Area organizations. The meeting was arranged and facilitated by Congressman Tom Lantos' office. Representatives who attended were David Abrahams, representing the California State Genealogical Alliance; Gordon Fine, representing the San Francisco Bay Area Jewish Genealogical Society; Lorraine Dong, President of the Chinese Historical Society of America, and Jeanie Chooy Low, member of the Chinese Historical Society of America. Congressman Lantos was instrumental in retaining NARA's Pacific Sierra Regional Offices in San Bruno. He continues to be very interested in preservation issues, as are Senators Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer, and Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi.

Mr. Carlin began the meeting by reiterating NARA's previous announcement that it would not proceed with plans to consolidate the regional branches of the Archives.

As representatives of major user groups in the region, we urged that the older "A-Files" (circa 1940-

1970), currently stored at the San Bruno branch of the Archives, be added into NARA's permanent collection and thus made safe from destruction, and that this project be given top priority. Although "A-Files" are technically owned by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), NARA is under contract with INS to store and manage these files, and has the authority to take possession of "A-Files" thirty years or older for its permanent collection. These "A-Files" are presently classified by the INS as "temporary" files and are susceptible to eventual disposal. Among the "A-Files" are the complete immigration files of Chinese-American families, Japanese-American war brides and repatriated individuals, Holocaust victims, Filipino veterans and political refugees from World War II and the war in Indochina.

In the meeting, Mr. Carlin agreed that the "A-Files" were historically significant but stated he would not make a decision on the "A-Files" on a nationwide basis until NARA conducted an in-depth study. Although he agreed to appoint a "point person" to communicate with concerned organizations and researchers on this issue, he stated that NARA would rely on input from the National Genealogical Society and the Federation of Genealogical Societies for its final decision on the fate of the "A-Files" nationwide. At our request, Mr. Carlin appointed his Assistant Director for Policy, Lori A. Lisowski, as "point person" for San Bruno.

Transferring the San Bruno "A-Files" to the National Archives is not expected to be a major financial burden to the taxpayer. However, because of the budget system of the United States, it will probably take until Fiscal Year 2001 before funds become available – provided that action is taken very soon. Moreover, the two Federal agencies (NARA and INS) have to agree to this project.

By the end of 1999, the "A-Files" stored at all the other Regional Archives will have been moved to Lee's Summit, Missouri, for storage. It was only through strong advocacy on the part of this region's genealogists and historians, and the support of local legislators, that the San Bruno "A-Files" will remain here during the interim until a final decision has been made.

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Cemetery Lessons, or How Granite Turns Into Fur

by Rodger Rosenberg

Genealogists should always find out as much information as possible by mail before visiting a cemetery, an archive, or a shtetl. A recent trip to a cemetery reaffirmed this important lesson for me in a way I had never anticipated. I had always thought about maximizing my research, rather than just wasting time on something I could have learned in advance by checking with the cemetery office.

I had traveled to Chicago to attend a family seder. Passover brings together as many as one hundred of my relatives to observe the holiday and catch up. I had promised myself for many years that I would attend, and this year I made it happen.

My other goal for this trip was, of course, family history research. I had heard a great deal about the Waldheim Cemetery in Chicago, which is one of the largest Jewish cemeteries in Illinois. I arrived there early one morning before the main offices opened. I had come well equipped with the death certificates of 19 relatives, including my Great-grandparents Ben and Dora Kanter. I felt that I could probably find their plots without too much assistance. After a short walk and with the help of a map, which was available outside the office, I found myself face to face with the tombstone of my Great-grandmother Dora Kanter.

I then began to look for the marker for my Great-grandfather Ben. I searched for more than 30 minutes without any success. My inability to find Ben Kanter's grave made me question whether I had found the right Dora Kanter. I had called the cemetery some years' back, when I knew only that they were buried at Waldheim and had a vague idea of their dates of death. I remembered that an assistant at the cemetery told me that there were approximately 40 Ben Kanters buried

there. After waiting another 30 minutes for the office to open, I was relieved when a very helpful assistant checked the cemetery's records and was able to provide me with the plot number of my great-grandparents.

I was shocked when I ended up returning to the exact same plot I had been standing at earlier that morning. Still not finding Ben Kanter, I was confused and returned to the office to ask for more help. The assistant who was even more helpful this time, not only found the file, but also showed me the correspondence about the plot from my Great-aunt Florence. The clerk carefully checked the records again and compared it to an original map of the cemetery. She assured me that the information was correct, and that I had been given the correct plot information for my great-grandfather.

I explained my dilemma and after a bit more checking of their records we found the problem. Ben Kanter had indeed been buried at the designated plot, but a stone had never been erected. After several unsuccessful attempts by Waldheim to contact my relatives about placing a stone, the cemetery had given up.

Later that afternoon, I met with my uncle to share my story. He did not seem surprised at all. He then told me the true story about my great-grandfather. Apparently Ben, as my uncle described him, was a "cheap SOB." He said that Ben had done little to help out the family; preferring to donate his time and money to various groups of which he was a member. Upon his death, it became the responsibility of his oldest daughter Florence to arrange for the funeral. Money had been set aside for the stone. But as the anniversary date of his death approached Florence decided to put the money to better use. My uncle remembered the beautiful mink coat she bought with the money.

This story illustrates the old saying to "look before you leap." Or in this case check with the office before you go wandering around a cemetery for two hours.

Congratulations!

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Library Holdings of Congregation Beth Am, as of July 1999

Compiled by Dick Hoffman

In the February 1999 issue of ZichronNote, Dick Hoffman informed us about the excellent new library at Congregation Beth Am in Los Altos Hills. We reproduce part of his article here, and include a list of holdings, which may be of particular interest to Jewish Genealogists.

Congregation Beth Am is located at 26790 Arastradero Road, Los Altos Hills, and its library is available to members of the SFBAJGS. The best time to visit the Beth Am library is on Sunday mornings from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., when the religious school is in session and Dianne Rauchwerger, librarian, is in the library. The library is also open most days and some evenings, but may be in use for a study group or other meeting. For this reason, we recommend coming in on Sunday mornings when the library is reserved for library use.

The library presently has about 4,500 books with ample space for future growth. If you have any questions about using the library, you can contact Dick or Caroline Hoffman by telephone at (650) 968-4202; fax: (650) 961-4909; or email: rmhoffman@aol.com.

In addition to those listed below, the Beth Am Library collection contains many other books and periodicals that should be of interest to genealogists. Look at the following call numbers: 736 (Holocaust), 777.1 (California Jewish history), 798 (collective biographies), and 799 (individual biography).

| <u>Title</u> | <u>Call Number</u> |
|--|--------------------|
| Dictionary of Jewish Surnames from the Kingdom of Poland - Beider | R 798.1 BEI |
| Dictionary of Jewish Surnames from the Russian Empire - Beider | R 798.1 BEI |
| Encyclopedia Judaica | R 900 JEW |
| Encyclopedia of Jewish Genealogy - Kurzweil and Weiner | R 798.1 KUR |
| Falstein-Korman Family Tree: From Nemirov, Ukraine to the World - Rosenman | R 798.1 FAL |
| Finding our fathers: A Guidebook to Jewish Genealogy - Rottenburg | R 798.1 ROT |
| Finding Your Jewish Roots in Galicia - Wynne | R 798.1 WYN |
| First American Jewish Families - Stern | R 798.1 STE |
| Following the Paper Trail: A Multilingual Translation Guide - Shea & Hoffman | R 798.1 SHE |
| From Generation to Generation: How to trace your Jewish genealogy and family tree - Kurzweil | R 798.1 KUR |
| Guide to Genealogy Software - Prezcha & Lowrey | R 798.1 PRZ |
| Guide to Naturalization Records of the United States - Schaefer | R 798.1 SCH |
| How to Document Victims and Locate Survivors of the Holocaust - Mokotoff | R 798.1 MOK |
| Jewish Genealogical Research in Israel - Sack | R 798.1 SAC |
| Jewish Vital Records, Revision Lists & Other Jewish Holdings in the Lithuanian Archives - Rhodes & Sack | R 798.1 JEW |
| Lithuanian Jewish Communities - Schoenburg & Schoenburg | R 798.1 SCH |
| My Generations - Kurzweil | 798.1 KUR |
| Polish Roots - Chorzenpa | R 798.1 CHO |
| Researcher's Guide to American Genealogy - Greenwood | R 798.1 GRE |
| Rimmonim Bells - Alpern | R 798.1 ALP |
| Roots Schmootz: Journeys Among Jews - Jacobson | 798.1 JAC |
| Russian Jewish Given Names - Feldblyum | R 798.1 FEL |
| Scattered Seed: A Guide to Jewish Genealogy - Freedman-Morris | 798.1 FRE |
| Shtetl Finder Gazetter - Cohen | R 798.1 COH |
| The Jews of Poland - Weinryb | 763.6 WEI |
| They Came in Ships - Colletta | R 798.1 COL |
| Where Once We Walked: A Guide to the Jewish Communities Destroyed in the Holocaust - Mokotoff | R 798.1 MOK |
| WOWWW Companion - Mokotoff | R 798.1 MOK |

Periodicals

Avotanu: The international review of Jewish genealogy (quarterly)

Landsman (quarterly)

SFBAJGS Family Finder Update

The surnames and towns being researched by our newest members are listed below. Also included are corrections to the recently distributed 1999 Family Finder for members Dorshkind, Gannes, and Lindner. We hope to maintain this database for our membership. If you have a correction, update or new information you would like us to know about, contact: SFBAJGS, P.O. Box 471616, San Francisco, CA 94147, or send email to: dLkurtz@ix.netcom.com.

| <u>Surname</u> | <u>Town, Country</u> | <u>Member</u> |
|---------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| Anton/Antonoff/Antonovsky | Vinograd, Ukraine | Gannes, Abraham |
| Babindur | Grodno, Belarus | Goldstone, Saul |
| Berenjensky | Bialystok, Knyszyn, Poland | Chesler, Judi |
| Berens | Bialystok, Poland; Florida | Chesler, Judi |
| Bettmann | Burgkunststadt, Germany | Lindner, Manfred (not Likuski, Sita) |
| Bregman | Bialystok, Knyszyn, Poland; Atlanta, GA | Chesler, Judi |
| Breyer/Brayer | Biharea, Romania | Meng, Frances Spanton |
| Chesler | Bialystok, Knyszyn, Poland; California; New York | Chesler, Judi |
| Conskavulsku | Pultusk, Poland | Chesler, Judi |
| Cotton | Germany; Riga, Latvia; New York, NY | Meng, Frances Spanton |
| Elbman/Elbauer | Hungary | Meng, Frances Spanton |
| Epstein | Grodno, Belarus | Goldstone, Saul |
| Flatau | Grajewo, Rajgrad, Poland | Winograd, Morjorie & Flatau, Abraham |
| Ganapolsky | Vinograd, Ukraine | Gannes, Abraham |
| Gannes | Vinograd, Ukraine | Gannes, Abraham |
| Glück, Glick | Giraltovce, Slovak Republic | Dorshkind, Carole |
| Gottlieb | Brad, Romania; New York, NY | Meng, Frances Spanton |
| Grünstein/Greenstein | Bihar, Bihor County, Brad, Oradea, Transylvania, Romania | Meng, Frances Spanton |
| Harris | London, England | Chesler, Judi |
| Jospenei | Kaunas, Lithuania | Goldstone, Saul |
| Kurtz | Kaunas, Lithuania | Goldstone, Saul |
| Lubelsky | Bialystok, Poland; Buenos Aires, Argentina; New York | Chesler, Judi |
| Ovsrevna | Moscow, Russia | Goldstone, Saul |
| Pakcyk | Pultusk, Poland; California | Chesler, Judi |
| Pesser | Birobidshan, Russia | Goldstone, Saul |
| Rejansky | Pultusk, Poland | Chesler, Judi |
| Schual | Birodbishan, Russia | Goldstone, Saul |
| Silverman | Germany; Riga, Latvia; New York, NY | Meng, Frances Spanton |
| Strignitz/Streignitz | Berlin, Hamburg, Striegnitz, Germany | Meng, Frances Spanton |
| Tarsches | Kaunas, Lithuania | Goldstone, Saul |
| Tarshis, | Kaunas, Lithuania | Goldstone, Saul |
| Zepka | Pultusk, Poland | Chesler, Judi |

Additional correction to the 1999 Family Finder:

In the "By Location" section for "Wien, Austria," please remove the Kleiner entry for Stern, W. David

Genealogical Clues in Czarist Decrees

by Michael Steinore

Michael Steinore is researching the KATZNELSON family from the district of Bobruisk, Belarus. A resident of Portland, OR, he regularly visits the San Francisco peninsula where his mother, Marcy Seidscher is Director of Administration at Congregation Beth Am. He can be reached at msteinor@teleport.com.

Researchers whose ancestors lived in the Pale of Settlement must necessarily consider how the Czarist government's decrees affected their family's history. Examples that come readily to mind are: being forced to adopt a surname; conscription into the Russian Army, avoiding conscription into the Russian Army by, among other responses, changing surnames again or emigrating to America; being ousted from (or prevented from entering) certain occupations; and pogroms. Michael Steinore's article emphasizes how "history" affects "family history." —Gordon Fine

At some point, every genealogist researching ancestors who lived in the Russian Pale of Jewish Settlement begins to puzzle over a variety of questions, for example:

- Was it likely they lived in more than one town/area?
- Did their social class or wealth change over time?
- Were they ever drafted into the Russian Army?
- What documents are available for them?

By studying the details of *ukases* (decrees) issued by the czars, one can obtain clues to try to answer these questions. The study of the impact of czarist decrees on Jews is complex, but genealogically invaluable. This article, however, gives only a basic outline.

The czars of 19th century Russia frequently issued decrees concerning the Jews. If the Jewish Question was not an obsession of theirs, it was certainly a preoccupation. The chart of major *ukases* that accompanies this article¹ represents only some of those with genealogical significance and deserves careful study. While the chart represents the trees, it is important to see the forest. There are two main themes of czarist thinking that are represented throughout the various decrees.

Theme 1: Dislocate and Economically Ruin the Jews

As Schuyler² observed in 1872, discrimination against Jews in Russia was based not on religious intolerance, but on the theory that Jews exploited the Russian population and were innately harmful. Though there was religious discrimination, most restrictions on Jews were of a civil nature. Because the czars considered Jews economically harmful, the

policy was to keep them mobilized, continually uprooting them from villages and towns (see laws of 1795, 1804, 1807, 1823, 1825, 1827, 1882, 1887, 1893, and 1908). At the same time, all but the wealthiest, most educated Jews were kept out of the interior of Russia and confined to the Pale of Settlement (see laws of 1859, 1861, 1865, and 1879). Even within the Pale, laws were regularly passed to compress the area where they could legally reside.

The continual dislocation and crowding created economic ruin for Jewish families, because of forced migration and excessive competition. It is unlikely for the majority of Jews to have been able to remain in the same village for the entire 19th century. Other decrees took direct aim at the Jews' dominance of the liquor trade, out of fear and resentment of the effect liquor was having on the peasant population (see laws of 1804 and 1894). These laws created economic hardship for the approximately one-third of Jews in the Pale who were involved in liquor-related trades, and forced many to seek other trades.

Schuyler elegantly skewered the theory that the supposed economic harm caused by Jews justified their confinement to the Pale:

"If the Hebrews are so dangerous to the welfare of the country and population, why protect certain [gubernias] from them at the expense of others? Why not diminish the evil by distributing them throughout the empire ...? Why make exceptions in favor of the rich, who must on this reasoning be vastly more dangerous to the population than the poor? If the Hebrews are not dangerous then the present restriction should not be kept in force. On any theory they are wrong."

Theme 2: Convert or Assimilate the Jews

Another theme found in Czarist decrees was to try to "de-Judeaize" the Jews by converting them to the orthodox Eastern Church. This was attempted primarily through military conscription (see laws of 1827, 1835, 1851, 1853, 1874, 1876, and 1886), but

Continued on page 30

¹ The chart summarizes important decrees found in S. M. Dubnow, *History of the Jews in Russia and Poland*, Vol. 1-3, Jewish Pub. Society of America, Philadelphia, 1916-1920.

² E. Schuyler, *Memorandum on the Legal Position of the Hebrews in Russia*, October 1872, [Correspondence from Eugene Schuyler, the American Chargé d'Affaires in St. Petersburg], U.S. HR Executive Document No. 192, 47th Congress, First Session, Serial Set 2030.

also by requiring Jews to attend higher education in Russian institutions (see laws of 1844 and 1859). Conversion from Judaism was also encouraged by offering financial incentives (see law of 1817); conversely, proselytism or reverting back to Judaism meant heavy punishment.

The decree of 1827, requiring 25 years of military service and Jewish youths to be sent away to Cantonist units created such agony that Jews did whatever they could to avoid the draft, which took a larger toll upon poorer Jews. Even after Czar Alexander II abolished the Cantonist system in 1856, Jews continued to evade the draft in large numbers. Alexander II, noting the failure of conscription in assimilating Jews, tried a gentler approach of assimilating them through education, but this too failed in large measure, and Alexander III again turned military conscription into a punitive weapon against Jews.

Summary

Studying the chart of decrees (below) can provide useful clues to several inquiries: place of residence, early marriages, military draft status, residence outside the Pale, attendance at a Russian educational institution, social class, and reason for emigration. It also suggests various documents where information may be found: tax lists, kahal records, revision lists, 1875 census, university and gymnasium records, internal passports, Duma voters lists, and others. However, some caveats are in order. The chart is a summary only – laws contained many detailed nuances. Some laws were later revoked, suspended, or modified. Enforcement of decrees was sometimes lax. Innumerable local laws and variances existed as well. A balanced and analytical snapshot synopsis of laws affecting Jews in 1872 can be found in [Schuyler].

| Year | Ukase/Decree/Law | What it did/Effect | Political Subtext/Theme |
|------|---|---|---|
| 1772 | 1st Partition of Poland | | |
| 1775 | Law of 1775 | Divided Russia into gubernias | |
| 1776 | Ukase of 1776 | Created the Jewish kahal to run affairs for the government | |
| 1785 | Law of 1785 | Established social classes: merchant, meschiane, artisan, tillers of soil | Meschiane: townsmen with fewer than 500 rubles; artisan (tailor, goldsmith) |
| 1791 | Ukase of Dec. 23, 1791 | Jews confined to Pale of Settlement | |
| 1793 | 2nd Partition of Poland | | |
| 1794 | Ukase of Jun. 23, 1794 | Jews required to pay double head tax, or leave Russia after paying a triple head tax | Christian merchants worried about competition |
| 1795 | Ukase of 1795 (also year of 3rd partition of Poland) | Jews living in rural villages required to relocate to district towns. Effect: crowded conditions in towns ruined their livelihoods | Desire to dislocate Jews and reduce their influence on rural peasant population |
| 1804 | Statute of 1804 in the reign of Czar Alexander I (to take effect in 1807) | Prohibited Jews from innkeeping, selling liquor, leasing and or living in villages. Encouraged Jewish agricultural colonies. Effect: reduced Jewish liquor trade | Russian nobility wanted the liquor trade for themselves |
| 1807 | Ukase of Oct. 19, 1807 | One-third of Jews to be expelled from rural villages in each of the next 3 years | Czar no longer feared alliance between Jews and Napoleon |
| 1808 | Ukase of Dec. 1808 | The ukase of 1807 was suspended, but not revoked. Note: Czar later revoked ukase due to War of 1812 | Gubernators told the Czar the decree was too harsh on Jews |
| 1817 | Ukase of Mar. 25, 1817 | Jews who converted to Christianity offered crown lands in return. Effect: none – no Jews took the offer | A missionary mood in government desiring to encourage conversion |
| 1823 | Ukase of Apr. 11, 1823 | Jews may not: lease land, keep inns, live in villages; must move to cities and towns by Jan. 1, 1825. Effect: gubernators soon pleaded to end hardship on Jews | Famine of 1821 blamed on Jews. Landlords wanted to reduce effect of liquor on peasants |
| 1825 | 2 ukases of 1825 | Jews banned from living within 50 voersts (kms.) of Russian Empire border. Effect: economic and emotional blow to Jews, who could not be near family graves | Jews considered smugglers. Continued policy of dislocation and compression against Jews |
| 1827 | Ukase of Aug. 26, 1827 in reign of Czar Nicholas I | Jews ages 12-25 must serve 25 years in army; minors must serve in cantonist units. Effect: Devastating blow | Czar's desire to convert Jews to Christianity through conscription |
| 1827 | 2 Ukases of Dec. 2, 1827 | Jews in Grodno province must relocate from villages to towns; Jews prohibited from residing in Kiev | Continued policy of dislocation and compression against Jews |
| 1834 | Rumor of a ukase | Jews forbidden to marry early; already married men exempted from conscription. Effect: Jewish minors married by hundreds of thousands | |
| 1835 | Ukase of Apr. 13, 1835 "Statute concerning the Jews" | Jews prohibited from early marriages (under age 18 for males, under 16 for females); already married men not exempted from conscription; Eliminated policy of expulsion from villages | Major piece of legislation which recodified the Statute of 1804 |

| Year | Ukase/Decree/Law | What it did/Effect | Political Subtext/Theme 1844 |
|-----------|--|---|---|
| 1844 | Ukase of Nov. 13, 1844 "Education of Jewish Youth" | Created Jewish crown schools and rabbinical schools | Eliminate influence of Talmud. Recognition that conscription has failed to assimilate Jews |
| 1844 | 2 Ukases of Dec. 19, 1844 | Abolished the kahal and reinstated the candle tax, directing the proceeds to Jewish crown schools. Effect: the kahal transformed into a fiscal agency | Attempt to eliminate the power of kahals, but they were still needed to collect taxes |
| 1851 | "Temporary Rules Concerning the Assortment of Jews" Nov. 23, 1851 | Jews divided into 5 classes: merchants, agriculturalists, artisans to enroll in guilds; settled and unsettled burghers. The lowest class liable to satisfy bulk of military conscription obligation | Attempt to separate Jews into "useful" and "useless" members of society |
| 1852 | "Temporary Rules on Conscription" | Any Jew, not just kahals, could offer a Jew without a passport as a substitute for someone drafted. Effect: set Jew upon Jew, increased antipathy toward kahals | Took effect during period of Crimean War |
| 1856 | Coronation Manifesto of Aug. 26 1856 in the reign of Czar Alexander II | Military conscription for Jews now same as for the general population. Abolished cantonist system | New, enlightened Czar. Rather than crush the Jews, assimilate them through better treatment |
| 1859 | Council of State resolution on Mar. 16, 1859 | Jewish merchants and a small number of less wealthy Jews allowed to populate and trade in Russian interior | Attract Jewish capital to interior cities without big influx of Jews |
| 1859 | Ukase of 1859 | Children of Jewish merchants must attend general Russian schools or Jewish crown schools | Attempt to subvert the influence of the kheder and the yeshiva |
| 1860 | Council of State law Nov. 27, 1861 | Extended right of residence outside Pale of Settlement to Jewish doctors, higher education candidates | Try to eliminate religious passion by encouraging Jews to enter general education establishments |
| 1865 | Law of Jun. 28, 1865 | Created limited right of residence outside Pale of Settlement for Jewish artisans, mechanics, distillers | The government actually discouraged Jews to enter the interior, e.g., Jews who completed Army duty were banished back to the Pale |
| 1866 | Ukase of 1866 | Jews no longer granted land, money for establishing agricultural colonies in southern gubernias | Government no longer needed to encourage artificial colonization |
| 1873 | Ukase of 1873 | Closed rabbinical institutes and Jewish crown schools | Government abandoned attempt to reform Jewish education |
| 1874 | Law of 1874 | Broadened military draft from unsettled burghers to all social classes of Jews; reduced conscription term. Effect: Because of persistent draft evasion, government registered all Jewish youth in 1875 | Equalize burden on all Jews prior to granting equal rights |
| 1876-1878 | Special Provisions on Military Service | Jews rejected for military must be replaced by other Jews. Three exemptions: (1) only sons, (2) only wage-earning sons, (3) older brother already in Army | Ensure compliance of Jews with military conscription |
| 1879 | Law of 1879 | Extended right of residence outside Pale to Jews with higher education degrees, professionals, feldshers | |
| 1881 | Alexander II assassinated Mar. 1, 1881 | Effect: almost immediately, planned pogroms occurred all through the Pale for the duration of 1881-1882 | |
| 1882 | The "Temporary" May Laws, May 3, 1882 in the reign of Czar Alexander III | Jews prohibited from: settling anew outside of towns, acquiring rural property, doing business on Sunday and Christian holidays. Jews already in rural areas grandfathered. Effect: crushing blow to livelihood | Alexander III's more repressive view of Jews. Jews considered injurious to economy. Desire to confine Jews to 10% of the Pale |
| 1883 | Senatorial Ukase of May 10, 1882 | Gubernia governments responsible for protecting Jews from pogroms. Effect: Only a handful of pogroms occurred from 1882 to the Kishinev massacre of 1903 | Public relations in response to protests from Europe, America |
| 1886 | Enactment of Apr. 1886 | The family of any Jew evading military service is fined 300 rubles. Passports revoked, property sold to satisfy fine. "Family" was interpreted liberally | Government angry at continual draft evasion despite higher per capita service of Jewish conscripts |
| 1887 | Law of Dec. 29, 1887 | Prohibited Jews from: migrating among villages, hosting family from other villages, assuming a family member's business in another town | Increasing anti-semitism |

Continued on page 32

| Year | Ukase/Decree/Law | What it did/Effect | Political Subtext/Theme |
|------|--|---|---|
| 1887 | Circular of Minister of Public Instruction July, 1887 | Set university, gymnasia admission quotas for Jews: 10% in Pale; 5% outside the Pale; 3% in St. Petersburg and Moscow. Effect: limited access to education | Reduce the number of "privileged" Jews outside the Pale |
| 1893 | Law "Concerning Names" | Jews may not have different name in private life than that recorded in official registers. Jews forbidden to change name mistakes recorded in official registers | Desire to insult and humiliate Jews. Many educated Jews had Russianized their names |
| 1893 | Dept. of Interior Circular | Repealed 1880 decree, allowing privileged Jews to reside outside the Pale. Effect: within a year or two, all Jews expelled from Russian interior back to the Pale | |
| 1894 | Passport Regulation of 1894 | Jewish passports must contain a physical description | Humiliation of Jews |
| 1894 | Law of 1894 | Liquor trade placed under government monopoly. Effect: Economic blow to hundreds of thousands of Jews | Indirect attempt to force Jews to leave rural villages |
| 1894 | Alexander III dies Oct. 20, 1894. Nicholas II reigns | Waves of pogroms in 1903-1906, beginning with Kishinev Massacre in 1903 | |
| 1905 | "Bulyghin Constitution" of Aug. 6, 1905; Imperial Manifesto of Oct. 17, 1905 | Czar granted limited representation through the state дума. Effect: Jews allowed to vote in and be representatives in state дума | Czar Nicholas II weakened by Russo-Japanese War defeat |
| 1908 | Law passed by 3 rd State Duma | All citizens may choose place of residence except Jews, who are confined to the Pale. Effect: Wholesale expulsion of Jews from the Russian Interior | Desire to maintain the Jewish Pale of Settlement |

Sutro Library *cont'd. from page 8*

- Translation Guide to 19th Century Polish-language Civil Registration Documents, Jewish Genealogical Society of Illinois
- Jewish War Veterans of the U.S., Joseph Friedman, 1943
- Glimpses of Jewish Life in San Francisco, Michael Zarchin, 1952
- Western States Jewish History (periodical), 1983-present
- Continuum: A Selective History of San Francisco Eastern European Jewish Life 1880-1940, Ruth Rafael
- Black Book of Locations Whose Jewish Population Was Exterminated by the Nazis
- Index to French Deportations
- The Jews of California, From the Discovery of Gold Until 1880, Rudolph Glanz, 1960
- New York Public Library Catalog of the Jewish Collection, 14 volumes, 1960
- European Passenger Steamship Arrivals — Morton Allen Directory 1890-1930
- European Passenger Steamship Arrival — Adler's Directory 1899-1929

My best advice is to plan a leisurely day at Sutro. There is so much that one can do there that it is important not to become overwhelmed. Sometimes my favorite activity is just to wander around, checking out the new arrivals area, looking for any recently published census index books or discovering if any of the emigration or immigration indexes have new volumes. Just take it easy and enjoy the process.

"A-Files," NARA, *cont'd. from page 25*

This writer urges all members of the genealogical and historical community to write to the various officials who will advocate that the 1940 - 1970 "A-Files" be designated for NARA's permanent collection, and be saved from eventual destruction. Your letters have made a definite impact on public policy and decision-making at NARA in the past. Let your voices be heard once again so that the files of our ancestors will be preserved for our children and accessible to researchers for all time.

Although the following names and address are provided for your convenience, please write to your local Congressional representative as well:

John Carlin, Archivist of the United States, 8601 Adelphi Road, Room 4100, College Park, MD 20740-6001

Scott Hastings, Director, INS Files and Forms Mgmt., 425 Eye Street, NW, Washington, DC 20536

Representative Tom Lantos, 400 El Camino Real, Suite 820, San Mateo, CA 94402

Senator Dianne Feinstein, 525 Market Street, Suite 3670, San Francisco, CA 94105

Senator Barbara Boxer, 1700 Montgomery Street, Suite 240, San Francisco, CA 94111

Representative Nancy Pelosi, 450 Golden Gate Avenue, 14th Floor, San Francisco, CA 94102

Representative Ellen Tauscher, 100 Civic Center Plaza, Dublin, CA 94568

Representative Pete Stark, 39300 Civic Center Drive, Suite 220, Fremont, CA 94538.

COMPUTER/ONLINE NEWS

Reunion 5.0

by Jerome B. Jacobson

If you are in the market for a Macintosh-based genealogy program, Leister Production's Reunion has to be a leading contender. In a January 1998 review in *MacWorld* magazine, that compared Reunion to Mac versions of Family Tree Maker and Ultimate Family Tree Deluxe, columnist David Pogue judged Reunion 5.02 to win by a wide margin. This was not unexpected as Reunion is the only one of the three that was originally modeled for the Macintosh and not burdened by modifications from PC origins. Follow-up letters to the editor in April 1998 also mentioned Personal Ancestral File 2.3.1 (from the LDS Church) and Gene 4.2 (shareware from Diana and David Eppstein) as satisfactory alternatives.

My experience with genealogy software is limited to Reunion, which I have used for several years, upgrading from version 3 to 5. Originally, it was based on the HyperCard program but although the feeling of a "stack of cards" was maintained it has been revised to become a more flexible software application with lots of bells and whistles. Older files have been compatible with program updates as well as with a new computer, though a jump of several updates may require sending files to the publisher for reformatting; even my own innovations for storing some dates in the "wrong" place were anticipated and the data were saved in an upgraded Note section.

This program captures the intuitive nature of the Mac and was suitable for a novice like me to learn how to use a computer. Reunion 5 also has a well-organized printed manual to guide you through more technical features such as revising chart presentations, dropping in photos, and interacting with the Web.

It opens with a Family Card (see figure below) containing basic dates and locations; there are default fields for occupation, education, religion, and miscellaneous notes with no requirement for data in any field other than the name. The same card shows abbreviated data for parents above and children below. This information can be added at any time by using on-screen buttons or the menu bar. An empty Spouse Card appears automatically, even for a newborn, keeping all Family Cards uniform and available for future entries.

Navigating through the family tree can be rapidly performed in several ways; the easiest is to click on a parent name to go backward or on a child to go forward. There are also arrow buttons, a Find file, and an easily called up index to locate another branch rapidly. Multiple spouses (up to 50!) are identified by a red triangle next to the name. Clicking it produces a pop-up menu, which instantly accesses other spouses and children. A similar feature is available to accommodate both adoptive and biological parents. Children's names are outlined by boxes with different shapes for boys, girls, and unknown, they can also be color coded to distinguish twins, adoptions, or even a family pet! Marriages between family members may produce unusual family relationships but are easily handled by choosing spouse names from the existing index.

continued on page 34

Family Card Sheet

| | | | |
|-------------------------------|--|--|---|
| Jacob Jacobson 1863 - 1925 | | Benjamin Morris Janov ca1869 - ca1933 | |
| Bessie Sussman 1868 - 1939 | | Esther Sarah (Ethel) Miller ca1871 - 1938 | |
| 31 Dec 1925, Chicago, IL | | | |
| David Jacobson | | Julia (Julie) Janov | |
| Birth | 1896 Tukums, Latvia | Birth | 1898 Janow, Poland |
| Death | 27 Nov 1956 Chicago, IL Age: 60 | Death | 11 Oct 1990 IL Age: 92 |
| Occ | Cigar Salesman | Occ | Housewife |
| Educ | H.S. | Educ | H.S. |
| Reli | | Reli | |
| Note | Early schooling in Latvia, could speak Yiddish, German, and some Russian. Came to USA in 1910, lived with parents and siblings in Chicago, IL. After some schooling had numerous jobs. Served in US Army 7 years. Entered in 1913 at | Note | Came to USA in 1912. Lived with parents and siblings in Chicago, IL, was a comptometer operator for Sears, Roebuck & Co. till marriage. Later helped run the family cigar stand in Deutch's Restaurant till 1939. Several years later |
| ID: 3 | Changed: 27 Feb 1999 | ID: 4 | Changed: 27 Feb 1999 |
| Beverly J. | | Jerome B. | |
| 2 | | | |

Reunion, cont'd. from page 33

In addition to the Note field (holding up to 64,000 characters) there are sub-fields, such as military and medical, most of which I have chosen to ignore. Cards can be flagged to denote any features you choose, such as red hair or left-handedness. Sources are indicated by colored superscript numbers and can be placed anywhere throughout the Note field; in other fields, such as Birth or Marriage, they appear grouped at the end of the line. Hebrew dates are accommodated and are easily interchanged with Gregorian.

Various housekeeping features are available. A mailing address report can be set up to include up to three addresses, telephone, fax, email, and web page for each person, and names can be flagged for focused mailings using your word processor. Calendar lists can be set up to remind you of birthdays, anniversaries, etc.

Printouts can be made for the entire tree or any branch. These are recorded as colored charts (descendant, pedigree, relative, and timeline) or as lists and reports (descendant, family group, family history, ahnentafel, tiny tafel, and register). The manual contains sections for each of these formats, with instructions for editing content and appearance as well as for adding photos and graphics. The GEDCOM file format can be used for exchanging data with other programs and data can be imported from other applications such as spreadsheets and databases.

Reunion 5 is still somewhat costly at \$99, an improvement from early editions. However, technical assistance is free through a useful web page (www.LeisterPro.com).

In November 1998, Reunion 6 was released. I have tried the online demo and am impressed with a couple of the new features, such as hourglass relative trees and automatically keeping chart boxes off of page breaks, but I did not buy the time-limited \$49 upgrade. The program now arrives on a CD-ROM instead of a single floppy disk and has features that are designed to take advantage of the speed and memory of the newest Macs. This update does accommodate Apple's new iMac computers which do not have a built-in floppy disc drive. Unfortunately, it no longer comes with a printed manual and, in spite of the accolades the company gives its new online manual, I have yet to find one I really like.

In summary, Reunion is a first class genealogy program with many of the features that attracted so many of us to the Macintosh. The publisher actively supports the software with advancements that take advantage of new technology, but has not abandoned its older customers.

"And I still see their faces..."

Ada Holtzman, JewishGen

You may have seen, read, or heard about the beautiful album made out of an exhibition of Jewish-Polish, old and rare photographs. This was a famous traveling exhibition, shown at Yad Vashem and elsewhere, last year. The author of the album is Golda Tencer, and publication was made possible through an initiative of the Shalom Foundation – an American-Israeli-Polish Foundation, located in Poland.

Now this wonderful exhibition is online, courtesy of the Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles. Read all about it on the main page at motlc.wiesenthal.org/exhibits/faces/index.html.

I drew the attention of a descendant from Zdunska Wola to this virtual exhibition and he found a picture of his own father, with all the family members who perished in the Holocaust. This was picture number six; now the images in that one picture, one out of 455, are no longer "unknown," they have names.... Following that one discovery, I feel there will likely be additional identification of other towns and other people, made by those who search through the gloomy past for traces of their families in Poland.

The site includes a very extensive index of surnames at motlc.wiesenthal.org/exhibits/faces/ind1.html, but no index of all the place names identified in these 455 photographs. I have taken it upon myself to compile an index of places, and I am pleased to announce that this list is posted on my web site at www.geocities.com/Paris/Rue/4017/isee.htm. Even if you are not searching for family in Poland, the exhibition is very moving virtual commemoration of a vanished world.

New York City Naturalization Documents by Email

Steve Zedeck, JewishGen

Did you know that you can request New York City naturalization documents by email? Send a message to the Northeast Region branch of the National Archives at archives@newyork.nara.gov. Provide as much information as possible including the individual's name (and possible variations), age, and place of birth, which will allow the staff to focus their search.

The search is free, and if a record is found in which you are interested, a copy can be obtained for \$10 per record. This branch has photographic copies of naturalization records from 1792-1906, filed in federal, state, and local courts located in New York City.

Vilna Uezd Group and Web Sites for Lithuanian Towns

Joel Ratner, the coordinator of the Vilna Uezd (district) Research Group, has provided this list of links to web sites for various towns in Lithuania. Many of them are "ShtetLinks" pages hosted by JewishGen (see Chuck Weinstein's article in *ZichronNote*, February 1999). If a page for your town does not yet exist, you are encouraged to create one. See the "how-to" at www.jewishgen.org/ShtetLinks/documentation/writing.htm.

Joel would like to hear from anyone interested in the Vilna Uezd, and is happy to provide additional information. He can be contacted at joelrat@aol.com.

Janeve (Jonava) – www.mindspring.com/~peggyf/jonava.htm

Yasven (Josvainiai) – users.aol.com/glynne/home.htm

Keidan (Keidainiai) – www.philly.infi.net/~awcassel/Keidan

Kelem (Kelme) – www.jewishgen.org/shtetlinks/kelme/kelme.html

Kibart (Kybartai) – www.jewishgen.org/shtetlinks/kibart/kibart.html

Kovno (Kaunas) – www.jewishgen.org/shtetlinks/kovno/kovno.html

Krok (Krakes) – members.tripod.com/~Krakes

Kruzh (Kraziai) – www.zah.ndirect.co.uk/kraziai.htm

Kupishok (Kupiskis) – www.jewishgen.org/shtetlinks/kupiskis/kupishok.html

Lazdei (Lazdijai) – www.jewishgen.org/shtetlinks/lazdijai/

Linkeve (Linkuva) – www.btinternet.com/~ablumsohn/linkuva.htm

Plungyan (Plunge) – www.jewishgen.org/shtetlinks/plunge/plunge.html

Rakishok (Rokiskis) – www.jewishgen.org/shtetlinks/rokiskis/roksigweb.html

Shkudvil (Skaudvile) – www.jewishgen.org/shtetlinks/shkudvil/shkudvil.html

Shavl (Siauliai) – www.jewishgen.org/shtetlinks/shavli/shavli1.html

Simno (Simnas) – www.jewishgen.org/shtetlinks/simnas/simnas.html

Skopishok (Skapiskis) – www.jewishgen.org/shtetlinks/skopishok/skopishok.html

Smorgon (now in Belarus) – www.geocities.com/RainForest/2750/smorgon.html

Sudarg (Sudargas) – www.jewishgen.org/shtetlinks/sudarg/sudarg.html

Vilky – www.cgi.cs.cmu.edu/afs/cs/user/jennie/www/karn/vilki.html

Vilkija – www.channell.com/users/mtobin/Lithuania.html

Vilna (Vilnius) – www.jewishgen.org/shtetlinks/vilna/vilna.htm

Vishtinetz (Vistytis) – www.jewishgen.org/shtetlinks/vishtinetz/oppenheim.html

Yaniskelis – www.jewishgen.org/shtetlinks/yanishkelis/yanishkelis.html Jonishkel

Yurburg (Jurbarkas) – www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/jurbarkas/index.html

Yurburg (Yurburg Yizkor Book) – www.jewishgen.org/shtetlinks/yurburg/yurburg.html

Neishtot-Tavrig (Zemaiciu Naumiestic) – www.jewishgen.org/shtetlinks/naumiestic/naumiestic.html

German Jewish Research Online

Lois Carter, SFBAJGS

Much information about German genealogical research can be found at germany-info.org/nf_gic/index_culture.html, then selecting Tracing German Ancestors.

Information is provided on genealogical societies, internet resources, publications, and how to obtain birth, marriage, and death records from Germany.

Jewish Libraries and Archives on the Web

Hilary Henkin, JewishGen

I found a great web site entitled "Judaica Libraries and Archives on the Web," created by Ethan Starr and hosted by Amherst University at: www.amherst.edu/~edstarr/judlibs.html. This source links to more than 70 archives and libraries in the United States and around the world and provides brief descriptions of a few.

Polish Research Site Links to Well Beyond the Borders

Wylma Pencer Freedman, JewishGen

If you can ignore the banner advertising, the web site for the Poland Border Surnames Mailing List at maxpages.com/poland may be of interest to you even if you are not searching for family in Poland. This site offers pages of links organized by location such as Russia, Prussia, Austria, Poland, and Ukraine. For example, on the Jewish Research page, are links to the familiar JewishGen (and JewishGen databases), and lesser-known sites providing images of Jewish synagogues, and a discussion of Polish-Jewish relations.

Other pages of are organized by research interest such as maps and towns, bookstores online, name meanings, and search engines. "Cemeteries and Obits" provides links to online indexes of published obituaries. The vital records page has links and information for the National Archives and Records Administration, the Immigration and Naturalization Service, the Polish Archives, Canadian Archives, and other resources.

There is information for both the beginner and advanced researcher. You can also subscribe to the Poland Border Surnames Mail List hosted by RootsWeb.

Lviv Records in the Archives of Ukraine

Eleanor Bien, JewishGen

In January I received a response to a letter I had written to the Central State Historical Archives of Ukraine, City of Lviv. I requested a list of their holdings of birth, marriage, and death records for the Jewish community of Lviv (Lemberg, Poland). According to the Director of the Archives the following records exist:

- Births – 1805-1872, 1894, 1896
- Marriages – 1801-1866
- Deaths – 1805-1872, 1891, 1941-1942

The Archives may be contacted at: Soborna sq. 3-a, 290008 Lviv, Ukraine.

Zmigrod and Dukla (Western Galician shtetls) Web Site

Phyllis Kramer, JewishGen

We were once five strangers brought together by JewishGen in our search for information about our families. To learn more about our common ancestral town, we pooled resources and hired a Poland-based researcher.

The results of her remarkable efforts, coupled with the research each of us had done, has resulted in a

listing more than 750 birth, marriage, and death records (including folks from Gorlice, Grybow, Rymanow and environs).

The web site, www.jewishgen.org/shtetlinks/Zmigrod/Zmigrod.htm, also offers travelogues, memories of native Zmigródians, many photographs of Zmigród residents in 1938, the old and new synagogue, the marketplace, the sawmill, gravestones, Holocaust survivors and finally, Holocaust histories of the entire area.

Vital Records for England and Wales

FreeBMD (Free Births, Marriages, and Deaths) is a fairly new project seeking to provide indexes for births, marriages, and deaths recorded under the Civil Registration system, which has been in place since 1837. Hosted by RootsWeb, the project will index information that is more than 100 years old for internet publication. Thus, records currently posted cover the period 1837-1898.

There are presently approximately 200,000 records in the database (less than .05% of the total), so you should not expect to find your relatives in the database yet, but certainly note this web site for the future. Volunteers are encouraged to contact the project through the web site at freebmd.rootsweb.com/

Scotland General Register Office Online

Arlene B. Edwards, JewishGen

The General Register Office for Scotland is the UK Government department responsible for the registration of births, marriages, deaths, divorces and adoptions in Scotland, and for carrying out periodic censuses of Scotland's population. Their web site at www.open.gov.uk/gros/groshome.htm provides an excellent description of the holdings of this repository as well as guidance for Scottish genealogical research.

Among the searchable databases are an index of Scottish birth and marriage records from 1553 to 1897 and death records from 1855 to 1897. It is expected that the index to death records will be expanded to include records through 1923 later this year. The 1891 census indexes is currently available, with 1881 census data also slated for inclusion in 1999.

This is not a free service, however. According to the online FAQ, payment of GBP6 (six pounds sterling, about ten US dollars, USD10) allows one to view and download up to 30 computer-screen pages of index data. For an additional GBP10 (about USD16) you can highlight a particular index entry and send an electronic order for an extract of the full record to which the index entry relates.

Find that Living Relative – Property Tax Rolls Online

Jan Weinmann, *JewishGen*

So you've heard that cousin Ethel and her husband moved to Palm Beach about five years ago, but they're not in the phone book? This web site may help you find them. If the person you're looking for currently owns property, that ownership is a matter of public record. You may be able locate them, or at least narrow things down, by searching the online public records made available by many counties.

On my web site, www.geocities.com/PicketFence/4798/, I have posted links to more than 50 county or state government sponsored sites, covering more than 150 counties, including all of Maryland and New York, as well as links to several descriptions of the legal language in deeds. These sites allow searches of current property tax records, most by name. I update the list every few weeks, so stop by from time to time. As of August 6, the above site points to:

- Tax Roll Links (last updated 6/27/99)
- Property Tax and Deed Reference Links (last updated 3/26/98)

Bureau of Land Management Records

Betsy Robinson, *Genealogical Society of Santa Cruz County Newsletter, May-June 1999*

The Bureau of Land Management has an online web site where you can get actual copies of land grants made between 1820 and 1908 for the following twelve states: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Ohio, and Wisconsin. The address is www.glorerecords.blm.gov.

The site is wonderful. You can search by name and even variant spellings of the name by using the % sign (they provide instructions). When you click on a name that comes up you can view the deed to ascertain whether you have the ancestor you want (they provide instructions and even a free viewer, if needed). Then if you want a certified copy, you can either order it online using a credit card or print out a form and send a check. BUT, if you do not need a certified copy, you can save the deed to disk and print it out yourself at no cost.

The file is saved in a .tif format (for windows 98 users, use the Imaging program under Accessories to open the file). Tip: For some reason the image prints better if you use the portrait setting on your printer but rotate the image 90 degrees rather than just using the landscape setting. Don't ask me why. Also, size

the image to fit the page. So far I have printed out seven deeds from two states for one ancestor.

Search for Relatives and Unclaimed Property Online

Rob Weisskirch, *JewishGen*

In the May 1998 issue of *ZichronNote*, Sita Likuski wrote about searching for unclaimed funds due to family members held by the New York State government. Now, through the National Association of Unclaimed Property Administrators, you can search the entire country. NAUPA's charge is "collecting and reuniting lost owners with their unclaimed property." Their web site at www.unclaimed.org links to all unclaimed property offices throughout the U.S.

Searching by state, check for names anyplace your ancestors might have been. Also, check on behalf of your own relatives and friends. Imagine what a nice surprise to have found free money.

Ellis Island "Wall of Honor" Online

Mindy R. Elliott-Adelman, *JewishGen*

The Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation's American Immigrant Wall of Honor is a fundraising program whereby for a fee, one can have the names of immigrant ancestors inscribed on the memorial. A database of the more than 500,000 names submitted is searchable online, at www.wallofhonor.com/search_f.asp. Country of origin is also included, and in some cases, the town as well.

You are limited to searching for names that have been inscribed. No information is available regarding the people memorialized, nor is there contact information for the person who submitted the name(s). However, if you find a name of interest, the Foundation will forward letters to the submitter of a name on the Wall of Honor.

Note that the names and locations found in the database are provided by the submitter and may not match those you have discovered in your research. For example, years ago my family honored my grandparents by having their names inscribed. We gave their country of origin as "Russia." Now, through my own research, I know that while they came from the Russian Empire, my grandfather was born in what is today Poland and my grandmother from modern-day Ukraine. If I searched for David Kurtz from Poland, I would not find his listing.

Similarly, a distant relative submitted the name of his grandmother as "Ann," while I know her as Chaya. For the greatest chance of finding a "match," keep your searches flexible!

-Editor

JewishGen Databases

1891 Galician Business Directory

More than 12,000 names from 1,000 shtetls in Galicia, are searchable by surname or town at www.jewishgen.org/databases/galicia_1891.htm. These 12,000 represent approximately half of the names found in the 1891 Galician Business directory. Compiler Phyllis Kramer chose to include those which "sound Jewish." According to the web site, "for each entry, the database contains the following fields: Surname, Given Name, Town Name, Occupation (in German), and Occupation (translated into English)."

Note that the spelling of town names reflects those used in 1891, when Galicia was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and German was the official language. Thus the town you are seeking may be spelled differently than its listing in the JewishGen Family Finder which reflects the modern (Polish and Ukrainian) names.

Bristol Cemetery Database

An index and tombstone photographs of three cemeteries in Bristol, England are searchable at www.jewishgen.org/databases/bristol.htm. The Bristol Jewish Cemetery Project was undertaken by volunteers from the local Jewish Genealogy Group. Their efforts provided a comprehensive listing of burials for the Chevra Chadisha (Jewish Burial Society). The information has also been submitted to the Cemetery Project of the IAJGS.

Information from the tombstones was supplemented from the following sources:

- the Bristol Chevrah Chadisha Register of births and deaths 1829 - 1894, covering the St. Philips and Temple-Rose Street Cemeteries
- a listing of the inscriptions from the tombstones in the St. Philips Cemetery compiled in 1990 - 1992 by Judith Samuel and the late Rev. Dr. Bernard Susser (original research by David and Simon Jacobs and Lynne Edwards, 1984)
- the index produced by the Bristol Chevrah Chadisha for the newer sections of the Fishponds Cemetery
- a pre-1950 notebook covering the older (original) sections of the Fishponds Cemetery
- the Bristol Chevrah Chadisha's holding of death certificates

The database includes full name, date of death, age, additional data source, condition of tombstone, cemetery and location of grave.

Keidan Cemeteries Database

Ada Greenblatt has compiled a valuable database for those interested in Keidan, Lithuania, at www.jewishgen.org/databases/keidan.htm, consisting of approximately 1,500 tombstone inscriptions from seven cemeteries. In Kedainiai, Lithuania more than 460 tombstones had readable inscriptions. The other six cemeteries, in New York and Chicago, contain Keidaner landsmanschaft plots.

Information provided includes the full English and Hebrew names, date of death and age, and notes which generally include the full tombstone inscription.

Belarus SIG Website Now Online

Risa Heywood, JewishGen

Are you researching ancestors from Belarus? The Belarus SIG (special interest group) focusing on the gubernii (provinces) of Grodno, Minsk, Mogilev, and Vitebsk, is online at www.jewishgen.org/belarus.

Some of the projects currently underway include:

- Minsk Guberniya дума voter lists – translation of lists will include the districts of Minsk, Pinsk, Mozyr, Igumen, Novogrudok, Borisov, and Slutsk.
- Russian business directories translation
 - * Minsk Gubernia – complete
 - * Mogilev – nearing completion
 - * Vitebsk – in progress
- Minsk yizkor book name index translation – the table of contents and the name index of Volume I are complete and will soon be available on the Yizkor Book Project web site (www.jewishgen.org/yizkor). Permission has been granted to allow translations of any portions of the Minsk Yizkor Book to be included on the web site.
- Mogilev vital records – translation and indexing. We are working to purchase copies of the microfilms from the Mormon Family History Library. Subsequently, translators will develop a database of names.
- Senno, 1861-64 birth records – translation efforts await funding.

The web site also has an online newsletter and a list of resources for research about and within Belarus, many with links to further information. There is also a list of towns, showing the uезд (district) and guberniya (province) for each. You can subscribe to an online discussion group and join the Belarus SIG – no dues!

The "All Lithuania" Database

Davida Noyek Handler, *JewishGen*

The ever-growing "All Lithuania" Database (ALD), a project of the Litvak SIG, is searchable at www.jewishgen.org/litvak/all.htm. The database is comprised of a number of smaller databases and contains information found on revision lists, family lists, census information, tax lists, voters lists, vital records, and a variety of other resources.

Through the electronic wizardry of the JewishGen network, the "All Lithuania" database links to many other existing databases of Litvak interest. The magic of the Daitch-Mokotoff system eases us through the maze of alternately spelled names.

When you search for a name or a shtetl, your one search will find *all* instances where that name or shtetl occurs within *any* of these different databases that together make up the ALD. The initial "Search Results" page provides a table showing:

- each database in which your selected name appears
- how many "hits" are in each database
- a link to introductory information about that database, as well as a contact person who is responsible for the sub-database.

To find which records have been entered, which are in process, and which are yet to be processed, please go to our Records Inventory page at www.jewishgen.org/litvak/records.htm.

To better understand the database and its components, we recommend reviewing the introductions to the revision, family and census lists. They can be found at www.jewishgen.org/litvak/lists.htm.

This remarkable database represents a huge, cooperative effort on the part of many volunteers. Those of us interested in Lithuanian research owe them our gratitude.

BostonWeddings

This index, at www.jewishgen.org/databases/advocatew.htm, currently includes more than 3,800 wedding announcements from the *Boston Jewish Advocate* newspaper. It currently covers January 1976 through May 1999 and will eventually cover 1905 to the present.

The database includes the full names of brides and grooms, issue date, and – when published – home towns and parents' names. The original wedding announcements are often accompanied by a photo, brief biographies of the couple, references to

grandparents, and may also identify other wedding party members. Copies can be obtained from microfilmed issues of the *Advocate*.

American Jewish Historical Society's Manuscript Catalog

Fred Davis, *JewishGen*

After five years of development, a major database, the American Jewish Historical Society's Manuscript Catalog, is available online at www.jewishgen.org/databases/ajhs.htm. This catalog is a detailed, annotated listing of eleven hundred manuscript collections housed at the American Jewish Historical Society (AJHS). Until now, this information existed only in the card catalog at the Society's headquarters. The web site constitutes the first publication of these complete descriptions in any format.

The web site will be a boon to any researcher pursuing topics in Jewish history in the Americas. It will also be a significant resource for Jewish genealogists who are tracing American Jewish ancestors.

"Researchers are always asking, 'What do they have?' Before this web site, one had to pore over the card catalogs in Waltham, MA to explore the unique resources at AJHS," explains Fred Davis, coordinator of the project. "Now, anyone, anywhere in the world, can see the overall listing, and the individual descriptions, at a glance."

The AJHS, founded in 1892, is the world's leading institution for the preservation of original materials on Jewish life and culture in the Americas. In its archives, the AJHS holds more than 40 million manuscripts, 30,000 books and thousands of newspapers, magazines, paintings, photographs and other artifacts that document the growth and accomplishments of American Jewry. Manuscript collections at the AJHS range in size from one page to hundreds of boxes each; in dates, from the sixteenth century to the present. The AJHS has been collecting these materials for more than 100 years, and preserves them in its archives in the original format, be it handwritten, typewritten, or printed

The project has included the writing of new, detailed essays on collections of particular interest to genealogists. For example, a detailed explanation of data regarding 4-5,000 U.S. Jewish soldiers in World War I is now online. There are also essays on such important collections as the Industrial Removal Office, the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) in Boston and the New York Court Records.

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