



זכרונות

ZichronNote

The Journal of the San Francisco Bay Area Jewish Genealogical Society

Volume XX, Number 3

August 2000

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. 21** **Palo Alto:** *Highlights of the 20th International Conference on Jewish Genealogy in Salt Lake City.* JGS members who attended the seminar will tell us about the exciting new developments in Jewish genealogy and regale us with their adventures.
- Sun. Sept. 17** **San Francisco:** *Challenges to Researching Your Female Ancestors.* SFBAJGS past-president Dana Kurtz will discuss strategies for overcoming the roadblocks to researching women. When a woman married and took her husband's surname, did the trail to her family disappear? This presentation will address tactics and sources for researching the elusive women in your family tree.
- Mon. Oct. 23** **Palo Alto:** To be determined.
- Sun. Nov. 19** **San Francisco:** *15th Annual Jewish Genealogy Workshop.* 12 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. 18** **Palo Alto:** *Travels to Ancestral Towns.* SFBAJGS Treasurer Marc Seidenfeld will share the experience of his summer travels to Ukraine and elsewhere. Marc is an excellent speaker, well known to SFBAJGS members. Other members are also expected to talk about their summer genealogical expeditions. This promises to be a fascinating and moving presentation.

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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 e-mail address.

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

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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.

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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

Something as simple as a postcard has given me an unexpected glimpse into the lives of my ancestors and provoked thought – and research – about the card's cultural context. While browsing on ebay, the well-known online auction site, I came across a host of listings about postcards including a category for "Jewish postcards." The further I looked the more fascinated I became. Here were actual photographs of Jewish life throughout the world, and in many cases, in areas where there are now few, if any, Jews.

One item that caught my eye was a listing for a business area in Russian Poland. To my amazement I found the postcard to be one of my ancestral towns, Lomza, Poland. The photograph shows an intersection, including the shops. It appears to be a posed picture. The elegantly dressed citizens stand still while there is no street traffic to be seen.

As I pored over the photograph, I saw a sign for a "T. Bermann." A smaller sign below appears to be in Hebrew. What engendered a visceral reaction in me was the recognition that my great-grandparents may well have walked that street, even shopped at Bermann's emporium.

I have become familiar with the process of identifying the towns of my forebears, using research aids to identify a latitude and longitude then the appropriate dot on a map. I collect names and dates for my family, population and other statistics about their hometowns. But an image such as this helps remove me from textbooks and allows me to envision my family moving through their daily routines, just as I do through mine.

Interestingly, the Russian printing on the back notes that the card is "Allowed. Image approved by the military censor, Warsaw. May 18, 1915." World War I had begun the previous year and apparently even a picture postcard image was subject to approval.

Translation of the handwritten Russian on the back identifies the sender and recipient as having common Russian names, probably not Jewish. It is noted that the card is to be picked up at the destination post office. The card was sent to the town of Barnaul, Russia, more than 1,200 miles from Lomza, in the Russian interior.

The sender wrote "I am sending a big hello and my best wishes from Lomza ... I am in good health and feeling well" Then there is an unclear reference to "... all horrors ..." followed by "...there is an end to everything in our lives," likely references to the havoc of World War I.

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SOCIETY NEWS

E-mail Address Updates

Please note the following updates to e-mail addresses listed in the SFBAJGS Membership Roster.

Rita Bauer	braks3@home.com
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Michael Witkin	michael@witkin.org
Naidia Woolf	rnwoolf@earthlink.net

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

Messages to the following people have bounced:

- Bruce Bertram Howard Miller
- Jan Rosenberg Potts

Please advise us of your correct e-mail address.

Welcome New Members

Susan Goldsmith & Joseph Waxman	Piedmont
jcwsmg@sprintmail.com	
Lora Levin	Napa
Lavinia Schwarz	Oakland
r-vscharz@worldnet.att.net	
Gretchen Spieler	San Francisco
playgs@aol.com	

In the May issue of *ZichronNote*, the e-mail addresses of two new members were transposed. With apologies for the error, the entries should have read:

Jeffrey Sugarman	sugarjf@worldnet.att.net
Vladimir Tetelbaum	vtetelbaum@yahoo.com

In Memoriam

Our organization lost an enthusiastic member when Sadie Miller died at age 85. She spread her joy for life to all whom she met. A Chicago native, one of the photos displayed at her memorial service showed her in uniform smartly attired as a court bailiff, a Cook County sheriff with badge and pistol. Sadie moved to Palo Alto in 1984 and was active in Jewish and charitable organizations. She enjoyed our SGBAJGS meetings and took considerable pleasure in locating her parent's shtetl on a map of Poland. Like so many of her friends and her family, we will miss her.

The Holocaust Center of Northern California

In May, David Goldstein, the Assistant Archivist at the Holocaust Center of Northern California, spoke to the SFBAJGS. The HCNC's 12,000-volume library covers Jewish life before the Holocaust and all phases of the Holocaust, including: U.S. involvement in World War II; refugees and displaced persons camps; efforts to establish post-war Israel; religious interpretations of the Holocaust, Holocaust fiction, arts, events, and denial. Of particular interest to genealogists are deportation lists of Jews from France, Belgium, and Holland; a registry of 100,000 survivors; Red Cross records for Belgium, Holland, and France; yizkor books, gedenkenbuchs; and oral testimonies.

The yizkor book collection numbers approximately 460 volumes. Yizkor books were written by survivors and those who left Europe before World War II to remember their lost hometowns and Jewish communities. Most were compiled in Israel and may contain stories, poems, songs, and photographs. Subjects vary widely but often include commentaries on social, political, economic, and religious life. The history of the town and its destruction during the Holocaust are usually included with specific references to people and places.

Although most yizkor books are written predominantly in Yiddish, (often with some Hebrew), 66% of those at the HCNC contain some English, and some are indexed. Many books contain necrologies and/or lists such as survivors in Israel, Argentina, or the U.S. A project to microfilm the entire yizkor book collection is almost complete.

When researching at the HCNC, it is helpful to know the regions where your towns of interest are located (the collection includes maps). If there is no book for your town, the book of a neighboring town may mention your community. Since it is common for more than one town to have the same name, identifying the geographic location of your town is important. It is also useful to know approximately when your family left the town and the family occupations (yizkor books may contain essays about particular professions).

The Holocaust Center of Northern California is located at 639 14th Avenue at Balboa in San Francisco. Hours: Sun. 12-4 p.m., Mon. and Wed. 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Tu. and Thu. 1-6 p.m.

CALENDAR, cont'd.

More Genealogy Events

Local

Thu., September 21, 7 p.m. **Santa Clara County Historical and Genealogical Society, Connecticut Research.** Community Room, Santa Clara City Central Library, 2635 Homestead Road, Santa Clara, CA. www.katpher.com/SCCHGS/

Regional

Mon., August 21, 7 p.m. **JGS of Sacramento, Map Resources – How to Get Them and What is on Them**, Speaker Rabbi Matt Friedman. Arts and Crafts Room, Albert Einstein Center, 1935 Wright Street, Sacramento. Tel: (916) 486-0906. www.jewishgen.org/ajgs/jgs-sacramento

Mon., September 18, 7 p.m. **JGS of Sacramento, The Changing Boundaries of Europe**, speaker Allan Bonderoff. Recorded lecture plus handouts. Arts and Crafts Room, Albert Einstein Center, 1935 Wright Street, Sacramento. Tel: (916) 486-0906. www.jewishgen.org/ajgs/jgs-sacramento

National/International

Wed. - Sat., September 6-9, **Federation of Genealogical Societies, A World of Records: Rediscovering Old Millennial Sources with New Millennial Techniques.** Salt Palace Convention Center, Salt Lake City. Write: FGS Business Office, P.O. Box 200940, Austin, TX 78720-0940; Tel: (888) FGS-1500; Fax: (888) 380-0500; e-mail: fgs-office@fgs.org. www.fgs.org

Fri. - Sun., September 22-24, **Federation of Eastern European Historical Societies (FEEFHS) Year 2000 7th International Convention.** Holiday Inn Downtown, Salt Lake City, UT. More than 100 lectures covering all areas of Central and Eastern Europe, and Internet Genealogy. Write: FEEFHS 7th International Convention, P.O. Box 510898, Salt Lake City, UT 84151-0898. www.feefhs.org

Correction

In his article "How To Use U.C. Berkeley Libraries for Genealogical Research," published in the May 2000 issue of *ZichronNote*, Jeremy Frankel relates the discovery of his Koenigsberg family in the book *East End 1888*. Jeremy would like to clarify that the name "Koenigsberg" does not appear either in the contents or the index, but does appear in the text (a lesson for all genealogists!).

Yizkor Books at the University of California, Berkeley

by Jeremy Frankel

Using the online catalog at the UC Berkeley Library, I found references to yizkor books for the towns listed below just from searching the keyword "yizkor." Although I have not inspected any of the books, you should be able to do a search with the place name and pull up the entry. Check all the entries as they do not always refer to shtetls, but also prayer and song books.

Most of the yizkor books are not held in the library on the Berkeley campus but are stored at the UCB Richmond Field Station annex in the Northern Regional Library Facility (NRLF). The NRLF is located about ten minutes north of UC Berkeley, adjacent to I-580, just north of the Bayview exit. (See the May 2000 and May 1997 issues of *ZichronNote* for more information.)

<u>Town/Alternate Spelling, Country</u>	<u>UCB Location</u>
Aleksandriya, Ukraine	NRLF
Baranov (Baranow), Poland	NRLF
Biten (Byten), Belarus	UCB Main
Demblin-Modz'its (Deblin), Poland	NRLF
Dokshits Parafyanov (Dokszyc-Parafynov), Belarus	NRLF
Droitshin (Drohichin), Poland	NRLF
Dubosari, Moldova	NRLF
Dzialoshits, (Dzialoszyce), Poland	NRLF
Garvolin, Poland	NRLF
Gnivoshov, (Gniewoszow), Poland	NRLF
Iveyeh (Ive), Belarus	NRLF
Kazimierz, Poland	NRLF
Lask, Poland [English section at end]	NRLF
Lipnishok (Lipnishiki), Belarus	NRLF
Makov Mazovitsk (Makow Mazowiecki), Poland	NRLF
Mlinov-Muravits (Mlinov, Muravitsa), Ukraine	NRLF
Ogustov (Augustov), Poland	NRLF
Opt (Opatov), Poland	NRLF
Otvotsk (Otwock, Karczew), Poland	NRLF
Porisov (Parysow), Poland	NRLF
Pyetrkov (Piotrkow), Poland	NRLF
Radomsk (Radomsko), Poland	NRLF
Rozvadov (Rozadow, Rzeszow), Poland	NRLF
Rubiz'evits (Rubezhovich), Belarus	NRLF
Sarnaki, Poland	NRLF
Shevintsy (Svencionys), Lithuania	NRLF
Shumsk (Shumskoye), Ukraine	UCB Main
Tarovits (Torgovitsa), Ukraine	NRLF
Tshivits (Tiszowic, Tyszowce), Poland	NRLF
Tomashov Mazovyetsk (Tomaszow Mazowiecki), Poland	NRLF
Ts'ortkov (Chortkov), Ukraine	NRLF
Turkah (Turka), Ukraine	NRLF
Varshe (Warsawa), Poland	UCB Main
Vayslits (Vaislits, Wislica), Poland	NRLF
Virushuv (Wieruszow nad Proсна), Poland	NRLF
Volkovisker (Wolkovisker), Belarus	UCB Main
Volomin (Wolomin), Poland	NRLF
Voyslavits (Vislavitsah, Wojlawice), Poland	NRLF
Vylen (Wielun (Lodz)), Poland	UCB Main

Report on the 20th International Conference on Jewish Genealogy

From July 9-14, 2000, the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies hosted the 20th International Conference on Jewish Genealogy in Salt Lake City, Utah. Salt Lake City is home to the Mormon Family History Library (FHL), a repository holding many valuable genealogical sources including thousands of microfilmed records from all over the world.

Competing for the time and attention of the attendees were: more than 80 lectures on a broad range of topics of interest to Jewish genealogists; meetings of special interest groups (SIGs); informal gatherings of people sharing a common research interest; "Breakfasts with the Experts"; luncheons; and those chance encounters that must have been bashert. Needless to say, no one slept very much, but everyone came home excited. The more than 620 attendees included at least 33 members of the SFBAJGS. Some of our members offer their reviews, experiences, and reports.

Hillary Farkas

At around 9:50 in the evening, they turn the lights on up on the second floor of the FHL in Salt Lake City. As someone nearby me wryly observed, "This is the only library I know of where they turn the lights ON when they're going to close!" On the second floor of the FHL, microfilm readers definitely rule over footcandles.

In all, I spent about 60 hours in the FHL before, during, and after the conference. Although worn out from running back and forth between the hotel and the Library, I was delighted with the decision that fellow SFBAJGS member Rita Bauer and I had made, to take advantage of low weekend hotel rates and come a few days early in order to maximize our research time. By the time we left to return home, I was also convinced that our current medical codes would now have to be revised to reflect a new condition called "microfilm readers' elbow."

On my part, this new "condition" was occasioned by the lack of indexing, causing both serious eye and elbow strain earned during hours of winding through dozens of microfilms. When searching through the petitions for naturalization, I ended up viewing each and every single petition filed for New York's Monroe County from 1902 to 1916. These records contained the names of ships, ports of entry, and dates of arrival for my male relatives, especially valuable since I had not been able to find Soundex entries for my relatives – a discovery in which I was not alone.

The conference sessions that I attended were largely in the "how-to" area, and were excellent. I had signed

up for three SIG luncheons, thinking that this would have the combined benefits of lunch while being an excellent source information about genealogical research in those specific areas. The lunches were quite good, but unfortunately the speakers left much to be desired. I was also unhappy with the politics I had earlier observed during my visits to several of the SIG meetings. Only the Latvian SIG made a sincere effort at making me feel a part of the group and helping with answers to some of my questions.

My most enduring memories however came while sitting in the gloom at one of the microfilm readers on the second floor of the FHL. In that near-dark environment, I would occasionally hear a sudden gasp of surprise and know that someone else had found a name for which they had been searching. That "first find" is like an electrical jolt. At first you sit frozen. Then you reach out to touch or cradle that name in your hands. But these projected images are phantoms that cannot be held, being as elusive to the touch as they had been difficult to find. It was this incredible moment, shared by so many of us, when a name became a real person. And by finding it, the name had come to life. This was no longer my grandmother's father; this was my great-grandpa!

Microfilm in hand, I would dash to the change machines to gather pockets full of dimes and nickels, then endure the agony of waiting in line to use a microfilm copier. The ten seconds it took for each copy to appear seemed like an eternity. Somehow, only when the name was on paper would I actually be able to touch it and make the living connection. Once while waiting, I mused about the shared emotions I was experiencing as compared to what my ancestors had endured. They had made that incredible voyage across land and ocean; thrilled at the sight of the Statue of Liberty in the New York Harbor; waited anxiously while going through the drill at Ellis Island; and finally, experienced the elation of stepping on to American soil!

For us, the lights going on at the FHL library meant it was time to call it a day and go home. For our immigrant ancestors, the lights at the end of the journey meant it was time for a new life to start.

Barbara Corff

I am very glad I went to Salt Lake City. The best part was getting to know our SFBAJGS members better and having access to so much great, professional advice and translation services so close at hand! The community feeling at the conference

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gave inspiration to my research. The Family History Library prepared the best finding aids, by country and topic, specifically for Jewish genealogy. They made a generous gift to JewishGen by allowing JewishGen to use these books and the CD without restriction in any way they see fit. I am really hoping that JewishGen gets these resources online or on CD very soon!

The FHL was brimming with volunteers to help with every question. This place has everything at your fingertips! The library was open until 10 p.m., so we were all zombies by closing time. I had minimal luck with my own research in the library, but now I know what to attempt on the next trip, and what is possible. I did learn how to use the New York State special censuses (1915 and 1925) by teaming up with another researcher. There is no soundex for these censuses. We used finding aids and maps and street directories in our search.

I would recommend bringing your own (non-refrigerated) sack lunch to eat in the vending room, and then go out for a dinner break. The vending machines are minimal. I would also recommend shopping around for special "genealogy" rates at the nearby hotels. Two members stayed at the hostel for approximately \$30 per night. The FHL has a lost-and-found room, which will also check your bags for the day.

At the conference, the resource room was very busy with people checking out books and finding-aids for study. Ancestry.com gave free access to their web site on computers they provided. I had fun in the vendors' room listening to Vlad Shoshnikov, a Belarus specialist from Moscow, translate the markings on a 1910 Russian bank note. I ended up buying one, too. The vendor also had ephemera and vintage postcards from many countries. I met a man who wrote my surnames in Cyrillic for my future research.

I've just finished reading my conference syllabus, which is a resource by itself. I wish I had attended more of the lectures and saved my library research for another time. I was unprepared to look at documents in Russian and German when I still felt that there were immigration records, special census documents, and other records (in English) for me to locate. I was able to hang out with fellow Hungarian SIG members, and I relied on them for much advice. Henry Wellisch from Toronto was able to translate a letter for me while we stood outside the hotel during a false fire alarm. The letter gave me names and dates and a possible town of origin for part of my Austro-Hungarian **RICKMAN** family. During the conference I learned of the difficult acquisition process for

microfilming records in the former Soviet Union, and what records I could expect to find in the FHL. I really got a better grasp on such big picture concepts as migration patterns, Jewish history, and surname patterns from the lectures I attended.

I will be attending future conferences to continue the growth of my knowledge, and to deepen the many friendships I formed in Salt Lake City!

Rita Bauer

I spent seven days in Salt Lake City and returned exhausted and glad to be home. I spent only two days at the Family History Library and although I did obtain some information, it was not as much as I hoped or wanted. I was a neophyte and wasted a lot of time trying to find the how and what I was looking for.

I went to lectures almost every hour and enjoyed almost all of them. Of the two luncheons I attended, the one hosted by the German SIG furnished some interesting information for my research. Unfortunately I was a bit late to it as it was not in the location I expected. I was disappointed by the keynote speaker who, I felt, spent too much time on the history of the Mormons.

Carol Feiner

The following blurb comes from *Avotaynu*, and it reminds me how helpful everyone at the Family History Library was. They would go to any length to help you find what you were looking for. There were tip sheets on the information desks in every area of the library. For example, there was a tip sheet for each census year explaining what information to extract from the index cards and then how to find the actual census sheets on microfilm. It was easy to look at the filmed index cards, fill out the forms and then them take to the census area. I found the census films with no trouble.

The LDS (Mormon) Family History Library has for years printed aids to genealogical research not well known except to those who have gone to Salt Lake City to do research. They are now available

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Tapes of Summer Seminar Lectures Available

Virtually all lectures given at the IAJGS Summer Seminar held in Salt Lake City, July 9-14, are available on tape and can be purchased at a cost of \$8.50 each, plus shipping. Contact Repeat Performance, 2911 Crabapple Lane, Hobart, IN 46342. Telephone: (219) 465-1234. Web site: www.repeatperformance.com.

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free on the Internet. Go to www.familysearch.org/sg and click the button that says "How-To Guides." It will display a brief description of each guide. Click a guide of interest and the full text is displayed and can be printed.

Examples are: letter-writing guides and genealogical word lists in many languages; research outlines for every U.S. state, Canadian province, Australia, Denmark, England, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Latin America, Norway, Philippines, Scotland, and Sweden. Other titles include: "Tracing Your Immigrant Ancestor" and "Hamburg Emigration Lists."

I was totally addicted to the Library and could have spent another week (or more) there. Every piece of information I discovered led to something new. To be quite honest, I found the seminars to be a bit basic. I had never thought of myself as beyond a beginner, but I guess I am. Between computers, books in the SFBAJGS library, and networking, I already knew much of what they had to share. But for beginners and non-computerized researchers, I think that the seminars were probably great.

My best result: My parents are in their eighties and they are my only source for much family history. There is so much that they've forgotten or thought they had already told me. In the Jewish birth records for Szekesfehervar, Hungary (I spent three hours on just that one roll), I found children born to my great-grandfather, Fulop Sachs, but the mother had a different name – "Nina," not "Janka" as I expected. I asked my mother if she thought this was a nickname. "Oh no," she replied. "That was Fulop's *second* wife. His first wife died and he married her sister who was only 16 years old." Hello!

Devera Witkin

The Salt Lake City conference was a Litvak-predominated conference for me. The LitvakSIG sponsored the visit of Regina Kopilevich, the main tourist guide from Vilnius, Lithuania to the U.S. Regina gave numerous talks about touring Lithuania. In addition, the SIG had its annual meeting, which had the largest ever attendance, and our own Judy Baston was re-elected to the LitvakSIG Board.

LitvakSIG also sponsored a luncheon with more than 150 people attending, where Regina gave an informal talk about visiting Lithuania. Litvak speakers included Davida Handler, President of the SIG; Harold Rhode; Dr. Jerry Esterson from Israel; and Judi Caplan. Topics ranged from single surname research to deciphering tombstones to searching the All Lithuania Database. In addition, LitvakSIG was the

recipient of the "Outstanding Contribution via the Internet Award" presented by the IAJGS for the SIG's creation of the All Lithuania Database. In prior years, this award was presented to JewishGen and JRI-Poland, and was certainly the highlight of the conference for me.

The conference ended on the highest possible note: the "entertainment" at the banquet was a preview presentation of the moving documentary "My Grandfather's House" by Eileen Douglas and Ron Steinman, chronicling Eileen's search for her grandfather's house in Kovno, (Kaunas), Lithuania.

Roger Stein

I think I got the most out of the "Breakfasts with the Experts" sessions. They had plenty of tables available and each had an expert. In this situation you could ask a question and get a detailed answer. You did not have to fight crowds as you had to at the end of a lecture. During one of these breakfasts I met Harold Rhode who put me on to some different threads of research that I could follow.

The conference also energized me more than I expected. While I was there I just sort of absorbed different ideas. I only stayed through Tuesday and then went hiking in Zion National Park. During this hiking time I think all these ideas were percolating. I came home Saturday night and then spent a good portion of Sunday just following through on some of the ideas.

I spent time in the Family History Library working on a project that I have been thinking about for a long time but had not gotten around to doing. When they immigrated, two of my grandparents went to small towns, Altoona, Alabama and Dubuque, Iowa. In the FHL I went through the 1910 Census for Dubuque, Iowa and Bibb County in Alabama. I found all the families listed as Russian Hebrew. I hope to go through this and find clues to how they decided to settle there. So far I have found family trees in the Family Tree of the Jewish People (www.jewishgen.org/gedcom) for some of the families. I also think many of the people from these towns came from the same towns or areas in Lithuania. So I am trying to cross these lists with some of the lists the LitvakSIG has obtained from the Kaunas archives. So far I have found five people and families originally from from Debeikiai in the Vilkomir Uyzed living in the Birmingham area. I don't know what will come of it but it has kept me thinking for the last few days.

I think I am getting more out of the conference now that I am home. I went there to get ideas and I have come away with more than I expected. It has just taken some time for them to simmer.

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Marcia O. Kaplan

My first Jewish genealogy conference was great. I am ready to go again, but I know now how important advance preparation is – more about that below. The most difficult aspect of the conference was choosing which sessions to attend or whether to attend at all and go instead to the Family History Library.

As a first-timer, I stayed at the conference on the first day to take the beginner classes. Nancy Levin Arbeiter did a great job, as did Gary Mokotoff. But what else would you expect? I admit that even armed with all the written materials and tidbits of information from the lectures, I felt helpless and overwhelmed at the Library.

Fortunately, the FHL staff overextended themselves and brought in troops of volunteers, the missionaries, to guide us. Most of the guides were knowledgeable and treated our questions, no matter how dumb, with dignity and respect, and *patience*.

Now, back to advance preparation: we received a booklet prior to leaving for Salt Lake City, which was extremely helpful. It was nitty-gritty stuff. But, did I listen? The “little piece of paper” research method, as the Library’s Nancy Goodstein calls it, just does not work. After two days, you forget what the scribbled notations mean. Next time, Henry (my husband) and I will each carry a bound notebook and enter the source, as well as the dead ends.

Another piece of advice I would give is to try to obtain as many source documents from family members as possible. Here is a good example: I spent considerable time in the FHL finding my mother’s parents’ marriage license. When I returned home and told my cousin, she replied that her mother had it.

One of my goals was to locate my paternal grandfather’s naturalization papers. I had written to the Immigration and Naturalization Service weeks ago and to the court in Brooklyn where the certificate had been issued. But because nothing arrived before the conference, I thought I would try the Library. Unfortunately, the Kings County (Brooklyn) records were not available, but lo and behold, upon my return home there was an envelope from Washington, D.C. I tore into it only to find six unintelligible pages with a stamp “Best Copy Available.” Back to square one.

Sheree Roth

I had the honor of attending the Jewish genealogy conference in Salt Lake City. It was probably the best treat that I have ever given myself. Imagine being in a room filled with 600 people who share your passion for Jewish genealogy and actually want to listen and talk about it for hours.

I have been pursuing my family history for about five years now. I have interviewed relatives, sent away for documents, etc., mostly in the U.S. and Canada. I went to the conference hoping to learn how to start researching overseas in Eastern Europe. I also wanted to learn how to use the Family History Library. I had never actually made it over to the local Family History Center, so this was to be my initiation. I was very impressed with how well organized the conference was and with the high caliber of speakers. Often I had to make the difficult decision which of three simultaneous lectures I should attend or whether to sacrifice the lectures and go to do research at the library.

The most important lectures for me were those I attended on how to read Russian and Hungarian language documents since that was going to be my focus at the Library. Probably the biggest highlight of the trip was getting the chance to view the microfilmed records of the Jewish community of Kremenets, Ukraine. Alas, even after taking the class on how to read Russian documents, the Cyrillic language was too much for me. The other half of the document was in Hebrew. I thought I would stand a chance with my fabulous sixth grade Hebrew Day School education but all I could pick out were a few Yaacovs and Yosefs. I was not used to the old 19th century handwriting. I had better luck reading the 1848 Jewish census of Ung County, Hungary, which was also at the Library. I had heard that the staff and volunteers at the library would be helpful. They were. They even had some of the experts on the European records, who had presented some of the lectures, on hand to help us. Other lecturers were brought in who are well known in the Jewish genealogy community, some of whom were also on hand at the library to help us out.

A highlight for me was having Alexander Beider (who wrote *A Dictionary of Jewish Surnames from the Russian Empire*) translate my four family names from Kremenets into Cyrillic. By the way, I had always assumed that whoever wrote that big book had spent a lifetime bringing it into being. Alexander Beider (whom everyone was calling Sasha) looked to be as old as a college kid. He assured me that the book only took him six years to write. His follow-up book, *A Dictionary of Jewish Surnames from the Kingdom of Poland*, took him only three years.

When I first got to the library and went looking for those Kremenets microfilm reels, I found that they had been checked out by someone else at the conference. The librarian told me that they were on hold for a fellow named Ron Doctor. That afternoon it just so happened that I attended a lecture whose

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SFBAJGS Library

The library of the San Francisco Bay Area Jewish Genealogical Society is available between meetings at the Institute for Masonic Research, 1111 California Street at Taylor in San Francisco. Parking in the building will be validated upon request for persons using the library. The Institute is open Monday - Friday, 3-8 p.m., and Saturday, 10 a.m - 4 p.m.

For any questions about the SFBAJGS library, contact Society Librarian Judy Baston, (415) 285-4616, or send e-mail to jrbaston@aol.com. If you wish to request that a particular item be brought to a Society meeting, make sure you let Judy know at least one week before the meeting.

New Titles in the Library

Syllabus of the 20th International Conference on Jewish Genealogy, July 2000

The American Jewish Archives Journal, 1948-1998
Jacob Rader Marcus Center of
the American Jewish Archives

A Translation Guide to 19th Century Polish Language Civil-Registration
Documents (Birth, Marriage and Death Records) 2nd Edition
Judith R. Frazin

Audio Tapes from the 20th International Conference on Jewish Genealogy, July, 2000

Beginner's Workshop	Nancy Levin Arbeiter
Census Records: An In-Depth Review	Nancy Levin Arbeiter
Immigration Records: An In-Depth Review	Nancy Levin Arbeiter
London Resources for the Jewish Genealogist	Doreen Berger
Naturalization Records: An In-Depth Review	Nancy Levin Arbeiter
Rarely Used Sources for Jewish Family Research in Germany	Angelika Elmann-Kreuger
Records at the INS	Marian Smith
Teaching Jewish Genealogy	Rabbi Matt Friedman
The Influence of Migrants from Czech Lands on Jewish Communities in Eastern Europe	Alexander Beider
Vital Records: An In-Depth Review	Nancy Levin Arbeiter

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speaker was introduced by none other than Ron Doctor himself. I waited until the end of the lecture to tell him about our shared connection to Kremenets. Ron is the president of the JGS in Portland, Oregon. We are going to try to have these six reels from Kremenets translated into English. Ron managed to talk Stanley Diamond, chairman of the JRI-Poland project, into accepting Kremenets under the umbrella of his organization. Kremenets is now in the Ukraine but as Ron pointed out to Stanley, it once was in Poland, before the borders changed. Now, for our part it will only take time and money. Of course if anyone reading this wishes to contribute in any way to this project please let me know.

Oh yes, I must not neglect to say that I managed to get my nose out of the Library one evening in order to walk across the street to Temple Square. I found out why the seagull is the state bird of Utah and attended a practice session of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir.

Roy Ogus

My attendance at the 20th Annual Conference on Jewish Genealogy in Salt Lake City was, as in previous years, a most interesting, stimulating, and enlightening experience for me. The combination of the interesting lectures and discussions sessions, the engaging speakers, and the ability to interact with fellow Jewish genealogists from all over the world, resulted in a most fulfilling week.

For me the highlight of the week was undoubtedly the access I had to the Mormon Family History Library. The instant availability of the huge collection of microfilms in the Library leads to an amazing efficiency in one's research. Rather than studying the films in a piecemeal fashion at a local Family History Center, one can quickly follow the threads of one's research in a very effective and rapid fashion.

Even more exciting for me, the week of the conference was the first time that a large number of Lithuanian vital records microfilms, recently filmed

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for the Family History Library at the Lithuanian State Historical Archives in Vilnius, were available in the FHL inventory. These films contain a significant portion of the Archive's Lithuanian vital records holdings, and for the first time, these records are accessible to the public directly, rather than through the Archives. A full description of the records that are now available in the FHL can be found at www.avotaynu.com/lithuanialist.htm.

During the week, I spent several hours at the FHL reviewing the films for one of my ancestral shtetls, Paberze, Lithuania, and was amazingly successful in finding a large number of new *Ocus* vital records from this town. (I can read enough Russian to locate the records, but I will use some assistance to complete the full translation of the records.) Previous to these films being available in the FHL, locating this number of records would have required an exchange of correspondence with the Lithuanian Archives taking many months and a large number of dollars finally to obtain copies of the records. Instead, working in the FHL was efficient and pleasant, and the copying of these records was accomplished requiring only some small change to feed the copying machines.

I am most excited by the large bounty of new records that I brought home with me, and my only regret is that I didn't have more time to complete the perusal of a larger number of the Lithuanian films. This will undoubtedly necessitate another trip to Salt Lake City to visit the FHL again.

Sheila Becker

It was my first conference and I learned some of the ropes. After an unsuccessful microfiche search, I talked to the experts and hired Regina Kopilevich and Alexander Beider to do some research in Vilnius and Poland respectively. I also joined the Kutno and Lviv groups as well as the Galicia and Litvak SIGs.

I was excited about the developments in genetic research. My husband is a Cohen, who has a marker on the Y chromosome. We are participating in the study which aims to trace the Cohanim to Aaron, the first Jewish Cohen. I was also impressed by the level and intensity of genealogy research.

Carole Dorshkind

I spent a very intense, but glorious five-and-a-half days in Salt Lake City, the first 39 hours of which I did not leave the hotel except for a quick delightful dinner next door, with members of the Hungarian SIG. From then on, the fabulous Mormon Family History Library became my home, from which I emerged only for several pre-arranged and pre-paid

meals, and one or two lectures. I was having so much fun, I even postponed my return, "standing by" for a 10 p.m. flight instead of my scheduled 3:30 p.m. one!

As a first timer, I found I was reeling in the beginning, from all the activities and the fabulous speakers I heard during that time – learning how to read Hungarian and German records, discovering more about the Immigration and Naturalization Service, its records and its plans for the future, learning tons more about immigration records, finding out how to research Slovakian records, hearing about 19th century German Jews and much more. Then, I put that new-found information to work, scavenging the stacks and film drawers for clues about my ancestors. The Library employees and volunteers couldn't have been more willing to help – and the vast resources available there were really a bit overwhelming. It was so difficult to stay focused, when there was so much more I could look at for so many other relatives. Even spending 12-14 hour days in the library didn't seem like enough time!

I enjoyed seeing and hearing the people from *Avotaynu* and the IAJGS who have done so much to promote Jewish genealogy. One the most moving moments of the general proceedings was when Nancy Goodstein, of the Family History Library staff, shared the results of countless hours she had devoted to preparing a comprehensive compilation of all the Jewish resources (comprising more than a dozen thick binders) available at the FHL. An officer of the Library gave Howard Margol, IAJGS President, a CD-ROM of the same material for the to put online or made available to IAJGS members. Countless people will now be able to know about and gain access to much more information with greater ease. This was a lovely gift.

The conference was extremely well organized and the people wonderful. It was fun to see other people as crazed as I get sometimes, rushing to make every moment count while doing research, and I look forward to more!

Jerry Delson

The conference organizers brought speaker Regina Kopilevich from Vilnius, Lithuania so that she could give us the latest news on Jewish finds and activities in Lithuania and Belarus. Regina is a young mother, who has been a tour guide for Jewish groups and individuals in Lithuania. She showed slides including some which featured her five-year old son. With warmth, empathy, and amazing energy, she transformed the scene for Jewish visitors to that region. At one session, she asked how many attendees have been on her tours, and several dozen raised their hands. From the podium,

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More About World War I Draft Registrations

Newsletter of The Genealogical Society of Santa Cruz County, March-April 2000

More than 24,000,000 World War I draft registration cards are on file at the National Archives and Records Administration Southeast Region branch in East Point, Georgia. They are filed alphabetically by state and by draft board. Three registrations took place:

- June 5, 1917: All men between the ages of 21 and 31 years of age were required to register.
- June 5, 1918: Registration of all men who had become 21 years of age since June 5, 1917. A supplemental registration was held on August 24, 1918 at which time men who had become 21 years of age since June 5, 1918 were required to register.
- September 12, 1918: This registration provided for the registration of all men between the ages of 18 and 21, and 31 to 45 years of age. This was the third and final World War I registration.

You can request a search of this file but must provide the full name of the person and his city, county, and state of residence at the time of registration. For the following cities, a street address or other specific location information (such as ward) is required. (City directories providing street addresses may be found on microfilm at the Sutro Library in San Francisco.)

California – Los Angeles, San Francisco

District of Columbia – Washington

Georgia – Atlanta

Illinois – Chicago

Indiana – Indianapolis

Kentucky – Louisville

Louisiana – New Orleans

Maryland – Baltimore

Massachusetts – Boston

Minnesota – Minneapolis, St. Paul

Missouri – Kansas City, St. Louis

New Jersey – Jersey City, Newark

New York – Albany, Buffalo, New York City, Syracuse

Ohio – Cincinnati, Cleveland

Pennsylvania – Luzerne Cnty, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh

Rhode Island – Providence

Washington – Seattle

Wisconsin – Milwaukee

Complete a separate request and enclose \$10 payment for each card. Make check(s) or money order(s) payable to National Archives Trust Fund. Provide as much of the following information as possible:

- Full name of registrant;
- Birthdate of registrant;
- Birthplace;
- Complete home address, including county at time of registration;
- Draft board location (street address, city, county, state);
- Registration date;
- Name of wife or nearest relative at time of registration;
- Registrant's occupation;
- Signature of requestor;
- Requestor's telephone number; and
- Requestor's name and full address.

Submit your request and payment to NARA Southeast Region, 1557 St. Joseph Avenue, East Point, GA 30344-2593 (web site: www.nara.gov).

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she good-naturedly awarded several individuals with lapel pins from Lithuanian cities. I received the Vilnius pin because of my Strashun relatives there and because she said that I "like to tell stories."

A really gifted storyteller, however, is Gary Mokotoff, publisher of *Avotaynu*. He entertained us with stories of a black sheep he found while researching his family. As proof that it really is a small world, I was surprised to realize that I had met a son of his "black sheep" last year when I was in Omer, Israel!

For the whole conference, I roomed with, Bob Friedman, a fourth-cousin from New York. We were at the Family History Library when it opened at 7:30

a.m. each morning. I attended more lectures than he did, as my cousin stayed at the Library until 10 p.m. each evening. Then, back at our room, we would talk past midnight. If it had continued for a second week, I would have enjoyed staying in Salt Lake City to hear more of the excellent presentations and receive help from the experts. But when I did get home, it was great to get some rest.

Sita Likuski

I hadn't been to Salt Lake City since 1991, and had forgotten how enticing the Library is. Even with hundreds of conference researchers, there was always

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Seminar Report, cont'd. from page 11

a microfilm reader available. With every film I wanted in the nearby filing cabinets, I didn't have to order and wait for them to be sent to my local Family History Center from Salt Lake City! If it was the wrong reel of a multi-film set, it was easy to try the next one. And being allowed to take out five films at once – what a luxury! Since I only had two days available, I came prepared with the microfilm reel numbers I wanted to view, having looked them up at home using the online FHL catalog at www.familysearch.com, and didn't have to spend any time on the Library computers.

Conference highlights were meeting and re-meeting JGSers from all over the world. On the shuttle from the airport to the hotel, I met someone researching one of my families, **BRANDON**, whose migration matches mine, England to Jamaica: the relationship is yet to be established. This was amazing since Sephardic researchers are a minority, and those researching the Caribbean are a minority within a minority.

My regret was not enough time. I developed a sore lower back from two days of intensive microfilm reading, but it was worth it!

Judith Krongold

It was very exciting to find census records, marriage licenses, and a slice of our family history at the Family History Library in Salt Lake City while attending this year's conference. For me, the conference started off with a session by Gary Mokotoff on how to use the FHL, which was very well presented. At the FHL itself there was quite a bit of assistance available which helped point me in the right direction for my research. From then on it was a question of research and detective work. The microfilmed records were usually there when I needed them, except for one day when a microfilm reel I needed was loaned out all day. It was extremely frustrating to keep looking for it, and when it was returned, two of us made a beeline for it and shared it for hours.

There was always the dilemma of whether to go to a lecture session or go and do research. Often, I went to study the microfilms while my husband Israel went to the sessions for me as well as for himself. For Israel, the highlights were the history sessions: "Tracing Your Hasidic Roots" by Raphael Gruber, an excellent presenter; "The Irgun and the War of Liberation" by Ralph Yodaiken, which gathered many old Irgun supporters who had a great time together; and "Changing Borders of Eastern Europe" by Hal Bookbinder which was also a winner. Besides some of the useful how-to sessions, the "Genetic Approaches to Jewish History" was very interesting and well presented, and hearing Marian Smith of the

Immigration and Naturalization Service describe her work within that agency gave a good understanding of the problems we face when trying to get documents from that source. I came back with lots of material that I need to follow up on. We were pleased that we went to the conference and had a chance to become immersed in the FHL. It was also fun getting to meet the attendees from all over the world.

Marc Seidenfeld

I have been trying for years to trace the siblings of my grandmother (Anna Hand, my father's mother), without much success. I know she had seven brothers and sisters but I have not been able to find records of them other than in some early census records. But at the Family History Library in Salt Lake City I found declarations of intent to become U.S. citizens and naturalization documents for two of them, her brothers Louis and Manny Hand. These documents contained the names, birth dates, and places of birth of their spouses and their children – a genealogical goldmine. Now I expect to make further progress in tracing these branches of my family.

This work could have been done here in the Bay Area but it would have taken much longer. In Salt Lake City all the records are right there and you help yourself – no ordering film, waiting two weeks for it to arrive and then finding out that you ordered the wrong file, etc. I did in two days in Salt Lake what would have taken months here. I hope to be able to return to Salt Lake to do some more intensive research. It is incredibly rewarding when you actually locate a long lost ancestor!

Lois Silverstein

The Family History Library. Shelves of books. Floors of films. Where else could a seeker after sources go with such ease and find such plenty? To set the conference in a place where such a treasury lives was a gift pure and simple. For me, its presence overrode the talks and sessions, however bountiful they themselves were.

I spent four days carting my folders back and forth to the FHL and I had touched nary a hundred-thousandth of a fraction of its possibilities. To have access to these records, and the tools to explore them, kept my step light and my spirits from flagging. This remained true even when dead ends from long birth certificate indices for New York City, and nearly invisible passenger lists from 1870 and 1886, dared me to throw in the towel. So too, the kind support of the Library volunteers, endlessly patient, endlessly providing, as they guided neophytes like me who just wanted to find something or someone of their gigantic,

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NATIONAL RESOURCES

Genealogical Addition to the New York Public Library

Al Wirtzbaum, *JewishGen*

The Main Branch of the New York Public Library, located at 5th Avenue and 42nd Street opened a new research facility at the beginning of the year. The Irma and Paul Milstein Division of United States History, Local History, and Genealogy is housed in two rooms.

Room 119 is the Microform Room, with four manual and four automatic microfilm readers, two microfiche readers and a reader/printer. (Note that with only one reader/printer, a long line of patrons can develop.) The extensive collection includes microfilm related to ships' passenger lists, census records, city directories, and indices to vital records.

Room 121 is the Reference Assistance and Reading Room with approximately ten computers and flat-screen monitors. The materials include a number of handbooks and guides, along with an extensive collection of vital records in book form. (For instance, while browsing the stacks I came across a book that included some death records for 1962, the year in which my grandmother died. Flipping through the book, I found her name.) Other references include books on the histories of various localities in the U.S. and overseas, the Social Register for the early years of the 1900s, and a large collection of family histories.

To find the rooms, enter the library through the 5th Avenue doors and turn right. At the end of the hall, turn left. Enjoy this beautiful, new facility.

Information Sought on Ellis Island Wall Names

Dorot, *Jewish Genealogical Society, NY, Winter 1999-2000*

The Statue of Liberty - Ellis Island Foundation is seeking to add family history information for people named on the American Immigrant Wall of Honor at Ellis Island. The information sought includes city or province of origin, year and port of entry, and name of ship. According the Autumn 1999 issue of *The Lifeline* (New York State Council of Genealogical Organization), there is no charge for submitting and adding this information. Contact SOLEIF, Inc., P.O. Box 5200, New York, NY 10163-5191.

INTERNATIONAL RESOURCES

Project to Microfilm Lithuanian Records

Roots-Key Spring 2000

A project to microfilm all of the Jewish vital records stored in the Historical Archive in Vilnius, Lithuania is underway, following an agreement reached between the Lithuanian Archive Administration and the Mormon Family History Library in Salt Lake City, Utah. The archive will do the actual filming using equipment provided by the Mormons. When completed, the microfilm will contain more than 500,000 Jewish vital records.

It is estimated that the microfilming will take 18 months, and the cataloging will take an additional 18-24 months before all of the rolls of film are available to the public.

The individual rolls will become available as cataloguing for them is complete. Use of the vital records relies on the ability to recognize the ancestral surname written in Cyrillic or Yiddish, as the records are written in both languages.

Records of Deceased Physicians

Family Finding, Wisconsin JGS, Autumn 1998

For many years, the American Medical Association maintained records on deceased (as well as living) doctors in the United States. These files have been turned over to two other organizations. If the AMA held records about the doctor you are researching, you might find information from the following:

The National Library of Medicine can refer you to the edition of the *Journal of the AMA* that contains an obituary. The obituary may contain the doctor's full name, the place date of birth, medical education and year of degree, and possibly more. Write to: National Library of Medicine, NIH Building 38, 8600 Rockville Pike, Bethesda, MD 20894.

The National Genealogical Society also has data on file. For \$15 per name they will provide the birth and death dates and location, medical school, place and type of practice, hospital affiliations and obituary. In your request, provide the doctor's name, time period and location of practice, if known. Write to: National Genealogical Society, Attention: Deceased Physician File, 4527 17th Street North, Arlington, VA 22207.

Seminar Report, cont'd. from page 12

still shapeless puzzle of family, a single bit of the trail and so ride home in triumph and renewed energy to carry on the task. How many of us have these volunteers seen, beginners and advanced seekers, from all over the country, and around the world, trekking in hopeful, limping out with stacks of questions, half-answers, multiple clues as yet unfathomed riddles? How many of us have they patiently answered, asking over and over, "Could you please show me how to use the New York State Census Index Cards?" Or, "How exactly do I decipher the Gothic script of the Hamburg Passenger Index?" Classes were offered, and for us doing research in Jewish genealogy, special sessions were held on FHL's Jewish Records; special shelves with the lists and catalogues of these records were made available. Every day, I felt grateful for the continuing support.

An added bonus to the Library itself, its riches, and its helpers, were the experts from our conference who set up shop in the basement classroom, and darted hither and yon in the stacks and carrels to answer questions. While I was "going blind" over the disappearing ink of ships from Bremen to Baltimore, Antwerp to New York or Philadelphia, I could hear the hearty voice of Harold Rhode guiding a nearby researcher down his own lists; or the thoughtful

comments of Gary Mokotoff instructing another on how to make sense of Russian records, and not being afraid to do so. Or the contagious enthusiasm of Warren Blatt, assuring us that if he could find more than 2,000 Polish relatives, so could we. (Would that it could be so.) Or the bright-eyed Randy Daitch, with his Sherlock Holmesian grasp of names and places.

Never was I stranded far from my more advanced colleagues. My questions were always welcome, there in the Library, back at the hotel, over breakfast, or at the various tutorials available throughout each day. I felt cared for and guided by those who offered help and information as I took my halting steps. Help was always available from my fellow conference attendees, always willing to take a break in their voluminous research, to give me a clue or prompt me to go in this or that direction. In fact, this "guidance" process, a more structured addition to the New York and Los Angeles conferences, was for me (apart from the Library), the best aspect of the conference.

And last but not least, the internet presentation by Alex Abraham from Yad Vashem lifted my spirits and helped me rededicate myself to the task. To sit before a modest man and see his efforts and those of his Israeli team work to restore the names of the Holocaust martyrs and survivors in multiple

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

I am curious about the choice of this postcard. Maybe the street, Rządowa Street, had particular meaning to the sender or recipient. Perhaps the selection was limited or just that the Hebrew sign an anomaly in a non-Jewish neighborhood. How did this postcard come to the U.S.? Was it so meaningful that it was carried by an immigrant?

The particulars of this postcard may never be clear. For me, however, it has added a dimension to my own image of the world inhabited by my ancestors.

Over the years I have come across books filled with postcards and wondered why someone had thought to save them. I learned that in the days before many people could afford a camera, people would purchase postcards of the places they visited. While reading *A History of Jewish Photography in Poland* by Lucjan Dobroszycki and Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, I came across the following:



"Postcards. Tens of thousands of postcards of Jewish subjects were issued in Poland by commercial publishers as well as by Jewish social and political organizations. ... Jewish postcards covered a wide variety of subjects. Entire series were devoted to Jewish writers, political figures, old Jewish residential areas, synagogues, hospitals, schools, ceremonial art, modern painting and sculpture, and traditional types and scenes."

Since finding this postcard, my interest in old Jewish postcards has grown. These photographs reflect a unique way of life that no longer exists. For those of you who are interested in more information about Jewish postcards, I highly recommend *Yiddishland* by Gerard Silvain and Henri Minczeles.

Rodger

BOOKSHELF

Surviving the Holocaust with the Russian Jewish Partisans

Review by Marcia Katzel DeVries

Most of us have probably heard people ask (or asked ourselves) regarding the Holocaust "why did the Jews go like sheep to their slaughter ... why didn't they resist or try to fight back?" Many of us and much of the rest of the world believed that the Jews of Europe were too weak, powerless, and ineffectual to fight for their lives.

For an entirely different view, authors Jack Kagan and Dov Cohen describe how they (and others) escaped from the ghetto of Novogrodek, and lived and survived with the Russian Jewish Partisans for much of the War. The book is written in two parts, one by Cohen and the other by Kagan.

Jack (Idel) Kagan and Berl Kagan (Dov Cohen) are first cousins who were born in Novogrodek, White Russia (now Belarus), Dov in 1922, Jack in 1929. They relate in detail the history of Novogrodek and what life was like in their town before the War. They describe the vibrant Jewish way of life; the Jewish institutions of learning, music and art; the political parties; and most of all their loving and close-knit families. Both of them lost their entire immediate families, murdered by the Nazis and their collaborators.

How they escaped from the Novogrodek Ghetto, living with "unimaginable horrors" as described by Berl, and found the Partisans is a captivating read. Living deep in the woods surrounding Novogrodek, with as many as 1,200 Jews, while harassing the German convoys and installations, is truly inspiring.

Before the Holocaust there were 6,000 Jews living in Novogrodek; 100 survived. This is truly a yizkor book, with many names of Jews who lived there, descriptions of them and their lives. For anyone with a tie to the Novogrodek area, this is for you!

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languages not only made me weep with gratitude, but prompted me once again to urge my Holocaust survivor friends, to take comfort in the deep caring of such efforts to keep the truth alive and make it accessible to all.

The week I returned home, I received my first "overseas" correspondence from a possible relative – in Russian! Rather than throw up my hands with hopelessness because I couldn't read it instantly, I used my education from the conference and located a translator. I have hauled out my maps of Ukraine and feel almost fully confident to take on the next steps of contacting the archives "over there" to check on possibilities. Thanks to the conference and the excellent work of its makers and shakers, I no longer feel I am "Beyond the Pale."

Judy Baston

In the not too distant future, it may become a lot easier to navigate what often seems to be a labyrinth of valuable databases on JewishGen (www.jewishgen.org). Simply keeping up with the constantly growing number of databases can be difficult. And if one's ancestors lived in an area affected by various border changes, that can add to the questions. For example, If I'm looking for family who lived in the town of Lida, I might have to search in Lithuania, Poland, or Belarus.

At the Jewish Genealogical Seminar in Salt Lake City, Susan King and Warren Blatt of JewishGen announced an "all-country" search system which is

being developed to consolidate search results from various databases containing information from a particular area. For areas subject to border changes, the search system will include an overlap feature, so that, for example, a search for Lida, now in northern Belarus, will also include the many records for that town in the All-Lithuania Database as well as the 1929 Polish Business Directory. Also planned is the ability to search in regions that no longer exist, such as Galicia, through an envisioned All-Galicia Database.

Although no firm date was given for launching this "all-country" system, we can all anticipate this development as one that will help us keep up with the ever-burgeoning number of databases available to us on JewishGen.

Vicky Furstenberg Ferraresi

The conference in Salt Lake City provided a wonderful opportunity to learn and network. From the "mountain of records" available at the Family History Library to the conference itself, there was something for everyone, but especially so, for a new researcher like me.

I attended lectures on deciphering foreign language records and understanding how the German language leads to natural name changes. The Yad Vashem Holocaust Victim's Name Database was introduced. Currently it is only available on site at Yad Vashem, but it is hoped that this valuable resource will be accessible on the Internet before long. Other speakers reviewed rarely used German sources such as court,

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Seminar Report, cont'd. from page 15

town, and tax records for genealogical research. On a more personal level, three speakers talked about the value of less-frequently used sources (including a diary), to gain insight into what their ancestors' lives were really like. These windows into the past give me even more motivation to try to find out as much as I can about my own family.

The FHL alone was worth the trip. It was so productive to have every film of interest right there. I was glad I had done my homework and had prepared a long list of films I wanted to review. I was able to look at reel after reel without interruption, and gather a large amount of information in a relatively short period of time. The staff on the European floor was extremely knowledgeable and helpful. Many were multilingual and translated records as fast as I could find them. The Library also holds a large number of books, maps, and other excellent resources.

The conference too was well organized. Programs began at a reasonable 8:30 a.m. with a two-hour break for lunch (or a quick trip to the library!). The fifteen-minute breaks between sessions also provided a nice respite.

Finally, the networking was great. What a pleasure it was to meet people with whom I had been corresponding online. We had many opportunities to share information and strategies, as well as get to know each other. I look forward to continuing the friendships started at the conference, and in moving in the new directions my research leads.

Jerry Jacobson

Several speakers described the Family History Library catalog. There are at least four versions in use, the newer ones, including the internet version, are searchable by subject. It was stressed that information is not necessarily listed under the expected town or city, and that one should also look under county and state (or equivalent terms in other countries). The catalog is available on a CD-ROM for \$5, which is, presumably, much faster than the internet. I plan to research future projects in the catalog and save the results, hoping to get to Salt Lake City or the large FHC in Los Angeles every couple of years. Sending for films from the local library has been disappointing for me, often the material isn't on the exact film indicated in the index.

Scott Hastings, Director of Public Outreach for the Immigration and Naturalization Service, described the problems they are having retrieving older records and was seeking support for a new fee for genealogical records. They are overwhelmed with requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act

for which they cannot charge a fee. He described an antiquated system of searching for paper records stored in multiple locations which further slows the process but for which he has no real hope of getting public funds to upgrade. He said he didn't know how many searches are requested for older material, which seemed unbelievable to me and suggested the volume may be less than he has implied; we should all carefully read the proposal when it is published.

A series of in-depth reviews by Nancy Arbeiter covered vital, census, immigration, and naturalization records. These presentations were exceptionally clear and accompanied by well-organized syllabus notes. I suggest that a review of the audio tapes of these sessions, with the syllabus, would be valuable for many intermediate and all beginning genealogists.

Talks on the changing borders and governments in Europe finally began to have practical meaning to me. I realized that records I am looking for may well be in a different country than I expect, and why records for one shtetl may be in a different form or language from another shtetl only a few miles away.

The lectures on how to read foreign languages tended to be worthless with the exception of learning to recognize key words and forms of records.

The talks on lesser-known sites and types of records in various countries may be helpful to some researchers but most require visiting foreign archives and a familiarity with foreign languages that few amateurs will have. An anecdotal talk by Harold Rhode did convince me to widen the geography of my searches. He found branches of his family in widely separate and unexpected locations.

The lecture by Alexander Beider was not easy to follow but showed me that the European Jewish community of the middle ages was largely in Bohemia/Moldavia and that Yiddish and the large German and Eastern Europe settlements were, in large part, subsequent to migration from what is now the Czech Republic.

A talk on "Shtetl Travel" by Ellen Shindelman had several practical points (e.g., don't travel with family who won't want to "waste time" searching for records) and the syllabus notes will be worth reviewing if you are considering a trip.

I discovered that many other local Jewish genealogical groups have done worthwhile research projects (e.g., indexing cemetery records). It was embarrassing to realize that a large group like ours was contributing less than we might.

Next year in London!

COMPUTER/ONLINE NEWS

World Gazetteer

David Joseph Colman, *JewishGen*

I have had great results with JewishGen's ShtetlSeeker, but have found a complementary site, which I suspect, will prove very useful to many. It is called the World Gazetteer and is located at www.calle.com/world. It claims to have 3,397,140 place names listed.

Once there, click the country name. I tried it for Poland and was then presented with a huge series of two-letter combinations. I clicked "Kr," and received a large list of Polish towns/cities, each beginning with those two letters, including their latitude and longitude – given in degrees only, not minutes.

Each town name is a link to more detailed information including basic maps, the complete latitude and longitude, and links to search results from the Google search engine (www.google.com).

Vienna, Austria – Birth, Death, and Marriage Records

Joyce Eastman, *JewishGen*

The Bohemia-Moravia SIG (Boh-Mor SIG) Web site includes information on obtaining Jewish birth, death and marriage records from the Vienna, Austria archives. At www.jewishgen.org/BohMor/ausguide.htm, select the topic "Jewish birth, death & marriage records." This section details the records held by different repositories.

Addresses, telephone and fax numbers, and e-mail addresses are provided for each archive. I submitted my request for death information via e-mail and was delighted to receive a reply the following day.

Don't overlook the other offerings on the Boh-Mor SIG site. Entitled "Beginner's Guide to Austrian-Jewish Genealogy," information is provided on many Austrian resources, Holocaust topics, as well as links to other sites of interest.

SFBAJGS Family Finder Update

The surnames and towns being researched by our newest members are listed below. This database is maintained for our membership. If you have a correction or update you would like us to know about, contact: SFBAJGS, P.O. Box 471616, San Francisco, CA 94147, or send e-mail to: dLkurtz@ix.netcom.com.

<u>Surname</u>	<u>Town, Country</u>	<u>Member</u>
Davis	Romania	Goldsmith, Susan & Waxman, Joseph
Edelhertz	New York; Pennsylvania	Spieler, Gretchen
Frankel	Kolosvar, Hungary	Levin, Lora
Gittes	Seta, Jonava, Lithuania	Goldsmith, Susan & Waxman, Joseph
Goldfarb	Romania; Omaha, NE	Spieler, Gretchen
Goldsmith	Seta, Jonava, Kedainiai, Vandziogala, Lithuania	Goldsmith, Susan & Waxman, Joseph
Gordon	New York	Spieler, Gretchen
Haffner	Botoschon, Botosani, Romania	Goldsmith, Susan & Waxman, Joseph
Horowitz	Dolginovo, Belarus	Goldsmith, Susan & Waxman, Joseph
Kaiser	New York City, NY; elsewhere	Schwarz, Lavinia
Kempe	Baltic area; Manhattan, NY	Schwarz, Lavinia
Koenigsberg	Austria	Goldsmith, Susan & Waxman, Joseph
Mechanic	Germany	Schwarz, Lavinia
Meyer	Wreschen-Posen	Schwarz, Lavinia
Neu (New)	Germany	Schwarz, Lavinia
Rappaport	Romania	Spieler, Gretchen
Regensburger/Regensburg	Nuremburg, Germany	Schwarz, Lavinia
Reisfeld	United States	Kudryautseva, Gelia
Schilokraut	Silagh Magje, Hungary	Levin, Lora
Schochet	Latvia; Lithuania; Minnesota	Spieler, Gretchen
Schvartz	United States	Kudryautseva, Gelia
Schwarz	Russia	Schwarz, Lavinia
Shames	Dnepropetrovsk, Ukraine	Levin, Lora

New JewishGen Databases

All Latvia Database

Martha Levinson Lev-Zion, *JewishGen*

The Courland Research Group, the Latvia SIG, and individual donors have pooled their holdings to create the All Latvia Database found at www.jewishgen.org/databases/latvia/. Six different databases have been combined with nearly 25,000 total entries, referring to approximately 40,000 named individuals living in the area now known as Latvia. The database is a work in progress and new entries are being added regularly.

Databases include:

- Courland 1907 Duma voters lists and the 1905 list of Jewish voters of Windau;
- Recruits enlistment registers and family lists;
- Passlosen - Jews without lawful permit;
- Jews in Hasenpoth/Aizpute 1834;
- Jewish inhabitants of Riga, 1885/1886; and
- Riga tax administration list, 1858-1917.

1890 New York Immigrants from Austria, Poland and Galicia

Warren Blatt, *JewishGen*

JewishGen has launched the "Index of 1890 New York Immigrants from Austria, Poland and Galicia" database, compiled by Dr. Howard M. Relles. This is one of the many databases on the JewishGen web site at www.jewishgen.org/databases/1890NY.htm.

The database is an index to all of the passengers who arrived at the port of New York by ship in the year 1890, for whom the ship's records indicated that they were citizens of Austria, Poland, or Galicia. A total of 44,052 records is derived from the U.S. National Archives' (NARA) microfilmed copies of the original ships' passenger manifests, prepared at the time of embarkation from the particular overseas ports. See National Archives Microfilm Publication M237, the 18 rolls cover 1890 (reels #543-#560).

This database contains each passenger's surname and given name; NARA soundex code; date of arrival into New York; microfilm reel number; ship's name; ship's number; line number of the passenger in the ship's manifest; and an abbreviation indicating the "Country of Citizenship": Austria, Poland or Galicia. The database also has a supplemental table listing each ship and its date of arrival in New York, with the corresponding microfilm number, ship number, and number of passengers.

Additional information about each passenger may be available on the microfilmed ship manifest, available at a number of repositories including several branches of NARA, the New York Public Library, and through local LDS (Mormon) Family History Centers.

There were a total of just over 1,900 ship voyages recorded in the rolls of the 1890 microfilms. Of those 1,900 voyages, 671 voyages had at least one passenger on board who was listed as a citizen of Austria, Poland, or Galicia.

All Belarus Database

David M. Fox, *JewishGen*

The Belarus SIG is delighted to report that the All Belarus Database (ABD) containing more than 80,000 entries, is available at www.jewishgen.org/databases/Belarus/. The ABD will allow you to search all of the Belarus databases at one time by surname, town, or global text. The Daitch/Mokotoff soundex search option is also available for surname and town searches.

As more databases are compiled they will be added to the ABD. Some of the databases that are close to completion are the Pinsk Ghetto List; the Minsk Gubernia Duma Lists; the Borisov Cemetery List; the 1911 Minsk Homeowners List; and a few others. Information on the 1889 Minsk City Homeowners List is forthcoming.

Databases include:

- The Phoenix Project – referencing more than 12,000 people in the Brest Ghetto;
- Grodno Gubernia 1912 voters list;
- Rechitsa Uezd (Minsk Gubernia) 1906 voters list;
- Minsk Surnames – index of surnames appearing in the LDS microfilms of the Jewish vital records for the city of Minsk.
- 1903 Vsia Rossiia, 1911 Minsk Gubernia, and 1911 Mogilev Gubernia – Listing of Jewish businesses in Russian business directories;
- Mogilev birth index of boys, 1864-1894;
- 1929 business directory - Nowogrodek Province; and
- Minsk City Homeowners Lists, 1889 and 1911.

Inventory of Filmed Lithuania Records on Avotaynu Web Site

by Judy Baston

"Nu, What's Nu?" the online bulletin from Avotaynu, has pointed out that a complete inventory of microfilms containing Jewish vital records for 67 towns in Lithuania, can be found at the Avotaynu Web site www.avotaynu.com/lithuanialist.htm.

These microfilmed records – birth, marriage, death, and even some divorce records – are in both Hebrew and Cyrillic. The inventory includes the locality name (and present-day spelling); the fond/series/file number; the event type and date; and the film or item number.

As noted by Harold Rhode at the Litvak SIG meeting during the summer seminar in Salt Lake City, these records were filmed just as they are filed in the Lithuanian State Historical Archives. For example, one town's birth records for a particular year may be sandwiched between records from two other towns. Therefore one may need to look at quite a few microfilms to research all records filmed for a particular town. When looking for that town's records on a film, it is especially important to note all information, including the item and file number.

California and Texas Vital Records Online

Hilary Henkin, *JewishGen*

Rootsweb has added vital records databases for California and Texas to their Web site:

- California births and deaths, 1905-1995 at userdb.rootsweb.com/ca/birth/search.cgi and userdb.rootsweb.com/ca/death/search.cgi
- Texas births 1926-1995; marriages 1996-1997; divorces 1968-1997; and deaths 1964-1998, all at www.rootsweb.com/rootsweb/graphics/texas.html.

All three databases are searchable on many fields, allowing you to perform generalized searches on a particular surname. The results returned may include first, middle, and last name; birth date and location; death date and location; and Social Security number.

Where a Social Security number is known, a link to more detailed information is available. In one example, the last town of residence was listed as well as the state in which the Social Security number was issued. Additionally, a link to a form letter, is provided, which can be used to request the SS-5 – the actual application for the Social Security card. (Fees are also indicated.)

HIAS: Service For Locating Friends And Family

Saul Issroff, *JewishGen*

The Hebrew Immigration Aid Society (HIAS) has launched an online search service to help people locate friends or loved ones separated by social upheaval and immigration during the past 100 years. Users can make location inquiries through the HIAS Web site at: www.hias.org/location.

The site describes HIAS' services, how to initiate a search and what to expect. A form to submit a search request can be downloaded and mailed or faxed to HIAS. The form requires the first and last name of the person being searched for, his/her birth date and birthplace, country of immigration and when contact last occurred. The search fee is \$25 per request.

"How-To" Guides from the Family History Library

The LDS family search Web site at www.familysearch.org/sg has a series of "How-To" guides for genealogists. Research guides for every U.S. state and many countries provide a well-organized list of sources for your research.

For each locality, categories may include: records in the LDS Family History Catalog; a listing of archives and libraries; census information; directories; gazetteers; history; maps; newspapers and periodicals; naturalization and citizenship information; and town and vital records. Many of the category entries are links to more detailed information or to the source itself.

Another set of guides provides word lists – translations into English of words often found in genealogical records. Languages include Polish, French, German, Spanish, and Latin. The Polish guide, for example, offers a discussion of Polish records alerting the researcher to time periods when other languages were used for official records. Additionally, these guides offer linguistic information, which may aid the researcher in understanding how the particular language is used. For example, in Polish, nouns may be masculine, feminine, or neuter as are the adjectives used to describe them. Therefore the word "old" will be spelled differently for "old man" than "old woman." This knowledge greatly aids the researcher who is unfamiliar with the language used in the records.

These guides are excellent sources of information about the holdings in the FHL Catalog as well as serve as good outlines for all genealogical research.

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