



זכרון ZichronNote

The Journal of the San Francisco Bay Area Jewish Genealogical Society

Volume XXI, Number 3

August 2001

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. August 20** **Palo Alto:** *Highlights of the 21st International Conference on Jewish Genealogy.* JGS members who attended the seminar in London will tell us about the exciting new developments in Jewish genealogy and regale us with their adventures.
- Sun. September 16** **San Francisco:** *Searching the Ellis Island Database with Fewer Tears.* Stephen Morse, who wrote the one-step Ellis Island Database search program, will provide assistance in negotiating this sometimes frustrating new source. Steve is an amateur genealogist who has been researching his Russian-Jewish origins for the past few years. He is an active participant in the Bereza Area Research Group.
- Mon. October 15** **Palo Alto:** *Utilizing the Internet to Better Understand the Lives of Our Ancestors.* Ron Arons and SFBAJGS President Rodger Rosenberg will discuss use of the Internet and other resources (including the criminal justice system!) to understand the influences and events that shaped the world of our ancestors.
- Sun. November 18** **San Francisco:** *Beth Hatefutsoth: Past, Present and Future.* Douglas E. Goldman will talk about the Douglas E. Goldman Genealogy Center at Beth Hatefutsoth, Israel, which houses the largest collection of microfilms of Jewish vital records from Poland outside of the LDS Family History Library.
- Note Room Change.** Program will take place in Building C, Room 235.
- Mon. December 17** **Palo Alto:** *Spelling Jewish Names.* SFBAJGS Recording Secretary Jim Koenig will reprise his outstanding San Francisco discussion of Jewish surnames, their roots and histories. In this valuable presentation, Jim highlights the challenges genealogists face when researching family names, and strategies to overcome them. Jim is a member of the American Names Society.

More Genealogy Events of Interest on Page 4

ZichronNote

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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.

Display Advertising is accepted at the discretion of the editor. Rates per issue: business card-sized (3-1/2 x 2 inch) - \$10, quarter-page - \$20, half-page - \$35, full-page - \$60. Ads must be camera-ready and relate to Jewish genealogy.

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: SFBAJGS, Membership, P.O. Box 471616, San Francisco, CA 94147.

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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

Who Will Be the Next President of the SFBAJGS?

by Rodger Rosenberg

This summer has brought us many new changes and there are more to come. At the Annual Jewish Genealogical Conference, which was held in London, a new board was elected. Hal Bookbinder of the Los Angeles JGS is now the president of the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies (IAJGS). A complete list of the officers can be found on page 4. Their e-mail addresses are listed on JewishGen. It is our hope that the new board will be able to facilitate more opportunities for Jewish genealogists everywhere.

Our own board will also be going through changes. As I have mentioned before, this is my final year as president, and effective January 1 we will have a new president. Who will it be? Maybe you! In fact all of the officer positions on our board will be open to anyone who wishes to become more involved.

I highly encourage everyone in the Society to consider becoming more involved, whether as an officer or working with the board in the many activities we do. These include annual workshops, our newsletter, the cemetery project, publicity, membership, etc. All you need to do is make that first step by letting me or any of the current board members know of your interest. Officers are elected through a mail ballot that is sent to all members.

I will remain involved with our Society as director of programs. Anyone who would like to become involved with this should let me know.

Another change at the beginning of the year 2002 will be a new meeting site in Palo Alto. After a long and close relationship with Congregation Kol Emeth, we will be moving our meetings to Congregation Beth Am (thanks to the efforts on Dan Hoffman). The reason for this change is that the attendance at these meetings has grown to the point where a larger facility is needed. We will have the opportunity to avail ourselves to the vast library at Beth Am as well as having our meetings there.

As you wind up your summer, please consider becoming more involved in the Society.

Rodger

Report from London

by Jeremy Frankel

This article is the first of several from SFBAJGS members who attended the annual conference of the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies in London. Jeremy Frankel is researching **FRANKEL**, Poland and London, England; **GOLD(RATH)**, Praszka, Poland, and London, England; **KOENIGSBERG**, Vilkaviskis, Lithuania, London, England, and New York City; **LEVY/LEADER**, Kalisz, Poland and London, England; and **PRINCE**, Krakow, Poland and London, England.

As far as I know, six members of SFBAJGS attended this year's International Conference on Jewish Genealogy. They were Ron Arons (who was also a speaker), Marcia De Vries of Concord, CA, Gretchen Spieler of San Francisco, Roy Ogus of Palo Alto and I. Ruth Wilnai of Palo Alto was also listed as an attendee.

There were almost 800 attendees, 165 speakers, six lecture rooms, a computer resource room and a library room with just a small selection from the JGSGS library. There was a "help desk" staffed by JGSGS volunteers, who answered questions not only

about the conference, but also about what to see and do in London.

This was the second conference I have attended. The first was last year at Salt Lake City. In general, it is always amazing that these conferences run as well as they do. No matter how much is gained from the previous year's organizers, the site, locality and attractions are always different and present a host of unique problems.

The welcome and orientation were most useful and

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SOCIETY NEWS

SFBAJGS Elections and the Future of the Society

by Beth Galletto, ZichronNote Editor

It's summer in the Bay Area and time to begin thinking about leadership for this Society in 2002. This December marks the end of the two-year term of the current officers of the SFBAJGS.

The JGS has grown in recent years and it is essential that more members contribute to its ongoing success. Now is the time for 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)

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 contact me or Rodger Rosenberg. Our phone numbers and e-mails are listed on the left side of page 2.

CALENDAR, cont.

More Genealogy Events

Local

Wed., September 12, 7 p.m. **Santa Clara Historical and Genealogical Society, California and the Net**, speaker Suzanne Infantino. Mission Branch Library, 1098 Lexington Avenue, Santa Clara; www.katpher.com/SCCHGS.

Thurs., November 15, 7 p.m. **Santa Clara Historical and Genealogical Society, Locating Manuscripts**, Santa Clara Library temporary quarters at Bing and Lochinvar; www.katpher.com/SCCHGS.

Regional

Sun., October 27, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. **National Genealogical Society, Regional Conference in Northern California, presented by the California Genealogical Society and Library**. Speakers include Curt Witcher, manager of the Historical Genealogy Department of the Allen County Library in Fort Wayne, Indiana; and Cyndi Howells, owner and webmaster of Cyndi's List of Genealogy Sites on the Internet, a categorized index to more than 99,800 online resources. Witcher will present sessions on research methodology, the use of periodical literature, government documents, and death records. Howells will present sessions on e-mail communications, evaluating websites, and Internet research. Crowne Plaza Hotel, 1221 Chess Drive, Foster City. Register on-line at www.ngsgenealogy.org or telephone (703) 525-0050 or (800) 473-0060.

Jewish Genealogical Trip to Salt Lake City

Gary Mokotoff and Eileen Polakoff will lead a research trip to the Family History Library in Salt Lake City.

The trip will take place October 25 through November 1. Cost of \$695 per person double occupancy or \$910 single occupancy includes seven nights' accommodations at the Salt Lake Best Western Plaza Hotel, located adjacent to the Family History Library. The trip includes an introductory class and optional workshop on the available resources as well as access to Mokotoff and Polakoff at the library for assistance and personal consultations. Limited to 40 attendees.

For more information visit www.avotaynu.com/slctrip.htm or telephone (201) 387-7200.

Inside This Issue

by Beth Galletto

Since the publication of the previous issue, powerful and exciting resources for Jewish genealogists have been launched or expanded. One of these, not just limited to Jewish genealogists, is the Ellis Island Database, which brought the potential of viewing original Ellis Island passenger manifests to genealogists' home desktops.

As Randy Stehle notes in his informative article on the EIDB, the site registered 26 million successful hits in its first 54 hours of operation. This did not count those, like your editor, who were frustrated by a recurring error message stating that the site was too busy and could not be accessed. Since its opening the site has become more easily accessible, and many are making wonderful discoveries. An article by Juliana Smith, editor of the online "Ancestry Daily News," provides more information about the Ellis Island passenger manifests.

For an inspiring success story, read Roy Ogus' account of his experience with the Lithuanian archives. This issue also contains news about the availability of new Lithuanian and Slovak resources.

Also in this issue, JRI Poland announces its one millionth record. To personalize this announcement, read Judy Baston's story of how she made use of JRI Poland.

From London, Jeremy Frankel reports on the annual Conference of the International Jewish Genealogical Society. Watch for more stories about personal experiences at the conference in the next issue.

Please continue to send me your comments and story ideas. E-mail me at galletto@pacbell.net.

IAJGS Elects New Officers

Current officers of the Board of Directors of the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies, elected in July by a vote of representatives of all member societies, includes the following: President, Hal Bookbinder (Los Angeles, CA); Vice President, Anne Feder Lee (Honolulu, HI); Secretary, Joel Spector (Cherry Hill, NJ); and Treasurer, Michael A. Posnick (Minneapolis, MN).

Other members of the Board of Directors include Michael Brenner (Teaneck, NJ), Judith Frazin (Northbrook, IL), Past President Howard Margol (Atlanta, GA), Daniel Schlyter (Salt Lake City, UT), Garry R. Stein (Toronto, ON, Canada), and Arnold R. Tolkin (Palm Beach Gardens, FL).

Success Story: Success with the Lithuanian Revision Lists

by Roy Ogus

An SFBA JGS member for over six years, Roy Ogus is researching the surnames **OGUS, ALPERSTEIN, RODKIN, PERLOFF, BLACKER** and **WILLIAMS** from Lithuania and Belarus.

Introduction

I have been researching the Ogus family history for more than 15 years. My interest started when I realized how little I knew about my own family history. While I was growing up my family had little contact, if any, with my father's relatives. For some reason, my father did not talk much about his family. Of course, as is so often the case, by the time I became interested in this story, my father's memory had declined and he did not have many coherent memories about the family details. Most of the older relatives in the family had already passed away. Nevertheless, I learned that my family originated from Lithuania in a town "near Vilna," and that my grandparents had emigrated from the country around the beginning of the 20th century.

I started my research by looking into what else was known about the Ogus name, and what other families had this surname. I soon found out that the surname was quite unusual, and that there were just a handful of families in the world with this name. I discovered a small scattering of families with this name in the U.S., Canada, England and South Africa. (I even found a fairly large family in the U.S. with the surname August, believed to have originated from an Ogus family.) I wondered if the name was original, or had been changed by the ancestors of these families when they had emigrated from Eastern Europe.

I slowly made contact with many of these families and started to find a similar pattern in their histories. I found a few other Ogus researchers, and we pooled our information. Most interestingly, I made contact with one researcher who had compiled a number of comprehensive family tree charts containing a description of the original family structure. This researcher had based his charts on an interview with his father in England in 1945, shortly before his father's death, in which he learned about the Ogus story that had been passed down through the generations.

According to this researcher, the family apparently originated in the town of Paberze (or Podberezhe), Lithuania, which is located very close to Vilna (about 38 kilometers northwest of the city). It was theorized by his father that most, if not all, the families were descended from a single ancestor, Yechiel Michel Ogus, born around 1770, who was the *shochet* in

Paberze. I obtained a fairly detailed family tree generated by this researcher. The story was passed down that the surname "Ogus" was assumed by the family in the 1860s, and that a daughter of Yechiel Michel Ogus, named Keila, had married a man named Reuben, who was supposedly the *chazan* of Paberze. It was reported that Reuben and Keila retained the surname of Ogus for their family.

Research in the Records in Lithuanian State Historical Archives in Vilnius

I was intrigued by this story and set out first to validate it through finding documented proof of its contents, and second, to find the connection of my own family to this larger Ogus family tree.

I started my Lithuanian research by making contact with the Lithuanian State Historical Archives, located in Vilnius. (I will refer to them subsequently as the "Archives.") Using its support, I started a methodical search through the records in the Archives for the town of Paberze. I learned that the Archives housed a fairly extensive set of records from Paberze, but that they only had vital records for Paberze going back to 1838.

I quickly found some success. The Archives managed to locate the marriage records of my grandfather, Aaron Ogus, in 1908. The patronymic in his name now provided me with the name of his father, my great-grandfather. The record confirmed for me that my grandfather's family was from the town of Paberze.

The Lithuanian Archivists were tremendously helpful to me, and their methodical search through the vital records provided me with an extensive list of references to the vital events for the surname Ogus in the town of Paberze. It turned out that there were many records for the Ogus family from the town. I started to request copies of the full records that were interesting to me. From these records I painstakingly built up the various family structures.

I soon discovered that the surname was already in existence as early as 1838, the date of the earliest records housed at the Archives for the town of Paberze. Furthermore, the spelling of the name appeared to have been unchanged since these early records (it was actually spelled "Oguz" in the original

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Russian or Hebrew, using the “hard” ending). The name had commonly been changed to the spelling “Ogus” in the new world.

In reconstructing the Paberze families from the vital records, I found an amazing correlation between the data from these records and the family tree chart that I had received from the Ogus researcher. As I’ve mentioned, the latter chart had been based on the information that had apparently been handed down by word of mouth in the families. I found that the ancestor, Reuben Ogus, mentioned above as the *chazan* of the town, had actually been the rabbi of the town as well, and I found his name mentioned as the officiating rabbi on nearly every Paberze vital record that I found through about 1860.

After laboriously putting together the various family structures, I found that some of them could be linked to the original Yechiel Michel Ogus ancestor in the family folklore that I had previously obtained. (He was however, exclusively shown as “Michel Ogus” in all these records; I have yet to find any documented reference to the double name of Yechiel Michel, but I do know that this was a common paired name at the time.) However, I started to find and construct a number of families that I could not yet connect based on the vital records data, nor from the family tree chart that I owned.

Unfortunately, there were no records for the period earlier than 1838. Therefore, I could not find the crucial records for the children of Yechiel Michel Ogus who were supposed to have been born soon after 1800.

In addition, I discovered in the earlier records that the progenitors of some of these unconnected families appeared to be from the same generation as Yechiel Michel (or even earlier), but were not shown on any of the charts of the early family that I had obtained from the Ogus researcher. This was somewhat puzzling, and suggested that the early Ogus family structure was obviously more complex than what had been handed down in the family folklore.

I reviewed again the inventory of Paberze documents which are housed in the Lithuanian Archives in Vilnius. I noticed that in addition to the series of vital records, they also possessed a set of Revision Lists for the town, the earliest one being for the year 1811. This looked like a new fertile avenue for research. I requested that the Archives perform a search for me through the Paberze Revision Lists for the surname Ogus.

Breakthrough in the Revision Lists

The Archives performed a methodical search for me through the 1811, 1834, 1851, 1853, 1854 and 1858 Paberze Revision Lists for the surname Ogus. They provided me with an extensive list of Ogus references, containing a wealth of new data. I started ordering copies of the records of interest, and soon found that the data from these Revision Lists enabled me to make the next significant breakthrough in my Ogus research.

The 1811 and 1834 Lists were particularly interesting, since they provided the first documented information that was earlier than the earliest Paberze vital records that are held by the Lithuanian Archives. Only one Ogus record was found in the 1811 Revision List, namely the family of Michel Ogus (who was without doubt the same person as Yechiel Michel Ogus), and the contents of this record were truly astounding to me. The information in the record read like a veritable “Rosetta Stone” for the early Ogus family in Paberze, and the wealth of information provided in this short record was quite amazing. This record immediately helped me to tie up several loose ends.

This 1811 record for the family of Michel Ogus contained a number of surprises and revelations to me. First, this document was written in the Polish language, unlike the later Revision List documents, which exclusively used the Russian language. Second, the Ogus name was obviously already in use as early as 1811, much earlier than I had previously understood. However, in the 1811 record, the spelling that was used for the surname of the family was “Oukuz,” as opposed to “Oguz.” I would guess that this document contained perhaps one of the earliest uses of the surname, which likely had been newly-chosen at the time. In all later revision lists, the name is consistently spelled “Oguz” (or actually the Russian script equivalent of that spelling).

However, of much more interest, the family structure of this Paberze Ogus household in 1811 was clearly detailed in the record. It included a number of new revelations for me. I found out that Keila, whom I had believed was the daughter of Yechiel Michel Ogus, and who had married Reuben (and whose family had retained the surname of Ogus) was actually the *sister* of Michel and not his daughter. Reuben Ogus was thus the brother-in-law of Michel Ogus, and not his son-in-law.

I found that the *father* of Michel Ogus was also living in the house at the time, thus providing me with the name of an earlier generation in the family, and his birthdate. Furthermore, from the patronymic in

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Ellis Island Database Goes Online

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 Punszk, Poland; **GINESHTER** from Punszk, Sejny and Miroslaw, Poland; **WEJSIEYSKA** from Sejny, Poland; and **NICIANSKI** and **POMRANSKY** from Filipow, Poland.

Passenger ship manifests often provide a good source of genealogical data. For the first time ever a searchable database of these records is now available for free on the Internet. The Ellis Island Database (EIDB) consists of 22 million ship manifest records for the Port of New York for the years 1892 to 1924.

This project was the result of a seven-year joint venture between the National Parks Service, the Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (LDS). In the most difficult extraction project in LDS history, 12,000 LDS volunteers from 2,700 congregations in the U.S. and Canada put in 5.6 million man-hours. At a cost of \$25 million, 3,685 reels of microfilm, covering the period of greatest immigration in U.S. history, were processed. The Port of New York accounted for 71 percent of all arrivals during this 33-year time span. An estimated 100 million living descendants of Ellis Island immigrants constitute 40 percent of the current U.S. population.

What the EIDB Includes

On April 17, 2001, ceremonies were held to open the American Family Immigrant History Center on Ellis Island and to make the EIDB accessible to the public. This date was chosen because on April 17, 1907, the largest number of immigrants ever processed in a single day (11,747) occurred. This was more than twice the usual number. Among the celebrities to appear were Tom Brokaw, Charles Grodin and Joel Grey. A search was conducted for Irving Berlin's immigrant record by his daughters and great-grandson.

The year 1892 was chosen as the starting point, as Ellis Island (named after Samuel Ellis, who owned it in the 1770s) opened for business at the beginning of this year. Prior to this date a variety of other places were used to process immigrants. The first ship manifests were required to be filled out in 1820. From then until 1855 there was no central processing center. Passengers simply got off at whatever pier their ship docked. From 1855 to the spring of 1890, Castle Garden, located at the southwest tip of

Manhattan, was used. The Barge Office, located at the southeast tip of Manhattan, was used from April 1890 to the end of 1891, when Ellis Island became the central processing point for immigrants. On June 14, 1897, a fire destroyed the buildings at Ellis Island, so the Barge Office took over again. Ellis Island was reopened on December 17, 1900 with the dedication of a new building. Ships never actually landed at Ellis Island. They docked in Manhattan and the passengers (usually only those in steerage) were ferried to Ellis Island for processing.

The ship manifests, in addition to recording immigrants, also listed U.S. citizens returning home, crew members, non-immigrant aliens, deportees and a few people who literally missed the boat. For instance, in 1909, Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung are listed aboard the S.S. George Washington, even though they never lived here. In the early years, the manifests had an average of 15 columns of questions. In the later years, up to 36 columns were used. The countries with the highest number of immigrants during this period were Italy, Austria, Hungary, Russia, Finland, England, Ireland, Scotland, Germany and Poland.

How to Use the EIDB

The EIDB web site, www.ellislandrecords.org, was much more popular than anticipated, with 26 million hits in the first 54 hours of operation, or 27,000 hits per second. This only counts the successful hits. A great many people could not get in at all during this period. Compaq shipped ten additional web servers in response to this, but accessibility was still a major problem for more than a month.

You must register to use the site. I hope that most of the problems encountered by people attempting to register have been worked out. I personally had no problems on my first attempt, but I read many postings on the JewishGen Discussion Group from a variety of researchers who had a broad spectrum of problems. Once you are registered, you can do unlimited searches. At first I had my best luck late at night when the demand was less. Even then, I

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would often get bumped off, experience very slow response times or not be able to get on in the first place. Things appear to be much better now.

The first search page lets you enter the first and last names of the person you are looking for. Wild cards are allowed using the percent sign. For instance, one could enter as little as one letter of the first or last name followed by the “%” sign and get a long list returned. The results come back in three groups: exact matches, close matches and alternate spellings. This is done because the surname one is looking for may have been extracted differently due to a number of factors. Such things as misspellings on the original manifests, poor copies and errors made during the extraction process are the main problems. The other major problem in the extraction process is the handwriting found on these old lists. One of the most common errors occurs when the capital letter “S” is mistaken for a capital “L.” There are many other letter combinations that cause these problems. Even diacritical marks can cause confusion. The German umlaut back then was usually done with a single stroke (as opposed to the two dots used today), which resembled an accent mark. I have seen the town of Punsks transcribed as Pinsk because of this.

After this initial result appears, one can then edit it several different ways. Selecting the “name” option will generate a list of 30 names the EIDB deems to be viable alternatives. They use their own version of Soundex, which is different than that used by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). This list encompasses a wider range of alternate spellings than does the first step. One is limited to choosing two alternate spellings at a time for further searches.

Other variables that can be edited include the year of arrival (using one or more years), age on arrival (a range of ages is acceptable), ethnicity, port of departure and the name of the ship. There is one major limitation to one’s choices – they must be associated with the list of people already generated by the prior search. One does not get to choose from lists that include all the ship names for instance.

Once you find the person you are seeking, you can click on the name to get a page that shows some of the data from the manifest. This consists of: the name, ethnicity, place of residence, date of arrival, age on arrival, gender, marital status, ship name and port of departure.

From this page you can either click on the “ship” option (if available) to see a picture of it, along with a short write-up, or on the “ship manifest” option to

see an extract of it. This extract shows the individual’s name, gender, age, marital status, ethnicity and place of residence. More importantly, it shows all the other passengers in the order they were listed. This allows you to see other relatives traveling with your passenger as well as other people from the same town.

EIDB Limitations

Some ship manifest pages have the option to view the original manifest. All manifests were scanned, but not all are linked properly. The designers of the database are currently addressing this problem. The ones that are correctly linked will return a small version of the original manifest. Then you can click another button to see an enlarged version of it. This is important because there is some information on them that does not appear anywhere else. The most important piece of information (usually found on later manifests) deals with whom the immigrant will be staying with in the U.S., their exact address and their relationship.

The actual manifests and the ship information pages do not have a print option available. There are some helpful suggestions as to how to print these items out on the JewishGen Discussion Group Archives. JewishGen is working on a FAQ section for this database, but it was not available at the time this article was written in early July.

The EIDB designers are well aware of the wide range of problems encountered by users of their web site. You can e-mail them at: dberrors@ellisland.org. Please be sure to specify which of the following problems you have encountered in the subject line: manifest error, spelling error, ship image error or other database error. Their instructions state that due to time constraints they will be unable to answer any e-mail individually.

Three software programs have already been written to help researchers overcome some of the limitations and problems with the EIDB. The first program to appear was written by Edward Rosenbaum. It can generate a list of name permutations based on either the Soundex or Daitch-Mokotoff systems. A free trial version is available at www.jewishgen.org/jewishgenmall. Permanent registration of a copy costs \$19.99. This software will customize a web page with links to the EIDB for each spelling, along with a research log. I have not used it, but have read good things about it.

The second program is free and enables the user to conduct a search in one step. It was written by Stephen Morse who designed the Intel 8086, the grandfather of today’s Pentium processors. One can

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Passenger Arrival Records

by Juliana Smith

Juliana Smith is the editor of the "Ancestry Daily News" and author of "The Ancestry Family Historian's Address Book." She has written for "Ancestry" Magazine and "Genealogical Computing." Juliana can be reached by e-mail at: editor@ancestry-inc.com, but regrets that she is unable to assist with personal research. An archive of her Monday columns, "The Family History Compass," is available on the Ancestry.com site at: www.ancestry.com/library/view/columns/compass/d_p_1_archive.asp. This article first appeared in "Ancestry Daily News" and is used with the author's permission.

Passenger lists are among the most sought after records for our ancestors. Apart from the information they contain, there is also an intangible value to them. They represent the journey our ancestors took as they left their home and traveled to a new land and a life that was often uncertain. Just the thought of moving across town is enough to have me hyperventilating into a paper bag.

The trip was often hazardous and the conditions under which many of our ancestors traveled could easily be described as horrific. As someone who gets seasick on a one-hour boat trip, I can't even imagine spending several months at a time onboard a ship, as they had to in the pre-steamship days.

The voyage also represents the link to the old country. Information about the immigrant's origins will rarely be found in early records, especially before the 1890s. Before we attempt to "cross the pond" with our search, records on this side of the pond should be exhausted. The more information we are armed with when we begin to research overseas records, the better our chances are for success.

Still, the sentimental value and other clues that can be gleaned from these records make them a valuable addition to our family story.

Obtaining these records can be tricky though, so let's take a closer look.

Background

Pre-1820 Passenger Arrival lists, if they exist, can be a bit more difficult to find than those of later years. Those that have not been destroyed may be widely scattered in archives, museums and libraries, typically near the port of entry. There are also some published indexes to these lists and in some cases transcriptions.

While there isn't enough room in this article to take a comprehensive look at these compilations, "Printed Sources: A Guide to Published Genealogical Records," by Kory L. Meyerink devotes an entire chapter to published immigration sources. Many lists have also surfaced in periodicals. The Periodical Source Index (PERSI) returned 5,640 hits in a search for 'passenger lists.' In some cases, these published

indexes and transcriptions may be all that remains of them.

Beginning January 1, 1820, the U.S. Government required passenger lists to be filed by the ship master with the collector of customs in the port of entry. The lists that have been preserved from 1820 forward are available at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA).

The content of the lists varies greatly. There was no uniform format and no requirement as to what information needed to be collected in earlier lists, which from 1820-91 were often referred to as "Customs Passenger Lists." With the creation of the Department of Immigration in 1891, things got a bit more organized and a standard form was put into use shortly thereafter.

These new lists, which are referred to as "Immigration Passenger Lists," are much better sources of information than their predecessors. In addition to the standardized forms, beginning in 1893, much more information was required.

How to Locate the Lists

The Ellis Island database will be helpful in this aspect to many, but there will also be many that will have to resort to the "old fashioned" way of locating their ancestors. Misspellings, hard-to-read handwriting, data entry errors and other genealogical curses will conspire to make it difficult, if not impossible to locate some ancestors in the database. Apart from that, the database only covers arrivals to the Port of New York from 1892-1924, which is a comparatively small window in American immigration history, albeit an important and busy one.

In addition, those searching for the Kellys, Smiths, Millers and other common names will need distinguishing information to pick their ancestors from the crowd. (Wouldn't you know that I am searching for all three of these surnames.)

Obviously, you will need the name of the immigrant. OK, that's a no-brainer, but also consider that you will need the name they gave to the purser as they got on the boat in the old country. That name may

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Passenger Lists, cont. from page 9

be different than the Americanized version with which you are familiar.

Another consideration is the interpretation of that name by the purser. As we know from experiences with our friend the census taker, these interpretations can vary wildly.

You will want to know approximately when they came over. This may be learned with careful examination of all available records here in the United States. In addition it is helpful to know approximately how old they were when they came over since ages are typically included in the passenger lists. This information can be estimated using information found in various records the same way we estimate the arrival date.

Look at the Record

You've probably heard this somewhere around a bazillion times before, but once you locate them in an index or if you find the entry in the Ellis Island database, you will want to look at the original list if at all possible. Along with the possibility of omissions, and misinterpreted or misspelled names that you may be able to recognize easier than the indexer, there are many other things you can find when you look at the list in its entirety. You may see other familiar names that turn out to be maiden names, neighbors, sponsors and future spouses on that same list. On a long trip in close quarters, you got to know your travel companions really well—probably a bit too well!

If you are interested in learning more about

passenger lists and how to find them, I highly recommend "They Came In Ships: A Guide to Finding Your Immigrant Ancestor's Arrival Record," by John P. Colletta. In addition to being a very helpful guide, it is written in an interesting and easy-to-read manner.

Other Helpful Publications and Links

"They Became Americans: Finding Naturalization Records and Ethnic Origins" by Loretto D. Szucs

"Printed Sources: A Guide to Published Genealogical Records" edited by Kory Meyerink

"The Source: A Guidebook of American Genealogy" edited by Loretto D. Szucs and Sandra H. Luecking

"Ellis Island: Tracing Your Family History Through America's Gateway" by Loretto D. Szucs

Periodical Source Index (PERSI) CD-ROM
shops.ancestry.com/product.asp?productid=2164

National Archives and Records Administration
Immigration Records www.nara.gov/genealogy/immigration/immigrat.html

Immigrant and Passenger Arrivals (Catalog of Microfilm Publications) www.nara.gov/publications/microfilm/immigrant/impass.html

Ship Passenger Manifests (from the INS Web site)
www.ins.gov/graphics/aboutins/history/ImmRecs/passlist.htm

The Immigrant Experience www.libertystatepark.com/immigran.htm

Immigrant Ship Transcribers Guild istg.rootsweb.com
Ellis Island Database www.ellislandrecords.org

Bad Boy Does Good

By Rodger Rosenberg

You can find almost anything on Ebay, an on-line auction to which I am addicted. About a month ago I was checking out their listing of items under the heading of "Judaic" (of which there were more than 1000). Imagine my surprise when I found an item with the listing of "Jewish Bad Boy." I found that it was a listing for FBI wanted posters for two criminals, dated 1942, which listed their "race" as Jewish or Jewish extraction. Intrigued, I put in a bid and eventually won. Those of you who know me also know about my fascination with the American Jewish Mafia of the early 20th Century. I have several relatives who were indirectly connected with it.

Several weeks later when I received my new prizes, I was even more shocked to see the wealth of genealogical information contained in these documents. Along with a photo and the men's various aliases they listed the names of their relatives, their

relationship to the wanted man, and their addresses. The posters also described in great detail the alleged criminal activities. I decided to check into this further. By utilizing Jewishgen's Family Finder, I found a relative of one of these wanted men. I photocopied the poster and sent it to the relative, who said that this information helped fill some important gaps concerning a family member who was never spoken about.

It is for that reason that I call this piece "Bad Boy Done Good." In the end this wanted criminal helped someone in finding out more about his family and other relatives who were otherwise unknown. If you know of relatives who were sought by the FBI, be sure to check this avenue through the Freedom of Information Act, which can be found on the web at foia.fbi.gov/.

EIDB, cont. from page 8

specify any or all of the editable features used on the actual EIDB site. This includes the use of wild cards. The program has a good FAQ section that should be read before using it. The program has a long list of ports and ships that while not complete, is quite extensive. Some of these names have been misspelled on the EIDB, so it is important to use Steve's list to do a proper search. His list of ethnicities is complete. There is an advanced function that allows you to search by the town of residence. A surname of at least one letter must still be entered, and it only works with Netscape's browser at present. (Everything else on his search form works for all browsers.)

Steve will be addressing our group at the September meeting, with a talk entitled "Searching the EIDB With Fewer Tears." He has also been invited to speak before the Los Angeles Jewish Genealogy Society in August on this same subject. His site can be found at: sites.netscape.net/stephenmorse/ellis.html. Recently, he added a section that performs the same function as the next program.

The problem of original manifest lists not being linked to the EIDB extends to incorrectly linked pages as well. There are many links that pull up an image of a manifest from another ship that arrived a few days earlier or later than the actual one. Early on, people discovered that the URLs used for actual manifests in the EIDB incorporated NARA's series and roll numbers as well as the database's own designation for frame (page) numbers and a lettered drive. Alex Calzareth wrote a free program that lets the user enter this data and then view many manifest pages that were incorrectly linked. Alex has links to NARA's web sites that list the roll numbers for the two series. This site is located at: www.geocities.com/alcalz/om.htm. There are still

some original manifests that cannot be viewed as they were either not scanned at all or scanned incorrectly.

My Experience with the EIDB

With the use of these software programs, one can perform successful searches of this great new resource. I personally have found many relatives whose last names were pretty mangled and whose dates of arrival were years off from the family lore.

I had a chance to put Steve Morse's one-step program to the test recently. A relative had just told me that two of our Rafalin cousins, Frances and Jacob, had arrived on the Batavia in 1905 at New York. I had already searched the EIDB and found six Rafalin relatives, but not these two. Knowing that their last name was probably misspelled, I tried a wildcard search using "Raf%" and the ship Batavia, but did not specify a year. I got a number of hits, among which was a Freide and Jacob Rafalli from the town of Pulsk, arriving on the Batavia in 1906. I knew from other sources that they were from the town of Punsck, so this seemed a likely match. The link to the actual manifest was not working, so I sent for the microfilm that covered this date through the LDS family History Center in Menlo Park. When it arrived, the manifest had the name of another relative as the person they would be staying with in New York, confirming that they were indeed my cousins.

Some of the information on the manifests is quite fascinating. I discovered that another relative had some health problems noted upon his arrival. It seemed that in addition to his "medical hernia," he also had "defective vision." These finds are among the many reasons that the EIDB is a valuable research tool.

EIDB FAQ Now on JewishGen

by Elise Friedman, JewishGen

An Ellis Island Database FAQ & Tips has been posted on JewishGen as an InfoFile. The EIDB FAQ is intended to answer the most frequently asked questions that have been seen on the JewishGen Discussion Group and the SIG mailing lists. There are also some excellent tips to help you with your searches. The direct link to the FAQ is www.jewishgen.org/infofiles/eidbfaq.html

You can also get to the FAQ from the JewishGen homepage. Click on InfoFiles (under Learn), then click on either Immigration (under Topics) or United States (under Countries). Then click on Ellis Island

Database FAQ and Tips.

The FAQ will be updated from time to time. If you have corrections or additions, please e-mail me directly at elise@chatsystems.com. However, please continue to send requests for help to the appropriate mailing lists. This will enable other readers to benefit from your question and the response and will also save my inbox from becoming a mountain of e-mail.

Many thanks to Dena Abrams, Steve Morse and Edward Rosenbaum for reviewing my drafts of the FAQ and providing valuable comments and information.

Revision Lists, cont. from page 6

the name of Michel's father, Simon, I now knew the name of the grandfather of Yechiel Michel Ogus! Based on the ages of Yechiel Michel and his father, I now could estimate that the birthdate of the grandfather of Yechiel Michel Ogus was around 1730!

This short record next revealed the existence of a second brother-in-law of Michel Ogus, named Abel Ogus, who had also retained the name of "Ogus" for his family after he married Michel's sister, Tzvia-Golda (in similar fashion to what Reuben and Keila had done). I had previously discovered the name of Abel Ogus, and had determined from the vital records that he would have been a contemporary of Yechiel Michel Ogus. His had been one of the mystery families that I could not previously link to the family of Yechiel Michel Ogus. In one neat step, the 1811 record now solved the problem of the family of Abel Ogus, and allowed me to definitively connect his extensive family to that of Yechiel Michel Ogus.

Of course, the revision list data also provided additional information such as more reliable birthdate information for all the family members, and this information has allowed me to confirm previous hypothesized family connections, and to reject others as being not possible.

However, in spite of the breakthroughs that have enabled me to link a number of previously unconnected families, I have also confirmed from the Revision List information that there were indeed several distinct Ogus families living in Paberze in the 1834 timeframe. Based on the birthdates for the progenitors of these families, I can't yet connect these families with the family of Yechiel Michel Ogus, and if there were indeed connections, they would have had to exist in the same generation as the grandfather of Yechiel Michel Ogus or earlier. It is also possible, of course, that these were separate, unrelated families, who had, for one reason or another, also assumed the surname of Ogus when surnames were chosen by the various Lithuanian Jewish families in the early 1800s.

Relections on My Research

In summary, my Ogus research in the records for the town of Paberze in the Lithuanian Archives has been truly fulfilling and exciting. I was fortunate that an extensive set of both vital records and revision lists have survived in the Archives. This large set of records has enabled me to assemble a very accurate description of the early Ogus families from this town. I continue to be amazed at how close my documented description correlates with the story that was handed down through the Ogus families by word of mouth. Nevertheless, I have found and

corrected a number of errors in the family folklore, and these corrections have enabled me to tie up a number of previous loose ends and inconsistencies.

I realized that the vital records and the revision list documents are each extremely valuable in their own ways. The vital records enabled me to make considerable progress in my research, but it was the revision lists that facilitated the big breakthroughs.

The support that was provided to me in my research by the Lithuanian State Archives in Vilnius was truly wonderful and exemplary. They have been exceedingly responsive, thorough and diligent in all their searches. They have discovered a large number of most interesting records for me. I have greatly appreciated all their efforts. (I look forward to a personal visit to the Archives during my trip to Lithuania, planned for next July.)

Finally, an ironic note: in spite of the enormous wealth of information that I have discovered about the Ogus family history and family structure, I have yet to determine where my own particular Ogus family links into the overall family tree, which I have now traced back to about 1730! I have traced my own line back to my grandfather, but the trail runs cold there. I still am missing this unknown documented link to the previous generation. Perhaps a missing record or a name change has caused me to be stymied in finding the connection. However, this remaining mystery should serve to provide a strong impetus for my continued Ogus research.

Editor's Note: For more on researching Lithuanian ancestors, see page 14.

Maps On Line

David J. Sencer, JewishGen

There is an excellent map of NYC at www.brorson.com/maps/NYC/NYC1902/NYC1902MapLevel1.html which allows areas to be enlarged and moved. The reproduction is good enough to identify most of the streets in the Lower East Side.

David Gordon, JewishGen

There is a superb 1859 map of London available online. You can zoom in quite close and the map is clear and legible. The site is www.ph.ucla.edu/epi/snow/1859map/map1859.html. It is part of an epidemiological study at UCLA School of Medicine. What's more, the site also contains other historical information as well. However, be warned. Because of the vast amount of data, the map may take a while to load.

INTERNATIONAL RESOURCES

JRI Poland Announces Its First Million: One Million Records Recaptured, One Million Lives Remembered

With notes from Judy Baston

Countering the widespread perception that records of Polish Jews did not survive the Holocaust, Jewish Records Indexing (JRI)-Poland recently announced that it has reached its first million records, allowing the potential for countless Jewish families with roots in Poland to gather information about lost family members through civil birth records, marriage and death certificates.

JRI-Poland, founded in early 1995 by Stanley Diamond of Montreal, Michael Tobias of Glasgow and Steven Zedeck of Nashua, New Hampshire, now has more than 400 volunteers worldwide. It offers the modern world indices to the vital Jewish records of Poland via the Internet — the first resource for more than 150 towns and villages in 19th century Poland, indexed and available through the JRI Poland web site at www.jewishgen.org/jri-pl.

Recovering Generations Lost

Indexing of the first million records is only the beginning. By 2039, when a century has elapsed since the Holocaust began in Poland, JRI-Poland hopes to uncover more than nine million records from Polish archives. JRI Poland — a non-profit U.S. organization dedicated to families around the world in search of missing history — has two primary resources that it has already utilized to reach its one-millionth record. These include microfilms of records in the Polish State Archives (PSA) microfilmed by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (LDS or the Mormons) and Polish State Archives Records - Direct, which typically include additional non-microfilmed Jewish records from the years 1875 to 1900.

Until JRI-Poland, these vital records from the last decades of the 19th century were unavailable outside of Poland, and to search them meant commissioning a search by the Polish State Archives or a private researcher. Because marriages were often between spouses of different towns, following a family's 19th century trail was often impossible and usually very expensive.

A search of the JRI Poland database now yields indices to records held in Warsaw's Jewish Historical Institute, as well as lists of surviving cemetery records and gravestones. A project is under way to

index the 1929 Polish Business Directory.

All of these are proving to be exciting new sources of never-before-seen Jewish records, extending well into the 20th century. For most family historians, this will be their first glimpse into the Jewish world in Poland as it existed on the eve of the Holocaust and the key to retracing their family's footsteps.

Beginning With One Million

Diamond helped conceive this project as an outgrowth of his own genetic-related research and has located many surviving branches of his own family through the JRI-Poland indices. "Our one millionth mark is an exciting milestone," Diamond emphasized, "but along the way the extraordinary JRI-Poland database has not only aided countless researchers, but has vividly demonstrated what can be accomplished through the cooperative energy of global volunteers. We are very proud that it has become an inspiration and model for indexing projects covering other geographic areas."

"This is only the beginning for JRI-Poland. We are determined to index every one of the millions of available records within a century after the Holocaust, and through the generosity of donors around the world, we may be able to reach this milestone even sooner. What better way to enrich the fabric of our lives now, than to revive the memories of our people's past in Poland and rescue their names from oblivion — it's more than a Jewish moral obligation, it's a human project — a human obligation," Diamond added.

Jewish Indices at Your Fingertips

Through the help of JRI-Poland and the relationships the organization has formed with many record sources, Jewish people around the world are now able to utilize online indices to archival records to find out about their family history in Poland. While these searches may begin with information as far back as the 1700s, they forge connections with more recent generations, helping many ultimately to discover and remember those family members lost in the Holocaust. Before their records were indexed by JRI-Poland, they could not even be remembered

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All Lithuania Database Offers New Lithuanian Resources

by Carol Coplin Baker, LitvakSIG Research Groups Coordinator

The Board of Directors of LitvakSIG is pleased and proud to announce the birth of the New All Lithuania Database weighing in at 275,199 records! This new creation can be visited at www.jewishgen.org/Litvak/all.htm. Our special thanks go to Michael Tobias, Warren Blatt and Trevor Tucker for their expertise in bringing about this blessed event.

Before you rush to welcome this newest addition to our families' genealogies, we would like to explain the guidelines that have been used in the creation of this wonderful resource. When the idea of the All Lithuania Database was first formulated back in late 1997, none of us had any idea that we would have access to the kind of information that is now arriving almost weekly. We knew that many of us had received information about our own families and that sometimes on those documents other families were listed. The idea was to share the data about those extra families with people who may be researching those names. We were all therefore encouraged to forward all of the acquired information to a central pooling place which came to be known as the ALD.

It is now nearly four years and many thousands of records later - and things have changed. Most of the data that we have now comes from complete lists that we have purchased from one or another of the archives. However, there was still some data on the ALD that came from those original donated records. For the most part, we had tried to mark them (in the citation file) with an "E" to signify that they were "excerpts" and not complete lists. Still, many people were confused. For example, if they saw a reference to an 1827 revision list for the town of Luoke, they might expect to find their family in such a list. However, that information could have been submitted when we were all asked to send in any data we had. If you had family in Luoke at that time, you would certainly wonder why they did not appear on the ALD when in fact, most of the residents at that time were not in the sample submitted.

This is a very long explanation of the reason that we have decided to remove all of the partial lists at this time and to accept for inclusion only those lists that are complete. Actually, a great many of the partials or excerpts have now been superseded by the lists that we have purchased in their entirety.

More data will be superseded as time goes on. We are being very careful to make note of the early submissions so that we can replace them with the lists that contain all of the people in a particular town.

There are also a few changes to the formats of the various lists as we have come to know them. The Revision and Family lists formerly on the ALD had a field for Mother and for Spouse. This information does not exist on the 19th century lists and has therefore been removed. We had added those columns in an effort to make things easier for you. However, we have come to realize that in so doing we made assumptions we had no right to make.

The Relationship to Head of Household field remains so that if Rocha is listed as Itzik's wife, and Gershon is listed as Itzik's son, you are free to decide whether or not Rocha is Gershon's mother. Other useful information that was provided in the original list such as identifying which daughter-in-law is married to which son has been entered in the Comments field.

Other Surnames in Household is another field that we originally added. It is no longer displayed, however, it is still there and is stacked behind the Surname field so that when you retrieve a surname that had the same page and registration number as another, all of the surnames are shown.

We have also eliminated the Citations table. The source of the record (archive, fond, inventory and file) appears in the last field to the right of each entry. A report showing all of the lists including the number of entries for each will be provided on a separate page. And finally, we have standardized the format for all Taxes and all Voters lists so that they can be displayed together.

The All Lithuania Database has been made possible by the donations of many hundreds of researchers who have contributed to one or another of the various District Research Groups. Without their support, the acquisition and translation of the many individual lists in this resource would not have been possible. There are many more records still waiting for us.

For information on how to volunteer to help the project or how to contribute to the All Litvak Database, visit www.jewishgen.org/litvak/.

Major Slovak Database Initiative

By Debbi Korman, JewishGen

Volunteers interested in Hungary and Slovakia are about to start a major database initiative. Yad Vashem is providing deportation lists from Slovakia's four major assembling/labor camps - Zilina (the largest), Novaky, Vyhne and Sered. Zilina was used during the 1942 mass deportations because it was the closest to Auschwitz. However, Yad Vashem has more hidden documents totaling 100 different lists including Supis Zidov (Jewish conscription) lists of several major towns, regional lists of Jews compiled by local Judenrats, lists of Jews who received special permits to work, military listings, Hlinka Guard lists and others. There are thousands of pages of data which at present are only available in two places, Yad Vashem and the archives in Bratislava.

More pages means more volunteers are needed to create the databases, but the effort will be well worthwhile. I have used some of these lists at the archives in Bratislava and they are invaluable.

Nearly all of the towns which belonged to the Slovak fascist state between 1939 and 1945 are represented in the lists. It should be noted that for towns that were centralized gathering places for Jews of the region, the information in the lists virtually always includes towns of origin of the deportees. The major towns are: Banska Bystrica, Bardejov, Bratislava, Cadca, Giraltovce, Humenne, Kezmarok, Levoca, Lipiany, Liptovsky Svaty Mikulas, Medzilaborce, Michalovce, Myjava, Nitra, Novaky labor camp, Nove Mesto nad Vahom, Piestany, Pohradie, Poprad, Presov, Ruzomberok, Sabinov, Sered labor camp, Spiska Nova Ves, Stropkov, Topolcany, Trebisov, Trencin, Trnava, Turcansky Svaty Martin, Vranov nad Toplou, Vyhne labor camp, Zilina, Zilina labor camp, Zlate Moravce and Zvolen.

It should be remembered that after the Munich pact, the Czechoslovak Republic was divided into a German protectorate and the Slovak independent fascist state. The Slovaks had to surrender to the Hungarians a large portion of territory which previously belonged to Czechoslovakia, principally Subcarpathian Ruthenia (now Ukraine) and Romania (Transylvania). Transports began in Slovakia in 1942. They only included people from those territories which then belonged to the Slovak state. The transports from Subcarpathian Ruthenia and Transylvania took place in the spring and summer of 1944.

Participation in the project requires only basic typing skills. The lists are typewritten, so there are no problems with illegible handwriting. You are provided with an Excel database, all set up with the proper columns. Detailed instructions are provided regarding what information goes into what column. All you have to do is enter the data and send it to the project coordinator. Or if you don't like to type but you don't mind proofreading, you can act as a validator and check for typographical errors in the data input.

I worked on the Debrecen deportation lists database that is now in the validation stage. I input two or three pages a day, which took less and less time as I got into the rhythm of the project. On the last page I found a family member. I did not anticipate that a family member would have been sent to Debrecen because the rest of the family lived considerably farther north.

The project is sponsored by JewishGen and by the Hungarian SIG. Thanks must be given to the many people who have already worked hard on this project, principally Rachel Reisman, Joyce Field and Louis Schonfeld. The project coordinator is Tom Venetianer, who lives in Brazil. I encourage all Hungary and Slovak researchers to participate in this opportunity to make valuable information readily available on the Web. Tom's e-mail address is tom.vene@uol.com.br.

UCB Used Book Store as a Source

Jeremy Frankel

On a recent visit to the UCB Bookstore for used and duplicated items (Main Library, First floor, Room 157, open Monday through Thursday, 11-2) I noticed the "Times Gazetteer of the World." Originally published in the 1950s to accompany the five-volume atlas, it contains 345,000 place names and geographical coordinates. It retails for \$40.

Also in the reference section was the privately published "Personal Names in the New York Times." There were two six-volume sets, covering 1975-1993 and 1975-1995. Both were bargains.

Although these volumes may have been purchased by the time of publication, consider visiting this store when you are researching in Berkeley. There may well be other items on subjects that will pique members' interests.

JRI Poland, cont. from page 13

or memorialized as so many of them subsequently have been.

JRI-Poland has received international acclaim, both for its research tools for Jewish families seeking connections to lost relatives, as well as for their impact on medical research. The potential benefit of the database for Ashkenazic families trying to trace their medical histories, particularly those at increased risk for hereditary conditions and diseases, is immeasurable.

Building JRI-Poland

JRI-Poland relies on the generosity of donors — both volunteers and financial contributors — for the continuation of this unprecedented global project. The organization has formed alliances with the Ronald S. Lauder Foundation Genealogy Project (RLF) at the Jewish Historical Institute (JHI) in Warsaw, the Douglas E. Goldman Jewish Genealogy Center in Tel Aviv, the Warsaw and Lodz cemeteries and the Kielce-Radom Special Interest Group. For more information on how to use the JRI-Poland site or to contribute to the JRI-Poland project either through volunteer hours and/or financial contributions, please contact Stanley Diamond, Project Director at (514) 484-0100 or SMSDiamond@aol.com.

Impact of JRI Poland on the Family of SFBAJGS Member Judy Baston

There are dozens of personal stories that illustrate the power of these one million indexed records. The impact that finding lost relatives has had on the lives of researchers and their families exhibits the power of JRI-Poland to change one's family tree, remember a life and recover a piece of history through the JRI indices.

For Holocaust survivor Jeremiah Jaskolka, first cousin of longtime SFBAJGS member Judy Baston, information from the JRI-Poland database helped restore a sense of connection he believed had been lost forever. "As time passed," Jaskolka noted, "my memories grew dimmer, and the mental pictures of my family faded. All the more so, since I had no photos left of my parents, brothers, etc. I had no letters left of that period, and I had nobody to talk to, in order to refresh my memory. In the end, it seemed to me that my past had not existed at all; that I had grown up without having experienced childhood and adolescence. I felt without roots, unconnected anywhere — as if I had originated from nowhere, one of the Holocaust survivors."

That all changed one fall day in 1996, when Jeremiah received a large manila envelope from

Baston, who serves on the Board of Directors of Jewish Records Indexing-Poland. She had undertaken research in Poland to uncover the fate of Jeremiah and his family, believed by her family to have perished in the Holocaust. Judy was stunned to discover that Jeremiah had survived and had emigrated to Israel in 1962.

After the connection was made, Judy began sending Jeremiah family information — first, photos of his brothers and mother, which he looked upon for the first time in nearly 60 years. Then she began sending him reflections of their shared ancestral past she had obtained because of the Jewish Records Indexing-Poland database: records of her grandmother's birth, Jeremiah's father's birth, his grandparents' wedding, as well as a family tree showing their ancestors back into the 18th century.

Jeremiah had been born in the big city of Warsaw, and his father Yankel had never told him that he himself was born in the small "shtetl" of Nur, some 60 miles to the northeast. Indeed, Jeremiah had never heard of tiny Nur, nor did he have any sense of how the millions of "shtetl" Jews — including those in his own family — had lived in the 19th century. But through copies of records obtained as a result of indices created by Jewish Records Indexing-Poland, he was about to recover his history.

"Judy sent me birth certificates more than 100 years old, of my father, aunts and uncles," Jeremiah said. "In those days there were no pre-printed forms. Every event, like a birth, a wedding, a death, was recorded by a population-registry clerk. It was done in legible handwriting, in script in his very own hand, with all the details of the event.

"For instance, Judith's grandmother's certificate was worded thus: *'Today, March 9, 1883 in the morning, there appeared before me Hayim Jaskolka, twenty-three years old, by profession a teacher, a resident of the town of Nur, accompanied by two witnesses, Hershko Karp, a merchant, and Hershko Valis, a shoemaker, both of them thirty-four years old. He presented to me a girl and declared that she had been born in the town of Nur, three years before, of his lawfully wedded wife, Sarah Gitel, twenty-seven years old, whose name before her marriage was Konopiaty. Pursuant to religious customs this girl was named Rivkah. The registration was delayed due to the lack of knowledge of the father. Because the father and witnesses are illiterate, I am obliged to read to them what I have written and to be the only signatory. Clerk Bodno'*

Jeremiah read the text and was stunned: "In my mind's eye I saw a small town with narrow and winding alleys, and houses that were about to topple.

Continued on page 17

JRI Poland, cont. from page 16

I saw the Jewish inhabitants, in black garb, bearded, with side-curls, a scene out of Sholom Aleichem. I saw the office, where a young Jew stood, who was destined to become my grandfather. He was holding in his hand a little three-year-old girl, with large and inquisitive eyes, who was destined to become Judith's grandmother. It was as if I had been transported miraculously, by means of a time machine, to a distant past, a world that had existed 150 years ago."

Records from the town of Nur, which had been microfilmed by the Mormons, were among the first to be indexed by Jewish Records Indexing-Poland. Other nearby towns' records quickly followed as the JRI-Poland database grew. And then later records from Nur and other neighboring villages were indexed under the agreement between JRI-Poland and the Polish State Archives.

Both of these indexing initiatives meant that Judy had been able to track the history of her family from village to nearby village. Even though she began her

research with no more than the stories of her immigrant family members that they had come "from Nur," searching for family names in the JRI-Poland database showed her that family members had lived in many villages in which she might never have thought to search. With each additional town indexed by JRI-Poland and searchable on its database, Judy was able to add additional branches to her family tree. She sent the tree to Jeremiah.

"In her search for the roots of the family, Judy located names and dates of birth and death of my forebears, going back seven generations," he noted. "She sent me a list of these forebears, in a shape of a tree with branches. The data in this genealogy went back to my great-grandmother's great-grandfather.

"No longer did I feel so alone," Jeremiah stressed. "I stopped being 'rootless' and disconnected. Now I, too, have strong and massive roots, spreading over 250 years. I have found a whole magnificent tribe to which I belong, and to which I have returned."

London, cont. from page 3

we were made discreetly aware of security arrangements by the co-organizer, George Anticone, who reminded us we all had to wear our name badges at all times.

It may be argued that there is a danger of the conferences now becoming too large, as each succeeding conference attempts to "outdo" the previous one. The above statistics do not tell the whole story. Yes, there were some 165 scheduled speakers, but each day there were six time slots with a choice of six speakers for each slot. So at best one could see only 36 speakers if one went religiously to a session in every time slot, every day. In other words, one would miss learning from the other 129 speakers, quite a high percentage.

New this year were theme presentations that ran all day. Themes included, "Migration and Transmigration" or "Genes and Genealogy" and a panel discussion on the restitution of looted property.

Against this background, the myriad of genealogical libraries, museums and cemeteries, along with the local and national research facilities that only a city like London can offer, were also competing for our attention.

Unless one arrives either well before the conference and/or stays afterwards, one has to question the validity of the ever-increasing "work load" being placed upon the genealogist. I was lucky

in that I originally came from London and was able to combine "business with pleasure." I stayed with my parents, which cut down the cost considerably, thereby allowing me to stay for a month. I also knew my way around London and didn't have to rely on the generosity of locals to show me around.

In closing, I have to confess that I did enjoy the conference. As someone who contributes quite actively to the JGSGB list-serve, it was a pleasure to finally put face and voice to the e-mail addresses with which I had become so familiar. I made useful contacts, which I hope will bear fruit in the future. The library was also very helpful. In one instance I was able to locate a family living in England in the 1851 census.

I also visited five cemeteries and photographed about 50 graves. I spent many hours at the Family Record Center and retrieved about 30 certificates. In one instance I had to search through 100 index books before I came across a likely match for a marriage. I took a chance in ordering the certificate. As my late paternal grandfather (who died before I was born) was one of the witnesses, I was most pleased to see that my guess was correct. On top of all this, I also had research to undertake for some people in America. I anticipate attending Toronto in 2002 and hope that the work load will be less onerous.

PAST MEETINGS

Geographical Resources

by Zachary Baker

Zachary Baker spoke on geographical resources at the June 18 meeting in Palo Alto. Baker is Reinhard Family Curator of Judaica and Hebraica Collections at the Stanford University Library. He is former Senior Librarian of the YIVO Institute. His presentation included a handout listing the following resources, reprinted with permission.

Selected Internet Resources for European Jewish Geography

GeoNet Names Server, 164.214.2.59/gns/html/index.html. "Old GeoNet" has not been updated since July 1, 1999, and is due to be taken offline on July 31, 2001. "New GeoNet," gnpswww.nima.mil/geonames/GNS/ is up to date, but more cumbersome. Search for localities' names under their present countries.

JewishGen, www.jewishgen.org. Click on "Databases" (under "Research") for the JewishGen ShtetlSeeker, www.jewishgen.org/ShtetlSeeker/. Search by town name (exact spelling or Daitch-Mokotoff Soundex) or by latitude/longitude. In addition, from the JewishGen home page, click on the following (under "Projects and Activities"):

JewishGen ShtetlLinks, links to many Special Interest Groups (SIGs) relating to Jewish communities worldwide

JewishGen ShtetlSchleppers, links to tours of ancestral regions and hometowns

JewishGen Yizkor Book Project, links to translations, libraries, necrologies, and other relevant sites

Oddens Bookmarks: The Fascinating World of Maps and Mapping, oddens.geog.uu.nl/index.html. Includes many links to digitized maps, historical and contemporary; national, regional, and local. Click on "Browse" for a listing of subject categories (e.g., "Maps and Atlases," "Map Collections," "Gazetteers").

Stanford University Libraries - Branner Earth Sciences Library and Map Collections, www-sul.stanford.edu/depts/branner/index.html. Click on "Map Collections" for a description of map resources at Stanford. From that page - "Introduction to the Map Collections" - click on "Gazetteers" for links to online gazetteers, or on "Additional Resources" for references to print sources and links to various online resources.

Also try various Internet search engines such as Google, www.google.com, for specific topics such as "Pale of Settlement maps."

E-mail Address Updates

Please note the following updates to e-mail address listed in the SFBAJGS Membership Roster:

Carol Feiner	airport.travel@wspan.com
Sally Moses	chaiyall2001@aol.com
Sharon Lambie	slambie@yahoo.com
David Abrahams	dmabr1@home.com
Margot Parke	sfmargot@earthlink.net

If you have an e-mail address but have not been receiving occasional SFBAJGS messages, or your e-mail address has changed, send a message to galletto@pacbell.net so we can keep you up to date.

COMPUTER/ONLINE NEWS

New on JewishGen

Joyce Field, JewishGen V.P. Research

JewishGen has added a new site, SephardicSIG: Sephardic Genealogy at JewishGen, www.jewishgen.org/sephardicsig. It is hosted by Jeffrey S. Malka. Sefard Forum: E-mail Discussion Group For Researchers Of SephardicGenealogy, the SIG's companion mail list, will continue to be coordinated by Bernard Kouchel. If you are not already a subscriber, see details at www.jewishgen.org/infocfiles/SefardForum.htm.

JewishGen has long wanted an important Sephardic web site like Jeff's "Resources for Sephardic genealogy," so when he agreed to move his award-winning site (Jewish Agency Top 10 and Brittanica 2 Stars) to JewishGen, you can imagine our elation.

Recently retired, Jeff has been busy redesigning his site for weeks in preparation for the JewishGen launch. His goal of expanding Sephardic research opportunities meshes with JewishGen's objectives.

JewishGen recognizes that there are no boundaries in the Jewish family and that developing new pathways for Sephardic research will enhance everyone's understanding and appreciation of Jewish history and its magnificent diversity. Jeff's belief that the Sephardic definition should include both Ladino- and non-Ladino-speaking Jews as well as Mizrahim and other non-Ashkenazi Jews the world over will bring to JewishGen a wealth of new material from which we all will benefit. If we grasp that Sephardic Jews were 90 percent of all Jewry through the 12th Century, we can see how Sephardic research can expand our horizons.

JewishGen Announces New Databases

Warren Blatt, JewishGen

Three new databases on JewishGen include:

- "Aufbau" database of Holocaust survivors: The German-language newspaper "Aufbau," published in New York, printed numerous lists of Holocaust survivors in Europe from 1944 through 1946. Volunteers at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington computerized more than 33,000 of these names, which are now available as a JewishGen database, searchable at: www.jewishgen.org/databases/Holocaust/Aufbau.htm.

- Warszawa Homeowners Lists, 1852, 1869 and 1870: Compiled from city directories and tax lists, the Warszawa Research Group has compiled more

than 9,000 names of homeowners in Warszawa (Warsaw), the capital and largest city in Poland, and its suburb of Praga. This database is available at: www.jewishgen.org/databases/WarszawaHomeowners.htm.

- Belarus Names Database: The Belarus Names Database contains indices to more than 43,000 names that appear on 76 different web pages of the Belarus SIG. It is an integral part of the "All Belarus Database", located at www.jewishgen.org/databases/Belarus.

All of JewishGen's databases can be found on the main databases index page, www.jewishgen.org/databases.

Leo Baeck LibraryCatalog Online

Gary Mokotoff, Nu? What's Nu?

The Leo Baeck Institute catalog of its library and archival holdings is now available online at www.lbi.org/mclinkpage.html. LBI describes itself as a "research, study and lecture center whose library and archives offer the most comprehensive documentation for the study of German Jewish history." The archives and library are located in New York at the Center for Jewish History. There are also branches in London and Jerusalem.

People Finder

Gary Mokotoff, Nu? What's Nu?

Dubbing itself "The Ultimate People Finder Website," a site in The Netherlands at www.nedsite.nl/search/search.htm will link you to many, many locations that have e-mail address books, telephone/fax numbers, postal addresses, cemetery/death records and genealogy sites oriented toward locating people.

Newspapers on the Web

The following links can be used to track down newspaper and magazine articles:

- www.ecola.com links to newspapers and magazines worldwide

- www.usnewspaperlinks.com links to U.S. newspapers

- www.obitcentral.com/ links to obituaries

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