



זיכרון נזות

ZichronNote

The Journal of the San Francisco Bay Area Jewish Genealogical Society

Volume XXVI, Number 1

February 2006

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.**
Jewish Community High School, 1835 Ellis Street. Jewish Community Library open on second floor. **Free parking: enter parking area from Pierce Street.**
- Los Altos Hills:** **Monday, Library opens at 7 p.m. Program begins at 7:30 p.m.** Congregation Beth Am, 26790 Arastradero Road.
- Berkeley:** **Sunday, 12:30 to 3:30 p.m.** Berkeley-Richmond Jewish Community Center, 1414 Walnut Street, North Berkeley.

Mon. Feb. 6, Los Altos Hills: *Preserving Old Family Documents and Pictures.* As part of your genealogical research, you're undoubtedly collecting family photographs, documents, and other memorabilia. Make sure these important artifacts are preserved for years to come! Paula Jabloner, archivist and conservator, will share her 12 years of archival experience to describe the techniques and materials we should be using to ensure their long-term protection. As Archivist at the Computer History Museum in Mountain View, Jabloner is responsible for overseeing and documenting all aspects of the document and library collections including physical organization, storage and preservation, cataloguing, digitization and access. She has served as Project Director for Silicon Valley History Online, and was an archivist at a variety of institutions.

Sun. Feb. 12, Berkeley: **(Note date change.) Bugsy Siegel and Meyer Lansky.** We are delighted and privileged to have our very own Ron Arons reprise his very successful (and sold out at last years' International Conference on Jewish Genealogy!) presentation of his genealogical sleuthing of two notorious Jewish gangsters and their connection to the Conference location - the Flamingo Hotel in Las Vegas.

Sun. March 19, San Francisco: *Program to be determined.*

Sun. April 16, Berkeley: *Program to be determined.*

Mon. April 17, Los Altos Hills: *California's Jewish History.* Ava Kahn, historian and co-author of "California Jews," a study of Jewish life, history and culture in California from the Gold Rush to the twenty-first century, will share insights and information about our ancestors' experiences in and contributions to the Golden State.

Sun. May 21, San Francisco: *Program to be determined.*

Sun. June 18, Berkeley: *Program to be determined.*

Mon. June 19, Los Altos Hills: *My Recent Genealogical Trip to Poland - What I Learned.* Phyllis Bismanovsky discusses her trip to Poland on a family heritage tour, specialized to visit her family's towns of origin, Wyszców and Kaluszyn. She will discuss where she went, what she saw, her feelings about being in Poland, how the travel guide enriched the experience and how it has changed her life.

For the latest program information visit www.jewishgen.org/sfbajgs

More Genealogy Events of Interest on Page 4

ZichronNote
Journal of the San Francisco Bay Area
Jewish Genealogical Society

~ 25th Anniversary Year ~

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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 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 \$23 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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President's Message
Embarking on Our 25th
Anniversary Year

by Jeremy Frankel, SFBAJGS President

I realize that all of you will be reading this in February, but I write this as we are racing around the last curve towards the year-end holidays. Frantic present-purchasing; seeking out cards with the most appropriate message; concocting holiday letters to family and friends. Many of us will spend some time with family. Connecting with family is the most important, most precious present one can give.

This past Thanksgiving, my partner Melissa and I hosted Thanksgiving for a group of friends who weren't going home for the holidays. As well as carving the turkey, we carved out some space and time for people to simply get together, and this really seemed to work for everyone there.

With these thoughts in mind, I have also thought (at least I would like to think) that the various Jewish congregations and communities of the San Francisco Bay Area are also "family." We "visit" congregations and JCCs and enjoy being a part of what they have to offer.

I would like to think that in 2006 we can strengthen those "family ties." One way is for Society members to act as "messengers," alerting their congregation or other community groups to what we are doing, what we have to offer in the way of programs, and that we can also present outreach programs to them. As my recently published letter in "J" described, the SFBAJGS is one of the best kept secrets in the Bay Area! We need "outing" and having you, the membership, spread the word is the best way for that to happen.

In other news, our *Resource Guide* has been a Bay Area best seller. Nearly every genealogy library has one and genealogists have been snapping them up. We have had to reprint them and we hope that they will help in your research. I always carry mine with me.

As you all should know by now, 2006 is our 25th anniversary year. We have planned a year of meetings and an expanded *ZichronNote* will look backwards over our 25-year history. If any long-standing members have any Society related items, we'd love to see them.

Our editor Beth Galleto had among her files the *Jewish Bulletin* newspaper article that was a request to interested persons to attend the very first meeting of the Society. And thanks to Society member Hy Ramm, we now have a page from the

Continued on page 19

SOCIETY NEWS

Welcome, New Members

Linda Fine.....haiphai@smsn.com
Jacob Koff.....jacobkoff@sbcglobal.net
Irving Lind.....irvinglind@sbcglobal.net
Jean Nassi.....jgnassi@aol.com

See updated Family Finder Information on page 8.

E-mail Updates

William (Ze'ev)/Lisa Brinner.....wmbrinner@sbcglobal.net
Walt Firestone.....shinbet8@sbcglobal.net
Genealogical Society of Utah (formerly "Acquisitions-Serials, Family History Library").....serials@gensocietyofutah.org
Jeff Lewy.....airbair@gmail.com
Art Salop.....arthursalop@yahoo.com
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Ernest Schneider.....wdsernie@comcast.net
Janice Sellers.....janicemsj@gmail.com
Marilyn Shulman...alanandmarilyn@theunion.net

E-mail Bounces

E-mails for the following people have been bouncing: Lois Clauson, Gloria Heller, Burton Meyer, Rebekah Sachs, Marjorie Stern, Gerald Wagger

Please send updates to dlkurtz@ix.netcom.com

Slate of Officers Re-elected

Ballots have now been counted and the proposed slate of officers was re-elected to guide the Board of Directors of the SFBAJGS for the next two years.

Jeremy Frankel was re-elected to the office of President; Rosanne Leeson, Vice President; James Koenig, Secretary; Dana Kurtz, Treasurer, and Larry Burgheimer, Membership Chair. Congratulations to all.

Bay Area Resource Guide, Second Edition, Now Available

The SFBAJGS recently published the Second Edition of "Jewish Genealogy Basics and Resource Guide for the San Francisco Bay Area." This edition totals 22 pages of useful information and could be a valuable addition to your genealogy resource library. The cost to members is \$3. The book can be purchased at any SFBAJGS Meeting. If you'd prefer to receive it by mail, add \$1 for postage. (The cost to non-members is \$5 plus \$1 postage.) Send your check, payable to "SFBAJGS" to SFBAJGS Resource Guide, P.O. Box 471616, San Francisco, CA 94117.

Ride Request From South Bay Member

Do you live in San Jose, Santa Clara, or the Los Gatos area? Long time SFBAJGS Member Lillian Wurzel, a resident of Santa Clara, would very much like to attend our meetings in Los Altos Hills, but needs a lift to and from meetings. Lillian is a great conversationalist and "would be glad to help with gas costs." If you can offer Lillian a lift, please call her at 408-984-3718 to make arrangements.

Bay Area Resource Guide, Corrections and Additions

Part of the practice of genealogy is to recognize and correct your errors. To update your copy of the Resource Guide (see above), please make the following corrections and additions:

Page 10: The paragraph describing marriages states in part "...recorded from 1990..." The year should be 1906.

Page 11: In the entry for the Labor Archives, the contact person is Susan Parker-Sherwood (note addition of hyphen).

Page 11: Paul Hamburg's email address is missing the "p" in front of "hamburg."

Page 15: Sinai Memorial Chapel has been serving

the Jewish Community since 1915, not 1937. Their Chevra Kadisha records date from 1915 to date.

Page 17: Jewish Family and Children Services: Phone: 415-449-1200.

Pacific Hebrew Orphan Asylum records in storage. Adoption Connection: 1710 Scott St. San Francisco, CA 94115. 415-359-2494 or toll free: 800-972-9225 **families @adoptionconnection.org** or visit **www.adoptionconnection.org/**

Page 18: Los Altos Family History Center - new directors: Lane and Yovonne Pendleton. To make appointments for Tuesday and Thursday morning hours call 408-749-9999.

CALENDAR, cont.

More Genealogy Events

Regional

Sat., April 22, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. **Sonoma County Genealogical Society. Fourteenth Annual All-Day Seminar.** Barbara Vines Little, president of the National Genealogical Society and a nationally known lecturer and writer, will discuss the following topics: Re-Creating Your Ancestor's Neighborhood, Taxes: Milk Them for All They're Worth, Granny Possum's Pointers, and Land and Inheritance. Luther Burbank Center for the Arts, Santa Rosa. Early registration is advised. For more information or registration visit www.scgs.org or call (707) 763-4492.

State and National

Sun., Feb. 19, 10 a.m. **Jewish Genealogical Society of Sacramento. GenSmarts: The Genealogist's Ultimate Research Planner.** Barbara Leak will present a live demonstration of GenSmarts, a new genealogy computer program that automates your research planning. The program analyzes your existing data files and tells you, person-by-person, which records to research and why. It points out holes in your data, generates research to-do lists and links you to online research sites. Albert Einstein Residence Center, 1935 Wright Street, Sacramento, CA. For more information visit: www.jgss.org, email jgs_sacramento@yahoo.com, or call (916) 486-0906 ext. 361.

Sat., April 1, 8 a.m. - 3 p.m. **Clark County Nevada Genealogical Society. Spring Family History Seminar featuring Dr. George K. Schweitzer.** Dr. Schweitzer, author of numerous publications including 19 genealogical guidebooks, uses historical reenactment to teach genealogy and has traced many of his ancestral lines back to the early 1500s. Gold Coast Hotel & Casino, Conference Center - West Flamingo and Valley View, Las Vegas, Nevada. For more information visit www.lvrj.com/communitylink/ccngs or www.rootsweb.com/~nvccngs.

One-on-One Help with Your Family Tree

Whether you're trying to find your great-grandmother's elusive town or your grandfather's passenger manifest, take advantage of the Jewish Community Library's extensive reference collection and Internet connection to countless searchable databases — all with brainstorming and one-on-one guidance from experienced genealogists.

Longtime Library volunteer staffer Judy Baston and other veteran researchers from the San Francisco Bay Area Jewish Genealogical Society, including Ron Arons, Jeremy Frankel, Beth Galleto, Steve Harris, Dana Kurtz and Marian Rubin, will help with brainstorming and problem-solving. Bring your materials and your questions.

Sessions take place the first Sunday of each month, February through June, from noon to 2 p.m., at the Bureau of Jewish Education Jewish Community Library, 1835 Ellis Street, San Francisco. The dates are February 5, March 5, April 2, May 7, and June 4.

Parking is free. The parking entrance is on Pierce between Ellis and Eddy. Registration is requested but not required. For registration or information call (415) 567-3327, ext. 704.

Family Memories: BJE Programs of Interest to Genealogists

Family memories and memoir — of special interest to genealogists — are the subject for two authors who will speak in March at the BJE Jewish Community Library, 1835 Ellis Street, San Francisco.

Samuel Freedman will present a talk and reading from his book *Who She Was: My Search for My Mother's Life*, on Thursday, March 9, at 7:30 p.m. Freedman's mother died of cancer in 1974 when he was 19. For the next 26 years he gave her little thought, becoming, "by default and by choice," his father's son. As he neared 50, the same age his mother was when she died, Freedman began piecing together the fragments of his mother's life, a task he understood as a filial duty and an act of atonement. Thus began his investigative journey into his mother's life as she lived it in the Bronx in the 30s, 40s, and 50s;

Continued on page 18

Are Your SFBAJGS Dues Overdue?

Membership dues for 2006 were payable on January 31, 2006. If you have not yet sent in your renewal, please do so as soon as possible. A sticker on the mailing label on this issue will remind you if you have not yet renewed. The May issue of ZichronNote will be sent only to members in good standing.

Please send your check for \$23, made payable to "SFBAJGS," to SFBAJGS Membership, P.O. Box 471616, San Francisco, CA 94147.

**Jewish Genealogical Society
(New York)
is proud to host the
26th IAJGS International Conference on
Jewish Genealogy**

Sunday through Friday, August 13-18, 2006
New York Marriott Marquis Hotel
Broadway and 45th Street, Manhattan



- **Lectures by archivists, historians, and other experts on shtetl geography, the immigrant experience, American and Eastern European records, Holocaust research, Internet resources, genetic testing and more.**
- **Guided tours of Ellis Island and other immigrant landmarks.**
- **Escorted van trips to area cemeteries.**
- **Hands-on computer workshops.**
- **Kosher luncheons and gala banquet.**
- **Special Interest Group meetings for "landsmen" from Galicia, Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, the Sephardic world, and other locations.**
- **Programming for beginning to advanced family historians, plus a special track for Russian émigrés.**
- **Facilitated research at the city's vast array of archives and libraries.**
- **Musical entertainment by Zalman Mlotek of the Folksbiene Yiddish Theater.**



Weinstein

Register online. Upon completion of the conference registration, you will be directed to a link to register for the Marriott Marquis Hotel. Early registration is \$215 and **must be submitted by May 15, 2006**. Additional early registration for a spouse/companion is \$150 (syllabus not included). After May 15th regular registration is \$250 and registration for a spouse/companion is \$175.

Keynote speaker will be Dr. Allen Weinstein, Ninth Archivist of the United States. Dr. Weinstein will address the 26th Annual Conference on Sunday, August 13, 2006. The gala banquet will be held on Thursday, August 17 and will cost \$80.

Registrants can order *Genealogical Resources in New York*, by Estelle M. Guzik, at the greatly reduced price of \$35, including tax and shipping, on their conference registration.



For details and online registration visit

www.jgsny2006.org

or write to

Conference, Jewish Genealogical Society, Inc.,
P.O. Box 6398, New York, NY 10128





San Francisco Bay Area Jewish Genealogical Society: Celebrating 25 Years

Society Purchases New York City "Police Census" Microfilms in Honor of Twenty-fifth Anniversary

By Jeremy Frankel, SFBAJGS President

With great pleasure I announce that the San Francisco Bay Area Jewish Genealogical Society has underwritten the cost of purchasing the 82 microfilms that comprise the 1890 New York City Census. This donation is a part of our celebration of the Society's 25th anniversary in 2006.

As many genealogists are aware, the 1890 Federal Census was 99 percent destroyed in a fire that ravaged the Department of Commerce Building in Washington D.C. in 1921.

Fortunately, about 30 years earlier New York City officials, unhappy with the results of the 1890 Federal Census, had decided to undertake their own census. The 1890 New York City Census covered only Manhattan and western Bronx — no other boroughs were included, though Kings County (Brooklyn) and Richmond County (Staten Island) were enumerated in 1892. The Society has purchased microfilms of the 1892 Census as well as the 1890 Census.

New York used the city's police force, which went door to door (hence the nickname "Police Census"). This census, taken between September 19 and

October 14, uncovered 13 percent more residents than had been enumerated in the U.S. Census. It was not the kind of in-depth census that the Federal Government normally undertook; Police Census questions were limited to street address, name, age and sex. Of the 1008 census books, 894 survive today.

With a 20 year gap between the 1880 and 1900 Federal Censuses, all genealogists would say that any information is better than nothing! Additionally, making these records available at the Oakland Family History Center (the largest Family History Center in the United States after Salt Lake City) further increases the richness of this major San Francisco Bay Area genealogical resource.

The Society hopes that this example will encourage other Bay Area genealogical societies to show their appreciation of a local genealogy library deserving of support, or to acknowledge a special event in their society's history by adding to a genealogy library's collection.

For more information, please contact; Jeremy G Frankel, President, SFBAJGS, at jfrankel@lmi.net.

Looking Back: Articles From SFBAJGS' Past Tracing Jewish Family Trees Can Be a Never-ending Task

First published in the *Jewish Bulletin* (now *J*)
September 26, 1986. Reprinted with Permission

The problems are immense. The Russians won't talk, and most of the German records were destroyed in the Holocaust.

Still, Martha Wise, founder of the San Francisco Bay Area Jewish Genealogical Society, keeps digging up her Jewish roots, tracing her family back to sixteenth-century Denmark, and working with hundreds of other families whose ancestors' identities have disappeared in buried logs of Lithuanian tax collectors, or in closed files of Ukraine bureaucrats, or in fireplaces of mad Nazis in Austria.

Wise said the inspiration for SFBAJGS.....came from a now-defunct East Coast publication called

Toledot, which was run by two men and was devoted to Jewish genealogy.

When societies began forming in New Jersey, Philadelphia and Los Angeles, Wise said to herself, "Why can't we have one here?"

Using the family finders section of *Toledot*, Wise began contacting Bay Area Jews, some of whom were interested in forming a local society, some not.

"We founded it, as it happens, five years ago," she said in a recent interview in the living room of her Sunset District home in San Francisco. It is there that she puts out the society newsletter, a potpourri of local, national and international news about the nearly

Wise, cont. from page 6

impossible task of uncovering Jewish family trees.

The native San Franciscan, who had some experience with establishing cat pedigrees and who has researched both sides of her family, has come to the conclusion that she will "never see a finished Jewish genealogy."

Wise, 72, and her husband, Warren, are retired. ("He could care less [about genealogy]," she said.) They have no children "but plenty of relatives" to carry out the unfinished business of the family tree.

Able to obtain more information about her father's German descent than her mother's Russian ancestry, even though many records of German Jews were destroyed 40 years ago, Wise noted, "The Russians will not talk. Everything is a deep, dark secret. Russians can be friendly and warm, but they have a deep vein of suspicion."

Talking to her relatives, researching in libraries and archives in this country and Europe, Wise discovered that her father's family, the Greens, dated back to seventeenth-century Copenhagen. But she has been able to go back only a couple of generations on her Boston-born mother's side.

With the help of non-Jewish agencies (the California Genealogical Society and the Mormon Church), and the Sutro Library in San Francisco, Jews can begin their own searches into the past, Wise explained. But primarily her advice is to "talk to everyone you can. Your own relatives probably have the best information."

Still, she cautioned, you must remember that "you're dealing with people's memories." Those memories, she said, are likely to be contradictory. Family secrets, she noted, add to the difficulty of clarifying the past.

With 20 genealogical societies in the U.S. and a new one in Jerusalem, Jews have opportunities now of plugging into a computer network of family finders and of learning something about their pasts, Wise said.

Each year, she added, genealogical societies gather at a convention to discuss the many ways one can go about finding out if a grandfather, for example, came from the Ukraine or Poland.

But Wise explained that rabbinical records sometimes are the most thorough method of research, and if a relative happened to be a rabbi, there is a better chance of garnering information. Otherwise, she noted, one must rely on public records and "many times, census records only listed the name of the head of the household...so everything isn't available."

From Past Issues of the SFBAJGS Newsletter

Volume 1, Number 1, September 1981

Election Results

At our August meeting, it was decided that it was time for our growing organization to elect officers. The following members volunteered to serve and were elected to the following offices: President, Carolyn Sherfy; Vice President, Martha Wise; Treasurer, Patricia Futuran; Secretary, Peter Tannen. Those present expressed their thanks to the founder of the Society, Martha Wise, for her efforts in organizing our group.

Past Meeting

Pete Tannen, one of our members, reported on the Summer Seminar on Jewish Genealogy in New York City, organized by Steve Siegel, Vice-President of the New York Jewish Genealogy society and co-editor of *Toledot, The Journal of Jewish Genealogy*.

This most informative seminar was attended by over 90 people from all over the U.S. Highlights of the seminar included tours of the YIVO Institute, N.Y.C. Municipal Records Offices, the New York Public Library (Local History & Genealogy, Jewish, Map, and Microfilm Divisions), Leo Baeck Institute, and New York's Lower East Side, as well as talks on Mormon Records, a visit to Poland, and Rabbinic and Jewish sources. Time was set aside for informal discussion among attendees, who generally enjoyed the seminar and agreed that Steve Siegel did a very good job of organizing it. Representatives from five Jewish Genealogical Societies, including San Francisco, summarized their group's activities. Pete also talked about genealogical research in New York.

Volume 1, Number 2, November 1981

Computers and Genealogy

Personal computers are an ideal tool for storing genealogical records, and for writing family histories. A growing number of people have begun to use personal computers in their genealogical research, and there is now a journal devoted to that subject: "Genealogical Computing," published bi-monthly....

The Computer Center for Jewish Genealogy has recently been established by Dr. Neil Rosenstein, a founder of the Jewish Genealogical Society of New York. Dr. Rosenstein is using a personal computer to index names of researchers, families, and towns and countries of origin...

Pete Tannen, our Newsletter Editor and Corresponding Secretary, has an Apple II computer, which he has been using to maintain our Society's mailing list, as well as to prepare this newsletter...

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 at P.O. Box 471616, San Francisco, CA 94147, or send an e-mail to Dana Kurtz at dlkurtz@ix.netcom.com

<u>Surname</u>	<u>Town, Country</u>	<u>Member</u>
AKMEIER	Zalishchyky, Ukraine	Fine, Linda
COHEN	Zalishchyky, Ukraine	Fine, Linda
DURTZ	Svencionys, Lithuania	Fine, Linda
FIET	Krosno, Poland	Fine, Linda
FINKEL	Russia	Lind, Irving
FRECHTER	Turlice, Ukraine	Fine, Linda
GEFFNER	Potok, Ukraine	Fine, Linda
KLIOT	Disna, Vyerkhnyadzvinsk, Belarus; Riga, Latvia;	
KORNREICH	Vilnius Lithuania; St. Petersburg, Russia	Fine, Linda
LEVENTHAL	Sanok, Poland	Fine, Linda
LEVINE	Russia	Lind, Irving
MENCZEL	Melnitsa Podolskaya, Ukraine	Fine, Linda
NASSI	Istanbul, Turkey	Nassí, Jean
POCTEL	Russia	Lind, Irving
SCHECHNER	Borshchiv, Glubochev, Ukraine	Fine, Linda
SCHWARZBACH	Skala Podolskaya, Ukraine	Fine, Linda
SEILER	Krosno, Poland	Fine, Linda
STENIK	Kozachizna, Ukraine	Fine, Linda
STUP	Zalishchyky, Ukraine	Fine, Linda
TRATNER	Warszawa, Poland	Nassí, Jean
VOULOUVENTAL	Germany	Lind, Irving
WERNER	Krakow, Sanok, Poland	Fine, Linda
WILDENBERG	Warszawa, Poland	Nassí, Jean

Alert on State Legislation Impacting Genealogists- New Hampshire and New Jersey

By Jan Meisels Allen, Chairperson, Public Records Access and Monitoring Committee
and IAJGS representative on the FGS/NGS Records Preservation and Access Committee

The IAJGS Public Records Monitoring and Access Committee monitors legislation that impacts access to vital genealogical records (birth, marriage, death) and census. In that vein I am alerting you to several egregious bills recently introduced in New Hampshire and New Jersey.

I. New Hampshire- HB 1382 prohibits a public or private entity from using non-public personal information about an individual for any reason without the individual's consent. The bill defines the term "individual" to mean a human being, including a deceased human being. As drafted the bill would prevent organizations such as Ancestry.com and other data collection organizations from obtaining information on a deceased person unless that person

had given their approval. If the bill is enacted as currently written, some state and local government employees may preclude individuals from obtaining copies of information (birth, marriage or death records) on someone who is dead because the deceased person had not given his/her approval.

The genealogical community, as represented on the FGS/NGS Records Preservation and Access Committee, (IAJGS serves on the committee) is taking the position of "support if amended." The amendment we are trying to achieve is the removal of "deceased human being" from the definition of "individual" in the bill.

The first hearing was scheduled in the Judiciary
Continued on page 19

Sentimental Journey: Finding Family in Old Hungary, Part II

by Vivian Kahn

Vivian Kahn began the story of her search for her Hungarian roots in the November 2005 issue. Part II describes the recent trip she took to Budapest, Miskolc and Kosice in Hungary and Michalovce and Sobrance in what is now Slovakia. She is planning a third installment to include conclusions she has drawn from her travels and ideas for future research. She is searching for members of the **Moskovits**, **Neumann**, **Kahan**, and **Berkovics** families.

Planning for the Trip of a Lifetime

How do you go about planning what may be the trip of a lifetime? Where should you go? How much time will you need to spend in each place? Do you need a guide and translator? And, even though it's now easy to find and book hotels on-line, how do you decide where to stay in unfamiliar foreign countries?

One relatively easy way to resolve these dilemmas is to book your trip through ShtetlShleppers, JewishGen's travel service. However, after checking on available tours, dates, and prices, Hungarian SIG members Gabi Svatos, Linda Rakoff and I decided to write our own ticket, so to speak. Being free to design our own itineraries meant that we wouldn't be constrained by someone else's plans and could linger as long, or as little, as we wanted in each of the places we were going to visit. It also meant that we had to do some serious thinking about exactly what we wanted to accomplish on this journey. Trying to be as methodical as possible, I created an Excel spreadsheet listing my specific research objectives and the length of time it would likely take to accomplish what I wanted to do or see at each location. The idea was to see where our objectives intersected.

I had already decided that I didn't want to spend time looking for records that are now (or are likely to be soon) available in the U.S. or on the Internet. What I wanted to find was names and dates for more of my Neumann and Moskovits cousins. Having spent many hours (by now, perhaps even many weeks!) poring over records and squinting at microfilms at the National Archives, Family History Library, Yad Vashem and the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, I didn't really want to devote my trip to the same pursuits. Instead, what was really important was to see if I could find what remained of the places where my father and his family had lived, not just the design of the built environment, which is particularly important to me as an urban planner, but also the natural environment, music, art, history, and, of course, the food!

Two absolute musts were visits to cemeteries in Michalovce and Sobrance, Slovakia, where I knew

that my paternal relatives had lived. I also wanted to try to find out about other Moskovits and Neumann family members who might have lived in these, or nearby, towns in what is now eastern Slovakia. My deepest desire was to see if I could find the actual buildings where my relatives had lived — but without addresses, this was going to be a real challenge. Moreover, my father's family seemed unusually peripatetic compared with some families who lived for generations in the same shtetl. Between 1898 and 1920, my paternal grandparents and their children had lived in Sobrance, Sabinov, Kosice, Kristy, and Michalovce in Slovakia and Miskolc in present-day Hungary. There were also pictures of the family in a place called Arpadhaza, a resort area near Lake Balaton, and school pictures of my father and his brother Lajos that were taken in Papa. My grandfather Viktor was a tobacco farm manager, not a traveling salesman, so I wondered why his family had moved so often.

Through another Hungarian SIG member, I had found Jan Hlavinka, a history graduate from Medzilaborce, Slovakia, who was very interested in helping out. Jan and others recommended that I write ahead to the archives and offices I wanted to visit. Using form letters and my Slovak-English dictionary, I crafted letters in Slovak to the mayors and town clerks in Sobrance and Kristy listing the names and time periods I wanted to research. There was no need to write to Michalovce because Jan's mother-in-law works there in the Municipal Registry. The problem was that, with a few exceptions, I didn't really know what I was looking for.

The travel plan, which ultimately worked out remarkably well, was to coordinate our schedules to the extent possible given our individual objectives and to meet at several locations during the trip. In addition to three days in Bratislava with Linda and Gabi, my husband and I spent seven days in Budapest, divided between the beginning and end of our trip, two days in Miskolc, two days in Kosice, and four days based in Michalovce in far eastern Slovakia. We also took a short side-trip to Vienna to meet and spend a night with Pavel Simko, my second cousin-once removed, and his Hungarian-born wife

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Journey, cont. from page 9

Elizabeth. Pavel and his older brother Dusan were born in Kosice. Their great-grandfather was my grandmother's oldest brother Gyula who had died in Presov in 1926. Had it not been for a message sent to me through JewishGen in 1996, I would have never known of their existence.

The Journey Begins: Budapest

We landed in Budapest on a muggy August morning, weary after a long flight from Oakland via Chicago and Frankfurt. As tired as I was, my pulse quickened as the taxi drove into Pest, past buildings that had obviously been standing when my grandparents visited Budapest in the early twentieth century. We settled in at the Benczur (also recommended by H-SIG members) and, after taking a short nap, went off to get a Hungarian chip for our cell phone. The Benczur is in the diplomatic district near Varosliget, Budapest's fabulous urban park (think Central Park, Golden Gate Park and Grant Park). The park anchors the eastern end of Andrassy ut, a tree-lined boulevard that is probably the most exquisite street in the entire city. Austro-Hungarian battalions, Nazi troops, and Soviet tanks once covered the same stretch that we were walking between Hosok Ter (Heroes' Square) and the heart of Pest. These days the broad paths that flank the central lanes are perfect for cycling, skating, strolling and dog-walking. (Budapest residents seem to adore dogs.)

It was surprising to see how little the streetscape has changed since Budapest's last heyday at the end of the nineteenth century. Still gorgeous but somewhat decrepit apartment buildings east of Nagykorut, the Great Boulevard, give way to shops, cafes, and epic structures, like the glorious neo-Renaissance State Opera House, as you go toward the Danube. Andrassy ut is punctuated by monumental squares and circles populated by statues of Magyar generals, statesmen and, I believe, even a few writers and poets.

After purchasing a cell chip at a shop at Nyugati Train Station (Budapest's oldest railway terminal) and getting a short lesson in using the Hungarian phone system, we connected with Andras Koltai, a fourth generation Budapest resident whom I "met" through JewishGen. Although his degree is in economics, Andras is also a very accomplished researcher who has been trying to help me find a 1949 marriage record for my father's first cousin Piroska Markus Vero. Piroska and her 4-year old daughter Marika survived Strasshof and returned home to Debrecen to find their apartment ransacked. From a letter to my grandmother, I know that she went to Budapest

in 1949 to find work. She also found a husband but all the letter said was that his name was Bandi and he had a 17-year-old son.

Although we probably would have preferred traditional Hungarian cuisine for our first night in Budapest, we met Andras for dinner at an outdoor cafe off Erzebet Korut, another grand boulevard. Except for all of the smokers, we could have been in Santa Monica. Very California and very Budapest trendy.

The Central Synagogue and Hungarian Jewish Archives on Dohany Street were at the top of my list for places to visit in Budapest but our first full day in Budapest was a Friday. Another lesson in travel planning. Archives aren't open on weekends and shuls and Jewish sites often close early on Friday and are, of course, closed on Saturday. Arrange your schedule so you can spend your weekends walking and visiting parks, museums, and, when you're in Budapest, enjoying public baths like the sumptuous Szechenyi Baths in the Varosliget. We walked over to Keleti Station on Saturday to buy tickets for Miskolc and the trip to Kosice. Weekends are also a good time to be in transit even though trains may run somewhat less frequently on Saturday and Sunday.

On Friday we did get to the Dohany Street Central Synagogue, the largest in Europe, and managed to rush through the Jewish Museum before closing time. The experience was somewhat disappointing. We weren't allowed to take pictures inside the sanctuary and the archives were closed. I had sent e-mails inquiring about hours of operation before leaving home, but never received any response. A friendly woman at the desk confirmed that Zsusi Toronyi, the archivist, is back from maternity leave but works only limited hours. In fact, having already reviewed a catalog of Archive holdings, I wasn't even sure that this spot would be important for my research. From what we saw of it, the Museum was interesting and would have been worth closer examination. There was, nevertheless, something unsettling about the busloads of tourists disembarking to spend a few minutes visiting yet another landmark on their itinerary and posing for pictures in front of Imre Varga's silver-leaved memorial Tree of Life in the courtyard.

We were too late for the Jewish heritage guided walking tour that leaves twice daily from the Dohany Synagogue, so guidebook in hand, we struck out on our own to explore the old Jewish District, which became Budapest's central ghetto in November 1944. From the mid-nineteenth century, a large proportion of Budapest's Jews lived in this neighborhood of narrow winding streets and massive courtyard apartment buildings. A few years ago, the government stopped developers from

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demolishing the old buildings, many of which were literally crumbling as the thick stucco fell from their facades. Although the trash in the streets and the ever-present graffiti contribute to an initially negative impression, developers are now renovating the buildings to create condominiums and shops selling expensive German furniture.

In November 1944, the Hungarian fascist government built a wall along Karoly korut, behind the Dohany Synagogue, and crowded thousands of Budapest's Jews, by then about the only Jews left in Hungary, into the old buildings. Many could not survive the appalling conditions. By the time the Soviet troops liberated Budapest in February 1945, there were reportedly more than 2,500 bodies lying in a temporary morgue in Klauzal Square, a little park that is still one of the only green spaces in the neighborhood.

Wandering away from the Central Synagogue we turned onto Rumbach utca and came upon the still un-restored vaguely Moorish design synagogue that was the first major work of Viennese architect Otto Wagner. The faded rust and yellow striped façade is similar to the exterior of the older Dohany Synagogue and is also topped with two turrets. We were trying to peer through the barricaded entrance when we met Peter, a neighborhood resident who had just picked up a six-pack at a corner store. With his Eddie Bauer T-shirt, baseball cap, and reddish-gray pony tail, this Hungarian gentile seemed an unlikely guide to the Jewish district. Nevertheless, he was clearly on friendly terms with the group of Chassidim who have taken over the Orthodox Synagogue on Kazinczy utca.

After a brief conversation with some men who were washing down the courtyard in preparation for Shabbos, he took us up the back stairs to the lovely sanctuary. The blue ceiling is studded with gold stars and the walls are decorated with a motif of five-branched menorahs and Stars of David. Passing through the kitchen we exchanged Shabbat Shalom with the woman who was setting a long table for the Erev Shabbos dinner. Built in 1913, the Art Nouveau façade of this synagogue looks much more modern than some American shuls from the same period.

Some members of the Chassidic congregation live in apartments around the courtyard. They also operate Hannah, one of Budapest's only kosher restaurants, in an adjoining building.

There are now about 80,000 Jews in Budapest, the largest Jewish population in Eastern Europe, and 26 synagogues. Before World War II, Budapest had a Jewish population of about 200,000 and 125 synagogues. Until the Nazis invaded on March 19, 1944, the Jewish population grew with the arrival of refugees who had managed to escape from Austria,

Slovakia, and even Poland. In June 1944 Hungarian authorities ordered Budapest's Jews to move into 2,000 buildings marked with Stars of David and located throughout the city. After the fascist Arrow Cross took over the Hungarian government in October 1944, they created two ghettos, the larger so-called international ghetto at the Ujlaki brick-yard in Obuda, on the

west side of the Danube, and the central ghetto in the old District VII Jewish quarter. (Andrew Salamon's memoir "Childhood in Times of War" at www.remember.org/jean/index.html is a moving first-person account of life in Budapest before and during the Nazi occupation.)

During the eight days we spent in Budapest, at the beginning and end of our trip, we wandered through many of the city's older residential areas. We knew about all of the glorious turn-of-the twentieth century architecture in Budapest but were unaware of the impressive Art Nouveau buildings. My husband Larry, the designated expedition photographer, took scores of digital photos of residential buildings in various stages of decrepitude. Andras had told us that at the end of the Soviet era the government had sold buildings at discount prices to the existing tenants. Unfortunately, years of deferred maintenance, World War II bombing, and street-battles during the 1956 uprising have taken their toll on these still beautiful buildings. In addition to bearing graffiti, which were unfortunately present in every city we visited in both Hungary and Slovakia, the facades of many of the buildings on Budapest's side streets are still bullet-

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Keleti Train Station, Budapest

Journey, cont. from page 11

pocked. Even so it's a surprise to look up and see a reclining nude on the parapet above the entrance to your building. And what fun it must be to identify your building as the one with two very buxom and bare-chested ladies flanking the front entrance!

By Train to Miskolc and Kosice

Four days after arriving in Budapest, we rolled our bags over to Keleti Station and boarded a train for Miskolc. It struck me that my father had probably come through Keleti almost 80 years ago as he left Hungary for the last time.

Many others had left Keleti on their last journey to the east after the Nazis overran Hungary in 1944.

Miskolc, once the second-largest city in Hungary, is in the country's Rust Belt and was an industrial center as far back as the late eighteenth century. During the Soviet period, the huge steel mill employed about 18,000 workers. After it closed in the 1990's, U.S. Steel reportedly bought the complex and then shut it down to avoid competition with its operation in Kosice. These days the economy is sagging and the population declining, which makes Miskolc remind me of Buffalo, Gary, Flint, and other places in America's old industrial heartland. During the short cab ride from the train station to the Pannonia Hotel, we saw piles of scrap metal, car lots, and dilapidated buildings. Except for visitors like us whose relatives once lived in this town that is now almost empty of Jews, it appears that few tourists visit Miskolc. Despite the depressingly institutional architecture of the Soviet period that characterizes much of the place, local officials have made a real effort to maintain many of the pleasant old buildings around Szechenyi utca in the Belvaros, the heart of the old city where the Pannonia is located.

My father and his family came to Miskolc just before or after the start of World War I. My grandfather Viktor Neumann was a tobacco farm manager and I've been trying to find out whether they grew that crop in this part of Borsod county as well as nearby Szabolcs county. Several of the old pictures in our family album were taken in Miskolc. My father's oldest sister Blanka worked as a seamstress in Miskolc and continued to work in the trade after emigrating to New York City where she became a loyal supporter of the ILGWU. In addition to finding

out where in Miskolc my father and his family had lived, I was looking for information about the family of my father's first cousin Aliz Moskovits. She was deported and perished with her husband Miklos Kornis and son Gustav. Their son Gyorgy survived and, according to information I had found on the Internet, was an artist with homes in Vienna and Budapest.

In contrast to the relatively cool reception we received in many of the archives and municipal offices we visited during our trip, we felt very welcome when we visited the old shul in Miskolc. Peter, the

young rabbi (who's actually from Maramarossziget, where my Kahan relatives lived) pulled out old record books and let us take pictures of the building's interior. There are only about 300 Jews left in Miskolc so they don't use the main sanctuary for services except for special occasions. It was disappointing not to find the name of my grandfather in the records of either the Orthodox or Neolog shul, both of which are kept in the

Jewish community office. I did find an entry for Mr. Barna, the photographer who took a studio picture of my grandfather Viktor in 1915. Staff in the county library were also very helpful. I transcribed all of the Kohn and Neumann names and addresses from a 1912 Miskolc Directory. I also found an entry for Kovacs Janos, the women's tailoring business where Blanka worked, according to an old picture. Mr. Kovacs was probably the serious-looking fellow with the moustache surrounded by seamstresses. Unfortunately, I couldn't find anything about Viktor and Hermina Neumann, indicating that my grandparents probably hadn't moved to Miskolc by 1912.

Two days later, we took a cab to the station to catch our early morning train to Kosice, narrowly escaping a head-on collision while negotiating a construction project on a rain-slicked Miskolc street. Linda had arrived a day ahead of us to meet with Jan Hlavinka, the young historian from Medzilaborce who was also going to be my guide and translator in Michalovce and Sobrance. Over lunch we learned about her frustrating attempt to do research in the Kosice municipal offices. Jan explained that municipal offices are poorly funded (like they are in California!) and local officials don't consider assistance to family researchers among their responsibilities. We hoped we'd have a better reception at the Kosice regional archives. While some of the books seemed

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Blanka Neumann, far left, and fellow workers at Kovacs Women's Tailors, Miskolc, about 1915.

A Brick Wall? No, a Secret Garden

by Jeff Lewy

Jeff Lewy is a retired airport consultant who became interested in genealogy to make sense of family photos going back four generations in the U.S. and then wanted to know more about the people in the photos! Most of the family lines settled in Chicago by 1870, but came to the U.S. in the 1840s and 50s, via Alabama. His family tree keeps growing and now extends back six generations in some cases. He's interested in **KAHNWEILERS** in Rhineland Pfalz, **LEWYS** in Ostrow (now near Poznan, Poland), **LOEWYS** in Bohemia and **LOEWENTHALS** in Mecklenburg. As a former history major, he enjoys extending the research as far as it may lead him.

Genealogists are always complaining about their brick walls as something to be destroyed. But our goal isn't really destruction, it's creating a unique story from the patterns we discern in our search.

I prefer to think of my brick walls as walls around a Victorian garden — once inside, there are colorful flowers of information laid out in elegant patterns, with quiet paths to stroll down in the mild sunshine, protected from the hurly-burly weather outside. And in the center is our family tree, spreading up and over us.

And like a Victorian garden, there are one or several gateways, often with doors that don't let us see in until we open them. We may have to push hard to open a door, after many years of disuse, or we may have to find a key. I'm always surprised to find that the key may not be hidden — it's in plain sight, but just not already in the keyhole.

Here's an example from my own family. In retrospect, there are a number of clues that fill in the story I am telling, and I'll mark them with this symbol: ‡. That gives you an unfair advantage, since I didn't recognize them as clues until later! And all of this work was done in San Francisco (with one exception in Washington, D.C.), either online or at the Sutro Library. I have never done any genealogy in Alabama, although now I know exactly what to look for if I do go there.

My great-grandparents on my father's side, Louis Kahnweiler and Jane Hahn Kahnweiler, lived in Chicago. I have photos of them. Jane lived until 1936, so my father, born in 1909, remembered her well, and my mother knew her during my parents' courtship and briefly after their marriage in 1935. Louis died in 1913, so he wasn't known to either of them. I have a letter Louis wrote to my grandfather J.B., when J.B. was about to marry Louis and Jane's daughter Lily in



Louis Kahnweiler

1900. Louis was born in Germany in the early 1840s, but his English and his penmanship were elegant, and the letter warm and loving, opening with "My dear beloved boy." The one photo of him shows bright, intelligent eyes and a soft smile.

Family lore said that Jane was born in Alabama in 1848. Louis and Jane were married in Mobile, Alabama in 1867 ‡, and I knew the names of seven children, all of whom were born in Chicago. I don't know when Louis came to the U.S. or where he landed.

That's the start.

First I dragged up all the census information I could find online and through the microfilm census indexes. I could easily trace the married couple and their family from 1880 on, although I had to wade through misspellings of Kahnweiler and Kehnweiler. I found Jane and her parents Alexander and Rosetta Hahn in the 1850 Census living in Marengo County, Alabama, about 140 miles north of Mobile. Both parents were born in Germany. In 1860, Jane and two brothers were living with a single woman shown only as A. Hahn ‡. No Hahns with the right names are listed in Alabama in 1870 — not surprising, since the Civil War intervened; besides, I know Jane and Louis were already in Chicago.

Throughout the period, there is a Solomon Hahn family in Mobile, but there's no clear connection to "my" Marengo County Hahns, and Hahn is a fairly common name. Since Jane and Louis were married in Mobile, I'm guessing he is Jane's uncle.

The Civil War indexes available online show a "Lewis" Kahnweiler. Sounds good to me, even though family lore never mentioned any Civil War service and I had assumed Louis came directly from Germany to Chicago. I did wonder how Louis met Jane.

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Garden, cont. from page 13

On a trip to the National Archives in Washington, D.C. I found a fair amount about Louis, all of which made me reasonably certain he's the right one. He was inducted into the 2nd Alabama Light Artillery in Tuscaloosa, Alabama as a private, and was captured near Nashville, Tennessee in December 1864. He was then transferred as a prisoner of war to Camp Douglas, Chicago, and amnestyed in May 1865. In his amnesty petition, he said he did not want to be "returned south."

Among my favorite sources are city directories. There are directories for several hundred cities, large and small, often going back to the mid-1800s, and published every year or two, usually into the 1920s or 1930s. They are all on microfilm and available in many research libraries, including the Sutro Library here in San Francisco. The directories show residence address, business type or occupation, and business address for most working individuals. In addition to telling what my relatives did for a living, they also show which individuals were living at the same address. Even working single women appear, and widows often appear with their late husband's name.

I was able to trace Louis and his family in the Chicago directory starting in 1868, only a year after his marriage, and continuing until his death in 1913. I found Jane as a widow from time to time after that, and I traced his working children, too. So I have a much better sense of how my family changed and prospered (mostly) over time, and I can see them migrating from the inner city southwards to better neighborhoods in Hyde Park, in increments of about a half-mile every few years.

I am lucky that my relatives lived in Illinois, which has an excellent death index online, from the 1870s through 1950. I was able to find death dates for many relatives, and ordering copies of death certificates is easy when you have the certificate number from the index. For relatives who died after 1916, I have learned where they were born, their parents' names and birthplaces, mothers' maiden names and causes of death. From Jane's death certificate, I learned that her mother's maiden name was Weinberg, which may help if I ever try to locate her in the old country.

In family papers I got from a cousin (when I visited and asked for any paper he had), I found an article from the *Chicago Tribune* in 1929 with Jane's reminiscences about living through the Chicago Fire of 1871. Interesting in its own right, it also includes a reference by Jane to her mother being in Chicago at the time. The reference is to the railroad station, so I assumed mother was visiting. ‡ And it seems she wasn't dead, ‡ despite her disappearance from the Alabama Census.

So, the garden walls at this point are:

1. What happened to Jane's parents and siblings?
2. Is there a connection to Solomon Hahn in Mobile?
3. How or where did Louis and Jane meet?

Question 1. What happened to Jane's parents and siblings?

I asked this question of another cousin, Louis' grandson (another Louis) who is a generation older than I am, and whom I had never met before. He told me that Jane had a brother Isaac (Ike) who ran a haberdashery in Chicago. ‡ Ike died during the Depression, and Cousin Louis, who was a child at the time, remembered it because Ike left his money to his sister Jane and all Jane's grandchildren got some. It wasn't much, but during the Depression, it was welcome just the same.

Ike shows up in the Chicago city directory from 1892 until his death, and I know where he lived and worked. The death index finally yielded his birth date of 1852 and death date of 1934, under Isaac "Hohn." He lived alone, and I learned nothing more from his death certificate, since the informant was a neighbor, not a relative, and all the interesting parts of the certificate say "Unknown." Proof only that some garden paths lead in a circle.

But with another name to search in Alabama Census data, I found Isaac living with a married brother in Sumter County in 1880. Sumter County is just west of Marengo County. The brother's only child, a daughter, was named Rosetta, like her grandmother. There's not a lot more on this family, but someday I may go to Alabama and see if there is more to be found.

Many months went by as I worked on other branches of the family.

Recently, I stumbled onto Louis' brother Jacob Kahnweiler in the 1900 Census. Jacob was on the same page as an unrelated "Rosenfeld" I was tracking, under "Kahweiler." ‡ It was the wrong Rosenfeld, as it turned out, but I was glad to find Jacob! I hadn't gotten around to looking for missing data on Jacob, although I knew I didn't have all the censuses for him.

This find nudged me to look for other people for whom census data was missing, particularly those about whom I now knew more than I did when first trolling for them in the indexes.

I didn't have information on Louis and Jane Kahnweiler for 1870, so I decided to try a "brute force" search. Knowing where Louis and Jane lived from the city directory, I converted their address to the current

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one (Chicago renumbered its streets in 1909) and then tried to figure out which ward they lived in, using the ward maps that are available online. Ward 8 was my first guess. I thought I would search all of Ward 8, page by page. However, I was put off by the fact that the Census for Ward 8 was 576 pages long!

I decided to do a search in the index by first name. This usually gives 50 to 200 choices, which are easily scanned in a few minutes, and only a few are close enough to warrant looking at the census page itself. I tried Alex and Alexander (the son), Louis and Lewis, in Ward 8. No luck. Then I tried "first name - Jane," adding "born in - Alabama," and "living in - Illinois," since Jane is such a common name. This gave me 51 entries in Illinois, surprisingly, with only one in Chicago. Nothing in Ward 8, but in neighboring Ward 9 there was Jane "Kahnellen." Looking at the page itself I found Louis and Alex. The handwriting was bad, and I could see how the transcriber would see Kahnellen. This confirmed the data from the city directory! I tested Kahnellen in the overall Ancestry search but that was the ONLY entry. There are no other "lost" records with that spelling. Well, it was worth a try.

Encouraged by that luck, I decided to look for Isaac Hahn in the 1870 census. Again, first name, Isaac, born in Alabama, living in Illinois. This time there were only 23 entries to review, including Isaac "Hohn." I hadn't known he came to Chicago so early. But the bigger surprise showed in the census page itself - his mother Rosetta "Hohn" was living with him! So great-great-grandma was still alive in 1870, and had moved north with Isaac and very near Jane and Louis. That explains the reference to a living "mama" in Jane's reminiscences of the Chicago Fire in 1871. I now guess Rosetta died before 1880 (although I can't find her death record in Chicago), and Isaac went back to Alabama (per the 1880 census). Then he returned to Chicago in 1892, per the Chicago city directory.

Question 2. Is there a connection to Solomon Hahn in Mobile?

Although Solomon is at best a fairly distant relative, I thought this might be traceable in the Mobile city directory, which begins in 1861. He appears in the first directory after the Civil War, for 1866, in the dry goods business.

Looking in 1867, there he is again, and down the block is Miss Jane Kahnweiler! (First surprise.) So Jane had come to the city, either during or just after the Civil War. She was old enough to work, and her father was probably dead, so it would make sense for her to look for work in a fair-sized city where she already had relatives.

On a hunch, I looked under "K," and there was Louis, a clerk in another dry goods store! (Second surprise.) So Louis did "return south." I looked at 1866, and Louis was there, too. He and Jane were gone by 1868. This is consistent with their marriage in August 1867 and their move to Chicago in time to appear in the 1868 Chicago directory.

Question 3. How or where did Louis and Jane meet?

They might have first met in Tuscaloosa, not far from Marengo County, but they certainly met and deepened their acquaintance in Mobile, as well.

So my walled garden looks different now, and the patterns in the flower beds are clearer and more ornate than when I entered. Someday I'll go to Alabama and find out more about the Hahns and the Kahnweilers.

Try London Post Office Directories for British Research

By Jeremy Frankel, SFBAJGS President

London Post Office directories are very similar in scope to U.S. city directories. However they are much less egalitarian and do not include all the residents, only those who live in central London and in the "better" streets. Additionally, some streets only include businesses and no residents whatsoever. All that apart, they can still be very useful in genealogical research. I have been able to trace my Koenigsberg family and their business addresses in these directories.

Two institutions in the San Francisco Bay Area have them on the shelf, as follows:

- 1863 - UC Berkeley (at NRLF Storage Library)
- 1874 - Sutro Library
- 1877 - Sutro Library
- 1887 - Sutro Library
- 1897 - Sutro Library
- 1901 - Sutro Library
- 1914 - Sutro Library
- 1916 - Sutro Library
- 1947 - Oakland LDS (back room)
- 1951 - Sutro Library
- 1959 - Oakland LDS (back room)
- 1960 - Oakland LDS (back room)
- 1963 - Sutro Library
- 1968 vols 1 and 2 - Sutro Library

Journey, cont. from page 12

interesting, it was disappointing to find that most of the records on film were the same ones we could find at the Family History Library. Once again, walking the streets seemed a better use of time.

My cousin Dusan wasn't able to get away from his job in Switzerland to meet us but I was thrilled to find his books and the works of Sandor Marai, another Hungarian Jewish author from Kosice, prominently displayed in the window of a book shop near the Cathedral. It turned out that the Hungarian-speaking proprietor knows both Dusan and his brother Pavel. Pavel had told me that his grandfather, Dr. Ludvik Simko, had lived near the synagogue on Pushkinova Street. He also recalled that the Moskovits family had owned a building called Maleter House on Mylinska Street, the main thoroughfare between the train station and the central part of the old city. We walked up and down the street. If the building was still there, renovation had made it unrecognizable. Moreover, after Linda's disappointing experience at the municipal archives, it didn't seem worth the effort to spend time trying to find property records.

Michalovce and Sobrance

I still don't know exactly when or where my father and his immediate family lived in Budapest, Miskolc, and Kosice. The next leg of our journey would finally take us to the area of eastern Slovakia where my facts were much more certain. Leaving Kosice the train traveled east into the green foothills of the Carpathian Mountains. Jan met us at the station in Michalovce with a friend who had a car. This is a new station. The one that thousands of Slovak Jews passed through in 1942 during the mass deportations from Michalovce still stands but is no longer used for passenger travel.

We had to maneuver around downtown Michalovce to get to the Hotel Jalta because most of the streets were blocked off for the annual Zemplen County festival. Once again we had arrived on a Friday, leaving little time to visit any municipal archives before they closed for the weekend. After checking in at the Jalta, we headed east to Sobrance and the surrounding villages where I knew my father, his parents, and his grandparents had lived until sometime before World War I. In addition to looking for the old Jewish cemetery, I wanted to see Kristy and Ostrov, little places south of Sobrance where my father, his brothers, and my grandmother were born and my great-grandfather had a farm.

The Moskovits and Neuman families were both from Sobrance, the main town in the district and once a half-way stop on the coach ride between Ungvar (now Uzhhorod, Ukraine) and Nagymihaly (now Michalovce,

Slovakia). In the 1890's Miksa Neumann, the father of my paternal grandfather Viktor, had a large farm a few kilometers south of Sobrance between Kereszt (where my father and his brothers were born) and Tasula. According to the 1929 Magyar Zsido Lexikon, Jews began settling in this area in the early seventeenth century. In 1877, there were more than 2,000 Jews living in the district's 33 settlements, and they accounted for more than a third of the 1,080 residents in the town of Sobrance. By the end of the nineteenth century, about half of the district's major landowners and leaseholders were Jewish. The names of both of my great-grandfathers are included in this list. Because the Sobrance district was ceded back to Hungary, its Jewish community survived until 1944, almost two years after their friends and family in Michalovce were deported to the camps. I have been checking the Yad Vashem database for names from the Sobrance district and have, so far, found about 300. I'm sure there are more.

After lunch (soup and more beer), we went to visit the new Sobrance town hall. (The old one was reportedly destroyed during a battle at the end of the war.) The registrar had received my letter and seemed friendly but wouldn't let us see any records. I wrote down names and dates and we waited while she checked her books. Alas, it turns out that the records from 1895, when civil registration began, up to the early years of the twentieth century, are not in Sobrance. For some strange reason these records are in Krcava, another town a few kilometers away. Jan suggested that we leave the list of names and offer a tip. The clerk took the list but declined the tip, which Jan later explained was probably because the clerk knew that his mother-in-law held a similar position in the Michalovce registry office.

Our next stop was the Jewish cemetery outside of Sobrance. After poring over our maps and checking the Jewish cemetery database on Jan's laptop, we finally found the unmarked cemetery surrounded by fields a short distance east of Sobrance. Based on accounts from other visitors, I wasn't surprised to find that the cemetery was completely overgrown, which is probably for the best because the dense vegetation has protected the stones from both natural elements and unwanted human incursions. I spent some time crashing through the underbrush and came upon a number of legible matzevot but none from my own relatives. After returning home I got an e-mail from Jan saying that he had found a record stating that my great-grandfather Miksa Neumann died in Kereszt (now Kristy) in 1897. Since there's no record of a Jewish cemetery in Kereszt, I suspect that he is buried a few kilometers up the road in the cemetery we visited. I'm making inquiries about the

Continued on page 17

cost of clearing the brush and brambles and photographing the cemetery.

This area is very close to the Ukrainian border. There are no roads to access the fields and the land probably looks very much as it did in the late nineteenth-early twentieth centuries. A thunder storm was approaching as we stopped outside Ostrov and watched a combine at work in what looked like a wheat field. From a distance we could see the storks that patrol the fields by day and return to the villages at night to perch in large nests on utility poles. It appeared that some villagers had even erected poles that seemed to serve no function other than to provide places for these large birds to build their nests.

Since we couldn't visit cemeteries or city halls over the weekend, we spent the next two days looking for any remnants of the old Jewish community and the cemetery. The map of Michalovce that we got at the hotel clearly identified Zidovsky Cintorin (Jewish cemetery) adjoining the large Christian cemetery northwest of the city center. The map didn't indicate that this was an uphill walk or that there was a wall around the cemetery and a locked gate. We swatted mosquitos as we walked the perimeter and I found a tree that could be used to scale the wall, if necessary, to get inside.

We were unable to find Andrassy utca, where my great-grandparents lived in the early 1920's, but we did come across other streets with old one-story, steep-roofed masonry houses that the Soviet-era bulldozers had missed. On Sunday we decided to return to Sobrance. There were no rental cars available anywhere near Michalovce so we took the bus — along with elderly women and couples with young children who were returning from Sunday church services in Michalovce to Zavadka, Ribnica, Sobrance, Tibava, and the other little communities along the road between Michalovce and the Ukrainian border.

From what we saw of Sobrance, it is a pleasant and placid little town with a population of about 4,300. Perhaps because everyone was home enjoying

Sunday dinner after church, the streets were virtually empty. Even if Jan had been along to help with translation, it's unlikely that the grizzled inebriate knocking on the door of a closed tavern or the young woman with a stroller would have remembered my Moskovits, Neumann, Rosenberg, and Zicherman relatives who lived here before World War I. Some of the older buildings along Hlavna ulica (Main Street) are being renovated. Except for a few of the ubiquitous Soviet-era apartment blocks and several lovely old homes, most of the residential buildings were the same early twentieth century one-story buildings we saw in Michalovce. Sobrance residents, like many suburban and rural Slovaks and Hungarians, take tremendous pride in their gardens, which displayed a gorgeous

array of tomatoes, peppers, cabbage, and onions, along with roses, sunflowers, hollyhocks, and other blooms. We saw a stork patrolling the shallow waters of the river that runs behind the town hall. A few blocks from the central district, the developed area gives way to gold and green fields that stretch east to the Carpathians and south to the Hungarian plains.

On Monday morning we resumed our research with a visit to the registry office in Michalovce town hall. In contrast to the unfriendly reception that Linda received in Kosice, Jan's mother-in-law offered us coffee, cake, and seltzer as we went through the record books. Once we realized that there were two sets — one for the city of Michalovce and the other for the surrounding communities — it didn't take long to find the death record for my great-grandmother Sali who died in Michalovce in 1924. The abstract that I had received by mail several months before my trip had not mentioned the names of her parents (my great-great-grandparents!) whom the records identified as Izak Kohen and Anna Lefkovic. There were other Moskovits records but none of the names looked familiar.

Finally, it was time to visit the cemetery. I didn't have to scale the wall because Jan had called Rabbi Steiner in Kosice and obtained the name and phone number of the elderly Michalovce resident who is

Continued on page 18



Jewish cemetery in Michalovce, Slovakia

Journey, cont. from page 17

the keeper of both the key to the cemetery gate and burial record book. Mr. Haber was initially wary of telling Jan exactly where he lived so we made arrangements to pick him up outside the hospital, which is near his apartment. The four of us squeezed into a taxi and we headed up the hill to the cemetery.

Once inside the cemetery, I had a look at Mr. Haber's book, which he carried in a plastic grocery sack. As I recall, the surnames were in Hungarian and the given names in Hebrew. Each entry included a row and grave number. The rows were relatively easy to locate because the numbers are written on the walls around the cemetery. It took only a short time to find the graves of my great-grandparents and then my grandfather. I recognized the matzevot from my grandmother's old sepia snapshots of her parents' side-by-side graves and my grandfather's monument. My grandmother left Michalovce for New York City in March 1921, before my grandfather's headstone was unveiled and before her parents died, so she never visited the graves. In fact, I am likely the only one of my grandfather's descendants ever to visit the cemetery. There were no familiar names on any of the matzevot near my grandfather Viktor's rather impressive granite marker. My great-grandparents, however, seemed to be surrounded by family members.

Memories, cont. from page 4

her ambitions and yearnings, her dreams and disappointments. Meticulously researched, but as compelling as a novel, *Who She Was* vividly portrays an ordinary young woman as a memorable heroine.

Samuel G. Freedman is a professor of journalism at Columbia University and a regular contributor to the *New York Times*. The author of four acclaimed books, his last book, *Jew vs. Jew: The Struggle for the Soul of American Jewry* won the National Jewish Book Award for Nonfiction in 2001 and his previous book, *The Inheritance: How Three Families and America Moved from Roosevelt to Reagan and Beyond* was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in 1997.

Helen Epstein will present a talk with slides about her book *Swimming Against Stereotype: The Story of a Czech Water Polo Player/Officer/Jew* on Thursday, March 16, at 7:30 p.m.

Although Jewish athletes played a major role in competitive sports at the start of the twentieth century, they do not occupy a significant place in Jewish memory. In this illustrated lecture, Helen Epstein, author of *Children of the Holocaust* and *Where*

The inscription on my great-grandmother Sali's grave identified her father as Benjamin Yitzhak haKohen, confirming the information in the Michalovce record book. I couldn't find my great-grandfather Markus in the records but according to his headstone he died in 1925 and was the son of Avraham haLevi—another great-great-grandparent! On a marker next to the graves of Sali and Markus Moskovits, I recognized the name of Armin, my grandmother's older brother. I knew that he was born in Sobrance in 1869 but didn't know that he had died in Michalovce in 1937. Like all of my relatives' matzevot, Armin's had inscriptions in Hebrew on the front or east face and German on the back. Armin's monument identified his wife as Fani (Feiga) Weiss, born in 1880. According to the inscription on the monument they had a daughter Paula Jakubovits who perished at Ravensbrück. Mr. Haber recognized the name Leopold (Aryeh ben Menachem haLevi) Moskovits on another nearby monument and reported that he was a rich man and a butcher. Between Armin and Leopold's graves I found a Rosza Moskovits who was 86 years old when she died in 1918. The inscriptions identified her as the daughter of a Yosef Lefkovits. Was he my great-great-grandmother's brother? And who was Leopold Moskovits? Was his father Menachem my great-grandfather's brother? It wasn't until I returned home that I began to unravel some of these family ties.

She Came From: A Daughter's Search for her Mother's History, turns her focus on her father, Czech Olympic athlete Kurt Epstein. Drawing on historical sources as well as interviews with Central European athletes, Epstein sketches the life of her father and his generation of Jewish sportsmen and women in the period between the two World Wars.

Born in Prague in 1947, Helen Epstein, the daughter of Holocaust survivors, grew up in New York City and studied musicology at Hebrew University in Jerusalem. A graduate of the Columbia Graduate School of Journalism, she is the author of five books of literary non-fiction, including her two memoirs and the biography *Joe Papp: An American Life*. All three books were named *New York Times* Notable Books of the Year.

Co-sponsored by the Holocaust Center of Northern California and the Northern California Jewish Sports Hall of Fame.

For more information, call (415) 567-3327, ext. 703. Secure parking is available. Enter on Pierce Street between Ellis and Eddy.

Legislation, cont. from page 8

Committee of the New Hampshire House of Representatives on January 31. If you are interested in New Hampshire records and want to voice your concern with the legislation as currently written, do so by writing to the committee members. You will find the names of the committee members at:

gencourt.state.nh.us/ie/billstatus/commdetils.asp.

You may read the bill by going to:

gencourt.state.nh.us/legislation/2006/HB1382.html

2. New Jersey AB 1390(AB 3806 in the 2005 session). This bill removes vital records (birth, marriage, domestic partnership and death records) from the definition of public records, thereby making access to such records difficult, if not impossible. The bill has been assigned to the Assembly Homeland Security and State Preparedness Committee. The committee members are not yet announced per the legislative website.

The bill needs to be amended to permit copies of such records for genealogists. Efforts to get time limits on the confidentiality of birth records (100 years), marriage records (60 years) and death records (40 years) in the bill do not appear to be successful as yet.

The bill can be accessed at the New Jersey Legislature's website: www.njleg.state.nj.us/2006/Bills/A1500/1390_I1.pdf

If you are interested in New Jersey vital records and are concerned with the legislation, contact the committee members — when appointed — to make your concerns known.

For more information contact Jan Meisels Allen at janmallen@worldnet.att.net

President's Message, cont. from page 2

September 1986 issue of the *Bulletin* which held an interview with Martha Wise, who was then the president of the Society. (Read this interview on page 6.)

As this is our twenty-fifth year, I hope that you will participate by attending more meetings and getting to know other members, or writing an article for *ZichronNote*. I also want to meet as many of you as possible. Towards the end of the year we hope to have a celebratory party or luncheon. We're not quite sure yet what form this special meeting will take. Many ideas are still flowing in. If you have any thoughts, please e-mail Board Member Shellie Wiener

New Search Engine Finds Polish Holocaust Records

Jews around the world know that time is running out in the search for family members who may have survived the Holocaust. For Jews with roots in Poland, a new search engine on the web provides help and hope with a database of over a quarter of a million records — one of the largest Holocaust search tools in existence. The search engine at www.CRARG.org has been created by the Czestochowa-Radomsko Area Research Group.

The data includes both survivor records and death records from professional research and volunteer typing. "Most of our research and typing is based on highly detailed lists made during or right after the War," says CRARG president Daniel Kazez, a professor at Wittenberg University (Ohio). The Czestochowa-Radomsko Area Research Group was founded in 2003 by a group of individuals with family roots in southern Poland. "Because of both voluntary and forced migration of Jews in Poland during World War II, we understand that our families from southern Poland could have been almost anywhere in Poland or Europe by the end of the War," Kazez said. "Therefore, we broadly target our data collecting to cover any Jews who were in Poland or from Poland."

Additional search engines listing Holocaust victims or survivors are maintained by Yad Vashem, JewishGen, and Jewish Records Indexing Poland at www.yadvashem.org, www.jewishgen.org, and www.jri-poland.org.

Condolences

ZichronNote has received news that longtime member Arleen Chasson of Los Altos Hills has passed away. The editor and Board of Directors wish to express their condolences to her husband, Leon Chasson, and brother, Stan Judd.

(s_wiener@yahoo.com), who has volunteered to be in charge of the event planning.

The membership has voted to retain the proposed slate of officers. I would like to thank everyone for voting and for the many kind comments that were added. As I have said before and will say again, the Society has a great Board of Directors which does sterling work, and I am extremely privileged to work with them all. As always we encourage members to attend and participate.

As I wrote at the beginning, by the time you read this we'll be well into 2006. The Board and I wish all of you a peaceful, healthy and (genealogically) prosperous 2006.

ZichronNote

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Contributors to this Issue

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ZichronNote

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