



זכרונות *ZichronNote*

**The Journal of the San Francisco Bay Area
Jewish Genealogical Society**

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The Ger Mandolin Orchestra

A picture of his Polish grandfather's mandolin orchestra inspired SFBAGS board member Avner Yonai to start his own. See page 5.

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The Rybak family in Ger in 1935. Avner Yonai's great-uncle Beryl Rybak was the conductor of the Ger Mandolin Orchestra.

ZichronNote
Journal of the San Francisco Bay Area
Jewish Genealogical Society

President's Message
I Want a Minyan

By Jeremy Frankel, SFBAJGS President

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'Twas brillig and the slithy toves did gyre and gimble in the wabe. Actually, it was Sunday in San Francisco, and Janice Sellers and I were driving in from the East Bay to Congregation Beth Israel-Judea (BIJ), looking forward to a lecture on South African Jewish research by Roy Ogus. If members haven't "twigged", we planned the 2010 series of lectures primarily with speakers drawn from our own membership in conjunction with the 2010 IAJGS Conference being held almost in our back yard—okay, 400 miles south of here. We figured it was a great idea to show off the depth and breadth of genealogical knowledge accumulated by our esteemed members.

We pulled up outside, still amazed at the lack of traffic on the road. We were glad to have gotten there early, as it would give us more time to set up. It was a really nice (almost too hot) day in San Francisco, and yes, there WAS a Giants game on too. What else was going on? Oh yes, the International Food Festival was taking place around the corner from BIJ.

But still. Where was everyone? I find it hard to believe that just three of us showed up to hear Roy Ogus give a fascinating presentation, not only on his South African family research and the many dark secrets that still lurk within, but we benefited from Roy's very concise run-down on South African geography and history.

Many of the documents Roy displayed (on the big screen; we were using our new projector for the first time) were extremely interesting, not the kind of documents we're used to seeing. We spent quite a bit of time poring over them and working out the details together.

Fortunately, what was sorely lacking in numbers was almost, almost made up for with the interest shown by the minuscule audience and the ideas put forward to help Roy fill in some of the blanks he still has with regard to his family research. Remember, this IS a two-way street; speakers welcome, want, and need responses from the audience.

I know that South Africa may not be a place where everyone thinks they have family, but as Roy and the meeting announcement pointed out, if you have Lithuanian heritage, it is more than likely a branch of your family emigrated there at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Continued on page 4

SOCIETY NEWS

New Members

Joan Boyle joanboyle4@aol.com
Stephanie Hoffman ... stephanie.hoffman@comcast.net
Heidi Lyss heidilyss@mac.com
Mona Reeva mreeva@comcast.net

In order to continue to receive the SFBAJGS e-zine and *ZichronNote*, please send e-mail updates to newsletter@sfbajgs.org.

Door Prizes at Meetings

The Society has received some donations recently, and it was decided that a good way to share the wealth would be to have door prizes at meetings. At the January meeting in San Francisco, member Lynn Rhodes won a copy of *The German Minority Census of 1939: An Introduction and Register*. At the Oakland February meeting, guest Linda Smith won a copy of *One Foot in America: The Jewish Emigrants of the Red Star Line and Eugene Van Mieghem*. Who will be the next winner? Could it be you?

It's Membership Renewal Time!

If you who have not yet renewed your membership in SFBAJGS for 2011, now is the time. You must be a member to continue to receive *ZichronNote*. If you can't remember whether you have renewed or not, e-mail Membership Chair Larry Burgheimer at membership@sfbajgs.org and ask him to check your membership status.

Three reasons to renew:

1. You want to help SFBAJGS with its projects, such as the Cemetery Project, through which information about Jewish burials in San Francisco cemeteries (now in Colma) are being added to the JewishGen Online Worldwide Burial Registry.
2. You want to meet other people whose eyes do not glaze over when you discuss your latest genealogical research find, and who may even have some suggestions to help!
3. You want to keep receiving *ZichronNote*, with all its information and announcements of interest to genealogists.

Stories Needed for *ZichronNote*

Have you had a breakthrough in your family research, solved a family mystery through painstaking research, discovered a better way to use resource materials, or walked where your ancestors walked as part of an interesting family history trip?

We want to read about it in *ZichronNote*. Please submit materials to newsletter@sfbajgs.org.

Meeting Times and Locations

Unless otherwise indicated, the SFBAJGS meeting schedule is as follows:

- San Francisco:** **Sunday. Doors open 12:30 p.m. Program begins at 1:00 p.m.**
Congregation Beth Israel-Judea, 625 Brotherhood Way.
- Los Altos Hills:** **Monday. Doors open at 7 p.m. Program begins at 7:30 p.m.**
Congregation Beth Am, 26790 Arastradero Road, Room 5/6.
- Oakland:** **Sunday. Doors open 12:30 p.m. Program begins at 1:00 p.m.**
Oakland Regional Family History Center, 4766 Lincoln Avenue.

See Back Cover for Calendar of Upcoming SFBAJGS Meetings

CALENDAR

Genealogy Events

Local and Regional

Wed., 23 February, 7:00 p.m. Marin County Genealogical Society. Steve Morse presents "One-Step Webpages: A Hodgepodge of Lesser Known Gems." Marin Family History Center, 220 North San Pedro Road, San Rafael. http://www.maringensoc.org/Meetings

Thu., 24 March, 7:00 p.m. Jewish Community Library. Felix and Sue Warburg present "Jews of the Historic South: Charleston, Beaufort, and Savannah." 1835 Ellis Street, San Francisco. http://www.bjesf.org/library.htm

State and National

Sun., 13 March, 10 a.m. Sacramento Jewish Genealogical Society. Robinn Magid presents

"Polish Genealogy." Albert Einstein Residence Center, 1935 Wright Street, Sacramento. http://www.jewishgen.org/jgs-sacramento/html/meetings_2010.html

Thu., 17 March, 1:00 p.m. San Joaquin Genealogical Society. Janice Sellers presents "Newspapers Online." Cesar Chavez Central Library, 605 North El Dorado Street, Stockton. http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~sjgs/

Fri.–Sun., 10–12 June. Jamboree. The schedule is now available as a PDF and the blog and registration are active. http://scgsgenealogy.com/2011jam-home.htm

Sun.–Fri., 14–19 August. 31st IAJGS International Conference on Jewish Genealogy. Grand Hyatt, Washington, DC. Blog at http://www.dc2011conference.blogspot.com/. Discussion group hosted through JewishGen; go to http://www.jewishgen.org/ListManager/members_add.asp, sign in, and look under Hosted Projects for the "Subscribe" button. http://www.dc2011.org/



Advertisement for the Bureau of Jewish Education Jewish Community Library Genealogy Clinic. It includes the title 'Help with Your Family Tree: Brainstorming with the Mavens', dates for the clinic (October 3, November 14, December 1, January 8, February 5, March 5), and contact information for the library at 1835 Ellis Street, San Francisco. It also features a tree graphic and logos for the Bureau of Jewish Education and the Jewish Genealogical Society.

President's Message, continued from page 2

The Board is currently re-evaluating where meetings ought to take place for 2011 and after. The economic depression—and no, I DON'T believe the recession has ended (I'm still waiting for the increased income from the end of the LAST recession to trickle down to me)—is causing many places to leverage their meeting rooms to maximize their income. That means the Board has to justify expenditures as part of the benefit of running the organization.

If members don't show up (I wanna see at least a minyan) then we will have to take a long, hard, serious look at whether having a meeting in San Francisco is worth the financial effort as well as Board members schlepping in from the East Bay. Please be there—otherwise it ain't fair!

Postscript: We kicked off 2011 with our very own Steve Morse and his "Demystifying the Jewish Calendar" presentation in San Francisco. This was naturally very well received, but it remains to be seen if you, me, and all of us can keep this momentum up throughout the whole year, or will this be the one mystifying thing that defeats even Steve's One-Step Calendar app!



Plucky Move

By Alexander Gelfand

A picture of his Polish grandfather's mandolin orchestra inspired SFBAGS board member Avner Yonai to start his own.

Alexander Gelfand is a recovering ethnomusicologist, a sometime jazz pianist, and a former West African drummer. His work has appeared in the *New York Times*, the *Chicago Tribune*, the *Forward*, and many other publications. This article was first published by *Tablet Magazine* on 28 October 2010 at <http://www.tabletmag.com/arts-and-culture/music/48739/plucky-move/>. It has been modified from its original version.

Have you ever had one of those moments—one of those epiphanies—when everything is illuminated?

Avner Yonai did. It came, fittingly enough, while he was watching the film *Everything Is Illuminated*, based on the novel by Jonathan Safran Foer. Which led, of course, to the mandolins.

But first, the epiphany.

Yonai, who runs a moving and storage company in California, was born in Israel. His father's family emigrated from Poland to Palestine in 1932; his mother's family, or at least some of them, did the same in 1935. Those who didn't perished in Treblinka, along with the other Jewish residents of Gora Kalwaria, or as it's known in Yiddish, Ger.

No one in Yonai's family talked much about life in Ger. "Living in Israel, they had no desire to return to Poland, or to talk about it," he said. And Yonai didn't think much about it until he found himself in a darkened theater, watching Elijah Wood return to his character's ancestral shtetl and stand before a monument commemorating the date of the massacre in which most of his forebears lost their lives: March 18, 1942.

"I was born on March 18," Yonai said. "I don't believe in signs, but that was too much of a coincidence."

Within two weeks, Yonai was in Ger, trying to find traces of his own family. He met with a survivor, Avrum Henryk Prajs, now 94, who pulled out the town's *yizkor* book and showed Yonai a photograph of his grandfather, two great-uncles, and a cousin, taken sometime in the early 1930's. It was a photo

of an orchestra: the Mandolin Orchestra of Ger. His great-uncle Beryl Rybak served as the conductor of the orchestra.

One can still find mandolin orchestras in most large cities in this country. In the early decades of the 20th century, when the Gibson guitar company actively promoted mandolins, the orchestras were everywhere, especially among the immigrant communities for whom the mandolin carried memories of home.

The mandolin originated in Italy in the 15th century, and a large body of Baroque and classical music exists for the instrument. Cheap and portable, it rapidly became a staple of folk music across the continent, especially in the eastern parts; there is Slovakian mandolin music, Ukrainian mandolin music, and a significant amount of Jewish mandolin music.

Sometime in the 19th century, some enterprising soul realized that mandolins could be built in different sizes and grouped just like bowed string instruments: mandolinas for violas, mandocellos for cellos, mandobasses for contrabasses. Thus was born the mandolin orchestra, Jewish versions of which

quickly sprang up across Europe and North America, with mostly amateur members. My old mandolin teacher, Mr. Katz, led just such a group in Montreal when he wasn't schooling little kids in Eastern European chestnuts such as "Tumbalalaika" and "Dark Eyes" ("Ochi Chornye"), the latter having been a favorite of my maternal grandfather, who emigrated to Canada in the early 1920's from Krynki (Krinek), just 150 miles northeast of Ger.



The Ger Mandolin Orchestra in the 1930's

That black and white portrait of the Mandolin Orchestra of Ger eventually led Avner Yonai to some long-lost relatives in Israel. But that was hardly the end of it. Given that most of his mother's family had played in the orchestra, Yonai decided to resurrect it.

Figuring out what the orchestra played has not been simple. Prais can identify its members, but he was just a child when they gathered at the Y. L. Peretz Library in Ger during the 1920's and 1930's. In a YouTube video (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rMcVvPANGKU>) you can see him struggling to recall what they might have performed.

One can hazard a guess as to the general outlines of the group's repertoire based on the kinds of music that were popular among Eastern European Jews at the time, and on what Jewish mandolin orchestras in America played during the same period. "I would expect that they would be playing light classical pieces, tangos, Yiddish theater songs, and folk favorites," says mandolinist and guitarist Jeff Warschauer, who has examined the repertoire of the old Workmen's Circle Mandolin Orchestra in New York, among others. He points out that the Jewish mandolin orchestras in North America played "some Yiddish things, some things we might call klezmer, and even some Hasidic things." But as for what Ger's orchestra played, it's still a guess. As Yonai says, "There is not an archive where we can go and ask the librarian, 'Give me the repertoire for the mandolin orchestra of Gora Kalwaria.'"

But Yonai is not one to give up easily. He has used the genealogy Web site JewishGen (<http://www.jewishgen.org/>) and the YIVO (<http://www.yivoinstitute.org/>) archives to find contacts and archival materials among the scattered descendants of the Jews of Ger. He has hired a doctoral candidate in ethnological studies at the University of Warsaw to pore over old newspapers, sheet music, record catalogs—anything that might hint at the mandolin orchestra's repertoire. Together with the Israeli mandolinist Benny Bilsky, who has volunteered to act as music director for the project, he has even visited the large community of Gerrer Hasidim in Bnei Brak, Israel, searching for tunes that might have found their way into the orchestra's book.

So, if you have a chest of old mandolin music from your great-grandfather's collection moldering in the attic, or a *yizkor* book that happens to mention the pieces that your great-uncle's mandolin orchestra played in Poland in 1933, drop Yonai a line. He'll be happy to hear from you.

For Avner Yonai, this is not just about mandolins. It is about connecting to a past that otherwise exists only in fading memories and rare photographs. And it is, first and foremost, about a small group of people

who stayed behind when others, more prescient or maybe just luckier, chose to leave. People he met on his first trip to Ger, gazing at him in black and white across the span of nearly one hundred years. He has even launched a Facebook page (<http://www.facebook.com/#!/pages/The-Ger-Mandolin-Orchestra/110726952277142>) dedicated to the orchestra that was once so pivotal to his family.

"For me," he said, "it is a family thing."



The Ger Mandolin Ensemble: 2011 will perform on Sunday, 6 March, at 2:00 p.m. as part of the 26th Jewish Music Festival. The 1930's prewar spirit of the Jewish mandolin orchestra of Góra Kalwaria, Poland, will come alive again through the vintage repertoire and virtuosity of world-class mandolinists Mike Marshall (music director), Grammy nominee Avi Avital, Eric Stein (*Beyond the Pale*), Jeff Warschauer (*Strauss/Warschauer Duo*), Radim Zenkl, Chris Acquavella, Brian Oberlin, and more. The performance is dedicated to the members of the Jewish Mandolin Orchestra and the martyred Jewish community of Góra Kalwaria. Cosponsored by Avner Yonai.

Freight & Salvage Coffee House

2020 Addison Street, Berkeley

Tickets: \$20 advance; \$25 door.

\$2 discount on advance or door tickets for full-time students and seniors (65+).

Tickets and information: <http://www.jewishmusicfestival.org/> or (866) 558-4253.

15% discount for groups of ten or more: (510) 848-0237 x118 or outreach@jewishmusicfestival.org.

The Galitzianer **Request for Submissions**

The Galitzianer is the quarterly journal of Geshher Galicia. Submissions may be articles and/or graphics, both original and previously published, relevant to Jewish genealogical research in Galicia: articles about recent trips to Galicia, reports on your own research, research techniques, historical and recent pictures relevant to these matters, lists, book reviews, etc.

Electronic submissions are preferred, though not required. Submissions are accepted from both members and nonmembers of Geshher Galicia.

Though submissions are accepted year-round, the deadline for the May 2011 issue is 8 April 2011. To send a submission or if you have any questions, contact Janice Sellers at janicemsj@gmail.com. For more information see <http://www.jewishgen.org/galicia/newsletter.html>.

Cemetery Project Gives New Life to Local Burial Information

By Beth Galleto

Beth Galleto has been working on her family history since a distant cousin made an unexpected visit in 1978 and sketched out a makeshift family tree on a napkin. When not working on genealogy, she is a freelance copywriter and editor. She was formerly the editor of *ZichronNote* and is currently the SFBAJGS Webmaster.

About ten years ago volunteers from the San Francisco Bay Area Jewish Genealogical Society (SFBAJGS) embarked on a project to index burial records from local Jewish cemeteries and to post the indices on the JewishGen Online Worldwide Burial Registry (JOWBR). For many pre-1906 burials these are the only remaining records, because so many vital records were destroyed in the 1906 earthquake and fire in San Francisco.

Thanks to hours of painstaking, detailed work by many volunteers, the SFBAJGS Cemetery Project has so far posted information about 12,418 burials on JOWBR. The burials are in Home of Peace Cemetery and Emanu-El Mausoleum (Congregation Emanu-El) and Hills of Eternity Memorial Park (Congregation Sherith Israel). Both are located not in San Francisco itself, but about 20 miles south in Colma, a city of approximately 2,000 living and 2 million deceased individuals. Colma has 17 cemeteries, including a pet cemetery.

In the mid-1890's the city of San Francisco, running out of land for buildings, ordered all cemeteries within the city boundaries closed. All the remains and any possible stones from the Jewish cemeteries in the city were disinterred and then reinterred in Colma, which currently has three Jewish cemeteries. No more burials took place in San Francisco after 1900. The burial dates in the database for the graves that were moved are the dates of reburial, not the original dates of burial.

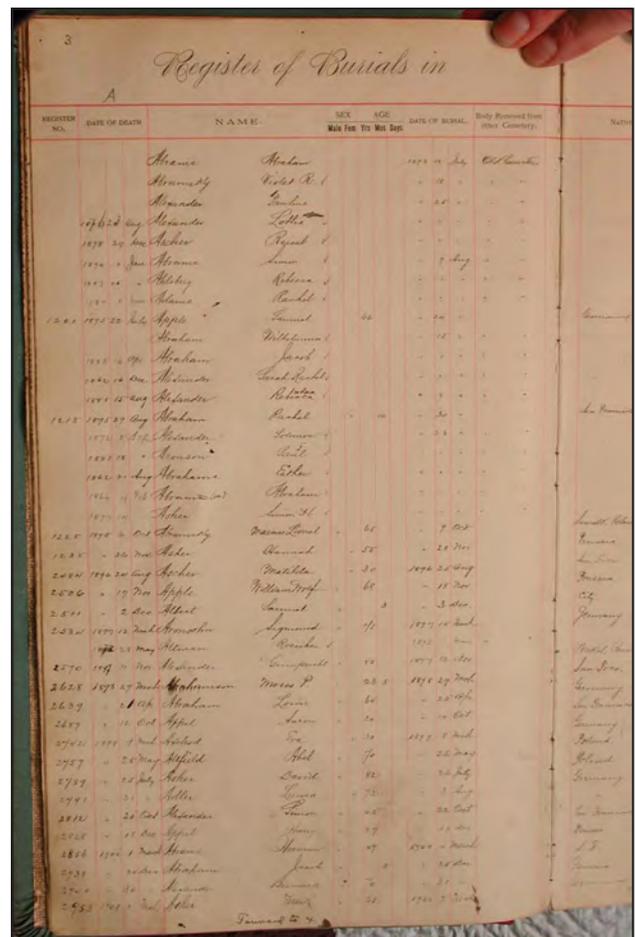
The indexing work consisted of four steps:

- First, photos were taken of the pages of the cemeteries' ledger books.
- The next step was to transcribe the (sometimes barely legible) writing from the photographs into computerized spreadsheets.
- A second person checked each item to verify its accuracy and make corrections if needed.
- Finally, the information from the spreadsheet was formatted to fit the requirements of the JOWBR database.

The reburials date from 1884 to 1900. Subsequent burials can be found dating into the early or mid-1940's. Some, but not all, list year of death. The books do not include original records from the burials of those graves that were relocated.

The listings generally include place of birth and death, age, plot location, and burial date, although many have a note that this is the date of reburial, not the original burial. Some include date of death. There are no photos of *matzevot* (grave stones). Taking such photos may become a future SFBAJGS project.

So far three cemetery books have been indexed and the data sent to JOWBR. Two are from Home of Peace and the other from Hills of Eternity. The data from Hills



A sample ledger page from Hills of Eternity.

of Eternity, consisting of 6,126 burials, went online 17 July 2008. Home of Peace Cemetery Book 1, 4,175 burials, went online 7 January 2010; Book 2, 2,117 burials, went online 6 June 2010.

According to Pierre Hahn, the Cemetery Project chairman and an SFBAJGS board member, all the information that was in the ledger books was transcribed into the spreadsheets. "We transcribed whatever was in the book. If a person was crossed out because they were moved to a different cemetery, we left them in, with a note at the end."

Individual cases have additional information that does not fit into JOWBR's format. Anyone who finds a person listed in JOWBR can contact Hahn to find out if additional information is available for that burial. Looking at the earliest death for which information is known, Hahn found the record for Julia Lazar, who died at age 4 and was originally buried in the 18th Street Cemetery in 1868. He noted that the data also include burials of a few severed arms and legs.

Transcribing, indexing, and posting more than 12,000 records is an amazing accomplishment, but the project isn't over yet. The next stage is to index and convert 14,000 records from Salem Cemetery into JOWBR's format. Congregation Beth Israel established Salem Memorial Park in 1877. Salem followed Hills of Eternity and Home of Peace in moving from San Francisco to Colma.

The SFBAJGS Cemetery Project could not succeed without the many volunteers who have worked tirelessly to get it done. They include Sylvia Alderman, Ron Arons, Paul Edises, Linda Fine, Paula Fleisher, Deborah Friedman, Dan Goodman, Pierre Hahn, Jerry Jacobson, Stan Judd, Batya Kalis, Marcia Kaplan, Rosanne Leeson, Jeff Lewy, Sita Likuski, Roy Ogus, Sherry Oppenheim, Hy Ramm, Sheila Sello, and Eugene Zauber.

The JOWBR database can be found at <http://www.jewishgen.org/databases/Cemetery/>. For more information or to volunteer contact Pierre Hahn at cemetery@sfbajgs.org.



The Top 20 for 2011

By Jeff Lewy

By the time you read this newsletter, your New Year's resolutions may seem long gone. But in our first issue of *ZichronNote* for 2011, we suggest you celebrate your genealogical research and findings with these New Year's resolutions, or just make them part of your to-do list to make 2011 a genealogically significant year for you. (With thanks to Curt Witcher of the Allen County Genealogy Center in Fort Wayne, Indiana, who got us thinking with his list of 50 items!)

1. Interview your older relatives. Start with the ones you've always wanted to get around to interviewing but haven't. (Yes, that means *all* your older relatives!)

2. Visit another living relative. It's never too soon to capture another story, take another picture of someone, or find a "new to you" photo or document that relative has.

3. Visit a dead relative. Take a photo at a cemetery of a tombstone or a plot you don't have in your archive.

4. Attend a local genealogical society meeting near your home even if you may not have ancestors in that area, and then join if you like it. You're supporting good works where you live, and there is always great value in networking with people who share our interests and our passions. A hint: SFBAJGS meets monthly, rotating between San Francisco, Oakland, and Los Altos Hills.

5. Volunteer to do something tangible and specific to assist your local genealogical or historical society. Another hint: SFBAJGS has a series of projects to digitize cemetery records throughout Northern California.

6. Join a genealogical society in an area where your ancestors came from. It could be the key to unlocking some of your research challenges.

7. Review old research notes and folders in your genealogical filing cabinet (real or virtual). You may find some answers just waiting for you!

8. Organize the photocopies and research notes that have been stacking up in your office, or on your dining room table, from previous research efforts.

9. Explore an aspect of social media that is new to you. See if this exciting frontier of technology can help you do more genealogy better.

10. Look at a new or different piece of genealogical software or online site—just for the fun of it!

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The Right Word and the Wrong Word

By Fred Hoffman

Translating a word correctly can make a significant difference in your research.

William F. “Fred” Hoffman is the editor of *Gen Dobry!*, the e-zine of PolishRoots®. He can be reached at wfh@langline.com. This article was previously published in *Gen Dobry!*, Vol. X, No. 11, 1 December 2009, PolishRoots®: <http://www.PolishRoots.org/>.

People often ask me how a fellow who majored in German ended up working in the field of Polish genealogy. Well, actually, more ask why a fellow would major in German

Be that as it may, I got involved in Polish genealogy mainly because it was a way to put my language skills to good use. Over the course of my first 30 years, I had learned a fair amount about Latin, German, Russian, and Polish (in that order, the last one self-taught)—and those happen to be exactly the languages that prove useful in any branch of Polish history, including genealogy!

In America, sadly, knowledge of languages other than English is not usually a path to career advancement. Oh, if you already have a marketable skill and can bring knowledge of another language to the table as an added qualification, that can prove useful. But hard as I tried to discover a marketable skill, languages are what I’m best at, and there really is no great demand for linguistic talent per se.

So I was rather pleased when I came to realize that genealogists often need help from someone who knows his stuff, language-wise. Where most hard-headed businessmen say, “No need to learn a language, make people in other countries learn English,” genealogists are constantly stumbling across foreign terms they don’t know, terms that could be important in their research. They will be grateful to anyone who can tell them what they need to know, maybe even pay for the info. What a concept!

The other day I was reminded how important it can be to find someone who knows just the right word. Right now, Jonathan Shea and I are trying to make serious progress on the Latin volume of our In Their Words series of translation guides. Jonathan has dug up plenty of sample documents; my job is explaining the grammar and putting together vocabulary lists. Latin documents are not too hard to figure out if you have some help with the unfamiliar terms that constantly show up in them. So I’m keeping my eyes open for any term we haven’t already listed, especially if it refers to an occupation that may show up in vital records or parish sacramental registers.

I was fascinated when I saw a note posted to the JewishGen mailing list, in which a gentleman named Eric asked:

“In translating the 1771–1774 Hungarian Jewish Censuses, one occupation is listed in Latin as *Cremati Ustores*. The only thing close to this that I find in translation Websites is ‘corpse burner.’ The two words appear to be somewhat redundant and mean the same thing. It has been suggested this occupation refers to alcohol distillers. Certainly the distillation process requires burning. However, I cannot find any definitive source that links this Latin occupation with distillation.

“Based on the fact that some towns in the Censuses identified numerous Jews with this occupation, and considering that Jews do not cremate their dead (i.e., burn corpses), it seems plausible the term does refer to alcohol distillation — although, there are certainly other words in the Latin language that could have been used to refer to alcohol distillation.

“Can anyone cite a reliable source that has linked the terms *Cremati Ustores*, or similar words, to the occupation of distilling alcohol?”

I looked in the various books I have, but to no avail. Most dictionaries focus on Classical Latin, the language of ancient Rome, not the version used by the Church and educated Europeans for centuries. These works don’t help much with the kind of Latin that genealogists encounter.

For instance, the huge (and expensive) *Oxford Latin Dictionary* defined *ustor* as “one paid to burn dead bodies” (apparently burning live ones did not pay well). The only entry relevant to *cremati* was for the verb *cremo*, “to destroy by fire, cremate”; *cremati* would be a genitive singular or nominative plural form of the past passive participle, *crematus*, “cremated” or “consumed by fire.” So as Eric said, in terms of classical Latin, *cremati ustores* would be “body-burners of the cremated one” or “cremated body-burners.” One seems redundant—why would you want to burn a body that had already been cremated? The other is absurd—it’s hard to imagine how the cremated could be of much assistance in cremating others.

But as I said, the Latin that shows up in records of the 17th or 18th or 19th century is very different from the Latin of Cicero and Caesar. Some words had the same form as in Classical Latin but had developed very different meanings. Other words did not exist at all in Classical Latin and were formed to describe objects and concepts unfamiliar to the ancient Romans.

I had no luck finding anything that shed light on this question, to my frustration. But a lot of really smart people participate in the JewishGen mailing list—that's why I enjoy monitoring it—and I looked forward to seeing what info might be forthcoming.

Sure enough, a few days later, Eric posted a note to thank those who had responded and summed it up thus:

"Two scholarly resources were identified that clearly indicate the occupation of *cremati ustor* is that of a distiller. It should be noted that the Latin used in the Hungarian censuses was not truly classical Latin but a modified form of the language.

"Both references list various occupations in Latin and then their Hungarian counterparts. The first document can be found at:

http://epa.oszk.hu/01600/01610/00017/pdf/vmm_17_1984_29_rozsanelendvai.pdf

"It translates *cremati ustor* as *palinkafozo*, meaning 'brandy cooking.'

"The second document has a very lengthy link ... [which he posted, then provided a TinyURL link]:

<http://tinyurl.com/yz6kjcjg>

"Then look up *cremati ustor* on page 183. It similarly translates into *palinkafozes*, or 'distilling.' As part of the definition in Latin it says *destillatio vini adusti*, which I would loosely translate as 'distilling wine by burning.' Since brandy is made by distilling wine, one could interpret such a person as a brandy maker or perhaps, more broadly, as a maker of spirits."

I thought this was useful info and promptly added it to our Latin word list after I found a source verifying that *crematum* can be short for *vinum crematum*, literally "burnt wine." That is the same etymology that applies to our word "brandy" (from Dutch *brandewijn*, "burnt wine"). We cannot conclude that the term *cremati ustor* must always refer to a brandy distiller; all we know for sure is that the term can mean that in certain Hungarian documents. If you came across the term in some other context, perhaps another meaning applies. Still, if you see it used denoting an occupation, that would be the first meaning I'd try.

I doubt many of you really need to know how to say "brandy distiller" in Late Latin. My point is, look how hard it was to dig up this info! The people who

helped Eric had to rummage around in a 1901 Latin-Hungarian dictionary and a 1984 article written in Hungarian. But once you recognize the value of finding just the right word, you will go to great lengths to do so. Who knows, you might even be willing to pay a fellow who majored in foreign languages



Top 20 for 2011, cont. from page 8

11. Digitize old family documents and photographs and then share them with family members.

12. Have interested relatives help provide off-site storage and data security for your valuable research by giving them electronic copies of your genealogical records.

13. Convert more of your paper files to digital files for increased flexibility in preserving and sharing them.

14. Make a calendar of ancestral birthdays and anniversaries. It's fun to do and a great holiday gift for next year.

15. Read old county and town histories from the areas where your ancestors lived. It puts their lives in context.

16. Regularly write new chapters of your story in a journal. Create a bit of family history for your descendants, who will want to know your life story.

17. Write your own version of the history of a town during the time(s) your ancestor(s) lived there. It's a fine exercise in research and in discovering local history.

18. Write up some family research you have done and "publish" it by placing a copy (paper or electronic) with other family members or a local library or genealogical society. You'll be sharing and preserving your work.

19. Take a young person with you on your next genealogical research outing. You'll be surprised how fascinated youngsters and grandchildren are about what we do! (Yes, it is a genealogist's version of "take your child to work day!")

20. Contribute money or a copy of your genealogical research to a library or historical society that has helped you. They are all important sources for genealogists!

Put some of these ideas on your resolutions list—or just your to-do list—and celebrate your hobby or addiction!

Best wishes for much happiness and great success in your genealogical endeavors in 2011!



Now Online

By Marilyn Dornhelm

Juicy Bits of Jewish Genealogy

In this column I share what's new in online indices, digitized archival material, and tools. The main sources for these are JewishGen and many SIG digests. Comments are welcome. Send them to mdornhelm@yahoo.com.

USA

GENERAL

Ellis Island Interviews Free on Ancestry.com

<http://search.ancestry.com/search/db.aspx?dbid=2142>

Featuring 1,700 oral histories recorded from 1973 on by the U.S. National Park Service. The interviews are delightful. They give insights into conducting one's own interviews.

How to Access FBI Files

<http://getgrandpasfbifile.com/>

<http://www.getmyfbifile.com/>

"Get Grandpa's FBI File" walks you through the procedure to request his case file, as provided by the Freedom of Information Act. The sister site is "Get My FBI File."

U.S. Immigrant Ports of Entry

<http://www.genesearch.com/ports.html>

The best and most complete Web site for ports and historical passenger lists/records.

Four New Databases in Ancestry.com's Jewish Heritage Collection

<http://landing.ancestry.com/jewishfamilyhistory/us/default.aspx>

The URL is for the Jewish Collection, both free and premium. New databases: WWI Serviceman Questionnaires, Jews and Non-Jews, 1918–1921 and Undated; WWII Jewish Serviceman Cards, 1942–1947; Jews in Colonial America, Brazil, and Surinam (Oppenheim Collection), 1650–1850; New York Hebrew Orphan Asylum Records, 1860–1934.

U.S. Military Records from 1656–onward

<http://www.genealogy-quest.com/military/>

The lists include serving, missing in action, deaths, and liberated prisoners of war.

Library of Congress Digitized Newspapers

<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/>

Many U.S. regional newspapers from 1860–1920 with a very user-friendly search engine.

CALIFORNIA

San Francisco Mortuary Records

<http://www.sfgenealogy.com/php/sfmrsearch/sfmrindex.php>

COLORADO

Leadville, Colorado, Hebrew Cemetery Database

<http://www.jewishleadville.org/cemeteryhistory.html>

MASSACHUSETTS

Beth El Cemetery, West Roxbury, Listing

<http://beth-el-cemetery.com/SectionReports.asp>

Not searchable.

NEW JERSEY

Passaic County (New Jersey) Naturalization Images

<http://records.passaiccountynj.org/press/indexPassaic.aspx>

Documents as recent as 1987 are included. You can search with a partial surname.

NEW YORK

New York Neighborhoods Way Back When

<http://www.screanews.us/NewYork/ContentsNewYork.html>

I recognized several places where I grew up. Do a search on locations if they are not prominently displayed.

Two More New York Cemeteries Online

<http://www.montefiores.com/>

Burial information for Montefiore Cemetery and New Montefiore Cemetery. This is a work in progress.

Historic Eldridge Street Synagogue: List of Original Members

<http://www.eldridgestreet.org/index.php/history/original-congregants>

Magnificent Pictures of Old NYC

<http://www.nyc-architecture.com/SPEC/GAL-BW.htm>

PENNSYLVANIA

Philadelphia Street Names & Photos

<http://www.phillyhistory.org/HistoricStreets/default.aspx>

<http://www.phillyhistory.org/PhotoArchive/>

Street names current and obsolete, and photos.

SOUTH CAROLINA

The Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina

http://jhssc.org/Jews_of_SC_in_Print.html

Many books pertaining to Jews in South Carolina with links to online versions. Information includes burial and other cemetery listings.

WISCONSIN

Old City Directories

<http://www.linkstothepast.com/milwaukee/ctydir.php>

EUROPE

AUSTRIA

Vienna

Vienna Address Books for 1858–1942

<http://www.digital.wienbibliothek.at/periodical/structure/5311>

Jews of Vienna Indexed Records More than 350,000

<http://Genteam.at>

Use the “Overall Search” option.

Wiener Zeitung Newspaper on ANNO Is Now Searchable

<http://fue.onb.ac.at/DigiToolLuceneSearch/zeitungen.html>

This newspaper carried government, legal, business, criminal, and inheritance announcements as well as arts reviews, gallantry medals, personal notices, etc.

BELGIUM

Antwerp Police Immigration Index 1840–1930 at FamilySearch.org

<http://tinyurl.com/4jvn5pl>

Brussels Civil Records

<http://www.arch.be/>

BMD and registers of the city’s population. A work in progress. Choose “search persons” on the left side.

CZECH REPUBLIC

Susice

Online Register of Familiants (HBF124)

<http://www.toledot.org/prachens.htm>

Trebic

Trebic House Registrations

<http://translate.google.ca/translate?hl=en&sl=cs&u=http://unesco.kr-vysocina.cz/vyvoj.php%3Fidm%3DB5>

Starting in 1724. In English. A remarkable Czech study cataloguing the entries in the land registers for all houses in the Jewish Trebic community in Moravia, with photos, house owner names, and detailed descriptions, some of which go back a century before 1724.

ENGLAND: See UK.

FRANCE

WWI Jewish Soldiers in the French Military

http://www.memoiredeshommes.sga.defense.gouv.fr/spip.php?page=base_recherche&_Base=MPF1418&_Action=1

Records of French army soldiers who died in WWI.

The book “Les israélites dans l’armée française” can be ordered at

<http://www.genealoj.org/New/texte/page06.php>

The French National Library, French Prisoners of War and more

<http://gallica.bnf.fr/?lang=EN>

Search globally in English on all of the library’s online data (including many French periodicals such as the Beaux Arts directories). The prisoner lists, published after the fall of France, contain thousands of names of captured soldiers.

Excellent Jewish Tourist Guide to France!

<http://us.franceguide.com/Special-Interests/Jewish-Traveler/home.html?NodeID=2787>

Also see Holocaust France.

HUNGARY

1943 Phone Book of Greater Hungary

<http://www.jewishgen.org/Hungary/methods.htm>

Hungary in 1943 included the areas of present-day eastern Slovakia, Transylvania, and Transcarpathia that were ceded back to Hungary by the Vienna Awards in 1938 and 1940. The individual sections are titled, with links for downloading.

Searchable 1943 Phone Book of Greater Hungary

<http://genealogyindexer.org/directories>

Search results link to the appropriate PDF file and page (on <http://www.archive.org/>) for downloading. The images themselves are not yet on the Genealogy Indexer Web site, so downloading desired sections is still necessary.

Other Hungarian Census 1770–1850 Database Major Update

<http://www.jewishgen.org/databases/Hungary/CensusOther.htm>

Since surnames were not required, also search by town. If you find someone of interest, examine the microfilmed record. It is in Latin but has information not in the database.

LATVIA

Latvian Newspapers and Magazines 1895–1957

<http://www.periodika.lv/Default/Skins/LatviaArch/Client.asp?Skin=LatviaArch&enter=true&AW=1293753827023&AppName=2>

Full-word search online at the Latvian National Digital Library Web site. It is not necessary to use diacritical marks when searching. Items published after 1 July 1938 are not accessible on the Internet.

All Latvia Cemetery List by Town

<http://www.docstoc.com/docs/43764491/All-Latvia-Cemetery-List-by-Town>

A 54-page list of burial records for Latvian cemeteries. About 4,500 records in all.

LITHUANIA

Jewish Kaunas Marriages 1932–1934

Lithuanian Prisoners List 1922–1940

<http://kaunas.shutterfly.com/>

Sign-up required. More than 1,500 marriages. Select “LIT-1922_1940-Prisoner Surname Frequency List” for a surname list relating to the first 1,000 prisoner files. A wealth of information, *i.e.*, place of birth, age, father’s name, where arrested, details of arrest, photos, etc. About 40% of the prisoners were Jewish and either suspected of or convicted for being Communist.

Internal Passport Records for Birzai, Panevezys, Siauliai, Telsiai, and Ukmerge

<http://www.jewishgen.org/databases/Lithuania/InternalPassports.htm>

2,235 internal passport records have been added to the database.

Also see Holocaust Lithuania.

POLAND

GENERAL

Online Map of Poland Showing Boundary Changes 1795–1918

<http://polmap.republika.pl/polska1.htm>

Start with the 10th–11th century map (shown as X-XI) and click the Next button to see how Poland’s borders changed over time.

Finding and Getting Copies of Jewish Records in Poland

<http://www.bloodandfrogs.com/2011/02/finding-and-getting-copies-of-jewish.html>

This article describes methods for getting copies of microfilmed and nonmicrofilmed records, and how to order records directly from Polish archives.

Rzeszów Digital Library

<http://www.pbc.rzeszow.pl/dlibra>

School reports from the late 19th C.–1939. Class lists are at the back of each book. Search “gimnazjum” to get school reports for a number of other towns, including Bochnia, Drohobycz, Jaslo, Lancut, and Lwow. Many books on the site are text-searchable, so search for your family names. Look at old newspapers, gazetteers listing landowners for each town in Galicia, and more.

Pre-WWII Poland Maps

<http://english.mapywig.org/news.php>

Extremely detailed maps are a fountain of information and can be used in the field to locate villages which have long disappeared from the ground and cannot be found on modern maps.

Czeladz-Bedzin

Czeladz-Bedzin Cemetery Burials Index 1916–1942

http://www.jri-poland.org/cemetery/bedzin_czeladz_jewish_cemetery_records.htm

3,200 surviving gravestones are now searchable.

Lodz

Lodz Jewish Cemetery

<http://www.jewishlodzcemetery.org/EN/Home/Default.aspx>

Searchable by surname or section. Click on the “Plan of Cemetery” tab. Select “by Person” or “by Quarter” located on the upper right side of the Cemetery plan page.

Sokolow Podlaski

Photos of Sokolow Podlaski Then and Now

<http://www.facebook.com/album.php?aid=17315&id=100000438611833>

Warsaw

Warsaw Area 1939/1940 Telephone Directory

<http://genealogyindexer.org/>

Many of the entries include a personal name, occupation, street address, and telephone number. There is also a small (not comprehensive) Warsaw business directory at the end.

ROMANIA

Czernowitz Directories

<http://czernowitz.blogspot.com/>

The 1927 directory can be downloaded directly at <http://czernowitz.blogspot.com/2010/11/directory-for-czernowitz-for-year-1927.html>.

SLOVAKIA

Bratislava Pressburg Pozsony: Jewish Secular Endeavors (1867–1938)

<http://www.neurabooks.com/index.html>

A new book by A. Robert Neurath about the Jews of Bratislava and their contributions.

UK

GENERAL

UK Marriage Records 1837–2005

<http://www.findmypast.co.uk/media/news/news-item.jsp?doc=fullyindexedmarriages.html>

Another 1911 Census of England and Wales

<http://genesreunited.co.uk/>

UK Burial Records Oct 1776–Feb 1785

<http://www.SynagogueScribes.com/>

The site has 21,000 searchable records and covers a wider range of material, including a separate search for secular records.

Jewish UK volunteers in the Spanish Civil War

http://www.international-brigades.org.uk/british_volunteers/roll_of_honour.htm

<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/History/spanjews.pdf>

A full list of the UK volunteers who died in a the Spanish Civil War and details of the important role played by Jewish people in the fight against Fascism in this war.

AJEX Database at The Jewish Military Museum, London

<http://www.ajexroh.org.uk/record.php>

Search for Jewish servicemen and -women who served in the British Armed Forces.

Jewish Soldiers in the British Army in WWI and WWII

<http://www.britishmedalforum.com/viewtopic.php?f=187&t=62289>

<http://www.britishmedalforum.com/viewtopic.php?f=187&t=57319>

These are great stories of great Jewish warriors. Signing on is necessary but easy.

Glasgow, Scotland

Gorbals Public School Records 1885–1905

<http://www.jewishgen.org/databases/UK>

UKRAINE

11,000 Records for Zaslav (Izyaslav) and Nikolayev (Mikolaiev)

<http://www.dankazez.com/zaslav/>

BMD, military, census

USSR

Victims of Soviet Oppression, WWII 1939–1949

<http://www.indeks.karta.org.pl/en/tomyindeksu.html>

<http://www.indeks.karta.org.pl/en>

In English.

Stankiewiczze and Friends

<http://www.stankiewiczze.com/>

In Polish. Also has lists and info on victims of Soviet oppression.

WORLD

ALGERIA

Births, Deaths, Marriages 1830–1909

<http://anom.archivesnationales.culture.gouv.fr/caomec2/>

ISRAEL

Israel Phone Book in English!

<http://www.israelpb.com/>

Includes many variations of spellings. Note: Renter telephone numbers are listed under the landlord's name.

Volunteers from Abroad Who Fought in Israeli War of Independence

<http://www.machal.org.il/>

Aliyah Bet and Machal Archives searchable database.

Volunteers from Abroad Including Kibbutz Volunteers

http://israelvets.com/indx_names_of_volunteers.html

Find hometowns, units/ships served, and duties in Aliyah Bet/armed forces.

Hot off the press: Additional Hebrew Newspaper Archives from Eretz Israel

<http://www.jpress.org.il/cross-section/allpub-en.asp>

Haskafa 1896–1908, Habazeleth 1893–1911, and Maariv 1948–??.

HOLOCAUST

GENERAL

Israel Radio Program for Lost Relative Search and Holocaust Victim Information

Write to the producer at mador2@gmail.com. Provide relevant names, locations, and dates.

Yad Vashem and Google Partnership for Accessing Photo Collection

<http://collections.yadvashem.org/photosarchive/en-us/photos.html>

The site is fantastic but the search engine is weak. Use the Google search engine, with a keywords/text string, for many more hits. Example: "Warsaw ghetto" site:collections.yadvashem.org/photosarchive

FRANCE

Nazi-era Looted Artwork from France and Belgium

<http://www.errproject.org/jeuropaume/>

Searchable database.

Holocaust Documentation in Jewish Theological Seminary's French Archives

<http://www.jtsa.edu/x14977.xml#survivors>

These French-Jewish records might help when researching Jews in France during WWII.

LITHUANIA

Lithuanian Holocaust Atlas

<http://www.holocaustatlas.lt/EN/#about-project/>

A project of the Vilna Gaon State Jewish Museum.



SFBAJGS Family Finder Update

The surnames and towns being researched by our newest members are listed below. This database is maintained for the benefit of our membership. If you have a correction or update, please write to SFBAJGS at P.O. Box 318214, San Francisco, CA 94131-8214.

<u>Surname</u>	<u>Town, Country</u>	<u>Member</u>
BERGER	Vilnius, Lithuania	Mark Berger
BLASABALG	Krakow, Poland	Leonard Schlusssel/Karen Lavrischeff
CZUR	Vilna, Lithuania	Stephanie Hoffman
FLANZENGRABEN	Tarnobrzeg, Krakow, Poland	Leonard Schlusssel/Karen Lavrischeff
GREENBERG	Berdichev, Ukraine	Mona Reeva
GUSS	Kolkie, Russia	Eileen Shulman
HOFFMAN	Vilna, Lithuania	Stephanie Hoffman
KAUFMAN	Vilna, Lithuania	Stephanie Hoffman
KELLER	Prussia; San Francisco, Oakland, CA; Virginia City, NV	Heidi Lyss
KRAWCZINSKY/KROFT	Russia	Jerry Kroft
LICHENSTETTER	San Francisco; Nuremburg, Germany	Joan Boyle
MILIKOWSKY/MILIKIN	Byaroza, Belarus	Jerry Kroft
NECHAMKIN	Kolyshki, Belarus	Jerry Kroft
OSER	Nikolsburg/Vienna	Susan Wengraf
OVRVTSKY	Makarev, Ukraine	Mona Reeva
PECK	Rowne, Poland	Eileen Shulman
PINSHOWER	Russia; San Francisco, Oakland, CA; Virginia City, NV	Heidi Lyss
PRESSMAN	Novosibirsk, Russia; Riga, Latvia	Gayle Geary
ROMM	Riga, Latvia	Stephanie Hoffman
ROSENGARTEN	Makarev/Kiev, Ukraine	Mona Reeva
SALOMON	Beerfelden, Worms, Germany	Stephanie Hoffman
SANOFSKY/SANKEY	Rockitnoye, Ukraine	Jerry Kroft
SCHAEFFER/SHAFER	Mordy, Poland	Leonard Schlusssel/Karen Lavrischeff
SCHIEFMAN	Berdichev, Ukraine	Mona Reeva
SCHLUSSEL	Krakow, Tarnobrzeg, Poland	Leonard Schlusssel/Karen Lavrischeff
SPIEGELMAN	Mordy, Poland	Leonard Schlusssel/Karen Lavrischeff
TALAN	Shanghai	Gayle Geary
WEISS	San Francisco; Nuremburg, Germany	Joan Boyle
WENGRAF	Nikolsburg/Vienna	Susan Wengraf
WOLF/WILK	Mordy, Poland	Leonard Schlusssel/Karen Lavrischeff

Triangle Fire 100th Anniversary

The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire occurred in New York City on 25 March 1911. The factory was on the 8th, 9th, and 10th floors of the Asch Building. Almost 150 workers in the factory, most of them immigrants and many of them young Jewish girls, died from the fire or from jumping from the 9th and 10th floors. The fire and the deaths led to legislation that improved factory safety standards and working conditions.

Many of the families could not afford funeral plots or tombstones. The Workmen's Circle arranged for burials for fourteen of the victims in the Circle's section of Mt. Zion Cemetery. An obelisk stands as a memorial to all who died because of the fire. The inscription reads:

"We Remember the Victims of This Tragic Event and Strive to Achieve Safe Working Conditions and Dignity for All in a Shenere un a Besere Velt — A Better and More Beautiful World."



The Journal of the San Francisco Bay Area Jewish Genealogical Society

Volume XXXI, Number 1

February 2011

Calendar of Events

Mon. Feb. 28, Los Altos Hills: *Yad Vashem Names Recovery Project.* Jessica Minturn of San Francisco Jewish Family and Children's Services will discuss the Names Recovery Project, the vital effort to recover the names of all 6 million Jews who died in the Shoah. Come learn how you can help.

Sun. Mar. 13, Los Altos Hills: *SFBAJGS Board Meeting.* SFBAJGS members are invited to attend the next board meeting, scheduled to start at 10:30 a.m. To get address and directions, RSVP to vicepresident@sfbajgs.org.

Sun. Mar. 27, San Francisco: *Towers of Gold: How One Jewish Immigrant Named Isaias Hellman Created California.* Author Frances Dinkelspiel (Hellman's great-great-granddaughter) will talk about Hellman's impact on early Los Angeles and his role in the development of San Francisco as a major financial center..

Sun. Apr. 10, Oakland: *Cadastral Maps and Landowner Records: New Horizons for Genealogists.* Gesher Galicia President Pamela Weisberger will discuss the history and relevance of cadastral maps as an alternative source of genealogical and community information, how to obtain this type of record from overseas archives, the history of Gesher Galicia's cadastral map program, and how to create your own community projects using these data.

Mon. Apr. 11, Los Altos Hills: *When Leopold Met Lena: Marriage, Divorce, and Deception in the 1890's.* Beginning in Czestochowa, Poland, and Cracow, Austria, and continuing to Manhattan's Lower East Side and Little Rock, Arkansas, Pamela Weisberger will show how the tumultuous, romantic, and litigious world of immigrant ancestors is brought to life in court records, graveyard inscriptions, newspaper articles, city directories, censuses, and vital records.

Also see pages 3 and 4. For detailed program information visit <http://www.sfbajgs.org/>.
