



זכרונות *ZichronNote*

The Journal of the San Francisco Bay Area Jewish Genealogical Society

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The Eagerly Anticipated Family Reunion

Relatives born on three different continents converged in London for a grand family event.
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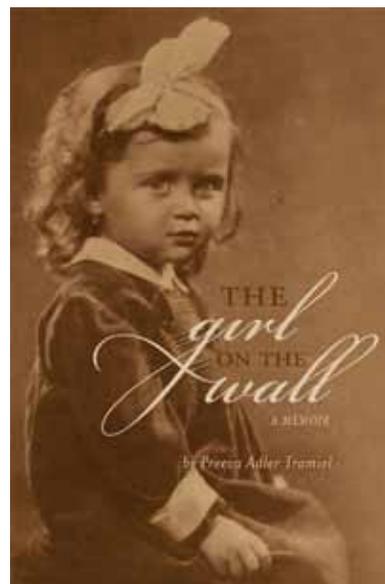
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People Finder queries are free to Society members. Nonmembers may place queries for \$5 each. Queries are limited to 25 words not including searcher's name, address, telephone number, and e-mail address.

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Society Address

SFBAJGS, P.O. Box 318214, San Francisco, CA 94131-8214

President: Jeremy Frankel, president@sfbajgs.org

Vice President: Janice M. Sellers,
vicepresident@sfbajgs.org

Secretary: Shellie Wiener, secretary@sfbajgs.org

Treasurer: Jeff Lewy, treasurer@sfbajgs.org

Membership: Avner Yonai, membership@sfbajgs.org

Publicity: Janice M. Sellers, publicity@sfbajgs.org

Webmaster: Beth Galletto, webmaster@sfbajgs.org

Cemetery Project Coordinator: Pierre Hahn,
cemetery@sfbajgs.org

Founder: Martha Wise

ZichronNote

Editor: Janice M. Sellers, newsletter@sfbajgs.org

Proofreaders: Roy Ogus, r_ogus@hotmail.com;
Heidi Lyss, heidi@sfbajgs.org

SFBAJGS Web Site: <http://www.sfbajgs.org/>

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President's Message
Reaching Way Out, Reaching
Way Back

Jeremy Frankel, SFBAJGS President

One of the many things experienced genealogists do is exhort freshman family historians to interview their oldest living relatives. But for those of us who have been around the genealogical block several times, what can we do? Whom should we interview? Indeed, is there anyone left whose brains we can pick?

In my case the answer has been a resounding yes! Admittedly, Victoria, my partner in genealogical research, rolls her eyes when I excitedly tell her that I have found that yet another "TAD" cousin (my initials for "tenuously, absurdly distant") has actually bitten the bait I lobbed out, the "bait" being a letter I had written (yes, I still do that when needed).

If you think about it, when we're researching deceased relatives, we're seeking documentary evidence of their existence and what they did in life. On the other hand, when we're researching living relatives, whom we know nothing about, we need to substantiate that they are who we think they are, which means trying to find ways to get in touch with them. So we're looking for a Facebook page, an e-mail address, or a telephone number. Failing all that, maybe even an old-fashioned snail-mail address.

In my case, several would-be relatives living in England had business connections, and there are third-party, online, commercial companies that skim the official listings of business ownerships. The information they provide can include exact dates of birth (!) and complete street addresses. Voila!

So I wrote a letter to one would-be TAD cousin and kept my fingers crossed that it would successfully jump through all the hoops between me and its intended recipient. Would it arrive at the right address? Was the person still living at the one I had found? Would the letter even be opened? Maybe the sight of a foreign stamp and an unrecognized international return address might provoke a huge gulf of reluctance to reciprocate and it would be confined to the wastepaper basket.

If it had been opened and read, I was still praying that what I had written had been enticingly enough presented to create a response, rather than merely crushing the letter (and my hopes) into a small paper ball that was then tossed into the aforementioned wastepaper basket.

No, I had greater hopes from my (deep breath here) great-great-grandfather's brother's wife's sister's daughter who had married and borne a son whose

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SOCIETY NEWS

New Members

Barbara Coats barbara.coats@sbcglobal.net
Leonard Jacobson Len_Jacobson@usa.net
Laurie Umeh lumeh2@yahoo.com

In order to continue to receive the SFBAJGS e-blast and *ZichronNote*, please send changes in your e-mail address to newsletter@sfbajgs.org.

Family Finder Query

Looking for long-lost cousin **David (T)KACH**, son of **Zalman** and **Pashia**, who immigrated with his family to the U.S. in the late 1940's. David was last said to be living somewhere on the San Francisco peninsula.

Leslie Shipnuck
2071 Emerson Street
Berkeley, CA 94703
shipnuck@comcast.net

Member in the News

Judy Baston was featured in the *Potrero View*: <http://www.potreroview.net/hill-resident-judy-baston-expert-at-tracing-family-history/>.

Your Story Belongs in ZichronNote

Did you meet a cousin at the 2015 IAJGS Conference in Jerusalem? Have you had a breakthrough in your family history, solved a family mystery through painstaking research, discovered a better way to use resource materials, or walked where your ancestors walked as part of a heritage trip? Have you had success or made progress at the Genealogy Clinic with the Mavens? Have you made contact with a "tenuously, absurdly distant" cousin?

Tell us your story, share your discovery! We want to read about it in *ZichronNote*. Please submit materials to newsletter@sfbajgs.org.

It's Renewal Season!

You should receive your renewal soon. Please don't forget to send it in, and update your family names and contact information (especially e-mail address)!

Ballots for Election of Officers

All five current officers of the society have stated that they are willing to serve another two-year term. President Jeremy Frankel, Vice President Janice Sellers, Treasurer Jeff Lewy, Secretary Shellie Wiener, and Membership Director Avner Yonai appear on the ballots that have been e-mailed to current members. Members also may vote for write-in candidates if desired. Ballots must be returned by **15 January 2016** to be valid. If you have questions or comments about the electronic voting, contact Preeva Tramiel, Elections Coordinator, at elections@sfbajgs.org.

Volunteer for the Cemetery Project!

Members of the San Francisco Bay Area Jewish Genealogical Society have transcribed more than 35,000 cemetery records that have been added to the Jewish Online Worldwide Burial Registry (JOWBR) managed by JewishGen. We applaud the volunteers who have done this tremendous amount of work, and we now have new sets of burial records to transcribe. Send a message to cemetery@sfbajgs.org if you can help.

SFBAJGS on Social Media

SFBAJGS has a YouTube channel, <https://goo.gl/Siy512>. Check out our video shot at the 2015 San Francisco History Expo with Emperor Norton himself! If you have videos of society or other genealogical events you would like to share online, contact membership director Avner Yonai at membership@sfbajgs.org.

SFBAJGS also has a Facebook page: <https://goo.gl/23bkt4>. Friend us and visit often for announcements and updates between meetings.

Meeting Times and Locations

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

San Francisco: Sunday. Doors open 1:00 p.m. Program begins at 1:30 p.m.

Rhoda Goldman Plaza, 2180 Post Street.

Parking available in Rhoda Goldman Plaza garage with entrance on Sutter Street.

Oakland: Sunday. Doors open 12:30 p.m. Program begins at 1:00 p.m.

Oakland FamilySearch Center, 4766 Lincoln Avenue.

Los Altos Hills: Monday. Doors open 7 p.m. Program begins at 7:30 p.m.

Congregation Beth Am, 26790 Arastradero Road Room 5/6.

See Back Cover for Calendar of Upcoming SFBAJGS Meetings

CALENDAR

Genealogy Events

Local and Regional

Saturday, 12 December 2015. Susan Goss Johnston, "Spreadsheets: The Wonderful Tool Genealogists Seldom Use." California Genealogical Society and Library, 2201 Broadway Suite LL2, Oakland. <http://californiaancestors.org/>

Sunday, 13 December 2015. Jeremy Frankel, "My Grandfather's Name Was Changed at Ellis Island." Jewish Genealogical Society of Sacramento. Albert Einstein Residence Center, 1935 Wright Street, Sacramento. <http://www.jewishgen.org/jgs-sacramento/>

Monday, 14 December 2015. Steve Morse, "Case Study: Genealogy of Renee Kaufman." Livermore-Amador Genealogical Society. Congregation Beth Emek, 3400 Nevada Court, Pleasanton. <http://www.l-ags.org/>

Tuesday, 19 January 2016. Kathy Marshall, "Changing Boundries and Lost Ancestors." San Ramon Valley Genealogical Society. LDS Church, 2949 Stone Valley Road, Alamo. <http://www.srvgensoc.org/>

Sunday, 31 January 2016. Judy Baston, "Documenting the Vilna Ghetto Library." Jewish Community Library. 1835 Ellis Street, San Francisco. <http://www.jewishlearningworks.org/library-events>

Saturday, 6 February 2016. Janice M. Sellers, "Why Would They Put It on the Web If They Didn't Want Me to Use It?: Copyright Issues for Genealogy." Solano County Genealogical Society. Moose Lodge, 623 Taylor Street, Fairfield. <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~cascgs/>

Sunday, 21 February 2016. Kenneth L. Kann, "The Jewish Chicken Ranchers of Petaluma: Why Remember?" Jewish Community Library. 1835 Ellis Street, San Francisco. <http://www.jewishlearningworks.org/library-events>

Sunday, 28 February 2016. Peter Schrag, "When Europe Was a Prison Camp: Father and Son Memoirs, 1940-1941." Jewish Community Library. 1835 Ellis Street, San Francisco. <http://www.jewishlearningworks.org/library-events>

Saturday, 16 April 2016. Judy Russell, Legal Genealogist Seminar. Sonoma County Genealogical Society. Finley Community Center, 2060 West College Avenue, Santa Rosa. <http://www.scgsonline.org/>

Saturday, 22 October 2016. CSGA board meeting and joint seminar with California Genealogical Society. Speakers Wendy Elliott and Janice M. Sellers, talks TBA. **Free.** California Genealogical Society and Library, 2201 Broadway Suite LL2, Oakland. <http://www.csga.com/>, <http://californiaancestors.org/>

State and National

Saturday, 19 March 2016. CSGA board meeting and joint seminar with Fresno County Genealogical Society. Mary Ann Vincent, "Mapping Our Ancestors: They Went Where? Why?"; Janice M. Sellers, "Grandma, Who Are You?: Finding the Maiden Names in Your Family Tree" and "Vital Records and the Calendar Change of 1752." **Free.** Woodward Park Regional Library, 944 East Perrin Avenue, Fresno. <http://www.csga.com/>, <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~cafcs/>

2-5 June 2016. Genealogy Jamboree. Southern California Genealogical Society. Burbank Airport Marriott Hotel, 2500 Hollywood Way, Burbank. <http://www.genealogyjamboree.com/>

26-28 June 2016. Redefining Crypto-Judaic Identity: Then and Now. Society for Crypto-Judaic Studies 2016 Conference. Drury Plaza Hotel, Santa Fe, New Mexico. Call for papers deadline **15 February 2016.** <http://www.cryptojews.com/>

7-12 August 2016. 35th IAJGS International Conference on Jewish Genealogy. Seattle, Washington. Call for papers deadline **15 December 2015.** <http://www.iajgs2016.org/>

3-6 November 2016. The Holocaust in the 21st Century: Relevance and Challenges in the Digital Age. Claremont, California. <http://goo.gl/3DGfsU>

International

23-25 May 2016. Jewish Soldiers in the Collective Memory of Central Europe: The Remembrance of World War I from a Jewish Perspective. Graz, Germany. Call for papers deadline **31 December 2015.** gerald.lamprecht@uni-graz.at

2-28 November 2016. International Jewish Genealogy Month. <http://www.iajgs.org/jgmonth.html> 

Brainstorming with the Mavens

The San Francisco Jewish Community Library hosts a free genealogy clinic every month (except July and August) from 12:00 noon to 2:00 p.m. Bring copies of family charts, documents, and other information and let experienced SFBAJGS Jewish genealogists help point you in the right direction in your research. 1835 Ellis Street, San Francisco. There is free, secure parking in the building. Call (415) 567-3327 x704 or write library@jewishlearningworks.org for more information.

Upcoming dates:

6 December 2015

10 January 2016

7 February 2016

6 March 2016

The Nigerian Jewish Family Reunion

Jeremy Frankel, SFBAJGS President



The Whole Family in One Big Shot

Key people: The seated woman in yellow is Helena Frankel, my mother. The seated woman in blue is Leatrice (Leader) Iwobi. The woman standing between these two is Maureen (Leader) Bloom, Leatrice's half-sister. The gentleman to the right of Leatrice in the photo is her husband, Charles Iwobi. The big fat guy in the blue shirt in front of Charles is me.

It was toward the end of the evening of 6 April 1985, on the second night of Pesach, that I inadvertently began researching my family history. Sitting at the table after dinner, my grandfather asked whether I knew that his brother Charlie had been married before he married the great-aunt whom I had known growing up. With little to go on other than his name and the name of the woman he wed in 1930, I began my search.

A daughter, Leatrice, was born of this union in 1931, but Great-uncle Charlie and his first wife parted ways before their child's birth. My grandfather was perhaps the only person to whom this information had been entrusted, for no other member of my family had ever spoken of Leatrice. In 1948 Charlie married again,

and two years later his second daughter, Maureen, was born.

Since that evening and with the advent of the Internet and a myriad of genealogical databases, my family tree has sprouted so many branches, twigs, and leaves that the "fruit" now includes some 3,000 people. The original question about my great-uncle and his first marriage remained unresolved until recently, however. Three previous articles have explained the challenges I faced, the missteps I took, and finally the success of connecting with the missing daughter and her long-lost family (see *ZichronNote* from August 2014, November 2014, and February 2015). It had remained a mystery for so long because in 1957 Leatrice met and married Charles Iwobi, a



Leader Sisters' Families

Seated in the middle are Leatrice (Leader) and Charles Iwobi. Standing behind and between them is Maureen (Leader) Bloom, Leatrice's 20-year-younger half-sister. Standing at the extreme left and right are Alex and Sarah, Maureen (and Terry's) grown and married children. The other six standing are Leatrice and Charles' grown and married children.

Third from the left is Andrew Iwobi, with whom I first made contact. He is a senior lecturer in law at Swansea University. His wife, Uzo, also a lawyer, was awarded OBE for community service in South Wales. Felix (third from right) has a son, Alex, who at 19 has captained the England Under-21 soccer team and plays for Arsenal, a leading London soccer team.

Nigerian engineering student. By the following year they had moved to his homeland, where they raised their family of nine children (although one died in infancy).

Many years later the family relocated to South Wales, and I was able to find them via various references on the Internet. In June 2014 I made contact, principally with Leatrice and Charles' oldest son, Andrew, and his wife, Uzo. For nearly a year we established a relationship through e-mail, catching up on family history and exchanging photographs. There was after all the small matter of 5,300 miles separating us.

After the initial shock and some e-mail correspondence, my cousin Maureen took a trip to Swansea to meet her half-sister. Then early this year Maureen announced that her family would host a London reunion in the spring. Although I had considered attending the IAJGS Jerusalem conference, this party took precedence. It would also give me an opportunity to see my 84-year-old mother and my brothers.

I flew to London and had several days to get over the jetlag, do some touring, and all too soon it was the day of the reunion. A mixture of excitement and nervousness was in the air as I drove the few miles from my mother's home in Edgware, northwest London, to Maureen and her husband Terry's home in Mill Hill.

When Maureen answered the door we stood there for several seconds taking in the view and years that had passed since we had last seen one another. The sounds of children drifted toward the entryway as Maureen and Terry's son, daughter, and seven grandchildren were in attendance. And there in the living room were Leatrice and Charles, sitting regally in high-back chairs watching over the proceedings. As we greeted each other and met their son, Andrew, and his wife with whom I had been corresponding, more of their children and many grandchildren appeared at the door, and we were welcomed to the party with introductions and hugs.

Everyone began focusing their cameras or cell phones, gesticulating to various family members to form group shots to capture memories of the occasion. Platters of food were continually refilled, and glasses were always full. It was a truly happy occasion with tremendous warmth and the beginnings of new friendships.

Before I left California I had had the presence of mind to print out copies of the family tree, which were now quickly distributed. The only thing missing, I felt, was nametags. So many people were milling around that I lost count after trying to remember 40 people's names.

This event was the culmination of many years of unrelenting work, but it reminded me that we don't do our research for those who are departed; we do it for the living. In the case of my family, it was a long overdue reuniting of family encompassing three continents. Finding descendants can provide new insight into your ancestry and reveal and re-establish lost relationships. Your family tree can still bear new fruit!



Journey to a Jewish Ancestral Town in the Old West: Corinne, the “Gentile City” of Utah, Part 2

Heidi Lyss

Heidi Lyss delved into the world of genealogical research six years ago, on receiving a book from her father about a distant Swiss relative. She has presented seminars to Northern California genealogical societies on writing family histories and has taught creative writing and English composition at local colleges. Her published pieces include fiction, creative nonfiction, poetry, and trade/academic articles. She is a board member of SFBAJGS. The first part of this article appeared in *ZichronNote* Volume XXXV, Number 3, August 2015.

Correction: In the first part of this article, Rosalia’s family name incorrectly appeared as Pinschauer. It should have been Pinshower.

Footnotes in this article continue numbering from Part 1.

As it turned out, Corinne surprised me. The desolate and dusty desert I had pictured did not materialize when I turned off the freeway and drove into town. I spotted the train depot immediately, centered amid an array of tracks and dirt, as I had expected. However, even my view from the highway revealed on both sides of the road rows of apple, cottonwood, and weeping willow trees that shaded quiet residential streets and quaint older houses, all of which backed up to the banks of the meandering Bear River.

As I arrived late in the afternoon, I stopped first at the post office, with the hope of locating my family’s street, Locust, as noted in the 1890 census. After that unsuccessful mission, I parked the car and wandered around the former downtown. I realized that I would not likely find a unique stand of weeping willows rising alongside a pond and a bridge as originally described by my great-grandmother Lillian, given that willows appeared everywhere I turned and I would have had to tromp through residents’ back yards to fully canvass the area. I decided to consider exploring further during a future, more leisurely trip.

I could still learn much on my first foray into Corinne, however. A few original buildings remain, including the Methodist Episcopal Church built in 1870 as the first protestant church in Utah. I walked over to it, appreciating and at the same time feeling a bit bemused by its traditional architecture reminiscent of many New England churches. Down the street stands the old brick Mercantile Building, which I suspect was the boarded-up General Store my great-aunt Irma mentioned in her 1970’s postcard. Inside, a man perched in front of the window, paintbrush in hand, eyeing a large canvas. When he looked up and spotted me, he waved, beckoning me to enter his studio and gallery. I admired his vivid depictions of river and mountain landscapes, of horses splashing through water, and of cowboys riding some of the mounts while others



Methodist Episcopal Church

ran free. Although he had not grown up in Corinne, the artist, Kelly Donovan as I recall his name, knew and shared history of the town. He noted that he liked the area but would have preferred to live west of the Great Salt Lake, where the land was less populated and quieter. “But it’s much colder in winter on that side of the water,” he said.

I wondered at this small detail and whether my forebears would have known that same fact, a bit of information that often one gleans only when talking with a local. I thanked him and continued my walk down the road to a shady spot where a plaque commemorates the site of the once famous Corinne Opera House, now gone. Given my family’s social nature, as I understand it, and their correspondence with national newspapers (including the *San Francisco Call* and the Ohio-based *Hebrew Sabbath School Visitor*), I suspect that they might have attended the opera on at least a few occasions. Regardless, they would have passed the opera house and the Methodist church and likely would have shopped at the Mercantile. I imagined them passing by during Corinne’s lively years when it must have felt like a busy and perhaps wild place akin to Virginia



Mercantile Building

City, and also during its later more tranquil period of decline.

After roaming the quiet remnants of Corinne's main streets, I drove to the local cemetery, which rests in a flat field slightly outside of town, with distant views of marshland and the Great Salt Lake. I did not discover any family graves there, nor did I expect to, but the grassy cemetery helped paint a picture of a mixed community with names from a variety of ethnic heritages. I was most struck by a set of gravestones inscribed in Japanese, with no English translations. I thought of the journeys of my great-great-grandparents and wondered if they had known this particular Japanese family, whose land of origin lay just as far from Utah as did the European villages of my Prussian ancestors.

Rosalia Pinshower⁶ and Joseph Keller each traveled from Prussia in the mid-1800's, and each made the way to California from the East Coast, most likely via ship, though I have information only on Rosalia's arrival in New York (from Hamburg) right around the time of the start of the Civil War. Each then traveled to Virginia City, Nevada, where they met, with Joseph arriving several years prior to his future wife, who had several merchant relatives living in the free-wheeling mountain town. I feel inspired thinking of their transitioning from German-, Polish-, and likely Yiddish-speaking European Jewish communities to the western frontiers of North America, encountering people from lands not only in Europe but also in Asia, and living a new life filled with adventure and challenges, and a mix of losses and successes. I do know, as evidenced in a letter their daughter Mamie sent to the *Hebrew Sabbath School Visitor*, that only two other Jewish families lived in Corinne by 1879, so the Keller family would have needed to travel south to Salt Lake City to connect with the larger nearby Jewish community.

That visit to Corinne on a late summer afternoon I hope to be only my first. I envision a return there with my family members to further explore the family home locale and to sense more of what the Kellers' life might have been like. Perhaps we will locate the site of the Keller farm on the now-vanished Locust Street as well.

I left Corinne that afternoon with a set of impressions, not only of the surprisingly lush landscape but also of the feel of the air—damp and fresher than in downtown Salt Lake City that afternoon—and of the light. What struck me most about Corinne, along with the canals and gnarled apple, majestic cottonwood, and graceful willow trees, was that utterly unanticipated luminous blue light. I have seen such a glowing light in parts of the Napa Valley (though more green there in hue) on warm summer days, and more notably on a journey a few years ago through the Greek isles. Perhaps in both Corinne and the islands of Greece the neighboring presence of a large body of salt water reflects the sky and dampens the atmosphere, gracing the air with that opaline blue glow on warm days.

As I left town, I stopped at the Corinne train depot, locus of much of Joseph Keller's business activities, and site where his son Abe worked for the Southern Pacific Railroad. On my way back to Salt Lake City, I continued to follow a railroad depot theme, pausing at the train station in Ogden where Dora, the youngest of the Keller siblings, passed through in August 1906⁷, six years after the family, without father Joseph, appeared in the census for Oakland, California. My mother possesses several postcards that Dora mailed that August to each of her sisters and to her brother, Abe, all posted in a rush from the Ogden terminal as she voyaged from Salt Lake City up to Weiser, Idaho to visit her eldest sister, Sarah. On the cards, she referred to some familiar family landscapes, including "Does anything look familiar?" on one addressed to Abe that depicts the Bear River Canyon.

On 4 September of that year, shortly after Dora's return to California, the family held a second funeral



Old Corinne train depot

for Joseph Keller, reburying him in the First Hebrew Congregation of Oakland's cemetery next to his wife, Rosalia, who had died in Oakland in 1901. Dora does not mention on her postcards arranging for the disinterment of her father's casket from the Jewish cemetery of Salt Lake City and transporting him back to California, where the entire family, save Idaho-based sister Sarah, then lived, but it appears she embarked on her summer voyage partly for this purpose.

As I drove back to Salt Lake City in the evening dusk, I reflected on journeys and in particular on the Keller family's voyage south by train on that September morning in 1895 for Joseph's funeral procession, the shock they must have felt at his sudden death, and their sadness. I thought too about Dora's exuberant 1906 postcards which perhaps masked that sadness, mixed with a more open nostalgia for the places she knew as a young girl, and perhaps also relief at bringing her father home in a sense, to be close to her mother again and to her family.

I wondered too if Dora, my great-grandmother Lillian, and the rest of the family sensed their descendants and relatives would come back to Corinne in the future, following the trails of their lives. In 2013, my mother, brother, partner, and I visited Virginia City, retracing part of the path of the Keller family and of some of Rosalia's Pinschower relatives.⁸ We were not the first to embark even on this journey of revisiting former family haunts, for Lillian Keller's daughter Irma, who sent my mother the 1970's postcard from Corinne, also wrote to her mother and father from Virginia City decades earlier in 1933:

Dear Mom and Pop,

Fuffie, Jack, John and I are here today. We are taking in everything, even the Cemetery. We are now in the Crystal Bar. It is just as quaint as ever here.

Love, Irma

Postscript

In September 2015, after the first part of this article appeared in the August *ZichronNote*, I obtained probate records for Joseph Keller. From these records, I located the exact block in Corinne where the family held property. The streets have since been renamed, but one stretch of the Keller family land ran along a lane that fronts the Bear River. Given locust trees often grow next to streams, I suspect this road was the elusive Locust Street for which I had searched. Having grown up alongside creeks and rivers in the Sierra Nevada mountains, I have childhood memories of picking leaves from locust trees and holding them underwater, where they magically shimmer silver and gold as the current bends them: an apt association with my ancestors who, upon first coming to America,

became deeply connected to the Nevada silver and gold rush, before engaging in the trade opportunities ushered in by the opening of the transcontinental railroad.

Endnotes

6. In the United States, Rosalia and her closer family members spelled their surname as "Pinshower." Rosalia appears on the ship *Hammonia's* passenger lists from Hamburg and New York with her surname spelled as "Pinschower." Other likely relatives based in Virginia City, Nevada used the "Pinschower" spelling. In Rosalia's hometown of Kempen, Prussia (now Kepno, Poland), records from around the time of her birth all reflect the spelling as "Pinczower."

7. Dora would have passed through the older train station building erected in 1889. The current Ogden train station was built in 1924, after a 1923 fire destroyed the preceding structure.

8. I have not yet determined the exact connection between Rosalia and the other Pinschowers of Virginia City, but the likelihood is high that they were family and probably closely related.



President's Message, continued from page 2

grandson (Stephen Harrison) I had written to on the off chance he might actually respond to me!

Stephen did respond (big exhalation), and by e-mail! What's more, he included as an enticing tease to me an attachment that was a photograph of two UK passports that had been mounted and framed. They had been issued in 1922 to his great-grandparents, complete with their photographic images. Could I have asked for anything more! Well, yes, I will now ask what other genealogical treasures does the family have tucked away?

Another distant cousin who first got me to tiptoe down this branch had also mentioned another cousin. She wrote in a throw-away line, "David, I think he lives in Italy." She was referring to David Harrison, Stephen's first cousin. Invoking my *booba's* voice with the Yiddish inflection, "How many David Harrisons could there be living in Italy?"

I pulled up Google and typed in his name and "Italy": not too many hits. I zeroed in on one that looked likely and dug up some more information. I then went to Facebook and typed in the same name. Aha, there was one living in Italy. But how could I be sure this was the right person? I checked out who his friends were, and sure enough, there were other relatives whose names I recognized.

He owned a food business. I found the Web site, and there among the contact details was a UK

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Looking for Landsmen

Susan MacLaughlin

SFBAJGS member Susan MacLaughlin is an amateur genealogist, avid knitter, and intrepid traveler who lives in Alameda with her husband, Bruce Gordon. She first started doing genealogy research on her paternal line in the 1980's. During the last two years, she discovered the power of DNA testing and has used it to identify her mother's birth family.

"You mean we Gordons are Spanish, not Polish?" my husband, Bruce, asked with an incredulous smile. Bruce and I love all things Mediterranean, and I realized he would love to call Spaniards *landsmen* (kin).

"Not exactly," I replied, marveling at Bruce's sudden curiosity about my genealogy research. Until now, he had shown not even the remotest interest in my quest for "dead relatives", as he calls them.

"You're Polish on your father's maternal line (the Greengards) and on your mother's maternal line (the Lapiduses). So, you're still half-Polish. I'm talking about your father's paternal line."

"But I thought the Gordons were Russian," he said, understandably confused. Bruce knew that his grandfather, Phil Gordon, and great-grandfather, Nathan Gordon, had arrived from Odessa in the early 1900's. They spoke Russian and Yiddish, according to the ships' passenger lists. In America, they had spoken only English.

"Yes, they were Russian. But long before that, in the 1400's, your ancestors lived in northern Spain." This was new information that I had just discovered through the results of DNA testing. My research had led me to other researchers who had opened a whole new world to us.

Bruce's father's paternal forebears were Jews who lived in the Czar's Russian Empire in the late 1800's in the Pale of Settlement, a vast "prison" without walls where Jews were confined. According to Wikipedia, the Pale was created by Catherine the Great 100 years earlier (1791) in order to contain the Jews in a single geographic area. One fifth the size of Imperial Russia, the Pale included much of present-day Lithuania, Belarus, Poland, Moldova, Ukraine, and parts of western Russia.

I imagined the Gordons' life in the old country (now Ukraine) to have been much like that of the fictional Tevye and his family in *Fiddler on the Roof*. Back then, many Jews lived in villages and small towns—*shtetlach*—earning a living, observing their religious traditions, and keeping mostly to themselves. In the closing scene of *Fiddler*, following a *pogrom* (government-sanctioned violence) and the Czar's edict, the villagers were forced to flee their homes.

Family oral history tells us that the Gordons left Odessa to avoid *pogroms* and conscription into the Czar's army. Their surname, Gorradischer, had been shortened by patriarch Nathan, presumably to sound more American. They settled in Minnesota. We knew nothing about Nathan's first wife (Phil's mother) or his parents or earlier ancestors. To learn more, I started with traditional genealogy research: looking up immigration and naturalization records, birth and death certificates, and census reports. Fortunately, many records are available online. Only a few, such as copies of naturalization papers, must be requested by mail. I created a Gordon family tree, filling in as many branches as possible. But before long, I hit a dead end, what genealogists call a "brick wall." DNA testing was the logical next step.

Tracing Jewish genealogy, even with DNA testing, is challenging for a variety of reasons. First, until recent times, the majority of Jews married only other Jews. Because of this practice of intermarriage (endogamy) throughout recorded history, testing Jewish autosomal DNA (the type of DNA inherited from both parents) yields an overwhelming number of matches, and these matches are much more distant than the test results suggest. A "predicted third cousin" is more likely to be a fifth, sixth, or more distant cousin. There are ways to work with the vast amount of data generated, but it is a long and tedious process.

Second, prior to the 19th century, many Jews (and non-Jews) did not have surnames. A Jewish man whose given name was David and whose father's name was Daniel may have been known as David ben Daniel (son of Daniel). During the late 1700's and early 1800's, government authorities across Europe began requiring the use of surnames. People often adopted last names that related to their trades, locations, or other characteristics, such as hair color. For example, a person who worked as a goldsmith might become Goldschmidt. In the case of the Gordons, they likely came from a *shtetl* named Gorodotsk before moving to Odessa; they were called Gorradischer (the ones from Gorodotsk). Of course, just because they took the same surname once upon a time, not all Goldschmidts, nor all Gorradischers, are related to each other. Talk about complicated!

After exhausting the paper trail of records and documents, which provided very few details on Bruce's ancestors, I turned to Y-DNA testing. Passed directly down the paternal line from father to son, Y-DNA could help me trace relatives, both living and dead. The best approach would be to test the oldest male in the family, the one closest to the source. But would Bruce's 98-year-old father, Jule, be willing to participate? He had about as much interest in genealogy as Bruce: next to none. Yet Jule and I had a good relationship. Maybe he would do it for me. I took a deep breath and asked for a favor. Would he allow me to submit his DNA for testing? I produced the test kit, and he indulged me by swabbing the inside of his cheeks. I mailed the swabs to Family Tree DNA last April, and several weeks later the results trickled in: first the autosomal results and later the Y-DNA results. To my surprise, so did an exciting e-mail.

In August, a man named Jeff Wexler sent me a message to say that my father-in-law was a close match to his uncle, meaning they are related on their paternal lines several generations back. He explained that Jule's Y-DNA results showed that he is an Ashkenazi Levite. Chances were good that Jule was also related to the Horowitz rabbinical family. I was floored! Normally I was the one who reached out to DNA matches. Here was a huge clue about the Gordon family's heritage, and it had dropped into my lap. We had not known that the Gordons were Levites (members of the Hebrew tribe of Levi), akin to Jewish "royalty." In Biblical times, the Levites assisted the *Kohanim* (Cohens), the priestly caste, with temple duties. In more recent times, some Levites became rabbis, including many of the Horowitzes whom Jeff had mentioned.

I learned from Jeff's Web site, LeviteDNA.org, that prior to landing near Prague and adopting the Horowitz name, our "DNA relatives" were Spanish. The patriarch, Shem Tov Halevi (the Levite), lived in Gerona, Aragón, Spain 1,000 years ago. He claimed lineage from the prophet Samuel. His offspring adopted the surname Benveniste. Nearly 500 years later, in the 1470's (two decades before King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella expelled all Jews from Spain), the Benvenistes moved to a safer place: Horovice, Bohemia (today's Czech Republic), where they became Horowitzes (from Horovice). The family flourished there and throughout Eastern Europe for centuries. In the 1880's, some Horowitzes immigrated to Boston and New York City, where some of their descendants serve as Chasidic rabbis today.

Thanks to the research that others have conducted and compiled, we now know something about the Gordon family's ancient history, from the 11th century through at least the 16th century. Our immediate family tree extends back only as far as Nathan's birth in 1864. So I have lots of blanks to fill in—about 400 years' worth! Additional Y-DNA testing (more tests on Jule's original sample) may identify the branch of the Horowitz family to which our Gordons belong. With more information, I may be able to link our family group to someone whose family tree is more extensive than ours, and bridge the gap between Odessa and Horovice.

My father-in-law has no more interest in genealogy today than he did before DNA testing. At nearly 99, his world is composed of the immediate family in the Bay Area, his lady friend, and his roses. My husband, however, has moved from not interested in genealogy to slightly curious about his ancestry. He can appreciate the "intellectual exercise" of the research (his words), but he doesn't understand my need to *know*. (I'm not sure I understand it myself!)

Also, our Gordon family is not religious; they are self-described cultural (secular) Jews. Thus, being a Levite does not impress Bruce nor have a direct impact on him, but he likes the idea that he has Spanish roots. Bruce read that Spain passed a law recently that would grant dual citizenship to descendants of Jews who were displaced during the Inquisition under the *Edict of the Expulsion of the Jews* in 1492. He still frowns when he sees me whiling away hours on the computer doing genealogy research, but he smiles at the prospect of obtaining Spanish citizenship. *Buena suerte* to us.



Why Have Family Newsletters?

Bubbles Segall

Bubbles Segall has been publishing a newsletter for her extended Lurie family since 2004. A current AJGS (Vic) committee member, Bubbles presented a paper on publishing family newsletters at the 2010 Second Australia National Conference on Jewish Genealogy, held in Melbourne in March 2010. This article was first published in *Jewish Genealogy Downunder*, Volume 14, #2, June 2012, Australian Jewish Genealogical Society (Vic), Inc., pages 8–9.

Communication is so important in families. Today, with most families scattered all over the world, newsletters are a great way to keep in touch. Family newsletters don't have to be complicated, but there are a few things to consider.

Aim

Deciding what to write about is the first step. What do you hope to achieve? Here are some of the things I wanted to accomplish with my newsletter.

- Keep in touch with family members.
- Preserve stories and information that would otherwise be lost.
- Share information, stories, and accomplishments with family members.
- Share and preserve photos of significant events (births, weddings, bar/bat mitzvahs, graduations, and so on).
- Keep family information together in one place.
- Leave a paper trail for future generations.
- Learn about my family's history, traditions, origins, and culture.
- Create an avenue for family members to pass on stories which would otherwise not be told.

Publishing Format and Frequency

How often you publish a newsletter will depend on the time you have to devote to such a project, how much information you have to share, and your chosen method of production (and therefore cost).

Many people now produce e-newsletters only and e-mail them as PDF's to family members because of the cost savings, but printing and posting a hard-copy version of your newsletter to those who do not have e-mail is a good idea.

Distribution List

Create a distribution list by starting with your immediate family and close relatives. Once the news gets out, you are going to have people coming out of the woodwork who want to receive copies. Some family members will not be interested in receiving copies or providing information, however. It is best to build your distribution list either by word of mouth

or by sending a copy of the newsletter to everyone you think will be interested, asking them to respond if they wish to continue receiving future issues.

Naming Your Newsletter

Give your newsletter a catchy name. Think of names that are quirky, unusual, and easy to remember. Some examples are Wolpe Words, Cooper Connections, Barnett Beat, Feldman Family, Cohen Capers, Newman News, Milnick Mishpocha, and Chafkin Chronicles. My family newsletter is called *Lurie Links*.

Blended Family Newsletters

Decide whether you want your newsletter to cover your maternal and paternal families, and even your spouse's family.

What Information Should Be Included?

As well as the usual family events, such as weddings, anniversaries, birthdays, and graduations, you can consider:

- family traditions, stories about your ancestors
- roots projects prepared by school children
- articles on the origins of family surnames
- genealogical and historical research outcomes
- discovery of new family members

Valuable information can be found in old letters, old diary entries, entries in autograph books, obituaries, and relevant articles from old newspapers.

Tips

Here are some tips to consider if you decide to start producing a family newsletter.

- If anyone in your family shares your passion for genealogy, consider asking that person to proofread your newsletters before they are distributed.
- Ensure that the newsletters are interesting and not too long. If you have trouble shortening the content, ask someone for help.
- Make sure you put names to photographs and define the relationships of everyone mentioned in the newsletter.

- Ensure that your information about family members is correct. If you are not sure, ask an appropriate person.

- If you are distributing your newsletter via e-mail, use the BCC facility, as not everyone wants their e-mail addresses available for all to read, even if they are other family members!

- If you bold surnames, your newsletter will be easier to read.

- Ask for feedback from family members, and if you receive feedback consider publishing it in your next newsletter.

- Don't include anything that might cause friction among family members. Remember that you want your family members to feel comfortable sharing their information.

- Include birth names and married names.

- Remember that it is important to document the source of any information provided in your newsletter.

There are two types of sources in genealogical research: primary sources and secondary sources. Primary sources are documents and records created at the time of the event (for example, births, marriages, deaths, census), and secondary sources are documents and records not created at the time of the event (such as information from old letters and oral interviews). Stating this kind of information adds credibility to your work.

Privacy

Some family members may request permission to upload information from newsletters onto the Web. Encourage them to respect family members' right to privacy.

Useful Web Pages

Create a family newsletter: <http://genealogy.about.com/od/publishing/a/newsletter.htm>

How to create a family newsletter: http://www.ehow.com/how_2046162_create-family-newsletter.html



President's Message, continued from page 9

e-mail address! What did I have to lose? I wrote and asked the business to pass my message on to David Harrison.

That was on Friday at the end of the day and work week. I spent the whole weekend agonizing over whether my e-mail would end up in an electronic wastepaper basket!

But no, I was in luck. On late Wednesday evening I received a reply from David himself, who wrote:

Dear Jeremy,

Hello! I don't have much interest in genealogy, though I know Saul D Harrison who was known as David, was described as a scrap rope & metal merchant on his 1883(?) UK naturalization papers. I am passing on your emails to my 3 sisters, who might be glad to delve deeper.

A week or so passed, and yes, I was in touch with one of his sisters.

That was one success story. Another one involved me successfully contacting (deep breath again) my great-great-grandfather's brother's granddaughter's son Alan. Save there was a slight twist. Alan (not his birth name) was born in Berlin in 1936. His parents

were not married, and his mother died three weeks after he was born.

His aunts managed to put him on a train in 1939 as part of the Kindertransport when he was just three years old. His foster parents eventually adopted him, so he took their name.

Alan recently sent me several certificates, plus some pages with Hebrew names and *yahrzeit* memorial dates as well as three burial cards, which listed exactly where each person was buried.

I guess that what I'm trying say here is that it's always worth writing to seemingly very distant relatives because you never know what they might have of value.

And that David I mentioned who lives in Italy? He sells locally sourced Italian products that are non-GMO, vegetarian or vegan, and dairy-free. The company is called Seggiano, and some of his wares can be bought at Whole Foods. Yes, a shameless plug for my "tenuously, absurdly distant" cousin.

How many tenuously, absurdly distant cousins can you connect with? We want to hear (and publish) your stories.



The Girl on the Wall

Book Review by Beth Galleto

The Girl on the Wall by Preeva Adler Tramiel. BookBaby, 2005. 194 pages. ISBN 978-1631926860.

At some point every genealogist wants or needs to publish the results of years of research, in order to share them with family members and the world. One of the many ways to attack such a project is through autobiography or memoir, and this is how Preeva Adler Tramiel, a resident of Palo Alto and a member of the board of SFBAJGS, has chosen to tell her story.

In her book's prologue, Preeva mentions an old Hasidic tale that ends with the words, "God loves stories." Perhaps this is why her book is laced with stories. Readers will love them, too.

The book focuses on Preeva's search for the truth about her larger-than-life father, Samuel Adler, also known as Hershi Adler and Adler Hershi. The stories she heard about him during her childhood in the Bronx and Yonkers, New York, seemed too amazing to believe. Her father, who grew up with his five siblings in Munkacs/Munkach (now called Mucachevo) in the Transcarpathian region of Europe, was a survivor of Auschwitz; a tough guy; perhaps a dealer in black market alcohol, coffee, and rubber tires during the war; a handsome man who was irresistible to women; a man who fought in Israel's war of independence and was Zionist leader Jabotinsky's driver; a man who could communicate in 13 languages; and, according to the tales she heard, much more.

While there were all these stories, there were also certain things that were never discussed. On the wall above her parents' bed was a gold-framed portrait of a young girl with blue eyes and blond curls. Who was she? Preeva's father could only turn away and cry. Preeva's mother would only say, "Ask your father." In time Preeva learned that her father had had a wife and two children who were murdered at Auschwitz,

and that the portrait was of her dead half-sister Hajmalka. Preeva's feelings for her father's other family were complicated by the realization that, if her father's first family had not died, she herself would never have been born.

Hershi Adler died of cancer when Preeva was 16, leaving her to search for the truth on her own. During a long period of time she tried *not* to delve into the past. Later she began talking to relatives and using the various tools of genealogy to learn more about her father and his family, and about her mother's past as well. Her quest led her to travel through Israel, Ukraine, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia.

In addition to being a writer and genealogy researcher, Preeva is a wife and mother, a stand-up comic, a community activist, and president of her congregation. Her comedic experience shows in the book. Her wry, self-referential sense of humor often brings a laugh even as she discusses difficult subjects.

This book clearly demonstrates that as the first generation of Shoah survivors passes from the earth, their children—who also suffered—must also be counted among the survivors.

This is an important book, although it has a few flaws, such as two family tree diagrams that are pixilated and illegible. It will be of interest not only to genealogists but also to a wider audience, who will want to follow Preeva on her quest to solve the mysteries of her father's life while at the same time making her personal journey from survivor's guilt and self-doubt to confidence and self-acceptance.



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 familyfinder@sfbajgs.org or at P.O. Box 318214, San Francisco, CA 94131-8214.

<u>Surname</u>	<u>Town, Country</u>	<u>Member</u>
Fivelovich	Poznan, Poland	Barbara Coats
Levin	Stettin, Germany or Szczecin, Poland	Barbara Coats
Meltzer	Kurzeniec, Belarus	Laurie Umeh
Oshinsky	Filipova, Poland	Laurie Umeh
Schlosberg	Kurzeniec, Belarus	Laurie Umeh

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Family Finder information. This will be maintained on file with the SFBAJGS and periodically shared with the membership.
Please print clearly. New members: Please fill in as completely as you can.
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November 2015

Upcoming SFBAJGS Events

Sunday, 17 January, San Francisco: *The Heroic Journey as Inspiraton for Writing Your Family History.* In a continuation of the talk she presented in 2014, SFBAJGS board member Heidi Lyss will discuss how Joseph Campbell's classic heroic journey can inspire your family history narrative.

Sunday, 21 February, Oakland: *Case Study: Genealogy of Renee Kaufman.* Steve Morse will demonstrate how using online information can help you easily outline your family history, even with names spelled "creatively" in databases.

Monday, 22 February, Los Angeles: Speaker Eshel Haritan, topic to be announced.

Sunday, 13 March, San Francisco: *Reclaim the Records: Using Freedom of Information laws for Genealogical Research.* Fresh off a victory over the New York City Municipal Archives, Brooke Schreier Ganz will discuss how Freedom of Information laws can help genealogists gain access to records.

Sunday, 17 April, Oakland: *The Wealth of Resources at FamilySearch.org.* Dennis White will explore the freely available digitized records, Wiki, Memories, Family Tree, and more on FamilySearch.org.

Monday, 18 April, Los Altos Hills: *Social Media for Genealogists.* SFBAJGS member Meredith Sellers will illustrate how social media sites can assist your genealogy research efforts, discuss the pros and cons of different platforms, and outline ways to maintain a secure online presence.

See page 3 for meeting locations and times and page 4 for other events of interest.

For more program information visit <http://www.sfbajgs.org/>.
