



זכרונות *ZichronNote*

The Journal of the San Francisco Bay Area Jewish Genealogical Society

Volume XLI, Number 3

August 2021

Who Is That in the Photograph?

With diligent research, and maybe a little bit of luck, you also might be able to identify some of the people in your old photographs and postcards. **See page 4.**

Also in This Issue

Remembering Carla	
Judy Vasos	11
More Evidence for Sephardic Jews in Poland	
Kevin Alan Brook	13
Why Get Involved in Genealogy?	
Hilary Osofsky	14
A Bit More on Name Changes	
Jeff Lewy	15
Genealogy Newsletters Available to SFBAJGS Members	
.....	16

Departments

President's Message	2
Society News	3
Genealogy Calendar	18
Upcoming SFBAJGS Events	back cover



*Walking to Ruth's civil marriage ceremony, 18 March 1942.
Carla Knoller is third from the left. See page 11.*

ZichronNote
Journal of the San Francisco Bay Area
Jewish Genealogical Society

© 2021 San Francisco Bay Area Jewish Genealogical Society.
Copyright for individual articles remains with the authors.

ZichronNote is published four times per year, in February, May, August, and November. The deadline for contributions is the 15th of the month preceding publication, but submissions are accepted year-round. The editor reserves the right to edit all submissions. Submissions may be made by hard copy or electronically. Please send e-mail to newsletter@sfbajgs.org.

Reprinting of material in ZichronNote is hereby granted for nonprofit use when there is no explicit limitation and credit is given to SFBAJGS and to the author(s). All other reproduction, including electronic publication, without prior permission of the editor is prohibited.

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.

Back Issues are available for \$10 per issue. Requests should be sent to SFBAJGS at the address below.

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

Membership in SFBAJGS is open to anyone interested in Jewish genealogy. Dues are \$23 per calendar year. The Society is tax-exempt pursuant to section 501(c)(3) of the IRS Code. Make your check payable to "SFBAJGS" and send to SFBAJGS, Membership, P.O. Box 318214, San Francisco, CA 94131-8214.

Society Addresses

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

Web site: <http://www.sfbajgs.org/>

Society Contacts

President: Jeremy Frankel, president@sfbajgs.org

Vice President: Preeva Tramiel, vicepresident@sfbajgs.org

Secretary: Shellie Wiener, secretary@sfbajgs.org

Treasurer: Jeff Lewy, treasurer@sfbajgs.org

Membership: Jeff Lewy, membership@sfbajgs.org

Programs: Janice M. Sellers, programs@sfbajgs.org

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

Webmaster: Barbara Stack, webmaster@sfbajgs.org

Transcription Project Coordinator: Jeff Lewy,
transcriptions@sfbajgs.org

Electronic Newsletter Coordinator: Dana Kurtz,
newsletterexchange@sfbajgs.org

Founder: Martha Wise

ZichronNote

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

Back Issues: sfbajgs.org/ZichronNote/ZichronNote.html

Note: All URL's are valid as of the time of publication.

President's Message

**Beshert: A Coincidence, or,
It Was Meant to Be**

Jeremy Frankel, SFBAJGS President

For several years I have kept a list of *beshert* that have inexplicably come my way. I have no idea why so many have happened to me, but I just take it as a sign that whatever I'm doing, it must be right. Even during these last few months, they have still managed to manifest themselves.

Most recently I was visiting a used bookstore in Berkeley that I haven't been to for quite some time. In their oversize pictorial section was *Streets* by Nigel Henderson. It was published by London's Tate Gallery in 2017. The author lived in London's East End and during the 1950's took a series of photographs capturing local life around him.

As I flipped through the pages, I saw one image that featured a bookstore. The name above the store was Mark Klein Library. *Hmm*, I thought, *my cousins' grandfather was Mark Klein*. I shot off a message to one of the cousins, asking if that person recalled what the grandfather did for a living. The cousin wrote back, "I remembered one of my grandparents outside the bookshop." Bingo! I was also sent a photograph that matched the image in the book. What a coincidence. Naturally, I ended up buying the book.

Next, a year or so ago, a cousin (by marriage), whom I've never met, sent me a miniature set of the Pentateuch, plus a matching sabbath prayer book. They had been inscribed by a rabbi in my cousin's family to his business partner's son, who became *bar mitzvah* in September 1899. For some (still) unexplained reason, however, the *bar mitzvah* boy never received the books. The rabbi's half-brother seems to have inherited them and then passed them down to his granddaughter, my cousin.

She wrote to me saying no one in her family wanted them, they would be trashed, and would I like them. Sure, I said, and I'll pay the postage as well. So for the last few months they were sitting on my bookshelf.

The *bar mitzvah* boy grew up in England, then immigrated to America in 1908. In 1912 he met and married his wife in Chicago; the couple then made their way to Washington State.

After a bit of genealogical sleuthing, I discovered that his only grandson was living in Beaverton, Oregon, just 600 miles north of the Bay Area. I wrote a postal letter explaining everything. He passed the letter on to his

Continued on page 17

Society News

Your Story Belongs in ZichronNote

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? Have you had success or made progress at the Genealogy Clinic with the Mavens? Do you have a brick wall you want to discuss? Did you meet a cousin at the annual conference, or make contact with a "tenuously, absurdly distant" cousin or a "relative of the heel?"

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

Research Scope of SFBAJGS

The San Francisco Bay Area Jewish Genealogical Society does not limit its scope to the San Francisco Bay area. While our meetings take place in various locations in the Bay Area, our research and pursuits include the entire world, as that's where our ancestors came from. Our members have extensive experience with genealogical research in every corner of the globe and with all types of historical records.

SFBAJGS Board Meetings

SFBAJGS board meetings are open to members to attend, and we welcome you to do so! The next board meeting is scheduled to begin at 10:00 a.m. on Sunday, 14 November, **online via Zoom**. If you are interested in attending and learning more about how your board reaches decisions for the society (or possibly about serving on the board?), contact the editor at newsletter@sfbajgs.org.

This Is an Election Year!

The four current officers of the society have stated that they are willing to serve another two-year term. President Jeremy Frankel, Vice President Preeva Tramiel, Treasurer Jeff Lewy, and Secretary Shellie Wiener will appear on the ballots that will be sent to current members. Members also may vote for write-in candidates if desired. Ballots must be returned by **31 December 2021** to be valid. If you have questions or comments about the election, contact the Elections Coordinator at elections@sfbajgs.org.

Members in the News

Vivian Kahn, Director of the JewishGen Hungarian Research Division, was named co-recipient of the 2021/5781 Susan E. King Volunteer of the Year award at this year's JewishGen annual meeting. A short video was prepared in her honor: <https://youtu.be/EJSfa8IzUcE>.

Ron Arons was elected Secretary of IAJGS, to serve a two-year term which will conclude at the end of the 2023 IAJGS annual meeting.

Board member **Dvorah Lewis**, the Genealogy Librarian at Sutro Library, had an article published in the California State Library Foundation *Bulletin* (November 2021) about Sutro's efforts to engage with the public through its redesigned Web site.

Family Tree Magazine has published its list of 101 Best Genealogy Websites for 2021, available at <https://www.familytreemagazine.com/best-genealogy-websites/>. **Brooke Schreier Ganz's** Reclaim the Records appears under "Best Genealogy News Websites and Blogs", and **Steve Morse's** One-Step Website is under "Best Genealogy Tech Tools."

Continued on page 17

Meeting Times and Locations

This is the normal SFBAJGS meeting schedule when not affected by pandemics:

San Francisco:	Sunday. Doors open 12:30 p.m. Program begins at 1:00 p.m. San Francisco Public Library, 100 Larkin Street, Latino/Hispanic Room Easily reachable by BART: across the street from Civic Center BART station.
Oakland:	Sunday. Doors open 1:00 p.m. Program begins at 1:30 p.m. Oakland FamilySearch Library, 4766 Lincoln Avenue
Palo Alto:	Monday. Doors open 7:00 p.m. Program begins at 7:30 p.m. Congregation Etz Chayim, 4161 Alma Street
See Back Cover for Calendar of Upcoming SFBAJGS Meetings	

In Praise of Ephemera: A Picture Postcard from Vilna Reveals Its Secrets More than One Hundred Years after Its Original Publication

Shnayer Leiman

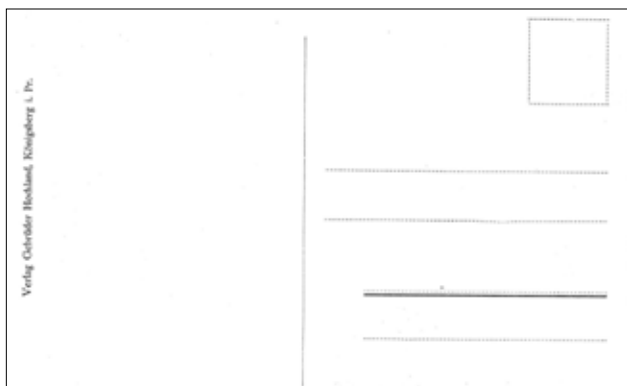
Shnayer Leiman is Distinguished Professor of Jewish History and Literature at Touro College's Graduate School of Jewish Studies and also teaches at Yeshiva University's Bernard Revel Graduate School. This article was first published on *The Seforim Blog* on 27 July 2020 at <https://seforimblog.com/2020/07/in-praise-of-ephemera-a-picture-postcard-from-vilna-reveals-its-secrets-more-than-one-hundred-years-after-its-original-publication/> and is reprinted with permission.

I belong to a small group of inveterate collectors of Jewish ephemera. We collect artifacts that many others consider of little or no significance, such as postage stamps; coins, and medallions; old posters, broadsides, and newspaper clippings; outdated New Year's cards; wine-stained Passover *Haggadot*; Jewish ornaments, objects (e.g., Chanukah dreidels), and artwork of a previous generation; photographs and postcards; and the like. The items we collect—all of Jewish interest—take up much space in our homes; they can also be costly at times. Often, we end up paying much more for an item than it is really worth, especially if it completes a set. Collectors of ephemera suffer from a disease that has no known remedy. The only respite we have from the disease is when we write scholarly essays about what we have collected, for—as I know from experience—it is not possible to write scholarly essays and actively collect ephemera at the same time.

The Picture Postcard

Several years ago, I acquired the postcard shown on the right. It measures 5½" by 3½", a standard size for its time. It is a mint copy, meaning that no message was penned on its back and it was never mailed. Thus, I cannot date the postcard by a recorded date or postmark on its reverse side (but see below). We present the obverse and reverse of the postcard for the benefit of the reader:

Obverse: The obverse presents a black and white photograph, also standard for its time. It features a tombstone with a Hebrew inscription; a mausoleum behind the tombstone, with a brief Hebrew inscription; and what



appears to be a cemetery attendant, with his hand atop the tombstone. Most important, it contains a German heading under the photograph, which reads in translation, "From the Eastern Front of the Theater of War, Wilna, An Old Jewish Tombstone [with Inscription]."

Reverse: The reverse has the name of the publishing company that produced the postcard: "The Brothers Hochland in Koenigsberg, Prussia."

Historical Context

In terms of historical context, the information provided by the postcard (a German heading; Vilna is defined as the eastern front of the theater of war; the postcard was produced in Königsberg) can lead to only one conclusion, namely that the postcard was produced on behalf of the German troops that had occupied, and dominated, Vilna during World War I. German troops occupied Vilna on 18 September 1915 and remained in Vilna until the collapse of the Kaiser's army on the western front, which forced the withdrawal of all German troops in foreign countries at the very end of 1918. Thus, our photograph was taken, and the postcard was produced, during the period just described. Its *Sitz im Leben* (purpose in life) was the need for soldiers to send brief messages back home in an approved format. The ancient sites of the occupied city made for attractive postcards. (This may have been especially true for Jewish soldiers serving in the German army.)

Due to a wonderful coincidence, a distinguished scholar of Yiddish and a dear colleague, Professor Dovid Katz, recently published a copy of the very same postcard we publish here.¹ Unlike my copy, his includes on the reverse side a dated message penned by the German soldier who mailed it, as well as a dated postmark. The message was written on 3 December 1917 and postmarked the next day, on 4 December. Thus, we can narrow the timeline somewhat and suggest that the postcard was almost certainly produced circa 1916 or 1917.

The Old Jewish Cemetery

The old Jewish cemetery was the first Jewish cemetery established in Vilna. According to Vilna Jewish tradition, it was founded in 1487. Modern scholars, based on extant documentary evidence, date the founding of the cemetery to 1593 but admit that an earlier date cannot be ruled out. The cemetery, still standing today (but denuded of its tombstones), lies just north of the center of the city of Vilna, across the Neris River, in the section of Vilna called Shnipishkes (Yiddish: Shnipishok). It is across the river from, and just opposite, one of Vilna's most significant landmarks, Castle Hill with its Gediminas Tower. The cemetery was in use from the year it was founded until 1831, when it was officially closed by the municipal authorities. Although burials no longer were possible in the old Jewish cemetery, it became a pilgrimage site, and thousands of Jews visited annually the graves of the righteous heroes and rabbis buried there, especially the graves of the Ger Zedek (Avraham ben Avraham, also known as Graf Potocki, died 1749), the Gaon of Vilna (R. Eliyahu ben R. Shlomo, died 1797), and the Hayye Adam

(R. Avraham Danzig, died 1820). Such visits still took place even after World War II.

The cemetery, more or less rectangular in shape, was spread over a narrow portion of a sloped hill, the bottom of the hill almost bordering on the Neris River. The postcard photo captures the oldest mausoleum and rabbinic grave in the old Jewish cemetery, exactly at the spot where the bottom of the hill almost borders on the Neris River. It was an especially scenic, and historically significant, site in the old Jewish cemetery, and it is no accident that the photographer chose this site for the postcard.

The Tombstone and Its Hebrew Inscription

The tombstone is that of R. Menahem Manes Chajes (1560–1636). He was among the earliest Chief Rabbis of Vilna. Indeed, his grave was the oldest extant dated grave in the Jewish cemetery when Jewish historians first began to record its epitaphs in the 19th century. R. Menahem Manes' father, R. Yitzchok Chajes (died 1615), was a prolific author who served as Chief Rabbi of Prague. Like his father, R. Menahem Manes published several rabbinic works in his lifetime, and some of R. Menahem Manes' unpublished writings are still extant in the Bodleian Library at Oxford University. His epitaph reads²:

חפ
 ונזוע (יגא ג וכלט)
 [ו] יפא חור [ח חישל], ונזילע סויה [רשח]
 יכ ונל אג ייא, ונזעפפ ונלוי סויה
 ונישאר ורשטע חלפג ונאטח
 ונאטח ח [ח ונזעפפ חשח שחש]
 ח [ח ח] יג ונזעפפ [ח] דישחח לודאח
 ונזעפפ דיעפ [ח] [ח] חלפג
 [ח] שחח חחח [ח] חחח ונזעפפ
 חחח [ח] חחח חחח חחח
 סויה חחחח חחחח חחחח
 [ח] שחח סויה חחח יכ חחח חחח
 חחחחח חחחח חחחח חחחח

The epitaph, actually a poem with an acrostic, reads in a summary translation:

At this tombstone lies buried the mighty Gaon — the day has darkened for us — the Lord's anointed one, the breath of our life, our eyes shed tears, woe onto us for we have sinned, the crown of our head has fallen, the sun has turned dark for us, the great Gaon, the pious and

humble one, the lamp of Israel, the column of support, the mighty hammer, the head of our Exile, the light of our Exile, the head of the Yeshiva and Chief Rabbi, Rabbi Menahem Manes, son of Rabbi Yitzhak Chayes of blessed memory. His pure soul departed with a kiss [from G-d] on Monday, 8 Iyar. When this day came to its end, the sun, moon, and the heavens were darkened.

May his soul be bound up with the Living [on High].

The Mausoleum and Its Hebrew Inscription

In the old Jewish cemetery, many of the more famous rabbis were buried in mausoleums. All rabbis buried in mausoleums were buried underground. The mausoleum itself served as an honorific place of prayer that a visitor could enter and then pray at the grave of the rabbi of his choice. All tombstones were placed outside the mausoleum and were affixed to its outside wall, directly opposite the body of the deceased rabbi named on the tombstone (but who was buried inside the mausoleum). Often, the names of famous rabbis were painted on the outside wall of the mausoleum (much like street signs), identifying who was buried in it. The mausoleums sometimes contained the graves of several famous rabbis. R. Menahem Manes Chajes was buried in the mausoleum that can be seen behind his tombstone. A famous rabbi buried in the same mausoleum was R. Moshe Rivkes (died 1672), author of *חליוהו ראב* ("The Well of the Exile") on the *Shulhan Arukh* (the *Set Table*, the official Jewish code of law by R. Joseph Karo and R. Moses Isserles).³ The inscription on its wall, above the tombstone of R. Menahem Manes, reads:

וְיָחַד שְׂמָאָה לְרַבֵּי לֵוִי מָנְסֵי חַיֵּים וְצַדִּיק וְנָכוֹן

Here is the tombstone of the great Gaon, R. Manes Chajes

The Cemetery Attendant

What has remained a mystery for more than 100 years is the identity of the cemetery attendant. We shall attempt to identify him and to restore him to his proper place in Jewish history.

The reader will wonder how I know that the person in the photograph was a cemetery attendant. Perhaps he was a tourist who just happened to be there on the day the Hochland Brothers Publishing Company arranged for a photograph to be taken for its postcard collection?

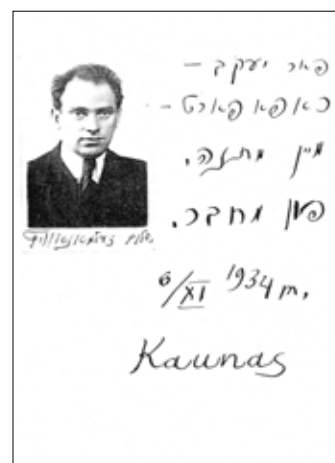
Initially, it was simply a hunch, largely due to ephemera, that is, other photos of visitors to the old Jewish cemetery in the interwar period. I have a collection of such photos, and either they feature the tourist (who handed his camera to the tour guide or cemetery attendant, and asked that his

photo be taken in front of the Vilna Gaon's tombstone or at the Ger Zedek's mausoleum), or they feature a cemetery attendant who stands in those places, while the tourist, who knows how to use the camera, takes the photo. The tourists can always be recognized by their garb, which matches nothing worn by anyone else in Vilna. The cemetery attendants, functionaries of a division of the Jewish *Kehilla* (called *Zedakah Gedolah* at the time), all wear the same dress, a "Chofetz Chaim" type cap and a long coat, both inevitably dark gray or black. While I am not aware of another old Jewish cemetery photograph featuring the specific cemetery attendant seen in our postcard, his dress is precisely that of all the other cemetery attendants whose photos have been preserved.

But there is no need for guesswork here. Sholom Zelmanovich, a talented artist and Yiddish playwright, published his *יִצְחָק גַּרְפּוֹטְצְקִי רַעְיִי* ("The Righteous Proselyte: Graf Potocki of Vilna") in 1934.⁴



Title page of Zelmanovich's play



Author's inscription

This three-act play commemorates the life and death of the legendary Ger Zedek of Vilna in a new and mystical mode.⁵ The volume includes sixteen original drawings by Zelmanovich. Several of the drawings preserve details of Vilna's old Jewish cemetery with seemingly incredible accuracy. Thus, for example, Zelmanovich depicts the northern entrance gate to the old Jewish cemetery, as well as the nearby Jewish caretaker's house on the cemetery grounds, even though few photographs are extant that even begin to capture the details of those sites. His depiction of the Ger Zedek's grave (and the humanlike tree that hovered over it) is perfectly located in the southeastern corner of the old Jewish cemetery and is surrounded by the wood fence that existed in that corner prior to 1926. Only



דער בארימטער בוים אויסן קבר מן גר-צדק

Top: Northern entrance to Vilna's old Jewish cemetery.
Bottom: Ger Zedek's grave in the old Jewish cemetery.

someone who had spent quality time in Vilna's old Jewish cemetery could have known exactly where to place the entrance gate, the caretaker's house, and the Ger Zedek's grave.

One other matter needs to be mentioned. Zelmanovich dedicated the volume in memory of his deceased parents, Meir Yisrael son of Mordechai and Sheyne daughter of Broyné.⁶

געהייליקט מייע פארשטארבענע עלטערן:

מאיר-ישראל ב"ר מרדכי

און

שיינע בת ברוינע ע"ה

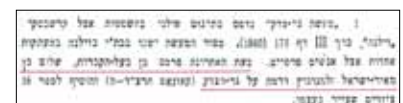
In the summer of 1935, the municipal authorities of Vilna, then under Polish rule, announced their plan to demolish Vilna's old Jewish cemetery and replace it with a soccer stadium. Vilna—and worldwide—Jewry did not stand idly by. Instead, they engaged in an extensive, and ultimately successful, battle against the municipal authorities. As

part of its efforts to win over the municipal authorities, the Vilna Jewish community charged a young Jewish scholar, Israel Klausner⁷, with writing a history of the old Jewish cemetery. It would offer clear documentation and prove beyond doubt that various Polish kings and municipal authorities throughout the centuries had authorized the Jewish community to construct the cemetery and maintain it. The cemetery was legally the property of Vilna's Jewish community. Klausner's monograph, titled *יבולעז-תיב וירוק (שיח) חזליוב* ("A History of the Old Jewish Cemetery in Vilna"; Vilna, 1935), includes a discussion of the Ger Zedek's grave. In a footnote⁸, Klausner mentions in passing Sholom Zelmanovich's "recently published drama on the Ger Zedek" and adds that Zelmanovich was the son of the caretaker of the old Jewish cemetery (Hebrew: *צב* (וירצקא-לעב), Meir Yisrael Zelmanovich! The plot thickens.

The full force of the Hebrew term *וירצקא-לעב* is not really captured by the English word "caretaker." A variety of cemetery attendants worked in the old Jewish cemetery in various capacities (such as guiding visitors and leading them to the graves they wished to visit, reciting prayers at the graves, groundkeeping, repairing broken tombstones and re-inking their inscriptions, and guard duty). But one cemetery attendant was in charge of all the other attendants, and as we shall see, he and his family lived in the house on the cemetery grounds. He was called *לעב* (וירצקא, perhaps best rendered as "Cemetery Keeper" or "Managing Director" of the old Jewish cemetery. We have established that Meir Zelmanovich served in that capacity. But who was he and when did he live?



Title page of
Klausner's monograph



Footnote about Sholom
Zelmanovich

Meir Zelmanovich

Sadly, almost nothing is known about the life of Meir Zelmanovich. He published no books and wrote no essays. As best I can tell, only one newspaper report mentions his name during his lifetime.⁹ The report itself is significant. It records a complaint made by Meir Zelmanovich in 1919 that the Polish legionnaires had desecrated the old Jewish cemetery. But it would be Zelmanovich's tragic death in 1920 that would perpetuate his memory. Here, we need to provide some historical context. Israel Cohen begins his discussion of the impact of World War I on Vilna, as follows¹⁰:

Within the small space of eight years, from 1914 to 1922, the Jews of Vilna tasted of the blessings of nine different governments, and suffered from a combination of other evils even more noxious. They became a prey to economic depression, military requisitions, unemployment, famine and disease; thousands of them were subjected to forced labor, imprisonment, plunder and brutal attacks; and physical and material deterioration inevitably engendered a certain degree of social demoralization. All the variegated differences of principle, of religious outlook and sociological doctrine, were now forgotten in the inferno created by the common foe. The long protracted fight for civil and political rights had to yield to the more primitive and desperate struggle for mere existence.

Almost certainly, the greatest concentration of Jewish suffering in this period came in April 1919, when the Polish legionnaires unleashed a pogrom against Vilna's Jews. Israel Cohen describes the horrors that followed¹¹:

The [Polish] legionnaires¹² defiled and desecrated the [old Jewish] cemetery, smashed the tombstones, and opened the graves (including some of Vilna's earliest rabbis) in the belief that they would find in them arms and money. Disappointed in their search, the Poles transferred their attentions from the dead to the living and ran amuck in the Jewish quarter. For three days they seized Jews in the streets, dragged them out of their homes, bludgeoned them savagely, and looted their houses and shops. About 80 Jews were shot, mostly in the suburb of Lipuvka, where some were ordered to dig their own graves; others were buried alive, and others were drowned, with their hands tied, in the Vilna [now: Neris] River. ... All sorts of outrages were committed in those days by the Poles in celebration of their victory. They tied a Jew to a horse and dragged him through the streets for three miles. They took a sadistic delight in cutting off the beards and earlocks of pious Jews.

They even arrested, assaulted and humiliated Rabbi Rubinstein and Dr. Shabad. Altogether, thousands of Jews in Vilna, as well as in Lida and Bialystock, were imprisoned in various concentration camps where they were ill fed and beaten, and where they suffered from hunger and typhoid. Moreover the total loss due to destruction and pillaging of Jewish people in the pogrom, in Vilna alone, was estimated at about 20 million roubles (about \$10,000,000).

Polish rule of Vilna came to an end when the Russians recaptured Vilna on 14 July 1920. Russian rule lasted for six weeks, after which the Russians retreated and left Vilna in the control of the Lithuanians. Lithuanian rule lasted until 8 October 1920, when the Poles once again recaptured Vilna. One can only imagine the fear that gripped the Jewish community in Vilna when they heard the sounds of the approaching Polish legionnaires. In fact, hundreds (some claim thousands) of Vilna's Jews fled on 8 October to Kovno, then part of independent Lithuania.¹³ Indeed, there was something to fear, for the Polish legionnaires were free again to wreak havoc with Jewish lives. Although the severity of the pogrom of 1919 did not repeat itself, the indiscriminate murder, rape, and looting of Jews that took place in Vilna between 8–10 October 1920 was, at least in the eyes of the victims, yet another pogrom.¹⁴ Briefly, eyewitness Yiddish accounts¹⁵ record that at least six Jewish men and women were murdered, numerous women were raped, and some 80 Jews were mugged and robbed. No one was brought to justice for committing these crimes!

On 10 October 1920 Meir Zelmanovich, cemetery keeper of the old Jewish cemetery in Vilna, was murdered by the Polish legionnaires. He was 70 years old when he died. The official Jewish record of his death lists his home address as "Derewnicka 3." This is the address of the house on the grounds of the old Jewish cemetery. It is no wonder that Sholom Zelmanovitch could depict so vividly the northern entrance gate to the cemetery, its nearby caretaker's house, and the humanlike tree hovering over the Ger Zedek's grave. His childhood playground was the old Jewish cemetery in Vilna.

מדינה	שם	תאריך	מקום	גיל	סיבה	הערות
רוסיה	מיר זעלמאנאָוויטש	10 אדר	ווילנא	70	רציחה	ביתו: דערעוויטשא 3

Death register entry for Meir Zelmanovich

On the picture postcard from 1916–1917, one sees an elderly Jew. One possibility is that it depicts none other than Meir Zelmanovitch, the cemetery keeper of the old Jewish cemetery until his death in 1920 at age 70. I suspected that this was the case, but could not prove it until recently—when a small miracle occurred.

Miracles Sometimes Do Occur

In March of this year, out of the clear blue sky, I was contacted by Laurie Cowan, who introduced herself as a great-granddaughter of Meir Zelmanovich! She was interested in any information I could provide about her great-grandfather that she didn't already know. I was delighted to make her acquaintance but wondered what led her to me. It turns out that both of us were seeking information about the same person—Meir Zelmanovich—from the Lithuanian State Historical Archives in Vilnius. An alert researcher at the archives noticed this and made the *shidduch* between us. I shared with Laurie whatever I knew about her great-grandfather. In turn, I asked her to send me copies of whatever documents she had relating to him. She sent me a scan of the following photograph of her great-grandmother and great-grandfather, Sheyne¹⁶ and Meir Zelmanovich:



Never has it been so easy to identify an unidentified picture on a 100-year-old picture postcard! One suspects that the picture postcard company representative, and a photographer, met with cemetery keeper Meir Zelmanovich at the old Jewish cemetery in Shnipishok. He led them to the mausoleum of R. Menahem Manes Chajes and was asked to pose at the tombstone just outside it. He graciously accepted the invitation. This may well have been the last photo taken of Zelmanovich, and it preserves, together with the photo provided by Laurie Cowan, the likeness of a martyr who fell during the October 1920 mini pogrom in Vilna.¹⁷

At least six Jews were murdered between 8–10 October 1920 in Vilna. They died for one reason only, namely,

because they were Jews. Such Jews are regarded as martyrs, and their names, at the very least, deserve to be recorded and remembered. Until now, none of the names of the Vilna martyrs of 1920 has been published in any public Jewish record, whether in a contemporary Jewish newspaper, a Jewish historical essay or book, or an online posting. Having examined the extant records in the Lithuanian State Historical Archives, I have been able to retrieve the names of the six Jewish victims who were murdered in Vilna in October 1920. In each case, the Jewish *Kehillah* records of Vilna in 1920 state clearly in Hebrew that the cause of death was either *גרוגז* or *הגרוגז*, depending on the sex of the victim (*i.e.*, murdered). The names are:

1. Shmuel ben Mendel Katz, age 56, died 9 October.
2. Etel Natin, age 36, died 9 October.
3. Basya Natin, age 32, died 9 October.
4. Rokhl Blume Shuster, age 45, died 9 October.
5. Meir Zelmanovich, age 70, died 10 October.
6. Shlomo Abramovich, age 17, died 12 October.¹⁸

May the memory of these martyrs be forever for a blessing!¹⁹

Note

* *רפסח סע*, the People of the Book the world over, mourn the death of R. Shmuel Ashkenazi in Jerusalem, at the age of 98. He was *רפסח רע*, the consummate master of the Hebrew book. Bibliographer, bibliophile, and book collector, his encyclopedic knowledge of all of Hebrew and Yiddish literature remains unparalleled in our time. His most recent contributions appeared in three massive volumes, replete with some 1,794 pages of immaculate scholarship. He never wasted a word; he wrote with precision and parsimony. Among his many accomplishments, he edited the *Kasher* Passover Haggadah, one of the most significant scholarly editions of the Passover Haggadah ever published. He was largely responsible for the single most accurate bibliography of Hebrew books ever produced, *זיכרון יצחק לעפד*: *The Bibliography of the Hebrew Book 1473–1960*. Aside from his scholarly distinction, R. Shmuel Ashkenazi wrote in an elegant Hebrew with its own special charm. Not only did he advance discussion, but he did so in an aesthetically pleasing manner. For those of us who knew him personally, he evinced the same charm in his personal relationships that he did in his writings. He set a standard of excellence that we can only strive to emulate, but never really replicate. *אוי ירצו ירצו!*

This essay is dedicated to his memory, a token of appreciation for all he has taught me.

Endnotes

1. Dovid Katz, "World War I Postcard of the Grave of Rabbi Menachem Manes Chayes (1560–1636) in the Old Vilna Jewish Cemetery", *Defending History* (11 March 2020), at <http://www.defendinghistory.com/world-war-i-vilna-postcard-of-the-grave-of-menachem-manes-chayes-1560-1636>. A copy of the postcard can also be seen online at "YIVO 1000 Towns", record ID 10743, <http://yivo1000towns.cjh.org/>.
2. For a fuller discussion of R. Menahem Manes Chajes and his epitaph, see S. Leiman, "A Picture and Its One Thousand Words: The Old Jewish Cemetery of Vilna Revisited", *The Seforim Blog*, 14 January 2016, especially notes 7–11 (<https://seforimblog.com/2016/01/a-picture-and-its-one-thousand-words/>).
3. Aside from his pivotal commentary on R. Joseph Karo's *Shulhan Arukh*, R. Moshe Rivkes was a great-great-grandfather of the Vilna Gaon.
4. Precious little is known about Sholom Zelmanovich (1898–1941). See the brief biographical entry in *רעשידיי רעייז רעד (רעזיסעס)* ("Biographical Dictionary of Modern Yiddish Literature"; Martin Press: New York, 1960), volume 3, column 670, which mistakenly lists him as being born in a town near Kovno, circa 1903. He was born in Vilna in 1898 (JewishGen) and died during one of the first Nazi *Aktionen* in the Kovno Ghetto.
5. In general, see Joseph H. Prouser, *Noble Soul: The Life and Legend of the Vilna Ger Tzedek Count Walenty Potocki* (Gorgias Press: Piscataway, New Jersey, 2005). Prouser's excellent monograph is a study of the many literary reworkings of the legends surrounding the Vilna Ger Zedek, with primary focus on 20th-century Jewish literary contributions. Strangely, he offers no discussion of Zelmanovich's contribution.
6. On the feminine Yiddish name "Broyne", see Alexander Beider, *Dictionary of Ashkenazic Given Names* (Avotaynu: Bergenfield, New Jersey, 2001), pages 484–486.
7. Klausner (1905–1981) settled in Palestine in 1936 and continued to be a prolific author of studies and books on the history of Vilna's Jewish community. Aside from several important monographs, such as his history of the old Jewish cemetery, he wrote a two-volume history of Jewish Vilna titled *1939–1881: אגטליך פילשטרייזע וועלט ("Vilna, the Jerusalem of Lithuania: The Later Generations, 1881–1939"; Ghetto Fighters' House: Tel Aviv, 1983)*, to which a third volume treating 1495–1881 was added posthumously, based largely on studies previously published by Klausner.
8. *וועג צו אונזערע אידן (אונזערע אידן)* ("A History of the Old Jewish Cemetery in Vilna"), page 45, note 1.
9. See Vytautas Jogela, "The Old Jewish Cemetery in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries", *Lituanus*, volume 61, no. 4 (2015), pages 81–82.
10. Israel Cohen, *Vilna* (Jewish Publication Society: Philadelphia, 1943), pages 358–359.
11. *Ibid.*, pages 378–379.
12. Cohen regularly spells the word "legionaries." For the sake of consistency, I have spelled the word "legionnaires" throughout this essay.

13. See, e.g., Boaz Wolfson, "עטליכע אידן" in *אידן און אידן* ("Middle-Lithuania" in *Pinkas [Ledger] for the History of Vilna during the War Years and the Occupation*; B. Zionson: Vilna, 1922), column 387.
14. There are probably as many definitions of "pogrom" as there are scholars and politicians. Since it is unclear whether the crimes committed on 8–10 October 1920 were planned and implemented by either a government or a political action committee, and since the duration of the attacks was short and rather swiftly brought under control, historians are reluctant to refer to the events that occurred on 8–10 October 1920 as a pogrom. On the other hand, to label those events a mere "disturbance" does not begin to capture the malevolent intent of the perpetrators directed specifically against Jews, and does not address the intensity of Jewish suffering at the time. For some of the different views regarding the definition of "pogrom" and how the term has been manipulated by political interests, see Szymon Rudnicki's forthcoming essay "The Vilna Pogrom of 19–21 April 1919", to appear in *Polin* 33 (2020). Professor Rudnicki kindly allowed me to see a prepublication copy of his lucid and informative essay.
15. Wolfson, *loc. cit.* Cf. Jacob Wygodski, *אין סעטע* ("In the Storm"; B. Kletzk: Vilna, 1926), pages 217–221.
16. Sheyne Zelmanovich died in Vilna on 26 October 1921, at age 68 (JewishGen). She lived in her home on the old Jewish cemetery grounds until her death. In a personal communication, Laurie Cowan informed me that the Zelmanoviches had 10 children who survived to adulthood. The sixth child, Beirach (popularly called Berik, and later Ben), was her grandfather, an older brother of Sholom, mentioned above.
17. The only other extant likeness of Meir Zelmanovich (known to me, and recovered on 15 July 2020) is an undated passport photo (circa 1916) preserved in the Lithuanian State Historical Archives. During the German occupation, all residents of Vilna were required to have—and to carry at all times—a German passport (we would call it an identification card). Meir Zelmanovich's German passport photo confirms the identity and authenticity of the photos of Zelmanovich published in this essay. All three photos are of one, and the same, person.
18. One suspects that Abramovich may have been shot or beaten on 9 and/or 10 October, as with the others, but did not die from his wounds until 12 October.
19. This essay could not have been written without the help of Regina Kopilevich, researcher (and tour guide) extraordinaire, who located whatever documents I sought at the Lithuanian State Historical Archives (Lietuvos Valstybės Istorijos Archyvas) in Vilnius. I am indebted to the librarians at the Archives for allowing her and me to examine these and other documents during my visits to Vilnius. Next to Google, JewishGen is a modern Jewish historian's best friend, and we are grateful to all who contribute to make JewishGen the great historical resource that it is. Matt Jelen's careful reading of an earlier draft has significantly improved the final version. I alone am responsible for whatever errors appear in this essay.



Remembering Carla

Judy Vasos

Judy Vasos lives in Oakland, California with her husband, Tony Baczewski. She has been researching family history since 1990. Her Web site is <http://www.judyvasos.com/>.

Carla Knoller was 18, living with her parents in Amsterdam, and attending art school when she received a summons from the German Nazi occupying power to present herself at Nazi headquarters for “work in the east.” The Nazis had invaded the Netherlands in May 1940 and slowly began to impose restrictions on Jews, the same restrictions that had caused so many Jews like Carla and her family to flee Germany to the neutral Netherlands to escape persecution.

Carla was a cousin of my mother-in-law, Rosi Mosbacher Baczewski. Rosi left Germany for England in 1940 and stopped in Amsterdam to visit Carla, Ruth (Carla’s older sister), and their parents, Tante Trude and Uncle Ari. Rosi spoke fondly of both girls and remained in close contact with Ruth after the war with regular letters and a few visits between Rosi’s home in New York and Ruth’s in Israel.

Another cousin, Marion Frolich, grew up with Carla and Ruth in Berlin before the families were forced to flee Germany. Marion was a few years older than Carla but admired her like an older sister. Marion described herself as shy and awkward and couldn’t understand how Carla interacted so easily with everyone. She told me everyone was drawn to Carla’s easygoing ways, vibrant personality, and good looks—her beautiful dark hair and eyes. Carla did well in art school, and Marion spoke well of the talent and skill she displayed as a graphic designer. She expressed great love, admiration, and appreciation for Carla whenever we spoke.

When Rosi learned of my interest in Carla, she sent my

husband and me photos that her parents had sent her of Ruth’s religious wedding service on 16 June 1942 in Amsterdam. Despite increasing restrictions against Jews, the family gathered for the wedding, including Rosi’s parents, who were living in Amsterdam. One month earlier, the Nazis had issued a decree requiring all Jews older than 6 years of age to wear the Jewish star on their outer clothing where it would be visible to all. The bride, groom, and entire wedding party wore the Star of David at the ceremony. They smiled into the camera.

A month later, the summons for Carla arrived in the mail. The family was confused about the intent of the summons. They had never seen one and were unsure how to respond. They had not heard of Auschwitz or the plan to round up and deport all the Jews of Europe “to the east.” Some months prior, on 20 January 1942, the most senior Nazi officials had met in secret in Wannsee, Germany to formulate and begin to implement plans for the Final Solution.

Ari, Carla’s father, sought advice from the Joodse Raad, the Jewish Council, a group of Jews organized by the Nazis to act as a liaison between the Nazis and the Jewish community. He was advised that Carla should report, as the summons specified that “something worse would likely happen.”

On 15 July 1942, Carla and hundreds of other young Jews reported to the train station in central Amsterdam for the first transport of Jews to Camp Westerbork, located several hours northeast of Amsterdam. The camp, originally built to house Jews



Carla Knoller, 1938



Carla and Ruth Knoller, 1935

fleeing persecution in Germany, was now a transit camp for deportation.

The trains arrived at Westerbork, where all passengers were ordered to a large hall—filled with personnel, desks, and typewriters—to register. They were each then given coffee and a roll and sent to other trains. Westerbork was not their final destination. They boarded trains for Auschwitz-Birkenau.

Carla's family had no idea where Carla had been taken. Several weeks after she left home they received a postcard from her postmarked 29 September 1942, mailed from Auschwitz-Birkenau. A notation in Carla's records at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. states that a postcard was received by Carla's parents. What was written on the postcard is unknown. Historians who have researched mail sent from extermination camps during the war document that prisoners of the Nazis were forced to write something positive to their families.

The trains took three days to arrive at Auschwitz, probably arriving about 18 July or so. What happened during the interval between when Carla arrived and the date of the postcard is unknown. Perhaps because Carla was young and strong she was put to work. A worse possibility was suggested to me by a relative who said she had heard that beautiful Carla was kept during this time in a barracks for Jewish women who were made available to German guards for their sexual pleasure. I did some research and learned that such barracks existed but could not find a way to confirm whether Carla was in one.

Carla was murdered one day after the postcard was mailed. Her parents would not know for years that she had been killed. After the war, they filed endless search documents with the Red Cross International Tracing

Service for information about her whereabouts. In 1951 they learned their daughter had been murdered by the Nazis at Auschwitz on 30 September 1942.

In letters Ari Knoller wrote to family after the war, he mourned that he had followed the advice of the Jewish Council to have Carla respond to the summons. He did not know he would lose her forever.

I searched for documentation of Carla's life prior to the train transport but found only a police report she filed in 1941 in Amsterdam after her bicycle had been stolen. The archives of the U.S. Holocaust Museum; the Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies (NIOD) in Amsterdam; and the Westerbork Transit Camp Memorial Museum provided me with information about Carla's death.

In 1953 the family submitted a Page of Testimony for Carla to the Hall of Names Memorial to Holocaust Victims at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem.

With this story and these photos, I add my own memorial to Carla.



*16 June 1942, reception after Ruth's religious wedding.
Carla is standing in the rear.*

More Evidence for Sephardic Jews in Poland

Kevin Alan Brook

Brook's earlier articles on Sephardim in Eastern Europe appeared in the May 2016, August 2016, February / May 2017, February / May 2018, and May 2019 issues of *ZichronNote*.

I am responding to the critique "Sephardic Jews in Eastern Europe: A Response" by Harmen Snel and Jits van Straten, which appeared in the February 2019 issue of *ZichronNote*. Curiously, their critique discussed only the first article in my series, even though the next three articles were already in print by then as well. Those additional articles introduced more Sephardic surnames, including Abarbanel, Abenjacar, Abugov, Alfasi, de Lima, de Millao, Delion, Domingo, Galante, Kastro, Nunes, Rosanes, and Rynaldo, none of which the authors mentioned. After that, in my fifth article, I introduced two more: Efrussi and Kuriel.

The authors discussed their knowledge of documentation related to Sephardim in Amsterdam but failed to mention the recent discovery in Inquisition archives by Ton Tielen and Joel Weisberger that the Sephardic community of Amsterdam paid money to four nonproselyte members of their community and then had them resettle in Poland between the Hebrew years 5448–5462 (corresponding to the years 1686–1702 of the common era): Merari Belogrado, Nieto de H. H. Usiel (a descendant of Hakham Uziel of Amsterdam), Mordehay Cohen, and Rahel Cuna. This is further evidence that not all Sephardim in Poland arrived there by way of the Ottoman Empire.

I acknowledge the authors' point that not all of the ancestors of modern Turkish Jews were Sephardim. After 2015, I've independently learned about their partial origins in the Ashkenazi, Romaniote, and Italki Jewish communities, even though they call themselves simply Sephardic today, which has caused confusion. The evidence I presented in my articles for shared autosomal DNA segments in Ashkenazim did not make a determination of Sephardic origin based on Turkish Jewish matches but instead on Catholic matches from places such as Portugal, Spain, Mexico, Puerto Rico, and Cuba whose ancestors did not intermarry with Ashkenazim, Romaniotes, or Italkim. Sometimes, however, those segments are indeed shared by Jews from Turkey, validating the partial Sephardic origins of the latter also. DNA segments of Sephardic origin have become so widespread that they are found in almost all modern Ashkenazi Jews. Due to the nature of the autosomal test, matches to all such segments are related within the last 16 generations, going back no further

than the 1400's, thus postdating the initial split between Ashkenazim and Sephardim. Although the authors noted that "DNA results from commercial firms are not always a guarantee of reliability", I undertook multiple rigorous rounds of triangulation, and often parent-child phasing, for the Sephardic DNA segments I studied to ensure that they were not identical-by-chance.

I also acknowledge the authors' point that the Ashkenazi surname Bondy (Bondi) might not be of Sephardic origin, as some researchers previously thought. In his Winter 2017 article in *Avotaynu*, Alexander Beider concluded that Bondy is not necessarily Sephardic but could be Italki. He noted that Bondi was the given name of some Italian Jews and that Norsa Bondi, a Jewish family of Italki origin, lived in Verona in the 17th century.

The authors acknowledged that the surname Castiell is of Sephardic origin. In 2017, I learned that some Jews with the surname Kastel lived in Zamość, Poland in the 19th century. Upon learning from me that the Castiell family had a presence in Zamość in the 16th or 17th century, Beider told me his new opinion that the city's 19th-century Kastels (including Mendel Hersz Kastel and Szmul Kastel, who were both born in 1812, and the Kastels who were born there in the 1830's–1880's) descended from the Castiells. He originally thought that Polish Jews obtained the surname Kastel from the identical German word meaning "small fort." As a result of my conversation with Beider, his Winter 2017 article preferred the Sephardic origin theory for the Kastel family of Zamość.

As for Italy, it was home to both Italki Jews and Sephardic Jews during the period under discussion, and I do realize that, for instance, many of the Jews from Rome were Italkim without roots in Spain and that some Jews in Venice were Ashkenazim from Germany. It is therefore incorrect for the authors to have made the blanket assumption that "Brook considers Italian Jews Sephardic."

My research is never based on "wishful thinking" or seeking "status" from a coveted ethnicity but on the best documentary and genetic data I can find at the time. Several dozen Sephardic Jewish men with ancestors from Spain and Portugal really did resettle in the Polish-Lithuanian

Continued at bottom of page 14

Why Get Involved in Genealogy?

Hilary Osofsky

Hilary Osofsky is a retired attorney (commercial finance) for whom relaxation generally consists of researching some aspect of family history, hiking with her family, reading the classics, gardening, or entertaining her grandson. She is also investigating the possibility of patenting an invention. She began genealogy research in memory of her parents, each of whom, in a moment of clarity, realized that there would be no family narrative unless s/he told the story. This article is © 2021 Hilary M. Osofsky.

To skeptics who think that genealogy research amounts to nothing more than collecting a string of names, I suggest that it is a pursuit for the curious-minded who are part history buffs and part puzzle enthusiasts. It offers the following:

Deeper Personal Meaning. By learning the identities and circumstances of our forebears, we gain a deeper sense of identity that can be passed on to our children and to theirs.

Answers to Family Mysteries. Solve family mysteries before they're lost to history, *e.g.*, the identities of our namesakes, the family's place of origin, the whereabouts of lost relatives, or, in my case, determining whether my great-grandfather, born in the Pale of Settlement circa 1849, was actually murdered in South Africa well over a century ago (yes, in 1907, according to the report of the inquest proceedings).

Continuing Education. If family research is done properly, for context, related subjects range from Jewish history or, more broadly, world history to international relations, geopolitics, sociology, law, religious practices, and foreign languages, among others.

Intellectual Stimulation. In addition to acquiring an education in the above diverse subject areas, there is the inevitable obstacle requiring thought, knowledge, perseverance, and strategizing. Genealogy research also offers opportunities for communicating and writing. And it's a reason to improve computer skills.

Social and Family Connections. Make new acquaintances at local genealogy society meetings, renew relations with family members, and discover previously unknown extended family members. I've formed close bonds with a British cousin whom I've never met but speak to regularly by telephone, as well as with a New York cousin who graciously allowed me to stay in his Manhattan apartment during a sudden family emergency.

Flexibility of Scheduling. Most research can be done independently from home and can be worked into or around any schedule, devoting as little or as much time as desired.

Mitzvah. A meaningful benefit is the opportunity for *mitzvah*. For my cousin in England who thought she was alone without family, I found another cousin living in her same city who also thought she was alone, and the two of them have become fast friends. For my cousin in Virginia, I found a lost cousin, his childhood playmate, whom he had dreamed of finding for more than 50 years.

So I would say that family research is an antidote to boredom, isolation, and intellectual stagnation—not to mention a reason to finally go through, organize, and preserve old family photos and mementos.



More Evidence for Sephardic Jews, continued from page 14

Commonwealth, and many of them really did intermarry with the Ashkenazim there. I stand behind the accuracy of most, but not all, of the statements I made in the first five articles in my Sephardic series. In addition to some legitimate or potentially legitimate problems highlighted by the authors, I will add this: In 2018, I learned from Beider that the information in my first article pertaining to the Diniz and Charlap families might possibly be partly or fully imaginary.

Bibliography

Alexander Beider, "Exceptional Ashkenazic Surnames of Sephardic Origin", *Avotaynu: The International Review of Jewish Genealogy*, Winter 2017, pages 3–5.

Joel S. Davidi Weisberger, "Sephardim Real and Imagined: A Response to 'Many Sephardic Jews Aren't Actually "Sephardic"' by Alex Beider", *The Philadelphia Jewish Voice*, 7 February 2018; http://web.archive.org/web/20210120164951if_/https://pjvoice.org/2018/02/07/sephardim-real-and-imagined-a-response-to-many-sephardic-jews-arent-actually-sephardic-by-alex-beider/#.YAhfPR3LFGY.



A Bit More on Name Changes

Jeff Lewy

Jeff Lewy became interested in genealogy to make sense of family photos going back four generations in the United States and Europe and to learn about the people in the photos. Most of his family lines arrived in the United States in the 1840's and 1850's, mostly in Alabama, before settling in Chicago by 1870. His tree now includes seven or more generations for most of his family names. He is the Treasurer of the San Francisco Bay Area Jewish Genealogical Society.

The two articles on Jewish name changes in the May 2021 issue of *ZichronNote* were very informative ("Jewish Americans Changed Their Names" and the book review of *A Rosenberg by Any Other Name*). I would like to offer some comments from personal research to add to the discussion about name changes and variations.

In general, I find that the names of my ancestors tended to vary over time, even for specific individuals. It is my surmise that a single correct spelling is a 20th- and 21st-century obsession, a result of increased literacy and bureaucracy in the last hundred years or so. Spelling appears to be much more variable before then. [Ed.: *In the United States, you see much more consistency in spelling after Social Security was enacted.*] As long as my ancestors were able to identify themselves and be identified by others, that was enough. It can be communicated in the old joke, "You can call me anything you want, just not late for dinner."

Some name changes are really about spelling but not pronunciation. In my family, as an example, on my maternal side I have found Loewenthal and Lowenthal. Both come from the German Löwenthal and result from replacing the "ö", either by dropping the umlaut, which does not commonly appear in English, or following the German convention of using "oe" to replace it.

On a different line on my maternal side I have Loewe and Loewy relatives, using an English-based spelling of the pronunciation of the German Löwe. Some of these relatives changed their name over time in Europe, before immigrating to the United States in the 1870's, while others changed it in the United States to make the spelling and sounds more comparable to English usage. [Ed.: *These are similar to observations I have made that immigrants often changed the spelling of their names here to keep the same pronunciation, or the pronunciation to keep the same spelling.*]

None of my American relatives of either name, using either spelling (including my American-born grandparents, who also spoke German), used the umlaut sound (requiring pursed lips) in pronouncing their names.

I also have a great-grandfather Carl Loewy from (then) Bohemia, who changed his name to Charles Smith after arriving in the United States. I was frustrated for almost a decade in finding out much about him because of the common surname. Family lore says he took it to fit in, at the insistence of his older brother, who preceded him to the United States. That brother, Moritz Loewy, took the name John Smith in the 1850's. I have found almost nothing about John Smith—he not only fit in, he disappeared into the common mass of John Smiths.

I felt a rather sweet revenge when I realized that Charles Smith's family lost the "Smith" in the next generation, and I am grateful to his children for making it vanish. Of six children, three were girls, who all married and took their husbands' surnames. Of the three boys, one died as an infant and one as a single man in his early 20's; the third married but had no children at all.

I agree that anti-Semitism was a significant prod to encourage Jews to change their names. I, however, am a descendant of Jews who all came from German-speaking countries before 1880. One branch of my Loewenthal family changed their name to Low—not when they first arrived, but during World War I, as "protection" against anti-German sentiment that was prevalent during the war. This was also reflected in the falling popularity of German shepherds in those years and their replacement with French poodles.

My conclusion about name changes is that there are many reasons, some accidental and some purposeful, and that even the purposeful changes can occur for a variety of reasons. As a genealogist, I am willing to live with the evolution and mixing of languages and do not look for any "pure and ancient" form, but accept whatever spelling(s) my forebears used, even if they were inconsistent or changed over time.



Invite a Friend to Join SFBAJGS

<http://www.jewishgen.org/sfbajgs/about.html>

Genealogy Newsletters Available to SFBAJGS Members

Many genealogical societies share their newsletters with other societies. This is the current list of newsletters/journals we have received as PDF files. A benefit of membership in SFBAJGS is that you can request to be on the distribution list for any or all of these. Send a message to Dana Kurtz, our Electronic Newsletter Coordinator, at newsletterexchange@sfbajgs.org and let her know which one(s) you would like to receive. Warning: We do not receive all these on a consistent basis.

Organization	Title	Last Received (as of 8/2021)
Argentina JGS (defunct?)	<i>Toldot</i>	4/2007
Australia JGS (New South Wales)	<i>Kosher Koala</i>	7/2019
Australia JGS (Victoria)	<i>Jewish Genealogy Downunder</i>	11/2013
Australia JGS (Western Australia)	<i>Perth Jewish Roots</i>	2/2021
Bergen County JGS (New Jersey) (defunct)	<i>The Gatherers</i>	11/2004
British Columbia JGS		5/2003
Brooklyn (New York)		3/2019
Broward County JGS (Florida) (defunct publication)	<i>Family Gatherings</i>	11/2008
California State Genealogical Alliance (defunct)		6/2013
Cleveland JGS	<i>Kol</i>	12/2017
Conejo Valley and Ventura County JGS (California)	<i>Venturing</i>	8/2021
Connecticut JGS	<i>Quest</i>	2/2019
Denmark JGS		11/2006
Federation of Genealogical Societies (defunct)	<i>Forum</i>	2017
Great Britain JGS	<i>Shemot</i>	12/2014
Greater Miami JGS (Florida)	<i>Branches</i>	7/2021
Greater Philadelphia JGS	<i>Chronicles</i>	4/2008
Greater Washington DC JGS	<i>Mishpacha</i>	4/2012
Illiana JGS (defunct)		9/2017
Illinois JGS	<i>Morasha</i>	6/2012
Israel JGS	<i>IGS News</i>	6/2011
Maryland JGS	<i>L'dor V'dor</i>	6/2019
Michigan JGS	<i>Generations</i>	8/2007
Montreal JGS	<i>Montreal Forum</i>	Summer 2009
Orange County JGS (California)		11/2019
Oregon JGS (defunct publication)	<i>Shalshelet</i>	12/2015
Palm Beach County JGS (Florida)	<i>Scattered Seeds</i>	4/2019
Root Cellar Sacramento GS (California)	<i>GeniGram</i>	9/2019
San Diego JGS (California) (defunct publication)	<i>Discovery</i>	11/2008
South Africa JGS (defunct)	<i>Yichus</i>	8/2005
South Africa JewishGen SIG	<i>Journal of the SA-SIG</i>	7/2018
Southern Nevada JGS	<i>Generations</i>	9/2014
St. Louis Genealogical Society	<i>News 'n Notes</i>	Winter 2020–2021
St. Louis JGS (defunct)	<i>Generations</i>	6/2011
Southwest Florida JGS	<i>Mishpachology</i>	Summer 2021
Sweden JGS	<i>Mishpolgen</i>	2/2015
Switzerland JGS	<i>Maajan Die Quelle</i>	4/2013
Toronto JGS (gap between 2008 and 2016)	<i>Shem Tov</i>	6/2021
Utah JGS (defunct publication)	<i>Atsmi Uvsari</i>	1/2011
Washington State JGS	<i>Evergreen Mishpacha</i>	1/2006
Wisconsin JGS	<i>Family Finding</i>	9/2005



President's Message, continued from page 2

genealogically minded daughter-in-law, who e-mailed me excitedly, wondering if her husband, the great-grandson, could have the books. It's only 122 years late, but the books are now with the family. It was evidently meant to be.

I trust that this continuing pandemic hasn't blunted your genealogical skills. There are any number of free streaming lectures to keep us active. Just last week my New York cousin alerted me to "The Time of Cholera: A Case Study about Historical Context" by Alison Hare, which is about how she used some unusual sources to work out exactly who had died on the London street her ancestor lived on. And of course there was a plethora of online lectures from this year's conference. Fingers crossed, next year in Philadelphia.

On behalf of the board, we all wish you and your family a continued safe and productive summer.



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

Society News, continued from page 3

International Jewish Genealogy Month

International Jewish Genealogy Month (IJGM) is a program of the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies (<http://www.iajgs.org/jgmonth.html>). IJGM is celebrated during the month of Cheshvan, which this year runs from 6 October–4 November on the secular calendar. The purpose of IJGM is to make the public more aware of genealogy and the fact that local Jewish genealogical societies can help them start their research.

This year SFBAJGS will promote IJGM with a talk about one of the best known Jews to immigrate to the United States. On Monday, 18 October, Michael STrauss, AG, will present "Levi Strauss: It's All in the 'Genes'" via Zoom, especially for IJGM.

SFBAJGS on Social Media

SFBAJGS has a YouTube channel, <https://goo.gl/Siy512>. If you have videos of society or other genealogical events you would like to share online, contact publicity director Janice M. Sellers at publicity@sfbajgs.org.

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



Serving the entire Jewish Community for over 110 years



Honoring the dignity of the deceased
and providing compassion and support
for the living

- Advanced planning counseling
- At-need arrangements
- Bereavement support and services
- Burial at all Jewish cemeteries locally and globally

Samuel J. Salkin, Executive Director (FDR 3371)

San Francisco . FD262 . 415.921.3636
East Bay . FD1523 . 925.962.3636
Peninsula - South Bay . FD1830 . 650.369.3636

www.sinaichapel.org



Genealogy Events

Local and Regional

Tuesday, 14 September 2021. David Graf, "Relations between the Client Kingdoms of Judaea and Nabataea." Anglo Israel Archaeological Society. Zoom. secretary@aias.org.uk

Tuesday, 21 September 2021. Lisa Alzo, "Telling the Stories of Your Female Immigrant Ancestors." Santa Clara County Historical and Genealogical Society. Zoom. <http://www.scchgs.org/>

Saturday, 25 September 2021. Thomas MacEntee, "The 1950 Census: Are You Ready?" San Mateo County Genealogical Society. Zoom. <http://www.smcgs.org/>

Monday, 27 September 2021. "Researching the Places Your Ancestors Lived." Oakmont Genealogy Club. Zoom. <https://sites.google.com/site/oakmontgenealogyclub/>

Tuesday, 5 October 2021. Kathy Nielsen, "A New Life for Old Photos: Identifying, Organizing, and Restoring Photos." Genealogical Society of Santa Cruz County. Zoom. <http://scgensoc.org/>

State and National

1 September–18 October 2021. NYG&B New York State Family History Conference @ Home. Online. <https://www.newyorkfamilyhistory.org/nysfhc-home>

Wednesday–Saturday, 9–12 March 2022. RootsTech Connect. Online and FREE. <https://www.rootstech.org/>

Sunday–Thursday, 21–25 August 2022. IAJGS International Conference on Jewish Genealogy. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. <http://www.iajgs2022.org/>

International

6 October–4 November 2021 (Cheshvan 5782). International Jewish Genealogy Month. <http://www.iajgs.org/blog/ijgm/>

For more local, national, and international events, visit <http://www.library.ca.gov/sutro/genealogy/calendar/> and <http://www.conferencekeeper.com/>.

Free Genealogy Webinars (Registration Usually Needed)

Allen County Public Library. <https://acpl.libnet.info/events>
FamilySearch. https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Family_History_Library_Classes_and_Webinars

Florida State Genealogical Society. <http://www.flsgs.org/cpage.php?pt=253>

Georgia Genealogical Society. <http://gagensociety.org/events/webinars>

Illinois State Genealogical Society. <http://ilgensoc.org/cpage.php?pt=234>

International Society for British Genealogy and Family History, 20212–2011 Winter schedule. <https://mailchi.mp/c808efee8d1e/winter-webinar-schedule-2021-22>

Jewish Genealogical Society of New York. <https://jgsny.org/programs-civi/year.listevents/2021/01/24/->

Legacy Family Tree (MyHeritage). <http://familytreewebinars.com/upcoming-webinars.php>

Minnesota Genealogical Society. <http://mnsgs.org/eventListings.php?nm=38>

National WWII Museum. <https://www.nationalww2museum.org/events-programs/events-calendar> (live); <https://www.youtube.com/c/wwiimuseum/videos> (recorded)

Ontario Genealogical Society. <https://ogs.on.ca/webinars-2020>

Southern California Genealogical Society. <http://www.scsgenealogy.com/>

Utah Genealogical Association. <https://ugagenealogy.org/cpage.php?pt=11>

Wisconsin State Genealogical Society. <http://wsgs.org/cpage.php?pt=127>

Some Recorded Genealogy Webinar Libraries

Center for Jewish History. <https://www.facebook.com/watch/centerforjewishhistory/501317183869918/>

Clark County (Washington) Genealogy. <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCU3xUStuw4Na0hAZ0XMfMvQ>

FindMyPast. <https://www.youtube.com/user/findmypast>

Jewish Genealogical Society of Long Island. <https://jgsli.org/>; <https://jgsli.org/youtube/>

JewishGen. <https://www.jewishgen.org/live>, <https://www.youtube.com/user/JewishGen613/videos>

JDC Archives. <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCMbxlm35r4F4kHPhpp-MFSg>

Los Angeles Public Library Genealogy Garage. <https://tinyurl.com/3rpf7yc>

Moment Magazine. https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL7oVkadwPksjzJ_i0J1UZ6ulledRSclx2 (several relevant to genealogy)

Sephardic Genealogy. <https://www.youtube.com/c/SephardicGenealogyAndHistory>

Sephardic World. https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLmVEojTkF-DPooNu_-Jzi4I4t23P0Pweb

YIVO Institute for Jewish Research. <https://www.youtube.com/user/yivoinstitute>





SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA JEWISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

a 501(c)(3) non-profit Tax ID 94-2948891

Membership, P.O. Box 318214, San Francisco, CA 94131

Thanks for your support!

2021 Membership. Check one: ☐ New member ☐ Renewing member

Name(s): _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____ Email: _____

New Members: How did you find out about SFBAJGS? _____

Dues for 2021:

\$23.00 Regular Membership

\$ _____ Contribution. (Dues and contribution are tax-deductible)

\$ _____ Total enclosed

Make checks payable to SFBAJGS or use these payment options:

Use either Credit Card or PayPal Go to link www.sfbajgs.org/about.html
and look under "Join the SFBAJGS"

Does your employer offer a **Matching Gift** program for charitable contributions?

Newsletter options. Normally we will send you the SFBAJGS newsletter, *ZichronNote*, as a PDF file. If we don't have your email, you do not have a computer, or you cannot download materials, check below and we will send your newsletter by regular mail.

☐ I am unable to download the newsletter. Please send a printed version by regular mail.

Want to be more involved with SFBAJGS activities? Please check your areas of interest.

☐ Membership ☐ Newsletter ☐ Publicity ☐ Program Development ☐ Digitizing Paper Records
☐ Website Development ☐ Congregational Liaison ☐ Meeting Coordination

Family Finder information. This will be maintained on file with the SFBAJGS and periodically shared with the membership. ☐ Check here if you do NOT want your information to be shared.

Please print clearly. New members: Please fill in as completely as you can.

Renewing members: No need to repeat, just update with new information and changes.

SURNAME

Location

Continue on reverse side if necessary. Please mail to above address or email pdf to treasurer@SFBAJGS.org

SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA JEWISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

2021 Membership Form page 2 (optional)

SURNAME

Location

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Upcoming SFBAJGS Events

Currently all scheduled events are being held online with Zoom.

Sunday, 19 September: *Holding a Family Tree-union on Zoom.* Member David Milgram will describe how he put together a socially distanced online family reunion during the COVID pandemic.

Monday, 18 October: *Levi Strauss: It's All in the "Genes."* Michael Strauss, AG, will discuss one of California's best known pioneers. Levi Strauss was a businessman and philanthropist, and his relatives still live in the San Francisco Bay area.

Sunday, 21 November: *Here Comes the 1950 U.S. Census! What to Expect.* Census enthusiast and creator of tools for Steve Morse's One-Step site Joel Weintraub will describe the 1950 census, its questions, location tools, and more.

Sunday, 12 December: *Tracing Your Jewish Family in Ukraine.* Alex Krakovsky, who has been successful with lawsuits against Ukrainian archives to get access to records, will describe how he is making those records available online.

See page 22 for other events of interest.

For more program information and to register for a presentation, visit <http://www.sfbajgs.org/>.
