JGSGP News

With great enthusiasm, we pick up the task of communicating our love for genealogy while striving to share our knowledge, successes and genealogical challenges with each other.

On behalf of JGSGP, we want to extend a huge “thank you” to Mark Halpern, who single-handedly published and distributed Chronicles to our membership for many years. Today, that job is simply too much for any single individual, so your new editorial board, consisting of Evan Fishman, Ed Flax, Cindy Meyer, Selma Neubauer and Kaye Paletz, has agreed to work together on all aspects of Chronicles. Our efforts will include soliciting articles from members, searching for items we can reprint from other genealogical and general publications, graphics and design, editing, electronic and traditional mail distribution.

Many of us are computer literate and actively online, and consequently we are moving in the direction of distributing Chronicles as an electronic file, that will reach each of us more rapidly, appear in full color with online links to additional information and resources, and allow complete flexibility when it comes to the page-count and organization of our journal. Those who aren’t quite as computer savvy yet can still look forward to a print edition. We look forward to a continuing conversation with you, as we refine our concepts and consider your ideas and suggestions and to increased connections with our friends in the genealogical community.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our love of genealogy with each of you.

Your Chronicles Editorial Board

President’s Message

Welcome to the return of Chronicles, with our new look and a new editorial board. Unfortunately we have been unable to publish Chronicles for some time, but we are now up and running. Our thanks to Mark Halpern, who for many years was our editor and did an outstanding job. He has given us a wealth of information that we will be publishing along with many new articles.

Our society has been very active. We hosted the IAJGS Conference in 2009 with over 1000 attendees from around the world. We received rave reviews for the programming and our volunteers. We continue to have monthly meetings with a variety of informative speakers at various locations; Keneseth Israel, Rodeph Shalom, Mikveh Israel and the Gershman Y.

Our new Strategic Planning Committee, chaired by Steve Schecter has great plans for us and has motivated many of us to get more involved. Steve has also created a Beginners Workshop curriculum that he has been teaching in New Jersey and other locations. Jim Meyer has volunteered to take on the improvement of our website. These are key projects to improve our member communication and outreach to the community.

Another exciting development is a project by Boy Scout, Ian Montgomery. For his Eagle Scout project Ian took on the enormous task of cleaning, photographing and indexing the graves at the now-closed Mt. Carmel Cemetery. Ian has given us his data which we are placing on the JewishGen JOWBAR site.

Again, I would like to give special thanks to Mark Halpern, Steve Schecter, David Mink, Evan Fishman, Ed Flax, Jim and Cindy Meyer and Stan and Shelda Sandler for their service to our society. More information to come in future issues of Chronicles. Looking forward to seeing you at our meetings.

Fred Blum - President
Subscriptions & Change of Address

CHRONICLES (ISSN 0893-2921) is the quarterly publication of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Philadelphia. It is free to JGSGP members and to JGS Societies in the newsletter courtesy-exchange program. Printed and mailed back issues are available at $4.00 each in the US and $7.00 outside the US. Chronicles is published quarterly and distributed electronically in PDF format. Please supply the editor with your updated email address to ensure on-time delivery.

JGSGP Membership

Membership dues and contributions are tax-deductible to the full extent of the law. Please make checks payable to JGSGP and mail to the address below. Please include your email address and zip+4 code.

Annual Dues (January 1 - Dec. 31)
Individual............................................................. $25
Family of two, per household...............................$35
Sponsor..................................................................$50
Patron.................................................................$100
Non-resident (beyond 90 miles)............................$15
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Overseas...............................................................$21

Membership Applications / Renewals and Payments to: JGSGP • PO Box 335 • Exton, PA 19341-0335 educonser@comcast.net

Editorial Contributions

Submission of articles on genealogy for publication in CHRONICLES is enthusiastically encouraged. Please keep a copy of your material. Anything you want returned should be accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope.

While email and other electronic files are highly preferred, the editors will be happy to work with you and your material in any form. If you have an idea, please contact Evan Fishman of the Editorial Board by email: ebf2001@comcast.net or by phone at 856-667-2077.

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It all began with Isaac’s Certificate of Naturalization, saved by my mother, which led to his Declaration of Intent and Petition for Naturalization at the National Archives Mid-Atlantic Region in Philadelphia, PA. His Declaration gave all the necessary information, including the facts that Isaac left from the port of Antwerp, Belgium on May 6, 1902, on the ship “Philadelphia”, and came to the port of Philadelphia on May 20, 1902. But, the ship “Philadelphia” did not leave from the port of Antwerp, nor did it come to the port of Philadelphia; it went to New York. The soundex of the name Wagman (and many spelling variations) did not lead to Isaac arriving at the ports of Philadelphia, New York, Baltimore, etc.

As the years went on, I began to use the HIAS and Ethnic Bank records at the Philadelphia Jewish Archives Center. I learned that on April 9, 1904, Itzek Wagman purchased a ticket for his son Josel at the Rosenbaum Bank. On June 29, 1904, Itzek Wagman purchased another ticket for his son, Josel, at the Blitzstein Bank.

On his Declaration, Isaac said that he arrived on May 20, 1902. From the Bank records, I knew that he was in Philadelphia in April 1904. Another record at PJAC is called “Record of the Association of Jewish Passengers Arriving at the Port of Philadelphia”. The records are handwritten, and are recorded by month, date, year, ship, names of Jewish passengers, sex, age, place of nativity, vocation, ticketed for (usually city, state). For nearly a year, three times a week, for ½ hour each time, I went through the films starting in 1901.

On May 20, 1903, there he was, ISAAC UGMAN, age 32, on board the “Switzerland”, from Russia, no vocation,
going to Bristol, PA. The name was close, but the clue was Bristol, PA where I knew there were cousins and Isaac’s oldest son, in later years. When Isaac went to file his Declaration, he did give the right month, date and port of departure. At the National Archives, I found the ship manifest for the “Switzerland”, and there he was, JSAK UGMAN. Then I found the soundex card.

This example of the use of the HIAS and Bank records also teaches a lesson in the use of a foreign language by our immigrants, and what was heard by the people asking for the information. Isaac had a thick Yiddish accent, and I could hear him pronouncing Wagman as vUgman. Isaac is spelled correctly on the HIAS record, and it is probably spelled Isak on the ship manifest. But the “I” looks like a “J” and that is how it is recorded on the soundex card.

Contact JGSGP Member and former Co-President, Selma Neubauer at: selmanew@verizon.net

ONE PERSON’S QUEST TO FIND AND RESTORE THE GRAVES OF THE TRIANGLE FIRE’S VICTIMS
TRIANGLE SHIRTWAIST FACTORY FIRE: A CENTURY LATER

by Michael Hirsch

Scattered among 16 cemeteries around New York they came to rest, the 146 people whose lives were violently cut short 100 years ago in one of the nation’s worst industrial disasters — the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire.

A few years ago, I set out to see if I could learn who these people were in an effort to finally identify all who had perished on that awful day, March 25, a century ago. Incredibly, this had never been accomplished before. The newspapers of 1911 hadn’t done it, nor had the city of New York. The few lists that existed were riddled with errors, misspellings and phantoms.

At the time, I figured this might take a few weeks or perhaps even a few months, and I wonder now if I would have begun the journey had I realized that the task would take longer than four years. It required an extensive search of records, newspapers and archives all over the city, and ultimately would lead me to the graves of all those who died. Locating these burial sites would turn out to be the most difficult and emotional work of the entire project, especially those of the Jewish victims whose burial societies had long been closed, leaving behind ancient headstones that had deteriorated into abysmal conditions.

Slowly, over weeks and months that led to years, I scoured badly overgrown and untended burial grounds, seeking headstones that often turned out to be entombed under decades of old growth or lying in shattered, barely legible pieces on the ground. With each person I discovered there came an inevitable feeling of exhilaration, followed soon thereafter by an overwhelming sense of sadness with the realization that these martyrs of the labor movement had not only been forgotten by their fellow countrymen who owed them so much, but also by their families as well. Many of these gravesites had not been visited by anyone in over half a century, if ever at all.

Somehow, I found myself making a promise to these complete strangers that I would not forget them. That, now that they were found, I would act as a kind of place holder for their family until the day came when their real kin returned.

So for the past three years I have visited the Jews before the
High Holy Days and the Christians before Christmas, and before the yearly fire anniversary I have visited them all.

I suppose it must sound a bit crazy to do something like this, but as I came to know their stories and, in some cases their families, I began to feel a special responsibility to them, a responsibility that comes from the knowledge that I was probably the only person on earth who knew where they were and who cared about that. Over time what began as a commitment to visitation and remembrance grew into a mitzvah of preservation and restoration as well.

It seemed so very wrong to me that their resting places were such a mess, I just felt the need to act. Somewhat spontaneously three summers ago, I could no longer stand by looking at 25-year-old Bessie Dashefsky’s badly overgrown gravesite. So, with a pair of clippers in hand I started cutting until finally, three hours later, Bessie’s grave, along with those of three others buried next to her, were free of thickets and vines. Her stone is still a broken ruin, but at least now her family can find her, pray for her and leave a stone atop what’s left of her memorial.

Over time I have been able to restore the graves of Anna Altman at United Hebrew Cemetery; those of sisters Rose and Sarah Brenman and that of Beckie Neubauer at Baron Hirsch Cemetery, and to purchase a new headstone for Jacob Bernstein at Mount Richmond Cemetery. Recently this mitzvah of mine expanded again into an effort to convince local synagogues, churches, schools and community groups to adopt a Triangle victim’s gravesite. More than 80 of their resting places are in serious need of repair and restoration, including 15 that never received a headstone at all.

Not long ago, I told my friend Leigh Benin, who is a cousin of Triangle victim Rosie Oringer, that through all of this I have come to feel a little bit that I, too, have become a kind of distant cousin to Rosie and the others. He said to me, “You know, one definition of family [is] the people who know your story.” Maybe that’s true.

Michael Hirsch is a researcher and co-producer of the HBO documentary film, “Triangle: Remembering the Fire,” who recently identified the last six victims of the 1911 disaster. Contact Michael Hirsch at feedback@forward.com

Social Networking Websites:
A Virtual Playground for Genealogists
by James Gross

For those genealogists who seek to connect or reconnect with their known relatives, the development and popularity of online social networks may prove to be an invaluable resource.

Depending on when one began their genealogy research, some of you may recall a time in the not so distant past when communications with family members were primarily conducted via postal mail or the telephone. This began to change as the computer became more widely available.

I can recall a time back in 1985 when an Apple IIe was considered to be an amazing piece of technology. I first used a computer for dial-up back in 1988. It was a 386 laptop. I used it to log into user groups online with a dial-up modem. Eventually I upgraded to a faster computer. Computers gradually improved as the technology became more advanced. In recent years, dial-up access has been gradually replaced by cable. In 2007, I finally made the switch in my internet access from unreliable dial-up access to fast ethernet cable access.

Some readers may have similar experiences in terms of how they personally experienced the evolution of computer technology in their lives. This march in technology has resulted in faster computers, faster internet access, and increased access to online information and databases. People have found that computers can be very useful tools for communication and information retrieval.

And, as computer use has become more popular, the usage of email has emerged as a commonplace and accepted method of communication. Many people, including genealogists, have been quick to take advantage of this tool for communication with family members.
Recently, another communication forum has emerged which may serve to further enhance genealogy research and family contacts. It is the advent of the online virtual social networking website. These online social networks, which include such websites as Facebook, Myspace, and Linkedin, act as virtual playgrounds where people can choose to interact with their friends and colleagues. They can also choose to be known, or to be anonymous.

In my own social networking experience, I have found Facebook to be the most useful networking website for my goal of locating relatives. It is simply amazing to see how so many relatives, especially the younger ones, are on Facebook. For example, a blogger named Robyn recently posted the following timely comment: “I have often wondered if Facebook could be a good tool for today’s genealogist.” (4)

A similar view on the merits of Facebook was voiced by blogger Robert Ragan. Ragan, in his blog entitled, “How do You Feel about Facebook - Waste of Time or Great Genealogy 2.0 Online Social Tool,” discussed the merits and advantages of using Facebook for locating relatives. (5)

Terri W. in a post on Robert Ragan’s blog, commented, “Facebook has helped me keep in touch with cousins I haven’t talked to in years. It also tells me when friends are online and allows me to ‘chat’ with them” (6) And, Aaron S., a sophomore at Vassar College, observed that Facebook had helped him keep in touch with his parents, grandparents, aunts, and uncles. Suzuka commented that, “Facebook allows all of us to keep in touch, even though we are all over the country or in different countries.” (7)

I will admit that the search engine options within Facebook may not be perfect, but with some perseverance, one can still manage to identify a number of relatives. I have found that Facebook contact is a much faster method of locating relatives, especially younger ones, as opposed to depending on slow postal mail.

I have also noticed how these social networking sites appear to be a less invasive method of initial contact as opposed to using the telephone. As many of you know, in today’s mobile society, not everyone has land lines, much less published phone numbers.

According to an online article reprinted from the National Genealogy Society newsmagazine, social networking sites such as Facebook, “provide a way for genealogists to quickly and easily share information about their research with their families, especially with people who think they are ‘not interested’ in genealogy.” (8)

In order to use Facebook or Myspace to locate someone, you must first sign up for a free account. After you are signed up, you can begin to locate friends and family, school buddies, college friends - the list is endless.

In terms of methodology, I have found it useful to begin by first locating relatives with obscure names and then attempting to mine their “friend’s list” for other known relatives. This method has worked well for me, especially when faced with the alternative of a name search involving a common surname. The reason is that those users with common names, depending on their identified city and state, can be more difficult to identify as relatives.

Users of social networking sites, such as Facebook, should be aware of some current issues related to privacy concerns. Recently, there have been number of articles and blogs, including an article in PC World, regarding Facebook’s decision to change their policy on user data. (9) The issue is how the user data is collected and how it affects user privacy.

User privacy can be a very important issue for some people. In fact, this issue is so important, that one consumer advocacy group, the Electronic Privacy Information Center (EPIC), recently filed a complaint with the FTC (10). Their complaint was focused on Facebook’s recently proposed changes to their privacy policy and default user settings.

In addition, groups including the Consumer Federation of America, the American Library Association, the Privacy Rights Now Coalition, and Foolproof, also added themselves to the EPIC complaint. (11)

So, what is all the fuss about? An important issue deals with Facebook’s decision to change user default settings. The new settings could result in more of the user’s Facebook data to be preset to be public rather than visible only to friends. There is also the risk that some personal user information, could be deemed publicly available information and shared with Facebook’s commercial software developers.

As social networking websites, like Facebook, have gained popularity, they have also exponentially increased the potential to attract dishonest people and schemes. As Jordan Jones noted, “the biggest concerns voiced about Facebook over the years have been about privacy and security…” (12)

Whether it is the inclusion of a town name, an identified organization, or some other identifying information, some Facebook users are becoming more concerned about personal safety.

Hopefully, social networking websites will soon realize the importance of ensuring that their users feel free to engage others without worrying about safety. Issues such as privacy mining and
human predators are real and should not be ignored by the user.

Of course, the ultimate guardian of privacy is the user. If social networking users do not want their potentially embarrassing activities made public, then they should keep their photos private, delete them, or take a few minutes to review their privacy settings.

In closing, social networking websites, such as Facebook, can be a real asset to one’s genealogy efforts. While one should be cognizant of the pitfalls, social websites such as Facebook can be a real bonus for locating relatives. Privacy issues aside, I can attest to the usefulness and benefit of conducting searches for relatives on social networking websites. Even if you can only locate the younger relatives, they can often refer you to their parents or other older family members.

James Gross is a former micrographic technician with the National Archives in College Park, MD. He has worked on personal genealogy research since 1991. He can be reached at: larklane@juno.com

References:
(6) Ibid.

Book Review

Historic Synagogues of Philadelphia & The Delaware Valley: by Julian Preisler
by Steve Schecter

While not the largest or the oldest American Jewish community, Philadelphia and its surrounding areas have long been a center of Jewish heritage and thought. Much of it is reflected in the neighborhoods where Jewish people lived with the synagogues they built and attended. Like Jewish communities everywhere, differences in interpretation of Jewish law spawned multiple synagogues in a neighborhood – ranging from degrees of Orthodoxy to Traditional to Conservative to Reconstructionist to Reform thought. Divisions carried from “the old country” of German, Russian, Hungarian, Litvak, Galitzianer, Sephardic, Rumanian, etc., etc., etc. backgrounds, interpretations and disagreements combined with “shtetl based shuls” to further increase the number of synagogues. And the migration of the Jewish population from neighborhood to neighborhood and from city to suburb along with continued mergers and congregational separations further enrich the mix.

Julian Preisler begins to tell of this rich history through pictures of many of the synagogues that were established. While buildings have been leveled or converted to churches, they still reflect the history of a vibrant Jewish population. Julian has documented much of this history in one of the more thorough picture collections of past and current Philadelphia area synagogues.

Using his acknowledged volunteers and local archives to supplement his personal collection, he provides 127 pages of black and white pictures of Southeastern Pennsylvania, Southern New Jersey and Delaware synagogues. He documents much of the Jewish footprint left on this area ranging from the large better known congregations to the small shieblach, from the “shuls” that are currently active to those formerly so.

Mr. Preisler, the son of Holocaust survivors, uses his experience as a genealogist and archivist to supplement his pictures with a
brief Jewish history of the region and local synagogue architecture. He also takes significant effort to accurately describe each of his photographs.

While at first look this book appears to cover much of the same ground as Allen Meyers’ work, this is not the case. Unlike Meyers, Julian focuses exclusively on synagogues. He describes the book as “not an exhaustive photographic or historical catalogue, but rather a relaxed, informal look at the various styles, sizes and types of synagogues that can be found in Philadelphia and the Delaware Valley.” Even this “relaxed look” is a daunting task. While a few errors and oversights remain, Julian has gotten it mostly correct, a tribute to his rigor. This is an effective supplement to his internet book of North American Synagogues (available at http://www.americansynagoguearchitecture.com/). An index of sites and a more organized theme would be helpful. This book is a valuable step forward in documenting our Jewish history in the area. I recommend it both for its perspective and for the warm feelings it engenders in seeing the shuls of our youth or bar or bat mitzvahs and the rekindled memories of parents, bubbas, zadyas, friends and neighbors praying together in a Jewish Community.

Reviewer Steve Schecter is Vice President - Programs of JGSGP. Contact him at: stevehs46@gmail.com

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**Book Review**

The Life and Times of Congregation Kesher Israel
by Harry D. Boonin. 192 pages. $29.95
Self-published, 2008

*by Bill Gladstone*

Society Hill, a picturesque area of colonial Philadelphia, was home to this old synagogue, around which grew a lively community of Eastern European Jewish immigrants in the late 19th century. Kesher Israel played a significant role in the rise of early American Zionism, just as two other nearby institutions—Independence Hall and the Liberty Bell—are central symbols of American freedom.

The book is a superb example of a well-established genre of Jewish historical writing that focuses on given synagogues or communities. Its value to genealogists lies in its colorful portrait of an early, important Jewish community and the many pioneers associated with it. A sample of how well the author envisions the milieu: "Curbside and pushcart markets, teams of horses flying over cobblestone streets, immigrants just off steamers from Europe, cigar smoke and pickle barrels, numbers writers and union enforcers, dreamers and paupers, teahouses and saloons, pool halls and feed stores—and in the middle of this excitement was the synagogue."

Boonin, a long-time president of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Philadelphia and well-known genealogical researcher and writer, has produced a loving, first-rate history replete with dozens of photographs redolent of Jewish life in decades past. Anyone with roots in the Philadelphia area—indeed, anyone who likes fully illustrated and easily readable Jewish histories—will find this book highly interesting and even enchanting.

Reviewer Bill Gladstone is a writer and frequently reviews books for *AVOTAYNU*. This book review was originally published in *AVOTAYNU*, Volume XXIV, No. 2, Fall 2008. Republished with permission of the author.

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**Finding Information About My Uncle, Baruch Yitzhak Thau**
with the Help of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) at the 29th IAJGS in Philadelphia, PA

*by Stanley R. Sandler*
After World War II, my mother asked the HIAS organization in NYC to determine whether her brother, Baruch Yitzhak Thau, and his wife, Esther Kunig Thau, survived the Holocaust. After HIAS made a search, they reported that no trace of the Tai Family was to be found and that they probably were killed by the Nazis. Before WW II, they were living in Kolomyja, Poland. We were told by HIAS that they had many reports indicating that Kolomyja suffered greatly during the Holocaust.

Now that the ITS Records were becoming available to the USHMM, I submitted a request on May 20, 2008 [1] to get information on the fate of Baruch Yitzhak Thau. I received a response on September 17, 2008 indicating that no index card in the ITS files was located but that several other records concerning Baruch Yitzhak Thau were found. This case was then transferred to a senior research staff member at the USHMM for further review.

I was very fortunate to have the USHMM available in the Resource Room at the Conference. To my surprise and good fortune, the senior research staff member (Ms. Megan Lewis) who had worked on this case was present. With her computer resources, she was able to check her file and said that a very long e-mail was sent to me but it may have not been possible to be received by my computer. On her return to Washington, DC, she transferred the documents that she found [2] to a CD and mailed the CD to me. I opened the file and found documents covering the years 1932-1939 [3]. These documents indicated that Baruch Yitzhak Thau was a member of the Jewish community in Kolomyja, Poland and that he was paying his yearly dues as shown on the lists in the documents. We now know that he was alive in Kolomyja, Poland at least until 1939 when all correspondence with him was abruptly terminated. We can only surmise that he and his wife were killed in the Shoah.

I was also very fortunate to meet Rabbi Shalom Bronstein at the Conference and hear his talks [4]. It was at his urging that I submitted Pages of Testimony to Yad Vashem’s Holocaust-Shoah Victims Data Base for Baruch Yitzhak Thau and his wife, Esther Kunig Thau.

1. USHMM Case #6973.
2. According to the USHMM, the original documents are located in the Ivano-Frankovsk Archive in the Ukraine. The Archive only sent copies to the USHMM.
3. Documents were listed in Fond: 320, Opis: 1 and Delo: 2, 4, 10, 12, 14, and 15, for documents titled: “Gminy Wyznaniowej Zyd, na rok 1932, 1933, 1936, 1937, 1938 and 1939” “Lista platnikow sladk-Kolomyja, Stanislawow.
4. Rabbi Shalom Bronstein’s talks were entitled: “Galicia Doctors’ Project (at Yad Vashem)” and “Yad Vashem-A Potential Genealogical Resource”-29th IAJGS Conference in Philadelphia, PA, August 2-7, 2009.

Stanley R. Sandler is an active member of JGSGP
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Sharei Israel Synagogue
4th & Porter Streets, Philadelphia, PA

by Harry D. Boonin

One of the most popular synagogues in South Philadelphia, Sharei Israel, 4th & Porter Streets, Philadelphia, closed thirty years ago.

When synagogues closed, they made different decisions as to what to do with their yahrzeit boards. A yahrzeit board from Sharei Israel was transferred at some point to Congregation Kesher Israel, 412 Lombard Street, Philadelphia, and it hangs there today. The lights are still lit to commemorate the death of those whose name appears on this board.

The board itself is dated 1962 although individual deaths are noted on the board that predate that date. Most of the dates of death are after World War II, many being in the 1940s. There are a few older plaques. There are 100 individual plaques on this board. I have abstracted all the names and if you will send me an email, I will see if a name you are looking for is there. The information on each plaque includes the name of the person who died and the date of death.

Sharei Israel began in 1913 and was incorporated in 1916. It closed in 1978. When it closed it transferred its other assets to Emes V’Zedek in Beit Shean, Israel. Their new name is Shari Israel-emes V’Zedek.

Harry D. Boonin is the founding president of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Philadelphia and well-known genealogical researcher and writer. Contact him at: harryboonin@gmail.com

T458: Old INS Correspondence & Case Files at the National Archives

by James Gross

For the determined and methodical researcher, doing research on NARA microfilm, Series T458, RG 85, entry 6, may prove to be time well spent. This mi-
microfilm series (T458) is an obscure source relating to immigration. This 31 roll series, entitled, “Subject Index to Correspondence and Case Files of the Immigration and Naturalization Service,” consists of old INS microfilmed index cards which contain file numbers used by NARA staff to identify and pull the textual files. Be aware that not all files can be located. Some files have been disposed of, lost, misfiled or transferred. According to Reference Archivist Suzanne Harris, the index to the series is referred to as RG85, entry 6, while the actual records reside in several series and are identified as entry 7, entry 9, entry 26, and so forth.[1]

According to the T458 Finding Aid (INS Reference Guide), the textual collection, housed at the National Archives (Archives I) in Washington, DC, consists of old INS immigration correspondence as well as case files dating from approximately 1906-1957, though a few cards date back to 1903. [2] Per the T458 Finding Aid, the majority of T458 references are to INS subject correspondence in the “56,000 Series”. The 2 files which I researched were from the “56,000 Series” aka “Subject & Correspondence Files”. Archivist Suzanne Harris advised me that the T458 material may also include references to Bureau of Naturalization correspondence, Chinese correspondence, visa files, and alien registration records, as well as naturalization files which are in the custody of the US Citizenship & Immigration Services (USCIS). [3]

The researcher should be aware that this roll series, given to NARA by the INS, is arranged by a somewhat challenging subject list and not by surname. There is no complete listing of subject headings. A basic roll list, indexed by subject, is at the end of the T458 finding aid as well as on the LDS Family History Library website. [4]

I developed an interest in this roll series based upon 2 genealogical articles. The first article appeared in “Avotaynu”. [5] It was co-written by Marian Smith and Valery Bazarov. Marian Smith is the Senior Historian at the History Office of USCIS. The authors listed, as one of their source references, NARA series T458, RG 85, entry 9. The second article entitled, “Hebrew Immigrant Cases, 1906-1914”, appeared in “Chronicles”. [6] It listed as reference, T458, RG 85, entry 9. The Chronicles article referred to a website [7] with a database listing of Hebrew immigrants for the period 1903-1924 who had cases brought before the immigration board. With Ms. Harris help, I obtained a small file on a possible relative. Though I managed to find one relevant file, I was able to determine that not all files exist.

I limited my search to a few key items. I looked for “Jews” on roll 18, and found an entry which read “See Hebrews”. On roll 16 there are a number of entries under the heading of “Hebrews”. On roll 15 there is an entry for “German-Jewish Childrens Aid, Inc.” This was a WWII era, US based, nonprofit refugee organization. [See images below]. These entries turned out to consist of 2 large folders. Suzanne Harris had both folders pulled for me. I went through the folders in Archives I, Central Reading Room. On roll 21 are listed many civic as well as social organizations, under “Organizations.”

With regard to accessing these 31 rolls, the researcher is in luck, even if they do not happen to live near a regional National Archives facility. [9] There are a number of libraries who own this film series. [10] and, the LDS (Mormon Church) family history library microfilmed a copy of this roll series. [11] You can therefore access the microfilmed index at any LDS family history center in the world.[12]

James Gross previously worked for the National Archives in College Park, MD. He can be reached at: larklane@juno.com

3. Finding Aid (INS Guide) is available at NARA. Contact Suzanne Harris, National Archives, Washington, DC (202-501-5395, x330)
4. T458 Roll list found at: http://www.familysearch.org/Eng/Library/fhlcatalog/supermainframeset.asp?display=titlesearch&columns=*,0,0 under title search “subject, case files.”
JGSGP Founding President
Harry D. Boonin Receives Award
by Mark Halpern

At the 2009 IAJGS International Conference on Jewish Genealogy Awards Banquet, our founding President, Harry Boonin was the recipient of two honors -- both well deserved.

The International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies bestowed their 2009 award for Outstanding Contribution to Jewish Genealogy via the Internet, Print, or Electronic Product. The award was for authoring two books pertaining to the history of the Philadelphia Jewish Community.

**The Jewish Quarter of Philadelphia: A History and Guide 1881-1930** grew out of the walking tours that Harry conducted around the South Street area. That area was filled with synagogues, sweatshops, bathhouses and Jewish institutions which Harry describes in the book. It was awarded the Ben Franklin Award of Excellence for Educational Books/Directories in 2000. The Jewish Quarter of Philadelphia is available through the Avotaynu catalogue.

**The Life and Times of Congregation Kesher Israel** is the story of the synagogue at 4th and Lombard Streets in Philadelphia, from its beginnings in 1897 to its recent history. It can be purchased using the order form at http://www.jewishgen.org/jgsp/Boonin_Book.doc.

JGSGP also honored Harry with a special award for "lifelong" dedication to the Society and its objectives. In presenting the award, David Mink, Conference Co-Chair, cited Harry for his foresight as a founding member and President of the Society, for his wisdom in recreating the story of our ancestors early years in America and Philadelphia, and for his enthusiasm which is an inspiration to all of us. David presented to Harry an original oil painting of the interior of the "The Little Shul" by Philadelphia artist Ed Bronstein.

"The Little Shul" - Congregation Shivtei Yeshuron Ezras Israel - is located at 2015 S. 4th Street, Philadelphia, PA. It is a small synagogue in South Philly, which was founded in 1876. The congregation moved into its current building in 1909, and has continued to hold services on a regular basis. This Orthodox Shul is the last remains of a large Jewish population that Harry writes about in his books. Harry has prayed here and is a supporter of its restoration on its 100th anniversary.

Well known Philadelphia landscape artist, Ed Bronstein (see his website: http://www.edbronstein.com), donated his painting as a fundraiser for The Little Shul. JGSGP purchased this painting to support the restoration of the Shul, a cause Harry cares deeply about.

An Unexpected Surprise at Philly2009
by Shelda Carol Bachin Sandler

Philadelphia2009, the 29th IAJGS Conference which was held in Philadelphia, was the first such conference I have ever attended. As Co-Chair of the Hospitality Desk, the conference and everything about it was a memorable experience which I will always cherish. I met so many interesting people and enjoyed being at the Hospitality Desk so much that I missed most of the sessions I had planned to attend!

There was, however, one film in particular that I wanted very much to see. I did not know anything about the film. The only "draw" it had for me was its name: "No. 4 Street of Our Lady." I had no idea what it was about except that the title sounded fascinating. Now I know that it was beshert that I attended that showing.

My story begins back in November 2008 while I was reading the November/December 2008 issue of The Penn Stater, a
magazine published by the Penn State Alumni Association. Yes, I am a devoted Penn State graduate! As I leafed through the magazine that quiet Shabbos afternoon, I came to an article titled The Family Tree. This true story tells about Judy Maltz, a Penn State filmmaker who, along with two other Penn State filmmakers, traveled back to Sokal, a town located in Poland during World War II (now in Ukraine). Traveling with Judy Maltz and the other two filmmakers were Judy’s father, her aunt, and a close family friend. The latter three, who were children during the war, had not been back to Sokal for 63 years. For two years during the Holocaust, these three people plus other members of the Maltz family were hidden in a hayloft above a pigsty in the home of Francisca Halamajowa, a Polish Catholic woman who risked her life to help Jews, like the Maltz family, hide from the Nazis. According to the story in The Penn Stater, of the 6,000 Jews who lived in Sokal before the war, only 30 survived. Francisca Halamajowa saved half of them.

I read the story with tears streaming down my cheeks. That night, after Shabbos, I e-mailed a letter to the editor of The Penn Stater magazine. Two days later, on Monday, November 3rd, I received an e-mail from the Contributing Editor stating that he would like to add my letter to those being considered for publication in a future issue. It appeared in the March/April 2009 edition and was the only letter published about “The Family Tree”. Below my letter, there was a comment from the editor that No. 4 Street of Our Lady would premier at the State Theatre in State College on March 1st. I was overwhelmed that my letter was considered worthy of being printed and that the documentary had become a reality. The title of the film never registered in my mind.

Now fast forward to Philly2009 and what was one highlight of many for me at the conference. As I sat watching the film, I knew something about the story seemed familiar; yet I could not pinpoint what it was. The name Francisca Halamajowa sounded familiar. Even so, no recollection was forthcoming. Imagine my surprise when I realized that I knew the events that were going to happen before they actually happened in the film! I then knew that I had either read or heard this story before…but where? It finally occurred to me that I was watching the documentary filmed by the Penn State filmmakers. Just to be sure I was correct, I carefully watched as the credits scrolled over the screen at the end of the film. Indeed, Penn State was named. When the lights came on and Alex Denisenko was answering questions about the film, he confirmed that this was Judy Maltz’s documentary and the story of her family’s survival during two years of the Holocaust.

When the film ended, I all but ran back to the Hospitality Desk to tell my husband and the other volunteers about the powerful and moving film I had just seen. What a beautiful experience for me! What a memorable highlight of Philly2009! I’m convinced it was beshert. ❖

Sherda Carol Bachin Sandler, a member of JGSGP who can be reached at stanshel@msn.com

Reflections on the 29th IAJGS Philadelphia Conference
As we look forward to the 31st IAJGS conference, August 2011--Washington, DC

by Kamila Klauzinska, M.A.

Following his 1842 American tour, Charles Dickens characterized its residents as follows (American Notes for General Circulation, p. 277): “They are, by nature, frank, brave, cordial, hospitable, and affectionate. Cultivation and refinement seem but to enhance their warmth of heart and ardent enthusiasm”.

After reading many of Dickens’ books and spending TV evenings with Dickens enthusiast and interpreter, actress Miriam Margolyes, I decided in 2009 to check out for myself what Americans are like.

The occasion was unique. I was going to Philadelphia to realize my dream of participating in a genealogical conference by attending my first Jewish genealogical conference. It was a professional trip, if you can ever talk about a professional trip in the case of an ethnologist. Ethnological studies, like untreatable diseases, attack all senses and modify them, making them feel all the more intense and everlasting.

A few years ago I started my PhD dissertation on the modern genealogy of Polish Jews, the first in Poland, to my knowledge. This is how the conference became an integral part of my work. Why did I choose this topic?

In 1944, Nadia Zlatanova-Strenk wrote in (Rodowody. Idea wspolnoty w przekazach rodowodowych, Warsaw 1994, that the relationship of humanistic studies to the complex phenomenon of genealogy, which borders many areas of studies, is multilateral and ambiguous. I have often experienced this during conversations with researchers of Jewish history and culture. Their multifaceted approach towards my topic of interest inspired me to look at Jewish genealogy up close. Armed with my “scientific glasses” I decided to come closer to this phenomenon. I got so dangerously close to it that I became a genealogist myself, and now I was to be one of the
lecturers at a genealogical conference. I remembered the process of “filtration of phenomena” without which I would have gone insane being surrounded by a forest of new things, people and languages. The conference was supposed to be a rite de passage in my work on my dissertation, and as in every rite I had to endure certain procedures in crossing borders.

Ricki Lou Hildebrand had offered to host me at her home during the conference but I wasn’t able to immediately locate her after landing at the airport. When I did see her, I knew Dickens was right! Warm, hospitable and friendly Ricki Lou waited at the airport for over an hour. After a short ride we were in the heart of old Philadelphia. After a glass of wine, we were fast asleep.

Ricki Lou showed me all of Philadelphia: the quaint streets of Olde City, Market, Walnut, Rittenhouse Square, South Street, Mikveh Israel Cemetery – one of the oldest in America. She showed me many directions, shapes, colors, tastes and smells of Philadelphia.

While I was very impressed and moved by many of Philadelphia’s rich historical and cultural offerings during free time during and after the conference, the focus of my trip was the genealogical conference which began with an elegant dinner for participants to meet each other. This social aspect of our intellectual exchange was crucial during the conference, which was much livelier than other non-genealogical conferences I have attended.

My prior knowledge of the conference was based solely on materials from other conferences: syllabi, CDs and information from the internet. Getting to know a genealogical conference in such a way is like reading recipes in a cookbook, and never experiencing the actual dishes. What’s the use of knowing how much salt and pepper to use to make the dish tasty, if you have never had any of its ingredients in your mouth.

At the welcoming dinner, I met some wonderful people including Jackye Bernstein Sullins, Joni Blum (wife of Fred, president of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Philadelphia), and Fred's mother, whose necklace neatly inlaid with her family photo enhanced the genealogical character of the conference. I also met Paul Cheifitz from Cape Town, South Africa, who I believe was one of the youngest participants.

After a fine talk by Fred and Conference Co-Chair David Mink, I looked for potentially familiar people who I might have come across during my genealogical research and hunt for materials for my dissertation. I could not believe I spotted Miriam Margolyes. I remembered the words of Gloria Berkenstat Freund who, at an interview at YIVO the previous year, had remarked that even though she's never formally met the people with whom she's had e-mail contact, she's able to recognize these individuals perfectly at genealogical conferences. It is the intuition of a genealogist, she told me. So there is some mysticism in genealogy and Miriam Margolyes was my marvelous mystical experience.

I met Mark Halpern, without whose enormous support I would not have been able to be a part of this most important celebration of Jewish genealogy. Together with other friends he made sure the five-day conference ran smoothly and professionally. Stanley Diamond and Roni Seibel Liebowitz, who had been internet guests at my home, made me feel so welcome. Many a time we conversed about genealogy and exchanged data; they helped me get photos for one of my articles, photos that were inaccessible in Poland. Thanks to them, as well as Mark Halpern, Hadassah Lipsius, Rhoda Miller, Robinn Magid, Arnold L. Markowitz, Gloria Berkenstat Freund and many more whom I met in Philadelphia, I was able to see the conference with a clearer and sharper eye.

It was truly a five-day genealogical family gathering, where people from all levels of research got to know each other or recognized each other in person. There were family researchers, town leaders and prominent people in the area of Jewish genealogy like Stanley Diamond, Gary Mokotoff and Miriam Weiner.

The conference was an abundant source of knowledge. The materials presented referred to particular families, as well as the history of Polish and Ukrainian towns or Polish history in general, as in the case of Michael Steinlauf’s lectures which attracted a big audience. Apart from the lectures, there were numerous genealogical films: stories about people’s trips to the countries of their ancestors; novelties about JewishGen or JRI-Poland; various projects that have materialized in the United States and all over Europe.

The strongest impression on the audience was the presentation delivered by the special guest, Father Patrick Desbois, creator and president of Yahad in Unum, about his project of memorializing mass graves in Ukraine. Equally fascinating was Dr. Jonathan Sarna's talk about the new National Museum of American Jewish History, currently
under construction in Philadelphia, (since recently opened). As its chief historian Sarna presented the underlying concept of the museum in such an original and stimulating manner, far removed from the standards of my Polish culture, that I ventured to see the building the next day.

During the five days, I talked to people who were deeply engaged in their projects, inquisitive in their questions about my research and offered me their expertise in return. Most of them treated their participation as part of their mission. They have shown dynamism and persistence in collecting data, while organizing new groups and associations, searching for volunteers and enlarging the genealogical community.

Walks in the hotel corridors often resulted in productive exchanges in a convivial spirit. Sending greetings while going up and down the escalators reminded me of mountain hikes. People were enthusiastically relating stories, searching for connections, sharing family photos.

I will recall this conference as a place of remembrance of thousands or even millions of people, a place from which genealogists depart for their continued journey to return in a year with more revelations about their ancestors.

It was both a pleasure and a privilege to have this ethnological adventure during which I met individuals who are both authors and creators in their cultural contexts. Marcel Proust said, (In Search of Lost Time, Warsaw, 1992) that a true journey of discovery is not about looking for new landscapes but about acquiring new eyes. I was experiencing new landscapes and was looking at them with new eyes. Even though it was a professional trip, I grew fond of many people and was sad to leave knowing that I will likely never return.

Author, Kamila Klauzinska holds an M.A. degree in Ethnology from the Faculty of Philosophy and History, University of Lodz.

She is Co-Leader "Photographic Project in the Jewish Cemetery of Zdunska Wola."

In 2005 Klauzinska was awarded a Prize by the Ambassador of Israel in Poland for taking care of the Jewish cemetery and in 2008 received the Gold Cross of Merit from the President of Poland for the preservation of the Jewish heritage in Poland.

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Jewish Agricultural Settlements in South Jersey
by Bernard Cedar with photos by Walter Spector

A program about the Jewish agricultural settlements was presented April 13 by Ruth Bogutz, a student of the history of the Jewish communities of South Jersey, followed by a tour of some settlement sites on May 1. These activities were co-sponsored by Temple Emanuel of Cherry Hill and the South Jersey Affiliate of JGSGP.

Ruth Bogutz serves as president of the Tri-County Jewish Historical Society and has overseen the collection of information regarding the activities and achievements of the Jewish communities of Burlington, Camden, and Gloucester Counties, as well as the farming settlements in Cumberland, Salem and Cape May Counties. She is a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania and a life-long resident of South Jersey.

After Ruth opened the presentation at Temple Emanuel, Steve Schecter spoke briefly on behalf of JGSGP. Ruth then gave an overview of how the agricultural settlements came into being. She discussed the status of Jewish life in Russia in the latter part of the 19th century, after the assassination of Tsar Alexander II and the pogroms that followed, leading to the emigration of a large number of Jews from Russia to areas of the world that would accept them, particularly the U.S.

She discussed the formation of the first agricultural settlement, the Alliance Colony, which was settled in 1882 by 43 families, and then covered the other settlements which were established during the following decade. Ruth indicated what presently remains of these settlements, particularly the shuls that were built by the settlers, some of which are registered as historic sites, and the one or two which are still maintained as active synagogues.

Following Ruth’s talk was a video presentation of an interview Ruth and Steve Schecter conducted with Helyn and Morris Ostroff. The Ostroffs, descendents of the founders of the Garton Road Shul, have dedicated themselves to the restoration and maintenance of the building located on a small parcel of land donated by the Garton family. Built in 1890, the shul was in regular use into the 1970s. They described the life of the community that comprised the congregation, how and when they were able to attract a rabbi, and what eventually happened to the settlements over the several decades after the initial start. While Helyn was the main speaker during the 20 minute interview, Morris often interjected; the two of them conveyed great warmth and humor throughout. The video lasts for about 20 minutes.
About 30 of us gathered on Sunday, May 1 in the Temple Emanuel parking lot and organized into 10 car pools to make the trip. Ruth Bogutz distributed a package of information for each car which included an itinerary of the program, driving instructions and maps for each of the three sites we were visiting. Our first destination was the Alliance Colony located in Pittsgrove Township in Cumberland County, about a forty mile journey from Temple Emanuel, where we met in the Alliance Museum.

Alliance was named after the Alliance Israelite Universelle, an agency located in Paris, founded to encourage the formation of Jewish agricultural settlements in developing areas of the world. Our speaker was Jay Greenblatt, an attorney and local resident with an interest in the preservation of historically important sites associated with the South Jersey Jewish agricultural settlements. He told us about his background, growing up in Vineland.

Jay related how his paternal grandfather emmigrated from Russia to Alliance in the 1880s, along with his wife and their six children. The family grew to include eleven children, including Jay's father who was born in Alliance in 1896. Jay's grandfather worked as a carpenter and later became a butcher.

Jay then described the situation of the Jews in Russia, particularly the increasingly anti-Semitic attitude of the government after the assassination of Alexander II and its incitement of pogroms. This led to a substantial emigration of Jews out of Russia to the U.S. and other countries with open immigration policies.

With the help of the Alliance Israelite Universelle, a small group from Russia was brought to New York with the expectation of being settled in an agricultural colony. It took a little time for the Alliance officials, and the person whom they appointed as the overseer of the group, Moses Dropsie, to pick out the property for the colony. Dropsie chose South Jersey and obtained 1100 acres in Pittsgrove Township which became the Alliance Land Trust. Forty-three families became the first settlers in the colony, named for its benefactor. They initially lived in tents while the land was cleared. The land was subdivided into fifteen acre plots, distributed by lottery to each family. A two room house and a well were built on each lot.

These families had little or no experience with farming, but were helped by local farmers. In order to fill their time and supplement their income during off-season, many of the families took in piecework. In time, some of the families branched off to other work: carpentry, retail stores, clothing manufacturing, etc.

A new group, the Jewish Agricultural and Industrial Aid Society, was set up to carry on the work that Alliance Israelite and Baron de Hirsch had started. This new group offered small loans so that sewing projects and other activities could begin. By 1900 there were 500 people in Alliance. The Brotman family set up a clothing factory which employed some of the residents.

Moses Bayuk, one of the founding members of Alliance, built a cigar factory which he later moved to Philadelphia. These, and the other employment activities, were more enticing to some of the original settlers and the second generation.

By World War I many residents had left Alliance. The fact that agricultural prices were depressed, and land quality was far from the best, didn't help. Some people however continued to live in the area through the Depression and World War II. Refugees who were able to avoid the Holocaust arrived in Alliance before World War II, as did survivors later. Both added to a revival of cultural, religious, and economic activity in Alliance and the other settlements in the area.

Jay also talked about the building where we were meeting. Its original purpose was as a community building; the bema and the ark came from a nearby shul which closed, was sold, and is presently used as a Baptist church. Jay closed with a description of the historic preservation activities with which he and others are involved. The Jewish Historical Society of Rural Southern New Jersey, with the help of the Jewish Federation of Cumberland County is trying to raise $6 million to help preserve the historically important buildings in the area. They hope to establish an historic area in Alliance comprised of museums and representative homes and shuls by using current as well as relocated buildings.
Following Greenblatt’s talk the group left the Museum to visit other important sites related to the Colony. Unfortunately the entrance to Tiphereth Israel Synagogue, founded in 1889, was locked. We were, however, able to peek through the windows to see that the shul appeared in good condition. Most of us then went to the Alliance Cemetery.

Alliance Cemetery Old Section Gate

The Alliance Cemetery is a well maintained facility and still active. Its gravestones date back to the early days of the Colony. Its gates have the names of the founding officers who started the cemetery, and added to its grounds. Located in a corner of the site is the Holocaust Memorial with an interesting and moving design. It’s well worth viewing. Many of the most recent gravesites are those of Holocaust survivors.

Our next destination was the Garton Road Shul, about 5 miles away, where we were met by our hosts, Helyn and Morris Ostroff. The Ostroffs, as was previously mentioned, are descendants of the original Jewish settlers of this area, Sephardic Russian Jews who came in the 1880s. The shul came into being so that the Jewish workers on the area farms would be able to go to a shul within walking distance of where they lived and not breach the Sabbath restrictions prohibiting animal or mechanical means of transportation.

Officially named Beth Israel, the synagogue was given a small parcel of land in 1892 by a relative of Morris Ostroff. The parcel was just big enough to accommodate a small building which follows a traditional layout, with an ark and a bema at one end, facing east, the congregation facing the bema, and a balcony where the women sat.

All of us just about made it in, with some standing in the entrance. Helyn led the program, talking about the lives led by their ancestors. She discussed securing a rabbi for the High Holy Days and how they received donations, primarily from people affiliated with the Yiddish theatre who would spend their summer vacations in the area. The shul declined in the 1920s along with a concurrent downturn in agriculture in South Jersey but there was a regeneration in the 1940s with the arrival of refugees. The shul continued to be used until 1983.

We left the Garton Road Shul for our final stop, the Carmel Synagogue, about a 5 mile ride. Temple Beth Hillel-Beth Abraham, known as the Carmel synagogue, was built around 1910. A solid brick structure, it is included on the National Register of Historic Places. Helyn Ostroff served as our guide again by virtue of her position as a member of the board of directors. She related its history including its ups and downs. After years as a Conservative congregation, Beth Hillel faced declining membership and turned to a neighboring Reform congregation, Beth Abraham, which couldn't afford an expansion to accommodate its membership. Discussions took place between the congregations, culminating in the merger of the two to form a single congregation, Beth Hillel-Beth Abraham, following the Reform ritual, and using the Carmel site. The sanctuary is beautifully decorated and well maintained. An addition was added to the building for office space and for other events. There is a separate building for a religious school and other activities. As usual, the Ostroffs were an interesting and humorous team of tour guides.

A great hand was given to Ruth Bogutz for preparing and guid-
Immigrant Jewish Philadelphia School Days
by Harry D. Boonin

Going through photographs on phillyhistory.org, I was struck by how many of them showed Philadelphia public grade schools from years ago, most now torn down although some still remain till this day. These photographs show the construction of new schools during the period of heavy immigration into the country at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries, the insides of classrooms, the first day of school, schoolyards, formally posed photographs of classes and informal scenes of children playing in the schoolyards.

On p. 202 of *The Immigrant Jew in America*, (edited by Edmund J. James, Ph.D., with the collaboration of Charles S. Bernheimer from Philadelphia; New York: B.F. Buck & Company, 1907), I found a record of schools (partially reproduced on p. 18) located in the Russian Jewish areas of South Philadelphia, and the population of Jewish children for each school given as a number and as a percentage of the total number of students. The area covered is from Locust Street in the north, Moore Street in the South, the Delaware River on the east and 19th Street on the west—the district composing the greater portion of the Russian Jewish community of the city in 1905.

Generally, the greatest percentages of Jewish children in these schools are in the schools located immediately surrounding the 5th & South Street areas. There are only a few schools west of Broad Street and the largest percentage of Jewish students in these “western” schools was 18 percent. The greatest percentages of Jewish students are in schools north of Washington Avenue, east of 8th Street, south of Locust street and west of 2nd Street, although there are several exceptions, such as the Fletcher School near Front Street that had a Jewish population of 79 per cent. The schools with the highest percentages of Jewish children were those in the Jewish quarter surrounding the eastern end of South Street. The listing on p. 202 described the total and percentage distribution of Jewish children in 39 kindergarten and grade schools in the area. Some of the schools with the largest Jewish percentage of children are presented below in chart form (I have also included a few other schools to demonstrate that the farther you went from 5th & South Streets, the fewer number of Jewish children were enrolled in these schools). For a more complete listing of the schools, see *The Immigrant Jew in America*.

It can be determined from these figures that the school populations were determined by the neighborhood patterns of ethnic growth during the immigrant years. These statistics, along with those for the years immediately preceding and following, (if we had them), would dramatically demonstrate just how quickly this South Philadelphia neighborhood changed from one ethnic group to the next. The figures demonstrate how many grade schools there were years ago and how close they were to one another. Determining school boundaries is beyond the scope of this little blog, but I am sure that there are old school records held by the School Board of the City of Philadelphia which would describe, by streets and perhaps house numbers, the boundaries for each school.

The photographs on the site, especially those of the Mt. Vernon School, give you a good picture of what school life was like in 1909, when many of the photos were taken, the schoolyard and what appears to be the first day of school. Children still went to school barefoot, and the girls were dressed in the finest that the immigrant families could afford. Perhaps you will not find a photograph of your own grandparents or great grandparents among the treasures being displayed on the web site, but you can learn something about how they were educated, where they were educated and how they grew up to become American citizens.

When immigrants came to Philadelphia in the 1880s and 1890s, many families, especially those where a father died young, required the help of younger children to run a business and make a living. Children left school after 4th grade to help out. Why after 4th grade is not clear, but anecdotal stories note children dropping out of school after the 4th grade.

In the 1900s, 1910s and 1920s, economic conditions improved. During this period there was “a steady growth in attendance in the upper grades, the high schools and the professional institutions” among the Russian Jewish immigrants. It was during this time that the colleges, especially Temple College (now University) and the University of Penn-
sylvania, enrolled a remarkably large number of Russian Jewish students. Ironically, many of the students who enrolled at Penn during this time got their first real taste of knowledge at the Hebrew Literature Society, 312 Catharine Street, directly across the street from the Mt. Vernon School.

Immigrant children clamored for more and more learning. A group of the leaders of the Hebrew Literature Society contacted Penn, and Penn agreed to send professors to Society meetings on Sunday afternoons to instruct the youngsters on subjects that were either not taught in the local high schools, like bacteriology, astronomy, etc., or augmented and advanced studies taught at schools such as Central High School. In 1905 alone, Penn furnished over a dozen professors as part of this program to help educate these immigrant children.

The article on the Philadelphia schools contains the following paragraph (written in 1905): “Probably no single agency has had a more far-reaching educational influence, especially in molding ideas in accordance with standards of our country and our time, than the public school. It gives to the son of the immigrant the same advantages as to the son of the native born, and in many instances the transformation to similarity with the latter is swift and complete.” Although daughters would not catch up for two more generations, they did attend Mt. Vernon School as well as the other schools in the area and were openly welcomed by the Hebrew Literature Society at their Sunday afternoon sessions.

Author Harry D. Boonin is the founding president of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Philadelphia and a well-known genealogical researcher and writer. Contact him at: harryboonin@gmail.com

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From your *Chronicles* editorial board:
We have always prided ourselves on the fact that *Chronicles* contributors are primarily JGSGP members; this was acknowledged when we received the 2009 award for best Jewish genealogical society publication. We are continuing that tradition in this issue, but in order to remain a Philadelphia-centric journal we need you, our faithful readers, to submit articles.

Take a look at the scope of the content in this issue:

- Personal family accounts
- Valuable tips to facilitate your research
- Book reviews
- Historical perspectives on immigration and settlement in Philadelphia and adjacent areas
- Milestones (Harry Boonin’s honors and the centennial of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire)

We also anticipate covering Eastern Europe, Germany and other geographic areas in future issues. Please give serious consideration to sharing your respective genealogical journeys with the broader JGSGP community. Help us insure that *Chronicles* remains a vital, timely, and compelling publication. Contact Evan Fishman at ebf2001@comcast.net or 856-667-2077 to discuss your ideas for articles. Thank you.
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<td>Voluntary Gift of the JGSGP Program Fund</td>
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What are the most important surnames and their ancestral town that you are researching? Provide up to six surnames, towns and countries, which will be shared with other members in upcoming editions of Chronicles.

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JGSGP GENEALOGY FAIR:
The first annual JGSGP Genealogy Fair will be held at Temple Sholom in Broomall, 55 N. Church Road, Broomall, PA 19008 on SUNDAY, JUNE 12, 2011 from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. Our own “experts” and representatives from local repositories will be on hand to answer your questions. Bring your family and friends. The Fair is open to the public and ideal for beginners and experienced genealogists alike. Admission is FREE; and there is ample FREE parking.

At the Fair you will find the following help “Stations” and more:

1. Welcome & Information about JGSGP
2. Getting Started in Jewish Genealogy
3. Jewish Records Indexing-Poland
4. Russian Research
5. German Research
6. Computerized Family Tree Programs
7. Books & Maps
8. Southern New Jersey Agricultural Colonies
9. Philadelphia Immigrant Bank Records
10. Family History Center
11. US National Archives (NARA)
12. Scrapbooking Your Family Tree
13. Society Member Displays
14. Mt. Carmel Cemetery Restoration Project
15. Genealogical Society of Pennsylvania

Printed materials will also be available from the Philadelphia City Archives and the Sam Azeez Museum of Woodbine Heritage.

**Special offer, only during the Fair, FREE Membership in the Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Philadelphia for the remainder of 2011 for non-members**

Please share information about this exciting event with family and friends. It’s not to be missed!

For additional information, call 610-544-6877.