Perhaps the lazy (or lazier) days of summer put us in a mood for reflection about the more hectic times we’ve experienced. Our society has had a busy year in terms of programming and we’ve experimented with Sunday afternoon meetings near the Main Line during standard time months. How do you feel about that experiment?

“Chronicles” is now a going “thing.” We’ve published six issues so far, and we hope you’ve been pleased. We need your feedback and input though. What topics would you like us to cover? What has appealed? We’re always in need of new and returning contributors. Have you read a good book about genealogy, Jewish genealogy or Jewish history that expanded your understanding of our ancestral towns or regions? Share your genealogical journey, your “wow” experiences, websites and resources you’ve found helpful. We can all learn from each other; we don’t operate in a vacuum.

Speaking of the opposite of vacuums, we’d like to make some observations on the recent, very successful Genealogy Fair that our society hosted in June. Approximately 150 people attended which confirms that people on BOTH sides of the Delaware River are fascinated by Jewish genealogy. More than 80 new members registered as participants and will enjoy the benefits of complimentary membership in JGSGP for the balance of 2012. We welcome all of you; check the list on page 3 where they’re all acknowledged.

The fair wouldn’t have happened had Bernie Cedar not taken the helm. He was so impressed with our first fair last year, chaired by Shelda & Stanley Sander, that he felt convinced that we could replicate our inaugural event in South Jersey.

(Continued on Page 4)
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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EDITORIAL CONTRIBUTIONS
Submission of articles on genealogy for publication in CHRONICLES is enthusiastically encouraged. The editorial board reserves the right to decide whether to publish an article and to edit all submissions. 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: editor@jgsgp.org or by phone at 856-667-2077.

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If you are a new member, please share the surnames and ancestral towns you are researching. Who knows? You may find a cousin within our society or someone who has been researching the same town with whom you can share information and experiences. The procedure is simple: e-mail the following information to membership@jgsgp.org: your name, the surnames you're researching, current names of ancestral towns and countries using the JewishGen Communities Data Base: http://www.jewishgen.org/communities/search.asp. We plan to post this information on our website as a way of expanding the scope of our society’s collective database.
FROM THE CHRONICLES TEAM
(Continued from page 1)
Bernie built on the original model by broadening the scope of stations that were offered, including JGSNY, DNA Shoah Project, JewishGen, and other out-of-town repositories. Working with several other JGSGP members he was able to incorporate 15 different stations, each of which appealed to different attendees. Our own JGSGP members shared their expertise, knowledge and experience. This was truly a collaborative effort, one of many on which our society thrives.

As usual we cover a multitude of topics in this issue including some stirring articles about personal genealogical journeys by Jack Weinstein and Evan Fishman. Felicia Mode Alexander provides a moving update about a film in progress that was previewed at a meeting in the fall of 2011. Our recent genealogy fair is highlighted with several pages of photos which we hope convey the excitement and deep interest that attendees experienced and depict the hands-on approach which is greatly appreciated. Several contributors share their knowledge of research sites and techniques, including an article by Gene Hurwitz which deals with photography. We also offer summaries of recent meetings so that members who weren’t able to attend can get the gist of what was presented. If you miss some meetings and want to learn more, try contacting the speaker(s) directly. If you don’t know that person’s email address, send us a message. The best way is through our Facebook page: http://tinyurl.com/jgsgp which will usually generate a pretty quick response.

We will share reports about the Paris IAJGS conference in our fall issue.

Evan Fishman, Editor

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

This past June we had our second annual Genealogy Fair in Cherry Hill, NJ. It was also a great success as was our previous one in Broomall, due to the efforts of Bernie Cedar, Steve Schecter, Evan Fishman, David Brill and many others. Next year we may have our Fair in the Bucks County area, stay tuned.

We will resume our monthly meetings at Reform Congregation Keneseth Israel on September 10th when David Mink will share observations related to his recent trip to Poland. As we did last year, we will be moving our meetings to different parts of the Philadelphia area. Steve Schecter, Vice President - Programs, has some great ideas for programs and topics. Never content to be idle, Steve also gave a beginners course on Jewish genealogy this summer at the JCC in Margate, NJ.

In October, I will be speaking to several groups about our society and how to locate individuals through genealogy. I’ll also discuss my volunteer efforts on locating individuals for the United States Holocaust Museum’s "Remember Me" project.

Please join our Facebook group "Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Philadelphia". On our page you can interact with other members as well as view posts of timely information about our society and research.

Fred Blum - President

JGSGP ANNOUNCES NEW MEMBERSHIP VP

Our society is pleased to announce the transition of our Membership VP from Mark Halpern to Susan Neidich.

Mark has become an active zayde, and consequently his priorities and time must now be redirected. As we welcome Susan, we also wish to thank Mark for his many years of service in virtually every capacity to keep our society running. We could not have survived nor run our 2009 conference without Mark’s expertise, generous efforts, and input. Mark will still continue in his role as Past President and provide his wise counsel and active support for our society’s many activities.

We are very fortunate to have Susan stepping into this critical role. A born and bred New Yorker, Susan has lived in various locations in the U.S. and resided in Israel for more than a decade where she attended graduate school and later worked in the foreign exchange department of a Jerusalem bank. She lived in Cheltenham in the 1990s and moved back to Philadelphia last fall. Since 1996 Susan has been employed by different Jewish institutions, primarily as a synagogue administrator.

Susan’s curiosity about her family tree began in childhood. Her father’s family name was Neidich; her mother’s maternal family line was Nydick. Although both families came from Pinsk, then part of the Russian Empire, she was informed that they were unrelated. She was determined to
find the link between them and began her decades long quest while in her early teens. (That search may be a future article in Chronicles.)

Susan is glad to become part of the leadership of JGSGP and help it continue to provide the excellent services and programming of which she has availed herself over the past fifteen years.

As our society continues to revitalize, we realize that the days of a few people doing everything have passed. We need to spread responsibility more broadly; when more people actively participate, each individual has less work to do, and we achieve improved results. Susan cannot do her job alone. I'm sure she can depend on everyone for their support, and we look forward to several of you stepping forward to provide her with your active assistance, both in the transition and on an ongoing basis.

Fred Blum - President

“ItMisA’S FuGue” - A FOLLOW UP
by Felicia Mode Alexander

At one of our general meetings last year, JGSGP members heard about an exciting new project, which would bridge both genealogical research and the Holocaust. Sadly, many of us have been involved in these two strands of research in our own family histories. The speakers that night, Jennifer Gilbert Goss and Sean Gaston, were developing a project to bring together students, alumni and teachers at Fleetwood Area High School in Fleetwood, Pennsylvania to tell the story of a very special man named Frank Grunwald, otherwise known as Misa.

Their efforts were to culminate in a film entitled “Misa's Fugue”. During the meeting Sean and Jennifer presented a trailer of the film and explained its inception and progress to date. At that time, the film was still in the development phase, and they were seeking funding from every possible source. They received generous grants from the Jewish Federation of Reading, the Pennsylvania Holocaust Education Council, and our society also committed toward that effort after viewing producers, Jennifer and Sean's moving presentation.

On April 16th I had the honor of attending the world premiere of “Misa’s Fugue” at the Miller Center for the Performing Arts at Reading Area Community College. Before the film started, we were informed that the film's subject, Holocaust survivor, Frank Grunwald, was unable to attend due to health issues, but would speak to us by video. It was tragic that he could not be with us on this special night because he would have been so honored by what these young people accomplished. The nearly two-hour film traced Frank’s life as a young boy in pre-war Prague through his time in the Terezin Ghetto and ultimately the death camp, Auschwitz-Birkenau. The story of how he managed to survive such places as a child is startling, but how he later emigrated and became an American citizen will resonate with anyone whose ancestors came to our shores as penniless immigrants.

Extensive research was conducted under the supervision of the teachers to safeguard the historical integrity of the film and to acquire primary and secondary sources appropriate as visual parallels to Frank’s testimony: archival films, still photographs and later, student artwork. As a Holocaust educator and experienced genealogist of more than two decades, I was very impressed with the producers’ emphasis on research to ensure accuracy in all aspects of this film. Moreover, as a public school social studies teacher, I cringe when I hear people complain about our public schools and issues related to teachers’ unions, so I am exceedingly proud to showcase my peers and the scope of work of this school community. “Misa’s Fugue” was indeed an institutional labor of love as well as a tribute to both the enlightened administrators who supported the project and the dedicated team of teachers and students who created it. Communication/Media classes edited the film, students transcribed Frank’s testimony into computers, Fleetwood alumni helped students compose and perform the score for the film, and talented young men and women produced the artwork which was utilized as background in various scenes and also on display at a local gallery following the premiere.

I have watched many moving documentaries about the Holocaust. This film, however, was so special, that it left me, and most of the audience breathless. When the credits rolled, the theatre was totally silent except for the muffled sobs of those of us who had not expected a film made by students and teachers to be so professional and incredibly moving. As a longtime member of JGSGP, I am very proud that our society helped make this film possible.

What is next for “Misa’s Fugue?” It is being shown at local theatres for limited runs and the producers are currently
raising funds to enter it in juried film festivals. We will have a screening of the film for JGSGP members in the fall, so anyone who wishes to see this film will have the opportunity to do so. ❖

To learn more about “Misa’s Fugue,” check out its Facebook page, or go to its website: [http://www.fahsdocproject.com/](http://www.fahsdocproject.com/)

A special education teacher in the East Windsor, NJ Regional School District, Felicia Mode Alexander has taught both middle and high school world history and has been actively involved in Holocaust education, connecting her students with survivors and escorting them to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) in Washington DC each year. Her passion for genealogy research and Holocaust education came to fruition when she discovered a long lost cousin, the only child of a sole survivor, living in Israel.

Originally from the Boston area Felicia has been actively researching her family for more than twenty years. She is a member of the Jewish Genealogical Societies of Greater Philadelphia and Boston and is researching MODE, SHUMAN, ABRAMS, BORNSTEIN in Berlin and Posen; GROSSMAN, LONGBORD and TALIAFSKY in Kiev region.

You can contact Felicia at fmode@verizon.net

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**THE ULTIMATE GENEALOGICAL GIFT**

by Evan Fishman

My close friend Manny is the son of two Holocaust survivors, a fact that significantly influenced the environment in which he grew up in Montreal and shaped his perspective on life. His parents divorced when he was very young; he was essentially the child of a single mother because he had almost no interaction with his father. Prevailing family dynamics precluded his father’s involvement in his life.

According to Manny’s mother, his father was the sole survivor of his extended family. He knew his father’s Hebrew name (Shmuel ben Avraham ha-Levi), his birth date, and had a vague idea where he was born but almost nothing else about his paternal family. His mother and her older brother, originally from Piotrkow Tribunalski (Poland), survived the Shoah, and during his formative years Manny’s familial interactions centered around his mother, his uncle, and later his uncle’s family. He could count on one hand the number of times he saw his father who tragically died on Manny’s fourteenth birthday, shortly after his one extended visit with his only child.

My close friendship with Manny and his wife, Ruchel, began in 2003. Almost from the outset I was saddened by how limited his family life had been. I felt that Manny had been deprived an important element of normal human existence. He often talked about life with his mother and uncle and alluded to the nonexistent role his father played. Periodically Ruchel and I would encourage him to investigate his family history and to contact an elderly woman in Montreal who had been his parents’ close friend when they were first married. Manny finally had a long conversation with Mrs. P. in June 2009 and learned that his parents had probably married shortly after the end of World War II when they both lived in the Displaced Persons Camp in Bergen-Belsen. Mrs. P and her husband immigrated to Montreal with Manny’s parents in early 1948 and remained close friends for several years.

His conversation with Mrs. P. served as a catalyst for Manny to learn more about his father but he didn’t really know how to go about his search. Over the years I had shared many of my genealogical “exploits” with Manny and Ruchel, and I had repeatedly offered to help him if and when he wanted to learn more. Thanks to a tip from the JewishGen’s daily digest I learned about the Czestochowa-Radomsko Area Research Group’s (CRARG) databases ([http://www.crarg.org/search.php](http://www.crarg.org/search.php)). When I entered Manny’s surname, I found listings for the people I believed to be Manny’s father’s siblings, parents, and grandparents. His father Samuel’s birth date in that database matched the one listed on his death certificate, and his grandfather’s Hebrew name (Avraham) conceivably matched the civil name that was listed, Adolf.

Manny was visibly moved when I shared this information with him. For the first time in his life he had concrete information about his paternal family. His wellspring of interest motivated me to dig deeper in the hope of providing my dear friend more information. Early one morning in August 2009 I turned to JewishGen’s Family Finder, entered Manny’s surname and got eleven hits. I then refined my search, restricting it to the four researchers who had also indicated a common geographical area of origin (Lodz region). I submitted brief messages to all four, and to my amazement, within one hour I received a response from a woman who remarked that she knew of Manny’s branch of the family through some family tree charts she had received from a cousin in France. I immediately responded to that e-mail message, and I was so excited by this discovery that
I asked Sandra if I could call her. Our 30-minute conversation convinced me that I had found a living link to Manny’s paternal family, thus dispelling his long held assumption that he had no relatives on his father’s side.

Later that morning I informed Manny of this remarkable discovery. He was incredulous; his initial response was “Awesome!” I gave him Sandra’s contact information and advised him that she was in contact with two other cousins, a father (living in Sweden) and his son (living outside Paris) as well as another cousin in Grenoble, France. Manny quickly got in touch with Sandra, and within two weeks he e-mailed and called his other cousins (the father/son combination). He was bitten by the genealogy bug on a very personal level and wasted no time to expand upon his newfound family.

Manny later was able to arrange a mutually convenient date for Sandra and her husband to meet Ruchel and him for lunch in New York City. Since I was the “shadchan” who brought these cousins together, I was included in the lunch rendezvous as an honorary member of the family. While looking forward to this important meeting, Manny also was apprehensive. “What will I talk to them about?” “Do we have anything in common?” Ruchel and I both assured him that there was nothing to worry about. “You’re cousins, blood relatives. That’s enough commonality.”

The three of us joined Sandra and Henry and spent three delightful hours becoming acquainted. Manny’s trepidations were instantly eradicated because Sandra and Henry were such warm, friendly people; they won him over, and I believe a void was filled.

Two months later Sandra invited Manny, Ruchel, their son David, and me to a pre-Thanksgiving lunch at their home along Long Island Sound which Sandra had inherited from her grandfather, Manny’s grandfather’s first cousin. We had a wonderful afternoon, met Sandra and Henry’s daughter, and another cousin came along later. Sandra showed us home movies taken during her parents’ honeymoon trip in the early 1930s. They had visited the cousins in Czestochowa who were represented on the family trees. Names became real people. The film depicted Jewish family life that was soon to be eradicated during the Shoah.

Manny remains in contact with Sandra, and she invited him to a partial family reunion with French relatives this past May. Unfortunately Manny wasn’t able to join because of prior commitments. Nevertheless Sandra shared photos that were taken.

Presenting Manny with living members of his paternal family dispelled the notion that his father’s family had totally been wiped out during the Shoah, but more significantly I believe it make him whole because he finally had firsthand knowledge of the past that had eluded him for so long. Among my many genealogical discoveries this was probably the most moving one for me because I was able to give a dear friend a substantial, qualitative gift which is probably what we all hope to achieve.

Author Evan Fishman is the editor of Chronicles and has always been interested in learning about his extended family. He began to methodically research his family history in 2000 and has been amazed by the stories and experiences he’s encountered. All of this has enriched his life, resulted in very meaningful new connections, and provided profound insights. Some of the surnames he’s researching include Mandelstein, Lithnizer, Adelman, Pressesien, Fishman, Udin, Burstien, Winarsky, all of which (except Fishman) originate in present day Ukraine. Evan also does private genealogical research. Contact him at ebf2001@comcast.net.

**COPYING OLD FAMILY PHOTOS AT HOME - AN UPDATE**

*by Gene Hurwitz*

Over twenty years ago I wrote an article for *Chronicles* “Copying Old Family Photos at Home”, (see Autumn 1991, Vol.X, No.3). In that article I described how to take a picture of a photo that might be one of a kind, a different size than needed, borrowed from another family member, or to provide a copy for a family member. The film could then produce a negative for printing in various sizes and quantities. The article suggested specific camera types, lenses, filters and film.

Of course the entire world of photography has changed enormously since then. In many ways digital cameras have simplified the process of copying old photos, and they have made possible many enhancements to improve on the original that would be difficult or impossible to achieve with film and chemical darkroom.

Possibly the greatest advantage in using a digital camera is immediate feedback. Take a picture, and you see the result right away. Check the playback image for proper exposure and composition, zoom in to check the focus. If it’s not what you were expecting, do it again. It costs you nothing.
In reviewing my original article, I found that the recommendations and considerations remain pretty much the same. Photography is still photography, even though today's digital cameras are essentially computers that take pictures. For example, I had suggested using a camera that lets you see through the lens to avoid cutting off key areas of your subject when camera-to-subject distance is close, known as parallax. Digital cameras let you view the subject (in this case the picture you are copying) on the LCD screen, virtually the same as viewing through the lens. As with film cameras, a moderate zoom lens lets you come close enough to fill most of the picture area with your original. If your camera lets you adjust apertures and shutter speeds, medium apertures and speeds faster than 1/30 second work best.

The considerations I wrote about in 1991 are also still valid. A tripod or copy stand can be helpful to reduce camera movement and vibration, though I have had success simply holding the camera in my hands. Take your picture multiple times, check the results in playback mode, select the best ones. No good ones? Try it again, it's free.

The trickiest part may be keeping the original and the camera image plane parallel to avoid distortion. A rectangular picture should photograph as a rectangle, not as a trapezoid. This is also necessary to keep the focus consistent throughout.

The other main consideration - illumination - is also unchanged with digital. I like to use daylight. Avoid sunlight; open shade works best to evenly illuminate your original. You don't want more light on one side than another; let the light fall evenly.

In 1991 I briefly mentioned using various filters that might minimize damages or defects in the original photo. That's where options have dramatically improved. Adjusting contrast, brightness, sharpness, etc. are one-click procedures, and many repairs are not much harder. It is amazing what can be easily done once your pictures have been copied to your computer. Then you can output your "new and improved" copies to a printer, to a CD, to a flash drive, to a web gallery, to Facebook, etc, etc.

Finally, I should mention that you can bypass the camera completely and simply scan your original photo. Most tabletop scanners can accommodate an original up to about 8” x 10”. The scanner will create a digital file that can then be processed the same as from a camera. If your scanner resolution is set to 600 dpi or more, you will have enough leeway to crop the image if desired or to print larger than your original.

Gene Hurwitz, an active member of JGSGP, is a professional photographer in Feasterville, PA

FINDING UNCLE AARON
by Jack L Weinstein

Like Ivory Soap, I know where 99-44/100ths percent of both sides of my family are living or where they are buried. All except Uncle Aaron. When the Weinstein family emigrated to America in 1905, Uncle Aaron stayed in the home town of Gorodnitsa, Ukraine. He was an extremely religious man and had heard that America was treyf. The rest of the family heard about the pogroms.

In the early part of 1990 I wrote to the American Red Cross in association with the International Committee of the Red Cross’s International Tracing Service, located in Bad Arolsen, Germany. I requested a search for Aaron and his wife Bracha. I provided the year of birth and the last town that they lived in which was all the information I had.

Some time in March 1995 I received a telephone call from Amy Blanchard, a tracing specialist with the American Red Cross. We set up an appointment to meet at my mother’s house. She presented us with tracing results from March 14, 1994 and April 5, 1994 listing Aaron Weinstein.

The year of birth and town were correct, and the results provided a street address for his post-World War II residence in Amsterdam. A street address was also provided. Further fate was unknown. The local Red Cross chapter, however, didn't give up and gave me the address of the Joods [Jewish] Museum in the Netherlands. They in turn forwarded my request to the only Weinstein listed in the telephone book and also provided me with a copy of that page.

Alas, another dead end. I later received an e-mail from a Stefan Pinkus of the Jewish Genealogy network who provided a birth place, parents' names, date of death, and the last five addresses but of a different Aaron Weinstein.

Early in 2003 I contacted the local Red Cross chapter to update my mailing address and e-mail address, and in December 2003 and again in February 2004 I learned that my file was still open and research was continuing.
In August 2004 I received a telephone call from Deborah Cooper, Coordinator of International Services, Southeastern Pennsylvania Chapter of the American Red Cross, who informed me that she had some information on Uncle Aaron. We arranged to meet at my home.

Upon opening the envelope she handed me, I noticed that the heading on the letter was marked "URGENT." As I scanned down the page I saw my name, Uncle Aaron’s name and the names of two living relatives who had been lost to time and war. It had taken the American Red Cross fourteen years but they found Uncle Aaron by guessing the year he was born and his town. After Mrs. Cooper left I sat down again, and as tears filled my eyes, I read and reread the two names of my newfound relatives.

There were only two living siblings left, both daughters. One lived in Ukraine, the other in Israel. I immediately wrote to the one in Israel and included my e-mail address but purposely held back on information, requesting what she knew. I received information that corresponded to my own, showing that the family came to Gorodnitsa from Slavuta. A young man came to live with them by the name of Micha. We knew him as Moshe. The Israeli family thought he was Aaron's brother, and they were right. They talked about a wedding picture that was sent to them. The whole family in America has that photograph.

Several photographs the Israeli family had included Uncle Aaron. Although he looked thirty to forty years older than the one photograph we have of him, the facial features were there. The shape of his face, its features and the Weinstein ears proved the Red Cross had found my Uncle Aaron.

On discovering that Aaron’s daughter, Esther, was going to celebrate her birthday on February 12, I decided to go to Israel and be with her on her special day. I left February 10, and Esther's son, Alex, his wife Maria, and granddaughter, Alin, met me at the airport.

What a thrill to meet Esther at Alex's apartment. We all cried tears of joy. “Meine blut” [my blood] I told her. I met all the other members of her family except for Uri who had just entered the military.

The family treated me like a king for the six days I spent with them: I sat in a special chair, enormous, delicious meals flowed from the kitchen to the table. Alex took off from work everyday and escorted me to all the sights I wanted to see. He paid for an interpreter when Alin wasn't with us. All family members made sacrifices to see to my needs. Sometimes an English speaker translated on the phone to help me understand information the family was providing. On my last evening, Alex and Maria presented me with two teapots that they had brought from Gorodnitsa to Israel. These were made in the porcelain factory that my Uncle Aaron had worked in. I can never express my thanks to my newfound family and the American Red Cross. Finding Uncle Aaron was a thrill of a lifetime.

Jack L Weinstein has been a member of JGSGP since its founding and is presently committee chair for publicity. In 1987 BC (before computers) Jack published "The Weinstein Family Tree" and "The Levin Family Tree" using a typewriter and a metal ruler to form the charts. A copy center did the rest.

You can contact Jack at jwtv@juno.com

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**REFLECTIONS ON FIVE YEARS OF TEACHING JEWISH GENEALOGY**

by Steve Schecter

For the last five years I’ve presented over twenty seminars on Jewish genealogy. They have ranged from a two-hour introduction to six weekly two-hour sessions. Participants have ranged from beginners to advanced researchers and from senior citizens to eleven year olds. I have learned more then I've taught. For those planning to start or restart/recharge your efforts, here are my reflections.

We are often impatient. We want to get started and find everything yesterday. Not to worry; it's normal. We need to learn "to make haste slowly." Learn a bit, take small steps first to avoid frustration and build confidence, then broaden to an expanded search for ancestors and their stories.

Eighty percent of everything Jewish genealogists do is the same as any other genealogist. We can learn from them and follow their simple rules:

1. Start with your pedigree chart. It will show what you already know and what you want to search first.

2. Use a computer genealogy program, several of which are free downloads. Start simply; easy learning is a good plan Make sure that software uses GEDCOM standards to record data. Then as you get more advanced you
can transfer your data to a more sophisticated program.

3. Hone your discussion skills. Remember: you want to establish a low-key, warm and friendly discussion with your relatives, not interview or interrogate them. Prepare by using Family Group Sheets to highlight what you've found and what you would like to know. Sheets can be found online or you can print them from your software. Since we are social creatures, breaking bread together helps -- a "glassel tea" and a cookie are great discussion lubricators.

4. Source everything. Footnote where you find records. Make sure to include enough information so anyone can later relocate it. You will be amazed at how this can settle family "blood feuds" about Uncle Abe's birthday -- or more typically multiple birth dates. Also as one who learned this after completing much of my research, it is HELL to go back and try to annotate old research.

5. Use online computer searches, they are helpful after you have set up your genealogy software to keep records. Avoid "death by paper" as you try to figure out what you wrote on the 42nd post-it note attached to the 33rd sheet of paper in your "I'll get to it tomorrow pile."

6. Use repositories: 75-80% of records are not yet on the internet; the local Family History Center usually attached to a Mormon church, the National Archives and other local archives can provide a wealth of information. Town halls and libraries frequently have significant resources. Contacting local funeral directors, cemeteries, synagogues and older neighborhood residents is often invaluable.

Jewish genealogy differs from other genealogy in about 20% of your research. Remember:

1. Jewish groups came to America in waves at different times. While individuals came at all times, the large waves were: Sephardic Jews who constituted the earliest Jews to immigrate to the U.S., settling in the early 1700s. (In fact there is growing evidence that Columbus was a Sephardic Jew). In the early to mid 1800s German Jews emigrated. They were frequently "middle-class" merchants looking to expand business opportunities. The largest wave of migration occurred between 1881 and World War I when about 2 million Eastern European Jews, most of whom were poor and spoke Yiddish, sought to escape persecution, pogroms, and rampant anti-Semitism. They frequently came to join relatives or landsmen (Jewish people from their village or shtetl), so checking whom they met on arrival or where they first lived is often helpful. Often they did not come as a family; male wage earners often came first with other family members joining them later.

2. Names were not changed at Ellis Island. Everyone entered America with the name they used to get on the boat. This does not mean that all names are 100% accurate. People sometimes traveled with someone else's ticket. Many Jews didn't have surnames until they were arbitrarily assigned in the early 1800s and often they were resented. For a variety of reasons Jews arbitrarily or legally changed names once in America. Consequently it's best to start with what you know, and slowly work back to find changes.

3. Exact spelling often doesn't matter. Names were transliterated from their native tongue into English based on sound. Phonetically what's the difference between a "koff" and a "kov"? Various soundex systems focus on consonants or phonetics to make searches easier.

4. Dates vary. Precise dates are new phenomena and frequently ancestors were confused when switching from the Julian or Hebrew calendars to the Gregorian calendar. "Close enough" is often good enough especially when accurately sourced.

5. If you are looking in Europe, some records DO EXIST but you must learn the rules. Some data are online (JewishGen.com is especially helpful), indexed or searched by standards. Most require using the CURRENT country rather then where it was in the past. Borders changed as frequently as you change your socks, so search rules are important. Most sites/records have spelling conventions. Are the records in Roman script, Cyrillic print, Yiddish transliteration or transliteration of some "native" tongue? And like the 163 Washington's in the USA, many places share names.

6. Not everyone died in the Holocaust and not all traces of Europe's Jews were erased. Some records exist as tapes at a Family History Center or are housed in an American site, on the internet or in a European archive. If it is taped or online, great; if in a foreign archive, consult someone at a local Jewish genealogy society such as JGSGP.

7. Read and learn as much as you can about the environment in which your ancestors lived. It may not be strictly genealogy but this context is critical in learning about and appreciating how they lived and how your heritage has
been defined. Even family "stories" may be *bubbe meises* with a grain or more of truth.

Genealogy can be described as hours of tedium interrupted by moments of euphoria. Hopefully these reflections will help increase the "euphoria" rate and help make your findings more interesting and easier to disseminate.

*Author Steve Schecter is Vice President-Programs of JGSGP and an active advocate for our society. His enthusiasm for teaching beginners and encouraging them to pursue their family connections is infectious and inspiring.*

You can contact Steve at: programs@jgsgp.org

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**SOLVING A BURIAL MYSTERY & DISCOVERING A VALUABLE RESOURCE**

by Stanley R. Sandler

My Aunt Rose’s two surviving daughters recently asked me to help them locate the burial locations for all their seven siblings who had passed away over the years. Aunt Rose, my father’s older sister, had nine children, and at one time lived in the Bronx in New York City.

The purpose of this article is to describe how I solved a burial mystery and in the process discovered a valuable resource: the US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Nationwide Gravesite Locator which enabled me to find the location of the grave of one of my cousins.

By interviewing the two surviving daughters and the children of their deceased siblings, I was able to identify the burial locations of six out of the seven siblings. I was unable, however, to locate the grave of one remaining brother.

On further searching, I learned that the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) National Cemetery Administration maintains over 130 national military cemeteries throughout all fifty states as well as the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, Philippine Islands and Virgin Islands and thirty-three soldier lots and monuments. It also has an online burial/grave site locator which identifies where family members who served in the U.S. military are buried.

By using this locator tool I learned that my cousin is buried in Calverton National Military Cemetery in Calverton, New York. In addition the relevant citation indicated his branch of military service (Navy), the wars in which he fought, and his birth and death dates. Finally, it provided his plot location as well as the cemetery’s address and telephone number. My subsequent telephone call confirmed the dates of his military service and indicated that his wife is buried in the same plot.

There is no charge for a deceased service member and spouse to be interred at any military cemetery, and each individual is provided a granite tombstone gratis. I finally was successful in locating all seven burial sites for my cousins’ siblings and in the process learned about military cemeteries. The Nationwide Gravesite Locator tool, is an important resource where one can learn important genealogical information for family members buried at a military cemetery.

*Author Stanley R. Sandler is an active member of the JGSGP Board of Directors, was a co-chair of the hospitality committee at the 2009 JGSGP-IAJGS conference in Philadelphia, and a co-chair of JGSGP’s first Genealogy Fair in 2011. He currently is co-chair of the JGSGP Speakers Bureau and a frequent contributor to Chronicles. He has been doing research about his family for over 40 years, both in the USA and in Galicia, specifically in Kolomyja, Poland, and in neighboring towns, and also in Vienna, Austria. Stan can be contacted at stanshel@msn.com.*

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**JGSGP’S 2012 GENEALOGY FAIR FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION**

*3 generations of Birnbaums sharing information: Myrna, Mark, & Jacob*
VIEWS OF THE JGSGP GENEALOGY FAIR

Stan & Shelda Sandler with Attendees at the Welcome & JGSGP Information station

Elyse & Michael Krug with Steve Schecter at the Getting Started - Jewish Genealogy Station

Fair Attendee Studying a Map of Eastern Europe

Jewish Life - Atlantic City & the Jersey Shore

(l-r) Founding President, Harry Boonin, President, Fred Blum and Genealogy Fair Organizer, Bernie Cedar

JewishGen Research Station
VIEWS OF THE JGSGP GENEALOGY FAIR

Camden County, NJ Historical Society Station

Felicia Mode Alexander - German Research Station - advising JGSGP member, Morrie Kricun (right)

Beth Leavitt - National Archives &Records Administration Station

Mark Halpern - Jewish Records Indexing-Poland Station

David Brill - Russian Research Station

JGSGP member Barbara Lewis with Fred Blum - Immigrant Bank Records Research Station
JGSGP’S 2012 GENEALOGY FAIR
by Ed Flax

As part of our outreach to the genealogical community, JGSGP hosted its second, successful Genealogy Fair on June 10, this time, at Temple Beth Sholom in Cherry Hill, NJ.

From beginners to experts there was something at the Fair for everyone. This year’s program committee, headed by Bernie Cedar, successfully arranged for over a dozen stations dealing with a variety of genealogical pursuits, with an expert manning each station. At the Welcome & JGSGP Information station, non-member attendees provided basic information and received complimentary JGSGP membership for the balance of 2012.

JGSGP members and professionals from a variety of institutions provided information and help for all. Stations included: Hospitality & Membership, New Jersey State Archives, JewishGen, Jewish Neighborhoods South Philly & Other Parts of the City, Research Books, Professional Genealogists, Jewish Atlantic City & region, Yiddish Translations, Jewish Genealogical Society of New York, Jewish Federation of Cumberland, Gloucester & Salem Counties, Getting Started/Computer Research, Russian History & Research, DNA-Shoah Project, Brochures & Literature, Camden County Historical Society, Ethnic Bank Records. Research Maps, German research, National Archives & Records Administration, Family History Center, Jewish Records Indexing-Poland

Discovering this unanticipated "station" reminded me of previous articles in Chronicles in which contributors emphasized how memorial plaques, a lesser known resource, can prove useful in our research and provide a welcome, if unexpected, opportunity to contact the family member(s) who arranged for the plaque.

Check our website and future issues of Chronicles for information about the 2013 Genealogy Fair to be held at a Bucks County, PA site.

❖

As I left the fair, my eye caught a display in the lobby entitled, “This Week We Lovingly Remember.” Featured in the lobby display were the memorial plaques for those whose yahrzeits were going to be observed that week at Temple Beth Sholom. Staring me in the face was the name, Gail Janet Wolfe. It occurred to me that she might be my close friend’s wife, but I continued to walk to the parking lot. After a few moments’ thought, I got out of the car and returned to the synagogue, this time looking for the plaque for Gail’s husband Kenny, my college fraternity brother, who had also died much too young. Sure enough, I found Kenneth Ross Wolfe memorialized there in the room off the synagogue lobby that contains the majority of Temple Beth Sholom’s memorial plaques. It was sobering to recognize that I had lost two close friends within a few years and to realize that their family members lived so close by and were members of this synagogue.

APRIL MEETING SUMMARY
by Kaye Paletz

“LOCATING INDIVIDUALS BY USING GENEALOGY” PRESENTED BY FRED BLUM

Fred described many examples in which he found relatives through numerous search methods including effective use of various databases and traveling to Canada, Ukraine, and Israel to interview relatives in person. One of the most touching instances was when he interviewed a relative shortly before she died.

Two of Fred's recommendations were: don't trust everything you hear and be sure to and be sure to think of alternate spellings for every name. Through his extensive research he discovered that information about his maternal grandfather contained some erroneous, and consequently misleading, information.

Not only has Fred had great success in finding members...
of his own family but he also does outstanding volunteer work for the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum’s “Remember Me” project. By posting critical photographs on a related database, Fred has been instrumental in connecting relatives with displaced child survivors. In addition, he serves on the board of the International Red Cross's International Tracing Service (ITS).

Fred cited the following websites because of the useful databases they provide:

He also stressed the importance of using an online search engine like Google for any name you're researching even if that person lived long ago.

Fred's talk was not only illuminating but he also peppered his comments with his own brand of humor.

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**MAY MEETING SUMMARY**
*by Mark Halpern*

**“YOUR JEWISH ROOTS IN POLAND: JRI-Poland - THE RECORDS AND MORE”**

**Introduction**

The archives of Poland contain a remarkable collection of Jewish vital record registers that have survived the ravages of time and upheavals of history.

Jewish Records Indexing – Poland is dedicated to the indexing of these and other records. This award-winning database has become a vital finding aid for family historians and has revolutionized the research into Jewish records from both current and former areas of Poland. This article will cover how to find out what records exist, what you will find in the key records, and the vast resources of the JRI-Poland database.

The map (above right) shows the current borders of Poland in red and the pre-World War II borders in green. Vital records are usually found where they were registered. In current day Poland, we are dealing with four specific areas with different historical records:

- Prussian Poland in the west
- Congress Poland (also called Russian Poland or Kingdom of Poland) in the center
- Russian Pale of Settlement for a small section in the northeast that was formerly in Grodno Gubernia
- Galicia, a province of the Austrian Empire now in southeast Poland and western Ukraine

A few basic facts about research in Poland pertaining to vital records:
- Vital records less than 100 years old are protected by privacy laws. They are held at town civil records offices (Urzad Stanu Cywilnego – USC) Records from Galician towns now in Ukraine are currently held at Warsaw USC;
- Vital records over 100 years old are available to the public. They are held at regional offices of Polish State Archives;
- Many Jewish records were microfilmed by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (LDS Church.)

**Finding What Records Exist for Your Town**

There are four online sources we will cover here:
- and ELA database of population registers (census-type data) – http://www.archiwa.gov.pl/pl/data-bases/389--the-
The Routes to Roots Foundation Archive Documents database covers repositories of Jewish records in Poland, Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine, and Moldova. It also includes Polish records that can be found in Germany and Israel. Search by town name. The resultant search results will list all types of records. Click on the “document type” for more information. This database is the best consolidated inventory of available Jewish records and includes types of records not found in other inventories.

The PSA PRADZIAD database is searchable by town. The data entry form is in English and you do not need to use any special Polish accented characters. The search results have a number of Polish words. *Mojzeszowe* is Jewish religion; *Alegata* is marriage supplement; *Malzenstwa* is marriage; *Urodzenia* is birth; and *Zgony* is death. For other Polish words or phrases, use Google Translate: http://translate.google.com/. Click on “more” for details.

Likewise, the PSA ELA database is searchable by town. *Kseigi ludnosci* or *Spis ludnosci* or *Kseigi Mieszkancow* or similar words signify books or registers of residents. These are the most important records in this collection for genealogists. In Congress Poland, each community was required to maintain an ongoing census-like record of all legal residents of the community. The information was recorded in huge volumes organized by house number. These records are very important for genealogical research, because, on one page, they show the birth, marriage, and death information for everyone in the household and often include information never recorded in metrical (vital) records - particularly birth information.

The LDS Family History catalog should be used to find out if microfilms exist for your town. Search the catalog for “Place-names.” In some citations, terms are in the original language, so you may need to use Google Translate. However, this redesigned catalog now contains an English description of the collection.

The JRI-Poland Database
JRI-Poland “Your Town” pages provide an overview of what records are available for your town in the Polish State Archives, which of these have been microfilmed by the LDS, and the status of JRI-Poland indexing of your town’s records. Researchers, however, are often not sure of the towns of their ancestors. From among the millions of Jewish records for thousands of Polish towns and villages, the JRI-Poland database can give quick insights into the locations where your family records may exist.

The database offers search capability using both the Daitch-Mokotoff soundex system and the Beider-Morse Phonetic Matching system, giving you access to sound-alike entries. You can search the database using one or any combination of search parameters – surname, given name, town, and any text. This does not mean you can get all records for a particular town, but if a small village is mentioned in a larger town’s records, such a town search may find records that mention that village and help a researcher pinpoint in which record group that village can be found.

You can narrow your search with the selection of geographical choices of pre-WWI Russian Gubernia and Galician Wojewodztwa available on the “Geographical Region” drop-down menu. IMPORTANT: While most searches can be made within a geographical area, two major additions to the JRI-Poland Database — the 1930s Aliyah Passport File and the post-war Monitor Polski court notices — require the researcher to search the entire database and not limit the search by geographical area.

Searching the JRI-Poland database is now a TWO STAGE process. STAGE I shows the number of results by Russian Gubernia and Galician Wojewodztwa. To access the Stage II data, you must log in using your JewishGen identity and password. See https://www.jewishgen.org/JewishGen/Support.htm to register.

Press the button and STAGE II shows the index entries for the selected Gubernia/Wojewodztwa.

Using the JRI-Poland database is a great first step in your research efforts. While the database does not contain actual vital records, successful searches will give you an index entry with the name, record number, the year the event was recorded (but not necessarily when it actually occurred), and possibly more. Search results include the LDS microfilm number so you can order the film and review the actual record at your local Family History Center. For records not filmed by the Mormons, follow the online instructions that include an easy-to-use form for
ordering records directly from the Polish State Archives. You can obtain actual records, which have additional information that does not appear in the index entry. The JRI-Poland Order FAQ at: http://www.jri-poland.org/psa/orderfaq.htm#q1.1 has information on how to order records indexed from LDS microfilms or Polish State Archive projects.

The JRI-Poland database depends on three prime resources:

- **LDS Microfilms of Records in the Polish State Archives**
  Records from 1810 to 1865 – and in some cases beyond – have been microfilmed by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (LDS or Mormons,) and you can view them in LDS Family History Centers worldwide. There are about 2,000 microfilms containing Polish Jewish vital records for more than 570 cities and towns. These microfilms were the starting point for JRI-Poland's indexing and the foundation of its searchable database.

- **Polish State Archives – Direct**
  From 1997 through 2006, Jewish Records Indexing-Poland had an agreement with the Polish State Archives (PSA) to index its holdings of Jewish vital records not microfilmed by the Mormons (LDS). These generally are the records from about 1865 to 1905.

With the addition of these indices, information on the majority of Jewish vital records from the last decades of the 19th century and early 20th century have now become readily available outside of Poland. No longer is it necessary to hire the Polish State Archives or a private researcher to find records. JRI-Poland is now in discussion with the Polish State Archives to resume indexing hopefully in late 2012.

- **Other Sources**
  To fulfill its mission of indexing records of genealogical value, JRI-Poland has added indices from other record groups in the Polish State Archives such as Census Records, Books of Permanent Residents, Army Draft, School and Court Records.

In addition, the JRI-Poland database includes records from such diverse sources as the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw, Polish museums, various cemeteries in Poland, and birth, marriage, death, draft evaders, and court notices in Polish newspapers.

### Vital Records of the Four Areas of Poland Covered by JRI-Poland

#### Prussian Vital Records
- From 1812 to 1874 records were kept in separate Jewish registers
- 1812-1847 usually in columnar format
- 1847-1874 in Napoleonic narrative format.
- Recordkeeping in German, in a hard to decipher Fractur (Deutsche schrift) or Sutterlin script. Mixed civil registration (Standesamt) commenced in 1874. Records no longer kept by religious groups.

#### Congress Poland Vital Records
- Semi-autonomous region of Russian Empire from 1815 to 1918.
- Civil registration introduced in 1808 and until 1826, maintained by Catholic Church. Jewish records included in Catholic registers from 1808 to 1825.
- Samples and translations in Polish language at: http://www.jri-poland.org/frazin.htm

#### Bialystok Area (Pale of Settlement) Vital Records
- Area under Russian control from 1815 to 1918 -- part of Grodno Gubernia
- Vital recordkeeping commenced in 1826
- 1826-1834 Synagogues registered vital events locally
- 1835 Rabbis required to maintain Crown registers
- Vital events recorded in columnar format
- Recorded in Russian / copied in Hebrew. Samples at: http://www.jewishgen.org/Belarus/belarus_documents.htm
- Revision Lists (Reviski Skazki) are Russian Empire records similar in nature to the Congress Poland Books of Residents.
- Found at Belarus National Historical Archive in Grodno and have not been indexed

#### Galician Vital Records
- Civil recordkeeping from 1784 but surviving records mainly from 1850s
- No formal regulations until 1877, when format and data requirements standardized
- Jews avoided registration of marriages
- Recorded in columnar format in either Polish or German
- German writing is hard to decipher, Fractur or Sutterlin script.
• Heading in Polish or German – both languages starting in 1877
• Samples of headings with translations: Click on “AGAD Archives Project” and under the paragraph, “Interpreting your Galician Vital Records at: http://www.jri-poland.org/galicia/
• Galician vital records from the Ukraine State Archive in Lviv have been microfilmed by the LDS Church
• All Galicia Database, at: http://search.geshergalicia.org/ has indices of some of these records
• Only a few town records from Polish Archives have been microfilmed by LDS

JRI-Poland Surname Distribution Mapper
http://data.jewishgen.org/maps/jrimap.asp

The "Surname Distribution Mapper" is a tool designed to help researchers graphically understand where their family names first appeared in the 19th century records and visualize how the family spread throughout Poland by decades from the early 1800s into the first part of the 20th century. Using modern mapping technology provided by Google Maps, the Surname Distribution Mapper allows users to graphically display their search results using a tree icon to indicate the number of entries found for a surname in a town's vital and other records. By running the cursor over each tree icon, a user can view a pop-up window displaying the number of vital record entries found in various towns in the JRI-Poland database. Clicking on the balloon brings the user to the familiar JRI-Poland search results for detailed viewing of a town's entries.

Additionally, and especially exciting for researchers, the Surname Distribution Mapper can display results for specific decades or in a "progressive mode," where tree icons appear successively by decade to give the researcher an idea of the movement of their family around Poland and the Western Ukraine. ❖

Mark Halpern, Immediate Past President of JGSGP, is a member of the JRI-Poland Board and Executive Committee - http://www.jri-poland.org/

Contact Mark at mark@halpern.com

UPCOMING MEETING DETAILS
(Check the back page of Chronicles for the date, time and exact location of each meeting)

Monday Sept 10 at KI: David Mink will describe his recent trip to Poland and Jewish heritage sites in the area. He has many pictures and will leave plenty of time for questions and answers. As David has described, this was a very powerful trip that stirred feelings about his family history and deep emotions about our collective past.

Monday, Oct. 15 at KI: Catherine “Casey” Zahn will help us learn how to better navigate the 1940 census. Now that the initial rush is past and more states have been indexed, the census is more accessible.

Casey is a Norwich, CT native who teaches third grade in Robbinsville, NJ. She is a past trustee of the Genealogical Society of NJ and was the program chair for the Federation of Genealogical Societies (FGS) 2008 conference in Philadelphia. Casey has written two teacher guides for the National Genealogical Society and had two articles about teaching genealogy to children published in Heritage Quest Magazine, (November 2004.) She often teaches adult genealogy classes throughout NJ. Currently Casey resides in Pennington, NJ with her husband and daughter and often goes home to New England to seek out her relatives, past and present.

Sunday Nov. 11 at 1 PM at Main Line Reform Temple: Reprising his excellent presentation at Beth El Jewish Genealogy Club (East Windsor, NJ) Stanley Bergman will discuss and demonstrate how to preserve documents and pictures. He will share techniques that he's used during his 27 years as the document preservationist at YIVO along with practical approaches to preserving and recovering many of our family treasures.

This year we will be trying something new -- perhaps a bit of “back to the future” for some long-time members. One-half hour before each meeting we will have books available for browsing. Some “mentors” will also be there to help guide you in your research. We hope to be helpful to everyone, but especially to beginners, so please encourage them to attend. Let’s make all our meetings "BRING A FRIEND" events. ❖
Please print, complete and mail this form with your check to our NEW ADDRESS:
JGSGP, 1657 The Fairway, #145, Jenkintown, PA 19046

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(Dues are for the calendar year, January 1-December 31. Members joining after September 30 will receive membership through the end of the following year.) Contributions and dues are tax deductible within the limits of the law.

What are the most important surnames and their associated ancestral towns 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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Please note that our mailing address has changed to: 1657 The Fairway, #145 Jenkintown, PA 19046
Please direct all US mail correspondence to this new address.

Look for information about other IAJGS member societies: http://www.iajgs.org/members/members.html
Join the JGSGP Facebook group. Our members are continually posting fascinating news and developments which impact on genealogy and important related areas. http://tinyurl.com/jgsgp

Upcoming Meetings
** Save these dates on your calendar. Note new starting times **
Program details will be posted on the JGSGP website as soon as they are complete: www.jgsgp.org

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Mon., Sept. 10, 7PM, Reform Congregation Keneseth Israel - 8339 Old York Road, Elkins Park, PA 19027

Mon., Oct. 15, 7 PM, Reform Congregation Keneseth Israel

Sun., Nov. 11, 1 PM, Main Line Reform Temple - Beth Elohim 410 Montgomery Ave, Wynnewood, PA 19096

Sun., Dec. 16, 1 PM, Main Line Reform Temple - Beth Elohim

Sun., Feb. 10, 1 PM Main Line Reform Temple - Beth Elohim

Additional meeting information will appear in the next issue of Chronicles as the dates and programs are confirmed.