



CHRONICLES

JOURNAL OF THE JEWISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF GREATER PHILADELPHIA

דברי הימים



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REFLECTIONS FROM YOUR CHRONICLES TEAM

Periodic reassessment is useful in a publication like ours. In order to be more "user friendly" we'll be implementing a stylistic change beginning with this issue. Following the model used in many journals and magazines we'll be organizing our content into definable sections and recurring columns. Take a look at the Table of Contents; you'll notice headings such as "Commentary," "Techniques, Tools, & Tips," "Travel," "Meeting Summaries & Updates," "Random Acts of Genealogical Kindness & Brick Walls", etc.

We thank specific individuals for volunteering to head recurring columns: "In the Beginning" (Steve Schecter), "Scrapbooking Q & A" (Marge Farbman), "Research Techniques" (James Gross), "Brick Wall Q & A" (Felicia Mode Alexander and Lois Sernoff).

Similarly, most organizations benefit from periodic re-evaluation. Our society's strength stems from the efforts of our members. Just as Hillary Rodham Clinton wrote, "it takes a village to raise a child", so it takes the active participation of many to create a well-oiled [organizational] machine. Refreshments at our monthly meetings don't appear mysteriously from the sky, speakers aren't knocking down our doors to share their expertise, without reminders from our membership vice-president we wouldn't know the date, time, and location of our meetings, and our quarterly journal only succeeds with an infusion of new material from our readers.

Take a look at p. 2 of each issue of *Chronicles* where we list the officers and committee chairs of our society.

(Continued on page 3)

CHRONICLES

JOURNAL OF THE JEWISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF GREATER PHILADELPHIA

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 |
| Non-resident (with local mailings)..... | \$25 |
| Overseas..... | \$21 |

Membership Applications / Renewals and Payments

to: JGSGP • 1657 The Fairway, #145
Jenkintown, PA 19046

Questions about membership status should be directed to neidich44@gmail.com

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.

SUBSCRIPTIONS - ADDRESS CHANGE

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

(“Reflections” continued from page 1)

Most, if not all of them, would benefit from the active involvement of more members to assist them in their respective endeavors. For example, our Speakers Bureau has reached out to many organizations, and our “ambassadors” have traveled to many venues to educate people about the joys and benefits of exploring one’s Jewish family history. The effectiveness of this outreach tool would be significantly enhanced if more people would step up to the plate and offer to speak and/or schedule speaking engagements.

Here are suggestions as to how you can strengthen JGSGP:

1) Offer programming suggestions to Steve Schecter, programming vice-president. Is there a specific area of interest that we’ve overlooked? Do you know of a worthwhile speaker?

2) Membership vice-president, Susan Neidich, would welcome participation of additional members to help her greet members as they arrive at our monthly meetings, make phone calls to get more people to renew their memberships, and maintain contact with folks who miss meetings.

3) Take a bunch of printed copies of *Chronicles* and distribute them to your synagogues, organizations, Hebrew schools, etc. Just this morning a friend from my shul complimented me on the quality of our content and recognized how important it is for him to speak to his parents and elderly relatives to get their stories.

4) Compose an article for *Chronicles*. Every story is worth sharing. Contact the individuals mentioned above who are heading recurring columns.

5) Join the ranks of roving speakers for the Speakers Bureau and help promulgate JGSGP’s mission to educate about Jewish genealogy.

6) Suggest and help implement new projects. The immigrant bank records and *Jewish Exponent* databases are just two examples of member-generated projects that have provided important new information.

We attained the pinnacle of success as a society when we co-hosted the 2009 conference, but analyze how we did that: significant numbers of our members banded together to achieve a worthwhile goal. Let’s recapture that enthusiasm and demonstrate JGSGP’s continuing vitality. ❖

Evan Fishman - Editor

We have had several very interesting meetings this past fall. If you were unable to attend them you missed some very valuable information. Avraham Groll from JewishGen gave a great presentation in December on "How to Navigate through JewishGen.org", and in November we learned how to preserve our photographs and documents.

Our next meeting will be held at Main Line Reform Congregation in Wynnewood, PA on Sunday, February 10th at 1 pm. We will be presenting the Holocaust themed film, "Misa's Fugue", which our society partially funded. Please try to attend. The producers and creators of the film will be on hand for a Q & A period afterwards.

As a genealogy society one of our missions is to connect families by enabling genealogists to have better access to records and information. Our members have done some remarkable work. We indexed records from the four Philadelphia immigrant banks and are currently indexing obituaries from the Philadelphia *Jewish Exponent*. We have also funded the indexing and cleanup of newly closed Mt. Carmel Cemetery in the Frankford section of the city. I think we should be reaching out to the other active and inactive cemeteries with the goal of creating better access to their databases. This would greatly enhance the availability of the valuable records to the Jewish genealogy community worldwide. If you have an interest in chairing a committee of this nature, please contact me at president@jgsgp.org.

As stated before please join our Facebook group "Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Philadelphia" (<http://tinyurl.com/jgsgp>). We have over 100 members now. Upcoming meeting information is posted there as well as other valuable and timely content. ❖

Fred Blum

Deadline for our Spring issue is Monday, February 25, 2013. Please send your material to editor@jgsgp.org.

WE EXTEND A WARM WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST MEMBERS

Charles & Barbara Lavine
Maura Sostack
Jamie Takacs-Neshkoff

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Philadelphia PA
Lowville NY

Caren Trantas
Lynne Walters
Beverly Schechtman

Atlantic City, NJ

AN "OLD" GENEALOGIST LOOKS AT A GENEALOGY SOCIETY

by Harry D. Boonin

This article is addressed to the newer members of our society who have joined this year as well as those who joined earlier. The newest were identified in recent issues of *Chronicles*. To all of you, I say one word: "Welcome!" You have joined a great bunch!

You are probably saying to yourself, "What makes them so great?" You probably think, "Words flow from his mouth like mud down the Schuylkill River." Well, that is probably true, but what's also true is the value of a society, even in an all-electronic age. You ask, "How can that be?" Anything that anyone wants to know about genealogy can be found on the internet! It's true that the internet contains a huge amount of material, more than any new or seasoned member of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Philadelphia can look at in a lifetime, even if she/he starts while in diapers and goes on to live a long and full life. But, (and you knew there would be a but), that is the very reason a society is more necessary today than ever before, and your presence at society meetings will help you in your searches. Stuff is on the internet: learning to use, find, value, connect, and understand it is what genealogy is all about today. Sometimes others can help you in your quest.

In the old days, you needed to know where libraries and archives were located. You planned vacations around the location of a hard to find repository so you could take a secret trip there early one morning while your supposedly unaware spouse was sleeping and you told her/him you were going to play golf. But she/he knew where you went. Genealogists are not very good at covering their tracks. Spouses know everything.

I want to use just one, online genealogy site to explain what I am talking about: www.jewishgen.org. This is the favorite and most visited, online site for new and seasoned Jewish genealogists. Nothing comes close to it in importance. The question, however, is: "Can you use it by yourself? How much of this site do you actually use?, 2% or 5% or some

smaller percentage? Do you know how to navigate it?" (When I say, "it" I mean any genealogical site, including www.jewishgen.org, www.ancestry.com, and the other thousands of sites.) I was looking through my daily postings from www.jewishgen.org today and stumbled on a posting thanking Marilyn Robinson, a most generous Jewish genealogist who frequently provides information about new Russian web sites she has discovered.

"What is this all about?" Marilyn has discovered and identified websites from all over Russia, and as they come online and she finds them, she advises us of her findings. Each of these websites offers genealogists with Russian-Jewish roots new sources to search. They are in Russian, of course. "Is that a turn off? Most of us enjoy reading things in English. Looking at those funny Russian letters gives a true genealogist a headache but this can be overcome by using Google's wonderful tools to convert Russian into English. Bingo, all your problems are solved or are they?"

Do you understand everything about the data on the sites, even with online tutorials and Marilyn's wonderful guidance? What if you're able to translate the material in Russian in the privacy of the computer corner of your house, do you still have questions? What is the value of the hundreds of links she has found? What have others found? Does one link lead to another? Only by talking to others at JGSGP meetings can you learn the full meaning of the great data available to us. Society meetings (what I am selling) provide opportunities to bring us together and provide a venue for us to learn. And they don't bite! After all, learning is why we are all doing Jewish genealogy. Why use a short cut in your learning process?

This is just one example of how a society can help a newcomer. Many of our seasoned members are knowledgeable in many areas. There is really no end to what they know. Attend a meeting, introduce yourself and test my theory that they are smart. Stand up and state a few of the principal surnames you are researching and the names of your towns in the old country. Who knows? Maybe someone else at the society meeting is researching your family or your ancestral town. Ask questions. Ours is a typical Jewish organization. The response will usually be another question (what did

you expect?), but if you persist, who knows? You may get someone to give you an answer; it has happened.

It is only in these give and take discussions that you can pick up a hint, a kernel of an idea that will lead you to scribble a note on a piece of paper that will send you scurrying back to your corner computer to follow a new lead that you had never thought of, but should have, mainly because no one can think of everything. We all need help, and help is available. Even if you don't learn anything, we feed everyone at each meeting so you would not have to endure a total loss. Good luck in your searches, and, on behalf of the society, we would love to see all new members, perhaps at a "new members" meeting. Who knows? New things are possible. It's a wonderful world! ❖

Author Harry D. Boonin is the founding president of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Philadelphia and a well-known genealogical researcher and writer. Harry is the author of "The Jewish Quarter of Philadelphia: A History & Guide 1881-1930", "The Life & Times of Congregation Keshet Israel", and is researching Jewish boxers from Philadelphia.

Contact Harry at: harryboonin@gmail.com

IN THE BEGINNING

by Steve Schecter

I'd like to reactivate this column which used to appear in earlier years of *Chronicles* and was designed to make it easier for "newbies" (both those online and those who aren't) to expand their genealogical world. When you become "computer literate," you will improve your genealogical searching skills. Sure, one can "do" genealogy without a computer, but a computer sure makes it easier.

Specifically a computer with software will help:

1. Organize your records;
2. Connect with the internet;
3. Let you better store and preserve your genealogy "stuff";
4. Move you into the 21st century (albeit perhaps with some kicking and screaming).

First, some basics. Some of us approach a computer grudgingly or with fear and trepidation. Not to worry, this is generational and normal. Computers have become resilient and user friendly. We no longer need fear the "blue screen of death" and its interminable reboots. As my kids say: "computers are bulletproof." Now we need to readjust our mindsets to match.

Our kids or grandchildren approach computers as toys, something to play with. THIS IS CRITICAL. We learn best when we play; we do not need to be taught to play and we do not fear play. Heck, play is fun and mistakes often open new opportunities. When we treat our computers as toys, we enhance our learning, its utility and our enjoyment.

Let's minimize the stress about what type of computer. It now makes little difference-- PC, Mac, desktop, laptop -- they are all toys. It is best to start with a traditional computer and some basic software. Pick what you can afford and what your friends and your family use. This will enable you to help each other. Remember: a computer is designed for a three to five year lifespan, so you can make a more informed choice when you get your next one.

To start, get an internet connection, typically through Comcast or Verizon. This will give you access to the worldwide web (www). Here you can begin to explore. Using e-mail and doing Google searches will become second nature, and you can also try Facebook and JewishGen. And while a few people encounter computer viruses and other mischief, a reasonable virus protector should act as a vaccination. Ask your grandchildren which ones they use. Also, follow the simple rule of not giving personal information to people you do not know.

Second, for genealogy, you want a program to help store and organize your findings. Here you have two primary options: 1) keeping your data on your own computer or 2) storing data on someone else's.

Web based software services like Geni, MyHeritage and Ancestry all offer to store your data typically for free to start and then for a fee. This is the "cloud" we hear about. These services make it easier for others to find your tree and add to your search, but remember, the company has your data.

The other choice is to get software that resides on your computer. You control access and the data are saved on your computer. I recommend this option even though I also use a cloud program to gather and share.

There are now many software choices, and it can feel overwhelming. Based on what I have used personally or what friends use, I suggest Legacy or Family Search's PAF for those with a PC and Reunion for those with a Mac.

Legacy & PAF are free downloads with \$30 to \$50 add-ons

if you want advanced features and charts. As a beginner you typically do not need the add-ons; they can be purchased later after you've acquired some experience. Reunion costs about \$100 and includes everything.

All three programs are easy to download and install, bulletproof (i.e. hard to hurt) and easy to learn if you remember to play with them. If you want to use another program, go ahead but just make sure it is GEDCOM compatible. GEDCOM is a universal computer language that will let you transfer your data to another program should you want to. Any program you're considering should clearly state if it is GEDCOM compatible.

When you get this far, start playing and check *Chronicles* for follow-up articles on software and your search. ❖

Author Steve Schechter is JGSGP's Vice President-Programs 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

RESEARCH TECHNIQUES: REVIEW OF JEWISHGEN'S FTJP DATABASE

by James Gross

Beginning with this issue we will feature a column devoted to highlights of software, databases, websites, or special research techniques. JGSGP members are invited to email me if they have tech questions: techquestions@jgsgp.org.

For our first column topic, I will briefly highlight a few areas in the website (www.jewishgen.org) and then focus on one, specific component.

Founded in 1987, JewishGen has become the central online destination for Jewish genealogical research. More than 1000 volunteers throughout the world actively contribute to JewishGen's ever growing collection of databases, resources and search tools. JewishGen has more than 400,000 users worldwide and allows them to search more than 14 million online records in databases for Poland, Belarus, Ukraine, Germany, Lithuania, the United States, and other regions. JewishGen also has a searchable database (consisting

of two million Holocaust records) which includes registrations from ghettos, transport lists, concentration camp records, and survivor lists.

Within the JewishGen website, the primary research databases include: the JewishGen Gazetteer (formerly the "ShtetlSeeker"), the JewishGen Communities database, the worldwide burial registry (JOWBR), the Holocaust database, country databases, the JewishGen Family Finder (JGFF), and the Family Tree of the Jewish People (FTJP). Ongoing projects (Yizkor Book, KehilaLinks, Family Pages, and ViewMate) are also contained within this enormous website.

There are discussion groups which enable researchers to connect, ask questions, exchange information and learn from others. They are categorized by general and specific areas/topics of interest. There is a helpful table of contents on the website.

Now I'd like to focus on the one database which I feel is very helpful for locating individuals and their associated family trees: the Family Tree of the Jewish People (FTJP). This is a searchable compilation of family trees submitted by individuals and is searchable by a variety of methods. Its central purpose is to enhance the ability of researchers to locate and identify family tree branches which are being researched. As of December 2010, JewishGen's FTJP database exceeded five million names from 4200 contributors. In addition to submitting their own family trees, users can contact other researchers from within the database via a secure and anonymous email forwarding system. FTJP's reach has broadened since 2010 when it began a partnership with MyHeritage.com. This merger provides Jewish genealogists with a special facility with which to create their family trees while also enabling MyHeritage.com users to see FTJP data.

The database works as follows:

A) Users submit a gedcom file (example: james.ged) by uploading them onto the JewishGen website. These gedcom files are files which most genealogy software programs can create as a file output.

B) Registered members of JewishGen (registration is free) can log into the FTJP website, type in the names they are looking for within the search engine, and click on the desired name.

The database search can be performed using the following two steps:

- A) Users subscribe and become members of JewishGen.
- B) Users can then log in using their email and password to enter the site. They then perform name searches on the FTJP database.

Searches have three areas for customizable searching:

- A) Given (first) name or town/country,
- B) Type of search by surname “exact spelling”, using the “Daitch-Mokotoff Soundex” system, or “starting with this spelling”
- C) “Order results by” with options to select from a drop down menu.

I usually select given name for my searches. Then I usually select the “Surname- Exact Spelling” option. See image #1 below.

For example, I searched for Nathan Steinberg who was my grandfather. As I want this precise name, I chose to use the “exact spelling” search option. The next option is the results order. I chose to order the results by given name. See Image #2 below.

See Image #3 (below) for partial search results:

| Name | Born | Died | Father + Mother | Code | Last Updated |
|--|------|------|--|--------|--------------|
| STEINBERG, Aron Nathan | 1833 | 1907 | Nathan Aron + Bluemchen Herz Berghausen | 132112 | 20 Feb 2008 |
| STEINBERG, Dr Nathan | 1898 | 1998 | Solomon Joel + Breina (Saidel) Steinberg | 2913 | 17 SEP 2012 |

The FTJP database returned 16 entries, including one from my Sept 2011 gedcom submission. JewishGen identifies your submissions with grey coloring of the entry. The little purple image to the left of my entry indicates that a viewable tree is available. Let’s click on my hyperlinked entry, Nathan. See Image #4 below.

| Name | Born | Died | Father + Mother | Code | Last Updated |
|--|------|------|--|--------|--------------|
| STEINBERG, Aron Nathan | 1833 | 1907 | Nathan Aron + Bluemchen Herz Berghausen | 132112 | 20 Feb 2008 |
| STEINBERG, Dr Nathan | 1898 | 1998 | Solomon Joel + Breina (Saidel) Steinberg | 2913 | 17 SEP 2012 |

Image #5 below is a partial screenshot of the entry and shows part of Nathan's tree.



There is a clickable button for users to contact the submitter. See Image #6 below.

In summary, the FTJP is a very useful primary resource which can be of help to Jewish genealogy researchers. I have found it useful to periodically check this and the other databases on JewishGen for updates. By the way, it looks like I need to update my gedcom file! ❖

Images 1-6: Courtesy JewishGen FTJP database and family tree (gedcom) data from the author.

Author James Gross recently graduated with a Master of Library & Information Science (MLIS) from Drexel University. He has been working on his family tree since the early 1990's and is a periodic contributor to various genealogy newsletters.

James also has a genealogy website: <http://tinyurl.com/grosssteinberg> He can be reached at: navistar96@yahoo.com

QUESTIONS FROM AN AGING GENEALOGIST

by Steve Schechter

All of us are aging, and hence, the following questions apply universally. At some point we (or our heirs) will be confronted with deciding what to do with our collections of irreplaceable documents, pictures, files, software and books that we've accumulated in doing research.

Some of us are fortunate to have interested family members willing to take the baton; some are seen by family as semi-obsessed and *meshuga* (crazy), bordering on hoarders, and many of us are viewed somewhere in between. The harsh reality is that ultimately we will have a collection of "stuff" into which we have poured our hearts and souls and that we want to outlive us.

So, what are we to do?

It seems that the more we can preserve, clean, organize and protect our "stuff", the likelier it will be to live on, be accessible and helpful to future generations. Guidelines for us now might include:

1. How can I organize everything to make it easy for someone 50 or 100 years from now to make sense of it?
2. How can I store materials to slow down deterioration?
3. How can I cull the critical from the important to reduce the collection to a more manageable size and help me focus my time to maximum advantage?
4. How can I make and safely store electronic records? How do I scan, photograph, format and securely save it all? How do I add critical source information and links to documents and pictures to my genealogy software?
5. How do I begin to record the "stories behind the stuff," memories not captured in the documents, the narrative behind the pictures, the heart and soul of people past and present?
6. What provisions should I make for where to archive or leave my "stuff" when I can no longer store it?

These seem to me important questions that we too often avoid. It is easier to rationalize that it will be left to "whomever," and they will care for everything. When traveling to local auctions and flea markets, however, it is shocking to see how many documents, pictures and artifacts -- collections from someone's

life-long passion -- are forsaken and for sale.

I wish I had the answers to my six questions and a bunch more. Perhaps some of you have ideas that you can share by writing an article for future issues of *Chronicles*. ❖

Author Steve Schechter 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.

Steve is researching SHULLRIKTER, BRANSKY, ZALMAN & RADINOWSKY from the Vitibsk / Dubrovno / Lyady areas; LINDER, KOKESH, & HAAS/HASS from Zalocze/Brody; and ZELACHONIK & PINDRAKOV from Minsk. As one of our Speakers Bureau "ambassadors" he conducts talks and workshops on the importance of Jewish genealogy to our future and instructs his listeners about techniques to identify ancestors and preserve their stories. You can contact Steve at: programs@jgsgp.org

SIX DEGREES OF SEPARATION OR LESS

by Jared Klein, Ph.D.

In November 2011 my son, Nathaniel Klein of Atlanta, Georgia met Rachel Leah Berman, a young lady from Montreal. (Of interest to genealogists: Rachel Leah's mother, Rivka Berman (nee Rickover) is a cousin of Hyman Rickover, father of the American nuclear submarine.) In May of this year Nathaniel brought Rachel Leah to our home in Athens, Georgia to meet me, my wife, and our other son Adam. During this visit Nathaniel suggested that I show Rachel Leah a precious family heirloom.

My paternal grandfather, Yisroel Klein (for whom I'm named) was a *rav* (rabbi) in Hungary during the first decade of the 20th century. He attended the Ratzferd [Hungary] Yeshiva, studying with Harav Shaul Rosenberg who may have been the *rosh yeshiva* (headmaster of the school). He became a rabbi in the town of Jaszkarajeno [Hungary], and served as the town's sole *moreh hara'ah* (decider of Jewish legal issues). He frequently engaged in epistolary correspondence with rabbis throughout Hungary and Romania about *halakhic* (Jewish legal) issues that arose in the process of daily life.

My family is fortunate to own a book that contains fourteen *teshuvot* (*responsa*) that my grandfather received from his colleagues. These *teshuvot* were handwritten in old Hebrew

paleography between 1902 and 1911, the year before my grandfather died at the tender age of 28 or 29, apparently from leukemia.

Learned rabbis at that time addressed one another in flowery styled expression, replete with Biblical allusions. My aunt in Cleveland later commissioned a rabbi there to help translate portions of the letters. One letter, composed by Harav Shaul Rosenberg of Ratzferd, was one of the earliest and was sent soon after my grandfather was married and before he found a rabbinical post.

When I showed this book to Rachel Leah and opened it to the table of contents where all the letters, their dates, and their sources were listed, she immediately fixed her attention on the name “Harav Shaul Rosenberg of Ratzferd”. She then revealed that this man was her mother’s great grandfather! The Berman family possesses the published *responsa* of Harav Shaul in a book entitled *Chemdat Shaul (Saul’s Delight)* in which there are actually six letters written to my grandfather. The Klein personal collection is missing two of those letters. The Bermans also possess a picture of Harav Shaul but none of my grandfather.

Mrs. Berman (Rachel Leah’s mother) was utterly amazed at this atavistic link between her daughter and future son-in-law. She stated that one might perhaps expect this sort of thing to occur in New York [City], where entire European communities often transferred themselves lock, stock, and barrel, but she said, “Athens, Georgia!” Of course, in my case Athens, Georgia must be “deconstructed” back to Cleveland, Ohio, a less exotic immigrant city.

The story is still an exceedingly interesting one and shows that there are many ways, both intentional and unintentional, in which we can recover our past. It also shows that genealogy in the narrow sense of disembodied names and dates, which is usually the first line of interest for people trying to understand who they are and where they come from, must be supplemented, wherever possible, by details of our ancestors’ lives in order to bring our genealogical pasts to life. ❖

Dr. Klein, a cousin of a close friend of “Chronicles” editor, Evan Fishman, is Distinguished Research Professor of Linguistics, Classics, and Germanic and Slavic languages at the University of Georgia and received his B.A. from Case Western Reserve University, and his M. Phil., M.A. and Ph.D. (all in Linguistics) from Yale University. Klein is also Director of the Linguistics Program at the University of Georgia’s Franklin College. He can be reached at jklein@uga.edu

SCRAPBOOKING Q & A

by Marge Farbman

Can I salvage my stuck-together photos damaged in this past October’s super storm?

In the aftermath of Super Storm Sandy many people have salvaged water-damaged photographs which may now be dry, but stuck together. The emulsion layer became tacky when it got wet or was in a high humidity location and when it dried, it stuck to whatever was against it.

We think about photos as being dry... ink on paper, but dry. Photos actually go through a wet process from negative to print. The chemicals are in liquid form, the photo paper is immersed into the liquid, and the image appears as if by magic. Very old photos are processed on heavy paper, today's prints on much thinner paper. Both old and new photos are very fragile when wet so any handling should be done carefully.

Should your photos be caught in a flood and you are able to rescue them quickly, but do not have the time to try to save them, put them in a freezer! If frozen they will not mildew. Mildew will destroy the images and the paper, but if frozen they will keep till you have time to defrost them and try to save them. If your photos stick together because they were in a highly humid environment and you can't get to work on them... into the freezer! Although this sounds strange, this is the technique Creative Memories consultants have used when helping people after Katrina and other disasters. If you are putting them into a freezer, put them in plastic bags, in sizes that will be workable when you try to restore them.

Don't try to peel the photos apart. Soak them in cold, distilled water for a short period of time, about 5 minutes or so, to allow moisture to be reintroduced to the emulsion. After the photographs have been soaking for several minutes, attempt to separate them, first by testing one of the edges to see if it peels apart freely. If not, continue to soak them and check on them periodically, doing the same peel test on the edge. Be very careful as they are in a delicate stage. Wear gloves to protect the photos and handle them by the edges only.

Once the photos have been separated from each other, they should be laid on a flat, dry surface in a temperate environment and allowed to dry completely before being handled further. If you have a huge number of photos to dry, string

some clothes line and use old-fashioned clip clothes pins to hang them to dry. You can get the clothes pins at craft stores, Michael's, AC Moore, etc., since they are now a craft item. They may also be available at local hardware stores.

For information about digital print restoration and more definitive information on heritage print restoration, go to www.rit.edu/ipi and look for "A Consumer Guide for the Recovery of Water-Damaged Traditional and Digital Prints" Rochester Institute of Technology, Image Permanence Institute. or

<http://www.creativememories.com/Library/disaster.pdf> for the article. ❖

Marge Farbman has a varied and concurrent career background: 30 years in interior design, 15 years as a fundraiser, 12 years as a scrapbooking teacher, consultant and scrapbook designer for clients. In the odd hours not taken by these enterprises, she and her husband have raised four children, enjoy eight grandchildren and managed to do a bit of gardening and traveling to boot! Marge loves sending video email to family, friends and clients to keep them updated on her latest adventures. You can reach Marge at: margefarb@aol.com or 610-291-8988.

PLANNING A TRIP TO ANCESTRAL TOWNS

by Merle Kastner

Years ago, before I acquired a computer and used email, I called and visited all the older, living family members in all branches of my family, wrote letters and did tons of research. My cousin and dear friend, Bruce Reisch contacted me and then there was no turning back.

When planning a trip to ancestral towns, do your homework:

- o Collect all useful addresses, phone numbers, email addresses in advance of trip.
- o Xerox all documents you'll need to take.
- o Contact specific repositories, city halls, museums, and archives way in advance. List your queries.
- o Read accounts of trips taken by others in your respective SIGs. Network with those travelers as well as those in the discussion groups for advice, guidance, and tips.

Book all your travel arrangements in advance. Utilize whatever discounts you can access: Europass for trains, etc.

Arrange for guides, researchers, and drivers in advance, using referrals from previous travelers to the same locations. Communicate with them at length via email, phone, SKYPE. Discuss language capabilities, familiarity with Jewish sites, dealing with government officials on local, regional, and national levels; ask about *baksheesh*. Set rates in advance and method(s) of payment.

Arrange accommodations and meals in advance. Thoroughly check out accommodations so that they meet your standards and needs (elevators, low floor, smoke-free, accessibility to accommodate various disabilities, Wi-Fi, local and international telephone rates and coverage, message service). Anticipate any special dietary needs (kosher, vegetarian, gluten free, etc.) and plan accordingly. Confirm all accommodations in writing. What are electrical conditions in each country you'll be visiting? Bed & breakfast; apartment vs. hotel? Check out www.booking.com.

Evaluate how you want to handle foreign currency. What's the best way to convert from your regular currency to the other? What forms of payment are most widely used in the countries you're visiting: credit card, debit card, traveler's checks?

Suggested Links:

<http://www.jewishgen.org/InfoFiles/UkraineTravel.html>
(Advice from a traveler in 1999 & 2002)

<http://www.jewishgen.org/InfoFiles/pl-trav.txt>
(Travelogue from a 1995 trip)

<http://www.jewishgen.org/InfoFiles/CodeOfBehavior.html>
(Etiquette for genealogists) ❖

Merle Kastner is vice president of programming for the JGS of Montreal. While she resides there, she has definite roots in Philadelphia. Her paternal grandmother, Esther Miller Kastner, was born in Philadelphia in 1894 and moved to Canada with her family in 1909.

Merle has spearheaded indexing of Jewish cemeteries in her home area and attends IAJGS conferences regularly.

She is researching: KASTNER, OSTFELD (Bukovina), NATHANSON, MENDELSSOHN (Piatra Neamt & Negulesti, Romania) KUSSNER/KUSHNIR (Bendery, Moldova), MILLER/SHUSHINSKI (Lida, Belarus, Vilna & Eishishok, Lithuania), GARBARSKI & DENENBERG/DYNABURSKI (Sejny, Suwalki gubernia, Poland).

Contact Merle at: merlek@videotron.ca.

WALKING IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF MY GREAT GREAT GREAT GRANDPARENTS: A VISIT TO MY GERMAN ANCESTRAL TOWNS THROUGH THE GENEROSITY OF COUSIN ULI

by Joan F. Pollak

For the past fifteen years I have been researching my German ancestors with interrelated family links who came to the United States in the mid 19th century. I have enthusiastically presented this research at a German SIG meeting and at JGSGP's 25th anniversary luncheon in 2004. However, I never expected it would be possible to visit all my ancestral towns spread out in the German countryside. How would I get there? Who would guide me? Was the language gap insurmountable?

My sixth cousin Uli, a relative I had never met, gave me one of the most generous gifts of my life and made such a trip possible. When he heard I was planning a sightseeing visit to Berlin with my husband and daughter for the second week of September 2012 he insisted that I find a way to extend our trip and meet him in Munich. Uli promised to act as our guide and said he would plan the itinerary including a two-day trip to the towns of my ancestors.

Uli and I discovered several years ago that we were related when he obtained my name from a mutual relative interested in the roots of our families from Hengstfeld, Germany. At that time Uli was researching information about his German Jewish grandfather who had broken off his relationship with a young, non-Jewish, maiden after she became pregnant. This young woman became Uli's grandmother. Uli's grandfather then immigrated to the United States during the rise of Nazi power. We jointly examined internet records from our respective homes in Munich and Philadelphia, and I helped Uli piece together information about this grandfather's children and grandchildren in the United States.. We developed a warm rapport as a result of our contacts. When he offered to chart a trip for us through the German countryside my family and I were game for the adventure.

Uli then spent several months preparing by contacting historians, mayors, and local historical societies. I'd been able to document many ancestral gravesites, street addresses, and local synagogues after years of research utilizing the help of German archivists, and as a result I was able to highlight for Uli the sites that would have the most

significance for me. My German ancestors were not all Uli's relatives, but he was careful to include every town I wanted to see. Through meticulous planning, Uli lined up appointments for guided tours and presentations over the two-day travel period, carefully scheduling each day down to half hour increments I was definitely in the hands of a master planner!

Following our visit to Berlin, my family arrived in Munich and enjoyed a cross-cultural exchange experience with Uli and his family. We toured Munich, Mad Ludwig's Castles, and Dachau and shared the history and horror of concentration camp life. We were also treated to an authentic Bavarian dinner at Uli's house. We looked at his hand drawn family tree and educated our families about all the ancestors we were to encounter. Our two-day tour was to include stops in two states--Bavaria and Baden-Wuerttemberg-- and would require a lot of good humor on the road, breaks for sightseeing, and good food and beer.

The first day of our ancestral tour started in Binswangen, Bavaria, which is about two hours northwest of Munich.



Joan Pollak in front of Great Great Great Grandfather Gerson Heilbronner's house in Binswangen, Germany

According to family oral history, my two Heilbronner great great great grandfathers were peddlers who fled Binswangen in 1847 with their families due to revolutionary unrest and persecution. I was unsure if all traces of life from two centuries ago would be hidden by apartment complexes and shopping areas, but I was thrilled to find that the picturesque town nestled in the Bavarian fields remained as it was with small streets, thatched roof houses, and a jewel of a restored synagogue.

Our guide, Johann Urban, a historian and teacher who met us at the street sign that said "Judengasse" [Jews' Alley] showed us the Jewish section of town on an old map, and then walked me over to several houses where my great

great great grandparents had lived. Mr. Urban found the story about revolutionary unrest surprising because there were no records of the revolution impacting Binswangen. We concluded there were personal reasons which we will never know that caused my ancestors to flee.



Interior of Binswangen Synagogue

We proceeded to tour the beautiful synagogue founded in 1836 and preserved with the help of state funds, and then drove on to the cemetery outside of town. Although several centuries of Jewish gravestones had been shattered by Nazi youth, a number were put back together though the burial sites were not exactly marked. I was able to find a gravestone that bore the name “Heilbronner” and felt that I had truly come full circle with my ancestors.

That afternoon we arrived in Michelbach, Wuerttemberg, where we toured the restored synagogue with Crystel Pfaender, second chairwoman of the Michelbach membership group. I knew from the archives that my great great grandmother Fannie Alexander, who immigrated to the U.S. in 1866 and married a Heilbronner from Binswangen, had been confirmed in the Michelbach synagogue in 1864. Looking up at the women’s prayer area made me think of her sitting there as a teenager. We went on to the beautiful Michelbach cemetery, surrounded by fields of maize, where a number of ancestors were buried, and we acknowledged their memory by placing stones on the graves. When we asked Ms. Pfaender if any other Jewish descendants ever visited the cemetery her eyes teared up, She replied that no one was left, and she was consequently honored by our visit.

Our families enjoyed an overnight stay in the medieval town of Rothenburg, and then early the next morning we drove two hours to the town of Grosseicholzheim, Baden. My great great grandfather, Isaac Rund, emigrated from Grosseicholzheim to New York City in 1850 and had con-

secutively married two Heilbronner sisters. Thanks to earlier help from the Grosseicholzheim volunteer historian Artur Vogt I had discovered that Isaac Rund’s mother, Zierle Westheimer Rund, who lived from 1771 to 1823, was buried in the Boedigheim cemetery outside of Grosseicholzheim along with other Westheimer and Rund family members. The cemetery was our first destination.

At the beautiful cemetery we met a large greeting party composed of the town historical society led by Maxi-Monika Thuerl; Reinhart Lochmann, a local historian specializing in Jewish history; and a newspaper photographer. We were welcomed as important guests, stood for photos and started our tour at the preserved morgue which sheltered a 150 year old horse drawn hearse.



We proceeded to the graves where I located my great great grandmother Zierle and spent a quiet moment of awe standing near an ancestor who lived in the 1700’s. We visited the graves of other uncles, aunts and cousins and I took careful photographs of all the legible Hebrew lettering for future translation.

The tour continued to the town of Grosseicholzheim where we visited a Holocaust memorial site designed by students, and a room in the local castle that was devoted to Jewish history. A walk past homes of ancestors, a synagogue building with a commemorative plaque, and lunch at an inn that had been owned by an ancestor capped off an emotional morning. At lunch I gave a speech to the gathering of the historical society and the regional historian, thanking them for their hard work preserving all the Jewish sites of the town which helped me reconnect with my ancestors. The visit was documented by an article in a regional and Heidelberg city newspaper



Joan Pollak in Noerdlingen with gravestone of Great Great Great Grandfather Isak Alexander

Our final afternoon stop was at the Jewish cemetery, founded in 1878, outside the city of Noerdlingen where we met the city archivist Susanne Faul. My great great great grandfather Isak Alexander, Fannie's father, was buried in this cemetery, and I knew from my research that he had been an antique dealer in Stuttgart. The inscription on his grave noted that he was a "beloved father." Ms. Faul showed me gravestones for Isak's daughters, Sary and Jette. This was significant because I knew these aunts had emigrated to the U.S. but later decided to return to Germany and lived near their father at the end of his life. Aunt Sary's gravestone included a very sad memorial to her daughter Resi, my cousin who "had disappeared in a concentration camp in 1941." After such a memorable day our families enjoyed a walk and German style ice cream inside the lovely walled city of Noerdlingen.

It is still hard for me to sort through my reflections after such an emotionally intense journey. Glimpsing the lives of my ancestors through their villages, cities, houses, synagogues, and burial sites certainly cemented my connection with them and with my past. I was happy to be able to share that experience with my husband and daughter. I have great reverence and appreciation for the German volunteers, historians and archivists dedicated to preserving the memory of the Jews who lived amongst them. I saw that many Germans work hard to confront and reconcile with the truth of persecution and murder of their Jewish neighbors. Finally, encountering the generosity of my cousin Uli, who found meaning in joining his family in the present and the past

with mine, made this a once in a lifetime experience. I will always be grateful I found such a wonderful cousin and person through my genealogical research. ❖

Joan F. Pollak has actively researched her family genealogy for the past seventeen years. Her ancestors emigrated from Germany, Bohemia, Hungary, and Russia, and she has traced her ancestral towns on all family branches. Family names of interest include HEILBRONNER/HEILBRONER, ALEXANDER, RUND, FEIGENBAUM, EICHBERG and JANDORF from Germany; POLLAK, STEINER from Czech Republic; REITER, MOSKOWITZ/MUSKOVITS from Hungary; ZUCKERMAN/ZUCKER from Russia. Contact Joan at JFPollak@gmail.com

JEWISH POLAND TODAY

by David Mink

(A follow-up to David's report published in the Fall 2012 issue of *Chronicles*, Vol. 29-3)

Our *shtetl* tour of Poland this past summer included visits to Lublin, Zamosc, Chmielnik, Szttdlow, Pinczow, etc. These were towns that had substantial Jewish populations before World War II and currently have only a handful of buildings, cemeteries, and monuments that are evidence of once thriving communities.. The synagogues that have been reclaimed and restored serve today as museums and cultural centers. The cities, however, tell another story. In Krakow and Warsaw, we found Jewish populations and thriving communities. Seeing this renewal of Jewish life became the most exciting experience of our trip to Poland.

Our first stop in Krakow, before we even checked into our hotel, was the Krakow Jewish Community Center.



The place was humming. In the front courtyard, young people were selling T-shirts, snacks, cd's, and *tchotchkes* from various booths. The annual Jewish cultural festival was in full swing, and this was a great opportunity to sell souvenirs to the out-of-towners. Jonathon Orenstein, one of the driving forces in the community, spoke to us. He is typical of the multifaceted people we met. An American who lived in Israel for seven years and taught modern Hebrew in Jagiellonian University from 2002-2008, he is now the executive director of the local JCC which serves as the non-denominational center for the entire community and fulfills the same role as JCC's do in the U.S.

That night we enjoyed a concert by Paul Shapiro's Ribs & Brisket Revue at the beautiful Tempel Synagogue. On Friday night, we had Shabbos dinner in the *Chabad* (a Hasidic movement) shul, the Kupa Synagogue, with 300 guests from Krakow, Poland, and abroad. It was a joyful meal.



Rehearsal in the Tempel Synagogue

One of the advantages of this particular trip was that we got to meet some exceptional people who have played and continue to play an important role in the rebirth of the Jewish community, including Dr. Stanislaw Krajewski, a philosophy professor at the University of Warsaw. Although Krajewski's parents told him he was a Jew, he did not know what that meant while growing up under Communist rule.

While he was a leader in the Solidarity movement, he began to explore his heritage. A group of curious, like-minded Poles, would meet for clandestine discussions about what it meant to be Jewish. They would read smuggled books and articles from America as their main source of information. Since the collapse of Communism, Krajewski has been able to embrace his Polish-Jewish heritage as an Orthodox Jew and a leader of the Jewish community.

The most visible sign of the vitality of the Jewish com-

munity in Poland is the annual Jewish Cultural Festival in Krakow. Begun in 1990, this year's festival spanned eight days full of lectures, exhibits, workshops, and music. The highlight was a great outdoor concert in Szeroka Square enjoyed by thousands of young Poles and folks from everywhere.



Szeroka Square Concert

Warsaw, which is the heart of Jewish Poland, was our next stop. We toured the Nozyk Synagogue, the city's only remaining prewar synagogue. It has a beautiful sanctuary and serves as the pulpit for Rabbi Michael Schudrich, Chief Rabbi of Poland. We also visited the Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute which houses one of the greatest collections of archival records, photographs, books, journals, art, testimonies, diaries, and survivor records of the Jewish life which flourished for ten centuries. The Jewish Genealogy and Family Heritage Center is a department of the Jewish Historical Institute, and its staff assists Jews from Poland and around the world who are searching for information about their family histories and the towns and *shtetlach* in which they lived.

We were fortunate to get a preview of the Museum of the History of Polish Jews from Dr. Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett who is the director of its Core Exhibition Development Team. When completed this stunning, state-of-the-art Jewish museum will be on a par with the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum and Israel's Yad Vashem. It will extend the historical narrative beyond the Holocaust to encompass an epic Jewish history that even today profoundly shapes contemporary Israeli and American Jewish life.

The Taube Center for the Renewal of Jewish Life in Poland, with an office in Warsaw, is dedicated to enriching Jewish life and connecting Jews from around the world to their East European heritage. It played an important role in planning this tour.

Our visit to Warsaw was very intense. We toured the remnants of the Warsaw Ghetto, the historical markers, and the monuments which bear witness to the destruction of a community of 300,000 Jews. In contrast we spoke with young Poles, Jewish and non-Jewish, who want to tell the story of a Jewish people that lived and thrived in Poland for 900 years before World War II. As in any Jewish community, current members are diverse and span the spectrum from the extremely Orthodox to the extremely secular. The debate of who is a Jew in Poland takes on a whole new set of issues. The renewal of Jewish life in Poland is a growing movement supported from within Poland and by the Jews of the U.S. and Israel. It was wonderful to experience this rebirth first hand. ❖

David Mink joined JGSGP in 2006 and soon became Vice President of Programs. He co-chaired the 29th IAJGS International Conference on Jewish Genealogy in 2009 which was held in Philadelphia. His trip to Poland was very enlightening.

He's researching MINKOWSKY from Zhitomyr, GREENBERG from Uman, PSENY from Seidlce, and HUBER from Siemiatycze David can be reached at: daminker@gmail.com.

ISABELLA'S SAMPLER

by Ann & Jack Kauffman

Shortly before the mid-point of the nineteenth century, a young girl who lived in Philadelphia's North Mulberry Ward stitched a sampler to practice her needlework. Hers was a marking sampler with letters of the alphabet; numerals; her name, "Isabella Oppenheimer"; her age, "11"; and a date, "1847". By itself this was unremarkable. Families often framed and displayed similar samplers to recognize a daughter's mastery of a valued skill she would need when she matured and established her own household.

Although many of these samplers were lost to time, Isabella's survived and was admired more than a century later by another young girl, Kathy Argo, when it hung on the wall of a neighbor's home in Hamilton County, Ohio. The neighbor promised to give the sampler to Kathy one day, but the heirs instead sent their mother's possessions to auction. At that auction, Kathy's mother placed the winning bid for the sampler and presented it to her daughter as a gift. It now hung on a wall in Kathy's home where she was free to admire it.

However, years later Kathy decided that if she could find a living descendant she wanted to return the sampler to Is-

abella's family. Through online searches and communication with other researchers, she learned that Isabella's parents, Coffman/Kauffman Oppenheimer (born around 1810) and Solidel Adele Juzan (born around 1813) were married in Mobile, Alabama in 1831. Solidel had one brother who never married. Although her father married three times, there were no other direct descendants from his marriage to Solidel's mother.

Kauffman and Solidel Oppenheimer moved to Ohio where five children Catherine, Elias, Frances, Isabella, and Samuel/Simon, were born. Between 1840 and 1850 the family moved to Philadelphia where Kauffman was employed in the retail clothing business. He was listed in the 1871 Philadelphia City Directory as living at 1604 N. 6th Street and maintaining a retail clothing business at 521 Market Street. He would remain in Philadelphia until at least 1875.

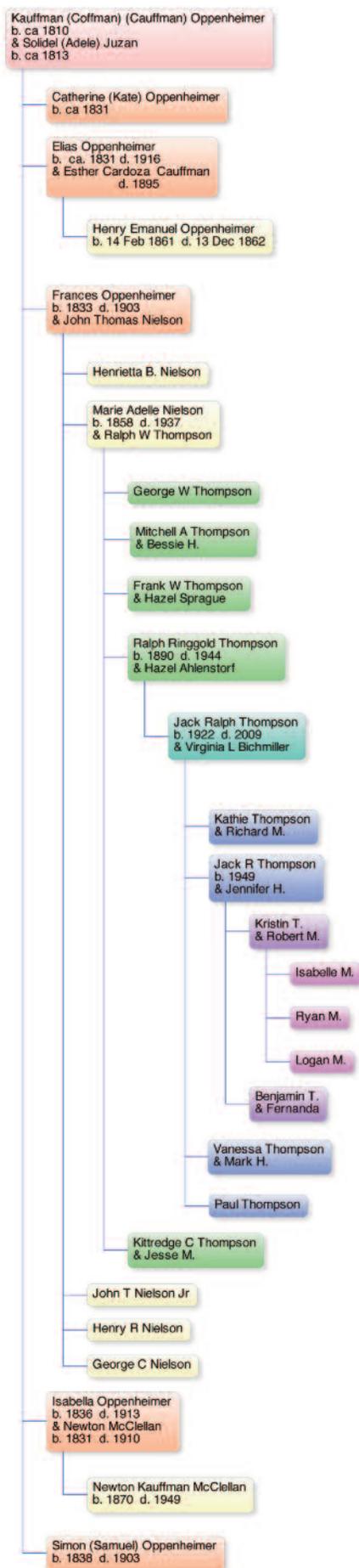
Isabella married in Philadelphia in 1870 and, moved to Butler County, Ohio with her husband, Newton McClellan. There they raised a son, Newton Cauffman McClellan, who never married. Kathy's search for a living descendant, siblings of either Kauffman Oppenheimer or his daughter Isabella, however, proved to be more difficult.

Her request for help appeared in the Random Acts of Genealogical Kindness section of the fall 2011 issue of *Chronicles* where it captured the interest of a JGSGP member (this article's co-author, Ann Kauffman) who shared Kathy's interests in genealogy and needlework. In the early spring of 2012 their online collaboration began.

Two of Isabella's siblings, Catherine and Simon, never married. In 1854 Elias married Esther Cardoza Cauffman, daughter of Simon and Rachel Cauffman. Philadelphia's Congregation Rodeph Shalom records indicate that their son, Henry Emanuel Oppenheimer, was born on 14 February 1861 and died on 13 December 1862 at 22 months of age. Henry was buried at Beth El Emeth Cemetery in West Philadelphia. No records have been found of Esther and Elias having any additional children, either prior to or after Henry's birth.

Esther and Elias subsequently moved to New York City where census records listed his occupation as manufacturer. Esther died there in February, 1895. Her body was returned to Philadelphia via train where a transit permit at Broad Street Station noted she was to be buried in West Philadelphia Cemetery (Jewish). Elias died in New York City in 1916 but his burial site has not yet been identified.

Kauffman (Coffman) (Cauffman) Oppenheimer Family



Frances Oppenheimer last appeared in the 1850 U.S. Census when she lived with her family in Philadelphia. A search of the registry of deaths at Philadelphia's City Archives found no entries for either Frances or for her father, Kauffman Oppenheimer. There was an 1862 entry for a Frances Oppenheimer but her age, 8 months, and parents' names were not consistent with Isabella's sister.

Frances remained elusive until 1880 when a collateral search of the census records for all of Isabella's siblings identified a Kate Oppenheimer visiting her sister, Frances, and brother-in-law, John Thomas Nielson, in Covington, Kentucky. Kate's age was consistent with what was known about Catherine Oppenheimer. Furthermore, her mother's death certificate from 1913 noted that although Isabella was buried in Butler County, Ohio, she died in Covington, Kentucky, establishing a link to that city. A death certificate listed John Nielson's birth place as Philadelphia, providing yet another link.

The 1880 census entry also included the names of five children of Frances (Oppenheimer) and John Nielson. Online searches for the Nielson children led to the names of several potential direct descendants of Isabella's sister, Frances. Kathy Argo, who received the information, began to contact them.

On October 15, 2012, while on a trip East to visit sites of family interest, Jack R. Thompson of Denver, Colorado, the great great grandson of Isabella's sister, Frances, and his mother, Virginia Thompson Howell, met Kathy Argo at her Ohio home. During their visit he expressed his appreciation for the genealogical search that led to identifying him as a descendant of Solidel and Kauffman Oppenheimer. He was thrilled to receive the sampler that their daughter, Isabella, had completed in 1847. He was even more thrilled that it would eventually be passed on to his own granddaughter, Isabelle, who was named in honor of yet another Isabella, her paternal great grandmother. ❖

Though Isabella's sampler has now been restored to her family, the search for genealogical information about her extended family continues. If anyone can share additional information about the Oppenheimer and Cardoza/Cauffman families, please contact the authors, Jack and Ann Kauffman, who are both members of JGSGP. kauffmanj982@aol.com



Jack R. Thompson, Kathy Argo,
Virginia Thompson Howell with Isabella's Sampler

ALEXANDROVSKY / ALEXANDER FAMILY IN PHILADELPHIA

by Jay Lenefsky

This is my story. I have been researching my Alexandrovsky family since 1980. I found out that branches of this family emigrated to the U.S. and changed their surname to Alexander. I have traced some of the Alexandrovsky/Alexander family to New York City, St. Paul, Minnesota, Chicago and to Germantown Avenue, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. I was able to find descendants of the family in New York City, St. Paul and Chicago, but not in Pennsylvania.

There were two sisters Jennie and Miriam (Mary) Alexandrovsky/Alexander who married and settled in Philadelphia on Germantown Avenue. Mary married Sam (Samuel Goldberg) I was told that they had some kind of store, maybe shoes, on Germantown Avenue. Jennie married a Joseph Sellers.

In the 1930 census, Joseph Sellers and family are listed at 1238 Germantown Ave. Samuel Goldberg and family are listed at 1334 Germantown Ave.

I also have two family documents that mention
1) Chaim David Perlin and Yitzchak Alexander (who lived at 1326 Germantown Ave. Philadelphia, PA) in June 1920 and
2) Yitzchak Alexander, Toby Alexander, Miriam Rudin

Ship Manifest-1922: Feiga and Chaim Berl Aleksandrowska (lines #18 and #19) going to her brother-in-law (his uncle) Jacob Alexander at 1328 Germantown Ave. Philadelphia, PA

So this is my story. Any help in learning about and/or contacting descendants of these families would be greatly appreciated. Thank you very much, ❖

Jay Lenefsky –Israel. Contact Jay at: hotdog@inbox.com

JGSGP has posted Jay's documents on our website so that you can access them to try to assist with his family search. Click on the following link to access them:

<http://www.jgsgp.org/alexandrovsky/>

BRICK WALL Q & A

My great Uncle Heshie Povlotsky, his wife Miriam and daughter Ettl arrived in Philadelphia in 1902. They were met at the wharf by his father Abram Povlotsky (my great great grandfather) and brother Joel Povlotsky who was my great grandfather. Joel had changed his name to Louis Haas by the time they arrived. None of this family is on the 1910 or 1920 census. I tried using the spelling they used on the ship (Pawlocky) as well as the name Haas that my great grandfather had adopted. I have also checked the death records at the [Philadelphia] City Archives but have not found any record of death. ❖

Member Lois Sernoff offered the following suggestions to MR:

Have you searched the JewishGen U.S. database collection for entries that fall into the "sounds like Povlotsky" category? I did and focused more specifically on a search of the various Philadelphia Ethnic Bank Passage Order Book Records.

Here's a step-by-step set of instructions:

1. Enter "jewishgen.org" in your browser
2. Click on the "Databases" tab and then "Complete List of Databases"
3. Select the "America" (in blue) option
4. Click on to "The JewishGen USA Database"
5. Enter "Pavlotsky" as surname with the "sounds like" option + Region = Pennsylvania
6. Three sets of ethnic bank records are cited (Blitzstein, Lipshutz/Peoples, and Rosenbaum). Since Rosenbaum records are the earliest, start there and look for

hits that match the information you provided, i.e. passenger names, possible purchaser names, date of arrival

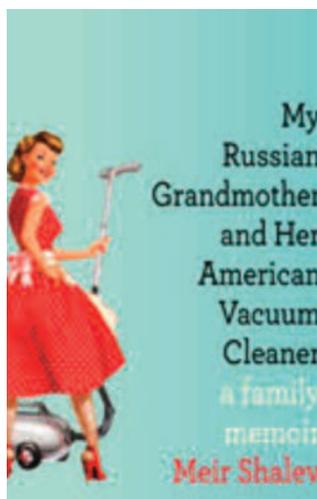
7. If you find likely matches, then follow instructions on “The Rosenbaum Bank Passage Order Book Records Database” for example (<http://www.jewishgen.org/databases/USA/PhilaRosenbaum.htm>) for contacting the Philadelphia Jewish Archives Center (PJAC), now located at Temple University, to gain access to the actual record(s). Also advise us at JGSGP (brickwallquestions@jgsgp.org) of your progress so we can more fully track this case.

BOOK REVIEW:

MY RUSSIAN GRANDMOTHER & HER AMERICAN VACUUM CLEANER: A FAMILY MEMOIR

by Meir Shalev, translated by Evan Fallenberg

Reviewed by Evan Fishman



Feeling connected to the characters and situations depicted in a work of fiction or non-fiction is both a joyful experience and a testimonial to an author’s story telling abilities. I recently read a delightful memoir by one of Israel’s most celebrated novelists, Meir Shalev. The title is undoubtedly intriguing; indeed, “the svieep-errr” (the author’s grandmother’s term for the confounding vacuum cleaner) figures as a protagonist and formidable foe, of sorts, to his beloved Grandma Tonia.

Shalev successfully recreates his grandparents’ lives as pioneers on their small farm in Nahalal, Israel. Grandpa Aharon Ben-Barak, immigrated from Makarov, Ukraine to Palestine in 1909 during the period of the Second Aliyah (1904-1914). Widowed with two young sons, he married his deceased wife’s half-sister, Tonia, shortly after her arrival in Palestine from Rokitno, Ukraine in 1923 . As many of us can attest, this wasn’t an uncommon practice. They proceeded to have five children, including Shalev’s mother, Batya. Sharing this statistical information is rather cut and dry but the author makes a salient point within that same paragraph: “All five were born with a talent for storytelling,

and many of those stories were about their mother [Tonia].”

Grandma Tonia was obsessed with cleanliness, “And since every person needs an enemy, hers was dirt.” and developed a fascinating set of rituals around that fixation that were legion in her family. “Even I, who was born twelve years after the house was built, remember clearly her shoulder rag and all its comrades dangling from [door] handles like little battle flags, protecting them from the touch of hands or fingers.”

While Grandma Tonia’s idiosyncrasies provide a humorous backdrop for this family memoir, her personality and the family dynamics are the elements that really captured my attention. “Tonia was my grandmother, my mother’s mother, and in my eyes she was not at all crazy. She was different. She was distinctive. She was what we call a ‘character.’ “ Like Tonia, my maternal grandmother was also a veritable force of nature who never hesitated to brand other family members as “characters.” As I continued reading, Shalev’s descriptions coalesced into an endearing portrait of the family matriarch with her distinctive Russian accent, fractured Hebrew laced with her own creative grammatical constructs, and definitive view of the world. Shalev recalls when he was seven going on eight and Grandma Tonia deemed him “mature enough and responsible enough” to help with Seder preparations:

“Can you take it [a coveted, rarely used chair] to the dining room?” she asked me.

“Yes,” I said.

“On your own?”

“Yes”

“Lift it up. Don’t drag it across the clean floor on me and don’t scritch me the walls with it. . .”

In addition to the richness and the literariness and the accent, her Hebrew had another characteristic: every verb was directed at herself. Chairs were dragged on her, clean sidewalks were dirtied on her, painted walls were scritchd on her. “Scritch” is an old family verb still current in our dictionary of expressions and idioms. It is derived from the Yiddish word for “scratch,” but we use it only for describing scratches on walls. . . . Grandma Tonia, who fulfilled the wall-washing commandment on a daily basis, considered a scratch in the oil paint to be such grave damage that she gave it its own name: scritch.

I remember a wonderful, early 1990’s television series entitled “Brooklyn Bridge”, which also showcased a loving,

immigrant, Jewish grandmother who was the commanding officer of her three-generation Brooklyn family, all of whom lived in the same apartment building. While I didn't grow up under the same circumstances, the grandmother character immediately resonated, and her portrayal struck a very receptive chord.

Forgive me for indulging in the personalities of various immigrant, Jewish grandmothers but I wish to convey how poignantly and deeply impressed I was with Shalev's skillful crafting of his memoir. I came away intimately knowing the assorted members of his extended family and understanding its family dynamics to the point that I could almost predict how various events would play out. I wish we could all fashion equally warm, endearing, rich, and recognizable portrayals of our ancestors in our respective family memoirs. ❖

Reviewer Evan Fishman is 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. Some of the surnames he's researching include Mandelstein, Lisnitzer, Adelman, Presseisen, Fishman, Udin, Burstein, Winarsky, all of which (except Fishman) originate in present day Ukraine. Evan also does private genealogical research.

Contact Evan at: editor@jgsgp.org

STANLEY BERGMAN: RESTORING & PRESERVING PICTURES & DOCUMENTS NOVEMBER MEETING SUMMARY

by Steve Schecter

Our November speaker was Stanley Bergman, a professionally trained conservator whose impressive resume includes twenty-seven years of preserving documents for YIVO and serving as director of preservation at the Center for Jewish History. Stan actually gave three presentations in one.

First, he shared his personal story: from Holocaust survivor to refugee to harrowing journeys to America, then to Israel, and finally back to America. Against this backdrop of twists, turns and passionate memories, Stan explained how he started working on restoration and preservation and how it is now a labor of love for him to help save Jewish history and culture.

His story also pointed out how fortunate some of us are to have had ancestors to interview and pictures to preserve.

Next Stan offered sage advice on archiving our collections. He noted that families sometimes decline the collections we have taken years to compile. This presents a question of what to do with our "stuff" after we are gone. Stan's experience working inside an archive gives him insight to an unspoken reality: "Unless material is organized and indexed, it will probably be placed in a warehouse and remain untouched for years, if ever." The message is clear: after putting your heart and energy into collecting your story, it seems a shame to see it relegated to a warehouse (a la the conclusion of the film, "Raiders of the Lost Ark") because your organizing and indexing were put off for *mañana*.

Finally, Stan, spoke about restoration and preservation. Restoration is a highly skilled, demanding and delicate craft. It takes tools, technique, patience and practice. Unfortunately most of our stuff requires more time and effort than we can reasonably provide, and hiring a professional can be expensive. The harsh reality is that the actual value of all our material, beyond its personal sentiment, does not justify the effort or cost. So, what to do? While a difficult and emotional decision, one must dispassionately decide if s/he can make the investment of time or money required for restoration. In implementing this decision, it is essential to remember the first rule: DO NO HARM. If you are unsure of the result, STOP until you can be sure. Misguided restoration too often leads to ruin. In most cases the best decision is to take steps to preserve the document or picture and put off restoration until it can be done well.

Stanley presented a safer approach:

1. Scan the document/picture at the highest resolution possible and save it as a tiff or jpeg.
2. Place the original in a Mylar sleeve, index it, place it in an archival storage box and store it in a climate-controlled area -- a closet rather than a basement, attic or garage. This should slow or stop deterioration of the original. If the original is showing signs of acid-caused deterioration, use a de-acidifier spray and let it dry thoroughly before putting the original into a Mylar sleeve.
3. Make a duplicate of the scan and use Photoshop Elements or Photoshop to clean it up. This yields an enhanced copy, while the original safely waits until you learn how to restore properly or can afford a safe restoration.

Stanley's insights are invaluable, and his handouts are available on our website (www.jgsgp.org) along with his e-mail address. He has graciously agreed to respond to questions. We thank him for his time and commitment to helping us preserve and restore our heritage. ❖

Author Steve Schechter's biography follows his article "In the Beginning" which ends on page 6.

You can contact Steve at: programs@jgsgp.org

ongoing database objectives such as the Yizkor Book and the Memorial Plaques Projects.

While JewishGen is a free service and its content readily available to all researchers., Mr. Groll stressed the importance of donations and the value added services, such as JGFF alerts, that come with a small yearly donation of \$100.00 or more. Avraham Groll is actively researching his own family and managed the JewishGen station at the second JGSGP Genealogy Fair. He has provided handouts related to his presentation which are available on our website (www.jgsgp.org). He can be reached at agroll@JewishGen.org. ❖

Shelda Carol Bachin Sandler is a JGSGP board member and was co-chair of Hospitality at the JGSGP-IAJGS conference in 2009. She co-chaired JGSGP's first Genealogy Fair in 2011 and was the coordinator of the Delaware County/Main Line Affiliate for ten years.

Much of her genealogical research is centered in the areas of Tarnopol, Galicia; Zgierz and Zawichost, Poland; and Mogilev, Belarus. She may be contacted at stanshel@msn.com

CONNECTING WITH YOUR PAST: JEWISHGEN.ORG DECEMBER MEETING SUMMARY

by Shelda Carol Bachin Sandler

JGSGP president, Fred Blum opened the meeting by calling for a moment of silence in memory of the victims of the recent Newtown, Connecticut massacre. Afterwards he mentioned that the next IAJGS conference will take place in Boston between August 4-9.

Steve Schechter, programming vice president. announced the dates and locations of JGSGP meetings from February 2013 through the third annual JGSGP Genealogy Fair, scheduled for Sunday, June 9, 2013 at Congregation Kol Emet in Yardley, Pennsylvania. (Please see p. 24 of this issue of Chronicles for information about upcoming meetings.). We'll be showing the recently released documentary film, "Misa's Fugue", at our February meeting, and its filmmakers will be there to elaborate and entertain questions. JGSGP contributed to the making of this film.

Guest speaker was Avraham Groll, Director of Business Operations for JewishGen, an affiliate of the Museum of Jewish Heritage – A Living Memorial to the Holocaust located in New York City. Mr. Groll proceeded to give a PowerPoint presentation entitled "Connecting with Your Past: JewishGen.org". This served as a useful tutorial on how to navigate through the extensive JewishGen website (www.jewishgen.org). Mr. Groll elaborated on what it offers and how to maximally benefit from it. He explained all the options on the JewishGen home page and then, using his own surname, he demonstrated numerous ways that JewishGen can be used for research. He also discussed how researchers can connect with other researchers through the JewishGen Family Finder (JGFF) and through discussion groups. He touched on the numerous InfoFiles and some of the helpful databases: (Town Finder, Gazetteer, and KehilaLinks) as well as features like ViewMate and the various

RUSSIAN INTEREST GROUP NOTES—NOVEMBER 2012

By David R. Brill, RIG Coordinator

Occasionally at Russian Interest Group meetings we hear from one of our members who has made the journey to his/her ancestral shtetl somewhere in the former Russian Empire. November's RIG meeting was devoted to just such a "roots" trip, but with a slight difference: the travelers were my paternal first cousins, and one of the places they visited on their trip was our common grandfather's birthplace, Usvyaty, Russia. My cousins, Elaine and Carol Epstein, along with their Russian-speaking guide, Galina, succeeded in locating the Jewish cemetery of Usvyaty, the only remnant of a once thriving Jewish community that has now disappeared. Their report of the trip (as presented by me) and the photographs they brought back of the present-day village, made for a lively and informative meeting.

Under the czars, Usvyaty was a shtetl in the Vitebsk Guberniya (province), one of the four traditionally Belarussian *guberniyas* (the others being Grodno, Minsk and Mogilev). In 1897, the year of the All-Russia Census and three years after my paternal grandfather Louis (Leib) Brill was born there, 1,205 Jews were reported living in Usvyaty, representing 41% of the total population. The 1897 *Vsya Rossiya* (All Russian Directory) indicated that Usvyaty enjoyed a thriving commercial atmosphere,

and its forty-eight businesses were almost all owned by Jews. Many Usvyaty Jews had business and family ties to Vitebsk, the provincial capital. When the revolutionary Soviet government created the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic in 1919, it drew the border just west of Usvyaty, thereby placing the town in Russian territory and cutting it off from its former metropolis. Today, Usvyaty is in the Russian Federation, so Americans traveling there from Belarus require a separate visa and border crossing.

Like the rest of the former Vitebsk Guberniya, Usvyaty was devastated by World War II. The remaining Jewish community, already decimated by years of emigration and Soviet Communist rule, was destroyed in the Holocaust. A monument in the neglected Jewish cemetery memorializes thirty Usvyaty residents, members of the Enkin and Khorosh families, who were murdered there by the Nazis on Nov. 7, 1941.

What my cousins found in Usvyaty was a town that had largely forgotten, or did not wish to remember, its Jewish past. Officials in the town hall had no knowledge of any local Jewish landmarks and were mostly unwilling to help. Only by but-tonholing some of the older residents were my cousins and their guide eventually able to locate the pathway leading to the ruined Jewish cemetery, off the road and deep in the woods. This experience was in strong contrast to the other places they visited in Belarus (Il'ya, Dolginov and Dokshitsy, all located in the former Vilna Guberniya), where local officials were uniformly helpful and Jewish monuments are generally better preserved. ❖

David Brill chairs JGSGP's Russian Special Interest Group. Contact David at brillldr@comcast.net



Photo courtesy of Elaine Epstein.

Remains of the Jewish cemetery in Usvyaty, Russia, August 24, 2012. The individual shown is the guide, Galina.

SUCCESS THANKS TO CHRONICLES

On October 21, Tammy Hepps posted this message on the JGSGP Facebook page:

Already a success story from the latest [fall 2012] Chronicles -- I got an email this morning from a reader in Israel [JGSGP member Rabbi Shalom Bronstein] asking me about my Skversky family, and eureka, we've connected two branches I've been trying to connect for the past 5 years -- and discovered my uncle's namesake in the process!!!

You can contact Tammy at: thepps@gmail.com

GENEALOGY WORKSHOPS & PROGRAMS OFFERED BY JGSGP

by Steve Schecter

Overview: As part of our community outreach, our Society has successfully offered six programs in genealogy at differing levels. All are interactive with hands-on activity and the give-and-take of Q & A. Each can be tailored to specific needs delivered at your site. Costs are modest and negotiable. At each level, participant materials are provided. Programs can often be taught to your local people for subsequent delivery.

Level 1: "Why Jewish Genealogy; Why Now? (Introduction to Jewish Genealogy)": Overview of the value and practice of Jewish genealogy. In roughly 90 interactive minutes, concepts are introduced, and participants are encouraged to seek out their roots. Target audiences include men's clubs, sisterhoods or others from your congregation and community. Participant number is unlimited.

Level 2: "Getting Started in Jewish Genealogy": Single 2-3 hour session covering the basics of tracing Jewish roots. While the introduction level talks about Jewish genealogy, this program provides more hands-on tools to begin searching and documenting. Can be customized to cover specific topics. Designed for no more than 24 participants.

Level 3: "Beginning Jewish Genealogy": Multiple sessions provide the tools to get started and, between sessions, a chance to try them. Reporting progress in class for help, support and encouragement is included. Most successful in six 90-120 minute sessions spread over six to twelve weeks.

Access to computers is not required. Instructor internet access is required. Topics include: Orientation, Keeping Records, Surfing The Net, Finding Family Documents, Using Repositories and Recording Your Story. Designed for 10 - 20 participants.

Level 4: “Intermediate Jewish Genealogy”: Collaborative clinic addressing issues and overcoming brick walls. Works best after the beginners program, but is open to anyone with experience. Laptops are helpful but not required. Internet access with bandwidth to support class computers is needed. Instructor internet access is required. Program has been successfully offered as six 90-120 minute sessions and can include field trip options.

Participant number not to exceed 10-12.

Level 5: “Single Session Pre-Bar/Bat Mitzvah”: Ninety minute class to encourage students to search and record their genealogy as a mitzvah project. Online search engines are introduced and encouraged, contingent on parental permission. Instructor internet access required. Works best when religious school faculty members join sessions and integrate the learning and techniques into their ongoing classes. Follow-up sessions are also recommended. Participant number between 8-20.

Level 6: “Working with *Bubby & Zaida*”: Two or more 90-minute sessions where pre-Bar/Bat Mitzvah students attend with at least one grandparent, older relative or older family friend. Opportunity to build a stronger intergenerational bond. Instructor internet access is required. Often the elders teach the history and the teenagers teach the technology, and both learn, laugh and enjoy. Participant number 8-20. ❖

SUMMARY OF JGSGP OUTREACH EFFORTS TO DATE

Shelda and Stan Sandler are to be commended for their outstanding efforts in increasing JGSGP’s visibility in the general community. Since 2010 our “ambassadors” have:

- Traveled to Philadelphia and four adjacent counties in Pennsylvania (Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery) as well as Burlington and Mercer counties in New Jersey.
- Been hosted by ten synagogues, three senior communities, three membership organizations, and the National Archives & Records Administration (NARA)
- Presented overviews of, conducted “how to” sessions, and explained the objectives and missions of Jewish genealogical research

We wish to thank:

- o Mark Halpern, David Mink, & Joel Spector—each of whom has spoken once so far. Hope you’ll soon be “regulars” on this lecture circuit.
- o Fred Blum & Steve Schecter—both of whom have tirelessly been the face of JGSGP at multiple venues.

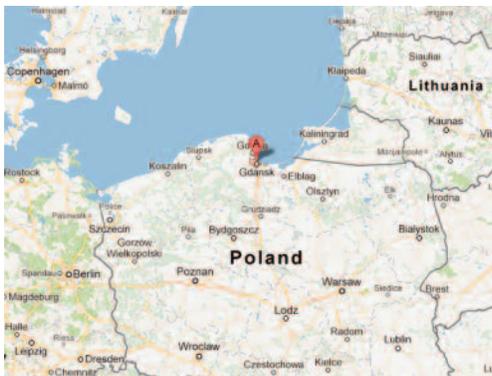
In addition, Steve Schecter has conducted beginners and intermediate workshops at the JCC’s in Cherry Hill and Margate, New Jersey.

To view the past and future of our outreach efforts, click on the link below on the JGSGP web site.

<http://www.jsgsp.org/outreach/>

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

Please contact Stan Sandler (stanshel@msn.com or 610-544-6877) if you are searching for family from the city of Danzig (now Gdansk), Poland or nearby areas.



DUES REMINDER

If you haven’t paid your dues for 2013, please complete the Membership Renewal form on the following page. Send it promptly with your check to our new membership address.

Remember: paid-up members receive the electronic version of *Chronicles* as it is published.



Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Philadelphia

2013 Membership & Renewal Form

Enjoy *Chronicles*, Our Award Winning Quarterly Publication

Please print, complete and mail this form with your check to our NEW ADDRESS:
JGSGP, 1657 The Fairway, #145, Jenkintown, PA 19046

| Membership Categories and Contributions | New Member | Renewal | Amount |
|---|------------|---------|--------|
| Individual - \$25 | | | \$ |
| Family - \$35 (2 Members Same Household) | | | \$ |
| Sponsor - \$50 | | | \$ |
| Patron - \$100 | | | \$ |
| Non-Resident \$15 (more than 100 miles from Phila.) | | | \$ |
| Overseas \$21 | | | \$ |
| Voluntary Gift to the JGSGP Library / Digitization Fund | | | \$ |
| Voluntary Gift to the JGSGP Program Fund | | | \$ |
| A check is enclosed for the amount of: | | | \$ |

Name (please print) _____

Additional Name(s) _____

Address 1 _____

Address 2 _____

City _____ State _____ Zip+4 _____

Phone (_____) _____ email: _____

(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 later be shared with other members.

| Surname | Town | Country |
|---------|------|---------|
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Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Philadelphia
1657 The Fairway, #145
Jenkintown, PA 19046
www.jgsgp.org

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

JGSGP CALENDAR & REMINDERS

Please note that our mailing address has changed to: 1657 The Fairway, #145 Jenkintown, PA 19046

Please direct all U.S. 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>

The first thirty minutes of each meeting is devoted to browsing reference books and getting help from mentors.

Program details will be posted on the JGSGP website as soon as they are complete: www.jgsgp.org

**Sun., Feb. 10, 12:30 PM Main Line Reform Temple - Beth Elohim
410 Montgomery Ave • Wynnewood, PA 19096**

**JGSGP will present the movie, "Misa's Fugue", and we'll have an open discussion with its producers.
Our donation helped to fund this film, and now we have a special chance to see the results of our investment.
Go to: <http://www.fahsdocproject.com/> for details about the film.**

**Sun., Mar. 10, 12:30 PM Main Line Reform Temple - Beth Elohim
Steve Schecter: "Sticky Writing or How to Write Your Family History So People
Will WANT to Read It". More details to follow.**

**Monday Apr 8 at 7 PM at Reform Congregation Keneseth Israel (KI)
8339 Old York Road • Elkins Park PA 19027
We will have our "Brick Walls" meeting.**