



CHRONICLES

JOURNAL OF THE JEWISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF GREATER PHILADELPHIA

דברי הימים



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REFLECTIONS FROM YOUR CHRONICLES TEAM



While including our usual features (Techniques, Tools, & Tips, meeting summaries, and queries) we are focusing in this issue primarily on impressions from the IAJGS-Boston conference, held August 4-9, 2013. Our contributors share what they learned during formal sessions and informal gatherings;

in other words: "What Happened in Boston Doesn't Stay in Boston." The article entitled "The Road to Philadelphia Goes Straight through Jerusalem" demonstrates how a random act of genealogical kindness can provide significant assistance to a researcher. Consider similarly helping a genealogy colleague in the future. We also pay tribute to esteemed member, Steve Schecter, who died on September 30th.

At least twenty-four members of the JGSGP family gathered on October 4th to bid a sad farewell to Steve Schecter, our vice president of programming. He died unexpectedly as a result of a tragic fall. Our members were joined by many others at the funeral which was a significant testimonial to the man whom we all considered to be "a good guy."

I have many wonderful memories of Steve, going back at least seven years. I don't recall remember exactly when we met, but I vividly remember standing outside in the parking lot at Reform Congregation Keneseth Israel after one of our society meetings and discussing his surname, which was also one of interest to me. I learned that Schecter wasn't the original surname which meant we weren't related. "Nisht geferlich," "not so terrible," because that discussion was the first of many, many extended conversations *(Continued on page 3)*

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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.

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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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(“Reflections” from page 1)

Steve and I would have. We chatted on the phone; debated and analyzed before, during, and after JGSGP meetings when we carpooled and en route to IAJGS conferences, and whenever we met for coffee or a meal. Steve’s modus operandi was to schmooze over coffee; he must have had stock in Folger’s or some other brand! While the initial subjects of every conversation were genealogy in general and our society in particular, we seamlessly shifted to more far reaching topics.

Steve was considerate of others. Whenever we were arranging to get together he’d ask, “Does that work for you?” He could also be persuasive and cajole anyone into undertaking additional responsibilities. How do you think I became editor of *Chronicles*?

This past July Steve had arranged to give genealogy presentations at Senior Camp at Isabella Freedman Jewish Retreat Center in Connecticut. He asked me if I wanted to accompany him and help individuals with their genealogy research. I grabbed the opportunity to spend a few days in pleasant country surroundings and share some of my research experience with others. We had a four to five hour drive ahead of us, and I wondered if we’d run out of subjects to talk about. I shouldn’t have worried. As the aphorism goes, “we bonded”. I was impressed with his thoughtfulness and candor and was flattered when he shared personal aspects of his life.



Steve was scheduled to give three presentations during the three days at Senior Camp. He was definitely in his element and demonstrated his expert teaching skills. It is easy to see in the photo above how much he was enjoying yet another opportunity to share his passion for genealogy.

Steve was a masterful educator. While he was eager to impart a great deal from his amazing reservoir of knowledge, his

teaching style was not intimidating. He preferred to instruct, engage, and inform in a very relaxed manner, in the hope that his listeners would appreciate the subject matter and become inspired.

Through Steve’s long association with JGSGP, he touched the lives of many people, directly and indirectly. He is leaving very big footprints behind. Thank you, Steve, for being a wonderful mentor, friend, and role model. I’ll miss you. ❖

Evan Fishman, Editor

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE



I am writing this message with a heavy heart! Our society has suffered a tragic loss with the sudden passing of our Vice-President of Programming, Steve Schecter. If I am considered the head of our society, Steve was our heart.

On September 30, Steve was helping a friend, as usual, tripped and fell against a metal door jam. Steve fractured his neck in the worst possible place. The next day, with his wife Mary and daughters Meredith and Rachel at his side, Steve was taken off life support.

Steve was responsible for the great programming we have had in the past few years. He was also instrumental in organizing and publishing our wonderful *Philadelphia Jewish Genealogy Resource Guide* for the 2009 IAJGS conference that our society hosted. He was a great help to Mark Halpern, David Mink and myself in handling all the details for that conference. He will be difficult to replace. Steve was an active speaker on the topic of Jewish genealogy at many diverse locations. He was a mentor to many. Not only was Steve a volunteer for our society, he also volunteered at the Cherry Hill Family History Center and Magee Rehabilitation Hospital.

Steve and I met every few weeks for breakfast to discuss society programming and society business. In the upcoming weeks I will hold a meeting of our board to discuss how we can appropriately honor Steve’s name. We were friends, and several years ago we learned that we were DNA cousins from many generations ago. My heart goes out to his family. I too will miss him very much. Rest in peace my friend! ❖

Fred Blum, President

**WE EXTEND A WARM WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST MEMBERS
AND HIGHLIGHT SOME OF THE NAMES & TOWNS
THEY ARE RESEARCHING**

Jan Felgoise
Molly Kovnat from Kovno-Gubernia
Diane Hakam
Papkin from Kiev, Ukraine; Luchman, Luttan, Luchtan, Lipshitz and Nydick from Pinsk, Belarus
Zena Indik
Rabbi Fred Kazan
Michelle Marks

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Mary Jane Roth
Grojskop (Grosser) from Labun/Yurovschina; Kandel from Makhnovka; Lieberman from Berdichiv; Tepper from Miropol, all in Ukraine. Roth from Kosice/Kassa in Hungary/Slovakia, Fried from Modor in Hungary
Jonathan & Harriet Rudolph
Rudoff, Rukofsky, Rudowsky of Stepnitz/Stepantsy, Ukraine
Fran Sion
Alexandria, VA
Ambler, PA
Huntingdon Valley, PA

TRIBUTES TO STEVE SCHECTER

by Barbara Hershey

I am very sorry for your loss. When it's convenient to share my condolences with his family please do. I don't know them. And, I didn't know Steve well BUT.... I met him at the Philadelphia conference when I was looking for a ride back to Mt. Laurel where I was staying at my sister's house. She was in a nursing home after a life changing car accident on her way to work. He was very, very generous in sharing some of his experience as a patient and a volunteer in the rehab hospital. His advice and conversation was very helpful to me as I was the primary decision maker for my sister's care. It was a very comforting ride to New Jersey as I was entering a dizzying world.

My sister was in the hospital and rehab for a year and a half. She is now permanently in a wheelchair, but she takes care of herself day-to-day. She moved to be nearer a brother and his family so they can all help.

There are many wonderful people doing genealogy, but in my heart Steve was in the front of the line. I am terribly sorry to hear this news. I know his death will create an absence in your organization and for you as his friend. My heart goes out to his family. May their memories with him be a source of strength and healing.

Barbara Hershey, Portland, Oregon

by Harry Boonin

Steve Schecter led the presentation at our April meeting when we discussed writing a family narrative and telling family stories. I stayed with Steve after the talk; it would be the last time I would have a good talk with him. We talked and talked until we were the only two left, and we both walked out to the parking lot together. When

I got to my car I saw that I had left my keys on the front seat. I told Steve that I had an AAA card, would call them, and they would be there in a jiffy. I said, "Go home, you have a long ride."

Steve wouldn't hear of it. He would not let me stay there alone. I tried to tell him that it was unnecessary and that he should head home to his family. He disagreed. He stayed with me till the truck came and they got the door open. To me, that was Steve.

Whoever he was with was the most important person in the world. I think we all had that feeling. He wanted to know about whatever you were doing and help you. We were lucky to have Steve and to know him, even for a time that was much too short. ❖

Harry D. Boonin, founding president of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Philadelphia, is 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



Steve Schecter

CONFERENCE IMPRESSIONS

by Merle Kastner

The IAJGS Conference, Boston, Massachusetts
August 4-9, 2013

My own experience in one SIG session:



Based on the past conferences I've attended (all of them but two since 2000), I have to say that this year's Boston conference was excellent.

Two years ago I was part of a full house that attended the inaugural session of the Bessarabia SIG, a clear indication that there was a definite need for this new special interest group. Born and raised in Kishinev, Yefim Kogan started BessarabiaSIG, and it has grown into an excellent source of information and networking. He has acquired documents, volunteers of all kinds, translators (to note Ala Gamulka, who works tirelessly), plus others to create databases for the many thousands of records he has amassed. Yefim has arranged researchers on site in the various key cities in Moldova (the former Bessarabia). The website contains an incredible wealth of research information of all kinds.

This session was of particular interest to me as I am hoping to visit Kishinev/Chişinău within the next two years. My great-grandmother, Liza Kussner/Kushner Miller spent the first seventeen years of her life in Bendery, a small city about fifty kilometers from Chişinău. Travel there isn't recommended but the records I need are located in Kishinev where Yefim was born and grew up.

My hat is off to Yefim Kogan, the powerhouse behind Bessarabia SIG for his work and for again chairing a most informative SIG session at the conference. ❖

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) Contact Merle at merlek@videotron.ca.

DID I EVER TELL YOU ABOUT MY COUSIN JOE IN PHILADELPHIA?

by Felicia Mode Alexander

When interviewing my aging relatives about our family history, I have been painstakingly careful about keeping every scrap of paper on which my notes have been recorded. Since my research days began before the invention of the internet, these notes are precious to me, and each interview is seared into my memory through them. From time to time, I return to look at what I wrote twenty-five years ago to see if I might have overlooked an important detail or if something new has materialized to confirm or disprove something I had been told.

About fifteen years ago, while my father's overall health was declining, his long-term memory seemed to be getting much more precise, and he shared things that I had never heard before. I know this because I referred back to my old notes. It was during one of our conversations, after I had been living in suburban Philadelphia for over a decade, that he casually asked if he had ever told me about his cousin who lived in Philadelphia. Dumbfounded that I had never heard about this mysterious cousin before, I asked him to tell me all about him. The cousin was a physician who had treated my grandmother, who was supposedly his first cousin, when she needed to recover from depression. I had previous notes about her medical situation but nothing about recovering in Philadelphia. Her older brother had died suddenly, and she suffered a miscarriage and nervous breakdown after receiving this devastating news. According to this new information from my father, Dr. Joseph Langbord had nursed his cousin back to health in Philadelphia. Dad was very specific about names and places during this conversation so I was confident that I would find documentation confirming the existence of a person with this name.



Dr. Joseph Langbord

It was around this same time that I became involved in the JGSGP. I reached out to our membership for help. Lois Ser-noff suggested I contact the American Academy of Physi-cians, as they hold archival records on all physicians licensed in the U.S. Another member from Florida reached out to help me with the news that Dr. Langbord was from Teplik, Ukraine and that he had a wonderful reputation in the Jewish community for his generosity and willingness to treat anyone regardless of his/her ability to pay him. I eventually received Dr. Langbord's records from the source Lois had recommended. He definitely seemed like a good find for one's family tree. I did my own research about the Langbords and was able to find out a lot about them, including their immigration information, which was aligned with the arrival of my family from Kiev. All of this was interesting, but I still had only anecdotal evidence of his connection to my family: "Cousin Joe from Philadelphia".



Felicia Mode Alexander & Irene Ostroff

While spending a week at the recent IAJGS conference in Boston, I attended the final night's big event, the gala banquet. I was seated at a table with folks I did not know and struck up a conversation with Irene Ostroff from Palm Beach, Florida. Originally from Philadelphia, she is now a snowbird, but still has family in the Philadelphia area. She is in her eighties and has a terrific memory, so I thought to myself, 'why not'?

I asked Irene, "When you were growing up in Philadelphia, did you ever know a man by the name of Dr. Joseph Langbord?" I certainly knew it was a long shot. "Of course! He was my cousin," she happily reported.

I was stunned. Not only was she a cousin of the mystery man my dad told me about over a decade ago, but she had an 8"

x 10" family group photo in her hotel room, in which she identified Joe Langbord, who was clearly visible. Irene told me some information about him which I did not know, and I promised that I would be in touch with her if I could make any definitive conclusions about our cousin connection.

The moral of this story to me is to never discount anything you might hear about family members and don't be afraid to ask questions when there is only the slimmest chance of a connection. To anyone who might read this and is part of the Langbord clan, I am the granddaughter of Florence Grossman Mode, who was born in or near Kiev...and perhaps your cousin, too! ❖

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 D.C. 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, Abrahams, Bornstein in Berlin and Posen; Grossman, Longbord and Taliafsky in Kiev region. You can contact Felicia at fmode@verizon.net

GETTING MORE THAN MY MONEY'S (AND TIME'S, AND ENERGY'S) WORTH AT THE 2013 IAJGS CONFERENCE

by Barbara Pilvin



Most of us can trace at least some of our ancestors to one or more regions that were part of the Romanov Empire and then the USSR. I grew up intimately knowing my relatives came from what is today Belarus, but knowing almost nothing about my Latvian paternal grandmother's family.

When I signed up for this conference, I had to choose between the Belarus and Latvia SIG luncheons, since--not for the first time—they were held at the same time. In the in-

terest of fairness and equal opportunity, I decided that, since I attended the Belarus lunch at my last conference (in Washington, D.C., in 2011), I'd sign up for the Latvia lunch this time. Not only was the food fantastic, but Nicholas Evans' talk about the Latvia he's grown to know and love was witty and heartwarming. I was able to envision that place as a real home from which my family members were compelled to leave in the wake of a pogrom that cost my great-grandmother at least one of her many siblings and may well have been the event that also left her a widow.

The smaller attendance at the Latvia SIG luncheon allowed us more time for informal, relaxed talk and questions. There's nothing anyone can do about the relative sizes of different regions' populations of Jewish descent, but I always prefer smaller group to larger group events... and I would highly recommend attending SIG luncheons to everyone! The talks are informative and add a true human element to regions many of us have never seen; they also give us a chance to talk with people and assist one another in our genealogical research.

All work and no play will make any conference more tiring than it needs to be, so I made sure I had some fun. For starters, there were a lot of excellent films, three of which weren't really "entertaining," in light of their serious subject matter, but were enlightening and inspiring.

The subject of *Jewish Soldiers in Blue and Gray* is obvious from the title; *Never Forget to Lie*, which I also subsequently watched on PBS, is about Jewish children who survived the deportations and slaughter of the Holocaust, largely by being spirited out of the ghettos by their self-sacrificing parents; and *Harbour of Hope* focuses on three Holocaust survivors who were taken by ship to Malmo, Sweden.

I've seen other films at IAJGS conferences and they're invariably worth the time. As tragic as many of their stories are, they also leave me with a strong sense of pride and gratitude, not just because of my own Jewish ancestry, but also because of the courage, sacrifices and good sense of many non-Jews who have helped and continue to help us and others who suffer persecution and discrimination.

There was a wealth of music at this conference, and I only wish I'd been able to sing with some of the performers I heard! My favorites were a funny and musically gifted group called SAFAM and the Zamir Chorale of Boston, which sang for us at Thursday's gala dinner.

This article would be incomplete if I didn't mention Jewpardy, one of the zaniest parodies of a TV series I've ever seen, and at this one, audience participation was strongly encouraged, and it was personally gratifying when I saw that I knew many of the questions to the genealogy answers that came up. I also wasn't surprised to see professional genealogist and regular IAJGS conference speaker, Crista Cowan there, while she creamed the other contestants!

And finally... One of the best parts of a conference is the unscripted: Seeing people I haven't seen in a while, making new friends and even discovering cousins I didn't know I had.

I met with one woman who wanted to discuss our somewhat distant relationship. What I didn't expect to discover was that she also had a cousin who could be a dead ringer for a lot of my male relatives. When I went into my Family Tree DNA account, looked up his name, saw a variant spelling of my maternal grandfather's surname ("variant" by one vowel), and discovered he was from the same town, I knew he's part of my family!

In addition I reunited with the delightful Englishwoman I had first met at the 2009 Philadelphia-IAJGS conference, who, like me, has primary lymphedema...and who, I discovered some time ago, is a distant cousin of mine. I also saw my friend from Boston who'd spent years wondering about his birth father's family, and has since learned about siblings he didn't know he had. Finally I saw Ellen Cassidy, a high school classmate from Great Neck, New York back in the long ago '60s who I knew would be at this conference. She's written a book about her search for her maternal Lithuanian Jewish ancestors entitled *We Are Here: Memories of the Lithuanian Holocaust*. She spoke at the Free Library of Philadelphia last month. If you ever have an opportunity to hear her, I guarantee you won't be disappointed. ❖

Author Barbara Pilvin MLS, is a public service librarian at the Free Library of Philadelphia, focusing on history, genealogy, medicine, French, and music, especially singing. Three years ago, at almost 60, she took up classical Hebrew, proving that you're never too old to learn (or to do) something new!

After she retires in two years, she plans to devote more time to genealogy, memoir and historical fiction (and mystery) writing, as well as add another graduate degree on top of her Smith College AB, Yale MA in French and history, and University of Maryland MLS.

Contact Barbara at: pilvinb@freelibrary.org

BREAKING DOWN BRICK WALLS AT THE BOSTON IAJGS CONFERENCE

by Felicia Mode Alexander

I am an IAJGS conference veteran, have attended five previous conferences and always find the depth and variety of lectures to be very helpful to my research. However, I decided that this time I would specifically dedicate my time to digging deeper into my Boston roots and literally walking in the footsteps of my ancestors. Attending the Boston event was a true homecoming for me, since I was born there, as were many relatives including my father and grandfather. In fact, I am the fifth generation of my family to call Boston home.

How I utilized my prior research and took advantage of the opportunities available to conference attendees resulted in some wonderful new discoveries about my family. This article will weave the story of my family with the discoveries made possible by IAJGS conferences I have attended. My experience could be valuable to people thinking about attending one in the future. The bottom line is this: I did my homework prior to arriving in Boston and planned ahead to take advantage of as many relevant experiences as I could while there.

- I reviewed my Boston notes and extracted the specific information I would need to advance my research: all family surnames and given names, surnames of families into which they married, exactly where they lived in Boston, when they lived at each address, their synagogue affiliations and burial locations.

- I identified all of the conference workshops related to Boston Jewry.

- I allocated time to use Proquest in the computer research room, specifically the Boston *Globe*.

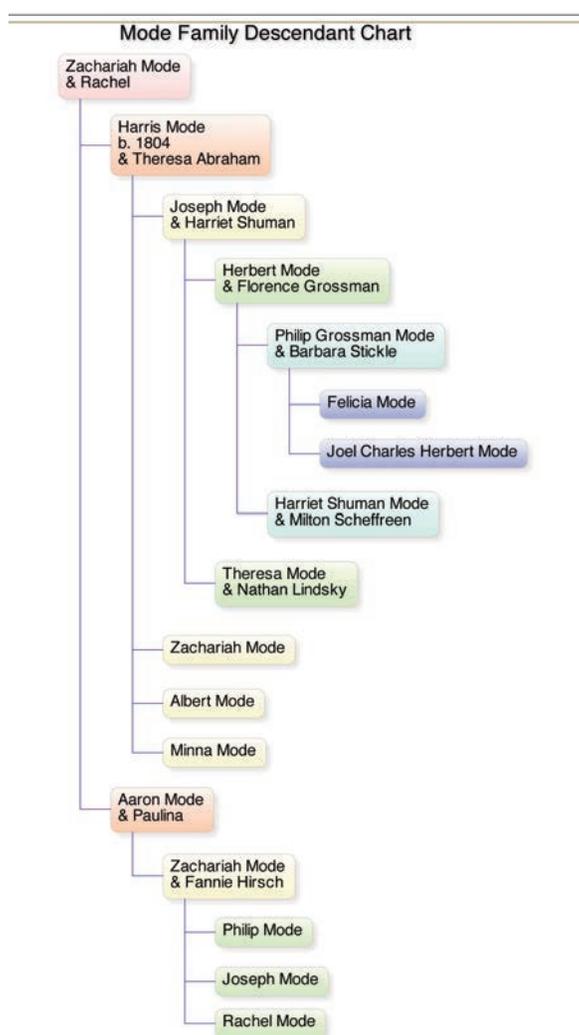
- I utilized the "Speaker Biographies" section of the syllabus hoping to find specific individuals, chief among these being Dr. Ellen Smith and Dr. Jonathan Sarna, editors of my much used research text, *The Jews of Boston*. My late father had annotated this coffee table sized book for me with many post-its and margin notes that pointed out references to our family or their Boston neighborhoods.

- I registered as soon as I saw the posting for three different walking tours of Jewish Boston.

I began my review of what I already knew about my Boston

roots by reading the original notes I took in 1983, during my first research trip to Boston's oldest Jewish cemetery. The land was purchased and consecrated in 1842 by members of its first *shul* (synagogue), Ohabei Shalom. This cemetery is the final resting place of many of my ancestors who came with the wave of Jews from Posen, Prussia in the mid-19th century.

When I first began my genealogy work in 1983, my father (Philip Grossman Mode) and I walked among this cemetery's rows of old headstones. He recognized many names and was able to tell me about these people, thus lighting the spark in me to become a genealogist. Attending IAJGS conferences helped me learn even more about our family and truly appreciate both our deep roots in Boston and the history of Boston Jewry.



In the back of the cemetery, among the oldest stones, stand the *matzevot* (tombstones) of my great great grandfather, Harris L. Mode (1804-1888) who was buried alone, a widower in death as he was when he first settled in Boston with his young children. I have a photograph of this old grave, taken on that first visit in 1983 as well as one from 2013.

The inscription is much less clear now than it was thirty years ago, but the stone is still erect and somewhat readable. A few steps away are the graves of Minna Mode Bornstein and her husband, Jacob L. Bornstein. At the time of our first visit, my father could not identify Minna, but more than two decades later, while attending the Philadelphia - IAJGS conference in 2009, I solved this mystery and discovered her connection to our family. Dad also showed me the graves of my great grandfather, Joseph Mode and his wife Harriet Shuman Mode. My great grandmother was the sister of Abraham Shuman, a prominent Boston merchant, philanthropist and leader in the Jewish community.

A city block in Boston's Downtown Crossing section was named "Shuman's Corner" in the late 1800s. There is actually a photo of his store, "A. Shuman and Co." in Smith and Sarna's book, *The Jews of Boston*. In still another row of the cemetery are the memorial stones for my grandparents, Herbert Shuman Mode and Florence Grossman Mode, and the family plot of Florence's oldest brother, Josiah Grossman, his wife Rose Nickalaewsky Grossman and their only child, Alma Grossman Mendelsohn, all of whom died within a short time of each other.

As we walked among the stones so many years ago, Dad and I also were stunned to come upon a stone for another Philip Mode. "Mode" is a very unusual Jewish surname, so to see the same first and last names as my dad's was startling! That riddle was solved about five years later, thanks to another IAJGS conference. The other Philip Mode turned out to be a cousin from New York City about whom my father knew absolutely nothing! While attending the New York City-IAJGS conference several years ago I trekked to the Municipal Archives and searched vital records there since this information was not yet available online. (Today it is available at: <http://www.nyc.gov/html/records/html/home/home.shtml>)

It was there that I found Philip Mode, his father, Zachariah Mode and grandfather, Aaron Mode! I had literally stumbled upon the younger brother (i.e. Aaron) of my great great grandfather, Harris L. Mode! This hypothesis was confirmed when I acquired the death certificates of both Harris and Aaron, which identify their parents as Zachariah and Rachel. In addition, conforming to Ashkenazi naming patterns, one of Harris' sons, my great grandfather's brother, was named Zachariah.

As mentioned previously, Dad also knew nothing about Minna Mode Bornstein. I had been frustrated in my attempts to identify her in any of the census records. She had only been listed as Minna Bornstein, with no mention of

her maiden name or parents. However, I finally found her... at the IAJGS conference in Boston! I was able to conclusively determine her relationship to our family by taking advantage of the free one-day use of the online historic newspaper database, Proquest!

My query led to an 1880 newspaper story in the *Boston Globe* as well as a posed photo from Minna and Jacob L. Bornstein's 40th wedding anniversary celebration. The best part was that it included her place of birth in Posen, Prussia as well as the names of her father, Harris L. Mode and the names of other family members including her children! It also honored them as founding members of Temple Ohabei Shalom. Thank you IAJGS and Proquest!!! Another brick wall smashed to pieces!



Charles Playhouse (former home of Congregation Ohabei Shalom)

In my effort to walk in my Bostonian ancestors' footsteps, I experienced some very special goose bump moments; only genealogists can appreciate how these feel. On the second day of the conference I embarked on my first walking tour. My first goal for the day was to see Temple Ohabei Shalom, (originally Congregation Ohabei Shalom), the South End synagogue where my family worshiped. I was not disappointed as at least one of the original buildings is still standing, although it is used as a theatre today.

The photograph above shows the second home of Congregation Ohabei Shalom (1863-1886). Designed by Asher Benjamin, this Greek revival style building was constructed in 1839 and became the center of the first Jewish neighborhood in Boston. It has served as a theatre since 1958.

While standing in front of this building, I felt a strong emotional connectedness to my ancestors' lives and the role they played in Jewish Boston. More than 160 years young,

this once tiny congregation has evolved into a large, active synagogue on Beacon Street in nearby Brookline.

As we continued on our walk, we entered another neighborhood in the South End, and I knew we were close to what I was truly hoping to see. I was not disappointed! I found myself on tree lined Chandler Street, with its long row of original three story brownstones still standing and in remarkably good condition.



Chandler Street - Boston, Massachusetts

This street was important to me for one reason: after finding out about Minna Mode Bornstein, I went back to the U.S. Census to look up her married name, “Bornstein,” and discovered that in 1880, she lived on Chandler Street. As I walked along that street, we searched for the right house. It was the very last one on the block: #79 Chandler Street which had been the home of Minna and Jacob Bornstein, her father, Harris and her younger brother (my great grandfather) Joseph Mode, along with his wife and young daughter, and their servants from Germany and Ireland. Alas, to my great disappointment this house was no longer standing and was the only vacant lot in the row of intact brownstones. I was left with the question: what happened to #79? Even without seeing their exact house, I got a wonderful glimpse into their world at that time, just a few blocks from Ohabei Shalom, living in a lovely Jewish neighborhood, working their way up the socio-economic ladder as merchants in Boston.

As we continued the South End walk, we passed what had been the Elysium Club, a social club comprised of young Jewish men who hosted plays and various types of entertainment. My grandfather (Herbert Shuman Mode) was actively involved in this group before getting married in 1909, a fact I also uncovered through my Proquest search. The tour guide showed us where other synagogues would later

be built and described the later changes in the demographics of the neighborhood, leading to the rise in the number of Jews living in Brookline, Brighton and Newton a generation later.

With the exception of my grandfather, all of these relatives died before I was born. I never knew them, but after seeing their neighborhood, temples, and social clubs and remembering the stories my dad shared decades ago, I felt a very special connection. I imagine this is how other genealogists have felt discovering family *shtetlach*, (small Jewish towns or villages formerly found throughout Eastern Europe). I cannot wait to see what new discoveries I make at future IAJGS conferences. ❖

Felicia Mode Alexander's biography and contact information can be found on page 6, following her article, "Did I Ever Tell You About My Cousin Joe in Philadelphia?"

MY BOSTON CONFERENCE EXPERIENCE

by Michael Jaron



The Boston conference was my fifth in more than eleven years. I'd like to discuss two of the reasons why it might have been the most beneficial of all.

My primary question was: Why did one of my maternal great grandfathers (Asher Anshel Machleder) leave Philadelphia and move to New Bedford, Massachusetts? He had a sister whose husband (Aaron Harris Silverblatt) became the first rabbi of the first synagogue in New Bedford (Ahavath Achim) around 1897. While my maternal branches are all from Shereshevo, now in Belarus, most of the individuals listed in the synagogue charter were from Vilnius. This created an obstacle I couldn't figure out.

By attending a Litvak SIG presentation by Eden Joachim I learned about the All Lithuania Database (ALD) and considered the real possibility that Shereshevo could once have been part of Lithuania. Applying this tool I was able to confirm family connections for at least five relevant surnames that appear on the Shereshevo Revision Lists. I then used four of these confirmed connections, along with one or two from the synagogue charter. I also did a town search using

Shereshevo. There were hits on all parameters!!

In contrast to my maternal branches, I always had less to go on with my paternal branches. This primarily relates to my paternal grandfather. I knew the original surnames: YUROVSKY in Ukraine and JUROWSKY upon immigration to Philadelphia in 1904. I was told he came from Kanevik(?) and had a sister who married a FINKEL. I had also heard that my paternal grandmother arrived in Boston as an illegal alien, carrying one of my father's older sisters.

On the last day of the conference, I was standing in the lobby of the hotel talking with another attendee. He suggested that I go with him to a presentation that focused on DNA evidence. This presentation ("Using Autosomal DNA Analysis to Connect Rabbinical Lineages" by Dr. Jeffrey Mark Paull and Janet Billstein Akaha) led me to determine a means for finding where my paternal grandfather's family lived during the 19th century. "Autosomal DNA tests . . . are useful for identifying descendants of a common ancestor, regardless of whether they descend through the paternal lineage, the maternal lineage, or through a combination of both male and female ancestors."¹

Simply, Dr. Paull's presentation involved the use of the FTDNA (Family Tree DNA) Chromosome Browser to determine relationships dating back about 400 years. Following the conference, I went to work with the Chromosome Browser, starting with the matches in common with the presenter, along with FF Q genetic matches and the three known YUROVSKY FF matches. I'm hoping further steps will lead me to definitive results regarding my paternal line. ❖

1. Jeffrey Mark Paull and Janet Billstein Akaha, "Using Autosomal DNA Analysis to Connect Rabbinical Lineages: A Case Study of the Wertheimer and Wertheim Dynasties," *Avotaynu*, Vol. XXVII, No. 4, (Winter 2012): 59.

Born in Philadelphia, author Michael Jaron moved to Pittsburgh in 1972 to attend University of Pittsburgh, where he earned a BA in History and an MA in Library Science. He's been married for thirty-nine years, and he and his wife have two sons. He's been actively researching for more than fifteen years. His grandparents' surnames are: YUROVSKY, WERNICK, MACHLEDER/LEVY, and FARBMAN.

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BECOMING MORE ADEPT AT USING SOME RESOURCES FROM THE FAMILY SEARCH WEBSITE

by James Gross

The challenge at any IAJGS conference is how to choose between the many lectures and events offered. I decided at the recent Boston conference to attend a computer workshop on August 7 and a lecture the next day, both conducted by Todd Knowles, a reference consultant in the British Research unit at the Family History Library in Salt Lake City and genealogy lecturer.

I chose these two sessions because I wanted to focus on LDS (Latter-Day Saints) resources which I've often found very helpful for my research. At the computer workshop Mr. Knowles instructed us on the usage of the Familysearch.org website. He gave us an outline of updates to the LDS online microfilm catalog, no small task since more than 24 million rolls of microfilm are available for use at any Family History Center in the U.S.



Todd Knowles

Learning how to effectively navigate the familysearch.org website is very useful knowledge for all genealogists. Despite the time limitations he managed to squeeze in a number of useful search examples including the usage of a wildcat search, a boolean search, surname searching, and town searching. He also showed the class how to locate community trees.

During his lecture Mr. Knowles focused on his website entitled the Knowles Collection which contains six databases that include records of the Jewish people from the following locations: the British Isles, North America, Europe, South America and the Caribbean, Africa and the Orient,

and the South Pacific.

The great advantage of the Knowles Collection is that it links together into family groups, thousands of individual Jews (over 600,000 as of January 2013). Until now, these records were available only at the Family History Library or from private archives or individuals.¹ As a Jewish genealogist and a volunteer at my local LDS family history center, I have seen firsthand how the LDS Family History Centers provide a very useful resource for researchers, regardless of faith.

I encourage everyone, regardless of where they live, to go and visit their local family history center. ❖

1. https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/The_Knowles_Collection

Author James Gross' biography and contact information can be found on page 13, following his comments on "Three Presentations at the Boston Conference That Taught Me New Approaches."

THREE PRESENTATIONS AT THE BOSTON CONFERENCE THAT TAUGHT ME NEW APPROACHES

by Steve Schecter (z"l) (*zecher l'vrachah* =
may the [i.e. his] memory be a blessing)
with additional comments from James Gross

Probate Records: Wills and Estates. Why to Search and How to Search

By Allan E. Jordan.

Prior to 1916 probate was used mostly for wealthier people but afterwards changed to include a much broader population. Mr. Jordan explained the two types of files:

- Those who left a will are testate.
- Those who had assets but no will are intestate and the court records are known as an administration.

Using probate records often requires a genealogist to search two separate indexes; if one finds no will, one may still find administration records. He also alerted us that these are court records, and each court decides where records are housed (the court, an archive, a historical society, etc.) These are all public records unless a family has had a court seal the records.

This presentation opened a new source of information I did not previously appreciate. Mr. Jordan both explained probate records and gave extensive "how to information."

Mr. Jordan and I spoke after his presentation, and he agreed to speak at a future JGSGP meeting.

Immigration And Naturalization Service (INS) Citizen Records: Beyond the Basics

By Zack Wilske

Mr. Wilske, a knowledgeable historian in the Historical Records Branch of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), spoke about record files and research help available through his office. While many records are available through the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) many additional records are only available through the USCIS because of privacy reasons, nuances in law, and regulations. Searches can be requested at a nominal cost.

James Gross added the following:

There are five types of records which could have been generated by the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service and are available through the USCIS: certificate files, alien registration forms, visa files, registry files, and A-Files.

A secondary USCIS resource entitled "U.S. Subject Index to Correspondence and Case Files of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, 1903-1959" has recently been digitized and is available at www.ancestry.com. Check with USCIS if you have reason to believe that an unusual issue affected your relative, such as being detained overnight at Ellis Island, questions about his/her immigration status, etc.

This presentation opened a new and previously unknown source of information for me. This may help me find several ancestors who "went missing" after they had arrived in the U.S.

City Directories for U.S.: Finding And Charting Unique Uses

By Diane M. Freilich, JD.

Ms. Freilich showed how city directories are often underutilized. She emphasized the content of the directories and listed seven genealogical uses. She also showed a technique for mapping ancestors from directories. Briefly, she suggested using a spreadsheet and listing people by year. She emphasized listing names of potential relatives and trying

not to miss a year. Columns might include: name, address, occupation and other findings. By coordinating the map, especially changes and omissions, with other sources such as censuses, obituary records, newspaper information, etc., specific causes and events may be identified.

This presentation provided a solid blend of a skilled, well-prepared and knowledgeable speaker with a novel approach. Ms. Freilich's presentation combined insightful information about directories with a practical technique to use them more effectively.

I was impressed with all of the above speakers and would recommend their speaking at future JGSGP meetings. ❖

Steve Schecter, (z"l) was Vice President Programming and a beloved member of JGSGP

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 1990s and is a periodic contributor to various genealogy newsletters. James also has a genealogy website: <http://tinyurl.com/gross-steinberg> He can be reached at: navistar96@yahoo.com

THE HUMAN CONNECTION IN GENEALOGY

by Evan Fishman

While we all delight in finding new facts about our relatives and ancestors, I've found the human connections we establish (or re-establish) to be far more fulfilling and meaningful.

A week before the conference I received an email message inviting me to a gathering of attendees who share ancestral roots in Volhynia (Ukraine). I was thrilled to see Sheryl B's name in the "To:" window. She grew up in Millville, New Jersey, and she and I both resided in the same apartment building (in separate apartments!) in Jerusalem during our junior year abroad at Hebrew University. We exchanged messages, and she subsequently communicated to the group how excited she was about this long, overdue reunion.

During the course of this gathering I heard several informal presentations from individuals who had recently traveled to their ancestral towns in Volhynia. I had always thought travel to this region would be unproductive because there was nothing tangible left to see. I was pleasantly surprised to learn

that there are indeed sites to see (cemeteries, etc.) and more importantly, some of my *landsmen* reported that they were able to do worthwhile research at local repositories.



Evan & Sheryl at the IAJGS-Boston Conference

Sheryl gave me her genealogy business card which indicated her website, <http://beforeamerica.com>, where her mother described her life from the time of her birth in Sarny, Poland in 1921 to her arrival in the United States in 1947. She provides a richly detailed and emotional account; one can't help but be moved and enlightened by it. My strong reaction resulted partially from the fact that this was my friend, Sheryl's mother's personal memoir, not that of a random Holocaust survivor.

Before the conference my sister-in-law advised me that a close friend of hers, Nora, would also be attending. Nora "found" me the hectic, first day of the conference; we lunched together on three occasions during that week and ran into each other numerous other times. Nora has recently embarked on her own genealogy journey, and I was happy to share some of my knowledge with her. Both of her parents were Holocaust survivors from Krakow, Poland, so I mentioned that there were numerous records for her to check. I indicated that translators would be available that week and recommended that she study the syllabus and maximize her conference experience by attending sessions that would be most meaningful and helpful, including those dealing with research resources, organization and management of research results, historical content relevant to her family's past, and how to use software, photographs, and maps to further her research goals.

I also encouraged her to take advantage of every opportunity to converse informally with other attendees: to explore similar backgrounds and ancestral towns, learn about their research trajectories, and get direction for her own research. During our last lunch together Nora commented how inspired she was by the

dedication of fellow attendees and how wonderful it was “to feel a part of a larger community of like-minded people doing this ‘detective’ work and getting excited about the often small but significant discoveries made.” She also noted that she ran into and reconnected with members of One Generation After, the now defunct Boston-based organization for children of Holocaust survivors, and attended sessions dealing with Holocaust related genealogy.

A month after the conference I drove to the north shore of Long Island to meet a childhood friend of my father’s. Dad and Ernie met when they were ten years old and lived a stone’s throw from each other in Irvington, New Jersey. Their lives overlapped most significantly during World War II when they were both stationed in North Africa and subsequently in Italy. Although Dad had spoken of Ernie every so often, I had never met him, and I was determined to do so before it was too late. At age 94 Ernie proved to be quite the raconteur, and he regaled me with many fascinating stories during our four hour get-together.

He clarified some misperceptions I had about my father’s wartime experiences. Ernie served in the air corps, and if I didn’t know better, I would’ve thought that he fought in a different war than my father who served in the infantry. Ernie worked with fairly high ranking officers and was able through his connections to requisition a chauffeured vehicle to transport Dad from Sidi Bel Abbès to Oran (both in Algeria) to watch a boxing match featuring noted champion, Marcel Cerdan. When Dad and Ernie were both stationed in Naples, Ernie generously gave my father a warmer jacket to wear that was far superior to the minimal outer garments the U.S. Army provided.

I thoroughly enjoyed my visit with Ernie. It was very heart-warming to connect with him and to thereby deepen my memories of my father and his life. Interestingly Ernie reminded me of Dad in the way he told his stories. Perhaps I was looking for similarities. Nevertheless I was so glad I braved Long Island’s traffic clogged roadways; it was a truly memorable experience that was generated by my passion to delve into my family’s past. ❖

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.

Contact him at editor@jsgsp.org

ADDITIONAL DETAILS REVEALED IN BIRTH RECORDS

By Stanley R. Sandler, Ph.D



My father, Meir Eliazar Grief Sandel, was born on March 6, 1900 in Kolomyja, Poland. He had a close relationship with his younger brother, Baruch Izaak, whom he enjoyed taking to *cheder* (Hebrew school). Sadly, Baruch Izaak reportedly

died as the result of complications from a bad cold. I should have asked my father for more details before he passed away in 1978. I always remembered this very sad story and recently wanted to determine how old my father and Uncle Baruch Izaak would have been when all this happened.

I searched the JRI-Poland internet site and recently found a record (see image on p. 15) noting the birth of a Baruch Izaak, son of Malka Greif, my paternal grandmother, in Kolomyja, Poland on November 3, 1902. There's no mention of the father (Solomon Sandel)¹ Consequently, Baruch Izaak is my uncle. Malka Greif’s parents, my great-grandparents, are listed as Moses Greif and Reisli from Korolowci, Poland. As I reported in an earlier issue, these great grandparents and their entire family, except Malka, were massacred on the evening of April 11, 1873.²

Although this record is categorized as a birth record, Baruch Izaak's date of death ("18/10 1907" corresponding to October 18, 1907) is surprisingly listed in column #12. Using this information, I calculated that Baruch Izaak was only five years old when he died while my father was two years older.

Although this was the information I was seeking, the story becomes even sadder when I inferred from Solomon Sandel’s manifest that he wasn’t present at his son, Baruch Izaak’s birth or death. Solomon had left for the United States from Antwerp, Belgium on October 4, 1902, about one month before his son was born (November 3, 1902). Solomon’s wife, Malka, arrived with the rest of the family on August 9, 1909.

I strongly recommend reading the comments section of all birth documents since they frequently record other life cycle events and thereby provide additional genealogical information about that individual.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Einstands-Zahl Lohn paragraf	Der Geburt Urkunde	Der Bestenfalls oder Namens-Bestätigung Österreichs lub walsches mieszka	Das Kindes Datiocytia	Ethnicität, ange- hob ethniele oder welchele Geburt	Vor und Zuname des Vaters, sowie Stand, Beschäftigung und Wohnort
			N a m e Imię	Urbeside lub zakonye detye lub mieszka	Imię, i nazwisko, stan, zakonye i mieszka zamieszkania ojca
616	1902	1902	Alwin		Moses Chaim Grosfabauch wielki Zeccher handlarz w Kolomyji, z domu Kmetzkyca z Kolomyji VIII str. 40/1 p. 286 1902
617	1902	1902	Baruch Isaac		

7	8	9	10	11	12
Vor- und Zuname der Mutter, ihre Stand und Wohnort Własności podług wymiennosciem zatrudnieni i mieszka zamieszkania ihrych Eltern	die Pathe oder Zeugen des Sanlekt oder Schames	des oder der Beschneider	der Hebamme oder des Ge- burtshelfers	Totf. geb. d. m. u. Dati. d. m. u. urodzony	Anmerkung U w a g a
	Imię i nazwisko, stan, mieszka zamieszkania matki i jej rodziców	kumów lub świadków Sanlektu lub Schamesa	obrazajacych lub obrazajacych		
Maria Grosfabauch wielki Zeccher handlarz w Kolomyji, z domu Kmetzkyca z Kolomyji VIII str. 40/1 p. 286 1902	Joszew Tereza kopia w Kolomyji Tereza z domu Kmetzkyca z Kolomyji VIII str. 40/1 p. 286 1902		O Tereza z domu Kmetzkyca z Kolomyji VIII str. 40/1 p. 286 1902		
Malka Greif wielki Zeccher handlarz w Kolomyji, z domu Kmetzkyca z Kolomyji VIII str. 40/1 p. 286 1902	Meier Jakob kopia w Kolomyji Moses Sanna Dawid Isidor kopia w Kolomyji	Chaim Frankel kopia w Kolomyji	O Tereza z domu Kmetzkyca z Kolomyji VIII str. 40/1 p. 286 1902		

As a matter of family genealogy, my brother, Dr. Bernard Irwin Sandler (Baruch Yitzhak Sandler) is named for this uncle who in turn was named for our great-grandfather, Baruch Itzhaak Sandel, a rabbi and *dayan* (religious judge) in Kolomyja, Poland. ♦

1. Baruch Izaak Greif, JRI-Poland, Kolomyja, Poland, Greif--Year Born: 1902 ; Fond: #300, District/Signatura: : #2263; Type: B; and AKT # A617.
2. Stanley R. Sandler, *Chronicles*, Vol. 23-3/4, p. 38 (2004); Vol. 24-3, p. 13 (2004); Vol. 24-4, p.10 (2006).

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 U.S. and in Galicia, specifically in Kolomyja, Poland, and in neighboring towns, and also in Vienna, Austria. Contact Stan at stanshel@msn.com.

IN THE BEGINNING . . .

by Steve Schecter (z"l)

As technology improves, our computers have become invaluable in searching our genealogy. Previously, we've looked at data storage programs. Here is a very brief listing of six research sites that can be helpful to get you started.

Please remember, web sites do not replace a disciplined search; they complement and supplement it. Speaking with family, reviewing family artifacts and searching repositories

(archives, public records, international sites, etc.) are still CRITICAL for tracking down your ancestors.

Also, please remember the issues between data storage and research. My suggestion is that even though several of these sites offer data storage, keep your "official" records on your computer with you as the only source of input.

Search sites are emerging like mushrooms on a spring lawn, so this is clearly not an exhaustive list. Rather it is a starting place, a beginning.

Sites:

- Google.com. This is a free site and your best search friend. If you have a question, "Google it!" You can also frequently find instructional videos by googling what you want to learn and search for same on YouTube. Make friends with Google. There are also other search engines - Yahoo, Bing, etc. -- you can try; they may turn up information Google overlooked.
- JewishGen.com. This is a free site devoted to Jewish genealogy. It has multiple databases and links to other helpful sites. There's also a Family Finder where you can look for others who are also searching similar names and areas as you, as well as enter your searches so others with shared interests can contact you. This site also has a town finder to pinpoint town of origin and provides the multiple spellings of that town name in different languages. JewishGen provides enough databases, links, etc. to fill an entire column, so it may be best to playfully explore it. Basic service is free; a \$100/year donation provides several advanced services.
- FamilySearch.org. This is a free site sponsored by the Mormon Church (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day

Saints). It is excellent at indexing records and provides a window for searching the microfilm database the Church maintains and ordering films to review at your local Family History Center. As with most sites it will take some time to play with the site to fully realize its capabilities.

- **Ancestry.com.** This is a paid site. Frequently it will give you a free trial period that may help you decide if you want to spend the bucks. It has many helpful databases, and you can find yourself lost for hours in meaningful research. Typically your local Family History Center (at a local Mormon church) or a local library may have this site available free. If you choose this route, bring a thumb drive/memory stick to copy your findings so you can both view and print them when you get home. This site, similar to Geni.com, also has the capability to record and store your family tree.

- **Geni.com.** This is a free site with a paid add-on for additional features. It seeks to combine data storage and search capabilities. While it is a family tree site, helpful for social networking and crowd sourcing, it uses algorithms to match charts with potential relatives and expand your findings. This is helpful to uncover and connect with potential relatives and grow your tree but please remember to get independent confirmation (typically three total sources) before declaring someone a confirmed part of your ancestry. An annual fee allows you to better use the crowd sourcing algorithms to link with other trees that may share a relative.

- **MyHeritage.com.** This is a paid site with a free introductory period that bills itself as a blend of genealogy and internet technology. Similar to Geni.com (which it owns) in using crowd sourcing technology, it also offers Family Tree Builder 7.0 for PC users only and other services. Get a better view of their capabilities at:
<http://blog.myheritage.com/media-kit/>

The site claims to be intuitive, yet some have reported more complexity than expected and slow response to questions (no phone support, only e-mail).

If you identify additional helpful sites or want to describe your experiences with one of these, please write your brief review (a paragraph or two) and submit it to editor@jgsgp.org. Clearly all of us together have more experience and are collectively smarter than this writer alone. ❖

Author Steve Schecter, (z"l) was 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 was infectious and inspiring.

NOT A RELATIVE, DARN IT

by Eugene Hurwitz



Sometimes it's nice to read about well known people whose surnames also appear in your genealogy and hope to make an actual connection. My maternal ancestry is from a relatively large Marcus family in Romania. They all came to the U.S. during the first few years of the 20th century. "Marcus" is not an uncommon name, but I was anxious to read a new biography of Josephine Sarah Marcus, who was Wyatt Earp's common law wife for forty-seven years. Wouldn't it be cool to add that branch to my family tree!

Dr. Ann Kirschner, University Dean of McCaulay Honors College at City University of New York (CUNY) wrote a very well researched book entitled *Lady at the O.K. Corral: The True Story of Josephine Marcus Earp*. She made extensive use of traditional genealogical sources and other documents, many of which can be seen on a corresponding website (www.ladyattheokcorral.com).

Josephine's father was Hyman Marcus, son of Moses Marcus, a baker living in Posen, part of the area partitioned from Poland in late 18th century and absorbed into Prussia. The Jews in that area were looked upon as lower class compared to the rest of Germany. Hyman emigrated and arrived in New York about 1854, settling on the Lower East Side and working as a baker. About a year later, he met and married Sophia Lewis, who had a young daughter Rebecca. Three more children were born: Nathan (1857), Josephine (1860) and Henrietta (1864).

Hyman and Sophia became interested in relocating to San Francisco after reading much about the vibrant Jewish and general communities that were growing there in the years after the Gold Rush and the 1868 earthquake. The family left New York and was living in San Francisco before the 1870 census.

Like many teenage girls, Josephine was fascinated by the theater and wanted to perform on stage. Within a few years she joined a touring company performing Gilbert & Sullivan's comic opera *HMS Pinafore*. The tour proceeded to Arizona Territory, where many successful performances were held, and arrived in Tombstone in 1879. The Earps arrived there the same year.

The rest of the story is fascinating. Briefly engaged to but really "the other woman" in an adulterous relationship with Sheriff Johnny Behan, Josephine left him for his political rival, Wyatt Earp. That rivalry came to a violent head with the famous shootout. Josephine and Wyatt were together until his death in 1929, and his ashes are buried in the Marcus family plot near San Francisco. There is even mention of the couple attending a family Passover *seder*. Josephine lived until the mid 1940s and constantly strove to maintain and control Wyatt's legacy.

I'm pretty sure Josephine and I do not share any family history. Nevertheless I recommend the book and the website. You can view a brief group of videos there which demonstrate the forensics used to determine the authenticity of various photos reported to be Josephine. It's interesting to see the methodology used to compare facial features. ❖

Author Eugene Hurwitz is a greater Philadelphia professional photographer (A&G's Picture This!, Feasterville, PA) who often contributes his talents to JGSGP and his work to "Chronicles."

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CHOOSING THE CORRECT GENEALOGY SOFTWARE

by James Gross



In this column I will address two common questions facing genealogists: Why should I bother to use genealogy software? Which is the best software to use?

While some of us have handwritten notes and papers, I think it can be safely argued that the use of computers and genealogy software helps to maximize time management and increase research efficiency as you accumulate information and notes. Genealogy programs provide a fast and accurate means for storing, viewing, and analyzing your genealogy work. The larger your family tree, the more branches or data you need to manage. Software helps you more efficiently manage that data because you can more easily trace, track, organize, and ultimately share your family tree data. Your paper records become secondary because your information is now permanently saved on the software.

There are approximately ten well-known genealogy programs available today.¹ This discussion will confine itself to briefly highlighting three of those programs: Ancestral Quest, Legacy Family Tree, and RootsMagic. All three programs are gedcom compatible and can be used to export data from the program to create a gedcom file. Think of a gedcom (Genealogical Data Communication) file as a universal file format for sharing genealogy files between genealogy software programs. Using a gedcom compatible program is necessary if you choose to upload a copy of your family tree to a website such as JewishGen.org or Ancestry.com.

While compatibility with the familysearch.org website is not a requirement for choosing a genealogy software program, Ancestral Quest, Legacy Family Tree, and RootsMagic are all listed as being endorsed by and compatible with familysearch.org, the genealogy research website run by the LDS (Church of Jesus Christ Latter-Day Saints or Mormons). The LDS recommended software chart can be a helpful guide in software selection.²

You should be aware that there are a number of websites which review and rate gedcom compatible software.^{3,4}

Here are a few examples:

Ancestral Quest: "This program has continued to develop and is a very widely used program." Legacy: "...has a standard version that is free and is one of the better free genealogy programs available." RootsMagic: "Complete and easy to use with extensive reports."⁴ See "Cyndi's List" for more information available on Ancestral Quest⁵, Legacy⁶, and RootsMagic.⁷

So, am I going to answer that second common question facing genealogists by recommending the best genealogy software program for you? Let's just say that I will let you decide which program is best for your needs. Select your program based on the company support, user reviews, and your determination of the program's usefulness. Just make sure that you choose a software program which has gedcom and be sure to periodically back up your data files. ❖

1. <http://genealogy-software-review.toptenreviews.com/>

2. <https://familysearch.org/products>

3. <http://tinyurl.com/5uozuc>

4. <http://www.gensoftreviews.com/>

5. <http://www.cyndislist.com/software/aq/>

6. <http://www.cyndislist.com/software/legacy/>

7. <http://www.cyndislist.com/software/rootsmagic/>

Author James Gross' biography and contact information can be found on page 13.

CAN BIRTH DOCUMENTS & FAMILY LORE BE MISLEADING?

by Shelda Carol Bachin Sandler



I vividly recall, when I was eight or ten years old, standing in my grandparents' grocery store and listening to my mother and grandfather conversing with another gentleman whom I recognized but couldn't identify. The conversation seemed more "family-like" than "business-like", and after the gentleman left, I asked my mother who he was. "That's Benny Brier, Grandpop's cousin. Grandpop is from a very large family and has many cousins." I don't recall ever seeing that man again.

Years later I began doing genealogy research, and one day I discovered a listing for a birth record in the JRI-Poland index for a Boruch Awerbach, son of Eidel Basie APTOWITZER and Mendel AWERBACH, born in 1881 in Krasna in Tarnopol Wojewodztwa in Galicia. Eidel Basie was my grandfather's aunt and the daughter of my great great grandparents (Aron Isak and Rojze Aptowitzer) from Zborow. There was no doubt that the newly discovered, Boruch Awerbach, was my grandfather's cousin.

In April 2013 I received an email via the JewishGen Family Finder (JGFF) from a woman named Margo who was helping her friend, Carol, research the BRIER family. I had listed Brier as one of my surnames of interest at JGFF and explained to Margo that according to family lore some or all of Eidel Basie and Mendel Awerbach's children had changed their surname to Brier but I had no documentation to confirm that.

Margo, Carol, and I began to explore more deeply; Carol was particularly interested when I mentioned Boruch Awerbach (later Brier??). She was familiar with a Ben Brier in her family who was born in 1891, son of Kalman and Sirka (Sarah) BREIER (a variant spelling). Carol wondered if my Boruch Awerbach was the same man as her Ben Brier since Boruch could have been Anglicized to Ben.

I was unable to locate a birth document for Carol's Ben Breier on JRI-Poland but I did locate birth documents for two other children of Kalman and Sirka: Feige Dwora and Schmiel Seinuel Breier, born respectively in 1886 and 1888 in the town of Cecowa (a/k/a Tzetziv) where my grandfather and his siblings were also born and lived before immi-

grating to the U.S. Coincidence or did two branches of the same family choose to live in close proximity?

Carol and I both stuck to our guns with regard to the birth years of our respective "Ben Briers", hers in 1891, mine in 1881. They, therefore, couldn't be the same man. Carol sent me copies of all the documents she and Margo had gathered, most of them thanks to www.ancestry.com. Her Ben Brier had lived on S. 58th Street in Philadelphia but she didn't know his occupation.

I located a Bernard Bryer [sic] on the 1940 census, born in 1891, an insurance broker, residing at and working from 219 S. 58th Street. Moreover, this information matched the label on the cover page of an insurance policy that my father had taken out shortly before the 1940 census. I couldn't ignore the similarity in addresses and the concrete evidence of a Bernard Bryer/Ben Brier's involvement with my family.

My dilemma: Do I hold fast to the story about Boruch Awerbach and his siblings' changing their surname to Brier AND the information on the birth record indicating Boruch's birth year as 1881? This line of thinking put me at odds with Carol's take on Ben Brier and the information I found about a Bernard Bryer on the 1940 U.S. census.

Carol later told me that her Ben Brier is buried at Mt. Lebanon Cemetery in Collingdale, Pennsylvania. After confirming this with the cemetery office, my husband and I drove over. I was sure I would find the answer to my dilemma once I saw the Hebrew name on Ben Brier's *matzevah* (tombstone).

The tombstone indicated that this Ben Brier's Hebrew name was "Dov Baer ben Kalman" which didn't correspond in any way to my alleged "Ben Brier's" Hebrew name of "Boruch ben Mendel". I then concluded that the Ben Brier I had seen at my grandparents' grocery store years ago, whom my mother had identified as "Grandpop's cousin", was the same man as Carol's Ben Brier. It was then also clear that Boruch ben Mendel Awerbach, the cousin listed on the birth document, was not this Ben Brier. The story, however, doesn't end here.

What I didn't expect to find during that visit to Mt. Lebanon was the presence of multiple Brier tombstones adjacent to numerous APTOWITZ and APT (shortened variations of Aptowitzer) ones. We had stumbled on a virtual gold mine which led my husband to comment, "There has to be a relationship between the Briers and the Apts!"



In mid-June Carol told me about a cousin named Beverlee; she and I communicated and agreed to get together to share family information. We met for lunch along with our husbands. Beverlee's grandparents were Jacob Apt (son of Samuel Aptowitz and Basze/Bessie Birnbaum) and Fannie Brier, surnames of definite interest to me. We were unable, however, to find the definitive link joining our two families. I sincerely believe when the *neshama* (soul) of any of our ancestors is "ready" to be found, it will lead us to the documentation and the answers we seek. My search will continue. ❖

Shelda Carol Bachin Sandler is co-chair of JGSGP's Speakers Bureau. She was also Hospitality co-chair at the 2009 IAJGS-Philadelphia conference, co-chaired our first Genealogy Fair in June 2011, and is a frequent contributor to Chronicles.

THE ROAD TO PHILADELPHIA GOES STRAIGHT THROUGH JERUSALEM

by Jan Jacobson Sokolovsky



During the summer of 2012, I was at the Hebrew University trying to find the classroom for a new, informal *Gemara* (Talmud) class, which was not listed in the catalog. I had a general idea of the building, and, on the way there, I spotted someone who looked rabbinical in an American sort of way, and I thought he might be going to the same class.

Sure enough, he was, and en route we became friends—

both of us had spent many summers at Camp Ramah and had lots of mutual friends and acquaintances. His name is Rabbi Shalom Bronstein, a Philadelphia native who had been a congregational rabbi before moving to Israel with his family in 1986.

Somehow one day Shalom and I started to talk about genealogy. I noted that he's active in the JGSGP, and then I remembered something. For many years, my maternal grandfather's U.S. citizenship certificate has been hanging in my study; I never knew him since he died before I was born. He had been admitted in a federal court in Philadelphia in 1887, but since my whole family is from Chicago, I never thought about that fact. His certificate indicated that he had entered the U.S. as a minor, which was consistent with some other facts I had heard. I knew that he had married my grandmother in Chicago and had lived there until his death.

It dawned on me that if my grandfather had been admitted in Philadelphia, he must have lived there for at least five years before being naturalized. I mentioned this to Shalom, who thought we could start to do some research on my grandfather's early life in Philadelphia through his contacts at JGSGP. He put me in touch with Evan Fishman who posted my query in the Spring 2013 issue of *Chronicles*. Evan and I met in late May during his trip to Jerusalem and was very optimistic about the possibility of someone volunteering to do the basic research for me.

Sure enough, I received an email from JGSGP members, Jack and Ann Kauffman, and within a short time, these wonderful people sent me years of city directory information about my grandfather, including where he lived and what he did. I was delighted.

I shared my story with a close friend in Cherry Hill, New Jersey who offered to take me to the addresses in Philadelphia where my grandfather had lived on my next trip to the States. I spent a whole day with her in Philadelphia in June, and, even though it was very rainy, we went to every address where he had lived and took pictures of the one house which is still standing.

There is more research to do, but I am so grateful to the friendship and help which I received from Shalom, Evan and the Kauffmans. You are a great group.

Jan Jacobson Sokolovsky, an attorney, active volunteer, and savta (grandmother) made aliyah (immigrated to Israel) in 1986.

TWO PICTURES ARE WORTH 2000 WORDS

Stanley R. Sandler, Ph.D

About thirteen years ago I received a photograph from my Cousin Jean that showed two tombstones from a cemetery in Kolomyja, Poland that she believed were for her grandmother and her sister. After translating the inscriptions I determined that they were actually for her grandmother and her great grandmother. Per Cousin Jean's request I sent her these translations. It was only after I had written an article for *Chronicles*¹ about Jean's mother, Rose (Kalechstein) Silverman, and her aunt, Molly Sandler, that I re-examined this photograph.

Upon studying the photograph, I realized that it told a powerful story of love of family and family history.

The photo shows family members gathered around two tombstones, probably for a memorial service, in 1936 or later. I recognized my Aunt Molly Feuer Sandler (my Uncle Morris Sandler's wife) who was standing on the right side near her mother, Sura Feuer's tombstone, as well as other relatives who stood near her. The name "Ryfka [Feuer Kalechstein] Kreisler" was inscribed on the tombstone on the left; Ryfka was Molly's sister and Sura Feuer's daughter. Sadly she died about four months prior to her mother



Among Ryfka's relatives in attendance at this memorial gathering was a young, unidentified woman standing near the tombstone on the left. I couldn't help but notice the resemblance she bore to the bride whose 1924 wedding photograph appears on the right. I believe that woman and the bride were the same person, namely Rose Silverman. I noted other resemblances as well between the attendees at

Rose's wedding and those at this memorial ceremony.

Translations of the inscriptions on these tombstones (which are no longer standing)² reveal and confirm how various family members were related, particularly those whose surnames were Zwerin, Feuer, Kalechstein, Kreisler, Sandler, and Silverman.

Right Tombstone:

"Here lies a modest, esteemed, older [married] woman Sura, daughter of her teacher, Moshe, (let him rest in peace), [who] passed away on the 4th day of Iyar 5696 [corresponding to April 26, 1936] May her soul be bound up in the bonds of eternal life. SURA FEUER, died 4 Iyar 1936"

Left Tombstone:

"Here lies a modest, esteemed [married] woman, Ryfka, the daughter of her teacher Asher Antshel, [who] passed away on the 27th of Kislev 5696 [corresponding to December 23, 1935] May her soul be bound up in the bonds of eternal life. RYFKA KREISLER died 27th of Kislev 1935"



It must have been very hard for my Aunt Molly and Cousin Rose to return to Kolomyja in order to honor the mother/grandmother and sister/mother who had suddenly passed away. Moreover, I wonder if they encountered any unpleasant situations during this trip given the rising animosity that Germans had toward Jews in the mid-1930s. ❖

1. Stanley R. Sandler, "Confirming Oral History or 'What Happened to Cousin Rose?'," *Chronicles*, Volume 30-2, (Summer 2013): pg. 9.

2. A 1990 picture of the destroyed Kolomyja cemetery shows that it is now a park. Miriam Weiner. *Jewish Roots in Ukraine and*

Moldova: Pages From The Past and Archival Inventories (New York, NY: YIVO Institute for Jewish Research and The Routes to Roots Foundation 1999) p. 137.

A biography of author Stanley R. Sandler & contact information appears on page 15, following his article, "Additional Details Revealed in Birth Records"

next?". Add pictures, documents, background information and other embellishments. The "treeline" at the bottom of the screen changes to identify and place into perspective each page of your story. Sharing can be public or by invitation only or the story can be embedded into an existing website. Viewers can tag stories and provide additional input as the story continues to develop.

SEPTEMBER 2013 MEETING SUMMARY

Tammy Hepps was the speaker at our first meeting of the season on September 16. Developer of *Treelines* software, Tammy is the winner of the Roots Tech 2013 Developer Challenge.

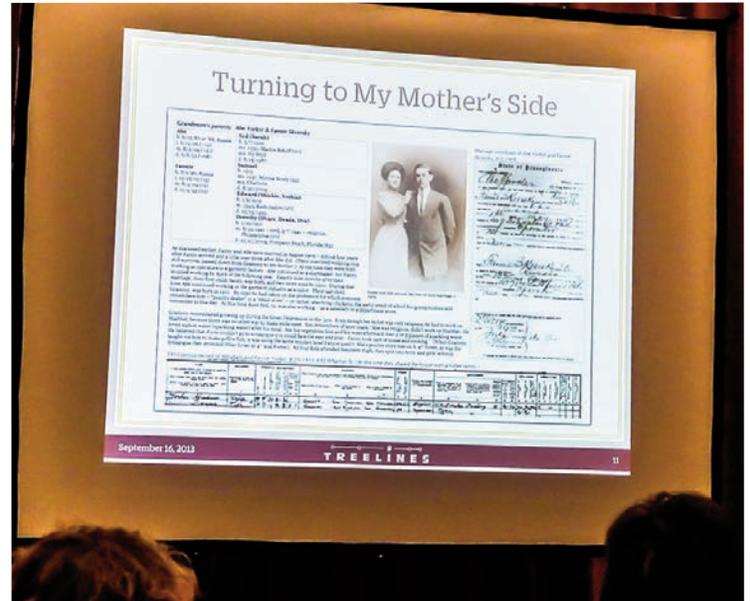
Interested in her family history since childhood, Tammy began digging deeper in 1991. She soon came to realize the importance of sharing her findings. Traditional research adds color and context to the stories, but it is the stories themselves that attract attention. *Treelines* focuses on both the research that generates a family tree as well as the stories that make that research compelling and worth sharing.



Tammy Hepps Presenting at JGSGP's September 2013 Meeting

The main part of the software is the "storybuilder" which includes a wizard with step-by-step instructions. If you want to develop a story about the immigration of a particular family branch, you can import an existing tree and select the people to be included.

This brings up a "treeline" running across the screen showing all the events for those selected individuals. A preview button allows you to see the story, but then you need to further develop the plot, constantly asking "what happens



Treelines Format

The *Treelines* approach parallels how we tell stories in real life: one story at a time while sometimes interweaving them into a larger narrative. We add detail by referring to documented facts, but memories and research are of equal weight. Begin creating your story at:

<https://www.treelines.com/>

where you can also view other shared stories. There is also a Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/treelinescom>) to "like."

Interesting Website: Compelling Stories: Jewish Lives Lived

If you enjoy reading memoirs recounting the lives of individuals or families, check out <http://compellingjewish-stories.blogspot.com/>.

Toby Anne Bird has posted reviews of more than 100 such books and documentaries.

OCTOBER 2013 MEETING SUMMARY

Maureen Taylor, an internationally recognized expert on the intersection of history, genealogy, and photography, gave a highly informative and dynamic presentation at our October 20 meeting. Below is an abridgement of the handout she's developed which outlines how she analyzes photographs.

Immigrant Clues In Photographs

Maureen A. Taylor

Evaluation Steps

- Why is this picture in your collection?
- Who do you think the people are?
- Are there stories associated with the image?
- How did it end up in your collection?

Identification Clues

- Photographer's Imprint – photographer's surname and location
- Clothing – military uniforms, work or trade, ethnic, and regional dress
- Other Details – Postal clues, props, interior scenes, and location
- Use clues to create ancestor's timeline in pictures

Find Immigrant Photos

- Ask relatives
- Re-examine your research because documents may contain photographs
- Research collections – historical societies and special places that collect family photographs

Above summary excerpted from Maureen Taylor's *The Family Photo Detective*, (Family Tree Books, 2013).

Additional information about Maureen Taylor and her seminars is available at her website: www.maurentaylor.com

QUERIES

Queries from Linda Krocher (capuccinoholic@gmail.com)

I have two brick walls that seem insurmountable, and would welcome any help!

1. I'm looking for the mother (and any other children) of JACOB GOLDMAN (June 1883-June 1959) of Philadelphia. Of Russian-Lithuanian stock, Jacob came from Rushka, Zhitomir Gubernia (province) or Brest-Litovsk, arrived in Baltimore June 28, 1904 on the SS Brandenburg, and may have changed his name from SCHNEIDERMAN(?) to GOLDMAN to match that of his brothers A. GOLDMAN and LAIB GOLDMAN here in the U.S. He married Celie Greenberg June 10, 1907, and had the following children: Aaron 1908, Charles 1909, Abraham (Al) 1911, Anne 1914, Tillie 1915, Rose 1925, and Evelyn 1930. His mother came to the U.S. somewhat later than 1904, then settled in Rock Island, Illinois, where she remarried. Other family members settled in Omaha, Nebraska.

Frustratingly, I do not know her name! But the man she remarried supposedly lived to 100, and celebrated with a second bar mitzvah. I called the largest shul in the Rock Island area, but they claim they don't have any records of such events. I downloaded a listing of all the females named Goldman (assuming it's right) in the right time period, but it's anyone's guess; there are far too many women with that surname. If anyone is willing and able to join the quest, I can provide more information on Jacob and a bit for his brother Laib.

2. My great-grandparents, William Louis Greenberg (Dec 1859 - ~1938?) and Sarah Sigal Greenberg (Nov 1862 - ~1942?) are apparently still walking the earth! :-)) I've contacted every Jewish cemetery and funeral parlor in the Philadelphia area, and no one has a listing for a burial for this couple. Vital Statistics can't find them either (I've tried three times). I've also done an online search of their online database covering a span of about 15 years.

JGSGP SPEAKERS BUREAU

One of our missions as a society is to educate the community about Jewish genealogy. We do this through our Speakers Bureau. To volunteer as a speaker or request a speaker for your event, please contact Stan or Shelda Sandler stanshel@msn.com.



Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Philadelphia

2014 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

You may also complete our online form and mail it, using our website: <http://www.jgsgp.org/>

Membership Categories	New	Renewal	Amount
Individual - \$25			
Family - \$35 (2 Person Household)			
Additional Voluntary Contribution			
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, 2014.

(New members joining after September 30, 2013, receive membership benefits through December 31, 2014.)

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 three surnames, towns and current countries which will later be shared with other members.

Surname	Town	Country



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 address.

Look for information about other IAJGS member societies: <http://www.iajgs.org/members/members.html>

Join the JGSGP Facebook group: <http://tinyurl.com/jgsgp>. Our members are continually posting fascinating news and developments which impact on genealogy and important related areas.

A thirty minute period before each meeting is devoted to browsing reference books and help from mentors.

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

Sunday, NOVEMBER 17 1:00 PM at Reform Congregation Keneseth Israel (KI)

8339 Old York Road, Elkins Park PA 19027

Joel Spector will discuss “The Growth of the Russian Jewish Population from Early Historical Data Through the 1897 Census.” This presentation will describe the patterns of Jewish population growth in Russia, beginning with the earliest known historical data.

Sunday, DECEMBER 8 1:00 PM Main Line Reform Temple 410 Montgomery Ave, Wynnewood PA 19096
Andrew Zalewski presents the story of Galicia, a crown land of the Austrian Empire. His book *Galician Trails* explores every facet of this long gone land, from tiny villages, to towns filled with craftspeople, to cities with the conveniences of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Tentative Meeting Dates

Sunday, JANUARY 12, 2014 , Sunday FEBRUARY 9, 2014

For complete program information, check your JGSGP emails or our web site: <http://jgsgp.org>