



CHRONICLES

JOURNAL OF THE JEWISH GENEALOGICAL
SOCIETY OF GREATER PHILADELPHIA

דברי הימים



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REFLECTIONS FROM YOUR CHRONICLES TEAM

Reflections 2013



I'm writing this "Reflections" column in late December, as we approach the new calendar year. Many of us review our experiences of the past year at this time, and as genealogists, we're likely to include our research progress in this review, assessing our personal accomplishments: Did we break through a frustrating brick wall?; Did we identify an ancestor in a mysterious photo?; Did we locate extended family and actually meet them in person? I'd like to share my experiences in these three areas in this "Reflections" column.

I am fortunate to have had significant success in tracing the ancestry of both of my parents and have written about my father's family several times in *Chronicles*. I have found great joy in this work and consider it a gift to my children and their future children to be able to share family stories and important documents about their ancestors. My husband has patiently seen me off each time I head to an IAJGS conference or back to Boston to do yet more research.

Not everyone in my family, however, shares this treasure of a carefully researched family history. My husband grew up without knowledge of his father's family. As a child of divorce, remarriage and custody issues, David was faced with a challenging situation growing up. No one in his family would say much about his dad or his dad's side of the family. David's surname at birth was later changed to that of his stepfather, and his link to past generations of McMil-lans was broken. However, we genealogists know that though names were often changed, *(Continued on page 3)*

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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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Larry Fine, famous as one of "The Three Stooges?"
Answer - Quiz # 1

("Reflections" continued from page 1)

family history can still be discovered with painstaking research... Enter the wife/genealogist!

About twenty years ago, David asked me if I could apply any of my genealogy expertise to locating his father. For the purposes of this article, I will not include all of the research procedures I utilized, but will touch on the results, and why this story may resonate with many readers.

Brick Wall:

After more than a decade and considerable research, I was finally able to locate David's father and contacted him. My husband was quite anxious about their first meeting, based upon the little information his mother had told him as a child. We were pleased when David Sr. met us upon our arrival in Ontario, Canada. For decades he had grieved the loss of his son, and during this first meeting he shared treasured artifacts of the few years he had with his only child: David's birth announcement from a Glasgow, Scotland newspaper, a family Bible given to young David by his paternal grandparents and numerous photos of David as a child with his not yet divorced parents and also with other family members (see next section).

This marked the beginning of a lovely reconnection between father and son which continued until David Sr.'s death and included his meeting his three grandchildren. The research skills I had acquired in researching my own family proved invaluable in bringing about this meaningful reunion between my husband and his father. I felt this was a true *mitzvah*.

Mysterious Picture(s):

In preparation for the initial meeting with his father, David pulled out an old photo album containing many pictures of his family before his parents' divorce. These photographs were taken while the family was still living in Glasgow and David was quite young. In several of the pictures, there were other children who appeared to be very fond of "Baby David". David had once asked his mother about these children but was told they were just neighborhood kids.

During that first visit with David's dad we spread out the array of Glasgow photos to show him. To our delight, he identified the kids immediately, saying "This is your cousin, Russell, this is your cousin Morag, and this is your

youngest cousin, Eleanor!" These were the three children of David's aunt and uncle, all first cousins! Thanks to this new information and the addresses David's dad provided David eventually connected with his two female cousins, in Scotland and England. We subsequently located their brother, Russell, through Facebook!

Meeting of the Cousins:

Russell and his wife live on the Costa del Sol, close to Gibraltar. This past spring, our daughter was studying abroad in Seville, also located in southern Spain. We decided to reach out to David's cousin, to see if his home was anywhere near Seville. Since David and I didn't expect to go to Spain in the foreseeable future we hoped that Russell and his wife would be able to meet our daughter while she was in Spain.

We genealogists know, however, that "there is no such thing as a coincidence". Our daughter soon required an emergency appendectomy, so off we flew to Spain a few days later. We contacted David's cousin who immediately invited us to stay with them on the beautiful coast of the Mediterranean. David, our daughter (recovering nicely) and I rented a car and headed south.. We were stunned when we arrived and discovered such a striking resemblance between David and his cousin, Russell, that they could be taken for brothers: one thinner, one heavier; one older, one younger. In yet another "there is no such thing as a coincidence", we discovered that their son was living near Seattle but had previously resided less than five minutes from our home in Bucks County, Pennsylvania!

Quite ironically, Russ and Eileen had visited their son in 2001, but we had not yet located David's extended family at that time. The piece de resistance was a multi-generational family "paella" dinner attended by their two grown daughters and four grandchildren. Our daughter Megan was also meeting her second cousins and second cousins once removed!! All in all, we spent a lovely two days with them, and it ended much too quickly.

In completing my reflections on my husband's family reunion this year, I would like to encourage all readers to keep at it. It literally took two decades of ongoing research to connect my husband to his biological first cousins, but it was worth it. Sadly, his dad did not live to see this happen, but we know he would have been thrilled. The next part of this journey will be to go to the

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

Gray Bramnick Philadelphia, PA
*Bramnick, Bloom, Shapiro, Chapiro, Eiseman - from
Kishniev, Moldova, Mogiler Polosk, Swdelkow*

Andee Hochman Philadelphia, PA
Gloria Hochman Wynnewood, PA
Bea Leopld Wallingford, PA
*Yutkewitz, Sober, Goldberg, Freidman, Grandy - from
Romania, Lonza Gabernia, Poland*

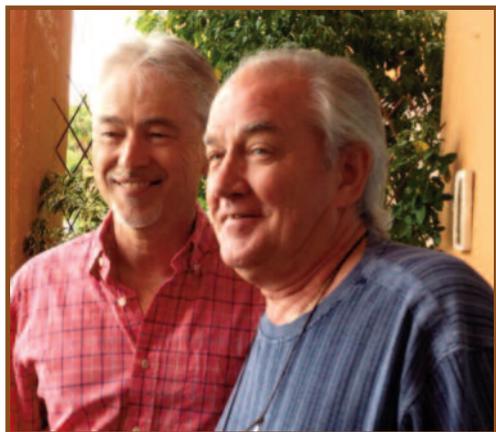
Rod MacNeil Philadelphia, PA
*Hortenstein, Halperin - from Hoodenka, Austria,
Stanislow, Austria, Czontkow, Austria and Derwento,
Yugoslavia*

Ruth Newman King of Prussia, PA
Harris A. Platt Bala Cynwyd PA
*Rosengarten, of Riga, Latvia; Wolinsky of Ukraine,
Finkelstein of Poland*

Alice Weiss Longmont, CO
Duke (Donald) Zimmerman Baltimore, MD

UK to finally meet David's other cousins, Morag and Eleanor and their families! Now you know what MY New Year's Resolution is for 2014! Good luck with yours. ❖

Felicia Mode Alexander, Associate Editor



My husband David (left) and his cousin Russell. Taken in Spain in 2013.

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 the Kiev region. You can contact Felicia at fmode@verizon.net

REFLECTIONS #2



If I were asked to describe some underlying themes in this issue's content I would say, "sharing, caring, persistence, and patience."

First off, all the articles we publish result from the willingness of their authors to share information, experiences, and stories derived from their research. Networking and collaboration are essential in the work we do. Sometimes individuals facilitate our respective genealogical journeys by providing tips and direction; Ruth Kurschner certainly did. Joel Spector provides insights into Russian census data so that we can progress further while Carole Strickland and James Gross recommend a number of useful websites with the same goal in mind. James also continues to evaluate techniques, this time outlining how to store our precious data more securely, and Marge Farbman advises us how to optimize our use of photographs to transmit our family history and legacy. At our December and January meetings Andrew Zalewski shared how he came to pen *Galician Trails* and provided an overview of Galician Jewish history; David Brill and Marilyn Mazer Golden provide a clear summary.

Persistence pays off in the cases of Felicia Mode Alexander, Ann Kauffman, and Walter Spector. Ann and Walt wisely revisited specific, incomplete or curious, segments of their research and were rewarded when they explored previously unavailable sources. Felicia doggedly pursued her hunt in the hopes of locating her husband's biological father. Her persistence over a period of two decades demonstrates how being patient often reaps rewards. Author, Ellen Cassidy, reports on the Litvak Heritage Symposium she attended in No-

member where she learned about impressive and even remarkable efforts to correct misperceptions and inaccuracies about what happened in Lithuania during the Holocaust.

Performing random acts of genealogical kindness can be labeled as pure and unadulterated caring. Many of us are aware of JGSGP president, Fred Blum's untiring efforts on behalf of the International Tracing Service and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum to reconnect families and provide missing links related to that catastrophic era. I hope my article on genetic genealogy will convince you that by caring AND sharing we can help our relatives with medical issues.

David Brill initiates a new feature, a genealogy quiz, to test your skills in interpreting data on documents while thinking outside the box. We hope this issue informs and inspires while we try to stay warm during the winter chill. ❖

Evan Fishman, Editor

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

January 2014



With this President's Message I would like to bring you up to date on recent changes to the Social Security Death Index (SSDI). On December 26, 2013. The federal budget that was recently approved by Congress and signed by President Obama contains a section that

delays access to an individual's information until three years after his/her death. The reason behind this decision is to try to prevent fraud by preventing identity theft and the filing of false tax returns. If you have intentions to submit an SS-5 form for genealogical purposes, you will not get this information for anyone who has died in the preceding three years. Another effect will be that the Social Security Administration will not be reporting new deaths for three years. I do not believe that the current data providers will be pulling the old information down from their sites but new information will not be available for three years.

In a few weeks our board will have a planning meeting. One item on the agenda will be to determine the proper way to honor the loss of Steve Schecter. I welcome comments or suggestions from anyone who was fortunate enough to be touched by Steve. Send to president@jgsgp.org.

Fred Blum, President

A TOP GENEALOGIST WITH TRUE DETECTIVE TALENT

(The following piece about JGSGP president, Fred Blum, was excerpted with permission from an article published on November 19, 2013 in "Inside" magazine, a sister publication to the "Jewish Exponent," for which Bryan Schwartzman is the senior writer.)

Following several paragraphs tracing Blum's professional background as a private investigator, Schwartzman begins to explore the roots of this detective's passion for genealogy.

"...But in 1998, his path took an unexpected turn when a chance encounter with a distant cousin awakened within him a passion — an obsession, really — with genealogy. And who better to unearth the past than an honest-to-God private investigator? . . .

In the process [of his personal genealogical journey], he has tackled the greatest mystery of his life: the story of his maternal grandfather — the only grandparent Blum ever knew — whose past was shrouded in secrecy.

Unraveling the truth:

[Blum's maternal grandfather Jacob] Schrage had always told his four children that he was born in Vienna, his mother died in childbirth and his father remarried a woman with six children. He said that his family didn't want him and, when he was 13, sent him to live with an uncle in Leipzig, Germany. Schrage said he never had contact with his father or step siblings again...

Through a complicated series of twists, turns and false starts, Blum discovered that the only true part of Schrage's story was that he left home at the age of 13. He had troubles with his father and was sent to live with his uncle Samuel to learn the fur trade. He wasn't born in Vienna, but rather in the town of Radziechow, in what was then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, but which today is situated in western Ukraine. (Learning the name of an ancestral town is an important step in the process and can unlock many other doors.)

He also learned that his great-grandmother most certainly didn't die in childbirth and that his grandfather actually had eight younger siblings. Schrage had denied his own family. It was as if he had erased his past and, decades later, his grandchild was trying to recreate it. What would cause someone to tell such a lie about his past, and to cut off all ties with family members?

The significant value of interviewing living relatives:

That kind of answer wouldn't come from records or archives, but from talking to real people. Through his research, Blum not only heard for the first time that many family members perished in the Holocaust, but that there were more than a few he had never heard of who survived. He learned that Jacob had an elderly sister living in Rehovot, Israel, a cousin living in Winnipeg, Canada, and that a man in Long Island named Joseph Deschrage was the son of Jacob's younger brother, who was known as both Abraham and Adolph. He was born Josek Schrage and died in 2011 at the age of 94...



Jacob & Abraham Schrage
Krakow, 1910

When Blum first contacted Deschrage in 1999, the older man got quickly and brutally to the point: He blamed Blum's grandfather, Jacob, for the family's inability to emigrate and, consequently, for their deaths in the Holocaust.

Undaunted, Blum and his mother drove to New York to meet Deschrage, who began the meeting in an accusatory fashion. As the three started eating, though, they warmed

to each other. Deschrage told them a version of the story they would hear from other newly discovered family members as well. Jacob had tried to go into business for himself, but he got badly in debt and faced financial ruin, or worse, if he didn't return the money. As Deschrage told it, Jacob borrowed the money from Adolph, Deschrage's father. He repaid his debts, left the country in 1913 — and they never heard from him again. The family, Deschrage said, was never able to financially recover and, three decades later, most members perished in the Holocaust.

Did it happen like that? Were parts of Deschrage's story true? Despite all Blum's skills, he has had to reconcile himself to the reality that he'll never know the whole truth.

Mending fences:

"It's something that I just store away. I'm never going to be able to get the answer to that," he said. Meanwhile, he and Deschrage developed something of a father-son relationship. "My mission with Joseph was to show him that the descendants of Jacob are good people. I ended up giving

him great peace because he learned about my family. He became very special to me."

This experience was so powerful that Blum kept devoting more time to genealogy, to his own research, to the society he has led since 2007 and to helping others to reunite families [by lending his detective skills to aid the International Red Cross & the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum.]

His journey took another unexpected turn in 2005, when he saw an advertisement in the *Jewish Exponent*. The International Red Cross was trying to help Holocaust survivor Shlomo Adelman locate his father's sister's family... Blum decided to lend his skills to the effort... Within two weeks, he had found Adelman's long-lost cousin,...

Since then, he has cracked more cases for the Red Cross and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. In 2011, the museum launched the Remember Me project, an effort to use social networking and crowd sourcing to identify and locate more than 1,000 displaced children who were photographed after the war by various relief organizations to help find their families. Many of these images are now part of the museum's collection.

"These children are the youngest survivors of the Holocaust," said Jude Richter, director of the project. "We wanted to do what we could to locate them to document and record their story for future generations."

So far, they have found 360 survivors in 14 countries. Blum is responsible for having located about 20 of them,...

When Richter first spoke with Blum, he gave him three cases to look into. "He found them all within a day," Richter recalled. "This is somebody who has access to information that we don't have access to, and he has a skill set that we don't have. He understands how to approach survivors — he has everything you could want for working on this kind of project."...

With genealogy, Blum likes to say, one is never finished. That sentiment echoes the thought from *Pirkei Avot* (Ethics of the Fathers), a tractate of the *Mishnah* (the collection of sixty-three tractates in which Rabbi Judah set down the Oral Law and systematically codified Jewish law), that one is not required to complete the task — but neither may one desist from it. ❖

GENETIC GENEALOGY & THE DYING ART OF CONVERSATION

by Evan Fishman

I confess that I regularly practice the dying art of conversation. Before social media networking became *de rigueur*, people actually talked with/at/to each other. This was the almost universally accepted means of direct, interaction between individuals, either in person or over the phone. Family lore was transmitted in conversation during visits.

Several years ago my Aunt J called me with an interesting query prompted by a course she was taking at her local Jewish community adult education program. Her instructor had postulated that there was a high level of literacy among Russian Jewish women in the late 19th-early 20th centuries. If that were indeed true, then how could we explain why my grandmother (her mother-in-law) was illiterate, especially when her younger sister (by less than two years) read and wrote in both Yiddish and English?

Grandma was a very intelligent woman who navigated her way in life without hesitation. In fact she often took care of her younger sister, the literate one. In addition she was the veritable matriarch of the family because she was uniquely able to remain on good terms with just about every member of her husband's extended family which included eight brothers and sisters and their progeny. Apparently she possessed street smarts and considerable social intelligence. Then why couldn't she read?

I had grown up managing my grandmother's correspondence for her. I read letters to her from her son, daughter-in-law, and grandchildren and wrote replies when she wanted me to. One explanation I was given was that Grandma's eyesight made reading difficult for her. I also heard that economic necessity dictated that only one sister could go to school and learn to read English, and Aunt E was elected for this role. As a child these explanations seemed plausible, and I didn't challenge them. Conversely, whenever I joined Grandma at Yom Kippur services, she seemed to be following the *davening* (prayers) because she was always on the right page and appeared to be saying the right words. Didn't that indicate she knew how to read Hebrew?

During the course of an extended conversation Aunt J and I searched for an explanation. We digressed into a discussion of dyslexia which her younger son has, as does one of

his children. Then we recalled that my uncle, her husband, had a lot trouble with spelling. Eureka! There seemed to be a pattern over three generations with regard to the occurrence of dyslexia. Could this situation be due to heredity?

Could Grandma have had dyslexia which would explain why she never learned to read in any language? When Grandma was a child (late 19th – early 20th centuries) schools were ill equipped or completely unknowledgeable about how to teach children to overcome dyslexia. According to clinical neuropsychologist, Jerome J. Schultz, Ph.D., “Dyslexia is regarded as a neurobiological condition that is genetic in origin. This means that individuals can inherit this condition from a parent and it affects the performance of the neurological system (specifically, the parts of the brain responsible for learning to read). It's not uncommon for a child with dyslexia to have an immediate family member who also has this condition.” (<http://school.familyeducation.com/learning-disabilities/42788.html>)

Aunt J and I were thrilled with our analytical collaboration. While nothing could be done at that point to remediate the condition, we now had a plausible explanation for why my grandmother wasn't literate. Having a diagnosis is often preferable to ambiguity.

At an IAJGS conference several years ago, I heard Stanley Diamond of the Montreal JGS give a riveting presentation about genetic genealogy as it related to beta-thalassemia, a potentially fatal condition. His talk served as my introduction to genetic genealogy. Through diligent research he had discovered repeated incidence of this disorder as a cause of death in his family. When I did similar research and calculated how many of my relatives had been diagnosed with Parkinson's, I decided this merited further investigation.

I drafted a rough family tree around the branches involving these specific relatives. I discovered that a grandchild of each of three siblings (Elya, Mechel, and Goldie) had Parkinson's disease. Furthermore, the mother of one of these grandchildren had also been affected.

When I noted that two successive generations had been affected, I brought this to the attention of N's oldest child and recommended that he research the hereditary aspect of Parkinson's.

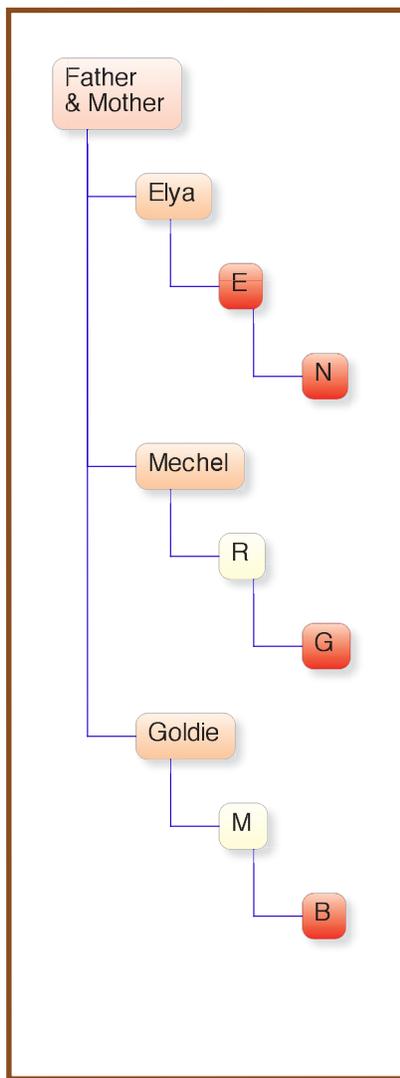
In my own cursory research; (<http://www.parkinsons.org.uk/content/types-parkinsons-and-parkinsonism#sthash.8wbyGtQS.dpuf>) I had read the following:

“There is no conclusive evidence that Parkinson's is a hereditary condition that can be passed on within families, apart from in exceptionally rare cases.

It is thought that although it is not directly inherited, some people may have genes that increase the possibility of developing Parkinson's.

People who have genes that are prone to Parkinson's may be more likely to develop the condition when combined with other factors, such as environmental toxins or viruses.

At present, it is estimated that up to 5% of people with Parkinson's may have a genetic cause.



**Descendant Chart
(Names in red had
Parkinson's disease)**

The role genetics may play in the development of Parkinson's is currently the subject of much research.”

Some concluding thoughts: Don't minimize the role of conversation and sharing of stories in providing significant information about your families. Although the two situations that I described don't revolve around fatal outcomes, I would recommend that we explore the medical aspects in our family history research. As Stanley Diamond indicated, "Genes and genealogy are different facets of a shared coin in personal history." ❖

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 Evan at editor@jsgsp.org

MY CIRCUITOUS ROUTE TO INVESTIGATING MY FAMILY

by Ruth Kurschner



I am not an experienced genealogical investigator; in fact, compared to serious researchers, I am a mere dilettante. But I am serious about retrieving my family information. Like most people, I did not ask enough questions of the older generation, and now it is too late to question

my Viennese mother, my Galician father, and my Aunt Zelda and Uncle Simon Dickman from the Lower East Side of New York City who saved my parents and me from Hitler's killing camps and gas chambers.

My mother, Else Kurschner, was born in Vienna in 1908, my father in Galicia in 1900. They met and married in Vienna in 1932, and I was born there in 1935. My mother and I came to New York City in May of 1939; however, my father, due to his Polish birth, had to wait for his U.S. quota number to be reached. He spent 1939 to 1940 in an internment camp for German refugees, Kitchener Camp, outside of London and arrived in New York in the spring of 1940. I have many documents: my passport with swastikas, birth certificates, --and many family photographs including one of my mother's father in an Austrian World War I uniform.

My mother found it necessary to place me in Shield of David Home for [Jewish] Orphan Girls in the Bronx for a year while she worked, saved money, and waited for my father to come from England. We moved to Philadelphia where I grew up, married and gave birth to my daughters—a normal life from then on.

1) Sometime in 2005, I attended a meeting of the South Jersey Jewish genealogical group. Monica Leonards (z"l / of blessed memory) of the Philadelphia group came to this meeting ONCE. That is how I learned about the German/Austrian SIG (special interest group) which met in Elkins Park, and I attended several of these meetings. I announced that I was planning to visit Vienna in June. I had no idea that Monica was suffering from ovarian cancer; she never mentioned it and died not long after that. Still, she obviously felt the responsibility of providing me with vital information. Only a few days before I flew to Vienna, Monica gave me the email address of Celia Male in London. I e-mailed Celia Male before I left the U.S. and told her my travel plans.

2) When I arrived in Vienna and logged into the internet at a

café, I found a message waiting for me from Celia Male giving me directions as to how to access the Viennese records.

3) Normally, one would think of going to the town hall to search for city records. True, the records are there but are not available to the public due to their fragility. Celia Male's instructions were explicit: "Take the U-3 of the Metro to the Gasometer stop." (The only building at that stop was an ordinary shopping mall.) "Go into the mall—take the elevator to the third floor. Then take another elevator to the fourth floor. There you will find the Archives for the City of Vienna on microfiche." I subsequently learned that the Archives would be closed for the entire month of August. I had only a few days in July in which to conduct my research.

4) My family was not in the 1939 Vienna directory; however we were in the 1938 records. I found the following citation: "Kürschner Nuchim, chem. techn.e, [chemist] II. Lassingleithnerplatz 2 [his business address], Wohn [residence] II. Lillenbrunn[asse]. 11" (The "II" indicates the 2nd district which was heavily Jewish). PROOF! He had always told me that he was a chemist and had his own "factory" where he made his household waxes (similar to Johnson's wax products).

Now that I had the address, I located the building which was only a few blocks from our apartment. He must have used a basement as his "factory" where he cooked up his polishes. His brand was **Valkyrie**, derived from the initial syllables of the surnames of the owners (Solomon WALter and Norbert KUR). Remember—they believed that they were Austrians, and Wagner's opera, "Die Walkure" or "The Ride of the Valkyries" was SO AUSTRIAN! I also found the name and address of my mother's aunt, Mina Lichtenstein, who did not make it out of Vienna. I took photographs of all of these buildings.



Zentralfriedhof, Vienna Austria

5) I already had the locations of the gravesites of my maternal great grandparents, my mother's father, Eli Judah Kleiner in Tor 1, and her mother, Regina Kauftheil Kleiner in Tor 4 of the Zentralfriedhof Cemetery. I took photographs of the gravestones, copied the inscriptions, and recited *Kaddish* (hymn of praises to God recited by mourners) at all of the sites.



This final resting place commemorates **Krystallnacht** (November 9-10, 1938) when virtually all synagogues in Vienna were destroyed and many people murdered. This memorial is situated at the entrance of the **Zentralfriedhof (Central Cemetery), Gate IV, Vienna**

The inscription reads: "On the 17 Siwan 5747 [14 June 1987], the remains of the Torah scrolls that were desecrated, torn and burnt by the Nazi mobs were buried at this spot.
Chewra Kadisha Vienna, June 1991"

During their lifetimes, I failed to ask my parents, aunts, and uncles enough questions. However, I found kind and considerate people, involved in their own *tsuris*, (problems) like Monica Leonards, who were willing to extend themselves to assist me in my family search. A woman whom I met only once or twice connected me via the internet with another woman whom I have never met. Together they enabled me to access my family's records in the Archives for the City of Vienna. ❖

Armed with a B.A. in English from Rutgers and an M.A. in Writing from Rowan, Ruth presently teaches English composition at Camden County College. In a "previous life" she worked as a legal secretary for forty years.

Ruth is researching: KLEINER, KAUFTHEIL, and KORNBLAU from Vienna and originally from Galicia. (towns: Tarnow and Hsuyatin; KURSCHNER, ROTENSTREICHER originally from Monasterzyzka, Poland. Contact Ruth at: ruthkur@comcast.net

NOVEMBER MEETING

JEWISH CENSUS DATA FROM IMPERIAL RUSSIA: A REVIEW BASED ON A PRESENTATION BY JOEL SPECTOR AT THE 33RD IAJGS INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON JEWISH GENEALOGY

By Joel Spector - Presenter

I. Taxation Under Peter I

Prior to 1718, attempts by the Imperial government to enumerate the Russian population were conducted by assessing households. Factors, such as the number of residents in the household, were not considered. In fact just as an assessment was to be made, many peasant families temporarily moved into the same household, thus being counted as one household, not as several individual families

On November 26, 1718, while engaged in war with Turkey, Tsar Peter I (later Peter the Great) decided that additional funds were needed for the war effort. He created a new method of taxation, a poll tax (*podushnaya podat* or подушная подать in Cyrillic characters), which counted the population as individuals rather than as households. The initial count, however, conducted during 1718 and 1719, did not produce the expected monetary results, and it became necessary to conduct a supplemental, or revised, census. The revisions conducted over several years became known as *Reviziya Skazka* (revision list).

The first *Reviziya Skazka* was conducted between 1719 and 1724, with revisions documented through 1727. It counted only males from ages 15 to 60 and females from 16 to 60. Criteria for subsequent *Revizie Skazki* were altered to include the social classes required to pay taxes, including peasants and guild merchants; the nobility, titled citizens, citizens with advanced degrees, soldiers, State rabbis and teachers were exempt from taxation. Nine subsequent *Revizie Skazki*¹ were conducted, the final one in 1859.

On April 26, 1727, Tsarina Catherine I decreed that Jews “in Ukraine or in other Russian cities be immediately deported” from Russia. Many of them settled in Poland, and subsequently they or their descendents again became Russian citizens after the partitions of Poland. Consequently, only those *Revizie Skazki* begun after the three partitions of Poland, (1772, 1793 and 1795), contain significant Jewish populations.

II. Creation of Russian Gubernias

On December 18, 1708, Peter I announced the formation of the initial geographic divisions of Russia that we know as *gubernias*, (from the Russian word *gubernator* meaning governor). No geographic boundaries were indicated in the original law; only principal and secondary cities were listed from which we can surmise the general borders of each *gubernia*.

The initial eight *gubernias* were: Moscow, St. Petersburg, Kiev, Smolensk, Archangel, Kazan, Azov, and Siberia, The date when Jews were first mentioned in each *gubernia* varied; they were first mentioned in Azov *Gubernia* as early as 115 BCE and in Kiev *Gubernia* in 1018.

Beginning in 1719 the existing *gubernias* were subdivided several times. By 1905 the *Vsya Rossiia* included 100 *gubernias* consisting of 818 districts or *uyezds*. The Pale of Jewish Settlement contained sixteen *gubernias* with 160 *uyezds*, and Tsarist Poland included ten *gubernias* with 84 *uyezds*.

III. The Russian National Census of 1897

Each of the ten *Revizie Skazki*, conducted between 1719 and 1859 was administered for the sole purpose of registering taxpayers. There arose a need, however, for a greater delineation of the statistics of the Russian population after serfdom was abolished in 1861.

The purpose of the 1897 Census, conducted on January 28, was to document statistics about the entire population of the Russian Empire. The initial figures were verified by a subsequent visit. Five different forms were utilized to compile census data, each with slightly different questions: (A) peasant households on agricultural lands; (B) landed estates; (V) urban populations; (G) the military; (D): boarding students. Nineteen questions were asked, including basic demographics (name with patronymic, sex, age, marital status), residence, estate, native language (which clearly identified the Jewish population), education and profession.

IV. Census Data

The Census returns were kept at a local level, and a copy was sent to the central commission for data tabulation. A punch card was created for each person, and statistical tables were created. The final tabulation of data took about ten years. Initial summaries were available in 1905.

Statistics for ninety-two of the 100 Russian *gubernias* were compiled into eighty-nine separate volumes, available on nineteen microfilm reels at the Family History Library in Salt Lake City, Utah.

The Tsarist government made the volumes or their summaries (written in pre-Revolutionary Russian) available to the editors of the *Evreiskaya Entsiklopedia*² (Jewish Encyclopedia). Printed in St. Petersburg between 1906 and 1913, it is still one of the most important and valuable sources for Jewish genealogical research. Among its approximately 215 contributors were the principal scholars and intelligentsia of the Jewish community in St. Petersburg at the end of the 19th century.

Information from the 1897 Russian National Census was made available to the editors of the *Evreiskaya Entsiklopedia*² prior to its publication and was incorporated into its sixteen volumes containing more than 12,000 articles. Summary figures for the Jewish population in each *gubernia* are found in charts in the article on population (*Население*).

Thus far Jewish populations have been found³ in ninety-five of the 100 gubernias, including all of those in the Pale and Tsarist Poland, in over 400 uyezds and over 2,500 towns and cities. This article's author continues to collect and document population data from the 1897 Census.

V. Extant Data from the 1897 Census

While the vast majority of the actual paper records from the 1897 census have been destroyed in compliance with imperial decree, many have survived. Some statistical reports in the Minsk Archive still exist. The Grodno Archive has census lists including personal information. Other citations of newly discovered records are constantly being made and continue to be reported.⁴ ❖

1. The dates of the ten *Revizie Skazki* are:

- First Revision: 1719-1724,
with corrections through 1727.*
- Second Revision: 1743-1747
with returns as late as 1757.*
- Third Revision: 1761-1767*
- Fourth Revision: 1781-1787*
- Fifth Revision: 1794-1808*
- Sixth Revision: 1811*
- Seventh Revision: 1815-1825*
- Eighth Revision: 1833-1835, revised through 1851.*
- Ninth Revision: 1850-1852*
- Tenth Revision: 1857-1859*

2. "Evreiskaya Entsiklopedia" (Jewish Encyclopedia). St. Petersburg: Brokhaus & Efron, 1907-1913.

3. Based on the author's ongoing research.

4. A list of surviving questionnaires is found in Alexander Dunai's article in "Avotaynu" XXIV: iii, 12-14 (Fall, 2008).

Immediate past IAJGS secretary, Joel L. Spector is a past president of JGSGP, and former chairperson of its Russian SIG. With knowledge of both contemporary and pre-Revolutionary Russian language, Joel has given presentations on the Russian language and has provided translations of documents to individuals and groups. He has been conducting research in several historic Russian language encyclopedias for well over a decade and has produced a unique Russian language Jewish Encyclopedia, "Evreiskaya Entsiklopedia." He is researching the names ZEITLIN and BLACK, primarily in Vitebsk Gubernia.

Contact Joel at JLSpector@aol.com

LITVAK JEWISH HERITAGE SYMPOSIUM

By Ellen Cassedy

JGSGP members were among the attendees at a symposium entitled "Litvaks: Lithuanian Jewish Heritage" at the National Museum of American Jewish History on November 10, 2013. Participants at the gathering were diverse in background, (both Jews and non-Jews), but united by a common interest in understanding and preserving Lithuania's rich Jewish history. The Embassy of Lithuania, the Consulate General of Israel, and the Philadelphia Regional Office of the American Jewish Committee joined together with the museum to sponsor the event.



Batame Hertzbach, Lithuanian Liaison, American Jewish Committee, moderator of Session I of International Symposium on Litvak Jewish Heritage: The Early History of the Lithuanian Jewish Community

In welcoming attendees, Lithuanian Ambassador Zygimantas Pavilionis indicated that people of different faiths and different ethnicities lived side by side in Lithuania in relative harmony for hundreds of years. Then came the Holocaust, when "because of our mistakes, we lost those bridges, that harmony." He voiced his hope of "restoring the harmony that

used to be and rebuilding those bridges.”

Dr. Antony Polonsky of Brandeis University took up the question, “What is the origin of Litvak identity?” Why did Litvaks (Jews of Lithuanian origin) develop their reputation for rationalism, social radicalism, miserliness, intellectual rigor, and fervent opposition to Chasidism? Polonsky traced such contributing factors as the rise of Chasidism, the *haskalah* (Jewish enlightenment), massive emigration that dispersed Litvaks around the world, and the rise of Zionism and the Jewish Labor Bund.

“OUR” HISTORY

Dr. Darius Staliunas of the Institute of Lithuanian History in Vilnius discussed the history of relative tolerance for Jews in Lithuanian society, followed by the cataclysm of the Holocaust. According to Staliunas the official narrative during the postwar Soviet years (1944-1990) emphasized class rather than ethnicity or culture, barely mentioning Jews. With the fall of the Soviet Union, Lithuanians began to create a new historical narrative. Yet at first the Jewish narrative remained absent, as many Lithuanians, “tend to think that ‘our’ history is only the history of ethnic Lithuanians.”

Within the past ten years, however, Lithuania has seen a resurgence of research and writing about Jewish culture, despite the challenge that few Lithuanian historians read Yiddish or Hebrew. “International cooperation among scholars,” Staliunas said, “will help to address this problem.” During the question and answer period, Dr. Polonsky stressed the importance of amateur genealogists in exhuming Lithuania’s lost Jewish history.

TO MAKE PEOPLE UNCOMFORTABLE

Dr. Saulius Sužiedelis, professor emeritus of history at Millersville University in Pennsylvania, who has done much to bring the facts of the Holocaust into public discourse in Lithuania, opened by saying that the role of the historian is to offer critical analysis, “to make people uncomfortable.” “The Holocaust is the bloodiest event in modern Lithuanian history,” he said. “It should be central in Lithuanian memory.”

Dr. Sužiedelis presented facts and figures about the tumult of mid-20th-century Lithuania, with its mass murders, ghettos, deportations, POW camps, evacuations, mobilizations, and guerrilla struggle against Soviet rule. He seconded Staliunas’s call to make Jewish history part of the Lithuanian national narrative. He commented, “It is important to face honestly the participation of Lithuanians in the Holocaust.”

Sužiedelis made special mention of the research supported by the International Commission for the Evaluation of the Crimes of the Nazi and Soviet Regimes in Lithuania, on which he serves as an adviser.

Dr. Šarūnas Liekis, a professor at Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas, Lithuania, discussed how ordinary Lithuanians learn about history through cultural institutions (such as Sunday school) and how memory is passed down within families.

PROMOTING TOLERANCE

Krista Bard, Honorary Consul of the Republic of Lithuania, who organized the symposium, introduced the two final speakers.



(Left) Herbert Block, American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee and Anatanas Zabulis, creator of www.litvakworld.com

Herbert Block of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee and a member of the U.S. Commission for the Preservation Of America’s Heritage Abroad described the preservation of Jewish heritage sites in Lithuania. He brought greetings from Faina Kukliansky, chair of the Lithuanian Jewish Community, which supports Lithuania’s current population of 4,000 Jews.

Finally, Anatanas Zabulis, President and CEO of Omnitel, the leading telecommunications operator in Lithuania, spoke about the virtual Jewish museum he has initiated at www.litvakworld.com. The site collects Jewish family stories, publishes tales of famous Litvaks, and conducts interviews with Lithuanian Jews. Its goal is to promote tolerance and increase understanding of the contributions of Jews to Lithuanian culture. ❖

Ellen Cassidy is the author of: “We Are Here: Memories of the Lithuanian Holocaust.” She has presented at a JGSGP meeting and lectures regularly on Lithuanian Jewry and Lithuania.

Contact her through her website: www.ellencassedy.com

SUMMARY OF DECEMBER 2013 & JANUARY 2014 MEETINGS

By David Brill (December) & Marilyn Mazer Golden (January)

Andrew Zalewski - Presenter Overview of Galician Jewish History

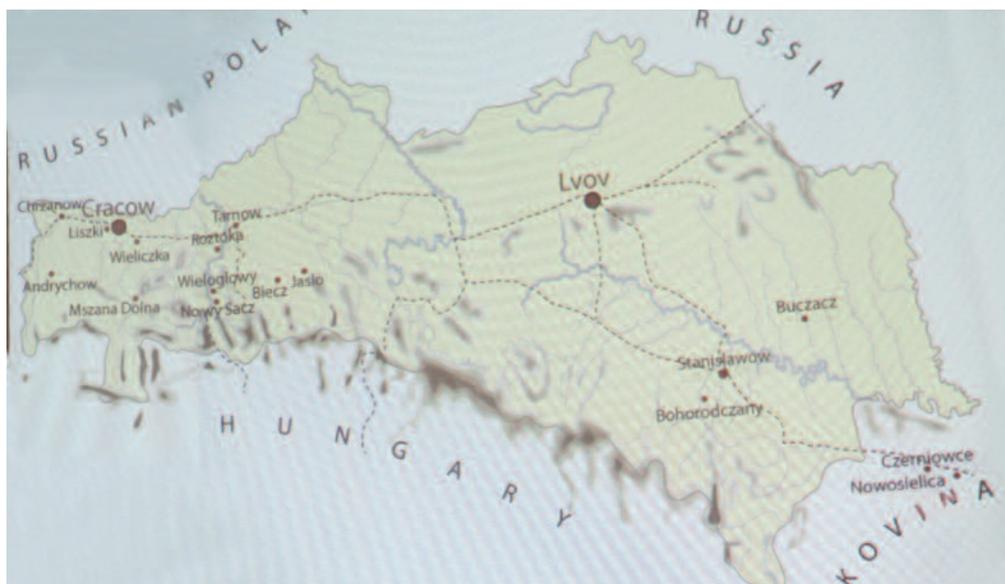
A heavier than forecasted snowfall and treacherous driving conditions resulted in an abbreviated December meeting. However, featured speaker, Andrew Zalewski, graciously agreed to continue his presentation at the January 12th meeting.



Fred Blum, JGSGP President (left) with Dr. Andrew Zalewski

Dr. Zalewski was born in Warsaw, Poland. Both branches of his family, one Jewish, one Christian, came from Galicia. He has documented his interest in Galicia in his first book, *Galician Trails: The Forgotten Story of One Family* and is working on a second book, *In Search of Jewish Roots*.

The beginning of Austrian Galicia dates to the 1772 partition of Poland by Prussia, Russia, and Austria. The Austrian Empire, ruled by Empress Maria Theresa who also held the title, Queen of Hungary, occupied Galicia. The estimated Jewish population there of 220,000, more than in the rest of the Austrian Empire, was a shock to the Austrian monarchy. Edicts were promulgated with the



Austrian Galicia - ca. 1772

aim of controlling the future growth of the Jewish population; imposing higher taxes with the birth of each child was an example. Jewish marriages required the permission of rabbis and local administrators but the Jews relied primarily on religious marriages and largely ignored the second requirement. Some “remarried” in accordance with civil law after the birth of five or six children. Early edicts limited Jewish marriages in an attempt to control the size of the Jewish population. After the laws became less restrictive were many of these religious marriages legitimized.

In 1776, Jewish regulations pushed the Jewish community toward separation rather than assimilation. In 1788 Joseph II signed edicts requiring Jews in Galicia to adopt hereditary surnames.

While the 1789 Tolerance Patent called for the same laws to be applied to Jews and Christians, this operated more in theory than in actual practice. Jews were allowed to attend university and German schools were established for Jewish students. Emperor Joseph II entrusted Hertz Holmberg, the first Jew to receive an advanced degree from the University of Vienna, with Jewish education. Homborg encountered strong resistance among the rabbis who also blamed him when the 1795 candle tax was introduced.

Dr. Zalewski highlighted two locales in Galicia. The small town of Wieloglowy became known for its salt mines, considered “white gold.” Austria and France vied for control of these salt mines with Austria eventually prevailing. Joseph the Great built up the town of Stanislawow, the center of which was predominantly Jewish, and concurrently

the Halpern and Horowitz families were prominent in the city’s economic and communal life. Dr. Arthur Nemhein served as mayor from 1897-1919, indicating the important role Jews played in civic affairs which was also characteristic in Galicia as a whole. By the early twentieth century the city was a major center of Jewish

manufacturing, again reflecting the dominance of Galician Jews in retail sales and trade.

During World War I, also known as The Great War, Austria and Russia were enemies. After two weeks Russia gained control of many Galician towns, including Lvov and Stanislawow, and the Cossacks ransacked the area. The continually shifting, huge Eastern front, stretching from the Baltic Sea in the west to Minsk in the east, and Saint Petersburg in the north and the Black Sea in the south, had a drastic effect on the course of the war and created even greater chaos for the civilian population. The end of World War I resulted in the dismemberment of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire and the end of Galicia as a separate entity.

to learn of the existence of a document listing more than 800 individuals from the town who had been murdered by the Nazis and their Lithuanian accomplices in the summer of 1941.

They were dumbfounded when they saw firsthand the names of actual family members, grandparents aunts uncles and cousins, who had been killed. They also recognized many other names because the South African Jewish community is very tight knit, comprised heavily of former Lithuanians and their descendants.

After the initial shock they learned that two local Christian midwives had compiled this handwritten list from memory in 1946 and secretly held on to it until after the Soviets had left Lithuania in the early 1990s and small numbers of survivors and descendants of the town's Jews were allowed to visit. The list includes the last names, first names and ages of 808 people who were murdered.

THE IMPACT OF TRAVEL TO AN ANCESTRAL HOME

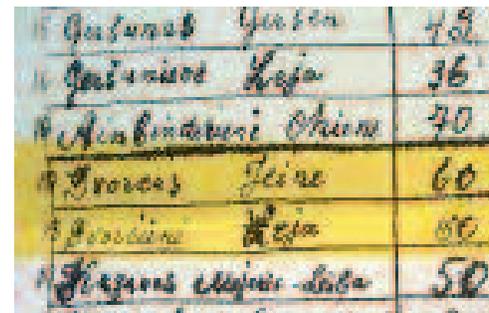
by Evan Fishman

Everyone who travels to his/her ancestral home reacts differently. If one travels alone or with just a few others, the experience tends to be very personal. On the other hand traveling with a sizeable group generates a different scenario. While the personal dimension remains, the overall experience is broadened with the introduction of a significant, communal element shaped by involvement with one's fellow travelers.

In the Summer 2013 (Vol. 30-2) issue I wrote about "Aunt" Tzipora's group trip to her ancestral town of Brisk. She dealt with sadness and loss as she toured current day Brest (Belarus). Most of us can identify with her situation. Seeing one's former home conjures up the feeling of "I can't go back there", and to some extent we mourn that reality. In this article I'd like to describe the visit of other extended family members to a town in which they had never lived--Kupishok, (Kupiškis), Lithuania.

This past Thanksgiving I learned about the diligent efforts of my niece's late grandfather, Norman Meyer (of blessed memory), his brother, Alec, and their cousin, Mervyn Shapiro, to organize an effective group tribute to the decimated community from their ancestral town.

In August 1997 a group of thirteen descendants from the Meyerowitz, Goldin, Shapiro, Choritz, Gafanovich, and Sarfanovich families met in Kupiskis. During a meeting with the town's mayor and an archivist they were surprised and shocked



Original list, photo - Clive Moss

It's not in alphabetical order, but rather in family groupings based on where the midwives remembered they lived,

Following this staggering revelation the three gentlemen initiated plans to honor the memory of these previously nameless Jews. They were motivated by powerful and compelling memories of their family life while growing up in South Africa. As Alec wrote: "Friday nights before going off to the [Zionist youth] movement meetings were spent in our household speaking about Kupichik. Personalities were mentioned, family names were bandied about and in my youth I wrote down the names of the family and their positions on blue note paper that I have to this day. It is all filed away in files hopefully to keep the information in the family.

Their mission culminated on July 13, 2004 when about fifty survivors and descendants dedicated a Wall of Memory in the Kupiškis library, formerly the Great Synagogue of Kupishok. The Wall of Memory created an enduring legacy by restoring the victims' names for posterity.



Kupiskis Wall of Memory, photo - Barry Mann

Kenneth Sachar, a member of this group that traveled to Kupiškis, noted in his “Memoir of a Trip to Lithuania”: “. . . it is thought that the survivors [the midwives] went down each street in their minds and thought about who had lived in each house, thinking ‘Oh it was that family and these were names of the parents and the children and next door to them lived this family and these were names of the parents, grandparents and children’ . . .

Norman spoke about why they had come, saying of those on the list, “We did not walk away. We decided that the least we could do was to bring their names to life again. To give them the persona, the dignity, the honor. They are all in Gan Eden (Garden of Eden, expressing one of several Jewish versions of the afterlife) but here on earth their names on this Wall bring their memory to life. It was a task that had to be fulfilled. This is the least that we can do.”

(N.B. The list of names was published by JewishGen and can be found in the Holocaust Survivors and Victims Database of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum.)

After returning home Norman and fellow Kupishok descendant and traveler, Harvey Sherzer, co-produced a DVD entitled “Kupishok: For Eternal Memory” in which the 2004 remarkable journey of self-discovery was chronicled. (<http://www.jewishfilm.org/Catalogue/films/Kupishok.html> and <http://www.historyassociates.com/news/may-5-2005-press-release/> Sadly Norman died in December 2004 before the DVD was completed.

The preceding factual account of Norman’s dedicated work doesn’t fully convey the profound level of appreciation that the Kupishokers on the 2004 trip accorded him. He was affectionately nicknamed “The President of World Jewry and chairman of the board [of this group of Kupishokers]”



The Board of Directors: The "President of World Jewry" and board chairman, Norman Meyer (R) with his brother, Alec Meyer (L) and cousin, Mervyn Shapiro, photo - Ken Sachar

In addition Kenneth Sachar reported, “. . . Then Norman gave an address which was moving, but powerful, courageous, confrontational in a non aggressive way, and inspirational. . .” Another traveler commented, “Truly, Norman epitomized what it was to live up to a good name, a challenge that was his beacon of principle. “A well-written biography can be measured by the degree to which a reader identifies with and feels that s/he truly knows the subject of that biography. The Kupiškis website at JewishGen along with the personal comments of trip members and their photographs, were so moving that after perusing all of it I felt I really knew Norman, may his memory be a blessing. ❖

The author gratefully acknowledges the use of the following: (<http://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/kupiskis/kupishok.htm>)

<http://www.jewishfilm.org/Catalogue/films/Kupishok.html>

http://www.ushmm.org/online/hsv/source_view.php?SourceId=31591

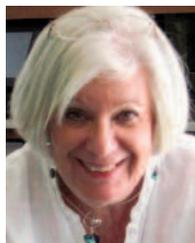
<http://www.historyassociates.com/news/may-5-2005-press-release/>

personal comments by Kenneth Sachar and Beryl Meyer, and personal photographs from Kenneth Sachar, Barry Mann, and Clive Moss.

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 Evan at editor@jgsgp.org

DON'T LET YOUR FAMILY HISTORY SLIP AWAY

by Marge Farbman



Usually I discuss how to preserve or organize photos by themes for placement in scrapbooks, and then how to make the stories behind the photos flow... but in writing for this edition of *Chronicles*, my mind is elsewhere. I recently had a conversation with an 80-something friend who lives in a retirement community. She has a collection of large bins in her living room, and I asked her what was in them. She told me they were filled with old family photographs.

Trying to be positive in my choice of words, I asked her why she didn't distribute them to the appropriate family members. She could tell them stories about the people in the photos and identify them by writing their names and other pertinent information on the reverse side. She could pass on her knowledge of the family history of both her own and her husband's families. What a treasure to share with one's children and grandchildren.

Sadly, she won't give them up. Instead, she holds on to those photographs, stashed away in large plastic storage boxes. These pictures are rarely, if ever, looked at. Perhaps, just possessing them is a way of keeping the people in them alive to her. How sad. . . When she is gone, those same family members will have no idea about the identities of the people, their own relatives, in the photos and will probably throw the whole lot of them away.

I write this story in the hopes that it will encourage readers to reach out to elderly family members and ask them to share stories contained within their photos. Ask them who the people are, how they are related, where they came from. Write the information on a piece of paper that can be placed behind framed photos. For loose photos, carefully write on the backs with a photo-safe pen or pencil. Don't write on the backs of faces. Should the ink bleed through, at least the faces will not be damaged. I usually write or print as small as is legible along the bottom edge or around the edges of the photos to avoid potential damage.

Family elders may not want to give up possession of their photos, but they will probably enjoy relating stories about the subjects of these photos. This might take multiple visits; do it. Come with a notebook and maybe even a recording device.

Write down the stories as they tell them; and if they go off on a tangent, write that story down too. Eventually it will find its place in the family history. Record the stories even when you write them down so that no detail is overlooked or lost. Who knows what little tidbit might help uncover a missing piece of a genealogy.

It is a *mitzvah* (good deed) to visit the elderly and an even greater *mitzvah* to help them continue to feel part of the larger family circle. Take them a sweet, make a pot of tea and enjoy the sharing of your family's history. Perhaps youngsters in the family can also be part of the process by making a pedigree chart while the elders confirm that the names and dates are correct.

Once the storytelling gets started, it is fun for all. Don't put it off. Start today. Enjoy collecting your family's history while some of its older actors are still available. ❖

Marge Farbman has a varied and concurrent career background in interior design, as a fundraiser, as a scrapbooking teacher, consultant and designer. She and her husband have raised four children, enjoy eight grandchildren and manage 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.

ALWAYS RESEARCH THE NEWEST RESOURCES

by Walter Spector



I enjoy exploring for new information to add to my family tree. Several years ago I found the World War I draft card for my great uncle, Herman Samuel Shafer. The image was not very clear, but, I could read the basic information. I continued to look for a more readable image. My

daily review of Family Search paid off because on January 30, 2013 more than 23 million World War I draft registration cards were put online.

First, I looked for cards of family members for whom I didn't have any records. No success. I couldn't find any information on them. Next, I started to search for the family members whose information I had found previously. (I like the "hunt") When I got to Uncle Herman's card, I deciphered

a previously unreadable detail. Much to my surprise he was registered as an alien which I found odd because by the time he registered he had graduated from Temple Pharmacy School. I definitely had the incentive to look further about his country of origin.

Step 1: Returning to FamilySearch.org, I found an index of Pennsylvania Eastern District Naturalization Indexes, 1795-1952. The index card for Uncle Herman, which included the numbers for his Declaration of Intention and Petition for Naturalization was online.

Step 2: Using these numbers, I searched FamilySearch.org again for Pennsylvania Eastern District Petitions for Naturalization, 1795-1931, found both documents as well as his Certificate of Arrival. Uncle Herman was born in Lonovitz, Russia, 192 miles west of Kiev. He left Antwerp, Belgium on the S.S. Finland and arrived at Ellis Island on June 12, 1907. He lived at 457 N. 6th Street in Philadelphia, less than a mile from my present home.

Step 3: Finding the actual manifest proved to be more difficult. The Shafer listed at Ellisland.org did not match my uncle. With the knowledge of the ship's name and the date of arrival I proceeded to Web Pages by Stephen P. Morse and found the Ellis Island Manifests (aka Missing Manifests) (1892-1924). Navigating through that site, I found the SS Finland with four members of the Safir family and my uncle, Chejum Safir who was nine years old. He was accompanied by his father, mother and older sister.



Herman Samuel Shafer

Uncle Herman lived a successful and productive life in the United States as a pharmacist and as a representative of the Abbott Drug Company. He was married to my aunt, Ida Lander, for thirty-one years and they raised their son Steve, a professor at Dowling College.

I conducted all the research and the story, without cost, from the comforts of my home. My great uncle Herman Samuel Shafer's family history would have been lost if I hadn't taken that one last look. ❖

A former assistant principal in the Philadelphia School District, Walt currently serves as an educational consultant to various school systems in Pennsylvania and New Jersey. He's an avid collector of historic Philadelphia-themed postcards (Chronicles, Vol. 28-4, Winter 2011-2012, p.15) and is proud of his roots in the agricultural colony of Woodbine, New Jersey. He now serves as a JGSGP vice president.

You can reach him at educonser@comcast.net.

CLOUD BASED STORAGE: A BRIEF LOOK AT DROPBOX

by James Gross



Traditionally, genealogists have accumulated piles of papers. Now we accumulate digital as well as paper files. This short article will address options for periodically backing up those digital files. After all, the alternative would be a catastrophic loss of data negating long hours of research and collections of family tree data.

One potential problem with saving all of those digital files to the computer is that the computer hard drive can crash. To avoid this, some people use portable hard drives as a backup; but they can crash as well. Other people use large flash drives to store their files or burn data to CD's or DVD's.

Another stable, backup storage option which has emerged is the virtual online backup, or cloud based backup. One advantage of the online backup is that because the digital file is stored remotely, you have no risk of losing it if your computer stops working or is stolen. All software is installed on remote web servers which the user does not see. A second advantage of online backup is the user is a click away from being able to copy these files to other computers.

There are a number of fee-based and free remote backup services which are available. Five of these cloud providers which offer free access are summarized in the following table.¹ Additional storage or other features are also available from these providers for a fee.

Cloud based providers

Company	url	Free storage
Dropbox	www.dropbox.com	2gb
Idrive	www.idrive.com	10gb
Google drive	drive.google.com	5gb
Amazon cloud drive	amazon.com/cloudrive	5gb
Opendrive	www.opendrive.com	5gb

Dropbox offers cloud storage and file synchronization and allows a user to create a special folder on each of their computers which it then synchronizes so that it appears to be the same folder, with the same contents, regardless of which computer is used to view it. Files placed in this folder are also accessible through a website and mobile phone applications, e.g., via iPhone or iPod Touch app.²

Dropbox keeps backups and restores damaged messages daily. User errors are even minimized. If a user clicks on “Delete”, the message is usually moved to a trash folder where it is kept for another thirty days before being truly deleted. The user can still recover accidentally deleted messages during that thirty day window.³

Users should be aware that an ongoing issue regarding on-line storage involves ensuring the encrypted security of the data. Several incidents involving unauthorized data access indicate that reliability and security continue to be concerns or issues when data is accessed and stored remotely with cloud computing in general.

For example, in July 2013, Dropbox revealed that hackers had gotten access to a very small percentage of users' accounts and accessed their files. The breach took place because these users had used the same username and password at more than one website, and when one of those sites was compromised, the hackers could get into their Dropbox account as well. As Goldsborough, the author of the article citing these security breaches has noted, “...hacking attacks can cause service interruptions...Cloud service providers are acutely aware of the reality...and are continually beefing it [security] up”.⁴

In summary, a smart reason to use cloud storage is to prevent data loss. After all, one cannot always predict when the computer will stop working. All data files which are uploaded to the cloud storage are stored on web servers that are backed up regularly. This gives users peace of mind which can be priceless in the event of a natural disaster such as flood or fire.

While no file storage company or service can guarantee 100% security and access, it is apparent that the that the five cloud

storage providers listed above represent another option for digital file backup. The reality is that the best backup option is a multiple backup plan. So, back up those digital files! ❖

References:

1. Goldsborough, R. (2012). *Preparing for the next emergency*, *Teacher Librarian*, 40: 2, p. 68.
2. <http://online-data-backup-review.toptenreviews.com/dropbox-review.html>
3. <https://www.dropbox.com/help/115/en>
4. Goldsborough, R. (2013). *How sound is the cloud?*, *Teacher Librarian*, 40: 3., p. 68.

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> James can be reached at: navistar96@yahoo.com

ANCESTRY.COM DATABASE: INS SUBJECT INDEX

by James Gross

In the last issue of *Chronicles* (Vol 30-3, Fall 2013), I wrote a short article regarding a lecture, “Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS) Citizenship Records: Beyond the Basics” that I had attended at the 2013 IAJGS conference in Boston.¹ The United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) has ownership of immigration records² which have not been transferred to the National Archives due to privacy reasons. During his lecture Zack Wilske, a USCIS staff member, included a short reference to a secondary USCIS resource entitled, “U.S. Subject Index to Correspondence and Case Files of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), 1903-1959”.³ I wrote an earlier article on this subject for *Chronicles* in 2011.⁴

This Subject Index has recently been digitized and added to the Ancestry.com data base.⁵ Ancestry describes the contents of this database as “. . . files as kept by the Immigration and Naturalization Service for various individuals pertaining to immigration, emigration, and naturalization. You can find information like surnames, port and date of entry, date of birth and whether or not they came alone or with relatives. In rare cases, there can be a very substantial abstract of the correspondence or case file in the index”.

The Ancestry.com database also includes images of original

naturalization records⁶ (primarily Declarations and Petitions) from U.S. District and Circuit Courts from up to eighteen states, including New York and Pennsylvania.⁷ Actual quantities of entries by each state are not disclosed. For researchers who had relatives residing in Pennsylvania, this database includes some digitized records from: “Naturalization Petitions for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania”, NARA Roll Series M1522, and “Naturalization Petitions of the U.S. District Court, 1820 – 1930, and Circuit Court, 1820 – 1922, for the Western District of Pennsylvania”, NARA Roll Series M1537.⁸

To illustrate search approaches, I entered the term “Jewish” and received 111 returns. A search of the word “Hebrew” had 58 returns and “Hebrews” had 714 returns. A search of one of my surnames, “Steinberg”, had 65 returns and a search for another one of my surnames, “Geringer” had 15 returns. The inserted Ancestry.com entry is for Morris Steinberg who also has a clickable link to a digitized copy of his Petition for Naturalization.



In closing, I recommend that a researcher spend a few minutes using the Ancestry.com online database to see if records for any relatives are available. Periodic additions and updates to Ancestry make it a useful online resource to visit on a regular basis. While this website is available by subscription only, many public libraries offer their visitors free access to it. ❖

References:

- (1) <http://www.uscis.gov/historyandgenealogy>
- (2) USCIS available records list <http://tinyurl.com/lu58v5k>
- (3) INS Case Files <http://tinyurl.com/inscasefiles>
- (4) T458: Old Correspondence & Case Files at the National Archives, *Chronicles*, Spring, 2011, pp. 9-11
- (5) <http://search.ancestry.com/search/db.aspx?dbid=1946>
- (6) <http://search.ancestry.com/search/db.aspx?dbid=1554>
- (7) States include AL, FL, GA, KY, MS, NC, SC, TN, CA, CO, CT, LA, MD, NY, OR, PA, VA, and WA.
- (8) <http://search.ancestry.com/search/db.aspx?dbid=1554>
- (9). Source: Ancestry.com, U.S. Subject Index to Correspondence and Case Files of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, 1903-1959.

WEBSITES TO BREAK DOWN BRICK WALLS

By Carole Strickland



My primary reason for going to Boston for the IAJS 2013 conference was brick walls – just too many of them. While I am fortunate enough to have a second cousin who spends an incredible amount of time searching obscure (at least to me) online

sites and communicating with people (whether or not related) who may be in possession of additional information or documents, my brick walls have been closing in.

In the Fall 2013 issue of *Chronicles*, our friend Steve Schecter (z”l) opined in his “In the Beginning” article that “...websites do not replace a disciplined search; they complement and supplement it.” Given time and location issues, my family members and I have relied greatly on information obtained through websites and, in particular, online databases, in order to move forward.

I went to Boston to learn of additional online databases, and to reacquaint myself with those I had forgotten about in order to try to make some openings in my brick walls. To do that, I recorded every website with an online database that I learned of at the IAJS conference, even the ones of which I had previous knowledge but had forgotten. I also recorded possible “new” or different ways to use some of the usual databases. After a brief post conference decompression period followed by my son’s wedding, I began to search through the information I had recorded and try out the websites, one by one. While I’m still experimenting, I thought it might be of benefit to others to know of at least the following six sites, some of which have helped me create windows in some of those brick walls.

www.genealogyindexer.org

FREE name searches of many old foreign directories, digitized records and books. The materials are in the language of original publication, but the site is helpful in providing an option to transliterate names from Latin characters to their Cyrillic alphabet equivalents and in highlighting those designated names. If you want to access the actual document, you will probably need to download a DjVu plugin. Please read the home page directions first!

www.fultonhistory.com/fulton.html

The website is that of “Old Fulton Postcards”. FREE search

by name of over 25 million New York digitized historical newspapers, including old national entertainment papers such as *Billboard*. The searcher can request highlighting of a name in the publication image.

www.litvaksig.org/component/litvaksearch

The main All Lithuanian Database (ALD) is FREE. The URL takes you through JewishGen to the database. Access to some related databases requires LitvakSIG membership and donation.

www.italiengen.org

FREE birth, death, bride and groom records from the five county New York City area. The database includes everyone's records, not just those of Italian descent. This database produced results (and gave up family secrets) when other more prominent databases did not.

www.jri-poland.org

This is one of the first organizations I learned of when starting my genealogical journey but for some reason, I hadn't realized it provides a FREE online database for name and town searches. Click on "New to JRI-Poland? Click Here to Get Started" to go directly through the JRI Poland site to database access. If you click on "Register for FREE ACCESS to more than 5,000,000 records" instead, you will be slowed going through the JewishGen website to get there. JRI-Poland also has some mid to late 19th century Galician records.

www.geshergalicia.org

Gesher Galicia hosts a FREE online database (the All Galicia Database) with the ability to search names and towns in various types of records, though the majority, at this time, are birth and death records. Also visit the Map Room for some digitized historic and cadastral maps (originally created by the Austro-Hungarian Empire for tax collection purposes in the 19th century) courtesy of the Gesher Galicia Cadastral Map and Landowner Records Project. ❖

If you have questions or would like to contact the author, you can reach Carole at: czs452@gmail.com

A BRICK WALL BREACHED

by Ann Kauffman

When my husband Jack and I first began researching his family nearly three years ago, we came across the name "Fannie Radablatt" in the 1910

Federal census. She was listed as head of household, Jacob Kaufman's mother-in-law. Jack had never heard his paternal great grandmother's name before. We were unable to locate any further entries of any kind for her using online searches with her surname as it was spelled on that census or with "wild card" spellings.

Periodic searches for Fannie over the next year were unsuccessful, and she wasn't listed in the records of any local cemeteries. Requesting Jack's father's original Social Security application, where his mother's maiden name might be recorded, was not an option. Neither his father nor mother appears in the Social Security Death Index. We concluded that our efforts might be productive if we searched his father's brothers' and sisters' records instead.

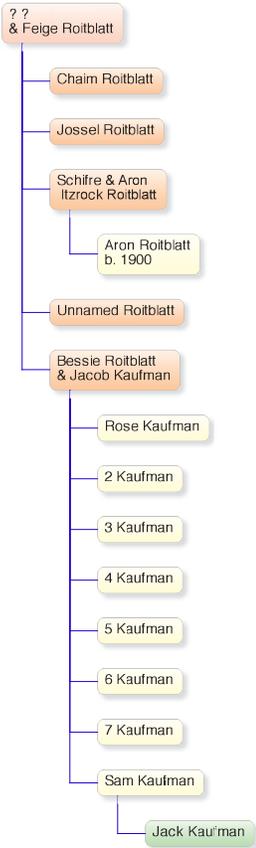
Jack's oldest sister provided the names of their seven paternal aunts and uncles which we later confirmed from census records. Unfortunately, all eight Kaufman/Kauffman siblings (including Jack's father) either did not list their mother's maiden name or listed it incorrectly on their Philadelphia marriage license applications. This omission/error might be attributed to the fact that most of these eight children were still minors when their mother died and their father remarried a year later. Although we shouldn't have been totally surprised about this omission/error, we were nevertheless disappointed.

We knew that the oldest paternal aunt and her husband had changed their surname when they moved to California sometime around 1950. We were able to find listings for them as registered California voters in various city directories and on the California Death Index. Aunt Rose's citation on the death index indicated that her mother's (Bessie Kaufman) maiden name was "Retblatt". We were consequently encouraged to continue our search for more information about Fannie after that discovery.

During the ensuing many months and after periodic searches using "Radablatt", "Retblatt", and other spellings as surnames, a tangible detail finally surfaced. We learned that a 48-year-old woman with a 7-year-old child heading for the home of her daughter and son-in-law (Bessel [sic] and Jacob Kaufman) on S. Daly (Beulah) Street in Philadelphia piqued the attention of immigration officials. While we can only speculate why this happened, we are exceedingly glad that their curiosity or suspicion were raised because the net outcome was a Board of Special Inquiry report for "Feige and Aron Itzrock Roitblatt [sic], her grandson, traveling from Hamburg on the SS Merion".

Initially filed in Philadelphia on 11 August 1907, this report was only recently posted on Ancestry.com, and yielded a wealth of information including the names of three of Jack's previously unknown paternal great uncles. One of them was the father of 7-year-old Aron; he had died before his son was born. Two of the older Aron's brothers, Chaim and Jossel, remained somewhere in Russia. An unnamed sister was also deceased. The immigration report was unclear about whether Feige/Fannie's husband had died or had left her eight years earlier.

Feige Roitblatt Descendant Chart



The younger Aron's mother, Sophie, had immigrated to the U.S. two or three years before her son arrived, was remarried, and living in New York City. Jacob Kaufman (Feige/Fannie's son-in-law) reported he had some contact with Sophie in New York the previous September, after his wife (Bessie) and their four children arrived in the U.S. He provided Sophie's new surname and address to Immigration officials. She was then summoned to come to Philadelphia in order to flesh out more details about Aron's familial status. She appeared on 14 August 1907.

Sophie's independent testimony corroborated the information Feige/Fannie and Jacob had provided. They gave another place name, Mozyr (Minsk gubernia) that we included in our subsequent searches. Cleared by Immigration authorities, Sophie returned to New York with her son who later adopted his stepfather's surname. Had this Special Inquiry Report not surfaced, we would not have been aware of Aron Roitblatt Herman's existence.

Feige/Fannie remained in Philadelphia with her daughter and son-in-law until at least the date of the 1910 Federal Census. She remains elusive to us after that date.

The lesson reinforced for us how important it is to periodically revisit a previously unsuccessful search. As our experience shows, you may discover new documents that provide important, additional data. They might also reveal new paths to explore in a family genealogy search and even breach your brick wall. ❖

Ann and her husband, Jack, were introduced to JGSGP at the June 2011 Genealogy Fair. Their experience is an example of combining an old lesson with a new approach to research as reported by Steve Schechter (z"l) with additional comments by James Gross in "Three Presentations at the Boston Conference that Taught Me New Approaches", Chronicles, Volume 30-3, Fall 2013.

Contact Ann at: kauffmanj982@aol.com

DEADLINE FOR SPRING ISSUE

We welcome articles from ALL our readers. Our editing team will punch up your basic story (if necessary) and make you proud.

Kindly have a non-relative vet your article before sending it. That way you can be sure that the content is clear to someone who's not familiar with your research.

Deadline for the spring issue is Friday, February 28, give or take. Please contact editor@jgsgp.org if you have any questions.

JGSGP QUIZ #1:

JGSGP member and Russian SIG coordinator, David Brill, has begun a new feature which challenges our expertise in using various important documents.

An image from the 1910 U.S. census appears on the following page and includes a citation for a famous Philadelphian. Can you identify that person?

See hints on the following page:



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 pay your dues using Paypal on our web site:
<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: _____

Family Membership second 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



4th Annual Genealogy Fair

“If it’s June, then it must be time for the genealogy fair”

Sunday, June 8, 2014 1-4 pm

Main Line Reform Temple, Wynnewood, PA

Overall chair is Carole Strickland, and Avivah Pinsky is coordinating logistics at the synagogue.

Carole is requesting volunteers to handle tasks both before June 8 and on the day of the fair itself.

Assignments include: Before fair: Determination of stations, staffing needs; Contacting and scheduling repositories, presenters; Coordination of IT needs of presenters; Publicity: Drafting press releases; Updating email addresses of publicity recipients; Designing flyers using computer graphics techniques; Mailings (snail & electronic) of press releases and posters/flyers; Hand delivering posters and flyers to appropriate locations

Sunday, June 8: Welcome/registration table - Room decoration and set-up assistance

Please contact Carole at czs452@gmail.com to offer your assistance.

The success of this event depends on the collective efforts of many JGSGP members.

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, FEBRUARY 9, 2014 1:30 PM MAIN LINE REFORM TEMPLE

410 Montgomery Ave, Wynnewood PA

THE START TIME IS BEING CHANGED TO 1:30 PM

to avoid the traffic resulting from the dismissal of Hebrew school students.

Jessica M. Lydon, Associate Archivist, Philadelphia Jewish Archives Collection, presents, “Genealogical Resources at Temple University Libraries’ Special Collections Research Center” – an introduction to the resources available at the SCRC including the Philadelphia Jewish Archive collection and “Digitizing Philadelphia’s Steamship Ticket Purchase Ledgers” - an overview of the planning, process, and progress of an active project to digitize and make freely available ledgers produced by Philadelphia’s steamship agents that document the sale of prepaid steamship tickets for passage to/from America.

Tentative Meeting Dates

Sunday, MARCH 9, 2014 , 1:30 PM MAIN LINE REFORM TEMPLE

410 Montgomery Ave, Wynnewood PA 19096

Sunday, April 6, 1:30 pm, MAIN LINE REFORM TEMPLE

ChaeRan Y. Freeze, Professor, Near Eastern & Judaic Studies, Brandeis University,

THE STEVE SCHECTER MEMORIAL LECTURE

“Everyday Jewish Life in Imperial Russia”

Monday, May 19, 7:30 pm, Location TBD (note the change of date)

Ron Arons, Jewish genealogical author and speaker,

"Understanding Our Families, Understanding Ourselves"

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



Steve Schechter