During the past two weeks, I took advantage of a lull in my editing responsibilities to at long last resume my personal genealogy research, focusing specifically on some unresolved issues. Years ago I had uncovered individuals in New Haven and Philadelphia with the same surnames as two of my branches. At that time, I wasn’t able to find a definitive link that would ascertain connections. I found it exhilarating to once again engross myself in the research process. I pursued these threads for hours at a time. One could say I was obsessed; I stayed up into the wee hours of the morning, completely absorbed. My great grandmother, Mollie, had a brother, Srul, who had settled in New Haven. I wondered why. When I discovered a considerable number of Mandelsteins living in New Haven before he arrived, I theorized that Uncle Srul had settled there because his sister’s Mandelstein in-laws were already there, so there was a comfort level he could depend upon. At this point, I’m trying to contact descendants of those Mandelsteins in the hopes of finding a common ancestor.

I shared my newfound enthusiasm with Shelda Sander, who had experienced a similar hiatus while serving as coordinator of JGSGP’s Delaware County affiliate. She is excited with every new bit of information and feels sorry for people who aren’t interested in their own genealogy. “Look at all the confusion, frustration, indecision, hair pulling, and ‘fun’ they are missing!”

(Continued on Page 3)
Answer - Quiz # 3

Sylvan Scolnick, AKA Cherry Hill Fats at 650 pounds, became a criminal mastermind specializing in corporate fraud. After spending a number of years in federal prison, he turned to a life of crime and became a government informant and author on crime and prison reform. He died of natural causes in 1976 at the age of forty-six.
Genealogy research demands persistence, but I believe periodic pauses can also be beneficial. When we eventually resume our searches, it is with renewed energy; we’re more amenable to fresh approaches and sometimes bring greater insights to the table.

In my recent review of my Mandelstein branch, I discovered that I had inadvertently ascribed the wrong manifest to my great grandfather. The man listed on that document had been deported back to England! I was determined to locate the correct manifest and was rewarded after a fairly simple search at www.ancestry.com. It pays to periodically re-examine our findings for accuracy; I like to think my renewed enthusiasm prompted that review.

Likewise, I find it useful to browse through past issues of Chronicles. It’s particularly reassuring to note our regular contributors who focus on specific areas of interest. Kudos go to James Gross for his “techie” articles and to Marge Farbman for her insights in scrapbooking as well as safeguarding and preserving our precious documents and photographs. Thanks also to David Brill for introducing the Chronicles quiz—a kind of “lumosity” exercise to keep our genealogical brains sharp. Finally I want to acknowledge the SandlerS, Shelda and Stan, for frequently submitting articles without any editorial prodding.

There is something for everyone in this issue. We are pleased to share some photographs from our 4th Annual Genealogy Fair which was expertly coordinated by Carole Strickland. Carol Heller and Tammy Hepps share stories highlighting the lives of relatives about whom they had known little or nothing. Tammy also shares how her Treelines process has proven a very useful tool for preserving her relative’s legacy. Walter Spector presents a newspaper clipping that unravels a long ago mystery.

We strive to keep our Chronicles readers up to date on the latest technological advances and how they can be applied to our research. To this end, James Gross offers another look at “Data Backup.” Steven Captuso, a former resident of Cherry Hill, New Jersey and Philadelphia, fondly reminisces about his family and opens our eyes (and other senses) to some wonderful family history anecdotes. These are only some of the absorbing articles included in this issue! Last but not least: as of this writing, seven JGSGP members will be attending the 34th IAJGS International Conference on Jewish Genealogy beginning July 27th in Salt Lake City. We look forward to reading their reports in the fall issue. ❖

Evan Fishman, Editor

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

JULY 2014

HOW MY PASSION FOR GENEALOGY WAS IGNITED BY MY COUSIN LEWIS KATZ (Z”L)

When I was eighteen years old, I started my own legal support service in Philadelphia, which brought me in contact with many attorneys. One such attorney was Lewis Katz. I had been told there was some family connection but at eighteen, learning about family history was the last thing on my mind. I lost contact with Lewis when he moved his office from Philadelphia to Cherry Hill, New Jersey in the early 1970s and didn’t see him again for about twenty-five years when a paralegal called in 1998 and asked me to provide service to his firm. Lewis happened to be in the office the day I went for an interview, so I asked to see him. I told him that I believed we were related. He asked how; I replied that I didn’t know, but I noticed a framed stock certificate on the wall in his office. His mother had purchased it for him as a child, and her name, Betty Blum, appeared on the certificate. Noticing that Blum was also my last name, Lewis thought this was interesting, and he suggested we figure out if there was a connection. This led me on a path that changed my life. At that time I knew that Lewis was a very successful attorney, businessman, and philanthropist. I didn’t know, however, the full extent of his generosity.

That conversation launched me on a mission to learn and understand my family history. I immediately began my search. I had no knowledge how to get started but I read articles, went to the National Archives, the Free Library
Rhoda Antolino                  Wynnewood, PA  
Gary Delson                    Langhorne, PA  
Wunsch, Evyan, Broude, Lang, Shoft, Delson; Gostini  
(Glazmanka) Latvia, Kaunas (Kovno) Lithuania, Radziwil-
low, Russia and Harrisburg, PA  
Stuart & Bev Feinberg          Exton, PA  
Feinberg & Kopelson; Minsk, Belarus, Russia & Zygovka, 
Ukraine (mother’s roots)       
Stephen Finkelman              Huntingdon Valley, PA  
Sheldon & Linda Gantz          Newtown Square, PA  
Rhea & Len Huber               Bala Cynwyd, PA  
Nathan Bloch, Rebecca Bloch    
Alan LaPayover                  Philadelphia, PA  
LaPayover; Lapajovka, a village associated with Kamionka 
Struzmila, a town near Lviv, Ukraine.  
David & June Leavitt           Narberth, PA  
Pfeffer                        
Brian Melrose                  Washington, DC  
Lee Rothman                    Philadelphia, PA  
Joyce Rubin                    Yardley, PA  
Charlotte Shuman               Wynnewood, PA

We extend a warm welcome to our newest members and highlight some of the names & towns they are researching.

of Philadelphia, and the Pennsylvania Historical Society. Most importantly, I joined JGSGP. I attended meetings and asked many questions of the helpful members I met. Within a few months I had a pretty good grasp as to how to proceed. I found census records, naturalization records, marriage records, death records and ship manifests. I eventually determined that Lewis and I were second cousins. My father and his mother were first cousins, and our grandfathers were brothers. My father’s family settled in South Philadelphia and Lewis’s mother in Camden, New Jersey.

This information led me to other cousins, and Lewis and I bonded. I learned that his father had died from a heart attack when Lewis was only eighteen months old. The two of us travelled around the country to meet our other cousins who were able to shed light on his father’s life and tell stories about his mother. I went so far as to do research on our ancestral shtetl, Bila Tserkva, Ukraine and to travel there with Lewis’s sister, Sandy, who has also become a close cousin and friend. Lewis was so excited with this research that he videotaped our first cousin once removed and myself to pass on our history to his children and his grandchildren.

We had truly become family, and Lewis included me in his life. My wife and I were invited to his birthday parties, the Bar Mitzvah of his grandson, and his son’s recent wedding. Lewis went on to be well known to many politicians as well as entertainment and sport stars. He purchased the New Jersey Devils hockey team, the New Jersey Nets basketball team and acquired part ownership in the New York Yankees. I sat with him in the “owner’s box” for the Stanley Cup and National Basketball Association (NBA) playoffs and the World Series.

Despite his successes in life, Lewis never forgot where he came from. As his self-made wealth increased, his charity increased as well. He donated money to causes that were important to him, especially those related to children and education. As Camden became one of the poorest cities in the U.S., Lewis did his part to make things better. He built charter schools. He bought the property where his childhood synagogue was located and in its place built a Boys and Girls Club to provide a safe haven for the children of Camden. Since 1998, the same year that Lewis and I reconnected, he has served on the Board of Trustees of Temple University, his beloved alma mater, and was awarded an honorary doctorate at this year’s commencement. Lewis contributed countless, unselfish acts of kindness. It didn’t matter if you were the President of the United States or a janitor struggling to make a living. Lewis Katz cared for everyone.

The wonderful friendship that resulted from my genealogy research came to an end too soon. At 5:30 in the morning of June 1st, 2014, I was awakened by the sound of Lewis’ sister, Sandy, crying over the phone. At 9:40pm the night before, Lewis and six others perished in a plane crash. It was the same plane that I had flown on with him. Needless to say we are all heartbroken. How could this wonderful man be taken away from his family and the world?

Lewis once heard John Wooden, the great basketball coach, say, “You can’t live a perfect day without doing something for someone who will never be able to repay you.” This is the life that my dear cousin Lewis lived. I will miss him for the rest of my life.

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Our goal as a society is to educate and to help foster re-
Two projects I'd like to suggest involve the indexing of records from various cemeteries, and from landmannschaften (immigrant benevolent societies) at the Philadelphia funeral homes, Joseph Levine & Sons and Goldsteins’ Rosenberg’s Raphael-Sacks.

We've achieved great success in the past when members assumed responsibility and volunteered their efforts to index the ethnic bank records and Jewish Exponent obituaries, coordinate and lecture for the speakers bureau, organize and staff four genealogy fairs, and finally, insure the success of the 2009 conference. Note: the more records that are available online, the more everyone benefits. Please contact me at president@jgsgp.org to get these projects started.

Fred Blum, President

ADVANTAGES OF JOINING A GENEALOGY SOCIETY

by James Gross

On June 8, 2014, our genealogy society sponsored its 4th Annual Genealogy Fair at Main Line Reform Temple-Beth Elohim in Wynnewood, Pennsylvania. I was one of several JGSGP society members who hosted tables and assisted researchers with their research questions. I have been actively engaged in genealogy research since 1991 and have been a long-time JGSGP member. My participation in this year’s fair made me think: Do non-affiliated genealogy researchers realize the tangible and intangible advantages of joining their local genealogy society?

I realize that some researchers may think that if their ancestors are not from the local geographic region, that joining a local genealogy society may not be helpful. However, most if not all of the members in your genealogy group are facing the same or similar geographic challenges in researching their respective ancestors and places across the world. This common need to overcome time and distance makes it logical to seek out and network with like-minded genealogists because they can share their research experience and knowledge with you.

Here are several reasons to join a genealogy society. The idea for this list and the credit go to Kathleen Hinckley; read her article, “Ten Reasons to Join a Local Genealogy Society.”

1. You will no longer be researching alone. The advantage of joining a genealogy society, and its network of like-minded genealogists, is you are no longer researching in a vacuum. There are countless researchers out there, a few of whom are probably researching the same surname and shtetlekh (small towns) as you. You can share your passion by speaking with other genealogists and by networking with researchers online. Speaking from experience, it often helps to bounce ideas off of fellow genealogists and get help with seemingly insurmountable brick walls.

2. Learn tips from guest speakers. If your genealogy society has guest speakers, like JGSGP does, you may find the guest presentation or lecture to be helpful. It never hurts to learn about a new research facility, resource, or a new method for locating information.

3. Learn from other society members. This may sound redundant, but chances are that your very problem has probably vexed another researcher who has ideas or a useful strategy of how to approach and solve your particular brick wall problem.

4. Look into other genealogy societies. Regardless of which genealogy society you belong to, you can sometimes benefit by looking at the resources held by other genealogy societies. For example, I like the online resources and links found on the JGSNY website (www.jgsny.org).

5. Contribute to the society. You may find you possess skills which are needed by your society. Volunteer for committee positions. After all, someone has to plan the programs, take the photos, send out the announcements, write the newsletter articles, etc. I particularly appreciate the members who help with the refreshments.

6. Locate distant cousins. I have found it to be extremely helpful to compare my family tree with that of other researchers, whether in person or online via websites such as JewishGen.org, Geni.com, or Ancestry.com. These connections can result in locating and networking with others who are researching the same geographical area, the same unique shtetl, or the same surname. This connection can lead to assisting each other with resources or research strategies.

7. Develop genealogy colleagues and friendships. Common interests, such as one’s ancestral shtetl, can lead to genealogy friendships. For example, I have helped a Geringer in-law advance her Canadian and United Kingdom research by assisting her with resources and ideas.
8. Use a genealogy society’s newsletter as a resource. When I first began my research, I sought out genealogy newsletters via libraries and historical societies as a way to learn about existing and newly identified research sources and resources. Some genealogy societies may even have select, back issues available online as downloadable pdf files.

In summary, it is my opinion that there is immense value in networking with fellow genealogists through membership in a genealogy society. This is especially true when you need help to research further back to an earlier generation or solve a challenging thread of research. As opposed to giving up, it is more practical and advantageous to seek out assistance from a fellow colleague for that insurmountable “brick wall” research question. I have found that a genealogy society membership is a very reasonable investment given the immense value it represents. To locate a Jewish genealogy society, either in your local area or farther away, check the website of the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies (IAJGS) which maintains a list of all of the societies in the world.5

References:
(1) http://www.genealogy.com/74_kathy.html
(2) www.jewishgen.org
(3) www.Geni.com
(4) www.Ancestry.com
(5) http://www.iajgs.org/members/members.html

Author James Gross has been working on his family tree since the early 1990s. He is a periodic contributor to various genealogy newsletters. James is a regular volunteer, helping other genealogists in their research at the Cherry Hill, NJ Family History Center. He also has a genealogy website:
http://tinyurl.com/gross-steinberg
James can be reached at: navistar96@yahoo.com

ORAN ROMANCE REVISITED
by Carol Heller

Genealogy searches can take many directions and, hopefully, yield much family history. What really started my interest in genealogy was a more recent time period. While my uncle, Joseph Kenig, was in the army and stationed for several years in Oran (northern Africa) during World War II, he worked in a military office with a local Jewish woman, Hermance Drai, who did civilian work. He was transferred to Italy, but he returned to Oran to marry her in March 1946. He came back in June 1946 to take her to the States.

However, she died suddenly a few days before he arrived. He and her family were devastated. He immediately returned to the States. As a child, I never knew about this marriage. In those days, my grandparents believed it was best not to talk about sorrows. After my uncle died in 2000, we found her picture, many letters written by her and by her family, and a lot of military memorabilia.

We also found an old camera with film which had not been developed. Amazingly, we were able to get these pictures developed. They were pictures of the synagogue, the wedding party, the bride, and my uncle. My uncle had also written a very detailed description of the family preparations leading up to the wedding and of the wedding itself.

My parents ultimately told me that my uncle had been married. He never remarried. He was always very close with his nieces and nephews, but we were never able to broach the subject with him.

After his death, I read and re-read the letters, looking for some clues about Hermance’s family. I located some names of army buddies and posted some messages on www.ancestry.com. I was able to connect with a second wife of an army friend and share pictures, but there were no additional leads. I wrote to the consulate in Oran and received a reply from someone who happened to pick up the mail that had been...
left on an office desk. Her suggestion was to post a message in a local newspaper. I never followed her suggestion. On the Ancestry message board, I posted a message with the last name of the family. There were seven sisters. Possibly, someone would see it and respond.

After a number of years, I forgot about the Ancestry post. However, a week or so after my dad died in 2009, something told me to check the message board. There was a response posted several years earlier from a sister, with an address in France and a telephone number. I called immediately, fumbling through the language issue, and we began corresponding. We shared pictures and letters. I learned that only three sisters still survived. The family always wondered what had happened to my uncle. They referred to him as family and talked about him with their children and grandchildren.

In 2011, my brother and I met one sister and her husband in New York while they were on a cruise along the Atlantic coast. In 2013, we travelled to France and met her and another sister and their extended families. We have a wonderful connection with this family through email, Facebook, and by phone and wish that fate had not been so unkind to these two, wonderful, young people in 1946.

Carol Heller is retired from the Social Security Administration. In addition to enjoying her grandchildren and numerous hobbies, she is researching the Heit and Kenig families from Zamosc, Poland. She also searches for the Kalstein family from Kishinev, Moldova and the Heller family from Vilna, Lithuania.

She commented: “Our French family is very special to me and my brother. Amazing that the world is so accessible through the internet. I have since tracked down my mother’s family who came from Zamosc. It is an exciting journey to search and uncover information.” Contact Carol at: cheller01@comcast.net

REMEMBERING ARMY STAFF SERGEANT HERBERT GOLDBERG, 1922-1944
by Tammy A. Hepps

I believe the first time I even heard about Herbie, my grandmother’s cousin from South Jersey, was the day I asked her to dictate the family tree to me. I was so focused on writing down everything she said – she gave me close to a hundred people in one sitting – that I had very little time to reflect on any of it. I annotated Herbie’s name with her words “killed WWII” and moved on. It wasn’t until a few years after she died that I realized the missed opportunity to ask the right questions. When we cleaned out her apartment, I discovered that of all the letters she must have received over her long life, there were only two sets of correspondence she kept. One was Herbie’s letters to her during his military service. For the first time I realized that Herbie was just a year younger than she, brother to the favorite cousin and son to the favorite aunt she often mentioned. She and Herbie must have been close, too.

This past Veterans Day, Herbie’s niece posted a picture of him on Facebook. It was the first time I saw what he looked like. His cheerful smile raised a lump in my throat. I began to wonder about his death and life. One Google search later, I miraculously had much of what I had hoped to learn: name, short biography, military rank and division, burial, photograph, awards, even newspaper articles, all due to the amazing, volunteer efforts of Phil Cohen in creating his Camden County history site, www.dvrbs.com. Herbie’s page (http://www.dvrbs.com/Monuments/voorhees/VoorheesAmy-EW-WW2-HerbertGoldberg.htm) also contained a couple of surprises about how his path had crossed my own.

I knew that I had grown up near where Herbie’s family had lived because my grandmother had sometimes pointed across a busy intersection near my childhood home to tell me she had visited cousins there, back when the area was in the country.
Years later, when I began attending a particular local synagogue, she told me I should ask its rabbi emeritus if he remembered the Goldbergs because they had been founding members. I never did. It seemed too remote. But on Herbie’s memorial page I learned it was that rabbi who had buried him, the synagogue’s library was named for him, and its memorial wall contained a plaque with his name. How had I never noticed either? I was most startled to learn from Phil’s site that Herbie’s name was on two war memorials in our shared hometown, neither of which I had even known existed. One was in the neighborhood where he had grown up and his parents remained after he died (much of which was obliterated by the Ashland PATCO station built in the ’60s). It was hard to believe all this family history was just a breath away from where I grew up.

So, in a short period of time, I turned a name and “killed WWII” into a trove of information. Plus, from my uncle I learned the history of the battle in which Herbie was killed, from the synagogue archivist I received a moving account of the library’s dedication, and most importantly, from Herbie’s niece I heard memories of the life he had led. What could I do with all these fragments to share with my family the full story of the person Herbie had been? Enter my own web site, Treelines.com, which I had launched a year prior for just this purpose.

Treelines is a new kind of genealogy web site focusing on the stories of people’s lives. Other genealogy programs help you organize names, dates, relationships, and sources into a tree. In contrast, Treelines uses that tree as a starting point and proceeds to add memories, photographs, anecdotes, and historical context, all of which conveys the true measure of a person’s life. The results are part digital scrapbook, part multimedia story, generating a potentially more enriching, accessible, and fun experience for your entire family.

If you’re an experienced genealogist, you can get started on Treelines by uploading your family tree in the GEDCOM format, which is what I did. When I first looked at Herbie’s page on Treelines, it was very clear that it didn’t do his life justice.

After importing my GEDCOM file, Herbie’s life story on Treelines consisted of just two pages.

That big green plus sign beckoned: there were so many more pages that needed to be added to Herbie’s story. Using Treelines’ storybuilder (which won the RootsTech Developer Challenge), I started entering the information I had piece-by-piece. Some of it was genealogical, like census and military records, while other parts were a mix of genealogical and narrative, like the newspaper articles and synagogue records. Even more meaningful were photographs of Herbie, his grave, his tombstone, and his memorial in the synagogue. Most important of all, however, were the letters he wrote my grandmother while deployed and the family stories his niece recalled, which had little research value, but immeasurable family worth.

As I watched the timeline of his life emerge from all of these artifacts, I made sure to add what historical context and personal color I could – how he struggled during training to fit in with his raucous fellow soldiers, how his regiment faced fierce, almost non-stop fighting from the moment they arrived in Italy, and, of course, how tragic it was that this cheerful young man, with such love for his fiancée, had to go to war at all. The emerging story also gave me a place to explain to my family what it meant to me to discover that his life resonated so close to home.

Herbie’s story wasn’t only mine to tell, though. My own uncle and Herbie’s niece had family and historical context to share as well. Fortunately, Treelines is designed for just this sort of collaboration. After inviting them to our private family tree and giving them access to edit Herbie’s story, they could add their own pages, too.

The best part of having Herbie’s biography online is that his story will continue to evolve as we learn new things about him. For example, his deceased personnel file is still on order, and the synagogue archivist continues to turn up more information about the family’s involvement for me. Whenever these findings arrive, I can easily add them to the story and alert my family. The relatives whom I’ve invited to edit the story can also add information as they dig up pictures or recall memories.
In short, Treelines makes your family tree the basis for a digital scrapbook to which you and your relatives can add anything, whether a sourced genealogical fact or a priceless family anecdote. Connecting the details into a story, as we did for Herbie, is optional. It’s enough just to use the site as a gathering place for everything worth remembering. Treelines’ effective tools make it easy for you and your relatives to work together, no matter how far apart you all live, to preserve in one place the most meaningful aspects of your family’s history.

If you’ve already been working on your tree elsewhere, you may question the value of working Treelines-style. The benefits go beyond just collaborating more easily with your relatives and recording information that doesn’t have a place in traditional family tree software. Treelines creates an inviting experience for those relatives who need convincing about why family history is so important. The design is meant to engage them not only so they enjoy perusing the scrapbooks or stories you put together, but also so they can easily add their own contributions. The whole point of making genealogical discoveries is to find a way to pass them down, and Treelines is designed with that primary goal in mind.

On Memorial Day I invited my family to read Herbie’s story to commemorate his service. Whether they read every word or caught the gist from the pictures, they were connecting with the past in a way my original tree with its plain facts and sources would not have permitted. It is gratifying to me as a family historian to know I’ve managed to compile and share an important story. What is even more important is that the life and ultimate sacrifice of our cousin, Staff Sergeant Herbert Goldberg, who grew up just down the road, are still being honored two generations later.

Everything in your tree is private by default on Treelines, but I chose to make Herbie’s story public so you can read it at http://treelines.com/herbie/.

Tammy A. Hepps is the creator of Treelines.com, a family, story-sharing website and winner of the RootsTech 2013 Developer Challenge. She has a degree in computer science from Harvard as well as fourteen years of experience in digital media, leading a diverse range of technology initiatives. She has been working on her family tree for more than twenty years and combines the depth of her knowledge in genealogy, technology, and storytelling into her Treelines website.

She serves on the boards of directors of JewishGen and the Philadelphia Jewish Archives Center (PJAC), and the board of advisors of the New York Family History School.

Tammy can be reached at thepps@gmail.com

MY ASHKENAZIC GRANDMA’S BOREKAS AND THE CHALLENGE OF PRESERVING FAMILY HISTORY

When I mentioned that I would be writing about the Capsutos for a genealogy journal, relatives from three branches of my family immediately asked the same question: "You are going to write about borekas¹, aren't you?" It's an article of faith in my family that savory Sephardic pastries are practically the pinnacle of Jewish culture. So besides this being a story of how family history is lost or preserved, and how cultural traditions survive through unlikely channels, this is also about cheese pastries and spinach turnovers. Lots of them.

To give you an idea of how seriously my extended family takes our borekas and our phyllo pastries: In 2002, while changing planes on my way to a family reunion, I ran into my cousin Sandie at O'Hare Airport. She was struggling to hold onto a heavy suitcase that kept trying to roll away. "Why didn't you check the bag?" I asked. She replied, "My regular suitcase is checked. This is 412 phyllos."

When Jews hear my last name, they often respond, "You don't look Sephardic." And it's true: I don't look Mediterranean at all, because three of my grandparents were Ashkenazim, and anyone looking at me sees one seriously pasty punim (face). However, growing up, I was mainly around the Turks in the family. An Ashkenazic relative told me yesterday that after marrying a Capsuto, she found that Sephardic families are very close and "there's something about Sephardic culture that just sucks you in." Part of it is that, as a minority within a minority, many Sephardim feel protective about our foods, language, writers, thinkers and music, and feel an urge to promote them.
So here I am, a three-quarters Ashkenazic, one-quarter Sephardic Jew who has only the vaguest idea of what a kugel is, but who devours borekas, translates documents from Judeo-Spanish into English, and can whip up a passably tasty batch of kupeta². Three-quarters of my reference points come from one-quarter of my heritage.

My lack of knowledge about my Central and Eastern European ancestors is not absolute. I know, for instance, that my mother grew up in a Yiddish-speaking family in the Strawberry Mansion section of Philadelphia and in Northeast Philly in the 1940s and 50s. I have photos of her relatives and could tell you names and a few anecdotes, but on the whole I know surprisingly little about their ancestry and culture. My maternal grandmother Florence (Bluma), who had emigrated from Poland, died in the 1950s before I was born, and no one talked much about her when I was little. My mother tells me that Florence was observant - she lit candles and kept kosher - and was much missed after she died. Otherwise the information is sparse and second hand.

As for my maternal grandfather Izzy, I knew him well for almost thirty years and loved him very much. In all that time, though, he would never talk about the Old Country. I think that for him, the whole point of fleeing an oppressive land like Russian-dominated Ukraine was that your descendants should never be burdened with the knowledge of what happened there. Anecdotes about his youth were always set in 1920s Philadelphia, including tales of schoolmates mocking his accent. When he would tell these stories, he would screw up his face, brandish his fists, and imitate his childhood Slavic accent as he warned his schoolyard tormentors: "You make fohn my accent, I geev you two blue eye!" He worked for many years at the Budd factory in Philly, which made auto parts and train carriages.

Grandpa Izzy's siblings were dead by the time I came along, so other than my mother and her sister's immediate family, I knew of almost no living relatives on that side. Yes, there was Jewish food and yes, there was some Jewish music (largely Yiddish recordings by the Barry Sisters, though Grandpa generally preferred classical music), but it was as if his world had begun on the shores of Pennsylvania.

By contrast, the Greek/Turkish culture of my father's family was a strong presence in my childhood, imbued with the scent of Mediterranean cheeses and sauces, the taste of spongy, honey-soaked bumuelos, and the pulsing sounds of Greek dance music on the turntable. My love of Sephardic food was instilled largely by two women: one Sephardic - my great-grandma Rachel - and one, paradoxically, my Ashkenazic paternal grandmother Bess. She, too, had been at least partially "sucked in" by Sephardic culture. Her ancestors may have come from Eastern Europe, but when we visited, breakfast in her kitchen generally consisted of homemade cheese borekas and spinach borekas.

As a teenager in Chicago, Grandma had spent a fair amount of time around Sephardim, including her childhood sweetheart, my Grandpa Al. (When my grandfather died in 1995, I inherited a beautiful photo of teenage "Betty," with a love note written on it to her Al.)

Young Bess was in and out of the kitchen of her future mother-in-law, Rachel, around that time. Thanks to the Capsutos and to Bess's own research, she gained a solid knowledge of Sephardic cuisine to complement her repertoire of Eastern European Jewish dishes and American meals. Like her, I too learned about a variety of Sephardic foods from my grandpa and his siblings: Rachel's five sons and three daughters who survived to adulthood.

Great-grandma Rachel (known to everyone as "Nona" practically from the moment she first became a grandmother) had a joyful laugh that made people smile. In 1910, in her early 20s, she emigrated from Kastoria, Turkey (now part of Greece) to Chicago, where she moved in with her brother. Family lore says it was Rachel's sister who originally was meant to emigrate and who was seen as a potential bride for Mosco Capsuto, a fellow Kastorian in his late 20s living in the Windy City. Mosco was disappointed to learn that Rachel was the sister coming over, as he knew she had a big mole on her nose, and he didn't think it sounded appealing. A cousin recalls
Nona saying that her parents, affluent cloth merchants, sent her to Vienna for surgery to remove the mole and to plug the resulting hole. When Mosco finally met her in Chicago, they hit it off and they were married in 1911. These great-grandparents, "Nona and Papou," were together until his death in 1963, shortly before my birth.

I knew Nona for ten years. When I remember her, two images come to mind: 1) My eighty-something, 4' 5", Greek-accented great-grandmother waving a handkerchief over her head as she danced enthusiastically to Greek music and tried to get everyone else to dance with her at family celebrations or in my grandparents' living room on Long Island, and 2) Nona talking to us kids as she baked borekas or cooked chewy, gooey honey candy that she would cut into diamonds. Nona was a strong woman who had given birth to nine children, and as a young housewife, she had been the sunny counterpart to Mosco, a much beloved but stern disciplinarian who believed in the educational value of a belt strap. (He would mellow considerably with age, and become a doting grandfather and great-grandpa.)

So what does all this have to do with genealogy? Well, my cousins and I have been talking a lot lately about the ways in which families' histories are preserved and lost, and about the importance of genealogy evoking personalities instead of being just dry lists of names and dates. I'm concerned that all I know about my mother's family is a few anecdotes and whatever paper trail was left in ships' manifests and census records, but I'm also concerned that even on the Capsuto side of my family, most of what I know about Rachel and Mosco and their brood came from stories that either she or her children told me, and that exist only in our memories. When our generation is gone, nothing may be left of those stories. Only one of their children is still alive to remember their Chicago home of the 1910s and 20s, where they spoke "our Spanish": great-aunt Becky is still here, but she is 95 and ailing.

We rely too much on memory, and even when we try to document things, it's easy for all that hard work to go for nothing. For many years, the historian of our branch of the Capsuto family was my great-uncle Hermie, of Tucson, Arizona. In the 1970s and 1980s, he conducted arduous research in those pre-internet days, compiling hundreds of pages of handwritten and typewritten data, and ultimately tracing our ancestry back to one Chayim Abraham Kafsudo, probably born in Turkey around the 1830s. Hermie would bring his tape recorder to family gatherings to record informal oral histories, as well as gab sessions where he and his siblings swapped anecdotes about Rachel and Mosco and reminisced about growing up in Chicago. During these sessions, I remember animated conversations, singing, and laughter echoing off the walls.

When Hermie died in 2004, his collection of Judaica - books, a shofar, news clippings and so on - went to a Jewish historical society in Arizona, but no one seemed sure where his family research material ended up. He had once told me he planned to leave it to his granddaughter, so I figured she had it. His son and granddaughter, meanwhile, assumed he had sent it all to me. It is so easy for years of work to vanish.

Fortunately, around that time, I visited Hermie's brother Eddie in Florida. Eddie didn't have the original material, but Hermie had sent him photocopies twenty years earlier... hundreds of sheets of precious family history! In those pages I "met" long-gone cousins I'd never heard of. There were happy stories - births, weddings, people reunited with loved ones - and tragedies, such as the death of 15-year-old Solomon "Sam" Capsuto who, in 1916, slipped on a banana peel and fell down the stairs of a Chicago elevated train station.

Eddie was about 90 when I visited him, and he entrusted the photocopies to me. I wonder if other relatives also have photocopies of the originals. In addition, Eddie let me make digital copies of countless family photos from the 1910s to 1960s, and told me who the people were and some of the background. Even better, just this week, one of my dad's cousins told me he thinks he has some of Hermie's family audio recordings.

The recovery of these materials is good news, but we came very close to losing a lot of vital information. We need to figure out how to preserve it and make it available to our relatives (if not necessarily the general public) in a way that is reliable and durable. Family websites often disappear when the webmaster dies, so this may not be the ideal route. Printed,
bound books are expensive and seem a bit 20th century, though we’re considering them. Sharing information through social media or commercial genealogy websites also seems precarious: web portals can shut down without warning, and even if they don’t, their future corporate owners could always decide to delete old data and old accounts.

We don’t have a perfect solution yet. But we’ll hash it out at our next reunion, over a batch of spinach borekas.

References:
(1) The names of these delicacies vary by region and family. In our family, a “boreka” is usually a type of savory pastry made with thin, light, hand-kneaded dough. Similar pastries made with phyllo dough, which are also known as borekas in much of the world, we simply call "a phyllo."
(2) Kupeta (sometimes written "koopeta") is a Passover candy made from honey, sugar and matzah meal. Similar Pesach treats exist throughout the Jewish world, but I have only heard Sephardic families from Kastoria call it by this name.

Steven Capsuto is a part-time historian and full-time professional translator of various languages, including Judeo-Spanish (popularly known as Ladino). He was born in Philadelphia in 1964, grew up in Cherry Hill, and lived in Center City from 1989 to 2006. He resides in New York City.

Steven is currently reading anything he can find about the Sephardic communities of Greece in the 19th and early 20th centuries, especially anything about the Jews of Kastoria. At his family's next big reunion, he and his cousins will be trying to decide on reliable, durable ways to make their family history available to future generations.

Contact Steven at: stevecap@dca.net

DATA BACKUP: SAVE YOUR DATA AND BROWSER BOOKMARKS

by James Gross

Data backup is a frequently discussed computer IT (Information Technology) topic. When you least expect it, your computer may suffer a momentary malfunction, or it may simply refuse to restart. Some of you may be very lucky and have never experienced a computer shutdown or loss of data. Others of you, however, may be able to relate and understand the apprehension and annoyance when a computer unexpectedly shuts off or refuses to restart. So, how can you be more proactive?

In today’s fast paced information highway, we are inundated with a multitude of information devices. These include tablets, laptops, and desktop computers. Computer users access and store information for both business as well as recreational purposes, such as genealogy, and, as we research and browse online, we exponentially accumulate an ever increasing amount of data files, image files, and bookmark links. Many of these data and image files as well as browser bookmarks are unique and cannot be replaced if lost. In a previous issue, I discussed options for data storage backup.

As the author Daniel Jones noted in his article on computer data backup, “It is absolutely critical that users understand that corruption happens, hard drives will fail, motherboards will short out, and mistakes will erase data.” There are a number of statistics which illustrate the relatively low percentage of periodic data backup by users.

Apparently, 35% of computer owners have NEVER backed up their computer, 51% of computer owners backup less than once a year or never, and women are 33% more likely than men to have never backed up their computer. On the positive side, the frequency of data backups seems to improve based on one’s level of education. Thus, if you are a college graduate, statistically speaking, you are 75% more likely to have backed up your data.

A short summary of data backup would include the obvious: have some sort of plan for data backup! I can appreciate that we are all creatures of habit and one of these habits may include being lazy in regard to occasionally spending time to back up important computer files and folders.

Now, as long as you have your important genealogy files stored in identifiable folders, such as “my documents,” “genealogy files,” or “family photos,” it is readily apparent which folders you would select to backup. When you perform your periodic data backup, the folders could be copied to a portable hard drive or burned onto a DVD (digital visual disc). I don’t feel it is really necessary or practical to try and backup the entire computer.

I recently ran into a problem when my computer began making strange noises. I shut it down, but it would not restart. I was not totally alarmed as I routinely back up most of my important files by saving them to a second, internal hard drive. However, I ran into another problem: I had neglected to create or save a backup for my browser bookmarks. And since I do quite a lot of genealogy and...
reference searches, I had accumulated a lengthy list of browser bookmarks.

What are browser bookmarks? Browser bookmarks are those bookmarks which you have saved to help you locate a particular website or webpage. Three popular internet browsers are Internet Explorer, Firefox, and Chrome. Each of these browsers has an option to export and save a browser bookmark file. Internet Explorer’s file is Bookmark.htm, Firefox’s is places.sqlite, and Chrome’s is Bookmarks.

Each browser has its own location and method of exporting a copy of the file should you need to recover it. For example, Internet Explorer has a “Favorites” button, Firefox users use the “show all bookmarks,” and Chrome users access the bookmark manager.

There are a number of cloud based alternatives for saving and retrieving bookmarks. One popular service is called Google Bookmarks. A Google account is required. In addition, there are a number of other cloud based bookmark providers.5, 6 Several online blogs endorsed a free cloud based bookmark service called Xmarks and I may try it.7 For those with Macs, Bookkit, a fee based bookmark manager, may be worth looking at.8 The bottom line, please be smart and spend some time today to back up your important files and bookmarks and avoid the aggravation, wasted time, and expense which comes with computer malfunctions.

References:
(4) Ibid.
(5) List of cloud based bookmark providers: http://alternativeto.net/software/xmarks/
(6) Alternative list of cloud based bookmark providers: http://tinyurl.com/ok7lucx
(7) Xmarks. Website at: http://www.xmarks.com/
(8) Bookkit. Website at: http://www.everydaysoftware.net/bookit/

James Gross biography appears on page 6, following his article “Advantages of joining a Genealogy Society”.

James can be reached at: navistar96@yahoo.com

SALVAGING YOUR PHOTOS AND MEMENOTES
by Marge Farbman

This past January a short circuit set fire to my house. Though it did not completely burn down, the damage was extensive. More damage was caused by smoke and heat than actual flames or water. Being a scrapbooker and the grandmother of eight, I had a ton of photos in frames on the walls and tabletops, in scrapbooks, in photo boxes, in cardboard boxes large and small, on our computers, and on CDs. Here’s what I have learned so far from this experience.

Any digital photos on your computer are vulnerable to loss from the heat of fire. Depending on where they were at the time our computers melted to varying degrees. And, the soot of the fire gets into EVERYTHING and gums up the works. Remembering that heat rises, we were still surprised that things on the floor and the lower shelves of the bookcases were somewhat salvageable, but everything from table/desk height to the ceiling was pretty much destroyed, melted, or toasted by heat which reaches thousands of degrees according to the fire marshal.

Although the heat warped the jewel case of each CD, the content of the CDs themselves (our precious photos) was readable by my relatively new, one year old computer. CDs that were in a drawer were in better shape than the ones stored on the bookshelf. We carefully cleaned all of the CDs before attempting to read them in the new computers. Soot was even found in sealed cases.

I took my warped and twisted laptop to the Camera Shop in Bryn Mawr and asked the staff associate if he thought he could recover the data. He was able to recover not only my photos, but all my data as well. My husband’s computer was in a different location and wasn’t so lucky. He had not updated his computer in years so his old system was now not accessible, and although the old versions of programs worked fine for him, they could not be read by more recent versions of the programs, and his data could not be recovered. After experiencing this computer episode, I would recommend that you consider keeping your equipment and programs updated. If the manufacturer is not going to support your system, upgrade.

Photos on the wall or on tabletops suffered various problems. Some were just sooty but came out of the frame. These I gently rinsed in tepid water and used a soft cloth to wipe off soot that did not rinse off. I laid them on a towel and allowed them to air dry. The top protective surface has washed off but the image...
on most of them is still decent. I will scan them into my computer and then save them onto a CD. This time, I will put the CDs in a small, fire safe. The one place that the soot did not manage to get into was our fire safe!

Photos in hotter areas, like the side of the refrigerator or in the living room on the opposite side of the wall where the fire spread were melted onto the glass of the frames. They did not soak off and were so encrusted with soot that in some cases we couldn’t even tell who was in the photo. Sadly, we threw them into the dumpster and hoped that somewhere, either on the CDs or on our children’s computers, we will find those pictures again.

Fortunately, the photo albums were not so near to the fire source, so although the firemen dragged their hoses through the living room, the albums were on the opposite side and didn’t get wet. The days of being in an unheated house with wet rugs and high humidity was not a good thing but many of the albums seem to be all right or at least recoverable. Currently they are in large, plastic trunks tightly sealed to keep the smell of smoke out of our temporary housing.

The photos that were in black plastic boxes from Creative Memories fared best. It’s a shame that they do not sell them anymore because, other than being in the box, those photos were unprotected and they are mostly clean. I think some soft tissues will clean off the light coat of soot. The envelopes of photos and negatives, mostly labeled at least by year and stored in cardboard photo boxes were in second best shape. Had they gotten wet, the photos would have been goners, but fortunately they were only sooty. I bought new photo boxes at Michael’s and put the envelopes of photos into the clean boxes. There were too many to go through now. Though everything smells of smoke and fire, the cardboard boxes seems to hold in the odor. I’m not sure what I will do with them but for now they are boxed and stacked in the top of a closet in our temporary digs.

I have the photos and albums stabilized, and I’ll get to them when I can because, truthfully, there are so many other things that now need my attention more. I don’t know if I will have to scan, reprint, and remake about twenty finished albums, many with embellished pages, and most with journaling. I’m hoping over the next few weeks to leave them outside in a covered area to air out. I have found that many things will release the smell of fire if allowed to air out. Most of the hundreds of books were literally toasted by the heat and went into the dumpster. A few survived, however, and my fresh air treatment has worked or it seems to have. We’ll see how they smell after a few, humid, Philadelphia, summer days.

I’ll let you know how my project progresses but in the meantime here are a few tips:

• Keep your photo CDs in a fire safe. They are not expensive and worth it for important papers and photo CDs.
• Share photos with your kids or other family member and friends. They will serve as your off-site repository
• Keep envelopes of photos and negatives in heavy weight cardboard, archival if possible, boxes. Not too big so you can grab them if necessary and if possible. Plastic seems like it would be better, but we found that plastic things melted beyond recognition in some areas so it’s a toss-up.
• When things are safe, try to stabilize your photos and albums and get family and friends to help you do whatever you need to do to return your albums to useable shape.
• And yes, it could happen to you, so take precautions now. Scan those old precious photos or have it done for you. Ask your kids, grandkids to help. They know the technology.
• Do it now or at least soon. Get help and get it done. Save those photos of all the generations of your family.

Marge Farbmans 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

SOUTH JERSEY AFFILIATE APRIL 24, 2014 MEETING
by Susan Sokolick Kauffman

Genealogists on the eastern side of the Delaware River had an enlightening experience at the April meeting of the South Jersey affiliate when David Brill presented a talk entitled “The Pale of Settlement: What You Know for Sure That Just Ain’t So”. The title itself certainly caught the attention of the attendees immediately through its shock value and irreverence.

After tracing the phrase “Pale of Settlement” to an English term first used to describe the limited places in Ireland where English people could reside, David then went on to identify which modern countries were included in the Jewish version in Eastern Europe. They stretched from the Baltic to the Black Seas.

A list of myths concerning “The Pale” served as a successful organizing device for this talk. Each was explained clearly and in great detail. They included:

• Keep your photo CDs in a fire safe. They are not expensive and worth it for important papers and photo CDs.
• Share photos with your kids or other family member and friends. They will serve as your off-site repository
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❖

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A list of myths concerning “The Pale” served as a successful organizing device for this talk. Each was explained clearly and in great detail. They included:
David spent time debunking these “givens” and offered factual information about life for our Jewish ancestors who lived there.

**Military**
- The notorious 25-year draft requirement only lasted for about seven years, from 1827 to 1834. Over time, the length of required service was reduced, first to fifteen years, later to six, then five (with an additional nine years of reserve duty).
- It’s true that some children were conscripted (the “cantonists”). However, that practice ended in 1859. It’s also true that, as is the case today, the poor and uneducated were disproportionately represented.
- Jews couldn’t become officers (with extremely few exceptions, mainly doctors).
- Jews evaded the draft at about the same rate as other groups in the Russian Empire.

**Pogroms**
- Were very rare prior to the 1880s.
- Were motivated by a combination of religious and economic causes.
- Became more violent and lethal over time.
- Mostly took place in Southern Ukraine and Southern Russia.
- May have been directly planned by government officials, although the evidence for this is circumstantial. What is beyond dispute is that the government’s reaction to the pogroms was anti-Semitic in that it blamed the behavior of the Jews for provoking the attacks on their communities.

**Land Ownership**
- By law, Jews could own land within the Pale, but not outside it.
- Even within the Pale, Jews were prohibited from owning (Christian) serfs who went with the land. Without serfs to work it, Jews had little practical reason to acquire land.
- Jews were encouraged to farm underpopulated lands in Southern Ukraine, in exclusively Jewish farm colonies.

**Universal Poverty**
- The popular perception of the *shtetl* (small town, village) as a place of grinding, unremitting poverty is partly true. It’s a fairly accurate description of what many formerly prosperous *shtetlekh* had become by the early 1900s.
- Many of the same *shtetlekh* had been wealthy from trade just a few years earlier.
- The more northern gubernias (pre-1917 provinces in the Russian Empire) tended to be poorer.

**Barred from Living in Cities**
- Jews were generally barred from living in four cities in the Pale, including Kiev—but even here there were exceptions.
- Jews who were deemed important enough (which at first included only wealthy merchants) could be granted residency privileges by the czar on an individual basis to live in cities.
- By 1910, there were 75,000 Jews living in Kiev city.
- There were no ghettos, in the western European sense, in the Pale. Technically, Kiev Jews could live anywhere in the city. However, most lived, by choice, in one of several Jewish neighborhoods, especially the Podol district.

**Research in the Old Country is Impossible**
- In fact, Russian bureaucrats were excellent record keepers and information is available.

David’s well-organized and clearly sequenced presentation, delivered with both warmth and humor, certainly helped to dispel myths that keep us from painting a more accurate portrait of the lives of our forbearers in the Old Country and hopefully will foster a new enthusiasm to keep researching the FACTS!
May Meeting Summary

by Elaine Ellison

Our May speaker, Ron Arons, presented “Understanding Our Families, Understanding Ourselves”, with a focus on genograms which are used to record family history through the lives of each of its members. These generate a family tree system that works through multiple generations using the Bowen Family Systems Theory that was developed by psychiatrist, Dr. Murray Bowen, from the 1950s to the 1970s. Its eight concepts are based on the idea that the family is an emotional system. The concepts are: 1) differentiation of self; 2) triangles; 3) nuclear family emotional system; 4) family projection process; 5) emotional cutoff; 6) multigenerational transmission process; 7) sibling position; 8) societal emotional process. Ron Arons studied the Bowen Family Systems Theory for three years.

He focused on doing his research full time after his parents died and traveled to England, Poland, Romania, Belarus, Ukraine, and Lithuania. He decided to search information on one family member at a time and chose his great grandfather, Isaac Spier, the son of a rabbi, as his first study. Ron shared events in his great grandfather’s life with great humor. According to the census he reviewed, Isaac was born in Brooklyn, New York, but his wedding certificate indicated London as his birthplace. An 1881 census from England confirmed he was born in London. It seems Isaac simultaneously had four wives in four different locations. He was arrested in 1916 for larceny and forgery, having “cooked the books” of his place of employment. The records Ron researched showed that Isaac spent four years at Sing Sing Correctional Facility in New York State. In examining Sing Sing records, Ron found that his great grandfather also used an alias, Herbert Edward Spier.

His great grandmother, Ida, complained to a judge that her husband, Isaac, abandoned her. Another woman, Minnie Ott, claimed Isaac was a bigamist. When the judge saw Isaac’s reaction after Ida showed him their son, “the jig was up”.

Ron spoke about family relationships such as a father’s expectations of the oldest son, a mother’s relationship with her sons, and triangles of people to diffuse anxiety within a family. He discussed how to create a spreadsheet comparing and contrasting family traits to identify trends of behavior. With the spreadsheet, a person can explore the “whys and hows” of family behaviors, including a sense of humor, treatment of women, anxiety, and, yes, criminal activity.

Ron closed with a chilling analysis of the brothers who masterminded the Boston Marathon bombings in April 2013. His paper on this subject can be found at http://www.hsystems.org/9.html.

On his handout Ron provided the links to four genogram software websites including www.genogramanalytics.com, which can be used by both PCs and Macs.

4th Annual JGSGP Genealogy Fair

by Evan Fishman

The auditorium at Main Line Reform Temple in Wynnewood, Pennsylvania was bustling with lively conversation between budding and seasoned Jewish genealogists on June 8th. Kudos are in order to Carole Strickland, overall Fair coordinator, with expert assistance from Avivah Pinski, who managed logistics at the temple, and Shelda Sandler, who handled publicity. The afternoon ran very smoothly.

Following the format established at previous fairs, there were about twenty-five stations, all of which were staffed by congenial individuals eager to answer questions and provide guidance in the attendees’ research efforts. Twenty-two JGSGP members served in this capacity while nine other individuals volunteered their time to represent various area repositories or organizations or provide translation services.
According to Susan Neidich, membership vice president, approximately 50-70 non-members attended the fair, of which ten paid to join our society. Jack and Ann Kauffman asked people to fill out exit evaluations. They received twenty-nine responses with 90% rating the fair favorably.

JGSGP offers its thanks to those who were instrumental in making the fair the resounding success it was:

- JewishGen research: Walter Spector
- Ancestry.com research: James Gross, Barry Wagner
- Ethnic bank records: Fred Blum, Lois Sernoff
- JRI-Poland: Mark Halpern
- Polish translations: Dr. Andrew Zalewski
- Family History Center: Bill Nicholls
- Philadelphia City Archives: Jill Rawnsley, archivist
- Reference/Resource materials: Rod MacNeil, Jim Meyer
- Yiddish translations: Rita Ratson
- ViewMate assistance: Linda Ewall-Krocker
- Russian translations: Joel Spector
- Germany/Prussia: Felicia Mode Alexander
- Russian Empire: David Brill
- JGSGP membership: Susan Neidich
- Getting Started: Marilyn Golden
- JGSGP Speakers Bureau: Stan & Shelda Sandler
- Hungarian research: Alicia Weiss
- Lithuania/Litvak SIG: Bernard Cedar
- NJ State Archives: Bette M. Epstein, supervising archivist; Kaye Paletz
- Genealogical Society of PA: Joyce Homan
- Victor Center for the Prevention of Jewish Genetic Diseases (AEMC): Linda Mastoon, Dir. of Marketing & Communications
- Parkinson’s Progression Markers Initiative at UPJIS: Rachel Purri for Jacqui Rick, PPMI Project Manager
- Free Books: Cindy Meyer
- Entrance & Exit Surveys: Jack & Ann Kauffman
- Guest Russian translator: Ludmila Hanchar
The South Jersey affiliate met at the Cherry Hill branch of the Family History Center for a presentation on the resources available through familysearch.com, followed by a tour of the research area. Ann Timmons, assistant director, gave a comprehensive overview of the extensive program the Mormons have organized for genealogy research. Family Search is the largest genealogy organization in the world with over 4600 locations. Each facility offers tools and resources to learn about our ancestors and provides free access to subscription genealogical websites, including familysearch.org and ancestry.com.

The process for ordering microfilms has been overhauled and is accessible exclusively at familysearch.com. Consequently, Ann encouraged attendees to establish their own accounts there in order to manage procurement of microfilm and microfiche from the Family History Library which contains over 2.5 million microfilms from over 100 countries. Microfilming is currently taking place at 200 camera sites throughout the world. In addition, thousands of volunteers worldwide are working to index all files in Family Search’s efforts to digitize its entire collection. As a result we shouldn’t jump to order microfilms; do an online search first instead. Ann then outlined the ordering process.

JGSGP member, James Gross, showed the vast network of websites available and focused on specific databases that can only be viewed onsite at a FHC, such as newspaper searches, historic maps, and fold3.com which specializes in military records. We can get genealogical advice or learn where to find record collections by clicking on the “Wiki” option on the “Search” tab at familysearch.com. Just entering “Jewish” in the search window results in a significant number of collections which can be explored.

Thanks to Keala Sikahema, director of the Cherry Hill Family History Center, for arranging this very worthwhile visit.

ASHKENAZI NAMING PATTERNS

by Pamela Weisberger

Recently there was a question on one of the JewishGen SIG (Special Interest Group) lists inquiring about naming patterns – certainly an ongoing hot topic among genealogists – and I was moved in the spirit of the moment to chime in. I, too, made many assumptions when I first got started in genealogy about thirteen years ago and believed there were easy to follow rules about how names were chosen and how they were changed. I learned very quickly, however, that when it came to names, the only rule is that there are NO rules. Nothing is ever as it seems, and any and all interpretations are possible.

When it comes to how Jews "Americanized" their names, all bets are off. When people ask, "Could Sophie have become Esther?", the answer should always be "Yes...it could." That doesn't mean it did, but you also cannot overrule the idea and never should. Of course, this makes figuring names out extremely confounding. A few examples:

One of my most esteemed rabbis in the country was the late Rabbi Jack Stern, Jr. from Westchester Reform Temple in Scarsdale, New York. Growing up with him as my rabbi I was perplexed by this "Jr." thing, which appeared to be something Jews just didn't do (unless they were those wacky German Jews who celebrated Christmas!) but I never found out the answer why and how. It just was. (And was his name really John, Jonathan, or truly Jack?) The stories about nicknames not being the legal names are -- we also know -- not true and there are some people named Dick, who are not Richard and Jacks are simply Jack.

My Hungarian grandmother was named, Szerena, at birth, given the Hebrew name, Sarah, had a passenger record under Sali (a common Hungarian diminutive) and in the U.S., upon enrolling in school, became the very modern (at the time) Sadie. At age eight she remembered this name change very clearly and, while attached to her original name,
was powerless to do anything about it.

My Polish great grandmother was known in the U.S. as Hattie or Henrietta or Yetta. Her sister was also named Yetta or Hattie. What gives? When I finally located their official names on birth records, one was “Jochabed” and the other was “Chaya.” Both sounded too exotic and foreign to be used in the U.S., and perhaps they both liked the American version, decided to choose that variation, and didn't consider the confusion it would cause their families.

I always caution people to look at the ages of the parents. If there is a wide spread, especially if the husband is much older than his wife, this was possibly a second marriage. In the shtetl, what nice Jewish boy would have waited until he was in his thirties to get married? (Unless he was off at school for a long time or in the military or a traveling trader, peddler . . . you get the idea. It might have happened, but . . . highly unlikely.) So if his daughter has the same name as his wife, perhaps it is because she was born of the first marriage, and her mother was wife number one. If a son has the name of the husband, perhaps the wife was a widow, and the child was named for her former husband, who might have had the same name. (Married couples tended to often be of the same name combinations too. I have two “Leopold and Lenas” in two different sides of my family!) There can be blended families (there are today, there certainly were then) but documents rarely reflect that. Sometimes name analysis can offer clues.

I have found that it’s extremely common that Ashkenazi men would often name their first-born daughter after their deceased mother, and after that the wife’s deceased mother... and if they had siblings, everyone followed this pattern. My great great grandmother, Ruchel, had at least five granddaughters named Rose. My other great great grandmother Laia had several granddaughters named Lily. I even named my own daughter Lily. But . . . was she named for the Laia from Poland, as you might suspect? Not at all, because I wasn’t into genealogy and hadn’t traced my family when she was born. Fate? Perhaps? My husband’s German family with a mother named Mina who died, had several “Minnies” who came along in the U.S. and England. Is this a rule? Of course not, but when you find the same name popping up among first-born daughters in a family, it’s a good bet it is for a deceased grandmother or great grandmother. Or fate. Take your pick.

I’ve also found Hana, Hona, Chana, Chava, etc. on passenger records becoming Hannah, Anna, Channa, Hani, Annie, Eva, etc. in the U.S. or England. (But sometimes they could be Sophie or Esther! Remember...there are no rules!) Did they all have the same Hebrew name? Maybe yes, but most likely no. Beckys could have previously been Riwek versus Rebecca and so on. Another great grandmother named Beile (very popular in the Old Country) was -- at various times in the U.S. Bella, Bertha, Betty (that’s what everyone named their daughters later on, so popular in the 1920s) and even "Buck" according to one U.S. census mistranscription.

Although this theory is apocryphal, I think that schoolteachers or administrators are to blame for a lot of this name confusion. Right off the boat, most immigrants went on with their lives. The passenger records bear witness to the old version of what they were called. With toddlers at home, odds are the old names were still in use as was the language they spoke. When it came time to enroll children in school, probably the first time a name had to be written down and recorded officially, school officials might have counseled parents on providing a name in English with “American” spelling (as opposed to one that sounded Hebrew or Russian or Polish), and thus the Americanized version was born. After all . . . who in the U.S. could be bothered to write a name, like Szerena, with a “z” in a funny place? Who would know how to pronounce it?

A woman with Irish background told me that her grandmother named Mollie, had her name recorded as Margaret by a school official who told her that Mollie could only be a nickname, and every girl known as that should have the legal name of Margaret. Ahah! Who knew?

There are so many nuances in how given names were chosen (or forced onto people) that the only rule is that there are no rules and you need to go on instinct.

I'm researching a future talk on a woman born Rosheen (an Irish name!) who then became Carol. Her mother Ruchel, Raja (born in Odessa in 1907), then Ray (in the U.S.) decided she liked the name Rosheen too (which had also been her stage name -- remember that many Jews were in vaudeville) and took it as an adult, which precipitated changing her daughter's name. Who can account for why people do these things? (This Rosheen, turned Carol, went on to marry Walter Matthau and even her own family didn’t know the history of her name until it was unearthed during research.)

So keep an open mind and, when doing research, assume that Moishe on a passenger record could be Max on a
World War I draft registration, Morris on a naturalization record, Monroe for business documents, and perhaps Maurice . . . Moritz . . . Manny - oh, wait, that would probably mean he was Emmanuel in Hebrew, but then wouldn't he have preferred Michael in the New World? See what I mean? You could drive yourself crazy with this mishagash (craziness)! ❖

(Reprinted and edited with the permission of the author from the May 31, 2014 JewishGen discussion group digest.)

Pamela Weisberger is a professional genealogist and international speaker. She’s given presentations throughout the U.S., Australia, Poland, Canada, Ukraine, England, Italy, and Israel. She is also the 1st vice-president of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Los Angeles and president of Gesher Galicia, a research group focusing on the former Austrian province of Galicia. She has researched for the television show “Finding Our Roots,” created the “Galician Archival Records Project,” and has special expertise in historical newspaper research.

Contact Pamela at: pweisberger@gmail.com

TWO FAMILIES RESCUED AMID FLAMES AND SMOKE

by Walter Spector

I believe strongly in revisiting various genealogical resources for updates and new information.

I have referenced the site “Old Fulton New York Postcards” (http://www.fultonhistory.com/fulton.html) in a previous article. The manager of the site digitizes old newspapers. While the emphasis has centered on New York State newspapers, the Philadelphia Inquirer has recently been included. Therefore, I have started to search for my family names that are concentrated in Philadelphia. I found a few articles that did not give any more genealogical information or data.

I decided to try my wife’s family of Celian. I found an article about a serious fire that could have consumed the entire family. It made the front page of the Inquirer on August 17, 1901. Abraham, my wife’s grandfather, saved everyone, and all the members of two families survived. ❖

A former assistant principal in the Philadelphia School District, Walt Spector is 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 Walt at educonser@comcast.net.

The entire Celian family survived this fire; pictured are Abraham & Clara Celian and five of their eight children."
STEVE SCHECTER MEMORIAL LECTURE
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 5, 1:30 PM
REFORM CONGREGATION KENESETH ISRAEL
8339 OLD YORK ROAD, ELKINS PARK PA 19027

TENTATIVE SPEAKER: GLENN DYNNER, PHD
“JEWS AND THE LIQUOR TRADE IN EASTERN EUROPE”

Professor of Religion at Sarah Lawrence College, Glenn Dynner received his BA from Brandeis University, MA from McGill University, and PhD from Brandeis University. He was also a recipient of the Fulbright Award.

Dr. Dynner is a scholar of East European Jewry with a focus on the social history of Hasidism and the Haskalah (Jewish Enlightenment). Author of the book *Men of Silk: The Hasidic Conquest of Polish Jewish Society*, which received a Koret Publication Award and was a finalist for the National Jewish Book Awards, his additional interests include Polish-Jewish relations, Jewish economic history, and popular religion.

His latest work, *Yankel’s Tavern: Jews, Liquor, and Life in the Kingdom of Poland*, fills an important gap in our understanding of the social and economic development of Poland between the Congress of Vienna (1814-1815) and the ill-fated Polish uprising of 1863-4.

To read a fuller description of the book and view its table of contents, check out: http://ukcatalogue.oup.com/product/9780199988518.do

Dr. Dynner was featured in the episode of “Who Do You Think You Are?” with actress, Gwyneth Paltrow. Watch a moving segment at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vuPPtMbq4NY.

This lecture is being held to honor the memory of our esteemed member, Steve Schecter, who was a driving force in the Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Philadelphia.

WEDDING ANNOUNCEMENT

Katka Reszke (our March speaker) and Slawomir Grunberg were married in a traditional Jewish ceremony on June 24 in Wroclaw, Poland. This was the first religious Jewish wedding there in fourteen years. Read more at: http://www.jta.org/2014/06/24/news-opinion/world/in-polish-city-a-wedding-celebrates-jewish-rediscovery-and-revival
Nine-year-old Sylvan Scolnick (line 48), residing at 1339 N. 7th St., Philadelphia, grew up to have an unusual profession. By what nickname, referring to his most prominent physical characteristic, was he better known?

The answer appears at the bottom of page 2

Quizmaster, David Brill is a member of JGSGP and has been researching his own family history in Ukraine, Belarus, Poland, and the United States for over 20 years. Coordinator of the Russian Interest Group for JGSGP, he has made several presentations about various aspects of genealogical research in regions of the former Russian Empire.

David has been active in transliterating documents, including all existing Jewish and vital records for his ancestral shtetl of Usvyaty, Russia. He also maintains a Kehilalinks page for Tuchin, Ukraine.

Contact David at brilldr@comcast.net

Most, if not all, of us have uncovered black sheep, skeletons in the closet, non-heroes, non-royals or previously unknown but intriguing episodes through our family history research. We would like to invite our readers to submit articles about experiences when you were caught off guard by some finding(s).

Your Chronicles editorial team invites you to comment on the content and style of our publication.

1. Are there subjects we haven't covered?
2. Would you prefer that we emphasize or de-emphasize certain categories (discoveries, travel, techniques, meeting summaries)?
3. Would you like our graphic presentation to be changed? Please respond with your ideas and suggestions to: editor@jgsgp.org

We exist to support our members’ genealogical pursuits by providing relevant, informative material. YOUR comments, suggestions, and gentle criticisms will help us improve OUR publication.

Reminder:
Deadline for submission of articles for the fall issue is Monday, September 1.
Please send material to: editor@jgsgp.org
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/

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Dues are for the calendar year, January 1-December 31, 2014.  
(New members joining after September 30, 2014, receive membership benefits through December 31, 2015.)
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.

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

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**Sunday September 7 at 1:30 PM**
Reform Congregation Keneseth Israel
8339 Old York Road, Elkins Park PA 19027
Moriah Amit, Genealogy Specialist, Center for Jewish History, New York, NY
“Family History Research at the Center for Jewish History”

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**Sunday, October 5, 1:30 pm,**
Reform Congregation Keneseth Israel
8339 Old York Road, Elkins Park PA 19027
The Steve Schecter Memorial Lecture
Tentative Speaker, Glenn Dynner, PhD, Professor of Religion, Sarah Lawrence College
“Jews and the Liquor Trade in Eastern Europe”

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**Sunday, November 9, 1:30 pm, Keneseth Israel**
Karen Franklin, Director of the Family Research Project, Leo Baeck Institute, New York, NY
“New Strategies for Researching German-Jewish Ancestry: Do We Still Need Archives?”

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**Sunday, December 14, 1:30 pm, Keneseth Israel**
Speaker: Allan Jordan, Historian & Author
“Probate Records: Wills and Estates - Why and How to Search”

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For complete and up to the minute program information, check your JGSGP emails or our web site: http://jgsgp.org