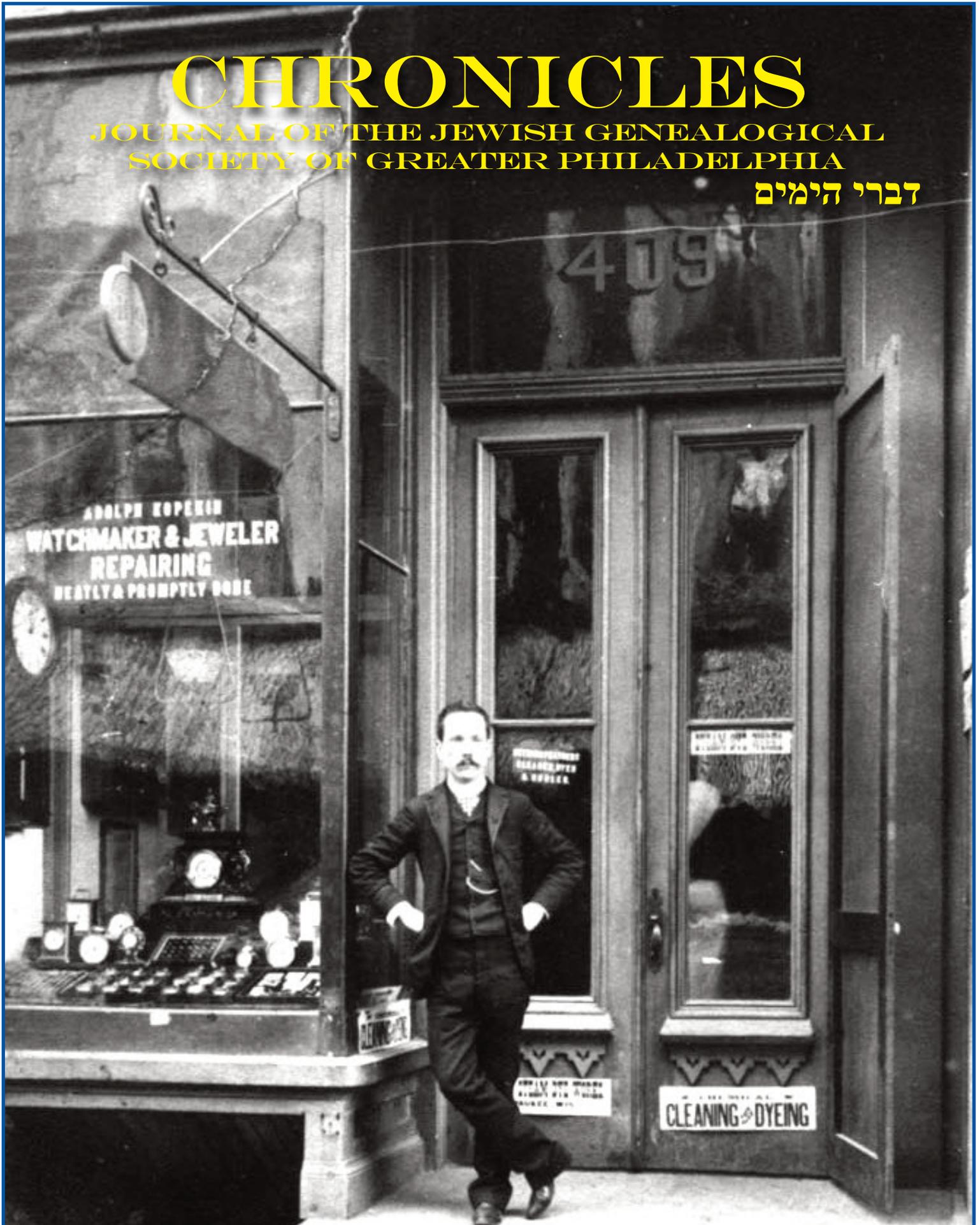


# CHRONICLES

JOURNAL OF THE JEWISH GENEALOGICAL  
SOCIETY OF GREATER PHILADELPHIA

דברי הימים



# CHRONICLES

JOURNAL OF THE JEWISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF GREATER PHILADELPHIA

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Cover Photo: Courtesy Avivah Pinski. See article on p. 15.

## REFLECTIONS FROM YOUR CHRONICLES TEAM



In last winter's "Reflections" column (Vol. 32-4) I wrote about the importance of networking and working collaboratively in the interest of furthering our individual research efforts as well as those of the larger genealogical community. I'd like to share some small scale recent collaborative experiences I had.

My sister-in-law's 102-year-old aunt died several weeks ago. Tzipora was an amazing woman whose life overlapped with some very significant events in recent Jewish history. Born and raised in Brisk D'Lita (now Brest, Belarus), she made *aliyah* (immigration to Israel) in 1937. She settled in a *moshav* (communal settlement where families own their own homes) in northern Palestine where she remained the rest of her life. In response to her death, one of my nephews composed a eulogy for her in which he shared personal memories: the harsh life she and her family endured on the *moshav*, her efforts to improve the family's financial position by taking a government job in Haifa, and the tremendous impact the Shoah had on her personally. He peppered these accounts with references to happier experiences that he and other family members shared with her.



The most outstanding example was when Tzipora organized a trip back to Brest about ten years ago, when she was only in her early nineties!! Two sons, six grandchildren, and some of her eleven great grandchildren, as well as my other nephew and my sister-in-law's sister and brother-in-law, accompanied her on this unique trip down memory lane. Tzipora served as a tour guide, pointed out buildings in the town that were once synagogues, and spoke Russian or Polish to the locals. Clearly moved by Tzipora's life, my nephew used her sad death as an opportunity to articulate how profoundly she inspired him. In so doing he was able to coalesce grieving

family members while enabling them to collectively reflect on this remarkable matriarch's life and how she served and will continue to serve as a role model.

This opportunity was not unusual, and neither was my get-together with a second cousin to share our research efforts to date. I'm related to AB twice because I'm a blood relative to both her paternal grandparents. During the past several months, we've emailed, asked questions, shared documents and photographs, and explored our double connection together. We finally decided to meet face to face at her home in Baltimore. I think I've only seen AB once or twice in my life. We grew up in different parts of the East coast, and consequently I never got to know her very well. Nevertheless, our blood connection and mutual interest in delving into our family's past provided the catalyst for this reunion.

In preparing for our reunion I reread material about her paternal grandfather whose business efforts were quite extraordinary. Shortly after the conclusion of World War II the U.S. Army bestowed a Certificate of Meritorious Service upon him for his assistance in making the Armed Forces "the best fed army and navy in the world." His companies were the largest suppliers of poultry to the armed forces, delivering over 1 million pounds per week. In 1994 the Israeli Embassy recognized him for his contribution toward establishing the poultry industry there. I felt extremely proud of my great uncle, and it was very affirming to talk about him with his granddaughter.

Until this meeting I had never collaborated on genealogy research with a relative who is also a serious researcher. AB and I regaled each other with additional stories, corrected errors and incomplete stories, and became better acquainted. We deepened our connection, and genealogy research was the conduit.

---

We traditionally devote our fall issues to reports from JGSGP members who attended the previous summer's IAJGS conference; this issue is no exception. Thanks to one of the German translators in Seattle, Avivah and Gabriel Pinski advanced in their research about his maternal grandfather, a watchmaker in both Vienna and Milwaukee. Mark Halpern shares the fascinating story of one of seven Jewish refugees who traveled via the Trans-Siberian Railway to Vladivostok, Russia and then boarded a rickety ship to Japan, ultimately headed for safe haven in the U.S. or elsewhere. Joel Spector gives us a behind the scenes perspective based on his unique role as programming chair for this conference.

It's exciting when past authors, who are not JGSGP members, grace us with new material. Two years ago (Vol. 31-3) Susan Leviton shared her memories of growing up in Camden. She now relates an emotional story centering on a mysterious brass key from Spain. This is another example of how a specific object spurs individuals to pursue extensive research. Steven Capsuto shared a charming account (Vol. 31-2) about his extended family, focusing on his mixed Ashkenazic and Sephardic heritage. He credits that article with the genesis of his Jewish history website, [www.betweenwanderings.com](http://www.betweenwanderings.com).

Following in Susan Leviton's footsteps, Kaye Paletz shares her memories of growing up in Trenton. Photographs prove significant to both Marge Farbman and Harry Boonin, albeit in different ways. James Gross provides us with a primer on scanning. Our sixth, annual genealogy fair once again proved successful. Bette Epstein, senior reference archivist at the New Jersey State Archives, went beyond the call of duty and offered to go back to her office and delve into the naturalization papers of one attendee's grandfather; Bette thinks that attendee received an incorrect second page for that document.

Check out the above and more. Belated wishes for a "shanah tovah." May we all be blessed with a year of good health, contentment, and fulfillment during 5777. ❖

*Evan Fishman, Editor*

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

**Renee Fishman**

Chaitt/Chajet from Berzai Lithuania; Atkins/Atkatz/  
Ukmerge, Lithuania; Luster from Wischnetz, Poland;  
Chaytowich from Makovetz, Russia

**Mitchell Anderman**

Anderman, Bredt

**Lisa Ben-Shoshan**

Spiegel, Milner, Malinow, Caplan and Cohen from  
Warsaw, Poland, Radomysl, Ukraine,  
Korotshev, Ukraine

**Lois Goldman**

Lubowitz from Russia; Grosinger from Fertos Almash,  
Hungary; Goldman

**Marjorie & Eric Jacobs**

Klein, Kesselman, Kessler from Odessa &  
Zhitmor, Ukraine

**Dresher, PA**

**Holland, PA**

**Cheltenham, PA**

**New Hope, PA**

**Merion Station, PA**

**Rhoda Kreiner**

Bobman, Solodar, Kreiner from Ukraine & Russia

**Steven Pilchik**

Harad, Albert, Lipson, Schneider/Snyder,  
Shmukler, Wagner

**Marla Roth**

Oxenburg, Londer, Kops, Messinger, Spector,  
Selznick, Savoroff, Maslow and Zohn

**Jackie Schroder**

Taksa, Gordetsky (Gordon) from Chodorkov,  
Russia / Ukraine

**Ellen Tilman**

Portnoff, Rosenberg, Beskin from Dvinsk and  
St. Petersburg

**Ross Weintraub**

Golod/Gould, Weintraub & Cantor from Mozyr, Tluste  
/ Tovste, Latvia / Courland

**Langhorne, PA**

**Huntingdon Valley, PA**

**Richboro, PA**

**Elkins Park, PA**

**Elkins Park, PA**

**Lafayette Hill, PA**

**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**



**A**s I write this message we just held our annual genealogy fair. This event has become a very successful venue to garner new interest in the field of Jewish genealogy; over 100 people attended. I would like to personally thank all the volunteers and exhibitors that make these fairs a great success. I would especially like to thank Felicia Mode Alexander, Carole Strickland and Barry Wagner who organized the fair.

The main reason I became interested in my family history was due to the fact that I knew so little about my ancestors. When I started my journey, my mother was eighty years young, and her father was the only grandparent I was fortunate to know. All the others had passed before I was born. This past March, I lost my mother at ninety-six years of age. I have spent much time reflecting upon the wonderful gift I was able to give her by connecting her with her past and enabling her to meet family she never knew existed. For the first time in her long life she met her father's youngest sister in Israel, first cousins in Canada and New York, and many second cousins around the world. As you do your own research think of the people you will be honoring by keeping their stories and memories and alive.

Our next meeting takes place on Sunday, October 30 at Adath Israel in Merion Station. As many of you may know I am a licensed private detective. As genealogists we all become detectives. At this meeting I will be speaking about the process I went through to locate my mother's family and the volunteer work I have done in locating Holocaust survivors for the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum. I will be providing a handout with various websites to help you in your research. I gave this talk in August at the recent IAJGS conference in Seattle. ❖

*Fred Blum, President*

by Mary-Jane Roth



This was my fourth conference, and I have learned a lot from each one. Each time, my focus has changed as I have developed new skills and learned more about doing serious research on my family tree. As usual, there were many presentations that gave me fresh ideas for research or informed me about Jewish history in my areas of interest. There were two ways in which this conference gave me new insights..

For the first time this year, the conference organizers included a workshop where members of the Board for Certification Of Genealogists (BCG) explained the process for becoming a Certified Genealogist®. As I have honed my research skills through experience and education I have realized that there is a distinct difference between folks who plot out family relationships based solely on family stories or a few records found online, and those who use the Genealogy Proof Standard (GPS) to assess the validity of their work. I wondered what it took to get “certified” and why one would want to do so. This was my chance to find out.

The IAJGS panel consisted of Judy Russell “The Legal Genealogist,” and conference banquet recently certified researcher), and David McDonald trustee of the BCG). They addressed the fact that for the past twenty years or so has simply been on exist for our ancestors, and that we tend to hit much earlier than those researching non-Jewish. Their argument was that many of the tools and techniques of the genealogy community are valid for us, too, and that knowing of those techniques is essential to the genealogist who wishes to “professionalize” his/her research.



Judy Russell

(lawyer, author of the blog speaker), Sara Scribner (recently certified researcher and the focus in Jewish genealogy finding out what records still brick walls in our research American families. Their argument was that many of the tools and techniques of the genealogy community are valid for us, too, and that knowing of those techniques is essential to the genealogist who wishes to

The panelists described the certification process and the timeline involved through discussions and examples. After an application is submitted to the board, the researcher has one year to submit a portfolio of various kinds of research projects (not involving one's own family) assigned by the board and aimed at demonstrating mastery of skills such as acquiring records, resolving conflicts between records, analyzing problems, making a case for conclusions drawn from available resources, and preparing reports for a “client.” They discussed the role of the GPS in formulating questions for research and determining if or when a reasonably exhaustive search for records has been conducted. They emphasized that not everyone who applies is certified and that attendance at conferences and other classwork greatly improves one's chances. They also provided the names of several workbooks that provide examples of the kind of work required in the portfolio. I plan to seriously consider embarking on this journey.

The second way that this conference was different for me had to do with the people I met. Before the conference, I scheduled meetings with some folks with whom I had been corresponding but had not yet met. In one case, the meeting resulted in obtaining a translation for a record that I needed. In another instance, I was asked to give a short presentation at the Ukraine-SIG meeting on a records acquisition project on which I am working. Several folks who want to help with the project contacted me after the presentation. I was also approached by others who want to start projects of their own and wanted more information on the process. At a presentation on Hungary, I chatted with a woman who has researched extensively in a town in which I have a peripheral interest. Our conversation continued after the conference via e-mail, and we have determined that we are almost certainly related by marriage. She also sent me a death certificate that I had been unable to find on my own.

Finally, Emily Garber who had been doing the official conference blog for about a month before and during the event, hosted a breakfast meeting of folks who blog. That was a great way to exchange ideas and for a relative newbie like me to gain from the wisdom of folks who have been blogging for a long time. I hope that it will be a regular feature of future conferences. These encounters showed me that the effort it takes to move from being a passive consumer of conference sessions to active participant in discussions with others is well worth the trouble. ❖

*Mary-Jane Roth is a retired civil servant who has been researching her family tree for about fifteen years. Although she now lives outside of Washington, D.C., she lived for many years in and around Philadelphia where most of her ancestors lived. All of her maternal great grandparents (GROSSER, TEPPER, LIEBERMAN, KANDEL) came to Philadelphia in the 1890s, and the families stayed in the area. Many of them and their siblings lived into the late 1960s and 1970s passing family stories down during large and frequent family gatherings. These provided the basis for much of her initial research. Mary-Jane now passes on the stories of her family in her family history blog [www.memorykeepersnotebook.blogspot.com](http://www.memorykeepersnotebook.blogspot.com) Contact her at [greenst@comcast.net](mailto:greenst@comcast.net)*

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## MY 2016 IAJGS EXPERIENCE

by Bonnie Merkle Keyser



I was a first time IAJGS conference attendee in August and had several hopes for the experience:

1. Breaking down genealogical brick walls. Don't we all?
2. Meeting relatives. Don't we all?
3. Learning what archival records exist or don't
4. Meeting and making new contacts

Unfortunately, no brick walls came down, but I accomplished the other three goals.

First of all, a shout out to the nice people from the Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Philadelphia. I enjoyed meeting Mark Halpern and Fred Blum.

Sephardic research was a strong emphasis at this year's conference. Devin Naar's keynote address on Sephardic family history left me pondering the possible deep roots we Ashkenazim likely have in Sephardic history.

Israeli research was of particular interest to me as a branch of my family immigrated to Palestine in the 1930s. Consequently, I attended two sessions with Garri Regev of the Israel Genealogy Research Association (IGRA) and renewed my membership. IGRA is doing amazing work in expanding its database. Israel has a seventy-year privacy law, and there is much work to be done in coordinating various databases. In particular, the Zionist Archives was mentioned as being difficult for researchers to work with.

I was familiar with Jeffrey Paul's work on the history of Jewish surnames in the Russian Empire, but I learned much more from his presentation.

I attended two of Emily Garber's offerings. Using cluster techniques derived from anthropology was an

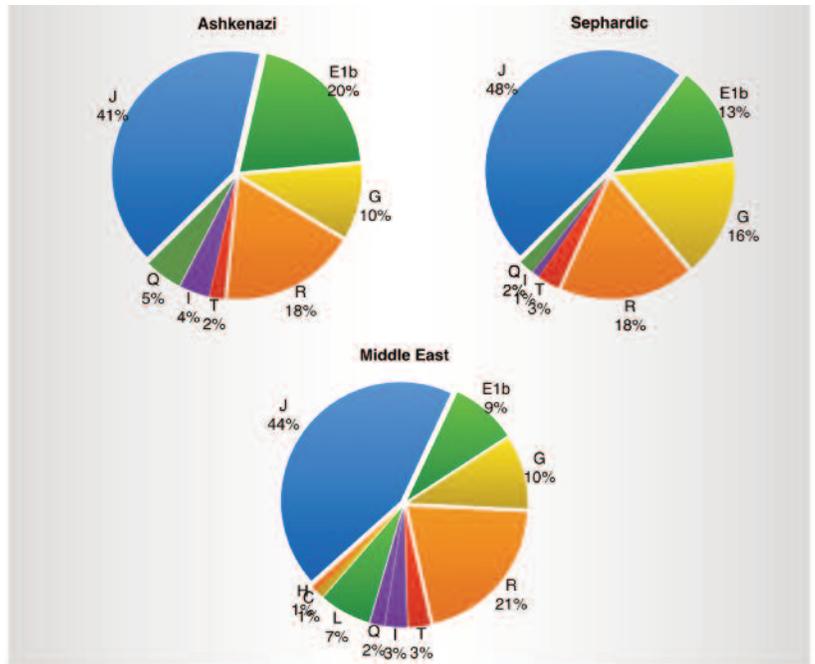


IAJGS Seattle - View of Mt. Ranier

idea new to me. Her other presentation stressed how necessary it is to apply genealogical proof standards to our work and to be rigorous in using citations.

I was disheartened to learn about the inactive status of Latvian activities. I spent some time speaking with some interested people, and we hope to fire up interest within JewishGen to get things moving again. In the meantime, I am currently involved in corresponding with the archives in Riga to obtain records for my family. Similarly, Nadia and Alex Lipes painted a very grim tale of remaining archive records from the Kiev Gubernia. There is a palpable fear in the Baltic states of a Russian takeover.

The other evening programs featuring Bennett Greenspan and Judy Russell were quite enjoyable. I actually managed to get through the crowds and speak with Bennett and two of his employees. Being the proverbial optimist, I agreed to upgrade a Y DNA test I administer.



Y Haplogroup - photo by Bennett Greenspan, Family Tree DNA   
12 © 2015 Family Tree DNA, All Rights Reserved

Another shout out to Eric Goldman for introducing me to the film “Hester Street.” After hearing him speak, I immediately cleared my calendar and went down to the Diamond Room to enjoy the charming film.

Now to the negatives: The exhibitions were disappointing. I’ve heard that in past years there was a wide variety of merchandise for sale. This year the space consisted largely of Ancestry, Family Search, FTDNA, GENI, and My Heritage.

More seriously, several presentations I wanted to attend (including Fred Blum’s) were held in rooms too small to accommodate those interested, and we were forced to leave. In one instance, we “rejectees” were invited to watch the LIVE! broadcast as well as view the presenter’s work online. I didn’t notice anybody keeping track of attendance so they can better plan for next year. I would hope that in Orlando there would be a greater availability of flexible space so people are not thrown out of sessions they want to attend.

I spoke briefly to a fellow researcher - relative who has been asked to be on the planning committee for the Orlando conference. He mentioned having more clearly defined tracks, including one specifically for those interested in DNA. I perceived much interest in DNA but much confusion and frustration with it. ❖

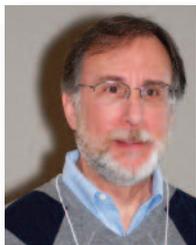
*Bonnie Merkle Keyser writes, “I began my paternal tree about seven years ago, placed it on Ancestry, put a Family Finder listing onto JewishGen.org and thought I was “done”. Ha! Then things changed again with DNA. I tested my brother, myself and the cousin who had the family history. I respectfully asked questions, acquired and met DNA relatives. The thing I have learned about genealogy is that it is never finished. With DNA advancing all the time, who knows what we will discover?”*

*Surnames of interest: MALKIEL (Latvia, Lithuanian); KLEGER (Volhynia, Ukraine); SACHS (German) Big unknown still: COHEN/KATZ/FRIEDMAN : Kiev Gubernia.*

Contact Bonnie at: [bonkey458@yahoo.com](mailto:bonkey458@yahoo.com)

# VISAS FOR LIFE: SEVEN REFUGEES' JOURNEYS TO SAFE HAVEN CHAPTER 1: NISSIM SEGALOFF

The following is excerpted from Mark Halpern's session at the 36th IAJGS International Conference on Jewish Genealogy in Seattle in August 2016.



At the 2013 IAJGS conference in Boston, I met a Japanese man, Kiyotaka Fukushima, who was attending the conference while on business in the U.S. Taka's interest in all things Jewish started after meeting an Israeli woman in Tokyo in 1999. Our chance meeting facilitated a connection to a second Japanese man, Akira Kitade. Taka introduced me to Akira's work after seeing a documentary film about him on Japanese television.

Akira had retired after many years of service at the Japan National Tourist Organization. In 1998, he visited his old boss and mentor, Tatsuo Osako. Osako showed him an album that contained photographs of six women and one man who were passengers on the Amakusa-Maru, a rickety ship on which Osako had worked as an assistant purser in 1940 and 1941. This ship carried Jewish refugees from Vladivostok, Russia to Tsuruga, Japan on their long journey from war torn Europe through Russia via the Trans-Siberian Railway to safe haven in the U.S. or elsewhere. These photos and their inscriptions represented heartfelt gratitude to the kind Japanese man who escorted them to safety in Japan.

Akira Kitade (left) and Taka Fukushima



For years, Akira wondered about the people in these photographs. In 2009, Tatsuo Osako passed away and, while paying respects to the family, Akira inquired about the album. Osako's daughter later found the album and gave it to Akira. He said that since seeing the photos in the album, these seven people have occupied a large space in his heart. Akira wanted to trace their footsteps and find out where they are now.

The only man to provide his photo to Osako wrote in French: "With fond memories to my good friend, Tatsuo Ohsako" on March 4, 1941.

Akira Kitade thought the man's first initial was "I." When we could not find any information on Mr. I. Segaloff, we started trying different initials. I plugged "N" Segaloff . . . into the

In July 2015, Akira, Taka, and I teamed up to identify these refugees. Five have now been identified. This is the story of one of them.



Ancestry.com search engine and found this World War II U.S. draft registration – the “old man’s draft” conducted in April 1942 for men aged 45 to 65.

Compare the signatures. What do you think?

We had our man. Nissim Segaloff was born in 1896 in Silistra, Bulgaria, but he wrote in French. There was a story to uncover. It turned out to be better than we could have expected.

Nissim arrives in Japan in early March 1941. On March 16, 1941, he boards the Hie Maru sailing from Yokohama to Seattle with a U.S. immigrant visa issued February 1, 1941 in Sofia, Bulgaria. The passenger list states that Nissim is fluent in English and his last permanent residence was Paris, France. Nissim is headed to New York City to a friend, John Von Allen, at 299 Park Avenue. No luck finding any connection to that person or that address. There is one John Von Allen in the 1940 census born in New York, living with his wife and three daughters in Brooklyn, and working in a retail grocery store. Not a promising lead.

REGISTRATION CARD—(Men born on or after April 28, 1877 and on or before February 16, 1897)

SERIAL NUMBER 4725 NAME (Print) NISSIM. ORDER NUMBER SEGALOFF

1. PLACE OF RESIDENCE (Print) HOTEL DEVON 70 W 55

2. MAILING ADDRESS 55 W 70 HOTEL DEVON

3. AGE IN YEARS 45 DATE OF BIRTH Dec 15 1896 PLACE OF BIRTH SILISTRA BULGARIA

4. TELEPHONE C. 7-0290

5. EMPLOYER'S NAME AND ADDRESS B. R. COTTEN 44 WHITE HALL ST. N.Y.C. American Taxi Corp. 44 Whitehall St. N.Y.C.

I AFFIRM THAT I HAVE VERIFIED ABOVE ANSWERS AND THAT THEY ARE TRUE.

D. S. S. Form 1 (Revised 4-1-42) 16-21620-2 Nissim Segaloff

With the help of a kind man in France responding to my posting in the JewishGen discussion forum, we find that Nissim was a jewelery broker in Paris in 1925, and later a furrier in Paris who declared bankruptcy in 1930. So, Nissim has been in Paris since at least the early 1920s until only months after the Nazis occupied Paris in July 1940. How he escaped to Bulgaria is not known.

Confiance mal placée

Un courtier en bijoux, M. Nissim Segaloff, demeurant 22, rue de la Victoire, avait confié, il y a quelques jours, trois montres en platine et brillants, représentant une valeur de 5.000 francs, à un commissionnaire, Maurice Bleschman, demeurant 9, rue Joubert. Ce dernier ne trouva rien de mieux que d'engager au Crédit municipal les montres confiées. Il toucha 1.300 francs, qu'il perdit du reste au jeu.

Sur plainte de M. Segaloff, Maurice Bleschman a été arrêté hier par l'inspecteur Léonetti et envoyé au Dépôt.

de Paradis, ci-devant et demeurant actuellement rue Jenner, 50.

Etablissements J. Bourdelle et A. Maugniot, société anonyme au capital de 1.000.000 de francs, à Issy-les-Moulineaux, 6, rue Ernest-Renan, ci-devant et actuellement à Paris, rue Leconte-de-Lisle, 3.

Complicité de commissionnaire, société anonyme, 24, rue Dauphine, ci-devant et actuellement 3, rue de Castiglione.

Descamps, commerce de décolletage, 100, rue de Belleville.

Nissim Segaloff, fourreur, 20, rue Dauphot.

Roy, vins et liqueurs, 72, rue d'Angoulême, ci-devant et actuellement 30, avenue de Rigny, à Bry-sur-Marne.

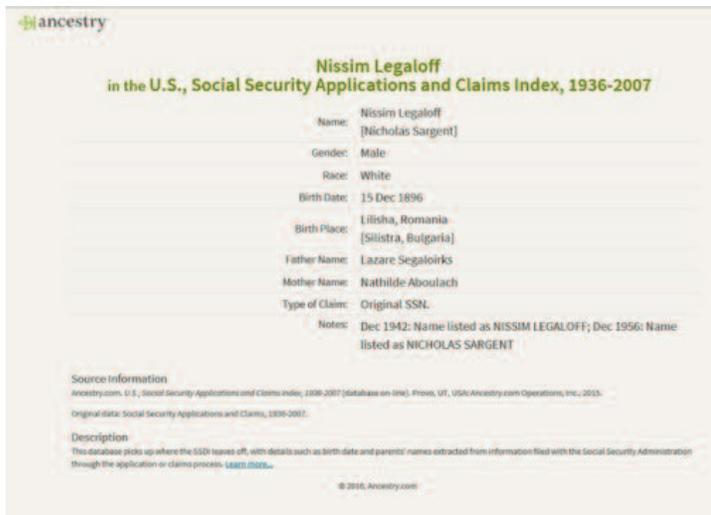
Guillaume Van Den Plas, dit Willy, 210 bis, boulevard Persaire, qui s'est substitués à la Société Van Den Plas, Salomon et Cie, société en commandite simple, pour la vente de châssis et carrosseries automobiles, avenue des Champs-Élysées, 71.

Société anonyme de constructions industrielles, au capital de 1.500.000 francs, pour l'exécution de tout

Nissim arrives in Seattle on March 29, 1941 and makes his way to New York City. A hard to decipher notation on his passenger manifest appears to show that he had \$2,498.50 (worth nearly \$42,000 today) when he arrived. He files his Declaration of Intention in October 1941, registers for the “old man’s draft” in April 1942, applies for Social Security in December 1942, and files his petition for naturalization in July 1946. In all of these documents, he lists his address at hotels in midtown Manhattan from 54th to 58th Street. All of his witnesses are friends. Many live in hotels in the same area. He lists his occupation as “none,” “unemployed” or any number of generic occupations such as “broker” or “self-employed.” He is single. ‘Who is this guy? Is he a CIA agent? A con man? A playboy? A jewel thief? A gay man in the closet?’ Nothing makes sense for a jeweler or a furrier who spoke multiple languages and lived in hotels. I searched Manhattan phone books from 1941 to the mid-1960s, but he never appears.

Ancestry.com provides a critical link in tracking Nissim and other refugees after they arrive in the U.S. About the time we started our search to identify the refugees in the photo album, Ancestry introduced the U.S. Social Security Applications and Claims Index, 1936-2007. This database includes information filed with the Social Security Administration

through the application or claims process, including valuable details such as birth date, birthplace, and parents' names for more than 49 million people. You can also find details on changes made to applicants' records, including name changes resulting from marriage, divorce, or any legal process.

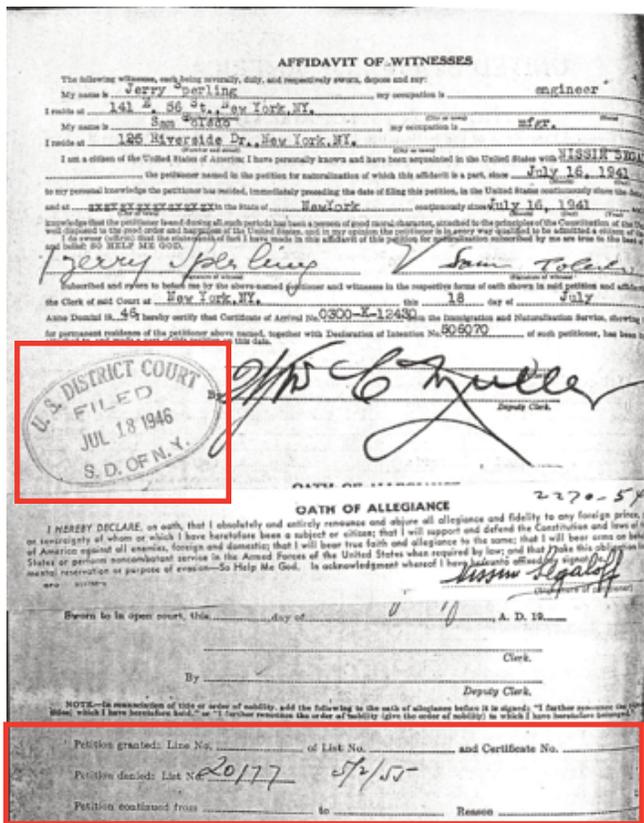


Nissim's file gives us information on his date and place of birth, his parents' names and a name change in 1956 to Nicholas Sargent.

In the early 1950s, Nissim traveled to Europe at least twice. He departed New York by ship in July 1951 and returned six months later, again by ship. In June 1953, he flew to Europe and returned seven months later by ship. In the first trip he was listed with Bulgarian nationality, but in

1954, he was "stateless." 'Was travel for work? Was he a play-boy? Was he a spy?' Nothing adds up.

Nissim had filed his Declaration of Intention for U.S. citizenship in October 1941. He petitioned for naturalization in July 1946 including a legal name change to Nicholas Segaloff. This petition was denied on May 2, 1955. There is no reason given for the denial or why it took nine years to deny the petition. 'Who is he?'



Nissim again petitioned for naturalization on May 20, 1955, the same month his initial petition was denied, and to change his name to Nicholas Sargent. This petition was approved and Nicholas became a U.S. citizen in November 1956. This adds to the intrigue of our man, Nicky.

After 1956, we could not find Nicky until we discover Nicholas Sargent in a *Sports Illustrated* article about the First Annual International Backgammon Tournament held on Grand Bahama Island in May 1964. The article states: "Nicholas Sargent (ne Segaloff), a Rumanian, may be the

best backgammon player in the world.” However, Nicholas lost to a younger challenger in one of the semi-final matches. Nick Sargent was referred to as “the craggy-faced, chain smoking Sargent.”

This explains everything. A single guy who made his livelihood playing a game, not unlike the Jewish poker players of today. Nicky Sargent is their role model.

**Nicholas Sargeant (ne Nissim Segaloff)**



With help from a new friend with Bulgarian Jewish roots, my Japanese friend Taka, and Renee Steinig, we started identifying and contacting every U.S. and international backgammon organization and forum. I joined the BG on-line forum and posted my questions about Nicky Sargent aka Segaloff in early December 2015.

On January 30, 2016, I received a response from Bill Robertie, a world champion backgammon, chess, and poker player. Bill tracked down players active in the 1960s who remembered Nicky. Bill talked to Stephen Rafael, now about ninety and the dean of British backgammon players. Stephen recalls meeting Nicky in Paris in the 1930s and knew he had relocated to New York. Stephen described Nicky as short, squat, and toad-like. He made his living in the 1950s and 1960s playing backgammon in

New York and Europe. He was considered the best European player in this period. However, Nicky was a generally unpleasant fellow who was barred from most clubs and high-stakes *chouettes*, a form of backgammon for more than two players.

By the early 1970s, Nicky had returned to Europe full time, hustling backgammon games in winter in Gstaad, a high society ski resort in Switzerland, and in summer in Cap D’Antibes, a high society resort on the French Riviera.

On p. 32 in the 27 January 1979 issue of *The Spectator* (a British magazine covering politics and culture), Taki’s High Life column on “Ski Swiss” talked about the Palace Hotel in Gstaad, Switzerland: “Unlike most expensive places, the food is excellent and the service superlative. The only danger is the long line of salesmen who frequent the lobby. Plus the Ayatollah of backgammon, Mr. Nicholas Sargeant, born Sigalov somewhere between Bulgaria and Serbia before the turn of the century. Nicky was the first backgammon hustler, having clipped a certain Mr Guggenheim in Europe and then followed him to America on a ship called the Titanic. Alas, Guggenheim went down but Nicky survived. He is still hustling at the Palace but since the new breed of confidence men have appeared (Grinda. Martyn and company.) old Sargeant adds class to the place.”

One correction to Taki’s gossip: Benjamin Guggenheim was one of the most prominent victims of the Titanic which sank in 1912. Taki says that Nicky survived the Titanic, but he would have been fifteen years old when the ship sank, and he does not appear on any list of survivors. More likely is that Nicky later hustled Benjamin’s nephew Robert Guggenheim, who was a backgammon player and also had a tournament in California named after him.

The saga of Nicky Segaloff/Sargent is almost complete. We hear that he died in the early 1980s in Europe, but we are still searching for his death record or obituary. ❖

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

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# INDIANS, METIS AND JEWISH FUR TRADERS: SHAPING THE NORTH AMERICAN FRONTIER

SUMMARY OF A PRESENTATION BY PAUL KING AT THE  
IAJGS CONFERENCE, SEATTLE, AUGUST 7, 2016

by Bernard Cedar



**P**aul King has been involved with family genealogy since 2000. He is a fourth generation Canadian who has lived in Jerusalem for forty years.

His talk was about the role of Jewish traders who became involved with military provisioning, peddling, and merchandising in the eighteenth century, first under French control, and then under the British, at the end of the Seven Years War in 1759; how this evolved into fur trading which became very lucrative due to the craze for fur hats in Europe from the mid-eighteenth and into the nineteenth century.

King discussed the role of two Jewish sea captains: Abraham Gratis (1695-1780) from Bordeaux, whose ship supplied the French military and colonies along the St. Lawrence River; and Alexander Schonberg (1720-1801) who provided similar services to the British troops, especially those that took over Montreal from the French.

British governmental changes, which came into effect at the end of the Seven Years War, opened a more liberal attitude towards Jewish immigration into Canada. Under French law only those of the Roman Catholic faith could settle in Canada. The British, however, allowed for open immigration, but only those who were Christian could participate in government. Under the agreement that ended that war, French settlers in Quebec could retain their language and religious beliefs, and government participation.

King mentioned three Jewish families who settled in Quebec in the mid-eighteenth century and became important to economic activity in early Canada. Ezekiel Solomon (c1735-c1804) settled in Montreal and was thought to have been from Berlin. Aaron Hart went to Trois-Rivieres (Three Rivers), a town located between Quebec City and Montreal. The Gratz brothers from Philadelphia were the third family who went west.

Ezekiel Solomon married Mary Elizabeth Dubois, who was Catholic. There must have been a discussion about where they should marry, probably some concern about Ezekiel having to convert, if they were to marry in a Catholic church. Ultimately they settled on a compromise; they married in an Anglican church. King mentioned that there were a substantial number of interfaith and interracial marriages, particularly with native Indian women. The children of those marriages were called *metis*, individuals of mixed Native American and French Canadian ancestry.

In the early years of trading (1761-1770), Ezekiel became one of



Michael Gratz

the first *voyageurs*, persons employed or working for themselves to transport goods and supplies between remote stations in Canada or the U.S. Northwest. He set off for Mackinac Island, about 650 miles west of Montreal. The island is located close to the strait that connects Lakes Huron and Michigan and is also close to the access to Lake Superior from Lake Huron, which offered a water route to go further west. The island also offers better protection than a site on the mainland and easy access by boat or canoe, the major means of travel at that time. Fur pelts were traded for supplies and other trade goods that the Indians treasured.

The pelts were shipped back to Montreal under protection for trans-shipment to European ports. Profits were usually substantial. The business often didn't go so smoothly. There were disputes between the Indians and the *voyageurs*, amongst the *voyageurs*, and new competition who wanted to take over the business, particularly the Hudson Bay Company which was heavily financed by London bankers. Often these disputes led to operations against the interlopers, like the hijacking of pelt shipments. The *voyageurs* also banded together to form consortiums, such as the Northwest Company, to compete more effectively against Hudson Bay and survive.

Despite all their problems most of the Jewish traders survived. They went back to Montreal, as did Ezekiel, and the Gratzes went to Philadelphia. Notwithstanding their intermarriages, they kept some ties to their heritage, helping form congregations, giving monies to charities, and being buried in Jewish cemeteries. They led the way for their heirs and other Jews that followed in the business world.

King also mentioned that much new information about these early entrepreneurs is becoming available. This offers an opportunity for interested genealogists and historians to seek out these sources and utilize them. Paul King has made a welcome start.

I think it is important to learn more about these few entrepreneurs and *voyageurs* who went out to areas of North America. Little about them was known by those who colonized the Atlantic coastal area. Much was learned by the British exploration of the areas north of the Great Lakes and by the American explorers, such as Lewis and Clark, west of the Mississippi. They were able to confirm and expand on the stories told by the *voyageurs* about the contacts they made with indigenous inhabitants, the landforms, and streams and rivers which could be confirmed by the expeditions. Strong trading ties were developed by these entrepreneurs and *voyageurs*, leading to the filling in of much of the lands west of the Appalachian and Adirondack Mountains and north of the Great Lakes beginning in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

The work that Paul King has done and the work of others that have explored and written about this area of history should be encouraged by family history and genealogical groups. Just as genealogical groups and individuals explore the archives of Europe and other areas to find out about our ancestors, similar investigation should be encouraged in government and private archives in the U.S. and Canada to fill in this important area of history. ❖

*Bernard Cedar became interested in genealogy when his cousin, who was doing research on his mother's family, asked him to attend a Jewish genealogy conference in New York City in 1999. While they attended for only one day, Bernie was hooked. In 2001 he bought his first computer, and by then he had enough free time to indulge. Bernie has been involved in the workings of various Jewish genealogical groups like our JGSGP, and before that, groups in New York City and North Jersey.*

*He is researching SUDARSKY from Lithuania, the U.S. and Israel; CEDAR in the U.S. and U.K.; BANILOWER and YAEGER from Bukovina, Galicia (in Austria, now Ukraine) and the U.S.*

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# IT'S ALL IN THE DETAILS... AND THE DOCUMENTS

by Avivah Pinski



**M**y husband Gabriel's family members were savers; they had many photographs, documents and artifacts from the nineteenth century. Gabriel was the only grandchild, so we inherited it all and keep discovering new things. Three sisters, born in Vienna, came to the U.S. in 1906. His mother, z"l, who was born in 1897 and died in 1986, and her younger sister, who was born in 1902 and who died in 2002, knew a great deal of information and shared many stories with us. As with all family stories, however, there was also information which they either did not know or which they chose not to tell us.



Adolph Kopekin in front of his watch/jewelry store in the U.S. in the 1880s. Gabriel's mother told us this store was in Chicago in 1884, but Adolph was still in Lemberg then. He was listed in an 1888 Milwaukee city directory, but the address was not "409" as is clearly visible in this photo.

Gabriel's maternal grandmother's family was from Lemberg (now L'viv, Ukraine) in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. We have original documents from Lemberg dating back to 1854. The extended family moved to Vienna sometime around the 1870s to 1880s. We brought copies of some old documents that had never been translated to the IAJGS conference in Seattle this summer. We could identify one of them as coming from Lemberg, but it was written in the old German Sutterlin script which we couldn't decipher. It was partly damaged, but appeared to have some kind of an official seal on the lower left. Another document was handwritten in Russian, but had "Tsar Alexander" printed at the top.

Gabriel's maternal grandfather, Adolph/Aaron, was from Belarus. Gabriel's mother and his aunt had each given us a different town of birth. We eventually found Adolph's marriage record in Vienna and were able to verify that he had, in fact, been born in Polotsk (Polatsk), Belarus. Gabriel's mother told us that Adolph was a trained watchmaker, had moved to Vienna, and then came to the United States. We never knew where he was trained. Gabriel's mother had shown us a lovely, framed photograph of Adolph "standing in front of his watchmaker's store in Chicago in about 1884." She told us that he was single and unhappy in the U.S., so "he moved back to Vienna" where he met and married Gabriel's grandmother. We have another photograph of his watchmaker's shop in Vienna. They apparently lived comfortably in Vienna for a number of years and had the three



daughters (there was also a young son in between who died). Adolph then moved to New York and brought his wife and three daughters to New York in 1906. Adolph worked as a watchmaker in New York for Longines Wittnauer for many years.

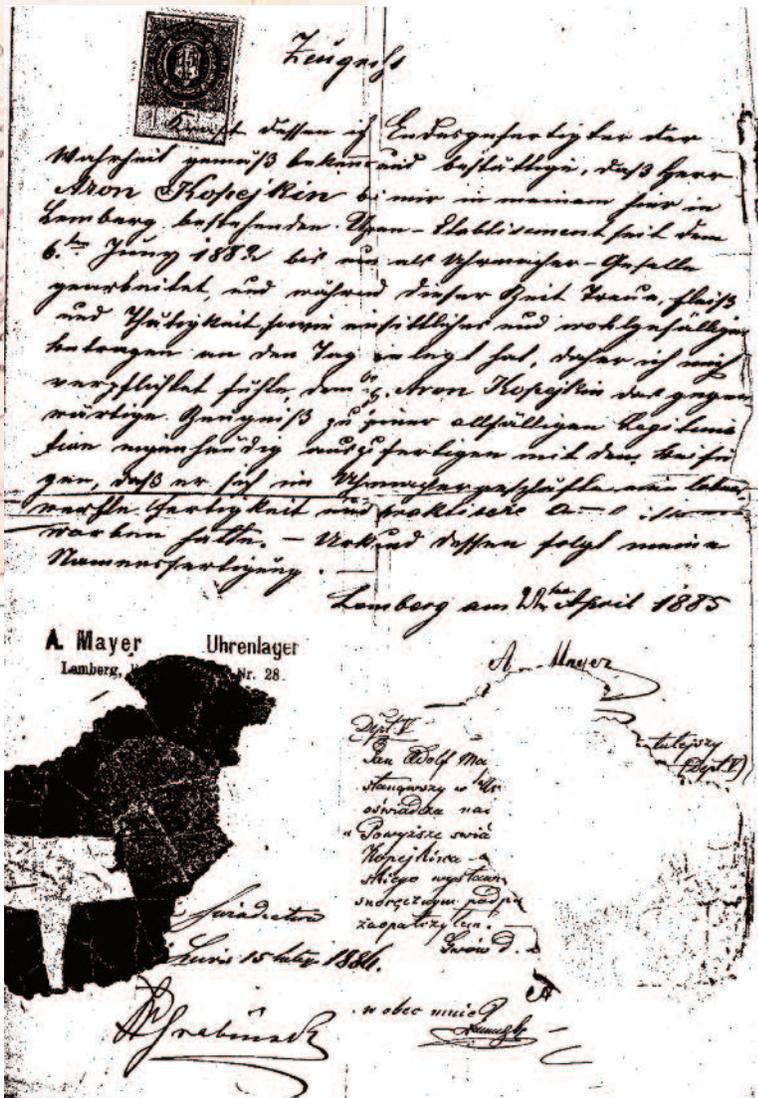
More recently, Gabriel's Aunt Margaret told us that Adolph and his siblings did not like their stepmother and that his brother, Heinrich, who was about seven years older, left home and moved to Lemberg. 'Why Lemberg?' This remains a mystery. Since Polotsk was in the Russian Empire and Lemberg was in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and the Russian Empire restricted the movement of Jews, this could not have been an easy move for a Jew. At any rate, Adolph left Polotsk to join his brother, Heinrich. Until Margaret told us this story, we had no idea that Adolph was in Lemberg. We had assumed that he had moved from Polotsk directly to Vienna. 'Did he meet Gabriel's grandmother in Lemberg?' Heinrich, who married in Lemberg, eventually moved to New York. It now appears that Heinrich's wife may have somehow been related to Gabriel's grandmother. This now put a wrinkle in things, as we had no idea that Adolph had left Polotsk and moved to Lemberg, when he actually lived in Lemberg, or when he went to Vienna.

'So what were these old, untranslated documents that we had?' We were able to find someone to translate them at the conference in August. The first document, in Russ-



ian, was in the name of Tsar Alexander and gave Adolph permission to travel outside of Polotsk.

The second document, in Sutterlin German, written in Lemberg in 1885, was an official document, written by a master watchmaker from the guild that attested to Adolph's training as a watchmaker. The author stated that Adolph had worked for him for three years and was a *geseller*. The translator explained that a *geseller* was one rank below a "master" in the guild system and that the "master" level was required before a watchmaker could open his own shop. Based on the document's location of



Lemberg, the date of 1885, and the statement that Adolph had worked with the master for three years, it has now become clear that Adolph was in Lemberg from 1882 until 1885.

Not only did these documents give us some more information about Adolph, but they also gave us more of a timeline. Since we had never found evidence of Adolph's first arrival in the U.S., we did not have any proof of his presence in 1884, other than the photograph with the date written in by Gabriel's mother. Once we had our two documents translated, Gabriel realized that Adolph could not have been in the United States or Chicago in 1884 since he was working for a watchmaker in Lemberg in 1884.

Gabriel looked again for a ship arrival record to the U.S. After an unsuccessful search, he got some help from the Ancestry representatives who always attend the conferences to give talks and help the attendees. The Ancestry representative was also unable to find a manifest but did find Adolph in a city directory, listing his residence and his watchmaker shop in Milwaukee in 1888!! However, a mystery remains. The Milwaukee directory gave Adolph's business address as "461 3d" and his residence as "373 4th." The photograph of the store clearly shows the number as 409. 'Is this in Milwaukee, or did he have a store in Chicago as well?'



The family gave us a wrong date, but that is a very understandable error. Our documents indicated that Adolph was in Lemberg until 1885, that he was in Milwaukee in 1888, and that he married Gabriel's grandmother, Frederike, in Vienna in 1890. We have no evidence that Adolph was in Vienna before he came to the U.S. in the 1880s. 'Where was he between 1885, when he left Lemberg, his 1888 address listing in Milwaukee, and his travel from the U.S. to Vienna sometime before 1890? Did the family give us the wrong city or is it possible that he was in Chicago as well as Milwaukee?' Gabriel's mother said that Adolph left Chicago because he was unhappy and lonely. 'Did Adolph go from the

U.S. to Vienna sometime before 1890 because he had met Frederike in Lemberg and intended to marry her?' We do not know when Frederike and her family moved from Lemberg to Vienna.

We have yet to find a boat or arrival record for Adolph's travels to and from Europe in the late nineteenth century, but we do have a photograph of his store in the U.S. and the city directory listing showing he was in Milwaukee in 1888. Clearly, there was truth in the family narratives, but the details were a bit different. There are still many missing pieces to the story. This is yet another lesson that family stories are important clues in hunting down our family histories; there's truth in them, but the details change over the years. None of us remembers things completely accurately, and even documents can have erroneous information, but the fun is in the hunt and piecing together the evidence! ❖

*A longtime civil rights attorney in private practice in Bryn Mawr, PA, Avivah Pinski also volunteers at HIAS Pennsylvania, which provides non-profit legal and social services for immigrants and refugees.*

*Avivah is researching: ZUCHMAN in Sarnaki & Karczew Poland, REZNIK in Drohiczyn nad Bugiem & Siemiatich Poland, KOIFMAN in Securenii (Bessarabia) now Ukraine; PINSKI in Mohilev, Belarus; KOPEKIN in Polatsk, Belarus & Vienna, Austria; RIFCZES in Lviv (Lemberg), Ukraine & Vienna, Austria.*

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# PROGRAMMING AN IAJGS CONFERENCE

by Joel Spector



In December 2014 I went to the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York to consult with several experts. I have a very old (16th century) Venetian *ketubah* (a Jewish prenuptial agreement) and a rolled up photograph of a meeting of the Seventeenth International Congress of Orientalists, held in Oxford, England in 1928, which my great uncle attended and at which he was photographed.

After meeting with Dr. Sharon Mintz about the *ketubah* and another expert on old photographs, I had lunch with Dr. Janette Silverman, the recently appointed lead co-chairperson of the 2016 IAJGS Conference on Jewish Genealogy, scheduled for Seattle, Washington. I had anticipated that our conversation would center on the Ukraine SIG (Special Interest Group) on whose board we both serve. I was quite surprised when she asked me if I would take charge of programming for the Seattle conference.<sup>1</sup> After some moments of thought, perhaps too few, I agreed to take the job, although with some hesitation; I soon thought, ‘What have I gotten myself into?’ Nevertheless, I did not rescind my agreement, and the process began.

There are three major components in the programming process, two of which take place before the conference:

1) accepting and then reviewing all of the proposals and determining which will be included and 2) creating the schedule of all of the conference programs.<sup>2</sup> The other major task was closely monitoring the programs during the actual conference. The overall process was a complex one, which became more demanding of my time and attention than I had anticipated. A brief outline of these components follows.

After receiving proposals for over 425 presentations, the three other programming committee members and I set out to tackle the formidable task of selecting those proposals we wanted to include. These other IAJGS members were Emily Garber of Phoenix, Arizona who also maintained the conference blog; Barbara Hershey of Portland, Oregon who also compiled the conference syllabus; and Judi Missel of Mesa, Arizona who also created and updated the conference app. I would not have been able to complete the programming tasks for the conference without the constant input and support of these very capable and knowledgeable genealogy experts!

Using a rating protocol provided by eShow, an Illinois company which specializes in event planning management, we were able to rate the proposals by indicating: “accept,” “reject,” or “I have no opinion.” I felt, however, that this system didn’t allow us to evaluate the “accepted” proposals thoroughly enough. The committee agreed to collectively review each proposal and to weigh in other factors: the prospective speaker’s previous presentation history, duplication with other proposals, etc. The result was about fifteen hours of Skype meetings over five nights spread out over three weeks.

Our next task was to design an overall program schedule and room allocation. We could only guess which speakers and topics would attract a larger audience, and we needed to be mindful to assign “IAJGS LIVE” sessions to the two large ballrooms. We also had to avoid simultaneously scheduling presentations on similar topics, figure out how to accommodate speakers giving multiple presentations as well as SIG and BOF meetings, and SIG luncheons. Add to this complicated mix our desire to give major focus to topics related to Sephardim because Seattle has one of the largest Sephardic populations in the U.S. We also wanted to experiment with shorter presentations (45 minutes long), but ‘how should we schedule them?’ And let’s not forget scheduling evening programs that we collectively labeled “Sleepless in Seattle.”<sup>3</sup>

After publishing a preliminary program schedule we then received emails from speakers requesting changes in the schedule because of various needs: “My presentation is too close to or conflicts with another presentation I need to attend;” “too close to lunch;” “I won’t be in Seattle that day;” “I can’t give my presentation that early in the day.” Each of these requests required an individual response, which then had to be incorporated, and the schedule changed accordingly.

After several iterations, we settled on a final (so we thought!) schedule.

Once the conference began, there was a constant barrage of questions and a myriad of details that needed to be resolved. Fortunately, we had conference managers who could handle many of the details, technical people who could assist with such problems, and personnel who oversaw the taping of presentations and the LIVE programming. One less area for me to be involved in. There seemed to be a continuous stream of questions that needed my attention and required immediate answers! Each time I thought there could be even a brief respite after a crisis situation, another crisis presented itself! When I tried, mostly unsuccessfully, to steal away from the conference floor, my cell phone would invariably ring with another problem to be resolved.

Fortunately, there were few, really only one, nightmarish situation--every programmer's worst fear--when a presentation attracting a large audience had been scheduled for a room that was way too small. This created quite a turmoil, and many of the prospective attendees had to exit the room; they were not happy! Fortunately, one of the speakers in that situation volunteered to repeat the presentation, so in the end most attendees were accommodated.

Finally, 12:30 pm on Friday arrived, and the conference was over! Programming was complete! I felt tremendous relief as I sat with the conference co-chairs and registration chair to summarize the experience and make some recommendations for next year's conference! Fortunately I had booked a reservation on an Alaskan cruise after the conference which I really enjoyed. I'm now looking forward to programming the 2017 IAJGS conference in Orlando... but only as a consultant! ❖

*Notes:*

1. I have attended almost all of the IAJGS conferences since 1998, either as JGSGP president or as IAJGS secretary. Consequently, I was well aware of the amount of work and planning necessary to put on a conference and the intensity of that effort. I also have had conversations with previous programming chairpersons, including our very own Mark Halpern, who chaired the programming committee for both the 2009 conference in Philadelphia and the 2013 conference in Boston. Thus I knew the broad parameters of what was entailed in programming for a conference.

2. We were also responsible for the keynote speaker during the opening session on Sunday evening and the banquet speaker on Thursday evening. Fortunately, the conference co-chairs found those individuals, but the programming committee was charged with negotiating topics with them. This ultimately was an easy task because of their professionalism and expertise.

3. At the opening session, much to my surprise, I was publicly presented with a "Sleepless in Seattle" nightshirt as a gag gift. I was even embarrassed into wearing it during the reception following the opening session. What fun!

Past IAJGS secretary, Joel L. Spector is also 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 completed an English language index to the "Evreiskaya Entsiklopedia". He is researching the names ZEITLIN and BLACK, primarily in Vitebsk Gubernia. Contact Joel at [JLSpector@aol.com](mailto:JLSpector@aol.com)

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## THE KEY FROM SPAIN

by Susan Leviton



My life's work is as a *yidische kultur tuerin* – a Jewish culture worker. Like a variant Johnny Appleseed, I travel around planting bits of cultural history and folk arts among toddlers and elders, college groups and *havurot* (small groups of like-minded Jews who assemble for the purposes of facilitating Shabbat and holiday prayer services, sharing communal experiences such as life-cycle events, or Jewish learning), people in Jewish community centers and Methodist retirement communities. My work in my own studio spreads out when I take my calligraphic arts and traditional paper cutting skills on the road, and when I sing, I take special care in setting each song in its context, assuming

no one in the audience is a Yiddish speaker, and knowing that the interpretation is critical to opening hearts and minds. In my travels I usually teach in a whirlwind of different topics and to a wide range of ages, and even if it's a "one-off" program, I always come away with some new insight or connection that an attendee brings to the discussion. Of late, I have been expanding my singing repertoire as I build skills with Lauren Brody, a founding member of one of the first *klezmer* revival bands (a musical tradition of the Ashkenazi Jews of Eastern Europe... originally consisted largely of dance tunes and instrumental display pieces for weddings and other celebrations), "Kapelye," and also a founding member of the all women band, "Mikve." Lauren is a master of Bulgarian and other Balkan music forms and languages, so we've been on the road performing in up to ten languages in a single concert, tying much of the music to Jewish history and experience.

Still, much of my singing work is done solo and *a cappella*, in the format of lecture/recitals. Of the fifteen or so programs I have built, one that touches many audiences is titled "Yearning for Homeland." Using song as a roadmap, it covers millenia of Jewish history – lands left behind and homelands abandoned (*Eretz Yisroel*, Russia, Spain) -- and also looks to the anticipation of resettlement in new places. Although most of the material is in Yiddish and other Eastern European tongues, there is one brilliant and touching song in the Sarajevo dialect of Judeo-Spanish that I sing with renewed emotion now, as a result of an encounter that brought the song to life.

Flory Jagoda is a living treasure who from Spain and Portugal, and sings the musical family, while also composing her the Washington, DC area, her Judeo-cent. Flory Jagoda was honored for her at the Library of Congress in 2012, at the



Flory Jagoda

"Onde Sta La Yave" is a gorgeous song in the drawer? My relatives hid it with of Spain... " Flory writes that there is a from a Spanish home was sometimes from generation to generation with the "An amazing image, right?"

traces her family's roots to the expulsion songs that have been passed to her from her own. As a native of Sarajevo now living in Spanish is inflected with a Yugoslavian accent contribution to world music with a concert age of 90.

that asks, "Where is the key that's hidden great sorrow and with great love, dreaming tradition among her people that a brass key taken when the families fled and passed hopes of someday returning to that home.

And while I have always sung this song with a certain reverence, I was shaken into a new relationship with the lyric when I sat with an older man over lunch following a presentation I did at a *Limmud* conference (dedicated to Jewish learning in all its variety) several years ago. He told me that when he was going through his late grandfather's possessions, he came across an enormous brass key. When he had it examined by an antiques specialist, he was told that it was indeed a 500-year old key from Spain! The bonding of this person's reality with Flory's song has stayed with me and remains front and center when I share the song with audiences.

For me, the connections between the folk arts and *di goldene keyt* (the golden chain) are our inextricable bridge to generations past. When we are able to crack a window open and breathe something of our historic and personal past, we stand on firmer ground in the present. This is why I sing in a language that few people even speak, why I dip a pen into an ink bottle when desktop publishing can spit out neat lettering in a blink, and why I accept every offer I can to share my cultural gleanings with people young and old. We need each other's songs, stories, and wonderment.

The key from Spain... the golden chain... these are lovely images of heritage, and they are perhaps only a song or a story removed from us. We are generously rewarded when we dig just a little deeper into the treasure chests of our cultures. ❖

*Susan Leviton is an interpreter of Jewish songs, master calligrapher and paper cutter. Her joyful embrace of Yiddish arts is matched only by her enthusiasm in sharing that joy. Her "ketubot" (marriage contracts), awards, and institutional art may be found in homes, synagogues, and awardees' offices across the country and in Jewish communities as far away as Denmark & Ukraine. For more about Susan, check her website: [www.susanlevitonarts.com](http://www.susanlevitonarts.com). Contact her at [susan@susanlevitonarts.com](mailto:susan@susanlevitonarts.com)*

# THE BETWEEN WANDERINGS BLOG: HOW WRITING FOR “CHRONICLES” LED ME TO START A JEWISH HISTORY WEBSITE

by Steven Capsuto



Two years ago I wrote an article for *Chronicles* about how my family was trying to take Jewish genealogy beyond mere lists of names and dates to emphasize the stories of people’s lives. I wrote about photographs. I wrote about the family oral histories my great uncle Hermie recorded in the 1970s and 1980s, which no one seems able to find now. And I wrote about a desire to connect with the past on a more personal, visceral level than the usual approaches allow.

I did a lot of background reading for that piece. I studied published books and articles about Jewish life in the Old and New Worlds, with emphasis on first person accounts from the era when my family came to America: the late 19th and early 20th centuries. I became fascinated with the first person narrative legacy left to us by past generations of Jews and non-Jewish allies, much of it in languages other than English.

Of course, I also studied books and articles by historians who thoroughly researched an era they didn’t personally experience, but there was something I connected with emotionally when reading words from that era. These weren’t people describing everything through a twenty-first century filter or pausing, as modern historians must do, to explain things they think people today won’t understand. For me, the first person narratives’ assumptions about what was everyday and what was not helped me connect with their accounts of Jewish life. Sometimes, it felt like the people were talking to me directly... a far cry from our usual names and dates approach to history. The historians’ writings touched my mind, but the old writings touched my feelings.

Since I’m a translator by profession, I made two decisions while working on that *Chronicles* piece: 1) I would translate and publish some of the better, more valuable Jewish-themed books from the 1850s to 1920s that I had found while writing that article; and 2) I would start a blog built around excerpts from Jewish memoirs, letters, articles, and other writings from that era. The blog would combine English material with new translations from other languages.

The first book translation is now available—Ángel Pulido’s oft-cited 1904 classic, *Sephardic Jews and the Spanish Language*, in its first-ever English edition—and the blog has been live since September 9th. Titled “Between Wanderings: Jewish Life and Culture, 1850s–1920s,” the blog features diverse voices and content: Russian Jews in Boston, Sephardic *chalutzim* (pioneers) in Palestine, old Ladino proverbs, women’s prayer services in nineteenth century Romania, short fiction by classic Jewish authors, and early recordings of Yiddish music. I’m even working on some entries about how Jewish soldiers on the front lines of World War I celebrated religious holidays.

Visit [betweenwanderings.com](http://betweenwanderings.com), and let me know what you think. ❖



*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](mailto:stevecap@dca.net)*

## FINDING ISRAELI FAMILY

By Bonnie Merkle Keyser



Several years ago I began a family tree on Ancestry.com. I grew up with memories and photographs of my father's many Philadelphia cousins. I'm not sure what motivated me to begin the tree. Maybe it was my mother's passing very suddenly in November 2001 and my father's death six months later. Fortunately I thought to post a Family Finder request on JewishGen. I let my Ancestry subscription lapse and forgot about genealogy.

It was a hot summer day five years later when my husband and I were taking the train into New York City. I was surprised to get an email response to my Family Finder request from second cousin Stanley, a person whose name I instantly recognized but did not personally know. He asked me if I was in touch with second cousin Tina whom I did know. "Have you ever seen the family history written by Tina's mother Fay?" "No," I replied, I hadn't. "I'll send it to you. It's very interesting."

Interesting doesn't describe what I read. Yes, there were lots of familiar cousin names in it as well as other names from Fay's side of the tree. Yes, I had realized when building my original tree that the late Fay and her husband Dan were distant cousins. What astonished me, however, were the names of seven great aunts, not just the six I had in my tree. 'Who was this seventh aunt?' Fay did not even know her name but did recall the name of a daughter and that the family had emigrated from Latvia to Palestine in the 1930s. Tina recalls her mother receiving letters from Israel that were translated for her grandmother, Celia Dwir. Unfortunately those letters haven't survived, and we surmise that they were in Yiddish.

I searched the normal places: Ancestry, JewishGen and found nothing. I expanded my JewishGen Family Finder listing to include more surnames. Finally I posted on Tracing the Tribe, the Jewish genealogy Facebook group. Genealogist Israel Pickholtz responded and helped me find relevant records in the Tel Aviv burial records. I then had names of children and grandchildren of my unknown great aunt (but still no name), but I did have a name and address of one of her living descendants.

By happenstance, distant cousin Meredith was living in Tel Aviv, having made aliyah a few years ago. She offered to contact David, a great grandson of "Unknown Great Aunt." Although David was welcoming to Meredith, he still had doubts about our relationship. We were at a standstill.

I posted again on Tracing the Tribe asking for more information about the family. Another kind person in Israel offered to go to the cemetery and take pictures of the graves. Now I had pictures of most of the graves, but still no name of "Unknown Great Aunt."

I posted still again to Tracing the Tribe. Again Israel Pickholtz responded and agreed to help me navigate the Israeli Archives website. Even though there is an English interface to that website, the navigation is Hebrew. We arranged to Skype and we found my great aunt Sonia's citizenship application, photos AND the name of her mother, Sarah!

I sent this information back to my relative David in Tel Aviv. He was amazed, and I think was convinced. He still remains rather uncommunicative, perhaps due to language issues. Cousin Stan is interested in visiting Israel, and I hope he will connect with our Israeli relative.

I spent a good deal of time in the resource room at the recent IAJGS conference. I also renewed my membership in IGRA and found that many new resources had been added since I last looked. Critical to me was a listing for my great aunt's husband name change SCHIERMAN to SHULMAN. ❖

Moral: Genealogy is NEVER finished!

*Bonnie Merkle Keyser's biography and contact information follows her article on p. 8.*

## SUPPORT EFFORTS TO ACQUIRE AND INDEX RECORDS

by Evan Fishman



**E**xamination of vital records often serves as the building blocks of our genealogy research. We all benefit from the material we access from sites like JRI-Poland. This material doesn't, however, appear like manna from heaven. It takes the contributions of donors to acquire those records and the efforts of volunteers to patiently index them so they become usable.

Years ago JGSGP spearheaded the indexing of ethnic bank records, which enabled us to pinpoint our ancestors' immigration to Philadelphia and provided valuable new information about their whereabouts and relationships in the "old country." Such efforts are ongoing through the different SIGs (Special Interest Groups) comprising JewishGen. Our programming vice president, Mark Halpern, works diligently on behalf of JRI-Poland and its ordering process and has been responsible for the Bialystok Archive project and the AGAD (eastern Galicia records) project. Past president, Joel Spector, serves on the board of the Ukraine SIG which continually searches for records and engages volunteer and professional translators to make them accessible. JGSGP member, Mary-Jane Roth, has been involved in the acquisition, digitization, and translation of records of a specific region in Volhynia, Ukraine from the Central Archives of the History of the Jewish People (CAHJP).

Please seriously consider contributing your dollars and/or your time to these ongoing and vital tasks. Check out various projects listed at the websites of the various SIGs, etc. and lend them your support. ❖

*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.*

*Evan is researching the following surnames, all in Ukraine:*

*MANDELSTEIN--Starokonstantinov; LISNITZER--Luchinets, Izyaslav; ADELMAN--Krasilov; PRESSEISEN--Ostrog; UDIN--Kiev; BURSTEIN--Radomyshl*

*FISHMAN--Terespol, Poland & Brest Litovsk, Belarus*

Contact Evan at [editor@jgsgp.org](mailto:editor@jgsgp.org)

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## MEMORIES OF TRENTON

By Kaye Bard Paletz

With assistance from Carol J. Robins



**L**iving today in Churchville, Bucks County, Pennsylvania, which is about eighteen miles south of Trenton, New Jersey, and subscribing to a Facebook group called the "Trenton Jewish Project" have kept me connected to my hometown. I have not lived there for many years but still have several close friends who were Trenton natives.

Neither of my parents came from Trenton. My mother was from Orangeburg, South Carolina, where she grew up with a very simple Judaism. At the time, there was probably one synagogue in the whole town. It was not like Charleston, by any means, to which many Jews had moved. I am not sure if she ever attended religious school. Her parents were born and lived all their lives in South Carolina. Her grandparents came to the United States with the wave of German Jews in the 1880s. My mother was proud of being Jewish and moved to Trenton in 1937 to enhance her chances of marrying a Jewish man.

My father was from Russia. As a result of with the Reform syn-  
ish War Veterans, Har he was very proud

Like many of my  
ing up were Jewish,  
Jewish. Being a Jew-  
New Jersey towns.  
being Jewish.

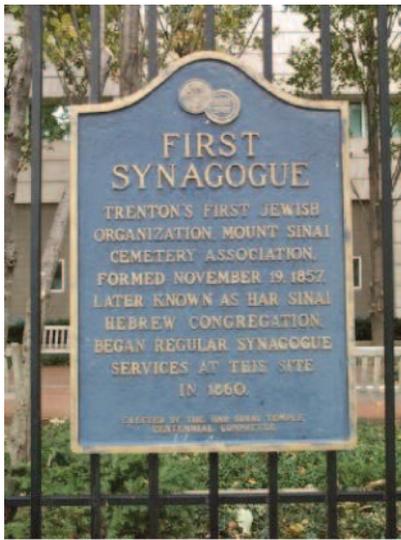
I grew up in Ewing  
Trenton, but those of  
Township and Tren-  
at one end and changing-so that some numbers on the same street are in two different municipalities. Ewing schools had many Jewish children but by no means as many as in Trenton. That changed around 1968 when riots erupted in Trenton. Many parents subsequently moved or sent their children to private schools. "Junior 3" and Trenton High School had the highest number of Jewish students before that time.

One vivid memory of growing up in Trenton was going to Cadwalader Park (partly designed by premier American park designer, Frederick Law Olmsted, and his son, John C. Olmsted) to play on the rides and see the monkey house. In the 1970s the park became home to the Trenton City Museum. On Sundays, many Jewish families went to the Dog House, a local hamburger and hot dog eatery on River Road in West Trenton. It was very crowded on Sundays, but I remember the cream soda there more than anything else.

According to Arthur Finkle, author of the recently published book, *Trenton's Jews: Beginning, Adaptation and Achieving the American Dream*, there were about 500 Jewish families in the city of Trenton in 1907. From the 1920s through the 1940s, there were many marriages between Trenton natives. Former Trentonians always have a connection with each other, especially if they run into each other after not having seen each other for decades. Since many of us live in Bucks County we often see each other in the grocery or at the Jewish bakery. Cramer's Bakery in Yardley and McCaffrey's Markets in Yardley and Newtown are the places that come to mind.

In the 1950s, the Weinstein Delicatessen and Kohn's Bakery were two places where one could be assured of seeing a neighbor or friend. These two shops were right next door to each other on Hermitage Avenue, so it was unlikely that a family would go to only one of the stores without going to the other. I remember long lines on Sundays and buying seeded rye bread and very lean corned beef.

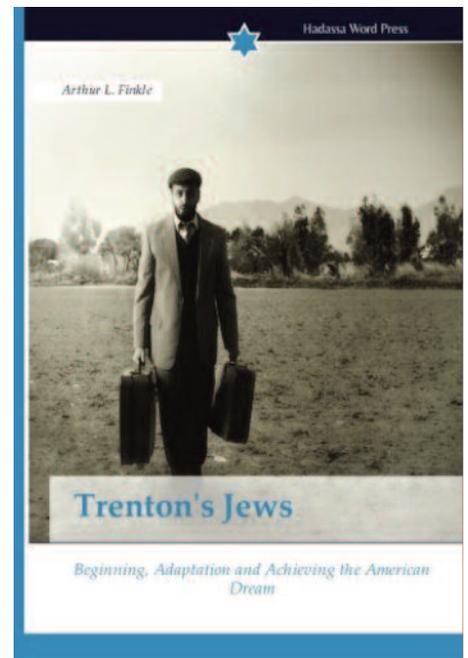
Sadly, Trenton and its Jewish community are not what they were in the 1950s and 1960s when I grew up. There is presently only one Reform synagogue, formerly located in Trenton, which moved to the suburb of Pennington in 2006. The synagogue itself was established in the 1850s. There is one Conservative synagogue, Adath Israel, in Lawrenceville, yet another suburb, and the Orthodox synagogues are long gone from Trenton. One Orthodox shul is now located in Lawrenceville. There are also several Chabad *shuls* (synagogues) located in the greater Trenton area. Trenton never had a Reconstructionist synagogue. Congregation Brothers of Israel, a Conservative synagogue that



Hightstown, New Jersey, and his parents from Belarus and my mother's upbringing, she and my father became affiliated agogue. My father was active in Jewish Family Service, Jew-Sinai Temple, and several other Jewish organizations of which and that connected him to our faith.

Jewish contemporaries, most of my friends while I was grow-  
and I remember that most of my parents' friends were also  
ish Trentonian is a bond unlike any I have heard of in other  
There was never a stigma in living in Trenton/Ewing and

Township in the 1950s. Our school differed from those in  
us in Ewing were and still are considered Trentonians. Ewing  
ton border each other. A street can lie in both locales-starting



originated in Trenton, moved to Bucks County, in Newtown, Pennsylvania. Concern for safety along with the fact that very few Jewish people live in what is considered “Trenton proper” have resulted in these moves.

In 1998, the New Jersey *Jewish News* acquired the *Jewish Reporter* and started publishing an edition in the Princeton/Mercer/Bucks region, covering the area in New Jersey extending from the Route 1 corridor to the greater Princeton area, to Yardley, Pennsylvania, and more.

The Jewish Community Center, which was located in Ewing, NJ when I was a child, is now used for nonsectarian purposes. As a teenager, I spent many days during the summer at the pool of the JCC. (Famed architect, Louis Kahn, designed the buildings that flanked the entrance to the swimming pool at the Trenton Jewish Community Center. For more information, click on this link: <http://kahntrentonbathhouse.org/index.php>) There was also a day camp, although I dropped out after one day!

There are two Jewish funeral homes and several cemeteries in suburbs of Trenton. Orland's Ewing Memorial Chapel has been family-owned for fifty-four years, while Shutzbank is the other funeral home. A few cemeteries are located in Trenton, but Fountain Lawn Memorial Park Cemetery in Lawrenceville is generally the burial place for members of the Conservative *shul*. Greenwood Cemetery is in an area of Trenton that is no longer as safe as it once was and now includes both Jewish and non-Jewish burials. I went by myself to visit my great-grandmother's grave many years ago and regretted going without a companion. Ewing Cemetery, where my parents are buried, is also non-denominational. There are several old cemeteries in Trenton and in neighboring Hamilton Township that date back to the 1800s. Sad to say, many of the markers are no longer visible. Although there are several Jewish cemeteries, to date no one has undertaken the valuable task of indexing the graves or names.

Many former Trentonians reside at Greenwood House Nursing Home and, more recently, Abrams Assisted Living, located in Ewing. A visitor can be assured of seeing a former neighbor or friend there. A body of volunteers among my generation visit the older generation at Greenwood House, helping them bring back memories.

After the 1968 disturbances, downtown Trenton deteriorated slowly. In 1964, when I got my braces, we went to a Horn and Hardart Automat, which no longer exists. Department stores, such as Arnold Constable (my favorite), Nevius-Voorhees, and Dunham's (in that order) moved to Lawrenceville after 1976. Eventually these stores closed.

In the 1950s and 1960s, many attractive small stores were located in downtown Trenton. I remember Michelle's Luggage, owned by members of my synagogue, a bookstore and several fairly nice restaurants for lunch. Mary Roebing was known as the first woman to head a major American bank and was the widow of the great grandson of notable John Roebing, who designed and built the Brooklyn Bridge. She had a lovely restaurant that closed in the 1970s. In the 1960s, there were one or two movie theatres, but they moved out before the department stores did.

We no longer have many restaurants in Trenton other than lunch places. The city now caters to New Jersey state government employees and local residents, mainly African American and Hispanic. I started working in Trenton in 1976, and many of the buildings had already been converted to office buildings.

Since so many Jewish families have moved in recent years to communities outside Trenton, the bond does not seem the same. However, accessing the Jewish Trenton Project on Facebook and knowing of the Trentonian collection at the Trenton Library, demonstrate our interest in maintaining Trenton memories. ❖

*Kaye Paletz was a librarian for the New Jersey State Library for thirty years. Her interest in genealogy began in 1990 after hearing a talk by Miriam Weiner at the Red Lion Y.*

*She is researching WILENSKY (Konotop-Ukraine), PALETZ (Lithuania and South Africa), MARCUS/MARCU (Rumania and Lwówek, East Prussia), BARD (Sculyani, Moldova/Romania) and SILVERBERG (Siemiatycze, Poland).*

Contact Kaye at [kpalez@verizon.net](mailto:kpalez@verizon.net).

# RESEARCHING THE GENEALOGY OF HARRY LASOFF: SCALING MY OWN BRICK WALL

by Stewart Feinberg

Revised and Updated (Sept. 14, 2016)



In *Chronicles* Vol. 32-3 (Fall, 2015) Evan Fishman wrote about dealing with brick walls, an all too common problem in genealogical research. I would like to share my recent efforts in trying to scale my own particular brick wall.

Harry Lasoff was my wife's, Beverly, maternal grandfather. Here is all the information I had when I started my research:

- Harry and his wife, Rose, lived in New York City their whole lives.
- According to the gravestone at Mount Zion Cemetery, Queens, New York: his date of birth (DOB) was July 4, 1886 and date of death (DOD) was January 22, 1972.
- Beverly's aunt, his daughter Naomi, who passed recently, indicated he was born near Minsk, and immigrated to America with Rose, arriving at Ellis Island in 1907.
- At some point Harry and Rose changed their last name to Lasoff. The original surname was something like "Lachowitz."

That's all I had, plus the names and birth dates of his children.

At my first stop ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com)) I uncovered surprisingly little – just the 1920 and the 1930 federal census records.

## Federal and New York State Censuses

The 1920 and 1930 Federal census records have been my only sources of information for Harry and Rose Lasoff. Although they lived in New York City their entire lives after immigrating to the U.S., I did not find them in any New York State census (1905, 1915, 1925). If one assumes Harry provided the information on both censuses, it's very interesting to find some discrepancies between the information recorded.

In the 1920 census, the following information appears: Harry's age is reported as 32, (DOB ~ 1888); he and his wife, Rose immigrated in 1907; Harry became a citizen in 1917; Rose was also naturalized, but no date is given; Harry, his father, and his mother were all born in Musher, Russia; Rose is reported as being born in Minsk, Russia.

As previously mentioned, Harry's date of birth (July 4, 1886) and date of death (January 22, 1972) were listed on his gravestone. We do not know the identity of the informant(s) for the censuses and the gravestone. This is one of the many problems we encounter when we start genealogy research after the passing of previous generations.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE—BUREAU OF THE CENSUS  
FOURTEENTH CENSUS OF THE UNITED STATES: 1920—POPULATION

STATE: New York COUNTY: Queens TOWNSHIP OR OTHER DIVISION OF COUNTY: \_\_\_\_\_ NAME OF INCORPORATED PLACE: New York City Queens Borough WARD OF CITY: Q. 25

ENUMERATED BY ME ON THE 6 DAY OF January, 1920. ENUMERATOR: Marie McNamee

HOUSEHOLD NO.	FAMILY NO.	PLACE OF BIRTH	NAME	RELATION	SEX	AGE	MARRIAGE	CITIZENSHIP	EDUCATION	FATHERS				MOTHERS				OCCUPATION	
										Place of birth	Native born	Place of birth	Native born	Place of birth	Native born				
56	7	Poland	Lasoff, Harry	Head	M	32	1907	1917	High School	Poland	Poland	Poland	Poland	Poland	Poland	Poland	Poland	Poland	Poland
56	8	Poland	Lasoff, Rose	Wife	F	28	1907	1917	High School	Poland	Poland	Poland	Poland	Poland	Poland	Poland	Poland	Poland	Poland
56	9	Poland	Lasoff, Naomi	Daughter	F	7	1913	1917	High School	Poland	Poland	Poland	Poland	Poland	Poland	Poland	Poland	Poland	Poland

More information was requested on the 1930 census as compared to the previous one. Harry's age is reported as 43 (DOB ~ 1887), which is consistent with previous reports. However, "Poland" is listed as his parents' and Rose's birth-

place. This record indicates Harry is a naturalized citizen, but the year of naturalization is not requested. He was 19 when he married, which would mean he and Rose were married in 1906, a year before they immigrated to the U.S.

‘Why did Harry provide two different birthplaces? Indeed, did he? Was it even Harry who reported this information?’ Although a census reports “secondary data,” it is hard to believe a census taker would write “Poland” if he were told “Russia” or “Musher” or vice versa.

### JewishGen Town Search

The Town Finder feature at [www.JewishGen.org](http://www.JewishGen.org), indicates Harry’s birthplace, Mazyr (the Belarussian variant of the name) is located 146 miles SSE of Minsk and is also known by the following names: Mozyr (Russian), Mozir (Yiddish), Mozyrz (Polish), Masyr (German). Maybe, Harry or his family decided, for some unknown reason, to list their ancestral town in Poland, instead of Belarus. I have searched through the JewishGen Belarus database starting with a “Lachowits” type name or starting with the town of Mozyr – all without success.

### Ship Manifests

I am continually amazed at how comprehensive the ship manifests in the Ellis Island databases are. All that seems to be needed are the person’s name and year of immigration. Of course, the person’s actual name could be very different from what was recorded by ship officials at the European port of embarkation. I could not find a ship manifest for Harry and/or Rose Lasoff in the range 1905-1910 using the many permutations of Lasoff that their children reported: Lachowits, Lachowicki, Lachowicz, Lachowits, Lachowitz, Lachowitsky, Lachowitzky, Lakhowitz, Lakhovits, Lakhovitz, Lyakhovich, etc., etc.). I experienced the same frustration when searching manifests for anyone born between 1886 and 1890 or born in Mozyr.

One might think Harry Lasoff is listed on a ship manifest, but his pre-Lasoff name may be so unique or distorted, I might not recognize it. However, since he came over with his wife, there would be two consecutive lines on a ship manifest with the same last name. I did not find any such pairing.

**UPDATE:** Rod MacNeil read my original *Chronicles* article and proved to be extremely helpful in getting me over my “brick wall,” not only with ship manifests, but with other genealogy records, as you will see, below. (Ref. 14, 15).

**SALOON, CABIN, AND STEERAGE ALIENS MUST BE COMPLETELY MANIFESTED.**

**LIST OR MANIFEST OF ALIEN PASSENGERS FOR THE UNITED STATES**

Required by the regulations of the Secretary of Commerce and Labor of the United States, under Act of Congress approved February 20, 1907, to be delivered

S. S. *Schun* sailing from *Parsenen* July 18<sup>th</sup> 1907

No.	NAME IN FULL		Age	Sex	Mar. or Single	Calling or Occupation	Abil. to Read. Write.	Nationality (Country of which citizen or subject)	Race or People	Last Permanent Residence	The name and complete address of nearest relative or friend in country whence alien came.	Final Destination	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12		
1	Family Name	Given Name	Yrs. Mos.							Country	City or Town	State	City or Town
1	<i>Rosin</i>	<i>Michael</i>	16	M		<i>U.S. patented you you Russia</i>		<i>Belorussia</i>		<i>Moscow</i>	<i>Father Schunars Rosin</i>	<i>U.S.</i>	<i>U.S.</i>
2	<i>Frozon</i>	<i>Neil</i>	14	M		<i>U.S. patented</i>				<i>Warsaw</i>	<i>mother Sara Frozon</i>	<i>U.S.</i>	<i>U.S.</i>
3	<i>Lavit</i>	<i>Sankel</i>	15	M		<i>U.S. patented</i>				<i>Warsaw</i>	<i>mother Sara Frozon</i>	<i>U.S.</i>	<i>U.S.</i>
4	<i>Lavit</i>	<i>Sarkel</i>	11	M		<i>U.S. patented</i>				<i>Warsaw</i>	<i>mother Sara Frozon</i>	<i>U.S.</i>	<i>U.S.</i>
5	<i>Lavit</i>	<i>Sarkel</i>	11	M		<i>U.S. patented</i>				<i>Warsaw</i>	<i>mother Sara Frozon</i>	<i>U.S.</i>	<i>U.S.</i>
6	<i>Lavit</i>	<i>Sarkel</i>	11	M		<i>U.S. patented</i>				<i>Warsaw</i>	<i>mother Sara Frozon</i>	<i>U.S.</i>	<i>U.S.</i>
7	<i>Schijornica</i>	<i>Abraham</i>	25	M		<i>U.S. patented</i>				<i>Warsaw</i>	<i>Father Schunars Schijornica</i>	<i>U.S.</i>	<i>U.S.</i>
8	<i>Diamant</i>	<i>Abraham</i>	22	M		<i>U.S. patented</i>				<i>Warsaw</i>	<i>Father Schunars Diamant</i>	<i>U.S.</i>	<i>U.S.</i>
9	<i>Gottmaki</i>	<i>Abraham</i>	11	M		<i>U.S. patented</i>				<i>Warsaw</i>	<i>Father Schunars Gottmaki</i>	<i>U.S.</i>	<i>U.S.</i>
10	<i>Silberskum</i>	<i>Schunel</i>	22	M		<i>U.S. patented</i>				<i>Warsaw</i>	<i>Father Schunars Silberskum</i>	<i>U.S.</i>	<i>U.S.</i>
11	<i>Lavinter</i>	<i>Joseph</i>	32	M		<i>U.S. patented</i>				<i>Warsaw</i>	<i>Father Schunars Lavinter</i>	<i>U.S.</i>	<i>U.S.</i>
12	<i>Schkind</i>	<i>David</i>	22	M		<i>U.S. patented</i>				<i>Warsaw</i>	<i>Father Schunars Schkind</i>	<i>U.S.</i>	<i>U.S.</i>
13	<i>Lachowitzky</i>	<i>Lipser</i>	20	M		<i>U.S. patented</i>				<i>Warsaw</i>	<i>Father Schunars Lachowitzky</i>	<i>U.S.</i>	<i>U.S.</i>
14	<i>Lachowitzky</i>	<i>Rochel</i>	28	F		<i>U.S. patented</i>				<i>Warsaw</i>	<i>Father Schunars Lachowitzky</i>	<i>U.S.</i>	<i>U.S.</i>
15	<i>Mias</i>	<i>Andronia</i>	11	F		<i>U.S. patented</i>				<i>Warsaw</i>	<i>Father Schunars Mias</i>	<i>U.S.</i>	<i>U.S.</i>

Rod found the ship manifest for Harry Lasoff, when using the name Lesor Lach\*, which would encompass most of the possible names listed in the paragraph above. The search using “Lesor Lach\*” turned up a ship manifest listing for “Leiser Lachawiski” and his wife, “Rochel Lachawiski”, although it appears the spelling could also be “Lachawitzki.” (Ref. 8A-D).

## Death Certificate

Besides providing information on the date, location and cause of death, death certificates can provide information not readily available anywhere else, including the individual’s birthplace, and the names and birthplaces of the decedent’s father and mother. A search at [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com) usually identifies the existence of a death certificate and will then provide the document number of that death certificate so that it can then be ordered from the appropriate bureau of vital records. I tried this for Harry Lasoff, but there was no notation of a death certificate.

While Ancestry did not have a record of Harry Lasoff’s death certificate, it could still be available from the New York City Department of Vital Records. I called Mount Zion Cemetery to see if they had a copy of the death certificate. No luck there, but I did get the telephone number of the NYC Bureau of Vital Statistics (212-788-4520). A recorded message gave me the website where I could order a copy of the death certificate ([www.nyc.gov/vitalrecords](http://www.nyc.gov/vitalrecords).) The website (<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/w2w.htm>) explains how to order a death certificate from any state. I have ordered a copy of the death certificate, and we will see what happens.

**UPDATE:** The Department of Vital Records of New York City responded to my application for a copy of Harry Lasoff’s death certificate saying I had not provided sufficient information for them to locate it (Ref. 9, 10). The last known address I had provided was not correct. They said that and parents’ names would probably be sufficient.

## Application for Naturalization

The naturalization application can provide information not available or conveniently available elsewhere. Such information can include birthplace, spouse’s name, when and where married, last foreign residence, names and ages of all children, port of departure before immigration to the U.S., and applicant’s name when initially entering the U.S. This is a veritable gold mine of information, which can be extraordinarily useful when beginning to search regional databases at [www.jewishgen.org](http://www.jewishgen.org). Unfortunately, I was unsuccessful in trying to find Harry Lasoff’s naturalization application, even though both the 1920 and 1930 censuses indicated that Harry became a U.S. citizen in 1917.

**UPDATE:** Rod MacNeil came through, here, also, although he did not find the naturalization application (more on that in a few paragraphs, below).

Expanding the search from using LESOR LACH\* to the newer version, LESOR LASOFF, turned up draft registration cards for World War I and World War II Certificate (Ref. 4, 5, 11). I believe these cards are definitely for Harry Lasoff, although the World War I draft registration card (Ref. 4) describes Harry as “Tall”, which is not how you would describe somebody who is 5’5” (Ref. 7A).

Also found was a listing for Leser Lasoff in the Social Security Death Index (Ref. 6).

A visit to my mother-in-law (Harry Lasoff’s daughter) in early August turned up a most unexpected, but very valuable find – Harry Lasoff’s Certificate of Citizenship (Ref. 7A, B) from May 5, 1917, about a month before Harry registered for the World War I draft. A very interesting tidbit is that at the top of p. 2

The image shows two draft registration cards for Harry Lasoff. The left card is a "REGISTRATION CARD" with handwritten information: Name (Last, First, Middle) "Leser Lasoff", Age "29", Home "578 Courtlandt Ave. N.Y.C.", Date of Birth "July 15, 1887", Place of Birth "Russia", and other details. The right card is a "REGISTRAR'S REPORT" with handwritten information: Name "Leser Lasoff", City or County "New York", State "New York", and Date of Registration "June 5, 1917".

is this notation: “Name changed by order of the court, from LEISER LACHAWITZKY.” It is also interesting to see that Harry signs his first name as “Leser,” but whoever was filling out the form types it in as “Leiser!”

### Scaling the Brick Wall?

So this is where I am, at the base of a brick wall that has the title, “Ship Manifest--Death Certificate--Application for Naturalization.” Any help, suggestions, or leads would be most welcome. Contact me at [stewfein@gmail.com](mailto:stewfein@gmail.com). ❖

**UPDATE:** Gathering all the new information, resulting mostly from the great work of Rod MacNeil, allowed me to create the three tables shown below. The table of names should prove very useful in further research in that it effectively says, “If you are looking for documents in this time period, use this particular name for what was ultimately Harry Lasoff.”

### PATH FOWARD

- It’s time to go to JewishGen.org to re-search Harry’s origins in Belarus.
- We’ll start with the name, Leiser Lachawitzki and its variants, along with using the *wild card asterisk* (\*) in our name searches, since we now know that was the name used on the ship in which he emigrated to America. Lachawitzky (aka Lachawitsky) appears to have been a very common last name in Belarus in the nineteenth century.
- From the gravestone we know Harry’s father’s name was Yudel. Harry had a brother named Morris (Moshe) (Ref. 16). Harry named a son, Morris.
- We also can start with the Belarus town name along the lines of Mazyr (Mozyr/Mozir/Mozyrz/Masyr).
- Two items in America that I would like to find are:
  - Harry Lasoff Application for Naturalization (1917). It is probably under the name “Leiser/Lesor Lachawitzky.
  - Harry Lasoff’s Death Certificate (1973). ❖

### HARRY LASOFF NAMES

DATE	DOCUMENT	REF #	COMMENTS
<b>LEISER LACHAWITZKI</b>			
7/18/1907	BREMEN Ship Manifest 8A-C	Rochel Lachawitzky follows right afterward.	
5/4/1917	Certificate of Citizenship	7B	On back of certificate: “Name changed by order of the court” from this to Leiser Lasoff.
<b>LEISER LASOFF</b>			
5/4/1917	Certificate of Citizenship	7A	Not the spelling Harry used in his signature. On back of certificate: “Name changed by order of the court” to this from Leiser Lachawitzky.
<b>LESER LASOFF</b>			
5/4/1917	Certificate of Citizenship	7A,B	Harry’s spelling in his signature which differs from official entries..



6/5/1917	WW I Draft Registration	4
1941	WW II Draft Registration	5
1/1972	SS Death Index	6

#### HARRY LASOFF

1/6/1920	1920 Federal Census	2
4/8/1930	1930 Federal Census	3
6/22/1972	Gravestone	1

#### EZRA ELIEZER

1/22/1972	Gravestone	1	Hebrew name = Ezra Eliezer ben Yudel
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#### HARRY & ROSE LASOFF ADDRESSES

ADDRESS	DATE	SOURCE	REF #	COMMENTS
77-05 Rockaway Blvd Queens, NY	5/4/1917	Certificate of Citizenship	7A	
598 Courtlandt Ave. Bronx, NY	6/5/1917	WW I Draft Registration	3	
566 Courtlandt Ave. Bronx, NY	1/6/1920	1920 Federal Census	2	
556 Courtlandt Ave. Bronx, NY	1920	NYC Directory, 1822-1995	12A,B	1920 NYC Directory says "556," not "566"
4712 – 3rd Avenue Brooklyn, NY	9/8/1921	Ethel Lasoff Birth Certificate	17	
241 E. Market St. Wilkes-Barre, PA	1923	Wilkes-Barre, City Dir., 1923	13A,B	Verified by daughter; Ethel (my mother-in-law)
717 E. 131st St. Bronx, NY	4/8/1930	1930 Federal Census	3	
77-05 Rockaway Blvd Queens, NY	1941	WW II Draft Registration	5	

#### HARRY LASOFF BIRTH & DEATH DATES

DOB	DOD	SOURCE	REF #	COMMENTS
1887		Ship Manifest	8	20 as of 7/11/1907
7/15/1887		WW I Draft Registration	4	6/5/1917
7/1886		WW II Draft Registration	5	1941
1888		1920 Federal Census	2	32 as of 1/6/1920
1887		1930 Federal Census		43 as of 4/8/1930
7/4/1886	1/22/1972	Gravestone	1	Father "Yudel"
7/15/1886	1/1972	Soc Sec Death Index	6	SS #292-20-6779

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3. LASOFF, HARRY - 1930 Federal Census, CENSUS TAKER SHEET\_2015-09-03.
4. 2016-07-08-2C\_Leser Lasoff WW I draft registration.
5. 2016-07-08-2B\_Leser Lasoff WW II draft registration.
6. 2016-07-21-4\_LESER LASOFF\_US SSDI, 1935-2014.
- 7A. 1917-05-04\_HARRY LASOFF - Certificate of Citizenship (Side 1).
- 7B. 1917-05-04\_HARRY LASOFF - Certificate of Citizenship (Side 2).
- 8A. LEISER LACH\* - Search Hits-- Passenger Lists\_2016-08-15.
- 8B. LEISER LACHAWISKI -- Record Listing-- New York, Passenger Lists, 1820-1957 [using Lesor Lach\*]- Ancestry.com\_2016-08-14.
- 8C. 2016-07-08-2D\_LesorRochellLachawiski1907immigration.
- 8D. RHEIN Passenger Ship\_LesorRochellLachawiski1907immigration.
9. 2016-06-14\_Harry Lasoff - VitalChek Death Certificate Order Confirmation.
10. 2016-06-15\_NYC Dept of Health - Information Related to Your Recent Order.
11. LESOR LASOFF Search Results\_2016-08-15.
- 12A. ADDRESS-NYC 1923 - HARRY (LESER) LASOFF - U.S. City Directories, 1822-1995\_2016-08-17.
- 12B. ADDRESS-NYC 1923 - HARRY (LESER) LASOFF - U.S. City Directories, 1822-1995\_2016-08-17.
- 13A. ADDRESS-WILKES-BARRE 1920 - HARRY (LESER) LASOFF - U.S. City Directories, 1822-1995\_2016-08-17.
- 13B. ADDRESS-WILKES-BARRE 1920 - HARRY (LESER) LASOFF - U.S. City Directories, 1822-1995\_2016-08-17.
14. 2016-07-08-1\_Rod MacNeil= responding to your article in Chronicles, first of two emails.

15. 2016-07-08-2A\_Rod MacNeil= responding to your article in Chronicles, second of two emails.  
 16. GRAVESTONE -- Lasoff, Morris (Harry's brother) & Mollie\_2016-01-12.  
 17. 1921-09-08\_ETHEL LASOFF - Birth Certificate.

Author Stew Feinberg earned a Ph.D in polymer science from the University of Akron. He was employed by several companies before joining Dupont in 1985. He spent his first twenty years there in polymers research and development, then seven years in regulatory affairs, and retired at the end of 2012. Stew's interest in genealogy began in earnest about three years ago, after taking an online genealogy course. He has been focusing on Ukraine and Belarus, the countries of origin for both his wife Bev's and his maternal and paternal grandparents. He's been very active in Keshet Israel Congregation in West Chester, Pennsylvania as a member of several committees and its board of directors, and was president for three years (1996-1999). Hobbies besides genealogy include photography and running.

## GET THEM TO SAY "YES"

by Mindie Kaplan with notes by Lara Diamond

[Note: In Chronicles, vol. 32-3 (Fall 2015) we introduced a forum that dealt with the issue of how to secure the help of reluctant potential relatives. Mindie Kaplan spoke to this topic at the recent IAJGS conference in Seattle.]



The first thing most people think of when interviewing relatives is how many names, dates, or places that person can provide. I try to turn that idea on its head. 'What can I give THEM? What stories can I share? What photos can I provide that they might not have seen or that might bring back good memories? How can we become friends?' We all share things with people that we like. If you give me a gift, I'm going to give you a gift in return -- the gift of friendship, memories, of wanting to help you and join you on that journey to discover our history. This idea, connecting family and becoming a part of a larger group, is at the heart of my research. This is what I hoped to convey in my talk.

I tried to turn this central philosophy and approach into a series of concrete techniques for reaching out to relatives, including those who are reluctant to meet with a stranger, and provide examples of research successes to inspire and encourage people to expand their research in new areas.

The lecture was really broken into three sections:

- **Relatives**

- How do you contact them?
- How do you prepare for the meeting or interview?
- What role does documentation play?
- Why it's important to be an ethical researcher.

- **"Cold Calls"**

- How do you find new people?
- How do you convince them to talk to you, a stranger?
- How do you build a relationship that will lead to even more relatives?

- **DNA Testing**

- What can DNA tell you?
- How do you ask someone to take a DNA test?
- What are some examples that will get them interested in participating?

From Lara's Genealogy (<https://larasgenealogy.blogspot.com/2016/08/iajgs2016-day-5.html>):

I introduced Mindie Kaplan and then listened to her talk, which was about how you can get relatives to say "yes." She explained that you could get a better idea, based on oral history, of where to start looking. You can also get help to identify

mystery photographs. She gave many examples from her own research where various strategies worked to put together puzzle pieces and get additional information.

## Approaching people who know nothing about you.

- Explain who you are and why you've contacted them.
- **What's in it for them?**
- Be reassuring. Remind them that you don't want anything they're uncomfortable sharing. **Emphasize ethics and honesty.**
- Put them in charge of the conversation.
- If they start to hesitate, remind them that it's perfectly okay to say "no."
- Start with asking questions about grandparents, not parents or other living relatives until they're more comfortable.
- Always be respectful of their privacy.
- Don't ask for things that can be used for identity theft.
- Ask for permission, not forgiveness.
- Don't assume that you know how they will react to a given piece of information!

"Get Them to Say Yes" (slide #23), presented at IAJGS conference in Seattle, August 11, 2016

Mindie talked about using social media like Facebook to try to find living relatives who may have good information. She also talked about the initial approach. Don't ask about maiden names (as people may feel you're trying to steal their identity). If you have photos from their line, send them to them. That is something that should be meaningful to them and also gives you some credibility.

She stressed the importance of keeping consistent email addresses so you can be reachable.

Photos you get from people can help to tell stories about people and shed light on the relationships between various family members.

She discussed how DNA can be used to prove (or maybe disprove) a potential connection--and can encourage someone who isn't sure of the relationship that there actually is one.

Please click on to <http://mindiekaplan.blogspot.com/> to see a video of Mindie's presentation. ❖

*A Java programmer, Mindie Kaplan has been obsessed with Jewish genealogy for more than twenty years. Her family tree currently consists of more than 3,500 individuals. When printed (including photos, stories, and biographies) it is 173 pages for the SPLAVER side and 99 pages for the ENTES side. Mindie has years of experience reaching out to distant family members to learn their stories, discover old photographs, and obtain DNA samples with the goal of putting together the story of her family. She is also the manager of the Anyksciai, Lithuania and Smorgon, Belarus DNA projects at FamilyTreeDNA.*

*She has attended nearly every IAJGS conference since 2003 in Washington, DC. and is involved with both the JGS of Greater Washington and the JGS of Maryland. She has presented this talk at JGS of Maryland and will be speaking at JGS of Greater Washington on January 8, 2017.*

Contact Mindie at [rayvenna@his.com](mailto:rayvenna@his.com)

# A BRIEF LOOK AT SCANNING

by James Gross



**S**canning documents and photos is a function that is conducted to assist in organizing paper records and photos as well as to share them with others. Scanning documents helps when doing and sharing research and helps to reduce the volume of one's paper storage. In this short article I will briefly talk about a few flatbed scanners, scanning software, and computer file management.

You are going to embark on a cross-country trip or cross-state trip to do research, and most of your records are stored in a filing cabinet or are in binders on a shelf. In the past you may have even carted around binders of documents. You know that your memory isn't perfect and you need to have instant access to a number of records as you visit research sites and archives. The problem is that you are buried in paper. After all of those research trips, microfilm copies, and photocopied records, you have a huge pile of records. 'How do you manage them, and make use of them in today's digital world?' Simple. They need to be scanned.

**Flatbed scanners:** When selecting a scanner, pick one that will work with your computer's operating system. Some users are using Windows 7, some are using Windows 8 or 10, and some of you are using Macs. I have had very good luck with the Canon line of flatbed scanners. They are both lightweight and thin. Pictured at the right is the Canon LIDE 110 (2011). It is compatible with my current operating system, Windows 7. It is also compatible with Windows 8 and Windows 10.



There is also the Canon LIDE 120 (2014), (pictured below left) which is compatible with Windows 7, 8, and 10. It offers a scanning resolution of 2400 x 4800 and has a scan to cloud function. It sells at \$120 retail or around \$60-90 on Ebay. The Canon LIDE 120 was replaced by the LIDE 220.



The LIDE 220, (not pictured), looks very similar to the LIDE 110 and is compatible with Windows 7, 8, and 10. It features a scanning ratio of 4800 x 4800 and also has a scan to cloud function. It retails for \$170 or around \$100-120 on Ebay.

All three of the above-mentioned scanners draw power directly from a USB connection to the PC or laptop, eliminating the need to use a separate AC power adapter. There are other brands of scanners that you can choose from, but I chose to highlight the Canon line as I have used one or more of them.

**Scanning Software:** All of the above-mentioned Canon scanners, if purchased new, come with Canon's software package. Since I picked up an older model, the LIDE 110, which didn't come with scanner software, I downloaded a TWAIN-compliant scanner driver for my model from Canon's support website. A check on the Canon website<sup>(1)</sup> shows drivers are also available for the LIDE 120 and LIDE 220, and a complete scanning software package entitled, "My Image Garden," is available for the LIDE 220. I understand from online reviews, however, that many users do not care for the supplied Canon software.

An alternative is stock scanning software to use an aftermarket software package such as NAPS2 (Not Another PDF Scanner 2)<sup>(2)</sup>. Another software program is Vue Scan<sup>(3)</sup> which is touted as being compatible with over 3000 different scanners on Windows, Mac OS X and Linux. I am currently using NAPS2. Whichever software you decide to use, I suggest you use this simple approach. Try out the software at home with a standard business letter, and establish which setting looks good to you. The software programs will typically allow you to adjust resolution (300, 400 or 600dpi), brightness, contrast and bit depth (b/w, grayscale, or color). Where possible, I use a lower resolution in b/w mode to reduce file size. Use the color option for scanning your photographs.

**File format:** Documents are usually saved to the pdf format. Photographs and images offer more options. In brief, they can be saved in either the jpg, or tiff formats. A tiff file is much larger than a jpg file. Online forums I've read recommend initially saving an image to the tiff format and later Photoshopping it to the jpg format<sup>(4)</sup>. This is probably the best option for archival storage. However, I personally do not save any image files to the tiff format because I don't have the time to edit in Photoshop. I also don't use the tiff format because it creates a very large file which is often too large to email. Consequently I exclusively use the jpg file format.

**Scan test:** Be sure to review your scan after it is scanned to verify the clarity and positioning of the page. The page may be too dark, too light, or positioned off center on the scanner. If you make a few test scans, you will get a feel for which setting is best for your needs. I usually scan photos to a jpg file and documents to a pdf file.

**Saving the scanned file:** When saving your file, decide what to name it. This sounds extremely simplistic, but you need a file name that accurately refers to the file and which will make sense to you the next time you look for it. After you save the file, you need to decide where to store or place it.

**Scanned computer file management:** This step is very important as it will save you time. You may wish to create folders on your computer for your research and place all scanned files in those folders. Now those of you who consider yourselves to be electronically organized probably have your own favorite methodology of computer file organizing and filing. My method may not work for you. The reality is that we all have our own preferences, if any, in regard to how we organize our electronic computer files.

**My documents file:** Many computer users, myself included, dump a lot of files here. This is fine, except that I look at it as a short-term location. I keep all of my electronic files in a main computer folder, which I call "genealogy." I then have subfolders including a "genealogy pdf" folder. Within this folder I have more subfolders, listed by family surname, as I am usually working on one specific family at a time. Thus, I am using a multi-tiered level of folders. I would encourage you to review where you currently keep your electronic genealogy files on your computer and whether you need to rename or move them. It is best if you can decide on the folder naming and location on your computer where you wish to save your scanned files and other digital files.

Once you decide on the folder location, adhere to it and make it part of your routine to always save your relevant scanned genealogy files to this location. You should always choose your own electronic folder filing system, based on your needs and your ability to discipline yourself to always save to the correct computer folder. File organization can easily be an hour-long lecture in itself, so I will simply say to try and create a usable computer file folder system and stick with it.

In closing, picking up a lightweight flatbed scanner will enable you to take all of those paper files and share them with the rest of your family as well as fellow researchers. The scanner is only as good as the user, so practice scanning a few pages if you plan on taking it with you on a research trip. I touched on designating one or more electronic folders for your documents. You'll appreciate that word of advice after you create a family or genealogy folder because this alone will save you on retrieval time. If you can create and embrace a system of electronic file storage, it will result in improved efficiency and easier file retrieval tomorrow. 'Now, which folder did I save that scanned family tree chart file to, and what did I name it?' ❖

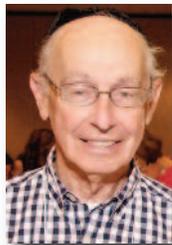
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*Author James Gross has been working on his family tree since the early 1990s. A periodic contributor to various genealogy newsletters, James volunteers regularly at the Cherry Hill, NJ Family History Center where he helps other genealogists in their research. He also has a genealogy website: <http://tinyurl.com/gross-steinberg>. Contact James at: [navistar96@yahoo.com](mailto:navistar96@yahoo.com)*

## THE YEARBOOKS OF YORE

by Harry D. Boonin



Recently, the *Baltimore Sun* published an article, “Are Yearbooks Now Too Old School?” by Carrie Wells, about the yearbooks that were so dear to us in our high school years and later, and of their possible demise and eventual extinction. ‘Well,’ I said to myself, ‘There’s a story that’s sure to get any Jewish genealogist’s Irish up!’

Here is my story of the yearbooks of my mother and father. Mom’s story first. Mom was one of eighteen children, the only one to attend college. She enrolled in the Women’s College of the University of Pennsylvania, graduated in 1925, and seldom spoke about her years at Penn. In the 1980s, before the personal computer, before the internet, before the iPhone, in other words, before the world began, I used to like to rummage around in the old, corner, used book stores in the neighborhoods of Philly looking for God only knows what.

One day in one of these long-gone, quaint establishments, I stumbled upon a 1928 yearbook (men’s) from the University of Pennsylvania. (There were two colleges at Penn: the women’s and the men’s, but only the women’s was so designated.) I asked the sleepy clerk in the bookstore, “How much?” He replied, “Gimme five bucks.” So for five bucks I bought a beautiful, gold-leafed volume that looked very nice in my library full of paperbacks. (It really didn’t have gold leaf but it makes for a much better story!) And there it stayed for many years. Never read fully, often skimmed, gathering dust.

By this time I was deep into Jewish genealogy, writing on my typewriter to this one and that one—and an idea came to me. ‘Mom never had a copy of her yearbook?’ Brilliant I thought to myself. And sure enough, the Women’s College of the University of Pennsylvania did publish a separate yearbook the year Mom graduated. So I got an idea. (Genealogists are always getting ideas. They must come in the cold cereal packages along with Dick Tracey watches and Mickey Mouse stuff.) Anyhow, I called the Penn archive, got a very nice gal on the other end of the line, and proposed the following deal to her: “Would you like a magnificent copy of the 1928 gold-leafed yearbook in exchange for the 1925 Women’s yearbook?” She said dryly, “I’ll have to see if we have any additional copies of the 1925 book we could give you.” (I had suggested that this be a “barter” type deal, with no money involved.) She checked and said that they did have an extra copy of the 1925 book I wanted, and she needed the 1928 book I had. Wow! Sometimes ideas work. (Dear reader, this is said with a disclaimer, as I make no claim that anyone else would be as lucky as I have been.) The archivist and I were both very happy. I was proud of my brilliance, and Mom would have been proud of me.



When I opened the book I cried. I had never seen a picture of Mom in college. There she was. She was beautiful. I had no idea that I could meet my mother when she was about twenty years old (she had entered Penn at an early age). I had no idea she was ever that young, and carefree, and independent in feature and poise. It literally shook me up. I then read about her interests. She was a member of the Menorah Society which was a moderate Zionist society at Ivy League schools in the 1920s. (‘Weren’t Jews just about barred from most Ivy League schools?’) Mom always told me she loved attending lectures from the time she was very young, and I knew of her love of learning, but here for the first time I learned of one of her college societies where she belonged and could probably find a listing of the lectures she attended at the Menorah Society. In any event, the book held much for me, and I was so lucky to have found it and was able to give it to our daughter, Sarah. Perhaps she will pass it on to our grandson, Josh.

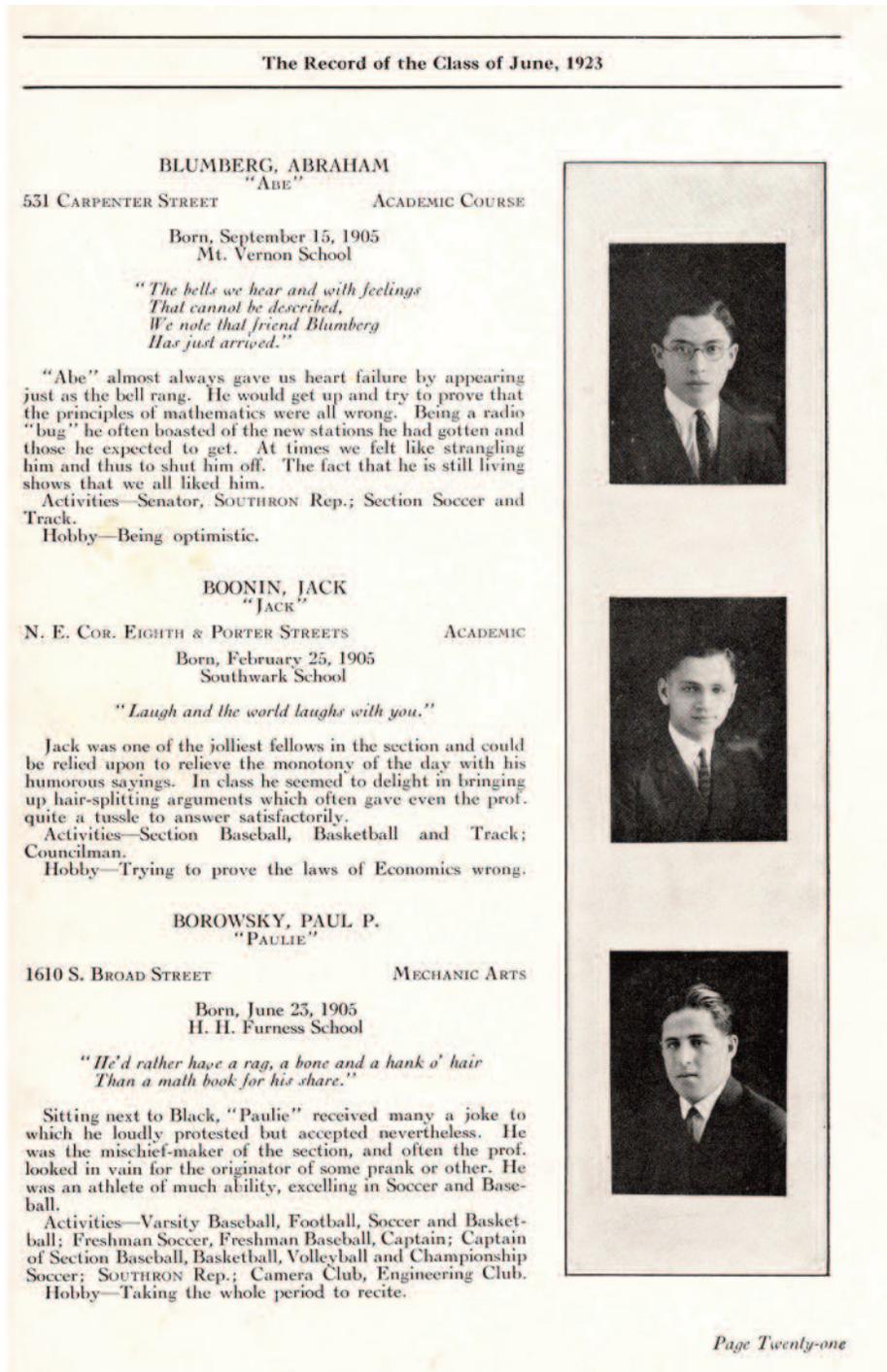
Now, on to Dad. My father died when I was ten, which was sixty-nine years ago. This becomes a big part of the story. All my life I was told that at South Philadelphia High School for Boys where he attended, he was one of the three musketeers, Al Blumberg, Morris Bernhard, and Jacob Boonin. I never thought about his high school years even

after I found Mom's college yearbook. (I had my father's college yearbook from Penn State and did not think I needed anything else.) Well, that was how things stood going into the summer of 2015.

At a Reform Congregation Keneseth Israel meeting at Caryl Levin's Elkins Park, Pennsylvania home that summer, about fifty of us gathered for food, fun, and conviviality. As is Caryl's wont, she first went around the group sitting outside in a circle on her magnificent patio, and she mentioned each person by name (she has a wonderful memory). When she got to me, she mentioned my full name and continued around the group until she got to an elderly gentleman, about my age, perhaps a tad older, on the other side of the wide circle. He explained what he did for a living, said a few other introductory words, and then said, "I remember Jacob Boonin." I could not believe my ears. Someone in 2015 could remember my dad! Impossible. As soon as the meeting was over I introduced myself to this gentlemen, who turned out to be a son-in-law of Morris Bernhard, one of the three musketeers in high school.

When I was in grade school and high school, men would come up to me and tell me that they knew my father, and then they would tell me things about him which I then took for granted. I should have noted the remembrances in a book. I do not remember my father—except for a few little things. I was just too young. But as the years passed, I met fewer and fewer men who knew my dad. And then one day the stories stopped, and many years passed before the summer of 2015. So you can imagine my surprise when an elderly gentleman said to me, then a 78 year old, that he knew my dad. On the patio that summer day we spoke for a little while, and he said he did not have very many specific memories, but did have a few.

Well, it wasn't more than six months later that my wife and I attended a funeral and went back to the *shiva* [mourning period] house and who should be there but Morris Bernhard's son-in-law. He came right up to me and said he had something for me. I don't know how he knew I would be there at the *shiva* house, but I tried to look like I understood what was going on—which I did not. He then handed me a tattered and slightly dog-eared little volume that said on the outside "The Class Record Book, 1923," and in a small circle on the cover were the words, "South Philadelphia High School," and in even smaller letters at the core of the circle were the words, "Self-Reliance Culture Life Work." He said he wanted me to have the book. I asked him if he had any children, the grandchildren



of Morris Bernhard. He said he did. I asked why he was giving the book to me, a stranger, and I insisted that he give it to Morris' grandchildren. He would hear of no such thing and said that the book was his (Morris' daughter had passed), and he wanted to give it to me and did so. I didn't put up much of a fight, as I really wanted the book and was more than a little bit amazed by the entire incident.

My fingers touched the book, and I began to cry. Maybe not on the outside, but definitely on the inside. I sat down in a corner and began to look through the thin, little volume (92 pages) with its brown, faux leather cover. On the left side of p. 20, there was Morris Bernhard ("Moish," in the book); opposite him, on the right side of p. 21, was Abraham Blumberg ("Abe," in the book) who I knew as "Al" and remembered quite well. I knew him because later in life he became partners with Mom in a day camp. Finally, below the entry for Blumberg was Jacob Boonin ("Jack," in the book), my dad. And the book had a story about him. I will copy the entire entry.

**BOONIN, JACK**  
**N.E. Cor. Eighth & Porter Streets      Academic**  
**Born, February 25, 1905**  
**Southwark School**  
**"Laugh and the world laughs with you."**  
**Jack was one of the jolliest fellows in the section and could be relied upon to relieve the monotony of the day with his humorous sayings. In class he seems to delight in bringing up hair-splitting arguments which often gave even the prof. quite a tussle to answer satisfactorily.**  
**Activities—Section Baseball, Basketball and Track; Councilman**  
**Hobby—Trying to prove the laws of Economics wrong.**

Next to the paragraph on Jack Boonin is his photograph, in tie, jacket, and white collar and the mandatory serious expression of the era. Most of the boys in the class were Jewish. One Italian boy, Francesco P. Di Dio, put down for his hobby, "Talking Jewish." And so it went.

The boys of the class of 1923 went out into the world to make their fame and fortune, and we have their yearbook to document their early years and what kind of boys they were. ❖

*Author Harry D. Boonin is the founding president of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Philadelphia and a well-known genealogical researcher and writer. Harry is the author of "The Jewish Quarter of Philadelphia: A History & Guide 1881-1930", "The Life & Times of Congregation Keshet Israel", and is researching Jewish boxers from Philadelphia. Contact Harry at: [harryboonin@gmail.com](mailto:harryboonin@gmail.com)*

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## SUMMER PHOTOS

by Marge Farbman



**A**s I write, here we are at September, the season of new beginnings. The kids are beginning a new year at school. The teachers are beginning the new school year with new plans, goals, and hopes. The Jewish new year is late this year, but advancing upon us with thoughts of family coming together, old familiar foods to make and eat, and stories and pictures of summer vacations and accomplishments.

At our house, summer photos will be of circus camp and granddaughters flying through the air on a trapeze, our new great granddaughter on her first trip to the beach, granddaughters and their parents exploring Maine and then joining their cousins for fun in Boston, and peach picking at the local farm. All those pictures are saved in our phones! So what's a grandma to do?!

This grandma is going to download them to her computer, pick the very best ones, put them on a flash drive, and print them at Target. Or maybe I'll upload them to Costco and put them into a "Summer 2016" photo book with copies for each family. This book will include the stories that the kids have told with the accompanying photos so that they can remember them and share them with future generations.

If you are not so into the print off the best pictures of dinner to share with everyone again later and write on the where and when the photo was taken (date, month and year) and the names of the babies! Even if you never are identified, and you can contain them for the future. of themselves, they will to share.

One other reminder for holi- tures of everyone. Get ings. Get people around the holiday finery, and your overflowing with yummy just being together -- the younger generations. Be sure to include friends who are part of your holiday, too.

Ocean City, NJ - 2010 Dee Silver (Ed Flax's wife)  
with three of their grandchildren



computer, ask your kids to summer fun and bring them to one. Then you can enjoy them back, in permanent marker, was taken (date, month and adults, the kids, especially the put them into an album, they tuck them into a waterproof When the kids need pictures know that Grandma has some

iday get-togethers... take pic- candids. Get family group- table, your table set with your family's traditional dishes things. Get pictures of the kids grown up kids as well as the

As a second reminder ... considering how strange the weather has been in some parts of this country, i.e., floods, forest fires, intense heat... let me suggest that you secure all your photos either in albums with page protectors, in waterproof boxes, in large plastic trunks. Containers and covered pages will shield them from water, moisture, smoke, even extremes of temperature. My personal experience has been with smoke and fire damage. My photos in albums with page protectors, even though they were in the adjacent room to the fire, came through just fine. I cleaned the covers with art-gum erasers and wiped the page protectors with barely damp paper toweling. The photos were fine. The prints in their envelopes identified by specific years in shoeboxes were okay too. They were sooty on the outside of the envelopes, but not as covered as the boxes, and the photos were, mostly, fine. Fortunately, the cardboard boxes were not in an area where the firemen poured water.

After you have done all that research about your family, protect it. Remember that your computers and phones are vulnerable too. Back up your family tree and research information. Flash drives of amazing capacity are so inexpensive these days. Save it in another location. You might consider getting one of those small fire safes at an office supply store. They are pretty inexpensive, and I can personally say that the only place in my house that smoke and soot did not penetrate was into the little safe we had that was on the other side of the wall where our fire started! Measuring 20 x 20 inches, it was of solid steel, and it survived. Our computers melted... literally. Somehow, my laptop melted in such a way that I was able to retrieve the hard drive and get the files from it. My husband's computer, sitting ten feet away, however, was a complete loss, hard drive included... and that's where the family tree was saved. Most of that information is not easily recovered. So take it from us: SAVE, BACKUP, AND HAVE MULTIPLE COPIES Our best wishes to all for a happy and healthy coming year. ❖

*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 and one great grand- daughter; 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](mailto:margefarb@aol.com) or 610-291-8988*

# PROGRESS MADE IN CATALOGUING THE JEWISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF GREATER PHILADELPHIA COLLECTION AT THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF PENNSYLVANIA

by Dr. Lee Arnold, HSP Library Director

The Historical Society of Pennsylvania (HSP) has made great strides in cataloguing the collection from the Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Philadelphia (JGSGP), given to HSP around July 2015. Seventy-seven records have been added to our online catalogue *Discover* ([www.discover.hsp.org](http://www.discover.hsp.org)) this year. All of the retained items (HSP had returned duplicates to the JGSGP) will keep the same call numbers on their spines as when they were at Gratz College. They will also be shelved together as a unique collection as they were at Gratz. One thing that the society has been doing, which was not done at Gratz, is to send all of the paperback books out to the bindery. Bound books last longer.

You can locate JGSGP books at HSP in one of two easy ways. Go to our online catalogue *Discover* ([www.discover.hsp.org](http://www.discover.hsp.org)) and type in “Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Philadelphia” in the “All Fields” search string and hit “Find.” You can also type in “JGSGP” in the “Call Number” search string and hit “Find.” Review the list which will then appear. When you see an item you wish to know more about, simply click on it and the full cataloguing record will show.

The Historical Society of Pennsylvania is proud to be the new home of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Philadelphia collection. HSP provides a convenient and professionally staffed research library. It is committed to facilitating genealogical research and education. Since the merger of the Balch Institute for Ethnic Studies with HSP in 2002, we have also endeavored to add more Judaica to our collections. The JGSGP collection enriches both of these goals. ❖

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## MY GENEALOGY FAIR EXPERIENCE

by Steven Pilchik

(All photos of our genealogy fair were taken by JGSGP member, Eugene Hurwitz)

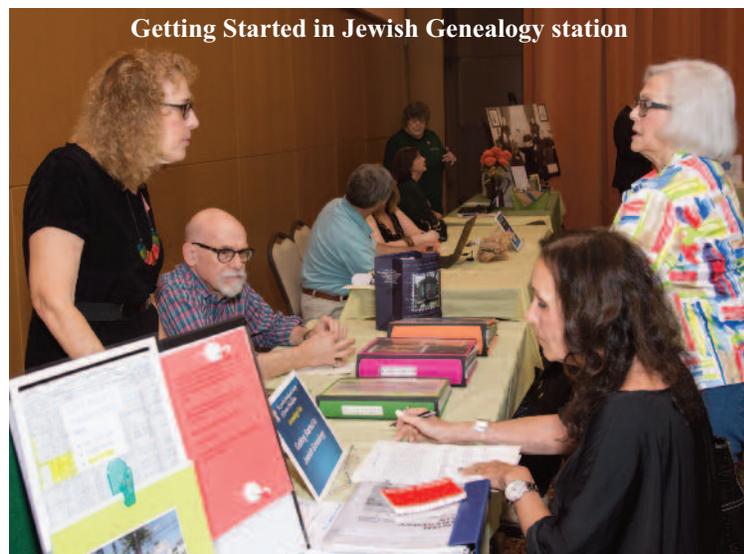


Genealogy fever is always there, whether simmering in the background or taking over my ever present desire to learn something new about the family. The JGSGP genealogy fair was just what the doctor ordered.

Research is most rewarding when I am doing the digging, but it is never something one can do alone. Over the decades, more and more records have become available online, and the internet has definitely helped shrink the distance and the time to retrieve those scraps that lead to the next clues and the next revelations.

We can't do it alone, and thanks to the JGSGP genealogy fair and the volunteers staffing the tables, I, for one, had another breakthrough!

I walked into the fair and found about a dozen tables



staffed by a cast of friendly fellow genealogists and subject matter experts on topics ranging from other genealogical organizations, to Special Interest Groups, to research centers. Wi-Fi enabled, there were researchers happy to show us what resources are available specific to their area of expertise. I was happy to simply walk around and listen to others ask their questions and listen to the flow of information and even strike up a conversation with other attendees. Everyone had something to share, and networking is our best source for ideas and leads.



Bette Epstein - NJ State Archives - assists an attendee

I came across one table of particular interest, the New Jersey State Archives, staffed by Bette Epstein. A couple was asking questions, and Bette was a champ, listening, asking probing questions, and accessing records while they talked. When it was my turn I asked Bette for some advice on how I might try, again, to locate my great grandfather's death certificate. I knew all the particulars -- where he is buried, date of death, name. Bette suggested I send her an email, and she'd be happy to help.

There were many other tables to visit. There were even tables with reference books -- books about the ships that brought immigrants to the New World and books on the history of names, to name a few. I always thought I knew the meaning of my last name, until I opened one of the books on names. I guess I was misinformed. Now, of course, I wonder when the family first started using this name... and why.

I left the fair with new information and some new leads to add to my research. First things first ... I emailed Bette.

When I first started on my genealogical journey, I used to run to the mailbox every day, holding my breath that there would be an official envelope from one archive or another. Today it is simply another mailbox I open, hoping for news. Attached to the email from the NJ State Archives was my great grandfather's death certificate! Bonus: It had my great grandmother's first name. Something previously unknown! How did she do it? How come over ten years ago, when I wrote away for it, I only received a letter saying that it could not be found?

As we both saw, the name on the certificate was Alter. My grandfather's name was Abraham. Perhaps the original researcher saw that and decided it could not be the same person. But we Jewish genealogists know that first and last name spellings, derived from Hebrew and Yiddish, are guesses at best. Bette stuck with it and realized this was our man.



Yiddish translation assistance

I walked away from the fair with my great grandfather's death certificate, a new definition for my family name, and a new JGSGP membership for the 2017 year! I still have the bug, but it was a good day! ❖

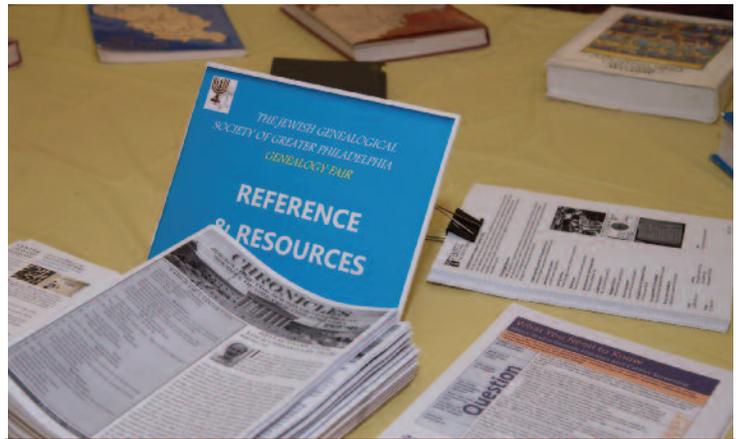
*Originally from New York, Steven Pilchik is an account manager for a health information technology corporation. He's been researching his families since the summer of 1979 when, on a USY Israel Pilgrimage trip, he was introduced to a girl who shared his last name, and claimed roots to the same shtetl from which his family emigrated. They have not yet found their link.*

*His search continues into his families: PILCHIK from Stolin, Belarus, BLECHER/BLACKER from Slutsk, Belarus, HARAD from Kaharlyck, Ukraine, ALBERT Buki, Ukraine, SCHNEIDER/SNYDER from Ungheni, Moldova, BEITCHMAN from Skullian, Bessarabia.*

Contact Steven at: [shpilchik61@gmail.com](mailto:shpilchik61@gmail.com).

# JGSGP GENEALOGY FAIR IN PICTURES

SEPTEMBER 11, 2016 - REFORM CONGREGATION KENESETH ISRAEL, ELKINS PARK PA



## JGSGP GENEALOGY FAIR IN PICTURES

SEPTEMBER 11, 2016 - REFORM CONGREGATION KENESETH ISRAEL, ELKINS PARK PA



### JGSGP SPEAKERS BUREAU HAVE EXPERTISE IN GENEALOGY, WILL TRAVEL

We are proud of our Speakers Bureau and wish to reach a broader audience in the greater Philadelphia Jewish community.

We have speakers available for synagogue groups and organizations to help their members get started in tracing their family roots. Please contact Stan and Shelda Sandler at [stanshel@msn.com](mailto:stanshel@msn.com) for more details. Our publicity flyer can be found at: [http://www.jgsgp.org/Documents/Speakers\\_Bureau.pdf](http://www.jgsgp.org/Documents/Speakers_Bureau.pdf)

**The following Speakers Bureau guidelines have been approved by the JGSGP board of trustees.**

- There is a \$100 fee for a speaker.
- The fee will be waived if five attendees join the JGSGP after the presentation: speaker receives five completed JGSGP membership applications and a \$25 check with each.
- Presentations are given to groups of at least ten adults interested in genealogy.
- Presentations can be made at synagogues and affiliated groups such as men's clubs, sisterhoods, and organizations like ORT and Hadassah, within a 20-30 mile radius of Philadelphia.
- Schools, JCC's, and retirement homes will be considered on a case-by-case basis as long as they agree with the above guidelines.



# Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Philadelphia 2017 Membership & Renewal Form

Enjoy *Chronicles*, Our Award Winning Quarterly Publication

Please print, complete and mail this form with your check to  
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/>

All members receive e-mail copies of *Chronicles* as part of their dues. If you would like to have a paper *Chronicles* mailed to you, please check the  & include an additional \$10 with your dues to help cover mailing and printing.

Membership Categories	New	Renewal	Paper <i>Chronicles</i>	Amount
Individual - \$25			<input type="checkbox"/> \$10	
Family - \$35 (2 Person Household)			<input type="checkbox"/> \$10	
Sponsor - \$50			<input type="checkbox"/> \$10	
Patron - \$100			<input type="checkbox"/> \$10	
Additional Voluntary Contribution				
<b>Please enclose check payable to JGSGP in the amount of:</b>				

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, 2017.**

**(New members joining after September 30, 2016 receive membership benefits through December 31, 2017.)**

**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



## JGSGP CALENDAR & REMINDERS

Our U.S. mail address is: 1657 The Fairway, #145 Jenkintown, PA 19046

JGSGP is on the web at: <http://www.jsgsp.org>

Look for information about other IAJGS member societies:

<http://www.iajgs.org/members/members.html>

Join the JGSGP Facebook group: <http://tinyurl.com/jsgsp>.



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

Please check your JGSGP emails, our website (<http://jsgsp.org>) and our Facebook page (<http://tinyurl.com/jsgsp>) for complete and up to the minute program information.

Sunday, October 30, 2016 1:30 PM

Temple Adath Israel, 250 N. Highland Avenue, Merion Station, PA 19066

Fred Blum, Private Detective & President, JGSGP

How to Locate Individuals Through the Use of Genealogy

Fred will teach us some techniques he uses to locate individuals through genealogy. This information will enable researchers to locate family and uncover distant relatives.



Sunday, November 20, 2016 1:30 PM

Reform Congregation Keneseth Israel, 8339 Old York Road, Elkins Park PA 19027

Harry D. Boonin, Author & Founding President of JGSGP

Jewish Boxing in Philadelphia a Century Ago.

In 1928 there were more Jewish boxers nationally than there were from any other ethnic group in the country, including the Irish and African Americans. These background stories are what made our ancestors lives meaningful. Harry will talk about four Jewish boxers from Philly, how he researched their lives, and the role Jewish boxers played in immigrant America.



Sunday, December 11, 2016 12:30 PM (please note earlier time)

Reform Congregation Keneseth Israel, 8339 Old York Road, Elkins Park PA 19027

The 3rd Annual Steve Schecter Memorial Lecture

Rabbi Lance Sussman, Senior Rabbi at Keneseth Israel &

Professor of American Jewish History

The Golden Age of Philadelphia



Sunday, January 29, 2017 1:30 PM

Main Line Reform Temple, 410 Montgomery Ave, Wynnewood Pennsylvania 19096

Israel Pickholtz, author of "Endogamy: One Family, One People."

Are you concerned about understanding and interpreting your DNA test results? DNA results are especially complicated for Jews, who have largely married "within the tribe" for hundreds of years, a practice known as endogamy. In this presentation, Israel Pickholtz will tackle this challenge head on. Following the talk, copies of his book will be available for purchase and signing.



Historical Society  
of Pennsylvania

The JGSGP genealogy library collection is housed at the:  
Historical Society of Pennsylvania,  
1300 Locust Street, Philadelphia, 19107, (215) 732-6200,  
[www.hsp.org](http://www.hsp.org)

You can arrange a visit there to view the *reference only* collection on the HSP website.

Our president, Fred Blum often has free passes available for HSP. Contact Fred at [president@jsgsp.org](mailto:president@jsgsp.org).

Deadline for submission of articles for our fall issue is Sunday, December 11, 2016.

Please send material to: [editor@jsgsp.org](mailto:editor@jsgsp.org).