



דְּבָרִי הַיּוֹם

# CHRONICLES

March 2008

The Award-Winning Publication of the  
Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Philadelphia

Vol. 26, No. 4

## CONFERENCES, CONFERENCES AND MORE CONFERENCES

**28th IAJGS International  
Conference on Jewish Genealogy**

**CHICAGO**

**August 17-22, 2008**

**<http://www.chicago2008.org>**

**Co-Sponsored by the JGS of Illinois and the Illiana JGS**

**See page 6 for more information**

**FEDERATION OF GENEALOGICAL SOCIETIES  
CONFERENCE**

[www.fgs.org](http://www.fgs.org)

**September 3-6,  
2008**



**See Page 7  
for more  
information**

**PHILADELPHIA 2008**

**PHILADELPHIA**

**29th IAJGS Conference on Jewish Genealogy  
Co-Hosted by Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Philadelphia**

**August 2nd - 7th, 2009**

**See Page 9 for more information**

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### **Annual Membership Dues – Jan. 1 to Dec. 31:**

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Individual .....	\$25
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Patron .....	\$100
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Non-resident (with local mailings) .....	\$25
Overseas .....	\$21

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**Correspondence:** articles, letters, surname queries, advertisements, and payments for advertisements should be sent to:

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

### by Fred Blum

Dear Fellow Members,

I am pleased to report that, by the time you read this message, our contract will have been signed with the International Association of Jewish Genealogy Societies for JGSGP to co-host the 2009 International Jewish Genealogy Conference. As reported before, the Conference will be held at the Philadelphia Sheraton Hotel at 17<sup>th</sup> and Arch Streets. The dates of the Conference are August 2<sup>nd</sup> to the 7<sup>th</sup> of 2009. More information will follow. As you can see on the cover of Chronicles, a Logo has been designed for the Conference. David Mink has agreed to be our Co-Chair of the Conference. Much effort has already been done to ensure a successful Conference. We are grateful that many members have agreed to volunteer their expertise and their time for the upcoming Conference. David, Mark Halpern, Harry Boonin, Evan Fishman, Steve Schechter and I have spent many hours putting an agreement together to establish the duties that JGSGP will be responsible for at the Conference (see more on page 9).

In this issue, you will find information on the upcoming IAJGS Conference in Chicago this summer. I will be in attendance as well as many of our members.

We have had some terrific speakers at our meetings lately. February 10<sup>th</sup> -- Karen Franklin spoke of the research she has done regarding the Plaut Family. March 17<sup>th</sup> -- Jon Entine spoke to a packed house about his book *Abraham's Children: Race Identity and DNA of the Chosen People*. Coming up April 14<sup>th</sup> -- our own Harry Boonin will discuss his new book about Kesher Israel Synagogue (see page 9). May 12<sup>th</sup> -- Beth Wegner will discuss her wonderful book and PBS series on *Jewish Americans, Three Centuries of Jewish Voices in America*. I hope you will consider attending the upcoming meetings.

As reported before, the Philadelphia Jewish Archives are interested in collections that anyone would like to donate. And speaking of donations, the Jewish Archives maintains the Jewish History of Philadelphia. This is our history and is costly to maintain. Please consider a donation in any amount to the Philadelphia Jewish Archives (See page 11 for more information).

I wish you all Happy Passover.

Fred

### UPCOMING GENERAL MEETINGS

**All Meetings at Reform Congregation Keneseth Israel, Elkins Park, PA**

***Our Co-Chairs of the Program Committee for 2008, David Mink and Steve Schechter, are working on programs for the second half of 2008.***

Date	Time	Speaker	Topic
Monday Apr. 14, 2008	7:30 PM	Harry Boonin, Author and Founding President of JGSGP	Harry's New Book: <i>The Life and Times of Congregation Kesher Israel and More</i>
Monday May 12, 2008	7:30 PM	Beth Wenger, Katz Chair in American Jewish History, University of Pennsylvania	<i>The Jewish Americans</i> : Dr. Wenger's book was the basis for this recent PBS Documentary
Monday June 16, 2008	7:30 PM	Beau Sharbrough, VP of Content, Footnote.com	Jewish Research on <i>Footnote.com</i>

### UPCOMING DELAWARE COUNTY AFFILIATE MEETINGS

**All Meetings at Martins Run Lifecare Community, Media, PA**

Date	Time	Speaker	Topic
Sunday Apr. 6, 2008	1:30 PM	Donald Wittenberg, JGSGP Member and Educational Planner	Old School Records: Where to Find Them and What They Tell Us
Sunday June 1, 2008	1:30 PM	Dr. Theodore Schurr, Director, American Regional Center for the Genographic Project	Using DNA to Trace Your Ancestry

## WELCOME NEW AND RETURNING MEMBERS

Steven Bolef .....	Norristown, PA	Jacob Koff .....	San Francisco, CA
Maris Bredt .....	Studio City, CA	Arthur Rosenthal .....	Bala Cynwyd, PA
Sandra Erlick .....	Cherry Hill, NJ	Susan Rudolph .....	Hopewell, NJ
Janet Fraidstern .....	Northampton, MA	Michael Schatz .....	Elkins Park, PA
Amy Graham .....	Swarthmore, PA	Marvin Sclan .....	Philadelphia, PA
Byron Hapner .....	Wenonah, NJ	Lawrence Shuman .....	Fairfax, VA
Ivan Herschenfeld .....	Wilkes Barre, PA	David Wice .....	Philadelphia, PA
David Hoffman .....	Encino, CA	Benjamin Zitomer .....	New York, NY

## THANKS TO CONTRIBUTORS

Malvin Aaronson	Joanne Grossman	Kaye Paletz
Robin & Ira Adelman	Susan Gurman	George Riser
Richard Avner	Michael Jaron	Andrea Robinson
Marsha Bolden	Laurel Katz	Paul & Ann Rosenberg
Steven Bolef	Harold Kohn	Irving Rothberg
Maris Bredt	Mickey Langsfeld	Dan Rottenberg
Bernard Cedar	Arthur Magilner	Wesley Shank
Ronald Drucker	Arnold Markowitz	Joel Spector
Robert Evans	Leonard Markowitz	Walter Spector
Janet Fraidstern	Stanley & Audrey Merves	Norton Taichman
Sheila Friedrich	David Mink	David Wice

## IN MEMORIUM

On December 15, 2007, JGSGP lost a special person who was a significant contributor to our Society for years. Helen M. Stein, widow of our long-time President Jon E. Stein, passed of cancer at the age of 87. Helen was a publicist and community activist having worked and/or volunteered for Cheltenham High School, Cheltenham Art Center, Jenkintown Times Chronicle, Cheltenham Adult School, Philadelphia Museum of Art, and Congregation Keneseth Israel. Helen used her skills to help JGSGP expand during her husband's 11 year term as President and to organize and run the successful 1989 International Conference on Jewish Genealogy in Philadelphia.

She is survived by son Robert, daughters Judy, Sally, and Nancy and four grandchildren. May the family be comforted among those who mourn, and may the memory of Helen be for a blessing.

On February 18, 2008, JGSGP lost a long-time member, genealogy enthusiast, and attorney Paul W. Rosenberg. He was featured in the last *Chronicles* on page 6 showing his Family Tree DNA certificate.

Paul is survived by his wife Ann, sons Eric, Gregg, and Marc, daughter Ellen and five grandchildren.

May the family be comforted among those who mourn, and may the memory of Paul be for a blessing.



## NOTES FROM JGSP MEETING PROGRAMS

**December 2007 -- Dr. Arthur Kiron,  
Schottenstein-Jesselson Curator of Judaica,  
University of Pennsylvania Library and  
Director, Center for Advanced Judaic Studies  
Library on the American Genizah Project**



Courtesy of Jack L. Weinstein

From the University of Pennsylvania Website:  
*Penn Judaica is leading a consortium of public institutions and private collectors to locate, catalog, transcribe, and digitize some of the most important, founding documents of American Jewish history. This American Genizah Project began work in the summer of 2006 with a pilot project focusing on the correspondence of Isaac Leeser (1806-1868), considered the most important mid-19th century American Jewish minister, editor, translator and communal leader. Relying on the successful proof-of-concept employed in the Penn-Cambridge Genizah digitization project, the American Genizah undertaking will similarly seek to provide on-line access to physically dispersed yet intellectually related materials. The short-term goal of the project is to produce a standards-based electronic edition of the extant correspondence of Leeser. Our long-term hope is that this project will serve as a model for collective efforts to digitize related archival collections around the U.S. and internationally.*

Dr. Kiron told the audience that he had written his Doctoral Thesis about Sabato Morais, the Chazzan at Mikveh Israel Synagogue starting in 1851. His first public speaking engagement was at Mikveh Israel Synagogue in 1992 to the Jewish Genealogical Society of Philadelphia at the encouragement of then JGSP President, Jon Stein.

Sabato Morais replaced Isaac Leeser as the Chazzan at Mikveh Israel. Isaac Leeser, born in Westphalia, Prussia, was a very important leader in the Jewish community of Philadelphia and the United States. See <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/view.jsp?artid=142&letter=L>

for more on Leeser. Leeser founded the *Occident and American Jewish Advocate*, the first monthly periodical of Jewish interest. The *Occident* was published from 1843 through 1868 and was distributed all over the world. Some letters and papers of Isaac Leeser were held at Dropsie College and others spread out at other repositories and private collections. The Dropsie College collection is now part of the University of Pennsylvania Center for Advanced Judaic Studies Library.

"Genizah" is a Persian word for the place in a Synagogue to store documents of value that are not used anymore. This place is not an Archive. The Leeser documents and other documents of interest to scholars of American Jewish history are dispersed physically as well as by ownership. The objective of the American Genizah Project is to locate these physically dispersed documents, scan them, create a catalog, and provide access and full-text searching online.

The model for this project is the Leeser papers and the *Occident and American Jewish Advocate* being scanned at the University of Pennsylvania. Handwritten documents are being transcribed. A website for the Leeser materials is under development and is expected to be online in Spring 2008. Dr. Kiron demonstrated some of the website's capabilities. Especially interesting to Jewish Genealogists will be fully searchable access to the full run of the *Occident and American Jewish Advocate*.

Dr. Kiron talked briefly about the Center for Advanced Judaic Studies Library -- a reference collection and NOT an Archive. The Center for Advanced Judaic Studies Library has an online finding aid. The first step in accessing materials at the Library is to find materials of interest in their catalog. Once found, you can only use the material by appointment. For more information, see the Library website at <http://www.library.upenn.edu/cajs/>.

**February 2008 -- Karen Spiegel Franklin  
Director, Family Research Program  
Leo Baeck Institute, New York City  
on The Plaut Family: Tracing the Legacy**

From the Avotaynu Website:

*When Elizabeth S. Plaut began tracing her husband's family roots forty years ago, she had no idea how this undertaking would change her life and turn her into a serious genealogist. A trained researcher, she corresponded with hundreds of people around the world to glean information about the various branches of the family; scoured cemetery files, archives, and other*

*available sources; and maintained copious files brimming over with her notes and charts. Beginning with her quest to find the roots of her husband's branch of the family from Willingshausen, Germany - many years before genealogy became popular - Elizabeth Plaut discovered families in dozens of small villages in Germany. She tracked the relationships between more than 11,000 people and separated the branches according to the many cities where the families originated. Impressive in its scope and in Elizabeth Plaut's meticulous commitment to detail, The Plaut Family: Tracing the Legacy will be of immense value to all those interested in knowing more about their roots.*



*Courtesy of Jack L. Weinstein*

Karen is and has been an integral part of our Society for many years. Karen is a native of the Philadelphia area and her family have been members of Keneseth Israel since 1847. Karen is a life member of JGSP and has spoken to our group and our German SIG many times.

Karen has a long list of credits in the arenas of Jewish Family History, Judaica and Art Museums, and as an author. Karen is the Director of Family Research at the Leo Baeck Institute in New York, the pre-eminent organization for the study of the history and culture of Jews from German speaking areas. She also is on the

Coordinating council of the German SIG and the Chair of the Advisory Committee of *Stammbaum*, the publication of the Leo Baeck Institute. Karen is also a member of the JewishGen Board of Governors, a genealogical consultant to the American Jewish Archives, and a past president of the IAJGS, the global umbrella organization for Jewish genealogical societies. In Karen's spare time, she consults with many organizations and museums involved in Nazi era looted art and she has used genealogical techniques to locate legal owners and heirs of such looted art. Karen wrote an article with two case studies that was published in September 2007 edition of *Chronicles*.

Rabbi Gunther Plaut is a very well known Reform Rabbi in Toronto, who is now 95 years old and in very poor health. For more information about Rabbi Plaut, see [http://www.holyblossom.org/rabbi\\_plaut.htm](http://www.holyblossom.org/rabbi_plaut.htm). Karen's husband, Rabbi Steven Franklin, was an assistant Rabbi in Plaut's congregation for a few years. Rabbi Plaut's wife Elizabeth was a genealogist and researched all PLAUTs even if they were not related to or from the same region as her husband. Elizabeth passed away before publishing the PLAUT genealogy. The Plaut children asked Karen to prepare their mother's research for publication with one provision -- no more research or updates. The contract was to compile and complete the work of Elizabeth Plaut without change.

Karen organized the Plaut files into ten file boxes. What Karen found, in addition to the family history charts of the Plauts, were letters, articles, and other documents that provided a snapshot of world Jewry at that time (over 30 years of research). Examples of these snapshots are what Karen shared with us.

Karen did break her "contract" with the Plaut children. She used the Yad Vashem Central Database of Shoah Victims to honor the memory of the Plaut martyrs who perished in the Holocaust. The family did agree. Over 500 Plaut's were memorialized in Pages of Testimony. ☩

## CONFERENCES, CONFERENCES, AND MORE CONFERENCES

### 28th IAJGS International Conference on Jewish Genealogy Chicago, Illinois, August 17-22, 2008 <http://www.chicago2008.org>

The International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies (IAJGS) announces the 28th International Conference on Jewish Genealogy to be held in Chicago, August 17 - 22, 2008 at the Chicago Marriott Downtown Magnificent Mile.

The IAJGS is proud to co-host this conference with the Jewish Genealogical Society of Illinois and the Illinois Jewish Genealogical Society.

This annual conference is the premier event for Jewish Genealogists. Attendees from around the world gather to learn, share expertise, find others researching the same locales, and maybe even meet a relative they didn't know about before.

Sixteen Special Interest Groups (SIGs) will host sessions concerning their research focus such as German-Jewish Genealogy, Ukraine, Poland, and Litvak

Jewish Genealogy research. A number of specialists or archivists from Europe or Eastern Europe will be in attendance to make presentations and advise attendees about resources available in their country. Some of the SIGS will hold luncheons with a featured speaker.

At least sixteen smaller groups, Birds of a Feather (BOF), will hold meetings such as the BOFs for Yiddish Theater, Suwalki Lomza, Posen Prussia, and Lublin & Zamosc Area.

This week-long event for Jewish Genealogists will be filled with a tremendous array of sessions and presentations of interest to genealogists from beginners to those who are experienced researchers.

Among the many topics, one that is sure to fascinate many will be the latest information about the International Tracing Service (ITS). The opening up of the records from the ITS Archives at Bad Arolsen, Germany is a momentous event for Jewish genealogists. According to Gary Mokotoff, publisher of Avotaynu, who recently visited the Archives: "The records are truly exciting and a potential goldmine for family historians trying to find out the fate of family members caught up in the Holocaust." Conference attendees will learn about what can be found in the 26,000 meters of various types of records and in the alphabetically and phonetically arranged Central Name Index containing over 50 million reference cards for over 17.5 million people as well as where they can access the now digitized portions of the ITS collection.

There will be sessions on aspects of researching Sephardic ancestry, the Midwestern Jewish experience, using computers, immigration records, and much much more. A resource room with a wide variety of genealogically relevant materials will be open to attendees.

A special mini-symposium will be held on Genetics, Jewish Diseases, and the Role of Genealogists, under-

written by an educational grant from Genzyme Corporation. Speakers will include Dr. Lee Shulman, MD, Anna Ross Lapham, Professor in Obstetrics and Gynecology, Chief, Division of Reproductive Genetics, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Feinberg School of Medicine, Northwestern University, Gary Frohlich, Certified Genetic Counselor with Genzyme Therapeutics and a representative of the Chicago Center for Jewish Genetic Disorders.

A film festival will feature a wide range of films of relevance to Jewish genealogy.

Chicago offers many research opportunities for genealogists such as the Spertus Institute of Jewish Study (with its Asher Library and the Chicago Jewish Archives); The Newberry Library; and public institutions (e.g. Chicago Board of Election Commissioners, the Office of the Circuit Court Clerk of Cook County, the Cook county Assessor's office [for property records], the Cook County Vital Records office) and the Great Lakes Regional branch of NARA (the National Archives).

The hotel has wonderful facilities - all registered attendees will get free internet access from their hotel guest rooms and complementary access to the hotel's health facilities.

Registration is open. "Early-bird" conference registration, through April 30, 2008, is \$250 and \$150 for a companion. Daily conference registration is also available. The special hotel rate for conference registrants is \$199 per night plus tax (single or double), plus \$30 per additional person. Conference registration and hotel registration can be completed at the conference website: [www.chicago2008.org](http://www.chicago2008.org)

Please join other JGSGP members at this Conference. If you have never attended one of these, you do not know what you are missing. 

## Federation of Genealogical Societies Conference 2008 Pennsylvania Convention Center, Philadelphia September 3-6, 2008 <http://www.fgsconference.org>

During this conference you will hear knowledgeable presenters discussing their latest research insights and resources. The popular Exhibit Hall always showcases a wide variety of state-of-the-art and traditional products and services. Conference functions provide many opportunities to meet, talk, and share research with others who share your passion for family history.

The FGS Web site [www.fgs.org](http://www.fgs.org) provides newsworthy items along with additional information about the conference. Volunteers provide a blog and e-zine with updates posted regularly as conference planning develops. The program is now available on the Conference website [www.fgsconference.org](http://www.fgsconference.org).

The Federation of Genealogical Societies and several genealogical and historical groups in and around Philadelphia invite you to join them in Philadelphia in September 2008, for the "*Footprints of Family History*" conference.

The conference hotel is the downtown Marriott Hotel, connected to the Philadelphia Convention Center where the exhibition hall and seminar rooms will be located. Lodging cost is \$159 per night. For reservations call 1-800-228-9290 and mention FGS or Federation of Genealogical Societies.

The September 2008 FGS conference has as its theme "*Footprints of Family History*" recognizing Phil-

adelphia as the place where the ancestors of millions of Americans first set foot on the continent. It was Philadelphia, indeed, that was the largest North American city in colonial times – as well as being the No. 1 port of entry during the 18th and early 19th centuries.

The conference committee is fashioning a program that pays homage to this region's rich history as well as topics at the very cutting edge of family history, including:

- Research in the Mid-Atlantic states: Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware
- DNA's ever large impact on genealogy
- Tracks on area's major ethnic groups such as the English, Irish, Swedish and Germans
- Topics helpful to African-American research
- How "material culture" can enrich family history

- Society management presentations
- Military records relating to a variety of conflicts

FGS 2008 Conference registration is available at <http://fgsconference.org/registration/index.php> both online and by mail. The Registration Booklet includes the entire Program. You can contact FGS at Phone: 1-888-FGS-1500 or E-mail: [office@fgs.org](mailto:office@fgs.org). Early Registration (Postmarked by 2 June 2008) for the full Conference is \$175 and for a single day is \$95.

JGSGP is a member society of FGS. This Conference has a much different flavor than the annual Jewish Genealogy Conference. Being in our City gives us a chance to enjoy both Conferences – FGS in 2008 and IAJGS in 2009.

You can volunteer to help with FGS 2008. More information follows. ☀

### Volunteer at the FGS Conference Save on Registration Fees Support JGSGP

March 2008

Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Philadelphia

Dear Members,

A vital component of the success of each FGS conference is the help provided by local volunteers. This year, the FGS Board is offering historical and research societies in the Delaware Valley a unique opportunity. If members of a society commit to and perform 100 hours of volunteer service during the week of the conference, their society will receive 1% of the profit from the conference. While we can't say at this time what that figure will be, this presents a wonderful opportunity to add to your society's financial resources while your members have the opportunity to reflect Philadelphia at its best and help the many conference visitors feel welcome. Your society will also be listed as a sponsor of volunteers, thus providing recognition to all the conference's attendees. This offer is limited to the first 10 societies who respond with a commitment of 100 volunteer hours.

There are a wide variety of volunteer opportunities available so that everyone, regardless of age or abilities, can participate. Volunteer activities for Tuesday (the day before the start of the conference) include stuffing conference packets and monitoring the entrance to the Exhibit (Sales) Hall. On the actual days of the conference (Wednesday – Saturday), help will be needed at the Registration Booth, in the Exhibit Hall, in the Convention Center hallways and at the escalators providing directions to classes, etc.

In addition to your society benefiting, each volunteer who signs up for, and performs, at least 8 hours of service will have the conference registration fee rebated according to the following schedule:

# of volunteer hours	Conference fee rebate
16 hours	Full rebate (four days) - \$175.00
12 hours	Half rebate (two days) - \$87.50
8 hours	Fourth rebate (one day) - \$43.75

In order to receive the rebate, a volunteer has to sign up for at least 8 hours, but can work in separate 4-hour blocks, if preferred. The rebate will be sent to the volunteer after the conclusion of the conference.

Since many of your members will probably be volunteering at the conference anyway, this is a great opportunity to bundle their hours under your society's name - you'll all benefit!!

Thanks very much!

Sincerely,

Mary Louise Fitzpatrick

Director of Volunteers (Local Arrangements Team)

Phone – (Home) 610-666-6567

Email: [ancestorfind@gmail.com](mailto:ancestorfind@gmail.com) ☀

## 29th IAJGS International Conference on Jewish Genealogy

PHILADELPHIA August 2-7, 2009

Co-hosted by JGSGP and IAJGS

After twenty years, our Society will again be the host of the annual International Conference on Jewish Genealogy. This time, we will be sharing the hosting with the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies (IAJGS).

JGSGP and IAJGS will be sharing responsibilities and JGSGP will be responsible for:

- ♦ Local Resources and the Repository Guide - the Repository Guide is already being developed under the leadership of Steve Schechter. If interested in helping, you can contact Steve at 856-273-0850 or [stevehwltd@aol.com](mailto:stevehwltd@aol.com).
- ♦ Tours - local tours of Jewish and historic places and events. If interested in helping, contact David Mink at 267-318-7092 or [daminker@aol.com](mailto:daminker@aol.com).
- ♦ Resource Room - a room at the Conference where attendees will have access to research materials, experts, and advisors.
- ♦ Hospitality - a room where volunteers will provide attendees with materials and advice for making their week more enjoyable.
- ♦ Local Publicity - in all media and with Jewish organizations
- ♦ Volunteers - organizing the people needed to staff the Conference and the activities in advance of the Conference

JGSGP will share responsibility with IAJGS for:

- ♦ Programming - determining and scheduling the lectures/presentations, computer training classes, SIG (Special Interest Group) and BOF (Birds Of a Feather) meetings.

The Conference will take place at the Sheraton Philadelphia City Center Hotel at 17th and Race Streets starting on Sunday, August 2nd and ending on Friday, August 7th.

For those who have attended past Conferences, we expect this Conference to be as good or better than the ones in the past. For those who have never attended an IAJGS Conference, this is your chance to find out what you have missed.

This Conference, like all others, will be International in scope -- covering genealogical, historical, cultural, and other related subjects from all places Jews lived and their migrations. In addition, there will be a distinct Philadelphia flavor (and I do not mean cheese steaks or pretzels).

Anyone interested in volunteering for any of the responsibilities listed above or just interested in helping in any way you can should contact Harry Boonin at 215-918-0326 or [harryboonin@gmail.com](mailto:harryboonin@gmail.com). ☀

### LOCAL NEWS AND FEATURES FROM PHILADELPHIA AND ENVIRONS

#### THE LIFE AND TIMES OF CONGREGATION KESHER ISRAEL

By Harry D. Boonin

Founding JGSGP President and Philadelphia Jewish Historian, Harry Boonin, has published his second book. It is the story of historic Congregation Kesher Israel in the heart of the Russian Jewish settlement of Philadelphia, but also much more -- chronicling the lives of the eastern European Jewish immigrants who prayed there and lived and worked nearby. American Zionism, pushcart markets, gamblers, sportsmen, union organizers, bootleggers, and the Depression are subjects covered in these 190 pages that also includes 80 new and historic photos.

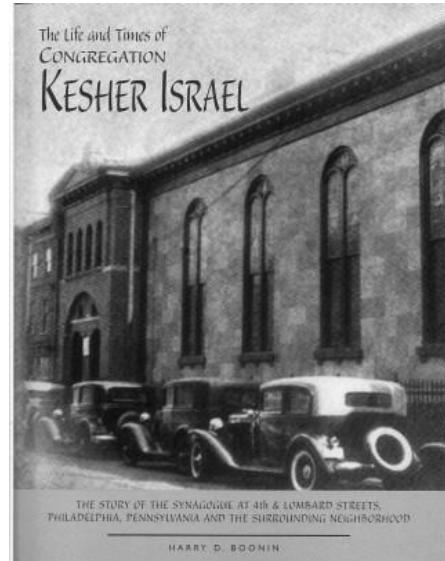
The book sells for \$29.95 plus sales tax and shipping and handling. For PA residents (excluding Philadelphia) the full cost is \$35.75. For Philadelphia residents, the full cost is \$36.05. To purchase, make checks payable to JWT of Phila., Inc. And mail to:

Harry D. Boonin

505 Plymouth Court, Warrington, PA 18976

Harry will talk about his new book at the Society's meeting on April 14. There will be a book signing at the meeting.

A review of the book will appear in the next issue of *Chronicles*.



**Preview**  
**Appendix A**  
*The Life and Times of Congregation Kesher Israel*

**CONGREGATION KESHSER ISRAEL**  
 412 Lombard Street  
 Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

The original charter for Congregation Kesher Israel from 1894 hangs in the shul. Names, addresses and offices held are taken from the charter. Occupations, where they appear, were taken from Philadelphia City Directories or correspondence with the families.

**Officers:**

Louis GLICKMAN (fish business)	724 So. 10 <sup>th</sup> Street	President
Philip WERNER (food extract)	421 So. 2 <sup>nd</sup> Street	Vice President
Harris ROSENTHAL (frame maker)	523 So. 8 <sup>th</sup> Street	Treasurer
Samuel BAKER	609 Moss Street	Rec. Secretary
Isaac BINDER (fruit store)	5 <sup>th</sup> & Lombard (S.E. corner)	Fin. Secretary

**Trustees:**

Julius SALKOWITZ (tailor)	407 S. 5 <sup>th</sup> Street	1 <sup>st</sup> Trustee
Louis RACWZIN	1126 So. 9 <sup>th</sup> Street	2 <sup>nd</sup> Trustee
Barney GLASSMAN (peddler)	819 Barnett Street	3 <sup>rd</sup> Trustee
Philip LOWITZ	507 So. 7 <sup>th</sup> Street	4 <sup>th</sup> Trustee
Susman YUDELOWITZ	516 So. 7 <sup>th</sup> Street	5 <sup>th</sup> Trustee

**Directors**

George SPIRO (frame maker)	329 South Street
Harris SACHS	327 So. 2 <sup>nd</sup> Street
Solomon SILBERSTEIN	410 Catharine Street
Jacob NUROCK (watches & jewelry)	604 South Street
Harris GORDON	612 S. 6 <sup>th</sup> Street
Solomon MEINKIN	1111 Titan Street
Harris SOLEMSHEN	734 So. 6 <sup>th</sup> Street
Jesse FRANKEL	697 Catharine Street
Dr. Joseph ABRAHAMSON	439 So. 7 <sup>th</sup> Street
Abraham ISAACMAN	625 So. 3 <sup>rd</sup> Street
Joseph SCHNEIDER	625 So. 3 <sup>rd</sup> Street
Nathan BLUM	725 South Street
Mayer WACHTEL	710 South Street
Mayer SIRNAMER	927 Washington Avenue
Jesse ROMANOWSKY	431 German (Fitzwater) Street

**Board of Education**

Jacob J. SHAPIRO	748 So. Front Street
Louis ROSEN	525 Catharine Street
Dr. L. RUBINSOHN	411 So. 8 <sup>th</sup> Street
Samuel N. HARRIS	236 Christian Street
Marcus GOLDMAN (librarian, HLS)	269 Elmwood Street
Aaron COHEN	422-24 Bainbridge Street
Morris BRAUDY	724 So. 6 <sup>th</sup> Street
Jacob WAXMAN (fish business)	620 So. 4 <sup>th</sup> Street

**ARCHIVES IN PERIL**  
**A Letter from the President of the Philadelphia Jewish Archives Center**

March 8, 2008

Dear Friend of the Archives:

When I became the President of the Board of the Philadelphia Jewish Archives Center less than six months ago, I had no idea that I would have to write this letter. Into its 36<sup>th</sup> year of collecting and preserving the records of the local Jewish community, PJAC is nearly out of operating funds. We have been caught in a perfect storm: competition for funds within the Jewish community, a faltering economy, little income left after a move precipitated by the Balch Institute closing and a canceled major fundraising event. We are actively searching for an academic partner with which to align PJAC, but this will take time.

I saw recently the successful archiving of African American papers at Temple University. Named after its curator and collector, Charles L. Blockson, the archives' web site quotes Dr. Blockson: "No race of people should be deprived of the knowledge of itself" and I thought: can we think any differently about the records of our community? We have carefully preserved many of the extended Philadelphia Jewish community's records and we continue to collect even more.

Here is a question: what happens if PJAC has to cease operations in the next couple of months? What happens to the collections we have preserved with great care and professionalism for these past 35 years? We have been proud to hold the collections of major institutions in Philadelphia and its immediate surroundings: most synagogues, medical facilities, philanthropic agencies, businesses, communities, families. We have housed all of Federation and its constituent agencies' records. We have mounted notable exhibits and honored some of Philadelphia's prominent Jewish leaders.

I took the Board position with plans to start digitizing our records to make them available to a much greater community on line and to save much needed space. I also wanted to grow a significant endowment and expand our educational programs. We have had this year a successful middle-school education program at Perelman; with some adaptation it would be a good addition to after-school programs. An oral history project that joins local public high school students with elderly members of our community is presently seeking grants and a summer intern will be learning how to do finding aids. A new audio-visual presentation is ready to take to community groups.

PJAC's mission has always been to collect, preserve, educate and provide research and I believe we have been successful in fulfilling it. So I ask for your help. Our need is immediate; we cannot operate without money to pay our staff and other bills. Although we are mounting a campaign for endowment, we need funding for day to day operations as well. These collections have been entrusted to us for a reason: they are the collective history of the local Jewish community; they are the stories of the work of parents and grandparents, which young people can access with pride. Won't you help us by writing a check today, or by calling our office 215-925-9090, ext 242 and paying by Visa or MasterCard? Ask your friends to help. If you have questions that you would like me to answer, please send them by email to: [crochester@philajewisharchives.org](mailto:crochester@philajewisharchives.org).

With sincere thanks for your consideration.



Carole Le Faivre-Rochester  
President of the Board  
Philadelphia Jewish Archives Center  
125 North 8th Street, 6th Floor  
Philadelphia, PA 19106

## Connecting the Dots by David Mink

We are always trying to connect the dots – to give our future a sense of history and to give our stories a life after us. The Philadelphia Jewish Archives Center (PJAC) has developed a unique program to serve this purpose. Created by Jewish educator, Dr. Shelley Kapnek Rosenberg, the program introduces seventh graders to the importance of preserving and creating archival documents.



*Gloria Becker examining fragile documents with students*

The seventh graders, fifty-two of them, come from the Saligman Middle School, a Program of the Perelman Jewish Day School. The instruction comes from volunteer “master teacher,” Gloria Becker, assisted by as many as ten docents. Once a month, for eight months, we get together for a two-hour session. The first session, which energized the students, took place at PJAC. There was a scavenger hunt in the stacks, an opportunity to put on “archival” gloves to get a close look at some of the fragile documents, and a photo shoot with students posing with a life-size Zayde just off the boat or a new immigrant teenager. Every one went home with something.



*Perelman Student poses with Immigrants*

The remaining sessions take place at the Saligman Middle School. Four sessions cover the Cycle of Jewish Life including Brit Milah, Bar and Bat mitzvah, Weddings, Death and Funerals. The remaining three are concerned with Jewish history in Philadelphia, including the first Jewish Sunday school, the first Jewish Publishing Company, the first Jewish American Cookbook and Philadelphia’s first professional Jewish basketball team, the SPHAS (South Philadelphia Hebrew Association).

The students get a break from their teachers and we docents get to interact with teens in a way that would not happen otherwise. Ms. Becker holds their attention and gives some background on history of the day’s topic. The docents facilitate the discussion with their group of eight students. It is always interesting and unpredictable what the kids will say. Our goal is to keep them focused and on task. For the most part, they are fully engaged in the discussion. At the end of the session, we go around the room asking for a comment on something they learned that day. The docents seem to come away learning as much as the students.



*David Mink in the PJAC stacks with student*

Kudos must go to Dr. Rosenberg for developing a unique approach and an engaging curriculum. Also, kudos must go to Gloria Becker who adroitly delivers the program in a relevant and engaging way. And kudos must go to PJAC for having the foresight and desire to reach out to the community. As a docent, I have received more than the time I have invested. It is wonderful to see the dots connected from generation to generation. And it is even greater to have been part of the process. As it is written at PJAC: “Someday you will be a Jewish Ancestor. Be a great one.”

*Photos courtesy of David Mink*

**The Jewish Quarter of Philadelphia**  
**by Harry Boonin**  
**a posting to The PhillyHistory Blog of March 5, 2008**  
**<http://www.phillyhistory.org/blog/>**

*Editor's Note: In the December 2007 issue of *Chronicles*, Harry Boonin wrote about *PhillyHistory.org*. As a result, the people who run this website asked Harry to write about Philadelphia's Jewish history on their Blog. Harry's article was posted on March 5 and is repeated here with permission of the author. You can find the original article with photos at: [www.phillyhistory.org/blog/archive/2008/03/05/the-jewish-quarter-of-philadelphia.aspx](http://www.phillyhistory.org/blog/archive/2008/03/05/the-jewish-quarter-of-philadelphia.aspx).*

Years ago, cities and towns in Europe had Jewish quarters. Most were finitely defined. When the east European Jewish immigrants began coming to the United States en masse, Jewish quarters sprung up in cities along the eastern seaboard. Some were loosely defined, others more precisely. In the early years of Jewish mass immigration, a fairly sizeable Jewish quarter was established in a well-defined area of old Philadelphia, today known as Society Hill and Queen Village. In *The Presbyterian*, a weekly journal published in Philadelphia in 1889 for the Presbyterian community, the editor wrote: "In Philadelphia we are likely to have a Jewish section, where emigrants from Eastern Europe will congregate. From Fifth Street to the Delaware River and south of Lombard Street these foreign Jews are crowding in, and being very poor, the Hebrew Charities are drawn upon heavily." The Jewish press saw a more confined and a smaller quarter, extending from Spruce Street in the north to Christian Street in the south and from 3rd Street to 6th Street east to west. Within this narrow rectangle, bearded Yiddish-speaking men and their large families settled. This was at a time when sweatshops were moving south from Kensington to Northern Liberties and then south of Market Street to Bank and Strawberry Streets. At this time, German-Jewish wholesale clothiers, like Snellenberg's, had their businesses on N. 3rd Street between Market and Arch Streets. Many of these buildings stand today.

When immigrant steamers from Liverpool would arrive, trains of the Pennsylvania Railroad backed down onto the piers of the American Line to whisk away immigrants on their journeys to Chicago and places in the west. However, a sizeable number of Russian-Jewish immigrants stayed in Philadelphia and settled in the Jewish quarter. Many concentrated around the eastern end of South Street for three primary reasons: the rent was cheap, housing was near the sweatshops and the neighborhood was near the Emigrant Depot at the foot of Washington Avenue and the Delaware River. Prior to 1900, hardly any Jews lived south of Washington

Avenue. The Jewish Quarter of Philadelphia was hemmed in by the Polish and the Irish to the east, by African Americans to the west and Italians to the southwest and, to the south, by the Irish. Crossing well defined boundaries was dangerous for the immigrants. Within this narrowly defined area, a new life sprang up. Curbside and pushcart markets were established; teams of horses flying over cobblestone streets made daily runs to the Dock Street wholesale market. Seen on the pavement of the new S. 4th Street pavement market were pickle barrels and union enforcers, dreamers and paupers, curbside bookies and curbside elections, saloons, pool halls and feed stores — and, in the middle of all this excitement were the synagogues, dozens of them.

Central to the new immigrant neighborhood was South Street, called "the great Street for Polish Jews and huckstering of every variety." Some writers called it the Russian quarter because so many of the newcomers were from the Imperial Russian Empire. In 1887, the *Public Ledger* wrote: "On South Street many 'neat' stores have been built and indications point to the further improvement of that old downtown avenue of retail trade." Dock Street, the wholesale food market of its day, "is not a handsome street; it is old, full of crude commercial bustle in the hours of the day, and after night fall or in the early hours of the night until the nocturnal preparations for the next day begin, it is almost wholly deserted." The first Yiddish theatre was in the center of the quarter, located at the corner of 5th & Gaskill Streets. It was here that the greatest actors of the Yiddish theatre performed, Jacob Adler and Boris Thomashevsky. And it was here, in the late 1880s on the little stage lit by candle light, that real horses were used in the tragedies and comedies of that era. In the 1890s, the S. 4th Street vegetable and meat market was started on the sidewalks; it eventually grew into the fabled S. 4th Street pushcart market, still remembered till this day.

Most of the immigrants worked in the nearby sweatshops or in the markets. Markets were located in the shambles along S. 2nd Street, the Washington Market along Bainbridge Street from 3rd to 5th Streets and in the 4th Street pushcart market. Sweatshops in the quarter numbered over one hundred. On the 300 block of Lombard Street alone there were five sweatshops. In 1895, men in these shops were paid \$6.00 per week for working 58 hours and women, for the same work and hours, were paid \$3.00 a week and sometimes as little as \$1.80.

After 1900, Jews moved south across Washington Avenue and within just a few years they lived in great numbers south of Washington Avenue and east of Broad Street. Many Jews in the clothing trade prospered during the 1920s and moved to West Philadelphia and Strawberry Mansion. After Congress cut off immigration from Eastern Europe in 1924, the old Jewish quarter began to die out. Although its demise was slowed, first by the Depression and then by the effects of World War II, outward movement from the quarter

accelerated after the war ended. Today, there are four synagogues remaining from the original Jewish quarter. Two buildings built as synagogues — B'nai Abraham, 527 Lombard Street (built in 1910), and B'nai Rueben, 6th & Kater Streets (built in 1905 but used for commercial purposes since 1956) — survive. Today, the twin religious houses of Mother Bethel Church (built in 1889) and Congregation B'nai Abraham stand proudly together at the corner of 6th & Lombard streets — and have stood together since 1910. ☀

## FEATURE ARTICLES

### My Genealogy Angels by Joan F. Pollak

I began my genealogy quest twelve years ago, and over this period of time have found the original towns of all my immigrant ancestors and learned much about their life experiences. To achieve these gratifying results, I visited multiple sites with archival holdings; interviewed every relative that I discovered; engaged in JewishGen online discussion groups; learned to navigate internet search resources; visited cemeteries; and followed many other leads familiar to determined genealogists. However, I could never have accumulated such extensive knowledge without the assistance of the many angels that I fortuitously encountered along this journey. I am writing this article as a tribute to the generous and selfless spirit of non-Jewish individuals who reached out in extraordinary ways to help me discover my family history.

My first inkling that such special people existed was when I received a reply to a posting I made on the USGenWeb project website, inquiring about Jewish burial places in Tarboro, North Carolina. I was aware that this had been the home of my father's Heilbronner ancestors when they emigrated from Germany in the 1860's, but I did not have much more information. A woman named Jo responded to the posting, and said that she was a member of the local genealogy society and that she would investigate the local cemeteries for me. She proceeded to send me, without request, some local census data which contained references to my family. She then informed me that, since she worked near the local Edgecombe County Courthouse in Tarboro, she planned to stop by on her lunch hour and see what legal documents might exist for my ancestors. Within a week, a several pound package came in the mail piled with documents relating to the extensive business dealings and real estate transactions of my great great grandfather, Louis Heilbronner. Besides being overwhelmed with such interesting information, I was touched by her initiative and proceeded to send flowers.

Jo also provided me with the name of a North Carolina community college teacher, Monica Fleming, who had written books on Edgecombe County history. For the small cost of joining the local genealogy society, Monica began to research and send me local newspaper items that had been written about my family in the 1870's and 1880's, including wedding descriptions, advertisements, business failures, and obituaries. When I visited Tarboro in person in 1999, in coordination with a traveling exhibit on Jewish history in Eastern North Carolina that I had contributed family photos to, Monica acted as a personal tour guide. We walked to the sites of my ancestors' businesses and homes and brought my family to life. Monica later inserted a section about the Jewish history of Tarboro in a new book, acknowledging our work together.



*Joan Pollak at JGSP 25th Anniversary Luncheon displaying her Heilbronner family*

In 1997, I inquired about the Heilbroners from Germany in a posting on the JewishGen discussion group. This provoked an outreach from Lars Menk, a genealogist pursuing his own research for a book on Jewish surnames in Germany. (This is now published as *A Dictionary of German-Jewish Surnames*.) Lars wrote to me about several regions where the Heilbroners had

resided over several centuries. Several months later, when research at the National Archives in Manhattan uncovered the Heilbroner's original town in Binswangen, Bavaria, Lars helped me identify local archives and key researchers to whom I could write for additional information. Last year it was gratifying to learn that Lars had won the Obermeyer German-Jewish History award, given to individuals who voluntarily preserve Jewish history in Germany.

Several years later, Lars discovered in his research a surname with a familiar naming pattern, linking me to a new ancestral town, Grosseicholzheim, in Germany. Up until this point I had hit a wall pursuing the family lineage of my great great grandfather, Isaac Rund, who had immigrated to North Carolina and lived in New York in the 1860's and 1870's. I pursued this amazingly lucky lead, using the JewishGen Family Finder to email researchers with related family surnames. One researcher gave me the name of a man from Grosseicholzheim who had been helpful in hosting him when he visited the town. I introduced myself by email to Artur Vogt from Grosseicholzheim, and explained my interest in Rund and Westheimer ancestors. Artur was eager to help me out, and explained, in broken English, that he had grown up with the sadness of losing Jewish friends and neighbors to the Holocaust, and he was determined to be of service as families returning in later years to research their roots. Artur found local references to the Runds and Westheimers, and personally visited the nearby Bodigheim cemetery where he photographed the grave-stone of my great great grandmother and emailed it to me. Artur has established a Jewish history wing within a local museum, and hosts families from all over the world for a Holocaust commemoration. I was gratified to learn that he will be awarded a certificate from

the Obermeyer program following my collaboration with another nominator.

A final example of selflessness by strangers stands out for me. Several years ago, I prepared to visit the Czech Republic, and planned to combine a trip to Prague with an excursion to the ancestral home of my Pollak ancestors in Janovice nad Uhlavou. A distant cousin, who had taken his own trip to Janovice, suggested that I contact Karl Major, an older resident of the town, for assistance. He had found Karl when his letter to the "mayor" of Janovice landed at the home of Mr. Major. With the assistance of my Czech researcher, Magda Simonovska, who was familiar with my lineage and provided transportation for the trip, we arranged a visit to Mr. Major. When my husband and I, and Magda, arrived in Janovice, Mr. Major's wife made a traditional fish lunch and we exchanged gifts. Then, accompanied by Mr. Major and his daughter Eva, we walked the streets of my ancestors; toured remains of the old synagogue; met a man who had known my family and possessed a book of town history; and entered the enclosed cemetery. I will never forget, traipsing through grass and thorns, uncovering gravestones of ancestors with my new friends who shared all my excitement.

I have maintained fondness for many of my "angels" and send holiday greetings and personal notes. However, it was the tragedy of September 11, 2001 that brought home the importance of establishing such global interactions. I received notes of concern and condolence from not only the distant relatives I had discovered through family research, but all the personal helpers that I had met along the way. Genealogy has many benefits as we learn about our family history and preserve this for the future. However, discovering the generosity of strangers across the world has been, for me, a very meaningful part of the experience. 

## BREAKTHROUGH! Thank Goodness for Genealogical Friends at JGSP by Judy Becker

In May 2006, I received this email from Joan Rosen, a friend and member of JGSP:

*From the Rosenbaum Bank records (found at PJAC and online now at JewishGen), for which I am helping to create an index:*

*On 13 Feb 1900 Gedalje Becker, of 915 South 6th Street in Philadelphia, purchased a ticket for Mojsche Leib Gutfleisch, age 40. The ticket was mailed to Lemberg, and it looks like it might have been addressed to "Llocraw," which could have been a person or a street name, or a place in or near Lemberg! The ship was the Pennland (American Line), sailing on or around 6/11/1900, from Bremen to Philadelphia.*

At HIAS (*Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society – records at PJAC*), I had already found the ship records of arrival of both my grandfather, who arrived that June (1900), and my grandmother, father, his older brother and a first cousin (the daughter of Gedalia - for whom I'm named), who all arrived three years later. However, I didn't know the person in the U.S. who was helping them to immigrate. Now, this all makes perfect sense to me. I also knew that "Llocraw" was Zloczow, the Galician town where my father and most of his siblings were born. Further, I knew that my father lived as a child in two or three places in South Philadelphia. That Philadelphia address in the Rosenbaum Bank record may have been one of them. My father told me Gedalia (George) had

taken his wife's surname to maintain her Becker family's name. Gedalia was a Gutfleisch. Eventually my grandfather, who was a peddler, found his customers could not pronounce his Gutfleisch name and decided to adopt the Becker name. Ironically, Gedalia's only son later changed his name to Baker and now only my branch of the family has the Becker name. Another piece of information obtained from this record was that the ship left from Bremen. The ship record only mentioned Russia.

In 1995, I was in Europe researching archives in some of my ancestral towns and countries. Although my father's family came from an area of Galicia that is now Ukraine, all of Galicia was in Poland around the time he was born. Since I was in Warsaw, I went to the Jewish Historical Institute. Here I visited the Ronald Lauder Genealogy Project. I discovered that the Project Director, Yale Reisner, spoke my dialect of English (Philadelphia!). Yale spoke at a JGSP meeting in 2005. Unfortunately, Yale could not find anything of value for me in his archives. However, he told me that there was a Polish Archive branch within walking distance, which had Jewish records from my area of Galicia, now in Ukraine, that were over 100 years old.

Within 15 minutes at the AGAD Archive (the Central Archive of Historical Records), an Archivist located my father's birth record. It was written in Polish but he

translated it for free. This record told me that my father was illegitimate (his parents were not married in a ceremony recognized by the civil authorities), but my grandfather's brother and his sister-in-law were witnesses to his paternity. So, my father's surname on the document was Baral, like his mother's, since the authorities did not recognize the father without a civil marriage record. I then asked the Archivist to find his brother's birth record, but he could not find it.

Eleven years later at the International Jewish Genealogy Conference in New York City, I discovered that Mark Halpern, our then Society President, was very active with the Jewish Records Indexing - Poland project. Since I rarely seem to have success searching for records online, I asked him to help me. Eventually, Mark found eight of my family's records, including my father's and my uncle's births records. When he couldn't find my uncle with the name Gutfleisch, he tried Baral and "voila", there it was. Apparently, my grandfather was not present when his first son's birth was registered. This time, with Mark's amazing help, I was able to send for copies of all the records. They were all written in Polish.

Recently my uncle's granddaughter took them to her neighbor, who understands and reads Polish, and we are finally getting an English translation. 

## Memories of a Polish Shtetl ZAWADY

### Adapted from an unpublished research paper by Joel Petlin

*A memoir based on the oral testimony of Beryl Root z”l, with the addition of notes, corrections, and comments  
by Avigdor (Root) Ben-Dov, his son. August 2005*

*Editor's Note: ROOTS - KEY, the publication of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Los Angeles, published a special edition in Fall/Winter 2007, "Recreating Your Ancestral Shtetl." This is one of the many articles in this issue, a copy of which is available in the JGSP Library. This issue is available for \$10 for U.S., \$13 for Canadian, and \$17 for overseas addresses. Mail requests and payment to: JGSLA, PO Box 55443, Sherman Oaks, CA 91413-0443.*

*This article is republished with permission of JGSLA, the author, and the Root family.*

Beryl Root z”l was born Berko Dov Ber Rutkiewicz on March 17, 1897 in a small village called Zawady in the Bialystok Province of Poland, about 45 km. distant from the city of Lomza. He grew up in the turmoil of Eastern Europe at the turn of the century and could recall such earth-shattering events as World War I and the October Russian Revolution as if they were yesterday.

Life was hard in the *shtetls* of rural Poland and Beryl had to do his share to help his family meet their

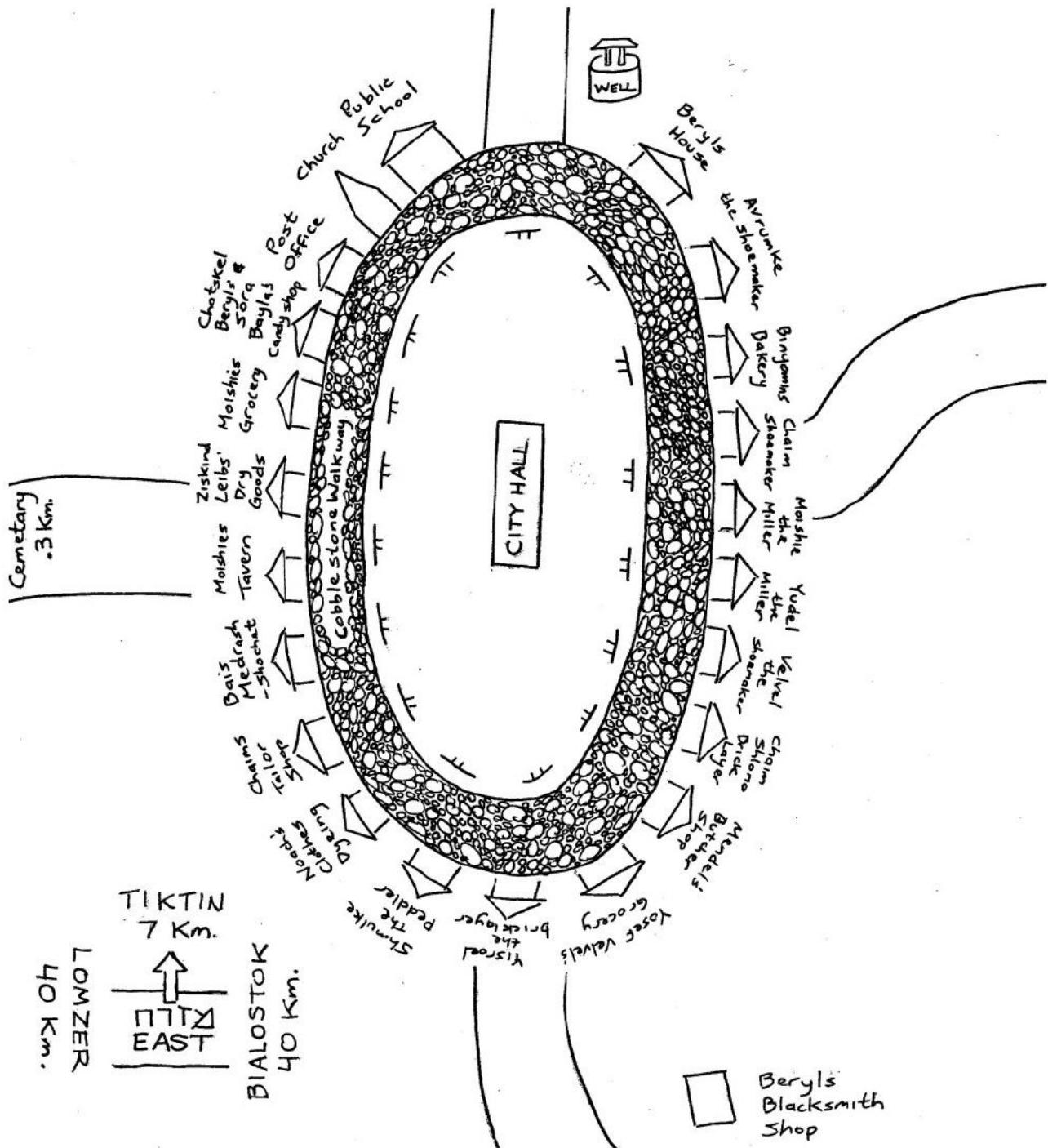
expenses. Although he attended *Cheder*, a Jewish studies school for boys, including classes in elementary subjects, he was unable to attend school beyond the age of 16, and in any case, Beryl, following in the footsteps of his father, Rav Tzvi Hershel, began at an early age to spend time in the smithy learning the trade of blacksmith alongside his father. He built up his body from handling the smithy's hammer and working with heavy implements. This later proved to be a boon when confronted by Polish trouble-makers and anti-Semites who were not in short supply in rural Poland of his day.

Beryl married Kenny Susman from Zambrow, a not-too-distant town in Bialystok Province, and raised a large family, including four sons – a firstborn son (name unknown) who died very young, Shimko aka Shimon (Sherman), Hershko aka Hershel (Herbert), and Avigdor (Victor); and five daughters: Shajne (Shirley), Leja (Leah), Sora (Sarah), Malka (Martha), and Rifka (Rita). Leah died at the age of about 17. Avigdor and Rifka, the twins, were born in 1937, just two years before the war started.

### **Hand Drawn Map of Zawady by Beryl (Dov Ber) Root (Rutkiewicz)**

## **APPENDIX I**

Detailed Map and Directory of ZAWADE in Lomzer Gubernia, Poland, April of 1939



Beryl felt the unrest in Europe and his wife, Kenny, wrote to her wealthy, elder brother, Louis, who lived in America, and who made arrangements to get his sister and her family out of Poland as quickly as possible. In April 1939, just a few short months before the outbreak of war, the Rutkiewicz family boarded the Polish steamship *Stefan Batory* which departed from Danzig (Gdansk) and arriving in New York Port in May. This was one of the last commercial ships to cross the Atlantic in safety and among the last out of Poland before it was occupied by the Germans.

The story of the Rutkiewicz family is analogous to the story of any Jew in *shtetl* Europe at that time. Most Jews led a simple existence, were hard workers, and had close family ties. In Zawady, everyday life revolved around the two major centers: the marketplace and the *beit Midrash* (study hall and prayer house). There were nineteen Jewish families in Zawady, and even after many years of living in America, Beryl remembered them all.

Each family, Beryl recalled, had a part in the perpetuation of the town. Zawady was built in a circle (see hand-drawn map) with all of the buildings facing a town hall which stood in the center of a huge concourse. The residents of the town all had their businesses along Zawady's only street, with their houses either above or behind their stores. People in town filled the jobs that were needed and continued in the lifework of their fathers and their fathers' father before them. Most Jewish families were involved in retail or wholesale business along the main street, while their Polish neighbors tended to be farmers. There was a baker, a butcher, a tailor, and a peddler; two grocery stores, a dry-goods store, and a candy store; two shoemakers, two bricklayers, and two flour millers; a dyer of clothes, a *shochet* (kosher ritual slaughterer), and of course, a tavern-keeper. Even in a town as small as Zawady, there was an overlap of people's names, therefore people were called by their professions or trades. There was a "Chaim the Schneider" (tailor), a "Chaim the Muller" (bricklayer), and a "Chaim the Shuster" (shoemaker). The two Moishes (Moshe) in town became "Moishie the Geshanker" (bartender) and "Moishie the Milner" (flour miller). Beryl's trade was as a blacksmith ("Beryl the Schmidt", in *Yiddish*), a trade he learned from his father at a very young age. Unlike the other merchants of his town, however, Beryl was forced to put his shop some distance away from the residential areas since almost all the construction was of wood and iron-working required a large open fire which could not be too near the houses of the town because of the risk of a conflagration.

Zawady's houses were like most of Europe's nineteenth and early twentieth century rural dwellings. They were made from logs approximately eight inches thick.

(The forests of Poland were notable for their rich harvest of trees for lumber and later proved to be a blessing, alas, for too few, providing a hiding place and a shelter during the War against the Jews.) The roofing of the houses were straw and the walls were plastered to add warmth. Any addition of warmth was welcomed, as Poland's winters brought temperatures well below zero (centigrade). Beryl remembers his children rushing to sit on the wood stove after supper. Blankets and pajamas were also warmed from the heat of the stove. The house was large enough to accommodate all nine Rutkiewicz children.

It should be noted that though there were only 19 Jewish families in Zawady, that number represented an average of six children per household and possibly a *bubie* and a *zaidie* (grandmother and grandfather), all under one roof. There was very little social mobility in *shtetl* Poland as most children took on the parents' business and learned the skills to continue the family trade. Physical mobility was also quite infrequent, as most children would just stay at home, unlike today's generation which wanders far from family to pursue careers and wealth. Married sons would generally bring in a wife and bear children to strengthen the extended family household. Beryl's children were born in the same house as their father and his father, Tzvi. Within the neighborhood, families often inter-married as marrying out of the village was generally not done unless there were no eligible prospects available. The bricklayer's daughter, for example, married Shmulke the peddler, and Beryl's cousin married Yosef Velvel, the grocer.

Intertwined in the Jews' daily life was a strict adherence to Jewish religious practice and tradition. Each town had a *beis hamidrash* where the Jews would pray three times a day. The *beis hamidrash* was also a house of Torah study for young and old. All children attended a "cheder" (afternoon religious school) conducted in the *beis hamidrash*. Finally, the *beis hamidrash* was home for the *shochet* who ritually slaughtered all meat in accordance with age-old Jewish tradition and laws. The *shochet* also had *smichah* (rabbinic ordination) and could therefore answer most any question that came up regarding interpretation of Jewish law (called in Yiddish, to "*pasken shayles*"). It was the shelter of small town community and the constant reminder of anti-Semitism that kept the Jew in Europe from wandering away from the tradition. Beryl recalls how, unlike in America and other Western "enlightened" countries, not to study Torah and not to observe the Sabbath day (a day of rest) was unthinkable. All members of the community were firm believers in G-d and devoted to His service. When one member of the community had violated a religious law, it was through pressure by the community that he or she was brought back into the fold.

In one instance in Zawady, Moishie the Milner's 18-year-old son, ventured to the big city of Bialystok (about 40 km. away). There, he witnessed Jews desecrating the holy Sabbath for the first time in his life. He returned to Zawady influenced greatly by what he saw and was found smoking on the Sabbath (a prohibited action). He was put in "*cherem*," excommunicated by the town where he was not spoken to or dealt with until he repented (in Hebrew, called "*teshuva*", i.e., return to the faith).

Though the people "lived" in Jewish tradition, it was still necessary to learn more and know more of the ways of our fathers. Education, or *Talmud Torah*, was required of boys and girls ages five to fifteen. *Chumash* (Bible), *Neviim* (Prophets), reading, writing, and conversing in Hebrew, were some of the subjects studied. Even the youngest children knew their *alef-beis* – the Hebrew alphabet. The teachers of these classes would be Jews who came in from other towns and were hosted by families in the towns in which they taught. Meals were provided by the residents on a week-by-week basis. Then, like now, salaries of these educators were very low. Beryl remembers his father paying Beryl's teacher the equivalent of \$5 for six months' wages! Most families could not always afford to pay the teacher and very few people ever paid on time (so what is new?) In addition to *Cheder*, the Polish government required children to attend public schools where they learned such things as mathematics, and reading and writing in Polish. These public schools were often overcrowded, as was the public school in Zawady which had over 200 children and only two teachers.

In addition to education, a Jew is responsible for fulfilling the *mitzvot* (religious Commandments). Each obligation takes on a mixed blessing of advantages and difficulties when viewed through "shtetl" Poland. Sabbath – the day of rest – was a welcome retreat from the hard labor of the week. Fancier clothing was worn and better food was eaten. While the daily diet in Zawady was potatoes, noodles, and sour milk, Sabbath afforded the community the luxury of serving meat dishes. The usual Sabbath feast was enhanced by large helpings of *cholent* – a hot stew of meat, potatoes, beans, and barley. Shirley Root Joseph, the eldest of Beryl's daughters, recalls how on *erev Shabbos* (Friday evening, the beginning of the Sabbath) everyone in town would bring their pot of *cholent* over to the bakery where it would stay hot in the oven until it was to be served for lunch the following day. The pots would often be confused and it was common for the Rutkiewicz family to eat someone else's *cholent* recipe. Another important religious practice that was more difficult to follow was that of *mikvah* (ritual immersion in water). In Zawady, drinking water was easily gotten from the well in the center of town;

bathing and clothes washing could be done at the spring not far down the road; but *mikvah* (literally, "collected") water must be a certain measurement of natural or rain water. Only larger Jewish towns could maintain a *mikvah* so the Jews of Zawady often traveled to Tiktin (Tykocin), about seven miles east, to use their facilities.

Beryl was only 18 years old at the outbreak of World War I. With the help of a friend at City Hall, he changed his identification to show his legal age as 17, below the minimum for the draft into the Russian army. The Russian government used the draft as an anti-Semitic tool to enlist young Jews and keep them for many years far from Jewish influence and the opportunity to practice Judaism. The normal fears of fighting in a war also played a part in the politics of draft-dodging.

These were bloody times and Beryl remembers how the Jews would be the losers no matter who controlled the country where they lived or their government. The Jews fled Zawady with the approach of the German Army, but returned a short time later to find their homes still intact (unlike in much of Eastern Europe). Freedom of travel was greatly restricted during the war. All bridges were blocked off for security, and permission in writing was needed to pass by. The Jews soon learned the value of their education and the meaning of their high literacy rate in comparison to Russian, Polish, and German soldiers.

Beryl recalls how he used a plain note with scribble on it to pass bridges held by the illiterate military. The end of World War I saw the Russians returning home through Poland. The underfed and poorly clothed soldiers often robbed the townsfolk they encountered. Beryl smiled as he told me of his embarrassment at having his clothing stolen by a band of Russian peasant soldiers. Though one war was over, another was brewing. The war against the Jews that soon struck Europe crushed the lives and the very existence of what were once flourishing Jewish communities.

It was a combination of the pogroms and the poverty that led the Rutkiewicz family out of Poland. With relatives in America, Beryl, his wife, Kenny, and their seven living children were plucked from the inferno to come and saved from certain death. On April 21, 1939, the Rutkiewicz family boarded the Polish steamer, the *Stefan Batory*, the last commercial ship out of the port city of Gdansk before the shipping lanes of the Atlantic were shut to civilian traffic due to jitters related to threats of war. After a twelve day journey in steerage in the hold of the ship, the *Batory* docked in New York's Port Authority where the Rutkiewicz family took on the "Americanized" name of "Root".

The Roots were swarmed with hugs and kisses from relatives that they never knew existed. Shirley Root-Joseph remembered with a chuckle how the boat docked

on May 3<sup>rd</sup> – a Polish national holiday called *Tshetzego Maya* – with all the passengers waving Polish flags at the bewildered Americans. The Roots had come to the

“Land of Opportunity” with nothing more than a Jewish heritage, the Polish language, and nine hearts full of dreams. ☩

## GENEALOGY NEWS

### U.S. News

#### IAJGS Legislative Alerts for New Jersey and Pennsylvania

*Summarized from IAJGS Public Records Access Monitoring Alerts. Jan Meisels Allen, Committee Chair*

**New Jersey:** A 326 is the third legislative session's attempt to limit access to vital records. As promised to the genealogical community in last session's version, the author, Assemblywoman Quigley, did incorporate in the current introduced version, the existing state limitation on age of records for non-certified, genealogical copies: births occurring over 80 years, over 50 years for marriages and over 40 years for deaths. A copy of the bill may be reviewed, downloaded and monitored at: <http://www.njleg.state.nj.us/bills/BillView.asp?BillNumber=A326T>

A hearing held on Thursday, March 6, resulted in a number of amendments. The amendments change the 80-50-40 year public availability to 100 years after a birth, 50 years after a marriage, civil union or domestic partnership and 40 years after death or fetal death and transfer the records to the New Jersey State Archives and Records Management. A provision requested by IAJGS now exempts genealogists from the bill's prohibition of sharing information, which otherwise would have made it a crime for our sharing of obtained information with family, friends or clients.

If you are a resident of New Jersey, you may want to "flag" this bill for discussion with your local legislator. Politicians are more receptive to their constituents than people residing outside their jurisdictions. If you wish to know how to find your local representative, go to:

<http://www.njleg.state.nj.us/members/legsearch.asp>.

If you are writing to the authors or committee chairs, these are the names and e-mail addresses of the authors: Assemblywoman Joan M. Quigley: [AswQuigley@njleg.org](mailto:AswQuigley@njleg.org) Assemblywoman Nellie Pou: [AswPou@njleg.org](mailto:AswPou@njleg.org) Assemblywoman Vainieri Huttle: [AswVainieriHuttle@njleg.org](mailto:AswVainieriHuttle@njleg.org)

For more information and a sample letter, go to the IAJGS website [www.iajgs.org/pramc/Latest\\_Alert.doc](http://www.iajgs.org/pramc/Latest_Alert.doc).

**Pennsylvania:** SB 1296 will open vital records: The bill recommends opening birth records after 75 years and death records after 50 years. The bill has been referred to the Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee. To read the bill and follow its status go to: <http://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/billinfo/billinfo.cfm?syear=2007&sind=0&body=S&type=B&BN=1296>

For more information and to keep up-to-date, go to the IAJGS website [www.iajgs.org/pramc/Latest\\_Alert.doc](http://www.iajgs.org/pramc/Latest_Alert.doc).

#### Baltimore Jewish Cemetery Database

*JewishGen posting by Sylvia Furshman Nusinov on February 2, 2008.*

The Jewish Museum of Maryland has announced the Baltimore Jewish Cemetery Database may be accessed via their website:

[http://jewishmuseummd.org/html/cr\\_genealogy\\_shc.html](http://jewishmuseummd.org/html/cr_genealogy_shc.html)

Burials of more than 23,000 persons are listed c.1850 to the present decade. Cemeteries included are three of Baltimore's major Jewish cemeteries and several individual ones.

The Museum website includes a listing of additional primary Maryland sources for genealogical research.



*The Jewish Museum of Maryland in Baltimore*

#### Boston Globe (1872-1922) Online

*JewishGen posting by Bob Kosovsky on February 5, 2008.*

I've just discovered that ProQuest, which provides access to digitized versions of newspapers such as the New York Times, Los Angeles Times, Washington Post, etc. has just recently added 50 years worth of the Boston Globe, 1872-1922.

For more info about ProQuest Historical Newspapers, see:

[http://www.proquest.com/products\\_pq/descriptions/pq-hist-news.shtml](http://www.proquest.com/products_pq/descriptions/pq-hist-news.shtml)

## Holocaust Research and Information

### German Gedenkbuch Now Online

*Galicia SIG Mailing List posting by Renee Stern Steinig on January 26, 2008*

From the GerSIG discussion group comes the important news that the second edition of "Gedenkbuch: Opfer der Verfolgung der Juden unter der nationalsozialistischen Gewaltherrschaft in Deutschland 1933 - 1945" is now searchable online at <http://www.bundesarchiv.de/gedenkbuch/directory.html>.

The second edition, published in 2006 in book form (four volumes) and on CD, lists Jewish victims from all places that were within Germany's 1937 borders, including towns that later became part of East Germany, Poland and Russia.

The new website is in German but not difficult to use. In the search box (labeled "Suchen nach:" -- Search for), enter -- in any order -- any of the following information about a person: surname (*Familienname*); first name (*Vorname*); birth name (*Geburtsname*); place of birth (*Geburtsort*); place of residence (*Wohnort*); place of deportation (*Deportationsort*). Then click the buttons next to the fields ("Suchfelder") you wish to search.

Since many Galician Jews moved to German cities before the Nazi years, this website is a significant new resource for Galitzianer researchers. Entering "Galizien" as "Geburtsort" brings up over 6,000 names.

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### Report on Trip to International Tracing Service

**May 4**

*From Nu? What's Nu?, Volume 9, Number 3 , January 28, 2008*

Thirty-seven people have signed up for the Avotaynu-sponsored trip to the International Tracing

Service in Bad Arolsen, Germany, from May 4–9. Currently there are five Australians, four Israelis, three British and a lot of Americans.

The purpose of this pioneering trip, in addition to providing an opportunity for engaging in personal research for those attending, is to:

- evaluate the ITS collection regarding family history research
  - evaluate research at ITS compared to research at facilities like Yad Vashem and the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum who have digitized copies of much of the ITS collection with plans to have the entire collection by 2010.
  - the capacity of ITS to handle large groups of genealogists at one time
- 

### Yad Vashem Now Offers Online Inquiries to ITS Records

*From Nu? What's Nu?, Volume 9, Number 3 , January 28, 2008*

In conjunction with its acquisition of the records of the International Tracing Service, Yad Vashem in Jerusalem has developed an online application form for people to make inquiries about the fate of persons caught up in the Holocaust. Yad Vashem will search not only the ITS records but other records in its vast collection, which, they claim includes 75 million pages of documentation, as well as photographs, testimonies, Pages of Testimony and more. People are also invited to come to their facilities and do onsite research.

The online application and downloadable form can be found at:

[http://www1.yadvashem.org/ITS\\_and\\_YADVASHEM/home.html](http://www1.yadvashem.org/ITS_and_YADVASHEM/home.html)

## European News

### The Frankfurt Memorbuch: New Digitized Manuscript Online

*IAJGS Leadership Forum posting by Jan Meisels Allen on February 5, 2008*

The National Library of Israel, David and Fela Shapell Family Digitization Project has announced public access of a digitized version of the Frankfurt Memorbuch, one of the most important sources of genealogical data on German Jewry.

The Frankfurt Memorbuch is a 1,073 page manuscript documenting the deaths of important members of the Jewish community of Frankfurt am Main, one of the most important communities of German Jewry, over a period of almost 300 years (1628-1907). The notations are generally in the form of the yizkor prayer "May God

remember the soul of ..." followed by biographical data, much of which is a description of the piety and good qualities of the deceased.

The site includes page and chronological indexes as well as an essay on the Memorbuch in both Hebrew and English by the late Cecil Roth

To access the Memorbuch in English:

[http://jnul.huji.ac.il/dl/mss/heb1092/index\\_eng.html](http://jnul.huji.ac.il/dl/mss/heb1092/index_eng.html)

### Warsaw Jewish Cemetery Director Tries to Reconstruct Records Burned by Nazis

*Based on an Associated Press article by Monika Scislowska, December 16, 2007*

Director Przemyslaw Israel Szpilman walks through the cemetery with deteriorating *matzevot* and transcribes

the details of the inscriptions and the location in his notebook and later enters the data into his computer. He does this along with his other responsibilities of maintaining the sprawling Cemetery and handling burials.



During the War, the Nazi's burned the offices of the Cemetery with the files inside. Now, Szpilman is painstakingly reconstructing the Cemetery records of the estimated 250,000 gravesites. Burials started in 1807 and the Jewish community still uses this Cemetery.

As of December 2007, after five years of work, Szpilman has completed about 60,000 records. But now he has help. A philanthropist from Chicago is paying four Jewish students, who are taking photos, recording inscriptions, and setting up a website. The website is at [http://cemetery.jewish.org.il/lang\\_en/](http://cemetery.jewish.org.il/lang_en/) and has the capability to search by surname. Results include inscription information and a photo.

Szpilman has personal motivation. His great-grandfather, Jankiel Szpilman, was buried here in the 1930s, but his plot has not yet been found. Szpilman is a distant relative of Wladyslaw Szpilman, whose story of survival was told in the award-winning book and movie, "The Pianist."

### Inquisition records at (University of) Notre Dame

*From Tracing the Tribe by Schelly Dardashti, February 25, 2008*

For those interested in the Inquisition and the tragedy of its impact on Sephardim and the Sephardic Diaspora, here is a collection of primary resource material.

Notre Dame University purchased The Inquisition Collection in November 1996 from Libreria José Porrua Turanzas in Madrid, Spain, through an estate gift of Harley L. McDevitt. It is a significant collection (565 items) of books and manuscripts on the activities and history of the Inquisition in Spain, Portugal and the New World.

The collection - with many 15th century items - includes inquisitor's manuals, indices of prohibited and expurgated books, descriptions of autos-da-fé, records of inquisitorial tribunals, certificates of familiars, engravings and other artwork, early commentaries and histories of the inquisitions, modern secondary works and critical studies of the inquisitions.

Collection highlights are in an online exhibit at [www.library.nd.edu/rarebooks/collections/rarebooks/hispanic/inquisition.shtml](http://www.library.nd.edu/rarebooks/collections/rarebooks/hispanic/inquisition.shtml).

There are other well-known Inquisition collections at the University of Pennsylvania and Indiana University.

## Interesting Resources and Announcements

### New Blog: This Day in Jewish History

*From Tracing the Tribe by Schelly Dardashti, March 8, 2008*

Interested in what happened in Jewish history on a particular day? If so, then *This Day in Jewish History* blog is for you.

The daily round-up lists interesting global tidbits and names families and communities that can lead researchers to additional sources on events impacting Jewish history.

This list of events ranges from 1688-2008, and places named are global.

The blog is compiled by Mitchell A. Levin as part of the Jewish History Study Group program at Temple Judah, in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

<http://thisdayinjewishhistory.blogspot.com>

### Two New Resources on the Web for Argentina Research

*JewishGen posting by Ben Weinstock on January 25, 2008.*

1. JCA Argentina: A list of colonists personal files, located at: <http://sites.huji.ac.il/archives/>

2. 1950 telephone directory:  
<http://www.jewishgenealogy.com.ar/guia1950/ancestors-phone-1.html>

### GenealogyBank: Historic Papers and More

*From Tracing the Tribe by Schelly Dardashti, January 30, 2008*

GenealogyBank bills itself as the fastest growing newspaper archive for family history research. It offers more than 3,300 US newspapers in all 50 states, from the

1600s through today, for some 106 million newspaper articles and 26 million obituaries.

Latest additions features big city dailies and regional weeklies including: San Jose (CA) Mercury, 1886-1922; Baltimore (MD) Sun, 1837-1901; Kansas City Star (MO), 1815-1922; NY Herald, 1844-1863; Philadelphia (PA) Evening Post, 1804-1912; Philadelphia (PA) Inquirer, 1860-1922; and more.

The site is celebrating with a 30-day trial offer for only \$9.95. <http://www.genealogybank.com>

### MyHeritage Announces Major Upgrade

From *Tracing the Tribe* by Schelly Dardashti, December 19, 2007

A favorite site is [www.MyHeritage.com](http://www.MyHeritage.com). In addition to its amazing photo handling capability, online Family Tree Builder, family websites, it also features a great genealogy search engine which searches some 1,400 genealogy websites at once to provide targeted information on names you are researching.

The search engine - MyHeritage Research - was upgraded this week, and now searches across more than 10 billion records to provide the most extensive genealogy searches on the Internet. The price is also right - its free.

Researchers can only enter a family name or a combination of given and family name.

For Jewish genealogists, there is more good news. MyHeritage has collaborated with JewishGen and the JewishGen All-in-One search has been added to MyHeritage Research. Thus, the search will now include almost all JewishGen databases, not available elsewhere on the Web.

### Genealogy Research Proposals Sought

From *Tracing the Tribe* by Schelly Dardashti, March 8, 2008

The International Institute for Jewish Genealogy (Jerusalem) is inviting serious research proposals for ground-breaking research in six preferred areas of Jewish genealogy from qualified individuals and/or relevant organizations in those areas.

The research is to be carried out in the 2008-09 academic year; successful applicants will receive grants of up to \$10,000. The deadline for proposal submission is May 31, 2008, for review according to the highest standards of academic excellence by July 31, 2008.

Six preferred research areas include Jewish history from a genealogical perspective; rabbinical genealogy; onomastics; inter-disciplinary aspects of Jewish genealogy; Jewish genealogy and computer sciences; sources and resources for Jewish genealogy. Proposals in other areas are not excluded.

For an extensive listing of examples, go to the IIJG site at [www.ijjg.org/home/](http://www.ijjg.org/home/) and click Projects - Upcoming Projects - Call for Projects.

### SURNAMES AND TOWNS BEING RESEARCHED BY MEMBERS

JGSGP no longer maintains the *Registry of Roots* for our members. We encourage all members to register their ancestral surnames and towns with the JewishGen Family Finder (JGFF) at <http://www.jewishgen.org/jgff/>. In lieu of the *Registry of Roots*, we will list the Surnames and Towns provided to us by members in most editions of *Chronicles*. We hope this will bring some of our families together.

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ABRAMOWITZ	Swir	Belarus	Paul Abrams pabrams1@verizon.net
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