

CHRONICLES

JOURNAL OF THE JEWISH GENEALOGICAL
SOCIETY OF GREATER PHILADELPHIA

דברי הימים



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JOURNAL OF THE JEWISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF GREATER PHILADELPHIA

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Submission of articles on genealogy for publication in *CHRONICLES* is enthusiastically encouraged. The editorial board reserves the right to decide whether to publish an article and to edit all submissions. Please keep a copy of your material. Anything you want returned should be accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope.

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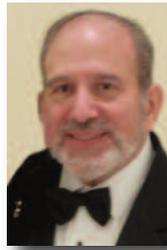
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Cover Photo: Hankus Netsky & klezmer musicians
September meeting photos (cover + pp. 23-24)
courtesy Gene Hurwitz

REFLECTIONS FROM YOUR CHRONICLES TEAM



How do people react when you tell them you do genealogy research? I've often discovered that people relate differently after learning about my passion. Some examples:

- During a recent Shabbat dinner, a family friend told me that his great grandfather came to the U.S. in 1871 and settled in Des Moines, Iowa. I found this amazing because Eastern European Jews didn't emigrate in large numbers until after the 1881 pogroms. He and I'll explore his family history together during a future visit.

- I recently met a woman named Joyce who was born in the same hospital in Newark as I was and went to Weequahic High School, which Philip Roth made famous in several of his novels. Although I didn't attend Weequahic, I heard a lot about it while growing up. In fact, several of Roth's characters were based on people I personally knew or knew of.

- After posting a translation request on JewishGen's list serve, another woman responded because she thought I might be related to a friend of hers in Orange County, California. Her friend and I couldn't identify any definitive connections, but Barbara and I discovered that we both grew up in the same area in New Jersey. Although she's over twenty years my senior, I knew a classmate of hers, who as an adult was a neighbor of mine.

- While walking home from *shul* (synagogue) another family friend told me how excited he was to discover an ancestor who was a noted rabbi in the Washington, D.C. area.

- For many years, my friend, Marsha, longed to visit Cuba where she was born. Although she and her family immigrated to the U.S. when she was a young child, she was eager to rediscover some significant landmarks that she remembered. After President Obama lifted the ban on tourism to Cuba, I encouraged her to make her dream come true so she could reconnect with her roots there. She did so in May, accompanied by several family members. This trip filled a longtime void for her.

My point is that genealogy seems to be a universal topic of interest, probably because everyone wants to know about his/her family history. What sets us apart, however, is that we actively research that family history, while others are more passive. What can we do to change that equation? I believe that being personally involved in helping others explore their past will generate excitement which may provide the impetus to their becoming researchers.

As in past years we present reports by JGSGP attendees to the IAJGS annual conference in Orlando. Mary Jane Roth focused on her improved skill set as a blogger, thanks to sessions with more experienced bloggers where she picked up “inside information” and delved into copyright issues. She also benefited from the conference’s DNA track and the presence of representatives of all the major DNA testing companies. Norman Katz could both give and take, thanks to some personal meetings he had in Orlando, and he made some advances in his own research. Merle Kastner highlighted two of JewishGen’s important volunteer projects—JOWBR (JewishGen Online Worldwide Burial Registry) and the Memorial Plaques Project. Unlike these three attendees, James Gross offered his perspectives on his two presentations: “INS Subject Index: Jewish Refugee files from World War I and World War II” and “Using the Veterans Administration to Obtain Records on Deceased Veterans.”

In addition, we cover a broad swath of subjects: a Civil War ancestor, weddings in Philadelphia during the early 20th century, as well as some intriguing discoveries. It’s always gratifying when we learn about how articles in *Chronicles* generate memories as was the case for Shalom Bronstein after reading the story of M. Levin & Sons in our summer issue. Bernard Cedar and Ruth Bogutz coordinated the trip to South Jersey agricultural colonies back in June, and it’s possible that one of those colonies will be experiencing a resurgence thanks to a descendant of one of the founders; see the article on Alliance Community REboot.

Those of us who attended the 4th Annual Steve Schecter Memorial Lecture were treated to a fascinating presentation by klezmer authority, Hankus Netsky, along with performances by a trio of klezmer musicians whom he accompanied. Steve had a great love for music and was an ardent fan of klezmer music, in addition to being a staunch follower of Bruce Springsteen! ❖

Original articles are *Chronicle's* life blood. We urge our members to submit original material for future issues. All stories are worth consideration, and our editing team will "punch" them up as needed.

Evan Fishman, Editor

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

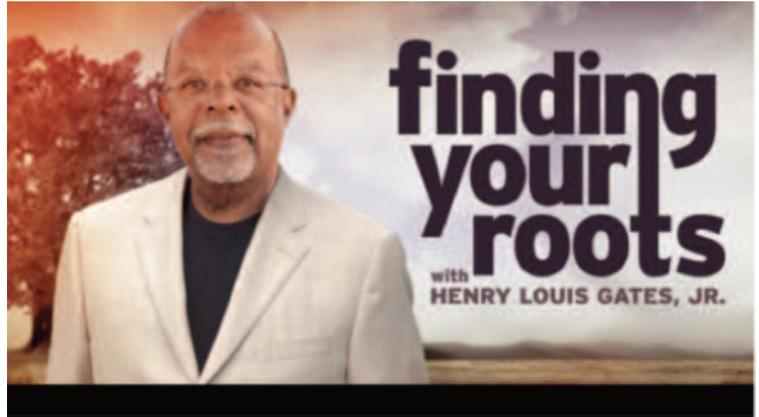
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|--|---------------------------|--|-------------------------|
| Harriet Allan | Wyncote, PA | Meredith & Stephen Hecht | Willow Grove, PA |
| Deborah Farkas | Wynnewood, PA | Hecht, Bloom, Lambert, Rubin, Darrow, Landskroner Places: Russia, Austria, Ukraine, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania | |
| Farkas and Gutman, both from Dubove, Ukraine; Berger from Ossoj, Ukraine | | Ira Miller & Michele Figures | Cherry Hill, NJ |
| Lillian Garfinkel | Merion Station, PA | Gelsher and Abramovitz from Belz and Rubenstein from Bialystok, Poland/Russia | |
| Helfand from Kletsk, Belarus; Magid from Kovno (Kaunas), Lithuania; Garfinkel and Nur from Poland | | Irving Selsley | North Wales, PA |

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



An IAJGS conference is a great opportunity to hear excellent speakers, do research, and network with other genealogists, from beginners to experts. This past July I had the opportunity to attend the 2017 IAJGS conference in Orlando, Florida. There were some wonderful speakers and films. Two speakers stood out for me.

Harvard professor, Henry Lewis Gates, Jr. gave an excellent talk at the Thursday banquet when he spoke about genealogy and genetics. He also gave an overview of the upcoming fall season of his television series on PBS, "Finding Your Roots," which will feature many Jewish personalities, including Senator Bernie Sanders, comedian Larry David, and actress Scarlett Johansson to name just a few.



Another impressive speaker was Lynn University history professor, Robert Watson, who gave two presentations. His first was the keynote address on Sunday evening. He spoke then about the relationship between Alexander Hamilton, the Jews and the American Revolution. The following morning, he discussed his recent book entitled *The Nazi Titanic* and focused on a little known and ultimately tragic situation involving the German ocean liner SS Cap Arcona and its thousands of concentration camp prisoners. Professor Watson had the entire audience enthralled. He speaks frequently around the country. I encourage everyone to attend his lectures when he's in the Philadelphia area.



I met with other speakers who live close to the Philadelphia area, and we will try to line them up, along with Professor Watson, for future meetings.

Next year's conference will be held from August 6th to August 10th in Warsaw, Poland. Most of the talks will be in English. There will be many side trips planned to visit ancestral shtetls and well as Holocaust sites.

On behalf of the society, I would like to express our sincere thanks to Susan Neidich for her service as membership vice president since 2012. She is stepping away from this responsibility, and we want to wish her the best. ❖

Fred Blum, President



MY CONNECTION TO MIKE LEVIN OF M. LEVIN & SONS

by Shalom Bronstein

Note: It's very gratifying to learn of the impact that "Chronicles" articles have on readers. Jerusalem resident, Philadelphia native, and JGSGP member, Rabbi Shalom Bronstein shared his reaction to "It All Started with Bananas" in Vol. 34-2, pp. 10-12 (Summer 2017):

9/17/17



Chronicles came at a time when I'm very busy with so many things. I opened it to see what it contained – well, I hit the jackpot.

Mike Levin was a close friend of my grandfather. Two or three summers ago, I was walking to the bus here in our Jerusalem neighborhood. I always wear a Phillies hat. A fellow stopped me and said that they [the Phillies] were not having a good season. One thing led to another, and I discovered I was talking to a fellow named Morris Levin. He said something about the produce business, and I asked him if he was related to Chaike Levin. He told me that she was his great grandmother.

I told him that she and my grandfather, Mayer Shulman, grew up together in Panevezys, Lithuania 130 years before and were close friends in Philadelphia. He told me that he didn't know where she was born. We talked a bit, and he later came to our house and photographed photos I had of his great grandparents.

I was a frequent visitor to the Dock Street warehouse in the 1940s and early 1950s. I would go with my grandfather. I am enclosing a photo, which I have also donated to Yad Vashem, showing the activity of the group known as the Litvisher Ferband, known in English as the Alliance of Lithuanian Jews of Philadelphia & Vicinity. Mike Levin was president from the 1930s to his death. After his passing, his son Albert assumed that position. In the photo, Mike Levin is standing wearing the jacket & tie. Chaike Levin is second to the left, and my grandfather is standing next to her. You can see the banana hooks on the ceiling.



The Ferband was very active in projects in Israel and before that in helping fellow Litvaks in the DP camps. My grandfather was in charge of the clothing packages that they sent which were packed on Dock Street. I don't have time to go into further details, but I have a 1947 and a 1961-62 yearbook from the Ferband packed with information. ❖

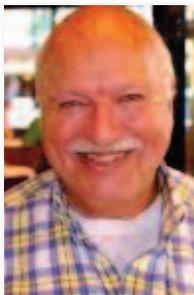
After serving as a congregational rabbi for sixteen years. Rabbi Bronstein made aliyah with his family in 1986, settling in Jerusalem. He is a member of the Israel Genealogical Research Association, Association of Professional Genealogists and Rabbinical Assembly.

He is researching - SHULMAN/SHILLMAN – Panevezys, Pumpenai; BLOCH – Ramygala, Krekanava (Lithuania); the DIMMERMAN, BECK & GELMAN families from Ostrog & vicinity (Volhyn); BRONSTEIN, BROWNSTEIN, RUNSTEIN, ROCHMANN - Kishinev (Moldova); GOLDSTEIN - Iasi (Romania) – those who came to America all settled in Philadelphia; GOLDZWEIG & LETZTER - Cholojow/Uzlovoye (Eastern Galicia/Ukraine). Contact Rabbi Bronstein at: sygaa@netvision.net.il

A JEWISH CIVIL WAR VETERAN FINALLY RECEIVES A VISITOR

by Alexander Woodle

Note: This article was originally published in Avotaynu, Vol. XVIII, No. 4 (Winter 2002)



Simon Woodle was one of thousands of German speaking immigrants who came to our shores between 1840 and 1880 to seek a better way of life. His story is not of an extraordinary man who cures a disease, writes a famous novel or creates a new technology to improve society. He was a common man who found employment, married, provided food and shelter to his family and served his country during wartime.

He barely registered on the genealogical radar screen when I began my family research, but as I delved into the vital records, census, city directories, etc, a clearer image of him began to take shape. His paper trail led me to the home village of my ancestors in Bohemia (Avotaynu, Volume XVIII, Number 4, Winter 2002, Page 8), and along the way, I was able to flesh out the bones of this man and his life in America during the last half of the 19th century.

Simon Woodle, an older brother of my great grandfather, David Woodle, was born in Čkyně, Bohemia on April 7, 1841. He embarked for New York City from Hamburg in May 1856 listing his occupation as a farmer. The trail ran cold until he appeared in the New York City directories in the 1870s. During this period his occupation was listed as hat maker, the same profession of his brothers Moritz and David.

Confusion arose when the 1880 census revealed a Charles Woodle, hat maker, born in Bohemia around 1840. The two sisters living with him during this time had been previously confirmed from the archives in Prague, Czech Republic as Simon Woodle's siblings, as well! The birth register for Simon's family clearly revealed no room for Charles Woodle to fit into my gg grandmother's pregnancy schedule? Who was Charles?

I began to track the wife and children of Charles Woodle to see if I could somehow solve this mystery. The brick wall was finally breached when I found marriage records for two of his children listing Simon as the father in one and Charles in the other, but both married to the same woman. I concluded Charles and Simon were one and the same person. When I combined their records in my family database they meshed perfectly.

However, the most important find came from a commercial website that listed a Civil War pension record for a Simon Woodle. I ordered and received from the National Archives a voluminous record of Simon's complete military history. The file contained information on his enlistment and discharge and an extraordinary number of medical reports in support of his pension application including doctor's examinations and anatomical sketches denoting his wounds received in combat. His unit, the 15th New York Heavy Artillery, had been in a number of significant engagements in Virginia from 1863-1865.

In 1920, his daughter Mary, crippled by an unknown malady and institutionalized, attempted to secure his pension. There were letters from her relatives and sponsors who pleaded her case, but to no avail. Her request was denied, because her father's death in 1898 was deemed not due to war injuries

Hidden within this pension file were other important genealogical facts; the early death date of his wife, the birth of a previously unknown daughter and his address in New York City in 1890. With this address the 1890 Manhattan Police Census could be examined to determine who was living with him at that time.

Finally, this massive file also revealed his place of burial: the Civil War East cemetery on the grounds of the Gov-

ernment Hospital for the Insane (since 1916 called St. Elizabeths Hospital) in Washington, D.C. The federal government had established a number of hospitals across the country to treat the thousands of soldiers wounded physically and mentally during this horrific conflict.

In the National Archives Northeast Branch I found a microfilm showing the record of Simon Woodle's admittance into the eastern branch of the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers in Togus, Maine in 1893 because of defective vision attributed to his service at the siege of Petersburg (VA). The following year he was transferred to Washington, D.C. where he died in July of 1898 from "organic brain disease."

I contacted the National Archives in Washington and spoke with the curator for St. Elizabeths' records. He said there was a small file on Simon Woodle and would send me copies by mail. The file included a letter written in 1896 by a woman representing Simon's daughters asking for information about whether he was alive or dead as he left home without informing his family! She wrote, "...Hoping you will be kind enough and let me know something about him, as his children are anxious to know about him."

A second letter from the then superintendent of the hospital notified Simon's next of kin of his death. Another, written by Simon's daughter Henrietta Woodle following the death of her father, states in part, "We are very sorry we could not come on to see him as we are not in circumstances just at present. We are very thankful to you for notifying us as we are very happy to think that he was well taken care of in his last moments and to think we know where he is buried now."

This flood of information filled in many blanks in the life of this man, but I now wanted to find his tombstone and establish closure for the family. I spent a whole day researching St. Elizabeths Hospital and phoning various governmental bureaucracies to find out more about the Civil War cemetery located there. My persistence paid off and I received the first of many emails from an employee of the Government Services Administration (GSA) whose job included property administration over a portion of the St. Elizabeths. He became my genealogical guardian angel writing to me every day!

It turns out there are two Civil War cemeteries, the east and west, and they are not documented very well. He was, however, able to determine that Simon was buried in the east cemetery. He contacted a local cemetery historian and promised to look for the grave. The cemetery is located just outside St Elizabeths security wall (the current home of the would-be assassin of President Reagan).

I received an email from my guardian angel that evening stating, "I wish I could tell you I scanned the 1000s of gravestones that are out on the East Campus...but we were there only about 5 or 10 minutes...there were four of us wandering through the cemetery, just talking...and I turned, and damn if Sgt. Woodle's gravestone wasn't right in front of me!"



East Campus Cemetery - St. Elizabeths Hospital

It was one of those miraculous moments all genealogists live for! In this vast sea of graves they had accidentally stumbled onto Simon's marker. My GSA contact told me that St Elizabeths was celebrating its 150th anniversary in June and that I should come at that time. I contacted the organizers of the birthday celebration and was invited to lay a wreath at the memorial service. I purchased an official Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) grave marker to bring with me to mark Simon's grave.



So in June, I flew down to Washington, D.C. and spent that weekend listening to speakers talk of the work of the hospital, the horrific accounts of casualties including thousands and thousands of soldiers who suffered from what we now call Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Simon's fatal illness classified, as "brain disease" and "chronic dementia" may very well have been PTSD. We will never know for sure. What I do know for sure is my visit to Simon's gravesite was probably the first by a member of my family. I proudly placed the grave marker next to his tombstone and stood for a moment of silence. ❖

Alex Woodle is a member of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Boston (JGSGB) and former Director of the New England Historic Genealogical Society's (NEHGS) Circulating Library. He has published articles on Jewish genealogy for NEHGS, Avotaynu and Mass-Pocha and presented talks at local, regional and international genealogical conferences.

He is searching for WUDL in Prostibor and Čkyně in Czechia; GOLDSCHWEIN in Skala; LANDMAN in Chortkiv, SARANAH in Podolia. He is a retired researcher specializing in Jewish genealogy.

Contact Alex at: awoodle@verizon.net

REBOOT OF HISTORIC ALLIANCE COLONY

by Jarrett Ross

Note: On October 8, the past, present, and future of the Alliance Colony converged when dozens of individuals assembled and heard presentations which blended agriculture, history, and genealogy.



In the small community of Alliance, a rural area in southern New Jersey, a crowd began to gather at the small, 130 year old synagogue, Tiphereth Israel. They were gathered to celebrate the beginning of a new day for the Alliance community, a self-described reboot by the leaders of this new endeavor; William and Malya Levin. The community of Alliance, often called The Alliance Colony, was first settled in 1882 by forty-three Jewish families who were escaping Czarist Russia. They were inspired by the Am Olam movement, a back to agriculture movement begun by Jews in Russia who wanted to show that Jews were capable of manual labor.⁽¹⁾ Alliance is the most successful Jewish agricultural colony in America.⁽²⁾ The colony saw multiple waves of new Jewish refugees in the first few years and even took in Jews who had already settled in big cities such as New York and Philadelphia.

When the settlers first arrived at Alliance the land was completely covered by woods, and their only shelter was in the form of tents supplied through an act of Congress procured by politicians from the nearby town of Vineland.⁽³⁾ As time progressed these Jewish colonists cleared the land of trees with the help of local Christian neighbors and began to grow their first crops. They built a huge barracks type housing which was nicknamed "Castle Garden", after the port in which so many had come through, but eventually they began building their own houses. The houses were still quite small and as time went on, some of the families would put additions onto their houses. In a 1982 interview Bernie Stavitsky, a descendant of colonist Eli Stavitsky, called the houses "one-room shacks".⁽⁴⁾

The settlers suffered greatly in the first years, but through hard work and the support of multiple organizations, they built a strong community. The children and grandchildren of these settlers went on to become successful educators, lawyers, judges, politicians, physicians, etc. By the 1930s and 1940s most of the original families had moved on to bigger cities, but waves of further Jewish immigration by those escaping the Shoah kept the area full of Jewish farmers. By the '60s and '70s the Jewish community became sparse because most families and descendants had moved on to the bigger cities such as New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, San Francisco.

The unofficial leader of the original Jewish settlers of Alliance was a man named Moses Bayuk, a lawyer and spiritual leader from Bialystok. Before immigrating Moses Bayuk had been elected as the delegate to scout the land along with fellow settler Eli Stavitsky.⁽⁵⁾ Now Bayuk's second great grandson William Levin, leader of the Alliance Community Reboot (ACRe) who also descends from the Levin family of Alliance, is revitalizing the same land originally chosen by his ancestor 130 years ago.

William and his wife Malya decided to descendants, historians, agriculturalists, see the newest phase of the Alliance in the historic synagogue Howard Jaffe, one of the families which settled in the history of the colony and its synagogue recent years. Howard is one of the last as his ancestors. He's also one of the Robin Cohen, looking after the syna-

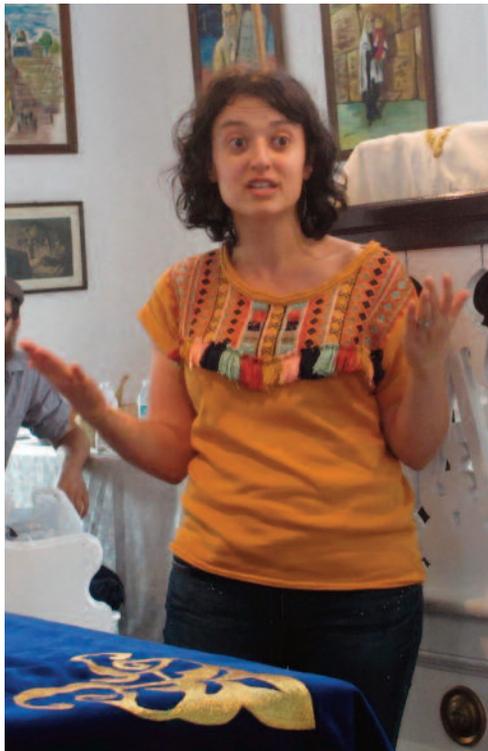
"The Alliance Colony is one of the few many, but we're one of the only ones explained, "...this synagogue was the spokes of this community. Now we've has been in use for as long as it has been of continuous opening."

Mr. Jaffe talked further about the differ-pictures and Torah covers, and men-gogue was used for the Hebrew school to sleep. Many of the prayer books, 19th century. He then introduced Malya Levin, one of the leaders of the ACRe along with her husband William, who spoke about their inspiration for the project and how they got started.

"On our first date William told me he was descended from the first Jewish agricultural society in North America, and I was like, what are you talking about?" Mrs. Levin quipped as she laughed. "Then he brought me back here, and I always thought that the history was so interesting and what a beautiful thing to have happened in the past. And slowly over our relationship we found out that actually it's happening in the present. Jewish farming is alive and well and is actually a burgeoning movement across the country."

Mrs. Levin further explained that this movement back to agriculture by Jews, young and old, has allowed them to live out deeper spiritual principles and connect further with their Jewish faith. A lot of the ideas and concepts for the ACRe project come from the history of Alliance and are being made relevant in the present day. "You can be inspired by the beautiful history that Howard was just talking about and have that history continue. It's so beautiful that we have the *shul* (synagogue) here where people pray, we have the cemetery, and how beautiful that we can have living farming and living Jewish ritual going on as this sort of ongoing circle of life, right here, on this holy ground."

Malya Kurzweil Levin



put together this event to give fellow and the plain-old curious a chance to community. As the crowd settled down a descendant of the Goldfein family, area around 1887, began to explain the and what has been happening in more descendants still farming the same land three people, along with Mark Fox and gogue for the past few decades.

colonies in New Jersey, there were still up and running things." Mr. Jaffe hub and the farms around were the come to the point where the synagogue created . . . so you have over 130 years

ent items hanging on the walls such as tioned that the third floor of the syna- and also as a place for traveling rabbis chairs, and other items date back to the

Mrs. Levin then introduced her father, Arthur Kurzweil, who is well known in the Jewish and genealogical communities as the author of *From Generation to Generation*, an authoritative guide to Jewish genealogy. Kurzweil movingly described how he became interested in genealogy, which then turned into much more as he began to write books, conduct speaking tours, and help establish the first Jewish genealogical society in New York City. His connection to Judaism deepened significantly. He went on further to discuss the connection between Judaism and the renewed interest in agriculture at Alliance, linking the tree of life in the Kabbalah to the activities of this reboot movement.

Nathan Kleinman, nicknamed Farmer Nate, then described the work he and others have been doing. He was hired to help clear and cultivate the fields in Alliance. A native of Jenkintown, Pennsylvania whose interest in agriculture grew out of his political activism, Farmer Nate's passion for his work was evident as he discussed the different crops presently planted.

Nathan "Farmer Nate" Kleinman



Links to video from October 8 event:

Part 1 - <https://youtu.be/dCt5IV3tpHE>

Part 2 - <https://youtu.be/NpIabmtuNQo>

Part 3 - <https://youtu.be/etDjwU7X1Wc>

Playlist-https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLcGqX_-rsFhTjMdlbEO8IUryVczs_6X8d

Author Jarrett Ross is a genealogist and descendant of the Ecoff family from Alliance. He began researching his own family history in 2009 while finishing his undergraduate degree at the University of Pittsburgh. Since then he has built his own personal tree with over 7000 people, successfully connected with thousands of relatives all over the world, and has helped build hundreds of trees for people of varying ancestral backgrounds. Jarrett has found a specialty in Sephardic Jewish research with an emphasis on the Dutch Sephardim. He also specializes in Jewish agricultural societies of Southern New Jersey, Ashkenazi Jews, Jews in America, and Jews in the United Kingdom. Jarrett writes a blog called "Sephardic Genealogy", which focuses on his Sephardic genealogy research. He also has a vlog called "GeneaVlogger" where Jarrett talks about his research, gives genealogy tips, interviews other genealogists, and shows different aspects of working in genealogy. Contact Jarrett at geneavlogger@gmail.com



Arthur Kurzweil

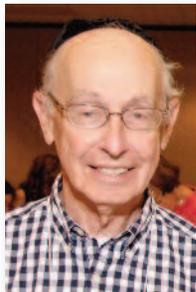
The gathering drew people from all over the country including descendants of many early Alliance families such as the Bailey, Bayuk, Brotman, Ecoff, Goldfein, Greenblatt, Labovitch, Levin, Perskie, Rothman, and Salunsky families. This was the first public event for the Alliance Community Reboot (ACRe) as well as the first public event at Alliance since the 125th anniversary in 2007. The revitalization brings excitement and renewed interest to the area and will hopefully mark a new chapter in an historic community. ❖

References:

1. Ellen Eisenberg, *Jewish Agricultural Colonies in New Jersey 1882-1920*, (Syracuse, Syracuse University Press, 1995), pp. 25.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. xvii-xvii.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 90-91.
4. Rich Brotman, *First Chapter in a New Book: The Story of Brotmanville and the Alliance Colonies of Southern New Jersey*, (Magnetic Image, 1982), <https://vimeo.com/222691402>.
5. Sidney Bailey, "The First Fifty Years", *Yoval: The Golden Jubilee and Fiftieth Anniversary Reunion*, (The Committee on Arrangements; August 1932), pp. 12-13

WEDDING HALLS IN EARLY RUSSIAN-JEWISH PHILADELPHIA 1885 TO 1908

by Harry D. Boonin



There is little written about the wedding halls in early Russian-Jewish Philadelphia. If any reader knows of a wedding that took place in any of the halls mentioned in this article, please let me know. The only information I have on the first four halls identified below are the wedding invitations themselves given to me over the past few years. The fifth hall invitation is found in *The Jewish Quarter of Philadelphia*, p. 124.

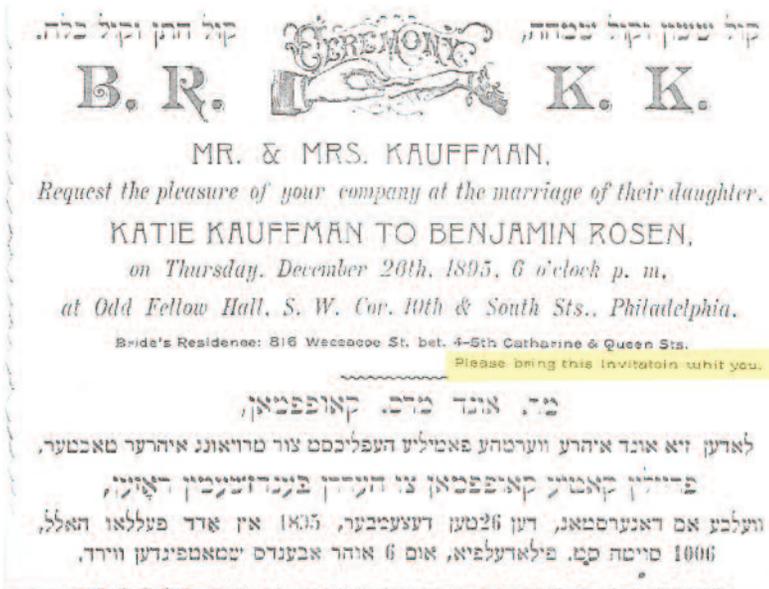
Other than the New Auditorium Hall on South 3rd Street and Dramatic Hall on South 5th Street, none of the other halls is described in the book – two of which were omitted because they were technically a few blocks west of the traditional boundaries of the Jewish quarter. (For other halls in the Jewish quarter, some of which were used for weddings, refer to p. 190 in the same book.)

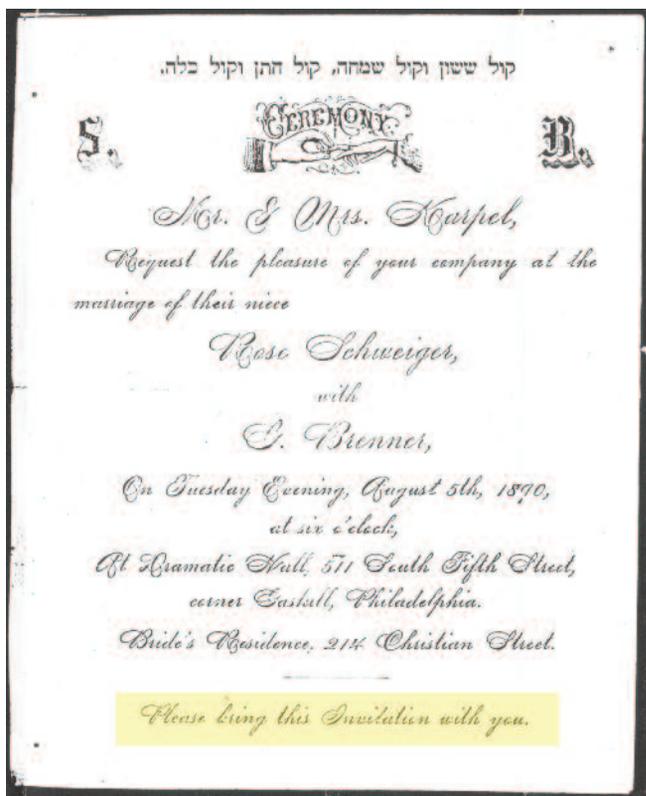
N.B. A line last printed in most of the invitations reads: "Please bring this invitation with you" or words to that effect. One invitation printed, "whit you." Russian Jews today carry with them to this country an older tradition, which may account for that line. If an invitee could not attend or did not want to attend the wedding, the invitee on occasion would transfer, with or without the knowledge of the bride's family, the invitation to another family. Another possibility for the last line is that at these hall weddings there were two kind of guests: invited guests (or their transferees) and "hat check guests." 'Who was a hat check guest?'

Since many weddings in the Jewish quarter took place on a work day, and since many men and women, boys and girls, were employed in back breaking work for long hours, they hungered and thirsted for a good meal when they got out of work. And instead of going to their overcrowded boarding house for gristle and bone, when they smelled the sweet cooking of the bride's family emanating from one of these halls, they couldn't resist admitting themselves to the hall and trying to mingle with the invited guests. When they would be found out, the bride's parents were reluctant to throw them out on their ear, it wasn't *haimishkeit* (indicative of good manners or welcoming hospitality). If the bride's family came from a small *shtetl* (village) in the Pale of Settlement where everyone in town was invited (like in "Fiddler on the Roof"), good manners dictated that the resident or interloper had to be fed, at no cost.

But the bride's father wasn't made of gold. So, what developed, so I am told, was a tradition of not asking for an eating fee or an entrance fee to the banquet hall, but rather something more politically correct. When the stranger was asked to check his or her hat, they were told that there was a 25-cent fee for checking the hat, thus the guest became the "hat check" guest.

Whether this is folklore or not, I rely on the good readers of *Chronicles* to straighten this out if it is in any way in error. But there is little or no doubt that invitations carried the words "Please bring this invitation with you," and because these precatory words were commonly used, they must have had some rather important meaning.





A listing of the wedding invitations follow: (Two of them are pictured here are highlighted) :

1. Athletic Hall, 625 S. 5th Street, Sunday, January 18, 1885, supper at 5:00, ceremony at 7:00 pm
2. Dramatic Hall, 511 S. 5th Street, Tuesday, August 5, 1890, at 6:00 pm
3. Odd Fellow Hall, S.W. Corner 10th & South Streets, Thursday, December 26, 1895, 6:00 pm.
4. Temple Hall, 1024-26 Lombard Street, 22 December 1896, 6:00 pm punkt (sharp).
5. New Auditorium Hall, 747-53 S. 3rd Street, Tuesday, September 1, 1908, 6:00 o'clock in the evening.

A note on Jewish folklore. Our observant ancestors chose Tuesday as a lucky day, and consequently many marriages were performed on a Tuesday. In the creation story, I am told, the phrase "ki tov," or "and it was good," appears twice for Tuesday, and it thus became a lucky day to be married. ❖

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 his latest, "Never Tell a Boy Not to Fight." Contact Harry at: harryboonin@gmail.com

IAJGS 2017 CONFERENCE REFLECTIONS

by James Gross, MSLIS



I recently returned from attending and lecturing at the 37th IAJGS conference, held at the Walt Disney Swan Hotel, in Orlando, Florida.

This six-day conference featured lectures, films, research, and networking among over 700 Jewish genealogists. So, what were some of the highlights from this conference?

A genealogy conference, for those of you who have not attended, provides a venue where one can attend lectures on genealogy topics. One can listen, learn, and network among other like-minded attendees and share and enjoy various aspects of Jewish genealogy research while in the company of fellow researchers.

There was a variety of meetings, lectures, and films to choose from. I will first touch on my two lectures, then



a few conference pictures. I gave the following two lectures:

[1.] INS (Immigration & Naturalization Service) Subject Index: Jewish Refugee Files from World War I and World War II.

This presentation focused on the resource, "Subject Index to Correspondence and Case Files of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, 1903-1959."

This collection is listed in the National Archives online microfilm catalog as Microfilm # T-458. It is a U.S. government resource which consists of entries regarding individuals and organizations and can help in locating immigration information on Jewish refugees. This microfilm contains file entries for the period spanning 1903-1959.

In my four-page handout: <https://tinyurl.com/ins2017handout> I provided a supplemental sheet for post-World War II refugee research: <https://tinyurl.com/ins-addendum-2017>. This supplemental sheet included website and resource links for further post-World War II refugee research. Some of the organizations included are the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, the Center for Jewish History, and the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee.

My INS Subject Index power point lecture is available with the two embedded videos (long download) at: <https://tinyurl.com/2017-ins-powerpoint-long>. It is also available without the videos at: <https://tinyurl.com/2017-ins-powerpoint-short>.

[2.] My second lecture was entitled, "Using the Veterans Administration to Obtain Records on Deceased Veterans."

The focus of this lecture was to briefly explain to researchers how they could make effective use of an alternate source to obtain records and information on their deceased military relatives.

This resource, Veteran Administration (VA) files, primarily contains medical records, but depending on the file contents, it could also contain the DD214 discharge form, application for military duty, as well as other military records.

Of interest to genealogists is the possible listing of the names of family members in these records. This lecture focused on using the VA as an alternative to the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC). My four-page

INS Subject Index: Jewish Refugee files from WWI and WWII

By James Gross, MSLIS (navistar96@yahoo.com)

Supplemental resources: <https://tinyurl.com/ins-addendum-2017>



handout: <https://tinyurl.com/va2017handout>.

My supplemental handout (VA Long report.pdf): <https://tinyurl.com/va-report3>.

My power point lecture can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/2017-va-powerpoint>.

The IAJGS created several videos. See some of the attendees and lecturers.

Exhibitor room video: <https://tinyurl.com/iajgs2017video1>

IAJGS Conference, Summary of Day 3 video: <https://tinyurl.com/iajgs2017video2>

IAJGS Conference, Summary of Day 4 video: <https://tinyurl.com/iajgs2017video3>

IAJGS Conference, Summary of the week video: <https://tinyurl.com/iajgs2017video4>



The conference included a very useful resource room. where many subscription based databases are available for free to attendees. The resource room also included access to ProQuest, another subscription based database, with access to many newspapers, including the *Historic New York Times*. I have located several obituaries using this resource.

I also made use of a fee-based Israeli database, called the IGRA (Israeli Genealogy Research Association) All Israel Database. Per the IGRA website, this database contains “over 1,000,000 records relating to Eretz Israel from the Ottoman Empire through the British Mandate to the State of Israel.” I used the IGRA database to locate several marriage records for my Israeli Fridman family.

In addition, I found a few Hebrew speaking researchers on www.MyHeritage.com who are researching some of my family names.

While the weather outside was hot, with a few showers, the atmosphere at the conference was lively. It was an opportunity to make new contacts, say “hi” to other researchers, and learn about new genealogy resources. In short, I had a great time at the conference and sneaked in a few days for fun at Walt Disney World. ❖

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>.

James can be reached at: navistar96@yahoo.com

MY IAJGS 2017 EXPERIENCE

by Mary-Jane Roth



I attended my fifth genealogy conference in July, this time in Orlando. Although my focus has changed as I've gained experience with my research, this year's program excited me just as much as my first one did. I downloaded the conference app as soon as it was available and began scheduling events that I wanted to attend. I really liked the app because it allowed me to plan. I identified interesting sessions that competed within the same time slots. However, I knew I could purchase recordings of those I would miss. In addition, the app helped me record my scheduled arrangements with other attendees.

I enjoy meeting people with whom I've corresponded who share my interests and have helped me advance in my research. I arranged to have a meal with them or meet them in the hotel lobby in order to share information. I learned new information at many sessions, but I learned the most when I attended more than one session about a single topic.



Emily Garber

I write a Family History blog, "MemoryKeeper's Notebook" (<http://memorykeepersnotebook.blogspot.com>). It's a small blog that focuses on my family, but I am always looking to improve it. I attended Emily Garber's session entitled "Blogging Family History." She provided many tips on how to make your own blog great. In addition, she recommended other general genealogy blogs that I will be checking out. Go to: http://iajgs2017.org/handouts/2277_Handout_BloggingFamilyHistory_20170415.pdf to see her handout. Emily also organized a brown bag breakfast for ten of us bloggers one morning. We included long time bloggers as well as newer ones like me. We covered the gamut from how to start a blog to learning from blog "insiders." I also enjoyed meeting the owners of the blogs I follow.

I attended a session led by blogger Janice Sellers who discussed copyright issues such as the law related to the use of photographs, articles, books, etc., whether gleaned from the web, someone's tree, or an artifact that you find among your family papers. I always try to cite my sources in my blog as well as in my family tree. I have sometimes wondered about how to cite some information I've found.

I also took advantage of sessions about DNA, which was a major feature of this conference. Bennett Greenspan, founder of Family Tree DNA, revisited the genetic ancestry of Jews (Ashkenazim and Sephardim) during his presentation entitled, "Live! The DNA of the Jewish People." Several other speakers highlighted how the different testing companies now allow customers to upload results from other participants. In that way people can take advantage of the different tools companies offer. All the major DNA testing companies were represented in the exhibitor's hall. I met with one representative to learn how to gather all the kits that I might administer for my family into one family project. This would save a great deal of time when collating information. Armed with this new knowledge I hope to make progress in affirming or refuting various relationships suggested by regular family research.



Janice Sellers

Next year's conference will be in Warsaw, and during the final session, the organizers gave me the impetus to attend. This conference promises to be very interesting, and I am excited to start planning for it. ❖

Mary-Jane Roth is a retired civil servant who has been researching her family tree for about fifteen years. 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.

WAS IT WORTH GOING TO ORLANDO? YOU BET IT WAS!

by Norman Katz



I had attended twelve genealogy conferences prior to the one in Orlando, Florida. I wondered if it would be worthwhile going to this one. ‘What new information would I learn? Some presenters might be the same people I had heard previously. Their topics might be good for new genealogists, but not for me. Many of the hands-on sessions sounded like others I had attended earlier. The vendors appeared to be the same ones with the same products.’

After much thought, I decided to attend. Not only did I make new contacts, but I received additional information about family members to add to my family tree.

An exciting development occurred while perusing the message board. One request concerned an unusual surname that happened to also be my stepmother’s surname. I contacted the person who posted the request; he turned out to be a high school student researching his family history. He was attending the conference along with his mother. I helped him fill in family information and sent him another document after I returned home.

I also renewed a friendship with an attendee from the Chicago area who photographed grave markers in area cemeteries. He volunteered to take photos of specific graves for me. I sent him a list of the gravesites after the conference, and he sent me photos of almost all those I requested.

At previous conferences, ProQuest did not allow participants access to copy engagement/marriage announcements or obituaries from certain large cities. This year, however, they did allow access, and I obtained about twelve articles. I discovered previously unknown relationships: a same sex marriage, names of distant relatives mentioned as descendants and burial locations listed in obituaries. In addition, I renewed my subscription at half-price with one of the software vendors.

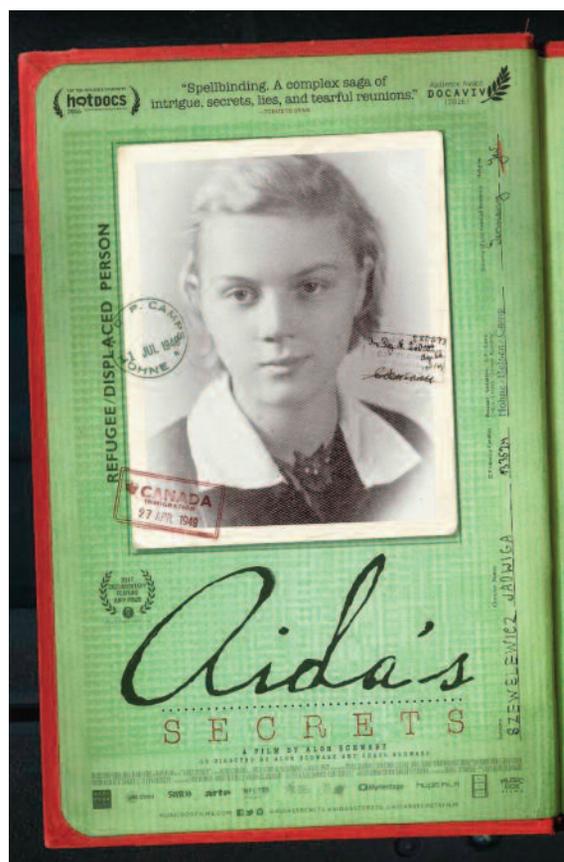
Henry Louis Gates Jr. gave an outstanding keynote speech at the banquet, and I felt honored to hear him.

I attended one movie, a special presentation of “Aida’s Secrets.” The movie impressed me, and an enlightening discussion followed the showing. I hope my Adult Community Yiddish Club will show it. The Orlando conference fulfilled my hopes to learn new information, and I look forward to learning more genealogical information at future events. ❖

Norm Katz has been doing genealogical research for twenty-two years. He started after retirement and was looking for something to keep him busy. He is a member of the Beth El Synagogue Genealogical Club, the Monroe Township Library Genealogy Club, the Genealogy Club of Central New Jersey, the Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Philadelphia and the Jewish Genealogical Society of New York. He has made presentations to various groups and is involved with Jewish Records Indexing – Poland, where he is a Shtetl Co-op Coordinator for his ancestral Polish towns.

When he has the time, he enjoys helping others just for the challenge.

Contact Norm at normk12065@aol.com



JOWBR & THE MEMORIAL PLAQUES PROJECTS

by Merle Kastner



I have attended all IAJGS conferences since 2000, except for three, and have never missed the presentations on JOWBR (the JewishGen Online Worldwide Burial Registry).

Nolan Altman is JewishGen's Vice President of Data Acquisition and coordinates its Holocaust and JOWBR databases and the Memorial Plaques Project. In addition, he is the immediate past president of the JGS of Long Island, a member of the JGS of New York, and an IAJGS board member.

Nolan took over the helm of JOWBR around 2005, when Joyce Field retired. This most valuable project now boasts 3.1 million records (many of which have accompanying photos of headstones or footstones) and is growing.

Begun in June 2012, the Memorial Plaques Project has amassed plaque records from 248 synagogues and other institutions, totalling 157,197 memorials, and this is also increasing. This database includes information from plaques and yizkor lists. See <https://www.jewishgen.org/databases/Memorial/Submit.htm> and <https://jewishgen.org/databases/Memorial/WhyMemorial.htm>



Nolan Altman

In September 2016, I arranged a program for the JGS of Montreal that featured Nolan. He and his wife drove to Montreal, and he spoke to us about both projects. His presentation generated a great deal of interest and enthusiasm.

The enormous value of both databases is several-fold. They are open to researchers and to non-researchers seeking information on their families. It's impossible to estimate how many people in areas removed from the burial places of grandparents, great-grandparents and other family members have been able to find what they are looking for, but the numbers are huge.

Lost family members are often located as a result of the details (father's name, tribe - -Kohen, Levi, Yisrael-ages, etc.); families are often linked.

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How to submit data to JOWBR

A JewishGen Screencast Series

To assist donors who are interested in submitting data and/or photos to the JOWBR database, JewishGen has developed a series of "How To" screencasts (short online videos). When you watch these screencasts, you will be able to watch and hear an explanation of how to make a complete and successful JOWBR submission.

The screencasts cover all the questions we typically receive, from "How do I know if my cemetery is online?" to "What will my data look like when I'm done?" The majority of the screencasts describe exactly how to properly complete the standard JOWBR Excel template, and make specific entries in the Cemetery Info tab and the Burial Template.

Each screencast addresses a specific topic or type of entry. You can watch the entire series, or just the ones you have questions. Like all online videos, you can pause or replay them as desired. (An alternative to watching the screencasts is the webpage "Submitting Data to JOWBR").

In the box at the right is a clickable list of the available screencasts (and their length, in minutes and seconds).

We hope this submission aide will help you see that submitting records to JOWBR is not at all difficult. The ability to share data with researchers and family members around the world is invaluable and we hope that you'll consider making a submission of your own.

If you have any questions, please contact [Nolan Altman](#).

- 1. [JOWBR - An Introduction](#) (0:57)
(Now with 2.27 million records!)
- 2. [Getting Started](#) (3:55)
- 3. [The Cemetery Info Tab](#) (4:34)
- 4. [The Burial Template - Overview](#) (2:12)
- 5. [Entering Names](#) (4:48)
- 6. [Entering Place Names](#) (2:09)
- 7. [Entering Dates](#) (2:34)
- 8. [Entering Plot Locations and Comments](#) (1:13)
- 9. [Linking Photos to Your Records](#) (2:41)
- 10. [Putting it all Together](#) (3:09)

[JewishGen Online Worldwide Burial Registry](#) [JOWBR FAQ](#)

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MUSEUM OF JEWISH HERITAGE A LIVING MEMORIAL TO THE HOLOCAUST

In the past dozen years I have personally photographed Jewish cemetery stones and entered the details, photo numbers, etc. of six Montreal cemeteries in addition to those of Quebec City and Sherbrooke, as well as two important sections of another cemetery in Montreal.

While visiting Lithuania in 2006, I stumbled upon an old, decrepit Jewish cemetery in Lazdijai and, with great trepidation, entered and photographed



Lazdijai Cemetery-
Dvora & Tzvi Avner tombstone-2006

only a small number of stones. I regretted not doing more, but going further was almost impossible because the ground was very uneven and the overgrowth dangerous. All my photographs are now on JOWBR. In fact, someone from the U.S. Midwest noticed one of my photographs and sent us an earlier photograph of that same tombstone which was much more legible. We, of course, added this to the database.



Photo taken in 1922
supplied courtesy of Allen Avner

Five years ago, during my trip to Romania, I was de-

lighted to visit the relatively well-kept Jewish cemetery in Piatra Neamt and photographed as many stones as possible. Everything is documented in JOWBR.

And not wishing to neglect the Memorial Plaques Project, I have personally photographed plaques from three of Montreal's synagogues, entered them into that database, and I plan to do more in the future.

It is important to note that Nolan has a group of volunteers who do translations from Hebrew, if required, and help with other facets of these two, very valuable projects. I strongly encourage readers to think of participating.

I must admit to being a great admirer of the work that Nolan does - with dedication, great attention to detail, patience and a sense of humor, too.

Yasher Koach [kudos] and huge thanks, Nolan! ❖

Merle Kastner is vice president of programming for the JGS of Montreal. While she resides there, she has definite roots in Philadelphia. Her paternal grandmother, Esther Miller Kastner, was born in Philadelphia in 1894 and moved to Canada with her family in 1909.

Merle has spearheaded indexing of Jewish cemeteries in her home area and attends IAJGS conferences regularly. She is researching: KASTNER, OSTFELD (Bukovina); NATHANSON, MENDELSSOHN (Piatra Neamt & Negulesti, Romania).

Contact Merle at merlebk18@gmail.com.

MY FRIENDS AND MY COUSINS ARE COUSINS

by Walter Spector

Background



Lenore (Lenny) and Steve Dash

My wife Anne and I have known Steve and Lenny for more than forty years. Steve and I worked for the School District of Philadelphia. Steve was an elementary school administrator, and I was a secondary school administrator. We did not hold our professional differences as contentious. Instead, we joined each other in family celebrations, enjoyed many dinners, and travelled together. The Dashes' daughter, Carrie Warwick, has been compiling her family genealogy for years. She is always looking for relatives to put on her family tree. Her most recent research has taken place through her DNA search.

Anita Becker Shomer and Jerry Shomer

My wife Anne and I met Anita and Jerry more than forty years ago. Although Anita and I are second cousins, our families were separated for a long time. Initially we were introduced at a neighbor's house. It did not occur to me that there might be a family connection with the Beckers/Shomers. If I had asked her maiden name when we first met, I would have known immediately that we were related. However, the next we met, at Aunt Birdie's house, I realized that we were, in fact, related. Aunt Birdie was Anita's aunt and my first cousin once removed. Anita's grandfather, Leopold Becker, and my grandmother, Ida Becker Lander, were brother and sister.

Over the years, our relationship has grown into a wonderful friendship. We travel, dine, laugh and meet on the Ventnor beach together. Anne and Anita are avid jewelry makers. In fact, Anita's daughter, Stephanie, would return from a party and tell her mother, "Michael Spector [our son] is very cute," and Anita's reply was always the same, "Watch it, you are related."

It took a while for all the Becker children--Anita, Nessa, Joe, and Harry-- to understand the Becker-Spector relationship. Recently, Joe received a DNA kit and the results were posted. More Becker relatives were uncovered.

The Friends and the Cousins are Cousins

Now comes the good part, the part that reveals that my friends Lenore and Steve and my cousin Anita are related. One day, Carrie Dash Warwick noticed a match with a Joseph Becker when she compared results from their respective DNA tests.

As a result of a number of emails, Carrie and Joe determined



Steve & Lennie Dash

Jerry & Anita B. Shomer

Nessa B. & Virgil Procaccino

Joseph & Patricia Becker

Anne & Walter Spector

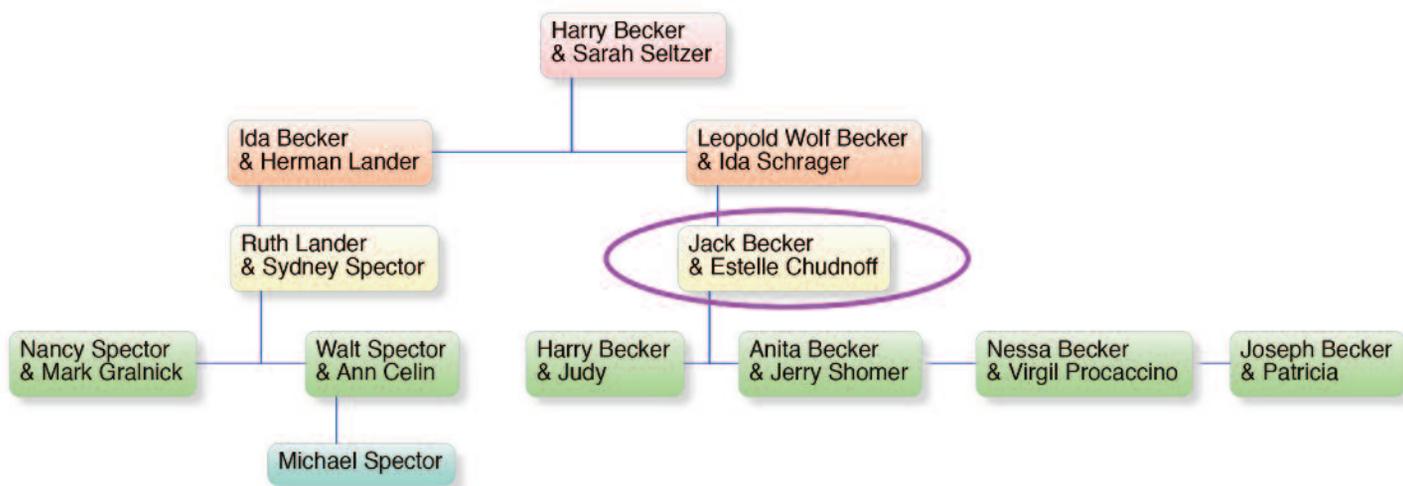
that they are second cousins. Anita's mother, Estelle Chudnoff Becker, and Lenny's mother, Evelyn Lieberman Shaper, were first cousins. Lenny's grandmother, Lillian Chudnoff Lieberman, and Anita's grandfather, Harry Chudnoff, were siblings. During a phone conversation, Joe told Carrie "you are like the Walter Spector of our family!" (because I turned up one day as a relative and like Carrie and Joe, I am always looking for relatives). Carrie's reply was, "I know Walter Spector. He is a longtime friend of my parents." Although the Shomers and Dashes had spent many evenings with the Spectors and friends, they never formally met or had a discussion.

In May 2017, the two couples met at the wedding of Michael Spector and Anna Elena Alvarez in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico. In July 2017, Steve and Lenny Dash, three of the four Becker siblings and their spouses, and my wife and I met for dinner in Somers Point, New Jersey. There were lots of laughter and stories to cement our relationships and friendships. Remarkably, Anita's son and Lenny's son both work at the same local university in the same department! Now we are all connected... and a great evening was had by all. Thanks to Anne, Anita and Lennie who contributed to this article.

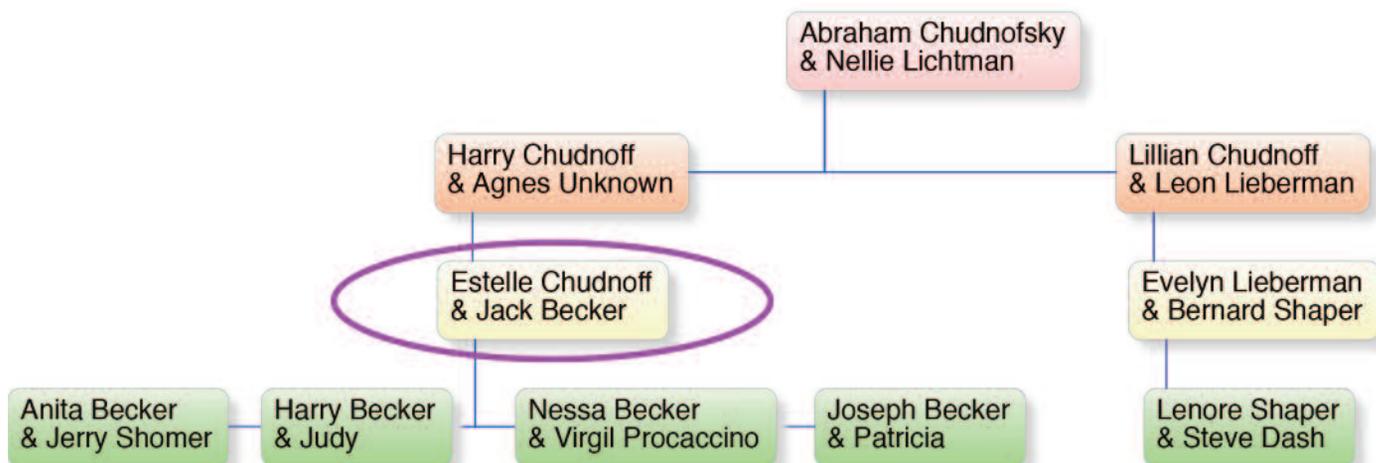
PS - I am still related to my cousins but not my friends! ♦

The connection in the two branches of the BECKER / CHUDNOFF family is highlighted in the two charts, below.

Becker Descendant Chart



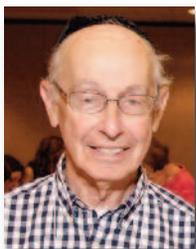
Chudnoff Descendant Chart



A former assistant principal in the Philadelphia School District, Walt Spector is an avid collector of historic Philadelphia-themed postcards (Chronicles, Vol. 28-4, Winter 2011-2012, p.15) and is proud of his roots in the agricultural colony of Woodbine, New Jersey. He now serves as a JGSGP vice president. You can reach Walt at educonser@comcast.net.

YO! I FOUND GRANDMOM'S NATURALIZATION PAPERS

by Harry D. Boonin



You smile. You are a trained, Jewish genealogist with decades of moss on your white beard (or if you are a female, evidence that you are no longer sweet sixteen) and a snooper into things genealogical. All such trained personages know one doesn't find one's grandmother's naturalization papers, at least during the heyday of immigration before World War I. For those who would like to know why, a quick perusal of *United States vs Cohen*, 179 Fed. Reporter 834 (1910), decided by the Circuit Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, is instructive.

It seems that in July 1907, Henrietta Cohen, perhaps a frustrated and before-her-time hippie, got it into her noggin to get herself naturalized. She had been in the country a while and thought it a good idea. She filed her Declaration of Intention to become an American citizen and on August 6, 1909, she filed her Petition for Naturalization. The cooperative Circuit Court for the Southern District of New York, finding her a fine candidate, admitted her to citizenship. Since this was so contrary to established law, the United States of America (perhaps not the whole country, but an important part of the Department of Justice acting on behalf of the entire country) appealed the dastardly order of the ignorant, lower court. What got the Department of Justice so riled up—and didn't they have anything better to do?

Well, here is the story. Simply put, the fact was that in 1907 and 1909 Henrietta had a (gulp) husband Tobias and he (gulp) was alive and well, and doing very nicely in America. Tobias and Henrietta were married in 1870, and by 1910 we hope they had lived forty years of wedded bliss. But that evidently was not the problem. Tobias, for reasons known only to an inner circle of close friends, did not become a U.S. citizen—and he and only he (“father knows best”) could become a citizen and his wife would ipso facto become a citizen through derivative citizenship. Who could question such a system? It made perfect sense in 1907. (Just ask father!) Maybe he had fond memories of the *Auld Sod* [one's native country]. Who knows why he didn't become a regular citizen.? After forty years he was still “a subject of the Emperor of Russia,” as the court put it. So, Henrietta, without the right to vote and without many other rights, chose to think for herself (as it turned out, a bad idea), and would have gotten away with such thinking had not the appeal been taken to the higher court.

The Circuit Court, *ipso facto*, undid the dastardly deed, flat out disallowed her naturalization, and returned her to the care of the czar, although he was far, far away in *Yenemsville* (the middle of nowhere.) And the czar didn't even know her—and could not have understood her if she spoke to him in either Yiddish or English. What a *misha-gosh* (crazy thing)! Gosh! The upper court, without powdered wig, advised all and sundry personages that a married woman could not be naturalized if her husband was around. She could only obtain derivative citizenship when and if her Tobias decided to waltz down to the courthouse and fill out some papers. (Maybe he didn't like red tape.)

Anyhow, that is the story of how I found grandmom's naturalization papers and also solves the question of why there was a big X through the entire page. And I thought it was a grandchild scribbling on it years later. ❖

Note: Per UNITED STATES v. COHEN, No. 292, Circuit Court of Appeals, Second Circuit 179 F. 834; 1910 U.S. App. LEXIS 4714 Rendered June 14, 1910:

*The admission to American citizenship is a high privilege which should not be granted upon a doubtful interpretation of the law. It must be conceded that there is no specific provision of the statutes which permits the naturalization of the alien wife of an alien husband. On the contrary, as was pointed out by Judge Henry B. Brown in *Peguigot v. Detroit*, 16 Fed. 211, the general trend of legislation has been constantly toward the recognition of the proposition that the husband is the head of the family and that his wife and minor children take his citizenship, it being inconsistent with the theory of our laws that the wife shall be a citizen and the husband an alien and vice versa.*

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, most recently, "Never Tell A Boy Not To Fight" about Jewish boxers from Philadelphia. Contact Harry at: harryboonin@gmail.com

SEPTEMBER MEETING SUMMARY
4TH ANNUAL STEVE SCHECTER MEMORIAL LECTURE
“KLEZMER MUSIC & COMMUNITY IN 20TH-CENTURY
JEWISH PHILADELPHIA”
PRESENTER & PERFORMER: HANKUS NETSKY, PH.D

by Linda Ewall Krocker



The word “klezmer” means “a vessel of song,” referring to both musical instruments and musicians. It’s also a musical tradition of Ashkenazi Jews of Eastern Europe and was a fixture at Jewish weddings. While it “died” around 1920 in New York City, it continued to be played in Philadelphia until the 1960s. Nowadays musicians around the world are very interested in klezmer music and regard it as a form of blues or European roots music.

Hankus grew up in the Mount Airy section of Philadelphia and was part of a Conservative Jewish community. In addition to exposure to jazz and modern music, he was introduced to klezmer by members of a nearby Hasidic synagogue. He didn’t hear this type of music anywhere else nor did any English language written sources exist. Klezmer has its roots in the Hasidic stronghold in the Podolia province in Ukraine and the town of Teplik, both of which were destroyed by pogroms.

He interviewed elderly family members including his uncle, an orthodontist, who owned a collection of 78 rpm klezmer recordings. Boris Thomashefsky, along with his wife Bessie, were founders of the Yiddish Theatre in America and were instrumental in introducing klezmer music in the United States. The only written account about klezmer can be found in the 1905 book entitled *The Russian Jew in America* in which Charlotte Kimball Patten, a non-Jewish social worker, described the Jewish weddings she attended to learn about the music. “The guests danced till four o’clock, --strange old-world dances to tuneless music. . . . competitive dances between men, circling dances of women whirling, laughing and embracing each other. It is greatly enjoyed by all except the bride, who is often desperately tired and ill after her twenty-four hours’ fast.”⁽¹⁾ Patten also referred to the “music of shear” [the Russian *sher* medley] which was played seemingly endlessly, continually evolving, nothing ever repeating.⁽²⁾ Other popular dance tunes at Philadelphia Jewish weddings were bulgars (like “Bulgar in D Minor”).



The musicians who performed always included a violinist and trumpet and clarinet players, and they often played until 4:00 a.m. They kept an instrument case open on the floor, and wedding guests would throw money in. Members of the Philadelphia Orchestra often played in klezmer bands. They would play a concert earlier in the evening and then go to the weddings and perform late at night. Venues, besides family restaurants and banquet halls in South Philly, included the Trocadero (1003 Arch Street)⁽³⁾ and the Arch Street Theatre (819 Arch Street) which also featured Yiddish theatre performances.⁽⁴⁾

Characteristics of a Jewish (South) Philly wedding:

- Guests were marched around the room until the food was ready on a different floor of the venue.
- *Freilachs* – [a circle dance; *freilach* is Yiddish for “festive”) only immediate family danced.
- Everyone was seated so they could serve the soup to a Romanian shepherd’s tune.
- Jack Kessler [local klezmer musician] sang as the groom (*chusen*) would expound to the bride (*kallah*) everything he loves about her.
- There was a “*broigas*” [angry] dance (a wedding dance of anger and reconciliation) between the mothers-in-law, regardless of any disagreements that may have transpired before the wedding, and after sixteen bars they would come together united as best friends . . . at least until the end of the wedding!
- Hasidic dance for the old men.
- Bucharesta Bulgar (*hora*), which later became “Hava Nagila” [“Let us rejoice”], an Israeli folk song traditionally sung at Jewish celebrations.
- *Mezinka* dance for the youngest or last daughter to be married off. This Ukrainian garland ceremony (which was adopted by Jews) would be a photo opportunity when the mother of the bride was crowned . . . and maybe also the mother of the groom . . . and then maybe the fathers . . . and would bring them to *freilich*.
- After World War II the bride would request swing music or jazz and ask the band not to play the old stuff from her father’s generation, but it was hard to not play it because guests would come up and ask the band when they were going to play it [klezmer music].
- One violinist always brought a trunk. When the party was over, he would push all the food off the banquet tables into the trunk to feed his family for the week.
- Only in Philadelphia did the band play a good night song to guests as they left.



Interspersed between remarks, Hankus (on piano) accompanied his fellow musicians, Zoe Christiansen (clarinet & accordion), Ezra Weller (trumpet), Daniel Blacksberg (trombone) and Jack Kessler (hazzan & vocalist.) Earlier that day (at Main Line Reform Temple) Hankus led a service, held a music lesson, and turned interested musicians who brought instruments into a klezmer group. If you email him at hnetsky@aol.com, he will send a link to materials on his Dropbox account.

For further information, see Hankus Netsky’s book, *Klezmer: Music and Community in Twentieth-Century Jewish Philadelphia*; Temple University Press, 2017. ❖

Notes:

1. *The Russian Jew in the United States: Studies of Social Conditions in New York, Philadelphia, and Chicago, with a Description of Rural Settlements*. Ed. Charles S. Bernheimer, Ph.D. Philadelphia: The John C. Winston Co., 1905. p. 245.

2. *Ibid*, p. 244.

3. *Wikipedia*

4. *Wikipedia*

Linda Ewall-Krocker has been interested in genealogy since the early 1980s, fortunately starting shortly before her dad passed away, so that she did get some information from him.

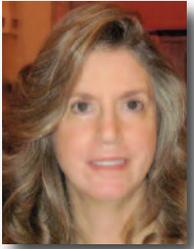
Linda is researching: FISHELOV (FISHER) in Kachinovichi (suburb of Pinsk, Minsk Gubernia, Belarus); WEISS in Kamyanets Podilskyy, Khmelnytsky, Ukraine; GOLDMAN in Somes, Russia (or Rava-Rus'ka in Lviv Oblast of western Ukraine); and GREENBERG in Odessa, Ukraine. You can reach Linda at: cappuccinoholic@gmail.com

OCTOBER MEETING SUMMARY

“POLISH JEWS: CIVILIZATION, DESTRUCTION, TINY REBIRTH”

SPEAKER: MICHAEL STEINLAUF, PH.D

by Linda Ewall Krockner



This session was billed as “an introduction of sorts” to next year’s IAJGS conference in Warsaw, Poland. Dr. Michael Steinlauf, professor at Gratz College, opened his talk by debunking the myth that Russian Jews emigrated to avoid twenty years of service in the army. That factor was no longer an issue by the 1850s.

Jewish life has existed in Poland for 1000 years. The definition of Poland has changed, but by the mid-1700s it covered a vast area extending from the Baltic to Black Sea, and from the Dnieper River to the eastern part of Germany. After World War I it was split into Romania, Czechoslovakia, Baltic countries, western Soviet Union, and Ukraine creating room for Belarus and western Ukraine.

Polishe Yiden (Polish Jews) lived among the general Polish population, but despite persistent and ongoing antagonism from the Catholic Church, day to day life went on. Poland was a multi-cultural society thanks to the migration of peasants from Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine, Greece, Austria-Hungary, and Germany who arrived at the same time as Jews. Jews were often quite prosperous and had the means to build huge synagogues.

Between 1600-1900 one-third of Polish Jews lived in the illustrious *shtetl* or small town; the word *shtetl* was derived from “*shtot*,” Yiddish for town. However, some Jews resided in cities or countryside. They often constituted 60-90% of a town’s population. They lived near the market place among other Jews. Ghettos didn’t exist; that was a western European concept. *Shtetlach* (plural of *shtetl*) were less isolated than you might think. Peddlers, journeymen, musicians, cantors, preachers, shamans (who dispelled demons and professed to heal the sick) moved around for business or to find a place to settle. The perception that there was constant violence is also a myth.



Michael Steinlauf

Polish nationalism developed in the 1890s to convince the people of their Polishness, and Jews were involved in this movement if they saw themselves as such. Political parties such as the Socialists and National Democrats came into existence, and Zionism arose concurrently as another nationalist movement. Jews had full citizenship and voted in elections on various levels: national for the Polish Parliament, town elections, and the *kehilah* [local Jewish community]. However, Jewish political power was deliberately limited which wasn’t surprising given that the population was primarily Roman Catholic. Instruction in schools was conducted primarily in Polish and Yiddish, also in Hebrew in some cases

There was rising anti-Semitism during the period between the two world wars. The pervasive sentiment was [there are] “too many Jews, they cause problems.” The average Pole didn’t like Jews and wished they’d go away. Nazis murdered 3 million of the 3.5 million Jews in Poland. Three periods actually constituted the Holocaust in Poland: the period of rising anti-Semitism, followed by the period of official annihilation, and finally the period when bystanders, more or less participated in the Nazi goal of eradicating Jews, which resulted in the murder of an additional, approximately 300,000. The 2012 film “Aftermath,” the fictional Holocaust-related thriller and drama, was inspired by the July 1941 Jedwabne pogrom in occupied northeastern Poland during Operation Barbarossa, in which 340 Polish Jews of Jedwabne were locked in a barn later set on fire by a group of Polish males, summoned specifically for that purpose by the German Ordnungspolizei [uniformed police force in Nazi Germany between 1936 and 1945].

Stalin saved more Jews than anyone else by allowing them to take Soviet citizenship; they migrated to Siberia (where one out of three survived) or western Asia. The situation can be summed up in the following joke:

Two Jews traveling on two trains going in opposite directions asked each other, “Where are you going?” They each responded, “You’re crazy, turn around!”

The period after World War II was characterized as the worst Jew hating era in history. Those Poles who hid Jews often had to hide the fact. When Jews returned to their ancestral towns after World War II to reclaim property now inhabited by Poles, they sometimes didn’t survive the encounter. There were some pogroms, such as the one on July 4, 1946 when the age-old libel resurfaced that Jews had stolen a Christian child. Gradually the government itself became anti-Semitic, anti-Zionist, and Communist, and Jews were kicked out of their jobs. It tried to create an exclusively Polish society. Jews could only travel to Palestine/Israel. Some Jews remained under the radar, and some even continued to work for the government.

Following the fall of Communism in 1989 there’s been a revival of progressive and Orthodox forms of Judaism, the latter thanks to Lubavitch influence. A Jewish community center now exists in Krakow and Warsaw. Security is tight at Jewish venues, up to a strip search level. Few Muslims live in Poland. Katka Reske’s fascinating book, *Return of the Jew: Identity Narratives of the Third Post-Holocaust Generation of Jews in Poland*, explains why it’s difficult to answer the question “how many Jews currently live in Poland?” [She spoke to JGSGP in March 2014, see *Chronicles*, Vol. 31-1). About 40,000 admit to being Jews. Some have belatedly found out that they are Jewish.

The translation of about twenty Jewish-themed books into Polish during the first five years after Communism indicated a major attitudinal shift. “Memory work” is a contemporary phenomenon spurring the restoration of synagogues and cemeteries in even the tiniest towns; the objective is to restore the Jewish presence in the minds and memories of local inhabitants. Krakow’s annual Jewish Culture Festival is one of the best known cultural events in Poland. You need to book reservations months in advance for this event usually held in late June or early July. All this activity demonstrates how much the perception of Jews and Judaism has changed in the past twenty-five years, since the downfall of Communism and its replacement by a new Polish government.

The 38th IAJGS International Conference on Jewish Genealogy, co-hosted by POLIN, the Museum of the History of the Jewish People, and the Jewish Historical Institute, will take place in Warsaw, Poland from August 6-10, 2018: <http://www.iajgs.org/blog/iajgs-2018-in-warsaw/>

In building and conceptualizing the museum some very dedicated Poles worked conscientiously to accurately portray the significant role of Jews in overall Polish culture. As Steinlauf stated, “There is no Polish history without Jews.”

Check out the following three short video clips. ❖

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JpREpVFHr_c (Rainer Mahlamaki, the architect talking about the building)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zkfk06W5-A>

(Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett taking about the core exhibition, launched officially in 2014. It is divided into several distinct historical periods and ends with 1989. It can take a week to go through all the galleries.)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MMlbhLIIqFg>

(Re-creation of the roof of the Gwozdziec wooden synagogue)

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Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Philadelphia

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Dues are for the calendar year, January 1-December 31, 2018.

(New members joining after September 30, 2017 receive membership benefits through December 31, 2018.)

Contributions and dues are tax deductible within the limits of the law.

What are the most important surnames and their associated ancestral towns that you are researching?
Provide up to three surnames, towns and current countries which will later be shared with other members.

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JGSGP CALENDAR & REMINDERS

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

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

Look for information about other IAJGS member societies:

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

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



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://jgsgp.org>) and our Facebook page (<http://tinyurl.com/jgsgp>) for complete and up to the minute program information.

Sunday, November 19, 2017 1:30 pm

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

“A New Way to Share Family Memories-Re:collection”

Speaker: Josh Perelman



The National Museum of American Jewish history recently launched Re:collection, <https://www.enwoven.com/recollection>, an easy-to-use online and mobile experience that makes it possible for you to collect and share your personal stories and family memories representing the past, present, and future of Jewish life in America. Learn how NMAJH developed Re:collection and how it can serve genealogists' efforts to preserve family memories for generations to come.

An article in the September 28, 2017 Philadelphia *Inquirer*, <http://www.philly.com/philly/news/jewish-american-museum-philadelphia-story-sharing-digital-family-recollection-20170928.html>, used JGSGP member David Mink's family to promote this new program.

Josh Perelman is chief curator and director of exhibitions, collections, and education at the National Museum of American Jewish History, where he oversees the museum's core exhibition, special exhibitions, educational programs, digital projects, and artifact collection. Throughout his twenty years in museums and public history, he has been motivated by the intersections of storytelling and design, and has dedicated himself to presenting history, culture, and art in meaningful and unexpected ways. Josh directed and served as chief curator for the landmark core exhibition that inaugurated the new building NMAJH opened on Independence Mall in 2010. He recently curated “1917: How One Year Changed the World,” “Richard Avedon: Family Affairs,” and “To Bigotry No Sanction: George Washington & Religious Freedom,” and served as co-curator and book editor for “Chasing Dreams: Baseball and Becoming American.” Josh holds a dual Ph.D in Jewish studies and American history from New York University .



Check out the *NEW*, modern, mobile, friendly JGSGP website for details on upcoming events, and material of interest.

***Yasher koach* (kudos) to Joanne Grossman for her tireless and diligent work over several years studying other genealogical websites, learning from the best and bringing our new website to life this past month. You'll find the site easy to navigate, modern and clean with valuable information on our activities, contacts, genealogical links and resources.**

Thanks also to Jim Meyer who updates the site to keep us all on top of JGSGP activities, resources and events.

Deadline for submission of articles for our winter issue is Sunday, December 17, 2017

Please send material to: editor@jgsgp.org.