

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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Quiz #14 Answer:
Many Philadelphians of that era assumed he was born Jewish. Some online biographical sources tell us "Mayor Bernard Samuel was born of Jewish parents, but converted to the Episcopal faith as a young man" (Wikipedia). (See Page 25 for the story told by this census.)
The 1900 census shows that this assertion is at best, only partly true. Bernard's father, Samuel, was evidently a Jewish cigar maker of English origin, born in (or all places) Australia. I bet there's an interesting story there. However, his mother was named Christina Streeton, and Christina's father John Streeton (Bernard's grandfather) was born in Pennsylvania in 1825 - probably not Jewish on that side.

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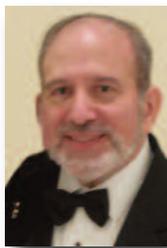
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REFLECTIONS FROM YOUR CHRONICLES TEAM



Norm Katz recommended the film, "Aida's Secrets," in his report about his experiences at the recent IAJGS conference in Orlando (Fall 2017, Vol. 34-3, p. 17). Based on his endorsement I made a beeline for the Ritz at the Bourse to catch the movie during its very limited run here in Philadelphia.

This documentary revolves around two brothers, both Holocaust survivors, who were reunited after being separated for sixty-five years. The older brother grew up in Israel, while the younger was raised in Canada. The film follows their search for the identities of their parents and uncovers some long-hidden secrets.

I was profoundly moved while watching the story unfold, especially when the brothers first meet each other at the airport. Despite their many years of separation, they were both visibly overcome when they reunited, a scenario I've witnessed as a result of my genealogy research. The blood connection is extremely powerful. If you have the opportunity to see this film, run, don't walk, to the theater!

We don't always undergo such emotionally laden experiences when we uncover significant clues through our research, but when they do occur, they are extremely compelling and memorable. I believe our goal should be to create as many vivid moments as we can.

I recently read a captivating account by Esther Levy-Chehebar about her deceased grandfather. Her descriptions of him, both physical and personal, were so vibrant that I truly felt I knew this man.

... Grandpa Maurice owned and operated two children's stores in Philadelphia. The stores were called Children R Us; the 'R' was forward facing so as to avoid legal action, while simultaneously duping customers into thinking that they were shopping at a (considerably discounted) Toys Я Us enterprise. This was the type of loophole Grandpa Maurice had grown deft at maneuvering.

A man of great taste and swagger, Grandpa Maurice spoke five languages fluently, chief among them Arabic and English. I'm convinced that had the legal team of Toys Я Us

come after him, they'd leave more than slightly buzzed and scratching their heads over how they wound up enjoying dinner and a cigar with the very man they had planned on sabotaging only two hours earlier.

For nearly 10 years, my grandfather, father and his younger brother David made a daily 110-mile commute to Philadelphia from Midwood, Brooklyn. . . My father would park the van in a discounted lot on Market Street and together, always together, they'd ride the elevator down to ground level. This is how they found themselves, three tubby Egyptian men, riding the "stand-up coffin" with two female strangers. The space was so tight that "Uncle David was practically corkscrewing the lady in front of him," but not tight enough that Grandpa Maurice abandoned the cigar that hung from the corner of his mouth. After he realized that moving his arms was too difficult, given the circumstances, Grandpa simply let the cigar dangle from his lips, inhaling from the left and exhaling out of the right corner of his wet mouth. With a gold chain suspended from his bronzed neck and the opaque aviator sunglasses that he wore everywhere but outside, Grandpa Maurice looked like the Middle Eastern incarnation of Tony Montana.

The air in the elevator became clouded with smoke. "Excuse me, sir, do you mind?"

One of the women pivoted the 10 degrees the elevator would allow to face my grandfather. Blue in the face, she continued: "Sir, there is no smoking in the elevator. Sir."

My grandfather inhaled deeply, and with an accent thicker than the smoke itself, proclaimed, "Lady, your perfume, it's *keeling* me! But I don't tell you nothing."

http://www.tabletmag.com/jewish-life-and-religion/248958/my-grandfathers-foul-medemes?utm_source=tabletmagazinelist&utm_campaign=45743098b6-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2017_12_06&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_c308bf8edb-45743098b6-206893405

I realize that a vibrant description like the one above could only be written because Levy-Chehebar knew her grandfather first hand, but achieving as high a level of poignancy that we can when we develop our respective stories is a goal worth aspiring to.

I recently was inspired to delve more deeply into my own family history while learning more about the vast resources that NARA provides. One step led to another, and somehow I found myself perusing the citations for various relatives who held patents. On a lark I entered a different relative's name and found it linked to a 1945 patent for a tire inflation guard "to safeguard the personnel and others against possible injury or death in the event of a failure of a tire carcass to hold the air pressure which is fed into it." This was apparently an example of necessity being the mother of invention because this relative owned Belmont Body Works, a company which manufactured bus chasses in Newark, New Jersey.

This unexpected tidbit of information added a whole new dimension to the story of this distant relative and enriched my understanding of who he was. I never knew him personally, but he now became a more concrete personality, more than just a name associated with various vital records and a manifest.

In addition to our usual monthly meeting summaries, we present two stories about multi-generational family businesses. The first focuses on longtime companies located at Philadelphia's famed Fabric Row. The second deals with Rochester Formal Wear, located on the New Jersey side of the Delaware River. Thanks to our regular tech contributor, James Gross, we present an article about collaborative networking. Ted Bainbridge shares information about an update on the Find-A-Grave website, and JGSGP member, Michael Levin, introduces a fairly new website called the Tsal Kaplun Foundation archive. David Brill asks us to examine a 1900 census record about a Philadelphia notable in the latest JGSGP quiz. I'm always amazed how he conjures up these brain teasers! ❖

Evan Fishman, Editor

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Winter 2017-2018



As I write this message we are celebrating Hanukkah. This is the season of gift giving and showing our family and friends how we appreciate them. I would like to thank Evan Fishman, Ed Flax and everyone else that is responsible for putting this great publication [*Chronicles*] together on a regular basis. I am sure you, the readers, gain much helpful research information and enjoy the stories of genealogical success. I would also like to especially thank Mark Halpern, Barry Wagner, and Susan Neidich for their work in keeping the society moving forward. And thank you Joanne Grossman for spearheading the development of our new website.

I would be remiss if I didn't thank you, our JGSGP members, for your continued involvement. By attending our monthly meetings you demonstrate the effectiveness of our programming. Many of you have participated in various projects over the years which have resulted in new databases that help the research efforts of the general genealogy community. Please sign up for future projects.

I continue to speak to various groups about how to research their families. I get positive feedback about my talks. As a result we get people interested in their family history, and hopefully they will join the ranks of our membership.

Next August IAJGS' conference will be held in Warsaw, Poland. I have roots in Poland and Galicia as well as many of you. This will be a great opportunity to visit your ancestral shtetl, do research in Poland, visit the new Polin Museum of the History of Polish Jews and various sites in the area. I certainly plan on attending. ❖

Fred Blum, President



**WE EXTEND A WARM WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST MEMBER
& HIGHLIGHT SOME SURNAMES & PLACES HE IS RESEARCHING**

Stuart Bogom

Bogom, Bogomolny, Wiseman, Busakovich
from Sokoufka/Justingrd, Ukraine/Russia

Philadelphia, PA

Vidumsky, Zoubitsky from Shanghai, Tientsin
China

GENERATIONS COLLIDE ON FABRIC ROW

by Theresa Stigale

(Abridged from the original which appeared in June 2016)

<http://hiddencityphila.org/2016/06/on-fabric-row-pushcarts-and-posh-boutiques-weave-history-with-vitality/>

Note: In the spring of 2016 Theresa Stigale interviewed vendors who currently operate businesses on Fabric Row and interwove descriptions of the stores with glimpses into the family histories behind them.



Philadelphia's Fabric Row on 4th Street contains nearly all of the city's fabric shops in one concentrated stretch between Bainbridge and Catharine Streets. At its peak, from the 1930s to the 1960s, the famed textile corridor supported about 30 fabric dealers. Today only ten remain. The shops still in business have been family-owned for two, three, and even four generations. But many stores have closed for lack of a successor, declining health, and increasing competition from low cost wholesalers and Internet retailers. However, the remaining scope of goods and services is impressive enough and worth hours of my time this spring as I set out to report this story. . . .

The continued decline of family owned fabric shops is inevitable, that is a material fact. Eventually Fabric Row may indeed become just "Fabric Block" with only a small handful of textile stores still holding on. For now, the blend of old and new businesses makes for a vibrant commercial corridor with a history still firmly rooted in place with many new stories yet to unfold. Here are profiles of only some of the merchants along South 4th Street.

FABRIC STORES

Paul's Draperies | 737 South 4th Street



Harold Paul takes a seat inside his drapery shop
Photo: Theresa Stigale

If you look up and to the right when walking into Harold Paul's drapery shop you will see a tea-colored wedding portrait of his parents taken in 1919. "They are wearing clothes that they really couldn't afford back then, and resorted to rent the formal attire from the photographer himself."

Paul is a second generation fabric shop owner, married to his wife, Sylvia, "my true love and the most important VIP in store" for 68 years. Paul's father started with a pushcart 76 years ago, the origin of many original fabric shops on 4th Street that eventually moved their business to a storefront when they could afford to buy or rent. His family lived above the storefront when he was younger. The second floor is now devoted to the store's workshop.

"The shops were really busy back then and many stayed open until nine at night or later," says Paul. Merchant neighbors became close friends and socialized after closing up for the day.

Saturday nights were festive and everyone would take turns hosting dinner parties. Everyone brought cooked food to share and stayed to play cards.

Paul is a drapery specialist. He sells materials and fabricates custom draperies for residential and commercial use. There are no sequins or fancy notions to be found here. "Restaurants, office buildings, schools, hotels and even the many windows on cruise ships need their materials to be flameproof and also washable," says Paul.

Regarding the transition of Fabric Row, Paul acknowledges change is afoot. “You can’t really depend on the walk-in trade anymore,” he explains. “There is a lot less traffic with fewer fabric stores.” However, business is good at Paul’s Draperies. Paul beams with pride as he shows the “thank you” letter he received from the crew of the latest Rocky movie, *Creed*, filmed in Philadelphia in 2014. Paul was contracted by the designers to make the draperies for the movie’s sets. He has also made draperies for Woody Allen films that were shot in Boston and Baltimore.

His inventory remains focused on selling drapery materials. Prices start at around \$5 per yard, but can easily exceed \$150 per yard and more for woven materials. Silks start at about \$30 per yard. Recently a customer needed draperies to match an antique bed he acquired in England. “High-end materials like that order” go for up to \$250 per yard wholesale, with a 50-yard minimum (not including about \$1,000 for shipping).

Fleishman’s Fabrics and Supplies | 749 South 4th Street



In with the old and the new. Fleishman’s Fabrics and Supplies has been on Fabric Row for over 90 years.

Photo: Theresa Stigale

Fleishman’s is a go-to spot for material, embellishments, and related clothing supplies. It’s also a popular shop with crafters, teachers, and art students. It is one of the few stores left that dedicates an entire room to menswear fabric for suits. The shop was founded 90 years ago by Stanley Fleishman’s father who opened it as a men’s fabric wholesaler. Stanley and his wife Tricia run the store alongside their son Joshua and loyal, long-time staff.

The spectacle of color greets the customer as she walks the aisles brimming floor to ceiling with material and trimmings.

Fleishman’s also sells supplies to dry cleaning stores like hangers, plastic wrap, and tickets—basically everything



they need to operate their business. With overseas competition for those types of inexpensive bulk goods, the business has shifted more toward supplying fabric to bridal shops and designers at every level.

Trish Fleishman talks about the changing shape of textile retailing and how the economy affects her family business. “About twenty years ago I recognized a trend in more hand-made accessories like belts, jewelry, and handbags. Call it the Etsy effect. I started slowly introducing more items to sell to crafters like studs and spikes, leather pieces, and pocketbook hardware. This helped the store stay in business during some leaner years.”

Trish Fleishman and her husband keep the torch burning at Fleishman’s Fabrics and Supplies | Photo: Theresa Stigale

Jack B. Fabrics | 748 South 4th Street

Sherie Abrams’ parents, Jack and Rose Blumental, founded Jack B. Fabrics 30 years ago. Today, Abrams works in the shop alongside her mother Rose and her daughter Jamie in one of the brightest and most organized shops on the Row, rebuilt after a fire in 2013.

“We sell everything, from ‘dress to drape’,” says Abrams. Along with fabrics the store carries thread, zippers, elastics, spandex for bathing suits, velcro, and upholstery plastics for protective slipcovers for couches and chairs a la 1970.

The shop was busy one recent Monday afternoon with customers buying drapery fabric and young women shopping

for prom gown embellishments. Abrams explained that some teenagers might order a gown from overseas, but when it arrives they discover that it's too small. Sizing in other countries can vary with U.S. sizes and teenagers often stop by desperate to salvage their purchase and make it work with more materials.

Much of the fabric business is predictably seasonal. The late winter and spring season are devoted almost entirely to bridal and prom materials at Jack B.'s. Abrams' suppliers tell her that Philadelphia is one of the biggest cities for custom-made prom dresses and gowns. Some teens and their mothers start shopping for materials as early as January. Summer brings demands for outdoor cushions and the fall and winter holidays are busy with customers looking to redecorate for company with fresh upholstery, draperies, and table cloths.



Sherie Abrams showing wedding gown lace to a customer at Jack B. Fabrics
Photo: Theresa Stigale

When the Abrams' store caught fire three years ago, in a blaze that claimed the life of Philadelphia fire captain Michael Goodwin and devastated other nearby businesses, the Abramses had to consider whether to stay open. With a strong resolve to move forward, the Abramses rebuilt and moved back into their family's original location. The business moved across the street for a year and half while the store was remodeled. Their temporary home was the former location of Sherie's grandfather's shop, the well-known Silk Leader. According to Abrams, her grandfather's store was so jammed packed with bolts of fabrics that customers could not enter. "He would take the orders out on the sidewalk then go inside and dig it out." So full of fabric was his shop in the 1930s that he expanded his business with a pushcart in the Italian Market to handle the overflow demand. He operated the cart until 1985 and sold full bolts of fabric, not just remnants .

PUSHCARTS AND PLACEMAKERS

Joel Spivak



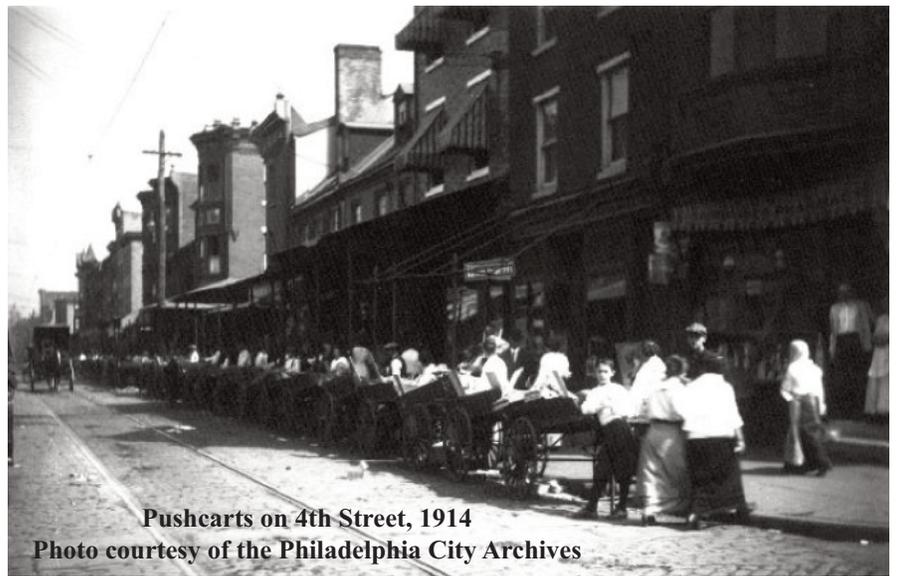
Joel Spivak in front of an original pushcart | Photo: Theresa Stigale

Spend any time with local architect, historian, activist, and author Joel Spivak and you may conclude that he is the most interesting man in the city. The former owner of Rocketships & Accessories at 623-625 South Street has boundless energy and a passion for the city's history, especially when it comes to historic preservation, vintage trolleys, and old Philadelphia hot dog stands.

One of Spivak's projects is curating a rotating display of Philadelphia artifacts and documents in a storefront window at 703 South 4th Street. Known for vintage typewriters filling the storefront's windows on one side, the property owner (and Spivak's friend) gladly gives him unlimited curatorial

authority over the window to share his love of local Philadelphia history and how it relates to Fabric Row.

Spivak's grandparents were Philadelphia Jewish immigrants thus he feels a strong connection to the Fabric Row. He even owns one of the last real pushcarts, which is on display in the shop window of Maxie's Daughter. "This cart is from the late 19th century and was made in Philly," says Spivak. The cart was used on either 4th Street, one of the other open air curbside markets on South 7th Street, or Marshall Street near 5th and Girard. "I know of only three Philadelphia pushcarts that still exist," says Spivak. One sits out front of Maxie's Daughter and another is placed in the store's window. The other is a pushcart used by early 20th century wholesale produce distributor Michael Levin that is on display at the Independence Seaport Museum. [see *Chronicles*, Vol. 34-2, Summer 2017, pp. 10-12]



Pushcarts on 4th Street, 1914
Photo courtesy of the Philadelphia City Archives

Michele Palmer

Michelle Winitsky Palmer is preserving memories of her father Louis Winitsky's fabric shop at 724 South 4th Street, where she and her family lived until she was four. Her Fabric Row project, "Philadelphia's Fabric Row: The Pushcart Years 1905-1955," opened on June 23 [2016] at the Philadelphia History Museum at the Atwater Kent. "The exhibit shows how different world events affected 4th Street," says Palmer. "I'm including many materials and photos from old family archives."

Pushcarts varied in size and uses. Most were three-by-four feet with wheels and some were used to wheel down to the docks on the Delaware River to pick up produce to sell in the Italian Market. "The pushcarts basically sold all types of dry goods," says Palmer. "About half of the carts sold produce and other food such as canned goods. The other half sold curtains, notions and trims, and fabric remnants."

Palmer also met with merchants in 1997 and 1998 capturing oral histories of 4th Street, some of which are available at her online museum dedicated to the history of Fabric Row. (http://fabricmuseum.org/South_Fourth_Street.html)

Palmer's father, along with his partners Phil Morgenstern and Max Rapoport, were "jobbers," or wholesalers, who operated both Winitsky & Company, a retail store, and Win-Tex Fabrics, a wholesale shop. With the two businesses, Michelle says that "They were able to sell to everyone, the household customer and also bigger customers such as decorators."

Note: Other long time business profiled in this article were Maxie's Daughter (724 South 4th Street) and B. Wilk Fabrics (801 South 4th Street). ❖

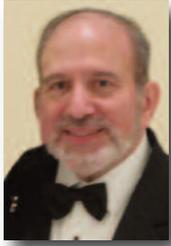
Theresa Stigale was born and raised in Southwest Philly. She earned a B.B.A. from Temple University in 1983. Theresa is a photographer as well as a licensed Pennsylvania Real Estate Broker, developer and instructor. In the past ten years, she has documented the loft conversion projects that she and her partners have completed in Philadelphia, from stately old abandoned warehouses covered with graffiti to vintage factories, some still active with manufacturing.

Visit her web site at TheresaStigalePhotography.com.

ROCHESTER FORMAL WEAR- NOW IN ITS FOURTH GENERATION

by Evan Fishman

(This is a composite of two articles—one in the Camden *Courier-Post* (November 12, 2006), the other in the Philadelphia *Inquirer* (January 30, 2007)—that marked the 100th anniversary of Rochester Formal Wear.)



In 2006 Rochester Formal Wear, currently located on Route 38 in Maple Shade, New Jersey, celebrated its centennial. According to one of its current proprietors, Richard Levin, a multi-generational business is “the ultimate in advertising—that you are the person giving them service, and your family has been doing it for generations.” It is the rare retail business that survives 101 years under any ownership, but Rochester Formal Wear has been in the same family from the time Great-Grandmother [Rebecca] Silverman, mother of six children, started selling surplus clothing to growing families out of her home at 299 Kaighn Avenue in Camden.

Rebecca passed the business on to her daughter, Fannie, and son-in-law Herman Levin from far-off Philadelphia. Their five children in turn grew up in the business, helping around the shop. Son, Leonard Levin remembered, “I started working when I was 5. I loved it so much I decided I’d never stop.”

Following a hitch in the Army, he came home in 1947 and immediately started working. He bought 10 tuxes and started renting them out at the store. In 1955, Leonard and his sister, Ruth Levin Levine, moved to a big new headquarters on bustling Airport Circle in Pennsauken [N.J.]. Leonard handled men’s formal wear (both sales and rentals), while Ruth ran the bridal operation.

The business popped like a champagne cork. During prom season the Levins slept on the counters. “I was a hustler,” Leonard recalled. “When I went to Hong Kong, I’d order 2,000 dozen shirts.” Leonard’s son, Richard, [now 62], recalled putting on matching, wine-colored tuxes for his brothers’ bar mitzvah at the glamorous Latin Casino in 1963. “That was back in the day when people really dressed up,” he said. But attire grew more casual over the years and the market for formal wear softened.



Leonard Levin-3rd generation &
Herman Levin-2nd generation



In 2004, Rochester relocated to its third location, in a 4,500-square foot store—coincidentally all locations were situated along Kaighn Avenue and its extension, [N.J.] State Route 38. The brothers [Stan and Richard] said that’s enough space to offer tuxes from size 2 to 80, as well as multicolored vests, hats and accessories ranging from Mason’s cuff links to silk ascots. “We like to work but we aren’t workaholics like our dad. Richard said. “This is a great size for us.” The current location bears the Silverman-Levin family stamp, from the photos of the generations on the wall to the million-hour weeks to the chatting up of every customer, especially repeat ones, coming in the door.

Nick Denofa is one of those repeaters. He is the jazz band director at Pennsauken High School. . . who was in for his usual dozen or so tuxes for the band’s winter concert. “There are franchises in our business, but there are still lots of



Stan & Richard Levin (4th generation) at the present location--2006

people like Nick who want to be remembered from year to year,” Richard Levin said, “so there is room for a store like ours.”

Family Dynamics

It’s not as if there’ve never been family problems in the business. For the first 40 years the first and second generations of the family lived upstairs over the Camden store. That meant, if you were a Silverman child, you could not avoid working, even when you wanted to play. The other children were liberated when Fannie married Herman Levin, whom Stan Levin [now 67] called a “barker.” “You know, he stood on South Street just barking for a store, “Hey, come on in. Get a suit,” Stan Levin said. “He was perfect for the business.”

Originally, Leonard Levin partnered with his brothers, Myron and Melvin, after World War II, but Melvin had a yen to go out on his own, starting his own formal wear firm, the Ritz, about 10 blocks away in Camden, at Broadway and Pine Street.

“My father would go into a school and try to wrap up the prom business, and then Melvin would go in and try to undercut him. They were very competitive,” Richard Levin said. Soon after Leonard Levin moved Rochester to Route 38 in Pennsauken near the Airport Circle, Melvin Levin moved Ritz a few miles east on Route 38 in Maple Shade. He died [in 1991] but no one in his family wanted to take the business over, and it closed.

Todd Millay, executive director of the Wharton Global Family Alliance, which studies family business, said it took a special set of circumstances for a business to last four generations. “Part of it is the nature of the particular business. You wouldn’t have a four generation business of buggy whips these days,” Millay said. . . . Things that have a big change in scale or are candidates for globalization don’t usually make it. . . .

“But it really relies on talent, be it in employees or the families themselves,” Millay said. Each family business has been successful, he said, because they have done things properly. Each generation has to learn that.

“Richard Levin commented, “We just learned from our dad. He had us folding cummerbunds and bagging tuxes every Saturday. . . . I just loved the way my father did life. He was in here until the week he died [in December 2006], sitting in a chair and telling customers what they should buy or rent. He always said: ‘I love to work, and I work to live,’ which is what I feel.”

“We’re not retiring just yet, and we have low overhead. We own our building, and we have good inventory, so we are still well-positioned,” Richard Levin said. “Best of all, we get along. I am into marketing, and Stan is into making sure we pay the bills.” ❖

Sources:

- Smith, Eileen. “Rochester Marks 100th Anniversary.” *Camden Courier-Post*, November 12, 2006, pp. 1D-2D.
 Strauss, Robert. “Unusual Longevity.” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, January 30, 2007, pp. C1, C6.

GENI AS A COLLABORATIVE NETWORKING TOOL

by James Gross, MLIS



Those of you who have been working on your family trees are probably well aware of paid genealogy websites for collaborative networking. This may be a relatively new idea for others. In this article, I am going to briefly discuss some of the advantages of placing your tree in an accessible location and making your tree, and yourself, available for contact.

I have a copy of my tree on Ancestry, Geni, and MyHeritage.¹ The advantage of having membership with one or more of these companies is that you can add your tree or names to the site and send messages to other tree owners. In terms of size, Geni appears to be the largest, claiming that it has over 112 million profile entries.² Your research will benefit when you use the online commercial genealogy websites because they enable you to connect with other users who are tracing common lines. They also serve as a location where you can find family documents and photos.

While I can understand the reluctance of some genealogists to pay annual fees to for-profit genealogy websites, the ability to place a copy of your tree online, look up names, compare trees, and contact users does have its advantages. I have had the most success in locating relevant trees and responsive users on the Geni website. As one other Geni user noted, “We have discovered family members who we didn’t know existed and have fun getting to know them.”³

I have had less success in contacting users on MyHeritage. Nevertheless, I do find it useful to check the MyHeritage website as its list of family entries is easy to read. I also use the Ancestry member directory on occasion. I advocate checking all three websites to see if anyone has posted a tree with mutual ancestors. You’ll find these sites great for checking on common family lines, family photos, documents, and ancestral information.

To illustrate my point, I will discuss a recent breakthrough, courtesy of a message from a Geni user.

I have a copy of my family tree on Geni. One of my most extensive tree lines is Friedman. It contains a number of Israeli branches, including Chaya Gitel Jacobson (Friedman). Several members in this family have Hebrew sounding surnames which have been loosely transliterated into English with variations in spelling.

Chaya gitel jacobson (Friedman)  
Hebrew: חיה גיטל יעקובסון (פרידמן)
Gender: Female
Birth: January 1, 1900
Jerusalem, Jerusalem District, Israel
Death:

I was thrilled to discover that I'm possibly distantly related to Israel's first chief rabbi, Rabbi Avraham Kook.

Reb Chaim Yehuda Jacobson  
Hebrew: חיים יהודה יעקובסון יעקובסון
Gender: Male
Birth: estimated between 1867 and 1927
Immediate Family: Son of Abraham David Jacobson and Sara Neshia Jacobson
Husband of Chaya (Friedman) Jacobson
Father of rafaël yehuda jacobson ; rafaël yehoshua Yacobson ; zvi Yacobson ; yochovet lider (jacobson) and avraham Yacobson
Brother of Reb Sholem Naftali Aharon Jacobson ; Esther Leah Eisenbach (Jacobson) ; <private> יעקובסון יעקובסון ; Chana Shnitzer (Jacobson) and Liba Rashke Jacobson

A woman named Sarah sent a message to me via Geni.

I replied that the combination of surnames, Jacobson and Lider, appeared among the immediate family members of Reb Chaim Yehuda Jacobson who is part of my larger Israeli Friedman family.

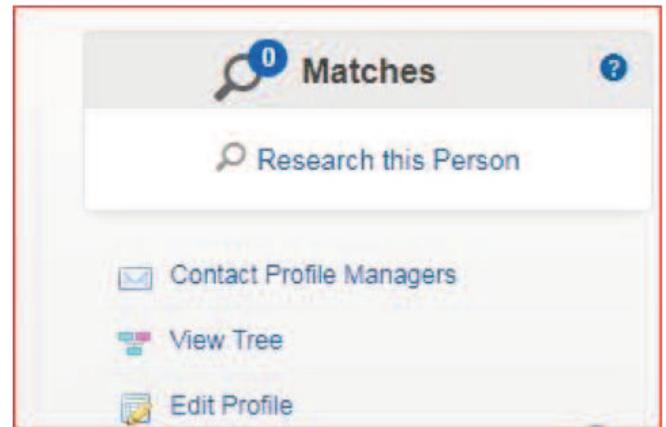
In fact, the Friedman family is part of my Saidel family, which is one of the major branches within my grandfather's family.

Apparently Sarah is related to one of Reb Chaim Yehuda Jacobson's siblings. I later discovered, by looking at the Geni profiles, that there were six siblings, five who became adults.



When I had time, I looked at Sarah's tree, noted her mother, Tziporah (Jacobson) Rosenberg, and carefully looked at her grandfather, Reb Sholem Naftali Jacobson. Then I saw that Sarah had also listed a prior generation. Reb Sholem Jacobson's father was listed as Abraham David Jacobson. I looked at my existing tree and saw that exact name in my notes, written in pencil, as being the father of my relative's husband, Reb Chaim Yehuda Jacobson. Thus, I had identified my relative's husband's siblings.

Geni allows users to click on the research button; suggestions for possible matches then pop up. I clicked the "Research this person" option within Geni and was forwarded to the MyHeritage paid website. In turn the MyHeritage search engine listed several names based on its matching criteria. My lack of success with MyHeritage, is probably due to a number of factors, the primary one being the language differences of transliterating Hebrew names to English. Nevertheless, I continue to make incremental advances in my research, primarily thanks to my usage of the Geni website.



While this article focused on the positive aspects of using Geni, that website does have a few negative issues. It's challenging to search within Geni due to its inability to handle partial name searches. I believe that searches by wildcard are also not possible, and, I am unaware of a soundex or other reverse search capability. My Hebrew speaking relatives often have names which don't always translate precisely into English language names. I found it necessary to be very precise when typing in my name variations.

In closing, be aware that you may be able to break down or bypass a brick wall in your research by placing your tree on a collaborative genealogy website such as Geni, MyHeritage, or Ancestry. ❖

References:

1. Ancestry is located at www.ancestry.com; Geni is located at www.geni.com; MyHeritage is located at www.myheritage.com
2. Brooks, Amber, (Aug 2017). "Geni: A Genealogy Website With Over 11 Million Users Discovering Where They Came From in a Worldwide Family Tree," retrieved Dec 2, 2017 from: <https://tinyurl.com/geni-2017>
3. Ibid, Brooks, Amber. (2017). Retrieved Dec 2, 2017 from: <https://tinyurl.com/geni-2017>

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

FIND-A-GRAVE HAS CHANGED

AN UPDATE ON THE FIND A GRAVE WEBSITE

by Ted Bainbridge, Ph.D.



On 8 November 2017 www.findagrave.com changed. Some changes are cosmetic, while others are functional. A map feature has been added. The home page has become a photograph with a few menu selections across the top. That page is dominated by the search panel, which functions largely as it did in the past and with the same options for every search box except those related to location.

The old search panel specified location via pull-down lists for country, state, and county. The new search panel offers a single box for location, in which you are supposed to type the name of a place. As you begin to type a city, county, state, or country that box auto-fills with suggested place names which you can select with a mouse click. Use the American English equivalent of a country name; Germany works but Deutschland doesn't.

The new home page's menu bar goes across the top of the screen. Clicking CEMETERIES takes you to a page that lets you hunt cemeteries in either of two ways. Near the top left of the page is a search box where you can type a cemetery name. This auto-fill box works as above. When you select a name, you see a hit list of cemeteries with that name. Each entry on the hit list displays some facts about that cemetery, and a link to its information page. That page contains a search box that you can use to hunt for a person's name.

Instead of using that cemetery-name search box, you can use the cemetery-place search box to its right. Clicking a place name produces a map of cemeteries near that place. You can zoom the map in or out, and can pan it in any direction. (If the map doesn't display any marker pins, zoom in.) After a name is in that search box, clicking Search leads to a hit list of cemeteries near that place. Use this hit list the same way you use the other cemetery search box. ❖

Ted Bainbridge is a ninth-generation Pennsylvanian. Every immigrant ancestor he has identified settled immediately in Pennsylvania and stayed here for the rest of their lives. Ted was an Army officer, taught math and science in public schools, was an auditor and corporate financial executive, and taught accounting and financial management in colleges. He earned his Ph.D. from the University of Iowa. Ted has been a genealogical researcher, teacher, speaker, and writer since 1969. He served as president of his local genealogical society and was on the staffs of two LDS Family History centers.

TSAL KAPLUN FOUNDATION ARCHIVE

[HTTPS://WWW.TKFGEN.ORG/](https://www.tkfgen.org/)

by Michael Levin



The third wave of Jewish migration to America started after the year 1880. For the next forty years more than one million people came from the Russian Empire to the U.S. Today the descendants of this wave are looking for their roots.

Researchers use www.jewishgen.org (JewishGen) as their main resource for searching the history of their families. JewishGen is getting files from many individual researchers using the Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People (CAHJP). This process is very unpredictable because nobody knows where data are kept. Miriam Weiner collected a lot of information about the content of archives of the Former Soviet Union (FSU). Unfortunately, she stopped her useful work.

Currently there are several issues that adversely impact the archive business in the FSU: different access rules, dependence on state and local administration, poor support of archives, personal attitude of archive's staff.

Tsal Kaplun Foundation tries to maintain the heritage of Jews from the former Russian Empire and FSU. One of its projects is ARCHIVES, which consists of three parts:

1. Reference to online archives websites;
2. Inventory of documents, kept by a local archive;
3. Open source, the collection of files (most in pdf format)

REFERENCES

People need to know Russian or the local language in order to use most of the online search engines. Only a small part of those archives is presented on JewishGen.

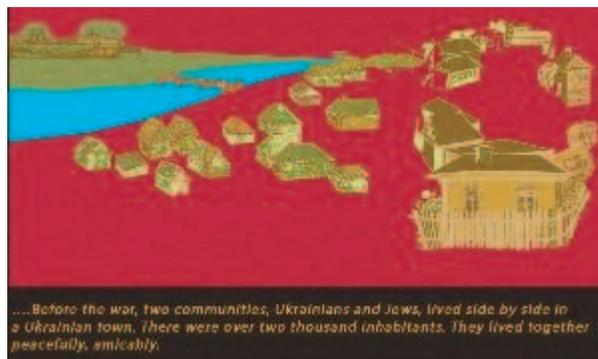
INVENTORY

The various archive inventories are sorted by republics and cities. The fastest growing part of this project is Ukrainian metric books from different local archives: https://www.tkfgn.org/inventory_archives.html

SIGs (Special Interest Groups) of JewishGen continue to translate, index, and publish documents from different archives. Today researchers can view the result of these efforts if they contribute annually to those specific SIGs.

OPEN SOURCE

This project began after Alex Krakovsky, a young genealogist, started to publish a list of Jewish documents held in the Kiev State archive. He scanned more than 300 files and provided viewing access through Ukrainian Wikipedia. Tsal Kaplun Foundation then translated all descriptions so researchers can look at the real documents: https://www.tkfgn.org/archives_alexkrakovsky.html



Artwork by Moshe Heman

All JGSGP members are welcome to participate in the continued growth of this project! ❖

Michael Levin began working on his family tree in 1961 when he was fourteen years old. A refusenik, he and his family immigrated to the U.S. from Leningrad, U.S.S.R. in 1988 after waiting eight years for government permission to leave.

After retiring In 2013 from his position as a professional IT specialist at the University of Pennsylvania, he activated his genealogy research. Two years later Michael organized a trip to Ukraine, where more than half of his relatives were killed in the Holocaust. The documentary, "The Road to Krasnostav" was produced as a result of this trip. The film (with English subtitles) was a winner at the Jakarta International Film Festival.

Two years ago, Michael became a co-founder of non-profit organization – Tsal Kaplun Foundation, which preserves the heritage of Jewish people from the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union.

He is a member of JewishGen and the Ukraine, Belarus, Lavinia, and Bessarabia SIGs.

PENNSYLVANIA RAILROAD VOLUNTARY RELIEF DEPARTMENT



Special Collections Research Center (SCRC)

The SCRC is the principal repository for and steward of the Libraries' rare books, manuscripts, archives and University records. SCRC makes these resources available to a broad constituency as part of the University's engagement with the larger community of scholars and independent researchers. Although collections at the SCRC with genealogical content are limited, genealogists engaged in family history research about relatives who lived and worked in the Philadelphia area, may find some of the organization records in our collection useful.

Pennsylvania Railroad Voluntary Relief Department

The Pennsylvania Railroad (PRR) Voluntary Relief Department was established in February 1886 as a sick and death benefit plan for railroad employees. It was funded by the company and by voluntary contributions made by employees. Death benefit case files generated by the Voluntary Relief Department and held by the SCRC, are available for years 1902 to 1968, with the bulk of the files dated after 1923. There is a gap in the mid-1930s through the early 1940s for which there are no case files available. The case files are arranged by death date and include files for employees who were born as early as the 1840s. Membership in the plan was voluntary, so not all PRR employees will be documented in these case files. The case files are not limited to employees who worked in Philadelphia or Pennsylvania, but include employees from all PRR divisions/regions who voluntarily enrolled in the program.

Case file documentation varies, but may include an application to join the program, information on the employee's role including division, occupation, etc., contributions made to the fund, health information, names of beneficiaries and benefit amount, correspondence, and a copy of the employee's death certificate. SCRC staff can search the PRR Voluntary Relief Department death benefit case files with the full name of a deceased employee and death date. Reproduction services are available. Contact the SCRC for more information.

Research Requests

The SCRC reading room is located on the ground floor of Temple University's Paley Library and is open from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. Due to the unique, rare, valuable and often fragile nature of the items in our collection, the use of these materials often requires advance notice for retrieval which can be done online using your SCRC Researcher Account <https://temple.aeon.atlas-sys.com/logon>

For general inquiries or questions about setting up your SCRC Researcher Account email scrc@temple.edu or call (215) 204-8257. ❖

Thanks to Jessica M. Lydon, associate archivist at SCRC, for sharing SCRC and previous PJAC items with Chronicles.



**Rosetta A. Beck case file, Voluntary Relief Department,
Pennsylvania Railroad Records**

**Image courtesy of Special Collections Research Center,
Temple University Libraries, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania**

A YAD VASHEM DISCOVERY

This is a true story that must be read

When a train filled with a large transport of Jewish prisoners arrived at one of the Nazi killing centers, many Polish gentiles came out to watch the latest group as they were taken away. As the disoriented Jews were gathering their possessions to take with them into the camp, a Nazi officer in charge called out to the villagers standing nearby, "Anything these Jews leave behind you may take for yourselves, because for sure they will not be coming back to collect them!"

Two Polish women who were standing nearby saw a woman towards the back of the group, wearing a large, heavy, expensive coat. Not waiting for someone else to take the coat before them, they ran to the Jewish woman and knocked her to the ground, grabbed her coat and scurried away.

Moving out of sight of the others, they quickly laid the coat down on the ground to divide the spoils of what was hiding inside. Rummaging through the pockets, they giddily discovered gold jewelry, silver candlesticks and other heirlooms. They were thrilled with their find, but as they lifted the coat again, it still seemed heavier than it should. Upon further inspection, they found a secret pocket, and hidden inside the coat was a tiny baby girl!

Shocked at their discovery, one woman took pity and insisted to the other, "I don't have any children, and I'm too old to give birth now. You take the gold and silver and let me have the baby." The Polish woman took her new "daughter" home to her delighted husband. They raised the Jewish girl as their own, treating her very well, but never telling her anything about her history. The girl excelled in her studies and even became a doctor, working as a physician in a hospital in Poland.

When her "Mother" passed away many years later, a visitor came to pay her respects. An old woman invited herself in and said to the daughter, "I want you to know that the woman that passed away last week was not your real mother ..." and she proceeded to tell her the whole story. She did not believe her at first, but the old woman insisted.

"When we found you, you were wearing a beautiful gold pendant with strange writing on it, which must be Hebrew. I am sure that your mother kept the necklace. Go and see for yourself." Indeed, the woman went into her deceased mother's jewelry box and found the necklace just as the elderly lady had described. She was shocked. It was hard to fathom that she had been of Jewish descent, but the proof was right there in her hand. As this was her only link to a previous life, she cherished the necklace. She had it enlarged to fit her neck and wore it every day, although she thought nothing more of her Jewish roots.

Some time later, she went on holiday abroad and came across two Jewish boys standing on a main street, trying to interest Jewish passersby to wrap Tefillin on their arms (for males) or accept Shabbos candles to light on Friday afternoon (for females). Seizing the opportunity, she told them her entire story and showed them the necklace. The boys confirmed that a Jewish name was inscribed on the necklace but did not know about her status. They recommended that she write a letter to their mentor, the Lubavitcher Rebbe *ZT"L*, explaining everything. If anyone would know what to do, it would be him.

She took their advice and sent off a letter that very same day. She received a speedy reply saying that it is clear from the facts that she is a Jewish girl and perhaps she would consider using her medical skills in Israel where talented pediatricians were needed. Her curiosity was piqued and she traveled to Israel where she consulted a Rabbinical Court (Beis Din) who declared her Jewish. Soon she was accepted into a hospital to work, and eventually met her husband and raised a family.

In August 2001, a terrorist blew up the Sbarro cafe in the center of Jerusalem. The injured were rushed to the hospital where this woman worked. One patient was brought in, an elderly man in a state of shock. He was searching everywhere for his granddaughter who had become separated from him.

Asking how she could recognize her, the frantic grandfather gave a description of a gold necklace that she was wearing.

Eventually, they finally found her among the injured patients. At the sight of this necklace, the pediatrician froze. She turned to the old man and said, "Where did you buy this necklace?"

"You can't buy such a necklace," he responded, "I am a goldsmith and I made this necklace. Actually I made two identical pieces for each of my daughters. This is my granddaughter from one of them, and my other daughter did not survive the war."

And this is the story of how a Jewish girl, brutally torn away from her Mother on a Nazi camp platform almost sixty years ago, was reunited with her Father.

Source: Yad Vashem

IN THE SWAMPS AND WILDERNESS OF NEW JERSEY FIFTY YEARS AGO

by Moses Freeman

This is an abridged version of the article, translated from the original Yiddish by Mark Alsher

Note: Moses Freeman was among the original settlers of the agricultural colonies centered in Alliance in 1882. He wrote this memoir around 1932.

Jews in Russia at that time looked around and saw that their economic and political situation in the Russian valley of tears was lost, all played out.

The call went out across the land, Jews, Jewish children, save yourself, everyone however he can. Emigrating, fleeing the Russian hell, was the only way. Two lands called to the Jewish emigrant, America and Palestine.

Two streams formed at that time of emigration, Palestine with a land poor, desolate and abandoned in appearance, but full of idealism and national hope, and the second is the young and rich, full of possibilities, America, which drew the Jewish immigrant from eastern Europe like a magnet!

In Odessa the "Am Olam" was founded with the aim of settling on the land in America and to realize the long sought wish to become productive and to live as other peoples, from their own toil. . . .

After a stormy three-week trip on the ship from London, I, along with a group of many Jewish families, *luftmentshn* [individuals who are more concerned with airy intellectual pursuits than practical matters like earning an income], former brokers, shopkeepers and innkeepers, all from Odessa, arrived safely on the 10th of May, 1882 in New York and landed in the then famous Castle Garden.

As stated, we traveled here under the flag of the Am Olam's second party transport, with the sole purpose of settling here on the land as the first colony of Jewish farmers in the area of Vineland, New Jersey.

The first stage of the resting place for us privileged Am Olam people under the protection of the Jewish Agrarian Society was Ward's Island or, as we called it then, simply the Island. On that island there was also a mental hospital and jail houses. There we rested from the difficult and long journey on land and sea! In the month of June, soon after *Shvues*, [Shavuot] we received the good tidings that we would soon be setting off for the promised land toward which we had set our eyes and where we expected to find our "rest and possession," rest and our own home.

We came to the blessed land of swamps and wilderness and angry, poisonous mosquitos on a hot, burning afternoon and we, Odessers, found inhabitants who had been there for a few weeks. These were a group of agile and clever Yelizavetgraders. They, the Yelizavetgraders, had snatched the birthright; they were older than us by an entire three weeks!

A mile away from the Broadway Station (today the station is called Norma), we fell into a deep and thick forest of high growing pines and solidly built oak shade trees! By the road, sandy and narrow as a ditch, the new settlement stretched out in two large gypsy tents. These were the "tents of Kedar," the tents which served as a temporary home for over 50 Jewish families, husbands and wives, fathers, mothers and their little children. All of us together in these tents, as we called them then, lived communistically-Jewishly. As far as I remember, no damages happened in those tents. In the morning, everyone found himself whole, undamaged, except for blisters and red wounds which the mosquitoes left overnight in remembrance of the redemption, a sign of hospitality to the new, future citizens of the land!

. . . .

Jewish Hands Turn a Desert into a Garden of Eden

The main center of the settlement was Alliance, half of the area. Alliance now includes *Broytmansville*, [Brotmanville, NJ] more an industrial collective than farming, which was founded later, when Alliance was already settled. The majority of the colonists were in Alliance. Approximately 40 families were settled there. The second largest settlement was about two miles further from the center. This was a low, sandy and swampy place by the dried up stream which had once cut through this sandy desert and had left deep, dry canals overgrown with wild bushes and small trees. Seventeen families settled here, the outspoken radical Odessa element of the colonists.



Coming from the Synagogue Brotmanville NJ

Source: Digital Collections of the Center for Jewish History

The settlement later became known as "the Seventeen," among whom the writer of these lines had the misfortune to receive his lot and become a householder. The third and smallest settlement of six families, was lost on the way between Vineland and Rosenhayn, closer to Rosenhayn. The entire settlement of the three Jewish colonies was founded and supported by a committee of New York and Philadelphia philanthropists as well as by Mansion House Relief Committee of London. . . .

We had to go through the wringer until we managed to arrange for the monies for sowing and other implements such as fertilizer, hiring a horse for plowing and tilling the sown fields, would go directly to the colonists instead of applying to the Leach Brothers who were actually the owners of the entire stretch of sand, forest and bushes for which they received good money from the Committee, and the German American Mr. Sternberg with the fat cigar in his mouth from Hartford, Connecticut. He was the land expert who, for a good commission, bartered away the sandy New Jersey desert to the Committee of New York Jewish philanthropists for a cheap price. But it did not come about easily. The

colonists were forced to send a delegation to New York to present the demand that the money for sowing be given to them directly. And so it was. Very close to planting time, yours truly with a committee of five was sent with full authority to deal with the Committee in New York.

The authority to deal with New York was signed by approximately 50 colonists, the pioneers of the three settlements of colonists, and these are their names. Many of them are no longer among the living.

M Taff	L. Kumanov	Al. Abramowitz
M. Ludwig	B. Bitzkov	Simcha Temnik
H. Cherkasky	M. Greshnik	D. Horowitz
M. Reziner	D. Makadenko	Y. Abramowitz
L. Britshk	Y. Rosenfeld	M. Lavinsky
R. Luly	A. Levin	M. Savitzky
M. Bezman	A. Berman	M. Shtraznik
M. Dorfsman	Z. Kalinovitz	Avrohom Shepetovsky
Sh. Gershkovitch	Sh. Yankelevitch	Zalman Saluntshik
A. Reikin	H. Levin	L. Persky
Y. Budnik	Y. Apatshinsky	Chaim Menes
Y. Berlin	P. Taltchinsky	M. Persky
Y. Lerner	A. Zilverman	Y. Yudelevitch
Y. Wechter	H. Kaltun	and Moses Freeman.
A. Katz	A. Grutzky	
Y. Liberman	Y. Rosinsky	

. . . The delegation in New York was successful and 30 dollars was given directly to each colonist to use to provide themselves with seed, fertilizer for the soil and to hire a horse and plow to plow and sow the land of about five acres of cleared land with vegetables, white and sweet potatoes, beans, peas, tomatoes and other products for the table for eating. . . .

By the second crop, there were far fewer who were involved with land work. The farmers and their grown children took to the shop. Some worked making clothes and some in the cigar factory which the committee had set up in the center among the forty families. The first crisis in the life of Jewish farmers in the New Jersey colonies came about. . . .

In this article, it will suffice to say that after the first crisis in Alliance many colonists left their farms and went to the city to work in the shop or to peddle in the street with fruit or dry goods. I myself, after I had suffered for two years in the bushes and suffered hunger and cold, gave back my deed to the "Leaches," left the house and the well and the land and from the Leach brothers for all of this two years' work received 10 dollars cash with which I traveled to the state of Maine and worked there in a wool mill for nine dollars a week 11 hours a day. As stated, many farms remained empty and abandoned after the first failure on the land.

Between the 80s and 90s of the previous century, a fresh stream of wanderers set out from eastern Europe who made their ideal in life to settle on land. Be that as it may, in a short time, the abandoned farms, especially those of the 40 families in the center, were straightaway taken over by the newly arrived immigrants from Russia, Poland and Galicia.

Among the new immigrants to Alliance, the idealist in whose house in Odessa the Am Olam was founded came and made his home. This is the enlightened scholar and nationalist Shneur Bailey, the father-in-law of the two doctors Samuel Yofe and Maxwell Herman. When speaking of the old residents of the Jewish colonies, I cannot pass without recalling the recently deceased pioneer and founder of the settlement Moyshe Bayuk, the father of the Bayuk children, cigar manufacturers.

The deceased Moyshe Bayuk was a remarkable and great personality. During his life, Bayuk was the first and foremost, the head and the paragon of the Jewish settlement all around. Himself a great scholar of Talmud and Kabbala, an enlightened man and philosopher, he lived all fifty years here with the colonists. He suffered here in the early times, lost two wives during his lifetime, and at the end of his days, with the financial help of his wealthy children, he wrote and published a large book in five parts called "Toyres Moyshe" (the Teaching of Moses). He was a world scholar and for many years the judge of the area, justice of the peace. May he rest in peace. . . .

And now they celebrate, the second or perhaps the third generation with the few Mohicans who still remain alive, the 50th year jubilee since the Jewish colonies of Alliance, Norma, Rosenhayn and Broymansville were founded. The old, the remaining pioneers who encountered an empty desert with swamps and wild forest and who still remember the gypsy tents and the communal kitchen, when now the land for miles around has, by Jewish toil, been turned into a paradise of magnificent, beautiful and comfortable homes with gardens and entire stretches of cultivated land with fruit trees and green lawns which grab the eye and delight the soul of every visitor. . . .

"He who works his land shall be sated with bread" the wise King Solomon said in his Book of Proverbs. That is, whoever works and cultivates his land is sure to eat his fill of bread. The call in the city should be: "back to the earth, to the land!" ❖

NOVEMBER MEETING SUMMARY

by Ed Flax



Josh Perelman, chief curator and director of exhibitions, collections, and education at the National Museum of American Jewish History, was the featured speaker at our November meeting. He discussed the NMAJH's recently launched Re:collection resource, <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. We learned how NMAJH developed Re:collection and how it can serve genealogists' efforts to preserve family memories for generations to come. ❖



re:collection

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RECOLLECTION.NMAJH.ORG

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NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AMERICAN JEWISH HISTORY
A Smithsonian Institution Affiliate

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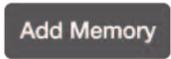
RECOLLECTION.NMAJH.ORG

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Visit recollection.nmajh.org.

Click **CREATE MY ACCOUNT** or **EXPLORE PROJECT**.
You will be asked to create a simple log-on.



Then, either add one memory to one of our public Community Projects...

Click the **ADD MEMORY** button. From there you will see a number of different types of content you can upload. Follow the instructions to add a picture, video, audio recording, text, or pull from social media.

Join the Re:collection community and become an invaluable contributor to the ever-evolving tapestry of American Jewish life.



...or start your own personal Project.

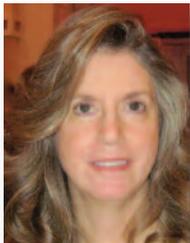
Click the icon in the upper right-hand corner of your screen and select **PROJECTS** to return to your home screen. Then click the large **CREATE A PROJECT** button. Add as many files as you want and share with your friends and family.

Questions? Email recollection@nmajh.org

Ed Flax is the graphics and art editor of "Chronicles." Among other surnames, he is researching FLAKS in Ukmerge, Lithuania and SILBER in Orla, Poland. Contact Ed at ejflax@gmail.com

DECEMBER MEETING SUMMARY GENEALOGY IN THE ROUND

by Linda Ewall-Krocker & Marilyn Mazer Golden



Linda



Marilyn

Mark Halpern introduced our Genealogy in the Round session which we hadn't conducted in several years. "Come and share a genealogical success, brick wall, or tip. We all learn from one another. Who better to consult with than other folks researching the same geography, the same records, the same issues? We have a lot of expertise amongst our membership."

A. Unable to find passenger records for great grandparents although he has arrival dates from a family tree.

SteveMorse.org – Steve Morse excels at databases and found most sites too laborious. He designed more user-friendly interfaces for a multitude of other databases. Ellis Island is his claim to fame. Through his interface, you can narrow it down to search for only Jewish passengers, a specific year, etc. Likewise for Castle Garden. Check there for passenger lists. Join Ancestry.com for fourteen days or a month in order to access the Ellis Island database. Use the gold form. Do NOT assume your relatives came in through Ellis Island; there were many common ports of entry, including Canada, Baltimore, and even Pier 52 in Philadelphia. One JGSGP member spent a few hours searching at the Family History Library in Salt Lake City and found a few pages of ship records that hadn't been scanned into the digital records, and was thus able to find his family.

B. A new retiree just started genealogy and couldn't believe what she was able to find in the past week, including her original last name. Tips:

- Names could have changed from Yiddish to Americanized forms after immigrants arrived., i.e. Mueller(?) = Miller; Portnoy could be Taylor; Gittel became Gela, Goldie, or Gertrude, Yaakov = Jacob or Jack, Itzak = Isadore or Irving, etc.
- Misspellings and transcription errors frequently occurred.
- Passenger records contain the original names. Name changes occurred at the time of naturalization.
- Check FamilySearch.org for the Port of Philadelphia entry cards.
- You can also search Philadelphia immigrant bank records (Blitzstein, Rosenbaum, Rosenbluth) for savings accounts used to bring relatives to the U.S. (Records are at Philadelphia Jewish Archives, but you can search online or search index on JewishGen.org)
- Ancestry.com also has "Jewish Name Variations."
- Also searching for a relative who lived on a farm in the Neshaminy Valley. Check records at the Bensalem Historical Society. KI (Reform Congregation Keneseth Israel) has an extensive library of farm school records as does Delaware Valley College.

C. There are reasons for doing research with DNA testing, but we may need to be careful about the results.

You never know who might fall out of the tree genetically. FamilyTreeDNA has the largest collection of Jewish records. Endogamy is a real problem. If two men marry two women from the same families, their children could actually show up as siblings, and unless people who test fill in the names of ancestors and towns and post a tree, their matches are useless.

GedMatch.com is a great service where you can upload your raw (autosomal) DNA results from any service in order to compare DNA with people who have tested on another service.

FamilyTreeDNA will accept testing from Ancestry for about \$14.00.

Ancestry is now embroiled in an issue in which a woman of color was not identified as such, yet other DNA companies correctly identified her African heritage. Ancestry claimed that their labs are overwhelmed. This isn't surprising with all the advertising they've been doing.

D. Several of one member's relatives were raised in an orphanage. She cannot find her great grandfather's naturalization or death records.

Suggestions:

- Look for marriage records.
- Where was her great grandmother buried?
- Work backwards and laterally to search for clues.
- Orphan records for New York City may be found at Steve Lasky's www.museumoffamilyhistory.org. Their researchers went to all Jewish cemeteries in the New York City area. The site includes surname lists.

Allan Jordan often posts at JewishGen's digest offering to search for records at specific New York City repositories for a very nominal fee. Contact him at aejordan@aol.com. New York State also did mid-decade censuses that can be very helpful.

Some resources:

- ItalianGen.org has databases of New York City marriages and other records.
- Brooklyn Daily Eagle has archives online.
- JGS of New York (City) has a list of cemeteries in the New York area, and some have online databases.
- JewishData.com – look to see if they have what you need.

E. Name changes occurred through the courts; the naturalization process was one such opportunity.

In Philadelphia name changes occurred at the Court of Common Pleas or in federal court.

F. Another member looked for a grandparent in the voting records for Bessarabia (now Ukraine).

She found an engagement/wedding photo, but no further information. Suggestion: Check the Russian Consular Records Index and Catalog (author Sallyann Amdur Sack) at NARA (National Archives Records Administration) in Northeast Philadelphia. (Patrick there is very helpful). National Archives in College Park, Maryland is also very helpful. JGSGP owns this book which lists names and numbers in the index. They have information from different ports which enables you to get to the specific records which are in Russian. Contact Russian consulate (there are branches in major cities all over the country). Another possible source is HIAS records.

G. How long does it take for naturalization records to be made available to the public?

The latest anyone could remember was 1949, but NARA could answer this question. Around war times, people needed to prove if they were American. Aliens used to have to register annually until they were naturalized. Green cards replaced “alien registration records.”

H. Obituaries are sometimes a good source of other family members’ names, which may include maiden names.

When you can’t find someone, look for Yiddish names.

I. Joseph Fisher died in 1929 from internal injuries when hit by a truck in front of 4111 Sterling St. in Philadelphia.

No record of this in newspapers! Check: Temple University Urban Archives and HSP (Historical Society of Pennsylvania) which has past issues of the Philadelphia *Public Ledger*, a popular newspaper at the time, amongst its holdings.

J. Recommended software:

- Using **Family Tree Maker**, Fred Blum was able to record the contact information of all the relatives he met at a family reunion. They disappeared when he upgraded to a newer version, and he feared they were lost. (Features of the newer version: you can insert email addresses, phone numbers, etc.; family color coding, like that found in Legacy Family Tree, is available; you can sync with Ancestry, and link the tree to your DNA test.)
- **Legacy Family Tree**, just purchased by My Heritage – all Fred’s addresses were imported, and just needed a bit of clean-up.
- Others include **Roots Magic** and **Heredis**.

K. Additional Comments

- Another attendee shared a story about a trunk that was handed down through three generations of non-Jewish female relatives which revealed her grandmother’s name. Hopefully this will be a future story in *Chronicles*.
- Levy Cemetery, 8th & Chestnut Sts., the first Jewish cemetery in Philadelphia; now Mikveh Israel Cemetery.
- Philadelphia City Archives, located at 3101 Market St., is closed until September 2018.
- Brooke Schreier Ganz founded “Reclaim the Records” and is the first genealogist to successfully sue a government archive (New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene) for the return of records to the public. Her organization has indexed vital records.
- Marriages typically took place at the bride’s home, then the newlyweds lived with the groom’s family.

Note: The January meeting summary will appear in our spring issue.

Linda Ewall-Krocker has been interested in genealogy since the early 1980s, Among other surnames, she is researching WEISS in Kamyanets Podilskyy, Ukraine and GREENBERG in Odessa, Ukraine.

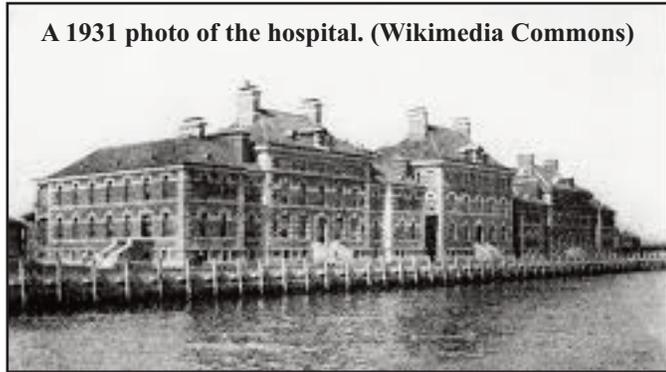
You can reach Linda at: cappuccinoholic@gmail.com

Marilyn Mazer Golden is a retired speech/language pathologist.

She enjoys helping others and can be reached at mazergolden@gmail.com.

Ellis Island. She took us west, past the areas open to the public, and opened a metal gate that we all passed through. “You are now in New Jersey!” she announced. (The island was the subject of a legal battle between the two states. In 1998, a court ruled that only about 17 percent of the island is actually New York ... but, alas for New Jersey, it’s the part where the museum is. New Jersey still gets a small portion of the museum’s concessions fees.)

Barbara explained that back in the day, the Ellis Island Immigrant Hospital consisted of 22 buildings spread over the southern part of the island. The built is manmade, constructed cavated during the building of system. During the hospital’s over 3,500 immigrants died dren—and 350 babies were born on Ellis Island was no bies were in limbo, at the mercy



area on which the hospital was from landfill and concrete ex-the New York City subway heyday, from 1902 until 1930, there—half of them chil-born. Barbara noted that being guarantee of citizenship. Ba-of individual decision-makers.

The United States’ first public-for its time: Doctors used fluo-sterilize mattresses, stressed the importance of healthful food and sunlight, and knew to isolate patients with highly communicable diseases from other patients. Ellis Island was one of the first places in the country to employ a full-time female physician, Dr. Rose Bebb, who could make anxious non-English-speaking women feel more at ease. Sadly, though, Ellis Island also used IQ tests designed (poorly) by eugenicist Henry Goddard, finding an extraordinary number of immigrants to be “feeble-minded.”

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sterilize mattresses, stressed the importance of healthful food and sunlight, and knew to isolate patients with highly communicable diseases from other patients. Ellis Island was one of the first places in the country to employ a full-time female physician, Dr. Rose Bebb, who could make anxious non-English-speaking women feel more at ease. Sadly, though, Ellis Island also used IQ tests designed (poorly) by eugenicist Henry Goddard, finding an extraordinary number of immigrants to be “feeble-minded.”

As you no doubt know, 75 percent of the immigrants who came to America at the turn of the century came through Ellis Island. Very few, however, wound up in the hospital. Steamship companies would have to pay for the return of sick passengers, so screening was careful before emigrants left the shores of their home countries. Still, one person in 10 was marked for additional medical screening. Doctors watched to see if the new arrivals could walk up the ramp from the ship and up the steps to the screening area without becoming winded. They looked for a limp. They looked for evidence of psychiatric disorders. They looked for asymmetrical faces and/or an inability to pass an incomprehensible IQ test as evidence of intellectual deficits. They looked for fungal infections of the skin like ringworm and favus. In the test that was scariest to the new arrivals, they used a buttonhook to turn eyelids inside out and look for trachoma, which in those days led almost invariably to blindness. (Sometimes, though, the busy doctors used their unwashed fingers to conduct eye exams. President Theodore Roosevelt visited in 1906 and recorded his dismay that “the doctors made the examination with dirty hands and no pretense to clean their instruments.” Soon, however, handwashing and the sterilization of instruments were the order of the day.) The tests were extremely cursory—usually taking no more than 30 seconds, since each doctor saw hundreds of patients a day. The purpose, though, was to determine who was healthy enough to work. America did not want gadabouts.

Only about 1 percent of the 12 million entrants were deported for medical reasons. (Of course, every immigrant claimed to know someone who was sent back; the threat was a huge source of foreboding and terror.) Somewhere between 2 and 10 percent of new arrivals spent time in the 750-bed hospital, but of those, 90 percent were ultimately allowed to enter the country.

The hospital’s own lifespan was short. In 1914, the year the complex was completed, over 10,000 patients from 75 countries were treated; as the United States started to crack down on immigration after WWI, though, demand for its services decreased. The hospital closed in 1930. For several years afterward, the FBI used the buildings as a field office; in the 1940s, military personnel were treated there for shell-shock with electroconvulsive therapy. In 1954, the Coast Guard, which had jurisdiction over the hospital complex, abandoned it entirely and left it to the elements. ❖



Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Philadelphia 2018 Membership & Renewal Form

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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.

Surname	Town	Country



JGSGP CALENDAR & REMINDERS

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

JGSGP is on the web at: <http://www.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, February 18, 2018 12:00 pm (note the early meeting time)

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

“Evidence Analysis: Which is the Right Record?”

Speaker: Rhoda Miller, Certified Genealogist



Utilizing the Genealogical Proof Standard (GPS), this presentation will demonstrate methods of looking at your research to find gaps as well as evaluate findings, especially those with conflicting evidence. Holocaust records will be utilized to support the GPS.

Rhoda Miller, Ed.D., CG® has been a certified genealogist since 1998 specializing in Jewish research and Holocaust studies. She is a past president of the Jewish Genealogy Society of Long Island (JGSLI) and continues her leadership as a board member. She led JGSLI’s project to produce the Arcadia Images of America book *Jewish Community of Long Island*. Rhoda volunteers as Litvak SIG’s co-coordinator of the Svencionys District Research Group, administers a Svencionys DNA group, and is webmaster of the JewishGen Kehilalinks Orlyta, Belarus website.

Sunday, March 25, 2018 1:30 pm

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

“The Jeckes in Israel”

Speaker: Anat Feinberg, Professor of Hebrew and Jewish Literature



Israelis call them “Jeckes” referring to those Jews who came to pre-state Israel from Germany after 1933. In my talk, I shall relate their emigration story and shed light on their contribution to social and cultural life. While at first Israelis tended to be critical about the Jeckes, over the past decade their image underwent a radical change. The talk will close with a short examination of the way the Jeckes have been portrayed in Israeli literature.

Anat Feinberg, born in Tel Aviv, is Professor of Hebrew and Jewish Literature in Heidelberg, Germany. She has published books and articles on Israeli literature and Jews in German theatre, and edited the modern Hebrew literature chapters in the revised edition of the *Encyclopedia Judaica*.

Check the *NEW!* society website, www.jgsgp.org for additional upcoming meeting notices for April through November 2018 and for more information about our society.

Deadline for submission of articles for our spring issue is Sunday, March 18, 2018
Please send material to: editor@jgsgp.org.