

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.

While email and other electronic files are highly preferred, the editors will be happy to work with you and your material in any form. If you have an idea, please contact Evan Fishman of the Editorial Board by email: editor@jgsgp.org or by phone at 856-667-2077.

SUBSCRIPTIONS - ADDRESS CHANGE

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Quiz #15 Answer:
Silesian-born Jewish optometrist, Sigmund Lubin, son of a successful ophthalmologist, turned his knowledge of lens craft into world's first movie mogul, with his own film production studio, "Lubinville," right here in Philadelphia at 20th & Indiana Sts.
At its height his company was turning out a movie a day. It was a flash in the pan, though. After a 1914 studio fire and other setbacks, the Lubin studio went out of business in 1916. So this former mogul went back to being an optometrist. He also had the dubious distinction of being one of the foremost early practitioners of film piracy. He was posthumously recognized for his contribution to the motion picture industry with a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

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Cover Photo: Ed Flax

Art installation by JR in the Ellis Island hospital complex (from photos in the Ellis Island archives). See article p. 14

REFLECTIONS FROM YOUR CHRONICLES TEAM



Genealogy research is undeniably addictive. I can't begin to count how many days (and nights) I've sat glued to my seat, my eyes affixed to the computer screen, foregoing food, and defying my body's urgent cries for sleep. 'The answer is around the corner! I just need to experiment one more time with the wildcards to unlock that Ancestry or Family Search door to reach the promised land! I will be rewarded for my diligence in just a few minutes.'

But what happens when the genealogy bug begins to infect others? Then it becomes truly contagious and exciting!

This past June my friend Richard visited the family plot in a Queens, New York cemetery. He photographed tombstones inscribed with different variations of the surname SCHOLNIK. Richard subsequently asked me to help him determine the identities and relationships of supposed relatives interred there. The only names he recognized were his paternal grandparents; three other names--K. and M. Rand and C. Steele-- registered vaguely. He wanted to be able to share this newfound information with his sisters who were due to visit at the end of July.



Richard Scholnik with sisters, Susan (left) and Nancy (right). Their grandparents' gravestone is on the left;

Oldest sister, Nancy, had sent him a copy of an 1895 photograph, the subjects of which were assumed to be their paternal grandfather, several of his siblings along with their spouses, as well as four young children. Their father, Lee Scholnik, had identified the family members twenty years earlier, and Richard assumed those identifications were correct. Subsequent research proved otherwise.



The only person Richard could definitively identify was his grandfather (Nechemie/Nathan, #1) based on other photographs he had seen. He was standing alone because he didn't marry until 1898. Lee identified one woman as Henche, the oldest sibling, who, according to family lore, had brought the others to the U.S. She stood on the far right (#2) with her husband sitting in front of her (#3), but Lee didn't know their surname. There was one brother (#4) who was reputed to have returned to Melnytsya-Podilska, Ukraine (formerly Mielnica, Galicia). One other couple was identified as Shimshon & Tsivia Scholnick (#5 & #6), and the third couple consisted of Dudya (Dawid) Scholnick and his wife, Feige (#7 and #8) with their four children.

Thanks to JRI-Poland, we were able to correct some of Lee's identifications. When I entered "Skolnik" and "Mielnica," we were rewarded with a treasure trove of 215 records! We learned by perusing them that Richard's grandfather, Nechemie, was one of eleven children born to Srul and Tema Szkolnik. We also were able to link each sibling with a corresponding birth year. Considerable further investigation yielded manifests for several siblings, which enabled us to confirm or refute Lee's identifications. It turned out that Shimshon (the brother reputed to be standing on the left, #5) didn't arrive in the U.S. until 1897 and didn't marry until 1902. Therefore, Shimshon and Tsivia couldn't be one of the couples in this photograph. Another sibling, Ojzer, fathered four children from 1888 to 1894 before immigrating that year, then fathered seven more children in Mielnica from 1901 to 1911. We deduced from these findings that Ojzer was the brother who returned to Galicia (#4).

We're going along with Lee's identification that Dudya and his wife (#7 and #8) constituted the couple sitting in front, but so far, we haven't been able to locate his manifest. We did locate a manifest for his wife, Feige, along with a five-year old daughter and a one-year old son, who arrived in 1889. We think Lena is the taller girl in the photograph (#9),

and Jacob Moses is the taller boy (#10). ‘Who were the other children?’

Thanks to a manifest of Hamburg departures we determined that Chaskel Scholnik immigrated in 1891. He and his wife, Sara Lea, are #5 and #6, and we think their son, Moses Leib, is #11. The youngest child is possibly Dudya and Feige’s daughter (#12) who could have been born after Feige’s arrival in 1889.

As mentioned earlier, Richard recognized the names K. & M. Rand during his June visit. By using marriage records, census records, Google and Genealogy Bank searches, we’ve been able to push ahead at least two generations for that branch and others. Richard has done a remarkable job of contacting strangers and introducing himself to them. One newly discovered second cousin, A. Rand, sent him a home movie taken by his father (M. Rand) around 1953 in Richard’s home town of Canton, Ohio. A. Rand, his family’s self-designated historian, asked Richard to help him identify the subjects in his father’s sixty-five-year-old movie. Richard was stunned when he recognized his childhood back yard and everyone gathered there—his three grandparents, his father, his uncle, both his sisters, and himself at two years old!

Slowly but surely the names on the tombstones were becoming “real” to Richard. In addition, his letter writing efforts have paid off handsomely. At this point he’s added at least thirty (!) new second cousins plus their children and grandchildren. In fact, Richard can now trace eight generations of one branch! More of this saga in the fall issue. Stay tuned.

Appearances can be deceiving. “MyHeritage.com” is mentioned in no less than three articles in this issue. No, we don’t have any stock in the company! These three articles demonstrate this tool’s many useful applications. Our “Discoveries” section offers a wide array of portraits: a young World War I soldier, a multi-generational family business, and an unconventional woman who was very involved in the women’s suffrage movement in the early 20th century. Arthur Rosenthol presents a step-by-step description of how he learned the current name of a Philadelphia street that seemingly no longer exists, while James Gross shows how to find additional, relevant family trees and establish connections with the new relatives who posted them.

I’ve heard some poignant stories from JGSGP members who attended this summer’s IAJGS conference in Warsaw, and I look forward to sharing these accounts in our fall issue.

We welcome submissions of articles. Everyone has at least one story to tell. Please send your material to editor@jgsgp.org. ❖ **Deadline for the fall issue is Sunday, November 11.**

Evan Fishman, Editor

WE EXTEND A WARM WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST MEMBERS & HIGHLIGHT SOME SURNAMEN THEY ARE RESEARCHING

Natalie Arost Philadelphia, PA
AROST (originally HARASTI), ROSENBLUM,
BLUM and EPHROSS.

Millie Gorson Bala Cynwyd, PA
SHULITZKY from the town of Khashchevata,
Gaysin, Ukraine; LISTERNICK from Slavuta, Vol-
hynia, Ukraine

Barbara Freedman Raleigh, NC

Robert Fuerman Lansdale, PA
WEISZ from Ungvar, Hungary; FEURMAN from
Michalovce, Hungary; FISHER from Tarnopol, Austria

Marlise Gross

Carole Slotsky Jenkintown, PA

Sylvia & Mark Wagman Wilmington, DE
FRYDMAN from Rodom, Poland; PEREL and KAS-
TEL from Zamosc, Poland; COHEN and ROSEN-
BERG from Pinsk, Belarus; GENDELMAN and
KRTAKAUER from Sosnowiec, Poland; GOLD-
STEIN and WAGMAN from Bogoria, Poland; TU-
NICK from Dnipro, Ukraine

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE ON SUMMER HIATUS

Fred Blum attended the 2018 IAJGS conference in Warsaw and will give us his report in our fall issue. We look forward to reading articles from Fred and some of our other JGSGP members who attended this conference and visited their ancestral towns and other genealogically interesting sites in Eastern Europe this summer.



We have a very special conference to look forward to in 2019, when the IAJGS gathers in the nearby city of Cleveland, Ohio, just a seven hour drive from our area.



I'm looking forward to visiting the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame while continuing to search for my roots. It should be a fantastic time. ❖

Fred Blum, President

A TRIBUTE FOR TWO SOLDIERS - PART II

by Joanne Grossman



Herman Rossman and Arthur Raphael Segall were young Jewish soldiers who lost their lives in World War I. This second installment will highlight Arthur Raphael Segall, my paternal grandfather's cousin.

A Facebook Discovery

On Memorial Day 2018, a Facebook friend shared a story that Bob McNulty (<https://www.facebook.com/PhiladelphiaStoriesbyBobMcNulty/>) had posted about six Philadelphia men who lost their lives in the last weeks of World War I and were buried in Flanders Field, Waregem, Belgium. The brief description of each man's life included pictures of their grave markers, home addresses, and birth and death dates. I saw the marker of a Jewish soldier, Arthur Raphael Segall.

**Pvt. Arthur R. Segall,
145th Infantry Regiment, 37th Division
Flanders Field, Waregem, Belgium
May his memory be a blessing.**



the manifest enabled me to identify and locate his birth record on JRI-Poland. This record established that Aron Segall was born to Chackel and Elka (nee Hercek) Segal of Chorzele, Poland. I also found Chackel and Elka's marriage record on JRI-Poland and discovered that Elka's mother was Ryfa Rajza nee Tejtelbaum. I was familiar with the surname Tejtelbaum since the Tejtelbaums in Chorzele had married members of the Freedman family. Arthur clearly belongs somewhere on my family tree and in the future, I will be doing more research to establish the exact degree of relatedness.

I am most grateful that Bob McNulty posted a tribute to Arthur and the other soldiers on Facebook, and I particularly must thank my Facebook friend for sharing this discovery with me. Without these clues, I would not have known about this relative's existence and sacrifice.

Genealogical revelations like this can come from unexpected sources. You just never know when or where you might discover your relatives! ❖

Joanne Grossman is a retired educator and is co-webmaster of the JGSGP website. She is researching; ROISMAN/ROJZMAN/ROSSMAN; KOIFMAN/KOYFMAN/KAUFMAN; PARKHOMOVSKY/PARCHOMOVSKY/PARCHOMOVSKY from Illintsi (Linitz) Ukraine; Dashev, Ukraine; Gaissin, Ukraine; Sitkovtsy, Ukraine; KOIFMAN/KOYFMAN/KAUFMAN from Tiraspol, Moldova; FRYDMAN, FINKELSTEIN, BOGDANER, KOPCARZ from Chorzele, Poland; Przasnysz, Poland; LEBDINSKY from Shpola, Ukraine; Novomirgorod, Ukraine. Contact Joanne at: webmaster@jgsgp.org

THE MESSINGER FAMILY OPTICAL BUSINESS 100 PLUS YEARS LATER!

by Marla Oxenburg Roth



As a follow up to a previous blog that was featured in *Chronicles*, I was asked by the editor to submit the history of the Messinger family's optical business in Philadelphia that continues today.

Because I have a passion for genealogy and DNA, I have re-connected to descendants of my Messinger family. Some third cousins of mine (and extended cousins) continue the family business. Through them, I have been informed and updated with further information. They have given me permission to use their names as well as business names.

As I mentioned in my previous blog, (<https://huggincousins.wordpress.com/2017/12/06/i-had-a-great-great-grandmother-living-in-new-york-the-sideways-search/>) my father had worked in this family business for a short period of time for his cousin (1C1R to be exact) Peter "Pete" Messinger in Philadelphia. Pete was his mother's first cousin. Here is my dad's 1942 World War II draft registration card showing his employment at Central City Optical Company and listing his Aunt Ida's phone number . My guess is that



REGISTRATION CARD (Men born on or after July 1, 1924, and on or before December 31, 1924)		FORM APPROVED Budget Bureau No. 33-8023-02	
(Also for the registration of men as they reach the 18th anniversary of the date of their birth on or after January 1, 1943.)			
SERIAL NUMBER W. 48	I. NAME (Print) Samuel NONE OXENBURG		ORDER NUMBER 12 279-v
E. PLACE OF RESIDENCE (Print) 2208 No. NATRONA ST. PHILADELPHIA, PENNA.			
(THE PLACE OF RESIDENCE GIVEN ON LINE 2 ABOVE WILL DETERMINE LOCAL BOARD JURISDICTION; LINE 2 OF REGISTRATION CERTIFICATE WILL BE IDENTICAL)			
3. MARITAL STATUS SAME			
4. TELEPHONE FRE 4015	5. AGE IN YEARS 18	6. PLACE OF BIRTH PHILA. PA.	
7. NAME AND ADDRESS OF PERSON WHO WILL ALWAYS KNOW YOUR ADDRESS (Aunt's House) OCT 6 1924 MRS. LENA OXENBURG (Mother) 2208 N. NATRONA ST.			
8. EMPLOYER'S NAME AND ADDRESS Central City Optical Co. 100 No. 10th St. PHILA. PA.			
9. PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT OR BUSINESS			
I AFFIRM THAT I HAVE VERIFIED ABOVE ANSWERS AND THAT THEY ARE TRUE.			
DSS FORM 1 (Rev. 11-19-42)		418-21829-4 (1722)	

his parents did not have a phone at the time. He was eighteen years old at time of employment.

The Messinger optical business had its original roots in New York, started by Pete's optician father, Joseph, my great grandmother's (Rebecca Messinger Kops) brother. As early as the 1900 census, Joseph's profession was listed as optician.

I heard the story from my cousins that Pete developed an eye problem and went to stay with cousins in California to recover. After recovery, the story is that Pete rode home on an Indian motorcycle, married Rose and settled in Philadelphia. I knew Rose as a lovely elderly woman living in Atlantic City, NJ and, with fondness, recall her sitting in her rolling chair on the Atlantic City boardwalk.



Here is a photo of Pete and Rose before they were married.

Another cousin that I connected with when I started a Messinger Family Facebook group, stated in a post that when Pete first settled in Philadelphia, he lived with the "artist" and his wife. That artist would be Samuel Spielman and wife, Ida Kops Spielman. Ida was the "Aunt" whose phone number was listed on my dad's draft registraton card . Ida was Pete's first cousin and my great aunt (sister to Lena, my dad's mother). So, the Kops family, already living in Philadelphia, is how Pete came to be a resident and set up shop in Philadelphia, expanding the family business.



I found several advertisements for this business in Philadelphia newspapers.

Pictured is the earliest one I located in The Philadelphia *Inquirer* in January 1925.



The business flourished and Pete (also an optician) seems to have been quite a philanthropist. Here is a clipping showing Dr. Peter Messinger sponsoring a Christmas dinner for the homeless in 1932 at his place of business on N. 10th Street.

The Philadelphia branch opened several years after the original New York City store, and today the descendants of Joseph and his sons, Peter and Benjamin, operate the family business in Pennsylvania and California.

From Nathan Messinger: "Joseph Messinger was my great grandfather. His son, Benjamin, was my grandfather. Benjamin's brother, Peter, started the "Philadelphia" branch of the Messinger family. Joseph, Benjamin, Peter, and many of their children and grandchildren were (and remain) in the optical business. My father Robert and his brother, David Messinger, had an optical business in Brooklyn for many years. Their father, Benjamin Messinger, took over Joseph

Messinger's original optical business ("Clark Optical") in Manhattan, and ran it until his death in 1940 (at age 40). My father and uncle worked in that business as young men until entering the military in 1941. I'm not certain what became of that business. In 1963, my dad started Stillwell Optical (my uncle joined him two years later) in Brooklyn and ran it until 1979. At one point they had several locations and a wholesale lens laboratory that served other opticians and optometrists around New York. That business closed in 1979 at the time of my father's death."

From another Messinger cousin, Judy: "My husband, Jay H Messinger, O.D., fourth generation optometrist practiced at Home Optical 1972-4. We then moved to Los Angeles, and he then began practicing in Compton, California forty-two years ago. He was recently honored as 'Optometrist of the Year' by the California Vision Foundation."

I also gratefully acknowledge the following information from my third cousin, Norma Messinger Meshkov, who provided the greatest detail on the Philadelphia history of this still thriving family business: "I can fill in some more meat to the Philadelphia area Messinger optical business story since we are still actively working in the optical field. Peter Messinger's sons, Milton (Mendy) and Daniel, continued the family profession and became optometrists in the 1940s and '50s. Mendy took over the office and lab at 103 N. 10th Street. until his premature death, and Daniel had a private optometry practice in North Philadelphia; together they continued to operate the wholesale optical lab.

Home Optical became Eyeland and then Philadelphia Eyeglass Labs, changing names but remaining with the original family. During the 1960s through the 2000s several more family members joined the business, and several more retail optical offices were opened in the Philadelphia suburbs and then throughout the Pennsylvania area. The family tradition has continued to the next generation: Mendy and Daniel's children are all still involved in the optical profession.

Scott Messinger, Daniel's son, currently owns and operates fourteen Eyeland Optical offices throughout Pennsylvania. Scott, whose other passion is dog rescue, has been honored for his hundreds of flights for Pilots and Paws.

Next generation: Scott's son, Brad Messinger, is president of Chester County Opticians.

Norma Messinger Meshkov, Daniel's daughter, currently operates five Philadelphia Eyeglass Labs locations in the Philadelphia city and suburbs. The flagship office and lab is still in Chinatown in Center City, around the corner from Peter Messinger's first office in Philadelphia, celebrating almost 100 years in the same historic district.

Craig Messinger, Milton's son, currently owns and operates Philadelphia Eyeglass Labs in Montgomeryville, PA."

Quite a history for my Messinger family and an honor for me to be able to share this! ❖

Marla Oxenburg Roth says "My lifetime passion has been genealogy and more recently, DNA discoveries." She is a member of JGSGP and Bucks County Genealogical Society. She enthusiastically studied genetic genealogy at GRIP (Genealogy Research Institute of Pittsburgh). She has held meetings at her local library to educate and assist others with their research and DNA questions. Convinced by a newly found second cousin to start blogging, she began writing stories about her research and discoveries. You can find her blog at <https://huggincousins.wordpress.com>.

Born in Philadelphia, with ancestors from Rajgrad (near Kiev) and Senyove, Russia; Krakow and Warsaw Poland; Bardejov, Hungary. Family names are SPECTOR, ZOHAN, SELZNICK, LONDER/LONDON, SAVAROFF, TULCHINSKY, OXENBURG, KOPS, MASLOW, MESSINGER MIRISCH, TASCHNER, FISCH, GOODMAN/GUTTMAN. From Czeřstochowa and Stopnica, Poland, family names are ROTH (originally ROTHOLZ), WEBER, METZGER, STOPNOICER, LUSTIGER, ZAJDMAN, BIEDERMAN, HONIGSBURG, KATZ.

UPDATES ABOUT MYHERITAGE.COM

Today's technology provides us with amazing tools that facilitate and enhance our research. The MyHeritage DNA organization is one of the companies that is actively involved in real-time applications.

Back in June, the "Today Show" broadcast a segment detailing how a 41-year old woman connected with her unknown birth father, thanks to a MyHeritage DNA test. I'm sure you'll be moved as much as I was by the reunion. Here's the link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nkUt3XupQdU>



Also in June, in response to the challenge presented by immigrant families that were separated at the Mexican border, MyHeritage took the bull by the horns with the following announcement:

We have just announced that, following the recent separation of immigrant parents and children in the United States, MyHeritage is expanding its pro bono initiative, DNA Quest — which helps reunite adoptees with their biological families through DNA testing — to help those parents who were detained at the US border reunite with their children. We are pledging 5,000 additional free DNA tests for separated parents and children who are interested in this opportunity.

For the DNA kits to reach the affected people, MyHeritage has begun contacting relevant government agencies and NGOs that are able to provide assistance with distribution of the DNA kits — to parents in detention facilities and to their children placed in temporary custody. MyHeritage is also calling the public to assist — anyone who can help with the distribution of the DNA kits and is in touch with the separated families is requested to contact dnaquestsupport@myheritage.com. The DNA results will be processed by MyHeritage and not shared with any third parties. To read more, click on <https://blog.myheritage.com/2018/06/myheritage-offers-free-dna-tests-to-help-reunite-separated-migrant-children-with-their-parents/>. ❖

FINDING OUR FATHERS

by Arthur Rosenthol

(Not to confused with Irving Howe's World of Our Fathers; The Journey of the East European Jews to America and The Life They Found and Made)



My mother's Philadelphia family came from Kamenetz-Podolsk in the late 1890s. I found them in the 1900 census, but I couldn't read the name of the street that they lived on. I knew it was near 2nd and Fitzwater because my mother told me she used to go to *shul* (Anshe Nezine) with her grandfather.

The census sheet listed the enumeration district as ED 62. Going to <http://www.stevemorse.org> I saw a gray box on the left that listed US Census as the third choice. Hovering my mouse over "US Census" opened a new box with many choices. I selected "1870 – 1940 Large City ED Finder."

Once the page loaded, I saw that it defaults to the 1940 census. However, there is a selection box on the top line where you

and entered German to find that it is now Fitzwater St.

PhillyHistory.org Historic Street Name Index

Search Street Name: german

Partial Matches: Falls & Germantown, Germantown, Germantown & Bristol, Germantown & Perkiomen, Germantown & Reading, Germantown Plank, Little German

Old Name	New Name	Year Recorded	Location	Currently Exists
German	Fitzwater	1897	2nd St. to Passyunk Ave., n. of Catharine St.	yes

Instructions:
• Enter a search term in the Street Name box and click the Find button. A list of streets that match your query will be shown.
• Select one of the streets listed. The list of name changes involving that street will be shown.
• When you click on a street name in this list, a new search is started with that name.

© Copyright 2001-2018 City of Philadelphia Department of Records. For comments and suggestions, please contact phillyhistory.org/support. This application was designed and developed by Azavea Incorporated.

Streets in 1900 ED 52-62 in Philadelphia, PA

4th S	German
5th S	Lawrence
Baxter Pl	Leithgow
Casberry? Ct	McMenamie? Pl
Catharine	Minervah Pl
Fitzwater	Queen
Fulton	

David Brill was kind enough to send me a map from <http://www.philageohistory.org/tiles/viewer/> of the 1875 Hopkins atlas. Philadelphia Geo History has maps from 1808 to 2015. Just click on the box next to the map you want, and zoom in to the area of interest. I found my grandfather's house on Nineveh Place, a small alley between 4th and 5th below Fitzwater. The whole block was redeveloped some time after 1900, and Nineveh Place no longer exists. ❖

A second generation Philadelphian, Arthur grew up in the Swampoodle and West Oak Lane sections of the city. A retired engineer, Arthur has been tracing his family for ten years. He still hopes to find out if his great grandfather was really a rabbi in Ostrog (now Ukraine) or just a teacher in the cheder (literally "a room") where young children were taught the basics of Judaism and the Hebrew language, in Europe and elsewhere).

He's searching for: LEITERMAN, APPLESTEIN and OPENCHUR, Kamenetz Podolskiy, Podolia; ROSENTHAL, Bielogrodka and Zaslav, Volhynia; FEUERSTADT, Ostrog, Volhynia; all in Ukraine.

NEWS FROM DANIEL HOROWITZ AT MYHERITAGE.COM

by Daniel Horowitz, Genealogy Expert

September 2018

I'm happy to announce another industry first from MyHeritage! We now support the upload of 23andMe v5 and Living DNA data files, in addition to supporting data uploads from all major DNA testing services, including Ancestry, 23andMe (prior to V5) and Family Tree DNA (Family Finder).

Since 2016, MyHeritage has allowed users who have already tested their DNA to upload their DNA data from Ancestry, 23andMe and Family Tree DNA. They receive DNA Matches and ethnicity estimates on MyHeritage for free. However, previously MyHeritage did not support the upload of tests based on the chip called GSA (Global Screening Array), now being used by 23andMe (v5), and by Living DNA. Recent improvements to our DNA algorithms now allow us to support DNA data processed on GSA chips, and so we now support uploads of 23andMe v5 and Living DNA data files.

Uploading DNA data to MyHeritage is fast and simple. For users that upload now, we offer full access to DNA Matching, Ethnicity Estimates, our industry-leading chromosome browser, and more, for FREE. Please see the full blog post here: <https://blog.myheritage.com/2018/09/new-myheritage-supports-23andme-v5-and-living-dna-uploads>. ❖

VISIT TO ELLIS ISLAND - JULY 2018

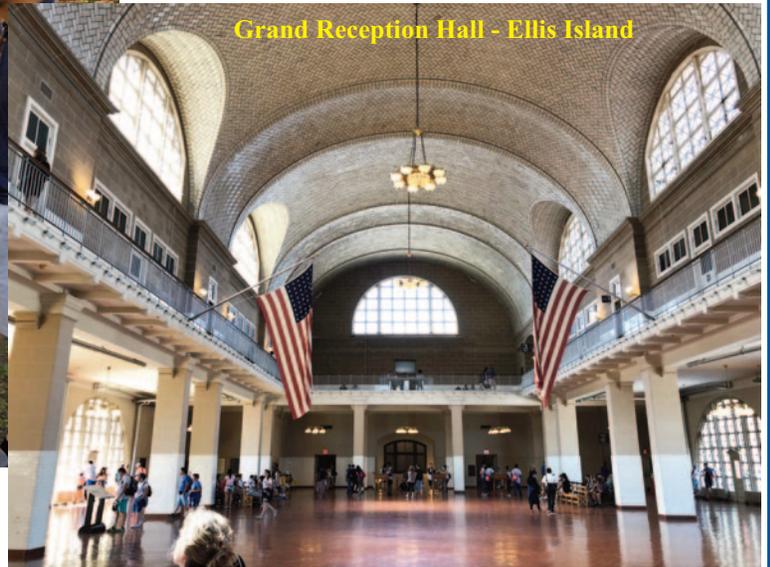
by Ed Flax



My wife, Dee, and I took a trip to Ellis Island at the end of July. While there, we visited the museum and also took the hard hat tour of the abandoned hospital complex not often seen by Ellis Island visitors.

The weather could not have been better, and the sights were wonderful. It is interesting that we probably spent more time there than our ancestors who passed through hurriedly, except for those women who were detained, while waiting for a husband or other relative to come pick them up and verify that they were not single women likely to become public charges i.e. prostitutes.

In the image below (left), you can see the old



hospital psychiatric ward. Note the cage on the outer door.

The hospital morgue is pictured below including eight, individual "storage" units at the left rear.



The image below is a collage of photos on the abandoned hospital walls and are part of an art installation by JR, (<http://www.jr-art.net/>) from photos in the Ellis Island archives. They are intended to evoke the feeling that this is not just an abandoned building, but a place where immigrants came to make an impact on our country.

Touring Ellis Island provides a poignant look into our country's past and present. A visitor would come away with indelible memories of what our ancestors looked and sounded like, based not only on the historical presentations, but also by examining the mass of all humanity from every corner of the globe that visits daily. Looking at and listening to the other people on the ferries is an education in how the world looks and what Americans of all races, nationalities, religions and creeds look like. ❖



Ed Flax, a longtime JGSGP member and "Chronicles" graphics editor has been studying his family for over twenty years. Surnames he is researching include: FLAKS, Ukmerge, Lithuania; BRIN, Kaunas, Lithuania; SNITKOWSKY, Thomaspol, Ukraine; SILBER, Orla, Poland; BASHERGLICK, Kamanyets-Podolsk, Ukraine; FRIMERMAN, Soroca, Moldova. His family tree can be found online at: http://www.flax.org/FamilyWeb/wc_toc.html

Contact Ed at ejflax@gmail.com

A SUFFRAGIST IN THE FAMILY

by Joe Eichberg, PhD



This is the story of Paula Jakobi, a first cousin of my great grandfather, Fred Eichberg, who led a rather colorful, not to say tumultuous, life. Paula was the daughter of Emilie Eichberg and Julius Oberndorf. Emilie was one of five daughters born in Stuttgart, Germany to Moritz Eichberg and Eleanor Seligsberg. Moritz was a cantor in Stuttgart synagogues for over fifty years, and three of his daughters had pronounced musical talent, but not Emilie. Emilie married Julius in 1863 in New York City. He came from a small town near Fuerth, Germany. Paula, their second child, was born in Stuttgart in 1870. Her parents spent considerable time traveling back and forth to Europe due to both family and business reasons. They amassed considerable wealth.

In February 1890, Paula Oberndorf married Leo Jakobi in New York City. Their unhappy marriage produced two daughters, Audrey and Ruth. In 1895, the New York *World* newspaper reported family discord because "Mrs. Jakobi simply got the theatrical bee in her bonnet and, being a woman with a will of her own, would not yield to her husband in his expressed wish that she abandon her aspirations in that direction."¹ At any rate, their disagreements led to a separation, with the children living with Leo's parents. In 1904, suffering from prolonged depression, Leo committed suicide by shooting himself.²

Soon after, Paula began her lifelong custom of frequent travel to Europe, where one of her daughters was studying at the Sorbonne. About this time, she became active in the women's suffrage movement, which was then gathering steam both in England and America. In January 1914, she was the moving force in organizing what was called the "Authors Evening for Suffrage", a gathering of well-known literary figures of the era.³

During these years, Paula became a member of Heterodoxy, a group based in Greenwich Village, that was an integral part of



January 1914: An Authors Evening for Suffrage gathering

Sitting left to right: Will Irwin, Edwin Markham, Lincoln Steffens, Arturo Giovannitti, Percy MacKay, and W.E. Burghardt Du Bois. Standing left to right: Mrs. Flora Gaitlin, Ellis O. Jones, Elizabeth Freeman, William Hard, Mrs. Paula Jakobi, Frederick Howe, and Mrs. Frederick Howe.

Photo by Paul Thompson

the feminist movement of the early 20th century.⁴ Heterodites believed in fostering the intellectual, social and economic equality and self-development of women and regarded suffrage as one means to achieve these ends.

Her efforts in support of gaining the vote for women continued in the next few years, culminating in her participation in picketing the White House in November 1917, when she was arrested along with several others and was sentenced to thirty days in the notorious Occoquan



Paula Oberndorf Jakobi

workhouse (now converted to a cultural arts center) in Lorton, Virginia. According to her written description, she was beaten, undertook a hunger strike and was force fed.⁵ A few months earlier she had co-authored and published a short play that satirized the legal response to the suffragists' demonstrations. Paula concurrently also wrote a number of other short plays and stories and served as the opera critic for a New York newspaper, sometimes using the pseudonym, "Paula Owen".

Paula continued her frequent European trips in the 1920s and began living with Anna van Vechten, who had been married to Carl van Vechten, the writer and photographer best known for his association with the Harlem Renaissance. By the 1930s the Heterodoxy movement was declining, marked by the deaths of several members, including Anna's, who killed herself by walking out of a hospital window. According to surviving correspondence, Paula was "all broken up" over this tragedy.⁶

There is little extant information about Paula's later life. Remarkably, she authored a play in the 1940s called "De Adamses", a play in dialect, which was staged by the Hedgerow Theatre in 1952 in Rose Valley, Pennsylvania.⁷

In 1957, while her faculties were declining, Paula wrote to Linus Pauling, the eminent chemist famous for his advocacy of taking Vitamin C: “Will you take the time to read this letter? I am a very old woman 87 years old. During the past year my memory has weakened---I have tried to help the situation by speaking to specialists, by reading books and articles on the mind and its deterioration to find a remedy---I take up my courage and come to you.”⁸ Pauling replied to say he could offer no help and recommended a well-balanced diet.

Paula Jakobi died in a nursing home on Long island, New York in 1960, leaving no will as far as I could determine. Her daughter, Audrey, who had studied art at the Sorbonne, went on to become the administrative director of the WPA Federal Arts Project in New York City during the Great Depression of the 1930s, but that’s another story! ❖

References:

1. *New York World*, February 21, 1895
2. *New York Times*, July 26, 1904
3. *An Authors Evening for Suffrage*, Library of Congress
4. Judith Schwartz, *Heterodoxy*, New Victoria Publishers 1986
5. See Inez Haynes Gilmore, *The Story of the Women’s Party*, Harcourt Brace and Co. 1921, for Paula Jakobi’s description.
6. Letter from Marie Jenny Howe to Fola La Follette, December 13, 1933, obtained from Lesbian Herstory Archives, Brooklyn, NY
7. *Jet Magazine*, April 3, 1952
8. Letter from Paula Jakobi, April 29, 1957 and reply from LP, May 8, 1957, in *Linus Pauling Special Collections*

Joe Eichberg was a professor of biology and biochemistry at the University of Houston for over thirty-five years before retiring in 2012. He had a head start on family research thanks to his 2x-great grandfather Eichberg’s 1867 autobiography (which was translated from German by one of his granddaughters) and a 1906 Eichberg family tree that was widely circulated within the family. His personal interest in genealogy was sparked about twenty years ago when he found a trove of letters written in 1875 between his maternal grandparents when they were engaged but separated, in Alsace, France in the aftermath of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870. Since then he has actively researched both his French and German ancestors.

He is researching: EICHBERG (Bad Mergentheim, Braunsbach and Stuttgart, Germany), LEVY (Biesheim, Alsace), FRIEDLANDER (Ermershausen and Friesenhausen, Germany), LOWENSTEIN (Allendorf an der Eder and Langen-Bergheim, Germany), ROSENFELD (Crailsheim, Germany)

MYHERITAGE: A PEEK AT FAMILY TREES

by James Gross



MyHeritage is a fee-based online genealogy website.⁽¹⁾ which offers web, mobile, and software products. Per the MyHeritage blog, this company boasts over 90 million users.⁽²⁾

We will focus in this short article on one area of this site, Research / Family Trees, and how users can make use of this valuable resource to locate researchers and relatives who are working on one of your ancestors.

An important but possibly overlooked category on the MyHeritage website is called “Family Trees.” The advantage of doing a Family Trees search is that you may be able to locate additional deceased relatives. You could also be lucky and identify an unknown cousin or in-law who is doing research on one of your mutual common ancestors.



There are five scrollable headings or sections on the MyHeritage main page: Home, Family Tree, Discoveries, DNA, and Research. (see horizontal bar above)

We are going to briefly discuss an area, Family Trees, located within the Research section of MyHeritage. First you need to access the website. It is available for free at any LDS Family History Center.⁽³⁾ Click the scrollable clickable section entitled, “Research.” (dropdown menu previous page). You will see under “Search all records” that there are several optional sub-headings including, “Family trees.” Click it.

You will see a list entitled, “In Family Trees.” This is the Family Trees list. You will notice that it includes family trees from six separate sources.

Family Trees
This collection includes information about individuals in family trees contributed by members of MyHeritage, as well as information about the family sites in which these trees are organized and about the members who own them.

In Family Trees	
MyHeritage Family Trees	2,918,114,544 records
FamilySearch Family Tree	915,773,336 records
Geni World Family Tree	275,854,188 records
MyHeritage members	78,051,451 records
Search Connect™ - Searches by MyHeritage Members	101,352,311 records
MyHeritage Family Sites	44,596,848 records
Other family trees	
WikiTree	10,653,350 records

Within the “In Family Trees” section, you will see a list of viewable family trees. Per the graphic, you can see that there are 2.9 billion Family Tree records in MyHeritage Family Trees, 915 million Family Tree records in Family Search Family Trees, and 275 million Family Tree records in Geni World Family.

Now, depending upon your knowledge of your tree, you may be able to locate one or more new relatives or in-laws who are working on mutually common names. I think it is important to be thorough in your research. After all, some of the names could have been submitted by a distant cousin.

The image shows three identical profile cards for Nathan Steinberg, each from a different family tree manager. Each card includes a placeholder profile picture, a star rating, and the following information:

- Name:** Nathan Steinberg
- MyHeritage Family Trees:** James Gross Family Tree, managed by James Gross (top card); Fidziura Web Site, managed by Michele Fidziura (middle card); Headley Web Site, managed by Samantha Headley (bottom card).
- Birth:** Dec 25 1898 - Panevezys, Lithuania
- Death:** Feb 5 1998 - PA Phila
- Parents:** Solomon Joel Steinberg, Breina (Saidel) S
- Siblings:** Movsha Steinberg, Albert Steinberg, Edna
- Wife:** Reba Eva (Green) Steinberg
- Children:** <Private> Gross, <Private> Steinberg, Lou (top card); Louis Steinberg (middle card)

I conducted a search for my late grandfather using the advanced search option. I chose to use the advanced option as I wanted to reduce the results to a manageable number. So, I added his wife’s name, Reba. My results included three hits on his name (left).

Based on my advanced search, there are three people listed as working on this person: myself, cousin Headley, and Michele Fidziura. I know Headley as a younger cousin, but I am unsure who Fidziura is, so, I will send her a message and see if she responds.

In summary, I have found the “Research / Family Trees” section of MyHeritage to be quite useful. It has enabled me, on occasion, to locate previously unknown relatives and their family tree data. I think it never hurts to be open-minded about locating mutually related relatives, trees, and the accompanying research data. Of course, it is up to you to verify that the names and data are correct. ❖

References:

1. MyHeritage. <https://www.myheritage.com>
2. MyHeritage. Blog. Retrieved 8/5/2018 from: <https://tinyurl.com/yabssgew>
3. LDS Family History Centers. <https://www.familysearch.org/locations/>

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

MAY MEETING SUMMARY

“SEX, LIES, AND GENEALOGICAL TAPE OR THE NAKED TRUTH ABOUT MY GREAT GRANDFATHER, UNPLUGGED AND EXPOSED”

PRESENTER: RON ARONS

by Linda Ewall-Krocker

Introduction of Ron Arons

Over the past twenty years, Ron has given more than 450 presentations concerning genealogical methodology and technology. He is the author of three books: *The Jews of Sing Sing*, *WANTED! U.S. Criminal Records*, and *Mind Maps for Genealogy*. In 2006 he appeared on the PBS TV series, “The Jewish Americans” and highlighted Jewish criminals on Manhattan’s Lower East Side. That same year he was awarded a research grant from the New York State Archives to continue his research on the topic of Jewish criminals in New York City. Ron earned a B.S. in Engineering from Princeton and an MBA from the University of Chicago. He also juggles, dances, and hula hoops.



Most genealogists focus their efforts on collecting names, dates, and places to grow and expand their family tree as much as possible. This is quite natural. However, a much different experience can be had by focusing one’s efforts on one ancestor at a time. By doing so, one can go beyond the questions: Who?, When?, and Where?. One can explore the far more interesting and powerful questions, WHY? and HOW? Why did our ancestors act the way that they did? How did their behavior have an impact on us? Individual-focused genealogy provides additional insights not only into our ancestors’ lives, but our own lives as well.

The truly unexpected benefit of this approach is that it broke down brick walls, allowing the speaker to push back his family tree another remarkable four generations. It also enabled the speaker to discover a wide range of records that he might not have explored otherwise. The lesson from this approach is to dig deeply, never give up, and keep going back and back.

Starting the old fashioned way, before the Internet existed, he researched records manually. The New York census states that his great-grandfather, Isaac Spier, was born in New York, which was not true. A certificate of birth had similar issues, showing he was born in England. Another census showed him a resident of Sing Sing Prison, born in Pennsylvania.

Ron unearthed various names, spellings, birth places and wives. To keep track, he created a spreadsheet with the following headings: *year, document/event, name used, birth year, birthplace, address, and occupation*, and converted monetary amounts into today’s dollars. In the course of his research, he checked the 1881 British census, passenger ship records, U.S. immigration/naturalization, U.S. census records, etc. He also used a Mind Map tool. [A mind map is a diagram used to visually organize information. A mind map is hierarchical and shows relationships among pieces of the whole... Mind-mapping software can be used to organize large amounts of information,...]⁽¹⁾

New York records directed him to the archives. Another document indicated yet a third name for his great grandfather and showed him to be a bigamist, born in England, an entry clerk and a trolley car driver (which made it easier to get back and forth between wives). Ron had an amusing conversation with his brother on the phone, but his aunt was not so easily amused. She apparently knew less than her older sister, who warned him not to mention Sing Sing to his grandfather. He was directed to the New York City Municipal Archives, which provided relevant legal papers. The case file also showed the marriage to the other woman. The Brooklyn *Daily Eagle*, found via interlibrary loan, had an article: “Two Wives Claimed Him.” Other newspapers published stories, including “Two Were in Court, and There are Others, the Police Say,” and mentioned that he was the son of a well-known rabbi.

During his court appearance, his great grandfather denied recognizing the lady in the red dress, his wife, stating he had never seen her before. He used to needle his grandmother with a contraction of a name of another wife out there somewhere. A book, *Life in Sing Sing by Number 1500*, written by another inmate when his great grandfather was there, describes the conditions in the prison over 100 years ago. In 1916 he was charged with forgery. In 1925 his ancestor was mentioned in the newspaper as being accused of extortion. Another article described how he “cooked the books” at another company.

Ron explored antiquated maps of streets in Brighton, England where houses were subsequently torn down, as well as the beach where horse drawn carts took bathers to the sea to change and bathe. Another Brighton site was the summer castle of the prince who would take his mistress there for vacations. His great grandfather may have theorized that if it was good enough for the prince, it was good enough for him to have mistresses.

Comparing generations, Ron surmised that Abraham (the rabbi) changed his family surname from “Spier/Speer” to “Szeszupski” in the U.S. while Isaac (his great grandfather, the scoundrel), varied his first name between Herbert, Joseph, Nathan and Edward. There were many similarities between their lives.

Other useful sources for Ron’s research included FultonHistory.com/fulton.html, which has a lot of New York and Philadelphia records, including property cards. He utilized a new book, *New York City Municipal Archives: An Authorized Guide for Family Historians* by Aaron Goodwin. Ron also employed family systems theory, an approach used by psychiatrists and others to understand family relationships. ❖

References:

(1) *Wikipedia entry on Mind Map.*

FYI (FROM OUR MAY MEETING)

Penina Hoffnung, Senior Manager for Community Engagement at the Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia, described progress in the reclamation project at Mount Carmel, the cemetery that was desecrated a few years ago. Joe Mangioni, of Gravestone Matters and Masons, is supervising the project. Thus far, 503 gravestones have been righted, at a cost of about \$1000 per stone. After the vandalism, \$250,000 was received to restore the stones, as well as to landscape, stabilize the ground, add lighting and put up a new gate and fence (which is already compromised). The press and Philadelphia’s Mayor Kenney attended the dedication/restoration.

Ian Montgomery, a former Boy Scout, indexed the entire register of people buried there, which is available on Find-a-Grave and the JewishGen website in the resource section. Representatives are looking for the entire burial records and hope to engage the next generation to maintain this historical preservation. In addition, the restorers regularly get *tikun olam* (Hebrew phrase that means "repairing or healing the world") for their clean-up efforts at Har Nebo and Mount Carmel Cemeteries. Har Nebo takes care of Mount Carmel, so contact that office to find out if there is a map for the latter. The cemetery is open from 10am-4pm, so be careful not to get locked in. If you visit, please bring a trash bag to pick up litter.

Judith Lipmanson outlined a project she had just completed involving digitization of JewishGen.org Iskur records. In 2010, three days after a posting on Family Finder, she heard from an Israeli who forwarded her information that enabled her to get in touch with members of a Hungarian branch of her family she hadn’t known existed...nor did they know they had American relatives. This discovery was a significant addition to her German family roots. Digital copies of her findings are available on request to lipmanson@comcast.net.

JUNE MEETING SUMMARY

“HOW TO BRIDGE GENEALOGY RESEARCH AND THE HOLOCAUST BY CONNECTING THE DOTS”

PRESENTER: FELICIA MODE ALEXANDER

by Linda Ewall-Krocker

Introduction of Felicia Alexander:

Felicia Mode Alexander, M.Ed., is a retired Holocaust educator and a longtime member of JGSGP. Felicia has traveled extensively in Europe and Israel and researched in Poland. She is currently editing a newly discovered 500-page manuscript written by her grandmother who immigrated to the U.S. in the 1880s.



Common Assumptions:

1. “The Holocaust did not directly impact us because our family came to America long before World War.” Fact or Myth? Felicia’s relative did come, and with a fake surname.
2. “There are no records about my family in Europe because everything was destroyed during the war.” Fact or Myth? For Felicia, this idea was debunked at the 2004 IAJGS conference in Washington, D.C. and it changed her life. Available records at the conference included Yad Vashem Pages of Testimony at (www.yadvashem.org), as well as ProQuest, through which she was able to access thirty newspaper articles in an hour.
3. “I have hit a brick wall because my family members did not discuss or pass on information about the past.” Fact or Myth? Felicia posted a request on JewishGen asking for anyone who knew of a specific person from a specific town to please contact her. About a year later she heard from the daughter of a family she was seeking. Another valuable resource was Lars Menk’s book *A Dictionary of German-Jewish Surnames*, which helped her identify a relative who stayed behind in Europe.
4. “My (survivor) parents never talked about the Holocaust, so there is no way I can find out anything about my family.” Fact or Myth? A story Felicia found about a woman whose parents were Holocaust survivors who never shared any information about that period in their lives illustrated the value of research even after their deaths.

Conclusions and Examples of Strategies:

All perceived obstacles are just challenges. You should find alternate routes, take a break if necessary, but do not totally give up on the search. Make maximal use of American and international repositories and websites. For example, when Felicia researched the oldest graves in a Boston cemetery and investigated the 1850 U.S. census data from Boston, together with family names she did not recognize, she discovered a useful reference to a relative from her family’s home town in Prussia.

Another important resource is data at the Italian Genealogical Group website, (www.italiangen.org/records-search/deaths.php), which has digitized New York City vital records. In Felicia’s case, she was able to ascertain a family member’s death date. and that knowledge helped her to recognize her great great grandparents who had never emigrated.

The Holocaust Museum website lists deportation information for the Riga Ghetto in Latvia, (<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/document/listing-of-jews-for-deportation-to-riga-latvia>) where her Berlin ancestors



JEWISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF GREATER PHILADELPHIA

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SURNAME	TOWN	COUNTRY



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

Please check JGSGP emails, our website and our Facebook page for complete and up to the minute program information.

Sunday, November 18, 2018 1:30 pm

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

“Making the Most of Family Search for Jewish Research”

Speaker: W. Todd Knowles, Accredited Genealogist (AG)



Todd is a member of the International Patron Services team at the Family History Library in Salt Lake City, Utah. After being introduced to family history when he was twelve years old, he soon discovered his Jewish roots. The journey to find these Polish Jewish ancestors led to the creation of the Knowles Collection (knowlescollection.blogspot.com) and six databases that as of May 1, 2016, contain the genealogical records of over 1.4 million people. Todd has spoken throughout the world, and his articles have been widely published.

This presentation will focus on the FamilySearch website (www.familysearch.org) which holds the records of over 6 billion people worldwide, making it the largest collection of free family trees, genealogy records and resources in the world. In this lecture Todd will guide us through the FamilySearch website with an emphasis on finding our Jewish families. We will also learn how to use the Knowles Collection.

Sunday, December 16, 2018 3:30 pm (please note later starting time)

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

“Passports for Life: The Bernese Group Rescue of Polish Jews in World War II”

Speaker: Jeffrey Cymbler



Jeff earned his BA from Yeshiva University and a JD degree from Boston University School of Law. A child of Holocaust survivors, he has been an avid genealogist since 1983. Jeff was co-chair of the 11th Annual Conference on Jewish Genealogy and program chair of the 19th Annual Conference on Jewish Genealogy. He was on the editorial boards of both *Jewish Roots in Ukraine and Moldova: Pages from the Past* and *Archival Inventories and Jewish Roots in Poland: Pages from the Past and Archival Inventories* and authored the first chapter of the latter book, entitled, “Introduction to Polish-Jewish Genealogical Research.”

“Passports for Life” is a presentation dedicated to Aleksander Lados, the Polish envoy in Bern, his subordinates, and members of the Jewish community in Switzerland who acted hand in hand during World War II in saving hundreds of European Jews. The members of the so called “Bernese Group” embarked on an illicit operation aimed at massive forging of passports of Latin American countries and smuggling them to the ghettos in Poland, Holland, France and other places in the German-occupied Europe.

The presentation will depict the origins of the covert operation, its protagonists, division of work among the members (half of them were Polish Jews), *modus operandi* of the group and consequences of their activity.

Deadline for submission of articles for our summer issue is Sunday, Nov. 11, 2018.

Please send material to: editor@jgsgp.org.