

CHRONICLES

JOURNAL OF THE JEWISH GENEALOGICAL
SOCIETY OF GREATER PHILADELPHIA

דברי הימים



CHRONICLES

JOURNAL OF THE JEWISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF GREATER PHILADELPHIA

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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.

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Answer to quiz (p. 34): computer programmer. Temple graduate, Marlyn Wescoff, known by her married name Marlyn Meltzer, was one of six women now recognized as the first computer programmers. In 1945 these six women were hired by the University of Pennsylvania's Moore School of Electrical Engineering to program ENIAC, often considered the first general-purpose digital programmable computer.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ENIAC>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marlyn_Meltzer

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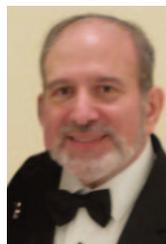
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Cover Photo: *Hiding in Plain Sight* author, Beatrice Sonders, in the David-Horodok room at the Detroit Holocaust Memorial Center. Thanks to photographers, David and Pauline Salama. See article p. 24

REFLECTIONS FROM YOUR CHRONICLES TEAM



Genealogy research is a lonely, solitary endeavor . . . or is it? Yes, we isolate ourselves as we peruse endless websites and explore the treasure troves of records available at www.ancestry.com and www.familysearch.org, but did we ever stop to think how those websites were developed?

They are the result of collaboration between repositories and various companies and organizations to digitize and make records available to researchers. We've all benefited from the vast resources of JewishGen, but those records are the product of countless volunteer hours involved in translating and organizing.

And what about collaboration and networking on a more personal level? I have a 31-year old second cousin, once removed, who's also been bitten by the genealogy bug. We share online discoveries, and she keeps me on my toes with her questions, trying to put a context to various family events and dynamics. Courtney is more technologically savvy than I am, and she posted our family tree online, cropping designated headshots from a 1947 family portrait I shared with her. She's reached out to other cousins, and as a result, when my first cousin from Indianapolis came to New Jersey on business this past summer, he joined in an intimate family gathering. Interestingly, this event occurred on my maternal grandmother's fiftieth *yahrzeit* (anniversary of an individual's death). I remarked that she would've been so happy that this group of cousins had assembled. Courtney also established a Facebook group for the far-flung members of our family, many of whom used to attend monthly family circle meetings during the 1950s and 1960s.

I recently posted a query on JewishGen, asking for interpretation of a difficult to decipher town name on a manifest. One respondent, Yitzhak, went the next step and pointed out that there was additional information on a subsequent page of detainees which I had overlooked. He asked some insightful questions which I probably wouldn't have considered on my own.

Our founding president, Harry Boonin, forwarded a query from Bruce, who was trying to ascertain the location of a

burial site of a woman at Philadelphia's Mt. Carmel Cemetery. I remembered that two indexes of that cemetery are posted on our website. Eagle Scout, Ian Montgomery, was responsible for that indexing project. Our membership chair, Marilyn Mazer Golden, gave me Ian's mom's (Diane) e-mail address, resulting in a three-way communication between Bruce, Diane, and myself, another demonstration of the benefits of collaboration and networking.

I was browsing through the alumni notes in *Brandeis Magazine* and came upon a reference to the memoir *Hiding in Plain Sight* in which Beatrice Sonders relates her horrific experiences during the Holocaust. The citation mentioned that her grandson, David Salama, interviewed her as part of the development of this book. He also did genealogical research and traveled to David-Horodok, his grandmother's shtetl in Belarus. I decided I would try to locate David and get a deeper insight into the process he underwent. I was very impressed and moved by Beatrice's mission to share her story and give her children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren a legacy.

James Gross continues to educate us in our "Techniques, Tools & Tips" section, focusing this time on aspects of the research process using the JRI-Poland website. Ted Bainbridge updates the Find a Grave website.

Joe Eichberg introduces us to his relative Audrey McMahan who was instrumental in the Works Progress Administration (WPA) Federal Arts Project which began in 1935. Jack Myers shares his travel to his ancestral towns and highlights one of the latest recipients of the Obermayer Awards which recognize and encourage those individuals and organizations in Germany that have raised awareness of a once-vibrant Jewish history and culture. Felicia Mode Alexander underscores the more personal side of her recent IAJGS conference experience in Warsaw which resulted in unexpected, new advances in her research.

We also present two reviews of recently published works of genealogical interest. Carol Robins' gives her impressions of Julian Preisler's *The Synagogues of Eastern Pennsylvania*, while David Salama movingly explains the process he underwent in helping his grandmother produce her Holocaust survival memoir.

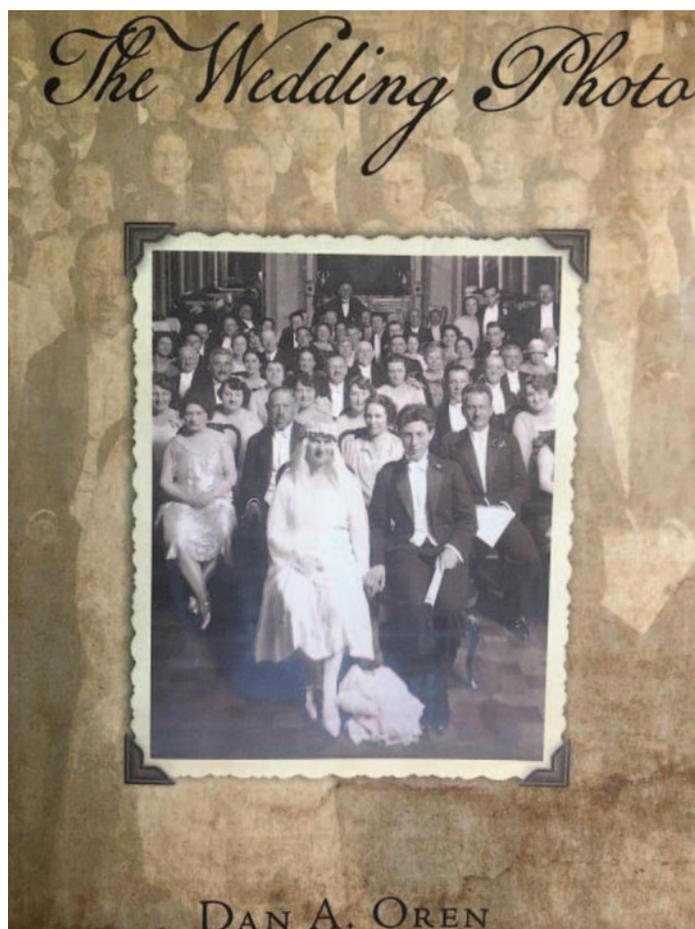
Dan Oren's *The Wedding Photo* has garnered rave reviews and is being described as a "collection of gripping investigative accounts [which] transforms genealogy into a world of exciting historical adventures." I look forward to a review from one of our members and his presentation at our April meeting.

At our December meeting, JGSGP member, Len Duboff, shared the news that he is in the process of donating his vast collection of research about his family to Temple University. Check out his letter on p. 5.

On p. 17 in the fall 2018 issue of "Chronicles" we identified the woman in the photo as Carol Hoffman. We should've identified her as Karen Franklin. Our apologies for the error.

Evan Fishman, Editor

Our readers are the best source of new material for our publication. Please share your respective stories and send them to editor@jgsgp.org.



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

Rochelle Form

Lafayette Hill, PA

GLICK from Krasburg (Kreitsburg), Russia (Now Krustpils, Latvia); WALD, WALDO, WALDOW, VOLDO, VOLDOW - (originally WOLODESKY) from Cherkassy and Kiev, Russia (now Ukraine); BEN from Malin, Kiev Gubernia, Russia (now Ukraine); SOBEL (originally ZABOLOTSKY) from Radomyshl (Zhitomir region), Russia (now Ukraine)

GOLDSMAN from Chisinau and Buenos Aires, Argentina; KARKOWSKY, GOLDMAN AND BARSHANSKY from Laskow and Odessa, Russia; SLOTNICK from Ekaterinaslav, Russia; MERSKY and KOMINSKY from Smorgon & Vilnius, Lithuania; HOROWITZ AND HIRSHKOWITZ from Romania; GROSS from Bela Tserkva, Russia; SIEBZHENER from L'viv, Ukraine; and FELSTYN AND PROSHUROW

Marlise Ellis Gross

Cherry Hill, NJ

ELLIS and ULYANETSKIY from Chisinau, Moldova;

Douglas Seidman

New York, NY

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



At our last meeting on December 16, we elected a new slate of officers for 2019. The following individuals have taken the helm: President Fred Blum, Vice President for Programming Mark Halpern, Vice President Felicia Mode Alexander, Secretary Marilyn Golden Mazer, Treasurer Barry Wagner and directors Linda Ewall- Krocker, Evan Fishman, Mickey Langsfeld and Joel Spector.

As I have written previously, our library is now housed at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania (HSP), located at 13th & Locust Streets in downtown Philadelphia. If you type the url "discover.hsp.org" and then enter "JGSP" (not JGSGP) in the search window, you'll get 315 hits. The bulk of the indexing project has been completed with a few more titles needing to be catalogued. We acknowledge the efforts of HSP cataloguer, Anthony DiGiovanni and the continued, helpful assistance of Lee Arnold, Senior Director of the Library & Collections and Chief Operating Officer.

The board of the Philadelphia Jewish Archives (PJAC) has completed its goal of raising funds to house its collections at the Special Collections Research Center at Temple University. These funds will also provide compensation for an archivist. Since PJAC's mission is complete, they have decided to dissolve. Feel free to contact Temple if you would like to contribute to the collection. Temple is always looking for interesting family genealogies and records. (See Len Duboff's letter to the right.) Temple has completed the digitization of the Philadelphia Immigrant Bank Records which are available at their website. ❖

Fred Blum, President

Dec. 18, 2018

Evan Fishman
Editor
Chronicles Journal

Jewish Genealogical Society
of Greater Philadelphia
1657 The Fairway #145
Jenkintown, PA 19046

Dear Evan:

I was very pleasantly surprised by the reaction to my announcement of "gifting". (Temple Universities term for this action), of my records of my family research to Temple University's new library when it is completed in 2019.

I had just turned 80 this past summer and realized that no one in the family has surfaced to continue recording the history of my parents families.

There are now more than 2300 people recorded in my families and about 700 in my wife, Lorie's family. Thirty five to forty years of recording the who, what and where of eight generations of the Dubovy, Duboff, Dubowe clan as well as the Ruche and Malamud members of my mother's family. Lorie's family record is much shorter, basically just here in America.

My attorney, Ms. Vivienne A. Crawford, had participated in the "Gifting" of client's holdings to the Temple University Library the year before, so I contacted her about doing the same. She in turn contacted Ms. Margery N. Sly, Director, Special Collection Research Center at Temple University Libraries, who requested to visit my home to see what I was offering. This visit took place in September. To my surprise and failing memory, Ms. Sly, reminded me that the library already had two copies of my family history from the early 2000's that I donated to Philadelphia Jewish Achieve Center while doing the Jewish Exponent Obituary Records project for our society.

This may be the easiest meeting I have ever participated in. The Library will supply boxes to be used to transfer my records, research, charts, and other memorabilia next year for inclusion in Temple's new library building. Eight file drawers of manila folders, one for each member of our families as well as family tree charts I created for various family events and get together. Plus two library shelf units, full of research materials, references and other memorabilia.

I look forward to this taking place without a hitch.

Respectfully,

Leonard S. Duboff

GETTING ACQUAINTED WITH REVISED FIND-A-GRAVE.COM

by Ted Bainbridge, Ph.D.

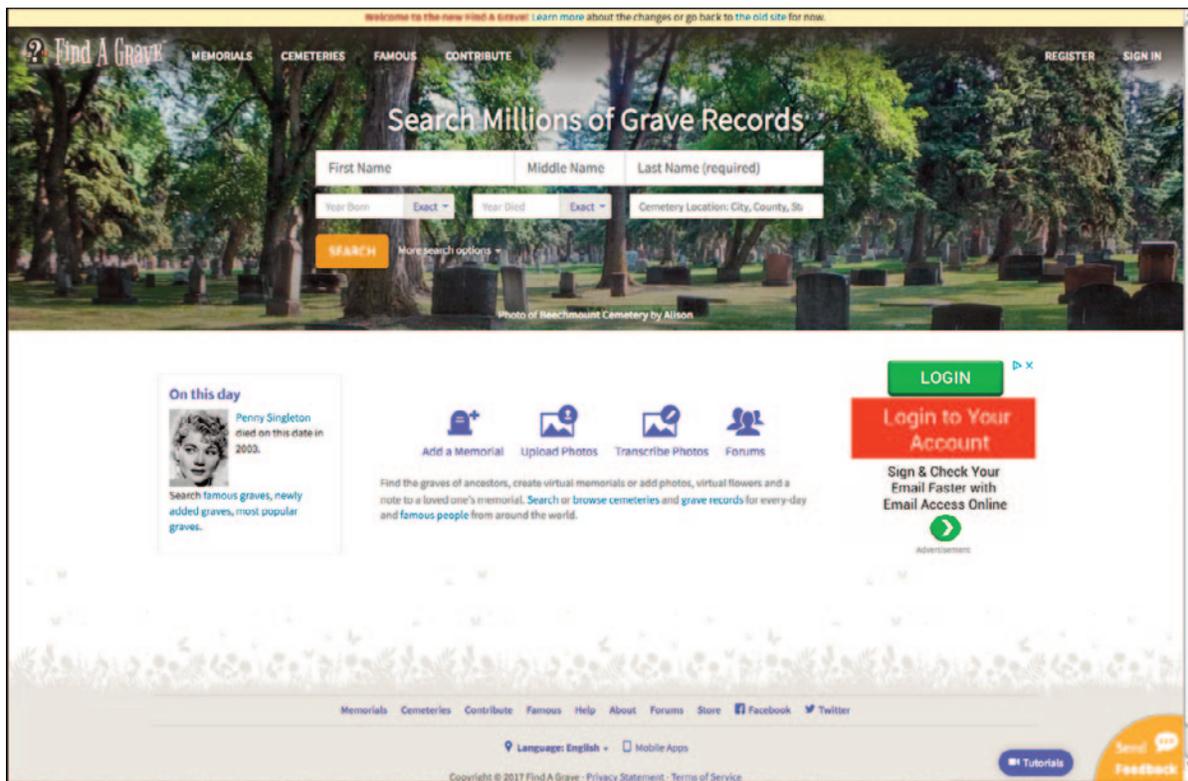
N.B. This article is a tutorial about using the site's features. Ted Bainbridge wrote it because several people told him they were unhappy with the changes and/or didn't know how to use them. He also realized that some people were unaware of its useful and powerful new functions.



The website, <https://www.findagrave.com> collects individuals' cemetery and other information, whether a grave marker is present or not. The site's database includes over 165 million people's memorials and adds about 1 ½ million per month. It contains information from almost half a million cemeteries around the world. This free site can be searched in several ways, and its information is easy to download onto a home computer. The site is menu-driven and intuitively easy to use. Registration, which is optional and free, gives the visitor access to features that are not otherwise available. Everybody should explore the tutorials.

Think of the home page as being organized into four areas:

- the main menu, near the top of the page and filling its entire width;
- the search panel for individuals' graves, which dominates the background photograph;
- the link to FindAGrave tutorials, a blue oval button near the bottom right of the page;
- other less frequently used items, occupying the rest of the screen below the background image.



Hunting A Person

By far, the most common use of <https://www.findagrave.com> is hunting individuals. The simplest search is done as follows. Enter a first name in the box provided near the center of the background photo. (This is optional, but if you don't do it, you will get an enormous hit list for all but the most unusual surnames). I recommend leaving the box for middle name blank, because grave markers usually don't show middle names. Put a surname in the appropriate box. (This is required.) There is no option for "similar spelling" or "similar sound", so do separate searches for each variant

spelling of the first name and surname. Click the search button.

A hit list appears, showing records that match your request and headed with the count of how many records are on the list. Search the hit list for the person you want, then click that person's name. You will see that person's information page. (If a picture of the grave stone exists, look at it in detail. Sometimes this will show that the typed information on the page contains an error.) To save the information on that page, you can command a "print" from your computer's operating system. Alternatively, you can scroll to the top of the page, click "save to", click "copy to clipboard", open the program you will use to save the information, paste the clipboard's content into that program, and save within that program. To save the source citation, scroll to the bottom of the person's page, click "source citation", copy the text of the citation, paste that text wherever you want it to be, and save that destination's content within the appropriate program. The person's page might include links to FindAGrave pages for relatives. Click those links to see their information.

Typing only the first and last name probably will produce a hit list that is too long to read. If that happens, search for that name again but narrow the search by using the pull-down menus next to the "year born" and "year died" boxes below the name boxes you used. In addition to or instead of those restrictions, you can use the location box next to those date boxes. As you type a place into that box, an auto-fill list appears. When you see the appropriate place, select it from the list. (Typing the name and clicking the "search" button instead won't give good results.) If you use all three restrictions and the new search doesn't find the person you want, remove one of those restrictions and search again. If that search fails, replace that restriction and remove another one. If you fail again, repeat. If all those searches fail, use only one restriction at a time and do all three restricted searches. Repeat this process until you are successful. (But remember that not everyone is listed at <https://www.findagrave.com>, so all your searches might fail. In that case, try again later, remembering that FindAGrave adds about 1 ½ million records per month.)

Next to the "search" button you can see "more search options". Clicking that makes the following available:

- "Famous" separates a famous person from others who have the same name. (Asking for Marilyn Monroe creates a hit list of 29 people. Going to the top of the list, clicking "refine search", pulling down "more search options", clicking "famous", and then clicking "search" shows only the movie star we all know.)
- "Sponsored" shows only pages that have no advertisements because somebody paid to remove them.
- "Nickname" must be checked if you ask for somebody by nickname instead of given name.
- "Maiden name" must be checked if you ask for somebody by maiden name instead of married name.
- "Partial last name search" lets you search by putting only the first letters of a first or last name in the appropriate boxes. (Requesting "wana" shows Wana, Wanamaker, Wanabaker, and other surnames that begin with those four letters; but it doesn't list Wannamaker.)
- "No grave photo" gives only people who have no grave photo on their information page.
- "Grave photo" gives only people who have a grave photo on their information page.
- "Flowers" gives only people who have virtual flowers attached to their page. (Asking for Clarence Bainbridge without this option clicked gets five names, but clicking this option reduces the list to two.)

Hunting A Cemetery

The next most common use of FindAGrave is hunting cemeteries. There are three ways to find a cemetery:

- On the main menu click “cemeteries” and type a name in the box provided. (This is an auto-fill box. Use it as above.) Click “search”. A hit list appears. Click the name of the cemetery you want. That cemetery’s page of information appears.
- On the main menu click “cemeteries” and type a place in the other box. (This also is auto-fill.) Click “search”. A hit list appears. Click the name of the cemetery you want. That cemetery’s page appears.
- On the main menu click “cemeteries” and type a place in the appropriate box. (This is an auto-fill box. Use it as above.) Don’t click “search” or press the “return/enter” button. Instead, look at the map. If the map doesn’t show any location markers, click the ‘+’ button near its lower right corner. Zoom in or out and pan in any direction until you see the area you want. Click any marker to see the name of that cemetery, then click the name to see its information page.

Favorite Cemeteries

If you registered as a member, you can create a list of your favorite cemeteries. Go to the information page of the cemetery you want to put on your list. Near the top right corner of that page, click “add favorite” and proceed.

You can create virtual cemeteries by linking interesting individuals to a collection that you create. (Examples: you might link all of your Blankenship relatives’ information pages to a group called “My Blankenships”, or you could gather all your relatives who served in the Civil War.) Go to the page of a person you want to add to a virtual cemetery (v.c.). Near the top right corner of that page, click “save to”, click “virtual cemetery”, and then proceed. At this location you can create a new v.c. or add this person to an existing v.c.

Other Features

The main menu at the top of FindAGrave’s home page includes an item called “famous”, which allows a search for a famous person, as was described above. That menu also has an item called “contribute”, which people use to add information to FindAGrave’s database.

Between the home page’s background photograph and the button for tutorials is a large white space that offers links for these items:

- | | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| • read about a random person | • famous graves | • newly added graves |
| • most popular graves | • add a memorial | • upload photos |
| • transcribe photos | • forums | • search cemeteries |
| • browse cemeteries | • search grave records | • browse grave records |
| • famous people | • log in | • memorials |
| • cemeteries | • contribute | • famous |
| • help | • about | • forums |
| • store | • Facebook | • Twitter |
| • language | • mobile apps | • privacy statement |
| • terms of service | • end feedback | |

Most people probably can ignore most or all of those items, but feel free to explore and experiment as you like. ❖

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 at 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 served on the staffs of two LDS Family History Centers.

Contact Ted at: ted.bainbridge@gmail.com

THREE HIGHLIGHTS REGARDING JRI-POLAND

by James Gross



I recently read an interesting article entitled "Jewish Records Indexing-Poland: The Effect of Reaching Critical Mass" by Stanley Diamond in the Fall 2018 edition of *Avotaynu*.¹ It presented several useful research points regarding updates to the JRI-Poland database. This article will briefly share three highlights; a full reading of his article, however, is suggested.



Jewish Records Indexing - Poland (JRI-Poland) is a volunteer run, non-profit organization that has created indices/extractions to more than 5 million Jewish birth, marriage and death records from current and former territories of Poland. Diamond's article explains that JRI-Poland [JRI-Poland.org] is "extracting all genealogically relevant information for the records in its database, and when possible, linking these search results to online digital images".² To give some perspective regarding the extent of these holdings, the article notes that ". . . with a database of 5.4 million records, Jewish Records Indexing-Poland has reached critical mass".³ Furthermore, "more than 2.3 million entries in the database are already directly linked to digital images or folders".⁴

The first highlight from the article is the news that JRI-Poland has negotiated a renewal to their agreement with the Polish State Archives (PSA) and is in the ongoing process of scanning Jewish vital records.⁵ This has been accelerated by the PSA's decision to undertake a massive digitization initiative. Changes in Polish privacy laws enabled this initiative.

Shtetl CO-OP Initiative

Jewish Records Indexing - Poland

The second JRI-Poland highlight regards locating names. JRI-Poland has made excel file copies of their data available as a premium offer for a number of towns.⁶ Per the JRI website, this is called the Shtetl CO-OP Initiative.⁷ The excel file is available to researchers for a qualifying contribution of \$180-\$200.⁸ The article notes that this can include date ranges of 1826-1915 and for some, 1810-1915.⁹ Researchers interested

in obtaining an excel list should consult the Shtetl CO-OP webpage which contains a summary along with contacts and is organized by name of town. One can then consult JRI-Poland.

The third highlight is information on locating pre-1826 Jewish records. The article mentioned that, "Pre-1826 Jewish records may be found in the Roman Catholic civil transcripts for many hundreds of towns...".¹⁰ It advised readers to consult town listings on a Polish archival website, PSA¹¹ which is identified by the yellow icon to the right.



Using this website, my search for a small village, Mukanie, located near the larger town of Radziechov, yielded five hits. Unfortunately, it was unclear to me what the results meant nor which records on my town were available. I also had difficulty in understanding the PSA website results due to the language utilized.

Some of the PSA results mentioned the town of Lopatyn, which was previously unknown to me. I decided to try using the search results from the PSA town name of Lopatyn on another website, FamilySearch.¹² My Family Search query resulted in several listings of metrical books. In fact, the FamilySearch query located three scanned microfilms which may be of help in my research

I suggest that researchers avail themselves of the JRI-Poland website and see if there are any relevant family names or scanned material.

Jednostka aktowa: 1/301/0/-/851

Digital copy

Parafia: Łopatyn. Dekanat: Busk. Księga metrykalna ślubów dla całej parafii: 1740-1776 - wpisy wspólne, a później: Łopatyn 1776-1783, Manastyrek (właściwie Podmanastyrek) ad Hrycowola 1777-1784, Mukanie, Niemiłów, Opatucno 1777-1784, Majdan Stary i Ohładów 1783, Majdan 1784.
1740-1784

I would also encourage researchers to try a few town searches on the PSA website. I used some of the PSA data in my search on the FamilySearch website. Lastly, don't forget to do a surname or town search on the JRI-Poland website. ❖

References:

1. Diamond, Stanley. "Jewish Records Indexing-Poland: The Effect of Reaching Critical Mass." *Avotaynu: The International Review of Jewish Genealogy*. Volume XXXIV, Number 3, Fall 2018, pp. 12-16, <https://tinyurl.com/jri-poland2>. Accessed 15 Dec. 2018.
2. *Ibid*, p.14.
3. *Ibid*, p.12.
4. *Ibid*, p. 13.
5. *Ibid*
6. *Ibid*, p. 14-15.
7. "Shtetl CO-OP Initiative." *JRI Poland*, JRI-Poland.org, jri-poland.org/shtetl/status.htm. Accessed 15 Dec. 2018.
8. Diamond, Stanley. "Jewish Records..." p. 15.
9. *Ibid*, p. 14.
10. *Ibid*, p. 14.
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Note: When accessing, click the British flag on the upper right of the page.
12. Family Search. Intellectual Reserve, Inc., www.familysearch.org/. Accessed 14 Dec. 2018.

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, New Jersey 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

AUDREY MCMAHON & THE FEDERAL ARTS PROJECT

by Joe Eichberg



The Works Progress Administration (WPA) was established in 1935 to provide employment during the depths of the Great Depression. Among its many programs was the Federal Arts Project, which was created the same year and was a source of support to visual artists and artisans nationwide. The largest of its divisions by far was the New York region, which encompassed New York City and State, New Jersey and for a time, Philadelphia. Its administrator was Audrey McMahon, a third cousin (once removed) of mine.

As I mentioned in my last article (*Chronicles*, Summer 2018, pp. 15-17), Audrey was the elder daughter of Paula and Leo Jakobi. She was born in 1890 in New York City and owing to the marital difficulties of her parents, she and her sister, Ruth, were living with their father and paternal grandparents by 1900.⁽¹⁾ As she described it⁽²⁾, she received her education in art largely at the Sorbonne.

In January 1917, Audrey married Melvin Alden (who traced his ancestry back to Mayflower passenger, John Alden)

in Florida, and the couple lived in Havana, where she gave birth to a daughter, Patricia, in December 1918. Already separated from her husband by the time she submitted an emergency passport application to the American legation in Havana in August 1918, she stated that she had lived in Paris from 1900 to 1914⁽³⁾. Soon after, she returned to New York. In a subsequent passport application she submitted later that year, she described her occupation as “secretary”⁽⁴⁾.

In 1922, Audrey married A. Philip McMahon, a fine arts professor at New York University, and at about that time she began working at the College Art Association (CAA), an organization founded in 1911 (and still in existence) that is dedicated to fostering the teaching and appreciation of the visual arts. During the 1920s, her responsibilities there steadily grew, and by the end of the decade she had become CAA director as well as the editor of their publications. In addition, she also instigated traveling art exhibition programs⁽⁵⁾.

During the early days of the Depression, while still at the CAA, Audrey became involved in efforts to provide relief for unemployed artists, first through the office of Mayor LaGuardia and later by provision of welfare funds from New York State. There were over 1400 needy artists then, and these resources proved to be far from adequate.

In July 1935, the Federal Arts Project was initiated under Harry Hopkins. Audrey was offered the national directorship, but declined, and became one of the five regional directors instead. She described the operation of the FAP and her role in it in both a written memoir and an oral interview^(6,7). By 1936, the New York regional FAP employed over 2000 artists including painters, sculptors, graphic and commercial artists, crafts persons and art teachers⁽⁸⁾.

The output of murals, paintings, prints, photographs, sculptures and architectural works was enormous. Many artists who were to become well known in future years (e.g. Willem de Kooning, Jackson Pollock, Ben Shahn) received an average pay of less than \$24.00 per week. The FAP’s impact went beyond just supporting artists. Perhaps, more importantly, it exposed ordinary Americans to art through paintings, murals and other forms of visual arts in public spaces (for example, airports, local libraries, post offices and classrooms).



Audrey McMahon (second from left). Standing next to her (to her left) is Holger Cahill, FAP national director. Photo taken in 1938.

Audrey not only had to administer this vast operation, but also cope with sit-ins that unemployed artists staged in her office as well as criticisms of the works that were produced. As she commented, “An eighteen-hour day was the rule rather than the exception---Each morning in fear and trembling, I approached a mountain of mail---each morning my terror was justified and what kept me-and all of us-going was the basic conviction that what we were doing was both right and well done.”⁽⁶⁾

What was Audrey like? According to art historian, Francis O’Connor, who knew her well, she was “commanding and assertive. As such, she was an excellent herder of artists and tempered her temperament with justice so everyone respected her even if they disliked her. I suspect her hard early life taught her how to be a survivor-and by devolvement how to be a strong and effective bureaucrat.”⁽⁹⁾ Other individual sources and recollections that I consulted suggest there was a wide range of opinions about her personality, but none questioned her ability. Several artists were motivated to represent her in their art. Two of these are shown. A 1977 paper mâché sculpture by FAP participant Eugenie Ger-



Homage to Audrey McMahon (Goddess of Fertility)
(Eugenie Gershoy 1977)

shoy, reflected her role in nurturing artists in the program and is meant to be complimentary.

However, a 1940 caricature portrait of her by the painter Alice Neel, who also survived on FAP funds during the 1930s, clearly is not.

As the 1930s drew to a close, pressure increased to curtail the FAP. This was partly driven by anti-Communist hysteria; indeed, a substantial number of artists joined the Communist Party; and as war approached, other priorities intervened. As Audrey commented, “after 1939, although we were doomed, all of us put out a great deal of resistance against dying”⁽⁶⁾. The ultimate outcome of progressive cutbacks was the elimination of the FAP in January 1943.



Portrait of Audrey McMahon
(Alice Neel 1940)

There is a sad footnote to Audrey’s impressive achievements. I was able to gain access to the probate proceedings accompanying her will at the New York Municipal Archives. They revealed that her daughter, Patricia, was mentally deficient, possibly due to birthing difficulties, and in 1927 was committed to the Training School in Vineland, New Jersey (which subsequently became the American Institute for Mental Studies). Audrey made arrangements for her lifetime placement, and Patricia remained there for over sixty years, until her death in 1990. During all this time, there was very little family contact.

But to give Audrey the last word: “—I believe that the WPA Federal Arts Project should serve as a model for the years ahead, for the artists and public of tomorrow. I hope broad patronage of the arts may, someday, be repeated, for never in the history of any land has so much cultural progress been achieved in so brief a time as in the New Deal years.”⁽⁶⁾ ❖

References

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3. *Note: The only ship arrival record for this time period in the Ellis Island Ship Manifests, 1906-1923, and on Ancestry I could find show an arrival from Europe in 1906, together with her sister and an aunt*
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Author, Joe Eichberg, earned a PhD in biochemistry at Harvard University. While pursuing a postdoctoral fellowship in England, he met and married his New Zealand-born wife; they have three children and four grandsons. Joe was a professor of biology and biochemistry at the University of Houston for over thirty-five years before retiring in 2012.

Joe had a head start on family research thanks to his great 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. 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). Contact Joe at joeichberg@comcast.net

A SAD STORY: TRACING THE ROOTS OF A HOUSEHOLD MEMBER

by Carol Robins



My family employed a live-in housekeeper from 1949 to 1966, at which time Mabel entered Cedarbrook, a nursing home near Allentown. At that time my mother was planning to move to an apartment. It had not cost much to have Mabel live in an extra room in our home, she explained. Mom paid her wages and Social Security taxes, which then were used to pay for Mabel's upkeep in her new residence.

Cedarbrook was originally established as a county poorhouse in 1845. Known as the Lehigh County Poorhouse and House of Employment, the Almshouse, and the County Home, it originally housed the destitute, prisoners, the mentally disturbed, and homeless children. Residents who died were buried at a nearby cemetery, and unclaimed bodies were shipped to a state board in Philadelphia. Today Cedarbrook is like a self-contained city offering care for the county's elderly.

In 1949 or so, I met Mabel's half-brother, and what I will always recall is the outhouse. Her relatives were very poor.

Not having married, Mabel did have an estranged daughter whom I never met. One day in the 1960s, my mom told me that a woman wandered into her small dress shop and was "the spitting image" of Mabel. I did not pursue this then, and Mom didn't seem eager to talk about it. What bothers me now is that I didn't have the curiosity then.

I visited Mabel a few times at Cedarbrook. She was indeed glad to see me, and even introduced me as "her daughter." I was somewhat overcome, and I was glad she felt positive about me. At least the place was pleasant and bright. Mabel seemed adjusted, although I didn't really ask.

Along with household chores, she prepared us for school in the morning, braided my hair when I was young, and woke my mother up for work each morning. Perhaps Mabel would be considered a nanny today, but she did much more---she cooked and cleaned until she couldn't later on because of her heart condition.

One day around during the 1970s, I was visiting Allentown from my home in New Jersey. My mother casually mentioned that Mabel had died. Other guests were at the table, and I guess I didn't let this remark register, nor

did I have time to react. I went on with my daily work and busy life.

As I look back, I wonder why my mother did not save me an obituary from the paper. Perhaps as a delayed reaction, I belatedly decided to try to learn more about Mabel. I realized after all those years I had never really understood the life of this hard-working woman, who, although unfortunate, was given a chance to earn a living and was well cared for by my mother.

At some point after my mom died, I called Cedarbrook. The kind staff told me the name of the funeral home. I visited the place and received a copy of an obituary from the Allentown paper. I saw that she had died in September 1974. From there on, I was eventually able to trace Mabel's roots.

Only a few years ago, some time after 2009, when more records became available online, I realized I might be able to learn more. Mabel was born in 1903. Typing in names from her obituary, I was able to find many census records. I looked up her mother, the half-brother, and Mabel's last name. I learned the full name of her birth father and even the name of her daughter, who appeared to have been adopted into another household according to the 1940 census.

Mabel's baptismal certificate listed her grandfather as a sponsor. A great grandfather was a Civil War veteran. I was also amazed to learn about Mabel's birth father's large family, his marriage to someone other than Mabel's mother, and the many children he had within marriage.



Mabel at the left. Others unidentified

I was shocked when I located Mabel in the 1930 and 1940 census records. She had been living at Laurelton Village, known as the Pennsylvania Village for Feeble-Minded Women of Childbearing Age in Hartley Township, Union County, Pennsylvania. The institution is listed for only these two census years according to a Facebook page. Mabel was a resident for at least a decade.

I was astonished by the name of the home. (Early in my research, I had noted a striking name for a hospital in Philadelphia---the Lucien Moss Home for Incurables of the Jewish Faith---but the title of Mabel's home was something else.)

The aim of Laurelton State Village, formed in 1913, was to train women, ages sixteen to forty-five, in home-making skills to become self-sufficient. As the first of its kind, its early goal was to detain and care for the residents. Theories about mental retardation at the time meant repetitive daily routines and isolation from the community.

In 1969, males were admitted. Renamed the Laurelton State School and Hospital, it closed in 1998. In 2006, new buyers planned to turn it into a convention center, restaurant, and dude ranch, but after eight decades, the buildings and the landscaped property remain off limits.

At the home, Mabel was listed as a "servant." Other women were kitchen or laundry workers. I don't know whether my mother knew about Mabel's stay at Laurelton, but Mom certainly performed a *mitzvah* (good deed)

in giving Mabel a home. I did not consider Mabel “feeble-minded”; she just seemed simple. I did not know how to communicate with her. She used to love to walk our dog, and I thought of her as Pennsylvania Dutch because she’d say, “Buffy, get out from in under my feet” and “The dog wants out.”

Mabel was good at crocheting. Each week she went to church and to a women’s auxiliary, and she had her own community elsewhere. After learning about Laurelton I felt sadder about her hard life, but I feel that my understanding of my earlier years with her has been enhanced. We considered her part of the household, and she must have felt we were her family because she mourned with us when my dad died in 1956. ❖

A Penn State graduate, Carol Robins was a writer for “Prevention Magazine” and a technical editor at HRB-Singer and Bell Labs. She also proofread for the Asbury Park “Press.” Later she edited medical books at W.B. Saunders in Philadelphia for twenty years and a pharmacy journal at MediMedia in Yardley, Pennsylvania for eleven years. She volunteers at KleinLife, Hadassah, and Naturally Occurring Retirement Community (NORC).

Carol is researching these family names: LIPSKY, ESKIN, HASKIN (Minsk, Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova??), RABINOWITZ (Zaklikow, Poland), ABELEW, FINDERSH and ANGERT (Tiraspol, Moldova). Contact Carol at cjrobins22@hotmail.com

A GERMAN ANCESTRAL TRIP & AN OBERMAYER AWARD

by Jack A. Myers



This past June my wife Laurie and I were invited to attend the formal introduction of the book, *Die Juden vom Altrhein* (The Jews of the Old Rhine), in Mainz, Germany. The book was the product of a multi-year research project by a team of non-Jewish authors regarding the Jewish heritage of a cluster of Rhine River villages where my father’s maternal grandparents and great grandparents (Schott, Guthmann, Eiseman and Haas) lived. Never having been to Europe, we crafted an itinerary that enabled us to be tourists for ten days, starting in Amsterdam followed by a river cruise from there to Basel, Switzerland. We then transformed ourselves into curious explorers of the environment of my ancestors for the next week. First, we took a train from Basel to Ulm and then a cab to Altenstadt, a village in the Swabian region of Bavaria, about twenty-five miles south of Ulm on the Iller River.

L to R: Alwin Muller, Anja Preussner, Laurie Myers

My paternal great great grandfather, Hermann Mayer, was the brother, son and grandson of Altenstadt’s three rabbis of the late 18th and first half of the 19th centuries. Within hours of e-mailing the town authorities in advance of our trip, I received a response indicating that the town historian, Alwin Muller, would serve as our guide while touring the old Jewish section and accessing the locked cemetery. The historian’s adult daughter, Anja Preussner, who lived forty kilometers away, would spend the day with us to interpret.

As we later came to realize, our visit was very important to Alwin. He took great pride in the memorials and signage displayed throughout the town. He indicated that he normally conducted about six group tours per year, often for students. Mr. Muller believed that we were the first Americans to come to visit the Jewish cemetery and view the former homes of the Jewish residents.

Our day-long tour of Altenstadt was incredible. The town’s Jewish legacy dates back to 1650, when the local noble invited Jews to settle there. By



1800, there were 400 Jewish and 100 non-Jewish residents. However, by 1838 there were only 35 Jewish households, many with multigenerational extended families. A substantial number of the houses from the 1800s are still standing, though often enhanced by satellite dishes or solar panels. We saw the home of my great great grandfather, (six of his children's families would later be members of Keneseth Israel in Philadelphia) and the 1820 house that was occupied by my great great great grandfather, Rabbi Abraham Mayer, and his wife, Rachel, a descendant of the famous Rappaport rabbinic family.

Around the corner is a house that had been occupied by a branch of Albert Einstein's family. Albert was born in Ulm, while his father came from Bad Buchau, Biberach, Baden-Wurtemberg, which is a few miles southeast of Altenstadt across the Iller River. In fact, three 19th century marriages at Keneseth Israel involved Einstein relatives, all natives of Buchau, which in the 1830s was home to only 155 Jews.



Jack Myers in front of the 1820 Altenstadt home of his third great grandparents

The site of the former Al-built in 1802, ransacked is outlined today by The large walled ceme-maintained (I believe by memorative plaque dedi-lists the names of the the Nazi era. As Mr. tery was left unscathed denced by the remaining of the plots, although have fallen victim to the visible gravestones, Mr. those of the three rabbis,



tenstadt synagogue, which was in 1938 and torn down in 1955, granite columns and plaques. tery on a wooded hill is well Mr. Muller) and includes a com-cated twenty-five years ago that town's twenty-three victims of Muller pointed out, the ceme-during the Nazi period, as evi-iron railings surrounding some some of its oldest gravestones erosion of time. Among the 300 Muller immediately pointed out together beside the south wall.

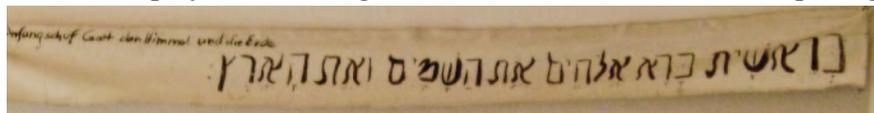
The town hall lobby includes a single display case housing artifacts of the synagogue. Copies of a brochure describing the town's Jewish history in some detail are available there too. An official, emerging from his office, gave me a 2001 edition of a book containing three histories of the region's Jewish population, including one written by the last leader of the Altenstadt Jewish community in 1931. It is important to note that international tourists are not the target audience of these efforts—the brochure, book plaques and signage are all exclusively in German.

Altenstadt and the families that emigrated from there to Virginia are mentioned in the 1976 book, *Richmond Jewry*. During and after the Civil War, many moved north to settle in Philadelphia where there were family and business ties. One of the Virginia Myers branch (they had changed the spelling of their name) went on to become mayor of Savannah, Georgia at the end of the 19th century. Another Altenstadt family, having changed their name from Kahn to Cone, flourished in North Carolina, where their magnificent homestead is now part of the National Park Service along the Blue Ridge Parkway.

From Altenstadt we traveled by rail to Mainz, a city on the Rhine River, near Frankfurt, to attend the book ceremony. The

villages that were the subject of the book (including Hamm, Eich, Gimbsheim, Alsheim, Osthofen and Guntersblum) lie south of Mainz and north of the famous city of Worms. Over the course of two-and-a-half days, a total of sixteen descendants (nearly all of us related in some way) from Brazil, Sweden, Israel, England, Germany and the U.S. were hosted by the authors, publishers, church leaders and their congregants and mayors and other officials. Television and print media covered our tours of cemeteries and narrow village streets, as well as receptions in churches, Eich's townhall and the Jewish cultural center in Worms.

Hamm's church leader, Thomas Hoppner-Kopf, provided transportation for our group, and his congregants offered us an incredible array of refreshments. His fellow minister, Bernd Wilhelm, served as street guide and photographer. The church's children had been taught enough Hebrew to display a welcoming banner that featured the Torah's opening verse in Hebrew and German!



Earlier in the day, congregants joined us at the Jewish cemetery outside of the neighboring village of Osthofen. It is here that many of my ancestors are buried.



Osthofen Jewish Cemetery --Jack Myers (r) and third cousin Thomas Doerr by grave of Great Great Grandfather Heinrich Schott

After taking in the awe of this quiet walled cemetery, surrounded by vineyards, we traveled a short distance to the site of a concentration camp in Osthofen, which was formerly occupied by a Jewish-owned paper mill. The camp was briefly used for detentions in 1933-34, primarily for political enemies of the Reich. Only recently established as a memorial, the display of powerful sculptures and artwork document "the dreadful scale of the National Socialist terror." From here we drove the short distance to Worms, which is the location of a synagogue, the Rashi House which includes the Jewish Museum and municipal archives. We were greeted by the Lord Mayor and toured the facilities. After lunch, we traveled back north a short distance to Hamm and Eich.

As we walked the streets of Hamm and then Eich, Rev. Wilhelm pointed out the still standing homes of our ancestors, including that of my great great great great grandparents, Elias Guthmann and his wife Gutchen Eisemann (and their children); my great great grandparents, Heinrich Schott and his wife Nannette Guthmann; and those of several siblings. The oldest member of our descendants group was in fact born in Eich in 1931, before her family fled. The book's emphasis is on documenting the families who had left in the 1930s. (By comparison, my grandmother's ancestors left Eich and Hamm in the mid 1800s but carried on a close correspondence with

family still in Germany over the ensuing years.) Similarly, the members of the press were keenly interested in interviewing a woman returning to visit the town where she was born.

Individual schedules did not permit us all to be together the entire time. Laurie and I were shown additional sites in the two days that followed including the small city of Russelsheim, just south of Frankfurt, where the destroyed synagogue has been rebuilt. The cemetery is well maintained, and the local museum includes exhibits and print material calling attention to its Jewish past.

The 536-page book itself was an effort of several years, not intended to be a money-making best-seller, but a detailed scholarly work. In October we learned that the authors, Gabriele Graf Hannah, her brother and sister-in-law, Hans-Dieter and Martina Graf, are to be awarded the very prestigious Obermayer German Jewish History Award.

Administered by the Obermayer Foundation, this award is co-sponsored by the Berlin Parliament (where the award ceremony took place on January 21, 2019), the Leo Baeck Institute of New York and JewishGen.org. The award is given annually to recognize non-Jews who have "made extraordinary contributions to preserving or breathing new life into Jewish history and culture. . . (and) raised awareness of a once vibrant Jewish history and culture. . . ." The nomination that I sub-



The Myers with author Gabriele Hannah; Rev. T. Hoepfner-Kopf and news crew in background at Osthofen Cemetery

mitted details how I became involved in the project after I received an inquiry from Gabriele Hannah via Ancestry.com in January 2014, and how I have benefited from Gabrielle Hannah's continuous supply of family records from Germany. Besides pictures and documents, I provided them access to my Ancestry Family Tree as well as scanned copies of other family trees in German from the 1930s that had been shared with me during my own research over the past forty years. Using these as guides, and exploring countless German and American documents, she and her co-authors gained a very comprehensive view of the interrelationships within and between these Rhine communities that greatly expanded our family's prior knowledge. Personally, I am proud to have been a

contributor to a project that has now bestowed international recognition on its authors.

Among my ancestors, the Guthmann and Haas families were the first Jews to settle in Atlanta before 1850, having migrated from New York and Philadelphia via Youngstown, Ohio, Kentucky and Tennessee. Others found their way to Chicago. The Schotts settled here in Pennsylvania, including Lewistown and Mifflintown along the Juniata River above Harrisburg. The Atlanta clan prospered but is most remembered today because of the depiction of Lena Guthman Fox as "Miss Daisy" in her grandson's stage and screen hits "Driving Miss Daisy." In the 1930s, Schott and Guthmann family members who still remained in Germany were able to escape. Locally, several settled in Vineland, New Jersey and New York City.

Our take-away from this extraordinary week in Germany was a deep respect for the many separate efforts in recent years to document, preserve and teach Jewish heritage that stretches back hundreds of years. It is one thing to see the famous Jewish landmarks of a large city like Amsterdam, or in a more modest but famous city such as Worms; but to witness the efforts of individuals, churches and governments in small towns that no longer have Jewish populations was personally appreciated and its significance recognized.

Every so often one reads of acts of anti-Semitism in Germany, though often with significant counter demonstrations. Antisemitism still exists—in France, throughout Europe and certainly here in the U.S.—but there are those who would like to imagine that it is only significant in Germany. Alwin Muller and his daughter Anja Preussner; authors Gabriele Hannah and her brother and sister-in-law, Hans-Dieter and Martina Graf; Revs. Thomas Hoppner-Kopf and Bernd Wilhelm and their Hamm congregants; as well as the many others who have served to place memorials and maintain vestiges of former German Jewish institutions, demonstrate the strength of today's desire by Germans to confront the past in a positive manner rather than hide from it. ❖

Jack Myers, currently the archivist at Reform Congregation Keneseth Israel, has been exploring his family history since the 1970s. A graduate of the University of Michigan and the University of Pennsylvania, Jack retired after a nearly forty-year career in public school finance. He also taught at KI for over twenty-five years. The most outstanding aspect of his resume is his wife Laurie; their twin sons, Aaron & Seth; and new grandson Conway Penn. DNA tests identified Jack and Laurie as fourth cousins, though they haven't identified their common great great great grandparents yet!

Jack's surnames and ancestral towns of interest: MAYER, LOWENSTEIN, LANDAUER, RAPPAPORT--Altenstadt, Swabian Bavaria; GUTHMANN, SCHOTT, GUCKENHEIMER, EISEMAN, HAAS, KOENIG--Hamm, Eich, Russelsheim (villages along the Rhine), Germany; ARMON, HERMAN, TSVILISHOVSKY tracing back to JOSEPH (THE TRUE) HaKOHEN of Granov, Ukraine; SIMON, ROSENBERG

Contact Jack at: myersinphilly@comcast.net

THE IMPACT OF THE 2018 IAJGS CONFERENCE ON MY LIFE

by Felicia Mode Alexander, M.Ed



Introduction

I was very excited when the location of the 2018 IAJGS conference was announced because I've toured and studied in Poland twice as a Holocaust educator. It had been nine years since my last visit, and I looked forward to returning to the beautiful and booming city of Warsaw. I would explore the new POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews, revisit the Jewish Historical Institute, attend workshops related to my family research in Central and Eastern Europe, and last but not least, reconnect with a dear friend who is a Polish Holocaust educator. Any genealogical discoveries would be icing on the cake.

Before World War II, Poland was home to the largest Jewish population in Europe, including my ancestors in the German speaking region of Poland, now known as Poznan, but I have never been able to find that singular document conclusively linking our family to a specific place. The old German town names (Wongrowitz, Schneidemuhl, Kobylin, Bromberg, Obornik and Posen) in our assorted documents dated back to the mid-nineteenth century and Prussian rule of the region. They had been reported on documents such as the U.S. census and U.S. naturalization papers, decades after immigration in the 1840s. In addition, these were recorded once they were on American soil. The value of such documents is only as accurate as the information provided by the immigrant's descendent or the immigrant's own recollection and/or reporting of his/her place of birth. My research would never be complete until I could find a primary source that identified my ancestral home. In other words, after more than thirty years of research, I had still not found actual evidence of their life in Posen. Though I knew the chances were slim, this was also a major reason for my return to Poland and attending the 2018 IAJGS conference

Some people chose not to attend IAJGS 2018 due to concerns about the political atmosphere in Poland. I had similar trepidations, so I want to emphasize the role of several Polish people in making the conference week truly rewarding for me. My overall experience was enhanced by the kindness of three women: Marika, a stranger I met on my flight to Warsaw; Jolanta, a longtime friend; and Danuta, a new acquaintance, whose impact on my research I could never have imagined. This article will touch on the personal aspects of the trip made possible by these three women, a miraculous surprise from Danuta and a noble endeavor of the students and teachers of my ancestral town in Poland.

Marika

My seat companion on the flight to Warsaw was Marika, a delightful young woman, fluent in English and a true "goodwill ambassador" for Poland. Through our hours of chatting, she learned I was traveling alone. Since her husband would be picking her up at the airport, she insisted that I join them to drive from the airport to the conference hotel in the middle of Warsaw. I gratefully accepted her offer. Though it was quite late, and I am sure Marika was as exhausted as I, these folks went out of their way to assist me. Marika had been fascinated hearing about the IAJGS conference and pointed out noteworthy historic sites on the way to the Hilton. This act of kindness, transporting me to my hotel, was a warm welcome that served as a kick-off to my week in Warsaw. Marika and I are now "Facebook friends," and I may even see her again one day.

Jolanta

I arrived in Warsaw a few days before the actual kick-off of the conference. I had made plans to see Jolanta, a Holocaust educator whom I met at a Holocaust education program at Columbia University nearly a decade ago. We had stayed in touch over the years, including collaborating on an international human rights project with our high school students. When I found out that IAJGS would be convening in Warsaw, "Jola" was the first person I contacted! We decided to meet before the conference started. She drove ninety miles into Warsaw, and we spent our day together at the POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews.

The terms *bashert* and *kismet* really apply to my experiences at IAJGS. I believe that people find themselves in situations because they were meant to share an experience. Jola and I walked through the POLIN Museum, arm in arm, a Polish Catholic teacher and an American teacher with deep Jewish roots in Poland. Together, we discovered a magnificent wall mural and exhibit depicting my ancestral home in the region of Posen/Poznan. The display included several panels and was highly detailed, showing the lifestyle of Jewish people in this community centuries ago. It was fascinating exploring this space from both our shared and individual perspectives.



Jola and I spent the better part of the day at the POLIN Museum and memorialized our time together with a photo taken in front of the Mon-



ument of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. It was a powerful experience reminding us of our original connections through Holocaust education as well as our common roots exhibited in the museum.

Harris or Zvi? Ask an Expert!

I have discovered new information at each IAJGS conference by networking, attending workshops or using new databases in trial runs at the conference. This time, I brought two photos of a headstone which had both English and Hebrew inscriptions. Since I cannot read Hebrew, I needed assistance. At the translation

section in the exhibit area, I met with a

rabbi who provided helpful information. The inscription on the front of my great great grandfather's (1804-1888) headstone bore the name Harris L. Mode, while his name on the back was Zvi Yehuda ben Zachariah ha-Levi. This was interesting to me because I had seen the middle initial "L." on Harris' stone, and knew his father's name, Zachariah, but did not know they were Levites! I thought this was a fascinating discovery! I told the rabbi that I believed Harris/Zvi lived in Posen, Prussia. Coming from a family of tailors, he would have interacted in German, so I wondered what name he would have employed for colloquial use. The rabbi did not hesitate and immediately stated that it would be Hirsch, which also fit with his name in America, Harris. Most interesting; this information was to be validated at a later point and is described in the next section.

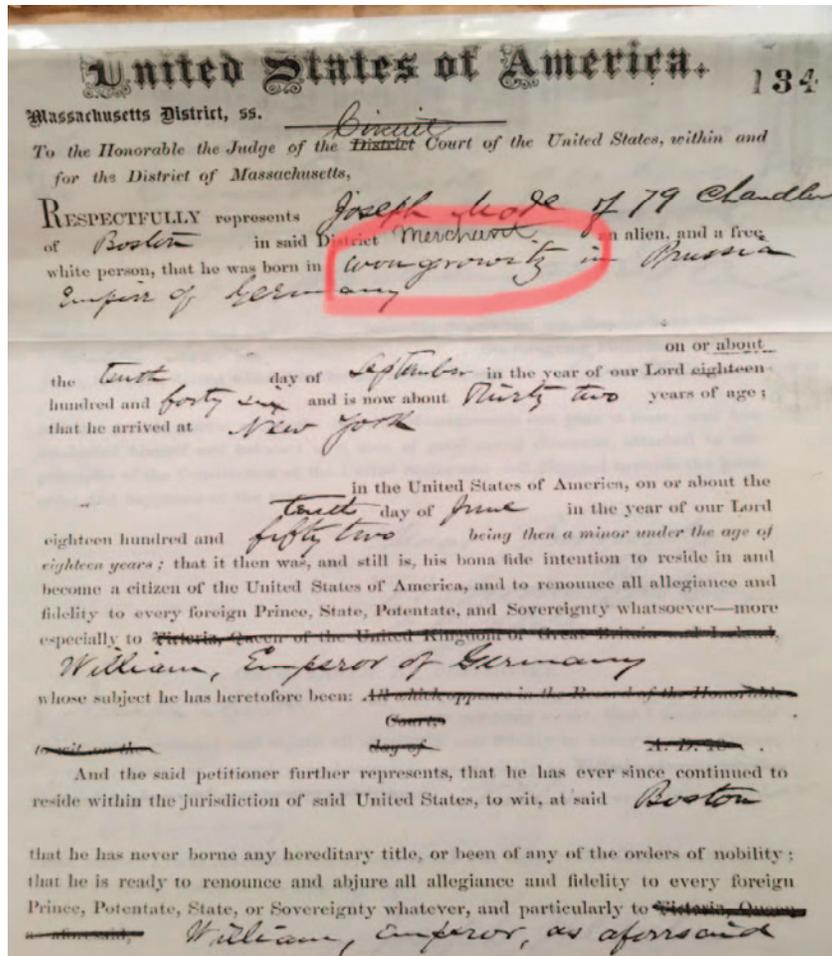


Headstone located in the old part of the Ohabei Shalom Cemetery in East Boston, the oldest Jewish cemetery in Boston. Photo ca. 2016, after a major restoration project.

Danuta

When the conference schedule and speaker biographies were published online, I noticed with great interest that there was going to be a session entitled "Wagrowiec: Time Regained, Exploring Jewish History of a Small Town." I sent the speaker, Danuta Chosinska, an e-mail explaining that her town's name appeared on many of my ancestors' documents. I knew that her town, Wagrowiec and my ancestors' town, Wongrowitz, were one and the same. The older spelling of Wongrowitz was from the era when this region of Poland was under Prussian/German rule. The modern name, Wagrowiec, is the Polish spelling,

but the pronunciations of both are very similar. Danuta was interested to hear this and asked me about my familial surnames. I shared these with her and hoped for the best.

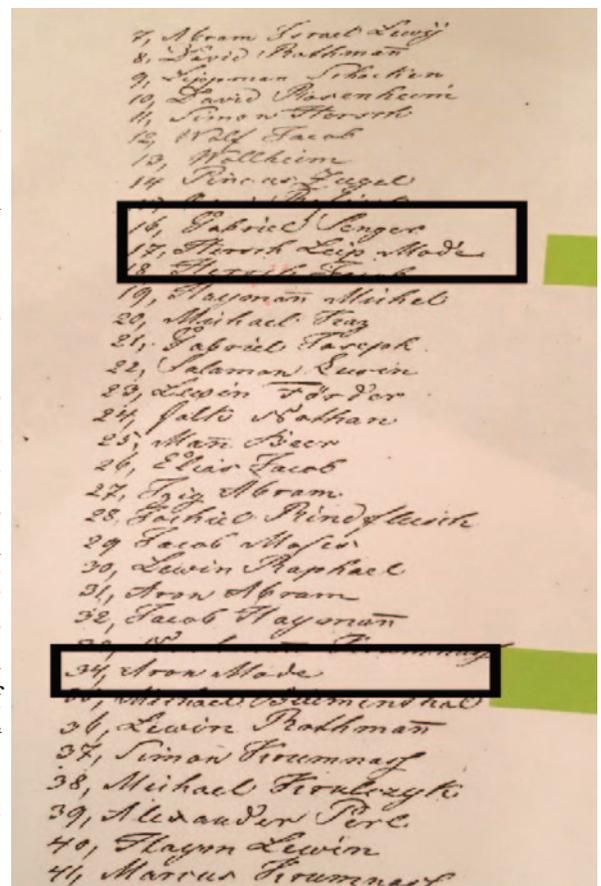


I had never seen any actual confirmation in my own research that we truly came from this town, as all of our documents were created after the fact in the U.S. The document pictured left is my great grandfather's (Joseph Mode) 1873 naturalization certificate identifying Wongrowitz as his birthplace (in red) and his arrival in the U.S. as a young child in 1852. His father was Harris/Zvi mentioned in the section above. I had never been able to locate any arrival documents or ship manifests for my ancestors despite the fact that arrival dates are included on this document. I had also not found any digitized documents among the Prussian records housed in Berlin. My fingers were crossed that Danuta would find evidence of my Modes.

Once we were both in Warsaw, Danuta and I met for lunch to discuss our town. She had a funny little glimmer in her eyes when she sat down. I was not sure what to expect, but she definitely was excited to share something with me. I had few expectations, thinking this was really just a small town, and she probably would not have much, if

any, information. I knew from my years of research that few records of Jews in Posen remain today. I could not have been more wrong. Danuta pulled out a folder, containing a large packet of papers, entitled *Acta* (report of public events) Wongrowiec and dated 1834!

Together, we looked through the handwritten pages until we came to one with a numbered list of male names. She asked me to refer to #17. It was **Hirsch Leib Mode!** And moving down the page to #34 was **Aron Mode**. With the help of a fellow teacher from my ancestral town, I had historical evidence of my family living and worshiping in Wongrowitz in 1834; the documents she had brought me were voting records from the only synagogue in Wongrowitz! These documents had been found in a repository in Berlin! I started to cry with stunned delight! I had found my great great grandfather and his younger brother. What's more, upon closer examination I also discovered that just above Hirsch at #16 was **Gabriel Sanger**, who I knew to be their brother-in-law!!! If I had not already met with the rabbi to translate the Boston *matzevot* (gravestones), I would not have identified Hirsch in this document! Their names appeared on additional pages, too. This confluence of historical connections is why I love attending the IAJGS conferences.



Restoring the Jewish History of Wagrowiec

After my very fruitful meeting with Danuta, I attended her formal presentation, which was about the Jewish history of Wagrowiec. She explained that it has become her mission as an educator and citizen, along with her history teacher husband and several other teachers in Wagrowiec, to research and honor the Jewish history of their hometown. Most residents know very little about this. *(Author's note: the research, photos and graphics in this section of the article are being used with Danuta's permission and are from her outstanding presentation.)*

With the German invasion and occupation of the region in 1939 and its strategic proximity to Berlin, the town was renamed Eichenbruck, the town's old synagogue was destroyed, its cemetery was dismantled and the *matzevot* removed. There had once been a vibrant Jewish community in the town, including many merchants and scholars, which peaked in the late 1840s, but most had left for America by the 1930s. Many had emigrated, like my own ancestors, for economic reasons in the mid 1800s when the population started to decrease.



Wągrowiec Jewish community											
Year	1780	1816	1831	1834	1847	1862	1871	1885	1913	1921	1932
Number	4	167	351	494	812	663	689	632	348	260	206

While still in her teens in 2001-2003, Danuta was part of a summer work crew which performed community service. At that time, the town reservoir was very low due to drought, revealing a remarkable discovery.

As the water level dropped, residents could see many Jewish headstones lining and reinforcing the banks of the town reservoir, a construction strategy commonly utilized by the Nazis. The local teens, Danuta included, worked to remove and restore the gravestones as much as possible. Eventually, a long-term plan was developed to create a memorial site.



Photo above from the discovery of the *matzevot*;
(right) some restored gravestones;
(below) trilingual memorial



Today, Danuta is a teacher of German in Wagrowiec. She and other teachers are working together to make sure their students learn about the Jewish history of their town and have created a blog, a website, pamphlets (sepia toned in photographs on the next page) that are in Polish and translated into Hebrew and English, and presentations about the Jewish history of Wagrowiec. Check out <https://www.facebook.com/Wagrowiec1381>.

Following the recovery of the *matzevot*, the community dedicated a memorial site with the beautiful, trilingual marker (pictured on p. 22) in addition to re-installing many of the restored *matzevot*.

In 2017, the official dedication of this memorial was attended by the Israeli Ambassador to Poland, Anna Azari. Students recited poetry written by earlier Jewish residents of their town and today, they volunteer their time to conduct walking tours, “Time Regained- -Following in the Footsteps of the Wagrowiec Jewish Community” for other students and visitors.



Prace porządkowe na kirkucie, maj 2017, fot. Wioletta Gryczka

Pictured left are continuing restoration efforts on the *matzevot*. Israeli Ambassador Azari (bottom photograph, far left), Danuta (far right) and Danuta’s students tour the memorial and participate in the walking tour.

As a result of Danuta’s IAJGS presentation, there is now a plan underway to create a JewishGen Kehila (community) link for Wagrowiec/Wongrowitz in which Danuta, Eli Rabinowitz (who has created many of JewishGen’s KehilaLinks) and hopefully I will work together to complete this project for posterity.

Conclusion

My feelings about Poland today are quite different than before the conference. Three individuals made a difference in my week in Warsaw and in how I feel about Jewish history in Poland moving forward. As long as there are kind and honorable men and women leading the next generation as teachers, I have hope that our Jewish history in Poland will be preserved and valued. As in America, there will be people harboring hatred and prejudice, but if one very small Polish town can create a memorial site and welcome Jewish people back to their ancestral town, I have hope . . . and I cannot wait to visit Wagrowiec/Wongrowitz myself! ❖



Pamiątkowe zdjęcie młodzieży oraz opiekunów biorących udział w projekcie „Wagrowiec: czas odnaleziony” z Anną Azari, ambasador Izraela w Polsce, fot. Rafał Różak

A retired special education teacher in the East Windsor, New Jersey Regional School District, Felicia Mode Alexander has taught both middle and high school world history and has been actively involved in Holocaust education, connecting her students with survivors and escorting them to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) in Washington D.C. each year. Her passion for genealogy research and Holocaust education came to fruition when she discovered a long lost cousin, the only child of a sole survivor, living in Israel.

Originally from the Boston area Felicia has been actively researching her family for more than twenty years. She is a member of the Jewish Genealogical Societies of Greater Philadelphia and Boston and is researching MODE, SHUMAN, ABRAHAMS, BORNSTEIN in Berlin and Posen; Grossman, LONGBORD and TALIAFSKY in the Kiev region. You can contact Felicia at fmode@verizon.net



Colorized picture postcard of the old town of Wongrowitz/Wagrowiec.

BOOK REVIEW *HIDING IN PLAIN SIGHT: MY HOLOCAUST STORY OF SURVIVAL*

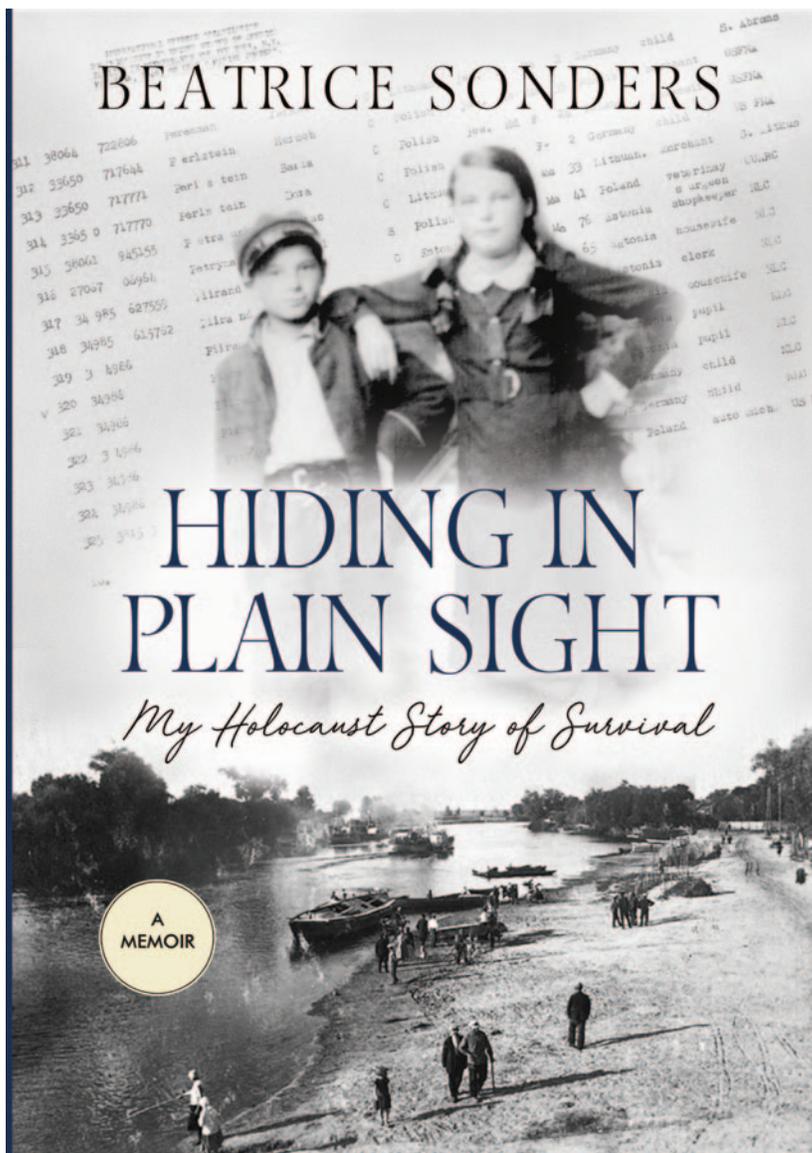
N.B. Instead of writing a review of this book, I think it best to let Beatrice Sonders and her grandson, David Salama, tell the story, in their own words.

Beatrice Sonders: “This book is dedicated to my three daughters, my ten grandchildren, and my seventeen great-grandchildren [now eighteen] ...and their children’s children.”

Foreword by David Salama

As I begin to put the finishing touches on my grandmother’s memoir, we are preparing for Passover in the year 2018. Soon, we will sit with our family and retell the story of the Exodus from Egypt. . . . probably the most important line of the Passover Haggadah, in my opinion, is the following sentence: . . .

“In every generation, each person is obligated to view for themselves as if they had been there and left Egypt.”



In other words, we are required to put ourselves in the Exodus narrative and try to imagine that we, as individuals, were witnesses to the slavery of our people and their eventual deliverance out of Egypt to the promised land of Israel. The following memoir entailed a long, complex process, but I like to think that the words in this memoir of the matriarch of my family serve as our own sort of Haggadah. While it’s a telling of a story not two-thousand years old, but a mere seventy-five years old, because of my grandmother’s survival, we are here today. Because of her, we are a family bound by our connection to this remarkable story of hope, luck, and faith

It was only in the early 1990s that my grandmother, Bea, began to tell her story, as she kept quiet about much of her experience in the immediate time period after the war. Her children knew bits and pieces of her narrative, but it was never documented in any attempt at preservation for future generations. In beginning to compile this memoir, I transcribed two interviews Bea gave from VHS tapes—one to the Holocaust Museum of South Florida in 1992, and another to the Steven Spielberg Shoah foundation in 1996. [As a teenager in the 1990s, David watched these videos awestruck, but he realized that there were many questions that the interviewers hadn’t touched.]

Meanwhile, my grandmother’s companion, Mort

Horowitz, began interviewing her, writing out her story on loose-leaf paper, and turning her memories into a proper narrative. He handed me his copious notes, which I typed up. I then interviewed my grandmother for ten hours over a series of days in 2016 and transcribed those interviews. . . .

To find more answers, I contacted the International Tracing Service and found documents of my grandmother's time in the displaced persons (DP) camps in Germany after the war. I also came across her listing on the ship manifest when she and her family came to America in 1949 and dug into the family tree, coming across cousins from both Bea's maternal and paternal lineage. Perhaps most interestingly, I discovered that my grandmother's first cousin, Ida Rosenblum, who is only six months younger than she is, lives in the building next door to her. Due to a family misunderstanding, they did not know each other, despite raising their families less than a mile from one another. I think, therefore, that it is important to recognize the deep wounds the Holocaust created and that, even seventy-five years later, some of these small fragments of shattered families are only now being pieced back together.

In August of 2016, I had the opportunity to travel with my wife, Pauline, to David-Horodok, which is in present-day Belarus, with the David-Horodok organization of Detroit. Together, with other David-Horodok descendants from Detroit and Israel, we walked the cobblestone streets of the town that was once a thriving Jewish community. I found the street on which my grandmother's house once stood. We walked the seven kilometers to the mass grave where Bea's brother and father most likely remain, and later journeyed to Sarny, which is today across the border in the Ukraine. Grandma and her mother walked this 100-kilometer journey together in August of 1941. [David and his wife separated from the larger group and together with a private guide, they explored Sarny, whose ghetto Bea and the man who was to become her husband endured and miraculously survived.]

There, on the outskirts of town, are three large mounds of earth—the three mass graves in which nearly 18,000 Jews were murdered during the liquidation of the Sarny ghetto. This is the resting place of Bea's mother. Seeing these locations firsthand was a moving and emotional experience and motivated me further to help complete my grandmother's memoir.

I have read and reread Grandma's story. I have walked the streets and towns that she did as a young teenager. I have heard her, with anguish and tears, speak of how her family was murdered. Each time, I've been left amazed by her ability to find hope and maintain faith, even in the most unimaginable horrors. It is my hope that, through this book, the memories of Bea's family will never be forgotten. It is also my hope that future generations of Basia Gadziuk's family take the time to read this family "Haggadah" to understand and appreciate what Bea endured—and ultimately survived. ❖

David Salama (*standing far left*)
April 2018



Four generations: Beatrice Gaduzk Sonders, center, with three generations of her family – all are David-Horodokers.

BOOK REVIEW

THE SYNAGOGUES OF EASTERN PENNSYLVANIA: A VISUAL JOURNEY

by Carol Robins

At our December meeting, I was delighted to receive this brand new book, just published in October. Author, Julian Preisler, is a researcher specializing in historic preservation and Jewish genealogy. Both color and black and white photos grace these glossy pages. Although it is a soft cover book, it is one that anyone should be glad to place on the coffee table.

Pennsylvania is sixth in Jewish population and the fourth oldest organized Jewish community in the United States. Many of us might be familiar with books featuring the former and current synagogues of Philadelphia, but often overlooked have been the cities and towns in the eastern part of the state, all with their own Jewish history.

The book is divided into four sections, and the author has taken special care to detail the history of each region:

- Southeast Pennsylvania (Philadelphia, Bucks, Delaware, Montgomery, and Chester Counties)
- Lehigh County (Allentown), Northampton County (Bethlehem, Easton), Lebanon Valley, Berks County (Reading)
- The Pocono Mountain Region (Stroudsburg, Honesdale)
- The Anthracite Coal Mining Region (Hazleton, Scranton, Dunmore, Kingston, Pittston, Wilkes-Barre)

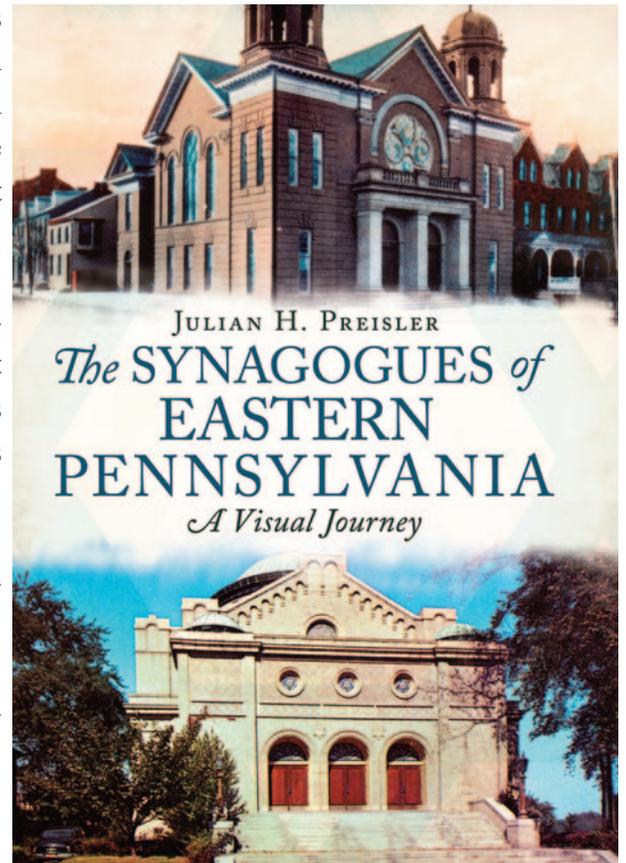
Knowing that many *shuls* (synagogues) and buildings are not there anymore made for a bittersweet experience for this reader. Several of these smaller towns no longer have a synagogue or a functioning Jewish community. Mergers and relocations are pervasive today, even in large cities.

Synagogues have existed in Pottstown, Pottsville, Mahanoy City, Minersville, Shenandoah, Frackville, and Dickson City. To this day, Lehighon's Temple Israel still has Sabbath services and is planning other events in this small community.

In Delaware County, how many of us have visited the synagogues of Wallingford, Upper Darby, Media, Broomall, Yeadon, or Havertown?

In Bucks County, Doylestown, Levittown, Newtown, Richboro, Yardley, Bristol, Berwyn, Eagle, and Malvern are some of the towns where Jews have worshipped.

Closer to home in Montgomery County, Norristown, Gladwyne, Elkins Park, Blue Bell, Maple Glen, Merion Station,



Penn Valley, Wynnewood, Dresher, and Springhouse have been home to many synagogues.

I was very impressed with the final product, especially since I have known fellow campers from the anthracite coal regions, Lancaster County, and Berks County. I look forward to reading Mr. Preisler's earlier book, a companion to this one. *The Synagogues of Central & Western Pennsylvania: A Visual Journey* focuses on Chambersburg, Danville, Hanover, Harrisburg, Pittsburgh, and Uniontown.

The author has also written *American Synagogues: A Photographic Journey* (eBook 2008); *Historic Synagogues of Philadelphia & The Delaware Valley* (The History Press, 2008); and *Jewish West Virginia* (Arcadia Publishing, 2010).

Originally from Detroit, Mr. Preisler lives in the West Virginia suburbs of Washington, D.C., and is the son of Holocaust survivors. He is a graduate of Mary Washington College in Fredericksburg, Virginia. ❖

Reviewer, Carol Robins is interested in the history of Riga, Latvia; Vilnius, Lithuania; Minsk, Odessa, Tiraspol, Balta, and Bukara. Names include RABIONOWITZ, ANGERT, BLUESTINE, YAFFE, IOFFE, KLEEMAN, GREEN NISE, FRANK, SCHEINHOLTZ, DAMELIN, GREEN, SHERMAN, TANKEL, ABELEW, ESKIN, HASKIN, and LIPSKY. Contact Carol at: cjrobins22@hotmail.com

IT'S BETTER TO GIVE THAN TO (JUST) RECEIVE

We are fortunate that we have the excellent and vast resources of JewishGen to assist in our research efforts. Some of us have taken advantage of education offerings to enhance our researching skills or to break down brick walls, while others of us have submitted entries to the Family Finder in the hope of identifying *landsmen* (individuals from the same ancestral town) and extended family.

I believe JewishGen more than deserves our support. Have you ever checked this page:

<https://www.jewishgen.org/JewishGen-erosity/>? You'll see the many opportunities to give back: projects sponsored by specific SIGs (Special Interest Groups), more general endeavors like the JOWBR (JewishGen Online Worldwide Burial Registry) and the general education fund, and finally the *yizkor* (memorial) book translations which give us thorough pictures of daily life in many of our ancestral towns. I've donated to the Starokonstantinov, Ukraine birth records 1866-1916 project because I hope to eventually uncover relevant information for members of my mother's paternal ancestry.

Fellow JGSGP member, David Mink is spearheading the project to translate the *yizkor* book for Siedlice, Poland (his mother's hometown) from Yiddish to English. *The Sefer Yizkor le-Kehilot Shedlets* (Memorial Book of the Community of Siedlice) is the most extensive compilation of the Siedlice community of Poland before World War II. Published in Yiddish and Hebrew in Buenos Aires in 1956, the book reconstructs the social, political, and religious fabric in this city of 15,000 Jews. The chapters were written by the citizens and survivors of the city. They paint a thorough picture of life there. Translating this book will open up this vital resource beyond the Yiddish speaking community, and it will serve as a vital tool for academics as well as genealogists.

Please consider supporting a pet project or two, to benefit both yourself and the larger JewishGen community. Contributions are tax deductible. ❖

Evan Fishman, Editor

DECEMBER MEETING SUMMARY

PASSPORTS FOR LIFE –

THE BERNESE GROUP RESCUE OF POLISH JEWS IN WORLD WAR II PRESENTER - JEFFREY CYMBLER, JD

by Linda Ewall-Krocker

(Note: In addition to Cymbler's remarks, this summary includes explanatory details accessed from other sources).



Cymbler outlined the story of the Polish diplomats and Jewish associates who constituted the clandestine Bernese Group. These brave individuals purchased blank passports from Latin American embassies and produced falsified ones that enabled many hundreds of Jews imprisoned in Jewish ghettos in German-occupied Poland to escape the Holocaust.

Markus Blechner, honorary consul of the Republic of Poland in Zurich and grandson of Holocaust victims, used Facebook as a research tool to locate some of these passports. K. Heidi Fishman, author of *Tutti's Promise*, described how the efforts of the Bernese Group saved her mother and grandparents -- the central characters in her book. Wladyslaw Szlengel, a Jewish-Polish poet, lyricist, journalist, and stage actor (1914-1943), wrote a song entitled "Passports for Life."



Poland was instrumental in producing Latin American passports, but no one knew to what extent until recently. The embassy began collecting and comparing documents from the archives, including photographs and names. Archives of Swiss Police provided more information, and Yad Vashem records were also researched. All the pieces of the puzzle were put together to ultimately identify the members of the Bernese Group and develop the narrative of how they saved many hundreds of people. A list of all known Jews for whom such passports were issued will be published in the near future.

The Bernese group consisted of the following six individuals: Konstanty Rokicki, Abraham Silberschein, Aleksander Ładoś, Chaim Yisroel Eiss, Stefan Ryniewicz, and Juliusz Kuhl.

Aleksander Ładoś (1891-1963), Polish envoy in Bern, Switzerland in the years 1940-1945, and in 1939-40 briefly a minister in the Polish Government in Exile, supervised the rescue action between 1941-1944, provided diplomats with full political and diplomatic umbrellas (created by interested nations to address a single situation such as an internal conflict in a non-member state), and convinced authorities to turn a blind eye.



Aleksander Ładoś
He played a crucial role in preparing a list of Jews to receive forged Latin American passports and had thousands of pictures sent from German-occupied Poland.



Abraham Silberschein

Abraham Silberschein (1882-1951), a Zionist politician and pre-war member of Sejm (lower chamber of Polish parliament), who became a resident of Switzerland in September 1939, was the founder of RELICO, the Geneva-based relief committee for Jewish war victims. He played a crucial role in preparing a list of Jews to receive forged Latin American passports and had thousands of pictures sent from German-occupied Poland.

Chaim Eiss (1876-1943) was a founding member of the Agudath Israel (Union of Faithful Jewry) and its main representative in Switzerland. He facilitated the transfer of money, passport photographs, and requests to locate family members in Europe.

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chaim_Yisroel_Eiss)



Chaim Yisroel Eiss

Stefan Ryniewicz (1903-1987) was deputy chief of the Legation of Poland in Bern and nominal chief of its consular division between 1938 and 1945. He was responsible for maintaining contact with representatives of Latin American legations in order to obtain blank passports and intervened with the Swiss police when it arrested Abraham Silberschein.



Stefan Ryniewicz

Juliusz Kuhl (1913-1987), a Jew and low-level diplomat at the Polish legation in Bern, was responsible for the legation's contacts with the Jewish organizations and was said to know everyone "from A to Z – from Agudah to Zion." He probably also took part in buying the passports.



Juliusz Kuhl

Konstanty Rokicki (1899-1958), vice consul of the Republic of Poland in Riga and Bern, manually forged more than 1,000 Paraguayan passports for Nazi-persecuted Jews in the ghettos.

Latin American passports protected holders by giving them Latin American status. The Nazis treated these new Latin American Jews differently than European Jews. Many of them were sent to internment camps instead of being deported to death camps. Until 1944 they could feel relatively safe because the Germans exchanged them for German POWs. In essence, these Latin American passports

"meant a better chance for survival" (from K. Heidi Fishman's blog, <https://popjeandme.com/2018/09/22/passport-update/>.) The price of these black-market passports became exorbitant and demanded the ultimate professionalism so that they didn't endanger the lives of other passport owners.



Konstanty Rokicki

Abraham Silberschein was tasked by Ryniewicz and Rokicki with insuring a more limited and affordable passport (no more than 700 Swiss francs per passport, compared to 1,000-2,000 before). Money came from Jewish organizations, private donations and state aid. Lists were made of who received them (they couldn't get more than one or that would unearth the whole program!), including photos. Letters and pictures were transferred into the list and given to the Polish Legation in Bern. Rudolf Hugli, honorary Paraguayan consul, who played an important role in this rescue process but profited by supplying blank passes, (<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/holocaust-oskar-schindler-julius-kuhl-canadian/article35896768/>) was also interrogated by the Swiss Police. By mid-1943 he was no longer acknowledged as an established representative of Paraguay. After a joint intervention by Poland, the United States and the Vatican, Paraguay acknowledged that for humanitarian reasons, they agreed with the program of producing the passports. In September, Silberschein was found with money and evidence that the passports were being produced. Heinrich Rothmund, head of the alien police and responsible for the implementation of the Federal Council's refugee policy, (https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heinrich_Rothmund) ordered the closure of Swiss borders to asylum seekers.

Marcel Pilet-Golaz, a Swiss politician who served on the Swiss Federal Council from December 13, 1928 -

December 1944, became aware of the Swiss surveillance of the (forged) documents, but Łados convinced him to turn a blind eye on the Bernese Group's activities. Abraham Silberschein communicated with the World Jewish Congress and specifically with Nahum Goldman and Arieh Tartakower pleading, "Help us to make everything possible to broaden the action, which is essential to save *Sherit Ha-Pletah* (a Hebrew term of Biblical origin meaning "surviving remnant") ...". Łados wrote: "I fully support this plea..." This received the full acceptance of the Polish Legation, making this the utmost scheme they were working on.

The diplomats are considered people without whom it was impossible that those affected would have survived. An application was received in 2018 by Yad Vashem to install Ładosz, Ryniewicz, Rokicki and the 1940-45 Legation of Poland into the Righteous Among the Nations. ❖

Linda Ewall-Krocker has been interested in genealogy since the early 1980s, fortunately starting shortly before her dad passed away, so that she did get some information from him. His little funeral prayer books have also been a helpful resource for when family members were buried, though not where, since he knew that and didn't jot it down; the information died with him.

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

MEETING SUMMARY - JANUARY 27, 2019

DNA 101: HOW TO USE GENETIC TESTING FOR GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH

**PRESENTER: LARA DIAMOND,
PRESIDENT, JEWISH GENEALOGY SOCIETY OF MARYLAND**

by Linda Ewall-Krocker

In this session, Lara Diamond shared insights on how to use genetic testing for genealogical research citing various types of tests available (including autosomal, Y-DNA and mtDNA). She explained the types of genealogical questions each test can help answer, how each company presents results, the strategies for transferring results from one company to another, and how to benefit from each.

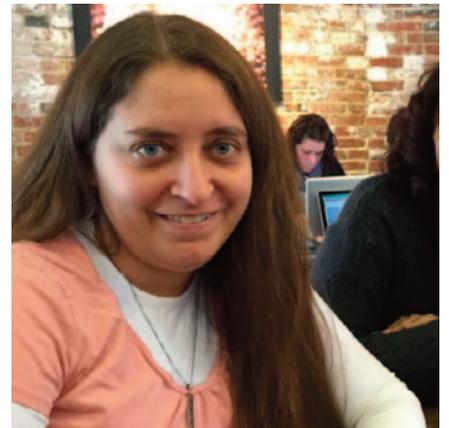
Lara found a cousin whose roots traced to a very tiny town they shared. She had an aunt in her tree marked as “killed in Holocaust,” but she was not... she came to the U.S. and had children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren.

Using Yad Vashem records, Lara showed town, names of parents. DNA is complementary to traditional research.

You want to be a good match to her family because she'll research your family! DNA can point you in research directions that the paper trail may not have.

The big four: AncestryDNA, FamilyTreeDNA, 23andMe or Heritage. If you test elsewhere, you won't get as much for your money. FTDNA is the only company that does mtDNA and Y-DNA tests and runs sales around Mother's Day for mtDNA tests and Father's Day for Y-DNA, as well as April 25th, DNA Day.

MtDNA traces the direct female (mother's mother's mother's) line and can be taken by men or women. Take the “Full Sequence” test around Mother's Day. Mitochondrial DNA has few mutations, so matches can go back 1,000 years. Surnames change every generation as women marry. The test can be used to disprove descent from a common direct female ancestor. If test yields only a few matches, there may have been a recent mutation. Those matches are worth investigating! A recent mutation makes it much easier to figure out the match. Lots of “0” genetic distance matches just show that you're related, but it can go twenty generations back. The haplogroup shows where the DNA branched off. If matches go to Puerto Rican names, you may have Sephardic heritage where ancestors left during the



Inquisition rather than following the Ashkenazi route.

Y-DNA (only men get a Y chromosome, which traces father's father's father's line), and usually traces surnames. There are different levels of testing (do at least thirty-seven.) It doesn't work well to trace father's surname because Jews haven't had surnames that long, and people changed names. Mutations can help to estimate relationship distance; the haplogroup tracks which branch someone is in. Even if you don't get a good match when you first test, more people keep testing, so check periodically. Genetic distance shows the number of mutations. Some markers mutate more frequently than others. Click on the little orange icon (on FamilyTreeDNA) to show which mutated. A distance of 4 on a certain (breakable) gene may be a better match than a distance of 3 for another match. A Jewish marriage without a civil marriage was interpreted by the government to be an illegitimate, which can make tracing surnames unreliable.

Autosomal test looks at all of the non-Y chromosomes inherited from all ancestors and is reliable for four to six generations, and often more. Potential for identifying relatives from all branches. Get ethnic estimates (admixture). "American mutts" want to know what they are. The results are only as good as the information put in. An adopted relative may have affected the DNA so that you get erroneous matches who are not Jewish, for example.

Ethnicity estimates (come with autosomal tests)

- Only as good as sample population
- Only as good as the ethnicity "bins"
- Reasonably good to the continental level
- "Noise"
- If you're Jewish, you won't get specific countries of origin
- Often get undated, so don't get too attached to a 2% Finnish result. Don't get too hung up on small percentages, they might not be real.

Cousin Matching

- Relationships are estimates
- If you are Jewish or from another endogamous community, these estimated relationships may be much closer than reality.
- Look at amounts of shared DNA.
- Second or third cousins due to endogamy...not a lot of genetic diversity (we're kind of inbred). We could be twelfth cousins in fifteen ways. Unlike the wording on a rear view mirror, "Objects may be closer than they appear."

New on AncestryDNA: they show how much DNA you share with matches, in cMs (centimorgans, the unit of measurement). View your match. If they have a tree, you may be able to find common ancestors. Both trees need to be public or you need to have access to see a tree they've shared with you.

FamilyTreeDNA also has a Family Finder test which gives you the amount of shared centimorgans. View the chromosome browser.

23andMe also offers health information, which is frequently the reason people get tested rather than an interest in genealogy. DNA gets divided up randomly throughout the generations, but large blocks are of interest. Small bits can be endogamy.

MyHeritage recently has been reporting a lot of false positives. Check Shared DNA and Triangulation (small icon that looks like a traffic light).

DNAPainter.com – free

- Paint chromosomes to show which sections match which family
- The Shared cM Project 3.0 tool v.4 shows relationship probabilities based on states from “The DNA Geek.”
- Even 1/8th Jewish can show endogamy.
- 10-15 with a 175 cM match can mean passing up a closer match. Look for 20-30 cM.

Possible Surprises

- A parent (or grandparent) wasn't who you thought
- Someone in your family gave up a child for adoption, and that child has tested
- Out-of-wedlock cousins
- Surprise ethnicities (ignore very small percentages)
- Criminal relatives (identified because of your DNA)

Which company is the best for DNA? It depends.

Ancestry

- Largest database for matches
- Can transfer from Ancestry to some other platforms
- No direct access to analytic tools (chromosome browsers)

FamilyTreeDNA

- Jewish owners
- Large percentage of Jewish users; has Sephardic ethnicity category
- Higher percentage of serious researchers than the others
- Can transfer to/from some other platforms
- Chromosome browser
- Stores sample for future tests

Recommendation: transfer from Ancestry to Family TreeDNA in order to do chromosome browsing.

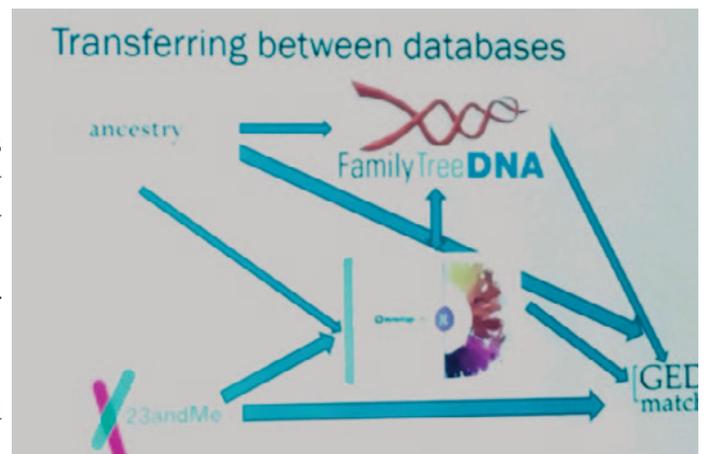
23andMe

- Health information
- Potential to do an add-on to get some health information
- Chromosome browser
- Can only transfer to GedMatch Genesis & MyHeritage; does not accept transfers

MyHeritage

- Newest in the market but growing quickly
- Good analytic tools and adding more regularly
- Largest number of “Jewish” ethnic categories
- Chromosome browser, automatic triangulation
- A test might show that someone isn't Jewish "enough" as defined by *halacha* (Jewish law). Different locales may have different laws, i.e. Maryland didn't used to allow health testing. France wouldn't allow testing. Solution: send kits elsewhere to a neighboring country or state. FamilyTreeDNA will send them kits.

Transferring between databases (see photo - right) and <https://tinyurl.com/TransferDNA>



AncestryDNA > FamilyTreeDNA, GedMatch, and MyHeritage.

FamilyTreeDNA will accept from Ancestry and MyHeritage and transfers to GedMatch.

23andMe transfers to MyHeritage and GedMatch.

Some charge ~\$19. Cousin matches will be free.

Contacting Matches

- Say which person you match (people administer multiple kits)
- Give your ancestral surnames/locations
- Don't give your whole life story
- Give your email address (other than FTDNA & GedMatch, already provided via e-mail)

Sample email:

"Hello! Ancestry predicts that John Smith and I are third cousins. I'd love to investigate to see if we can find a connection."

List your surnames/locations

Provide name and e-mail address

Shared Matches (with a warning)

Can help show which side the match is on, but won't necessarily help if you're Jewish because of endogamy!

X Match

If Jewish, don't take it too seriously. Can be endogamy. But check large X matches.

X matches are usually small if you're Jewish, and are not that meaningful.

Facebook Groups

- Genetic Genealogy Tips & Techniques
- Jewish DNA for Genetic & Family Research

Books

• *Family Tree Guide to DNA Testing & Genetic Genealogy* (Blaine Bettinger). Not specific to Jewish genealogy, but best book out there. If you ever have a chance to hear him speak, do so!

Questions

• Are we the only population that has issues with endogamy? No. Hawaiian Islanders, French Canadians, Cajuns, and other groups where intramarriage is common also encounter this issue

• Look for 20 or more segments.

• On Ancestry, go into the match and press the little "I" in a circle to see "largest segment." Christa Cowan is actually working with developers to give Jewish people the help we really need.

• Is DNA testing the best way to spend our time? Israel Pickholtz told us three years ago that it wasn't, but prices have gone way down and kits go on sale. It's another tool in our tool chest.

Next RootsTech conference: London, United Kingdom

24–26 October 2019 at the ExCeL London Convention Centre

Information at: <https://www.rootstech.org/>



ARE YOU PLANNING TO ATTEND THE 39TH IAJGS CONFERENCE ON JEWISH GENEALOGY IN CLEVELAND?



Look for complete details on the IAJGS website: <http://www.iajgs2019.org/>.

Registration is now open; hotel, restaurant and sightseeing information is available.

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.

The conference will be another exciting opportunity for Jewish genealogists to make contacts, learn from experts, visit with family and enjoy a week of discoveries with new and old friends.

JGSGP GENEALOGY QUIZ #16:

by David Brill



Here's the 1930 census for the WESCOFF family at 5264 Arlington St. in in the Wynnefield section of Philadelphia.

Q: One of the two daughters became one of the very first people in the world to do a kind of job that is now pretty commonplace. What's the job?

See the answer on p. 2.

PLACE OF ABODE		NAME	RELATION	HOME DATA		PERSONAL DESCRIPTION	EDUCATION	PLACE OF BIRTH			MOTHER TONGUE OR NATIVE LANGUAGE (IF FOREIGN BORN)	COLOR	CITIZENSHIP, ETC.	OCCUPATION AND INDUSTRY		EMPLOYMENT	VETERANS
State	County			Ward or city	Block No.			Street	Country	State				County	City		
Pa	Philadelphia	5264	Arlington	St.	34	112											
1	5264 928 415	William	Head	W	42	19	H	Pa	Pa	Pa	Polish			Manager			
2		Joseph	Wife	F	42	19	H	Pa	Pa	Pa	Polish						
3		Rebecca	Daughter	F	17	19	H	Pa	Pa	Pa	Polish						
4		Joseph	Daughter	F	15	19	H	Pa	Pa	Pa	Polish						
5	5264 928 419	Rosemary	Daughter	F	14	19	H	Pa	Pa	Pa	Polish						
6		Joseph	Daughter	F	12	19	H	Pa	Pa	Pa	Polish						
7		Joseph	Daughter	F	10	19	H	Pa	Pa	Pa	Polish						
8		Joseph	Daughter	F	8	19	H	Pa	Pa	Pa	Polish						
9		Joseph	Daughter	F	6	19	H	Pa	Pa	Pa	Polish						
10	5264 928 421	William	Head	W	42	19	H	Pa	Pa	Pa	Polish						
11		Joseph	Wife	F	42	19	H	Pa	Pa	Pa	Polish						
12		Rebecca	Daughter	F	17	19	H	Pa	Pa	Pa	Polish						
13		Joseph	Daughter	F	15	19	H	Pa	Pa	Pa	Polish						
14	5264 928 423	William	Head	W	42	19	H	Pa	Pa	Pa	Polish						
15		Joseph	Wife	F	42	19	H	Pa	Pa	Pa	Polish						
16	5264 928 425	William	Head	W	42	19	H	Pa	Pa	Pa	Polish						
17		Joseph	Wife	F	42	19	H	Pa	Pa	Pa	Polish						
18		Rebecca	Daughter	F	17	19	H	Pa	Pa	Pa	Polish						
19	5264 928 427	William	Head	W	42	19	H	Pa	Pa	Pa	Polish						
20		Joseph	Wife	F	42	19	H	Pa	Pa	Pa	Polish						
21		Rebecca	Daughter	F	17	19	H	Pa	Pa	Pa	Polish						
22		Joseph	Daughter	F	15	19	H	Pa	Pa	Pa	Polish						
23		Joseph	Daughter	F	12	19	H	Pa	Pa	Pa	Polish						



JEWISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF GREATER PHILADELPHIA

2019 Membership and Renewal Form

Member Information (Please Print)

Name (s): _____ **Date:** _____

Address: _____

Street Address

Apartment/Unit #

City

State

ZIP Code

Phone: _____ **Email:** _____

Membership Status: _____ **New Member** _____ **Renewal of Membership**

Membership Categories (Check box on left)

	CATEGORY	AMOUNT
<input type="checkbox"/>	INDIVIDUAL	\$ 25
<input type="checkbox"/>	FAMILY (2 Person Household)	\$ 35
<input type="checkbox"/>	SPONSOR	\$ 50
<input type="checkbox"/>	PATRON	\$100
<input type="checkbox"/>	Add Paper Chronicles (optional)	\$ 10 per year; For international mailing fee, contact editor@jgsgp.org
<input type="checkbox"/>	Add Contribution (optional)	\$
<input type="checkbox"/>	TOTAL AMOUNT	

All members receive e-mail copies of CHRONICLES. If you would like to have a paper CHRONICLES mailed to you, include an additional \$10 with your dues. Dues are for the calendar year, January 1 – December 31, 2019. YOU MAY PAY YOUR DUES USING PAYPAL on our website: <https://jgsgp.org>

If you are mailing your membership form and check, **mail to:** JGSGP, 1657 The Fairway, #145, Jenkintown, PA 19046. Make check payable to: JGSGP

Research Information

For New Members Only: Please list the surnames you are researching. Include the associated ancestral town and country. Use the back of the form if needed. This list will 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: <https://jgsgp.org>

Look for information about other IAJGS member societies:

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

Join the JGSGP Facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/196732503717635/>.



A thirty-minute period before each meeting is devoted to browsing reference books and getting help from mentors. Please check JGSGP e-mails, our website and our Facebook page for complete and up to the minute program information.

Sunday, March 17, 2019 1:30 pm

Main Line Reform Temple • 410 Montgomery Avenue • Wynnewood, PA 19096

“Looking at the History of Philadelphia's Jewish Community Through the Eyes of More Than 500 Synagogues”

Speaker: Ira Poliakoff



Ira Poliakoff was born in Manhattan in 1945 just as his father returned from four years of service as a ship's doctor during World War II. He grew up on the Upper West Side of Manhattan and Rockville Centre, Long Island. A retired business owner, he has lived with his wife, Judy, in Wynnewood for almost forty years. Ira's first book, *Synagogues of Long Island*, published in 2017, was awarded first place in the category "Religion, General," at the 2018 Best Book Awards at Book Fest. Ira will discuss interesting stories and facts about some of the more than 500 synagogues that exist or have existed in Philadelphia and its suburbs. Autographed copies of this book will be for sale after Ira's talk.

Sunday, April 14, 2019 1:30 pm

Venue to be announced - check our website for details: <https://jgsgp.org>

“The Wedding Photo: When A Genealogical Tree Bears Fruit!”

Speaker: Dan Oren, author of *The Wedding Photo*



Dan A. Oren, M.D. has worked for thirty years as a psychiatrist and faculty member at Yale University, the National Institute of Mental Health, and the University of Rzeszów, Poland. Prior to publishing *The Wedding Photo*, Oren wrote *Joining The Club: A History of Jews and Yale*, and co-authored *How to Beat Jet Lag: A Practical Guide for Air Travelers*. A visit to an abandoned Polish Jewish cemetery in 1993 launches a twenty-year search to solve the mystery of "Who is Buried in Sarah's Tomb?" A visit with a cousin unearths a breathtaking photo of a Berlin family wedding from 1926 and leads to discovering its unimaginable post-wedding history. An archivist in Prague discovers an unknown uncle whose life takes the reader from the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York to the Vatican. A memoir by Philip Roth shocks a daughter into unlocking a father's concealed past. In *The Wedding Photo* Dan Oren shares inspiring stories and techniques of how the pursuit of genealogy opens new worlds. Autographed copies of this book will be for sale.

Sunday, May 19, 2019 at 1:30 pm

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

We are working with Professor Robert Watson, who presented “Hamilton: Man, Myth, Musical... Mensch” to us last October, to talk about his book, *The Nazi Titanic: The Incredible Untold Story of a Doomed Ship in World War II*.

More details in our next issue and on our website: <https://jgsgp.org>

June 2019 Meeting

In lieu of our usual meeting format, the Program Committee is now working on a full-day bus trip to the Museum of Jewish Heritage, A Living Memorial to the Holocaust. JewishGen is an affiliate of the museum. The plan for this trip is to include a group tour of "Auschwitz: Not Long Ago. Not Far Away.”

More details in our next issue and on our website: <https://jgsgp.org>

Deadline for submission of articles for our spring issue is Sunday, March 24, 2019.

Please send material to: editor@jgsgp.org.