



זכרון ZichronNote

The Journal of the San Francisco Bay Area Jewish Genealogical Society

Volume XVII, Number 2

May 1997

SFBA JGS CALENDAR OF GENEALOGICAL EVENTS Meetings of the San Francisco Bay Area Jewish Genealogical Society

Please note: Unless otherwise indicated, the meeting schedule is as follows:

- San Francisco:** **Sunday, Doors open 12:30 p.m., program begins 1 p.m.**
Fort Mason Center, Marina Boulevard at Buchanan Street
Building C, Room 205 (or as indicated below)
Free to members, \$3 for non-members, applicable towards membership
- Palo Alto:** **Monday, 7:30 - 10 p.m. Please contact Dana Kurtz if you need directions.**
Congregation Kol Emeth, 4175 Manuela (near Foothill Blvd. and Arastradero Road)

- Sun. May. 18** **San Francisco:** *Clothing Clues in Family Photographs.* Speaker Melissa Leventon, Curator of Textiles, Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco. (See page 4 for details.)
- Mon. Jun. 16** **Palo Alto:** *Jewish Life and Culture in Russia, 1881-1917.* Speaker Steven Rappaport, doctoral candidate, Stanford University. (See page 4 for details.)
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|---------------------|----------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| Sun. Jul. 20 | San Francisco | Mon. Aug. 18 | Palo Alto |
| Sun. Sep. 21 | San Francisco | Mon. Oct. 20 | Palo Alto |
| Sun. Nov. 16 | San Francisco | Mon. Dec. 15 | Palo Alto |

Upcoming classes offered by the National Archives Pacific Region

- Fri. May 16** *Passenger Arrivals and Naturalization Records.* 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.
- Fri. Jun. 27** *Census Information: A Potpourri for Research.* 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.
- Fri. Jul. 11** *Using the Internet for Family History.* 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.
- Fri. Jul. 18** *Preserving Your Family History: Basic Techniques.* 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Classes held at: 1000 Commodore Drive., San Bruno. To register or for information, call (415) 876-9009.

Other Genealogy Meetings of Interest on Page 4

ZichronNote
Journal of the San Francisco Bay Area
Jewish Genealogical Society

ZichronNote is published four times per year, in February, May, August and November. Deadline for contributions is the 10th of the month preceding publication. The editor reserves the right to edit all submittals. Submissions may be made on 3-1/2" floppy disks in DOS, Windows 3.1 or ASCII format, or e-mailed to <DLKURTZ@ix.netcom.com>.

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Family Finder queries are free to society members. Non-members may place queries for \$5 each, limited to 25 words not including searcher's name, address, phone number and e-mail.

Correspondence relating to publication items or requests for back issues should be addressed to the SFBA JGS at the address below.

Display advertising is accepted. The rate for a 2-column-inch (3-1/2 x 2 inch, business card-sized) insertion is \$10 per issue, quarter-page ad \$20, half-page ad \$35, full-page ad \$60. Ads must be camera-ready, relate to Jewish genealogy and be in good taste.

Membership is open to anyone interested in Jewish genealogy. Dues are \$20 per calendar year. The Society is exempt pursuant to section 501(c)(3) of the IRS code. Make check payable to "SFBA JGS" and send to: Sita Likuski, Membership, 4430 School Way, Castro Valley, CA 94546.

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ZichronNote Editor: Dana L. Kurtz

Copy Editor: Gordon Fine

Meetings: **Odd-numbered months**-3rd Sunday of each month, 1 p.m. at Fort Mason Center (Marina at Buchanan), San Francisco. **Even-numbered months**-3rd Monday of each month, 7:30 p.m. at Congregation Kol Emeth, 4175 Manuela Avenue (near Arastradero and Foothill), Palo Alto.

SFBA-JGS Web Site: www.jewishgen.org/sfbajgs

President's Message

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Great things are happening! With your generous contributions we have purchased a photocopier which will be available at all meetings. This will help alleviate the sometimes long wait for a fellow SFBA JGS member to finish using a book while you are waiting for it. At the February "open library night" in Palo Alto the copier made its debut: I don't recall seeing anyone wait for a book.

February also saw our first ever SFBA JGS meeting in Berkeley, at Temple Beth-El. What a terrific turnout - 65 members and guests! The enthusiastic crowd has encouraged us to schedule another Berkeley meeting soon. Keep your eyes on the *ZichronNote* and web site calendars, and those occasional e-mail announcements. Our thanks to Temple Beth-El and to JGS member Robinn Magid for providing the room.

Calling all volunteers: the SFBA JGS is ready to launch its participation in the World-Wide Cemetery Project. We need your help to create an index to all Jewish burials in the Bay Area. (See article, page 6.) Any amount of time you can offer to this vast project will be a valuable contribution. The project has potentially terrific benefits for Jewish genealogists around the world. To see what this international project looks like, check out the link from the JewishGen web site <www.jewishgen.org/cemetery/index.html>. Contact Gordon Fine at (415) 346-4856 for more information.

The SFBA JGS library holds DOS-based floppy disks with the project's cemetery information updated as of July 1996. Contact librarian Judy Baston at (415) 285-4616 or via e-mail <jrbaston@aol.com> to borrow the disks.

Notice the long list of contributors to this issue credited on the last page. Each of us has something to offer to other genealogists. The common experiences and unexpected avenues of genealogical research are most rewarding when shared. Please consider sharing your experiences with the readers of *ZichronNote*.

Finally, check out the bargains available on some of the best books for Jewish genealogy (also on page 6). This will be the last time we will offer these discounts for the near future. Don't miss this opportunity to begin or enhance your genealogy library.

~Dana

SOCIETY NEWS

Member News

Welcome New Members

Vivienne Chutick	Belvedere
Jacque W. Cohen	Arcadia
Andres Convers	Louveciennes, France
Michael Feller	Kensington
Denise Ojibway Goldberg	San Jose
Martha and George Greene	Los Altos
Gary Katz	Santa Clara
Art Krakowsky	Moraga
Helen Major	San Francisco
Basya Petnick	San Francisco
Mike Rothenberg	San Jose
Arthur Salop	Palo Alto
Joyce Scharf	Vallejo
Frank Snitz	Berkeley

Welcome Marc

The SFBA JGS is pleased to announce that Marc Seidenfeld has joined the Board of Directors as Treasurer.

Marc brings with him his experience as an attorney and as treasurer of a large fraternal organization. We look forward to benefitting from his expertise and enthusiasm for Jewish genealogy and the SFBA JGS.

Donations

Thanks to the many members who generously donated above the membership dues level.

Supporting

Larry Tesler	Edward Zelinsky
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Contributing

Beth and Charles Brummer	Howard Oser
Carol Slutsky Hanig	Ruth Rafael
Shirley Wasserman Hausafus	Edith and Leon
Norma Agar Holzman	Rosenthal
Fred Loewy	James Smith
Carol Morrison	Charles Weinstein

Founder Martha Wise has thoughtfully donated a new 30-cup coffee pot to the SFBA JGS.

E-Mail

Messages sent to the following people bounced. Please advise us of your correct e-mail address:

Barry Asin	Victor Levy
Steven Byars	Nicki Russler
Loren Bialik	Rae Sal Schalit
Bill Ellenburg	Denise Selleck
Shirley Hausafus	

If you have an e-mail address but have not been receiving occasional SFBA JGS e-mail messages, or your e-mail address has changed, send a message to <DLKURTZ@ix.netcom.com> so we can keep you up to date.

Lauder Project Donations Preserve Polish Records for a Jewish Future

by Gordon Fine

Last year the SFBA JGS appealed for donations to the Ronald S. Lauder Genealogy Project to preserve mildewing records of Polish Jewish life from the 17th century through the post-Holocaust period. In part because of our generous total contribution of over \$12,000, treasures of the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw are now stored in acid-free containers. Donations have purchased computers and pay data entry clerks to create computer-searchable databases of Jewish birth, marriage, death and burial records; unique Holocaust documents such as *judenrat* records; and post-war children's home records.

These records have been used so that a "hidden child" - inquiring through JewishGen - could ascertain his Jewish background; he has subsequently begun adult Jewish education classes sponsored by the Lauder Foundation. Survivors have found long-lost relatives that they had presumed to have perished. Archival materials have also yielded *yahrzeit* dates thereby providing a sense of closure regarding lost loved ones.

Additional funding will enable the project to computerize more genealogical materials, publish guides to previously unknown collections and preserve photographs by means of CD-ROM technology. Tax-deductible contributions, which may be designated for "Genealogy/Archives," may be made to the Ronald S. Lauder Foundation, 767 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10153.

CALENDAR, cont'd.

More Genealogy Events

Local

Sun. May 4, 1-4 p.m. California Genealogical Society: **Forms and Filing for the Beginner**. Registration: CGS, 300 Brannan St., Suite 409, San Francisco. Tel: (415) 777-9936.

Wed. May 14, 7:30 p.m. San Mateo County Genealogical Society (SMCGS); **Oral Interviews**. Speaker Linda Scott Lilles. Central School, Belmont. Tel: (415) 572-2929

Sat. May 17, 12:30 p.m. SMCGS; **Beginnners Workshop**. SMCGS Library, 25 Tower Rd., San Mateo. Tel: (415) 572-2929.

Thurs. May 22, 7:30 p.m. **SMCGS Computer Group Meeting**. SMCGS Library, 25 Tower Rd., San Mateo. Tel: (415) 572-2929. Tel: (415) 572-2929

Sun. May 18, 1-4 p.m. California Genealogical Society; **Documenting Your Work**. Registration: CGS, 300 Brannan St., Suite 409, San Francisco. Tel: (415) 777-9936.

Sun. May 25, 1-4 p.m. California Genealogical Society; **Census and Other Starting Places**. Registration: CGS, 300 Brannan St., Suite 409, San Francisco. Tel: (415) 777-9936.

Tue. Jun. 10, 7:30 p.m. Livermore-Amador Genealogical Society, regular meeting. Congregation Beth Emek, (corner of College Ave. and South "M" St.), Livermore. Tel: (510) 447-9386

Regional

Mon. May 19, 7 p.m. JGS of Sacramento; **Beginnings of Judaism in Sacramento**. Speaker Brett Wyatt, author of *Jewish Settlement in Sacramento*. Albert Einstein Center, Arts & Crafts Room, 1935 Wright Street, Sacramento. Tel: Jane Paskowitz (916) 633-9557.

Mon. Jun. 16, 7 p.m. JGS of Sacramento; **Family Tree Maker Software Demonstration**. Speaker Eric McGlynn. Albert Einstein Center, Arts & Crafts Room, 1935 Wright Street, Sacramento. Tel: Jane Paskowitz (916) 633-9557.

Across the Country

Mon.-Sat. Jul. 21-26, **National Institute on Genealogical Research - 1997 Program**. Write: National Institute on Genealogical Research, P.O. Box 14274, Washington, D.C. 20044-4274.

Upcoming SFBA JGS Programs

On Sunday, May 18 in San Francisco, Melissa Leventon, Curator of Textiles for the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco will present **Clothing Clues in Family Photographs**. Ms. Leventon will explain how clothing worn by our ancestors can be a tool to use in determining when photographs were taken.

JGS members are invited to bring only ONE photograph for Ms. Leventon's review. Sign-up sheets will be posted at the meeting - space is limited. Don't miss this great program!

The next Palo Alto meeting will be on Monday, June 16. The topic is **Jewish Life in Russia, 1881-1917**. Speaker Steven Rappaport is a doctoral candidate at Stanford University. He recently spent a year in Russia and Israel doing research for his dissertation, "Jewish Education and Culture in Russia 1881-1917."

Living in St. Petersburg for seven months, Mr. Rappaport conducted extensive research in the Russian State Historical Archives focusing on Jewish education and culture. He had access to many materials on Jewish primary schools from hundreds of communities in pre-Revolutionary Russia.

Mr. Rappaport has been awarded fellowships from the National Foundation for Jewish Culture, the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture and the Mellon Foundation. Come learn more about the daily lives of our ancestors.

Wed.-Sat. Sep. 3-6, Federation of Genealogical Societies, Dallas Genealogical Society; **Unlock Your Heritage - 1997 FGS/DGS Conference**. Dallas, TX. Write FGS, P.O. Box 830220, Richardson, TX 75083-0220. Fax: (214) 907-9727.

Thu.-Thu. Nov. 6-13, **Jewish Genealogical Research Trip to Salt Lake City**. Gary Mokotoff and Eileen Polakoff. Write 155 N. Washington Ave., Bergenfield, NJ 07621.

Foreign Travel

Sun.-Thu. Jul. 13-17, **5th International Seminar on Jewish Genealogy**, Paris, France. Write: Philip Abensur, Pres., Cercle de Genealogie Juive, 14 rue Saint Lazare, 75009 Paris, France. Tel/Fax: 01 40 23 04 90; Minitel: 3615 GENEALOG; e-mail: A. Convers <100766.2212@compuserve.com>

Sun.-Thu. Aug. 31-Sep.18, **Discover Your "Ancestral Roots" in the Ukraine**. Cruise Kiev to Odessa, four-day optional extension to Moldova. Write: Shirley Rose, Travel-Rite Inc., 816 Glenmere Way, Los Angeles, CA 90049. Tel: (310) 471-1943; Fax: (310) 476-9553; e-mail: <dream@aol.com>.

Success Story: What You Think You Know May Hurt You

by Sita Likuski

Sita Likuski, SFBA JGS Membership Chair, hopes to trace her **LEVY** family from Brooklyn back to Russia and her **MARKS/SKIDELSKY** families to Belarus. Her maternal lines of **FIDANQUE**, **BRANDON** and **MADURO** are documented from Spain to the Netherlands to the West Indies and to Panama.

The end of the search was easy. Log onto "Switchboard" on the Internet. Find the phone number for the only **PERGAMENT** in the New York City area with the correct first name. Call her. Yes, Herbert Pergament, my father's first cousin, was her late husband. They had two daughters, four grandchildren, and seven great-grandchildren - my "new" cousins!

The search itself lasted years because I "knew" Herbert had no family. My father would have mentioned them! Originally I was just trying to find out if Herbert was alive. He might live in Brooklyn, as I'd found phone listings for him there through the 1940s. However, there was no current listing in the New York City phonebooks.

I checked the Social Security Death Index and found one Herbert Pergament, born the same year as my father, died in 1962. This looked like a good possibility. Unfortunately, no place of death was listed. I searched the index of New York City deaths at the New York Public Library - no luck. There was no point in checking the New York City Groom's Index for Herbert because I knew he never married!

At one of my first SFBA JGS meetings, in Palo Alto, I mentioned that I was looking for Pergaments, among others. JGS member Jim Serwer was also. Thanks to his research, I found out my Pergaments were buried at Acacia Cemetery in Ozone Park, Queens. On my next visit to New York, in 1993, I visited the cemetery and found Herbert's parents' tombstones. Even more exciting, they were in a family plot with my great-grandparents, Morris and Sylvia Bessie Horowitz **LEVY**, and my grandfather, Isadore Levy. (Although my grandfather's stone is missing, the cemetery had his date of death on file, which allowed me to track down his death certificate.) Naturally I took pictures.

Later, looking at the photos, I suddenly realized what I had seen. The tombstone of Fannie Levy Pergament, Herbert's mother, said "Beloved mother and grandmother." I knew dates could be wrong on tombstones, but an inscription like that? Herbert had children, or he had a sibling who had children. And I had one or more new cousins!

The next clue was the June 1917 WWI Draft Registration of Herbert's father. For the question, "Have you a...child under 12 years old" he wrote, "2 children." This could be the answer! Sadly, I knew from a small stone at the cemetery that there had been a Pergament child, born in July 1917, who died in 1920. Probably, but not definitely (watch those assumptions) this was the second child. But there might still have been children born after 1917.

I decided it was time to write to the Social Security Administration (SSA). After all, they had a date of death; how could they know that but not know the place? They responded that Herbert died before filing for benefits so they did not have that piece of information. I could request the claim file which is "generally destroyed five years after the death of the last person receiving benefits on the record. Some files, however, are retained for a longer period." I figured for \$14 I had nothing to lose.

Six months later (this was during the government shutdown), I got my money's worth from the SSA: copies of Herbert's marriage certificate in both Hebrew and English, his death certificate and his widow's application for benefits. The marriage was in New York City. If I'd only checked the Groom's Index years ago! However, the death had taken place on Long Island, which explained why I couldn't find a record in New York City.

One problem remained: On every document the wife's name had been whited out. She was "not shown to be deceased" in the SSA's records and thus her name could not be shown. A request to the Municipal Archives in NYC with a \$10 check (since I didn't have a certificate number for the marriage, only the groom's name and the date) promptly brought a copy of the original marriage certificate showing the wife's name. A log-on to the Internet brought me her phone number.

She wrote, after our phone conversation, "I am totally amazed by your phone call. It is nice to know that people don't disappear. We do leave a Heritage."

Call for Volunteers to "Adopt" a Cemetery

Spring is here and the weather is perfect for "adopting" a cemetery, burial society or funeral home for the Cemetery Project. This SFBA JGS volunteer project will assemble a computer database of Jewish deaths and burials in the Bay Area. Our cemetery project is coordinating with numerous genealogical societies around the world under the auspices of Arline Sachs and the Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies.

The first phase of this project is to locate and record basic background information about Jewish cemeteries and mortuaries, and non-Jewish cemeteries where Jews are buried. Dana Kurtz, Gayle Leyton and Rodger Rosenberg developed a survey sheet, which has recently been mailed to over one hundred cemeteries and funeral homes around the Bay Area.

The second and more ambitious step will index each Jewish burial in the Bay Area. Each entry will include name, date and place of death, birth

date or age at death, and grave location. This index will then be available for researchers and interested family members so they can contact the appropriate cemetery, burial society or funeral home to obtain additional information.

Volunteers are needed throughout the Bay Area to "adopt" a cemetery (or part of a cemetery) and index its records. You work on their own, or we will help you try to form a working group.

Volunteers are also needed to enter information into a computer database at home (without having to visit a cemetery.) We already have grave marker information has been recorded by David Abrahams, Chuck Weinstein and Julian Preisler (of Wilmington, Delaware). This is an exciting project creating a potentially valuable resource for all Jewish genealogists. Please contact Gordon Fine at 2678 California Street, No. 3, San Francisco, CA 94115, (415) 346-4856.

Last Chance to Purchase Major Resource Books at Great Discount

Members of the SFBA JGS are eligible to purchase some of the most valuable resource books for Jewish genealogy at significant discount. By ordering in bulk, we obtain at least a 20% discount on most books and pay no shipping charges from Avotaynu Publishing Company.

To take advantage of this, we must place an order that meets a minimum quantity for each title. In the past, JGS members have often had to wait over a year for enough orders to be placed. Therefore, the SFBA JGS Board of Directors has decided to offer this opportunity **only one more time** for the foreseeable future.

If you are interested in ordering any of the books listed below, please send a check for the total amount due, made payable to the SFBA JGS, to SFBA JGS, P.O. Box 471616, San Francisco, CA 94147.

ORDERS AND PAYMENT MUST BE RECEIVED BY JUNE 13!

<u>Title</u>	<u>Author</u>	<u>List Price</u>	<u>JGS PRICE</u>
Where Once We Walked	Sack/Mokotoff	\$69.50	\$55.60
WOWW Companion	Mokotoff	\$25.95	\$20.76
Dictionary of Jewish Surnames from the Russian Empire	Beider	\$75.00	\$60.00
Documents of Our Ancestors	Meshenberg	\$19.95	\$16.00
FAQ: Frequently Asked Questions About Jewish Genealogy		\$11.00	\$ 8.80
Following the Paper Trail	Shea	\$29.00	\$23.20
Documenting Victims and Locating Survivors of the Holocaust	Mokotoff	\$25.95	\$20.76
Guide to Genealogical Resources in Israel	Sack	\$35.00	\$28.00
Biographical Dictionary of Canadian Jewry	Tapper	\$35.00	\$21.00
Jewish Surnames from Prague	Beider	\$11.00	\$ 6.60

- All other items in the Avotaynu catalog are available at list price but there without shipping charges.
- *Dictionary of Jewish Surnames from the Kingdom of Poland* by Beider is not available at discount.

Success Story: The Raphael Family

by Randy Stehle

In addition to the surnames in this article, Randy Stehle is researching **BRILLIANT** and **SABELOWITZ** from Kovno, Lithuania; **GREEN** and **MARKMAN** from Prussia; **POOL**, **BIERMAN** and **DE HOND** from Amsterdam; **VAN FRANCK** from Uithoorn, Holland; **WOLFF** from Sombar, Galicia; and **GROSS** from L'vov, Galicia.

I first started researching the Polish side of my family in the late 1970s. My grandfather was still alive then, and he knew the names of the towns in Poland where his parents were born. They were from different towns in Suwalki guberniya, his mother from Filipow and his father from Punszk. At my local Mormon Family History Center (FHC), I discovered that the Jewish records from both towns had been filmed. With the help of a Polish speaker, I was able to locate relatives from both towns. There were only a few **NICIANSKIS** in Filipow but a bewildering number of **RAFALINS** in Punszk. (The name was changed to **RAHAEL** when they got to America). I recorded my direct line back to my second great-grandfather in Punszk. As the records were kept in Russian after 1867, I decided it would be too difficult to look at them. Soon after this, I finished graduate school, got my first "real" job and married. Work and family took me away from my genealogical pursuits for more than a dozen years.

When I began genealogical research again a few years ago, I had great luck with my French and German families. Spurred on by my success, I joined the SFBA JGS and even attended a few meetings. After reading about Russian Era Indexing of Poland Project (REIPP) (see *ZichronNote*, August, 1996), I got on-line and sent for the Punszk microfilm again. Armed with some REIPP printouts I went back to the FHC and copied every Rafalin Russian era record.

I also copied some Polish language records, as I knew the SFBA JGS was going to have a workshop soon. There would be people there who could translate these two languages and I hoped they would help me identify other relatives in Punszk. I hit gold at the workshop - I discovered that two sisters of my second great-grandfather had married men from other towns (Kalvaria and Augustow). The most exciting find was that one of the Russian era death records was for my third great-grandfather. I could now go back another complete generation.

Landsmen Leads to a Fourth Cousin and Great-Great-Grandfather's Four Siblings

All this success finally inspired me to subscribe to *Landsmen* (the publication of the Suwalk Lomza Special Interest Group). I sent for all the back issues, and when they arrived I could not put

them down. In the very first issue I read part of an English translation of a Suwalki and vicinity yizkor book. I was fascinated by the description of life in the second half of the 19th century. There was also an article on Jewish records filmed by the Mormons that had some great research tips. I learned that the films identified as Roman Catholic civil records for the period 1808-1825 also contained Jewish records.

I finally got to the Family Finder advertisements and saw one that mentioned Raphaels. This name is not that uncommon, so usually I do not get too excited when I encounter it. This time was different. I almost fell off the couch as I read the other surnames in the ad: **ESTERSON**, **WINKLEMAN** and **HYMAN**. I also was researching these names. In fact, I had been trying to hook up with the Winklemans since I first started.

I called the person who placed the ad, (Nancy Schoenburg, who co-wrote the book *Lithuanian Jewish Communities*). We knew immediately that we were cousins (fourth cousins actually). She was completely unaware of my side of the family, which as it turned out, was the one branch that came to California. The only research of ours that overlapped was for the only other side that came out west (to Washington State). All the other branches of the family stayed on the East Coast. Nancy had also started her research in the late 1970s. Several years earlier she also had found a Family Finder ad (in a different publication) from another fourth cousin in our family (with whom I am now exchanging e-mail).

Eventually we identified ten siblings in my second great-grandfather's generation. I knew of three, while Nancy knew of five. We only overlapped on one, the Winklemans. Nancy sent me her descendancy chart which had about 1,000 names on it. I sent her my family tree plus a picture of our mutual third great-grandfather, Aron Raphael.

When I went back to look at the Punszk films, the given name Aron proved problematic. There were lots of Rafalins in the records, but some had a father with the first name of Orel. Not wanting to do sloppy research, I made note of this and moved on with my research. Then I looked in a back issue of *Avotaynu* (Vol. VII, No. 4, Winter 1991, pp.12-15)

continued on page 8

Raphael Family, cont'd from page 7

and read the article by Alexander Beider on Jewish given male names in the Russian Empire. It turned out that the principal diminutive form of Aron was Orel. Now the records started making more sense. I found three more siblings of my second great-grandfather, Chaim.

Landsmen and the FHC Lead to a Fifth Cousin and More Rafalins from Punszk

After finding Nancy's ad in *Landsmen*, I stayed up very late reading other back issues. I found another Family Finder ad that really floored me. Someone in Los Angeles was looking for Rafalins from Punszk! I excitedly spoke with Lisa by telephone the next day and although we could not figure out if we were related, we both had been looking at the same films from Punszk and were familiar with some of the names on each others' trees. I headed back to the FHC and went over my notes as I carefully looked at all the Rafalin records yet again.

This time was different - paying close attention to patronymics, variant and diminutive forms of given names, multiple marriages and the lack of consistency in the spelling of names, I finally started to see that every Rafalin in Punszk was related to me. I also looked at the 1808-1825 "Roman Catholic" civil records for the first time and was able to locate more relatives in this earlier period. They all traced back to one individual, my fifth great-grandfather, Ephraim, son of Rafal. He was born in the early 1770s and had five sons. These boys all married and had lots of children themselves. The origin of the family name also became clear when I got this far back. The most common way to turn a given name into a surname was to add "owicz" (as in Rafalowicz). My ancestors took the more uncommon "in" ending and honored Rafal by taking the surname Rafalin. This put to rest the fanciful idea held by some members of my family that the name Raphael had anything to do with Italian origins.

Lisa turned out to be a fifth cousin. Her branch immigrated last, in the 1920s and 1930s. (All the other branches came in the 1870s and 1880s.) She had no idea there were any other relatives in the United States. We exchanged descendant charts and have been e-mailing each other ever since. Her side has some fascinating stories about how they got to America. Their route included several South American countries and Mexico where her great-uncle was chief rabbi for many years.

I spent several months reviewing all the Punszk films. I recorded every relative and drew a large family tree of all those born in Poland. Having read that Jews moved around a lot back then, I decided

to check all the films for towns within 30 miles of Punszk. *Landsmen* has been extracting marriage records, stressing the need to consider records from neighboring towns because of all this movement. Reading all the back issues yielded one Rafalin marriage in Suwalki, which is about 15 miles southwest of Punszk. This person turned out to be a relative. I found other relatives in Krasnopol and Sejny.

An added bonus to this method of searching was finding unanticipated information. In the Sejny records I found the 1828 marriage record of my third great-grandparents, whose daughter married into the Rafalin family. In Krasnopol I found records for two other families who had married into the Rafalins (though neither one was related to me). One group was related to Nancy, while the other group was related to another fourth cousin, Rima, who lives in Israel. Nancy, who had been trying to trace this side for years, and Rima were thrilled by the discovery.

Finding "Smith" and A Clue in a Bottle

I noticed something interesting about some of the names on Nancy's descendant chart. Two different men with the surname Oshinsky had married into her side of the family. One changed his surname to **NELSON** when he got to America. I had recently found an 1849 marriage record for my great-great-grand-aunt, Sarah Rafalin to Moses **OSZYNSKI**.

Nancy and I wondered if there was a connection between any of them. She hooked me up with Mel Oshins, editor of the Oshinsky Family Newsletter. Mel has a database of over 5,000 names of people related to Oshinskys and sent me a descendant chart for the Nelson/Oshinsky branch. I sent for the death certificate of Simon Nelson, who had married into the Raphael family. I really got lucky as his death certificate had the information I needed: it showed his father as Moses Nelson and his mother as Sarah Raphael. (Three other death certificates I eventually obtained for his siblings did not have this crucial information.) Sarah's brother was Raphael Raphael, and his daughter Jennie had married Simon Nelson. Therefore, Simon had married his first cousin, and I could now have the fun of adding his side to my tree.

Mel's chart showed that Simon had two brothers, Samuel and Rudolph, and a sister (first name unknown). Rudolph's side had been completely traced, while nothing had been started on Samuel's side. The sister had married Harris **SMITH** in New York. I shuddered when I thought about tracing a Smith, especially when no one knew anything about her, including her first name.

continued on page 14

How to Pronounce Your Polish Town and Family Names and Recognize Their Most Common Grammatical Transformations

© Fay Vogel Bussgang (Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Boston)

Since I have been studying Polish these past few years, I have become sensitized to the many mispronunciations of Polish names that I hear among genealogists. Polish is a very difficult language to master, but just learning to pronounce correctly the

names of towns and families one is researching and to recognize them in their various grammatical forms should be manageable. One could then recognize that "Brzeziny" and "w Brzezinach" refer to the same town but that "Brzeżany" is something totally different.

Pronunciation

The following guide gives the essentials for learning to sound out family or town names. When you practice, go slowly, sound all the letters, and put the accent on the **next to last** syllable.

<u>Polish</u>	<u>English</u>	<u>Sounds most like:</u>	<u>Example</u>
a	short ah	ha! ha!	Kraków, Radom
ą (nasalized)	on [om before b/p]	song [trombone]	Nowy Sącz, [Dąbrowa]
e	eh	bet	Mazowiecki, Przemyśl
ę (nasalized)	en [em before b/p]	Bengal [hemp]	Częstochowa, [Dębica]
i	ee	feet	Katowice, Wieliczka
o	o	bought	Drohobycz, Horodenka
ó/u	oo/u (or, see below)	boot, flute	Jelenia Góra, Lublin, Kuźnica
ó/u	short oo/u	book, put	Łódź, Lwów, Kraków
y	short i	fit	Gdynia, Drohobycz
c	ts	eats	Katowice, Kielce, Płock, Siedlce
ć/ci	ch (softened)	cello/cheat	Chęciny, Ciechanów, Tycocin
cz	ch	church	Łowicz, Wieliczka
ch/h	h (aspirated)	Helen	Chęciny, Chełm, Częstochowa
dz	ds	suds	Dzbanów, Radzanów
dzi	dgy	fudgy	Będzin, Działoszyce, Radziejów
j	y	year	Jarosław, Kolomyja, Radziejów
ł	w	wood	Łódź, Białystok, Wrocław
ń	nn	onion	Gdańsk, Poznań, Toruń
prz	psh	pshaw!	Przedbórz, Przemyśl
r	r (rolled)	rrroar!	Radom, Rawa Ruska
ś/si	sh (softened)	sh!	Przemyśl, Siedlce, Śląsk
sz	sh	shop	Kalisz, Kolbuszowa
szcz	shch	sh children	Bydgoszcz, Szczecin
w	v	van	Lwów, Warszawa, Wrocław
ź/zi	zh (softened)	cashmere	Kuźnica, Zielona Góra
ż/rz	zh	vision	Łomża, Rzeszów, Żychlin

Beware: The **final letter** of a word is **unvoiced**. The following letters change to their unvoiced counterpart: b → p, d → t, g → k, w → f, z → s, ż → ś, dz → c, dź → ć, rz/ż → sz, cz → ć, sz → ś. Therefore, Kraków sounds like "Krakoof," and Brzeg, like "Bzhekl". (This may also happen in the middle of a word before an unvoiced consonant.)

Useful Declensions for Genealogists

Even if you can't translate a Polish document, understanding the most common transformations of the names of people and of towns will help you decide whether a document pertains to you or not and whether you want to have it copied and translated.

For English speakers, there are three new concepts to learn about the Polish language: **case**, **gender**, and **stem**.

Words in Polish change endings depending on their **case**, that is, according to the function they have in a sentence. There are seven different cases in Polish. The three most commonly seen in genealogical research are: the **Nominative**, the **Genitive**, and the **Locative**. A fourth, the **Instrumental**, is seen mainly in marriage records (explanations are below).

In addition, town names, like other words in Polish, come in different varieties; they have **gender** (feminine, masculine, or neuter) and some are even plural.

The **stem** is the basically unchangeable part of a word to which endings are added. The stem may be considered soft, velar, or hard, depending on its last letter.

The ending, which tells what case a word is in, varies, depending on the number, the gender, and the stem.

This may sound confusing, but it will make more sense as you go along. Don't get hung up on trying to understand or learn all of what is below. Search only for that which applies to your towns or your family names. Write down each of your town and family names in the most commonly used cases and become familiar with them.

Nominative Case

The nominative case is the subject of a sentence or the name of a town or person: Płock, Radom, Kron.

Genitive Case

The genitive case denotes "of" or possession, follows some prepositions, or is the direct object after a negative verb. In vital records, the genitive is most often used following "z/ze" (from, of) to tell what town someone is from (z Krakowa) or to indicate maiden name: "z (domu) Bussgangów", from the house of the Bussgangs (plural).

Genitive endings for towns:

1. **Feminine towns** are those which end in "a" in the nominative case: Warszawa, Warta, Horodenka. (A few towns ending in double consonants or "ew" are also feminine: Bydgoszcz, Łódź, Żółkiew.) The genitive ending for all feminine towns is "y" or "i": Warszawy, Warty, Horodenki, Bydgoszczy, Łodzi, Żółkwi. (Note that "ie" before a final letter, as in Żółkiew, is dropped.)

2. **Masculine towns** end in a consonant in the nominative: Lwów, Gdańsk, Płock, Włocławek. The genitive ending is "a" or "u" for towns with masculine names:

a) The genitive of most Polish masculine towns is formed by adding "a": Lwowa, Gdańska, Płocka, Włocławka. ("e" before a final letter is dropped.)

b) If the town ends in a softened consonant such as "ń" or a hidden softening (which you learn by usage), "ia" is added: Poznań → Poznania, Radom → Radomia, Wrocław → Wrocławia.

c) Most foreign cities and a few Polish towns have the ending "u": Londynu, Bostonu, Nowego Jorku.

3. **Neuter towns** end in "o" or sometimes "e" in the nominative: Brzesko, Radomsko, Opole. They form the genitive by adding "a" to the stem: Brzeska, Radomska, Opola.

4. **Towns** which end in "y", "i" and, with a few exceptions, "e" in the nominative are **plural**: Chęciny, Suwałki, Działoszyce, Katowice. To form the genitive, they cut off the final letter to become: Chęcin, Suwałek, Działoszyć, Katowic. (Note that an "e" is often added before the final letter to separate two consonants, as in Suwałek.)

Maiden name of a woman: The genitive plural is used after "z/ze" to indicate the maiden name of a married woman. The usual ending is "ów": Bussgang → z Bussgangów, Spiro → ze Spirów. If the name ends in "cka/ska" (feminine of "cki/ski"), the ending is "ich": Sawicka → z Sawickich, Kowalska → z Kowalskich.

To indicate an unmarried woman "ówna" is added to the surname in the nominative "ównej" in the genitive: Glasman → Glasmanówna/Glasmanównej. A married woman is Glasmanowa/Glasmanowej).

Instrumental Case

In general, the instrumental case is used to show with whom or by what means something is done. In a marriage record, it may be used for the groom who appears with the Rabbi. It is formed simply by adding “em” for a man (to both first and last names or just to the first name): Szmuel Kron → *wraz ze* (together with) Szmuelem Kronem. For names ending in “cki/ski”, the ending is “m”: Aron Laski → *z Aronem Laskim*.^{*} The instrumental case is also used after “między” (between) to indicate an agreement between the bride and groom. For a woman, “a” is added to the stem of her first name only: *między Aronem Laskim i Ruchlą Wolf*.

Locative Case

The locative case tells where something is located and is used only after certain prepositions, the most common in vital records being: “w/we” (in).^{**} The rules for forming the locative seem very complicated, because there are changes in the stem of the word, not just the ending. However, if you go through your list of towns one by one and apply the rules, it is manageable. First, you must determine the gender of the name and also the type of stem it has (hard, velar, soft).

1. Hard stems

If the last consonant of the word is “hard,” regardless of gender, it has to be softened and then an “e” ending is added.

- a) p, b, f, w, m, n, s, and z are softened by adding “i” before and “e” ending: Warszawa → *w Warszawie*, Kraków → *w Krakowie*, Chełmno → *w Chełmnie*, Lublin → *w Lublinie*.

- b) Stem endings t, d, r, and ł are softened according to the following pattern before adding “e”: t → ci, d → dzi, r → rz, ł → l: Łańcut → *w Łańcucie*; Rajgród → *w Rajgradzie*; Zielona Góra → *w Zielonej Górze*.

2. Velar (Guttural) stems (k, g, ch)

- a) Feminine nouns soften velar stems (k → c, g → dz, ch → sz) before adding an “e” ending: Horodenka → *w Horodence*, Struga → *w Strudze*, Bierwicha → *w Bierwisze*.

- b) Masculine and neuter names with velar stems simply add “u” to the stem: Płock → *w Płocku*, Przemyśl → *w Przemyślu*, Tarnobrzeg → *w Tarnobrzegu*, Włocławek → *w Włocławku*, (drop “e” before final “k”), Radomsko → *w Radomsku*.

3. Soft stems

- a) Feminine names ending in “ia” or with a soft or functionally soft stem (i, j, l, c, ć, cz, ś, sz, ź, ż, rz) add “i” or “y” to the stem: Bochnia → *w Bochni*, Łódź → *w Łodzi*, Bydgoszcz → *w Bydgoszczy*, Dębica → *w Dębicy*.

- b) Masculine and neuter names ending in a soft or functionally soft stem consonant add a “u” to the stem: Drohobycz → *w Drohobyczu*, Mielec → *w Mielcu*, Opołe → *w Opolu*, Zgierz → *w Zgierzu*.

- 4. Plural names of towns all form the locative case by adding “ach” to the stem: Brzeziny → *w Brzezinach*, Katowice → *w Katowicach*, Chęciny → *w Chęcinach*, Suwałki → *w Suwałkach*.

(See next page for further examples.)

Pronunciation Tip: It is my observation that Poles do not use their lips as much as people speaking English or French. The sounds are articulated more inside the mouth. It is a little like a ventriloquist who may speak quite clearly although with lips relaxed and barely moving. If you practice that way, you will find that it is easier to pronounce words with a string of consonants without becoming completely tongue-tied.

^{*} The word “ze” is used instead of “z” to indicate “from” or “with” when the word following it begins with a cluster of consonants which would make it difficult to pronounce without the added “e.” That is why in the Instrumental, “ze” is used before Szmuel, but only “z” is used before Aron.

^{**} For the same reason, “we” is used instead of “w”. Therefore, it is “we Lwowie,” but “w Warszawie”. However, what we think would be difficult may not necessarily be what Poles consider difficult. We might want “we” before Przemyśl, but they don’t consider the “Prze” sound to cause any problems!! Thus, it is “w Przemyślu”.

Sample Declensions of Town Names (arranged by type of stem)

Type of Stem	Nominative	Genitive	Locative
Fem. hard stem	Warszaw <u>a</u>	Warszaw <u>y</u>	Warszaw <u>ie</u>
Fem. hard stem	Indur <u>a</u>	Indur <u>y</u>	Indur <u>ze</u>
Fem. velar stem	Wielicz <u>ka</u>	Wielicz <u>ki</u>	Wielicz <u>ce</u>
Fem. soft stem	Dębic <u>a</u>	Dębic <u>y</u>	Dębic <u>y</u>
Fem. soft stem	Łomż <u>a</u>	Łomż <u>y</u>	Łomż <u>y</u>
Fem. soft stem	Kołomyj <u>a</u>	Kołomyj <u>i</u>	Kołomyj <u>i</u>
Fem. soft stem	Łódź	Łódz <u>i</u>	Łódz <u>i</u>
Masc. hard stem	Kraków	Krakow <u>a</u>	Krakow <u>ie</u>
Masc. hard stem	Lublin	Lublin <u>a</u>	Lublin <u>ie</u>
Masc. hard stem	Żmigród	Żmigrod <u>u</u> *	Żmigrodz <u>ie</u>
Masc. velar stem	Gdańsk	Gdańsk <u>a</u>	Gdańsk <u>u</u>
Masc. velar stem	Chmielnik	Chmielnik <u>a</u>	Chmielnik <u>u</u>
Masc. velar stem	Tarnobrzeg	Tarnobrzeg <u>u</u> *	Tarnobrzeg <u>u</u>
Masc. soft stem (hidden)	Jarosław	Jarosław <u>ia</u>	Jarosław <u>iu</u>
Masc. soft stem (hidden)	Radom	Radom <u>ia</u>	Radom <u>iu</u>
Masc. soft stem	Mielec	Mielc <u>a</u>	Mielc <u>u</u>
Masc. soft stem	Lubraniec	Lubrańc <u>a</u>	Lubrańc <u>u</u>
Masc. soft stem	Zamość	Zamośc <u>ia</u>	Zamośc <u>iu</u>
Masc. soft stem	Tarnopol	Tarnopol <u>a</u>	Tarnopol <u>u</u>
Neut. hard stem	Grodno	Grodn <u>a</u>	Grodn <u>ie</u>
Neut. velar stem	Radomsko	Radomsk <u>a</u>	Radomsk <u>u</u>
Neut. soft stem	Opole	Opol <u>a</u>	Opol <u>u</u>
Plural	Chęciny	Chęc <u>in</u>	Chęc <u>inach</u>
Plural	Katowice	Katowic <u>ę</u>	Katowic <u>ach</u>
Plural	Kielce	Kielc <u>ę</u>	Kielc <u>ach</u>
Plural	Suwałki	Suwałek	Suwałk <u>ach</u>

* These towns are formed from familiar words *ogród* (garden) and *brzeg* (river bank) which may explain why they have a "u" ending in the genitive, in contrast to most other town names.

For towns with compound names, the nouns follow the rules above, but the adjectives, such as *Nowy* (new), *Zielona* (green), or *Mazowiecki* (in Mazowiecki region) follow the rules for adjectival endings, depending on gender, case, and number.

Adjectival endings are underlined in compound names below to show the pattern of forming endings.

Adjective	Nominative of town	Genitive	Locative
Zielona (f)	Zielon <u>a</u> Góra	z Zielon <u>ej</u> Góry	w Zielon <u>ej</u> Górze
Zduńska (f)	Zduńsk <u>a</u> Wola	ze Zduńsk <u>iej</u> Woli	w Zduńsk <u>iej</u> Woli
Mazowiecka (f)	Rawa Mazowiek <u>a</u>	z Rawy Mazowiek <u>iej</u>	w Rawie Mazowiek <u>iej</u>
Mazowiecki (m)	Ostrów Mazowiek <u>i</u>	z Ostrowa Mazowiek <u>iego</u>	w Ostrowie Mazowiek <u>im</u>
Nowy (m)	Nowy Sącz	z Nowego Sącz <u>a</u>	w Nowym Sącz <u>u</u>
Nowe (n)	Nowe Miasto	z Nowego Miast <u>a</u>	w Nowym Mieśc <u>ie</u>
Biały (m)	Białystok	z Białegostok <u>u</u>	w Białymstok <u>u</u>

[Białystok (m) is treated like a compound word made up of "Biały" (white) and "stok."]

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LOCAL RESOURCES

Northern Regional Library Facility

by Robinn Magid

The Northern Regional Library Facility ("NRLF") is a great genealogy resource in the East Bay. Located in Richmond at the "Richmond Field Station," it offers reading room privileges to anyone with a valid University of California library card, and appears to have many items of genealogical interest. Combine that with a friendly and helpful staff, free parking and easy access from the I-580 freeway, and the NRLF is something to get excited about!

The NRLF is a high-tech, climate-controlled, storage facility for older or infrequently used books, for a cooperative of Northern California libraries. The participating libraries include the University of California campuses in Northern California, the California State Library (Sutro) and two private libraries: the Western Jewish Historical Archives of the Magnes Museum, and that of a private law firm. Each entity determines the public access restrictions regarding its own collection. (The NRLF has a counterpart in Southern California.)

The typical NRLF user is a UC library patron who requests that an NRLF item be sent from storage for use at the "owning library." The patron completes a special request card at the circulation desk. The NRLF may fill the request in several hours or within a day, to the requesting facility. Citations can be pulled by the NRLF staff and mailed in response to requests through interlibrary loan departments at public libraries as well. The NRLF can also be used directly as a research library.

Last fall, Elissa Mondschein, one of the caring employees at the NRLF, and a genealogist herself, discovered that the facility has New York City, city directories from 1915 through 1923. She posted a generous offer on JewishGen to search the directories and it caught Dana Kurtz's attention. Suddenly, the word was out that this facility is a resource in itself! For someone like me who's been

trying (unsuccessfully) to get to Sutro Library for several years, the discovery of these items in the *East Bay* is like manna falling from Heaven!

The NRLF is a closed stack facility, but there is a comfortable reading room available to anyone with a valid UC library card. You can request items to be "pulled" by phone, e-mail or in person and are pulled at the time of the request and not on some artificial schedule. Requests are not filled after 4:45 p.m. The NRLF will hold the pulled items in the reading room for up to two weeks. Next to the reading room is a well-stocked reproduction room for the convenience of a reading room user.

The NRLF website, <www.lib.berkeley.edu/NRLF>, includes easy driving directions to the facility. The NRLF can also be reached by telephone at (510) 232-7767 or (510) 642-6233.

There are three ways to find items in the NRLF on-line and these catalogs can be searched in the reading room or on the Internet. The holdings appear in the MELVYL and GLADYS systems and the NRLF has its own database which can be accessed through MELVYL. One limitation of the NRLF database is that it cannot be searched by subject. All items at the NRLF are assigned call numbers (NRLF bar code numbers) and shelved chronologically in the order received from their owners; this means they are not shelved by subject! In addition, they are shelved according to size and placed two rows of materials to one shelf to save space, so it's a challenge to figure out what's there even to the most observant of employees.

Elissa gave me a tour of the stacks and a run-down on how the facility operates. She has discovered great treasures just by walking down the aisles and by checking in books returning from circulation. There are plenty of new discoveries to be made, but some highlights appear in the list below.

Special thanks to Elissa Mondschein for her time and generosity to genealogists. Thanks also to her boss, who made her available to us!

AT THE NRLF

- Various Yizkor Books
- Encyclopedia Judaica
- New York City city directories (1915-1923)
- Martindale-Hubbell directories
- YIVO Bleiter (Newsletters)
- Congressional Records
- Supreme Court Proceedings
- Foreign Census Statistics
- Maps
- Guide to the Unpublished Materials of the Holocaust Period by Yad Vashem. (some volumes)

Some books of interest:

- Jews of Los Angeles 1849-1945
- Jews of Charleston
- Jewish Settlers in Australia
- Jewish Life Under the Tsars
- Jewish Museum of Prague
- Jewish Camps in Estonia
- Slaughter of the Jews in the Ukraine in 1919

Raphael Family, cont'd from page 8

I went to the National Archives and found two Harris Smiths from Russia with wives and children but could go no further. Nancy gave me a phone number Simon Nelson's granddaughter. She had heard of the Smiths, but had lost contact. She gave me the phone number of Jim Nelson, Samuel's grandson. He turned out to be the perfect person to call. He is the town historian in Monroe, New York and was very glad to hear from me. He sent me a lot of newspaper clippings about his side of the family as well as a copy of the family bible's "family register" page.

One of the newspaper articles was about the discovery of his family's "time capsule." Back in 1975, the people who were living in the home his grandfather Samuel had built, were tearing down a wall to make repairs. They found an old gin bottle with a note in it written in 1924 by Samuel Nelson. Among other things, it said that Ida Smith had died June 21, 1924 in New York City.

I now had a first name and a date of death. I found census information about Ida and her family at the National Archives. At San Francisco State University I obtained a copy of her obituary from the *New York Times*. The obituary gave the married name of one of her daughters as Chenkin. I raced home, turned on the computer and did a Yahoo telephone search for all the Chenkins in New York State. There were only 12 of them, so I started making phone calls. I had made 10 calls without any luck, getting the usual gamut of responses that ran from helpfulness to suspicion. On my next to last call I finally hit pay dirt. I had found Ida Smith's grandson. He was a little wary so asked me what Ida's maiden name was. When I said Oshinsky, he relaxed and gave me his entire side of the family. I then put him in contact with his other cousins, as well as Mel Oshins.

When I got the copy of Samuel Nelson's family register page from his bible, it gave the place of his birth as Klanoresht, Suwakli guberniya, Poland. No one had ever heard of it. The JewishGen Shtetl Finder could not locate it. A reply to a JewishGen query suggested that the shtetl was Klonorejse. We could tell by its longitude and latitude that it was near Punske and finally found it on several maps at the University of California at Berkeley Map Room. Unfortunately, no Jewish records for the time period I need have been filmed by the Mormons.

Through the combined efforts of all my relatives we have made a lot of progress in our Raphael research. I have met some really nice people who share my passion for genealogy. I look forward to seeing who has e-mailed me each day and love sharing my new discoveries with them.

"Running Hooch" Brings So Much More to Life...

by Rodger Rosenberg

I recently traveled back East to see my grandparents. They are both in their late eighties and live in a nursing home. While my grandmother's condition doesn't affect her physically, her mind, sadly is gone. My grandfather's situation is the opposite. His physical condition is worsening while his mind remains sharp. Unfortunately, they live in an environment which does not provide much mental stimulation. On my first visit with them, I asked my grandfather about a story I had heard from his brother-in-law, in which my great-grandmother sold liquor illegally from a baby carriage. At first he denied his mother ever worked as a "bootlegger." Then as I saw a light begin to shine in his eyes, he recounted a number of stories of such detail that one would never believe they took place over 70 years ago.

My grandfather explained that his father would make the liquor and would deliver it to shops on Bradford Street in Boston. He described to me in great detail how he would carry a number of bottles; one in each pocket, others in his pants legs and that when he walked there was an audible "clunk clunk." Then he would walk past the detectives who watched for "runners." He recounted with even greater animation, how a pair of detectives chased him from Washington Street to Acton Street when he was carrying two five-gallon drums of "hooch." He vividly described how he ran into a warehouse and stashed the drums under some lumber and then ran out the back door to Washington Street. What made this story even more memorable was to hear my grandmother constantly interrupting him yelling, "don't use his name..." and "we would be getting him in trouble."

This story reflects an important principle in which I strongly believe. As genealogists in pursuit of documents, we sometimes forget the greatest sources - the people. My grandfather is now 87 years old and has cancer of the spine. This interview may have been my last chance to ask those important "who, what, where and when" questions, but that is not important. What is important is that for a short time one afternoon, he relived a vibrant memory, which brought a smile to his face.

For those of you interested, the going price was 50 cents for a half-pint and one dollar for a pint ...wholesale.

Using the Russian Consular Records as a Research Tool

by Malcolm Singer

Malcolm has only been researching his family roots for about a year. He is searching for information about Morris **SINGER/ZAGER/SAGER**, likely from Ukraine or possibly Latvia, who married Julia **KRIVEROOK** (or **SCHNEERSON?**) from Kriver Rog. He is also researching **LAVINE/LEWIN** from Lida (Vilna guberniya) who married Sarah **MILLER** and a **BRUCH/BRUCK/BROOK** from Budapest who married a **FEINER** also from Budapest.

The author hopes that the information in this article will help others find ancestors from the former Soviet Union.

Everything I know about my grandfather is uncertain. He came to this country on July 6, 1886 through Boston, Massachusetts. He was either 11, 13 or 17 years old. His naturalization papers say 13, but his daughter (my aunt) thinks he was 11 and had to lie to get on the boat without his parents. His headstone gives his birth date as 1869 (which would make him 17 in 1886). Family members differ about his origin, (Latvia or Ukraine) and no one knows for sure what the family name was before entering the United States.

Because he was a child traveling alone, my grandfather may have assumed the surname of a family on board just to get into the country. The family lore is that our name was **SAGER** or **ZAGER** and that the Immigration and Naturalization Service officer wrote "**SINGER**." His first name is also a mystery. My aunt thinks he answered "Mister Zager" when asked his name and INS wrote "Morris Singer."

I have read articles that claim such name changes are bogus. The name on the ship's manifest was carefully used with very little chance of change. Furthermore, translators were present at the point of debarkation who spoke Yiddish, Russian, Polish and several other languages. I think he used papers with the name Morris Singer, age 13, to avoid being conscripted. The name on these papers was used for the ship's manifest when he boarded the boat.

It would have been nice if he had written his name somewhere or kept letters from relatives in the old country. He never attended school in this country and I don't know if he could read or write. My grandmother's niece says she remembers seeing letters, but her family destroyed any mail from the Russian Empire for fear of what their friends and neighbors would think.

Morris Singer left behind his parents and some siblings. As far as anyone knows, none of his siblings ever came to this country. However, Morris did promise to bring his parents here. Sometime after the Bolshevik revolution he did bring them over, but they did not choose to stay.

This gave me a clue: he had to contact the Russian Consul to make arrangements to bring them here.

I used the Jewish Genealogical People Finder from Avotaynu and found some entries for Zager and some for Singer that referenced the Russian Consular Records. I then looked on the microfiche for those records and found the reel and page numbers. (Microfiche of the JGPF and Russian Consular Records Index are available in the SFBA JGS library and through Avotaynu.) Also available is the Daitch-Mokotoff Eastern European soundex system used in the Russian Consular Records Index and Catalog by Sallyann Amdur Sack and Suzan Fischer Wynne (New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1987). Avotaynu has an on-line searchable index, <www.avotaynu.com>, as does JewishGen <www1.jewishgen.org/jgffweb.htm>.

The National Archives (8601 Adelphi Road, College Park, MD 20740-6001) has microfilm records of all the Russian Consular Records. You can contact the archives by telephone (301) 713-7250, 8:45 a.m. to 5 p.m. EST on weekdays or send an e-mail to <inquire@arch2.nara.gov>.

The records are on rolls of microfilm which you can buy for \$34 a roll. If you can visit the Archives, you can make copies of specific pages for just 25 cents per page. The Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Washington (P.O. Box 412, Vienna, VA 22183-0412) can provide names of professional researchers who will obtain the records for a fee.

I obtained copies of the records I was interested in. They were in Russian and English. Records usually contain more than one language (ordinarily Russian and English, but possibly Lithuanian, Yiddish, German, Ukrainian or Polish) and the correspondence is often handwritten. The Singers that contacted the Russian Consul did so to obtain passports as Russian citizens. The most promising lead was the Zager reference. Esther and Solomon Zager petitioned the Russian Consul (along with a few hundred others) to repatriate to the Russian Empire. I was hoping that these Zagers were Morris' parents. However, his headstone has the name Moshe Zosel B'r Zvi. Zvi is commonly Anglicized to Harris, Harry, Hershel, Hirsch but never Solomon. So, although I have learned to use the Russian Consular Records, I am back to square one.

My Visit to Dorot Center: Send In Your Family Tree

by Marian Rubin

During my recent trip to Israel, I visited Dorot, the Douglas E. Goldman Jewish Genealogy Center at Beth Hatefutsoth Museum in Tel Aviv. My own family tree is number 254 in their database and so I feel a special connection with the Center.

When I asked Diana Sommer, the Director of Dorot, what message she had for our SFBA JGS members, she quickly responded, "Tell them to send us their family trees!" She added that the Dorot database now includes more than 2,600 families with 600,000 names.

Diana, who is an active genealogist, (researching **MEISELES** from Kamenets Podolsk, **GEJSER/GEYSER** from Olviopol, Ukraine, **BLACHER** from Panevezys, Lithuania and **SCHUBB** from Shimantza, Lithuania), gave me the instructions for submitting family trees, which must be in GEDCOM (GEnealogical

Data COMmunications) format. If you are using a computer genealogy program, consult the manual to find the term your program designates for converting your data to GEDCOM format. For example, to convert a Family Tree Maker file into GEDCOM, select "Copy/Export Family File" from the "File" drop-down menu. Then click the File Format drop-down list and select "GEDCOM (*.GED)." (This will create a copy of your family tree with the extension ".GED" not replace your existing Family Tree Maker file.) Other programs use terms such as *conversion* or *GEDCOM*.

Your GEDCOM tree can be sent by e-mail as an attachment to: <bhgnlgy@post.tau.ac.il>. You will be notified by regular mail when your tree has been entered in the database. There is no charge. Try to submit the name and address of another relative, preferably younger than you, who can be contacted when someone finds a connection. After your tree has been entered, you can order a hard copy and a certificate which can be ordered to honor a relative.

Family trees can also be sent on paper. Submit name, date of birth, place of birth, parents' names, name of spouse, date of death and place of death. The cost is \$1 per name for 50 to 500 names and \$.60 per name for over 500 names. Mail to: Dorot, Beth Hatefutsoth, P.O. Box 39359, Tel Aviv 61392, Israel. For those whose family trees are already in the database, corrections or additions should be made by sending a complete, revised GEDCOM disc which will replace the current tree.

While I was there, a steady stream of visitors used the four Dorot computers to search for their families. To me, one woman's possible connection emphasized the value of Dorot. The database also preserves my family information for future generations and it increases the possibilities for unknown family to find me.

If your family tree is in the database at Dorot, please contact me at <merubin@aol.com>. Let's see if our SFBA JGS members are well represented and let's try to increase that representation. Group participation can work to each individual's advantage.

You can visit the Dorot home page at: <www.bh.org.il>.

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Basya Petnick, Editor

INTERNATIONAL RESOURCES

London Post-Paris Seminar Program

by Dr. Saul Issroff

The Jewish Genealogy Society of Great Britain is arranging a week long program of London visits, to begin July 20, follow the Paris Seminar. Visits to main research centers will start with an introduction to the facilities and a tour - after which there will be opportunities for personal research. Members of the JGS of Great Britain will be on hand to help.

The Society reserves the right to vary the days on which particular visits take place. If large numbers reserve for a particular location, more than one visit will be organized. When booking, please indicate how long you plan to stay in London.

The charge for each visit will be GB £10 or US \$16. Reservations may be made in advance but will only be considered firm upon receipt of payment. After booking, detailed material about each location will be sent. U.S. dollar bills or British pounds will be accepted - we cannot accept American checks except for group bookings.

Contact: Dr. Saul Issroff, JGS Great Britain, 29c Elsworthy Road, London NW3 3BT, Great Britain; e-mail: <saul@swico.demon.co.uk>, fax: +44 171 4831542.

Program Includes:

Sunday, July 20

- Walking tour of the Jewish East End of London
- JGSGB hosts a wine and cheese party to see if we share ancestors, and answer questions about genealogy in the U.K.

Monday, July 21

- Family Records Centre: Birth, marriage and death records from 1837 onwards for England, Scotland and Ireland; some military and consular records; decennial censuses for all U.K. except Ireland from 1841 to 1891
- Walking tour of Somerset House and the City of London to Bevis Marks Synagogue

Tuesday, July 22

- Somerset House: Wills for all U.K. from 1858 onwards, including overseas wills where there was property in the U.K.; walking tour of the Law Courts, Temple Bar, Fleet Street, St. Paul's Cathedral, London Wall, Bevis Marks (the oldest synagogue in the U.K.) and a talk on the records of the Spanish and Portuguese Jewish community
- Guildhall Library

South African Jewish Family History Society Established

by Paul Cheifitz

We are very excited to announce the long awaited establishment of the Jewish Family History Society of Cape Town. A group of dedicated and experienced genealogists and family historians have gotten together to assist interested parties in Cape Town, and indeed throughout the world, in locating information about their families. Although we do not yet have the ability to conduct research on an individual basis we can send you in the right direction and recommend experienced researchers who will help you with your research. We will answer all of your requests and will help you ourselves if we are able to do so.

The ninety thousand or so Jews in South Africa are mainly of Lithuanian Jewish descent and thus anyone researching their Lithuanian or Latvian Jewish ancestry should not rule out the possibility of locating long lost relatives in South Africa. Our Jewish Community, however, is made up of Ashkenazim and Sephardim from all over the world.

Contact us at: The Jewish Family History Society of Cape Town, P.O. Box 541, Sea Point, 8060, South Africa. Telephone: 21-451546, Fax: 21-4393768; e-mail: <jewfamct@global.co.za>

Mariampol, Lithuania Indexes Available

An index to Mariampol birth, marriage and death records, from 1808 to 1920, has been put together by a group of 25 researchers. Mariampol was part of Suwalki Guberniya and is today in Lithuania.

The index references 9,500 known records. For each entry the index includes: index number; act number; year; family name; first name; father's name when given; and whether the actual record has been obtained. Not all years are available as documents may not yet have been found or may have been destroyed. For the years 1808 to 1826, most of the records appear to be Catholic. For 1826 to 1870, the records are virtually complete and there is a "good selection" for following years.

The research group has obtained copies of 500 full documents in addition to the index. Recently, records for 1867 and 1893 were purchased. As funds become available, additional records will be obtained. The cost for the index pages alone was over \$3,500 and has not yet been fully paid for.

continued on page 18

Mariampol, cont'd from page 17

Copies of the index are available for \$110. Contact Raymond Whitzman at: 5787 McAlear Ave., Cote St. Luc, Quebec, Canada H4W 2H3; e-mail <whitz@cam.org>. This index will not be made public until it is completely paid for and it is asked that it not be distributed until permission is given by a majority of the project participants and by the archives in Vilnius.

Thanks to Ray Whitzman

200th Anniversary of the Death of the Vilna Gaon

by Alan Portis

October 1997 marks the 200th anniversary of the death of one of the greatest Jewish religious thinkers, Elijah ben Shlomo Zalman (1720-1797). He is known as the Gaon ("genius" or "learned") of Vilna for his extraordinary Talmudic studies in Vilnius where he lived and is buried.

By a special decree, the President of Lithuania, Algirdas Brazauskas, has formed a work group assigned to organize an appropriate plan of events to commemorate the anniversary. Proposed events include memorial holy services at the grave of the Gaon and at the synagogue; an international scientific conference with published materials; public lectures at the University of Vilnius and at the Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas; a large exhibit; reconstruction of the house where the Gaon spent his last years and establishment of a museum there; a meeting of the Gaon's descendants; publication of a book about the Gaon; publication of a commemorative postal stamp and envelope; release of a commemorative coin; and a public ceremony with the participation of foreign guests and diplomatic corps, at which a special commemorative musical composition in honor of the Gaon will be premiered. The main events will take place September 10-15, 1997.

The Jewish Community of Lithuania invites broad participation at the commemoration of the 200th anniversary of the Gaon and appreciates any support in organizing this event, which is of great cultural significance to Lithuania. For more detailed information contact the Jewish Community of Lithuania at: Pylimo g. 4, Vilnius; tel: (370-2) 61 30 03; fax (370 2) 22 79 15; e-mail <root@lzb.vno.osf.lt>, S. Alperavicius, Chairman, Jewish Community of Lithuania. SFBA JGS member Alan Portis will attend these events and welcomes contact from other SFBA JGS members interested in the Gaon; e-mail address <portis@socrates.berkeley.edu>

COMPUTER/ON-LINE NEWS

Net Surfing New Waves

by Dana L. Kurtz

In response to a recent e-mail asking SFBA JGS members for their most useful and lesser-known web sites, I received a surprise; most mentioned only the best-known sites such as JewishGen and Switchboard. A number of our members are more adventurous web surfers and some of their suggestions are given below.

I would like to urge those who have spent your time at these well-known sites to explore the tremendous depth of information available on the internet. Remember, you cannot "break" your computer or the internet and your only investment is a little bit of time to develop the familiarity and flexibility to get the most out of search engines.

Have you entered a surname or ancestral town name into Yahoo? Alta Vista? Excite? (search engines) or Deja News (a database of newsgroup postings)? Maybe your long-lost uncle participates in a discussion group about Cajun cooking. You can enter any word, words or phrase for a search.

At Excite <www.excite.com> "Poland and maps and old" returned 2,379,414 "hits" – a daunting list of sites where the words were found. However, the first entry was: "Maps Can Help You Trace Your Family Tree" <<http://info.er.usgs.gov/fact-sheets/genealogy/index.html>>. "Suwalki and guberniya" in Alta Vista <www.altavista.com> returned a list of 200 documents. The first was "I Grow Up In Suwalk" a Jewish girl's first-person account of how WWI and events of the subsequent years altered her life.

If your on-line connection is by America On Line, Prodigy or a similar service, use it as a gateway to the world wide web. Don't limit yourself to one service's files, search utilities or discussion groups.

A Few Suggestions (all begin with <<http://>>)

- "Genealogy in Cook County, IL"
<www.rootsweb.com/~ilcook/cook.htm>
- "Genealogy and Poland: A Guide"
<www.man.poznan.pl/~bielecki/genpolen.htm>
- "Judaism and Jewish Resources"
<shamash.nysernet.org/trb/judaism.html>
- "YIVO Institute for Jewish Research"
<spanky.osc.cuny.edu/~rich/yivo/index.html>
- Yad Vashem <www.yad-vashem.org.il/>
- "Obituary Daily Times"
<www.best.com/~shuntsbe/obituary/>
- Lithuania: An Index to Internet Information
<www.ciesin.ee/lithuania>
- "Jewish Genealogy In Australia"
<www.zeta.org.au/~feraltek/jozgen.htm>

[See also "List of Internet World Wide Web Sites For Jewish Genealogy Research," *Avotaynu*, Vol. XII, No. 4, Winter 1996.]

BOOKSHELF

***Racisme et Repression Sous Vichy:
Le Camp d'Internement d'Ecrouves***

by Francoise Job

Francoise Job will be a featured speaker at the "5th International Seminar in Jewish Genealogy" to be held in Paris, July 13-17, 1997.

Much has been written about the internment camp at Drancy, on the outskirts of Paris, where so many thousands of French Jews were herded to await transfer to Auschwitz and other extermination camps. (A memorial visit to the site is being planned to coincide with the International Seminar on Jewish Genealogy in Paris, this July.) While Drancy is the best-known of the French camps, there were others. The repressive politics of the Vichy government "necessitated" the creation of internment camps within France. Ecrouves, a village in the suburbs of Toul, became the "Drancy" of the region of Lorraine, with more than 4,000 internees over the course of three years.

During the French administration, the camp at Ecrouves had been planned for the imprisonment of opponents of the regime (Communists, Gaullists, resistance fighters) and black marketeers. With the takeover of the camp by the German authorities, Ecrouves also became a transit center for deportations to the forced labor and extermination camps across the Rhine. Jews represented almost half of those in Ecrouves.

Author Francoise Job is a Doctor of History and respected author of several volumes on the history of the Jewish communities in Nancy and Luneville (Lorraine). In 1992 she published a biography of Gustave Nordon who, with the help of funds allocated by the American Joint Distribution Committee as well as his own money, aided many Jews in Lorraine and particularly in the camp at Ecrouves during the German occupation. The use of considerable, unpublished documentation has permitted her to vividly describe the conditions in which the internees were held and to place in evidence the questionable behavior of certain administrators during that troubled period.

The book pays particular attention to describing in detail the daily life in the internment camps. The volume includes an index of the nearly 1,800 Jewish internees, mostly from Alsace and Lorraine, who passed through Ecrouves before being "transferred to an unknown destination" from which very few returned. There is a preface by Eric de Rothschild, and an introduction by Serge Klarsfeld.

The book (ISBN: 2-911043-16-2) is available from

***What Zeesie Saw on
Delancey Street***

by Elsa Okon Rael, illustrations by Marjorie Priceman

This delightful children's book (ages 5-8) with folk-style illustrations is a nostalgic look at one aspect of lower East Side life in the early 1900s.

Zeesie, who's just turned seven, is going with Mama and Papa to her first package party. The Zborovah Society, a group of family and friends (landsleit), has gathered to raise money to bring others from their home village of Zborov to America. Each family has brought a wrapped surprise package of homemade foods to be auctioned.

Couples dance to music from a klezmer band and the stage is piled high with packages. Zeesie thinks perhaps she can spend the birthday dollar her bubbeh and zaydeh gave her. There is fun in the bidding, and much hilarity as Uncle Yussie discovers he has spent \$2 for a beautifully wrapped brick. (But the others share their food with him, so he has more than he can eat.)

Papa tells Zeesie about the "money room" where men enter one by one. There, if a man has money to give, he leaves some. If he needs money, he takes only what he needs.

Zeesie imagines a room full of gold and diamonds. Unable to restrain herself, she sneaks into the room but has to hide as Papa's best friend Max enters. He whispers a Hebrew prayer and counts out \$8 from a pile of bills. Zeesie remembers what her Papa has said, "It's as much a mitzvah - a good deed - to take when you need, as to give when you can." When Max leaves, she puts her birthday dollar on the pile of bills and rejoins the party. She knows she's spent her dollar perfectly.

The book (ISBN 0-689-80549-7) includes author's historical notes, Yiddish glossary and recipes on the endpapers. (28 pages, 1996, Simon and Schuster, \$16.99.)

Reviewed by Sita Likuski

the publisher, Editions Messene (for the Centre de Documentation Juive Contemporaine), 99-103 rue de Sevres, 75006, Paris; Fax number 011 33 3 83 35 64 24. The publisher's price is \$28. For shipment by air add \$18; \$9 for surface mail. The publisher will accept payment by a check in U.S. dollars, however an additional charge of \$10 will be added for the bank commission. Payment by credit card is not possible.

Compiled and translated by Rosanne Leeson

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ZichronNote

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