

## Who Are the Mezvinskys? A Case Study of How to Do Genealogical Research By Ann Rabinowitz

Sometimes events in the news provide a good starting place for genealogists to learn about how to create a family history and delve into a family tree. A case study of such an event was the recent wedding of Marc Mezvinsky (son of Ex-U.S. Representative Ed Mezvinsky and Ex-U.S. Representative Marjorie Mezvinsky) and his bride, Chelsea Clinton.

Who are the Mezvinskys? Where did they come from, where did they end up, and why should we as genealogists be concerned about this wedding? As it so happens, the groom's family is Jewish and learning more about this quintessential American family is a useful introduction to the process of locating records about any American Jewish family.

How did I start my search and what did I find with

the aid of my own computer, without contacting any Mezvinsky family members? In the last ten years, there have been a plethora of new online databases, which make researching much easier and quicker than in the past. For instance, scanned documents can be enhanced by enlarging the images. Thus, names or addresses which were illegible previously can now be seen quite clearly.

The following sites were utilized to locate information and confirm that the families related to Marc Mezvinsky represent a typical range of Jewish ethnicities and places of settlement in the U.S. His ancestors came from Poland and Russia; one set went to the small towns of the Midwest and the other set remained on the eastern seaboard and lived in a large city. Their lives were, on the whole, successful and productive.

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Ed Mezvinsky and Marjorie Margolies Mezvinsky  
(Parents of Marc Mezvinsky Early in Their Marriage)

### Google.com – biographies

One of the first things I did to get a grip on who were the major players in the family tree was to check out Google.com. This major search engine brought up the

**DOROT**  
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# President's Letter

## by Linda Cantor

Summer has come and gone very quickly, along with the annual conference on Jewish genealogy. Among the over 1,000 genealogists attending the 30th IAJGS International Conference on Jewish Genealogy held in Los Angeles, California were a large number of JGS members. And I'm sure that everyone enjoyed themselves and benefited from attending.

For me, attending a genealogical conference is a hectic, busy, but enjoyable experience. It's hard to decide which lectures to attend since there are usually between four and eight held at any one time. And they start at 8 a.m. and continue until after 10 p.m. at night. After four or five days of this, you are exhausted. But it's worthwhile because you learn so much, have a chance to meet so many of the people who were just names on the computer before, and see all your old friends from prior conferences. It's not too early to think about next summer's conference in Washington, DC – the 31st IAJGS International Conference on Jewish Genealogy to be held August 14 to 19, 2011. (See <http://www.dc2011.org/> for more information.)

This year's IAJGS awards were distributed as follows: Lifetime Achievement went to Hal Bookbinder for his many contributions to the world of Jewish genealogy; Outstanding Publication by an IAJGS Member Society went to *Roots-Key, the Journal of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Los Angeles*; Outstanding Contribution to Jewish Genealogy via the Internet, Print or Electronic Product went to Judith Frazin for *A Translation Guide to 19th Century Polish-Language Civil-Registration Documents*; and Outstanding Project Award was presented to the Jewish Genealogical Society of Philadelphia in recognition of the outstanding depth and breadth of the *Philadelphia Area Jewish Genealogy Resource Guide*.

The Rabbi Malcolm Stern Grant for 2010 was awarded to the Israel Genealogical Society for a three part project. One part involves transcribing and scanning records from the Ottoman Empire, recorded in Ottoman Arabic Osmanli script; a second section deals with building a database of the name changes many immigrants made in order to Hebraicize their names; and the third section

involves scanning books of residents and/or directories of citizens.

The IAJGS annual elections were held at the conference, and Jan Meisels Allen, Daniel Horowitz, Kahlile Mehr, Jackye Sullins, and Nolan Altman were reelected to the IAJGS Board, while Jay Sage was newly elected.

**Joy Rich**, who edited *Dorot* for the past six years, has resigned from her position. We would like to thank her for all her hard work in creating a wonderful, award-winning publication. And now we welcome **Toby Sanchez**, who will serve as the new editor of *Dorot*. Toby, a JGS member for many years, is a researcher and grant writer for non-profits and will receive her MLS in Library & Information Studies in December. We are sure to benefit from Toby's experience, knowledge, and interest in genealogy. And she hopes that many of you will share your genealogical experiences and knowledge by writing for *Dorot*. You can reach Toby at [editor@jgsny.org](mailto:editor@jgsny.org).

We have some great programs planned for this year. Be sure to look at the upcoming events on page 14 of this issue. Roni Liebowitz, our vice president for programming, has engaged some interesting speakers and I'm very excited about hearing them. So be sure to save the dates for this year's meetings – September 19, 2010; October 17, 2010; November 21, 2010; December 19, 2010; January 16, 2011; February 20, 2011; March 6, 2011; April 10, 2011; May 22, 2011; and June 12, 2011.

We're always happy to receive program ideas from you. Please share any suggestions that you have with us. Let us know if you would like to get more involved in JGS, perhaps write an article for *Dorot*, volunteer to serve on a committee, or get involved in the administration of JGS. I would love to hear from you at [president@jgsny.org](mailto:president@jgsny.org).

See you at our next meeting.

*Linda*

## Two More Impressions of the Conference

**# 1:** The 30<sup>th</sup> IAJGS Conference was a creatively planned, well-attended event that offered diverse simultaneous program choices for everyone –

from genealogy beginners and first-time attendees to experienced researchers and people who have attended nearly every conference since the first one in New

York in 1981.

There were sessions for the early risers and events into late evening for those of us who seem never to sleep. The resource room, film festival, vendor area, exhibits, workshops and tours complemented the presentations, panels, SIG events, Birds-of-a-Feather gatherings, evening entertainments and informal conversations that took place throughout the expansive facilities of the new JW Marriott Hotel. However, the spiral-bound program book was occasionally disappointing for its inconsistencies and omissions.

Congratulations to the JGS of Los Angeles, the conference planners, and the large team of volunteers for an outstanding week.

**Steven Siegel**

**# 2:** The Los Angeles conference was a success. The hotel accommodations and LA Live (a complex of restaurants and sports venues) were great.

As for the lectures, I was especially pleased with the talks on searching for relatives that are still living and reviewing databases on missing people. Logan Kleinwaks' lecture on his GenealogyIndexer.org Full Text Search Engine was very informative for me, as my ancestral shtetls were found.

I was also pleased that there were BOF (Birds of a Feather) meetings for various gubernias, which covered more detail than the general SIG (special interest group) meetings.

**Gary Gershfield**



Members of JGSNY at the 30th International Conference of the IAJGS in Los Angeles, California. From left to right: Paul Silverstone, Jerry Liebowitz, Roni Seibel Liebowitz, Martin Perl, Hadassah Lipsius, Linda Cantor, Bob Friedman, Nina Lenz Sitron, Gary Gershfield, Steven Siegel, Howard Rotblatt, Sol Krongelb, Valery Bazarov, and Renee Stern Steinig.



## WHO ARE THE MEZVINSKYS? Continued from Page 1

groom Marc Mezvinsky and his father, Edwin Maurice Mezvinsky, son of Abraham Mezvinsky and Fanny Grundman, and his mother, Marjorie Mezvinsky and her parents Herbert Edward Margolies and Mildred Louise Harrison.

There was much in the way of biographical and anecdotal information available through Google.com regarding the parents, as they had both served in the U.S. Congress and had led high profile lives. I learned from Google that Ed had lived in Ames, IA, and Marjorie in Philadelphia, PA, and that gave me the cue for the next step in my search.

### **Newspaperarchive.com – articles in local papers**

This database is a remarkable collection of newspapers, both large and small, and is an excellent source of information. In many places, especially small towns, one didn't have to be a famous person to get a write up in a local newspaper, because the everyday happenings of life were considered important enough to report on.

My first task then was to locate whether there were any listings for the family names. I found quite a few Mezvinsky listings in the Iowa newspapers, because the groom's grandfather, **Abraham Mezvinsky**, was a grocer who owned eight stores across Iowa.

In the *Ames Daily Tribune-Times*, of November 19, 1936, an article discussed the dinner and housewarming party held in celebration of Abe Mezvinsky's new home at 105 Ninth Street, Ames, Iowa. The newspaper listed the names of the guests, who were family and friends from various places where the Mezvinsky's had either lived or owned businesses. One of the more prominent guests was Rabbi Zeichik of the Beth El Jacob Synagogue in Des Moines, Iowa.

Three years later on April 28, 1939, the *Le Mars Semi-Weekly Sentinel* had an article entitled "Ames Man Buys Grocery Store in Le Mars". This described Abe Mezvinsky's ownership of eight retail and wholesale grocery stores in several Iowa cities, his two farms of 400 acres in Hancock County, 200 acres of farmland in Dallas County and that he had 500 head of cattle, which provided the meat supplies for his grocery stores.

The story of Abe Mezvinsky's success was told in detail in the July 7, 1959 issue of the *Ames Daily Tribune*, in "Ames Grocer Typified American Success Story". The

article described how Abe started out in America with \$5.30 in his pocket and that he never went to school in his life. It described the members of Abe's family, where they came from and where they lived.

Mentioned in the *Ames Daily Tribune* of November 13, 1964, was the 1964 community service award given to Abe Mezvinsky by the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America for his outstanding contributions to the Jewish community of Iowa and the advancement of Congregation Beth El Jacob of Des Moines.

The family made the newspapers again on October 11, 1975, when the *Ames Daily Tribune* reported the October 5<sup>th</sup> marriage of Marjorie Sue Margolies and Rep. Edward Mezvinsky. It listed the wedding guests and had a beautiful photograph of the bride.

In 1976 Abe Mezvinsky was featured on "This Morning," a public affairs program on WOI (Radio 640), produced by Bernard Timberg, which described him as "an eastern immigrant's version of the Horatio Alger legend transferred to Iowa."

### **Ancestry.com – records & family trees**

Knowing that Ancestry.com was a sure thing for clarifying relationships and locating arcane information, I started again with the Mezvinsky family, but found very little on them other than Census data and the fact that Abe Mezvinsky, the groom's grandfather, had come from Kiev, Ukraine in 1911. Also, Abe Mezvinsky's mother was listed in the 1920 census as Venta, an odd name, but no given name for his father was listed.

However, upon searching the Public Family Tree section of Ancestry.com, I found a Yenta, the daughter of Joseph Osherenko, who married Naftali Mezvinsky. These must be the parents of Abe Mezvinsky and his brother, Moshe Mezvinsky.

Finding no further information on the Mezvinsky family there, I decided to look at other resources.

### **Miscellaneous Sources – web sites, burials, etc.**

Attempting to search beyond the Ancestry.com information, I clicked onto the Missouri State Archives, Missouri Death Certificates, 1910-1959 <<http://www.sos.mo.gov/mdh/>>. I found a Yenta Mezvinsky,

who was born in Russia (no town known) on May 15, 1863 to a father named Joseph Osherenko. Her mother's name was not given. She married Nathan Mezvinsky, and died on September 2, 1937, whilst living at 914-1/2 Patee Street, St. Joseph, Missouri. To confirm that she was the correct person, I found that her son, Abe Mezvinsky, signed the death certificate and she was buried in Mt. Olivet Cemetery, St. Joseph, Missouri. However, I could not find similar information for Yenta's husband. But I did find another son for Yenta, who was Isaac Mazvinsky(sic) who lived from 1892 to 1928 and was married to Sophia.

Looking for another resource beyond the norm, I found the findagrave.com site <<http://www.findagrave.com>>, which had eight listings of Mazvinsky graves. Evidently, the family name was spelled Mazvinsky in Missouri and Mezvinsky in Iowa. Looking carefully at the eight grave listings, I found a Nathan Mazvinsky, the father I had been searching for.

As can be seen, from the photograph of his gravestone, he was noted in Hebrew as Naftali-Zvi ben Ze'ev. This takes the Mezvinsky family back a further generation to Ze'ev [Wolf] Mezvinsky in Kiev, Ukraine.



**Nathan Mazvinsky, Progenitor of the Mezvinsky Clan in America**  
Shaare Sholom Cemetery, St. Joseph, Missouri

Also, buried in Shaare Sholom Cemetery is Nathan's wife Yenta. The Hebrew inscription states that she was



**Yenta Mazvinsky, the Mother of the Mezvinsky Clan**

Yenta bat Moshe-Aria. This differs somewhat from the Joseph Osherenko listed on her death certificate.

Quite a number of other Mazvinskys are buried in Shaare Sholom, and they make up another branch of the family tree which bears further investigating.

Whilst the Mezvinsky family lived or had businesses in Kansas City and St. Joseph, Missouri, as well as Iowa City, Red Oak, and Ames, Iowa, and had commercial dealings in Le Mars and Nevada, Iowa too, there were few mentions of them in records other than the Census. Wholesale and retail groceries were the typical businesses undertaken by Jews when they settled in small towns and rural areas across the United States.



**Mezvinsky-Owned Home, 267 Campus, Ames, Iowa, Built in 1900**

An anecdote about Abe Mezvinsky from a blog <<http://blog.beliefnet.com/crunchycon/2007/08/family-ties.html>> brought him to life, beyond a mere listing of grocery stories and town names.

*“Years before, as a popular Ames High School student who made three key second-half steals in the 1955 state basketball championship game against Iowa City High, [Ed] Mezvinsky oozed a pleasant, confident drive. After all, he was the son of Abe Mezvinsky, who peddled fruit off railroad cars and rose from a Ukrainian immigrant with \$5 in his pocket to the head of a small supermarket chain in central Iowa. Mezvinsky remembers how his Jewish father’s store sat smack in the middle of a Catholic neighborhood in Ames. One day, the Catholic priest [at St. Cecelia’s] gave a sermon about one of the best examples of Christianity around: Abe Mezvinsky, the Jewish store owner who took in hobos and gave them food.”*

### **Back to Ancestry.com**

Deciding to return to the family of Abe Mazvinsky’s wife Fannie Grundman, I went to Ancestry.com. There, the records revealed a lot, especially in regard to the children in the family who had been born in Warsaw, Poland.

It appeared that they came from the town of Lukow, Poland, prior to their 1911 emigration to the United States from Bremen, Germany, to the Port of Galveston, Texas, on their way to Kansas City, Kansas. Their mother Ester left her brother Mordche in Lukow and faced a long and arduous journey with her children to join her husband in the Midwest.

To take another tack, I then began to look on Marc Mezvinsky’s maternal Margolies side of the family, i.e., the parents of his mother. There, I found Herbert Edward Margolies, the grandfather of the groom, who was an engineering executive, and his wife Mildred Louise Harrison, an artist. Going back a further generation, one finds the parents of Herbert Margolies who were Russian emigrants, Philip Margolies, and Mary Burshtein. There was no further definition of a shtetl of origin given in any of the records. They had arrived in America in 1885 and proceeded to have five children. In 1900, they lived at 711 Broad Street in Philadelphia. Philip was a cigar maker by profession.

Whilst definitive information, other than the fact that Philip’s parents were from Russia and Germany, is not available, more information is to be found for Mary’s

parents, Abraham and Ida Burshtein. Abraham (born 1850) and Ida (born 1848), had fourteen children, of whom only seven survived to adulthood. It was a sad recognition of the high mortality rate in those times. In 1900, the family lived at 809 Fifth Street in Philadelphia. Abraham Burshtein, like his son-in-law Philip Margolies was a cigar maker by profession.

Cigar making was an occupation often dominated by women and to a lesser degree by men. In Philadelphia, United Cigar Manufacturers (UCM) and American Cigar Company were prominent, although the Theobald and Oppenheimer Company which was founded in Philadelphia in 1860, constructed a new plant in 1899 which had 700 employees. It was bought out by H.B. Grawley Cigar Company in 1900 and continued in cigar production until 1912 when it converted to textiles and alternative uses as other cigar companies did. Perhaps Philip and his father-in-law Abraham worked there.

The Theobald & Oppenheimer factory produced many cigars and below is an example of one of their labels, which was used in 1901.



**Theobald & Oppenheimer Cigar Label, 1901**  
<<http://www.cerebro.com/store/pc/viewPrd.asp?idproduct=17023&idcategory=0>>

The cigar industry was fraught with inequities and poor working conditions as can be seen depicted in the following pictorial description. Many individuals, whilst they sought work in the factories as greenhorns, they tried quickly to find other more remunerative work.



My next stop on the genealogical trail was:

**JewishGen** <<http://www.jewishgen.org>>

When going to the front page of JewishGen, one has a choice of looking up family names which I did. The Mezvinsky name popped up in a number of places as follows:

There was a burial of an Izrail Davidovitch Mezhvinskij, born October 7, 1926, died November 16, 1998, and buried in the Saltonishkiu Cemetery in Vilnius, Lithuania. Perhaps this was a relative far from the Kiev of family memories, a survivor of the Holocaust. In addition, there was an Abraham Maswinski who left Lithuania for South Africa in 1924 and perhaps he was related to this prior individual in Lithuania. In fact, there was even an M. Mezvinski, who was born in 1872 and came to London in 1898.

There were also several listings for Mezhvinskys in the Kiev Gubernia in the Duma Voters Lists for the towns of Pliskovo, Berdichev and Moshny as well as further records in the towns of Pereyasklav, Poltava and Kishinev.

So, as often happens with towns given in records, it might be that whilst Abe Mezvinsky had Kiev written as his home town in several American documents, it could very well have meant Kiev Gubernia, the province instead.

I then decided to look for the Grundman family from Warsaw in the following site:

**JRI-Poland** <<http://www.jri-poland.org/index.htm>> - Records

In order to try and locate records for the Grundman family, who according to the U.S. Census came from Warsaw, I contacted Judy Baston, who is active in the JRI-Poland project as a Board Member. She then directed me to Hadassah Lipsius, Translation and Data Entry Coordinator, who has done so much work on the Polish records.

I told Hadassah that I had looked at the JRI-Poland database, but I could not find any record for the Grundman children, Feige, Libe and Chaim, who had been born in the 1900-1909 era. Two later children, Minnie and Abe Morris Grundman, had been born in America.

Hadassah explained that due to the depredations of World War II, in which approximately 85% of Warsaw was destroyed, the records were decimated.

After doing some further research, I also had found that the family had lived in Lukow, Siedlc, Poland, before coming to America, and that the family of Ester Grundman, the mother of Feige, Libe and Chaim, had lived there, as had her brother Mordche (last name unreadable on one surviving record).

Again, I found that there were no corresponding records for the correct period and individuals available in JRI-Poland. No American records seemed to provide the first name of Ester's husband either. He was a mystery.

The JRI-Poland did provide numerous records for Lukow which included the following:

- PSA (Archives) Births - 1869-91,1893-1901,1903
- PSA (Archives) Marriages - 1869, 1871-1883, 1885-1895, 1897, 1900
- PSA (Archives) Deaths - 1869, 1871-1883, 1885-1895, 1897, 1899-1901
- LDS (Mormons) Births/Marriages/Deaths - 1836-1847

Currently, the JRI-Poland is doing quality control checks on an updated LDS Lukow file which contains: LDS 1826-1865. Apparently, there are ten Grundman listings in the latest records which are not available yet. This proves that one has to really keep on top of what is going on for the record sets and years one is interested in.

I have had sensational results from using the JRI-Poland Database in the past and it really pays to continue to check what they have on-line and to become a member of the group.

### **Bureau of Prisons Locator – records of prisoners 1982 to Present**

Another aspect of doing research into one's family tree is that sometimes one finds stories of criminal activity or less than desirable behavior. One means of following up these stories and suspicions is the Bureau of Prisons Locator.

The father of Marc Mezvinsky, Edward Maurice Mezvinsky, whilst accomplishing many positive things in his lifetime, had also stepped aside from the path of correct behavior once he left his career in the U.S. Congress. He was convicted of various Federal crimes, including bank, mail and wire fraud, and was sent to prison at Eglin Air Force Base in Florida for eighty months.

Due to this change of status, I decided to look at the U.S. Bureau of Prisons Locator <<http://www.bop.gov/iloc2/InmateFinderServlet?Transaction=NameSearch&needingMoreList=false&LastName=mezvinsky&Middle=&FirstName=edward&Race=U&Sex=U&Age=&x=0&y=0>> to obtain some information on him and when exactly he had been released. Sure enough, the Locator allowed me to learn that he had been released at the age of 73 on April 11, 2008.

In regard to researching inmates released prior to 1982, writing to the following address is necessary as the records have to be manually searched:

Federal Bureau of Prisons  
Office of Communications and Archives  
Attn: Historic Inmate Locator Request  
320 First Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20534

It is recommended that the inmate's full name, date of birth (or age at time of incarceration), race and approximate dates in prison be provided. Additional information such as the register #, aliases, crime and name of prison where confined, help with the research for information.

### **The Opposite Side of the Family**

At times, when researching the Jewish side of a mixed marriage, one can accidentally find Jewish connections on the opposite side of the family too. In this case, I found an interesting twig jutting out from the family tree. It is confirmed by the National First Ladies' Library site <<http://www.firstladies.org/biographies/firstladies.aspx?biography=43>>.

It appears that Hillary Clinton had a grandmother, Della Murray, who was born in Aurora, Illinois, in 1902, and died on March 25, 1960, in Miami, Florida. She married her first husband Edwin Howell at the age of sixteen. She then divorced him in 1927 and was remarried in 1933 to her second husband, Max Rosenberg. He was a Russian Jewish immigrant, who came to America in 1901 and settled in Chicago, IL, and who later died in Los Angeles in 1984.

By going to Ancestry.com, I was able to locate two vital pieces of information which confirmed the brief facts known about Max Rosenberg, and find a few more.

- **Ship's Manifest** - One was the manifest for the S.S. Kaiser Wilhelm Der Grosse which left Bremen, Germany on July 16, 1901, and arrived in New York on July 24, 1901. Passengers on this ship were Wolf Rosenberg, age 42, born 1859, and his son Mondel, age 18, born 1883, both from Bauska, Latvia. They were going to Wolf's brother-in-law W. Bohrman, at 35 Henberg Street, Chicago, IL (note – the name of the street is not that legible, so the spelling may be incorrect).

- **Naturalization** - The second piece of information was the naturalization for Max Rosenberg, born November 25, 1884, arriving July 25, 1901 in New York, and naturalized on August 6, 1906, whilst living at 101 Johnson Street, Chicago, IL. As you will note, Mondel was now Max, which was a common transformation for the full name of Menachem-Mendel. In fact, one of my favorite uncles was Menachem-Mendel, later Max from Bauska as well.

All of these bits of data can now be used to locate the correct Max Rosenberg and his father in other records such as those in America as well as those from Bauska, Latvia. This is particularly important as there are hordes of Rosenberg records, many with the same first names and similar dates of birth.

In regard to the Latvian records (which encompass vital records, census and revision lists), the Latvian State Historical Archives project Raduraksti at <<http://www.lvva-raduraksti.lv/en/about.html>> has been put online. Since these records are not in English, Christine Usdin, a researcher who lives in France, has been steadfastly translating the Latvian records into English and putting them online at <<http://vishki.pagesperso-orange.fr/rigavitalrecords.html>>. She advised me that

the Bauska records have not been translated yet, but will be in the future and perhaps Max Rosenberg and his father Wolf and the rest of their family will appear there.

## CONCLUSION

As can be seen, the family tree which started out with just Marc Mezvinsky and his parents, grew by leaps and bounds and stretched to the Midwest and Philadelphia and back to Poland and the Ukraine. The family tree, as has been merely sketched in here, represents a living present from the past that can be cherished by the family and their descendants. It is also something that can naturally be added to and enlarged upon by additional sleuthing into records and newspaper articles and by patiently awaiting newly translated records.

I hope this excursion into the lives of the Mezvinskys or Mazvinskys and their kin will inspire you to embark on a family search, right from your own computer.

*Ann Rabinowitz is the Assistant JewishGen Blog Coordinator and is a Board Member of the LitvakSIG. In addition, she researches and writes about her Litvak, Galitzianer, South African and British roots and the Holocaust. ☆*

## JGS Program Reports

June 13, 2010

### “Naturalization: Where are the Documents?” by Steve Stein

Our own member Phyllis Kramer, who is also a JewishGen Advisory Board member and experienced genealogist with credentials too numerous to mention, presented an informative talk on identifying, locating and understanding United States naturalization documents, and clarified many of the complexities that stump genealogists. Key topics included the history of naturalization, the documents, the questions on those documents, where naturalizations were performed, and where one can find such documents.

Naturalization in the US, the voluntary process of becoming an American citizen, fundamentally changed in 1906 following the creation of the Bureau of Immigration. Prior to that year, any adult male was eligible for naturalization, women being noted primarily as dependents. State or federal courts could

perform naturalizations, which consisted of two steps – declaration of intention to be naturalized, and the petition to become naturalized. There were no standard forms. In the 1930s, the Works Progress Administration (WPA) indexed many such records for Cook County, IL, New York City, and New England. These documents contain little information other than the applicant’s former country of allegiance.

In 1906, forms were standardized, and federal, state and local naturalizations were to be forwarded to the newly formed Bureau of Immigration, later to become the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). Three other related processes – military naturalization, derived naturalization, and alien registration – were also managed by INS. Essentially, aliens serving in the military and wives and children of naturalized citizens became citizens in somewhat different ways than normal applicants, at different points in time. In addition, registration of all alien residents, including fingerprinting, became mandatory in 1940.

The essential documents in the process usually consisted of:

- Declaration of Intention, filed by the applicant, generally after 3 years of residency (“declaration”)
- Petition for Naturalization filed by the applicant after 5 years of residency (“petition”)
- Certificate of Naturalization, issued by the government (“certificate”)

Information varied, but often after 1906, petitions generally included the country and town of birth, ship and date of immigration, marriage and family data, profession, and after 1924, photographs. The certificate generally had no information but referred to the declaration and/or petition and indicated the court in which it was filed.

Phyllis indicated that these documents and indices to them may be found in a variety of places, not always consistently. Included among these places are: New York County Old Records division at 31 Chambers Street, clerks’ offices, the National Archives, and the Family History Library. Both indices and images may also be found at commercial sites such as <[www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com)>, <[www.footnote.com](http://www.footnote.com)>, and <[www.italiengen.com](http://www.italiengen.com)>. The catalog at Ancestry.com can be used to identify collections available there.

As far as finding the correct document in the correct place, standard genealogical techniques apply. Censuses – both federal and state, such as New York – can be a great help in narrowing down where someone lived, or even in narrowing down their possible year of naturalization, as some of the censuses indicate naturalization status and even court of naturalization. The NY Census has address indexes for some counties and also a one-step on the Steve Morse site for finding the film number. Ship manifests sometimes have handwritten notes containing the number of the Certificate of Arrival, another document used for later applicants to verify immigration information, or other useful information. World War I draft records, death certificates indicating how long the deceased had been a citizen, and voter registration records may also be used for this purpose.

In addition to the sites already mentioned to look for naturalization documents, the Freedom Of Information Act (FOIA) form G-639 can be used to have the USCIS (United States Citizenship and Immigration Services), successor to the INS, search their indices for C-files, Alien Registration Files, Visa Files, Registry Files, and A-Files. The USCIS website at <[www.uscis.com](http://www.uscis.com)>

gives more information about these files.

Phyllis also pointed out that until 1922, a married woman’s citizenship generally followed that of her husband; for example, if an American born woman married an alien man, she generally lost her citizenship. Then, at the end of her talk, Phyllis handed out a “cheat sheet” that summarized the key points she wanted the audience to take away. The information is included here.

### Quick Guide to Finding Naturalization Papers

- Start with all available census, note the year, city, responses of “na” (naturalized), “pa” (papers filed) or “alien”.
- Search the manifest for clues
- Search other documents: draft, death certificates, voter registration
- Search major sites like [ancestry.com](http://ancestry.com), [italiengen.org](http://italiengen.org) and [footnote.com](http://footnote.com)

### Major Sites

- **Best website for Naturalization Information by State:** <<http://germanroots.com/naturalization.html>>.
- **Italiengen.org**
  - For current list of indexes and data go to: <<http://www.italiengen.org/databaselist.stm>>
  - New York: Indexes for Eastern (Bklyn) and Southern (Manhattan, Bronx) Districts (1824-1957)
  - Nassau and Suffolk County Supreme Courts
  - Upstate New York: Northern District Court, Essex County, Western District Court
  - Bronx, Richmond and Queens Borough Supreme Courts (1914-1952)
  - New York: Clinton and Essex Counties (1836-1906)
  - New Jersey: Trenton (1838-1967)
  - New York Northern District Court
- **Footnote:** <<http://www.footnote.com>> (**fee based**)
  - Partnership with NARA
  - Many naturalization records for

Louisiana (Eastern), Massachusetts, Maryland, New York (Eastern/Southern/Western Districts), Ohio (Northern), Pennsylvania (Eastern/Middle/Western Districts)

- Not particularly easy to use the query facilities
- For current list of indexes and data go to: <http://www.footnote.com/browse.php>

- **Ancestry.com (fee based, free in library)**

- World Archives Project – 1.2 million documents and 5.4 million indexes. This project encourages users to index NARA microfilms. To see the list of databases covered, click on the “collaborate” tab, then World Archives Project.
- US Naturalization Record Indexes: 2.4 million records – this database appears to be a mixture of early and later (post-1906) indexes. Ancestry does not list the years covered for each court or state.

- **NARA Microfilms and Online Order Function**

- General genealogy: <http://www.archives.gov/genealogy/>
- Naturalization: <http://www.archives.gov/genealogy/naturalization/index.html>
- Order function: <https://eservices.archives.gov/orderonline/>

- **LDS: Microfilm Catalog** <http://www.familysearch.org>

- Record Search project: <http://pilot.familysearch.org/recordsearch/>
- Catalog: [http://www.familysearch.org/eng/Library/FHLC/frameset\\_fhlc.asp](http://www.familysearch.org/eng/Library/FHLC/frameset_fhlc.asp)
- Each state has microfilmed records including: vital records, newspapers, books, census, courts
- Photocopy Order Form: [http://www.familysearch.org/eng/search/RG/frameset\\_rhelps.asp](http://www.familysearch.org/eng/search/RG/frameset_rhelps.asp), click on “Sorted by Document Type” and click

on the form next to #31768

- **FOIA: Freedom of Information Act**

- To file a FOIA request, write a letter including a clear description of the documents/records you are requesting with the subject’s name and date and place of birth, and your contact information. Be warned that these agencies will not answer questions; the request must be for records, not information. Download the FOIA request form G-639 from <http://www.uscis.gov/porta/site/uscis/>, navigate to “Forms” and find the G-639.

- **Other State Naturalization Sites:**

- New Jersey, Passaic County: (indexes and documents) <http://records.passaiccountynj.org/press/Clerk/ClerkHomePB.aspx?op=basic>
- New York Major Sites: [www.italiengen.org](http://www.italiengen.org), [Ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com), [Footnote.com](http://www.footnote.com)
- New York Upstate: Albany County (index for 1821-1991): <http://www.albanycounty.com/departments/achor/naturalizationindexes.asp?id=856>
- Illinois: Cook County (1871-1929): <http://www.cookcountyclerkofcourt.org/NR/about.aspx>
- Philadelphia, PA: <http://www.phila.gov/phils/Docs/Inventor/natz.htm>
- Other websites of interest
  - Naturalization at <http://www.gaeleire.freesevers.com/custom2.html>
  - “Naturalization and Citizenship” at <http://www.rootsweb.com/%7Enynewyo2/naturalization/>

*(Steve Stein is a member of the JGS Executive Council. He is a software systems professional in the telecommunications industry and has been researching his own and his wife’s Eastern European genealogies for more than thirty years). ☆*

## Responses from Our Readers

### 2009 Dorot Article Was Translated and Reprinted in a German Publication

*Editor's Note: Nancy Polevoy, author of "Continuing Genealogical Research in Sulzdorf a.d. Lederheke," which appeared in the Summer 2009 Dorot, "received three letters from a German researcher, clarifying some of the points in her article. We are reprinting her letter with all the detailed information for the benefit of JGS members with connections to Sulzdorf and Kleinsteinach.*

Last fall after my article, "Continuing Genealogical Research in Sulzdorf a.d. Lederheke," was published in the Summer 2009 *Dorot*, I received three letters from Cordula Kappner, who had been in the State Archives in Wurzburg recently and discovered that prior to 1832 Sulzdorf used the cemetery in Kleinsteinach, not Kleinbardorf, as I had written in my article and everyone believed to be true.

She sent me a map showing that Kleinsteinach is near to the town of Riedbach, plus photographs of the Kleinsteinach cemetery. The stones are very old, leaning at different angles, and the writing is very faint because of their age. (I could send photos, if requested.) In her second letter, Cordula Kappne wrote that the cemetery in Kleinsteinach is about 25 km from Sulzdorf. And she said that the Kleinsteinach cemetery has been documented, so that this year the gravestones in the new part will be on the internet. The Haus der Bayerischen

Geschichte in Augsburg scanned the cemeteries of Landkreis Hasberge last December, 2009. And she found that my great great great grandfather, Maier Heilner, was buried in the Kleinsteinach cemetery in 1825. So now I know where my ancestor was buried, but it is impossible to locate his tombstone, because the stones are too old to be read. In all, it is informative and yet frustrating.

In her third letter Cordula Kappner wrote that there had been an index to the Kleinsteinach cemetery up until the Nazi period, but it no longer exists.

On another note, Mr. Reinhold Albert requested permission to reprint my *Dorot* article in German, and received permission to do so. I recently received a copy of the publication, *Echo der Lederheke*, July-September 2010, nr. 3/2010,110, Ausgabe on pages 54-58. The website address is <[www.sulzdorf-adl.de](http://www.sulzdorf-adl.de)>. In his postscript to my article, Mr. Albert wrote that the graves in the Jewish cemetery in Sulzdorf were photographed in March 2010 and can be found on the internet under <<http://www.hdbg.de/juedische-friedhoefe/friedhoefe/friedhofsulzdorf-an-der-lederheke.php>>.

I thought that *Dorot* would be interested in learning all that has transpired since the publication of my article last year.

Sincerely,  
Nancy Polevoy ☆

### The Jewish Genealogical Society website opens the door to

- Jewishdata.com (accessible by members of JGS)
- NY Naturalizations: Database of the Index to Brooklyn Naturalizations (1907–1924); Other New York Area Naturalizations: links to searchable online New York State naturalization indexes by county
- Cemeteries: Map of New York Area Jewish Cemeteries; Directory of Jewish Cemeteries in the Metropolitan New York Area; Burial Societies in the New York Metro Area; New York Area Cemetery Directions
- NY Area Resources: a comprehensive list of repositories in the metropolitan New York area
- Dorot: downloadable issues: spring 2000-winter 2005–2006; list of highlights of back issues: 1979-2008
- Events: Announcements of upcoming JGS monthly programs and events
- New York Landsmanshaftn and Other Jewish Organizations: links to indexes, databases, and directories, such as *American Jewish Year Book*; Landsmanshaftn and other town and country-related organization organizations incorporated in New York County, 1848-1920; WPA Survey of New York City Synagogue Records, 1939
- Memorial Database of Jewish Soldiers, Partisans and Workers killed in action during the Nazi era
- Inventory of LDS Microfilms and Microfiche on Indefinite Loan at the Center for Jewish History
- Other: links to other sites that may be of interest to the JGS community



<http://www.jgsny.org>

# Metro Area Repository Round-up

## **Berman Jewish Policy Archive** <[bjpa.wagner@nyu.edu](mailto:bjpa.wagner@nyu.edu)>

This archive, housed by NYU Wagner and located at 295 Lafayette Street, #3013 (212-998-7564), is a new online resource, which to date contains over 5,000 documents for download, many of which have never been digitized before and are not available anywhere else online. Their offerings include:

- The Immigration of Levantine Jews into the United States, 1914
- The Juvenile Court and the Jewish Community, 1916
- A Truly Jewish Home for Working Girls, 1915
- Jewish Agricultural and Industrial Aid Society, New York 1902
- Judaism and Hyphenism 1916
- And much more

The site at present emphasizes issues of culture and identity. User registration allows access to the bookshelf (to save articles for later use) and bibliography tools (to generate customized lists of sources for personal reference or to share). To learn more, visit their site at <[www.bjpa.org](http://www.bjpa.org)>. For inquiries and appointments, the email address is <[bjpa.wagner@nyu.edu](mailto:bjpa.wagner@nyu.edu)>.

## **Brooklyn Historical Society** <[www.brooklynhistory.org](http://www.brooklynhistory.org)>

The BHS Library has many tools for researching houses and apartment buildings, plus the addresses and occupations of Brooklyn residents in the 19th and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The Library is open Wednesdays, Thursdays

and Fridays from 1 to 5 P.M. Reference questions may be submitted by e mail, by going to <[www.brooklynhistory.org](http://www.brooklynhistory.org)>, and clicking on “Ask A Question.”

## **The YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe** <[yivoencyclopedia.org](http://yivoencyclopedia.org)>

YIVO's new site provides the most complete picture of the history and culture of Jews in Eastern Europe from the beginnings of their settlement in the region to the present. This website makes accurate, reliable, scholarly information about Eastern European Jewish life accessible to everyone.

With the YIVO online encyclopedia anyone can quickly find the answers to such questions as: what is the history of the shtetl, how far was Minsk from Pinsk, who wrote the first Yiddish novel? Also, what did the *misnagdim* believe, and why were so many Polish Jews tavern keepers in the 19th century?

There are many ways to use the YIVO online encyclopedia. The user can click on Topics, such as arts, daily life, places, language and literature, history and politics, and religion. Here one will find comprehensive articles, supplemented by illustrations, maps, videos and audio recordings. Or one could go directly to Maps or Images/Audios/Videos, or Documents and see what they have. There are 70 videos to look at, 50 audio recordings and 192 newly available documents. If one starts at the site called Browse, one can look up a letter, such as B, and see what is available in the Bs, and then there are 25 more letters to browse through. ✧

# Upcoming and Current Events

## **Jewish Genealogical Society**

October 17, 2010, 2:00 p.m.

Monthly Program: "**One Foot in America, the Jewish Emigrants of the Red Star Line and Eugheen Van Mieghem**" Speaker, Erwin Joos.

Mr. Joos will present a riveting account of the mass emigration of Eastern European Jews from Antwerp to America between 1873 and 1934. The greater number came over after the pogroms, which occurred between 1900 and 1914. The journey to American ports, which took from seven to fourteen days, was a grueling experience for those in steerage.

The estimate is that between 30 to 40 percent of Jewish Americans have ancestors who sailed with the Red Star Line, which was one of the most important American shipping lines. Many stories have been written about the emigration experience from Antwerp by Jewish writers such as Sholom Aleichem and Yuri Suhl. Noteworthy passengers included Irving Berlin, Golda Meir, and Albert Einstein.

The Antwerp artist, Eugheen Van Mieghem, is probably the only European artist who made a cycle of artworks about these Jewish emigrants. He was able to observe them closely in all seasons and all weathers, as he lived in his parents' tavern on Montevideo Street, just in

front of the warehouses of the Red Star Line.

Erwin Joos is the curator of Belgium's Eugeen Van Mieghem Museum and president of the Eugeen Van Mieghem Foundation, a non-profit organization with more than 1,000 members. He has organized exhibitions at YIVO, the Ellis Island Immigration Museum, and South Street Seaport Museum, plus numerous exhibitions in Europe. He has lectured in Antwerp, Amsterdam, Paris, and New York, has written five major books, including *Antwerp-New York: Eugene Van Mieghem*, and edited 12 albums.

November 21, 2010, 2:00 p.m.

Monthly program - "**American Passage, The History of Ellis Island**" Speaker: Vincent J. Cannato.

Professor Cannato will discuss his book, *American Passage*, which masterfully illuminates the story of Ellis Island from the days when it hosted pirate hangings witnessed by thousands of New Yorkers in the 19th century, to the turn of the 20th century when massive migrations sparked fierce debate and hopeful new immigrants often encountered corruption, harsh conditions, and political scheming. He articulates the dramatic and bittersweet accounts of the immigrants, officials, interpreters, and social reformers who all play an important role in Ellis Island's chronicle. The talk will provide JGS members with glimpses into the lives of these individuals, as he narrates this complex and often heart-wrenching epic.

As immigration policy, national security, and the war on terror remain at the forefront of national debate today, this timely history offers Americans an important perspective on how the nation addressed similar challenges a century ago.

Professor Cannato teaches history at the University of Massachusetts, Boston and is the author of *The Ungovernable City: John Lindsay and His Struggle to Save New York*. He has written for *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *The Washington Post*. A book-signing will follow the presentation.

After the October and November meetings The Ackman & Ziff Family Genealogy Institute at CJH will be open before the meeting, starting at 11:00 a.m., for networking and research.

December 19, 2010

## **Annual JGS "MEMBERS-ONLY" Brunch and Meeting**

### **NOTE TIME and LOCATION:**

**Brunch at 11:00 a.m., Program at 12:30 p.m., Brotherhood Synagogue, 28 Gramercy Park South, near 3rd Avenue, Manhattan.**

Program: "**HIAS Photo Archives: Faces of Immigration**" Speaker: Valery Bazarov.

To freeze-frame a moment in real life is generally an unachievable task, but sometimes with the help of a camera it can be captured. In every family, such photos are treasured and relished – even more so in the family of HIAS that amounts to more than 4 million Jews who immigrated to America. Forty linear feet of the archival collection contain 22,000 images taken at the most crucial times, when ties with the past were severed and a new life was still unknown. These pictures chronicle a period that lasted more than 100 years. The refugees from persecution, pogroms, and poverty, escapees from death and famine – they all pass before our eyes when telling the story of their suffering and hope. The first Seders on Ellis Island and Jewish children in Yokohama; the internment camps in Vichy France and displaced persons on board the military transports that brought them to safe havens; Hungarian and Cuban refugees; North African Jews and the Soviet Jewry exodus – these images will leave no hearts unmoved. This PowerPoint presentation will be accompanied by case studies of rescued and resettled families from different periods of immigration.

Valery Bazarov is the Director of HIAS Family History and Location Services, which helps immigrants of different generations find family members and friends with whom they have lost contact over the years, sometimes decades. Valery is committed to finding and honoring the heroes, Jewish and non-Jewish, who rescued European Jews during the Holocaust. Valery Bazarov researches HIAS history and presents his findings in lectures and publications; He is a frequent lecturer at international and national conferences on Jewish genealogy.



## Meeting Calendar

The dates of the JGS monthly meetings for the 2010-2011 program year are as follows:

2010	2011
October 17	January 16
November 21	February 20
December 19	March 6
	April 10
	May 22
	June 12

As a meeting date approaches, information on the topic and speaker (as well as any changes in time or venue) will be available in *Dorot*, on the JGS website <[www.jgsny.org](http://www.jgsny.org)>; or at Upcoming Programs and Events <[www.jgsny.org/events.htm/nexmetings](http://www.jgsny.org/events.htm/nexmetings)>, and on the JGS Facebook page <[http://www.facebook.com/home.php?#!\)group.php?gid=62112838856&ref=ts](http://www.facebook.com/home.php?#!)group.php?gid=62112838856&ref=ts)>.

### New York City

#### Yeshiva University Museum in the Center for Jewish History, 15 West 16<sup>th</sup> Street, NYC

Through January 2, 2011, the Museum will present amateur films by Polish American Jews who visited their families, friends and communities in Poland in the 1920s and 1930s.

#### YIVO in the Center for Jewish History, 15 West 16<sup>th</sup> Street, NYC

Sunday, October 24, 2010 at 10 A.M.

A conference on the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of

Simon Dubnow, with Robert Seltzer.

Monday, November 1 at 2 P.M.

A lecture on the Slovak Jewish Heritage by Maros Borsky.

Monday, November 8 at 3 P.M.

A lecture by Rebecca Kobrin on "Empire of Charity: American Jews and the Rebuilding of Polish Lithuania, 1919-1939."

### Brooklyn

#### Brooklyn Historical Society, 128 Pierrepont Street, Brooklyn, NY 11201, 718-222-4111

Through December, 2010 "Painting Brooklyn Stories of Immigration & Survival," a collection of paintings, oral histories and personal effects are used to tell stories of immigration and adjustment.

### Long Island

Sunday, October 24, 2010, 10:45 a.m. at Temple Beth David, 100 Hauppauge Road, Commack, N.Y.

The **JGS of Long Island** will celebrate its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a dairy brunch and a talk by Leona Schwartz, daughter of Eli Mintz, who played Uncle David in "The Goldbergs," the popular television series of the 1950s. Ms. Schwartz will reminisce about Gertrude Berg, who was an important television pioneer, as well as an actress, and about Jewish life in New York City in the 1950s. Tickets are \$20 per person for members and their spouses, and \$30 for non-members. ☆

## Notes from All Over

**The Yizkor Book Master Names Project** is seeking the help of volunteers who have Excel on their home computers and have a basic familiarity with how to enter information on it. No other preliminary experience is needed. If you are interested and can help, contact: Oznat Hazan, Project Manager, <[hazan33@gmail.com](mailto:hazan33@gmail.com)> or <[ybmj@gmail.com](mailto:ybmj@gmail.com)>.

#### Records of World War I and World War II Veterans Are Not On Line, But Are Available by Mail

According to Susan Nash, Archives Specialist with the Archival Programs Division of the National Personnel Records Center, "Any military personnel service record that is 62 years old or older since the veteran was discharged, died in service or retired is an archival public record and does not require any kind of authorization from the next of kin or proof of death." Unfortunately, although the records have been available for several years, the public has not been able to

access them online, because of a "freeze on website updates at the St. Louis National Personnel Records Center" However, they are available if one submits form SF-180 by mail or fax. Records from 1947 or earlier are now available, and include those who served in the Navy (1885-1947); The Marine Corps (1906 through 1947); the Army (1912-1947), and the Coast Guard (1898-1947). Each year additional names will be available.

To access SF-180, you can just type in the phrase, "military personnel records" into your browser or type <[www.archives.gov/st-louis/military-personnel/standard-form-18](http://www.archives.gov/st-louis/military-personnel/standard-form-18)>. After filling out the 3 page form, mail it with the correct fee to National Personnel Records Center, Military Personnel Records, 9700 Page Avenue, St. Louis, MO 63132-5100. The fee is \$5 for copying pages or less and \$60 for copying more than 5 pages.

## Harvard Law School Library Releases Internment Camp Archives

The Harvard Law School Library announces the release of the Maurice Ettinghausen collection of Ruhleben civilian internship camp papers, covering the period 1914-1937. An overview of the collection is available at [http://oasis.lib.harvard.edu/oasis/deliver/deeplink\\_collection=oasis&unquield](http://oasis.lib.harvard.edu/oasis/deliver/deeplink_collection=oasis&unquield).

The papers were produced when the German government established an internment camp for the incarceration of male foreign civilians outside Berlin. Most of the internees were British, but there were other nationalities.

The digitized papers may be viewed by going to <http://pds.lib.harvard.edu/pds/view/12382737>.

Most of the material in this collection is not personal, but is composed mainly of notices, playbills, newspapers, and hand lettered signs. Images are also available. For these one must search for Ruhleben in Harvard's VIA system, where one will find pictures of theatre productions, camp buildings, groups and societies formed by the prisoners. The material shows the kind of societal bonds that developed when a group of strangers were thrown together in restricted circumstances for an indefinite period. ☆

## Online News

### Hungarian Surname Changes

If you can't find your Hungarian ancestors in 19<sup>th</sup> century Greater Hungary, it might be because they changed their surname. The book *Szazdunk nevvaltoztatasai 1800-1893 (Surname Changes in Our Century)* was published in Budapest in 1895. It lists 19th century name changes by Hungarians, many of them Jewish.

The book is accessible from the Pecs University Klimo Theca website <http://kt.lib.pte.hu/cgi-bin/kt.cgi?konyvtar/kt04112203/index/html>. Click on *Tartalomjegyzek*. The book is arranged alphabetically by new surname, but includes the former surname, in parenthesis, the occupation, town name (not clear if it is birthplace or abode), the names of children who also changed to the same surname, number of the decree which authorized the name change, and two digits which indicate the year in which the change was granted. To move forward to the next page, click on *kovetkezo oldal*. To see the previous page, click on *elozo oldal*.

### The Museum of Family History <<http://museumoffamilyhistory.com>>

This is an internet-only multimedia and interactive creation, devoted to modern Jewish history. It has a growing collection of photographs and documents, some accompanied by music or commentary. You can spend an hour of more going to the movies via their site.

Among the exhibitions now available are:  
Rites of Passage; American Newspapers & How They Addressed the Immigration Issue; The Memories of Mayer Kirshenblatt; HIAS: The Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society; From Kishineff to Bialystok: A Table of Pogroms 1903-1906; The Holocaust, The Yiddish

World; The Fischer Family of Warsaw, The Immortal Al Jolson, The Russian Jew in the United States, and much more.

### Moving Here <<http://movinghere.org/uk>>

The National Archives of the United Kingdom has an interesting, user friendly website devoted to immigration into the U.K. from many different places. The Home Page states, "**Moving Here** explores records and illustrates why people came to England over the last 200 years and what their experiences were and continue to be. It offers free access, for personal and educational use, to an online catalogue of versions of original material related to immigration history from numerous local, regional and national archives, libraries and museums. Moving Here gives visitors to the site the opportunity to publish their own experience of migration." The section dealing with Jewish Migration contains a timeline and has information and documents on origins, journeys, settling, growing up, working lives, culture and festivals, and politics.

### Cite Nationale de l'Histoire de l'Immigration <[www.histoire-immigration.fr](http://www.histoire-immigration.fr)>

This French website devoted to immigration over the past 200 years is part of an actual museum in Paris at the Palais Doree, with events and films, as well as online material. If one clicks on to "Reperes sur l'histoire de l'immigration," one will find many photographs and archival documents dealing with the history of immigration to France from Italy, Belgium, Eastern Europe, Algeria, Morocco, Senegal and other places. It explores the contribution of immigrants to the French life. There is a section on Jewish immigration and notable Jewish artists, writers, composers, etc.

## Canadian Archives - Progress in Digitization (Canadian Genealogy Centre)

The Canadian Genealogy Centre at Library & Archives Canada now has digitized images and html pages for Ocean Arrivals 1919-1924. Images of many other periods are also available on their Microform Digitization Passenger Lists. In the section called Ethno-Cultural and Aboriginal Groups, there is a large amount of information on Jewish immigrants, such as the history of Jewish immigration to Canada, a list of archival collections, including the records of various congregations, and a collection of Jewish periodicals.

## Cemetery News - Knollwood Park Cemetery Burial Data Now Online

by Steve Lasky

Mt. Carmel Cemetery in Queens, New York, assumed supervision of the nearby Knollwood Park Cemetery in 2008 and recently put online a searchable database of the estimated 17,000 Knollwood burials. Be forewarned that most of the pre-2000 burials do not list either dates

of burial or death, but simply list the date using their default setting of 1/01/1900.

Knollwood Park in Ridgewood was founded in 1947, according to [jgsny.org](http://jgsny.org). Its burials are listed as Cemetery Section 5 within Mt. Carmel's website. Sections 1 and 2, are for the main "old" Carmel Cemetery. Section 3 is the new Carmel Cemetery (down the road), and Section 4 is for the former Hungarian Union Fields Cemetery (opened in the late 1800s, as per [jgsny.org](http://jgsny.org)). Elias Savada has informed us that so far there are less than 300 burials listed online for this section, but the cemetery will soon add more names.

You can find the burial data for these five sections combined as one on the Mt. Carmel Cemetery site at [www.mountcarmelcemetery.com](http://www.mountcarmelcemetery.com). I imagine that if you find a burial in Knollwood Park and would like to know the actual date of death for the person, you can telephone either Knollwood Park or Mt. Carmel to see if they have the information. ☆

## New, Recent, and Noteworthy Publications

Jane Ziegelman, *97 Orchard Street: an Edible History of Five Families in One New York Tenement* New York: Smithsonian Books/Harper/Harper Collins, 2010. 232 pages. \$25.99) The publisher describes the book as "an exploration of the culinary life in the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century through the stories of five families who were residents of one Orchard Street tenement. Ziegelman shows how immigrant cooks brought their ingenuity to the daily task of feeding their families, preserving traditions from home but always ready to improvise."

Annie Hauck-Lawson and Jonathan Deutsch, *Gastropolis: Food and New York City*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2008. 368 pages. \$29.95 hardcover, \$19.95 paperback..

From the publisher: "*Gastropolis* explores the personal and historical relationships between New Yorkers and food. Beginning with the origins of cuisine combinations such as Mt. Olympus bagels and Puerto Rican lasagna, the book describes the nature of food and drink before the arrival of Europeans in 1624 and offers a history of early farming practices. Essays trace the function of place and memory in Asian cuisine, the rise

of Jewish food icons, the evolution of food enterprises in Harlem, the relationship between restaurant dining and identity, and the role of peddlers and markets in guiding the ingredients of our meals.....Touching on everything from religion, nutrition and agriculture to economics, politics and psychology, *Gastropolis* tells the story of immigration, amalgamation and assimilation."

William Grimes, *Appetite City: A Culinary History of New York*. New York: Macmillan/North Point Press, 2010. 264 pages. Hardcover \$30, paperback \$18).

From the publisher, "William Grimes, the former *New York Times* restaurant critic, leads us on a grand historical tour of New York's dining culture. Beginning with the era when simple chophouses and oyster bars dominated the culinary scene, he charts the city's transformation into the world restaurant capital it is today. ...Enhancing his tale with more than one hundred photographs, rare menus, menu cards, and other curios and illustrations. Grimes vividly describes the dining styles, dishes and restaurants succeeding one another in an unfolding historical panorama." ☆

# QUESTIONING THE EXPERTS

## DOROT questions JGS members about their genealogical adventures and elicits their advice for those embarking on similar paths

### An Interview with Ada Green

DOROT: In terms of your personal genealogical research, how long ago did you start?

GREEN: I started in April 1993 – 17 years ago. I was originally interested in researching just my mother's side of the family. She was born in Vienna, Austria, and when I was young, she told me that when she was a girl in Vienna before World War II, her mother told her that we're of Sephardic ancestry. And that was something that always interested me, because I always considered myself Ashkenazic. My mother said that there were Sephardic names in the family and that her mother did a genealogy before the war and that the records were still in Vienna.

I forgot about it until 1992 when there was all this press about the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Columbus discovering America and that the Jews left Spain and that Columbus may have been Jewish. That's what reminded me that I was interested in researching my Sephardic genealogy. Little did I know where this would lead.

From April 1 to April 10, 1993, I took a Smithsonian tour of Vienna. Although the purpose was general sightseeing and cultural activities, we did have some free time when I planned on looking up some records. The day before I left, JGS New York sponsored a beginners' seminar and I joined the JGS immediately. I went to Vienna and to the Jewish archives there and found my mother's birth record, her brother's birth record and my grandparents' marriage record. And it mentioned where my mother's parents were born; my maternal grandfather was born in Brody, my maternal grandmother was born in Nadworna. Those were both in Galicia. The archivist had a wall map of the old Hapsburg Empire and she pointed to my grandparents' towns and told me they are in Ukraine today. Here it is 17 years later and I never did find my Sephardic roots. I believe that the information was passed down from generation to generation orally through the female side of the family.

DOROT: Do you recall any important breakthroughs in your research over the years?

GREEN: There were two. The first concerns Lithuania. My father was a Litvak. I became so hooked on genealogy that within a year of starting, I became interested in my father's Litvak side of the family also, but only to the limited extent of knowing what shtetl his parents came from. My father had a landsmanshaft certificate that belonged to his father, Oscar Greenblatt, dated about 1925. It was for the Shater Progressive Benevolent Association. The town today is Seta. It listed Shaters living in America. Apparently they were raising money for a *Talmud Torah* (Jewish school) in Shat. I always knew my father's parents were from Kovno Gubernia in Lithuania, but I had never known the name of the town. That's how I got the name of the town. Even with that, I still wasn't interested in getting further into Lithuanian genealogy. But I did register my town with the Family Finder.

Ferne Mittleman, co-founder of the JGS of Buffalo, contacted me. Her roots were also in Shat, she asked if I had any information about Shat and I sent her a photocopy of my grandfather's landsmanshaft certificate. She had a contact in Israel, Joe Woolf, who was born in Shat and lived most of his life in South Africa before he made *aliyah*. He knew Yiddish and he translated the certificate including all the names. The following year, in 1994, I went to Israel and met Joe Woolf and we talked all about Shat. That's when I became fully committed to Lithuanian research although I hadn't started out that way.

In 1996 I made the first of five research trips to Lithuania, and I was there with Joe Woolf. We were at the Kaunas Archives in Kovno, Lithuania, looking at Shat documents for the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century and my Greenblatt family was not listed in any of them. I had learned by then that my great grandmother was from a town called Vandziogala, Lithuania. It suddenly dawned on me that perhaps my Greenblatts were originally from that town, too. So when the archivist told me that she couldn't find the surname Greenblatt in any of the Shat records, I said, "all right, forget about Shat, let's look at Vandziogala instead." And sure enough, it turns out that my Greenblatt family was from Vandziogala before they were from Shat. That was a real breakthrough.

Concerning another breakthrough, prior to my trip to

Salt Lake City in June 2008 for my mother's father's side, I could go back only as far as the name of his father, Hirsch Finkel. It was just a name. I had no other information. Then I found out that the Mormons had microfilmed the records for Brody. So I went to Salt Lake City and looked at those microfilms to see if I could find any information about my Finkel family. I went there knowing only the name of my great grandfather, and I left being able to go back three generations before him. I spent a week pouring through six reels of Brody records that the Mormons had microfilmed.

DOROT: Have you encountered any brick walls and, if so, what have you done about them?

GREEN: My Greenblatt family was from someplace before they were from Vandziogala and I don't know where. I don't have a clue. Possibly from Poland. Although several Grinblat (Greenblatt) households appear in the earliest known 19th century documents that exist for Vandziogala, dating to the early-to-mid 1840's, my great great grandfather, Meer, son of Itsko Grinblat, is not in them, so that leads me to believe the family came from somewhere else. My grandmother's mother's family from Krakes, Lithuania – the surname was Koren – were from some other place before they were from Krakes, and I don't know where. So I can't go back before the 1850s for either of those branches.

What does one do about it? Well, for one thing, you don't lose sleep over it. I think that there's really a need for psychologists who specialize in genealogy. You really have to put things in perspective. Things going on today are much more important than things that happened 150 years ago!

DOROT: Are there any particular research techniques that you would like to pass on?

GREEN: I like looking up New York City death certificates for everyone in my ancestral landsmanshaft cemetery plots because that way, through maiden names of mothers or maiden names of spouses, I discover people who are related to me who I wouldn't have previously known about. So after I catalog a cemetery plot for my ancestral town, I then look up as many death certificates as are on file at the New York City Municipal Archives. They would have had to pass away in New York City before 1949 to have a death certificate on microfilm at the Municipal Archives. But that way I have found people related to my family who I didn't previously know about.

DOROT: Do you agree that for beginning genealogists, talking with relatives in a good place to start?

GREEN: Talking with relatives is a good place to start, but it shouldn't be the be-all and end-all of everything. You can't stop there. Relatives might be able to give you some leads that you could pursue so you don't spin your wheels, such as surnames and towns. On the other hand though, relatives have a lot of incorrect information as well, often mired in myth. The most common myths are about names changed at Ellis Island, which is nonsense; or *bubbe meises* about horse thieves in the family; or "we were very rich in our shtetl, our great *zayde* owned the only tavern in town." I can make an equal case of doing some preliminary research before speaking with family members – census, naturalization, passenger ship and vital records – because it may give you a better idea of what questions to ask and you'll be better able to refute things that your relatives may say that are not true.

DOROT: If you had a magic wand and you could find a set of data, what would it be?

GREEN: There are no 19<sup>th</sup> century records for my shtetl of Shat. They are not currently known to exist and they were probably destroyed. There are no 19<sup>th</sup> century vital records when all my Greenblatt ancestors were there. For U.S. research, if I could have one set of data that's not available now it would be New York City death records past 1948 and all New York State death records that are more than 50 years old. New York State has a 50-year privacy rule on death records. The New York Municipal Archives has death records only up to 1948. By New York State law they would be allowed to have death records up to 1960.

DOROT: Are there research methods that aren't really productive?

GREEN: Don't spin your wheels researching the wrong person or the wrong family. If it's a common name like Benjamin Levinson or Abraham Bloom, make sure you have the right one. Even if they came from the same shtetl, it might be a common surname and there might be more than one person with the same name. Also, don't assume that all your grandfather's first cousins and all your great grandfather's siblings came from the same shtetl that he did. Jews moved around. Don't assume that your ancestors were born in the shtetl that they hailed from. Like in the case of Shat, my grandfather, for all I know, may not have been born there. His two

older sisters, Hannah and Leah, are listed in the 1874 Vandziogala family list so I assume they were born in Vandziogala. My grandfather's naturalization record says he was born in Shat but there are no 19<sup>th</sup> century vital records for Shat, so I have no way of knowing.

DOROT: What are a couple of research sources you find particularly useful?

GREEN: For U.S. research, cemeteries are the most useful to me. Once you find out where someone is buried, hopefully you can get the Hebrew name of the deceased's father, which can bring them back one further generation. And you might discover other relatives buried in the same plot if you go to the cemetery and just walk around that plot. The online database that I use the most is the New York City Death Index on ItalianGen, which I access through Steve Morse's One-Step site, which has the form where you can type more information than just on the ItalianGen site alone.

DOROT: Would you tell us more about your regional specialty and how to learn more about it?

GREEN: For particular regions, it's best to join a Special Interest Group (SIG). SIG members pool financial resources for the purchase and translation of European archival records. These would be too expensive for one person to pay for individually.

DOROT: In terms of your personal genealogical research, can you imagine a day when you've mined everything there is?

GREEN: Frankly, I've already reached that point. I reached that point a long time ago, which is why I'm now so involved in records indexing and other genealogical projects as opposed to doing my own research. Every so often a record does become available, a new person, a new name. But it's not on the scale that it was in the first five or six years when I was finding new things every week.

DOROT: What are you doing with the results of your personal family research?

GREEN: I've put several of my families on Family Tree Maker. I haven't distributed it, I haven't published it. I don't really think that others would be interested in it, including even members of the same family. But I have the information so that when I meet new relatives or others who are interested in that name, I can just access it through the computer software.

DOROT: Any pet peeves in genealogy?

GREEN: I'm concerned about the lack of quality in online databases. I think that there's more emphasis on quantity of records over quality, that there's very little quality control.

DOROT: Let's turn to a major part of your work – cemetery research. What got you started with that?

GREEN: Again going back to Shat, Lithuania, I was looking for those people who were listed on my grandfather's 1925 certificate for the Shater Progressive Benevolent Association. And my mother, who was not a Shater, told me back in 1994 about the existence of a Shater Society. My mother was a Holocaust survivor and when she came to America in 1946, she originally lived with Shaters in Queens, New York, and she would attend meetings of the Shater Society with them, which was how she met my father. She told me that they probably had a cemetery plot somewhere.

In late January 1995 I went to a JGSNY Beyond the Basics Seminar and saw a computer printout listing burial societies in the New York metropolitan area (it's now online) and it contained a listing for a landsmanshaft plot for the Shater Progressive Benevolent Association at New Montefiore Cemetery. It was the dead of winter and the next day, with snow on the ground, I went out to the cemetery. I had never been to a New York Jewish cemetery in my life. The gravestones were all for people who had died in the 1960s, '70s, '80s. They weren't the old Shaters listed on my grandfather's certificate. I found out from New Montefiore's office that there was an older plot for the same society at Old Montefiore Cemetery. So the next day I went out there. There were two plots with about 250 graves and I photographed all of them. When I saw people there with the same surname as my great grandmother, I said to myself, "Wow, I've got to do this for all the other towns where I have roots." It was the initial joy of finding relatives that I didn't know about that encouraged me to continue doing this. In 1996 I became the chair of the JGSNY Cemetery Project.

DOROT: What motivates you to select particular cemeteries to research?

GREEN: In the New York area I originally picked landsmanshaft plots that were associated with my ancestral towns. And as a native of Newburgh, N.Y., I did the three Jewish cemeteries there. Then I chose plots from nearby towns such as Keidan, Lithuania, which

was near Shat. Again, because people moved around, they might be buried in those plots. I did find relatives in the Keidan plots who I wouldn't have known about had I not cataloged those plots. Today, I pick plots in the New York area where I have relatives buried, but within reason. I study other cemeteries in other states, too. For example, I have cataloged a number of Jewish cemeteries in Mississippi. I find them historically and personally fascinating. I have cataloged all the known Jewish cemeteries in British Columbia, one in Victoria and five in Vancouver, my favorite city in the world.

DOROT: What advice would you give to people who have not done as much cemetery research and cataloging as you have?

GREEN: Know thy cemetery? By that I mean, make sure that the deceased person or a particular burial society that you're looking for is located in the cemetery you plan on visiting. Know who you're visiting first, don't just go out there and start looking for the person. You need to realistically assess your capabilities and limitations in light of your age and physical condition.

Plan your visit for a time of year when it's not too hot or cold – not like me photographing Shater plots in the dead of winter, but that was the enthusiasm of a newbie. Be sure to have a cemetery map with you at all times. If you have a mobile phone, jot down the cemetery office's phone number so you can call the office if you can't find the plot you're looking for. To learn more about cemetery research, people can go to the JGSNY web site: <[www.jgsny.org/cemfaqs.htm](http://www.jgsny.org/cemfaqs.htm)>. There are also questions and answers at <[www.museumoffamilyhistory.com/qna-cp.htm](http://www.museumoffamilyhistory.com/qna-cp.htm)>. And to learn

about submitting data to the Jewish Online Worldwide Burial Registry (JOWBR), there's a screencast series at <[www.jewishgen.org/databases/cemetery/screencasts](http://www.jewishgen.org/databases/cemetery/screencasts)>.

DOROT: Have you ever run into surprises as a result of this research?

GREEN: Once, I was in a Jewish cemetery in Newburgh and a man came up to the gate and I let him in. He was looking for the grave of his great grandmother. I said it would take me too long to find it, but I told him I would send him a photo of it from home. It turns out that his great grandmother and my great grandmother were sisters and their husbands were brothers. This was a man from San Francisco and it turned out that his great grandparents and my great grandparents were brothers and sisters. What a coincidence. He was a relative I didn't even know I had.

DOROT: What are the most important needs in cemetery research?

GREEN: Only a very minute portion of all the burial societies in New York have been indexed. It's just a fraction, less than one percent, I would say. Just pick one society, the one where your *bubbe* and *zayde* are buried or your ancestral town. Just pick one society to start and catalog it for JOWBR. If everyone who reads this issue of *Dorot* were to catalog just one society, it would make a big difference in the number of graves in JOWBR. They only take whole cemeteries or whole societies. You can't just submit your ancestors.

DOROT: Thank you. ☆

## JGS on Facebook



JGS, Inc. has created a group page on Facebook (<<http://www.facebook.com>>), an online social networking facility. After you join Facebook, you can reach JGS's page in any of these three ways: (1) Go to the JGS website (<<http://www.jgsny.org>>) to link to the page. (2) Go directly to the page at <<http://www.facebook.com/home.php?filter=lf#/group.php?gid=62112838856&ref=search&sid=1424416892.508558736..1>>. (3) Log in to Facebook and search for "Jewish Genealogical Society–New York." We hope you will join the more than 285 members of the JGS Facebook group. The page includes details about our upcoming meetings and follow-up reports about the presentations. We welcome comments and reactions to the meetings as well as suggestions of topics for monthly meetings.

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