



JGSLA DATES AND UPDATES

JEWISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY of LOS ANGELES

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• June/July 2008 •

Upcoming Meetings

July Sunday, July 20, 2008, 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.
“From Birth in Lithuania to a New Life in America”, by Dr. Benjamin Lesin, & Regional SIG Roundtables
Valley Beth Shalom Synagogue, <http://www.vbs.org> 15739 Ventura Blvd., Encino, CA

August no meeting, see you at the IAJGS conference, Sunday, August 17, 2008 – Friday, August 22, 2008
28th IAJGS International Conference on Jewish Genealogy, <http://www.chicago2008.org>
Chicago Marriott Downtown Magnificent Mile, 540 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL

If you have not yet made your plans to participate in the Conference, consider doing so. It is the premier event of the Jewish genealogical year. Some highlights include:

- Gala reception honoring Susan King, the founder and former long-time head of JewishGen.
- E. Randol Schoenberg as Keynote Speaker on “Recovering Nazi-Looted Art-A genealogist’s Tale.”
- Film festival catering to all created by Pamela Weisberger.
- Hands-on computer classes, including Photoshop, JewishGen, Ancestry, Family Tree Maker and more.
- Lisa Lipkin will provide story-telling entertainment at the awards banquet.
- The JRI-Poland luncheon will feature a representative from new Museum the History of Polish Jews.
- Unique and diverse ethnic menus for the various SIG luncheons.
- Various tours of Jewish Chicago, including transportation to various Jewish cemeteries.

See <http://www.chicago2008.org> to view the full program, for additional information and registration.

Sept. Sunday, September 14, 2008, 1:00 p.m., IAJGS conference highlights and films
University Synagogue, <http://www.unisyn.org>

October Sunday, October 12, 2008, noon – 6:00 p.m., Assisted Research Day with translators available
Los Angeles Regional Family History Center, <http://www.larfhc.org/>

Prior Meetings

See page three for summaries of the May and June programs by Jeff Malka and Ron Arons.

President’s Message

A tremendous "thank you" to members who came out on a very hot day to staff the JGSLA booth at the Israel Festival at Woodley Park on May 18, 2008, celebrating the 60th anniversary of Israel's Independence. Members who staffed the table were Nancy Biederman, Michael Kerstein, Arnie and Susan Schwartz, Marion Diamond, Andrea Massion, Bobby Furst, Joanne Aloni-Bolden, Mort Rappaport and myself. Michael Kerstein was invaluable in helping to carry display materials in from the car, and back out at the end of the day. Thanks also to Sonia Hoffman who loaned us her amazing display board of family research, which always draws positive attention from Festival visitors. We had quite a number of people who signed up for our mailing list, and hope to welcome many of them as new members in the near future. Thanks to all of you...we were well-staffed throughout the day, and I hope all of you enjoyed talking to the visitors.

Sandy Malek, president@jgsla.org

Editor's Message

Dates & Updates has been, and will continue to be, a monthly publication. However, due to other commitments, no June issue was published. So, this will serve as a combined Dates & Updates for June and July.

Welcome New Members!

Welcome to the following who joined the JGSLA over the past few months: Stephen Chase, Sheri Cohen, Fran Goldstein, Lorraine Joffe, Maite Klein, Debra Newell and Geraldine Mund

Member Updates

Our congratulations to Barbara and Ken Klaristenfeld on the arrival of twin grandchildren Sophie Violet and Evan Russell Klaristenfeld, born to Jessica Wood and Elan Klaristenfeld, March 2008.

Our condolences to the Bob Seeds and family on the passing of Harice Seeds, who died on May 26. She was a long time member and a former director of the Society.

Hal and Marci Bookbinder are proud to share that their daughter, Felicia Tischhauser, while working as a project manager and raising three sons with her husband, Eric, has graduated cum laud from California Lutheran University.

Congratulations to Yosefchai Laden on their daughter, Tania Elizabeth Laden's graduation from Stanford University in June. Yosefchai also shared that "The main skill that I acquired while searching for my family in the Ellis Island database was to use the "soundex" search in combination with the dates and departure sites. I was able to find every one of my Russian family's listings on the ships' manifests. This was because I was open to new ways to spell familiar names."

Requests for Assistance

Phil Robinson has found microfilms of the Bialystok birth records for his grandfather, in Old Cyrillic script. He would like to hire someone who can read Old Cyrillic to go with him to the LA Family History Center to scroll through the microfilm and find the right pages to translate. If anyone is fluent in Old Cyrillic and would be willing to help, please contact Phil at parobinson2000@hotmail.com.

Donna Rice hurycane@earthlink.net, Florida, is looking for Henry Fischer who signed a Page of Testimony in 1973. At that time his address was N. Sierra Bonita in Los Angeles. The Page of Testimony was completed in conjunction with the Council of Post War Jewish Organizations, stamped with the name of Esther Przeworski-Pratt. The POT was also signed by H. Egan/Egon on behalf of the 1939 Club of Los Angeles. Donna is looking for Henry Fischer, his descendants or anyone who knew him or his family.

Benjamin Zuckerman a.k.a. Shapsie Kremer

Yale Zuckerman

Years ago when I first began the search for my family's history, my first goal was to find my parents on Ship's Manifests coming to America. In our first visit to the LA Regional Family History Center, my wife and I in less than three hours of searching found my mother Sarah (Sonya) Meisel (her maiden name) coming into Philadelphia in 1911. We were so excited we had tears in our eyes.

That was easy. Now to find my father Benjamin Julius Zuckerman who arrived a few years before her. He came first, sent for her, and they were married in Williamsport, PA. It was not easy to find my father! I searched for months, probably over a year. I tried all possible spelling or misspelling of Zuckerman, all or any different first name. I looked in all ports -- New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Boston and Canada -- no luck. Finally someone suggested that I find my father's Application for Citizenship. There the applicant must identify when and where he/she came into the United States.

I located that document signed by my father Benjamin Julius Zuckerman. It told me that my father arrived in New York in February 1908 on the ship SS Korea under the name SHAPSIE KREMER. I had never heard that name before. My sister and three brothers, all older than me, had never heard that name before. I went searching for Shapsie Kremer and found him very quickly. Yes, Shapsie Kremer was my father Benjamin Julius Zuckerman. It remains a mystery to our family who was Shapsie Kremer?

Breaking Down Brick Walls

Charlotte Rutta

In 2003 I ordered records from JRI-Poland, hoping they would relate to my husband's family. After having them translated, there was no one who could verify if we were related or not so I just filed all the documents away.

About a year later I posted them to a JewishGen SIG group, listing every name on the marriage documents, the shtetls, dates, etc, hoping that maybe someone would recognize the names. About one half hour after I posted the info, I received an e mail from a lady in New York. One of the brides was her great-aunt; the mother was her great grandmother. She had been searching for a very long time and because I had posted the European spelling of the names she made the connection. She wrote that I had "made her day, her year." Needless to say I was as excited as she was. I e mailed her back for her address and sent her copies of the original, the translation in modern Russian and then into English.

We still correspond after all these years so it just goes to show, NEVER give up, brick walls can be knocked down.

Discovering Your Sephardic Ancestors and Their World, May 21, 2008

Summary by Jeff Malka, speaker

Jewish world population has varied over time from the 7 million Jews in the 48 C.E. Roman census to the present. As late as the 1200s, 90% of all Jews were Sephardic with several communities in Spain of 12,000 Jews while the largest Jewish communities in the Ashkenazi world were those of Frankfurt-am-Main and Vienna with 700 and 1,200 Jews respectively. Similarities and differences between Sephardic and Ashkenazi genealogical resources were described.

Onomastics describing how Jewish names evolved from biblical times to the present, including the impact of Babylonian names persisting to this day, reasons for the loss of surnames in Christian Europe while they persisted elsewhere, how translated Sephardic surname variants arose, and the difference between Sephardic Jewish names and converso names.

Sephardic surnames are often very ancient enabling searches in the voluminous notarial archives of Spain (dating from the 1200s, with 3,000 per year per village!). Examples of such archives were shown using notarial records of the Malka family in pre-expulsion Aragon and Toledo to demonstrate how such records provide documentary proof of how surnames translated variants were used interchangeably in legal documents and the importance of knowing these variants in Sephardic research. Unique Sephardic resources include ketubot with multi-generations of bride and groom ancestors, French archives, Alliance Israelite Universelle Archives, consulate records, the enormous Seville archive of all passengers from Spain to the New world from 1500 to 1800, and Inquisition records were described.

Specialized tools such as ability to read Sephardic cursive Hebrew script (examples were shown including Spanish written in Hebrew characters), converting Muslim calendar dates, reading Ottoman archives written in the pre-1924 Latin script were described.

Multiple Jewish population transfers were described, in and out of Spain during Roman and Phoenician times, following Visigoths oppression, during the Moorish period, flight out of Spain in the 1200s (Maimonides), the 1391 pogroms and the final 1492 expulsion.

A few of the more useful websites and books for Sephardic genealogists were listed with many more available in the large SephardicGen.com website which includes separate sections on many aspect of Sephardic genealogy and large Sephardic databases (see recent *Avotaynu* article about the website).

The Jews of Sing Sing, June 30, 2008

Summary by Ron Arons, speaker

I didn't choose the topic *The Jews of Sing Sing*. It was beshert. I learned early on in my family research that my great-grandfather served time in Sing Sing for, of all things, bigamy. My mother knew about her grandfather's transgressions, but kept it a secret to her grave.

I wrote a manuscript about my great-grandfather and his father, a rabbi from Poland who also got into trouble, only to be told by the publishing world that it "did not need another memoir." So, as a lark, I decided to write a book about every Jew who ever served time at the famous prison "up the river" from Manhattan. Little did I understand the enormity of the topic I would attempt to tackle.

My early research led me to understand that there were far many more Jewish criminals behind bars than one might think. Federal and NY state censuses both showed 100-200 Jewish sounding names in any given year. Using the prison's admissions records, held by the NY State Archives, I counted how many Jewish criminals there were. It took five weeks of turning page after page of the admissions books covering the years 1880 through 1950. When I saw a record showing 'Jew', Hebrew, or something equivalent, I took a digital photograph of the record. I walked out of the Archives with more than 7,300 photos. Even discounting for recidivism, I counted more than 6,000 individual Jews who served time at the prison.

For my revised concept for the book, I wrote chapters about a dozen different criminals, gangsters and lesser-knowns alike. Using the same technique as I did with my own ancestors, I collected as much documentation as I could about these criminals – FBI files, admission records (to Sing Sing and other correctional facilities), court trial transcripts, alien files, and newspaper articles, piecing them together to reconstruct these individuals lives.

By examining their entire lives, especially their childhoods, I was able to explore the question WHY – why did they choose a life of crime? Conventional wisdom suggests that it was a simple case of their being immigrants (or sons of immigrants) or that they lived in the troubled conditions of NY's Lower East Side. While these most certainly contributing factors, I found in many cases that something else was going on – some distinctive dysfunctional aspect within their nuclear families.

To reiterate, I did not select this topic. But now, after more than ten years researching, writing about, and speaking about the topic of Jewish criminals, I find myself an expert in this specialty topic. Who would have thought? I hope you will ready my book which is not only a set of mini-biographies, but also a show-by-example instruction manual for how to reconstruct someone's life using standard and non-standard genealogical documents.

Power GOOGLE'ing

Hal Bookbinder, *Dates & Updates* editor

It's hard to find anyone unfamiliar with the GOOGLE Internet search tool. However, most are unaware of the additional features of GOOGLE that make it even more powerful. When you next use GOOGLE take notice of the links above (Web, Images, Maps, News, Video, Gmail, more) and to the right (Advanced Search, Preferences, Language Tools) of the search box. Here are a few features and techniques that you might find useful.

ADDRESSES & PHONE NUMBERS

GOOGLE is a U.S. phone book in disguise-you can look up street addresses and phone numbers directly through the search box. Type in an address or phone number and you'll see the corresponding publicly listed phone numbers and addresses at the top of the results page. You can search by name and address, or by phone number.

ALERTS

You can have GOOGLE send you an email each time it uncovers a particular term. So, say you want to be notified each time a new page is found with your Shtetl or family name. To access this tool, click on "more" at the top of the GOOGLE search page, then "even more", and finally on "Alerts" <http://www.google.ca/alerts?hl=en>.

DOMAIN SEARCHES

What if you want to search only in a single domain, like ".ucla.edu", "ca.gov" or "Jewishgen.org". You can use the Advanced Search to specify a domain http://www.google.ca/advanced_search?hl=en.

EXCLUDING PHRASES

For example, you can include in your search a rule to exclude some sites. One of my family names is "Barenberg." But, if I use GOOGLE to search for this name, I come up with a lot of sites mentioning "Russ Barenberg," a folk guitarist in whom I am not interested. Using the "Advanced Search" button (immediately to the right of the GOOGLE search field), allows me to search for "Barenberg", but exclude pages with "Russ Barenberg" http://www.google.ca/advanced_search?hl=en.

IMAGES

Interested in pictures from your Shtetl? Click on "Images" and then search for your Shtetl by name. Searching this way for Dubno, returned a series of pictures and maps.

INCLUDING SYNONYMS

What if you are searching for Bookbinder genealogy, but want to include any page that contains "genealogy" or a synonym for genealogy, like "family tree" or "family research". Place a "~" before the word in the search box. So, you would enter, Bookbinder ~genealogy.

MAPS

GOOGLE Earth lets you fly anywhere on Earth to view satellite imagery, maps, terrain, 3D buildings and even explore galaxies in the Sky. You will need to download the free GOOGLE Earth software. Do you want to see an aerial view of your house? Or see a view of the family Shtetl? To access this tool, click on "more" at the top of the GOOGLE search page, then "even more", and finally on "Earth" <http://earth.google.com>.

NUMBER RANGES

A little-known Google feature lets you retrieve search results containing numbers within a given range. In your browser's search box, type your search term, followed by the two numbers defining your desired number range and separated by two periods (no spaces). For example, if you are searching for references to a particular name, but only where a 19th century date is mentioned, you could include 1801..1900 in the search field.

QUOTATION MARKS

A simple technique to focus your research is to put quotation marks around the full name of the person for whom you are searching. Searching for Hal Bookbinder returns 21,000 sites. Searching for "Hal Bookbinder" returns *only* 582!

TRANSLATIONS

Another tool available through GOOGLE provides translations, including German, Polish, Romanian and Russian. You can use this to obtain a quick translation of any words, phrases, or paragraphs that you type in, or to view translations of web pages. While the translations are imperfect, they generally are helpful, quick and free. To access this tool, click on "more" at the top of the GOOGLE search page, then "even more", and finally on "Translate" http://translate.google.com/translate_t.

WILD CARDS

You can also use * as a wild card in your search. When I tried "Hal * Bookbinder", I found several references to "Hal and Marci Bookbinder" and one to "Hal. Bookbinder", a typo that I would not have found by just searching for "Hal Bookbinder".

WANT MORE, CHECK CYNDI'S LIST

Cyndi's List devotes a section to GOOGLE for genealogy. Check out <http://www.cyndislist.com/google.htm> and you are likely to find new and creative ways to use GOOGLE.

(This is updated from an article originally published in the February 2006 issue of *Dates & Updates*. Some material is taken from an article by Tom McNichol in the April 2008 issue of the *California Lawyer Magazine*, <http://californialawyeromagazine.com>.)

Facts From The Stacks

Barbara Algaze, JGSLA Librarian

As reported in the last issue of Dates and Updates,

"Thanks to the generous donations of JGSLA members to the Library Acquisition Fund, our collection of journals of the Western States Jewish Historical Quarterly has recently been expanded to include all back issues and now numbers approximately 140 items. They represent Volume 1, #1 (October 1968) through 2008."

Amongst these issues are a number of special items which have been shelved separately from the collection. They are:

- *California: Earthquakes and Jews*, 979.494 F25 wc
- *Walla Walla: Judaism in a Rural Setting*, 979.748 F25r
- *Pioneer Jews of Los Angeles in the Nineteenth Century*, 979.494 F25wp
- *Jewish Women of the American West*, 973 F2ws
- *Pioneer Jews of British Columbia*, 971.1 F25w
- *Sephardic Jews in the West Coast States*, 296.979 F2 kw, Volumes 1, 2 and 3

"Tracing Your Family Roots" Television Series

Barbara Algaze, JGSLA Librarian

Episodes of "Tracing Your Family Roots," a Washington, DC area public access TV program, are available on your computer. Go to <http://tracingroots.nova.org> and click on any episode to view it on your PC. Each show is about a half hour. The series is hosted by Arline Sachs, a former president of the JGSGW, and Sallyann Amdur Sack, PhD, editor of Avotaynu, founding president of the JGSGW and a former president of the IAJGS. Both are published authors with long lists genealogical accomplishments.

Americans of Jewish Descent on-line

Researchers now have access to the complete text of Rabbi Stern's monumental volume that was published in 1991 as the updated and revised 3rd edition entitled: *First American Jewish Families: 600 Genealogies, 1654-1988*. This publication is an historical document in its own right, and it is not our intention to alter it in any way. Students of American Jewish genealogy are encouraged to use this text as a basis for their research.

<http://www.americanjewisharchives.org/aja/FAJF/intro.html>

Index to 48,000 Australian Jewish Burials

From Nu? What's New?

The Australian Jewish Historical Society has placed an index to 48,000 Jewish burials at <http://www.bd-bd.info/>. Information includes date, name, age (if given), tombstone inscription, Hebrew name (if given), cemetery and plot location. The site does not specify whether the date is date of burial or date of death.

pre-WWII directories

Logan J. Kleinwaks, kleinwaks@alumni.princeton.edu

The following pre-WWII directories are newly searchable on my site <http://kalter.org/search>. Some have been previously discussed on JewishGen and SIG mailing lists, while I believe others are not well known, and would benefit from analysis by those with relevant geographic and linguistic expertise.

- 1894 Commercial Directory of the Jews of the United Kingdom (Harfield)
- 1904 Poland Manufacturers' Directory
- 1938 Economic Directory of Kielce, Krakow, Silesia Provinces
- 1914 Upper Silesia Trade Directory
- 1924 Poznan Telephone and Business Directory
- 1930 Poznan (City) Address Directory
- 1826 Warsaw Directory
- 1932 Bialystok Address Directory
- 1914/1915 Krakow War Refugees Address Directory
- 1914/1915 Lwow War Refugees Address Directory
- 1913 Lwow Address Directory
- 1910 Lwow Address Directory
- 1902 Lwow Address and Business Directory

Because of the large number of directories now searchable on the site, and the large number that will be added in the near future, I will soon be reorganizing the site and making other improvements. Stay tuned, and please continue to tell me about online directories you think should be added. (Note that I am now including even directories with name indices, because of the benefits of making them full-text and soundex searchable.)

As usual, the result of a search will include a list of numbers, corresponding to the images where matches to the search term can be found. If you have never used the site and do not know how to view those images, read the answer to the first frequently asked question at kalter.org/searchfaq.html (or click the FAQ link on the site, just above the search area).

If you find information useful to your research with this tool, please tell me.

Yad Vashem Places Photo Archives Online

From Nu? What's New?

Yad Vashem has added a searchable photo archive of some 130,000 images to its web site at <http://www.yadvashem.org>. Gary Mokotoff reports however, that archives are difficult to navigate. However, if you find something on your family or shtetl, it may be worth the effort.

Ancestry.com Divulges Planned Databases

Ancestry.com claims it now has 7 billion names in more than 25,000 databases. They have announced plans for future databases to be available in the next few months. A partial list includes.

- Historical newspapers – 20 million additional images and more than 1 billion names.
- Cook County (Chicago), Illinois Birth, Marriage, and Death Records (1871–1988).
- Florida State Census (update) – 4 million names added to the Florida State Censuses representing the years 1867, 1875, 1935, and 1945.
- Drouin Collection of French-Canadian Vital and Church Records (1621–1967) – 37 million names
- British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards (1914–1920) – 4.8 million names
- German City Directories (1797–1945) – 32 million names
- Ontario, Canada Births, Marriages, and Deaths – 10.7 million names
- Swedish Emigration Records (1783–1951) – 1.7 million names

See <http://tgn.mediaroom.com/index.php?s=43&item=121> for the complete announcement.

Helpful Websites

Bobby Furst

Census Enumerator Instructions (IPUMS)

Census enumerators were given very specific instructions when it came to recording the answers your ancestors gave. Reading these instructions can be very helpful in more fully understanding the records. This site includes the original instructions for the years 1850-1950.

<http://usa.ipums.org/usa/voliii/tEnumInstr.shtml>

US Census Abbreviations

Ever wonder about the meaning of some of the abbreviations found in the US census? Here's a handy list of relationship, citizenship and race abbreviations, along with the original instructions given to the census enumerators.

<http://www.searchforancestors.com/records/censusabbreviations.html?sssdmh=dm13.166231>

Glossary of Ancient Diseases

Find out what your ancestor died of, in today's terms

www.olivetreegenealogy.com/misc/disease.shtml

British Jewish Marriage Authorisation Certificates

It is now possible to order online copies of Marriage Authorisation Certificates for marriages that took place under the auspices of the Office of the Chief Rabbi of England from 1880–1886. Plans call for including the years 1845–1907. The project is a collaborative effort between the United Synagogue and the Jewish Genealogical Society of Great Britain.

Marriage Authorisations granted by The United Synagogue (from c.1845) give permission to a local rabbi to conduct a marriage ceremony. The Authorisation is granted after the authorities are satisfied that both parties are halachically Jewish or that they have an acceptable Certificate of Conversion. Information of the Marriage Authorisation gives among other information:

- The proposed place and date of marriage
- The Hebrew and English names of the bride and groom
- Their addresses
- Their country of origin
- The Hebrew names of the bride's father and groom's father
- The Hebrew names of the groom's unmarried brothers and which ones intend to attend the marriage ceremony

The first batch of records (3,900) within this database is those from 17th February 1880 - 30th December 1886. Records cost £15 for United Synagogue and JGSG members and £20 for non-members. The site is located at http://www.theus.org.uk/support_services/find_your_family/marriage_records

New York Databases

Bobby Furst

The New England Historic Genealogical Society in Boston announced the launch of a new Web portal highlighting the wide variety of New York resources available on their award-winning Website, NewEnglandAncestors.org. This new portal, located at www.NewYorkAncestors.org, will direct members to a wide range of databases, publications, and articles focusing on New York state research.

Resources and research tools will be available to all NEHGS members as part of their membership, and include a wide range of New York databases such as vital records, probate records, census, tax, and voter lists, cemetery records, church records, court records, and published genealogies and biographies.

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