



זכרון ZichronNote

The Journal of the San Francisco Bay Area Jewish Genealogical Society

Volume XXII, Number 3

August 2002

CALENDAR OF GENEALOGICAL EVENTS

Meetings of the San Francisco Bay Area Jewish Genealogical Society

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

San Francisco: Sunday, Doors open 12:30 p.m. Program begins at 1 p.m.

Fort Mason Center, Marina Boulevard at Buchanan Street, Building C, Room 205

Los Altos Hills: Monday, 7:30 p.m. Congregation Beth Am, 26790 Arastradero Road

Sun. August 18 Berkeley-Richmond Jewish Community Center: *SFBAJGS, Introduction and Overview.* Sita Likuski will discuss progress on the Cemetery Project and Ron Arons will present highlights of the 22nd International Conference on Jewish Genealogy in Toronto, Canada. 1414 Walnut Street, North Berkeley, 1 to 3:30 p.m.

Mon. August 19 Los Altos Hills: *Highlights of the 22nd International Conference on Jewish Genealogy in Toronto, Canada.* JGS members who attended the seminar will tell us about the new developments in Jewish genealogy and will discuss their personal discoveries.

Sun. September 15 San Francisco: *Highlights of the 22nd International Conference on Jewish Genealogy in Toronto, Canada.* Same program as above.

Mon. October 21 Los Altos Hills: *The Holocaust Oral History Project.* Ann Gren Faldinger, Director of the Holocaust Oral History Project, will discuss the methodology and goals of the project, on local and national levels. Ms. Faldinger will provide an understanding of the value of the Oral History Project as a resource for family history.

Sun. November 17 Berkeley-Richmond Jewish Community Center: *Genealogy Workshop.* More details in next issue.

More Genealogy Events of Interest on Page 4

ZichronNote

Journal of the San Francisco Bay Area Jewish Genealogical Society

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

Back Issues are available for \$5 per issue. Requests should be addressed to the SFBAJGS at the Society address below.

Display Advertising is accepted at the discretion of the editor. Rates per issue: business card-sized (3-1/2 x 2 inch) - \$10, quarter-page - \$20, half-page - \$35, full-page - \$60. Ads must be camera-ready and relate to Jewish genealogy.

Membership is open to anyone interested in Jewish genealogy. Dues are \$20 per calendar year. The Society is tax-exempt pursuant to section 501(c)(3) of the IRS Code. Make your check payable to "SFBAJGS" and send to: SFBAJGS, Membership, P.O. Box 471616, San Francisco, CA 94147.

Society Address:

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Meetings: Odd-numbered months-**3rd Sunday of each month, 1 p.m. at Fort Mason Center (Marina at Buchanan), San Francisco.** Even-numbered months-**3rd Monday of each month, 7:30 p.m. at Congregation Beth Am, 26790 Arastradero Road, Los Altos Hills.**
SFBAJGS Web Site: www.jewishgen.org/sfbajgs

President's Message

Issues Facing the SFBAJGS

by Jeremy Frankel

In my last column I was reminiscing about the past and how I became involved in genealogy. This month I will ponder some of the issues facing the SFBAJGS as we embrace the 21st century. These issues have been raised at the last couple of meetings of the SFBAJGS Board.

As we shake off the vestiges of the 20th century, it seems to me that there is going to be some reassessment of what it means to belong to a JGS. What are the benefits? In the past any non-profit would point to its newsletters and meetings, annual workshops, or visits it would undertake. For the San Francisco Bay Area JGS we have concentrated on putting out a high quality newsletter with original articles. We use ZichronNote to showcase the kind of in-depth research being pursued by our members.

Living in the Bay Area, we can easily tap into high quality local speakers for our monthly meetings. In the past year we have had such speakers as Stephen Morse, creator of the "One Step Ellis Island Database" search program; Douglas Goldman, who talked about Beth Hatefutsoth in Israel; and our own Ron Arons, Judy Baston, Jim Koenig, Henry Kaplan and Rosanne Leeson, to name but a few.

But what of the future? The Board is concerned that the money we receive is used as wisely, beneficially, and effectively as it can be. I won't beat about the bush: domestic postage costs have just gone up and the printing and postage costs are eating into our budget at a greater rate than we want to increase the dues. Therefore we are looking at how to improve the way we get our message across. One way would be to make ZichronNote available in an

Continued on page 15

Meetings to be Held in East Bay

In order to be more inclusive of East Bay members of the society, the SFBAJGS is planning to hold some of its meetings at the Berkeley-Richmond Jewish Community Center, located at 1414 Walnut Street in North Berkeley. The first meeting at this location, an introduction and overview to the organization and its activities, will take place Sunday, August 18 from 1 to 3:30 p.m. The Jewish Genealogy Workshop will be held at the same location in November.

To get to the center, exit I-80/580 at the University Avenue exit. Go east on University to Shattuck. Turn left on Shattuck and continue for a half mile. Turn right on Vine and then left on Walnut. For information call (510)848-0237 or visit www.brjcc.org.

SOCIETY NEWS

E-mail Address Updates

| | |
|-------------------|------------------------|
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| | |
|------------------|--------------------------|
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| Spielman, Marvin | mspie62223@aol.com |
| Wagger, Gerald | gwagger@aol.com |
| Wiener, Shellie | s_wiener@yahoo.com |

If you have an e-mail address but have not been receiving occasional SFBAJGS messages, or your e-mail address has changed, send a message to galleto@pacbell.net so we can keep you up to date.

SFBAJGS Family Finder Update

The surnames and towns being researched by our newest members are listed below. This database is maintained for our membership. If you have a correction or update you would like us to know about, contact: SFBAJGS, P.O. Box 471616, San Francisco, CA 94147, or send e-mail to: BurgAuer@aol.com.

| <u>Surname</u> | <u>Town, Country</u> | <u>Member</u> |
|-------------------------|--|------------------|
| ANGER | Bilgoraj, Poland | Eckstein, Randy |
| ECKSTEIN | Bilgoraj, Poland | Eckstein, Randy |
| FESSLER | Vatra Dornei, (Roumania) | Wiener, Shellie |
| GLOGAU | Hamburg, Germany | Kiefer, Harry |
| GOLEMBE | Lyubashevo, Lakhva, Minsk, Pinsk (Belarus) | Wiener, Shellie |
| GRUENEBAUM | Frankfurt, Germany | Kiefer, Harry |
| HOCHSTADT | Vizhnitsa and Putila (Ukraine), Vatra Dornei, (Roumania) | Wiener, Shellie |
| HOTZNER | Hamburg, Germany | Kiefer, Harry |
| JACOBSON | UK | Ramm, Hy |
| KIEFER | Osterath, Germany | Kiefer, Harry |
| LEMER | Szczebrzeszyn, Poland | Eckstein, Randy |
| LEVY | Tennessee and Mississippi | Lemmon, Amelia |
| PACHT | Vizhnitsa (Ukraine), Vatra Dornei, (Roumania) | Wiener, Shellie |
| RAMM | UK | Ramm, Hy |
| ROCHMAN | Lublin Gubernia, | Eckstein, Randy |
| RUBINGER | Vizhnitsa and Putila (Ukraine), Vatra Dornei, (Roumania) | Wiener, Shellie |
| SCHAPP | Vatra Dornei, (Roumania) | Wiener, Shellie |
| SCHOENTHAL | Frankfurt, Germany | Kiefer, Harry |
| SILVERSTEIN | Vatra Dornei, (Roumania) | Wiener, Shellie |
| SPIELMAN | Karmanov, Poland | Spielman, Marvin |
| WAGGER | Duinsk, Latvia | Wagger, Gerald |
| WALLACH | Vizhnitsa (Ukraine), Vatra Dornei, (Roumania) | Wiener, Shellie |
| WEGER | Duinsk, Latvia | Wagger, Gerald |
| WEIGEL | Vatra Dornei, (Roumania) | Wiener, Shellie |
| WIENER | Kolomyya (Ukraine) | Wiener, Shellie |
| WINDWER | Kolomyya (Ukraine) | Wiener, Shellie |
| WOFSON | UK | Ramm, Hy |
| WOLF | Warsaw Gubernia | Eckstein, Randy |
| WOLFORWITZ, WOLFARIVITZ | Warsaw Gubernia | Eckstein, Rand |

CALENDAR, cont.

More Genealogy Events

Local

Thurs., Sept. 19, 7 - 9 p.m. **Santa Clara Historical and Genealogical Society, Archives vs. Library** with speaker Paula Jabloner. Function and operation of archives. San Jose Public Library, 3345 Lochinvar Ave., Santa Clara. www.katpher.com/SCCHGS

Regional

Sat., Sept. 14 and 18, 9:30 a.m. - noon. **California Genealogical Society. Beginning Genealogy.** Class for beginners or those who have paper management questions. Class covers forms and filing techniques and preparation to use U.S. Census sources. Preregistration required. 1611 Telegraph Ave. Suite 100, Oakland. www.calgensoc.org/events

Sat., Oct. 19, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. **California Genealogical Society. Blockbuster Seminar.** Presented by genealogy expert Gordon C. Remington. 353 Frank Ogawa Plaza, Oakland. www.calgensoc.org/events

Mon., September 23, 7:30 p.m. **Jewish Genealogical Society of Los Angeles. Holocaust Research.** Presented by Katherine Mader, author, and Adaire Kline, library director of the Simon Wiesenthal Center. Skirball Cultural Center, 2701 N. Sepulveda Blvd., Los Angeles. (818)771-5554. www.jgsla.org

Mon., October 21, 7:30 p.m. **Jewish Genealogical Society of Los Angeles.** Speaker is Arthur Kurzweil, author of "From Generation to Generation." Co-sponsored by the Skirball Cultural Center. Skirball Cultural Center, 2701 N. Sepulveda Blvd., Los Angeles. (818)771-5554. www.jgsla.org

International

August 4-9, **22nd International Conference on Jewish Genealogy**, Toronto, Canada. www.jgstoronto2002.ca

Tenth Annual Jewish Genealogical Research Trip To Salt Lake City Planned

For the tenth consecutive year, veteran Jewish genealogists Gary Mokotoff and Eileen Polakoff will be offering a research trip to the LDS (Mormon) Family History Library in Salt Lake City from October 31 to November 7. To date, more than 300 Jewish genealogists from the U.S., Canada, South America, Israel and Europe have taken advantage of this program.

The program offers genealogists the opportunity to spend an entire week of research at the library under the guidance and assistance of professional genealogists who have made more than a three dozen trips to Salt Lake City.

It includes a specially arranged three-hour class on day of arrival introducing the participants to the facilities and resources of the Family History Library; a mid-week informal group discussion of progress and problem-solving and access to trip leaders from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the library for on-site assistance and personal consultations. For those new to genealogy, a beginners workshop on the first morning of the trip introduces them to the wonderful world of Hamburg immigration lists, U.S. passenger arrival lists, naturalization records and census records. A copy of the book "Your Guide to the Family History Library" is part of the pre-trip literature.

Social events include a mid-week group brunch for camaraderie and discussion of successes (and failures); and special seating at the Sunday morning broadcast of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir.

For additional information, write to SLC Genealogy Trip, 155 N. Washington Avenue, Bergenfield, NJ 07621, call (201) 387-3818; or visit www.avotaynu.com/slctrip.htm.

Correction: 1890 Police Census Can Be Found at San Bruno LDS Library

By Jeremy Frankel

In the February, 2002 issue of *ZichronNote*, I alerted people to the existence of the 1890 Police Census of New York City as a substitute for the destroyed 1890 Federal Census. According to the LDS catalog it was available at the LDS library on Pacific Avenue in San Francisco. I have since discovered that the library no longer exists at that address.

However, on a recent visit to National Archives Regional Branch at San Bruno, I saw a notice that stated that the 1890 Police Census for NYC is

available at the San Bruno LDS library. This is conveniently located just a couple of blocks away at 975 Sneath Avenue. I immediately drove there, only to discover that it wasn't open that day!

The telephone number is (650) 873-1928. The posted hours are: Wednesday: 9-4, 6:30-9; Thursday: 9-4; Saturday: 9-4. It is closed on all the other days. As always, call ahead to check that there will be volunteer staff available for your visit.

Using the Jewish Community Library for Genealogy Research

by Judy Baston

The following is taken from information about the Jewish Community Library presented by Judy Baston at the SFBAJGS meeting May 19 in San Francisco. Judy Baston is a former SFBAJGS Librarian and has served on the volunteer staff at the Jewish Community Library (JCL) for the past 10 years.

With more than 30,000 volumes, as well as musical items and a video collection, the Jewish Community Library (JCL) is a major resource for Jewish genealogy research in the Bay Area.

One of the reasons I have felt so at home working there as volunteer staff three days a week for the last 10 years is the commitment of the library — and the Bureau of Jewish Education with which it is affiliated — to the importance of family history. The collection of basic books at the library used in Jewish family history research has grown significantly, as has the number and variety of programs in the family history field.

Even for those of you who are familiar with the library may not realize that the JCL now has a searchable online catalog at www.bjesf.org/MAIN/JCL/Onlinecatalog.html.

The online catalog defaults to a “keyword” search. This is a good option — it takes in words in a title, an author’s name, and words in the subject heading. After you’ve entered a word for a keyword search, click on “browse” — it gives you the option of checking the results for a slightly different spelling. Then click on “search.”

Even though an online search will indicate that every book is “IN” — since circulation itself is not computerized yet — you should not presume a book is “IN” unless it is a reference work, which is always in. Make sure you call or email the Library to check if a circulating book is actually in.

Not all the items in the Library are in the online catalog. Some of the older items, including some reference works, haven’t been added yet. They are still in the old-fashioned card catalog in the library. So if you do see what you want in the online catalog, you know it’s in the collection. But if you don’t see what you want, call us or email us and ask us if we have it.

How do you know which books in the Jewish Community Library to consult in your research?

You may have searched the Ellis Island Database and found a passenger manifest for a family member. But the place of birth listed for this person is someplace you hadn’t heard of before. If you’ve just found a new ancestral town, what is first thing you

should do?

Even if it’s more than 10 years old, with a new version coming any day, consult “Where Once We Walked,” (WOWW) by Gary Mokotoff and Sallyann Sack, which includes information for thousands of ancestral towns. Many people look at this book and stop at a town’s current spelling, or geographical coordinates, or pre-war population. But among the most important aspects of WOWW are the other sources of information that it cites.

Many of books cited in “Where Once We Walked” are in the Jewish Community Library:

- ♦ “Every Day Remembrance Day” by Simon Wiesenthal, listing dates of pogroms, deportations, and mass killings for Jews in various towns.
- ♦ “Encyclopedia Judaica,” which includes bibliographies after many articles.
- ♦ “From a Ruined Garden,” about the Memorial Books of Polish Jews.
- ♦ “Last Jews of Eastern Europe” by Brian Blue and Yale Strom.
- ♦ “Shtetl Finder” by Chester Cohen, with information on many towns.
- ♦ “Wooden Synagogues” by Maria and Kazimierz Piechotka with photos of many now-destroyed wooden synagogues from various towns.
- ♦ “Yahadut Lita” whose section on different communities has been translated in “Lithuanian Jewish Communities” by Nancy and Stuart Schoenburg.

A few other important sources of town information have been published in last 10 years. They’re at the Jewish Library and are worth checking for town information.

One of the newest additions to the Library’s collection is the three-volume “Encyclopedia of Jewish Life Before and During the Holocaust,” which contains short articles on 6,500 different communities plus an additional 2,500 alternate names with “see” references. In the third volume, there is an extensive glossary of movements, organizations, customs, etc. that are mentioned in the town articles.

Continued on next page

Jewish Community Library, cont. from page 5

Avotaynu has posted a complete list of towns described in the three-volume encyclopedia. The list of towns can be reached through www.avotaynu.com/books/encyclopedia.htm.

The Library also has Miriam Weiner's "Jewish Roots in Poland" and "Jewish Roots in Ukraine and Moldova." She put all her archival information from these books online recently, but the descriptive material and photos for various cities is only available in the books. The Library also has Suzann Wynne's "Finding Your Jewish Roots in Galicia" and Tomas Wisniewski's "Guide to Jewish Bialystok and Surroundings."

(Several of the sources in "Where Once We Walked" are not in the Jewish Library, but they are in the Holocaust Center of Northern California, a separate organization that is downstairs in the same building. Most important among these are the Yizkor (memorial) Books for more than 500 towns, the Registry of Holocaust Survivors, and the Gedenkbuch. The Registry of Holocaust Survivors has grown since "Where Once We Walked" was first published, so even if you don't see a reference for your town, it's a good source to check if you are looking for *landslayt*.)

Let's say you've just discovered a new surname you didn't know before; what should be your first step? One of Jewish genealogy's best kept secrets is The Consolidated Jewish Surname Index (CJSI) at www.avotaynu.com. This index can search several dozen databases, microfiches and books for a particular surname and its spelling variants. A number of resources in that list are in the Jewish Community Library:

- "A Dictionary of Jewish Surnames from the Russian Empire" by Alexander Beider.
- "A Dictionary of Jewish Surnames from the Kingdom of Poland" by Alexander Beider.
- "Sourcebook for Jewish Genealogies and Family Histories" by Irwin Berendt and David Zubatsky.
- "First American Jewish Families" by Malcom Stern.
- "Jewish Surnames from Prague" by Alexander Beider.

(And in the Holocaust Center downstairs, you can check surname listings in the Holocaust Registry and also the Memorial to Jews Deported from France (which includes many Polish Jews), and the Gedenkbuch.)

Many references from the CJSI are also on the Internet, which can provide a symbiotic relationship between books and the Internet, as well as between name research and town research.

Recently a patron came in the JCL to find the exact spelling of her ancestral town. She had heard the name from her grandfather, but had never seen it written. Was it Gline, Galina, Golina or something else? There was no sense of what was nearby, and "Where Once We Walked" turned up several possible answers. Fortunately, her family name was a distinctive one.

Although there is no public computer with Internet access at the Jewish Library, there is a computer with which I can access the Internet for reference questions. We went to the CJSI and found one possible match for her surname — in the Jewish Records Indexing-Poland Database. Checking it, we found a match for her name in the Galician records of the town now listed as Glinyany, Ukraine, but which WOWW confirmed used to be called Gline in Yiddish.

Knowing we had the right town, we were able to find in WOWW that there was a listing in the "Encyclopedia Judaica," as well as the "Encyclopedia of Jewish Life," and I could point her to Internet resources such as JewishGen Yizkor Book translations and further JRI-Poland indexing of her town's records.

The JCL also has a number of books on the origin and meaning of first names, including Alexander Beider's "Dictionary of Ashkenazic Given Names," Shmuel Gorr's "Jewish Personal Names" and Alfred Kolatch's name dictionaries.

There are many books in the JCL on various Jewish communities in the US, as well as on Jewish communities in many different countries. These books may not mention your family's name, but there are frequently clues — in the bibliography and in footnotes and end notes — about archival and other sources in which you can look for more specific information that may mention your family. Footnotes are one of the most important resources for the genealogist.

One very interesting resource for genealogical research can be the "American Jewish Yearbook." Early editions include lists of subscribers to the Jewish Publication Society, for example. There are two editions with directories of local organizations throughout the US in the first two decades of the 20th century. An index to the Yearbook is produced every 50 years, and the index to the last half of the 20th century is expected soon.

At the JCL there are a number of bibliographies that take you to other books and resources. In addition to the "Sourcebook for Jewish Genealogies," there are bibliographies of Jews in the Bay Area and in California.

Continued on page 8

Safe Storage Guidelines

By Karen Zukor, Zukor Art Conservation

How should you store your precious documents and heirlooms so that they will be preserved for future generations? Karen Zukor, an expert in this field, provides some tips. She can be reached at (510) 652-7915.

The safest storage for all documents and works of art on paper is flat storage that provides protection against light, acidity, dust, temperature and humidity fluctuations, and air pollution. Proper storage includes archival containers, with no acids, dyes or adhesives that might bleed, or rough edges that might scratch. Objects housed within such an environment need to be separated from one another by interleaving tissues, to avoid surface abrasion, ink transfer and an accumulation of acidic deterioration.

Acid is the most harmful threat to paper; it can be absorbed into the paper from the air or any material adjacent to it; the result is discoloration and weakening of the object itself. Temperature and humidity have an immediate effect on paper: exposure to temperatures above 75 degrees F can embrittle paper significantly, as does relative humidity below 30 percent. The process of aging is also accelerated by constant fluctuations in both temperature and moisture content. Papers maintain their greatest strength when storage conditions are maintained at 50 to 60 percent relative humidity and 65 degrees F.

Moisture also encourages the growth of mold and fungus that will thrive if the print is exposed to high humidity even for a short period. The spores for such growth can be carried in dust and should not be allowed to accumulate in storage boxes or drawers.

Exposure to sunlight, whether direct or indirect, causes deterioration of both paper and the media employed. All-cotton papers will bleach in the presence of sunlight and wood pulp papers will darken, but both will weaken from exposure to both visible and ultraviolet light. Watercolor pigments are very susceptible to fading and many dyes and pigments are fugitive (likely to change, fade or disappear) in the presence of indirect light. Sunlight also acts as a catalyst in acid degradation; it will accelerate the physical deterioration of paper as well as its discoloration.

Given the inherent fragility of paper and its highly reactive nature with the environment, the following should be followed:

- ♦ Make sure all paper objects are in good condition before storage. Carefully remove them from acidic mats and separate any labels or information to be saved if they are causing

stains or indentations. Do not attempt to separate objects from mounts when they are adhered or remove adhesive tapes; these tasks should be performed by a conservator.

- ♦ Store all paper objects flat, not folded, in acid-free boxes, folders or envelopes. Objects should not be crammed tightly into a container nor allowed to move too freely; both could cause damage to corners and edges.
- ♦ Interleave each object with an acid-free glassine tissue or medium weight acid-free paper to prevent one object from damaging an adjacent one. It is safest to have the interleaving papers cut larger than the object so that each piece can be lifted out on its own "support." This will minimize direct handling and therefore damage.
- ♦ Make sure any object with soft or friable media (pastel, charcoal, flaking pigment, collage) does not have additional heavy objects laid on top of it.
- ♦ Keep storage containers away from light and dampness. Do not place boxes directly onto the floor or stack them tightly. There should always be some air circulating around them.
- ♦ Check periodically for insect infestation and the presence of mold or mildew.

Framed Artwork

It is important to remember that sealed frames are still subject to environmental changes; moisture and heat can be absorbed through the dustcover, and dust can enter at the juncture of frame and glazing. Therefore, framed artwork must still be protected and stored properly. The following are suggestions for long-term storage:

- ♦ Wrap each frame in paper to keep out dust and insects. Bubble wrap can additionally be used outside of the paper to protect fragile finished and plexiglass which scratches easily. Plastic and/or plastic bags are not recommended because they trap moisture and can provide an environment conducive to mold growth. If storage is to be very long-term, avoid plastic or bubble wrap altogether and cushion with unbleached cotton material or polyester batting.
- ♦ Avoid pressure-sensitive tapes (Scotch™,

Continued on next page

Jewish Community Library, cont. from page 7

There are quite a few books in the JCL that contain photographs of what life was like in your ancestral shtetls before World War II. They include "Image Before My Eyes," with photos of Poland from mid-19th century until the Shoah; "And I Still See Their Faces," photos found after the Shoah by non-Jewish neighbors and collected for an exhibition; "Poyln," photos taken in Polish towns by Alter Kacyzne in the 1920s and 30s and published in the Yiddish Forward; and several books of photos by Roman Vishniac.

The JCL's large publications collection includes the last five years of the Jewish genealogy journal *Avotaynu*, *American Jewish History* and the *Western Jewish History Quarterly*, and a wide variety of other publications. The "Index to Jewish Periodicals," published annually, is a finding aid to articles in these publications.

If you're looking for family in Israel, we have a set of Israeli phone books from 1992 and 1993 in Hebrew, as well as Sallyann Sack's "Jewish Genealogical Research in Israel." For Holocaust research, the library has Gary Mokotoff's "How to Document Victims and Locate Survivors of the Holocaust," as well as many circulating books on the Holocaust.

We have works of literature set in our ancestral towns — Chaim Grade's novels about Vilna; I. B. Singer's about Warsaw; Sholom Aleichem's about the Ukraine; and S.Y. Agnon's about towns in Galicia, which can really help us imagine what life must have been like for our family members who lived nearby.

In the last few years, there have also been quite a few books of fiction published with shtetl settings, or examining family dynamics or inter-generational connections. Dozens of memoirs touching on family history are also available at the JCL. They can give us new insights into why our own family members may have made the decisions they did, and these volumes can also sometimes give us ideas about ways in we might want to present our own family histories.

There are also dozens of books and stories for children at the Jewish Library that cover life in our ancestral towns, the voyage to America, and life in the Lower East Side. There are even books for children specifically about family history.

I have held the belief that a library is not merely a building and the books inside it. What transforms those two things into a library is staff who can work with patrons to help them not only find what they need, but also help them think through what they're looking for in the first place.

All the full time staff at the Library are familiar with family history research. I am certainly willing

to work with any of you during my hours at the Library. I'm there on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2 to 6, and on most Sundays from noon to 4 p.m. I hope to see you all there.

The Jewish Community Library is located at 601-14th Avenue, San Francisco; telephone (415)751-6983 ext. 106; email library@bjesf.org. The Jewish Community Library is open Sundays from noon to 4 p.m.; Mondays and Wednesdays from 10 a.m to 4 p.m.; Tuesdays from noon to 6 p.m. and Thursdays from noon to 8 p.m. Closed Fridays, Saturdays, federal and Jewish holidays.

Safe Storage, cont. from page 7

masking, duct tape, etc) when wrapping frames or containers. Substitute cloth tape of undyed twine for tying.

- ♦ Keep frames off the floor by resting them on padded supports (for example, bricks covered with carpeting) or on shelves lined with carpet scraps or acid-free corrugated board.
- ♦ Store them away from exterior walls which tend to contain more moisture than interior walls and are subject to greater fluctuations in temperature.
- ♦ If frames are stacked up next to one another, make sure hardware is not puncturing or scraping adjacent frames. It is standard practice to stack frames face-to-face and back-to-back.
- ♦ Label the outside of each wrapped frame as to what the item is so you don't have to open the package repeatedly to discern its contents; include information regarding artwork, glazing material, any special handling it should receive, and the date it was framed. If it is particularly heavy, not that on the label as well. Store with the label facing out.
- ♦ If you are concerned about the amount of relative humidity in the storage area, tack up a humidity indicator strip and read once a week for a month to see how much fluctuation takes place. It is wise to check the strip at different times of the day.
- ♦ Check periodically for insects and mold and keep the storage area well vacuumed.

Spielberg Yiddish Book Center On Line

Bernard Kouchel, JewishGen

The National Yiddish Book Center has launched the Steven Spielberg Digital Yiddish Library, an on line bookstore that makes more than 12,000 out-of-print Yiddish titles available for purchase directly over the Internet at www.yiddishbooks.org.

Continuing the Paper Trail

by Jeremy Frankel, President, SFBAJGS

I am always exhorting SFBAJGS members to use the University of California library system at Berkeley. There are three libraries I frequent: the Map Library, the Main Library and the Newspaper Library.

It is in the latter library where I can be found most often. When I first began researching there I was most surprised and very pleased to discover that the library possesses a complete set of the *Jewish Chronicle* (JC). This newspaper has the distinction of being the world's oldest English language weekly Jewish newspaper. It is published in London and was started in 1840. It has never missed an issue, even during the General Strike or during the second world war, when unfortunately the London offices were bombed and a complete set of JCs was destroyed. (They have since built up another complete set.)

The reason I research the newspaper is that the JC devotes two to three pages in every issue to paid announcements (think of them as classifieds). These encompass nearly all the rituals of life from birth to death. One can read announcements for bar mitzvahs, engagements, marriages, silver and golden wedding anniversaries, death and memorial notices.

After 1900 the paper began accepting New Year greeting notices. Among the most important announcements are the tombstone consecration notices. Unlike the United States, where a death certificate states where a person is buried, English death certificates are silent on this matter. So one alternative to checking every cemetery (or asking one's relatives) is to look through the newspaper and see if the family published an announcement. Many of the announcements contain names, relationships and street addresses.

Since I began seriously looking at the JC in 1993, I have been slowly amassing an ever-growing number of notices. For the past year or so this has become more difficult, as I seem to have exhausted all the families and the events one could look up. So my usual mantra to everyone was that I had 400 or so announcements.

This past May, I was thinking of what to get my parents. June 1 was their 50th wedding anniversary. (They were sharing the day with someone else who was also celebrating her 50th anniversary: Queen Elizabeth II). A flurry of emails went between me and

my younger brother Laurence about what to get them. They had been married for 50 years and had everything they needed or wanted. My two brothers were taking them out to a fancy restaurant in the country.

My mother declined any presents. My father hasn't been in the best of health these past few years and just having him reach this milestone was more than sufficient.

Melissa, my partner, said to me "Well, it's obvious what you should do. Put an announcement in the JC." Of course! She went on line and after wading through what seemed to us a rather user-unfriendly web site we were able to place an announcement on line. On Tuesday, May 28 I was awakened rather early by my phone ringing and a very British voice at the end asking for me. It was the JC calling to confirm the announcement and spelling. I gave her my credit card number and she said it would appear in the paper on Friday.

On Friday morning I was again awakened by an early morning call. Again there was a very British voice at the other end — it was my mother! Quite naturally people in London had opened this week's JC and turned to the pages of "hatches, matches and despatches." It was the second notice under the heading of "Congratulations!" My mother had received several calls and wondered how everyone knew.

When she was told "It's in the paper!" she was quite bowled over. After grilling my two brothers and her brother, she decided that there was only one possible culprit: me. I had to confess, and my mother said that she and my father were very surprised and pleased.

A week later a copy of the newspaper arrived from London. I sat down at the computer to enter the details (superstition dictates that I wait until the notice is actually in my hands). That done, I thought I would check how many listings I had. I have filed the notices by last name in three Excel files, each with the subtotal numbers in the file name. Imagine my surprise to discover that my parents' anniversary notice was exactly the 500th announcement in my collection! I now await the 501st announcement.

As genealogists we spend a lot of time researching our families' past. Here is something we can do to continue the paper trail by ensuring that family events are still recorded in a newspaper.

The Development of Jewish Surnames

By James Koenig, SFBAJGS Recording Secretary.

Jim has made presentations on Jewish names at SFBAJGS membership meetings and is a member of the American Names Society.

Patronymics Developed First

In Biblical times, Jews — and indeed, most other peoples — were each known by a single name. For the vast majority there was no need for a hereditary family name: communities were small, and people tended to remain in the general area where they were born. If a second name was needed, for example to distinguish between two or more persons with the same given name, a patronymic was used. In simplest terms, a patronymic is one's father's name, used as a second name. Parentage would be indicated by use of the word 'ben' ('son of') or 'bat' ('daughter of') in front of the father's name. The Aramaic word 'bar' might be used instead, as in Simeon bar Kochba, the Jewish revolutionary of the 2nd Century C.E.

Patronyms, of course, change from generation to generation. Thus they do not qualify as surnames, which are hereditary family names, unchanged through several generations.

Hundreds of millions of people in the Middle East, Africa and elsewhere continue to use patronymics to this day. Some use a word indicating 'son of,' such as the Kenyan president, Daniel arap Moi, or 'daughter of,' as in the name of the Icelandic engineer Kristin Gestasdottir. However, most users of patronyms today get by without using such a modifier.

In addition to patronyms, titles or words describing personal characteristics were often used as part of a person's name. These usually followed the given name, but again tended not to be inherited by following generations.

The Chinese were the first nation to systematically develop and impose hereditary family names, the practice going back to perhaps the 7th Century B.C.E. This practice extended even to the Chinese peasantry. Obviously, surnames made it easier to identify, tax and otherwise control a large and growing population. Chinese surnames were based not only on patronyms and personal characteristics, but also on occupation, place of origin, tribal or clan affiliation, pleasant sound, auspicious meaning, and even attractive written form.

Patronyms and names derived from personal characteristics did evolve into hereditary family

names among noble and powerful families in Greece and Rome, and the practice was extended into Hellenized Palestine. For example, the descendants of the Jewish freedom-fighter Mattathias the Hasmonean, and his son Judah the Maccabee (also Latinized as Judas Maccabeus), are known as the Hasmonean or Maccabean dynasty.

Even where no surname developed, Jews tended to adopt a Greek or Latin form of their given name. This usage continued in the Diaspora, such that a Jew might have a Hebrew sacred name or Shem haKodesh, and a secular name in the local language. The secular name might be a form of the Hebrew name in the local language, or might be entirely different. This practice has continued to the present.

The systematic development of hereditary family names in Europe began in the 10th and 11th Centuries C.E. among wealthy and powerful classes in England and Ireland, and spread onto the continent shortly thereafter. The early surnames typically were based on patronymics, place or residence or origin (especially estates owned by the bearer), and to a lesser extent on personal characteristics and occupation. The use of surnames had spread into Spain and Portugal by the 12th Century C.E. Interestingly, Spanish and Portuguese Jews followed this custom and began to adopt hereditary family names in those languages. Jewish surnames followed the current style, and were based on patronyms, place of residence, occupation and personal characteristics.

Acronymic Names

At a somewhat earlier time, Jews had begun to develop acronymic names. An acronymic name is one composed of the initial letters of several words, typically but not always Hebrew words. It serves as a shorthand to identify an individual, including his or her honorary titles, place of origin, ancestry or occupation. For example, the common name of the great 11th Century French commentator on the Torah, Rashi, is derived from the initials of his title, name and patronymic, Rabbi Shlomo (Solomon) ben Yitzhak (Isaac).

The famous 13th Century Sephardic rabbi and philosopher Moshe (or Moses) ben Maimon was

Continued on next page

known as Rambam, an acronym for Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon; and his contemporary, Rabbi Moshe (Moses) ben Nakhman was called Ramban. These were not hereditary family names, however.

The acronymic practice continued into the Renaissance era. The famous 16th Century High Rabbi of Bohemia and Moravia, Judah Loew ben Bezalel, was called Maharal. There are two explanations for this acronym. The first is a Hebrew phrase meaning 'the most respected high rabbi Loew'. The second derives from the German name for Moravia, Maehren: the 'Maerische Hohe Rabbi Loew', 'Loew, the High Rabbi of Moravia'. (Loew, 'lion', of course is a calque or couplet name for Judah.) We shall see that certain Jewish acronymic names did develop into hereditary surnames in the modern era.

During the Middle Ages, the practice among theologians, scholars, philosophers and other educated persons was to Latinize or Hellenize one's name, as a mark of respect for learning. Thus, Moshe ben Maimon became known as Maimonides, and Moshe ben Nakhman became Nachmanides.

These did not develop into hereditary family names, but this transition did take place for the names of several Christian theologians and scholars. The German theologian Philipp Schwarzerd became Philipp Melancthon, and his family carried that surname for several generations. The Italian family of scholars, della Scala, became Scaliger after the most illustrious of them settled in the Netherlands. Most European families having a surname ending in '-ius' (Sibelius, Stettinius) had a scholar or theologian as ancestor.

Jews Carry Surnames From Spain

Jews carried their surnames after their expulsion from Spain and Portugal at the end of the 15th Century C.E. However, these names often were modified to reflect spelling, meaning or pronunciation in the local languages of the lands in which they settled. Arabic words of similar meaning replaced Spanish surnames. The Spanish letter 'c' was replaced by 'k' in Northern and Eastern Europe, and 'ch' evolved into various written forms. The genitive or possessive letter '-i' was added to surnames in Arabic- or Italian-speaking lands: ben Yaakov (Jacob) became Iacobi, Jacobi, Jacoby, Yakubi. Enriquez became Hendriksen in the Netherlands, Dutch '-sen' replacing Spanish '-ez'.

Some Jews abandoned their Spanish or Portuguese surnames, and either reverted to patronyms or even acronyms, or took entirely new surnames reflecting their new lives. This was especially true for those who moved into Islamic lands. The same process of

acculturation today causes Jews in English-speaking countries to anglicize their names.

Jews living in Italy, France, the Netherlands, and parts of the Turkish Ottoman Empire began the process of acquiring hereditary family names at this time. Most of these surnames were in the local language, but some were derived from Hebrew words. Those derived from Hebrew typically either were Hebrew patronyms, from such names as Yaakov (Jacob), Avram (Abraham), Yitzhak (Isaac), Yusuf (Joseph) or Moshe (Moses); or were words reflecting ancestral membership in the priestly Kohanim or Levite classes. The name haLevi (Halevy), 'the Levite', became the most common Jewish surname in medieval France. Another new creation was Sarfati, 'one from Sefarad' or Spain, a Sephardic refugee in France. This remains a common French Jewish name to this day.

There is a story, perhaps apocryphal, that the surname Rapoport derives from the Hebrew 'rafa', 'a doctor' and the Italian 'porto', meaning 'door' or 'gate': 'the doctor who lives near the town gate'. If true, it represents a blending of Hebrew and Italian words into a new surname. In another version, the 16th Century doctor lived in the town of Porto, Italy, and 'rapa' derives from a medieval German word for 'raven'. This creates a rather confused and obscure meaning: 'the raven of Porto'.

The great majority of 16th and 17th Century Jews, however, lived in Poland, Lithuania, the Ukraine, Bohemia, Moravia, and Ottoman Romania, and they remained without hereditary family names. Thus the surnames held by Spanish, Portuguese, Arabic, Turkish, Italian, French and Dutch Jews remained the exception, rather than the rule.

German Surnames Based on Patronym, Place, or Occupation

During the 16th and 17th Centuries, Jews living in the ancient settlements of the Rhine Valley began the slow process of surname selection. The same process began slightly later in German Bavaria. These surnames typically were based on patronym, place of residence, or occupation. Most of those surnames based on residence were German place names: Offenbach, Oppenheimer, Guggenheim, etc. Those derived from patronyms usually were Hebrew names, often with the German ending '-son' or '-sohn' ('son of'). The surnames derived from occupation usually were German words, often with the ending '-er' ('one who').

One sub-class of residence surnames was based on the sign hanging outside the place of residence.

Continued on next page

Surnames, cont. from page 11

To a largely illiterate population, house numbers or names were of no use. Signs carrying a distinctive illustration were common as a means of identification. In the late 18th Century, the family of Meyer Anselm in Frankfurt took as their surname the red shield hanging in front of their house: Rothschild.

Similarly, certain rabbinical families in Western and Central Europe took as their name the name of the town or city in which they lived or held a pulpit: Lipschitz/Lifshits was derived from either Loebshuetz, Germany or Libsice, Bohemia; Ginsberg/Ganzburg from the German town Guenzburg; Halpern/Galper/Alper from Heillbrunn, Germany; Horowitz/Gurvich from Horovice, Bohemia, to name just a few. However, as the sons of these rabbis assumed posts elsewhere, new surnames often were adopted. This has resulted in several families having different place-name surnames although all are direct male-line descendants of the same rabbi.

In Bohemia and Moravia, and even in Poland, many Jewish families adopted, but then abandoned, family names during the 16th through early 18th Centuries C.E. The reason for this is unclear. It may reflect pressure from local or national authorities for Jews to conform to the naming process then sweeping across that region. During the 14th through early 17th Centuries, Christian families in the several German states and the various regions of the Austrian Habsburg Empire, as well as in parts of Poland and Lithuania, had taken hereditary family names. Not surprisingly, the process went most slowly in rural districts of Poland, Hungary and Lithuania. Jews may have seen a temporary necessity to have a surname, but then dropped those names because their rural Christian neighbors had not yet taken them.

At the end of the 17th Century C.E., the Jewish population of Europe, the Middle East and North Africa, including the Ottoman Turkish lands, probably totaled less than one million. Fewer than 25 percent of these could be stated to have hereditary family names. By late in the following century the Jewish population had increased to perhaps 3 million, or slightly less. Probably two-thirds still did not have hereditary surnames. These were the Jewish inhabitants of the vast Polish Kingdom, the extensive rural regions of the Austrian Habsburg Empire, and most of the Jews living in the Ottoman Empire. The few thousand Jews living within Imperial Russia likewise were known only by given name or given name plus patronym.

Boundary Changes Reflected in Name Selection

It should be remembered that prior to 1772, the Kingdom of Poland comprised not only almost all of today's Poland, but also all of Lithuania, the southern half of Latvia, essentially all of Belarus, the western two-thirds of the Ukraine, and small bits of today's Russia, Germany, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Romania. As such, it was the geographically largest nation in Europe. However, beginning in 1772 and continuing through 1795, the Polish Kingdom was destroyed and its lands distributed among Russia, Austria and the Kingdom of Prussia.

Russia acquired Latvia, Lithuania, Belarus and the central Ukraine from Poland. Austria received Galicia, the western Ukraine and southern Poland, and small pieces of today's Romania. Prussia took northwestern and central Poland, including the Warsaw area. (However, Prussia was to surrender the Warsaw area to Russia and small pieces of southwestern Poland to Austria within a quarter century.)

Almost overnight, Russia went from being a land essentially without Jews to having over three-quarters of a million Jewish inhabitants. Austria went from perhaps 150,000 to over a third of a million Jews, and Prussia (at least temporarily) added about 100,000 Jewish residents to its small original Jewish population. In addition, somewhere between one-third and two-thirds of a million Jews lived within the Ottoman Empire, mostly in the Middle East and North Africa. To a large degree, these Jews had no hereditary family names.

The same time period was marked by the Enlightenment in Western Europe, an epoch of scientific and philosophical inquiry; and by the French Revolution and the ultimate rise of Napoleon. Influenced by these factors, the Austrian Emperor Josef II decreed in 1787 that Jews living in the non-German-speaking parts of the Empire immediately were to take German-language surnames, plus given names derived exclusively from the Bible. This had effect principally in what later became Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Slovenia (recently part of Yugoslavia), Transylvania (now part of Romania), and Galicia and the western Ukraine. This decree was part of an Imperial Austrian process to Germanize (or de-Slavicize) its Jewish population. The relatively few Jews living within German-speaking Austria probably also took hereditary surnames at this time.

The Kingdom of Prussia followed the Austrian example in 1794, with a requirement that the Jews of Prussian-occupied Warsaw and vicinity take German-language surnames. This requirement was

Continued on next page

extended in 1812 to Jews residing in the original Prussian territory, and in 1833 to the rest of Polish territory under Prussian rule. Several other German states and the French Napoleonic Empire also imposed a surname requirement on its Jewish inhabitants during this period.

Although hereditary surnames were required by the Austrian and Prussian authorities, enforcement of the several laws and edicts appears to have been lax, or was observed only locally or slowly. This defies our concept of Prussian efficiency. It probably reflects Prussian preoccupation with its Napoleonic Wars and with the subsequent peace treaties and societal readjustment. As a result, some Jews abandoned their new surnames, or changed them almost at will. Hereditary surnames therefore did not become standardized until the 1820s, or even later in some regions. However, by that time German-language surnames had become the norm throughout the German- and Austrian-dominated lands of Central and Eastern Europe. This, as noted above, included significant Slavic-speaking regions (Czechoslovakia, Slovenia, Polish Galicia, the westernmost Ukraine, and western Poland), plus Hungary, as well as Germany and Austria proper. These surnames had their origin in place names (including a few that weren't German), occupations, patronymics and personal characteristics, plus a smattering of new acronymic names designed to sound German. (For example, Katz is an acronym for Kohen Tsadik, 'righteous priest' in Hebrew, but it manages to closely mimic the German word for 'cat'.)

Jews in Russian Empire Take Yiddish and Hebrew Names

The situation was significantly different within the Russian Empire. Although Jews were required to take hereditary surnames under the terms of an Imperial decree of 1804, and in several subsequent edicts, no language of origin was specified. As a result, Yiddish and Hebrew words, along with Polish and Ukrainian words, and Lithuanian, Polish and Belarusian place names, were the principal sources of the new Jewish surnames. Although to an untrained ear Yiddish sounds somewhat like German, the spelling and pronunciation of most words is significantly different. Therefore, most Yiddish-language names were decidedly different from the German ones.

An exception to this naming practice was found in Russian-occupied Courland province of Latvia. For centuries there had been a German-speaking aristocracy in that region, and German remained the language of authority even after its incorporation into Imperial Russia in 1795. (For example, census

forms were in German until the 1850s.) Therefore, the small Jewish community of Courland tended to adopt German-language, rather than Yiddish, surnames.

In addition to its acquisitions directly from Poland, Russia negotiated the transfer of eastern and central Poland from Prussia in 1815; and seized the southernmost strip of the Ukraine and the Crimea from a vassal state of the Ottoman Empire (1780s). Russia also acquired Bessarabia (essentially modern Moldova) from the Ottomans. These acquisitions swelled the Jewish population of the Russian Empire to over two million by 1815.

The Tsarist government established a Pale of Settlement for Jews within the Russian Empire. This was the only area in which Jews were allowed to live. Basically, this comprised the lands acquired from Poland and the Ottoman Empire, with the exception of certain excluded cities (Kiev, among others) and border regions. Courland was left outside of the Pale, and no new Jewish settlement was allowed, but the pre-1795 Jewish inhabitants were allowed to continue residence. These policies essentially isolated Jews from Russian-language influence during the surname-generating period. Therefore, relatively few Russian-language surnames were adopted.

As in the Austrian and Prussian regions, enforcement was spotty and erratic. In some areas it was not until the 1830s that the process resulted in standardized family names. This late date was true especially for Jews in Bessarabia.

Selection of surnames for Jews within the Russian Empire was left to local authorities, who in turn usually allowed the Kahal, or local Jewish community administration, to advise individuals on name selection. By contrast, in the Austrian Empire, local officials closely supervised the process. There are stories, perhaps true only in small degree, of village authorities lining up the Jewish men and assigning names in repetitive sequence: Schwartz ('black'), Weiss ('white'), Klein ('small'), Grossman ('large'), and over again. Other stories involve claims that Austrian and other officials demanded payment before they would register attractive-sounding surnames, and routinely imposed awkward or unpleasant names on those who refused to pay, or could not. Zwang, meaning 'compelled' in German, reportedly is one such surname.

There is a parallel to this situation in the Philippines, where Spanish priests converted thousands of natives to Christianity during the 16th and 17th centuries. In some villages, reportedly, priests assigned surnames having religious connotation by repetitive sequence: Cruz/de la Cruz, Trinidad, Concepcion, Paz/de la Paz, etc.

Continued on next page

Surnames, cont. from page 13

Ottoman Empire Lags Behind

The Ottoman Empire during this period included most of Romania, all of Bulgaria, today's Serbia, Bosnia and Macedonia, as well as Turkey and much of the Middle East and North Africa. Many Sephardic Jews living in the Ottoman lands had acquired surnames centuries earlier, and continued to use those, or their modified replacements. However, the Ottomans did not require hereditary family names for anyone. Indeed, it was not until 1936 that the inhabitants of Turkey were required by President Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, the founder of modern Turkey, to adopt surnames. By then, of course, Turkey was reduced to its present size, mostly in Asia Minor.

Most Turks took modern Turkish words as the basis of their names. This leads to a curious parallel. A quick glance through a Turkish telephone directory reveals columns of persons surnamed Kaplan. However, almost without exception, they have Islamic given names. The explanation is that Kaplan in modern Turkish means 'tiger,' an attractive attribute to many Turks.

The Romanian princely states, under Turkish control through the first half of the 19th Century C.E., were similarly indifferent to imposing regulations about hereditary family names. As a result, many Romanian Jews did not acquire such names until the 1830s and '40s, or even later in isolated cases. The names typically were Hebrew, Yiddish or Romanian words, with a smattering of German words. It must be remembered, however, that Romanian Transylvania and Bukovina (northernmost Romania) were at that time part of the Austrian Empire, and thus subject to German-language regulations.

What emerged, therefore, was a great surname divide. It separated the German-surnamed Jews of Germany, Austria and the countries then controlled by them (Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, parts of Romania, parts of Poland, etc.) from those of the Russian and Ottoman Empires. In the latter, surnames were based mostly in Yiddish, Polish, Ukrainian and Hebrew, and occasionally in Ladino (old Spanish), Arabic, Russian, Romanian, Lithuanian and other languages, but not usually in German. Because the Jewish population of the Russian Empire exceeded those of the Austrian, German and Ottoman lands combined, the great majority of Jewish surnames thus were derived from Yiddish, Polish, Ukrainian and Hebrew.

By the late 1840s it is likely that all but a few thousand of the five million Jews in Europe, the Middle East and North Africa had taken hereditary surnames. This eased, but did not eliminate, name

confusion for genealogists.

Synagogues in some parts of the Russian, Austrian, Ottoman and German states continued to use given names or given names plus patronymics in records of birth, death and marriage, ignoring the newly applied surnames. Further, it was not uncommon for members of a single family to adopt different surnames, or to change surname when moving to a different area, or when political boundaries shifted (and therefore the official language changed). This practice accelerated as Jews emigrated to English-speaking countries.

Spelling Variations Depend on Alphabet Used

Spelling of a single surname varied with the alphabet used: Cyrillic, Roman or Hebrew. For example, Russian lacks the letter 'h', uses 'k' for English 'c', and sounds 'o' like English 'aw' rather than 'oh.' Therefore, Cohen becomes Kagan when transliterated from Russian. The German version, Kahn, became Kan in Courland province. The name Cohen, especially in its contracted form Cohn, caused problems for Jews moving to French-speaking areas, because of its similarity in sound to an extremely vulgar word Cahn or Cahen or Caen became a more-acceptable alternative. All of these have tended to confuse beginning genealogists.

Further, the Slavic and Baltic languages have masculine and feminine endings to names. For example, the mother of the composer Rimsky-Korsakov would be known as Rimskaya-Korsakova. These name endings vary additionally with grammatical case (possessive, direct object, etc.). Further, the Lithuanian and Latvian languages add a final '-s' even in the nominative case to masculine names. Mendel Feldman becomes Mendels Feldmans in documents in those languages. These have added to the confusion, even for seasoned genealogists.

The most common Jewish surnames, all across the world, have been those that dealt with religious heritage or activity: Cohen ('a priest') and Levy ('a Levite') in all their spellings, Katz ('righteous priest'), Kaplan ('a cantor or other synagogue official'), Rabinowitz/Rabin in its various forms ('son of the rabbi'), and Feldman (possibly 'a cemetery worker'). Next come a class of ornamental names, so-called because of their (supposedly) attractive connotation: Greenberg ('green mountain'), Goldberg ('golden mountain'), Goldstein ('gold stone' — possibly a jeweler), Rosenberg ('red mountain'), and Silberman ('silver man' — possibly a silversmith).

Along with these come names derived from patronymics: Friedman (from German 'friede,' peace,

Continued on next page

President's Message, cont. from page 2

electronic format, commonly referred to as "pdf." To be able to read a pdf document, the recipient has to have installed Adobe Acrobat® software. Fortunately this is freely available on-line.

What would that mean to you? Well, no more waiting! As soon as Beth Galletto, *ZichronNote* editor, puts the finishing touches on it, it could be put on our web site so that anyone could download and read it on their computer or print it out; or it could be emailed to members.

What are the advantages of doing this? From the Board's point of view, it means a lot less paper (which translates into lower printing costs) and smaller postage costs. For you, it means taking up less room on your bookshelf; but more importantly, the newsletters would be word searchable! No more flipping through all those pages trying to find something. We also appreciate that there are a number of members who do not to use computers or for a variety of reasons prefer the look and feel of a printed version. For these and for publicity purposes, we will continue to print some copies of *ZichronNote*.

At its last meeting the Board agreed that the Society should investigate a number of new technology options which, down the road, would serve to make this organization more effective. All this will take time while we decide what is the right path for us and then sort out the proverbial bugs. Naturally we will keep you all appraised and would encourage and invite members to let us know your views.

But to me the underlying question is what will it mean in the future for you to join an organization? In my mind it will be to support an ideal. But if all this technology is almost free, why should anyone

join anything? Good question. The answer is that as a local group, we can tackle local projects and make a lasting contribution to the world of Jewish genealogy. We will become a more inclusive partner with the other JGS's as we establish ourselves with the result of the work we do. Freeing up the funds previously spent in traditional ways means spending more on the projects we would like to undertake.

This is happening with the Cemetery Project, which is now well underway. Volunteers in the society are creating the name index from the 600 pages Ron Arons and Jerry Jacobson digitally photographed late last year. Sita Likuski is heading up the name indexing part and as I write in early June, we have already got over 200 names transcribed - only 15,000 or so left to go! And there are many other projects we could - and should be taking on as an organization. Of course that means getting involved, and the Board looks forward to seeing as many members as possible step forward as we secure the past for the future.

Finally, the SFBAJGS can only be as good as the sum of its members - the "glue" of the organization. We meet, discuss our problems, offer solutions and revel in each others success stories. Doing this face-to-face will always beat out telling the same story as an email.

That's why we have meetings, to see the faces behind the email addresses, to make the personal contact. I look forward to seeing your face at the next meeting!

Jeremy

— *Jeremy Frankel, Oakland, California*

Surnames, cont. from page 14

a substitute name for Shlomo or Shalom), Jacobson/Jacobs in all forms, and Lieberman (from either or both masculine Eliezer and feminine Liebe). To these are added the rabbinical family place names Ginsberg and Lipschitz; and Schwartz (either a personal characteristic or an assigned name). Finally, there is Shapiro/Spiro, memorializing the Jewish community of Speyer, Germany, supposedly largely destroyed during the Crusades.

These 18 name clusters probably are held by only about 15 percent of the total Jewish population. Such a percentage for the top 15 or 20 surnames is not unusual for most European languages, except Portuguese, where the top 10 surnames are held by almost 25 percent of the population. In China and Korea, also, the top five surnames are held by upwards of 20 percent of the population, and the total number

of surnames in use is only several hundred to a few thousand. In comparison, there are probably more than 100,000 surnames in common, occasional and rare use by Jews worldwide, including all variations in spelling and newly made-up names. Probably half of the hundred thousand names are unique to a single family or a group of loosely related families.

Newly created names are most common in Israel, where an immigrant population has in large number shed its European or Arabic surnames and adopted Hebrew names in their place. Some of these names are translations of the original name into Hebrew. Some have personal significance that cannot easily be understood, such as Maor, 'castle.' Others are Hebrew words that reflect hopes and aspirations for the young country.

Anyone with comments, corrections or questions is invited to contact the author at jbkoenig6332@msn.com.

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Feature Articles

| | | |
|---|----------------|----|
| Continuing the Paper Trail | Jeremy Frankel | 9 |
| The Development of Jewish Surnames | James Koenig | 10 |
| Safe Storage | Karen Zukor | 7 |
| Using the Jewish Community Library for Genealogy Research | Judy Baston | 5 |

Departments

| | |
|----------------------|------|
| Calendar | 1, 4 |
| Family Finder Update | 3 |
| President's Message | 2 |
| Society News | 3 |

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