

זכרון ZichronNote

The Journal of the San Francisco Bay Area Jewish Genealogical Society

Volume XXIV, Number 2

May 2004

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.**
Jewish Community High School, 1835 Ellis Street. Jewish Community Library open on second floor. **Free parking: enter parking area from Pierce Street.**
- Los Altos Hills:** **Monday, Library opens at 7 p.m. Program begins at 7:30 p.m.** Congregation Beth Am, 26790 Arastradero Road.
- Berkeley:** **Sunday, 12:30 to 3:30 p.m.** Berkeley-Richmond Jewish Community Center, 1414 Walnut Street, North Berkeley.

Sun. May 16, San Francisco: *The Jews of Singapore.* Joan Beider, Senior Lecturer in Journalism at U.C. Berkeley. Don't know of any family who lived in or came through Singapore? Intriguingly, there is a Lithuanian Jewish connection to Singapore as well as a fascinating surprise which Joan uncovered during the course of her research. Join us for this truly fascinating presentation.

Sun. June 20, Berkeley: **Note location change.** *View the Western Jewish History Center at the Judah L. Magnes Museum.* Aaron Kornblum, archivist of the WHJC, will outline the museum's collection, the world's largest archive dedicated to representing the diverse historical and cultural experiences of Jews of the thirteen western United States. The WJHC documents Jewish life through its collection of original letters, diaries, oral histories, rare and historic photographs, newspapers, books, and institutional records. 2911 Russell Street, Berkeley.

Mon. June 21, Los Altos Hills: *New and Unusual Holdings at the National Archives.* David Piff shares with us some of the less-familiar treasures at the National Archives and Records Administration, San Bruno. Come and find out what you might be missing.

Sun. July 25, San Francisco

Sun. August 15, Berkeley

Mon. August 16, Los Altos Hills

Sun. September 12, San Francisco

Sun., October 17, Berkeley

For the latest program information visit www.jewishgen.org/sfbajgs

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 address below.

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Membership is open to anyone interested in Jewish genealogy. Dues are \$23 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.

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President's Message A Pot Pourri

by Jeremy Frankel, SFBAJGS President

Pierre Hahn Named to Board

By the time you read this, the Board will have approved the appointment of Pierre Hahn to the Cemetery Name-Index Project. Sita Likuski will continue to monitor the personnel side of things, keeping a list of who is doing what, while Pierre will coordinate the merging of the worksheets. I am also exploring which cemetery we could work on next. If there is anyone in the Society who wants to "get involved," this is certainly a great way to learn.

Cemetery Indexing Still Needs Assistance

This takes me back to when I first became President and became aware of the challenges the Society was facing. I think it is worth repeating here. Like many other non-profit organizations, we are faced with many recreational challenges as well as recent financial ones. As more and more databases become available online (most recently the Italian Genealogical Society's 1891-1911 New York City Birth Index) the Board has to have good answers for why people should still join the Society.

To me the answer is easy: there is work to be done! The most obvious one is the cemetery name indexing project. (See article on page 14.) Not only does this get people involved at the local level, but the finished results, when uploaded to the JewishGen Online Worldwide Burial Register (JOWBR), will benefit Jewish genealogists the world over. Several of us are also exploring how we can attract the younger generation as well. One way may be through the name-indexing project. Another may be to sponsor a research project, such as interviewing grandparents.

Magnes Museum

I recently had the opportunity to visit the Judah L. Magnes Museum in Berkeley. How many of you have heard of this museum? And how many of you realize that it is the third largest Jewish Museum in the country? Not only is there a collection of over 30,000 items, but there are also specialized collections at the Russell Street location. Check out the website at www.judahmagnesmuseum.org and see my article on page 6, which includes a unique genealogical plea for help from Aaron Kornblum, the Curator of the Western Jewish History Center, one of the collections. Aaron expressed a strong desire for a closer relationship between the Museum and the Society. He will kickstart that relationship with an East Bay meeting at the Magnes on Sunday, June 20.

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SOCIETY NEWS

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Volunteers Wanted: Be An Active Participant in the SFBAJGS!

The SFBAJGS is looking for members to volunteer to fill the following positions.

Distribution Coordinator - Work with other JGS members to label and bundle our mailings (usually not more than once per quarter and most often for only a few hours).

Outreach Coordinator - We get many inquiries about the Society, who we are and what we do. We're looking for someone interested in responding to fellow genealogists. Commitment: A couple of hours per month?

Program Committee Members - Recently our president and vice-president took on the added burden of arranging for our meeting speakers. They need your help. We're eager for committee members to offer suggestions and contacts for future programs. Work with our board to brainstorm program ideas, identify possible speakers, and arrange their presentations. This is a group effort and a terrific way to get the "inside track" on "how-to."

Please contact President Jeremy Frankel at jfrankel@lmi.net if you're interest or want to know more about these great opportunities to get involved!

Wanted: Your Stories About Family History Travel

Have you traveled in search of your family history? Whether you visited your ancestral shtetl or went to a courthouse or an archive in the U.S., SFBAJGS members want to find out about it.

galleto@pacbell.net and let her know you have a story to tell. Readers are interested in your experiences, your "Top 10 Travel Tips," and other related material.

Please contact *ZichronNote* editor Beth Galleto at

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 an e-mail to Larry Burgheimer at BurgAuer@aol.com.

<u>Surname</u>	<u>Town, Country</u>	<u>Member</u>
ALTER	Romania	Solomon, Ken
BERNHOLTZ	Poland, Canada	Solomon, Ken
BIRNHOLTZ/BIRENHOLC/BIRENCHOC	Poland	Solomon, Ken
ERLICH	Poland, United States	Solomon, Ken

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CALENDAR, cont.

More Genealogy Events

Local and Regional

Sat., May 8, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. **Santa Clara County Historical and Genealogical Society and Silicon Valley PAF Users Group. Silicon Valley Family History Seminar.** Keynote speaker Beth Uyehara, author of "The Zen of Genealogy." Choose five classes from a list of 40. Takes place at 875 Quince Avenue, Santa Clara. www.svpafug.org/may8.pdf

Mon., May 17, 7 p.m. **Sacramento Jewish Genealogical Society. Eastern European Research**, presented by Gary Mokotoff of *Avotaynu*. Albert Einstein Senior Center, 1935 Wright Street, Sacramento. Contact Teven Laxer at tevenL@aol.com if you are interested in attending.

State and National

Wed.-Mon., May 19-24, **National Genealogical Society Conference, A Golden Prospect.** Program designed to focus attention on success, teaching methodology and how to overcome adversity while experiencing the marvels of your family history. There will be numerous presenters. Gary Mokotoff will lead workshops on accessing records in Eastern Europe and recent developments in Jewish Genealogy. Sacramento Convention Center, Sacramento. Details at www.eshow2000.com/ngs.

Mon., May 17, 7:30 p.m. **Jewish Genealogical Society of Los Angeles. Raising Atlantis: The Recovery of Jewish Memory in Poland**, presented by Yale Reisner, Director, Lauder Foundation Genealogy Project. Skirball Cultural Center, Magnin Auditorium, 2701 N. Sepulveda. www.jgsla.org

International

July 4-9, **24th IAJGS International Conference on Jewish Genealogy** in Jerusalem, Israel. The conference will take place in the Renaissance Jerusalem Hotel. For more information visit the conference website at www.ortra.com/jgen2004/



Jewish Genealogy Course in South Bay

"Jewish Genealogy - Finding your Roots Without Leaving San Mateo County" is the topic of a four-session course to be presented by Michael Steinore at the Peninsula Jewish Community Center, 800 Foster City Boulevard, in Foster City. The course will take place on Mondays and Thursdays, June 7 through 17, from 7 to 8:30 p.m.

The course provides a comprehensive introduction to genealogical research and covers primary U.S. documents such as naturalization records, passports, census documents, vital records, and passenger lists. How to use Internet resources to find these documents will be addressed with tips and tricks explored. The program will also cover the inventories of the local archives.

Fees are \$60 for community center members and \$72 for non-members. For more information, visit: www.pjcc.org/cgi/class.php?code=52

One-on-One Help with Your Family Tree

First Sundays: May 2, June 6
12 - 2 p.m.

Jewish Community Library
1835 Ellis Street, San Francisco

Here's a chance to get help
with your genealogy questions ...
between meetings of the SFBAJGS

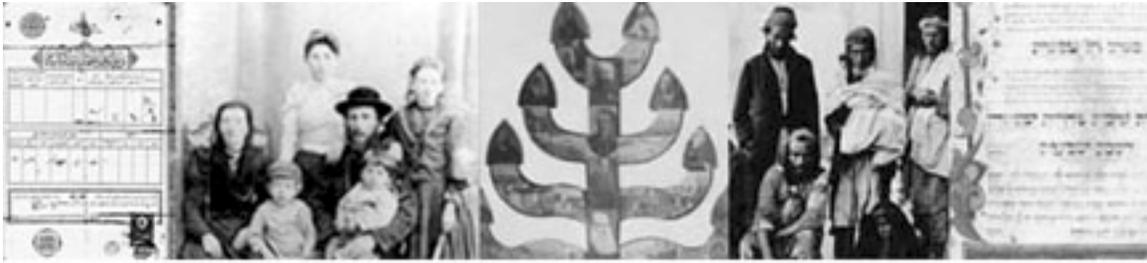
Whether you're trying to find your great-grandmother's elusive town or your grandfather's passenger manifest, you can take advantage of the Jewish Community Library's extensive reference collection and Internet connection to countless searchable databases — all with one-on-one guidance from experienced genealogists.

Longtime Library volunteer staffer Judy Baston and other veteran researchers from the San Francisco Bay Area Jewish Genealogy Society, including Ron Arons, Jeremy Frankel, Dana Kurtz and Marian Rubin, will help with brainstorming and problem-solving.

Bring your materials and your questions to the Library, the first Sunday of each month.

For more information: e-mail library@bjesf.org

The Israel Genealogical Society invites you to the International Association of Jewish Genealogy Society's 24th annual International Conference on Jewish Genealogy, July 4 - 9 in Jerusalem



The International Association of Jewish Genealogy Societies includes chapters from all over the world, from Australia to Venezuela and from most states in the United States. Associate members include Jewish museums, institutes, libraries and historical societies. This diversity generates fascinating annual conferences in a different venue each year. Once in a decade, Jerusalem is honored to be the host. Due to the unique resources available in Jerusalem, many attendees wish that the Annual Conference would take place more frequently in Israel.

What can you expect this year? Lectures by the world's foremost experts on Jewish communities from around the world; in-depth studies on Jewish onomastics and the origins of Jewish names in different communities. Learn to read Solitreo and other archaic scripts in order to unlock the secrets of original archival sources; learn about the historical forces that caused our ancestors to emigrate and the routes of their migrations throughout different periods of our history. Prominent archivists in Israel will illuminate different aspects of their archives and how to navigate them. Arrangements are being made to facilitate research, with volunteer translators standing by and archives extending their hours during the Conference week. Known experts in different aspects of Jewish life will be present to answer questions and break down brick walls which might have stymied research. A group of "how to" workshops will deal with everything from different aspects of genealogy, writing and publishing family histories and newsletters, to creating family and village webpages. Three to four sessions will be presented concurrently each hour from morning to night in both

Hebrew and English. The most important lectures will be simultaneously translated, available in both languages. For the preliminary program, go to www.isragen.org.il/ROS/prog2004.pdf to download a .pdf file.

2004 marks the 50th anniversary of the foundation of Yad Vashem. Yad Vashem, along with the Conference organizers, has arranged a special memorial dedicated to the Shoah which will involve lectures on how to search for those who were murdered, vanished communities, newly developed databases by Yad Vashem and individual consultations for research. There will be a special evening event at Yad Vashem which will include a tour and explanations of the newly built facilities, a light meal and a moving ceremony at the Valley of the Lost Communities.

For more information on the 2004 Jerusalem Conference and online registration, see: www.jewishgen.org/jerusalem2004

The Conference will take place at the Jerusalem Renaissance Hotel. Special room rates of \$40 to \$48 per adult in a double room include our enormous Israeli breakfast and all service charges and taxes. El Al is offering a 10 percent discount and is waiving all requirements for a minimum stay. On the other hand, because we would like to have you stay with us as long as possible, tours are being arranged for before, during and after the Conference. Take time to meet your cousins! Translators are available for your first telephone contact and to help you locate them.

This is an opportunity of a lifetime, with volunteer help provided at every step of the way!

We hope to see you this year in Jerusalem!

Magnes Museum Informs and Surprises

By Jeremy Frankel, President, SFBAJGS

For the past 40 years a large house on a quiet tree-lined street in the Elmwood district of Berkeley has been the home of the third largest Jewish museum in the United States, the Judah L. Magnes Museum.

In addition to rotating exhibits throughout the year in several galleries (from its collection of more than 25,000 objects), specialized collections are also housed in the large, historic Burke mansion. These include the Western Jewish History Center and the Blumenthal Rare Book and Manuscript Library. In addition, the Museum is the umbrella organization for the Commission for Preservation of Pioneer Jewish Cemeteries and Landmarks. The Museum's collections consist of paintings, sculpture, prints and drawings, Judaica, film, video and photography.

I visited recently at the request of Aaron T. Kornblum, the Curator/Archivist of the Western Jewish History Center. The WJHC concerns itself with the history of the Jewish people who settled in the 13 western states. The WJHC is located in the "attic" of the house. As an aside, I was constantly

amazed by the fact that its walls and "ceiling" were all shingled!

The collection is predominantly textual in nature, including books, journals, newspapers, periodicals, encyclopedias, photographs, maps, letters, posters, and all kinds of ephemera. Apparently the collection grew in size far more quickly than its staff had time to accession and catalog all of its holdings. But with Aaron now at the helm and his 11 years experience at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. (as reference archivist, Aaron handled upwards of 5,300 enquiries every year), researchers and genealogists will be immeasurably thankful for the work now being carried out there as well as for Aaron's knowledge of Holocaust-related material.

Because of the immense backlog of collections that need cataloguing, inventorying, and indexing, researchers who come to visit will have to spend time researching and not necessarily finding quick or easy

Continued on page 12

Family Finder, cont. from page 3

<u>Surname</u>	<u>Town, Country</u>	<u>Member</u>
FICHENDLER	Poland	Solomon, Ken
FINGERHUT	Poland, United States	Solomon, Ken
FIRSCHEIN	Priluki, Ukraine	Falk, Micki
FRIEDMAN	Poland	Solomon, Ken
FRIEDRICH, FRYDRICH	Poland, United States	Solomon, Ken
GOLDBERG	Romania	Solomon, Ken
JAKUBOWICZ	Poland	Solomon, Ken
JEL(L)EN	Lomza, Poland; Glasgow, Scotland; Brussels, Belgium; Los Angeles, CA	Leeds, Diane
KUCHARCZYK	Poland	Solomon, Ken
LIPSCHITZ	Tarnobrzeg, Poland	Padover, Steven
LONDON	Liverpool, England; Sioux Cty, Iowa; South Dakota	Falk, Micki
ODERBERG	Poland	Solomon, Ken
PADOVER	Mielic, Poland	Padover, Steven
PUSHKIN	Lithuania	Solomon, Ken
REICHMAN/REJCJMAN	Warsaw, Poland; Brussels, Belgium; NYC	Leeds, Diane
ROSENBERG	Poland	Solomon, Ken
SOLOMON	Romania, Lithuania, United States	Solomon, Ken
SILVERGOLD	Poland	Solomon, Ken
STEINHARDT	Tarnobrzeg, Poland	Padover, Steven
SZTAJNBERG	Poland	Solomon, Ken
WAJNHOLC	Poland	Solomon, Ken
WAXELMAN	Poland	Solomon, Ken
ZUCKERMAN	Poland	Solomon, Ken

Yanova Revisited

by Jerry Jacobson

Jerry Jacobson, a retired radiologist, is now a student taking liberal arts classes. In 2001 he and his wife traveled to Poland to visit his mother's birthplace. He is researching **JANOVSKY**, **ROSENZWEIG**, **PLOTNICK** and **MILLER** in Janow Sokolski and Bialystok, Poland and **JACOBSON** and **SUSSMAN** in Tukums, Latvia.

My mother and her family came from Janów Sokolski. The town is now in northeastern Poland, but when they left in 1912 it was part of Czarist Russia. Yiddish was the language they spoke at home, and a teacher came to their house to give lessons in written Yiddish as well as Hebrew. They also studied Russian during their three years of compulsory public education, and they picked up some Polish from the customers who came to the family tavern.

When she was 14, my mother and her family emigrated to Chicago, Illinois. In the 1930's and 40's she and her five siblings and some of their cousins, each married and with their own families, met regularly for family gatherings; the stories they told about "Yanova" became part of my childhood.

My mother died at age 93, the last survivor from her generation. A few years earlier she had recalled dozens of relatives and relationships, many from her childhood, that became the basis of my family tree. Her descriptions of early 20th century Janów were generally positive and in an oral history recorded when she was 91 she noted, "Yanova wasn't a bad town."

I'm not certain when I first decided to visit Janów. It must have been after Poland became independent from Soviet control. After years of dreaming and many months of planning, my wife and I finally boarded a LOT-Polish Airlines Boeing 767 and set out to find my roots. After two days of sightseeing in Krakow we took a train to Warsaw, where we met our guide, Kristof Malchiewski. For the next four days Chris served as driver, interpreter, facilitator and friend, and it was because of his skills and persistence that our visit was at all successful. We stayed in a hotel in Bialystok and drove the 49 km. north to Janów on September 11 and 12, 2001.

History

According to a pamphlet published in 1998 by the community of Janów, the village was named after the Sapiehowie family estate. [Presumably a man named Jan (John) was the namesake. There are many other towns in Poland also named Janów; this one is now known as Sokolski, referring to the region of Sokolka.) It is believed that Janów was founded in

1703 by Kazimerez Siennicki, sword-bearer of the Great Duchy of Lithuania. Jerzy Stanislaw Sapieha was owner of the Janów estate. He and his wife Teodora contributed to the bestowal of civic rights in the first half of the 18th century. The Supiehowie family designated a huge area for construction of a small town next to the existing village of Przybudek (present Korycinska Street). They marked out a square for a marketplace, a church, and a synagogue. After her husband's death Sapiezyna established fairs there as well.

Antoni Tysenhaus, a reorganizer of royal estates in Lithuania, contributed to the town's development. In 1795 there were five streets, 174 houses, 18 breweries, 15 distilleries, weaving workshops, and 1,013 residents in Janów. By the end of the 19th century the number of houses had increased to 321 and the population to 2,000, including 1,100 Jews. Milling and founding industries developed. According to the pamphlet, "The 18th century street plan as well as interesting wooden buildings from the late 19th century and the first half of the 20th century remind of the past splendour of Janów."

In his book *Jewish Bialystok and Surroundings in Eastern Poland*, Tomasz Wisniewski writes, "Janów Sokolski Population 4,920 (in 1993). [This figure apparently covers the entire Janów district which also includes several smaller villages] 49 km. north of Bialystok. Jews began to settle in Janów as early as the 17th century, and by 1719 the bishop of Vilno, Konstanty Brzostowski, had granted them permission to build a synagogue (which was constructed in 1740). The town's census in 1775 counted 214 Christian residents and 221 Jews. In 1897, 1,797 (or 78 percent) of the town's 2,296 residents were Jewish. Just prior to World War II, approximately 1,100 Jews lived in this small, poor town known for its hotel, which was owned by the Jew Chmiel Rudawski. The last rabbis of Janow were Nisan Perelsztejn, Jososzua Kralusz, and Zalman Kosowski. The town's wooden synagogue, which prior to World War II was renovated and maintained by the Polish State office for Historical Buildings, was burned and destroyed by the Nazis."

Continued on next page

Janow, cont. from page 7

Oral Histories

The following is summarized from an oral history recorded by Julia Janov Jacobson/Matz on June 5 and 6, 1989. She was born in Janów in 1898 and emigrated in 1912.

According to her oral history, only Jews lived in the center of Yanova. Residents of the surrounding areas were Polish farmers. There were 99 homes and one optret [outhouse], a synagogue, beth hamidrash, mikvah, and cemetery. There were two windmills, one at each end of town. Each was owned by one of her older cousins, Shepsle and Feivle Janovsky, who were brothers. There was also a watermill at the river.

Julia's parents owned a "shenk" which served food, beer, and also illegally served spirits which were kept in a storage place separated from the tavern. [Our guide said that *shenk* is a Polish word meaning a bar. It has unpleasant connotations. This business also served food and seemed like a tavern or inn.] They had two adjoining or connected buildings, one used for the shenk and the other for living quarters. It was the largest building in the area. Adjacent to it the family had a barn with a cow. Julia said that during the summer the children swam naked in the river. She also remembered that there were many fruit trees nearby.

She thought all of the homes formed a circle or square with the synagogue, punim [well], and the church in the center. [It was difficult to determine the accuracy of this from the recent visit; except for the church most of this section of town was burned during WW II. The church and the former position of the synagogue are about a block apart.]

Julia believed that the merchants were all Jewish. She remembered a butcher, a hardware store, a wig maker, a dry goods store, a beauty shop, an apothecary, and another shenk. There was also a town policeman, so the children were stationed as lookouts whenever liquor was being served in the shenk; their only patrons were gentile farmers who came into town on market days. She recalled no overt persecution of Jews and thought her family's emigration was for economic reasons.

The following is taken from a taped interview with Daniel Polanik recorded on September 11, 2001. Daniel was born in 1926 and is a native of Janów. He is Christian but grew up in the Jewish section of town and learned to speak Yiddish through his associations with other neighborhood children. He was interviewed (in Polish) in his home with our guide asking the questions and translating for us. Daniel chided me for not being able to speak Yiddish

so we then could have spoken directly.

Daniel lived with his parents and his five siblings. Their house was burned and rebuilt, apparently on the original site. The German invasion started on a Wednesday in 1941. One plane flew over and dropped bombs on the wooden synagogue, which was consumed. The synagogue was a very nice two-story pine structure. It was used only a few times each year for special services. For everyday use small shtittles [beth hamidrash] were used. When the Germans came they acted like barbarians towards the Jews and began killing them. All the Jews were moved to one district where the Germans established a ghetto. On the first of November 1942 the Germans ordered the local people to bring 100 horse carts. There were about 50 German soldiers, 10 dogs and about 10 machine guns. They surrounded the area and at about 8 in the morning they expelled all Jews from the area, put them on the horse carts and drove them from here to Sokolka [a larger regional town 23 km. west and south] and then to Kielbasin [a slave labor camp northeast of Sokolka] where, as far as he knows, all of the Jews were murdered.

[A book by Martin Gilbert confirms that on 11/2/42 there was a deportation from 65 towns in the Bialystok area, with 950 Jews removed from Janów.] One of the Jews who survived was hidden by Poles in another village about 5 km. north. [This may have been Abram Lipcer from Janów whose testimonial is in the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw.] One Jew named Buginsky[?], a tailor, was hidden in another town but somebody turned him in; people reported that when the Germans came he said that he didn't care, there was a need to die so he was ready. They shot him.

Daniel then referred to an incident that took place in January, 1942, in Suchowola, a town about 17 km. north and west. The Germans gathered the Jews in a big barn, threw gasoline on it and burned all of them. When somebody tried to run away from the barn they shot him, cutting him in half. "Seeing what they did, one could have his heart broken," Daniel said. [It was not clear whether Daniel actually observed any of these events or was repeating stories he had heard. The massacre he reported in Suchowola might be the one (committed by Poles, not Germans) which took place in Jedwabne, another town in the region.] One of the tortures the Germans laid up for the Jews — which was implemented by Poles — was forcing Jews to swim in the river in the wintertime. "So the Germans cared that much for hygiene of the Jews," he said, laughing.

When asked about a windmill Daniel remembered one nearby that was burned by arson before the war.

Continued on next page

He said the owner was named Shepsle. He didn't remember a shenk. Other remembered names were a butcher, Mortel, who had five sons. There were four tailors, one named Bulyak[?]. He remembered that Jews had a separate school. He said also that there were Jewish bakers, a blacksmith also named Shepsle, and three Jewish hairdressers. He estimated that there were about 800 Jewish families (or individuals) before the war.

Further history

Chris translated the section about the Sokolka ghetto from a pamphlet about Sokolka. According to the pamphlet the ghetto was created in 1941 and was used for Jews from Sokolka and surrounding towns and for some "runaway Jews." It held about 4,000 people. Residents worked in shoe and tailoring shops set up by the Germans as well as in a tannery on Shindler Street run by the Feinberg family. Some Jews were used for work outside the ghetto, such as the creation of an artificial lake.

The Germans liquidated the Sokolka ghetto in two stages. On the second of November 1942 most of the residents were taken in horse-drawn carriages to Kielbasin near Grodno where they were probably shot. On January 24, 1943 those who remained were taken to the Treblinka death camp. Only a few managed to survive, thanks mainly to the help of local Poles. [I did not record the author or title of this publication. A book by Martin Gilbert reports that on 11/2/42 about 8,000 Jews were removed in a deportation from Sokolka. The Nizkor Project Report (found on line at www.nizkor.org/ftp.cgi/camps/aktion.reinhard/ftp.py?camps/aktion.reinhard/treblinka.treblinka.11) notes that Kielbasin was a collection camp from which 38,900 Jews were transported to the Treblinka death camp between November 10 and December 15, 1942.]

Touring Janów

Daniel went out with us to look at the town. The outside of his one-story wooden home is attractive and both the exterior and the yard seemed well kept, with even more care than the inside. We walked south past another home to the end of this street where there is a large yard behind a small sawmill. He told us that the wooden synagogue was located on this empty lot. There is no remnant or marker. We then walked west the half block toward the central park area. Daniel said there was a beth hamidrash on that block, and something else was across the street. He may have meant the mikvah. Apple trees now grow there in a fenced yard next to a house.

We then got in Chris' car and drove north about

2,000 feet to the former site of the windmill once owned by Shepsle Janovsky. Daniel said his father sometimes took things there for milling. This is at the edge of town and on the road to the Jewish cemetery. The land is higher there than at the town center. Daniel pointed to a field with some low brush perhaps 75 ft. from the road and said this was where the windmill stood. There is a small house with new vinyl siding just east of the field, Daniel said this was originally the home of the windmill owner. Like many of the homes in town it has a metal roof. There is a weathered shed and a cement block house attached in the rear. We drove on about a quarter mile more and came to the Jewish cemetery. It is unmarked except for a sign which has fallen from what may be the remains of a gate and which Chris translates as "No grazing on this site." It is mostly surrounded by farm land and there are no walls. There are scattered matzevahs visible. I counted over a dozen but there are probably many more hidden by the brush. Wisniewsky estimates there are about 200.

The markers in this cemetery are granite or a similar stone. Hebrew letters are visible on many, but they are difficult to photograph. Chris said that only poor people used granite; wealthy people would have had sandstone markers which could be used for sharpening farm tools and therefore were more likely to be removed. There is a nice view of the town from the cemetery.

Marilyn and I wandered around the center of town. The main regional road, two lanes running east/west, is also the main street of town. Another street intersects it and leads to the secondary roads to the north and south. The dominant structure in town is the yellow brick Roman Catholic Church of St. Jerzy with its twin spires, built in 1905. There is evidence of extensive restoration of the brickwork, and the inside of the church has obviously been recently refurbished.

On the same block there is a park area immediately west of the church. It is roughly half a block in area and has been planted with a number of trees which appear to have been planted after WW II. The park includes a monument dedicated to the regaining of Polish independence after WW I. It is surrounded by a low stone wall. The southeast corner of the park is the "main" intersection in town and the town gasoline station is located here. This complex of church, park and gasoline station has streets surrounding it and was the only such "block" we saw. The church faces south onto the main street. Some of the wooden buildings in this block look like 19th century structures, though we are told that this section of town was largely rebuilt after the fire.

Continued on next page

Janow, cont. from page 9

We were later told [by Andrzej Kozlowski] that prior to WW II the area of the park was the main economic center of town and was controlled by Jews; there were stalls around the park but along the main road was the best location. Presumably this park is the open area my mother described behind the shenk, though Daniel placed the former location of the wooden synagogue a half block to the east.

Along the main street east of the park there is a mixture of detached residential and commercial frame buildings, all small scale. The post office is a single story structure where two or three people work; in addition to stamps they sell a few small consumer items, such as toothbrushes. Across the street is the two-story city hall with the older wooden section in front and a stucco addition in the rear. (Chris met with several officials here while setting up our interviews.)

There are other buildings in the rear with a sign indicating public parking. The small area is filled with a half dozen autos. Down the street is a modern brick face on part of a frame building, the bank. Farther out are small residences merging with gardens and fields. One unused house in the west side of town has a large stork nest on the chimney. The storks had migrated to Africa at that time of year. The street where Daniel lives is one of the few side streets we saw. It is L-shaped and immediately east of the park. One building in town has a sign identifying it as the "Ponderosa." We learned later that this is the local amusement place. The southern part of the city extends along the north-south road, identified by Daniel as Bialystok Street. Near the town center the buildings were largely destroyed during the war, and there is now a mixture of low buildings and empty lots here. Some structures are unused or contain agricultural equipment.

The primary school, a featureless Soviet-era building, is also in the south side of town, about a quarter mile from the intersection. There is an attractive stone patio in front of it, surrounding a small park-like region. A school bus brings students from the surrounding area; we were told that the birth rate has declined in recent years and some neighboring towns have closed their schools.

The cultural center is next to the school. It is a three-story gabled frame structure and has a library in which we saw some students reading. The town newsletter is published here. It is duplicated on letter-sized paper and has items of local interest, sports, a crossword puzzle, poetry, and paid advertisements. The woman in charge of the center gave us a lot of her time. We were invited into her office and tea was served while she and Chris

conversed. Telephone calls were made to older residents. One remembered the two windmills in town, both owned by Jews. There were no pertinent records but the director did have a 1934 pamphlet with illustrations of the Isaac Colony, which Chris said was an agricultural center near Sokolka, which may have prepared Jews for emigration to Palestine. The town historian, Mr. Nietupski, died last year. Apparently his brother hopes to publish his writings and therefore has not made them available to the public. The cultural center also houses a collection of wall-sized double woven rugs in a variety of patterns. These were produced by a small group of local weavers, some of whom have won awards for their work. Double woven rugs are said to have a long tradition in this region. The center sponsors several interest groups: dance, art, computer, model making, literature, weaving, and English lessons. The sports center is further south. It features a soccer field, tennis court, and swimming pool. Near the southern edge of town is an attractive Catholic cemetery. It has a high stone wall, and there is a wooden chapel within.

The Kumialka River is south of the main street. On the west it is near the town center; on the east it meanders farther away. It is now more a stream than a river but is said to have been wider in the past. Just south of Janów there is a dam with a small reservoir. A watermill at this site has been restored but is not in use. It appears to be a tourist attraction along the PTTA (Polish Tourists Country-Lovers' Association) bicycle and walking trail. This part of Poland has a lot of swampy land and the dam controls the level of the river as well as providing water for recreational use. The community was electrified in 1949. Telephones appear to be common and 85 percent of the local farms and homes are said to be connected to a piped water supply. There is also a regional sewage treatment facility.

Touring Outside Janów

One of the people who work in the cultural center is Andrzej (Andrew) Kozlowski, who has a strong interest in the history and culture of Janów. Chris knew him from a previous visit and he became our guide on a ride around the countryside. We passed fields of American blueberries and white Polish berries, grown for export to Denmark. Much of the land is not very fertile and is used for grazing by small groups of cattle; many of the fields are planted in hay which is rolled into huge cylindrical bales for winter fodder. One entrepreneur has a large rose culture business with acres of greenhouses; the roses are shipped to other parts of Poland and to Russia and there are stacks of hay bales on his property to be used as fuel for heating the greenhouses. Andrew told us that this business

Continued on next page

Janow, cont. from page 10

employs 200 people and is the largest employer in the area.

At the small community of Bialousy the houses are frame and resemble those in Janów. In the middle of a field there is a picturesque old windmill. It no longer turns but it still has remnants of its vanes. I walked through a field of strawberry plants to get a photo. This farmer also grows some tobacco, an unlikely crop in this climate but apparently not rare because Joseph Stalin had encouraged it.

We also drove to Marchelowka where there is another windmill but without its vanes. This one is still used occasionally, now powered by electricity. Near another road a pile of burned logs on a cement slab was identified as yet another mill that was destroyed by fire a few years ago.

In the neighboring community of Wasilowka we stopped at the home of Teresa Pryzmont, an award winning weaver. A sign at her gate shows this to be a stop on the arts and crafts trail for tourists. She lives in a large farm house with her extended family and insisted on showing us all of the steps in making wool into yarn and in weaving it into patterns on a large loom. She does this in her bare feet with hand-made equipment. She learned the craft from a neighbor and quickly surpassed most others in her skill. She now raises her own white, brown and gray sheep. We bought several small weavings as gifts.

President's Message, cont. from page 2

Caveat Emptor!

The modern, transcribed databases available at the various "online fee-paying services" need to be approached with caution. I was recently checking out a name in Virginia in the 1840 census. I duly typed in the first name, last name and the name of the state where the person was living. The result was nil. However, when I selected "All States," not only were there 84 entries with that name, but there were two in Virginia!

Additionally, the modern transcription of names by staff members of these on-line services sometimes leaves something to be desired. I was looking up the name Yaffey in the 1930 census in Baltimore, Maryland. Because the enumerator's writing was in an italic style, it had been transcribed as Gaffey! The mother's name, which was Doris, had been transcribed as Dixie!

These challenges have led me to realize that the one-on-one sessions begun last year by Judy Baston at the Jewish Community Library are a great way for experienced researchers in our Society to help potential members become aware of such problems,

Afterthoughts

Janów is an appealing rural community with a well developed sense of civic pride. I can only guess how the village we visited in 2001 resembles the one in which my mother grew up but it seems to live up to her assessment that "Yanova wasn't a bad town."

I thought I was prepared for the absence of any residual Jewish presence here but still found myself searching for remembered names and locations. In the end I found satisfaction in talking with Daniel and in walking on the same streets used by my forebears. The cemetery may yet tie me here more firmly if one of my family names is ever discovered in it.

On the return trip to Warsaw we stopped in Tykocin and Treblinka. The former is the museum of an active Jewish community that has left its mark on the country. The latter is a bleak reminder of an impossible time. It will be my only visit to such a place. Since my mother's family had left by 1912 I didn't think I would find the events of WW II to be of strong personal interest. This proved to be wrong. The timing of our trip coincided with the terrorist attacks on the United States. This added an unexpected layer of emotion to an otherwise emotional trip and extended our stay in Warsaw by several days. In Warsaw we were very aware that although we were inconvenienced we remained comfortable tourists in a friendly country—a far different experience from what it might have been 60 years before.

break through their brick walls, or simply get started with their family histories. These sessions are held on the first Sunday of each month and run from noon until 2 p.m. The library has a large amount of genealogical material as well as Internet access.

Society Approaches Silver Anniversary

Last, but certainly not least, my constant preoccupation with genealogy got me thinking about the Society and its history. *ZichronNote* Editor Beth Galleto found an undated newspaper clipping from what was then called the *San Francisco Jewish Bulletin*. I went to the Newspaper Library at UC Berkeley looking for the article. Eventually I found it in the August 22, 1980 issue. The headline was "Genealogy Society Now Forming Here." The last paragraph notes "... members of the new chapter who are experienced at tracing roots will help assist those who are interested in beginning such a project..."

This means that the Society will be 25 years old in August 2005, a little over a year from now. How should we commemorate the event? A dinner, a picnic, a commemorative book? Please contact me at jfrankel@lmi.net with your thoughts and ideas.

— Jeremy

BOOKSHELF

**Book Review: Under the Vine and the Fig Tree:
The Jews of the Napa Valley, by Lin Weber**

By Rosanne Leeson, Vice President of the SFBAJGS

In gratitude for the contributions of Jews in America, during the Revolutionary War, George Washington sent his blessings to the fledgling community of Jews in Newport, Rhode Island, in which he referred to the Prophet Micah, speaking of the new Zion, saying "...everyone shall sit safely under his own vine and fig tree, and there shall be none to make him afraid..."

The beautiful Napa Valley is often referred to as an Eden, but what is not always realized is that in many ways Jews helped to found its communities. They came as merchants, gold seekers, vintners, and often became civic and social leaders, as well. The first Jewish families arrived shortly after the Gold Rush. Soon the streets of Napa towns were lined with Jewish-owned shops, and the community thrived. Sadly, the years of WWI saw the rise of antisemitism, Prohibition wiped out many of the Jewish-owned winemaking families, and the Jews began to flee the region. It was not until the late 1950's that Jewish families began to return to the Valley.

Two members of our SFBAJGS, Donna Mendelsohn and Zoe Kahn, who recently formed the Jewish Historical Society of the Napa Valley, felt strongly that a history of the Jews in the area was needed. Within days they realized that the project was beyond their capabilities and needed a more experienced researcher and author. They turned for help to author Lin Weber, who had already written other books on the history of Napa. Ms. Weber agreed to take the project on. Assisted by a grant from the Jewish Community of Napa, she did extensive research in newspaper archives and cemeteries. She also arranged for interviews with a number of current members of the Jewish community and descendants of original settlers. The book is filled with many tales of the drama of the immigrant experience, and a rather surprising connection between a famous vintner and bootleggers during Prohibition.

In a minor quibble I feel that I should point out two very small errata: on pages 69 to 70, the reference to the town from which Zoltan Rosenberger came reversed the Hungarian to Romanian names. The Hungarian name was Koloszar, while the Romanian (and current name) is Cluj. On page 80, the reference

to the kidnapped "daughter" of Charles Lindbergh should, of course, have been "son." But, these are minor oversights and do not really affect this fascinating history.

This book is filled with many entertaining stories of the development of the Napa Valley and the Jews who lived there, and it is interwoven with the history and worldwide events that affected their lives in so many ways.

An added plus is that the book also serves as a vehicle for charitable donations. Profits will be donated back to the non-profit Jewish Community of Napa Valley, which provided the original seed money for the book, to support non-sectarian needs such as the Meals on Wheels, Napa Food Bank, and Napa Valley Symphony, among others.

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Magnes, cont. from page 6

answers. Volunteers for the Center, consequently, are always welcome and needed.

I was there to focus on any material relating to cemetery lists as possible future cemetery name-indexing projects that the SFBAJGS could carry out for the Magnes — as well as for JewishGen's JOWBR (Jewish Online Worldwide Burial Site) website. I was able to go through the Center's Guide to Archival and Oral History Collections (1987), and Aaron was there to pull the relevant items for me to review. At the end of my visit he expressed the hope that we could forge closer links between the Magnes and the Society. The first such link will be the East Bay meeting at the Museum on Sunday, June 20.

Before I departed, Aaron asked if the Society could help solve a mystery for the Museum: who was Isaac Manuel, step-son of Isaac Berck? The information available is extremely sketchy, typical of what genealogists have to deal with when embarking

Continued on page 14

Historic Orphanage Ledger Books May Be Viewed for Research

By Jeremy Frankel

The SFBAJGS recently received a \$250 donation from the Jewish Family & Children's Services in San Francisco. The JFCS is almost as old as the city, having started life in 1850. During the course of a couple of conversations I had with Cynthia Cox of the Funding and Development Department, she alerted me to the fact that the JFCS possesses a number of ledger books containing orphanage records.

The Pacific Hebrew Orphanage Association began in 1872. In its early days the orphanage was situated at Divisadero and Hayes. It was a four-story building surrounded by a large garden and playground and was run under the leadership of Temple Emanu-El.

In 1921 the orphanage moved to Ocean Avenue and was renamed Homewood Terrace. The new orphanage comprised a "campus" of large cottages. Ten boys and ten girls lived in each one. There were also a commissary, gymnasium, hospital and synagogue. These buildings lasted until the 1970's when the orphanage merged with the JFCS. By then the City of San Francisco Social Services was assuming responsibility for orphans, so Homewood Terrace was closed.

All of the records have, miraculously, survived all the changes and moves, though they were not always stored in an acceptable archival manner.

I arranged to see these records, and under the ever-watchful eyes of Cynthia Cox I was allowed to peruse the large leather-bound ledger-size volumes. There are several marked "Register of Orphans" dating from 1872 to the 1980's. These are quite detailed and include such information as name, sex, age admitted, "whole or half orphan" (whether one or no parent was alive), date of admittance, date of discharge, disposition of child, place and date of birth, nationality of parents, and where married.

There are also three volumes of photographs containing photos of the children, leadership personnel, and interior and exterior views of the homes.

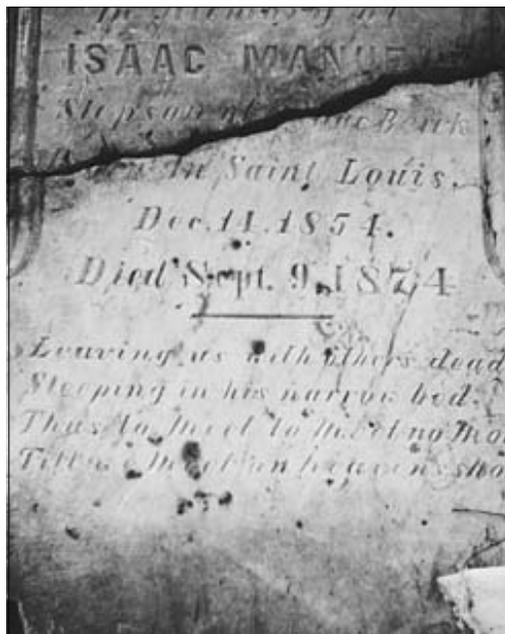
Cynthia Cox welcomes requests from people who have an academic or genealogical interest and wish to view these records. Her email address is cynthiac@jfcs.org, or call (415) 449-1261 during normal office hours.

Magnes, cont. from page 12

upon a family history project. All that is known is that Isaac Manuel was born in Saint Louis on December 14, 1854 and died on September 9, 1874, a few months shy of his 20th birthday.

So who was Isaac Manuel and even more important, where is he buried? The reason Aaron wants to know is that all the information above comes from his headstone, which currently resides in two halves in a safe location until more information is discovered. Is there a clue to be found in the first line of his epitaph which reads "Leaving us with others dead...?"

Several years ago an anonymous donor gave the stone to the Magnes. He had placed it in his backyard after a neighbor had given it to him! Hence we have mystery piled up upon mystery. Aaron would



Bottom of Isaac Manuel's mystery headstone at Magnes Museum.

really like to see the headstone and grave reunited, as I suspect all of us would. If any of you sleuths out there feel so inclined and wish to perform a mitzvah, please help Aaron, the Judah L. Magnes Museum and the Berck family bring this mystery to a happy conclusion. If anyone has any ideas or clues, please contact email me at jfrankel@lmi.net.

This would also be in keeping with the work of the Museum. Several years ago the museum's Commission for the Preservation of Pioneer Jewish Cemeteries and Landmarks assumed responsibility for several Gold Rush era Jewish cemeteries. For more information, please see the book *Pioneer Jewish Cemeteries* by Susan Morris, a former director of the Judah L. Magnes Museum.

PAST MEETINGS

International Red Cross Tracing Service Shares Techniques with Genealogy Research

By Jeremy Frankel, SFBAJGS President

The speaker at the March meeting of the Society in San Francisco was Dorian Kittrell, a Marriage and Family Therapist. He has been a volunteer with the San Francisco Bay Area chapter of the Red Cross since 1998. He is an International Tracing specialist who also works on disaster relief. He carried out disaster relief after Hurricane Allyson and at the World Trade Center.

Kittrell began his presentation with an historical overview of the Red Cross. He explained how each country's Red Cross organization is autonomous. Many national Red Cross organizations pay dues to belong to the International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC). The ICRC helps coordinate international relief work.

Kittrell also provided some of the historical background surrounding the internationally recognized emblems. At one time there was a proliferation of red emblems, but in the 1930's these were all abandoned in favor of a simple Red Cross or Red Crescent. A third emblem, the Red Star of David (Magen David Adom, MDA) has been a source of contention in the international communities, with a split between countries as to whether the MDA should be officially recognized or not. Currently, the American Red Cross wants to see the MDA accepted and has withheld its annual dues in protest since about 2001.

Kittrell then showed a short video that outlined the various activities of the ICRC, such as war, famine and disaster relief. He explained how all US military personnel receive lessons on the international rules with respect to military and civilians in time of war.

Within the Red Cross is the International Tracing Service (ITS), which is responsible for undertaking the organization's Holocaust work. Like genealogists, ITS paid staff and volunteers access records and databases. There is also a fair amount of footwork, going door to door in a neighborhood asking if neighbors recall a specific family or individual.

A person can initiate a Holocaust inquiry by filling out a form at chapter level. Several copies are made and sent to the American Red Cross ITS in Baltimore, Maryland. A copy is filed there and the request is sent to Geneva, the headquarters of the ICRC. The request then filters down to the local level in the country where the relative was last seen or heard of.

Many of the people who undertake this research are volunteers. Their resources are much the same as any genealogist would use: vital records, city/telephone directories, and on line databases.

It was an illuminating presentation and every chapter of the Red Cross would welcome volunteers to assist in its many programs.

Cemetery Indexing Project Progresses

By Sita Likuski, Cemetery Project Co-chair

Two Colma cemeteries, Home of Peace and Hills of Eternity, are the final resting place of San Francisco Jews from the 19th century on. The SFBAJGS has undertaken the task of transcribing information from the cemeteries' ledgers pertaining to people who were buried between the late 1880's and 1930. This includes about 14,300 names. Many of these were reburials from cemeteries in San Francisco. Because most of the civil death records for San Francisco were lost in the 1906 earthquake and fire, these cemetery records are invaluable to genealogists.

The cemetery ledger pages have been photographed and are on a computer CD. Several of our members have been transcribing and verifying (proofreading) these entries, but more volunteers are needed so

that the records can be completed. They will then be posted on JewishGen's online burial register (JOWBR).

Pierre Hahn recently volunteered to serve as Co-chair of the Cemetery Project Committee. He will use his technical expertise to consolidate several databases into which project volunteers have entered data.

So far 1,400 records have been finished, 3,300 have been transcribed and need to be verified, and 9,600 must be both transcribed and verified

If you are interested in helping with this worthwhile project, please contact Sita Likuski, sita@comcast.net or phone (510) 538-4249.

COMPUTER/ONLINE NEWS

NYC Death Index, 1891-1911, Now On Line

Renee Steinig, JewishGen

Our colleagues at Long Island's Italian Genealogical Group have done it again. Led by IGG's John Martino, volunteers from several Long Island genealogy groups have created a new database that is "to die for."

They've created a free online index to New York City deaths,

1891-1911! The index, which covers 1,400,000 records, allows Soundex and wildcard searches for last names and first initial searches for first names. It can be found on the IGG website www.italiangen.org.

Reflecting the historical boundaries of the city, the index includes only Manhattan deaths for the years 1891 to 1894 and Brooklyn and Manhattan deaths for 1895 to 1897. For the years 1898 to 1911 all five Boroughs (Manhattan, Brooklyn, Bronx, Queens, and Staten Island) are covered.

Microfilmed NYC death indexes for this period are particularly tedious to work with because they are subdivided by borough and month. Hence a researcher who has no idea of date or place of death needs to look for a name first by month in January, February, March, etc., in Manhattan, then in the Bronx, etc.

Caveats: The index was created by scanning the original index books, then proofreading the results. Thus many spelling errors present in the original index were retained in the index.

The system currently has some glitches. For example, when I searched for "H Wolf," results were 22 pages of Wolfs — all Wolfs with first names containing the letter H, beginning with Abraham.

The IGG website also offers indexes to naturalizations in

- Southern District Court, Manhattan, 1906-1959
- Nassau County, NY, 1899-1986
- Suffolk County, NY, 1853-1990
- Bronx County, NY, 1914-1952 and to
- military naturalizations in the New York area during the two world wars and the Korean War.

Note: The Santa Clara LDS has all the microfilms for the New York City Department of Health Indexes from 1888 onwards, for Births (to 1937), Marriages (to 1937) and Deaths (to 1965).

JewishGen Adds Immigration Databases

Warren Blatt, JewishGen

JewishGen is pleased to announce two new major American-Jewish immigration databases: the Boston HIAS arrival records, and the Blitzstein Bank Passage Order Records for the Port of Philadelphia.

Millions of immigrants came through the ports of Philadelphia or Boston rather than New York, and many immediately left from the port of arrival to other cities and towns.

■ Boston HIAS Arrival Records

The Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) assisted Jewish immigrants at many ports of arrival. The records of Boston HIAS are held by the American Jewish Historical Society. Among these records are 24,000 arrival cards for 1854-1956. The LDS Family History Library microfilmed these cards in 2002. JewishGen's new Boston HIAS database is an index to these nine microfilm reels, compiled by David Rosen. The database indexes both immigrant passengers and the persons and places where the immigrants were headed. The Boston HIAS database can be searched at: www.jewishgen.org/databases/USA/BostonHIAS.htm.

■ Blitzstein Bank Passage Order Books, Port of Philadelphia

In the port cities on the east coast of the U.S. in the late 19th and early 20th century, there were "ethnic" or "immigrant" banks -- commercial enterprises where recent immigrants could save money and arrange to purchase steamship tickets to bring their families to the U.S. Today, the record books of the Blitzstein Bank are housed at the Philadelphia Jewish Archives Center (PJAC).

In addition to information about the immigrant, these records often contain the name and address of the person who paid for the tickets, port of entry (usually, but not always, the port of Philadelphia), and intended final destination (again, not necessarily Philadelphia).

Through the collaboration of PJAC, the Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Philadelphia (JGSGP), and JewishGen, the Blitzstein Bank records have been indexed. There are approximately 18,000 cards with information on 30,912 passengers.

The Blitzstein Bank Passage Order Books can be searched at: www.jewishgen.org/databases/USA/PhilaBlitzstein.htm.

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