



זכרונות ZichronNote

The Journal of the San Francisco Bay Area Jewish Genealogical Society

Volume XXVII, Number 2

May 2007

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 6, San Francisco — Note change of date and location. *Visit to Holocaust Center of Northern California*, 121 Steuart Street, Suite 10.

Mon. June 18, Los Altos Hills: *My Trip to Ukraine*. SFBAJGS member Karen Roekard will share her experiences on a recent trip to Ukraine (for more information see article on page 7).

Sun. June 24, Berkeley: *Searching for Pre-1906 Earthquake San Francisco Records*. Nancy Simons Peterson, author of the widely acclaimed *Raking the Ashes: Genealogical Strategies for Pre-1906 San Francisco Research*. will discuss the challenges of researching pre-1906 San Francisco. She'll offer specifics about which records were lost, strategies for replacement sources and much more. A fifth generation Californian, Nancy is a nationally known certified genealogist and author of numerous articles appearing in prominent genealogical periodicals. Winner of the 1998 National Genealogical Society's Family History Writing Contest and the Society of Genealogists Scholar Award in 2003, she holds undergraduate and graduate degrees from Stanford University. This program will be repeated July 15 in San Francisco.

Sun. July 15, San Francisco: *Searching for Pre-1906 Earthquake San Francisco Records* presented by Nancy Simons Peterson. See above.

Sun. Aug. 19, Berkeley: *Panel Discussion of the Highlights of the 27th Annual International Conference on Jewish Genealogy*. This year's conference in Salt Lake City will undoubtedly offer exciting news about resources and other developments in the world of Jewish Genealogy. If you can't make it to Salt Lake, be sure to come hear all about it. If you did attend, please join the panel and offer your highlights. *Note: This program, with different panelists, will be presented in Los Altos Hills on Monday, August 20 and in San Francisco on Sunday, September 16.*

Mon. Aug. 20, Los Altos Hills: *Highlights of the 27th Annual International Conference on Jewish Genealogy*. See above.

Sun. Sept. 16, San Francisco: *Highlights of the 27th Annual International Conference on Jewish Genealogy*. See above.

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

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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
Contacting Distant Relatives

By Jeremy Frankel, SFBAJGS President

On Monday, April 16th the Society heard Irene Reti, Director of the Regional History Program at UC Santa Cruz, talk about oral history and the importance of recording and preserving people's memories.

This got me thinking about how guilty I am for spending so much time in front of a computer screen and not spending more time contacting living relatives. Even though I have been doing genealogy for over 20 years now, I still feel a little strange "cold-calling" someone. After all, you never know how they are going to react.

I personally made amends a week later when I contacted a relative I had never spoken to before. Roy is almost eighty years old, a widower who lives in Astoria, New York. We had a very good, informative conversation, and of course, he was able to fill me in on details of his branch of the family which I knew nothing about. Roy doesn't have e-mail, so it will take a bit more effort from me to stay in contact with him.

Another distant relative, Bill, who lives in Florida called me from a dual bat-mitzvah in Orlando. Apparently he was sitting next to Marty, who is active in a local JGS and remembered me from the last Salt Lake City Conference. Small world!

Talking of Salt Lake City, this year's Conference is only a couple of months away now. It would appear that not as many Society members will be attending, but we will still have our Post Conference reviews in late summer/early fall. I won't be going to SLC2007, but I certainly will be going in 2008, when it will be Chicago's turn. It's a city I have never visited, so it's something I am really looking forward to.

Mention of 2008 reminds me that I already have three speakers penciled in for next year. Rosanne and I are always open to ideas or speakers you have heard. Drop us a line and let us know what topic you are interested in. The feedback helps us tremendously in seeking out new speakers.

In closing, with summer just around the corner, try using some vacation time for a visit to a relative you haven't seen in a while. I'm sure it will do you both a world of good.

Jeremy Frankel

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SOCIETY NEWS

Welcome, New Members

Gene H. Golub, Stanford golub@stanford.edu
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E-mail Bounces

Gerald Wagger
Lee & Ted Samuel
Ava Mack
Hal Smith

Please send updates to **dlkurtz@ix.netcom.com**

Your Story Belongs in ZichronNote

If you have made a trip to your ancestral shtetl, made a breakthrough in your research, or discovered a resource that can benefit other genealogists, share your story with readers of *ZichronNote*. New articles are always welcome. For more information, contact editor Beth Galleto at galleto@pacbell.net.

NARA Increasing Fees

The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) has issued a proposed rule relating to copying of Federal records created by other agencies that are in possession of the National Archives. According to the notice, the fees are being changed to reflect the current costs of providing the reproductions. Statute requires that NARA recover the actual cost of making copies of records.

NARA last raised their charges seven years ago and performed a cost study in 2006 resulting in the decision to raise the fees. Costs include staff salaries, equipment (paper, toner, etc) shipping costs and oversight and administration of making the requested copies. To read the proposed rule go to: **www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/fedreg/a070226c.html**

Receive Newsletters from other JGSs in .pdf Form

Dana Kurtz, SFBAJGS Treasurer and Webmaster

The SFBAJGS occasionally receives newsletters from some JGSs in .pdf format or links to those published online. We can make them available to you by free "subscription." The .pdf files range in size from about 25KB up to 1.5MB. Your download time will vary depending on your Internet connection speed.

Recently received newsletters include those from Philadelphia, Southern Nevada, St. Louis, MO, Washington DC, and Broward County, FL.

In the past we have received newsletters from:

- JGS Argentina
- JGS Australia
- JGS of British Columbia
- JGS of Broward County
- JGS Conejo Valley & Ventura County
- JGS of Great Britain
- JGS of Greater Philadelphia
- JGS Illiana (Illinois/Indiana)
- JFRA - Israel
- JGS Miami
- JGS Michigan
- JGS Montreal
- JGS Oregon
- JGS New Jersey (North Bergen)
- JGS San Diego
- JGS of South Africa
- South Africa - JewishGen SIG
- JGS of St. Louis, MO
- JGS of Southern Nevada
- JGS SW Florida
- JGS of Toronto
- JGS of Utah
- JGS Washington DC
- JGS of Washington State
- JGS of Wisconsin

If you would like to "subscribe" to any of these newsletters, please e-mail Dana Kurtz at **dlkurtz@ix.netcom.com** with information about which one(s) you'd like to receive. (If you have already sent such an e-mail, there is no need to send another.)

CALENDAR, cont.

More Genealogy Events

Regional

Thurs., June 14, 7 p.m. **Contra Costa County Genealogical Society.** Val Sullivan will discuss researching military records in the 18th and 19th centuries. LDS Church, 3700 Concord Blvd., Concord. For information visit www.cccgs.org

Wed., July 25, 7:30 p.m. **Marin County Genealogical Society. "Raking the Ashes,"** presented by author Nancy Peterson. The book is of interest to anyone doing California and San Francisco genealogy. It specifies which records were lost in 1906, which survived, and where to find them. She suggests strategies for dealing with record losses where they occur. Marin Family History Center, 220 North San Pedro Road, San Rafael. For information call (415) 479-2200 or visit www.maringensoc.org

Wed., August 22, 7:30 p.m. **Marin County Genealogical Society. "Protect, Preserve and Archive Your Photos,"** presented by portrait photographer Jeanette Vonier. She will explain how to protect, preserve and archive precious family photographs and how damaged photos may be restored and enhanced to look better than the originals. Marin Family History Center, 220 North San Pedro Road, San Rafael. For information call (415) 479-2200 or visit www.maringensoc.org

State and National

Tues., May 15, 7:30 p.m. **Jewish Genealogical Society of Los Angeles. The Jewish Experience in Early Twentieth-Century Postcards.** A slide-illustrated lecture presented by Professor Shalom Sabar of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Early postcards portray a view of Jewish life prior to World War II and in a few cases represent the only extant images of bygone events or destroyed communities. Skirball Cultural Center. For more information visit www.jewishgen.org/jgsla

Mon., May 21, 7 p.m. **Jewish Genealogical Society of Sacramento. California State Archives.** Presented by Nancy Zimmelman, California's first female archivist. She has most recently focused on issues relating to electronic records and digital records preservation. Albert Einstein Residence Center, 1935 Wright Street, Sacramento. For more information visit www.jgss.org or leave a message at 916-486-0906 ext. 361.

Mon., June 18, 7 p.m. **Jewish Genealogical Society of Sacramento. Western Jewish History Center.** Presented by Aaron Kornblum. See above for more.

One-on-One Help Sessions Continue

One-on-One Help sessions continue from noon to 2 p.m. May 6 and June 3 at the Jewish Community Library, 1835 Ellis Street, San Francisco (on the campus of the Jewish Community High School of the Bay). Each session includes a round-table brainstorming session and then one-on-one assistance and work with on-site computers.

Bring your materials and take advantage of the library's extensive reference collection and Internet connection to countless searchable databases, together with one-on-one guidance from experienced genealogists. Veteran researchers from the San Francisco Bay Area Jewish Genealogical Society will help with brainstorming and individual problem-solving.

Access free parking on Pierce Street, between Ellis and Eddy Streets. Registration is requested but not required. Call (415) 567-3327, ext. 704. For more information e-mail library@bjesf.org

Register for 2007 IAJGS Conference

Registration is still open for the 2007 Conference in Salt Lake City, scheduled for July 15 through 20 at the Hilton Salt Lake City Center.

Conference attractions include the opportunity to network with international researchers, experts and archivists; world famous speakers; a film festival; focused SIG projects; DNA and genetics tracks; computer workshops; breakfast with the experts; special photographic exhibits; an onsite resource room; and free WIFI access, in addition to access to the world's largest genealogical library.

Visit the conference website at www.slc2007.org to register, book rooms at the Hilton, and learn what the conference and Salt Lake City have to offer.

FEEFHS Conference Precedes IAJGS

The annual conference of the Federation of East European Family History Societies (FEEFHS) will take place in Salt Lake City July 12 through 14, preceding the IAJGS Conference.

The FEEFHS is an umbrella organization that promotes family research in eastern and central Europe without any ethnic, religious, or social distinctions.

Topics scheduled for this conference include researching Germany, Poland, Slovakia, Galicia, Bukovina, Volhynia, Austro-Hungary, Ukraine, Coratia, Russia, and Romania. The Friday morning sessions focus on Jewish research. For information visit www.feefhs.org/

Making It Real: How I Turned My Database into a Successful Family Reunion

By Judith Berlowitz

Judith Berlowitz has a PhD in Romance Languages & Literatures, has taught Spanish and World Civilizations and has also done research in ethnomusicology (Judeo-Spanish balladry). In her spare time she is a medical, legal, and musical translator and sings alto in the Oakland Symphony Chorus. Her genealogical research includes surnames **ALEXANDER, BERLOWITZ, DA SILVA-SOLIS, FISCHL, FRESCHL, GATTMAN, LOEWENBERG, NUNEX-CARVALHO, PHILIPSBORN, SCHMALBACH, and RITTERBAND.**

The Background

After doing considerable work on my own extended (perhaps over-extended) family tree, I turned my attention to my husband's family about three years ago. As a youth Cy had looked forward to the multi-generational reunions of the Cousins' Club, and, since our marriage and the birth of our daughter, had renewed relationships with several family members. His cousin Natalie, as the unofficial family chronicler — and in possession of a remarkable memory — had information and photographs of the Berlowitz family since the three siblings and four



Family gathering at Kutsher's Country Club

nephews came to America from "Russia" (modern-day Ukraine) through Ellis Island early in the twentieth century. They settled in Brooklyn and changed their names, in some cases by design and in others by marriage. She knows who was named for whom and how people are related, with a pretty accurate memory of birth and death dates, and possesses a treasure-trove of anecdotes. And there were written memoirs, left by two of Cy's aunts, with slight variations between them, but with much valuable information.

From the memoirs I learned that the city closest to the family shtetl of Orekhov was called "Katrinaslav" (which turned out to be "Ekaterinoslav," modern-day Dnipropetrovsk), and that Cy's grandfather Jacob Berlowitz and family had come to America on the SS Smolensk. This was sufficient information to locate the manifest on the Ellis Island Database. When I

saw the date of the family's arrival, July 24, 1906, I realized that the next year would be the hundredth anniversary of their coming to America.

Search for the other siblings' and nephews' manifests (one of them a "Missing Manifest" which I located through Steve Morse's website) revealed that Jacob's elder brother David arrived the following year, while the four nephews arrived in 1911 and 1913. With Jacob had come his sister Bella, wife of Salmon Blumen (later Sam Blum), who had arrived in 1905, paving the way for the rest of the family's arrival. The nephews were

sons of Chana, sister of David, Jacob, and Bella, and their surname as it appears on their manifest was "Jachkind," which was changed to "Ashkin" shortly after their arrival. This confluence of dates meant one thing to me: We must have a Berlowitz Family Reunion in 2006.

Reunion? When? Where?

It was not easy to contact all family members because all the Berlowitz family except for Jacob and his son Harry (Cy's father) had changed their name to "Berley." In fact there are living today five first cousins named David Berley, all named for their grandfather, David Berlowitz. In addition, they were scattered across the U.S., not all had e-mail, and contact with the Ashkin family had been lost.

Among the family members I was able to reach, the response was 100 percent positive. A survey of

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Reunion, cont. from page 5

preferred dates, which at first produced only hopelessly different results, finally gave us the last few days of June and first of July, the days immediately preceding the July Fourth holiday. But what about the venue? The family had not gotten together as a whole for many years, but the last few reunions had been held at the Raleigh Hotel in the Catskills. Perfect! A traditional Jewish family hotel in the mountains! But I received less-than-glowing reports from the most recent visitors to the Raleigh, so turned to Kutsher's Country Club, which looked great on-line and offered very reasonable rates, as well as a meeting room that we could use.

Getting everyone accommodated long-distance was a tedious and awkward process, and occurred during a major move and change of address for us, but I finally booked rooms for about 75 people. During the course of the correspondence some people had felt slighted that the Berley and Blum names were not included in the reservations list. So the Berlowitz Family Reunion became the Berlowitz-Berley-Blum Family Reunion. We have a date, we have a place, but what does one do at a family reunion in the Borscht Belt?

Organizing the Reunion

I knew I could not do this by myself, so I sent out appeals for help at organizing. But since I didn't have a definite plan, I of course got vague responses. We must know what we are doing before we delegate tasks. Searches on the Internet provided "how-to" information that I didn't think was appropriate for our group: they were either too formal, including elections of officers and financial reports, which this family had not had for many years, or just plain silly, suggesting games of charades and scavenger hunts. But some suggestions, both from the Internet and from family members, were valuable, including souvenir T-shirts, creating large family trees that people could add to, color-coding name tags according to family line, and providing tables for family photos.

There were plenty of recreation activities at Kutsher's but we lacked something that would draw

us together. Some people were interested in visiting the first family burial plot at Beth David in Elmont, NY. This idea had to be discarded because of the distance from Monticello and the difficulty of organizing transportation. I remembered an article in the *Times* about a "tumbler" who performed

regularly at Kutsher's. So Paul Krohn, AKA "Crazy Tyrone," agreed to be our personal tumbler, "cleaning up" his act a bit in consideration for the mixed ages of our group. Two family members, grandsons of David Berlowitz and Sam Blum, David Berley and Larry Blum, agreed to do presentations, David (Ph.D,

Physics Professor) on stories about his grandfather and Larry (MD, Dermatologist) on the painting career of his father, Dr Harry Blum, which reached from age 35 until his death at age 105. Many people agreed to bring photographs. I designed and ordered T-shirts, to be delivered at Kutsher's.

Another element I wanted for the reunion was a memory book, something that people could actually pick up and leaf through. Cy's Cousin Charlotte agreed to help me draft the book, which was to be interspersed with digital images of people, manifests, census forms, draft registration cards, and other memorabilia. The book turned out to be a narrated version of my Berlowitz database, a big challenge but worthwhile. The results went into a three-ring binder, part of my carry-on luggage, along with the rolled-up family trees.

Let the Reunion Begin!

The day finally arrived, the assorted family members checked in, and all gravitated to the meeting room, found their family trees posted on individual easels (one for each of the immigrant siblings) to which they added new information, then miraculously gathered in groups to share family photos and stories.

Activities flowed smoothly during the days, both outdoor (pool, rowing, tennis) and indoor (mah-jongg, dining, and of course, *de rigeur* schmoozing). On Saturday night, the tumbler turned out to provide a riotous evening that involved the entire group.

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BBB family in T-shirts.

Photo by Matt Kramer

On Searching for a “Long-lost” Relative: Don’t Give Up the Chase!

By Naidia Woolf

Naidia Woolf, formerly of Birmingham, England, immigrated to the US in 1957 and has lived most of the time in California. She owns and operates a word processing and editing service and is proofreader for *ZichronNote*. Contact her at rnwoolf@earthlink.net

Years of fruitless searching for my father’s cousin Wolf (Willie) Kujawski, who immigrated to the United States in 1940, has reminded me of the importance of bearing in mind that our immigrant ancestors sometimes adopted different names after settling in a new country such as the United States. The name chosen was sometimes the anglicized or simplified version of their original name — or in some cases those of family members or friends who arrived in the host country before them. For example, my paternal grandfather (from Lodz, Poland) was born Szija Wolf Kujawski. After settling in Birmingham, England, he discontinued using his Polish surname — presumably because it sounded too “foreign” to English ears — and assumed the name Simon Wolf — later Woolf (by adding a second “o”). Grandpa’s Hebrew name was Yehoshua, an English version of which would be Joshua. Why he chose Simon rather than Joshua or Josh beats me! Maybe he thought Joshua sounded “too biblical” (Jewish). At that time in England resentment was building towards the many thousands of “undesirable aliens” (a euphemism for the poor and largely uneducated Jews from Eastern Europe) who were “usurping” jobs traditionally held by the English working class.

In 1939 my “Uncle” (more properly first cousin once removed) Willie and wife Regina came to visit the family in Birmingham. In his letter to me on September 1, 1993, my father’s brother Sidney wrote how at the time “war broke out [in September 1939], refugees Cousin and wife Kijawski from Kiel Germany [were] staying with our family at St. Lukes Road. They were en route for USA. My cousins left for New York before USA entered the war, and due to circumstances of those days we never heard from Willie and Regina again.” Uncle Sidney’s letter, laboriously typed “with two fingers” on both sides of a sheet of paper on what was obviously a manual typewriter, is one of just three I received from him over a two-year period and which I will always treasure. (Sidney died a few years later.) As is often the case with family recollections, information regarding Willie and Regina’s ultimate destination in the “New World” was contradictory. My older sister Sandra (who was nine when Willie and his wife visited the family in Birmingham), insisted they were en route for Canada. Consequently, because my family hadn’t heard from Willie and Regina since they

left England, I had no way of knowing whether they immigrated to Canada or the U.S.

In 2002 I attended the International Jewish Genealogical Conference in Toronto, Canada. One of the tours sponsored by the IAJGS was to the Ontario Jewish Archives in North York, Ontario. Before going to the conference I was disappointed to learn that the Canadian immigration records were only available up to 1935. This left me out in the cold, knowing that my father’s cousin Willie and wife Regina could not have arrived in Canada earlier than 1939. At that time the reference library in Toronto had an excellent collection of city (including telephone) books for major towns in Canada going back at least 80 years. Some of the earlier, rather dilapidated city directories had been preserved on microfiche. For two hours I pored over hundreds of records for 1938 to 1946 hoping to come across the name of my ancestor, but to no avail. I did, however, come across a possible relative in the current Toronto City phone book. The next day (while on a tour) I stopped by the house and left a note under the door. Later on I telephoned and spoke to the son of the household (a Michael Kujawski) who said he would speak to his mother (Esther Kujawski). After returning to California, I wrote to Mrs. Kujawski asking if she knew whether she was related by marriage to my family from Lodz, Poland. Unfortunately I never received a reply, so all of my efforts along those lines were in vain. I did, however, receive an e-mail from the archive director at the Canadian Jewish Congress National Archives, saying that she had researched the names I requested, including all spelling variants, but “neither Willie [nor] his wife Regina Kijawski/Kujawski (y) appear[ed].” She concluded by saying that the National Archives had listings for four people named Kujawsky but that none of them had names “close to” Willie or Regina, and that “all the files concern immigration between 1951 and 1954 [were] too late” in relation to my research.

Last December I finally got around to checking the Alien Passengers/USA New York ship arrivals 1935-1938, the link to which (in Ancestry.com) was originally forwarded by a fellow researcher ten months earlier. In the Oct. 3, 1940 Alien Passengers List/Manifest, I finally found my father’s “long-lost”

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Long Lost Relatives, cont. from page 7

cousin, Wolf (known in family circles as Willie) Kujawski and wife Ryfka (Regina), who had sailed from Liverpool, England on the S.S. Samaria on Sept. 23 of that year. His age was given as 45. The “States Immigrant Inspector At Port of Arrival” report (shown on a subsequent page of the Manifest) gave the name and address of a brother with whom the couple would be staying in the U.S. (My initial reaction was: “What brother?!”) The brother was identified as a B. Winter who lived in Paterson, New Jersey. Later, thanks in part to an impressive amount of detective work by the same helpful researcher who’d alerted me to the online availability of the Alien Passengers/USA New York ship arrivals, I was able to identify Benjamin as Jakov Ber Kujawski, my uncle Willie’s brother from Poland. This meant that Jakov had changed his name, presumably after settling in the U.S.

I subsequently found Benjamin Winter in the 1930 U.S. Federal Census, born in Poland in 1892. According to the US Social Security Death Index, Benjamin died in New Jersey in 1973. Here his birth date was given as 1890. I also found a Willy Winter, born in 1898, died in New Jersey in 1969, and a Regina Winter, born in 1897, died in New York in 1970. My immediate reaction was could Willie and Regina Winter be the same individuals as “my” Willie and Regina Kujawski?

According to the New York ship arrivals, 1920–1957, a Jakov (Jakob) Ber Kujawski, born in Lodz, Poland in 1891, arrived in the United States in 1920 from Copenhagen on the S.S. United States. The ship’s manifest revealed that his father was a Pinkus Meyer Kujawski. Pinkus (born in 1871) was my paternal grandfather’s older brother! In February 1891, at age 20, he married a Ruchla Bryl. Pinkus and Ruchla had at least two sons, Jakov Ber and Wolf, born in 1898. (As most of us are aware, dates of birth as shown on gravestones and in official death records can be misleading. All too often the DOB is furnished by a next-of-kin who only knows the approximate birth date of the deceased. Presumably this was the case with my father’s cousins, Willie and Benjamin. It therefore behooves us to view that kind of data with a degree of skepticism.)

After comparing dates of birth and death, I concluded that after immigrating to the United States Jakob Ber Kujawski changed his name to Benjamin Winter (Ber>Ben>Benjamin) and his brother Wolf (Willie) followed suit by adopting the same surname. Why choose Winter? It’s possible the name morphed as follows: Kujawski>Wski>Winter. Or *maybe* (here my imagination takes flight!) it was chosen on a whim: a Jewish family from Birmingham named Summers had arrived in the States circa 1916 — before Benjamin — and was already living in Paterson, New

Jersey. The only way I can be sure that Willie and Benjamin Winter were my father’s cousins from Lodz is by obtaining copies of their death certificates from the State of New Jersey. I gather that death certificates in the U.S. give the name of the cemetery where the deceased was interred, name of funeral parlor or association, where the deceased died, cause of death, signature of informant, names of parents, wife or husband (or next of kin), and how long in the U.S., etc. If Willie and Benjamin’s death certificates give their father’s name as Pinkus Meyer Kujawski, the mystery of what happened to Willie and Regina will have been solved at last!

The moral is: always bear in the mind that your ancestors may have changed their names after settling in another country, and don’t give up the chase!

Postscript: A few years ago I retained the services of a researcher in Lodz, Poland. He researched my ancestors at the Lodz State Archive and sent me an inventory of birth, marriage and death records for the period 1874–1897. It was there that I “found” my paternal grandfather, Szija Wolf Kujawski, his parents, Icek and Raza, twin sister Trajdla Ryfka, and older sister Kaza Jenwa. Also listed was the birth of a Jakob Ber, son of Pinkus Meyer and wife Ruchla. At that time, however, those names did not ring a bell.

Traditionally among Eastern and Central European Jews, the name Woolf/Wulf was often a patronym before it became a family name; as such it was often linked with the name Benjamin (in Hebrew Binyamin, Ze’ev, or Bunem). In my family, the tradition has continued through the generations: my father’s youngest brother was a Benjamin and I have a great nephew named Ben.

In case any reader is confused by the alternate spelling of my paternal family name I should mention that when I began exploring my family roots (back in 1997) I believed it was spelled with a “y” after the initial “K.” (In fact I have a handwritten note from my late father where the name is spelled that way.) Years later, however, thanks to several well-informed members of JRI-Poland’s online newsgroup and my own independent research, I learned that Polish surnames never include a “y” after the initial “K”; also that my ancestral name was sometimes spelled with an “i” and “e”: Kiejawski. My initial confusion over the spelling resulted in lots of e-mails between me and other newsgroup members and much seemingly wasted time. I did, however, learn something about Polish spelling conventions along the way. After obtaining a copy of my grandfather’s birth record, I finally discovered that his secular name was Kujawski: spelled with a “u” after the initial “K.”

Getting Relatives to Help with your Family Research Can Feel Like Pulling Teeth

By Naidia Woolf

What can one say that's new about researching one's family history? Probably not much. That said, I'm going to share my experiences, good and bad.

First of all, trying to get family members to provide the necessary vital information for me feels like pulling teeth! I'm constantly asking myself, "Why is so-and-so being so unhelpful?" It would be understandable if they were Holocaust survivors or had lost parents during the war; many Holocaust survivors try to put that indescribable horror behind them as much as is humanly possible. But what about relatives like mine who *did not* live through that terrible experience or were born during the war and therefore were too young to know or remember anything about it?

What makes my task even more difficult is having to pry information out of relatives who live thousands of miles away (mostly in England), whom I hardly ever see or have never met. People (unlike me) who have family (parents, an elderly aunt or uncle) living within a reasonable distance might be more able to sit down with them and once they're in the right frame of mind, get them to share precious photographs of *bobbeh* and *zaideh* in the Old Country, or talk about their lives there — if that doesn't evoke painful memories.

Based on first-hand experience, I believe there are three basic reasons why relatives are sometimes unwilling to cooperate: (1) they aren't interested or can't be bothered — but all too often expect you to send them a copy of the family tree when finished! (2) they think you're a busy-body, poking your nose into their personal affairs, and (3) — the least likely scenario — they have skeletons in the closet they don't want to reveal. In addition, a relative might lie about his or her age, be reluctant to disclose a previous marriage, or even (in rare cases) a family member's criminal or disreputable history. It's also possible there had been a mysterious or unexplained death in the family. My mother once told me about a brother who died in infancy and how her father blamed her — a two-year old — for his death. Throughout my childhood I assumed the baby was a step-brother. A few years after my grandmother (who was consumptive) died in 1920, her husband had married a second time. In the late 1990s I learned that the child who died in infancy was in fact my mother's brother (and the firstborn son in the family) and that he died of natural causes. (Some of you may remember the article I wrote about my grandmother

which appeared in a 2002 issue of *ZichronNote*.)

Sometimes I avoid asking questions of a personal nature for compassionate reasons. A cousin's mother was murdered by a stranger in her home. She had invited him in for tea (he'd taken her home in a taxi after she'd bumped her head and fallen down in Woolworths); after returning home from work later that day, her son was interrogated by the police for 24 hours as the prime suspect. At the risk of opening up an old wound (and seeming uncaring) I have never asked my cousin when — what year — his mother died. On occasion he will talk about his childhood (in Ireland) but that is all.

I once had high hopes that a distant relative would be able to explain the connection between our two families, only to have my expectations "dashed to the ground." I was trying to determine the relationship between my maternal grandmother (the one who died of TB) and a Morris Shorn, the witness to her death certificate who identified himself as a cousin. I wrote to Shorn's granddaughter (now living in Spain) asking if she knew. She wrote back to say that she didn't really remember her grandfather — she was very young when he died — but that her father (who died in 1995) always referred to my Aunt Rita as "his cousin." When I pressed her for more information, she fired back an e-mail saying she "wasn't interested in family trees and to leave it at that," which I felt obliged to do. Nevertheless, considering how cordial (and detailed) her initial response to my questions about her grandfather had been, I was quite crest-fallen. To this day I've been unable to determine whether Morris Shorn was my grandmother's first cousin, cousin by marriage, or a more distant relative.

I find it intriguing that people who are not related to you (biologically at least) can be extremely helpful. It's understandable, of course, if they're already conducting their own family research. A few years ago I exchanged a "baker's dozen" e-mails with a man (also living in Spain) whose adoptive grandmother — "Dora" — had married into Morris Shorn's family. (To protect his identity I'll refer to him as "R.") While in England on business, "R" telephoned several of Morris's elderly and somewhat befuddled descendants — or rather their surviving spouses. It turned out that Dora was Morris's sister. My contact in Spain even e-mailed me an early 1950's-era family group photo which showed her seated at the dinner table with her in-laws, the Shorns.

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Pulling Teeth, cont. from page 9

That's a shining example of someone who although only a distant cousin of mine by adoption (if that) put a lot of time and energy into trying to verify our kinship.

Unfortunately none of the individuals "R" telephoned in London remembered meeting any members of my maternal family (or their offspring) or knew anything about Morris Shorn's background, specifically his name before he left Poland (i.e., if were different from Shorn).

I can think of numerous occasions when mere acquaintances or people I've never even met have photographed and/or translated the Hebrew inscription on an ancestor's headstone, researched vital records for me at the Family History Centre in London, or gone to the trouble of identifying all of the people in an old group picture — even located a hitherto unknown relative of mine. I could go on, but the genuine "kindness of strangers" list is too long to include here.

Doing genealogical research can reveal interesting facts about one's relatives. I used to think I knew a lot about my Uncle Sidney's wife Stella, who was originally from Czechoslovakia and had moved to Berlin with her parents in 1933 (where her father opened a fine china and glassware shop). As the situation for Jews under the Nazis became intolerable, Stella acquired a girl friend's domestic exit visa so she could leave Germany and seek safe refuge in England. (Having a domestic visa was one of the few means whereby Jews were allowed to leave the country.) My Woolf relatives are long-term residents of Birmingham, England. Hearing that my uncle met Stella in Birmingham during the war while she was working as a domestic for a neighboring Jewish family, I'd always assumed that she was a young, single girl at the time. Their marriage certificate (which I received from the General Register Office in Southport, Merseyside, England) came as a big surprise. Not only was Stella older than my uncle, she had also been married previously and divorced. Because her first husband had a "non-Jewish" name, I'm assuming that he was a gentile and divorced his wife to avoid the "taint" associated with being married to a Jew.

While dealing with uncooperative relatives I've

learned two important lessons. The first is the importance of not giving up — after all it might take a long time but you might hear from them *eventually*. (I'm thinking of a cousin who waited nearly a year before sending me a copy of our grandmother's burial record he had stored in his back room!) The second is tact and diplomacy. The direct approach — "Please let me know your (and wife and children's) dates of birth and marriage and the same for your parents, including their dates of death (if deceased)" — hardly ever works. You're probably perceived as a nuisance. I find that the indirect approach usually works best. For example, sending a friendly letter and requesting photos of your cousin's children (and/or grand children), can elicit

the names and respective ages of each from which you can estimate dates of birth. If all else fails you can always order the vital records directly (at least, those of deceased family members), unless, of course, they are not yet in the public record. (I'm referring mainly to obtaining copies of death certificates that may be subject to a 100-year privacy rule.)

Sometimes, however, you have to resign yourself to giving up on a relative who, despite all of your coaxing or entreaties, won't cooperate. For years I tried to get a cousin in the North of England to send me a copy of our maternal grandmother's photograph I remembered fondly from my childhood. Despite several friendly requests through the mail and a long-distance call to England, I never received a copy of the much-loved

photograph. Once, out of desperation, I even sent a five pound sterling note (to cover the cost of photocopying or scanning and postage) - to no avail!

All you can do is tell yourself, "*Genug is genug!*" ("Enough already!"), then look for another approach or avenue of research.

The saga of the much-sought after and greatly missed photograph does have a happy ending, however. It was sent to me from England by another person I've met only twice — my cousin's twin sister's husband. Yet another example of a not (biologically, at least) related individual being more helpful than one's blood relatives! My grandmother's photo, in its silver frame, is now where it belongs: above the bookcase where a picture of my mother as a pretty young girl is displayed.



The photo of Grandmother Sarah Rose is now displayed above the bookcase.

Notes on Traveling to Ancestral Shtetls

By Beth Galleto

Beth Galleto, editor of *ZichronNote*, is planning a trip to Poland and Ukraine this summer. She is researching BOLKER from Poland and Volhynia, KOHN from Hungary, and OSHEROFF and LEVITIN from Russia.

When planning a trip to a place you have never been, it is wise to listen to people who have traveled there before you. One of my cousins and I are planning a trip to ancestral shtetls in Poland and Ukraine this summer, so it seemed like a good idea to attend the March meeting of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Los Angeles, which featured a panel of four people who had completed such trips.

I don't normally travel all the way from the Bay Area to L.A. to attend a JGS meeting, but in this case it was well worth the effort. It gave me an opportunity to visit the cousin with whom I plan to travel (an L.A. area resident) and to attend the meeting with her.

I think we both came away with feelings of anticipation combined with apprehension. Neither of us is a travel novice, but the panel described Ukraine as a place unlike any we had previously visited. It turned out that none of the panel members discussed trips to what is now Poland, but three of them, as well as the panel moderator, talked about trips to Ukraine.

Mark Heckman: the Czernowitz Reunion

Heckman, immediate past president of the JGS of Sacramento, attended a summer 2006 symposium of more than 60 former residents — now spread around the world, many in Israel and other countries — from Czernowitz (now Chernivtsi) in Ukraine. Heckman said that the town was unique in the Austria-Hungarian Empire because its large Jewish population was integrated into the general population. The majority were middle class and educated.

In addition to the symposium Heckman visited other towns including Sadagora, Zastavna, Zaleshchiki, Tluste and Horodenka.

His route included flying Lufthansa to Warsaw and then Lot Polish Airlines to Lviv.

Among Heckman's observations were that outside the cities the area was very rural. His visual effects included video of people "taking their cows for a walk." He noted also that the Austrian era buildings are falling apart. The Czernowitz cemetery, cleared about ten years ago by the JGS Ottawa, which recorded names and places, is now nearly impassible and

infested with stinging nettles. In some other villages he visited he noted that there is no longer a Jewish presence. He advised that visitors find out where cemeteries and villages are located before starting their trips.

Lois Rosen: A Trip to Latvia and Lithuania

Rosen, a member of the JGSLA, discussed her trip to Latvia to research the Rozinko family. Her trip included meeting family members she had found through her research. One of them is a second cousin from Latvia, now living in England, whom she found through the JewishGen Family Finder. At the meeting she displayed a beautifully illustrated family tree she created based on her research.

She visited Riga and Daugavpils in Latvia and Pasvalys in Lithuania. When she started her trip she knew she wanted to visit four places but she did not know how to get from one to another.

In Riga, Latvia she met a distant cousin who became her guide. Rosen's slides included scenes of the ghetto in Riga, now inhabited by non-Jewish poor, and the Rumbula forest outside Riga where the Jews of Riga were killed in the Shoah.

She traveled with an outline of documents from the Latvian Archives, where she met the researcher who had conducted her family research. In Daugavpils, which she called a "very Russian city," she was able to find her family's former house. She visited the restored synagogue and active Jewish Community Center there.

The Lithuanian trip, she said, was a "whole other story." In Pasvalys she hired a taxi for two days to drive her around. She visited a restored synagogue and the old ghetto, which started as a fortress and is a prison today.

Rosen said that in the Latvian archives, where she was able to utilize the 1897 census, the archivists were helpful — a condition that is not necessarily true in other Eastern European locations.

Karen Roekard: Researching in Ukrainian Archives

Roekard (AKA Gitel Chaye Ita Rosenfeld Rokart), a Berkeley resident, spent 10 days in Ukraine in 2005

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with Alex Dunai, visiting Lviv, Rawa Ruska, Belz, Zolkiew, and Wolka Mazowieka, where her ancestors once lived. In September 2006 she went back to research tabula register general indexes, and cadastral maps. She spent nearly two weeks doing research in both the State Historical Archives in Lviv, Ukraine, assisted by Natalie Dunai.

In her talk she focused on the archives and what it was like to work in them. Roekard said that her project started with a stash of letters she received after her father died. She first went to Ukraine on her own and later sought help from Alex Dunai with tabula registers from 1782 and 1890. She noted difficulties in the archives, in which she said records were sometimes not available, lights were not always on, and what was required in order to obtain records was sometimes mysterious.

Roekard noted that forms had to be filled out in Cyrillic, so she had to have a guide with her at all times. She also had to have patience. While waiting for documents, she and Natalie Dunai explored file cabinets with index cards referring to Belz and Robinuska.

Roekard showed examples of documents that may be available including cadastral maps showing details of houses in a town and tabula registers. These were written on a paper that is like linen, she said.

Roekard said that eventually she was able to take 1,400 photos of documents having to do with her family. The family was in business, which generated many documents. She translated the necrology from Belz and found a link with the Belzer rebbe.

The experience, she said, was both rewarding and painful.

**Andrea Massion:
Finding Ukrainian Roots**

Massion, a native of Los Angeles, and her cousin from Oakland, traveled to Ukraine in May 2005. With Alex Dunai as their guide, they visited Ananiev, Odessa, Balta and Uman. She met another cousin for the first time in Kiev. Many of her family's oral histories began to make more sense to her because of discoveries she made on her journey.

In Kiev they met a cousin, Gregor. His family spent World War II in the Urals, thus escaping disaster. He remembered receiving packages from America.

They visited Babi Yar and a war memorial and stayed in a Black Sea hotel in Odessa. There they also visited a craft school in which family members learned skills that eventually led them to jobs in the

film industry in California. The Jewish community there now consists of 10 families who settled there after the war.

The older part of the cemetery was gone. Massion and her cousin got a cold reception from Jewish community members, who asked, "Why were you not here earlier?" Massion wrote every surname she could see in the cemetery. She was told that there were no existing records because all had been sent away in a truck for safekeeping and the truck had exploded.

In Balta, her grandmother's birthplace, she saw grapevines everywhere. She noted that her grandfather grew grapevines, a fact that made more sense with this new knowledge. In the cemetery in Balta she couldn't read the stones. She said that Uman was well organized. She was able to find a directory of residents in which some of her relatives were listed.

My cousin and I were thoughtful as we drove back to her home after the meeting. We knew we have a unique and perhaps even life-changing experience ahead of us.

A Few Things to Remember

Travel advice from the speakers included:

- No visa is currently required to travel to Ukraine.
- Vaccinations recommended for Ukraine include hepatitis A, hepatitis B, typhoid, and tetanus. Check the CDC website for more information.
- For travel conditions, check with the Dept. of State.
- Ukraine has a cash economy – that means no ATM, credit cards, or travelers checks.
- The exchange rate is about five Ukrainian hryvnia to a dollar.
- A phrase book is necessary.
- Russian is close to Ukrainian. It helps to be able to read Cyrillic.
- A guide is essential.
- Things change fast so be prepared. (Heckman)
- Bring toilet seat covers and toilet paper in travel size.
- Bring a digital camera and lots of memory sticks. Carry small notebooks for notes.
- Bring Pepto Bismol. Have bottled water in the car when traveling.
- Don't forget "giveaways" such as pens, pencils, and hats. Bring ancestral photos printed at home to give to the town archives or the mayor. These are best if marked with the name of town.
- Go to local markets to buy supplies and vodka.

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Using Excel for Genealogy

By Jeremy G Frankel

Jeremy has worn many hats during his eclectic career; from cartographer and land surveyor, to historian and author (*New York State Canal Guide*; the first book for boaters on the Erie Canal). Jeremy then worked as the Executive Director for a non-profit in upstate New York on a canal restoration project. The local county then employed him for three years in a records management program collating and cataloging 180 years of county records. Jeremy also spent ten years researching the 20th century development of Edgware, the London suburb where he grew up. For the past twenty plus years Jeremy has been researching his FRANKEL, GOLDRATH, KOENIGSBERG and LEVY ancestry. He is the president of the SFBAJGS and a professional genealogist.

As an avid user of Excel for genealogy, I thought it might be useful to pass along some tips on why and how I use it. If you are not familiar with Excel, let me explain; this is a spreadsheet application. When you open a new spreadsheet, you are confronted with a page that is full of little boxes in rows and columns. These are known technically known as cells. Originally, spreadsheets were designed for bookkeepers and accountants for managing business finances, putting a number in each cell. With Excel one can combine cells using mathematical formulae and put the results displayed in another cell. A spreadsheet can consist of more than one "sheet" and one can link different sheets and have the results on one sheet reflected in a cell in another sheet. But that is not what I am going to discuss here. I am not going to describe using numbers or mathematical formulae, but using cells for words.

The reason I like using Excel is that it can handle large amounts of data, which you can see (mostly) all at once on your screen. You can set up each vertical column of cells so that they can contain the same kind of data. One column could be last names, another, first names, and so on. The beauty of Excel (one of many) is that you don't have to enter the information in any order; but of course, like data must be entered in its named column; i.e. all first names go in the same column, all last names in the same column. The reason for not worrying about the A-Z order is that you can "sort" the columns and have data in either ascending or descending order. Of course it all depends upon what you want to use the spreadsheet for. I will discuss sorting later on. Once you have input all the data, the next time you wish to enter some new information, you can insert a new line in the right place and type it right there.

I use Excel as a management tool for several projects. One of these is vital records. I happen to have 157 birth, marriage and death certificates. Although I keep all the originals in archival enclosures and have a photocopied set, this doesn't help me when I am away from my office working in a library or academic institution and need to refer

to someone's information.

So I created three Excel spreadsheets, one each for birth, marriage, and death. Each column relates to each kind of information contained on each certificate. Taking birth certificates as an example, I have a column for the year (easier to sort than having the complete date, but more on that later). I have the registration district, county, certificate number, when born, where born, first name, last name, name of father, occupation, and so on. I think you get the drift.

If you already have a pile of certificates, it's easy enough to open up a new spreadsheet, create the column headings, then begin entering all the data (or as much as you feel you want) on each line. You don't have to type each certificate in order, because at the end, you can click on the DATA pull-down menu, select SORT and then decide the priority of one column over another. For example, it would make sense to have a spreadsheet organized by last name. On the other hand, if you have many certificates with the same last name, you could have a spreadsheet just for that last name and sort by first name.

I should also mention here that once you begin generating a dataset which is bigger than the height of the screen, the headings will obviously scroll up and off the screen. This can be a problem for us older folks whose memory retention is temporary, but Excel offers a wonderful solution: you can "freeze" the heading row(s) so that they always appear at the top while the dataset columns and rows scroll up out of view.

In my version of Excel (official declaration here: I'm a MAC user) there is a colored button above the right hand slide bar. If you click and hold down using your mouse or trackpad, you can slide this button down and a gray line will follow down the spreadsheet. Select the lines (above it) that you want to freeze, unclick, then go to the Window menu item and select "freeze pane." Now your headings will always stay in view as you scroll up and down.

Another way I use Excel is for maintaining my ever-

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growing list of street addresses. You come across addresses in all sorts of places; censuses, city directories, correspondence, BMD certificates, newspapers and so forth. Again, you can create a database and enter all the information with columns for the address. I even have a column for the street number (because more than one family could live on the same street). I also include the town and country, the source of the information, the date of that source and the resource, the facility where this record exists. Currently my address spreadsheet runs to 708 lines of entries and thirteen columns.

I actually maintain two versions of this spreadsheet. One is A-Z by street address and the other is by the family's last name. To do this I only have to update one spreadsheet, save it, then do a re-sort and save that one with a new name. With this second spreadsheet, sorted by last name, then first name, then street name, I can follow the history of where and when families lived at certain addresses. This ability to sort using different priorities may also provide research clues and insights on where to search next.

Sorting is easily achieved. Click on "Data" on the drop down menu and then on SORT. A window will appear with three sort priorities, A, B and C. Against each field is an up/down button and by clicking on this you can select the column you want. So, when converting an address book spreadsheet to one prioritized by family name, for the first priority, select the column letter which contains the family last name, then select the column letter which contains the first name. Finally select the column letter which contains the street name. Click OK and voila: you now have a resorted spreadsheet. Now go ahead and save and rename it.

Although this is a historical address book, don't forget you can use it to create a current address book. I have several: one for family, one for friends, one for genealogy libraries and institutions. It's obvious that you can get really carried away here, organizing your life in cells!

The *Jewish Chronicle* is the world's oldest English-language Jewish newspaper still in publication, having begun publication in 1841. One reason for its importance is the various life events reported as paid notices, although they really didn't become popular until the mid 1880s. By 1900 they were featured on the first three pages of the newspaper. On the inside were the Social Pages, where family events were also listed, albeit at a slightly higher price.

Because most of my genealogy has to do with London where many of my family members lived, a number

of families made use of the *Jewish Chronicle* to place these paid notices of family events ranging from birth, through bar-mitzvah, engagement and marriage, to death and tombstone consecration. To date I have 599 entries, with the Koenigsberg family alone providing 216 entries. In 2002 I placed an entry in the paper recognizing my parents' fiftieth wedding anniversary. This turned out to be my 500th spreadsheet entry. It really surprised my mother as she woke up to congratulatory calls that morning not knowing who had advertised the occasion. Her early morning wake-up call to me soon located the culprit!

As well as paid notices, there could be articles and news stories. Additionally, because of the charitable nature of Jews, there were often many charities requesting donations for causes at home and abroad. Some issues of the *JC* listed columns and columns of people's names and the amount they donated. Sometimes the names were grouped by synagogue name. As you can appreciate, a plethora of information can be contained within the pages of the *JC* for anyone with British ancestry.

The *Jewish Chronicle* spreadsheet columns include year, last name, parents/spouse, person, issue date, event type, and notes. The parents/spouse column depends upon the person the event is about. If it is a child, then I put down the parents names. If it is one spouse, then I put down the name of the other spouse.

Dates present a problem because normal international genealogical convention calls for the event to be recorded by ddd/mmm/yyyy, with the day and year written as numbers and the month as the first three letters of the word. Obviously one cannot sort this way. Even setting up any other way can cause confusion. This is why, as well as the column with the complete dates, I also include a column that contains just the year. I could have created three columns for day, month, year, but I personally didn't think it was necessary to go to such lengths.

During a recent project I encountered a problem where a city directory I needed to look at was either not in a collection or the page(s) were missing. I asked myself the question, "which institution has a copy," which rapidly morphed into "which institutions have which years of all the city directories for that city."

Right now I am in the middle of doing this with the San Francisco city directories. These run from 1850 to the 1980s. There are seven institutions in the San Francisco Bay Area that have large collections of SF city directories, but no institution has a complete collection. Obviously if you are following a family year by year, then you may have to go to several institutions to see them all.

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Sharing Your “Tree” at Family Events

By Larry Burghaimer,
SFBAJGS Membership Chair

About 18 years ago, which was before I had an active interest in my family’s genealogy, I had an opportunity to use a family tree. My daughter was having her Bat Mitzvah and as the father, I was hosting the evening party following the actual Bat Mitzvah. We were expecting relatives and friends from all over the country and I wanted to acknowledge their presence.

My daughter had an assignment in her seventh grade Sunday school class to make a family tree. While preparing the data she asked us, her parents, to help her get the names of family members and how they were related. She prepared the tree on a piece of butcher paper that was about 3 feet wide and about 14 feet long. The tree was placed on the paper in a horizontal display. She started with the great-grandparents of each of her parents’ families and followed the families down to the cousins on her

level or below. The tree was not very legible from a distance but one could get the idea of who was on it.

At the party we had two children hold the tree as I pointed to each person’s place on the tree as I introduced the family members, starting with the two grandmothers who were in attendance. I didn’t know where each person was located in the room but they got the idea of when their name would be called and were ready to stand up. I called each name, the person’s position on the tree and where they were currently living. It was a nice way to acknowledge each side of the family without doing one before the other. There was a tendency for each family group to applaud for their group member as they stood up.

It worked out very well, went quickly, and we captured the whole introduction process on a VCR tape (recently converted to DVD). When looking at the 18-year-old tape we realized that one whole table of eight relatives are now all deceased but we had them recorded as being present at this family event. I would recommend this process to others.

Reunion, cont. from page 6

Family meetings were both riotous (with the perpetuation of decade-long family jokes) and serious, with multi-media presentations of family stories. I was honored to receive the “Cousins’ Club” gavel from Natalie, together with the awesome responsibility of continuing the renewed family feeling. The commemorative T-shirts were a big hit; people who hadn’t ordered one regretted it (it might have been a good idea to order a small surplus), and people placed orders for the memory book.

The final day of the reunion was dedicated to photo sessions, exchanges of e-mails and phone numbers, and promises to meet again.

Epilogue: Since the 2006 reunion, old friendships have been renewed, an Internet group has been formed, the “Memory Book” is turning into a self-published book about the family (about 80 pages so far), thanks to contributions from many family members, and I have made contact with the Ashkins, many of whom will probably be coming to the next reunion, planned for 2008 in San Diego.

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I have made a spreadsheet that lists the year, name of directory, then seven columns for each institution (I put a check mark in the cell if an institution has that directory), and then a comments column. When completed, I hope to have this uploaded to a local genealogical society’s web site.

In closing I hope I have explained succinctly just how useful Excel can be; not only for handling large amounts of data, but in the ways the dataset can be resorted to emphasize a different perspective, which may help tease out a clue or shed light on something about a family which wasn’t obvious before.

First appeared in the March 2007 issue of Montreal Forum, the newsletter of JGS Montreal. Reprinted with permission.

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- Go to all museums whether renovated or not.
- Invite people you meet to a meal.
- Note everyone and everything. Don’t depend on the guide to remember things.

“What was true for me in September may not be true now. It’s as if you go into the Land of Oz, with things shifting and changing,” said Roekard.

Pam Weisberger, who moderated the panel, noted that the Latvia SIG website has been updated by Bruce Dunes. Finally, she noted that the Heritage Foundation for Preservation of Jewish Cemeteries, located in Williamsburg, New York, is working to restore Eastern European cemeteries. For more information about this organization e-mail PWeisberger@hotmail.com.

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ZichronNote

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