



זכרונות ZichronNote

The Journal of the San Francisco Bay Area Jewish Genealogical Society

Volume XXVII, Number 3

August/September 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. Sept. 16, San Francisco: *Panel Discussion of the Highlights of the 27th Annual International Conference on Jewish Genealogy.* This year's conference in Salt Lake City will offer exciting news about resources and other developments in the world of Jewish Genealogy. If you didn'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.

Mon. Oct. 15, Los Altos Hills: *Doing Research in Poland.* Judy Baston, a longtime Polish researcher and a member of the Executive Committee of Jewish Records Indexing-Poland, will discuss a variety of ways to find your Polish ancestral town, how to determine what records exist for your town and make the most of the JRI-Poland database and website, as well as other hints to help enhance your Polish research.

Sun. Oct. 21, Berkeley: *Oral History Techniques.* Esther Ehrlich, founder of Story Lines, believes in the power of stories. A trained oral historian, she worked for six years at the Regional Oral History Office (ROHO) at the University of California, Berkeley, one of the leading oral history programs in the country. At ROHO she developed and conducted an oral history project on performance artists and dancers with disabilities, for which she received a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Sun. Nov. 18, San Francisco: *My Trip to Ukraine.* SFBAJGS member Karen Roekard will share her recent experiences of traveling to and doing research in Ukraine, specifically concentrating on research in the L'viv archives.

Sun. Dec. 9, San Francisco: *A Wealth of World Jewish Records.* Michael Goldstein is a Jerusalem-based genealogist who researches, mentors, lectures, and conducts workshops in Israel and North America. He carries out worldwide Jewish research and guides North Americans in locating and connecting with their Israeli family. He will discuss how Israeli archives and Internet sites have developed collections of historical and contemporary information about Jews from around the world, including Poland, Russia, Spain and China. This presentation will offer general guidelines about contacting and accessing Israeli archives. Goldstein will also share interesting case studies and data on how family mysteries were solved by accessing lesser known Israeli archives.

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.

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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
My Father, Maurice David
Frankel, 1930 - 2007

By Jeremy Frankel, SFBAJGS President

I think it would be fair to say that we all come to genealogy by choice. Whatever it is that creates the initial spark, we turn around and find we're hooked. It's both an extremely pleasurable as well as a frustrating hobby because we spend an inordinate amount of time as well as a fair amount of loose change to satisfy this addiction. We wrack our brains trying to figure out how to demolish brick walls. We engage our fellow genealogists and pick their brains. You all know what I am talking about.

It suddenly wells up as being more than a pastime when someone close to us dies. Then it isn't academic any more, it's real and messy, and it turns your life upside down. By sheer luck I have managed for a long time to avoid having this aspect in my life.

I moved to the States almost 20 years ago now. And to be honest, there hasn't been anyone close in my family who has passed away, except for my maternal grandparents, whom I had known for some 45 years. (My paternal grandparents died before I was born.) My grandfather died in 1997, followed a year later by my grandmother. By then I had been living in America for 10 years and had been kept apprised of the slow downhill path my grandmother was taking. It was still a bit of a shock when my grandfather passed away first. This was probably caused by the strain of looking after my grandmother. Still, they had lived long lives, so their deaths weren't entirely unexpected.

My father has suffered a litany of ill-health problems, beginning with three quadruple bypasses, followed by an operation to remove half his stomach. Then prostate cancer, then a minor stroke down his left side. He had gone down the street shopping, suffered the stroke, and then, as calmly as one could, walked back home (and past his doctor's office) to announce to my mother that he thought he had suffered a stroke!

The downhill path became steeper as his shopping list of medications may have interacted adversely. His legs became exceedingly swollen, so he couldn't walk. My mother and youngest brother (who still lives at home) performed the Herculean task of dealing with an increasingly difficult husband and father. He then began to resemble someone with dementia and it was determined that he had excess fluid on his brain. An operation was performed to insert a "shunt." It worked for a while. His appetite waxed

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SOCIETY NEWS

Welcome, New Members

Jacqueline Degner, Los Altos

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Myrna Morse.....mrm75@comcast.net

Please send updates to rnwoolf@earthlink.net

Mark Your 2008 Calendar: USCIS Historian Speaks January 13

Marian Smith, historian at the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (formerly INS) will speak on Sunday, January 13, at the Jewish Community Library in San Francisco.

Her topic will be "The Universe of Immigration Records, 1882-1954." The program will start at 1 p.m. Smith will discuss records of the former INS found at the National Archives and in Agency custody. She will begin with an overview of all types of records created and maintained over time, and how these records are distributed between the two agencies. Her talk will then cover the services and records becoming available through the new USCIS Genealogy Program. Finally, a question and answer session will address the particular interests and concerns of researchers.

Roster/Family Finder Emailed in August

The 2007 edition of the SFBAJGS Roster and Family Finder was emailed (in pdf format) to all members for whom we have up-to-date email addresses on August 14. If you don't recall receiving it, please check your back emails. Please notify Dana Kurtz at dlkurtz@ix.netcom.com if you did not receive it.

SFBAJGS Elections: Get Involved and Get More Out of the SFBAJGS

This December marks the end of the two-year term of the current officers of the SFBAJGS. It is time to begin thinking about the future of the Society.

It is essential that more members contribute to the success of this organization. Think about what you want from the JGS and how you can participate in making and keeping the Society strong. Not all commitments require large amounts of time.

Elected officers are:

- President
- Vice President
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Membership Director

This notice serves as the first call for nominations for elected positions. You may nominate yourself or another member. You are strongly encouraged to volunteer in any way that interests you. You will certainly get more out of the Society as an active participant. All of us who have volunteered can attest to that.

Opportunities that can be managed by an individual or shared by a committee include:

- Membership
- Program coordination
- Web page maintenance and enhancement
- Publicity
- Hospitality (arranging for cookies at meetings)
- ZichronNote
- Cemetery project

For more information, to nominate yourself or someone else, or to volunteer, contact Jeremy Frankel at (510) 525-4052 or jfrankel@lmi.net. **Nominations are due by October 1.**

Help Spread the Word About Jewish Genealogy and SFBAJGS

Members of SFBAJGS who are hooked on the search for their Jewish ancestors may want to share their passion with others. If you want to make a presentation to your synagogue or other interested group, SFBAJGS President Jeremy Frankel and Vice President Rosanne Leeson will be happy to assist you. The society is always looking for new members — and there is always a chance that someone in your audience will turn out to be a long lost cousin. For contact information see page 2.

CALENDAR, cont.

More Genealogy Events

Regional

Wed., Oct. 24, 7:30 p.m. **Marin County Genealogical Society. "Jewish Genealogy,"** presented by SFBAJGS President Jeremy Frankel. Marin Family History Center, 220 North San Pedro Road, San Rafael. For information call (415) 479-2200 or visit www.maringensoc.org

Sat., Nov. 3, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. **San Mateo County Genealogical Society. Four Lectures by Christine Rose include "Addicted to Courthouses," "County and Other Local Land Records," "Military Records for Problem Solving," and "Using Little Known and Neglected Sources: A Potpourri."** Rose is a certified genealogist and a leading expert on courthouse records. First Presbyterian Church, 25th and Hacienda, San Mateo. Preregistration \$24 members, \$27 non-members. \$30 at the door. For information visit www.smcgs.org

State and National

Mon., Sept. 24, 7:30 p.m. **Jewish Genealogical Society of Los Angeles. "When Leopold Met Lena: Marriage, Divorce and Deception in 1892 New York."** Presented by Pam Weisberger. The discovery of a divorce decree in the 1890s *New York Times* "News of the Courts" leads to scandal-ridden court transcripts held at the NYC municipal archives and revelations of a family secret. Beginning in Czestochowa, Poland and Cracow, Austria and continuing on to Manhattan's Lower East Side and Little Rock, Arkansas—the tumultuous, romantic and litigious world of our immigrant ancestors is brought to life in court records, graveyard inscriptions, newspaper articles, city directories, census and vital records. Learn how present-day genealogical research can be used to solve 19th century mysteries. Skirball Cultural Center. For more information visit www.jewishgen.org/jgsla

Mon., Oct. 15, 7 p.m. **Jewish Genealogical Society of Sacramento. "The First Steps —Beginning Your Family Tree Research."** Presented by Pam Dallas, Sacramento genealogist and popular lecturer. She will present tips on how to begin your initial efforts and where to go next. 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.

Sun., Nov. 18, 10 a.m. **Jewish Genealogical Society of Sacramento. German Jewish Research.** Presented by Carol Baird. See above for more.

My Grandmother's Suitcase: A Family Memoir

Shortly after publishing his essay, "At the Museum of Jewish Heritage," which explored his mysterious lifelong attraction to Judaism and Yiddishkeit, Jim Van Buskirk learned from his mother the secret she had kept from him his whole life: that he is Jewish. She went on to show him the contents of her mother's suitcase, filled with photographs, letters, and documents. He continues to look for answers by researching his genealogy, talking to previously unknown relatives, and sifting through the contents of his grandmother's suitcase.

The Bureau of Jewish Education's Fall Lecture at the Jewish Community Library, presented by Van Buskirk, will take place Tuesday, October 16, at 7:30 p.m. at the JCL.

Jim Van Buskirk, a member of the SFBAJGS, is most recently the co-editor of *Identity Envy: Wanting to Be Who We're Not*, and *Love, Castro Street: Reflections of San Francisco*. Before joining the Jewish Community Library as book group coordinator he served as program manager of the James C. Hormel Gay and Lesbian Center at the San Francisco Public Library.

This presentation, cosponsored by the SFBAJGS, is free and open to the public. For more information call (415) 567-3327, ext. 703.

One-on-One Help with Your Family Tree

Whether you're trying to find your great-grandmother's elusive town or your grandfather's passenger manifest, take advantage of the Jewish Community Library's extensive reference collection and Internet connection to countless searchable databases, along with one-on-one guidance from experienced genealogists from the SFBAJGS. Longtime Library volunteer staffer Judy Baston, as well as Ron Arons, Larry Burgheimer, Jeremy Frankel, Beth Galletto, Steve Harris, Jeff Lewy, Marian Rubin and other veteran researchers are on hand to help with brainstorming and problem-solving.

Bring your materials and your questions. This year's dates include October 7, November 11, December 2, January 6, and February 3. Registration is requested but not required. Call (415) 567-3327, ext. 704.

Please come promptly at noon. Sessions continue until 2 p.m. or longer.

Both of the above programs take place at the Jewish Community Library, located in San Francisco at 1835 Ellis Street, between Scott and Pierce. Free parking is available at the Pierce Street entrance.

San Francisco's Disappearing Cemeteries

By Jeff Lewy

Computerizing Colma Cemetery Records

Members of the San Francisco Bay Area Jewish Genealogical Society have been volunteering to transcribe and computerize the records of the Jewish cemeteries in Colma, with cooperation of the current management of the Colma cemeteries. This task is intended to make the records available on the Internet as part of the JewishGen Online Worldwide Burial Registry (JOWBR). JOWBR's aim is to catalog data in Jewish cemeteries and burial records worldwide.

Working on these transcriptions raised questions regarding how the cemeteries came to be where they are, and what happened to Jews who died before the cemeteries opened in 1889.

The cemetery records note the relocation to Colma of many remains originally buried in San Francisco, as a result of several periodic municipal efforts to reclaim land originally used for cemeteries. The ultimate result is that there are only two cemeteries left in San Francisco — the small very old one at the original Mission Dolores and the military cemetery in the Presidio. All the others have been “reclaimed” for other uses.

First Jewish Cemetery - 1849

The earliest records of a specific Jewish cemetery in San Francisco date from 1849, when one acre was set aside as the (first) Home of Peace, referred to as the Hebrew Cemetery. It was probably near Pacific Avenue west of Larkin Street (now near the west end of the Broadway tunnel). Other sources suggest that the cemetery was in the block bounded by Broadway, Gough, Vallejo, and Franklin. One acre is a little less than half of one of the existing city blocks in that area. With the extraordinary growth of San Francisco, that plot was almost filled by 1860. It appears that no new plots were sold and few additional graves added to the existing plots after that.

Expanded Jewish Cemeteries - 1860

A new location was found in what is now Dolores Park, between Church Street and Dolores Street,

and between 18th Street and 20th Street. This area covers about eight acres. Even in those days, there was a split between the more reform and more orthodox synagogues, and the new location was divided into two approximately equal parcels, one on either side of what is now 19th Street. Emanuel and the related Eureka Benevolent Society managed the (second) Nevai Shalom or Home of Peace (between 18th and 19th Streets), and Sherith Israel and the Hebrew Benevolent Society managed Gibboth Olam or Hills of Eternity (between 19th and 20th Streets). The two cemeteries were consecrated in 1860 and 1861. Approximately 300 burials were moved from



Dolores Park Cemetery

the Hebrew Cemetery. The few surviving photos of the cemeteries show elaborate Victorian structures, in the florid taste of the period.

A Third Jewish Cemetery - 1877

In 1877, the City gave the Jewish community 11 acres in the city cemetery in recognition of the important role of the Jewish community in the city. The consecrated Jewish section was known as Salem or New Salem, managed by Beth Israel. The city cemetery was near the ocean in what is now Lincoln Park.

Cemeteries Out of San Francisco

In 1880, the City Supervisors first passed an ordinance forbidding any further burials inside the city limits. The ordinance resulted from “public outcry” for land used up by the cemeteries, or more accurately, pressure from real estate interests that wanted to develop the “limited usable space” in the city. The ordinance also required the removal of all existing graves from existing cemeteries by the end of 1888 so that the areas could be used for more “suitable” purposes. The ordinance focused on the supposed health benefits of not having the cemeteries next to residential areas, but the true reason was clearly to promote land speculation after clearance — much as developers today build golf

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Cemeteries, cont. from page 5

courses, sell pricey homes on the perimeter, and then later fill in the golf course with more homes.

The story of the Christian cemeteries in San Francisco gets complicated after 1880, as some cemeteries contested the ordinance, and some flatly refused to obey it, so that some cemeteries in the City were not vacated until after World War II.

Jewish response to the City Ordinance

The Jewish communities responded in a different (and more law-abiding) fashion. They bought land in Lawndale, a small rural area on the south side of San Bruno Mountain, outside the city limits, and in 1889 opened new cemeteries there. The cemeteries kept their names, so the current cemeteries are the (third) Home of Peace, originally on 45 acres, and the (second) Hills of Eternity, originally on 20 acres.

The burial societies moved all the graves from the Dolores Park sites to Lawndale beginning in 1889 and completed the move within a few years. Photographs of the time show long corteges of hearses and other vehicles transferring coffins to the new sites. Lawndale changed its name in 1941 to Colma.

Some Graves and Markers Left Behind

Some graves were also relocated from the first Home of Peace after 1889, but it is believed that some graves probably still occupy their original sites, now covered over with residential buildings.

Some families with relatives buried in Dolores Park

arranged for relocation of gravestones and other markers, but many occupants of the graves no longer had living or concerned relatives, so much of the marble and granite was used to extend seawalls or fill ravines in various parts of the city.

Many graves in the Salem cemetery were not moved, and are now under the Lincoln Park Golf Course.

This is another “only in San Francisco” story, since most other cities left existing cemeteries in place as the urban area grew around them.

Sources

Mavrogeorge, Brian, Presentation to California Genealogy Society, May 1999.

San Francisco Chronicle, Datebook, October 29, 2006

Hansen, Gladys, *San Francisco Almanac*, 1995

Note on accuracy of sources

Particularly because much of this activity occurred before the 1906 earthquake, the records are spotty and may not be reliable. I found contradictions and discrepancies in the sources I used, but I believe they are substantially correct.

Further Reading

San Francisco History Room, San Francisco Public Library (New Main), 100 Larkin Street, San Francisco, 6th Floor

Blackett, John, www.sanfranciscocemeteries.com and related links

NARA Seeks Comments on Digitizing Archives

—Jan Meisels Allen, director, IAJGS and chairperson IAJGS Public Records Access Monitoring Committee

The U.S. National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) is seeking public comment on its draft Plan for Digitizing Archival Materials for Public Access, 2007-2016. Comments are due by November 9, 2007 and should be sent to: Vision@nara.gov or by fax to 301-837-0319. This plan affects all the regional offices, the two Washington D.C. archives and the various presidential libraries—equating to 10 billion pieces of paper. The stated purpose includes increased access to the records and preserving the original records from wear and tear. Part of the proposal is for NARA to partner with different organizations (private, public, non-profit, educational and government), and these partners will assume much of the costs of the digitization. While the partners may not assume the copyright for the records, they may add value-added services. Access to the partner products will remain free in the NARA

Research rooms and after a period of time NARA has the right to provide free online access to the digitized materials. The plan proposes that by 2012, one percent of the documents will be online, either digitized by the partners or NARA. The proposal lists the NARA draft operating standards, list of existing partners and other items relevant to the proposal, and guidance on handling the documents. The proposal may be accessed at: www.archives.gov/comment/digitizing-plan.html.

Sutro Library Adds Saturday Hours

The Sutro Library has announced that it will be open the first Saturday of each month starting November 3, 2007, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Sutro, the San Francisco branch of the California State Library, is located at 48 Winston Drive in San Francisco. Among other things, it offers a large collection of city directories and U.S. censuses on microfilm. For more information call (415) 731-4477 or email Sutro@library.ca.gov.

New Databases Available at the Oakland FHC

By Jeremy Frankel, President, SFBAJGS

FamilySearch (LDS) announced at the end of May that they were adding a number of new database services to assist the many genealogists who visit the Family History Centers (FHC) to carry out their research. For those of us who live in the San Francisco Bay Area, these new databases will augment the wide-ranging services already available at the Oakland FHC. The new databases are:

Footnote (www.footnote.com)

Footnote is a subscription-based website that features searchable, original documents that provide users a view of the events, places and people that shaped the American nation and the world. The site will have over 25 million digital images by the end of 2007. Footnote is currently working with FamilySearch to index the American Revolutionary War Pension files. Additional projects with FamilySearch are under development.

Individuals with Footnote subscriptions will still be able to sign in with the same Footnote username and password they use at home to save, annotate, and upload content.

Godfrey Memorial Library (www.godfrey.org)

Godfrey Memorial Library has an extensive collection of essential resources to assist genealogical and historical research. Resources include newspapers, city and business directories, vital records, printed census records, state, county, and local histories, as well as numerous family histories, family bible records, and service and pension records.

Heritage Quest/ProQuest

(www.heritagequestonline.com)

Heritage Quest online includes the complete set of U.S. Federal Census images from 1790 to 1930 including names and indexes for many of the sets. Users will be able to find people and places located in over 20,000 published family and local histories and PERSI, an index of over 1.9 million genealogy and local history articles. Other online databases include Revolutionary War Pension, Bounty-Land Warrant Application files, and the Freedman Bank Records.

Access to this service will be limited to 1400 family history centers in North America. It will definitely be available in the Oakland FHC and most other Bay Area FHCs. Patrons outside the Bay Area can call their local FHC to see if it is available.

Kindred Konnections

(www.kindredkonnections.com)

Kindred Konnections has over 230 million pedigree linked names with submitter information. The online pedigrees are not merged, but maintained by individual patrons. There are additional databases of birth, marriage, death, and census records that are automatically searched along with the pedigree linked data. Segments of pedigrees can be downloaded.

World Vital Records (WorldVitalRecords.com)

WorldVitalRecords.com provides access to research helps and has a wide variety of international records, including more than 60 Parish registers, Scottish death records, UK marriages, and Irish prisoner records. There are more than 300 newspapers with 100,000 pages added each month, and over 500 online databases, including vital, military, land, pension records, reference materials, family histories, maps, gazetteers, and international links. With the recent Quintin Publications partnership, WorldVitalRecords will soon have more than 10,000 databases online. At least one new database is added every business day.

Oakland Family History Center has also placed online the catalog of material permanently housed in its collection. This includes books, maps, microfilm and fiche. Oakland FHC is very well patronized by genealogists and enjoys a good relationship with the Salt Lake City Family History Library with respect to ordering films. On a recent visit I was leafing through the microfilm orders binder and was quite surprised to see just how many **of our** Society members' names I recognized.

So far seven other Bay Area FHCs have catalogued their holdings, and these too are available online. The reason why this service is so important is that not every item was obtained through the normal channels of Salt Lake City microfilming records and making duplicate copies available. There are always items which may have been donated to a local FHC. These won't appear in the international Family History Library Catalog (www.familysearch.org). One important local example is the Menlo Park FHC, which has a huge amount of UK material, much of it donated by the folks who run Menlo Park from their trips to the UK.

One caveat: You can order a film by mail or in person and pay either by cash or local check. Online ordering and/or paying by credit card is not an option.

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Looking Back at the 2007 IAJGS Conference

Perspectives from members of the San Francisco Bay Area Jewish Genealogical Society who attended this summer's international conference, July 15-20 in Salt Lake City.



The People Make It Great

By Dave Howard

It's the people. I do genealogy to find my living relatives. When I attend a Jewish genealogy conference I feel everyone in the room is a cousin. Since this was my third conference in a row it was a chance to not only meet new people but to see "old" friends. It has dawned on me that spending quality time with people either by attending their presentation or talking one-on-one is my payback.

My wife attended with me. The only person in the world that has all my ancestors, my sister, attended with me for the first time.

Following is a partial list of people who really made this conference great for me.

Some are constant major contributors who share so much with us. This trip those key people included the Bay Area's ubiquitous Ron Arons (who told us how to locate big k'nocker philanthropists and free tsatskes for prizes), the Bay Area's maven's maven, Steve Morse (I now use his eBay bidding tool), Gary Mokotoff, editor of *Avotaynu* and the father of modern Jewish genealogy (who taught us how to send a page of testimony to Yad Vashem), and Susan King, the heart and soul of JewishGen.org (who told me only a few people contribute \$100 or more a year and they really need money).

Bennett Greenspan, founder of FamilyTreeDNA, gave me a bunch of ideas for a yDNA surname project (Horowitz) and my yHaplogroup Project (Jewish_Q). He also convinced me to have my mtDNA tested because I really do care about my mother.

Speaking of DNA, I met face-to-face a fellow Bay Area resident who is one of the 73 men who match 12 for 12 markers on my Y-Chromosome. There are so many of us we are now going for an upgrade to 67 markers.

I attended the Belarus, Litvak, and Latvian SIGs. These groups have such different personalities and the people involved are so knowledgeable.

For some reason the Latvia SIG has captured my heart. I really like the people running it. I am on their board. I have agreed to finish two ShtetLinks, for Rezekne and Daugavpils (Dvinsk), this year.

Speaking of ShtetLinks, the woman who I collaborated with this last year to do a link for Krazia, Lithuania was at the meeting. We had spent so much time corresponding and on the phone it was great to be able to give her a hug and a kiss. I really encourage everyone to work to contribute to a ShtetLink for a broader view of what life was like for our ancestors.

I was in a DNA birds-of-a-feather meeting and a very bright woman was addressing our group. To my surprise, she knew who I was and what I had been doing. It turned out she and I have been corresponding over the Internet for the last four years on other matters. Another name has become a face.

Now do you see why I love to attend these conferences? It's the people.

A Satisfying Experience on Many Levels

By Michael Feiler

This was my second IAJGS Conference. While last year's conference offered more local color and excitement (surrounded by Mid-Town Manhattan and the Greater New York City Jewish Community), returning to Salt Lake City offered more for me on a number of levels. I was part of the SLC Jewish Community for 20 years and found the return, after 40 years, to be invigorating. Seeing old friends, neighbors from Kensington, and acquaintances from last year's conference was energizing. Meeting new people and potential contacts, not to mention two distant relatives, may lead to future genealogical richness.

I found the talks by Peter Lande of the US Holocaust Museum, Gary Mokotoff of *Avotaynu*, and Steven Morse of the SFBAJGS, to be most exciting and tailored to my interests. It was wonderful to see people I met last year from JRI-Poland, Litvak-

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Looking Back at the 2007 IAJGS Conference

SIG, and Gesher Galicia. It was an indescribable delight to be surrounded by some of the world's most distinguished Jewish genealogists and 599 other Jewish genealogists of varying intensities and interests.

I sharpened my knowledge of genealogy by DNA, finally getting tested by Family Tree DNA. I did this even though I was tested as part of the "National Geographic Five Year Project" done this spring. I listened to a talk given by Bennet Greenspan (of Family Tree DNA) in Manhattan last year and decided it was time to see if I was really related to Bruce Feiler after all. The Shoah DNA project, which I only attended briefly provided me the richest emotional experience of the conference. Their goal is to build a genetic database of people who lost family during the Holocaust. This is both in order to reunite families separated during the Holocaust, and to aid in identifying victims who remain buried anonymously throughout Europe. For more information you can contact them at info@dnashoah.org.

See you in Chicago August 2008!

What I Learned at the Conference

By Martin Sherman

The most important benefits of attending the Conference are the people you meet and hearing the speakers teach about how to do research. There was a lot of schmoozing in the evening hosted by the conference. Also, I ran into a neighbor from Palo Alto and a woman I had attended high school with, all tracing their ancestors.

In addition, I learned the following:

1. The best internet site to start research is **SteveMorse.org**. He also lives in San Francisco and is very happy to answer questions. He has several one step tools that connect with Jewishgen, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services genealogy website, Ancestry.com and others. His site is amazing in how it links to so many other relevant sites for research.

2. In the materials handed out, there was a listing of attendees, giving the names of the towns and names they were researching. I did not find anyone looking for Rakamaz or Szerencs, small villages in Northeastern Hungary where my father's side of the family is from. I found that someone was researching Zeisler/Czeisler from Eger, my maternal grandfather's name. Being at the conference, I was



Dale Friedman, Marilyn Dornhelm, Michael Feiler, and Vivian Kahn report at the August SFBAJGS meeting in Berkeley on what they learned at the annual conference.

able to meet him. He had been doing genealogy for many years. He believed we had parallel lines, but it was exciting to meet someone who had been researching the same name as I was.

3. At the Hungarian Special Interest Group meeting, one of the speakers recommended using **www.bogardi.com/gen**. It has a gazetteer listing place names.

4. JewishGen has a way of tying in with the list of Jewish cemeteries and Google Earth so that we can see the satellite image of the cemetery or the town from the JewishGen communities database. It was fun and exciting to attend the Conference. I enjoyed it so much that I plan to go to Chicago in August '08 to attend the next conference.

Continued on next page

Chicago Records to be Available Online

—Sharon Fingold

Eastman's Online Genealogy News recently announced that Chicago birth, death, and marriage certificates will be available online at the beginning of 2008. This should be a good resource for people with roots in Chicago and who are planning to go to the Jewish Genealogy Conference to be held in Chicago in the summer of 2008. According to Eastman, the 24 million documents available online will include birth certificates that are at least 75 years old, marriage certificates more than 50 years old, and death certificates more than 20 years old.

President's Message, cont. from page 2

and waned. He began to lose weight. Then six weeks ago he was admitted to the hospital one more time. The decline steepened even more until last week when he contracted peritonitis. The doctors were loathe to operate because his body could not withstand an operation. He was given two days to live.

I was called on Saturday, August 25th to come home. I rearranged my life and rescheduled my ticket (I had planned on going home after the Jewish Holidays). I flew out on Sunday and arrived Monday morning. He was still alive. I had two days with him in the hospital. He was relatively lucid for those two days and knew I was there to see him. On Wednesday at 10:30 am, as had become the routine, my mother, Helena, my two brother, Laurence and Warren, and Mum's brother in law, Brian, drove down to the hospital for another visit. In the afternoon after we had lunch, his breathing — which had been rather labored all that morning — suddenly sounded different; it was far less labored. It began to grow weak, and then grew weaker and weaker in just 25 minutes, until it finally stopped and he expired at 3:55 p.m. London time. We all stood there, teary-eyed, looking down at the frail body which was a ghost of its former self as a loving husband and father.

It was a really difficult time for me as I was constantly shifting between the grieving son and the family genealogist who somehow wanted to capture the details and so preserve for all time this memory of my father. How does one document someone's life when they are dying? The funeral was held the following afternoon on Thursday at 4 p.m. I won't go into the six-hour hiccup that Thursday morning which held up receipt of the death certificate and the release of my father to the burial society and threatened to prevent the funeral from happening. But it all turned out right in the end and it was gratifying to see so many relatives and friends show up to pay their last respects. Who were all these people? Many I hadn't seen in 20 years — some hadn't even been alive for twenty years! I didn't have their latest pictures, but I couldn't go around snapping photographs. At least this is one person for whom I will not have difficulty finding his burial location!

And now as the time goes by I have to put on my the other hat and breathe the life back into him, to do his life justice as only the family genealogist can do, as only the son of a father can do.

Jeremy Frankel

Editor's Note: The officers and directors of the SFBAJGS send their condolences to Jeremy on his loss.

Looking Back at the 2007 IAJGS Conference

IAJGS Board Report on the Salt Lake City Conference

By Anne Feder Lee, IAJGS President

As always, those attending the annual international conference had to make difficult choices among a great many activities: from inspiring and knowledgeable speakers, SIG and BOF luncheons/meetings, watching films, socializing, to doing research at the Family History Library. Here are a few highlights:

There was a great photo exhibit called Lives Remembered: Photographs of a Small Town in Poland 1895-1939 put together by Mike Marvins from numerous pictures his grandfather, Zalman Kaplan, took as the photographer in Szczuczyn from 1895-1939.

Paul Shapiro, of USHMM, gave an extremely moving opening ceremony speech about his years of work that have led to the opening of the ITS archives at Bad Arolsen.

Dan Rottenberg, author of the first guidebook on Jewish genealogy research, *Finding Our Fathers*, spoke at the banquet and wowed us all by announcing that he was relinquishing his copyright

to the part of his book with the alphabetical list of family names with information on each entry. I'm sure it will be up available on the web before too long.

The banquet festivities also included the awarding of the 2007 IAJGS Lifetime Achievement to Mathilde Tagger of Israel for her many years of Sephardic research and the 2007 IAJGS Award for Outstanding Contribution to Jewish Genealogy via the Internet, Print or Electronic Product to Lars Menk for his remarkable book, *Dictionary of German-Jewish Surnames*.

At the IAJGS annual meeting, Alexander Avraham, on behalf of Yad Vashem, presented a certificate to Donald Hirschhorn of the JGS of Palm Beach County, in recognition his activism, dedication and outstanding volunteerism as coordinator for the Shoah Victims Names Recovery Project.

The IAJGS member organizations approved the granting of the 2007 Stern Award of \$2000 to the US Holocaust Memorial Museum to be used for its upcoming project to index materials it receives from the International Tracing Service (ITS). The Board announced that in the future the name will be

Continued on next page

BOOK REVIEW

**Jewish Memorial (Yizkor) Books in the United Kingdom
Destroyed European Jewish Communities
by Cyril Fox and Saul Issroff**

Reviewed by Jeremy Frankel

As most of you are aware, I am a great lover of databases as a way of compiling large amounts of information and teasing out possible new search avenues. However not all databases come as computer spreadsheets. That said, Cyril and Saul have done an admirable job compiling all the known yizkor books in thirty-two UK libraries into a very usable book format.

The book opens with a 13 page introduction which describes yizkor books and other memorial books. There is also a very interesting section which asks the question: if your shtetl didn't have it's own yizkor book, could it be contained within another yizkor book? The bulk of the book, some 154 pages is given over to several appendices as follows:

Appendix One: books with wholes or part text in English. Yizkor books on web sites

Appendix Two: Yizkor books in UK libraries

Appendix Three: locating worldwide sources (our own HCNC is amongst the listings)

Appendix Four: major bibliographic sources of yizkor books

Appendix Five: Glossary

Appendix Six: special interest group mailing list

Appendix Seven: small towns and villages mentioned in larger yizkor books

Appendix Eight: pinkas hakehilot translations in JewishGen.

The book is published by the Jewish Genealogical Society of Great Britain (JGSGB), 2006

ISBN: 0-9537669-5-0

As can be seen, Cyril and Saul have undertaken a very comprehensive study which goes well beyond what the title infers.

I can highly recommend this book and it definitely ought to be on the bookshelf of every serious scholar of the Holocaust, Jewish history and of course genealogy.

Conference, cont. from page 10

changed from Stern Award to Malcolm Stern Grant to clarify that it is for a proposed project.

Jan Meisels Allen gave an excellent report on the activities of the Public Records Access Monitoring Committee. A bylaws amendment was passed adding the following language to IAJGS Objectives: "To promote public access to genealogically relevant records."

No words can express our thanks to all the wonderful volunteers under the able direction of conference co-chairs Michael Brenner and Hal Bookbinder. A sincere thanks to: The Generations Network for sponsoring for sponsoring the Ancestry.com Resource Room; to the Family History Library for providing extended hours for attendees, speakers, and special maps for the resource room; and to Genzyme for a substantial educational grant and for sending Gary Frohlich to share important information on Ashkenazi genetic diseases, particularly Gaucher Disease.

Thanks also to Bass publishers, The Jacob Rader Marcus Center, Congregation Kol Ami of Salt Lake City, JGSs, SIGs, individuals and many vendors.

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The web site is: www.oaklandfhc.org/

The Oakland FHC is one of the largest centers outside of Salt Lake City. It is housed beneath the LDS Visitors' Center (one block south of the Lincoln Ave/San Joaquin Ave exit on Highway 13), and is some 10,000 square feet. Oakland has some up-to-date services which eliminates photocopying images from microfilms (this will please the environmentalists among us!). The library has a microfilm reader/scanner and the displayed image can be saved to either a CD or a flash drive. You can also use a flash drive on one of the dozen or so computers, all of which have internet access. Oakland FHC's hours are Tuesday - Thursday: 10 am - 9 pm; Friday and Saturday: 10 am - 4 pm.

The author would like to acknowledge Margery Bell, the Assistant Director of the Oakland FHC for providing the new database information and for checking the article.

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