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ZichronNote

The Journal of the San Francisco Bay Area
Jewish Genealogical Society

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News of Three Polish Cemeteries

Joan Abramson describes her findings on a recent trip to Czestochowa, Zarki,
and Lodz, Poland. See page 5.

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The interior courtyard at #2 Piramowicza, Lodz, in 1938 and 2010. Top picture shows Joan's Aunt Helena, her father, Roman Freulich, grandmother Nisla Mirla Freulich, and first cousin Rafael Jelen. Lower photo shows the building as it is today.

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Journal of the San Francisco Bay Area
Jewish Genealogical Society

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President's Message

Is Bigger Really Better?

By Jeremy Frankel, SFBAJGS President

Not so long ago, in fact just four months ago, 40 or 50 members of this Society flew or drove (did anyone take the train?) to Los Angeles for this year's International Conference on Jewish Genealogy. Obviously this year's location was a big factor in persuading some 20 percent of our membership to attend.

As advertised, it was going to be the biggest event yet — and so it was, with programs, classes, early morning sessions beginning at 7 in the morning and running through the day on multiple tracks until the wee hours.

The location was the brand new Marriott hotel, just south of downtown Los Angeles; billing itself "LA Live." While most of us were encamped many floors above, the programs, classes etc, were spread out over the hotel and across the street (via an enclosed overhead walkway) at the Conference Center proper. We got our aerobic exercises thrown in for good measure!

Yes, it was huge, and with all the added attractions of sight-seeing tours, movies etc, etc, it really lived up to the "larger than life" extravaganza that perhaps only Los Angeles could put on.

While it was wonderful seeing all the faces of people I hadn't seen in a long while (I hadn't attended a conference for some six years) there was a nagging feeling that it wasn't quite right. To be honest it was more than a nagging feeling.

This event was truly more an extravaganza than an academic conference where family historians and genealogists could and would learn about records, techniques, processes — all the tools one needs to navigate what is becoming a much more challenging and absorbing pastime.

This is not to say such programs and classes were not in evidence, but it seemed to me that they were being lost in a sea of other, more peripheral activities which, while very interesting in and of themselves, lit up a question-mark as to whether a genealogy conference was the right place for such things. It more than once crossed my mind that here in San Francisco the "Israel in the Gardens" event, held every June, would be a far more appropriate venue (and yes, the Society did participate in this a few years ago, too).

Gary Mokotoff, one of the publishers of *Avotaynu*, has "come out" so to speak, writing quite bluntly how

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SOCIETY NEWS

New Members

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In order to continue to receive the SFBAJGS e-zine and *ZichronNote*, please send e-mail updates to newsletter@sfbajgs.org.

International Jewish Genealogy Month

SFBAJGS put up a small display heralding this year's International Jewish Genealogy Month (IJGM), which ran from October 9 to November 7 (the Hebrew month of Cheshvan), at the Oakland Regional Family History Center. Rather than "preaching to the converted" so to speak, it was felt that the "genealogy traffic" at the FHC would alert folks to the fact that October celebrated IJGM as well as the more well known Halloween!

IJGM is a program of the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies (IAJGS). The purpose of IJGM is to make the public aware of the hobby of

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SFBAJGS displayed items related to Jewish genealogy at the Oakland FHC for Jewish Genealogy Month.

Meeting Times and Locations

Unless otherwise indicated, the SFBAJGS meeting schedule is as follows:

- San Francisco:** **Sunday, Doors open 12:30 p.m. Program begins at 1:00 p.m.**
Congregation Beth Israel - Judea , 625 Brotherhood Way.
- Los Altos Hills:** **Monday, Doors open at 7 p.m. Program begins at 7:30 p.m.**
Congregation Beth Am, 26790 Arastradero Road, Room 5/6.
- Oakland:** **Sunday, Doors open 12:30 p.m. Program begins at 1:00 p.m.**
Oakland Family History Center, 4766 Lincoln Avenue.

**Please Note: New Meeting Sites for San Francisco and East Bay
See Back Cover for Calendar of Upcoming Meetings of SFBAJGS**

CALENDAR

Genealogy Events

Local and Regional

Tues., Nov. 16, 6:30 p.m. **San Clara County Historical and Genealogical Society.** “Canadian Family History Research.” Pamela Erickson will speak about one of her areas of expertise: tracing your Canadian ancestors and how to locate Canadian records. Santa Clara Public Library, 2635 Homestead Road. More information at www.scchgs.org/main/meeting.html

State and National

Sun., Nov. 21, 10 a.m. **Sacramento Jewish**

Genealogical Society. Glenda Lloyd presents “Maiden Names.” Albert Einstein Residence Center, 1935 Wright St, Sacramento. For more information visit www.jewishgen.org/jgs-sacramento/html/meetings_2010.html.

Sun., Dec. 19, 10 a.m. **Sacramento Jewish Genealogical Society.** Vivian Kahn presents “Hungarian Research.” Albert Einstein Residence Center, 1935 Wright St, Sacramento. For more information visit www.jewishgen.org/jgs-sacramento/html/meetings_2010.html.

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he felt about Los Angeles (the conference, not the city) in the latest issue of Avotaynu. (Just in case you aren’t aware of Gary’s credentials, he was the first president of the AJGS (before it became the IAJGS); he attended the very first conference in 1981 and each one since. Next year’s conference, to be held in Washington D.C., appears too, to be making all efforts to be just as “all-encompassing.”


And perhaps that is where it has gone wrong — become derailed, so to speak — in an effort to try to bring in more and more people (which they don’t) and adding more and more events (many with their own fee). In these economic times, I think we ought to be looking long and hard at what the International Conference on Jewish Genealogy ought to be.

The fact that this year’s event was the thirtieth may mean it has really grown up and ought to be a more mature event. Trying to be more like every other event doesn’t make it stand out as being different and having something special to offer.

As Rosanne Leeson, our vice-president, has suggested, perhaps the conference ought to be held every other year.

What do you think? Did you attend Los Angeles? Are you going to Washington D.C., and if so why? What will draw you to it? Do write and let me, the Board and indeed the membership know your views.

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GENEALOGY CLINIC

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2010: OCTOBER 3 · NOVEMBER 14 · DECEMBER 5
2011: JANUARY 9 · FEBRUARY 6 · MARCH 6

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News of Three Polish Cemeteries

By Joan Abramson

Joan Abramson is a former journalist who has worked for several newspapers, *Time Magazine* and the Time Life Book Division. Her publications include numerous magazine articles and seven published books, including several books on women's employment issues and several photo-history books. She has served as a government and private sector consultant on telecommunications user needs and economic development in third world countries. Abramson has lectured nationally on women's employment issues and on telecommunication needs in developing countries. She taught at the University of Hawaii for seven years, where she specialized in nonfiction writing, journalism and English literature. Beginning in January, Abramson will be teaching a workshop at the San Francisco Jewish Community Center on collecting, writing and preserving family stories. For information about the classes, contact adult education at the SFJCC or email Abramson at joan@abramson.us.

In late September 2010, my husband and I traveled to Poland. This was not our first trip. We had visited several times to see friends and once, 50 years ago, we had gone with a specific family goal in mind: we tried to locate something — anything really — in Czestochowa that might be reminiscent of my father's birth and the first 15 years of his life.

That was a great trip. We bounced along back roads in a little red Volvo bug we had purchased, screeched to frequent sudden stops behind wooden carts and flocks of geese, and laughed almost every time we stopped for gas or food as villagers gathered round to kick the tires, test the springiness of the fenders and to comment to each other (we supposed) on the shiny newness of our little car. But we were young and inexperienced and hadn't a clue to how we might locate Jewish records. And we found little that might interest family members, let alone contribute anything to our family's slim and short genealogy.

September 2010 was different. Interest in Eastern European Jewish roots has burgeoned, discovery and digitization of records has been prodigious and over the decades my husband and I have learned, first, that difficult and time consuming research is a prerequisite to finding anything of interest; and second, that such research is never finished. So this time we went armed with ample, if not complete, research and modest goals. And this time we were traveling with my cousin, a Polish native who is intensely interested in uncovering his Jewish family past.



Entrance to the Czestochowa Jewish cemetery

Czestochowa

We visited three Jewish cemeteries during our trip. One was in Czestochowa, the birthplace of my father and his five siblings and the city from which he, his father, two brothers and one sister set forth for America in the early years of the twentieth century.

Czestochowa had about 45,000 Jewish residents before World War II. The city attracts a solid stream of tourists, both from Poland and from other countries. Tourism is largely religious — most visitors come to Czestochowa to worship at the shrine of the Black Madonna at the Jasna Gora monastery. The town has at least one bare-bones but extremely clean and extremely well run hotel. And its main street is lined with souvenir shops, fast food cafes and pizza parlors that cater

to the Jasna Gora visitors.

But today Czestochowa has few Jews and only limited evidence of Jewish tourism. We tramped through what was the Jewish ghetto during the Nazi occupation. Little remains. Because my cousin is deeply involved with reconstructing his past and is a determined and inquisitive person, we were able to find the memorial on Ulica Kawia, at the northern border of the former ghetto, where thousands of Jews were shot and buried in huge pits by the Nazis. The memorial is locked now. A shopkeeper across the street keeps the keys and trots across to open the two gates whenever she spots a cruising car that looks as if it might contain likely visitors. The memorial is a well-kept and somber reminder of the past. That

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it is locked is, perhaps, a sobering reminder of the present.

There is a large Jewish cemetery in Czestochowa. It dates from about the beginning of the nineteenth century and contains about 4,500 graves. Various attempts have been made over the years to clean and restore the cemetery, which was partially destroyed by the Nazis. But it remains unlocked and untended. It was vandalized as recently as 2007 by intruders who daubed anti-Semitic slogans and Nazi symbols on about 100 gravestones. Polish guidebooks, my cousin told us, warn that the cemetery is not a safe place to visit. And access is not easy to find. Nevertheless we tried.

Using the GPS system in our rented car, we approached first through a rundown residential street that ended in a rutted mud and gravel turnaround. My cousin asked directions from a grandmother who was tugging her grandson down a muddy side path. She frowned, pointed and told him in a few hasty words to follow a path that began on the far side of the pitted turnaround. She seemed angry, I thought, even hostile. Nevertheless, we parked our car and walked toward the dark, heavily wooded path, past a man in well-worn workman's clothing who sat in a rusted-out van tipping vodka into his mouth from a half empty bottle.

The path seemed endless. As we pushed aside the brambles, my cousin reminded us of what he had read about the cemetery being isolated and perhaps not quite safe. My husband wondered aloud if we should turn back. But we went on and, after half a kilometer or so, ended up in another gravel turnaround, this time with an old but unoccupied car parked in the middle, and with the cemetery gate before us, standing ajar.

The sun was descending. We opted not to enter the cemetery but, instead, to walk back, retrieve our car and try to make our way to the gravel road that led directly to the gate. A few false starts later, we found the right road — through a factory compound and across an unmarked railroad track. We parked the car just on time to see a young couple emerging from the cemetery. The young man posed his giggling girlfriend by the cemetery gate for one last photograph. And they left, hand in hand, grinning, in the car they had parked in the middle of the turnaround. It wasn't a search for ancestors that had inspired their visit, I thought.

The main path leading from the cemetery gate was dark, overgrown and foreboding. We found ourselves walking faster, avoiding dawdling near interesting, toppled headstones. We had our lists, of course, including a cousin who had died in 1937 and five

or six as yet unidentified but likely relatives of my grandfather, all buried here. But it was useless to try to locate grave markers in the overgrown jumble, and as the graveyard darkened we turned back toward the gate. Only then did we notice that a man stood between us and the gate, on the main path. He watched us for a time and then skittered off the path, into the bushes with his bottle. Was he alone? Did he perhaps have friends there? We didn't know. But the atmosphere was not conducive to dawdling, or to picture taking. We made our way quickly past the place where he had left the path, back to the car — the three of us side by side — and left.

What can I say about that unproductive visit? It was depressing and strangely menacing. My husband and I were happy to make our way back to our postage stamp sized room — one folding chair, one towel and one pillow per person — in the spotless tourist hotel dedicated to serving mostly Jasna Gora pilgrims.

Perhaps it was the overly protective language in the Polish guidebook that made us so uneasy. Perhaps it was nothing more than the fact that we had arrived at the cemetery late in the day, with darkness rapidly descending. It is possible that at mid-day, in the sun, the Czestochowa cemetery would be a more comfortable, if haunting, place to visit. But there was a feeling of abandonment about that place — a feeling that nobody cared. It was, in a word, creepy.

Zarki

A second cemetery on our list was in Zarki, a small town about an hour's drive from Czestochowa down a side road off the Czestochowa-Krakow highway. Zarki was my grandmother's birth town. It was also the town where her mother, father and six sisters and brothers had been born, and where both sets of her grandparents and numerous aunts, uncles and cousins had been born and had died. My cousin had unearthed a census of the 384 Jews who lived in Zarki in 1791. There were few surnames in that census, but we had identified several people whose given names matched all four of my great great grandparents (my cousin's great great great great grandparents). Almost everyone in our immediate families had left Zarki for Czestochowa by about 1858, but we were hopeful that somehow we could match the names of the earlier generations that had been born and died in Zarki.

Thirty-five years after that 1791 census the little shtetl had a Jewish population of 702, 27 percent of the total town population. About 1,500 Jews, 54 percent of the population, lived in Zarki by 1857, the year my grandmother was born. By 1864, the Jewish population reached 2,291 — 61 percent of the population. And in 1921 it reached 2,536 —

57 percent of the population. Before World War II, the total population remained about the same — somewhere around 4,000 souls. Over half were Jews.

Most of Zarki's Jews died in an unfenced ghetto set up by the Nazis near the town center, or were shipped off to the death camps. But the atmosphere in this small town was not the atmosphere of Czestochowa. My cousin had arranged a meeting with an official at the municipal office to begin our Zarki visit. And I had discovered something very exciting on the Internet: a list of names of those who were buried in the Zarki Jewish Cemetery. The list contained more than a dozen names of people who were most likely family members.

We were greeted warmly in the neat, modern Zarki municipal office and we spent our first hours in town going through the information the town was collecting on Zarki's now extinct Jewish community. Zarki, it seemed, cared. The municipality had engaged a professor from Krakow's Jagiellonian University, the oldest university in Poland, to help translate the Hebrew headstones in the cemetery and to create a database with all of the information collected in it. And the headstones in the cemetery had all been photographed.

Unfortunately, the list contained none of the names of family members I had found on the Internet in that Zarki burial list. What was the problem? Surely, we thought — disappointed as we were — the list created by the Krakow professor was incomplete. We were wrong. The list turned out to be very thorough and included information from every existing headstone that could be found, even those that had been vandalized by the Nazis and placed, after the war, on the wall surrounding the cemetery.

The problem, we finally discovered, was in the Internet list. The International Jewish Cemetery Project had posted a URL that, it said, would connect the viewer to a "burial list" for the Zarki Jewish cemetery. But the URL connected the viewer, instead, to a list of all Jewish surnames that had been found in Zarki records. The list had been put together by Dan Kazez and CRARG — the Czestochowa Radomsko Area Research Group. I informed Dan about the error after our trip. He contacted the International Jewish Cemetery Project and the reference to a "burial list" has now been removed.

Disappointed as we were to find no trace of our relatives in the Zarki cemetery, we were not disappointed with Zarki. After we left the municipal office, we walked down Ulica Maniuszki to the Zarki synagogue. The old building had been almost leveled by the Nazis and was refurbished during Communist years as the Zarki cultural center. But the communist

authorities had paid no attention to the building's origins. The result bore little resemblance to the original structure. Recently the Zarki town council decided to try again. They removed the communist era trappings and are currently reconstructing the building according to its original design. When the project is finished, the building will remain as the town cultural center. There are no longer any living Jews in Zarki, but a section will be reserved as a small museum of Zarki's Jewish past.

Next we followed the town's Jewish Cultural Trail and turned down Ulica Polna toward the Jewish cemetery. Along the way my cousin struck up a conversation with Stanislaw Nowak, a local woman who turned out to be the current president of the Zarki municipal council. As she led us toward the cemetery she told us that she had been the head of the Zarki elementary schools before her retirement and that she had introduced a series of lectures to the town students, which she gave, on the history of the Jews of Zarki. It struck her, she said, that the children had been growing up without knowing that Jews had once lived in Zarki, had played a major role in the town's economic and cultural life, and had for many years made up a majority of the population.

She also told us that the town had several families that had hidden Jews during the Nazi occupation and that these people had been named by Yad Vashem as Righteous Among the Nations. She herself had visited Israel, she said. After her retirement she had culled through and copied the school records of all of the town's Jewish schoolchildren and then had traveled to Israel to personally carry the records to the archive at Yad Vashem. She hadn't known how important they were, she said, until she got to Israel and talked to the historians at Yad Vashem.

We parted company near the entrance to the cemetery and spent the next hours wandering through and attempting to read the tumbled and standing stones. The Kierkow on Polna Street was opened in the 1820s, when a small, earlier cemetery was completely filled. Nine hundred graves were identified in the cemetery in 1985. In 2004, the year the Jagiellonian University professor was asked to catalogue the graves, only 700 matzevot (headstones) were identifiable.

We no longer had hope of finding any stones we could connect to family members. And of course we saw and recognized the destruction that had been done in the past by time and vandalism — the jumbled and misplaced headstones, the vast areas where nothing could be found or identified. But it was a bright and sunny day and the experience of wandering around that cemetery was an agreeable one. We stopped here

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and there to read an inscription, to decipher a date, to read a name, an age, the name of a parent. The cemetery was unlocked. The wall was low and covered with misplaced and upturned matzevot that served as ever present reminders of past vandalism. But somehow there was no sense of hostility or menace.

An illusion? Perhaps. But we all were left with the feeling that Zarki had its share of caring people. The town is reconstructing the synagogue, is making continuing efforts to complete the identification and mapping of the Jewish cemetery, has produced a brochure to help guide visitors through Jewish sites, and has set up a Jewish Culture Trail with explanatory markers on the old sites. The trail winds past the two cemeteries, the synagogue, the old Jewish streets and the old town market square that was once the hub of Jewish commercial life. Zarki seems to be making an effort to retrieve memories of its bicultural past.

Of course, we knew, Zarki residents are not unaware that most Polish tourism now is Jewish tourism — people looking for their roots and for some sign of the way their ancestors lived. Economic self-interest was surely a motivating factor in what Zarki continues to do to pull together its Jewish past. But it would be wrong to ignore the genuine concern we felt from people who somehow knew that the absence of the Jewish half of Zarki left an enormous hole in the town's persona.

Lodz

The Lodz Jewish Cemetery was on our list as well. Once again, we came equipped with lists of family members who we knew or supposed were buried in this cemetery. This time our list was very long. One way or another many of our family members had made their way to Lodz while it was blossoming into the textile manufacturing center of Europe in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

We arrived in Lodz on a Saturday and the cemetery was, of course, closed. My cousin had set up an appointment with the cemetery manager for Sunday morning, so we spent part of that Sabbath day exploring Lodz, both inside and outside the area that had been the Lodz Ghetto during the Holocaust.

Not many of the buildings from the ghetto remain. We found one building in the ghetto, at 28 Limanowskiego, where members of our family had lived during the Nazi occupation. None of them survived. The building remains a squalid and depressing reminder of the past.

Across the street at 25 Limanowskiego, where other relatives lived, the building has been torn down but

not replaced. The lot remains, like many in the Baluty slum area, a weed-grown, trash-strewn empty lot. And a few blocks away on Zawiszy Czarnego (renamed Inselstrasse by the Nazis), the building where my grandmother and aunt were forced to live inside the ghetto has been replaced, as have the buildings in the area, by drab Soviet style apartment structures.

The Gestapo headquarters building is one of the few ghetto buildings that remain intact — it is now occupied by a pharmacy and a tattoo parlor. Here, and occasionally elsewhere in the former ghetto, one can find a small memorial plaque mounted inconspicuously on a wall. At one street corner, near where a wooden bridge that once connected two fenced-in sections of the ghetto once stood, we found the words "Litzmannstadt Ghetto 1940/1944" stenciled in white paint on the crumbling pavement.

We spent a solemn couple of hours at the ghetto memorial at Radegast, the rail station from which tens of thousands of Jews, including one of my aunts and perhaps a number of other relatives, had been jammed into freight cars and sent to the death camps. The memorial includes a long tunnel where hundreds of pages listing the names of people being transported to the death camps are mounted on the walls — the Germans were meticulous in their record keeping. We searched for the names of my aunt and other relatives who had been sent to their death from Radegast. That proved to be a hopeless task. There were so many names.

My cousin and I had each assembled a list of addresses where family members had lived before the war, outside the ghetto area. The few apartment buildings that remained standing were old, decrepit and ill maintained. Nevertheless, they were occupied. Left to myself, I probably would have been content to do nothing more than photograph the exterior of these now shabby buildings. But my cousin walked straight ahead though the dark, peeling corridors (some marked with anti-Semitic graffiti) that in each building led to a central courtyard and a series of foreboding doors, each leading to a few of the building apartments. And if he found anyone about, he talked to them and asked if they remembered the Jewish families that had once lived in the buildings. Nobody did, and the degree of sympathy expressed by the current tenants was mixed. Nonetheless, we were able to find the former homes of several of our relatives.

My grandmother had moved to Lodz from Czestochowa during the 1920s and had lived for years in an apartment she shared with one of her daughters at Ulica Piramowicza, #2. Another daughter lived nearby and raised her family in Lodz. Amazingly enough, the building on Piramowicza, on

a block-long street across from the colorful Alexander Nevsky Cathedral, is still there. My persistent cousin marched me through the now dark and crumbling passageway that led to the building courtyard. There, much to my surprise, I found that the bones of the now decrepit building had changed very little from the old photos I had from 1928 and 1938 visits my uncle and my father had made to Poland. Plumbing lines and railings had been added here and there. The basement apartments were boarded up. The stucco decorations had faded or fallen away. And the paving stones of the courtyard were far from clean. But after a time, the contours of the courtyard revealed themselves and I was able to identify the exact spot where a relative had photographed my father, his mother, sister and nephew, in 1938.

It was a moving moment for me — not one of those people is alive now. And three of the four — my grandmother, aunt and cousin — were victims of the Nazis. My cousin was transported from the ghetto early on and spent six years as a slave laborer in Kauern, Dachau and Flossenberg before he perished somewhere between Flossenberg and Bergen Belsen just weeks before liberation. My aunt was shipped from the ghetto to Chelmno on her 55th birthday, March 30, 1942.

And my grandmother? Well, for years it was impossible to find out when she had died, and where or even whether she was buried. All we knew was that she had been alive at the time the Nazis occupied Lodz, in September, 1939. Then, just months ago, with some difficulty, I found that she had died in the ghetto on July 7, 1940, six months after being forced from her home on Ulica Piramowicza. The next task was to try to find out if there was a burial site for her.

Neither her time nor place of death was known to my father. Finding out was one of the tasks I hoped to complete on my 2010 trip.

Recently there has been an expanded effort to identify and list the names of people buried in the Lodz Jewish cemetery. This is not a simple project — the cemetery is the largest Jewish cemetery in Europe. And it, like the rest of the Jewish cemeteries in Nazi occupied areas, was vandalized and then neglected for years. The cemetery encompasses more than 42 hectares of land, including a huge area now labeled the Ghetto Field, where Jews from the Lodz ghetto were buried side by side during the Holocaust. There are no mass graves in the cemetery. The closest to mass graves are the half dozen pits dug by the last 800 workers who remained in the ghetto at the end of the Nazi reign. Their German guards ordered them to dig the pits for their own execution. But the Germans fled as the Russians arrived and the 800 Jews survived. The pits have been left open, near the cemetery wall, as a reminder and a memorial.

The several hundred thousand Jews who were incarcerated in the Lodz Ghetto at one time or another were either moved on to death camps or died in the ghetto of starvation, disease or violence. For those who perished within the ghetto, the Germans allowed individual burials, and the Ghetto Field is filled with 45,000 grave sites, crammed in head to toe, elbow to elbow — a closeness that suggests both claustrophobia and comfort. The graves are largely unmarked now. The Nazi rulers of the ghetto allowed no matzevot and the minimal small metal or concrete markers allowed by the Germans have mostly sunk below the ground.



Above: From Radegast station, now part of the Lodz Ghetto Memorial, thousands of Jews were shipped out of the Lodz Ghetto to the death camps. Below: The pits dug by the Lodz Ghetto's last remaining Jews were intended for their own execution.



The several hundred thousand Jews who were incarcerated in the Lodz Ghetto at one time or another were either moved on to death camps or died in the ghetto of starvation, disease or violence. For those who perished within the ghetto, the Germans allowed individual burials, and the Ghetto Field is filled with 45,000 grave sites, crammed in head to toe, elbow to elbow — a closeness that suggests both claustrophobia and comfort. The graves are largely unmarked now. The Nazi rulers of the ghetto allowed no matzevot and the minimal small metal or concrete markers allowed by the Germans have mostly sunk below the ground.

Continued on page 10

Cemeteries, cont. from page 9

But in recent years the Israeli Defense Force has undertaken the task of surveying the seemingly boundless ghetto field and tagging gravesites with numbered markers. And since the Lodz Judenrat and the German authorities kept careful records during the ghetto years, there are fairly good records that can be matched to the numbered plots and there is a chance that the names of family members who are known to have died in the ghetto can be matched fairly closely with specific plots of earth. I was lucky enough to find my grandmother's gravesite in this way.

My cousin had set up an appointment for us with the cemetery manager and on a cold Sunday morning in September we both came to our appointment equipped with long lists of relatives we believed were buried there. The manager warned us

that the exact plot within each section of the huge cemetery was not always known. Even if an exact plot was known, he said, it was not always possible to find it. Grave markers have been vandalized or have disappeared into the earth. Weeds abound — in some sections of the cemetery we found ourselves slogging or stumbling across uneven ground hidden by unbroken thickets of weeds that towered over my head.

The cemetery manager was accompanied by a muscular young employee who marched ahead of us, clad on this cold morning in a summer weight T shirt and gripping a map with plot numbers. He had been trained to read Hebrew letters, and he shouted and motioned to us to follow each time he located one of the sites we were seeking. My cousin found one of his great great grandfathers and one of his great great grandmothers in this way and we found the graves of a couple of cousins who had died before the war.

But the young man's Hebrew was, it turned out, not that good. He located the gravesite of one of my aunts, who had died in 1935, and pointed us to an empty space between two headstones overrun with head-high weeds. He pulled a few weeds away from the right hand headstone and we both took pictures. Later, back in the cemetery office, the manager

double-checked his records and told us my aunt was buried two spaces from the right headstone rather than in that empty space. But because we were virtually frozen in place in the deep weeds, both of our photos showed only the right side headstone and the empty space. Perhaps there had been two empty places between the headstones. Or perhaps, if we had been motivated to push on a little further in the thick weeds, we may have found my aunt's matzeva.



Joan stands near the gravesite of her grandmother Nisla Mirla.

Luckily my cousin lives in Warsaw and has already scheduled another visit to Lodz to revisit the cemetery and double check on the iffy gravesites.

For me the highpoint of that trek through the Lodz Jewish Cemetery was finding my grandmother's gravesite in the Ghetto Field. She had died in the first year of the ghetto's existence and so was buried just one row in front of two pre-war graves with headstones that were

listed in the cemetery records. The stones had eroded, but they were clear enough, and we were able to locate my grandmother's burial site within a foot or two of a small birch tree. The moment was an intensely emotional one for me. I had never met my father's mother but through all the years of wondering and searching for some record of her life and death I felt I had come to know her. And now I would be able to place a modest marker on her unmarked grave.

For all of its shortcomings and difficulties, our visit to the Lodz Jewish Cemetery was a positive one. We had found a small but caring Jewish community in Lodz watching over the cemetery and making efforts to identify grave sites, replace missing monuments and help relatives reconnect with long gone family members. Despite the vast fields of weeds, the tumbled down monuments, the uneven paths; despite the disappointment of missing markers, despite some misidentified headstones and imprecisely identified burial sites, we had the feeling that there were people who cared, who tried, who were determined to protect the cemetery grounds and those who rested there. We came away feeling that more would be possible at some future time, that there were people who wanted to help — who would

Continued on page 14

Now Online

By Marilyn Dornhelm

Juicy Bits of Jewish Genealogy

In this column I will share what's new in online indexes, digitized archival material and tools. The main source for these will be JewishGen and many SIG digests. Comments are welcome. Send them to mdornhelm@yahoo.com.

(Editor's Note: In ZichronNote, URL notations are in boldface and the "http://" notation is omitted to save space, unless needed to make a link in the PDF version of ZichronNote.)

Review for July 31 to October 16, 2010

In the USA

GENERAL

Get Your Ancestor's A-Files (Alien Files)

www.archives.gov/research/genealogy/aliens/a-files-kansas-city.html

Some immigrant A-Files of those born in 1909 and before are available for viewing and copying. To read more on the files and how to request them: www.archives.gov/press/press-releases/2010/nr10-137b.html From Jan Meisels Allen, *JewishGen*, Sept. 3.

Best US State Sites for Online Genealogy Data

<http://familytreemagazine.com/article/2010-best-state-websites>

From Hilary Henkin, *JewishGen*, Oct. 14.

Improvements Made to the stevemorse.org Ellis Island Database Search

1. The Ellis Island database used at the Stephen P. Morse One-Step site has recently been updated with a fresh file, something that has not been done since 2006.

2. The results page of the Ellis Island Database Gold Form now can be sorted by any column on the results page. Simply click on the column header at the top of the page.

From Avotaynu, *Nu! What's Nu?* Aug. 15.

INDIANA

Allen County (Indiana-USA) Public Library Launches New Genealogy Website

www.genealogycenter.org

Includes several free databases and portals including Our Military Heritage. Your local library can do an interlibrary loan if you find something of

interest to you. From Jan Meisels Allen, *JewishGen*, Oct. 13.

MAINE

State Archives Update to Online Marriage and Death Indexes

www.maine.gov/sos/arc/

Added Indices are: Maine Death Database, 1960-2009 and Maine Marriage Database, 1892-1966 and 1977-2009. From Jan Meisels Allen, *JewishGen*, Aug. 10.

MASSACHUSETTS

Boston

Obituary Source - Massachusetts

www.schlossbergchapel.com/schloss_archives.html

Schlossberg and Solomon is an undertaker in Canton, MA, on suburban Boston's South Shore. From Linda Cantor, *JewishGen*, Aug. 20.

MICHIGAN

Two Good Detroit Sources

www.thisisfederation.org/cemetery/default.asp

The Irwin I. Cohn Michigan Jewish Cemetery Index includes only Jewish cemeteries.

<http://seekingmichigan.org/>

Death records are available for 1897-1920.

From Lisa Grayson, *JewishGen*, Oct. 10.

FLORIDA

Check these links for public records.

www.broward.org/records/welcome.htm

www.miami-dadeclerk.com/public-records/pubsearch1.asp

<https://www.myfloridacounty.com/serv/MyFloridaCounty/ORI/Order?thisPage=MyFloridaCounty.ORI.Order.state.Start> (Note: Tinyurl for the above is <http://tinyurl.com/25ou>)

www.pbcountyclerk.com/oris/records_home.html

From Zev Griner, *JewishGen*, Aug. 4.

NEW YORK

Historic Photos and Descriptions of Old NYC

www.forgotten-ny.com/STREET%20SCENES/bordereastchester/borderline1.html

An amazingly comprehensive site! Everything from old NYC: neighborhoods, cemeteries with photos of headstones (ex. old Mt. Zion Cemetery in Queens), a section devoted to the 1911 Great Triangle Shirtwaist

Continued on next page

Now Online, cont. from page 11

factory fire (most of the 140 plus dead were young Jewish women), subways, etc. From Irene Berman, *JewishGen*, Sept. 14.

Locating a NYC Synagogue Burial Society

1. There is a 1939 index of synagogues in all five boroughs, a WPA project. Original forms are on microfilm at the NYC Municipal Archives. www.jgsny.org/landsmanshaft/synagogues.htm#Brooklyn

2. A 1917 book called "Jewish Communal Register," online at Google Books.

From Joy Weaver, *JewishGen*, Sept. 12.

Rensselaer County, NY, Marriage Index 1908-1935

www.rootsweb.com/~nytigs/

Includes the City of Troy and smaller county communities. A printable form for requesting copies of the actual marriage records is obtainable here. From Marian Price, *JewishGen*, Aug. 17.

OHIO

Ohio Research

Ohio death certificates (1908 thru 1953) are now digitized on line. <http://beta.familysearch.org/s/collection/list>
From Adelle Weintraub Gloger, *JewishGen*, Sept. 20.

PENNSYLVANIA

Pittsburgh, PA

The Pittsburgh Jewish Newspaper Project

<http://pjn.library.cmu.edu/>

A searchable index and browseable issues of *The Jewish Criterion* (1895-1962), *The American Jewish Outlook* (1934-1962), and *The Jewish Chronicle* (1962-present). From Lisa Grayson, *JewishGen*, Sept 12.

WISCONSIN

Milwaukee, WS

Jewish Obituary Records

www.jewishmuseummilwaukee.org/history/statistics/obituary/index.php

An index of obituaries published in the *Wisconsin Jewish Chronicle*, 1921-1996. The museum will charge you \$10 per copy. From Lisa Grayson, *JewishGen*, Aug. 3.

EUROPE

GENERAL

18th Century Census of Jews of Poland, Belarus and Lithuania

www.jewishfamilyhistory.org/index.htm

Photocopies of the census sheets, town-by-town of the 1784 census of the Jews in the eastern regions of the Poland-Lithuania commonwealth. Bialystok is not included, but other Jewish communities in what are now Lithuania, Belarus and Poland are included.

From Jim Bennett, *JRI-Poland*, Oct. 16.

AUSTRIA

GenTeam - More Than 240,000 New Records (also available in English)

www.GenTeam.at

1. Obituaries 1901-1918, in the *Neuen Freien Presse*, Vienna

2. Records of the Civil marriages in Vienna 1870-1908

3. Records of Vital Statistics from Lower Austria, Upper Austria and Moravia

4. The Josef-Heider-Indices of Upper Austria

5. Meta-search of databases at GenTeam

GenTeam is an organization of genealogists or historians whose focus is Austria and its neighboring lands. Database use is free; only a simple registration is required. From Traude Triebel, *Austria-Czech SIG*, Oct. 2.

BELGIUM

Antwerp and Other Belgian Alien Registration Records Indices (Felix Archives)

www.felixarchief.be/

Indexes for periods - 1840-1874, 1875-1885, 1886-1900, 1901-1915 and 1916-1930. The actual archive records extend to 1970, but for privacy reasons only the indexes up until 1930 are available. This website is in Flemish. Use a tool like Google Translate, Google's Chrome browser, or the Google Toolbar to automatically translate each page.

Copies of records can only be obtained by someone physically going to the Felix Archives reading room. An alternative is to go to an online forum:

www.geschiedenisvanantwerpen.be/forum/

Here you can post a request for someone to send you a file. Include the file number, the person's name, the microfilm number and its location. From Philip Trauring, *Gesher Galicia*, Sept. 7.

JMDR Archives, Belgium Alien Records 1940-end of WWII

E-mail Ms. Laurence Schram, (laurence.schram@cicb.be) for a free record search. Send as much information as you can, including maiden names for spouses, all birthdates and birthplaces. She will email the records. From Philip Trauring, *Gesher Galicia*, Sept. 7.

ENGLAND - See UK

FRANCE

Strasbourg Records Online (click the British flag for English).

<http://archives.cg67.fr/>

The records of Archive Departementale of the Bas-Rhin in Strasbourg include: parish registers from the XVIth century to 1792; 10-year index and civil registers of birth, marriage and death from 1793 to 1902; family names' choice registers by Jews (1808). From Rosanne Leeson, *FrenchSIG*, Sept. 1.

Paris, France

Original Records 1860-1902 Online, for 6 Months Only

http://canadp-archivesenligne.paris.fr/archives_etat_civil/index.php

Birth, marriage and deaths registers including marriage banns. (French language site). From Francois Paraf, *FrenchSIG*, Sept. 13.

HUNGARY

Egyenloseg [Hungarian] Newspaper, 1892 and 1898 Searchable on the Internet

Newly added to the website of Historical Jewish Press. **www.jpress.org.il/publications/EGY-en.asp** From Rose Feldman, *JewishGen*, Aug. 28.

Also See UKRAINE, Mukacheve

Also See HOLOCAUST- Hungary

LITHUANIA

A Complete Listing of Lithuanian and Belarusian Towns

<http://vildistrictresearchgroup.shutterfly.com>

Select the DATA on the left side of the webpage, and you will find a choice of two Excel files. Only the second one was usable. From Joel Ratner, *JewishGen*, Sept. 5.

ROMANIA

Baia Mare/Nagybanya., - Jewish portraits, Late 1930s -1940s

Over 400 portraits of Jewish people from this city were taken in a local photo studio.

www.jewishportraits.org or www.nagybanya.org

From Vivian Kahn, *H-SIG*, Aug. 16.

POLAND

Warsaw

Jewish Newspaper, Glos Gminy Zydowskiej Now Online

www.jri-poland.org/warsaw/warsmarr.htm

Find links to each issue of this Jewish Polish newspaper, published on a monthly/bi-monthly basis from August 1937 to June 1939. Marriage announcements (1937-1939) from this paper were previously indexed for the JRI-Poland database. From Hadassah Lipsius, *JewishGen*, Aug. 8.

UK

General

Useful sites for tracking someone down in the UK

1. **www.british-jewry.org.uk/**

2. **192.com** A fee-based search includes UK electoral roles, but has some free results. From Philip Trauring, *JewishGen*, Oct. 11.

UKRAINE

Mukacheve, Ukraine

Yad Vashem Online Exhibition about Munkacs, Hungary (Mukacevo,USSR)

An interesting exhibition about the town, both before and after the Holocaust.

www1.yadvashem.org/yv/en/exhibitions/communities/munkacs/index.asp

From Steven Lasky, *H-SIG Digest*, Aug. 16.

WORLD

GENERAL

World Newspapers Digitized Online

www.onlinenewspapers.com/

An enormous number of contemporary newspapers from all over the world. Free. From Martha Lev-Zion, *JewishGen*, Oct. 10.

BRAZIL

Sao Paulo

Passenger Lists of Immigrants 1870 - 1953 (Portuguese)

www.memorialdoimigrante.org.br/portalmi/

There's an "English introduction" link toward the bottom of the web page. Data is from the registries of the "Hospedaria do Imigrante" (Immigrants' Lodge), where newly arrived immigrants could stay for up to eight days. From Yvonne Stern, also Lisa Grayson, *JewishGen*, Sept. 4.

CENTRAL ASIA/RUSSIAN EMPIRE

1910 Color Photos of Central Asia, Georgia, Armenia, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan

Full collection can be seen at **www.loc.gov/pictures/search/?st=grid&co=prok**

From Alex Woodle, *JewishGen*, Sept. 12.

Continued on next page

Now Online, cont. from page 13

ISRAEL

New Materials on Tel-Aviv, Jaffa and Petah Tikva Available to the Public

The names have been transliterated into English.

1. 1915 Census of Tel-Aviv

www.isragen.org.il/siteFiles/1/153/6574.asp

2. British Mandate Census 1922 - Petah Tikva and Tel-Aviv - Jaffa. Covers 1/5 of the Jewish population in Eretz Israel at that time.

www.isragen.org.il/siteFiles/1/153/4979.asp

From Rose Feldman, *JRI-Poland SIG*, Aug. 5.

Name Changes British Mandate Period

An index of name changes during the British Mandate period (1921-1948). www.isragen.org.il/siteFiles/1/153/4971.asp

From Avotaynu, *Nu! What's Nu?* Aug. 15.

MOROCCO

Searchable Newspaper "La Voix des Communautes" 1950-1957 and 1961-1963 in French

www.jpress.org.il/publications/VDC-en.asp

From Rose Feldman, *JewishGen*, Aug. 28.

HOLOCAUST

GENERAL

Not New but IMPORTANT...Reconnecting families using Yad Vashem's POTs

www.shoahconnect.org/begin.php

If there is a Page of Testimony (POT) for a family member at Yad Vashem, join ShoahConnect.org and link yourself to the record. Then when someone else connects to the same record, you are put in touch online. It is incredibly powerful. As more people use this resource, the usefulness will rise exponentially. Privacy is protected. From Philip Trauring, *JRI-Poland*, Oct. 8 and *Gesher Galicia SIG*, Oct. 11.

HUNGARY

5,000 Names Added to Hungarian Holocaust Memorials Database

The Introductory webpage for the database is located at: www.jewishgen.org/databases/Hungary/HolocaustMemorials.htm

The names have been added to these two searchable databases:

www.jewishgen.org/databases/Hungary

www.jewishgen.org/databases/Holocaust

From Larry Kohn, *H-SIG*, Oct. 16.

MISCELLANEOUS

FamilySearch Has 5 Million New Records of Free Indexed Names

<http://beta.familysearch.org/>

Click on "all collections" to see listing of what records are available. From Jan Meisels Allen, *JewishGen*, Sept. 14.

Cemeteries, cont. from page 10

help, just as quickly as time and resources allowed. We were left with a sense of possibility.

End Note

Now I have to confess that I have discussed the three cemeteries we visited in reverse order. I started at the end of the trip, which was a low point, and worked my way back to the high point — the beginning. We began our family search of cemeteries in Lodz, where both my cousin and I had the emotionally intense experience of finding ancestors. For me the experience represented a measure of closure for my family. Until quite recently it would probably have been impossible for anyone in the family to have discovered my grandmother's death record or her grave site. There was satisfaction in that visit.

Next we went to Zarki. And while there were no family members to be found in the Zarki cemetery we came away with a sense that the town was beginning to understand and cope with its past. To a somewhat lesser degree than Lodz there was satisfaction in that visit.

Last was Czestochowa. I mistyped that at first — "lost was Czestochowa." Maybe I should leave it at that.

Display, cont. from page 3

genealogy and the fact that there is a local Jewish Genealogical Society that can help them get started on their research.

The display consisted of items lent (for the exhibit) by Society members Janice Sellers and Robinn Magid, and by John Jex, a former director of the FHC.

Janice took the poster created for this year's IJGM and printed a smaller version as hand-outs. The poster, as well as publicizing the event, advertised the Society's address and Web site.

Next year, we hope to expand the "consciousness-raising" by having displays in maybe half a dozen places around the bay. We are also looking to have an open house at the Family History Center.

Jeremy Frankel and Janice Sellers

SFBAJGS Family Finder Update

The surnames and towns being researched by our newest members are listed below. This database is maintained for the benefit of our membership. If you have a correction or update, please write to SFBAJGS at P.O. Box 318214, San Francisco, CA 94131-8214.

Surname	Town, Country	Member
ALEXANDER	Poland	Lee, Dan
ANTOLEPT	Lithuania	Lee, Shirley
BARMAK	Poland	Lee, Dan
BLASKEY	Russia	Henderson, Jean
BRASH	Lithuania	Lee, Shirley
BRAVERMAN	Poland	Lee, Dan
BUTOWSKY	Kislev, Ukraine	Stone, Robin
COHEN	Russian Empire; Manchester, England	Osofsky, Hilary
DANOWSKY	Jedwabne, Poland; New York, NY; Chicago, IL	Stone, Robin
EDELSON/EDLESON	Manchester, West Derby, Broughton, and London, England; Johannesburg, South Africa	Osofsky, Hilary
EDELSON	Neishtot-Tavrig, Jonava, Kvedarna, and Taurage, Lithuania; Johannesburg, South Africa	Osofsky, Hilary
FRIEDLENDER	Liptovsky and Budapest, Hungary; Philadelphia, PA; Israel	Osofsky, Hilary
HARRISON	Kaunas Gub., Lithuania; Manchester, Liverpool, Chorlton, and London, England	Osofsky, Hilary
HEMMINGS	England	Henderson, Jean
IDELS/IDELIOVICH/IDELOVICH	Neishtot-Tavrig, Jonava, Kvedarna, and Taurage, Lithuania; Johannesburg, South Africa	Osofsky, Hilary
KAPLAN	Lithuania	Lee, Shirley
LAIVAND	Lithuania	Lee, Shirley
LEVIN	Poland	Lee, Shirley
LIULETSCHIK	Poland	Lee, Dan
MATZKIND	Lithuania	Lee, Shirley
MENDELSON	Poland	Lee Shirley
REICHER	Liptovsky and Budapest, Hungary; Philadelphia, PA; Israel	Osofsky, Hilary
SAPOZNICK	Jedwabne, Poland	Stone, Robin
SCHMETTERER	Poland, Russia	Stone, Robin
SOLOF	Poland, Russia	Henderson, Jean
STEIN	Kovno gubernia, Lithuania; Manchester, Liverpool, and London, England	Osofsky, Hilary
STEIN	Liptovsky and Budapest, Hungary; Philadelphia, PA; Israel	Osofsky, Hilary
STEINBERG	Lancashire and London, England; South Africa	Osofsky, Hilary
SZASZ	Austria-Hungary	Stone, Robin
TAYLOR	Kaunas Gub., Lithuania; Manchester, Liverpool, and London, England; San Francisco, CA	Osofsky, Hilary
THOMASPOLSKY/TOMASPOLSKY	Ukraine, Argentina	Stone, Robin
WEISMAN	Lithuania	Lee, Shirley
WOLF	Liptovsky and Budapest, Hungary; Philadelphia, PA; Israel	Osofsky, Hilary

The Journal of the San Francisco Bay Area Jewish Genealogical Society

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November 2010

Calendar of Events

Sun. Nov. 21, San Francisco: *Jewish Genealogy: What Is It, and Where Do We Stand Now?* Experienced researcher Dale Friedman will explore sources and methods in Jewish genealogy, illustrating with personal examples. Longtime researchers as well as beginners will benefit from this presentation.

Sun. Jan. 23, San Francisco: *The Jewish Calendar Demystified.* The Jewish calendar is both a solar and lunar calendar. As such, the rules governing the calendar can be a bit daunting. Stephen Morse, developer of the One-Step online tools, presents the calendar in an easy-to-understand — and sometimes tongue-in-cheek — fashion.

Sun. Feb. 13, Oakland: *The Near Future of Family Search...and Other Goodies.* Get the inside scoop on current and future changes to FamilySearch.org from Margery Bell, assistant director of the Oakland Regional Family History Center.

Mon. Feb. 28, Los Altos Hills: *Yad Vashem Names Recovery Project.* Jessica Minturn will discuss the Names Recovery Project, in which Jewish Family and Children's Services partners with the Yad Vashem Holocaust Museum in Israel. This vital effort to recover the names of all 6 million Jews who died in the Shoah is growing ever more urgent as time passes. Come and learn how you can help.

Also see pages 3 and 4. For detailed program information visit sfbajgs.org
