

*That you might recount it to a future generation*

למען תספרו לדור אחרון

Psalm 48:14

# DOROT דורות

תהילים מ"ח:יד

*The Journal of the Jewish Genealogical Society*

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## Upcoming Programs

Sunday meetings begin at 2:00 PM and, unless otherwise noted, are held at The Center for Jewish History, 15 West 16<sup>th</sup> Street, New York, NY (between 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Avenues). *Note the new location.* A *schmooze* session starts at 1:30 PM to swap genealogical problems, solutions and anecdotes. *Postscript* sessions are short "how-to" presentations on a specific topic offered after the main program.

Reminder: non-members will be charged \$3 for admission. Please bring your membership card.

### **Navigating the Revolving Doors of the Former Soviet Union — September 17, 2000**

Award winning author and genealogist Miriam Weiner will talk about newly discovered documents in the archives of several countries, provide an update on archives accessibility, and give tips on preparing for on-site research.

Future meetings will be on a weekday evening in October at a resource site, and on November 19 and December 17 at the Center. Watch for the postcard mailings, and look for updated program information on the JGS web site: [www.jgsny.org](http://www.jgsny.org)

### **OTHER ACTIVITIES**

### **FGS/UGA Annual Conference — September 6-9, 2000, Salt Lake City, Utah**

The Federation of Genealogical Societies and the Utah Genealogical Association have

titled their conference, to be held at the Salt Palace Convention Center, "A World of Records." There will be over 130 presentations by more than 60 speakers, lectures geared to all levels of expertise, over 150 exhibitors, and special workshops and lectures for professional genealogists and society managers on opening day. For more information, contact FGS at 888-FGS-1500; email [fgs-office@fgs.org](mailto:fgs-office@fgs.org); or visit either organization's web site: [www.fgs.org](http://www.fgs.org) or [www.infouga.org](http://www.infouga.org).

## JGS News

### **Rabbi Malcolm H. Stern, z"l Elected to National Genealogy Hall of Fame**

Rabbi Stern (1915-1994) became the fifteenth distinguished genealogist to receive this singular honor. His election was announced at the annual National Genealogical Society's Conference in Providence, Rhode Island on June 2. Rabbi Stern, a founder and past president of the Jewish Genealogical Society, was nominated for the honor by the JGS, the American Society of Genealogists, and 24 other Jewish genealogical societies.

The NGS announcement noted that Rabbi Stern "exercised an extraordinary influence in practically every area of modern genealogy." In addition to his active work in the field of Jewish genealogy, he was elected to successive positions of fellow, treasurer, secretary, vice-

president and president of the American Society of Genealogists; was a fellow of both the NGS and the New York Genealogical and Biographical Society, and vice-president for external affairs of the Federation of Genealogical Societies. For ten years he was genealogical representative to the U.S. National Archives Advisory Council, where he founded the National Archives Records Administration Gift Fund (later named in his memory), and was instrumental in helping the National Archives

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## DOROT

### The Journal of the Jewish Genealogical Society

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obtain independence from the General Services Administration. He also founded, and served as first chairman of, the Genealogical Coordinating Committee, a nationally recognized and influential genealogical advisory group made up of representatives of the major genealogical societies.

Rabbi Stern, after obtaining his rabbinic ordination and M.H.L. from Hebrew Union College, served in the U.S. Army Air Corps as captain and chaplain during World War II. He had pulpits in Philadelphia and Norfolk for 17 years, and then for 16 years served as placement director for the Central Conference of American Rabbis. He was also a fieldwork supervisor and Adjunct Professor of American Jewish History at Hebrew Union College, and author of the landmark tome *First American Jewish Families*.

## **Brooklyn Naturalization Index Tops 120,000! Volunteers Welcome!**

The JGS project to computerize the index to the Kings County Clerk's Office is moving ahead

at a rapid pace. Over 123,000 records can now be

found on the JGS web site ([www.jgsny.org](http://www.jgsny.org)). Over 62% of the Declarations and 23% of the Petitions filed in the Kings County Supreme Court from 1907-1924 are included. Five of the nine master indexes have been assigned to volunteers, and we are currently distributing work on the sixth volume. Each volunteer is assigned 10 pages (up to 66 names per page) and must have an IBM compatible computer and either Microsoft Access, Excel, Lotus or any dbf program. Volunteers are also needed to proof the completed work against the original records at the County Clerk's Office. To join this project, contact Estelle Guzik at [jgsny@aol.com](mailto:jgsny@aol.com).

Much thanks for their contributions to this project go to: Wendy Almeleh, Paul Baranik, Bruce (Baruch) Blum, Robert (Bob) Boeckle, Rose Boxer, Rita Braunstein, Sharon Breary, Adam Bronstein, Judy Caputo, Ruth Becker, Syd Chazanow, Ruth Cipko, Claire Cohen, Corinne Coleman, Alfred Cortese, June DeLalio, Linda Desmond, Tom Dikeman, Stuart Driller, Andrea Ewerling, Don Eckerle, Bill Farran, Carole Glick Feinberg, Michael Fener, Jacqueline Fierstein, Rachel Fisher, Barbara Florio, Jane Foss, Barbara Frank, Jan Freedman, Bobby Furst, Marge Gaiso, Ava

## Past Programs

### **YIVO Institute for Jewish Research Archives — February 20, 2000**

Fruma Mohrer, Associate Archivist at YIVO, gave an overview of the holdings of the archives which may be relevant to genealogists. The YIVO Archives is one of the largest repositories in the world of original documents on Jewish life, especially of life in Eastern Europe. It holds hundreds of thousands of original photos, letters, manuscripts and posters, which originated in Europe. Founded in Vilna in 1925, the YIVO Institute began immediately to collect books, documents and photographs. During World War II, the Institute was closed by the Germans and its collections were ransacked. After the War, the American army discovered some of the original YIVO documents in Germany and sent them to New York where the new YIVO headquarters had been established in 1941.

Today the Archives holds about 22,000,000 documents arranged into about 1500 separate collections. The Archives concentrates on four

Gorkin, Estelle M. Guzik, Katherine Harris, Steve Harris, Mark Heckman, Eli Hecht, Sheila Heitner, Lawrence Hofrichter, Joanne Holmes, Eden Joanchim, Allan Jordan, Santos Justiniano, Laura Katz, Walter Kehoe, Phyllis Kramer, Ted Kramer, Maria Krane, Bob Kraus, Ken Kravitz, Sol Krongelb, Charlene Lampert, Ethel Larsen, Holly Leech, Sara Lief, Sylvia Liff, Jeffrey Levine, Pamela Levitt, Stephanie Lewis, Elizabeth (Liz) Lovaglio, Susan Mann, John Martino, Steve Millman, Olga Montecorboli, Barbara Moskowitz, Barbara Kaufman Murphy, Mark Nearenberg, Don Neuhaas, Robin Newman, Madeleine Okladek, Batya Olsen, Al Opengart, Stephen Pilchik, Carolyn Putterman, Ann Rabinowitz, Carol Raspler, Renee Resky, David Rheingold, Tom Risinger, Aaron Rosenberg, Marv Rosenberg, Edward Rosenbaum, Elias Savada, Ron Schechter, Eric Schwartzman, Doug Seidman, Rebecca Simmons, Michael Slotnick, Bruce Soskind, John Stehn, Kathy Stice, Bob Tallman, Judy Tarail, Kathy Then, Edith Tuber, Pat Wallace, Bob Weingarten, Lori Wenig, Lucille Wright, Mary Zatorski, Bruce Zatz, and Lori Zedeck and Steven Zedeck.

main fields: Yiddish language, literature and culture including Yiddish theatre; European history with emphasis on Eastern European history; Jewish life in the United States with emphasis on immigration; and the Holocaust and its aftermath. Detailed listings of the Archive holdings can be found in the *Guide to the YIVO Archives*, published in 1998 by M.E. Sharpe.

The archival collections consist of original unpublished documents such as letters, manuscripts, handwritten lists of names, posters, art works and photographs. While the archives do not have many 'real' genealogical records, people have found all kinds of useful information about their family background or added crucial pieces to the puzzle of their family tree in the archival collections of YIVO.

Before attempting to use the archival collections, the researcher should consider if a member of their family were famous in the Yiddish community, for example as a writer or as a communal or political activist. If so, their papers may have been formally deposited at YIVO. For researchers without famous family members, the most important piece of

information one would need in order to learn whether the YIVO Archives has any documents or pictures of interest is the names of the towns or cities where one's European ancestors lived and the correct spelling of the names of those towns or cities. More than one town may have had the same name,. The Public Services Librarian at YIVO, Batya Kaplan, can point researchers to the right geographical gazetteers and maps for this purpose. Ms. Kaplan can be reached by e-mail at [bkaplan@yivo.cjh.org](mailto:bkaplan@yivo.cjh.org).

The records in the Archives most frequently used by genealogists are in the landsmanshaftn collection. These mutual aid societies, established by immigrants from the same town or city, mushroomed at the beginning of the century and again, after the Holocaust. The YIVO archives contain documents from close to 1,000 landsmanshaftn. A guide to the Landsmanshaftn Archive, published in 1986, lists collections for those towns held by the Archives at that time. Since then, records of about another 50 societies were collected; these are described in the *Guide to the YIVO Archives*. There are also about 100 new landsmanshaftn collections received in the last two years which are still uncatalogued.

The Archives also contains some communal documents from Germany and France, primarily in three collections: R 31, Germany, Vilna archives; R 116, Germany; and RG 128, Collection of Rabbinical and Historical Manuscripts. The documents in these collections are very rare. They are in poor condition but they contain very precious communal and synagogue registers, including some from the rabbinical courts of Frankfurt am Main from the 16th through the 18th centuries; the rabbinical court of Metz, France for the 18th century; and some communities in Germany. There are at least 60 groups of family papers deposited in the two collections from Germany. A high level of language proficiency is required to read these types of documents, many of which relate to scholarly and legal topics. These collections have finding aids in the form of a catalogue listing each folder by number with a description of the documents in that folder, but are not indexed. There are also communal records from three communities which were dissolved around the time of World War I: Krotoszyn and Ostrow, in the Posnan area, and the Jewish community of Briesen known in

A landsmanshaftn collection might contain minutes of meetings, membership lists, constitutions, cemetery maps, and photos of the town back in Europe. Records of family societies have also been included among the landsmanshaft records because of the similarity between the two types of materials.

The second most important type of genealogical source in the Archives is Jewish communal registers created in Europe, which often contain vital records recorded by the Jewish community council (the *Kehillah*). The Archives has relatively few of these types of materials, which are extremely valuable and rare. YIVO also has records of about 110 Lithuanian Jewish communities which belonged to independent Lithuania between the two world wars. Most of these records date from the period 1918 through 1926, but in some cases duplicate or delayed birth registrations from earlier years can be found in these files. There is a 50 year old finding aid to this collection, typewritten in Yiddish. A new finding aid to this collection has been funded by the Jewish Genealogical Society and will be computerized in English.

Polish as Wabrzezno. These communities formerly belonged to Germany.

The records of the Jewish community of Salonika, Greece, are in the YIVO Archives. This collection contains registers from the 1930s, with a page for each person often accompanied by a photograph. The community of Salonika was almost completely exterminated in Auschwitz.

In addition to official community records, the Archives also contains records of some other organizations, notably the records of the Vaad Hayesivot, (Council of Yeshivot), a Vilna based organization that served as a clearinghouse for all fund raising activities for the yeshivas in over 400 communities in Eastern Poland. Delegates from each community sent handwritten or typed lists of contributors to the central office in Vilna. These lists contain names of thousands of residents of Eastern Poland, most of whom did not survive the second World War. This collection covers the period 1924 through 1939.

The Archives contain two collections titled Collection of Genealogy and Family History. The first, RG 126, contains documents such as birth, marriage and death certificates, military

service passes, education diplomas, permission to engage in business, passports, family correspondence, memoirs, diaries, family trees, etc. This collection has about 370 family names indexed. The second, Genealogy and Family History in the Vilna Archives, is an older (pre World War II) European collection that requires more language skills to use, as it contains materials handwritten in Hebrew and German.

The Archives contain two more types of collections which are useful for family research. The first, "People of a Thousand Towns," contains about 15,000 photographs relating to Poland, Russia, Czechoslovakia and Rumania, reproduced on video disc and catalogued on a computer database. It is accessible by country, town and city. Photocopies or prints of the original photographs can be ordered. The videodisc is located in the office of the Photo Archivist, not in the reading room; to access it, send a FAX to 212-292-1892. The Archives also has other photographs not included on the videodisc, of Jewish life in other countries, including the United States. Included in these collections are the photo archives of ORT, the Jewish Distribution Committee, HIAS and OSE, all Jewish organizations which carried out relief work and helped Jews throughout the world. The photographs of the Holocaust period

YIVO is open Monday through Thursday, from 9:30 AM to 5:30 PM, and is located at The Center for Jewish History, 22 w. 17<sup>th</sup> Street, New York, N.Y. 10011. Personal identification including photo i.d. is necessary to gain entrance to the reading room. Persons wishing to use the Archives should call in advance to make an appointment, as the items the researcher wants to consult may be in use by another researcher, or in a collection temporarily closed for processing.

*Lillian Faffer*

### **Ancestors, Relatives, Genes and Jews — March 19, 2000**

Dr. Robert D. Burk, a professor at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine of Yeshiva University and a Board Certified Medical Geneticist, presented a lecture that was a follow-up to a lecture he presented in May of 1998. He also updated the audience with preliminary results from the cheek swabs that were taken during the 1999 Summer Seminar. His objective in this lecture was to explain what geneticists do, what

include images of the Displaced Persons camps in Italy, Austria and Germany. These photographs are arranged alphabetically by the name of the camp within each country.

The final collection is one of the best known collections on the American Jewish immigration experience, the records of the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, known as HIAS. Two subgroups from this collection are noteworthy. The first, the records of the Ellis Island Bureau, covers the years 1905 through 1923, and consists of hardship cases. The files in this group are more than 75 years old and are open to interested genealogists. The second subgroup in the HIAS archive is a group of microfilmed HIAS arrival records covering the ports of New York and Philadelphia and contained on 122 microfilm reels arranged chronologically and alphabetically according to the HIAS soundex system. For access to the HIAS materials, write to the HIAS project archivist, Gunnar Berg, at YIVO, or call him at 212-246-6080, extension 6124.

YIVO also holds original documents covering the Holocaust period including those of the Warsaw, Lodz and Vilna ghettos and Jews interred in France. These documents contain names of many individuals.

oncologists do, and what they can do together to look for causes of cancer. He is particularly interested in prostate cancer.

He began by giving a short course in basic genetics. He described how traits are passed from parent to child; how some traits are dominant and others are recessive, and the consequences of those differences. He explained that many traits are sex linked. Such traits are most common among males. Hemophilia, one such sex-linked disease, is mentioned in the Talmud. The "Y" chromosome, which exists only in males, has been studied to validate that Cohanim are all descended from a single individual, Aaron. It was found that most Cohanim shared the same region on their DNA. This was found to be true for both Sephardim and Ashkenazim. More recently a tribe in South Africa, the Lemba, who had an oral tradition that they were Jews, were found to have the same DNA among those who claim to be descended from priests.

Dr. Burk explained why Jews are such an ideal subject for genetic research. He cited three

reasons: The “Founder Effect”, a result of the historical intermarriage within the Jewish community; the willingness of Jews to participate in research; and the willing use, by Jews, of healthcare.

The Founder Effect results in mutations that occur in an individual being passed on, and multiplying in subsequent generations. The descendants of the original “founder” reproduce with one another, thus the original mutation is more concentrated in the founder’s ethnic group.

Dr. Burk described the historical migration of Jews. He noted that, until recently, Jews almost always married Jews, in spite of (or because of) their concentrations in specific areas. Ashkenazi Jews are the best group for demonstrating the Founder Effect. They are common carriers of certain genetic diseases, most of which are the result of a mutation in a single ancestor. Other examples of Founder populations cited by Dr. Burk are Finland, Iceland, French Canada, and the Amish and Mennonites.

Certain cancers are believed to be inherited. Six percent of colon cancer patients share a

At the April 16 meeting, esteemed genealogist and co-publisher of *Avotaynu* Gary Mokotoff presented a lecture on town names in Central and Eastern Europe, to help beginning genealogists learn how to find their ancestral towns. As many genealogists know, Central and Eastern Europe experienced political transformation throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Borders changed, countries came into and went out of existence, peoples made war and peace. During all these transformations, town names changed, so the same town might go by several different names. However, it is possible to trace the name changes, and to associate a town name provided by an ancestor with one on a map, even if they are not exactly the same.

The name of a town usually changed according to a logical principle. When one political power took over a town, the power would transliterate the town name into its own language. Thus, for example, a Polish town name might have been transliterated into Russian, and one’s ancestor might have used the Russian version of that town name on his naturalization application. On a contemporary map, however, the name might be transliterated back into Polish. Familiarity with these

common ancestor with the colon cancer mutation. Most cancers with a genetic link are very complex and result from many genes. A genetic link may only predispose an individual to colon cancer. Fifty years ago stomach cancer was more prevalent. Now colon cancer appears to be caused by the same gene; changes in diet may in part be responsible for this shift.

The cheek swabs taken at the seminar were part of the Cancer Longevity, Ancestry, Lifestyle (CLAL) study, a prostate cancer research project. The study is trying to get a handle on complexity. Existing studies did not record religion; therefore there are no such statistics for prostate cancer. The questionnaires returned by genealogists are particularly useful because they usually know their family history. The researchers look at the Jewish people as one big family. They feel they are on the verge of finding a prostate cancer gene.

*Michael L. Levine*

### **The Changing Face of Central and Eastern Europe — April 16th, 2000**

alphabets can sometimes help identify when a town name has remained the same, but merely been transliterated into a different language. In other cases, meaning in the new language (“lovely place” in Russian). Nationalism also motivated name changes. Towns named after nationalist heroes might get their names changed when an imperial power took over. Russia would change the name of a town named after a Polish nobleman, for example, so that it was named after a Russian army hero. When Poland became independent, it would change the name back. Internal politics could also cause town names to be changed; the classic example is St. Petersburg, which was changed to Leningrad during the Communist period of the U.S.S.R, and has now been changed back to St. Petersburg in the new Russia.

The situation can get even more complex when three languages come into play, in combination with one or more of the factors mentioned above. Towns on the East Prussian/Lithuanian/ Polish/ Russian border provide numerous examples. Neustadt Scherwindt, Wladyslawow and Kurdikos Naumiestis are all the same town! *Where Once We Walked*, co-authored by Gary Mokotoff, cross references these types of divergent names under its

listings, and also contains a soundex index index that allows one to look up a town based on the sound of the town name, rather than its spelling.

Mr. Mokotoff recommended *Where Once We Walked* (WOWW) as the best guide to locating an ancestral town. There are also name change gazetteers for Central and Eastern Europe, which should be available at any good research library. Nineteenth century European maps and atlases will often list different versions of town names, as did the Fifth Edition of the National Geographic Atlas. Also, the WOWW Companion organizes towns by latitude and longitude, so one can identify towns that are near each other. Finally, Mr. Mokotoff dispelled the notion that there are Yiddish town names, town names that only Jews used. Rather, he said, Jews just pronounced the town name with a Yiddish inflection, and then transliterated it differently as a result. Using the soundex index of WOWW should bypass that complication.

During the *postscript* session, Mr. Mokotoff previewed the 20th Annual Conference on Jewish Genealogy, held from July 9th to July 14th in Salt Lake City, Utah.

*Rachel Eskin Fisher*

•Births: Manhattan 1853-1909; Bronx 1898-1909; Brooklyn 1866-1909; Queens 1898-1909, Staten Island 1898-1909.

•Marriages: Manhattan 1853-1937; Bronx 1898-1937; Brooklyn 1866-1937; Queens 1898-1931, Staten Island 1898-1937.

•Deaths: Manhattan 1812-1948; Bronx 1898-1948; Brooklyn 1857-1948; Queens 1898-1948, Staten Island 1898-1948.

Some lesser-known resources at the Municipal Archives are historical maps that show the block and lot numbers for buildings during different periods. Armed with this information, one can find a picture of the building in a collection of photographs of every building in the City of New York in 1939/1940.

The records of the Manhattan County Clerk's office, City Register's Office, and Surrogates' Court are also housed at 31 Chambers Street. The County Clerk's office, located on the 7<sup>th</sup> floor, holds business records, name changes, and naturalizations. These records cover Manhattan County only. The naturalization records are those filed in the State Supreme Court for Manhattan from 1907 to 1924, and are

## **Genealogical Resources at 31 Chambers Street — May 21, 2000**

At this entertaining and informative meeting, professional genealogists Leslie Corn and Jordan Auslander were joined by Brian Andersson, Assistant Commissioner for the New York City Department of Records and Services. The three provided a slide-show tour of the Municipal Archives and other facilities at 31 Chambers Street, and then described some of the wealth of records that can be found there. This summary touches on the basic points of the discussion, which was followed by a lively question and answer session. Those who seek more detailed information are encouraged to consult last summer's conference syllabus, *Genealogical Resources in the New York Metropolitan Area*, and the Winter 1996 - Spring 1997 issue of *Dorot*.

The building at 31 Chambers Street houses a wealth of resources for genealogists. Some of these resources are indexes, some are the actual documents, and some are secondary materials (such as maps) that provide useful information for the genealogical search. The most important facility, located on the ground floor, is the Municipal Archives. Vital records for New York City available here include: located in the original bound volumes on open shelves. An alphabetical card index is located in the same room. Copies of individual naturalizations can be made by requesting the microfilm version and using a microfilm copier in the same room.

The Surrogates' Courts holdings on the fourth floor include indexes to Probate files, Administration files, and Guardianships, as well as the actual estate records and wills. More recent records are indexed in the computer, while older records are indexed in bound volumes and other finding aids. Some older records may be on open shelves, but most estate files must be requested and there may be a wait of several days or a week to retrieve older files that are not kept on the premises. Ms. Korn advised genealogists to always request a copy of a Probate or Administration file, because one never knows what valuable information it might contain.

The City Register's Office holds property conveyances, including deeds and mortgages. To find deeds and mortgages, one must know the block and lot number of the property. If an

ancestor or relative owned property, following the deed chain may reveal information on where they previously lived or next moved to, and even on dates of death and heirs when a property is passed on or disposed of as a result of the death of the owner.

In addition to the wealth of material housed at 31 Chambers Street, the building itself is worth a visit. Beautiful architectural details and an imposing marble entrance lead to halls filled with records. Thanks to Jordan, Leslie, and Brian for sharing their photographs and extensive knowledge of 31 Chambers Street with the JGS.

*Rachel Eskin Fisher*

### **June 11, 2000 — Holocaust Research: Documenting Victims and Locating Survivors**

Jeffrey Cymbler, longtime JGS member and expert genealogist, presented a plethora of information about advanced Holocaust research at this first JGS meeting at the Center for Jewish History. Mr. Cymbler shared documents and information he gathered in the search for evidence of his father's Holocaust experience.

Mr. Cymbler first cautioned that much of the information in his lecture would not be relevant for tracing relatives from the eastern part of Poland, which was first controlled by Russia under

There are a number of very useful sources for Auschwitz. A three volume publication, *Auschwitz Death Books* (edited by Jerzy Debski et. al., Birkenau: State Museum of Auschwitz-Birkenau) lists names of those murdered in Auschwitz, based on documents from the Soviet Union that became available after its breakup. *Auschwitz Chronicle, 1939-1945* (by Danuta Czech, New York: Henry Holt and Co.), lists what happened in the camp daily, based on documents found after the war.

For evidence of the activities of American relatives trying to help their relations in Europe and elsewhere, and of attempts by Jews in Europe to emigrate with the help of Jewish organizations, consult the archives of various organizations. The World Jewish Congress records are housed at the American Jewish Archives in Cincinnati. These include letters and affidavits of support from American Jews. These records are not indexed by name.

Though the American Joint Distribution Committee Archives at 711 Third Avenue is open, a JGS member attending the meeting

the pact between Hitler and Stalin. When the Germans did conquer this area, they did not usually send Jews to concentration camps. Rather, the Einsatzgruppen followed the German army and murdered Jews in their towns. Thus, there is little official documentation of these victims, as opposed to those who were sent to concentration camps. The Pages of Testimony at Yad Vashem are the best place to begin that research.

It is very helpful, when tracing someone who was in a concentration camp, to know the number the person was assigned. On many documents created by the Nazis, people were referred to by number only. At most concentration camps, a form was created for each prisoner. Mr. Cymbler believes that when a prisoner was sent elsewhere, the form was sent with him or her. The U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum has microfilms of thousands of these forms, in roughly chronological order (not alphabetical), by camp. The New York JGS also donated chronological registration lists for some camps to the National Archives Varick Street location. Serge Klarsfeld's book, *Memorial to the Jews Deported from France*, contains typed versions of transport lists. The originals are in handwriting, so there are likely to be errors in the typed versions.

noted that there did not appear to be any organized method of locating records. The organization's catalog is at their archives in Givat Ram, Jerusalem. HIAS, the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, does have records, such as arrival cards. Search forms can be requested at (212) 613-1409 or [location@hias.org](mailto:location@hias.org).

There are several sources for tracing survivors. Records of Jews who registered with a Polish Jewish organization after the war in Poland can be found at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, and they are in alphabetical order. YIVO holds records for some Displaced Person camps. There are multiple lists of survivors, such as the Survivors Registry at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Mr. Cymbler illustrated his lecture with overhead projections of the documents and letters he had found. Many concerned his father, who survived. Some concerned other relatives or strangers with compelling stories. The documents and letters demonstrated the power of research and served as a memorial to the people genealogists seek in Holocaust research.

## Notes From All Over

### **New NARA Film Series Available**

Researchers who have not been able to locate their ancestor's arrivals may be interested in the unusual possibilities represented by the new microfilm publications announced recently by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA):

- M1320, passenger and crew lists of vessels (1929-1959) and airplanes (1946-1959) arriving at Bridgeport, Groton, Hartford, New Haven and New London, Connecticut (13 rolls).

- M2042, alphabetical manifest cards of alien arrivals at Calais, Maine, c. 1906-1952 (5 rolls).

- M2064, alphabetical manifest cards of alien and citizen arrivals at Fort Fairfield, Maine, c.1909-1953 (1 roll).

- M2071, alphabetical manifest cards of alien arrivals at Vanceboro, Maine, c. 1906-1952 (13 rolls).

### **New Ship Indexes On-Line**

The Hamburg Emigration Lists project, sponsored by the city of Hamburg, Germany, has now inaugurated a searchable on-line database. The first years 1890 - 1893 are searchable by surname, and both the index entries and the corresponding detailed information for each entry are currently available without charge. The data can be accessed from the JGS web site, or directly at [www.hamburg.de/LinkToYourRoots/english/welcome.htm](http://www.hamburg.de/LinkToYourRoots/english/welcome.htm).

Another database for ship arrivals in 1890 was reported in the previous issue of *Dorot*. Howard Relles' index to immigrants from Austria, Poland and Galicia, can now be found among the JewishGen databases ([www.jewishgen.org](http://www.jewishgen.org)).

See the article starting on the next page for a more complete evaluation of these databases.

### **New Jersey State Archives Moves**

The New Jersey State Archives moved to new, expanded and improved facilities in April. They are now located at 225 West State Street in Trenton. The archives can be contacted at 609-292-6260 or visit their web site at [www.state.nj.us/state/darm/darm.html](http://www.state.nj.us/state/darm/darm.html).



# The Hamburg On-Line Index vs. *Migration From the Russian Empire*

Alex E. Friedlander

A project to create a database from the Hamburg Emigration Lists, sponsored by the city of Hamburg, Germany, has finally begun to emerge as a useful utility that can be searched on-line. These are essentially the same lists that had been microfilmed some time ago by the Family History Library and are familiar to researchers who have used these films. However, the indexes for these lists on the microfilms are awkward to use, as they are only alphabetic by each ship. The goal of the on-line project is to create a database with a single, consolidated index as well as the detailed information for each passenger. The plan is to first index the period from 1890 to 1914, and then work both forwards to 1934 and backwards to 1850.

The first three years, 1890 - 1893, are now searchable by surname, and both the index entries and the corresponding detailed information for each entry are currently available without charge. As the database grows, there will evidently be some type of fee structure created to obtain the detailed specifications for each entry. There is no soundex capability, and both the web site address and the actual surname entries are upper/lower case sensitive; entering "rosenberg" will produce no results, whereas entering "Rosenberg" will be successful. The database can be accessed via a link from the JGS web site, or directly at [www.hamburg.de/LinkToYourRoots/english/welcome.htm](http://www.hamburg.de/LinkToYourRoots/english/welcome.htm).

Another database being created for ship arrivals in 1890 was reported in the previous issue of *Dorot*. Howard Relles' index to immigrants from Austria, Poland and Galicia, is now accessible from the database menu at the JewishGen site ([www.jewishgen.org](http://www.jewishgen.org)). Of the 44,000 names, over 26,000 indicated Austrian citizenship and another 17,000 plus stated Polish citizenship.

Another key difference between the Hamburg lists and the *Migration...* series indexes is that the latter is limited to ships arriving at United States ports, for which it shows the arrival

Relles reports that a random sample of immigrants from Poland in his index showed only 45% included in the published *Migration from the Russian Empire* index (112 out of 250). This finding suggested that a comparison of the three sources (the *Migration...* series, Relles' database and the Hamburg site) might provide interesting findings. An analysis was undertaken using a relatively common Jewish surname, Rosenthal, for the period of 18 months that overlaps both the Hamburg on-line database and the published series (which presently only goes up to June, 1891).

One immediate advantage of the Hamburg lists database that quickly became apparent is that unlike the *Migration* indexes, which are being published in volumes of increasingly limited time span, requiring searching the index of each volume (six thus far), the on-line database has one alphabetic (by given name) index for each surname. Another important difference is that the published indexes include only persons coming from Russia, Poland, Lithuania and other countries constituting the Russian Empire of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Hamburg lists include all persons carrying a given surname sailing from Hamburg, regardless of their stated nationality. Thus during the 18 month period, the two relevant volumes of the *Migration from the Russian Empire* series index a total of 49 Rosenthals arriving on 25 boats. The Hamburg lists index a total of 152 Rosenthals, including 104 during the 18 months ending in June, 1891, or twice as many. While over half of the 152 come from Russia, there are 43 from Germany, Austria or Hungary, eight United States citizens (including a few from San Francisco), and scattered nationals of Argentina, Rumania, and Finland. Conversely, the Hamburg departure lists do not include persons who sailed from ports such as Bremen, Antwerp or Glasgow, whereas the *Migration...* series indexes does include these individuals. dates and the ports that the ships sailed from; while the Hamburg lists show all ships that sailed from Hamburg, including those going to Canada and those going to England ("indirect

sailings"). The Hamburg lists show the departure dates from Hamburg, which are typically one week to ten days earlier than the arrival dates, but in the case of indirect sailings can be much earlier. Of the 152 individuals in the Hamburg lists, 38 were on indirect sailings, of which 27 were from Russia. When an individual appears in the published *Migration...* series as arriving from a British port, it is often possible to find the first leg of their journey on the Hamburg lists.

One of the most important features of the Hamburg ship lists, which users of the Family History Library microfilms will have noted, is that the town of origin or last residence (often but not always the same) is specified. United States arrival lists from the nineteenth century seldom list this critical piece of information, and hence it is not commonly found in the published indexes.

The on-line site provides this information in two ways. The normal index page only lists the country of origin, but each individual has a link to a details page which provides the town name. An alternate search option, which allows identification of all passengers on a ship from the same town, produces an index page that includes the town of origin for each passenger, but that lacks the link to the details page.

Relles' 1890 database is somewhat more limited in the information it provides. Age and country of origin (i.e. Poland vs. Austria) are not shown, and there is no link to further details for each passenger. On the other hand, Relles has indexed ships arriving from all ports, provides the ability to search by the Daitsch-Mokotoff soundex code, and gives specific microfilm reel, ship and list numbers for each entry allowing for much easier location of an individual on the original (filmed) manifest. His database lists only 18 Rosenthals, only some of which duplicate the Hamburg list entries. Many of the Hamburg entries are missing from Relles' index because the individuals listed "Russia" as their country of origin, while some of Relles' entries are not found in the Hamburg lists because they sailed from other ports. In addition, Relles' database covers 12 months, vs. the 18 months

A limited sampling of Relles' database suggests that the omissions in the published *Migration...* indexes are substantial, supporting his finding that over half of the Polish immigrants in 1890 were missing from the published indexes. All the ship arrivals in June, 1890 on Relles'

extracted from the Hamburg index (to coincide with the time frame of the published indexes).

Of the 152 Rosenthals found in the index on the Hamburg on-line site, 82 listed Russia as their last place of residence. Of these 82, over half (46) sailed after the June, 1891 date that is the current cutoff date for the published series. However, of the 49 persons on 25 ships found in the *Migration...* series indexes, 19 were on 11 boats that came from Antwerp, Bremen or Glasgow. Passengers on most of these ships would not show up on the Hamburg lists (although there were some indirect sailings via Glasgow). In addition, some of the passengers sailing from Liverpool that are among the 30 remaining Rosenthals in the *Migration...* series indexes were not transferring from indirect sailings from Hamburg. Hence there are clearly people sailing from Hamburg who do not show up on the arrival lists indexed in the published series. What happened to them?

The problem is not one of omission of selected individuals from the arrival lists. Every boat that showed up both leaving Hamburg and arriving at a United States port had the same individuals listed, although there were understandably some different spellings of names. There appear to be two major classes of "missing persons." One group are those on ships that sailed directly from Hamburg to the United States, for which departure lists exist at the Hamburg end but for which arrival lists are missing in the published *Migration...* series. There are four such boats in the 18 month period studied that showed up in this limited analysis, i.e. that carried one or more passengers with the Rosenthal surname. These boats did arrive in the United States, according to the *Morton Allen Directory*, and a check of the National Archives microfilms shows that the arrival lists are extant. Two of the three boats from 1890 are also included in Relles' database.

It is unclear why these lists were not available to the authors of the published indexes, since they worked with the original manifests at the Temple-Balch Center for Immigration Research in Philadelphia.

database were compared with those listed in volumes 5 and 6 of the *Migration...* series. Most ships listed in both indexes showed the same arrival date, although some dates differed by up to five days. But 15 of the ships in the Relles index were missing from the *Migration...* series

index in that one month alone. While some of these ships may have only had passengers listing Austria as their native country, 7 of the 15 ships originated from Hamburg (including the two with Rosenthals identified in the analysis of the Hamburg database). Relles shows a total of 1436 passengers on those 7 ships who listed Poland or Austria as their origin, and given the fact that the ships sailed from Hamburg, it is almost certain that they had passengers from Russia or Poland.

The other (and more common, in the Rosenthal analysis) source of missing persons compared to the Hamburg departure lists was the indirect lists. It would appear that some emigrants, on reaching England, changed their planned itinerary (or never intended in the first place to proceed on to the United States). They either stayed in Britain, or went instead to places such as South Africa or Palestine. It is also possible that some of these persons continued their journey on a ship whose manifest is also missing from the published indexes. For example, Bruche and Nachman Rosenthal from Sukerany sailed from Hamburg on March 31, 1891 with seven children on the S.S. Kaiser, bound for Boston via Liverpool. There is no record in the published *Migration...* indexes of their arrival in the United States, either because they did not complete their trip or because they came on a ship whose manifest was not included in the *Migration...* series.

The Hamburg on-line index thus represents a significant new source for information on immigrants who had not been previously documented and/or indexed, even during the period for which other indexes already exist. As the Hamburg index expands, it will become a major new genealogical research tool. The caveat here relates to how accessible the information will be once a fee structure is put in place to access the detailed information, but if the indexes themselves remain freely available for searching one can always go to the Family History Center microfilms to obtain the additional details.

## **Dina Abramowicz Remembered Zachary M. Baker**

*Zachary M. Baker, former chief librarian at YIVO, is now the Reinhard Family Curator of Judaica and Hebraica Collections in the Humanities and*

*Area Studies Resource Group of the Stanford University Libraries.*

With the passing of Dina Abramowicz, who died in New York City on Monday, April 3rd, we have lost one of our last vital links to Eastern European Jewish civilization. In her capacity as librarian of the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research (where she worked for over half a century) Dina would have disapproved being described as a symbol of Eastern European Jewry, though those who came in contact with her often regarded her as such. Symbols tend to be static, and there was nothing static about Dina's probing curiosity or her desire to learn new things, to be au courant with current events or the newest books to cross her desk.

Tenacity, energy, strength, and above all dedication -- these are the main characteristics that marked Dina Abramowicz's personality. She was dedicated to her work, to the public that she served, to the legacy of Vilna, and to the memory of her father, Hirsz Abramowicz. Dina was also blessed with a phenomenal memory, which she was always able to plumb for elusive facts and helpful research strategies. In addition, she was a polyglot, with native or near-native fluency in Russian, Yiddish, and Polish, and with a superb knowledge of English (which she learned as an adult).

Dina Abramowicz was a true product of the Haskalah, raised in a Russian-speaking home, educated in a Yiddish gymnasium and a Polish university -- life experiences that could hardly be replicated elsewhere than in her native Vilna during the first few decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Perhaps it was the cross-cultural and multilingual environment that was her birthright that made her so open to the world at large. Her chosen profession, that of librarian, provided the ideal outlet for the development of her intellectual interests and her desire to educate the public.

She endured the traumas of Nazi occupation, and for a time was protected from the fate suffered by tens of thousands of Vilna Jews in 1941 by serving as a staff member of the Vilna Ghetto Library (which was led by Herman Kruk). She found refuge with Jewish partisans in the forests

surrounding Vilna, and that enabled her to survive until liberation by the Soviet army, in

In 1946, Dina was reunited with her father, an educator and journalist who was visiting the United States when war broke out in 1939. Her association with YIVO began in 1947, and continued until the very end. (One of her YIVO Library volunteers, Elaine Adamenko, was with her when she died.) During the decades that she worked at YIVO she oversaw the acquisition and absorption of major collections (including pre-war holdings from Vilna that were restored to YIVO shortly after World War II), participated in ambitious Holocaust documentation projects, assisted thousands of readers (in person, by phone, fax and mail), compiled bibliographies, and published numerous articles in scholarly and more general-interest journals.

Dina Abramowicz was not one to call attention to her achievements. Once, when the idea of a festschrift was broached, she strongly objected because of the implication (in her mind) that its publication might signify that she had reached the end of her productive life. The premise of her

protest indicated a fierce pride in her work, combined with a strong sense of personal privacy and a determination not to permit her name to become grist for anyone's mill (including her own). In later years she began to open up a bit, and both spoke and wrote about her experiences before and during World War II, most memorably at the 1998 convention of the Association of Jewish Libraries, in Philadelphia. Her lecture about the Vilna Ghetto library, "Guardians of a Tragic Heritage: Reminiscences and Observations of an Eyewitness," was published in the Association's proceedings and also issued as a separate publication by the National Foundation for Jewish Culture.

By and large, though, in her autobiographical writing Dina elected to focus on others rather than on herself. This was reflected in her touching memoir, "The World of My Parents," published in vol. 23 of the YIVO Annual (1996), and above all in the English translation of her father's book

"Portraits of a Vanished World" (originally published in Yiddish as "Farshvundene geshtaltn"), which was published in 1999 by Wayne State University Press. In her later years, all of her energies were concentrated on getting that literary monument to her father's memory

1944.

published, and she was profoundly grateful when it finally did come out.

If Dina's home was YIVO, she was also involved in other activities. She belonged to a Workmen's Circle branch, and participated in the deliberations of that unique hometown organization, Nusakh Vilne. Dina attended plays, the opera, and films, and she read *The New York Times* with great scrutiny. During the years when YIVO was still located on Fifth Avenue she could often be spotted walking across Central Park, on her way home or to work. In short, she had become a genuine New Yorker.

All who knew Dina Abramowicz will doubtless realize that these hastily written thoughts barely scratch the surface of this complex and amazing individual. We will all miss her.

*The New York Times published a four column obituary article with a photograph of Dina Abramowicz in front of the familiar card catalogue at the old YIVO library, on Sunday April 9, 2000 (p. 39). Dina was head librarian at YIVO for 25 years, and then from 1987 until her death at the age of 90 held the position of research librarian. She was described as someone "whose firsthand and encyclopedic knowledge of the lost Yiddish world of Eastern Europe made her a treasured resource for hundreds of scholars and writers....Her mind was a mental card catalogue for hundreds of rare and obscure books and historical materials in the dusty YIVO stacks. And she hunted them down for scholars like Irving Howe and novelists like Leon Uris as well as for thousands of ordinary people trying to research their family histories." Dina Abramowicz left two nephews and a niece, but as the Times noted, "her name endures in dozens of acknowledgments by the authors whose research she shepherded. In his tribute in 'The World of Our Fathers,'...Howe thanked YIVO for making the book possible, 'especially its indefatigable and splendid librarian, Dina Abramowicz.'"*

## In Print

*The following listings are provided as a service to readers, and are based on announcements*

received from the publishers, not on actual reviews of the books themselves. Any questions about an individual publication should be

Felix Gundacker. *Register of Jewish Vital Statistics in State Archives Pertaining to Bohemia*. ATS 260. This title is among several being advertised as new books by the Institute for Historical Family Research. The Institute is apparently a sales and research services vehicle for Mr. Gundacker, a professional genealogist. The book contains a listing of all still extant Jewish records of Moravia in a "distinctive numbering system" showing the time span involved. Also enumerated are all Roman Catholic and some Protestant records which contain Jewish vital statistics. Order from the Institute at A-1190 Wien, Pantzergasse 30/9, Austria; 0043-1-369-9729; <http://ihff.nwy.at/index.htm>; email IHFF@gateway.at.

Marilyn J. Harran, Dieter Kuntz, John Roth et. al. *The Holocaust Chronicle*. Publications International, 2000. 768 pp. hardcover. \$35.00 at bookstores or from Amazon.com. This comprehensive history of the Holocaust was conceived and brought to fruition as a personal project of Louis Weber, the C.E.O. of Chicago area based Publications International, Ltd., and published as a not-for-profit endeavor. The son of Polish Jews who settled in America in 1920, Weber selected a team of scholars and other experts who created a major new resource on the Holocaust. The book includes over 2000 photographs selected from collections at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Yad Vashem and other archives and private collections, many in full color and most published in book form for the first time. Numerous sidebars and inserts contain information on people, locations and events. The book can also be ordered directly from the publisher at a special not-for-profit price of 6 books for \$100, including shipping and handling; call 800-745-9299.

Barbara Kessel. *Suddenly Jewish: Jews Raised as Gentiles Discover Their Jewish Roots*. University Press of New England, 2000. 188 pp. clothbound. \$19.95. "What is it like to find out you are not who you thought you were?" asks the author in this compelling volume, based on

directed to the publisher and not to Dorot or the JGS.

### **Of Jewish Interest**

interviews with over 160 people who were raised as non-Jews only to learn at some point in their lives that they are of Jewish descent. Kessel's subjects discuss the emotional upheaval of refashioning their self-image and, for many, coming to terms with deliberate deception on the part of parents and family. Responses to the discovery of a Jewish heritage ranged from outright rejection to wholehearted embrace. For some crypto-Jews in the southwest United States (descendants of Jews who fled the Spanish Inquisition), the only clues to their

heritage are practices and traditions handed down through the generations, whose significance may be long since lost. Jews who were adopted as infants to save them from the Holocaust are now learning of their heritage through the deathbed confessions of their adoptive parents. The varied responses of these disparate people to a similar experience, presented in their own words, offer insights into the nature of self-knowledge. Whether they had always suspected or were taken by surprise, Kessel's respondents report that confirmation of their Jewish heritage affected their sense of self and of their place in the world in profound ways. In bookstores, or call 800-421-1561.

### **Of General Interest**

Carolee Inskip. *The Graveyard Shift: A Family Historian's Guide to New York City Cemeteries*. Ancestry, 2000. 296 pp. softbound, \$24.95 plus shipping. Provides information on years of use, affiliation to religious or other organizations, and contact information. An important focus of the book appears to be cemeteries that were relocated; the stories behind the relocation and the details of the relocation and renaming are given for such cemeteries. Order from Ancestry.com at 266 West Center St., Orem, UT 84057; 800-ANCESTRY; <http://shop.ancestry.com>.

Ann Hunt. *A Research Guide for the New York 1910 Federal Census*. Friends of the National Archives in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, 1999. 142 pp. 8½ x 11" soft cover. \$17.95 plus shipping. An alphabetical listing by county and town for all places in New York State *except* the five boroughs of New York City, listing the microfilm number, volume, enumeration districts, page numbers and wards for each locality. The guide has three parts, with towns and counties cross indexed. Previously, published indexes were available only for the New York City counties. Order from Heritage Quest, P.O. Box 329, Bountiful, UT 84011-0329; 800-760-2455; [www.HeritageQuest.com](http://www.HeritageQuest.com). Also available directly from the Friends of the National Archives, Silvio O. Conte Pittsfield Regional Archives, 10 Conte Drive, Pittsfield, MA 01201-8230; 413-445-6885; [volunteers@pittsfield.nara.gov](mailto:volunteers@pittsfield.nara.gov). The Friends also sell a hard cover edition for \$45.00, plus \$5.00 shipping.

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The Jewish Genealogical Society has received a bequest from the estate of David Swit, z"l, cousin of JGS Past President Marsha Saron Dennis. It was Mr. Swit who sparked Marsha's interest in the Saron family history, leading to a long collaboration, including research, newsletters and family reunions - not to mention Marsha's becoming a professional genealogist.

The Jewish Genealogical Society has also received three donations in memory of our member, Bonnie Phelps (z'l) from the men and women of Science Applications International Corporation, Division 6415, staff members of the Office of the Secretary of Defense's Program Analysis and Evaluation Directorate, and from Lisa Meade and Thomas Amatruda, Bonnie's friends and coworkers.

May David and Bonnie's families be comforted among the mourners of Zion.

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