
The Journal of the Jewish Genealogical Society

DOROT דורות

Volume 36, Number 3

Spring 2015

Clues For Finding South American Family, Part I

By Ann Rabinowitz

In my research, which encompassed the families of two Hyman sisters who left Manchester, England, and went to Buenos Aires, Argentina, I started with information I already knew about the family, which was sketchy at best. For instance, living family members could not remember the first names of the sisters or were not sure which ones went to Argentina out of the 10 Hyman siblings.

Help arrived when my cousin sent me a note that he found a notebook with family information that had belonged to his mother's brother, Lazarus Hyman. This notebook contained a very valuable clue to locating the sisters:

Fanny Hyman de Bernstein, Marcos Paz 2115, Tel: 67 4635

Rebecca's address: Casa Victor, Segurola 2075 -77, cable address: Vigdor BA. Probably circa 1947/8

I looked up the addresses on the showmystreet.com site. There I found that they appeared to be business addresses rather than residential ones. Since these addresses were from 1960, the areas might have changed significantly in the years since.

The last time family in England had heard from them was in 1960 when Sophie Hyman Fink took her son

Brian to visit her sister Fanny and Fanny's family in Buenos Aires. When she arrived, she found that her sister had just died. She had also gone to see the family of her sister Sylvia, who had also immigrated to Buenos Aires, but in 1931, and who died in 1940. Her married name was not remembered.

Given this limited information, I proceeded to visit findmypast.co.uk, a subscription site that included British vital records, immigration manifests and census data. I also used freebmd.org.uk, the non-subscription site for vital records. The latter site gave me the names of the siblings in the Hyman family, but a Rebecca was not one of them. So I decided to focus on Fanny whose marriage record confirmed that her new husband was Louis Bernstein. The immigration manifests, in particular, provided Spanish language-based first names such as Luis for her husband and Lazaro, Mario, Roberto and Ernesta Flora for her children.

Also of interest, in regard to the manifests, were the family's trips between Argentina and Manchester, England in 1927 and 1930. The parents, Luis and Fanny Bernstein, appeared to take one or two of their five children with them, but not all at the same time. I wondered why they chose to go in 1927.

continued on page 4

In this issue

Clues for Finding South American Family

by Ann Rabinowitz.....1

President's Postings

by Jane Rosen Berenbeim.....3

JGS Welcomes New Members.....3

Upcoming Events.....7

The Right To Be Forgotten

by Yvette Hoitink.....8

More on German Children's Aid – Addendum

by Linda Cantor.....9

JGS Program Reports

by Steve Stein.....9

Notes from All Over.....12

In the Repositories.....13

New, Recent & Noteworthy Publications.....14

Questioning the Experts:

Moriah Amit.....16

JGS Friends.....23

DOROT

The Journal of the Jewish Genealogical Society

Editor.....Toby Carliner Sanchez
tobysanchez@gmail.com

Design and Production.....Jim Garrity

.....Contributors.....

Jane Rosen Berenbeim, Linda Cantor, Larry Freund,
Yvette Hoytink, Ann Rabinowitz, Toby Carliner Sanchez,
Steve Stein

Photographs by Joy Kestenbaum

© 2015 Jewish Genealogical Society, Inc.
JGS, Inc. is a not-for-profit,
tax-exempt organization.

JGS, Inc.

15 West 16th Street, New York, NY 10011

Telephone: (212) 294-8318

E-mail: info@jgsny.org

Website: <http://www.jgsny.org>.

Mail to: P.O. Box 631, New York, NY 10113-0631

DOROT (ISSN 0886-2796)

is published quarterly as the
fall, winter, spring, and summer issues.

Subscription is by membership only.

Back issues are for sale at

<http://www.jgsny.org/dorot.htm>.

To request permission to reprint an item,
contact the editor at editor@jgsny.org.

DOROT is indexed in

Index to Jewish Periodicals.

RATES FOR DISPLAY ADS

Full page \$150 Half page \$80

Quarter page \$45 Eighth page \$25

Publication of an advertisement does not imply an
endorsement or recommendation by JGS, Inc.

JGS EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Jane Rosen Berenbeim, President

president@jgsny.org

Joy Kestenbaum, First Vice President/Program

program@jgsny.org

Michael L. Levine, Second Vice President/Membership

membership@jgsny.org

Harriet Glickman Mayer, Third Vice President/Communications

Stewart Driller, Treasurer

Howard Rotblatt, Secretary

Past President: Roni Seibel Liebowitz

Lanie Bergman

Hadassah Lipsius

Robin Brown

Lauren Shulsky Orenstein

Linda Cantor

Michael Pertain

Bob Kosofsky

Paul H. Silverstone

Jeffrey Levin

Steve Stein

Printed by The Sheridan Press, Hanover, PA

WE INVITE YOU TO JOIN US!

The Jewish Genealogical Society, Inc., founded in 1977, was the first of over eighty such societies. Our approximately 900 members live in the New York metropolitan area, other states, and other countries. We hold membership in the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies. We have an office in the Center for Jewish History and a library in the Center's Genealogy Institute.

We support organizations, repositories, and archival projects through donations to insure the preservation of many of the Jewish community's treasured documents and to provide greater public access to them. These organizations have included the American Jewish Historical Society, American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, American Sephardi Federation, Center for Jewish History, Center Genealogy Institute, Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, JewishGen, Jewish Records Indexing-Poland, Leo Baeck Institute, National Yiddish Book Center, Ronald S. Lauder Foundation Genealogy Project at the Jewish Historical Institute of Poland, and YIVO Institute for Jewish Research.

Membership benefits:

- free admission to our monthly meetings (September through June), featuring guest lecturers from a variety of disciplines, and field trips to libraries and archives;
- discount on admission to JGS events, such as all-day seminars;
- a subscription to our quarterly journal, *Dorot*, containing reports on monthly meetings, descriptions of items held by repositories and organizations, announcements of new books, feature articles on genealogical research, and tips on new Internet sites;
- free access to JewishData.com;
- discount on JGS publications, including *Genealogical Resources in New York*, an invaluable tool for genealogical research in New York City; and
- discounts from the JGS Friends listed on the inside back page of *Dorot*

Membership dues per calendar year:

- Regular Member \$36
- Local Member 25 years of age and younger \$18
- Family Member (two members) \$45
- Sustaining Member \$60 (two membership cards)
- Supporting Member \$100 (two membership cards)
- Patron Member \$250 or more (two membership cards)
- Out-of-town Member (more than 100 miles from New York City) \$25
- Foreign Membership (air mail) US\$36

You can become a member on-line via the JGS, Inc. website at <http://www.jgsny.org/>. Click on **Membership** in the top bar and then on **Join Now**. The application form will appear on-line. Be patient. Complete it and click submit. On the next screen, select a credit card and make payment.

You can also request a membership application by mailing a self-addressed, stamped envelope to Jewish Genealogical Society, Inc., P.O. Box 631, New York, NY 10113-0631, or you can print out the application on the JGS website at <http://www.jgsny.org>. Click on Membership in the top bar and "Join Now" (be patient). Complete the form and mail it to the above address. Please note that within the limits prescribed by law, your membership fee less \$12 attributable to the *Dorot* subscription is deductible as a charitable contribution.

JGS is a not-for-profit organization open to people of all ethnic and religious backgrounds.



President's Postings by Jane Rosen Berenbeim

I write these notes as the JGS program year draws to a close. After our upcoming meeting – a lecture by Glenn Dynner on June 14th -- we adjourn until September 20th. On that day, we will resume a JGS

tradition of annual visits to New York City synagogues of historical interest, with a tour of the Stanton Street Shul, one of the very few early 20th century tenement synagogues still standing on the Lower East Side.

For our meetings during the months following that field trip, Program VP, Joy Kestenbaum, has planned an excellent series of lectures on both historical and methodological subjects; please visit our website, www.jgsny.org, for dates and details.

Returning to the present: Among the articles of interest in the current issue of *Dorot* is an interview with Moriah Amit, Senior Reference Services Librarian/Genealogy Coordinator of the Ackman & Ziff Family Genealogy Institute in the Center for Jewish History. The interview provides a valuable overview of the wealth of resources available to researchers at the Institute and in all the

collections of the Center's five partner organizations. It also calls to mind the history of the Institute and the role of JGS in its founding. Included in the brain trust that was convened by the Center more than fifteen years ago to formulate plans for a Genealogy Institute were representatives of JGS, including Karen Franklin, Estelle Guzik, Miriam Weiner, and the late Steven Siegel. And among the original holdings of the Institute was the JGS library which became part of its core collection.

I was also reminded of the history of the JGS recently by a member who mentioned to me that he was celebrating the 25th year of his membership. We would like to salute all of you who have been part of JGS for 25 years or more and ask that those members send us an email (info@jgsny.org) so that we can add your name to our list of those to be recognized.

One final reminder that there is still time to register for the 35th IAJGS International Conference on Jewish Genealogy to be held from July 6th to 10th in Jerusalem. Please visit the Conference website at www.iajgs2015.org for details.

Jane

JGS Welcomes 10 New Members

Name	City	State
Elise J. Kornfeld	New York	NY
Meryl Lewis	Hastings-on-Hudson	NY
Claire Mendelson	Hartsdale	NY
Jesse Nasta	Baltimore	MD
Betty Perlish	Bayside	NY
Lois Plotkin	Iselin	NJ
Stevi Raab	New York	NY
Marshall J Saperstein	Davie	FL
Michelle Vick	Sacramento	CA
Sarah Wildman	Takoma Park	MD



Clues For Finding South American Family continued from page 1

REPUBLICA DOS ESTADOS UNIDOS DO BRASIL
FICHA CONSULAR DE QUALIFICAÇÃO

Esta ficha, expedida em duas vias, será entregue à Polícia Marítima e à Imigração no porto de destino

Nome por extenso: Roberto Simon Bernstein

Admitido em território nacional em caráter TEMPORÁRIO

Nos termos do art. 7 letra B do Dec. Lei 7067 de 18-9-45

Lugar e data de nascimento: Bs. Aires 17.3.1925

Nacionalidade: ARGENTINA Estado civil: CASADO

Filiação (nome do Pai e da Mãe): Luis e Fanny Simon

Profissão: Industrial

Residência no país de origem: Mareco Fax 2118, Costa

Nome: IMAGEM: SEXO:

FILHOS MENORES DE 18 ANOS:

Passaporte n. 1755068 expedido Policia de Bs. Aires na data 29.11.1951

vindo sob n. 012959

Consulado Geral do Brasil em Buenos Aires, 5 DEZ 1951

Para obter o documento de qualificação para a viagem

Temporary Immigration Card for Travel to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 1951
Roberto Simon Bernstein, Buenos Aires, Argentina

A good means of finding this out was to look through my family tree. Very often, family *simchas* like weddings were the reason for trips back home; or, bringing children to meet their grandparents and other family. In addition, checking out Jewish newspapers such as *The Jewish Chronicle*, which published announcements of engagements and marriages as well as bar/bat mitzvahs, births and deaths, was a good bet.

It appeared that my assumption was correct as I found that Fanny Hyman Bernstein's younger sister, Sophie Hyman Fink, my aunt, was married in 1927. This must have been the reason for the trip. In addition, the grandparents had not yet seen the children who were born in Argentina. Their trip in 1930 may have been to see their grandmother once again, and I saw that she passed away in 1931. Perhaps, too, Sophie's sister Sylvia went to Argentina in 1931 as her mother had passed away by then, she was single, and she went to start a new life with her elder sister Fanny.

Looking for more specific information from Argentina, I then went to the Jewish Genealogy in Argentina site at <http://hebrewsurnames.com/search>. The names of the children of Louis (Luis) Bernstein and his wife, Fanny Hyman, were found in the Jewish burial records. In these records, I noticed that Fanny's maiden name was now spelled Himan rather than Hyman.

In addition, the site provided scanned pages from the

following directory: *Guia Annual Israelita Edicion 1947* (found in the library of the IWO Institute in Buenos Aires). The directory had several Bernstein names, addresses and telephone numbers, but not any business addresses. There will be more about this resource and others like it further on in my research.

At this point, a fellow genealogist, Paul Cheifitz, was looking in the FamilySearch.org site and found they added a valuable resource - immigration cards for Brazil.

These were composed of two databases:

Brasil, Rio de Janeiro, Cartões de Imigração, 1900-1965, which are to be found in the Arquivo Nacional, Rio de Janeiro [National Archives, Rio de Janeiro], <https://familysearch.org/search/collection/1932363>.

Brasil, São Paulo, Cartões de Imigração, 1902-1980, which are to be found in the Arquivo Público do Estado de São Paulo [São Paulo State Public Archives, São Paulo], <https://familysearch.org/search/collection/2140223>.

The immigration cards are in Portuguese and were obtained from Brazilian consulates around the world. They are presented when either visiting or immigrating to Brazil. Many of the cards are for individuals who left Europe either before or after the Holocaust and others are for individuals who were visiting Brazil for business or pleasure.

They may contain the following information:

- Name of immigrant
- Date and place of immigration
- Immigrant Status
- Nationality
- Birth information
- Civil Status (Single/Married)
- Father's/Mother's Names
- Occupation
- Address
- Photo of Immigrant (not all have photos)

Instructions on how to best use these two databases are provided at the following link:

[https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Brazil,_S%C3%A3o_Paulo,_Immigration_Cards_\(FamilySearch_Historical_Records\)](https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Brazil,_S%C3%A3o_Paulo,_Immigration_Cards_(FamilySearch_Historical_Records)).

Knowing I was looking for a Bernstein family, Paul perused these records. He quickly found one for Roberto Simon Bernstein, whose card is shown at the beginning of this article. He passed the find onto me. I realized that Roberto was one of the younger Bernstein sons as the card stated his parents were Luis Bernstein and Fanny Himan. Evidently, Roberto traveled to Rio de Janeiro for a temporary visit in 1951 that was probably for pleasure.

I saw that Roberto has listed his profession as industrial and in another database it was listed as metal products. This piqued my curiosity as I was told the family was involved in radio stations. Looking further afield, I found there were several resources I could use to determine what his business was in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

These resources were the following business and telephone directories, which were published in Spanish:

Guia Anual Isrelita Edicion 1947 (Found in the library of the IWO institute of Buenos Aires)

Guia Telefonica de Buenos Aires 1960 (Telephone Directory)

Guia Anual Israelita de los Paises Latino-Americanos 1949 (all countries in South America)

Noting that these Guias were found in the library at the Fundacion IWO – Institute Judio de Investigaciones, Buenos Aires (<http://www.iwo.org.ar/idish/?cat=12>), I thought it was probably a branch of the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research in New York (<http://www.yivo.org>). I decided to contact Lyudmila Shokolova, Acting Chief Archivist at YIVO, to see if they had similar books that I might be able to utilize. Otherwise, I would have to use the Internet to find if there were any libraries that held the books or contact a bookseller who had a copy for purchase.

I got a quick response from YIVO and found that they were a separate entity from the group in Argentina. However, they did have one of the “Guias,” but a different one from those to which I had found references, namely the *Guia Anual Israelita Edicion, 1946*. This was a valuable thing to know, because at least one *Guia* was here in the U.S. and could be more easily accessed at YIVO in New York.

An unexpected new resource came to light from JewishGen Roy Ogus, who took a trip to Argentina, and while there visited the Congregacion Israelita de la Republica Argentina, located in Buenos Aires, and founded in 1862. This synagogue had approximately 600 memorial plaques that Roy photographed for later possible submission to the JewishGen Memorial Plaque Database (<http://www.jewishgen.org/databases/Memorial/>).

He gave me a copy of the scanned material on the plaques and I went through the data. On the whole, the surnames were in their original spelling. They represented the predominantly Polish or Russian names with Romanian, Sephardic and a bit of other nationalities thrown in for good measure.

For instance, there were names such as Guinesburg and Ciment, which is a name well known in Miami Beach, Florida. Then there was Mirelman, which is a name found in Ireland; the Dutch name Jonge and Nemirovsky, a name known in France, as well as several Groll entries. The first names were mostly Spanish language conversions from the original European or Hebrew/Yiddish names such as Felipe, Jaime, Jose, Jacobo and Moises for males. For females there were Ana, Manuela, Marcela, Margarita, Teresa, Rosa and Rosalia. One scanned page gave the names of 64 individuals, both men and women, who donated money toward the cost or upkeep of the synagogue, ranging from Isidoro Aslan to Jaime Wencelblat.

As I went through the scanned pages, I came upon the name of Bernstein, the family name for which I had been searching. There were two entries that had the Hebrew month/day of death, but no year. These were Isidoro Bernstein, 23 Elul, and Berta Hahn de Bernstein, 28 Nisan. I will have to do more research to determine who these individuals were, and if they are from the same Bernstein family I am looking for.

Another resource I came upon was the AMIA organization in Buenos Aires. It started a new program to assist families all over the world to reunite with their relatives in Argentina. The new program is called REUNIR and can be found at the following link: <http://www.amia.org.ar/index.php/content/default/show/content/112>. Three volunteers run the program, Clara Rozen, Elda Waingortin and Martha Jansenson, who can be reached at reunir@amia.org.ar. I wrote to them in English with the basic information I had on the family. I received a response that it would take a bit of time as they were only three volunteers working one day a week.

As I waited for a response from REUNIR, I decided to make use of another resource, namely social media. So I looked for the Bernstein family on Facebook, and there I found a Lazaro Bernstein, who said he was originally from Buenos Aires and now lived near me in Florida. Not only that, Lazaro's photos on Facebook appeared to look quite a bit like Roberto Simon Bernstein on his immigration card photo. In addition, I knew that there was a Lazarus in the Hyman family and a Lazaro in the Bernstein family in the older generations. So, I thought, this might be a young descendant of the family.

A message in English was sent to Lazaro in the hope that he could understand it and respond. I got a Facebook Chat message back from Lazaro, and he was indeed a great grandson of Fanny Hyman Bernstein. His grandfather was Lazaro Bernstein, who was Fanny's son. To tie it together, his grandfather Lazaro was a brother of Roberto Simon Bernstein, who appeared on the Brazilian immigration card.

I was delighted, of course, that I had found the right person. He told me that he and his siblings lived in South Florida and that his parents still lived in Buenos Aires. It was an especially great find, as Lazaro is not only on Facebook, but has an email address and was in contact with his father, who does not use email, via telephone. This is proof that social media are critical to locating younger family members and through them the older living generations, who may not be computer literate or users of social media.

One critical thing I learned is that perhaps I should

have looked at the Mormons' familysearch.org site a bit more thoroughly and not just the new data set of immigration cards. It was on the general site that I found Lazaro listed along with his grandfather Lazaro Bernstein (Fanny Hyman Bernstein's brother) and they were both listed as living quite near to me. This discovery is a helpful reminder that the clues to people you are searching for can be there all the time. In fact, the people might be neighbors and you might not realize it, unless you use the proper genealogical tools and revisit these tools to catch newly input data.

Some final steps will be learning more about the family's antecedents and where they were from in Lithuania and Latvia in order to go further back in time on the family tree, as well as to reconnect them to their cousins in England and Israel. It is hoped that they will share their old photos dating from the years before their immigration to Argentina and in the years afterward, which will fill in the gaps of all those long years of separation.

This has been a very exciting discovery 55 years since the last communication with the family. Now that they are in touch, everyone is eagerly awaiting meeting and talking with their long-lost cousins.

Ann Rabinwitz is the Editor of the JewishGen Blog, Coordinator of the Kupsiskis SIG and a former Board Member of the LitvakSIG. In addition, she researches and writes about her British, Galitizianer, Litvak and South African roots, as well as the Holocaust. ☆

QUESTIONING THE EXPERTS continued from page 22

comprehensive and corroborated by documentary evidence, I definitely don't have issues with donating it to a relevant institution such as the Center for Jewish History. I understand that people have privacy concerns but I think there are enough safeguards to deal with those and I think in general that we should be leaning toward greater availability of not only our records but our research.

DOROT: Thank you.

Moriah Amit is the Senior Reference Services Librarian, Genealogy Coordinator at the Center for Jewish History's Ackman & Ziff Family Genealogy Institute. Moriah has provided reference service at the Institute for over four years and has overseen the day-to-day operations of the Institute for almost two years. She has been invited to speak at the 2013 IAJGS International Conference on Jewish Genealogy, the Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Philadelphia, and St. John's University's Genealogy Sources and Services graduate course. She earned an M.L.I.S. degree in Library Science from Pratt Institute in 2010. ☆

Upcoming and Current Events

Jewish Genealogical Society, New York

June 14, 2015, 2 p.m.

“Jews, Liquor & Life in Eastern Europe”

Speaker: Glenn Dynner, Ph.D.

In pre-modern Eastern Europe, the Jewish-run tavern was often the center of leisure, hospitality, business, and even religious festivities. This unusual situation came about because the nobles who owned taverns believed that only Jews were sober enough to run taverns profitably, a belief so ingrained as to endure even the rise of Hasidism's robust drinking culture. As liquor became the region's boom industry, Jewish tavernkeepers became integral to both local economies and social life, presiding over Christian celebrations and dispensing advice, medical remedies and loans. Nevertheless, reformers and government officials, blaming Jewish tavernkeepers for epidemic peasant drunkenness, sought to drive Jews out of the liquor trade.

Historians have assumed that this spelled the end of the Polish Jewish liquor trade. However, newly discovered archival sources demonstrate that nobles often helped their Jewish tavernkeepers evade fees, bans and expulsions by installing Christians as “fronts” for their taverns. The result—a vast underground Jewish liquor trade—reflects an impressive level of local Polish-Jewish co-existence that contrasts with the more familiar story of anti-Semitism and violence.

Location: Center for Jewish History, 15 West 16th Street (between 5th and 6th Avenues), Manhattan

Admission: JGS members are free; guests pay \$5 at the door.

The Ackman & Ziff Family Genealogy Institute will open at 11:00 a.m. for networking with other researchers and for using the computers, microfilms and books.

Join us for a “Lunch and Learn” session 12:30-1:30 before the lecture (bring a bag lunch).

Jewish Genealogical Society of Long Island

June 28, 2015, 2-4 p.m.

“The Genealogy Indexer Website”

Speaker: Logan Kleinwaks

Location: Mid-Island Y-JCC, 45 Manetto Hill Road, Plainview, NY, www.miyjcc.org

Brooklyn Historical Society

June 16, 2015, 6:30 p.m.

“Tales from the Vault: Personal Archives How-To Workshop”

Speaker: John Zarillo, Archivist

Learn how to properly store and handle your family's papers, photographs memorabilia.

Location: Brooklyn Historical Society, 128 Pierrepont Street, Brooklyn

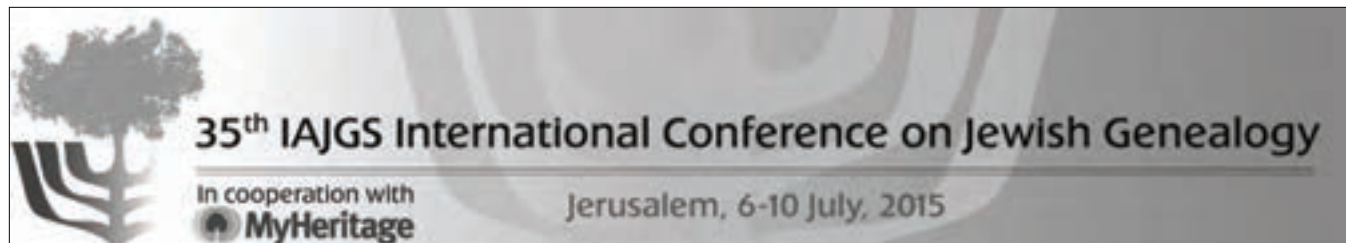
Admission: \$20 or \$15 for BHS members, tickets & registration at brooklynhistory.org

35th IAJGS Conference on Jewish Genealogy

July 6-10, 2015

Jerusalem, Israel

Further information, including registration, available at <http://iajgs2015.org> ☆



The Right to Be Forgotten

By Yvette Hoitink

A new European guideline ensures that citizens have the right to be forgotten. They can ask search engines to remove results that are no longer relevant. That will prevent your drunk selfie from appearing on the first page of search results the next time a potential employer searches for your name. The guideline is primarily aimed at search engines, but wider regulation is in the works.

As genealogists, we're used to personal information becoming public after enough time passes, even if the information may be embarrassing for the descendants. Perhaps grandma never admitted that she had an illegitimate child, and father was silent about his time in a psychiatric facility, but after 100 years this information is accessible to everybody. If they had had the opportunity to erase the information by claiming the right to be forgotten, surely they would have deleted their unwanted files, and their offspring would not have been able to find this information.

The right to privacy and the right to information are at odds with each other. For paper files, there is a tried and tested method: restrict access during a specified period. **For recent information, the right to privacy takes precedence, but for old information, the right to information takes precedence** (emphasis added).

In the case of digital information, public information is usually easily accessible, confronting more people with unwanted or outdated information about themselves.

The solution that the European Union chose is different from that in the paper world: they don't restrict access, but they allow the information and references to the information removed. This negates the possibility of making the information available in the future. Privacy wins, and future historians will have to make do with censored information.

This development fits into a larger discussion about digital preservation. Until now, this discussion focused mainly on keeping information accessible despite obsolete media (who can still read a 5 ¼" floppy disk?). But by allowing information to be erased upon request, digital information will become even more volatile.

The National Archivist of the Netherlands, Marens Engelhard, called attention to the long-term effects of the right to be forgotten at the iBestuur (iGovernance) conference of 2015. One of his theses was "As a result of the destruction of personal information, we may no longer be able to reconstruct our past."

I hope the lawmakers will heed his warning.

Yvette Hoitink is a professional genealogist in the Netherlands, who has been helping people from across the world to find their ancestors for almost 25 years. She can be reached at yvettehoitink@dutchgenealogy.nl, and she writes about Dutch genealogy on her website, <http://www.dutchgenealogy.nl> ☆

JGS on Facebook



Facebook©

JGS, Inc. has created a group page on Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com>), an online social networking facility. After you join Facebook, you can reach JGS's page in any of these three ways:

- (1) Go to the JGS website (<http://www.jgsny.org>) to link to the page.
- (2) Go directly to the page at: <http://www.facebook.com#!/group.php?gid=62112838856>.
- (3) Log in to Facebook and search for "Jewish Genealogical Society–New York."

We hope you will join the more than 1980 members of the JGS Facebook group. The page includes details about our upcoming meetings and follow-up reports about the presentations. We welcome comments and reactions to the meetings as well as suggestions of topics for monthly meetings.



German Jewish Children's Aid – Addendum

By Linda Cantor

The story that appeared in Vol 35, No 4, the summer 2014 issue of *Dorot* was reprinted in *Avotaynu* (Vol XXX, No 4 Winter 2014). Reader Peter Lande, who is a long-time volunteer at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, was moved to look up the children discussed in the article. He was kind enough to share some information on Mary and Hanna Offentier.

The original article discussed the records of the German-Jewish Children's Aid organization and their attempts to get children out of Holland in 1940. In investigating what happened to some of these children I discovered that Mary Offentier completed a Yad Vashem Page of Testimony for her sister Hanna. Hanna was sent first to Westerbork and then to Auschwitz where she died. Mary survived and I had no further information on her. Peter discovered that Mary, married and living in New York City, sent an inquiry to the International Red Cross Tracing Service in 1990 asking about her sister's

fate. Mary stated that she last saw her sister on July 14, 1942 and we now know that Hanna died in Auschwitz on September 30, 1942 of pneumonia. But we don't know and will probably never know why one sister was deported and the other not.

There is some additional information to be found on the German and Austrian children who were living in the Netherlands during World War II. Go to *Dokin* (Duitse Oorlogskinderen In Nederland - German War Children in the Netherlands) at <http://www.dokin.nl/index.htm>, where you can look for information on those children who we know died. For example, the page on Hanna Offentier includes her date of birth and death; names, dates and places of birth of her parents; addresses where she lived in the Netherlands; a photo; and some documents, which appear to be about her residency in the Netherlands. Access to information about survivors is limited and requires special permission. ✧

JGS Program Reports

by Steve Stein

February 22, 2015

“Ancient Texts Lead to Genealogical Discoveries: Genealogical Resources at the Jewish Theological Seminary”

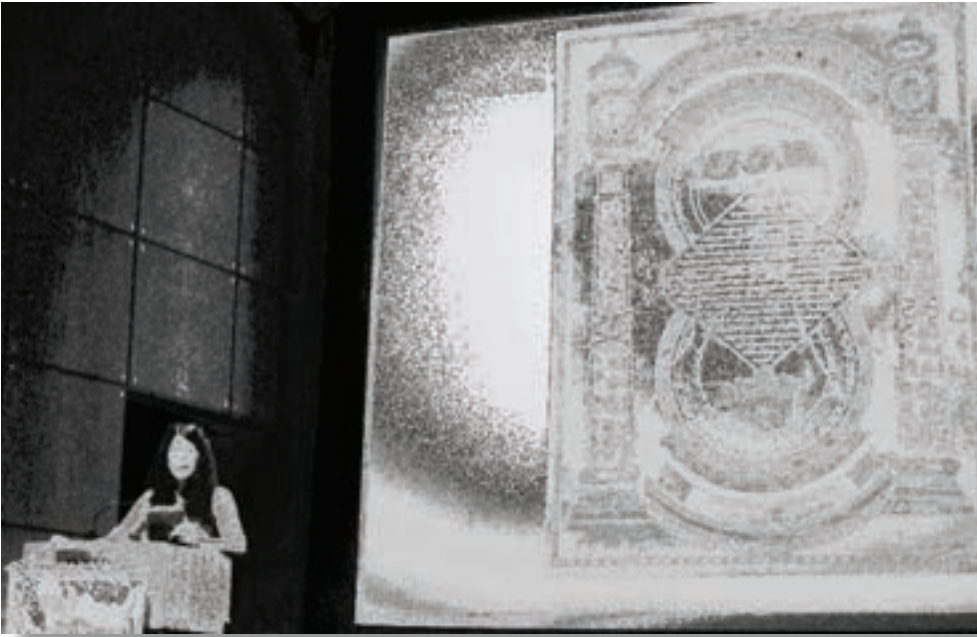
One genealogical resource right in our own New York backyard, which few genealogists are aware of, is the archives at the Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS), in the Morningside Heights section of Manhattan. Our speaker, Dr. Janette Silverman, introduced the attendees to some of the types of items that she has discovered there while serving as Outreach Director for the William Davidson Graduate School of Jewish Education (some of you may be familiar with Janette in her roles as JewishGen Ukraine SIG Coordinator and/or a moderator of the JewishGen Discussion Group).

The archives have a number of collections in the “special collections” category, which may be explored at http://www.jtsa.edu/The_Library/Collections/Guide_to_the_JTS_Archives.xml and <http://www.jtslib.raretreasures.org>, a few of which Janette described and demonstrated in some detail, and are of genealogical interest (also click on the Library or Collections items on the menu).



Dr. Janette Silverman at JGS meeting

The first collection that Janet discussed was the U.S. Department of State collection for the late 18th / early 19th century. Here can be found transcripts, reports,



Dr. Janette Silverman discussing a *ketubbah* from New York, dated 1863

generally highly decorated and were used to establish economic and social status. There are nearly 500 such *ketubbot* that can be viewed on the website.

The last collection discussed was *mohel* books, recording ritual circumcisions. These were kept by the *mohel*, not by the Jewish community, as an official record. These books vary greatly in the amount of detail recorded, how well or how poorly they are indexed, whether they have prayers, instructions, laws of circumcision, etc. One notable book, for example, belonged to David de Lida,

a well known 18th century *mohel*.

et al, which describe Jewish life in countries such as Russia, Switzerland, Finland and Poland. One document describes the difficulties experienced by certain naturalized citizens traveling back and forth between the U.S. and Russia, which can provide a context for other records that a genealogist may search for or read.

Though many of the collections are catalogued, the finding aids are sparse. Janette has only been at JTS for a short period of time, so she has not yet explored some of the collections. Everyone was encouraged to explore the collections online as well as in person and make their own discoveries.

Another collection that Janette discussed in a fair amount of detail was that of the French Jewish community, covering the years 1648 thru 1945. This collection at JTS constitutes the largest single collection of records regarding French Jewry. One may discover, for example, where Jews were living in France even before the French Revolution in 1789. The collection includes other artifacts such as surveys, documents, statistics and advertisements. Janette pointed out a subscription list from 1817; the investigation of the blood libel case of Raphael Levy from about 1670; real estate sales documents in Avignon. Since France was also a colonial power, the collection contains documents from Algeria, which was a French colony well into the 20th century, and from French colonies in the Caribbean.

Following are the additional URLs contained in Janette's handout.

- Ketubbot – http://www.jtsa.edu/The_Library/Collections/Ketubbot.xml and <http://jnul.huji.ac.il/dl/ketubbot/>
- Mohel Buchs– http://www.dutchjewry.org/phpr/circumcisions/kisch/circumcisions_izak_hartog_kisch_list.php and <https://www.abebooks.com/book-search/title/mohel/page-1/>
- State Department – http://www.jtsa.edu/prebuilt/archives/jtsarchives/usa_gov.shtml

The next collection Janette presented with a great deal of visual appeal was JTS' extensive assortment of *ketubbot*, or marriage contracts. These cover a period of a couple of hundred years, and span a variety of cultures, including both Sephardic and Ashkenazic traditions. She explained the various templates, both literal and conceptual, and some of the symbolism and wording variations that reflect the various subcultures. Ashkenazic *ketubbot* tended toward the plain and functional/legal, whereas Separdic *ketubbot* were

March 22, 2015

“Understanding Our Families, Understanding Ourselves”

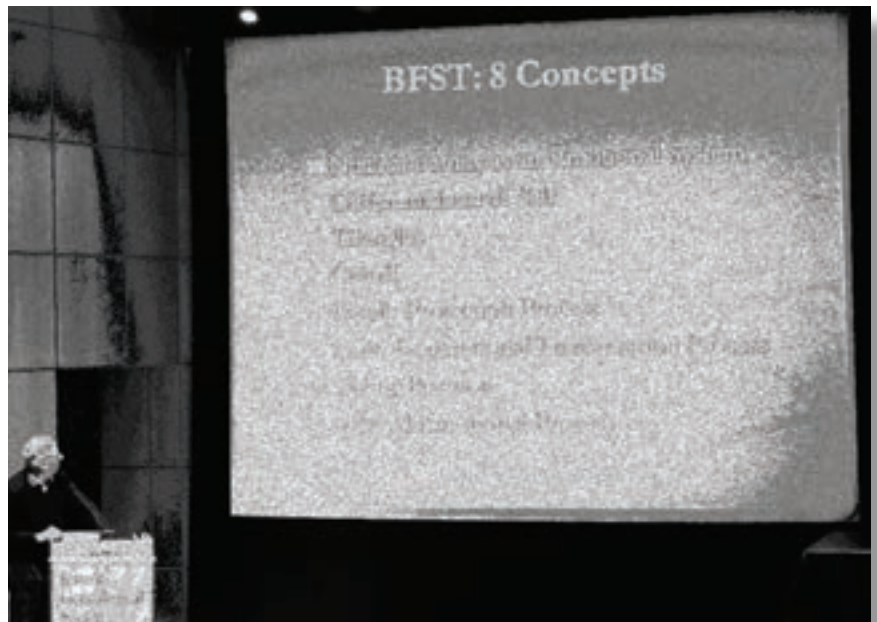
Genealogist, author and speaker Ron Arons, familiar to us from his many previous talks, introduced a new concept at our March meeting, the use of Family Systems Theory as an aid to understanding family histories. The concepts, based on work by E. O.

Wilson and formalized into Bowen Family Systems Theory (BFST), are general concepts that apply to many situations, and which Ron applies to genealogy in interesting ways.

First, Ron recapped the stories of his own great-grandfather and great-great-grandfather, who have been the basis of some of his previous work, such as *The Jews of Sing Sing*. As many of you may know, Ron's great-grandfather, Isaac Spier, was imprisoned for bigamy. During this recounting of his research, Ron spent some time focusing on the dysfunctional nature of the relationships of these two ancestors in particular, which was a setup for the hypothesis of the applicability of BFST to genealogy. This genealogy spanned both the United Kingdom and the United States and involved many different kinds of documents and other sources.

The theory posits that one can explore behavioral traits of family members through multiple generations. The first step is to focus on one individual at a time, capturing both facts (medical as well as historical) and sociological characterizations of the individual in the lens. Second, one may create a "genogram," a pictorial representation of the relationships between pairs of individuals, and/or among groups such as parents and a child. Each relationship carries with it a notation that indicates the nature of the relationship. This diagram has a representation similar to a family tree but is less hierarchical and carries with it a different kind of information. Some genealogically determined facts, such as birth order, are factors in this characterization.

The notations for the relationships are quite intuitive. Green notations indicate a healthy relationship and red notations a dysfunctional one. Different shapes or patterns may indicate a hostile, violent, cut off, harmonious, very close, "fused" (overly close), or other states of a relationship. Lines represent binary relationships and triangles represent three-way relationships. These are rarely symmetric. When put into a representation spanning generations, one may be able to see the origins and means of transmittal of traits and behaviors. In Ron's case, he was able to show the various influences that may be used to contextualize his family members' related behaviors.



Ron Arons reviewing the general concepts of Bowen Family Systems Theory (BFST)

To show the general applicability of this methodology, Ron then turned to the case of Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, the Boston Marathon bomber, and his troubled relationship to his co-conspirator brother Tamerlan, their parents, other siblings and even friends. A genogram can be constructed that depicts how genealogical, historical, behavioral and medical information may be thought to influence the behavior of Dzhokhar and Tamerlan.

For further reading and training, Ron recommended the following:

A BFST Analysis of the Boston Marathon Bombers & Their Families by Ron Arons

<http://www.hsystems.org/9.html>

The Eight Concepts of Bowen Theory by Dr. Roberta Gilbert

<http://www.thebowencenter.org>

<http://www.hsystems.org>

Software for genograms may be found at:

<http://www.genogramanalytics.com> (PC and Mac)

<http://www.wingeno.org> (PC, free)

<http://www.genogram.org> (PC)

<http://www.genopro.com> (PC)

Steve Stein is a member of the JGS Executive Council. He is a retired software systems professional in the telecommunications industry and has been researching his own and his wife's Eastern European genealogies for more than 35 years. ☆

Notes From All Over

Avotaynu, The International Review of Genealogy, Is Now Available Online from <http://www.avotaynuonline.com>

This goldmine of genealogical information is now available free of charge to all from the magazine's new website, which will share the information simultaneously on Facebook and Twitter. The new site will not duplicate the existing print journal, but will be something different — a vital new source of in — depth genealogical information and advice combining text, videos and podcasts, and encouraging dialogue between writers and readers. The goal is to stimulate collaboration among Jewish genealogists, experts and non-experts. As a bonus, all 260 articles published in *Avotaynu* from 2007-2011 will be included, plus the complete archives of *Toledot* and *Bereshit*, and *the Ser-Charlap Family Newsletter* (which are no longer published). Sallyann Amdur Sack-Pikus will be the Editor, Adam Brown, the Managing Editor, and Gary Mokotoff will be the publisher.

Find Immigrants to U.S. from the Russian Empire 1834-1897

There are 400,000 names in a list of immigrants to the U.S. from the Russian Empire (1834-1897). This list identifies individuals by their nationality (Armenian, Finnish, Galician, Lithuanian, Polish, Russian and Ukrainian). Most of the records are for New York City arrivals, but there are also records for arrivals in Baltimore, Boston, New Orleans and Philadelphia. The site is searchable by name. The URL is <http://aad.archives.gov/aad/fielded-search.jsp?dt=2127&tf=F&cat=GP44&bc=,sl> or just type Russian Immigration 1834-1897 into your search engine, as there are several different URLs available.

Three Holocaust Related Items from the German Federal Archives

Researchers will be interested that the German Federal Archives has made available three new searchable databases of names of Jewish victims of Nazi persecution:

“Chronology of Deportations from Belgium, France, Netherlands” at <http://www.bundesarchiv.de/gedenkbuch/chronicles.html.en> lists the transports from

the above three countries, showing the date, number of people, arrival date and destination.

“Narrative of the Expulsion of Polish Jews from the German Reich 1938/1939 & Their Records” at <https://www.bundesarchiv.de/gedenkbuch/zwangsausweisung.html.en> describes the forcible deportation of 12,000-17,000 Polish Jews from Germany between Kristallnacht in 1938 and the start of World War II in September 1939. Included is information about the consequences for Austrian Jews of the annexing of Austria by Germany, and the Polish government's reaction to the unexpected and unwanted arrival of Polish Jews from German lands. There is a narrative and a searchable list of names.

“Memorial Book of Victims of the Persecution of Jews under the National Socialist Regime in Germany, 1933-1945, German Jews Murdered in the Holocaust” at <http://www.bundesarchiv.de/gedenkbuch/intro> This is an updated version of a book first published in 1986 and now includes 150,000 names (including those from the former East Germany). Each entry includes the person's name (including maiden names for married women), date of birth, place of last residence, place to which deported, and date of death, when known.

436,000 German Restitution Records Now Online & Searchable in English

The site is at <http://wga-datenbank.de/en/search.html> and contains records of restitution claims in West Berlin, property confiscated or acquired by the Reich, the Nazi Party, the state of Prussia or other Nazi institutions.

Help Save Jewish Cemeteries in Poland

There are more than 1,200 Jewish cemeteries in Poland, most of which are unprotected and not maintained, lacking markers, signs, fences or gravestones. The Foundation for the Preservation of Jewish Heritage in Poland (FODZ) has an “Adopt a Jewish Cemetery in Poland” initiative, which seeks to encourage individuals, families, groups, etc. to support preservation projects. Projects may be small, such as mounting a memorial plaque to make visitors and residents aware of the cemetery, or large scale, such as erecting fences, gates, and memorials. In 2013 and 2014 the FODZ had projects in more than 24 Jewish cemeteries. <http://fodz.pl/?d=5&id=101&l=en>

Find Volunteer Researchers in France

This website from the French archives will forward your request for research assistance in French records to volunteer genealogical researchers. It may take several weeks to get a reply. <http://www.entraide-genealogique.net/index.php?id=1&lang=EN>

Free Worldwide Online Depository of Genealogies

The full name of this free site is Electronically Preserving Obituaries as a Cultural Heritage and the purpose of it is to allow individuals anywhere to preserve the memory of deceased family member and friends through memorials, obituaries and tributes. <http://www.epochlegacies.org>

Sources: *Avotaynu*, Vol. XXX, No. 4, *Nu? What's New?* Vol. 16, No.6 February 8, 2015 and Vol. 16, No. 11, March 15, 2015 ☆

In the Repositories

American Jewish Historical Society, www.ajhs.org

A scroll through the Finding Aids on the AJHS website reveals such useful sources for family research as:

The Baron De Hirsch Finding Aid, 1870-1991, which describes the content of the archive's 188 boxes. Among them are the records of the National Farm School, the Peekskill Farm, the Woodbine Colony and other farm colonies supported by Baron de Hirsch funds for Jewish immigrants in California, Connecticut, Florida, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, North Dakota, New Jersey, New York Pennsylvania, South Dakota and Texas (Galveston).

The Hebrew Sheltering Arms Guardian Society, 1879-1972, in which one may find the names of the children who were cared for. This organization later merged with the Jewish Child Care Association.

The Hebrew Orphan Asylum of the City of New York, 1855-1985, where children's names are listed.

The Industrial Removal Office Records, 1899-1922, which has a database in which to find the names of the individuals who were "removed" to cities outside New York by the IRO.

There are also finding aids on the campaigns for Soviet Jewry.

The archival materials must be consulted in person at the Center for Jewish History.

Brooklyn Historical Society, www.brooklynhistory.org

The BHS has two new online aids to genealogical research.

1. "Guide to Brooklyn Jewish Archival Materials at the Othmer Library," containing organizational and personal records, family photos, newspaper clippings, sheet music and oral histories. The material deals mostly with the period from 1900 to 1950, but there is some nineteenth century material, too.

2. "Guide to Family History & Genealogical Research," which contain directories, an index to wills, family histories, scrapbooks, census materials and vital statistics about specific neighborhoods.

In addition, the BHS has 4,000 images online and 35,000 images that can be viewed in person.

New York Public Library

Noteworthy collections, available online, include:

650 Yizkor Books Digitized, <http://www.nypl.org/collections/nypl-recommendations/guides/yizkorbooks>.

Jewish Committee Oral History Collection, <http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/american-jewish-committee>.

This collection consists of interviews with 2,250 well known individuals, comprising 100,000 pages of transcripts and 6,000 hours of audio tapes. Among the voices and life stories, one will find those of Bella Abzug, Kitty Carlisle, Abba Eban, Abraham Foxman, Victor Gotbaum, Marvin Hamlisch, Alfred Kazin, Golda Meier, Itzhak Perlman, Molly Picon, Leo Rosten and Neil Simon, to name only a few. ☆

New, Recent, and Noteworthy Publications

Books about the Jewish Experience in the New World

Hasia Diner, *Roads Taken: The Great Jewish Migrations to the New World and the Peddlers Who Forged the Way* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015) 280 pages, 18 b/w illus., \$35.

From the publisher: “Between the late 1700s and the 1920s, nearly one-third of the world’s Jews emigrated to new lands. They followed paths paved by intrepid peddlers who preceded them. This book is the first to tell the remarkable story of the Jewish men who put packs on their backs and traveled forth, house to house, farm to farm, mining camp to mining camp, to sell their goods to peoples across the world. Hasia Diner tells the story of millions of discontented young Jewish men who sought opportunity abroad, leaving parents, wives and sweethearts behind. Wherever they went, they learned unfamiliar languages and customs, endured loneliness, battled the elements and proffered goods from the metropolis to people of the hinterlands. These men brought change to themselves and the families who later followed, to the women whose homes and communities they penetrated, and ultimately to the geography of Jewish history.”

A reviewer wrote: “Deeply and richly researched, festooned with colorful details, Diner’s account follows the peddlers’ peregrinations as they cut a wide graphical swath through the United States and South Africa, the Caribbean, and Latin America of the 19th and 20th centuries. You get the sense that Diner is rooting for these itinerant purveyors of goods and ideas, determined to rescue them from the shadows to which both economics and history have consigned them.”

Adam D. Mendelsohn, *The Rag Race: How Jews Sewed Their Way to Success in America and the British Empire* (New York: New York University Press, 2014) 320 pages, 15 halftones, \$35.

From the publisher: “The majority of Jewish immigrants who made their way to the United States between 1820 and 1924 arrived nearly penniless; yet today their descendants stand out as exceptionally successful. How can we explain their dramatic ascent? Have Jews been successful because of cultural factors distinct to them as a group, or because of the particular circumstances

they encountered in America? *The Rag Race* argues that the Jews who flocked to the United States during the age of mass migration were aided appreciably by their association with a particular corner of the American economy - the rag trade - shaping both their societal status and the clothing industry as a whole.

“Comparing the history of Jewish participation within the clothing trades in the United States with that of Jews in the same business in England, *The Rag Race* demonstrates that the differences within the garment industry on either side of the Atlantic contributed to a very real divergence in social and economic outcomes for Jews in each setting.”

A reviewer wrote: “This book is studded with insight and written with wit and style.” Another reviewer said: “This is an outstanding example of comparative history and offers insights that any scholar or student of immigration will appreciate.”

Jeff Kisseloff, *You Must Remember This: An Oral History of Manhattan from the 1890s to World War II* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 2013) 622 pages, \$24.95 paperback.

From the publisher: “Jeff Kisseloff brings together 137 New Yorkers who witnessed daily life in Manhattan from the 1890s to World War II. Dividing the city into ten neighborhoods and devoting a chapter and about a dozen voices to each, Kisseloff offers a brief historical introduction, then lets the eye witnesses speak for themselves.”

A reviewer wrote: “The past emerges here not as history but as lived life in the vivid descriptions of immigrants and their descendants, who populated the widely varied sections of the metropolis. Hardly a melting pot, the city was divided into ethnic enclaves – Jewish, Chinese, Irish, German, each with an individual character.”

Books about Genealogy & Tales of Genealogy Searches

Jewish Genealogical Society of Palm Beach County, *Genealogy Resources – Searching Your Ancestry in Archives and Repositories, 10th edition*, Sylvia Furshman Nusinov, editor, 324 pages, spiral binding,

\$20 plus \$5 postage.” Order from Sylvia Nusinov, 10298 Buena Ventura Drive, Boca Raton, FL 33498

From the publisher: “An excellent guide for both beginners and advanced researchers seeking help in their genealogical research, each edition has been updated to conform to the changing world of genealogical resources—both in the cyber-world as well as national and international repositories and archives. The first edition was awarded the IAJGS 2003 Achievement Award for Outstanding Publication. Many distinguished members of the IAJGS (International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies) contributed their expertise to this book, presenting the latest references for research in Poland, Lithuania, Belarus Galicia, and Sephardic countries. This new edition features updated request forms for searching the National Archives & Records Administration, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, U.S. Federal Census forms, 1790-1940, Canadian Census forms 1851-1911, articles regarding Yad Vashem, the International Tracing Service, Beit Hatfusot, Sephardic and Ashkenazi genealogy, family tree charts and much more.”

Glenn Kurtz, *Three Minutes in Poland* (New York: Farrar Straus and Giroux, 2014) 415 pages, illus., \$30.

From the publisher: “When Glenn Kurtz stumbles upon an old family film in his parents’ closet in Florida, he has no inkling of its historical significance or of the impact it will have on his life. The film, shot long ago by his grandfather on a sightseeing trip to Europe in 1938, captured on color 16 mm film the only known moving images of the thriving predominantly Jewish town of Nasielsk, Poland, shortly before the community’s destruction. Fewer than one hundred of its residents would survive. Kurtz quickly recognized the brief footage as a crucial link to a lost history and that every image, every face was a mystery that might be solved. Soon he is swept up in a remarkable journey to learn everything he can about these people, traveling across the United States, to Canada, England, Poland and Israel and into archives, basements, cemeteries, and even an irrigation ditch at an abandoned Luftwaffe airfield, as he looks for shards of Nasielsk’s Jewish history.” This book was named one of the best books of 2014 by National Public Radio, *The New Yorker*, and *The Boston Globe*.

NOTE: Mr. Kurtz will be the featured speaker at a JGSNY meeting in the fall of 2015.

Nathan Dylan Goodwin, *Hiding the Past* (2013, \$11.99), *The Orange Lilies* (2014, \$6.99) and *The Lost Ancestor* (2014, \$11.69), all self published and available from www.nathandyangoodwin.com or from Amazon in paperback or Kindle versions.

These are the titles of three genealogical crime mysteries, featuring Morton Farrier, forensic genealogist.

A reviewer in *Your Family Tree* wrote about *The Lost Ancestor*; “Flicking between the present and stories and extracts from the past, the pace never lets up in an excellent addition to this unique genre of literature.”

Family Tree Magazine’s reviewer said about the same book, “This is a fast moving modern crime mystery with genealogical twists. The blend of well fleshed out characters, complete with flaws and foibles, will keep you guessing until the end.”

New York Genealogical & Biographical Society, *New York Family History Research Guide & Gazetteer*, (New York: NY Genealogical & Biographical Society, 2015), softcover, 856 pages, extensive index, \$85 plus \$10 postage or \$65 plus \$10 postage for NYG&B members.

From the publisher: “This is the first book of its kind. More than 100 experts have reviewed and contributed content about local and regional resources and key topics in New York family history. There are chapters on major record groups and research resources, including the most up-to-date and comprehensive review of New York State’s extremely complicated vital records system; information on research resources for sixteen major ethnic and twelve major religious groups that have lived in New York; gazetteers, maps and research guides to each of New York’s 62 counties, including the five boroughs of New York City; more than 100 special topic bibliographies vetted by genealogists; timelines of key events in New York history 1609-1945 that impact genealogical research; and an index of over 11,000 place names and place-name variants past and present.” The archivist of the U.S. called it “a true gift to those interested in family history.” ☆



QUESTIONING THE EXPERTS

DOROT questions both JGS members and outside experts about their genealogical skills and elicits their advice for those embarking on their own genealogical path.

Interview with Moriah Amit, Senior Reference Services Librarian/Genealogy Coordinator, in the Ackman & Ziff Family Genealogy Institute housed in the Center for Jewish History

DOROT: Your official title is Senior Reference Services Librarian/Genealogy Coordinator, but are you, in effect, the person in charge of the Ackman & Ziff Family Genealogy Institute at the Center for Jewish History?

AMIT: Yes, that's correct. I oversee the day-to-day operations of the Institute.

DOROT: Would you tell us about the Institute and how it fits into the structure of the Center for Jewish History at 15 West 16th Street in New York?

AMIT: The Center was founded in 2000 as a collaboration of five partner organizations – the American Jewish Historical Society, the American Sephardi Federation, the Leo Baeck Institute, the Yeshiva University Museum and the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research – that came together under one roof. Recognizing the wealth of genealogical resources within the partner collections, the five Center partners and the Jewish Genealogical Society established the Genealogy Institute that same year to serve as the gateway to those resources and to cater to the specific needs and interests of the genealogical researcher, which are quite different from those of the average Reading Room user at the Center.

DOROT: Who are represented by the names Ackman and Ziff that are attached to the Institute?

AMIT: In 2007 the Center renamed the Institute “The Ackman and Ziff Family Genealogy Institute” in honor of the generous contributions of Bill and Karen Ackman, Larry and Ronnie Ackman, and Hope and Simon Ziff. They were really inspired by the help that they received at the Center for Jewish History and wanted to make that kind of hands-on assistance more widely available to the public. Summing up the families’ commitment to the Institute’s mission, Mr.

Ziff stated “Funding Jewish genealogy is essential to us, since we share a deep sense of family history and identity and understand the need to discover information relating to our roots, culture and traditions.”



Moriah Amit

DOROT: What are the resources at the Center for Jewish History that you draw upon for people who are interested in genealogical research?

AMIT: The Genealogy Institute, in its own right, has a vast amount of resources to help people in all aspects of genealogical research from very beginning to advanced research. We have a wide variety of reference books, including surname dictionaries, gazetteers,

encyclopedias, guides to interpreting genealogical records in a variety of languages, and more. Also, we are an affiliate library of the Church of Latter Day Saints Family History Library, the largest collection of genealogical records in the world. This means that our patrons have the opportunity to order any microfilm in the Family History Library to be viewed here either on temporary or long-term loan. In addition, we already have on site nearly 2,500 microfilms from the Family History Library, which predominantly contain Jewish records from Eastern and Central Europe. We have these on long-term loans. A complete list of these is available on the JGS website. To find the list, go to jgsny.org, find the JGS Resources tab, and click on “Microfilms at CJH.”

DOROT: So a researcher who wants to access the microfilm resources of the LDS Family History Library submits a request through the Genealogy Institute?

AMIT: Well, actually the ordering takes place on line at the Family History Library website, FamilySearch.org, but if you select the Center for Jewish History as the destination for your order, then you can view it at the Genealogy Institute on one of our eight digital microfilm readers.

DOROT: Do the digital microfilm readers offer any advantage to the researcher over the old-fashioned,

hand-cranked readers?

AMIT: Oh, absolutely. First of all, you have the option now of saving any image to a flash drive or emailing it to yourself, in addition to printing. There are also many options for changing the image quality and size, so that you can more easily read your documents.

DOROT: Do people have to make appointments to access their microfilms at the Institute, once they order them on line?

AMIT: You do not need to make an appointment to view microfilms. However, we do encourage people to reserve a microfilm reader, as they sometimes can be fully occupied. You may reserve a microfilm reader at least one day in advance of your visit at microfilm.cjh.org.

DOROT: When, in general, can people come to the Genealogy Institute to do their work?

AMIT: We're open six days a week, Sunday through Friday. On Sundays we're open from 11 AM to 4 PM, Mondays 9:30 AM to 7:30 PM, Tuesday through Thursday 9:30 AM to 5:30 PM and Friday 9:30 AM to 1:30 PM. We do not take appointments but we try our best to help every person who walks into the Genealogy Institute. Our website is <http://www.cjh.org/p/34>.

DOROT: You are in charge of the daily operations of the Institute but you also use volunteers. What role do they play?

AMIT: They play a crucial role. First of all, they're part of our reference services team, assisting our patrons both on site and remotely. I should mention that we take questions via phone, email and online chat, as well as from our on-site visitors. In addition to that, they help us with a wide variety of projects, as needed. For example, I currently have volunteers helping to index selected historical foreign-language periodicals in our partner collections. The ultimate goal is to create a database, so that the public may search for names within these periodicals. Currently we're working on French and Russian-language periodicals, but this will not be a comprehensive database of Jewish periodicals in either language. We are really focusing on local, community-based periodicals that people might be interested in while searching for information about their ancestors.

DOROT: You mentioned that people can submit questions to the Institute. What are the kinds of

questions that you tend to receive?

AMIT: First of all, I get questions from all over the world and at all levels of research. Many of my questions are from people who are first getting into genealogy. Those tend to be very process-oriented questions: How do I go about finding records from X place in X time period? More advanced researchers typically reach out to us when they hit a brick wall. Their questions tend to be much more esoteric and are frequently related to specific collections at the Center for Jewish History.

Connecting Researchers to the Center's Vast Collections

DOROT: Can people doing research in the Genealogy Institute move into the collections of the partner organizations at the Center for Jewish History to carry out their research and can you give them guidance about how to do that?

AMIT: Yes, the Genealogy Institute's primary mission is to facilitate access to the Center's genealogy-related materials, and we strive to make that transition as seamless as possible. We produce research guides on various topics within Jewish genealogy as well as for individual countries where Jews originated. Those guides cover the major resources at the Center pertinent to those topics and countries. In addition to that, of course, when we work with patrons either on-site or remotely, we frequently direct them to appropriate materials in the Center for Jewish History's collections.

DOROT: For a large percentage of your researchers, what are the specific kinds of resources within the partner organizations that can provide them with some information about their ancestors?

AMIT: The amount of materials in our collections that are relevant to researching both individuals and towns is vast, reflecting the entire scope of Jewish life across centuries and around the world. Primary sources, such as memoirs, newspapers, photographs, and records of Jewish organizations – communal, charitable, cultural, political, and professional – assist our researchers in building a nuanced picture of what life was like for their ancestors, beyond simple names and dates. These include everything from New York City orphanage records to records of various immigrant aid organizations like HIAS (Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society) that can provide information about the immigration experience of our ancestors to 18th and

19th century *mohelbücher* (or circumcision registers) from various towns in Germany. We are one of the world's primary repositories of records and histories from various Jewish communities around the world. In addition to that we have one of the world's largest collections of *yizkor* books, which are memorial books created by *landsmanschaftn* (<http://www.cjh.org/pdfs/Landsmanschaftn.pdf>), or hometown mutual aid societies that were set up by Jewish immigrants. These *landsmanschaft* committees created memorials to individual communities that had been destroyed in the Holocaust, but these books do not only reflect the towns' Holocaust experience. They also reflect the entire history of the Jewish settlements in those towns and profile prominent individuals as well as the cultural heritage of those towns.

DOROT: Those books were written for the most part in either Yiddish or Hebrew. If somebody finds an article in one of the books that might be relevant to their family, can you offer them assistance in accessing that material if it has not been translated into English or some other language?

AMIT: Sure, we actually engage with a number of volunteer translators and we can arrange for them to get in contact with anyone who would like a limited amount of materials to be translated, including from Hebrew and Yiddish. For more extensive translations, we do have people we can refer for hire.

DOROT: Do you have a relationship with the Yizkor Book Project at JewishGen (<http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/translations.html>)?

AMIT: We don't have a formal affiliation with them, but we certainly refer people to that project all the time when they're looking for English translations of particular *yizkor* books. I should also mention that we have a great many individual family collections as well, the papers of individual families, many of which include family trees and more detailed family histories.

DOROT: That leads to this question: Many genealogists accumulate material on their families in the course of their work. Do you encourage or at least offer people the possibility to submit those materials to the Center for Jewish History or the Genealogy Institute?

AMIT: While the Genealogy Institute is currently not accepting donations of family history papers, the Center's partner organizations are heavily involved in collecting and preserving those kinds of materials. If a

person inquires about donating their family documents and/or family history research, we will connect them to an archivist at the relevant partner organization, who will happily talk with them about the possibility of submitting their family papers here.

Orphanage Records

DOROT: Have you worked with researchers and helped them make any significant discoveries?

AMIT: Sure, I see people make breakthroughs every day in front of me. While I may not carry people through the entire course of their research, I certainly feel that I've made an impact by directing people to places where they may find very significant insights into their families. One of the most poignant areas of research that I find is when people are looking at any of the five New York City orphanage collections that are held by the American Jewish Historical Society. People whose parents or grandparents were in orphanages as children often have very little information about their childhoods, what happened to them when they left the orphanage, or even what the circumstances were that led them to be admitted to an orphanage. Not too long ago, one of my patrons was trying to track down what happened to their grandparent in what I believe was the New York Hebrew Orphan Asylum. The collection actually had a ledger of visitors to this orphan asylum during one of the years that this patron's grandparent was living there. I could tell it was very emotional for that person to see that even though their grandparent had been admitted to this orphan asylum, they were frequently visited by a number of different relatives during the course of the grandparent's time there. They weren't just left there to fend for themselves. There was really a family connection that was maintained during their stay there.

DOROT: Are those orphanage records indexed?

AMIT: Yes, the admission and discharge registers of all five of the New York City orphanages held by the American Jewish Historical Society (AJHS) have been indexed. They have also been digitized in partnership with Ancestry and are searchable and viewable on Ancestry.com, although not for the entire date ranges of AJHS' holdings. Some more recent records are restricted for privacy reasons. We provide free access to Ancestry.com on-site in the Genealogy Institute.

Free Access to Online Commercial Databases

DOROT: What resources for family researchers do you

have on the computers at the Genealogy Institute?

AMIT: First of all, we subscribe to a number of commercial genealogy databases, which allows people to access these vast online record collections for free when they visit us. If you were to use these same databases from home, you would have to purchase a subscription to each one. Ancestry is definitely our most popular of these, but we also have several others that are well used, such as Fold3 – a database that includes U.S. naturalization records, city directories and military records – and ProQuest’s American Jewish Newspapers, Historical New York Times, and Obituaries databases.

In addition to those New York City orphanage records that were digitized and available on Ancestry, the American Jewish Historical Society has also provided digital images of a number of its other genealogically relevant collections to Ancestry, such as World War One and World War Two Jewish service records and records of Jewish immigrant arrivals at the port of Galveston, Texas.

DOROT: When you search on Ancestry for any of these databases, do you do a general search by just putting in the name and clicking on Search or is there a way to narrow your search within a specific database such as the orphanages?

AMIT: Yes, there is a way to narrow that search. If you go to the “Search” tab on the Ancestry home page and click on “Browse Card Catalog,” you can then search by keyword for the title of that collection in the Card Catalog, and once you click on the collection title, you will be able to search just that set of records.

DOROT: If you were researching, say, an uncommon name, would the record appear in a general search?

AMIT: I would say in theory, yes, but if you were interested in a particular group of records such as the orphanage records, I would recommend starting by searching that specific group of records.

DOROT: Are there any other stories that come to mind of significant breakthroughs in your patrons’ research at the Genealogy Institute?

AMIT: I recently corresponded with a patron, Jason Kirchick, who made a completely unexpected discovery about his great aunt Sophia in the HIAS Boston case files at the American Jewish Historical Society

(AJHS). He had initially sent an email to the Genealogy Institute seeking information about the parents of his grandfather, Julius Kirchick, who had been placed in the New York Hebrew Orphan Asylum. I was able to provide him with a few leads, including a 1910 U.S. Census record, in which Julius is listed with his parents, Abraham and Rose, and his older sister, Sophia. Mr. Kirchick went on to search for Julius’ sister, Sophia, on Ancestry.com and found that she married an Italian man named Antonio Lallo in 1917 and then just three years later, according to the 1920 U.S. census, was living at the Inwood House, a shelter for “wayward girls” in New York City. These tantalizing clues spurred him to reach out to the AJHS for additional assistance. Bonni Joi Koelliker, AJHS’ Photo and Reference Archivist, wrote back to him with exciting news. She had found a match in the online index to AJHS’ HIAS Boston case files (available at <http://www.cjh.org/p/61>) and located the associated microfilm, which contained about 20 pages of correspondence concerning Sophia’s whereabouts in 1936. Upon ordering copies of his great aunt’s case file, Mr. Kirchick was surprised to learn about some of the sad twists of fate that had befallen her in the decades after her wedding. According to these documents, her family had been heartbroken by her marriage to an Italian man and had lost contact with her when she accompanied him to Italy sometime around 1920, upon his deportation. In 1936, a Reverend H.L. Ellison of the Mission Church for Jews in Bucharest, Romania, contacted HIAS, stating that Sophia was found in the streets of Bucharest homeless and sick, that he took her under his roof, and that she needed an operation. At first, her family did not wish to intervene, but, several months later, they had a change of heart and sent Sophia \$20 to assist with her operation expenses. The last report from HIAS’ Bucharest office, dated December 2, 1936, states that Sophia had her operation and is in need of additional financial support to cover the costs of her rehabilitation. Although the case file ends there, Mr. Kirchick is using this incredible find as a foundation upon which he hopes to flesh out the details of the remainder of her life. If you would like to offer Mr. Kirchick any advice about where to look next, you may email him at jkirchick@hotmail.com.

DOROT: What brought you to the Genealogy Institute? Your background is in library science, I believe.

AMIT: That’s correct. I received my Master’s in Library Science from Pratt Institute and I began working at the Center for Jewish History as a cataloging librarian. I decided that I wanted to pursue reference librarianship because I really wanted to work hands-on assisting

the public, and I really felt that I had a good grasp of the collections here and could be of use in directing people to appropriate resources. In my first few years working in reference, I alternated between working in the Reading Room and working in the Genealogy Institute but over time I really developed an affinity for genealogy resources and genealogical research methods. I guess my colleagues recognized that as well so gradually I became more and more specialized in that area and two and a half years ago I was promoted to a full-time reference services librarian in the Genealogy Institute.

DOROT: Once you became involved professionally with genealogy, did that spill over into your own family research?

AMIT: Absolutely. I definitely caught the genealogy bug once I started working here. Especially when I first started working at the Genealogy Institute, I used my family history as a way to get myself immersed in all the important resources and the research process. That helped me get oriented to this whole different world that I really didn't know about until I started working here.

DOROT: To what parts of the world does your family research extend?

AMIT: I have quite a mixed background. Half of my family is of East European Jewish descent, specifically Polish and Lithuanian and Galician; on the other side of my family, I am half German-Jewish and half Sephardic-Jewish, by way of Syria and Turkey.

DOROT: In terms of geography, what has been the most challenging part of your research?

AMIT: I would say the Eastern European side of my family has come easiest, but I don't know if it is necessarily due to the particular circumstances of the records that exist for that area or that I just happen to have started with more information on that side of the family, because I still have relatives on that side to whom I can ask questions. Unfortunately on my other side, I developed this interest too late, as is a familiar story for many people. The relatives whom I can interview on that side unfortunately have very minimal information about my family history. That poses a challenge. But it has been a fascinating journey just to learn more about the communities that my family came from on that side. I'm still working to get through those brick walls. As most people know, it frequently takes years once you

get into it. You can put your research aside for a while and then some new idea will come to you and you'll go off again on another chase.

DOROT: Are there any techniques that you, as a professional librarian, would recommend to people who may or may not be new to family research?

Advice to Family Researchers

AMIT: My number one recommendation is to be extremely organized in your research. You really can't underestimate the value of making sure that you have documented not only the facts that you found, but where they have come from. The other recommendation that I would have is to think outside the box, don't just think about the most obvious choice of documents such as birth, marriage and death records. Think about all the kinds of traces that people may have left, whether it is in newspapers or in community archives, in an organization that they may have been involved with or that may have aided them in some way. There are all kinds of activities that people have been engaged with that leave traces besides the basic official records of people's life events.

DOROT: Do you have a particular organizational format that you use for your own research to keep track of, as you say, not only the information but where it came from?

AMIT: I'm sure that people are comfortable with different formats. I personally use an online family tree builder software that helps me to keep track not only of facts like dates of birth, marriage and death, but also citations for all those facts and places for notes and the ability to upload photos, so it's all in one place.

DOROT: As a librarian, have you given any thought to the eventual documentation of the personal genealogical work that you're doing?

AMIT: That's funny, I haven't given much thought to that. Certainly I've thought about it from a personal perspective, which members of my family would be interested in seeing this kind of material? What kind of legacy am I leaving for future generations in my family? But in terms of a wider perspective, what future researchers might make use of it, that's something I have yet to determine. Once I have assembled something that I deem to be sufficiently

continued on page 6



Jewish Genealogical Society, Inc.

Donation Form

I (we) would like to support the work of JGS, Inc. with a gift of \$ _____ .

I (we) plan to make this contribution in the form of: check credit card

Credit card type | Exp. date _____

Credit card number _____

Authorized signature _____

Gift will be matched by (company/foundation): form enclosed form will be forwarded

I (we) wish to have our gift remain anonymous.

Would you like to make your gift in honor, or in memory, of a friend, family member or colleague? If so, please tell us the name and address -- and special occasion, if appropriate -- of the person to be honored or memorialized and we will inform that person or his/her family (but we will not indicate the amount donated).

In honor of _____ In memory of _____ Thank you _____ Get Well _____ Other (fill in) _____

Name and address of person you wish to honor: _____

Name and address of person to inform, if different from the name above:

Donor Information

Name _____

Billing address _____

City, ST Zip Code _____

Phone _____ E-mail: _____

Signature(s)

Date

Please make checks, corporate matches, or other gifts payable to: JGS, Inc. [JGS, Inc. is an I.R.S. 501(c) (3) non-profit organization. Donations are tax-deductible in accordance with applicable law]

Jewish Genealogical Society, Inc.

PO Box 631

New York, NY 10113-0631



WHY YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS TO JGS ARE IMPORTANT

In addition to its monthly lectures and the publication of *Dorot*, JGS advances the interests of Jewish family historians by supporting -- both financially and through the work of volunteers -- a variety of archival research activities. **Gifts to JGS permit us to underwrite the microfilming, digitizing and indexing of original records relevant to Jewish genealogical research, thereby enabling the preservation of valuable documents and facilitating public access.**

Among the many organizations and repositories where your contributions have supported preservation and records access are: the American Jewish Historical Society, American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, Center for Jewish History and its Ackman & Ziff Family Genealogy Institute, Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, JewishGen, Jewish Records Indexing-Poland, NYC Municipal Archives, New York Genealogical and Biographical Society, and YIVO Institute for Jewish Research.

The Jewish Genealogical Society website opens the door to

- Jewishdata.com (accessible by members of JGS)
- NY Naturalizations: Database of the Index to Brooklyn Naturalizations (1907–1924); Other New York Area Naturalizations: links to searchable online New York State naturalization indexes by county
- Cemeteries: Map of New York Area Jewish Cemeteries; Directory of Jewish Cemeteries in the Metropolitan New York Area; Burial Societies in the New York Metro Area; New York Area Cemetery Directions
- NY Area Resources: a comprehensive list of repositories in the metropolitan New York area
- *Dorot*: downloadable issues: 1984—2012; list of highlights of back issues: 1979-2008
- Events: Announcements of upcoming JGS monthly programs and events
- New York Landsmanshaftn and Other Jewish Organizations: links to indexes, databases, and directories, such as *American Jewish Year Book*; Landsmanshaftn and other town and country-related organization organizations incorporated in New York County, 1848-1920; WPA Survey of New York City Synagogue Records, 1939
- Memorial Database of Jewish Soldiers, Partisans and Workers killed in action during the Nazi era
- Inventory of LDS Microfilms and Microfiche on Indefinite Loan at the Center for Jewish History
- Other: links to other sites that may be of interest to the JGS community



<http://www.jgsny.org>

JGS Friends

JGS members are encouraged to patronize our Friends listed below. Make use of your current JGS membership card to take advantage of the special offers we have arranged for you.

If you have a suggestion for a new Friend, please e-mail it to the Editor at editor@jgsny.org.

THE MUSEUM AT ELDRIDGE STREET

12 Eldridge Street, between Canal & Division St (just south of Canal St)
New York, NY
212-219-0888
www.eldridgestreet.org

JGS members receive **free admission** for a companion (2 for the price of 1). \$10 adults; \$8 students/seniors; \$6 children 5–18. Free Mondays (up to 6 people), Sunday–Thursday 10:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Friday 10:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.

Tours of the restored Eldridge Street Synagogue

Tour: From Ellis to Eldridge: Immigrant History

Tour: Beyond the Façade: Architecture and Preservation

Special programs and other tours by appointment—see website www.eldridgestreet.org

THE JEWISH MUSEUM

1109 Fifth Avenue (at 92nd Street)
New York, NY 10128
(212) 423-3200
www.TheJewishMuseum.org

JGS members will receive **free admission** for a companion (**2 for the price of 1**). \$12 adults; \$10 senior citizens; \$7.50 students. Children under 12 free. Saturdays free.

Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Saturday,
11:00 a.m.–5:45 p.m.;
Thursday, 11:00 a.m.–8:00 p.m.;
Friday (EST: Nov–Mar) 11:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.;
(DST: Apr–Oct) 11:00 a.m. to 5:45 p.m.

Closed on Wednesdays and major legal and Jewish holidays.

MUSEUM OF JEWISH HERITAGE: A LIVING MEMORIAL TO THE HOLOCAUST

36 Battery Place, Battery Park City
New York, NY 10280
(646) 437-4200
www.mjhnyc.org

JGS members will receive a **\$2 discount** on the general admission price (\$12 **\$10** adults, \$10 **\$8** seniors, and \$7 **\$5** students). Children 12 and under free. Wednesdays, 4:00 p.m.–8:00 p.m., free. JGS members receive **15% off** all purchases in the Museum Shop.

Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, 10:00 a.m.–5:45 p.m.;
Wednesday, 10:00 a.m.–8:00 p.m. (free after 4:00 p.m.);
Friday and the eve of Jewish holidays, 10:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m. (EST);
Friday, 10:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. (DST).

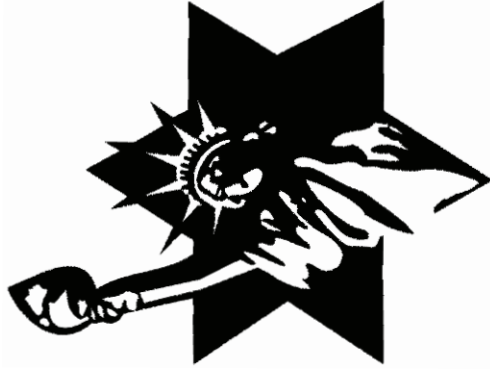
Closed Saturdays, Jewish holidays, and Thanksgiving Day.

YESHIVA UNIVERSITY MUSEUM AT THE CENTER FOR JEWISH HISTORY

15 West 16th Street
New York, NY 10011
(212) 294-8330
www.yumuseum.org

JGS members will receive **free admission** for a companion (**2 for the price of 1**). \$8 adults; \$6 seniors and students.

Sunday, Tuesday, Thursday, 11:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.;
Monday, 5:00–8:00 p.m (Free)
Wednesday, 11:00–8:00 p.m. (5:00–8:00 p.m. Free)
Friday, 11:00 a.m.–2:30 p.m. (Free)



Jewish Genealogical Society

P.O Box 631
New York, NY 10113-0631
www.jgsny.org

Address Service Requested

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Hanover, PA
Permit No. 4

That you might recount it to a
future generation, Psalms 48:14

למען תספרו לדור אחרון, תהלים מ"ח:14