

The Journal of the Jewish Genealogical Society

DOROT דורות

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Jewish Refugees from Egypt Documented in JDC Archives Lists

by Pinchas Aronin

As an archivist at the Jerusalem Archives of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) over the past few years, I have been part of the team processing the 1945-1964 portion of JDC's Geneva Office collection. The Geneva collection contains material from around the world, dealing with subjects such as post-World War II DP (displaced persons) Camps in Germany, aid to Jews in North Africa, housing and integration programs for chronically ill immigrants in Israel, loans provided to Jewish immigrants in Brazil in order to get established in business. It contains many lists of names.

Recently I have been processing a group of files dealing with JDC's involvement in aid provided to Egyptian Jews and Jewish refugees from Egypt in the wake of the 1956 Suez Crisis (the war of Egypt vs. Israel, Britain and France). Among these materials, I found some lists of hundreds of refugees who received aid from organizations funded by JDC in France and Brazil. As I process the collection, I frequently get the feeling that each document is like a piece in a puzzle, and depending on the records at hand the puzzle can either appear fairly complete, or that I am looking at just one corner of what must be a much larger picture.

In the case of the Egyptian refugee crisis, JDC's records provide a fairly rich picture of the events in Egypt and some of the paths to resettlement that the refugees followed. I will try to fill out this larger picture before returning to describe the lists.

Before the Suez Crisis, an estimated 50,000 Jews were living in Egypt. The community was centered primarily in the cities of Cairo and Alexandria and included both Sephardi and Ashkenazi elements, as well as Karaite. Many held Egyptian nationality, others were officially nationals of various countries in Europe, North Africa and the Middle East, and perhaps the largest proportion did not have any official citizenship. Several languages were spoken in the Jewish communities of Egypt, French being one of the most prominent.

After the war in late October to early November 1956, the regime of Gamal Abdel Nasser began putting pressure on Jewish residents of Egypt, as well as other minorities in Egypt. Laws were passed allowing the state to deny citizenship to people suspected of Zionist sympathies. Many Jewish businesses were sequestered or closed; many Jews were deprived of their jobs; and laws were

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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*

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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

As the newly elected President of the Jewish Genealogical Society, I am pleased to introduce the Winter 2015 issue of *Dorot*. Let me begin by thanking Roni Seibel Liebowitz for her three years of leadership of the JGS, and by welcoming Joy Kestenbaum as the new Vice President for Programming. Fortunately, Roni, as Past President, remains a member of the Executive Council.

The election of the members of the JGS Executive Council for 2015 was held this past December 21st at our Annual Meeting and holiday brunch. It was good to see so many of you and to be treated to a first-rate "Ask the Experts" session, chaired by Joy, and featuring JGS members Karen Franklin, Robert Friedman, Avrum Geller, and Hadassah Lipsius. A sampling of their responses to members' "brick wall" questions can be found in this issue.

Looking ahead, please mark your calendars with the dates of our upcoming monthly meetings: April 19th, May 17th and June 14th. In addition to providing a forum for learning from experts on genealogical methodology and Jewish history, these programs give us a chance to meet and learn from one another. I recommend that

you keep an eye out for notices of the informal "lunch and learn" sessions, held periodically in advance of the formal lecture. And looking ahead to the summer: the annual *International Conference on Jewish Genealogy* will be convened this year in Jerusalem on July 6th through 10th. The Conference website, www.iajgs2015.org, is up and running.

The current issue of *Dorot* features two essays recalling Jewish life in Egypt in the mid-20th century, and one article about resources for researching Jewish families who fled Egypt in those years. It's an area we haven't covered recently and I think you'll find these pieces to be of interest. On a very different note and much closer to home, all of us researching New York City records will want to read Jordan Auslander's article about the efforts of a team of "obsessive" volunteers (his characterization, not mine) to create a more accessible filing system for records in the NYC Municipal Archives.

I look forward to seeing you at our spring meetings and invite you, in the meanwhile, to get in touch with members of the Executive Council to share your thoughts about ways in which the JGS can be most helpful to you and to the genealogical community.

Jane

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 1870 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.



JGS Welcomes 22 New Members

Name	City	State
Pinchas Aronin	Jerusalem	Israel
Chaia Beckerman	Anaheim	CA
Mayer Blum	Cedarhurst	NY
Rita Braunstein	Astoria	NY
Marc Eiseman	Floral Park	NY
Susan Fein	East Brunswick	NJ
Dr. Lois Fermaglich	Lanesboro	MA
Dr. Cynthia Gerstl	Silver Spring	MD
Diane L. Hakam	Holbrook	NY
Neil Kudler	Northampton	MA
Eve Kummel	Otis	MA
Susan Landsman	Forest Hills	NY
Ellen Lebowitz	Bethlehem	PA
Mark Lieberman	Ridgefield	CT
Robin A Meltzer	Silver Spring	MD
Steven Pilchik	Huntingdon Valley	PA
Ousama Saki, BP	Agadir	Morocco
Rebecca Schaeffer	New York	NY
Nora Licht & Doug Sheer	Woodstock	NY
David Slater	Marietta	GA
Carol Handschu Stern	Los Osos	CA
Marion Yanovsky	Monsey	NY

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>

Jewish Refugees from Egypt Documented continued from page 1



Egyptian Jewish refugees disembark from the SS Mecca in Piraeus, Greece, 1956. Photographer: Kostas Megalokonomos. *Courtesy of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee*

passed limiting the number of minority employees that could be employed in any given business. Hundreds of Jews were arrested without cause, and the regime began a campaign forcing many Jews to leave the country and using threats to get the emigrants to sign documents saying that they were leaving of their own accord and would never return.

The Central Registry of Jewish Losses in Egypt, which JDC had helped to establish and fund, worked with the American Jewish Committee, the Jewish Agency and the World Jewish Congress to collect information from the Jewish refugees regarding their financial losses and experiences. In the Central Registry's first bulletin, dated 27 June 1957, individual cases of refugees are described, as, for example, the following Case No. 2:

"Monsieur S. had worked for 18 years for the Société Egyptienne de Publicité. In November 1956 he was the head of their Bookkeeping Department. This company had 17 other Jewish employees. Monsieur S. was arrested at midnight at his home and taken to a concentration camp in Cairo where he found his fellow Jewish employees. They were told they must never set foot in their offices again. After three weeks internment they were all released at the same time in order to leave Egypt. They were warned not to make any attempt to

collect their terminal pay or other benefits to which they were entitled under Egyptian law. The company owed Monsieur S. 345 £E."

Waves of Jewish refugees began leaving Egypt in December 1956. Although the arrests did not last more than a couple of months, the economic pressure and fear continued, leading to a large-scale exodus in the following months and the emigration of most of the Jewish population of Egypt in the following several years. The emigrants were allowed to take only minimal amounts of possessions with them, not including valuables.

Many of the early refugees in late 1956 and early 1957 left on large ships chartered by the Red Cross on their behalf, some carrying as many as 1,000 people. These and other ships brought Jewish refugees to Piraeus and Athens in Greece, Naples and Genoa in Italy, and Marseilles in France. A minority of Jewish refugees left Egypt by plane. By the end of June 1957 arrivals by ship and plane together numbered approximately 20,000. The exodus slowed after that, but emigration continued. By August 1965, the total remaining Jewish population in Egypt was estimated at 2,500.

The largest proportion of the refugees went to Israel and was helped by the Jewish Agency. Others remained in Europe or immigrated to countries in the Americas. Italy and France also served as countries of transit

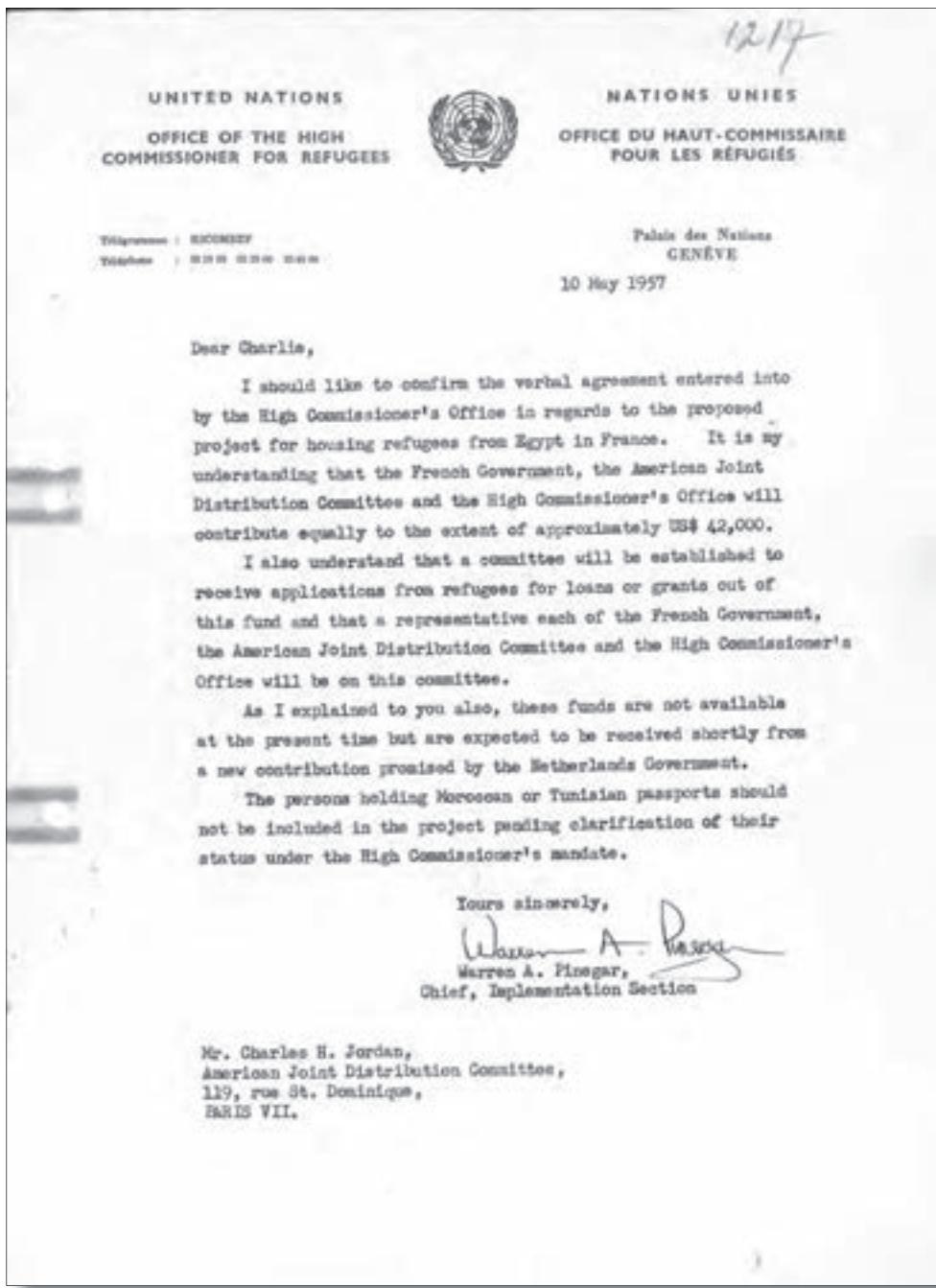


Egyptian Jews expelled from Egypt, check passports with an official of the Jewish Agency in Marseilles, France, 1957. Photographer: Jerome Silberstein. *Courtesy of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee*

for many refugees, as they tried to arrange visas for countries such as Brazil and the United States. France opened its doors to many refugees who spoke French or who originally resided in formerly French-controlled countries that were no longer hospitable to Jews.

As the refugee crisis began, JDC, as one of the main international Jewish aid organizations, became involved.

One aspect of this activity was collecting information on the situation in order to advocate more effectively for the needs of the refugees. JDC appealed to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Auguste R. Lindt, to recognize Jews without citizenship of any country as official refugees under his mandate. Jewish appeals on this subject were accepted, which allowed legal protection of the refugees and paved the



Letter from Walter A. Pinegar, Chief, Implementation Station, UN Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees in Geneva, to Charles H. Jordan, Director General of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, May 10, 1957. Courtesy of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee

ANNEE 1957

ETAT DES SOMMES VERSÉES SUR LE FONDS COMMUN
POUR L'INSTALLATION DES RÉFUGIÉS D'ÉGYPTE

N° du Cas	N° du dossier COJASOR	N° S.S.A.E.	Nom et prénom	Nombre de pers.			Don	Prêt
				H.	F.	E.		
1	40.948	1e7.898	BANOUN Albert	1	1	1		
2	41.595	1e7.897	ANNAKF Isaac	1	1	3		
	41.685	1e9.545	JACOEL Jacques	1	2			
8	41.688	1e8.899	NATUVEL Elie	1	1	2		
10	41.689	1e9.546	DEHHEI Victor	1	1	2		
11	41.684	1e9.912	COHEN Ernest	1	1	5		
12	41.740	1e8.657	BOREDA David	1	2	4		
13	40.915	1e7.891	MAMANE Marcus	1	1	3		
14	41.219	1e9.893	COHEN Elie	1	2	3		
15	41.683	1e9.461	CHALOM Mayer	1	1	2		
16	41.695	1e9.977	HAYAT Charles	1	1	2		
17	41.694	1e9.399	DEMAYO Albert	1	1	2		
17bis	41.686	1e9.460	DEMAYO Mofse	1	1	3		
18	41.696	1e9.367	VIAUD Joseph	1	1			
19	40.655	1e7.513	WAICHE Samuel	2	1	3		
20	41.121	1e9.679	GUIGUIT Charles	1	1	2		
21	41.697	11e.763	COHEN Simon	1	1	1		
22		111.215	POLUY Edith Marg.					
23	41.686	1e9.546	LEVY David	1	1	1		
25	41.381	111.e91	JOSEPH Salvo	1	2	1		
27	40.889	1e7.589	SOFFER Rebeah	1	1			
29	41.e54	1e8.723	MATATTIA Hie	1	2	3		
30	41.139	11e.199	ROKET Jacques	1	1	1		
31	41.491	111.580	HARARI Michel	1	2	2		
32	41.ee5	1e8.514	DJEMAL Marc	1	1	2		
33	40.847	1e8.913	PALOMBO Aileen	1	1	3		
34	41.276	1e8.613	LEVY Ibram	1	2	2		
			A reporter . . .	27	35	55		

List of Egyptian Jewish Refugees in France in 1957. This aid consisted of payments and loans provided to Egyptian Jewish refugees in France by COJASOR (Comite Juif d'Action Sociale et de Reconstruction) with funds from the JDC. Courtesy of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee

way for additional sources of funding for their benefit.

Most of the refugees arrived in Europe with few if any resources. Whether they remained in their initial countries of reception or were staying temporarily until further emigration could be arranged, they were often in need of immediate help to meet the basic needs of food

or shelter. How they fared depended on the country, the means of the local Jewish community and the interest of local authorities. Wherever possible, additional help was provided by JDC, local or national Jewish communities and sometimes governments.

One pressing problem was finding adequate housing



Charles H. Jordan, JDC Director General, presents a check for 10,000 francs to Philippe Monod, President of the AERE (Association pour l'Establishment des Refugie Etrangers) in recognition of his agency's reception and care of stateless Jewish refugees from Egypt. Right to left: Lucie Chevalley President of the Service Social d'Aide aux Emigrants; Philippe Monod; Charles Jordan; and Baron Guy de Rothschild (President of the Fonds Social Juif Unifie). Paris, France, 1956. *Courtesy of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee*

for the new arrivals. Frequently they were put up in hotels, an expensive and imperfect solution that was inappropriate for those permanently settling in their countries of reception. In a November 23, 1959 letter to the office of the UNHCR, JDC's Henri Elfenbein addressed the situation of a housing program in France. During 1958, he wrote, "565 persons were housed... The housing fund, thus far, has given priority to employable families with children, so that, with low-rent housing, families would be independent of further assistance. There remain a substantial number of cases that are in the hard-core category, where the people are living in hotels or small furnished apartments." The hard-core cases were people who needed long-term aid from organizations, often because their age or medical conditions prevented them from becoming self-supporting.

Elsewhere in the files is a list of Jewish refugees from Egypt in France who received housing aid through this housing fund, the Fonds Commun pour l'Etablissement des Réfugiés d'Egypte. This was a fund administered by the French Jewish organization Comité Juif D'Action Sociale et de Reconstruction (COJASOR), and jointly funded by JDC, the French government and the UNHCR. The list contains the names of

approximately 300 heads of families who received help from this fund during the years 1957-1959. Along with each name are listed the number of men, women and children in each family, so the total number of people who are listed as benefitting from the fund comes to 1,255. Also on the list are case numbers as well as the parallel case numbers for COJASOR and SSAE.

Another list relates to the Egyptian refugee situation in Brazil. The Conselho de Assistencia in Sao Paulo, which the JDC helped support, aided the integration of Jewish immigrants. A list of their beneficiaries in 1957 includes the names of over 350 heads of families of Jews arriving from Egypt. Other sections of the same list, which together cover a similar number of people, list

immigrants from Hungary, from which refugees were fleeing in the aftermath of its failed revolution, Israel, Europe, and North Africa. This list also includes the number of family members in each group.

These assets are accessible via the JDC Archives website www.archives.jdc.org, both through the names index and search function (accessible on the home page) and by direct links to the lists themselves (<http://archives.jdc.org/explore-the-archives/searchable-lists.html>). The JDC Names Database contains over 500,000 names from documents dating from 1914 onward. The JDC's large photo collection contains photos of Egyptian refugees from this period, also accessible online from the JDC Archives website.

Pinchas Aronin has worked as a cataloguer in the Jerusalem office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee Archives since 2012. He grew up in Washington, D.C. and White Plains, New York, and studied for his BA in the Joint Program of the Jewish Theological Seminary and Columbia University before making aliyah in 2008. He served in the IDF in 2009-2010 and held a number of other jobs before joining the Archives of the Joint. ♦

Two Real Life Stories of Life in Egypt before and after the Forced Exodus of Jews in 1948 and 1958

Growing up as a Jew in Cairo

By Victor D. Sanua, Ph.D.

About 50 years ago, I came to America to study psychology. I was fluent in English but my speech had a slight accent. Many people would ask about my background. This was difficult to answer since one single response would not suffice. If I was asked my place of birth, it was Egypt (but I was not Egyptian). If I was asked about my passport, it indicated I was Italian, but I had never lived in Italy. If they inquired about the origin of my family, I would indicate Spain but I had to add that my family left Spain about 500 years ago, went to Italy, and later settled in Istanbul where I found burial stones with the name Sanua (meaning "modest" in Hebrew), one dated early 17th century. The only thing I was sure about in my background was the fact that I was Jewish. I am presenting this short exchange to indicate that a large number of Jews born in Egypt were not culturally indigenous to the country.

During the middle of the 19th century, the ruler of Egypt who wanted to modernize the country readily accepted Europeans; consequently, a large number of Ladino speaking Jews came from Turkey. In time, the dominant foreign language became French, and there were a large number of French schools such as the Lycee Francais and the Catholic Schools attended by Jewish children.

My education started in the school of Bab-el-Louk. Besides French, two other languages were taught, English and Arabic. Two hours a week were devoted to the language of the country. Since the Arabic that was taught was classical and had little to do with spoken Arabic, many of us were never conversant with the language, unless the home language was Arabic. However, we were able to manage with "street" Arabic. All department stores had French speaking employees. In my home, we spoke French and Ladino. Depending on their background, Jews spoke other languages.

The small Ashkenazi community spoke Yiddish. Of course, the different nationals whose parents came from various countries spoke the language of their origin, and schools were established for Italians, Germans, Greeks and Armenians. A few schools taught in English.

Since most of the students who attended such schools and who wanted to pursue professional careers could

not attend Egyptian universities because of Arabic deficiencies, they had to go abroad. Only a few students attended Egyptian universities. In view of the decline of France as a power, learning English became more important and it was at that time that I pursued my education in English, first in the high school attached to the American University at Cairo, and later in their liberal college which made it possible for me to continue with my studies in the United States.

Social life for Jews between the two world wars was quite pleasant. Life centered on families, club activities and swimming pool facilities. Cairo had practically everything that a major European city could offer, Italian operas, ballet, Comedie Francaise, foreign symphony orchestras, etc. We had the most recent movies produced in the U.S., England, France and Italy. Alexandria was the major resort city where many Cairenes went to the beaches during vacation time. Alexandria and Cairo had numerous nightclubs presenting shows. There was one particular favorite place for dinner and dancing in Cairo that was called Groppi. I was a member of a club called Judeo-Espagnol but, because of the rising nationalism, the name was changed to Judeo-Egyptian.

A teacher came to my home to prepare me for my bar mitzvah, which was celebrated in the major synagogue in Cairo called Shaar Ha Shamayim (The Gates of Heaven). The famous Chief Rabbi of Egypt, Haim Nahoum Effendi, conducted the service. In 1984, 34 years after leaving Egypt, I returned with my daughter to visit this synagogue with one of the remaining Jewish residents. On Friday evenings the synagogue was always crowded, and there was only standing room if one was late. During the High Holidays, all synagogues were well attended. Clubs, private schools and large homes were, also, used to conduct the Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur prayers. It always felt strange when we thanked God for having delivered us from the Egyptians during Pesach Seders.

Our identity as Jews was quite strong and we even learned to sing the Hatikva in Ladino. There were times of sadness, however. Many times during the year, the ritual of what we called "meldado" (Yahrzeit) was observed. The custom was celebrated in the home. There were a number of older men of modest means who kept dates of deaths and made a living conducting such services in the homes. We requested a number of men to make sure that we had a minyan, particularly

in the middle of the week. Between prayers, they discussed in Ladino passages of the Bible.

These idyllic conditions of Jews in Egypt came slowly to an end with the conflict in Palestine, culminating with the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, and the disappearance of a vibrant community. Today in 1998, there might possibly be about 100 older Jewish persons in all Egypt.

The late Dr. Victor Sanua was a Research Professor in the Dept. of Psychology at St. John's University and President of the International Association of Jews from Egypt. He was the author of "A Short History of the Exodus of Jews from Egypt" and "The Contributions of Sephardic Jews to the Economic and Industrial Development of Egypt" (both published in www.sephardicstudies.org, 30 April 2006) and Fields of Offerings (Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1983). The above article originally appeared in Sepharad, published by sepharad.org.

My Memories of Egypt

By Esther Daiell

October 20, 1958 was the date my family and I left Egypt. We lived in Cairo in an apartment house on a street by the name of La Rue Farouk. Later when the king was overthrown, the name changed to Share El Gesh (the street of the army).

I had a beautiful childhood in Egypt. In 1956 when the war with Israel, England and France broke out, things changed. We were told to get out of the country and sign a document stating that we were leaving of our own accord and would never return. Now we were stateless. In a short period of time my parents had to sell everything and were allowed to leave with just \$20 worth of currency and gold per person. The Jewish Agency helped us get out of the country, through the help of the Red Cross.

My last sad memory of Egypt was when we were boarding the *Aolia*, and a customs officer pulled the head off my doll to see if any jewels were hidden there. My father got us out of Egypt in style by having us travel in first class. The other passengers, unfortunately, had to sleep on the deck of the ship.

We landed in Marseille and quickly were transported by train to Paris. As a child I began to realize the seriousness of our situation when the agency took us to a soup kitchen to have breakfast near Le Sacre Coeur.

We lived for two and a half years in one hotel in La Rue La Chapelle. The French government was very generous by allowing my brother and me to attend their schools. I personally loved my school and still am in contact with my dear friend Martine. HIAS and COSAJOR were instrumental in helping us in France. HIAS was for emigration and COSAJOR (Comite Juif D'Action Sociale et de Reconstruction), the French equivalent of NYANA, was for our financial and other needs. The French government was helpful and periodically checked to see if we had decided to stay in their country. My father felt the anti-Semitism and decided to wait to get into the United States. It was a law sponsored by Senator John F. Kennedy, the Law of Refugees and Escapees, which helped us to immigrate to this country.

We arrived in New York City on March 15, 1961, the ides of March. It was very cold and we were not prepared for the elements. It was close to Passover and NYANA helped us to celebrate the holiday out of Egypt. They helped us find an apartment in the Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood of Brooklyn. The landlord gave us hell and the neighborhood was quite dangerous. Eventually, my parents were able to relocate to an area where other Jews from Egypt lived on Bay Parkway in Brooklyn. After five years we became naturalized.

It was very difficult for my parents to be in this country, especially for my father, who had a hard time getting jobs. It was my mother, who never was allowed to work in Egypt, who succeeded. She was able to use her skills as a seamstress to get a job with the well known House of Pauline Trigere. I was lucky to get into a special art school and my brother was able to go to City College.

Esther Daiell is an artist and art therapist, who works in senior citizen centers. She wrote this reminiscence because she wanted to let people know that the Jews of Egypt did not leave voluntarily, contrary to the assertions in recent films about Egypt. ♦



Upcoming and Current Events

Jewish Genealogical Society, New York

April 19, 2015, 2 p.m.

“Paper Love: Searching for the Girl My Grandfather Left Behind,”

Speaker: Sarah Wildman

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.

May 17, 2015, 2 p.m.

“Holly Golightly Was a Nice Jewish Girl: Our Ancestor Reinvented”

Speaker: Pamela Weisberger

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.

June 14, 2015, 2 p.m.

“Jews, Liquor, & Life in Eastern Europe”

Speaker: Glenn Dynner, Ph.D.

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.

Jewish Genealogical Society of Long Island

April 26, 2015, 2 p.m.; Mavens meet at 1:30 p.m.

“How Did Jews Get to Europe?”

Speaker: Avraham Groll

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

Sunday, May 31, 2015, 2-4 p.m., Mavens meet at 1:30 p.m.

Speaker: To be announced

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

Sunday, June 28, 2015, 2-4 p.m., Mavens meet at 1:30 p.m.

“The Genealogy Indexer Website”

Speaker: Logan Kleinwaks

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

35th IAJGS International Conference on Jewish Genealogy

July 6 – 10, 2015, Jerusalem, Israel

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



1899 Newspaper Article Reports on an After Yom Kippur Banquet for Jewish Soldiers in San Francisco

Thanks to JGS members Jeffrey Levin and Eliezer Frolich, *Dorot* received an article from the September 22, 1899 issue of the *Oregon Hebrew News*, listing the names of Jewish soldiers from New York City, serving in the 27th Infantry Unit of the 202nd Regiment, who had recently returned from fighting in Cuba in the Spanish American War. They were the guests of Rabbi Dr. M.S.

Levy and members of Congregation Beth Israel in San Francisco at an after Yom Kippur banquet held in their honor at Ossosky's Kosher Restaurant. The article describes the menu, the names of all the local participants who arranged the banquet and the names of the Jewish officers and soldiers who made after dinner speeches.◊

JEWISH SOLDIER BOYS BANQUETTED AFTER THE FAST OF YOM KIPPUR.

The Jewish soldiers in the twenty-seventh infantry regiment, which sailed for Manila last Monday from San Francisco were banqueted at the close of the Yom Kippur fast, by the Rev. Dr. M. S. Levy, Colonel Henry L. Kowalsky and the young ladies and gentlemen of the Alumni Association of Congregation Beth Israel. There are many Jewish boys in the regiment, all from the New York vicinity. Twenty-two of them served in the Cuban war, chiefly with the Two Hundred and Second Regiment. They were relieved from camp duty that day by courtesy of Colonel Bell, in order that they might attend the Day of Atonement services in Dr. Levy's synagogue, and at 6:30 o'clock in the evening the banquet in their honor was given at Ossosky's kosher restaurant, 113 Turk street.

The guests were under the leadership of Private Jacob Solins of New York, who had made the arrangements with Dr. Levy. The other soldiers were: Max Gold, Louis Saltzer, Max Weinberger, Jake Gardner, Simon Frank, Max Steinberger, F. Wolf, Wally Paunick, Corporal Jake Rosenfeld, George Heiman, John G. Scheurer, F. Barnett, Henry Ansell, Abraham Stern, Max Cohen, Edward Bauman, Jake Bauman, Sergeant Frank Emish, Max David, Henry Johnson, Morris Fienman, Abraham Gronskinsky, Bugler Samuel Hollander, Max Dan, Morris Heideler, Louis Bernstein, Samuel Jacobs, Jake Kurman, Simon Frankenberger, Harry Rosenthal of New York; Mike Gantshester, of Middleton, Connecticut, and Louis Goldstein, of Washington, and Quartermaster Sergeant Charles Rice, of Baltimore.

The tables were richly decorated with flowers, and the banquet hall was of gay and brilliant appearance. The cooking, according to kosher rules, was conducted by Mrs. Ossosky, and this was the menu:

Noodle Soup.

Filled Fish. Raisling.
Chicken Giblets with Green Peas and
Mashed Potatoes. ^x
Roast Duck. Zineland.
Stewed Peas. Apple Pudding.
Pears, Peaches, Apples and Grapes.
Coffee.

The dishes were served by Mrs.

Martha Ossosky, Mrs. Tetta Davis, Miss Frances Harris, Mrs. Nellie Carash and Miss Jennie Leiser. After the soldiers had dined in a way worthy of able-bodied young men who had fasted twenty-four hours, and the dinner was an exceedingly good one, Dr. Levy presented Colonel Kowalsky as toastmaster. The Colonel delivered a brief address, in which he spoke in high praise of Rabbi Levy, with whom the banquet plan was originated. Closing, he said: "The Jew in all times of history has been loyal to his religion. Wherever he has adopted a country he has been one of the most loyal supporters of that country, and it is with pride that we see so large a percentage of our Jewish boys fighting beneath the Stars and Stripes."

Dr. Levy made a short speech, saying, as he began: "Mr. Toastmaster, boys of the Twenty-Seventh Regiment and ladies and gentlemen: I am particularly touched by the privilege of meeting the soldier boys here at this time. When their regiment arrived a week ago, one of the members called at my house with a message from New York, and asked, on behalf of the regiment, the privilege of celebrating Yom Kippur in the Jewish way."

Then he described his efforts to obtain military permission for attendance at the religious services, stating that he had told the Colonel that when men are found in faithful allegiance to the religion of their fathers they will be found true to their flag. He spoke of intense loyalty to the United States flag, which he declared was to the Jews the best flag in all the world.

"Do your duty to the flag," he added. "One Jew cannot fail in that without doing injury to all other Jews. You are expected to do more than your duty. This may be the last Kippur on earth for some of you, and I trust that if occasion demands it you will die bravely, courageously, heroically, beneath the folds of the flag that offers freedom to all."

Dr. Levy spoke so touchingly about the duties of the soldiers and the going from home, that many of the soldiers wept.

Louis Michaels, president, and Louis

Goldberg, past-president, of the Alumni Society of the Congregation of Beth Israel, delivered eloquent addresses. Then Mr. Kowalsky called on the soldiers for a speech, and Sergeant Frank Emish responded.

The Sergeant said that the Jewish members of the Twenty-Seventh Regiment would be first on the firing line whenever the Regiment should be called into action.

Private Jacob Solins followed, saying that the Jewish members of the Regiment would do their duty in whatever shape the duty might present itself. He thanked Dr. Levy, Colonel Kowalsky and the others for the generous reception.

S. Myerson and Major Ellis also made speeches. Then cheers were given by the soldiers for President McKinley, for Colonel James Bell and other regimental officers, for Dr. Levy, Colonel Kowalsky and the members of the Beth Israel Alumni Association, for Mrs. Levy, for San Francisco, for "old New York." Dr. Levy led in the singing of "America," and then the banquet ended. Dr. Levy provided transportation to the Presidio for the soldiers.

Assistants in the banquet preparations, most of them representing the Beth Israel Alumni Association, were the Misses Mabel Kochman, Elsie Franklin, M. Cohn, Gertrude M. Cohn, Mrs. I. Levin, Mrs. A. Cohn, Mrs. Major Ellis, Mrs. M. Myerson, Louis Goldenberg, Louis Jacobs, Adolph Oppenheimer, Louis Michaels, Albert Chin, I. Ossosky and Leon Schwimer.

JGS Program Reports

by Steve Stein

December 21, 2014
“Ask The Experts”

For a change of pace, our December meeting consisted of an extended Q&A session with a panel of experts. In the days leading up to the meeting, members were given an opportunity to submit questions that were assigned to a panelist, researched and an answer prepared. Each speaker answered questions in one of their areas of expertise. Some additional questions were fielded from the audience. The program followed JGS’s annual brunch and election of officers for 2015.

We are very proud that we were able to form a panel consisting entirely of current or former members of the JGS Executive Council: Hadassah Lipsius, a current EC member, board member of JRI-Poland and member of the Board of Governors of JewishGen; Avrum Geller, professional genealogist, member of the Association of Professional Genealogists, and of the New York Genealogical and Biographical Society; Bob Friedman, past Director of the Genealogy Institute at the Center for Jewish History; and Karen Franklin, past president of IAJGS, co-chair of the Board of Governors of JewishGen, and currently Director of the Family Research Project at the Leo Baeck Institute .

Following is a sampling of the questions posed to the panel.

- Where did my family come from in Germany/Prussia?



The Panel of Experts at the December, 2014 Annual Meeting
From left to right, Hadassah Lipsius, Karen Franklin, Avrum Geller, Bob Friedman and moderator Joy Kestenbaum



Karen Franklin answers Question #1

Karen’s reply: The researcher was having a problem because her family’s immigrations took place before manifests typically carried that information. She suggested using two surnames and building lists of where those surnames tracked from in various sources, then intersecting those lists to narrow down the possibilities to a very small number of towns which could be researched more efficiently.

- What records exist for my region of Austrian Galicia in the 19th century, since JRI-Poland covers the Polish period?

Bob’s reply: By showing results for the questioner’s town, Horodenka, from the databases of JRI-Poland, Gesher Galicia, and Miriam Weiner’s Routes to Roots, Bob was able to demonstrate that the questioner had made some false assumptions, thus closing off avenues of research that would have proven fruitful and valuable. Records did in fact show up in JRI-Poland, and may in fact show up via multiple database portals that share record sets.

- If there are “late civil registrations” of marriages, is it possible that rabbinical



Bob Friedman answering a question about finding records regarding a town in Austrian Galicia in the 19th century

marriage records were mandated, and would be a source of further research?

Hadassah's reply: Religious i.e. non-civil records often existed for marriages, circumcisions, divorces, et cetera but were not mandated. Many records were kept by the Kahal (local community), and not necessarily by the local Rabbi. Hadassah cited an example from her own research of communal records from St. Petersburg.

- Can you find the manifest for my father, that I've been trying to find for many years?

Avrum's reply: After walking through various

search techniques for ships' manifests, Avrum hit the same dead ends as the researcher. He then tried using the specific reference to a ship arrival for the SS Russia found on the father's brother's naturalization papers (he also could not be found in the index). But Avrum was able to find some degree of success by stepping through the manifest of the SS Russia on the specified date of arrival; for one of the very faint names that the indexer could not have read. Avrum could see the manual annotation indicating the number of a Certificate of Arrival, which had been added when that passenger applied for citizenship (the paper document

was obviously more readable at that time than the microfilmed image currently used by Ellis Island and Ancestry). The number matched the one recorded on the uncle's petition, thus verifying his arrival on that date.

Some of the original questioners, as well as members of the audience, helped make the meeting highly interactive and engaging with follow-up questions and discussion.

Thanks to all the panelists for a very engaging and lively discussion.



Avrum Geller answering a question about a hard to find name in a ship's manifest



Hadassah Lipsius answering a question about rabbinical records



A view of the attendees at the December 2014 JGS Annual Meeting listening to the panel of experts



Past JGS president Roni Liebowitz congratulating new president Jane Rosen Berenbeim

**January 25, 2015
“The Ethical Genealogist”**

Well-known genealogist and attorney Judy G. Russell, referred to in genealogical circles as “The Legal Genealogist,” asked us at our January meeting to take a step back from our technology and methodology and consider the ethical ramifications of family research. She introduced us to the principles of the National Genealogical Society, the Association of Professional Genealogists and the IAJGS, stressing throughout her talk that these are the rules that we, whether as

beginners or experts, should follow.

As we uncover facts and stories about family history and family members, we are confronted with very basic questions: which stories are true and which are lies? What kinds of facts are to be considered private? What shall we do with information about living, or even recently deceased, family members? Ms. Russell dealt with these and many other issues in her talk.

Referencing the work of Dr. Thomas Jones, Ms. Russell presented her three easy-to-remember guidelines for ethical behavior:

- Tell the truth
- Play nice with others
- Don’t tell tales out of school

In order to illustrate how these principles work, Ms. Russell gave examples, many out of her own research.

Tell the truth:

Strive for the highest level of truthfulness. A cousin’s book indicated a connection within her extended family to a member of the colonial House of Burgesses in Virginia. This connection proved to be untrue. She emphasized that stories that either cannot be documented or have been proven untrue must be recorded as such. If the documentation is inconclusive, say so!

Another case in point – the long-denied connection



Judy Russell, the speaker at the January 2015 meeting, answering questions on ethical rules for genealogists

between Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings. For many years this was denied by the other relatives of Thomas Jefferson, but the validity of the DNA evidence about their relationship must be accepted.

Play nice with others:

Give credit where credit is due, and reference sources. If you use someone else's research, make sure to cite accurately, without changing, rearranging, or omitting information. And make sure you leave information in repositories the way you found it, so that others may benefit from it as well.

If you request information from relatives, be sure to offer yours in return; and remember to share the costs of postage, records, and the like.

DNA testing has of late become an issue. DNA companies require legal authorization from the person whose DNA is being submitted, even direct descendants. Thus, taking (i.e. stealing) and submitting someone's DNA is a serious no-no, both legally and ethically. And DNA "bullying," i.e. urging family members to participate against their will, or relentlessly

pursuing non-respondents on genealogy sites, is similarly off-limits.

Don't tell tales out of school:

If a story is not yours to tell, don't tell it. This refers even to already published information; always receive permission in writing before doing so. This applies emphatically to information about living people and to DNA data, where publicizing certain information may cause hurt, shame, or other embarrassment. And vital facts concerning living relatives almost always should not be used, except with permission.

To illustrate, facts or events that often fall into this category are those regarding unknown parentage, criminal history, financial hardship, and the like. And just because it may be true, and known to the researcher, does not make it fair game for publishing on your website or sharing it publicly or even privately with family members.

In the question-and-answer session that followed, Ms. Russell emphasized that there are always "gray areas" that require the researcher's judgment. Certain embarrassing facts cease to be embarrassing when the principals, and in most cases the children of those people, are no longer living. But thoughtfulness must prevail.

Ms. Russell cited a number of sources for further reading. Also see Ms. Russell's site, <http://www.legalgenealogist.com>.

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A collage of ethical guidelines for genealogists

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

Online News

Gesher Galicia Now Accessible in 80 Languages

Gesher Galicia at <http://www.geshergalicia.org>) has documents in Polish, Yiddish, German, French, Spanish, Ukrainian, Russian and 73 more languages. To obtain an almost instant translation, click the Google Translate icon.

JDC's Warsaw Office Collection 1945-1949 Is Now Online

To search this collection from the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, go to <http://search.archives.jdc.org> and select "Advanced Search" from the top menu. Choose "Text Collections (Open)" in the drop down menu; then go down to "Search in Collection," click on the magnifying glass, then scroll down to find "Records of the AJDC Warsaw Office, 1945-1949". To conduct a search, insert a term into the "Search All Fields" window (a search of the database fields) or "Full Text Search" (to search within the documents themselves).

Source for Canadian Research

The Ontario Jewish Archives maintains an interesting source called "The Rotenberg Ledger," which lists the names of individuals brought from Europe between 1911 and 1914. It was kept by a family of steamship agents. The site is available from www.jgstoronto.ca/rotenberg-ledger.

Another Source for Newspapers Online

Elephind.com is a new source for digitized newspapers, which aims to make it possible to search all the world's online historic newspapers from one place. Although this goal has not yet been achieved, one can currently access 2.6 million newspapers on file in the Library of Congress and many university libraries, plus Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, and Mexico. All items are in English, so that the Mexican newspapers deal with events in Texas and the Southwest. More will be added. The *Dorot* editor clicked the name of a famous relative, Romany Marie, who ran a popular artists' café in Greenwich Village in the 1920s, and instantly came up with articles about her in Ogden, Utah, Washington, D.C. and many other places.

Eleven Million New York Times Articles Now Free to Times Online Subscribers

Those who have current online subscriptions to the *New York Times* can now search newspaper articles published between September 18, 1851 and December

31, 1980. One may also subscribe directly to this service. The search is by keyword.

Thanks to *Scattered Seeds*, published by the Jewish Genealogical Society of Palm Beach, for these online sources. ☩

In the Repositories

A Special Report on the Municipal Archives by Jordan Auslander

The Municipal Archives, located in Room 103 at 31 Chambers Street, has about 7200 microfilm reels of vital records—about 865 reels of births, 2260 of marriages and 4050 of deaths—all stored in 55 drawers in five cabinets and a carousel. To the consistent chagrin of patrons new and experienced, as well as archives staff, these record groups were scattered haphazardly throughout the room.

Another problem is that the Municipal Archives has not received any new vital records from the NYC Department of Health since 1992. In July 2014 the Archives Vital Record Processing Unit was reorganized and moved from Room 101 into Room 103, called the Research Room. Four cabinets of microfilms of non-vital records were brought into this room at the same time. These cabinets contain Mayoral, Almshouse, infrastructural records, and Coroner and Medical Examiner Reports. Tucked within these new storage units are some obscure genealogical gems such as Staten Island Naturalizations, Civil War Substitutes and the tantalizingly vague “Old Town Records.”

The addition to all this city history further confused and disrupted the genealogical collection now scattered amongst nine cabinets opposite the staff counter. The Municipal Archives, like many City agencies that serve the public with a Point-of-Sale, is inadequately staffed. Since the vital records microfilms follow no coherent sequence within the cabinets, “newbies” and pros alike must ask the staff for direction. Time for processing patrons’ copy orders is further taxed by the torrent of requests flowing from the Ancestry.com order link to the vital record indexes. This link was initially compiled by a consortium of local genealogical societies (German Genealogy Group, the Italian Genealogical Group, and the Jewish Genealogical Society) forged by John Martino.

Something needed to be done. So on Friday January 30, 2015 a team of obsessive volunteers (JGS members Bob Friedman, Debra Braverman, Jordan Auslander and Lauren Orenstein, who is also a member of the JGS Executive Council) reordered the five vital record cabinets to run in sequence: Births for Manhattan, Brooklyn, the Bronx, Queens and Staten Island; followed by Marriages and Deaths maintaining the same borough order (based on descending volume). We tried to create a new, intuitive sequence with clearly labeled, accurate cabinet inventories for each drawer and drawer labels. We hope this will improve the research experience for patron and staff alike.

News of Other Repositories

Queens Public Library – A Source for Queens and Long Island History and for Brooklyn, Too

(www.Queenslibrary.org/research)

The Queens Public Library has digitized many local newspapers from the 19th and 20th centuries. Formerly called the Long Island Collection, the new name is “The Archives@Queens Library.” Here one will find newspapers from numerous neighborhoods and formerly independent towns which carefully reported births, deaths, marriages and local events. For those with a Queens Library card, there is free online access to a large selection from “Articles & Databases (magazines and periodicals).

Digitized Memoirs at the Leo Baeck Institute www.lbi.org or digital.cjh.org

The Leo Baeck Institute at the Center for Jewish History has 1722 memoirs of life in the late 18th, 19th and 20th centuries in its digital files each with a finding aid to explain what is available.

The HIAS “Generations Project” Is Collecting the Stories of Recent Immigrants from the Former Soviet Union (<http://mystory.hias.org/en/stories>)

The “Generations Project” collects the immigration stories from two or more generations within the same family that emigrated from the Soviet Union to the United States. Currently it is focusing on grandparents, parents and children who settled in Philadelphia and in New Jersey. Interviews were conducted by telephone, e mail or in person, and one can read the interviewer’s questions and the vivid answers of each generation in English or Russian. Here is an excerpt from one family: “Jews were still treated like second-class citizens and on numerous occasions my parents were forced to watch as teachers discriminated against my sister and me....My father was one of Russia’s first entrepreneurs and learned firsthand the dangers of rising too high too quickly.”

Blogs by New York Public Library Staff Give Research Tips

The staff of the Library’s Milstein Division of U.S. Historic, Local History & Genealogy gives regular classes on research.

The texts of past classes are online as blogs (www.nypl.org/locations/divisions/milstein). Here are a few recent subjects: “Play Strike! Exploring New York City Playgrounds through Historical Newspapers,” which gives a history of where children played outdoors and describes the famous playground strike of 1899; :”You Must Remember This, the Jeff Kisseloff Oral History Interviews,” describes 150 interviews conducted in the 1980s of older New Yorkers who had been longshoremen, bootleggers, pickle makers, butchers, housewives. The actual interviews may be read in the Library and in Kisseloff’s book of same name. Also available are “Conducting Genealogical Research Using Newspapers,” “Researching Orphans in Genealogy,” “Class Act -- Researching New York City Schools with Local History Collections.” ♦

Notes from All Over

Historical Maps of the Habsburg Empire

The whole history of the Hapsburg Empire from 1763 through 1887 can be viewed by typing the above phrase into Google, “Historical Maps of the Hapsburg Empire,” and perusing the following maps: “Military Surveys of 1763-1787, 1806-1869, 1869-1887,” “The Hungarian Kingdom 1869-1887,” “The Austrian Netherlands from 1764-1771.” There are also detailed maps of Budapest from the 18th to the 20th centuries. The maps can be browsed in 3D using the Google Earth Plugin. The maps include Galicia, Bukovina and Transylvania. There are also cadastral (property/land use maps) of various parts of the Empire.

Interactive Map Locates the Sites of Mass Killings of Jews in the Holocaust

This fairly new site, www.yahadmap.org, combines printed and video interviews with living witnesses of the killings primarily in the Soviet Union during the Holocaust, notes from the book *Holocaust by Bullets*, information from the archives of the former Soviet Union, and geographical notes that together tell the

story of the loss of Jewish lives in numerous cities. Some information was added as recently as 2012. A map shows the sites (red means there is online information, blue means the information is not yet available). It notes also the years of occupation, whether there is a memorial and lists the names of nearby villages. The information appears when one places the mouse over the red circle. There is a place on this site to contribute additional information.

A Memorial to Shanghai Jews

The names of 13,732 mostly German and Austrian Jewish refugees are listed on a wall in Shanghai at a former synagogue that is now a museum in the neighborhood where many Europeans lived. The site at shanghaijewishmemorial.com is searchable by family name.

How to Preserve Gravesite Information

In December 2014 MyHeritage.com ran a successful project to digitize all the names in the cemetery in the town of Holon. This is Israel’s largest cemetery. Over

150,000 graves were photographed in one day by 120 Israeli volunteers and MyHeritage employees of all ages. The day began at 8:30 a.m. and ended after sunset at 6 p.m. The story of this remarkable day is told in

words and pictures at <http://blog.myheritage.com/2014-12/digitizing-cemeteries>. Perhaps other organizations can organize a similar effort in a local cemetery. ♦

New, Recent, and Noteworthy Publications

Books about Eastern European Life

Pauline Wengeroff, *Memoirs of a Grandmother: Scenes from the Cultural History of the Jews of Russia in the Nineteenth Century*, 2 vols. Translated with an introduction, notes and commentary by Shulamit S. Magnus (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press) Vol. 1. 2010. 384 pages. \$55.00
Vol. 2, 2014, 248 pages \$49.50

From the publisher: “Pauline Wengeroff (1833-1916), the only nineteenth-century Russian Jewish woman to publish a memoir, sets out to illuminate the cultural history of the Jews of Russia in the period of Jewish ‘enlightenment,’ when traditional culture began to disintegrate and Jews became modern. Wengeroff, a gifted writer and astute social observer, paints a rich portrait of both traditional and modernizing Jewish societies in an extraordinary way, focusing on women and the family and offering a gendered account (and indictment) of assimilation.”

“In Volume 1 of *Memoirs of a Grandmother*, Wengeroff depicts traditional Jewish society, including the religious culture of women, during the reign of Tsar Nicholas I, who wished ‘his Jews’ to be acculturated to modern Russian life.”

“In Volume Two, Wengeroff claims that Jewish women were capable and desirous of adopting the best of European modernity but were also wedded to tradition, while Jewish men recklessly abandoned tradition and forced their wives to do the same. The result was not only marital and intergenerational conflict but also catastrophic cultural loss, with women’s inability to transmit tradition in the home leading to larger cultural drift. Two of Wengeroff’s children converted when faced with anti-Jewish educational and professional discrimination, unwilling to sacrifice secular ambitions and visions for the sake of a traditional culture they did not know. *Memoirs* is a tale of loss but also of significant hope, which Wengeroff situates not in her children but in a new generation of Jewish youth reclaiming Jewish memory. To them, she addresses her memoirs, giving an orphaned youth, orphaned of their past and culture - a grandmother.”

Glenn Dynner, Antony Polonsky and Marcin Wodzinski, eds., *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry, Volume 27: Jews in the Kingdom of Poland, 1815-1918*. (Portland, OR: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2014) 512 pages, ill., maps, tables. \$34.95 paper

From the publisher: “The Kingdom of Poland, also known as the Congress Kingdom or Russian Poland, was created by a decision of the Congress of Vienna as part of its attempt to set up a post-Napoleonic European order. It incorporated lands that for many decades had been the most important centers of Polish politics, finance, education, and culture, and which also had the largest concentration of Jews in eastern Europe. Because of these factors, and because its semi-autonomous status allowed for the development of a liberal policy towards Jews quite different from that of Russia proper, the Kingdom of Poland became a fertile ground for the growth of Jewish cultural and political movements of all sorts, many of which continue to be influential to this day. This volume brings together a wide range of scholars to present a broad view of the Jewish life of this important area at a critical moment in its history.”

“In the nineteenth century, tradition vied with modernization for Jews’ hearts and minds. In the Kingdom of Poland, traditional Hasidic leaders defied the logic of modernization by creating courts near major urban centers such as Warsaw and Łódź and *stiblekh* within them, producing innovative and influential homiletic literature and attracting new followers. Modernizing *maskilim*, for their part, found employment as government officials and took advantage of the liberal climate to establish educational institutions and periodicals that similarly attracted followers to their own cause and influenced the development of the Jewish community in the Kingdom in a completely different direction. Their immediate successors, the Jewish integrationists, managed to gain considerable power within the Jewish community and to create a vibrant and more secular Polish Jewish culture. Subsequently Zionism, Jewish socialism, and cultural autonomy also became significant forces. The relative strength of each movement on the eve of the rebirth of Poland is extremely difficult to measure,

but unquestionably the ferment of so many potent, competing movements was a critical factor in shaping the modern Jewish experience.”

Shaul Stampfer, *Lithuanian Yeshivas in the Nineteenth Century: Creating a Tradition of Learning*

(Portland, OR: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2014) 416 pages, \$29.95 paperback

From the publisher: “This is the first systematic study of the Lithuanian yeshivas that flourished from 1802 to 1914 in their social and cultural context; their legacy still dominates orthodox Jewish society. The main focus is the yeshiva of Volozhin, which in its independence of the local community was the model for everything that followed, but chapters are also devoted to the yeshivas of Slobodka and Telz, and to the *kollel* system.”

“One of the key ways in which the traditional Jewish world of eastern Europe responded to the challenges of modernity in the nineteenth century was to change the system for educating young men so as to reinforce time-honored, conservative values. The yeshivas established at that time in Lithuania became models for an educational system that has persisted to this day, transmitting the Talmudic underpinnings of the traditional Jewish way of life. To understand how that system works, one needs to go back to the institutions they are patterned on: why they were established, how they were organized, and how they operated. This is the first properly documented, systematic study of the Lithuanian yeshiva as it existed from 1802-1914. It is based on the judicious use of contemporary sources—documents, articles in the press, and memoirs—with a view to presenting the yeshiva in its social and cultural context. Topics covered include the leadership and changes in leadership; management and administration; the yeshiva as a place of study; daily life, and so forth.”

Books about the Sephardic Lands

Julia Philipps Cohen and Sara Abrevaya Stein, *Sephardi Lives: A Documentary History 1700-1950*
(Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2014) 480 pages, \$29.95 paper

From the publisher: “This ground-breaking documentary history contains over 150 primary sources originally written in 15 languages by or about Sephardi Jews—descendants of Jews who fled medieval Spain and Portugal, settling in the western portions of the Ottoman Empire, including the Balkans, Anatolia and Palestine. Reflecting Sephardi history in all its diversity, from the

courtyard to the courthouse, spheres intimate, political, commercial, familial and religious, these documents show life within these distinctive Jewish communities as well as between Jews, Muslims and Christians.”

“*Sephardi Lives* offers readers an intimate view of how Sephardim experienced the major regional and world events of the modern era—natural disasters, violence and wars, the transition from empire to nation-states, and the Holocaust. This collection also provides a vivid exploration of the day-to-day lives of Sephardi women, men, boys and girls in the Judeo-Spanish heartland of the Ottoman Balkans and Middle East, as well as the émigré centers Sephardim settled throughout the twentieth century, including North and South America, Africa, Asia and Europe. The selections are of a vast range, including private letters from family collections, rabbinical writings, documents of state, memoirs and diaries, court records, selections from the popular press and scholarship. In a single volume, *Sephardi Lives* preserves the cultural richness and historical complexity of a Sephardi world that is no more.”

Bernard Lewis, *The Jews of Islam* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014) 272 pages, \$22.95

From the publisher: “This landmark book probes Muslims’ attitudes toward Jews and Judaism as a special case of their view of other religious minorities in predominantly Muslim societies. With authority, sympathy and wit, Bernard Lewis demolishes two competing stereotypes: the Islamophobic picture of the fanatical Muslim warrior, sword in one hand and Qur’ân in the other, and the overly romanticized depiction of Muslim societies as interfaith utopias.”

“Featuring a new introduction by Mark R. Cohen, this Princeton Classics edition sets the Judaeo-Islamic tradition against a vivid background of Jewish and Islamic history. For those wishing a concise overview of the long period of Jewish-Muslim relations, *The Jews of Islam* remains an essential starting point. A reviewer wrote: ‘An elegant and masterly survey. It is a measure of Mr. Lewis’s gift for synthesis that all the many findings of recent scholarship, including his own in the Turkish archives, are made to fit into a coherent and plausible pattern.’ Another said: ‘Lewis refuses . . . simplistic approaches and tries to explain the complex and often contradictory history of Jewish-Muslim relations over fourteen hundred years. He does this in prose that combines eloquence, dispassion, and wit.’” ♦

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 Hadassah Lipsius

DOROT: How long have you been researching your family history?

LIPSIUS: Since about 1994. I already knew a great deal about my family's history. My parents were always interested in where we came from, the towns, the family history, and information from previous generations back. It was important to them for me to know my history so I really had a head start.

DOROT: What was the source of that tradition, that feeling among your parents?

LIPSIUS: I think part of it may have been the *yichus* (pedigree). They were proud of who they were, where they came from, and the history of their families.

DOROT: So you were a four-year-old sitting there taking notes?

LIPSIUS: Not necessarily a four-year-old, but I remember looking through my grandmother's pictures and finding notes on the back in my sister's handwriting, identifying the people in the photos. We were told family stories at a young age. The challenging thing was to find out if they were real.

DOROT: Where in the world do your family's roots go?

LIPSIUS: My mother's family originally came from Warsaw. Although at times they moved out of Warsaw for marriages, the origins from the mid- to late 1700's are from the city of Warsaw.

DOROT: And your father's family?

LIPSIUS: My father's father was born in St. Petersburg, Russia. That is why I always say that I come from city folk from a long way back. We were not farmers, we were not villagers, we were city folk.

DOROT: Is that unusual?

LIPSIUS: Probably. In particular, you had to be granted the right to live in St. Petersburg, because it was outside the Pale of Settlement. My great, great grandfather had acquired the right to live there. I did find my great grandfather's passport in the St. Petersburg archives, which grants him the right to live anywhere within the Russian empire.

DOROT: What did he do or who did he know to get that privilege?

LIPSIUS: My great grandfather's passport lists that he was a gilded stocking maker, and that he owned a mini shop or factory, an *atelier* (workshop) – that was the word they used because in those days the Russians liked speaking French. The 1895 business directory shows him as a stocking maker.



Hadassah Lipsius

DOROT: What was your experience in doing that research in St. Petersburg?

LIPSIUS: I did not do it myself. I hired somebody to do it, but I pursued it because for a long time the archive was closed. As soon as I found out that the archive opened, I sent somebody there to find the documents but making copies was not permitted. Then as soon as I found out that they were allowing copies to be made, I sent the same person back again. In the archives in St. Petersburg, they have the Jewish community records and the birth records. My grandfather came to America with a copy of his birth record. The archives had his birth record as well as his brothers' birth records.

DOROT: Let's turn to Warsaw. For the period you've been doing research – and you do go there on occasion – how would you compare your early experience to the way things are now?

LIPSIUS: My research in Warsaw has been very successful. Every time I've looked there, I have found many small and sometimes even large wins. When I went to Warsaw in 1976, on a "holocaust tour," we travelled all over Eastern Europe. I went to Warsaw and

entered the Jewish cemetery, which is one of the largest Jewish cemeteries in Europe. At that time it was quite overgrown. I wandered around, and frequently stopped to call out “Oh, wait a minute, I know that name! That’s a great uncle!” Even today when I go to the Warsaw cemetery, I keep finding family graves. There is never a time when I look and do not find some cousin in the Warsaw cemetery. The cemetery now is in much, much better condition than it was in 1976, under communist rule. Now, much more information is available and documented. Eighty thousand tombstones from the Warsaw cemetery have been photographed and are online on the Internet.

DOROT: Indexed as well?

LIPSIUS: Yes, a search on JRI-Poland (www.jri-poland.org) will link to the Foundation for Documentation of Jewish Cemeteries in Poland (FDJC) website. The FDJC photographed and transcribed the gravestones. JRI-Poland signed a collaborative agreement with FDJC, so that one can search using the JRI-Poland search methods in finding the tombstone. When I first went in 1976, I had to hunt and finding a tombstone was just by happenstance.

DOROT: When you search using JRI-Poland, can you search through the specific database of the cemetery or is it just a general search where you type in the name and the locality, in this case Warsaw?

LIPSIUS: To search the burial records from the FDJC, one should search under the Geographical Region – “no specified region.” This particular database is not listed under the town and there are many other cemeteries listed, not just Warsaw, although Warsaw is the main one. The list of the cities in the database can be found at <http://jri-poland.org/cemeteries-in-database.htm>

DOROT: How has your experience in the Warsaw archive evolved over the years you’ve been going there?

LIPSIUS: Actually, my first findings from Warsaw records resulted from using the LDS (Latter Day Saints) microfilms. That is where I first began finding my family information for the years 1808 to 1864. The years after, 1865 to 1939, are not microfilmed by the LDS so one has to go to the archives for vital records and search through the registers. Through JRI-Poland, the vital records from 1865-1905 were indexed, but then the Polish State Archive agreement with JRI-Poland was cancelled. With the new agreement from 2013,

we have once again begun to index the metrical books from Warsaw. Now, as of the last year, many of those images from the register books are actually on-line in a Polish archive: National Digital Archive website. <http://szukajwarchiwach.pl/>

DOROT: If you go to JRI-Poland and locate a birth record, how do you get to see an image of the actual record?

LIPSIUS: What I have been working on is linking the Warsaw records. Not everything is linked yet on-line but I am working on it. So if you search JRI-Poland and find a record, you can click on the link to get the image. However, there are a great many indices that are not yet linked to the images of the records. If a researcher finds there is no link to an image of interest, he should search on JRI-Poland, which lists the fond number and the unit number. A researcher next would go to the Polish State Archives NDA site – the National Digital Archives site – and look for the record, based on the fond and unit number.

DOROT: This is the result of an agreement between JRI-Poland the Polish State Archives. Since you are very much involved with JRI-Poland, has that turned out to be as important an agreement as it seemed at the time?

LIPSIUS: What the most recent agreement did was allow for the continuation of indexing of the vital records. Now indexing is allowed for records from 1905 until 1914. In the past six months for Warsaw, we have uploaded maybe 5,000 or 6,000 records covering the 1905 to 1913 time period, and they are searchable. Many of them are linked. Those not linked from this new batch are because the images are not on line. I had the archivist index new register books that were just received in the past year. I asked her to do those first so that I would have the opportunity to give people something that hadn’t been available yet.

DOROT: You said the Polish State Archives had just received the registry books. Where had they received them from?

LIPSIUS: The registry books originally were stored in the local registry office. When everything that is contained in that registry book is over 100 years old, by Polish law, they move it over to the Polish State Archives facilities.

DOROT: So it goes from the local archive to the

national archive in Warsaw?

LIPSIUS: That is correct.

DOROT: To back up to something you mentioned earlier, you said that your family kept good records and they were part of your upbringing. Yet you did have to go back to the stories and confirm them to the extent you could. What was that process like for you?

LIPSIUS: Some were simple things, like my grandmother saying that her mother was born on the same day of the same Hebrew month on which she died, that she was born on *Rosh Chodesh* Nissan (the first day of the Hebrew month of Nissan) and she died on *Rosh Chodesh* Nissan. It is supposed to be a special thing to be born and die on the same day. To confirm that involved just finding her birth record and finding her death record and actually proving that it did happen. At first I thought to myself that it was not true, but then I realized that I forgot to convert from the Julian to the Gregorian calendar. It turned out Grandma was right! Some were stories about the businesses they were in and proof was actually finding business directories that listed those as their businesses. Others were stories that had some truth, but they were assigned to the wrong person. The story really happened, but to somebody else, somebody else in the same family.

DOROT: How were you able to dig that fact out and assign it to the correct person?

LIPSIUS: It is a little twist in working with the available documentation. One of the other resources that I have had success with and those that people helped me with, are the notary documents.

DOROT: What are notary documents?

LIPSIUS: Especially in a city in the 19th century, if one were in business or had money or owned property, the Jewish families would document the information. I have notary documents for prenuptial agreements for my family. I have notary documents that show where someone leased property from somebody else or where somebody loaned money. I also have notary documents after somebody died, and an inventory of the property was completed that listed everything they owned, and whether it was movable or immovable. An inventory will say: "one fork, one spoon," or "2,000 books," and also money.

DOROT: This is in Warsaw?

LIPSIUS: It is not just in Warsaw. It has been found in many other archives, too. But, yes, it is in the Warsaw archives. It is part of the Warsaw archives system that includes the file from notaries where people had documents notarized.

DOROT: Are these documents indexed in a way that a researcher can go through them and have half a chance of finding something useful?

LIPSIUS: Many of them are indexed for Warsaw but not on-line. There is a finding aid from the Warsaw archives.

DOROT: I managed to take you on a long detour from your story about a discovery you made using the notary documents.

LIPSIUS: Right. I was looking at the notary document for my great, great, great grandfather when he died in 1834. When he died, they took an inventory of his property and in the document, it lists all the family members, including the children and lists his home. One of the items listed in the notary document said "unknown value from the will," and it listed a woman, and said he was an inheritor from this woman's will. I knew who this woman was because she was a known personality in the Jewish community and had died several years before him. I did not know why he would be in her will, but the notary document said, "because he is her son." It turned out he was her son from her first marriage. I had not known his mother's name; I couldn't go back that far. But here I found where it said "he is her son," and she was a known person who had stories. So the stories that had been attributed to somebody else in my grandmother's family turned out to be her stories instead.

DOROT: Are you able to read all this material written in Polish handwriting?

LIPSIUS: I can make out some of the information, but not fully. I have help in translating. I say I know how to read "recordese," which means numbers, names, dates, months, ages, years, but not all the information that would be in notary documents. But now I have been getting from one of the researchers in Warsaw, wills from my family, and they were written in Hebrew.

DOROT: Can you deal with that?

LIPSIUS: Yes.

DOROT: How far back do those wills go?

LIPSIUS: They are early 19th century.

DOROT: You've been doing this research on your family for more than 20 years. Do you think you're getting to the end of finding new data?

LIPSIUS: I do not feel like there is an end. It is something you keep digging, where you go not just back but sideways sometimes and, by going sideways, it also helps to go back.

DOROT: You must have files and files, either on paper or on your computer. Do you have any plans for what you might do with all this information?

LIPSIUS: No, I still have a full-time job as an engineering manager and I have not figured out how to fully document everything.

DOROT: What are the various options you might consider? Perhaps a book or something digital or a Hollywood movie?

LIPSIUS: I don't know about the movie. Perhaps I need Gloria Berkenstat Freund to help me get more organized than I am. I read the interview with her in *Dorot* and she seems to have a way.

DOROT: Has what you've learned about your ancestors made a difference for you in any way and for those in your family participating in what you're doing?

LIPSIUS: I guess each family member has a different appreciation of it. I know my parents, who have since passed, took a great deal of pride in the information that I found. The woman I found in the will who is related to me – a lot of *Chassidim* know who she is because she was a benefactor. So every once in a while, my sister will tell people, "Oh, I'm a descendant of ..." There was actually a recent article about this woman in *Hamodia* in which there was an error. I sent a correction saying that "Hey, I'm alive, I'm a descendant!" They had assumed that the child from the woman's first marriage must have died and had no issue. They actually published the correction in the magazine, in which I said I'm a descendant and how proud I am.

DOROT: I think at this point, we ought to identify this woman.

LIPSIUS: Her name is Temerla Sonnenberg. Her portrait appears in most of the books that talk about the history of the Warsaw Jews.

DOROT: What did she do that distinguished her?

LIPSIUS: First of all, she was a businesswoman. She negotiated agreements. There were some issues with the king and she was involved in the negotiations. She also was a very charitable woman. There are descriptions of her funeral in the newspapers of the time that say over a thousand people attended her funeral and they gave money to all the poor who were there. But what she also did was pay the rabbis a salary and they would work for her, but they really would not work full time, they would learn and study, and she would pay them a full salary. So this way, she was a benefactor, and they worked to some degree but she also supported them in their learning and studying. She was my fourth great grandmother.



Temerla Sonnenberg

DOROT: Do you have a sense of connection to her?

LIPSIUS: Yes, I think so. It is not just putting a name on a tree, it is knowing who they were and what they did. I'm proud that she was a strong woman. There are all the stereotypes that people have about the 1800s: the women were not educated, etc. But she had her own business. I have seen it in the other women in my family: they had businesses of their own, they were educated and they signed their names in the documents. It is a source of pride to me that the stereotype is wrong, that women were educated in those times. And perhaps even that they were more educated in Poland than in the United States, and also that they were involved in business.

DOROT: Thank you.

Hadassah Lipsius is a Supplier Quality Engineering Manager for a major defense contractor. She was co-chair of the 27th International Conference on Jewish Genealogy, held in New York in 2006. She is a member of the board of Jewish Records Indexing-Poland, a member of the board of governors of JewishGen, the Database Manager for the Warszawa Research Group, and a member of the JGS Executive Council. ♦

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