
The Journal of the Jewish Genealogical Society

DOROT דורות

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IAJGS Conference Clicks on High-Tech

by Schelly Talalay Dardashti

Build a conference and they will come.

Registrants from six countries, twenty-eight U.S. states, and Washington, D.C. have already signed up, with potential speakers from eighteen countries. The website receives more than 500 daily hits.

While pencil and paper will always be important, cyberspace and technology hold amazing discoveries—if we know where and how to look at an increasingly complex mountain of resources. We spend hours searching the Internet and sending e-mail to family around the world. Some of us have graduated to family websites and computer-based phone calls.

Some of us remember when a home fax machine was considered a new-fangled contraption. Today, we can't live without the technology that fills our homes: faxes, copiers, scanners, printers that produce color photos as easily as a black-and-white letter, digital cameras, and video. How many remote controls do YOU have?

Modern techniques require new skills—hard to learn from books but relatively easier to learn hands-on. This year's conference provides opportunities for just that learning experience. The first-ever Computer Lab, organized by Phyllis Kramer, will offer a variety of hands-on classes in essential skills for today's modern genealogist.

Ms. Kramer is planning a new approach to technology to help researchers learn new or advanced functions and skills in a limited-seating environment with one computer to each person. Expert instructors will use overhead displays, and students will be able to practice their new skills.

Two-hour classes (\$10 each) on Sunday include "Genealogy on the Internet," "Intro to the Internet," and "Using JewishGen Databases and Search Capabilities." On the following days, shorter classes (\$5 each) will be scheduled throughout the day. These include various introductory classes (JewishGen databases, PowerPoint, Internet, PCs) as well as "PowerPoint for Genealogists" and "Finding Relatives on the Internet."

A two-part class focuses on how to create genealogical websites. Classes on country-specific research (Hungary, JRI-Poland, South Africa, and Ukraine, for example) and other resources (Consolidated Jewish Surname Index, Pages of Testimony, using Steve Morse's website for census research, and using Word tables) are only some of what will be available.

The full class schedule will soon be available at the website, www.jgsny2006.org. Pre-register online now for the Sunday classes. For weekday classes, sign up at the conference.

The Program Committee, chaired by Gloria Berkenstat Freund, is continuing to build an especially rich array

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Editor.....Joy Rich
Design and Production.....Joy Rich

.....Contributors.....
Schelly Talalay Dardashti
Larry Freund
Bernard I. Kouchel
Arthur Kurzweil
Avraham Laber
Peter Landé
Marian L. Smith
Pamela Weisberger

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Address all correspondence to:
JGS, Inc.
15 West 16th Street, New York, NY 10011
Telephone: (212) 294-8326
E-mail: info@jgsny.org
Website: www.jgsny.org

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Membership Benefits

The Jewish Genealogical Society, Inc., founded in 1977, was the first Jewish genealogical society. We have over 1,000 members in the New York metropolitan area, other states, and abroad. We hold membership in the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies, an umbrella group of more than seventy-five societies worldwide representing more than 9,000 members.

We have supported, through generous donations and the help of JGS volunteers, the establishment of a variety of archival research projects, including the purchase of microfilm and the microfilming and digitization of original records, thus insuring greater public access and preservation for many of the Jewish community's treasured documents. Some of the organizations and repositories that have benefited from our gifts are American Jewish Historical Society, American Sephardi Federation, Center for Jewish History, Center for Jewish History Genealogy Institute, Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS), JewishGen, Jewish Records Indexing-Poland, Leo Baeck Institute, National Yiddish Book Center, and YIVO Institute for Jewish Research.

Membership benefits include:

- free admission to monthly programs (September through June)
- discounted tuition at the day-long annual seminar "Basics and Beyond"
- subscription to the quarterly journal *Dorot*
- discounts on JGS publications
- discounts from the JGS Friends listed on the inside back page of *Dorot*

Membership dues per calendar year:

- Regular Membership \$36
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- Sustaining Membership \$60
- Supporting Membership \$100
- Patron Membership \$250
- Out-of-town Membership (for those who live more than 100 miles from New York City) \$25
- Out-of-Town Membership (receive local mailings, primarily meeting notices) \$36
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Members in the Sustaining, Supporting, and Patron categories will automatically receive two membership cards and an acknowledgement in *Dorot*. A membership application can be requested from Jewish Genealogical Society, Inc., P.O. Box 286398, New York, NY 10128-0004. Please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope. An application also appears on the JGS website at <http://www.jgsny.org/members.htm>. The subscription to *Dorot* is valued at \$6 per year. The balance of the membership dues is tax-deductible.

WE INVITE YOU TO JOIN US!

Lucille Gudis, 1933-2005 ז"ל

Lucille Gudis, former Vice President of the Jewish Genealogical Society, Co-chair of the 2006 International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies Conference, and continuing inspiration to her family, friends, and fellow genealogists, died on Friday, December 23, 2005. At a heavily-attended funeral service at Plaza Jewish Community Center the following Monday, tributes from her family, teaching associates, and the genealogical community acknowledged the profound influence she had on the world around her.

Lucille grew up in Bensonhurst, Brooklyn, graduated from Lafayette High School and Baruch College, and began working in management at Gimbel's department store. But she then decided to take charge of her life, as she would on so many other occasions, and said, in effect, "no, this way," and returned to college with the goal of becoming a math teacher. She taught math to junior high school students on Manhattan's upper west side for many years until her retirement from the teaching profession. It was a career dedicated to excellence in teaching and the advancement of her legions of students.

Lucille began working on her own family history in 1987 when she attended the Second International Jewish Genealogy Conference in London, England. Linda Cantor, who would become Lucille's close friend and traveling companion, first met her at that London meeting. "She was pretty much a beginner then and after that got very involved in the JGSNY," recalled Linda, JGS Secretary and Co-chair of the 2006 Conference. "She was on the Executive Board of the Jewish Historical Society of New York and worked very closely" with the organization's founder, the late Rabbi Malcolm Stern. "Her interests were not just genealogy but general Jewish history as well." Lucille co-chaired the American Jewish Historical Society conference in New York in 1993.

There were clearly no half-way measures for Lucille. She researched the family histories of the former residents of 97 Orchard Street, the 1863 building that houses the Lower East Side Tenement Museum. She volunteered once a week, every week, at the National

Archives almost from the time it opened in Manhattan in 1992, recalled Jeff Cymbler, former JGS Vice President. She created massive family trees for her private genealogy clients.

As a professional genealogist, Lucille's areas of specialization were Jewish genealogy, New York City, England, and Europe. Her client services included family research, record research, heir searches, and lecturing to organizations and schools (4th grade through college).

She was typically thorough and conscientious in preparing courtroom testimony as a genealogical expert witness. "Lucille was an incredibly precise person," remembered former Executive Council member, Debra Braverman. "When she was going to testify in court for the first time—the first of many times—she offered to take me out to dinner and proceeded to pepper me with questions on exactly what it was she had to do to be the very best expert witness she could possibly be."



Over the years, Lucille was Treasurer of the Jewish Genealogical Society, Vice President-Program, and Vice President-Membership. She co-chaired the 1999 Jewish Genealogy Conference in New York with Past President Michael Brenner, who described Lucille as "a tireless worker who sought to excel in

all that she did. We were members of the Executive Council together for many years. Lucille's thoughts and ideas added much to the growth of the Society."

Lucille took what former JGS Vice President for Programming, Gloria Berkenstat Freund, described as a "proactive approach" to the 2006 conference. "We were driving back from the 2003 conference in Washington, D.C., and she said, 'They're going to ask us to do a conference in New York. Why don't we choose the year and put in a proposal?' She volunteered Linda Cantor and Hadassah Lipsius to be Conference Co-chairs, and she volunteered me to be Conference Program Chair. I think she probably volunteered everyone."

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Hadassah Lipsius called Lucille the “ultimate volunteer. When anybody would ask for a volunteer, everybody would sit on their hands. She would always volunteer for the task, she would do the work. But not only would she volunteer, she would volunteer the person sitting next to her, too, and say ‘I’ll only do it if so-and-so does it.’ You could never say no to her, but you knew that she would work just as hard on that project.”

Lucille “had a real passion for things, and she was willing to take a stand, come what may,” observed Executive Council member Claus Hirsch. Jeff Cymbler remarked that “Lucille knew how to look at the bright side and live life to its fullest.” She immersed herself in craftwork, sculpture, and painting. She was passionate about the theater and demonstrated a personal flair for fashion and design.

Lucille was a second mother to her niece and nephew, a loving source of advice and counsel as well as a loving great-aunt to Matthew. She was an avid traveler, traveling extensively in Eastern Europe, South America, and Asia and visiting her ancestral towns in Ukraine and Belarus and long-lost cousins in Britain and Israel. Jeff Cymbler noted that “her recent trips to the birthplace of her father in Berdichev, Ukraine, and to Israel to meet for the first time her newly discovered over-ninety-year-old cousin were dreams that she

brought to fruition.” And “Lucille’s genealogy family was important to her,” said Hadassah Lipsius. “We played a major role in her life.”

Lucille was also literally a source of sustenance to her wider genealogical family, always arranging dinners before Executive Council meetings—“we jokingly referred to her as the Social Director,” recalled Linda Cantor—and at the annual conferences. “At every conference I ever attended,” said Rhoda Miller, Program Vice President of the Jewish Genealogy Society of Long Island, “Lucille always arranged for the New York group to go out to dinner, and she made sure everybody was there and everybody paid and everybody’s reservation was in place.” The last Jewish Genealogy Conference Lucille attended was in 2005 in Las Vegas and, as in previous years, she organized the New York dinner at, appropriately, a New York-style deli.

Many tributes to Lucille have appeared on the Society’s website, among them one by Conference Registration Chair Roni Seibel Liebowitz: “There are some people who touch our lives because of the example they set by living life to the fullest, their generous sharing of knowledge, the compassion they show to others, their wit, humor, and kindness. It is rare when all these qualities exist in one person. They did in Lucille.” ☆

Lucille Gudis Memorial Fund for Jewish Genealogy

Lucille Gudis was a vital part of the Jewish Genealogical Society for many years. Her untimely death created a void in our Society and in our individual lives. Those of us who worked with her on the Executive Council and came to consider her a good friend searched for an appropriate way to remember her and her dedication to our Society and to the world of Jewish genealogy.

JGS has established the Lucille Gudis Memorial Fund for Jewish Genealogy to honor her memory. Initial contributions to the Fund are being used to present a Lucille Gudis Memorial Lecture at the 26th conference of the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies, to be hosted by JGS at the New York Marriott Marquis from Sunday, August 13, to August, Friday 18, 2006.

To pay tribute to Lucille and her deep interest in emigration to and through Great Britain—which was part of her family history—the lecture will be given by her friend and genealogical colleague, Nick Evans, Honorary Research Fellow at the Research Institute of Irish & Scottish Studies at the University of Aberdeen. Nick will speak on “Jewish Transmigration through Britain, 1836-1924.”

It is our hope that contributions to the Lucille Gudis Memorial Fund for Jewish Genealogy will enable us to continue to honor Lucille’s memory. Tax-deductible contributions can be made by sending checks made payable to JGS, Inc. to Memorial Fund, Jewish Genealogical Society, P.O. Box 286398, New York, NY 10128-0004. Please write the note “Memorial Fund” on the check.

Lucille Gudis with her 2006 IAJGS Conference Co-chairs, Linda Cantor (top left) and Hadassah Lipsius (top center), and Program Chair, Gloria Berkenstat Freund (center right). Photos taken at the IAJGS Conference, Las Vegas, 2005.



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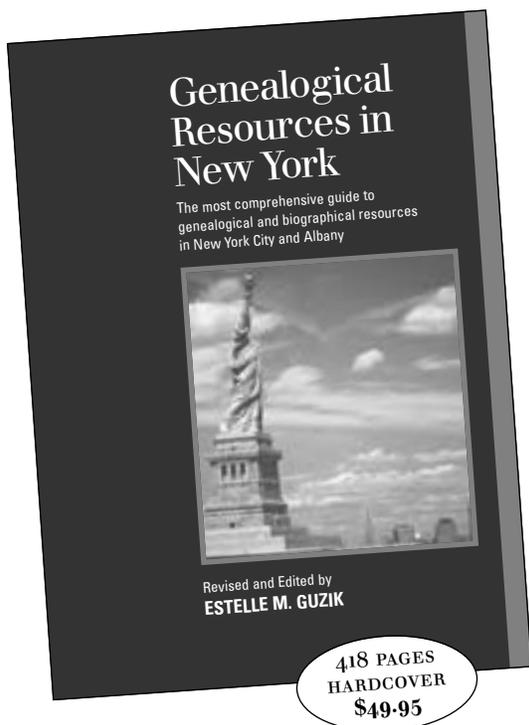


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JGS Program Reports

November 20, 2005

Gesher Galicia Regional Meeting

The second annual regional meeting of Gesher Galicia (Bridge to Galicia) was held jointly with the Jewish Genealogy Society. An article about the meeting begins on page 9 of this issue.

December 25, 2005

JGS Membership Brunch

About one hundred JGS members enjoyed a pre-Hanukkah brunch and conversation at the first JGS Membership Brunch, held at the 92nd Street Y. Due to the New York City transit strike, the brunch nearly did not take place. There were several tense days as the Executive Council pondered what to do if the strike continued beyond Friday and how to notify everyone. Fortunately, the strike ended just in time.

President Alex Friedlander opened the event by welcoming the members and reciting the *Hamotsi* prayer. Kosher Bagel Hole of Brooklyn catered the affair with platters of bagels, lox, two varieties of cream cheese, spreads, salads, pastries, jelly doughnuts in honor of Hanukkah, coffee, tea, and orange juice.

After brunch, some members visited the Hanukkah gift boutique held in the Y's library as the brunch room was being readied for the next part of the day's proceedings—the annual election of officers and the monthly meeting.

Special thanks are extended to Jeanne Anderson, Adam Bronstein, Linda Cantor, Mike Levine, and Steven Siegel, without whom this event could not have been so successful.

(by Michael Pertain, Vice President, Membership, JGS Executive Council)

At the annual election, the following slate was unanimously elected: President, Alex Friedlander; Vice President-Program, Steven Siegel; Vice President-Membership, Michael Pertain; Treasurer, Paul Silverstone; Secretary, Linda Cantor; Past President, Estelle Guzik; and Executive Council members, Wendy Almeleh, Valery Bazarov, Adam Bronstein, Stewart Driller, Gloria Freund, Claus Hirsch, Michael Levine, Hadassah Lipsius, and Susan Stone.

Hadassah Lipsius and Linda Cantor then gave a PowerPoint presentation on the upcoming 26th Annual

International Conference on Jewish Genealogy in New York City in August 2006 at the Marriott Marquis. Ms. Lipsius and Ms. Cantor, the conference co-chairs, pointed out the best reasons for attending the conference.

Ms. Lipsius mentioned many of the great opportunities a conference such as this offers: the chance to hear such outstanding speakers in the field of Jewish genealogy as Dr. Allen Weinstein, Archivist of the United States; Dr. Stephen Morse, guru of genealogical databases and research; Dr. Hasia Diner, author of *Lower East Side Memories: A Jewish Place in America* and *Her Works Praise Her: A History of Jewish Women in America from Colonial Times to the Present*; Phil Brown, who will talk about the Jewish legacy in the Catskills; Ira Wolfman, author of *Jewish New York: Historical Cues, Genealogical Clues*; Dr. Daniel Soyer, author of *Landsmanshaftn: East European Jewish Hometown Societies in the New World*; Dr. Eleanora Bergman, from the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw; Olga Muzychik, from the Historical Archives of Ukraine in Kiev; and Dr. Simone Eick, from the German Emigration Center at Bremerhaven.

Ms. Cantor provided examples of some of the highlights of doing genealogical research in New York City. She explained how to obtain passenger arrivals records, naturalization records, court records, vital records, tax photos, business records, Industrial Remove records, Jewish Welfare Board World War II records, *landsmanshaftn* papers, Yizkor books, and maps at the National Archives-Northeast Region, Municipal Archives, YIVO, American Jewish Historical Society, and New York Public Library.

Ms. Lipsius described some of the information on the conference website (www.jgsny2006.org), including Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), up-to-date information about archives and repositories in New York City, restaurants near the conference hotel, sightseeing suggestions, and more.

(by Linda Cantor, Secretary, JGS Executive Council)

January 15, 2006

My Grandfather's House: The Journey Home

Documentary filmmaker Eileen Douglas chose the Jewish Genealogical Society's January meeting for the New York premiere of *My Grandfather's House: The Journey Home*. She was rewarded with a standing room

only audience in the 247-seat auditorium.

Her successful search for the house her grandfather grew up in in Kovno, Lithuania (before he fled to the United States at age sixteen to escape the Tsar's Army), begins with family papers, moves to her research in archives, and culminates with her visit to Kovno and reunions with family members.

Ms. Douglas and director and co-producer Ron Steinman, also present at the screening, filmed over a five-year period in Manhattan; Washington, D.C.; Syracuse, New York; Kovno, Lithuania; St. Petersburg, Russia; Baltimore, Maryland; Potomac, Maryland; and Tel Aviv. In the film, partly narrated off-screen by Ms. Douglas, she displays old family photographs, old

letters written in Yiddish, archival records, and archival film footage and combines them with her on-screen reminiscences, interviews, and conversations with her no-longer-lost family. The film is highly personal—but not just for Ms. Douglas. The audience is drawn into the search, the emotions, and the history of this one Lithuanian Jewish family as if the story belongs to each person viewing it. It is the story of Eastern European Jewry, the Holocaust, and the families, living and dead, who are unknown to them but who can be found and met and hugged and kissed and cried and laughed with.

Copies can be purchased from The Cinema Guild on VHS or DVD for \$250. Phone (800) 723-5522 or e-mail orders@cinemaguild.com. ☆

(by the Editor)

Gesher Galicia Regional Meeting

by Pamela A. Weisberger

On November 20, 2005, at the Center for Jewish History, Gesher Galicia, the special interest group for people with roots in Galicia, a province of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire, held its second annual regional meeting in New York City, jointly sponsored by the Jewish Genealogical Society of New York.

For those of you unfamiliar with the term, Galicia was the largest province of the Austrian Empire, originally called Galicia-Lodomeria when the Austrians took that territory from the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth during the First Partition of Poland in 1772. The borders varied slightly over the years, especially during the Napoleonic Wars, following which Krakow and surrounding lands were eventually added to the province. Galicia bordered Moravia to the west, the Russian Empire to the north and east, and Hungary and the Ottoman Empire (Moldavia) to the south. It was returned to Poland when that state was re-established after World War I and was divided between Ukraine and Poland after World War II. Today, the eastern half of Galicia is part of Ukraine and the western half is part of Poland. The term "Galicia" no longer describes an administrative or political region in either country.

We offered a full day of Galician-related activities and meetings, beginning with several birds-of-a-feather get-togethers. Stan Diamond of JRI-Poland joined the Kolbuszowa Region Research group, coordinated by Eden Joachim and Shelley Pollero. As part of the Suchostaw Region research group's meeting, Valerie Schatzker, webmaster for the Drohobycz Administrative District and Yizkor book translation coordinator, spoke

about the Jewish Oil Magnates of Drohobycz and Boryslaw, detailing the origins and workings of the oil industry in that area with the theme "genealogy meets history." Rubin Schmer (born in Drohobycz in 1925) and Leonard Kleinman discussed their efforts to rebuild the cemetery and synagogue in that town.

I presented a research and project update followed by a PowerPoint slide show of Gesher Galicia member John Diener's trip back to his ancestral shtetls last summer with Alexander Dunai as his guide. Commencing in Krakow, John and his son drove to the recently opened memorial at the site of the Belzec death camp in Poland. He continued on to Lvov, where his photographs showed us the Golden Rose Synagogue, the remains of the Jewish Quarter, and the Lvov Ghetto. After that, he journeyed to Grzymalow, the town his father was born in, to photograph the ruins of the synagogue and cheder and then continued on to other shtetls of the Ternopil District. Fittingly, also present in the audience was Will Kahane, the last Jewish child born in Grzymalowe in 1945, whose uncle, Rabbi David Kahane, wrote the book *Lvov Ghetto Diary*. A year ago, Will commissioned a Ukrainian translation of this book and, with the cooperation of the government, had thousands of copies distributed to schoolchildren throughout the country so they might be educated about the events that took place in their country during the Holocaust.

Shelley Pollero, immediate past coordinator of Gesher Galicia, offered a glimpse into the Polish online auction site Allegro, illustrating her talk with examples of the genealogically-related treasures for sale, including

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Gesher Galicia Regional Meeting

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cemetery books and photographs, a “Jewish wine bottle,” divorce records, funeral documents, Jewish ration coupons, passports, telegrams, and postcards of various shtetls. She also offered a primer on useful Polish words to use when searching for items to bid on, including *plakaty* (posters), *Zydowskie gazety* (Jewish newspaper), *cmentarza(e)* (cemetery), and, most importantly, variations of Jew or Jewish—*zydowskich*, *Judaika*, *Zydow*, *Zydowski*, and *Judaicum*. The website for Allegro is at <http://www.allegro.pl>.

A short film from the series *The Jews of Poland* was then shown. Shot in 1939 on the streets of Lwow, this ten-minute documentary is one of the last visual accounts of Jewish life in the former Lemberg, Galicia, before the Holocaust. The Steven Spielberg Jewish Film Archive's Virtual Cinema has all the films in this series, which you can view for free on the Internet. Those related to Galicia are *Jewish Life in Lvov* and *Jewish Life in Krakow*. The web link is <http://www.spielbergfilmarchive.org.il>. You will need Internet Explorer and Windows Media Player to view the films at the Virtual Cinema.

Mark Halpern, representing Jewish Records Indexing-Poland, discussed the status of the JRI-Poland Galician projects in Polish and Ukrainian archives and clarified strategies for ordering records. After that, Suzan Wynne, the founder of Gesher Galicia and author of *Finding Your Jewish Roots in Galicia*, movingly spoke about the day-to-day lives of our ancestors as they set about making a living, marrying and raising families, educating their children, and participating in religious life in the cities, towns, and shtetls of Galicia. She explained the process of surname acquisition, the development of the Kahal system of Jewish self-government, and the participation of Jews in the mandated system of universal education under Emperor Franz Josef.

Several Polish and Galician business and telephone directories are now available online through the

websites of the Digital Library of Wielkopolska and the U.S. Library of Congress. Genealogical researcher Logan Kleinwaks has created a search engine for these directories, which greatly simplifies the process of looking up names and professions. In his lecture, he described how to use an Optical Character Recognition (OCR)-based search engine to use these directories successfully. He also reviewed the leading commercial OCR software programs, demonstrated their use on Galician documents, and commented on associated scanning technologies. His website for search engines

linking to the 1926/27, 1928, and 1929 Poland and Danzig business directories can be found at <http://www.kalter.org/search.php>, and his FAQs are at <http://www.kalter.org/searchfaq.html>.



Concluding the meeting was a screening of the film *I Remember Jewish Drohobycz*, previously shown at the Gesher

Galicia luncheon at the IAJGS conference in Las Vegas in 2005. In this video portrait of the vanished world of Eastern European Jewry, JGSLA founding member and rabbinical scholar David Einsiedler, born in Drohobycz in 1919, recounted the heart and soul of shtetl life between the two world wars. Through personal reminiscences, the viewer is led through the streets and into the homes and schools of this Galician town. David described moving to Lvov, then to the university in Pisa, Italy, and then on to America in the late 1930s as the threat of war loomed over his beloved home and the lives of his loved ones. Several genealogical societies and researchers who have connections to this town or region have asked about obtaining copies of this video. A DVD is now available. Please contact me at pweisberger@hotmail.com for details.

IAJGS Conference Update

We are planning many exciting events for the IAJGS conference to be held in New York City during August 13-18, 2006. In addition to our annual SIG meeting and birds-of-a-feather gatherings, there will be a hands-on computer tutorial workshop on research specific to Galicia and two talks by Ukrainian researcher and



guide Alexander Dunai on “Tabula Registers: An Untapped Genealogical Resource in the Lviv Archives” and “Ukrainian/Galician Archives: Records, Research, and Resourcefulness.”

The speaker at the Gesher Galicia luncheon will be Daniel Mendelsohn, a frequent contributor to *The New York Review of Books*, *The New York Times Magazine*, and *The New York Times Book Review*, who will discuss his new work due out in October 2006. In *The Lost: A Search for Six of Six Million*, a writer’s quest for the truth behind his family’s tragic past in World War II becomes a sweeping investigation into the meaning of memory, family, and history. Part of Daniel’s journey included a return to his family’s ancestral shtetl of Bolechow, Ukraine, formerly Galicia, with Alex Dunai as his guide. The focus of his talk will be “the writer’s angle” in genealogical research, including undertaking a journey in which one moves between past and present in an effort to solve a long-standing family mystery. Alex Dunai will provide his perspective on the role of the guide, researcher, and translator in this type of genealogical quest.

New to Gesher Galicia?

To learn more about our SIG, visit our website at www.jewishgen.org/Galicia where you will find information on databases, links, and other helpful research information for Jewish-Galician genealogists. If you are not a member, consider joining. Benefits of membership include receiving our quarterly journal, *The Galitzianer*, with articles on travel experiences, photos of interest, news and advice about obtaining records, and historical pieces and stories from Galician family histories, along with the yearly “Gesher Galicia Family Finder,” which lists the surnames and Galician towns being researched by each member. Members can also apply for research grants for Galician-related research projects. If you are already a member but are interested in being part of our steering committee,

please contact me at pweisberger@hotmail.com. If you need further information about any of the speakers or topics mentioned in this article, feel free to contact me directly.

(Pamela A. Weisberger is the Research Coordinator for Gesher Galicia) ☆

TRANSLATIONS

from Yiddish, German, French, Hebrew
Certificate in Translation,
New York University

Martin Jacobs
marjacobs1@yahoo.com
(718) 449-5955

IAJGS Conference Clicks on High-Tech continued from page 1

of topics covering everything for which researchers at all levels could ask: Central Asia, the Catskills, Poland, DNA, multimedia presentations, HIAS, Jewish history, the Sephardic world, Jewish women, emigration from Bremerhaven, cemeteries near and far, the Lower East Side, New York City buildings, and many more. The most difficult aspect will be attempting to choose which program to attend during each time slot.

When the daytime programs end, the conference schedule doesn’t stop. After-dinner evening events are always popular, including a recently announced presentation by Zalman Mlotek, Folksbiene Yiddish Theater executive director, on American Yiddish theater history. He will perform European and American Yiddish theater music and speak about the composers.

Volunteers are needed in many areas, including hospitality, registration, repositories, resource room, tours, syllabus, volunteer translator, typing, and others. Email volunteers@jgsny2006.org for more information or fill in the volunteer form online at the website.

For up-to-date details about all programs as well as conference details, join the NY 2006 SIG Discussion List through JewishGen. ☆

Finding a Sergeant

by Larry Freund

(Editor's Note: In the Fall-Winter 2004-2005 issue of Dorot, the author described how he helped a World War II veteran find the gravesite of a crewmate killed during the war. This article concludes the story.)

Harold L. Goldberger, a twenty-one-year-old Bronx resident, died on October 9, 1943, when his B-17 was attacked by a German fighter and plummeted into the Baltic. Two members of the crew parachuted safely, were rescued from the Baltic by German sailors, and spent the next year-and-a-half as prisoners of war. The body of Sgt. Goldberger, the B-17's ball turret gunner, was discovered in the sea, was buried in a German military cemetery, and was eventually re-interred in a New York-area cemetery selected by his family.

Lt. Col. (Ret.) Harry T. Cliffe, the navigator aboard the B-17 and one of the two surviving crew members, indirectly enlisted the help of JGSNY in locating Sgt. Goldberger's grave so he could pay his respects. I took up the search, which was ultimately successful. As described earlier, Lt. Col. Cliffe hoped to visit Sgt. Goldberger's grave in the months ahead.

Plans for his visit began to gel in the late summer of 2005. But one question remained frustratingly unanswered: were there any surviving members of Sgt. Goldberger's immediate family? Previous research pointed to at least the possibility of next-of-kin—the fact that Sgt. Goldberger had an older sister, Irene, who had corresponded in the 1960s with U.S. military officials using her married name

(in correspondence located in Sgt. Goldberger's VA file).

With the day of Lt. Col. Cliffe's visit fast approaching, one last attempt was made to locate those likely next-of-kin. The online Social Security Death Index provided a potential clue: a listing for the 1996 death of a man in Broward County, Florida, with the same name as the husband of Sgt. Goldberger's sister. I ordered a copy of his death certificate online, and it provided the informant's name—Barbara Miller, who

lived in the New York area. A call to Ms. Miller confirmed her kinship to Sgt. Goldberger; she was, indeed, his niece. Her brother and his family live in the Mid-Atlantic area. Her mother, Irene, had died years earlier.

Lt. Col. Cliffe and his wife flew to Newark from San Antonio, where my wife and I met them. On a warm, sunny, late October Sunday, a small group gathered at the grave of a young man who, sixty-two years earlier, had given "the last full measure of devotion." The tall, lean Texan, Harry Cliffe, knelt at Sgt. Goldberger's flat gravestone, clearing the overgrowth, a touching act of remembrance observed by a member of Harold Goldberger's own family.

The Cliffes flew back to San Antonio late Sunday afternoon. Sgt. Goldberger's niece had given me another

bit of information about Harold Goldberger—he had graduated from Stuyvesant High School in June 1939. Lt. Col. Cliffe has written the story of Harold Goldberger for the next edition of the school's alumni newsletter. ☆



USAF Lt. Col. (Ret.) Harry T. Cliffe and Barbara Miller at the grave of Sgt. Harold L. Goldberger, October 2005. (Photo courtesy of Gloria Berkenstat Freund)

Metro Area Repository Round-up

National Archives—Change in Hours

The NARA facility in Manhattan is no longer open until 8:00 p.m. on Thursdays, Nancy Shader, Regional Facility Director, has reported. The new hours are Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m.; Tuesday, 8:00 a.m.-8:00 p.m. (limited to microfilm research after 4:30); and the first Saturday of each month (limited to microfilm research).

New-York Historical Society—New Director

Dr. Jean W. Ashton has been named Vice President and Library Director of the New-York Historical Society. Dr. Ashton was the society's Library Director from 1990 to 1993. She will oversee the cataloging and digitization of the society's collection as well as the development and mounting of exhibitions. Dr. Ashton serves on N-YHS's Trustees' Library Council, and she was recently nominated by Mayor Michael Bloomberg to serve on the New York City Archives and Reference Advisory Board.

New York Public Library—Sunday Hours

Some of the divisions that New York Public Library had opened on Sundays as of December 2004 are no longer open on that day. Those still open on Sundays are Rose Main Reading Room, Bill Blass Public Catalog Room, D. Samuel and Jeane H. Gottesman Exhibition Hall, Sue and Edgar Wachenheim III Gallery, and Edna Barnes Salomon Room, the last three being used only for exhibitions. The open hours are 1:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m. The Sunday schedule is in effect through May 21, 2006. Services available include stack delivery, copy services, reader registration, electronic resources and Internet access, and reference services.

New York Public Library—Map Division Reopens

The New York Public Library's newly-renovated Lionel Pincus and Princess Firyal Map Division reopened in December. The collection, international in scope, focuses on cities, especially New York City and the surrounding area.

The storage room houses over 900 oversize map drawers and over 400 oversize shelves holding hundreds of thousands of sheet maps, oversized atlases, and other items dating from the mid-16th century to the present. Patrons have direct access to frequently-used materials, such as world and U.S. atlases and books. The new state-of-the-art digital mapping technology (geographic

information systems (GIS)) allows advanced geographic research through the management, analysis, and displaying of geographic information.

Public workshops and classes about map history, map collecting, and new technology for map research will begin in September.

New York County Surrogate's Court—Indexes

Some indexes to wills and letters of administration at New York County Surrogate's Court are now available as scanned images on the public access computers in the Record Room. The PDFs are copies of the court's bound indexes. Each bound index covers one or more letters of the alphabet within a range of years, such as 1662-1910. A list of wills (or a list of letters of administration) from the earliest date to the most recent is found under each surname.

Some of the bound indexes and all of the card indexes to wills and letters of administration have been relocated to the Record Room. The staff will retrieve the bound indexes from behind the service counter upon request.

Kimberley Sulik, Archivist/Records Manager at New York County Surrogate's Court, described the locations of the wills and letters of administration and their indexes:

- Wills:
 - computerized: 1662-1910 (non-word searchable scanned images) and 1964-present (fully searchable database)
 - bound index books: 1662-1910 (Liber Room) and 1911-1949 (Record Room)
 - index cards: 1950-1963 (public area of the Record Room)

- Administrations:
 - computerized: 1743-1910 (non-word searchable scanned images) and 1964-present (fully searchable database)
 - bound index books: 1743-1910 (Liber Room) and 1911-1949 (Record Room)
 - index cards: 1950-1963 (Record Room)

New Jersey Bureau of Vital Statistics—Fee Increase

Fees for copies of birth, marriage, domestic partnership, and death records ordered from the New Jersey

continued on page 14

Department of Health and Senior Services, Vital Statistics, increased as of January 1st. The State Bureau of Vital Statistics and Registration maintains birth, marriage, and death records from 1878 to the present and domestic partnership records from 2004 to the present.

The new fee for the initial search and a resulting certification (a non-certified document provided to those with a distant or no relationship to the decedent which contains limited information), certified copy, "No Record," or "No Match" is \$25. Additional copies of the same record, ordered at the same time, remain at \$2 per copy. For genealogical searches, the fee for an additional year search remains at \$1 per year searched. Genealogical records are those for births that occurred more than eighty years ago, marriages that occurred more than fifty years ago, and deaths that occurred more than forty years ago.

Identification must be submitted with a request, and the relationship to the individual named on the vital record requested must be stated. Acceptable forms of

identification are listed at <http://www.state.nj.us/health/vital/acceptid.shtml>. Acceptable relationships are described at <http://www.state.nj.us/infobank/circular/eom18.shtml>.

Requests for genealogical records must be made through the write-in service to either the State Bureau of Vital Statistics and Registration in Trenton or the local registrar in the municipality where the event occurred. Requests for non-genealogical records can be made either through the write-in service or by visiting the State Bureau of Vital Statistics and Registration in Trenton or the local registrar. Each municipality is permitted to establish its own fees.

Original birth, marriage, and death records for May 1848-May 1878 are located at the New Jersey State Archives. Microfilm copies of births, 1878-1923; marriages, 1878-1940; and deaths, 1878-1940, are also there. See <http://www.njarchives.org/links/webcat/queries/sehealt2.html>. These materials are available for in-person use only. A search service is provided by the State Bureau of Vital Statistics. ☆

Conference Welcomes Archivist of the United States

Dr. Allen Weinstein, Archivist of the United States, will be the keynote speaker at the IAJGS conference's opening reception on Sunday, August 13th.

Born in New York City, Dr. Weinstein served as a senior advisor at International Foundation for Election Systems, founded and was president and CEO of The Center for Democracy, and was a Professor of History at Boston University and Smith College, an Executive Editor of *The Washington Quarterly* at Georgetown's Center for Strategic and International Studies, and a member of The Washington Post editorial staff. In 1986, he won the United Nations Peace Medal.

Dr. Weinstein has authored a number of books, including *The Story of America*; *The Haunted Wood: Soviet Espionage in America - The Stalin Era*; *Perjury: The Hiss-Chambers Case*; and *Freedom and Crisis: An American History*.

Last year, Dr. Weinstein, along with genealogists, historians, and archivists, successfully opposed a budget proposal that would have defunded and dismantled the National Historical Publications and Records Commission. Dr. Weinstein's goals for the next five years are to fulfill NARA's major electronic records initiatives—the Electronic Records Archive (ERA) and Electronic Records Management (ERM), continue the evolution of strategic directions for Federal Records Management, and create, expand, extend, and, where necessary, redesign NARA's educational and public programs, including linking them to school curricula.



Registration Form

26th IAJGS International Conference on Jewish Genealogy August 13 – 18, 2006

(* Required Information) Please Print

*Last Name _____	*First Name _____
*Spouse/companion Last Name _____	*First Name _____
*Address _____	*Country _____
*Address 2 _____	
*City/Town _____	*State/province _____ *Postal code _____
*Telephone: _____ Fax () _____ E-mail _____	

Name Tag/Seminar Family Finder Information

*How do you wish your name to appear on your badge?

Print up to 5 ancestral surnames and towns that you are researching. These names will be listed on your nametag.
(Please use the modern spelling as listed in *Where Once We Walked*, or on JewishGen's *ShtetlSeeker*)

Surname	Towns and countries
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Registered spouse/companion name badge information

Surname	Towns and countries
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Please check if applicable

	Self	Spouse/Partner
JGS President		
SIG Coordinator		
Shtetl Group Leader		
Birds of a Feather Coordinator		

Do you have a **disability** that requires an accommodation? If yes, what accommodation do you need?

_____ Please respond by May 15, 2006

I would like someone to contact me about **room- sharing**

Yes No

If yes:

Female Male

Smoking Non-smoking

Early registration must be submitted by May 15,2006 US \$215 _____

(Includes a conference syllabus)

Additional **early registration** fee for spouse/companion (syllabus not included) \$150 _____

Regular registration after May 15,2006 \$250 _____

(Includes a conference syllabus)

Additional registration fee for spouse/companion (syllabus not included) \$175 _____

Daily rate (syllabus not included) [] Sun [] Mon [] Tues [] Wed [] Thurs
_____ days @\$75 _____

Additional syllabus may be purchased. Order _____ copy (ies) @\$35 _____

Genealogical Resources in New York - discounted price, including tax and shipping @\$35 _____

Kosher Banquet Thursday evening, August 17, 2006
Number of tickets _____ Chicken _____ Fish _____ Vegetarian @\$80 _____

SIG Meals

SIG	Date	Price	Quantity	Total
JRI-Poland	Sun, August 13	\$30		\$
Gesher Galicia	Mon, August 14	\$30		\$
Latvia SIG	Mon, August 14	\$30		\$
Hungarian SIG	Tue, August 15	\$30		\$
Litvak SIG	Tue, August 15	\$30		\$
Ukraine SIG	Tue, August 15	\$22		\$
Belarus SIG	Wed, August 16	\$30		\$
South Africa SIG	Wed, August 16	\$30		\$

SIG Meals Total \$ _____

(The \$30 lunch includes a choice of wrap or sandwich, a garden salad, cole slaw and pickle, vegetable chips, a cookie, a whole fresh fruit, and beverage.

The \$22 coffee includes pastries, sliced fruit and coffee.)

Cemetery Visits

Cemetery	Location	Price	Quantity	Total
Beth David – Sun, August 13	Elmont	\$21		\$
Beth David – Mon, August 14	Elmont	\$21		\$
Mt. Hebron – Sun, August 13	Flushing	\$18		\$
Mt. Hebron – Wed, August 16	Flushing	\$18		\$
Mt. Zion – Sun, August 13	Maspeth	\$18		\$
Mt. Zion – Thu, August 17	Maspeth	\$18		\$
Old Montefiore – Sun, August 13	St. Albans	\$18		\$
Old Montefiore – Tue, August 15	St. Albans	\$18		\$
Ridgewood/Glendale – Sun, August 13	(circle one below)	\$18		\$
<small>Mt. Carmel, New Mt. Carmel, Mt. Neboh, Machpelah, Beth El, Hungarian Union Field, Knollwood, Mt. Judah, Union Field, Mt. Lebanon</small>				
Ridgewood/Glendale – Fri, August 18	(circle one below)	\$18		\$
<small>Mt. Carmel, New Mt. Carmel, Mt. Neboh, Machpelah, Beth El, Hungarian Union Field, Knollwood, Mt. Judah, Union Field, Mt. Lebanon</small>				

Cemetery Visits Total \$ _____

(Please note that cemetery tours will depart from the Marriott Marquis at 8 am and last until approximately 1 pm. In the cemetery, the bus will drop you off and pick you up at the cemetery office. You will need to walk through the cemetery to the gravesites of your interest and these are all large cemeteries).

Computer Classes

These classes meet on Sunday, August 13 and will be intensive 2 hour PC classes

Class	Time	Price	Quantity	Total
Using JewishGen's Databases and Search Capabilities	10 am	\$10		\$
Genealogy on the Internet	12 noon	\$10		\$
Intro to The Internet	2 pm	\$10		\$
Using JewishGen's Databases and Search Capabilities	4 pm	\$10		\$

Computer Classes Total \$ _____

Tours

Tour	Date	Time	Price	Quantity	Total
Jewish Lower East Side (walking tour)	Sunday, August 13	1 pm	\$22		\$
Jewish Lower East Side (walking tour)	Monday, August 14	1 pm	\$22		\$
Jewish Lower East Side (walking tour)	Wednesday, August 16	1 pm	\$22		\$
Jewish Ellis Island	Sunday, August 13	8:15 am	\$28		\$
Jewish Ellis Island	Monday, August 14	8:15 am	\$28		\$
Jewish Ellis Island	Tuesday, August 15	8:15 am	\$28		\$
Tenement Museum & Eldridge St Synagogue	Sunday, August 13	9 AM	\$18		\$
Tenement Museum & Eldridge St Synagogue	Tuesday, August 15	9 AM	\$18		\$
Tenement Museum & Eldridge St Synagogue	Wednesday, August 16	9 AM	\$18		\$

(All tour prices include the price of a roundtrip Metro Card to use on the subway)

Tours Total \$ _____

Hotel Information

The rates are as follows:

\$208 - 1 or 2 people in a room \$238 - 3 people in a room \$268 - 4 people in a room

Date of Arrival _____ Date of Departure _____

Number of people _____ Number of Beds _____

- Smoking
- Non-smoking

If you are sharing this room with another Conference registrant, please list their name here _____

Please note we are entering the hotel reservation for you. You will receive a confirmation from the hotel, which will include a phone number to make any modifications to your reservation. Hotel reservations may be accepted only via credit card.

Payment

Total Enclosed \$ _____

- Check, payable to JGS, Inc, enclosed
- Credit Card _____ MasterCard _____ VISA _____ American Express

Name on Card _____

Card No. _____ Security Code _____

Expiration Date (mm/yyyy) _____ Signature _____

Cancellation/Refund Policy

All requests for cancellations MUST be made in writing.

Mail request to: JGS, Inc – 2006 Conference Refunds, PO Box 6398, New York, NY 10128

All refunds will be issued after the conference has ended, by check only

Request Received	Refund	Administrative Fee
June 1, 2006 and earlier	Full refund	Minus \$35
June 2 – July 15, 2006	Full Refund	Minus \$75
After July 15, 2006	None (except at the discretion of JGS, Inc)	

Mail this form with credit card information or check payable to JGS to:

IAJGS Conference
c/o eShow2000
5 Executive Court #2
South Barrington, Illinois 60010

If registering by fax, you will need to include your credit card information or mail a check payable to JGS separately to the address above. Fax the registration form to: 847-713-2590.

Please note we are entering the hotel reservation for you. You will receive a confirmation from the hotel which will include a phone number to make any modifications to your reservation. Hotel reservations may be accepted only via credit card

Any questions, contact:
Roni Seibel Liebowitz at registration@jgsny2006.org

New York

“Burial Societies in the New York Metro Area”

To make it easier to search the Jewish Genealogical Society’s database “Burial Societies in the New York Metro Area” (<http://www.jgsny.org/searchcity.htm>), Ada Green has written “Helpful Hints for Searching ‘Burial Societies in the New York Metro Area’” (<http://www.jgsny.org/keyword.htm>). The database contains close to 10,200 entries from almost 100 cemeteries in New York City, Long Island, Putnam County, Westchester County, and northern New Jersey. It includes the names of the burial societies, the cemetery in which each plot is located, the section/block and gate/post number, and the shtetl or town from which its members originated.

Death Index

The Italian Genealogical Group and the German Genealogy Group have updated their free New York City death database to include 1943-1945. The final three years, 1946-1948, are being proofread and are just several weeks away from being added to the database. Additional information about this and other IGG/GGG databases can be found elsewhere in this issue in the article “More Morse One-Steps.”

The death database and many others on the IGG and GGG websites could not have been created without the help of many volunteers. Volunteers are now working on a database of Manhattan brides for 1866-1937, which includes over two million names. The Genealogy Federation of Long Island needs an additional fifty or sixty volunteers to work from home with a spreadsheet program (Excel or Works) or even a word processor. Send an e-mail to John Martino, Project Coordinator, at JohnM16881@aol.com to offer to participate.

Historic Brooklyn Photos

Historic photos of Brooklyn and Manhattan, 1893-1990, can be viewed on Brooklyn Public Library’s online catalog at <http://www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org/brooklyncollection/photo-collections.jsp>. The thousands of photos are from BPL’s Brooklyn Collection, which includes the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*’s photo collection, c. 1900-1955, and the collections of amateur and professional photographers. Themes include character studies and portraits, street scenes, municipal and commercial buildings, parades, Ocean Parkway, housing, synagogues, yeshivas, people

working at their trades, and other scenes representing Jewish life. Hasidic Williamsburg is strongly represented in the collection of Irving I. Herzberg.

National

Jewishdata.com Additions

The following resources, recently added to the Jewishdata.com database, are now available to JGS members through the JGS website at www.jgsny.org. Scroll down to the middle of the home page and enter your user name or e-mail address and password.

- 10,500 tombstone images from Frankfurt, Germany, including Hebrew-only monuments, indexed by name
- several thousand indexed tombstone images from Jewish cemeteries in these New York cities and towns: Binghamton, Johnson City, Newburgh, Ridgewood (Queens), Schenectady, and Syracuse
- almost 8,000 records and images of Kings County, New York, Declarations of Intention filed by Jewish immigrants during 1906-1913. The database contains almost all of the Declarations filed in Brooklyn by Jews during those years.

An interview with Rabbi Avraham Laber, creator of JewishData.com, begins on page 20 of this issue.

ILGWU Photos

Photos of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, 1885-1985, are online at <http://odell.mannlib.cornell.edu/ilr/catalog/ILGWUDescription.php>. This small portion of the collection of the Kheel Center for Labor-Management Documentation and Archives at Cornell University’s Catherwood Library documents labor and working class history through photos of everyday life and work at home, in garment shops, at the Union’s offices, in the streets, and in the courts. A keyword search and advanced search are available. Or view all 1,031 (to date) images without entering search terms by clicking “Go,” “Agree,” and “Go.” Or, search by subject by clicking “Subjects,” “Agree,” and a subject, such as "Jewish Americans," "Marches, Shirtwaist Makers," "Strikes," "Street Scenes," "Union Officers," and "Working Conditions."

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VA Nationwide Gravesite Locator

The Nationwide Gravesite Locator of the Department of Veterans Affairs National Cemetery Administration (http://gravelocator.cem.va.gov/j2ee/servlet/NGL_v1) now includes records of veterans buried in private cemeteries. The almost two million records (to date) are for veterans buried since January 1997 whose graves are marked with a government grave marker. The database now lists over five million gravesites in national, state veterans, and private cemeteries and Arlington National Cemetery. The VA administers 122 of the 138 national cemeteries, the Army two (Arlington and Soldiers Home), and the Department of the Interior fourteen.

International

YIVO's Library Catalog

The first edition of the YIVO Library's online catalog includes 60,000 records. They are mostly of monographic books in all European languages as well

as in transliterated ("Romanized") Yiddish and Hebrew. The catalog, thus far, represents only a portion of the library's extensive holdings. The major portion of the holdings still must be located through the card catalog in the Center for Jewish History's Reading Room. http://www.cjh.org/about/yivo_catalog.html (note the underscore in the address: yivo_catalog).

YIVO's Photo Catalog

YIVO's photo catalog, "People of a Thousand Towns," is now online at <http://yivo1000towns.cjh.org>. 17,000 photos from several photo collections at the YIVO Archives are included. They document Jewish life in pre-war Eastern Europe from the late nineteenth century to the early 1940s and include large Jewish centers in Czechoslovakia, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Russia, Ukraine, and Yugoslavia as well as many smaller towns and villages. Register free at <http://yivo1000towns.cjh.org/register.asp> to use the catalog for seven days. After seven days, reregistration is required. ☆

A Conversation With Rabbi Avraham Laber

Arthur Kurzweil: I have been told by people who know of your website but have no experience with it that they think it's a Jewish genealogical website for people from a very small area in upstate New York. I know this is false, but I'd like to hear it in your words. Why is this misperception happening and what's the truth?

Avraham Laber: The first area we covered was upstate New York. That was in 2003. However, our database has grown so much, with records from Brooklyn, Connecticut, Illinois, Massachusetts, Vermont, Canada, and Germany. Records from upstate New York are only a small percentage of our database.

AK: How do you decide which kinds of records to gather and include on your site?

AL: We consider a combination of factors based on the information content and the ability to acquire the records from each location. To illustrate this, one record type we gather is Declarations of Intention, which are loaded with such information as date and place of birth, height, weight, and date and means of arrival to this country. We only acquire the documents from 1906 and not earlier because the pre-1906 documents do not include the details mentioned above.

Tombstone images are good sources of information, and we attach higher priority to the types that include more information. Many tombstone images from Frankfurt, Germany, are being processed now because we have found the right person to acquire images in Germany.

AK: Many genealogical websites are free. JewishGen is an obvious example of a Jewish genealogical website that has an enormous quantity of information and data and is free. So is the Ellis Island site, the Yad Vashem site, etc. Why does Jewishdata.com cost money, and how did you determine what the charge is?

AL: The websites you mention—JewishGen and the others—are all excellent sites. They all do great work! Let's take a look at JewishGen. Acquiring records and indexing them and posting them on the Internet does cost a lot of money. Some people donate their time and images, so you can find, for example, several images from various Jewish cemeteries. However, by and large, its work is supported by donations. When logging in to JewishGen, the first thing you see is a page about donating necessary funds. I support it in its work.

Jewish Data does it differently. Our approach is to pay people to get the work done and offer paid subscriptions to cover their expenses. We figure that considering the

time and money it would cost for people to travel and acquire even just several documents or tombstone images, a subscription will bring them quicker and less costly results.

AK: What are the current activities of the site? Are you gathering more data?

AL: We are constantly gathering more data. Now we have about 250,000 records. Our short term goal is to reach one million records. Recently, we started acquiring records from large Jewish cemeteries in Queens and Chicago.

AK: What do you mean by 250,000 “records”?

AL: At our website, all records are indexed by names, and all listed results are displayed together. The records are listings of the holdings, which include Declarations of Intention, tombstone images, books, news articles, and historical journals.

AK: What is the goal of the website?

AL: Our goal is to provide a home for Jewish records in order to help people study Jewish history and genealogy. We hope that knowing more about their own family and the Jewish family in general will inspire people to strengthen their link in the Jewish golden chain by living their lives according to the Torah and Mitzvos. This was the only consistent element in Jewish history. We plan to develop a workbook to help people take advantage of our website by using it as a study guide for students.

AK: How does your site compare to JewishGen?

AL: JewishGen is considered the Internet home for Jewish genealogy. It is a place for people to meet others who are researching the same families, and it helps form a community of people helping people. It also hosts a variety of projects run by groups of volunteers. Jewish Data is just one useful tool that benefits Jewish genealogy researchers and anyone interested in Jewish history.

Because JewishGen relies on the groups, it has the advantage of a large pool of contributors, but it is also limited by what the groups are able to undertake. For instance, it may have several images from a few of the Jewish cemeteries we have posted, but we capture entire Jewish cemeteries. Our staff spends long days in the summer heat snapping pictures. When posting

documents, we also post all of the Jewish records found at each location.

Another difference is that JewishGen includes many indexes to records, while we post the records themselves. For example, JewishGen hosts a project called JewishGen Online Worldwide Burial Registry, which is mostly an index of names and dates. We post the actual tombstone images.

AK: Can you describe just how the website works?

AL: Users enter the surname they are looking for, and then records are displayed with a listing of the record location. If they click on a camera icon on the left side, they will see a clear image of the document or tombstone. If someone is doing research on a particular place, they can enter the city name in the location field, and all the records from that location will be retrieved.

AK: I suspect that a typical researcher will say “What if I pay the money and find nothing?” To minimize this, who would you say are the best prospects for finding the site lucrative?

AL: People should always enter the names they’re interested in on the home page. They can see if those names are in the database or not, and there is no charge to find that out. Obviously, if someone sees that their family names are not there, they should not subscribe. In the long run, we are trying to make the database free to end users thru public library subscriptions. Some public libraries subscribe, and all of their cardholders can use the database from the comfort of their homes by remote access. The database can also be accessed by visitors to the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. There are also low rates for group subscriptions. Some groups offer free access as one of their membership perks—for example, the Jewish Genealogical Society in New York.

AK: How did you get involved in Jewish genealogy?

AL: Once I was walking with a friend near an old Jewish cemetery. I asked “What do you see over there?” He shrugged his shoulders. “A bunch of old stones. Why, what do you see?” I replied “I see a mountain of information.”

Since 1996, I’ve been serving as the Rabbi of Beth Tephilah Synagogue in Troy, New York. The synagogue has a long history, and some of it is preserved. I would receive letters and phone calls from people asking me

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questions like “Is there anything in the synagogue records about my grandfather? Do you know where my aunt is buried?” I thought hard about how to make all the records available online. This concept led to the development of Jewish Data.

AK: Have you worked on your own family history? What have you found? And would your site be useful for your own family?

AL: I have done some work on my own family history, but I haven't devoted much time to it. I hit some roadblocks getting information from Ukraine, which is where they came from. One of the interesting stories I heard was that my great-grandfather was serving on military guard. One night, he heard noise from the bushes. After calling for the person to identify himself and hearing no response, he shot. It turned out that the Czar had been in the area, and my great-grandfather shot one of his horses. He was in deep trouble, so he ran away and eventually reached New York. I do believe, though, that by helping so many others, eventually I will be helped as well. And while the site has not been helpful for my own family yet, as it grows, I think it will.

AK: Why do you, as an observant Jew, feel that doing this kind of research is important?

AL: My teacher, the Lubavitcher Rebbe, would always encourage people to use every venue to spread Judaism. I think that it can help people become more aware of their Jewish roots and do more to grow in their observance. In addition to this, it is important to know who is Jewish, who is a Cohen or Levi, etc. Our database helps accomplish this. In fact, the Sanhedrin (the highest court in the times of the Temple) would spend much of its time examining the lineage of the Cohenim, i.e., genealogy research.

AK: I know someone who is very interested in his family history, but his wife says, “Spend your time learning Torah—not with this mishegoss!” What is your reaction to that?

AL: Of course people should study Torah as much as possible. However, as mentioned before, the greatest Jewish leaders considered family history to be something important, and one of the main advantages of our website is to save people time. Here we have thousands of hours of research already done for people,

and it only takes them a few seconds to access the records. If they would search for the same records on their own, it would cost them much more money and time.

AK: Jewishdata.com is an ambitious project that will surely delight many researchers. I am quite impressed with this groundbreaking website.

(Rabbi Avraham Laber is the creator of Jewishdata.com, available to JGS members through the JGS website. Arthur Kurzweil is the author of From Generation to Generation: How to Trace Your Jewish Genealogy and Family History and the recipient of a Lifetime Achievement Award from the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies.) ☆

Keeping up with Conference News

Keep up with news about the IAJGS conference as it breaks by visiting <http://www.jgsny2006.org> regularly. Posted to date are details about:

- registration
- hotel reservations
- discounted plane and train fares
- transportation to and from New York airports
- local trains, subways, and buses
- parking near the hotel
- Frequently Asked Questions
- keynote and banquet speakers
- genealogical repositories in New York City
- Jewish cemeteries in the New York metropolitan area
- kosher and non-kosher restaurants near the hotel
- theaters, concerts, and entertainment
- sightseeing tours
- cemetery visits
- Sunday computer workshops
- museums
- how to volunteer

Yet to come is news about lecture topics, speakers, workshops, more computer workshops, evening events at the hotel, extended hours at repositories, and the Repository Fair.

You can subscribe to the Conference Mailing List through JewishGen at <http://www.jewishgen.org>.

More Morse One-Steps

Finding a Living Person

Databases used to find living people now have One-Step search forms on Dr. Stephen Morse's website. The databases are:

- Ancestry.com's U.S. Public Records Index (<http://ancestry.com/search/db.aspx?dbid=8907>)
- Private Eye's People Search (<http://www.privateeye.com/Search/People/Default.htm>)
- Peoplefinders's People Search (<http://www.peoplefinders.com/Search/People/Default.htm>).

Links to Dr. Morse's One-Steps are listed in the "Births, Deaths, and other Vital Records" section of his website (<http://www.stevemorse.org>). Ancestry is listed as "Public Records: Searching US Public Records in One Step," and Private Eye and Peoplefinder are listed as "Birth Years and Related Persons: Finding Birth Years and Related Persons in One Step." Information in the databases was compiled from public records.

Finding a Groom's Bride

After using Dr. Morse's One-Step to locate a groom (listed as "New York City Groom Index (1908-1936)" in the "Births, Deaths, and other Vital Records" section of his website at <http://www.stevemorse.org>), click on the link he has created for that groom's bride in the "View Bride" column. Because the volunteers of the Genealogy Federation of Long Island have not yet completed the bride database, clicking on "bride" may result in "No Matches Found."

Year of Marriage

The "Year of Marriage" column in the IGG and GGG bride and groom databases lists the year the marriage was reported to the Department of Health, not the year the marriage occurred. Marriages that took place near the end of a year might have been reported the following year. A marriage on December 27, 1906, for instance, might have "27'06" entered in the IGG/GGG "Day of Marriage" column and "1907" in the "Year of Marriage" column.

For the groom database, Dr. Morse's One-Step looks for "1906" in both of those columns even if "1906" has been entered in both boxes for "Year of marriage is between."

For the bride database, his One-Step only searches

the "Year of Marriage" column and, therefore, would not find that 1906 marriage. Users must enter "1906" and "1907" in the two boxes for "Year of marriage is between."

Deaths

Similarly, the IGG/GGG death database lists in the "Year" column the year the death was reported, not the year of the death. A death toward the end of a year could have been reported that year or the next. Search the death database by entering the year of the death as well as the following year in the "Year of death is between" boxes. ☆

Who She Was Author to Speak at Conference

Samuel G. Freedman, award-winning author, former reporter for *The New York Times*, and professor of journalism at Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism, will be the keynote speaker at the IAJGS conference banquet on Thursday evening, August 17th. Professor Freedman will offer a thought-provoking talk about the motivation and methodology behind *Who She Was: My Search for My Mother's Life*.

Professor Freedman has written five critically acclaimed books, including *Jew Vs. Jew: The Struggle for the Soul of American Jewry*, the winner in 2001 of the Jewish Book Council's National Jewish Book Award for Non-fiction. In the recently published *Who She Was*, he reconstructs his mother's childhood, adolescence, and young adult years in the working class east and west Bronx of the 1930s, 40s, and 50s, where she grew up as the child of Eastern European Jewish immigrants. This fascinating account is a "must-read" for those who, like Samuel Freedman, seek to understand their parents' and grandparents' pasts within the context of their times.

To learn more about Professor Freedman and read reviews of his books, including *Who She Was*, and the full text of articles he has had published, visit his website at <http://www.samueelfreedman.com/books/index.html>.

See <http://www.jgsny2006.org/registration.cfm> for information on registering for the conference and the banquet.

Upcoming and Current Events

New York

Through April 2, 2006

Yeshiva University Museum: The exhibit “A Perfect Fit: The Garment Industry and American Jewry, 1860-1960” traces the history of the garment industry in America by exploring the themes of technology, industry, labor, immigration, and Jewish and popular culture. Cost: free with Museum admission of \$8 for adults and \$6 for seniors and students; free for YUM members, those with a valid Yeshiva University ID card, and children under five. <http://www.yumuseum.org/APerfectFit/index.html> Location: Center for Jewish History.

Through April 9, 2006

New York Public Library: “Treasured Maps,” an exhibit mounted by the Map Division in the Edna Barnes Salomon Room, displays more than eighty rarely seen maps ranging in time from 17th century maps documenting the way the universe was then understood to maps of present-day New York City neighborhoods. Admission is free. <http://www.nypl.org/research/calendar/exhib/hssl/hsslexhibdesc.cfm?id=384> Location: 5th Avenue at 42nd Street, Manhattan.

Through April 23, 2006

Leo Baeck Institute: The exhibit “Widely Scattered, Closely Linked: The Daily Life of Central European Jewry, 1600 to 1948” looks at the daily life of Jews across the expanse of Central Europe, from Alsace-Lorraine in the west to the mountains of the Bukovina in the east. There were regional borders to cross and taxes to pay; there were geographical variations in recreational activities, apprenticeship options, and community activities. But the essential Jewish values of family, education, and worship transcended territories and centuries, making even widely scattered populations closely linked. Admission is free. <http://www.lbi.org/exhibitions.html> Location: Center for History.

Through June 2006

American Jewish Historical Society: “‘Cradled in Judea’: Jewish Orphanages in New York, 1860-1960” is an exhibit about the history of these orphanages which, from their beginnings, were populated by a variety of “orphans.” The progeny of poverty and disease, few of these children were full orphans. Others

had parents who relinquished them because life in an orphanage seemed better than the one they could provide. Orphanages evolved in concert with advances in child care theory and practice. From the nineteenth century into the twentieth, an orphan’s life progressed from one of regimentation and scarcity to one with greater opportunities for individuality and self-expression. Through the lives of the children, this story captures a century of adversity, accomplishment, and, most of all, change. Admission is free. <http://www.ajhs.org> Location: Center for Jewish History.

Through June 25, 2006

Museum of Jewish Heritage: “Life in Shadows: Hidden Children and the Holocaust,” an exhibit organized and circulated by the United States Holocaust Memorial



Gitta Rosenzweig was discovered in a Catholic orphanage after the war. In 1942, she had been found wandering in the Polish countryside and was taken to a children’s home, where she was given the name “Maria Czekanska.” Here, she sits on the lap of a woman from the home.

Photo credit: Courtesy of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum; gift of Gitta Rosenzweig.



After liberation, the Jewish community set up homes for orphaned children who had survived the war, many in hiding. The toddlers in this photo are being cared for in a children's home in Etterbeek, Belgium. Their parents were deported to Auschwitz.

Photo credit: Courtesy of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum; gift of Margit Meier.

Museum, tells the story of the thousands of Jewish children who survived the Holocaust by either having their identities disguised or being physically concealed in attics, cellars, barns, and sewers. Going into hiding often meant leaving their families and identities behind. Life in hiding was never safe and was always fraught with danger.

After the war, a new chapter in the story of these hidden children began. Surviving parents, relatives, and family friends sought out children they had placed in convents, orphanages, or with foster families. Local Jewish committees in Europe tried to register the living and account for the dead. For many children, the search for their families and their true identities involved traumatic soul-searching to rediscover who they truly were. Cost: free with general admission price of \$10 for adults, \$7 for seniors, and \$5 for students; free for children twelve and under. Location: 36 Battery Place, Battery Park City, Manhattan. <http://www.mjhnyc.org> The Museum of Jewish Heritage is a **JGS Friend**; see page 31 of this issue for information about the discount provided to JGS members.

Through July 5, 2006

Museum of Jewish Heritage: "Ours to Fight For: American Jews in the Second World War" examines

and celebrates the role of Jewish men and women who participated in the American war effort on and off the battlefield. The exhibit makes use of video testimony, artifacts, letters, and photographs. Cost: free with general admission price of \$10 for adults, \$7 for seniors, and \$5 for students; free for children twelve and under. Location: 36 Battery Place, Battery Park City, Manhattan. <http://www.mjhnyc.org> The Museum of Jewish Heritage is a **JGS Friend**; see page 31 of this issue for information about the discount provided to JGS members.

Through September 4, 2006

Museum of Jewish Heritage: "Bukharan Odyssey," an exhibit of photographs by

Zion Ozeri, captures one of the world's most exotic and colorful Jewish communities, the Bukharan Jews of Uzbekistan. Settling in the cities and villages of Central Asia centuries ago, this community flourished and created its own special traditions, customs, and rituals. Mr. Ozeri traveled to Uzbekistan from 1993 to 2000 to photograph this rich and vibrant intersection of Jewish, Persian, Uzbek and Soviet influences on Bukharan Jews just as they began emigrating en masse to Israel and the United States following the break up of the Soviet Union. Cost: free with general admission price of \$10 for adults, \$7 for seniors, and \$5 for students; free for children twelve and under. Location: 36 Battery Place, Battery Park City, Manhattan. <http://www.mjhnyc.org> The Museum of Jewish Heritage is a **JGS Friend**; see page 31 of this issue for information about the discount provided to JGS members.

March 19, 2006, 2:00 p.m.

JGS: Bob Friedman, Director of the Genealogy Institute at the Center for Jewish History, will present "Sneak Preview: The Center for Jewish History's Dynamic New Website and Online Catalog." Mr. Friedman will provide a guided tour of the Center's redesigned, user-friendly website. The online catalog is an integrated search engine providing entry to the treasures in the collections of the

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Center's partners (American Jewish Historical Society, American Sephardi Foundation, Leo Baeck Institute, Yeshiva University Museum, and YIVO Institute for Jewish Research) from a single access point.

March 23, 2006

Yeshiva University Museum: David Von Drehle, journalist for The Washington Post, will read from his award-winning book *Triangle: The Fire that Changed America*, on the 95th anniversary of the fire at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory. Cost: \$10; \$8 for YUM members and students. The cost includes exhibit viewing. Location: Center for Jewish History.

March 26, 2006

Yeshiva University Museum: "All in a Day's Work," a folklore festival, combines storytelling, dressmaking demonstrations, and music, bringing to life the multi-ethnic world of the garment industry. Cost: \$12; \$10 for YUM members, students, and children under 18; \$5 for members' children under 18. Includes Museum admission. Advance purchase recommended. Location: Center for Jewish History.

March 29, 2006

Genealogy Institute: The workshop "Finding Our Roots: Introduction to Jewish Genealogy" will teach how to start family history research. Topics are "Oral History," "Census Records," "Passenger Lists," "Naturalization Papers," "Cemeteries and Funeral Homes," "Jewish Surnames," "Vital Records," "City Directories," "Spelling Variations," "Internet Sites," and "Resources at the Center for Jewish History." Space is limited; advance registration is recommended. Choose between the 10:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. and 6:30 p.m.-9:00 p.m. workshops, and register by phone: (917) 606-8200, fax: (917) 606-8201, e-mail: boxoffice@cjh.org; or online: <http://www.cjh.org>. Cost: \$25 per person. Location: Center for Jewish History.

April 4, 2006, 6:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m.

New York Public Library: Alice Hudson, Chief of the Map Division, will present an illustrated lecture featuring maps and views of New York City from Central Park to Astoria and provide an overview of the Division's half million maps, including maps on display in the "Treasured Maps" exhibit. Admission is free. Reservations are required. To reserve a seat, send an e-mail to Training@nypl.org or call (212) 930-9284. Location: 5th Avenue at 42nd Street, Manhattan, in the South

Court Auditorium (enter the library from 5th Avenue).

April 8, 2006, 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

Genealogy Federation of Long Island: The seminar "Family Roots II: Where to Begin, How to Continue & Share" is designed for everyone from beginners to experts. Four lectures will be offered in each of four one-hour time slots. In addition to the beginner's track, lectures include "What's New at the National Archives & Records Administration," "Beyond DNA: Your Genetic Genealogy Options," "Census Research in the 21st Century," "Organizit: Reducing Your Genealogy Clutter," and "Military Records as a Genealogical Resource." Cost: registration by March 24th, \$45; walk-ins and registration after March 24th, \$55. For additional details, updates, and registration, see <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~gfli> or e-mail gfli-cipko@earthlink.net. Location: Stony Brook University.

April 16, 2006, 2:00 p.m.

JGS: "The Databases of the Genealogy Federation of Long Island," posted on the websites of the Italian Genealogical Group (<http://www.italiangen.org>) and the German Genealogy Group (<http://www.germangenealogygroup.com>), will be reviewed by John Martino, Project Coordinator. Many millions of records held by local and regional archives have been—and continue to be—transcribed by volunteers from the Genealogy Federation of Long Island and other local genealogy organizations as well as by individuals living outside of New York. Mr. Martino coordinates and supervises the work done by volunteers prior to the data being entered in searchable online databases. The databases serve as indexes to marriages in New York City (brides and grooms); deaths in New York City; and naturalizations in New York City, Nassau County, Suffolk County, and Westchester County as well as in military camps in the New York tri-state area during World War I, World War II, and the Korean War.

May 10, 2006, 6:30 p.m.

New-York Historical Society: In "The Joy of Genealogy," Brian Andersson, Commissioner of New York City's Department of Records and Information Services, will use documents and records to discuss famous and infamous personalities of the 19th and 20th centuries. He will focus on the holdings of the Municipal Archives and City Hall Library, divisions of DORIS. Cost: \$12 (\$6 for N-YHS members, students, educators, and seniors). Location: 170 CPW at W. 77th Street.

May 17, 2006, 3:00 p.m.

New-York Historical Society: In "Introduction to NARA's Genealogical Resources," Dorothy Dougherty, Public Program Specialist, U. S. National Archives and Records Administration, Northeast Region, will outline the most useful records held by the Manhattan branch of NARA for genealogical research, including federal census records, ship passenger lists for the Port of New York, naturalization records, military records, and land records. She will explain the use of indexes to gain access to those records and the advantages and pitfalls of researching federal censuses and passenger lists online. Cost: \$15 (\$12 for N-YHS members, students, educators, and seniors). Location: 170 Central Park West at W. 77th Street.

May 21, 2006, 2:00 p.m.

JGS: Ron Arons will explore "The Internet Beyond JewishGen and Steve Morse's Website." JewishGen and Steve Morse's website provide the Jewish genealogist with excellent research tools. Mr. Arons will examine other "best bet" websites that allow researchers to locate many other online resources, including historical documents, newspapers/articles, living people finders, maps, photographs, and foreign language translators and aids. He will provide numerous examples of how the Internet has assisted him in his research.

Wednesday, May 24, 2006, 3:00 p.m.

New-York Historical Society: In "NARA's Online Genealogical Resources," Dorothy Dougherty, Public Program Specialist, U. S. National Archives and Records Administration, Northeast Region, will talk about how to find one's family in federal records, especially in NARA's online research catalogs and other holdings. She will outline search steps and provide sample searches for each online resource. Cost: \$15 (\$12 for N-YHS members, students, educators, and seniors). Location: 170 Central Park West at W. 77th Street.

June 18, 2006, 2:00 p.m.

JGS: The program will be announced on the JGS website at <http://www.jgsny.org/events.htm>.

** **JGS's** monthly meetings are held at The Center for Jewish History, unless otherwise indicated. The Center is located at 15 West 16th Street (between 5th and 6th avenues) in Manhattan. JGS members are admitted free with a current JGS membership card. The admission fee for non-members is \$3.00. The Center Genealogy Institute is open to JGS members from 12:30 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. for networking with fellow researchers and for access to its resource materials and computers. **

National

June 7-10, 2006

National Genealogical Society: NGS will hold its annual Conference in the States at the Hyatt Regency O'Hare in Rosemont, Illinois, fifteen miles from downtown Chicago. Tracks include African American, Ancestry.com, Basics, Board for Certification of Genealogists, Computer Lab, Ethnic, GENTECH, Illinois, Military, Records, and States. See details at <http://www.eshow2000.com/ngs>. Cost: \$210 for members (\$175 for registration by April 21st), \$245 for non-members (\$210 for registration by April 21st). A Librarian's Conference will be offered at no additional charge on June 6th for librarians who work with genealogy reference materials or with patrons doing genealogical research. Separate registration is required.

July 16-22, 2006

National Institute on Genealogical Research: NIGR's annual program at the National Archives in Washington, D.C., and College Park, Maryland, is intensive and in-depth, offering hands-on access to federal records of genealogical value to experienced researchers, including genealogists, historians, librarians, and archivists. This year, the focus is on African American, cartographic, immigration, land, legislative, military, and postal records. Enrollment is limited, and the institute fills quickly. See <http://www.rootsweb.com/~natgenin>. To receive an application brochure, fill out the form at <http://www.rootsweb.com/~natgenin/mailling.htm>. Cost: \$350 for registration postmarked on or before May 15th; \$400 if postmarked May 16th or later.

August 30-September 2, 2006

Federation of Genealogical Societies: Boston will be the site of the FGS annual conference, with the New England Historic Genealogical Society serving as local host. Designed for genealogists with all levels of experience, the conference includes management workshops for organization leadership training and tracks on the Internet and technology and skill building. The international tracks feature speakers from Canada, England, Ireland, and Scotland. Additional features are a Librarians Day and the Association of Professional Genealogists' Professional Management Conference. Speakers and topics are posted on the FGS Conference Blog at www.fgsconference.blogspot.com. Online registration is available at www.fgs.org. Cost: \$185; \$155 for registration by July 1st. ☆

Letters from the Dead

by Peter Landé

I courteously request that I, Helena Moses, a worker in the carpet factory at Rauchgasse 44, and my mother will again be exempted.”

Helena Moses

Susanne Moses

For the past fifteen years, I have been working with many volunteers and the staff of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum to try to gather in a single database the names of all who perished in or survived the Holocaust. While this project is far from complete, we have succeeded in collecting over three million names, although this includes duplicates—a major achievement in gradually identifying individual persons with names and dates and places of birth and death. Virtually all of these names have been drawn from documents created during the Holocaust, and they, therefore, differ from Yad Vashem’s collection of largely post-war testimonial information. A guide on how to access USHMM information follows this article.

The project described above has been a source of considerable personal satisfaction. Yet it remains incomplete in a significant respect. Each of these persons we have identified, and those we have not yet identified, has an individual story which far transcends simple biographical data. While many survivors have recorded their experiences, they are a small number compared to those who perished. And the dead cannot speak.

It was with great amazement that I stumbled across a massive collection of copies of letters written by Jews held in the Lodz ghetto. These many thousands of letters were appeals by individuals or families to remain in the ghetto and not be resettled. These “resettlements,” nominally to forced labor camps, were, in fact, mostly to Chelmno or Auschwitz, though the writers did not know of these destinations. Some of these letters are very short; others describe individuals’ circumstances in great detail.

To explain how these letters came to be written, one needs to have some basic information on the Lodz ghetto. The following is an extremely brief synopsis, and interested readers should consult books, such as *The Chronicle of the Lodz Ghetto, 1941-1944*, edited by Lucjan Dobroszycki, for more complete information.

The Germans occupied Lodz on September 8, 1939, and, later that year, established the ghetto. Initially home to over 200,000 inhabitants, the ghetto grew as Jews from the surrounding region were sent to Lodz. Later, Jews from Austria (Vienna), Czechoslovakia (Prague), Luxembourg, and Germany (Hamburg, Essen, Cologne, Berlin, Frankfurt, and Düsseldorf) were added. The total number of Jews in the ghetto varied with births and deaths and, more importantly, with “resettlements” from Lodz. By December 1941, the number of residents was over 160,000, but this gradually shrank to 151,000 in February 1942 and 110,000 in May 1942. The number remained above 100,000 for most of 1942.

Administration of life in the ghetto was handled by the *Judenrat*, a committee of Jewish elders. The *Judenrat*’s responsibilities extended to all aspects of life in the ghetto, including housing, employment, food, education, and even marriage and divorce. Of course, the Germans forced the *Judenrat* to carry out German orders for the production of goods and, ultimately, to choose who would be sent from the ghetto when the Germans scheduled such “actions.” The massive records of the *Judenrat* survived World War II and are held at the Lodz archives. These have been filmed and are available in the USHMM archives (RG 15.083M). They total 696 reels of film, with each reel containing about 1,000 frames. The finding aid for this collection may be accessed on the USHMM’s website at <http://www.ushmm.org>.

Deportations from the ghetto began as early as December 1940, but they were initially designed primarily to provide forced labor to other parts of occupied Poland. By 1942, however, transports to the Chelmno death camp began, and these continued until August 1944 when the transport destination was changed to Auschwitz.

The Germans ordered the *Judenrat* to provide specific numbers of persons (often 1,000) for each transport, but the decision as to who was sent was left, until later in 1944, to the *Judenrat* itself. The *Judenrat*’s criteria in choosing persons to be sent on a transport were not stated, though, for a period of time, persons who had served in the German or Austrian armies in World War I received deferrals. Those initially chosen were permitted to appeal for an exemption from a specific transport. Thousands did so, citing a range of factors,

but most applications were denied. Ghetto residents did not know where these transports were being sent, and the Germans carefully maintained the illusion that the transports were destined for resettlement work camps. Some Jews even volunteered to go on the transports, thinking that life elsewhere had to be better than the ghetto. Most, however, feared the unknown and tried to remain. Below are three letters as examples. Yet no single letter is adequate. It is only when one looks through hundreds of such letters that one begins to grasp the fear and hopelessness that affected all ghetto inhabitants.

The thousands of letters, mostly handwritten, were carefully broken down by the Judenrat into *owzglebnione* (approved) or *odmowa* (rejected) (see reels 273-304 of RG 15.083M). The rejected applications were then sorted by transport into four categories: Polish Jews, Foreign Jews, Children and Aged Persons, and Rabbis and Families. Judenrat administrators never gave an explanation for their decisions. The following is an attempt to summarize the grounds most frequently cited in applications.

I have included translations of three letters, two originally in Polish and one in German, in the hope that these “letters from the dead” will help the reader to begin to understand what ghetto residents thought as they considered their fates.

The writers did not know what grounds would be most effective in asking for a deferral. Many claimed to be sick and unable to travel, not realizing that the Judenrat preferred to choose persons of little use to ghetto life for the transports. Others claimed they were responsible for the care of sick family members or children. For a while, the Judenrat preferred not to break up families, though later these grounds appeared not to be accepted.

Apparently, the most effective basis for seeking deferral was to establish that one was employed and required for one of the many small factories that existed in the ghetto. A few were even more imaginative, claiming “a mistake has been made—we are not Jewish,” though this also appeared to be unsuccessful. As I examined the approved and rejected letters, I could find no pattern. Sometimes a sickness or proof of employment was accepted as grounds for deferral, other times not. The residents of the ghetto envisaged a functioning Judenrat rationally and mercifully examining their letters just as it issued rations or housing allocations. What they could not imagine was the reality in which

the Judenrat functioned, much less their fate when their “resettlement” took place.

Ultimately, there was no sure way of avoiding “resettlement,” but delay proved useful. When the Russians reached Lodz, they found only about 800 survivors. However, in 1944, the tens of thousands who had received deferments and avoided being sent to certain death in Chelmno began to be sent to Auschwitz, where many were transferred on to other German camps, such as Dachau and Buchenwald. There some perished, but others survived. Names from these transfers are gradually being computerized and will appear on JewishGen.

A note of warning: searches for individual letters are extremely difficult, since this material is organized by transport and date, not by name. However, the collection is open for examination by patient researchers. The only material which is easy to search by name is the “work card” collection, which is arranged alphabetically. These passes were issued for all persons employed in the ghetto and include a picture, date of birth, and profession (reels 673-696).

Three translated letters marked *odmowa* (rejected) follow.

Re Deportation

Since I am an old woman of 69 with a sick daughter who has been bedridden for years I ask that you show pity on me and free me from the resettlement. My daughter is 26 years old and has already been sick for 21 years. How can I seek guidance. I cannot carry my sick child on my weak back. I am myself crippled. Again, I ask for your sympathy.

Gitla Silberstein

Request

To the Honorable Committee

I kindly ask the committee to send an official doctor who will confirm the state of my health as well as of my son, Josef David. We are both seriously ill, I with asthma and have been bedridden for several months. My son has tuberculosis and this is the reason why he has already been excused from forced labor in the Third Reich.

I want to bring to the attention of the Honorable Committee that if my request is denied, for the

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Letters from the Dead

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reasons stated above, we will be unable to appear in person, and if we are taken by force, this will result in our deaths. The Honorable Committee, please consider a positive reply to our request and spare our lives.

Mania Kryś

Request

I am strongly appealing to you—the resettlement committee—from the depths of my heart. Please exempt with mercy a seventy year old woman, who is writing this letter although her fate has already been determined. Let your conscience be guided by reading my words. I am begging you for the last time to exempt me from resettlement. Compassion for old people exists everywhere.

Estera Holeman

How to Access USHMM Information

The USHMM has a large database—more than three million names, including duplicates—of Holocaust victims and survivors. This database differs from that of Yad Vashem in two essential respects. First, over ninety percent of the entries are non-testimonial, i.e., they are drawn from contemporary documents and not from submissions by individuals. Second, while the overwhelming majority of persons in this database are Jewish, it includes non-Jews who were held in and/or murdered in concentration camps as well as survivors.

Unfortunately, since access to and use of many of the documents that provided names for this database has only been provided on the condition that the names not appear on the website, less than half of the names may be accessed on the museum's website at <http://www.ushmm.org/namesearch>. The total database, as well as many other sources of information, is utilized to answer inquiries submitted to registry@ushmm.org. If requesting this service, please provide all available information on the persons to be researched as well as a mailing address where documents may be sent. Researchers may also make use of a "list of lists," a catalog of 8,000 name lists, many of which have not yet been computerized. At <http://data.ushmm.org/vlpnamelist>, type in the name of the town in which you are interested. Searches by country are not possible.

(Peter Landé came to the United States from Germany

as a small child. For the past fifteen years, he has been working with other volunteers and the staff of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum to develop a single database listing all who perished in or survived

New, Recent, and Noteworthy Publications

Of Jewish Interest

Jill Culiner. *Finding Home: In the Footsteps of the Jewish Fusgeyers*. Toronto: Sumach Press, 2004. 312 pp. \$24.95. Soft cover. To order online or by mail in the U.S., Canada, the UK, and Europe, see <http://www.sumachpress.com/order.htm>.

From the publisher: "Since the Jewish Diaspora, the stereotype of the Wandering Jew has haunted the Jewish understanding of identity. In *Finding Home: In the Footsteps of the Jewish Fusgeyers*, author Jill Culiner has uncovered a largely forgotten corner of Jewish history. The Fusgeyers (the Yiddish word for 'foot-goers'—wayfarers) were Jews who fled persecution in Romania in the early 1900s in order to find refuge, ultimately, in the New World. One hundred years later, Culiner retraces their steps in search of remnants of this lost epic journey. Culiner is a keen observer of Eastern European culture, and her acerbic wit and stunning lyrical style have created a compelling chronicle of loss and discovery. The focus on Holocaust studies can sometimes tend to obscure the fact that the roots of anti-Semitism go back long before the Second World War. Culiner's astute perceptions reveal the origins and persistence of European anti-Semitism. Her encounters with the past and the present of the Jewish presence in Europe are both chilling and illuminating. Winner of the Joseph and Faye Tanenbaum Prize in Canadian Jewish History (Canadian Jewish Book Awards 2005).

About the Author: A professional photographer and consummate traveller who divides her time between Toronto, Hungary and France, Culiner is presently preparing an exhibition (with texts) about the Hungarian Holocaust—the ghettos and the vanished synagogues—that will be shown in Budapest at the Holocaust Museum." ☆

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

למען תספרו לדור אחרון, תהלים מ"ה:14