

JGSI 30<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY ISSUE



HERITAGE

# מורשה Morasha

THE JEWISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF ILLINOIS

VOLUME XXVI NUMBER III

FALL 2011

## THE JEWISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF ILLINOIS

by Scott E. Meyer

### The First Decade...

The Jewish Genealogical Society of Illinois (JGSI) is now one of many such societies across the globe. It is hard to believe that just over three decades ago, there were none. The many projects enthusiastically embraced by Society members during its first ten years were sometimes groundbreaking, and they served as models to follow and foundations on which to build.

#### THE PRESENTATION THAT SPARKED IT ALL

In February 1980, about a dozen people came to the Morton Grove, Illinois Public Library to hear Stuart Feiler (z"l) present a talk on Jewish Genealogy. Feiler billed himself as a teacher for the Board of Jewish Education of Chicago and "the first person to teach Jewish genealogy at the high school level." Interest in ethnic genealogy had been ignited by the book and television mini-series, *Roots*. Those in attendance at the talk decided to meet the following month at the home of Freya Maslov, who soon came to be known as the group's "map lady." There, it decided to call itself the Jewish Genealogical Society of Illinois, and they selected their officers: Stu Feiler (President), Jeffrey Fried (Vice President), Anna Moscovitch (Treasurer), Ethan Bensinger (Legal Advisor), Freya Maslov (Archivist), Alan Spencer (Special Projects), Belle Mest (Researcher), Stacy Maslov (Membership Secretary), Marilyn Cohen (Corresponding Secretary) and Chaya Friedman (Typist).

#### SEARCH, AN INTERNATIONALLY DISTRIBUTED JOURNAL BEGINS—A CONFERENCE DOESN'T

The Board of the JGSI decided on two ambitious projects in 1981. The first was the publication of an internationally distributed quarterly journal for researchers of Jewish Genealogy, *SEARCH* (first published in the Fall of 1981). The second was organizing "the

first International Conference of Jewish Genealogists," planned for the summer of 1982. Though *SEARCH* continued for eleven years (with Alan Spencer as Editor and Scott E. Meyer as Associate Editor), the International Conference never occurred, primarily because its biggest advocate, Stu Feiler, was no longer associated with the JGSI.

#### HOSTING A NATIONAL SEMINAR

However, the JGSI planned and hosted what was billed as "the fourth National Seminar on Jewish Genealogy," in Evanston, Illinois, during the summer of 1984. It was not the first of such events—nor the last. The JGSI co-hosted the 28th IAJGS International Conference on Jewish Genealogy twenty-four years later in 2008.

#### PUBLISHING THE POLISH TRANSLATION GUIDE

The JGSI published and distributed specialized forms for researchers of Jewish genealogy. Designed by the third JGSI President, Judith R. Frazin, they were snapped up at each beginner's workshop. But in 1984, Judy tackled something far more comprehensive, and the JGSI agreed to publish it: *A Translation Guide to 19th Century Polish-Language Civil Registration Documents (Birth, Marriage and Death Records)*. The volume was so popular that a more comprehensive second edition was published in 1988, and an expanded third edition was produced twenty-one years later, receiving the "Outstanding Contribution to Jewish Genealogy via the Internet, Print or Electronic Product" award from the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies in 2010.

Another noteworthy publication included the JGSI newsletter, *Morasha*, which made its debut in 1985. Its publication allowed *SEARCH* to focus entirely on articles relevant to the Jewish genealogical movement at large, rather than society-specific information.

#### RECORDING JEWISH GRACELAND CEMETERY INFORMATION

Members of the JGSI gathered at Chicago's Jewish Graceland Cemetery in 1984 for an ambitious project: a detailed inventory of every grave marker in the cemetery, as well as a recording of information from numerous corresponding record cards for a large portion of the graves. Though the recording of the information onto index cards went smoothly, the computerization of the information had several starts, pauses and restarts until, in 2008, finally seeing online access to the names and dates of those interred in Graceland.



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JGSI welcomes articles for publication in Morasha which will help members further their research. The editorial Board reserves the right to accept or reject any material submitted and to edit those articles which are accepted. Articles must be typed to eliminate possibility of errors.

Send articles to [Morashaeditor@jgsi.org](mailto:Morashaeditor@jgsi.org)

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**LEGACIES**

**BENJAMIN A. OKNER**

On July 2, 2011 Benjamin A. Okner, long-time JGSI member and long-term resident of Washington, DC, died. He is survived by his sister, Helen Loube, of Silver Spring, MD, his sister-in-law, Dolores Okner, of Palm Desert, CA, and eight nieces and nephews. The JGSI extends its condolences to Ben's family.

*From the Editor...*

— by Peggy Morrow, Executive Editor

Congratulations to the Jewish Genealogical Society of Illinois (JGSI) on the celebration of their thirtieth anniversary.

As I've been pursuing genealogy for only five years, I've found the articles about our history very interesting. Research continues to be a challenge and I salute those who persevered in the pre-Internet age.

I am amazed by the number of members who have been part of JGSI from the beginning - a testament to the value of the organization. *Morasha* co-editor Dale Amdur wrote: "In 1985, in either the first or an early issue of *Morasha*, apparently I typed the newsletter and my husband printed it on 8-1/2"x14" paper. In that issue was the definition of the Hebrew word, *morasha* (which I remember choosing): 'The Torah uses the Hebrew word morasha to describe only two things: the land of Israel and the Biblical commandments. They are our heritage – the heirlooms that have been bequeathed to us and that we must in turn pass on to future generations to insure the continuity of the Jewish people.'"

This issue includes part 2 of Harvey Buchalter's very informative article on Yizkor books; I was pleased to receive feedback of this article's usefulness to our members. Also featured in this issue is Erica Hahn's fascinating article on her search for her Jewish roots.

If you would like to contribute an article to *Morasha* or have ideas that you would like to share with us, please email [morashaeditor@jgsi.org](mailto:morashaeditor@jgsi.org).

**מזל טוב**

JGSI wishes many years  
 of joy and happiness  
 to our President  
 Mike Karsen  
 and his new bride  
 Lisa Schwartz.

Mike and Lisa married on October 29.

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## BOARD BUSINESS

### *A Mystery No Longer...*

by Scott E. Meyer, JGSI Recording Secretary

Sometimes, it's all about making things better, and recent Board meetings have been focused on just that. As many know, JGSI has begun to offer online registration via PayPal, and the Board is pleased to see that a growing number of people are taking advantage of this new way of joining and maintaining JGSI membership. Still, in an attempt to make the process even better, Board member Mike Tarkoff has begun an investigation into ways to make the system even easier for members to provide useful information such as updated email address and phone numbers.

For years the Society has maintained a special JGSI telephone number, and continues to receive requests for genealogical assistance via that number. Calls have often been the very first contact that people have with our genealogical society. But what was once a simple matter of obtaining a phone number and plugging in an answering machine has given way to an infinite amount of cell phone and land line options. Board member Harriet Rudnit has agreed to wade through the sea of possibilities to find a phone package that best meets the current needs of the Society.

JGSI eNews announcements have also proven to be an important way to keep JGSI members up to date with the latest news items. However, this particular tool seems to work best when presenting a limited amount of focused information. Therefore, the Board has been considering exactly which items are best promoted by this form of communication.

JGSI recently reached the advanced age of 30, and its collection of records related to the business of the organization reflects tremendous growth, as can well be imagined. However, what once could be relegated only to cardboard file boxes can now be stored and retrieved by more efficient means. And so, the Board is beginning to explore the options available to electronically archive important JGSI records, and welcomes the input of anyone who might have expertise in that area.

As has been previously reported, the Board began exploring the possibility of holding some meetings in venues in various Chicago-area locales, and has scheduled a Beginners' Workshop at Anshe Emet Synagogue on October 23, 2011. The Board is hopeful that other opportunities will present themselves, so that even more of our members will be able to take advantage of the expert advice that can be acquired by attending a JGSI event.

Ever on the lookout for great programming for such events, JGSI President Mike Karsen was the Society's delegate to this summer's annual meeting of the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies (IAJGS) and also attended the IAJGS International Conference on Jewish Genealogy. He then brought back to the Board ideas for possible speakers and programs; some of which may well find their way into the programming schedule for 2012 and beyond.

These are but a few of the ways that the JGSI Board has been attempting to create an even brighter future for its members. Please remember that members' suggestions are always welcome, and the Board looks forward to presenting even more of those ideas at its upcoming meetings.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Mike Karsen, JGSI President

JGSI's biennial election was held this spring. After tabulating the ballots at our June 26 meeting, the following officers and directors were chosen for two year terms:

President.....Mike Karsen  
Executive Vice-President.....Robin B. Seidenberg  
Vice-President Membership.....Judith R. Frazin  
Vice-President Program.....Abby Schmelling  
Vice-President Publicity.....Paula Hyman  
Recording Secretary.....Scott E. Meyer  
Corresponding Secretary.....Barry Finkel  
Treasurer.....Michael Tarkoff  
Director-at-Large (*Technology*).....Skip Bieber  
Director-at-Large (*Special Projects*).....Debbie Kroopkin  
Harriet Rudnit will continue as past president and Belle Holman will remain as librarian (*appointed*).

We would like to thank retiring board members Thelma Ross, Gert Schachtman, and Sandy Imyak who all served JGSI for many years on the board.

One of the president's responsibilities is to attend the IAJGS annual meeting at the International Conference. Forty-four member societies were represented at this year's conference which was held in Washington, D.C., August 14-19.

The meeting consists of reports and the election of officers. Each member society has one vote in all matters brought to the meeting. The IAJGS' financial situation continues to improve due to the success of recent international conferences, including the Chicago conference in 2008.

The following officers were elected:

President: Michael Goldstein (*Israel*)  
Vice President: Jan Meisels Allen (*Los Angeles*)  
Secretary: Joel Spector (*Philadelphia*)  
Treasurer: Paul Silverstone (*New York City*)

The IAJGS board decides the winners of the annual awards which are announced at the banquet on the last night of the conference. The outstanding project was awarded to the Columbus, OH Jewish Historical Society for their "Legacy 2010" project which traced the history of the Jewish community in their area. The Stern Grant (research grants) went to Geshar Galicia for ancestral maps (\$2,000) and American Historical Society for filming of HIAS Boston records (\$1,000). There were no nominees for outstanding publication this year.

Future conferences will be held in Paris (2012), Boston (2013), and Salt Lake City (2014). They are also looking at potential conferences in Israel and/or Poland. If you have never attended one of these conferences, try to get there. You will be energized by how fast the Jewish genealogical world is moving forward to help us discover our past.

We have many ideas for further improving our society; we always need more people to step forward to help make them happen. I hope you have benefited from JGSI and realize it is now your time to give back. If you have ideas to help improve the society, please email me at [President@jgsi.org](mailto:President@jgsi.org).

On behalf of the board and leadership of JGSI, I would like to wish everyone L'Shana Tovah.

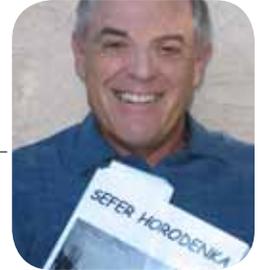


# YIZKOR BOOKS: A PERSONAL INTRODUCTION - Part 2

by Harvey Buchalter

*"Perhaps the Yizkor Book is the last meeting place of the eyewitnesses to the events of those days or perhaps it is the last gathering of all the Horodenkans who witnessed the building and destruction of their town."*

- Shimson Meltzer



## SEFER HORODENKO

Yiddish poet Shimson Meltzer, a former teacher in the Horodenko Hebrew School, was chosen as editor of *Sefer Horodenko*. The organization of *Sefer Horodenko* decided that "every member was free to write about whatever he or she desired, but the editor would have the final say, and also act as a fact-checker." Meltzer, chair of The Progressive Horodenko Association in the United States, describes the process: "*Sefer Horodenko* was edited, written and financed by the sons and daughters of Horodenko from the world over. Some articles were written by those not born there, but who lived there or married a resident. "We did not set out to create a volume that is exclusive or a work of outstanding literary value, but a publication made by, and speaking for, the survivors."

Minutes from a committee meeting report:

"We, who are present here today, the survivors of Horodenko, have cut-off limbs that are still bleeding. This wound is a terrible reality."

The Podway family in America became project leaders, mediating among the various factions in the U.S. and Israel. They underwrote most of the \$8,000 cost, publishing the first editions in 1957.

Meltzer acknowledges the incompleteness of the volume, noting, "the dwindling of collective memories;" that the very oldest memories are gone as the eldest pass away. He mourns the lack of information about organizations and institutions before the Holocaust.

About the *Yizkor* list, he says: "The list of those who perished will have errors, inaccuracies, omissions, but it is our holy duty to publish this, even if it is incomplete."

And then there was the matter of language: In the 1950's, some said only Yiddish should be used. It was the language of most Horodenkans, and a language that most Jews in Israel and America... 'spoke and understood.' Some wanted only Hebrew "to perpetuate the memories of lost loved ones for the next generation – the language of the sons and daughters of Israel." Or English only: for the sons and daughters in the United States.

Yiddish was selected.

## HORODENKO

Horodenko still exists in Ukraine, but with no Jewish presence. In the early 20th century, about 10,000 souls lived there: 33 – 40 percent were Jews; 45 – 55 percent were Ukrainians; 10 percent were Poles. In the 1920s and 1930s – this is about as far back as memory takes the writers – Horodenko was "unprogressive" compared to other modern towns.

What made it special to its Jewish inhabitants was its "Gallitzian Soul," or *Gallitzianeh Neshumah*, characterized by warmth and volubility.

Russian occupiers, destroying the City during the Great War; the Balfour Declaration of 1917, declaring Palestine

as a homeland for the Jewish people, energizing an entire generation of youth; the Holocaust destroying what remains. This, in a nutshell, is the history of Horodenko, but there is so much more.

The story of Horodenko, with slight changes of detail is the story of all Eastern European Jews from the last months of the Great War to the aftermath of the next Great War, a scant 25 years later.

Moshe Fleshner's Horodenko story, "Our Town, 1929" reflects all the changes that were coming to Jewish life in Eastern Europe.

His childhood consisted of *cheder*, then being sent on, reluctantly, by his observant parents, to the Baron Hirsch School - one of the schools founded by the great philanthropist, to give Jewish children an education including then-forbidden secular subjects and manual arts.

Following the Baron Hirsch School years, he enrolled in the New Hebrew School, founded in 1907, that "served as an opening to the nationalist movement – Zionism, especially in the aftermath of the Balfour Declaration."

Another writer reports that the Hebrew School "produced some of the first pioneers and settlers who went to Israel."

## THE GREAT WAR AND FLIGHT OF JEWISH RESIDENTS

In 1914, the Great War arrived in Horodenko – conscription; air fights over the town; invasion by the Czar's army; the return of the Kaiser's army; the remobilization of the Russian Army and the successive defeats suffered by the Austrian Army.

Conscription extended to 17-year olds, leaving younger children to support the family. With this came the mass flight of the Jewish residents.

Fleshner writes, "They grabbed their wandering staffs to save their lives and the lives of their children from plunder and murder that was prophesized to them by their false 'friends and neighbors,' the Ukrainians, several days beforehand.

His family lived in exile in a neighboring town for the next three years. At the Great War's end, they returned to Horodenko.

The sovereign Polish Republic, now nominally in charge, rebuilt the town, and the writers report normal relations between Jews, Poles and Ukrainians. The post war-years witnessed the pangs of Zionist longing, as well as the arrival of Socialism, but socialism with a *Yiddisheh tam* – a Yiddish flavor: Bundism, which felt that even this war-torn place could be transformed into a Jewish workers' paradise.

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## YIZKOR BOOKS: A PERSONAL INTRODUCTION - Part 2

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### ZIONISM

The *farbrenter Tzionists – di ershteh halutzim* - the fervent Zionists and first pioneers who eventually make the first aliya in 1919, prepared themselves on local farms for the rigorous life of backbreaking Kibbutz-type work as field workers. The Jewish estate managers asked, "Why's a nice Jewish boy like you want to be a peasant?"

In addition, the ultra-orthodox community viewed their secular brand of Zionism as heresy and put up many obstacles to emigration.

In 1924, Moshe Fleshner made *aliyah*. In 1929, he returned to Horodenko and the

surrounding villages where his extended family, those who took him in during the occupation, still resided. Ever the keen observer, Fleshner calls their existence, "an exile within an exile."

He discusses the reasons Jews settled in these outlying areas: the Ukrainians liked their liquor, but couldn't manage a saloon. The Jews could, and so despite the loneliness, the intense hatred they felt, the risk of becoming an "*am ha-aretz*" (an ignorant person) cut off from everything familiar, they settled in these places. Only on the High Holidays would they join with their fellow Jews.

Horodenko became a field of battle between Russians and Austrians as the Great War moved to the Eastern Front. Caught in the middle, Jews fled as best they could, recalling Moshe Fleshner's three-year exile in the outlying countryside.

Occupation of the now largely destroyed and evacuated town went back and forth three times, as described in many accounts in the *Sefer*. The Russians, believing the Jews had betrayed them by giving their positions to the Kaiser's Army, want to teach the Jews a lesson.

Leon Yurman's memoir, "*Blue-Green Tongues*," encapsulates all the horror of the Great War in my translation from Yiddish:

"Ten Jews selected to be impaled by bayonets. The captivity continued. The town burned. Through crooked old and dirty streets Jews were driven. One spotted his house and stood in front of it stone still for a moment, as bayonets impaled countless "guilty" Jews one after another in the screaming dawn of May.

Suddenly there was mass hysteria, as eyes became fastened to the sight of the telegraph poles. The will to live, with wide-eyed obstinacy rose up in the core of the Jew's being and faced down the challenge of death. A struggle between life and death broke out between the helpless captives and the Cossacks. But still they hung nine persons, people who had just been alive and who breathed fear and at the same time, yearned for a springtime morning.

One victim came loose from the rope, and before any of the Cossacks had a chance to hang him again, he ran away, but not far enough. Two Cossacks grabbed him near a burning house. His large frame shook as he grabbed both of them and took them into the burning house. Then the deadly flames fell upon all three of them and covered them for all time.

In the middle of the day in the market place and wherever houses burned, the smoke was visible through the clearness of the dawn. And the nine people suspended on the telegraph poles had exposed their bluish green tongues which were covered with dust and grime. Nine lifeless tongues. Nine tongues up against the monster – the beast of imperialism that ruins lands, that kills people and releases the savagery that lurks within the human breast.

The day had ground down, and brought an end to the harsh, dark night."

The inter-war years were hard. Immigration routes to America were closed, but about 250 young people made it to Israel.

Some – the numbers are not stated in the memoirs – left for Mexico and South America.

### WORLD WAR II

In Meyer Sucher's memoir, "*The Murder of the Jews of Horodenko*," the horror of the Blue-Green tongues is revisited, only this time, it is 1941-42. Here is what ensued: "The Hungarian Army, an arm of the Russian bear, takes control of Horodenko, and for a moment, all appeared quiet. However, one Sabbath morning, three weeks later, the first ominous signs appeared. Trains carrying large numbers of Hungarian Jews, all densely packed together, passed through the city on their way to the concentration camp in Transnistria.

The Jews of Horodenko hurriedly organized a makeshift kitchen to provide for the small number who managed to escape the clutches of this round up.

On *Tish B'av* a few weeks later, the first German Division entered Horodenko and immediately showed their colors.

They invaded the synagogues and threw the Torahs and Holy Books out into the streets to be trampled to bits. Then they caught and tortured several Jews. At the same time their Ukrainian collaborators, notorious anti-Semites who were the Nazis' civil administrators, began robbing the Jews of their possessions.

Sucher goes on to describe the ghettoization of the Jewish population into one third of the city, the appointment of a *Judenrat*, a Jewish Council, which was supposed to represent the Jews. And finally, the enforced isolation of outlying towns.

For six months the Jewish community of Horodenko struggled to live under these conditions. On December 5, 1941, the Germans initiated their first of three 'actions' (a total assault that inspires total terror). These 'actions' led to the

annihilation of the Jews of Horodenko.

Sucher then describes the special murder squads: Jews lined up under the pretext of receiving inoculations for typhus, then led to the adjacent forest and shot, their bodies falling into pits – 2,500 souls, half the Jewish population of Horodenko.

Escaping into the forest and hiding in barns and along ditches, bribing their Ukrainian neighbors, or declaring themselves 'useful,' a 'productive element' to the Nazis, 1,500 Jews remained alive. Sucher, claiming to be a baker, was saved by his enemy. He was one of the very few who survived to tell this story: Among the Jews hiding in the outlying areas, there was a tremendous fear of Ukrainian bandits, especially one named Bandera, a Ukrainian nationalist, an enemy of the Jews, but also an enemy of the Russians and Germans.

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# WHY I WENT TO SERBIA AND WHAT I LEARNED

by Erica Hahn



Erica Hahn and Stasa Cvetkovic

## Why I Went

I spent most of my lifetime trying to find out if I had any Jewish ancestry. When I was 12, living in Cincinnati, Ohio in the bosom of my mother's family of colonial lineage, my mother stunned me by telling me that she suspected that my grandfather, my Hungarian father's father, Michael Hahn, was Jewish. My father's mother was undoubtedly Hungarian. My father, George, had said our German last name was due to Germans who had immigrated to Hungary four centuries earlier.

In 1991, I was with my father George when he was dying. I asked him about his grandparents. All he knew was his grandfather was named Joseph. I asked him if we had Jewish ancestry. He said, "Not as far as I know." Then, he thought a little longer. He added, "But I like Jews - let's say we do." I told him I liked Jews, too.

At that visit, I went through his records and retrieved the marriage certificate of his parents, which showed that Michael's parents were Jozsef Hahn and Tirza Taube Allein. I have long regretted that I saw, but did not take, a picture of Michael.

In JewishGen, I discovered that three people with the last name Allein were Jews from the city from which Michael had come. There was no longer any reason to doubt that Tirza Allein was Jewish.

Two years later, with the assistance of a Hungarian genealogist Andras Koltai, I finally knew it all. Through research in Serbia he established that Jozsef Hahn was Jewish and the son of a Mihaly Hahn, the son of Isak Hahn. Jozsef's mother and grandmother both carried the last name of Buchwald. Tirza's father was Herman Allein, son of Saloman Allein, also in northern Serbia.

Even though I had lived with the question for decades, the truth of my Jewish heritage knocked me for a loop.

In 2010, I made arrangements to visit Serbia. There, I hired a guide named Stasa Cvetkovic, a professional genealogist.

## In Serbia

I already knew that my grandfather's last address before immigrating was in the city of Subotica in northern Serbia, in the province of Vojvodina but until 1920 known as Szabadka, Hungary. This region, since the mid Eighteenth Century (after the Turks were driven out), was part of either the Austro-Hungarian Empire or simply Hungary until 1920 when the territory was handed over to Serbia.

As soon as I arrived in Subotica, it was obvious that even today the area has a significant Hungarian population. All the signs are in Hungarian, Serbian written in Cyrillic letters, and Serbian written in Roman letters.

On my first full day, I have spent the afternoon in Topola with Antal Kocsis, a local historian. Topola is an ethnic Hungarian village a few miles south of Subotica. Antal's house is full of his discoveries from years of prowling in the empty fields: mastodon bones, Roman coins, Turkish weapons, a skull, icons, the works. An ethnic Hungarian and devout Roman Catholic, he has become the historian of the lost Jewish community of Topola.

Most Jews in Hungary in the Nineteenth Century belonged to a denomination called Neolog, which is still the main denomination of most Hungarian Jews. It is most similar to the American denomination of Conservative. In the 1970s, Antal saved the Neolog synagogue from being torn down and today it is the local library. He has spent years working on preserving the Jewish cemetery. He is also currently trying to save the house of Adolf Allein, who led the Orthodox community. His hope is to make it a Jewish museum. Adolf Allein was my great-grandmother's brother.

We visited the cemetery, which, as do most Jewish cemeteries in Serbia, had a memorial listing the dead of the Holocaust. We visited the graves of Adolf Allein, as well as his son and daughter-in-law, who were massacred by Hungarians in 1942.

I spent that evening, the beginning of Rosh Hashanah, with the Jewish Community in Subotica. It was a large, happy gathering. The Jewish community in Serbia is intact although small. They are organized into an entity called "The Federation of Jewish Communities in Serbia."

A number of the attendees poured over my charts, but no one found a



Stasa Cvetkovic at Graves

connection, except one elderly gentleman still mourning the loss of a lady love named Hahn from decades earlier.

The next day I was escorted by a member of the congregation to the Subotica Jewish cemetery. It is a very well cared for cemetery, with a Holocaust memorial. And there I encountered the graves of Jozsef and Tirza.

In the afternoon, I visited the Jewish cemetery in Csantaver, a village about 5 miles from Subotica. Csantaver is where my grandfather was born. This is a fairly small cemetery, hidden behind a small

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farm, and not very well cared for. Tirza's father, Herman Allein is buried there along with his wife Beti Buchwald. Kati Buchwald, The wife of first Mihaly Hahn is buried there too. In fact, the cemetery is full of people named Buchwald. The cemetery gave me a rather bittersweet feeling. There were so many untended headstones, with inscriptions in Hebrew, a language I cannot read, nor was anyone else visiting the cemetery. Probably, these are headstones of my relatives, maybe my direct ancestors.

I also made several visits to the Historical Archives in Subotica, where they went out of their way to provide as much help as possible. In the nineteenth century, the religious communities were supposed

to provide vital records to the civil authorities, and here is where the records are for most of Vojvodina. For the Jewish records, there is a fair but not complete amount, starting mid-nineteenth century. For instance, my grandfather is not in these records, although bris records exist for his two brothers, Imre and Janos. It was like touching the past to handle the original yellowing records of my immediate Jewish ancestors.

At the Archives, I learned more about Elisabeth Allein, my grandfather's first cousin whom I first encountered on JewishGen. I already knew she was one of 1694 Jews who, in 1944, rode a train arranged by Rudolf Kasztner out of Budapest to safety. A book on the

industries of Subotica described a battery factory her brother Andor had founded and she and her husband co-owned with him. I visited the site of the factory. It is now a derelict building occupied by squatters.

After talking to the attendees at the Rosh Hashanah service, visiting various Jewish cemeteries, and seeing the repurposed synagogues, it became obvious how thoroughly the Jewish community of Northern Serbia has been swept away, first by the Holocaust, and then by emigration to Israel. At the gathering, I was told that of 3000 Jews in Subotica, 800 survived and half of them migrated to Israel. A people, my people, once lived there but now have departed forever.

After I left Serbia I still had questions. For instance, who were the Jews of Serbia?

Until the year 2000, I didn't even know my roots lay in Serbia, not in Hungary.

## Questions

I began reading up on the Jewish history in Serbia on the Internet and discovered a large portion of the population was Sephardic in origin, not Ashkenazi as is true in Hungary. Sephardic Jews, driven out of Spain in 1492, were given refuge in Turkey, then accompanied the Turks into the Balkans when the Turks invaded the area.

I discovered that in 1787 Emperor Joseph of Austria decreed that the Jews in his realm must take German last names. In a pre-Internet age, this decree took a bit of time before it was fully in force.

There is a land census of heads of households in 1828 for the area. Since my return, I have spent quite some time studying it. In 1828, there are no Hahns in the area. But, in Szabadka, there is an Isak Hajm. Similarly there are no Alleins, but in one of the villages there is an Abraham

Alain and a Lazarus Alain. Would these be the original ancestors and these be the original versions of their names?

I already knew Michael's brother, Imre. I met him as an old man, living in Paris, an art dealer. I continued seeking the fate of Michael's brother Janos. I made a request to the International Tracing Service (ITS) for information on Janos. The ITS responded, first with a police report from 1943 a Nazi record from Paris showing he was identified as a Hungarian Jewish art dealer in the City, and the second from French police in the 1950s showing he was a Hungarian refugee.

This seemed to be the end of the story, a story of splintered family connections. My father who spent a portion of his childhood in Budapest never met the grandparents living four hours south by train. Why? It seems there must have been an estrangement between Michael and his parents. Learning that his uncle



*Entry to the cemetery at Csantaver*

led an Orthodox community, seeing the Hebrew inscription on his father's headstone, I suspect the estrangement was over religion. Michael walked away from his Jewish origins and his parents must have been appalled.

And two generations later, I am the product of that break. All the time I was in Serbia, I felt I was a bit of an imposter.

## Le Mervielleux Denouement



*Imre, Michael, Janos Hahn*

Once my first article was published in *American Ancestors*, Andras put it on his website. In June 2011, a French film maker by the name of Clarisse Hahn found my article. Clarisse found herself reading about her great grandparents Jozsef and Tirza. She is my second cousin. She put me in touch with her cousins and her uncle, all French, all named Hahn. She didn't know she had Jewish ancestry either. Her grandfather Imre, like my grandfather, married an ethnic Hungarian

and walked away from his past. Her uncle knows so much about my grandfather, things I never knew. And, he sent me a picture of Michael in Paris in the 1930s with Imre and Janos.

Suddenly, I have a family and a name which is connected to kin. And, I have a picture of Michael.

My research has reunited us.

*Continued, page 14*

## YIZKOR BOOKS: - Part 2

Continued from page 5

Ironically, the Jews believed the Germans could actually protect them against this rogue band of Ukrainian outlaws. Of course, this was not to be the case.

To flush out the remaining Jews, Sucher says, the Nazis now proclaimed they would no longer bother the Jews. Somehow, they convinced the approximately 1,500 Jews who were in hiding to come out into the open.

Some were still able to ransom themselves as 'productive elements,' but elderly Jews were executed and the rest forcibly assembled and transported to the concentration camp in Madjanek to an almost certain death.

The few who managed to escape joined the Partisans and actually survived the war, and their stories of survival are found in the Horodenko Yizkor Book.

They are also fonts of research for the personalities that emerged from the *shtetlakh*: In the case of Horodenko, the actor Alexander Granach is foremost, albeit not as well known today as his Jewish actor contemporaries, Edward G. Robinson and Paul Muni. He left his mark as a Shakespearean actor in Berlin, and starred in the drama, "A Bell for Adano" on the New York stage.

### HORODENKO LANDSMANSHAFT SOCIETY

The Horodenko Landsmanshaft Society was founded in New York in 1885, composed of peddlers and furriers whose dream, according to editor's concluding remarks, was to save a few hundred dollars and return to Horodenko. But most stayed on.

They provided assistance to one another in sickness and need including a plot for a funeral. Some established their own *shules*, usually *shtibelakh* (a cellar room) and formed a *minyán*. They sent many hard-earned dollars to assist their brothers and sisters during the

Great War, and in 1925 they financed the construction of a Yiddish Cultural Center and Yiddish School – never to be completed – in the center of Horodenko.

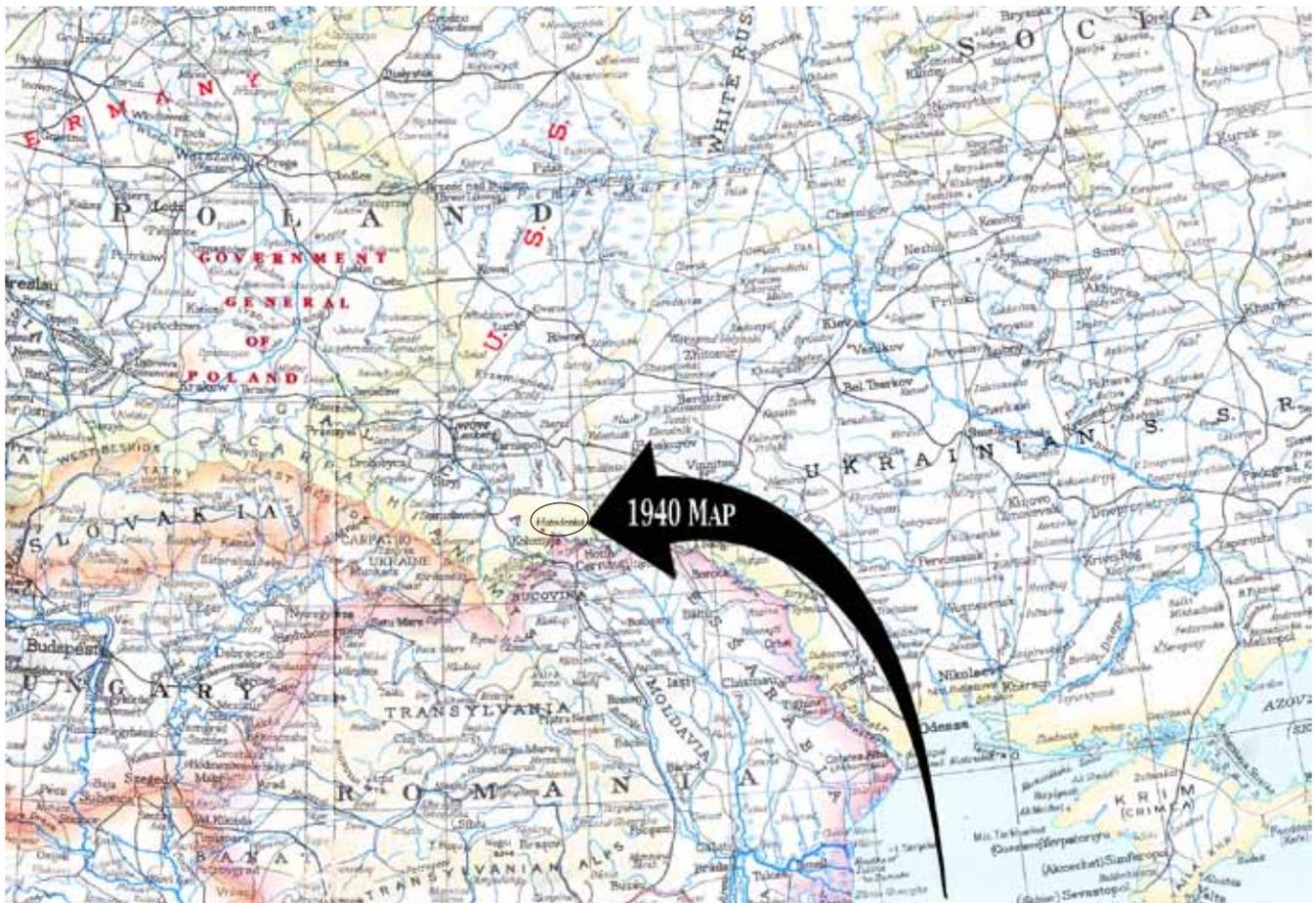
In the aftermath of the *Khurban*, they raised \$10,000 for refugee resettlement.

### AFTER THE HOLOCAUST

In 1945, the first survivors arrived in *Eretz Israel*. Those already in the country or who had been born or lived in Horodenko organized a committee to give aid and comfort to the newcomers, and to establish a monument. But they

came to realize that a more suitable monument would be a memorial volume to record the story of the Horodenko Jewish Community from beginning to end. The Result was *Sefer Horodenko*.

*Yizkor bikher* were written to be read: the names listed at the final chapters are there so as not to be forgotten. The memoirs were written to educate their descendants. We are their heirs.



Former NMJHS Board member Harvey Buchalter is a retired APS teacher, artist and sole owner of Harvey Buchalter Sculpture and Judaica.

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## WHY THE NEW YORK TIMES IS WRONG

*"Using Basic Genealogy Tools and Methods to Show That Your Family Name Was Not Changed at Ellis Island"*



Our JGS president, Ken Bravo, has been researching his family since the mid-1970's. More recently, he has added the families of his children's spouses, meaning he has now researched thousands of people and their families. He has also been a frequent speaker on a number of Jewish genealogy subjects.

In Ken's opinion, the greatest bubbe mesies of Jewish genealogy (or any ethnic genealogy for that matter), is some variation of the theme "Our family's name was changed at Ellis Island."

In late 2009, Ken saw an obituary in The New York Times which lamented that the deceased's family name had been lost to time and had been changed at Ellis Island. This led to an exchange of emails with the Times during which Ken sent them naturalization records, a ship manifest, census and other records, all proving that the family name was neither lost nor changed at Ellis Island. The correspondence ended when the Times finally e-mailed "I am not prepared to try to set decades of history straight by running a correction on one specific family name, regardless of the records."

This led Ken to search for other Times obituaries with similar claims on name changes at Ellis Island. While not an exhaustive search, Ken came up with four additional obituaries plus one letter to the editor with the name change claim.

When Ken began his talk, he quoted Mark Twain, who said, "Never pick a fight with someone who buys ink by the barrel," and added, "...or newsprint by the truckload." Ken has had some difficulty getting The New York Times to acknowledge that it has misreported the origin of some family names. Greg Brock, Senior Editor of Standards at The NYT e-mailed Ken that they have to be "200 per cent certain" that something is a fact to issue a correction.

Ken said that the problem begins with the situation that death notices are advertisements and that the family can write whatever they want. Obituaries are both news and advertising, because the family has to supply some of the information.

There is the hard-to-change mistaken idea that names were changed upon immigration. Think of the scene in "The Godfather" when the young boy, Vito Andolini from Corleone, is renamed "Vito Corleone" by the immigration official. This has been accepted by many people as the true way that families acquired their "American" names. The NYT has printed family stories that follow that impression.

Some of the cases that Ken has been able to disprove are the 2010 obituary of Sol PRICE, founder of The Price Club. The sources that Ken used were the 1920 and 1930 U. S. Census, the W. W. I Draft Registration form for Sol's father, and a Washington Post obituary written by Peter Eisner, a former WP editor who is writing a book about Sol Price. Ken spoke to Eisner and found out where to find the father's naturalization records. After obtaining the naturalization records, Ken saw that the father arrived in 1905 at Ellis Island as "Susche PRUSS".

Ken compared the death notice of Sol Price's brother in San Diego, California, to make sure that he had the right family. Even when he sent proof to The NYT, the paper would not run a correction.

Another case was the photographer Arthur ZINN, who died in 2003. The name the family used on the census was ZINNBERG.

There was a thought that Arthur was born Abrasha CHOODISMAN, but when Ken used the Steve Morse One-Step site, he could not find CHOODISMAN. He was able to use Morse's Ellis Island Gold form with phonetic matching and eventually found them on the Ellis Island passenger arrival list where Ken found that they entered as CHUSIDMAN. Ken used Footnote.com to find the naturalization record from Brooklyn, New York, in 1927, to confirm the name change.

Ken used BERK\* for a wildcard search of census records to show that Irving BERK's name had not been changed from BERKOVIC upon arrival, contrary to a 2006 report in The NYT.

In one of those name changes that makes it so hard to trace family, Ken proved that an official did not change Sasha UBSUSHONE's name to his mother's maiden name, causing him to become Charles ZIMMERMAN. Ken found Sasha coming alone through Ellis Island, and he was still using Ubushone when his mother and brother entered the U. S. He did find that when Sasha/Charles reentered the U. S. later, he had changed his name to ZIMMERMAN. When he re-entered he had to declare when he was naturalized.

*(Ed. note - Charles had become a labor leader in the garment industry and merited quite an obituary in The NYT on June 5, 1983, p. 32. To show how these things perpetuate themselves, Wikipedia picked up the story and put it online, "Sasha emigrated to the United States in 1913 at the age of 16... Sasha had his name changed to Charles Sasha Zimmerman by an official at Ellis Island upon arrival and he was thereafter known by this new moniker.")*

A letter to The NYT from Naomi KARP questioned what name to put on the Ellis Island plaque that she was ordering for her grandfather. Ken used the Stephen Morse site, [www.intelius.com](http://www.intelius.com), America's Obituaries and Death Notices website (since discontinued free online by the Cuyahoga County Public Library), Biography and Genealogy Master Index, and Marquis' Who's Who online, The Historical New York Times 1851- 1980 [tinyurl.com/db6wg](http://tinyurl.com/db6wg), and the 1900 and 1930 U. S. Censuses to track Naomi's grandfather, Jacob FRIEDMAN back to 1900. He found a possible arrival date of 1891 for a FREIDMAN who he thinks matches Jacob.

Ken has proven that it is possible to find the truth about name changes, if one is willing to do some research.

Ken Bravo's list of resources to disprove the "Ellis Island name change": Marian Smith (Citizenship and Immigration Service maven) articles: [www.iabsi.com/gen/public/imm\\_names.htm](http://www.iabsi.com/gen/public/imm_names.htm) or [tinyurl.com/3d2k9w3](http://tinyurl.com/3d2k9w3), Google: [www.google.com/](http://www.google.com/), Ancestry: [www.ancestrv.com/](http://www.ancestrv.com/), Stephen P. Morse One-Step website: [www.stevemorse.org/](http://www.stevemorse.org/), Cuyahoga County Public Library: [www.cuyahogalibrary.org/](http://www.cuyahogalibrary.org/) for access to America's Obituaries and Death Notices (*The library cancelled its subscription Dec. 31, 2010*), [www.footnote.com/](http://www.footnote.com/), Historic New York Times (also at [tinyurl.com/db6wg](http://tinyurl.com/db6wg) – not through the library), Ellis Island: [www.ellisland.org/](http://www.ellisland.org/), Anywho (to look up telephone numbers): [www.anywho.com/](http://www.anywho.com/), Cleveland Public Library: [www.cpl.org/](http://www.cpl.org/), Marquis Who's Who on the Web, Historic New York Times Castle Garden: [www.castlegarden.org/](http://www.castlegarden.org/) (*predated Ellis Island*)

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## The First Decade...

Continued from Cover

### “ROUTES TO JEWISH ROOTS”

The Jewish Genealogical Society of Illinois in cooperation with the Chicago Public Library presented “Routes to Jewish Routes” on Sunday, April 26, 1987, at the Chicago Public Library Cultural Center. Rabbi Malcolm Stern, (considered by many at that time to be the “Dean of Jewish Genealogy”) spoke on “Jewish Migrations Since 1492: Genealogical Resources and Jewish Surnames as a Clue to Genealogy.” Loretto Dennis Szucs spoke on “Genealogical Resources in Chicago,” and Maralyn A. Wellauer made a presentation on “Genealogical Research in Central and Eastern Europe.” Experts were on hand to assist the attendees, and included Ira Berlin, former director of Archives and Library at Northwestern Memorial Hospital, Charles B. Bernstein, attorney, genealogist, and author, Peter W. Bunce, director of the National Archives-Chicago Branch, JGSI President Judith Frazin, Martin Mainzer, member of the National Board of the Leo Baeck Institute, and Freya Maslov, co-founder and past-president of the JGSI. The workshop’s success encouraged JGSI leaders to host many other similar workshops over the following years.

### RECORDING KEHILATH JACOB/ANSHE DROHITCHIN CEMETERY INFORMATION

In 1988, the JGSI received a plea from the North Suburban Synagogue (NSSC) council regarding the desperate state of a local cemetery. The two-acre Kehilath Jacob/Anshe Drohitchin cemetery, straddling Morton Grove and Niles, Illinois, had been founded in 1890 by Russian immigrants. Over the years, ownership had passed through various hands and vandals had desecrated many of the stones. By the 1970s, the cemetery was in sore need of repair.

Though developers were unsuccessful in their attempts to build on the property in 1971 and 1973, the vandals had continued their work. The NSSC asked the JGSI to help record the information on the few remaining stones, as they were about to be relocated to a small area within the cemetery and surrounded by a new fence for their protection. Ironically, though the JGSI complied, saving those few stones led ten years later to the almost total destruction of the unmarked graves spread throughout the rest of the cemetery, since the land looked grave-free to a real estate developer’s eyes. After much research and negotiation by a special JGSI task force, the cemetery was saved from destruction in 2002 when the Illinois Attorney General’s office turned over the title of the cemetery to the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago.

### PLANNING A JEWISH GENEALOGICAL REFERENCE CENTER, GROWING A LIBRARY

In April 1989, it was suggested that a Jewish genealogical reference center be established, built around the JGSI holdings. Though the center never came to fruition due to space limitations, the JGSI continued to grow its collection and it became of primary importance to find meeting space that could accommodate its most significant aspects. During its first decade, the JGSI met in a series of locations in its attempt to best serve its members: The Mayer Kaplan JCC in Skokie, Northwestern University’s Technological Institute in Evanston and North Shore Congregation Israel in Glencoe. More locations would follow, but even though it meant temporarily storing the JGSI library holdings in lockers, warehouses and members’ houses, the Society never lost sight of the importance of its genealogical reference collection. In 2005, the organization and the library found permanent homes at Temple Beth Israel.

### IN CONCLUSION

That first decade was an exciting time for the JGSI and its members, as resources became more and more accessible. But no one during those ten years could have envisioned the Internet, let alone the impact it would have on genealogy in general and Jewish genealogy in particular. Keeping pace with the ever-changing genealogical resource landscape would provide only one of several challenges met by the Society over the following twenty years. Those challenges were sometimes difficult and oftentimes fascinating, but none quite as exciting as those posed during that first pioneering decade.

## MEMBERSHIP

by Judith Frazin

### NEW MEMBERS

Dennis Aron  
Barb & Joel Dolin  
Dick & Sandi Elkins  
Sara Farkas  
Willa Lieberman  
Edna Morris

### CONTRIBUTING MEMBERS

Shelly & Ivan Berk  
Sol Bleiweis  
Florence Davidson  
Leonard J. Eisenberg  
Eva Eisenstein  
Estelle Elekman  
Stoney & Marv Freeman  
Marcia Hirsch  
Paula Hyman  
Sheldon Isenberg  
Judith Jackson  
Myles A. Jarro  
Irwin Lapping  
Sue Millward  
Maia Mullin  
Walter Reed  
Max E. Rubin  
Harriet Rudnit  
Mel Seidenberg  
Myrna & Shael Siegel  
Shirley Sweig  
Frances M. Unger  
Zalman Usiskin  
Marion Viner  
Edmund Winter

### PATRON MEMBERS

Mark Amdur  
Sidney & LeMoyne Blair  
John L. Buckley, Jr.  
Alan L. Chakrin  
Carol G. Cohen  
Paul Epner  
Joseph & Eleanor Feitler  
Susan Gray  
Wendy Hauser  
Claire L. Hirschen  
Mike Karsen  
Geraldine Krasner  
Debbie Kroopkin  
Judith Labowitz  
Julie B. Levin  
Fred Margulies  
Steven & Alice Marx  
Peggy Morrow  
Alan Schwartz  
Marjorie Shender  
Howard Shidlow  
Benton C. Strauss  
Mike Tarkoff  
Sue Weiler

### SUSTAINING MEMBERS

Helen Arkes  
Shelley Davis  
Alexander Feller  
Larry Herman  
Richard Hoffman  
Donald M. Schindel

## ONLY THE NAME HAS CHANGED

by Peggy Morrow, *Morasha* Editor

As the current editor of *Morasha*, I was very interested to read the first issue of *SEARCH*, the first newsletter of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Illinois (JGSI).



The layout brought back early memories of using a typewriter, scissors, and rubber cement (with its fumes!) to create a newsletter. The production tools we have today are more sophisticated but the purpose of our newsletter has not wavered — providing content that helps Jewish genealogists research their roots.

Edited by Alan Spencer, the contributing editor was Stuart Feiler. Contributors were Judith R. Frazin, Freya Maslov, Chaya Friedman, Sara Schafler, Anna Moscovitch, and Marilyn Cohen. Thirty years later, Judy and Freya are still generously contributing their time and talent to *Morasha*.

The front page proclaims “SEARCH IS BORN” and states “SEARCH began with the realization that the Jewish genealogist was in need of a basic guide and research tool. It would provide ready access to proven research techniques, be a place to share practical ideas and would act as a reservoir of helpful tips which have been developed and refined by others in their search for their families.”

The feature article was “How to Trace Your Jewish Roots Through the Mormon Church Genealogy Library” by Judith R. Frazin. As another example of things remaining the same thirty years later, my friend’s friend recently told her the story of a wonderful woman who provided tremendous help to her at the Wilmette LDS library. My friend relayed the story to me as she knew that both this helpful woman and I were members of JGSI. Yes, it was Judy!

In those pre-Internet days, under the heading Zuchen Mispoché (*SEARCH* for Family), *SEARCH* contained several pages that listed family names and areas of geographic interest so members could share knowledge. The issue concluded with a list of useful resources.

The final of eight pages announced that the first ever International Jewish Genealogist Conference would be held in Chicago in 1982 (it did not occur), the creation of a Speakers Bureau, and the establishment of a JGSI Artist-in-Residence.

I am sure you join me in saluting these pioneers who laid the ground work for all the programs and resources we enjoy thirty years later.

## MOVING INTO Temple Beth Israel

by Harriet Rudnit

On September 14th, 2005, thanks to Harold Fleishman of Blessed Memory, a Jewish Genealogical Society of Illinois (JGSI) Membership Chair for many years as well as a past president of Temple Beth Israel (TBI), the Jewish Genealogical Society of Illinois signed a two year rental agreement with Temple Beth Israel in Skokie. The signing of this agreement had ended our many years of being “on the road” and holding our general monthly meetings at various public libraries.

We purchased five locked bookcases to house our unique genealogical collection as part of the agreement. These bookcases would be located in the lower level area in front of the temple’s library, where we would hold our general meetings. Members and guests could consult books and maps in the library before each monthly meeting.

Belle Holman, our JGSI Librarian, catalogued all of our books and supervised our move out of the Marshall Library in Northfield; David Lebovitz of Blessed Memory, our JGSI Corresponding

Secretary, had graciously stored our society’s numerous books, pamphlets, maps, magazines, and equipment in his warehouse and provided movers to transport our library out of Northfield and into its new home in Skokie.

Further help was given by board members, Thelma Ross and Gert Schachtman, who coordinated our bookcase purchases and helped Belle and myself with our move into TBI.

Because we had a permanent home, JGSI was soon able to purchase two other pieces of valuable equipment. The first was a LCD projector that could be used with a computer for PowerPoint

presentations; it replaced our older overhead projector, which had no computer capability. The second was a copier to further help our researchers retain important information.

After the signing of another TBI rental agreement, research resources were further enhanced, thanks to Vice-President Robin Seidenberg, by the creation of a help desk for use before each general meeting. Staffed

by volunteers, who brought their internet capable laptops, members had access to another research venue. Rather than competing, the internet and our library resources complement each other and increase our members’ chances of finding answers to their research questions; members helping each other piece together their family tree jigsaw puzzles continues to be our society’s primary goal!



# GENEALOGY CONFERENCE 2011

by Harriet Rudnit

D.C. IAJGS



This year's annual Jewish genealogical conference in D.C. had some very informative sessions, which were all held on the two lower levels of the Grand Hyatt Hotel. This made getting to and from the various meetings, presentations, films, as well as resource and vendor rooms very accessible by elevator or escalators. Presentations were varied and included for the first time three workshops for Mac users like me. Two involved Reunion 9 software while the other introduced Family Tree for the Mac.

The intermediate/advanced Reunion 9 workshop, "Getting the Most Out of Reunion," acquainted regular users of the software with some of the finer points of the program such as how to input two people of the same sex, what is the definition of a couple, as well as using copies of files when merging family files. Since there was no handout in the syllabus or in class, I will have to update my files to Reunion 9 and then use my class notes before I can share any program knowledge with others. Another criticism of this session concerned the presenter, who was a first time workshop teacher, in a room that wasn't configured to easily see the projection screen. However, the presenter did answer all questions patiently and the computers were problem-free.

A second lecture by Philip Trauring, "Utilizing Belgian Archives for Jewish Research," provided information about that country. He, too, had no handout but said information was available on his website, [www.bloodandfrogs.com](http://www.bloodandfrogs.com). The session was extremely helpful for those of us with ancestors who stayed two or more weeks in Belgium. When departing through Antwerp, the Aliens Police/Police des Etrangers started a file in every town/

city which contains relevant information about each foreigner. For Antwerp only, the files were housed in the Felix Archives; the National Archives contains the files for the rest of the country. However, some of the nineteenth century records were destroyed. A third source of information is the Kazerne Dossin, which contains the Belgian Register of Jews, membership lists of associations of Jews in Belgium, and deportation lists.

Foreigners were tracked by Le Police des Etrangers since the 1830's. In 1889, there were more than 500,000 files. In 1912, the millionth file was started, and in 2000 there were over five million files. At the National Archives, files are available one hundred years after they were begun. However, family members can get records earlier provided the person can document her/his relationship. When requesting a file, be sure to have Belgium officials check to see if multiple files exist; after receiving the file be sure to see who else is listed in it. After World War I, a photo of the person was a part of the file. When the foreigner left the country, the file was closed. I assume that a new file would be opened if the foreigner came back to Belgium and stayed two weeks or more. Information about accessing these files can be found on Mr. Trauring's website.

A third session focused on "JRI Poland What's New" had Mark Halpern and Hadassah Lipsius as moderators. Stanley Diamond, who couldn't come to D.C., was seen via a video stream from his home in Montreal, Canada, through the wonders of modern technology. He graciously gave credit to all of the JRI Poland volunteers and enumerated the accomplishments of JRI, so that the large number of beginners at this conference might appreciate all that the organization has accomplished. Two announcements deserved most important status. First, a future agreement with

Poland regarding the ease of obtaining Polish records now appears possible, because of dialogues with the new acting director general of the Polish State Archives. However, JRI-Poland records are still searchable by surname, given name, town, year range, and town coordinates. Second, JRI-Poland will no longer purchase any records until they have raised enough money to translate them; while this is a new practice for JRI-Poland, it has been and continues to be the practice of Litvak SIG. I am not familiar with other SIG requirements. For other updates on JRI-Poland, go to their host's site at [www.jewishgen.org](http://www.jewishgen.org).

Finally, one of the conference tracks involved Lithuania. From various meetings and presentations on this topic I learned that Lithuania may soon renew their relationship with Israel and open an embassy; this attitude and practice change is due to a change of officials, who are more receptive to recognizing the Jewish contribution to Lithuanian history. Because there is a large Litvak population in South Africa, there is the possibility of a new Lithuanian embassy being built there in the near future. There also was an evening conference session in which the Lithuanian ambassador in Washington answered questions and expressed a desire to establish a positive relationship between Jews and Lithuania. Many people are working for this eventuality.

Next year's three day conference will be held in Paris, France. In August, 2013, the conference will be in Boston, Massachusetts, and use the usual Sunday through Friday format. Instead of Jerusalem in 2014, the conference will be held in Salt Lake City. It is hoped that Jerusalem may be the 2015 host but that is only a possibility at this time. For further information go to [www.iajgs.org](http://www.iajgs.org).

## THE VENDORS' ROOM D.C. IAJGS

by Martin Fischer

Major genealogy conferences can be costly enterprises, so they often try to defray administrative expenses by offering space for fee-paying vendors to display goods and services of interest to conference attendees. At the IAJGS conference in Washington, D.C., the vendors ranged from jewelry and candle makers to genealogical online services. Here are a few nuggets of news from some of the vendors at this year's International Conference on Jewish Genealogy:

Avotaynu, the publisher and seller of Jewish genealogy books, had one of the largest displays at the conference, mostly with books that they had published and which were available for purchase. One book in their catalog of particular interest to members of JGSI is "Chicago & Cook County: A Guide to Research" by Loretto Dennis Szucs.

Sallyann Amdur Sack of Avotaynu, who helped staff the publisher's table, said

that among their plans for the future is to expand on the success of one of their popular books, "The Lost Synagogues of Brooklyn" by Ellen Levitt, with volumes to come about Queens and Manhattan. For more information, see [www.avotaynu.com/](http://www.avotaynu.com/).

Family Tree DNA, the genetic genealogy testing service, display was staffed by CEO Bennett Greenspan and other

*Continued, page 13*

## THE VENDORS' ROOM D.C. IAJGS

*Continued from page 12*

knowledgeable staff members who were available to answer questions from conference attendees about their tests and test results. For conference attendees who had already been tested, the FTDNA representatives present looked up the results online and explained the significance of those results. Their website is [www.familytreedna.com/](http://www.familytreedna.com/).

National Genealogical Society's display featured information about their home-study courses on a wide variety of topics for beginner or advanced genealogists. They offer graded and ungraded versions of their courses that are presented on CD-ROM disks, and assignments can be submitted either by snail mail or email. NGS was also promoting their 2012 Family History Conference, to be held in Cincinnati, May 9-12, 2012. For more information, see [www.ngsgenealogy.org/](http://www.ngsgenealogy.org/).

Association of Professional Genealogists had a table for those interested in hiring one of their members to conduct family history research. (In the interest of full disclosure, I need to mention that I am a member.) Their site is [www.apgen.org/](http://www.apgen.org/).

Ava Cohn, AKA Sherlock Cohn, the photo genealogist who is a member of JGSI, was offering her historical photo analysis services in the vendors' room. Her site is [www.sherlockcohn.com/](http://www.sherlockcohn.com/).

Accessible Archives, a subscription website with a database of newspapers and other documents from the 18th and 19th centuries was providing free searches for conference delegates. Their site is [www.accessible.com/](http://www.accessible.com/).

FamilySearch, the Church of Latter-day Saints' ever-expanding free online database of genealogical documents, was promoting their ongoing project to make millions of microfilms available for searching online, including many records of particular interest to Jewish genealogists. Their search page is at [www.familysearch.org/](http://www.familysearch.org/). If you want to help with this effort, FamilySearch is seeking volunteers to index records to make them searchable. For more information about this effort, go to [indexing.familysearch.org/](http://indexing.familysearch.org/).

To learn more about FamilySearch's future projects, visit their "labs" page at <https://labs.familysearch.org/>. For information about the Jewish records available on microfilm or in the FamilySearch database, just google for Jewish records in familysearch.

USCIS, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, had staff members available to explain their fee-based search and copy services for immigration and naturalization records.

Each search costs \$20, and each record copy request costs \$20 or \$35, depending on record format. For details see [www.uscis.gov/genealogy](http://www.uscis.gov/genealogy).

JewishGen, the main Jewish genealogical website, was represented in the vendors' room by Avraham Groll, director of business operations, who was available to answer questions about the website. Besides seeking donations to help fund the site, JewishGen is also seeking volunteers to help index records for Jewish genealogy databases. For details, see [www.jewishgen.org/jewishgen/GetInvolved.html](http://www.jewishgen.org/jewishgen/GetInvolved.html).



Geni is a family history social network website that offers both free and fee-based platforms for collaboratively creating online family trees. A family tree that does not go beyond fourth cousins or third great-grandparents is free and private, while fees are charged for publically posting family trees that go beyond those levels of relationships. If your family tree on [www.geni.com/](http://www.geni.com/) includes people who are on other Geni family trees, Geni members with matching individuals are notified and given the opportunity to link their trees.

MyHeritage is similar to Geni in that it offers both free and fee-based programs. A GEDCOM or a family tree generated by MyHeritage's free Family Tree Builder software is free if it has no more than 250 individuals. For larger family trees, MyHeritage charges a fee, but also offers additional features, including an online photo album, timeline and "Timebooks."

For those who would like to create an online presence for their family trees, photos and other genealogical data without building their own website, MyHeritage provides a good alternative. For more information, see [www.myheritage.com/](http://www.myheritage.com/) and [www.myheritage.com/genealogy](http://www.myheritage.com/genealogy).

Several artists and artisans of Judaica, such as jewelry, mezuzahs, and kipas, were also offering their works for sale to conference attendees. The more popular vendors, in my opinion, seemed to be those related specifically to genealogical interests. The vendors' room gave conference attendees opportunities to learn about some genealogical services, products and websites they may not have been familiar with. Of particular value was the availability of one-on-one contact with the experts who staffed the tables.

### Volunteer for project at Jewish Oakridge Cemetery in Hillside, Illinois

Do you or someone you know have relatives buried at Jewish Oakridge Cemetery, located on Roosevelt Road (between Mannheim and Wolf Roads) in Hillside Illinois?

I am looking for one or two volunteers to work with me at a future date to assist JOWBR (Jewish Gen's Online Worldwide Burial Registry) in a project to photograph and record the gravestone information in a database which will be available world wide.

Many other Jewish cemeteries have already been entered but not Jewish Oakridge. It was founded in the mid-1940s by German Jewish refugees. If you or another family member is willing to donate time and energy, please contact Ellen Kahn at 708-206-1628.

# WHY I WENT TO SERBIA

Continued from page 7

## NOTE ON RUDOLF KASZTNER:

Although Kasztner saved at least 1694 Jews from death and probably many more, he has been long vilified in Israel for negotiating with the Nazis, and unknown in the rest of the world. In recent years there has been a growing movement to exonerate him. Some key books have been published and a documentary has been released.

*Dealing with Satan* by Ladislaus Lob (one of the train survivors),

Jonathan Cape, 2008;

*Bargaining with the Devil: When to Negotiate, when to Fight*, by Robert Mnookin, Simon and Schuster, 2010.

*Kasztner's Train: The True Story of an*

*Unknown Hero* by Anna Porter, Walker and Company, 2007;

"Killing Kasztner" a 2008 documentary by Gaylen Ross, website for the film at [www.killingkasztner.com](http://www.killingkasztner.com)

## SOURCES:

"Tracing My Hidden Family Heritage in Hungary and Serbia" by Erica Hahn, *American Ancestors* vol 12, no.1 (winter 2011): pp33-36,44 .on Hungarian Jewish Roots, a genealogical website (the website of Andras Koltai) is at [www.jewishroots.hu](http://www.jewishroots.hu); also see [www.AmericanAncestors.org](http://www.AmericanAncestors.org);

Stasa Cvetkovics' website is at [synergia.rs](http://synergia.rs);

The JewishGen Hungary Database at [JewishGen.org](http://JewishGen.org);

International Tracing Service at [www.its-arolsen.org](http://www.its-arolsen.org);

Hungary Funeral Notices 1840-1990 at [familysearch.org](http://familysearch.org)

*IndustrijalIndustrijalc Subotice* (1918-1941) by Stevan Mackovic, Subotica, 2004.

*Germans and Hungarians: 1828 Land Census* abstracted by Martha Remer

Connor published by M.R. Connor, Las Vegas,

1991 at the Family History Library, Salt Lake City Utah, vol. 1 Bacs-Bodrog County (the Hungarian name for Vojvodina)

Emperor Joseph's decree is at [shoreshim.org](http://shoreshim.org), a Polish genealogy site

The article in Wikipedia on "History of the Jews in Serbia" has been picked up in a number of other sites.

See also the section on Subotica in International Jewish Cemetery Project at [www.iajgsjewishcemeteryproject.org/serbia/subotica.html](http://www.iajgsjewishcemeteryproject.org/serbia/subotica.html)

## OTHER GROUP EVENTS: 2011-November/December & 2012 January/February

### 5 NOVEMBER — Arlington Heights

Jeanne Larzalere Bloom — Polished Gems: Property Records, Cook County, Illinois

### 8 NOVEMBER — Schaumburg

Jeffrey Bockman — Didn't Find It in the Index

### 16 NOVEMBER — Wheaton

Sandra Trapp — Discovering the Naperville Family History Center

### 17 NOVEMBER — Elgin

Mike Karsen — You Can Pick Your Relatives

### 19 NOVEMBER — Richmond

Greg Cox — Illinois State Archives and IRAD

### 19 NOVEMBER — Mount Prospect

Steve Szabados — Finding Grandma's Birthplace

### 4 DECEMBER — Elmhurst

Craig Pfannkuche — Critique of Chicago Family Research Sites and Sources

### 13 DECEMBER — Schaumburg

Break Out Groups/Ethnic Research — Groups/Beginner's

### 7 JANUARY — Arlington Heights

Steve Szabados — Organizing and Writing Your Family History

### 12 JANUARY — Schaumburg

Caron Primas Brennan — Social Networkiing for Genealogy

### 18 JANUARY 2012 — Wheaton

Jennifer Holik — Visualizing Your Genealogical Data: Excel, OneNote, Maps, Blogs

### 25 FEBRUARY 2012 — St. Charles Hilton Garden Inn,

4070 East Main StreetDuPage County (IL)

[www.dcg.org/](http://www.dcg.org/)

Genealogical Society 37th Annual Conference

Tracking Your Ancestors' Footstep

Check locations for changes in program or dates.

Arlington Heights - [www.nwscg.com/meetings.html](http://www.nwscg.com/meetings.html)  
Northwest Suburban Council of Genealogists,  
Arlington Heights Senior Center,  
1801 W. Central Road

Schaumburg - [genealogywithtony.wordpress.com/](http://genealogywithtony.wordpress.com/)  
Schaumburg Library/Tony Kierna, 130 S. Roselle Road

Wheaton - [www.dcg.org/](http://www.dcg.org/)  
DuPage County Genealogical Society,  
Wheaton Public Library, 225 N. Cross Street

Elgin - [www.elginroots.com/v4/](http://www.elginroots.com/v4/)  
Elgin Genealogical Society, Gail Borden Public Library,  
270 N. Grove Avenue

Richmond - [www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~wiilbig/meet.htm](http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~wiilbig/meet.htm)  
BIGWILL, The Community Church, 5714 Broadway Street

Mount Prospect - [mopl.org/events](http://mopl.org/events)  
Mount Prospect Public Library, 10 S. Emerson Street

Elmhurst - [www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~ilgfe/](http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~ilgfe/)  
Genealogical Forum of Elmhurst, Community  
Bank of Elmhurst, 330 W. Butterfield Road

### *Are you Interested*

in a short-term project  
to help the JGSI?

We're looking for volunteers to index  
our JGSI newsletters of yore.

It will probably involve one get-together and  
then some at home time at your convenience.  
Please contact Alice Solovy at 847-679-3076.

## CHICKEN SOUP FOR THE GENES: ASHKENAZI JEWISH GENETIC CONDITIONS

On June 26th JGSI held its Annual Meeting. Mike Karsen kicked it off with a brief overview of the year's accomplishments. He recognized Abby Schmelling for her efforts regarding Programming, the Help Desk volunteers, the Newsletter committee, and all the members of the Board. Judy Frazin reported that the group now has 251 members and a 60% renewal rate. Ballots for the re-election of officers were counted and all candidates (who ran unopposed) were re-elected.

Scott M. Weissman presented a talk entitled "Chicken Soup for the Genes: Ashkenazi Jewish Genetic Conditions." The presentation covered various medical conditions commonly found in the Ashkenazi population including autosomal recessive conditions (such as Tay-Sachs), and hereditary cancer syndromes (such as breast and ovarian cancer).

Mr. Weissman included a brief overview on basic genetics and genetic disorders, along with the different types of tests and screening available. Emphasis was placed on frequency rates and heredity occurrence, along with general guidelines for who should undergo genetic evaluation. The presentation concluded with a brief overview of legislation regarding genetic discrimination.

## SEARCHING AND FINDING THE CHILDREN OF LE HILLE

On July 31st, JGSI member Walter Reed presented a talk entitled, "Searching and Finding the Children of Le Hille". Walter (formerly Werner Rindsberg) is a Holocaust survivor who was one of a group of children transported first from his native Germany to Belgium and then to Vichy (France) in an effort to evade capture by the Nazis.

His presentation included a brief overview of his relocation experiences, and highlighted the various methods he used to find and reestablish contact with others from the Kindertransport who survived the war.

Using a variety of techniques and sources, including chance contacts, the expertise of research professionals, persistence and luck, Walter has tracked down many from the group or their descendants and has organized several reunions. His advice to researchers: the information is there; you can find it if you look, but you must be persistent and keep trying.

Walter recently completed a book entitled *The Heroes of La Hille* and is currently seeking a publisher.

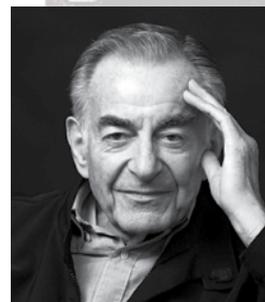
## KVELL AND TELL

JGSI's August meeting was held on August 28 and included reports from participants who attended the recent International Conference on Jewish Genealogy held in Washington, DC, as well as from Society members who were willing to "Kvell and Tell" about special achievements that occurred during the past year.

Members who spoke about the International conference included Harriett Rudnit, Judy Frazin, Marty Fischer, Sandy Kieferbaum and Robin Seidenberg. They reported on their attendance at various SIG meetings and also what some of the vendors attending the Conference had to offer in the way of new products and advice. Marty and Sandy also spoke about side trips they took including stops in Cleveland (Marty), and Poland and Israel (Sandy).

During the "Kvell and Tell" session, a number of members spoke, including Ethan Harris who spoke about his trip to Israel, Roy and Charlotte Leventhal who talked about the experience of self-publishing their collection of family stories, Celia Wilk whose Russian cousin was able to confirm the identity of a mystery woman's photo from a family album, and Joel Dolnick who reminded everyone that Ancestry.com records are constantly being updated and also how he was able to get an architectural printing service to print out a really long family tree chart [note: Kinko's may also be able to do this].

Finally, Skip Bieber reminded us that the annual Try-It Illinois statewide database trial will run from October 1 through November 30. Go to [www.finditillinois.org/tryit/](http://www.finditillinois.org/tryit/) to request a password for access to a vast assortment of electronic resources.





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**Resource Roundup** E-mail: [morashaeditor@jgsi.org](mailto:morashaeditor@jgsi.org)

*Some useful genealogy Web sites and resource books.  
Have you found a resource that may be of interest to others?*

[www.lo-tishkach.org](http://www.lo-tishkach.org)  
The Lo Tishkach online database of European Jewish cemeteries and burial sites contains over 9,000 listings in 29 European countries.

[archives.jdc.org/sharedlegacy/](http://archives.jdc.org/sharedlegacy/)  
This is a searchable database containing a collection of documents and photographs from World War II.

[ljhp.wordpress.com/](http://ljhp.wordpress.com/)  
This web site contains information about The Lithuanian Jewish Heritage Project's Cemetery Restoration Initiative.

***Changes at the Mormon Family History Center***

*by Judith R. Frazin*

Our members should be aware of the following new development at the Mormon Family History Centers.

As of September 21, 2011, all microfilms and microfiches must be ordered online at: <https://www.familysearch.org/films>

If you wish to order a microfilm or a microfiche, you will need to go to the above website, create a user name and password and select the local family history center to which you want your orders delivered. You can pay by credit or debit card or by Paypal.

Short-term microfilm orders will now have to be returned to Salt Lake City within 90 instead of within 30 days as was the case with the previous film-ordering system.

**JGSI 2011 Sunday Meetings**

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR**

**NOVEMBER 20 MEETING**  
Regular Meeting — 12:30-1:45

Program 2 p.m.  
JGSI President Mike Karsen will speak on  
The Musical "Chicago" and All that  
Genealogical Jazz.

**DECEMBER - NO MEETING**

**CHECK OUR WEBSITE**  
[www.jewishgen.org/jgsi](http://www.jewishgen.org/jgsi)  
for 2012 calendar dates

**REGULAR MEETINGS**  
are held at Temple Beth Israel,  
3601 W. Dempster Street in Skokie.  
*The temple will open at 12:30 p.m. to  
accommodate members who would like  
to use our library materials, need help with  
genealogical internet Web sites, or have  
genealogical related questions.  
Programs begin at 2:00 p.m. and the Library  
will reopen after the programs until 4:00 p.m.*