



משפחה

Quarterly Publication of
The Jewish Genealogy Society
of Greater Washington



“Every man of the children of Israel shall encamp by his own standard with the ensign of his family” *Numbers 2:2*

Volume 23 , Number 2

Spring 2004

SOCIETY NEWS

Are you looking for a project this winter?

JGSGW volunteers for the Danzansky Project are beginning to index the Goldberg Funeral Home Books. We are looking for a few volunteers to join our team. We have permission to take the books home, so work on the project can be done at your schedule, in the comfort of your home. Instructions and spreadsheet (Excel) will be provided. All that you need is a computer and some time.

To sign up contact Roberta Solit at rsolit@comcast.net or rsolit1@adelphia.net

Society Workshop at Family History Center

The JGSGW is sponsoring a workshop at the Family History Center at 6:15 p.m. on May 3, 2004. Since space is limited, we must limit attendance to the first 15 people who sign up. The workshop will feature a presentation by Larry Krupnak and there will be a period for questions and answers. There will also be counselors available to help you explore the resources available at the FHC. This workshop may be repeated in June.

Since space is limited, we recommend that you reserve a place as soon as possible. To reserve a seat, contact Liz Lourie by phone: 202-625-1082 or by email: Lourie@worldnet.att.net, giving your phone number in case we need to contact you.

Jewish Genealogy using the Internet - an online workshop

This is a repeat of the popular workshop given last April, and at the International Conference last July. It is a 2½ hour, hands-on workshop where you will be able to visit and explore actual internet sites. Essentially, it will introduce you to what is available online for doing Jewish Genealogy. You will be given a handout with internet addresses and a description of each of these sites. There will be two sessions of the workshop, both at Temple Rodef Shalom in Falls Church, Virginia. The workshop will be on Thursday, March 11 from 7 pm - 9:30 pm, and repeated on Sunday, March 21, from 2 pm - 4:30 pm. The sessions will be open to members only and the cost will be \$15 (to cover the cost of renting the facility). Please contact Rich Meyersburg by email at richme@erols.com to register for the classes. The sessions will be limited to 14 students each.

Rich Meyersburg, JGSGW

Mishpacha

JGSGW Officers and Committee Chairs for 2003-2004

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| President | Benjamin C. Fassberg benjaminf@aol.com |
| Vice Presidents | |
| Programming | Renee Payne ReneeP8546@aol.com |
| Membership | Marlene K. Bishow MLBishow@mindspring.com |
| Logistics/Administration | Judy Miller judymiller@va.net |
| Corresponding Secretary | Ben Okner b.okner@verizon.net |
| Recording Secretary | Rich Meyersburg richme@erols.com |
| Treasurer | Sharlene Kranz Skranz_99@yahoo.com |
| Member At Large | Joel Stearman dpastear@earthlink.net |
| Database Management | Ernie Fine efine@cygnetserv.com |
| Librarian | Judy Mostyn White mostyn@erols.com |
| Mishpacha Co-editors | Donna Sellinger dfsmetsfan@yahoo.com Sharlene Kranz Skranz_99@yahoo.com |
| Research | Roberta Solit rsolit@comcast.net |
| Workshops | |
| Beginners | Liz Lourie Lourie@worldnet.att.net |
| Internet | Rich Meyersburg richme@erols.com |
| Hospitality | Sonia Pasis sonyaskter@aol.com |
| Translation Services | Peter Lande pdlande@starpower.net |
| Tapes | Sonia Pasis sonyaskter@aol.com |
| Webmaster | Donna Sellinger dfsmetsfan@yahoo.com |

The JGSGW Web Site is located at:

<http://www.jewishgen.org/jgsgw>

משפחה

Mishpacha is the quarterly publication of the Jewish Genealogy Society of Greater Washington, Inc., serving Washington, Northern Virginia, and the Maryland suburbs.

Free to members, subscriptions are \$15 and \$20 foreign. Membership dues are \$25 for individuals and \$37.50 for families. Membership inquiries: PO Box 31122, Bethesda, MS 20824-1122

Appropriate ads the size of a business card will be accepted. The cost is \$15 for one submission or \$50 for one year (4 issues)

Mishpacha by the Jewish Genealogy Society of Greater Washington (JGSGW). All rights reserved. Mishpacha is intended to provide a free exchange of ideas, research tips, and articles of interest to persons researching Jewish family history. Permission for reproduction in part is hereby granted for other non-profit use, provided credit is given to the JGSGW and to the author(s) of the reproduced material. All other reproduction without prior written permission of the editor(s) is prohibited.

All JGSGW members are encouraged to submit their genealogical research experiences for publication in Mishpacha. Submit articles to either editor: Sharlene Kranz (Skranz_99@yahoo.com) or Donna Sellinger (dfsmetsfan@yahoo.com)

Back issues are available from Sharlene Kranz, 4336 Albemarle Street, NW, Washington, DC 20016 for \$5 each.

© 2004 Jewish Genealogy Society of Greater Washington, Inc.

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Society News | 1 |
| Letter to the Editor | 3 |
| Library News | 4 |
| The amazing 24th IAJGS International Conference on Jewish Genealogy | 6 |
| Domestic Research | 6 |
| Overseas Research | 15 |

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Donna and Sharlene,

Distributing the newsletter via the web (PDF download) saves the JGSGW money for printing and postage. In addition, you now have the ability to include as many pictures in color and sample documents as you want without concern for cost. It will also be easier to distribute back issues using your new methodology.

As you might know, when the Belarus SIG first started five and a half years ago, we decided immediately that our newsletter would be on line. We started doing issues in PDF, but now we put up individual articles as soon as they are edited. Please see http://www.jewishgen.org/belarus/newsletter/bnl_index.htm

Dave Fox, JGSGW

Jewish Genealogical Research Trip To Salt Lake City Planned

For the twelfth consecutive year, veteran Jewish genealogists Gary Mokotoff and Eileen Polakoff will be offering a research trip to the LDS (Mormon) Family History Library in Salt Lake City from October 21-October 28, 2004. To date, more than 350 Jewish genealogists from the U.S., Canada, South America, Israel and Europe have taken advantage of this program. In the past few years, the group size each year has been between 30-40 people.

The program offers genealogists the opportunity to spend an entire week of research at the Library under the guidance and assistance of professional genealogists who have made more than a three dozen trips to Salt Lake City. Each person has access to trip leaders each day except Sunday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the Library for on-site assistance and personal consultations. There is also a planned program that includes a three-hour class on day of arrival introducing the participants to

the facilities and resources of the Family History Library; a mid-week informal group discussion of progress and problem-solving. For those new to genealogy, a beginners workshop on the first morning of the trip introduces them to the wonderful world of Hamburg immigration lists, U.S. passenger arrival lists, naturalization records and census records. In addition to the beginners workshop, classes are given on problem solving, urban research and how to translate Polish and Russian records. A copy of the book, "Your Guide to the Family History Library," is part of the pre-trip literature.

Social events include a mid-week Sunday brunch for camaraderie and discussion of successes (and failures); attendance at the Sunday morning broadcast of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir; informal group dinners; and group planning parties.

For additional information, write to SLC Genealogy Trip, 155 N. Washington Avenue, Bergenfield, NJ 07621, call 201-387-8296; e-mail: mokotoff@earthlink.net; website: <http://www.avotaynu.com/slctrip.htm>

Workshop at Holocaust Museum

Following the successful program on Sunday, January 25 and in response to requests for a second workshop focusing on records at the Holocaust Museum and Library, Peter Landé, the winner of the 2001 IAJGS Lifetime Achievement Award for his work in Holocaust research and a member of JGSGW, has offered to conduct a week-day program to be held on Tuesday, March 23, 2004 at 10:30 a.m.

The group, limited to 10 participants, will assemble in the fifth floor Archives Reading Room for a briefing on USHMM resources of interest to genealogists. They will then be able to utilize the library and the downstairs Registry where computers will be available to search various databases which hold about 2.5 million names. There will be ample time for individual

questions. Participants may stay as long as they wish. No tickets are necessary for the workshop but Peter can arrange for tickets to the permanent exhibit for those who wish to have them.

If you would like to attend, please send your name and phone number(s) to Liz Lourie at lourie@worldnet.att.net or if you don't have access to e-mail, you can call her at (202) 625-1082.

2006 Conference Site Announced

The IAJGS is pleased to announce that it has awarded the 2006 International conference to JGS, Inc. (New York). With the enormous resources in the New York area, and the outstanding conferences that have been hosted there in the past, this should be a great opportunity.

The 2005 conference will be held in Las Vegas, Nevada. July 10-15. Las Vegas provides outstanding hospitality at very affordable rates. And, with Michael Brenner chairing this conference, it will no doubt provide outstanding programs and activities.

Conferences beyond 2006 have yet to be awarded.

Hal Bookbinder, IAJGS

DONATIONS NEEDED AT JGSGW LIBRARY

The JGSGW audio tapes are now being kept at the JGSGW library. We need cassette tape holders for some of the tapes. If you have any empty ones you can donate, please either give them to Sonia Passis or Judy Mostyn White, or bring them to the JGSGW library and leave them in with the JGSGW materials. Thank you for any donations.

Spring 2004



Library



JGSGW Library News

Judy Mostyn White, JGSGW librarian

Greetings and Happy Family Hunting!
The JGSGW library collection is housed at:

Isaac Franck Jewish Public Library
[IFJPL]

4928 Wyaconda Road
Rockville, MD 20852
Telephone: 301-255-1970

The IFJPL hours change seasonally, but generally they are open all day on Mondays and Wednesdays, afternoons and evenings on Tuesdays and Thursdays, Friday mornings, and the morning of the fourth Sunday of the month. Always call them first to check their hours before going to use our library. Directions to our library can be found on our web site, under Resources, Library.

JGSGW members who wish to use our library should go to the main desk of the IFJPL. There, you sign in, and be sure to put JGSGW in the appropriate category beside your name. You will receive a key to our locked cabinets. Unlock the doors, and use our materials. PLEASE return materials to the same location from which you took them. Close and lock our cabinets, and return the key to the person at the main desk.

Virginia members should be aware of the Jack Klein Memorial Library of Jewish Genealogy & History, located at Beth El Hebrew Congregation, 3830 Seminary Rd, Alexandria, 703-370-9400. Contact JGSGW member, Faith Klein, for more information.

THANK YOU

Here's a THANK YOU to the following library volunteers who have helped since last time:

JGSGW member, DAN GROSS, for frequent general help at the library, espe

cially with the catalog. This time he got us a new Yizkor book from eBay.

NEW BOOKS

DS 135 .P6 S4763; "Sefer Serotsk " by Mordekhai Gelbart, published 1971. Yizkor or memorial book for Serock (Seratzk, Serotsk), Warsaw, Poland; in Yiddish with some Hebrew; bibliography.

CS 49 .C384; "Discovering your immigrant & ethnic ancestors" by Sharon Carmack, published 2000. Handbook on immigration with bibliography and indexes.

CS 66 .J4 M35; "Sephardic genealogy: discovering your Sephardic ancestors and their world" by Jeffrey Malka, published 2002. Includes bibliography and index.

DS 135 .S55 A47; "Between Galicia and Hungary: the Jews of Stropkov " by Melody Amsel, published 2002. History of Jewish Stropkov, Slovakia; in Hebrew and English; with bibliography and indexes.

F 420 .J5 L46; "A corner of the tapestry" by Carolyn Gray LeMaster, published 1994. Jews in Arkansas, 1820s-1990s, with bibliography and index.

D 797 .U6 K56; "WWII military records: a family historian's guide" by Debra Johnson Knox, published 2003. Archival resources for WWII military records; includes federal and state records.

DS 135 .P6 D63; "Survivors of the Holocaust in Poland: a portrait based on Jewish community records, 1944-1947" by Lucjan Dobroszycki, published 1994. Contains lists of survivors with date and place of birth, names of parents, and last known address. This is the book discussed by JGSGW member, Peter Lande, in this issue of Mishpacha.

OLD BOOKS

Here are some of our older books that have been entered some time ago into the computer system of the IFJPL, with a description and their new call numbers:

CS 879.4 .L363; "Subata, Latvia, land records" published 1936, 1937. Deeds and land titles in Subata (Shubitz), Latvia; in Latvian; vol 1 is old records, vol 2 is new records, covers Daugavpils and surrounding area; gives names, street addresses, plots, etc. Old call numbers G29.3 & G29.4.

DK 505.24 .V57; "Visa Lietuva: informacine knyga 1922 metams" by Kazys Puida, published 1922. Name index of dentists, doctors, lawyers, and list of street name changes in Kova (Kaunas); in Lithuanian.

DS 135 .P62 S893; "Birth, marriage and death records of Jewish Suwalki".List of available data covering birth, marriage and death records of the Jewish communities of the Suwalki, Poland region (Mariampol and Kalvarija districts) for 1815-1915; in Russian. Old call number OG42.2.1

R 713.67 .L5 A51; "Lietuvos eksportas ir eksporteriai", volume 1 published 1929, volume 2 published 1938. Lithuanian vol 1: exports and exporters; vol 2: importers, exporters and manufacturers; in Lithuanian. Old call number D.

DS 135 .R93 Z23; "Memor book Zablatov", Hubert C. Unger, published 1949. Yizkor book for Zablatov, Galicia or Ukraine; in Hebrew and Yiddish. Old call number G42.2.3.

If you have any questions or comments about our library, suggestions for new purchases, or want to volunteer, you can reach me at 301-977-0154, or at mostyn@erols.com. Just please don't telephone between 6-8 pm or weekend mornings. Till next time, Happy family hunting!



The amazing 24th IAJGS International Conference on Jewish Genealogy

The program committee is evaluating an enormous number of very excellent papers that have been proposed. We promised to get this job done by the end of January. Since proposals are still coming in, even though the deadline was the end of December, we extended our own deadline by a number of weeks. Believe me when I tell you that the program will be positively outstanding. We have so many excellent proposals - more than twice the number we can possibly have presented - that we are going to be able to pick and chose only the absolute best.

Hotel rates are already posted on our website - <http://www.ortra.com/jgen2004/registration.asp>. I think you will be more than happy with the inexpensive rates we have arranged. And don't forget that those rates include all service charges and taxes as well as our famous, gigantic Israeli breakfast!! The rates per adult person in a double room are - are you ready for this? - between \$40 and \$48. For sure it would cost you more just to stay at home! So come to our magnificent and unique city of Jerusalem, which was one of the official seven wonders of the world!

Our Conference is not only going to be outstanding as far as Archival cooperation and input, but it is probably going to be the best conference in terms of quality and breadth that the IAJGS has ever had. We have prepared several databases which we have put on CDs and which will be given free to full paying registrants. These include:

- The Memorials of Vanished Communities (the very first cataloging of Israeli memorials of the Jewish Communities destroyed during the Shoah);
 - 1875 Montefiore Census of the Jewish Population of Eretz Israel;
- Spring 2004

- Helkat Mehokek (Translation of Hebrew tombstone inscriptions found on Mount of Olives);
- An Index to the Jacobi Collection of Family Trees;
- Sephardic and Mizrachi Genealogical Research in Israel;
- Index of Family and Private Archives at the Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People (a collections of private and family archives);
- A guide to the Archives and Archival Material for Genealogical Use in Israel; and more!

If you have any questions, join our online discussion group “Jerusalem 2004 Discussion Group” for which you can register from our home page: <http://www.jewishgen.org/jerusalem2004>. We look forward to hearing from you and to seeing you in Jerusalem July 4 to 9, 2004!

Martha Lev-Zion

The 24th IAJGS International Conference on Jewish
Genealogy
www.jewishgen.org/jerusalem2004

DOMESTIC RESEARCH

How to view the “Record of Aliens held for special Inquiry” when using the Ellis Island database.

After a long voyage across the Atlantic, many of our ancestors were detained at Ellis Island. There might have been a health issue, a question of the passenger's ability to support himself (LPC) or a relative that was supposed to meet them and failed to appear. The names of those detained passengers are listed in the pages called “Record of Aliens Held For Special Inquiry”. They are found just after the last “Manifest of Alien Passengers for the U.S. Immigration Officer at Port of Arrival” of each ship's records.

These pages are easy to locate when viewing the microfilm of the ships arrivals. Yet, I had never seen these pages when

using the EIDB. I wondered if the creators of the Ellis Island database filmed this page, though I knew they did not index them, as I had previously found several of my relatives listed on these pages and did not find more than the one entry for their manifest in the EIDB. I decided to search for my maternal grandmother, Rosa Malkes. An earlier search at Archives led me to her name on her manifest and Record of Aliens Held For Special Inquiry page.

I went to Steve Morse's pages (<http://www.stevemorse.org>) and used his Blue form for searching the Ellis Island Database in One Step (Jewish Passengers). I entered Rosa Malkes. Her name was listed once, and I chose to view her "scanned manifest". She appears on page #170, on the SS Statendam, arriving at New York on February 13, 1906. You must "click to enlarge" to be able to read the page. Then I clicked on "close window" and returned to the original view of her scanned manifest. I next clicked on "view text version manifest". By clicking on "next" page #172 appeared, as I searched for the last pages of her ships manifests.

For some reason it jumps two numbers for each page of the manifest. I continued to click on "next" until it no longer allowed me to do so. The word "next" no longer had a hyperlink. At this time, I clicked on "view original manifest". The last page of the ships list of aliens appeared. I now clicked on "next" and there was the 1st page of the list of detainees! These images are quite sharp and are often typewritten, making it quite easy to search for your ancestors names. On this voyage there were 15 pages, each listing 30 detainees. These pages were filmed but were not indexed by the EIDB, so a search of Rose Malkes only brought up her manifest.

These are valuable pages. They provide another glimpse into our ancestor's voyage, listing the cause of detention, the This 2nd edition, doubles the number of

date and time they were discharged (February 14th, at 10:34), the number of Breakfasts (4), Dinners and Suppers (4) they had (Rosa and 3 children). Often they give another address, as in the case above. On Rose's manifest it lists her husband as the person she was going to join. Meir Malkis's address is listed as 622 E 11St. NY. On her Special Inquiry page, Meir's address is 198 Watkins Ave., Brooklyn. Rosa's arrival to America was delayed one more day. There is a notation on the manifest that on the 5th day of their 10 day crossing Rachel, her 5 year old daughter died. This was just one more day of her difficult voyage.

Roberta Solit, JGSGW

New resource for Boston research

A new resource is on-line for Boston research: Tufts University in collaboration with the Bostonian Society is digitizing eleven Boston City Directories between 1865 and 1955. The project will link names with photos and with city maps. Only the 1865 directory is now available.

For a full description see:

<http://nils.lib.tufts.edu/bostonstreets/index.html>

David Rosen, Boston MA

BostonWalks' The Jewish Friendship Trail GUIDEBOOK, 2nd Edition, ISBN #0970082517, NOW AVAILABLE, with 6 Walking Tours of Jewish Boston!

RETAIL PURCHASE: A single copy is available at retail bookstores OR online from <http://www.angelfire.com/biz/LikeJACKnMARIONS/BookOrderForm.html>

BostonWalks' The Jewish Friendship Trail Guidebook 2nd edition is a handy guidebook for Jewish and non-Jewish tourists and residents to discover the downtown history of Boston Jewry by means of six walk tours with maps and photos. The 1st edition's short-run (600 copies) sold out.

This 2nd edition, doubles the number of self-guided Jewish Boston walk tours to six (6), and improves the guidebook's attractiveness with a new glossy cover, larger bibliography, and full updated index. Paperback, 198 Pages, Black and White Photos and Maps, Pricing - Retail: \$19.95/single copy + \$4/postage - Wholesale: \$11.97/copy for 12+ copies or \$15.98/copy for 2-11 copies. Pre-payment required.

New York Times Offers Article Archives from 1851-1995

The New York Times is now offering a complete article archive from September 1851 to December 1995. That's more than fifteen million articles. You can start your search at <http://pqasb.pqarchiver.com/nytimes/advancedsearch.html>.

Searching is free. You can search the full text, author, or headline. You can also specify a date range or include advertisements and other listings in your search. Search listings include the title, date, and author of the article, while icons allow you to see a sample portion of the article or purchase the article.

Yes, you can purchase individual articles. Click on the dollar sign icon and you'll see that an individual article costs \$2.99, or you can buy article "packs," and pay considerably less. (A 25-article "pack" costs the equivalent of \$1.05; you have 180 days to access the 25 articles.)

Yiddish Book Center Yizkor Book Reprints To Be Available Soon

The Yiddish Book Center project to reprint 650 yizkor books is nearing completion. They expect the books to be available for sale in March. Prices have not been fixed but it is estimated it will be \$90.00 for Book Center members and \$120.00 for non-members. This is a strange structure since tax-deductible membership is only \$36 per year. YBC also stated they may sell duplicate originals but the prices have not been determined. The Center's website is at www.nationalyiddishbookcenter.org.
Spring 2004

been determined. The Center's website is at <http://www.nationalyiddishbookcenter.org>.

Gary Mokotoff, Nu What's Nu

FOIA inquiries to the INS - how to give "consent" when the subject is dead?

I've sent many requests to the INS for naturalization records, but have never provided proof of death and have never been refused records because of this. I do provide birth and death dates though, even if they are just approximate. I think as long as the person is realistically no longer living, that's proof enough. If, on the other hand, you were requesting documents for someone born in the 1950s, I assume they would require the proof of death.

In addition, my experience has been that the official form does not give the FOIA staff enough information to efficiently locate the records in question, especially if the person has a common name and/or you don't have exact dates and places for the naturalization. So what I do is send a typed letter, on my own letterhead, providing as much relevant information about the person as I can. Here's an example of the requests that I send – all are welcome to use this as a template for your own requests:

"Dear Freedom of Information Officer:

I am writing under the Freedom of Information Act to obtain copies of INS records to aid in my genealogy research. Please provide me with a copy of the complete INS file for the following member(s) of my family (including, but not limited to, all naturalization and alien registration documents). I've included as much information as I have to assist the NRC in identifying the correct records.

Full Name: Morris FRIEDMAN
Original Surname: KMIOTEK

Birth Date, Place: Approx. 1872,
Warsaw (maybe Lomza or Pultusk), Poland
Death Date, Place: 15-Jul-1928, NYC
Spouse's Name: Jennie, maiden name
unknown

Marriage Date, Place: Approx. 1900-
1901, NYC

Children's Names: <just list them, can
include birthdates if you wish>

Parents' Names: Samuel & Sarah FRIED-
MAN (formerly KMIOTEK)

Immigration Date: Approx 1890, ac-
cording to federal census records

Naturalization Date: Approx 1910,
according to federal census records

Known U.S. Residences: 53 Willet
Street, New York, NY (April 1910)
51 Bristol Street, Brooklyn, NY (January
1920)

If you have any questions about my
request, please contact me at [phone
number].

Thank you,
Elise Friedman”

As you can see, I don't have too many
exact dates and places for this relative, so I
included approximates. Naturalization
documents generally include the names of
the spouse and children, so including that
information should help the staff to identify
the correct records, especially in cases of
common names like my Morris FRIEDMAN.
Identifying each residence that you know
the person lived at (from census records,
vital records, city directories, etc), as well
as when the person lived at each resi-
dence, can be very helpful as well.

When requesting these records, it's
generally a good idea to give more infor-
mation than not enough. Of course you
don't need to go as far as giving a whole
family tree though, since that won't be
useful at all. Even the parents' names of
probably aren't useful since I've never seen

Spring 2004

them mentioned on naturalization papers,
but I tend to include them anyway for
completeness, plus you never know what
other records may be found in your
relative's INS file.

The INS office in DC used to handle
FOIA requests, but now they are handled by
the National Records Center in Lee's Sum-
mit, Missouri. So, mail your requests to:

National Records Center

Attn: FOIA Office

P.O. Box 648010

Lee's Summit, MO 64064-8010

Within 2-3 weeks of mailing your
request, you should receive an
acknowledgement letter that includes a
tracking number. The letter will also state
that your request has been placed on either
the simple track or the complex track. In
most cases, naturalization file requests are
placed on the simple track. Still, expect
that it will take about 3 months to receive
the results of your request, sometimes even
longer.

Good luck!

Elise Friedman, Columbia, Maryland

Ancestry.com Nears Completes Pre-Ellis Island Index

Ancestry.com's every-name index to
passengers arriving in the Port of New
York prior to the creation of Ellis Island
is now complete 1850-1891. The fee-for-
service index is at [http://
content.ancestry.com/
iexec?htx=List&dbid=7488&r=0](http://content.ancestry.com/iexec?htx=List&dbid=7488&r=0)

Two new JewishGen Databases - American-Jewish immigration

JewishGen is pleased to announce two
new major American-Jewish immigration
databases: The Boston HIAS arrival records,
and the Blitzstein Bank Passage Order
Records for the Port of Philadelphia. Mil-
lions of immigrants came through the ports

of Philadelphia or Boston rather than New York, and many immediately left from the port of arrival to other cities and towns.

Boston HIAS Arrival Records

The Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) assisted Jewish immigrants at many ports of arrival. The records of Boston HIAS are held by the American Jewish Historical Society. Among these records are 24,000 arrival cards for 1854-1956. The LDS Family History Library microfilmed these cards in 2002. JewishGen's new Boston HIAS database is an index to these nine microfilm reels, compiled by David Rosen. The database indexes both immigrant passengers and the persons and places where the immigrants are headed.

The Boston HIAS database can be searched at:

<http://www.jewishgen.org/databases/USA/BostonHIAS.htm>.

Blitzstein Bank Passage Order Books, Port of Philadelphia

In the port cities on the east coast of the U.S. in the late 19th and early 20th century, there were "ethnic" or "immigrant" banks – commercial enterprises where recent immigrants could save money and arrange to purchase steamship tickets to bring their families to the U.S. Today, the record books of the Blitzstein Bank are housed at the Philadelphia Jewish Archives Center (PJAC).

In addition to information about the immigrant, these records often contain the name and address of the person who paid for the tickets, port of entry (usually, but not always, the port of Philadelphia), and intended final destination (again, not necessarily Philadelphia).

Through the collaboration of PJAC, the Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Philadelphia (JGSGP), and JewishGen, the Blitzstein Bank records have been indexed.

There are approximately 18,000 cards with information on 30,912 passengers.

The Blitzstein Bank Passage Order Books can be searched at:

<http://www.jewishgen.org/databases/USA/PhilaBlitzstein.htm>.

All of JewishGen's databases can be found at <http://www.jewishgen.org/databases>.

Warren Blatt wblatt@jewishgen.org

Probate Records as a Source of Genealogical Information

"Probate is the act or process of proving a will. The word itself comes from the Latin word for "truth." It is the root of "probative" and other English words.

The "act or process of proving a will" means bringing a document before a duly authorized court or person and asking for official recognition that it is the last will and testament of a particular deceased person. Probate also refers to a judicial determination or act of a court having jurisdiction establishing the validity of a will.

In American law probate is now a general term used to include all matters of which probate courts have jurisdiction. That includes the administration of estates of persons who die without a will (intestate) as well as the administration of estates of persons who die with a will (testate), proceedings to establish the fact of death or dispose of the property of a missing person, proceedings to transfer to the spouse of a deceased person his or her share of community property, the administration of trusts, and quite a few other matters. Every state in the United States has some version of a probate court. In California, the probate court is a department of each county's Superior Court. In some states probate courts have different names. In New York, it is known as the Surrogate's Court. Probate records in Cali-

California are (with rare exceptions) public and are maintained indefinitely by the courts. Each court also maintains a registry of wills listing each original will in its files. The original of every will is supposed to be filed with the court within 30 days of the decedent's death (even if there is not going to be a probate proceeding) and these records are also open to the public.

The Value of Probate Records for Genealogists

Probate records are a gold mine for genealogists. Typical wills start out by declaring that the testator (the person making the will) is married or unmarried, stating the name of the spouse, whether or not the person has been divorced and if so, the name of the former spouse and the date and place of divorce, the names of his or her children and often their ages, and the names and relationships of other beneficiaries. The petition for probate filed with the court by the executor will contain the names and addresses of each of the beneficiaries and heirs, state whether they are over 18 or not, and list their relationship to the decedent. The report of the executor and petition to close the estate will describe in considerable detail the size and nature of the estate and again, list each of the beneficiaries and their addresses and state what each of them is to receive.

How to Access Probate Records

To access these records you usually have to go to the courthouse of the county in which the probate occurred and ask for them in the court clerk's office. Probate is usually, but not always, done in the county in which the decedent resided at the time of death (it can also be done in a county where the decedent owned real property). Look at the death certificate to determine the county of residence at the time of death and check with that county's court first. Most courts in urban areas of California

are not easily accessible by telephone. If you are lucky and can get through to the clerk's office by telephone, ask for the probate clerk and see if he or she can tell you if a probate has been done for the person you are seeking or if there is a will on file. If a probate has been done, get the case number from the clerk. You are more likely to find what you are looking for if you actually go to the courthouse.

The courts usually identify files by case numbers and not by names. If at all possible, bring the case number with you when you visit the courthouse. If you don't have a case number, see if they have an index by name. Most probates are done under legal names, not nicknames. Be aware that if the probate is more than a few years old, it is unlikely that the actual file will be in the courthouse. It is more likely to be stored in an off-site warehouse, and the clerk will have to order the file for you.

Bring money with you because there is a fee for this service, which usually takes three or four days. In San Francisco you can pay extra and get the file the next work day. Be prepared to stand in line to talk to a clerk to get the form to request the file. You will have to stand in line again to request that the file be ordered from the warehouse if it is not present in the courthouse. You may well have to stand in line again to pay the fee because only some of the clerks can accept money. Bring cash. Some courts will not accept checks from non-attorneys. When you do examine the file, bring paper and pen with you to take notes because the court will charge fifty cents to a dollar for every page they copy for you. In short, court clerks' offices are not particularly user friendly. Nevertheless, if the records are there, you can inspect them and learn a lot about your family. Some San Francisco probate records are available online. These are searchable by name as well as case number. The court's website is <http://www.sftc.org/>. If you are

searching for relatively recent San Francisco records, check the website before going down to the courthouse.

Marc Seidenfeld.

Marc Seidenfeld is an attorney and has practiced law for more than 20 years. He coordinated the translation of the Yizkor Book for Dembitz (Dembitca) Poland and has served as treasurer on the SFBAJGS Board of Directors.

Texas Probate Records Available On Line

If your relatives died in Texas, probate records may be found at the following website: <http://three-legged-willie.org/texas.htm> A W.P.A. project of the 1940's generated indexes for probate records housed in at least 30 Texas counties. This project brings 11 of those counties together into a single alphabetical listing. Over 26,000 probate cases are represented in this data.

Rodger Rosenberg, former president and program chairman of SFBAJGS

How to Work with Courthouse Staff

I wish I had a dime for every letter I've written to courthouses over the course of my years of genealogical research. I could probably take a nice vacation-and do some more genealogy research. My experiences with courthouse staff have been mixed, as I'm sure yours have been too. Some courthouse employees were very helpful, even to the point of going way above and beyond the call of duty. Others, however, were more problematic. They may have had directions from their supervisor not to waste time with genealogists, or they may have had personal problems of their own. Regardless of the situation, I've learned that there really is a right way and a wrong way to work with staff to gain access to the materials you need.

The Golden Rule

Courthouses are no different than all other branches of government these days,

suffering from economic shortfalls and budget constraint. As a result, staff and clerks in courthouses are overworked, underpaid, and underappreciated. These people are under a lot of stress and they are subjected to a lot of grief in the course of a day. Too many members of the public treat these public servants like slaves and not like the invaluable, knowledgeable, and helpful citizens they really can be. I have found that the "Golden Rule" goes a long way toward turning a sour experience into a positive exchange. You remember the "Golden Rule," don't you? Treat others as you would want them to treat you. Put yourself in the place of the person on the receiving end of your communication, regardless of whether you write a letter or e-mail, telephone the courthouse, or make an in-person visit. Begin your letter, call, or visit on a positive and friendly note. When sending written correspondence, make your request less terse and impersonal. I often start a letter with the following paragraph:

"I am searching for several documents about members of my family and I hope you will be able to help me. I recognize that you have a heavy workload in the courthouse and that there are many records there, and that my request may require searching through older records which may be in storage, perhaps offsite away from your facilities. However, I really would appreciate your assistance in helping me access and obtain copies of these materials for members of our family."

If you call or visit the courthouse, always begin with a smile on your face. Yes, even a smile on your face while speaking on the phone can be heard in your voice. A smile and a friendly greeting can set the stage for a positive exchange. Even if you get a surly type of response initially,

do your best to maintain a positive tenor for the exchange. It really can pull the other person into the mood. Start the conversation with a statement such as, "I know you are very busy here, but you are the expert in this area and I need your expertise and help." You're showing respect and setting an expectation of success all at once. You'd be surprised at how that changes a scowl into an interested expression and gets someone's attention.

Be Professional

Besides the verbal abuse staff and clerks receive every day, they also must address what certainly must seem like a lot of stupid questions by people who are unprepared. As a genealogist, I would expect that you've organized and prepared yourself for writing your letter, making a call, or visiting the courthouse.

Don't just show up and say, "Do you have any documents here in the courthouse for my ancestors?" You should have an idea of what documents you want to search for that relate to specific ancestors as well as the department of the courthouse in which you will inquire. For example, in the United States you would visit the probate court's office for wills and estate packets, the recorder of deeds for property records and plat maps, the tax assessor's office for tax lists, the clerk of court for jury lists, the election commissioner's office for voter registrations, and other offices for access to marriage and divorce records. If you are seeking birth records, death certificates and coroner's reports, burial permits, adoption records, guardianship records, or other materials, it pays to know beforehand who to contact and where that office is located. Before you make contact in any form, take a few minutes to learn about the organization of the governmental entity you are researching. I often visit <http://VitalRec.com>. This site provides access to governmental information for all states,

Spring 2004

counties, and U.S. territories as well as some foreign countries. The link at this site labeled "Guidelines" provides excellent advice for requesting information. If I click on the State of Georgia, for example, I will find a link to the Georgia Vital Records Office. I'll also find a link for County Offices. If I click on Gwinnett County, I will find links to that county's official government website, and there I can visit the list of departments and learn more about what organization does what. There is a specific link to the county courts too, and there is a very detailed list of courts and you can research each one's area of responsibilities. For those counties without a direct link to a website, you can always use your favorite search engine and type the name of the county and the state, such as: "grayson county" tx The quotation marks around the county name make it an exact phrase, and the addition of the abbreviation for the state of Texas, help me narrow my search to quickly locate the county website. While you may not always immediately locate the precise information you need, you can always call the main telephone number of the county offices and they will direct you. Once you know what department or division handles what materials, prepare your inquiry. Be able to describe exactly what you want: name (including nicknames), date(s), location, type of document, and/or what you are trying to establish. The recipient of your request will appreciate a concise, well-worded explanation and can much more easily accomplish the task of locating the materials. If he or she has to be a mind reader to determine what you need, the chances are that you both will be disappointed with the experience and the results.

Ask Open-Ended Questions

I've learned that some of the people in courthouses seem reluctant to talk. Are they shy? Are they afraid of genealogists? If not,

why do I sometimes get these monosyllabic answers? There have been times when I've phrased a question in such a way that I can almost guarantee that I'll learn nothing of substance, such as, "Do you have the marriage records for this county for 1908?" I'll either get a "Yes," followed by more information about where and how I can access them, or a "No." Nothing more, just a "No." What you must learn to do is ask open-ended questions. Those are the ones that require more than a "yes" or "no" answer. I could restructure my question above to say, "Where in the courthouse or here in the county would I find the marriage records for 1908?" and am much more likely to obtain useful information. If the response is, "I don't know," your next question should be, "Who would know that information and where will I find that person?"

When writing a letter or e-mail and requesting information or copies of documentary materials, always include a sentence that says, "If you do not have these materials in your office, could you please tell me who and where I can contact in order to locate them?" Just asking the question places a burden on the person who ordinarily might not think to provide that information to give you more details. Also, always provide a SASE to encourage a response.

Be Grateful

Your mother was right; always say "please" and "thank you." Over the years, I have written many short thank-you notes to people in courthouses who have sent me information, sometimes much more than I had requested or hoped to obtain. Since I have more than one ancestor in a given county, I can expect to contact the same courthouse any number of times in the course of my research. I sent a written thank you note to a clerk in one particular courthouse in Georgia. She told me later

that she'd never received a note from anyone before! Over the years, we've been in contact a number of times. She always responds quickly to my requests and on a few occasions has sent me copies at no charge. Imagine that!

Summary

Positive experiences with people working behind the desks and in the records backrooms of courthouses are possible. Approach the people with respect, and be prepared to tell them exactly what you need. Be sure to let the persons you deal with know that you sincerely appreciate their help. You never know what that small gesture will mean to them or to your research in the future.

George G. Morgan: "Along Those Lines."

Author, columnist and speaker George G. Morgan writes an award-winning weekly genealogy column, "Along Those Lines," published on the Ancestry.com website. Reprinted with permission of the author and MyFamily.com, Inc. This article was originally published in the "Ancestry Daily News" and is copyrighted 2003 by MyFamily.com, Inc.

Reprinted from February 2004 ZichronNote, Journal of the San Francisco Bay Area JGS

Jewish Film Festival in Virginia

This year's International Jewish Film Festival will be presented from April 15-29 at the Cinema Arts Theater in Fairfax. The festival features films from the U.S., Canada, France, Argentina, Germany, and Israel dealing with subjects of interest to the Jewish community and to film lovers everywhere—human relationships, Jewish identity, assimilation, American and foreign cultures, Israel, and historic events.

Susan Drachsler, Jewish Community Center of Northern Virginia



OVERSEAS RESEARCH

Book of Survivors in Poland Discovered

Peter Lande, JGSGW

Dobroszycki, Lucjan, Survivors of the Holocaust in Poland. A Portrait based on Jewish community records 1944-1947. M.E. Sharpe, Armonk, New York, 1994

Most of Dobroszycki's short but interesting book consists of a portrayal, with numerous statistical tables, of the Jewish community in Poland in the immediate post-World War II period. While some of this community consisted of Jews who had survived within Poland during the German occupation, most were returnees from among the 300-350,000 Polish Jews who fled to the former Soviet Union or persons who returned from camps in Germany.

The most interesting aspect of this book for the genealogist is the tables listing more than 1,000 Jewish children survivors, and, in many cases, their parents. For example Anglister, Chuma born 1932 in Zelechow, parents Anglister, Jojne and Fela nee Sajtfinfer. Chuma was located in an orphanage or children's home in Lublin in December 1945.

The lists are broken down under the following headings:

- Children who survived in hiding with the help of Christians
- Children in orphanages and children's homes (December 1945)
- Children sent to Palestine in the summer of 1946

Other than those sent to Palestine, the fate of the children is not given. However, in all likelihood, they, like most Polish Jewish survivors, emigrated elsewhere. While their destination is not given, the patient researcher, having established relevant names and years of birth can use other sources such as the Jewish Agency, Yad Vashem's holdings of Red Cross records, and US immigration records to determine

Spring 2004

where they went.

Unfortunately, the publisher has not replied to a request to permit the computerized names to be placed on the web. However, the book can be utilized at the USHMM and the JGSGW's library (it is on order). For persons who cannot utilize either of these sources, they may send inquiries to me at pdlande@starpower.net

A footnote for researchers: Most Jews resident in Poland in 1945-47 registered with the Jewish community. Their registration cards and a typewritten roughly alphabetical list with about 225,000 names have been filmed and are available at the USHMM. This material is collated in a Polish soundex system and is often difficult to read. The Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw, which has all of this material and more, had initiated a project to computerize all the names and other information. Unfortunately, this project is at a standstill due to lack of funding. \$50,000 is needed to complete the project, but even smaller amounts would permit JHI to resume work on this valuable project. If there were sufficient interest, perhaps the JGSGW could serve as a conduit to collect such funding.

Holocaust Survivor Records

Over the past year, I have told you of our efforts to type over 16 thousand Holocaust survivor records. We finished our typing and proofing in the fall of 2003, but never found a way of getting our records online and searchable!

I am pleased to announce that an organization called Shoreshim has helped us to share these Holocaust records with researchers.

In all, our typing included over 20 thousand surnames, which are listed here: <http://www.kazez.com/~dan/crag/HoloSurn.html> please search for complete details here: <http://www.shoreshim.org/CRARG/CrSearchDb.asp>

If you find any surnames of interest above, Please note that this is a new and experimental system. I hope it works! And we very much thank www.shoreshim.org for their help!

Dan Kazez
The Czestochowa-Radomsko Area Research Group
<http://www.kazez.com/~dan/crarg/>

Argentine Research: Searching for Argentinean Relatives

There is an Argentinean immigration database (1882-1929) online at http://www.cemla.com/paginas/c_busqueda.htm. It is provided by CEMLA, Centro de Estudios Migratorios Latinamericanos. Enter a surname or partial surname in the box under the word "Apellido."

There is a JewishGen Infofile about genealogical research in Argentina that describes the process for contacting CEMLA and getting original records from them. It is located at <http://www.jewishgen.org/InfoFiles/argentina.html#B1>

Gary Mokotoff, Nu What's Nu

Book of Sephardic Surnames

A book on Sephardic surnames has been published in Brazil. Titled "Dicionário Sefaradi de Sobrenomes" (Dictionary of Sephardic surnames) it includes information about 16,914 different names. The introductory portion of the book is in two languages, Portuguese and English. The dictionary portion requires no knowledge of the Portuguese language because it is a compilation of surnames, toponymics, name type, Inquisition, sources, and important people bearing the surname). The data was gathered from 400 different sources and covers the time period 1350-2000. The authors, members of the Jewish Genealogical Society in Brazil, are Guilherme Faiguenboim, Paulo Valadares and Anna Rosa Campagnano. The book can be purchased Spring 2004

for 140 reais (about \$50) at <http://www.livrariacultura.com.br> or <http://www.sefer.com.br>.

Gary Mokotoff, Nu What's Nu?

1897 Russian Census for Grodno Gubernia

This information may be a real find for some of you who thought you would never find a trace of your Bialystok area ancestors.

Recently, David Fox, Belarus SIG Coordinator, announced the extraction and transliteration of the existing returns of the 1897 All Russian Census for Grodno Gubernia. These existing returns are only fragments of the entire Grodno Gubernia census.

The webpage explaining this acquisition can be found at http://www.jewishgen.org/Belarus/1897_russian_census_grodno_gubernia.htm. (this URL may be on two lines, so please make sure to copy the entire URL) On this webpage, there are links to a list of 1,800 unique surnames included in this database and over 700 unique shtetls/towns found in this database.

The number one objective of BIALYGen is to gain access to Jewish records in the National Historical Archives of Belarus in Grodno. As a result of the gracious cooperation of the Belarus SIG and David Fox, we have our first bit of data from the Grodno Archives. Thank you, Belarus SIG!!

Of the total available data, about 10% is for towns in the BIALYGen area of Bialystok, Bielsk, and Sokolka Uyezds (districts).

There are 776 unique surname spellings for people enumerated in the census for towns in the BIALYGen area.

Although you can search the Belarus SIG 1897 names list, that list contains 1800 names for all of Grodno Gubernia. Only these 776 surnames are for people living in the BIALYGen area in 1897.

As David Fox mentioned, funding of these extractions has not been completed. All the beneficiaries of this data need to help so that Belarus SIG and BIALYGen can continue to sponsor work at the Grodno Archives. I encourage all BIALYGen members to make a contribution to "Grodno Archives Research Projects," which can be done through the BIALYGen JewishGen-erosity page at <http://www.jewishgen.org/JewishGen-erosity/Bialystokrrg.html>.

These funds will be transferred to Belarus SIG to pay for the BIALYGen town extractions. If contributions are greater than the cost, those surplus funds will be dedicated to future Grodno Archives projects.

What do you receive for your contribution? Once funded, this data will be submitted to JewishGen for inclusion in the All Belarus and All Poland databases. Also, if a researcher contributes \$36 to BIALYGen Grodno Archives Research Projects, that person can submit their surnames of interest (up to 4 surnames) and we will search ONLY the BIALYGen area returns and provide full extracts to you.

Please use the Surnames on the lists which will be posted to this forum, make your contribution, and then notify me of your contribution and the surnames of interest to you.

Mark Halpern
BIALYGen Coordinator

All U. K. Database

JewishGen, in conjunction with the Jewish Genealogical Society of Great Britain, is pleased to announce the "All U.K. Database", which is now online at <http://www.jewishgen.org/databases/UK>.

This is a multiple database search facility, containing over 50,000 entries referring to people in the United Kingdom – England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. These databases have been con-

tributed by the "Jewish Communities and Records - United Kingdom Special Interest Group" (JCR-UK) and individual donors. The "All U.K. Database" incorporates the following datasets:

- * United Kingdom Marriages, 1838 to 1972: from all areas of the United Kingdom.

- * Wales Census Returns: 1,800 records from the 1851 and 1891 censuses.

- * London Jews (pre-1850): over 9,000 Jewish traders based in London.

- * Jewish Traders/Businesses in London - 1769-1839: names of over 5,000 Jewish traders based in London.

- * JewishGen Family Finder (JGFF): more than 10,000 entries by Jewish genealogists researching families in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

- * JewishGen Online Worldwide Burial Registry (JOWBR): 25,000 records from cemeteries within the United Kingdom.

The JewishGen "All U.K. Database" allows you to simultaneously search all of the above resources. The database is a work in progress and new entries are being added regularly. These databases are made possible only with the working involvement of many volunteers and your financial contributions.

For those of you with United Kingdom interests it will be of special value to your genealogical research. The "All U.K. Database" can be found at <http://www.jewishgen.org/databases/UK>.

Warren Blatt
JewishGen Editor-in-Chief
Boston, MA
wblatt@jewishgen.org

Vilna District Research and Record Translations

The Vilna District Research Group, a sub-group of the LitvakSIG, seeks to assist and advance the knowledge base of researchers by procuring, translating and distributing genealogical records for towns

what was the Vilna uезд [district] in Imperial Russia.

Our group has been involved in the 1858 Revision List project for the city of Vilna for several years. We have the complete 1858 RL for the Jewish residents of the city of Vilna consisting of almost 3000 pages and 26,000 records. To date we have translated 70% of these records. In addition, our group is now procuring the Revision Lists [1834, 1834-1849 supplements, 1850, 1851-1857 supplements, and 1858] for the town of MOLETAI [MALAT] and will be translating these in the next few months.

Revision List records and/or family lists also exist for the following towns in the Vilna district:

Antakalnis, Boguslavishok, Ciobiskis, Gedrovitz INCLUDED IN VILNIUS UEZD, DISTRICT C, Gelvan, Mikhalishok, Malat, Musnik, Nemencine, Novy Gorod, Shirvint, Snipishok, Vilna and Vilna Uезд.

Vital records [birth, marriage, death, and divorce] also exist for many towns in the Vilna district.

For most towns, the vital records cover the time period 1854-1915, although most towns have incomplete sets of data. The Vilna city records are the most complete and exist for the time period 1837-1915.

Anyone interested in obtaining information on the work of the Vilna District Research Group and wants to learn how much is required [for each project] to become eligible for various record translations should contact Joel Ratner at Joelrat@aol.com .

Joel Ratner
Coordinator, Vilna District Research Group

Galician Records Translation Assistance

If you need assistance with the translation of the column headings from Galician Records, I suggest visiting this url: <http://www.shtetlinks.jewishgen.org/Kolbuszowa/resources3.html>
Spring 2004

Susana Leistner Bloch, coordinator of the KRRG, Kolbuszowa Region Research Group, has placed sample Galician vital records and English translations of their column headings on her group's website.

I also recommend using Judith Frazin's 19th Century Polish Language translation guide, and / IN THEIR WORDS, a multi volume translation guide to German, Latin, Polish and Russian Documents, by Shea and Hoffman.

Eden Joachim
Rzeszow PSA Archive Coordinator
esjoachim@optonline.net

Hamburg Database Now Includes Nearly 2 Million Emigrants

The Hamburg Emigrant Lists on the Internet were updated through 1905 this past week. They include nearly 2 million entries from 1890-1905. The site is located at http://www.hamburg.de/fhh/behoerden/staatsarchiv/link_to_your_roots/english/index.htm.

The index provides basic information about the emigrant: name, country/state of origin, approximate age, and destination. The search engine does not allow soundex searches. Use the wildcard feature which is explained on the search page to find name variants.

For a fee, you can receive an abstract of the entire entry from the ship's manifest. The cost for an abstract is \$20 for 1-3 persons, \$30 4-10 persons, \$40 for 11-20, \$50 for 21-30 persons. Because it is an abstract rather than the actual manifest, each member of a family of three on a specific page would have his/her own abstract. Therefore, they would count as three persons if you requested information about all three. Funds are used to support the Internet site.

Website Depicts Latvia Today

A posting to the Latvia SIG Discussion Group notes a web site that has pictures

and maps of Latvia today. It is located at <http://www.latvia360.lv/>. Most unusual are scenes from 19 Latvian towns that are displayed with 360-degree panoramic views. Click the “All Cities” link and listed are all 35 towns described at the site. Each town has pictures and/or links to other sites that provide information about the town. It is a very attractive web site.

Gary Mokotoff

Yad Vashem Database online in June

The Hall of Names at Yad Vashem has spent years and millions of dollars converting 3 million ‘pages of testimony’ into an online database. The online site will be launched in June or in the summer sometime. This was written up about a month ago in the Jerusalem post and Haaretz online. The search has advanced options allowing you to search all different fields that were entered from the original forms. i.e. Search by: “last name”, “maiden name”, “born in...”, “birthdate”, “submitted by”, etc. As well as a combination of any of the above. When you do find an entry that interests you, you click on the record and it shows you the original form that was scanned in.

I have spent a fair amount of time using this resource at Yad Vashem. It will be phenomenal when it is available on the internet.

This is a tremendous resource. I have already found relatives from my father’s family who survived the holocaust by finding pages of testimony that were entered.

Sara Wenger, Israel

Jewish Documentary Sources in Belarus now accessible at YIVO

The Winter edition of the YIVO newsletter, available online at <http://www.yivoinstitute.org/pdf/yedies197.pdf>,

reports that documents chronicling more than six centuries of Jewish history, culture and religion can be found in nearly all archival repositories in Belarus. Until now, however, those documents were inaccessible or difficult to track down. A new Russian-language publication is making Jewish historical records in 54 national and local archives in Belarus available to researchers. The Guide was published in 2003 jointly by the Russian State University for the Humanities and Project Judaica, a joint program of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America and YIVO. The guide is the second in the series of finding aids to the Jewish documentary sources in the post-Soviet archives. The preceding volume, published in 1997, was devoted to the Jewish documentary sources in the Moscow archives. For more information on Jewish Documentary Sources in the Belarus Archives, visit the website of the RGGU publishing house: <http://publisher.rsuh.ru/price.htm> or email: admin_izdat@hotmail.ru.



Yad Vashem



JGS GW Meeting dates 2004:

April 18 at Har Shalom

May 16 at Har Shalom

June 27, 2004 at JCC of Northern VA

The Jewish Genealogy Society
of Greater Washington, Inc.
PO Box 31122
Bethesda, MD 20824-1122

Non-Profit Org
US Postage Paid
Bethesda, MD
Permit No. 0211