

CHRONICLES

**JOURNAL OF THE JEWISH GENEALOGICAL
SOCIETY OF GREATER PHILADELPHIA**

דברי הימים



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JOURNAL OF THE JEWISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF GREATER PHILADELPHIA

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Submission of articles on genealogy for publication in *CHRONICLES* is enthusiastically encouraged. The editorial board reserves the right to decide whether to publish an article and to edit all submissions. Please keep a copy of your material. Anything you want returned should be accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope.

While email and other electronic files are highly preferred, the editors will be happy to work with you and your material in any form. If you have an idea, please contact Evan Fishman of the Editorial Board by email: editor@jgsgp.org.

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Answer to quiz (p. 22): Flak jackets and duffel bags. I. Goldberg opened his eponymous Army Navy Store in 1919. It's still in business at its fourth location, 718 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia.

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REFLECTIONS FROM YOUR CHRONICLES TEAM



Imagine many, if not all, of us have experienced frustration when we were unable to find that elusive document, photograph, or artifact that would confirm some theory or fact that we're exploring. On the other hand, we're thrilled when it does materialize. Here are some recent examples I've personally experienced or heard about.

In the beginning of April, Deborah Glassman, current manager of the translation project for records from Ostropol, Ukraine and the environs, provided some new information. Starokonstantinov, located sixteen miles away from Ostropol, is one of my ancestral towns. Deborah informed me that she found a birth record for my great grandfather, Pinchas Mandelstein, which indicated that he was born in November 1866 and his parents were Moshe and Khaya Sura. What's more, Moshe was a retired soldier! Pinchas' tombstone showed that his father was Moshe, but learning about his military service and the name of his wife were revelations. I was elated and gratified about this new discovery. Knowing that at some future date I'd actually be able to view this birth record stirred up a wellspring of emotions.

My cousin, Courtney, is my partner in genealogical crime. She recently sent me a photograph of the *matzevah* (tombstone) of Pinchas' sister, Manya Gittel. Discovering this relative was one of my first major breakthroughs (*Chronicles*, Vol. 23-1, Spring 2004, pp. 9-10), and in the process I learned that she died in August 1910, leaving behind two young sons. The photograph was further proof of her death, but two words in the inscription evoked sadness. Translated from the literary Hebrew as "of tender years," these words expressed the palpable pathos that her widower and surviving children felt.



I was surprised to learn during Pesach that my friend, Elad, had previously worked as the comptroller at the Ellis Island Foundation. He then proceeded to tell me about the

existence of several boxes of records that were sitting in a closet in his office. They were about to be tossed out, but wiser minds thought better of that. At one point Elad rummaged through these boxes and found an index card for his great grandparents and their children when they arrived in New York City in April 1939 from Germany. The Rosenberg family was held for “Special Inquiry” and detained. Daughter, Tirza, was hospitalized on April 7, may have been under observation in Ward 1, and was ultimately transferred to Willard Parker Hospital [for Children with Contagious Diseases], located on East 16th Street, along the East River in Manhattan.

**The Rosenberg Family
in 1934**



Elad also told me that the family was faced with the possibility that Tirza wouldn't be allowed to board the ship at Southampton, England because of serious illness. Given the date of their departure, one can imagine what a dire prospect that was. In order to circumvent this potential risk, her older brother, Ernest, carried his sister (who was quite small) on his shoulder as if she were a young child and wrapped a blanket around her, thus creating the impression that she was asleep. Elad's mother, Adena, provided additional background. The reason the family was able to leave in 1939 was because Tirza's father had the foresight to start working on obtaining visas for the extended family in 1933.

Fortunately, the story had a happy ending, and you can imagine how excited Elad was when he found his great aunt's index card and viewed her microfilmed medical report. Although he had previously viewed documents related to this journey, seeing additional concrete evidence was extremely meaningful, and I appreciated his sharing this discovery.

Update: On April 30 I viewed my great grandfather's actual birth record, thanks to Deborah Glassman!

Along with our regular features (Linda Ewall-Krocker's meeting summaries and David Brill's quiz) we present articles that we received from contributors outside of our JGSGP circle. Jody Gorran shares his report on the 1919 pogroms in Ukraine and provides a backdrop to the development of a screenplay entitled “Pogrom.” Ted Bainbridge updates the Holocaust data sets available at Ancestry, while Nolan Altman does the same for JewishGen.

Richard Scholnik shares the latest installment in his genealogy journey by relating his efforts to meet relatives during his recent stay in Florida. Three book reviews appear in this issue including one on *The Mystery of the Miniature Sefer Torah* which JGSGP members, Karen and Jeff Albert brought to our attention. Marilyn Mazer Golden enthusiastically recommends *The Wedding Photo* which was the focus of our April meeting. Author, Dan Oren, gave a compelling presentation.

On May 2 B'nai B'rith Educators Unit No. 5290 held its annual awards dinner at which time it presented its Service to the Jewish Community Award to JGSGP “in recognition of outstanding contributions to the Jewish Community of Philadelphia.”

JGSGP member, Walt Spector, presented the award to JGSGP founding president, Harry Boonin. ❖

Evan Fishman, Editor

Our readers are the best source of new material for our publication. Please share your respective stories and send them to editor@jgsgp.org.



WE EXTEND A WARM WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST MEMBERS & HIGHLIGHT SOME SURNAMES THEY ARE RESEARCHING

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Rich Glass Voorhees, NJ
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Marlise Gross
Beverly Haas Bala Cynwyd, PA
 Mones (Monastyriskis, Monastersky) from Olshana,
 Ukraine; Snyder and Klein (Klevansky) from Yekateri-
 noslav, Ukraine

Carole Jacoby Philadelphia, PA
Donald Krasnick Havertown, PA
Marshall Lerner West Chester, PA

Steinberg/Sternberg from Khotin, Ukraine;
 Lerner from Briceni, Moldova
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Barbara Shotz Elkins Park, PA
Rich & Jackie Shulman Rydal, PA
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 from Musilev, Belarus (Russia)

Carole Slotsky Jenkintown, PA
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 Stern from Tulchin, Russia; Kun from Ungvár, Hun-
 gary; Weil from Kippenheim, Germany;
 Maxman/Maxmin from Bessarabia, Russia

Sharon Taylor Oreland, PA
Sylvia & Mark Wagman Wilmington, DE
 Frydman from Radom, Poland; Perel and Kastel from
 Zamosc, Poland

Judith Workman Wynnewood, PA

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



This will be my last message before the 2019 IAJGS (International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies) conference in Cleveland, Ohio. The conference starts July 28th and continues through August 2nd. If you have never been to a conference, this is a great opportunity, since it is not too far to travel there from Philadelphia. There's still time to sign up. The conference usually gets about 1000 attendees from around the world. There will be many presentations on various research topics and techniques as well as help for beginners. JGSGP members Mark Halpern, Joel Spector, Rabbi Gary Gans and I will be giving presentations. We will hold a gathering of attendees with an interest in Philadelphia research. If you are planning on attending, please reach out to membership chair, Marilyn Mazer Golden, (mazer-goldenjgsgp@gmail.com) or myself (president@jgsgp.org) so we can all meet up.

We continue to have meetings in the Philadelphia area with great speakers, and attendance is consistently growing. They are a great chance to network and be educated. If you are in the area, we hope you will attend. Information is posted on our website <https://jgsgp.org> and our Facebook group, Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Philadelphia. ❖

Fred Blum, President



Find complete
conference information
and registration at:
<https://www.iajgs2019.org/>

MEETING & GREETING MY EXTENDED FAMILY

by Richard Scholnik

Note: This is the third installment in Richard's genealogy journey.



May marked one year since I asked my genealogist friend, Evan, to try and find the relationships among my bygone relatives named on the dozen or so other Scholnik headstones located near the one marking my grandparents' gravesite. Since then, we have found more than 600 family members, including spouses! Right from the start, I knew that I wanted to establish contact with those who are still alive and then meet as many of them as I could.

This past February I vacationed in Holiday, Florida. I spent Friday, February 15 fixing an abridged family tree of Sunday dinner's expected attendees, but the guest list kept changing! I went a little crazy inside and in front of my sister, Susan, but after taking a long (yoga) break, I made up a new tree. I also had a list of email addresses to share, but both Norman and Bernice said they wanted to wait until Sunday to give me the okay to share theirs. Ugh! (The library closed while I was trying to finish getting that together anyway.) In addition, I picked up three bottles of wine for the people who were going to host us over the weekend and scored some orange cardboard and markers for name tags to put in front of place settings on Sunday's dinner table.

I picked Susan up on time, and we set off just after 9 a.m. on Saturday for Aaron and Regina's in Sarasota. We got there exactly on schedule—11 a.m. They live in a lovely development of small houses nestled into the landscaping. When they answered the door, Aaron mentioned that we hadn't called from the road as promised. I apologized and immediately forgave myself because there were way too many details to be perfect. At noon, I felt that I had to interrupt the conversation in order to remind Regina that Susan and I had to leave in another hour. She then started getting busy getting her food together (hors d'oeuvres had already been consumed; the table already had been set). I felt bad about rushing her, but I needed to keep to our schedule in order to get to dinner in Boca Raton by 7 p.m. in spite of Aaron and Regina's more leisurely pacing.



**Richard sharing an abridged family tree
with Aaron and Regina**

We sat down to lox, etc., which was very nice, and finally got to talk about things like Aaron's grandfather, Sam, and his wife, living with Aaron's family while he was growing up. Sam was a socialist who liked to read a political paper. He spoke only Yiddish, but he understood English. Aaron would get him to practice his signature so that he could sign in when it was time to vote. He also mentioned how his father closed one branch of his business because some of the adult relatives were underperforming!

We left for Pembroke Pines around 1:30 p.m. and three-and-a-half hours later, we were going around in circles trying to find Muriel's place. Finally, I parked, and we went in to meet my great uncle Chaskel's 79-year-old great granddaughter. Despite some serious medical issues, she remains upbeat, funny and engaging. She is a widow with two sons, one in Washington state and the other one living locally. Despite her physical limitations, Muriel impressively flies to visit her son in Washington once a year. Incredibly, she has eleven great grandchildren, and the oldest one is seventeen! We were disappointed that her first cousin was a no-show. I was able to steer Muriel back to stories I wanted to hear (like the one about how she and her older sister used to walk across the tenement hallway to her grandfather, Morris's apartment to eat hot dogs every Thursday; or the one about relatives gathering together at her grandmother's sister's house to watch Milton Berle and other shows on the family's first TV, one with a big magnifying glass on the screen). This visit turned out to be particularly good for all of us.

It was a little before 7 p.m. when we pulled alongside Barry & Sue's nice bungalow in a well-maintained older Boca Raton neighborhood. (After I had blown it with Aaron, my sister called ahead even though we were right on schedule.) Barry and Sue were very welcoming; in fact, they came out and welcomed us so much that we didn't even get into the front door before his brother and sister-in law, Louie and Nanci, showed up. It was good to see everyone, and finally we gathered in the living room to enjoy hors d'oeuvres and wine that Louie had brought. (He even provided his own crystal wine glasses, connoisseur that he is!) Everything was great as we ate and drank and talked and cooked. Right before we sat down to dinner, I took a phone call from Sid, who said he was going to attend the dinner alone.

Meanwhile the six of us continued to get along just fine with conversation and stories flowing (like the one about Rita getting the other half of our grandmother's diamonds, which caused Nanci to protest both results:

1) ex-wives giving family heirlooms back as well as 2) her not getting said family heirlooms!) Our brother/sister, brother/brother, first cousins, spouses get-together broke up amiably at a reasonable hour, and eventually everyone retired.

The next morning, I got an email from one of my Mexican cousins/email-pals, Coty, saying she, her husband, and her son (who is a student at University of Miami) wanted to know where and when the dinner was so they could come. I emailed her back with the necessary information and began working on the third revision of our family dinner tree! I also started working on the place settings for that night's dinner table. It fast was approaching 2 p.m., time to go to Bernice's to finally meet her and her "ever growing" Florida family before our 5 p.m. family dinner.

On the way I took two calls from my daughters. Coty had Facebooked them with her phone number and a request that I call her. The half hour trip was made stressful by the phone call and necessary email with the restaurant's reservation time, name, and address. (Coty had not received my earlier email.)

At 84, Bernice was more gorgeous than I expected her to be! Her place was loaded with people: husband, nephews, spouses, grown children, Her beautiful home was located in a very, very nice development in Boynton Beach. The usual hors d'oeuvres were served; Bernice's husband served me a black Russian. Everyone was talking and milling around while Bernice tried to get everyone to sit down in a cohesive group. I seemed to be the only one heeding her instructions.

At some point, I found out that two other relatives were going to join us. I began working on the fourth iteration of my tree, having long ago accepted that the invitation list was out of my control. Bernice said that she would make me sixteen copies, one for every dinner attendee. It was time for me to take my sister and leave in order to get to the restaurant with a half hour to spare before everyone was due to arrive.

We got to Delray Beach's Poppies Deli at about 4:35. No relatives had arrived; waiters were setting up a bunch of tables into a large rectangle outside of the room that I was told we were getting. The woman behind the desk apologized for the room being reserved to another party before it had been reserved for us, but she assured me that she would seat as many people as far from us as possible. (My noisy crowd level concern turned out to be a non-issue.) With Susan's eventual help, I finished taping the place cards into small tent shapes before Norm and his wife arrived right on time at 5 p.m. I introduced Susan, and others began showing up. I got myself a glass of wine, and I introduced whom I could until everyone turned into a human traffic jam leading into our table grouping. After a reasonable time, everyone was seated except for two people. The waitress took our orders.

Everyone seemed to be fully engaged with the relatives near him/her. I stood up and took control for a minute while taking a picture of the entire seated group. The food came, and the conversations continued. I got up a few times and walked around to everyone, once sharing a picture of a nephew's young twins, another time sharing the picture that Coty's husband had just taken of all of us, a few other times for reasons I no longer remember. At one point, Norm stood up, clinked his glass and thanked me for organizing the dinner. I took a mock seated bow and said something like "Thanks for coming; what is making this good is all of you." After about two and a half hours I was feeling a little deflated, adren-



aline-wise. Within about another half hour, people were getting up, standing together in groups, talking, taking pictures, saying their good-byes.

As you can imagine, an up-to-date family tree never was distributed (the missing son would have been on it mistakenly anyway), but here's the thing. . . We all had the most gratifying time ever, happy to be talking and listening and looking around and smiling, with our mouths full of deli, surrounded by our wonderful newly met family. And, not incidentally, all of us definitely are going to do it again next year! ❖

A retired math teacher from the Philadelphia school system, Richard recently discovered an in-

terest in genealogy when he came across unknown Scholniks near his grandparents' graves at Montefiore Cemetery in Springfield Gardens, Queens, New York. Since then, his sense of family has expanded immensely and been enriched by the connections he is making with newfound cousins. Richard continues to look for descendants of Srul and Tema SCHOLNIK (various spellings) from Mielnica, Galicia, now Melnytsya-Podilska, Ukraine; ADELMAN and FIDELHOLTZ from Gorodok, Belarus.

You can contact Richard at richardscholnik@gmail.com

NEW HOLOCAUST DATA SETS ON ANCESTRY.COM

by Ted Bainbridge, Ph.D.



My article entitled "Holocaust Records on Ancestry.com" appeared in *Chronicles*, Vol. 33-1, pp. 11-12. Since then, Ancestry.com has added a number of data sets to their holdings. I'd like to now provide an updated list of data sets (see <https://jgsgp.org>, under "Links") that include "Holocaust" in their titles (23 items), followed by items flagged with "Holocaust" as a keyword (201 items, broken into groups of 25). Both lists show Ancestry's newest acquisitions at the top. Scan both lists to see if Ancestry has acquired new data that would help your research, but which did not exist the last time you searched the site for such materials.

These data sets described a wide variety of people, such as residents of a place, holders of work permits, people on transports, prisoners, people killed, survivors, and (ambiguously) "victims." The sets include a wide variety of infuriating subjects, such as, "Dachau Inmates Possessions Upon Entry", "Krakow Apartments of Displaced Jews", and "Natzweiler Medical Experiments."

Scanning these titles might reveal useful items that you never would have expected to find intentionally. Every researcher should look at every data set with an ambiguous title such as, “selected records”, as well as those described as being provided by an organization instead of being described by their content.

Remember that Ancestry has Holocaust items that are not found by hunting for “Holocaust” as a title word or keyword. To be sure you have found all items related to this subject, you must search for additional words and phrases as described in my other article. When you see a hit list in response to a search, go to the top right area of Ancestry’s screen and set the Sort By box to Date Added. That will put the newest acquisitions at the top of the list.. ❖

Ted Bainbridge is a ninth-generation Pennsylvanian. Every immigrant ancestor he has identified settled immediately in Pennsylvania and stayed here for the rest of their lives. Ted was an Army officer, taught math and science in public schools, was an auditor and corporate financial executive, and taught accounting and financial management at colleges. He earned his Ph.D. from the University of Iowa. Ted has been a genealogical researcher, teacher, speaker, and writer since 1969. He served as president of his local genealogical society and served on the staffs of two LDS Family History Centers.

Contact Ted at: ted.bainbridge@gmail.com

THE HOLOCAUST BEFORE THE HOLOCAUST

by Jody Gorran

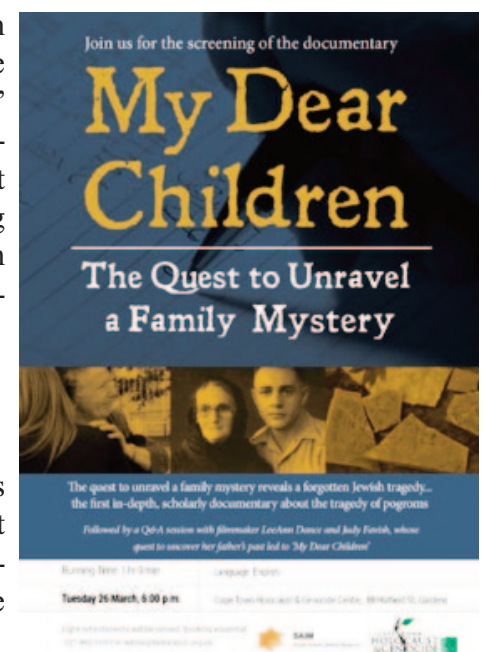


This year marks the 100th anniversary of the forgotten 1919 pogroms in Ukraine. Some refer to this series of pogroms from 1917-1921 as “the Holocaust before the Holocaust” and as “genocide” itself. The year 1919 was unfortunately very different as the character of the pogroms changed for the worse, particularly for Jewish women. I’m attempting to provide a voice for these forgotten women who suffered so greatly simply for being Jewish. I want the world to know what happened to them. I’m working with others to produce a feature film based on our screenplay *Pogrom*, and I’m inspired by the historical record so that these women will finally have a voice and never be forgotten.

I began this journey in late December 2017, when I received an email from Avraham Groll, director of JewishGen.org, thanking me for responding to the year-end email solicitation with a contribution of \$100 or more. As a “perk,” JewishGen provided me with online access to a new film documentary entitled *My Dear Children*, which was described as the first documentary about these pogroms. I knew nothing about them and found the film so compelling that in early January 2018, I contacted the producer of the film, LeeAnn Dance, and purchased a license so that I could show the film in my community in southern Florida.

Little did I know what would follow.

For twenty years I had thought I knew the name and location of my father’s father’s ancestral village in Ukraine and even paid a Ukrainian to visit what I thought was “the village,” but in late January 2018 I learned that I was mistaken. I would never have learned the truth without the intimate knowledge of volunteers of JewishGen.



Twenty years ago I entered “Chaswater” near Odessa at JewishGen’s original “Shtetl Finder.” The result I received indicated the town of “Kosy Vytorye” near Kosy Slobidka. However, there was neither interest in this town on JewishGen Family Finder nor any particular historical Jewish presence mentioned.

I submitted a query to JewishGen and received a surprising response from Alexander Sharon and Warren Blatt. They both indicated that my original “Chaswater” near Odessa was still near Odessa but was actually another town known as Khashchuvatye.

I asked them how they knew this when the JewishGen “tools” said otherwise. Both of them basically said “We just knew.” Warren Blatt explained that he was the creator of the JewishGen Communities Database and familiar with most Jewish communities in Eastern Europe.

About two dozen people on JewishGen Family Finder were interested in Khashchuvatye/Khashevata, and there was also a Google group. I was so excited by this discovery that I looked at everything I could find and contacted the Google group members. I was thrilled to learn that there was a Jewish presence in my ancestral village.

I had previously done DNA testing through Family Tree DNA and figured that it wouldn’t hurt if I ran the twenty or so names who I now knew believed they had family connections to Khashchuvatye against my DNA match list.

Lo and behold, I found two distant matches out of twenty. While we do not know of any family names in common, this DNA match appears to provide additional evidence that Khashchuvatye or its vicinity was really “the place,” particularly when you can tie family connections to a specific location AND have DNA matches related to that location as well.

I also learned from the Google group that unfortunately, like thousands of other *shtetlach*, (ancestral villages) its Jewish population suffered the fate of both 20th century pogroms and the Holocaust. The subject of pogroms caught my attention because until viewing *My Dear Children*, I had no real knowledge whatsoever of the pogroms and was now learning that Khashchuvatye had been subjected to these pogroms. A June 1923 report from the American Joint Distribution Committee, posted in the Google group, provided the following description:

Khashevata [Khashchuvatye] is one of the points of Gaisin District, which have suffered most from pogroms. The bands of Volynetz and Tiutunik rivaled with small local bands and the town was constantly pillaged during three years. There were some cases when the Jewish youths offered resistance to the bands.

The most cruel pogrom was committed by Denikin’s troops who remained in Khashevata [Khashchuvatye] for about 3 months, pillaging the population: carrying away whole carts loaded with the belongings of Jews and violating the women; many of the latter became infected with syphilis. Finally, on the day of retreat of Denikin’s Army, the officers committed a massacre in which 125 persons were murdered and 55 persons were wounded (in some cases, arms were chopped off.)

To have first seen the documentary, *My Dear Children*, which highlighted these post-Russian revolution pogroms and subsequently thought for twenty years that the ancestral village of my grandfather was elsewhere, to then finally learn that its true name was Khashevata and had been the object of these pogroms, left me speechless.

After bringing *My Dear Children* for a showing in my community and seeing how moved the audience was, I was determined to learn more about these pogroms in Ukraine. Part of this documentary was devoted to Dr. Irina Astashkevich, whose 2013 doctoral dissertation was entitled *The Pogroms in Ukraine in 1917-1920: An Alternate Universe*.

I obtained a copy of her dissertation and was further shocked by what it described. I reached out and spoke with her about her research, and she explained that she had expanded her dissertation into a book that would be published in the fall. I followed this conversation with a three-day visit in June 2018 to the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research in Manhattan, which was also prominently featured in the film and where Dr. Astashkevich had done much of research.

My goal was to find more information on Khashchuvatye/Khaschevata and the pogroms of that period. I was able to find a 1928 report by N. Gergel which indicated that Khashchevata was subjected to twelve successive pogroms during this period, the second highest number out of 531 Ukrainian villages subjected to 1286 pogroms.

Later that fall, Dr. Astashkevich's book, entitled *Gendered Violence: Jewish Women in the Pogroms of 1917-1921* was published. According to the book's abstract:

This is a groundbreaking study of an important and neglected topic—the systematic use of rape as a strategic weapon of the genocidal anti-Jewish violence, known collectively as pogroms, that erupted in Ukraine in the period between 1917 and 1921, and in which at least 100,000 Jews died and undocumented numbers of Jewish women were raped. The book is based on the in-depth study of the scores of narratives of Jewish men and women who survived the pogrom violence, but were then all but forgotten for almost a century. This book deconstructs the motives of perpetrators, the experience and expression of trauma by the victimized community, and how the genocidal objectives of the pogrom perpetrators were achieved and maximized through the macabre carnival of violence.

So now here I am, wanting to share with you a film project based on a series of historical events of unspeakable violence, perpetrated against a population of Jewish women in Europe who were subjected to mass public gang rape, mutilation, and murder, that have been virtually untold and unspoken of for the past 100 years. The fate of women in these circumstances has often been neglected.

As part of my plan to bring this horrendous series of events to the public's attention, I came up with the outline of a story and secured screenwriter Glenn A. Bruce (www.imdb.com/name/nm0115486) with whom I had worked successfully before, to craft a screenplay entitled *Pogrom*. I was also able to enlist the assistance of Dr. Astashkevich, who serves as our technical advisor.

I believe that this is a subject that should be known and never forgotten. And what better way to achieve this than through a feature film. *Pogrom* (tagline: "Some Things Are Worse Than Death"). The plot can be summarized as follows: When a young Jewish U.S. Army veteran of World War I, who previously emigrated to the U.S. with his father, returns to his family's ancestral village in Ukraine, he tries to save his loved ones from the continuous series of mass public gang rapes, mutilations, and murders during the horrifying pogroms post-Russian revolution, but his best intentions are not nearly enough to accomplish this goal.

We are hoping to gain the attention of the film industry and find a production company interested in making this film. It's *Saving Private Ryan* meets *Schindler's List* in Ukraine.

So, if you happen to know anyone with any connections to the film industry, please give them a copy of this article and/or let them know that I'd be pleased to send them a pdf copy of the script for *Pogrom* as well as a pdf copy of the book *Gendered Violence: Jewish Women in the Pogroms of 1917-1921*. ♦

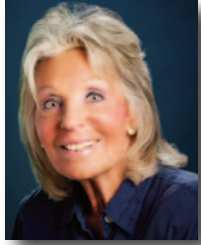
Jody is a retired entrepreneur living in Florida. His email address is jgorran11@gmail.com

THE MANIFEST'S DESTINY

A SHIP'S LOG TRACES AN AMERICAN FAMILY'S ORIGIN: A YOUNG WOMAN'S PASSAGE IN STEERAGE FROM RUSSIA TO NEW YORK'S ALIEN STREETS IN 1920

by Sally Friedman

For *The Inquirer* Posted: December 21, 2011. *Reprinted with the kind permission of the author*



We've managed to acquire a remarkable family Hanukkah gift: a ship's manifest, an official passenger log that tracks my late mother-in-law's voyage to America in 1920. It's a taproot to family history, part of our clan's collective "Coming to America" story. Had she not made that voyage, nothing would be the same.

Hinda Rubache came to these shores and through Ellis Island as a young woman of 22. She sailed from the city of Minsk in Russia, though her immigration papers say Poland because of the ever-changing borders. That ship's manifest, an impersonal document if ever there was one, lists her name, her height, her hair and eye color, and the fact that she could write - in Hebrew, not English. It does not mention the travails and hopes and dreams that brought immigrants to "The Golden Land." It does not note how it must have felt to leave family behind in the search for a better life, for the freedom to be Jewish without fear, for that heart-stopping, 11-letter word, opportunity.

Hinda, Americanized to Helen, soon married Jacob Friedman, another immigrant. Together, they tried to make their way in the teeming streets of New York. She was a seamstress, he an ornamental ironworker. Their great-grandchildren - my own grandchildren - might come from another universe, so different are their lives. Again, a common story in the dance of the generations.

My husband, a proud first-generation American, has told our daughters of his parents' move to a small New Jersey farm, of the long, hard hours working the land. It's important for our thoroughly modern children to understand whence they came. But because it's so far removed from their lives, our daughters Jill, Amy, and Nancy (and now their children), really can't fathom that immigrant odyssey. At the age when their grandmother traveled in steerage on the steamship *Finland*, leaving behind all she had ever known, our daughters were safely close to home, with the scaffolding of support from loving parents.

So the ship's manifest, (pictured on p. 13) which will be the centerpiece on our Hanukkah holiday table this year, is more than an ordinary document to us. It is our tenuous connection to how our family came to be where we are. In a sense, it is our passport to America. My husband has studied the list of names on that sterile looking document and has focused on the passenger listed on line 21 - his mother.

As many stories as he knows about her life before America - as much as he absorbed during his mother's long life - there are still gaps. There always will be. How did Helen and Jacob have the raw courage to make that journey? How



Hinda "Helen" Rubache Friedman , the author's mother-in-law. The passenger log of the ship on which she traveled has become a cherished family Hanukkah gift.

questions: How could the Moïsi family have been unaware of the existence of such a rare item in its midst? Why had Moïsi's parents, and especially his father, never spoken of it? How had the scroll, dedicated to his paternal grandfather, come into the possession of the Moïsi family in the first place? His research focuses on uncovering the history of the miniature *Sefer Torah* and also of his family. He also conducts a systematic investigation into the realm of miniature sacred scrolls to illuminate the geographical and historical origin of his own. In the course of his research, the author met with many eminent figures in the small world of experts in *Sifrei Torah*, scholars and rabbis from different Jewish religious traditions, and university professors. He also examined relevant documents in libraries and archives in several countries and corresponded with historians specialized in the field. As a result, the book provides a glimpse into the life and genealogy of a 20th century European Jewish family, while shedding light on the sacred book so central to Judaism as a whole. ♦

Francis Moïsi worked in public transportation, and held executive positions at the RATP (the Paris Transportation Authority). He was trained as a civil engineer at the Ecole Nationale des Ponts et Chaussées in France and at the University of California at Berkeley. Francis Moïsi is a fourth-generation Parisian, born into a French Jewish family of Romanian and Lithuanian origin. He was raised in an observant Jewish household and has been a long-time member of the MJLF, (Mouvement Juif Liberal de France) a Reform congregation in Paris, where he is now a member of the executive board and a vice president. This book was first published in Paris in November 2016.

Monica Berger Moïsi was born in New York City, grew up in northern New Jersey, and is a graduate of Tufts University and the University of California at Berkeley. She has a doctorate in English from the University of Paris and taught English as a foreign language in public schools in France where she has been living since the 1970s. Monica has been active in the Jewish community there and for many years was a trustee on the Board of the MJLF, a Reform congregation in Paris.

Note: Francis and Monica Moïsi are long-time friends of JGSGP members, Karen and Jeff Albert, who admire the exhaustive research the Moïsis undertook on this quest, as well as the long hours they dedicated to writing both the French and English versions of this fascinating story.

GENDERED VIOLENCE: JEWISH WOMEN IN THE POGROMS OF 1917 TO 1921

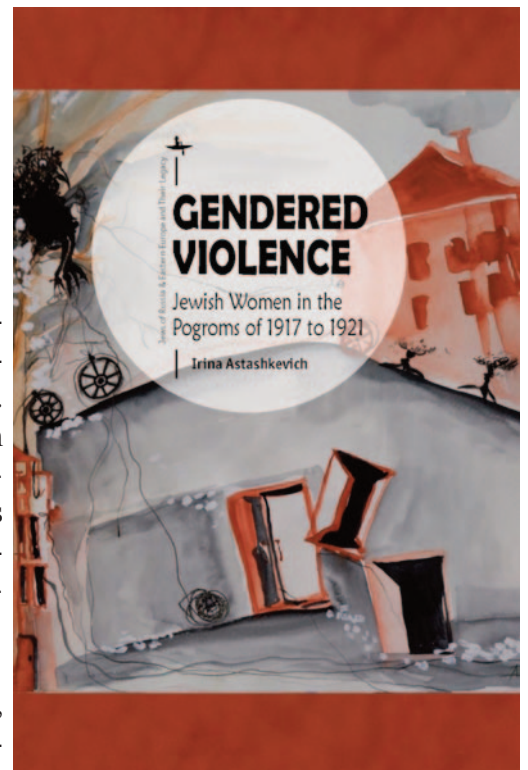
Astashkevich, Irina

Gendered Violence: Jewish Women in the Pogroms of 1917 to 1921.

Brighton: Academic Studies Press, 2018. doi:10.2307/j.ctv75d7p9.

This is a groundbreaking study of an important and neglected topic. Between 1917 and 1921, rape was used as a strategic weapon in the genocidal anti-Jewish violence—the pogroms—that erupted in Ukraine. During this period, at least 100,000 Jews died and unknown numbers of Jewish women were raped. The book is based on the in-depth study of the scores of survivor narratives that have been all but forgotten for almost a century. It analyzes how the victimized Jewish communities experienced trauma, how they expressed it, the motives of the perpetrators, and the part played by rape in furthering the pogroms' objectives.

Irina Astashkevich was born in Moscow. Valedictorian in the Project Judaica, a joint project of the Russian State University for the Humanities, Jewish The-



ological Seminary of America, and the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, she holds an MA degree in History and Archival Sciences. In April 2013, she received a PhD from Brandeis University, since when she has been a research associate at Tauber Institute for the Study of European Jewry.

(<https://www.academicstudiespress.com/jewsofrussiaeasterneurope/gendered-violence>)

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Introduction (pp. xi-xxii)

Growing up in Moscow in the 1970s and 1980s, we, the last Soviet generation, learned and told a lot of jokes. One of the jokes that I remember from my childhood appears to still be popular today in Russia:

There's a pogrom going on in a shtetl. The gang of hoodlums rush into a Jewish home and start to loot, plunder, and smash anything they do not grab. The owner, an old Jew, begs the assailants: "Take anything you want, just spare my daughter!"

The old Jew's daughter hears this and comes out into the room, saying, "No, Dad! A...

CHAPTER 1 Chaos in Ukraine: Defining the Context of Anti-Jewish Violence (pp. 1-17)

"I don't know how to begin, because I have lived through so much. . . . I have survived the following pogroms: Petliura's, Denikin's, Sokolovsky's, and so many more." Roza Rozenvasser, the twelve-year-old girl born in Vasilkov, found herself unable to account for all the violence that she had witnessed from February to November 1919, when she was questioned by the representatives of the Central Committee for Relief to the Pogrom Survivors. Roza's memory betrayed her, because the outbreaks of anti-Jewish violence followed one another continuously as various armed forces from formal regiments of different armies to armed bands of...

CHAPTER 2 Carnival of Violence: Development of the Pogrom Script (pp. 18-37)

"I am sorry for you, Moishke, but there is nothing to be done,"¹ a Ukrainian man said to his Jewish neighbor around the first week of May 1919, when they were smoking together in the evening, sitting on the same bench. Ataman Grigoriev's regiments had captured several towns nearby and moved close to Dmitrovka, a small town in the Cherkassy region of Ukraine to the southeast of Kiev, where neighbors were now discussing the inevitable: a pogrom. The Christian neighbor probably felt pity if not sympathy for Moishke, who would be subjected to looting, humiliation, torture, and violence, but at...

CHAPTER 3 The Perfect Weapon: Mass Rape as Public Spectacle (pp. 38-52)

The pogrom that broke out in Skvira, a large town at a railroad junction southwest of Kiev and home to the Chernobyl Hasidic court, in December 1919, was the eighth since October 1917. For two weeks, the Denikin army troops had terrorized the Jews of Skvira: at least sixty people had been killed, over three hundred were wounded, and a "huge" number of women were raped, with almost twenty of them subsequently requiring medical help.¹ The Jewish women of Skvira had been repeatedly raped by various pogrom perpetrators throughout 1919, but the rapes were seldom voluntarily reported, because of the...

CHAPTER 4 Inventing Vengeance: Who and Why Punished the Jews (pp. 53-76)

In the shtetl of Rakitino,¹ the second pogrom broke out on August 14, 1919, after the leaders of local peasants, who perpetrated the previous pogrom in February, invited the Cossacks, posted at the railway station, to help with the pogrom. A group of Cossacks had joined enthusiastically, and the pogrom started immediately and lasted for over two weeks. A young Jewish girl named Povolotskaia was stripped naked in the central street and raped by a group of Cossacks right there despite her desperate pleas. Three sisters from the Reikhman family were brutally raped in front of their parents' eyes. Khava...

CHAPTER 5 Describing the Indescribable: Narratives of Gendered Violence (pp. 77-104)

This account of the pogrom in town of Smela, located to the southeast of Kiev in the Cherkassy region, was provided by I. Galperin, in November 1920. Smela and the nearby town of Cherkassy, as well as the surrounding smaller shtetls like Rotmistrovka, Aleksandrovka, Medvedovka, etc., suffered devastating pogroms in May 1919 by Ataman Grigoriev's army and in August and December 1919 by White Army troops during their advance and retreat.

Galperin, in accord with other witnesses, estimates that at least four hundred women were raped during the first White Army pogrom in August, 6 and about a thousand during the...

CHAPTER 6 "Wretched Victims of Another Kind": Making Sense of Rape Trauma (pp. 105-125)

Rekis, who wrote this homage to a beautiful Ukrainian night in May 1919, ended up hiding in a ditch next to the road amid the bucolic landscape; he was almost enthralled by its beauty, which was marred only by the glow of his hometown of Rotmistrovka, a small shtetl in the vicinity of Smela and Cherkassy, ablaze after the pogrom. He escaped the bloody pogrom earlier that night after witnessing horrific scenes of torture and rape, and was deeply troubled by two thoughts: How could this barbarity coexist in the world with the European civilization? And how were such horrible...

CONCLUSION (pp. 126-131)

In modern scholarship, a pogrom is recognized as a violent riot that follows a definitive script and is directed at a minority that is not necessarily Jewish.¹ The return of the pogrom to modern history can be traced back to the anti-Jewish violence during the Civil War in Ukraine in 1917–21. During the pogroms in Ukraine, for the first time in history the archaic script of a pogrom became adapted to accommodate genocidal violence and to increase its aggregate damage to the widest extent possible. A pogrom permits its perpetrators an intimate involvement with the victims that enables the...

BIBLIOGRAPHY (pp. 132-143)

Index (pp. 144-148) (<https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv75d7p9>) ❖

BOOK REVIEW: THE WEDDING PHOTO

by Marilyn Mazer Golden



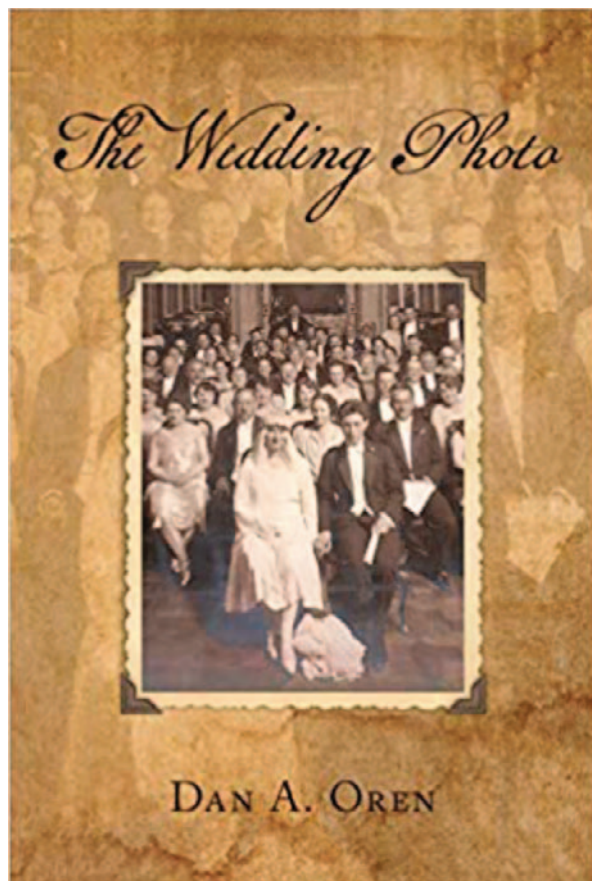
When I first saw the cover of Dan Oren's *The Wedding Photo*, I was fascinated with the idea of his searching for the people in the photo. I have photos from my grandparents and also have no idea who most of the people are. Dan's enthusiasm was felt from the beginning of his journey all the way through the end. He was able to use many different resources to locate the missing pieces to link his family together.

Dan included many photos and documents to show how he pieced together the steps he used to join members to his family tree. He began the book by telling the story of how he found his great great grandmother's tombstone in an abandoned and desolate cemetery in Poland. The book goes full circle into the twenty-year research project Dan did to find the truth about "Sarah Chana's tombstone" and then the connections he could then make from the photo.

At the end of the book he gives some helpful hints for the novice which I found to be excellent. He uses a Mac and the software Reunion for Mac, his tool for the tree branches in the book. He encourages all of us to forge ahead with our research and plot everything out methodically and document as we go! You'll never know what you can find!

A highly recommended book for its fascinating story, research methods, findings, and enthusiasm for genealogical research. I'm going to quote Dan, "... I can promise you that if you pursue your own history you will discover many of the most fascinating stories on earth, that are your family's history. This pursuit will take you to corners

of the world you never imagined and to meet the most interesting of people, alive, or dead. ❖



FEBRUARY MEETING SUMMARY

“THE JDC ARCHIVES: WHO WE ARE & WHAT WE HAVE TO OFFER JEWISH GENEALOGISTS”

Presenter: Linda G. Levi, Director of JDC Global Archives

Since its founding in 1914, the JDC (American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee or “The Joint”) has served as a worldwide relief organization administering to the multiple needs of overseas Jewish individuals and communities. The range of services provided includes establishment of schools, welfare activities, emigration assistance, retraining programs, food supplies, shelter, etc. For example, the JDC “aided European Jewish refugees in transit or safe haven in over” forty countries following World War II.



Many, many lists and other descriptive data document its massive and far-flung relief efforts, and these contain potentially valuable information for Jewish genealogists. In essence, the JDC served as “the ultimate networker.” The text collections deal with remittances, records of personal service, provision of services by various landsmanshaften, lists of war and pogrom victims, prisoner of war registers, displaced persons survivor lists, emigration records, and lists of refugees.

Personal Service for Relatives and Friends:
Lists of individuals arranged according to towns,
in alphabetical order

April 18th, 1921.

LIST OF PERSONS FROM
KORZEO
REQUESTING AFFIDAVITS & TRANSPORTATION FUNDS.

RELATIVE	REQUEST.
NEWARK N J 544 South 20th Street J Rutig	Send affidavits 800 dollars for Aaron Ella Krupnik 30 Alta 5 Sasia Rutis husband, Cable answer Sister Itta Rutis Korzoo
Boston Mass 339 Charles Street Boris Epstein	Se nd affidavits five tickets 500 dollars for Beril 48 Blume 42 Gerta 18 Wolf 16 Beasia Epstein 70 Cable also supporter need relief Cable answer Brother in law Beril Halperin Korzoo
Brooklyn New York 893 Third Avenue B Salliman	Send affidavits 650 dollars or seven tickets for Uda Leja 35 B Beril 33 Gita 9 Haja 7 Gerason 5 Hiam Osher 3 Payga 1 Cable reply Sister Uda Leja Anolewits waiting Korzoo
LYNN MASS 156 Ername Street S Kerman o/o Salla Riner	Send affidavits 600 dollars or four Gital 36 Lela Kagan 18 Yosef 13 Avroom 12 Cable reply Wife Gital Riner Korzoo
New York City 63 East Seventh Street Max Melamed	Send affidavits 900 dollars or 4 tickets for Shprinoie 36 Faiga 16 Hicha 14 Yojo 16 Masha Beril 9 Motel Shwartbroot 22 Cable answer Wife Shprinoie Melamed Korzoo
Washington D C 1101 Third Street N W G Silberman	Send affidavits 600 dollars or four tickets for Yudel 49 Razel 43 Denole 21 Perl 18 Cable answer Nephew Yudel Iapedo Korzoo
Chelsea Mass 54 Marerich Street Seimeon Fridman care of P Torobin	Send affidavits 200 dollars one ticket for Arela 24 Need Help Cable answer Arela Tabakarka Korzoo Jointdisco
ST LOUIS Mo 2118 Carr Street Morris Kleiman	Send affidavit 200 dollars one ticket for Marim 50 Cable answer Mother Marim Seelman Korzoo
PHILADELPHIA Pa 1158 Atwood Rd S Abelman	Send affidavits 750 dollars five tickets for Ela 21 Tyla 19 Nuchim 16 Hena 18 Shila 32 Cable answer Shila Baker Korzoo

JDC partnered with the America Red Cross to repatriate all World War I prisoners of war who wanted to be repatriated.

Index card of a Jewish prisoner-of-war helped by JDC's Vladivostok office.

Auxiliary Branch
of the
Joint Distribution Committee
of the American Funds for Jewish War Sufferers
Vladivostok.

of the Joint Distribution Committee

Vor-und Zuname: *Henriette Aschkenazy*
 Charge und Truppenkörper: *Inf. D. R. 2.*
 Gefangen (wann und wo): *Pruswang 16/11. 1914*
 Geboren (wann und wo): *Shprutivica 11/11. 1899*
 Zuständig: *Chopistkow*
 Heimatsadresse: *Mos Landau. Wien*
 Nationalität und Religion: *jude*
 Beruf: *Küschner*
 Stand und Zahl der Kinder: *ledig*
 Derzeitiger Aufenthalt: *Perwaja Rytschka*
 Abgegangen am (mit Transport): *16/11. 1914*

“The Serpa Pinto carried up to 700-800 passengers per sailing, and in the course of World War II it bore more refugees across the Atlantic than any other single transport. The JDC financed or shared in the financing of over a dozen sailings between 1941-1944.” The image below is a record of the status of three members of the Rozenblatt family. The child, Maria, was a passenger on one of these sailings.

ROZENBLATT Dina -
Maria -
Nordke -

2771

Charge de C.R.P.

Maria : Partie pour USA avec convoi enfants 21/9/43

Dina : Partie Lisbonne-Angleterre 30/12/43

Nordke: POB 260/62 London EC 1

JDC's work during World War II can be briefly outlined as follows:

- Germany—Assistance to German Jewish community – schools, jobs, emigration
- Poland & Vilna—food kitchens, refugee assistance, emigration
- Hungary—children's homes, welfare support, Wallenberg
- France—care for refugees, internees, children
- Spain & Portugal—care and maintenance, emigration
- Tangier—welfare payments to refugees, housing
- Shanghai—Over 18,000 Jewish refugees
- U.S. War Refugee Board—largely funded by JDC

The JDC responded to the tremendous needs resulting from the devastation and despair of World War II. Hundreds of thousands received relief supplies in many countries covering Europe and North Africa. In addition, many survivors (including individuals who spent the war years in Shanghai and Japan) benefited from various forms of emigration assistance that were provided.

The JDC Archives does not have official lists of the actual Displaced Persons (DP) residents as the DP camps were operated by UNRRA, but they do have index cards of DP's who were helped to emigrate by the JDC Emigration Service.

JDC was also instrumental in assisting Jews from Yemen to emigrate to Israel. It provided assistance to the Jewish communities of Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia beginning in the late 1940s. JDC also has been active in Ethiopia and was one of the organizations involved in Operation Solomon, May 24-25, 1991.

After presenting slides depicting the JDC's humanitarian efforts, Linda explained the resources available through its archives. JDC Archives holdings consist of three miles of document collections (or more than 40 million pages; 100,000 photographs; over 1,000 audio items, including 250 oral histories; over 1,000 films/videos, all of which provide "an enduring testament to a historic legacy and a platform to further awareness of JDC's global activities and priorities." Many of the records have been digitized or in the process of digitization.

- Names index + "list of lists: <http://archives.jdc.org/our-collections/names-index/lists-in-the-names-index>
- Database search: <http://search.archives.jdc.org>
- Our Shared Legacy: World War II and "The Joint" <http://archives.jdc.org/our-shared-legacy/>
- Exhibits: <http://archives.jdc.org/exhibits/>

Other useful URLs:

- Contact Us: archives@jdc.org
- Website: <http://archives.jdc.org/>
- Facebook: <http://facebook.com/jdcarchives>
- Instagram: http://instagram.com/jdc_archives
- YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/TheJDCArchives> ❖

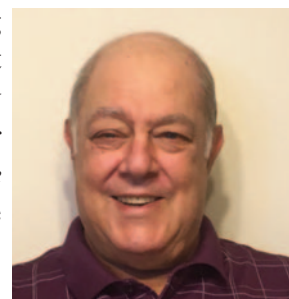
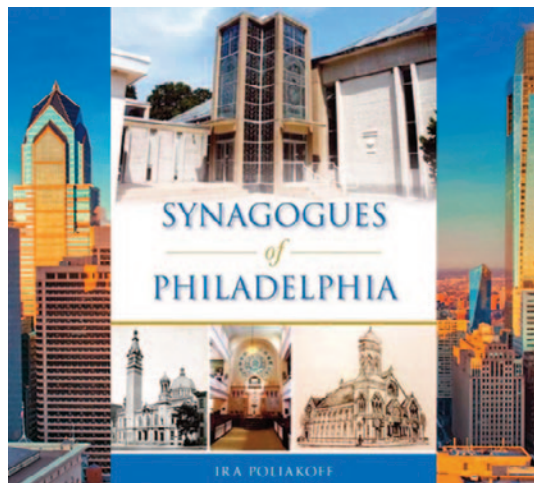
This summary is based on slides from Linda's presentation which are the property of the JDC Archives and cannot be replicated without its express permission.

MARCH MEETING SUMMARY

"SYNAGOGUES OF PHILADELPHIA"

SPEAKER - IRA POLIAKOFF

Ira Poliakov, author of *Synagogues of Philadelphia*, began his presentation by challenging us to name a couple dozen Philadelphia area synagogues in a spirited game of "Guess That Shul." At one time, there were 500 *shuls* (Yiddish for "synagogue") in the five-county Philadelphia area, but many of them were located in private houses and didn't keep records or the records aren't available. JGSGP's 2009 *Philadelphia Area Jewish Genealogical Resource Directory* proved very helpful in identifying some of them. There are 150 images in this book.



Ira made the following points:

- Dr. Solomon Schechter founded the Conservative movement.
- Philadelphia has one of the most vibrant Jewish populations in the U.S.
- We all like to talk about ourselves, our hobbies, and "the old neighborhood."

When Ira and his granddaughter were walking down 6th Street in Philadelphia one day, they passed a closed synagogue, B'nai Reuben Anshe Sfard (founded in 1883), located at 615 Kater Street, near South Street, and his granddaughter asked about the Jewish symbols on the building. Built in 1904, this was the *shul's* second location. Like many other synagogues, its doors were shuttered in 1956, and the building was later renovated and converted to condominiums in 2015.

Ira was inspired by the history these old synagogues represented, and consequently he began writing his book to give them their due. He pointed out that Mikveh Israel in Philadelphia was one of seven original colonial synagogues founded before 1800, along with the Touro Synagogue in Newport, Rhode Island.

Dr. Solomon Schechter served as the head of the Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS) from 1902 to 1915. Its trustees gave him the charge to prepare rabbis to address their congregations in English. Elias Solomon, ordained in 1904, was a member of the first class under Schechter's leadership. In 1911 Schechter convened a meeting in New York City to discuss the question, "Where will JTS graduates serve?" By 1913 he founded the United Synagogue of America which became the congregational arm of JTS and the Rabbinical Assembly. Of the twenty-two congregations that constituted the original body, five of them were in Philadelphia: Adath Jeshurun, Beth Israel (later Beth Zion-Beth Israel), Mikveh Israel, Ohel Jacob, and Beth El (now Temple Beth Hillel-Beth El). Indeed, Philadelphia became known for its strong Conservative base.



Former Synagogue B'nai Reuben Anshe Sfard

Also involved in the creation of the United Synagogue was Dr. Cyrus Adler, who later became chancellor of JTS and the president of Dropsie College here in Philadelphia, the first degree-granting institution for post-doctoral Jewish studies in the U.S. Mathilde Schechter, Solomon's wife, laid the foundation for the establishment of the United Synagogue's women's organization (National Women's League) and was a catalyst in the development of supplemental Hebrew schools in Conservative synagogues.

Philadelphia's early Orthodox *shuls* included the aforementioned B'nai Reuben Anshe Sfard, Kehilath Israel (Sephardic) in South Philadelphia, and Ahavath Israel in North Philadelphia.

Former Congregation Ohel Jacob, now
New Greater Straightway Baptist Church



A list of firsts:

- Bristol Jewish Center, founded in 1899, was the first synagogue in Bucks County.
- Beth Israel Congregation was the first synagogue in Chester County.
- Ohev Shalom—first synagogue in Delaware County - was located in Chester which was a very Jewish town until 1950.
- First synagogue building in Montgomery County, Hesed Shel Emeth, was established in 1892 in Pottstown.

Ira then discussed changes in synagogue configurations that could become trends. Nationwide, many synagogues have fallen on hard times financially, partly due to decreased membership. One solution to this situation has been the merger of two or more synagogues. For example, Congregations of Shaare Shamayim in Northeast Philadelphia is the amalgam of several area Conservative congregations.

Ira labels this as the “super *shul*” phenomenon which could become a model.

Another creative alternative can be found in the “Dell Experiment” in Austin Texas. In 1992, Michael Dell (founder and CEO of Dell Technologies) and his wife, Susan Dell, bought a sprawling ranch with the purpose of creating the Dell Jewish Community Campus. It opened in 2000 and is now home to Reform, Conservative and Orthodox synagogues, the Jewish community center, the Jewish federation, and the Austin Jewish Academy. B’nai Abraham, the oldest standing intact synagogue in Texas was no longer viable. It was relocated in 2014 from Brenham to the Dell Campus and is now the home of Austin’s Orthodox Congregation Tiferet Israel. The sales of the former synagogue buildings were used to underwrite some of the costs of the campus.

The shared building concept is another option. Selling an existing synagogue building, banking the cash, and using the interest to pay the rabbi or rent in another *shul*, have enabled some congregations to remain viable. Some communities, such as Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, are subscribing to this model, and Reform Congregation Keneseth Israel (KI) in Elkins Park shares its facilities with Melrose B’nai Israel Emanu-El.

As a result of his research, Ira would advise synagogues not to over-build. For example, classrooms for Hebrew schools that meet only a few times a week might not be necessary. See the June 13 edition of the *Jewish Exponent* for more about *Synagogues of Philadelphia*. ❖

UPDATE ON JEWISHGEN’S HOLOCAUST DATABASE

JewishGen.org is pleased to announce the completion of its most recent update to the JewishGen Holocaust Database. The database can be accessed directly at <https://www.jewishgen.org/databases/Holocaust/> and now includes more than 2.75 million records from approximately 200 component databases.

All component databases (individual data sets) have a project introduction. The introduction gives you further information about the historical background of the data, location of the original source document, fields used in the database, translation aids when applicable and acknowledgments to those that helped with data entry, validation and online preparation of the data set.

A listing of each of the component databases can be found by scrolling down the main search page. All data can be searched in one database-wide search from the Holocaust Database home page. ❖

Nolan Altman, JewishGen VP for Data Acquisition, JewishGen Holocaust Database – Coordinator

APRIL MEETING SUMMARY

“THE WEDDING PHOTO” BY DAN A. OREN

Dan looks upon genealogy as not just finding names and dates, but as a means of opening up doors to the world.

Discovering New Relatives Thanks To Philip Roth

Although Dan and his wife, Jeanette, were able to trace her genealogy back to her great grandparents, they didn't know the origin of her maiden name, Kuvin. She did know that author, Philip Roth, was her second cousin once removed. In doing research for his previous book, *Joining the Club: A History of Jews and Yale*, Dan found the 1985 Yale University Alumni Directory indispensable. On a lark, they perused the directory for another alumnus/a with the surname, Kuvin. Sure enough, they found a Leonard Kuvin who had been a graduate student in economics in the mid-1920s, currently living in Florida. They called eighty-five-year-old Leonard, but he was unwilling to explore the possibility of a relationship. Dan indicated that he would explain Leonard's relationship to Sandy Kuvin, Jeanette's father, in a subsequent letter.



Five years later, they received a letter from Leonard's daughter, Joan. She had read a section of Philip Roth's upcoming book, *Patrimony*, in the December 30, 1990 *New York Times Magazine* in which he mentioned his father's attending a wedding to which he had been invited by cousin, Sandy Kuvin.

This was the first time Joan had ever heard the family name outside of the context of her father's family of origin, and she began to question family lore which indicated that Kuvin was a French Protestant surname. Joan confronted her father about the veracity of the family background. At first her father dismissed her suspicion, but within twenty-four hours he reneged and confessed.

An unofficial Jewish quota existed when Leonard was a student at Yale. He was concerned about his future professional success and decided to put his Judaism aside and reinvent himself. He self-proclaimed himself of French Protestant Huguenot descent and promulgated that myth with his daughter.

Upon learning about her Jewish roots, Joan felt like a “born-again Jew.” Leonard explained that his parents were Anna Roth and David Chuwen (the “Ch” pronounced like the Hebrew letter “chet,” and the “w” like a “v.”) In his quest to fit in at Yale, he changed the family name to sound more American, hence Kuvin. The Roths emigrated from Kozlow, a small town in the Tarnopol province of Galicia. Leonard then handed his daughter Dan's unanswered letter which revealed extended Kuvin family. Searching the Yad Vashem database (<https://yvng.yadvashem.org>) yields many Chuwens in the Shoah Victims database.

Unraveling A Tombstone Mystery

In 1993 Dan accompanied his mother, Rebeka, back to Markuszów, Poland for a roots-finding trip. She had left her home in nearby Lublin in 1938 and emigrated to Palestine. This trip marked the first time she had been in Poland since that departure for Palestine. Despite the fact that the grounds of the local cemetery had become a jungle, they found a few surviving tombstones which were highly readable. Inscribed on one of these was the name “Sarah Chanah.” “Could this be Dan's grandmother's grandmother?” they wondered. The deceased's name was spelled out in an acrostic consisting of beautiful, emotion-laden poetry. Details about her life could be found on several lines: She was the daughter of a Reb Chaim Yaakov, who was the chief rabbi of Markuszów; she died on the fifth day of the Hebrew month of *Cheshvan* (corresponding to October/November) in the Hebrew year 534, which was indicated by the letters “dalet,” “lamed,” “khafofit,” using *gematria* (numerology) corresponding to 5534. The current Hebrew year is 5779. Accordingly, this woman died 245 years ago or in October/November 1773.

Further research, however, uncovered problems with the above analysis. This cemetery wasn't established until 1855,

and according to p. 316 of the Poland volume of *Pinkas Hakehillot* (Record of Communities), a Rabbi Chaim Yaakov was the chief rabbi of the town in 1880. ‘How could his daughter then have died in 1773?’

Years later a genealogy colleague suggested that the three Hebrew letters (“dalet,” “lamed,” “khafsofit”) didn’t indicate a year. Instead they indicated that this Sarah Chanah had died on the fourth (corresponding to the “dalet”) day of the week or Wednesday when the Torah portion, *Lekh L’cha* (represented by the “lamed” and “khafsofit”) was read. The subsequent discovery of a birth and a death record solved the mystery. The former document indicated that a son, Yitzhak Aryeh Rozenberg (already known as Dan’s great grandfather) was born to a Leib and Sarah Chanah. Did this supposed great great grandmother’s date of death correspond to the fourth day of the week that *Lech L’cha* was read? The death record indicated that Sarah Chanah Rozenberg, 56 years old and daughter of Reb Chaim Yaakov, died on November 5, 1902. Using the website <https://www.hebcal.com>, Dan was able to ascertain: that November 5, 1902 corresponded to the 5th day of the Hebrew month of *Cheshvan* 5663 (equivalent to 1902); that the date corresponded to a Wednesday; and that the Torah portion that week was indeed *Lech L’Cha*! Consequently, the Sarah Chanah [Rozenberg] buried in that grave was Dan’s great great grandmother!!



Dan related some other genealogical adventures including part of the story underlying a 1926 wedding photo that inspired the title of his book. Discovered among the possessions of a woman who died at the age of 107 in 2009, this photograph (see p. 16) was a moment frozen in time—the wedding of Margot Klausner and Jacob Rosner. Diligent research yielded the identification of many of the seventy-eight individuals in the photograph which subsequently resulted in several face-to-face meetings. Frequent Skype conversations with one relative, a woman who was seven years old at the time of the photograph, proved instrumental in uncovering connections and remarkable stories. ♦

JGSGP GENEALOGY QUIZ #17:

by David Brill



Mr. Goldberg’s 1942 draft registration card shows that he had a store on Market Street in Philadelphia.

What would you have been most likely to find in that store?

- Tastykakes and Peanut Chews
- Tallis and tefillin
- Flak jackets and duffel bags

See the answer on p. 2.

REGISTRATION CARD—(Men born on or after April 28, 1877 and on or before February 16, 1897)			
SERIAL NUMBER	1. NAME (Print)	ORDER NUMBER	
U 1481	Isaac Goldberg		
2. PLACE OF RESIDENCE (Print) (Number and street) (Town, township, village, or city) (County) (State)			
5804 Woodbine Ave Phila. Pa.			
[THE PLACE OF RESIDENCE GIVEN ON THE LINE ABOVE WILL DETERMINE LOCAL BOARD JURISDICTION; LINE 2 OF REGISTRATION CERTIFICATE WILL BE IDENTICAL]			
3. MAILING ADDRESS (Mailing address if other than place indicated on line 2. If same insert word same)			
5804 Woodbine Ave Phila. Pa.			
4. TELEPHONE (Exchange) (Number)	5. AGE IN YEARS (Date of Birth)	6. PLACE OF BIRTH (Town or county) (State or country)	
Gre 8284	37 July 14 1887	Zagazig Lithuania	
7. NAME AND ADDRESS OF PERSON WHO WILL ALWAYS KNOW YOUR ADDRESS (Name) (Address)			
(Wife) Mrs. Celia Goldberg 5804 Woodbine Ave Phila. Pa.			
8. EMPLOYER'S NAME AND ADDRESS			
9. PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT OR BUSINESS (Number and street or R. F. D. number) (Town) (County) (State)			
Market St Phila. Pa.			
I AFFIRM THAT I HAVE VERIFIED ABOVE ANSWERS AND THAT THEY ARE TRUE.			
D. S. S. Form 1 (Revised 4-1-42)		16-21630-8 (over) Isaac Goldberg (Registrant's signature)	



JEWISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF GREATER PHILADELPHIA

2019 Membership and Renewal Form

Member Information (Please Print)

Name (s): _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

Street Address

Apartment/Unit #

City

State

ZIP Code

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Membership Status: _____ New Member _____ Renewal of Membership

Membership Categories (Check box on left)

	CATEGORY	AMOUNT
<input type="checkbox"/>	INDIVIDUAL	\$ 25
<input type="checkbox"/>	FAMILY (2 Person Household)	\$ 35
<input type="checkbox"/>	SPONSOR	\$ 50
<input type="checkbox"/>	PATRON	\$100
<input type="checkbox"/>	Add Paper Chronicles (optional)	\$ 10 per year; For international mailing fee, contact editor@jgsgp.org
<input type="checkbox"/>	Add Contribution (optional)	\$
<input type="checkbox"/>	TOTAL AMOUNT	

All members receive e-mail copies of CHRONICLES. If you would like to have a paper CHRONICLES mailed to you, include an additional \$10 with your dues. Dues are for the calendar year, January 1 – December 31, 2019. YOU MAY PAY YOUR DUES USING PAYPAL on our website: <https://jgsgp.org>

If you are mailing your membership form and check, **mail to:** JGSGP, 1657 The Fairway, #145, Jenkintown, PA 19046. Make check payable to: JGSGP

Research Information

For New Members Only: Please list the surnames you are researching. Include the associated ancestral town and country. Use the back of the form if needed. This list will be shared with other members.

SURNAME	TOWN	COUNTRY



JGSGP CALENDAR & REMINDERS

Our U.S. mail address is: 1657 The Fairway, #145 Jenkintown, PA 19046

JGSGP is on the web at: <https://jgsgp.org>

Look for information about other IAJGS member societies:

<http://www.iajgs.org/members/members.html>

Join the JGSGP Facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/196732503717635/>.



A thirty-minute period before each meeting is devoted to browsing reference books and getting help from mentors.

Please check JGSGP e-mails, our website and our Facebook page for complete and up to the minute program information.

Have you hit a brick wall in your research? Post your questions on the JGSGP Facebook page. More than 750 active genealogists belong to this group. Who knows who can help answer your question? We've all been there, and often someone else's fresh perspective and prior experience and knowledge can yield the clues that help knock down that wall.

Photo: Ed Flax August 2018

Auschwitz: Not long Ago. Not far away.



June 26, 2019 Event

In lieu of our usual meeting format, our program committee has arranged for a full-day bus trip to the Museum of Jewish Heritage, A Living Memorial to the Holocaust. JewishGen is an affiliate of the museum. The agenda will include a group tour of "Auschwitz: Not long ago. Not far away."

More details on our website: <https://jgsgp.org>

Fall events will be listed in our summer issue

Deadline for submission of articles for our summer issue is Sunday, July 21, 2019.

Please send material to: editor@jgsgp.org.