

AUSTRALIAN JEWISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY e-Report

www.ajgs.org.au



22 April, 2009

PRESIDENT'S REPORT



As the new President of the AJGS, I look forward to working with Past President Rieke Nash and the Committee to make the coming year as productive and interesting for our members as it has been in the past. I feel I am stepping into the shoes of a giant in taking over from Rieke, whose first thought has always been the welfare of our members. The ongoing success of the Society is a tribute to her enthusiasm and hard work over many years. This is not to denigrate the strong support she has enjoyed from her husband Peter and the Committee.

Our AGM on 29th March was an opportunity to show our appreciation to Rieke, who has been presented with a handsome 2-volume Polish/English dictionary which will be useful in her work with JRI-Poland. Ken Lipworth, who stepped down from the Committee, was thanked for his valuable contribution over several years, and new Committee member Evelyn Frybort was welcomed. Professor Konrad Kwiet's talk on the Bad Arolsen archives from a historian's point of view was extremely interesting.

We are now being sponsored by the Jewish Cemetery Trust and thank them for the generosity and interest in our activities.

We hope you will enjoy the new e-Report, which will play a similar role to the Kosher Koala in keeping members up to date with new websites, new books in our library, upcoming events and interesting developments in the genealogical world. We would like articles to be part of the format, so please keep sending yours to ed@ajgs.org.au. Members without email will receive the e-Report as hard copy.

Events: AJGS (Victoria) is working on plans for the second National Conference, scheduled for March next year.

There is still time to book for the International Conference on Jewish Genealogy in Philadelphia, 2 - 7 August. See www.Philly2009.org.

I hope to meet you soon.

Jeannette Tsoulos
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YOU MIGHT THINK YOU KNOW..... by Jeannette Tsoulos

Name changes in genealogy can lead you down all sorts of false trails, but help can be at hand, as the following example demonstrates.

My great-grandfather, Harris Lewis, came to London in the 1870s from Suwalki, as did his brothers Morris and Abraham, his sister Leah and father, Jacob. Harris, Morris and Abraham later migrated to Australia. A simple statement of fact, as we thought.

The journal *Landsmen* publishes transcriptions of vital records from Suwalki and nearby shtetls, but I had never found any trace of the family, though I knew their original name, which was Goursky. Impatient to know more, I asked researcher Nicki Russler to see what she could find. She came back after a month to say she had found something but couldn't be sure it was the right family. Was there a chance that Jacob was Leib and not Jacob?

Well, this was an astonishing question, but before replying "no!" I thought I should check the sons' Hebrew names. Luckily Rookwood Jewish burial records are online, and often a Hebrew name is recorded, so I looked up Harris Lewis. Hmm... Chaim Tzvi ben Yehudah. Then Morris: Yaacov Moshe ben Ari Leib! Abraham's record had no Hebrew name. Could it be that Nicki was right and we were wrong? The names Ari, Leib and Yehudah are related and often used together, so there was no contradiction there. But if Jacob was Leib, who was Jacob?

Nicki's research eventually revealed a family whose names in Poland, apart from Abraham's, were quite different from the names we knew, though the dates fitted fairly well and a probable clincher was Abraham's wife, Leah Ralski, whom he married in Australia. Nicki's searches turned up several generations of marriages between Gourskys and Ralskis in Suwalki.

So if Nicki was right, Jacob was Leib, Harris was Chaim, Morris was Jacob and Leah was Rivka! But when I saw the Polish records in full I was convinced. Leib the father was Leib ben Yaacov – so Jacob was his father. Harris was Chaim Hirsh, which matched his Hebrew name, Hirsh being the Yiddish equivalent of Tzvi and Harris a common anglicisation of Hirsh. Morris was Yaacov Moshe, the same as his Hebrew name. Like his brother, he had anglicised his second name. Leah was Rivka Leah. She too used her second name in England. And Leib took on his patronymic, Jacob.

Why they did this is anybody's guess. Perhaps they felt a new life in a new country called for a new identity. But for a family historian over 100 years later, the mystery would not have been solved were it not for a genealogist with an open mind and the help of two Hebrew names.

**DON'T FORGET the SECOND NATIONAL CONFERENCE to be held in
MELBOURNE, 7 - 9 MARCH, 2010**

WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

David Lichtenstein Ruth Nathanson Andy Rogers

The Society will hold workshops at the North Shore Synagogue, Treatts Road, Lindfield in the Rev Katz Library on the following dates

SUNDAY WORKSHOPS 9.30 am to 12.30 pm

May 3	June 7	
July 5	August 2	September 6
October 18	November 8	December 6

MONDAY WORKSHOPS 10 am to 1 pm

May 11	June 15	
July 13	August 10	September 14
October 26	November 16	December 14

WHAT'S NEW IN OUR LIBRARY

Pam Zopf and Geoff Court have researched their family from their Spanish origins to London, and Tasmania in *A Cohen Family Odyssey*, in a way that will interest not only family members but those interested in the story of Jews in Spain, their lives after the expulsion in 1492, to their arrival in England, and later to Tasmania. This history supported by detailed Family Trees, anecdotes and personal stories by family members, photos, and maps, comes with well arranged indexes, bibliographies, letters and other interesting information. This 287 page family saga is well worth examining when next you visit the Library for the historical content and as an example of putting together your family tree and history.

Mixed Blessings; New Zealand Children of Holocaust Survivors Remember by Deborah Knowles. Jewish food plays an important part in the memories of our past whether it be a family tree history as in *Baghdad To Bombay* (see last printed edition of the KK Dec., 2008) or the memory of Holocaust survivors. Deborah Knowles had edited the stories of second generation children of Holocaust survivors who grew up in N.Z. The memories of their childhood or family are closely related to a special recipe whether it be cheesecake, chicken livers done my way, home made challa or gefilte fish.

SHEMOT March 2009, Vol 17 No 1

1911 Census is now online. See Shemot for details and for other interesting stories.

DISCOVERY Summer/Fall 2008 Newsletter of San Diego JGS

If you are interested in matching your DNA or having your DNA tested *Digging Up Daddy* by Carol Davidson Baird on pp. 6-7 is an interesting, amusing and unusual story. I can hardly wait for the final episode.

LANDSMAN Publication of Suwalk-Lomza Interest Group: features Birth, Death and Marriage records and history for the town of Sereje.

OTHER NEWS

THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF AUSTRALIA has added 200,000 new arrivals to the index of passenger arrivals, covering from 1921 to January 1950.

Enter RecordSearch to find a link to the index or see Fact Sheet 220 www.naa.gov.au

THE ROOKWOOD JEWISH CEMETERY from Gary Luke

The website has just had some maintenance on the advanced search facility.

www.rookwoodjewishcemetery.com.au/page/search-for-a-grave

Wildcards can now be used inside other character strings - eg. lev%y will find Levy and Levey. There is an undocumented single character wildcard "_". eg Lev_ will find Levy and Levi.

NZ JEWISH ARCHIVES and RECORDS

The Hocken Library at the University of Dunedin holds the Jewish Congregation records from 1862. The catalogue is online at

<http://hakena.otago.ac.nz/nreq/welcome.html>

Another new important New Zealand site is

www.bdmhistoricalrecords.identityservices.govt.nz/home

FROM Nu? What's New?

To be added or removed from this mailing list, go to the Internet site

www.avotaynu.com/nuwhatsnew.htm. To change your e-mail address, go to the same site and remove the old address and add the new address.

AVOTAYNU Spring Issue: “Getting Around Brick Walls”

Jewish genealogy has matured to the point that a number of us undoubtedly have had the experience of getting around genealogical brick walls. AVOTAYNU publishes such success stories in its Spring issue as a way of educating others on techniques for family history research. Submit stories to editor Sallyann Sack at sallyannsack@avotaynu.com. Include illustrations, if appropriate, with the article. An article should be at least 1,000 words (one page of AVOTAYNU has approximately 1,000 words.) Read AVOTAYNU Style Policies at www.avotaynu.com/Style.pdf before submitting the article.

The Library and Archives, Canada has placed the 1891 Census online at

www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/databases/census-1891/index-e.html. The site includes an index as well as the actual images. This census is also available at www.ancestry.ca by paid subscription.

JewishGen has its own internal search engine. Click “JewishGen” on the menu bar at the top of the JewishGen home page and select from the pull-down menu “Search website.”

Alternately, go directly to the search page at www.jewishgen.org/JewishGen/Search.htm.

Recent Additions to the JewishGen Shtetlinks were

- 1) Translation from Russian of a list of over 700 Holocaust victims killed in the Jewish colony Novozlatopol.
- 2) Full translation of the 1858 Revision list from the colonies Grafskoy (Prolotarsky) and Mezeritch.
- 3) Full translation of the 1852 list of settlers on Novozlatopol who came from Latvia in 1846, mainly from the town Lutzin (Ludza).
- 4) Prenumeranten list of 2000 names in colonies and towns of Yekaterinoslav and Kherson Guberniyas, from 'Imrei Shmuel', Part three, 1912. (in Hebrew).

INTERESTING WEBSITES

Hungarian Jewish History at the Hungarian Tourist Agency
www.ungarn-tourismus.de/shalomE05.pxd.pdf

International Jewish Cemeteries
<http://jewishgraveyardrabbit.blogspot.com>

Information about the more than 62,000 Austrian Jews who were victims of the Holocaust
www.doew.at/cgi-bin/shoah/shoah.pl?lang=engl

Genealogy at the Museum of the Jewish People
www.bh.org.il/Genealogy/index.aspx/

New address for the Susser Archive including Great Synagogue births and marriages
www.thorngent.eclipse.co.uk/susser/susserpublications.htm

New Online Encyclopedia of Jewish Women will be available for free at
<http://jwa.org/encyclopedia/> beginning March 1, 2009.

If you have found something of interest to our members or wish to submit a short research article, I am happy to receive your email at:

ed@ajgs.org.au

Miriam Shifreen
Editor