



September, 2009

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

In the search for our Jewish ancestors, we are indebted to the genealogists and researchers worldwide who access and transcribe records and put them on websites for all to use. We also owe a debt to thousands of Holocaust survivors and those who interviewed them, recording their stories as testimony to the destruction of Jewish communities and a way of life that exists now only in memory.

On 19th July, a group of our members took part in the Shoah Testimonies workshop at the Sydney Jewish Museum, with help from Rieke Nash, Peter Nash, Nigel Meinrath and SJM Education Officer Mariela Sztrum, and found it a productive and moving experience.



Society members Lyn Levy, Karina Brampton, Liane Corbett, Evelyn Frybort and Dennis Levy are being helped by Mariela and Nigel.

Rieke Nash gave members at the August 2nd workshop a fascinating account, with many photos, of the trip undertaken with Peter Nash, Kim Phillips and Kym Morris to Gallipoli, to help Kim with her project to photograph every Australian grave. In the process they found many Jewish graves, including French ones, over each of which Peter said Kaddish.

On 16th August Rieke, Sunny Gold, Michael Taub, Terry and Annita Newman and I took a carload of books and folders from the Society library to the home of our Central Coast representative, Beulah Gross, for an enjoyable afternoon with members of her group. It was a great opportunity for them to access our resources and discuss their research with us, and the enthusiasm was palpable.

Welcome to new members Francene Symonds and Catherine Heycox.

Future events:

On Sunday 18th October at the COA at 2.30pm, Daniela Torsh will bring and discuss her copies of the Bohemian Census of Jews of 1793. This will be a rare opportunity for those with Bohemian ancestry to look up details of their families. Further details will be emailed to members.

November: Gregory Sachs will talk about his trip to research his ancestors in Poland. Date and venue to be advised.

Congratulations to Michael Goldstein, President of the Israeli Genealogical Society, on his recent election as President of the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies (IAJGS). He is the first non-American to hold this position.

With Rosh Hashanah fast approaching, we take this opportunity to wish you and your families a Happy New Year and Well Over the Fast.

Jeannette Tsoulos
President

NEXT WORKSHOP DATES

Note due to Jewish Holidays some workshops are later in the month.

Sunday 9.30 am to 12.30 pm.

September 6 October 18 November 8

Monday 10 am to 1pm

September 14 October 26 November 16

HOW HEBREW NAMES CAN FIND FAMILY CONNECTIONS

By Jeannette Tsoulos

Hebrew names are a helpful and sometimes crucial tool in Jewish genealogy, though like everything in this endeavour they are not infallible, and confirmation from a second source is a good strategy. The most useful part of the name for genealogists is the patronymic, or father's name, as it extends the family tree by a generation.

Familiarity with Hebrew name relationships is always a help in sorting out family links. Some names are unrelated but are often seen together, such as Menachem Mendel or Eliezer Lipman. Others are linked by meaning and can consist of a Hebrew name, its Yiddish calque (loan translation) and sometimes a Biblical name associated with an animal, derived from the blessings Jacob gave his children. For example, Jacob compared Benjamin with a wolf, so the name Benjamin can have one or a combination of the Hebrew names Binyomin (Hebrew), Ze'ev (Hebrew, wolf) or Wulf (Yiddish). Other examples are Zvi/Tsvi (Hebrew for deer), Hirsh (Yiddish) and Naftali ('Naftali is a deer') and Aryeh/Ari (Hebrew, lion), Leib (Yiddish equivalent) and Yehudah/Judah ('Judah is a lion').

The English secular names Harris and Henry commonly have Zvi Hirsh as Hebrew names. The Hebrew name of a Philip will usually be one or more of the names Feivel, Uri and Shraga (meaning light), though the Yiddish Feivel originated from the Greek Phoebus (bright). However, these are just conventions. I have seen a Philip with the Hebrew name Avigdor.

Women's Hebrew names are usually simpler, consisting of one or two unrelated names and the patronymic.

Hebrew names can be seen on tombstones and are often, though not always, to be found in synagogue marriage and burial records where they are useful for genealogists in confirming familial relationships. If two men of the same surname have Hebrew names with different patronymics, one can safely assume they are not brothers, though if the patronymic is the same, one can still not assume they are brothers without confirmation from another source.

I have previously written about the dilemma posed by two different patronymics in the Hebrew names of brothers Harris and Morris Lewis. Their father's name in one record was Yehudah and in the other Ari Leib. Had I not known that the names are compatible, this could have become a proverbial brick wall, particularly as his English name was Jacob. Such are the riddles that lie in wait for genealogists.

Hebrew names can be a useful second source in confirming an assumption. To use my family again as an example, I spent some years researching the name of my great-grandfather Schames Morris, who came from Kovno, now Kaunas, Lithuania. None of the detailed books on given Jewish names and their diminutives in the Russian Empire mentioned Schames, though there were plenty of similar names. One day, glancing through a journal from an American Jewish genealogical society, I glimpsed the surname Shames and the penny dropped – what if Schames was his surname? This was confirmed when I checked the newly digitised New Zealand birth, death and marriage records and found his marriage (never previously discovered) as Morris Schames. Morris presumably was Moses, but I wanted to be sure. The following week, in the microfilm of Sydney's Great Synagogue burials, I found the confirmation in his son Solomon's burial record. Solomon's Hebrew name was Shlomo ben Moshe, and as the informant was his son Ben I felt confident that the name was correct. A later check with Solomon's brother Joseph's burial record confirmed this.

However in the case of Harris Lewis (above), who had changed his name from Hyman Goursky before most of his children were born, a few of his sons but none of his daughters had the correct patronymic Chaim in their burial records. A son or son's son who lives enough of a Jewish life to know his Hebrew name and that of his father can be a reliable informant for a death notice, whereas a nephew or other relative may not be.

A spin-off from the story of Schames was the discovery in the NZ records of the birth of his first two children, who had been known throughout their lives as Asher and Kate. To my surprise, these children's given names turned out to be Jeremiah Asher and Hanna. In Jewish families in those days the first son was named after his father's father unless still living, so my next move was to search the JewishGen website for a Jeremiah Schames in the Kovno area. Less common names are a boon for genealogists, and Jeremiah is far from common in Polish Jewish records. I was rewarded with a record on a revision list for a Schames family with given names of father Irmes and son Movsha and again for a father Movsha and son Irmes, probably the next generation of the same family. There was also an Irmiah from an earlier date and an Ermyash Zamushch from Vilnius. All these names would be versions of Jeremiah. The dates and ages of Irmes and Movsha do not fit exactly with my Morris, but I am reasonably sure that they are related because of the names. Whether I will get any closer than this is a matter for conjecture.

In England and most of Europe, Jews did not use surnames much before the early 1800s, and this is reflected in the English Jewish marriage records of the time. This was not the case for Hebrew names. The transcribed marriage records give both the brides' and the bridegrooms' Hebrew names together with those of their fathers. However the limited number of Hebrew names made it necessary to distinguish between fathers sporting identical names by adding qualifying epithets, based on their occupation, place of origin or place of residence. Thus the records abound with names like Moshe Pencutter, Abraham David Sugar Barley Man, Shmul Krakow, Simon the Lapidary and Eliezer Lazar

Birmingham. In this way a disadvantage becomes an advantage, since in the early years such information was not easily accessible, if at all.

Patronymics, of course, are not exclusive to Jews. They are an intrinsic part of Russian names, Greeks use them and probably many other nations as well. A Jew's Hebrew name however has a religious significance that makes it unique, and its place as a *shem hakodesh* or sacred name is assured as long as Judaism continues to be practised.

ADVENTURES IN JEWISH GENEALOGY

A ten-year member of the AJGS

An Account of Greta James's Experiences



I first started researching my family history about ten years ago. There was a hole where my father's family should have been. This happened because my father died when I was ten years old so I only have shadowy memories of him. His only brother and his parents had died many years before I was born so there were no people or anecdotes to fill the empty spaces. I didn't even know my paternal grandmother's name. My father and his brother were both born in Sydney but their parents were both immigrants.

My grandfather arrived in Australia in 1891 from Brody in today's Ukraine from what was then the province of Galicia in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Unfortunately I have so far only found one Brody record for my direct ancestors.

My paternal grandmother arrived from Lithuania in 1888. They came from the area around Telsiai on the west of the country. My grandmother arrived with her mother, two sisters and two brothers as assisted migrants. Assisted immigration from Lithuania was very rare at the time but my great grandfather had arrived four years earlier with his two sons from a previous marriage and had worked at Hardy Brothers as a watch maker to earn the money to bring his family out.

Having filled in some gaps on my father's side of the family, I was now totally addicted to family history research and so, of course, turned to my mother's side. All of these ancestors came to Australia in the second half of the 19th century. Two families came from Kutno in Poland and another from Krakow. Two other families came from London but I haven't been able to trace further back than there, although I've found one of these lines in a 1756 list of London Great Synagogue members. The final family came from the Netherlands and I've been greatly assisted by the wonderful documentation, both on the web and in books, of the Ashkenazi Dutch.

Because of this very geographically diverse background, I follow a number of email discussion groups. Some years ago, on the Jewish Records Indexing Poland list, Stan Diamond who leads this group, asked for an Archive Coordinator for Plock. As two sets of ancestors had some association with Plock, I expressed interest and immediately Stan contacted Rieke Nash, who is a Coordinator for another Polish archive, to check me out. I must have passed muster as I then served as the Plock Archive Coordinator for several years, raising money to fund the indexing of these records. Unfortunately pressure of work and other activities eventually meant that I regretfully had to step down from this job.

At much the same time, I was asked to take over as Treasurer of the AJGS and, happily I agreed as I had received so much help and support and wanted to put something back in. Also, I had served an apprenticeship on the committee some years earlier when I had looked after the processing (and banking) of membership dues. I am still Treasurer but plan to stand down at the next AGM.

Some other highlights from my genealogy research have been two International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies (IAJGS) conferences in Las Vegas (2005) and in New York (2006). They were fantastic opportunities to meet many knowledgeable people and to learn a lot. After the Las Vegas conference I spent a few days in Salt Lake City at the Family History Library and found some informative records.

I have just retired and have many plans. Of course, doing more family history research is on the list. So this is still very much work-in-progress.

Greta James
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FUTURE CONFERENCES

“OUR JEWISH ROOTS” The Second Australian National Conference on Jewish Genealogy will be held from Sunday 7 March to Tuesday 9 March, 2010, in Melbourne. The conference will be hosted by the AJGS (Vic.) in association with the Makor Jewish Community Library. The program will feature lectures, panel discussions, special interest group meetings, and visits to Jewish institutions and public resources. To indicate your ‘Expression of Interest’ to attend and to receive further information, email ajgs2010@gmail.com

The next IAJGS Conference will be held in Los Angeles from July 11 to 16, 2010.
The 2011 IAJGS Conference will be held in Washington.

For a most productive research experience, join Gary Mokotoff and Eileen Polakoff for their Annual Research Trip to the Family History Library at Salt Lake City, Utah, USA from October 22 to 29, 2009. Contact mokotoff@earthlink.net

THE JEWISH CEMETERY TRUST

Gary Luke

- 1 - The Trust has a list of headstones in the Old Ground of Rookwood which had preservation maintenance done this year by the Jewish Cemetery Trust. Some are ancestors of AJGS members.
- 2 - A number of large bushes and plants in the Old Ground which blocked the view of a headstone or were likely to cause damage have been removed or trimmed back.
- 3 - The pathway between sections 3 & 4, used for communal burials during the last decade, has been improved with newly laid turf and mini-headstones designed for unmarked graves. These mini-headstones will be placed on a number of the more than 1,000 unmarked graves over the next few years.
- 4 - The Jewish Cemetery Trust is taking on the trusteeship of the heritage Goulburn Jewish cemetery. The first maintenance work will be on the sign and the rusty gates.

JEWS FROM ENGLAND TO AUSTRALIA

Dr David Squirrell

I am currently involved in researching the name SOLOMON as a surname. There were a number of individuals transported to Australia under the criminal act as well as free settlers during the 1788 - 1850 era. I have a data base of over 2000 BDMs of the surname "Solomon" who lived in Victoria, New South Wales, Tasmania, South Australia and Western Australia which I am willing to share and discuss. Out of the Solomon lines I have been exploring, the main line consists of

Abraham Jacob Solomon who married Julia Isaacs on the 4th July 1849 and Isaac Solomon who married Ann Julian 1807 at the Great Synagogue, Duke's Place, London. I have BDM CDs at home so I can look up names for any reader if interested. Contact: squirrel@healthon-net.com
See also http://www.geocities.com/solomon_genealogy/Solomon_name_Index.html

UKRAINE SIG DIGEST on JewishGen

Scott Schultz

I first began researching my grandmother's birthplace by spelling it in English and as you might imagine, the results were pretty disappointing especially since transliterations can be somewhat subjective. Then in one of those "Aha!" moments, I decided to see what happened when I searched for it in Cyrillic. All of a sudden, a handful of results turned into a few hundred! I don't speak Ukrainian or Russian, but thanks to Google, you don't have to! If you do your search with Google, it will give you the option to translate the page. "Think outside the box" when it comes to your research and be persistent. Just because it isn't there today does not mean it won't be there tomorrow!

JEWISH AGRICULTURAL COLONIES IN THE SOUTHERN UKRAINE

Chaim Freedman

http://www.shtetlinks.jewishgen.org/Colonies_of_Ukraine/index.htm

This site was set up originally by Nancy Holden, then managed by Pavel Bernshtam and over the last year by Max Hefler. It includes much information about the history of Jewish agricultural settlement, mainly in the south eastern Ukraine. Some of the material has not been translated from Russian and volunteers are welcome. We would like to see all the lists included in the Jewishgen Ukraine database but do not have the manpower to key in the details. Contact: chaimjan@zahav.net.il

WEB SITE INFORMATION

NU? WHAT'S NEW? The E-zine of Jewish Genealogy from Avotaynu

Censuses of Scotland: ScotlandsPeople, located at <http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/>, claims to be the only site to have complete Scottish census records from 1841–1901. It includes an index as well as the actual images. This fee-for-service site also has birth, marriage and death records.

United Synagogue Marriage Authorisation Index has been updated by an additional two years and now identifies records from 17th February 1880 to the 31st December 1891. The index contains 8,236 records for England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales. It is located at http://www.theus.org.uk/support_services/find_your_family/marriage_records. It is updated whenever an additional year is indexed.

Contemporary Maps of Hungary, Slovakia and Romania. It was reported on various JewishGen SIG Discussion groups that there are detailed contemporary maps of Hungary, Slovakia and Romania at <http://www.hiszi-map.hu/catalog/index.php>. The maps include small towns and villages. Geographic markers (roads, bridges, streams, wooded areas) as well as inhabited areas and cemetery locations are shown.

IJG Presents Session at World Union of Jewish Studies

The International Institute for Jewish Genealogy hosted a panel on Jewish genealogy at the 15th Congress of the World Union of Jewish Studies held August 2–6 in Jerusalem. For the Institute, this event was a major milestone. Only last year, the American Association of Jewish Studies declined to accept a panel on Jewish genealogy, apparently on the grounds that the subject was not scholarly enough. Against that, the session at the WUJS Congress has already resulted in an invitation to the Institute to present a similar panel at the next Congress of the European Association of Jewish

Studies to be held in Ravenna, Italy, in 2010, and also in an invitation to IJG Director, Neville Lamdan, to lecture at the Russian Institute of Genealogical Research at the National Library of Russia in St. Petersburg. The Institute's panel was moderated by Prof. Sergio DellaPergola, the Chair of the IJG Academic Committee, and presentations were made by Profs. Aaron Demsky, Ruth Kark and Daniel Wagner; Dr. Joseph Glass, an associate of Prof. Glass; and by Ambassador Lamdan. The IJG Internet site is at <http://www.ijg.org>.

Ancestry.com Expands Jewish Record Collection

Ancestry.com has added records of the American Jewish Historical Society to its growing collection of Jewish records. It also has acquired the Routes to Roots Foundation archival database. The Routes to Roots' Eastern European Archival Database is the most comprehensive list of Jewish record holdings of Belarus, Lithuania, Moldova, Poland and Ukraine. It can also be searched at <http://rtrfoundation.org/search.php> To search through all the new Jewish record collections and the entire Jewish Family History experience, visit <http://www.ancestry.com/JewishFamilyHistory>.

Videos of Polish Jewish Cemeteries on YouTube

There are a number of videos of Jewish cemeteries on YouTube, perhaps as many as 246. To locate a particular video, search using the Polish words for "Jewish cemetery" — cmentarz zydowski — and the name of a particular town.

Search for Descendants of Red Star Line Passengers

Between 1873 and 1935 the Red Star Line shipping company transported almost three million people from Antwerp to the United States and Canada. The City of Antwerp has created a Red Star Memorial site at http://www.redstarlinememorial.be/smartsite.dws?id=MHE_LANDING&ch=MHE with plans to open a museum in Antwerp.

Google Maps Now Includes More Ukrainian Towns

It was reported on the JewishGen Ukraine Discussion Group that Google now has most, if not all, of the towns of Ukraine at <http://maps.google.com>. It is best to use the current spelling of the town and add "Ukraine" as a keyword of the search.

Free Indexes to Births of England and Wales on Ancestry.com

Ancestry.com is providing free of charge indexes to births in England and Wales from 1837–2005. The resulting digitized images are pages from books of indices that are recorded in alphabetical order in three-month increments. Each name on the page has been indexed by Ancestry.com. Information provided is name of child, mother's maiden name, district where born, and volume and page number of actual record. Exact date of birth is not given. Information is in two different databases:

1837–1915 <http://search.ancestry.com/iexec/?htx=List&dbid=8912&offerid=0%3a7858%3a0>

1916–2005 <http://search.ancestry.com/iexec/?htx=List&dbid=8782&offerid=0%3a7858%3a0>

JewishGen Wants More KahaLinks Pages

One popular component of JewishGen is their ShtetLinks site where individual family historians have created web pages for their ancestral shtetl (town) in Central and Eastern Europe. The equivalent for towns in the Sephardic area of influence is called KahaLinks; "kahal" being the Hebrew word for "Jewish community." Persons wishing to create a KahaLink site on JewishGen should contact Jeffrey Malka at JeffMalka@SephardicGen.com

Online Language Translators

One aspect of Jewish genealogy is dealing with languages that are not your native tongue. Whether it is visiting a web site or sending/receiving e-mail in another language, an online language translator can be a useful tool. For many years I have used AltaVista's Babel, now <http://babelfish.yahoo.com/>, with limited success. It does not handle more esoteric languages such as Polish. For Polish, I used

poltran.com which gives poor translations. Google's translator at <http://translate.google.com> seems to do an excellent job of translating 42 languages

Prague Conscription (Residence) Records Up to the Letter "O"

The Prague National Archive project to index their conscription records collection (1850–1914) now has 1.1 million entries. Conscription records are residence permits issued at the Prague police headquarters for the Prague region. The names are being indexed alphabetically and now include names that start with the letter "O." The entries include the name of the head of household, followed by the name of wife, children and other relatives with whom the family shared the residence, date of registration with the police, number of the house, and job of the head of household. It may include year and place of birth, religion and, in case of a married woman, her maiden name. The sheet may also contain entries concerning marriages and deaths.

The records are located at <http://digi.nacr.cz/prihlasky2/indexen.php>.

List of People Expelled from the University of Vienna in 1938

It was reported on JewishGen that the University of Vienna has published a database of 2,700 persons, mostly Jews, who were discharged or expelled in 1938. Among these persons are professors, students and employees of the university. This database is available at <http://gedenkbuch.univie.ac.at>.

NEW RESOURCES IN OUR LIBRARY

Sephardic Genealogy: Discovering Your Sephardic Ancestors and Their World (2nd Edition) by Jeffrey S. Malka, Avotaynu, 2009. This second edition is both an expanded and updated version of the original book. New chapters on the Sephardic experience in England, Hamburg-Altona, Portugal, Israel and Vienna and the implications for DNA testing add to the extensive website chapter.

Handbook of Ashkenazic Given Names and Their Variants by Alexander Beider Avotaynu 2009. This is a revised and simplified reference book based on the original publication, *A Dictionary of Ashkenazic Given Names: Their Origins, Structure, Pronunciation and Migrations* that was published in 2001.

We have acquired the latest edition of the *Avotaynu CD* that covers the years 1985 to 2008. The CD allows searches through all editions of the journal, *International Review of Jewish Genealogy*. It includes summaries of many of the overseas journals we have in our Library.

Two earlier published books have been donated to the Library.

Identity and Involvement: Auckland Jewry, Past and Present Editor Ann Gluckman, Dunmore Press, 1990 has been donated to the Society. This complements the recent anthology by New Zealand Jews, *Mixed Blessings* edited by Deborah Knowles.

The Jews of Vienna in the Age of Franz Joseph by Robert S. Oxford University Press 1990 provides an historical background to the years 1848-1916.

The recently published, *The Jews in South Africa: An Illustrated History* by Richard Mendelsohn and Milton Shain has been donated to the Rev Katz Library and is available for borrowing.

We welcome updates on your research, new discoveries and new finds. So contact me at: ed@ajgs.org.au

Miriam Shifreen
Editor