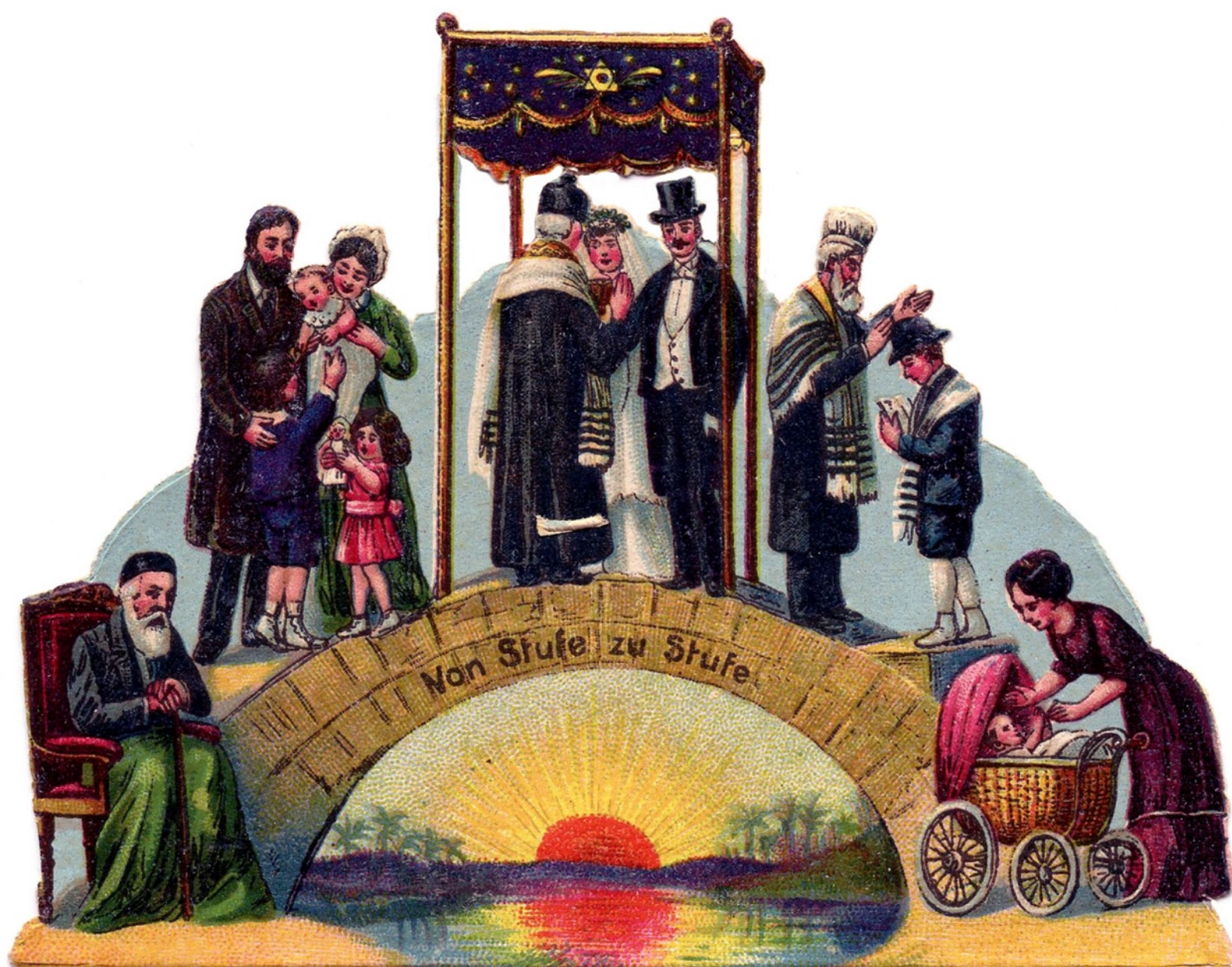




KOSHER KOALA



Stages of Life - late 19th/ early 20th century greeting card

SUMMER 2019

AJGS
L'dor V'dor

FEATURES

HOBART SYNAGOGUE IS PLANNING A PARTY

DANI HASKI

Next year, Hobart Synagogue, the oldest synagogue in Australia, is set to celebrate 175 years since its consecration. They're planning a party and would like everyone to help them celebrate.



Hobart Synagogue circa 1900.
Photo courtesy Hobart Synagogue

July 2020 marks the 175th anniversary of the consecration of Hobart Synagogue. The building in Argyle Street, Hobart, opened to the community on July 4, 1845 and has been in more or less continuous use ever since. To celebrate this milestone community leaders are planning a special commemoration and would like to invite the descendants of anyone with a connection to the synagogue to participate.

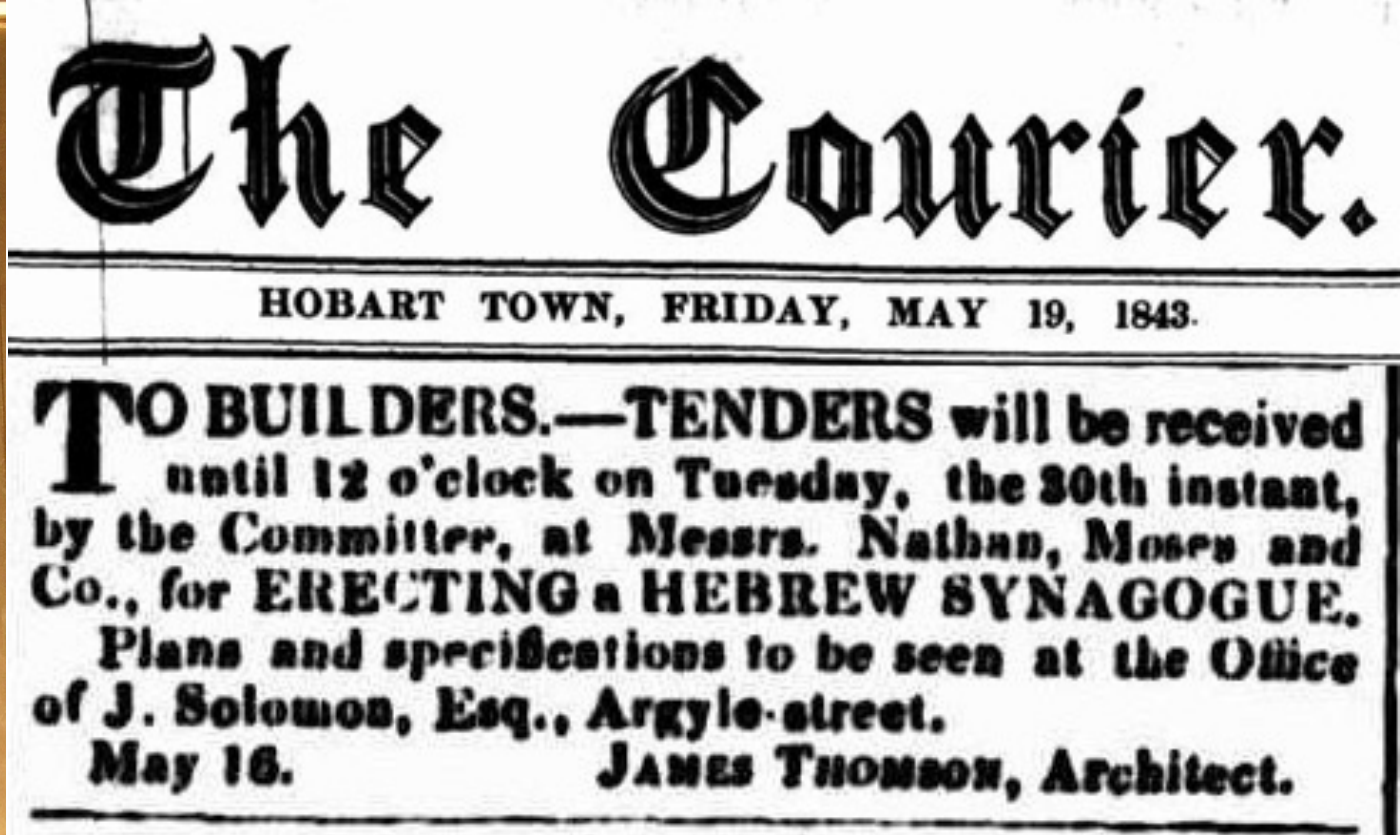
There have been Jews in Tasmania since the earliest transports of convicts from the United Kingdom. As convicts earned their freedom and gained some success and status, a Jewish community developed. Free settlers swelled their ranks and by 1842 the need for a dedicated Jewish house of worship began to be discussed.

As recounted on the synagogue's website:

Then-Governor Sir John Franklin had previously refused to make Crown land available for the synagogue, citing a law restricting land grants to Christian organisations (even though the restriction was no longer enforced in Sydney). Judah Solomon, a leading member of the Jewish community, stepped in to donate a plot. Solomon's home was Temple House on the corner of Liverpool and Argyle Streets, and the congregation was given a section of his garden. Today, Temple House forms part of the headquarters of Tasmania Police, who spent a considerable sum restoring it from a state of disrepair.

The synagogue was designed by James Alexander Thomson, a Scot transported to Tasmania in 1825. Thomson was assigned as a draftsman to the Public Works Department where he worked with architects John Lee Archer and David Lambe. After being pardoned in 1839, he set up his own business.

...the synagogue's foundation stone was ready for laying on Wednesday, 9 August 1843. Conscious of the historic moment, the congregational president Louis Nathan placed a sealed bottle in a specially prepared cavity. It contained a parchment record in both English and Hebrew of the names of the subscribers of money for the building, along with gold and silver



coins of the day and other relics. The bottle is believed to still be in place, but its exact location is unknown.

To pay for this grand vision, the community sought donations from within and without. They managed to collect over £700, but this was well short of the £1447 the building would ultimately cost. Community leaders wrote to Sir Moses Montefiore who made a modest contribution but the difference was ultimately made up by community members in the form of loans. One key contributor to the fundraising drive for the synagogue was Isaac Friedman, believed to have been the first Hungarian migrant to Australia. Friedman was variously an innkeeper and pawnbroker in Hobart. A list of donors appears on the wall of the ladies gallery.

Built in an Egyptian Revival style, the facade is dominated by two massive columns supporting a solid architrave above which are carved words from the Book of Exodus: “B’chol hamakom asher azkir et sh’mi avo aleicha uveirachticha” (In every place where I shall cause my name to be remembered, I shall come to you and bless you).

Once the synagogue was up and running, and with the establishment a couple of years later of a synagogue in Launceston, colonial authorities issued instructions that “all prisoners of the Jewish persuasion” not actually under a sentence would have leave to refrain from work and attend services on the Sabbath.

According to the synagogue website:

The Hobart Town congregation made provision for the convicts to receive two free Sabbath meals. It also sent an enquiry to the Chief Rabbi in London asking whether convicts could be counted as members of a minyan, and whether they could be called to the Torah. The responses were affirmative to the first question, and negative to the second.



Clockwise from bottom left: Hobart Synagogue Ark, The Centenary of Anzac service; Founders honour board - Photos courtesy Hobart Synagogue; Original tender advertisement - Trove

The numbered benches originally at the back of the synagogue were for the use of convicts and the poor. The Hobart synagogue is thus believed to be the only place of Jewish worship in the world with seats set aside for convicts.

Over time the fortunes of the community have waxed and waned. As ex convicts and free settlers alike found success, a few returned to England. Many more left for the Victorian goldfields during the 1851 gold-rush. Despite this a small, tenacious community remained. There was an influx of Jewish refugees at the end of WWII, but the community numbered less than 100 during the 1970s. Since then there has been a renaissance of sorts and according to the 2016 census, there are now more than 250 Jews in Tasmania.

Today the synagogue is shared between both orthodox and reform congregations and represents the interests of the Tasmanian Jewish community.

To commemorate the 175th anniversary of its consecration, Hobart Synagogue would like to invite the descendants of anyone with a connection to the congregation to participate in a special event in July 2020. To participate and for more information please contact Jeff Schneider, enquiries@hobartsynagogue.org

THE HOLOCAUST BEFORE THE HOLOCAUST

JODY GORRAN

Kosher Koala happily accepts unsolicited submissions. The following article was submitted by Jody Gorran from Boynton Beach, Florida. It's a tragic but fascinating story that Jody is now working towards revealing to a wider audience.

2019 marks the 100th anniversary of the forgotten 1919 pogroms in the Ukraine. Some refer to this series of pogroms from 1917-1921 as “The Holocaust Before The Holocaust” and as “genocide”. The year 1919 was very different as the character of the pogroms changed for the worst, 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 in an attempt to see a feature film produced based on our screenplay “*Pogrom*” and 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, the Jewish genealogical research site, thanking me for having responded to their year-end email solicitation and having contributed \$100 or more. As a “perk” for having contributed, JewishGen provided me with online access to see a new film documentary entitled [My Dear Children](#). Amongst other things, it was described as the first documentary about the pogroms. I knew nothing about these pogroms. I 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.



Left: The town marker for Khashchuvatye; Right: Cemetery Gates. Photos Courtesy of Jody Goran.

Until late January 2018, I thought I knew the name and location of my father's father's ancestral village in the Ukraine. Then I learned that I had been wrong. Not only had I been wrong, but twenty years ago I had even paid a Ukrainian to visit what I thought was "the village". I would never have learned the truth without the intimate knowledge of volunteer members of JewishGen.

Based upon the original JewishGen "shtetl finder" from twenty years ago and the current Jewish Gazetteer on JewishGen and using their Daitch-Mokotoff Soundex, I had put in what our family said was "the town" which was described as "Chaswater" near Odessa. Both twenty years ago and today, the result was 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 for this place.

In asking for assistance from JewishGen, I received a surprising response from both Alexander Sharon and Warren Blatt that my original "Chaswater" near Odessa was actually another town known as Khashchuvatye, 250km north of Odessa.

I asked both of 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.

Khashchuvatye/Khaschevata had about two-dozen people on JewishGen Family Finder who were interested in this town as well as having a Google group. I started looking at everything, and contacting them about the town as I was so excited by this new discovery. Khashchuvatye had the Jewish presence I had hoped that the ancestral village would have had.

Now earlier on, I had done DNA testing through Family Tree DNA and figured that it would not hurt if I ran the twenty or so names of these people 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 shtetls, its Jewish population suffered the fate of both twentieth 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 now I was reading that Khashuvatye had been subjected to these pogroms. A June 1923 report from the American Joint Distribution Committee posted in the Google group described the situation:

Khashevata 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 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 then after twenty years of thinking that the ancestral village of my grandfather was elsewhere, to then finally learn its true name was Khashevata and it had been the object of just such pogroms, left me speechless.

So after bringing *My Dear Children* for a showing in my community and seeing how moved the audience had been, I was determined to learn more about these pogroms in Ukraine. As part of the documentary, a portion 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 written a book on this subject and that it would be published in the fall. I followed this 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 much of Dr Astashkevich's research work was done.

My goal was to find more information on Khashchuvatye/Khashevata and the pogroms of that period. I was able to find a 1928 report by N. Gergel in which I learned 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 and I obtained a copy. It was described by its publisher as 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 victimised community, and how the genocidal objectives of the pogrom perpetrators were achieved and maximised through the macabre carnival of violence.

The fate of women in these circumstances has often been neglected. It is my desire to make a film to tell this story, 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 - a story untold, denied and neglected for the past one hundred years.

If you are interested in supporting this film, or want more information, contact Jody Gorran jgorran11@gmail.com

MY HERITAGE



In the last few months My Heritage has added tens of millions of records to their database. Most of them relate to the US but a few pertain to other territories and may be of particular interest to Australian Researchers.

In October they announced the release of over 20 million new records including:-

England: Index of wills, grants of probates, and letters of administration for the years 1853-1943 - over 10 million records that contain "information recorded in a probate index includes the name of the deceased, date of death, place of residence, place of death, size of the estate, occupation, as well as the names and relationships of any beneficiaries. These records can serve as a practical substitute for vital records, such as death certificates."

(Note that Ancestry has had these records available for many years)

The 1921 Canada Census enumerated 8,683,491 individuals. Conducted on June 1, 1921, this census recorded the name, relationship to head of household, marital status, age at last birthday, birthplace, nationality, immigration year, naturalisation year, and religion.

Also released in October were records from the Danish census of 1787 and 1801. These census records only cover the Kingdom of Denmark and do not include the duchies of Schleswig and Holstein.

In December My Heritage announced the release of 51 million records including:

- *Queensland Pupils Index, Part 5* - which includes the names of pupils from 171 schools in Queensland, Australia from 1866 to 2003
- *US Naturalization Record Index* for Northern Illinois, 1840-1950 and New England, 1791-1906 and
- a number of newspaper compendiums from around the US including Washington State (1855-2009), California (1847-2009) and Virginia (1792-2008).

December's release was also highly US-centric with the release of four new record collections. One that may be of particular interest to Australian researchers is *US Naturalization Records, Northern California, 1852-1989*. These records contain index cards for naturalisation petitions and list the person's name, residential address in California, date of birth, date the petition was made and granted and the alien registration number of the applicant.

It's important to note that many naturalisation indexes in the US contain very little information. The most useful records are the actual declarations of intent or grants of citizenship.

ANCESTRY



Ancestry have made finding updates of their collections quite tricky nowadays. The last entries on their site for Australia are from August/ September and include [New South Wales, Australia, Cowra Military Camp, Selected Personnel Photo Index, 1940-1947](#), [Australia and New Zealand, Obituary Index, 2004-2018](#) and [Australia, Newspaper Vital Notices, 1831-2001](#)

For Germany, additions for January are listed and include updates entries for [Berlin, Births](#),

[1874-1906, Minden, Births, Marriages, and Deaths, 1809-1873](#) and [Barnim, Births, 1874-1906](#).

For the UK there have been updates to [Liverpool, Electoral Registers, 1832-1970](#) and [Slave Registers, 1813-1834](#) for Former British Colonial Dependencies

US records do not appear to have been updated since October 2018 but recently added collections that may be of interest include:

- [New York State, Birth Index, 1881-1942](#)
- [New York, New York, Marriage License Indexes, 1907-2018](#)
- [New Jersey, Marriage Index, 1901-2016](#)
- [New York, Death Index, 1852-1956](#)
- [U.S., Obituary Collection, 1930-2018](#)
- [U.S., Find A Grave Index, 1600s-Current](#)

FAMILYSEARCH

In January Familysearch announced the addition of more than 23 million new records. Collections that may be of interest to Australian researchers include:



- [South Australia, School Admission Registers, 1873-1985](#) These records contain birth dates and parental/guardian information and include a digital capture of original records located at the State Records of South Australia.
- Births, marriages, deaths, legitimisation, and indexes created by civil registration offices from Benin, Costa Rica, France, Italy and Peru, as well as several US based collections.

For a full list and direct links to individual collections click [HERE](#).

Familysearch also announced a raft of new initiatives for 2019.

INTERACTIVE DISCOVERY EXPERIENCE

Until now these activities have only been available at live Familysearch kiosks during events. They are now rolling them out online. Activities include:

All about Me - information about the origin and meaning of your name, events that happened the year you were born and more “fun things about yourself, and also about your ancestors”.

Picture My Heritage - This feature allows you to insert yourself digitally into traditional clothing related to your heritage. On *Picture My Heritage*, you can save your custom photos or share them with friends and family.

Record My Story - record stories and memories from you or family members and add them —by text or audio— to [FamilySearch.org](#). They can also be downloaded to another source. (NB a similar feature is available on the My Heritage app).

FRIENDS, ASSOCIATES, AND NEIGHBOUR (FAN) RELATIONSHIPS

If you have created your family tree on Familysearch there is a new type of relationship nicknamed FAN - friends, associates and neighbours.

According to Familysearch:

This function will aid research by allowing users to record information about other people living in an ancestor’s household as noted in a historical record, such as boarders or staff.

OTHER RECORD RELEASES

In December JewishGen SIGSs announced additions to several of the major Jewish genealogy databases.

They include

JRI-Poland. 211,500 new or updated entries have been added to the [JRI-Poland database](#), bringing the total to 5.7 million. Plans are in place to link more search results to digital images on the Polish State Archives “National Digital Archive” and other websites.

Lodz. 50,000 names have been added to the Lodz Registration Cards 1916–1921 bringing the total to 180,000 Jewish names. It is part of the JRI-Poland collection.

LitvakSIG. 32,594 records have been added this quarter to the [All-Lithuania Database](#) of LitvakSIG. They include conscription lists for Vilnius city and suburbs, as well as for Sejny uyezd of Suwalki guberniya; family lists for towns in the Zarasai district and the 1942 census of the Siauliai ghetto. Also foreign passport applications for Vilnius city.

Gesher Galicia. Gesher Galicia added information about 3,200 Jewish medical students to the [All Galicia Database](#). The current update includes records of 1,500 students and graduates from Lwow University for the years 1894–1918.

Indexes of Jewish medical students from Galicia attending other universities:

Jagiellonian University:

- Jewish medical students and graduates (1802-1918)
- Jewish midwifery students (1802-1850)

Pest University

- Jewish Medical, Surgical, and Midwifery Students (1793-1846)
- Jewish Medical Graduates (1770-1921)

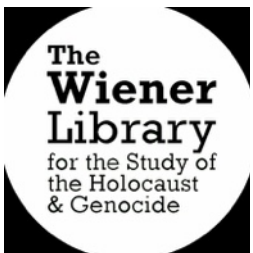
New records are being released daily by all archives. If you’ve heard of an interesting release [let us know](#).



Jagiellonian University Krakow. Photo: Dani Haski

NEWS AND VIEWS

CROWDSOURCING FACIAL IDENTIFICATION



[The Wiener Library](#) in London, one of the world's oldest museums dedicated to Holocaust research, has begun a search to identify around 80 people featured in photographs taken by a German-Jewish photographer, Gertrude (Gerty) Simon nee Cohn (1887-1970), who fled Germany to London.

Simon was already well-established as a photographer before she left Berlin in 1933, having photographed artists, politicians and cultural figures in the short lived Weimar Republic. She continued her career in Britain, as well as turning her hand to other areas, garnering success as the author of children's books.

Joining Simon in Britain a couple of years later, her son, Bernard, and husband, Wilhelm, were interned as part of the round-up of "enemy aliens" in June 1940. Bernard was deported to Australia, on the infamous *Dunera*. He died in 1970 and his partner donated his papers and archives, including hundreds of Ms. Simon's portraits, to the Wiener Library in 2016.



Gerty Simon, self portrait
Courtesy of the Bernard Simon Estate,
The Wiener Library Collections

The Wiener catalogued and digitised the images and has now launched a social media campaign - #FindingGerty - to raise awareness and to try to identify unknown individuals in the pictures. The images have been uploaded to [Flickr](#) to facilitate public access and leverage the global reach of the platform.

More information is available at [The Wiener Library website](#).

2000 PHOTOS OF DACHAU SURVIVORS DISCOVERED



In a neglected card index in its archives, the [International Tracing Service](#) (ITS) recently discovered a box containing 2000 photographs of survivors of the Dachau concentration camp. The index cards, dating from just a year after the war ended, contain details of:

...survivors who needed certificates of their imprisonment to receive support from relief organisations. To prove that they had been in the Dachau camp, and how long they had spent time there, they had to submit two photos of themselves—one for the files, and one to glue to the certificate.

The ITS is in the process of digitising the files and will make them available later in 2019.

You can read more details of this significant find on the [ITS News site](#).



Survivors in Dachau cheer approaching U.S. troops. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum [Public domain]

JEWISH HERITAGE SURVEY OF SLOVENIA



[Jewish Heritage Europe](#) reports a joint project between the *Center for Jewish Art* (CJA) at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and *France Stele Institute of Art History* at the Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Ljubljana, to record, catalogue and digitise the Jewish cultural heritage of Slovenia.

The project builds on decades of work undertaken by the Israeli researcher Zusya Efron (1966), Jewish Heritage Europe Director Ruth Ellen Gruber and Samuel D. Gruber (1996), CJA and the Department of Art History at the University of Ljubljana (2000–2002), and Janez Premk and Mihaela Hudelja (2014).

Slovenia, part of the former Yugoslavia, lies at a crossroad in Central Europe, bordered by Italy, Austria, Hungary, Croatia and the Adriatic Sea. As such it has a long and diverse Jewish cultural footprint.

The abstract of the project indicates Israeli and Slovenian researchers will investigate Jewish heritage sites including synagogues, medieval Jewish quarters, cemeteries Holocaust memorials, as well as ritual and cultural items such as Hebrew manuscripts and books, old photographs and archival documents in public and private collections that testify to Slovenia's Jewish culture.

The aim is to create a comprehensive English language web portal, integrated within the Bezalel Narkiss Index of Jewish Art, to facilitate access to documents and images of artefacts for researchers across the globe.

The project has a wealth of material to work with including medieval quarters in Ljubljana, Maribor and Koper; cemeteries in Slovenj Gradec, Nova Gorica and Lendava; and archives across the country.

It is not clear when the project will be complete.

JEWISH BRATISLAVA FINALLY ON THE MAP



[Jewish Heritage Europe](#) reports that after decades of quiet work documenting, researching, and promoting Jewish heritage in Slovakia, the strategic vision of Dr. Maros Borsky, a member of the board of the Bratislava Jewish Community, has finally come to fruition with the publication of a new tourism brochure and web pages on official government tourism websites.

The PDF brochure [Jewish Bratislava](#), can be downloaded from the official Bratislava tourism website and is also available in print. The brochure is in English, with Slovak, German and Hebrew versions in development.

The [Visit Bratislava](#) website now has a comprehensive Jewish section containing ...links to the web sites of the [synagogue and Jewish Community Museum](#), the underground [Chatam Sofer Memorial](#), the state-run Museum of Jewish Culture, and the [Jewish cemeteries](#)—the cemeteries have an [online register of graves](#).

The website also links to more in-depth, web resources on a [Jewish Bratislava](#) site produced by the [Menorah Jewish Heritage Foundation](#). This has information on [Jewish history](#) in the city, a more [detailed map](#) of Jewish heritage and specific monuments, [contacts and information](#) about today's Jewish community, plus a link to an [organised tour](#) of the city.



Left: Medieval quarters, Maribor, Slovenia - Wikimedia CC
Centre: Bratislava Jewish Museum - Wikimedia CC
Right: Vintage Postcard, Pressberg (Bratislava) 1904

BIRTHS AND DEATHS REGISTRATION ACT, 1874.

CERTIFICATE OF REGISTRY OF BIRTH.

COST OF UK BMD CERTIFICATES TO INCREASE



The UK's General Register Office (GRO) will increase the price of birth, marriage and death certificates and of PDF versions effective 16 February 2019. The price of a paper certificate will increase from £9.25 to £11.00 (approximately \$19.90) and the price for a PDF copy will increase from £6.00 to £7.00 (approximately \$12.65).

It's important to note that PDF versions are not valid as a form of official certification as they do not have the official crest and signature of issuing authority, as would a paper certificate. A certified copy is required for official purposes, e.g. if applying for a passport, driving licence, or to give notice of impending marriage.

If ordering historical certificates for deceased relatives for family history purposes, the PDF versions are perfectly adequate.

FAMILYTREEDNA ANNOUNCES ARRANGEMENT WITH THE FBI



At the end of January, FamilytreeDNA (FTDNA) and its parent company Gene-By-Gene, Ltd. [announced](#) that it was co-operating with the FBI and other law enforcement authorities to identify victims and perpetrators of violent crimes.

In their statement FTDNA outlined the thoughts of President and Founder of Gene-By-Gene, Bennett Greenspan:

After receiving inquiries from the FBI, Greenspan found himself asking whether, as a trusted guardian of consumer DNA data and consumer privacy according to U.S. News and World Reports, FamilyTreeDNA in good conscience and without violating consumers' trust could help the FBI identify the remains of deceased persons or perpetrators of violent crimes (as defined in 18 U.S. Code § (924) (e) (2) (B)), saving lives and preventing others from becoming victims?

“We came to the conclusion,” says Greenspan, “that if law enforcement created accounts, with the same level of access to the database as the standard FamilyTreeDNA user, they would not be violating user privacy and confidentiality. In order for the FBI to obtain any additional information, they would have to provide a valid court-order such as a subpoena or search warrant.”

FTDNA launched a commercial DNA testing kit in 2000. The company has been at the forefront of the industry ever since. While DNA evidence has been used to solve crimes for many years, the idea of combining DNA evidence with the huge databases held by the genealogical DNA matching services only came to the fore last year with the apprehension of the “Golden State Killer” in Florida.

Law enforcement officers in the US will have access to the same information as other FTDNA account holders. To gain access to more information, authorities will need to provide a valid court order. Those concerned about privacy issues can opt out of their matching service. This means their DNA will no longer be available to match with anyone on the platform, including law enforcement.

In an effort to understand how these new developments may affect Australian account holders I reached out to the NSW Police Department. In an email statement to *Kosher Koala* a NSW Police Force spokesperson stated:

While we are aware of genealogical home-test sites and their assistance to international law enforcement, the NSW Police Force does not use these sites for investigative purposes.

The National Criminal Investigation DNA Database (NCIDD) is the only DNA database used by law enforcement in NSW.

The Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission works with Australian police agencies to ensure the NCIDD operates in accordance with relevant Commonwealth, state and territory legislation governing collection and matching of DNA profiles.

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF ISRAEL WANTS YOUR FAMILY HISTORY



The National Library of Israel wants copies of family histories in print. The library is especially interested in collecting self-published manuscripts that may not be commercially available.

Submissions can be sent to the library by mail:

National Library of Israel
Receiving Department (For Erez)
POB 39105, Jerusalem 9139002

[Contact Channa Lockshin Bob](#) at the Library if you have any questions. The library advises that when you post your manuscript, include a reference to the announcement, so that the gifts department knows that it is a solicited donation.

BEVIS MARKS UNDER THREAT



The leaders of the Spanish and Portuguese Sephardi Community (S&PSC) distributed a letter to the wider community in January, after a development application was lodged for the block of land immediately next door to the historic Bevis Marks Synagogue. The building is the oldest surviving synagogue in the UK, having opened in 1701 (6yrs prior to St Paul's Cathedral), and has survived a 1749 fire, the blitz during WWII and two nearby bombings in the mid 1990s.

The proposed development on the site of 33 Creechurch Lane is for a 20-story retail and office tower that would overshadow the building. The trustees wrote:

We are deeply concerned over the major impact that the development would have on the historic setting of the Synagogue along with the reductions in daylight and sunlight into the Synagogue and the much-used courtyard. This overbearing presence will change the much-loved character and atmosphere of the Synagogue and its immediate surroundings. We are also worried about disturbance to our services, disabled access and damage to the Synagogue's fabric during the construction of



Bevis Marks Synagogue; Proposed development site - screenshot

such a large tower so close to our 300-year-old building.

The trustees' concern about access stem from the Proposed Servicing Plan, which encourages deliveries in late evening and weekends. This may impact congregants attending Friday evening and Saturday services.

Bevis Marks Synagogue is already surrounded by several skyscrapers, including the distinctive Gherkin building, on the next block. However, the block in which the synagogue itself is located has no tall buildings. The existing building on Creechurch Lane is the same height as the synagogue.

The S&PSC board urged members and friends of the community to lodge public comments to the City of London Chief Planning Officer, Mrs Annie Hampson. Submissions closed mid-February.

In a report in [The Times of Israel](#), the building's designer Ben Eley sought to allay concerns, saying:

The siting, materials, design, and form would be harmonious with the age and architectural style of the host building and would preserve the character and appearance of the area and the setting of nearby heritage assets.

Community leaders are not convinced.

JEWISH DOCUMENTATION CENTRE OPENS IN NEW MEXICO



Alan Grabinsky has written [a compelling story](#) in *The Tablet* about the opening of the architecturally designed [Jewish Documentation Centre of Mexico City](#).

Incorporated into the historic Rodfe Sedek synagogue, the building and the significant community archives it houses, comes after decades of work by the community, particularly Alicia Gojman de Backal, a history professor at the National University of Mexico.

In 1985 a devastating earthquake killed thousands of people across Mexico City. The Jewish neighbourhoods of Roma and Condesa were particularly affected and the archives of the Ashkenazi community, stored haphazardly in the dank basement of the Nidje Israel synagogue, were left in a state of complete disarray.

Professor Gojman de Backal took it upon herself to clean up the mess and the result was a seven-tome encyclopaedic history of the Ashkenazi community in Mexico, *Historia del Correo en Mexico (History of Jews in Mexico)*, published in 1993, and the conception of Mexico City's Jewish Documentation Centre

The JDC [Jewish Documentation Centre] archive includes Mexican anti-Semitic and anti-fascist posters of the 1930s, original manuscripts by the Yiddish poet Jacobo Glanz, and the first edition of *The City of Palaces*, one of the first Yiddish books published in Mexico, with poems by Isaac Berliner and original drawings by Diego Rivera (the communist artist was close to many left-wing Jewish émigrés). The reopened collection also celebrates more than 100 years of Jewish immigration from Syria, Turkey, the Balkans, Morocco, Iraq, and many more countries, and will be added to a collection that was awarded Memory of the World status by UNESCO..

Designed by architects Ezra Cherem Behar and Alan Cherem Hamui, the new building blends sleek concrete and glass with the historic features of the Rodfe Sedek synagogue, built in 1931. . The archives are stored in "fireproof, secure, and movable metal shelves" in a basement room said to be earthquake proof.

The new centre will have a library with 16,000 books in Spanish, Arabic, French, Hebrew, Hungarian, Yiddish, Ladino, English, Lithuanian, Polish, and Russian – many of them rescued

by the Allies during World War II. It will also house 1,500 newspapers from as far away as Istanbul; a collection of pictures documenting everyday life for Jews in Mexico; and original copies of the first Yiddish newspapers published in the city.

The new development also houses a mikveh, meeting and study rooms, and a lecture theatre for community events.

As Enrique Chmelnik, the director of the new centre, explained, “It’s ironic, ... 100 years ago, all these Jews from diverse backgrounds got together with a common goal in mind.” Since then the community has fragmented into ethnic enclaves, going so far that the Allepan and Damascene communities have separate congregations

With descendants of Jews from the ex-Ottoman Empire, Eastern Europe, and the United States, Chmelnik hopes this new centre will bring everyone back "under the one roof".

To see a gallery of photos and drawings of the new building visit the [project page at archdaily.com](http://project.page.at/archdaily.com).

EU SPENDS BIG TO REVEAL JEWISH HERITAGE ALONG THE DANUBE



During the second world war Jewish society in Europe was almost wiped out. [Jewish Heritage Europe](http://JewishHeritageEurope) has reported that for the next 3 years, the European Union will spend almost 2 million Euro on a research and tourism project along the extent of the Danube River.

The project will uncover and share what is left of tangible Jewish cultural sites and develop programs to highlight intangible cultural assets such as music & literature, religion, festivals & lifestyle, cuisine, oral history and the legacy of famous, local born Jewish personalities.

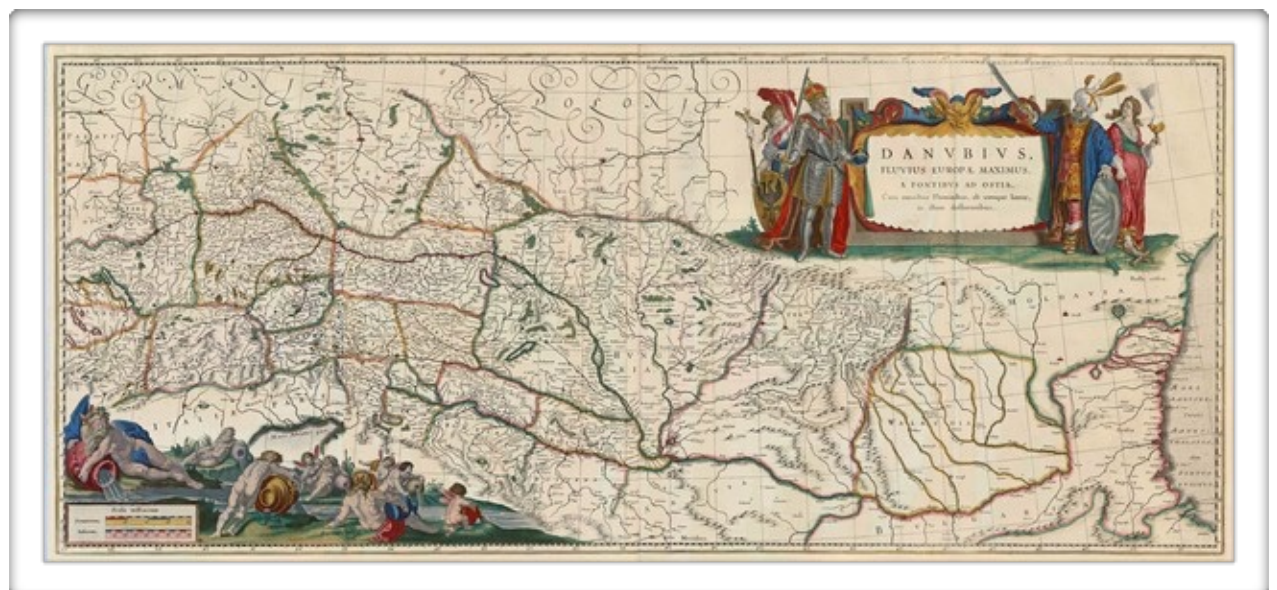
Nine mid-sized cities in Hungary, Romania, Slovenia, Serbia, Croatia, Germany, Montenegro and Bosnia-Herzegovina are involved.

The project description states that the main objective :

is to explore, revive and present the hidden intellectual heritage along with locally available Jewish cultural heritage of project partner cities. That can create a jointly presented, synergistic tourism tool/service that is accessible to the wide audience as well.

In early February, as part of the project, the city of Timisoara, Romania completed and posted [three videos](#). The first highlights Jewish architecture in the city, which has three synagogues; the second focusses on local Jewish personalities, and the third presents the life of a local Jewish family.

Partners and stakeholders in the project include local governments, tourist authorities and Jewish community organisations from across the region. More information can be found on the REDISCOVER website.



Vintage map - The Danube River, 1649
Public Domain

DO YOU HAVE AN OLD HANDWRITTEN CHALLAH RECIPE?



Sue Levy from Perth is on the hunt for a handwritten challah recipe handed down through the generations. She posted a request to the AJGS messageboard, writing:

As genealogists we hang onto all sorts of family memorabilia, including our mother's and grandmother's notebooks where they wrote down their recipes. I have a few on scraps of paper from my mother and mother-in-law but neither of them made challah.

Sue has put out the call on behalf of her friend, Carol Milner, a PhD candidate and lecturer at Curtin University in Perth, who is researching stories of life in Australia, including the Jewish experience. Carol is hoping to find an original, preferably handwritten version of the recipe, handed down through several generations.

If you have a family challah recipe in your collection and would like to share it with Carol you can [email Sue directly](#). Your contribution would of course be acknowledged upon publication of Carol's thesis.

Top Left: Challah, Pinterest, unattributed; Bottom Left: Tikkunei Shabbat (prayer book for the Sabbath), Google Art Project.
Right: Lighting Shabbat Candles, Pinterest, unattributed



SLEDGEHAMMER

STORIES OF BRICK-WALL BREAKTHROUGHS

Sledgehammer is a column where you can share how you managed to break through a brick wall. A brick wall is a seemingly insurmountable barrier in your research that seems to be unbreakable. By sharing your demolition story I hope other members will be inspired to try different tactics to knock holes in their own walls and move their research forward. Have you broken through a brick wall lately? Share your story! Email it to ed@ajgs.org.au

DNA DOES IT

EVELYN FRYBORT

Over the years I had exchanged information with what I assumed were relatives in Mexico. I was fairly certain that my information was correct, but I didn't have concrete proof of their relationship to me... until now.

I recently received an email from My Heritage announcing another DNA match. Usually the matches are quite distant, but on this occasion, the matched individual, Sergio Lasky, came up as my closest match to-date.

As you can see from the graphic, the shared DNA is only 2.3%, which looks small, but I then realised I actually had Sergio's details on my family tree. Rather than being a first or second cousin, he is actually my 3rd cousin once removed.

Sergio Lasky is a descendant of my Bobrownicki ancestors who lived in Lubraniec, Poland as early as the 1800s. Sergio's and my oldest known common ancestors were Dawid Bobrownicki, born around 1760, and his wife Hantka.

The screenshot shows the 'Review DNA Match' page on MyHeritage. At the top, navigation tabs include Home, Family tree, Discoveries, DNA (highlighted), and Research. The match is between Evelyn Frybort (labeled 'This is you', From: Australia) and Sergio Lasky (Age: 50's, From: Canada). Below the profiles, the 'Estimated relationships' section states '1st cousin twice removed - 2nd cousin once removed'. The 'DNA Match quality' section shows '2.3% (163.2 cM)' shared DNA, '13' shared segments, and a '25.3 cM' largest segment. At the bottom, it notes 'Shared DNA Matches' and that 'Sergio Lasky and you share the following 1,454 DNA Matches'.

Their son, Abraham-Jankier Bobrownicki, born 1804, fathered 10 children with his wife Heine Gusia nee Barcinska, one of whom was my great grandmother - Hantkie Bobrownicka. She married Mosiek Zakrzewski in Nieszawa, Poland.

Hantkie's brother, Salomon Dawid Abraham Bobrownicki, born 1834 in Nieszawa, is a direct ancestor of Sergio Lasky.

Two of Salomon Dawid Abraham Bobrownicka's daughters, Taube Gisia, born 1863 and Estera, born 1870, emigrated to Mexico City in the early 1900's.

Estera Bobrownicka, who had married Isaac Laski in Nieszawa, gave birth to 13 children. One of them, Monek Laski, born 1903, and his wife, Frajda Cyrła nee London had a son, Elias Pinkus Laski, born 1932 in Mexico City.

Sergio is one of four children born to Elias Pinkus Laski and his wife, Aida Burak. He was born in Mexico City in 1962 but currently lives in Canada. In a nutshell, the DNA provides further evidence that Sergio's great great grandfather, Salomon Dawid, and my great grandmother, Hantkie, were likely to have been siblings.



D.I.Y

PRACTICAL TIPS FOR PROTECTING AND PRESERVING PRECIOUS MEMORIES

D.I.Y. is an occasional column where we'll share practical ideas, tips and tricks for protecting and preserving photographs, documents and family heirlooms. It's a 'How To' column so if you have discovered a great way to organise and share your archives, preserve your photos or keepsakes or can share a link to a useful website please [share it with us](#).

JEWISH CEMETERIES, TOMBSTONES AND BURIAL RECORDS

Jewish cemeteries are replete with iconography, symbolism and hidden meaning. At a recent Eastern Suburbs workshop at Waverley Library, Robyn Dryen demystified some of the symbols and Hebrew iconography that appears on Jewish graves around the world. This is a summary of her talk.

WHAT IS A JEWISH CEMETERY?

Today most Jewish burials take place in designated sections of cemeteries owned by local councils or cemetery Trusts. Very few burial grounds are owned by the local Jewish community. In Victoria, the Melbourne Chevra Kadisha (burial society) and the Adass Synagogue community have established their own cemeteries. In the US and the UK it is common for synagogue communities to own their own cemetery. In the US and Israel there are also cemeteries owned by landsmannschaften (immigrant mutual aid societies). When we speak of a Jewish cemetery in Australia, we generally mean a designated area or section of a general cemetery set aside as a Jewish burial ground.

TOMBSTONES

Tombstones in Jewish cemeteries tend to reflect the customs of their respective communities and the styles of the period of their placement.



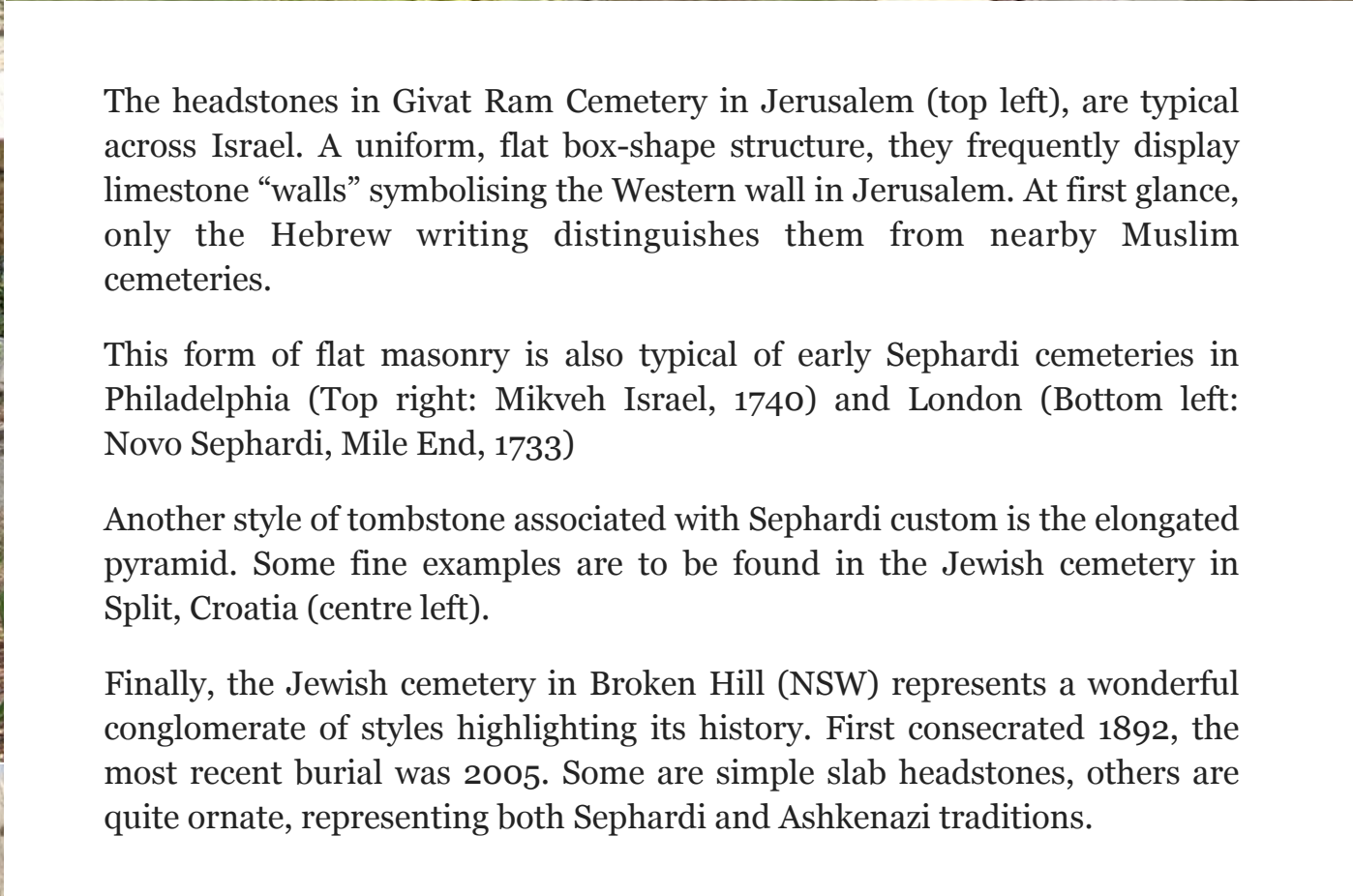
Old Jewish Cemetery, Prague
[Photo: Edd Prince - CC](#)

The old Jewish cemetery in Prague is typical of 15th-18th century European city cemeteries. While Jewish law commands that in death, there be no distinction between rich and poor, there are some very grand tombstones, and some very plain ones.

The Jewish cemetery in Berdychiv (northern Ukraine) displays an astonishing uniformity with tombstones shaped as felt snowshoes (*valenki*). The landscape is broken only by the massive mausoleum structure that is the burial place of Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berdychiv (1740-1809).



Jewish Cemetery, Berdichev -
Photo source: [Chabad.org](#)



Top Left: Givat Ram Cemetery, Jerusalem - [Photo: Nettadi - Public Domain](#),
 Top Right: Mikveh Israel Cemetery (1740), Philadelphia - Photo: [USHistory.org](#)
 Middle Left: Jewish Cemetery, Split (Croatia) - Photo: [Jewish Community of Split](#)
 Bottom Left: Novo Sephardi Cemetery (1733), Mile End - Photo: [Matt Brown CC](#)
 Bottom Right: Broken Hill Cemetery - Photo: Sunny Gold

The headstones in Givat Ram Cemetery in Jerusalem (top left), are typical across Israel. A uniform, flat box-shape structure, they frequently display limestone “walls” symbolising the Western wall in Jerusalem. At first glance, only the Hebrew writing distinguishes them from nearby Muslim cemeteries.

This form of flat masonry is also typical of early Sephardi cemeteries in Philadelphia (Top right: Mikveh Israel, 1740) and London (Bottom left: Novo Sephardi, Mile End, 1733)

Another style of tombstone associated with Sephardi custom is the elongated pyramid. Some fine examples are to be found in the Jewish cemetery in Split, Croatia (centre left).

Finally, the Jewish cemetery in Broken Hill (NSW) represents a wonderful conglomerate of styles highlighting its history. First consecrated 1892, the most recent burial was 2005. Some are simple slab headstones, others are quite ornate, representing both Sephardi and Ashkenazi traditions.

USEFUL SCRIPTS & STANDARD HEBREW PHRASES

There are some standard Hebrew phrases and abbreviations that appear on most Jewish headstones.

The Hebrew lettering is read right to left

peh nun = po nikbar = here lies

peh tet = po tamun = here is hidden

tav, nun, tzaddi, bet and hey -

an acronym for t'hay nafsho/ah tzrurah b'tzror hachaim = May his/her soul be bound up in the bond of life



The Hebrew name of the deceased is generally written in 4 parts -

GIVEN NAME	SON/ DAUGHTER OF	PATRONYMIC (father's name)	TRIBE
Gershon	ben בן	Raphael	HaCohen
Ruchel	bat בת	Mordechai	HaLevi

A convert to Judaism may have the patronymic ben/bat Abraham Avinu אבינו אברהם - Abraham the father (of the Jews)

The Tribes refers to the 12 tribes of Israel, traditionally said to descend from the 12 sons of Jacob. The suffixes HaCohen and HaLevi directly relates to members of the Priestly cast (HaCohen) – and the assistants to the priests (HaLevi). All other Jews are referred to as Israelites.

Cohens (or *kohein*; Hebrew: כֹּהֵן *kohen*, "priest", pl. כֹּהֲנִים *kohanim*) are the priests, who performed the rituals in the Temple. Cohens were also Levites, having descended from Levi's son, Aaron, brother of Moses. Today, Cohanim and Leviim still fulfil special functions in the Synagogue.

TOMBSTONE SYMBOLS

The symbols on headstones often tell us much about the person they honour. They may give clues as to their tribe, their occupation, age at death, their standing in the community, or their role in Jewish life and/or home.





For more examples see: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Symbols_on_Jewish_gravestones

Pair of hands in priestly blessing indicating the grave of a Cohen

Water pitcher with/without washing hands indicates the grave of a Levite

Crown – indicates someone who is esteemed – a king/queen among people

Torah scroll – maybe a rabbi, reader, or a person learned in torah



Tombstone of Abraham Cohen
Rookwood Old Ground (1874)
Source: AJGS, Jewish Cemeteries of Australia

Tombstone of Palik Halevi,
Zhvanets, Ukraine
Source: [Jewishgen.org](https://www.jewishgen.org)

Tombstone of Leah Cohen,
Rookwood Old Ground
Source: AJGS, Jewish Cemeteries of Australia

Tombstone of Rev. Solomon Levi,
Rookwood Old Ground
Source: AJGS, Jewish Cemeteries of Australia



A broken object such as a column, flower or candles represents the premature death of a young person - a life cut short.

Top Left: Tombstone of a Jewish woman

[Wikimedia Commons](#)

Right: Tombstone of David Braham,
Rookwood Old Ground

Source: AJGS, Jewish Cemeteries of Australia

Bottom Left: Tombstone of Joseph Merton Marks, Rookwood
Old Ground - Source: AJGS, Jewish Cemeteries of Australia

As in Europe, Australian Jews are not averse to erecting large and elaborate monuments. And although it is not common for images of the deceased to be attached to headstones, it is traditional in some Eastern European locations.

Left: Tombstone of Montague Levey,
Rookwood Old Ground

Source: AJGS, Jewish Cemeteries of Australia

Top Right: Tombstone of George Judah Cohen and his wife,
Rookwood Old Ground

Source: AJGS, Jewish Cemeteries of Australia

Tombstone of Hedvo Haimova,
Bukhara Jewish Cemetery [Photo: Adam Jones](#) CC



BURIAL INDEXES AND DATABASES

There are large collections of burial databases available online. New cemeteries are being photographed and indexed annually by enthusiastic volunteers around the world.

In Australia all states have searchable indexes for death certificates issued over 30 years ago. There are also databases of cemeteries put together by individuals. The most extensive for Australia is the Beverley Davis Burial Database (BD-DB), which contains over 48,000 entries collected over 28 years. It has information about Jewish burials at all cemeteries within Australasia and Oceania plus Australian War Graves. As the database is no longer being updated it lacks recent burials, and some sections in some cemeteries (e.g. Karrakatta in WA) seem to have been overlooked. It also sometimes lacks information for burials where there is no headstone.

The BD-DB is now being maintained by the Australian Jewish Historical Society and can be found at their [website](#).

For a list of other resources and databases [download the handout](#) from our downloads page.

Please send [AJGS](#) your links to additional sources of Jewish burial indexes.

LINKS & WEBSITES

ROOTSTECH 2019



[Rootstech](#) is on again! The huge genealogy/ technology conference kicks off in Salt Lake City at the end of February. This year many sessions will be live-streamed. Gould Genealogy has helpfully posted [a timetable of live-streamed sessions](#) with session time conversion to Sydney AEST.

Sessions will be streamed between 2am and 11:30am AEST, with general sessions featuring keynote speakers such as Emmy Award winning actress Patricia Heaton streamed live at 5am March 1. Saroo Brierley, whose story was immortalised in his bestselling autobiography, *A Long Way Home* and the Oscar nominated film *Lion*, will stream live at 5am on March 2.

Rootstech are also promoting a [Virtual Pass](#), which gives holders access to 18 exclusive recorded sessions on-demand. Videos from previous conferences can be viewed on their [online video archive](#).

Lara Diamond and Schelly Talalay Dardashti are running sessions on Jewish genealogy and Sephardic resources respectively, however these sessions are not currently in the streaming list. Hopefully they will be made available after the conference.

In October, Rootstech is also running [Rootstech London](#). The keynote speaker is Nick Barratt, an author, broadcaster, and historian best known for his work on the BBC series *Who Do You Think You Are?*

BAGHDAD GRAVES CATALOGUED



150 Graves in the Jewish cemetery in Sadr City, Baghdad, have been photographed and catalogued, with the data uploaded to the website of the Montreal Spanish and Portuguese congregation.

The program was initiated by Sass Peress, who was on a mission to find and clean up the grave of his grandfather, Sassoon Moshi Peress. Sass Peress worked with the local Muslim community to repair 150 of the 4,000 graves. He was assisted by Montreal based historian Sami Sourani who translated the epitaphs into English, identifying the names of the deceased.

The photographs and information can be accessed via a [shared icloud album](#) uploaded and maintained by Sass Peress. The album contains photos of the cleanup and images of headstones with the names of the buried people visible in English when you hover your mouse over the image.

The Sadr City Cemetery replaced the centuries old Baghdad Cemetery in the 1950s, after then-Prime Minister Nuri al-Said decided to demolish it in the wake of the mass exodus of Jews from Iraq, following the infamous Farhud massacre in 1941.

You can read more about this project at the blog [Point of No Return: Jewish Refugees from Arab and Muslim Countries](#)



The International Institute for Jewish Genealogy and Paul Jacobi Center [announced](#) the release in November of a monograph by Judith Kalik: *Movable Inn, The Rural Jewish Population of Minsk Guberniya in 1793-1914* (De Gruyter, Berlin, 2018).

Kalik's study, sponsored and supported by IIJG, presents the results of a systematic survey, the first of its kind, on village or "rural" Jews in the Minsk Guberniya from its establishment within the Russian Empire in 1793 to the outbreak of the First World War in 1914.

On the basis of primary sources, mainly Russian, it documents and contextualises the life-style of these Jews in a representative region of the Pale. It focuses, among other things, on their demographic and geographic distribution, their legal situation, their relations with their lords and masters and the external environment, as well as their familial and occupational structures. It also provides detailed statistical tables of Village Jews living in every district of the Gubernya throughout the period under examination. As a result, it throws new light on a previously "invisible" but important section of East European Jewry.

The monograph is available from the publisher, [De Gruyter](#), as a free download.

OTTOMAN ERA PHOTOGRAPHS AVAILABLE ONLINE



The [Getty Research Institute](#) has digitised and made available online, part of an extraordinary collection of photographs collected by the French photographer Pierre de Gigord. De Gigord amassed his collection while travelling through Turkey during the 1980s.

Consisting of multiple media types including albumen print panoramas, glass negatives, hand coloured slides and small postcards, around 6000 photographs have been painstakingly restored and are available to search and download from the [Getty Research Institute website](#).

The photographs, which date mostly from the late 19th/ early 20th century, document...

landmark architecture, urban and natural landscapes, archaeological sites of millennia-old civilisations, and the bustling life of the diverse people who lived over 100 years ago in the last decades of the waning Ottoman Empire.

To help navigate this vast collection, the GRI has a helpful [Finding Aid](#) that describes each series in the collection.

While not specifically a Jewish resource, for those of us with roots in Ottoman lands this collection of images opens a window on life in Ottoman Turkey at a time when the country, and the world, was on the cusp of change.

Left: Jewish Family - Photographer Unknown; 1860-1890 undated

Below: Panorama of Constantinople - Photographer Unknown; 1868

Pierre de Gigord Collection of Photographs of the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Turkey, 1850-1958





Top Left: Map of Palestine of the Jewish Brigade
 Bottom Left: Sailors from HMS Temaire, Western Wall Jerusalem 14/02/1919
 Above: Jewish prayers, led by Field Rabbi Dr Frankfurter
 Images courtesy of Adrian Andrusia Image Collection, [Jews of the First World War](#)
 Below: Screenshot of Memorial page.

WE WERE THERE TOO - UK JEWS DURING WW1



A consortium of Jewish groups including the UK Jewish Military Museum, The Board of Deputies of British Jews and the Learning Grid of London, have been diligently working on an ambitious crowdsourced research project to document the effect of WWI on the Jews of the United Kingdom. [British Jews in the First World War - We Were There Too](#) has engaged students from both Jewish and non-Jewish schools, alongside adult volunteers, to collect and collate stories of Jewish soldiers, citizens and institutions in the UK between 1914 and 1918, to illustrate the role of the Jewish Community in the British war effort.

The site contains an online exhibition with [articles](#) and [collections](#) highlighting different aspects of life during the war, including [A Good Jew and a Good Englishman](#), about the Jewish Lads Brigade; [Faith in the Front Line](#), written by Rabbi Reuben Livingstone, Jewish chaplain to HM Armed Forces; and [Strategic Camouflage](#), the surprising history of Solomon Joseph Solomon, a pioneer in the introduction of camouflage techniques to the British Armed Forces. One particularly interesting collection is a series of photographs and postcards collected by Adrian Andrusier. A London-based private collector, Andrusier, has been collecting postcards and postal history of Jewish life - particularly the 1890-1940 period - for over 40 years.

There is an online [memorial wall](#) of triangular photographs, each one linked to an information file of a soldier who died during the war. The file may include a photograph, the names of parents and siblings, their regiment and images of their military record.

There is also a space for registered users to upload a [personal record](#). This can be about an individual or an organisation and is designed to illuminate more personal stories.

LAVISH RUSSIAN DOCO ANIMATES JEWISH LIFE



The [Genesis Philanthropy Group](#), a global grant funding organisation with a particular focus on Russian speaking Jewish communities, have produced a 3-part documentary series covering 800 years of Russian Jewish history.

Entitled [Russian Jews](#), the series can be viewed on YouTube and comes with English or Hebrew subtitles.

Production values are high, with clever animation to bring to life historical figures and artistic recreations of Jewish life, to compensate for a lack of historical footage. The series is narrated by veteran Russian journalist, presenter and producer, Leonid Parfenov. Parfenov has produced more than a dozen TV documentaries on Russian history.

While the series concentrates most heavily on the 20th century, the first episode gives some insight into the movements of borders between Polish and Russian territory and the adoption of shtetl names as surnames when Alexander I decreed that Jews required them.

This episode also covers the pogroms of the 19th century and the waves of Jewish immigration, both out of Russia but, more importantly for the program, into the centre of the country and wider society. The film highlights the rise of Jewish artists, poets and intellectuals during a time that Russian society was convulsing with revolutionary change.

The second episode covers the period from the Bolshevik revolution, a cause supported by many Jewish campaigners, to 1948, ending with the murder of Solomon Mikhoels, a prominent Jewish actor and leader of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee, who was killed on Stalin's orders.

The third episode covers the period from 1948 to the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.

The series is predominantly aimed at native Russians, and hopes to educate both Jews and non-Jews on the role members of the Jewish community played throughout Russian history, and the effect persecution has had on the community.

A word of caution: Avoid reading the comments on the youtube page. Despite the best efforts to present the facts of history, undisguised hate and unfounded conspiracy theories continue to drive internet trolls to write uninformed dross.



Left: Opening titles Russian Jews;
Right: Host Leonid Parfenov;
Screenshots

EVENTS & WORKSHOPS

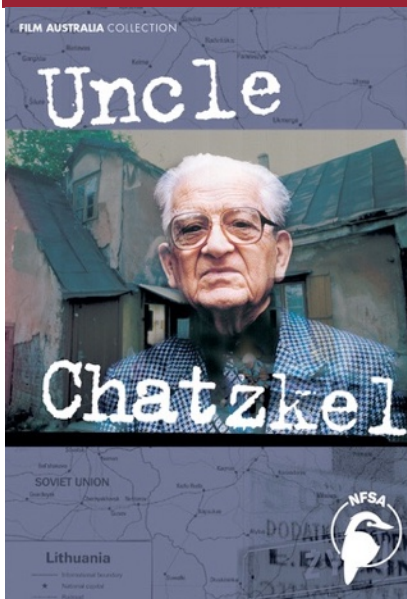
FILM SCREENINGS

SYDNEY JEWISH MUSEUM

UNCLE CHATSKEL

March 10, 2019 3:30pm

Cost: \$10.00



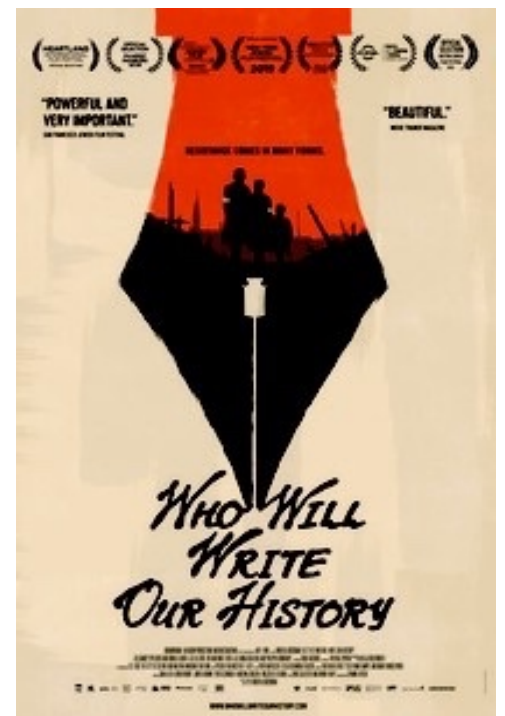
The Sydney Jewish Museum has a host of events on its calendar but there are two that will be of particular interest to genealogists. On March 10, 2019, at 3:30pm, they are screening *Uncle Chatskel*, Rod Freedman's award winning documentary charting the life of his great uncle, Chatskel Lemchen. Born in Lithuania in 1904 Lemchen was lauded for preserving the Lithuanian language during the Soviet era. He was 93 when his grandnephew, Rod arrived on his doorstep. Lemchen survived the Russian Revolution, two world wars, the

Holocaust, the Soviet period and the transition to Baltic independence. Freedman's aim was to explore the story of Lithuania's Jewish history on film through his great uncle's life story. There will be a Q&A with the Rod Freedman after the film.

On March 31, 2019 at 3:30pm there will be a screening of *Who Will Write Our History*, the extraordinary story of a secret band of journalists, scholars and community leaders, led by historian Emanuel Ringelblum, and known by the code name *Oyneg Shabes*.

In November 1940, days after the Nazis sealed 450,000 Jews in the Warsaw Ghetto, this clandestine group vowed to defeat Nazi lies and propaganda not with guns or fists, but with pen and paper.

Written, produced and directed by Roberta Grossman and executive produced by Nancy Spielberg, *Who Will Write Our History* mixes the writings of the Oyneg Shabes archive with new interviews, rarely seen footage and dramatic recreations to transport us inside the Ghetto and the lives of these courageous resistance fighters. [Watch the trailer.](#)



WHO WILL WRITE OUR HISTORY?

March 31, 2019 3:30pm

Cost: \$15.00



[Book tickets on the website](#)

148 Darlinghurst Road

Darlinghurst, NSW

Australia 2010

+61 2 9360 7999

UPCOMING WORKSHOPS

AJGS runs regular workshops where you can access resources, websites and the knowledge of other members.

Monthly Sunday and quarterly Monday workshops are held at The Rev Katz Library, North Shore Synagogue, Treatts Road, Lindfield. Quarterly Sunday workshops are also held at Waverley Library, 48 Denison St, Bondi Junction.

Check out [The Calendar on the AJGS website](#) for details or see below for dates, times and locations.

DAY	DATE	TIME	LOCATION
SUNDAY	MARCH 3	1000-1300	NORTH SHORE SYNAGOGUE
SUNDAY	APRIL 7	1000-1300	NORTH SHORE SYNAGOGUE
SUNDAY	MAY 5	1000-1300	NORTH SHORE SYNAGOGUE
SUNDAY	MAY 19	1400-1700	WAVERLEY LIBRARY
MONDAY	MAY 20	1000-1300	NORTH SHORE SYNAGOGUE
SUNDAY	JUNE 2	1000-1300	NORTH SHORE SYNAGOGUE
SUNDAY	JULY 7	1000-1300	NORTH SHORE SYNAGOGUE
SUNDAY	AUGUST 4	1000-1300	NORTH SHORE SYNAGOGUE
SUNDAY	AUGUST 18	1400-1700	WAVERLEY LIBRARY
MONDAY	AUGUST 19	1000-1300	NORTH SHORE SYNAGOGUE
SUNDAY	SEPTEMBER 8	1000-1300	NORTH SHORE SYNAGOGUE
SUNDAY	OCTOBER 13	1000-1300	NORTH SHORE SYNAGOGUE
SUNDAY	NOVEMBER 3	1000-1300	NORTH SHORE SYNAGOGUE
SUNDAY	NOVEMBER 17	1400-1700	WAVERLEY LIBRARY
MONDAY	NOVEMBER 18	1000-1300	NORTH SHORE SYNAGOGUE
SUNDAY	DECEMBER 1	1000-1300	NORTH SHORE SYNAGOGUE