



The Kosher Koala

Newsletter of the Australian Jewish Genealogical Society

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Vol. 3 No. 3

ISSN 1322-6401

September, 1996

EDITORIAL

Best wishes to all our readers for the Jewish New Year 5757!

Our membership is growing steadily and we are now passing the one hundred and eighty mark, but only few extra willing hands are coming forward to help with the multiple tasks which the Society and its very success engender...

Fortunately we find members ready to write interestingly about their experiences as family historians, whether as "lucky" beginners, or as more experienced genealogists. But it is discouraging to find so few members coming to our Annual General Meetings and so few willing to share the work.

We are always eager for people with new skills and some members are helping in new areas. Kim Phillips is preparing an index to Volume 1 of this newsletter, while Gary Luke is readying a text to present us, as well as the Australian Jewish

Historical Society and the Archive of Australian Judaica on the Internet. Nigel Meinrath is some way along on a computerised interfamily Sydney Jewish genealogical database.

Rieke Nash, our hardworking vice-president, resources librarian and publisher, also answers many genealogical queries directly sent to her, while your president and editor also copes with a sizable genealogical mail both from Australia and overseas. Occasionally other committee members take responsibility for answering letters within their area of expertise. We try to give helpful answers to all comers, but we are finding it impossible to write long answers to non-members, and to those seeking short-cuts to avoid membership. The best way to learn how to research your Jewish ancestry is to join this Society, to then receive and read this publication and attend our workshops, as well as our seminars and lectures
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SYDNEY WORKSHOPS 1996

The Society will hold its usual workshops at the North Shore Synagogue, Lindfield in the Rev Katz Library on the following Sunday mornings, 9.30 am to 12.30 pm

October 13 November 3 December 1

Our next evening workshop will be held on Tuesday night,

October 22nd,

from 6.30 p.m. to 9.30 p.m. at the above venue.

Contact 9427-6075.

On Sunday, 13th October, 1996, our usual morning workshop will be devoted to

LITHUANIAN RESOURCES

This is an opportunity for all members with this research interest to not only consult our resources on Lithuania, but also to meet others with the same interest.

Please bring information of interest to others.

The Australian Jewish Genealogical Society in conjunction with the Australian Jewish Historical Society will be holding a

JEWISH GENEALOGY DAY

on Sunday, 10th November, 1996 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the AJHS's new premises, Mandelbaum House, 385 Abercrombie Street, Darlingtown

Tel: 9427-6075 or

9518 7596

Cost: Members \$5.00

Non-members \$5.00

Bring Your Own Lunch

Morning & Afternoon Tea Provided

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Ruth Mandelberg

Patricia Strenger

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<http://www.zeta.org.au/~feraltek/jozgen.htm>

JEWISH GENEALOGY IN AUSTRALIA

VIEWPOINT FROM VICTORIA - THE SEARCH FOR AN IDENTITY

by Lionel Sharpe

My acceptance of the invitation from Sophie Caplan to contribute an article to the Kasher Koala reflects the emerging national growth and development of the Australian Jewish Genealogical Society.

Following in the footsteps of the National body, the Victorian Branch, to which I was recently elected as chairperson, during its short existence has an active committee and stimulating programme and we all look forward with interest to future developments in the South Australian Branch, and hopefully the creation of branches in other jurisdictions.

One of the key tasks of a relatively new national organisation is to carve out a special role and develop an image or identity among the myriad of other Jewish organisations in the community. The expansion of the membership and an increase of knowledge about our activities are important if we are to create the resources needed to effectively serve those who seek our assistance.

We are not alone in Australia in the field of Jewish genealogy. The Australian Jewish Historical Society is approaching its sixtieth year and while its major focus is the historical development of the Jewish community in Australia, it has always dealt with genealogical enquiries and has developed a great deal of expertise and resources to assist members and others with their searches within Australia. Its contribution and dedication to this field of research is to be highly recommended.

Similarly, the Jewish Museums, both in Sydney and Melbourne, have a direct interest in history which goes beyond the social, religious, economic and political life of Jewish communities both here and overseas. Museums are also interested in people who played a role in the shaping of history and those who participated in the past life of the community.

Then there are those involved in Holocaust research. Recording the names and personal details of those who perished and preserving for posterity through written autobiographies and audio-visual testaments the experience of the survivors is a key and vital role for the Holocaust Museums.

All these activities reflect the concern of Jewish communities for preserving the past so that coming generations will know about their roots and have an understanding of the origins of those values they hold dear.

There are a number of urgent questions we, here in Victoria, must address. For example, what is our special role as an organisation solely dedicated to genealogy? How do other complementary Jewish organisations, as I have already mentioned, both here in

Australia and abroad, assist and support each other? How do we conserve resources by avoiding duplication of both voluntary effort and scarce funds? How do we relate to other genealogical societies in the wider Australian community and internationally?

Developing a vision is a challenging task and one which all of us need to work on together if we are to play a meaningful role to the generations of tomorrow. Perhaps a 'mission statement' is the first step in this process. One suggestion is that our key goals be that of *making accessible available resources* and the *transfer of skills* from the more experienced members to help others access these resources.

One way of achieving this is to actively reach out into the community by providing training programs for those interested in tracing their ancestry. Another way is outreach into Jewish schools where students, as part of their studies, engage in family history projects. Many teachers may need guidance and assistance and the transfer of skills through teacher staff development seminars.

Like others in the Society, my interest was aroused through research into my own forebears and those of my wife. It's an exciting search and those of us who have learnt some of the tools of the trade are keen to pass that knowledge on to others. The Victorian branch along with our national body will continue to play its part in this national endeavour.

Lionel Sharpe is Chairperson of the Victorian Branch of the Australian Jewish Genealogical Society

VICTORIAN BRANCH

The Victorian Branch meets at the BETH WEIZMANN COMMUNITY CENTRE, 306 Hawthorn Road, South Caulfield, Melbourne

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THE LONG, LONG ARM OF THE AUSTRALIAN JEWISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

by Ruth Barnett

In December 1942, when I was a two-year-old growing up in Wagga, a baby named Maxine Roberta Blum was born in South Carolina. Maxine was our close cousin, yet for fifty-three years we were totally unaware of each other's existence. Last year our families were brought together in a "little miracle" for which we owe thanks to the Australian Jewish Genealogical Society and in particular to Rieke Nash.

Maxine's and my story begins in 1843, when Sarah, the second of nine children of Abraham and Elizabeth Myers, was born in London. Abraham was a respected cigar retailer, whose death on 24th August, 1897 was mourned in a long obituary in *The Cigar and Tobacco World* journal. His wife, nee Elizabeth Leith, almost certainly was a convert to Judaism (something we have not yet ascertained) but this was, if correct, a dark family secret! My late father never spoke of it, which was most uncharacteristic of him, and I feel sure that he was bound by a long-honoured promise. Nevertheless, Elizabeth died in 1903 a devout Jewess, as her headstone affirms.

Sarah Myers married Joseph Mok in London. They changed their name to Edwards, had ten children, one of whom, George, was destined to become Maxine's grandfather and sailed to America in the early 1890's.

In 1855 Elizabeth and Abraham Myers had produced a fourth daughter and seventh child: my grandmother Dinah. She married Abraham Mendes, from an old English Sephardic family, at Bevis Marks in 1890. Dinah was 35 at the time, and her husband 49 and they became parents of three sons, one of whom was my father. The entire Mendes family, with that of Dinah's brother Ike Myers, emigrated to Australia in 1920 and were welcomed in Melbourne by cousin Abe Sicree. My father began work as chief accountant for Maples' country furniture stores. In due course he was sent to Albury, where he enjoyed some of the happiest years of his life and grew to love and respect the Australian bush and its people. But he longed nevertheless for his "own" people, a longing he records touchingly in his diary as he describes an 80-mile journey to Wagga, in 1927, to participate in the Rosh Hashanah service in Sol Lewis's home. Wagga also boasted a Jewish hotelkeeper named Joe Levy, and Dad listened, enraptured, as Joe's young daughter Edna, a "typical Jewish beauty", played Grieg and Rachmaninoff on the piano.

My father's loneliness ended in 1936 when my mother, Bella Supran, accepted his proposal. They married in the Great Synagogue on the very day she arrived from London. She had known him since she was seven, and he twenty-one. Their families had been close friends.

My mother always insisted that she loved him from the day they met, and knew she would never marry anyone else. Bella was a child of fourteen when the Mendes left for Australia, and their wedding day was their first meeting in sixteen years. They lived forty-six close and happy years together. Twenty-four of those years were spent in Wagga (my mother went there straight from Golders' Green!) where my father owned a furniture store, and where my siblings and I were born. To my knowledge, Dad never mentioned his American cousins. This was before the days of ready telephone access, and they had simply faded from his life.

Imagine my surprise, therefore, when Rieke Nash - unaware of my Wagga "connection", but knowing of my pursuit of my forebears - drew my attention to a notice in the *Kosher Koala*. "Seeking Mendes of Wagga Wagga," it said, giving an address and phone number in South Carolina, U.S.A. and a name: Maxine Koss. Yes, it was "baby" Maxine of 1942: Sarah Myers' great-granddaughter and thus my second cousin once removed. Maxine knew of Wagga through correspondence in the 1920s and '30s between her great-aunt Maude (Sarah's daughter and my father's first cousin) and my father's maternal family. I immediately rang her, to our mutual delight. Amazingly, Maxine had in her possession a wonderful letter my father had written to the family in 1928, rich in vignettes of contemporary Australian life. To receive this letter, to see again the familiar, beautiful copperplate, brought a feeling of joy and a shiver to my spine. Here were my father's emotions and my father's wisdom, coming to me anew twelve years after his death. Genealogy brings many rewards, and they are not entirely academic.

Maxine's correspondence has also provided fascinating insights into the quirks of heredity. Photographs of her uncles bear an uncanny resemblance to my father's first cousins (and theirs, once removed), Maurice and Len Myers. They were unknown to each other, but all four, in their youth, sported a distinctive head of high, fuzzy, almost identical hair! Maurice and Len were the sons of Ike Myers (Dinah's brother) who "married out", and they were Dad's business partners in Wagga. Maurice's daughter Marion Stuckey still lives in Wagga; her handwriting bears a strange resemblance to that of Maxine. Marion was thrilled to receive a copy of a letter written by Ike Myers to his American family in the 1930s. She had never seen her grandfather's handwriting.

Maxine and I have enjoyed several phone conversations and my nephew, Peter, has already visited her, to be welcomed into the family with great affection.

There is an unrelated post-script to this story: further evidence that delving into one's genealogy sets in motion an endless chain of ramifications. Recently the *Kosher Koala* publicised *Roots and Recollections*, Sarah Orkin's reminiscences of London's old and scattered Sephardic families. I rang Mrs Orkin in London to inquire about purchasing a copy of her book

on an imminent visit to London. My husband and I were instantly invited to take our Seder with her family and friends. What a remarkable lady! She is 87, and having asked for a computer for her 75th birthday, she proceeded to compile a detailed genealogy of her huge family - the de Solas, Pools, Andrades, Mendes and others. This research formed the basis for her book, published last year.

Among the guests at Mrs Orkin's Seder was Miss Lucy Ryder, grand-daughter of Dr Moses Gaster, the Haham of Bevis Marks Synagogue for decades and author of the bicentennial History of the congregation. Miss Ryder had many memories of her grandfather, who died when she was a child, and recalled the family's pride in his prominent involvement in formulating the Balfour Declaration. She regretted that in the end his advice - that there could be no secure State of Israel unless peace were at first made with the Arabs - was discounted. The Balfour Declaration in its final form was disastrously ambiguous, setting the scene for decades of war and suffering. "If only they had listened to grandfather," Miss Ryder remarked. I expressed surprise that Dr Gaster's warnings remained (apparently) undocumented, and she affirmed that this was so.

There are two further anecdotes resulting from my meeting with Mrs Orkin, bearing out my son's observation that "to be of Jewish descent is to live in a global village". On the plane trip home to Australia, I was reading *Roots and Recollections* when the passenger next to me - a youngish man - said, "Excuse me, but I couldn't help noticing what you are reading. The Andrades are my family". His name was Mike Cattermole, he lived in Cooma, and his mother's father was Philip Andrade. I'm still reeling at this amazing coincidence. When he arrived home, Mike immediately phoned his mother in England - she and her brother had been researching the family and she in turn phoned Sarah Orkin, her long-lost relative. And to complete the story (for the moment, that is, for genealogy is like a snowball), I received a phone call recently from George Baur, a member of the Australian Jewish Genealogical Society. It transpires that he is also of Andrade ancestry, and he knew nothing of his relative in Cooma.

Mrs Orkin's book also mentions a Canadian relative, the world-renowned neurologist Dr Donald Calne who also happens to be a cousin of our member David Landor. This is the very Dr Calne under whom my son worked in 1993 as a visiting student at Vancouver University Hospital. Recently my son E-mailed Dr Calne to tell him of the connection. and his wife replied: "I knew there had to be a reason why I liked you so much!" It's said that fate works in many strange ways, but I'm sure it couldn't function without the Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies.

Ruth Barnett is a member of the Society in Sydney with mixed English Ashkenazi and Sephardi roots.

JEWISHGEN FAMILY FINDER

The responsibility for the Jewish Genealogical Family Finder (JGFF) has been handed over by Jewish Genealogical Society (NY) to JewishGen, Inc., an on-line Jewish genealogical service, and will be known as the JewishGen Family Finder (JGFF).

As many of our members have discovered, this resource has been invaluable in broadening the opportunities for discovering long-lost branches and making contact with others who may be researching your towns or family surnames. All members who have submitted research information for the Australian Data-base of the Australian Jewish Genealogical Society have automatically been included in the JGFF.

In the past, this information has been available in printed and microfiche versions available at Jewish Genealogical Societies so that the contact information, the names and postal addresses of researchers, has not been freely available. It is now intended to make the JGFF accessible from the Internet, which will expand dramatically the "client base" and therefore increase the likelihood of a successful contact. JewishGen, Inc. is aware of the problems of privacy and previous submitters will have the option of altering their contact information, but they need to be advised of those who do not want their names and addresses to be accessible on the Internet.

You need to decide on one of the following options:-

1. Your name and address can be freely available on the Internet.
2. Our Society's e-mail address can be given as your contact address.
3. You can provide your own e-mail address or phone number.

Our Society is prepared to up-date this information for you or you can write directly to:-

Susan King, President
JewishGen, Inc.
12 Greenway Plaza, Suite 1100
HOUSTON TX 77046, USA.

E-mail: jgffhelp@jewishgen.org

In the near future, individuals with access to the Internet will find instructions on the JewishGen home page <<http://www.jewishgen.org>> for updating, adding, and deleting entries. E-mail addresses and telephone numbers will be included in future additions. JewishGen, Inc. plans to make the system flexible so submitters may choose how their information is to be available online, i.e. only names and e-mail addresses could be available online, while all the submitter information could be available in the printed and microfiche versions.

Included in this issue is an information sheet for those who have already submitted their data to our Society.

USING POLISH JEWISH CIVIL RECORDS, A CONTINUING EXPERIENCE

by Bernard Freedman

Following the article by Ester Csaky in the June 1996 issue of *The Kosher Koala* describing her experiences in using the records of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (I will use the much shorter but I understand acceptable name Mormon in this article) and the very well attended visit of inspection to the Greenwich Family History Centre of the Mormon church, I felt that a few more happy experiences would help to fill out the possibilities for our members in undertaking this line of research.

I read somewhere that in the period 1860-1880, when the mass migration of people to Western Europe and then to America started, 80% of all Jews in the world lived in Poland or adjacent countries. It is quite likely that most of our members will have roots that extend into Poland during the 19th century. I have found the local Mormon family history centre is efficient, helpful and unobtrusive in the willingness to help.

The Mormon records which I have mostly used have been the birth-marriage-death records, which for Poland cover the period 1820 to 1880. They are described as civil registration documents which follow the Napoleonic format and are mostly in the Polish language but are in German in some areas and in Russian after 1868 until 1918. Napoleon's conquest of Europe allowed for the introduction of the Napoleonic Code in 1804 but its introduction was partial in Poland until about 1815, and it was not until 1820 that the records seem complete. At first the local Catholic parish church carried out the documentation, but the local Jewish community was allowed to administer the work and this seems to occur if a synagogue existed with a Rabbi to organise on behalf of the community. The documents are handwritten in a record book, a copy of which was to be sent to the provincial capital. I have seen no evidence that this did occur and so provided a backup copy in the case of destruction of the local record.

The first big help in my gaining access to the Jewish records is that the International Jewish Genealogical Journal AVOTAYNU (Vol. 2, Jan 1986) produced a list of all the Polish towns for which the Mormons' library has BMD records for the individual Jewish communities. The list identifies the Mormon order number of each microfilm and the years covered for each town. This list is available in our library, and it is spread over seventeen pages. I like to retain a copy, as I always seem to refer to it when I read or talk to friends. Listed alphabetically are approximately six hundred towns on 1735 microfilms covering the years 1810 to 1880. A few extend back to 1750 and up to 1936. They are often described as BMD documents but many include a film

on family names, school and cemetery records. Each microfilm covers up to ten years for a small town, three years for a large town. The two towns which are mentioned by Ester Csaky in her June article represent almost the two extremes of size. Lublin is a very large Jewish community and requires twenty-eight microfilms to cover the forty-five years, whereas Bychawa is small and only requires seven microfilms to cover fifty years. I assume that most of our members will have read the book "Konin", about a Jewish community of three to four thousand people, and this town requires six tapes.

The tapes are ordered through any local Mormon family history centre at \$7.00 per tape. The centre will telephone and advise as soon as the tape arrives and allow you to book a time (usually a whole day) to start your examination. The waiting time can be two to three weeks for a tape available in Sydney or two to four months for tapes which have to come from Salt Lake City. The tapes should remain available for three weeks but this is treated sympathetically, and may be extended.

It is important to note that in addition to the six hundred towns listed I have found that many surrounding towns, evidently without a Rabbi or a recognised synagogue, are included in the adjacent larger or better organised Jewish community records. I have also found that, although travel was difficult and expensive, my family often found a wife or a job in surrounding towns, so that an extensive area has to be researched to cover the full picture. I am also aware that the spelling of the names of towns and the borders between Provinces as well as National States changed many times in the hundred year history of that part of Europe. So nothing is straight forward or simple. (Editor's note: It is well to consult the book "Where Once We Walked" for location and locality name changes).

All the tapes I inspected have a family name alphabetical index at the end of each year for each type of event in the BMD documents. Sometimes I found a change in the spelling between the document and the index and only once did I find a document omitted from the index. A typical document, one birth and one annual index are illustrated in our June 1996 issue as part of the Ester Csaky article. The documents or certificates have become rather personal as they often contain the handwritten signature of your relation, and it is easy to imagine all the members of one's family being present at the time the document was prepared. I like the marriage documents, as they contain the names of parents on both sides (their town address, important if it is a marriage from two towns) the parents' occupation and often the single name of the mother. Girls are often more difficult to pick up genealogically speaking than boys together with the cross branching that marriages involve.

Assuming that you do not read Polish, in my experience it is impractical to take one's uncle or auntie along to help one read the microreader. This is a one-person

task, which requires good eye concentration. Nineteenth century Polish is not easy for a non student of language.

Now comes the rather vital step or steps of being able to recognise the family name involved and the type of BMD document quickly as one reels through the micro-film reader. For me the decisive help came from the book "A Translation Guide To 19th-Century Polish-Language Civil-Registration Documents", 2nd Edition compiled and edited by Judith R. Frazin. It is published by The Jewish Genealogical Society of Illinois 1989. I have found the book perfect for the specific task at hand. It gives you ways to quickly recognise the type of document, the location of the family names, occupations and the small but vital special references that may occur like the names of all other living children in the family, cause of death and original towns of birth or living. Often the handwriting is difficult and by grouping words for family relationships, legal, occupations and estates together both in English and Polish the penny tumbles and the mystery is solved. I must tell you that a not so short conversation with Sophie Caplan brought for me this great breakthrough.

As proof of my success with these records let me tell my story. My mother was one of ten children born in Bulli, near Sydney, between 1883 and 1905. I knew that her mother and father Jacob and Emma Glass were married in England, but came originally from Poland, Emma coming at the age of six. I was told that her family name of Cohen was Czerniak in Poland and that she was born near Posnan. After eighteen months of incompetent research I have formed a family tree from over one hundred BMD documents. It shows that when my great-grandfather left Poland in 1863/4 after some serious pogroms, he left behind nineteen first and thirty-four second cousins, if I assume that I have found most of them. Now comes the task of tracing them forward. I must also say that there is a lot of further researching to be done on the Mormon records before I can assume all my family records have been gleaned. Happy hunting!

Bernard Freedman is a member of the Australian Jewish Genealogical Society in Sydney, and a descendant of the Glass family of Bulli which also gave our community the well-known Sydney Glass, one of the Founders of the Australian Jewish Historical Society and his son, the late Judge Harold Glass.

**THE 5TH INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR
ON JEWISH GENEALOGY
JULY 14-19, 1997
PARIS**

Hosted by the Cercle de Genealogie Juive,
B.P. 4024, 75161 cedex 04, France.
Simultaneous translation into English.

SEARCHING FOR MY BIOLOGICAL FAMILY

My name is Pnina Gutman. I am 54 years old. I survived the Holocaust in Poland as a child. In 1950 I came to Israel with my adopting parents named Himmel. I remembered only two years of my childhood clearly, the years after my adoption in 1948. Earlier memories were unclear pictures - a Polish family, a church, Polish holidays and an orphanage in Otwock near Warsaw.

My adoptive parents did not talk either about my adoption or my past. To them I was their only beloved child. My adoptive mother used always to say: "A mother is the one who cares for the child, not the one who delivered it." Only now, after their deaths, I began to look for my biological family. Visiting the Żydowski Instytut Historyczny (ZIH), Polish Jewish Historical Institute, in Warsaw, I found documents which threw light on a part of my past life in the years 1944-48.

I was found abandoned in an empty railway waggon in Milanówek close to Warsaw. Later I was handed over to a Polish family named Kaczmarek by a Red Cross messenger (Kaczniczka in Polish). I lived with this family in Żyrardów, close to Warsaw, till the end of the war. After the war the family returned with me to their home town Sieraków, close to Poznań.

In 1948 I was taken away from the Kaczmareks by the Jewish Committee in Warsaw and placed in the Jewish orphanage in Otwock, close to Warsaw. In September 1948 I was taken from the orphanage by the Jewish family Himmel, and was later adopted by them and I came to Israel with them.

In June 1996 I met in Dzierżaków the son and the daughter of the Polish family Kaczmarek. They were happy to meet me and this reunion was very moving. But they could not add any details about my past to those I had given in 1944 when I was found: "My name is BARBARA REBHUN (REBHUN). I live in Aleje Jerozolimskie (A street by this name existed only in Warsaw). I am two and a half years old." I spoke Polish and German.

Another important fact is that, according to documents in the ZIH, in 1948 a certain family named Rebhun from Kraków looked for Barbara Rebhun...

During three months of enquiries I "found" four years of my former life. Now "only" two and a half years are missing.

I shall be most grateful to anyone who can help me solve the riddle of my life!

Pnina Gutman
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Fax: 972-8-859 6702

BOSTON 1996

by Albert Braunstein

The 15th Summer Seminar on Jewish Genealogy was held in Boston; the Hub of the Universe from July 14-19. Some 680 people attended from eleven countries including France, United Kingdom, South Africa, Israel and Brazil; the vast majority were from North America, and I was the only Australian representative.

Upon registration we were all presented with a blue and white tote bag containing a map of Boston, information about places to eat, syllabus of the program and lecture notes, names of the registrants and the surnames and towns they are researching. In addition we were given an excellent guide to the genealogy resources in the Boston area; Hebrew College Library, the Boston Public Library, National Archives, American Jewish Historical Society, including opening hours and how to use the library or archive. An appendix contained a list of Yizkor books held at Boston Libraries and even recorded their call numbers, making it a simple matter to locate the one in which I was interested.

The Seminar began on the Sunday with walking tours of Jewish Boston and a Beginners' Workshop which attracted well over a hundred people. This stream was supplemented by lectures on how to find your ancestral town, how to use an LDS Family History Centre, how to read vital records in Polish, and so on. Frank Leister, creator of Reunion genealogy software, was there to demonstrate some of the new features which will be added to Reunion 5.0 which hopefully will be available by the end of the year. One of the new features is a Hebrew calendar, which will make it more user-friendly for Jewish genealogy.

Alexander Beider, the foremost expert on East European Jewish surnames, gave a discourse about his latest interest in Ashkenazi given names. He was also available each morning for ten minute consultations, between 8 and 10 am, which were very popular. Like a good doctor, Beider was running overtime, which gave me a chance to have a chat with Jeff Cymbler who was next in line. Cymbler, who was giving a talk on "Researching Your Polish-Jewish Ancestry", said that the thing that had surprised him most this year was how many of the registrants were connected to the Internet - about sixty per cent. At the previous seminar in 1995 only about ten per cent had email addresses, and Cymbler himself was one of those who had recently become online. Clearly, the Internet is a major growth area for Jewish genealogy, and the newsgroup JewishGen is not making an idle claim in calling itself "The Official Home of Jewish Genealogy".

The Computer Room gave onsite access to the Internet and various databases, including REIPP (Russian Indexing of Poland Project) and the Cemetery Project which currently has over 175,000 names from about 400

cemeteries. Last October Arline Sachs gave talks in Melbourne and Sydney about the project to document all Jewish cemeteries around the world. The Cemetery Project name data is not online, however it is possible to order the Cemetery Project DOS-compatible disks from Arline Sachs for US\$20 + shipping.

The resource Room provided access to books, periodicals, maps, microfiche and unpublished indexes. A translator was on hand for Yiddish and Russian. I had brought with me a document from the Austrian Consul, dating from 1882, granting my great-grandmother permission to practise as a mid-wife in Egypt. The document was written in the old German Gothic script and was practically illegible. Fortunately, a German translator was able to quickly translate it for me.

Those with interest in a particular geographic region gathered at Birds of a Feather (BOP) meetings to form networks and exchange information about resources. The Mogilev BOF was convened by Schelly Dardashti who, like me, had Luria ancestors in Mogilev during the 19th century. An index to the Mogilev birth records for 1864-94 had been created and was in the Resource Room. I found 40 Lurias who had fathered sons during that period. Schelly informed me that the Lurias were all interrelated, and that we must be cousins. Bella Nayer, a recent emigrant to the US from Mogilev, gave a moving account of family life in Belarus. Due to the effects of Chernobyl, Bella's family had milk sent from St Petersburg; it was sour by the time it arrived, but at least it was not contaminated by radiation.

I would like to congratulate the Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Boston for an extremely well-organized Seminar; it was obvious that a lot of preparation had gone into it. Apart from all the knowledge gained from lectures and workshops, one of the joys of the Seminar was meeting so many like-minded, crazy people obsessed with genealogy. Next year the Seminar be held in Paris and I hope to see some of you there.

ALBERT BRAUNSTEIN <sbr@pa.ausom.net.au>
Albert Braunstein is a member of the Victorian Branch of the Australian Jewish Genealogical Society in Melbourne, and a medical practitioner. His parents are also members.

REFERENCES FROM *WHERE ONCE WE WALKED* RESEARCHED

Gary Mokotoff will research information on your ancestral town from the references in *Where Once We Walked*. Cost is \$US50 per town and will be refunded if there aren't at least four references provided. A maximum of four pages per reference will be copied.

(Information from yizkor books, Gedenkbuch, Sefer Marmaros or Wooden Synagogues cannot be provided.)

Send request to:

Gary Mokotoff, P.O. Box 900
Teaneck, NJ 07666, USA

RESOURCES ENHANCE TOWN RESEARCH

by Elaine B. Kolinsky

(Reprinted from Chronicles, Vol 13 No. 1, 1994)

EVREISKAIA ENTSIKLOPEDIA (EE)

SLOWNIK GEOGRAFICZNY KROLESTWA

POLSKIEGO (SG)

MEGILAT HA-TEVAH (MT)

LE-TOLEDOT HA-KEHILOT BE-FOLIN (LT)

These are a mouthful, nu! They are also full of incredible information about your towns and ancestors. I'm sure you have heard about these resources and read about them in various articles, but let me bring them to life for you.

Before genealogy fever descended upon my household (six years ago), I asked a simple question of the surviving members of my father's family. I inquired about their shtetl Vakhnovka (Wachnowka), Kiev Gubernia. I'm sure you can guess what the answers were. Some examples are: "You don't want to know." "Let the dead stay dead." "It burned to the ground and it's all gone." The best one was, "I remember cows, mud, old men with long beards, and the killing in the streets (pogroms)." One day, in frustration, I consulted with Neil Goloff, our JGSP librarian and Resource Maven. He showed me an article by Heidi Auerbach Farkash (Post Office Box 576, Rancho Santa Fe, CA 92067) in which she asks genealogists to write to her (SASE) for information on their towns, based on the research she had done at The Hoover Institution.

This was the beginning for me in receiving substantial information about my Eastern European towns. I wrote to Heidi who suggested Yivo (New York) and The Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace (Stanford, CA 94305-6010). From these three sources, I became inundated with town information. Thanks, Heidi. You changed the course of my research.

Mr. Zachary Baker, Head Reference Librarian of Yivo Institute for Jewish Research (1048 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10028, (212) 535-6700) will answer requests if you supply the correct information. There is a small copy fee. The following resources should be explored for Eastern European town searches. Don't make the mistake of thinking your town was not Polish and omit searching SG. The following is a brief description and some of my findings in these resources at Yivo.

1. *Evreiskaia Entsiklopedia*. This is a Russian language Jewish encyclopedia covering localities in the former Russian Empire. Mr. Baker feels it is unsurpassed in any subsequent Jewish encyclopedia. One can easily have it translated for a nominal fee with your favourite Russian translator. It is an article on Vakhnovka telling the story of its history. For example, it refers to this shtetl as a small town (*mestechko*) in "Berdichev" Uezd (the district I had been seeking) in Kiev Guberniya. It quoted from the revision documents (which Harry

Boonin has spoken about at several Russian Interest Group meetings). These revision documents were compiled in 1847 in the Vakhnovka Jewish Community and quoted "534" Jews. It also quoted from the 1897 census. In addition to all sorts of statistics, it speaks of the 150-year-old synagogue, prayer houses, Hasidic prayer houses and their history, its oldest cemetery, its Chevra Kaddisha, its new emerging brotherhood, and the private women's school. If translators are a problem, open Avotaynu for referrals.

2. *Slownik Geograficzny Krolestwa Polskiego*. This is a Polish language gazetteer with descriptive entries about Polish towns, a reprint of the 1880-1902 edition published a hundred years ago. The article on Wachnowka, referred to as Wachna in 1578, spoke of a little town on the Olshanka River in the district of Berdychev and reported its distance to two surrounding towns in yiorst (called *wiorsta* in Polish 2/3 mile) along with its 2,245 inhabitants. It went into great detail on the ownership by various Polish princesses through the years, and finally to the last owner who was once the former field marshal of the district Berdychev. (I wonder if he kept records?) At the freeing of the peasants, it listed all the new owners. Then it said something interesting. It referred to Wachnowka as a "District" with 9 local villages, counties, encircling 15 localities and included the town of Wachnowka, 2 small peasant settlements, 4 inns, 1,666 houses, 10,382 inhabitants, and goes on about peasants, mansions, treasure, and church land. I will have to speak to the "District Maven" Harry Boonin about this!

3. *Megilat Ha-Tevah (Scroll of Slaughter)*. This is Hebrew language material relating to the history of the pogroms and the slaughter of the Jews in the Ukraine, Great Russia and White Russia. It was written by Eliezer David Rosental (Jerusalem-Tel Aviv: Havurah, 1927-1930, 3 volumes).

Zachary Baker wrote a wonderful article in *Toledot** (Vol. 4, No. 1-2, page 19) in which he describes *Megilat Ha-Tevah*. Of interest is the following information. Eliezer David Rosental, born in Bessarabia (1856), was a Hebrew teacher and writer in Teplik, Podolia at the time of the 1919 pogroms. After witnessing the destruction and killing, he dedicated the rest of his life to documenting the happenings in each town that had suffered. The result was the *Scroll of Slaughter (Megilat Ha-Tevah)*. Unfortunately, he died at the age of 32 before completing all of the towns. Only the first nine letters of the Hebrew alphabet were covered: A, B, D, G, I, Kh, O, T, U, V, Z. Each letter has two alphabetical sections. One contains detailed descriptions of each town listed; the other lists the victims of those towns. Rosental states in his introduction that the material for his book rested on reliable eyewitness accounts, official lists, official documents, and the author's own experiences. He wanted to create a memorial "for all generations."

My Megilat Ha-Tevah findings: Joan Gross of Philadelphia and Sheila Weber of New York (found through the JGS Family Finder) joined with me to fund the translation of these articles. Six typed, single-spaced pages described the pogrom of Vakhnovka, along with the atrocities in nearby towns. It included names of townspeople, Cossacks and bandits. Following these six pages, were five pages of victims from all the towns beginning with the letter "V". These were the most surprising of all. There, listed under another town name, was my elusive ancestor Abraham Sirota who came to the United States, married off his daughters, and returned to Russia because he didn't like it here. We never knew what became of him. In addition, I finally learned how to spell my great-grandmother's maiden name because a relative was listed with the correct spelling. Ironically, the poor soul had to die in a pogrom to get on a list for me to learn how to spell his name. Other names completed many endings to family enigmas. At the end of this victim list is another with the number of Jews killed according to the "lists". Yet, still, is an additional list according to "word of mouth". These showed discrepancies.

4. Le-Toledot Ha-Kehilot Be-Folin. This is a Hebrew language book on the Jewish communities of Poland by Zevi Hirsch ben Hayyim Aryeh Leibush ha-Levi Horowitz (Jerusalem: Mosad Harav Kook, 1978, 20, 560 pages). Also, in Zachary Baker's article in Toledot* (Vol. 4, Nos. 1-2, pages 19-21), he describes Le-Toledot Ha-Kehilot Be-Folin. Of interest is the following information. Horowitz's work did not appear in print until 1978, although it was written in the 1930s. According to Mr. Baker, it was intended to be a source for the history of the rabbinate of over 100 Jewish communities in and around Poland, especially Galicia, but World War I broke out, and the first edition never appeared. Entries for towns are in alphabetical sequence with a small supplement at the end covering five non-Polish communities. Each entry has a small sketch of the community's history and a list of rabbinical centers such as Apta/Opatow (my husband's town), Belz, Dukla, Greiditz, Hrubieszow, Tysmienica, and Zamosc, which are longer. There are no entries for Warsaw, Vilna, Cracow, Lublin, Lodz, or Lwow. There is no index of names. I have not translated Apta/Opatow's pages yet.

I think it would be a good idea for all parties interested in sharing translation costs for "common towns" to get together. I would be willing to be a liaison.

Write to Elaine Kolinsky,
7608 Dorcas Street,
Philadelphia, PA 19111 (SASE).

*Toledot issues (hard copy) can be found by writing to Sophie Caplan,
AJGS, POB 154,
Northbridge, NSW, 2063.

NEWS FROM RAGAS

by Linda Cantor

(Reprinted from Lineage, Spring-Summer 1995)

The first edition of its newsletter provides us with much information on the work of RAGAS, the Russian-American Genealogical Archival Service. Its stated goal is to serve as a clearinghouse for requests to the various archives in the republics of the former Soviet Union. Consequently, RAGAS is also working to complete reference guides and indexes to records of the archives.

RAGAS/Moscow has been reorganized as the Genealogy and Family History Society ("G&FHS"), a non-profit organization registered with the Moscow Ministry of Justice. As a result, the Society was able to negotiate official agreements with regional archives in Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus.

You can contact the Society directly at P.O. Box 459, Moscow, 127349, Russia or at <vladrag@glas.apc.org> by E-Mail or by fax at 095/246-20-20, addressed to M-200 or 095/245-08-39, addressed to M-200. However, you should still send research requests to RAGAS/USA at P.O. Box 236, Glen Echo, MD 20812; fax: 202/219-1250, or <RAGAS@dgs.dgsys.com> via E-Mail, but note that they no longer accept the Specific Request Form. Use the Fuller Request Form, with a non-refundable fee of US\$50, in order to initiate a search. This change was made to reduce the number of negative replies that were generated by the use of the single request form. Using a more general request will create a better chance of success, enabling the Archives to have a choice of records to look up for you.

Several categories of records are available in the various archives - census records (revision or tax census lists and population censuses), vital statistic records (birth, death and marriage), religious institution records, military records, court records (business records), police records, educational institution records, newspapers, and city and business directories. They do not all exist for all localities. Many records, in what was the western Soviet Union, were destroyed during World War II. In addition, many religious records were destroyed during the Stalin years.

Most archivists have limited understanding of genealogy and are not necessarily supportive of family research. There are few finding guides, indexes, reference guides and, since most archives have been open to the public only since 1990, few archivists experienced in helping genealogists. RAGAS is trying to fill this void by setting standards and guidelines for all archivists to follow as well as establishing inventories and indexes for all available records.

RAGAS has had positive results in obtaining genealogical information from the Central Historical Archives of Russia in St. Petersburg, of Belarus in Minsk and Grodno, and of Ukraine in Lviv and from

LIST OF FAMILY GENEALOGIES

Developed by Dr Paul Jacobi

Listed below are those family genealogies developed by Dr Paul Jacobi that are deposited at the Dorot Center at Beth Hatefutsoth in Tel Aviv. Jacobi has devoted more than 40 years to tracing the 420 leading Ashkenazi families which shaped European-Jewish life for centuries before the Holocaust. Dr Jacobi is the outstanding expert on the genealogy of ancient Jewish families.

Badt	Isserles A (incl
Ballin	ReMa, Opatow)
Bamberger	Joshua-Maga'sh
Bassevi (incl von	(first Pnei Joshua)
Truenburg, Disraeli	Kalahora (-Kalifari-
Beyth	Lansberg, Sephardi family)
Buchner (Bochner)	Kalishch (v-er)
Bunems A & B	Kam
Cohn A (Hamburg)	Kara (Caro; I/II) von Kaulla
Darmstadt (-staedter)	Kisch
- Manesse	Klauber (incl Isserheim)
Eibeschuetz	Krochmal
mi-Ellrich (Mehleisch)	Krotoschin B
Emden A, B & C (incl	Krotoschin C
Grenhut, Scheier,	Kuh
Emden Kolom=MaHarik)	Kulp
Ettingen A (Jona)	Lazarus (-Hirsh-Poesing)
Ettingen B (Veit)	Lichtheim
Falk B	Lida-Freimann
(=2nd Pnei Joshua)	Lissa C
Fernbach	(Frankfurt-am-Main)
Frensdor (-fer)	Litten
Friedmann	Loeb (the MaHaRaI's
(Rushiner Hasidim)	family)
Frumkin A, B & C	Lowotitz
Geiger	Luria
Gombinner	Marktbreit(-er)
Graetzer (-Gratz)	May
Hakohen C	Meisels
(incl Schach)	Naumberg
Halevi A (incl Edels-	Norden
MaHaRaMESH & TaS)	Perles (Prague, Munich,
Halevi B	Konigsberg)
(-Charif) Hambro	Prager A
Hamburg (-er)	Pringsheim/Dohm
Heilbut	Raschi
Helen	Raschach
Henoch B	Ree
Herzkus	Reishcher (-Backofen)
(incl Lopatiner)	Rintel A, B & C
Heschel	Rothschild
Hollaender C (Semter etc)	Schachna (-Neustadt)
Horowitz Vols I/III	Schick
Isserl A (incl	Schidlow
Boscowitz, Loev)	Schotten
Isserlein	Schwelm

JEWISH GENEALOGY IN AUSTRALIA

For overseas researchers of Jewish relations in Australia

For Australians researching Jewish ancestors here or overseas

Miscellaneous associated information, links, and trivia

<http://www.zeta.org.au/~feraltek/jozgen.htm>

EASTERN EUROPEAN FINDS IN GERMANY

A follow-up by Peter Lande

The Standesamt I, Registrar of Vital Records (Birth, Marriage and Deaths), Rueckerstrasse 9, Berlin contains civil records for areas of the former eastern Germany which are now Poland and Russia for the years 1874 to the early 1940's. Most of this collection conforms to the pre-World War II borders but also includes Danzig (Gdansk) as well as some small towns in Grand Duchy of Posen.

Requests should include as much data as possible, such as place and date of birth, marriage or death; names of children; names of persons being married; maiden name of bride. All requests need to specify locality as that is how it is organised. The fee per inquiry is DM7 but may take as long as a year.

As with all German records, privacy regulations prevent information being given to anyone other than direct descendants except for "scientific purposes."

Peter also writes about other German holdings, for example the microfilming of the records of the Berlin Weissensee Cemetery which will eventually become available at the Centrum Judaicum Foundation, New Synagogue Berlin.

For more details refer to AVOTAYNU, Vol 9 No 1 Spring 1993 & Vol 9 No 3 Fall 1993

Segal	Traboat
Selmik	Utitz
Serwatzter-Itzkowitz	Volozhin (-er)
Sobotka	Wallach
Spira (-Schapiro Vol I/II)	Wolfsohn/Bucki
Strass B	Wormser A
Temeris	Wormser B
Teomin	(incl de Worms)

(From Shorashim Vol 3 No 3 Summer 1994)

JEWISH GENEALOGY BOOKSHELF

by Sophie Caplan

Those books with an asterisk (*) in front are held by our Society, books in the personal library of some of our members are marked with two asterisks (**) and books marked with a ☆ can be borrowed from the Reverend Katz Library at the North Shore Synagogue where our workshops are held.

BOOKS ON NEW ZEALAND

* LAZARUS MORRIS GOLDMAN, **"THE HISTORY OF THE JEWS IN NEW ZEALAND"**, 1958, A.H. & A.W. Reed, Wellington, N.Z., is the classic book on the history of the Jews in New Zealand from Joseph Barrow Montefiore's visit in 1830 and Joel Samuel Polack, brother of Abraham Polack who settled in 1831 and founded Kororareka to the end of the second world war. Rare, but probably in many libraries.

** LAURENCE NATHAN, **"AS OLD AS AUCKLAND"**, 1984, L.D. Nathan Group of Companies, Auckland, N.Z. This is the story at once of a family, a company, and of the origins of the Auckland Jewish community in the north island of New Zealand. With family tree, illustrative portraits, appendices and an excellent index. A fascinating book.

** ANN and LAURIE GLUCKMANN, editors, **"IDENTITY AND INVOLVEMENT, AUCKLAND JEWRY PAST AND PRESENT"**, Vols I and II, 1990 and 1992, are two volumes which tell the story of the Auckland Jewish community through the histories of families and of individuals, relating them at the same time to their families of origin in England, Holland, Poland, Russia, Czechoslovakia and Germany. The connections to families in USA and Israel make these two volumes of more than local Jewish genealogical interest. The families described include BARNETT, BRIESS, BRUELL, ASHER, MYERS, MIELZINER, NAREWCZEWITZ now NAREV, KLIPPEL, GLUCKMAN, ADLER, FILLER, SIMMS, ISRAEL and many others.

Volume II is still available for \$NZ20.

Write to: Gluckmann, 6D The Pines, 75 Owens Road, Epsom, Auckland 3, New Zealand.

☆ STEPHEN LEVINE, editor, **"A STANDARD FOR THE PEOPLE"**, 1995, Hazard Press, Christchurch, N.Z., is a massive (3 Kg) history of the Wellington Hebrew Congregation's first 150 years and of a large number of the individual families, though not all, who have been part of it. Many individual writers have contributed text and photographs, though those who were not included have been moved to complain. Yet it is an absorbing volume, with a wealth of details which even enabled me to find long-lost relatives of an uncle who perished in the Holocaust. An excellent index.

EDITORIAL

(continued from page 1)

by visiting experts. We endeavour to keep you informed of all new developments in Jewish genealogy.

At our Jewish Genealogy Day on 10th November we hope to hear a talk by Gerry Winerman on Jewish Genealogical Resources and Data in U.S.A. Gerry is president of the Los Angeles Jewish Genealogical Society and will be visiting Sydney and Melbourne and possibly other cities in Australia in November.

In February we expect the visit to Australia of Chava Agmon, the world expert on the CARO/CARA/KARO/KARA genealogy. We are inviting her to talk to the various branches of our Society wherever she will be.

In early February there will be an Australasian Congress on Genealogy and Family History in Christchurch, New Zealand. Unfortunately so far the projected programme has nothing of Jewish genealogical interest, despite the title "Landfall in Southern Seas". The emphasis seems to be wholly on English, Scottish, Welsh, Irish and German origins with possibly some Maori topics.

In July the Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies will hold its 5th International Seminar in Paris. Seminar documents will be published simultaneously in English and in French. The date has now been changed to 14th to 19th July, 1997 and the venue will be a centrally situated hotel in Paris. Once again there will be a panel of distinguished speakers on topics vital to Jewish genealogists and we urge those who can afford the time and the travel costs to do their utmost not to miss it. There will be simultaneously translations of lectures. A group of associated trips to various Eastern European archival and genealogically important areas are being offered as optional extras to participants of the Seminar. Some of us are planning to go to the Paris seminar.

We are interested to hear of others who are thinking of going.

Sophie Caplan, Editor

NEWS FROM RAGAS

(continued from page 10)

Ukrainian regional archives in Odessa, Kamenets Podolsk, Dnepropetrovsk, Zaporozhye, and Chernigov. On the other hand, they have had little success with the Central Historical Archives in Kiev or the regional archives in Ivano-Frankovsk, Ternopol, Rovna, and Lutsk.

In future newsletters, RAGAS plans to provide brief summaries of archival records, descriptions of conditions in particular archives, a profile of the process of obtaining a specific report (with the consent of the requester), and a surname exchange list, without the requester's name and address. They hope this will lead to a permanent database for the family historians with roots in the former Soviet Union.