



Winter 2012

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# Mishpacha

Quarterly Publication of  
The Jewish Genealogy Society  
of Greater Washington

"Shaya, A Family Tale"

by Alan Levitt

My grandfather, Shaya, was born in Kishinev, Bessarabia (now Moldova). He grew up learning how to take care of horses and other animals in his father's stables. He was a big, strong, tall man, and when he was a teen worked for the Russian army feeding and tending their horses and wagons. Although I never met him, over the last 40 years as my interest in family heritage increased, I asked a lot of questions about him to my own father and my Dad's seven other older siblings. All are gone now.

Among the many stories, traits, and lore passed down were two tales that I just didn't know to be true. One was that while Shaya was working for the Russian army, an anti-Semitic officer ordered him to clean up horse manure - but he had to pick it up with his bare hands, not with gloves or a shovel. Upon refusing to obey, the officer purportedly flicked off part of Shaya's ear with his sword.

Another story was that Shaya had the audacity to share his observations with officers - that he had seen that some of the soldiers did not treat their horses humanely. This story also ended when an officer used his sword on my grandfather's ear.

There are so many tales and variations that we learn when we are tracing our history. You can ask each

relative the exact same question and can never be sure if their responses are true, or even if a version of them might have actually happened. Just as our attempts to trace a name of a relative that has been translated from one language to another, and "heard" differently by officials writing the words they hear down, a similar thing often occurs when stories are passed down over decades, not unlike the game of "telephone."

So, I had accepted that this tale about Shaya was one of many more pieces of my heritage that I would never be able to confirm —at least until earlier this year, when I learned I might be able to uncover more about my ancestors by searching Canadian archives. My grandfather emigrated to Canada in 1905, right after the Kishiniv pogrom. With the help of the Jewish Genealogy Society of Montreal, we found 100+ year old records, including his actual Petition for Naturalization. Under the physical description of Shaya Levitt, an official had a handwritten "6 ft., blue eyes"... and "clipped right ear."

#### **About the Writer**

*Alan Levitt lives in Chevy Chase, MD. He is a JGSGW member and a founding member of the new Jewishgen Bessarabia SIG. He has a daughter named "Shia."*

"Every man of the children of Israel shall encamp by his own standard with the ensign of his family"  
—Numbers 2:2

# JGSGW

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Contact: [jgsgw\\_dc@comcast.net](mailto:jgsgw_dc@comcast.net)*

## From The Editor

Several months ago I sent out an email request to the Society membership asking for you to submit stories to be published in Michpacha. The hope was that a few stories would come in providing me with the basis for a great winter edition. This hope was realized when the stories began to arrive.

This Winter 2012 issue holds a number of those stories and Spring will hold more. I could not possibly print all that I received in one issue. Your stories are the gift that keeps on giving and I hope that you will continue to send them to me to keep Mishpacha chock full of your experiences.

Thank you all for your tales of travel back to the land of your ancestors, tips for helping others break down

walls, discoveries of relatives you never knew you had, and anecdotes of simple things that made you laugh or cry as you made your way through the puzzle of your family members lives. These tales and tips have been a pleasure for me to read and I hope that this is so for all of you.

Please continue to send me your stories - short and long - and I will do my best to get them into these pages .

I wish you all a very happy and healthy new year!

Jan R. Fine  
Editor

# JGSGW

## FROM THE PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

Dear Cousins:

The outstanding success of the 31st IAJGS International Conference on Jewish Genealogy applauds loudly the hard work and dedication of our members and volunteers without whom we would not have been able to plan and execute this gem of a conference.

One of the goals that drove many of us to forge forward was the knowledge that with a successful conference, comes the financial fruits that will help the Jewish Genealogy Society of Greater Washington to pursue programs and projects that will excite and stimulate our membership.

I remind you here of the essence of four of our society's objectives:

- To collect, preserve, and disseminate Jewish genealogical knowledge and information;
- To stimulate and provide instruction in the use of research methodology and adherence to standards of accuracy and thoroughness in research;
- To foster careful documentation and to promote scholarly genealogical writing and publication;
- To promote the preservation of Jewish genealogical records and resources.

Most recently, JGSGW was engaged in a project to index the Jews buried in Arlington National Cemetery. We maintain a website with this data and we have also contributed the data to JOWBR for the reference of all researchers. This is one of many worthy projects undertaken by JGSGW. Others, such as the indexing of RG59 and RG84 at the National Archives are posted to Jewishgen and are of benefit to the genealogical community.

**Now I challenge you to submit to me by January 31, 2012 an application for a project that will be worthy of our society's efforts and backing. I refer you to the section on our website detailing project funding. This may be found by clicking [here](#) and to the application that may be downloaded from that site.**

As President of our society, I will appoint a committee to review the completed applications and to make recommendations to the Board of Directors. At this time, we do not have a Research Chairperson, so I hope that I will also hear from society members interested in serving as the Application Committee Chair and others who are interested in serving on the committee.

Applications may be submitted by members and non-members alike and they will be judged on their contribution to genealogy - specifically to Jewish genealogy.

Warm wishes for a happy, healthy and prosperous new year,

*Marlene Bishow*

President

[president@jgsgw.org](mailto:president@jgsgw.org)

# A Jewish American Explores her Family's Past in Eastern Europe

by Linda D. Epstein | *originally printed by McClatchy-Tribune News Service*

June 27, 2011 reprinted here by permission of the author

**M**ore than a year ago plans were made between my dad's sister and our mutual paternal cousin to travel back to "the old country" and see where our ancestors had lived before coming to America. (The first to come over on my father's paternal side was my grandfather's uncle in 1871; he changed our family name from Tikotzinski to Epstein.) I have been working on my family's tree for many years, so my aunt and cousin decided I should be a part of the trip as well.

We would travel to Grodno, Belarus, where my grandfather was born (then part of Russia), and Sokolka, Poland, where HIS father was born. We would travel to Minsk, Belarus (also then part of Russia), home of my father's maternal grandparents. Our cousin's mother's side of the family was known to have perished outside Panevezys, Lithuania, in World War II, so we would make a pilgrimage there as well. Three other major cities were included — Warsaw, Poland; Moscow, and Vilnius, Lithuania — to give us a chance to see the sites there. And thus became our trip.



*The author shown here photographing her great grandfather's headstone in Grodno, Belarus.*

**B**efore World War II, Warsaw was a major center of Jewish life and culture, with one-third of the population consisting of Jews. The Jewish community of 394,000 was the largest in both Poland and Europe and second largest in the world.

From October 1939 to January 1940, the Germans began their anti-Jewish measures — prohibiting Jews from riding in public transportation, requiring them to wear the Jewish star, and conscripting them into forced labor. In April 1940, the ghetto construction began. Thirty percent of Warsaw's population was to be confined to an area that comprised of just 2.4 percent of city lands. Christians were moved out of the area as Jews from Warsaw and other outlying areas were moved in and the population of the Warsaw Ghetto reached more than half a million people. The ghetto was almost entirely leveled during an uprising in 1943 but a number of streets and buildings survived.

We spent most of a day at the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw, where Jan Jagielski gave us a tour of the museum as well as his library archives. He had walls full of binders for each city and town in Poland. These binders showed photos of the synagogues and yeshivas as well as of some of the Jewish people who lived there. We also were given our own screening of "912 Days of the Warsaw Ghetto," a sobering documentary about the ghetto and eventual extermination of the Jews.

"I can still see their faces" is a project created by Golda Tencer, a Polish actress with Jewish origins. Two rows of old tenement houses in the center of the city, dating from 1880-1900, show what Warsaw probably looked like before the war and ultimate destruction of the city. Tencer appealed for people to send in photographs of Polish Jews so that an exhibition could be created commemorating those who died. These large photographs hang on the outer



*“All journeys have secret destinations of which the traveler is unaware.”*

*My aunt showed me this quote by German philosopher Martin Buber she had written on the front page of her travel diary as we boarded our plane in New York City for Eastern Europe. We didn't realize how true it would be to our own voyage.*

buildings' walls for everyone to see the diversity of Polish Jewry.

Our Polish guide drove us to Sokolka, about six hours from Warsaw. Our first stop in Sokolka was the train station, to get our tickets for the next day's trip to Grodno. In my notes on the family, I knew that my great-great-grandfather worked with coal. In the lot in front of the station was a huge truck transporting coal; I realized then how special it was to be in this town.

Sokolka, with a population of 28,000, is in the eastern part of Poland bordering Belarus, and is situated on the international road and train route Warsaw-Bialystok-Grodno. In the center of town is a museum devoted to the history of Sokolka. We saw rooms full of costumes and crafts of the town. From there we walked several blocks to an old cemetery on a hill. I stood among the few headstones remaining, which were all worn away except for one that still had a faint Hebrew inscription. I sat down and cried, knowing that I had spent the afternoon where my grandfather, his father and his father had walked and lived.

\* \* \*

From Sokolka we took the train to Grodno. A visa is required to enter Belarus, which we had applied for and received before our trip. It took almost an hour for the visa check and upon arrival in Grodno we were told we had to buy health insurance for four euros before entering. Although the passport agents were very brisk, we found that the power of a smile overcame the language barrier.

Belarus had the highest per capita mortality of the occupied countries in World War II. Every family lost someone in the war. There is a different understanding of the Holocaust there and more Jews were hidden (again, per capita) than in any other country. There is no history of pogroms (violent riots) and everyone maintains that they have some Jewish blood in them. In the 1870s Belarus became part of the Russian Empire; before that it was Polish. In 1921 it reverted to being part of Poland and in 1939 it fell

into Russian hands. Grodno was not badly damaged in World War II as it came under German occupation on June 23, 1941 — the first day of Operation Barbarossa, when Germany invaded the Soviet Union.

Grodno, in western Belarus, has a population of more than 300,000. The city is naturally divided into two districts by the Neman River. The left bank district was built up mainly after the war. The right bank is comprised of the historical center, with architectural and cultural monuments of the 12th to the first half of the 19th centuries.

My grandfather's seven brothers and sisters came to America from Grodno two at a time, the last being my grandfather, age 10, and one of his sisters, who was 13, in 1910. They left their parents in Grodno.

From a family document, I knew where my great-grandparents were buried. I had always hoped to see their headstones, but we were unsure whether the cemetery was still standing or was in disrepair. As it turns out, the cemetery - in the "Zaniemanshi Forshtat" area of Grodno - was in very good condition. A caretaker lives on the grounds and the cemetery is behind a wall and locked gate. Volunteers have been lifting and resetting the stones that had fallen over. We weren't able to find the exact grave locations, as the cemetery no longer is organized in aisles and rows of plots, but we stood looking over the area where people from that era are buried.

Beyond our wildest dreams was the stunning connection we were able to make by spending a day with Gregory Hosid, a native Grodno Holocaust survivor, who led us to the site of the destroyed Zanemanye wooden synagogue where my grandfather remembered playing in the balcony as a child. It stood in what was the Jewish neighborhood of Grodno-Forshtat ("before the city"), an elevated area on the banks of the Neman River. Zanemanye meant "behind the Neman River." We were overcome to be standing where we believed my grandfather lived as a child.

(next page)

Hosid told us his personal story, of how he had jumped from the train that was taking him to the Treblinka death camp and hid in the woods. He ran into another refugee in the snow, a man whose wounds he cleaned, a shoemaker who fixed Hosid's shoes, and in turn they saved each other's lives. They joined up with the partisans to fight the Germans. Hosid took us to the Jewish ghetto and the execution sites of Grodno. We saw the Great Synagogue that was built in the 16th century. It burned down in 1902 and was rebuilt by the Jewish community.

My father's mother's family came from Minsk but we had no information other than that, so our guides took us to the Belarusian State Museum of the Great Patriotic War, which is the world's largest collection of World War II memorabilia. The three floors show weapons, medals, underground publications, general everyday-living items used by the partisans and more. We also went to the Jewish ghetto and The Pit, a memorial on the site of the main execution pit in Minsk (5,000 Jews were murdered in one day) with a sculpture depicting the victims.

\* \* \*

We spent a day in Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania, and saw The Choral Synagogue — the only active synagogue remaining in Vilnius. We then had a guide take us to Panevezys, about two hours north of Vilnius. We saw the former Panevezys yeshiva, now a market / cafe. We then met with Gennadi Kofman, the head of the Jewish community of Panevezys. Although we were there for my cousin's family history, it gave me

great pride, as a genealogist, to "give back to the old country": My cousin showed Kofman her grandmother's passport and photos of her grandparents she had brought with her, which he gladly made copies of for their archives.

Our guide took us to a park which was once the only Jewish cemetery in Panevezys. The tombstones had been taken as foundation stones and walkways during the Holocaust, but some had been reclaimed and used in a memorial at the site of the cemetery. From there we were driven out of town to a dirt road, where a sign stated "Jewish Genocide Victims Cemetery." It was here that 8,000 Jews were killed in the pits outside Panevezys.

Friends asked me why I wasn't going to the concentration camps on this trip. In Panevezys it hit me — I wanted to see where my ancestors had lived. I had seen the Jewish ghettos in all the cities we were visiting. I saw where the Jews were forced to live during the Holocaust. Yes, they died in the ghettos as well, but I was seeing where they lived.

This voyage was about life for me, not death — to see where and how my family and other Jews lived in the land of my ancestors.

#### ***About the Writer***

*Linda D. Epstein is a JGSGW member who lives in Bethesda, MD. She is Senior Photo Editor for McClatchy-Tribune Photo Service: [lepstein@mctinfoservices.com](mailto:lepstein@mctinfoservices.com)*

#### **IF YOU GO:**

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##### **TOUR GUIDES IN POLAND**

Warsaw Travel Tours: [www.warsawtraveltours.com](http://www.warsawtraveltours.com), telephone 48-664-702-755

##### **TOUR GUIDES IN BELARUS**

Voluntas: [fjs@voluntas.org](mailto:fjs@voluntas.org), telephone 375 29 699 4016

##### **HOTELS**

Mamaison Al-Suites Spa Hotel Pokrovka Moscow, [www.mamaison.com](http://www.mamaison.com), telephone 7-495-229-57-57

Kronen Park Hotel, Grodno, [www.kronon.by](http://www.kronon.by), telephone 375-29-360-00-50

##### **MUSEUMS**

The Belarusian State Museum of the Great Patriotic War, Francisk Skorina Ave., 25a, Minsk, telephone 375-17-227-11-66

Jewish Historical Institute, Tlomackie 3/5, Warsaw, telephone 22-827-92-21, [www.jewishinstitute.org.pl](http://www.jewishinstitute.org.pl)

Museum Sokolka, ul. Grodzienska 1, 16-100 Sokolka Poland, telephone 48-85-7112435

**A gallery of the authors photos from her trip may be viewed on the web. Click [here](#) to go directly to the website.**

# "Funny River"

by George Rothstein



The newspaper article is from the Sullivan County NY Record, Vol. 48, No. 31 of August 12, 1915



Map showing the Neversink River area near South Fallsburg, NY

I was trying to track down my paternal grandfather's nine siblings based on sketchy information from an elderly relative. All I knew about his youngest brother, Abraham Rothstein, was that he lived in Jersey City, NJ and drowned while on vacation in 1915 and that the river in which he died had a "funny name."

I made two wild guesses: that he probably died in the summer and that he might have died in one of the few welcoming places for Jews to vacation near New York in 1915, the Catskills.

I got a Google map of the Catskills and knew that I was hot on the trail when I found that the Neversink River flows through the Catskills. That was a pretty "funny" place to drown!

I called the reference department of a public library in a town in Sullivan County in the Catskills and asked the librarian if she would look at the local newspaper for any articles about drownings for all of August, 1915. Within 15 minutes she emailed me back the newspaper article with the whole story of my great uncle's demise.

I wish all of my research produced such quick and successful outcomes!

### About the Writer

George Rothstein spent his career with the National Security Agency as a Mathematician, Analyst and Attorney. He lives in Columbia, MD



Kedainiai, Lithuania, September 25, 2011

## Holocaust Memorial

by Myra Sklarew

*Myra Sklarew was in Lithuania in September and October, her 12th trip there over a period of 18 years, this time to speak at the memorial in Kedainiai where the names of those killed were engraved in a steel structure next to the massacre pit, made by an artist. Below is the text of her speech given that day.*

There is a great deal of criticism of Lithuania these days for the handling of issues dealing with the Holocaust. It is my sense that on an individual basis much more is being done now by Lithuanians to acknowledge what happened than in any previous years. One-third of all school children in Lithuania took part in the Holocaust Day memorial this year. There were many observances all over the country. I attended several that were moving and important.

Yudelis Ronderis, who was born in Kedainiai, is not able to be with us today but I bring words from him: I am the only one of my immediate family who stayed alive. I must be thankful that my mother allowed me to go out. If not, I would be in this pit. I am thankful to the people in the Kedainiai Museum that they keep the memory of those who were killed, and I thank all those who remember.

My thanks to Rimantas Zirgulis, Director of the Kedainiai Regional Museum and the project, Letters for the Future Generations, to the Kedainiai Municipality, to the International Commission for the Evaluation of the Crimes of the Nazi and Soviet Occupation Regimes in Lithuania, and all who have been involved in this memorial today.

I would like to tell the story of my cousin Eliezer Volpe (Leiser Wolpe) who was born in this place and whose family members—twenty-nine beloved ones, grandmothers and grandfathers, uncles and aunts and cousins, children and babies just awakening to the world — lie here in this earth.

Leiser did not die here. The first time he died was in the cellar at 78 Laisves Aleja in Kaunas at four in the morning in late June 1941. All the fathers and sons in the building were shot in the cellar. Leiser was a teenager. He was the only survivor. His father died there. He was wounded but escaped. He died the second time when his small brother Chaim was burned to death in the Slobodka/Vilijampole Hospital along with all the nurses, doctors and patients. And he died the third time when he had to help his mother give birth on the earthen floor of a stable to his baby brother Benjamin. The infant died after a few days and it was Leiser's job to wrap him in an old shirt and bury him. Leiser died again when his hiding place, his malina, was bombed and he somehow survived long enough to be taken to Dachau Concentration Camp. Though he was ill with TB, he survived a forced march and the Allied bombing which caused the Germans to flee and he

somehow made his way to St. Ottilien, a Benedictine monastery.

When I wrote about Keidan after my first trips to Lithuania in 1993 and 1994, after Yudelis Ronderis walked me past every single house and taught me about those who had once lived here, I felt a great loss of hope. I ended my poem with words from the Book of Job: "Where then is my hope? He hath fenced up my way that I cannot pass. He hath broken me down on every side and I am gone and my hope hath He plucked up like a tree."

Each of us is capable of hate and of love. What fear, what rage permits us to bring harm to one another? I do not think we understand yet why this happens. But here, today, in this place, 70 years later, Rimantas Zirgulis feels it is his mission as an historian and as a decent human being and as one whose own family was deported to Siberia for 16 years for generations of his family his mission to commemorate those Jewish people who were killed in Kedainiai. He says: I think it is the duty of contemporary citizens of Kedainiai it should be an important lesson to commemorate the Jewish people. And probably the main lesson for Lithuanians should be to finish dividing the society into "we" and "they" the reason why we are going to write all family names in Lithuanian and to invite all to Kedainiai.

So today, I take away the words of Job. There is great hope happening in this place thanks to Rimantas and to many hands who have made this possible. I made a promise to my cousin Leiser before he died that somehow the names of his family members would be remembered. I never dreamed, nor did he, that it could be possible to happen here in Kedainiai. My blessings and thanks for all who stand here today and for those who did not have a voice.

### *About the Writerr*

*Myra Sklarew, a JGSGW member, lives in Bethesda, MD*



## "Gold in Death Records"

by Charles Polinger

It recently occurred to me, while attending a family gathering that I am no longer in the middle of the age range of my family, and I am creeping closer to being at the top. This was a great awakening, since I normally go through my daily chores without giving age much thought. While a few members are in the late 80's to 90's there is a larger group of us who are in the 60's and 70's and are the seniors of the family. We are now, as they say, the "elder statesmen."

This transition to the senior level leads to the inevitability that a number of members of the family are now deceased. I will skip the emotional side of the losses, and focus instead on the wealth of information in death records.

Three basic places I find valuable genealogical information are the Social Security Death Index (SSDI), newspaper obituaries, and death certificates. Basic SSDI information can be found for free on the internet, but this gives only the month of death for persons under Social Security. I tend to use this free SSDI information, but am reluctant asking the Social Security Administration for a copy of the original application since their latest fee was \$27.00 per inquiry. I have, on more than one occasion, requested SSDI information and received records for an incorrect person, a costly mistake. When I have acquired the SSDI records, I have learned such information as occupations, employers, and addresses at time of signing up for Social Security.

I find a large amount of information contained in newspaper obituaries, which I tend to clip and paste for my genealogy files. But, I find the most valuable obituaries come from previous generations, people I barely knew if at all. Finding obituaries, though, can be a challenge, as newspapers usually keep current death notices online for a brief period. To get older

obituaries, I have found the US Library of Congress to be a good source. Knowing the city of death (possibly from the SSDI) and at least the month and year of death, the Library of Congress can produce a microfilm with the full local newspapers for that period.

As an example of the above, I once searched for information about my uncle Jerome Rosen, who someone claimed had died in San Diego in 1960. I had the date of death from the SSDI and obtained the newspapers with the obituary from the US Library of Congress' microfilms. From the obituary, I learned the name of Jerome's wife and found out he also had a son. A letter to the California vital statistics bureau resulted in a death certificate, providing even more details, such as Jerome's occupation and address, as well as cause of death.

Death certificates can be difficult to find, due to privacy issues. These restrictions on access change over time, though. When I wanted to read the death certificate for my grandfather, who died in Washington, DC, I had to tell the Vital Statistics Office I was his son before they would send me a copy. However, I once contacted a funeral home for one relative and talked to a very cooperative director who sent me the death certificate directly.

While deaths of family members can indeed be sad or tragic, public records left behind can be a goldmine of information for genealogists. The trick is digging for the gold and using available resources as well as the internet. With so many of my elder family members now deceased, death records sometimes provide the only links to our families.

### *About the Writer*

*Charles Pollinger, a JGSGW member, lives in Burke, VA*

Next Issue of MISHPACHA...

Spring 2012

Planned release on April 1, 2012

**Deadline for submissions:**

March 1, 2011

**Submissions should be made to the editor, Jan Fine, by [email](#).**

## JGSGW January Meeting

### JGSGW IS PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE

## “Writing the Family History: Creative Concepts for a Lasting Legacy”

Speaker: Sandra MacLean Clunies, CG

Many researchers and family historians can then assemble charts, documents, photos, artifacts – but are not yet comfortable with writing the narrative family history. The personal stories of both ancestors and the present generation – i.e., what are we doing to leave a record of our lives for the future, as well as sharing stories from the past?

This presentation outlines 20 simple elements to consider, and engages the audience in some participation as well. It was generated after an article of mine published in the National Genealogical Society Quarterly: “Writing the Family History: Creative Concepts for a Lasting Legacy” by Sandra MacLean Clunies, CG, who is a past winner of the NGS Family History Writing Contest (Putting Family History into Context: A Special Issue of the National Genealogical Society Quarterly NGSQ vol. 88, December 2000).

Many who hear this presentation come up afterwards and say they have now lost their fears and are now inspired to go home and start writing down the stories! With the December talk showing how to produce a final book, this could then add the important dimension of unique, personal, and very meaningful content to such a project. It follows my grandmother’s adage that “you can eat an elephant if you cut it into small enough pieces” ! This presentation demonstrates the “small pieces” that anyone can start to write.

This program will reflect a natural progression from the December program presented by Marlis Humphrey.

**Date:** Sunday, January 8, 2012

**Time:** 1:00 PM Schmooze, 1:30 PM Meeting and Program

**Location:** Adas Israel, 2850 Quebec Street NW, Washington, DC 20008

(202) 362-4433 <http://www.adasisrael.org/>



**Sandra MacLean Clunies, CG** has been certified by the Board for Certification of Genealogists since 1993. She is Past President of the National Capital Area Chapter of the Association of Professional Genealogists (APG) 2005-2008, past member of the Board of Directors of APG 2005-2008 and is a past winner of the National Genealogical Society Family History Writing Contest and was named the 2009 winner of the prestigious Grahame T. Smallwood Jr. Award of Merit by the Association of Professional Genealogists.

She is the author of book “A Family Affair : How to Plan and Direct the Best Family Reunion Ever.” Sandy’s research has been published in: National Genealogical Society Quarterly, Vermont Genealogy, and The Maine Genealogist. Articles and columns have appeared in: Ancestry, APG Quarterly, The Computer Genealogist, Genealogical Computing, Digital Genealogist.

Sandy’s numerous officer and memberships include: Association of Professional Genealogists, Board for Certification of Genealogists, Genealogists Speakers Guild, National Genealogical Society, *NGS/FGS Records Preservation and Access Committee*, *National Institute on Genealogical Research Alumni Association*, *New England Historic Genealogical Society*, *GenTech*

## JGSGW February Meeting

### JGSGW IS PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE

### “Your Jewish Roots in Poland: JRI-Poland, the Records and More ...”

Speaker: Mark Halpern

This presentation from Jewish Records Indexing-Poland [www.jri-poland.org](http://www.jri-poland.org) will cover Jewish records and research from the various parts of Poland – Congress Poland, Russian Pale of Settlement (Bialystok area), Austrian Galicia, and Prussian Poland records. The presentation will demonstrate what kind of information can be found in each sort of record and how to find out what records are available for one’s town. Sample searches will show ways to utilize the JRI-Poland database in order to get the most out of your research.

**Date:** Sunday, February 12, 2012

**Time:** 1:00 PM Schmooze,  
1:30 PM Meeting followed by Program

**Location:** Location: B’nai Israel, 6301 Montrose Road, Rockville, MD 20852  
301-881-6550 [www.bnaiisraelcong.org/](http://www.bnaiisraelcong.org/)



**Mark Halpern** has been researching his Polish and Galitzianer roots since 1996. Mark is a member of the Executive Committee and Board of Directors of Jewish Records Indexing – Poland [www.jri-poland.org](http://www.jri-poland.org). He has been responsible for the Bialystok Archive project and the AGAD Archive (eastern Galicia records) project as well as the JRI-Poland ordering process. Mark also serves on the Advisory Board of Gesher Galicia. Mark served as the Program Chair for the 2009 Conference on Jewish Genealogy in Philadelphia and is the immediate past President of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Philadelphia. Mark is also the originator and coordinator of BIALYGen, the Bialystok Region Jewish Genealogy Group [www.jewishgen.org/bialygen](http://www.jewishgen.org/bialygen) and coordinates a project to index and restore the Jewish Cemetery in Bialystok, Poland.

## JGSGW March Meeting

### JGSGW IS PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE

#### “The Jews of the Sudan”

Speaker: Dr. Jeffery Malka

Learn about the little known history of the intrepid Jews who in the late nineteenth century settled in the uncharted lands at the junction of the Blue and White Niles, prospered, established the only B'nai B'rith lodge in the heart of Africa, and whose members later had an impact Israel and world Jewry to present times.

A retired professor of orthopaedic surgery, Jeffrey Malka is the author of the prize-winning book “Sephardic Genealogy: Discovering your Sephardic Ancestors and their World” 2nd ed (Avotaynu, 2009) and creator of JewishGen’s SephardicSIG website based on his own popular SephardicGen Resources website. Descended from a long line of Sephardic rabbis going back to the 14th century, cabbalists and authors, and 13th century tax collectors, he is one of the pioneers of Sephardic genealogy in the United States. Dr. Malka was an invited lecturer at the Library of Congress, several IAJGS annual conferences, Washington Jewish Historical Society, and Jewish Genealogy Societies in the US, Canada, Spain, and Istanbul.

**Date:** Sunday, March 11, 2012

**Time:** 1:00 PM Schmooze, 1:30 PM Meeting and Program

**Location:** Beth El Hebrew Congregation, Alexandria, VA 22304  
703-370-9400 [www.bethelhebrew.org/](http://www.bethelhebrew.org/)



**Dr. Jeffrey Malka** is a long-time member of JGSGW and served as the Program Coordinator for the 31st IAJGS Conference on Jewish Genealogy held in Washington, DC in August, 2011. He was born in Sudan.



## JGSGW April Meeting

### JGSGW IS PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE

#### “The Chosen Folks: Writing about the Jews of Texas”

Speaker: Dr. Bryan Edward Stone

Dr. Stone’s talk will focus on the themes of his recent book, “The Chosen Folks: Jews on the Frontiers of Texas.” By addressing specific topics such as the transient sixteenth-century Sephardim who may have been the first Jews in the state, the establishment of permanent Jewish communities in Texas, and later immigrations such as the Galveston Movement, Stone explains the intricacies of Texas-Jewish identity.

The ways that Texas Jews defined themselves in opposition to others with whom they shared their state — and in opposition to Jews elsewhere — provide insights into how Jews construct and maintain their distinctive identity in places where they are an extreme minority. As such, the historical insights of *The Chosen Folks* are relevant to Jewish communities across the United States.

Bio:

**Date:** Sunday, April 15, 2012

**Time:** 1:00 PM Schmooze,  
1:30 PM Meeting followed by Program

**Location:** B’nai Israel, 6301 Montrose Road, Rockville, MD 20852  
301-881-6550 [www.bnaiisraelcong.org/](http://www.bnaiisraelcong.org/)



**Bryan Edward Stone’s** first book, “The Chosen Folks: Jews on the Frontiers of Texas”, was published in 2010 by the University of Texas Press. He is an Associate Professor of History at Del Mar College in Corpus Christi and a Visiting Professor at the Schusterman Center for Jewish Studies at the University of Texas at Austin, where he teaches a summer course on Texas Jews.

# Jewish Chaplains Get Memorial of Own

By Maia Efrem

originally Published October 24, 2011 in *The Jewish Daily Forward*  
reprinted with permission of the *Forward*



*Ernie Heaton, a survivor of the sinking of the Army troops ship Dorchester, visits the new Jewish Chaplains Memorial.*

## The Memorial was Dedicated to the Following Chaplains:

Army Capt. Nachman S. Arnoff  
Army Lt. Col. Meir Engel  
Army 1st Lt. Frank Goldenberg  
Army 1st Lt. Alexander D. Goode  
Army 1st Lt. Henry Goody  
Air Force Capt. Joseph I. Hoenig  
Army Maj. Samuel Dodkin Hurwitz  
Army 1st Lt. Herman L. Rosen  
Army Capt. Morton Harold Singer  
Air Force Capt. David M. Sobel  
Army Capt. Irving Tepper  
Army 1st Lt. Louis Werfe.

When the USS *Dorchester*, a U.S. Army troop ship carrying 900 soldiers and civilians, was attacked by the Germans in 1943, a rabbi, a Catholic priest and two Protestant ministers helped soldiers onto lifeboats and handed out life jackets, giving away their own as the ship sank off the coast of Greenland. The four chaplains were seen singing hymns and holding hands until the very end.

Yet Rabbi Alexander Goode was the only one of the Immortal Chaplains, as they came to be known, not honored with a memorial. That is, until now.

On October 24, a ceremony at the Memorial Amphitheater at Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia dedicated the first monument on Chaplains Hill, commemorating Goode and 13 other Jewish chaplains killed on active duty in America's armed forces.

"We decided that all four needed to be honored," said the project's originator, Ken Kraetzer, commander of Squadron 50 of the Sons of the American Legion. Kraetzer was searching for the names of all four lost chaplains at Chaplains Hill when he realized not only

that Goode's name was missing, but also that there was no monument to Jewish chaplains at all.

Of the other 13 chaplains, seven died on active duty in the United States, three in Vietnam and three in World War II. Chaplain Irving Tepper, one of the first soldiers to land in France on D-Day — June 6, 1944 — was killed by a shell less than a year later. Chaplain Morton Singer, a noncombatant volunteer in Israel's Six Day War of 1967, died while on a mission to conduct Hanukkah services for his men in Vietnam.

While researching the names and stories of these chaplains, Michael Feldberg, then executive director of the American Jewish Historical Society, saw a photo of Chaplain David Sobel and was struck by the resemblance he bore to him.

"David is now frozen in time, 28 years old forever. I am now in my late 60s. He chose to serve his nation, and is gone," Feldberg told the *Forward*. "I took a different path and have the honor of keeping his memory alive."

*(next)*

(from page 14) Chaplains Memorial

The new monument will take its place next to three monuments to chaplains of other faiths who gave their lives in service to their country. The first was dedicated in 1926 by a group of chaplains who served in World War I to 23 chaplains who died in that war. In 1981, a memorial to 134 Protestant chaplains was dedicated, and in 1989, a monument to 83 Catholic chaplains who died in World War II and in the Korean and Vietnam wars was created.

Sol Moglen, founder of the Brooklyn Wall of Remembrance, raised \$50,000 for the new Jewish memorial from veterans groups, communal organizations and individual donations.

Other champions of the project included the JWB Jewish Chaplains Council director Rabbi Harold Robinson and the Jewish Federations of North America.

The research, fundraising and approval efforts behind the memorial took three years. Though just about everyone acknowledged the need for a memorial to fallen Jewish chaplains on a hill where other faiths were recognized, the approval process was arduous. The chief of chaplains of each military branch had to authorize the final list of 14 chaplains. New York former congressman Anthony Weiner and New York Senator Charles Schumer introduced a joint resolution in the House of Representatives and Senate, respectively, authorizing the monument. The resolution was approved the week before Memorial Day of this year.

Brooklyn-based artist Debora Jackson, who was inspired by the aron kodesh, the ark containing the Torah scrolls, in her childhood synagogue designed the ornate 7-foot-tall memorial. "I wanted it to have a very different and very Jewish feel to it," Jackson said, emphasizing the monument's older-looking facade and antique finish. She wanted the monument to fit in

with the three older monuments that pay homage to the Protestant and Catholic chaplains.

The JWB insignia of the Star of David on top of the tablets is adorned on either side by two large golden lions of Judah. On the bottom, an inscription taken from King David's eulogy for King Saul and his son, Jonathan, reads, "They were swifter than eagles, they were stronger than lions."

The public ceremony is expected to draw almost 600 guests, 65 of whom will be the honored chaplains' family members.

David Engle was only 20 years old when his father, Lt. Col. Meir Engel, died of heart disease while on active duty in Saigon in 1964. Engel was a member of the Haganah in Palestine before moving to the United States, and he was one of the only chaplains to serve during World War II and in the Korean and Vietnam wars.

"It's very meaningful in that others who are buried or memorialized at Arlington probably knew these chaplains. It's about time," David Engle said. "This whole event is bringing together the families to grieve, memorialize and cry as one larger family."

Contact Maia Efrem at [efrem@forward.com](mailto:efrem@forward.com)

Link to [The article as it appeared in the Forward](#):

Links to more information about [Chaplains Hill](#) and [Jewish Chaplains Memorial](#) at Arlington National Cemetery

**Ernie Fine is the JGSGW Chair for the ANC (Arlington National Cemetery) Index Project. For more information about this project please click [here](#) or go to the JGSGW website at: <http://www.jewishgen.org/jgsgw/projects.html#ANC>**



*Jewish Genealogy Society  
of Greater Washington*



NATIONAL MUSEUM OF  
AMERICAN JEWISH HISTORY

**Join the Jewish Genealogy Society of Greater Washington for  
a day at the National Museum of American Jewish History  
Sunday, March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2012**



Museum at Dusk 2, Todd Minsky/Holistic Photography, National Museum of American Jewish History

The Museum's exhibition contains an interactive component called "It's Your Story" where guests can record a brief video story about their heritage or cultural traditions. The NMAJH has invited members of the Genealogy Society to record our stories.

***The National Museum of American Jewish History, located in the heart of historic Philadelphia, is the only museum in the nation dedicated solely to telling the story of Jews in America.***

Bus departs from Pike Center in Rockville (Bagel City) at 7:30 am and returns at 5:30 pm

**Cost:** members \$50 - includes round trip charter bus, Museum admission, guided tour, and box lunch  
non-members \$65 or \$75 for trip, tour, and lunch plus one-year JGSGW membership

Seating is limited; please respond ASAP. Responses will be collected through February 12, 2012

**Please respond to Marlene Bishow by email at 'mlbishow@comcast.net' or phone at (301) 330-3882 by Sunday, February 12, 2012 to confirm attendance, and to submit your lunch order.**

**Kosher, boxed lunch selections:**

*Each lunch comes with a drink, potato chips, chocolate chip cookie, whole fresh fruit, and vegetable slaw.*

- Bagel with Nova Lox, Cream Cheese & Tomato
- White Meat Tuna Salad with Lettuce & Tomato on Twist Roll
- Grilled Salmon on Black Bread with Cucumber Dill Sauce
- Grilled Vegetable Hoagie with Red Pepper Mayo
- Oven Roasted Turkey on Challah
- Corned Beef on Rye

**Lunch beverage selections:**

*Please choose one.*

- Pepsi-Regular \*\*\*\*\* Pepsi-Diet \*\*\*\*\* Sweetened Iced Tea \*\*\*\*\* Bottled Water



# JGSGW

## Recognizing Members of 25 Years or More

Member	Date Joined	Member	Date Joined
Ralph N. Baer	1980	Hans George Hirsch	1983
Ruth Sinberg Baker	1980	Arline Sachs	1983
Charles Gellert	1980	Susan Goldstein Urban	1983
Faith Nachman Klein	1980	Miriam Weiner	1983
Irwin M. Pikus	1980	Robert G. Enzel	1984
Sallyann Sack	1980	Rita Krakower Margolis	1984
Paul J. Wexler	1980	Annette Steiner	1984
Suzan Wynne	1980	Boris Feldblyum	1985
Maida Dacher	1981	Barney R. Kantar	1985
Susan Fairy	1981	Frederick A. Kolbrener	1985
Sheila Wexler	1981	Alan S. Cooper	1987
Rose Elbaum	1982	Milton R. Goldsamt	1987
Henry F. & Harriet M. Epstein	1982	Leonard A. Jewler	1987
Cynthia Koren & Robert Gerstl	1982	Wayne L. Pines	1987
Lauren S. Kahn	1982	Fran Rosenstein	1987
Paul B. Klein	1982	Barry A. Sklar	1987
Gary M. Laden	1982	William C. Suhler	1987
Michael B. Richman	1982		
Ruth K. Shapiro	1982		

## About Mishpacha

*MISHPACHA* is the quarterly publication of the Jewish Genealogy Society of Greater Washington, Inc. (JGSGW), serving Washington D.C., Northern Virginia, and the Maryland suburbs. *Mishpacha* is distributed electronically. All rights reserved.

Free to members, subscriptions are \$20/\$25 foreign. Membership dues are \$30 for individuals, \$45 for families and \$100 for Patrons. Membership inquiries:  
PO Box 1614, Rockville, MD 20849-1614.

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JGSGW members are encouraged to submit their genealogical research experiences for possible publication in *Mishpacha*. The editor reserves the right to accept, reject or publish in revised form.

Submit articles to the editor: [Jan R. Fine](#)

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# JGSGW

## Welcome New Members

Richard Schuman  
Todd Halpern  
Irv Hecker  
Miriam Teitel

Herschel Kanter  
Stephen Lubore  
Chester Levine

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## Patrons

Marlene Katz Bishow  
Vic & Marla Cohen  
Harvey Kabaker  
Alan Levitt  
Stephen Rockower  
Louis Solomon  
Harris Weinstein

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## Memorial

Ruth Weitzman Hurwitz

JGSGW mourns the passing of our long time member.  
May her soul be inscribed for a blessing..

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## Thank You for Donations

### Library Fund

John Hirschman  
Ruth Brenner

### General Fund

John Hirschman  
Polly Craighill

### In Honor of Sue Isman's Birthday

Melissa Crow (non-member)

### Joannie Miller Memorial Fund

Irv Hecker

# JGSGW

## JGSGW Genealogy Library Winter Hours

Regular library hours are:

Wednesdays: 1:00 – 3:00 PM  
Sunday February 4, 10 AM – Noon  
Sunday, March 5: 10 am to Noon

For assistance, please contact  
Vera Finberg - 703-978-6990,  
[vera.finberg@verizon.net](mailto:vera.finberg@verizon.net)

### OUR LIBRARY HAS ACQUIRED THE FOLLOWING NEW RECORDS:

#### **London Synagogue Records**

Transcribed and compiled by Harold and Miriam Lewin

#### **Marriage Records of the Great Synagogue-**

London 1791-1885

#### **Birth Records of the Great & Hambro Synagogues -**

London, Second Edition

- \* Great Synagogue birth records from 1791 to 1877
- \* Hambro Synagogue birth records from 1770 to 1905

#### **Birth Records of the New Synagogue & Marriage Records of the New & Hambro Synagogues-**

London

- \* New Synagogue birth records from 1774 to 1896
- \* New Synagogue marriage records from 1790 to 1823 & from 1837 to 1860
- \* Hambro Synagogue marriage records from 1797 to 1837 & post 1862

Please remember that our library has an extensive collection available for all members to use. Our catalog includes both printed and electronic material.

The JGSGW genealogy library is located at the B'nai Israel Congregation, 6301 Montrose Road, Rockville, Maryland 20852. It is co-located with the Chod Media Center on the second floor.

Details about the library can be found on the JGSGW [website](#)

### Other Society Newsletters Available Electronically

"Branches" JGS Greater Miami

"Shemot" JGS Great Britain

"Shalsholet" JGS of Oregon

"Kosher Koala" Australian JGS

"News 'n Notes" St. Louis Gen... Society

"Illiana" Jewish Genealogical Society

"Mishpochology" Jewish Gen Society of  
Southwest Florida

"Shem Tov" Toronto

"Venturing" JGS of Conejo Valley and  
Ventura County

Paris Organizing committee newsletter  
JGS Great Britain

Contact the [editor](#) at if interested.

# JGSGW

## JGSGW Meeting Calendar September 2011-June 2012

September 11	Temple Beth Ami	1:30 pm – 4:00 pm
October 23*	B'nai Israel	11:00 am – 4:00 pm
November 13	Olam Tikvah	1:00 pm – 4:00 pm
December 11	B'nai Israel	11:00 am -4:00 pm
January 8	Adas Israel	1:00 pm – 4:00 pm
February 12*	B'nai Israel	11:00 am – 4:00 pm
March 11	Beth El Hebrew Congregation	1:00 pm - 4:00 pm
April 15*	B'nai Israel	11:00 am – 4:00 pm
May 6	Har Shalom	1:00 pm - 4:00 pm
June 10	Potomac Community Center	11:00 am - 4:00 pm

\* *Board Meeting*

The Jewish Genealogy Society of  
Greater Washington, Inc.  
PO box 1614  
Rockville, MD 20849-1614



Please Visit Our Website for Updates  
[www.jewishgen.org/jgsgw](http://www.jewishgen.org/jgsgw)