



# Family Gatherings

The newsletter of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Broward County, Inc

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Volume 22, Number 4

April 2010

## UPCOMING MEETINGS

**Sunday April 25 1PM Alvin Sherman Library of NSU**  
**Paul Enchelmayer**  
**"Google Goodies for Genealogy"**

**Sunday, May 16, 1pm, Alvin Sherman Library of NSU**  
**Rabbi Edward Davis**  
**"Biblical Genealogy"**

**Sunday, June 6, 12 noon, Emerald Hills Country Club**  
**Annual Awards Luncheon**

### President's Message Brenda Feuer

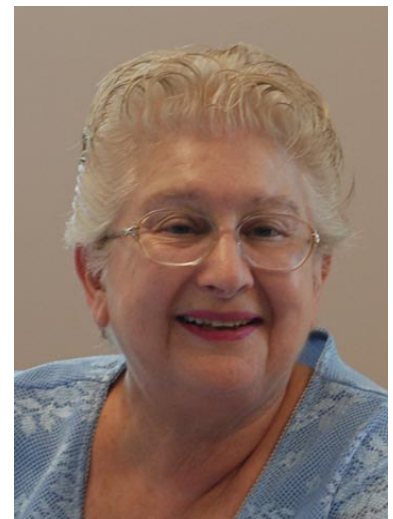
I will be speaking at two groups this month, on April 11<sup>th</sup> at Soref JCC and on April 27 at Kings Point in Tamarac.

questions about the conference I am sure they will have the answer.

Our programs have been inspiring thanks to our Program Chairman Marty Shames. The attendance at our meetings has been excellent thanks to our Publicity Chairperson Rosa Pinsky. On April 10<sup>th</sup> at Nova there is a Genealogy Fair. Rhoda Horowitz is busy coordinating our group. Thanks to all of you who have volunteered to help in any way. On April 25<sup>th</sup> we have our regular meeting also at Nova.

We have a Speaker's Group headed by Bob Koltnow. If you know of any group that wishes to have a speaker, just call Bob.

During the summer each year there is a conference of all the Jewish Genealogical Societies. Each year it is in a different location. This year it is in Los Angeles from July 11-16. There are speakers on all sorts of genealogical topics. The conference is helpful to beginners, as well as advanced researchers. I have attended three of the conferences and I always learn something new. Bob Koltnow and Marty Shames have attended a great number of the conferences, so if you have any



## Program Notes

Marty Shames

On Thursday, March 11, we were treated to a return engagement by Ron Arons, this time speaking on "Mapping Madness". Maps can be tremendously important in doing genealogical research, and Ron went into great detail on some of the resources available for maps. As in all other aspects of genealogy, the internet is becoming a very powerful tool, and he went into some of the online resources. One important point that he made was that you should not always depend on one resource alone. As an example, he showed us search results from both Google Maps and Bing. While they were both powerful and useful, there were some differences, with Google being better than Bing on certain aspects, but vice versa on others.

Being Ron Arons, he could not

resist touching on Jewish criminals, so he showed us satellite pictures of sites of interest, including Bernie Madoff's current "accommodations".

On Saturday, April 10, Nova Southeastern University held its 3rd Annual Genealogy Fair. The Fair gets bigger every year, and was attended by 500 or so people. Megan Smolenyak, who is a consultant on the TV show, "Who Do You Think You Are?", gave several talks. Our past-president, Michael Sofman, gave a talk to a packed room on "How to Get Started in Jewish Genealogy". Hopefully the event gave some new people the spark to get started on their own genealogy projects.

Our next meeting, Sunday May 16, will feature Rabbi Edward

Davis, a fascinating speaker, talking about "Biblical Genealogy". I guess we'll find out what all that "begetting" was about!



Ron Arons

## Membership

Ellen Sobo and Nancy Wyman

We warmly welcome our newest member:

Naomi Benzil

Dear Members:

Our membership renewal drive is underway - please don't delay – send in your dues now - we have some very special topics and speakers planned for 2010.

Our membership is 70 strong, but we are always looking to increase membership. Please help spread

the word by encouraging friends and family to attend our monthly meetings and help them get started on their own rewarding family search.

Finally, we wish to remind everyone that we have a new Mentoring program. If you would like a Mentor assigned to you, or wish to volunteer to serve as a Mentor for others, please contact Rosa Pinsky at (954)389-7392 (evenings) or by email: [pin-skyr@ccf.org](mailto:pin-skyr@ccf.org)

**Family Gatherings** is the monthly publication of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Broward County.

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**Deadline for submissions:** 5th of every month. Articles may be edited for content and clarity.

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## Library News

Rhoda Horwitz

### LIBRARY NEWS

While entering book titles to update our Library holdings, I thought that I'd share some of them with you. All of these are on our bulging shelves in approximate numerical order. The library hours are Tuesday's from 10 to 12 if you can't come in that day feel free to call me at (954) 741-8368 to make an appointment. You can check the JSBC.ORG website which has a partial listing of our holdings. Thanks to the ongoing generosity of our kind members through donations our library has in fact, 550 books, Lucky us! And lucky us, our newsletter editor Alison works at the Downtown Branch of the Broward Public Library, so she's up-to-date on all the incoming Jewish-related materials and can tell us all about them!

Here are just a few of the titles that we have. Hope that they are of interest to you:

"A History of the Jews" 1988 by Paul Johnson.

"The Black Jews of Harlem", 1970 by Howard M. Brotz

"A Double Thread: Growing Up English and Jewish in London", 2002 John Gross

"The Jews of Arab Lands: A History and Source Book", 1979 by Norman A. Stillman

"The Starting Point: Stories of Truth and Hope", 2007 by Daniel Shoer-Roth (Miami Herald reporter)

"Our Crowd: The Great Jewish Families of New York" 1967 by Stephan Birmingham

"How We Lived: A Documentary History of Immigrant Jews in America 1880-1930" 1979 by Irving Howe and Kenneth Libo.

I could go on and on, but you get the idea. We do have a wide variety, plus Jewish Encyclopedias, etc. Please keep in mind while visiting our library that computers and printers are unfortunately unavailable.

### Tidbits

Bernie Kouchel

Please see the following list for the Broward County historical Commission and local historical societies:

The Broward County Historical Commission's new address is : 301 S.W.13th Ave.

[www.broward.org/history/Pages/Default.aspx](http://www.broward.org/history/Pages/Default.aspx).

The BCHC encourages awareness of local history.

Ft. Lauderdale Historical Society, 219 SW 2nd Avenue. Fort Lauderdale. [www.oldfortlauderdale.org/](http://www.oldfortlauderdale.org/) & [www.fortlauderdalehistor](http://www.fortlauderdalehistor)

[ycenter.org/contact\\_us.html](http://ycenter.org/contact_us.html)

Online Historical Timeline: Jews of Broward County <http://www.jgsbc.org/history.html>

The various day-by-day accounts of Napoleon's march into and retreat from Russia in 1812 are filled with references to the towns and villages where Jews lived in Poland and the Pale of Settlement. On the way to Moscow the emperor stayed in KOVNO, VILNA, GLUBOKOYE and VITEBSK. His path back to France went through LIADY, TOLOTCHINE, BOBER, STARO-BORISOV, STUDIANKA north of BORISOV, KAMEN, PLECHNITSIE, a bleak village named MISEROWO by the

WARSAW and KUTNO. So seek out books of Napoleon's Campaign to find descriptions of the towns and villages listed above. 50 Most Popular Genealogy Websites: [www.progenealogists.com/top50genealogy2009.htm](http://www.progenealogists.com/top50genealogy2009.htm). Many of the databases on the resource page are free, though some charge a relatively small fee for access.

## JewishGen Discussion Group (Excerpts)

Finding relatives in Israel A very kind J-Genner posted this link last year to the Bezeq phone book in Israel -- it allows you to research family by typing in the name and city in English. Website: <http://english.b144.co.il/Default.aspx>.

This month we have added a number of books and carried out a large number of additions to existing books. Many of the additions include further new sections and photographs and we are also endeavoring to add tables of contents to existing projects as an aid to researchers - helping to know exactly what potential these books contain. Furthermore, the Yizkor Book team continues to add in necrologies to new and existing books with the help of a number of extremely motivated and dedicated volunteers. Finally, Max Heffler continues to faithfully add in the names from the necrologies into the Necrology database <http://www.jewishgen.org/databases/yizkor/>, which serves as another invaluable research tool for us all. During this last month we have added these 5 new projects:

Bil'che-Zolote, Ukraine (A Time to Speak - The story of My Life) -necrology <http://www.jewishgen.org/Yizkor/Bilche-Zolote/Bilche-Zolote.html>, Demidovka, Ukraine (The Town of Demidovka) - necrology <http://www.jewishgen.org/Yizkor/Demidovka/Demidovka.html>,

Siemiatycze, Poland (The Community of Semyatitch)

<http://www.jewishgen.org/Yizkor/siemiatycze1/siemiatycze1.html>

Skuodas, Lithuania (Testimony on the murder of the Jews of Shkud, Lithuania)

<http://www.jewishgen.org/Yizkor/Skuodas1/Skuodas1.html>

Zhovkva, Ukraine (Memorial book of Zolkiew) - necrology

<http://www.jewishgen.org/Yizkor/Zhovkva/Zhovkva.html>

Added 1 new entry: Jasionówka, Belarus (Encyclopedia of Jewish Communities in Poland, Volume VIII) [http://www.jewishgen.org/Yizkor/pinkas\\_poland/pol8\\_00372.html](http://www.jewishgen.org/Yizkor/pinkas_poland/pol8_00372.html)

And finally, we have continued to update 24 of our existing projects. Please remember that all this month's additions and updates have been flagged at <http://www.jewishgen.org/Yizkor/translations.html> to make it easy to find them.

### **A message from Yad Vashem**

#### **DO YOU KNOW SOMEONE WHO PERISHED IN THE HOLOCAUST?**

**Yad Vashem has collected information on over 3.6 million Holocaust victims and wants your help to record and memorialize the remaining millions through their**

#### **SHOAH NAMES RECOVERY CAMPAIGN**

**Here is how you can help.**

- 1. Draw up a list of relatives and friends who perished.**
- 2. Collect any photos you may have of the victims.**
- 3. Call your Yad Vashem community volunteer who will visit you at home to assist in filling out the necessary forms. Please contact the following volunteers**

**ROSA PINSKY 954 389 7392 [pinskyr@ccf.org](mailto:pinskyr@ccf.org)**

**or**

**EILEEN TULEPAN 854 340 6818 [Eileen@panther-marketing.com](mailto:Eileen@panther-marketing.com)**

**Nu? What's New**  
**The E-zine of Jewish Genealogy From Avotaynu(excerpted)**  
Gary Mokotoff, Editor  
**Volume 11, Number 6 | April 4, 2010**

**[Footnote.com](#) Makes U.S. Census Available at No Charge**

Footnote.com is making its U.S. census index and images available at no charge. That is the good news. The bad news is that they have available only 6% of the 1900 census, 4% of the 1910 census, 3% of the 1920 census, 98% of the 1930 census and 100% of the 1860 census. The good news is that the 3% of the 1920 census includes much, if not all, of New York City. The 1910 census data includes Pittsburgh, and the 1900 census includes Chicago.

I use the [Ancestry.com](#) collection, but the value of another index is that it may not include the errors that exist in the first index. For example, I found a Mokotoff family in the Footnote database that was misspelled in the Ancestry index as Bokotoff.

Footnote still provides Holocaust-related records from the National Archives and U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum at no charge. Both the Holocaust and census databases can be accessed from the home page at <http://www.footnote.com>.

**Another Auschwitz Database**

For many years the official Auschwitz Internet site at <http://auschwitz.org.pl/> has had a searchable index to surviving records of people interned at Auschwitz-Birkenau. The search engine is located at [http://en.auschwitz.org.pl/m/index.php?option=com\\_wrapper&Itemid=31](http://en.auschwitz.org.pl/m/index.php?option=com_wrapper&Itemid=31). The list is incomplete because most of the records were destroyed by the retreating German army.

There is now a second list of Auschwitz death certificates that includes the names of 68,864 individuals who died at Auschwitz and Birkenau, about 30,000 of whom were listed as Jews. It is located at <http://guardian.ifastnet.com/holocaust/auschwitz-data.htm>. There are names on this list that are not at the official site. Furthermore, the second list is not an index but a complete list of the names. This allows the searcher to browse the list looking for spelling variants. For example, searching for the surname Wolfowicz yields three hits at the official site but does not include a man identified as Wolfovicz.

An interesting side note about this second list. It appears to have been created by revisionists, not merely Holocaust revisionists but people who question all sorts of historical events. For example, there is extensive discussion about what really happened on 9/11. It claims that the buildings collapsed not due to the fire from the plane crashes but due to the presence of explosives in the buildings, the implication being that the buildings were deliberately destroyed. There are also numerous anti-Israeli articles. A complete list of articles can be found at <http://guardian.ifastnet.com/>. This would lead one to conclude that the second Auschwitz list is fabricated. Comparing it with the official list shows the names appear to be genuine. It is likely the revisionist list's purpose was to show that more Christians (39,000) died at Auschwitz than Jews (30,000). The nature of the site makes it suspect and therefore it would be wise to confirm that a name found in the list also appears at the official Auschwitz site.

**Online Education Courses by Family History Library**

The Mormon Family History Library is now offering online education courses at no charge. The initial offerings are:

- England Beginning Research (5 courses)
- Germany Research (3 courses)
- Ireland Research (5 courses)
- Italy Research (1 course)
- Principios básicos para la investigación genealógica en Hispanoamérica (México) (3 courses)
- Research Principles and Tools (6 courses)
- Russia Research (2 courses)
- U.S. Research (4 courses)

I listened to the first Russian course, given by Daniel Schlyter, and it was a good overview of the history and geography of Russia. The second course, also given by Schlyter, is about records and resources. The Library is reaching out to the professional genealogy community asking for people to volunteer to provide additional lectures for the collection.

The list of courses can be accessed from the home page by clicking "Free Online Classes." The exact URL is [http://www.familysearch.org/eng/library/education/frameset\\_education.asp?PAGE=education\\_research\\_series\\_online.asp%3FActiveTab=2](http://www.familysearch.org/eng/library/education/frameset_education.asp?PAGE=education_research_series_online.asp%3FActiveTab=2)

### Review of the New iPad

If you wish to read a review of the much-hyped, much-reviewed iPad from one of our own, read Dick Eastman's review at [http://blog.eogn.com/eastmans\\_online\\_genealogy/2010/04/a-handson-review-of-the-new-apple-ipad.html](http://blog.eogn.com/eastmans_online_genealogy/2010/04/a-handson-review-of-the-new-apple-ipad.html). Eastman publishes *Eastman's Online Genealogy Newsletter*, a popular genealogy e-zine.

### Anglo-Jewry Database

The Jewish Genealogical Society of Great Britain has updated its database of Jews in Britain in the mid-19th century. It now has more than 29,000 people, more than 90% of the estimated total Jewish population at that period. The searchable database is located at <http://www.jgsgb.org.uk/1851/index.asp>.

### Michael Bernet z"l

One of the unsung heroes of Jewish genealogy died this past week. Michael Bernet was a regular contributor to the JewishGen Discussion Group as well as the Ger(man)SIG Discussion Group. What impressed me about many of Michael's responses to inquiries is that he did not merely answer questions, but instead used his answer as an opportunity to educate the reader about the subject.

If you go to the JewishGen Discussion Group Archives at <http://data.jewishgen.org/wconnect/wc.dll?jg~jgsys~archpop> and search for "Michael Bernet" you receive a response: "Sorry there were more than 1000 matches - please vary your search (limit the range of message dates if necessary)." In 2001 alone, he contributed more than 200 postings.

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### Annual Conference Program Now Online



The annual IAJGS conference program schedule is now online at [https://www.goeshow.com/jgsla/IAJGS/2010/Conference\\_Program.cfm](https://www.goeshow.com/jgsla/IAJGS/2010/Conference_Program.cfm). In addition to the lectures, there are computer labs, film showings, research group meetings, breakfasts with experts, luncheons and midnight snack sessions. Some start as early as 8 a.m. Some end at 11:30 p.m. At times there are as many as eight concurrent sessions. Program listings preceded by "\$" are fee-based events that can be purchased when registering. They are primarily programs where food is served (Breakfast with the Experts, SIG Luncheons and Midnight with the Mavens) plus computer labs.

The conference is being held at the Marriott LIVE Hotel in Los Angeles from July 11–16, 2010. Additional information can be found at <http://www.jgsla2010.com>. The site provides information about registration, hotels, programs, speakers, films and tours. To keep up to date about conference information, subscribe to the newsletter at <http://www.jgsla2010.com/about/sign-up-for-the-announcements-newsletter/>.

### Index to Latvian Vital Records

Christine Usdin of France has an ongoing project of indexing 19th-century and early 20th-century Jewish vital records of Latvia. The work to date can be found at <http://www.premiumorange.com/rigavitalrecords/>. The source of the information is the online digitized images of records located at <http://www.lvva-raduraksti.lv/en.html>. A description of this site can be found in "Latvian Jewish Records Now Online" in the [July 10, 2009](#), issue of *Nu? What's New?* These rabbinic records are written in Russian and Hebrew. Usdin is extracting from the Russian portion, and Martha Lev-Zion of Israel is verifying the accuracy by reading the Hebrew portion.

Based on a sample of the index, the extraction is quite comprehensive including for births: date, name, names of parents (often including patronymic) and place of residence. For boys, also included is the officiant at the circumcision (*mohe*). For marriages: date, names of bride and groom including patronymic, ages and places of residence, names of witnesses. For deaths: date, name of deceased including patronymic, age of deceased, cause of death, place of residence. For divorces: date, names of principals including patronymic and witnesses.

Towns included to date are Dvinsk, Glazmanka/Dankere/Gostini, Griva, Jekabpils (Jakobstadt), Kudilga (Goldingen), Liepaja (Libava/Libau), Ludza, Malta(Silmala), Rezekne, Riga, Subate, Ilukste and Griva, Valdemarpils (Samaskas/Sassmacken), Varaklani, Vilaka and Vishki.

### **Poland Plans Database of “Victims of Repression Under German Occupation”**

The Foundation for Polish-German Reconciliation has initiated an Internet site that hopes to identify every Polish citizen that was a victim of German repression from the years 1939–1945. The site is located at <http://www.straty.pl/> and can be read in five languages: English, German, Polish, Russian and Ukrainian. It currently contains about 1.9 million names. The database is searchable at <http://www.straty.pl/index.php/pl/szukaj-w-bazie>.

The project was initiated in 2006 by the Institute of National Remembrance and the Polish Ministry of Culture and National Heritage.

There are remarkably few Jewish names in the database despite the fact there are a number of Holocaust databases that list Polish Jews. These could have been acquired by the project. There are less than 50 persons named Szapiro (and spelling variants) in the database, yet the Yad Vashem Pages of Testimony site has more than 1,000 persons named Szapiro of Polish origin. Only one Mokotow appears from the more than 100 persons named Mokotow who were victims of repression under the German occupation.

Approximately three million Polish Christians—out of a total population of 33 million—lost their lives during World War II, mostly due to the consequences of war. Approximately three million Polish Jews—out of a total population of 3.3 million—lost their lives, mostly due to genocide.

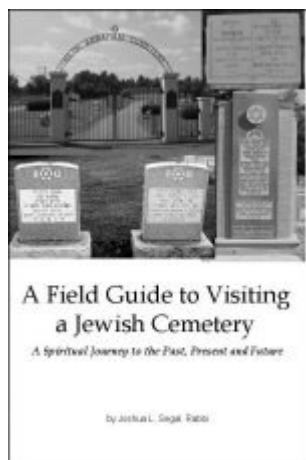
### **Swiss Refugees Database**

A database of more than 25,000 persons who fled to neutral Switzerland during World War II is available at [http://etat.geneve.ch/dt/archives/a\\_votre\\_service-liste\\_refugies-1700.html](http://etat.geneve.ch/dt/archives/a_votre_service-liste_refugies-1700.html). The complete list is presented alphabetically. Information about each individual includes name, date of birth and nationality. The site is in French. Use Google translate to convert the descriptive information in your native language.

### **Books for Jewish Cemetery Research**

Some years ago I was attending a gathering of my wife’s family and was discussing genealogy with the aged patriarch of the family. “Uncle Abe,” I said, “Isn’t it wonderful that Roni Liebowitz is tracing the Auerbach family history?” He thought for a moment and replied, “Yes, but she is a bit *mishugah* (crazy).”

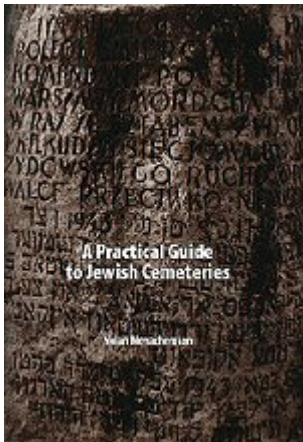
“Why do you think she is *mishugah*?” I queried. Uncle Abe answered “Because she takes pictures of tombstones.”



We family historians know the importance of tombstones and why we take pictures of them. However, Jewish tombstones can be a challenge for the beginning genealogist or those who cannot read the Hebrew inscriptions on them. Avotaynu offers two books to assist people in this aspect of family history research; each with a different approach.

*A Field Guide to Visiting a Jewish Cemetery* is a basic book that focuses on how to read the inscriptions on Jewish tombstones. It proves a step by step description of the various Hebrew components of a tombstone giving a translation of the Hebrew words. It is a soft-cover book that, as its name implies, you can bring to a cemetery and use on site to do cemetery research.

*A Practical Guide to Jewish Cemeteries* goes beyond the contents of the Field Guide. In addition to a comprehensive discussion of how to read the inscriptions on Jewish tombstones, it goes into greater detail about the artwork that appears on tombstones identifying and describing more than 25 symbols. There is a section describing famous



Jewish cemeteries and locations of major concentration camps. Another chapter identifies the burial locations of 260 famous Jews. The final chapter focuses on how to preserve cemeteries and tombstones.

Each book satisfies a different need. The *Field Guide* is a lower cost (\$21.00) work that focuses on reading tombstones with secondary information. The *Practical Guide* is a more expensive (39.00), more comprehensive book on Jewish cemeteries and burial customs.

Additional information as well as how to order *A Field Guide to Visiting a Jewish Cemetery* can be found at <http://www.avotaynu.com/books/CemeteryField.htm>. It includes a sample chapter and the Table of Contents. Additional and ordering information about *A Practical Guide to Jewish Cemeteries* can be found at <http://www.avotaynu.com/books/Cemeteries.htm>. It includes the Table of Contents, sample chapter and a review of the book that appeared in AVOTAYNU.

Compare the two and select the book that would best satisfy your needs.

### Access to NewFamilySearch May Be Near

Public access to NewFamilySearch, a major revision as to how to access data at the Mormon Church genealogy Internet site may be near. You can now register to eventually use the database at <https://new.familysearch.org/en/action/unsec/welcome>. Only registration is possible. Currently access is limited to members of the Church.

The new system will merge genealogical data with religious data. At various meetings with members of the Jewish community, the Church made assurances that the public would be able to tell whether religious ordinances, such as posthumous baptism, were performed on a person in the combined database.

For Mormons, the site provides explicit instructions on the procedure for submitting names for ordinances. One section states:

“Names of nonrelated persons should not be submitted, including names of celebrities or famous people, or those gathered from unapproved extraction projects, **such as *Jewish Holocaust victims***.” The bold face and italics are theirs, not mine.

### Beirut Jewish Cemetery Online

In 1948 there were 24,000 Jews living in Lebanon, mostly in Beirut.

Today there are only 30 elderly individuals living in fear and the only remaining vestiges of the Jewish community are the Magen Abraham synagogue and the Jewish cemetery of Beirut. Nagi Georges Zeidan, a Lebanese Christian, undertook the task of memorializing the Lebanese Jewish community by researching its history and creating a database of 3,184 tombstone inscriptions using both the cemetery and civil registrations. The database is now on SephardicGen at <http://www.sephardicgen.com/databases/BeirutCemeterySrchFrm.html> and <http://www.sephardicgen.com/databases/BeirutCemeterySrchFrmFR.html>

(French version)

### Where did we Jews come from?

Article by Leonard Ian Erskine

I approach genealogy from the historian's perspective, and not from the point of view of a genealogist, therefore, my interest is actually about the Jewish Diaspora, as it influenced our forefathers, and our family. Although, I have nearly completed my family genealogy, and written about specific family members as I knew them, nevertheless, I have skipped the tedious research of including details relating to addresses, social security numbers, and other facts the eventual reader finds disinteresting. In actuality, I am a storyteller who uses genealogy as the basis for my writings.

As a result, I write about Shtetl life in the Pale Settlement, and draw my research from many sources in an attempt to reveal how Jews survived a frontier environment; however this writing is a partial answer to the question. Where did we Jews come from?

As a child in Hebrew school, there was never any mention as to how we Jews arrived in Europe, or for that matter any courses on Jewish history, other than the endless recitations from the Talmud, and the study of ancient Hebrew. It was an education taught with a heavy hand, with no regard for a child's ability to absorb the devout teachings, while some children thrived on every word uttered, and the body language associated with praying, I was not the student that was most likely to succeed within those halls of learning. Nevertheless, my interest in Jewish history, and for that matter any history has been a lifelong passion.

At an early age I became fascinated with the way we European Jews looked; many are fair skinned, blue eyes, and light brown hair, not what you would expect from people that emanated from the Middle East. In fact many Jews look Slavic, Germanic, or Scandinavian, and there are those like me with a darker complexion, brown eyes, and black hair when I was younger. Yet my mother was very fair skinned, as were my mother's siblings, and I derived my complexion from my father, however, my father's siblings were half fair, and half dark in complexion. In fact one uncle had red hair as a young man, as did Rabbi Wolfson, who looked like a Scotsman, and ran our Hebrew School.

I was not given any good reason why we did not look Semitic, explanations that did not satisfy my curiosity, but the book, "The Jews of Khazaria" by Kevin Alan Brook, has all the answers I was seeking, it is a fine book, but a work written by an academician, for academicians, and a very difficult reference material to read. This writing is really a book review, with my interpretation of Mr. Brook's work, including my own reflections on the subject matter.

Whether the Rabbinate was embarrassed about our past Jewish history, and its revelations, or the time honored Jewish orthodox teachings could not accommodate the Diaspora in its curriculum, is debatable.

Being a secular Jew, with little interest in the spirituality of the religion, I found a deep affinity for the way we survived as a people against all odds in the Shtetl's (villages) of Europe. That history became very real to me, for my grandparents lived that life, a lifestyle that influenced my early years, while having a direct affect on my parents and their siblings.

We as Jews have been wandering for over 2000 years, long before the Jewish state ended in 70 AD, when the Romans began to aggressively drive the Jews from their homeland, where they had resided for over a millennium. Yet the Diaspora goes back to 722 BC, when the Assyrians conquered Israel, and the Hebrew inhabitants were scattered all over the Middle East. Ironically those victimized left no trace of their existence, and disappeared from the history books.

The above brief synopsis is the genesis of the scattering, which became part of the Jewish experience, but rather than expound on the plight of the Jews after 73 AD, let us explore the Jews of Khazaria, and their part in the Jewish mosaic.

The Khazars were predominately of Turkic heritage, and claimed that they could trace their descent back to Noah the legendary ark builder. They established a powerful kingdom in Southern Russia, between the Dnieper River, and the Aral Sea, a kingdom based on religious freedom. In addition to the Jewish population already living in Khazaria, a large number of Jews persecuted in the Byzantine Empire, and also victims of the crusades migrated to this land of freedom, and prosperity.

It was considered the Khazars were originally nomadic Turks, that were racially, and ethnically mixed; among them were black-haired people with dark brown eyes, red haired people with green, or hazel eyes, and fair skinned people with blue eyes. There was a segment of the population that had high cheek bones, wide faces, and narrow eyes, resembling people from East Asia. Many other looked similar to Europeans, or Middle Easterners.

Khazaria was one of the most diverse nations of the Middle Ages, that diversity of population lent itself to being a haven for oppressed peoples. In the ninth, and tenth centuries, Judaism became the most widespread religious influence on the Khazars. In the beginning the king, dignitaries, and the wealthy converted to Judaism, followed by a portion of the populace. In essence, the three major religions of the time were well represented in the kingdom.

Khazaria flourished as an independent state from about 650 AD, to 1016 AD, when the kingdom collapsed. There were three main reasons to the downfall of Khazaria, the lack of natural frontiers for defense; the alleged lack of self-sufficiency for most resources; and the lack of homogeneity in the Khazarian population. The end of the Khazar Empire signified the beginning of a new area; no longer did the Jews in Eastern Europe have a nation of their own. An independent Jewish state would not exist until the establishment of Israel in 1948.

There are many indications of the continued presence of the Khazars in Eastern Europe, and other parts of the world. The Khazars settled in Hungary, Romania, Ukraine, Belarus, Lithuania, Poland, Turkey, Spain, Southern Russia, the Northern Caucasus, Azerbaijan, the Middle East (including Egypt) and probable Bulgaria, and other places. It is assumed there was some intermarriage with other Jewish communities, while others merged with Muslim, and Christian populations. It should be noted that the Khazars were instrumental in stopping the Muslims expansion into Europe.

My mother, and father were both first generation English born, with mother's family originating from Poland, and Lithuania, where the borders changed so frequently you never knew what country you lived in, and arrived in England in 1885, while my father's mother was born in Byelorussia, and immigrated to England in the same time period with her family, she married my grandfather there, who was from Bucharest, Romania. Grandfather's original surname was Eskenazi, which denotes a Sephardic spelling of the Ashkenazi name, and since there is little history available I can only surmise there was a Turkish element in the family, from listening to stories as a child in England. Jacob (Eskenazi) Erskine died when I was 3 years old, so I never knew him, but there were always visitors to my grandmother's house who smoked those dreaded Turkish cigarettes, and drank Turkish coffee. They were unable to speak Yiddish which was my grandmother's mother tongue; therefore, they conferred in broken English. Sephardic Jews do not speak Yiddish, they do have a language of their own called Ladino.

Let us now look at the different groups that form the Jewish World, and start off with the Ashkenazim, which is a general definition applied to the diverse branch of European Jews, excluding those from the Mediterranean area. The word Ashkenazi refers to the original Jews dwelling in Mittleuropa, and considered to be the land of Ashkenazi, a province of what is now Armenia. The word Ashkenazi was subsequently applied in an extended man-

ner to different Jewish communities that included German, Austrian, Scandinavian, Russian, and Danubian Jews among others.

The Mettleuropa Jews eventually resided in Germany, Austria, and Bohemia long enough to develop their own German based language "Yiddish" which became the official tongue of all Ashkenazi Jews, with the exception of the German, and Austrian groups who were left behind when Jews From Germany emigrated towards Russia. Initially the Polish Jews had Slavic given names typical of Bohemia, and Monravia, in addition the Jews who emigrated from the west brought along their Germanic names.

However when the Sephardic Jews emigrated from Spain, and Portugal, to Poland, Hungary, and Romania, they married Ashkenazi Jews, the outcome was an infusion of names from all corners of the world.

It is claimed that Genetic tests indicate that Ashkenazi Jews are also direct descendents of the Israelites, and their DNA confirms ancestry from the ancient Middle East.

Genetic studies show the Ashkenazi Jews are more closely related to Yemenite, Assyrian, Sephardic, Kurdish, and Arabs than from European people, and that hardly any intermarriage or conversion has occurred to affect the Jewish Groups over the centuries.

They go on to say, the Jews who remained in the land of Israel, Iraq, or Yemen are usually labeled as Sephardic, on the other hand, the Jews of Rome have traditions that are not considered part of the two main groups. Furthermore, had we not been forced out of Judea, and still resided in the region as a unified people for over 2,000 years, the Jew of today would look like the Israel's Arab neighbors of today.

There seems to be some sort of a contradiction here, the facts are not compatible, considering the Khazar converts disappeared as a distinguishable ethnic entity, when their descendants became fully Jewish by marrying Ashkenazi Jews. That assimilation combined with other intermarriages, had to produce a genetic residue, whereas, the Arab looking Jew of the Diaspora, now looks European.

One Palestinian Authority spokesperson told a CNN reporter, that the Jews of today's Israel are not the Jews of yester year, they are European, and on that basis the State of Israel should never been founded. I only agree with the statement that a majority of Israeli Jews are European.

I am not a geneticist, however, the facts speak for themselves, even the Semitic look is slowly disappearing from the faces of your generation, and that of your children/grandchildren. I have attended Jewish reunions in England, Canada, and the US, and in a majority of cases 21<sup>st</sup> century Jews look more like their non-Jewish counterparts, which confirms my understanding how assimilation can take place if you live long enough in a country, to a point whereas, you begin to inherit facial characteristics of the population at large.

It is hoped that this presentation will give you food for thought, and spark additional study on your part into the fascinating subject about a very resilient Jewish people.

Conclusions, by Kevin Alan Brook author of the book "The Jews of Khazaria."

After considering the hard evidence of the cultural, linguistic, and ethnic ties between the Eastern European Jews, and the Khazarian Jews, as well as the equally strong proof for the Jewish migrations from the south, and west, I can only come to one conclusion; that the European Jews are descended from both the Khazars, and other converts, including the Judeans. The fact that most of our people descend from converts does not diminish our Jewish status, since all converts share equally in the Jewish Heritage. The Khazars were an extraordinary part of the Jewish experience, and memory of them must never again be forgotten. As the 21<sup>st</sup> century dawns, those of us who are Ashkenazi Jews have the right, as well as the obligation to rediscover, and reclaim our unique mixed heritage, as heirs to the great Khazar Empire that once ruled the Russian steppes.



Start making your plans now for the next IAJGS conference, in Los Angeles, July 11-16, 2010.

[www.jgsla2010.com](http://www.jgsla2010.com)

### **IT'S FREE!**

Do you subscribe to AVOTAYNU's Internet magazine, *Nu? What's New?* Published biweekly, it provides subscribers with recent-breaking news of interest to Jewish genealogists.

Subscribing is easy. Just go to [www.avotaynu.com/nuwhatsnew.htm](http://www.avotaynu.com/nuwhatsnew.htm) on the Internet.

## **Benefits of JGSBC Membership**

- Interesting and informative monthly meetings
- Monthly newsletter with informative articles and news of Jewish genealogical events
- Access to JGSBC's extensive collection of research books & materials
- Opportunity to network with others interested in Jewish genealogy
- Guidance from local experts to help you with your research
- Information exchange with others who are researching families from the same towns as your ancestors.

**And this is just the beginning. There are many more. To join JGSBC, use the form at the back of this newsletter, or visit our website at [www.jgsbc.org](http://www.jgsbc.org) and click on Membership in the navigation bar.**

**If you'd like to come to our meetings, but are unable to because of **TRANSPORTATION ISSUES**, please let us know, because there are **RIDES AVAILABLE!****

**Please contact Rosa Pinsky at [rpinsky@jgsbc.org](mailto:rpinsky@jgsbc.org), or call our Information Line at 954-873-4403**

## JGSBC Program Calendar

[www.jgsbc.org/helios/events](http://www.jgsbc.org/helios/events)

**Sunday April 25 Alvin Sherman Library**  
**Paul Enchelmayer**  
**"Google Goodies for Genealogy"**

**Sunday, May 16, Alvin Sherman Library**  
**Rabbi Edward Davis**  
**"Biblical Genealogy"**

### Speaker's Bureau

If you would like to have someone to speak to your group, please contact our Speakers Bureau at [speaker@jgsbc.org](mailto:speaker@jgsbc.org). We are always open to invite speakers visiting South Florida to give a lecture or presentation at our JGS. Please contact us in advance at the following email, [president@jgsbc.org](mailto:president@jgsbc.org), so we can coordinate the date and location.

The Jewish Genealogical Society of Broward County usually meets on either the last Sunday or Wednesday of the month. Please check the **JGSBC Program Calendar** above or our **Community Events Calendar** located at [www.jgsbc.org/helios/events](http://www.jgsbc.org/helios/events) for the exact times and locations.

The first 20-30 minutes of our meetings are devoted to **Brick Walls and Breakthroughs**, where members share their successes or ask for help with their difficult genealogical problems. Anyone interested in genealogy is welcome to participate in our programs.



Member Society

The JGS of Broward County is an integral part of a global network of 75+ societies, all members of IAJGS, with 10,000+ individual members who are actively researching their Jewish roots.

**Do you have a brick wall you've finally succeeded in breaking down? We'd love to hear about it.**

**Contact the Family Gatherings editor at [newsletter@jgsbc.org](mailto:newsletter@jgsbc.org). We look forward to reading your story in a future newsletter.**

## The Jewish Genealogical Society of Broward County, Inc.

**P.O. Box 17251**

**Fort Lauderdale, FL 33318**

**Phone: 954-873-4403 Fax: 954-577-9247**

**Email: [info@jgsbc.org](mailto:info@jgsbc.org)**

**[www.jgsbc.org](http://www.jgsbc.org)**

## JGSBC

### Officers and Directors

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### Past Presidents

Michael Sofman	2008-2009
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Bernard Kouchel, Founder	1988-1994

Check out our website at [www.jgsbc.org](http://www.jgsbc.org) for the latest information about our society or to contact any officer, director, or chairperson via direct e-mail link.

### WE NEED YOUR BOOKS!

Any Jewish genealogy, biographies, novels, or history books getting dusty on your shelves?

Put them to good use by donating them to the JGSBC Library.

No books? Make a donation to the JGSBC Library Fund. Contact Rhoda Horwitz at [library@jgsbc.org](mailto:library@jgsbc.org).

***Nova Southeastern University and the  
Jewish Genealogical Society of Broward County, Inc.***

***jointly present***

## **GOOGLE GOODIES FOR GENEALOGISTS**



**Paul Enchelmayer**

Sunday , April 25, 2010, 1:00 p.m.  
Alvin Sherman Library of NSU  
3100 Ray Ferrero, Jr. Blvd, Davie

Paul L. Enchelmayer is well-traveled in Florida, speaking at nearly two dozen societies and clubs, presenting programs to help others learn how technology can aid in family history projects. He is Chairman of the Genealogy Group of the University Club of Winter Park, Past-President (and current webmaster) of the Central Florida Genealogical Society in Orange County, a member (and webmaster) of the Florida State Genealogical Society's Speakers Bureau, and member of the National Genealogical Society, and the Hamilton County Genealogical Society in Cincinnati.

Paul's key research areas have included Stuttgart, Germany; Chicago, and Cincinnati. Several trips to Germany have yielded many newfound cousins, family stories, and reams of data. Through the Internet he has found even more relatives and resources from Austria to Australia.

***Admission is free  
Seating is limited, however, so please register in advance at  
<http://sherman.library.nova.edu/helios/events/>.***

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**Directions:** From University Drive north or south, travel east on SW 30th Street. Turn right at Ray Ferrero Jr. Boulevard. Turn right into the Parking Garage. Cost for parking is \$1 per hour.

**Contact:** 954-262-4575

**E-mail:** [kgarvey@nova.edu](mailto:kgarvey@nova.edu)

**Web:** [www.nova.edu/library](http://www.nova.edu/library)





**Jewish Genealogical Society  
Of Broward County, Inc**  
-Florida USA-

P.O. Box 17251  
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33318  
Phone: 954-873-4403 Fax: 954-577-9247  
Visit us at: www.jgsbc.org

## Membership Application

Date:	<input type="checkbox"/> New Member	<input type="checkbox"/> Renewal	<input type="checkbox"/> Gift
Name(s):			
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City:		State:	Zip:
Phone:	Fax:	E-mail:	

<b>Out-of-State Address</b>	Dates:
Street Address:	
City:	State: Zip:
Phone:	Fax:

Membership Category (please check one)	Dues	Notes
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual	\$ 25	To help save postage, we
<input type="checkbox"/> Each additional member (same address)	\$ 5	distribute our newsletter via
<input type="checkbox"/> Sponsor	\$ 50	e-mail. If you prefer to have
<input type="checkbox"/> Patron	\$ 100	it mailed, please check here. <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Student (full-time, under age 25)	\$ 15	
<input type="checkbox"/> Life (individual)	\$ 250	Foreign addresses, please add \$5
<input type="checkbox"/> Life (additional member, same address)	\$ 50	for postage.

I am also enclosing an additional contribution of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to help further the development of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Broward County, Inc.

Please make check payable to **JGSBC**  
and mail with application to:

JGSBC Membership  
P.O. Box 17251  
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33318

*JGSBC is a 501(c)(3) organization and your donation is tax-deductible to the fullest extent of the law.*

**How would you rate your genealogy skills?**  None  Beginner  Intermediate  Advanced  Professional

I am interested in the following activities:		
<input type="checkbox"/> Programming	<input type="checkbox"/> Leadership	<input type="checkbox"/> Membership
<input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter	<input type="checkbox"/> Workshops	<input type="checkbox"/> Computer/Database
<input type="checkbox"/> Website	<input type="checkbox"/> Finance	<input type="checkbox"/> Library
<input type="checkbox"/> Publicity	<input type="checkbox"/> Speaker's Bureau	<input type="checkbox"/> Hospitality

**Do you read any foreign languages?**  Yes \_\_\_\_\_  No