

# Family Gatherings

Newsletter of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Broward County, Inc.

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## President's Message

Michael Sofman

20 years. That's how long it's been since Bernie Kouchel accepted the challenge of starting a Jewish genealogy group here in Broward County. The inaugural meeting, on Jan 30, 1989, featured a lecture by Malcolm Stern, considered by many to be the "Father of American-Jewish Genealogy." Significantly, an audio tape of that lecture has recently been added to the American Jewish Archives.

We've sure come a long way in those 20 years. From a group of 15 or 20 initially, we have now grown to over 90 members. We've had many fine lectures and other events over the years, and have helped many people get started

on their genealogical journeys. And we owe it all to Bernie's vision.

At our Annual Anniversary Luncheon last month, we honored Bernie for all his work on behalf of the JGSBC. While not as active in leading the group as in the past, he continues to contribute, including regular contributions to this newsletter. Within this issue, you will see comments about Bernie from persons both within and outside our group, as well as photos from the Luncheon (pp. 12-14).

We are looking forward to a great spring of meetings, thanks to the hard work of Marty Shames. All of our upcoming lectures will be by prominent genealo-



**Michael Sofman**  
President, JGSBC

gists and authors, including Fred Blum, Steve Morse, Mike Karsen, Ruth Behar, and possibly Jeffrey Malka, a preeminent Sephardic genealogist. Check inside for further details, or go to our Events Calendar on the web at [www.jgsbc.org/helios/events](http://www.jgsbc.org/helios/events)

Have a wonderful 2009!

Volume XXI, Number 1  
January 2009

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## Upcoming Meetings

**Wednesday, January 21, 7:00 pm, Soref JCC**

**"The Secrets to Finding People and IAJGS 2009 Convention Preview"**

**Fred Blum, President, JGS Greater Philadelphia**

**Sunday, February 15, 1:00pm, Alvin Sherman Library of NSU**

**"One-Step Webpages: A Hodgepodge of Lesser-Known Gems"**

**Stephen Morse (advance registration necessary- see page 17)**

# Program Notes

by Marty Shames

We had two wonderful meetings in December. First, at our Annual Anniversary Luncheon, in addition to honoring our Founder and long-time President, Bernie Kouchel, we were treated to a stimulating lecture by Dr. Henry Abramson. He is the Dean of Academic Affairs and Student Services at Touro College South, in Miami Beach, and his talk was titled, "The *Shtetl* and South Florida: Same, but Different?" He took us on a tour of the religious and political currents that took place over the past several hundred years starting in Eastern Europe and expanding into the various corners of the world in the past 100 years or so. Living in South Florida, with a Jewish population of over 600,000, places us within one of the largest concentrations of Jews in the world, and there are some parallels with life in the *shtetl*. It was a fascinating talk and enjoyed by all (see page 10 for photos).

Three days later, we were treated to another excellent talk by

Elise Friedman. She is an expert in DNA genealogy, working on various projects with JewishGen, and is the former President of the Maryland JGS. She discussed how to get the test done, and more importantly, how to interpret the results. While DNA genealogy has the potential to help us break through some of our brick walls, there are some limitations. She was able to take a very difficult subject and explain it in terms that anybody could understand.

On January 21, Fred Blum, a private investigator and President of the JGS of Greater Philadelphia, will continue the conversation he started when he spoke to us last spring. He will be discussing the "Secrets to Finding People", and will also give us a preview of the next IAJGS convention, to be held in Philly in August. See next page for more on Mr. Blum.

And, don't forget the encore of Steve Morse, Sunday, Feb 15, at NSU.



Elise Friedman discussing how to best use DNA in your genealogical research

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**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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*Family Gatherings* is published 10 times per year (hiatus in July and August) and is free to JGSBC members. For subscriptions and change of address, contact membership@jgsbc.org or JGSBC, P.O. Box 17251, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33318.

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## Membership

Rosa Pinsky

We do have a couple of new members

**Irit and Robert Goldwin**

Please greet them at our next meeting

Our membership renewal drive is underway - please don't delay – send in your dues now - you will be delighted with the depth of topics and variety of speakers planned for 2009!

Please help spread the word – mention the JGSBC to friends and family. Encourage

them to attend our monthly meetings and help them get started on their own 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)659-5490(evenings) or by email: [pinskyr@ccf.org](mailto:pinskyr@ccf.org)

Warmest wishes,  
Rosa Pinsky  
Membership Chair

**Fred Blum** is the President of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Philadelphia (JGSGP) and a genealogical researcher with some unique credentials and experiences. He is a partner in Confidential Investigative Services and B&R Services for Professionals, both Philadelphia-based companies. Fred utilizes his sleuthing expertise in his professional life, as well as in his own genealogical pursuits. He volunteers his investigative/research services to the International Red Cross Holocaust Tracing Service and, as a result of using his specialized investigative techniques, he has been able to solve some of their "closed" cases and to reunite families that have been separated since World War II. Fred has taught several workshops in research tactics and will share some of them with us during his presentation, *The Secrets to Finding People*.



## Sifting Through Time, He Finds Some Answers

by Ryan Teitman, Staff Writer, *The Jewish Exponent*

Fred Blum rifles through records at the National Archives, the Pennsylvania Historical Society, the Philadelphia Free Library, and the Philadelphia City Archives. He scours official Census records. He finds the links that others missed in the nooks and crannies of history. And he puts these sleuthing and research skills to good use as someone who helps the Red Cross reunite members of families separated during the Holocaust.

Blum grew up in the Oxford Circle section of Philadelphia and now lives in Huntingdon Valley. He has been cultivating his investigatory mindset his entire adult life. At B&R Services for Professionals in Philadelphia — a business he founded right after graduating from high school — he leads an attorney-services firm that does court filing, court reporting and investigations.

Throughout the course of his work, the 56-year-old eventually became more curious about finding his own history: "As I got a little bit older, I started wondering about my family."

Blum had originally thought his maternal grandfather was from Vienna, Austria, but he found through the International Genealogical Index — run by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints — that he was actually from the shtetl of Radziechow, a town that changed hands frequently, from Austria-Hungary to Poland to its current country, Ukraine.

He also discovered that he had a 94-year-old living aunt in Israel, and cousins in Winnipeg, Canada, and New York state. These newfound family members included Holocaust survivors who had been looking for his branch of the family.

"They knew all about our family, but we knew nothing about them," said Blum. His work culminated in a family reunion in 2003 in San Francisco, where the dispersed members got a chance to meet each other.

### One Down, More to Go

He began to use his talents for others after he saw an advertisement in 2005 in none other than the *Jewish Exponent*.

The Red Cross was looking for a relative of one Shlomo Adelman, a Romanian Jew who had come to Israel in 1940. Always at the ready, Blum decided to lend his skills to the effort.

So he waded through Census records, Social Security death indexes, city directories, passenger-arrival indexes, and naturalization records. Within two weeks, he had found Adelman's long-lost cousin: Bessie Zauber from Ventnor, N.J.

Helping reunite Adelman and Zauber provided Blum with a profound sense of satisfaction, akin to what he felt

when his own extended family was reconnected.

"I thought that it was very rewarding," he said.

With one case solved, he was ready to take on another.

Today, Blum continues to pursue the history of his own family. He has traced his father's side of the family back to the mid-1800s, and his mother's back to 1810. He continues to forge ahead, learning more about his own history: He recently discovered a new branch of the family tree. He also serves as co-president of the Philadelphia Jewish Genealogy Society.

"It's remarkable to think about your lives and how we're all connected," attested Blum.

There are always more connections to find, he said — more records to trace and leads to pursue. He even traveled to his family's hometown in Ukraine, and met the family that sheltered one of his relatives during the Holocaust.

"With genealogy," he stated, "you're never finished."

*This article originally appeared in the February 22, 2007 edition of the "Jewish Exponent."*

### **Editor Wanted!!**

The JGSBC is looking for someone interested in editing our newsletter. I have been doing it for the last couple of years, but now, as President, my other duties make it difficult for me to put as much time into it as I would like. It is not a difficult job- most of the articles are submitted by others- the editor just puts it all together. All that is required are a few basic computer skills, and a bit of time. I currently produce it using Microsoft Publisher, but Microsoft Word works fine, too. I'm sure any word processing software could be used. It is actually quite fun and interesting doing this, and I very much enjoy it, but the time has come to turn it over to someone else. If you are interested, please let me know.

Michael Sofman  
President, JGSBC  
msofman@jgsbc.org

### **Outside Genealogical Events in South Florida**

Wednesday, January 14, 12:30 pm  
"Researching Death Records" Phyllis Kramer  
JGS Palm Beach County  
South County Civic Center, 16700 Jog Rd., Delray Beach

Sunday, January 18, 10:00 am  
"Help! I have Hit a Brick Wall!"  
JGS Greater Miami  
Greater Miami Jewish Federation, 4200 Biscayne Blvd, Miami

Sunday, February 1, 1:15 pm  
"How to Use Family Tree Maker"  
Genealogy Society of Broward County (GSBC)  
Alvin Sherman Library of NSU, 2nd Floor, Computer Lab A  
3100 Ray Ferrero Blvd, Davie

## A Jewish Soldier at Valley Forge

By Leonard Hoenig MD - FJN Torah Doctor

In this week's Torah reading, Behar-Bechukosai, we find the famous quote that appears on the Liberty Bell, "Proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof" (Vayikra 25:10). It is significant that a verse from the Torah appears on this American icon since Jews played an important role in the Revolutionary War.

All American history books note how Haym Salomon, a New York banker, was a prime financier of the American side during the Revolutionary War. The Jewish Encyclopedia notes that there were over one hundred Jewish officers and men who served in the Continental army (Vol.12p.363). While researching this topic I came across the name of Philip Moses Russell (1747-1830) who served as a surgeon's mate under George Washington at Valley Forge in 1777-1778. The following is a biographical sketch of this Jewish American patriot.

During 1777 the American forces won a major victory against the British at Saratoga, New York. However, the Americans also lost the city of Philadelphia to the British army, forcing George Washington and his men to retreat to Valley Forge, Pennsylvania. The winter at Valley Forge was bitter and Washington's troops were inadequately fed and clothed. They therefore suffered greatly.

Philip Moses Russell was born in England in 1747 and immigrated to America. In 1776 he joined the Revolutionary army as a surgeon's mate, an assistant to the regiment's medical officer (Helene Schwartz-Kenvin, *The Land of Liberty: A History of America's Jews* p.58). During the winter of 1777-1778 Russell served at Valley Forge tending the sick and wounded. During this time he caught a severe fever that left him with a loss of hearing and vision. He remained in the army but was forced to resign in 1780 due to ill health. General Washington wrote Russell a letter of commendation stating that Russell had served "with honor to himself and his country and he [Washington] with pleasure bore testimony to his assiduous attention to the sick and wounded as well as his cool and collected deportment in battle" (note: The original letter was lost in a fire. This quote is based on the recollection of Russell's son, Moses.)

After leaving the army, Russell married Esther Mordecai. The couple had ten children (five sons and five daughters) born in various cities around the country (<http://www.americanjewisharchives.org>). He appears to have worked for a time as a pharmacist in Philadelphia. Russell died in 1830 in Germantown, Pennsylvania and is buried in Philadelphia's historic Mikveh Israel Cemetery.

Today the Liberty Bell no longer chimes. The echoes of its sounds of freedom however, still reverberate throughout our land thanks to the courage of the many Jewish soldiers and patriots who fought courageously for what the Founding Fathers called inalienable rights: life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Buried not too far from the Liberty Bell is Philip Moses Russell who served with distinction under General George Washington as a Jewish American soldier at Valley Forge.

From the Florida Jewish News 05/14/07  
Submitted by member Ruth Filstead

## 29th IAJGS International Conference on Jewish Genealogy

August 2-7, 2009

in

**Philadelphia, PA**

**Mark you calendars!!**

### 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.**

## Library News

We have now received our latest big purchase. It's "The Encyclopedia of Jewish Life Before and During the Holocaust". This extraordinary 3-volume 1,824 page work published by Yad Vashem provides the history of the shtetls and cities of your ancestors in almost every continental country of Europe with the exception of Bulgaria, Finland, Portugal, Spain, and Switzerland. It describes the distinctive culture of these Jewish communities lost during the Holocaust. It chronicles the history of its Jewish people, as well as the habits and customs of the communities. There are more than 600 photographs and illustrations.

If you go to the Avotaynu.com site where the books are listed and check on this book, you will see that the towns are listed in four groups: A-E, F-L, M-S, and T-Z. Click on the letter that matches the

name of your ancestor's home town and scroll down to see if you can find it, as I did. Then we'll add you to our excited, can't wait list!

There are many other features such as maps that are created especially for this encyclopedia, which draw upon numerous historical sources to pinpoint the locations of towns with significant Jewish populations in Europe and North Africa, many of which disappeared during the war. The Index of Communities features alternate spellings in a variety of languages and dialects to help you

find your locations.

And there is so much more, including a Chronology which summarizes the sequence of critical events and helps the readers understand the context in which they occurred.

Brenda Feuer  
Rhoda Horwitz

P. S. Leave your phone or email messages with a tag about our Library or the Lost and Found or I will delete it since I get so many junk mail messages. You know what I mean! (954)741-8368 or [rhocat@aol.com](mailto:rhocat@aol.com). Thanks!



**Check out  
our Events  
Calendar at  
[www.jgsbc.org/  
helios/events](http://www.jgsbc.org/helios/events)**

**Nu? What's New? (excerpted)**  
**The E-zine of Jewish Genealogy From Avotaynu**  
**Gary Mokotoff, Editor**  
**Volume 9, Number 27 | December 7, 2008**

### **ITS Hires Archivist to Improve Indexing and Finding Aids**

The International Tracing Service in Bad Arolsen, Germany, has hired an archivist to improve the indexing of their collection and create finding aids for historical research purposes. ITS stated that, until now, the Central Name Index had been the key to the documents at ITS. Due to ITS's transformation into an academic archive, additional means of searching its inventory are needed in order to research locations, events and nationalities. In view of the massive number of documents, this will be a long-term project with interim results being made available. ITS also plans on collaborating with other institutions on the creation of directories, catalogues and finding aids.

ITS stated that improved indexing of the documents became an urgent task ever since the archive was opened up for historical research a year ago. Since then historians from memorial sites, universities, research institutions and museums, as well as jurists, archivists, genealogists and local historians have expressed interest in the documents. Approximately 1,300 visitors from 24 countries have visited the International Tracing Service since it opened to the public, including 330 researchers, 100 journalists and 290 victims of Nazi persecution and their family members. The first group to visit the facility was a group of genealogists who went to ITS last May. The trip was sponsored by Avotaynu. Of the total 11,300 inquiries from 77 countries that reached ITS over the past twelve months, approximately one quarter (2,920 enquiries) were made by scholars and journalists.

ITS's total inventory comprises 26,000 meters of original documents from the Nazi era and immediate post-war period. Additional information can be found at

[http://www.its-arolsen.org/en/press/press\\_releases/index.html?expand=2180&cHash=dd6fed5756](http://www.its-arolsen.org/en/press/press_releases/index.html?expand=2180&cHash=dd6fed5756)

### **DNA Evidence Shows Many Spaniards Have Jewish and Muslim Ancestors**

In an article written in the *New York Times*, a team of geneticists are claiming that 20 percent of the population of the Iberian Peninsula have Sephardic Jewish ancestry and 11 percent have Moorish ancestry. The article states that there is "explicit evidence of the mass conversions of Sephardic Jews and Muslims to Catholicism in the 15th and 16th centuries after Christian armies wrested Spain back from Muslim control."

In 1492, Catholic Spain offered the Jews a proffered baptism—convert to Christianity or leave the country. Prior to then, the Jewish presence in Spain dated back to the time of the Roman Empire and probably earlier. The Spanish edict was followed, in 1497, by a comparable decree by the King of Portugal.

Many Jews accepted baptism but practiced Judaism in secret. They became known by a variety of names including Marranos, conversos, crypto-Jews and New Christians. If they were caught practicing Judaism by the Inquisition—or in many cases merely accused and convicted—they were often put to death. There is strong evidence that some of these crypto-Jews participated in the early colonization of the Western Hemisphere. Read the *Nu? What's New?* article about the Melungeons at <http://www.avotaynu.com/nu6.htm> as an example. Also there is an article in *Every Family Has a Story* titled "The Jews of the Canary Islands."

The *Times* article can be read at

[http://www.nytimes.com/2008/12/05/science/05genes.html?\\_r=1&emc=tnt&tntemail1=y](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/12/05/science/05genes.html?_r=1&emc=tnt&tntemail1=y)

### **New Book: Google Your Family Tree**

My friends will tell you that I rarely get excited about new things. The last time that happened was when a man named Stephen P. Morse claimed he had a better way to search the Ellis Island Database. When I saw how Morse accomplished his search, I got excited because I realized it not only solved the problem of the inadequate Ellisland.org search engine, but it had relevance to many other Internet search applications.

*Google Your Family Tree* excites me because it has relevance to applications other than genealogy. A more appropriate title might have been "How to Use Google with Examples from Genealogy." Whoever uses Google must get

this book, whether you are a genealogist, a student with a homework assignment, or a cooking buff looking for a recipe.

Google has revolutionized information retrieval. Because just about everything and everyone is mentioned somehow on the Internet, this remarkable search engine is a boon to family history research. I have used it to find information about living persons, deceased persons of note, the history of my ancestral towns, the origin of the surname Mokotow and other data.

One might ask, "What is there to Google beyond learning how to use keywords?" *Google Your Family Tree* author Dan Lynch does use the first 28 pages to rigorously demonstrate how to select and apply keywords, but the next 296 pages teaches the reader about many of the other capabilities of Google including: Language Tools, Google Books, Google News Archives, Google Images and Videos, Google Alerts and Google Maps. At this point, we are only half done with the book. There are additional chapters on Blog Search, Google Earth, Google Notebook, Google Toolbar and Other Tips and Tricks.

The book is easy reading, because it is rich with sample screens from Google. Remarkably, I can find no other book that explains how to use Google. *Google Your Family Tree* is a must for every household, not merely for family history research, but for every family member who uses the Internet to glean information.

You can purchase *Google Your Family Tree* at Avotaynu's web site for \$34.95. For a limited time—through December 22—if you purchase a copy, we will include at no additional cost a *Google Your Family Tree Quick Reference Guide* which normally sells for \$6.95. Ordering information can be found at <http://www.avotaynu.com/books/Google-Your-Family-Tree.htm>.

### Call for Papers for the 2009 Conference on Jewish Genealogy



Planners for the 29th International conference on Jewish Genealogy have opened a web site for the event at <http://philly2009.org>. They have issued a Call for Papers from people who want to lecture at the conference. The conference is co-hosted by the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies and the Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Philadelphia. It will be held at the Sheraton Philadelphia City Center Hotel in Philadelphia, August 2–7, 2009. The conference is the premier event of the Jewish genealogical year. In 2009 it is likely to attract more than 1,000 genealogists.

### What's New at the Morse Site?

Stephen P. Morse has added a portal to Ancestry.com's Canadian Passenger Records. Previously he included a portal to Ancestry.com's Canadian Border Crossing Records. Both are listed in the "Other Ports" section of his web site at <http://stevemorse.org>. To read results requires a subscription to Ancestry.com

You can now search from the Morse site certain old phone directories from Moscow and St Petersburg, as well as military records. The user keys in the Latin letters equivalent of the surname. Morse transliterates the surname into Cyrillic which the user then pastes onto the search form. The results are both in Cyrillic and a Latin alphabet transliteration. The function is identified at the Morse site as "Russian Phone Directory (English)."

### JewishGen Discussion Groups

One of the principal lines of communication for Jewish family history research is the Discussion Groups located at the JewishGen site. The first such group on JewishGen is the main one simply named "JewishGen Discussion Group." It has existed for more than 15 years. Here genealogists shared information, ideas, methods, tips, techniques, case studies and resources. As Jewish genealogical research on the Internet grew, and with the advent of Special Interest Groups that concentrate on particular areas of interest, focused Discussion Groups came into creation. There are now nearly 30 such groups. They are (alphabetically):

AustriaCzech, Belarus, DNA Testing, Early American, French, Galicia, GerSIG (German), H-SIG (Hungary), JCR-UK (United Kingdom), JRI-Poland, Latin America, Latvia, LitvakSIG (Lithuania), Rabbinic, Rom-SIG (Romania), Scandi-

navia, Sephardic, South Africa, Ukraine and Yiddish Theatre/Vaudeville. There are also a few town/region groups for Borislav, Drogobych, Sambor and Vicinity; Bialystok Region; Ciechanow; Courland Area; Danzig; Lodz Area; and Warszawa.

All the postings of the main JewishGen Discussion Group have been archived since 1993. They can be searched at <http://data.jewishgen.org/wconnect/wc.dll?jg~jgsys~archpop>. The archives for the other groups, some as early as 1998, can be searched at <http://data.jewishgen.org/wconnect/wc.dll?jg~jgsys~sigspop>. Only subscribers to the particular SIG lists can search that list's archives. Anyone can search the main JewishGen Discussion Group's archives.

The main JewishGen Discussion Group has more than 5,000 subscribers. The exact number is not known, because it is mirrored to the newsgroup soc.genealogy.jewish whose readership is unknown. Four of the special interest Discussion Groups have more than 2,000 subscribers: Belarus, Galicia, JRI-Poland and Ukraine.

You can subscribe to any of the Discussion Groups at [http://lyris.jewishgen.org/ListManager/members\\_add.asp](http://lyris.jewishgen.org/ListManager/members_add.asp). Be sure to subscribe in Digest mode (the default mode). This mode will provide a single e-mail of all the messages of the day. Subscribing in Mail mode will provide an e-mail for every single posting.

### Volume 9, Number 28 December 21, 2008

#### Status of Internet Access to Canadian Census and Passenger Lists

If Canadian genealogy is an important part of your research, I suggest you subscribe to "Gordon Watts Reports." His latest e-zine summarizes the status of the digitizing and indexing of the 1851 through 1911 and 1916 censuses and Canadian Passenger Lists. The chart shows what projects is in progress, in what year digitization of the records are expected to be completed, when an index will be available and when the index will be available free of charge at the Library and Archives of Canada (LAC) Internet site. Watts' latest release is located at <http://globalgenealogy.com/globalgazette/gazgw/gazgw-0114.htm>.

Watts also discusses in the issue that people who are interested in keeping up with what is happening at Library and Archives Canada now have a new way of doing so. LAC has recently incorporated RSS feeds, one of which is "What Is New at LAC." At that location I discovered that the planned Index to Quebec Passenger Lists 1865–1900 is now available at the LAC site. It is located at <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/databases/passengers-quebec-1865-1900/index-e.html>.

These projects are a joint venture between Ancestry.com and LAC. The arrangement allows the commercial venture, Ancestry, access to records with the understanding that after a certain time period that they will be at the Ancestry site on a fee-for-service basis; they will be available at the government site, LAC, for free. Similar arrangements exist between the U.S. National Archives and Records Administration and a number of ventures in the U.S.

#### Videos of Pre-Holocaust Jewish Poland

Tomasz Wisniewski of Bialystok has placed on YouTube a number of videos of pre-Holocaust Jewish Poland. They can be found at <http://www.youtube.com/bagnowka7>. They are mostly still pictures presented in video format.

Titles include Jewish Cemeteries til 1945, Hassidim Chasidim - Holocaust, Jewish Cemeteries til 1945, Bielski Podlaski Synagogue, Jewish Children in Holocaust and Bialystok 1939-1944. All told there are 16 videos.

One film, Chivalrous Wehrmacht, shows photos and films of the German occupation of Poland taken by German soldiers. In one portion, there is a photo of German soldiers who had plundered a synagogue and were mockingly wearing keters (crowns of the Torah) on their heads. Another soldier was removing precious stones from the plates that adorned torahs.

Wisniewski has a major website at <http://bagnowka.com>, which includes nearly 60,000 photographs—some from postcards—of Poland. Most are pre-World War II and many are of Jewish life in Poland. There is a search engine at the site that allows you to search by surname or town name. Warning: A tiny note states the search is case sensitive. When I searched for the Mokotow ancestral town of "warka" (lower case "W") there were no hits. Searching for "Warka" (upper case "W") produced 18 results (although some of the pictures did not appear to be of Warka).

### Foundation for Jewish Heritage in Poland

The Foundation for the Preservation of Jewish Heritage in Poland is an organization whose mission is to protect and commemorate the surviving monuments of Jewish cultural heritage in Poland. They are also working to reclaim and restore properties which before WWII were the property of Jewish religious communities and other Jewish legal entities. They have a web site at <http://fodz.pl/?d=1&l=en>. This site has a list of Jewish cemeteries in Poland and their current status that can be searched from the home page. The home page also links to current and past projects of the organization. Click on “Gallery” to view information about specific projects.

### Ancestry.com Now Has 1935 and 1945 Florida Censuses Online

Ancestry.com has digitized and indexed Florida state censuses for the years 1867, 1875, 1935 and 1945. Florida is one of only two U.S. states (South Dakota is the other) to have completed a census as recently as 1945. This adds to Ancestry’s Florida State Collection which already includes the 1885 state census, marriages (1822–1875 and 1927–2001), death index (1877–1998), passenger lists (1898–1951) and land records. The Florida census search is located at <http://content.ancestry.com/iexec/?htx=List&dbid=1506&offerid=0%3a7858%3a0>

### Centropa.org

A Viennese-based organization, Centropa, has developed a remarkable Internet site, <http://centropa.org>, that is an oral history project which combines old family pictures with interviews. Centropa interviewed more than 1,350 elderly Jews living in Central and Eastern Europe; the former Soviet Union; and the Sephardic communities of Greece, Turkey and the Balkans. They combined the text of the interviews with 25,000 digitized images to create professional-looking autobiographies of these people. The intent was to document—at the family level—what it was like to live as Jews in 20th-century Europe.

When browsing this site, be sure to include <http://centropa.org/?nID=1> which provides a list of the surnames, cities and countries of the people they interviewed. From this page you can click on a specific surname, city of country that will lead to a list of persons who met the criteria. From there you can select the interview and photographs of the particular person.

A few biographies have been converted into video presentations. Go to <http://centropa.org/nov09/?nID=4> to view a sample of the videos. A complete list can be found at <http://www.centropastudent.org/?nID=77&fLang=ENG>.

The site is meant to be educational as well as informational. Centropastudent.org includes films and online study guides for educational programs.

### Living in America: The Jewish Experience—Philadelphia

In recognition that the 2009 International Conference on Jewish Genealogy will be held in Philadelphia this summer, the online Museum of Family History has created a component titled “Living in America: The Jewish Experience—Philadelphia” at <http://www.museumoffamilyhistory.com/mfh-philadelphia.htm>. It currently includes three articles with photographs about Jewish Philadelphia: “The Jewish Quarter of Philadelphia,” by Harry Boonin; “The Fabric of our Lives: A History of Philadelphia’s Fourth Street,” by Michele Winitsky Palmer; and “Four Jewish Families in Philadelphia: The End of the 19th Century,” by Leonard Markowitz. Boonin is the author of the book [\*The Jewish Quarter of Philadelphia: A History and Guide 1881–1930\*](#) which is available through Avotaynu.

## Message from Mike Karsen

I spoke to your group about the importance and urgency of "Writing Your Family History" and I would like to inform you of a program I now offer. In my "Legacy Pledge" program I share my PowerPoint slides from 3 of my lectures and copies of all of my personal Family Histories with anyone who would Pledge to write a family history within 12 months. As part of this program, I send gentle e-mail reminder every 3 months. To learn more about this program, go to my website, [www.Mikekarsen.com](http://www.Mikekarsen.com), and click on the **Legacy Pledge** icon in the left column.

If you've already written a family history as a result of my message, I would love to hear what you've done. Please e-mail me at [mike@MikeKarsen.com](mailto:mike@MikeKarsen.com).

## MENTORING

We have started a Mentoring Program to assist members with their brick walls or specific questions on a one-on-one basis. If you would like to be assigned a Mentor, please contact Rosa Pinsky at [pinskyr@ccf.org](mailto:pinskyr@ccf.org) or by phone (evenings) 954-389-7392. Please mention your area of interest and/or expertise so we can appropriately match you up.

We are also looking for people to serve as mentors, so if you're willing and able to help, please let us know as well.

## Tidbits by Bernie Kouchel

### Know your past for future health.

A family can learn much about its medical future simply by examining its past. Developing a family health tree can be one of the most important legacies you pass along to future generations. The U.S. Surgeon General's Office has set up a Web site – [familyhistory.hhs.gov](http://familyhistory.hhs.gov) – that helps people create a medical family tree. You need not go back very far, three generations, yours, your parents and your grandparents will suffice. When you update your family health tree, don't forget to share the new information with family members. Those who never learn about their family health history may be condemned to repeat it.

Happy New year!

Bik

### A note from JewishGen concerning Viewmate

ViewMate is still not operational on JewishGen; however, family researchers can now submit images they need assistance identifying/translating on the JewishGen blog.

Submit an image:

1. Save your image in a JPEG or PDF format only. Any other format will not be posted.
2. Email [viewmate@mjhny.org](mailto:viewmate@mjhny.org) with your image saved as an attachment.
3. The subject line must be: ViewMate.
4. In the body of the email, provide a brief description of what you need help with.
5. Include your name, email address and JGID. Your email address and JGID will not be posted.

View an image that has already been posted:

1. All images will be posted on the blog in the special section for ViewMate.
2. The file name will be "Name of Submitter - Current Date." (e.g., John Smith - 01/08/2009)
3. Visit the JewishGen Blog homepage at [www.JewishGen.blogspot.com](http://www.JewishGen.blogspot.com), and select "CLICK HERE FOR VIEWMATE."
4. You will now see a list of all images that have been submitted.

Notes:

1. We will confirm that images have been received, but we will not confirm when they will be/have been posted.
2. Generally speaking the images will be posted within 2-3 business days.
3. Once your image has been posted, you may announce it on the JewishGen Discussion Group. Be sure to include a link to the specific URL with your image or tell people to search for the appropriate file name (e.g., John Smith - 01/08/2009).
4. Unfortunately we cannot provide technical support at the current time. If a file image that is sent to us does not work, we will not post it. Please do not email us with inquiries as we do not have the manpower to answer them.

Best of luck with all of your research,

Avraham Groll  
Administrator of JewishGen  
Project Manager of JewishGen Yizkor Books  
[agroll@mjhny.org](mailto:agroll@mjhny.org)

## 20th Annual Anniversary Luncheon, December 14, 2008



Professor Henry Abramson speaking to the group



Bernie Kouchel receiving his plaque from Michael Sofman



A nice crowd listens intently



# ***TALES OF BERNIE***

## **Who is Bernie Kouchel?**

per Gary Mokotoff, Nu? What's New? Biweekly newsletter of Avotaynu, Inc. October 2, 2005

Bernie Kouchel is one of the pioneers of Jewish genealogy. He is the founder of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Broward County (Florida). He was on the JewishGen Board of Directors for many years. JewishGen honored Bernie by declaring the popular ViewMate system "The Bernard Kouchel Viewmate Project".

## **What was Bernie like in 1988 when he founded the JGS?**

By Michael C. Greenberg

It all began when Miriam Weiner came to South Florida in the mid to late 1980's and spoke to a crowd of several hundred people regarding Jewish genealogy.

Miriam urged us to form our own group and Bernie very enthusiastically accepted her challenge. Our first meeting was attended by about ten people. We voted in Bernie as the President and I was voted in as Vice-President.

During those first years what I remembered most about Bernie was his enthusiasm. He loved genealogy and was always very anxious to share success stories about finding a new relative somewhere. His enthusiasm for genealogy was felt by others and contagious as he was great about getting others excited about doing their genealogy.

Although twenty years have passed, Bernie is still very enthusiastic about genealogy; however, his enthusiasm has been tempered somewhat by pragmatism. Recently, Bernie shared with me about not going overboard in sharing with others. "Michael, I'll tell you what I learned; people love talking about their families and their discoveries, but nobody is as excited about your family as you are..."

Bernie, thank you for sticking with the group all these years and for all your great works!

## **What is one of Bernie's Current Passions?**

Bernie is very passionate about the Mormon/Jewish controversy and is the author of the JewishGen Infofile about the controversy which is located at <http://www.jewishgen.org/InfoFiles/ldsagree.html>.

In the 2005 Nu? What's New? Publication cited above, Gary Mokotoff reports that "Bernie recently discovered that he is listed in the Florida Death Index, 1936-1998, located at Ancestry.com. Bernie wailed that not only is the announcement of his death premature, but he added that now he has to worry that the Mormons will baptize him."

## **How Many Results are there for Bernie Kouchel on Google?**

As of a December 5<sup>th</sup> search.....557 citations.

### **From Jules Rosenthal**

In 1990 I inquired of the Philadelphia JGS if there was a (Jewish genealogical) organization in South Florida. They were kind enough to give me Bernie Kouchel's name and how to reach him. When Dorothy and I returned to Florida in 1991 I met with Bernie and joined the society to learn how to research in order to build my family tree.

Bernie was a fireball in those days and I did my best to keep up with him. The organization had about twenty members or so and Bernie covered most of the officer's duties, although there was Abner Turk doing duty as treasurer. As soon as Bernie learned I had a computer he immediately corralled me and convinced me that I was more than capable of publishing the newsletter of the organization. Until that moment Bernie was the reporter, editor, publisher and circulation manager of the two sided, one page newsletter.

I recall my IBM computer operated on the DOS system and there weren't many programs for publishing. I knew nothing about getting information to publish. No matter, after a meeting at Bernie's home, he passed on the member list with addresses, stampers for return address and sent me on my way. We did work out a unique way of getting me information to publish. Bernie would put all of the wonderful information he accumulated through the month on a floppy disc and we would arrange to meet half way to our homes in a Winn-Dixie parking lot.

We have come a long way since those early days and learned much from Bernie Kouchel.

*(Note: Jules Rosenthal was honored with our Award of Honor in 2005 for his many years of untiring service as Vice President, Director and Editor of the Family Gatherings newsletter)*

### **From Abner Turk:**

It doesn't seem possible that it has been a short twenty years ago that Sunday afternoon at the JCC in Plantation when Bernie introduced Rabbi Malcolm Stern to the many attendees of our first meeting.

Bernie is truly the "father" of the JGSBC and guided all of us during those first years. Nobody knew too much about genealogy and Bernie taught us.

How will I ever forget my first visit to the LDS in Salt Lake City with Bernie and Joe Abravenel. We both learned a lot thanks to Bernie..

Mazel Tov, Bernie, and here's to another twenty years !!

### **From Brenda Feuer**

My grandfather said that he came from a town that I did not know how to spell. It sounded like Zjettle. I was not sure what letter it actually started with. When I received my grandfather's naturalization papers it stated that he was born in Grodno. However poorly my pronunciation was Grodno did not sound anything like it. At the next meeting of the JGSBC, which at that time meant Bernie Kouchel, I asked Bernie if he could help me understand the difference between what my grandfather said and the naturalization papers. He immediately answered, "That's easy. Zhetl is a town in Grodno". He showed me on a large map where they were. Then I asked him how he knew this. He told me that his grandfather also came from Zhetl.

It turns out that both Bernie and I were born in the same hospital in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. Our families may have known each other or even been related, but there is no one left to ask.

## JGSBC Program Calendar

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

**Wednesday, January 21, 7:00 pm Soref JCC**  
**"The Secrets to Finding People"**  
**Fred Blum, President JGS Greater Philadelphia**

**Sunday, February 15, 1:00 pm NSU**  
**"One-Step Webpages: A Hodgepodge of Lesser-Known Gems"**  
**Stephen Morse**  
**(advance registration necessary– see last page)**

**(tentative)**

**Wednesday, March 4, location TBA**  
**Jeffrey Malka, speaking on Sephardic Genealogy**

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

President	Michael Sofman
Vice President	Martin Shames
Treasurer	Brenda Feuer
Secretary	Joyce Ben-Ezra
Directors	Robert Koltnow Rhoda Horwitz Michael Greenberg Rosa Pinsky Robert Pittell

### Committee Chairs

Cemetery	Ara Morenberg
Finance	Brenda Feuer
Library	Rhoda Horwitz
Membership	Rosa Pinsky
Newsletter	Michael Sofman
Program	Martin Shames
Publicity	Michael Greenberg
Speaker's Bureau	Robert Koltnow
Website	Ara Morenberg

### Past Presidents

Martin Shames	2004-2007
Robert Koltnow	2002-2003
Bernard Kouchel	1995-2001
Gene Garlin	1994-1995
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).



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

P.O. Box 17251  
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33318  
Phone: 954-243-6063 Fax: 954-523-0766  
Visit us at: www.jgsbc.org

## Membership Application

Date:	<input type="checkbox"/> New Member	<input type="checkbox"/> Renewal	<input type="checkbox"/> Gift
Name(s):			
Street Address:			
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

***Nova Southeastern University  
Jewish Genealogical Society of Broward County and  
Genealogical Society of Broward County***

jointly present

**One-Step Webpages:  
A Hodgepode of Lesser-Known Gems**



**Steve Morse**

Sunday, February 15, 2009, 1:00 p.m.  
Alvin Sherman Library of NSU  
4th Floor Conference Room  
3100 Ray Ferrero, Jr. Blvd, Davie

Please join us as we welcome back Stephen Morse, the computer genius who has attracted worldwide attention with his One-Step method for searching the Ellis Island Database and the 1930 United States census. Last year, he introduced us to his *One-Step Webpages*, and will now continue the discussion as we delve further into the tools he has created.

Shortly after the Ellis Island Foundation website opened, Morse created an alternative way to extract Ellis Island Database records and has been hailed the guru of Ellis Island Database information. Dr. Morse has also developed One-Step methods for *Searching for Ships in the Morton Allan Directory*, *Searching the Social Security Death Index (SSDI)*, *Obtaining Birthdays in One Step*, *Jewish Calendar Conversion Program*, *Generating Daitch-Mokotoff Soundex Codes*, *Generating American Soundex Codes*, and many others. A complete listing of his One-Step Webpages and information on how to use them can be found at <http://stevemorse.org>.

Morse, who resides in California, holds a Ph.D. in electrical engineering and is a computer professional best known for being the architect of the Intel 8086 microprocessor (the grandfather of today's Pentium processor), which sparked the PC revolution 25 years ago. The researching of his Russian-Jewish origins for the past several years motivated him to develop these remarkable programs that have benefited all genealogists searching similar areas.

***Admission is free for all wishing to attend.***

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

**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)

