



Family Gatherings

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

P.O. Box 17251, Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33318

Phone: 954-243-6063 www.jgsbroward.org Fax: 954-523-0766

E-mail: info@jgsbroward.org



Issue 2007 No. 3

March 2007

**NEXT MEETING: SUNDAY, MARCH 18, 1:00 PM
SOREF J.C.C**

President's Message

Our society seeks to educate our members and the community about Jewish history, Jewish geography and genealogical research methods to assist them to learn about their personal family genealogy. Recent developments and scheduled activities are giving us outstanding opportunities to achieve our objectives.

The March 4th edition of the South Florida Sun-Sentinel included an article titled "Genealogy group plans seminar for novice researchers" by Lois K. Solomon in which she talked about our upcoming March 11th Genealogy Workshop, Jewish Genealogy 101 Route to Your Roots. The article also quoted me and Rosa Pinsky about some of our genealogical interests and findings. There was also an article titled "Getting Started" in the same issue with a list of some popular genealogical websites. On Tuesday, March 13th I am scheduled to be interviewed by Rabbi Chai Amar on "The Best of You" Jewish radio program that is on WLVG 1040 AM from 4:00 to 5:00 PM. Our scheduled monthly programs for March, April and May are unusually rich in content and the speakers are exceptionally talented and interesting. Check the program information in Bob Koltnow's Program article.

Yad Vashem, an organization dedicated to perpetuating the memory of the victims of the Holocaust and the principal repository of information about the Holocaust is conducting a campaign to Let No Holocaust Victim Be Forgotten. They are asking people to memorialize each individual Jew who perished in the Holocaust by recording their names in a Page of Testimony. I recently submitted the names of 9 members of the Shames family who perished in the Holocaust. I was able to enter the information on line on the Yad Vashem website or I could have filled out the forms and mailed them to Yad Vashem.

(continued on next page)

Program Bob Koltnow

In addition to our workshop this Sunday (see ad later in this issue), we will be presenting the following programs:

SUNDAY MARCH 18, 2007, 1:00 P.M.

DR. MARIANNE SANUA

The Jewish Genealogy Society of Broward County will be honored to have Dr. Marianne Sanua address our Society at our General Meeting on Sunday afternoon, March 18th, beginning at 1:00 P. M. Dr. Sanua is a Professor of History and Jewish Studies at Florida Atlantic University, Boca Raton, Florida. She received her B. S. From Princeton University and her Ph.D from Colorado University. She is also a lecturer and author of many articles and books. Her presentation will be on Sephardic history and genealogy.

THURSDAY APRIL 12, 2007, 7:00 P.M.

RON ARONS

The Jewish Genealogical Society of Broward County, jointly with the Soref Jewish Community Center, are pleased to have Ron Arons from California return to make a most interesting presentation at the Soref JCC on Thursday evening, April 12, 2007, beginning at 7:00 P. M. Ron will discuss "Researching Jewish Criminals". He had appeared at the Soref JCC two years ago when he gave a fascinating presentation, from a genealogical point of view, of the lives of Meyer Lansky and "Bugsy" Segal.

Ron was born and raised in New York and as a veteran of the computer industry, he has earned degrees from Princeton University and the University of Chicago. He is a seasoned genealogist who has traced

(continued on page 7)

The Jewish Genealogical Society of Broward County usually meets on either the last Sunday or Wednesday of the month. Please check the Front Page for the exact time and location.

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. Guests are always welcome to participate in our programs.

General Meeting- February 21, 2007

At our most recent meeting, Karen Roekard, gave a terrific talk about her experiences in Eastern Europe, particularly the Ukraine, researching her family's roots. She was accompanied on her trip by the incomparable Alexander Dunai, and had some fascinating stories to tell about the towns, the people and the sights she saw, as well as her experiences in the archives.

Family Gatherings

A monthly publication of the JGSBC free to all members, who also have free access to the society's library and are entitled to vote on all matters brought before the membership.

We look forward to hearing your comments, suggestions, and genealogical success stories that may be of interest to our readers. Send any and all of the above to: info@jgsbroward.org

OFFICERS/DIRECTORS

- President/Director Martin Shames
Vice Pres/Director Jules Rosenthal
Secretary/Director Joyce Ben-Ezra
Treasurer/Director Brenda Feuer
Director David Corito
Director Rhoda Horwitz
Director Robert Koltnow, Esq.
Director Michael Sofman
Director Annabelle Stanislaw

COMMITTEES

- Library Rhoda Horwitz, Brenda Feuer
Program Robert Koltnow, Bernard Kouchel
Publicity David Corito
Membership Michael Sofman
Finance Brenda Feuer
Newsletter Jules Rosenthal, David Corito (temp), Robert Koltnow (temp), Michael Sofman (temp)
Website Bernard Kouchel
Speaker's Bureau Robert Koltnow

Past Presidents

- Bernard Kouchel, founder 1988-94
Gene Garlin 1994-95
Bernard Kouchel 1995-2001
Robert Koltnow, Esq. 2002-03

Check our website at www.jgsbroward.org for the latest information about your society or to contact any officer, director, or chairperson via direct link on the website.



(President's letter continued from page 1)

I encourage you to memorialize the names of the members of your family who perished in the Holocaust.

I look forward to seeing you at our upcoming meetings to learn, to share information and to break through those brick walls in our ongoing search for our roots. Since this will be the last newsletter before the Pesach holidays I want to wish you and your family a Chag Sameach and a happy, healthy and memorable celebration.

Martu Shames, President

Visit the Center For Jewish History website at http://www.cjh.org/supporting/familytree.php for a complimentary personalized, color version of the Family Tree that contains information you've filled in on your own. Just go to the site after you've gathered the information you would like to include.

Bernard Kouchel

LIBRARY NEWS

We're so glad that you're reading and enjoying our newsletter and found an error in the last edition. Several people wrote emails wondering if we'd changed the library hours to a different day. No, we're still open on Tuesday's from 10 to 12, an hour before meetings, and at special requests. In fact, we plan to be open for an hour after our March 11th Workshop so that you can see for yourself the vast array of books that we have.

I'm sure that you're familiar with the Jewish book publisher Avotaynu. If you go to their website (www.avotaynu.com) and click on their 100 recommended books to help you with your research, you'll find most of them already on our shelves. Check our library listings (www.jgsbroward.org), to examine our holdings. I'm working on typing in more books that we've purchased or have been donated to us. If you don't see a title that you think belongs there, drop us a line and perhaps we can purchase it. And remember, we always welcome genealogy books and bookcases that you no longer use. They are tax-deductible and we can make arrangements to pick them up, or you can bring them to one of our meetings!

We also have all the issues of Avotaynu dating back to 1989. They contain valuable ideas and inspirational stories of fellow genealogists. The www.Avotaynu.com site has an index that lists each copy and its contents, so that you can jot down a specific title and volume number, and find it on our shelves.

If you're looking for a volume to get you started, try reading or buying (\$11) a copy of "Getting Started in Jewish Genealogy". It's a slim volume, but packed

with much information. We also have "From Generation to Generation" which is also a beginner's guide to Jewish genealogy. Our most recent purchase is the "Avotaynu Guide to Jewish Genealogy", a fascinating, thick volume with advice from many genealogists. The time will really fly by when you're reading any of these interesting books, especially after attending our Workshop, "Route to Your Roots" on Sunday, March 11th from 12:30pm to 5pm. Just remember, that's the 1st day of Daylight Savings Time, so set your clock an hour ahead so you won't miss an hour of knowledge!!

See you soon.
Brenda Feuer
Rhoda Horwitz

Ever wonder what some of the old medical terms listed on death certificates mean? Did one of your ancestors die of "apoplexy"? "Consumption"? "Dropsy"? There are resources to find out the current terminology of these archaic terms. Often you can go to a medical library or even a public library and find old editions of medical textbooks or medical dictionaries, but, nowadays, the simplest way is via the Internet. Here are a few interesting websites:

<http://www.antiquusmorbus.com/Index.htm>
http://www.paul_smith.doctors.org.uk/ArchaicMedicalTerms.htm
http://www.thespeeds.com/genealogy/speeds/research%20aids/old_medical_terminology.htm
<http://www.henriettesherbal.com/eclectic/thomas/index.html>
http://www.leelehman.com/medical_1.html

In my family, one ancestor died of "cerebro-spinal fever", AKA meningitis, and another had "Bright's disease", or glomerulonephritis, an inflammatory kidney disease (for you basketball fans out there, this is what led to Alonzo Mourning's kidney transplant). By the way, "apoplexy" is a stroke, "consumption" is now known as tuberculosis, and "dropsy" refers to edema generally and congestive heart failure more specifically. Hopefully, none of your ancestors had the "French Pox" (as named by the British), now known as syphilis!

Michael Sofman (M.D.)

"Permission is granted for the quoting, in whole or in part, of any original article included in this issue of Family Gatherings by the newsletter/journal of any other IAJGS member society, providing acknowledgement of the source is given, unless the article is identified as one that is not to be reproduced.

Acknowledgement should include the title of the newsletter, the issuing society, and its volume number or date of publication. Additionally, as a courtesy, we request that an email be sent letting us know that a published article is being further used."

Nu? What's New? (excerpted)

The E-zine of Jewish Genealogy

Gary Mokotoff, Editor

Volume 8, Number 4 | February 25, 2007

Canadian Immigrant Database Online

Library and Archives Canada has made available online their Likacheff-Ragosine-Mathers collection (LI-RA-MA). This database contains documents created between 1898 and 1922 by the Russian consular offices located in Canada.

It consists of some 11,400 files on Jewish, Ukrainian and Finnish immigrants who came to Canada from the Russian Empire. Each file may contain passports, identity papers, questionnaires and other information. A total of 55,000 digitized images of these documents are online at the site.

The LI-RA-MA collection is located at <http://www.collectionscanada.ca/archivianet/li-ra-ma/index-e.html>. It is one of several launched recently as part of LAC's "Moving Here, Staying Here: The Canadian Immigrant Experience" project located at <http://www.collectionscanada.ca/immigrants>.

New Book: A Practical Guide to Jewish Cemeteries

Is it possible to write a book about cemeteries that is both informative and interesting to read? Nolan Menachemson of Australia created such a book and Avotaynu will be publishing the work, *A Practical Guide to Jewish Cemeteries* at the end of March.

The first chapter of Menachemson's 256-page book, *A Brief History of Jewish Burial*, describes many of the customs associated with this ritual. Chapter two focuses on what genealogists want for their research: "How to Read a Jewish Gravestone." Then the book gets interesting. Chapter Three deals with more than 25 different symbols that appear on tombstones. Examples: Bird, bookcase, broken branch, candle, deer, fish, etc. Each section of this chapter includes an example of the use of the symbol, its Jewish meaning, and often the significance of such symbolism in other religions.

Example: Candles, Broken and Shabbat. Candle symbols are found on the graves of Jewish women. The broken candle is usually found on the tombstone of a young woman and is a common motif in Jewish cemeteries in Poland. The Shabbat candle motif usually depicts women's hands, which is unusual as Jewish law prohibits human imagery on Jewish graves. Isolated human images, such as hands, are used as a metaphor to represent the complete human body. (This is just the first few sentences of a full page devoted to this symbol.) Other chapters that make the book interesting reading are devoted to:

- * The burial location of more than 100 famous Jews with biographies of the individuals
- * A chapter on preserving cemeteries
- * A description of famous Jewish cemeteries and the location of major Nazi concentration camps
- * A set of Frequently Asked Questions on such matters as Jewish cemetery architecture, prohibitions, burial organizations and much more
- * There is also a 820-year Hebrew year to secular year calendar converter (years 1200-2020).

The cost of the book is \$39.00 plus shipping. There is a pre-publication discount offer to persons who subscribe to our quarterly journal, AVOTAYNU. Until April 1, AVOTAYNU subscribers can purchase the book for only \$32.50, a 17% savings. When ordering the book, note in the comments section of the order that you are a subscriber. (We automatically check our records anyway and you will get the discount.) Additional

information, including the complete Table of Contents and a sample chapter can be found at

<http://www.avotaynu.com/books/Cemeteries.htm>

To subscribe to AVOTAYNU, go to <http://www.avotaynu.com/journal.htm>.

News from the SIGs

SIGs are Special Interest Groups primarily focusing on geographic areas of ancestry. You can subscribe to their Discussion Groups at <http://lyris.jewishgen.org/ListManager>. A log in is required. You can link the SIG home pages from <http://www.jewishgen.org>. There are also more than 80 Jewish Genealogical Societies throughout the world. A list of societies can be found at <http://www.iajgs.org/Member-Index.htm>.

German SIG. The German parliament has passed a law that will relax access to civil records. Under the new provision, which will take affect in 2009, records will be transferred to public archives as follows:

- * Marriage and civil union records after 80 years
- * Birth records: after 110 years
- * Death records: after 30 years

There will no longer be a requirement that the researcher be a descendant of the individuals named on the records.

Romania SIG. Romania is one of the few countries in Central and Eastern Europe that has not been genealogy friendly. Persons visiting the country have had, for the most part, success in accessing regional archives, but successful attempts to get records by mail has been unheard of. Now Hilary Henkin of Atlanta, Georgia, claims such success. In yet another example of persistence and patience, she requested records form the Romanian National Archives in Bucharest and got no reply. She then sent a follow-up letter to the Romanian embassy in Washington, DC, and received a response that requested funds and gave additional instructions. Within two months she received copies of the records she requested. Another researcher, Beth Long, will be giving a lecture at the annual conference about her experiences researching, in person, eight of the 43 different archive branches of Romania.

Ancestry.co.uk Adds Data on World War I Veterans

The British sister site of Ancestry.com, Ancestry.co.uk, plans to have Service and Pension records on 2.5 million soldiers that fought in World War I. The project is expected to be completed by the end of 2008. Currently, only those persons whose surnames start with A or B are online.

I briefly looked at a few documents and feel that most researchers will find the records are of limited genealogical value. Most records do not give the person's birth date; some do show age in years and months. Some documents have a home address, others have town of birth. Most documents have the regiment in which the soldier served. They are of historical value because they describe the person's role in the World War I.

To access the database, go to <http://ancestry.co.uk>, request Exact Matches Only and the results will appear in the Military Records section. Ancestry.com and Ancestry.co.uk are fee-for-service sites.

An Example of DNA Testing to Exclude Kinship

I have been cool to the use of DNA testing to prove kinship. This is because an exact match (12-marker test), by itself, merely demonstrates a 90% certainly of kinship within the past 400 years. I am unimpressed that you and I may have common kin with someone who lived centuries ago. Bennett Greenspan, president of FamilyTreeDNA notes, however, that other factors should be taken into account. For example, if two persons have the same surname and come from the same geographic area, the likelihood of kin in more recent generations is much greater.

DNA testing does, however, provide a valuable service to disprove kinship. I recently was the beneficiary (victim) of such a situation. Readers of this e-zine note that I frequently refer to the Tartasky family. Tartasky

was my maternal grandfather's surname. He was born in Volkovysk, Belrus, a city about 80 miles (130km) east of Bialystok, Poland. There were many Tartaskys in Bialystok, most in the building trades. My grandfather was apprenticed as a bricklayer in Bialystok, hence the hint that my family might be related to the Bialystok Tartaskys. The problem is that I have never found records of my grandfather's family and therefore, could not link my family to the Bialystok Tartaskys.

Consequently, I had my uncle and a male descendant of the Bialystok Tartaskys participate in the 12-marker (minimal) test. The results are that we are not related.

But there was a serendipitous result of the test. About four years ago I reunited with a college friend with whom I had not communicated for more than 40 years. We linked up because his son is active in genealogy. When you participate in the FamilyTreeDNA testing, they send you a list of all persons for whom there is an exact match. It turns out that my Tartaskys are an exact match with my college friend's paternal family. They come from Kobrin, which is only 60 miles (100km) south of Volkovysk. I have now ordered a more detailed 25-marker test for my uncle to see how close a match we are.

Help Grow the Shoah Victims Names Database

Yad Vashem wants volunteers who are willing to contact local institutions and individuals to grow the Shoah Victims Database whose principal documents are Pages of Testimony. With the aid of promotional materials Yad Vashem has developed, volunteers will reach out to survivors and their families and assist them in registering the names of

Jews who they know were murdered in the Shoah. This will be done through synagogues, Holocaust centers, Jewish Community Centers, Jewish student organizations, senior centers and social service agencies. To volunteer send your name, address, phone number and e-mail address to names.outreach@yadvashem.org.il with the subject heading "Names Volunteer"

To submit a Page of Testimony, there is a link on the left portion of the screen from the Basic Search page at http://www.yadvashem.org/lwp/workplace/IY_HON_Welcome. Click the words "Submit Additional Names"

Web Resources

"Yes! There really was such a thing as a Poorhouse! It was not just something your parents made up, like a boogeyman, to frighten you . . ." Thus states The Poorhouse Lady on *The Poorhouse Story*, <www.poorhousestory.com>. This site was referred to me by late, and missed, friend and member Ed Murray. Its goals include making records available for genealogical research and dispelling "the negative image attached to poorhouse residence." To the former goal, the site has historical information, photos of poorhouses (or poor farms), and state-by-state links that include notes from readers, lists of residents and deaths, and pointers to microfilms. The content varies greatly by state—e.g., some lists are just name/page indexes to other documents. So, this is pretty much a hit-or-miss proposition. Regardless, the site is worth a look for the historical perspective.

Let's talk about one of genealogists' favorite subjects: death! *Responses to Death in Nineteenth Century America*, <www.hfac.uh.edu/gl/usdeath1.htm>, will give you no new data, but it will give you an interesting understanding of the nineteenth century's view of death and dying. Ever wonder about the meanings of the initials and symbols on your ancestors' tombstones? Check one of these sites to help interpret what you see: *The Meanings of Tombstone Carvings*, <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~historic/meanings_of_tombstone_carvings.htm>; *Cemetery Iconography*, <<http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~txcemeteries/symbol.htm>>; or *Symbols on Gravestones and their Interpretations*, <www.rootsweb.com/~mnwabash/tombstonesymbols.shtml>.

Bob Emmett

(from *News 'n Notes*, the newsletter of the St. Louis Genealogical Society, Vol. 39, No. 2, Feb. 2007)

(Program continued from page 1)

his roots to England, Poland, Romania, Ukraine, Belarus and Lithuania. Ron is much in demand in that he has given presentations to many of the International Association of Jewish Genealogy Societies' Annual Conferences, as well as to local Societies across the country. His current research focuses on both famous and lesser known Jewish criminals, and his book "The Jews of Sing Sing" soon will be published.

There will be a charge of \$5.00 to members of the JGS of Broward County and the Soref JCC, and \$7.00 to non members. Refreshments will be served following the meeting.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 9, 2007, 7:00 P.M.
DANIEL MENDELSON

The Jewish Genealogical Society of Broward County, again jointly with the Soref Jewish Community Center, are pleased to have Daniel Mendelsohn, an award winning author, journalist and critic, make a presentation at the Soref Jewish Community Center, 6501 West Sunrise Boulevard, Plantation, Florida.

In September, 2006, Mr. Mendelsohn's new book, "THE LOST: A Search for Six of Six Million", is the story of his search to learn about the fates of family members who perished in the Holocaust. It is an "epic that weaves together memoir, reportage and literary detective work to forge a narrative as gripping as it is profound: a colorful, richly populated mystery that delves deeply into the nature of time, memory and history". THE LOST was considered among the best books of 2006 by such publications as the New York Times, the Washington Post, NPR's "Fresh Air", as well as receiving many other awards.

Daniel Mendelsohn spent five years searching the globe for an answer to the question he had asked as a boy "What really happened to his great uncle Shmiel, his wife and his four daughters during the Holocaust? After his grandfather's death, Mr. Mendelsohn found a bundle of letters from a desperate Shmiel in 1939. In his search, he visited a dozen countries on four continents to track down the remaining Jews from Shmiel's town, Bolechow. He not only discovered the answers he sought about his family's fate, but he learned so much more about his family's rich history, religion and culture as well.

Mr. Mendelsohn received his B. A. From the University of Virginia, and his M. A. And Ph. D. In Classics from Princeton University, where he was a Mellon Fellow in the Humanities. He began his career in journalism in New York and his articles, essays and reviews appeared frequently in numerous national publications. From 1994 to 2002, he was a Lecturer in the Department of Classics. He is currently a Professor of Humanities at Bard College

This will be a presentation that should not be missed. There will be a charge of \$6.00 to members of the JGS of Broward County and the Soref JCC, and \$8.00 to non members. Refreshments will be served following the presentation.



don't forget to register for
The 27th IAJGS International Conference on Jewish Genealogy

July 15-20, 2007
Salt Lake City, Utah
Salt Lake City Hilton City Center

SLC2007.org

Jewish Genealogical Society of Broward County Inc.

Presents

**Jewish Genealogy 101:
Four Hour Route to Your Roots**

Sunday, March 11, 2007, 12:30 to 5 p.m.

At Soref Jewish Community Center, 6501 West Sunrise Blvd.,
(between University Dr. and the Florida Turnpike), Plantation FL

Learn to discover your family heritage with this complete introduction to Jewish genealogy. Topics include researching and recording a family tree; interviewing relatives; identifying ancestral towns; Holocaust research; using censuses, city directories, ship's manifests; naturalizations, other U.S. sources; vital records, probate, and other court related documents; European records; computer and Internet resources. Recommended both for beginners and for family historians who want to brush up or expand their skills.

Attendees will receive a workshop manual (one per family). Light refreshments will be served.

Seating is limited. To assure a reservation, please register as soon as possible. To register, please mail the form below with your check (payable to JGSBC).

For more information contact us at jgsbroward@yahoo.com

View our web site at www.jgsbroward.org

----- cut -----

Workshop: Jewish Genealogical Society of Broward County Inc. (JGSBC)
PO Box 17251, Plantation FL 33324

\$20 (\$15 for an additional family member)
Enclosed is \$_____ as payment for ____ persons.

Jewish Genealogy 101: Four Hour Route to Your Roots – March 11, 2007

Name(s): _____ Tel: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State _____

E-mail address: _____

/ / I am presently a JGS member. Society name _____
/ / I wish membership info.



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

Membership Application

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Fax _____ Email _____

Out-of-state address

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Fax _____

Membership Category (please check one):

- Individual \$ 25
- each additional member, same address \$ 5
- Sponsor \$ 50
- Patron \$ 100
- Student (full time under age 25) \$ 15
- Life Individual \$ 250
- Spouse \$ 50

To help save on postage, we distribute our newsletter via email. If you prefer to have it mailed, please check here.

(foreign addresses add \$5 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 your check payable to the JGSBC and mail 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 (circle one)

None Beginner Intermediate Advanced Professional

Please list the surnames and corresponding towns you are researching, special interests or skills you have, and any foreign languages you read (attach separate sheet as necessary)
