

# Family Gatherings

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

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## President's Message

by Michael Sofman

At the end of January, Henry Wellisch, former president of the JGS of Canada, gave a fascinating talk about the Austro-Hungarian Empire and where to find genealogical records in the modern-day equivalents. He led us on a wonderful tour of the history and geography of the once mighty Empire, along with a glimpse into what life was like for the Jews of the region. This followed a lovely dinner that I shared with Mr. Wellisch and his lovely wife, Florence, who brought along their friend Halina, who had a fascinating story of her own, having survived the Holocaust at least in part by being hidden by Christian nuns. Perhaps we'll get to hear her story someday.

As noted elsewhere in this newsletter, our next speaker will be Stephen Morse, one of the leading lights in Jewish genealogy. His talk is unique in that it is being jointly sponsored by the JGSBC, the Genealogical Society of Broward County, and Nova Southeastern University (NSU). For NSU, this will be the first in a series of events celebrating the opening of the Genealogy Collection of their Alvin Sherman Library. The library already has thousands of books and journals, along with free online databases like Ancestry.com and Heritage Quest, and is a valuable resource for all genealogists. We look forward to seeing you at this fantastic event.



**Michael Sofman**  
President, JGSBC

**Alvin Sherman Library**  
Nova Southeastern  
University

**Address:** 3100 Ray Ferrero Jr. Boulevard, Davie

**Phone:** 954-262-5477

**Parking:** Parking is available in the Library Parking Garage for \$1.00 per hour.

Volume XX, Number 2  
February 2008

**\*\* SPECIAL EVENT \*\***

**STEVE MORSE**

**One-Step Webpages: A  
Potpourri of Genealogical  
Search Tools**

February 17, 2008, 1 pm  
NSU DeSantis Knight  
Auditorium

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

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## About Family Tree Maker 2008 Update

by Bernard I. Kouchel

I have been reading correspondence by the experts about the latest version of Family Tree Maker (FTM) genealogy program. The consensus seems to indicate: FTM 2008 is a new program, written completely from scratch; so it is in no

way an "upgrade" to FTM 16.

The recommendation is to stick with Family Tree Maker 16, unless one has seen FTM 2008 and knows what it does and, more importantly, what functions are missing. It is, in effect, a public beta

version, much like Microsoft is known for doing with its operating systems like Windows XP and Vista.

FTM 2008 will improve over time, but for the moment, stick with FTM 16 (2006).

## Letter From the Editor

by Ara Morenberg

Change continued to be at the center of my thoughts as I put this month's newsletter together.

Today, the JGSBC jointly sponsors the Steve Morse lecture with Nova Southeastern University and the Genealogical Society of Broward County, marking the first venture of this sort that I am aware of. I look forward to it being the beginning of a mutually-rewarding relationship for all three organizations.

And with regard to *Family Gatherings*, you'll notice that we have two articles from members—both interesting, informative pieces. The first article is about the newly hot topic of genealogic DNA by Brenda Feuer and how she has used it to discover that she's related to Steve Morse. And the other is part one of a story by Dina Hill, who over an 11-year period was able to turn a stubborn brick wall into a suc-

cess story through lots of hard work and suggestions from members of JewishGen, all of which she documents in diary form through emails to the JewishGen Discussion Group. This article in particular is a wonderful example of how networking and determination pay off in the end.

As usual, there are helpful tidbits sprinkled throughout the issue by Bernie Kouchel, who always amazes me with the information he finds on the web, and a new section of our newsletter called Photo Central, where members can spotlight pictures of their ancestors.

All in all, I think it's an issue to be proud of and I hope you enjoy it.



## AARP Provides Free Web Lessons

by Bernard I. Kouchel

It's amazing where you can find valuable, free information.

### BASIC WEB LESSONS BY AARP

Confused about the basics? This introductory topic will teach you everything you need to know about surfing the web. It starts with terms and techniques, and works its way through troubleshooting common problems.

There are 7 lessons, each made up of a series of short steps:

- **Understanding Basics**
- **Title, Menu, and Tool Bars**
- **Addresses/Address Bar**
- **Navigating Web Pages and Websites**
- **Printing**
- **Finding Things**
- **Handling Common Problems**

You can find more information at:

[http://www.aarp.org/learntech/computers/basic\\_web/a2004-10-15-lti-basicbrowsing.html](http://www.aarp.org/learntech/computers/basic_web/a2004-10-15-lti-basicbrowsing.html)

### INTERMEDIATE COMPUTER BROWSING LESSONS BY AARP

Learn a little more about surfing the Internet. Intermediate Browsing will take you to the next level by showing you how to make text larger, change toolbars, recognize a secure, and much, much more.

There are 5 lessons, each made up of a series of short steps:

- **Organizing Favorites/History**
- **Capturing Information**
- **Customizing**
- **Understanding Security**
- **Saving Time**

You can find more information at:

[http://www.aarp.org/learntech/computers/inter\\_web/a2004-10-27-intermediatebrowsing.html](http://www.aarp.org/learntech/computers/inter_web/a2004-10-27-intermediatebrowsing.html)

AARP also has several message boards where you can ask questions related to computers, the internet and different computer programs. More info at: <http://www.aarp.org/learntech/>

**Speaker: Fred Blum**  
**SECRETS OF FINDING PEOPLE**

**Wednesday, March 26th, 2008**  
**7:00 p.m., Soref JCC**  
**Plantation, Florida**

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

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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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# A Jamaican Jewish Family History

by Dr. Marilyn Delevante

Jews resided in Jamaica before the English conquest in 1665. The Hunts Bay Cemetery is very old and is, in fact, the oldest cemetery of any denomination on the island. Tombstones have been found there dating back to 1672. Many of our ancestors are buried there.

I do not find cemeteries to be sad places—especially not Hunts Bay Cemetery. There, I feel a close link with those Jews who fled from the dangers of the Spanish Inquisition and made a life for themselves here in Jamaica and other Caribbean islands.

The Jews that inhabited Port Royal chose Hunts Bay, four miles across the Kingston Harbour, as a suitable place for their cemetery. They had to row the deceased from Port Royal to Hunts Bay, where they disembarked, carried the body of their loved ones a hundred yards from the “Bay” to the burial ground (Beth Haim). The last burial to take place there was in 1819. Many people in Jamaica and several other countries can trace their ancestry to one or more of those that are buried in this cemetery.

In searching through these ancient tombstones for research on a book, I found one dated 1711 with the name Jacob BRANDAO engraved on it. It has inscriptions in Portuguese and Hebrew, with a few words in English around the periphery. I had no idea what these inscriptions meant, so I got them translated! I did know that the name BRANDAO was a Portuguese name and also that it had come to be known as BRANDON here in Jamaica. I also knew that my mother’s grandmother was a BRANDON—her name was Judith Hadassah BRANDON—and that Judith’s daughter Gladys married Vernon HENRIQUES. Many of you reading this story will have some connection to the BRANDON family.

The really exciting part is that the descendants of Jacob and Isaac BRANDON can be traced right up to the present time ... 13 generations!

The descendants of Jacob and Isaac are numerous and are active members of Jamaican Jewry today. Relatives of the Jamaican BRANDONS reside in

Panama, Australia, Cayman, the United Kingdom, Africa, the USA and Canada, number in the thousands and very often not even being aware of each other’s existence.

Jacob and Isaac were the sons of Abraham BRANDAO who was born in London in 1640 and died in 1712. He belonged to a Portuguese family who fled to escape the terrors of the Inquisition. Jacob was born in Port Royal, died when he was 46 years of age (1665-1711), and is buried in the Hunts Bay Cemetery. The translation of the Portuguese inscription on his tombstone reads: “Tomb of the blessed and honoured Jacob Brandao ... May his unfortunate death serve as a pardon for his sins.” Translation of the Hebrew inscription reads “The burial of the honourable gentleman, Rabbi Jacob Brandao ... he died in his righteousness.” — the title of Rabbi clearly denotes that he was one of the leaders of the Port Royal Jewish Community.

Jacob married Rachel and they had two children: Ester (1705-1759) and Joshua. Isaac Pereira (1666-1740) was born in Port Royal, but went to live in Kingston. He is buried in the old Kingston cemetery; his tombstone has been re-laid in the Memorial Garden at Duke Street. The inscription reads: “Tomb of the blessed, honoured, modest, elderly gentleman, Isaac Pereira Brandon, whom God chose to gather up for himself on Shabbat at 7 o’clock at night on the 6th (Rosh Hodesh) of Adar, 5500, corresponding to 23rd February 1739, at the age of 73 and one half years. M [ay] H[is] B[lessed] S[oul] E[njoy] E[ternal] G[lory].” There follows a verse in Spanish:

Sleeping, peaceful, resting,  
An example of virtue,  
His soul in eternal glory,  
May it enjoy tranquility  
through the ages.

Isaac married Rebecca Lopes Pereira



**Marilyn Delevante attending shul in Kingston, Jamaica.**

from Mile-End in London in 1696. She was born in Spain and died in Kingston. Isaac and Rebecca had a son Moses buried in the old Kingston cemetery; his tombstone has been re-laid around the perimeter of the Orange Street Cemetery.

Their son Moses (c. 1698-1732) died at the age of 33. He married Abigail (c. 1723-1767) who died at age 44. Their son Abraham (died 1813) married Judith (died 1828). Their son Manassah Brandon died in 1838 in Jamaica. George Manassah

(1823-1872) married Rebecca, whose daughter Judith Hadassah Brandon was born in 1862. Her date of death is unknown. She married Abraham Simons in Panama in 1886. Their daughter was Gladys Simons.

Family of Gladys and Vernon Devereaux Cohen Henriques: Gladys Zilla Simons of Jamaican Jewish parentage was born in Panama and married Vernon Cohen Henriques of Jamaica, the parents of Verna Cohen Henriques.

Vernon and Gladys had six children: Daniel, the eldest, died in infancy. Verna Elaine Cohen was next, and she outlived all her siblings. She died in 2004 at the age of 96. Yola, her sister came next, followed by Vernon Jr., Rudolph and Samuel, all of whom lived and died in Jamaica. Their offspring include families in Toronto, London, the United States, and even Cameroon.

The grandchildren of Vernon and Gladys are too numerous to mention, but there are a large number in Jamaica, while those in other countries maintain close links with Jamaica. All these children are 13 generations removed from Abraham Brandao born in London in 1640.

*This article is reprinted with the express permission of the author. Dr. Delevante is a retired Medical Officer and Board Member of Hillel Academy in Jamaica for over 35 years.*

# I Am My Own Grandpa

Contributed by Robert Koltnow

Inspired by a book of anecdotes by Mark Twain, the lyrics to the song *I Am My Own Grandpa* by Dwight B. Latham and Moe Jaffe are quite a puzzle even for seasoned genealogists.

Many, many years ago when I was twenty-three, I got married to a widow who was pretty as could be. This widow had a grown-up daughter, who had hair of red. My father fell in love with her, and soon the two were wed. This made my dad my son-in-law and changed my very life. My daughter was my mother, for she was my father's wife.

To complicate the matters worse, although it brought me joy, I soon became the father of a bouncing baby boy.

My little baby then became a brother-in-law to dad. And so became my uncle, though it made me very sad.

For if he was my uncle, then that also made him brother to the widow's grown-up daughter who, of course was my step-mother.

Father's wife then had a son, who kept them on the run. And he became my grandson, for he was my daugh-

ter's son.

My wife is now my mother's mother and it makes me blue. Because, although she is my wife, she's my grandmother, too.

If my wife is my grandmother, then I am her grandchild. And every time I think of it, it simply drives me wild.

For now I have become the strangest case you ever saw. As the husband of my grandmother, I am my own grandpa!

Think you know the answer?

## 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.**

## Steve Morse to Speak at NSU

Sunday, February 17, 2008 at 1:00 p.m.

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 will make a rare south Florida appearance on February 17th.

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 information. Since then, he has gone on to develop several other major search pages for extracting Ellis Island information, including *Searching the Ellis Island Database in One Step for Jewish Passengers*.

In April 2002, the National Archives

released the much-awaited 1930 Federal Census. Unlike the 1920 census, the 1930 census is not adequately indexed, making it a challenge for the researcher to find people in the census records. The Morse One-Step website is a user-friendly tool for finding Enumeration Districts and locating maps to determine cross streets. He has gone on to develop over 100 One-Step genealogical search tools, a complete listing of which, with instructions on their use, can be found at [www.stevemorse.org](http://www.stevemorse.org).

Morse, who resides in California, holds a Ph.D. in electrical engineering and is a computer professional best known



Steve Morse

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 motivated him to develop these remarkable programs that have benefited genealogists worldwide searching similar areas.

Co-sponsored by Nova Southeastern University, the JGSBC and the Genealogical Society of Broward County, the Morse event promises to attract genealogists of varying levels, beginning to experienced, from several south Florida counties. Admission is free. Details can be found at [www.jgsbc.org/helios/events](http://www.jgsbc.org/helios/events).

## Photo Central

If you'd like to see your ancestor's photo in Family Gatherings, send it to [newsletter@jgsbc.org](mailto:newsletter@jgsbc.org) with a short description detailing their name, how they are related to you, and the year and place the picture was taken.



Contributed by Bernard Israelite Kouchel  
**My parents, maternal grandparents, aunts and uncles.  
 1914-1927 [digital composite]**



Contributed by Ara Morenberg  
**My father's maternal grandmother,  
 Sophie Levin Scherper, c. 1895  
 Ostroshitskiy Gorodok, Belarus**



Contributed by Ara Morenberg  
**My father's maternal great  
 grandfather, Abram Levin, c. 1890  
 Ostroshitskiy Gorodok, Belarus**



Contributed by Michael Sofman  
**My maternal grandmother, Bertha  
 (far left), with sisters Lena, Kitty and  
 Rose Rich.  
 c. 1905, Newark, New Jersey**



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

The Holocaust Education and Documentation Center presents an author series January through April.

Each month an author of a Holocaust book is presented at the Center.

2031 Harrison Street, Hollywood  
 Reservations required.

Call 954.929.5690  
 for dates and times.

### IT'S FREE!

Do you subscribe to AVOTAYNU's Internet magazine, **Nu? What's New?** Published bi-weekly, 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.

### 28th IAJGS International Conference on Jewish Genealogy

August 17th-22nd, 2008

Chicago Marriott Downtown  
 Magnificent Mile  
 Chicago, Illinois

Network with international experts, archivists, and researchers, and access Chicago's archives and historical institutes.

[www.chicago2008.org](http://www.chicago2008.org)

## Genealogic DNA: A Brother's Gift

by Brenda C. Feuer

I have always been interested in surnames even before I was interested in genealogy. Surnames are a relatively new phenomenon for Jewish people. In the Russian Pale of Settlement, or White Russia as my grandfather referred to it, Czar Alexander I mandated that Jews adopt surnames in 1804, but it was not until 1836 that all Russian Jews had surnames.

In 2003, I was at the annual conference of the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies (IAJGS) where I received a syllabus for the conference. One section of the syllabus was titled *Family Finder* and a subsection of the *Family Finder* was titled *Surname List*, which is the one I looked at first.

To my delight, I found a match on a surname that I had never seen before on JewishGen's Family Finder other than my own listing. I immediately looked to see if we were both researching the same town. We weren't, but both towns were in Belarus. Next I looked at the contact name—after all, there were over 1000 people at the conference and I would have to locate this person. The name listed was Stephen Morse. This name certainly piqued my interest. Anyone who has done research in Jewish genealogy or in the Ellis Island Database has heard of Steve Morse and his One-Step Webpages. "Well," I thought to myself, "he is one of the speakers; I'll be able to find him."

Later that day, I got into the elevator to go to my room and, as luck would have it, there stood Steve Morse. I introduced myself and told him that I was also researching the name MICHALINSKY. He got off the elevator with me and we started to talk. I told him I didn't want to mislead him—my family name was not always MICHALINSKY. It was originally GLASSER or GLAZER. He looked really surprised and told me that his family's name was originally GLASSER, too.

I told Steve that, according to my family's story, in 1827, Czar Nicholas I decreed that Jews who had previously been exempt from military service were now liable for up to 25 years of

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***While female mtDNA can be used to trace a genetic connection, it is the male Y chromosome that is best used for confirming both recent and distant lineage questions.***

army service. My yet-to-be-identified ancestor, Mr. Glasser, did not want to go into the Russian army and went to live with his aunt. He later found himself in the town of Michalin, added the SKY, and then he had a new name.

Steve asked who had told me this story and, when I said it was my grandfather, he asked if I had some time. He asked if I had heard about his family and told me his family tale. We went to a computer where he brought up his family page. He spelled the name differently, yet in the syllabus he spelled it exactly as I did or I would never have matched it. He also showed me that the towns our relatives came from were less than 70 miles apart. At one of his lectures, Steve asked me for an ancestor line, which I gave him.

Later in the week, Steve asked if I had any male siblings and, since I did, he asked if my brother would be willing to do a DNA test. Steve's cousin had done a test, so there would be someone to match to. I replied that I would be willing to do a test, but I didn't know if my brother would. He said my DNA wouldn't work, and went on to explain that males receive the Y chromosome from their fathers and mtDNA from their mothers, while females receive only mtDNA from their mothers. The Y chromosome is more easily traceable genealogically speaking. While female mtDNA can be used to trace a genetic connection, it is the male Y chromosome that is best used for confirming both recent and distant lineage questions. This explained the need for the test to be male-to-male.

I was very excited about all this new information and the prospect of finding a new relative, but I didn't think my brother would share my interest.

When I asked him, he didn't even hesitate—he said, "Sure I'll do it." I went to Family Tree DNA online and had a kit sent to my brother in Michigan. We requested a 12-marker Y-DNA test which shows if there is a connection in the past 500 years. It's best use is to rule out matches—that is, if Steve's cousin and my brother didn't match on the 12-marker test, we would know not to proceed further.

The day arrived when I got an email titled "DNA Results Posted." I quickly went to the website. Disappointment. They couldn't list the matches since they didn't have a signed release from my brother. After he signed the form, I received a list of 6 possible relatives, one of them being Steve's cousin.

Next, we both did the 25-marker test, which required an additional fee, but no further DNA samples because Family Tree DNA could continue testing from the original. On the 25-marker test with 1 genetic distance, we now matched 7 people and with 2 genetic distance we matched 11 people, one of them being Steve's cousin. Then we did the 37-marker test. On this test with 1 genetic distance, we matched 2 people and with the 2 genetic distance we matched 1 person—Steve Morse's cousin. Simply put, we matched 35 out of 37 markers. We were related!

With this knowledge, Steve and I now have to go back to research basics to find our common ancestor. DNA is a great genealogical tool, like Steve's website or JewishGen, but it doesn't supply you with a pedigree chart. With its ability to confirm and exclude common ancestry, DNA promises to become a routine part of most genealogists' research efforts.

Sadly, my brother has passed away since the test was done, but his DNA will aid my research for years to come as Family Tree DNA continues to inform me of newly-available matches. What a wonderful gift he has given me.

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*Brenda Feuer has been researching her ancestry for several years. She is currently the Treasurer of JGSBC, and is also an active member of GSBC.*

# Diary of a JewishGen Success Story, Part 1

by Dina Hill

**April 18, 1997**

Dear JewishGenners:

My father-in-law knows that his grandparents changed the family name to Hill from something else. He thinks it's something like Chill (Ch being Hebrew Chet sound), but he's not absolutely sure. I just got the death date for my grandfather-in-law and have sent away for the death certificate which will enable me to get the birth certificate where I will find out what their first names were, but even if I look up the death certificate for my father-in-law's grandparents, it won't give me the original name Hill and they migrated here from Russia. Any advice as to how I go about finding out the name before it was changed?? Does anyone know what the name could have been if it's Hill now? There aren't too many Jewish families with the Hill surname. Please e-mail me with advice.

**April 21, 1997**

Dear JewishGenners:

Thank you to the two people (so far) who responded. I would like to share some of what I replied because it might help someone else to know the extent I went to in searching for answers. Thank you for responding to my question and dilemma. I didn't give the year that my great grandparents in-law migrated to the USA because I don't know. I think it had to be some time before the later 1880s because their 4 children were all born in the Bronx. I have missing links. Three siblings with just names, but no idea if they had married or had children except for the sister Florence Hill. My father-in-law remembers her to be some kind of show girl. He said she didn't marry, but he remembers little about Uncle Teddy and Uncle Louis. One thing this family seems to have in common through the generations is not knowing how to be a close family.

I did get a hit this week at the FHL when I found Rubin Hill on the death index. As soon as I arrived home, I sent away for his death certificate. I had the forms already. I had the exact date and the certificate # from the microfilm, and I even know the

age he was when he died. Once I am in receipt of his death certificate, I will have his birth date and then be able to acquire his birth certificate, and only then, will I find his parents' names.

The guess about the original surname may be very close to target because for years, my father-in-law said the name was something like Chil, so 2 months ago, I wrote to every Chill in the USA and e-mailed whatever Chill I could find on the e-mail search. I received many phone calls of people who were very curious. The problem is that all the ones I spoke to came after 1900, and I feel Rubin's father and his uncles may be the missing link, if in fact, we are related to those Chill families that I learned are related by second and third cousins, and their families originate in Poland--Ruminow. On more than 1 occasion, I spoke to my father-in-law about his father who was just 12 when his dad Rubin died, and I even spoke to his brother Louis who is 80 years old, and he is in poor health and doesn't remember. I even did a mitzvah in the process because for no known reason, the 2 surviving brothers hadn't spoken in 20 years. I called my father-in-law to tell him that his sister-in-law had passed away many years ago, and his brother was sick. He asked me for his phone number and called him. After, I spoke to one of Louis' 3 sons, Benjamin told me that the name before was Heidelberger (the man that lives in the house on top of the HILL). My father-in-law doubts that. He said he never heard that one before, and then I spoke to the only son of the deceased brother Irving, and Bobby is the eldest of all the cousins. He said for sure it was Chil. No one of my generation knows their great grandparents' names.

When I received a letter back from the Jewish Historical Society in New York a few months back, the volunteer was kind enough to send me a list of HILL possibilities. Some others, among too many to mention were Hichel, Hechel, Hilcz, and Hilali. It can get pretty overwhelming as you can see. I do now that they came from Russia, but it might be Poland now.

Thanks for your help. Happy Pesach to

all.

**May 5, 1997**

Dear JewishGenners:

As most of you know, today I was at the Family History Center. I have a death date for my great grandmother-in-law Sarah Hill!! I'm going to send away for her death certificate, and tomorrow, I'll mail away the form I got to Washington for her naturalization papers. I decided to write down some of the names I found while searching. I know that some of you (like my husband) might be disabled and not able to get out of your homes to visit the FHC so I hope this helps someone in either case. It sure would be great if others could do the same (providing they have the time of course). There's 1 Heidelberger and 1 Hilowich that I put in, as well.

Selected HILL Names of the Death Index in New York City 1918-1925. Copied from Death Index at Family History Center: Alice HILL, Bronx, June 13, 1918, age 1, cert. #4518; Julia HILL, Bronx, March 8, 1918, age 67, #1847; Rebecca HILL, Bronx, Feb. 22, 1918, 50, #1792; Stephen HILL, Bronx, Nov. 2, 1918, 67, #9503; Louis HILWITCH, Brooklyn, Aug. 8, 1918, age 55, #15944; Albert HILL, Manhattan, Dec. 21, 1919, 60, #33647; Delia HILL, Bronx, Jan. 13, 1919, 53, # 476; Hannah C. HILL, Bronx Feb. 11, 1919, 70, #1808; Leslie HILL, Bronx, Sept. 4, 1919, 41, #6594; Nellie HILL, Bronx, April 8, 1919, 59, #3544; William E. HILL, Brooklyn, April 23, 1919, 51, #3941; Sarah O. HILL, Brooklyn, May 8, 1919, 68, #12110; Albert HILL, Queens, April 4, 1919, 62, #2035; Anna HILL, Manhattan, April 16, 1920, 33, #14167; Annie HILL, Manhattan, Dec. 28, 1920, 67, #33526; Sarah HILL, Queens, May 6, 1920, 75, #2358; Henry P. HILL, Bronx, Dec. 15, 1921, 49, #6898; Kate W. HILL, Bronx, Dec. 23, 1921, 69, #7074; Mary A. HILL, Bronx, Oct. 15, 1921, 81, #5752; Sarah HILL, Manhattan, Nov. 6, 1923, 60, #26948; Sarah HILL; July 3, 1925, 75, #17517; Margarita HEIDELBERGER, Brooklyn, Oct. 30, 1920. 81, #20953.

(continued on Page 8)

## Torontonians Help Reclaim Cemetery in Belarus

by Andy Levy-Ajzenkopf

A town that was once home to little more than 3000 Jews in prewar Russia now has its shtetl's cemetery back. Thanks to the efforts of Toronto couple Celia Siegerman Denov and Robert Bell, the Jewish descendants of families from Sharashova, Belarus now have a physical reminder of what was once the town's Jewish minority.

Siegerman Denov, a retired social worker, told The CJN her father and his family immigrated to Canada from Sharashova in 1905.

The restoration of the cemetery was officially completed in September 2007 at a ceremony that was attended by Sharashovans, local politicians and dignitaries.

Siegerman Denov first became interested in restoring the cemetery after a cousin, who was working in Moscow in 1990, visited Sharashova in the early days of glasnost—when Russia opened up for renewed tourism—and discovered there were still some Jews living in the town.

At the time, she said, "the cemetery had been completely abandoned and was in very poor condition. In fact, it was so overgrown the [headstones] had fallen into the ground."

But it was still not as desecrated as other Jewish cemeteries of the region had been, she said.

Siegerman Denov visited her ancestral

**"The local authorities advised us against using wood for the fence," Siegerman Denov said, "because it could be taken down and used for fuel."**

home for the first time in 2000, while on a trip with her cousins.

"When I first got to the cemetery area, I couldn't find it. I was actually standing on it, but cows were grazing on it," she said.

On a return visit in 2005, Siegerman Denov had the good fortune to befriend Franklin Swartz, an American Jew living in Minsk, Belarus, who also happened to be the executive director of Voluntas: The East European Jewish Heritage Project—a charity that negotiates with the Belarus government to allow Jewish cemeteries to be listed as protected historic sites.

According to Siegerman Denov, Swartz quickly became an essential guide and interpreter and helped to obtain permits for the eventual restoration.

She also acknowledged the help and guidance of Michael Lozman, head of the charitable Eastern European Jewish Cemeteries Project Inc. in Albany, NY ([www.restorejcem.org](http://www.restorejcem.org)), who also traveled to Sharashova with her.

The project, funded by the United

Jewish Federation of Northeastern New York, collects contributions from the community to help "restore cemeteries... destroyed by the Nazis."

However, the cost of restoring the cemetery proved prohibitive until recently, when the Siegerman family was able to put nearly \$20,000 dollars together to privately finance the construction of a new metal gate and perimeter fence—about 1500 metres long—and the erection of a cenotaph commemorating the Jews buried there and those lost to the atrocities of the Holocaust.

It's inscription reads: "In loving memory of the once vibrant Jewish community, with fervent hopes for a peaceful and just world for all. In memory of those who were deported to Auschwitz January 30-February 2, 1943."

Though Bell and Siegerman Denov had to run all their wording and construction plans by a municipal "ideology monitor," they managed to get the work done by enlisting the help of the local townspeople.

Bell noted that Sharashova is still a small village in which many buildings are still without modern plumbing and people continue to use outhouses as the norm.

As such, the townsfolk relied on

(continued on Page 9)

## Diary of a JewishGen Success Story, Part 1

by Dina Hill (continued from Page 7)

**May 9, 1997**

Dear JewishGenners:

First of all, I want to thank all who have given me advice and help. You are the nicest and most helpful people I've ever known, and I appreciate all of you.

This is the first time, I am posting in more detail (not too much I hope) my family history in the hopes that it might find a connection around this

world. When it comes to the Hill name, and finding it's original source, I must tell you all, I just spent two hours e-mailing every person that has a surname with the root being HIL.

### **Descendants of Aaron HILL**

b: Abt 1870 in Poland d: Bef 1927  
+Sarah RUBINSTEIN b: Abt 1870 in Poland d: Bef 1927

..... 2 Teddy HILL b: Abt 1887 d: May

1977

..... 2 Louis HILL b: 19 March 1889 d: Unknown

..... 2 Florence HILL b: Abt 1890 in Bronx, New York d: 13 November 1989

..... 2 Reuben HILL b: Abt 1894 in Bronx, New York d. 27 January 1941

(continued on Page 9)

## Torontonians Help Reclaim Cemetery in Belarus

(continued from page 8)

horse-drawn carriages to transport segments of the new fence to and fro and used scythes to clear the cemetery grounds of weeds.

"The local authorities advised us against using wood for the fence," Siegerman Denov said, "because it could be taken down and used for fuel."

While on the trip, Lozman arranged for Siegerman Denov and Bell to meet with local high school students to talk about the Jewish community of Sharashova and ask them to write essays about what they knew of the Jews and the Holocaust.

"The elders in the village remember what happened to the Jews," Siegerman Denov said. "One boy wrote that his grandparents remembered the Jews. But the Jewish community was a bit of a mystery to them."

Still, when the cemetery was finally re-opened in early September, Siegerman Denov said she witnessed many of the town elders paying their respects and crying in front of the newly erected monument.

"Locals spoke and thanked us for doing this," Bell said. "Everyone in the

village seemed happy we were there. Not just for giving them work, but for doing the right thing after all these years."

Bell noted that there wasn't time to raise all the headstones, and Siegerman Denov said she plans to return to Sharashova in the future to complete the work and add a Hebrew inscription to the cemetery's monument.

She called the endeavour "one of the most fulfilling and moving things I have done in my life."

Siegerman Denov and Bell also urged others wishing to restore cemeteries in eastern Europe to contact Lozman and Swartz, and to do so soon.

"There are many abandoned Jewish cemeteries in eastern Europe. The time is right now, as governments are open to protecting [them] and urban development is imminent.

For more information, contact cdenov@aol.com.

*This article originally appeared in the 17 January 2008 edition of the Canadian Jewish News. It is reprinted with their express permission.*

## Diary of a JewishGen Success Story

(continued from Page 8)

..... +Pauline PEST (name changed to PESE) b. 10 July 1895 Warsaw, Poland m. 30 November 1916 d: September 1982

..... 3 Louis HILL b: 07 November 1917 in Bronx, New York  
..... +Mary ? b: 12 November 1916 m: 22 February 1948 d: 21 December 1993

..... 3 Irving HILL b: 09 August 1919 in Brooklyn, New York d: December 1987

..... +Ruthe ? b: 15 February 1915

..... 3 Benjamin Herman HILL b: 17 April 1929 in Brooklyn, New York

..... +Rosalyn GABRIEL b: 29 June 1926 in Ossining, New York

*Dina Hill has been researching her husband's ancestry for over a decade. She is an active member of the JGSBC Cemetery Committee. Part 2 of this article will follow in our next issue.*



## JGSBC

### Officers and Directors

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

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Newsletter	Ara Morenberg
Program	Martin Shames
Publicity	Ara Morenberg
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Website	Ara Morenberg

### Past Presidents

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

## Jewish Genealogical Society of Broward County

Mailing Address:  
JGSBC  
P.O. Box 17251  
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33318  
  
Phone: 954-873-4403  
Fax: 954-577-9247  
E-mail: [info@jgsbc.org](mailto:info@jgsbc.org)  
Web: [www.jgsbc.org](http://www.jgsbc.org)

*We're on the Web!*  
[www.jgsbc.org](http://www.jgsbc.org)

*You can trace your Jewish roots and discover your family's unique history.*



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.

## Out and About

### News from Other Genealogical Sources

#### **Sephardicgen.com Adds Index to Viennese Turkish Births**

[Sephardicgen.com](http://www.sephardicgen.com) has added an index of births of the Vienna Turkish (Sephardic) community to its site. It consists of 1440 births from 1832–1938, and, including names of parents, identifies about 4,750 persons. An index to marriages of this community is planned. The searchable database is located at:

<http://www.sephardicgen.com/databases/viennaBirthsSrchFrm.html>. The index was developed by Mathilde Tagger coauthor of [Guidebook for Sephardic and Oriental Genealogical Sources in Israel](#) which is published by Avotaynu.

[Sephardicgen.com](http://www.sephardicgen.com) has a number of other databases for Sephardic genealogy. They include a Consolidated Index to Sephardic Names and a number of databases by country including Algeria, Austria, Bulgaria, Egypt, Eretz Israel, Great Britain, Greece, (Iraq, Lebanon, Libya and Syria as a group), Morocco, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Tunisia and Turkey.

#### **Immigrants to São Paulo, Brazil, Online**

A list of immigrants who came to the State of São Paulo, Brazil, is available at <http://www.memorialdoimigrante.sp.gov.br>. Most of the records are for the period 1885–1925, but there are some as late as 1948. Searching for the given name John produced only about 200 entries. It does not have wildcard ability, but interestingly you can search by first name only. If you click on the name of an individual, it displays all persons who accompanied him/her. The site is sponsored by the Department of Museums and Archives, of the State Secretary of the Culture of São Paulo. You can order a certificate for about US\$10–15.

#### **ProQuest Digitizes Boston Globe 1872-1922**

ProQuest has added 50 years worth of issues of the *Boston Globe*, 1872–1922, to its digital collection of U.S. newspapers, which include the *New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Washington Post* and others. It provides full word searching of the issues of the newspapers. They do not offer individual subscriptions to the service; it is

available only through institutions, primarily libraries.

#### **Dachau Inmates List at Morse Site**

An index to 160,000 inmates of Dachau concentration camp is available at the Stephen P. Morse website at <http://stevemorse.org>. The information provided, when known, includes name, birth date, town of residence, prisoner number, arrival date and disposition (examples: died, liberated). The search engine has the usual host of options available that exist for many other databases at the Morse site. The database was made available to Morse by Peter Landé of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum.

#### **German Genealogy Group Adds Index to 19th-Century New York Vital Records**

The German Genealogy Group has added indexes to late 19th-century births, marriages and deaths for the Queens and Brooklyn sections of New York City. A complete list of vital record databases at their site can be found at <http://www.germangenealogygroup.com/otherdb.stm>.

## JGSBC Program Calendar

**Sunday, February 17, 2008, 1:00 p.m.**

**DeSantis Knight Auditorium, First Floor, Room 1124  
Nova Southeastern University**

NSU/JGSBC/GSBC Joint Special Event

**Guest Speaker:** Steve Morse

**Topic:** 1-Step Webpages: A Potpourri of Genealogical Search Tools  
Please register at website: [www.jgsbc.org/helios/events](http://www.jgsbc.org/helios/events)

**Wednesday, March 26, 2008, 7:00 p.m., Soref JCC**

JGSBC Membership Meeting

**Guest Speaker:** Fred Blum, President, JGSGP

**Topic:** The Secrets of Finding People

**Sunday, April 13, 2008, 1:00 p.m., Soref JCC**

JGSBC Membership Meeting

**Guest Speaker:** Marianne Sanua, Ph.D., Associate Professor, FAU

**Topic:** The Role of Sephardic Jews in the Early Settlement of America

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 website calendar located at [www.jgsbc.org](http://www.jgsbc.org) 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.



**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:		
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City:		State:	Zip:
Phone:	Fax:		

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

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