It was my great honor to be nominated and voted in as new president of our growing society at our June meeting. I shall attempt to serve to the best of my abilities and to aspire to the very great example set by my predecessor, Dr. Rolf Lederer, who, as the ex-officio past president continues to play a very active role.

I am pleased to make a few exciting announcements regarding speakers. As part of the 11th annual Holocaust Education Week, our society and Shaarei Shomayim Synagogue are sponsoring a visit to Toronto by the American-Jewish professional genealogist and writer Miriam Weiner.

**Ms. Weiner is due to speak at Shaarei Shomayim on the evening of Thursday November 7, 1991, at 8 p.m.** We expect a large community turnout.

Arrangements are currently being made to bring in Judith Frazin from Chicago, author of "A Translation Guide to 19th-Century Polish-Language Civil-Registration Documents". Her visit, which is planned for March 1, 1992, is being co-sponsored by the Ontario Genealogical Society.

A copy of Judith Frazin's wonderful translation guide (reviewed on page 3 of this issue) was recently deposited into our collection at the North York Public Library. You might wish to look at it, then purchase your own autographed copy from Ms. Frazin when she's in town.

Also reviewed in this issue is Sheldon and Judith Godfrey's biography of the early Jewish-Canadian politician George Benjamin. The Godfreys, who live in Toronto, have graciously consented to be guest speakers at one of our meetings, perhaps as early as November this year. Their trail-blazing research into early Jewish-Canadian families, dating right back to the 1750s, is just one of several related topics they intend to cover.

Our society is delighted to announce that we have agreed in principle to affiliate as equal partners with the Winnipeg Institute of Genealogy, which is a standing committee of the thriving and very active Jewish Historical Society of Western Canada. I met recently in Winnipeg with the WGI's executive committee, presided over by Mr. Harry Gutkin, whose books (such as the fascinating "Journey Into Our Heritage") are well known to students of Jewish Canadiana. Our very pleasant meeting will likely lead to mutual and lasting benefits.

Indeed, our affiliation with Winnipeg is already bearing fruit: some of its members have volunteered to provide a list of locally available Yizkor books, as we had requested; JGS of Canada members Henry Wellisch and Peter Cullman are assembling a bibliography of Yizkor books available in Canada. As part of an earlier arrangement, our past president Dr. Rolf Lederer expects to visit Winnipeg shortly to address our WGI colleagues at their invitation. As a next step, we're hoping to persuade one of our Winnipeg cousins to become a permanent Shem Tov correspondent.

Two of our members, Dr. Rolf Lederer and Henry Wellisch, were fortunate enough to attend the International Summer Seminar of Jewish Genealogists in Salt Lake City, Utah, in July. Both returned with rave reports about all that transpired. See Dr. Lederer's report of the proceedings on page 7 of this issue.

Last year, the executive committee of the Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies asked us if we would care to host the summer seminar in Toronto in 1993. Our response, reached after much discussion within our executive committee, was an unqualified "Yes." After all, as Browning penned, "A man's reach must exceed his grasp, or what's heaven for?" Dr. Lederer carried our decision to Salt Lake City, where it was accepted enthusiastically.

The proverbial ball is now in motion for a potentially very exciting gathering in 1993. You'll likely be seeing much more about the intense planning for this event in these pages. We'll also keep members posted about the 1992 seminar, due to take place in New York City next July.

A founding member of our society and its president for several consecutive terms, Dr. Lederer recently accepted the position of secretary of the Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies. Mazal Tov! Dr. Lederer has also generously consented to oversee all preparations for the 1993 summer seminar in Toronto. It is now incumbent upon the membership to provide the high level of back-up assistance he is sure to require.

I extend to all our members best wishes for the New Year.

---

Bill Gladstone,
President
At our meetings

June 26: The informal part of the evening was open to questions and answers by new members, whereas considerable time was devoted to a review of the society's By-Laws; the following revisions were recommended:

i. That all donors with contributions over a certain amount be automatically considered for membership without paying any additional fees;

ii. That the cut-off for membership applications be three days before any annual or special meeting;

iii. That the By-Laws requiring notice in writing for all meetings be changed to notice in writing for the Annual General Meeting only.

It was agreed that these revisions would be discussed with our lawyer and could be effected at a later date by the executive. On motion duly made, the By-Laws were approved by the members and executed by the President and Secretary.

A new executive for our society has been elected, following the proposed slate of candidates:

President
    Bill Gladstone
Secretary
    Sheryl Erenberg
Membership Secretary
    Peter Cullman
Treasurer
    Sid Disenhouse
Librarian
    Kaila Cramer
Newsletter Editorial Board
    Bill Gladstone, Howard Shidiowsky, Lawrie Weiser, Henry Wellisch
Chairperson, Cemetery Project
    Gert Rogers

The Corresponding and Recording secretaries were combined to one position.

The position of Vice President remains vacant.

After four years of editing and publishing SHEM TOV single handedly Peter Cullman has decided to hand over his position of sole newsletter editor as of January 1992 in order to pursue more of his expanding personal research. The newly elected editorial board is dedicated to continue the quality of our widely read newsletter.

Calendar

Thursday, November 7: MIRIAM WEINER, one of North America's best known certified Jewish genealogist, award winning columnist and author, will be the guest speaker. The evening is shared with and organized in conjunction with Shaarei Shomayim Synagogue in honour of the Eleventh Annual Holocaust Remembrance.

(Please note: there will be no October meeting.
the last meeting in 1991 will be December 18)

The following are meeting dates for 1992: topics are to be announced in future issues of SHEM TOV.

January 29; March 1; March 25; April 29; May 27; June 24.

* * *

The treasurer's report for the seven months ending July 31, 1991 has been presented to the executive by Sid Disenhouse and is available for perusal on request by the membership. Please contact any member of the executive.

Membership dues. Regrettably, membership dues for 1992 will have to be raised slightly due to tax increases and the escalating costs of printing and postage. (Please note: Membership dues are payable per calendar year and become due before February 29, 1992, the latest.)

Prepayments of 1992 dues, received before November 1, 1991 for existing members: $25.00

Payments of 1992 dues, received after November 1, 1991 for existing members: $30.00

Please don't delay prompt payment, your membership dues represent an integral part of our society's existence; the following is a breakdown of the various costs our society incurs in the course of a calendar year:

Membership of AJGS (Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies); new acquisitions of books for our growing library; our cemetery project; costs of invitations and honoraria to speakers and lecturers; production and printing of our new Starter Kit and publication of SHEM TOV.

Please note that the 18-page 'Starter Kit', complete with membership directory, is now available to any paid-up member at our regular meetings. The 'Kit', which will be updated annually, can also be purchased for $10.00.

* * *

Our cemetery committee has been very active this summer. At least seven out of twenty two sections of Roselawn Cemetery have now been transcribed, thanks to a dedicated core of about eight to ten volunteers. Work will resume on October 6 at 9:00 a.m. and will continue throughout the fall, weather permitting. If you wish to lend your support to this very worthy project, please call our committee chairperson, Gert Rogers, at 588-2318.

* * *

Our first workshop was such a success that it is a foregone conclusion that it may well become an annual event. We shall soon appoint a workshop co-ordinator; if you are interested in this position, please call any member of our executive. Our Second Annual Workshop in Jewish Genealogy, projected for April 1992, will be truly for beginners.

New Members

We are pleased to welcome the following new members.

Mrs. Shirley Zweig Sperling of Toronto, Mr. Sandy Israel of Florida and Mr. Raymond Whitzman of Montreal.

First National Awards Presented

The National Genealogical Society recently presented the following awards: to Miriam Weiner for winning the 1991 Award for Achievement, Individual, in recognition of her exceptional contribution to the field of genealogy over a period of five or more years, which resulted in significantly aiding research or furthering an interest in genealogy.

The award for Organizations was given to the Jewish Genealogical Society, Inc., of New York.

Our congratulations to the winners for their outstanding accomplishments!
Polish Translation Guide

A review by Bill Gladstone

Mrs. Judith Frazin, a Chicago-area Spanish teacher who neither speaks, reads or writes modern Polish, has produced a remarkable book of incalculable worth to anyone with old Polish birth, marriage and death records needing translation into English.

Mrs. Frazin began to research her roots after her paternal grandmother died in 1970. Before long, she discovered that civil records from Staszow and Polaniec, the Polish towns where her paternal ancestors had been born (both in the province of Kielce), had been microfilmed and were part of the Mormon Family History Library collection.

Her 312-page "Translation Guide to 19th Century Polish Language Civil Registration Documents" (second edition published 1989) evolved out of her experience in getting the hundreds of documents that she photocopied from the microfilms professionally translated. "I wanted to have each one translated individually, but the cost was prohibitive," she explains. "So by necessity, I found a way to abstract the most important information myself."

Observing that many phrases recurred in document after document, Mrs. Frazin began compiling vocabulary lists to help her translate the words that seemed unique. She developed a dozen specialized lexicons on such subjects as age, birth, death, place, marriage, numbers and dates, occupations, religion and time.

Most Polish birth records between 1826 and 1867 follow the same seven-part structure, Mrs. Frazin discovered. Each section begins with standard phrases that she calls "Section Locators." Within each section, specific words mark the location of key phrases containing information like name of town, date, name of child, name of parents and father's occupation.

In structure, marriage and death documents are equally stylized; the Translation Guide shows how to extract all the important genealogical information and attain an overall understanding of a record's meaning with minimal time and effort. By reprinting actual handwritten documents, it helps to make sense out of what may initially seem illegible.

When I first discovered the page long handwritten record of the 1846 marriage in Konin of my great-great-grandparents Rafaela Glicensztayn and Rudeszcy Hahn, much of it seemed unreadable. The first word, for example, looked like "Driato," but no Polish-English dictionary showed such a combination of letters.

The Translation Guide, with its chapter of the Polish alphabet, made it clear that the word was actually "Działo," with the "I" crossed with a diacritical mark [""] . The word means "it happened in" and usually precedes the name of the town in which an event took place.

With the help of the Translation Guide, I soon learned a wealth of information about my ancestors; Rafaela's parents were deceased in 1846, for example, so his uncle, Haskela Glicensztayn, had given the bridegroom away.

For Mrs. Frazin's purposes, "19th century" refers to the period from 1808 to 1867, after which Polish civil registration documents were recorded in the Cyrillic alphabet of the Russian language. In keeping with its overall comprehensiveness, her book features a guide to the Russian alphabet in both printed and handwritten forms.

For Jewish genealogists, the Translation Guide is akin to the famous Rosetta Stone found in Egypt in 1799, whose parallel Greek and Egyptian inscriptions finally unlocked the mystery of the hieroglyphics of ancient Egypt. We may be grateful in equal measure to the Mormon Family History Library for giving us access to these family documents, and to Mrs. Frazin for making their meaning accessible.

New Books In Our Library


WHERE ONCE WE WALKED', a guide to the Jewish communities destroyed in the Holocaust; by Gary Mokotoff and Sallyann Sack; published by Avotaynu, Teaneck, N.J.

LITHUANIAN JEWISH COMMUNITIES', by Nancy Schoenburg and Stuart Schoenbourg; published by Garland Publishing Inc., Hamden, CT.

New Microfiches In Our Library


INDEX, JEWISH NAMES IN PROTECTION OF INTERESTS OF U.S. CITIZENS IN ROMANIA, GERMANY AND POLAND: U.S. Dept. of State.

INDEX, JEWISH NAMES IN PROTECTION OF INTERESTS OF U.S. CITIZENS IN RUSSIA: U.S. Dept. of State.

INDEX, JEWISH NAMES IN PROTECTION OF INTERESTS OF U.S. CITIZENS IN AUSTRIA-HUNGARY: U.S. Dept. of State.


GALICIAN TOWNS AND ADMINISTRATIVE DISTRICTS.

BURIALS IN THE OLD SECTION OF WASHINGTON HEBREW CONGREGATION CEMETERY.

One copy of Vol. I of the long-awaited Encyclopaedia of Jewish Genealogy was recently given to Rabbi Irwin Witty and to Mr. Angus Baxter in overdue appreciation of the talks they gave to our members. A third copy was presented to Dr. E. Sheffman, winner of the draw at our first genealogical workshop in April this year.

Did you know...

The first ever Telephone book was published on February 21, 1876 in New Haven, Connecticut, USA.

[MAAJAN, DIE QUELLE, Nov. 17, 1990/No.4]
Our Members' Research: An Inspiration To Others

(The second of a series of articles on the research work done by our members: their beginnings, tribulations and successes.)

Peter Cullman

"Anything worth doing is worth doing to excess." (1)

A maxim that seemed to have been my own, long before I learned who the author was...

Was it another of life's coincidences that a good friend of mine handed me Arthur Kurzweil's 'From Generation to Generation' the book that was to become my daily companion for weeks to follow? Or were our sons' Bar Mitzvahs the moments when the realization set in that we had so little family. When sentimentality gave way, I began the practical part of a love affair that genealogy has become for me ever since.

Now, seven years later I pose the questions: how has genealogy enriched me? How has family research changed my life?

Before a multitude of answers can be put into perspective I must hark back to the beginning, a beginning with very few facts and virtually no names; one that became both a challenge and an obsession.

In review, the path back to the early days of my family research is littered with moments of joy, with moments of anxiety, great expectations and aspirations. To recall seven years of research in less than two thousand words can merely produce a capsule. Yet I shall endeavour to recount this journey, if only for the joy of sharing.

My personal genealogical starter kit contained my late mother's uncommon maiden name SIMONSTEIN, the rarely heard of name of a town now in Western Poland, SCHNEIDEMÜHL, and the determination to seek and to find, anything!

My mother was a mere four years old when her father died in 1907 in Berlin; his final resting place left virtually no clues to posterity. I had decided to set out to discover that his birthplace was in a town of minor importance in Prussia's most Jewish province, Posen, coming to prominence only after the middle of the 19th century when it became a railway stop on the Berlin-Königsberg route of the 'Ost-Bahn'. Though well situated in the heartland of a very Jewish countryside, Schneidemuhl never boasted more than a 15% Jewish population.

This small town and its Jewish inhabitants was to become the focal point of my family research for years to come.

The memory of sentimental journeys to the vast, romantic-looking Jewish cemetery in East Berlin's Weissensee, where my late mother took me as a child, initiated my correspondence with the helpful administration of that necropolis. Soon my persistent questioning revealed not only the location of my grandfather's grave but also another eight graves, all bearing the same family name.

My bold search ad in AUFBAU, America's only German Jewish publication, yielded two most valuable responses: one from New York, the other from Chile. At once an absolute boon to my growing research and at the same time a sign of the still widespread readership of this over fifty-year old newspaper. These two newly-found cousins laid the broader groundwork for my family tree as I obtained scores of names and addresses from them to write to, spreading from Texas to Brazil, Israel and Sweden.

With this bridgehead and the accompanying new confidence, I felt that I could now mount a major offensive. I combed the telephone books of every major city in the western hemisphere for entries of that elusive but unusual family name. Then I even temporarily abandoned my inherent frugality and yielded to impulsive long distant calls, thoughtfully taping my conversations for posterity, gaining invaluable information hitherto never dreamed of. Further search ads and inquiries, this time with HIAS, suddenly connected me with a cousin in Philadelphia whose proverbial old shoe box revealed treasures in the shape of old photographs of family graves in the Jewish cemetery of Schneidemuhl, her late parents had taken in 1938 before leaving their ancestral town to find refuge in the US.

These photos, showing the Hebrew and the German inscriptions on the elaborate gravestones of my great grandparents, are now in my possession; priceless relics of an almost forgotten past. In 1939 the Jewish cemetery had been leveled, totally destroyed, by the Germans, - obliterating any trace of a once Jewish presence for the returning Polish populace who regained tenancy in 1945, renaming the town Pila, 173 years after Poland's first partition of 1772.

All the while, as I had floated from one emotional high to another, I had also begun to peruse the microfiches at Etobicoke's Mormon Family History Library. Although no religious community documentation of the town's bygone days seemed extant, to my utter joy I discovered that Schneidemuhl's civil records, begun in 1874 as decreed in all of Prussia, had apparently been salvaged at the end of WW II and filmed in Berlin in 1964: now available on 165 microfiches, just for the asking...! Subsequent diligent examination of dozens of microfiches revealed an unbelievable mine of information. Soon excitement of this kind gave way to the realization that the town's small Jewish community was almost totally interrelated. No longer would I only examine known family names - I simply needed every Jewish record on film in order to rebuild the family of my mother.

Along with the many hundreds of birth, marriage and death documents, all stating religious affiliation and conveniently marked by the efficient Teutonic bureaucracy as being of 'Mosaic' religion, my eyes witnessed history on a personal level on every page of vital records. Wide margins on each record had allowed zealous clerks in the 1930's to add the Jewish 'identifier' on documents, branding each Jewish record, each Jewish person, with a rubber stamp, informing the reader that the person named above has (in accordance with the 'Nurnberg Laws') "adopted" the additional first names Sarah or Israel, thus easily facilitating the creation of soon-to-follow infamous 'Deportation lists'.

(1) "Nothing worth doing is worth doing to excess". — Mark Twain
Here also lay the beginning of my inevitable research into the period of the Holocaust, in terms of my own family. This emotional route via such institutions as Yad Vashem, the International Tracing Service of the Red Cross, the Restitution offices in Berlin or the Archives containing the original Gestapo records gradually exposed the fact to me that none of us has been left untouched by this traumatic period of history.

In time, my latent interest in history experienced a rapid revival, leading me to endless journeys to libraries. Then I also became exhaustively involved with 'birds-of-a-feather'-meetings after joining the local Jewish Genealogical Society.

I began to enjoy the tremendous learning process that became part of this all-absorbing endeavour. The historic, social and personal past became as exciting as the gathering of relatives with information who had no time to write. The newly-found second cousins recalled an unpleasant encounter with aunt Dora in the late 1930's in New York. By that time she would have only been in her early sixty's and I concluded that, although she could have lived another forty years, I had to be realistic.

Examining every death record for all the boroughs of N.Y. City on microfilm well into the fifties drew a complete blank and my expenses for ordering more films might have increased even further if I hadn't discovered the CD ROM on computer at the Mormon Family History Library, storing nearly 39 million names of deceased US citizens since the 1930's: the Social Security Death Index. Suddenly, within minutes, I not only discovered the death records of her sons, by that time also in their seventies, but I finally located the elusive aunt Dorothea, having lived to the extraordinary age of 94 when she died in 1967!

Years of ground work, involving near endless correspondence, search ads and microfilms, came to an abrupt halt at the touch of a computer key.

Almost too easy in terms of effort. Certainly very fast but definitely too late in terms of finding one live great aunt...

* * *

Mishpacha...?

Having divorced his wife by whom he had a child, a man marries his mother-in-law, i.e. the mother of his divorced wife.

As husband of the grandmother of his child, he could call himself the grandfather of his own child.

On the other hand, the grandmother, as wife of the child's father is also the child's (step) mother.

Thus, the child's natural mother, as daughter of the wife of the child's father becomes the (step) sister of her own child...

* * *

"When I was your age," the millionaire bragged to his son, "I carried water for a gang of bricklayers."

The son thoughtfully said, "I'm mighty proud of you, Dad. If it hadn't been for your great determination, I might have had to do something like that myself."

* * *

(1.) By Edwin Land, inventor of the Polaroid Land Camera.
Our Members' Research: An Inspiration To Others
[The second of a series of articles on the research work done by our members: their beginnings, tribulations and successes.]

Bill Gladstone

Great Moments in Jewish Genealogy Number 617:
Around 1915, the young man who was to become my grandfather, Ralph Glickstein, changed his surname to Gladstone. Evidently he thought that having the name of the popular former British Prime Minister would make it easier to get a job. This was in Toronto. He had two uncles named Glucksstein, also living in Toronto.

Some 70 years later, it dawned on me that the various Gluckssteins and Gluckssteins in the Toronto phone book might be related to us. So with great chutzpah I phoned a Gluckstein at random and explained my theory to the stranger who answered.

"What did you say your name was?" he asked.
"Gladstone -- but it used to be Glickstein."
"Glick? or Gluck?"
"Glick," I said quickly. "But I know for a fact that we had relatives who were Gluck."
"Well, the only Glickstein I knew was Harris Glickstein. He was my grandfather's brother."

Eureka: he had known my great-grandfather! This discovery led to others, which in turn begat others. Before long, I was convinced that, statistically speaking, every tenth person I passed on Bathurst Street was a relative. Soon, my investigations uncovered more astonishing news. Our name had formerly been Glisenstein and we had lived in the town of Konin, near Kalisz, in the Poznan province of Poland.

I cannot adequately describe nor explain my excitement at obtaining the microfilmed records of Konin's Jewish community, 1815 to 1878, through the Mormon LDS library. These records yielded hundreds of family documents and enabled me to construct an extensive family tree and insinuate dates as far back as 1780, the approximate year my third great-grandfather, Abraham Moses Glisenstein, was born.

After learning how all the Glicenstein in 19th-century Konin were related, I gleaned more information from microfilms from neighboring towns. After that I started to investigate leads about a certain Glicenstein family from Turek, a town some 15 kilometers away from Konin for which no Mormon LDS microfilm exists. My main source of information was the Encyclopaedia Judaica, which records that Enoch (later Enrico) Glicenstein, a Jewish sculptor, was born there in 1870.

Enrico Glicenstein achieved much international renown. A two-time winner of the prestigous Prix de Rome and a gold medalist at the 1900 Paris Exposition, he exhibited his sculptures and sketches. Many famous galleries and museums, including the Smithsonian Institute, exhibit his sculptures and sketches. A museum in Sefad, Israel, is largely devoted to him.

However, I must not unscientifically jump to conclusions. I hope to resolve this question by December 30, 1992, the 50th anniversary of the artist's death...

ENRICO GLICENSTEIN

R. L. HURST, 53, AIDE OF ADVERTISING FIRM

Head of San Francisco Office of
Batten, Barton, Durstine & Osborn

R. L. (Buck) Hurst, vice president in charge of the San Francisco office of Batten, Barton, Durstine & Osborn, Inc., advertising, died on Wednesday in his home at Laguna Beach, Calif., after an illness of three months, according to word received here yesterday. His age was 53.
1991 Summer Seminar, Salt Lake City.

The Double Tree Hotel was the seminar headquarters for this year's seminar held in Salt Lake City. Although only two blocks from the Genealogical Library, it took a good 15 minutes to walk the distance, because the blocks in Salt Lake City are HUGE, the traffic lights are slow, and the temperature was usually about 90°F (still an improvement on the recent 112°F, experienced in L.A. the year before).

As usual, there was a vast array of interesting topics, and an equally interesting and impressive roster of speakers. The two lectures that, in my opinion, were outstanding were those delivered by Odette Vlessing and Rabbi Malcolm Stern. Both dealt with topics that may be of limited interest to the mainstream of Central and Eastern European researchers, but they nevertheless captivated their audiences. Ms. Vlessing spoke on the Amsterdam Municipal Archives, where she is a Senior Archivist, tracing the history of the Jewish community, as well as specifying the holdings of the facility. Rabbi Malcolm Stern focussed on the Inquisition, the Marranos and Sephardic origins of the Jewish community in North America, the Caribbean and Brazil.

In addition to Odette Vlessing from Holland, overseas visitors included Jurgen Sielemann, Archivist in the Hamburg State archives, Rabbi Gyorgy Landeszman from Budapest, Hungary, Dr. Anthony Joseph, Manchester, United Kingdom, and Batya Untershatz, Director of the Bureau for Missing Persons in Jerusalem. The presence and participation of these distinguished quests definitely enhanced the quality of the seminar.

Daniel Schlyer of the LDS Genealogical Library gave unstintingly of his time, by delivering lectures (Overview of European Sources for Jewish Research and Jewish Research in Czechoslovakia) and by his assistance and approachability in the library.

Most participants spent many hours in the Library which is open from 7-30 a.m. to 10 p.m. (Tuesday – Friday) and 7-30 a.m. to 6 p.m. (Mondays), and well used. The reading rooms have hundreds of viewers and the microfilms are in open, accessible file cabinets. The staff was extremely helpful and knowledgeable. The greatest surprise for me was the thousands of volumes of genealogically related books on open shelves, written in every conceivable language. The capable library staff is very helpful with translations. I could have spent all my time browsing through this vast collection, and still not have covered my varied interests. Photocopying from the microfilms is available at the paltry price of 5 cents per page, and there are even change machines. I spent all the time I had in the European sections of the library but other levels are devoted to US and Canadian holdings and to U.K. items. I overheard two LDS staff members, one saying: “Do you know that there are close to 300 participants at this seminar and ALL know what they are doing.”

Anyone planning to visit the genealogical library in Utah should do as much preparatory work as possible to maximize the time available for research there. Such preparations may require several visits to the local Mormon Family History Library to obtain call numbers for microfilms and also to familiarize oneself with the geography of the library building.

Besides the lectures there were also many informal meetings including the popular “Birds of a Feather” gatherings. Many of these were organized along geographic lines by country, but are becoming more specialized and were organized by towns. Among other topics covered were “Cemetery Projects.”

The use of computers in genealogical research as given great prominence, ranging from the basics of computer use to the most advanced and sophisticated sharing of information. It is possible that in future an entire seminar could be devoted to this one aspect alone.

There were close to 300 participants, mostly from the U.S. (fairly evenly distributed between the East coast and West coast and points in between). The only other Canadians in attendance besides myself were, Lawrence Tapper from the Canadian Archives in Ottawa, and fellow Torontonian and society member, Henry Wellisch.

The organizers are to be commended for the smooth running of the seminar, in particular Gary Mokotoff and Sallyann Amudr Sack, who coordinated the preparations from afar and liaised with the locals under the able leadership of Thomas Noy.

We all look forward to renewing our friendships at the next seminar in New York City next summer, and then to be able to host the seminar ourselves in Toronto in 1993.

Dr. Rolf Lederer

* * *

What is a City Directory? ... and why

A city directory is a book which contains the name of each resident over 16 years of age, his or her address, marital status, occupation, place of employment, telephone number, and whether the residence is owned or rented. Each business, professional or industrial firm is catalogued by type, and the owners, partners, or officers are listed.

Only public information is contained in a City Directory and the publishing of such information does not invade anyone’s right of privacy. A person’s right of privacy is only violated by the publication of information that is sensitive, embarrassing, highly personal or offensive. Clearly, the information contained in a City Directory does not fall into any of these categories. A face-to-face interview is the keystone of a City Directory.

In Canada R. L. Polk & Co. has been publishing City Directories since 1870 in every province. Thus, the Polk Company and City Directories have been around for some time as they have published City Directories continually in many cities on an annual basis, more than 1,300 separate City Directories, most of them every year.

Polk enumerators conduct more than twenty five million such interviews a year. All Polk Directories are compiled and printed electronically by Polk employees, utilizing computers and the latest video composition techniques.

[An excerpt from a pamphlet by Might Directories, Div. R. L. Polk & Co. Ltd., City Directory Division, Toronto]
*Burn This Gossip*
Reviewed by Bill Gladstone

While researching a forthcoming book on the civil and political rights of Jews in British North America between 1749 and 1850, Toronto-born Sheldon and Judith Godfrey found intriguing references to George Benjamin, a Jewish federal politician in pre-confederate Canada. "I found him under the word 'Jew' in an old newspaper index in the Kingston Public Library," Judith recalls.

That fortuitous discovery—and a great deal of subsequent research—led to the publication in May this year of "Burn This Gossip" (Duke & George Press, Toronto $29.95). the Godfreys' full-length biography of the former MP for Belleville, who served between 1857 and 1863 under John A. MacDonald.

The British-born Benjamin, who previously had been all but overlooked by historians of Jewish Canadiana, was the founding editor of the Belleville Intelligencer, which today is Ontario's oldest surviving newspaper. Turning down a cabinet post for MacDonald, Benjamin forfeited the honour of becoming Canada's first Jewish cabinet minister, which went to Herb Gray 107 years later upon his ascendency into the Trudeau cabinet in 1969.

The Dictionary of Canadian Biography features a long entry on Benjamin but neglects to mention his Jewishness, possibly because Benjamin neglected his own Jewishness and converted to Christianity late in life. The genealogical tables at the back of the book reveal how thorough the Godfreys were in attempting to trace Benjamin's descendents; they even traveled to Australia to locate family members. "We've put family members in touch with each other," says Judith. "They all know each other now because of this book." None of Benjamin's known descendents are Jewish, she says.

Benjamin's most outspoken adversary was the well-known Belleville writer Susannah Moodie, whose poison-pen profile of an obnoxious Jewish newspaper editor in a serialized novel was unmistakably patterned on Benjamin, the Godfreys contend. Perhaps Benjamin's most notable associate was Mackenzie Bowan, his faithful apprentice, protege and political ally whom he treated like a son and who became Canada's fifth Prime Minister in 1894, long after Benjamin's death.

Various items pertaining to Benjamin, including a portrait, Hebrew prayerbook and impression of his wax seal, are displayed in "A Coat of Many Colours: Two Centuries of Jewish Life in Canada" the exhibit which opened recently at the Royal Ontario Museum.

An important, ground-breaking work, "Burn This Gossip" is also the first in a thematically related trilogy by the Godfreys. The centerpiece, they say, will be "Search Out the Land," their study of the civil and religious rights of Jews in British North America.

The third work, completed, but not yet published, sounds thematically related to the Godfreys. The centerpeice, they say, will be "Search Out the Land," their study of the civil and religious rights of Jews in British North America.

Hebrew Subscription Lists
Reviewed by Bill Gladstone

Appended to many thousands of 19th-century Judaic books, Hebrew subscription lists can be a valuable window onto the vanished world of our ancestors.

What are subscription lists? They are lists of names of people who purchased advance copies of rabbinical, religious, scholarly or other Judaic works, thus supporting the respective authors during the writing. In those days authors would go from town to town seeking pre-subscribers, then acknowledge them when their books were published.

Compiled by Hebrew scholar Berl Kagan, a fairly comprehensive index of subscription lists, "Sefer Prenumerantn" ("Hebrew Subscription Lists"), was published in 1975. Kagan examined tens of thousands of Jewish books in producing his 400-page catalogue, which is the key to about 350,000 Jewish names from 8,767 Jewish communities in Europe and North Africa.

While most of it is in Hebrew, Sefer Prenumerantn features an English introduction and index of towns, allowing those without a knowledge of the biblical tongue to use it with a minimum of assistance. It can be found at the Robarts Library under the call letters HM 496.8 K33.

Sefer Prenumerantn cites fourteen books that contain lists of subscribers from my paternal great-grandfather's town of Konin, Poland, which had a Jewish population of only a few thousand. Unfortunately, I couldn't find any of those fourteen books among the impressive 50,000-volume Judaica collection at Robarts. Almost all the titles cited in Sefer Prenumerantn may be found in the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, the YIVO Institute, Yeshiva University and the Jewish Division of the New York Public Library, all in New York.

Arthur Kurzweil, author of "From Generation to Generation," says that finding a subscription list with your ancestor's name in it is generally a laborious process that "should be saved for a time when you have just about reached dead ends with everything else."

However, subscription lists should not be discounted as a source of genealogical information, since many of the names in them can't be found in other documents. As Kagan notes, the great scourge of Hitler indiscriminately "destroyed birth, death, and marriage registers, and other original documents," along with the Six Million.

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Hungary

Researchers with roots in Hungary or in the former Austro-Hungarian Empire may be interested in the following additional source:

An 1828 census of the taxable population of Hungary, with references to their financial situation, including descriptions of lands and properties. The records, in Latin, are arranged in alphabetical order by county and within the counties by localities. Identified as 'Judeo,' every Jew is listed by his occupation.

Inquiries, with S.A.S.E. only, to: Henry Wellisch, 33 Cadillac Ave., Downsview, Ontario, M3H 1S3; or Tel. (416) 638-3280

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*SHEM TOV* Volume VII - No.3 September 1991
Benjamin's Park Memorial Chapel

The following is the first page of Finding Aids for the comprehensive collection of record books kept by Joseph Benjamin, founder of Benjamin's Park Memorial Chapel.

This collection has been deposited in Ottawa in the Manuscript Division (Ethnic Archives) of the Public Archives of Canada. Because of the sensitive nature of this collection of personal records, access by the general public is restricted. However, should members of the public wish to examine any of the records for further information on their own family or for genealogical purposes they may write to Mr. Michael Benjamin directly, incl. a S.A.S.E., at:

2401 Steeles Ave. W., Downsview, Ont., M3J 2P1, Canada.

Benjamin's Park Memorial Chapel (est. 1922)

Funeral Chapel

(Originals, 1930–1980. 4.9m. Finding Aid No. 1450.)

Benjamin's Park Memorial Chapel was founded in 1922 by Henry Benjamin who was a member of one of the early Chevra Kadisha fellowships of Toronto. He served the Jewish community with care and respect, observing the traditions and rites associated with Jewish burial and mourning practices.

After Henry Benjamin's death in 1939 the chapel (known as the Park Memorial Chapel) was passed down to his son Joseph who served the Jewish community for forty years from its premises on Spadina Crescent. His son Michael became actively involved in 1965 assuming full responsibility in 1979. Joseph joined the Jewish Funeral Directors of America association in 1943. He and Michael have served as Board members and have been active in the affairs of the Toronto Jewish community.

In August 1976 the chapel moved to its present location at 2401 Steeles Avenue West.

Presented in 1983 by Michael Benjamin, Toronto.

Finding Aid No 1450 is a bound set of photocopies of the seven record books kept by Joseph Benjamin.

Seven record books kept by Joseph Benjamin from 1930 to 1980 containing the following information: date of death, Yarzheit, name of deceased, cemetery section, name of cemetery. The outside dates for each book are:

- Book 1: Jan. 1930 to Dec 31, 1945
- Book 2: Jan. 1, 1946 to Dec 19, 1953
- Book 3: Jan. 1, 1954 to Dec 29, 1959
- Book 4: Dec. 29, 1959 to Dec 29, 1963
- Book 6: Dec. 29, 1968 to June 28, 1972
- Book 7: June 29, 1972 to June 30, 1980

Originals have been withdrawn from circulation. Researches must use the photocopies.


Records arranged chronologically 1946 to 1957, vols. 21 to 24. The cards contain information about the deceased with supplements that are found in the record books:

### Toronto Cemeteries

A list of Synagogues and Societies listed in alphabetical order, and the respective cemeteries with which they are affiliated.

The cemeteries are listed as follows:

- B Bathurst Lawn Memorial Park
- B T Beth Tzedec Memorial Park
- D Dawes Rd. Cemetery
- H B Holy Blossom Memorial Park
- J Jones Avenue Cemetery
- L Lambton Cemetery
- P S Pardes Shalom Cemetery
- R Roselawn Avenue Cemetery
- W Mt. Sinai Memorial Park

...
"Operation Solomon" brought 14,000 Ethiopian Jews to Israel; in an amazingly short time; an astonishing feat. To register each one of these newcomers seems to have become a new genealogical challenge, however.

The unusual Amharic script poses the first problem when names, given verbally to immigration workers, have to be transliterated into approximate Hebrew. The absence of birth certificates is combined with a feature we modern-day researchers only encounter when examining the roots of our early 19th century ancestors: patronyms.

In addition, a person's vague birthdate may often only be remembered in connection with a recent historic event or with the catastrophic year of the famine...

Israel's Government officials are now considering that these immigrants receive new family names, based on the given name of the grandfather most recently deceased.

In years to come, when this chapter of Israel's history has been neatly placed in the history books, we may find that in genealogical terms, we have been creating a new chapter of Ellis Island, parodying the "Sean Ferguson" (schon vergessen) of a hundred years ago, though this time with a Hebrew flavour...
Onomatological:

(adj. [Greek: onomatistos, of naming]: "of or pertaining to, or consisting of, names or a name." - WEBSTER'S New Collegiate Dictionary.)

Fascinating reading and essential to Jewish genealogy...

This is another in a series of columns - retrieved, correlated, and translated from this veritable mine of information: "Mitteilungen der Gesellschaft für Judische Familienforschung." Though more than six decades have passed since a group of dedicated scholars in Berlin, headed by Dr. A. Cezelizer, began the study of genealogy in full earnest, there is essentially nothing new in our quest - we still search for the origin and meaning of our names, the answers may only sometimes be forgotten...

Throughout the fourteen years of that quarterly publication, members were invited to submit questions and answers, and as we may see from time to time, the published answers were enlightening, though occasionally confusing and not always totally satisfactory...

Question Nr. 117/Vol. V, Nr. 4, 1929

Where does the name HADRA originate?

My great grandfather who carried this name was born in Bankau near Kreuzburg in Upper Silesia.

Pablo Hadra, Buenos Aires

Answer Nr. 1/Vol. VI, Nr. 1, 1930

The name Hadra may be of Czech origin. A derivation of: Hadr = Hader, Hadac = Hadernsammer (a collector of rags), a very common livelihood amongst Jews in the countryside of Bohemia. In Vienna, before the war, the following were known: Hader (4), Hadener (7), Haderlein (5), Hadra (2), Hadraba (5), Hadrawa (8).

"Bohemicus"

Answer Nr. 2/Vol. VI, Nr. 1, 1930

The name Hadra most probably originates from Daniel 5:18, and may have been assumed by a learned person. The word means 'splendour'. This assumption can be substantiated by the fact that this name originates in Upper Silesia and that numerous biblical names can be found there which normally rarely occur or are seldom used. The fact that a word such as 'splendour' has been used as a family name is proven in such widely used names as "Jafe", "Jaffe", "Jaffé", meaning pretty. A thorough examination of specifically Upper Silesian Jewish names in this context could yield some interesting results.

Dr. Felix Goldmann, Leipzig

Answer Nr. 3/Vol. VI, Nr. 2, 1930

Hadra is a village in the district of Lublinitz, Upper Silesia; there is also a Neu-Hadra (see also Zimmermann, Description of Silesia II, p.153, Nr. 12, and p.155 Nr. 24)

Bernh. Brilling, Breslau

Answer Nr. 4/Vol. VI, Nr. 2, 1930

Hadra is a village in Upper Silesia near Lissau (Lublinitz, now Poland), therefore not far from Bankau near Kreuzburg, the place of origin of this family.

Hans Hirsch, Vienna

In search of...

SHEM TOV's search column in which readers may advertise their personal field of research in terms of names and localities they are seeking, thus discovering others in pursuit of similar or identical families.

C-1/9a91 CULLMAN, PETER 99 Yorkville Ave. Toronto, Ontario, M5R 3K5 B.: (416) 964-2196 or H.: (416) 756-7856 ...Seeking information in Australia on any descendants of my great great uncle ISIDOR SIMONSTEIN, born ca. 1829 in Schneidemühl, Posen, and his wife JOHANNA, née LOEWENTHAL, who immigrated to Sydney, Australia, ca. 1868.

How are we going to write 3 February 2001?

A number of replies to this topic have been received by the Ontario Genealogical Society since this question was raised several months ago; below is a summary of some of the more pertinent opinions.

While it was acknowledged by some readers that a "dating problem" such as this had indeed been solved a long time ago, (in 1976 Canada adopted the ISO method and went metric in 1978!) the fact that not enough public institutions were using this unambiguous method (large > medium > small) was lamented. By writing Year - Month - Day computer sorting is easily facilitated, allowing a possible addition of Hour - Minute - Second, without affecting the logic; larger units first, with smaller units to the right. This is also the way we deal with money in our daily activities: millions before thousands before hundreds, etc.

A reader from London felt that 03 Feb 2001 or 2001 Feb 03 was clearly the only way this should be handled. If computers were unable to cope with this method then computers were obviously not the right instruments for this kind of historical work...

Another reader pointed out that the common English and American methods of reporting 03/02/01, though in wide use, are ambiguous and should be ruled out, as inevitably some sort of explanation is required, i.e. DD/MM/YY. Computers can display a date in any method chosen by the programmer regardless of how the date is formatted in the data file itself. By this admission the LDS system of date reporting appears as the clearest, neatest and most compact: a two-digit number and a four-digit number, separated by a group of three letters, without the need for punctuation, thus 03Feb2001. While language should not be a consideration, it should be remembered that LDS already has a vast body of data in this chosen format; the reader advocates this to be the method to be adopted by genealogists.

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The quarterly newsletter, published by the Jewish Genealogical Society of Canada, Toronto Division, is mailed free to members; single and back issues cost $4.00. Membership fees are $25.00 per calendar year. The Society was founded in 1985 and has currently over 90 members. Meetings are held September to June, usually on the last Wednesday of each month at 7:30 p.m. at Shaarei Shomayim Synagogue, 470 Glencarin Avenue, Toronto; notices of meetings are also announced in the Canadian Jewish News (Miriam Herman Column). Guests are always welcome.

The goals of the Society are to promote an awareness among the Jewish community of the possibility of tracing their ancestors, to foster an ongoing interest in our heritage, to encourage the sharing of research techniques and to disseminate information on Jewish genealogical research to family historians and professional genealogists alike.

SHEM TOV is dedicated to publish articles of personal research experiences, inform its members of new and tried pertinent research sources and act as part of a growing international network for experienced family historians and beginning genealogists.

The officers of the Society are:

- President BILL GLADSTONE 656-9246
- Immediate past president DR. ROLF LEDERER 922-5134
- Secretary: SHERYL ERENBERG 482-3730
- Membership Secretary: PETER CULLMAN 964-2196
- Treasurer: SID DISENHOUSE 731-0281
- Library: KAILA CRAMER 731-5790
- Editor: PETER CULLMAN 964-2196
- Hon. Life President: RAYZEL ROBINSON

Contributors to this issue were:

Dr. Rolf Lederer, Bill Gladstone, Peter Cullman.

For subscriptions or changes of address please contact the membership secretary, PETER CULLMAN, P.O. Box 446, Station A, Willowdale/Ontario, M2N 5T1, Canada.