Participants Explore Ancestral Treasure-Chests
At 4-Day Jewish Genealogy Seminar in Toronto
12th Summer Seminar concludes successfully, thanks to generosity of many

By Bill Gladstone

THEY WEREN'T exactly "four days that shook the world," but when they were over, it seemed clear that the 12th Summer Seminar on Jewish Genealogy, which our Society hosted in June at the Park Plaza Hotel, was a great popular success.

Work began in earnest on the Summer Seminar in early January. It involved tremendous effort on the part of our three co-ordinators — Henry Wellisch, Gert Rogers and Howard Shidlowsky — and many committee workers and volunteers. Our start-up capital was $2,000 which we borrowed from our Society's budget. We are pleased to report the full return of this loan plus a few extra shekels.

Who attended the Summer Seminar? About 75 Torontonians, 144 Americans, six British, one Israeli and two Russians — Sasha and Katya Kronick, our keynote speakers. As well, several dozen people purchased day and evening passes. Many participants reported significant progress with their research, and some met cousins during the Seminar for the first time.

We were blessed with excellent speakers. Local contributors included Dr. Stephen Speisman, Paula Draper, Cayle Chernin, Brian Gilchrist and Sheldon and Judith Godfrey; Harry Guikin came from Winnipeg, former Montrealer Jack Kugelmass from Wisconsin. The Americans once again displayed their indomitable friendliness and expertise through major contributions by Gary Mokotof, Sallyann Sack, Rabbi Malcolm Stern, Jeff Cymbler, Daniel Schlyter, Eileen Polakoff, Harry Boonin, Hal Bookbinder, Suzan Wynne and many others. The British and Israeli contingents added international flavor, and the Kronicks provided insight into Jewish genealogy in the former Soviet Union as well as a lavish volume, Russian Hand-Painted Shop Signs, for our library collection.

Shortly after the doors opened on Sunday morning, messages began to appear on the bulletin boards in the Hospitality Suite (see centrespread). Walking tours of old Jewish Toronto were well-attended and well appreciated — "Phenomenal!" enthused one person on the evaluation sheet. Many discovered what we have long known: that the Robarts Library is a first-rate world-class research facility in which one could spend weeks, months, even years. Other repositories, such as the Ontario Archives and the Ontario Jewish Archives, greatly impressed our delegates and made them feel at home.

All in all, the Seminar ran like clockwork. There was, of course, too much choice, too many good things happening all at once. Besides the talks were the Birds of a Feather groups and computer and other workshops. On Tuesday we arranged a special lunchtime presentation when Chicago film-maker...


AT OUR MEETINGS

Wednesday March 31: "Finding My Russian Relatives." Last autumn, Toronto filmmaker-actress Cayle Chernin went to Belarus and Russia to meet the descendants of relatives that her grandfather had separated from more than 50 years before. Making a video of the experience, Chernin showed rushes from her project and described her experiences.

Wednesday April 28: About 100 people attended the screening of The Jews of Poland at Adath Israel synagogue to mark Yom Ha-Shoah. The video, a compilation of archival footage taken months before the German invasion, showed the once-vibrant Jewish life in five major cities.

Wednesday May 29: Our Society membership voted in our new executive slate (see below) at this, our Annual General Meeting. Afterwards, Nora Freund, Hal and Jay Patler, and Alex Korn made presentations on the theme "Breakthroughs of the Past Year." (See Freund's article, p.14.)

Sunday June 27 to Wednesday June 30: The 12th International Summer Seminar on Jewish Genealogy attracted some 240 people to the Park Plaza Hotel for four days of talks, demonstrations, vendor exhibits, workshops, walking tours, excursions and a gala banquet. (Partial report in this issue; see also Sept.)

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Wednesday September 22: First Fall meeting; topic to be announced. Shaarei Shomayim, 8 p.m.

FOUR DAYS (Continued from page 1)

Marian Marczynski joined us at the last minute; he's working on a TV mini-series called "Shetl." There were also vendor displays, a bone marrow drive, a city of Toronto bus excursion, and a gala banquet at which singer-actress Theresa Tova drew fevered cries of "More!" for her renditions of classic English and Yiddish songs.

We are indebted to numerous people and organizations for contributions that ranged from retouching our logo to the loan of several computers. Sincere thanks go to Avotaynu, Hal Bookbinder and the Los Angeles Society, Bootee-Kent Company, Greenwin Property Management, The KTS Systems Group, LDS Family History Library, Lufthansa German Airlines, Miles Lawlor Communications, Minicom Data Corporation, the Ozrower Mutual Benefic Society, and Solby Shockey and Grant.

As departing president, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the "troika" — Henry, Gert and Howard -- for their extraordinary efforts above and beyond the call of duty. Many committee members and volunteers were equally instrumental to our success. Particular thanks to Catherine Adam (publicity), Joel Drutz and Rob Lowy (syllabus), Sheryl Erenberg (tours and excursions), Sandra Ezrin (banquet), Stan Guttman (registration), Nordechai Roitman (Birds of a Feather), Shai Spetgang (resources room) and Florence Wellisch (registration desk). I would also like to acknowledge the kind words of support and advice from Gary Mokotoff and Sallyann Sack. Kudos as well to the Park Plaza Hotel for its first-rate facility and excellent service. As a parting note I would like to thank everyone on my executive committee, and in particular my vice-president Sheryl Erenberg, for their devoted service over these past two years.

May we all be well and healthy and able to attend the 1994 Seminar next year in Jerusalem!
Rediscovering Jewish Roots in Moscow
Details of Alexander and Katerina Kronick's keynote address on Jewish genealogical research in the Russian Empire

JEWISH GENEALOGY, for me, is an attempt to find my own road back to Jewish culture," says 40-year-old Alexander Kronick, the Moscow psychologist who is president of that city's recently-formed Jewish genealogical society. The road to which he is referring apparently leads to many interesting places. Last year, his wife, Katerina, a family therapist and artist who is vice-president of the 26-member Moscow society, visited the United States seeking partners for a recently-established business, the Biographical Club. That search led to Avotaynu Editor Sallyann Sack and Washington-area Ottoman Empire scholar Harold Rhode. Last summer, with their support, the Kronicks organized what was probably the first seminar on Jewish genealogy in Moscow -- and possibly the first Jewish genealogical society. The invitation to speak at the Summer Seminar on Jewish Genealogy in Toronto came only six months later.

IN PREPARING THEIR TALK, Sasha and Katya asked their associates in the Moscow JGS about doing genealogical research in the republics of the former Soviet Union, then reported on the responses they got.

According to Moscow JGS member Dmitri Panov, the poor condition of many documents and the lack of systematic finding aids is a great hindrance to research; records that should belong together are often scattered, he notes. Evidently, documents pertaining to a family that lived in one place for many generations may be found in two, three, five or more archives.

Having used the Chernigov Archive extensively, Vladimir Rales reported that it "is in rather poor condition. It occupies two small, completely unequipped 19th-century estates and is staffed by two old ladies who bring files and documents from the basement to the reading hall. Many files from the pre-Revolutionary period are not properly sorted or systemized; they are simply heaped up. Many fonds pertaining to the 18th- and 19th-centuries don't have systematic, nominal, or geographic indices. Despite these difficulties, however, much material may be found pertaining to the life of Jews in the town of Chernigov and its province before 1917."

Others who have used the Chernigov Archive report that vital records and other files pertaining to Jews have been separated and sometimes hidden in unexpected places. Apparently, after the 1967 Arab-Israeli Six Day War, archive personnel were instructed to make the Jewish fonds secret. Many of them are now available again, but there is no telling what still remains hidden.

USING DOCUMENTS found in the Russian State Historical Archive in St. Petersburg, Anatolyi Haesh has compiled an alphabetical list of more than 4,000 names of synagogue officials in Russia from 1853 to 1855. Haesh's impression of the RSHA? "It's very tiring to look through lists written in the old style of handwriting by different scribes. Researchers are not given an original file but rather a microfilm. The microfilm reading equipment is old, in poor condition, and almost impossible to use."

Likewise, Moscovite Mary Prokopieva found the lack of photocopiers at the Kiev Archive somewhat frustrating. Photocopies are made primarily for museums, she reported; private researchers must request a "xerox copy" in writing and pay in advance by mail. Thus, photocopies are practically unattainable; instead, some archives make copies by typewriter -- a potential source of error.

For these and other reasons, Jewish genealogy behind the former Iron Curtain "is an extremely exotic pursuit and not for the members of the middle class," said Sasha.
Father’s final message inspires genealogist to find his roots

By Ben Rose

IT WAS A DEATHBED MESSAGE from his father that inspired Alexander Kronick, 40, a Moscow genealogist, to find his Jewish roots.

"Be as I am," were the final words of Kronick, Sr., and he gave his son the names and addresses of seven Jewish relatives.

The elder Kronick, also named Alexander, was born in Vilna in 1901 and his son in Kiev in 1953.

"Up to that time I had never heard the word Jew mentioned in our house," said the younger Kronick, who captivated the 12th annual summer seminar on Jewish Genealogy in Toronto recently with the account of his personal road to Jewish culture. "My father’s message was like a letter in a corked bottle thrown into the sea which washes ashore at the right time."

Although many of the relatives mentioned by his father are now living in Israel, Kronick did find an 80-year-old uncle in Vilna and thus began his interest in genealogy.

A psychologist, Kronick is president of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Moscow, while his wife, Katerina, from Yaroslav in the Ukraine, who translated his paper to English because the time he intended to study Russian had run out, gave her mind to going to Canada was used up in standing in line for his passport.

[Courtesy Ben Rose & The Canadian Jewish News]

A Miscellany of Riches from Russia & the Provinces

During their talk, the Kronicks described numerous sources of interest, including the following:

- Among the holdings of the State History Archive of Minsk are Revizskyie Skazski (government censuses (ca1720-1930); birth records of Minsk rabbis (1839-1875); files of Jewish rural societies; abuses of Jews during the compilation of Revizskyie Skazski; lists of synagogue authorities; lists of Jewish baptisms; complaints of Jewish shoemakers; and lists of Jewish owners of real estate in the town of Slutzk in 1908.

- Materials of interest in the Vilnius Archives: Revizskyie Skazki (censuses) from Vilensk province; pre-Revolutionary documents of a stock-holding company listing cheap apartments for Jews in Vilna; and post-revolutionary documents of the Jewish Cooperative Promotion Bank and Jewish Farming Credit Society.

- In Kharkov, the capital of the Ukraine during the war, the Nazis murdered several thousand Jews in 1941-42. The Book of Drobitskoy Yar, which Yuri Laykho, published in 1991 after gaining access to the so-called "yellow lists" of Jewish casualties from Kharkov, gives full name, year and place of birth, occupation or place of employment, and pre-war residence for all the Jewish victims. (A copy is at Yad Vashem.)

- Another volume, The Book of Sorrow, by Gitel Gubenko, lists more than 5,500 Jews whom the Nazis murdered in the Crimea. This book contains age, occupation, residence and other information on many victims.

(FOR further details on these items, see the next issue of Avotaynu.)

FIND YOUR JEWISH ROOTS

Visits to your shtetl in Poland, Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus or Russia

Where do you come from? Stop wondering and start knowing. I will search Russian archives for birth, marriage and death records of your ancestors; interview Jews in the towns they came from; take photos and videos of synagogues, Jewish cemeteries and local sites. I also organize personalized genealogical tours to Eastern Europe.

For information write or call Miriam Weiner, certified genealogist and co-author of the Encyclopedia of Jewish Genealogy (Jason Aronson Publisher), at Routes to Roots, 136 Sandpiper Key, Secaucus, NJ 07094. Phone 201/866-4075 or fax 201/864-9222.
Finding Relatives in Russian Police Files

Formerly secret police records from Russia, revealing state executions, political "crimes" and genuine criminal activity, are now available in Washington as well as in Moscow

By Miriam Weiner

If you had told me years ago that one day I would be glad to find my ancestors' names in the files of a police department, I would not have believed it.

However, when the family historian is in pursuit of information, no collection of documents is "off limits" including those held by law enforcement agencies and especially those from areas of the former Soviet Union, where it is still quite difficult to obtain family documents of any kind.

In my never-ending quest to document the Odnopozov family of my maternal grandmother, I was absolutely delighted to receive information from the Police Department archives in Moscow for many of my "accused" relatives. Of course, it is important to keep the "crime" in perspective. In those days, "crime" was defined much differently than now, at least in Canada and the United States.

While many of the case files in Moscow were destroyed before the Revolution, much remains such as the following:

In 1906, my cousin, Dora Odnopozova, then residing in Kharkov, committed the crime of writing secret letters to someone in prison. It is further noted that Dora was under secret police control (I can only imagine what this is) in Velsk for two years. It is interesting to note that the word "secret" appears frequently throughout police files.

Also in 1906, my cousins Alexandra, Kate and Elizabeta Odnopozova were all arrested because they were members of a social democratic circle in Pavlograd. Perhaps Dora wrote letters to these cousins in prison and for this, she is forever a "case file" in the police department records.

Finally, in 1908, my cousin Zelman Odnopozov (born 1843) was killed in a temporary shelter for Jews in Priluki. According to the files, the police closed the case file after apprehending L. Braginsky (age 17) who committed the murder in the course of a robbery with no political reasons being discovered. Along with the aforementioned cases, there were another fourteen files on those erring Odnopozovs. For the family historian, these documents are valuable because they include first and last names, age and place of birth, residence address and occupation.

TO OBTAIN information from crime files about your Russian relatives, it is not necessary to cross the ocean. In the National Archives in Washington, D.C., I found a reference to my Odnopozov family in the State Department files which also refers to a purported "crime."

According to this document, a notice appeared in Pravda in Moscow in September, 1930, listing persons who were executed in connection with the case of "counter-revolutionary damagers." The executions were carried out by order of the O.G.P.U. (no further explanation). Among the names on the list was Israel Abramovich Odnopozov, a resident of Moscow.

When I travelled to the USSR for the first time in 1991, I met the Moscow branch of my family and we were quite busy making corrections and additions to the computerized family tree, now stretching 23 feet. One name fairly leaped off the page -- Israel Odnopozov, born 1890, son of Abram. We could now fill in the missing information regarding his date and place of death, including the unusual circumstances!

There is an index to the State Department files located in the diplomatic branch of the National Archives. The files themselves are accessible to researchers on microfilm and those files which have not been microfilmed can be requested and examined in the Central Research Room.

It seems my Odnopozov relatives were activists and as a result, their names turn up in the strangest places. Several years ago, while at the National Archives reading the files on Israel Abramovich, I checked the index of FBI records and sure enough, one of my cousins was listed. The microfilmed documents cover the years 1908-1922 and much of the material consists of written reports from FBI agents, transcripts of interviews and other records. Many of the subjects of investigation were people suspected of subversive activities because of membership in groups supporting open immigration or union activities. Frequently, immigrants who failed to register for the 1917 draft were subject to FBI investigation. Some files relate to visa requests for people wishing to attend international conferences abroad.

While I hope never to see photos of my relatives in the post office or their names on the current "Ten Most Wanted List," I have found police records from earlier times to be a valuable resource in documenting my family history.

Miriam Weiner is an author and lecturer in the field of Jewish genealogy and Holocaust research. For information on how to research your family history and on the availability of documents in Russian archives, send a stamped self-addressed envelope to Weiner at 136 Sandpiper Key, Secaucus, NJ 07094.
Gary Mokotoff Delivers Latest News from Jewish Genealogical World

Discusses U.S. passenger list indexing, sources for Eastern Europe, upcoming Avotaynu publications and the new Holocaust Museum

By Bill Gladstone

Gary Mokotoff, publisher of Avotaynu and president of the Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies, made numerous important announcements and observations in his far-reaching talk, "Recent Developments in Jewish Genealogy."

With the aid of some 4,000 Mormon volunteers, the LDS Family History Library intends to computerize the U.S. passenger lists index, beginning with the port of New York from 1897 to 1924, Mokotoff said; estimated time of completion is two years. The announcement was greeted with applause from the audience of more than 200 people.

Regarding Jewish genealogical research in Eastern Europe, Mokotoff referred to three main sources of information: the Russian-American archival arrangement known as RAGAS; the FAST service of Boris Feldbleum and Yakov Shadevich; and professional Jewish genealogist Miriam Weiner of Secaucus, N.J., who had declined an invitation to speak at the conference owing to a professional engagement in Ukraine.

These three, Mokotoff explained, differ according to cost, reliability and speed. Whereas RAGAS typically charges about $50 to $60 (US) per day, FAST asks $200 and Weiner at least $800. According to Mokotoff, RAGAS and FAST lack an overall picture of what's where in the archives of Ukraine and other republics of the former Soviet Union; Weiner, however, has traveled extensively in Ukraine and Poland, and has the best knowledge of what their archives contain, including "virtually the complete inventory of all Jewish vital statistical records for the Ukraine." Furthermore, Mokotoff reported that customers of Weiner with whom he has spoken seem satisfied, including one whose $1,500 had netted about 100 family records. "Virtually every one of them has said they intend to use her again," he said.

CONTINUING ON EASTERN EUROPE, Mokotoff reported that the Polish government is proving somewhat recalcitrant in its policies pertaining to genealogical records, and that a surprising quantity of Polish-Jewish information may be found across the border in the former East Germany. For example, Warsaw and environs were part of Prussia from roughly 1804 to 1814, so records from this era are found in Germany, not Poland. The opening up of archives in the former East Germany has given us access to "a wealth of information [that] isn't uniquely German. There are a lot of Polish records and even some Lithuanian records there."

Other non-German records now found in East German archives were transported there during WWII, he said.

THE NEWLY-OPENED U.S. HOLOCAUST MUSEUM in Washington D.C. may become an extraordinary genealogical resource in the next few years, said Mokotoff, in part because of its co-operative agreement with Yad Vashem. Between them, these two institutions are approaching governments in Europe for original or microfilmed documents of Holocaust-related material. "It's amazing how much information about the Holocaust or events prior to the Holocaust exist, and therefore will become available in places like Yad Vashem and the Holocaust Museum," he said. As an example, he cited material that may make it possible to chart family trees for all Jews resident in Austro-Hungarian lands in 1939.

As for Avotaynu, Mokotoff noted that it now publishes books as well as its famous quarterly journal. The most exciting news is that Dr. Alexander Beider (whose seminal study of Russian-Jewish surnames is reviewed on page 11) is preparing two more manuscripts for publication. His study of Russian given names may appear within one or two years but we may be forced to wait three, four or more years for his dictionary of Jewish surnames from the Kingdom of Poland. Mokotoff also noted that Sallyann Sack and the Israel Genealogical Society are revising the worthy Jewish Genealogical Resources in Israel (first published 1987) in time for the Jerusalem seminar next April.

In a bid to distribute important resources cost-efficiently, Avotaynu now publishes microfiche, and several of these have recently been acquired for our Society's library collection. One was produced by Glen Eker, a member of our Society; it contains a list of Jews from Maritime provinces in the 1991 census of Canada. (See article, p.15.) Another microfiche contain lists of names of Jews in 18th-century Alsace.

IN CLOSING, Mokotoff hailed the emergence of two recently-formed Jewish genealogical societies -- Great Britain and South Africa -- as well as the so-called SIGs or special interest groups such as those on Suwalki-Lomza, Romania and Galicia. His talk was informative, exciting and -- to judge from the numerous evaluation forms later turned in -- one of the most popular of the four days.
Sallyann Sack Describes Massive Hungarian-Jewish Family Tree Project

Documentation exists to chart family trees "back to the time of Maria Theresa" for almost all Jewish residing in Austro-Hungarian lands in 1939

Using records left by the Nazis, Yad Vashem's resident Hungarian expert hopes to chart family trees for all 800,000 Jews who were living in the territories of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire on the eve of World War II.

According to Professor Gabriel Bar Shaked, existing documents can be used to construct genealogical charts going back to the reign of Habsburg Empress Maria Theresa (1740-80) for most Hungarian Jews who perished in the Holocaust and for those who survived as well.

Sallyann Sack, a Washington D.C. clinical psychologist and the editor of Avotaynu, described Bar Shaked's project at the Summer Seminar. She said that the Nazis required all Jews living within the region of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire to certify that their families had been citizens since 1848. "Obviously, they had to show a number of generations to do this," said Sack, who has found records pertaining to her grandmother and many previously unknown members of her own family. "You get a hold of these documents and you've got a lot of your family tree."

Yad Vashem may also soon acquire nationality papers for some 100,000 Hungarian Jews who were, on the eve of WW II, declared to be of Polish origin and deported; many were subsequently massacred. Other records provide details of the many Hungarian Jews who were conscripted into forced labour battalions or deported to concentration camps, few of whom survived.

Sack cited an extensive county-by-county Jewish census that the Hungarian gendarmerie conducted throughout the former Austro-Hungarian territories in April 1944, one month before the country's remaining Jews were rounded up. Each Jew was evidently required to complete an elaborate questionnaire with many questions about their families.

Bar-Shaked, who was born in Budapest, is evidently determined to acquire much of this material from various Hungarian government sources by the 50th anniversary of the Hungarian-Jewish deportations in May 1994. That date happens to correspond with the next international seminar on Jewish genealogy, set for April 29 to May 4 in Jerusalem.

Although the Klarsfeld Foundation is assisting with the project, Sack said that some $45,000 is still required. She recently sent out a letter to members of the Jewish genealogical community, seeking funds. For further information, write JGS of Greater Washington, P.O. Box 412, Vienna, VA 22183 US.

Genealogy in Israel

By Dee Kramer

SALLYANN AMDUR SACK went to Israel from Washington D.C. to track down members of her family, the Solamavitzs from Slotnick. She found them, despite Nazi records showing that 90 of her relatives were killed within two days in Auschwitz.

Sack became the editor of Avotaynu, the international journal of Jewish genealogy. She also authored A Guide to Jewish Genealogical Research in Israel (1987), and co-authored Where Once We Walked (1991), a reference book that documents 22,000 towns in central and eastern Europe where Jews lived before the Holocaust.

Sack opened her talk at the 12th Annual Summer Seminar on Jewish Genealogy, held in Toronto from June 27 to 30, with two trivia questions. Of the 54 Jewish genealogy societies around the world, which is the only one that does not have "Jewish" in its title? The one in Israel. And where does Ashkenazi and Sephardi genealogy meet? In Israel of course.

Many of the 60 or so people who attended Sack's workshop will be attending next year's conference in Jerusalem. They wanted to know whether it (continued on page 10)
NEW JGS JUST FORMED In Palm Beach County, FL. Contact: Mona Morris, Pres., 2247 NW62 Dr., Boca Raton FL 33496.

SATINSKY — I am looking for descendants of Paul Satinsky, Detroit MI or Maryland. Ruth Barnett. [Note added later: Ruth, contact Dr. David Satinsky in Bethesda & Potomac MD.]

RUSSIAN TRANSLATOR: Experienced in using LDS films. Will consider ordering YOUR film at my local LDS and scanning the indexed and unindexed films, selecting YOUR documents & translating them for you. I speak English well and can read Modern & Old Russian. Arkady Kotlyar, 100 Rte. 46 West, Apt. 183, Budd Lake NJ 07828

ANYONE want a lift to Montreal? Thursday morning? Would be happy to share expenses. [Write c/o JGS Canada.

FINKELSTEIN family of Winnipeg, contact Paul Silverstone [c/o JGS Canada].

SHARE ride to airport, Thursday 7-9:45 a.m. Libby, Room 740, late evening.

ANYone assist in locating family data on Yovavshalon Levy Janova (Janova) of Kovne Gubernia, Lithuania, born 1793? would be sincerely appreciated. Thank you. Manuel Linden, Toronto. [Write c/o JGS Canada.]


MARC LINETT: Please call me about the Katz’s from Slavuta. Judy Kavitz, Rm. 1136.

ANYONE able to give a ride to Buffalo (for 2) on Thursday morning? Would be happy to share expenses. Kay & Fred Levy, Room 733.

MARC LINETT: Do you know anything about Karasiles? Contact Judi Fox, Room 337 or around hotel.

YOUR HELP IS NEEDED, PLEASE!! David Priever and Florence Marmor, both members of the JGS-NY, are looking for anyone who had ancestors interred at either Makom Sholom or Bayside cemeteries (Ozone Park, Queens, NY.) There is a very strong possibility stones are being removed and plots resold. There are others involved in helping us with this investigation. We desperately need your help with photographs, death certificates (copies only) or copies of any other documents pertaining to these cemeteries. Please contact David Priever (attendee at the seminar) at 1470 S. Sherbourne Dr. #1, L.A. CA 90035-3520.

KEEPING to share ride to airport Thurs. 9 am. Cissie Eppel, Rm. 1129.

BERLIN NEWSPAPERS: Which Berlin newspapers would have been the usual organs for inserting announcements of birth, marriage and death among the Jewish community? For Judith Joseph, 25, Westbourne Rd., Birmingham B15 3TX U.K.

FAMILY FINDER. Seeking: Samuel of Libau (Lubuja) Latvia; Rotenberg of Ivanisk (Iwaniska) Poland. Lisa Newman, 570 Briar Hill Ave., Toronto M59 1M9.


A SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP for Galicia is forming. You can pick up an application form by calling me in Room 531. Suzan Wynne [Write c/o JGS Canada.]

RE: CONSTANTINOPLE, SALONIKA. Would like to get in touch with Sallyann Sack or anyone knowledgeable in this area. I will be here till 6:25 today (Monday). But am having dinner nearby from 6:30-8:30 p.m. today at 968-2722. Dr. Michael Benzson. [Note added: try Yitzchak Kerem in Jerusalem.]

I'M LOOKING for Nathan Solomon & Kate Greben, husband & wife, I think from Lithuania. Wednesday Bacon, 56 Dawn Hill Trail, Thornhill ON (416) 881-6947.

DAVE GOLDBERG, GAIL SERBER — I have been to Opatow and Rakow. If you would like to speak with me, Gloria Resin, Rm. 334.
IS ANYONE doing research in BRAZIL? Please contact Julian Falk, Room 322 [or write to JGS Canada].

HAVE from Minsk and Uslic (Uzlyany) completed work for Levin(s) Draft, B.D&M (1860s-1900), other Registration of citizens. Gayle Riley Room 1135, or 612 E. Live Oak #A, San Gabriel CA USA 91776. Excell. work.

I NEED HELP with some Polish tax records. Can you help? Susan Wynne, Room 531. [Write to JGS Canada.] ANYONE wanting to share a ride to the airport at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, contact Steve or Jo Fraenkel (Rm. 1511).

GARY SILVERSTEIN – Need to talk to you regarding Weinsbergers is Cleveland in 1920s & 1930s. Ruth Barnett, Rm. 423.

VEGETARIANS – CLOSING BANQUET – Please see me today – Sandra Ezrin – if you have not already. Thank you.

TO: THE LADY I spoke to briefly Sunday night who is related to BORNSTEIN family & related to ReMa (Rabbi Moshe Isserlis). Please contact Marty Isserlis at Intercontinental Hotel, 960-5200 Room 306, or write below. [Note #1 added: Phil Bloom – my Mom was a Bornstein – see me.] [Note #2 added: Leonard Spialter, JGS Dayton, Venture Inn, 87 Avenue Rd., Room 907, has info on Dayton Ohio Bornsteins.]

SHIMON B. LERNER, professional genealogist, is at conference. Specializing in New York City records after 1850. 303 West End Ave. Suite 504, New York 10023 N.Y. (212) 874-6175.

IF YOU HAVE an interest in Sullivan County or Ulster County (New York) Jewish genealogical research, I have access to cemeteries, death, birth and marriage (w/restrictions) licenses, probate, naturalizations and other records. I will do this research for a very small fee (& copy costs). Please see David Priever (or write to JGS Canada).

AIRPORT. Does anyone want to share a cab this afternoon in time for a 6 p.m. flight? Please call before 1:00 p.m. Peggy Freedman, Rm. 1415.

Sallyann – South Amur’s wife was named Tilly, I think. They had two daughters; one was named Selma. [Signature illegible.]

Re: Potential Birds of a Feather Group on South Africa, Gayle Riley & Lily Yaroch, please contact Saul Isarell in 1215.

WHY NOT put a Search Ad in Shem Tov?

SEARCH ADS

Rates are $5 for the first 25 words and 25 cents per word thereafter; your name and address are free. Please write advertisement clearly with family surnames you are researching in UPPER CASE letters. Make cheque payable to Jewish Genealogical Society of Canada and mail to: JGS Canada, P.O. Box 446, Station A, North York ON Canada M2N 5T1.

GOLDENBERG/NOEL – Born in Russia, my great-grandparents Arthur & Molly Goldenberg & son Benjamin may have used surname Noel. I’m told he ran a Jewish bookstore in Toronto & died age 98 (ca. 1948?). Molly supposedly ran a Jewish bookstore in Toronto (ca. 1948?). Seeking info & possible descendants. Charlene Palmer, 2310 Calumet St., Flint, Michigan 48503. (SP92)

MAIMAN – Seeking info re family of Barnett Maiman and Elizabeth Gutman who emigrated from Europe to Montreal, where they were married ca. 1908. Moved to Chicago 1917. Arlene B. Edwards, 1001 Highlight Dr., West Covina, CA 91775. (PC92)


SCHWARTZ – Seeking info on Herman & Samuel Schwartz, 196 Elizabeth St.; Joseph & Morris, 339 Gilead Pl.; both Toronto, ca. 1906. Morris aged 75 ca. 1920 & had two sons (?) Shmuil & Avram. Louis ran Exclusive Lady’s Garments. Avram’s children included Motel, Lazer, Chaim, Soshie/Sadie, Esther, Fagi/Fay. Itzak, Shmuil’s eldest son, died in a fire. A daughter, Chika, married a man who ran Rothstein’s furnishings store on Queen St. Son Lazer was furrier in Queen-Spadina area. Allan Schwartz, 18 Russo Dr., Hamden, CT 06518 US. (MR93)

SCHOEN BOOKS, One Cottage St., Easthampton MA 01027. Judaica in all languages, Holocaust, Zionism, much else. Catalogue on request.

June 1993 SHEM TOV 9
GENEALOGY IN ISRAEL (from page 7)

was essential to speak Hebrew (no, but it helps when reading telephone books). Could they pay someone to do preparatory research for them? (Yes.) Would they find the bureaucracy a problem? (Of course. This is Israel after all)

"Israel is a great resource for finding people related to you. I guarantee that you all have a distant cousin in Israel," said Sack.

Sack said people often find relatives in Israel whose ancestors immigrated during the British mandate. "The idealists went to Zion, and the pragmatists came to [North America] to make a living." Another source of mishpocha are the new Russian olim. "New connections are being made all the time," said Sack.

And how to find that distant cousin? The first top should be Yad Vashem's Hall of Names, which contains the written testimonies of more than 3 million Holocaust victims.

The Israel Genealogical Society has promised to help delegates as much as possible with their search in Israel. They will be given the Hebrew, Yiddish and Russian spellings of the names and places they are searching for, including all the possible variations in phonetics, and even ways to find name changes. They will be lining up Israeli experts who will be helpful as both translators as well as guides.

Dr. Anthony Joseph, a general practitioner from Birmingham, England, who has been a passionate genealogist since he was 12, tried to explain why genealogy has gripped so many people. "I have relatives who have been in jail, and others who have been on the honors roll. It's all the same to me. They say that genealogy is really "Mispocha­ology.""

[Courtesy Dee Kramer and The Canadian Jewish News]

Jews helped settle Canada

By Dee Kramer

THE JEWS who came to Canada between 1749 and 1867 were traders, risk takers, survivors. They were men (mostly) who were looking for a place where they could escape the restraints and restrictions placed on them as Jews. They were looking for a place they would not be sent away from.

"The British prevented them from owning land in settled areas, so they went into the 'boonies'," said Judith Godfrey at the talk she and Sheldon Godfrey gave at the 12th International Summer Seminar on Jewish Genealogy, held in June at the Park Plaza Hotel in Toronto.

The Godfreys have become recognized experts on Jewish life on the Canadian frontier. They have been scrounging through cemeteries, paging through old diaries, private papers and correspondence in Catholic seminaries and synagogues in the States, going to tiny museums in the Miramichi area of New Brunswick, checking out death notices, and taking rubbings of old cemetery headstones. "We look everywhere and xerox everything," said Sheldon.

And the conclusions they have come to are very interesting. "There were more of us in the beginning -- up to 10 percent -- and our importance (to the frontier community) was greater than we thought," said Judith.

During the French Period (1608 to 1760) there was an obligation to convert to Catholicism or leave. Conversions were very common. The Godfreys talked about a "Marranos mentality" on the frontier, with one man converting to Catholicism at least three times when he saw it would be to his advantage. After this period there was a period of unparalleled equality for Jews in Quebec from 1760 to 1790.

It was extremely difficult for these frontier traders to maintain their religion. It was not a question of putting together a minyan, but rather finding a Jewish bride. The very few who managed to find a Jewish bride had to import her from the States or Europe. They mostly lived in common-law with Catholic, Protestant and native Indian women. If there was a marriage ceremony it would be Protestant as Jews were not allowed a Catholic wedding.

But there are records of fur traders canoeing long distances to reach Montreal and giving tzedakah on High Holidays. The David family in Montreal observed the Sabbath. Mrs. David's correspondence often ends with a note saying she has to prepare for the Sabbath. By 1760, a cantor was imported to perform circumcisions. And by 1856 there were Jewish weddings.

The Godfreys have co-authored books and articles on Canadian Jewish history. Their latest book, Search Out the Land, on the Jews in British North America between 1749 and 1867, will be published next year. They are also currently completing genealogical summaries of approximately 100 Jewish families of the same period. This book will be called Who Was Who in Canadian Jewry.

[Courtesy Dee Kramer and The Canadian Jewish News]
Beider's Dictionary of Russian-Empire Surnames
Breathes New Life into Jewish Onomastics

Introduction alone makes book a classic, says reviewer MORDECHAI ROITMAN

TWO MASSIVE WORKS dealing with the origins of Jewish surnames have arrived upon the Jewish genealogical scene this past year. The dearth of comprehensive studies in English in this area makes their arrival all the more welcome.

The Guggenheimer book, like the Beider opus, is large -- each is more than 750 pages. Either one dwarfs the previous most popular and consulted work on the subject, Benzion Kaganoff's *Jewish Surnames: A Dictionary of Jewish Names and their History* (1977). The approaches taken by Beider and the Guggenheimers, however, are distinctly different.

More than six years in the making, *A Dictionary of Jewish Surnames from the Russian Empire* links onomastics with genealogy in a direct and logical manner. It does this utilizing two factors rare in English-language studies of this kind.

First, Beider makes a welcome and necessary innovation to the usual methodology of such studies by acknowledging that Jewish family surnames, to be properly understood, must be studied in compact focused units of political topography. The reason is that most Ashkenazic Jewish permanent and hereditary family names arose as a consequence of the political fiat of the various powers under which the Jews resided in Europe between 1772 and 1850.

Beider restricted the scope of his study to the Russian Empire (excluding Polish Russia, which was administered quasi-independently). In doing so, he has recognized that one must isolate a specific political unit's administration methods, language, historical and cultural milieu to appreciate fully why and how specific surnames were adopted or modified.

The second groundbreaking factor in his research (and in effect an offshoot of the first) is his use of demographics. Beider has examined Jewish voter lists for the *Duma* (Russian Parliament expanded as a result of the 1905 revolution) that were compiled in 1906, 1907 and 1912. By delineating in which regions various surnames appear and how they are modified, he detects various geographical and linguistic patterns that substantiate or demolish previous theories of surname derivation in the Empire. Anyone who has seriously undertaken a study of Jewish surnames must realize how crucial demographics are to finding family origins.

David L. Gold, Jewish consultant for the *Dictionary of Surnames* (Oxford Press, 1988), has pointed out that most Jewish surnames are not monogenic (originating with a single ancestor, whose scattered descendants are the only bearers of the name) but rather polygenetic (originating spontaneously with various persons in various localities). Someone named Klein who had an ancestor bearing that name in Hungary in 1800 (plus or minus a generation of adoption of the surname) is most likely unrelated to someone with a Klein ancestor residing in Lithuania in 1800. Monogenetic surnames are very rare. The statistical likelihood of a specific name being monogenetic increases with (a) the proximity of the bearers of that name both geographically and chronologically to the place and time where it was first adopted, and (b) the rarity of the name.

In the aforementioned area Beider's work is very helpful since it details by province (based on the voter lists) where it was found in the Russian Empire in the early 20th century. Ultimately, tying surnames to specific places helps us determine from whence we came. Seeing how Beider has skilfully utilized this early 20th century information, one could only imagine what he could have done with a voter list or census (alas, merely hypothetical) taken in the Russian Empire in 1875, one to two generations after the permanent fixing of surnames and immediately prior to the great migrations from Russia to the West.

BEIDER EXCELS in his analyses of surnames derived from toponyms (places of origin). His bibliography is replete with early gazetteers and maps that helped him identify Jewish Russian names arising from obscure shtetls in the early 19th century, many no longer extant. In my case he helped me trace my original and rare family name Volovansky, through a careful study of Slavic grammatical and cartographic minutiae, to a very small village on the Dniester River in the Olgopal region of Podolia, Ukraine. My known family migration tends to confirm this identification.

A one-hundred-page introduction precedes the dictionary portion of Beider's work. This introduction is so informative and seminal in understanding the origin of East European
family names that had he not written the remaining 750 pages it alone would make the book a classic in the study of Jewish family names. In this introduction he discusses previous works in English in this area and describes their weaknesses and strengths. He explains his methodology, sources and objectives and the problems involved. His overview of the origins of Jewish surnames in the Russian Empire is the most comprehensive and detailed study available in English today.

I strongly recommend a thorough reading of this introduction: don't just go straight to the dictionary portion and look up a name, no matter how tempting. One will get more out of the dictionary portion with a better understanding of what Beider is trying to do, and it might even better explain a specific name. For example, while the name Morgenstein (a variation of Morgenstem) is treated in the dictionary portion, additional and important information is found in the introduction. Indeed, it's unfortunate that the introductory section, because of its special usefulness, has not been indexed to allow for easier access to insights contained therein and not repeated elsewhere in the text.

I know of at least three members of our society besides myself who have corresponded with Dr. Beider. In all cases he seemed eager for our input and very informative and prompt. In his attempt at comprehensive, he seems of the attitude that any piece of information might be of use. This in my opinion is reflective of a truly sincere and objective pursuit of knowledge and is defined by the Jewish maxim, "Who is truly wise, he who learns from all men." This wisdom appears to have gone into his work.

Dr. Beider is now working on a similar project encompassing the Polish area of the Empire, which we in the world of Jewish genealogy are eagerly awaiting.

LET ME NOW TURN to the second new work on Jewish surnames, authored by Dr. Heinrich and Eva Guggenheimer. Although this book came out several months prior to Beider's, there is no question that Beider is a hard act to follow. To extend the metaphor: since the stage is bare and the shows are few and far between, there is an audience for both books. Until the specialization approach seen in Beider is extended to other countries, books such as this one will provide much needed information and ideas.

The Guggenheimer work has a much broader range than Beider and includes Sephardic and Oriental Jewish surnames as well as modern Israeli names. It contains 30 percent more names, listing more than 65,000, but some five to ten percent of the surnames listed have no explanation of etymology and are listed only "for the historical record" as per the author's introduction.

The book's strength lies in its imaginative applications of linguistic, spelling and literary sources to find origins of names. The book often suggests three or four completely unrelated theories to explain a name. As an example, Goldberg is listed under the general listing of Gold, which is (according to the Guggenheimers) derived either from the feminine Golda or masculine Gabriel, the angel in charge of the primeval gold as per the Zohar. Beside the name Goldberg, the Middle High German word for goldmine (goldhère) and the name of a town in Silesia are found in parentheses. The various ideas might help trigger the genealogist's own thinking vis à vis his or her own specific family name origin.

In a twenty-five-page introduction (recommended reading before using the dictionary), the Guggenheimers espouse a very interesting and original theory as to the general origin of Jewish surnames:

An analysis of the material collected in the Dictionary shows that Jewish family names most often are based on proper names and their derivatives, less frequently by place names and still less frequently on professions... This remark refers to the ultimate derivation of a name, not the direct etymology. [emphasis by authors]

I am unclear as to how the authors would differentiate between the "ultimate derivation" and the "direct etymology" of a name.

ALEXANDER BEIDER and Heinrich Guggenheimer are both mathematicians but this shared career path does not extend to their approach to surname origins. In Beider's case the exactitude of pure mathematics emerges in his precise and thorough explanation of surname sources. In the Guggenheimer's technique, their keen Talmudic interest as well as Eva's strong background in classical literature and languages has set the leitmotif for their dictionary.

In many ways the two styles complement each other, with Beider being unmatched in Russian toponomy and the Guggenheimers showing their originality and strengths in areas outside the Pale as well as in names referred to as "artificial surnames."

Ideally the Guggenheimer dictionary should be a stopgap, one in lieu of more specialized and scientific works in English on other countries in Europe. What are truly needed are Beiderlike works dealing with Slovakia, Prussia, Galicia, and other places of interest to Jewish researchers.

Beider is unmatched in Russian toponomy; the Guggenheimers show their originality and strengths in areas outside the Pale as well as in names referred to as "artificial surnames."
Cymbler Sums Up Polish-Jewish Sources

Lederer discusses Germany, Schlyter does the Austro-Hungarian Empire

By Henry Wellisch

JEFF CYMBLER started with an overview of Polish history from the period of the third partition, when Poland ceased to exist as a state, to the present. The complex shifting of frontiers was discussed with the aid of maps. The rest of the talk focused on genealogical research and the various resources available in North America and overseas. Jeff showed the progress he had made in finding multiple sources of information on his ancestral hometown of Bentzin. He discussed vital records and where to find them in some detail, as well as Yizkor books, tax records, old telephone books and synagogue records. Another important source of information is the Central Archive for the History of the Jewish people.

Important and Lesser Known Sources in German Genealogy: Dr. Rolf Lederer pointed out that as far as vital records are concerned, the various German state archives are the place to look. These archives do respond to inquiries and provide excerpts and sometimes photocopies of original documents. (The latter is preferred.) The LDS Family History Library has microfilmed many German records, thus simplifying research. It was also pointed out that sometimes Jewish records are intermingled with Catholic ones. The Leo Baeck Institute in New York has an extensive archive and collection of books and newspapers pertaining to Germanic Jews, and the Central Archive for the History of the Jewish People in Jerusalem has a good collection of material on many German-Jewish communities. Another source of information are cemeteries records, where available. The German-Jewish American newspaper Aufbau ("Reconstruction") is of some importance, and so is the Gedenkbuch for research into the Holocaust. This book is now being revised and will be reissued.

Researching Your Jewish Roots In The Austro-Hungarian Empire: Daniel Schlyter expertly traced the Empire's history and development in modern times with the help of maps showing the various regions and nationalities. Jews had been invited by the government to settle in the eastern part, especially in Hungary, to improve commerce and industry. The empire dissolved at the end of WWI and new national states such as Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and a reduced Austria and Hungary appeared. Vital records for Jews were kept during the 19th century, and many of these are available through the LDS Family History Library, which has an extensive collection on microfilm from about 1835 to 1895. Slovakian records are now being filmed. Earlier records are usually in Latin or German, later ones in Hungarian. Also of great importance is the Jewish-Hungarian census of 1848, available at the Family History Library for some parts of Hungary. Galician records have not been filmed, but those of Transylvania, Croatia and Slovenia may be filmed soon.

Report on the Austro-Hungarian Birds of a Feather BY HENRY WELLISCH

THE MEETING was attended by about 15 to 20 people. It soon became apparent that most were interested in the Hungarian part of the old Empire.

I had brought a printout of the index for the 1828 Hungarian tax census, which I had acquired in 1990 in Salt Lake City. This census, which covers most of present-day Hungary plus Slovakia and parts of Yugoslavia, has been listed for more than a year at the LDS Family History Library, but no one present seemed familiar with it.

We further discussed the other Hungarian censuses, two of which (1770 & 1848) are also in the LDS Library. Less known but still of great interest are the censuses taken by the Austrian government during the 18th century: 1725, 1736, 1745 and 1768. These are listed in the 18-volume publication Magyar Zsidő Okleveltár ("Hungarian Jewish Monuments"), available at the Robarts Library and in other major university collections.

Although in these censuses most Jews are referred to by their first names and patronymics, these records suggest the origins of many families. Evidently, the Jews along the western Hungarian border came from Austria, along the norther border from Moravia and Bohemia, and along the norther border from Poland. Most of the Turkish Jews left with the Turks when they were defeated by the Austrian powers.
On the Trail of Ancestors in Western Bohemia

Having gained access to 19th-century vital records during a personal visit, Nora Freund is now seeking rabbinical and familianten records.

SEVERAL YEARS AGO I began to research my family history, mostly by interviewing relatives and inspecting some documents my father had saved. Alas, my oral history was started too late, as many of my most knowledgeable relatives were gone. However, a cousin in Israel put me in touch with a cousin in Chile who possessed a family bible, upon whose flyleaf much important family information had been scrawled.

After four years I produced a volume documenting both my close family and various distant branches. At the time I was certain I would never get information from behind the Iron Curtain, but I reasoned that some future researcher could pick up the trail where I left off, using my work as a starting point. I felt that I wanted to make some kind of memorial to those who otherwise would not be remembered.

Now the unimaginable has happened: the communist system has collapsed and researchers are gaining access to information many had assumed the Nazis had destroyed. Instead of leaving the work to others, I myself have resumed the trail.

AS FAR BACK as I can trace, both sides of my family come from Western Bohemia. My maternal grandmother's family came from a town called Bor in Czech, Haid in German, near Tachov on the Czech-German border. They were Schutzjuden [protected Jews] of the Graf [Count] Lowenstein in the 1700s; the family name was Eckstein. A descendant who went to Israel in the 1930s traced the family tree back to Solomon Eckstein, born 1795 in Pernatice; his wife was Judith Hecht, daughter of Abraham Hecht and Rebeka Kohn. So the Ecksteins were in that area for at least 150 years, although you would not know it from the town history that the Germans produced after the war, in which the Jews are barely even acknowledged.

My maternal grandmother was born Kohn; her grandparents were Herman and Klara Kohn from Gorkau, a nearby village. My paternal grandmother was also named Kohn. Although they came from the same general area, I would not even attempt to trace a connection. How can you prove anything with a name like Kohn?

That left my paternal grandfather's family, whose name is Heller. I know the village from which they came. When the Czech borders were opened and it became possible to go there, I went to the main archives near the Castle in Prague to see if any records were available. At the Jewish Archives I was told that no records had been saved. However, staff at the State Archives informed me that records of the village of Oracov were kept under the records of another village, Kolleschowitz.

To my surprise and gratification, I found extensive vital records for the Jewish community of Kolleschowitz/Dereisen dating back to the early 1800s. These records contain many references to the Heller family, and I am still trying to piece together several family branches. These records were kept by the local parishes under the jurisdiction of the Austro-Hungarian rulers.

My third great-grandfather was evidently a local rabbi whose wife came from Prague. I found the marriage records of my grandparents and great-grandparents, and the names of my second great-grandparents. However, I did not find any of their birth records. My great-grandfather was born about 1816 and the birth records began only in 1820.

SINCE THERE WAS at least one and perhaps several rabbis in the family, my next step might be to find the rabbinic or familianten records. Familianten records were official permits issued to allow only the eldest son to marry and have children. Again, I did not find the Jewish authorities very helpful. Although others have assured me these records exist, the curator told me they did not. Well, we shall see.

Thanks to the records that I have found, I know that my family did not reach Oracov in 1848, the year the Prague ghetto was opened, but at least 50 years sooner. I still do not know where they came from but I see that I still have a lot of scope for tracing roots using records that I never imagined were accessible or even existed.

Although I have not been very systematic about researching my roots, I have made what I consider remarkable progress. I am greedy for more discoveries. Thanks to my participation in the JGS I have learned a lot and hope to continue to make progress.

Nora Freund is one of several members of our Society who reported on "Breakthroughs of the Past Year" at our May meeting. She is currently organizing a tour of Jewish cemeteries in the Czech Republic to take place next summer.
Listing the Jews from the 1901 Census (& Earlier)

Having completed the Maritimes, the writer has just finished indexing Toronto Jews in the first five Canadian censuses from 1861 to 1901; Montreal & Quebec are next

By Glen Eker

Since Eker is an uncommon surname, I imagined when starting to research my father's family in 1987 that doing genealogical research with little or no detailed information would be difficult. At that time my father knew only that his grandfather, Rubin Eker, came with his wife and four or five children from somewhere in Russia to Montreal in the late 19th or early 20th century, and settled in Glace Bay, Nova Scotia, where he worked as a butcher.

We knew little about this first generation of immigrants that constituted my grandfather Benjamin Eker's family. My grandfather never talked about the past and maintained only minimal contact with the many scattered members of his immediate family. Growing up in Montreal and Toronto in the 1930s and 1940s, my father knew only of those relatives who visited for short periods; even so, he did not know very much about them.

By obtaining old marriage licenses and death certificates from Montreal and Glace Bay, immigration records from the secretary of state, and estate and probate records from Nova Scotia through the LDS Family History Library and the court of probate in Sydney, I discovered names, dates and places pertaining to these first-generation immigrants and their families. Nonetheless, some information such as given names, birthdates and places of residence was still vague. I ascertained the Eker family ancestral town of Tulchin, Ukraine, only after obtaining my grandfather's World War I military record from the personal records centre at the National Archives of Canada. All other family documents simply stated Russia as the place of birth.

It was with great anticipation that I awaited the arrival of the 1901 census of Canada in the Canadiana room of the North York Public Library. This was the one source that would firmly establish my family as among the earliest Jewish residents of Glace Bay and the Cape Breton district. Furthermore, it would more precisely establish given names, dates of birth, year of immigration and other genealogical information.

Jews from Eastern Europe began arriving -- mostly from Romania, Russia, Russia-Poland, Austria and Germany -- in the Maritimes in the 1890s. Many also arrived via the United States, sometimes after several years of residence there. Many new immigrants became itinerant peddlers who went from town to town selling their wares. Others became peddlars in towns and cities, eventually establishing retail businesses and becoming small businessmen and merchants. By 1901, there was already a few established locally-born Jews in the Maritimes. This made for a small community with a diverse language and national background.

The 1901 census of Canada provides much genealogical information about Maritime Jews, including name, date of birth, place of birth, year of immigration, and occupation. In the case of my great-grandparents, Rubin and Sheva Eker, the census provided exact birthdates for them and their five children, along with their Hebrew names and year of immigration to Glace Bay from Russia. This primary information, given by the family to the census taker, may be considered fairly accurate.

Problems associated with the census are numerous. The quality of microfilming for some pages is poor, and entries are rife with spelling errors and illegible writing. Maritime towns with Jewish communities were microfilmed reasonably well, except for sections of Halifax and Sydney. Researchers must have good eyesight and much patience.

The search for other relatives in the Maritimes and the desire to further the field of Jewish genealogical research led my colleague Deborah Peklis and I to transcribe all Maritime Jews recorded in the 1901 census of Canada.

Since the census classifies Jewishness by both religion and ethnicity, we decided to record Jews not only by religion but by ethnic origin and by descent. A small but significant number of people give their ethnic origin as Jewish but their religion as non-Jewish. Jews 'by descent' refers to a family in which one parent is Jewish but whose children are not recorded as Jewish by either ethnic origin or religion.

"Ethnic" Jews, apparently, were individuals or families that abandoned the religion but maintained enough of a sentimental attachment that they recorded themselves and their children as Jewish by ethnicity. Our paper, "Jewish Residents of the Maritimes in the 1901 Census of Canada," provides genealogically important information on more than 860 individuals of Jewish religion, ethnic origin and descent as well as non-Jewish family members who resided with them. It is available on microfiche from Avotaynu Inc. in Teaneck, N.J. (Editor's note: It is also available for $20 plus $5 postage and handling by writing to Glen Eker, 46 Brady Lane, Guelph ON Canada N1L 1A5.)

Having finished the Maritimes, I am continuing my research on Jews in Canadian censuses. I recently completed indexing Toronto Jews found in the five Canadian censuses from 1861 to 1901. This detailed index, which provides genealogical information on approximately 5,500 individuals of Jewish origin, should be available from Avotaynu later this year. I am currently indexing Jewish residents of Montreal and Quebec City using censuses from 1871 to 1901. When completed, this index will provide information and census reference locations for approximately 11,000 individuals of Jewish origin.

Glen Eker, a college professor, is a member of our Society.

June 1993

Shem Tov 15
FIRST OF ITS KIND ON THE GREAT LAKES, THE STEAM-POWERED RAILWAY CAR FERRY "THE INTERNATIONAL" ALLOWED PASSENGERS TO CROSS THE U.S.-CANADIAN BORDER WITHOUT LEAVING THE TRAIN

MYSTERY SOLVED: The Citizenship Registration Branch in Sydney, N.S., found a record indicating that my great-grandfather, Harris Glickstein, had entered Canada via Black Rock, N.Y., in 1908. This seemed strange, since he did not arrive in America until 1909! Eventually, I discovered that the mysterious Black Rock is a neighborhood of Buffalo, N.Y., and that my great-grandfather did indeed pass through there on his way into Canada in January 1913. Harris Glickstein's name appears on a list of passenger arrivals to the Canadian Great Lakes port of Bridgeburg (near Fort Erie), a place that has apparently since vanished. This drawing shows the 'International', complete with passenger accommodations above the train deck, docked at Black Rock and about to cross the Niagara River.—Bill Gladstone

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