I have attended every annual conference of this kind since 1991 except the one in Paris and as they say: you see one and you see them all. But this is not quite true for this one. The JGS of Great Britain selected the Inter-Continental Hotel, Hyde Park, one of the finest hotels in London as the site of this event. The location is quite spectacular, only a few minutes walk from Buckingham Palace and other famous landmarks and easily accessible via the "Tube".

There were hundreds of people from all over the world present with a more cosmopolitan crowd than usual. This is not surprising given the London location. The "Brits" went out of their way to put on an extraordinary show with a dazzling variety of lectures on every conceivable subject associated with Jewish genealogy, history and folklore etc.

There were no fewer than over 160 speakers and nearly every day one could choose between 6 different lectures at one time. It was sometimes difficult to make a choice. Lectures lasted one hour, starting at 8:30 a.m. until 6:30 p.m., with a lunch break between 12:15 and 1:30 p.m. After the dinner break there were more lectures, meetings or a movie between 7:45 and 10:00 p.m. During the lunch break there were also special meetings, mostly get-togethers of the Special Interest Groups (SIGS). Believe me when I say that after 5 days of this you need a vacation.

For instance: On Tuesday, July 10 from 4:00 to 5:00 p.m. we had a choice from one of the following lectures:

2. Sources for Research on Hidden Jews of Warsaw, 1940-45 – Dr. G.S. Paulson
3. Reading Between the Lines of Grandfather’s Letters (from Galicia and Poland): History Can be a Heartless Judge – Mike Joseph
4. New Initiatives for the New Millennium: JewishGen's Research projects – Joyce Field
5. Research Tools for Jewish genealogy in France – Ernest Kallman

During the lunch break of that day there were 2 meetings: A workshop on Basic German Research and a meeting of the Poland Shtetl Co-op Coordinators. In the evening there were meetings of the Bohemian Moravian and the Dutch SIGS, a closed meeting of the Journal Editors and a talk and film: Back to Gombin – Minna Packer.

There were also 2 day long sessions on Migration and Transmigration with 10 speakers and another session extending over 2 days on Genes and Genealogy with 10 speakers. Some of the most popular lectures with large numbers of people attending were:

- Warren Blatt on Jewish Given Names, JewishGen Databases (with Michael Tobias) and Polish Jewish Research.

(continued on page 3)
UPCOMING EVENTS
Programs organized by the
Jewish Genealogical Society of Canada (Toronto)
at the Shaarai Shomayim Synagogue
470 Glencairn Avenue

Wednesday, October 31, 2001 - 8:00 p.m.,
Henry Wellisch will report on the London Conference

Wednesday, November 07, 2001 - 8:00 p.m.,
This program is part of the annual Holocaust Education Week.
"Old and New Sources of Information on Holocaust Victims and Survivors". Speaker: Peter Landé

Wednesday, November 28, 2001 - 8:00 p.m.,
Program to be announced

Doors open at 7:30, program begins at 8 p.m.
All members will receive further details either by e-mail or by telephone.

Wednesday, December 12, 2001 - 8:00 p.m.,
Chanukah party & elections to the executive

Wednesday, January 30, 2002 - 8:00 p.m.,
Program to be announced

For further information visit our website at www.jgstoronto.ca or watch the "What's New" column in the Canadian Jewish News.

Volume XVII, No. 3

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The Jewish Genealogical Society of Canada was founded in 1985 and currently has about 150 members. Membership costs $30 per calendar year, $20 for persons living beyond both Metro Toronto and its adjacent suburbs. Meetings are held September to June, usually on the last Wednesday of each month at 8:00 p.m. (doors open at 7:30) at Shaarai Shomayim Synagogue, 470 Glencairn Avenue, Toronto (unless announced otherwise). Guests are always welcome. Details are usually printed in the Canadian Jewish News.

The goals of the Society are to provide a forum for the exchange of knowledge and information through meetings, outings, workshops and guest lecturers, and thereby to promote an awareness of genealogy within the Jewish community of Canada. The Society is affiliated with the Jewish Federation of Greater Toronto and is registered as a non-profit charitable organization.

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Contributors to this issue:

MARGARITA LACKO
GOLDIE HONEY WALLENSKY
HENRY WELLISCH
Bruce Kahn spoke on Genealogy on the Internet and on Digital Imaging.

Stanley Diamond gave a talk on Jewish Records Indexing Poland.

Peter Landé talked on Sources of Information on Holocaust Victims and Survivors.

Here are the titles of some of the more esoteric lectures:

- Genealogical Aspects of Research in the Jewish Artistic Milieu of Former Austrian Silesia from the 19th Century till World War II.
- Jews in the Armies of the French Revolution and Empire.
- Reclaiming the Mad Hatter or the Joys of Anglo-Jewish Genealogy.
- Jewish Carpets: An Illustrated Talk
- How a Manchester Boy Came to be Blown Up in the King David Hotel, 1946

Since our President was unable to attend I had the honour of representing our society at a number of functions:

- The meeting of the presidents of Jewish genealogical societies.
- The meeting of the Journal editors (mentioned above).
- The meeting of the conference advisory group. As you all know our society will host next year’s conference in Toronto and this group was formed recently to assist the various societies to help in organizing a conference like this.

About a year ago I received a letter from Dr. Anthony Joseph, President of the JGS of Great Britain, asking me to give a talk on Canadian Jewish Archives. This was quite a challenge, but I learned quickly and eventually gave a talk which was well received under the title: Canadian Sources of Interest to Jewish Genealogists.

On Thursday evening we had the closing banquet where the result of the elections to the IAIGS executive and the various awards were announced. (See below)

I was asked to present at the closing of the banquet the official announcement for the 22nd Conference in 2002 in Toronto. Here is what I said:

The next conference on Jewish Genealogy will take place from August 4 – 9, 2002 at the Sheraton Centre Hotel in downtown Toronto. This large and modern hotel is on Queen Street, opposite Toronto City Hall, near 2 subway lines and with many varied restaurants and a large shopping mall nearby.

Some people have asked me why August and not July. The reason for this is that in July there is a World Youth Conference taking place in Toronto with the Pope present and all the hotels are fully booked. One of our executive members had a brilliant idea: Why not invite the Pope as a speaker? Someone else suggested: What about the speaker’s fee? Clinton was in Toronto recently and he charged $100,000, this we cannot afford. Anyway, we have now put this idea on the backburner.

The invitation from the IAIGS came somewhat late, but after some discussion we decided to accept and we are now busy getting organized. You must remember that we ran a conference like this in 1993 and I know that a good number of people in this audience were present then. I am sure they will agree that it was a successful conference and I am quite confident that we can run a well organized and exciting conference in 2002 and I invite you all to come to Toronto next year.

(continued on page 4)
At the London conference the following awards were announced:

IAJGS STERN AWARDS

The IAJGS collects voluntary donations from its members for the specific purpose of making focused awards to those who support our avocation. These are designated the "Stern Awards" in continuing recognition of Rabbi Malcolm Stern, who contributed so much to Jewish Genealogy. Over the past two years, $2,800 was donated by our member societies for this purpose. An additional $2,200 was added from general IAJGS funds allowing for the distribution of $5,000.

$1,000 to the Genealogy Institute of the Center For Jewish History, to support the creation of a web-accessible bibliography of family histories in the libraries of the AJHS, the American Sephardi Federation, and YIVO.

$1,000 to the Central Zionist Archives for computers to facilitate a catalogue project of applications for immigration to Israel from the 1940's to the 1960's.

$1,000 to the Philadelphia Jewish Archives for a microfilm printer/reader. This would be very helpful to patrons, most of whom are genealogists using HIAS records. Gift to be given in memory of Jon Stein.

$1,000 to the Center for Judaic Studies at the University of Latvia, for their continuing contributions to the All Latvia Database, including extractions of the Courland Voters database. The project to be funded is a Holocaust memorial project, and will not only act as a memorial for the perished but also provide important data for genealogical study.

$1,000 to Jewishgen for support of the Holocaust Database, which will contain data files from Yad Vashem and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum; to include files such as residents lists, victims lists, survivor lists, and prisoner/transport deportation lists.

IAJGS ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Each year, the IAJGS presents achievement awards to recognize excellence within our avocation.

Dan and Rosanne Leeson
Outstanding Contribution via Print Award for their indexes of the 1784 Alsatian Jewish Census, and of 18th century Alsatian marriages. Dan and Rosanne have worked tirelessly in making Alsatian resources available to Jewish genealogical researchers. The 1784 Alsatian Census was organized by villages, making its use difficult. Their published index, originally in book form, continues to be available through microfiche. Their more recent publication of an index to 18th century marriage contracts allows researchers to reach back beyond 1784.

Nancy Goodstein
Outstanding Contribution via Electronic Media Award for the Index of Jewish Records in the FHL. This index provides a crucial key to unlocking the vast Jewish genealogical resources contained within the Family History Library. In addition to all of the generally known records, Nancy located and made more accessible many Jewish records not previously known, including obscure records not otherwise easily found. The resultant index has been made available both through both CD-ROM and on the Internet.

Michael Tobias
Outstanding Contribution via the Internet Award for Jewish genealogical database development. Michael has rapidly developed the technology behind numerous databases benefiting Jewish genealogists across the world, including, among others, the Jewish Records Indexing - Poland Database and the JewishGen Family Finder, ShtetlSeeker, Family Tree of the Jewish People, and Discussion Group Archives. His efforts have made vast amounts of material readily available to the Jewish genealogical community.
Asociacion de Genealogia Judia de Argentina
(JGS of Argentina)
Outstanding Publication Award - In recognition of TOLDOT (their newsletter) for the scope and quality of its articles. Each issue is filled with original material, impressive both in its scholarly content and in its readability. The journal's layout is clear, clean, and professional. Each issue adds to the knowledge base of the worldwide Jewish experience and is anxiously anticipated by its readers around the globe.

JGS, Palm Beach County, Inc. Florida
Outstanding Programming Award - Recognizing its efforts to spread awareness of Jewish genealogy through its extensive local publicizing of Jewish Genealogy Month, 25 March to 23 April 2001. This included arranging for the publication of articles in various newspapers across Palm Beach County, sponsoring a lecture series, distributing posters, and conducting exhibits at local public and academic libraries.

Jewish Genealogical Society, Inc. (New York)
Outstanding Project(s) Award - Recognizing several of the Society's projects aimed at making historical records in the New York area more available to researchers everywhere; including projects to index Brooklny naturalization records, burial societies in the New York Metropolitan area, and New York landsmanshaftn and other Jewish organizations. The results of these projects have been made generally available through the web site of the JGS, Inc.

Peter Landé
Lifetime Achievement Award – In deep appreciation of Peter's contributions to the world of Jewish genealogy, both in his selfless assistance to others in pursuing their own research and in his efforts in gathering and indexing genealogical materials for the benefit of all.

Among these are his outstanding work on identifying resources and creating finding aids at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, his extensive support for the Yizkor Book Project, and his ongoing contributions to Stammbein.

THE NEWLY ELECTED EXECUTIVE OF THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF JEWISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETIES (IAJGS)

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September 2001 Shem Tov 5
TWO WEEKS IN HUNGARY AND SLOVAKIA
By Margarita Lockó

My parents were born in Budapest and were able to leave, or Argentina, in 1946. I visited Hungary on several occasions, between 1975 and 1985, but at that time I didn't even know that the word "genealogy" existed. Only three years ago, I thought of making a simple chart of my family tree. I never suspected that I would still be busy with it, and I'm sure I will keep on working on it for many more years. This was a last minute trip. We heard that my brother and his family, who live in Israel, were going to Hungary in August, so we decided to meet them there. Very first, we gathered all the information we had on the cities and villages we wanted to visit: Budapest, Miskolc, Abaújszántó, Tolesva and Győngyös. If there was enough time, I also wanted to visit Dunajská Streda (previously known as Dunaszerdahely) in Slovakia. We had a wonderful time! Weather was pretty hot (they told us that it was one of the hottest, but after living our first summer in Miami......), Budapest has changed a lot since the last time I was there in 1985. We had delicious dinners, generally quite early because we almost had no time to stop for lunches.

BUDAPEST:
My goal was to find the birth certificate of someone born in 1924. It was a bit of an ordeal, and because of privacy matters, I don't want to publish it here. I just have one question: Why are they so careful? What are they afraid of? I can understand that people who don't work at the Town Halls, Mayor offices, archives, etc., are not allowed to handle the record books. I might understand that it is difficult to make photocopies of the books, not only because of the size of such books, but because of their fragility. I might even understand why they don't allow you to take a photograph (not even a digital), because you could obtain information on other people from the same page (although I think this is too far fetched, but I can't think of any other reason). What I really can't understand is why they don't allow you to even be able to just look at the book. I hope someone can answer this for me.

MISKOLC:
I was not able to do much research there. I was trying to find the history of the Pamónia Hotel because family tradition says that my great-grandfather, Gyula BLAU, was the owner, which I now doubt. I knew he was an architect, so maybe he designed something for the hotel or was part owner. I did discover that he was a businessman and was on the board of directors of some bank. This I read in book #8 of the series "Miskolc története" (or something like this), I wrote it very quickly, thinking that I would be able to see it in the library and make a photocopy of this one page. But, we had no time to go to the library. I could not find these series of books in several bookstores in Budapest.

The first thing we did in Miskolc, was to go to the Registry Office (Petőfi utca 39), where a lady was already waiting with a copy of my e-mail (which I had sent to the Mayor a few weeks before our trip). She was very nice, she told me that she had asked her daughter to come to the office and wait for us, because she (the daughter) knows English. When we arrived, the daughter was already gone, but we spoke on the phone, just to clarify a few words. The lady was not able to find my grandfather's (Herman BLAU, born 1888) birth certificate. I was afraid this would happen, but I tried anyway. If you don't ask, you'll never know. She told me what I already knew: go to Satalaigjely or the Israeli Religious Community (as they call it). Jewish Community (Kazinczy utca 7, open only in the mornings). An elderly man looked into an old big book, which was arranged alphabetically. There I saw several BLAU's, including my grandfather and some of his siblings, with a note of a name change, to BÁNO. But I was not able to make a copy of it. This book refers to the books where the "real" birth notifications are. But, alas, those books were not there. The old man could not tell me where they could be. He did make quite an effort to look at every book in the office (they are not neatly stowed in bookcases, they are on top of chairs, desk, floor, etc.).

There is one notebook, which is well taken care of. This one has the names of the Holocaust victims. I was only allowed to write the names of the BLAU's which I thought were my relatives. According to the old man, there were 1500 Jews before the war, only 250 returned. The synagogue is used only on High Holidays. For Shabbat they generally use the Beit haSefer.

There is a memorial in the center of the courtyard. Also, at the entrance, there are several stones with carved names. We did not have time to go to the cemetery.

ABAÚJSZÁNTÓ:
We met with Elazar BLAU, his wife and two of his grandsons, at the train station in Miskolc. He is the organizer of the yearly meetings of survivors from Abaújszántó, in Israel, and a descendant of Rabbi Elazar LOW [SHEMEN ROKEAH]. By coincidence, he booked a trip to Hungary for more or less the same period as when we were there. In a way, we are related: his great-grandfather (Jakob BLAU) was the brother of two of my gg-grandfathers (Zsigmond and Herman BLAU).

Luckily we were with him, because the cemetery is somewhat hidden on a side road. It is surrounded by a stone wall and the gates are closed. But the caretaker lives inside. It is very well taken care of. We took several photos (I'm still waiting for the slides).

Zahava, Elazar's wife, translated the text of a few of the tombstones of "our" family. We spent about two hours at the cemetery. I wanted to follow Elazar to the village, and be there when he shows his grandkids where several of the BLAUS lived, the shop they owned, the synagogue, etc., but it was getting late for us. We needed to go on to Tolesva so that we could do some research on my husband's family. This was the highlight of his trip.
(Two Weeks in Hungary and Slovakia continued)

TOLCSVA:

We were very lucky! The road from Abaújszántó to Tolcsva is a winding road, between small mountains. It was not the season to see grapes, but the sunflowers are in full bloom. At the entrance of Tolcsva, which is a small village, there is a map. So we stopped and, while I was figuring out where the Town Hall was, a lady comes to our rescue. She asked for whom we were looking for. After I explained that we were looking for the Polgármester so that my husband could get his father's birth certificate and that we wanted to visit the cemetery, she asked: "The Jewish cemetery?" I guess we have typical "Jewish" faces (whatever that means). Well, to make a long story short, her husband was the caretaker of the Jewish cemetery!! Bingo!

She hopped in the car with us and first took us to the Town Hall. My husband got a lot of information on his family; the KOHNS and the GRÜNS. Then, we went to the cemetery, which was not far from where we first stopped. By the map at the entrance of the village, you go up a dirt road. It is surrounded by a concrete wall and there is a gate with a lock. Her husband and two workers were just beginning to clean up the "jungle": I can't find another word for what we saw. It was really overgrown! I tried to help looking for tombstones, but got "attacked" by plants with nasty thorns. So, while the guys disappeared before my eyes, I decided to play it safe and took some photos of the three tombstones in the oval. Our self appointed guide, Julika Galgovics, had to leave, but before leaving, she invited us to have a refreshment at their home. So, I was left alone. Alone! No, I was surrounded by mosquitoes. Julika and her husband, Rudolf Galgovics, also have some land (don't remember how big) where they grow vines. In front of their home, they have a cellar with several barrels. According to my husband, the wine is superb.

We HAD to stay for supper. Julika knew we didn't have lunch because of the time we arrived in Tolcsva, and there was no way that she would let us go without something in our stomachs. That gave us a better chance to chat with them about the community. According to Rudolf, there were about 380 Jews before the war. There are none now. Rudolf receives some money from the Community in Budapest, to take care of the cemetery: 800 Forints every 4 (FOUR) months! No wonder it looks like a jungle. We asked if he would know where the books of the Jewish community are. He said that some time ago, someone came and took them to Budapest. He also said that someone in Missouri used to send some money, but the money never arrives (they know this from correspondence). We have to follow up on this. After having a real homemade supper, we got a personal tour of the village. Took some photos of (what we hope was) the home of Salamon GRUN and his bakery, the ex-Jewish public school and... I would have to see the photos to remember. It was already dark when we said our good-byes, and went back to Miskolc.

I have to pause here and explain that all of this was spoken in Hungarian. It is true that Hungarian was the first language I heard, because that's what my mother spoke to us when we were kids, although we were born in Argentina. But, when you become a teenager, it's normal to rebel, so no more Hungarian for us, although my parents kept on speaking it between themselves. This means that my Hungarian is very basic, what I call "baby talk". But I guess I knew more than what I thought.

GYÖNGYÓS:

We left Miskolc after our research at the Jewish Community and we arrived in Gyöngyös at midday. Too late to go to the Town Hall. We did not have a map and by chance, we parked just in front of what was the synagogue. I knew that it was a furniture store now. Anyway, we went inside and asked if someone knew where the Jewish cemetery was. A man (I don't know if he was a client or worked there) gave us directions, very easy to follow. So off we went, after first having a real lunch at the pedestrian city centre.

We entered the cemetery through the side entrance, by a dirt road. There was no caretaker to be seen so we actually squeezed our way between the gate and the fence. The first impression was that it looked pretty neat. We were in a kind of square where the grass was well kept. On the right, we saw the Holocaust memorial. On our left and in front, we saw what looked like a nice peaceful forest. That was the first impression. We were very wrong. The nice peaceful forest was actually another jungle. At least there were no mosques here. The cemetery is still in use because we saw some very recent graves, only months old. I don't know how much time we spent trying to find my great-grandfather's (Márton FISCHER) tombstone. I do know that after this adventure, we were full of scratches and maybe even spiders crawling on our backs.

It was time to go back to Budapest.

DUNAJSKÁ STREDA, SLOVAKIA:

(Previously known as Dunaszerdahely)

Before leaving, we went to the Town Hall (the third one we visited) to try to obtain a birth certificate. This was the last day I was able to do some research in Budapest. So we left late for Dunajská Streda, with my brother and two of his children. The rest of the family stayed in Budapest. I had already seen the landscape because from Vienna, where we landed, we took the train to Budapest (on our way back, we took the hydrofoil). This time of the year, the corn is growing and the sunflowers are in full bloom.

We crossed the border at Komárom/Komarno, where we spent about an hour waiting in line. I imagine the reason why there were so many cars, is because it was the Friday before the big holiday (the Millennium celebrations). Looking at it positively, it gave the children a chance to stretch their legs, look at the boats passing by and get rid of some energy. Showing our passports and car ID, went really fast. An hour later, we were at my uncle's home. After having some lunch, chatting for a while and looking at photos, my cousin took us to the cemetery. WOW! This is a big cemetery and very well taken care of.

At the entrance, there are two rooms. The one on the left is an office, and, if I understood correctly, the one on the right...
is for preparing the deceased for burial. (Note: I am very happy I went with my brother but, it did not give me the opportunity to ask many questions, as my cousin and my brother were talking between themselves the whole time. It is difficult to interrupt two Hungarians, but when two Jews get together....)

There is a notebook where all the names are written alphabetically. If I understood correctly, you see the name of the person and the place where the tomb is located. Also, each tombstone has a number, so that it will be easier to find it. There is a project to digitize this. The marble stones are in very good condition, but the ones made of sandstone are difficult to read. Someone is busy painstakingly painting the letters in black, so that it will be much easier to read. Many of the stones have lots of inscriptions (Hebrew and Hungarian). Most of the broken stones are repaired. But my cousin got really mad when she saw a few of the newly repaired stones, on the floor. There is a caretaker, but I guess this corner was a bit too far for her to notice. According to my cousin, kids just like to climb the wall and "play". Also, many tombstones are reinforced with concrete on the base, so that they won’t fall. There are several Holocaust memorial sites. One of them is a square on the corner, where they buried things that were brought back from the camps. My cousin told me that there were 3500 Jews living in Dunajská Streda before WW2. Only 500 came back. My great-grandfather is buried here: Izidor (Israel) GRUNWALD. For those of you who might need a driver/guide/interpreter mainly in Slovakia, but also in Budapest, please contact me privately (no, it's not my cousin. He doesn't speak English).

It was almost 7 p.m., and time to go back to Budapest.

We again crossed the border through Komárom/Komárom. This time it went pretty fast, there were only 5 cars in front of us. Later I asked my brother why he chose to cross in Komárom and not Győr, which I heard was a much faster crossing. He said that he was accustomed to go via Komárom (he used to live in Budapest) and the distance is much shorter. We had several family reunions in Budapest: with my first-cousin and my second cousins, and their respective families.

Also I met a second cousin of my mother (BOTOS Imre) whom I saw for the first time and my mother’s best friend HAJNAL Gabi.

We left Budapest on the hydrofoil for Vienna. Pity that we calculated wrong with the date. We left the 20th of August, which is St. Istvan’s celebrations and missed out on the parades and fire works. But, because this fell on a Monday, they had all kinds of festivities during the weekend. Lots of arts and crafts on the street, folklore dancing and singing. The city was dressed to party! Well, this is it. These two weeks went pretty fast and we are ready to go again!

Margarita Lackó is a member of the JGS of Miami. Her E-mail address is: uzidog@post1.com

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**The Six Cs of Effective Genealogical E-Mail**

Good news! You’ve just found out the e-mail address of someone who has information that could help your research. You’ve typed up your first e-mail message to her. But wait – before you click “Send”, check that your e-mail passes these Six “C” tests.

Is your e-mail CLEAR and COMPLETE? Have you included birth, marriage and death dates and places if you know them (and if you don’t, have you said so)? If you’re discussing more than one family, are the relationships between them obvious? Be sure to state exactly what information you’re seeking, so your correspondent isn’t left wondering what it is you want to know.

Is your e-mail CONCISE? Stick to basics and omit less-important details. If your correspondent is interested and sends you a reply, you can send more of what you know in later messages.

Is your e-mail CORRECT? Your credibility as a researcher will suffer if your message contains misspellings or poor grammar. Read it over carefully and double check all dates.

Is your e-mail COURTEOUS? Messages that say “Send me what you have on John Smith” will go straight into the trash!

Is your followup e-mail CONSIDERATE? Be sure to write back and thank your correspondent soon after you receive a reply, regardless of whether or not they had any information for you. You never know -- they might be able to help you sometime in the future.

This article appeared in the February 2001 issue of Newsleaf, the newsletter of the Ontario Genealogical Society. It was adapted from the newsletter of St. Clair Co. (Michigan) Family History Group v. 14 no. 1, 1994, with thanks to Margaret Sharon.
Important Polish Archives Information
Andrew Blumberg

I sent a letter to the Polish archives at Naczelna Dyrekcja Archiwów Państwowych, Ul. Długa 6, Skr. Pocztowa Nr 1005, 00-950 Warszawa, Poland, requesting information about my family.

I followed the instructions in the JewishGen Infofile titled Vital Records in Poland and sent my request for pre-1900 records and a cheque to the main archive in Warsaw. However it appears that they now require that requests be sent directly to the appropriate archives branch.

The following is a translation (by Marcia Kamien) of the response they sent to me:

I posted an image of the original letter at http://members.bellatlantic.net/~ajbh61/polish_archives_letter.htm.

In answers on your letter in matter seeking information about your family, Central Archival Department would like to clear up that we don’t keep and don’t provide archival records. Archival materials - if they still exist- are kept in archives and institutions in accordance with territorial rule. In our information and atlases, we found 2 towns with the name Bielsk in present territory of Poland.

1. Bielsk, has Jewish certificates from years 1826-1898 which are kept in State Archives in Plock.
   Address: ul. Kazimierza Wielkiego 9B, 09-400 Plock.
2. Bielsk Podlaski, which they have Jewish certificates only from year 1835, and they are kept in State Archives in Bialystok.
   Address: Rynek Kocsiuszk 4, 15-426 Bialystok

We suggest finding more of information on name Bielsk (name of province, name of bigger town or city nearby, abode of administrative district, or parish). Then you should contact with suitable territorial archives of state.

We enclose information in English about accessible archival records available to the public. We suggest to visit website: http://www.archiwa.gov.pl

We also send you back your check for $30.

Jewish Heraldry and Jewish Noblemen
Naomi Teveth

On this site you can read about Jewish heraldry practices from the Middle Ages to Modern Times in Italy, France, England and heraldry practices of Court Jews and enabled Jews in Britain and Europe (with emphasis on the Rothschilds).

In my humble opinion, I consider this another aspect of genealogy, as you may have encountered heraldic emblems on documents, tombs or inherited objects and wondered about them. Go to URL: http://www. heraldica.org/topics/jewish.htm

For Sephardic heraldry and origins go to page: http://www.sephardim.com/html/heraldry.html

Medieval Jewish Naming Practices
Naomi Teveth

This website represents databases and articles about Medieval Jewish naming practices in the Western World, it contains:

A) A database of Medieval Jewish names (by J. Stampczynsky), which is an ongoing collection, organized by period and location and by etymological origin
   1) Names of Jewish Men 6th-11th centuries
   2) Names from Hebrew Chronicles of the 10th to 15th centuries and more

B) Khazarian names (by Kevin Brook)

C) Jewish naming conventions in Angevin England (study by Eleazar a-Levi) - a survey of Jewish names from the late 11th through the 13th centuries

D) Jewish Given Names found in "Les Noms Des Israelines en France", by Aranywny Catmuel. The data is drawn from sources from the Carolingian period through the Renaissance and includes names of Jews in other countries than France.

E) An Index to the Given Names in the 1292 Census of Paris (by Lord Colm Dubh with a separate list of the names of Parisian Jews.

F) Medieval Spanish Jewish Names of the 13th and 14th centuries (by Juliana de Luna) with a small collection of Jewish names from Castillian and Navarese sources.

G) Spanish names from the late 15th century with some examples of Jewish names.

The URL is: http://www.panix.com/~mittle/names/jewish.shtml

Ketubbah Collection
Naomi Teveth

The Jewish National and University Library holds a collection of over 1,200 Ketubbah from over the world covering a time period of over 900 years. You can now view fine examples from this collection in a database organized by country of origin. Go to: http://jnuil.huji.ac.il/dli/ketubbot/

You will find images of the Ketubbah as well as a full bibliographic record of each Ketubba. Some of the Ketubbah are blank forms, but others have the groom, bride, witnesses and annotations filled in. These can be read in Hebrew by clicking on the full bibliographic record.

Who knows, maybe some of you will find a Ketubba from his/her ancestors by chance?
Stewage Rates-1886
Vivian Zelvin, Eastchester, New York

For those wondering what it cost our ancestors to come to America, I found the following in the New York Times on August 13, 1886:

"The Hamburg-American Packet Company has followed the example of several of the other Continental lines which are fighting the Red Star Line by making an extensive cut in its stewardage rates. According to a circular just issued by the Hamburg Company, its rates have been reduced from $2 to $4 on the outward and from $10 to $13 on the homeward passage. The new Hamburg outward rates are $12 to Plymouth, $16.50 to London, $21 to Hamburg, Cherbourg, Copenhagen, Stockholm, Gothenburg, and several other Continental ports, and $25.25 to Paris. The prepaid homeward rates are: from London $13.50, from Paris S18; from Hamburg, Havre, Copenhagen, Stockholm, Gothenburg, $15. The figures by the Baltic service of the Hamburg Line are $21, outward and $15 return. The French Line is the only Continental conference company which has not yet reduced its rates."

I was trying to find the name of the ship in which my family arrived. I had the date my grandfather wrote that he arrived on his naturalization papers. It was interesting to see that ships were expected to arrive on dates posted but never made it. Several days later the ships still had not arrived.

Krakow Voter Registrations - 1929
Julian Schamroth (Jerusalem), Shtetlinks Krakow Webmaster

Shtetlinks Krakow is pleased to announce the uploading of a new, major database. It is the "1929 Voters Registration List". This is a list of almost 7,000 male Jews (including their names, ages, addresses and occupations) who registered for the constituency of District VIII, Kazimierz in Krakow for the 1929 general Polish elections.

Many thanks to all those who contributed financially to this project as well as to the many fingers that did the technically difficult task of transcription. These 'hearts and fingers' belonged to Judie Goldstein, Steve Shamroth, Bruce Morgenstern, Ben Weinstock, Charles Mahler, Roe Wise, Flora Gursky, Eden Elton, Jacob Lior, and Dan Aronson (I hope I haven't excluded anyone!).

A second project - that of transcribing the 1911 Voters Registration List is underway and should be completed in the next few weeks.

Yet another project - the 1937 Voter's Registration List - is also underway. (The funds for these 2 additional projects have already been raised).

To see this new database, go to www.shtetlinks.jewishgen.org/krakow and follow the "What's New" link.

Montreal Star Death Index for 1900 & 1901
Art Mayoff

Indexing of the Death notice listings published in the Montreal Star, the city's leading English newspaper of the time, for the years 1900 and 1901 has been completed.

This multi-year project has been the personal goal of Montreal resident and genealogist, Robert Wilkins. Work on the Death Index, which currently has some 15,000 entries, has begun on the year 1902 and should be completed by the end of 2001 bringing the total to over 20,000.

Requests for name searches for the completed years may be e-mailed to Mr. Wilkins at: monreal_1900@hotmail.com

Plans to put the database on-line are still in the future.

Check out our new website at
www.jgstoronto.ca
for current information about
the Jewish Genealogical Society of Canada
(Toronto) including valuable links.

Many thanks to Terri Rothman for
her efforts in creating the site.
The first Jewish Genealogical Society of Toronto wishes to extend a warm and hearty welcome to everyone who decides to share their idea's and new materials with us in our exciting organization. On behalf of myself, who has been assigned the editor, I would like to add that to all who make the choice of joining this Genealogical Society will be experiencing memorable discoveries and making new friendships that will touch you not only personally but spiritually.

Now, isn't this inspirational news and don't you feel motivated to find out how you can begin this explorative project. Let me start by saying that many Jewish People have been involved in their own ways for similar reasons that the Genealogical Society wants to keep the whole Jewish Community informed about. It is our organizations desire to see that not only will our membership increase in size but grow in awareness for all who are interested and want to understand the goals of the Genealogical Society of Toronto hopes to achieve.

Everyone at one time or another has asked questions about their grandparents regarding the type of lifestyle and location of where they lived. The face's of past family members can be seen in old photographs but we have no existing knowledge about them. The sight of old dishes, clothes and record albums that did belong to many generations before us sometimes makes us curious about which past relative owned one of those deeply cherished articles. We have all tasted the delicious foods prepared from traditional recipes and practiced in some of the Jewish Customs that are part of our Jewish Culture.

Each one of us lives with constant reminders of our past. Our ancestors may be gone but they are still missed and thought of in lots of households today. Unfortunately, many parents don't wish to discuss certain facts about their family history because of the Holocaust and the painful memories of the damaging effects that it had on our Jewish People. Other Jewish People feel that due to the amount of people that fled out of Nazi Europe at that time that it would be next to impossible to try to find any information on a deceased or surviving member of their family now. Too many Jewish People wonder if the process used to arrange the locations of their loved ones that they want to learn about would be too difficult or costly for them.

By reading the informative sheet that is attached to this newsletter, you will see that the Genealogical Society of Toronto has supplied you with numerous sources of material that will help you get started tracing your Jewish Roots. This organization does have a membership fee of $18.00 but we feel that it's a small fee for all the happiness and joy that you will bring to the people that can benefit greatly from the Jewish Genealogical Society of Toronto.

As were learning and contributing our meaningful findings about our Jewish People we are not only keeping their memories in our hearts and minds but I feel that everyone is helping to hold the entire Jewish Tradition alive. Our world is made up of many generations and your recordings will help transmit the knowledge to the next generation of children asking questions concerning their Jewish Heritage. In unity, our Jewish People have taught us to be strong and walk proud despite any hardships and struggles that we have to endure along the way and together we can commemorate their lives in our own way. One important way is by giving of our time and enthusiasm to seeking out all the research we can about our Jewish connections.

Find creative and easy ways of recording your facts. You can put everything down in a home-made notebook or try a tape-recorder. Have fun and take your time because this fact-finding mission will be endless. Work alone or have other members of your family participate in this adventurous investigation. When you are finished collecting all your data for your family files then present it as a very special gift on a celebrated occasion. Go ahead and explore the different streets, cities, and dates that your past family members once lived. One street can lead you on to other avenues of resources that you never even thought of before. Speculate in all types of places because the most oddest place can have just the right detail of information that you are looking for to complete a family profile. We have listed the main libraries that will have a section on the material that will be most helpful to you as well as some address's of booklets that you can write to that contains other historical materials relating to Jewish genealogy.
We suggest to make use of old maps, documents, manuscripts, microfilms, and of course any records that you might find in the libraries. The Genealogic Society does plan to have speakers visit with us and talk about their role pertaining to the Jewish Genealogy Studies. I can't stress enough of the importance of talking to people relating your stories to them. We do have computerized sheets with over 450 names of people who are associated with other Jewish Genealogy Groups in different parts of the United States and Canada. You never know that if you try to get in touch with another person trying to achieve the same goal, you might find that you are related.

Anything can happen once you start your generation trip of the past. Good luck fellow explorer and remember when you are done travelling through time to greet us back at our headquarters or you will be missing out on the most thrilling part of all which is the closeness that we all will be feeling when we explain and relate the information that we searched for. Don't talk too much, save your energy for the other journeys that you might be assisting for the new members who are interested in beginning. Well, I have said enough and I know that all of my readers are eager to enjoy all the good times and surprise's that this organization has in store for you, so I will end my first newsletter by saying finally that I hope that the Genealogical Society will prosper and flourish with a good feeling for all who partakes of it.

ADVERTISING RATES

SHEM TOV is now accepting display advertising for publication. Advertisers are requested to supply camera-ready art and payment by November 2001 for the Winter issue. Please indicate how many insertions you would like. As the chart indicates our basic rate is discounted for advertisements placed in four consecutive issues (one year) instead of a single issue only. By placing an ad in SHEM TOV, you are reaching a growing number of readers in Toronto, across Canada and internationally, and helping to support a unique and vital journal.

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Search ads are also available. Rates are $5 for the first 25 words and 25¢ per word thereafter, your name and address are free. Please write advertisement clearly with family surnames you are researching in UPPER CASE letters. Make your cheque payable to Jewish Genealogical Society of Canada (Toronto) and mail to: JGS of Canada (Toronto), P.O. Box 446, Toronto, Ontario M4X 1A9.