



# שם טוב SHEM TOV

JEWISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF CANADA (TORONTO)

VOLUME XXV No. 1

March 2009 Nisan 5769

## A RESOURCE FOR DISCOVERING WHERE RELATIVES LIVED

By Logan Kleinwaks

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*This article appeared in the Fall 2008 issue of Roots-Key, publication of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Los Angeles. It is reprinted with permission of the author and the JGSLA.*

**M**y grandfather probably would not have called himself a genealogist, but he was definitely a family man, with a genealogist's broad notion of family. He sought out and maintained friendships with not only his close relatives, but also distant and speculative relatives. How he identified the speculative relatives, before the advent of the Internet, provides a basic lesson in genealogy and an introduction to a major underutilized genealogical resource, *which I hope you will have used not long after reading this article.*

More than a dozen times, my grandfather moved his home, and, wherever he went, he hoped to discover relatives living nearby. Considering that he often moved great distances and to communities without large Jewish populations, it is surprising that this hope was ever fulfilled. However, working in his favor was a comprehensive search strategy: contact everyone with his ancestral surnames listed in the local telephone directory.

Since my grandfather had a habit of saving copies of both incoming and outgoing mail, I have seen some of his correspondence with these people. Typically, it began, in essence, "Are we related?" and concluded, "Probably," on the basis of common geographic origin, kohen/levi status, and family stories.

This basic search strategy, which is obviously more effective for uncommon surnames, demonstrates a fundamental approach to genealogical research: find *where* people with a surname of interest live(d), then use local resources (in my grandfather's case, the people themselves) to research whether they are relatives. It sounds simple, but many genealogists are not pursuing the first part, finding the *where*, as diligently as they might.

If you have been researching the same small group of ancestral towns for 30 years, you might be one of these people. If you think it is impossible for your relatives to have lived anywhere you don't already know about, think again. Follow my grandfather and start looking for relatives in new places.

In fact, you can follow him quite closely, because his resource of choice, the telephone directory, is more accessible than ever, online. Not only can you easily find and search current tele-

phone directories with national coverage (try [www.infobel.com](http://www.infobel.com) for links by country), but directories from before WWII, the focus of this article, are also available. Pre-WWII telephone, address, and business directories with broad geographic coverage are a fantastic resource for discovering where relatives lived.

The online availability of historical directories is largely the result of library digitization programs, in which libraries create digital images of their holdings, page by page. Typically, the presentation of these images includes buttons to view the next or previous image, the ability to view an image specified by number, and little else. This means that you can "turn the pages" of the directory online, and jump many pages forwards or backwards. If the directory is arranged alphabetically by surname, it is easy to find the images where a surname could be listed. However, few directories are arranged alphabetically by

*Cont'd on Page 4*

### ***In This Issue***

- 1 *A Resource for Discovering Where Relatives Lived*
- 2 *World Webcams: Visit Your Ancestral Towns Without Jetlag*
- 3 *Upcoming Events • New Members • In Memoriam*
- 5 *Ask a Society Member*
- 6 *Branching Out*
- 7 *Study Yiddish in Vilnius • IJG Forms Advisory Board • Calling All Latvians*
- 8 *Expecting the Unexpected: Unusual Resources Add Life to Family Tree*
- 10 *The History of Ukraine 1740-1940 • New TV Show*
- 11 *A Personal Journey of Discovery • Holocaust Memorials*
- 12 *Site-Seeing • Co-sponsorship of Programs • Website for 29th International Conference on Jewish Genealogy*



by Carolynne Vefffer

**W**hen I recently googled one of my ancestral towns (Ilza (Drildz), Poland), I found a link to a Polish site (also available in English) that collects links to webcams throughout the world. I was amazed to find that there is a webcam in Ilza. Here's the link: <http://www.worldcam.pl/en/>

While the site's goal is to cover the world, since it is a Polish site, Poland has its own entry, along with Europe, North America, South America, Africa, etc. There are 380 webcam links for Poland.

In addition to Ilza, among the Polish towns & cities covered by the 380 webcams are: Augustow, Bialystok, Czestochowa, Gdansk, Hrubieszow, Kielce, Lodz, Lomza, Lublin, Radom, Rzeszow, Szczecin, Tarnow, Warsaw, Wroclaw and Zamosc

Under Europe, there are entries for Roumania, Russia, Latvia, Lithuania, etc. There are 1,260 webcams for Europe.

But, of course, once I'd found that site, I had to google "Webcams Poland" and found many more links to webcam sites. Below are just a couple. There might be overlap, but there might be additional webcams not covered in the first

link. Neither seems quite as extensive.

<http://www.camscape.com/Europe/Poland/index.html>

[http://www.krykiet.com/webcams\\_poland.htm](http://www.krykiet.com/webcams_poland.htm)

So, basically, if you haven't already done this, perhaps search for webcams in your ancestral towns. It's a way to "visit" without jetlag or the expense of travel!

## Get *SHEM TOV* by Email

If you haven't yet done so, please subscribe to receive *Shem Tov* as a pdf. This will get you speedy delivery, and, in addition, will help you provide our Society with environmental and cost benefits: less paper & envelopes, less postage, and lower printing charges.

Simply send your request to [shemtov@jgstoronto.ca](mailto:shemtov@jgstoronto.ca).

We thank you for your consideration.

vol. XXV No. 1

*SHEM TOV* is published quarterly by the Jewish Genealogical Society of Canada (Toronto) and is distributed free to members. Current issues are available to non-members for \$4.00 per issue, and back issues are available free of charge on our website [www.jgstoronto.ca](http://www.jgstoronto.ca).

Contributions are invited. Please submit material to [shemtov@jgstoronto.ca](mailto:shemtov@jgstoronto.ca) or to Shem Tov Editors, P.O. Box 91006, 2901 Bayview Avenue, Toronto, ON M2K 2Y6. Publication is at the Editors' discretion.

The Jewish Genealogical Society of Canada (Toronto) was founded in 1986. Membership is \$40 per calendar year, \$18 for students. 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 Shaarei Shomayim Synagogue, 470 Glencairn Avenue, Toronto (unless announced otherwise). Guests are always welcome. Details are usually printed in the *Canadian Jewish News* and on our website at: [www.jgstoronto.ca](http://www.jgstoronto.ca).

The goal of the Society is 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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## UPCOMING EVENTS

Programs organized by the Jewish Genealogical Society of Canada (Toronto)

Unless otherwise noted, programs take place at the Shaarei Shomayim Synagogue - 470 Glencairn Ave.

Doors open at 7:30, program begins at 8 p.m.

Non-member fee: \$5.00 per meeting

(exception: spouses accompanying members)



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**Wednesday, March 25, 2009**

***Evolving Genealogy Internet Research and the Risk and Rewards of Placing Data on Social Interaction Networks and Genealogy related Databases***

Speaker: **Henry Blumberg**

PowerPoint presentation providing a review of the emerging trends in genealogy websites and examines search engines, directories, hosted or archival solutions such as JewishGen, custom Personal Data Bases, family websites created by individuals as well as *shtetl* sites. It will also examine the new frontier of proliferating social interaction networks such as Facebook, MySpace, Geni, etc. and the benefits and risks of the enhanced exchange of information, including loss of privacy and giving up rights to data and images.

Mr. Blumberg was born in South Africa and immigrated with his family to Canada in 1980. He is the Managing Partner of his Toronto law firm. He is the President of Latvia SIG for the third term and has been particularly interested in the evolving nature of web-related internet research. He has also presented papers on a number of genealogy-related subjects and has been involved in supporting the erection of memorials in Latvia to Jews murdered during the Holocaust. He has visited Lithuania and Latvia a number of times and was a speaker at the launch of the Names and Fates Project in Riga in June 2008.

**Wednesday, April 29, 2009**

***Who Controls the Information in Your Family Tree?***

Speaker: **Margaret Ann Wilkinson**

Dr. Wilkinson is Director of the Area of Concentration in Intellectual Property, Information and Technology Law at the Faculty of Law, University of Western Ontario. As an adjunct Professor in the Richard Ivey School of Business, she is involved in the Health Sector stream. Formerly a practicing lawyer in Toronto, she is also trained as a professional librarian. Dr. Wilkinson teaches several courses, speaks and writes in the areas of intellectual property law (copyright, patents, trademarks, industrial design, confidential information, etc.), other information law (privacy, personal data protection, censorship, telecommunications regulation, etc.), and professional ethics and professionalism. She supervises graduate students in a number of disciplines who are interested in these issues.

**Wednesday, May 27, 2009, 2-4 p.m.**

**Tour of the Genealogy Department of the Toronto Reference Library, 789 Yonge Street (just north of Bloor St.), 4<sup>th</sup> floor**

One-hour tour of the library's materials (sources, local histories and city directories) followed by a visit to the Learning Centre where computers will be available for use. Registration will take place at March & April JGS (Toronto) meetings. The tour is limited to 30 people, by pre-registration only.

**Wednesday, June 24, 2009**

**Breakthroughs and Year-End Meeting:**

***Member presentations (Great Foundations and Brick Walls)***

*For updated details on all programmes, visit our website:  
[www.jgstoronto.ca](http://www.jgstoronto.ca)*

### *We Welcome These New Members to Our Society*

Brian Bloom

Rodeen Stein

Tami Rotman-Martin

Howard Weinroth

Mark Silverstein

Peninah Zilberman

### **In Memoriam**

**Diane Ellen Kriger, PhD., Talmud and Bible Scholar,  
former editor of *Shem Tov***

Peacefully at home in Ottawa on Dec. 12<sup>th</sup>, 2008, age 57, after a long, brave battle with breast cancer. We at JGS Toronto are so sorry to hear of Diane's passing. Past president, Carolynne Veffer, on hearing the tragic news, stated: "The only thing I can say is that Diane was one of the sweetest, kindest, gentlest people I ever met." One of Diane's greatest joys was editing *Shem Tov*. For her, it was a labour of love. Our deepest condolences go out to her parents, Akiva and Shirley Kriger, as well as her sisters, brother-in-laws, nieces and nephews.

surname (many are arranged first by town or type of business), so the availability of the images begs the question, "How can I search them?"

There is a standard approach to making images of text searchable, employing a (software) technology called Optical Character Recognition (OCR), which automatically converts the *images* to the *text* they depict. When many images are involved, this approach can be hundreds of times less labor-intensive than manual transcription. OCR is used by Google Book Search ([books.google.com](http://books.google.com)), for example, which, incidentally, contains many books of Jewish genealogical value. I have applied OCR to online images of more than 47,000 pages from historical directories, making it possible to search many hundreds of thousands (probably, millions) of personal names, addresses, and occupations (content varying by directory). My search engine at [genealogyindexer.org](http://genealogyindexer.org), which also includes *yizkor* books and lists of Polish military officers, currently includes the following directories, which can quickly be searched simultaneously:

#### Poland

1939 Great Poland Physicians  
1938 Economic Directory of Kielce, Krakow, Silesia Provinces  
1937\* Poland Business, School, and Organizational Directory (Selected Cities)  
1933 Polish State Forests Administration Yearbook  
1931 Polish Veterinarians  
1930, 1929, 1928, 1926/1927 Poland and Danzig Business Directory (Trade, Industry, Handicraft, and Agriculture)  
1930 Poland Industry, Business, and Finance Directory  
1925 Western Poland Business Directory (Great Poland, Pomerania, Silesia, Danzig)  
1923 Poland and Danzig Commercial Directory  
1921/1922 Poland Joint Stock Company Directory  
1909 Polish Landowners Directory  
1904 Poland Manufacturers' Directory  
1896/1897 Western Poland Business Directory (Posen, East + West Prussia, Silesia) + Polish Businesses in Germany

#### Galicia

1914/1915 Galiccia and Bukovina War Refugees Address Directory, Vol. III (excl. Lwow, Krakow)  
1912 Galiccia Telephone Directory  
1901 Galiccia Industry Directory

#### Silesia

1939/1940 Silesia Business Directory  
1927 Lower Silesia Industry, Trade, and Craft Directory  
1914 Upper Silesia Trade Directory  
1914 Upper Silesia Industry Directory

#### Posen

Small 1946, 1936/1937 Poznan Business Directory  
1930, 1917, 1916, 1914, 1913, 1911, 1910, 1908, 1905, 1903, 1901, 1900, 1899, 1898, 1893, 1891, 1890, 1885, 1884, 1879, 1876, 1872 Posen (City, some years + Suburbs) Address and

Business Directory  
1924 Poznan Telephone and Business Directory  
1907 Posen Estates Directory

#### Warsaw

1938/1939 Warsaw (City + Suburbs) Telephone Directory  
1870 Warsaw Address Directory  
1826 Warsaw Directory

#### Bialystok

1932 Bialystok Address Directory

#### Bydgoszcz

1928 Bydgoszcz Address Directory

#### Krakow

1926 Krakow Address and Business Directory + Miscellaneous Polish Directory  
1917 Krakow Calendar  
1914/1915 Krakow War Refugees Address Directory  
1910, 1907 Krakow and Podgorze Address and Business Directory  
1892 Krakow and Suburbs Address Directory

#### Lwow

1914/1915 Lwow War Refugees Address Directory  
1913, 1910, 1902, 1897, 1894, 1883, 1871 Lwow Address (some years + Business) Directory

#### Vilnius

1937 Vilnius Business Directory

#### Romania

1959 Romania Telephone Directory  
1924/1925 Romania Business and Organizational Directory, Vol. II (excl. Bucharest)

#### Bucharest

1958 Bucharest Telephone Directory  
1938, 1937 Bucharest and Ilfov Telephone Directory  
1925 Romania Business and Organizational Directory, Vol. I (Bucharest)

#### South America

1913 South America Trade Directory

#### United Kingdom

1894 Commercial Directory of the Jews of the United Kingdom (Harfield)

\*Cities in the 1937 directory: Bedzin, Bialystok, Chelmno, Czyzow Szlachecki, Grajewo, Horochow, Janow Lubelski, Jaslo, Jozefow n. Wisla, Kalisz, Kazimierz Dolny, Kowel, Krakow, Krasnik, Kutno, Leczyca, Lezajsk, Lipsko, Lodz, Luck, Lukow, Lwow, Nisko, Nowy Sacz, Nowy Targ, Olkusz, Opotow, Opole Lubelskie, Oswiecim, Otwock, Pabjanice, Piotrkow-Trybunalski, Ploonsk, Poznan, Pruszkow, Przemyysl, Pulawy,

Rabka, Radomsko, Rozwadow, Rudnik n. Sanem, Rypin, Rzeczyca Ziemska, Sandomierz, Siedlce, Sokal, Sosnowiec, Szczepieszyn, Tarlow, Tarnopol, Tarnow, Trzebina, Warszawa, Wloclawek, Wlodzimierz Wolynski, Zamosc, Zawiercie, Zgierz, Zloczow, Zolkiew, Zwierzyniec.

The images of these directories are available online from the Digital Library of Wielkopolska ([www.wbc.poznan.pl/dlibra](http://www.wbc.poznan.pl/dlibra)), the Digital Library of Zielona Gora ([zbc.uz.zgora.pl/dlibra.html](http://zbc.uz.zgora.pl/dlibra.html)), the Silesian Digital Library ([www.sbc.katowice.pl/dlibra](http://www.sbc.katowice.pl/dlibra)), the Kujawsko-Pomorska Digital Library ([kpbc.umk.pl/dlibra](http://kpbc.umk.pl/dlibra)), the Podlaska Digital Library ([pbc.biaman.pl/dlibra](http://pbc.biaman.pl/dlibra)), the Malopolska Genealogical Society ([www.mtg-malopolska.org.pl](http://www.mtg-malopolska.org.pl)), the U.S. Library of Congress ([loc.gov/rr/european/tel.html](http://loc.gov/rr/european/tel.html)), JRI-Poland/JewishGen ([jewishgen.org/jri-pl/bizdir/start.htm](http://jewishgen.org/jri-pl/bizdir/start.htm)), and the Internet Archive ([www.archive.org/details/texts](http://www.archive.org/details/texts)). Unlike Google Book Search, which is both a search engine and a source of images, [genealogyindexer.org](http://genealogyindexer.org) is only a search engine for these directories, and it will not show you matching images. It will tell you the image numbers where matches can be found, and then you must view those images on the host website, and examine each of them manually to find the matches (there is no highlighting of matches on the images). This might seem tedious, but it is a lot better than examining thousands of pages manually, and, after a few successes, I hope you will find it is worth the effort. For instructions, please see [genealogyindexer.org/help](http://genealogyindexer.org/help).

Before you start searching, though, please consider that OCR is not 100% accurate. As a result, the search engine might tell you that a match occurs on a certain image, when it actually does not, and the search engine might fail to tell you about some matches. You can often overcome inaccuracies by searching for Daitch-Mokotoff Soundex and OCR-Adjusted matches to your search term.

For some of the directories, notably the enormous 1926-1930 Poland and Danzig Business Directories and 1924/1925 Romania Business and Organizational Directory, search results are organized by geographic region, which can help you to focus on the results most likely to be relevant to your family. Unless your surname is uncommon or known to be unique to a single family, all of whose members you are researching, you might want to skip matches from geographic regions very distant from where you know relatives to have lived.

Some of the directories are arranged by town, and, if you know towns where relatives lived, you should certainly search those towns' sections manually (except for large cities, where this is impractical), *in addition to* searching by surname to discover new towns.

Many of the directories include information about people's occupations, which can sometimes help you to identify them, when their given names are not listed (often, only a first initial is listed). If you do not understand the meaning of an occupation, try an online translator such as [translate.google.com](http://translate.google.com) (includes Polish, Romanian, German, and French, all the languages used for occupations in these directo-

ries), [www.poltran.com](http://www.poltran.com) (Polish), or [dict.leo.org](http://dict.leo.org) (German); consult online occupation lists, such as [www.ics.uci.edu/~dan/genealogy/Krakow/other/occupations.htm](http://www.ics.uci.edu/~dan/genealogy/Krakow/other/occupations.htm) (Polish), [www.jewishgen.org/infofiles/RomanianOccs.htm](http://www.jewishgen.org/infofiles/RomanianOccs.htm) (Romanian), or [www.jewishgen.org/infofiles/GermanOccs.htm](http://www.jewishgen.org/infofiles/GermanOccs.htm) (German), or ask for the meaning on the appropriate JewishGen SIG mailing list.

So far, I have discussed searching the directories for surnames, but you can actually search them for any text. Sometimes, you can find relatives without even knowing their surnames, by searching for street addresses or uncommon occupations. You might know the street addresses or occupations from other sources, such as postcards or family stories. In a dramatic example, I am aware of a case where a Holocaust survivor raised by adoptive parents knows that his biological mother, name unknown, who was killed in the Holocaust, lived next door to him. Searching an appropriate directory by street address could help this survivor discover that most basic piece of his Jewish ancestry, his mother's name.

Efforts are underway to digitize and make searchable additional directories. Please contact me if you want to play an active role, by volunteering your time, money, or directories in your possession for digitization.

Happy searching! Please share your successes with me.

*Outside of genealogy, Logan Kleinwaks has a strong interest in promoting reading worldwide, and recently founded a non-profit organization, the Book Wish Foundation ([www.bookwish.org](http://www.bookwish.org)), to provide aid such as books, reading glasses, solar lighting, and libraries for people in crisis, starting with 60,000 Darfur refugees in eastern Chad.*

## Ask a Society Member

**Q:** *Who is a relative in terms of generating a family tree?* Recently I found my name on a family tree on a website called Geni, <http://www.geni.com>. "Everybody is Related". I was put on a tree of my sister's daughter-in-law. Her husband is my nephew and she must feel that I am family. Should I be on her tree? Is this too broad a definition of family?

*Long-time member of JGS Toronto*

**A:** Editors: Genealogy is quickly becoming one of the fastest growing pastimes around the world. This in large part is because of the ease of conducting research, due to the enormous growth of data on the internet. We believe that the founders of Geni are attempting to show that all Jews are somehow related. Their intent is no doubt laudable. But can that lead to individuals feeling that their privacy has been violated?

We welcome the views of our readership. Please email [shemtov@jgstoronto.ca](mailto:shemtov@jgstoronto.ca) if you wish to respond to this question, or have another genealogical matter that you would like addressed.



JGS Toronto at Beth Tzedec
TRACING OUR JEWISH ROOTS: SELECTIONS FROM
THE JEWISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF CANADA
(TORONTO)'S LIBRARY COLLECTION
Curated by Elaine Cheskes

In Association With
The Reuben & Helene Dennis Museum, Beth Tzedec
& The North York Central Library

Tracing Our Jewish Roots was on display at Beth Tzedec
Synagogue throughout the months of January and Febru-
ary, 2009. The exhibit consisted of a selection of Jewish
genealogical reference books from the JGS Library that provide
resources for researching family histories. As a result, a pan-
oramic view of the history of the Jewish people evolved.

A most interesting feature of the exhibit was the description
of how a baseball game at Christie Pits in downtown Toronto
on August 16th, 1933 escalated into a full-blown riot wherein
our young Jewish Canadian boys were viciously attacked by
gangs of anti-Semitic hoodlums.

The Toronto Star in December 1992 published excerpts of
an article that had appeared in its pages on August 17th, 1993,
the day after the Christie Pits riots. We are pleased to include a
reproduction of this article in this issue of Shem Tov.

ADVERTISING RATES

SHEM TOV is now accepting display advertising for publication.
Advertisers are requested to supply camera-ready art and payment
by May 2009 for the Summer 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.

Table with 3 columns: Ad Type, One Issue, Four Issues (one year). Rows include Full Page, Half Page, Quarter Page, and Eighth Page.

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 91006, 2901 Bayview Ave.,
Toronto, Ontario M2K 1H0.

THE TORONTO STAR Thursday, December 3, 1992 H3

SIX HOURS OF RIOTING
FOLLOWS HITLER SHOUT

Jewish-Gentile Ball Game

CHRISTIE
PITS

Thousands battled in Canada's
worst anti-Semite riots

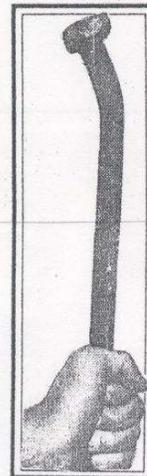
One of Toronto Jewry's
darkest periods exploded
into life On Aug. 16, 1933
during — of all things —
a baseball game.

A large Swastika flag
was unfurled during a
game between a predomi-
nantly Jewish side called
the Harbord Playground
and a team called St. Pe-
ter's.

"All hell broke lose,"
said the manager of the
Harbord team. Within
minutes, hundreds of peo-
ple were rampaging in
Willowvale Park, part of
Christie Pits, in a full-
blown race riot.

At its height, an estimat-
ed 10,000 people were
caught up in the violence.

Here are excerpts from
The Star story that ap-
peared the following day:



lead pipe.
On Bloor St. crowds
gathered in Jewish stores.
Damage was reported done
to a Jewish stationery shop.
Police were unable to scatter
them.

Three Jewish boys,
who according to police,
had been hurling jeers at
the Swastika organization
were attacked by a mob
who threatened to kill
them.

The three boys fled into
the office of a gasoline sta-
tion on the northeast cor-
ner of Christie and Bloor
where they slammed the
door and locked it.

The crowd of about 200
which had chased them in-
to the service station, was
attacked in the rear by po-
lice, who attempted to fight
their way into the impris-
oned boys.

Nine constables attacked
the rear of the crowd, which turned on
them and slugged toe to toe, until
reinforcements of police arrived.

By 11:30 p.m., the crowd had be-
come so unruly, that they were even
blocking the street cars.

Orders were given three motorcycle
men to charge them. They lined up
 abreast, and then charged the mob
with their exhaust pipes spreading the
heavy choking ill-smelling exhaust
throughout the mob, which broke and
fled.

A used-car lot near Bloor and Clin-
ton Sts. was the base of operations for
a large gang of hoodlums. One by one
they collected there and hid them-
selves behind and even beneath the
cars. At a given signal they would sally
forth and descend on a rival gang.

It was on one of these occasions
that a youth was knocked to the
ground and set upon.

"I happened to be right beside him
and I could not stand for it when they
began to kick him and pile on top of

Blood flowed freely, faces were cut and bruised.

In the third inning came the next shout of "Heil Hitler." Four Jewish youths rose to their feet. Despite the fact that they were outnumbered almost 10-to-1, they drew sawed-off lead pipes and started for the two they believed to be the leaders of the Gentile faction.

The umpire called the last man out and the game had ended, St. Peters the winners. The crowd cheered rather feebly and waited quietly for several minutes. Suddenly a white flag, marked with the Swastika emblem, appeared at one end of the field and a mild form of pandemonium broke loose. The flag was displayed by several young noisy Swastika enthusiasts, who were immediately besieged by a flock of more grimly silent Jewish youths intent on its capture.

The combatants fought desperately for possession of the Swastika emblem. The Jews emerged victorious for the moment, Murray Krugle, 82 Walton St., clutching the symbol under his arm.

But the fate of the much-coveted white flag was by no means settled. Several more efforts were put forth by its champions to regain it before the augmented forces of police realizing it was the bone of contention, forcibly seized its tattered remnants and their holders for the moment and hustled them away.

At the time the police were on Bloor St., foot constables trying to clear the jam of traffic, the mounted constables riding their horses up and down the sidewalks.

Jewish youths began to regather in the vicinity of College St. and Brunswick Ave. (when it was rumored that a Jewish youth had been killed). Augmented by numbers who had never been near the park they prepared to return to seek revenge. Several trucks, each loaded with about 25 youths, left for the park.

Although police on horseback, motorcycle and foot had formed a circle around the park the trucks succeeded in breaking through. They were met by the Swastikas waving blackjacks, broom handles, stones, fists, steel and

him," related Solly Osolky, aged 21, of Elm St., after he himself had been grievously attacked.

In his haste to escape the cruel blows, Osolky fell heavily to the pavement two or three times. Each time he did so he was subjected to more blows and kicks.

The gang was broken up and Osolky darted up a dark lane.

The battered boy was followed by several of the more daring attackers, one of whom yelled: "Where is he? I've got a big knife."

Seen by The Star afterwards, Osolky plainly showed that he had been the victim of a serious attack. He was limping and the left side of his face was badly bruised.

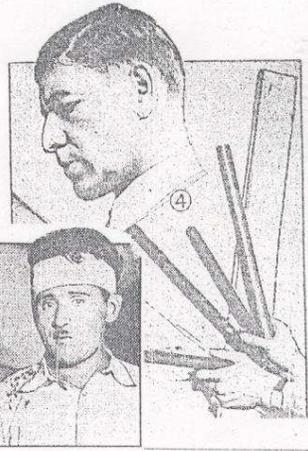
"Please get me right," he said. "I wasn't trying to start anything. I only butted in when a little fellow was getting a dirty deal. I don't think they piled into me because I am a Jew, but because I interfered with them. That gang was ready to kill and I sure laid low in the lane when they talked about ripping me from stem to stern with a knife."

One of the young men who admitted his attachment to the swastika organization flaunted his bruises and cuts to a Star reporter.

"I was holding on to one corner of it," the lad, Charles Boustead, of Sydenham St., stated "A Jew took a rush at me with a 12-inch iron bolt and belted me one across the cheek.

"At the conclusion of the game we unfurled our emblem and that started the works. I'll admit it," he told The Star, "if that flag had never been uncovered everything would have been quiet.

By 1.30 a.m. Willowvale Park and the streets in the vicinity were practically deserted.



Star photos of riot weapons and injured. Left: Al Eckler, David Fischer. Top: Solly Osolky

## Study Yiddish in Vilnius

The 28th Annual European Summer Program in Yiddish is an intensive one-month program in Yiddish language and literature held from July 26 to August 21, 2009 at the Vilnius Yiddish Institute, Vilnius University.

Founded at Oxford University in 1982, the programme was relocated to Vilnius, Lithuania in 1998.

For more information, please visit [www.dovidkatz.net](http://www.dovidkatz.net), the website of Dovid Katz, Director of the Yiddish Program, Professor at Vilnius University, researcher, author, Yiddish linguistics specialist.

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## IJG Forms Advisory Board

The International Institute for Jewish Genealogy (<http://ijg.org>), based at Hebrew University in Jerusalem, has just announced the establishment of an Advisory Board to voice its strong support for the Institute's goals and activities.

One of IJG's aims is to have family history as a recognized academic discipline. It has been invited to present a panel on the subject at the World Union for Jewish Studies Conference in Jerusalem in August 2009.

The Advisory Board consists of:

- Irwin Cotler, member of the Canadian Parliament and former Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada
- Baroness Ruth Deech, member of the British House of Lords; former Principal, St. Anne's College, Oxford
- Alan M. Dershowitz, Felix Frankfurter Professor of Law, Harvard Law School
- Abraham Foxman, National Director, Anti-Defamation League
- Stuart Eizenstat, former U.S. Deputy Secretary of the Treasury and Ambassador to the European Union
- Sir Martin Gilbert, historian and author, Oxford
- Arthur Kurzweil, author and a founding father of contemporary Jewish genealogy
- Rabbi Israel Meir Lau, Chairman of Yad Vashem and Chief Rabbi of Tel Aviv. Former Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi of Israel
- Senator Joseph I. Lieberman, U.S. Senator and former vice-presidential candidate
- David G. Marwell, Director, Museum of Jewish Heritage, New York
- Sir Malcolm L. Rifkind, Member of Parliament and former UK Foreign Secretary
- Henry A. Waxman, Member U.S. House of Representatives and Chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee.

## Calling All Latvians!

Shamir, the organization of the Jewish community in Riga, Latvia, is hoping to publish the Latvian Jewish Encyclopedia, covering the period from 1561 to 1991, as a remembrance of the Latvian Jewish community. It is seeking information about Jews born in that country or with a connection thereto. Please contact Executive Director, Victoria Shaldova, at [shamir@apollo.lv](mailto:shamir@apollo.lv) to provide data or to make inquiries.

Shamir's English website is <http://www.shamir.lv/index.php?lang=en>

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## Expect the Unexpected: Unusual Resources Add Life to Family Tree

By Peter Jassem

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Most genealogical researchers try to accumulate the largest possible number of civil records such as birth, marriage and death certificates, and by using sophisticated software arrange them in elaborate graphs representing family trees, often the size of giant sequoias of the West Coast. But these trees are often lifeless, petrified remnants of lost generations. This is why it is so important to go beyond these simple dry facts and try discovering the environment, the circumstances, the background, and the historical material of the time as well as the looks registered on old photographs, the untold stories and the remaining artefacts in ancestral towns.

While my talk at JGS of Canada (Toronto) on December 17, 2008 was based on my specific research confined to the geographic territory of Western Galicia and on findings from my recent visit there, the general conclusions and research tips were applicable to other areas of Poland and in fact to other countries of one's ancestry. One never knows what one may find. During my visits to various archives, I never stopped to be curious and I constantly asked the archivists: "is there anything else you may have?" When there was no more, I asked: "Is there anywhere else I should go?"

Let me give you a single example of how persistence pays and may lead to interesting discoveries. In the branch of the State Archives in Bochnia near Kraków, I reviewed the local Book of Residents dated 1901 and found the following listing of my great grandfather's family: Wolf JASSEM, 44, b. 1857 in Boguchwała near Rzeszów, Galicia, owner of the property; Cyrla JASSEM nee Schneeweiss, 45, b. 1856 in Słocina near Rzeszów, Galicia, followed by the same set of details about their five children Mojżesz, Aron Arnold, Emilia, Rebeka and Kalman Klemens. The heading had the street address "ulica Gazaris 417. I asked the archivist whether they had anything else pertaining to the property. In few minutes, he came back with a folder containing a building permit application for putting zinc cladding on the roof of Wolf's house and for building a new stove and a brick chimney. The application was filed in 1894 and included a floor plan, a cross-section and an elevation of the house. I was thrilled as I could now picture how this family of seven lived in a tiny, squeezed like sardines in a can, but, thanks to my great grandfather Wolf's improvement of the house, it was dry and warm. Another document revealed that my great grandmother was not happy with the neighbour's septic tank which was not properly sealed and released bad odour. I hope her complaint resulted in the town's intervention and the five children could soon breathe clean air again as they studied at the table in the warm kitchen. And they did study hard. Years later, the three boys received doctorates in law from Jagiellonian University, records of which were available in the archives of that institution. But as I was still in Bochnia then, I bought the town's map and found out that Gazaris Street still existed. I walked towards it as fast as I could and as I got there, I realized that the houses on both sides of the street were not old enough to witness the turn of 19th century and the street num-

bers were likely changed. Suddenly, I noticed a single small house offset from the street, looking old but well-kept, furnished with a new porch and a later addition on the side. The roof displayed neatly clad zinc sheets and it was topped with a brick chimney. It was the only really old house around. I recognized it instantly! Good job, Wolf: the new roof protected it well for over 100 years. I looked at the kitchen window and tried to imagine a glimpse of Cyrla preparing dinner for the family while the smoke would have drawn spiral lines over the chimney. Bearded Wolf was perhaps shaking mud off his boots as he entered the door on the left and the aroma of his favourite pickle soup greeted him at the threshold. This was my priceless moment of virtual reality. Had I not asked the archivist for additional documents, I would have never had this experience.

I would like to encourage everybody, whether of Galician roots or other, to go where your ancestor lived and look creatively for their traces. Don't limit yourselves to basics. Think in terms of modern times. Are there building department documents? Are there education department documents? What about the Chamber of Commerce records? And why not try to find legal papers? Is the State Archive the only repository of old documents? What about museums or schools of long history? You may leave your iPod at home, but for the heritage trip, you must take a notebook, a camera and a tape recorder and use them all the time. Have a set of good walking shoes with you. If you don't speak the local language, have someone with you who does. Do as much research and planning as you can before your trip but do not stick to it. Expect the unexpected.

**Examples of genealogical records** used in my research in addition to "usual records" such as birth, death and marriage certificates also known as civil or metrical records:

- Census records
- Conscription lists
- Books of residents (with complete street address) organized by households; permanent residents only)
- Population Registration Books (similar but organized by name; may include temporary residents)
- Property records (including building department records mentioned above)
- Cemetery records and tombstone inscriptions (I located names of some 25 Holocaust victims related to my great grandfather that were added to his tombstone in the Krakow cemetery right after the war)
- Interwar Polish ID application forms bearing beautiful sepia photographs
- Nazi ghetto registration forms for Jews in Krakow (applications for Kennkarten) with attached photographs.
- Oddity: war-time passport application by a Jewish person
- Austro-Hungarian school records
- Pre-war school records (like ones I found in the archives of a 211 year-old elementary school in Krakow

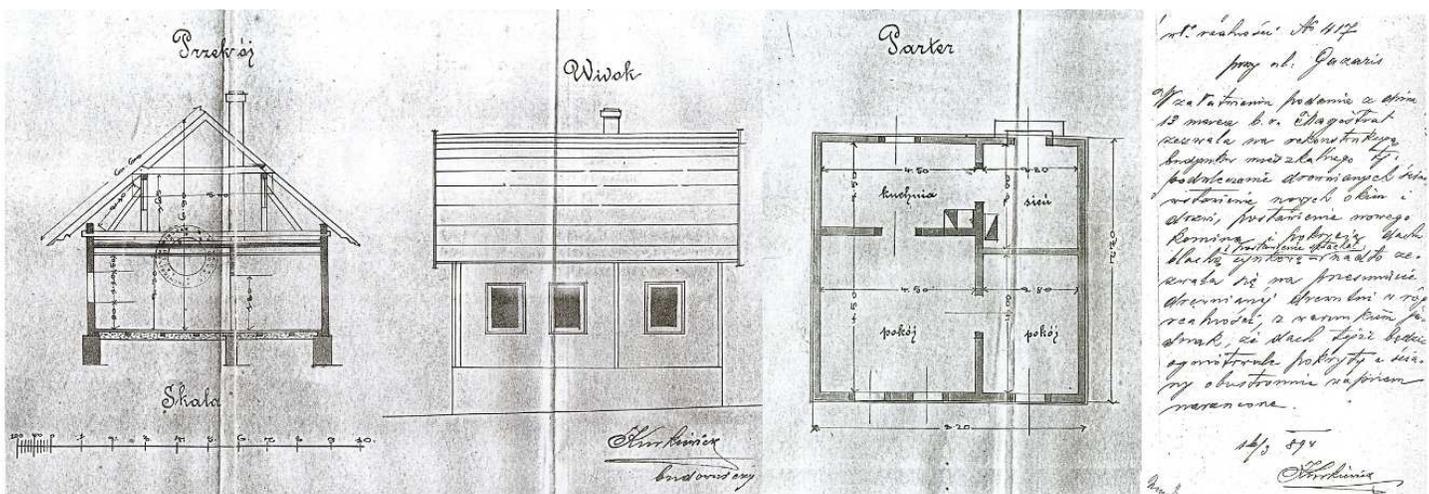
- University Records (like the graduate and doctoral students records at the archives of 644 year-old Jagiellonian University of Krakow)
- Jewish student organization records with lists of members and activists in the same archive
- Professional development files in Krakow archives (as those of my relatives who were lawyers)
- Business registration cards with lots of information
- Legal documents pertaining to businesses and properties
- Chamber of commerce records
- Inheritance proceedings
- Registration cards of Holocaust Survivors (available at the Jewish Historical Institute, Warsaw)
- Post-war registers confirming Polish citizenship include name changes
- Judenrat Zakopane file (at the Muzeum Tatrzańskie, Zakopane) with lists of Zakopane Jews and war-time documentation
- Lists of Jewish orphans of Zakopane orphanage and documentation (subject of a book and a film “My Hundred Children”)
- Postwar statements and legal proceedings to prove and declare death of a Holocaust victim (Monitor Polski)
- Address and phone books, business directories – consecutive addresses and businesses can be found as well as commercial ads
- Pre-war newspapers and magazines may include personal information as well as wealth of knowledge about the socio-historical background
- Buildings – synagogues and communal buildings frequented by ancestors (visit the existing or find photographs of annihilated buildings)
- Articles and documents about the history of these buildings
- Interviews with local historians; tape or write notes (I did so in Zakopane, Bochnia and Lancut)
- Maps – facsimiles of old (such as “Mapa Galicyi”) and new very detailed maps and atlases of Poland
- Excellent travelogues such as “Where the Tailor Was a Poet”, an illustrated guide published by Pascal.



The Family of Wolf Jassem – picture taken in Krakow



The 417 Gazaris Street home in 2004



Plans of the family home of Wolf Jassem at 417 Gazaris Street, Bochnia and Renovation Permit of 1894

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# The History of Ukraine 1740-1940, the Changing Borders and the Jewish Communities of Ukraine During This Time Period

by Harvey Glasner

**A** report on the January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2009 lecture by Professor Magocsi in conjunction with the Canadiana Section of the North York Central Library, Toronto Public Library

Paul Robert Magocsi is Holder of the Chair of Ukrainian Studies at the University of Toronto, since 1980 a Professor of History and Political Science, also at the University of Toronto, and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada since 1996. He is also President of the World Congress of Rusyns and author of nearly 700 publications on Ukraine and Central Europe. Professor Magocsi completed his undergraduate studies at Rutgers University in 1966, and was awarded a Ph.D. from Princeton University in 1972. He then went to Harvard University, where he was a member of the Society of Fellows between 1973 and 1976. Professor Magocsi has also taught at Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

He delivered a very interesting and entertaining lecture dealing with geopolitics in the region and its effect on Jews of the Ukraine; he also talked about border changes and the realignment of countries.

It is interesting to note that the Ukraine had, at one time or another, dominion over the Pale of Settlement (Lithuania, Poland), parts of Hungary, Romania, and Czechoslovakia, as well as what we now know as the former Soviet Republic of the Ukraine.

Jews did advance socially and culturally over the centuries in central Europe (they initially migrated from Greece and Turkey).

A very large percentage of distilleries, factories, flour mills, lumber mills, sugar refineries as well as taverns and inns were owned by Jews, keeping in mind the fact that most lived in poverty, in small communities (*shtetls*). Jews improved their situation most rapidly under the reigns of the Hapsburgs - Maria Theresa and her son, Franz Josef.

In the historical period that Professor Magocsi dealt with in his lecture, Jewish culture took a number of spiritual and creative paths i.e. Chassidism, the Reform Movement, Zionism, state recognition of Yiddish as a literary language, etc. With increasing freedoms, Jews were obligated to serve in the military and many rose to hold senior ranks. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Jews made up 25% of the Communist Party despite the fact that their numbers amounted to between 5 and 10% of the general population (depending upon the region).

Professor Magocsi also addressed the sad story of anti-Semitism in central Europe by giving us some historical context to the onset of the pogroms, blood libel trials, and forced collectivization.

We hope to have Professor Magocsi return at another time so that he can continue his narrative, dealing with the rise of fascism, the Holocaust and the post World War II Soviet experience.

## Selected books and publications

*Galicja: A Historical Survey and Bibliographic Guide* (University of Toronto Press, 1983).

*The Shaping of a National Identity: Subcarpathian Rus', 1848-1948* (Harvard University Press, 1978).

*A History of Ukraine* (University of Toronto Press, 1996)

*The Roots of Ukrainian Nationalism: Galicia As Ukraine's Piedmont*, (University of Toronto Press, 2002).

*Encyclopedia of Rusyn History and Culture, Second Revised Edition* (University of Toronto Press, 2002)

*Historical Atlas of Central Europe, Second Revised Edition* (University of Toronto Press, 2002).

*An Illustrated Historical of Ukraine* (University of Toronto Press, 2007).



**Professor Magocsi giving presentation at North York Central Library**

## Stay Tuned For New TV Show!

An American version of "Who Do You Think You Are?" will be aired on NBS this April on Monday nights at 8 p.m. Some of the celebrities who will be shown researching their personal histories will be Lisa Kudrow, Sarah Jessica Parker and Susan Sarandon. Those of you who watched Canadian episodes saw Avi Lewis and Steven Page respectively travel to Russia and Poland to trace their Jewish heritage.



## A PERSONAL JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY

by Karen Lasky



*This is Part 1 of a 3-part series*

Imagine growing up and living most of your adult life without knowing your true history and knowing it was forbidden to ask. I am a child of Holocaust survivors, both of whom were the sole survivors in their respective families. With both of my parents now deceased, I realized that I had repressed the hunger for my history for over 40 years...While I recognized that most children like me only possessed bits and pieces of their family history, some more than others, I still knew very little. Additionally, I had to deal with the anger of knowing that the Holocaust had stolen my history, and coming to terms with the fact that my parents could not speak of horrors they endured, it was sealed in secrecy.

I could no longer deny that this was my “legacy” and now, turning 60, I had to move forward in this very personal mission, alone...No sense of where to begin, I discovered that UJA Federation was organizing an Adult March of the Living marking the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Liberation, May 2005. There it was, a way to propel me into my parents’ histories and to walk in their footsteps through Auschwitz, then, wind up in Israel to heal, and experience the educational portion of the March. I committed immediately, but still could not escape my fear surrounding stepping on the soil where my families, and millions of our ancestors, were murdered. And what would my parents think of this? I could have never considered this during their lifetimes; this place ceased to exist in their minds in their desperation to escape the past. I was about to discover Poland, which for me existed only in its black and white images that we all have become accustomed to.

This Adult March consisted of 45 local participants, many 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> generation survivors. This annual solemn trek from Auschwitz to Birkenau had great historical significance as Jews in unprecedented numbers came from all over the globe to memorialize the 60th anniversary. The experience transformed me; however, my thirst for knowledge grew with each day. I was so geographically close to what I knew as my parents’ *shtets*, yet not able to visit or discover if there was anything of their pasts.

I returned home with an even greater commitment to discover my roots. I was born in the Bergen Belsen DP camp following Liberation and was in possession of my parents’ 1948 Passports to Canada. Their birthplaces, DP camp addresses and travel information were documented. From here, I communicated with the Bergen Belsen Museum and Auschwitz Museum and any other tracing service I could locate; every piece of information became critical to my research. Some 2 years later, I learned that the German Government had committed to construct a Memorial Museum on the grounds of Bergen Belsen. As this was my birthplace, I was invited to the Official Opening for October 2007, which would host its survivors from all over the world and memorialize those lost in this Camp. I struggled with the idea of visiting what I knew as “unspeakable Ger-

many”, but this was an opportunity I could not ignore. The pull was undeniably powerful, and once again, I could get close to Poland, and even closer to my roots. The monumental task of finding all the missing information lay in the journey ahead, fully aware that to have a successful result, I must be well-researched, possess correct information and have a definitive strategy. My personal search for my parents’ birthplaces was just beginning, at this very late time in my life.

*Part II: October 2007 - Arriving in Poland*

### Holocaust Memorials

by Shelley Stillman

While recently driving near Aix-en-Provence, France, a small paragraph in a guide book (Baedeker’s *Provence/Cote d’Azur*) about the internment camp in the town, Les Milles, caught my interest: “During the second World War, when France was occupied by the Germans, some 3000 German Jews who had fled from Nazi Germany were interned here in the local brick-works. Some escaped, but the remainder – together with a further 2000 Jews betrayed by the Vichy Government – were sent to German concentration camps. There is a plaque in memory of this sad tale to be seen near the loading bay at the railway station.”

My husband cautioned me not to expect to find much, perhaps a small plaque. What we found in Les Milles was much more: in one large room, murals painted in 1940 - 1941 covered the walls, where caricatures and allegorical images told of the hardships of the time; a boxcar sat on a siding near the abandoned train station, and a stone marker told the story of those who were sent to their deaths. Since my trip to Poland in 2005 on the March of the Living, I have felt a responsibility not only to visit Holocaust memorial sites, but also – especially now with digital photography and the internet – an obligation to photograph and share them.

There are Holocaust memorials the world over, many of which list names of individuals. In Toronto, the Holocaust Memorial in Earl Bales Park and the Jewish War Veterans’ memorial at Mt. Sinai Cemetery are just two examples. If you go to Steven Lasky’s website entitled The Museum of Family History <http://www.museumoffamilyhistory.com/mfh-a.htm>, under Site Map, you can find pictures of monuments that burial societies have placed at entrances to their cemeteries, including those in Canada.

I would like to invite you to join me in taking photos of any memorials you find, whether it be at the local cemetery or on your travels, and submit them to Steven Lasky for posting on his website.

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## SITE-SEEING

### A Compendium of Useful Websites for Genealogists

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#### Polish-Jewish Ancestry

For research on Polish Jewish ancestry, see [www.shoreshim.org](http://www.shoreshim.org) (*shoreshim* being the Hebrew word for “roots”). Here are a few things of interest to note on this site:

- the decree demanding that, beginning with January 1st, 1788, each Polish Jew should have a constant surname: <http://www.shoreshim.org/en/infoEmperorJoseph.asp>
- searchable database of documents from Krakow and some other towns: <http://www.shoreshim.org/en/dbSearchKrakow.asp>.

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#### New at Yad Vashem

The Artifacts Collection of Yad Vashem has a new website where you can see pictures of some of the thousands of items at Yad Vashem, along with a story or description to go along with them:

[http://www1.yadvashem.org/exhibitions/bearing\\_witness/index.html](http://www1.yadvashem.org/exhibitions/bearing_witness/index.html)

Stories of the Collection’s artifacts will be added to the site from time to time.

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#### New Canadian Data

The Canadian 1891 census is now available online. See: <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/whats-new/013-373-e.html>  
Please note the new feature where people can suggest corrections to records.

סגס

#### Preview of Europeana Site

<http://www.europeana.eu/portal/>

This is a prototype (beta version) of an exciting new site to be officially launched in 2010, linking you to 2 million digital items from Europe's museums and galleries, archives, libraries and audio-visual collections. The site is funded by the European Commission and the member states.

סגס

#### Ancestry.ca & JewishGen Alliance

Ancestry.ca, and JewishGen have partnered, the result being that millions of JewishGen historical records are now available for free on Ancestry.ca. There is now the capability to search JewishGen’s 300 plus historical record collections in combination with the seven billion names and 26,000 historical collections available on Ancestry.ca.

[www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca)      [www.jewishgen.org](http://www.jewishgen.org)

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### Co-Sponsorship of Programs

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If you are interested in exploring the idea of sponsoring one of our monthly meetings to honour a family tree breakthrough, a family event or to memorialize someone special, please contact me to discuss a program topic or speaker which would meet your needs as a sponsor, as well as the interests of our members.

As indicated in the column by Harvey Glasner about our January, 2009 program (see p. 10), the event was held at the North York Central Library, and was jointly sponsored with The Canadiana Room of the Library which hosts and looks after our Society’s book collection. As part of our outreach efforts, we intend to annually hold a jointly sponsored meeting with The Canadiana Room.

We would also like to have one meeting a year jointly with a synagogue or community group where there might be interest (or where interest can be generated) in genealogical matters. If you can suggest a synagogue or community group, please contact me:

Les Kelman

Chair, Programming Committee

[lkelman@jgstoronto.ca](mailto:lkelman@jgstoronto.ca)

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### Web Site for 29th International Conference on Jewish Genealogy

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The 29th International Conference on Jewish Genealogy will be held in Philadelphia from August 2–7, 2009 at the Sheraton Philadelphia Center City Hotel.

Please check the website [www.philly2009.org](http://www.philly2009.org) for the latest details on registration.

Keynote Speaker: Father Patrick Desbois, the French priest whose mission is to locate every Ukrainian mass grave and site of Jews murdered during the Holocaust. President of the Yahad-In-Unum Association, and author of the newly-published *Holocaust by Bullets: A Priest’s Journey to Uncover the Truth Behind the Murder of 1.5 Million Jews*

Click on “Conference Discussion Group” on the Conference website to post messages and ask and answer questions. This is a moderated discussion group.

Win free registration at the IAJGS Conference! Enter and win the Jewish Genealogy Month Annual Poster/Flyer Competition. For more detailed information, go to: <http://www.museumoffamilyhistory.com/mfh-iajgs.htm>  
Deadline is April 1, 2009