A RESOURCE FOR DISCOVERING WHERE RELATIVES LIVED

By Logan Kleinwaks
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My 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 telephone directories with national coverage (try 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 surname.

Cont’d on Page 4
World Webcams: Visit Your Ancestral Towns Without Jetlag

by Carolynne Veffer

When 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, Białystok, Częstochowa, Gdańsk, Hrubieszów, Kielce, Łódź, Łomża, Lublin, Radom, Rzeszów, Szczecin, Tarnów, 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

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!

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Simply send your request to shemtov@jgstoronto.ca.

We thank you for your consideration.
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.

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)

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.), 4th 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

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. 12th, 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, CarolynnVeffer, 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.
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), 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, 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**
- 1912 Galicia Telephone Directory
- 1901 Galicia 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 Pozen (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

**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 Szlacheckie, 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, Opata, Opole Lubelskie, Oswiecim, Otwock, Pabjanice, Piotrkow -Trybunalski, Plonsk, Poznan, Pruszkow, Przemysl, Pulawy,

The images of these directories are available online from the Digital Library of Wielkopolska (www.wbc.poznan.pl/dlibra), the Digital Library of Zielona Gora (zbcs.uz.zgora.pl/dlibra.html), the Silesian Digital Library (www.sbc.katowice.pl/dlibra), the Kujawsko-Pomorska Digital Library (kpbc.umk.pl/dlibra), the Podlaska Digital Library (pbc.biaman.pl/dlibra), the Malopolska Genealogical Society (www.mtg-malopolska.org.pl), the U.S. Library of Congress (loc.gov/rr/european/tel.html), JRI-Poland/JewishGen (jewishgen.org/jri-pl/bizdir/start.htm), and the Internet Archive (www.archive.org/details/texts). Unlike Google Book Search, which is both a search engine and a profit organization, the Book Wish Foundation (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.

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), 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.

Happy searching! Please share your successes with me.

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 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 February, 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 panoramic 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*.

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**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.

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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 91006, 2901 Bayview Ave., Toronto, Ontario M2K 1H0.
IIJG Forms Advisory Board

The International Institute for Jewish Genealogy (http://iiig.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 IIJG’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

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 to provide data or to make inquiries.


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, the website of Dovid Katz, Director of the Yiddish Program, Professor at Vilnius University, researcher, author, Yiddish linguistics specialist.
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 Boguchwala 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 and medicine, while the smoke would have drawn spiral lines over the chimneys. 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

8 March 2009 Shem Tov
• 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 Tatrzanskie, 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 sociohistorical 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.
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 20th 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.
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 60th 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 2nd & 3rd 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’ shtels, 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

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.
Polish-Jewish Ancestry

For research on Polish Jewish ancestry, see 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

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

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.

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.

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 www.jewishgen.org

Co-Sponsorship of Programs

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

Web Site for 29th International Conference on Jewish Genealogy

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 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