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# שם טוב SHEM TOV

JEWISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF CANADA (TORONTO)

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## Researching the Records of the International Tracing Service in Bad Arolsen, Germany

By Harvey Glasner

On November 4<sup>th</sup>, Michael Goldstein, a professional genealogist who is the current IAJGS President and also President of the Israel Genealogical Society, spoke at Shaarei Shomayim Synagogue during Holocaust Education Week. His topic was accessing the Red Cross records from the International Tracing Service (ITS) in Bad Arolsen, Germany.

The ITS mission statement expresses the desire to “serve the victims of Nazi persecution and their families by maintaining an archive that documents the fate of the victims”. The Arolsen repository contains millions of records compiled in one central archive. The ITS provides historical records of applications concerning victims of the Holocaust, victims being not only those who perished in camps and ghettos but also those who survived them. These records are not online and there is no intention to place them on the internet. The only other organizations that have copies of shared records are Yad Vashem in Israel and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C.

It is important to note that the Bad Arolsen records are very comprehensive, being comprised of concentration camp lists, death records, ship manifests of survivors, deportation lists, personal effects, and the wartime history of the persecuted.

The procedure that must be followed in order to obtain information is for the researcher to write to the ITS regarding a family member (forms can be downloaded from the website: [www.its-arolsen.org](http://www.its-arolsen.org)). Typically, a response to the application will be made in 6 to 12 weeks. The ITS will photocopy records pertaining to the individual(s) and send them to the claimant. The vast majority of the records that the ITS stores was obtained from the Allied forces. The records that came into possession of the Soviets are located in Moscow.

Michael has personally visited Bad Arolsen on two occasions. He was one of 40 Jewish genealogists that visited the archives 2 years ago, shortly after the ITS was opened to the public.

The archive contains a “central index” with approximately 17 million personal files (not all the records pertain to Jews). In-person researchers must enter a name (first and last) with significant dates, if available, on a computer and the system will do a search (soundex is employed). If records for an individual



Michael Goldstein of Israel speaks at Shaarei Shomayim Synagogue during Holocaust Education Week

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are found, the researcher will see a screen that shows documents pertaining to that individual. The staff will bring the actual paper files to the researcher on request. (This latter service will soon be discontinued as these documents are over 60 years old and need to be preserved).

The screen will also give the researcher information as to who else is enquiring about that individual. Many times, relatives are found that way!

The Bad Arolsen records offer wonderful opportunities to find out about the fate of missing relatives and can bring to light relations that were never known to you (by discovering others researching common ancestors). Finally, and possibly most importantly, the records help to preserve the continuity of the history of the Jewish people.

*Editors' note:* Several years ago, CBS' *60 Minutes* aired a segment about the opening of these records to the public. To see a May 15, 2006 article about the ITS archives that appears on the *60 Minutes* website, go to:

<http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2006/05/15/world/main1618307.shtml?tag=contentMain;contentBody>

## 30<sup>th</sup> IAJGS International Conference

The annual conference of the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies will be taking place in Los Angeles from July 11-16, 2010 at the JW Marriott Hotel at L.A. Live, a downtown LA entertainment and cultural complex.

Arthur Kurzweil, author of the book *From Generation to Generation*, has been designated "Genealogist in Residence" for the Conference. He is scheduled to give two hands-on workshops, *Climbing Your Jewish Family Tree* and *Holocaust Research: How and Why to Locate Information about What Happened to Your Family During the Holocaust*. In addition, Mr. Kurzweil is an amateur magician and will perform his show, *Searching for God in a Magic Shop*.

Visit <http://www.jgsia2010.com>

To sign up for the conference newsletter, go to: <http://www.jgsla2010.com/about/sign-up-for-the-announcements-newsletter/>

Conference blog:

<http://www.jgsla2010.com/blog/2009/10/conference-firsts-from-iajgs-2010-conference-central/>

Deadline for papers is January 15, 2010:  
<http://www.jgsia2010.com/conference-program/>

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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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## SHE, ALONE...

by Karen Lasky, 2003



Be very still, my children  
 Don't speak or utter a sound  
 Her Father's calm words upon their ears  
 The silence can help us disappear  
 Perhaps they'll pass us over, my children  
 So have no fear  
 Hurry, hurry, my children  
 Her Father's words, more firmly now  
 No time to prepare for unexpected leaving  
 We will stay together, a family  
 So have no fear  
 Walk steady and proud, my children  
 The journey is long and cold  
 Her Father's words bring little comfort  
 To their fearful hearts, wildly beating  
 Still we are together, a family  
 No need to fear  
 Step up, on board, my children  
 His encouraging words, quieter now  
 Deafened by crude meaningless shouts  
 That cut through the night with such precision  
 Closely they huddle in darkness together, a family  
 No need to fear  
 Stand Tall and steady, my children  
 Her Father's urging words, hardly audible now  
 Silenced by repetitious sounds of travel  
 Endlessly, churning and turning  
 Still, he speaks, we are nine together, a family  
 So have no fear

Jump, Jump, never question, my children  
 It's the *only* way you will survive  
 Hear this desperate pledge and  
 Spring, from this travel to death  
 And take with you, each other, your family  
 And have no fear  
 Hurry, Hurry, run with the night  
 With these guiding words, take speedy flight  
 Take no look back, there is nothing here  
 Only breathless sounds now upon her ears  
 She halts, shuddering, as if frozen by fear  
 Realizing, no longer, a family,  
 Alone,  
 Was it *She, She* alone, that heard her Father's plea

## Family Surname Timelines on Google

From the *Eastman Newsletter*

Reprinted with permission of Dick Eastman

W. David Samuelsen told me of a neat trick that was news to me: you can find family surname timelines on Google. In fact, it only takes a second or two to find timelines of events involving your family name.

To find a timeline, go to <http://www.google.com> and enter the following:

### **surname family history**

The only thing is you have to substitute the surname of interest in place of the word "surname" in the above example. For instance, to find timelines of my family name, I had to enter:

### **Eastman family history**

Next, Google will display all sorts of "hits" and, if you scroll down a bit, you will see timelines. In my case, I had to scroll to the bottom of the first page to see anything about timelines and then I clicked on "More timeline results." Depending how popular your surname is, you may have to scroll down even further.

The timeline I saw shows all sorts of historical events involving people with the same surname as my own. A blue timeline shows how many "hits" occurred for certain years and then the events themselves are listed below the timeline in typical Google fashion.

In looking at the Eastman timeline, I found quite a few "events" in recent years from some fellow who writes a genealogy newsletter.

I then tried my mother's maiden name which is very rare: Deabay. The only people I have ever found of that name have always been close relatives. The timeline didn't have very many events but the listings below the timeline had lots of facts, many of which I had not seen before.

I was amazed to find a 1952 newspaper account of my uncle's being shot in the Korean War (he survived). I knew he was a combat veteran but didn't know he had been seriously wounded.

I also read a few family obituaries as well as reports of several marriages, even those where a cousin served as bridesmaid or best man or usher.

This can be a great resource when you have exhausted other possibilities. Of course, you can search for the names on Google at anytime but the timelines add quite a bit of visual help.

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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. A further benefit is the capacity to view the photos in beautiful colour on your computer screen! Simply send your request to [shemtov@jgstoronto.ca](mailto:shemtov@jgstoronto.ca).

We thank you for your consideration.

## BRANCHING OUT

by Elaine Cheskes

### New Acquisitions to the JGS of Canada (Toronto) Library Collection at the North York Central Library (Gladys Allison Canadiana Room, 6<sup>th</sup> floor)

Azrieli, David J. *Rekindling the Torch: the Story of Canadian Zionism*.

Toronto: Key Porter Books, 2008.

Beider, Alexander. *A Dictionary of Jewish Surnames from the Russian Empire*. 2 vols. Rev. ed. Bergenfield, NJ. : Avotaynu, 2008.

Blumenthal, Nachman, ed. *The Book of Borszczow: a Yizkor Book*. Abridged ed. Translated from the Yiddish and Hebrew by Miriam Beckerman. Edited/adapted by Myrna Neuringer Levy. Private printing, 2005.

Jacobs, Jerrold, ed. *The Book of Zgierz: an Eternal Memorial for a Jewish Community of Poland*. League City, TX. : JewishGen, 2007.

Lynch, Daniel M. *Google Your Family Tree: Unlock the Hidden Power of Google*. Provo, UT. : Familylink.com, 2008.

### ADVERTISING RATES

SHEM TOV is now accepting display advertising for publication. Advertisers are requested to supply camera-ready art and payment by February 2010 for the Spring 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.

### A Masterpiece of Scholarship on Jewish Names

by Bill Gladstone

Special to The CJN, Thursday, 19 February 2009

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When the first edition of Alexander Beider's Dictionary of Jewish Surnames from the Russian Empire came out in 1993, it was hailed in genealogical circles as one of the most important books ever printed about Jewish surnames.

His subsequent compilations of Jewish surnames from Poland, Galicia and other regions have only solidified his reputation as a foremost authority in the field.

Beider recently updated the Dictionary of Jewish Surnames from the Russian Empire, a Herculean task that took four years. The revised edition has just been published by Avotaynu, the New Jersey-based Jewish genealogical publishing house. At 1,000 pages in hardcover, it's nearly 50 per cent larger than its predecessor. The original work has about 50,000 surname entries, the new and improved version about 74,000.

Beider considered the revision necessary because of the explosion of new sources and knowledge that has occurred over the last 15 years due to the collapse of the former Soviet Union, the rise of the Internet, and the publication of numerous related new works. He expanded the work's geographical range, altered hundreds of entries and added many new cross-references.

The Moscow-born statistician, linguist and onomastician, who has lived in Paris since 1990, is credited with almost single-handedly revolutionizing the field of Jewish onomastics. Before Beider, most researchers rehashed names and ideas from the published literature with little scientific method and little regard to where the names occurred geographically. One of Beider's central methodological principles was to link surnames to the geographical regions in which they originated, and he was the first to do an inductive survey of surnames based on primary sources such as old voters' lists, censuses, civil records and other archival mate-

rial.

Browsing through the dictionary reminds us how often our surnames contain capsulized references to our ancestral past. In the late 18th and early 19th centuries, when Russian Jews were obliged to adopt surnames, many took names of patronymic or matronymic origin – derived from a father’s or mother’s name – reflecting traditional Hebrew naming customs. Such names include Meyerovitz (son of Meyer), Davidovitz (son of David) and Gitlin (from the female name Gitl), thus preserving the name of an ancestor.

The plentiful class of surnames inspired by occupations offer glimpses of an outmoded village way of life. The name Bodgas (from German), for instance, means “bathhouse”; Cherednyak (Belarusian) is “cattle shepherd”; Drach (Yiddish) is “hand mill”; Fajnshtajber (Yiddish) is “calligrapher”; Gitel-makher (Yiddish) is “cap maker”; Goren (Ukrainian) is “forging furnace”; Katsov (Hebrew) is “butcher”; Latkemakher (Yiddish) is “maker of pancakes”; Milkhiker (German) is “dairyman”; Pakhter (Yiddish) is “leaseholder”; Plytnik (Belarusian) is “raft driver”; Shkolnik (Belarusian) is “beadle, sexton in a synagogue”; and Torgovets is “tradesman” (Russian).

Surnames derived from place-names are also common. The name Bobrushkin is linked to the town of Bobrujsk; Drubicher is linked to Drubich; Gordon to Grodno; Mogilevich to Mogilev; Polyakov to Polyak; Slobodkin to Slobodka; and Usyshkin to the Usyskin River. Many surnames are unique to a particular town or region but may be difficult or impossible to find on a map. (For assistance, see the book *Where Once We Walked*, the award-winning shtetl locator by Gary Mokotoff and Sallyann Sack.)

When surnames became mandatory, many Jews took names based on personal characteristics (such as Langbart, meaning “long beard”) or pleasant associations (Feldblum, Goldberg, Rosenstein, Silverman). A small but well-documented subcategory of “ridiculous” surnames includes such monickers as Brodavka (wart) and Dolgoshiya (long-necked). One pictures disdainful bureaucrats holding their noses as they assign laughable and even disrespectful last names to the poor Jewish applicants summoned to appear before them.

Other surname categories include rabbinical names and names of Kohen or Levite origin. For example, Beider links the famous name of Chagall to Segal, a Kohenite acronym of Hebrew origin dating back to the 11th century.

The dictionary’s 200-page introductory section illuminates the dark process of how Jews acquired their family names. These opening chapters discuss the history of Jewish names in Eastern Europe, their types and morphology and linguistic aspects, the patterns of their adoption, the overlap of Jewish and Gentile surnames, and the author’s scientific approach. Although densely written and highly technical, this material may fascinate those seeking to understand how, when and why Jewish surnames derived in the former Pale of Settlement.

A statistician at heart, Beider throws in statistical charts whenever possible, such as his percentage tables of the most common Jewish surnames in the various Russian provinces. Based on 1912 data, the most common names in Vitebsk region were: Kagan, Levin, Gurevich, Ginzburg, Ioffe, Rabinovich,

Sverdlov, Rapoport, Shapiro and Livshits. The list for Grodno shows Kaplan, Levin, Lev, Epshtejn, Kagan, Goldberg, Fridman, Shapiro, Rabinovich and Vajnshtejn.

Despite the high reliance on mathematics, the science of Jewish surnames can never be exact, since overlapping layers of meaning and language inevitably lead to ambiguities. Beider’s forthright discussions of such ambiguous derivations are enlightening. One must applaud his unfailing fidelity to the facts and his refusal to alter them to fit theoretical constructs.

Those who wish merely to look up the etymology of a surname should turn directly to the dictionary of Surnames, which takes up the remaining 800 pages of the book. A smaller soft-cover volume accompanies the dictionary and provides an invaluable Soundex listing of all the surnames within, so the correct entry may be found no matter how the name is spelled.

Before consulting the dictionary, it’s best to have some basic knowledge about the surname one is curious about. It’s important to know, for example, that the name Chambers was once Cherkofsky, Pearson was once Persovsky, or Yarmouth was once Yarmolinsky. Many of our old-fashioned names did not survive the Holocaust or the process of immigration to the New World and the dual cultural influences of anglicization and Americanization.

Ardent genealogists may want a dictionary of their own for home use; others will be content to consult it in a synagogue or reference library. Beider’s dictionaries for Poland, Galicia and other regions are also recommended.

For details about the Dictionary of Jewish Surnames from the Russian Empire, visit [www.avotaynu.com](http://www.avotaynu.com).

## **Bill 149, The Inactive Cemeteries Act**

*by Harvey Glasner*

Rob Leverty, Executive Director of the Ontario Historical Society, spoke at our Sept. 30<sup>th</sup> General Meeting. He was accompanied by Majorie Stuart, OHS volunteer and Editor of *Cemetery News*.

Mr. Leverty reported that in 1989, the Province of Ontario passed legislation that would allow the digging up and moving of cemetery plots if it were “in the public interest.” The Ontario Historical Society and the Ontario Genealogical Society have joined forces to protect Ontario’s cemeteries in light of this legislation and in recent years have spent hundreds of thousands of dollars in legal fees to block development on “sacred land.”

Mr. Jim Brownell, MPP, Stormont-Dundas-South Glangarry and Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Tourism, presented a Private Member’s Bill – *Bill 149, the Inactive Cemeteries Protection Act, 2009*. The thrust of this legislation is to enshrine the protection of unregistered cemeteries in Ontario from desecration at the hands of developers.

Mr. Leverty is asking for support for this legislation by having genealogists and historians sign a petition that Mr. Brownell will present to Queen’s Park. Our members’ involvement in signing this petition would be appreciated.

If you are interested, please go to the Ontario Historical Society’s website ([www.ontariohistoricalsociety.ca](http://www.ontariohistoricalsociety.ca)) and download the petition, or call Mr. Leverty at (416) 226-9011.

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## ALL ABOUT FACEBOOK

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The article below was originally printed in *Venturing Into Your Past*  
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Facebook was started at Harvard in 2004 for students, by student Mark Zuckerberg. Facebook was so popular that many tried to purchase the company for millions of dollars- in fact they turned down \$1 billion from Yahoo in 2006.

2006-Facebook opened to anyone with an e-mail address  
Facebook is the 6th most trafficked website in the US  
Facebook is the #1 photo-sharing site  
Facebook is now the 5th most valuable Internet company with Microsoft purchasing less than 2% of the company  
Source: [www.Crunchbase.com](http://www.Crunchbase.com)

Some attributes of Facebook:

It's free and easy to set up. It's a way of meeting/reconnecting with new family and friends. It's a day-to-day real time "social" contact with those you found. What you put on your "wall" (home page) is up to you. It's a way to share photographs and communications. Adjusting your *settings* lets you make as much or as little information public.

At your request, Facebook will go through your list of "friends"—the term Facebook uses for the people you connect with—and compares your friends with people on their network. They take the information from your "page" such as where you went to school and compare their other subscribers to find others who went to the same school. The Facebook search engine can find people, and affinity groups, like school alumni or people who grew up on a certain block, etc. The search engine can also search women's maiden names.

To join Facebook go to: [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com). While you don't have to provide all the information they request, you must provide them with your birth date so they can confirm you are of an age to be on Facebook. However, you are able to hide your birth date from being seen by others. If you provide a photo, it need not be a current one, or one of yourself...some have placed cartoons, or pets or other people instead of themselves.

Facebook will send you an invitation suggesting you be a "friend" to someone with a similar point of information, such as attending the same high school or college. Both parties have to accept/agree with the invitation. Individuals may also send you an invitation to be a "friend", which you have the option to accept or not. If you are on Facebook and invite someone to be

your "friend" it is recommended to explain who you are- for example a third cousin as your great grandfather was this person's great grandfather's brother, etc.

You do have the option to reject or ignore an invitation to be a friend, whether it is sent directly by the person or by Facebook. On a Facebook sent invitation you have the option to advise them to not send any more invitations. This works only for those invitations sent by Facebook, not individuals. It is not unusual that some people receive invitations from people they never knew as some people like "collecting" as many "friends" as possible.

An option on Facebook is to permit them to compare your e-mail address book with their subscribers to suggest that some may be related or friends of friends. This is something they can do only if you check off that option.

If you are concerned about having too many Facebook e-mails sent to your regular e-mail address, you can set up a separate e-mail address that you use only for Facebook. A free e-mail subscription may be obtained from Yahoo.com or Google's g-mail.

You also have the option to "filter" your friends' conversations so you do not follow all of their communications with other "friends".

For genealogy the "We're Related" is a great tool...You can get to that by typing it in the search box. Facebook may suggest that certain of their other subscribers are related, placing them in the "possible relatives" area but you decide and reply or not. If you type in "genealogy" in the search box it will take you to a World Vital Records page. A new social network specifically for genealogy, GenealogyWise.com has recently been started by World Vital Records.

JGSCV has started its own Facebook page...so type in the search box "JGSCV" or "Jewish Genealogical Society of the Conejo Valley and Ventura County". This page is open to members and friends and is moderated, so anyone requesting to be in this group has to be approved. Debra Kay Blatt is the Facebook coordinator for JGSCV. If you are on Facebook and a JGSCV member or meeting attendee sign up!

Those concerned about security should note that the information is "open" and the speakers suggested staying away from third party applications. While you have the option under the security tab to make your information open only to your friends

so others may not see it, if you join a network, everyone in the network will be able to see your information, even those who are not listed as your friends. An article entitled *10 Privacy Settings Every Facebook User Should Know* may be of interest <http://www.allfacebook.com/2009/02/facebook-privacy/>. Other concerns include:

- Privacy concerns by letting “strangers” know about you and your family?
- Opening up to potential identity theft?
- Inability to delete account content permanently- Since February 2008 this is permitted by contacting Facebook
- Unmoderated content-including in 2009 permitting Holocaust deniers
- Censorship controversies

Source: [www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org)

On July 16, 2009 Canada’s Privacy Minister stated Facebook breached federal privacy law by keeping users’ personal information indefinitely even after members close their accounts and raised concerns about the sharing of users’ files with the almost one million third-party developers scattered across the globe who create Facebook applications such as games and quizzes. Facebook has replied that it is introducing a number of new additional privacy features and is working with the Commission to address its privacy concerns. <http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/article/667167>

What ever your decision, it’s a personal option whether to belong to Facebook or not.

## August 27, 2009 Facebook Update

by Judy Kasman

As indicated in the Ventura County JGS article about Facebook, the Privacy Commissioner of Canada, Jennifer Stoddart, after a thorough investigation of the social networking site, had demanded on July 16, 2009 that Facebook address concerns relating to privacy and the sharing of personal information with third parties.

On August 27, 2009, the Privacy Commissioner announced the following improvements undertaken to be done by Facebook:

1. There will be a change to how third-party developers (e.g. of games & quizzes) will access Facebook users’ personal information. They will need to obtain users’ consents.
2. There will be a distinction between deactivating and deleting accounts, with the choice to be made by Facebook users.
3. Facebook is to improve its protection of the privacy of non-users invited to join Facebook.
4. Facebook will clarify its policy concerning what occurs at the death of a Facebook user

These changes are to be completed within a year.

For more on Facebook and the Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada, visit: [http://www.priv.gc.ca/index\\_e.cfm](http://www.priv.gc.ca/index_e.cfm)

## Points To Consider Before Subscribing to Facebook

by Harvey Glasner

I joined Facebook in July, 2009 after reading the article that begins on page 6. Here are some of my experiences and comments about this powerful social networking medium:

- Facebook drills down into your email list and retrieves all email addresses linked to your contacts!
- I thought that by not asking Facebook to search through my email list, only people I chose to be contacted would receive an invitation
- I was shocked to receive replies from people that were only slightly associated with me (some folks were upset about being contacted, others were very happy).
- One has to carefully go through the *Settings* tab to ensure that your privacy is protected (putting such seemingly innocuous information as date of birth could be used by Facebook for ...?)
- I spent more time answering replies from people that were contacted through Facebook than I really was prepared to initially spend.

Jeffrey Miller, adjunct professor of law and literature at the Faculty of Law, University of Western Ontario writes in *The Lawyers’ Weekly*, August 7, 2009:

“On June 17, the Privacy Commission found that Facebook has breached the PIPEDA (*Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act*) in four ways: It makes too much private information available to third parties who have commercial or otherwise exploitive interests in that data; when users ‘deactivate’ their Facebook accounts, the information remains in Facebook’s databanks; Facebook does not stipulate clearly enough that it’s a party that never ends: if you die, your Facebook profile survives immortal; and Facebook allows users to distribute private information about non-users (photos, e-mail addresses, etc.) without the non-users’ consent.”

If you have other comments regarding Facebook, please send them to [shemtov@jgstoronto.com](mailto:shemtov@jgstoronto.com)

## Create A JewishGen Webpage for Your Ancestral Sephardic Community

People of Ashkenzic background are likely familiar with the ShtetLinks component of JewishGen ([www.jewishgen.org](http://www.jewishgen.org)), where individual family historians have created web pages for their ancestral *shtetlach* (towns) in Central and Eastern Europe.

Now those of Sephardic descent can similarly create pages for their communities of origin; these links are referred to as KahaLinks, *kahal* being Hebrew for “Jewish community.”

Please contact Jeffrey Malka at [JeffMalka@SephardicGen.com](mailto:JeffMalka@SephardicGen.com) if you are interested in creating a KahaLink site on JewishGen.

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

### OF THE JEWISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF CANADA (TORONTO)

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*Doors open at 7:30 p.m., programs begin at 8 p.m.*

*Non-member fee: \$5.00 per meeting*

*(exception: spouses accompanying members)*

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#### **Wednesday, December 16, 2009 at 8:00 pm**

##### **Annual Election Meeting followed by Presentation**

***Ancestral Mission: Unexpected Discoveries***

**Speaker: Karen Lasky**

Imagine growing up not knowing where you came from, and forbidden to ask. Karen Lasky, a child of Holocaust survivors, explores the concept of growing up without details of her parents' personal histories. With little historical knowledge, Karen retraces her parents' footsteps through the concentration camps they were deported to and discovers their hidden pasts, family records and even their birth homes in Poland. She credits these discoveries with shaping the path to understanding who she is.

Karen Lasky has been an ardent writer of poetry, a contributor to and member of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Canada (Toronto), and a Holocaust Education Week volunteer.

#### **Wednesday, January 27, 2010 at 8:00 pm**

##### ***Unraveling the Mysteries Involved in the Use and Identification of Historic Photographs***

**Speakers: Ellen Scheinberg, Ontario Jewish Archives, UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, and Michael Rajzman, M.A., Assistant Curator, Ontario Jewish Archives**

This presentation will look at the history of photography and inform us as how to analyze a photograph to determine the date, location and other important elements. We will also be told about resources that are available to determine details about the individuals in the photos. Images from the Ontario Jewish Archives' holdings will be used as examples. If time permits, there will be an opportunity to examine an image from five members vis-à-vis what the image can tell us and how it can be preserved.

Dr. Ellen Scheinberg has been the director of the Ontario Jewish Archives since the fall of 2002. She holds a B.A. and Masters degrees in history from Queen's University and was awarded her Ph.D. in history from the University of Ottawa in 2007. She spent most of her archival career at the National Archives of Canada (now LAC), where she worked as an archivist within the Government Archives Division from 1990 until the spring of 2000. She also worked as an information management consultant for a year. Dr. Scheinberg has spent a great deal of time presenting papers and publishing articles in the area of women's history, immigration history and archival studies. She has also been an active member of the archival community.

Born and raised in Toronto, Michael Rajzman has done extensive research on early photographic technologies and formats as well as contemporary issues involving digital photography. He holds a combined B.A. in Art History and Canadian Studies from Carleton University and an M.A. in Photographic Preservation and Collections Management from Ryerson Uni-

versity. His recent research involves analyzing how people organize, store and share their digital photographs via online social networking websites.

#### **Wednesday, February 24**

TBA – Watch for details at [www.jewishgen.org](http://www.jewishgen.org).

#### **Wednesday, March 24 at 8:00 pm**

##### **North York Central Library, Auditorium (doors open at 7:00 pm) 5120 Yonge Street, Toronto**

Event is co-Sponsored in association with The Canadiana Department, North York Central Library

##### ***The Toronto Jewish Community; Portrait of our Past (1900-1930)***

**Speaker: Prof. Harold Troper**

Harold Troper will present an illustrated lecture exploring immigrant Jewish life in Toronto from the turn of the last century until the depression. Using images from the day, he will track the geographic shift in Jewish immigrant residential concentration from the Ward westward into the Kensington area. He will also touch on issues of housing, work, children, street life, organization building, discrimination and social interaction with the non-Jewish community.

Harold Troper is a professor in the Department of Theory and Policy Studies at the University of Toronto. He teaches on the history of immigration and ethnic relations in Canada and has a special interest in Canadian Jewish history.

Professor Troper is author or co-author of many scholarly articles and award winning books including *Immigrants: A Portrait of the Urban Experience*; *None Is Too Many* and *Old Wounds*. His latest book, *The Ransomed of God* was recently reissued in paperback under the title *The Rescuer* and he has a new book, entitled *The Pivotal Decade: Identity, Politics and the Canadian Jewish Community in the 1960s*, forthcoming with the University of Toronto Press.

Currently, Professor Troper is completing a research project with Professor Richard Menkis of the University of British Columbia on the Canadian Jewish community's engagement with the 1936 Berlin Olympics, the "Nazi Olympics".

#### **Wednesday, April 28 at 8.00 pm**

##### ***How I Became the "Nerve Centre" of the Family***

**Speaker: Jerrold Landau**

Jerrold Landau has produced family trees for two extended branches of his family. While most people want to trace their ancestors, his motivation was to keep track of all of his more distant cousins who he knew as a child, from whom he became more removed as they all aged. This mushroomed to the point

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where Jerrold is now the “nerve centre” of the family. For one branch of his wife’s family, there is now have a website, with gravesites, a family tree, etc. He is now starting to use Facebook for his research.

Jerrold is a freelance translator of *Yizkor* Books (Memorial Books of destroyed Jewish communities published by the *landsmanshaft* organizations after the WWII) from their original Hebrew and Yiddish into English under the auspices of the JewishGen organization. Jerrold’s translations, published on the JewishGen website, open up to the English speaking public the rich vista of pre-war *shtetl* life, personalized Holocaust testimonies by survivors, detailed necrologies, ancient town histories and other fascinating material that is included in these books. Towns whose books Jerrold has translated over his ten-year translation career include, among others: Rzeszow, Sochaczew, Stawiski, Debica, Ivano-Frankivk, Przemysl, Zuromin, Orhei, Podhajce, Roznyatow, Lizensk, and Zgierz. Jerrold lives in Toronto with his wife and four children. By day, Jerrold is a software test and translation specialist at IBM. He works on his translations on a part-time basis during the evenings.

### **Wednesday, May 26**

**Tour of Ontario Archives Building at York University, Keele Street Campus**

Details will follow on Society website and in next *Shem Tov*

### **Wednesday, June 23 at 8.00 pm**

**Member Break-Throughs: Brick Walls and Strong Foundations**

## **Canadian Naturalization Database**

**L**ibrary and Archives Canada (LAC) is pleased to announce the release of a new version of the Canadian Naturalization 1915-1932 online database. It now includes the names of 206,731 individuals who applied for and received status as naturalized Canadians from 1915 to 1932. References located in the database can be used to request copies of the actual naturalization records, which are held by Citizenship and Immigration Canada. See [www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/databases/naturalization-1915-1932/index-e.html](http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/databases/naturalization-1915-1932/index-e.html).

Library and Archives Canada acknowledges the assistance of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Montreal <http://jgs-montreal.org> and Jewish Genealogical Society of Ottawa [www.jgso.org](http://www.jgso.org) in this project.

The Canadian Genealogy Centre <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/genealogy/indexe.html> includes all physical and online genealogical services of Library and Archives Canada. It offers genealogical content, services, advice, research tools and opportunities to work on joint projects, all in both official languages.

## **Writing Jewish Family Stories and Memoirs**

**Workshop on October 18, 2009**

*by Shelley Stillman*

**I** was one of twelve Society members who attended the above workshop led by experienced writer, Lil Blume ([www.lilblume.ca](http://www.lilblume.ca)).

We began by introducing ourselves, sharing what event led us to trace our family’s history and why we wanted to write family stories.

Lil went over the different writing formats: Genealogy, Autobiography, Biography, Memoir Writing and Family Stories. She had prepared a workbook for us with background information and a series of questions that would lead to an afternoon of writing.

For each of the writing activities, we had the option of either doing a Memoir (telling our own story) or a Family Story. The first task was to either make a list of our personal life highlights or identity-defining events or make a list of events in our family that might have cemented or defined its identity.

Throughout the afternoon, there was an opportunity for participants to read what they had written. We shared information/stories about ourselves, our ancestors, family myths, and ‘normal’ family behaviours that revealed their/our beliefs and attitudes.

As participants read aloud, we learned of their family’s voyages and of personal journeys. It was interesting to see the different writing styles and approaches they were taking. We had each been asked to bring an old photograph, and were asked to relate (or imagine) what was going on in that person’s life at the time the photograph was taken. What would they want to tell us?

We discussed who our audience was, navigational aids, how to handle family conflicts and what responsibilities we had as the family scribe and archivist.

The workbook also gave us many suggestions for further writing including, but not limited to: family traditions, holidays, life-cycle events, memories and experiences during major world events, a childhood meal table memory, family songs and music.

Lil Blume is knowledgeable and makes a very fine facilitator. In her warm and personable way, she was encouraging of our efforts, giving us positive feed-back. Her style led to a trusting atmosphere in which people could safely share their own stories and experiences.

I personally came away from the afternoon with four pages of memory fragments, scrawled stories: I’d broken the ice, gotten started, didn’t worry about spelling or grammar, but stayed in the moment, wrote what came – captured some of the essence of who I am – who my family is/was, knowing that there would be time later to edit and share these vignettes.

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## Footnote.com and U.S. National Archives Holocaust Collection Update

*Thanks to Dick Eastman and the Eastman Newsletter Nov. 13, 2009 for allowing us to re-print*

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I published an announcement about the new Holocaust Collection on Footnote.com on 29 September 2009. I am re-publishing the announcement below. At that time, Footnote.com planned to have these records open to the public for only the month of October. However, I have been told there is now a change in those plans.

Due to the popularity of this collection, the folks at Footnote.com have decided to keep the records available free to the public through the rest of this year. This is a great opportunity to catch up on research that you missed earlier.

The deadline extension will enable more people to search and explore the original records from the National Archives. On January 1, 2010, these records will become part of the paid subscription on Footnote.com. These records, however, will remain free to access through any of the National Archives physical locations.

Here is the announcement that was originally published on September 29: **National Archives and Footnote.com Announce New Digital Holocaust Collection**

Footnote.com has now announced a major new online collection of scanned images of original documents. The following announcement was written by Footnote.com:

Collection includes Holocaust-related photos and records available online for first time

Washington DC and Lindon, UT -September 29, 2009 - The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) and Footnote.com ([www.footnote.com](http://www.footnote.com)) today announced the release of the internet's largest Interactive Holocaust Collection. For the first time ever, over one million Holocaust-related records - including millions of names and 26,000 photos from the National Archives- will be available online. The collection can be viewed at: <http://www.footnote.com/holocaust>.

"We cannot afford to forget this period in our history," said Dr. Michael Kurtz, Assistant Archivist of the United States and author of *America and the Return of Nazi Contraband: The Recovery of Europe's Cultural Treasures*. "Working with Footnote, these records will become more widely accessible, and will help people now and in the future learn more about the events and impact of the Holocaust."

Included among the National Archives records available online at Footnote.com are:

- Concentration camp registers and documents from Dachau, Mauthausen, Auschwitz, and Flossenburg.
- The "Ardelia Hall Collection" of records relating to the Nazi looting of Jewish possessions, including looted art.
- Captured German records including deportation and death lists from concentration camps.
- Nuremberg War Crimes Trial proceedings.

Access to the collection will be available for free on Footnote.com through the month of October. [UPDATE: Now extended to January 1]

The collection also includes nearly 600 interactive personal accounts of those who survived or perished in the Holocaust

provided by the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum. The project incorporates social networking tools that enable visitors to search for names and add photos, comments and stories, share their insights, and create pages to highlight their discoveries. There will be no charge to access and contribute to these personal pages.

"These pages tell a personal story that is not included in the history text books," said Russ Wilding, CEO of Footnote.com. "They give visitors a first-hand glimpse into the tragic events of the Holocaust and allow users to engage with content such as maps, photos, timelines and personal accounts of victims and survivors through over 1 million documents."

So that visitors may more easily access and engage the content, Footnote.com has created a special Holocaust site featuring:

- Stories of Holocaust victims and survivors.
- A place where visitors can create their own pages to memorialize their Holocaust ancestors.
- Pages on the concentration camps - includes descriptions, photos, maps, timelines and accounts from those who survived the camps.

Descriptions and samples of the original records from the National Archives.

The Holocaust collection is the latest in a continuing partnership between Footnote.com and the National Archives to scan, digitize, and make historical records available online. The goal is to give more people access to these and other historical records that have previously only been available through the research room of the National Archives. This partnership brings these priceless resources to an even greater number of people and enables the National Archives to provide ever-greater access to these critical holdings.

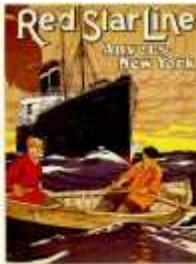
### About Footnote.com

Footnote.com is a subscription website that features searchable original documents, providing users with an unaltered view of the events, places and people that shaped the American nation and the world. At Footnote.com, all are invited to come share, discuss, and collaborate on their discoveries with friends, family, and colleagues. For more information, visit [www.footnote.com](http://www.footnote.com).

### About the U.S. National Archives

The National Archives alone is the archives of the Government of the United States, responsible for safeguarding records of all three branches of the Federal Government. The records held by the National Archives belong to the public - and it is the mission of the National Archives to ensure the public can discover, use, and learn from the records of their government.

## Red Star Line Shipping Company



Between 1873 and 1935 the Red Star Line shipping company transported almost three million people from Antwerp to the United States and Canada. The City of Antwerp has created a Red Star Memorial site at [http://www.redstarlinememorial.be/smartsite.dws?id=MHE\\_LANDING&ch=MHE](http://www.redstarlinememorial.be/smartsite.dws?id=MHE_LANDING&ch=MHE) with plans to open a museum in Antwerp (called Red Star Line/People on the Move Museum) in the spring of 2012.

The project is looking for stories about people's immigration experiences in using Red Star Line, including photographs. If you are a person, or descendant of a person, who took Red Star ship from Antwerp to settle in North America, contact [redstarline@stad.antwerpen.be](mailto:redstarline@stad.antwerpen.be). The names of the Red Star steamships are Arabic, Belgenland, Berlin, Cambroman, Devonian., Finland, Friesland, Gothland, Kensington, Kroonland, Lapland, Manitou, Marquette, Menominee, Merion, Mississippi, Nederland, Noordland, Pennland, Poland, Rhyndland, Samland, Southwark, Switzerland, Vaderland, Waesland, Westernland, Winifredian, Zeeland.

In the last issue of *Shem Tov*, Henry Blumberg had written about Eugeen Van Mieghem (1875-1930), the Belgian artist who had painted many scenes of emigrants on the Red Star Line. If you happen to be travelling to Manhattan before December 31, 2009, you can see *One Foot in America: The Jewish Emigrants of the Red Star Line and Eugeen Van Mieghem*, an exhibit of Van Mieghem's paintings, at YIVO Institute for Jewish Research in The Constantiner Gallery at the Center for Jewish History, 15 W. 16<sup>th</sup> Street, (between 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> Avenues).

See the next issue of *Shem Tov* for more on YIVO ([www.yivo.org](http://www.yivo.org)).

## The Jewish Diaspora of the Caribbean Conference in Jamaica January 12 to 14, 2010

For those of you planning a winter sojourn in Jamaica, you might consider taking part in this Conference being held in Kingston, Jamaica that will explore the history, culture, and identity of Caribbean Jewry. The host organization is the United Congregation of Israelites in Jamaica.

Visit <http://www.ucija.org/conferenceaa.htm> for Conference details.

## Shoah Connector

by Debbie Raff

Shtetl Leader of Nowy Sacz (Galicia) SIG  
Reprinted with permission of the author

Logan Kleinwaks, who founded the Genealogy Indexer at: <http://genealogyindexer.org/> has another project, as well.

For some reason this one slipped by me, so, many of you might be familiar with it already.

It appears to have been established about 2 years ago. As many of you know, those filling out Pages of Testimony may have done so over 50 years ago.

Although those going to the Yad Vashem site can see the submitter's name, address and sometimes phone number, it may be difficult, if not impossible for people to actually make a connection with a family.

The genealogy society in Israel has tried to assist, but with Logan's fairly new concept people might have a new way to make a connection.

Although many people might have looked at a Page of Testimony, they would not be able to connect with each other. So, Logan's site provides a confidential way of connecting.

For those of you who are on JewishGen's Family Finder, it is a similar system, but all communication begins with blind emailing.

It is a fascinating concept, I think and the more people who are involved the more connections can be made.

Prior to this, although many look at the Pages of Testimony in a way people have been like ships in the night and not aware that others out there others are looking for the same family.

As Logan points out in the video interview below, the likelihood of hits might even be higher than on a generalized family finder, the reason being that many of the Pages of Testimony are quite detailed.

To see Logan, hear about his new project, and find out how to use his ShoahConnect page, you can view the video. (see below)

Logan Kleinwaks explaining - "ShoahConnect" on "Tracing your Family Roots" (about 2 years ago) 20+ minutes  
<http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-1647178103406109799#>

To begin exploring Logan's site ----  
<http://shoahconnect.org/begin.php>

Logan's site can be viewed in; English, Spanish, Danish, Polish, Portuguese, Russian and Hebrew.

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## From the President

**A**s I look back over the past three years of my presidency, I am proud of what we as a Society have accomplished.

During my term, we updated our website, with the goals of keeping it more current, making it easier for Executive members to add and edit information, and making it more interactive. We are still working to increase interactivity to make it easier for members to connect with each other in a confidential and secure way and to allow all members to submit material for inclusion on the website. As I work towards implementing these features with our website administrator, your suggestions and input are welcome.

We submitted over 65,000 burial records and over 2,000 photographs of headstones from cemeteries in the Greater Toronto Area to JOWBR (JewishGen Online Worldwide Burial Registry). A large number of photographs is ready to be submitted once the data is proofread.

We have continued to produce a superior newsletter, *Shem Tov*, with expedited copies to those who subscribe to the pdf version.

We delivered interesting programs, workshops and field trips to our membership and provided speakers for Holocaust Education Week programs. We participated in the Mosaic Festival and worked with community groups to build partnerships.

On a personal note, I have had the opportunity to get to know a number of outstanding people – our fellow JGS members. I have also learned a lot. I didn't imagine that I would become conversant in the design of a website and learn the basics of Joomla.

As immediate Past President, I will join other Past Presidents in continuing to support the work of our Society. There is still work to be done on the cemetery project, and I have agreed to spearhead a drive for more volunteers to reactivate the photography project. In the spring, I will be looking to enlist the support of not only Society volunteers, but also volunteers from synagogues. I will also reach out to high school students who require community service hours for graduation.

I would like to add my words of thanks and appreciation to all those who have served on the Executive and the members who contributed in various ways to the success of our Society.

Congratulations and good luck to the incoming 2010 Executive and Board of JGS Toronto.

Shelley Stillman, President (outgoing)  
sstillman@jgstoronto.ca

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## Acknowledgements

As 2009 comes to a close, it is important to recognize the contributions of our members who have served on the JGS Toronto Executive and thank them for their efforts:

**Shelley Stillman** - President  
**Lucy Sadowski** - Secretary  
**Steve Gora** - Treasurer  
**Stephen Creed** - Member-at-Large; Refreshments  
**Harvey Glasner** – Member-at-Large; *Shem Tov* Co-Editor and photographer  
**Les Kelman** - Member-at-Large; Programming  
**Myrna Levy** – Member-at-Large  
**Neil Richler** - Member-at-Large; Membership

We thank Past Presidents **Henry Wellisch**, **Gert Rogers** and **Carolynne Veffler** for their continuing support and involvement.

We also wish to acknowledge the work of other members on behalf of our Society:

**Elaine Cheskes** - Librarian; **Judy Kasman** - *Shem Tov* Co-Editor; **Kevin Hanit** - Audio-Visual Technician, **Michael Keleman** - Greeter; **Arthur Ryman** - Website Administrator  
Thank you as well to all of the contributors to *Shem Tov*.

In addition, thanks go to following individuals:

- **Cemetery Photography Project** --  
**Elaine Slavens**, Coordinator  
Photographers: Society Members: **Kevin Hanit**, **Allen Halberstadt**, **Ronald Smith**  
Member of the Community: **Robert Lubinski** Translator:  
**Stephen Kraft**
- **Family Finder Coordinator** -- **Gert Rogers**
- **Program Committee** -- **Les Kelman**, Chair  
Committee Members: **Lucy Sadowski**, **Karen Sanders**
- **Telephone Squad**: **Nora Freund**, **Linda Offman**

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## In Memoriam

We regret to announce the passing of Beverley Colman-Lokash who passed away on November 17, 2009 in Toronto.

Beverley, a life-long learner, was a member of our Society since 1996. As a volunteer, she proofread over 5,000 individual burial records, cross-checking data from three different sources; she also took digital photographs of cemetery monuments. She was thorough, had boundless patience and showed a real commitment to the task.

Beverley is survived by her three children and her great granddaughter.