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שם טוב SHEM TOV

JEWISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF CANADA (TORONTO)

Celebrating 25 Years: 1985 - 2010

VOLUME XXVI No. 1

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The Jewish Community of Owen Sound, Ontario

by Betty Sherwood, JGS Toronto Member

My family lore always included the fact that my paternal grandfather, Hirsch Sosinsky, was employed by the Owen Sound community in the early days of the 20th century, but it wasn't until we owned a property in the area that I had opportunities to verify this and make my own contribution to this feisty community.

Few details are known about the original Jewish families of Owen Sound but as early as 1893, local newspapers reported on their holiday services, more than one *brit milah* and a wedding or two. Some of the names mentioned in the articles were Bernstein, Bloch, Fishkin, Goldblatt, Podhorer and Topp. In 1904 it was noted that "Mr. H. Sosinsky has been engaged to instruct the children in Hebrew and inspect the meat."

The Owen Sound Sun of September 13, 1904 wrote: "The little band of Hebrews who reside in town gathered together on Friday evening to observe the Jewish New Year as their ancestors were wont to do centuries before the light of Christianity shone forth...nineteen Hebrews assembled at the residence of D. Goldblatt. Rev. Sosinsky conducted the services...Next Monday is Atonement Day or the day of forgiveness. Feasting (sic!) will commence at 5 p.m. Sunday and will continue until 7:30 p.m."

From the *Owen Sound Times* of April 21, 1905 comes this report: "The local colony of Jews which consists of six families numbering about 35 persons began the celebration of the Jewish Passover at sundown Wednesday evening and will continue for nine days...The religious features are under the direction of Rabbi Harry Sosinsky and the services are held in the house of Mr. D. Goldblatt with all the ceremonies of the Levitical Law..."

With the arrival of Isaac Ezekiel Cadesky in 1906 and Nathan Rabovsky in 1907, the community gained new energy and Jewish life blossomed. More Jewish families settled in the city and surrounding Grey County. General stores, clothiers, furriers and furniture merchants kept their communities supplied with goods and many, such as the Gorbets and Fishmans, had established successful ventures.

According to the Canadian census of 1921, there were 72 Jews in Owen Sound and, in 1932, they organized themselves

as the Owen Sound Hebrew Community. Various downtown buildings were large enough to hold services, classes, holiday observances and fund-raising events. In 1947, a church that had been built in 1905 was purchased and named in honour of Isaac Ezekiel Cadesky. A full-time rabbi took up residence with his family on the top floor and regular services were held in the sanctuary below.

In 1991 the synagogue was designated a heritage building,

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Plan For Riga Ghetto Museum

by Judy Kasman

On February 2nd, 2010, the vice-mayor of Riga, Ainars Slesers, and Chairman of the Jewish Religious Community (Shamir), Rabbi Menachem Barkahan, signed a protocol of intentions on the foundation of the Riga Ghetto Museum.

The area of the Riga Ghetto is almost unique in Europe because it has not undergone any architectural changes over the last sixty years. More than 70,000 Latvian Jews were killed during the Holocaust; 20,000 Jews from Germany, the Czech Republic and Hungary passed through the Riga Ghetto.

The Riga Ghetto Museum will be located in the historical part of the city, behind the Central Market, not far from the culture centre, Spikeri. The building will have a total area of more than 1,000 square metres and will boast a large courtyard which visitors will get to through the passenger wagon in which the Jews were brought to Riga from Western Europe.

Displayed in the rooms of the two-storey museum will be artifacts from the Ghetto. There will also be multimedia devices through which a visitor will get a full picture

of the life and history of the Ghetto, and there will be access to various databases, i.e. children who were killed in the territory of Latvia, Jews who survived during the Holocaust and who lived in Latvia after the war, the Ghetto house registers and others.

On the second floor of the Museum, there will be seminar rooms, a library and a hall for cultural activities.

Shamir will seek the support of private donors for funds to build this Museum. One of the main sources for material for the exhibits might be descendants of the Latvian Jews worldwide. George Lansmanis, an adviser of the vice-mayor of Riga, made the first contribution to the Riga Ghetto Museum exhibition by gifting his precious family relic, the album of his grandfather, who was hidden from the Nazis from the 1st July 1941 to October 1944 while Nazis lived on the second and third floors of the very same building.

Visit http://www.shamir.lv/en/menu/46-riga_ghetto_museum.html for more information.

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The Jewish Genealogical Society of Canada (Toronto) was founded in 1985. 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.

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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Holocaust Headlines

by Judy Kasman

On December 23, 2009, Yitzhak “Ike” Ahronovitch, who had been born in Poland and who immigrated to Israel in 1933, died in north Israel at the age of 86. His name might not be familiar to many readers, but his story is widely known: Mr. Ahronovitch was the captain of the ship Exodus which, in 1947, left France and attempted to take 4,500 Holocaust survivors to Palestine. Ultimately, the British Navy seized the boat and the ship was forced back to Germany. The book *Exodus* by Leon Uris, made into a popular movie in the early 1960s, was based on this piece of history.



Miep Gies, who was one of eight people to hide the Frank family during WWII in the Secret Annex at Prinsengracht 263 in Amsterdam, passed away on January 11, 2010 at the age of 100. Ms. Gies had been a secretary to Otto Frank, Anne’s father: it was Ms. Gies who had saved Anne Frank’s now-famous diary, and she gave it to Anne’s father upon his return from the concentration camps. The diary was first published in 1947.

On July 30, 2009, Ms. Gies was awarded the Grand Decoration of Honour for Services to the Republic of Austria by Austrian Ambassador Wolfgang Paul.
www.miepgies.nl/en



On December 21, 2009, Polish police recovered the now historic, infamous and symbolic sign, Arbeit Macht Frei (Work Sets You Free), which had been stolen from the front gate of the Auschwitz concentration camp about one week prior. Three men in their 20s & 30s have been arrested for this crime, for which they could serve up to 10 years in prison. The five metre-long sign, which weighs about 30 kg, had been cut into three pieces to fit into a car and was hidden in a forest near Gdansk. The theft is under further investigation.

More than 1 million people died in gas chambers or were starved to death in the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp complex; about 90 percent of the victims were Jewish.



The Commemoration of the 65th Anniversary of the Liberation of Auschwitz was held in Krakow on January 27, 2010, which date had, in 2005, been selected as an annual global day of commemoration by the United Nations. Among the 150 people in attendance were Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Canada’s Immigration Minister Jason Kenney, an American delegation sent by President Barack Obama, and survivors of the Concentration Camp.

Rafael Goldchain: My Family – Photographic Memories and Fictions

By Judy Kasman

Those who attended the General Meeting on Wednesday, November 25th were treated to a delightful evening with photographer, Sheridan College professor and author, Rafael Goldchain (Goldszajn). In his PowerPoint presentation replete with photographs, Goldchain proceeded to outline his life story, starting from his birth in Chile in the 1950s. He provided anecdotes about his travels to Israel and Canada and, as well, his journey as an artist; this was enhanced by the photographs which he showed.

Ultimately, we were able to see what led Goldchain to conceptualize his book, *I Am My Family – Photographic Memories and Fictions*, published by Princeton Architectural Press in 2008, a family album of traditional portrait photographs; the twist is that only Goldchain himself is the subject of all of the photos, and not all of the people represented are real. The author/photographer, whose Chilean family originated in Poland, is transformed with the help of period costumes, accessories and make-up, to represent real or imagined family members from the past. It was so interesting to hear the stories behind the beautiful portraits in the book, and to see what was involved in staging each photograph to perfection.

Goldchain’s work is truly an unique take on Jewish genealogy. Please visit www.rafaelgoldchain.com for further information.



Rafael Goldchain as himself!

The Cemetery Project...

is ready to spring into action.
There will be a training session in May.
If interested, please write to cemetery@jgstoronto.ca.

How To Submit “How To” Articles For Our Website

by Shelley Stillman

We are always interested in drawing on the expertise of our members. At this time, we are seeking articles for the “**How To**” section of our website, www.jgstoronto.ca; this section is found under *Resources/How To*. The following useful pieces are currently there:

- *How To Access Ontario Birth, Marriage and Death Certificates and Records* by Henry Wellisch
- *From a Distance: Toronto and/or Ontario Free On-Line Name Searches* compiled by Carolynne Veffler
- [How To Search JOWBR](#) -- David Trost takes you through the steps on how to search burials in the Jewish Online Worldwide Burial Records of www.jewishgen.org

If you would like to submit “How To” content, please follow these steps.

1. Sign in at www.jgstoronto.ca with your JGS member login name and password.
2. Click the “Members” tab under the top banner.
3. On left side, choose tab “Submit Content”.
4. A template will appear. Then:
 - a. Give your article a title.
 - b. Category – choose “new content”
 - c. In the section “Intro Text”, you can write a short description of your article, including the date of your article.
 - d. Write your article in the section “Main Text”.

When you are done, click on the “diskette” icon near the bottom of the page to submit your article, and the website administrator will be notified that your contribution is waiting to be approved.. Once your article is approved, it will be published on our website.

Please be advised that publication of submitted material is at the discretion of the Website Administrator.

Jewish Genealogy On Youtube

If you ever need a reminder of why you are involved in the pursuit of genealogy, be sure to see this inspirational video clip recently produced by the

Jewish Genealogical Society of Colorado:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EUNBkD2U5G4>

Writing Family Memoirs

by Harvey Glasner

Society member Lorne Miller delivered a presentation at December 16th General Meeting at the Shaarei Shomayim on the importance of recording and publishing one’s family history and memoirs for future generations.

Lorne has had a number of careers over his working life. Born and raised in Montreal, he graduated from McGill University with both a B.Com and M.S.W. degree. Lorne relocated to Toronto in 1968 where he worked for Baycrest Centre as a social work supervisor, administrator of the Jewish Home for the Aged and Baycrest Day Care Centre, and eventually as the first Executive Director of the newly established Baycrest Centre Foundation. Following twenty-two years at Baycrest, Lorne became a successful fundraising consultant to not-for-profit organizations throughout Canada, the U.S. and Israel. During this period he wrote and published two major books on fundraising – one directed to synagogues and day schools, and the other directed to organizations serving seniors.

By the time he retired seven years ago, Lorne had developed a passion for writing and publishing books. In addition to publishing eleven books written by various members of the community (mostly personal memoirs), he has written a book on how to write and publish a book, a children’s adventure fantasy, and two community memoirs. He is currently writing his ninth book on how to spend one’s retirement years productively and meaningfully.

Lorne is passionate about his new career and feels that it his personal mission is to encourage families to record and write their memoirs/histories for future generations. The justification for doing so is to give life and character to the spirit of our relatives, rather than simply creating family trees.

Lorne has expressed interest in conducting teaching/learning seminars for our members in the how-tos of writing and publishing family histories. Stay tuned for future announcements.

The Ontario Genealogical Society, Toronto Branch,
& the Canadiana Department of
North York Central Library present
***The Women in Our Past:
Strategies and Resources for Researching
Female Ancestors***

**This workshop is being held on
Saturday, November 6, 2010
at the North York Central Library Auditorium.**

Visit [www.torontofamilyhistory.org/
womensworkshop.html](http://www.torontofamilyhistory.org/womensworkshop.html) for details.

If you are interested in speaking, the deadline
for proposals is April 30, 2010.

New Genealogy TV Shows

by Judy Kasman

The American version of *Who Do you Think you Are?* premiered on NBC and City-TV on Friday, March 5 at 8 pm. This weekly one-hour TV show, based on the BBC series of the same name, features the family histories of the following personalities: Matthew Broderick, Lisa Kudrow, Spike Lee, Sarah Jessica Parker, Susan Sarandon, Brooke Shields and Emmitt Smith. Ancestry.com is NBC's official partner on the series. Lisa Kudrow (*Friends*) is co-producer.

Who Do You Think You Are? has also come to Israeli television Channel 1 with 6 episodes featuring Israeli personalities, these shows having been aired in February and March.

Another new genealogy-based TV series of 4 hour-long shows, which were shown from February 10 to March 3 on PBS, is *Faces of America with Henry Louis Gates, Jr.* In this series, 12 well-known Americans' histories are featured with Harvard professor Gates: professor and poet [Elizabeth Alexander](#); chef [Mario Batali](#); comedian [Stephen Colbert](#); novelist [Louise Erdrich](#); journalist [Malcolm Gladwell](#); actress [Eva Longoria](#); musician [Yo-Yo Ma](#); director [Mike Nichols](#); Her Majesty [Queen Noor](#); television host/heart surgeon [Dr. Mehmet Oz](#); actress [Meryl Streep](#); and figure skater [Kristi Yamaguchi](#). As an aside, Nichols's background is German-Jewish (he was born Michael Igor Peschkowsky), and Gladwell's is Ontarian. To see more about *Faces of America*, including video clips, visit <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/facesofamerica/profiles/>. Episode 4, dealing with DNA, is currently online at <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/facesofamerica/video/episode-4-know-thyself/237/>.

It is particularly interesting to learn about the German-Jewish background of Mike Nichols who was born Michael Igor Peschkowsky in Berlin, Germany in 1931. He and his younger brother arrived together in the U.S. 1938, reuniting there with their father, and later with their mother who followed. Nichols' family tree reveals many well-known and accomplished people, among them Albert Einstein, a cousin on his mother's side.

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There are several advantages to receiving *Shem Tov* as a pdf:

- you will get speedy delivery right to your computer
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- you will save the Society money otherwise spent on postage and printing
- you will see the photos in colour
- you can click right on the links (or cut & paste them into your browser) to be connected to important websites

Simply send your request to have *Shem Tov* emailed to you to shemtov@jgstoronto.ca.

George Mantello Saved Jews During WWII With El Salvador Citizenship Certificates

by Judy Kasman

The lives of many European Jews were spared thanks to the work of George Mantello, a Hungarian Jewish businessman, who obtained certificates bearing the official seal of the Consulate of El Salvador.

Prior to WWII, George Mandel had befriended Colonel Jose Arturo Castellanos, a Salvadorean diplomat, who appointed Mandel the Consulate's first secretary in Geneva, Switzerland. Mandel (who changed his name to Mantello) was able to issue El Salvador citizenship certificates to many Jews in most Nazi-occupied countries, providing them with notarized copies, while keeping the originals. These certificates saved people's lives, although the number is still being investigated – perhaps hundreds, maybe thousands. Ironically, Mantello was not able to get the certificates in time to his parents in Hungary, and they perished at Auschwitz. The Swiss vice-consul in Budapest, Carl Lutz, sheltered Iren, Mantello's, wife and helped distribute certificates in Hungary.

From after the War until his death in 1992, George Mantello lived in Rome. In about 2005, a woman in Geneva found in her basement a suitcase filled with more than 1,000 such certificates. In 2008, Enrico Mantello, George's son, donated the certificates to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

George Mantello (1901-1992) was also instrumental in publicizing the Auschwitz Protocol. The Protocol was an eyewitness report written of the death camp by Rudolf Vrba and Alfred Wetzler, two Slovakian Jews who escaped from Auschwitz in 1944. The report was received by Mantello's assistant, Romanian diplomat Dr. Florian Manoliu, who gave it to Mantello; the latter had it translated into various languages and then distributed it to Swiss Protestant clergy and to foreign diplomats. He also launched a worldwide campaign in the press decrying the deeds of the Nazis. This publicity led to an end of deportations from Budapest to Auschwitz in 1944.

To read more about this fascinating piece of history, go to <http://www.ushmm.org/museum/exhibit/focus/mantello/>

Were your family members or friends saved by a Salvadorean certificate?

Please send an email to shemtov@jgstoronto.ca.

NEW MEMBERS

JGS Toronto is very pleased to welcome as new members:

John Beranbaum Kevin Aaron Gibbs
Edwin Goldstein Bette Shifman

Evelyn Steinberg

BRANCHING OUT

by Elaine Cheskes

Here are the **latest acquisitions** to the JGS of Canada (Toronto) Library Collection at the North York Central Library, Gladys Allison Canadiana Room, 6th floor

Levine, Allan Gerald. *Fugitives of the Forest: The Heroic Story of Jewish Resistance and Survival During the Second World War*. Guilford, Conn.: Lyons Press, 2009.

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

Petrovskii-Shtern, Iokhanan. *Jews in the Russian Army, 1827-1917: Drafted into Modernity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

World Jewish Congress. *List of Polish Jewish Refugees Now in USSR, 1945 American Archives H277/7*. New York: American Jewish Archives, 2002.

Robin McGrath. *Salt Fish & Shmattes A History of the Jews in Newfoundland and Labrador From 1700*. Newfoundland: Creative Publishers, 2006. Review by Prof. N. Ravvin appeared in *Shem Tov*, September, 2009



Google Your Family Tree: Unlock the Hidden Power of Google

by Daniel M. Lynch

Reviewed by Elaine Cheskes



Have you Googled your family tree? I am sure that most family historians have searched Google for their own names, place names or names of family members. In his book, *Google Your Family Tree: Unlock the Hidden Power of Google*, Daniel M. Lynch increases the chances of a successful hit by unlocking the secrets of this remarkable search engine. Both the novice and the expert genealogist will be amazed to discover innovative techniques and valuable resources for accomplishing a productive search.

The text is easy to understand as each procedure is outlined step-by-step, and even the most complicated technological concepts are simplified. In addition, the use of sample screens allows the researcher to clearly visualize the information.

Wildcard, Boolean, and keyword searching are only a few of the Basic Techniques that Lynch uses to create a solid foundation for efficient searching. He proceeds to incorporate More Advanced Techniques such as query building and expanded capabilities to broaden the ramifications of the search.

Another valuable feature of Google is the Language Tool. This component enables the text translator to translate the con-

tents of a document, postcard or letter from a foreign language into the native language of the researcher. In addition, when data is written in English, it may be translated into the language requested by the correspondent. For example, if an English language query is addressed to the Ukraine, the contents of the text may be translated into Ukrainian. Therefore, this feature will facilitate communication between the dispatcher and the recipient. *Google Alerts* automatically searches the web for information. When a request is made by the researcher to scan the web for genealogical resources, a continuous ongoing search is set into motion. Whenever a hit occurs, *Google Alerts* notifies the historian of the results.

Google Earth and *Other Tips & Tricks* offer a variety of methods for solving the ancestral maze. In this encyclopaedic volume, many important resources are included in the appendices entitled *Getting Started in Genealogy*, *Top Sites for Genealogists* and *Other Search Engines*. *Google Your Family Tree* is a masterpiece and an essential reference tool for those who are exploring and discovering their family trees.



Notification of Closure of the Binder Catalogues

As of January 2010, the binders that hold the complete catalogue listings of the Jewish Genealogical Society (Toronto) Library collection, located at the North York Central Library, Gladys Allison Canadiana Room, 6th floor, will be retired. The binder catalogues, **pre January 2010**, will remain available. However, information regarding **New Acquisitions**, post January 2010 will be accessible in the following formats:

- 1) website: www.jgstoronto.ca
To Search:
Click: Resources
Click: Library
 - a) **Author file, Title file, Subject file**
Scroll down the alphabetical list of authors, titles and subjects in each file
 - b) **List of New Acquisitions**
or
“**Control F**” key produces a search box. Enter the author, title or subject to be searched. If a “hit” occurs the exact position of the entry on the Excel spreadsheet is indicated.
- 2) **Printed Excel format document** of the author, title and subject files is available at the Reference Desk of the Gladys Allison Canadiana Room, 6th floor
- 3) **CD-Rom** of the author, title and subject files is available at the Reference Desk of the Gladys Allison Canadian Room, 6th floor
- 4) **Updated List of New Acquisitions** available at the Reference Desk of the Gladys Allison Canadiana Room, 6th floor
- 5) www.vrl.torontopubliclibrary.ca Virtual library tour
- 6) *Shem Tov*, Jewish Genealogical Society of Canada (Toronto) **Branching Out** columns include a list of **New Acquisitions**.

30th 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.jgsla2010.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/>.

Editor's Note: There is a delightful Canadian-Yiddish aspect to this website which even those not attending the Conference might enjoy:

Torontonians Mitch Smolkin, vocalist, accompanied by Nina Shapilsky, pianist, will be performing at the IAJGS Conference awards banquet on Thursday, July 15, presenting a show called "Rexite on the Radio". As indicated in the article on the Conference website entitled *Yiddish song: Blasts from the past* by Schelly Talalay Dardashti, the Toronto duo will be recreating the songs of Seymour Rexite (Rechtzeit) (1911-2002), known in his time as the "Yiddish Frank Sinatra". To enjoy clips of the original Yiddish tunes (c. 1950) sung by Rexite, treats such as *Surrey With the Fringe on Top* and *Love and Marriage*, just click on the links in the Dardashti article. You will not be disappointed!

If you are planning to attend the IAJGS Conference or the OGS Conference (see p. 9), or both, please send an email to shemtov@jgstoronto.ca.

YIVO Institute for Jewish Research

by Judy Kasman

The YIVO Institute for Jewish Research was founded in Vilna, Lithuania (then Poland) in 1925 as the Yiddish Scientific Institute, and has been in New York City since 1940. It is "...dedicated to the history and culture of Ashkenazi Jewry and to its influence in the Americas."

Vilna poet Avrom Sutzkever, who died in Tel Aviv this past January at the age of 96, during WWII had been forced by the Nazis to sort books from plundered Jewish libraries so that the Germans could establish an institute of Jewish studies, without Jews. Sutzkever and others put aside valuable books and buried them, only to retrieve them after the War and have them sent to YIVO in New York.

YIVO is a major resource centre for the study of Eastern European Jewish history, Yiddish language, literature and culture, and much more. Its collections, including its Library and Archives, are vast.

At www.yivo.org, you can access many online galleries & exhibits and get a sense of the huge amount of the archival material available, including music, films and photographs. For example, YIVO's *People of a Thousand Towns*, which consists of 17,000 photos of Eastern European Jewish life, can be seen at <http://yivo1000towns.cjh.org>. Online you can also access archived copies of *YIVO News*, its quarterly publication. One piece of information that I obtained from the Winter 2009 Edition (No. 205) was that a Yiddish book recently donated to the YIVO Library is the *Vegetarian-Dietetic Cookbook: 400 Meals Made Exclusively From Vegetables* by Fania Lewando, published in Vilna in 1938. The author had owned a vegetarian restaurant in that city.

Genealogists will especially be interested in the Miriam Weiner Genealogy Collection – in 2006, the noted genealogist donated her personal collection of books, maps and more that she had amassed over a period of 30 years.

YIVO is located at The Center for Jewish History, 15 W. 16th Street, New York; the telephone number is 212-246-6080. Visit www.yivo.org.

CONTEST WINNER!

Congratulations to **Jackie Welland** who won a free 2011 JGS Toronto membership! Her name was drawn at the February 2010 Executive Meeting from the names of all members who made their 2010 Society contributions by January 31, 2010.

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.

Non-member fee: \$5.00 per meeting

(exception: spouses accompanying members)

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

***NEW FEATURE: Doors open at 7:30 pm, meeting begins at 7:45 pm with a *Helping You Get Started* session!**

"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 where Jerrold is now the "nerve centre" of the family. For one branch of his wife's family, there is now 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, Lizhensk, and Zgierz.

Jerrold lives in Toronto with his wife and four children. By day, he 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

Afternoon program

Details to follow at www.jgstoronto.ca

Wednesday, June 23 at 8.00 pm

***NEW FEATURE: Doors open at 7:30 pm, meeting begins at 7:45 pm with a *Helping You Get Started* session!**

Member Break-Throughs: Brick Walls and Strong Foundations

Details to follow at www.jgstoronto.ca

CHECK THE WEBSITE OFTEN!

Remember to visit www.jgstoronto.ca frequently to see news and updates by checking the *Announcements* and the *What's New* section!

Familial Cancer in Jewish Women

by Judy Kasman

In 2008, Drs. Steven Narod & Kelly Metcalfe began a study at Women's College Research Institute about familial cancer in Jewish women in Ontario. More than 2,000 such women were offered free genetic testing for the two breast cancer mutations, BRCA1 & BRCA2. The goal of this study was to identify women who were carriers of these genes so that they could receive preventive care and screening.

Among Ashkenazi Jews, about 1 in 45 men or women carry a genetic predisposition to breast and ovarian cancer as compared to 1 in 250 women in the general population.

Those with family history usually develop cancer at a younger age than most, and may develop cancer in both breasts. Genetic susceptibility to breast cancer can be passed on through the mother or the father.

Presently, the saliva test used to test the genetic tendency of these types of cancer is offered in Ontario to women based on their personal or family history of cancer. However, as part of this study, all Jewish women who wished to participate in the study could be tested.

In December 2009, results of the first phase of the study were released. Of the 22 women in the study who were found to be carriers of the genes, six mutations were passed on through the mother, fourteen through the father, and two were not determined. Under the current guidelines, less than half were eligible for genetic testing in Ontario. Due to their findings, Drs. Narod & Metcalfe recommend that all Jewish women be offered DNA testing for the breast cancer gene.

The second phase of the study, in which up to 5,000 more women may take part, commenced on March 1, 2010. Participants must be Ashkenazi or Sephardic Jewish women from 20 to 70 years of age who reside in Ontario. They cannot previously have had genetic testing for the BRCA1 or BRCA2 genes, and they must be willing to complete several questionnaires and provide a saliva sample at the research centre in downtown Toronto.

To enroll, call 416-351-7395. You can click to enroll online at www.womensresearch.ca/jewishstudy/ where you can also obtain further information.



Of course, there are myriad other diseases with a genetic component. It is prudent for those tracking family tree data to include medical information along with people's names since one never knows if or when this information could prove to be invaluable. A book on this very subject by Jon Entine is *Abraham's DNA: Race, Identity and the DNA of the Chosen People*, Grand Central Publishing, 2007, which can be found in our Society Collection at the North York Public Library. Also, you can view Mr. Entine discussing his book at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rTJFziTzOeg>.

Update on European Cemeteries

by Judy Kasman

Lodz Ghetto Cemetery

American Steve Lasky has on his enormous website a large online exhibition about many of the Jewish Ghettos of Europe. At www.museumoffamilyhistory.com/ce/ghetto/lodz-ghetto-cemetery.htm, Lasky has made available two lists comprised of nearly fourteen hundred names of Jewish residents who perished in the Łódź Ghetto and were buried in the cemetery there. The lists (which are not yet complete) give the names of the deceased, and often the father's name, the date of death and age at death.

The lists are presented courtesy of the Łódź Jewish community through the agency of *Yad LeZehava (YZI)* in Kedumim Israel and with the dedicated cooperation of the Israel Defence Forces' *Witnesses in Uniform* Program. There are no headstones as yet, but the IDF intends to mark the graves in April, 2010 when the printed Hebrew-Polish markers will be ready.

Lasky hopes to add about five hundred burials to the list later this spring, once names are translated into Hebrew, and then into English.

Eastern European Cemeteries

In addition, the *Lo Tishkach* Foundation (Hebrew for "do not forget") has developed an online database of more than 10,000 Jewish cemeteries located throughout Europe. It also includes information about mass burial sites in Eastern Europe. Many entries included pictures of the cemeteries as they exist today. See <http://www.lo-tishkach.org/>, where you can learn more about this organization and search its database.

Austrian Cemeteries

In December, 2009, the Austrian government announced that it has pledged \$30 million for the restoration of its Jewish cemeteries which were neglected for more than 60 years. For this project, the Austrian Jewish community will also raise an additional \$30 million dollars through donations.



Ontario Genealogical Society Conference
May 14-16, 2010

Doubletree by Hilton-Toronto Airport
Over 600 are expected to attend this event, the largest of its kind in Canada.

To get the latest developments, sign up for the Conference blog.

For information, go to

www.ogs.on.ca/conference2010
conference2010@ogs.on.ca

Jews Of The Caribbean & Region

by Judy Kasman

The first known Jew to arrive in **Haiti** (in 1492) was Luis de Torres, Christopher Columbus' interpreter. In the 17th century, Brazilian Jewish immigrants settled in Haiti.

The next wave of Jewish immigration there stemmed from the Middle East – Lebanon, Syria and Egypt – during the late 19th and early 20th centuries; these people mostly engaged in the import and sale of textiles. Then, in the 1930s, about 100 European Jews who fled the Nazis came to Haiti. By the mid-20th century, the Jewish community peaked at about 300 people, following which members of the community dispersed to the United States and South and Central America. There is archeological evidence of a Crypto-Jewish community in Jeremie in western Haiti.

These days, there are about 25 Jews in Haiti, most of them in Petionville; they are among the country's affluent. Haiti's Torah is kept in the home of businessman Gilbert Bigio, Israel's honorary consul in Haiti. "...Bigio owns the land on which Israel recently set up its military field hospital..." after the January 12th, 2010 earthquake, which the Bigio family was fortunate to have survived.

According to Amos Radian, Israel's Dominican Republic-based ambassador to the nations of the eastern Caribbean: "Haiti and Israel maintain full diplomatic relations...during the 1960s and 1970s, Israel's international development organization, Mashav, was active in creating 'special farms' in Haiti, and teaching locals about sustainable agricultural practices, such as the use of drip irrigation and greenhouses."

With information from *Haiti's Jewish Remnant Keeps the Faith and Lends a Hand Amid the Crisis* by Gabrielle Birkner, *The Forward*, January 20, 2010



On January 31, 2010, The Hebrew Congregation of **St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands** held its 11th Annual Community Auction, the proceeds of which help maintain its 177 year-old building. The Congregation was founded in 1796 and its building is a United States National Historic Landmark which is open daily, welcoming more than 10,000 visitors per year.

It is noteworthy that Camille Pissarro, the Father of Impressionism, was born in St. Thomas to parents who were members of The Hebrew Congregation. An original Pissarro was one of the items up for auction.

<http://www.usvi.net/usvi/synagogue.html>

Ainsley Henriques, now in his 70s, is currently leader of **Jamaica's** small Jewish community. At the beginning of 2010, he and the Jamaican government hosted an academic conference in Kingston on the history of the island's Jewish community.

He is a distant relative of Abraham Cohen Henriques, who came to Jamaica in 1670 from Amsterdam (where many Portuguese Jews, and crypto-Jews lived), hoping to find Christopher Columbus' hidden treasure.

The Jamaican Jewish population peaked in 1881 at 2,535; by 1974 there were 450, and now the population numbers about 200. The Jewish population has been decimated by intermarriage, assimilation and emigration.

The sole remaining *shul* is Sharei Shalom Synagogue-United Congregation of Israelites, with prayers in English, Hebrew and Spanish. The synagogue, which boasts a sand floor, was built in 1908, on the location of a previous synagogue that had been destroyed by an earthquake.

Editor's note: My late father and three of his brothers were among many Jews who were welcomed by Trinidad from Poland in the late 1930s. A thriving Jewish community developed in Trinidad, but in a pattern similar to that described above, the communities have dwindled.

I'd like to hear from Society members whose family histories include life in the Caribbean. If you have an interesting story to share, please write to shemtov@jgstoronto.ca.

Diccionario Sefaradi de Sobrenomes Now Available in Softcover

The hardcover version of *Dicionário Sefaradi de Sobrenomes* (Dictionary of Sephardic Surnames) is almost out of print. Avotaynu has arranged with the authors to publish a softcover version. This magnificent book won the Best Reference Book award of the Association of Jewish Libraries for 2003. It includes hundreds of rare photographs, family shields and illustrations. In addition to the dictionary portion, there is a 72-page summary of Sephardic history, before and after the expulsion from Spain and Portugal, and a 40-page linguistic essay about Sephardic names, including a list of the 250 most common surnames.

From *NU? What's New?* Dec. 27th, 2009

City Of Toronto Research From The Comfort Of...Anywhere!

by Judy Kasman

Some of you have had the opportunity to visit the City of Toronto Archives, located at the base of Casa Loma at 255 Spadina Road, telephone 416-397-0778. It is open to the public Monday to Friday from 9 am to 4 pm, and Saturdays from 10 am to 4:30 pm from October to April. Here you can see special exhibits and pull microfilms of a vast amount of data, including photographs.

However, you can avail yourself of an enormous amount of Toronto Archives information without visiting in person; just visit its website: www.toronto.ca/archives.

Another useful website is that of the City of Toronto, Toronto Culture: www.toronto.ca/culture/history/credits.htm

Here you will find the equivalent of an online book, *The History of Toronto: An 11,000 Year Journey*. replete with images and photographs. Of particular note to Society members would be the chapters entitled *The First Half of the 20th Century, 1901-51* and *The Modern Metropolis, From 1951*.

There are links at this site to Toronto's Historic Museums and to Events and Exhibits. One Exhibit of note is *Collecting Toronto: Through the Eyes of Larry Becker*. Larry Becker was a Jewish Toronto coin dealer and collector of ephemera who died in 1999. Upon his death, his family donated his enormous collection of postcards, TTC tickets, maps, medals, etc. to the City. The collectibles, housed at the Toronto Archives, have been displayed at The Market Gallery and now can be seen online as a virtual exhibit.

Neil Richler Gives Presentation at USDS

Neil Richler (seen below), father a grade 2 student at the Bayview Campus of United Synagogue Day Schools (USDS), came to talk to the students about making family trees, collecting information and conducting interviews. He showed a video interview with his own grandfather as he talked about different ways of doing interviews. The visit was the culmination of the study of Traditions in Social Studies.



Neil Richler speaking to future genealogists

The Jewish Community of Owen Sound - Cont'd from page 1

but by then, the congregation had dwindled to less than 20 families. During the 1950s and 60s, efforts had been made to revitalize and beautify the building. A stained glass window was auctioned off and in 1966 new pews were purchased, but by 1992 it seemed likely that the synagogue would be closed. In 2002, collapse was literally imminent when a beam supporting the building was found to have rotted away.

But with the start of the new millennium an amazing re-awakening occurred and Jews in the area helped nurture a renewed vibrancy. Fifteen new stained glass windows, each honouring a family in the community while also presenting symbols of our traditions and history, were installed. The first public musical festival/fundraiser, dubbed "Rhythm and Jews", not only helped repair the building but attracted 35 new families to the congregation.

Several other projects and fund-raisers have recently been undertaken, including the installation of a heritage garden and courtyard; the designation of a Jewish section in Greenwood Cemetery; the creation of a Holocaust Memorial; and co-operating with The Grey Roots Museum and Archives on its exhibit "L'Chaim- To Life: The Story of the Beth Ezekiel Synagogue" and in the preparation of the Gallery and Synagogue Guide. The most recent "Rhythm and Jews" concert, attended by many in the wider community, was subtitled "Everything's Coming up Moses". The synagogue's website is www.bethezekiel.org.

Today over 60 families belong to this little shul that could. Classes in Hebrew and Jewish tradition are taught weekly and services, led by community members, are held regularly, with High Holiday services being conducted by a Toronto cantor. Men and women participate equally and all members are consulted on important matters, such as the selection of a new prayer book.

Beth Ezekiel is characterized by a respect for the beliefs and needs of members of every variety of Jewish background. This remarkable little community survives and flourishes as the last small town synagogue in Ontario, if not all of Canada. Perhaps you or someone you know are also descended from a pioneering Owen Sound family.

Author's note: By 1908, Hirsch Sosinsky was in Calgary, also employed as the cantor, *shoichet* and Hebrew teacher of its fledgling community and he continued to make Calgary his home until his death in 1956. I have recently returned to my Calgary roots.

SHARE YOUR WEALTH...

...of information, that is! If you have genealogical newsletters, journals, etc. that you are longer want or need, please bring them to a general meeting where they will put on a table for others to peruse, choose & reuse!

Angel Island

by Judy Kasman

When we think of North American points of immigration, many of us might readily think of Pier 21 or Ellis Island. I just discovered that January 21, 2010 marked the 100th anniversary of the United States immigration station on Angel Island, in San Francisco Bay. (100 points for those of you who had heard of Angel Island before!) On this recent anniversary, a special ceremony was held at the San Francisco Civic Center.

This Immigration Station is famous for having both included and excluded immigrants; it took an active role in trying to keep mostly Chinese out of the U.S. About one-third of the 500,000 people who passed through Angel Island between 1910 and 1940 were Asians. Many were detained, sometimes for as long as a year. It wasn't until 1943 that the Federal laws that limited Asian immigration were repealed.

Today, Angel Island is a California State Park.

Maria Sakovich, in her article entitled *When the 'Enemy' Landed at Angel Island*, states: "Between 1915 and 1919, Russian Jewish men, escaping conscription or deserting the army, and later mother, children and other relatives of American residents, constituted a large share of the non-Asians arriving at Angel Island."

See the entire article at www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2009/summer/angel.html

If Angel Island figures in your family tree, please send an email to shemtov@jgstoronto.ca

ADVERTISING RATES

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

	One Issue	Four Issues (one year)
Full Page	\$60	\$200
Half Page	\$30	\$100
Quarter Page	\$18	\$ 60
Eighth Page	\$10	\$ 32

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.

President's Message

The Jewish Genealogical Society (Canada) of Toronto was formed in 1985 by a committed group of individuals who saw a need for like-minded people to collaborate and help one another in the pursuit of their family histories. Since then, genealogy has grown exponentially in popularity throughout the world, thanks to online databases that have made the job of researching less intimidating and arduous. So, here we are, 25 years later, with some of the same people involved in JGS Toronto since, as we all know, family tree research is always a work-in-progress – it just never ends! We hope to be able to mark our Society's 25th anniversary later this year in a special, meaningful way. Please watch for details.

Certainly one can achieve success in genealogy without being a member of a formal organization. However, we as a Society strive to assist in the progress of our members by providing teaching and learning experiences through our workshops, and motivation by way of presenting engaging speakers. As well, we intend to do our utmost in providing a welcoming atmosphere that allows for camaraderie.

It is common knowledge that people benefit more from their membership in organizations when they become more involved, so here's your chance to become more active in our Society:

- Help Elaine Slavens and Shelley Stillman on the Cemetery Committee
- Get involved in publicizing our Society's activities to the community
- Join the Programming Committee under the experienced leadership of Les Kelman
- Work on education, e.g. getting Jewish day schools to include genealogy as part of their curricula
- Join the Membership Committee under Chair Neil Richler

Remember that **you**, our members, are the most important part of our Society. During this 25th anniversary year, do what you can to keep our Society vibrant and vital!

I look forward to your ideas and input!

Harvey Glasner
President, JGS Toronto
president@jgstoronto.ca

**Best wishes for a
Happy Passover!**