Featuring JGS Toronto’s Website: www.jgstoronto.ca
by Shelley Stillman, JGS Toronto Website Co-ordinator & Judy Kasman

Jewish Genealogical Society of Toronto

Serving the Greater Toronto Area since 1985

VOLUME XXIX No. 4

December 2013  Tevet 5774

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When I retired from my full-time engineering work, someone asked me to list, from my experiences, some important “lessons learned”. One which appears on my long list is “Bigger is not automatically better”. I have seen a number of occurrences when fast growth and expansion of an organization have resulted in a loss of cohesion and focus for the organization as well as for its members and staff.

In the context of JGS Toronto, growth for the sake of numbers only is not one of our goals. Nevertheless, it is important, in order for our Society to continue to exist and thrive, to maintain our membership and to welcome new members who are interested in genealogy, family stories and Jewish history. Our long-time members bring experience, while our new members bring new perspectives and new experiences. From a financial perspective, increased membership enables us to widen the search when seeking dynamic speakers and presenters, especially when travel costs are involved.

We want to increase our presence in the Toronto area and reach out to those who could be interested in joining our genealogy endeavours. The best way to achieve this outreach is for all of us to see ourselves as ambassadors for our Society. Let us invite people to our meetings; let us direct people to our website, our blog and the JewishGen resources; let us circulate issues of Shem Tov; let us distribute our Society business cards. Whenever there is an opportunity for us, as members who care about our Society, to spread the word, please use it.

Bigger is not automatically better, but increasing our presence in the Toronto area will ultimately contribute to the health, vitality and sustainability of our Society. Our mission of discovery and sharing of information is worth preserving.

Les Kelman, President, JGS Toronto
president@jgstoronto.ca
Wednesday, December 11th at 8:00 p.m.  
(doors open at 7:30 p.m.)  
At Temple Sinai, 210 Wilson Ave., Toronto  
Spadina Sweatshops: Jews & Gender in Toronto’s Labour Movement in the Early 1900s  
Ruth Frager’s lecture focuses on the history of the Jewish labour movement in Toronto, emphasizing the interactions concerning ethnic identity, gender, and class in the development of the unions in the clothing industry. Frager examines why so many Jews clustered in this sector and stresses the harsh conditions they faced, particularly in the interwar years. She highlights their struggles to improve their situation in the sweatshops and beyond, while focusing on the roots of Jewish activism.

Thursday, February 20th, 2014, 2:00-3:30 p.m.  
At Ontario Jewish Archives, 4600 Bathurst Street  
(Lipa Green Centre)  
Learn how to conduct genealogical research at the Ontario Jewish Archives  
Speaker: Melissa Caza, Archivist  
Registration required and will open in 2014. Attendance is limited so be sure to book early.

Sunday, March 23rd, 10:30 a.m. to noon  
At Beth Torah Congregation, 47 Glenbrook Avenue, Toronto  
Film Screening: Beautifully Broken. A unique film presentation and discussion on the use of filmmaking to explore family history.  
Speakers:  Marc Cohen; Vladimir Kabelik, director, and Rafael Goldchain, the subject of the film

Wednesday, April 23rd at 7:30 p.m.  
At North York Central Library Auditorium, 5120 Yonge Street  
Designing an Efficient and Effective “Tracing Forward”  
**Description:** This session will draw on actual case studies to demonstrate the importance of designing an efficient research plan to yield quick results when “tracing forward”. Learn key guiding principles that will help you succeed in finding those “lost cousins” sooner rather than later.  
**Speaker** Paul Jones is a former Chair of the Toronto Branch of the Ontario Genealogy Society and is well known in Toronto genealogy circles for original and often humorous presentations. A committed genealogy volunteer, he is also an award-winning writer and currently contributes regularly to the “Roots” column in Canada’s History magazine. He relishes the challenge of taking on family history problems that have stumped the experts.

Wednesday, May 28th, 7:30 p.m.  
At Beth Tzedec Congregation, 1700 Bathurst Street, Toronto  
Learning from our Family Heirlooms.  
Speaker Dorion Leibgott, Curator, Reuben & Helene Dennis Museum  
Using items from the Museum collection, Dorion Leibgott will demonstrate their emotional and contextual narratives and show how we can broaden our understanding of our genealogical pasts by unlocking the stories from our own family artifacts.

Wednesday, June 18th at 8 p.m. (doors open at 7:30 p.m.)  
At Temple Sinai, 210 Wilson Avenue, Toronto  
Annual Brick Walls and Breakthroughs  
It’s not too early to start thinking about YOUR presentation for this popular event!

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UPCOMING EVENTS
Please carefully note location and time of each programme!  
Check www.jgstoronto.ca for updates. For further information, write to programs@jgstoronto.ca

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34TH IAJGS INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON JEWISH GENEALOGY

Co-hosted by the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies and the Jewish Genealogical Society of Utah  
July 27th-August 1st, 2014 in Salt Lake City, Utah  
Registration begins in late December  
http://conference.iajgs.org/2014/

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2014 Ontario Genealogical Society Annual Conference
The 53rd Annual OGS Conference will be held at Brock University in St. Catharines from May 1st to May 4th.  
This year’s theme, Genealogy Without Borders, is based on the simple idea that genealogical research can be done almost without ever having to leave your home. Whether you’re looking for a headstone picture in England or a 1921 Canadian Census data image, the Internet provides access to thousands of documents to thousands of people. More recently, there has been an explosion in the use of social media sites like Facebook, YouTube and Twitter, to connect family researchers to both sources of information and family members around the globe.  
Genealogy Without Borders is genealogy research that does not require a passport!  
For information, visit  
http://www.ogs.on.ca/conference2014/index.php
Ger Mandolin Orchestra Performs in Toronto
by Judy Kasman

Eric Stein, Artistic Director of Toronto’s Ashkenaz Festival, had made a presentation to our Society in November 2012 about the Ger Mandolin Orchestra, of which he is a member. That evening, Eric gave the background of the orchestra, relating that it was founded several years ago by Avner Yonai, an Israeli San Franciscan, who assembled the orchestra after learning that his forebears in Gora Kowalia (Ger), Poland had played in such an ensemble almost 100 years ago. Eric was also able to share with us audio and video clips of the musicians, past and present. See Back Issues of Shem Tov, December 2011, Vol. XXVII, No. 4, and December 2012, Vol. XXVIII, No. 4.

And so it was a great treat for Torontonians to have the opportunity to see all eleven members of this present-day orchestra perform at the George Weston Recital Hall on November 7 as an Ashkenaz Festival performance that formed part of Holocaust Education Week; also in attendance at this concert were Avner Yonai and other Israeli descendants of the original players of the Ger Mandolin Orchestra. Each musician of this current incarnation of the orchestra, who reside in disparate locations in the U.S., Europe and Israel, is a mandolin virtuoso in his own right. Together, playing mandolins of every size, shape and form, the musicians created beautiful sounds.

The first half of the concert featured melodies that were reminiscent of the various types of music that the original orchestra would have played in Poland in the 1920s &’30s. After intermission, individual musicians were showcased in various styles, from swing, to klezmer, to Turkish. A piece by the late Leo Spellman, a Toronto Holocaust survivor, was given a world premiere in a mandolin-guitar duet. The concert concluded with Hatikvah, played on mandolins, of course.

As mentioned, the creation of this unique musical group emanated from a genealogical search, that is, when Avner Yonai returned to his roots in his father’s hometown of Ger. The lesson to be gleaned from this is that we as genealogists never know where our searches and discoveries will take us!

Precious Legacy: A Celebration of Life

On November 3rd, as part of Holocaust Education Week, Baycrest launched Precious Legacy: A Celebration of Life, an exhibit of 180 black and white photographs of Holocaust survivors who are residents of Baycrest’s The Terraces and the Apostex Centre or who are participants in the Café Europa programme held at the Terraces. The photographer is Elliot Sylman, who himself is the child of a Holocaust survivor.

The exhibit is on display at Baycrest’s Bathurst Street entrance (Ben & Hilda Katz building) and will continue until May, Jewish Heritage Month in Ontario. The photographs can also be seen online at www.baycrest.org/preciouslegacy
last fall, copies of our award winning anthology, Tracing Our Routes, Telling Our Stories were donated by our organization to Jewish institutions in Krakow, Warsaw and Berlin. My husband Ed and I were personally able to deliver the books while we were on a Jewish Heritage tour of these three cities.

In Krakow, the book was given to the Jewish Community Centre there. The Centre, open since 2008, is located in Kazimierz, the restored and revitalized old Jewish quarter of the city. The centre has a small library which has books in Polish, Hebrew, Yiddish and English, hopes to serve the entire community, both Jewish and non-Jewish. According to the website of the Centre, the library is the only public Jewish library in the country at this time.

Warsaw’s Museum of the History of Polish Jews opened last April, but its library has not yet opened. However, when it does open, in the spring of 2014, it will boast a copy of our book. During our group visit we were fortunate to meet and hear of the Museum’s mandate and plans from Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, a New York University professor of anthropology who is on a five-year leave of absence to serve as the Program Director of the Museum’s Core Exhibition, also slated to open this coming spring. She is passionate that the thousand year history of Jews living in Poland and their contributions to the culture of the country be showcased.

It was especially meaningful to present the book directly to her as Professor Kirshenblatt-Gimblett has her roots in Toronto; she was born here, her parents having emigrated from Poland.

While we were in the Jewish Museum in Berlin, which was designed by Daniel Libeskind, the third copy of the book was left to be included in their library resource collection. This Museum is dedicated to telling the story of the two thousand year history of Jewish life in Germany. Since its opening in 1999, which attracted visitors to an empty building and the opening of the permanent exhibition in 2001, millions of people have walked through the building. Indicative of the international composition of visitors is that audio guides are available in English, German, Hebrew, French, Italian, Spanish, Japanese and Russian.

This trip was a difficult one for us – not in a physical sense for our hotels were first class, the food we ate was plentiful and delicious and we travelled in warmth and comfort.

No, the journey was difficult, at times painful, because of some of the sites we visited and the memories of atrocities that occurred there. Yet, even in Auschwitz-Birkenau, there was evidence of rebirth and regeneration of Jewish life. For, as our group walked through the cold, barren site of horror our footsteps were followed by groups of high school students from Israel. Dressed in their warm, fleecy white jackets, with blue Magen Davids stitched on the back, their presence was a counterpoint to the slaughter that had transpired.

Meeting the people of Bet Warszawa, a progressive Jewish congregation in Warsaw and hearing of their members who are reaffirming their Jewish roots, attending a Friday evening service at the Rykestrasse Synagogue in Berlin, all were indications that there is a resurgence of Jewish life in Poland and Germany.
Be sure to visit the extensive JGS Toronto Library Collection located at the Gladys Allison Canadiana Room, North York Central Library, 5120 Yonge Street, Toronto.

**BRANCHING OUT**

by Elaine Cheskes

My husband Albert and I recently visited Barcelona. What a vibrant and beautiful city with its wide avenues and restored architectural wonders, many designed by the renowned architect, Antoni Gaudi! The Ramblas, walking street, with its living statues, world famous museums devoted to Picasso and Miro, fashionable designers’ boutiques on Passeig de Gracia are spectacular tourist attractions. What an illustrious history that Barcelona celebrates. However, among the voluminous relics of ancient times, where is the Jewish presence?

The fate of the Jews was sealed. From 1391-1492, two edicts were issued that commanded, “conversion or expulsion.” Non-compliance resulted in death.

**Headstones “Converted” to Quarry Stones: The Decimation of Barcelona’s Jews**

Survivors of the Attack on “El Call” in Barcelona in the year 1391

The preceding document lists the names in alphabetical order, of the Jews who survived the attack, in 1391, on the “Call”, the medieval Jewish quarter, and who “chose” to be baptized. In my opinion, a more accurate account would state that the Jews were “coerced” to choose baptism. Many of these Jews were known as crypto-Jews, conversos, or Marranos. They practiced the rituals of Judaism secretly. The first column indicates the original Hebrew names. The second column records the new adopted names after the conversion. The numbers adjacent to the names represent a digital record.

It is a difficult process in Barcelona to research church records and gain access to archival documents. One must make a formal request with an explanation of the reason and ultimate use of the information. “However, there is a slowly growing interest in finding out Jewish roots lost long ago. In great part, it is due to a decrease in embarrassment that may be caused to some, finding out that - though born in a Catholic family, baptized, etc. - their ancestors were Jewish. Most people do nothing with this information, while some go a little deeper. A much smaller number decide to return. It is also interesting to see that some of the family names of Jewish persons living in Spain today exist in records from the Middle Ages. To reconstruct a family tree requires research of someone experienced in this field.”

Further more, others have no interest to discover their heritage since their families have been Catholics for over 600 years. The link to the past has been permanently severed.

For genealogists, it is of great importance to access the headstones of ancestors. From the inscriptions, we can acquire basic vital information, and frequently trace a lineage that connects the generations. Unfortunately, this significant resource is unavailable to the Jews of Barcelona who are interested to discover their ancestry. After the attack, on the “Call”, in 1391, the King of Aragon, Martin I, granted the Jewish cemetery on Montjuic (Mountain of the Jews) to the order of the Celestines. Headstones were “converted” to quarry stones and reutilized for building materials. One example, where we can see re-used stone is the 16th century Lieutenant’s Palace, which housed until recently the Archives of the Crown of Aragon. As my eyes scaled the ancient walls, faded markings became visible, and I noticed upon closer scrutiny the Hebrew letters, Ayin, Vet, and Resh, etched into the crumbling stones. “AVR” is freely translated from Hebrew to English, as “passing”. Therefore, we can surmise that the palace was constructed from the remnants of Jewish headstones. Where is the respect and dignity deserving of these forgotten souls?

The only vestige of medieval Jewish religious life in the Northwest wall of the Lieutenant’s Palace

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“Call” is the Sinagoga Mayor that dates from the 14th century. The excavation of the synagogue began in 1996 with the restoration and renovation completed in 2002. A Montreal couple became the first to celebrate, after six centuries, their wedding in the Barcelona “shul”, and at a Shabbat morning service five men, formerly Catholics, completed their conversion to Judaism. They traced their lineage back centuries to Spanish Jewish ancestors.

Recovery project of the former Sinagoga Mayor of Barcelona, Currently named Shlomo Ben Adret

Overlook of Room 2 (After Restoration)

Currently, Barcelona has approximately 5000 Jews, practicing and non-practicing, and four synagogues; one Sephardic Orthodox, two Reform, and one Chabad. After 600 years of exile from Barcelona, Jews are gradually returning to their roots with the dream of establishing a vibrant and flourishing Jewish community.

Our sincere appreciation to Dominique Tomasov Blinder, a most knowledgeable guide, who gave us an enlightened understanding of the history, past and present of the Jews of Barcelona.

ii) Dominique Tomasov Blinder, architect specialized in Jewish Heritage www.urbancultours.com

Private Messaging Service

Private Messaging is a new, confidential service of JGS Toronto which enables you to send and receive emails through the JGS Toronto email box. Your email address will not be revealed.

Click on Compose, and you will be able to send a note to any member who has also registered. Type a name into the ‘To’ box or select a member from the Userlist.

An email will be sent from JGS Toronto letting the member know a message is waiting for him or her to pick up.

If the email message titled ‘A new private message has arrived from the Jewish Genealogical Society of Toronto (JGS Toronto)’ appears in your Junk Mail, please read it and then mark it as safe, so future messages will go to your inbox.

If you require any assistance, please write to webmaster@jgstoronto.ca

Shem Tov Back Issue Index

Back issues of Shem Tov are available on the JGS Toronto website. Click on Newsletter, then Back Issues Index. While anyone can search back issues of Shem Tov, only members have access to the four most recent issues.

Items can be searched by date, by topic or by author.

Let us know how you have used our website to enhance your research:
webmaster@jgstoronto.ca and/or president@jgstoronto.ca

HELP FOUND!

Sara Tatelman, who several years ago indexed back issues of Shem Tov for our website, is currently updating our Back Issues Index!
I started researching my father’s family using the Family History Library in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints that opened its doors in my suburban neighborhood in Buffalo, New York in 1973. I was very successful in tracing his father Fishel Yuskewitz’s family back to the 1700s in Poland and discovering that I am descended from a long line of tailors. Next I turned to the family of Leah Gerszt, my father’s mother, only to learn that she was the only one of her family to leave Poland. How terribly sad, I thought. Her whole family must have died in the Holocaust!

My research into the Gerszt family of tanners, also going back to the 1700s, revealed that Leah was the eldest child in her family, followed by three brothers. The Polish records stopped at a certain date and so I did not know if she had any other brothers or sisters. After a few years I wondered if by any chance someone in Leah’s family could have survived. About thirty years ago, I posted the Gerszt surname on Jewishgen.org and received many letters from all over the world; Israel, France, Argentina, Australia and the United States. But none of these people descended from Leah’s brothers.

As the years went by, I gave up hope until a year ago I got an unexpected phone call. Someone was looking for me! That is the exciting thing about genealogy. Not only does one learn about dead ancestors, who they are, where they come from and what they did but it is also rewarding to find and meet living relatives. Now I was not the one who did the searching – I was the one who was found.

Toronto genealogist, Bill Gladstone, who called me, verified that I was the granddaughter of Fishel Phillips (originally Yuskewitz), told me that somebody from Australia was looking for me, and that I should contact Rabbi Ner Bresler in Brooklyn, New York to learn more.

It seemed that Rabbi Bresler had turned to Jewishgen.org about 3 or 4 years ago looking to find relatives on his paternal grandmother’s side and discovered a cousin David Zyk, an 88 year old Holocaust survivor, living in Melbourne, Australia. In the course of them getting to know each other, David told Ner that he remembered his family receiving letters and packages from relatives in Toronto, Canada. The name he remembered was Fishel Phillips! My father had told me forty years previously that he had remembered mailing letters for his mother to Poland but he could not remember any details. My prayers were answered! David turned out to be the youngest son of my grandmother’s younger sister Golda. I had no idea she had existed!

While I had yearned to find a survivor, David’s wish was to find somebody in Fishel Phillips’ family who might have pictures of his mother. His mother Golda, father Wolf, two brothers Pinkus and Herszlo, and two sisters, Ryfka and Gittel, had all perished in the Holocaust. I, the genealogist and family historian in my family, had inherited my parents’ photographs. I perused what I had and found two photographs of people I could not identify. Through a process of elimination, I concluded they were connected to my grandmother Leah. Copies were made and sent to David. He identified the people in the photos. One picture was of his mother as a young woman standing behind her parents, my great grandparents Iciek Ajzyk and Ryfka Ester Gerszt. The other picture was of his mother Golda and father Wolf, his two older brothers, Pinkus and Herszlo, and Ryfka, the baby on his mother’s lap. Sitting next to Golda was her father, Iciek Ajzyk Gerszt. David was ecstatic! His wish had been realized.

Thanks to Rabbi Bresler for hiring Bill Gladstone to find me. What ensued were many months of emails between the rabbi and me. Ner’s idea was to bring David Zyk to Brooklyn, and then to Toronto to meet the Phillips families. After months of planning, David arrived in Brooklyn on September 16th. A joyous time was spent with Ner and his extended family, celebrating the Jewish holidays in an orthodox shul (synagogue). Ner reported that dancing with the Torah reminded David of his early years in shul in Poland.

On September 29th, Ner, his wife Lynn, and David flew to Toronto. That morning my husband Gordon and I drove to Toronto. We all congregated at my sister Ronni’s home. Present were my two sisters, Ronni and Fran, their husbands, several Phillips cousins and Bill Gladstone who had researched Fishel Phillips and found us. What an emotional meeting! We were all teary-eyed. David couldn’t believe all the family he had here.

The next day we visited two cemeteries. David saw the gravestones of Fishel (Philip) and Leah Phillips (his aunt and uncle), and my parents, my uncles and aunts who were David’s first cousins. Following lunch we drove to another cemetery to look for Ner Bresler’s maternal family who had settled in Toronto. As there were no benches in this cemetery, David and I opted to wait in the car. This was a chance for us to talk about his life.

He did not talk about the horrors of the Holocaust, his time in the Warsaw Ghetto, where his mother and two sisters starved to death, the disappearance of his father, and the escape of his two brothers, nor his time in two concentration camps. What emerged from this soft-spoken eighty-eight year old man were memories of a little boy who still missed his mother. He remembered her undressing him and kissing his feet, kissing him when he returned from school, always kissing him. He was her baby, her youngest child.

David spoke of his late teen years being taken away from him, the time in which a boy becomes a young man, learning about life amidst a loving family. He bemoaned the fact that there was no family to guide him in his choice of a life-mate. David said he always chose the wrong women; three times he was divorced. These unions produced no children.

Today he lives in his own home, still cooks for himself and still drives a car. He is fortunate to have a lady friend who lives across the street and looks after him. They share meals and outings together.

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A Thirty Year Dream Realized - continued from page 8

Too soon our visit with David was over. Had we more time with him, we might have learned more about his early life in Lowicz, Poland, his time in Germany after the war, and his years in Melbourne where he worked as a laborer and in a gas stove factory.

He returned to Australia, a happy man who had found relatives who welcomed him with tears and open arms. I returned to Buffalo, happy that David found my family with Rabbi Ner Bresler’s help. I had realized my thirty year dream in finding a survivor in my grandmother Leah Gerszt Phillips’ family.

News From World Organizations
Advocating on Behalf of Jews

WORLD JEWISH RESTITUTION ORGANIZATION

Abraham Biderman, co-chairman of the World Jewish Restitution Organization (WJRO) “...has stepped up its efforts to secure private property restitution legislation in Poland and in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe.” It published an Open Letter on this subject to the President of Poland in the Jerusalem Post in advance of the Polish President’s visit to Israel. This letter also appeared in the Polish media and was published by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency (JTA).

There is a new website where you can sign up to receive emailed updates regarding this issue: www.polishrestitution.org

NEWS FROM WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS

Earlier this fall, there were reports of a discovery of a major collection of Nazi-era looted art in the Munich apartment of collector Cornelius Gurlitt whose father was collector Hildebrand Gurlitt. According to the November 23, 2013 JTA article, “more than 1,400 works were confiscated nearly two years ago in the course of an investigation for tax evasion. The state prosecutors in Augsburg agreed last week to publish photos and titles for 590 works in the collection on Germany’s official website for identifying lost art. So far, 25 works have been put online”.

Ronald Lauder, World Jewish Congress President, said that all suspicious art collections should be publicized so that works can be found by possible heirs. The article states: “Lauder also said that statute of limitations on Nazi-era looting crimes should be voided.”

www.lootedart.com is a website of the Commission for Looted Art in Europe. The site’s subtitle is The Central Region of Information on Looted Cultural Property 1933-45. It has a few searchable databases and links to news and other related information.

New: JewishGen Canada Database

Among the many databases available at www.jewishgen.org, there is the new JewishGen Canada database. The current subjects available are:

JewishGen Family Finder
3,800 entries by genealogists researching Jewish families in Canada.

JewishGen Online Worldwide Burial Registry
168,000 burial records in Canadian cemeteries.

The JewishGen Memorial Plaques Database
Information from synagogue yahrzeit plaques.

Montreal Jewish General Hospital Archives
More than 4,000 records.

In addition, there is an external Database which will be useful for those searching Montreal:

Canadian Jewish Heritage Network
More than 67,000 listings drawn from Canadian Jewish archival sources. *

www.lootedart.com is a website of the Commission for Looted Art in Europe.

You Can Help JewishGen by Joining ANCESTRY.COM

Start by using the “Ancestry Search Box” on the JewishGen homepage. By doing so, any eventual subscription to Ancestry.com will result in JewishGen receiving a commission. It’s an easy way to help!

Watch JewishGen’s youtube video:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nASSn4rDXh4
A Little-Known Government Genealogy Service
November 24, 2013
A little-known program of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) provides genealogy information that may be difficult or impossible to obtain elsewhere. The records include naturalization files, visa applications, and citizenship tests, and may reveal family secrets and mysteries. In addition to relatives, historians or researchers can also request files.

Under the USCIS Genealogy Program, which started in 2008, requests are usually completed within 90 days. The government will run a search of the name, as long as the person is deceased. If there are records available, the government charges additional fees for the files. The fee for a record copy from microfilm identified as (M) is $20 per request. The fee for a copy of a hard copy file identified as (HC) is $35 per request. More information about the fees associated with each file series may be found at http://www.uscis.gov/history-and-genealogy/genealogy/historical-records-series-available-genealogy-program.

The documents typically include immigration information, often (but not always) including exact hometowns in their ancestors’ native countries. The files often have information on brothers, sisters, aunts and uncles. Many times it is useful to obtain the records of your uncles, aunts, and cousins who also immigrated from “the old country.”

If the immigrant applied for American citizenship, the details are also included in these files. For anyone of Japanese, German, or Italian origin who lived in the United States during World War II, the documents often include FBI reports about the person’s activities, including friends, family, and political activities.

For more information about the program, check out http://www.uscis.gov/genealogy.

GenTeam Adds Nearly a Half-Million Birth/Marriage/Death Records from Austria
November 4, 2013
GenTeam is a volunteer-run site that has indexed millions of records of interest to genealogists. The records are collected from present-day Austria and its neighboring lands. Access to their database is free, you just need to register for a free account on their site before you can search.

Recently, the site added 482,000 new records, including a 180,000 records from the Jewish community of Vienna – marriage and death records from 1913-1928, and birth records up to 1913. Other records previously available include marriages and deaths 1826-1938 and births 1826-1913. (Austrian privacy laws do not allow publication of records less than 100 years old so all records end in 1913.)

You can find GenTeam at http://www.genteam.at.

In the Gallery at the Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre

Mapping Harbord Village: Stories of a Neighbourhood is an exhibition that showcases the urban life of Harbord Village inspired by the memories of its residents. Their photographs and oral histories evoke the neighborhood through the use of three common themes: foodscapes, laneways and porches - which provide a glimpse into the daily life of Harbord Village. This part of Toronto, just west of the downtown campus of the University of Toronto, was once inhabited by many Jewish residents. The area is still home to the very active shul, First Narayever Congregation, at 187 Brunswick Avenue, and still boasts the popular Jewish bakery, Harbord Bakery.

The exhibit was developed by the Harbord Village Residents' Association and the Masters of Museum Studies at the University of Toronto.

At MNJCC, 750 Spadina Avenue, at Bloor Street, Toronto
To December 15, 2013

New York City’s Tenement Museum
by Judy Kasman

The tours offered by the Tenement Museum on Orchard Street are great, but you can still learn about the early American immigrant experience on the Lower East Side of Manhattan without travelling to New York. Just visit www.tenement.org where there are numerous online features.

For example, when you click on the History tab, you will find Research (See How an Exhibit is Born), Collections (see Oral Histories) and Photo Search (see the new online Photo Archive with images grouped under Street Scenes, Lower East Side and Immigrants.

Under the Play tab, there is a Virtual Tour of 97 Orchard Street, an Immigration Game and Webcomics.

Perfect for the armchair traveller!

Editor’s note: write a report for Shem Tov on your in-person visit to the Tenement Museum and send it to shemtov@jgstoronto.ca
Ancestry.com and Associated Press Bring AP Archives Online

Ancestry.com has collaborated with the Associated Press to make 50 years of news stories—in their original wire copy format—available online. There are five collections. All can be found at http://ancestry.com/AP.

Associated Press, Name Card Index to AP Stories, 1905–1990. This is an index of every person who appeared in an AP report during that time period. The cards were updated when additional references were made for the person rather than creating a separate index card for every mention. For example, there were AP reports about the World Gathering of Jewish Holocaust Survivors in 1981. Persons mentioned in the reports are in the index.

Associated Press, Service Bulletin, 1904–1927. The Service Bulletin was an internal AP publication with the purpose of communicating the “General Orders” of AP’s General Manager. It is unindexed.

Associated Press, Stories and Newsfeatures, 1937–1985. This collection includes AP news stories (1937–1985), which were selected by news librarians for microfilming to create an internal news archive of more than 700 reels. The set was not meant to be complete but to include only those stories of national or international importance. I had trouble using the database. For the keyword field, the site stated “e.g., pilot or Flying Tigers.” Using either of these search parameters produced no results. Apparently the Subject field is mandatory. Searching for “Flying Tigers” with a subject field of “Aviation” produced results. Similarly “Guadalcanal” produced no results but “Guadalcanal” and the Subject “Navy” produced 2,627 hits.

ITS Sends Additional Correspondence Files to Member Nations

The International Tracing Service (ITS) in Bad Arolsen this week provided further digital copies of its records to seven partner organizations in Israel, U.S., Poland, France, Luxembourg, Belgium and Great Britain. They are 450,000 of a total of three million correspondence files (T/D files). The documents contain inquiries, letters and eye witness reports from people who were victims of Nazi persecution themselves or had family members that were. On the other hand, the inquiries of authorities for the purpose of compensation are also kept here. ITS is a center for documentation, information and research about Nazi persecution. The archive comprises approximately 30 million documents about persons incarcerated in concentration camps, ghettos and Gestapo prisons and about forced labor and displaced persons. An international commission of eleven member states (Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Israel, Italy, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Poland, Great Britain, U.S.) defines the guidelines for the work of the ITS. The German Federal Archive is the institutional partner.

Additional information can be found at http://tinyurl.com/ITSMoreTDFiles.

Montefiore Census of Eretz Israel Online

The Montefiore Census of Eretz Israel for the years 1839, 1840, 1849, 1855, 1866 and 1875—some 25,528 families—is online at http://www.montefioreendowment.org.uk/census. The most recently completed project was the 1875 census which was done by the Israel Genealogical Society at the request of the Montefiore Endowment, the non-profit organization that owns the site. Census data may include name, age and place of birth of the head of household, financial status and occupation, wife’s name, names and ages of his children, and various comments.

Rose Feldman, one of the project’s leaders, states that while there are some surnames for Ashkenazim, most are listed only by given names. It is helpful to know several family given names as results show family groupings. Spelling, too, can present a challenge, as names, which often were transliterated from the original language into Hebrew were then transliterated 150 years later into English. In addition, there is little or no consistency of spelling in the original Hebrew. There is no soundex system (to date) that serves both Sephardic and Ashkenazic names, so it is recommended to use a wild card search, using “%” as the wild card. Feldman added that the key is to be creative in searching.

NEW MEMBER

JGS Toronto is very pleased to welcome

Rita Katz

as a new member:
### Cemetery Project Report

We have updated all of the files for the cemeteries in the GTA and for some out of town cemeteries. New cemeteries that we captured information for are: Belleville, Peterborough, Glace Bay, Nova Scotia, Windsor - Beth El Cemetery and Windsor - Shaar Hashomayim Cemetery.

Non-Jewish cemeteries that we have captured Jewish burials are at Mount Pleasant York, Westminster, Holy Cross, Saint James and Pickering.

We have added over 2,500 new burials in the last six months bringing our total to almost 85,000 on Jewish Online Worldwide Burial Registry (JOWBR at JewishGen). All of these files/records will be available in January 2014 at www.jewishgen.org.

Special thanks to Linda Offman and Bill Gladstone for translating tombstones, to Ellen and Sonny Monheit for continuing updates on Kitchener’s Beth Jacob Cemetery and to Kevin Hanit for updating Pardes Shalom and also translating.

Allen Halberstadt  
Chair, Cemetery Project

### From the Editor

Almost every genealogical society has a newsletter (these days more than likely sent as a pdf) to report its organization’s news and to disseminate information to its members. *Shem Tov*, JGS Toronto’s bulletin, serves just that purpose. But in my opinion, what makes *Shem Tov* unique is the contribution of its members.

Here are some ways that you, JGS members, can enhance *Shem Tov*:

- write an article for the column, *On a Personal Note*, to tell us about your research and discoveries - past issues have included stories by members such as Isme Bennie, Lil Blume Valerie Fox, Marla Waltman
- write about a helpful tool used for genealogical research: David Price has written about JRI-Poland and Neil Richler has written about using a tablet
- send photos: they could be of places you have visited or people that you have met or researched
- write about a family roots trip you have taken

Of course, there are many other topics that would be of interest to your fellow members. Don’t be shy. Submit your items to *Shem Tov*. Let’s keep our bulletin informative, entertaining and unique.

Would you like to proofread issues of *Shem Tov* before they go to publication? This is done four times per year.

If interested, please contact me.

Judy Kasman  
Editor, *Shem Tov*  
shemtov@jgstoronto.ca

### Keeping Ladino Alive

Ladino is the Judeo-Spanish language that was prevalent in the Sephardic world. It is often described as the Yiddish of the Sephardic world: like Yiddish, it combined Hebrew with the local languages of the inhabitants, in this case Spanish, Arabic, Italian, French, Turkish & Greek. Also, like Yiddish, the language once thrived but is now in disuse.

There are signs, however, that there is a will to keep the language alive. Flory Jagoda is a Bosnia-born sephardic Jewish singer widely known for performing Ladino songs. In 2009, Israeli bassist and composer Avishai Cohen released a CD, Aurora, featuring his skilful playing and also his vocals on several traditional Ladino tracks. Below are a few other news items pertaining to Ladino.

**ORIZONTES, A NEW LADINO ONLINE MAGAZINE**

In an article by Daniel Santacruz in the online bulletin, eSefarad, No. 256, I learned that we now have the opportunity to view a new online Ladino magazine called Orizontes which was launched this summer in Jerusalem under the auspices of the National Authority of Ladino. It is a magazine for young people: its contributors are young (under 40) and as is the focus of the articles and poetry. The writers hail from many countries around the world.

Even if you lack Ladino language skills, do not be discouraged from viewing this beautifully laid-out magazine, as there is a glossary at the back!  
http://issuu.com/matanstein/docs/orizontes_1

**LADINO CONFERENCE**

On March 5 & 6, 2014, there will be a student-run conference, uCLADINO JUDEO-SPANISH SYMPOSIUM: PRESERVATION & REVITALIZATION, at the University of California in Los Angeles. The conference’s website is at:  
http://www.ucladino.com

At this site, I learned that uCLadino celebrated the 1st International day of Ladino on December 5, 2013 (during Chanukah).

**MISSING LINKS**

I’m writing to you on behalf of my elderly father-in-law, Victor Schiff, who lives in Montreal. He is the son of Harry Schiff who years ago resided in the Ontario towns of Ansonville, Cochrane, Englehart and Krugersdorf. I am seeking any pre-1955 historical information, and especially photos, of the Jews in Northern Ontario (including North Bay and Kirkland Lake) so I can share this with my father-in-law.

He would also be interested in viewing photos from pre-1960 Kensington Market.

Victor’s mother’s name was Florence Abramson, and his siblings were Mary, Sally, Enid and Harold. It is possible that some JGS Toronto members might know this family.

David Fish  
Toronto

Editor’s note: If you have any information for David, or if you wish to contact him, please write to shemtov@jgstoronto.ca