MISHPOCHOLOGY   Volume 9, Number 1   March 2004

Jewish Genealogy Month – March 23-April 21, 2004 (Nisan 5764)

NEXT MEETING FOR THE JGS OF SW FL

Sunday, March 21, 2004 (1:00 PM) @ JCC, 582 S. McIntosh Road, Sarasota
Program: Importance of Oral Histories & How to Record Them by Sylvia Firschein
Sylvia Firschein will discuss how oral histories can benefit all involved and will demonstrate an actual interview. Sylvia founded the JGS of New Jersey when she was the librarian at the JCC in Wayne, NJ. Currently, she is the co-chair of the Oral History Project of Kobernick House/Anchin Pavilion and librarian of the Idelson Adult Library at Temple Beth Sholom.

President's Shpiel by Kim Sheintal

Children are joining the ranks of genealogical enthusiasts and discovering a passion for history as they do. Since 1998, I have volunteered weekly at a public high school class for expectant mothers. A grant was received for a genealogy class last year. This year, a six-week genealogy course was added to their curriculum, using Ira Wolfman's *Climbing Your Family Tree* as a guide. I was asked to speak and offer project ideas. These teenage students enjoyed sharing stories about their heritage. According to the August 8, 2003 issue of the Forward, Menachem Butler was in the fifth grade when his interest in genealogical research was born. A family tree project for school had put him on the trail of an ancestor whom his father had always mentioned as a point of pride: Rabbi Shmuel Salant. Butler, now 19, found out that Salant for nearly 70 years was the chief rabbi of Jerusalem – and his great-great-great-great grandfather. Over the past nine years, Butler has identified 95% of Salant's descendants and their life spans. In the process, he has visited Israeli archives and eaten kugel with newfound relatives. Because of his enthusiasm for genealogy, Butler attended the 23rd International Jewish Genealogy Conference in Washington DC in July and discovered that there were many more people his age at the conference.

The median age of ancestry buffs in the United States is just 40, according to Pamela Drake, who in 2001 conducted a study of more than 400 American genealogists. Neil Rosenstein, who has written several books on Jewish genealogy, said that his own observations indicate that Jewish genealogists are, in general, growing younger.

A professor at Hebrew Union College, Jonathan Krasner, is writing the first genealogy textbook for American Jewish teenagers. The Samberg Family History Program at the Center for Jewish History in Manhattan offered a two-week day camp in which high school juniors and seniors learn genealogical research skills in archives, libraries and on the Web. At the end of the summer, they hand in a creative project about their Jewish roots.

You are never too old or too young to be interested in genealogy.

APRIL AND MAY JGS MEETINGS at Flanzer JCC

Sunday, April 18, 2004 @ 1 PM: "Connecting the Generations" Bring your child, grandchild, niece or nephew (or other relative) with you and learn as a family how to trace your roots. Speaker: Jerry Rosenthal
Sunday, May 16, 2004 @ 1 PM: "Pot Luck Luncheon" with Rabbi Mendy Bukiet

Jewish Genealogy and the Civil War

By Larry E. Oppenheimer

It has been estimated that 10,000 Jews fought in the Civil War, representing both the Union and the Confederacy. Fortunately for those of us who may have had ancestors involved in the War, substantial documentation is available, often describing each participant's involvement. Much of this information can be found on the Web and both the Selby and Manatee County libraries have considerable resources regarding the Civil War. In this article I will describe how to find information about an ancestor who participated in the War and what sort of material of interest to genealogists may be available.

As always, the more information you have to start with, the easier it is to find the details. Let's say you have only the name of an ancestor who, family legend has it, fought in the Civil War. Start at home by looking at the web site <www.Jewishgen.org/databases/civilwar.htm>. The introductory material describes the history of this compilation of over 7,000 names of Jewish Civil War participants. From the person's name you will find: State Served, Regiment, Branch, Rank, Side, Company, and perhaps some other information. Next, check the two databases available at any Sarasota branch library through Ancestry Plus. The *Civil War Service Records* database will show the participant's company and unit served, rank, service dates, and allegiance. Finally, if your ancestor served the Union, check the *Civil War Pension Records* database and note the information there.

Once you have information about which side your ancestor served, and perhaps information about his unit, the path you take depends on whether he served the Confederacy or the Union. Most records for the Confederacy are kept by the individual states, while the Federal Government maintains the records of Union participants. To find information about a Confederate soldier, do a Google search using the name of the state, the term "Civil War," and "pension," or "records." So, entering "Florida" "Civil War" "records" generates a list of web sites that include unit rosters, lists of pensioners, instructions on how to get records from the State Archives, and a wealth of other information. If this approach does not work, direct inquiry to the State Archive in question is the next step.

Records of Union soldiers, and a few from the Confederacy, are held by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). There are two types of records obtainable. Military Service Records can be ordered on NATF Form 86. Pension Records can be ordered online or with NATF Form 85. The ordering process is described at the NARA web site, <www.archives.gov/research_room/index.html> under "genealogy," and at the Civil War Soldiers and Sailors System web site at <www.itd.nps.gov/cwss/>. The process using the NATF forms involves requesting the documents, after which you will be notified as to whether they have been found. The documents are then sent to you after you send in your payment. Pension records, when available, usually are of much greater interest to the genealogist than are service records.

What kinds of records might you find? Here I can only speak from my own experience, which may, or may not, be typical. The military records I received consisted of muster rolls (attendance records), administrative hospital records, and most interestingly a copy of my ancestor's discharge certificate. The later included his age and place of birth, as well as a partial description, along with information about the unit in which he served. All together not very illuminating.

My ancestor's pension records were a different story. Along with some administrative documents, one of which indicated that he had enlisted in Erie, PA (what was he doing there?), was another copy of his discharge certificate, a copy of his pension application, which included a description of his injuries, and a document describing how the injuries were sustained. Various pension documents indicated that he was awarded a pension of $12 per month which was reduced to $8, then increased to $24. A pension questionnaire which he had answered included information about his wife and living children, his marriage, and (surprise) his first wife. A second questionnaire, which requested financial and family information, was related to his death. Finally, a copy of his death certificate included the names of his parents. That is quite a bit of genealogical and historical information. As an aside, once we knew the name of his first wife we were able to find an entry for them in *Germans to America*, which told us when they came to America and the name of the ship.

In summary then, if you had an ancestor who fought in the Civil War, or any of the military actions for which the government has placed personnel records in the public domain (WW I and earlier), it is worth the effort to obtain his records. You never know what you might find.

Vilna District Research and Record Translations
By Joel Ratner, coordinator of the
Vilna District Research Group

The Vilna District Research Group, a sub-group of the LitvakSIG, seeks to assist and advance the knowledge base of researchers by procuring, translating and distributing genealogical records for towns in what was the Vilna uezd [district] in Imperial Russia.

Our group has been involved in the 1858 Revision List project for the city of Vilna for several years. We have the complete 1858 RL for the Jewish residents of the city of Vilna consisting of almost 3000 pages and 26,000 records. To date we have translated 70% of these records. In addition, our group is now procuring the Revision Lists [1834,1834-1849 supplements, 1850, 1851-1857 supplements, and 1858] for the town of MOLETAI [MALAT] and will be translating these in the next few months.

Revision List records and/or family lists also exist for the following towns in the Vilna district:

Antakalnis 1795; 1811; 1813-1814; 1816-1818; 1822/1833; 1834; 1843/1849; 1850; 1850/1854; 1858

Boguslavishok 1795-1796; 1816; 1818; 1822/1833; 1834; 1843/1849; 1850/1854; 1858

Ciobiskis 1816/1818; 1822/1833; 1834; 1843/1849; 1850-1854; 1858

Gedrovitz INCLUDED IN VILNIUS UEZD, DISTRICT C

Gelvan 1765; 1795-1796; 1811; 1816/1818; 1822/1833; 1834; 1843/1849; 1850/1854; 1858

Mikhalishok 1795/1796; 1816/1818; 1822/1833; 1834/1843/1849; 1850/1854; 1858; 1888?; 1897?

Malat 1784; 1816/1818; 1822/1833; 1834; 1843/1849; 1850/1854; 1858

Musnik 1795/1796; 1811; 1816/1818; 1822/1833; 1834; 1843/1849; 1850/1854; 1858

Nemencine 1795/1796; 1811; 1816/1818; 1834; 1843/1849; 1850/1854; 1858

Novy Gorod 1816/1818; 1822/1833; 1834; 1843/1849; 1850/1854; 1858; 1874?, 1897?

Shirvint 1816/1818; 1822/1833; 1834; 1843/1849; 1850/1854; 1858

Snipishok 1795; 1800; 1813-1814; 1816/1818; 1822/1833; 1834; 1843/1849; 1850/1854; 1858; 1874?

Vilna 1765?, 1784?,1795, 1810, 1816, 1834, 1850/51, 1858

Vilna Uezd 1795-1796; 1800-1801; 1811; 1813; 1816-1838; 1840; 1842-1846; 1850-1858; 1875?; 1878?; 1892/1899?

Vital records [birth, marriage, death, and divorce] also exist for many towns in the Vilna district. These are as follows:

Bezdonys (Bezdany), Bogoslavas (Boguslaviskis), Ciobiskis, Gelvonai (Gelvon), Giedraiciai (Gedrovitz), Inturkes (Intorik), Laibiskis (Leibishok), Maisagola (Maishagola), Michaliskis, Moletai (Malat), Musninkai (Musnik), Naujoji-Vilna (Novo-Vileisk), Paberzhe (Podberezhe), Rudamina (Rudamin), Salcininkai (Solechniki), Sesuoliai (Sheshol), Sirvintos (Shirvint), Stundishki (Strunaitis?), Turgeliai (Turgeli), Vilna Yonishkis

For most towns, the vital records cover the time period 1854-1915, although most towns have incomplete sets of data. The Vilna city records are the most complete and exist for the time period 1837-1915.

Anyone interested in obtaining information on the work of the Vilna District Research Group and wants to learn how much is required [for each project] to become eligible for various record translations should write to Joel Ratner at: Joelrat@aol.com

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Genealogical Conference in Port Charlotte
GenFair, a genealogical conference for family history buffs, will be held March 6, 2004, 8:45am-3: 30pm, at the Cultural Center of Charlotte County, 2280 Aaron Street, Port Charlotte, Florida. Sponsored by the Alliance for Genealogical Societies of Southwest Florida, the conference features noted speaker Dr. George K. Schweitzer who will make three genealogical presentations. His topics include: "Civil War Genealogy", "Rivers to Trails to Roads to Canals to Trains" and "Finding Your Ancestor's Parents". He will also hold an "Open Question and Answer Period". The registration fee is $35 and includes lunch and handouts.
For additional information, contact Barbara at bfleshman46@comcast.net or 941-575-1957, or Joanne at charleyslady@yahoo.com

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Welcome New Members
Jack and Maxine Baumring jackmax@comcast.net

JGS Library is Growing
Kim Sheintal donated four books:
The Jewish Condition – Essays on Contemporary Judaism Honoring Rabbi Alexander M. Shindler edited by Aron Hirt-Manheimer
A History of the Jews by Paul Johnson
American Judaism by Nathan Glazer
Beginners and Intermediate Genealogical Workbook by The Jewish Genealogical Society of Palm Beach County, Inc.

SHOP ISRAEL VOLUNTEERS NEEDED
March 13, 14 & 15 at Kobernick/Anchin, to volunteer contact Kim Sheintal at klapshein@aol.com

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Wonderful **W**orld of **W**ebsites
If you have a genealogy website to recommend for newsletter, contact Kim Sheintal klapshein@aol.com
EXPLORE THESE SITES:
http://www.jewishroots.hu (Hungarian Jewish Roots)
http://www.yad-vashem.org.il/exhibitions/index_exhibitions.html
www.ortra.com/jgen2004 (about IAJGS conference)
http://www.msnbc.com/news/254376.asp?cp1=1
http://www.tiigrs.org/hadassaArticle.htm
http://genealogy.about.com/library/weekly/aa052902a.htm (Preview this site on the next page of newsletter)

Googling Genealogy Style - Learn How to "Google" as You've Never "Googled" before

If you know what you are doing, you can use Google to search within web sites, locate photos of your ancestors, bring back dead sites, and track down missing relatives. Learn from these twelve Google search tips for genealogists that are recommended on the following website: **http://genealogy.about.com/library/weekly/aa052902a.htm**

1) Search with a Focus: Use a plus sign before words that are absolutely critical to your search. Use a minus sign before words that you want to be excluded from the search. Use quotation marks around any two word or greater phrase to find results where the words appear together exactly as you have entered them. Use OR to retrieve search results that match any one of a number of words. To get really fancy you can combine these options together to achieve truly focused search results. For example, crisp +surname -apple genealogy OR geneology OR +will OR "family tree" will return sites with the terms smith AND surname, combined with either genealogy, geneology, will, or the phrase family tree. **2) Search Without Stops**: Stop words are small, common words that many search engines ignore, or don't stop for, when searching for documents that match your query. This is because these words are either too common to generate meaningful results (i.e. where, how, about, and, if, be, the...). **3) Search Suggested Alternate Spellings:** The search engine's self-learning algorithm automatically detects misspellings and suggests corrections based on the most popular spelling of the word. **4) Bring Sites Back From the Dead:** How many times have you found what looks to be a very promising Web site, only to get a "File Not Found" error when clicking on the link? Genealogical Web sites seem to come and go every day as webmasters change file names, switch ISPs, or just decide to remove the site because they can no longer afford to maintain it. This doesn't mean the information is always gone forever, however. Hit the Back button and look for a link to a "cached" copy at the end of the Google description and page URL. Clicking on the "cached" link should bring up a copy of the page as it appeared at the time that Google indexed that page, with your search terms highlighted in yellow. You can also return Google's cached copy of a page, by preceding the page's URL with 'cache:'. If you follow the URL with a space separated list of search words, they will be highlighted on the returned page. For example: cache:genealogy.about.com surname will return the cached version of this site's homepage with the term surname highlighted in yellow. **5) Find Related Sites:** GoogleScout can help you find sites with similar content. Hit the Back button to return to your Google search results page and then click on the Similar Pages link. This will take you to a new page of search results with links to pages containing similar content. You can also access this feature directly by using the related command with the URL of the site that you like related:genealogy.about.com. **6) Follow the Trail:** Once you've found a valuable site, chances are that some of the sites which link to it may also be beneficial to you. Use the link command along with a URL to find pages which contain links pointing to that URL. **7) Search Within a Site:** While many major sites have search boxes, this isn't always true of smaller, personal genealogy sites. Google comes to the rescue again, however, by allowing you to restrict search results to a specific site. Just enter your search term followed by the site command and the main URL for the site you wish to search in the Google search box on the main Google page. For example, military site:www.familytreemagazine.com pulls up 150+ pages with the search term 'military' on the Family Tree Magazine Web site. This trick is especially useful for quickly finding surname information on genealogy sites without indexes or search capabilities. **8) Cover Your Bases:** When you really want to make sure you haven't missed a good genealogy site, enter allinurl:genealogy to return a list of sites with genealogy as part of their URL. **9) Find People, Maps and More:** If you're searching for U.S. information, Google can do so much more than just search Web pages. The lookup information they provide through their search box has been expanded to include street maps, street addresses, and phone numbers. Enter a first and last name, city, and state to find a phone number. You can also do a reverse lookup by entering a phone number to find a street address. To use Google to find street maps, just enter a street address, city, and state (i.e. 8601 Adelphi Road College Park MD), in the Google search box. You can also find business listings by entering the name of a business and its location or zip code (i.e. myfamily.com utah). **10) Pictures from the Past:** Google's image search feature makes it easy to locate photos on the Web. Just click on the Images tab on Google's home page and type in a keyword or two to view a results page full of image thumbnails. To find photos of specific people try putting their first and last names within quotes (i.e. "laura ingalls wilder"). **11) Glancing Through Google Groups:** If you've got a bit of time on your hands, then check out the Google Groups search tab available from the Google home page. Find info on your surname, or learn from the questions of others by searching through an archive of over 700 million Usenet newsgroup messages going back as far as 1981. **12) Narrow Your Search by File Type:** Typically when you search the Web for information you expect to pull up traditional Web pages in the form of HTML files. Google offers results in a variety of different formats, however, including .PDF (Adobe Portable Document Format), .DOC (Microsoft Word), .PS (Adobe Postscript), and .XLS (Microsoft Excel). These files appear among your regular search results listings where you can either view them in their original format, or use the View as HTML link (good for when you don't have the application that is needed for that particular file type, or for when computer viruses are a concern). You can also use the filetype command to narrow your search to find documents in particular formats (i.e. filetype:xls genealogy forms).

If you still aren't successful in your search after trying these tips, Google provides one more option - a new service known as Google Answers which allows you to ask a question and set the price you are willing to pay for an answer. A Google Answers Researcher will search for the answer and send you the information you're seeking, as well as useful links to Web pages on the topic. If you're satisfied with that answer, you pay the amount you specified. If not, then you may petition for a full refund.

JEWISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA
Presents

"Connecting the Generations"

Sunday, April 18, 2004 @ 1 PM—3 PM
Jewish Community Center
582 S. McIntosh Road in Sarasota

As a parent, grandparent, aunt, or uncle,
you can ensure that your
child, grandchild, niece, or nephew's
interest in the past continues into the future.

Bring a child dear to you to the JGS of SW FL
"Connecting the Generations" program
and learn as a family how to trace your roots.

Special Guest Speaker - Dr. Jerome C. Rosenthal
(a PhD with degrees in Jewish history and law)
will share his expertise and love of Jewish history
as we celebrate together the 350th Birthday
of the North American Jewish Community
1654-2004

Snacks will be served.
RSVP Kim Sheintal 921-1433