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President's Spiel

by Kim Sheintal

I started thinking about what I enjoy most about tracing my roots. Organizing and meeting family come to mind.

I recently bought a three-ring binder and filled it with my personal favorite genealogy mysteries and discoveries. Rather than read a book before I go to bed, I often read my genealogy mysteries and discoveries.

Another thing that I enjoy about my research is meeting new cousins that I only discover because of my genealogical research. In 2011, someone contacted me because she spotted on JewishGen that I was tracing Jeffer and so was she. We figured out that we were third cousins, once removed. We kept somewhat in touch over the years, but never met. In December 2024, her daughter visited Sarasota and I met her daughter. Meeting new cousins is much better than just adding them as a name and date on my family tree.

Here are more things people enjoy about tracing their roots:

- fostering deep connections with family
- it's like playing detective
- mental stimulation
- making surprise discoveries
- personal connection to history
- uncovering family stories
- to ensure [we remember] those who would otherwise be forgotten

What do you enjoy most about tracing your roots?

MISHPOCHOLOGY

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JGS of SW FL Zoom Program Only

Sunday, March 16, 2025

(12:45 p.m. Socializing) (1:00 p.m. Program)

"Leveraging Freedom of Information Laws
to Procure Novel Records" by Alec Ferretti

For Zoom link: ask Kim at klapshein@aol.com, 941-302-1433

"Leveraging Freedom of Information Laws to Procure Novel Records" by Alec Ferretti

Sunday, March 16, 2025 at 1:00 p.m. via Zoom

The Jewish Genealogical Society of Southwest Florida presents "Leveraging Freedom of Information Laws to Procure Novel Records" by Alec Ferretti on Zoom on March 16 at 1:00 p.m. This lecture will explain how Freedom of Information Laws work, and what genealogists can and cannot accomplish with them. Alec will discuss Governments' hesitations to provide genealogists with documents to which they are legally entitled, and the tools we have to plead our cases. For Zoom link, contact Kim Sheintal at 941-302-1433 or klapshein@aol.com

2025 Membership Dues

Single Membership: \$25/year

Family Membership: \$30/year

Sustaining Membership: \$50/year (single or family)

Mail check (payable to JGS of SW FL) with name, e-mail,
phone, address, surnames/places you are researching to:

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JGSSWF speaker's handout archive

www.tinyurl.com/mr3d8jwt

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www.facebook.com/JGSSWF

JGS of SW FL April Program

(April meeting will be the fourth Sunday.)

Sunday, April 27, 2025 at 1:00 PM

Use of Geography in Genealogy by Eric Wolfgang at Aviva
1951 N. Honore Ave., Sarasota, Florida

Wonderful World of Websites

https://familytreemagazine.com/heritage/jewish/ashkenazi-jewish-genealogy/?trk_msg=MB07GASODG1K7FM70RH3KU6V0K&trk_contact=ELTBHFFTOM3MHH3NPPR57Q8VHS&trk_module=new&trk_sid=CCQAS99E362IHSV6THRNA0K8MG&trk_link=I1ONOC27B9OK1CKPPM2SJ3E2V0&utm_source=Listrak&utm_medium=Email&utm_term=https%3a%2f%2ffamilytreemagazine.com%2fheritage%2fjewish%2fashkenazi-jewish-genealogy%2f&utm_campaign=FT+Newsletter
How to Trace Your Ashkenazi Jewish Genealogy

<https://www.iajgs.org/calendar/>
Jewish Roots Events

<https://www.wikitree.com>
WikiTree: Where Genealogist Collaborate

<https://genealogyisboring.com>
Using Canva to Build Family History Pages

<https://www.familysearch.org/en/blog/relatives-around-me>
Relatives around Me

<https://www.familysearch.org/en/help/helpcenter/article/how-do-i-use-relatives-around-me-in-the-family-tree-mobile-app>
How to Use Relatives around Me

https://blog.myheritage.com/2025/01/wrapping-up-2024-myheritage-year-in-review/?utm_campaign=Photo%20Features&utm_medium=email&hsenc=p2ANqtz--EAVWXNOv3oDcOdVDLrpNpqFiuD2GpFWE7co4rzRE2SBimGrnRh4sftLYOJUGkrMkIGcUbXjr_zdbQ2LiXOSoweHO5A&_hsmi=340702620&utm_content=340702620&utm_source=hs_email
Wrapping Up 2024: MyHeritage Year in Review

<https://www.thegatheringplacehome.com/don-t-forget-about-the-oddities-when-looking-at-ge-t3334.html>
Genealogy Oddities

<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/1265/>
Yearbook Availability at Ancestry.com

<https://www.myheritage.com/research/category-10010/yearbooks>
Yearbook Availability at MyHeritage

<https://www.classmates.com/yearbooks/>
Yearbook Availability at Classmantes.com

<https://www.e-yearbook.com>
Yearbook Availability Online

<https://www.alumniclass.com>
Connecting with Alumni

<https://www.yearbook.org>
How to Join Class List to Receive Reunion Updates, Find Yearbooks, and Search for Alumni

<https://treemily.com/blog/yearbooks-genealogy-research/>
Finding School Yearbooks & Using Them for Genealogy

<https://www.advantagearchives.com/enriching-your-archive-with-yearbooks-for-research-and-genealogy/>
The Benefits of Digitizing Yearbooks

<https://usa.jewishgen.org/synagogue-research/shul-records-america>
Shul Records America

<https://www.jewishgen.org/sra/>
Shul Records America (list)

<https://usa.jewishgen.org/resources/databases-and-lists>
JewishGen Research Division “Database & Lists”

<https://usa.jewishgen.org/home>
JewishGen Research Division

<https://genealogy.cjh.org/synagogue-map>
New York Historical Synagogues Map

<https://usa.jewishgen.org/get-started/videos>
JewishGen USA Research Division: Videos

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I08gm1VEC-M>
L’dor V’dor: Generation to Generation - A History of Tulsa’s Jewish Community

<https://archives.jdc.org/our-collections/names-index/>
Family Researchers and the JDC Names Index

Roots Tech Conference



<https://www.familysearch.org/en/rootstech>
RootsTech is the world’s largest family discovery event and will take place 6–8 March 2025. The online RootsTech conference will be available for free. The conference will be held in-person in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Partial Biography of Max Knisbacher (1913-1995) **by Jeffrey Knisbacher**

based mostly on interviews with Dad shortly before his passing

GERMANY

Dad was born Mordekhai Menahem (in Hebrew) or Markus Mendel (in German) Knisbacher, on 7 April 1913 in Berlin. (In 1998, on the strength of research done at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem by a genealogy collaborator of mine, Stuart LeVine, we learned that he was named for his father's maternal grandfather, Mordekhai Menahem BANNER.) His father was Isak (Yitzhaq Moshe) Knisbacher (after whom I am named) from Lysiec (Austria-Hungary before WWI, Poland, between the wars, U.S.S.R. from 1945-1991, and Ukraine thereafter). His mother was Cilli Szydlow, of Tarnow, Poland. They went to London to get married (in 1911), possibly to be able to keep the surname Knisbacher. They were not then, and never became, naturalized citizens of Germany and may not have had access to the documents needed for a German marriage. (I have since obtained a copy of the marriage certificate from London, which shows that Isak's father, Berl/Dov Knisbacher, was a hotel keeper and Cilli's father, Meier "Szydlow" [actually ROSENBLATT], was a "fishmonger".)

Dad did not like his given names and early in his school career had them changed to "Max". (We now know that his older first cousin, also Max KNISBACHER, son of his Aunt Frieda KNISBACHER in NY [married to her first cousin Saul KNISBACHER], was apparently named for the same grandfather. So maybe Dad changed his name to Max because there had been some talk of his cousin doing the same, though he probably never knew that cousin.) In 1918, Dad's father died in the infamous "swine flu" epidemic at the end of WWI that killed tens of millions of people worldwide. His maternal grandfather, Meier ROSENBLATT, later came from Poland to help raise him. He was the only one of his grandparents he ever knew.

Meier used the name SZYDLow because he and his wife had been married only by a rabbi [no civil ceremony], and their union was not recognized by the authorities, a common occurrence in Galicia at the time. I have since learned that Meier's wife Rele (Rachel), Dad's maternal grandmother, had passed away in 1916; otherwise she would have come with Meier to Germany. Max's paternal grandparents had remained in Poland, and his paternal grandmother Tsirl was one of many victims of the Nazis on both the SZYDLow and KNISBACHER sides, though Dad was not aware of the circumstances of Tsirl's death during his lifetime. His paternal grandfather Berl/Dov died of natural causes in Poland in 1925.

On his 11th birthday, in 1924, Dad's Uncle Hermann (Chaim Hirsch) Knisbacher came for a visit from Königsberg and surprised him with a 24" bicycle that he rode up until he left Berlin nine years later. In 1928, at age 15, Dad was on a class trip to the Harz Mountains, and a class photograph (of which he still had the original) was published in a Berlin Jewish Community commemorative edition (in German) some years ago (as of 1995). Dad is clearly recognizable in the picture, but the caption lists him as "Kuislacher?"

In 1929, when he was 16, and before he started working, Dad attended a business night school that concentrated on fast figuring of numbers. Dad also left behind some black and white pictures from that time, indicating he had visited Leipzig, either on a class trip and/or to visit some of his mother's relatives

(SZYDLow/SCHIDLows), who, we now know, were then living there.

After completing those courses, Dad began working 9-6 in a wholesale clothing place and preparing for his Abitur (qualifying exam for entry into medical or other professional school). He completed the work in a year and a half instead of the usual three years (at the Provincialism Kollegium). He would study after work from 6-11 (no kidding) Monday-Thursday (but not, of course, on erev Shabbos, for which he had someone take notes for him), at Fischers Vorbereitungsanstalt on Wallandorfplatz. ("Work ethic" in this family never required explanation!)

Dad was able to enter medical school on the strength of his grades and the financial support of his two relatively well-off uncles, Isaac and Shlomo Szydlow, each of whom picked up half the 600 mark tab (about \$120 in 1995 U.S. money), including registration, books and lab fees. One of Dad's stories from medical school has to do with how one time he brought home the hand from a cadaver (for a gross anatomy assignment) and had it in a jar with formaldehyde in the closet when his mother accidentally discovered it and nearly fainted. Another has to do with his belief that you are supposed to chew your food 21 times before swallowing--which our kids, Julie and Alden, always made fun of. Prior to leaving Germany at age 20, in his first, and sadly only, year of medical school, a couple of brown shirts sat down next to him in the lecture hall and started pointing to various people in the room "Er ist ein Jude"--but did not recognize Dad to be Jewish.

Near the end of his first year in medical school (1933) Dad was picked up by the police for a check that he had supposedly written (in violation of the then new foreign currency laws), that came back to be cashed from another country. When he said he knew nothing about it and would have to go home to find out what it was, they let him go but told him he had to return with an explanation. His uncle Shlomo, a well-off wholesaler who imported fowl from various European countries and had four of his own boxcars, had apparently signed Dad's name in order to continue paying his suppliers. He turned white as a sheet when Dad told him what had happened and told him to go back and say that he wrote the check for a friend of his mother's that she had met during one of her annual vacations at the Karlsbad spa in Czechoslovakia. Dad went back with this explanation and was again let go. But he was afraid that he would be picked up again and this time not be released, so he left the very next day (according to a story told me by Roy Hall, a Szydlow cousin, after Dad had passed away). Dad thereby saved his own life and paved the way for Mitch, Ellen and me.

EMIGRATION and TRAVEL

Dad was in France from June 1933-August 1934. At first he worked on a French farm for a couple of weeks (the hardest work he ever did in his life). He remembered that every French farmer raised, among other things, enough wine for his family to consume in a year, about 2,000 gallons. After that Dad worked in a Jewish-owned furniture factory in the Bischeim suburb of Strassberg (not far from the brewery suburb of Schiltigheim). There he perfected the carpentry and cabinet-making skills he had learned from his maternal grandfather, Meier ROSENBLAT. He remembered one particular peculiarity of Strassberg "ditsch" dialect--"machts fir" for "make fire" instead of Hochdeutsch "machts Feuer."

Early in August of 1934 he got a call from Paris, from the Hekhalutz Zionist movement of which he was a member, that his emigration certificate for Palestine was ready. So he left for

Palestine, where he lived from August 1934-July 1937. The first year and a half he worked in a furniture factory in Tel Aviv; the last year and a half, on a chicken "quarantine" farm near Haifa (the imported chickens, mainly from Romania, were held for several weeks to make sure they were disease-free before being released for slaughter). During an attempted robbery by an Arab one night, he fired his pistol and narrowly missed hitting the elderly watchman (in his 70's), who had already been shot in the knee and thigh by the Arab. He then had to quickly hide the Belgian automatic 6-shooter, (wrapping it in newspaper and sticking it in a rain spout), since the British would have arrested him and imposed the automatic 5-year jail sentence for having it. Dad had kept an Arabic summons requesting his testimony in that incident, one of the interesting documents he kept from his years in Palestine.

He was in Jaffa for a haircut just before the riots of 1936-1939 began (where several Jewish customers had their throats slit). Another oft-related incident involved an accident in which he fell off a motor bike and then, to add insult to injury, was stung by a scorpion and was in horrific pain (from the sting) while being transported to the hospital. He never rode a motorcycle after that and always warned us to stay away from them. (Nevertheless Anita and I had enjoyed mopedding through the Henlopen section of Rehoboth Beach, Delaware--later the summer home of President Biden--in those years that we could make it up there for a summer vacation from Baltimore.)

Dad received his naturalization certificate as a Palestinian citizen on 11 January 1937 (No. 21440A, Ser. No. of Application 27813) under the name of Markus Mendel KNISBACHER, his former nationality listed as Polish, even though he never set foot in Poland, nor knew any Polish, his entire life. During his stay in what was to become Israel, Dad had purchased two one-dunam plots of land (approx. 1/4 acre or 10,000 square feet) in Qiryat Haroshet, near Nahalal, at the entrance to Emeq Yizre'el (the Jezreel Valley) for 60 pounds each and then sold them back to the seller before leaving, for the same price. (Dad left behind the record of that deal.) Mitch estimated in 1995 that those two plots would have been worth about \$60,000 U.S. at that time.

During those years Dad was trying to get his family to leave first Germany and then Belgium to come to Palestine, but his mother thought Belgium was safe and refused to go. Because of this, and the fact that by 1936 it became increasingly hard to make a decent living in Palestine, Dad decided to return to Europe. He thought that with the little money he had saved he might be able to go back to medical school, in England, which, of course, turned out to be impossible. Our daughter Julie later became the apple of his eye when she entered medical school and was able to begin the medical career he had always wanted but that was denied him by the Nazis.

From August 1937 till October 1938 Dad lived in London, where his first job was teaching Hebrew at the Westland Synagogue (West End, near the Marble Arch), 2-3 hours every Sunday, where he earned 20 shillings (1 pound). He used to eat at Lion's Corner House (a chain of tea shops, actually multi-level restaurants), where a bowl of cream of tomato soup cost 3 or 4 pence. (On his late November, 1991 trip to London, an equivalent bowl of soup was \$4-\$5 and you had to buy it as part of a whole meal costing a lot more.)

In London Dad joined "Club 33" (from 1933?) for Jewish refugees. The 200 or so members included the European Maccabi boxing champion. (A Viennese soccer club known as "Hakoah" ['strength' in Hebrew] was one of the best.) Dad also taught

German at the Holborn Language Club, similar to Berlitz. One of his pupils was a 20-year old girl who worked for the RAF. Dad was in London when Chamberlain returned from Munich and gave his infamous "peace in our time" speech (widely mocked in the British press), after selling out Czechoslovakia.

Before coming to the U.S. in October of 1938, Dad visited briefly in Antwerp, Belgium with his sister Mali (later murdered by the Nazis along with her husband Louis [Israel] Strassberg). There he saw his niece Giselle for the first time, when she was just 3 1/2. (In 1954 he brought her to the U.S. and remained a father figure and very dear to her forever after.) He did not leave for the U.S. until his family was in Belgium, only giving up his attempt to get them to go to Palestine when his mother once and for all refused to leave. He lived in New York initially to be near his aunt Frieda Knisbacher and her husband and first cousin Saul (who had married and left for the states in 1907 and 1906 respectively), along with her son-in-law, Max Stendig and his wife Fanny. Dad worked as a carpenter making \$25 a week, a tidy sum in those post-depression days.

His arrival in October, 1938 was just a few weeks before the infamous Kristallnacht of 9 and 10 November (the European 9/11 where the day precedes the month), when the Nazis destroyed hundreds of synagogues, damaged over 7,000 Jewish businesses, killed at least 91 Jews and arrested over 30,000 Jewish men who were then sent to concentration camps. It was a vicious pogrom in what was just a prelude to the horrors yet to come. One of Dad's memories of those early days in the U.S. was hearing the famous War of the Worlds Halloween October 30 radio broadcast by Orson Welles, a fictional "breaking news" account of an invasion by Martians that caused serious panic among many listeners and widespread outrage in the media. He also recalled staying briefly with a family (cousins?) named Rinzler (in Passaic, NJ) for a couple of days, who treated him royally because they wanted to repay the hospitality Dad's parents had shown by putting them up for a week on their way out of Germany to come to the U.S.

Dad met Mom at Zionist Camp Avuka in Liberty, NY in June 1940 and followed her back to New York and then to Baltimore. Zayde made a trip to New York that summer to meet Dad's relatives; i.e., to check out Dad and make sure he was a suitable match for his (Zayde's) only daughter. He was assuaged when he met Dad's aunt Frieda and her husband Saul in the bakery they then operated. They welcomed him warmly in Yiddish with delicious food. Mom and Dad were married on October 13, 1940 and I was born Oct 6, 1941. Dad continued in carpentry, and helped build many of the "temporary" barracks at Fort Meade (many of which were still in use in the 1990s). His first car was a 1932 Chevy that he had from 1941-1943 (bought at Landay's Nash dealership on Greenmount Avenue). After that he got a good deal on a rebuilt Pontiac for \$300 that he later resold for the same price but should have kept. A Packard that he bought next turned out to be a real lemon, nothing but trouble.

Right after Pearl Harbor all aliens were called in by the FBI for interrogation. Dad had signed up as an alien on the basis of his British passport, not as an enemy alien, even though he was born in Germany. Enemy aliens could not possess radios, cameras or firearms. Dad had all three (a shotgun given him by Zayde, a camera that he brought from Europe and a radio probably purchased here). The FBI agents gave him a hard time but finally gave up. Dad endured three days of citizenship hearings June 24-26, 1944, after applying for citizenship on arrival in 1938. Judge Coleman, a notorious anti-Semite, had five test cases in that

hearing, including a rabbi from Park Heights, whose congregation had posted a \$1 million bond. All were represented by (the later famous Baltimore Judge) Simon Sobeloff. Only Dad got his citizenship that day, because he had arrived on a British passport from Palestine. (In recent years I found a Baltimore news clipping of that event.)

U.S. MILITARY

Dad was inducted (August 11, 1944), and honorably discharged (14 Mar 1946) at Fort George G. Meade, Maryland (where both Anita and I have worked since 1975 and 1976, respectively [1998, this writing]). His army serial number was 33 908 011. He refused to bring his citizenship papers to the induction center, as asked, because he did not get them from the army (as many did), and the army would have held them until he was discharged.

Basic Training at Fort Meade, Maryland, six weeks. In mid-October he was sent to Camp Crowder, Missouri, (in the Ozarks) for clerk school, six weeks. (Mom took me, just three years old at the time, with her by train then to visit him.) Two pot-bellied stoves at each end. Froze at night and caught a cold that lasted for months, until he shipped out Dec. 1, to Fort Custer, Michigan, MP (military police) school, six weeks (four miles from Battle Creek, Michigan). Mid-January, Camp Skokie Valley, Illinois (“chicken camp”, gave a guy six months in the brig for coming in late). It was a product of the Civilian Conservation Corps, where they taught riot control. Nobody wanted to be there. (I have postcards from Dad from all of his military posts.)

A Warrant Officer Goldberg assigned Dad to interpreter duty. He arrived at Camp Ritchie, Maryland, the end of January, 1945. There he studied Military Intelligence and got practical experience in the nearby Catoctin Mountains. The trainees did “night problems”, map making, and photint (photo intelligence). One of the exercises included finding your way at night through the mountains. They would be dropped off at 7 or 8 in the evening, told about fences, trees, etc., then take azimuths and wind up between midnight and 2 A.M in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania or Taneytown. Maryland. Also rifle shooting (Dad got the Marksman medal) and foreign weapons training. No KP or other distractions, “rations plus ten” (best food), the cook was a former chef at the Waldorf Astoria. Dad learned how to make baked Alaska, good duty, 70%-80% were German Jews.

June 12, 1945 (luckily, after the war in Europe ended on May 8), he left on the Queen Elizabeth, which docked in the Firth of Clyde (that, Southampton and Cherbourg were the only ports large enough). He spent one week in Southampton before shipping out. His first assignment was Marburg, Germany, capital of Hessen, in the castle of the Prince of Hessen, built around 1180. Germans in charge would not tell him and his colleague where the files they needed were located, only showed them the old files. The new ones, showing the conspiracies between Germany, Italy and Japan had been deliberately put in unmarked crates in a back room. Dad and another German American GI (non-Jewish) eventually found them and they were used for evidence at Nuremberg (for which work Dad got a citation). He was almost the only person who kept working on VJ Day. Dad's unit almost got shipped out to Japan, but a Colonel (probably his boss at the OSS, H. Stuart Hughes, see below) pulled rank at the Pentagon and got the orders changed.

He was soon thereafter recruited for the OSS (Office of Secret Services, the predecessor organization of the CIA) by a woman Ph.D., Dr. Rhea Bluh, from the Sorbonne. Dad was impressed by her name because it was so similar to his wife's name, Rea. (After

Dad's death I searched Dr. Blue out and found her. I have a letter from her, at around age 95, from the San Francisco area, confirming that Dad was one of the select group of very talented linguists she had hired.) He visited castles in Bavaria and Salzburg, Zell am See and Le Havre. At one of those stops he saw the Radio City Rockettes. Presumably his mission during those stops was interviewing either German POWs or survivors of the Holocaust or both, since he got a glowing recommendation by his boss H. Stuart Hughes, after his return to the States, commending him for the work that he did in preparation for the Nuremberg War Crimes trials. The biggest part of my unfinished work on this biography is determining who he interviewed and what the impact of his work was in the final verdicts.

Dad returned on a Victory ship with 2,000 men. He was given 45 days leave with pay in October and then 45 days while Mom was sick. On the ship all the soldiers gambled. One poor First Sergeant lost his entire \$3,000 savings. Dad played nickel and dime poker and came out \$30 ahead. He first arrived at Camp Miles Standish in Massachusetts and then went on to Fort Holabird, Maryland. He did not have enough “points” for time in to get out of the service at that point (he needed 70). So he stayed at Ft. Holabird through the spring of 1946 where he taught German at the Counter Intelligence Corps (CIC) for 2 1/2 months, from January-March of 1946.

The trip there was 1 1/4 hours by #31 streetcar, near Sparrows Point and Dundalk, via Eastern Avenue to Highlandtown and then another 1 1/2 miles further. His total military service was 19 months, from August 11, 1944 -March 14, 1946. (Ellie was born July 15, 1946.) His “Separation Qualification Record” lists the following “occupational assignments”:

1 1/2 months	Pvt	Signal Corps Basic Training (521)
2 months	Pvt	Military Policeman (677)
12 months	Pvt	Translator (267)

During the war Dad sent part of his pay to Mom and part to his Mom. In addition, Mom got \$95 a month in rent (\$55 from the 2nd floor apartment and \$40 from the 3rd floor) of our home at 3410 Duvall Avenue.

2025 note: While I was writing the first version of this in 1998, Anita and I were still working at Fort Meade, Maryland and had students of our own who had studied at Fort Huachuca, Arizona. I did not know at the time that Fort Huachuca came about from the closure of Fort Holabird in Maryland when the latter had run out of space for all of its new assignments. Nor did I know that when Dad was assigned to Fort Holabird at the end of his tour, his military records would have accompanied him there. That was very important because most WWII military records were lost in a fire at the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis on July 12, 1973 where they had been sent after the war for storage. In other words, the records that I had tried in vain to recover of my father's work from St. Louis, were also available at Fort Holabird—until they were transferred with everything else to Fort Huachuca. Unfortunately, Fort Huachuca later sent them to the National Archives in Washington, DC and I have still not been able to locate them. My father, like all of his coworkers, was sworn to secrecy about those tantalizing details of his work, and he never talked about them, nor did he ever share the many documents that he had kept and which my mother only found after his passing. There is still hope that those records, originally from Ft. Holabird, are stored somewhere at the National Archives and some future researcher may yet be able to access them. I have also tried to access the records of Dr. Rhea Blue who hired him, which may also contain the information on whom Dad

interviewed. But, even though there is a clear record number for her files, I have yet to hear back on the request I made for them over a year ago. JK

MARYLAND

After the war Dad was a small, independent construction contractor doing mainly store fixtures and club basements. Many of the storefronts in the Glen Burnie suburb of Baltimore in those years were his handiwork. He also went into real estate; i.e., buying houses on or around Eutaw Place (e.g., 1718 Eutaw Place), converting them to multifamily units and renting them out. After he had started doing that, the neighborhood changed. I often went with him on Friday nights to collect the rent (before the tenants would spend it on alcohol), and then we would go over to Bubbie and Zayde's for erev shabbat (Friday night) dinner. Summers I would often work with him repainting those houses, making minor repairs, tarring the roofs (in 100 degree heat), shlepping furniture up and down the stairs, etc. My younger brother Mitch took over that role after Anita and I were married in 1965.

Recently (1995) I asked Dad why he didn't stay with the government, since he had been in the OSS and had won a citation for excellence. He said that, in fact, he had been offered a job in intelligence after the war, but the pay was only \$2,000 a year, and he could do a lot better on his own as a contractor. (I have since found the actual letter offering him that job, for which the pay was a little more, but not a whole lot more, than \$2,000.) There was no way to know then that the job offer was likely in what was to become the CIA and had he been on the ground floor of that organization, he might have risen in the ranks to become a major player.

In 1959 Dad started teaching High School, after the unions insisted that he hire only union labor. Since he was making very little money in those days (\$5,000 or so as late as 1961, with a wife and three children to support), he could not afford to pay union wages to subcontractor plumbers and electricians. The first course he taught was biology, which was interesting and fun because it reminded him of his one year in medical school. Later he taught French and, after teaching himself Spanish, that language, too. In fact, he went to several Spanish teachers' conferences, in both Mexico and Spain, I believe. Dad taught, among others, at Sudbrook Junior High School and Southern High School in Baltimore City and Hereford High School in Baltimore County near the Monkton stop on the old Northern Central Railroad Road line. That line has since been converted to a gravel bicycle trail, running 21 miles from Ashland, off of York Road, through part of Gunpowder State Park and the beautiful Maryland countryside, to the Pennsylvania state line. (During our years in Baltimore, Anita and I loved to go biking there.) In addition to his teaching duties, Dad also enjoyed coaching soccer.

Dad retired in April of 1978. His teaching years were probably his happiest except for the incident that cut short his career a couple of months early. He had stopped two girls in the hall one day (Southern High School) to check their hall passes when some Black kid suddenly came up behind him and punched him in the jaw with all his might. Dad never saw it coming and was knocked to the floor, bleeding profusely because his teeth had actually been pushed through his cheek. Nevertheless he got to his feet, grabbed the kid by the collar and hauled him off to the principal's office. Needless to say, the court appearance later resulted in a slap on the wrist for that delinquent, who had been boasting of his "accomplishment" to his pals as Dad escorted him down the hall after picking himself up. Although Dad really was hurt pretty

badly and took quite a while to recover, his pride was probably hurt even more. As a teenager he had been on a boxing team, he was physically strong all his life, and he said that if he had seen the kid coming he would have flattened him first!

RESIDENCES

Mom and Dad lived first on Bonner Avenue and the corner of Chelsea Terrace, in a second floor apartment where they had to go through the widowed owner's first floor living room to get upstairs. Then Dad bought his first house, where I grew up, at 3410 Duvall Ave; Baltimore 16, MD (postal zone 16, later to become "zip code" 21216), in 1941. The original phone number was FO(rest) 8546, to which the 7th digit "7" was later added, giving FO 7-8546. In 1954 they bought their second residence, at 3411 Bancroft Road, Balto, MD 21215. (tel. RO[gers] 4-0742). Dad did extensive renovations on both houses. On Bancroft Road, he converted the one-family home into our house on the first floor and a combined 2nd-3rd floor apartment above, that was rented out.

EDUCATION

Brooklyn College in N.Y. had awarded Dad 60 credits for his Abitur in Berlin, a European high school diploma being the equivalent of at least an A.A. in the U.S. Those credits were then transferred to Hopkins. By taking courses on and off at night while working full time (and taking advantage of the G.I. Bill after the war), Dad was able to accumulate an additional 60 credits, eventually earning his B.A. at Johns Hopkins University in 1959, majoring in French. He was particularly proud to be able to finish up before I did (in 1961). But what he might and should have been even prouder of was his very good grades (he saved all those papers) from his one year at the medical school of Kaiser Wilhelm University, one of Europe's best. Today it is still a premier world university, though now renamed Humboldt University. Had he been able to finish his education there and gone on to practice medicine, he would have been among German society's elite and probably had a very successful and rewarding career.

National Genealogical Society Family History Conference "Tales and Trails"

Louisville, Kentucky

May 23-26, 2025

<https://conference.ngsgenealogy.org>



45th IAJGS Conference on Jewish Genealogy "And We Settled Here...The Jewish Journey"

Fort Wayne, Indiana

August 10-14, 2025

<https://www.iajgs.org/conference/iajgs2025/>

Yearbooks and Genealogy

Yearbooks are published annually by schools to document and highlight notable events from the previous year. Yearbooks offer a personal perspective on our ancestors past that other historical records often overlook and thus a great source for genealogists. In addition to obtaining a picture of your ancestor you can find out about their interests, nicknames, and even extra-curricular activities such as whether they played a sport or an instrument. Yearbooks are a fun way to learn about your ancestry. Yearbooks tell you where your ancestors lived in a particular year. Yearbooks can be found in schools, thrift stores, libraries, online, homes, ebay, etc. Most yearbooks are printed but recently some yearbooks only have online versions.

“The concept of yearbooks can be traced back to the early 17th century, when schools began recording student achievements and academic progress. Initially, these were simple logbooks or ledger-style publications used primarily by educational institutions. Their purpose was to keep track of student enrollments, grades, and other relevant information. With the advent of the digital age, yearbooks took on a whole new dimension. Online yearbook platforms allowed for interactive features, multimedia content, and easy customization. Digital yearbooks became a popular choice, offering flexibility in design, enhanced accessibility, and the ability to easily share and preserve memories across various platforms.”

<https://yearbooklife.com/2023/07/11/history-of-school-yearbooks/>

There are school yearbooks specifically for the college’s dental students, law students, etc. such as:

- University of Southern California Dentistry School Yearbooks

<https://digitallibrary.usc.edu/Archive/USC--Dentistry-Yearbooks-2A3BF1OD4I1?Flat=1>

- Fordham Law School Yearbooks

<https://ir.lawnet.fordham.edu/yearbook/>

There are family yearbooks.

<https://blog.emilycrall.com/2022/03/creating-our-family-yearbooks/>

You can use online sources to make a family yearbook:

www.shutterfly.com/p/photo-books/flush-mount-styles/family-yearbook-photo-book

Some synagogues publish yearbooks such as the 1941/1942 yearbook for Congregation Ahavath Chesed in Jacksonville, Florida found at

<https://ufdc.ufl.edu/AA00010715/00001/images>

Some synagogue religious schools publish yearbooks such as Temple Emanu-El Religious School in Sarasota which published religious school yearbooks in 1987/1988, 1988/1989 and 1989/1990, but these have not been digitized.

American Jewish Given Names 1910 - 1949

As Jews immigrated to the United States from 1910 thru the 1940s, many wanted to assimilate and Americanize and the naming trends of first names often reflected that.

Popular Given Names 1910s Immigrant Generation for American Jewish Girls and Boys

Girls: Annie/Anna, Becky (Rebecca), Bessie, Bertha, Clara, Celia, Dora, Etta, Esther, Ethel, Freida, Fannie, Goldie, Gussie, Ida, Jennie, Lena, Minnie, Mollie, Mary, Nettie, Pearl, Rose, Sarah, Sadie, Sophie, Tillie, Yetta, Zelda

Boys: Abe (Abraham), Ben (Benjamin), Charles, David, Harry, Herman, Hyman, Irving, Isaac, Isadore, Israel, Jack, Jacob, Joseph, Julius, Louis, Max, Morris, Nathan, Sam (Samuel), Sol (Solomon)

<https://www.jewishgen.org/infofiles/givennames/slide91.html>

Popular Given Names in 1920 for American Jewish Girls and Boys

Girls: Ruth, Elizabeth, Barbara, Martha/Matya, Edna, Esther, Sarah/Sara, Eva, Charlotte, Ella, Bessie, Alma, Rachel

Boys: Joseph, Harold, David, Daniel, Samuel

<https://www.kveller.com/18-jewish-baby-names-that-were-popular-in-the-1920s/>

Popular Given Names 1930s 2nd Generation for American Jewish Girls and Boys

Girls: Alice, Arlene, Beatrice, Bernice, Betty, Blanche, Clair, Doris, Dorothy, Edith, Eleanor, Evelyn, Florence, Frances, Gertrude, Harriet, Irene, Jean, Lillian, Lucille, Mildred, Muriel, Rhode, Rosalyn, Selma, Shirley, Sylvia

Boys: Alfred, Arnold, Arthur, Bernard, Charles, Edward, George, Harold, Henry, Herbert, Jerome, Jules, Lawrence, Leon, Martin, Milton, Morton, Milton, Norman, Paul, Philip, Ralph, Seymour, Sidney, Stanley, Walter, William

<https://www.jewishgen.org/infofiles/givennames/slide92.html>

Popular Given Names in 1940 for American Jewish Girls and Boys

Girls: Alma, Deborah, Esther, Judy, Rachel, Rebecca, Ruth, Sarah

Unisex: Elie/Ellie, Sharon

Boys: Albert, Benjamin, Daniel, David, Jonathan, Joseph, Michael, Samuel

<https://www.kveller.com/18-jewish-baby-names-that-were-popular-in-the-1940s/>

Most Common Given Names in America 1910s - 1940s

1910s John, Mary

1920s Robert, Mary

1930s Robert, Mary

1940s James, Mary

www.ssa.gov/oact/babynames/decades/names1910s.html

American Given Names 1950s - 2010s

The most common given names in America from 1950-2010:

- 1950 – Linda, Barbara, and Nancy; James, John, and David
- 1960 – Mary, Susan, and Lisa; David, Robert, and Mark
- 1970 – Jennifer, Lisa, and Tammy; Michael, James, and Brian
- 1980 – Jennifer, Melissa, and Heather; Michael, Christopher, and Jason
- 1990 – Jessica, Brittany, and Samantha; Michael, Daniel, and Justin
- 2000 – Hannah, Kaylee, and Elizabeth; Michael, Matthew, and Joshua
- 2001 – Emily, Ashley, and Samantha; Jacob, Joseph, and Dylan
- 2002 – Emily, Brianna, and Alexis; Jacob, Christopher, and Andrew
- 2003 – Emily, Hailey, and Olivia; Jacob, Matthew, and Zachary
- 2004 – Emma, Madison, and Sarah; Jacob, Michael, and Connor
- 2005 – Emma, Hannah, and Makayla; Aidan, Nicholas, and Tyler
- 2006 – Emma, Kaitlyn, and Abigail; Aiden, Ryan, and Joshua
- 2007 – Sophia, Ava, and Emily; Aiden, Ethan, and Noah
- 2008 – Emma, Madison, and Hailey; Aiden, Jayden, and Matthew
- 2009 – Isabella, Lily, and Madelyn; Aiden, Caden, and Jack
- 2010 – Sophia, Chloe, and Addison; Aiden, Ethan, and Logan

https://www.babycenter.com/baby-names/most-popular/most-popular-baby-names-through-history_1508595

Jews and non-Jews associate most Jewish given names to the following categories according to Sarah Benor, Vice Provost and Professor of Contemporary Jewish Studies, Hebrew Union College.

- Hebrew Biblical Character (e.g.: Chana, Reuven, Yehezkel)
- English Biblical Character (e.g.: Aaron, Abigail, Ruth)
- Yiddish Biblical Character (e.g.: Avrum, Rokhl, Yehudis)
- Ambiguous Biblical Character (e.g.: Ezra, Leah Miriam)
- Hebrew Biblical Modern (e.g.: Avi, Moti, Rafaela)
- Hebrew Post Biblical (e.g.: Akiva, Bruria, Meir)
- Yiddish (e.g.: Bayla, Feivel, Leib)
- Hebrew Modern (e.g.: Ariella, Lior, Stav)
- Ambiguous Jewish (e.g.: Emmett, Lila, Mindy)
- No Jewish Origin (e.g.: Mark, Randall, Sylvia)

There was a 2022 survey to find the most common American Jewish given names. Source for results in the next column is:

<https://hunter.cuny.edu/news/trends-in-american-jewish-names>

1950s Most Common American Jewish Given Names

1. Susan, Michael
2. Deborah, David
3. Ellen, Robert
4. Karen, Gary
5. Barbara, Jonathan
6. Linda, Lawrence
7. Robin, Steven
8. Debra, Daniel
9. Bonnie/Judith, Howard
10. Nancy/Ruth, Richard

1960s Most Common American Jewish Given Names

1. Lisa, David
2. Susan, Michael
3. Deborah, Daniel
4. Rachel, Jonathan
5. Karen, Mark
6. Laura, Robert
7. Amy, Steven
8. Elizabeth, Scott
9. Julie, Joseph
10. Sharon, Matthew

1970s Most Common American Jewish Given Names

- Rachel, David
- Sarah, Daniel
- Rebecca, Joshua
- Jennifer, Michael
- Amy, Benjamin
- Lisa, Jonathan
- Elizabeth, Adam
- Jessica, Andrew
- Deborah, Jeremy
- Melissa, Aaron

1980s Most Common American Jewish Given Names

1. Rachel, Daniel
2. Sarah, David
3. Rebecca, Benjamin
4. Jessica, Joshua
5. Lauren, Michael
6. Sara, Aaron
7. Jennifer, Matthew
8. Emily, Jonathan
9. Melissa, Jacob
10. Elizabeth, Adam

1990s Most Common American Jewish Given Names

1. Rachel, Benjamin
2. Hannah, Daniel
3. Sarah, Samuel
4. Rebecca, Jacob
5. Emily, Joshua
6. Leah, Jonathan
7. Elizabeth, Aaron
8. Emma, Zachary
9. Samantha, David
10. Jessica, Max

2000s Most Common American Jewish Given Names

1. Hannah, Samuel
2. Maya, Jacob
3. Miriam, Benjamin
4. Rebecca, Noah
5. Talia, Daniel
6. Eliana, Jonah
7. Abigail, Gabriel
8. Sophie, Adam
9. Naomi, Eli
10. Sarah, Ezra

2010s Most Common American Jewish Given Names

1. Maya, Ezra
2. Noa, Asher
3. Hannah, Benjamin
4. Elizabeth, Jacob
5. Miriam, Samuel
6. Naomi, Jonah
7. Abigail, Ethan
8. Shoshana, Isaac
9. Talia, Ari
10. Yael, Eli