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ATSMI UVSARI

“MY BONE AND MY FLESH”

עצמי ובשרי

Number 5

Spring, 2004

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Senator John Kerry's Jewish Genealogy

by Jennifer Anne Perez

Jennifer Anne Perez, a former reporter for the Los Angeles Times, is now an international freelance journalist based in Prague.

On February 2, 2003, the Boston Globe reported that Massachusetts senator and Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry, thought by many to be a “Boston Brahmin” of Irish-Catholic ancestry, was the grandson of Czech immigrants who had concealed their Jewish heritage.

The story begins in the hamlet of Horni Benesov on the tenth of May, 1873—the day Benedikt and Mathilde Kohn had a son they named Fritz. Like his father, Fritz became a simple brewer. Yet it was difficult for him to succeed in an area dominated by German-speaking Catholics. Many Jews hid their religious identity, posing as Gentiles. “It was easier to do business as a Christian,” says Prague-based genealogist Julius Miller, who specializes in tracing Jewish lineage. “Many Jews just stopped practicing Judaism during this period and had no belief at all.”

On March 17, 1902, shortly before his 30th birthday, Fritz took his wife Ida and infant son Erich to a government office in Vienna and changed their family name. Fritz Kohn would henceforth be known as Frederick Kerry. The Kerry family settled for three years in Austria before embarking on the steamship Konigen Luise in Genoa, Italy on May 4, 1905, bound for America. According to the ship's manifest, the Kerrys traveled in first class with only twenty-nine other passengers—French, American, and Swiss families with decidedly Anglican names like Hale, Walker, and Bridgeman.

Ellis Island records note that upon boarding the ship, Kerry identified his family as Germans from Austria, their former place of residence as Vienna. By the time the ship arrived in New York City on

May 18, 1905, Frederick Kerry had left his Jewish heritage behind. The Kerrys settled in Chicago, where Frederick quickly set out to stake his claim in the American dream. On June 21, 1907, he filed his initial citizenship papers with Illinois' Cook County Circuit Court. By 1908, he was listed in a business directory with an office on Dearborn Street in Chicago's famous Loop. In 1910, the year his daughter Mildred was born, he had made it into the Chicago Blue Book, a catalogue of notable city residents. By February 6, 1911, he had filed his naturalization petition, which was witnessed by the highly respected State Street merchant Henry Lytton and by Frank Case, a business manager at Sears Roebuck. Kerry had assisted in the reorganization of Sears, and by the following year he was promoting himself as a “business counselor” under the title “Frederick A. Kerry & Staff.”

For reasons that remain unclear, Kerry soon left Chicago and settled in Brookline, Massachusetts. There, in 1915, Ida gave birth to their third child, Richard, the future father of Senator John Kerry. Frederick would continue the merchant life, now working in the shoe business and achieving enough success to hire a live-in German domestic worker, who appears on the 1920 census records of the Kerry household.

Census information also shows the lengths to which Frederick Kerry went to obscure his Jewish lineage. Both he and his wife listed their native tongues as German—although the first language of Czech Jews of that era, born near the Polish border, would almost certainly have been Yiddish. By this point, however, both *[Continued on page 3]*

Kerry [continued from page2]

Frederick and Ida had been practicing Catholics for nearly twenty years, and by all accounts were regarded as devout in their faith.

Frederick Kerry's American dream ended mysteriously on November 21, 1921 at the age of 48. According to front-page news reports, the now virtually bankrupt husband and father of three walked into the lobby washroom of Boston's posh Copley Plaza Hotel, put a loaded revolver to his head, and pulled the trigger. He left behind \$25 in cash, \$200 in stocks, and a Cadillac. The suicide cast a shroud of silence over the family history for more than fifty years. It would come to light again with the first stirrings of a U.S. senator's bid for a possible presidential run in 2004.

The Kerrys' youngest child, Richard, would also achieve success, but unlike his father, would sustain it. He served as an Army pilot during World War II; married Rosemary Forbes, a descendant of two wealthy Massachusetts families, the Forbes and the Winthrops; and became a U.S. diplomat, holding posts in Oslo, Berlin, and Paris.

Richard and Rosemary's first son, John Forbes Kerry, was born on December 11, 1943. Though he attended exclusive boarding schools in Europe as well as an elite private school in New Hampshire, John later would tell interviewers that somehow he always felt disconnected from his peers, like an outsider. He attended Yale at about the same time as President George W. Bush—both belonged to the elite secret Skull & Bones society—but while Bush lived the fraternity life, Kerry, an admirer of John F. Kennedy, found his niche in politics and became president of the Yale Political Union, a nonpartisan group providing a

forum for a wide range of political debate. Upon graduation in 1966, he joined the Navy to fight in Vietnam. Returning to the U.S. in 1969 with a Silver Star, a Bronze Star, and three Purple Hearts, Kerry soon became a vocal critic of the war. Testifying before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in April 1971, he asked a question that would make him famous: “How do you ask a man to be the last man to die for a mistake?”

Five years later, Kerry graduated from Boston College law school and kicked his political career into high gear. He quickly rose through the ranks of state government, becoming lieutenant governor of Massachusetts in 1982 under then Governor Michael Dukakis, and eventually winning a U.S. Senate seat in 1984.

In the late 1980s Kerry learned from a relative that his grandmother Ida had been born Jewish—a surprising revelation, as he remembered her as a zealous Catholic. But he knew virtually nothing about his paternal grandfather, Frederick.

John Kerry's constituency assumed that, with his father's name and his mother's lineage, the senator was a full-blooded Irish Catholic. Even his hometown newspaper, the Boston Globe, regularly made the mistake, despite Kerry's repeated attempts to set the record straight. During a 1993 interview with TV host John McLaughlin, Kerry addressed the incorrect presumption that his father was Irish by stating that his grandfather was Austrian and that his grandmother had been born Jewish. He added: “We're still trying to find all the details.”

Try he did. On a visit to Europe, he stopped in Vienna and called every Kerry in the phone book. And in 2002, his office contacted the regional Czech archives, which, he would [*Continued on page 4*]

Kerry [continued from page 3]

later discover, actually possessed information on Fritz Kohn's birth, but the senator never received a reply. Two years earlier the bureau had stopped conducting searches for foreigners.

It was not until the late 1990s, when John's father Richard was suffering from cancer, that he finally disclosed to John that his grandfather had shot himself to death. "[That] turned on a light bulb for John Kerry on why his father was so understandably reticent to talk about it," Kerry spokesman David Wade told the Boston Globe. "It helped him understand his father much more and what his father went through."

Richard Kerry died in 2000. He never revealed that his father had been a Jew. Born in the U.S. and only five years old when Frederick died, it is likely that Richard did not know of his grandfather's hidden past.

In late 2002, as rumors began to circulate that Kerry would seek the Democratic nomination for president, editors at the Boston Globe began soliciting reporters for in-depth articles on Kerry's life. Journalist Michael Kranish, a veteran Washington correspondent who had spent four years piecing together his own Jewish family history, volunteered for the assignment.

Knowing that Jews sometimes altered their names and identities—his own family's name had been changed at Ellis Island—and that unless he hired an overseas collaborator to check European records, it would be months before he'd be able to complete an accurate search, Kranish turned to prominent genealogist Felix Gundacker of the Institute for Historical Family Research in Vienna, who specialized in tracing the genealogies of Jews in Austria and in what is now the Czech Republic. Within two weeks, Gundacker discovered the original document

in Vienna that recorded Fritz Kohn's name change to Frederick Kerry.

Ironically, had Kohn's name been changed at Ellis Island, it might have been impossible to uncover the original name. But because Kohn made the change while still in Austria, probably to conceal his background before coming to America, his origins could now be traced.

Gundacker's next step was to find Kohn's birth records. That search took him to the state archives in the Czech city of Opava. There he met archivist Jiri Stibor, a traditionalist who refused to use a computer, preferring to search by hand through the millions of musty files collected in the cavernous rooms of a former palace.

Stibor told Gundacker that on June 20, 2002 he had received an unusual inquiry—a letter in English from a certain "Samuel C" which carried the seal of a high-ranking Washington, D.C. official. The mysterious letter noted that John Kerry was a candidate for president (though the senator had yet to publicly announce his intention to run) and inquired about a man named "Fritz Cohn."

Stibor knew he couldn't be of assistance; the archives had stopped processing foreign requests several years earlier. In any case, the war and local antisemitism had left little evidence of a former Jewish presence in the region. "The Germans didn't want any trace of the Jews left," Stibor says, "even after so many of them were taken away. So many of the records were simply destroyed."

Keeping in mind the earlier request, and now proceeding on the assumption that Frederick Kerry had been born Jewish, Gundacker and Stibor began scouring the archives. "The Catholics of the time weren't interested in keeping good records [of the Jews]," Stibor says. "If there were Jews in the town, they would [Continued on page 5]

Kerry [continued from page 4]

be the last entries, at the end of the book.” Adds Gundacker: “If there was no [official] Jewish community, parish priests and other Catholics had to add birth records to the central record books. They mostly added those records to the end of the books, not as part of the regular records.” Finally, after pulling volume after volume off the archive shelves, they came upon a handwritten entry in the last pages of a yellowed book. “In the year 1873, on May 10th, was born Fritz Kohn, a legal son of Benedikt Kohn, master brewer in Bennisch (the old German name for Horni Benesov), House 224, and his wife, Mathilde, daughter of Jakob Frankel, royal dealer in Oberlogau in Prussia.”

This one sentence had put the last piece of the puzzle into place, solving an eighty-year-old mystery.

Gundacker phoned Globe reporter Kranish and told him he was “1,000 percent sure” that Senator John Kerry’s

grandfather had been born a Jew. “This is amazing...fascinating to me,” Kerry told the reporter. “This is incredible stuff. I think it is more than interesting; it is a revelation....It has a big emotional impact, because it obviously raises questions: I want to know what happened, why did they do this, what were they thinking, what was the thought process, and why, once they got over here, they never talked about it.”

At one point, Kranish said, Kerry became emotional, particularly when reviewing the front-page news accounts of his grandfather’s suicide. “God, that’s awful, Oh, God, that’s awful. This is kind of heavy,” the senator told him. “That explains a lot. It connects the dots. My dad was sort

of painfully remote and shut off, and angry about the... lack of a father.” He shook his head in wonder at the number of times he had visited the Copley Plaza, never knowing its significance in his family’s history. “How many times have I walked into that hotel...” he said, his voice trailing off.

Horni Benesov’s current mayor, Josef Klech, says that not a single trace remains of Kerry’s ancestors; not a single person in town remembers the Kohn family. Over time, the entire town—except for the Catholic church—has been completely rebuilt. Gone is the small Jewish cemetery where Kohn’s parents Benedikt and Mathilde were likely buried. In place of the Kohn brewery there is a public sauna advertising discount rates to local residents.

In Kerry’s office, half a world away, the senator chose to say little

publicly about the discovery but he did discuss the matter with Reform Judaism magazine. “This was an incredible illumination,” Kerry says. “I never really

knew why my grandfather left Austria or why he underwent such personal transformation, but we do know many of the things that were happening under the old Hapsburg Empire. We know what life was like for too many of them, and the ultimate turn for even greater tragedy it would take not much later.”

In a twist of irony, John Kerry’s younger brother Cameron converted to Judaism in 1983, shortly before marrying Kathy Weinman, a Jewish woman raised in a Conservative household in Michigan. As a member of a Boston Brahmin family, Cameron thought he was entering uncharted territory. Only later did he realize that he was returning to his genealogical roots. ☆

One sentence put the last piece of the puzzle into place, solving an eighty-year-old mystery.

Genealogy CDs may fail or degrade

by Eileen Phelps

What a great idea – burn Family History CDs and give all your loved ones their very own priceless heritage...NOT! Eileen Phelps, of the Utah Valley PAF Users Group, published an article about data loss problems on CDs. Sadly, the CDs we all expected to last about ten years are turning out to be rather fragile.

Many people have found that generic CD-Rs purchased in bulk have a high failure rate after only two years, and are unreadable on any drive. So, if you are giving CDs to relatives, consider whether you are offering data that you will update every year. If not, you had better buy archival quality CD blanks. Plastic sleeves can also degrade them, so get jewel cases to wrap them in.

Another caution: Fred Langa says, in an article in Information Week, “I did discover bad CDs, but not one zero was traceable to a specific brand or dye type. Instead, for me, the only disks that failed were those that I had covered with a glue-on paper label from a print-it-yourself CD label-maker kit. Several of these labeled CDs were, in fact, totally unreadable by every means I tried, including special data-recovery software; all the data on those CDs is just plain gone.

“My best guess is the glue on these do-it-yourself labels interacted with either the foil or the dye, rendering the CDs useless. The dye is the layer that holds the data on the CD and gives it its distinctive metallic color. This does not mean that all brands of labels are equally destructive, but perhaps it would be better to label with a marking pen.”

One reader said, “The really old gold disks with the green chemical have so far been OK, and the deep blue Verbatim Datalife Plus CDs

are also OK. The ones that are failing are two or three years old and have a silver reflective layer with a light green chemical coating.”

The article also talks about a situation that could affect travelers: “After visiting Belize in Central America, Victor Cardenes of Madrid’s National Museum of Natural Sciences, found one of his CDs discoloured, transparent and unreadable. The disk’s aluminium and polycarbonate layers [where the data is stored] were riddled with fungus. So if you’re traveling to a rainforest area, better copy your CDs as soon as you return, and get rid of the originals. ☆

AN ISRAELI JOKE

As the plane settled down at Ben Gurion airport, the voice of the El-Al Captain came on: “Please remain seated with your seatbelt fastened until this plane is at a complete standstill and the seat belt signs have been turned off.

“To those who are seated, we wish you a Merry Christmas, and hope that you enjoy your stay, ...and to those of you standing in the aisles, we wish you a Happy Chanukah, and welcome home.” ☆

OOPS !

Corrections to our Montefiore pages, in Number Four: these individuals have been interred and should not be italicized: **Rachel Friedman, Sarah Brisk Goldberg, Ann P. Levy, Herbert Levy, Hilliard Levy, Phillip Mednick, Helen Onhouse, Clara Pepper, Manny Pepper, Henry Policzer, Jack Sher, Max Skolnick, and Rachel Tamar Walton.**

Book Review

Streets: A Memoir of the Lower East Side

If your ancestors came to New York City at the turn of the century and lived on the Lower East Side, consider reading *Streets: A Memoir of the Lower East Side* by Bella Spewack, to get an idea of life there and then for recent immigrants. Here's a sample:

Goerck Street is one block below Lewis and two blocks from the East River. Every move we made brought us closer to it. Our street began with a saloon on Houston Street. Next to it stood a lumberyard whose entrance every

Sunday morning was marked by a garbage heap to which all contributed. Then came our row of houses. On the Stanton Street corner was another saloon. I

went several times to Goerck Street before we moved, compelled by fear and dread. It was a "tough" block. Bottle fights included every kind of weapon; some of the Goerck Street gangs used to throw rusty blades.

As a very little girl I would dare myself at night to go to Goerck Street and never get any further than the corner. Ours was and still is one of a row of red-four story houses, a fifth story being based on the stoop. There was a constant coming and going of moving vans and pushcarts – one family moved into one house and another moved out of the next. The houses formed a drably indifferent village that on rainy days looked like a row of washed-out, badly patched petticoats. They shared their submerging sorrows, small sufficient joys, and frequent fights. The majority of the families sprang from Galician sources; they rest were Hungarian and German Jews and a few Russians. The first half of the next block was Jewish and the rest of it was Italian, with an invisible but definite line of demarcation.

Our house, like the others, had four families on each floor, two to the rear and two to the front. There were two windows to the front room, which either faced the street or the yard, one window in the kitchen that faced an exceedingly

narrow, lightless airshaft, and in the bedroom a tiny square window that faced the hall. The hall had no window at all on any floor and got its heat and ventilation from the street. This is true of most East Side tenements. Separating the front room from the kitchen is what my mother called a "blind" window. It was simply a square hole, framed by woodwork, which allowed some of the front light to filter into the kitchen and stop at the entrance of the bedroom. From the East River, night and day, came the hooting of ferryboats and transient ships.

We were moved from Lewis to Goerck Street by a pushcart because that was cheapest. It took several trips to move us. We spent the day getting the rooms to look homelike – that is, a place to eat, work, and sleep, eat, work, and sleep. In the front room: the icebox, sideboard, table, chairs, and bed. In the kitchen: stove, table, and folding bed. In the bedroom, another bed. Home!

I went several times to Goerck Street before we moved, compelled by fear and dread. It was a "tough" block.

My paternal grandfather, Alexander Sissel Kaplan, lived on Sheriff Street when he met most of his children upon their arrival from Russia, in October 1899. And my aunt Sylvia Price, as a girl, lived on Goerck Street Both streets were demolished as part of slum clearance in 1920, and vast city projects now occupy the site. When my mom read the book, she recalled the school assemblies that Bella describes. She went to the same girls' high school as the author.

Bella Spewack is better known as the author of *KISS ME, KATE*. She and her mother arrived on the Lower East Side about 1902. The book includes a fascinating, information-packed introduction, photos, a map, a chronology of the author's life, and an afterward.

Streets: A Memoir of the Lower East Side is published by The Feminist Press at CUNY; ISBN 1-55861-153-3.

– Rochelle Kaplan ☆

Guest Editorial

A rabbi's views of Mormons and Jews

by Rabbi Shmuley Boteach
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Jewish officialdom is up in arms, the Mormon Church is on the defensive, and frankly I don't give a damn.

I refer, of course, to the controversial Mormon practice of baptizing deceased non-Mormons into their faith.

In 1995, the Mormon Church agreed to stop posthumously baptizing dead Jews. But according to Ernest Michel, a former executive vice president of UJA-Federation of New York who helped broker the 1995 agreement, the church has rebuffed attempts to remove Jewish names from its database of 400 million and has violated the agreement.

That may be so. But what a waste of time for everybody involved. It seems incredible that at a time when more Jewish civilians are dying than at any time since the Holocaust, and with the Jewish community in general, and the state of Israel in particular, needing all the allies they can get, we would waste our time with such trivialities.

I could not care less if the Mormons baptize me after I'm dead. It won't affect me. I'll always be a Jew – in this life and the next. If this is part of Mormon practice and belief, and they do it in the privacy of their own ritual, and it doesn't affect me in the slightest, why should I care?

People's beliefs are their own business. It's how they treat others that is everyone's business. What I care about is how much the Mormons support Israel today, not what they do with Jewish souls in what they regard as the afterlife.

Far from being my sentiment alone, this is a pivotal Jewish teaching: "It is the action [and not dogma] which is most important."

In my first few years as rabbi at Oxford University, I befriended a doctoral student by the name of Michael Taft Benson, whose grandfather at the time, Ezra Taft Benson, was president and prophet of the Mormon Church. Not only did Mike become and remain one of my dearest friends, he served as vice president of my L'Chaim Society and regularly brought groups of hundreds of Mormon students to our Sabbath dinners to learn more about Judaism. A great lover of Israel who has visited there more than ten times, Mike chose to write his doctoral thesis on Harry Truman's support for the creation of the Jewish state.

Through Mike, I was granted a meeting with the current president and prophet of the Mormon Church, Gordon B. Hinckley, who is Mike's grandfather-in-law. We spoke about Israel, his admiration for the Jewish people, and the Mormon dedication to Israel's prosperity and survival. I am regularly invited to address Mormon audiences in Utah who thirst for knowledge of all things Jewish and who treat me like a wise elder brother.

Mike even arranged for me to launch my book, *JUDAISM FOR EVERYONE*, at the University of Utah, and he and I are currently planning a Jewish Studies center for Snow College, where Mike serves as president. After meeting with Jonathan Pollard at Federal prison in Butner, N.C., it was Mike whom I called to ask for his support in meeting the two Utah senators on Pollard's behalf. He quickly arranged for me and Esther Pollard to meet with Senators Hatch and Bennet of Utah, who received us most graciously.

The Mormons are our brothers, the Christians are our kin. So long as they support and defend the Jewish *[continued on page 9]*

Mormons [continued from page 8]

people through their current persecution, that will always be so, whatever their beliefs, and we owe them our gratitude.

The same is true of those righteous evangelicals who love Israel like it is their own country. Many Jews are alarmed at the steadfast support of evangelical Christians for Israel, claiming it is insincere. It's an end-of-days strategy, they say. Jesus can't come back until the Jews have returned to Israel. The evangelicals aren't real friends because, at the Second Coming, they believe, all Jews will become Christians.

What an absurd complaint. To tell people who send tens of millions of dollars to poor Israelis and who place enormous pressure on the Bush administration never to abandon Israel that they are not real friends is to be ungrateful at best and treacherous at worst. Who cares what their beliefs are? They are our greatest friends in the world.

What will happen when Jesus comes back and some of our evangelical friends then expect that in return for their support we become Christian? Hey, we'll talk about it then. In the meantime, we'll show them unstinting appreciation for their love and support against an insurgent Islam that wants to wipe Israel from the map.

I, of course, don't mean to be flippant about any of this. My point is a very serious one. Friendships are not based on creeping into the innermost sanctums of the other's heart and discerning their motivation. Friendship comes down simply to the affection with which people treat each other.

If Jews are troubled by Mormon and evangelical Christian theology and propose to focus more on these groups' beliefs than on their actions, the logical outcome would be for the Jews to be far closer to the Muslims than to Christians. After all, theologically

speaking, Islam and Judaism are closer than any two other religions. Both are pure forms of monotheism which utterly reject the deification of a man as God; neither accepts any division in the Godhead, like a trinity; and both are based on a written law (the Torah and Koran) and on an oral legal tradition (the *halakha* and the *hadith*).

So why aren't we as close to the Muslims as we are to the Christians? Simple. The Christians, whatever their beliefs, treat us as beloved brothers, the Muslims, however monotheistic, murder our children.

Perhaps the Jewish community should focus more on how other groups treat us than what they believe about us. Let's stop with the silly insecurities that have us looking to scratch the skin of a friend and find underneath a closet anti-Semite.

Rabbi Shmuley Boteach is the best-selling author of fourteen books. Recently named by Talkers magazine as one of America's 100 most important talk-radio hosts, his newest book is THE PRIVATE ADAM: BECOMING A HERO IN A SELFISH AGE (HarperCollins). This commentary was recently published on world net daily <http://worldnetdaily.com>. An edited reprint was in the Deseret News. ☆

My Bone & My Flesh

Atsmi Uvsari is published quarterly by the Utah Jewish Genealogical Society (on line at www.rootsweb.com/~utjgs/). We reserve first electronic and print publication rights.

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We welcome comments, submissions, questions, and requests. Please send them to the editor, Don Fallick, via e-mail at: d.fallick@mstar2.net.

DNA genealogy explained – book review:

Mapping Human History: genes, race, and our common origin

Author: Steve Olson. ©2002. First Mariner Books edition 2003. ISBN 0-618-09157-2,

This book doesn't deal with genealogy *per se*. It does deal with our genetic heritage (DNA). Genealogy deals with the last 500 to 1500 years; DNA/genetics deals with the last 50,000 to 100,000 years.

The first chapters summarize the familiar story of the origin of man in the central, south-east corner of Africa. The Bushmen of South Africa are the most ancient living humans, since they carry the oldest mutation marking on their mitochondrial DNA. The book makes a case for our non-Neanderthal ancestry, and for a small group referred to as "modern man" to be all of present-day mankind's common ancestors.

This claim is based on DNA comparison of haplotype and haplogroups found in DNA. Out of the three billion characters that form the DNA in each of our cells, each generation has a random mutation of about one hundred characters. This means that only one character out of thirty million is not reproduced identically from one generation to the next. The location on each chromosome where that change occurs is called a haplotype, and the group of characters that was changed is a haplogroup.

When a mutation happens, all subsequent generations carry that mutation. This enables us to determine both relationships of people, and the time when a mutation occurred.

The author also discusses what I call the double inverted triangle of genealogy. We all have the same ancestors within a few generations, because in each previous generation the number of theoretical ancestors doubles, while the number of actual ancestors, who were alive and had posterity, diminishes in reverse proportion.

This inversion is greatly accelerated by close family intermarriage (third-, second-, and even first cousins), as well as events such as plagues and other disasters that eliminate a large number of possible ancestors.

The author mentions the proven common male ancestry of the "cohanim" – male descendants of Aaron – and the verified male Jewish ancestry of the South African Blacks – the Lembas. The haplogroups common to any group of people on each continent are discussed, as well as the acceleration of commonality of ancestry by present-day societies. In 300 to 500 years, the differences between Africans, Asians, and Europeans will still exist, but mixed populations, as in Hawaii, will be more common. Already, thirty percent of African-American men have a European ancestor.

Pros and cons of DNA studies are also discussed. Mitochondrial studies and the Y chromosome are the ones used in genealogy, as they enable us to trace the maternal and paternal ancestral lines, but they are not an end in themselves. More and more data is being gathered about mutations on the other chromosomes. Within each of us lies our whole genetic history, which will enable us to reconstruct migrations and similar events that mark our ancestral history.

Asians have common ancestors with Europeans; so do Africans and Oceanians, etc., so we should be one big, happy family. Most characteristics that we attribute to genetics are actually cultural. The diversity that we see is due to the nearly exclusive intermarriage of groups within themselves. But that cannot erase the common ancestry.
— Robert Neu ☆

DNA and Jewish History

The Chuetas of Majorca

from Avotaynu

“Chueta” was the name given to Jews living on the island of Majorca who were forced to convert to Roman Catholicism during the Spanish Inquisition. DNA research has confirmed that the modern-day descendants of these people are, indeed, of Jewish ancestry.

According to the research, the Chuetas are found to be more closely related to Moroccan and Libyan Jews than to other Majorcans. The DNA research indicates that the study of the current descendants “has shown that, to a remarkable extent, they have retained their biological identity, with a unique pattern, in terms of gene and haplotype frequencies, separate from the other populations of Majorca.” In non-scientific terms, it means they did not intermarry very much with the remainder of the population.

A summary of the study can be found at

http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi?cmd=Retrieve&db=PubMed&list_uids=12472657&dopt=Abstract.

You may have to paste this URL into your web browser because of its unusual length.

An article about Chuetas in the 1907 Jewish Encyclopedia at

<http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/view.jsp?artid=499&letter=C>

implies that a reason for the low level of intermarriage with the rest of the Majorcan population is that these people were shunned by the rest of the populace.

The name *chueta* is a derogatory term derived from the Spanish word for pork, implying they were Jews who ate pork. ☆

ANTISEMITISM

That wonderful comic, Sam Levinson, had a great answer to anti-Semite: “It’s a free world and you don’t have to like Jews, but if you DON’T, I suggest that you boycott certain Jewish products, like ...

- The Wasserman Test for syphilis,
- Digitalis, discovered by Doctor Nuslin,
- Insulin, discovered by Doctor Minofsky,
- Chloral Hydrate, discovered by Doctor Lifreich,
- The Schick Test for Diphtheria,
- Vitamins, discovered by Doctor Funk,
- Streptomycin, discovered by Doctor Woronan,
- The Polio Pill by Doctor Sabin, and the Polio Vaccine, by Doctor Jonas Salk.

Go on, boycott!

Humanitarian consistency requires that my people offer all these gifts to all people of the world. Fanatic consistency requires that all bigots accept Syphilis, Diabetes, Convulsions, Malnutrition, Polio and Tuberculosis as a matter of principle.

You want to be mad at us? Be mad at us! But I’m telling you, you ain’t going to feel so good! ☆

Great website for family history

www.centropa.org contains photos, maps, and genealogical information from Central European towns, from **before and after** the Holocaust. It’s a treasure trove for genealogical researchers.

NUTS 'N' BOLTS OF STYLE

by Don Fallick

A professional appearance is very important in preparing a family newsletter or Book of Remembrance. "Style" includes following the generally accepted rules of typography, as well as establishing your own unified style for your entire publication.

Commas

Commas seem to give the most trouble, even to professional writers. Many adults have been put off by complex grammatical rules as children in school, and have "a mental block" about them still. This is unnecessary. Native English-speakers will not go far wrong by inserting a comma wherever they would pause when reading aloud. Your computer's grammar-checker should catch most remaining comma errors.

For a discussion of the grammatical aspects of commas, see *THE ELEMENTS OF STYLE*, by Strunk and White. It is clear, concise, easy to understand, and very short.

A common style dilemma involves commas at the ends of quotations. Most modern editors put **all end** punctuation **within** the quotation marks. This greatly simplifies comma problems:

- "I don't know," she said.
- She said, "I don't know."

Signs and symbols

Other problems are caused by the numerals and symbols in the top row of keys on your keyboard. Many amateurs overuse numerals, percent signs, pound signs, and ampersands. They are not ungrammatical, but they look unprofessional, and create problems with plurals.

Always spell out:

- **"and,"** unless an ampersand is part of a company's name.
- **"percent"** except in headlines or forms.
- **"pounds,"** or use the abbreviation "lbs." if you must abbreviate. Never use "#."
- **"number,"** or use the abbreviation "No." Never use "#."
- **"inches"** and **"feet,"** or use "in." and "ft."
- **"dollars,"** but do use numerals for exact figures: "Two dollars," but "\$1.95."
- **"plus," "minus,"** and **"equals,"** except in mathematical equations.

Numbers

Numbers should nearly always be spelled out. Use numerals **only in:**

- telephone numbers and addresses
- dates
- exact prices
- recipes
- complex fractions: "half a dollar," but "37½ percent." If your computer cannot render a fraction properly, insert a hyphen between the whole number and the fraction: "37-5/8."
- precise decimals: "*Pi* is 3.1416," but "I walked three tenths of a mile."
- large numbers that would otherwise be too cumbersome to read: "One mile equals 5,280 feet."

Always spell out any numbers or figures which begin a sentence. If misreading a number would cause serious problems, it is often best to spell it out, too. *[continued on page 13]*

Style [continued from page 12]

These rules do not apply to headlines, where space is at a premium. It is standard practice to abbreviate within headlines whenever and however possible, using commas, hyphens, and slashes as necessary. **BOY, 12 DROWNS, 6 OTHERS OK** is a perfectly acceptable headline.

Uniform styles

Many readers have commented on how good *Atzmi Uvsari* looks. The secret is uniform styles. To keep by-lines, captions, subheads, call-outs, and page continuations uniform throughout each issue, create an example of each style on a “style sheet,” then copy and paste, altering the text as needed.

Our subhead style, as in “Uniform Styles” above, is a good example. The centered, bold face text is surrounded above and below by a reduced-height, blank line. Font and size match the rest of the article.

Pro’s sometimes select a quote from an article and reprint it, in larger type, separated from the rest of the text by lines or white space. Such “call-outs” attract the reader’s attention, fill gaps, and add visual interest. They should be formatted uniformly from page to page within a document.

Graphics

Readers and editors see graphics very differently. Illustrations accompanying text in books, newspapers, and magazines may indeed add to the reader’s understanding. But to an editor, the most important functions of graphics are to break up text, fill up space, and add balance to the page.

Visual balance is a very complex subject,

but here are a few basic principles:

- Think of the page as divided vertically and horizontally into four, six, or eight sectors.
- Balance sectors diagonally across the page, or across a two-page spread.
- Dark, brightly-colored., or hard-edged objects are said to be “weighty.”
- Light-colored, gray, or fuzzy objects are considered to be “light.”
- Small, weighty objects, balance large, light ones (like blocks of text).
- Distance away from the center of a page (or a two-page spread) increases the relative weight of an object.
- Similar objects next to each other or stacked above each other vertically stop all eye movement and ruin the balance.

Paragraphs

A “widow” is a line of text at the end of a paragraph, that fills less than a third of the line. An “orphan” is a final or initial line which has become separated from its paragraph, across a page or column break. A subhead near the bottom of a column is also an orphan. Avoid orphans and widows!

Columns can also cause problems. If you use too many subheads, it becomes impossible to avoid a “tombstone”—two subheads or headlines next to each other horizontally.

- Change the font or type size in the text.
- Change the margins or column size.
- Eliminate some subheads.
- Redistribute text with graphics or call-outs.

Don’t worry if your style isn’t perfect at first. Good style must evolve slowly. ☆

From IAJGS

Vilna District Research and Record Translations

by Joel Ratner

Coordinator, 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 uезд [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 for various years also exist for the following towns in the Vilna district:

Antakalnis	Mikhalishok	Shirvint
Boguslavishok Ciobiskis	Malat	Snipishok
Gedrovitz	Musnik	Vilna
Gelvan	Nemencine	Vilna Uезд.

Vital records [birth, marriage, death, and divorce] also exist for many towns:

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

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 contact Joel Ratner at Joelrat@aol.com. ☆

SPECIAL FEATURE:

THE ISRAEL GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY'S MAIN GENEALOGICAL PROJECTS

Prepared for the 24th IAJGS International Conference on Jewish Genealogy

Jerusalem, 4 - 9 July 2004

by Mathilde A. Tagger

The conference organizing committee has decided to undertake several projects of indexing sources, to be ready for the IAJGS conference. It is hoped that these projects will constitute an important addition to the existing genealogical resources that are found in Israel in general and in her capital Jerusalem, in particular. I hope with all my heart that the present summary of these special activities will prompt you to want to come to Jerusalem even more and to participate in this fabulous conference.

The Memorials to the Vanished Communities

– Prepared by Ellen Stepak, Chana Furman, Rose Feldman and other Volunteers.

Memorials to the Vanished Communities are found primarily in the cemeteries of Israel, particularly in that of Holon (near Tel Aviv), which contains some 300 monuments.

Although they are generally grouped in certain areas, one also finds them scattered throughout. These monuments commemorate one or several communities, sometimes of an entire region or country, such as the Memorial to Hungary on which the names of all the Jewish communities of that country are engraved. The names of tiny villages, otherwise forgotten by history, are sometimes found in the inscriptions.

The most impressive monument is certainly the one dedicated to the memory of the community of Wlodawa (Poland) and the surrounding localities, in memory of victims of the death camp of Sobibor. The memorial may appear as a forest planted in memory of the victims. This is the theme chosen for Belgium, Estonia, France and Latvia.

These memorials were erected with profound affection in memory of loved ones

who disappeared during the Shoah, martyrs - victims of pogroms who found their deaths without the right to even the simplest grave. Numerous monuments are superlative. Moved by intense emotions, the architects were able to transfer them into a remarkable creation. There is one common feature – they all possess an urn containing ashes brought back from the collective killing fields or from the death camps scattered throughout Eastern Europe. On some monuments, one can find a list of names of the victims engraved. The majority of these memorials are dedicated to the communities of Poland, the Ukraine, Lithuania and Belarus.

The Israeli associations of people from a same community or region, known by their Yiddish name of *Landsmanschaften*, each year organize commemorative ceremonies at their respective memorials. However, the number of survivors

originating in these communities is diminishing year by year, so that over the past several years, these annual commemorations have become more and more rare.

The database will be published on a CD-ROM in time for the International Conference of [continued on page 16]

Projects [continued from page15]

July 2004, and for each memorial it will include: one or more color photographs, the names of the communities as they are inscribed in Hebrew letters with a transliteration in Latin letters, the modern names, based upon WHERE ONCE WE WALKED¹ and upon ancient maps accompanied by the name of the province or *gubernia*, and of the country according to actual boundaries, the date of the annual commemorations, the exact coordinates to the memorial (the name of the cemetery, the zone and the section) and a comments column.

At this time, a list of some 1,300 indexed communities can be found on our Association Internet site:

www.isragen.org/ROS/mvc-1.html

HELKAT MEHOKEK - Translation and index of 8,000 inscriptions from tombstones on the Mount of Olives

Prepared by Mathilde Tagger

HELKAT MEHOKEK (Deut. 33:21) is the title of four booklets published in Jerusalem between the years 1906 and 1913 by Rabbi Asher Leib Brisk, a Yeshiva student. In 1913, these booklets were bound into a single volume containing the Hebrew tombstone inscriptions of 8,000 graves of the Mount of Olives Cemetery in Jerusalem, the most ancient Jewish cemetery in the world. This work has been entirely translated, transcribed, indexed and computerized in a searchable and easily useable database, which will be published on CD-ROM.

The 8,000 inscriptions cover the period between 1740-1906, and are classified by parcels and rows, with certain parcels being reserved for the tombs of the sages. These tombstone inscriptions include those of men,

women and children, of whom 1,500 are Sephardim and 6,500 Ashkenazim.

In addition to family names, first names, first names of father, dates of death and burial, this database is enriched by the places of origin or birth. The latter especially mention the communities of the Ottoman Empire and North Africa for the Sephardic Jews and the communities of Eastern Europe for the Ashkenazic Jews

A guide for Sephardic and Oriental research in Israel

– Prepared by Yitzchak Kerem and Mathilde Tagger

The aim of this project is to cover all the information available in Israel on Sephardic and Oriental Jews. These are Jews originating in Arab and Muslim countries and countries of the Far East.

The research institutes, archives, libraries, museums, associations for new immigrants (*olim*), Sephardic Communal Councils, funeral societies of ethnic non-Ashennazi (*Hevrot Kadisha*), *kibbutzim* and community villages (*moshavim*) founded by groups of Sephardic and/or Oriental immigrants are carefully inventoried.

Documents relative to the Sephardic and Oriental Jews are found in the following archives: The Jewish National and University Library, the Ben Zvi Institute, the Central Archives of the History of the Jewish People, the Municipal Archives of the City of Jerusalem, Yad Tabenkin and the Research Center for Italian Judaism. This study will also treat various aspects of genealogical research in Israel, for example, Sephardic and Oriental Jews in the Shoah. The facts will be grouped by country and will cover the entire Mediterranean Basin, the Balkans, Bukhara (Uzbekistan), [Continued on page 17]

Projects [continued from page 16]

Georgia (Asia) Afghanistan, Iran, India, Northern Europe and the Caribbean region.

Finally, the alphabets in Hebrew, Arabic, Ottoman Turk, Greek, Cyrillic, Judeo-Arab and Judeo-Spanish will be added to facilitate the work of the researcher. A general index will be included. This innovative project will supply material in addition to that in books, articles, discussion groups and Internet sites.

Index of families and personal archives found in the Central Archives of the History of the Jewish People (CAHJP) in Jerusalem

– Prepared by Suzanne Solomon and Mathilde Tagger

This project is the result of the detailed analysis of diverse collections making up the Central Archives, analysis executed by the Archives Committee.

The Central Archives of the History of the Jewish People holds some two thousand private and family archives. The detailed computerized index of this rich collection will furnish all the important genealogical information such as names of family, first names, places of origin, the periods covered, the types of archives, the genealogical tree included, the language of the documents, etc. This index will also be put on the CD-ROM.

The last population census ordered by Sir Moses Montefiore in 1875

– Prepared by Meriam Haringman and Jean-Pierre Stroweis

The population census of the Jews residing in the Holy Land in 1875 is the last of a series of five censuses ordered by Sir Moses Montefiore and carried out in the course of the 19th century, starting in 1839. This is the

first time in history that one of these censuses has been entirely deciphered, transcribed, translated, indexed and computerized.

For the Ashkenazi part of the population, the census was done according to Kolel (Talmudic school). These *Kolelim* (plural of Kolel) carry the names of the communities where the students originally came from, such as: Minsk, Volhynia, Vilna, Karlin, Zamut-Courland, Germany-Holland, and Austria, but also according to specific groups such as Prushim² and Habad³. The Sephardic and Oriental population were enumerated *en bloc* without any distinction or subdivision. There are also lists of community leaders, of widows and of orphans. It is interesting to note that some students worked at the same time as they studied.

The personal details included: family name, first name, age, date of immigration (*Aliyah*), place of birth (Eastern Europe for the Ashkenazi community while for the Sephardic Jews, North Africa, the Ottoman Empire, Iraq, Georgia and other countries of the Orient), family status, the first name of the spouse, the number of children and their ages, profession, financial state. Notes include details not covered under the other headings.

This project, in the form of an easily searchable database, will be ready in July 2004 and published on the Conference CD-ROM.

Notes:

1. WHERE ONCE WE WALKED, by Amdur Sack, Sallyann and Gary Mokotoff. Avotaynu, 2003. 2nd edition.
2. Prushim, also known as Mitnagdim, is the sect opposed to Hasidism.
3. Habad is another term used for the Lubavitch Hasidim. ☆

In Italian Dust

by *Andrée Brooks*

VENOSA, Italy — Amid rolling pasture land about 180 miles southeast of Rome, dust is flying. Workers carefully dig through crumbling sandstone deep beneath the surface of a grassy hillside. Stout wooden beams support a makeshift entrance and a labyrinth of newly exposed passageways that lead into an ancient underground maze. A loopy string of construction lamps illuminate the way. An excited archaeologist leads a visitor to a wooden board protecting a discovery made just the previous afternoon. It is a seven-branched candelabra, the original symbol of the Jews, carved into a slab found at a burial niche. The carving is so sharp and clean, it might have been completed yesterday.

The quality and clarity foreshadow even more important finds likely to come. The catacomb is only one of dozens of Jewish sites, artifacts, documents, rare books and manuscripts being discovered, analyzed and restored in southern Italy and Sicily. This work by scholars and government authorities is beginning to flesh out the largely unknown story of vibrant yet long-lost communities of Jews that inhabited the region from Roman times to the end of the Middle Ages.

Jews were expelled from southern Italy, known then as the Kingdom of Naples, in the 16th century. Few returned even after the ban was lifted in the 18th century.

Historians associated with the excavation believe the catacomb may be the largest ever found in Western Europe. Hundreds of niches have already been cleared, the bones

either looted or reburied according to ritual law. What is striking is that the inscriptions on the burial slabs found to date are almost totally in Greek. There is little or no Hebrew. When Hebrew is used, the characters mostly spell out Greek or Latin words. Both Greek and Latin were commonly used in that part of Italy at the time. This suggests an assimilated life for the Jews who may have lived here outside Venosa between the third and seventh centuries [Common Era]. “Our Jews were not separated from everyone else in those early centuries,” said Dr. Cesare Colafemmina, visiting professor of Hebrew and Hebraic literature at the University of Calabria.

Documents indicate that Emperor Titus brought 5,000 captives to the region after the destruction of the Second Temple in Jerusalem in C.E. 70, Dr. Colafemmina said. But hundreds more are thought to have settled here before and after that time, simply because it was a prosperous crossroads of maritime trade. And Jews played a vital role in Mediterranean commerce. By the end of the fourth century many towns were dominated by Jews. They even became political and community leaders, he said.

There has been limited interest in the area by most Jewish scholars because virtually none of today’s Jews understand their ties to these people, said Dr. Yom Tov Assis, professor of medieval Jewish history at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and academic chairman [*continued on page 19*]

Italian dust [continued from page 18]

of its International Center for the Teaching of Jewish Civilization. This oversight has been so even though historians consider that some the Jews of southern Italy were the ancestors of the earliest Jewish settlers in Northern and Eastern Europe. All too often, Dr. Assis said, “we favor Jewish history only from a base of our known family history or something that happened in our own day.”

So the current work is being led mostly by non-Jewish Italian scholars who view it as an integral part of the early history of the Italian peninsula and pan-European trade. confirmed by the oft-quoted words of Rabbeinu Tam, a grandson of Rashi, a famous 11th-century French rabbi.

Its scholarly distinction is “From out of Bari the Torah will go forth,” Rabbi Tam noted, paraphrasing scripture, “and the word of God from Taranto.” Bari and Taranto were important ports in the region.

And it is yielding fascinating dividends. For instance there is a first-century travertine tombstone now in the basement of the National Archaeological Museum of Naples, yet another example of vibrant Jewish life here during the first millennium. It was found in 1996 in the museum’s storehouses by Dr. Giancarlo Lacerenza of the Oriental Institute in Naples and a specialist in ancient Near Eastern history. Its emotionally charged Latin inscription is now regarded by scholars as the first archaeological corroboration of the plight of the Jewish captives being herded by the Romans into Italy from Jerusalem in the late first century.

This is the headstone of Claudia Aster, a 25-year-old Jew brought to the area, probably as a girl, and sold as a household slave. The inscription reads: “Claudia Aster, captive from Jerusalem. Tiberius Claudius

Proculus, imperial freedman, took care of this epitaph. I ask you to make sure through the law that you take care that no one casts down my inscription.”

Addressed in the plural to all inhabitants of the area, or travelers passing through, Dr. Lacerenza said, it sounded like an elaborate appeal for the protection of the inscription. Although such appeals have been found on other Roman tombstones, it is possible that Claudia did not want history to forget that she and her people had been taken there as captives. And her Roman master may have honored her wishes, possibly because he fell in love with her or even married her.

Dr. Lacerenza said that Aster may have been a Latin or Greek version of the Jewish name Esther. Claudia, say other historians, would have been the name given to her because she was a member of the household of someone named Claudius.

At the National Library in Naples, in the grandeur of the Palazzo Reale, new interest apparently is being taken in creating public displays for its formerly stored and largely unknown collection of early Hebrew manuscripts and incunabula, possibly the largest in Italy. Many of these were originally acquired from the Farnese Library, the personal library of Pope Paul III (1468-1549). Naples was a major center of Jewish book production during the 15th century. Southern Italy had previously claimed pride as one of the earliest centers of Jewish learning in Europe, making it an obvious location for such treasures.

Indications of the affluence of early Jewish life in Sicily abound, especially in Siracusa, formerly the ancient Greek port of Siracuse. Land records show that luxurious homes were owned by Jews. There is a newly restored mikvah, or ritual bath, in the old Jewish quarter that is divided into five

[Continued on page 20]

Italian dust [continued from page 18]

separate baths, rather than a communal pool, as was customary.

Two baths are hidden within private alcoves, which may have been for those who could afford the luxury. Still, all five are interconnected and tied into a common source of flowing water, as required by Jewish law. Archaeologists say the style suggests a late Roman or Byzantine origin.

About 70 miles northwest of Siracusa, in the mountain village of Agira, a holy ark of intricately carved stone, dated 1454, has been taken from a site that used to be a synagogue and moved inside the adjacent Norman church for preservation and viewing until the site itself can be restored. The ark is the repository for the Torah scrolls. Dr. Assis said it was of Catalan origin, possibly fashioned locally by Jews fleeing Catalonia during the persecutions of the mid-15th Century. Sicily was also ruled at this time by Catalan monarchs, but they were more tolerant than their counterparts on the Spanish mainland. The island was an obvious haven since it was prosperous and long favored by merchant Jews from all over the Mediterranean. Scholars said an ark as old as this was a rare find. Arks were typically made of wood, and a stone example is considered the most impressive and most scarce. ☆

To all our contributors:

Thanks for making this our biggest and best issue ever – twice as large as any previous edition. The quality and quantity of your submissions just keeps improving. Keep up the good work and *shep naches!*
– Editor

In our mailbox:

This Year in Jerusalem!

Dear Friends of the Jerusalem Conference,

We have been asked many times how you can help support the conference, even though you may not be able to attend.

One of the major ways you can help is by publicizing this wonderful conference. If you are affiliated with any Jewish organization, you can urge them to feature the conference in whatever media is available, be it a newsletter, a website, a bulletin board or even through a mass e-mailing.

As in the case of most Conferences, Jerusalem 2004 does not have a surplus of funding. Your local JGS or SIG might consider underwriting the costs of a conference speaker or archivist.

Alternately, a contribution to the J2004 general fund would be greatly appreciated! Naturally, individual contributions, no matter how modest, would be meaningful. For procedures and other questions please contact us:

- Alon Ginzberg along@yit.co.il
- Martha Levinson Lev-Zion, Ph.D.
martha@bgumail.bgu.ac.il
- The 24th IAJGS International Conference on Jewish Genealogy, July 4-9, 2004
www.jewishgen.org/jerusalem2004

We want to thank you for your interest in the 24th AIJGS Conference of Jewish Genealogy in Jerusalem during the week of 4 - 9 July 2004.

Martha

Always glad to help out! – Editor

President's Message:

Szarvas and (C)zeisler

by Robert Neu

Yes, we all have some names like Weisz, Klein, Schwartz, Goldberg, Levi, Steiner, Schlesinger or whatever as surnames on our family trees. However, we also have some like Szarvas and (C)zeisler, which for the longest time we think we are the only one to have. We always need to be reminded, that "our" ancestors are anything but "ours". We share them with many other people. We don't need to go back to Noah, Abraham, or David to have common ancestors.

If you venture in the Family History Center in Salt Lake City, on the wall of the main floor there is a pedigree chart that shows that President Bush, Milton Romney (now Governor of Massachusetts), Franklin D. Roosevelt, Oliver W. Holmes and some others, have a common ancestor named William Hutchinson (1586-1682.)

As Jews we often think that does not apply to us. Many who are Holocaust survivors, or their descendants, firmly believe that they must be the only ones to have survived.

In a letter dated May 1948, one of the surviving brothers of my father, who was the only one who stayed in Hungary after the war, wrote in part: "... our father, our mother, and brother Gyuri are no more. Uncle Danny lived through the trials of Auschwitz and came back, but as a broken man. Our cousin Klara is in Kaposvar. That is all that I know. Nobody is looking for me, and I am not looking after anyone either." Many survivors shared the same reluctance in trying to find any surviving relatives.

In a similar way, those Jews who came to the United States earlier, say as early as the 1880's, believe that no relatives of theirs from the old country have survived the Holocaust. They too believe that they are the only ones. To them, clearly, it is most unlikely that they still have relatives in or from the old country!

I have shared these points of view, though with some hope beyond hope, I posted my family names on the JewishGen website. With so many Weisz, Schlesinger, Klein, and Steiner descendants in the world, somehow one or more of them must be my relatives. They would manifest themselves, and help me further my line to whoever in the distant past. Well, it hasn't happened yet, and it may never happen.

I shouldn't complain. I have relatives that I know of in Hungary, Israel, France, Slovakia, Australia, England, Canada, and New Zealand among others. These are relatives I do know about, and I am sure there are many more I don't know about.

That's why, when I do research on some records, I don't copy only the data of my known relatives, but also those with the same surnames. I feel that if I could just go back one or two generations, they would connect with my people. This is particularly true for Jews, at least Hungarian Jews.

Well they do. This is why I posted my names on JGFF and the Family Tree of the Jewish People. This includes Weisz, Schlesinger, Steiner, but also Szarvas and Czeisler. Did you ever know anybody named Szarvas (Sarvas, Sarvasch, etc) or Czeisler (Ceisler, Zeisler, Ceiszler)? I haven't. Were they just names from the past? Well not quite. *[Continued on page 22]*

**We are all in it together.
Somewhere, sometime my
ancestors are also yours.**

(C)zeisler [continued from page21]

Sarvas has become Spier. As I said, I didn't find anybody, but others found me. In September 2000, Dan Spier from Venice, Florida contacted me about the Szarvases he had. He knew where they came from, and the first names of the members of his family that had left Hungary in the 1880's. Well I had those names as well. I took him two generations further back, as I had the information about the parents and grandparents, who are also mine. He told me that his mother had said that they were the only descendants from that lineage.

In October 2000 I was contacted by Jerry Zeisler from Virginia, about his lineage. His went back to Eger, Hungary and so did mine. I had the names he was looking for in my file. Furthermore, though they were in Eger, Hungary at the same time as mine, they went back to the Miskolc, Hungary area the same as mine did. We don't quite connect, but to me it is enough to declare that his ancestors are mine as well. Records for one more generation would be helpful to prove it, but oh well!

Please note, there is no magic to this. Just gather in all the needles you find in the haystack. If it doesn't help you immediately, it may help someone else. We are all in it together. Somewhere, sometime my ancestors are also yours. "My Flesh and My Bone." It is a flesh and a bone we should be proud of. – Robert Neu ☆

Contact us:

UJGS website: www.rootsweb.com/~utjgs/

President: Robert Neu

Program Chair: Rochelle Kaplan

Editor: Don Fallick

WHO ARE WE?

UTAH JEWISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY is a non-profit organization, organized to bring together all Utah people interested in pursuing Jewish family history. We welcome **all** people of Jewish heritage, ancestry, and others who are interested in Jewish genealogy, regardless of faith.

UJGS Meets Bi-Monthly at 7:00 PM on the third Tuesday of the month at Congregation Kol Ami synagogue in Salt Lake City, Utah (2425 Heritage Way).

Remaining meetings scheduled for 2004 are: May 18, July 20, and September 14. Each meeting includes a presentation by a recognized expert on some aspect of Jewish genealogy. We are small and informal, but we have a lot of talent!

Zip tips

Delayed naturalizations

by Marilyn Zipser

Can't find someone in 1920 census? They might still be in the military records from World War I.

In the 1930 census there is a column asking for veteran status. Even if men under forty-five (in 1918) didn't serve, they may have had to register for the draft. There were three registrations:

- June 5, 1917 – for all men between twenty-one and thirty-one.
- June 5, 1918 – all becoming twenty-one since the first registration
- September 12, 1918 -- for men aged eighteen through forty-five. (Immigrant ancestor may be here!) ☆