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President's Shpiel by Kim Sheintal

At a two-hour Jewish Genealogy 101 course that I taught in January, the importance of using the JewishGen Family Finder to look for others researching similar surnames was discussed. I did not expect to hear progress reports from students. One month later, a woman came up to me and said "thank you" and smiled. She told me that she took the Genealogy 101 course and soon after started using the JewishGen Family Finder. In that one month, this woman got hooked on JewishGen and found someone on the JewishGen Family Finder who gave her an extensive family tree of their shared family. She was excited to see me and to tell me her good fortune. And I was thrilled to hear that I got someone excited about tracing her family.

Allen County Public Library

The Genealogy Center and the rest of the Allen County Public Library opened their new facility on Saturday, January 27, 2007. It was a Grand Opening! More than two thousand people came through the Genealogy Center in the first five hours it was open. The new Allen County Public Library is really something to see! Indeed, it is a must see for anyone interested in libraries and family history. From the new café to the expanded computer labs, from the building-wide wireless connectivity to the amazing amounts of printed materials on browsing shelves, the entire library is warm and inviting.

For more information, read the newsletter *Genealogy Gems: News from the Fort Wayne Library* (No. 35, January 31, 2007). The Allen County Library in Fort Wayne, Indiana is a member of the JSG of SW FL and has on file all issues of the JGS of SW FL newsletters.

Jewish Genealogical Society of Southwest Florida

MISHPOCHOLOGY

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Program

Sunday, March 18, 2007 (1:00 PM)

Flanzer JCC/YMCA, 582 S. McIntosh Road, Sarasota

Genealogy in the Round:

Share Successes and Helpful Hints

Share and learn from the wise among us. Come! We'll talk!
For more information, Kim Sheintal 921-1433 or klapshein@aol.com

International Conference on Jewish Genealogy

I am delighted to announce that registration is open for the 27th IAJGS International Conference on Jewish Genealogy. The conference is scheduled for July 15-20, 2007 (Tamuz 29-Av 5, 5767) at the Hilton Salt Lake City Center. There will be 120 sessions – many first time presentations! Please visit the conference website at <http://www.slc2007.org> to register, sign-up for breakfasts with the experts, SIG luncheons, the gala banquet, book rooms at the Hilton, plan your travel, review tours that are available before and after the conference, read the FAQs, and learn more about what the conference and Salt Lake City have to offer. We will keep you informed as the website is updated with additional information, including scheduled speakers, computer workshops, and much, much more. Check the "Breaking News" left-hand button on the conference website every Friday for new information regarding the conference.

Remember to sign-up for the Conference Discussion Group on JewishGen to post your questions and learn more about the conference at <http://www.lyris.jewishgen.org/listmanager/>. (Remember you must be a registered JewishGen user in order to subscribe.)

The conference will include a special showing of "Lives Remembered: A Shtetl Through A Photographer's Eye". This photographic museum exhibit has been displayed internationally. It depicts a vibrant and modern life in an Eastern European shtetl from 1898-1939.

Conference Co-Chairs Hal Bookbinder and Michael Brenner, and the entire conference committee, look forward to sharing this exciting experience with all of you.

Jan Meisels Allen, Registration Chair

27th IAJGS International Conference on Jewish Genealogy

Nisan is Jewish Genealogy Month

March 20 thru April 18, 2007

Since 1999, Avotaynu has promoted Jewish Genealogy Month. Starting in 2007, IAJGS is taking over the promotion of this special month. If you would like a poster to help promote this event, call Kim Sheintal at 921-1433.

Wonderful World of Websites

http://news.yahoo.com/s/nm/20070110/wr_nm/britain_passengers_dc_1

People looking to track ancestors who emigrated from British ports are now able to search online passenger lists of the ships that carried them to new lands.

http://www.collectionscanada.ca/archivianet/02011802_e.html

This is a new database for Canadian immigration records.

<http://www.zabasearch.com/>

This is a free people search & public information search engine.

<http://www.familytreemagazine.com/forms/download.html>

This website has free downloadable genealogy forms.

<http://home.ptd.net/~NIKKI/jewish.htm>

Jewish Genealogy Mine website has links for Jewish genealogy.

<http://home.ptd.net/~NIKKI/holocaust.htm>

This website has links related to the Holocaust.

<http://www.jewishfamilyhistory.org/>

This is the website for the Jewish Family History Foundation.

<http://www.raogk.org/>

Random acts of genealogical kindness is based upon people helping people. The volunteers of Random Acts of Genealogical Kindness (RAOGK) have agreed at least once per month to do a research task in their local area as an act of kindness. The cost to you would be reimbursing the volunteer for his/her expenses in fulfilling your request (video tape, copy fees, etc.). This is not a FREE service.

<http://www.usgenweb.com/>

The US GenWeb project offers a free genealogy and family history lookup source by a group of volunteers for genealogical research in every county and every state in the United States. This project is non-commercial and fully committed to free genealogy access for everyone.

Example: You want someone to look up an obituary in Cook County in Illinois.

- Go to the US GenWeb website at:
<http://www.usgenweb.com/projects/index.shtml>
- Click on Illinois.
- Select Cook County and click Go.
- Click on Lookups.
- Click on [OBITUARY Lookup Researchers for Cook County IL](#).
- Then select a researcher and click on his/her name. You are given this person's e-mail. Send this person an e-mail with your request (look up a specific person's obituary for a specific date in Cook County) and soon you will hear that this person will lookup your request and get back to you.

www.obitcentral.com

Obituary Central is an obituary database for finding obituaries and performing cemetery searches.

An Unsung Hero:

How Paul Shapiro's Vision and Determination Moved Nations

<http://www.iajgs.org/echo/EchoJune2006.doc>

On May 17 an event took place that will benefit all Jewish genealogists, and, indeed, many non-Jewish genealogists, as well. On that date, in Luxembourg, the eleven countries which comprise the International Commission of the International Tracing Service (ITS) unanimously agreed to permit member countries to obtain copies of ITS material and make this wealth of information, said to include information on 17 million individuals, publicly available in their own countries. These countries include every country represented by the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies (IAJGS) and the overwhelming share of Jewish genealogists around the world.

If there is one common factor in the family history searches of Jewish genealogists it is the frustration faced in obtaining information on the fate of family members in the Holocaust. Even those researchers, whose immediate family members left Europe well before the Holocaust, know that other family members remained, whether or not their names are known. For those with closer family ties to Holocaust victims, the search has been more immediate and often painful.

Over the last few decades publicly available information on Holocaust victims and survivors has expanded exponentially through the work of Yad Vashem, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) and JewishGen, as well as many specialized research groups. However, the mother lode of information held in Arolsen, Germany by ITS remained impenetrable. Managed by the International Committee of the Red Cross and nominally under the supervision of the International Commission, the Swiss management of ITS resisted all attempts to access its holdings. This was true even though compensation claims for forced labor, and property and bank seizures required exactly the type of information held by ITS.

Beginning about five years ago, one individual, Paul Shapiro, Director of the Center for Advanced Historical Studies at the USHMM, began his struggle to change this situation. First, he had to convince his own government, and, in particular, the Department of State that this issue was worthy of attention even though it was certain to cause friction with Germany, the country which paid 100 percent of ITS costs and which was adamant against "opening" ITS. When direct efforts through the International Council failed to yield results, he turned to the International Task Force for Holocaust Education that was friendlier to this initiative. Gradually obtaining allies, such as France and the United Kingdom, the "issue" became less of "an American idea" and more of a multilateral European effort. Finally, as two of the last opponents, Belgium and Italy, ceased to object, Germany became the sole holdout. With growing international pressure and a change of government, Germany finally joined the international consensus. On April 18, standing on the stage of an auditorium at the USHMM, the German Minister of Justice announced that, at upcoming the May 17 meeting of the Council, Germany would support "opening" of ITS and that access to ITS material could begin even before formal international ratification would take place.

After a five-year struggle, all of us will have an opportunity to search for closure and to determine the fate of our family members. For this, we have one person to thank, Paul Shapiro, for his struggle to develop the international consensus that made this possible.

Jewish Genealogy-Reclaiming our Heritage and Preserving our Past

Dr. Norman L. Weinberg, Executive Coordinator

Poland Jewish Cemeteries Restoration Project

Jewish genealogists worldwide are actively engaged in recovering their past, filling in family trees with records of the living and the departed, including records of survivors and the millions murdered in the Holocaust. Who cannot be touched, shed tears or offer up a prayer when we come across another name or a whole family group wiped out during those terrible years? Genealogists can be proud of their accomplishments. By reconstructing our past from these records, many thousands of genealogists have brought us closer to our roots, a legacy we in turn can pass on to our children. But what of our physical heritage? What of our ancestral cemeteries left behind after the Shoah, with few if any resident Jews to tend to these holy places? Why should we care?

Before World War II, an estimated 1200-1400 Jewish cemeteries existed in Poland. Today, they are in a devastated state, caused mainly by the German forces as they entered Poland. After the War, under the Soviets, Jewish cemeteries fared little better, becoming farms, parks, roadways, building sites and garbage dumps.

In May 2001, a group of Jewish descendants formed the Ozarow Cemetery Restoration Project (OCRP) headed by Norman Weinberg, out of the realization that their ancestral cemetery was in devastated condition, with only about 60 monuments left out of hundreds, walls destroyed and the grounds overgrown with the debris of 60 years of neglect and abuse. We began the tasks of assembling a group of experts, raising the necessary funds and restoring, as much as possible, this all but forgotten cemetery. Key to success of the project was the team of Project Coordinators, both Jews and Poles. Early on, we made very important contacts with the mayor and priest of Ozarow. They were enthusiastic and provided much support throughout. The OCRP raised the money needed from generous Ozarowers in many countries and we began the project in June 2001 with the cemetery cleanup. Much to our surprise, we discovered many more monuments hidden under the debris of 60 years, toppled over and buried, not by human hand but by nature. Among the monuments was one in perfect condition, that of Moishe Aaron Safir, the grandfather of Moishe Gold, our Canadian Project Coordinator. Moishe Gold is named after this grandfather, bringing us to understand that those buried there are parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts and cousins. Our obligation was clear. Further surprises as the work progressed: near the remnants of the old wall workers discovered two very old monuments dated 1700 and 1715 and the mayor told us of many more monuments that had been taken away by the Germans near the close of the War to a farm on the banks of the Vistula to be used as fortifications against the Soviets. These were returned to the Ozarow cemetery and what were only 60 monuments in the beginning became close to 200!

We completed the restoration work on time, just 5 months after the project started. Over 500 townspeople greeted our tour bus on Oct. 15th as we arrived for the dedication ceremony, including town dignitaries and citizens, embassy officials and news media. The mayor and priest greeted us and the President of Poland and the Israeli ambassador sent letters of congratulations. Prayers were said by the priest and by Rabbi

Becker at the site of the mass grave, where townspeople had placed candles and bouquets of flowers.

Since that time all the monuments have been photographed and have been translated and with the assistance of efforts of JRI-Poland we hope to determine most if not all of the names of those buried there. This and other genealogical information was presented to the JewishGen Worldwide Burial Registry project (JOWBR).

Based on the success of the Ozarow model, the Poland Jewish Cemeteries Restoration Project (PJCRP) was born (www.pjcrp.org). Its objectives are restoring and preserving the still devastated Jewish cemeteries of Poland; documenting and publishing genealogical information on the internet; and, educating youth, both Jews and Poles in the Holocaust. The PJCRP has the support of the US and Polish Governments, the US Commission for the Preservation of America's Heritage Abroad, the Rabbinic Commission on Cemeteries, the AJC, the National Polish American-Jewish American Council, the Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw), the Foundation for Preservation of Jewish Heritage in Poland (Warsaw), as well as many more organizations. At this time, the PJCRP has been involved in restoring 15 cemeteries with another 30 cemeteries in various stages.

Why restore the Jewish cemeteries of Poland? We do this because our ancestors are buried there and we do this in memory of the six million Jews murdered in the Holocaust, three million Polish Jews among them who had no halachic burial. We remember them in our prayers, in Holocaust museums, memorials, books, the arts and educational programs. This is as it should be. But for the Holocaust, they and unborn their descendants would have been caring for their cemeteries. Now the obligation falls to us. By saving and restoring the cemeteries and memorialize the thousands of mass graves, we can do for them what they cannot...the greatest of mitzvot.

We learned that acts of tikun olam (repairing the world) do tend to perpetuate. But most importantly, we the "children" have not forgotten. We have returned to restore our sacred ancestral cemeteries, so the dead can rest in peace and by fostering respect and reconciliation, to help bring a measure of shalom into the world.

Jewish genealogists are uniquely positioned to help. As members of local and international associations, in SIG's, landsmanschaften and other organizations, Jewish genealogists can take the additional very meaningful step in reconnecting and reclaiming their heritage by restoring and preserving their ancestral cemeteries. For Jews this is both the greatest of mitzvot and an obligation.

You can help. Sign the Petition to the German Government at <http://www.petitiononline.com/1200des/petition.html> asking the German Government to take responsibility and pay their fair share of the \$200 million needed to restore the Jewish cemeteries they destroyed in Poland and protect and memorialize the thousands of mass graves they created.

Dr. Norman L. Weinberg will present a program at the Jewish Genealogical Society of Southwest Florida meeting on Holocaust Remembrance Day.

Sunday, April 15, 2007

1:00 PM

Flanzer JCC/YMCA (582 S. McIntosh Rd., Sarasota)

Genealogy Guidebooks Published by IAJGS Member Jewish Genealogical Societies

for a brief description, how to order and the cost

<http://www.iajgs.org/publications.html>

Capital Collections: Resources For Jewish Genealogy in the Washington, D.C. Area

Author or Editor: Sharlene Kranz, Editor

Published by: Jewish Genealogy Society of Greater Washington (2003)

Beginners And Intermediate Genealogical Workbook

Author or Editor: Compiled and Edited by Sylvia Furshman Nusinov

Published by: JGS Palm Beach County, FL (6th Edition, April 2005)

Genealogical Resources In New York

Author/ Editor: Revised and Edited by Estelle M. Guzik

Published by: Jewish Genealogical Society, Inc (New York City) (2003)

Genealogical Resources within the Jewish Home and Family

Author/Editor: Rosemary Wenzel

Published by: Jewish Genealogical Society of Great Britain (2002)

Getting Started In Jewish Genealogy: A Handbook For Beginners With Supplementary Information For Advanced Research

Author or Editor: Dr. Ronald D. Doctor

Published by: The Jewish Genealogical Society of Oregon (4th edition, 2006)

A Guide to Jewish Genealogy in Germany and Austria

Author/Editor: Thea Sktye and Randol Schoenberg

Published by: Jewish Genealogical Society of Great Britain (2001)

A Guide to Jewish Genealogy in Latvia and Estonia

Author/Editor: Arlene Beare

Published by: Jewish Genealogical Society of Great Britain (2nd edition, 2006)

A Guide to Jewish Genealogy in the United Kingdom

Author/Editor: Rosemary Wenzel

Published by: Jewish Genealogical Society of Great Britain (2006)

A Guide to Jewish Genealogy in Lithuania

Author/Editor: Sam Aaron

Published by: Jewish Genealogical Society of Great Britain (2005)

A Guide to Reading Hebrew Inscriptions and Documents

Author/Editor: Rosemary Wenzel

Published by: Jewish Genealogical Society of Great Britain (2005)

A Guide to Organising your Family History Records

Author/Editor: Rosemary Wenzel

Published by: Jewish Genealogical Society of Great Britain (2004)

Jewish Genealogy Basics and Resource Guide for the San Francisco Bay Area

Authors: Jeremy Frankel, Dana Kurtz, Rosanne Leeson

Published by: San Francisco Bay Area Jewish Genealogical Society (2nd edition, 2005)

Jewish Memorial (Yizkor) Books in the United Kingdom - Destroyed European Communities

Author/Editor: Cyril Fox and Saul Issroff

Published by: Jewish Genealogical Society of Great Britain (2006)

Shalom Israel '07

From April 28-30, 2007, the Sarasota-Manatee Jewish Federation, in partnership with the Kobernick House Catering, will present **Shalom Israel '07**, a local event celebrating Israel's Independence, at the Kobernick-Anchin campus on Honore Ave. in Sarasota. This event will showcase the essence of the State of Israel – the culture, the people, the food – in a family-friendly setting, as well as provide an opportunity for residents of Sarasota and Manatee counties to show their support for the people of Israel. The festivities will include:

- a Kosher Food Court featuring Jewish and Israeli delicacies courtesy of Kobernick House Catering
- jewelry, Judaica and art from local and Israeli vendors
- live entertainment
- activities for children, and more!

Jewish Genealogical Society of Southwest Florida members have been asked to supply some of the volunteers needed for the following shifts:

- Saturday, April 28, 2007 (8:00 PM to 10:30 PM)
- Sunday, April 29, 2007 (8:00 AM to 11:00 AM)
- Sunday, April 29 (11:00 AM to 2:00 PM)
- Sunday, April 29 (2:00 PM to 5:00 PM)

to assist artists and vendors with sales, food sales and service, ticket sales and the children's area – specifically storytellers and local artists to assist children with an tile painting project that will be displayed at Kobernick House in the future. Please call Kim Sheintal at 921-1433 to volunteer.

Yom Hashoah (Holocaust Remembrance Day)

A community memorial service to those who perished in the Holocaust will be held at Temple Emanu-El on Sunday, April 15 at 7:00 PM. The Jewish Genealogical Society will place a poster in the lobby of the Temple to encourage people at the service to submit Pages of Testimony to Yad Vashem. Pages of Testimony forms will be available.

The Names Database - Facts and Figures for the year 2006:

- Over 500,000 names records added to the Central Database of Shoah Victims' Names, which currently holds more than 3.1 names of Holocaust victims. These new names originated from Pages of Testimony and various names lists, including records from the Soviet Extraordinary Commission to Investigate Nazi Crimes (1943-46).
- More than 27,000 new Pages of Testimony received, including some 12,500 from the Russian-speaking sector.
- Almost 3,000 new photos of Holocaust victims received and will be added to the Names Database.
- More than 4,000 updates to information already recorded on Pages of Testimony made, stemming from direct requests to Yad Vashem's Hall of Names.

**Deadline for June issue of Mishpochology is April 1, 2007.
Submit articles to klapshein@aol.com.**