



Etz Chaim

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The Quarterly Journal of the
JEWISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF GREATER ORLANDO

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2089 Cedar Avenue
The Bronx, N.Y.

Photo by: Fritz Maass

**FOR YOUR GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH,
HAVE YOU BEEN BACK TO THE
“OLD NEIGHBORHOOD?”**

See pages 6 and 7

ETZ CHAIM

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Editorial Office

2619 Sweetwater Country Club Drive, Apopka, FL 32712
Jay Schleichkorn, Editor
Phone 407 464-9445, FAX - same
E-mail: PTJay@AOL.com

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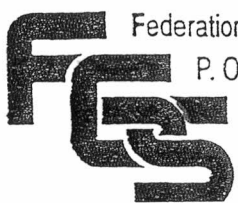
Membership Information:

Regular membership dues (January through December) are \$25.00. Out-of-town membership (more than 50 miles) is \$15.00 per year. Please make checks payable to JGSGO, P.O. Box 941332, Maitland, FL 32794.

JGSGO meetings will be held September through June, usually on the 2nd Tuesday of the month, at 7:00 p.m., primarily in the Senior Lounge, JCC, 851 N. Maitland Ave, Maitland. If a different location is used, adequate notice will be given to members.

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Federation of Genealogical Societies
P. O. Box 830220
Richardson, TX 75083-0220

In this Issue.....

- Pg. 2 - Calendar
- Pg. 3 - From the Acting President- Jerry Kurland
- Pg. 4 - Obituary - Moe Aronson
- Pg. 4 - Bronx Photos and Scenes
- Pg. 5 - How to Identify and Date Photos
- Pg. 6 - Back to Cleveland - Shirley Weiss Michael
- Pg. 6 - Public Access Catalog - Natl. Genealogical Society
- Pg. 7 - Back to the Bronx, NY - Jay Schleichkorn
- Pg. 7 - Back To Belle Harbor NY - Bob Glasser
- Pg. 8 - JGSGO Annual Meeting
- Pg. 8 - JGSGO Meeting of January 14, 2003
- Pg. 9 - Jewishgen Joins Museum of Jewish Heritage
- Pg. 9 - IAJGS Conference, Washington, DC July 20-25, 2003
- Pg. 10 - New Ellis Island Database Search Tools -by Megan Smolenyak
- Pg. 11 - Veterans History Project
- Pg. 12 - Library Report- Herb Adler

CALENDAR:

Future JGSGO Programs + others

Tuesday, March 11: Important Voting Meeting and Final Action on the new By-laws, reports and important announcements, 7:00 p.m. JCC, Senior Lounge

Tuesday, April 8: "How to Identify Your Ancestor's Shell" presented by Greg Kolojeski, JGSGO member since 1993, Senior lounge, JCC, Maitland

Tuesday, May 13: "Do Documents Lie? Records Created By and For Immigrant Ancestors." presented by Gladys Friedman Paulin, CGRS, Certified Genealogical Record Specialist, 7:00 p.m., Senior Lounge, JCC, Maitland

Tuesday, June 10: "Hands-On Computer Research" presented by Carl Migden, JGSGO member, and Greg Gronlund, Director, Genealogy Dept., Orange County Library, 6:30 to 8:45 PM. (Park on the street or in the garage across from the library).

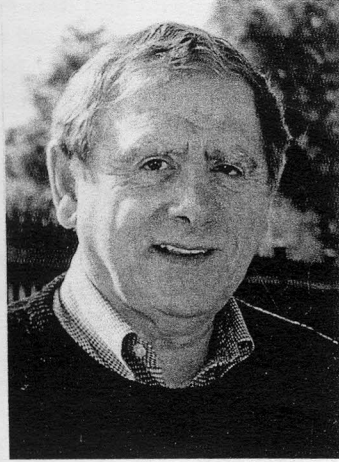
Sunday-Friday, July 20-25, 2003 - The 23rd IAJGS, International Conference on Jewish Genealogy, JW Marriott Hotel, Washington, DC (see page 9)

NOTE: The 2003 Annual Conference of the Federation of Genealogical Societies, hosted by the Florida State Genealogical Societies will be held in Orlando, September 3-6, at the Marriott Renaissance (adjacent to Sea World.)

FROM THE ACTING PRESIDENT.....

Jerry A. Kurland, B.Arch.

I wish to express my appreciation for the opportunity and challenge to redeem JGSGO as a viable, genealogical, dynamic Society that will constructively help its members with hands on active programs, to guide their research for ancestry and historical family findings. JGSGO's



founder Gene Starn, offered me a guide to follow:- "You will need a lot of energy and inertia to get things moving again."

We have the basis of a good team that will work together to plan, stimulate, organize, promote and vitalize members to play a greater role by giving some of their time in order to reciprocate and earn the rewards in their research by start doing something that's interesting as well as genealogically rewarding. Don't ask what my Society can do for me, ask, what can I do for the JGSGO.

We all need positive guidance not negative thoughts to succeed. The need for stimulating and interesting programming can be achieved through a new approach to research which will keep in pace with new technology and an updated directory of web sites that will help target members research with quicker results and with less frustrations and barriers to overcome. Hands on research with the use of a computer is only an instrument that will guide us through that "black hole," in our galaxy of our ancestors throughout the mystical ages of our heritage.

We need to offer our members a personal guidance in their steps to research. 1. Our Maven program is an excellent program if we can get the message across as there is individual guidance available.

2. We need to get the word out to attract new members, to have a new facility to house our growing library, to make better use of our time with more instructional type meetings and perhaps have more round table discussions to open paths in our research as a constructive

wayto socialize.

3. We have to make an arrangement with a library that allows us to use their meeting room, and other programs, several times a year, where wecan use their computers or invest in a few lap tops to hook up.

4. We need to advertise to the Jewish Public that we have a friendly facility (JGSGO) that is available to help people perform genealogical research.

We need to think about a permanent place for our library and perhaps make it into a conference meeting area and library with a few computers so that ideally our meeting would take place, surrounded with reference books, videos and tapes for use on projection equipment.

This may be dreaming but I think it can be achieved as a long term project to provide our members with easy access for research in a familiar environment.

Our JGSGO web site has great potential if we promote it to the advantage of our members. We could have experts in the field to build up our websites for research work, so that each member gets a chance to use a computer to start their research, perhaps in our library.

We need to evaluate the advantages of restricting our Web Site to Members only by requiring an ID and Pass Word. Our web site will have a Starter Kit and show step-by-step how to use selected sites for their research. If we are loosing members to the new breed who are trying to do it on their own from the comfort of their home, we say to them:- "They are missing the face-to-face information you get from our Society with people who has been there or done that. Data is one thing. It's the human background material that is just as important." Therefore, it is time that we develop a concept that will get us into the new age of research. At the same time let our Society be a constant source of knowledge to help people who join our Society to be able to access the records of their ancestors on the Internet, to obtain a quicker handle in direct research in the field and at the same time keep up to date with the latest sites available.

May 2003 give us the wisdom and inspiration to keep JGSGO active, and genealogically rewarding. Looking forward to having your input at our general meeting, Tuesday March 11, where your board will present an agenda and program for your vote on the new Bylaws for the future and success of the JGSGO.

Jerry Kurland

MOSES ARONSON, May 2, 1919-December 28, 2002

"Moe" Aronson of Orlando, 83, a charter member of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Orlando, died Saturday morning (12:15 a.m.) at Florida Hospital, Orlando. Moe was affiliated with Congregation Ohev Shalom and was the Secretary of the JGSGO and its representative to Shalom Orlando. On December 15, at the annual meeting of the JGSGO, Moe was re-elected Secretary.



The Aronsons were congregants of Ohev Shalom. Moe was active in several community and civic groups including the Jewish War veterans Post 759, the JCC 39ers Couples Club, Shalom Orlando, Central Florida's Holocaust Museum, the Orange County Historical Society, the N.Y. U. Alumni Association and the American Institute for Aeronautics and Astronautics.

In an article about the military service of several JGSGO members, Moe indicated he attended New York University's Dan Guggenheim School of Aeronautics, College of Engineering and graduated in mid 1940. He worked at Langley Field, VA (August -December 1940) and at the Glenn L. Martin Plant, Department of Navy Material, Baltimore from January 1941 through June 1942.

Moe wrote "I volunteered for Aviation cadet Training after my employer, (the Navy Department), said they didn't need young men to inspect Martin Aircraft after the company inspectors finished and signed off."

In early 1942, after being rejected for pilot training," Moe then asked for Weather Officer Training. He explained, "I was again rejected because the officer in

charge of the program was my former meteorology professor at New York University. I suspect I was rejected because my weather forecasts in class were more wrong than right. Since I had a Bachelor of Aeronautical Engineering degree, my next choice (which I got) was Aircraft Maintenance Officer." He was commissioned as a 2nd Lt., Army Air Corps.

He was assigned to Mitchell Field, NY then Wright-Patterson Field, Dayton, OH, Laurinburg-Maxton, NC, and overseas with the 9th Air Force. He spent twenty-two months overseas included being stationed in England, then on D-day +30 to Normandy, France as well as Rheims, St. Trond, Belgium, The Rhineland, Fritzier and finally Firtel Geberge, Germany. He was discharged from Rome, (NY) Army Air Field, as a 1st Lt., on December 11, 1945.

After the service, Moe used the GI Bill to earn a masters degree in Aeronautical Engineering at NYU (1950). He also took advantage of the NY State Veterans Benefits to get his Master of Industrial Engineering in 1958, also at NYU.

Moe wrote, "I met my future wife through my girlfriend in 1937, they were friends. On my return from service, I dated Ruth Katz and we were married in the Bronx on November 16, 1946."

Moe is survived by his wife of 56 years, Ruth. They have three grown children (two sons, Joel and Wayne, and a daughter, Helene) and three grandchildren.

Funeral services were arranged by Beth Shalom, Orlando, for 10:00 a.m., Monday, December 30, followed by burial at Ohev Shalom's cemetery with Rabbi Rudolph J. Adler, officiating.

BRONX PHOTOS AND SCENES

Carl Migden recently found the following websites pertaining to the Bronx. For those who lived in the Bronx, he shares the information as he suggested "you might find them very interesting." There are photos of various public school pix's, various old street shots of the Bronx, etc. See the following and have fun searching:

<http://irmaml.tripod.com/BxPix4.html> - Bronx Street scenes (old and recent)

<http://www.mindspring.com/~kraybill/> - Old Bronx movie theatres (old and recent)

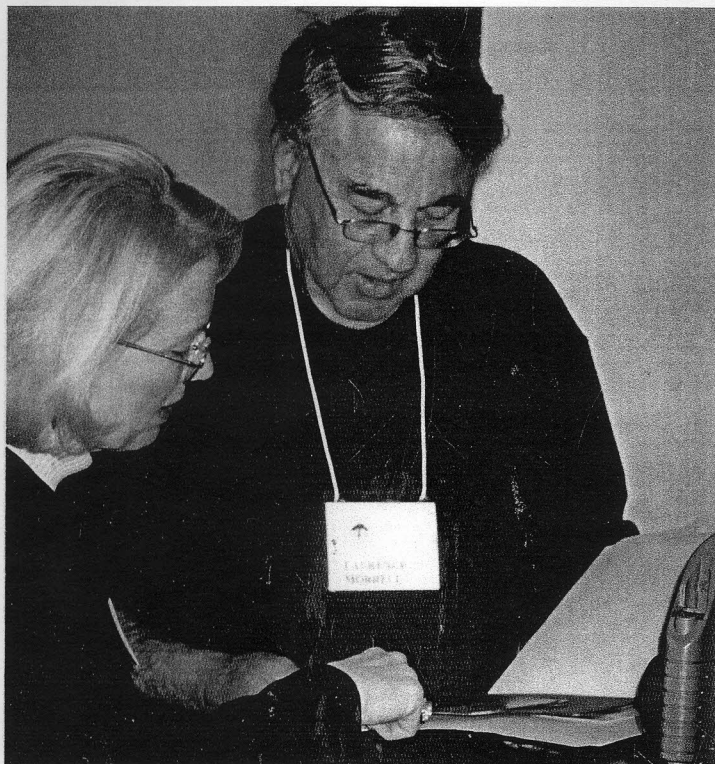
<http://kraybill.home.mindspring.com/44/02walton.html> -(old and recent)

http://www.backinthebronx.com/bbboard/bbboard_dissart_sr_ch.htm - Back in the Bronx

HOW TO IDENTIFY & DATE PHOTOS....

At the February 11th meeting of the JGSGO, held in the senior lounge, JCC, the guest speaker was Elaine Powell of Orlando, also known as "The Heritage Lady."

Powell has been a genealogist for 18 years and is currently the Historian/Archivist for the *Central Florida Genealogical Society*. She has been a scrapbooker for 30 years and a professional scrapbooking instructor for over five years. Her presentation to JGSGO members with fine audio visual support was not only interesting but most informative relating to the importance of preserving family history, memorabilia, documents and family records.



Elaine Powell and Larry Morrell tried to date several photos.

One of the handouts (How to Identify and Date Photos) that Powell distributed would be helpful to all and is copied (with her permission) in part as follows:

....Decide what information you want to obtain? Do you want to know who is in the photos, the date of the photo, or where the photo was taken?

....Talk to relatives and ask questions about the identity of persons in the photos. Post photos on "lost photo" websites. Place queries about the photo on a county message board site and refer them to a website where they can view a photo.

....Dating by the type of photo - The first photos were Daguerreotypes, first in America in 1838-1839.

....Dating using clues in the photo - Look at the objects in the photo, such as the type of lamps, wallpaper, telephones, and automobiles. For example: First wall phones -1900; candlestick black type phones - 1910; desk phones 1928;

....Dating using clothing, hairstyles, jewelry - old catalogs, especially an old Sears catalog and old newspapers can help.

.... To identify persons in photos use genealogical records.

....Dating by comparison to other photos - check books and photos on the Internet

....Sources/publications to help you identify photos would include: A website on 19th Century Photography gives detailed information on different types of photos and provides information on dating by looking at clothing, and hairstyles, go to: <http://www.ajmorris.com/roots/photo/photo/htm>>

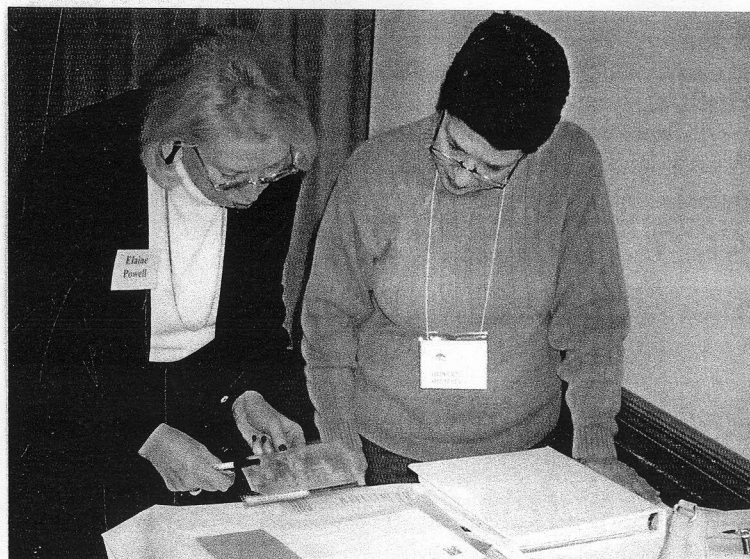
Use search engines on the Internet to search for elements within a photo to find websites that show historical items (www.yahoo.com, www.google.com, www.msn.com).

Publications to help you date and identify photos: *Uncovering Your Ancestry Through Family Photographs* by Maureen Taylor is a great resource. On her website <http://familytreemagazine.com/photos/photohelp.htm>, you can scan in a photo and she might help you date the photo.

Unlocking the Secret in Old Photographs by Karen Frisch-Ripley can help you find clues to identifying photos.

Dressed for the Photographer by Joan Severa gives very detailed clothing style information.

Family Chronicle's Dating Old Photographs magazines illustrate hundreds of photos that are dated and can help you in comparing clothing and hair styles.



Elaine Powell checked Shirley Michael's photos

During the meeting, members displayed old photos, especially those taken in Europe. These were more difficult to date but often not impossible since the photographers name, company and town usually were on the back of the photo. One member made a point that often families had group photos taken before they left the foreign country and these could be dated approximately by immigration years.

Note: Elaine Powell offers classes on how to operate the Family Tree Maker Genealogy software program. She may be reached at: CMElaine@aol.com and her website is: www.TheHeritageLady.com>

BACK TO CLEVELAND

by: Shirley Weiss Michael
Charter Member, JGSGO, since 1990

"From October 10 to October 15, 1996, my sister Harriet from California, my sister Sally from Georgia, and I went back to Cleveland, Ohio, for a visit. One of the things we decided to do was plan on visiting visit the houses in which we grew up. Unfortunately, we were advised not to go to the area where the first (Parkwood Drive) and the second house (Garfield St.) was located. (see photo)



Photo: 10805 Garfield St. The Weiss Family lived on the second floor of this two-family house.

When I was about 12 years old, we moved from Garfield to 2183 Jackson Blvd., in University Heights, Ohio. I have not see the house for fifty years. Lucky for us, the people living in the house were very gracious and invited us in. As a child the house was quite big or at least it seemed that way, especially when we had to help clean it. The house has a sun room, living room, dining room, and kitchen on the first floor. Upstairs there are three bedrooms and a bathroom. To my surprise, as well as my sisters, the house looked small.

While looking around, so many memories were going through my head, some happy, some sad. My mother died in 1943 leaving her husband, three daughters and one son. Having three sisters and one brother made it a place where many kids would gather, especially after school. Many hours were spent on the front porch as this was the place where we hung out the most. We had club meetings, slumber parties and many other things in that 'small' living room. I thought about the cold nights and having to go down into the basement to shovel coal into the furnace to make sure the fire would last on those cold winter nights. I remembered how I

would climb on the garage roof to sunbathe. And how I used a putter in the yard, to this day I still enjoy puttering in the yard. The very large rock on the front lawn is still there. If that rock could talk it would have many stories to tell. Going back and seeing the house in which I spent many years was a wonderful experience, especially because I was able to share this experience with two of my wonderful sisters."

Note: Shirley and Al Michael were married in 1954. Al's work brought them to Florida, then Connecticut and back to Florida.



During their visit in 1996, the sisters visited their home on Jackson Blvd. l to r: Standing: Harriet and Shirley with Sally seated in front.

GENEALOGICAL GENEROSITY: PUBLIC ACCESS CATALOG NATIONAL GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

Thanks to the kindness of an anonymous donor, the National Genealogical Society (NGS) has an even bigger circulating collection. Any researcher can borrow a book from the 1,500 new volumes through interlibrary loan. NGS has already begun the time-consuming task of adding the new book titles to its online library catalog, <http://www.ngsgenealogy.org/libprecat.htm>.

The circulating collection is located at the St. Louis County Library in St. Louis, Missouri. Check it out!

(Thanks to Gene Starn for this information)

BACK TO THE BRONX (see cover photo)

By: Jay Schleichkorn

"It once was known as the Beautiful Bronx," said Jay Schleichkorn. "It's been a long time since I returned to the first home I knew. I was born on April 13, 1925 at the Bronx Maternity Center located on the tree-lined Grand Concourse. My first home was at 2089 Cedar Avenue, a few blocks south of Fordham Road. Across the street from our home, high up on hill was the New York University Uptown Campus and the well-known Hall of Fame. It was a good healthy climb up the many steps for me to go to P.S. 26. I always thought of the NYU site as our front-yard. The rear of the house faced the Harlem River where the Columbia University Rowing team often practiced. My father owned the first house in a row of ten. We also had a four-car garage. Dad was a very successful plumbing and heating contractor. My two older brothers and I had everything we wanted until the crash of October 1929. In early 1931 we left Cedar Avenue and moved to an apartment at 1635 Popham Avenue, also in the west Bronx.

I always thought of 2089 as a big house. The backyard had quite a garden and my father grew very large Dahlias. Next to us, an apartment building was going up. The Bronx and our neighborhood was changing.



I have been back to the neighborhood two times but not in the past ten years. A good friend who lives on Fordham Road recently went by our house and took several photos. He preferred not to get out of his car. Looking at the photo, I noticed the garage is now 2091 and a residence. There's gated fence around the property. A second floor window has an air-conditioning unit. The front porch appears as I knew it. New York University moved from the Bronx and today the facilities are the Bronx Community College. The hundred+ steps leading to the campus appear to be overgrown. Behind 2089 is the heavily traveled Major Deegan Highway. I have good memories of Cedar Avenue but so much has changed there as well as throughout the Bronx."

BACK TO BELLE HARBOR, LONG ISLAND, NEW YORK-By: Robert Glasser,
Member JGSGO since 1996

Robert Glasser, of Winter Park, FL., shared his view of returning to his former home and the neighborhood. "I remember the house as being very big, but when I saw it 31 years after I left, it seemed so small!"

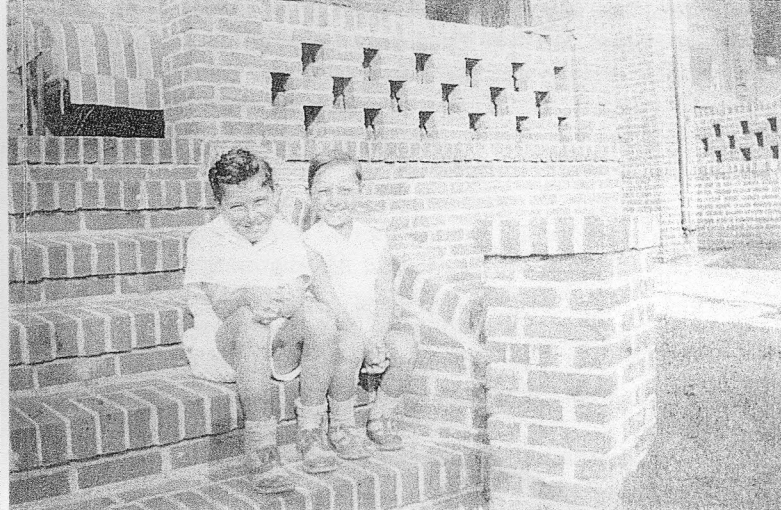


Photo taken in 1931 -House at 164 Beach 140th St., Belle Harbor, Long Island. Robert Glasser wrote, "In the photo is my brother and on the right is me at 4 years old. We moved to Florida in 1937."



Photo taken in 1968. "This is the first time I visited my childhood home. In the photo is my daughter, Maxine, who was also 4 years old. On her right is our son, Gary."

Bob noted "All the original bricks were painted white, except for the steps. The original brick grill-wall was removed and replaced with a new grill design, landscaping added."

JGSGO ANNUAL MEETING HELD

"We need to motivate every member to bring one friend to join our genealogical Society," said Jerry Kurland, the newly elected VP and acting president of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Orlando. Suggesting the organization needs an infusion of young people who would be interested in genealogy with hands on instruction using the computer to research individual family trees, Kurland indicated, "my aim would be to get a cross section of all ages into our group. We will develop an index of links to help one get quicker results and we also have great potential in our newly developed JGSGO web site. Our experienced members have much to offer and are willing to assist anyone interested in developing their family history."

Election of several officers took place Sunday evening, December 15, at the annual dinner meeting of the JGSGO held at the Golden Coral, Altamonte Springs. Three directors were elected including Jack Kornbluh, Sim Seckbach and Jay Schleichkorn. Re-elected were Doris and Don Frank as VPs of Membership; Shirley Michael, Treasurer; Moe Aronson, Secretary; and Herb Adler, Librarian.

Appointments included Jack Kornbluh as the web-master of the JGSGO web site <http://www.rootsweb.com/~flgcf/> and Jay Schleichkorn will continue as editor of the quarterly newsletter-journal, Etz Chaim.

Retiring president Sim Seckbach thanked the members for their support during his term of 3 1/2 years. He indicated, "there is a definite need for a Jewish Genealogical Society in Central Florida and we must lead the way."

As part of the business of the evening, on a motion by Herb Adler and seconded by Doris Frank, the group agreed to make a contribution of \$100 to Jewishgen.



In addition, proposed by-law changes were presented and will be discussed at the next meeting on Tuesday, January 14, at 7:00 p.m., in the community room, Seminole County Public Library, Oxford Street, Casselberry.

JGSGO Meeting - January 14, 2003:

Site: Seminole County Library m Oxford St. Casselberry

Acting President Jerry Kurland called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m. Thirteen members were present.

The passing of long time member Moe Aronson was noted with a minute of silence. Moe served the JGSGO well and just last month was re-elected to the Board as Secretary.

Jerry presented a long agenda. Primary attention was given to discussion of the proposed new by-laws which were approved by the Board on Monday, January 6, 2003.

Sim presented the proposed by-laws for discussion. It was agreed member couples would count as two people. There no longer would be a dues discount for JCC members. The new board must call a general meeting at least once per quarter, but there is nothing to prevent having additional meetings.

Five members would be elected to the board. The webmaster and the editor of Etz Chaim would also serve. The board then would select individuals to be president, VP, Secretary, Treasurer and Director.

A nominating committee would be named by September 15 with the membership notified by November 30. The committee would include one board member and two general members.

The proposed by-laws are to be presented to the membership at the March 11 meeting.

Other business: To further membership, JGSGO should increase distribution of meeting announcements to news groups and Jewishgen. We will re-instate the Q & A period. JGSGO will review possible dates for Sunday meetings. It was suggested this could bring new members to the organization. However, all members should discuss genealogy with their friends and encourage membership.

Herb Adler reported the JGS library is now in the hallway of the Holocaust Center. Members should be encouraged to use the library. "We receive some 40 newsletters and/periodicals." Check the web-site to see the library holdings. It was decided the library should keep the SIG journal but eliminate the older bulletins that mainly are "meeting notices."

Referring to the dues, it was noted by Sim that returns are coming in well. Etz Chaim should publish a reminder about dues payment's must be in by March or the member will be dropped. Present membership is 50.

Appreciation was extended to Jack Kornbluh for serving as the Webmaster. Jack indicated he would like to include the family being searched by each member. General information is up-to-date and all should make it a point to check the site.

Treasurer Shirley Michael reported the current balance in the Treasury is \$1829.00

Next meeting of JGSGO will be Tuesday, February 11 at the JCC Senior Lounge.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

JewishGen, World's Leading Internet Jewish Genealogy Resource, To Join Museum of Jewish Heritage - A Living Memorial to the Holocaust

(New York, NY) - Effective January 1, 2003, JewishGen, a world renowned Jewish Genealogy website, will become a division of the Museum of Jewish Heritage - A Living Memorial to the Holocaust in New York City. The Boards of the Museum and JewishGen approved the plan in December.

An Internet pioneer, JewishGen was founded in 1987 by Susan E. King and has grown from a bulletin board with only 150 users to a major grass roots effort bringing together hundreds of thousands of individuals worldwide in a virtual community centered on discovering Jewish ancestral roots and history. On JewishGen, researchers share genealogical information, techniques, and case studies. With a growing database of more than seven million records, including some material from previous centuries, the website is a forum for the exchange of information about Jewish life and family history and has enabled thousands of families to connect and re-connect in a way never before possible. "For many Jews, knowledge of their family history perished in the Holocaust; JewishGen fills in the missing pieces of the puzzle," said Dr. David G. Marwell, Museum Director. "Our Museum allows visitors to identify with the themes of 20th century Jewish history and has helped our public to identify with Holocaust survivors and opened new doors of understanding. With JewishGen, we will be able to take our message worldwide."

"Genealogy research is much more than just searching for names, dates and places," said Susan King, founder of JewishGen. "It is vitally important that researchers also understand the details of Jewish heritage and history; the Museum provides context for the lives being researched. That's what makes this relationship so exciting. Museum of Jewish Heritage - A Living Memorial to the Holocaust will also allow us to professionalize what has been an all-volunteer effort." Ms. King, who will report to Dr. Marwell, will be the Managing Director of JewishGen and will remain in Houston where JewishGen is based.

Among JewishGen's features are the Family Tree of the Jewish People containing data on more than two million people; the Yizkor Book Project, an ongoing effort to translate memorial books which contain previously inaccessible information on the fate of Jewish communities and their inhabitants affected by the Holocaust; and the Holocaust Global Registry, a central database of and for Holocaust survivors and their families. The Holocaust Global Registry is already responsible for re-connecting several families after more than 60 years of separation.

The Museum is located on the waterfront of Lower Manhattan in Battery Park City.



Photo: Jay Schleichkorn

The Museum's core exhibition is organized around three themes: Jewish Life a Century Ago, The War Against the Jews, and Jewish Renewal. With more than 2,000 photographs, 800 artifacts, and 24 original documentary films on display, the Museum uses personal stories and artifacts to present 20th century Jewish history and the Holocaust in a context of universal truths that speak to people of all ages and backgrounds. The Museum is in the middle of an 82,000-square-foot construction project that will contain a theater, classrooms, and special exhibition space, among other facilities. The East Wing, set to open in fall 2003, will enhance the Museum's mission of remembrance and education.

The 23rd IAJGS International Conference on Jewish Genealogy

*Hosted by the JGS of Greater Washington -
July 20-25, Washington, DC*

Marriott Hotel 1331 Pennsylvania Avenue, NWest

The Jewish Genealogy Society of Greater Washington (JGSGW) warmly invites genealogists of all levels and interests to attend the 23rd Annual International Conference on Jewish Genealogy. The location is Washington, DC--a capital city filled with spectacular family history resources and sightseeing attractions.

The Conference is being held July 20-25, 2003, at the ideally-located JW Marriott Hotel. The hotel is near major genealogy research institutions, many DC attractions, and numerous eateries ranging from a food court to gourmet establishments.

Washington provides renowned research repositories in a magnificent cosmopolitan city! Look for further information in genealogy journals and on this web site in the months ahead! (www.jewishgen.org/DC2003)

New Ellis Island Database Search Tools

By: Megan Smolenyak

By now, many of you are aware that The Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation, Inc. and JewishGen®, Inc. announced a working relationship on 21 October 2002 to "provide enhanced search capabilities for the Ellis Island Database." More precisely, this means that JewishGen.org is hosting a set of search tools (<http://www.Jewishgen.org/databases/eidb>) created by Stephen Morse with the help of Michael Tobias and Erik Steinmetz. If you haven't taken time to delve into this yet, I'm pleased to be the first to inform you that we all have reason to celebrate!

A Little History

If you're like me—one the more than 100 million Americans with ancestors who came through Ellis Island—you were thrilled with the 1 April 2001 introduction of the Ellis Island database (<http://www.ellisland.org>) with its more than 20 million indexed entries between 1892 and 1924. Perhaps you waited patiently for the traffic to die down so you could search the site or maybe you were one of those diehards who set their alarm for 2 a.m. in order to have a better chance of getting in. Several months later, you may have been fortunate enough to stumble across Morse's search tools (<http://home.pacbell.net/spmorse/index.html>).

Experimenting with them, you probably discovered how much easier they made it to find those ancestors whose names had been recorded in unexpected ways.

You may have scratched your head in puzzlement when the tools took a brief hiatus and breathed a sigh of relief when the 21 October announcement came. But since the announcement provoked such a rush to use the new tools, it's very possible that your initial attempts resulted in time outs and no information. The good news is that all involved parties scrambled to make the necessary upgrades to accommodate the heavy demand, as well as to work out a few minor kinks, and you'll probably now be able to get in and conduct successful searches without having to go into night-owl mode.

How It Works

There are several new features and improvements to Morse's earlier search tools, but to me, the most exciting new toy is the gray, short form (<http://www.Jewishgen.org/databases/EIDB/ellisshort.HTML>). I admit that I was one of those obsessed researchers playing with the website in the wee hours when that was still necessary and it's been worth every moment of lost sleep!

With the short form, it's possible to search the entire database by similar-sounding names and town of origin. The Daitch-Mokotoff Soundex system used to generate lists of those with like-sounding names is especially powerful for finding the many Ellis Island immigrants with long or complex names, prone to misspelling. You also have the flexibility to search for first name by "starts with or is" and

"contains" and last name by "starts with or is," "sounds like" or "contains."

And just as with the last name, you have the option of entering "starts with or is," "sounds like," or "contains" for town of origin. This provides tremendous utility because the towns of our ancestors were just as likely to be creatively spelled as their names.

The Example of Michael Zavacky

All this new functionality makes it easier to unearth those elusive ancestors. An immigrant who went by the name Michael Zavacky in the U.S. could have entered the country under any of a number of spellings. Michael might have been Michal, Mihaly, Miko, or some other variation, and a name like Zavacky could be spelled several dozen ways. Knowing this, you could enter Mi in the "starts with or is" field for the first name and use the "sounds like" option for Zavacky. When you launch such a search, you will be asked whether you want only those names starting with Z, the first letter of the last name, or all sound-alike names regardless of initial letter. If you choose the latter, you will have many more listings to wade through, but will also surface some candidates that would have otherwise remained hidden.

In this case, assuming you decide to limit the search to those with names starting with Z, you would be presented with a list of 289 possibilities. Among those you probably would not have found without some creative thinking are Zavaczki, Zawacki, and Zavodszky. Had you restricted this search to "starts with or is" Zavacky, you would have only found two records. On the other hand, if you had only entered M for the first name instead of MI, you would have 949 hits to scan because you would have included all the variations of Matthew, Martin, Mark, etc.

Building on the preceding example, let's assume that you don't even want to look at 289 names to find "yours" and you happen to know that the fellow you're seeking came from the town of Osturna. You might choose to enter the name as above and add "starts with or is" O for town name. This would produce 13 results. Three of these—the ones listed as being from Oszturnya, Osztwmia, and Osztornya—would be obvious contenders. Using age and year of entry data, you would probably be able to identify the one you are seeking.

Some Possible Uses

The most obvious application of this new functionality is to find a particular ancestor who has defied discovery, such as the scenario outlined above. But there are many other ways to exploit these search tools. For instance, you could seek all the people who entered with a particular surname or all the people who came from a particular village or town. I ran a "sounds like" search for the villages of origin of my four great-grandparents who came through Ellis Island. The Osturna search turned up 3,558 possibilities, of which 455 (or

continue page 11.....

Continued from page 10

ELLIS ISLAND continued....

roughly every eighth name) were Osturnites. Is this list comprehensive? Not quite because it does not include, for example, those who entered before the town of origin was recorded or those few who had strayed off to other towns before emigrating, but with some experimentation with Morse's tools, I managed to find about another 65 Osturnites, including those whose first and last names had been reversed. Before this new short form, digging out these approximately 520 villagers would have taken untold hours of searching.

You can also combine the name and town search capability to narrow a search. This is especially handy if you are dealing with a relatively common name. I wanted to find possible kin from Ireland, but the surname Curtin produced a daunting 1,165 hits. When I requested only Curtins from Listowel, however, I was rewarded with a considerably shorter list of only eight people who are much more likely to be related to me. Even those without Ellis Island roots should find this tactic valuable as it makes it possible to find later arrivals and possible cousins from a particular town.

Other quirky situations are also circumvented by these tools. Knowing that the first letters of names are especially likely to be misinterpreted and that the letter M is often confused with N and H, I performed a "contains" search on otczka when trying to find people named Motyczka. Sure enough, I found an entry for Jan . . . otczka. Wondering how many native born or naturalized citizens of Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania might have come through Ellis Island, I searched on town name "starts with or is" Wilkes and found an astonishing 2,291 hits. Dealing with an unusual first name? Try searching just on it. Curious about my own name of Megan which was so unusual until the last couple of decades, I found 22 Megans, mostly from Wales as expected, but also from Turkey, Chile and Hungary.

Try It Soon

So many items are touted as being "new and improved," but this wonderful set of search tools truly lives up to that billing. If you haven't already, I highly recommend that you treat yourself and spend a little time playing with the possibilities. And if you have a success story, why not drop me a line and tell me about it?

Megan Smolenyak Smolenyak, author of Honoring Our Ancestors and In Search of Our Ancestors, can be reached at: Megan@honoringourancestors.com. Her website features a library of many of her articles (including several on Ellis Island research) and Honoring Our Ancestors grants at: <http://www.honoringourancestors.com>

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VETERANS HISTORY PROJECT

Genealogists will be pleased to know that Congress voted unanimously for legislation to create the Veterans History Project (VHP) through Public Law 106-380. The authorizing legislation, sponsored by Representatives Ron Kind, Amo Houghton, and Steny Hoover in the U.S. House of Representatives and Senators Max Cleland and Chuck Hagel, was signed into law by President William Jefferson Clinton on October 27, 2000. Congress recognized the urgency of collecting wartime memories, which become more precious as the number of veterans dwindles by 1,500 ever day.

Thanks to JGSGO member, Bob Glasser, we have information on the project and how individuals can participate in the interviewing of veterans.

An attractive project-kit has been prepared which includes a How-To Guide, history of the project, getting started, conducting an interview, sample questions, transcribing an interview, and more.

The VHP covers WWI, WWII, and the Korean, Vietnam, and Persian Gulf wars. It includes participants

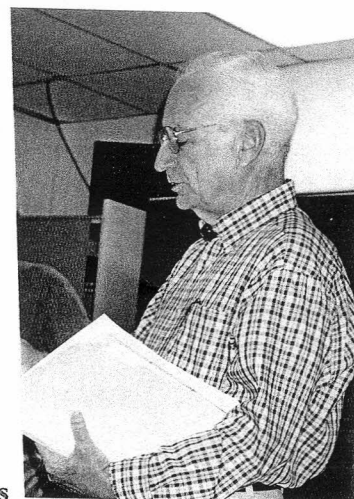
in those wars - men, women, civilian and military. The Library of Congress and the American Folklife Center have embraced this national effort.

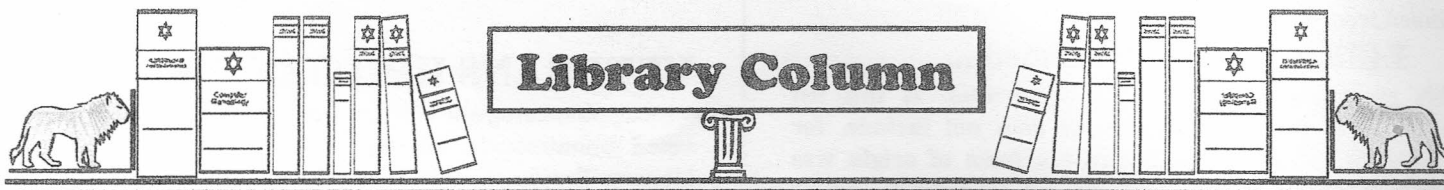
All Americans are urged to participate. The guide states, "By interviewing a veteran or war worker as part of the VHP, you honor those who served our nation during difficult and dangerous periods in our history."

Information in the VHP packet suggests ways to tape or video the interview and how to donate the material to the American Folklife Center. The Library of Congress will create a catalog of all oral histories and other documentation collected as a result of the VHP. The names of all veterans and civilians who are interviewed or those who have donated documents, letters, diaries, etc., will be listed on the Library of Congress web site at www.loc.gov/folklife/vets/.

As one who is interested in genealogy, the most immediate step is for you to obtain the information packet by contacting the Veterans History Project, Library of Congress, American Folklife Center, 101 Independence Avenue S.E., Washington, DC 20540-4615. E-mail is: vohp@loc.gov, ph: 1-888-371-5848.

Check the web site: www.loc.gov/folklife/vets/





Recently we received a complimentary four-volume set of the "Registry of Jewish Holocaust Survivors 2000", which has been placed in our Library at the Holocaust Center.

The Registry of Survivors, an on-going project of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and the American Gathering of Holocaust Survivors, contains the names of over 100,000 survivors living around the world. The Registry comes in a four-volume set of 3202 pages: an alphabetical listing of survivors (two volumes), one volume listing survivors by birthplace and residence before the war, and one volume listing survivors by location during the Holocaust.

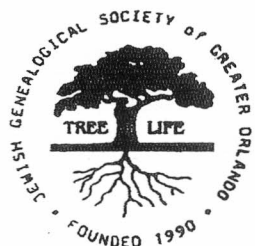
Included with the set are copies of the registration form with the request that we make these available to un-registered survivors so that they may be documented along with those already entered. If you know of un-registered survivors, please contact any Director for a copy.

Forms can also be downloaded from their website www.ushmm.org/remembrance/registry/. Survivors are encouraged to submit photographs, preferably from the war or immediate post-war period, with their registration.

In previous columns, I have brought to your attention the many publications we receive in the Library. Indexed below are a few of the articles in the latest issues, which may pique your interest in paying a visit to our Library.

In the "Forum", Winter 2002, publication of the Federation of Genealogical Societies, there is an article by Stephen P. Morse, entitled "The One-Step 1930 Census Website: Subtleties in its Use". In another article, Sandra H. Luebking, continues with "Sources: Finding Ship Passenger Lists 1820-1897, Part III-Internet & CD-ROM Resources". The Winter Issue of "Avotaynu" contains too many fascinating articles to mention but to single out one, Alexander Woodle chronicles the discovery of the roots of his family through diligent research in the U.S. and the Czech Republic in "A Journey of Discovery".

"Stammbaum", The Journal of German-Jewish Genealogical Research also has many intriguing articles. Margaret Linz writes about the discovery of "Family Secrets" through her research. Visit the Library—You will be rewarded!



Jewish Genealogical Society
of Greater Orlando

P. O. Box 941 332
Maitland, FL 32794



Drawing: Joe Kahn

"With all this snow and cold up here in the North, I often wonder why my family didn't move to Orlando!"