
Jewish Genealogy Downunder

Quarterly Newsletter of the Australian Jewish Genealogical Society (Vic) Inc.

Melbourne, Australia

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**Les Oberman, President, and the Committee of Management of the AJGS (Vic) wish
all our Jewish members and friends a Happy New Year
L'Shana Tova Ve Tikatevu**

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Australian Jewish Genealogical Society (Victoria) Inc

in association with the

Makor Library Jewish Community Library

RESEARCHING YOUR JEWISH ANCESTRY

A HANDS-ON WORKSHOP FOR BEGINNERS AND OTHERS

Sunday, 25th September 2005, 2.00 pm to 4.00 pm

Beth Weizmann Community Centre, 306 Hawthorn Rd., South Caulfield, 3162

This workshop aims to help those who wish to learn about vital records (births, deaths and marriages), shipping lists, naturalisation applications, overseas data bases, how to search the JewishGen Family Finder and other databases on the Net, surname dictionaries, how to search for towns and shtetls and more. Newsletters and journals from overseas will be available for inspection. A demonstration will be given on the use of the Internet for those wishing to learn about useful websites. Members of the committee will provide individual assistance on request.

Members \$4.00 Non-members \$6.00

November Meeting

FAMILY TREE PROGRAMS: WHAT'S AVAILABLE and WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENCES ?

Wednesday November 16th at 7.30 pm at the Beth Weizmann Jewish Community Centre

This will be an opportunity to compare and contrast the features of a number of programs using a data projector.

Jewish Genealogy Downunder

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Editorial Policy

We welcome contributions from members which will help others further their research. This might include sharing recent findings or the discovery of interesting resources. The Editor has the right to accept or reject any material submitted or edit as might be appropriate. Material appearing in this newsletter may be reprinted by other newsletters as long as proper attribution is given.

'Jewish Genealogy Downunder' is free to all members of AJGS (Vic) Inc.

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**Australian Jewish Genealogy Discussion
Group on the net:**

<http://www.ajgs.org.au> (On-Line Forum)

Membership fees:

Individual \$30.00 (add \$5.00 for The Koshers Koala)
Family \$35.00 (add \$5.00 for the Koshers Koala)
Concession: \$15.00 (add \$5.00 for the Koshers Koala)

New Members: John Solomon

EDITORIAL

A new exhibition opening at the Jewish Museum of Australia in St.Kilda on September 13th will no doubt attract the attention of genealogists. 'Death, Burial and Beyond' (see back cover) looks at how death, dying and grief are experienced, understood and ritualised from a uniquely Jewish perspective. There is also a photo essay about Jewish burial and cemeteries in Australia since 1788 by well known Melbourne photographer, Emmanuel Santos.

Not to be missed is a framed plan of the Jewish areas of the Melbourne General Cemetery in 1876, the Death register of the Jewish Congregational Society for burial in the Old Melbourne Cemetery, 1843 and the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation Death Register, 1864-1958. A magnificent illustrated catalogue is on sale.

Cemeteries play a vital role for Jewish genealogists. Travellers to Poland and other countries, which were home to millions of Jews before the Holocaust, often comment that the only sign of Jewish life in the shtetls of their families are the surviving cemeteries. The tombstones provide the only evidence that Jews once played a vital part in the life of these destroyed communities.

For Jewish genealogical enthusiasts Hebrew inscriptions on tombstones can provide vital information to link families. Those critical words 'ben' and 'bat' helps us get around the problems of name changes following resettlement in Australia. Just arrived at Makor Library is a new guidebook by Rosemary Wenzel, A Guide to Reading Hebrew Inscriptions and Documents, published by the Genealogical Society of Great Britain. Well worth a read before your next cemetery visit.

This issue includes a personal account of the Ottolenghi/Ottolangu/Langley reunion held in June (see page 3). Congratulations are well deserved to the organisers especially our committee member, Liz James. Such reunions are a wonderful catalyst for gathering unknown relatives together, seeking out new family data, developing or expanding a website, and even restoring and reconsecrating a tombstone (see front cover). They also provide an impetus to others to initiate their own reunions.

Another year has passed. Some of us have found new relatives, others have expanded their ancestral searching while other have just embarked on this fascinating journey. We wish all our Jewish readers L'Shana Tova Ve Tikatevu and well over the fast.

Lionel Sharpe (Editor)

Ottolangui Family Reunion

28th June 2005 in Melbourne

(A personal account of events by Merle Langley)

The last two issues of this newsletter advertised a family re-union and reconsecration of the tombstone of Moses and Emma Ottolangui at the Melbourne General Cemetery. Moses was buried in 1885 and the descendants of the Ottolenghi/Ottolangui/Langley family marked the 120th Yahrzeit with a ceremony conducted by Rabbi Dr John Levi and an evening family re-union at the Prahran Town Hall, the venue of an earlier Ottolangui wedding in 1908.

A two part article on the Sephardi Origins of the Ottolenghi/Ottolangui/Langley family of Australia and New Zealand by Lesley Goldberg, from a talk given by John Goldberg, to the Society in Sydney, appeared in *The Kosher Koala*, Volume 12 Nos 2 and 3, 2005, the newsletter of the AJGS Inc. The website, just updated, can be found at : www.geocities.com/ottolangui2002

The AJGS (Victoria) devoted an entire meeting on 20th July to the family history with a presentation by committee member, Liz James.

Here, Merle Langley, the Webmistress of their outstanding family website, gives her personal account of her visit to Melbourne and impressions of the event.



Katrina Cowen, Liz James and Jenny Cowen

It was an early start and a chilly morning in Brisbane on June 26th when I set off for the airport to catch my flight to Melbourne. As I boarded the plane I felt overwhelmed both with feelings of excitement at the prospect of my coming adventure and anticipation of meeting our wider family. Finally I would get to see the faces belonging to those names I knew so well.

My arrival at Melbourne airport was interesting. Expecting to be greeted by my dear cousin Wendy Bloomfield whose plane was due in some twenty minutes before mine and cousin Ron James, who had so kindly promised to pick us up, I was a little surprised to see neither of them! So I set off to find my luggage.

It wasn't long before the three of us found each other and headed off to our hotels in Melbourne city. Ron was a great chauffeur! Explaining to Wendy and me about places in Melbourne as we drove. Once at the hotel "Saville on Russell" I couldn't wait to get up to the room and see cousin Sue Wesley from New Zealand. It felt just terrific getting together again, sharing our thoughts and ideas!

In the afternoon Ron came back to the hotel and picked

Wendy, Sue and me up and took us to his house, where some of the other Ottolangui relations were gathering to finalize plans for the upcoming events on Tuesday.

It was wonderful to finally meet Liz and Ron James without whose dedication and organization this amazing Ottolangui get-together would never have eventuated. I think I speak for everyone when I say "Thank you" to them for all the time and the unswerving effort they put in to make this event a huge success.

The afternoon was spent getting to know each other over a cuppa and a piece of delicious "Jewish Cake" baked so perfectly by Jenny and Katrina Cowen and in between looking with sheer envy at Liz's beautifully adorned walls of family trees and photographs!

Monday morning Sue and I were woken abruptly at 8.20 am by the sound of a fire alarm and the smell of smoke filling our room and even more so the complete 10th floor of the hotel!

Throwing on some clothes, Sue quicker than I, we headed down the fire escape (me still getting dressed!) It wasn't until we got to the second floor and saw people in the hotel restaurant leisurely eating breakfast that we realized we were the only two people in the whole hotel evacuating! Sue continued down the stairs and I opted for the lift back up to our room. As the lift opened three firemen greeted me - I can't forget the priceless look on their faces when asked by a dishevelled, half dressed blonde holding a hairbrush and a shoe, if the hotel was on fire. "Can't you smell it's only someone burning toast," they replied, obviously amused!

Sue and I headed off to the Melbourne Library Monday morning to check out some pre-ordered documents. In the afternoon Wendy joined us to look for a building at 35 Bourke Street that was once owned by Jacob Ottolangui (son of Moses). Jacob rented the premises for 375 pounds a year to the Government who used it as a Post Office from 9 Dec 1891 until Jacob's wife Fanny died in 1917. I was most excited to find the building still standing and its heritage listed.



Rabbi John Levi at the Melbourne General Cemetery

In the evening a number of Ottolangui descendants gathered at our hotel bar and restaurant. It was an enjoyable relaxing time meeting everyone for a chat over a meal and a drink (or 3 or 4!).

Catching up with cousin Paul Sulzberger who had by now arrived from New Zealand via Tasmania with his family and meeting for the first time his lovely Mum, sisters and gorgeous daughters was certainly a real treat for me, given Paul is closely related to my man Tony Langley.

On Tuesday morning, we made our way to the Melbourne General Cemetery in Carlton for the "Re-consecration Ceremony" of the recently cleaned-up and repaired graves of Moses Ottolangui (1808-1885) and Emma Ottolangui nee Bensabat (1811-1898). The ceremony was officiated by Rabbi John Levi who made it easily accessible for those of us who were not Jewish.

The Rabbi translated the Hebrew on the gravestones and explained the significance of the words. It was a truly emotional feeling to be standing there as one united family in front of the graves of our antecedents just as those before us would have done a hundred plus years ago when Moses and Emma passed away.



After a quick trip back to the hotel to pick up our family data we headed to the Prahran Town Hall to set up for the evening gathering.

The Prahran Town Hall was chosen as the venue for the reunion after a wonderful photograph was found of an earlier Ottolangui wedding in 1908 between Joseph Levy and Sadie Nathan. The idea was to re-enact the photo with new Ottolangui descendants taken in the same place almost 100 years later.

As we arrived for the evening a photographer was on hand to take photographs and colour coded nametags were given out representing each particular branch of the family.



Ottolangui Family Reunion (above: the Nathan-Levy wedding at the same venue in 1908)

Descendants of each of the Ottolangui family lines had set up tables and display boards in the hall. It was remarkable to see the amount of combined information and photographs available to view on the night. For me the reunion was breathtaking and really brought home the significance of knowing ones family roots and the importance of passing this knowledge on to our children.

In the late afternoon Sue and I went for a quick stroll down Chapel Street, Prahran, an area where so many of our early relatives resided so many years ago. It was great to finally see the China shop where Abraham and Reyna Joachim nee Ottolangui (daughter of Moses) once lived. In the evening we had a lovely meal at a restaurant with Liz and Ron. Early Thursday morning after only 3 hours sleep, I headed back to the airport for my journey home. The fond memories of my Melbourne adventure and the wonderful people I had the pleasure of meeting will stay with me always.



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**THE STRANGE STORY OF  
RABINER KUPFERSZTOCH IN BERLIN**

by Leo Cooper  
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I have had many coincidences in my life, but this would be one of the most strange ones. I don't meet Michael H. very often, but when I recently met him he casually asked me what was my name before I changed it to Cooper. When I told him, he said he had something of great interest for me. The next day, I received a copy of an article in *ACTUELL*, a German journal published by the municipality of Berlin. It was a story about a Polish rabbi who lived and survived in Weimar and Nazi Germany. **The story is unbelievable, but no matter how incredible it may sound, it is true.**

"In the days prior to World War I, a young chassid rabbi in Warsaw, by the name of Kupfersztuch, had a shule with about 80 chassidic follower families. At that time, Warsaw belonged to Russia, and the Russian army conscripted many young Jews into military service. In the army, they were coerced into eating non-kosher food. As a result, many young Orthodox Jews deserted. Some were arrested and three of the rabbi's students were publicly hanged. Allegedly, Rabbi Kupfersztuch swore that he would avenge their death.

World War I broke out on 1 August 1914, and Russian armies under the command of General Samsonov invaded East Prussia. Their fortified positions near the Masurian swamps were considered to be impenetrable. Nevertheless, the German Generals Hindenburg and Ludendorff succeeded in decisively defeating the Russians in the epic battle of Tannenberg. Significantly, this victory was related to the fact that General Ludendorff had obtained the secret Russian defense plans, which apparently were forwarded to him through the "espionage" efforts of Rabbi Kupfersztuch.

To express his gratitude, Kaiser Wilhelm II arranged for the rabbi and his disciples to settle in Berlin. They came to live in Berlin's Scheunenviertel, a mostly Eastern European, Orthodox enclave in the city. The Kaiser also granted Rabbi Kupfersztuch a lifelong pension (Reichspension). **In Berlin, the rabbi became Gross Rabbiner of the Eastern European Jewish community and was known as the "Warschauer Rav".**

In 1925, Paul Hindenburg became the president of Germany. Every year on the occasion of Hindenburg's birthday, the rabbi from Warsaw with his beard, his long caftan, round black hat and walking cane, strolled to the presidential palace to personally convey his birthday wishes to the president. When Hindenburg died in the summer of 1934, and with the Nazis in full power, the "Warschauer Rav" was designated as a Schutzzjude (protected Jew) and as such continued receiving his state pension until his death in 1940.

During the so-called Polen Aktion in October 1938, a large number of the Rav's followers, together with approximately 15,000 former Jewish residents of Poland, were deported back to Poland. Only the Warsaw Rav was not deported. A few weeks later, on 9th and 10th November, Kristallnacht took place. During Kristallnacht, all Jewish businesses and most apartments on Munzstrasse were broken into and demolished.

Yet, during those days, uniformed policemen were

posted in front of the Munzstrasse house where the Warsaw Rav lived in order to protect him. But the Nazis were not to be foiled completely. Thousands of Jews were picked up later and sent to the concentration camps where they eventually perished. But the Warsaw Rav was spared. He remained in his apartment and eventually died of natural causes on 2 March 1940. He was buried in the Adass Israel Cemetery in Berlin."

The story in itself is incredible, but what is even more extraordinary, is that my former name was Kupfersztuch and that the Rabbi was my grandfather's brother - my great uncle.

As a child, my parents and I lived in Warsaw together with my grandfather Menachem Mendl. He was very religious and strictly followed all Jewish laws. As an orthodox Jew, he portrayed a typical "chassid" in the full sense of the word: in deeds and in outside appearance. He always wore a long, black coat with a thick cord around the waist, and a black cap with a small brim, called a "Jewish hat". He prayed three times a day and his main occupation between the prayers was the study of the sacred texts. Usually he would be sitting at a table in the corner of his room bent over a book.

I remember him telling me that he had a brother - a rabbiner - in Berlin. He also told me there were rumours that his brother was a "spy", code named "rabbiner K.", during World War I. There was little contact between them and only rarely did I hear my grandfather speak of him.

One day in 1938, during the deportation of the Polish Jews from Germany, my grandfather pulled out of his drawer an old, crumpled post card bearing a German stamp. It was from his brother. I distinctly remember that it was written in Gothic style and bore the address of Munzstrasse in Berlin. My grandfather expected the return of his brother at any day, but he never appeared and was never heard of. **I often thought of this rabbiner, but I never expected to receive first-hand news about him more than sixty years later.**

Reading the story about my great uncle, I was overwhelmed with emotions, for not only am I the sole Holocaust survivor of my family, but, I believe the last bearer of the name Kupfersztuch. I felt like hearing a voice from the grave. I wanted to find out more about him and I began some detective work.

Through the German journal I managed to obtain the addresses of the authors of the article - Arnold Zweig and Jerry Bocian who as a child had been the rabbi's neighbour and remembers him well. Both live in America. I managed to speak to Jerry who told me that two of the Berlin rabbi's grand children also live in US. He provided me with their addresses and I recently established a contact with my newly discovered relatives. Through them I obtained the photo of the rabbi's grave. The inscription on his grave reads as follows:

A Rabbi knowledgeable in the Torah,
a known Chassid, a dear soul
who sought good for his people,
our Teacher and Rabbi Avraham Itschok
the son of our Teacher and Rabbi, the Gaon
Moshe Arie KUPERSZTOK (a'h')
known as the Rabbi from Warsaw
Died on Sabbath....[follows the Jewish
date].

I am now corresponding with my newly found cousins and I am busy unraveling the mystery of the rabbi's role in the battle of Tannenberg. It was indeed a strange coincidence that led to the discovery of my lost relatives and at the same time to learn the extraordinary story about my ancestor.

In the meantime, there were some further developments regarding the Kupfersztok case. The latest issue of AKTUELL (published by the Berlin municipality and distributed worldwide) contains my letter in which I am asking if anyone knew about the Rabbi. To my great surprise I have already received two messages. One from Benjamin Ferziger - a former Berliner - who now lives in Los Angeles and personally knew the Warshever Ruv as he was known in Berlin.

"I knew the Warshever Ruv...it also presented a piece of Jewish history of Berlin...I remember him well as he walked around with a spodik and cane. He was quite a fearless person and not easily intimidated...I also heard it said that when some S.A. thugs was about to harm him physically in his apartment during the first years of the Nazis, in 1933 or 1934, he produced a letter from either President Hindenburg or the State Government and they left without molesting him or disturbing his apartment. In fact, he used part of his apartment as a Stiebel [a house of prayers] where my cousin's husband davened [prayed] and I even spent one Yom Kippur davening [praying] there, and the Warshever Ruv was the Baal Tefilla [cantor] for Neila which I well remember. All in all, he was an integral part of Jewish-Polish presence in Berlin for a good number of years and surely left his impact on Jewish history of Berlin."

Another message was from Martin Birken - also a former Berliner - who now lives in London.

"I, along with a couple of friends, used to go to the Warschauer Rov for "Shales Shides" [traditional Third Meal] on Sabbath for no other reason than a free nosh. He was quite a "character". He always tried to be very topical and would ask us what we think of Max Baer beating Max Schmelling or Joe Luis? He wanted to give the impression that he was up to date in matters secular. What a remarkable story?"

As you can see, the Rabbi was a known personality. Both messages confirm part of the story of my great uncle. What remains to be revealed is his role in the battle of Tannenberg.

A man in Berlin who took interest in this story, has obtained some information about the Rav and even got hold of a picture of the street where the Rav lived. The photo shows the house No. 11 and was taken in 1886. He also found out that the rabbi's had a wife, Chana (Hinde), maiden name Budczine, born in 1865 in Grojec, Poland. After the Rav's death she was placed in an old people's home on 14-16 Aguststrasse, Berlin-Mitte. She was deported to Theresienstadt on 2/2/1943 and died on 13/2/1943.

I approached the Preussisches Geheimes Staatsarchiv, but could not get any further. They suggested to consult their website - www.bundesarchiv.de followed by a series of instructions in German. Also www.gsta.spk-berlin.de.

I also tried the German Social Security Services whether they have a record of the Rabbi being a pensioner. So far

no result.

Perhaps your readers can also find traces of my great-uncle's father, Moshe Arie Kupersztok, who probably died in Warsaw and was buried there.

Leo Cooper lives in Melbourne and recently published his autobiography - *The Long Road to the Lucky Country*, published by the Makor Jewish Community Library.

His email address is: l.cooper@unimelb.edu.au



James McKinnon speaking about the role of the Public Records Office of Victoria at our meeting on August 17th

Have you joined ?
Australian Jewish Genealogy Discussion Group on the net

Visit: <http://www.ajgs.org.au>

(Click on On-Line Forum to register)

Seek help for your Australian ancestral research and assist others with their queries.

AJGS (Vic) Library now On-Line

On behalf of Makor Jewish Community Library I am delighted to advise you that the holdings of the Australian Jewish Genealogical Society (Vic) are now available online as part of the Makor Jewish Library. On behalf of Makor Jewish Community Library I am delighted to advise you that the holdings of the Australian Jewish Genealogical Society (Vic) are now available online as part of the Makor Jewish Library Network Database. It can be consulted 24 hours each day, 7 days a week. You can view it now at www.makorlibrary.com.

Makor gratefully acknowledges that this online database is now available because of the generous support of the Besen Family Foundation.

Leonie Fleiszig, Director - Makor Jewish Community Library, 306 Hawthorn Rd., South Caulfield, 3161

Summer Issue of the Journal - AVOTAYNU

International Tracing Service

The lead article in this Summer issue is a status report by Peter Landé on efforts to provide public access to the Holocaust records located at the International Tracing Service in Arolsen, Germany. This institution has more than 50 million records that identify a person at a given place at a given time during the Holocaust period. It is estimated that they have information on 14 million people, both victims and survivors.

ITS has refused to allow distribution of their information except through them. Their response time is very poor--many months, sometimes years, and they will only search for specific people, not generic searches.

The value of easy public access to these types of records can be demonstrated by the results of Yad Vashem placing Pages of Testimony on the Internet. Within days, people were reporting finding information about the fate of family members and there were even instances of individuals being reunited with family because of the easy online access to the information contained in the Pages of Testimony. For more information about ITS read <http://www.avotaynu.com/Holocaust/ITS.htm>.

New Books on Surnames

Alexander Beider where he evaluates two books on Jewish surnames: one by Heinrich and Eva Guggenheimer and the other the recently published "A Dictionary of German-Jewish Surnames" by Lars Menk. Beider provides a scholarly analysis of why he considers the Menk work a valuable contribution to German-Jewish history and the Guggenheimers book seriously wanting. More information about the Menk book can be found at <http://www.avotaynu.com/books/menk.htm>.

You can subscribe to AVOTAYNU at <http://www.avotaynu.com/journal.htm>.

CDs available on the IAJGS Las Vegas Conference

Dear 'Genners,
We are delighted to tell you about a wonderful opportunity to own a set of three CDs containing 31 recorded presentations at the just concluded IAJGS conference in Las Vegas. All this is thanks to Ron Arons and his small army of volunteers. Ron stepped up to the plate when it was announced that the customary practice of recording the sessions could not be followed.

Conference attendees as well as those who were not able to join us in Las Vegas now have an opportunity to listen to 31 of the sessions. We are making the complete set available at a very affordable \$35 plus modest shipping and handling costs.

To see a complete listing of which of the sessions were recorded visit the JewishGenMall at www.jewishgenmall.org.
The quickest way to find the complete description is to either enter the full title into the search field, "IAJGS 2005 Conference Lectures in a 3 CD Set (MP3 audio files)" or just select "Recorded Lecture"s from the Topic drop down box.

Carol W. Skydell, Vice President, JewishGen Special Projects

BIALYSTOKER MEMORIAL BOOK

It is my great pleasure to announce that Bialystokers and others around the world will now have access to *The Bialystoker Memorial Book*. The entire English language part of the book (originally published in both Yiddish and English), including all photos and captions, is being added to Ada Holtzman's Zchor (Remembered) website at <http://www.zchor.org/bialystok/yizkor1.htm>.

The objectives in making this book available to those from around the world with interest in Jewish Bialystok are:

1. To enable those interested to learn more about this city and its Jewish residents from the early days to the destruction of this beloved city by the Nazi oppressors.
2. As a tribute to Jewish Bialystokers and others who perished during the Shoah and those who survived and made a new life for themselves and never forgot.

This Internet publication is a joint project of The Bialystoker Center and Bikur Cholim in New York City, Ada Holtzman and her Zchor.org website, and BIALYGen, the Bialystok Region Jewish Genealogy Group.

We are very grateful to The Bialystoker Center for their permission to publish this important historical document on the Internet. We especially thank Barry L. Winston, President; Alys Kremer Grossman, Secretary; and Daniel Muskin, Administrator for their interest and support.

And, of course, we owe so much gratitude to and affection for Ada Holtzman, who has selflessly worked to create an unparalleled memorial to our ancestral town of Bialystok. Mark Halpern, BIALYGen Coordinator
<http://www.shtetlinks.jewishgen.org/bialygen/homepage.htm>

BALLARAT EXPO

Central Highlands Historical Association

Local and Family History Expo 2005

COMMUNICATIONS, CARRIER PIGEON to COMPUTERS.

Weekend of 1st - 2nd October 2005
Australian Catholic University,
Aquinas Campus, 1200 Mair Street Ballarat

<http://www.ballaratgenealogy.org.au/>

New Acquisitions to our Library Collection

JGSGB Series: Jewish Ancestors ?

A Guide to Organising your Family History Records
A Guide to Jewish Genealogy in Lithuania,
A Guide to Reading Hebrew Inscriptions and Documents

Preserving Our Litvak Heritage - A History of 31 Jewish Communities in Lithuania (JewishGen)

Genealogical Resources within the Jewish Home and Family
by Rosemary Wenzel, UK

Avotaynu Publications

Genealogical Gazetteer of the Kingdom of Hungary
A Dictionary of Jewish Surnames from Galicia,
Dictionary of Sephardic Surnames (2nd edition)
A Dictionary of German-Jewish Surnames

THE JEWISHGEN WEBSITE

Some guidelines for beginners

by Lionel Sharpe

Researchers often approach the AJGS with such questions as: *"I have tried GOOGLE search with no success - then I tried JewishGen but became confused - there is too many links to explore and I don't have the time - isn't there a simple way to find my ancestors - maybe even my own family tree ?"*

Impatience is one of the first problems to overcome when setting out for the first time. Certainly the internet is a fantastic tool to locate and search databases and find archival resources but most of us need plenty of time and perhaps expert guidance to steer our research.

The beginning researcher often believes that JewishGen is a one-stop-shop. It isn't - it is one of a number of useful sites, however, one does find a great deal of useful and well organised information. This short article will attempt to provide some guidelines for those who have not fully explored this website.

Family Finder

First open <www.jewishgen.org>. If you have not done so already I would strongly suggest that you register yourself on the *JewishGen Family Finder* (JGFF). There is no charge to register.

The JGFF is a computer-indexed compilation of surnames and towns currently being researched by over 67,000 Jewish genealogists worldwide. It contains over 330,000 entries: 90,000 ancestral surnames and 20,000 town names, and is indexed and cross-referenced by both surname and town name. The JGFF is a great networking tool, which is updated daily online. In essence, it enables you to locate others who are interested in the same names and birthplaces of your entries.

Once you have registered by entering details about yourself and your ancestral surnames, you will have access to entries placed by others. You will immediately receive confirmation by email of your research number and password. It is vital to remember both for future searching. Researchers should check the JGFF regularly to see whether new researchers have been registered.

If you know the city, town or shtetl where your ancestor was born, you can search for others interested in the same location. That is, do a place search rather than a surname search. Open the JewishGen Family Finder site, ignore the surname entry and instead, just type in the name of the town and country. You can then communicate with others interested in say, a small shtetl.

Sometimes we are not sure about the spelling of a surname or place name. You have the option to search either using exact spelling or a Soundex search. If the place name is unusual it is wise to first

consult "Where Once We Walked" by Gary Mokotoff and Sallyann Amdur Sack, which has a list of 23,500 individual communities including 17,500 former names of communities Yiddish names and many variant spellings or synonyms. It also provides the location of these communities. The second edition has 700 pages.

Family Tree of the Jewish People

Using your research number and password you will also have access to the Family Tree of the Jewish People (FTJP). No, it is not a family tree of every Jew who has ever lived. It is a database of individuals on family trees submitted by Jewish genealogists all over the world.

The online FTJP currently contains information on over two million and a half individuals, submitted by over 2,000 Jewish genealogists worldwide.

While the JewishGen Family Finder (JGFF) contains only surnames and town names, the FTJP contains data on individual people, their birth date and place, death date and place, marriage date and place, with links to parents, spouse(s) and children. You can contact the person who submitted his or her family tree to seek further information.

Some time in the future you might like to submit your own family tree. The FTJP can be searched on: <<http://www.jewishgen.org/gedcom>>

Databases

You will observe a heading - DATABASES. Click on this and you will find listings of 33 databases under sixteen headings such as Belarus, Great Britain, Hungary, Eastern Europe etc.

One of the most popular databases is **Jewish Records Indexing - Poland**, the award winning searchable database of indices to Jewish records of Poland, which was launched in early 1995 and is the largest fully searchable database of Jewish vital records accessible online.

More than 2.6 million records from 400 Polish towns are now indexed and more are being added every month. Information gleaned about your family of origin is available for ordering birth certificates and other documents from the Polish State Archives.

There are all some general databases such as the **JewishGen Holocaust Database which has 900,000 entries,**

JewishGen Online Worldwide Burial Registry with 500,000 entries,

Yizkor Books: A necrology database with over 170,000 entries from lists of Holocaust martyrs, published in Yizkor Books (Remembrance books compiled following World War 2)

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Reunited by luck, the internet and six degrees of separation

Jewish genealogists have combed the globe in the hope of finding a distant relative or helping others to do so, writes **PETER KOHN**.

ARMED with the truism that blood is thicker than water and that there are only six degrees of separation between all Jews, Melbourne's Jewish genealogists are striking out boldly to look for far-flung family ties.

All agree the internet has become a powerful tool in a search for family connections that immigration, wars and the Holocaust have torn apart.

Rebecca Wagen, 73, of Caulfield, a third-generation Australian, joined the Australian Jewish Genealogical Society (AJGS) of Victoria a few years ago with a view to finding out more about her great-grandparents, Abraham Isaacs and Frances Levy.

She posted their names in a people-search column of the AJGS newsletter and a reply came from a Bentleigh East woman, Yvonne Lewis, who turned out to be a second cousin.

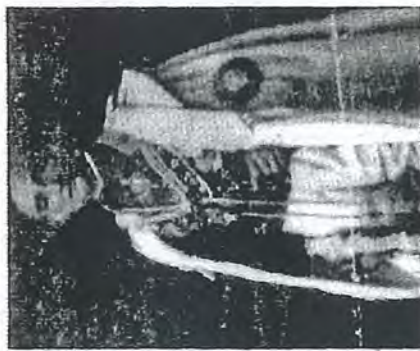
A few weeks later another posting appeared, this time from a woman in Queensland, whose

mother Rosemary Lawford is a second cousin.

"We all got together and now we're waiting for others to come out of the woodwork," said Wagen.

Lawford was able to report that Wagen's third cousin had been a British peer, Sir Rufus Isaacs, who was viceroy of India and that they were also related to opera diva Maria Garcia Malibran.

"My mother's family never talked about these people, so we didn't know about these things," said Wagen.



Viceroy of India Rufus Isaacs ... recently discovered distant relative of Melbourne's Rebecca Wagen.

"We were ecstatic. It was a sense of enclosure, a sense that we're not travelling alone."

Similarly, an email sent to the AJGS' newsgroup by an Israeli woman, Michal Golebowicz, yielded another unlikely reunion.

Golebowicz was making the request on behalf of Aliza, a friend who lives on her kibbutz. Aliza was looking for family members of her aunt, Trude Stettiner, whose daughter Margot had settled in Tasmania in 1939.

After reading the advertisement, AJGSV member Ellen Pahoff, 77, immediately thought of her longtime friend Zilla Roth, a Bentleigh retailer with whom she had grown up in Launceston. Roth's mother was named Margot — the same Margot for whom Aliza was searching.

"Computers are making this possible," said Pahoff, adding that coincidence also played a role.

"I'm probably the only one who would have clamped onto the fact that Zilla's mother's name was Margot. It was a matter of coincidence or maybe luck."

AJGS secretary Lionel Sharpe says search columns, such as the one in the AJGS newsletter, as well as the AJN's roots column, are invaluable



Sisters Fardis Sazina (second from left) and Rebecca Wagen (third from left) were recently reunited with newfound cousins Rosemary Lawford (left) and Yvonne Lewis.

forums for people tracking relatives and friends.

Sharpe says that the most useful place to start is the JewishGen Family Finder (www.jewishgen.org/gffi), which allows people around the world to join a surname search.

"With a little luck, you may find someone else who knows a great deal about your family of origin."

Exact spelling is not essential as the system will search for similar names.

As a next step, he recommends the Family Tree of the Jewish People (www.jewishgen.org/gedcom), a database of family trees created by genealogists around the world.

Sharpe says some people search for the sake of reuniting or of finding

out more about a deceased relative. There are also individuals or agencies seeking beneficiaries of deceased estates or life-insurance policies, or compensation for losses during the Holocaust and other cataclysms.

In searching for records in Australia, Sharpe says it is useful to start with a search of the National Archives of Australia, which is particularly useful for obtaining documents concerning non-British migrants.

For more information on the AJGS contact (03) 9523 6738 or visit www.ajgs-exist.com.au.

OUTLOOK 15

Tips for tracing Jews

People looking for People

The following notices are published as a community service to our readers and others. They come to us via discussion groups on the net or by direct mail and email contact with the Society.

SIGMAN/SWITGAL/MARKIEWICZ

My family in Poland has two photo albums which were given to them for safekeeping by a Jewish family in 1939. I would like to try and contact any surviving members or descendants of this family and reunite them with the material. The information that I have about the albums and the family is as follows. The albums are dated August, September and October 1935 and show a visit to Yugoslavia. The family name was SIGMAN and the wife's family name was SWITGAL. Mr. Sigman's sister was married to Mr. Markiewicz and his brother's name was Edward Sigman. Their home address in 1939 was: Ul. Jasnogorska 25(?) Czestochowa, Poland. The Markiewicz family had a son who went to Sienkiewicz High School with my aunt and a daughter who went to Slowacki High School in Czestochowa. Please respond privately to myself. I will then send your message to my sister in Poland.
Michael Niedzialkowski, Chicago <mn@polexport.us>

BIER

I am seeking any information about my cousins, Erna Lara Bier, born in Mannheim, Germany in 1924. She arrived in Australia with her brother, Herbert, born 1921, on the SS Oronsay in May 1939. There was also another relative, Albert Bier.
Yehudit Priva, Israel <ypriva@zahav.net.il>

RUSIECKI

My father was born in Poland in a town called Dzialoszyn in 1916. His name is Aron Rusiecki. I am looking for his brother's family who may have migrated to Australia.
Meir Rusiecki, Israel <meir_56@walla.com>

LEVI

I am interested in researching the Levi side of my family. My descendants date back to Aaron Alexander Levi, a Rabbi who died in 1883. I found a secondary text which refers to an Aaron Levi who help found the York Street Synagogue and was active uniting free settler and convict Jews in Sydney. However I have very little information to tie a connection on this. No doubt the family related to his son Solomon Levi, a Rabbi in Maitland, NSW, would know much more.

My question is: Has anyone heard of Aaron Alexander Levi (1823? - 1883). He married Sarah Moses in 1950 and seems to have remarried in 1877 to Sarah Dutsch. His father's name was Alexander A. Levi and Esther Levi, probably from London. I would be grateful of any information.
Graham Levi, Canberra <glevi@optusnet.com.au>

KLEBANSKY

I am searching for the family name Klebansky. In 1998, I contacted an Anna Klebansky but do not know her new email address. Last May I contacted a Morris Klibansky, who was listed on the Jewish Gen Family Finder (Researcher #7223) and lived in Turramurra, NSW. Do any of you know these people?

I Jane Neff Rollins, La Crescenta, California, USA
818-957-3405

FOX

Looking for the children of W.S. "Buddy" Fox who moved from the US to Sydney in the 1950's-60's. Buddy returned to the US but the children stayed in Australia. If anyone has any information about any member of this family, please contact. Buddy's grandmother. (Helen Strauss) was my grandmother's sister.

<sberg@kc.rr.com>

RUBINSTEIN

Looking for Rubinstein family whose ancestor left Minsk for Australia. One member in this family is named Brian Rubinstein. <sberg@kc.rr.com>

ST LOUIS PASSENGERS

I am assisting the US Holocaust Memorial Museum in trying to find out more about some passengers on the "St Louis". Some passengers were sent to England after the ship went back to Europe. Some left and went to the U.S. Others remained in England, but nothing is known about what ultimately happened to these people after they were sent to England in 1939. All we have are DOB and POB, and they interested in anything about their ultimate fate, where they died and if there are records of their burials in England. I have not been able to find anything in the JGSGB databases nor on Jewishgen burials. If anyone has any information please contact me privately.

Beifuss, Alfred	5/7/1890	Laasphe, Germany
Beifuss, Emma	8/19/1893	Frankfurt am Main
Haber, Nathan	1/26/1890	Dora, Ukraine
Hoffmann, Cilly/Zilly	9/10/1874	Wilhermsdorf, Germany
Hoffmann, Emma	12/14/1874	Priesen, Germany
Marcus, Freidrich	4/4/1889	Altona, Germany
Ryndski, Ferdinand	1/31/1916	Stuttgart, Germany
Schoeps, Beate	1/6/1938	Berlin, Germany
Schott, Else	4/5/1903	Krefeld, Germany
Turkowitz, Joel	10/4/1889	Liebnau, Germany
Turkowitz, Helene	4/17/1891	Rozwadow, Austria-Hungary
Weiser, Chawa	7/12/1883	Nowosielitza, Austria-Hungary
Saul Issroff, England,	<saul@shaul.homechoice.co.uk>	

ISAAC

I am looking for my great grandfather who married at the old church of Calcutta Fort William in India, 10th May 1879 John Isaac, Widower - Engineer
His father: George Isaac - Licence
Mother: Ada Lily Bockman - Spinster
I am need to know of his Birth, and Death and cannot
Mrs Lorna A James <billjames19@yahoo.com>

Continued from Page 9

SALOMON and HYMAN of NEW ZEALAND

I am researching images for an exhibition being prepared by the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa (Te Papa). The exhibition is called *Precious Metals*. It will explore the social and political history of gold and silver mining in New Zealand with an emphasis on the development of a distinctively New Zealand style in the art of silversmithing.

I am trying to find photographs of several noteworthy New Zealand silversmiths, both past and present and I am writing to ask whether you might have in your collections any photographs of the following two nineteenth century New Zealand silversmiths, both of whom spent time in Australia before settling here.

1. **Nathan Salomon** : a watchmaker, jeweller and silversmith, active in Dunedin New Zealand c1865-1870.
2. **Julius Hyman** (18? - 1911), watchmaker, manufacturing jeweller and importer. He arrived in New Zealand from Australia at the time of the gold rush and set up shop in Dunedin. After 1867 he became licensee of the Pier Hotel in Dunedin. He was a prominent Freemason and for many years president of the Jewish Congregation in Dunedin.

Ngaio Double, Image Research
Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa
PO Box 467, Wellington, New Zealand
NgaioD@tepapa.govt.nz

CASTEL

For some time I have been trying to find out details of my great-grandfather, David Castel born in Poland around 1846. He died in Brisbane 2/5/1927 and was married to Rosetta (nee Simmons born 18/7/1856). They were married in Ballarat on 6/2/1876.

Rosetta was a daughter of Abraham Simmons, born 26/2/1831 Penzance, Cornwall and Leah (nee Alman, born circa 1826, in Bristol, Wales). Leah and Abraham were married at the Melbourne Synagogue on 28/5/1854. Abraham was a son of Barnett Asher Simmons who was the longest serving Rabbi of Penzance. I would like to know where David Castel was born in Poland and his parents names, if he came to Australia via England or elsewhere, on which ship he arrived in Australia, if he was naturalised, etc. He later changed his name to David Cassells. Averil Young, Queensland, <buraside@bigpond.net.au>

Did your ancestors come from any of these towns in the WLOCLAWEK area ?

DOBRYN and WISLA, IZBICA KUJAWSKA, KOWAL, LUBIEN KUJAWSKI, NIESZAWA, PIOTRKOW KUJAWSKI, RADZIEJOW, RYPIN and SLUZEWO ?

The Jewish Records Indexing - Poland project <http://www.jewishgen.org/JRI-PL/> has been indexing the 19th century Birth, Death and Marriage records for these towns. The surname lists can be viewed on www.jewishgen.org/jri-pl/psa/status.htm under Wloclawek Archives. Click on the town name to check if your family name is listed.

Contact Rieke Nash, President of the AJGS (NSW) for more information about this project.
<president@ajgs.org.au>

Special Interest Groups

Once you have developed some confidence in researching the above sites your next step is to register yourself with one or more of the 21 Special Interest Groups (SIGS).

You will receive regular postings by email from other researchers in the same SIG. This might be a geographical region such as Ukraine or a topic such as Sephardic or Rabbinic genealogy.

JewishGen Discussion Group

If you wish to broaden your knowledge of Jewish genealogy and research methodology it is advisable to register with the JewishGen Discussion Group. You will be able to share information, ideas, methods, tips, techniques, case studies and resources. This electronic mailing list is a kind of electronic journal, which is sent to all subscribers on a daily basis.

This electronic mailing list is available in three different modes: Digest, Mail (individual messages), and Index. It is suggested that you request the Digest format to avoid overload. There is also an archive: **JewishGen Discussion Group Archives** which enables you to search over 100,000 previous JewishGen postings. Enter your surname or shtetl and see how many messages contain this name.

FAQs

If at any stage along the way questions pop into your mind go back to FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions about Jewish Genealogy) This gives an extensive discussion of methods and resources. Another general information link is: **JewishGen InfoFiles**. This is a comprehensive directory of resources organised by both topic and country.

Finally - support JewishGen

You might like to support the work of JewishGen - Click on **JewishGen-erosity** and become a contributor. You can make a general contribution to JewishGen, contribute to your favorite project, or honor a worthy individual. You might also volunteer to enter data on one of the many database projects. The **JewishGenMall** - sells a variety of books and products and your purchases help support JewishGen.

In the next issue we will explore other websites for the beginning researcher.

Information in this article has been quoted from the latest update of the JewishGen website.

PAGES OF TESTIMONY - YAD VASHEM

These can be viewed online at:

<http://www.yadvashem.org/wps/portal>

It is still not too late to submit a Page of Testimony for those lost in the Holocaust. Only about 2 million names have been submitted so far. You are able to locate submitters through the Israel Genealogical Society. Visit <www.isragen.org.il>

EXHIBITION

**Death
Burial and
*Beyond***

**13 September 05
to 15 January 06**

See Editorial - Page 2

Jewish Museum of Australia
26 Alma Rd, St Kilda
Tel: (03) 9534 0083
Open: Tues- Thurs 10-4, Sun 11-5
Closed Jewish holy days
www.jewishmuseum.com.au