

GENERATIONS

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JEWISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF ST. LOUIS

Affiliated with United Hebrew Congregation

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November 2004

IMPORTANT DATES AT A GLANCE:

November Meeting

Steamboats and Nineteenth Century St. Louis Robert Mullen, Speaker

Sunday, November 21 2:00 p.m.

NOTE: We will be back on our winter afternoon schedule for this meeting.

Meeting Held At:

Jablon Youth Lounge United Hebrew Congregation 13788 Conway Road

November Discussion Group is CANCELED

due to Thanksgiving Have a great holiday and remember to collect all those family stories!



No December Meeting

No December Discussion Group

See you in January.

November Meeting

Steamboats
and Nineteenth Century St. Louis
Speaker: Robert Mullen

Were steamboats romantic and traveling them an adventure? Steamboats began in America in 1787, with the first passengers and freight transported on the Hudson River in 1807. Within a few years steamboats were in the Delaware River, the Ohio River, and the Mississippi River. Steamboats remained the major transporters of both goods and passengers until the

1870s, when they were supplanted by railroads.

In the first half of the nineteenth century, steamboats were the major way to get to St.

Louis. In 1849, a fire on a steamboat spread to twenty-three steamboats. The fire swept up the levee, destroying tons of freight and fifteen blocks of residences, warehouses, and stores. This was the great fire of St. Louis. St Louis's nineteenth century history is tied to steamboats.

Come hear Robert Mullen present how life on steamboats was different from our romantic ideas. The presentation will include stories of people fleeing the epidemics of New Orleans and Memphis. The program ends with a presentation on the life and times in nineteenth century St. Louis.

Robert Mullen is Collections Manager for the Missouri Historical Society. He is very interested in riverboats, steamboats, and life in the nineteenth century. He is the editor for the Golden Eagle River Museum's publication *Paddlewheel*. He has been published in *Paddlewheel*, *Gateway Heritage*, and a soon-to-be published book on the nineteenth century printing industry in St. Louis.

There will be no December meeting due to the holidays. Have a wonderful Chanukah and a Happy New Year. Learn more about the January meeting in next month's newsletter.



NGS Schedules January Conference

The National Genealogical Society (NGS) has announced a 2005 Winter Warm-up Conference in Phoenix, Arizona from 20–22 January that might be just the excuse you need to fly into the sun for a few days.

Featuring some of the nation's top genealogists and some familiar St. Louis speakers, the conference offers a day of hands-on workshops and two days of one-hour seminars. Luncheons on Friday and Saturday feature Cyndi Howells speaking on the Internet and Elizabeth Shown Mills on writing your family stories. The Friday night banquet is entitled, "Coffins, Urns, and Zip-Lock Bags," and will be presented by Mark Lowe.

Registration for the conference is discounted for NGS members. There is a bigger discount if you register by 1 December. For more information on NGS and the conference, go to www.ngsgenealogy.org or contact Ilene Murray.

President's Message

September and October Meetings

Cynthia Millar, who has always been a friend to our organization, provided an interesting talk on maps in September. As always, we thank Cynthia for sharing her expertise and making us aware of the powerful collection available to researchers at the St. Louis Public Library.

Our October meeting was sparsely attended due to the St. Louis Cardinals Championship playoffs. However, what we lacked in quantity we excelled in quality. Our speaker, Robin Hanson, provided the attendees with an interesting background of the culture of Jewish cemeteries. Her interaction with the members left no doubt that Robin is a true asset to the local community for the interpretation of the writing on tombstones and cemetery customs.

Membership Responds to Needs

It has been a busy time for your board. In the past few months, the number of vacancies on our board has increased. I felt that it was justified to send an e-mail to our members in the expectation that a few people would volunteer to join in the administration of JGS. A copy of that message (modified to show the current need) appears on page four.

The response enabled us to fill three positions. Carolyn Altman and Eunice Solomon are our two new members-at-large (they will share the Parliamentarian duties) and Norman Kling will be our Discussion Group leader. Two members have expressed an interest in serving as the webmaster. Thanks to all of them for their willingness to contribute to the organization.

Rosters Coming

Unexpected from the mailing were suggestions from some of our members. An out of town member, Susan Abramson, mentioned that we should update and distribute our roster. She noticed that other organizations publishing a current roster experienced an increase in membership, meeting attendance, and volunteers. The board approved that suggestion at the last board meeting. Expect a new roster around the first of the year. Personal information that you previously requested to be private will not be included.

Revised membership forms will request maiden names. Such a simple idea, but useful to genealogists.

Sunday Afternoon Meeting Schedule Begins

The first of our Sunday afternoon meetings will start this November. I understand that some members do not drive at night, so this will be a perfect opportunity to join us for this program of local history, *Steamboats and Nineteenth Century St. Louis*.

Do you have any comments regarding the meetings or membership? Let me hear from you at <jerfransl@cs.com> or 314 434-2566.

Jerry Goldberg

JGS St. Louis President

Win an Early Registration to the 25th Annual Conference on Jewish Genealogy in Las Vegas, Nevada

The next International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies (IAJGS) annual conference will be held in Las Vegas, Nevada. The Jewish Genealogy Society of Southern Nevada, Inc., guest host for the conference, is sponsoring a raffle for early registration to the conference, which will be held 10–15 July 2005 at the Flamingo Hotel.

There will be 300 raffle tickets available at \$5.00 each. If the winning ticket belongs to someone who has already registered, the registration fee will be refunded. Drawing for the raffle will be held in January 2005 and the winner will be notified by 15 February 2005.

This raffle is open to anyone planning on attending the conference. With costs of these conferences rising each year, this could be a good value to the lucky winner. In a city that will give you odds on just about anything, the odds on *you* winning are pretty good!

Contact Carole Montello at <carmont7@aol.com> or Marilyn Brenner at <MMBrenners@aol.com> for your raffle tickets. And for more information on this conference, you can go to the JGS Southern Nevada Web site, <www.jgssn.org>.

This 25th Silver Anniversary Conference in the Silver State and in the 100th year of the founding of Las Vegas has all the makings of a very promising combination.

What's In A Name?

By Chuck Jackson

cbjackson1@mindspring.com

This will be the last in the ongoing series on surnames. Some names that appear in this list are names which I believe I missed in previous articles. If the name is a repeat from a previous article, then we may call it a "refresher."

WACHTEL

"Quail" in German. May refer to a place with a sign of the quail such as the famous house signs of Frankfurt. But, it may be a name selected by a Jew in remembrance of G-d's mercy and providence in providing quail to the Israelites on their journey through the wilderness.

WASSERMAN

From the occupation of "water carrier" or could be from the zodiac sign of Aquarius which would make it another luck ("mazel") name. Remember, superstition was very prominent in the everyday life of the Jew of the nineteenth century and before.

WEINREB

The following is directly from Rabbi Kaganoff's book and is repeated verbatim here as it is a very interesting explanation as to the meaning of the surname Weinreb.

Weinraub means "vine" in German, and Weinraub is the Yiddish version of it. Weinstock is also a vine garland which decorated a wine shop. All these names were used by owners of wine shops. However, the word for vine became a symbol for the name Israel. When Joseph II issued the law compelling the Austrian Jews to assume family names, the officials forbade them from taking Hebrew names. But the Jews evaded the restriction by preserving a Hebrew name in a symbolic way. In Jeremiah 6:9 Israel is compared to a vine, and the above names reflect the prophet's words.

I find this to be a very interesting development of a surname and did know a family in Louisiana whose surname was Weinstock. It seems Jews, when it was demanded of them they assume a surname, found ingenious ways of preserving their heritage and outfoxing the naming officials at the same time. Interesting and clever!

ZWILLENBERG

Yiddish for Zillenberg, a town in Upper Bavaria.

Thus ends a fascinating journey through history, geography, and symbolism in understanding our Jewish surnames. Did I cover all Jewish surnames? No. The ones I missed are ones for which I could not find any information. If I missed yours, then perhaps someday you will find it and will have the heartwarming feeling that you found what could be the origin of your family's surname.

In the beginning of this column several years ago, I started by talking about my family's names and, in particular, Jackson. It has been proven my ancestor's real name was Itzhak Yaacov. He "anglicized" it to Isaac Jackson soon after reaching the States. Why Jackson? I do not know. I do know he was drafted in the Prussian army when he was young and I surmise he escaped to the United States to avoid being used as cannon fodder as many Jews were used in the early 1800s. Changing his name was a step in leaving the horrors of war and atrocities behind. Yet, he listened to the call for help when the Confederate States of America was born and he served the Confederacy as did others in my family. I have yet to find which outfit he was in, as the one noted in his obituary was a combination of the remnants of several regiments and stragglers from yet other regiments. But, as we all know, time will reveal the secrets.

Best of luck in your searching. I hope these monthly columns have been a source of information in helping you determine your family tree and its origins. I found it very interesting and have learned a lot. Perhaps you did, too.

Rabbi Kaganoff and Arthur Kurzweil, many, many thanks.



And from the bottom of our hearts, the JGS thanks Chuck for this monthly treat he provided for us. If you have an idea for a column or would like to write for Generations, please contact the editor, Ilene Murray, at <ilenemurray@mindspring.com>.

Prize-Winning Essay Reminds Us of Why Our Ancestors Came

A lovingly written essay called "Streets of Mud, Streets of Gold" relates the immigration experience of one Jewish family, but echoes a process probably common to many of our families. It is an account of how the family of author, Fruma Klass, came to America in the early 1900s. You can find the essay online at this address: <www.powerofpurpose.org/winners/printer_klass.html>. You will surely find some relationship to your own family's journey from Europe to America in Fruma's story.

Meet the Members: Carolyn Altman

By Sylvia Letvak Jaffe

Carolyn Altman's interest in genealogy was aroused when she wanted to learn more about Ida, her paternal grandmother. She shares, "My grandmother died when my dad was four years old.



He was raised by his stepmother, Bessie Sacks. I didn't know where to begin my research so I joined JGS of St. Louis. I felt an ethnic group like the society would understand the uniqueness, and the background of the Jewish people."

Carolyn was right! She learned a lot about how to trace a family tree

through the beginning genealogy course and monthly meetings conducted by JGS of St. Louis. She was successful in her research and was able to share information discovered and previously unknown with her dad's sister, her aunt.

She disclosed that walking around the cemetery and discovering by accident the grave of her husband's grandfather was her most exciting research discovery. Carolyn explains, "My husband didn't even know his grandfather Altman's name. His grandfather had died a year before he was born."

Carolyn and Harvey Altman have been married forty-two years. They have two daughters and two grandchildren. She is a native St. Louisan. Carolyn is a training assistant for United Cerebral Palsy. Her interests vary from genealogy to computers to yoga. The Altmans exercise by walking in a swimming pool.

She is researching the surname ALTMAN, her grandparents, Jacob and Eva GOLDMAN, and PETERS, PETRONOVSKY, or PETER.

Carolyn is the Tribute Chair for JGS of St. Louis. She encourages members to send tribute cards for all occasions. Her phone number is 314-432-2757. The proceeds benefit the JGS library housed in United Hebrew Library.

Kaminets Podolsky Archives Seeks to Rebuild

You may remember reading that the archives in Kaminets Podolsky, Ukraine, had a very serious fire earlier this year. The archives is requesting that anyone who has received copies from them send to Ukraine a clear copy, with identifying information

JGS-St. Louis Needs You!

By Jerry Goldberg

Our organization of about 180 members has an involved participation of forty members serving on the board or attending the monthly meetings. Percentagewise, for a volunteer/cultural organization this is a good figure. Approximately fifteen of those forty members participate in the administrative activities of our society.

During the past few months, we have lost board members for various personal reasons. We have failed to fill committee leadership positions for over six months. These vacancies are placing unfair additional burdens on the present board members, many of whom have worked hard for the society since it began almost ten years ago.

My responsibility as president of JGS of St. Louis is to help this organization achieve its mission and the goals of its members. Unfortunately, our board membership has too many vacancies affecting the quality and quantity of genealogical tasks faced by JGS.

We have the following board vacancies

- Secretary: Take and distribute the minutes of the board meetings
- Librarian: Maintain the library of the society
- Publicity: Society public relations
- Webmaster: Responsible for posting information and maintaining the Web site

Each of the above positions requires attendance at a monthly board meeting, held in the evening for approximately two hours each month, plus the duties of the office—approximately four—six hours per month.

A more complete list of the responsibilities can be found in our bylaws on our Web site, <www.jewishgen.org/jgs-StLouis/>. Click on *Bylaws and Standing Rules of JGS of St. Louis*, located in the white area beneath the gold stripe. If a *File Download* window appears on a Windows PC, click on *Open with AcroRd32.exe*, and then OK. Mac users, this file will open with Adobe Acrobat Reader.

We have assisted a majority of our members in locating ancestors, and JGS wants to continue this tradition. As part of that tradition, in March of 2005, we'll have our annual "big event" with Stephen Morse, developer of the genealogical search Web site <www.stevemorse.org>, as our speaker.

We have been asking for your help for almost a year and as you can see, the response has been sparse. We need your time and energy to meet our goals. As president, I ask that you consider and apply for one of the above vacancies.

Please respond to Jerry Goldberg, 314 434-2566, or e-mail <jerfransl@cs.com> with the subject "JGS Board Vacancies."

on the back to assist the archivists there in re-assembling their salvaged documents. For additional information, go to <www.archives.gov.ua/Eng/News/pr-2004.10.php>.

Officers and Board Members

Officers

President: Jerry Goldberg Vice President: Peggy Nehmen

Secretary: TBA

Acting Treasurer: Ilene Wittels

Committees

Programs Joel Shedlofsky
Computer Gene Schneider
Librarian TBA
Archivist Ed Rosen
Tributes Carolyn Altman
Cemetery Indexing Cassie Buerki &
Gene Schneider
Funeral Home Indexing Jerry Goldberg

Marriage Indexing Eunice Solomon

Generations Ilene Murray

Publicity TBA

Research Dick Franzel
Finance Morton Bearman

Webmaster TBA

Members At Large

Eunice Solomon Carolyn Altman

Founders

Sylvia Jaffe Art Jaffe

Web site:

www.jewishgen.org/jgs-StLouis

How To Contact Us:

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President:

jerfransl@cs.com

Generations Editor:

ilenemurray@mindspring.com

Dates When Laws Were Passed Requiring Birth and Death Registrations

You may be surprised to learn that most states in the United States did not require births and deaths to be recorded until the beginning of the twentieth century. Some counties kept these vital records well before the states required them, and copies may be available at the county courthouse instead of on the state level. Clip this chart out as a reference so you will know when you should be looking for birth or death certificates in the states where your ancestors lived.

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Genealogy Event of Interest: November

St. L. Genealogical Society & St. L. County Library Present:

Tuesday, 9 November 2004 7:00 p.m. at Co. Library Headquarters Auditorium *Web sites, CDs, and Then What?*

Speakers: Joan Beach and Ann Fleming, CG, CGL



For more information on this program, go to <www.stlgs.org> or call 314-647-8547.

What We Learn from Others: The Sharing of Ideas

By Marilen Pitler

Chronicles, JGS of Greater Philadelphia, Fall 2003

In the article, "It's All Relative," we are reminded of the incredibly wonderful work the JewishGen Web site is doing for researchers in Jewish genealogy. The article states: "There are more than 300,000 ancestral towns and surnames in the JewishGen Family Finder, more than 500,000 Eastern European localities in the JewishGen ShtetlSeeker, more than 2 million individuals in the online Family Tree of the Jewish People, and full texts of more than 100,000 messages posted to the JewishGen discussion group since 1993, in addition to the myriad databases, information files, and much more."

Please do not forget about this incredible organization and the many, many ways it can help you while you are conducting your research. If you don't have access to a computer, use a friend's and check it out at **<www.jewishgen.org**/>. If you find something worthwhile, say thank you with a generous donation, too!

According to the same article, "More than 3,000 pages of Sephardic and Ashkenazi marriage index books and full registers were received from the Istanbul Chief Rabbinate and are now online at: <www.asfonline.org/portal/genealogy/turkey>.



Chronicles, JGS of Greater Philadelphia, Winter 2003

This issue of Chronicles listed several interesting Web sites, among them:

- City Directories of the United States of America: www.uscitydirectories.com/
- BookFinder.com: www.bookfinder.com/
- Nat'l Archives Records Administration— Preservation:

www.archives.gov/preservation/index. html

 The Library of Congress—Preservation: www.loc.gov/preserv/



Roots-Key, Newsletter of the JGS of Los Angeles, Winter 2003

A Future Vision—At the turn of the century, Jews invested in the Holy Land. The article states, "An on-line database of about 100,000 turn-of-thecentury Jewish names from around the world has elicited much interest from Jewish genealogists. Jews purchased at 1 pound each, the 250,000 shares of the Jewish Colonial Trust Ltd., beginning in 1899. JCT was the parent company of the Anglo Palestine

Bank and the predecessor of Bank Leumi. Most shares were bought in the early years of the 20th century. Jewish men and woman purchased the shares from their homes in Baku to Bombay and Baghdad; Johannesburg to Johnstown, Pennsylvania; Paris to Pittsburgh; Moscow to Massachusetts; Chicago to Calcutta; Samarkand to San Francisco; Lithuanian shtetls to Louisville, Kentucky." The article concludes with, "This database is a valuable resource, whether to redeem shares or for additional genealogical information." To read the entire article, check out *Roots-Key* in our library.

The online database can be found at: www.jct.co.il/shareholders.asp, or www.jct.co.il/contact.html>.



Chronicle, The Jewish Historical Society of Southern Arizona, January 2004

For a most interesting article on the Converso or Crypto-American Jew, read one man's journey into the discovery of his roots, "Confessions of a Marrano," in this issue of *Chronicle*. You will find it on our library's shelves.



The Evergreen Mishpacha, JGS of Washington State, Winter 2003/2004

Genealogy News—Canadian Naturalization Database

A naturalization database located on the Canadian Genealogy Centre Web site is now available containing names of thousands of naturalized Canadian citizens from the early part of the twentieth century. The Jewish Genealogical Societies of Ottawa and Montreal worked in partnership with the Canadian Genealogy Centre to create the database that currently contains lists of immigrants from 1915 to 1932. According to the article, "The new database is one of the few Canadian genealogical resources specifically designed to benefit researchers with roots outside the Commonwealth, for example, from the countries of Eastern Europe."

To visit the Canadian Genealogy Centre, click on **<www.genealogy.gc.ca/>**. Once there, click on "English," then click on "Databases." Finally, scroll down to the heading *Naturalization* and click on "1915–1932 Canadian naturalization."

"Even if you're on the right track, you'll get run over if you just sit there."

Will Rogers.

Researching Jewish Ancestors in Great Britain?

JewishGen, in conjunction with the Jewish Genealogical Society of Great Britain, has announced the "All U.K. Database" which is now online at <www.jewishgen.org/databases/UK>. According to their press release, "This is a multiple database search facility, containing over 50,000 entries referring to people in the United Kingdom—England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. These databases have been contributed by the Jewish Communities and Records-United Kingdom Special Interest Group (JCR-UK) and individual donors. The "All U.K. Database" incorporates the following data sets:

- United Kingdom Marriages, 1838 to 1972: from all areas of the United Kingdom.
- Wales Census Returns: 1,800 records from the 1851 and 1891 censuses
- London Jews (pre-1850): over 9,000 Jewish traders based in London
- Jewish Traders/Businesses in London, 1769–1839: names of over 5,000 Jewish traders based in London
- JewishGen Family Finder (JGFF): more than 10,000 entries by Jewish genealogists researching families in England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland
- JewishGen Online Worldwide Burial Registry (JOWBR): 25,000 records from cemeteries within the United Kingdom

The JewishGen "All U.K. Database" provides a search engine so you can "simultaneously search all of the above resources. The database is a work in progress and new entries are being added regularly. These databases are made possible only with the working involvement of many volunteers and your financial contributions. For those of you with United Kingdom interests it will be of special value to your genealogical research."

Rutledge Hill Press Publishes Series of NGS Genealogy Books

Have you started your holiday gift list yet? Here are some suggestions. Rutledge Hill Press has been publishing a series of genealogy books for the National Genealogical Society that are worthy of your attention. Written by experts in each area, the books cost \$19.99 each and are well worth the money.

The series consists of:

- Genealogy 101 by Barbara Renick
- *Online Roots* by Pamela Boyer Porter, CGRS, CGL and Amy Johnson Crow, CG
- A Family Affair by Sandra Maclean Clunies, CG

More New York Indexes Go Online

Because so many of our ancestors lived in big cities when they first came to America and because those cities are often so hard to do research in, it is always exciting to get genealogical information from them placed on the Internet. As has been reported before in *Generations*, the Italian Genealogical Society of New York has been instrumental in indexing and placing online many New York City records.

Recently, Gary Mokotoff, editor of *Nu*, *What's New?*, in Volume 5, Number 18, (10 October 2004), reported that the Italian Genealogical Society of New York had been adding to their Web site indexing project, and what a bonanza for New York researchers!

Now online is the index to grooms' names for New York City from 1908–1936. It is located at <www.italiangen.org/NYCMarriage.stm>. In the future they will be adding the grooms from 1895–1897 and brides and grooms from Brooklyn (Kings Co.)

The group has also updated their New York City death index. It now includes 1898–1919, all boroughs; 1891–1894, Manhattan only; and 1895–1897, Manhattan and Brooklyn.

According to a spokesperson, future plans call for some exciting additions to the site:

- NYC death indexes, 1920–1929 (coming soon)
- NYC grooms' index, all boroughs, 1897 to 1907 (in progress)
- Brooklyn brides' index to 1937 (nearing completion)
- Indexes to Eastern District Court (Brooklyn, NY) naturalizations through 1926 (nearing completion) and 1927 on (just getting started) Indexes that already exist at the site include:
- Nassau County naturalizations, 1899–1986
- Suffolk County naturalizations, 1853–1990
- Bronx County naturalizations, 1914–1952
- Military Naturalizations in the Greater New York City area (WWI, WWII, and Korean War)
- Southern District Court (New York) Naturalizations, 1906–1959

If you have ancestors who lived in New York City during the twentieth century, and you have not visited this Web site recently, waste no time in going there. Then bookmark it and return often! It is a fabulous resource for New York City research.

- Planting Your Family Tree Online by Cyndi Howells
- The Organized Family Historian by Ann Carter Fleming, CG, CGL
- *Unlocking Your Genetic History* by Thomas H. Shawker, M.D.

For more information or to order, go to: <www.rutledge hillpress.com>.

Inquiries

I am seeking information about Zolman WEIS(S)BERG married to Itta Weis(s)berg. They had two sons, Edward and Simion/Sam Weisberg. Zolman was a cantor in the early 1900's. I would like to find any children of Edward Weisberg.

Frank Weisberg 11492 W. Prentice Dr Littleton, CO 80127 303-986-9730 fdweisberg@msn.com

I am seeking information about a possible relative, a leading Orthodox rabbi in St. Louis, approximately in the 1920s and 1930s. If you know anything about the family origins of Rabbi Hayyim Fischel EPSTEIN, that would be greatly appreciated.

Steve Goldstein

Steve Goldstein 2000 Linwood Ave. #10F Fort Lee, NJ 07024 201-346-1357 sgoldstnj@aol.com

My grandfather was born in St. Louis in 1880, November 6. I suspect that he may

have been part of the Jewish community in St. Louis in his early years. He broke off relations with his family when he became an adult and moved to California. He was a medical doctor there. I would appreciate any information you might have regarding the WISE family in the St. Louis area in the late 1800s, early 1900s. Mary Wise mbreadlady@infostations.com

I am seeking information about my great-grandparents, Dorothea REDLICH and Henry SILVER, married 4 April 1964 (*sic*) at Congregation Bnai El in St. Louis by Rabbi Henry KUTTNER. They later moved to N.Y. and N.J. Any information on relatives of either would be welcome. Henry's father was Solomon and his mother, Hannah HOLTZ. Son Harry was born in St. Louis. Janet Silver Podell 1351 Harker Ave. Palo Alto, CA 94301 650-321-4262 or 415-263-7200, x31 janetsg@aol.com



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