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Editor: Bubbles Segall

bubbles@octa4.net.au

Southern African Jewish Genealogy Special Interest Group Newsletter

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

My alternate hat in South African Jewish genealogy is that of Project Director of the Centre for Jewish Migration and Genealogy Studies at the Kaplan Centre, University of Cape Town.

In February we held working meetings with people in Cape Town who contributed to the project. The year's progress and future plans were discussed. We also had a public meeting at the SA Jewish Museum. Over 50 people attended, many were newcomers to genealogy but it was nice to see a number of familiar names and faces. I led the workshop with an overview of the types of documents that can be obtained from Lithuania and South Africa. To save time, detailed handouts of contact addresses for research were given. Steven Albert, Project Manager, gave a masterly demonstration of the prototype all Southern Africa Jewry database and its search capabilities. This master database has been designed by Yafa Abraham of the Dept. of Information Technology at University of Cape Town. There are now approximately 160,000 individual entries (some names appear more than once in different databases). In summary the revised Jews' Temporary Shelter database with additional registers is now on the database, almost all Southern African burials are now at hand (with the exception of some Cape Town and environs cemeteries).

Passenger arrival records for the 1920's are now complete. Jews in the Boer War, WW1, WW2 and Mahal volunteers in Israel have been entered. There are a few communal records and registers being added from time to time. There is an ongoing process of checking, which is very time-consuming. The major future plans are naturalisation records for the Cape and the Transvaal, and the ongoing project to digitise Passenger manifests relating to foreigners or non-British citizens travelling to South Africa, at the Public Records Office in Kew, London. To date, 1895-1903 have been photographed and the images are being entered into a database designed by Dr Graham Smith of the University of Leicester. The data entry is done by students in Cape Town, and again there is a detailed process of checking.

Partly because of the checking needed, and for certain privacy and copyright constraints, it may be some time before this database can be made generally available on the World Wide Web. It will be available for genuine academic research within

the university ambit, and also sections of the database will be made accessible to visitors at the SA Jewish Museum Discovery Centre. Note that this has nothing to do with JewishGen. Steven Albert continues to answer genealogy queries at the e-mail address: kapgen@humanities.uct.ac.za

The 2004 IAJGS Conference in Jerusalem will have a very significant programme content relating to Southern Africa. For full details see the following website:

The IAJGS 24th International Conference on
Jewish Genealogy
Renaissance JERUSALEM Hotel
July 4-9, 2004

See the web page at:

<http://www.ortra.com/jgen2004>

A SA-SIG luncheon will be held at the conference and I hope to see many of you there.

Saul Issroff

saul@shaul.homechoice.co.uk

EDITORIAL

You may be aware that I have taken over from Beryl Baleson as editor of this newsletter. I look forward to hearing from you as well as receiving contributions for the Newsletter from you. If you have friends or relatives who are interested in their South African roots and do not receive this newsletter, a copy of the subscription form can be found at:

[http://www.jewishgen.org/safrica/
newsletter/index.htm](http://www.jewishgen.org/safrica/newsletter/index.htm)

This issue has three references to my home town of Stellenbosch, the first being a website which has old photos of people who lived in Stellenbosch between the early 1900's and the 1940's or even 1950's.

The second is an article published in the Australian Jewish Genealogical Society Newsletter *Kosher Koala* about my paternal grandmother, a nurse who worked with Jewish patients suffering from tuberculosis in Boston, Massachusetts, in the early 1900's until her move to Stellenbosch and subsequent marriage to my grandfather in 1910.

The third reference to Stellenbosch is a story written by Moira Schneider from the *SA Jewish Report* about the 80th anniversary of the laying of the foundation stone of the Stellenbosch *Shul*. The Chief Rabbi, Cyril Harris delivered a sermon and welcomed guests, some having travelled as far afield as Israel, Canada and England for this very special occasion.

Jonathan Smulian who left South Africa in 1955 to join the Israeli Army, migrated from South Africa to the UK in 1957 and now lives in Houston, Texas, has written an account of his father's life and travels which started in Oudtshoorn and continued into Boksburg, Johannesburg, Port Elizabeth, London and finally the USA.

Adam Yamey acquired an undated newspaper report describing the marriage of his grandparents in the Roeland Street *Shul* in Cape Town. As well as having genealogical and historical interest, the newspaper report gives a detailed description of the costumes worn by the bridal party and guests, which is fascinating to say the least.

Louis Zetler has been busy collecting information about SA Births, Engagements, Marriages and Deaths, which he is entering into an Excel database that may assist you with your research.

The name Lazar Sidelsky is synonymous with that of Nelson Mandela. Lazar's son Dov Sidelsky and his wife Naomi, who live in Jerusalem, were fortunate to be invited to attend the Presidential Conference on the Jews of the Diaspora held at the House of the President, Moshe Katzev last year. Dov has written an article about this historical and moving occasion.

Many of you may have met Ann Rabinowitz or had contact with her regarding your South African roots. She is a mine of information and has written an article on locating primary or secondary resources for South African Jewish research outside of South Africa.

It is not long now until the 24th IAJGS International Conference on Jewish Genealogy which is being held at the Renaissance Hotel in Jerusalem 4-9 July. The program is jam-packed with interesting speakers, fantastic research opportunities and exceptional tours of Jerusalem and Israel.

Some of the program highlights include:

- The Memorials of Vanished Communities (the very first cataloguing of Israeli memorials of the Jewish Communities destroyed during the *Shoah*)
- 1875 Montifiore Census of the Jewish Population of Eretz Israel
- Helkat Mehokek (Translation of Hebrew tombstone inscriptions found on the Mount of Olives)
- An Index to the Jacobi Collection of Family Trees
- Sephardic and Mizrahi Genealogical Research in Israel
- Index of Family and Private Archives at the Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People (a collections of private and family archives)
- A guide to the Archives and Archival Material for Genealogical Use in Israel and much, much more

It is not too late to find out more about the conference at their website, which is:

www.jewishgen.org/jerusalem2004

Happy Reading and Happy Pesach, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Please note that the contents of the articles in this Newsletter contain the opinions of the authors and do not reflect those of the Editor, nor members of the SA-SIG Board.

Bubbles Segall

Editor

Borrooloola

Northern Territory, Australia

bubbles@octa4.net.au

A COMMEMORATION DOWN MEMORY LANE

Moira Schneider
Cape Town

This article was originally published in the SA Jewish Report on 6 February 2004, and is reprinted here with permission.

Eighty years ago the foundation stone of the Stellenbosch shul was laid. To mark this historical event, a special service was held at the shul on Sunday 25 January followed by a tea party. The following story written by Moira Schneider and published in the SA Jewish Report, gives an account of the day.

It was a nostalgic journey for 150 present and former Stellenbosch residents as they gathered to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the laying of the foundation stone of their beloved synagogue. Some had come from as far afield as Canada, the United Kingdom and Israel to what for many doubled as a reunion of long-lost friends. "I haven't seen you for 40 years!" one elderly woman was overheard to exclaim as she excitedly embraced another.

Myrel Ginsburg, whose late husband Lossy served as chairman of the Stellenbosch Hebrew Congregation for 27 consecutive years of the 52 that he lived there, travelled from Eastbourne in the United Kingdom to attend. She was responsible for the magnificent arrangement of flowers in the *shul* foyer "for old times' sake", she said, proving that she hadn't lost her touch from the days when this was her regular duty.

Two 90-year-olds were in attendance – former resident Percy Bub, who now lives in Canada, and Dave Potash, together with his wife Judy Potash, with his late brother, owned the Stellenbosch Furniture Company from 1937 until 2003 and lived in the town for close on 60 years, having recently moved to a retirement village in nearby Somerset West.

At a service in the synagogue, Morris Marcus traced the history of the congregation since its beginnings in April 1900, when 24 foundation members attended services in two houses in the town. After the Anglo-Boer War, an influx of residents necessitated a move to bigger premises in Bird Street, for which the princely sum of one pound and

15 shillings a month was paid. "They even built a *mikveh*," he commented.

After the First World War, with the influx of refugees from Eastern Europe, it was decided to build the present *shul*, with Reverend A. P. Bender officiating at the laying of its foundation stone in 1923. Reflecting the Jewish demographic shift to the main urban centres, the congregation today consists of a mere 15 families.

Chief Rabbi Cyril Harris, who delivered the sermon, said that the name of the synagogue – *Agudat Achim*, meaning a band of brothers – was particularly appropriate. "The affectionate bonds that have been created are quite remarkable," he noted. "That's why the *shul* is full this afternoon. Those who left here ages ago still have Stellenbosch in their hearts – there's a bit of Stellenbosch all over the Jewish world."

Addressing himself to the diminished community, Rabbi Harris appealed to them to continue for as long as possible. "You're doing a marvelous job in difficult circumstances," he said, adding: "It's important for all of us to know that Stellenbosch is alive and well."

The *shul* holds regular Friday evening services conducted by former Herzlians Les and Barry Zetler, as well as Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur services led by students from the University of Cape Town. On *Simchat Torah* and *Chanukah*, Capetonian Morrie Marcus officiates.

Sheila Zetler, who together with her husband Michael, and daughter and son-in-law, travelled from Israel for the occasion, commented on the large number of former Stellenbosch residents living in Israel. "It's easier to get a *minyan* of us there than it is here," she quipped.

Summing up the mood of the day was Gerald Potash, a Somerset West resident who grew up in Stellenbosch. "It was such fun being here today – the spirit in the *shul* was amazing," he said. "As we walked in, we could see in our mind's eye where everyone sat all those years ago. We just picked up with one another, exchanging some of the humorous stories of the past. It was a very, very special day – for us, this is as good as it gets." In short, it was everything a trip down memory lane should be.

MARY LURIE SEGALL

Bubbles Segall

This article was originally published in Kasher Koala, the Newsletter of the Australian Jewish Genealogical Society Inc., Volume 10, No. 4, December 2003, and is reprinted here with permission.

In about 1984, my first cousin John Emdin and his wife Ava, sent their two children, Mark and Natalie to stay with my husband Ian and I for 2 weeks in Katherine where we were living at the time. Katherine is a country town 300 kilometres south of Darwin. Mark was about 13 years old and Natalie, ten. The Emdins, like me, migrated from South Africa to Australia in the seventies and settled in Sydney where they still live today.

Mark and Natalie brought me a book *From Generation to Generation: How to Trace your Jewish Genealogy and Personal History* by Arthur Kurzweil. I read this book from cover to cover and became absolutely hooked on genealogy. I ate, slept and dreamed genealogy for weeks and weeks. I couldn't get enough. I decided that the first thing to do was to find out the story behind a beautiful plaque which John has in his possession in memory of our grandmother, Mary Segall nee Lurie.

I first became aware of this plaque in the early 1980's when I visited John in Sydney. Years previously his father and mother, Samuel (Sonny) and Dorothy Emdin nee Segall, visited relatives in America who gave them this plaque which is inscribed as shown in Fig. 1.

I wrote to my father Eddie, in South Africa, asking him for some more information about his mother, my grandmother. He told me that she had been a nurse in Boston USA and that she worked with Jewish patients suffering from tuberculosis. Using Arthur Kurzweil's book I looked up addresses of places in Boston who I thought may have information about her.

My first letter was sent to the American Jewish Historical Society on the campus of the Brandeis University which is in Waltham, Massachusetts. The Librarian, Nathan Kaganoff, was extremely helpful and found some information regarding my grandmother which he forwarded to me. He also suggested that I contact the Beth Israel Hospital Archives in Boston, Massachusetts.

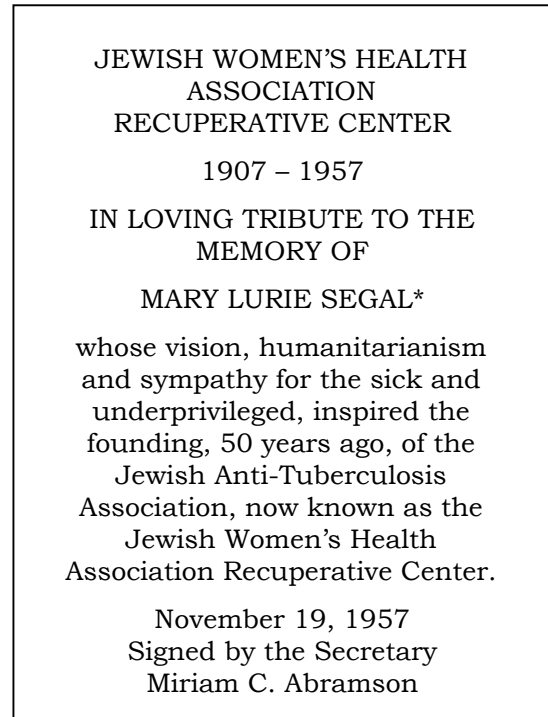


Fig. 1. Plaque honouring Mary Lurie Segall

Ruth Freiman, the hospital's archivist contacted me. With the help of Dr. Arthur J. Linenthal, a staff physician who was studying the early history of Boston's Jewish Hospitals, she was able to send me the following information.

In 1907 Mary Lurie began her service with the Tuberculosis Clinic at Boston's Mount Sinai Hospital. It was recognised that many poor migrant Jews with language difficulties were becoming ill with tuberculosis and it was suggested that a nurse be employed to home visit and supervise patients. The nurse's role was to investigate the home conditions of patients and ensure that the prescribed treatment was being carried out. Mary Lurie was the first nurse to be employed in this program. She organised women to work in the crowded tenement districts of Boston conducting educational campaigns for immigrants afflicted with tuberculosis.

The Mount Sinai Tuberculosis Program was supported almost entirely by funds from the association started by Mary Lurie. Late in 1907 the group changed its name to the Jewish Anti-Tuberculosis Association and early in 1908 was chartered by the state as a charitable organisation.

In 1908 Mary Lurie resigned from the Mount Sinai Hospital Society and travelled to a town called Stellenbosch in South Africa to join her sister, Etta Ganenda. Whilst there, she met and married my grandfather, Daniel Tzvi Segall.

Mary Lurie was awarded a posthumous citation from the Jewish Women's Health Association at a Jewish Women's Health Association Golden Anniversary Luncheon in 1957 for her contribution to education about tuberculosis, hence the plaque.

Both Ruth Freiman and Dr. Arthur Linenthal were interested in this plaque as Dr Linenthal's father Dr. Harry Linenthal was awarded a similar citation at this Golden Anniversary Luncheon in 1957 for his contribution .

In 1991 I received a treasured book in the mail from Dr Arthur J. Linenthal entitled *First a Dream: The History of Boston's Jewish Hospitals 1896 to 1928* which he had just completed. My grandmother receives a mention for her role in nursing Jewish patients suffering from tuberculosis in the early 1900's.

These revelations regarding my grandmother turned out to be the beginning of an ongoing fascination with family history, which continues to give me immeasurable enjoyment and satisfaction today.

* *Mary's husband Daniel Zvi Segall spelled Segall with two 'el's'. He and his brother Eliezer Nosen were the only family members who used this spelling. On the plaque dedicated to Mary, the name is spelled with one 'el'.*

Bubbles Segall, a member of our society who lives in the Northern Territory of Australia, has followed in her grandmother's footsteps by choosing nursing as a career, and like her she also worked in the field of public health. Bubbles has spent many years working with traditional Aboriginal people in remote parts of the Northern Territory and like her grandmother has been recognised for her contribution to health.

To commemorate the Centenary of Federation (1901 – 2001), the Australian Government awarded Centenary Medals to individuals who have made a significant contribution to Australian society. Bubbles was a proud recipient of this medal for her contribution to women's health in the Northern Territory. She was previously acknowledged by the

National Family Planning Association when she received their inaugural President's Award.

A WEDDING IN ROELAND STREET

Adam Yamey, Ph.D., B.D.S.

A couple of years ago my aunt, my father's sister, Elsa Budlender, sent me a photocopy of an undated newspaper report. It was about the wedding of my grandfather Solomon Yamey and his bride Leah Halperin. This wedding must have occurred sometime before the birth of their first child Ralph Yamey, who was born in 1915. I have copied the article out below, inserting question marks where I was unable to read the photocopy. It seemed to be of interest to try to identify some of the people who appeared at that wedding. I have highlighted the names of those about whom I have found some information, by using **bold** typeface.

I have received much help with this work from Bubbles Segall, Woolfie Emdin, Alex Walt, Abe and Charlotte Sher, Jeff Schur, Milton Simanowitz, Jeremy Pinn, Peter Arnold and Elsa Budlender and other people mentioned in the footnotes. Whilst acknowledging their interest and help I cannot hold them or anyone else responsible for any errors or inaccuracies that may have crept into the text.

A JEWISH WEDDING.

Last Sunday the **Roeland Street Synagogue** was the scene of a very pretty wedding, the contracting parties being **Mr Solomon Yamey of Namaqualand**, and **Miss Leah Halperin**, eldest daughter of **Mr. and Mrs. J. Halperin** of this town. The bride looked charming in a handsome toilette of white satin charmeuse artistically draped with lace and trimmed with pearl beading; she carried a bouquet of hibiscus and ferns. Her bridesmaid was Mis(?) **Frieda Halperin**, who looked extremely dainty in a gown of white satin with tunic of rich lace; with this she wore a white tulle hat with black streamers. The flower girls, the Misses **Frieda and Jenny Walt**, **Lily Emdin** and **Sophie Schur**, looked very *chic* in white satin **Kate Greenaway** dresses with pretty mob-caps; they each carried crooks with posies of white stocks and violets. The bridegroom

was assisted by Mr. **Woolf Halperin** as best man. The Rev. Wilder officiated.

There were some exquisite toilettes. Mrs. Halperin, the bride's mother, was in a gown of old gold and saxe blue satin with which she wore a toque to match trimmed with black ostrich plumes; **Mrs. Walt of Paarl**, wore a fawn-coloured satin with smart black taget(?) hat, with pretty tulle tulle ruching and plume; **Miss Horwitz**, of Faure, in yellow satin with dainty toque trimmed with ribbon and lace; Miss de(?) Jong, of Paarl, wore navy blue satin with facings of white, the hat being exquisite and trimmed with cornflowers. Another handsome toilette was that worn by **Mrs. Emdin**; this was of saxe blue satin, and with it she wore a black plumed hat; **Mrs. Katzen**, in striped champagne resilda cloth with coatee of paillette and small hat trimmed with pink roses and lace, was much admired: her daughter **Winnie** looked well in white crepe de chine; as did the **latter's sister** in a frock of pale blue satin with overdress? ?ninin; **Mrs. Pinn** received a full share of admiration in a toilette of biscuit-coloured cloth, with which she wore a white and black toque; **her daughter Julie**, too, looked *chic* in a grey costume with floral tulle toque; Mrs. David Binder looked elegant in a gown of old gold silk broche draped black Chantilly lace; to complete this exquisite toilette she wore a black satin hat trimmed with upright black ostrich feathers; Mrs. Smith wore cerise, shot with black taffetas and black toque trimmed prettily with ruched lace and plumes; also looking extremely well was Mrs. Kapolevitz in a black satin gown with dainty hat trimmed with the now very fashionable wings of tulle; **Mrs. Lear** wore a white frock with hat to match; Mrs. M. ?B???? , ?? toilette of royal blue satin and hat of purple tagel trimmed with floral ribbon, presented a really handsome figure; Miss Rose Whitten wore navy blue with black beaver hat trimmed with floral wings, and looked her best; **Mrs. Morris Alexander** always looks smart; on this occasion she wore a gown of gavotte coloured satin and a large picture hat; **Miss Goldi Levy** wore a striped foulard gown with smart shaped black hat; her sister, too, looked well in blue; **Mrs. Klein**, who came up from Potterville for the

occasion, wore a brown striped cloth with a tagel hat *en-suite*; **Mrs. N. Emdin** was in a navy blue tailored costume and her sister-in-law **Mrs. A. Emdin**, wore a dainty satin toilette; **Mrs. Witkin** looked most becoming in block silk poplin with hat to match; **Mrs. Kruskel** was elegant in a brown costume, with which a black hat with white ostrich feathers was worn; Mrs. Get(?) wore blue saxe satin with collar of embroidered lace and mustard-coloured hat trimmed with floral ribbon; Mrs. Barnet was in a gown of brown cloth with a pretty toque of canary colour; Mrs. Bloch wore a blue costume with black beaver hat; Miss Brady wore navy costume; Miss Udelman looked well in brown satin; Miss Berkaintz was handsome in a toilette or reseda green with black hat trimmed with upright roses; Miss Hoffman in a navy serge costume, looked dainty; Miss Ber(?)man, in a grey costume with hat to match trimmed with white osprey, looked really pretty.

A reception was held in the **Good Hope Hall** and in the evening a delightful dance was given. Among well-dressed women I noticed Mrs. Walt in silver-grey satin veiled in ninon and coatee of Brussels lace; **Miss Freeman** in fawn foulard trimmed prettily with a rich ???? ????ing; **Mrs. Jacobs**, in pale yellow satin draped with lace and a panel of beads; Mrs. Schuleman, in a white lace robe with belt of floral ribbon, looked fresh and becoming; **Mrs. Bloch** wore a gown of navy blue charmeuse with collar and belt of floral silk; pretty **Miss Pinn** looked just as sweet in a pale blue satin frock draped uniquely on one side only with rich looking lace; Miss Dora Fox was dainty in a gown of pale blue charmeuse trimmed with opal buttons and lace; another handsome toilette was that worn by Miss Hill: this was of grey satin and lace.

Below this article on the photocopy are the following two items and one advertisement. (I include them as they may help to date the wedding more exactly.)

Rondeau

by A Ruffian

The Suffragette has come to stay,
To that event we may as well
Make up our minds. Her strident yell
Is heard in England everyday.

Asquith at present is at bay,
Endeavouring in vain to quell
The Suffragette.

In time no doubt, she'll get her way
(**when that may be, no man can tell**).
But – pray divulge not where I dwell –
Woman does not deserve, *I say*,
The Suffrage yet!

Judges and White Gloves

Mr. Justice Searle is going about the
country collecting white gloves. It is
not thought, however, that he
proposes joining the S.A.R. dining
saloon staff just yet.

BY SPECIAL APPOINTMENT TO GOVERNMENT HOUSE

Mr. Isidor Fisher's Premier Orchestra

The Best Band in the Peninsula

For Dances, receptions, etc.

c/o DARTER'S
128, ADDERLEY STREET

My notes on the article reproduced above are as follows:

Mr. Solomon Yamey of Namaqualand, son of Iosel Jami and his wife Elka, was born in Plungyan (now known as "Plunge"), Lithuania in 1883. He arrived in South Africa in about June 1899 (information from South African Archives). In 1902 when he was naturalised he worked as a storekeeper in Mooresburg, Cape Province. I am not entirely certain what he was doing in Namaqualand. I believe that he worked with, or for a Mr. Jowell, also from Lithuania, father of Prof. Jeffrey Jowell, now in London. Solomon died 3rd May 1931 in Cape Town. Buried at Woltemade cemetery.

Miss Leah Halperin, was a daughter of Joseph Halperin and Dvorah Garb. Born in Lithuania about 1894, died in Port Elizabeth 1987.

Mr. and Mrs. J. Halperin: Joseph (Yisroel = Shroel) Halperin was born in the district or in the actual town of Telz (Telsiai) in Lithuania in about 1870. His father was Meir Halperin (a Rabbi?) and his mother was Feige Reitze Rayvetz, both from Telz in Lithuania. He arrived in the Cape about 1897. He established a bakery at 37 Harrington Street in Cape Town. When this 'folded' he ran a dairy business in Scott Street. His wife was Dvorah (=Dora), born Garb in or near Plungyan in Lithuania in about 1867. Her parents were Yehchezkiel Garb and Etta (or Yetta) Katzin, both of Plungyan.

Frieda Halperin was a sister of bride. She married Simon Horwitz.

Frieda and Jenny Walt were daughters of Isaac Jacob Walt (1878-1962) and Leah Garb, sister of Dora Garb (see above). Leah Garb and her two daughters were killed in 1926 in a rail disaster at Salt River near Cape Town. Some years after he became a widower, Isaac Walt married Leah Yamey, who was by then a widow.

Lily Emdin is now Lilla Miller. See separate section on the Emdin family, later on.

Sophie Schur is most probably the daughter of Moses Schur (who was born in Plungyan in about 1845 and died in 1915) and his second wife Leah, née Stutzen. Leah Stutzen was from Telz in Lithuania, where she married the widower Moses Schur in 1902. Moses brought her to South Africa. They set up a guesthouse called *Amalinda* at 126 Buitenkant Street in Cape Town, where Leah lived with her three children including Sophie. Buitenkant Street intersects Scott Street on which Joseph Halperin's dairy was located.

Moses Schur was a well-known *smous* based in Namaqualand. He had stores at Nabapeep, O'okiep and Bowesdorp. According to his grandson, Milton Simanowitz, Moses spent a lot of time in Namaqualand but visited Cape Town to see his wife. Likewise Leah Stutzen Schur also used to visit Moses in Namaqualand. Elsa Budlender has recently informed me that her father, Solomon Yamey, the bridegroom, had a store in Bowesdorp in Namaqualand (This information was given to Elsa by her late brother, Ralph.). She told me that Bowesdorp is almost inaccessible, being at the bottom of a steep incline. She thinks that it may now be uninhabited. [I cannot find any reference to it on detailed maps of the area although I can locate

Nabapeep and O'okiep. Both Nabapeep and O'okiep had copper mines (copper having been discovered in the area by Governor Simon Van Der Stel as early as 1685). According to the *South and East African Yearbook and Guide*, 1947 edition, copper mining in this area ceased in 1932. The mine at O'okiep reopened for a while in 1940 but has long since closed.]. The reason that Bowesdorp can no longer be found on the map is that in 1924, it was abandoned and re-established as the town of Kamieskroon some few kilometres north of the site of Bowesdorp

Is it possible that Moses and Leah Schur were in some way involved with introducing Leah and Solomon, the bride and bridegroom? My father has vague recollections that Mrs. Schur who owned the guesthouse might have had a reputation for matchmaking. Also worthy of note is that both Leah Stutzen and Joseph Halperin came from the same town in Lithuania: Telz.

Kate Greenaway was an illustrator of children's books. I have no idea what a Kate Greenaway dress would have looked like – early 20th century Laura Ashley style? I believe that they are still worn to this day, especially by Americans.

Woolf Halperin, a brother of the bride. Born in Telz, died in Cape Town. Married Annie Jacobs.

Mrs. Walt of Paarl, mother of Frieda and Jenny, see above (i.e. Leah Walt, née Garb).

Miss Horwitz. I am not sure who she is/was, but Frieda Halperin, see above, married Simon Horwitz.

Mrs. Emdin is probably Janie Emdin, mother of Lilly.

Mrs. Katzen. There were Katzens in Cape Town. There was a Katzen family related by marriage to the Schur family. Mrs. "Katzen", might possibly have been Mrs. Katzin. Mrs. Katzin was born in London in 1865 and she married Isaac John Katzin, a brother of Etta Katzin (see note about Mrs. J. Halperin, above). However this is only likely if there were an error in spelling. This Mrs Katzin had a daughter Winifred who may well have been known as "Winnie" (see below).

Winnie was probably Winifred Katzin (1894-1994) who later married Ernest Gloor in Lausanne.

Latter's sisters: Winnie had three sisters: Hilda, Olga and Norah - I have no idea to which of these the report refers.

Mrs. Pinn and her daughter Julie: Mrs Pinn was Mrs. Lazar (or Lazer) Pinn, née Aurelia (or Oralia) Wolpert. They had three daughters, including one called Julia, alive at the time of the wedding. The Pinnns were from what is now Lithuania. Lazar was married in Memel, which is not far from Plungyan, and came to South Africa in 1890. In 1893 Lazarus, a watchmaker, started Pinn's, the jewellers in Long Street. By 1907 he had moved his business to Adderley Street (see www.pinns.co.za, the web-site of the still-flourishing firm).

Mrs. Lear lived in Muizenberg. Her husband owned a business in Newmarket Street in Cape Town. He traded horses and donkeys and also sold eggs. Joseph Halperin, the bride's father, may possibly have been a customer as he used to paint egg on to the bread that he used to bake.

Mrs. Morris Alexander was almost certainly Ruth, the wife of Morris Alexander KC (1877-1945). He was also an MP. Ruth, born 1st May 1888, was daughter of Prof. Solomon Schechter. For a great deal of information about Ruth's interesting life, see *The Cape Town Intellectuals*, by Baruch Hirson, published in 2001 by Witwatersrand University Press: Johannesburg.

Morris Alexander was a graduate of Cambridge University (St Johns College) and an active associate of the Roeland Street Synagogue. He was the Founder President of Jewish Board of Deputies for the Cape Colony. As he could speak English much better than many of the congregation of this synagogue, his assistance was often sought. In the early years of the 20th century Morris was largely responsible for getting Yiddish made a language recognised by the courts in South Africa.

Miss Goldi Levy: Lived in Muizenberg and married a Mr. Goldfuss.

Mrs. Klein: There was a Klein family in Porterville, near to Piketberg. They lived somewhere between the two places.

Mrs. N. Emdin: Mrs Nathan Emdin.

Mrs. A. Emdin: Mrs Abraham Emdin

Mrs. Witkin was most probably the sister of Mrs Kruskal (**Mrs. Kruskel**). They were sisters, born Emdin.

Good Hope Hall: The *Goede Trouwe* Hall was in St. John's Street, Cape Town. It is in about the same place as the National Gallery stands today.

Miss Freeman may have been the person who married David, brother of Sir Solly Zuckerman of London. In which case her father was the *Shamas* of the Great Synagogue in Hatfield Street, Cape Town.

Mrs Jacobs. Was she possibly related to Annie Jacobs, who married Woolf Halperin (see above)?

Mrs. Bloch may possibly have been the wife of the late Monash Bloch.

Miss Pinn: See note on Mrs. Pinn, above.

Asquith: Herbert Henry Asquith, an opponent of the Suffragettes, became Prime Minister from 1908 to December 1916. The marriage of Leah and Solomon presumably occurred during Asquith's term of office but before the birth of Ralph Yamey in 1915

when that may be, no man can tell: 1928, actually!

At this point a note about the Emdin family may be of interest, as they appear so much in the article about the wedding.

Velva Emdin was born in Plungyan, Lithuania (as also were Dora Garb, Etta Katzin, Isosel Jami and his son Solomon Yamey, the bridegroom in the report above). Velva married Rachel Freedman and they had 8 children. Of these the following "star" in the newspaper report:

1. Jack Emdin married Jane Israel. Their daughter is Lila Emdin now Lila Miller.
2. Nathan Emdin married Bessie Guinsberg
3. Sorah Beila Emdin married Benjamin Kruskal.
4. Devorah Sheinah Emdin married Louis Jacob Witkin.
5. Abraham Emdin [1886-1963, Cape Town] married Hilda Maresky [1880-1970, Cape Town].

This newspaper clipping provides a view, as through a keyhole, into the social circle of a group

of Lithuanian Jewish immigrants who had recently arrived in Cape Town. With the help of many knowledgeable people I hope that I have been able to bring some life back to this community, which is fading from memory. I would be very pleased to learn more about any of the people about whom I have made notes, and any information on those whom I have not been able to identify would be very welcome.

Adam Yamey
195 Northend Road, West Kensington
London W14 9NL, UK

RANDOM NOTES ON THE LIFE OF MY FATHER, BAREND* "BEN" SMULIAN

Jonathan Smulian
Houston, Texas, January 2004

Ben Smulian was born at Oudtshoorn, Cape Colony in 1895. He was the son and the second youngest of the 8 children of my grandparents, Solomon (Shlomo) Smulian and Hinde Segal.

Solomon arrived in Cape Town, South Africa in about 1885 from the town of Plumyan (now Plunge), Lithuania. From the Cape he travelled by train and then stagecoach to Oudtshoorn shortly after to try to make his fortune in the flourishing ostrich feather business and bring his family over from Lithuania. I believe the family (his wife, three sons and two daughters), came to join him in South Africa in about 1893. As far as I know Solomon had no specialized skills and was known as a Hebrew scholar.

Shortly after the Boer War the family moved from the Cape Colony to Boksburg, Transvaal, a small town near Johannesburg. They were very poor, my grandfather having failed as a feather merchant. The family opened a small store run by my grandmother. Only my father Ben and his younger sister Annie were born in South Africa. His oldest brother Adolf had emigrated from South Africa to the United States after the Boer War to work with his uncles, the Smulian and Froug families in Bartlesville in Oklahoma Territory (prior to Oklahoma becoming a state in 1907). There, at the railhead, they had a thriving business trading dry goods with the local Indian nations. This business later grew into Froug's supermarket chain headquartered in Tulsa,

Oklahoma, and located in many cities in the south. Adolf's family still lives in Fort Worth, Texas.

An older brother Samuel, having, as a young man, worked as a *shochet* (a ritual butcher) in Oudsthoorn, emigrated from South Africa to London in the years before WW1. There, he studied medicine and became a very well-known and beloved general practitioner in the East End. After his death his family returned to South Africa before WW2. A third brother, Horace became a successful real estate agent in Johannesburg. The rest of the children, all female, married and remained in South Africa with the exception of a younger sister Annie, a schoolteacher, who also went to the States, married an "oilman" and "disappeared".

Ben Smulian was an excellent student and won a scholarship to King Edward School in Johannesburg. He then went to the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, where he graduated with a BA and LLB at age 22. During WW1, in 1917, he was recruited by Major Alistair Miller, (a highly decorated South African fighter pilot and later a great friend) with a small group of young South African volunteers to be trained in the UK as pilots in the RFC (later RAF). He was commissioned as a Flying Officer, got his wings but did not see action over France as the war ended in 1918. He returned to South Africa to become a member of the Johannesburg bar.

In 1920 he left Johannesburg and went back to the UK to further his legal studies at Wadham College, Oxford University where he received his MA. To specialize in Roman Dutch law, then applicable in South Africa, he later studied and presented a thesis receiving his LLD from the University of Leyden in Holland. He became a member of the Middle Temple, was called to the bar in the UK but returned to the bar in Johannesburg in 1921.

He used to tell the story of how in March 1922 on the orders of General Smuts he, a pilot and an officer, was called up as a private with other reservists into an infantry regiment. They were ordered to march on the striking gold and coal miners outside Johannesburg. His uniform and helmet did not fit, his boots were too big and he was completely untrained as a foot soldier. Toward evening the infantry, having marched all day, bivouacked for the night. Exhausted, he found a snug place to sleep under an overhanging rock ledge. He had been issued a ration of brandy before

turning in and slept soundly. When he awoke in the morning, the sun was high in the morning sky, birds were twittering and the fields around were littered with paper and trash blowing in the breeze. This was the only sign that an "army" had been there. After mulling over the fact that he had had no infantry training, had no idea of whether the cause was just, where the "army" had gone or what he was supposed to do, he decided to walk home by himself to Johannesburg. Evidently nobody missed him because he suffered no consequences. Later he said he was pleased he had no part in the action in which 200 striking miners (whites!!) were shot and killed in putting down the riot.

In 1924 he married my mother, Sylvia Stern (born in 1898 in Zeerust in the Boer Republic of the Transvaal). My late brother Donald was born in Johannesburg in 1925 and in 1928 the family moved to Port Elizabeth where my father opened his own practice as a solicitor (attorney) and notary public.

I was born in Port Elizabeth in 1930. My father had a relatively small but successful family, general and corporate law practice (he did not wish to continue as a barrister or take criminal cases). He was known (I was told by a number of leading barristers) as an outstanding attorney, a rigorous lawyer whose case preparation was highly praised. He also became the confidant, advisor and lawyer for many of Port Elizabeth's prominent citizens and their families. As a lawyer he had a series of partners. These included Louis Dubb, who became Mayor of PE and Robert Graham whose family founded Grahamstown. He was, however, unable to build long-standing partnerships or significantly expand his practice as he did not find colleagues who, he considered were as single-mindedly dedicated to the firm or worked as hard and as rigorously as he did. I strongly suspect he was very stubborn – a family trait - and may have been difficult to work with as he demanded from his legal associates the extraordinarily high standards which I know he set for himself.

Apart from being active in Jewish affairs, as an ardent Zionist prior to Israel becoming a state in 1948, president of the Eastern Province Jewish Board of Deputies and in the early 1930's, secretary of the Western Road Synagogue, he played a number of roles in enhancing the city's cultural life and in activities related to his past as an airman.

In 1934 he was the attorney for Reverend Abraham Levy and prepared the winning case against von Moltke and the Nazi inspired and funded South African Gentile National Socialist Movement (Grey Shirts) in the notorious “Elders of Zion” libel trial. My father, a small man, also organized and led a squad of young Jews, trained (under the guise of being members of a boxing club) in techniques for physically opposing Grey Shirt activities. They actively disrupted the infamous meeting at the Feathermarket Hall in Port Elizabeth in 1933 when the Jews were accused by von Moltke and his henchmen of planning (in the “Elders of Zion” document purported to have been stolen from the Western Road Synagogue) to take over South Africa as part of world wide anti-Christian plot. Although this outrageous accusation had absolutely no basis, many prominent people in Port Elizabeth believed it to be true, anti-Semitism was widespread and this was why the libel case against the Grey Shirts was brought (see Grey Shirt Judgment, Libel Action at Grahamstown, reprinted from Grocott’s *Daily Mail*, Grahamstown, August 21, 1934). The libellous accusations were clearly proven false and the Grey Shirts discredited and fined by the Grahamstown judges.

Although he never flew as a pilot again after WW1, in the late 1920’s Ben Smulian was founder and first president of the Port Elizabeth Flying Club, one of the first such organizations in South Africa to foster flying, organize flight training and convene local flying events. This became a family interest carried on for many years after WW2 by my cousin, a professional pilot and flying instructor, the late Squadron Leader Philip Smulian AFC. A South African, who was at Cambridge when WW2 broke out, he had been decorated for services which included leading an RAF bomber squadron, taking part in the Battle of Britain as well as paratroop landings in Sicily and towing gliders for the airborne assault on Arnhem in Holland (epically depicted in the film “A Bridge Too Far”). Ben Smulian was also founder of the first South African commercial airline, Union Airways, with his old mentor and friend Colonel Alistair Miller as chief pilot. Union Airways was later taken over by South African Airways prior to WW2.

As small boys in the 1930’s, my older brother and I spent every weekend at the “aerodrome” cadging “flips” with every private aircraft that passed through Port Elizabeth. My mother and the ladies of

the flying club volunteered every week- end to serve tea and sandwiches in the Flying Club hut as a respite to the long suffering passengers of South African Airways who landed exhausted and hungry after cross-country flights in the slow old Junkers 88 planes. I often think of this when flying and complaining about the “plastic” food served by today’s airlines.

My father and mother, an excellent pianist, were devoted to music. He made an important contribution by founding the Port Elizabeth Music Society and later the Eastern Province Federation of Music Societies which brought world-famous musicians from Europe to give concerts in the most important cities in the Eastern Cape (Port Elizabeth, Grahamstown, Queenstown, King William’s Town and East London) on a regular basis. These 8 or 10 concerts a year, based on local subscriptions and fund raising, greatly enriched cultural life for many years in a region which had virtually no access to live classical music. My parents were totally engrossed in organizing and arranging all the musical and social aspects of this concert program. They were also responsible for initiating the formation of a local orchestra in Port Elizabeth in which my mother played the viola. Ben, after serving as president for many years, eventually was elected President for Life. I wouldn’t be surprised if these organizations, or their successors, are still going strong 60 plus years later.

In 1939 at the start of WW2 Ben volunteered to serve in the South African Air Force but was rejected because of his age. Although I do not remember my father playing an active part in politics (he supported Smuts’ and Hofmeyer’s United Party as did almost all English-speaking South Africans), I do know that he insisted on arranging free concerts in the townships and locations where the musicians he brought to the city would play before large Coloured and African audiences who were excluded by law from attending the concerts at City Hall. Also, although he did not participate, he in no way sought to deter me from supporting anti-apartheid causes at UCT or becoming a member in 1953 of the Liberal Party, advocating universal franchise in South Africa. He knew party members were under police scrutiny and that our names were listed but always encouraged me to openly express my views.

Ben Smulian was a quiet, modest, principled and sympathetic man, devoted to his wife, to “good

books” and the enjoyment of classical music. He eventually sold his law practice in PE, partially retired in 1964 and came to live in Harrow on the Hill near London, UK (where I lived with my family) and spent winters in Marbella, Spain. In London my parents were ardent concertgoers. Later they returned to Cape Town in about 1969 to be close to my mother’s mother, Sophia Stern nee Lazarus. Born in London, she emigrated to South Africa with her parents and siblings in 1877 and lived to an age of 106). After Sophia Stern died, Ben and Sylvia Smulian left South Africa in 1979 and came to live with my family in Reston, Virginia, outside Washington DC.

My father often shook his head in amazement that he had lived in times where, as a young man he was flying a fragile bi-plane at the incredible speed of 90 MPH (in a dive) and as an old man, sitting in his living room in front of television he could watch Neil Armstrong landing on the moon as well as the subsequent space shuttle program.

He died in Reston, Virginia, USA in 1987, aged 91.

* *The story goes that he was to be called Baruch but the registrar of births in Oudtshoorn wrote Barend (an Afrikaans name) instead. This led to the strange situation when on one occasion, the Nazi Grey Shirts came to his office to ask him to advise them because they thought he was an Afrikaner. He told them to leave and later was very much involved in exposing their vicious lies leading to their subsequent downfall.*

**THE PRESIDENTIAL CONFERENCE ON
THE JEWS OF THE DIASPORA (with
special reference to the Jews of South Africa)**

*Dov Sidelsky
Jerusalem*

Lazar Sidelsky was the Johannesburg lawyer who employed Nelson Mandela as a law clerk in the 1940’s when it was uncommon for white South Africans to provide black people with professional opportunities. (The name of the law firm was Witkin, Sidelsky, and Eidelman.) Lazar’s son, Rabbi Dov Sidelsky and his wife Naomi, who now live in Jerusalem, were invited to attend the Presidential Conference on the Jews of the Diaspora which was held at the House of the

President of Israel, Moshe Katzav in November last year.

Dov supplied this article for the Newsletter.

Naomi and I were most surprised when we received a special invitation about two and a half weeks ago. It was to the *Presidential Conference on the Jews of the Diaspora with special reference to the Jews of South Africa* to be held at the House of the President of Israel, Moshe Katzav.

My immediate response was: how fitting it would be to honour the President with an album recording the ties between Lazar Sidelsky and Nelson Mandela. I immediately contacted the Presidential Home and asked for permission to present such an album at the Conference. I was told to fax my request, which I did. After not receiving a reply, I phoned and this time was told to speak to Akiva Tor, the President’s Advisor on Diaspora Affairs. He told me to send an e-mail giving greater details. This time the answer was in the affirmative: I could go ahead.

Naomi and I prepared the opening page together.

- a) I had copies made of a number of the photographs of Nelson Mandela and Lazer Sidelsky and the pictures with them and Mom and Colin and Rosalind and Danny.
- b) Following that, newspaper articles about Sidelsky and Mandela.
- c) Then I put in photocopies of the cover of Mandela’s *Long Walk to Freedom* and all the pages referring to Lazer Sidelsky and Alon Liel’s book cover and his references to Sidelsky.
- d) Also included were two articles about Mandela’s visit to Israel and his meeting with Dov Sidelsky and his wife, Naomi, at Prime Minister Barak’s office.
- e) Finally, there were the obituaries written about the late Lazer Sidelsky, the Mentor of Nelson Mandela.

While the photocopying was done several days before the conference, Naomi and I put the album together only the night before.

The big day arrived – Wednesday 28 November. Joe and Phyllis Simon took us with them in their car. We arrived at the Presidential House and had to

wait patiently in line, invitations in hand to be carefully checked. At last we could go ahead through the lovely gardens leading up to the House. There we found ourselves in the foyer/reception hall before the auditorium. South African voices everywhere – most of the people were a good ten years or more older than us. Also a group of men and women soldiers of the IDF – all born in South Africa. Very few religious men and women, by the lack of men wearing *kippot* and women with *sheitels*. More remarkable, most people were wearing very ordinary clothes – the folk coming to a conference to pay homage to their president. Naomi stood out among the women, elegant in a stunning wine-red suit which she had made herself and wearing her lovely pearl necklace and her cameo. Besides the Simons', our good friends Vic and Shirley Roth were there, Naomi's doctor, Hazel Kushnier and Jack and Shelley Winnett.

The two main speakers were Professor Gideon (Gidi) Shimoni of the Hebrew University and Yehudah Kay (Shirley's nephew) of the Jewish Board of Deputies. Gidi Shimoni spoke about the changes undergone by the SA Jewish Community from the Apartheid era to the present – from an academic point of view. Yehudah spoke of the community today – its circumstances, increasing religious identity, its problems and how these problems are being handled and what of its future.

Before President Moshe Katzav spoke, a gentleman presented a book that he had written. Then I was called upon to make my presentation. I asked for permission to say a few words. I went up to the stand with the microphone: The following is approximately what I said in Hebrew:

After being incarcerated for many years, Nelson Mandela was finally released and rose to greatness to become the President of South Africa and one of the world's great leaders. Only in recent years did it become known that Mandela served his articles in the Law Office of Lazer Sidelsky, my father, of blessed memory, who was the only white lawyer prepared to accept into his office this young black man from the Transkei. There is no doubt that if Mandela had not had the opportunity to be articled to Lazer Sidelsky, he could never have risen to be the great leader that he

became. I would now like to read the introductory page of the album, which I am about to present to the President:

Presented to

*PRESIDENT MOSHE KATZAV AND HIS
WIFE, GILA*

On the occasion of

*THE PRESIDENTIAL CONFERENCE ON
THE JEWS OF THE DIASPORA*

*As a mark of Esteem and Respect
And as a memento of the ties between*

*LAZER SIDELSKY AND NELSON
MANDELA*

My words were received with loud applause. I then approached the President and presented him with the album, turning the pages and giving brief comments and explanations. We shook hands to the clicks of the cameras, some official and some of our friends, and then I finally sat down. The President then replied, adding his own comments and good wishes. At the end of the conference, a number of people approached me, complementing me on the presentation and my short address.

In conclusion, I would like to say, that it was not just the presentation to President Moshe Katzav that was important to me. It was that I felt this to be the most fitting occasion that both the President and this crowd of mainly ex-South Africans should learn of Lazer Sidelsky and his contribution to the rise of Nelson Mandela and the emergence of the New South Africa. It was always Dad's inspiration and encouragement that gave me the confidence to speak in public and it was his spirit that inspired me to rise to this very special occasion.

SOUTH AFRICAN JEWISH GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH

Part I – South African Resources in America

Ann Rabinowitz

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As the Research Coordinator of the South Africa SIG, I am asked, many times, how to locate primary or secondary resources for South African Jewish research outside South Africa. This is due, in part, to an increasing number of South Africans who have settled in the U.S. and want to research their families and to Americans who have found that they have a South African family connection.

My first suggestion to researchers is to go to the South African SIG web site on JewishGen:

<http://www.jewishgen.org/safrica>

which has an enormous amount of InfoFiles, databases and tools for beginning genealogical studies. In addition, a second tremendous resource for locating existing materials on South African Jewry is the book *Bibliography of South African Jewry*, by Veronica Belling, Librarian, Jewish Studies Collection, University of Cape Town, published in Cape Town by Jewish Publications - South Africa, Kaplan Center for Jewish Studies and Research, University of Cape Town, 1997. This can be found at the New York Public Library and YIVO among other locations.

While much of the pertinent material on South Africa is either located in South Africa or held in a limited number of private hands, there are, at least, three major repositories in the U.S. that presently have holdings and one Internet resource worth mentioning:

Mormon Family History Centers (throughout the U.S.)

The Centers have access, upon request, to various microfilmed records for the Jewish community in South Africa for specific time periods. These records include such areas as emigration and immigration, applications for naturalization (Cape Colony only), death certificates, estate/probate documentation (death notices, wills, and liquidation/distribution accounts), and other

miscellaneous records such as birth, marriage and death records for particular areas as well as City Directories for certain years.

In 1997, when I visited the Gardens *Shul* in Cape Town, SA, I found that the Mormons had microfilmed the records. With the cooperation and permission of Ben Resnick, head of the *Chevra Kadisha*, I took notes on what records and years were covered in the Gardens *Shul* material and copied the first record for each book that I then put into a database.

This database is now on the SA SIG web site at *<http://www.jewishgen.org/safrica>*

Further information on this and other South African Jewish records held by the Mormons is available through the work of Roy Ogus, SA-SIG American Coordinator, and can be found on the SA-SIG web site as well.

<http://www.jewishgen.org/safrica/mormon.htm>

University of Texas in Austin, Texas

The University has the largest collection of South African Jewish material in the U.S. both in *belles lettres* and periodicals according to Nathan Snyder, Judaica Librarian and bibliographer of the collection. The collection is housed in the Perry-Castañeda Library (PCL), and can be accessed by going to the following site:

<http://www.lib.utexas.edu/pcl>

The materials were made available through the efforts of Prof. Seth Wolitz, Marie and Edwin Gale Chair of Judaic Studies, who obtained the donation of material in 1996 and 1999 from Prof. Joseph Sherman, University of Witwatersrand, now Corob Fellow in Yiddish Studies, Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies.

The collection, dealing with periodicals as well as manuscripts and papers, covers much that has never been published before either in Yiddish or translated into English. The periodicals are a magnificent collection that includes the *Der Afrikaaner Yiddisher Zeitung*, *Dorem Africa*, and the English language *Jewish Affairs*.

South African Yiddish authors, many of whom were born in Lithuania, are included in the University collection such as: M. Ben Moshe, Nathan Berger, H. (Haiman) Erlikh, Richard

Feldman, Morris Hoffman, N. Levinski, Hyman Polsky, Wolf Rybkov, Chaim Sachs, Levi Shalit, J. M. Sherman, Hersh Shishler, Mendl Tabatznik, David Wilkin and David E. Wolpe. In addition, the unpublished papers and manuscripts of poet David Fram

<http://staff.lib.utexas.edu/~cschroer/nathan/fram.htm>

and short-story writer Samuel Leibowitz

<http://staff.lib.utexas.edu/~cschroer/nathan/leibowitz.htm>

can be found in the Rare Books Section of the “The Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection” of the Library.

While these particular authors may not be familiar to you, their family names may be and could provide clues to further family research, especially as the material includes where the families were from originally and possibly other genealogically significant details. An example of how you may find exciting surprises in this material is the file for Samuel Leibowitz (1912-1976) who was born in Panevezys, Lithuania, and lived in Johannesburg. Using the on-line address for the Leibowitz material (see above), I checked through the items listed in his file. There, I found a reference to a letter he wrote in 1943 to my relative Leslie Yodaiken, a well-known Irish Jewish poet and writer. I was then able to send away to the Library and obtain a copy of the letter.

What are the chances that I would find any connection to my Irish family in a South African Yiddish author’s file located in a Latin American Collection at the University of Texas?! So, don’t be hesitant about looking through such resources even though you don’t expect to find anything. You may be surprised at what you do find.

YIVO, New York, NY

There are now a number of South African items available that are complementary to YIVO’s Lithuanian holdings. This connection is due to the large number of Lithuanian Jews that went to South Africa. The initial portion of this South African collection that I have donated to YIVO are three quite rare and hard-to-come-by resources:

1. *1929 South African Jewish Year Book*, edited by Morris De Saxe and Associate Editor I.M. Goodman, Johannesburg: South African Jewish Historical Society, 1929.

This is the inaugural volume in a series of twelve Year Books, the last being for the period 1976-1977, that provide a “Who’s Who” section, historical vignettes of the Jewish community, and demographic details. The entries in the “Who’s Who” section very often contain photographs of the individuals. The “Who’s Who” entries have been put into a database on JewishGen which can be accessed at:

<http://www.jewishgen.org/databases/sayb.htm>

2. *The Jew in South Africa: A record of what individual Jews are doing in various spheres of the country’s life*, edited by Rabbi Maurice Konvisser and Dora Sowden, Johannesburg: Century Publishing, 1945.

This volume contains very much the same type of “Who’s Who” information as the Year Books, but has greater focus on religious personalities and anecdotal data. Much of the material was obtained through direct interviews with the individuals. Many of the accompanying photographs depict the individuals in military uniform due to the proximity of the publication to the end of WWII. Like the 1929 Year Book, this volume can also be found in the JewishGen database at: <http://www.jewishgen.org/databases/sayb.htm>

3. *South African Jewish Board of Deputies Immigration Registers, 1924-1929*.

The three unpublished registers covering the years 1924-1926, 1927-1928, and 1929 were the product of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies mandate. The originals are to be found in the Kaplan Centre Archives in Cape Town, SA, and photocopies are located in the South African Jewish Board of Deputies Archives in Johannesburg, SA, and the Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People in Jerusalem.

The registers are a critical means of determining where families may have originated in “*der heim*” and who and where they came to in South Africa. A photocopy of the unpublished registers was made available to researchers at YIVO in May 2003. This resource can also be found in a sample database containing the first 500 plus records on the SA SIG web site:

<http://www.jewishgen.org/safrica/sa.htm>

The three entire registers are now part of the database of SA Jewry at the Kaplan Centre.

Another valuable resource at YIVO is entitled *South African Jews in World War II*, published by the South African Jewish Board of Deputies in 1950. It has listings of individuals who served, those who were wounded, awards given, and many photographs. The information contained in the book will also be on-line in the near future on the SA SIG web site.

Additional resources that I will be donating to YIVO in the near future will relate to various "Who's Who" listings for South African Jewish women that will also be available in database format on the SA SIG web site.

YIVO also has copies of the South African weekly Yiddish newspaper, *Der Afrikaaner Yiddisher Zeitung*, which was published in Johannesburg from 1942 to 1971. This publication has a fascinating series on shtetls from "*der heim*". The series was first located by Ada Greenblatt and written up in *Dorot*, Summer, 1996, Page 6. The various articles provided me with much information about not only the shtetls, but also the people who came to South Africa from the individual shtetls. The New York Public Library and the Library of Congress in Washington, DC, also have this publication on microfilm in addition to the previously mentioned University of Texas.

It is hoped that others will donate their materials to YIVO to expand their holdings and thereby make them available to both those living in the New York Metropolitan area and visitors to New York.

ebay.com

A new source for South African documents is to be found on *ebay.com*, the international flea market on the Internet. Unfortunately, as people pass away, their personal documents are either thrown away or sold in yard sales, flea markets or at auction. With genealogical study now such a growing activity, these documents have become attractive items to purchase.

Regular perusing of the offerings on *ebay.com* under topics such as Judaica, Lithuania, South Africa, or other countries, will bring up various items including school documents, passports, letters,

and the like. An example of this is what Dr. Neil Rosenstein, formerly of Cape Town, found on *ebay.com*. He was able to obtain a letter from his grandfather's bookstore in Vilnius, Lithuania, to Rabbi Nochum-Mendel Rabinowitz, in Cape Town. In addition, there have been cases where people have recognized that their expired South African passports have been put on *ebay.com* and they have had to retrieve them from possible sale.

It might be mentioned that, with the exception of the Mormon Family History Center, you may be able to obtain copies of materials or references from the above resources through the inter-library loan program at your local University or public library. In fact, I have requested materials from YIVO's library at a small cost for the copying and plan to obtain periodical materials from the University of Texas in the coming year. Items for sale on *ebay.com* are accompanied sometimes by extensively documented material and, very often, photographs. These can be downloaded and copied on your own printer, if you aren't interested in purchasing the actual item.

There are various other large repositories in the U.S. such as the Library of Congress and major Universities, which have resources relating to South Africa's literary, historical, economic, and political life and they even have early 20th Century periodicals such as "South Africa Magazine". It is not my intention; however, to go into those resources here.

CONCLUSION

It is important to note that there are actual South African resources available in America and particularly copies of important primary or secondary documents. In the future, I am hoping that other documents will surface and be donated to the major repositories mentioned here or to other libraries or archives in areas where former South Africans have settled such as Atlanta, GA, Chicago, IL, Dallas and Houston, TX, San Diego, CA, and South Florida. I would encourage any South Africans who have such materials to consider donations that will allow the preservation of these materials for use by other researchers.

Americans have wide access to the Internet and JewishGen and can obtain many other records relating to South Africa. These will be discussed in

a future article: *Part II - South African Internet Resources.*

Ann Rabinowitz, a native of Manchester, England, has been involved in genealogical research since childhood. She is formerly the Newsletter Editor and a Board Member of the JGS of Greater Miami and is presently a member of the JGS of Palm Beach County. She lives in South Florida. As the Research Coordinator for the SA SIG, she has produced numerous databases for South African resources that can be found on the SA SIG web site, including materials on South African shipping and immigration, naturalization, community profiles, and other related matters.

**Office-bearers for Jewish Genealogy Society,
Johannesburg, 2004**

CHAIRMAN +27 (11) 887-7764	Mo Skikne <i>moski@global.co.za</i>
VICE-CHAIR +27 (11) 442-7048	Ivan Elion <i>ivan@elion.org</i>
HON. TREASURER	Ivan Elion
GENERAL SECRETARY +27 (11) 884-3126 P.O. Box 783863, Sandton 2146	Judy Gerson <i>mrs.g@mweb.co.za</i>
MINUTE SECRETARY +27 (11) 485-2188	Hannah Karpes
PROGRAMME ORGANISER +27 (11) 646-9538	Ada Gamsu
LIBRARIAN +27 (11) 640-2995	Gerald Levin
MEMBER-AT-LARGE +27 (11) 082-871-6654	Dave Sieff
NEWSLETTER EDITOR	Mo Skikne

SA Vital records database

Louis Zetler is creating a S.A. Jewish Births, Engagements, Marriages and Deaths database in Excel. The database will also contain information about ex South Africans. He commenced this project towards the end of 2001.

If you have any queries, Louis will be happy to assist. If anyone has any information for this database, Louis would like to hear from you.

Louis can be contacted at *arlene@012.net.il*

Interesting Web Site

(Information provided by Louis Zetler)

<http://www.e-family.co.za/>

Click on "Genealogy Links", and at the bottom of the list is a University of Stellenbosch website:

*[http://www.lib.sun.ac.za/Archive/
Archive.exe?MenuItem=Home](http://www.lib.sun.ac.za/Archive/Archive.exe?MenuItem=Home)*

Type in the surnames you are researching, and see whether photos of your family are included in this collection.

According to Louis these photos belonged to a Mr Lockley who was the photographer based in Stellenbosch many years ago. Someone at the university has put these photos onto this website. There is a button you can use to add comments which Louis suggests people use to name people in the photos for future generations.

Louis also found photos of people who he could not identify and felt that these may have been linked by the same batch numbers. So, if you had family living in Stellenbosch many years ago, check out this website and see if you recognise any family members.