

SA-SIG

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

Southern African Jewish Genealogy Special Interest Group Newsletter

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Sitting looking out of my London window at the park covered in ice and snow for the past two weeks while dreaming of beaches and blue skies, I think it's a useful time to sum up some genealogical developments over the past year.

Cemeteries and burials: Stan Hart has done fine work in providing approximately 25,000 records of South African Jewish burials to the *JewishGen Online Worldwide Burial Registry*. *JOWBR* is a database of more than 1.5 million names which can be accessed at:

www.jewishgen.org/databases/cemetery

This is ably managed by Nolan Altman in New York City. Stan, who is based in Durban, has also photographed many of the tombstones and in due course, images will be added to the database.

We have been assured of updates to some of the major SA Jewish cemeteries in the new year. These are housed at SA Jewish Rootsbank (found at: <http://tinyurl.com/Rootsbank>). The updates remain an ongoing task, often difficult as not everyone understands the need to make this type of information freely available.

Ketubot and marriage records: Janine Blumberg, the hard working administrator at the Kaplan Centre has been entering early Cape Town *Ketubot* into databases and these are in the process of being added to the Rootsbank database. Again, authorities are often reluctant to cooperate. Not widely known is that a number of Johannesburg Jewish marriage records are on the Mormon FHL microfilms. Lisette Datnow has created databases of Germiston Hebrew Congregation records from inception to around 1970, when registers seem to have vanished. If anyone has access to other marriage registers please let me know. We can provide templates for data entry, as needed.

To date only Kimberley (Griqualand West) has come up with *Bris* records (*Mohel* Registers). These records include females, so are actually communal birth registers. Any other areas would be welcome.

The current edition of *Jewish Affairs*, produced by the SA Jewish Board of Deputies, has some interesting articles on genealogy, one by Hazel Dakers on her Norton and Norden family, and one

The Southern Africa Jewish Genealogy Special Interest Group (SA-SIG)

The purpose and goal of the Southern Africa Special Interest Group (SA-SIG) is to bring together Jewish genealogy researchers with a common interest in Southern Africa and to provide a forum for a free exchange of ideas, research tips and information of interest to those researching Jewish family history in the communities of South Africa, Lesotho (Basutoland), Botswana (Bechuanaland), Zimbabwe (Southern Rhodesia), Zambia (Northern Rhodesia), Swaziland, Mozambique, Kenya, and the former Belgian Congo.

The SIG has been producing a quarterly Newsletter since 2000 in which is included articles on personalities in the Southern African Jewish community, religious congregations, communities – past and present and general news about the lives our Southern African families led.

Further information on how to subscribe to the Newsletter can be found at:

<http://www.jewishgen.org/SAfrica/newsletter/index.htm>

If you would like to contribute articles to the Newsletter, accounts should include descriptions of families of the community, aspects of local Jewish life, its institutions and particular character. Jewish involvement in the community at large, its history, business life and development could be featured as well.

Articles for inclusion in the Newsletter should be sent to Colin Plen, Editor, at colplen@iafrica.com

General enquiries about the Newsletter can be sent either to Colin or to Mike Getz at MikeGetz005@comcast.net

The SA-SIG maintains a set of Web Pages that can be found at: <http://www.jewishgen.org/safrica>

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by Ann Rabinowitz on two interesting individuals. For copies, contact david@beyachad.co.za.

I would like to thank Colin Plen (Cape Town) who edits this Newsletter, and Roy Ogus (San Francisco), who does the layout, for the hard work they put into it.

Saul Issroff

London, saul@issroff.com

EDITORIAL

Gary Feitelberg sent me some material months ago concerning his research on British immigrants. I put the article aside and only recently found it again. He shows in the article that you can find pointers anywhere; even references to Jews amongst 1820 British Settlers.

A recent publication, *Boerejode*, by David Saks, led me to an earlier book titled *Boerejood* by Julian Roup. Julian's dad was Jewish, his Mom was not, and his life story about straddling the fence is very interesting. Especially for émigré South Africans, his comments about South Africa, particularly for which places to visit – it is well worth looking at the book.

Donna Gracia Nasi was a Jewish business leader at a most difficult time for Jews. I knew my children would not read this book, so I condensed it into a short summary, and I invite you to read my précis and decide whether you would like to read the whole book, which is definitely worth it. In her day (during the Inquisition's height), Donna Gracia was one of the world's richest women, if not one of the world's richest people, and yet she was chased out of one Catholic country after another.

Adam Yamey sent us a brief history of a Bavarian settler in South Africa, Heinrich Bergmann, whose life story is worth a read.

Schelly Dardashti sent us an interesting article about *Anousim*, the Forced Ones, who are showing up in the Southern United States and Central America to reclaim their Jewishness.

Rabbi Stan Zaiden initiated the roving Rabbi position now taken up so ably by Rabbi Zilberhaus.

Rabbi Zaiden is now in England and sent us an article about the Jews in Bothaville.

As usual we also include a smattering of interesting items about surnames and other little odds and ends.

Hope you all have a happy and healthy 2011!

Colin Plen

Editor

Cape Town, South Africa

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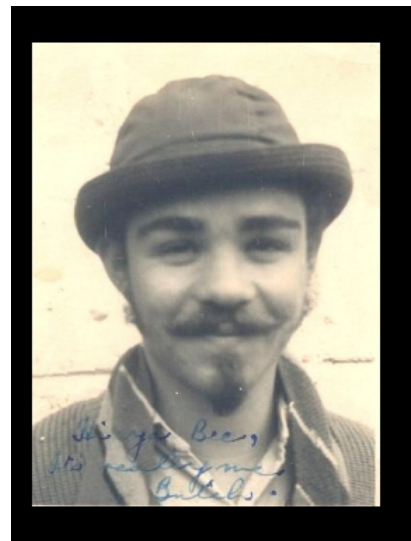
Obituary

MILTON "BUTCH" BOTTGER (BUTCH BEN YOK)

3 December 1924 – 29 October 2008

*Zan Swartzberg
(ex 69th Squadron, RD AFB)*

This obituary was originally published on the Machal web page at <http://tinyurl.com/bottger> and is reprinted with permission.



In Air Force and military circles in Israel, if you ask who Milton Bottger may be, you will draw a blank. But if you mention the name Butch Ben Yok, aaaahh, that is a different story!

Butch grew up and went to school in Doornfontein, Johannesburg, South Africa, with all his Jewish pals, even going to *Cheder* (Hebrew school) with them.

In 1947, the word on the grapevine sent out a message for Jewish ex-servicemen and women to volunteer for the, at that time, non-existent Israeli Air Force and armed forces.

When Butch heard that his Jewish pals were queuing up at the Zionist Federation offices for an application to join, there was no stopping him. With his experience in the South African Air Force during World War 2 as a radio operator, air gunner, serving in the North African and Italian campaigns, Butch had all the perfect credentials. His trepidations about being a Christian were unfounded, and he was welcomed with open arms by Phil Zuckerman, at that time the recruiting officer.

After some months of preparation and snafus, Butch, in a complement of 19 others, emplaned from Johannesburg's Palmietfontein airport in a Pan African Air Charter Dakota, landing five days later at Chiampino airport in Rome. From there, by hook and by crook, he finally arrived at Zatek in Czechoslovakia. In an out-of-the way secretive countryside landing strip, waiting to be prepared and serviced by the newcomers, were three B17 Flying Fortress bombers smuggled out of the USA.

Prior to taking off for Israel, Dov Judah and Smoky Simon decided that on the way there, each B17 would make bombing runs on targets in Egypt including Cairo. Butch, in a crew which included Joe Leibowitz, were selected to bomb El Arish in the Gaza strip. Joe, being knowledgeable of the Herzlia airstrip, was mandated to navigate. With much difficulty in the black of night, and with minutes of fuel left in the tanks, and with the option of crash-landing on the beach, despite the American skipper ranting and raving, Joe saved the day.

From there onwards, Butch was stationed at Ramat David Air Force base, attached to the 103rd squadron, flying C47 Dakotas, specializing in nighttime raids to targets, El Arish, Rafah, Gaza, Khan Younis, and even Damascus. Joe Leibowitz recalls at one of the briefings, a volunteer was called for to man an out-of-the-way radio outpost in the Negev desert. A critical part of our communication network. The first hand that went up, guess who, was Butch's, despite the unwritten rule in any man's army: "*Do Not Volunteer For Anything!!!*" Not in Butch's code of ethics.

Excuse the liberty, Henry Katzew and Maurice Ostroff, but may I extract this portion of your book, *South Africa's 800*: "*Butch Bottger was an imp of Nature, who won back the warmth he gave out. He carried quip in his eye and wit on the tongue, embellishing the days with good humour and cheerfulness. A 'lark' picture in a photographic album of 1948 shows a man with a curled up moustache, a tassel of a beard, and a head crowned with a turban.*"

A friendship of years, starting in a Doornfontein childhood with Phil Kemp and Dennis Goshen, sons of neighbouring Jewish families, brought Butch into our War of Liberation. They became the Inseparable Three.

In response to Prime Minister Ben Gurion's call for Hebraisation of names, Butch Bottger from then on was re-named, and proudly bore the name of *Butch Ben Yok* (Butch, the son of a Christian).

The three airmen were natural spirits of entertainment, and enjoyed free meals at their favorite restaurant, the *Gali Yam* in Tel Aviv. The proprietor, recognizing crowd-pleasers when he met them, Butch became the supreme favorite. He had not an enemy in the world. The man was lovable. He was among the few whose name, sixty years later, no volunteer had difficulty in recalling. This son of Christians loved the Jewish people. Jewish history knows people such as he, occasional men and women who have slipped into effortless identification with the people of history, gathered in by some kind of wordless, spiritual mystery.

Whilst at Ramat David, Butch was involved in everything to do with the welfare of the crews of the 69th Flying Fortress squadron, 103 squadron, the personnel on the base, the aircraft technicians, the kitchen and canteen, organising committees to see that all the liquor and other supplies were more than adequately attended to. Also organizing for the lads, transport to Haifa, to families entertaining them on *Shabbat* and to the Temple on High Festivals.

Butch, in his teens and twenties, excelled in soccer, cricket, squash, hockey, and especially boxing, gaining a title as a champion in the flyweight division. With this background and his love of sport sparked all these activities amongst the South Africans, Israelis, Americans, Canadians, English, Scandinavians, and other nationalities, with intense

competition, with the most hilarious consequences, with the Americans, mixing up American football, rugby and soccer rules.

Butch and his late wife Beryl attended the 50th Jubilee celebrations in Israel. For the sixtieth anniversary celebrations in Israel, he was invited to attend, all expenses paid, but due to ill-health was not able to avail himself of that honour. On the sixtieth anniversary, one of Butch's most cherished awards, the following certificate was inscribed and issued by the Jewish National Fund Golden Book committee:

“Presented to Butch Ben Yok by the South African Zionist Federation on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the State of Israel, 8 May 2008 – 3 Iyar 5768. In appreciation of your dedication and commitment to the state of Israel and the Jewish people as member of Machal during the 1948 War of Independence.”

During the last twenty years of his life, Butch lived in Warner Beach, South Coast, Natal.

Butch laid his life on the line for the Jewish people. Butch, on behalf of all those privileged to know you, I salute you, my dear friend!

Editor's Note: Of interest are the following Machal links:

- *World Machal web site:*
<http://www.machal.org.il>
- *Israel Machal web site:*
<http://www.sabranet.com/machal/english.html>
- *American Aliyah Bet & Machal Virtual Museum*
<http://www.israelvets.com/home.html>

EL PASO: DEEP IN THE HEART OF TEXAS

Schelly Talalay Dardashti

This article was originally posted on the blog, Tracing the Tribe, on 19 July 2010, and is reprinted here with permission. The blog can be found at <http://tracingthetribe.blogspot.com>.

It's the stories that get to you.

The stories of people from Brazil, Argentina, New Mexico, and right here in this corner of Texas. Some drive for hours to connect to the heritage of their ancestors – which is now theirs.

They come from all backgrounds and professions. They are artists, consultants, professionals, teachers, musicians, contractors – and even rabbis. Some have made a short journey, others have taken years to learn the secrets of their families. Each has accomplished this in his or her own way, with the support – or not – of their families.

The music of Judaism has always drawn me, and these past few days have been filled with various traditions. The beautiful circular chapel of El Paso's Congregation B'nai Zion was the perfect setting for the Sephardic chanting of Rabbi Juan Mejia and the Ashkenazi tradition of Rabbi Stephen Leon, whose father was a *hazzan*. In addition to these two fascinating men, there were others who took on major portions of some services and those who read from the *Torah*.

The 7th Sephardic Bnai Anousim Conference has been an eye-opener for me, even though I've known these stories for a long time. Hearing, in person, the life stories of these people from many backgrounds who have returned to public Judaism is an inspiration – or should be – for all of us.

I've heard the experiences of those who began searching, of the reactions of their families, their encounters with messianic churches and with people who misled them along their return. I've heard the stories of a man – originally from Monterrey, Mexico – and asked about his siblings. There are six, they live in different places, and “we all know who we are.”

Rabbi Juan Mejia, recently ordained by the Jewish Theological Seminary, is an amazing guy. His journey – from Colombia and Catholicism and the family secrets to teaching via the internet and in person to an audience that could potentially number in the millions – is inspiring.

While many anousim – children of the forced (even though that force was centuries ago) – look for acceptance from mainstream Judaism, many of these individuals believe they must be more proactive and organize their own centers. Rabbi Juan described a congregation in South America

that he visited. A beautiful facility, filled with the returned and returning. A flourishing congregation. When the Ashkenazi congregation in their city could not afford to retain their rabbi, this congregation hired him.

I'm still absorbing this weekend.

My talks on Jewish Genealogy 101 and Sephardic Research Trends elicited many questions. I distributed notes of my talks, urged attendees to write down what they know, to record their stories, so future generations will understand. I distributed *MyHeritage.com* software to help in the process. I've explained about DNA testing – Y-DNA, mtDNA and the new autosomal Family Finder – and what our IberianAshkenaz DNA Project at *FamilyTreeDNA.com* has demonstrated.

A pilgrimage is on the books, as the 8th Sephardic Bnai Anousim Conference will be held in Israel in August 2011. The plan is to be in Jerusalem on Tisha b'Av.

The date is important as Rabbi Stephen Leon introduced a resolution to the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism's conference in December 2009. It was unanimously accepted by the organization that Tisha b'Av be recognized as a day of memorial for the victims of the Inquisition – and that bnai anousim be welcomed – at Conservative congregations. Outreach for this movement is also being conducted in the Reform, Reconstructionist and Orthodox communities.

The group is planning to build a learning center in El Paso to assist bnai anousim in their quest.

As part of the conference, we watched a production of "Parted Waters" which described one family's experience with the ancestral secret. If this is offered in your community, do see it.

This morning, I'm heading to Ruidoso, New Mexico, and will be back in time to attend Tisha b'Av services.

BRITISH SETTLERS TO SOUTH AFRICA

Gary Feitelberg

Gary Feitelberg is a family historian/genealogist researching his Latvian and Lithuanian roots particularly the FEITELBERG, HILLMAN, and ZIMAN families, with branches in South Africa and neighbouring nations.

I recently came across a very interesting website *British 1820 Settlers to South Africa* (<http://www.1820settlers.com>). As my ancestors and family came mainly from Latvia and Lithuania, it was highly unlikely, however informative and interesting, that I would discover and find any family members and relatives. But as irony has it, I did find one after all, despite the fact that the list is predominantly British and not Jewish. My family members tend to travel to the most unlikely places at the most unlikely of times. It must be the "Wandering Jew" gene that moves and shakes them to all ends of the world. Previously I have found my FEITELBERG family in Botswana, Kenya, Rhodesia, South Africa, and Zimbabwe. Many famous or infamous. Some rich and successful.

The entry I discovered on the website gives only minor genealogical information:

Last Name, Given Name: Feitelberg, Esther
Born/Christened: b. 1889
Person ID: 142469
Tree: Master

When clicking on her name, some additional information became available:

Birth: 1889 (1)
Died: 1970 (1)

Personal ID: 142469
Last modified: 08 Dec 2007

Family: Frank Tarr, b. 21 JAN 1887, d. 1961N
Married: Y

Last modified: 08 Dec 2007
Family ID: F14799 Group Sheet

Sources: (1) The Tarrs of Rokewood, Adams, Dennis and Tarr, Moira (ISBN 0-620-15721- 6)

This becomes curious because of the date or year of birth which is nearly 70 years after the settlers from

Britain came to South Africa. The following brief background can enlighten us as to how this is possible.

Shock and surprise overcame me when I delved a little bit deeper into the settlement in South Africa and subsequent marriage. The South African National Archives (Natal Archives Depository) has a wealth of information on our ancestors and family members. Originally, I assumed Esther FEITELBERG was born in Latvia or perhaps in South Africa where she met her future husband Frank Tarr. It turns out she was born in Hull, England. This intermediate stop on the journey to settling in South Africa can now duly be noted on my FEITELBERG family tree chart. Here is an information reference notation which provided this most valuable information.

DEPOT	NAB
SOURCE	MSCE
TYPE	LEER
SYSTEM	01
REFERENCE	2182/1967
PART	1
DESCRIPTION	TARR, ESTHER KNOWN AS HETTIE TARR, BORN FEITELBERG. BORN IN ENGLAND. PRSP* DECEASED ESTATE NO 1351/1958. DECEASED ESTATE.
STARTING	1967
ENDING	1981
REMARKS	NO NAME GIVEN FOR PRSP*

* *Pre-deceased spouse*

Frank died in 1958.

DEPOT	NAB
SOURCE	MSCE
TYPE	LEER
SYSTEM	01
REFERENCE	1351/1958
PART	1
DESCRIPTION	TARR, FRANK, BORN IN CLUMBER, VIA GRAHAMSTOWN, CAPE PROVINCE. S/SP*: TARR, ESTHER, BORN FEITELBERG, DECEASED ESTATE
STARTING	19580000
ENDING	19810000

* *Surviving spouse*

Another interesting source of information with respect to the names of the early 1820 Jewish settlers, is taken from *Port Elizabeth in Bygone Days*, by J. J. Redgrave, Wynberg, Cape: Rustica

Press 1947. The surnames of these settlers to South Africa are mostly presently known today. Amongst them are Sloman, Norden, Norton, Garcia, etc., and their families. In addition, individuals Benjamin Green and Maurice Garcia can probably be found as well.

BOTHAVILLE

Rabbi S. A. Zaiden

I have often wondered how long my grandparents, Shalom Meir and Leah Goddess spent in Bothaville in the north-western (Orange) Free State in South Africa. I know that my aunt, Bertha Goddess (later Goldberg) was born in Bothaville in 1915, and as my mother was born two years later in Johannesburg, they must have moved within that period. Another uncle was born in another town 4 years before: so how long were they in Bothaville?

Bothaville is on the R59 highway about 80 km from both Klerksdorp and Kroonstad. Bothaville was established in 1839 on a farm owned by Thuines Louis Botha.

In my work as Rabbi to the Country Communities of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, I visited Bothaville on a number of occasions and monitored the cemetery. The cemetery has but a few graves and was well-looked after by the municipality.

The first Jew known to have settled in Bothaville was a Mr Kramer who farmed in the area. In 1906, a Mr. Stein, a butcher, lived in the town and they were joined by other Jews who were mainly shopkeepers.

The Bothaville Hebrew Congregation was established in 1913 under the Chairmanship of Mr I Livitatz, with Mr A Sacks as secretary. Application was made to the municipality and an erf in Kerk Street was granted for the building of a Synagogue. Meanwhile, services were held in private homes.

The foundation stone was laid by Mr A Sacks in 1929, and the Synagogue was built by Mr H M Labschagne. The opening service took place on 6 April 1930. Interestingly, Mr E Castiganni had a bond on the synagogue for £500.

In 1929 there were 27 families and the office bearers were Mr A Sacks, as President, and Mr J W Behr, as Vice President. Mr A Stein was treasurer and Secretary, with a committee consisting of W Sacks, M Mervis, and N Dinner.

Mr A Sacks was a town councillor for many years and was mayor in 1919/20, 1924/6, and 1928/30.

Bothaville grew to have a population of 1800 Europeans in 1957 with but 11 Jewish families, which made 50 Jewish souls and by then, Mr J Heller was the Honorary Secretary.

But then the Jewish numbers started declining, and in 1965 there were only 5 families making 24 souls, and the Honorary Secretary was Mr J Kruger.

Now I wonder how long did my grandparents live in Bothaville? Did the town offer great prospects and they thought that they could make a fantastic living there or were they just travelling when my aunt was born?

I will probably never know.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM EASTMAN'S ON-LINE GENEALOGY NEWSLETTER

Richard W. Eastman

Editor's Note: Shown below are excerpts of two interesting articles from recent issues of Dick Eastman's Online Genealogy Newsletter. The copyright of these articles is owned by Richard W. Eastman, and they have been republished here with the permission of the author. Information about Eastman's Newsletter can be found at <http://www.eogn.com>.

Familypedia: the Biggest Genealogy Site You Probably Never Heard Of

Are you familiar with Familypedia, a web site with 84,983 online articles about deceased individuals plus another 106,312 genealogy-related pages?

Familypedia is a wiki, part of the commercial Wikia site. It is a place where you can create articles about your ancestors and easily link them to other articles about where and when they lived. The site is

primarily text-based with biographical pages about deceased individuals. In some cases, you can find pictures of individuals as well as pedigree charts, maps, and other graphics. In most cases, each deceased person has a separate web page giving details about his or her life and also containing hyperlinks to other web pages that contain information about the person's relatives. Entire families can be hyperlinked together.

Familypedia can be used alone as a separate service, or it can be linked via hyperlinks to other online services, such as Ancestry.com, FamilySearch.org, or independent web pages created by individuals. Because the Familypedia web site has a wiki format, you can work collaboratively with others to create a network of articles about your ancestors and about those they lived and worked with. The site has no constraints on where the data resides, so you can provide links to your ancestors on whatever web sites host the information.

Before you start entering your own ancestors on Familypedia, you will want to see if there is already some information about them or their family. To find existing information, you can go to <http://www.familypedia.wikia.com> and use the search box. However, a more organized search method is to use the Surnames Index, Birth Country Index, Death Country Index, Birth Decade Index, or Death Decade Index, all found on the same home page.

For more information, go to:

<http://www.familypedia.wikia.com>

and click on *Getting Started* and also on *Tutorial*.

The full Eastman article can be read at:

<http://tinyurl.com/eastman-familypedia>

From the In-box: Which Online Software to Use?

I received the following message from a newsletter reader and decided to share the answer in the newsletter itself:

My cousin has begun documenting our family tree, and I am going to help her document the data electronically, but we are confused as to which software to use. We both need to be able to access the software online and make changes and

updates, so that is a deal breaker. We would also prefer software that allows us to link documents, PDFs, photos, etc. to individual family members in the tree. We took a look at ancestry.com, and my cousin even used it to do some of the research, but the monthly fee seems a little steep. Your article piqued our interest in other alternatives like onegreatfamily.com. Could you point us in the right direction?

Great question! This is an issue that many people and societies are facing today as they work together in collaborative projects. In fact, there are at least a dozen products that will meet your needs, and probably more. However, some of those products will meet your needs better than will others.

The full Eastman article can be read at:

<http://tinyurl.com/eastman-online>

UPDATE ON JEWISHGEN YIZKOR BOOK PROJECTS – DECEMBER 2010

Lance Ackerfeld

This article has been edited to save space. Lance Ackerfeld is the JewishGen Yizkor Book Project Manager, and can be reached at lance.ackerfeld@gmail.com. The Yizkor Book project web page can be found at:

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

The JewishGen ‘elders’ tell me that there has never been such a record month in the Yizkor Book Project with a total of 57 new entries, new books and updates during December. The year 2010, in fact, was an all-round record year compared to previous years. More than four times as many new entries added, twice as many new books added and almost twice as many updates were carried out in comparison with 2009!

Now, as I always stress, there are many, many people behind these figures and this month I would like to salute each and every one of them. The remarkable volunteer team who is working their way through *Pinkas Lita* (Encyclopedia of Jewish Communities in Lithuania) to translate all the community entries appearing there. Just this month,

we put up translations 28 of the entries about the Lithuanian communities that were devastated in the Holocaust and the final goal of this team is to completely translate all the entries within it. This is clearly a mammoth task and I salute this team’s dedication and persistence.

I would like to inform you about something else new that was added this past month to the Yizkor Book Project. Thanks to the diligent and time consuming research work of a volunteer, a new feature has been added to the Yizkor Book. A hyperlink has been added to each Yizkor Book’s entry which points to the OCLC (Online Computer Library Center) website at www.worldcat.org. Since the WorldCat website contains full bibliographic information for each book, along with links to thousands of libraries catalogs worldwide, this linkage will supplement the database’s current ‘Libraries’ table, thus allowing JewishGen users to locate Yizkor Books more easily, wherever they may be.

December also has seen the quarterly update of our necrology database with 4,330 new entries from 10 books.

Note that the following community necrologies were added this quarter to the database:

- Ratno, Ukraine
- Frampol, Poland
- Kossovo, Belarus
- Stolin, Belarus
- Bol’shoy Zhělutsk, Ukraine
- Sandomierz, Poland
- Novoseltsy, Ukraine
- Melnitsa, Ukraine
- Pogost-Zagorodskiy, Belarus
- Majdan, Ukraine

Now to the December figures. During this last month we have added these 5 new projects:

- Gusyatin, Ukraine (Two communities: Husiatyn and Kopyczynce)
- Makow Mazowiecki, Poland (Memorial book of the community of Makow-Mazowiecki)
- Pabianice, Poland (Memorial Book of Pabianice)
- Tluszcz, Poland (Memorial Book of the Community of Tluszcz)
- Turiysk, Ukraine (Memorial book of Trisk)

Added in 29 new entries:

- Didkiemis, Lithuania (Pinkas Lita)
- Dikshne, Lithuania (Pinkas Lita)
- Dubingiai, Lithuania (Pinkas Lita)
- Dubininkus, Lithuania (Pinkas Lita)
- Dubinova, Lithuania (Pinkas Lita)
- Dubrava, Lithuania (Pinkas Lita)
- Dusetos, Lithuania (Pinkas Lita)
- Dvoruka, Lithuania (Pinkas Lita)
- Dvornova, Lithuania (Pinkas Lita)
- Erzvilkas, Lithuania (Pinkas Lita)
- Freda, Lithuania (Pinkas Lita)
- Gaure, Lithuania (Pinkas Lita)
- Huta, Lithuania (Pinkas Lita)
- Igliauka, Lithuania (Pinkas Lita)
- Ilguva, Lithuania (Pinkas Lita)
- Imbradas, Lithuania (Pinkas Lita)
- Indrioniskis, Lithuania (Pinkas Lita)
- Inturke, Lithuania (Pinkas Lita)
- Janitz, Lithuania (Pinkas Lita)
- Janapole, Lithuania (Pinkas Lita)
- Jankai, Lithuania (Pinkas Lita)
- Jastnik, Lithuania (Pinkas Lita)
- Jegliskis, Lithuania (Pinkas Lita)
- Jieznas, Lithuania (Pinkas Lita)
- Jokubaiciai, Lithuania (Pinkas Lita)
- Jokubavas, Lithuania (Pinkas Lita)
- Silute, Lithuania (Pinkas Lita)
- Starobin, Belarus (Slutsk and vicinity memorial book)
- Vilkija, Lithuania (Pinkas Lita)

We have continued to update 23 of our existing projects:

- Belchatow, Poland (Belchatow memorial book)
- Biala Rawska, Poland (Memorial Book to the Martyrs of Biala Rawska)
- Czestochowa, Poland (Czenstochova new supplement to the book)
- Czestochowa, Poland (The Jews of Czestochowa)
- Dotnuva, Lithuania (Letters from Dotnuva)
- Fehergyarmat, Hungary (Our Former City Fehergyarmat)
- Gargzdai, Lithuania (Gorzd book; A memorial to the Jewish community of Gorzd)
- Garwolin, Poland (Garwolin Memorial Book)

- Gorodets, Belarus (Horodetz; history of a town, 1142-1942)
- Grajewo, Poland (Grayewo Memorial Book)
- Kaluszyn, Poland (The Memorial Book of Kaluszyn)
- Lithuania (Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities in Lithuania)
- Lithuania (Lite)
- Lowicz, Poland (Lowicz; a town in Mazovia, memorial book)
- Merkine, Lithuania (Meretch; a Jewish Town in Lithuania)
- Ostrow-Mazowiecka, Poland (Memorial Book of the Community of Ostrow-Mazowiecka)
- Rivne, Ukraine (Rowno; a memorial to the Jewish community of Rowno, Wolyn)
- Ryki, Poland (The Memorial Book of Kaluszyn)
- Siemiatycze, Poland (Yizkor The Community of Semyatitch)
- Sierpc, Poland (The community of Sierpc; memorial book)
- Tykocin, Poland (Memorial book of Tiktin)
- Volodymyr Volynskyy, Ukraine (Wladimir Wolynsk; in memory of the Jewish community)
- Wislica, Poland (Memorial book of Wislica; the Wislich yizkor book)

TELFED INITIATES AN OPEN-ENDED ON-LINE ARCHIVE OF SOUTHERN AFRICAN ACHIEVEMENT IN ISRAEL

Dave Kaplan

This article was originally published on the TelFed Online website on December 22, 2010.

A Story of Achievement & Enrichment: “What have Southern Africans not touched and developed?” asks Israel’s 6th State President Chaim Herzog, in his forward to Telfed’s 1992 publication *70 Years of Southern African Aliyah – A Story of Achievement*. He answers: “They are agricultural pioneers in the classic kibbutz mode and pioneers in industry. They have given Israel excellent physicians and veterinarians.” Not only are they

sportsmen but “they influence others to engage in sports. They have enriched Israel by their concern with the arts, their splendidly organized volunteering, and their innovations in medical care. Virtually every important aspect of Israeli life has benefited from them.”

It is Telfed’s belief that every Southern African that has settled in Israel has a remarkable history; a tale worth telling - from the young idealists who came in the days of the British Mandate, establishing kibbutzim under rigorous physical conditions to the wave after wave of immigrants who came, and in whatever walk of life, have enriched the state of Israel.

For this reason, Telfed has initiated a project to record data of all Southern Africans who immigrated to Israel prior to and after the founding of the State. The project’s convenor, former Telfed Chairman Hertzel Katz, has assembled a committee of well-known Southern Africans in the community with the aim of creating an on-line database of all Southern Africans who came on *aliya*.

Full details of the project, including the questionnaire for the submission of information, can be found at the TelFed Online website at:

<http://tinyurl.com/telfed>

HEINRICH BERGMANN

Adam Yamey

Before the discovery of diamonds and gold in South Africa – that is, prior to about 1866, very few Jews settled there. Most of those who did were from the British Isles and the German lands.

Heinrich (later known as Henry) BERGMANN who was born in Dittenheim, Bavaria, a first cousin of my great-grandmother Peppi BLOCH (born SELIGMANN, in Ichenhausen, Bavaria), was one of these intrepid early settlers. After a longer than usual sea voyage, interrupted by bad weather and a mutiny, he arrived in Cape Town in 1849 just before the eruption of the Convict Agitation in that city. Soon after this, he joined the trading company founded by the MOSENTHAL brothers (from Kassel in Hesse), and worked with Phoebus CARO (from Posen in Prussia) in Graaff Reinet. He must

have been highly regarded by his employers because not much time elapsed before he was sent to the newly established frontier town of Aliwal North in the Eastern Cape to open a branch store there.

BERGMANN made a great success of this, and in 1860 returned to Europe to find a Jewish wife. He married Charlotte Jenny SCHUSTER, whose family was amongst the better-known in Frankfurt’s Judengasse (see *goldschmidt.tripod.com*). They returned to Aliwal North. Despite becoming increasingly wealthy and a pillar of society, BERGMANN took his own life. He was buried by his Dutch friends, the DE WET brothers, Koos and David.

All of the above is based on fact.

The circumstances leading to Bergmann’s suicide are obscure, and only hinted at in the records that I have seen.

I have recently published a novel, *Aliwal*, which weaves fact with fiction in order to reconstruct the life of my tragic relative, and to suggest a plausible reason for his untimely end. I feel that my book may be of interest to readers of the SA-SIG because it explores many of the problems faced by European settlers to Southern Africa in the decades before the discovery of diamonds and gold.

Editor’s Note: A review of Adam Yamey’s book, Aliwal, can be found elsewhere in this issue of the Newsletter.

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR JEWISH GENEALOGY

The International Institute for Jewish Genealogy, established in January 2006, is located at the National Library of Israel, on the Givat Ram Campus of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Dr. Neville Lamdan is the Director. The Institute’s web site can be found at iijg.org.

The primary goals of the International Institute for Jewish Genealogy are two-fold:

- To advance the academic status of Jewish Genealogy within the field of Jewish Studies,

through research and teaching at the university level;

- To contribute to Jewish continuity, on the premise that knowledge of one's roots helps assure a Jewish future.

In a very short period of time the Institute has made tangible progress in pursuing its goals, at both the scholarly and broader Jewish levels. It has:

- carried out ten ground-breaking research projects
- developed innovative tools and technologies, specifically designed for the Jewish family historian
- elaborated "Academic Guidelines" for BA and MA courses in Jewish genealogy
- participated in international Jewish Studies conferences to promote family history as an academic discipline.

In brief, it has earned its stripes.

Encouraged by this success, the Institute has decided to try to broaden its activities and initiate "mega-projects" in an effort to reach out to wider audiences and, hopefully, to enhance the "trickle down" effect on diverse segments of the Jewish world.

One project, already under way, is a "Demographic and Genealogical Survey of Scottish Jewry", which has the potential to take Jewish genealogy to a new level. Other such projects might include distance-learning of Jewish genealogy and national or regional genealogical exhibitions for museums and JCC's.

To implement projects of this scale, the Institute needs additional financial support. Hence, an appeal is being made to fellow Jewish genealogists for support. Information on donating to the IJG can be found at:

<http://ijg.org/Donate/Contributions.aspx>

OCHBERG'S ORPHANS

Bennie Penzik

Bennie Penzik (an ex-Pretorian, now living in Israel) runs a blog with topics of South African and Israeli interest. This article is excerpted from a recent posting. The blog can be found at:

<http://vignettes2000.blogspot.com/>

This month marks two years of my involvement in a campaign to memorialise the man, Isaac Ochberg, who was responsible for rescuing some 180 orphans from Eastern Europe in 1921 and bringing them to a new life in South Africa. Two of those orphans became my parents. My late Mom was placed in Oranjia, the Jewish orphanage in Cape Town, which was established in 1911 with the financial assistance of Mr Ochberg.

Back then, the first orphan child, an eleven-year-old girl, arrived at Oranjia from Piketberg, a small town about 120 km from Cape Town on the road to Namaqualand, where a Jewish community existed more than one hundred years ago. The child had been four years old when she was orphaned and was taken into care by a local Jewish family. Seven years later, word of the plight of a young Jewish child, seen on occasion sleeping alongside the graves of her parents in the local cemetery reached Cape Town and sparked the establishment of an orphanage facility. The saga which followed included a three year spell as a 17-year-old nurse at the notorious mental hospital on Robben Island.

Scheduled for February next year at Piketberg are events to mark the restoration of elements of the *shul* – the Ten Commandments plaque above the ark donated by the family – and the consecration of a family memorial stone. My good friend, Harry Shaer of Haifa, plans to be present at the ceremony in memory of his mother, the first resident of Oranjia. Read the English translation of this stirring story by Harry's sister Phina, which originally appeared in Die Burger in July this year, at:

<http://dl.dropbox.com/u/4444011/An%20Orphan%20Story.doc>

Book Review

ALIWAL **by Adam Yamey**

Saul Issroff

Paperback, self published, 2010, 377 pages
ISBN-10: 144618322X, ISBN-13: 978-1446183229
<http://www.lulu.com/product/paperback/aliwal/12558619>

Editor's Note: A related article by Adam Yamey can be found elsewhere in this issue of the Newsletter.

There is a literary genre which may be peculiar to genealogists. It is part fiction, part fact and part derived from the intelligent analysis of pertinent documents and family trees, and the researching the relevant historical background.

Heinrich (later Henry) Bergmann (c1830-1866) was a young Jewish boy in a small Bavarian town of Dittenheim. He and his family felt there was a poor future in Germany, and had news of financial success from the few others who had immigrated to southern Africa. He was offered a job by Jonas Bergtheil, who was a trader working initially for the Kilian family in the Eastern Cape and later for the Mosenthal brothers. He was the earliest of the author's blood relatives to reach South Africa, and one of the first groups of German Jews to settle there. He arrived there in 1849, having set out from his birthplace in revolution-torn Bavaria several months earlier. Despite becoming very successful as a merchant in the frontier town of Aliwal North, he took his own life. The circumstances that led to him to do so are explored in the book, *Aliwal*, termed by Adam Yamey as "an historical adventure story, a fictionalised biography of a tragic relative."

This self-published book covers a large part of the early history of the Eastern Cape in South Africa. But it is far from a dry historical account. He starts with a number of evocative scenes in Germany, and gives vivid descriptions of German Jewish village life, the social and commercial interactions and the family situations.

German Jews in South Africa, largely led by the Mosenthal family, were responsible for a significant part of the early town development. They set up

trading stores, many staffed by family from Hesse-Cassel. This book provides extensive detail of these enterprises, and although some of the descriptions are based on conjecture, much is based on fact.

The actual story of his ancestor is very interesting, and also tragic. I recommend this book to all who are interested in German Jewry, early South African colonial history, and to those who just want a good read.

Book Summary

THE WOMAN WHO DEFIED KINGS: THE LIFE AND TIMES OF DONA GRACIA NASI **by Andree Aelion Brooks**

Colin Plen

Published by Paragon house, St Pau, Minnesota 2003.

Beatrice de Luna was born in Lisbon in 1510, the daughter of *Converso* parents.

The Spanish Inquisition was begun in 1481 to clear the Church of the bribery, lechery, venality, and other bad habits prevalent. In its course, Jews were forced at various times to take on the Catholic religion (or be killed), and many did so. The Inquisition later looked at the attitudes of these converted Jews (the *Conversos*) and their attitude to their adopted religion, which in many cases was lax. By 1497 the Church gave a final decision to the Jews of Spain who had been there for more than a thousand years, to leave, to convert, or to be killed.

The De Luna family had become very wealthy by being bankers in Spain. They had converted but despite their wealth and their importance – they were on close terms with the King and the Queen – they realised that their time in Spain was threatened. The King of Portugal had not taken on the Inquisition and he offered a welcome to the Jews of Spain and the *Conversos* to come to Portugal because he needed their financial acumen. Once they were there, he and then his successor revoked those promises, brought in the Inquisition, forbade any Jews from leaving the country, and forced all Jews to take on the Catholic religion.

The De Luna family had made their way to Portugal as Christians, but carried on their Jewish traditions behind closed doors. They also continued making huge amounts of money by financing the Spice Trade and lending money to Kings throughout Europe. Their daughters were brought up in an outward show on Christianity and a covert way of Judaism. The family traded through Europe, into the East.

Beatrice was married to Franco Mendes, a cousin who was possibly as wealthy the De Lunas. They had a daughter, and Franco, a much older man, died. He left his wealth to be shared between his wife and his brother who traded in Antwerp. This left Beatrice one of Europe's wealthiest women, having also inherited the bulk of her parents' assets.

The way the Inquisition worked was that anyone could be accused of not being a true Christian. If that person had a great deal of money, he or she was all the more likely to be accused because the accuser could keep a portion of that person's wealth if the Inquisition found him guilty. People like Beatrice had to pay regular bribes or insurance money to the King and to lobbyists in Rome who in turn were paying insurance money to the Pope to lower the tempo of the Inquisition.

In 1537 Beatrice realised that her time in Portugal had to be ended as all the bribes could not keep the Inquisition away from her and her family for much longer. Despite the King trying to keep her and her money in Portugal, she found a way to leave and by ship and by road she made her way to England and then to Antwerp. Antwerp was rapidly becoming the Venice of Europe. (Venice had been the centre of trade for spices and other imports coming in from the Far East but as the Spanish and Portuguese ships brought those goods in at a better rate, trade moved North to Antwerp.) In addition, because Antwerp had a much more liberal outlook, religiously, the Renaissance was getting more of a kickstart there than in the rest of Europe. *Conversos* found that they were welcomed in Antwerp and the leaders of the state protected them. Even the Emperor Charles V of the Holy Roman Empire found it more convenient to borrow from the businessmen there than to allow the Pope to send in the Inquisition.

But by 1545 Beatrice had made more money in Antwerp, the Pope was looking greedily at

Antwerp, and the leadership could not protect the Jews any longer. Beatrice took her household and her business to Venice.

She was a patron of the arts wherever she was, and encouraged and helped painters, printers, sculptors, and Jewish religious leaders. She used her business connections to bring Jews from Iberia and from any other places where they were suffering. Her ships always carried escapees whom she brought into her parts of Europe legally and illegally, and her money always assisted them.

In 1553 she looked across another sea and went on the kind invitation of Suleiman the Magnificent to Constantinople. The Turks at the time were the rulers of the Eastern Mediterranean and were felt to be knocking on the doors of Christian Europe in a threatening way. The Turks also welcomed all trades people to Turkey regardless of religion and Jews were welcome there to pray without any disguise.

Beatrice, now Dona Gracia, found that Tiberias in Palestine had hot springs, and many people made their way there for the beneficial effects. Dona Gracia made a deal with Suleiman that if, at present, Tiberias without promotion, could bring in revenue to him, she would enhance the area and bring in ten times that by promoting it. She brought in Jews to assist in modernizing the area, built houses and way stations, and prepared to build up Tiberias, and with it, Palestine, as a tourist area.

Unfortunately there were politics, the French ambassador to the Turkish Court said that this was an insidious plan by the Jews to bring all their people together and to form a new power to take over the Holy Land. All of Christian Europe saw bad things happening if Jews were not kept under control, and then the Sultan died, his weak son took power, and Donna Gracia grew old and died around 1569. Her Tiberias project fell apart mainly because the guards sent by the Sultan were not being overseen and the political enemies of Donna Gracia forced the plan to fail.

Her daughter was married by full Jewish rites in Constantinople to a cousin but subsequently the family disintegrated and the wealth was dissipated.

New Books

A HISTORY OF THE JEWS IN SOUTH AFRICA THE STORY OF THE SETTLEMENT

Two new books of interest to South African genealogists have been published by the company CDBooks-r-us. The company's website can be found at: <http://www.cdbooks-r-us.com>

A History of the Jews in South Africa

By Louis Herrman

<http://tinyurl.com/history-jews>

The highly interesting *A History of the Jews in South Africa, from the earliest times to 1895* contains expositions of Jewish influence in a wide range of areas, including their impact on the voyages of the early explorers, the 1820 settlers and the diamond and goldfields of South Africa. The influence of the immigrants from Eastern Europe is also described.

The book comprises the following chapters:

- The sea route to India
- With Vasco Da Gama
- The 'New Christians'
- The Dutch East India Company
- Jews at the Cape in the 17th and 18th centuries
- Jewish Cape colonists from St Helena 1806-1831
- Notabilities in early 19th century Jewry
- 1820 Settlers and others
- The Society of the Jewish Community of Cape Town
- The Jewish community and the Neptune Affair, 1849
- The first synagogue (Bouquet street)
- South African Jewry about 1860
- The Old Synagogue, 1863
- Diamonds and Gold, c1870-1890
- Progress in the Cape Colony
- East European Settlers
- The Rev AF Ornstein's ministry
- South African Jewry in 1895

Appendix 1 contains a literature reference list, Appendix 2 a copy of the grant of land made by

Tchaka to Nathaniel Isaacs, and Appendix 3 a list of the names inscribed on the South African Jewish War Memorial. A very detailed index is also included, as well as a number of photographs and illustrations.

The Story of the Settlement

<http://tinyurl.com/story-settlement>

The full title of this very interesting book is *The Story of the Settlement, with a sketch of Grahamstown as it was and Grahamstown as it is: together with a list of the original Dutch and Huguenot Settlers and of the British Settlers of 1820 and their wives and children.*

The book is more than just a list of names of Settlers (although it includes that as well) and comprises the following chapters:

- Grahamstown: 'The City of the Settlers'
- First discovery and early history of the Cape
- Dutch colonization, with a list of the early Dutch and Huguenot Settlers
- Capture of the Cape by the British
- Re-occupation by the Dutch
- Final capture by the British
- Colonel Graham
- The Battle of Grahamstown
- Arrival of the British Settlers
- The Settlers
- The location of the Settlers: Their early struggles
- The settlement in its youth
- The Trek Boers: Massacre of Retief and his party and Dingaan's defeat
- The War of the Axe
- The War of 1851-1852
- Grahamstown as it was
- Grahamstown as it is

Appendix A contains a list of the settler names, ages, etc, while Appendix B comprises a poem *The Landing of the Settlers*, by A Wilmot, in commemoration of the Settler's Jubilee in 1870. A series of great drawings and illustrations is included as well.

JewishGen Class

Do you have a lot of genealogical material to share and want to put it on the web, but don't know how? Have you waited for someone to create a ShtetLinks site for your town, but no one has? Do it yourself!

If you have basic computer skills, that's all you need to start making web pages. We will use a free, downloadable, simple-to-use web page editor to create our pages so you don't have to buy expensive software. This editor runs on both PCs (all versions of Windows) and Macs (OS X 10.2 or later), so practically everyone will be able to use it.

Requirements:

- 1) You must have basic computer skills such as knowing how to click on hyperlinks and how to "copy and paste" text using a computer mouse, etc.
- 2) You must be comfortable with using a web browser like Internet Explorer or Safari, and with using a word processing program like Microsoft Word or WordPerfect. You don't have to be an expert, just someone who has used those programs or programs like them.
- 3) And you'll need about 4-5 hours each week to read the lessons and practice making web pages

The tuition is \$36 and you can pay online by clicking on the Enroll Link on the education page at www.jewishgen.org/education.

You can pay online with our secure credit card system. If you have any questions, please email JewishGenEducation@lyris.JewishGen.org

Phyllis Kramer

V.P.Education, JewishGen Inc.

phylliskramer1@gmail.com

Education Website:

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

EDITOR'S MUSINGS

Colin Plen

The Affidavit

Thank you to those who wrote and commented and guessed about the reason for the Affidavit in Russia in the 1950's that I described in the previous issue of the Newsletter (July 2010). I was able to ask a Russian cousin about this. She reminded me that my grandfather died in the mid 1950's or thereabout. He left a bequest to his surviving sisters in Russia and they had to go to all sorts of government departments to arrange to get the money from my grandfather. My Russian informant told me that they were in great fear for possible repercussions which may result from the receipt of gifts from foreign relatives.

The book *Boerejood*

At the Gitlin Library I found a book called *Boerejood*. Interestingly it is not the newly-published book by David Saks titled *Boerejode*. This one is written by Julian Roup and describes his ideas on life, mainly to do with the fact that he had Jewish male ancestry and Afrikaans female ancestry. In his twenties, he left South Africa and is happily living in Britain. This book is a story of a visit to South Africa and describes interviews with various political people (and many non-political people), as well as his thoughts thereafter. A very pleasant book for someone who wants to reminisce about this beautiful country, South Africa.

As fellow *Boerejode* he claims David Kramer (who had a Jewish father and a Christian mother – a Kramer's original family name was Karabelnik), as well as Johnny Clegg and Pieter Dirk Uys, who in fact had a Jewish mother.

Grave Names of Interest

Previously there has been mention of unusual names on gravestones. For instance, I saw a Paul Kruger, who died in 1945, and when I mentioned this find to a friend, she told me that that was wrong, her grandfather (or was it her great-grandfather?) Paul Kruger had died in the 1950's and sure enough, I found another Paul Kruger!

Then I found Lloyd George Cohen.

My latest was Benjamin Franklyn Levin.

Walking through graveyards has its perks!

Help with Surnames

Every Yom Kippur on *Kol Nidre* for the past several years I have looked at the prayer where various occupations are mentioned and have wondered if the occupations are still used today as surnames. Thank you to the several people who looked up their telephone books and assured me that some of these names do appear in Israeli telephone lists.

Yotzer (potter)
Messatate (mason)
Charash (smith)
Malach (seaman)
Mezzipaig (glass blower)
Rokim (embroiderer)
Tzorief (smelter)

How Old Names Crop Up

In our last issue, memories of Springbok Radio was mentioned in an article on Cape Town nostalgia. This reminded me of a day when I was selling life assurance and I met a youngster who was introduced to me as Dominic. We began chatting and somehow we got onto the subject of the programmes that we used to hear on Springbok Radio in the good old days. Dominic knew all the “old characters” so intimately that I suddenly thought of something and said, “Hold on, Dominic, you are only 21. How can you possibly know anything about Springbok Radio?”

He replied: “My dad is Paddy O’Byrne and he had records and tapes of several of the programmes and I grew up listening to Mark Saxon (my dad was Serge) and all the other locally-made programmes.”

Just thought I would tell you about this memory ...

Myburgh – A Jewish Name

Sharon Myburgh-de Gois came to see me and said that she believes that the surname “Myburgh” is of Jewish origin. She showed me a family crest (apparently one of many variations):



Note that the trees appear to be palms which show an Eastern influence.

In Serbia and the Serbian language she has found references to the names: *Mije Brajkovica* and *Mije Kovačevića*. The first word probably means something like “street”, but wasn’t sure since she didn’t know the language.

An example: Belgrade’s two Jewish cemeteries are located across the street from each other at Mije Kovacevica Street 1, near the city’s municipal cemetery.

She also provided an interesting article on the Jewish Portuguese who kept their (new) Portuguese surnames when they fled to Holland from the persecution in Portugal.

Odd Names

Years ago my mother-in-law was reading a book with a character Volodya, a Russian citizen. She turned to her husband, of 30 years and said, “Look at this ridiculous name Volodya! Have you ever heard of such a name?”

He replied: “Yes, that is the name that was given to me when I was a child. They only called me Willie when we got to South Africa ...”

What is a *Bacharach*?

You probably remember Bert Bacharach, the band leader and composer of the fifties? Well, so do I. And on *Yom Kippur*, I was looking through my *machzor* to find the place when my eye strayed onto a word which looked like *Bacharach*. Subsequently, I found the place and next day I was unable to find the word *Bacharach* again. I spoke to a religious friend and he could not think of a word which I could have seen except that there is a Hebrew word *Bachar* which means “chosen”. Bert Bacharach and a whole group of members of his family were indeed involved in music, according to the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, but where did they get their name?

Then my post arrived, and included was a gift from Bubbles Segall, her old copy of Beider's book, *Jewish Surnames of the Russian Empire*.

(When she claimed that it was an old copy, I thought that this was a misnomer because the book is in pristine condition. As some people buy new cars when their ashtrays get full, I think Bubbles bought a new edition of Beider's book because it was available! I know that I get a sense of enjoyment if I can give my used books to someone who appreciates them, so thank you, Bubbles, and I hope that you know that I am really enjoying having the book on my shelf.)

At any rate, Bacharach is a place in Europe. That is the origin of the name.

Jewish Names Conference

The Tenth International Conference on Jewish Names will take place at Bar-Ilan University in Ramat-Gan, Israel, on Tuesday March 22, 2011. The steering committee invites papers on Jewish personal names, family names, epithets, and place-names from the biblical period through the modern age, from all Jewish communities world-wide, and from all fields of research, including Judaic studies, linguistics, literature, sociology, anthropology, genealogy, and toponymics. Papers will be presented in Hebrew and English.

Scholars who wish to present papers are requested to send a 300-word abstract, clearly stating their contribution, and a short bibliography, to one of the organizers listed below.

Yigal Levin, Dept. of Jewish History.
leviny1@mail.biu.ac.il

Boris Kotlerman, Dept. of Jewish Literature.
kotlerb@mail.biu.ac.il

Aaron Demsky, Project for the Study of Jewish Names
demskya@mail.biu.ac.il

South African Jewish Digital Archive Project

Yet another start-up project is the Jewish Digital Archive Project of the Kaplan Centre in Cape Town, South Africa. The project is being run by Ms. Romi Kaplan. The Centre wants to convert old family collections of photographs and film into accessible digital form. Building on an earlier oral

history project conducted in the 1980s, the Centre is now seeking to expand and deepen an understanding of Jewish social history in South Africa through this project. The collection will include film, photographs and oral interviews which will be available on the Internet. The project is requesting readers to donate photos or films. Additional information is available at:

<http://www.kaplancentre.uct.ac.za/digitalarchive>.

Jewish Inventors

Jews are not generally recognized as having played a significant role as inventors. However, Wikipedia alone has a list of more than 162 Jewish inventors.

Are you old enough to remember a film star called Hedy Lamarr? She was an inventor. Do you wear denim jeans? A Jewish invention. Read on:

Hedy Lamarr (1913 – 2000) was an Austrian-born American actress. Though known primarily for her celebrity in a film career as a major contract star of MGM's "Golden Age", Lamarr was a scientist, inventor and mathematician who co-invented an early technique for spread spectrum communications, a key to many forms of wireless communication from the pre-computer age to the present day.

Levi Jeans: In late 1872 Jacob Davis, a Reno, Nevada tailor, started making men's work pants with metal points of strain for greater strength. He wanted to patent the process but needed a business helper, so he turned to Levi Strauss, from whom he purchased some of his fabric. On May 20, 1873, Strauss and Davis received a United States patent for using copper rivets to strengthen the pockets of denim work pants. Levi Strauss & Co. began manufacturing the famous Levi's brand of jeans, using fabric from the Amoskeag Manufacturing Company in Manchester, New Hampshire.

Esther Miriam Zimmer Lederberg (1922 – 2006) was an American microbiologist and immunologist and pioneer of bacterial genetics. Notable contributions include the discovery of lambda phage, the relationship between transduction and lambda phage lysogeny, the development of replica plating, and discovery of bacterial fertility factor F. Lederberg also founded and directed the Plasmid Reference Center at Stanford University, whose collection contained plasmids of all types of genes,

coding for antibiotic resistance, heavy metal resistance, virulence, conjugation, colicins, transposons, temperature sensitivity and other unknown factors. (Most of these plasmids have still not been thoroughly studied.)

The full Wikipedia list can be seen at:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Jewish_inventors

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Requesting help with French name research

I am a French PhD student in my 3rd and final year. The subject of my study is South African onomastics of French origin.

As I am studying the family names, I thought of getting in contact with you. Why? Because by “name of French origin”, we mean, for example, family names of ex-French citizen, of which the origin of the name can be Celtic, Germanic, Occitan, etc., and, of course, also Hebrew, since the Jewish people are also a component of the French population.

Amongst the migrants to South Africa, there have been a number of French men and women. Amongst these Jewish people are names such as the LION / LYON - CACHET.

My question is: could you please point out to me the names of French Jews or Jewish people of French nationality?

These individuals qualify if they have “come from France”, have the “French nationality”, have been “naturalized French”, etc.

What I need is:

- Family names
- Date of arrival or date of the document of reference
- Place of origin (ex. : Alsace / town in Alsace / Paris / etc.) ;
- Archives references
- Variations in the spelling of the names which is the subject of the thesis.

Perhaps one of the Newsletter readers might have the time and pleasure to give me a hand with this research.

I would be most grateful and would really appreciate any help.

Michel A. Rateau
Président / Chairman CEEHGFAA
Historien - Onomasticien - Conférencier
e-mail : rateaumichel.perigord@wanadoo.fr
Mauzac-et-Grand-Castang, France

◆◆◆

Update on search for Dubow/Dubovsky family

The following individuals were kind enough to respond to my inquiry in a previous SA-SIG Newsletter concerning the Dubow and Dubovsky families who live in South Africa. Unfortunately, I could not answer them personally because I did not have their postal addresses, and I do not have access to e-mail or the Internet. If they will provide me with their postal address by contacting Mike Getz (see e-mail address below), I will try to get back to them personally.

Lewis Clifton, Marilyn Dubovsky, Henny Moed Roth, Ronald Kaplan, Moira Schneider, Cecil Schneider, Ann Rabinowitz, Adele Schneider, Brian Cohen, Louis Zetler, and Shaul Sharoni.

Many thanks!

Sylvan M. Dubow
Glenn Dale, Maryland, USA

Editor's Note: Please contact Sylvan through Mike Getz, at mikegetz005@comcast.net

◆◆◆

New YIVO Encyclopedia

The new on-line Encyclopedia from YIVO of the Jews in Eastern Europe was sent to me and I am forwarding the URL to all SA-SIG members for your interest.

<http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org>

Beryl Baleson
Israel

◆◆◆

Jewish Street names in Cape Town

In the article re Jewish street names in Cape Town [See SA-SIG Newsletter, January 2010], you can add Reuben Kaye Street in Parow.

Mel Goott



Israel Phone Book

The web site <http://www.israelpb.com> provides a new tool that can help find your relatives in Israel. It allows you to search through all of the phone numbers in Israel in English, and includes many variations of spelling for first and last names. It's my hope that the site will prove to be a valuable genealogical resource and help reconnect many families.

Shaun Waksman
Tel Aviv



Synagogue Photographs

Shawn Benjamin has taken some exceptional photos of several South African synagogues. Kimberley, Oudtshoorn, and Paarl feature amongst a number of other quality photos of Jewish and general South African interest.

To view more of these images do the following:

1. Go to <http://www.arkimages.co.za>
2. Click on the tab 'Image Library'
3. Click on 'log in' (leave the password field blank).
4. To search for images do the following: select the exact phrase from the drop-down list and enter the key word "Jewish" in the search block and click on "Find." To search using multiple key words select all of the words from the drop-down list.

To enlarge images:

1. Preview images by double clicking on the image.
2. Zoom/enlarge the image by clicking on the drop-down list DEFAULT SIZE.

Images may be purchased; one needs to register and log in to do so.

Saul Issroff

SURNAMES APPEARING IN THIS NEWSLETTER

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