

CHAI

From Colorado

Spring 2008

Jewish Genealogical Society of Colorado

Founded in 1995, the Jewish Genealogical Society of Colorado is a member of the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies (iajgs.org)- a nonprofit organization with 69 member societies in 14 countries. Membership is open to anyone interested in researching Jewish roots. Guests are welcome at free monthly meetings.

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Colorado Records and Resources: An Online Primer

Doing Jewish genealogy in Colorado, as with anywhere in the United States, starts with civil, non-religion specific records. To find ancestors who lived and/or died in Colorado, check with the following online resources to jumpstart your project. This article is only a sampling of what is available as you peruse through the recommended websites. All links to each repository or source can be found on the JGSCO website.

Highlights

Statewide Index to Marriages (1858-1939) is available from the *Colorado State Genealogical Society*.

Statewide Divorce Index (1880-1939) at the *Colorado State Archives*.

Denver Death Index (1870-1905) at the *Colorado State Archives*.

Denver Obituary Index (1938-2005) is available online through the *Denver Public Library*.

1.) **Ancestry.com**. Along with federal census records, numerous listings include the 1885 Colorado State Census, Colorado marriages 1859-1900, city and business directories, newspaper indices and select county archive inventories.

2.) **Colorado Department of Health and Environment** website for retrieving vital records. Includes applications for **death records** for the entire state 1900 to present. Certified copies of **birth certificates** are available in the county where birth occurred for birth years 1910 to present. **Marriage records** for the entire state are available for 1900 to 1939, and 1975 to present. Verifications for the years 1940 to 1974 are not available from this office and must be obtained from the county where the license was

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obtained. **Dissolution (divorce, separation and annulment) records** for the entire state are available for 1851 to 1939 and 1968 to present. Verifications for the years 1940 to 1967 are not available from this office and must be obtained from the county where the dissolution was decreed. *Some county vital records predate this office's collection and should be contacted directly.*

3.) **Colorado State Archives.** Search the Historical Records Database by name, county, time span or record type (over 450,000 entries and growing including the Statewide Divorce Index 1880-1939). Includes numerous holdings including 1870 Federal Census Records, Bar Admission Files 1899-1950, Birth Records (Pre-1907), Civil War Casualties, Colorado Court of Appeals 1891-1911, Denver Death Index 1870-1905, Divorce Records, Inheritance Tax Record, Land Patent Records, Old Age Pension, Probate Records, School Records, Teacher Certificate Applications, Teacher Experience Records and Vietnam War Casualties.

4.) **NARA Rocky Mountain Regional Facility** archival holdings include federal population censuses for all states, 1790-1930, indices for the 1880, 1900, 1910, and 1920 censuses, ship's passenger lists, and Colorado naturalizations.

5.) **Colorado Historical Society** - The holdings of the Stephen H. Hart Library include the largest newspaper collection in Colorado for birth, marriage and death records; books, maps, architectural drawings to identify early buildings; private and business correspondence, family albums, photographic prints, magazines and newspapers, and a wealth of other historical resources. Online library catalog, other indices and services available.

6.) **Denver Public Library** website includes an online catalog, access to WorldCat for interlibrary loan, photography collection, historical maps and a variety of microfilmed indices.

7.) **Denver Post** - The entire Post from 1895 to present is available on microfilm at the Western History section of the Denver Public Library's Main Branch in downtown Denver. The archives are online since 1993.

8.) **Rocky Mountain News** - Published since 1859. Archives online since 1989.

9.) Additional Colorado genealogical resources are linked from the **Colorado State Genealogical Society** website.

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Under Utilized Resource at the Denver Public Library: The St. Albans Border Crossing Records

by JGSCO Member Terry Lasky

One of the most under utilized resources at the Denver Public Library is the St. Albans Border Crossing Records. These microfilms consist of a set of cards filled out by every person who crossed anywhere along the border from Canada to the United States between 1892 and 1952. Each person crossing the border, for any reason, was required to fill out one of these cards. The cards contain a wealth of genealogical information. Although Ancestry.com has what they call “St. Albans Border Crossing Records,” they are not the same resource and do not have the same coverage or quantity of information.

The cards are arranged by American Soundex Code and then alphabetically by first name within each Soundex Code. There are two sets of microfilm; 1892-1924 and 1924-1952. The cards contain the following information: Port of arrival, date of arrival, person’s name, other people traveling with him/her, place of birth, age, sex, marriage status, occupation, read/write, language, race, nationality, name/address of nearest relative in country person came from, previous times in USA, destination in USA including person’s name and address, person to visit, height, complexion, hair color, eye color, distinguishing marks, seaport, date of landing and boat name.

Even if the person had been living in Canada for a length of time or was a Canadian citizen, the name of the port and boat they arrived on was usually given. If they were just passing through Canada on the way to the United States, the most important information was place of birth, nearest relative in the old country, date, boat and port of arrival, where going in the United States and who they were visiting.

If you had relatives who came by boat to Canada or whom you can’t find a boat record for, you should definitely check out the St. Albans records. Even if you find a record in the Ancestry.com Border Crossing Records, you should also check out the microfilm at DPL because the cards often have more extensive information. These microfilms are located on the 5th floor genealogy section of the downtown Denver Public Library.

Letter From The JGSCO President

As we come to the end of the year, I look back at the wonderful programs we have had. All have been interesting and informative. Our offer of a free year’s membership to all who signed up at meetings has worked beautifully. At last count, we have five new members who came into our organization that way.

I encourage all new members or those who need further instruction in beginning genealogy research to attend the Beginners Workshop on Sunday, May 18th at B'nai Havurah from 1-5 PM. Please contact Ellen Kowitt at (720) 221-6858 or grapevynwest@comcast.net for further information on the workshop and to RSVP.

I hope to see many of you at our next meeting.

-Rita Jo Tensly

Finding A JCRS Patient Record: A Success Story

Excerpted from Jim Haberman's Presentation to the JGS of SW Florida on February 17, 2008

He died in Colorado, where in about 1919, his young wife – my Bubbe – had taken him for treatment of tuberculosis, leaving their three young children behind in Detroit in the care of neighbors. That sentence contained the sum total of the knowledge of their son – my father – of those desperate times during his infancy. The sum total, that is, until June of last year.

One Sunday morning that month, I checked my email and discovered a message from Sam Sontag in Brooklyn with interesting news. It turned out that Sam's great-grandfather and Bubbe's mother were brother and sister, making us third cousins.

Later that week, I mentioned our new family connection to my Dad, who had just celebrated his 90th birthday. He responded by saying, "Why don't you take a look on the Internet, and see if you can find my father's burial records?" I was a bit taken aback by Dad's request, as he'd never had much interest in the digital world. I replied, "Sure, Dad, I'll take a look," never really expecting to find anything, as I'd tried in vain many times years earlier.

Late that afternoon, I sat at my computer, and on Google, typed in quotes in the search field, Abraham Haberman – my grandfather. That very simple, very basic search returned 12 webpages, 11 of which were related to other Abraham Habermans. One page, however, was located, of all places, at the website of the University of Denver's Penrose Library. I clicked the link and was amazed to see that the resulting page was headed "Ira M. Beck Memorial Archives, Jewish Consumptives' Relief Society Patient Records." It contained thousands of names in alphabetical order, each of which was linked to a corresponding webpage.

At that point, I felt that I had very possibly struck pay dirt. I slowly scrolled through the huge list, and about halfway down found my grandfather's name. I clicked on the link and was taken to a page summarizing Abraham Haberman's patient record. That was my eureka moment, for there I read that his disease was contracted in Detroit, that his wife's name was Rebecca (my Bubbe) and that he was the father of three children ages 2, 3 and 5 years (the ages of my father and his two sisters that year). The page also indicated my grandfather's date of admission to JCRS as June 17, 1919 and the date of his death three weeks later on July 11, 1919. I was certain that I had identified the institution at which he was treated and, as I now say, where he died. (Another link from the JCRS Isaac Solomon Historic Synagogue Foundation website brought me to a Golden Hill Cemetery record where he was buried.)

I would like nothing better than to be able to tell you that weeks of exhaustive work were necessary to make my discoveries. However, the in depth research I've just described required less than ten minutes of time. I'll let you decide whether my good fortune was mere luck or the work of a higher power.

Editor's Note: Although Jim Haberman found a Golden Hill Cemetery record located online at ghostseekers.com, it is advised that genealogists utilize the JewishGen Online Worldwide Burial Registry (JOWBR) at www.jewishgen.org/databases/cemetery/, which is a more thorough index including burials without a headstone. English translations of all Colorado Jewish gravestones in Hebrew, Yiddish and Russian are also available on JOWBR.

Denver Initiative to Collect Names of Babi Yar Victims

Babi Yar Park located where southeast Denver meets Aurora at the intersection of South Parker Road and South Havana is about to get a facelift. The Mizel Museum in cooperation with the City of Denver and the Babi Yar Park Foundation plans to expand the existing Babi Yar Park designed by Saturi Nishita, a member of Lawrence Halprin's staff. Massive sculptural and architectural elements including a museum, memory wall and hope garden are anticipated.

According to Ellen Premack, Mizel Museum Director, a committee will be formed to consider the collection of victim names to include in the new memorial space. If you have Babi Yar victim names to submit, contact Ellen at (303) 394-9993 x1 or ellen@mizelmuseum.org.

Stutthof Museum Collecting Eyewitness Testimonies

In February, 2008, the Stutthof Museum started the project "Last Witnesses" to collect audio and video documents from former Stutthof witnesses.

This project is an appeal to former witnesses to document memories and other information, especially those which were not recorded yet.

If you want to share your memories, or if you are in contact with a witness, help to elaborate the Museum's history between 1939 and 1945. Contact stutthof@stutthof.pl.

International Initiative to Collect Unpublished Holocaust Memoirs

Excerpted from Jacob Berkman article in The Intermountain Jewish News, April 18, 2008

Historian Saul Friedlander was recently awarded the Pulitzer Prize for his use of Holocaust diaries and memoirs. Now he's joining with the Claims Conference to herald a new initiative to collect firsthand testimonials before the last survivors have passed on.

The Claims Conference is urging survivors to submit previously unpublished materials, as well as to commit their unwritten memories to paper, and submit them to the database. Submissions will be accepted in any language.

The collected material will be available initially only to scholars and organizations dedicated to Holocaust research. Discussions are under way about how to make the information accessible to the public, but the conference says the priority is to make sure the memoirs are gathered before the survivors pass away.

The Claims Conference is not the first organization to undertake the recording of memories of Holocaust survivors. The best known among them, Steven Spielberg's Shoah Foundation Institute, has amassed an archive of 52,000 videotaped testimonies. Conference officials insist another effort is necessary, not only to collect testimonies that have not been recorded, but because certain aspects of the Holocaust remain unknown and live on only in the memories of survivors. More information about this Claims Conference project can be found at <http://memoirs.claimscon.org/>. More information about Steven Spielberg's Shoah Foundation Institute can be found at <http://college.usc.edu/vhi/cataloguingindexing.php>.

Postcards: Windows on the Past

by JGSCO Member Anne Fendrich

My husband and I began collecting postcards long before I understood their value to genealogists. We would often spend weekends exploring antique stores or flea markets in search of undiscovered treasures. Often, discouraged in our search, my husband would ask, "What will you take for the box?" When we got them home, I was put to work categorizing and filing these little treasures into albums. We purchased books on postcard collecting and found suitable archival albums in which to store them.

It was easy to recognize the historical value of many of them, and I decided to focus on Judaic cards. Although I already had early cards depicting the old Temple Emanuel on Pearl Street and National Jewish Hospital, we, at first were unaware that there was such a thing as a Judaic postcard. While on a visit to London, my husband noticed an ad in the newspaper for a gathering of dealers and collectors of such items. Our interest was piqued. It was our first introduction to a type of card that was rarely found in run-of-the-mill shops in local communities. One had to work with specialists to find and purchase these items.

Postcards first appeared in the mid-nineteenth century coming with progress in photography and printing reproduction. Originally, the production center of Jewish postcards was in Warsaw. These firms had affiliates in Moscow which helped spread the distribution and popularity of the new novelty. A great number of Judaic postcards were also published in the United States, Germany and France. It is believed the enormous distribution of these cards was linked to the general literacy of the Jewish population as well as to Jewish migration within the Russian Empire and growing migration across the Atlantic.

Perhaps it was Miriam Weiner's books that clued me into the value of postcards for genealogists. Postcard scenes from many of the communities mentioned in her books were used for illustrations. Indeed, photographic postcards of the time often depicted synagogues, public and educational buildings and busy town and market squares of Jewish communities. In many postcards there were displays of Jewish worship, study and life cycle events. These provide us with excellent portrayals of Jewish life, observances and fashion for a specific country or time period. Often, these attractive cards were created by Jewish artists. Many depictions of biblical characters and events are prevalent. Sometimes, a series will show famous rabbis, prominent Jewish writers, political, military and civic leaders; Jewish and Israeli heroes, sacred places or historic events. There are even some that have depicted the destruction of a Jewish community, and there are many that were blatantly anti-semitic.

The most easily available of Judaic postcard are the New Year's greeting cards. These were in Yiddish, and, sometimes, to a genealogist's delight, would have a family photo on them. Indeed, it was the postcards featuring family photos and messages that best help to enrich our search. Next in importance would be those that portray a shtetl or town associated with our ancestors' lives. Unfortunately, the more specific we get in our search, the more difficult our search becomes.

A recent Internet search using the terms rare, antique, old, collectable, Judaic and postcards, I came up with a list of possible sources that I will distribute at the May 6th

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Family History Regrets

by JGSCO Member Mark Fearer

Recently, I polled the listserv for the Association for Professional Genealogists (www.apgen.org), asking for the top three regrets of experienced researchers when they started out doing genealogy. Here they are, in order:

1) Not interviewing family members before it was too late. This is self-explanatory, but both professionals and non-professionals kick themselves for not doing it, especially with the older relatives. Needless to say, this is the one, irreversible regret. Don't wait – do it this weekend, so it doesn't become *your* top regret. Summer is often a time for family reunions, and that's a good time to get interviews (if you missed doing it during Passover.)

2) Failing to cite sources – at all, or sufficiently. If you do family history for any amount of time, you'll find yourself frustrated down the line if you don't write down where you found a particular fact.

There are two main reasons for citing sources: to remind you of where you found the fact, and to tell others who see your research, where your source came from. *Evidence Explained* by Elizabeth Mills Shown is the most comprehensive book on this subject, but for now, write down the pertinent information that makes it easy to find that fact.

For example, what or who told you that your great-grandfather was born in 1871? If you found that information in the 1900 Census, a proper citation might be *1900 US Federal Census, Jacob Butinski household, Brooklyn, NY, Roll T342_185, Enumeration District 158, page 17B. Jacob is age 29.* This shows how to find the record on microfilm or online.

3) Not being organized. As you do research, it won't take long before you'll start accumulating piles of paper – either a huge one, or many small ones. Frustration will soon creep in at not being able to find what you seek, so now is the time to develop an organizational system. You can create folders by name, family branch, document type, or any other system that makes sense for you. Experiment – no one is watching.

Honorable regrets included *Not taking genealogy classes earlier; Not identifying photos before it was too late; Not photocopying records; Not noting negative research; Not keeping a research log; Not doing collateral research; and Uncritically using published sources.*

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JGSCO meeting. Local sources can be found under the "Collectibles" listing in the yellow pages, and a quick phone call would determine availability. There is also a local postcard collectors group, and members are always ready to get rid of those not within their preferred categories, often for a reasonable price. There are also periodic postcard or collectors' shows that come to the Denver area that might be a source to connect you to a view of a hometown or shtetl. Some local historical societies or museums have reproductions of postcards that portray their community in the past. These could also serve the genealogist well. I do not recommend that you use my husband's bulk approach to postcard shopping. Yours must be a much more focused search that might eventually require local sources.

Genealogical Tidbits

When planning a **family reunion**, include genealogy activities. Request a **free sample copy of Reunions magazine** by completing a brief survey at www.reunionsmag.com. Free stuff at the same site includes podcasts, a forum and hundreds of pages of material about specific reunion details to help solve reunion planning dilemmas.

Subscribe to the **Denver Public Library Western History/Genealogy free email newsletter**. This newsletter is updated monthly and includes recent acquisitions and

new materials, research resources, donation information and upcoming events.

Have you explored the world of **genealogy blogs**? All the rage, we've linked some of the most popular from the JGSCO website at www.jewishgen.org/jgs-colorado/links.html. Check out Shelly Talalay Dardashti's *Tracing the Tribe: The Jewish Genealogy Blog*, Julie Miller's *COGen Blog: News and Tips About Genealogy in Colorado* and *The Ancestry Insider*.

Announced just this week after Wendy Berenbaum's JGSCO lecture on *Ashkenazi Diseases of Importance to Jews Today*, Family Tree DNA has formed a new company, DNATraits, that will perform **genetic disease testing for an Ashkenazi panel comprising 25 inherited diseases**. An introductory price of \$199 is available, thereafter, the price will be \$299. DNA stored at Family Tree DNA will not be used for testing for inheritable diseases, and a new type of saliva collection kit will be used for these tests. Visit www.dnatriaitraits.com/ashkenazi for more information and to order.

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Annual Jewish Genealogy Beginner's Workshop
Sunday, May 18th, 1-5 PM, B'nai Havurah
RSVP Required (720) 221-6858