

CHAI

From Colorado

Fall 2007

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 80 member societies in 16 countries.

Membership is open to anyone interested in researching Jewish roots. Guests are welcome at free monthly meetings.

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Who Isn't a Beginning Genealogist?

Each of our genealogical research goals are constantly in flux, evolving as new records are revealed or family stories unearthed. That means that providing interesting programs to our membership and educating the community about how to get started doing Jewish genealogy should not be the only goals of our society. We need to address each individual's needs.

There's a lot of information out there on JewishGen, Ancestry, FamilySearch, Rootsweb and other Internet websites. Perhaps there's too much information that isn't specifically focused on us. Focused on me. Focused on you. Perhaps assigning mentors or signing up for brainstorming workshops to break through personal research brick walls would be useful. What do you think?

I have found that the people who sign up for the annual JGSCO Beginners Workshop often come with very specific problems in mind to solve. They aren't necessarily interested in becoming generalists on all things genealogy. Upon being overloaded with information, they often become too overwhelmed to stick with doing the research.

We each have different learning styles, different personalities and genealogy goals. With technology ever-changing and the access to records broadening worldwide, we each reinvent how to do our own Jewish genealogy. We begin again and again.

Sit down and make a list. Perhaps, a list similar to the one you made years ago when you first decided to research your family history. Write down what you know about names, dates and places of origin. Then create a list of questions about things you would still like to learn about your family. Bring a question or two to a JGSCO meeting and gather the membership around to hear what you've already tried. Maybe we can jumpstart your research and motivation with a fresh perspective on what resources are currently available.

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Contributing articles are welcome!

President's Letter

To All of Our Genealogists,

For my first letter as President of the JGS Colorado, I would like to wish you good hunting with your research. We are all interested in helping each other, so please ask if you have a research problem. We have an excellent board and our board meetings are open to everyone. We could use more help in some areas, so if you would like to help, let us know. We will try to match the job to your talents and abilities.

Getting our JGS Colorado name out to the public is a good thing. Do not turn down a request for a talk on genealogy. Perhaps your synagogue, havurah, JCC or social group is looking for a program? If you can't lecture on Jewish genealogy, we will help find someone who can. There are a lot of people out there who are interested in doing what we do!

Please come to our meetings and bring a friend. We have many interesting speakers lined up this year, speaking on a variety of subjects. I am sure that you will find several subjects of interest to you.

Rita Jo Tensly

First-Timer's Reflections on IAJGS Conference in Salt Lake City

by Barry Levene

Several months ago, when I was trying to decide whether to attend the annual IAJGS conference, I really had not thought much about my personal expectations. I just knew that I was fairly new to the genealogy business and that I had lots to learn. And, hey, the conference was being held right next door in Salt Lake City, a place I was familiar with, having visited there many times on business trips. Air transportation was fairly inexpensive. Why not just sign up and see what all the fuss is about. So, I took the plunge, registered, and didn't think much about it again until about a week before the conference began.

I then did a little homework on the Family History Library website to create a list of possible items I might want to review while there, and I glanced over the conference schedule to get some idea of what sessions I might want to attend. I also printed off from Family Tree Maker some family tree information that I thought might be helpful in doing my research. That was it for preparation.

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After arriving in Salt Lake on Sunday afternoon and settling in at the hotel, I registered at the conference and received my credentials, a two-inch thick syllabus, and daily planner. As a first-timer, I had decided not to spend my time in computer classes but concentrate on presentations, so I sat down with the daily planner and syllabus and began planning out activities for my next couple of days. Each evening I would plan for the next day. The only set activities on my schedule were the Latvia SIG luncheon on Thursday and the IAJGS business meeting on Wednesday. I purposely avoided viewing any of the films in the film series because I did not want to sit in a dark room and watch a movie, but film-lovers must have been delighted at the range of offerings.

What were my priorities? Well, I wanted to experience a variety of topics. I wanted to focus on Latvia, Belarus, and Lithuania (where all my ancestors are from). I wanted to pick up some genealogical research techniques. I wanted to visit the Family History Library. I wanted to learn something about the Eastern European immigrant experience. I wanted to see if I could somehow add to my own research efforts. And I wanted to find out what the real Stephen Morse is like.

Did I achieve my objectives? I did learn a lot about research techniques. Particularly helpful were a presentation on the use of online discussion groups and one on data management techniques. For diversity I heard personal stories of successful research efforts, organizing reunions, and publishing newsletters. Paul Shapiro's talk about his tenacious and courageous struggle to open the International Tracing Service files was inspirational and fascinating. I learned about the history of trans-Atlantic voyages over the years. I spent some time at the Family History Library, where I did not find much information that was not in Russian or Hebrew, but I did relearn that I cannot use microfilm readers because the film movement makes me dizzy. And, yes, I did go to a number of Steve Morse presentations and found them to be detailed and informative, and Steve, himself, to be quite charming.

Finally, I learned an incredible amount about how to do research in Latvia and Lithuania. What was even more exciting is that I discovered someone at the Latvia SIG meeting who I think is a distant cousin. We think we share the same great, great grandparents. We are currently doing the research to try to verify whether this is indeed true.

What were my overall impressions? I was overwhelmed by the number, diversity, breadth, and depth of the presentations and the quality of the presenters. I think there was something for everyone. The conference organizers deserve a lot of credit for the advance planning and scheduling that was done and their ability to adapt to last-minute problems. The presence of the Library only blocks away was a positive addition. On the other hand, for me, the conference was too long. I left on Thursday night before the conference banquet. I decided that four and a half days was plenty. I also wished that there had been some effort to assist first-time attendees so that we could make the most of our time and be able to meet others more easily. On the whole, the conference was a worthwhile experience. It motivated me to renew my efforts to fill in family history gaps, and now I have a growing list of to-do items for my own research. Maybe now, based on what I learned, I can make some more progress.

Next year in Chicago, anyone?

IAJGS Board Report on the Salt Lake City Conference

by Anne Feder Lee, IAJGS President

As always, those attending the annual international conference had to make difficult choices among a great many activities. There were inspiring and knowledgeable speakers, SIG and BOF luncheons/meetings, watching films, socializing and doing research at the Family History Library.

There was a great photo exhibit called Lives Remembered: Photographs of a Small Town in Poland 1895-1939 put together by Mike Marvins from numerous pictures Marvin's grandfather, Zalman Kaplan, took as the photographer in Szczuczyn from 1895-1939.

Paul Shapiro, of USHMM, gave an extremely moving opening ceremony speech about his years of work that have led to the opening of the ITS archives at Bad Arolsen.

Dan Rottenberg, author of the first guidebook on Jewish genealogy research, Finding Our Fathers, spoke at the banquet and wowed us all by announcing that he was relinquishing his copyright to the part of his book with the alphabetical list of family names with information on each entry. I'm sure it will be available on the web before too long.

The banquet festivities also included the awarding of the 2007 IAJGS Lifetime Achievement to Mathilde Tagger of Israel for her many years of Sephardic research and the 2007 IAJGS Award for Outstanding Contribution to Jewish Genealogy via the Internet, Print or Electronic Product went to Lars Menk for his remarkable book, "Dictionary of German-Jewish Surnames."

At the IAJGS annual meeting, Alexander Avraham, on behalf of Yad Vashem, presented a certificate to Donald Hirschhorn of the JGS of Palm Beach County, in recognition of his activism, dedication and outstanding volunteerism as coordinator for the Shoah Victims Names Recovery Project. The IAJGS member organizations approved the granting of the 2007 Stern Award of \$2000 to the US Holocaust Memorial Museum to be used for its upcoming project to index materials it receives from the International Tracing Service (ITS). The Board announced that in the future the name will be changed from Stern Award to Malcom Stern Grant to clarify that it is for a proposed project. Jan Meisels Allen gave an excellent report on the activities of the Public Records Access Monitoring Committee. A bylaws amendment was passed adding the following language to IAJGS Objectives: "To promote public access to genealogically relevant records." The following officers were re-elected: Anne Feder Lee, President; Michael Brenner, Vice President; Joel Spector, Secretary; and Mike Posnick, Treasurer. Consensus was reached on creating a new IAJGS committee for Strategic Planning. Member organizations were encouraged to submit posters for our Jewish Genealogy Month competition (see www.iajgs.org for more).

The IAJGS Management Seminar on Fundraising and Grant-writing for Non-profits with presentations by Ron Arons and Shelly Weiner was excellent and included much practical information. All IAJGS member organizations received a CD with their Power Point presentations.

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At our preview of the Chicago 2008 conference, we announced that some of the special items will include lunch kiosks, free wi-fi in attendees' guest rooms, free use of the hotel health club and the possibility of cooking classes given by the hotel chef.

The Chicago Marriott Downtown Magnificent Mile Hotel will be the location of the conference and is in a wonderful location, has a spacious lobby, and a fantastic pastry chef. The room rate for single and double occupancy will be \$199 (plus tax) and an additional person will be \$30 (plus tax).

There will be a special focus on Jews in the Midwest, Jews in Latin America, and immigration to the US via Canada as well as many other sessions. The hotel is offering a special bonus of a free week for a conference attendee. Details of how the winner will be selected will be announced as soon as they are finalized.

For those who want to get a head start on research possibilities in Chicago are urged to go to Mike Karsen's excellent website: www.jewishgen.org/InfoFiles/Chicago. A Google search for "Jewish Chicago" will also lead to many interesting items. Mark your calendars now for August 17-22, 2008.

The Genealogist's Resource for Interpreting Causes of Death

As Posted on the IAJGS Listserv by Joan Parker, JGS of Greater Miami, Inc.

Although "modern" death certificates now do not include cause of death for privacy reasons, many of the older ones do, but interpreting the cause can sometimes be elusive.

Antiquus Morbus is an interesting web site that provides definitions of archaic medical terms, along with their old and modern definitions that we genealogists come across from time to time. This site helps decipher the causes of death found on mortality lists, certificates of death, and church death records from the 19th century and earlier.

It provides modern day equivalents of old terminology, ie: Falling Sickness is Epilepsy, but also provides supplemental information on many of the terms found, such as when and where such terminology was found. Many terms include descriptions of the causes of the medical condition which might give insights into understanding your ancestor's life style and last days.

If your death certificate comes from the "old country," in a foreign language, the web site provides lists of archaic medical terms, diseases, and causes of death in English, German, French, Polish and a few other languages. It even lists the medical terms in the original Latin terminology.

This and several thousand more archaic medical terms can be found on Rudy's List of Archaic Medical Terms at <http://www.antiquusmorbus.com>.

Golden Hill Cemetery

by Ted Ruskin

One of the programs planned by the Jewish Genealogical Society for this fall will be a trip to historic Golden Hill Cemetery which was founded in 1908 by the West Side Benevolent Society. Many of the early residents of the Denver community are buried here. Among them are patients of the Jewish Consumptive Relief Society who were buried there because the cemetery was relatively close to the hospital site, and it followed the Orthodox laws of burial. A large number were buried on the hill section which was set aside and separated from the main part of the cemetery for paupers, suicides and those who died of communicable diseases. Cemetery records indicate that those who were destitute were buried with very little reimbursement to the burial society: some at no cost, some for a few cents or a dollar or two. Personal possessions of the deceased were sometimes sold to defray the cost. There are approximately 800 burials on the hill. Only about one-third have any stones to identify them.

In 1989, I entered the monument business in Denver focusing on serving Denver's Jewish community. At that time, the hill section was in dismal condition, and I worked with the Synagogue Council to organize the annual cleanup project. At times, over 100 volunteers participated in this event.

The hill section of Golden Hill Cemetery has been declared both a State and National Historic Landmark and is one of only five Jewish cemeteries to achieve this status. Meanwhile, I have begun a new project to memorialize those who would otherwise be forgotten. I'm gathering funds from others to be matched in kind by myself to place stones on the unmarked graves in the cemetery.

When we make our trip to the cemetery, some of the members of the genealogical society, including myself, will explain Jewish burial customs and help decipher typical stone markings and their meaning. Stones of note will be pointed out, and, blessed by our beautiful autumn weather, it should make a wonderful outing for us all.

Never Give Up and Look for the Unexpected

Tip by Terry Lasky

I have searched for my grandfather's family in the 1910 census unsuccessfully for years. I was pretty sure that he was in Ohio, probably Cleveland. His name was Davis (David) Zaslowsky – Zaslowsky being spelled one of about 50 ways. I finally decided to go after my father who was a young child. I typed in "Harry" as a first name, born NY, born 1903 +/- 1 year, father "Dav*" and mother "Jen*". I got only two hits: a Harry Stone in Brooklyn, NY and a Harry Davis in Cleveland. Neither looked like my father/grandfather, but the one in Cleveland piqued my interest since the last name was Davis -- my grandfather's first name. I checked and it was my family (all other children and facts matched). They must have told the census taker, "David also known as Davis," and he/she must have thought that was the full name and never heard the surname Zaslowsky. Never give up and look for the unexpected. Remember, last names cause all kinds of problems.

JGS Schedule 2007-2008

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TIME</u>	<u>PLACE</u>	<u>PERSON</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>
Tues. Sept. 11	6:30 PM	Temple Emanuel	Joe Cahn	"WorldCat Resources"
Sun. Oct. 14	1:30 PM	Golden Hill Cemetery	Ted Ruskin	Tour
Sun. Nov. 4	Noon	East Side Deli	Stanley Hordes	"Hidden Voices: Crypto Jews of the Southwest"
Sun. Nov. 18	1:30 PM	B'nai Havurah	Mark Fearer	"The Strange Experiment of Jewish Migration Through Galveston"
Sun. Dec. 16	1:30 PM	B'nai Havurah	Rabbi Richard Newma	"Jewish Settlement in S. Africa in the 19 th & 20 th Centuries and the Situation Today"
Tues. Jan. 8	6:30 PM	Temple Emanuel	Sandra Greenberg	"The Museum of Family History: A Great Site for Jewish Genealogical Research"
Sun. Feb. 10	1:30 PM	B'nai Havurah	Jeanne Abrams	"Jewish Women Pioneering the Frontier Trail"
Tues. Mar. 11	6:30 PM	Temple Emanuel	Terry Lasky	"Canadian Records: Why We Care and What's Available"
Sun. Apr. 13	1:30 PM	B'nai Havurah	Wendy Berenbaum	"Ashkenazi Diseases of Importance to Jews Today"
Tues. May 6	6:30 PM	Temple Emanuel	Anne Fendrich	"Postcards Tell Your Family Story"
Sun. May 18	1:30 PM	B'nai Havurah	Ellen Kowitt	Beginners Workshop
Sun. June 8	1:30 PM	B'nai Havurah		Election of Officers, Sharing our Success Stories

Finding a woman when you don't know the married name is very difficult but not impossible. This example is one that I accomplished for someone else. The method I used won't work in most cases, but it is the concept of how I went about it that is important. The person that I was looking for was named Cecil M. Lewis in the 1900/1910 census, living with her parents. She was born in Colorado, her father was born in NY and her mother in Wisconsin. She was born about 1884. In the 1920 census, I looked for a person whose first name started with "Cec", born in Colorado, birth 1884 +/-2 years, mother born WI and father born NY. NOTE that the last name field was left blank. I got only one hit, a Cecil M L Stevens married to an Albert living in Richfield, Idaho with 2 children. Getting only one hit was a surprise and lucky. To verify that I had the right person, I checked the 1930 census but only found Albert (not Cecil) with 6 children and a wife named Mabel. I noticed that the first two children had Colorado for the mother's birth place and the last 4 had NH where Mabel was born. Assuming that Cecil may have died, I checked the Idaho death records and found a Cecil May Lewis Stevens had died in 1926, verifying that I had the correct person. This is another example of looking for people without using a last name in the search.

Tip by Terry Lasky
**Example of Finding a Married Woman
Without Knowing the Married Name**

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