



# Family Legacies

Linking the past with the present and the future

Jewish Genealogy Society  
of Southern Nevada - West

Vol.4, No.2 Spring 2001

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## Western Land Records On Line At BLM

Western land records have been added to the BLM (Bureau of Land Management) General Land Office (GLO) on line site at [www.glorerecords.blm.gov](http://www.glorerecords.blm.gov)

Researchers can print out images of the land papers using Adobe Acrobat Reader. Searches can be made of the database by name or patent number. Surname only searches are possible and a single state may be selected to search or all states may be selected. Searches may be made by Patentee—the person who received the land patent certificate or by Warrantee—the person who received a military warrant of land.

When search results for a surname appear on the screen you can print the list. If an entry on the list appears in red there is no digital image associated with the name. However, by selecting the entry you will receive the text information used to index the name. Entries in blue indicate that a digital image is available. Clicking on the entry takes you to a screen where you can follow directions to print out the document.

The site also contains a history of the homestead laws. Under State Resources For Research links are provided to other sites for each state. The links for the state of Nevada include:

Nevada GenWeb Project  
Nevada State Library and Archive  
BLM, Nevada State Office

The site contains a searchable database for the following states:

Alabama	Alaska
Arizona	Arkansas
California	Colorado
Florida	Idaho
Illinois	Indiana
Iowa	Kansas
Louisiana	Michigan
Minnesota	Mississippi
Missouri	Montana
Nebraska	Nevada
New Mexico	North Dakota
Ohio	Oklahoma
Oregon	South Dakota
Texas	Utah
Washington	Wisconsin
Wyoming	

This site is easy to use. There is a good section explaining what each field on the search form means. Tips include the note that you do not need to fill in the entire search form to search the database. If you need a certificated copy of a land record there are directions for purchasing the document. Information about purchasing a CD containing the land records is provided.



## **President's Message**

By Carole Montello

In the 1990's Las Vegas set out to reinvent its image from that of "playground for adults" to that of family vacation mecca. In the ten years since the mega resort boom, Las Vegas has succeeded. Resorts in and around the famed Las Vegas Strip now have something for everyone. Las Vegas has become one of the fastest growing cities in the United States. People move here at the rate of 4000+ a month. So where are all the genealogists hiding?

With the lack of resource centers in the area, the JGS Southern Nevada West has had to create its own resources. Members have been working over the past year compiling a selection of databases on Jews in Southern Nevada. The originals are held in the Special Collections Department at the University of Nevada Las Vegas. Working with Dr. Peter Michel, the Director of Special Collections, members worked to compile an index for the year 2000 of all the temple bulletins in Las Vegas. This project led to an indexing of the Las Vegas Hadassah Calendars for 1993-2001 and the Hadassah Scrapbook for 1965. These databases contain over 17,000 names!

In July 2000 seven members made the trip to Salt Lake City, Utah for the 20th Annual Seminar on Jewish Genealogy. When asked by the seminar chairs if we would like to work the registration desk we replied with a resounding "yes"! New friendships were formed, old ones renewed and many tired eyes left the Family History Library every day. No one returned home empty handed and everyone agreed that this seminar was the best ever.

We weren't without our share of guest speakers this past year. In August, Hal Bookbinder, Vice President of the IAJGS spoke to the membership on "The Khazars, Our Ancestors?" Hal was followed in September by newly elected IAJGS board member Michael Brenner who spoke on New York City Resources. In November we hosted an area-wide seminar on "Resources in the National Archives and Records Administration" presented by William Doty, Archivist at the Laguna Niguel, California branch of NARA.

Our membership, while small, is a great group of hard working family historians. Not only are they working on their own family genealogies but working on more databases of Jewish families in the Southern Nevada area. I was honored to be re-elected as President for another two-year term and welcome the returning and new board members. So, when you come to Las Vegas for your vacation, keep in mind that we are a family-oriented city, family-history oriented and invite you to join us on the third Sunday of the month at our meeting. Give us a call or email us and we will arrange for transportation if needed.

### **Distinguished Women in Southern Nevada 1995**

Biographical information on the following Jewish Women can be found in Distinguished Women in Southern Nevada 1995 Directory, published by Distinguished Publishing Company, Las Vegas, Nevada:

Shelley Berkley  
Lori Lipman Brown  
Frances-Ann Fine  
Carolyn G. Goodman  
Micki D'Amico Hecht  
Hinda Joy Hinden  
Edythe Katz-Yarchever  
Tamar Saposhnik Lubin  
Paula Quagliana  
Geraldine Schwartzner

### **JGS Southern Nevada West Family Tree Maker Class**

This Winter three sessions of classes were offered to members interested in the Family Tree Maker program. Each class consisted of three meetings over a three week period. Classes used two computers and each class was limited to four members. Basics of the program and advanced features were covered. Mary Barkan taught the class which she hopes to offer again in the Fall. The classes on citing sources, printing genealogy reports, inserting photographs and documents, and organizing a book were the most popular.

Graduates of the classes include: Myrna Adler, Nadine Kaufman, Jack Oliver, Earle Maklin, Sylvia Gruzin, Marilyn Barkan, Charlotte Showel, Frances Ross, Carole Montello, Janet Farino, Maxine Muse, and Shirley Kleiman.



## Our Trip To The Past—Part Two

### Minkivtsi

By Joan Adler and Bobby Furst

Wednesday, August 9<sup>th</sup>: What an amazing day! This day alone made the entire trip worthwhile. We left the hotel early since we were going to Minkivtsi and Kamenetz Podolski, at least a two hour drive. We've been calling it Minkovitz, or Minkowitz, but now we know this is incorrect. (The accent is on the "IVTSI") These are the first two places we learned about when we started working on our genealogy almost four years ago. We couldn't believe we were finally going to see them.

Minkivtsi is where the Bekelman family lived. Our great grandmother, Fannie Bekelman, had brothers Louis and Yankel (Yakov) who married Frima Dyen Stein. Yankel and Frima had six children: Sam, Morris, Abraham, Joseph, Frieda and a baby who died. Frima died and Yankel married Esther and had two more children, Luba and a son who died during the war. Apparently Esther didn't like Yankel's first family and Frima's children went to live with her sister Miriam Siegal before emigrating to the United States. Yankel and his second family stayed in Minkivtsi. Louis also emigrated. Minkivtsi was the last place our grandfather Louis Maschtalier (Brautman) lived before emigrating to America in 1902.

Gradually, as we drove, the terrain changed. There were more hills, steeper hills, fewer farms and more forest. The towns we passed through had houses with more decoration. Some of them were quite ornate.

We entered Minkivtsi from the top of a hill. The view was breathtaking. We saw farms, forest, a river and a few houses. It was very peaceful. It is difficult to describe the change and why we thought this area was so particularly beautiful. We don't know if it had anything to do with our feelings of closeness to this place. No matter what the reason, we thought this was the prettiest place we'd seen yet.

Minkivtsi is very small with only a tiny center. We continued to drive, thinking we would find more town. We crossed the Smotrych River (pronounced phonetically) and immediately began to climb a steep hill. Before we knew it, we were at the sign telling us we were leaving Minkivtsi. Across the road from this sign, there is a pipe leading out of the hillside, with water flowing out of the pipe and a large mosaic wall behind it. As we stopped to admire the scenery, which was even more spectacular than from the side where we had entered Minkivtsi, people stopped their vehicles to drink from this pipe or to fill receptacles with the water. We believe the water comes from a natural spring.

We decided to turn around and go back to the village. As we descended, Bobby asked Alex to stop on the side of the road next to an unpaved street. She wanted to walk down the street to see what was there. She must have been led by divine

intervention. Before we knew it, we were at the water mill our Bekelman ancestors used to rent. Three men who had been working in the mill came out to speak with us. Alex asked if they had ever heard the names Maschtalier, Broitman, Beke l-man, but they hadn't.



The mill in Minkivtsi where our Bekelman relatives once worked.

We asked if there was a Jewish cemetery here and they told us about a mass grave in the area. There had been what they called a massacre. The site of the mass grave was inaccessible and about three kilometers from where we were. They told us there is no marker, so we decided it would be too difficult to find. We asked if there were other Jewish cemeteries and one man told us about a cemetery on the side of a hill nearby. He offered to take us there. We followed him for about half a mile.

Some of the time we walked on the road and some of the time we were on a pathway and then we started climbing through the woods. We finally came to a small cemetery of about 20 or 30 graves. The weeds were very overgrown but had not yet completely encroached on the tombstones.

These graves were fairly modern. Each was sitting on top of a cement or stone foundation of about three feet in height and each foundation was surrounded by an ornamental, painted, iron fence. The stones were mostly written on in Cyrillic and most of the deaths had occurred in the 1960's or 1970's. Several stones had ceramic or porcelain discs on them with a photograph of the person on it. In some cases, the person's likeness was engraved on the stone. The whole place was a big surprise.

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## Our Trip To The Past—Part Two

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The Jewish cemetery in Minkivtsi



The next surprise came when we found there was a woman up there with us. She told us she had heard kids had been up here vandalizing the place and she wanted to check it out. Although she now lives in another town, she once lived in Minkivtsi and her father had been the caretaker of the cemetery. She felt it was her responsibility to make sure everything was in order. She told us there were many more stones in the woods next to where we were standing but the woods had so completely regrown that we couldn't see any of them. They were completely inaccessible. She showed us a different path through some people's yards and before we knew it we were back on the unpaved street to the mill.

Once back at the mill, the workers told us the mill used to be a water mill but it was now run by electricity. There are plans to convert it back into a water mill again. They gave us a tour of the mill and told us they are currently grinding corn for cattle feed but would be grinding grain for the people next. The workers suggested we go to the town center and ask some of the older people there about our ancestors. There wasn't much of a center, but we found it, parked the car and started to walk around.

In the center of Minkivtsi there were clusters of people who seemed to have nothing in particular to do. Several of them were at the little store and one older man approached us, asking Alex who we were and what we wanted. He volunteered to take us to the "Jewish street" which turned out to be less than a block away. He showed us several large houses owned by Jews before the war. The man told us about people named Bronfman, Fekstein and Cooperman and other Jewish names we can't remember. We asked if he remembered anybody named Broitman, Bekelman or Maschtalier.

Our escort didn't know any of our family names but he volunteered to take us to a former school teacher, Helen Mashtykash, who he thought might be able to help us. She lives in a house only two or three houses from where we were standing but he insisted on walking there with us.

The woman was in her yard when we approached. Alex spoke with her awhile, translating as he went. She said she remembered many Jewish people but no one with the names we mentioned. She directed us to a building that used to be a Jewish school. On the way we passed a field that used to be the site of four more Jewish homes. Apparently, a Nazi officer took up residence in the house on the corner during the war and ordered these four houses destroyed as they were in his backyard. The school was a block from the teacher's house. The man walked us there. While we were looking at the school, Helen came running up to us to tell us she remembered a woman named Bekelman who had red hair. This was Yankel's daughter from his second marriage. We were thrilled, to say the least. She took us to meet an old woman who lived in the house next to hers. She told us this woman was the Bekelman woman's friend. They went to school together. On the way there, she remembered the Bekelman woman's name was Luba.

Helen went into her neighbor's house and returned with Adela Vishovska who told us she remembered Luba Bekelman very well. They had been friends. We think Luba must have been born about 1915 which would make Adela about 85 years old. She told us Yankel had been a jeweler. Then she started reciting, "Aleph, Beth, Gimel, Daleth." She said Luba taught her the Hebrew alphabet and she still remembered it. Then she dropped a bombshell. She told us Luba had emigrated to Israel and that there is a woman in town who still writes to her. You know where we went next.

Adela gave us directions and the old man led the way. We couldn't thank Helen and Adela enough. We truly never expected to find anyone who knew anything about our ancestors. And now we were about to meet someone who still writes to one of them. We could barely control our excitement.

We walked up the road, Alex opened a gate and went inside. We asked to see Nina Orchevetna, the woman who writes to Luba Bekelman. Nina seemed excited to meet us and immediately invited us into her house to see photographs she had of Luba.

Nina told us Luba and she were good friends. Luba was a telephone operator before the war. She worked at the post office where she delivered messages, telegrams. Nina was her supervisor. Luba was very poor and Nina tried to help her. She let Luba baby sit her children while Nina worked. During the war, Nina's family hid Luba. They dressed her in peasant clothing and, together, they delivered food to the people in the village. Luba's brother was killed during the war.

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## **Researching at the Family History Library, Salt Lake City Part Two—At The Library**

Organized and ready, it's time to go to the Family History Library.

Consider advertising your research. Wear a button announcing the town or surname you are researching. If nothing else, this will give you something to talk about in line at the copy machine. Place your surnames or towns on labels and affix them to your tote bag or briefcase. Use a sheet of colored card stock to make a sign for your microfilm reader. When you are away looking in books or fetching microfilm leave the sign on your reader.

Be prepared to hand out business size cards containing your name, address, email, and the towns and surnames you are researching. You can easily make these genealogy business cards on your computer. A card is much easier than hastily writing down your information for someone you meet in the library who may share your research interests.

What things should you research in Salt Lake City? As a rule of thumb, you should research large record groups. These are record groups that you think may contain information about your ancestors. If you think your grandfather may have registered for the WWI draft in Detroit, Michigan, it is easy to look through all the draft films for Detroit. It is expensive to order all the films in to your local Family History Center. If you think your ancestor arrived at the port of New York but you aren't sure of the spelling used on the arrival records, looking through all the possible surname combinations on the soundex films to passengers arriving at the Port of New York is less expensive to do in Salt Lake City. Make time to research these "possible" records. If you want to trace your ancestors through twenty years of city directories, Salt Lake City is the place to do this.

Keep a research log as you research. The log will let you record what sources you searched. Record your search whether you located information or not. This will save you time in months to come when you want to know if you searched a particular record—don't trust your memory, write it

down on your research log.

If you are traveling with friends to the library, be flexible. Even though everyone may have agreed to break for lunch, realize that hot leads may turn up. In the thrill of the hunt your friends may not even remember that they are hungry. Be considerate and independent.

Do not annoy folks in line at the copiers. Library etiquette is to make only five copies if others are waiting. The main library floor has express copy lanes. Use these if you have only one page to copy. If you are coping from a book write down the page numbers you want to copy on a slip of paper. It is annoying to be waiting behind someone who is flipping through a book to locate needed pages. Also, write down references for pages you want to copy on microfilm and microfiche. The five copies rule applies here. If you need several census pages make sure you know the page references. The library now uses a copy card system. For an initial one dollar your copy card can be used on all library copy machines. You can add money to the card as needed. Remember to remove your card when you are done making copies.

If you need help ask for it! The library has volunteers who will help you. Try to ask questions of volunteers wearing gold badges. These volunteers are specially trained and can often give you fast help and answers. If you have repeatedly searched for a book and not found it on the shelf, consult the volunteer at the library attendant window located on each floor. The book you want could be in off site storage, stored with over size volumes, or missing. The attendant will try to locate the volume for you.

If you lose anything, ask at the library attendant window. Every night volunteers collect items left in the library.

Part Three of this series will cover the use of finding aids in the library.



## **Church Records**

By Carole Montello

In the late 1970s after reading Arthus Kurzweil's "From Generation to Generation" I set out to find my roots. I knew that my maternal grandfather, Clarence Marino, converted to Judaism shortly after he fell in love and eloped with my grandmother, Celia Pfeffer. Obviously, Marino is an Italian name and I knew my Sicilian great-grandfather but what I didn't know was that my great grandmother, who I knew as Grandma Lee, came from a German Evangelical Lutheran family. Where do I start?

My great-aunt Gladys Marino Huyler, my grandfather's youngest sister, told me her mother was born in New York City in 1875. Somewhere in my research I came across the Deutsch Evangelical Kirch (German Evangelical Church) on Houston Street in New York City. I was still new at this genealogy thing so I figured that if I wrote to the New York Genealogical and Biographical Society I would get all my answers. Not so. They referred me to the German Evangelical Ministry who referred me to the German Evangelical Synod, who ignored me. I guess they figured what would a Jewish woman with an Italian surname want with German Evangelical records. It was about that time that I found the Family History Library and learned that the records for the church on Houston Street had been microfilmed.

I ordered the films and waited for them to arrive. This was a new experience for me and I knew all the information I would want on Grandma Lee would be right there on the film. Not so. After painstakingly reading all the entries for 1875 I found nothing. Okay, I thought, I'll try the next roll. Again, nothing. As I threaded the last roll into the microfilm reader I thought that if I didn't find something on this roll then my aunt had given me the wrong information. And, there it was! In beautiful old script, in an entry for September 1875 the name Hans jumped out at me. Great-great-grandparents Carl Hans and Maria Bruggemann had two children baptized at the same time. Gustav Carl Franz born 3 February 1873 and Grandma Lee, Caroline Minna

Maria born 20 February 1875.

This find gave me an idea. If my great grandparents had two children baptized at the same time maybe the other children were baptized in pairs or in groups. I finished going through the roll and went back over the previous rolls and there were more of the children from this large German family. I was so focused on finding my great-grandmother I overlooked her siblings. In later years when I was working on the collateral lines I went back to the films of the German Evangelical Church and found other family members. The records I used were reasonably easy to read once I familiarized myself with the style of writing and the format in which they were entered.

### **Items From Hadassah, Las Vegas Chapter Displayed at Local Library**

Through the first week of May visitors to the Sahara West Library located at 9600 West Sahara could view items from the archives of Hadassah, Las Vegas Chapter.

On display were scrapbooks, silver membership plates, calendars, and photographs. The familiar Hadassah "eye bank" a plastic tube for collecting coins for Hadassah's sight saving projects was among the items. Photographs on view were from the years 1965-1973.

The display was located next to the main library staircase. Sahara West Programming Director J.D. Barber supervised the display set up. Jo-Ann Geller, past president of Hadassah, Las Vegas Chapter collected the materials used in the display.



## *Out Trip To The Past—Part Two Continued from page 4*

Luba married Simon in about 1932. He also worked at the post office. Their son Yura, was born in 1934. He was a teacher and went to live in Chernovitz. He had two daughters, Anitchka and another daughter whose name Nina couldn't remember. Simon was drafted into the Soviet Army, went to war, never to return. They never heard from him again and it is assumed he perished. Yura is also dead. But as close as we can tell, his death is not war related.

After the war, Luba remarried, to Abraham Markovitch. They had a son Boris in 1947. Boris is a teacher of music. Nina proudly told us he completed his studies at the musical high school. Boris married Rose in Kamenetz Podolski where they had three sons. They divorced and she went to live in Germany with the boys. Luba and Abraham moved to Mogilov Podolski. Later, Boris and his second wife Luda, and Luba emigrated to Israel. Nina still writes to Luba there. She gave us Luba's address and phone number. We will, of course, try to contact them. She is known as Luba Mak.

Nina went through her photographs. We asked if she would allow us to take them home, to photocopy them and then return them. She agreed without hesitation. We were amazed at her generosity.

As we were preparing to leave, Nina asked if we knew Bella Finkel. She said Bella used to send them packages of food and clothes but the Soviets learned of this and made them send the packages back with a note that these items were not needed. Bella's mother Chaia (Ida) Milstein was the daughter of our great grandmother Fannie Bekelman Milstein Maschtalier/Brautman.

We could not thank Nina and Petrov enough. They are proud people and we felt we would insult them by offering to give them any money. We left some hryvnas under one plate and decided to send them a gift when we returned their photographs.

We were overwhelmed by the kindness of the people we had met and were astounded to meet people who knew any of our relatives. This was completely unexpected. We've read stories on the Internet where visitors to ancestral towns met relatives or people who know their relatives, but we never expected it would happen to us. We both felt that, this day alone, made the entire trip worthwhile.



Seated, left to right: Abraham Markovitch, (Luba's second husband), Yura's daughter, Luba Bekelman Mak  
Standing: Anitchka (Yura's daughter), Yura Bekelman (Luba's son)

## Membership Application

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip+4 \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ \$20.00 Family Membership

\_\_\_\_\_ \$15.00 Individual Membership

Please make checks Payable to JGSSN-West

Mail To: JGSSN

P.O. Box 29342

Las Vegas, NV 89126

JGSSN-West membership runs from  
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**Calendar 2001**  
**JGSSN-West Meeting Schedule**  
Sahara West Library 9600 W. Sahara 1pm

**July 15–Every Picture Tells A Story**

**August 19–TBA**

**September 16–Revisiting Passenger Arrival  
Records**

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Jewish Genealogy Society of Southern Nevada - West

P.O. Box 29342

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**International Seminar on Jewish Genealogy**

**8-13 July 2001 London, England**

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