

SFBAJGS Activity Report for 2021

Jeff Lewy, SFBAJGS Treasurer

This annual report to our members covers our 2021 activities, financial results, and our grants to other organizations.

This year continued in the same pattern as 2020. Our meetings were all virtual, via Zoom. Although we were not able to meet in person, our meetings expanded our reach to include members and non-members from far and wide who otherwise would not have had the opportunity to hear our presentations. Our virtual audience continued to be larger than our in-person meetings last held in 2019. Our free online SFBAJGS News continues to inform members of SFBAJGS and other subscribers about our online activities and those of other groups, and our quarterly ZichronNote journal presents interesting articles about Jewish genealogy, many of them written by our members.

We are one of the larger societies in the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies (IAJGS), with about 200 members. The volunteer work of our members makes us one of the most active Jewish genealogical societies, and we take active roles in moderating Research Groups (RGs) online for JewishGen and participating in other efforts to find and provide public and online access to vital records and other records of genealogical interest.

Our name says we are the San Francisco Bay Area Jewish Genealogical Society, but we remind you that the “San Francisco Bay Area” part of our name merely means that we reside here. Our members and our interests are worldwide, as are our ancestors and living relatives. We can be as helpful to our members with ancestors in Ukraine, Bohemia, Galicia, Russia or South Africa as to those whose families have been in the Bay Area for four generations or more. All of our families, like yours, originally came from “someplace else,” and we have knowledge of and connections to many of those places.

Our members have continued to research their family histories, as more data continues to become available online, and we continue to field and answer questions from researchers near and far.

Several members attended the 41st annual conference of the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies (IAJGS), held virtually in August 2021, and other Society members helped organize the conference and made presentations.

Our members continue to make generous donations to the Society in addition to paying dues, giving us the opportunity to support our objectives:

- Support and improve online sharing of data useful to researchers everywhere doing Jewish genealogy
- Make formerly closed or unavailable records available online that support Jewish genealogical research
- Support efforts to research and remember existing and vanished Jewish communities

We support activities in the local area that are consistent with these objectives. We have ongoing volunteer projects to transcribe data from local cemeteries and other sources of birth, marriage, and death records and make those data available online for researchers everywhere. These projects are described below under “Transcriptions.”

Other work fulfilling these objectives takes place wherever Jewish communities and records are located, often far from us. Therefore, we continue our practice of making donations to other organizations that are working in those communities and archives. We support projects based on their value to the broadest possible audience of researchers, the need to preserve and protect fragile sites, and the need to record data where the repositories and archives are newly open or at risk of access restrictions.

Donations to other organizations working in ways that support our mission

This year, as a result of our members generous donations, we were able to donate a record \$6,500 to 11 organizations for their activities. We present the purpose of our donations and the URLs of these organizations so that you can learn more about their activities if you wish.

Local

- **Jewish Community Library in San Francisco:** to maintain and expand the very strong collection of materials related to Jewish genealogy and history, especially in the San Francisco Bay Area. <https://www.jewishlearningworks.org/jewish-community-library/>
- **Commission for the Preservation of Pioneer Jewish Cemeteries and Landmarks in the West:** to protect and maintain the seven Gold Rush-era Jewish cemeteries in the Sierra foothills. <https://www.pioneerjewishcemeteries.org/>
- **Oakland FamilySearch Library:** to expand its collection of materials for Jewish research which may be available through access via the FamilySearch website

https://familysearch.org/wiki/en/Oakland_California_FamilySearch_Library/Contact_Information

National and International

- **Italian Genealogical Group:** to support its ongoing online indexing of New York City records, including New York City death records and the index for New York naturalization records. <https://www.italiangen.org/>

- **International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies (IAJGS) Stern Fund:** to encourage non-profit institutions or organizations, Jewish or not, to pursue projects, activities and acquisitions that provide new or enhanced resources to benefit Jewish genealogists. <https://www.iajgs.org/>

- **Jewish Records Indexing–Poland:** to support ongoing digitization and indexing of Jewish records, primarily from Polish archives, but also from Ukraine and other locations where Polish records were formerly recorded. JRI-Poland now contains 5.8 million records from 550 Polish towns. <https://jri-poland.org/>

- **Kirkuty – Jewish Cemeteries in Poland:** to support photography of Jewish cemeteries in Poland, both extant and desecrated, drawing attention to the remaining signs of the pre-war presence of the Polish Jewish community. <http://cmentarze-zydowskie.pl/indexang.htm>

- **JewishGen: to their General Fund** supporting the primary online site of Jewish genealogical records and instruction for researchers. <https://www.jewishgen.org>

- **Ukraine Documents Acquisition Project at JewishGen:** to support digitization and placement online of records from Ukrainian national archives. Some of this work continues despite the war in Ukraine. <https://www.jewishgen.org/Ukraine/>

- **Gesher Galicia–Przemysl Project:** to identify the towns of origin of 577 books of Jewish index books held in the Przemysl State Archive in Ukraine and to preserve at Gesher Galicia the images of these record books. This identification project is now complete. Gesher Galicia is now comparing the data from these towns to determine which records might be newly digitized. <https://www.geshergalicia.org/>

Transcriptions

- We have transcribed more than 46,000 burial cards from Sinai Memorial Chapel in San Francisco dating back to the early 1920s when Sinai Memorial was established. These records are not limited to a single cemetery. As the only

nonprofit Jewish funeral home in Northern California, Sinai Memorial arranges for burials and cremations at cemeteries throughout the Bay Area and in other cities in the U.S. and overseas. The cremation records do not appear in any cemetery records, providing a new source of information regarding deaths that do not include burials.

- Our volunteers completed transcribing the 17,000 records of Eternal Home Cemetery in Colma. These records from six bound ledgers cover the years from the opening of the cemetery in 1903 until 2010. Those records will be publicly available on JewishGen’s Jewish Online Worldwide Burial Registry (JOWBR) when they are posted in mid-2022. Records after 2010 are maintained by Eternal Home on their computer system.

- We are transcribing burial records for Sherith Israel Synagogue in San Francisco dating from about 1861 to 1889. These records come from synagogue meeting minutes and copies of the related City health records kept by the synagogue. These records are particularly valuable since they provide a partial substitute for San Francisco City records destroyed in the 1906 earthquake

Financial Results for 2021

Revenues for 2021 were nearly \$9,800, very slightly more than in past years, with about \$4,600 in dues from 201 members and nearly \$5,000 in donations and other income. Thank you for your membership dues and generous donations, which support our activities and those of other groups doing work of great value to you, our members, and to the worldwide Jewish genealogical community.

Expenses totaled about \$10,100, generating a small loss of about \$300. This loss resulted from our grants in contributions to other groups of \$6,500. Those contributions are described above. Other significant categories of expenses were publication of four issues of *Zichron*Note, \$1,100; membership acquisition and retention, \$500; web site maintenance and management, \$400. All other expenses, including insurance and other administrative expenses totaled about \$1,500.

We thank you again as we do every year, for your membership, your donations, and your interest in Jewish genealogy and family history. Please let us know if you have any questions or suggestions to improve our performance and activities, and how we can most effectively help you with your research. Also let us know if there are any projects or activities you would like to see us undertake or support. We look forward to another year of accomplishments in 2022, and hope we will be able to return to in-person meetings in addition to our outreach via Zoom meetings.