



זכרונות *ZichronNote*

The Journal of the San Francisco Bay Area Jewish Genealogical Society

Volume XXXVI, Number 1

February 2016

A Wealth of Information in Newspapers

Newspaper articles can provide details about family members that may have been lost over the years. See page 5.

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Postcard photo of lower Church Street, New Brunswick, c. 1908. A sign reading "Theo. Cohn, Clothier" and an awning with "Cohn, Clothing" can be read at left.

ZichronNote
Journal of the San Francisco Bay Area
Jewish Genealogical Society

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ZichronNote is published four times per year, in February, May, August, and November. The deadline for contributions is the first day of the month preceding publication. The editor reserves the right to edit all submissions. Submissions may be made by hard copy or electronically. Please e-mail to newsletter@sfbajgs.org.

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People Finder queries are free to Society members. Nonmembers may place queries for \$5 each. Queries are limited to 25 words not including searcher's name, address, telephone number, and e-mail address.

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Display Advertising is accepted at the discretion of the editor. Rates per issue: business card-sized (3-1/2 x 2 inch) \$10, quarter page \$20, half page \$35, full page \$60. Ads must be camera-ready and relate to Jewish genealogy.

Membership in SFBAJGS is open to anyone interested in Jewish genealogy. Dues are \$23 per calendar year. The Society is tax-exempt pursuant to section 501(c)(3) of the IRS Code. Make your check payable to "SFBAJGS" and send to SFBAJGS, Membership, P.O. Box 318214, San Francisco, CA 94131-8214.

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Note: All URL's are valid as of the time of publication.

President's Message

Virtual Reality Is No Substitute

Jeremy Frankel, SFBAJGS President

The magazine *Vanity Fair* recently ran an article about virtual reality. This prompted a response from a reader who wrote that he was driving home one day and was "taken by the changing leaves in all their color and glory." He went on say that "a line stuck in my mind (from the article): 'What would be better entertainment technology than perfect virtual reality?'" I thought, Reality!"

This got me thinking. We just kicked off our society's 2016 series of presentations with Heidi Lyss' excellent talk about creative writing in San Francisco. We had an audience of eleven; okay, one more than a minyan, so I was happy. Our San Francisco location has been a challenging place of late to get a large crowd, and I'm always apologizing that this is because of the many competing activities taking place. Then again, just think, if each attendee had brought just one guest, we would have had twenty-two people and a much better turn-out for Heidi.

At the meeting I met Gary Patou, who had driven up from Palo Alto. (Besides me, the only other guy in the room!) As I went around the room schmoozing and greeting everyone before the meeting, Gary introduced himself, and I realized I was speaking to another Brit! Of course we played "Jewish genealogy." Turns out Gary grew up not too many miles away from me in north London. In just those few minutes we had, Gary posed a couple of questions and was feverishly scribbling down the answers I gave him.

The point of all this is that meeting face to face is far more exhilarating and potentially productive than a stream of e-mails back and forth. Heck, if I hadn't been speaking with someone in 2010 at the Los Angeles Jewish genealogy conference I would not have been introduced to the woman I've been sharing my life with for the past five years.

Our Vice-President Janice Sellers, wearing her Programming hat, and other board members have worked hard to select a wide-ranging and interesting group of speakers for this year. We are the only JGS that meets in three locations and regularly puts on sixteen meetings plus the occasional special meeting (we had two in February), so having done our part we need you to step up and do your part. And yes, bring a family member, friend, or guest. After all, our meetings are always free and open to everyone.

Yes, reality trumps virtual reality every time.



SOCIETY NEWS

New Members

Louise Swig lswig@cal.berkeley.edu
David Zeff no e-mail

Bounced E-mail Addresses

Lawrence Fagan LLFStan@gmail.com
Renee Tully renconranch@jps.net

In order to continue to receive *ZichronNote* and the SFBAJGS e-blast, please send changes in your e-mail address to newsletter@sfbajgs.org.

New Member Benefit

The Silicon Valley Jewish Film Festival now offers SFBAJGS members a 10% discount on tickets for screenings and events throughout the year. This year's festival has ended, but a special screening is scheduled for 6 March. Visit the festival site at <http://www.svjff.org/>.

Amazon Smile Donations

Amazon donates to San Francisco Bay Area Jewish Genealogical Society when you shop at AmazonSmile. Use <http://smile.amazon.com/ch/94-2948891>.

Your Story Belongs in *ZichronNote*

Have you met a cousin at an IAJGS Conference? Have you had a breakthrough in your family history, solved a family mystery through painstaking research, discovered a better way to use resource materials, or walked where your ancestors walked? Have you had success or made progress at the Genealogy Clinic with the Mavens? Have you made contact with a "tenuously, absurdly distant" cousin?

Tell us your story, share your discovery! We want to read about it in *ZichronNote*. Please submit materials to newsletter@sfbajgs.org.

Have You Renewed Yet?

If you who have not yet renewed your membership in SFBAJGS for 2016, now is the time. You must be a member to continue to receive *ZichronNote*. If you can't remember whether you have renewed, e-mail Membership Chair Avner Yonai at membership@sfbajgs.org and ask him to check your status.

Three reasons to renew:

1. You want to meet other people whose eyes do not glaze over when you discuss your latest genealogical research find, and who may even have suggestions to help!

2. You want to help SFBAJGS with its projects, such as the Cemetery Project, through which information about Jewish burials in San Francisco cemeteries (now in Colma) is being added to the JewishGen Online Worldwide Burial Registry.

3. You want to keep receiving *ZichronNote*, with all its informative articles and announcements of interest to genealogists.

Design Contest for International Jewish Genealogy Month

The purpose of International Jewish Genealogy Month (IJGM) is to help promote and celebrate Jewish family history. IJGM is held during the Hebrew month of Cheshvan, which in 2016 runs from 1–30 November. One of the activities is a competition to design the artwork used for the poster that publicizes the event. The winner of the contest wins free registration to the IAJGS annual conference, held this year from 7–12 August in Seattle, or free access to the conference recorded sessions. Go to <http://www.iajgs.org/blog/ijgm/poster-competition/> for more information and for instructions on how to submit your design. The deadline for the competition is **20 June 2016**.

Meeting Times and Locations

Unless otherwise indicated, the SFBAJGS meeting schedule is as follows.

San Francisco: Sunday. Doors open 1:00 p.m. Program begins at 1:30 p.m.

Rhoda Goldman Plaza, 2180 Post Street.

Parking available in Rhoda Goldman Plaza garage with entrance on Sutter Street.

Oakland: Sunday. Doors open 12:30 p.m. Program begins at 1:00 p.m.

Oakland FamilySearch Center, 4766 Lincoln Avenue.

Los Altos Hills: Monday. Doors open 7 p.m. Program begins at 7:30 p.m.

Congregation Beth Am, 26790 Arastradero Road Room 5/6.

See Back Cover for Calendar of Upcoming SFBAJGS Meetings

CALENDAR

Genealogy Events

Local and Regional

Saturday, 27 February 2016. Robert Jackson, "Discovering Your German Roots: The Great Migration, 1815–1914." California Genealogical Society and Library, 2201 Broadway Suite LL2, Oakland. <http://californiaancestors.org/>

Sunday, 28 February 2016. Peter Schrag, "When Europe Was a Prison Camp: Father and Son Memoirs, 1940–1941." Jewish Community Library, 1835 Ellis Street, San Francisco. <http://www.jewishlearningworks.org/library-events>

Saturday–Sunday, 5–6 March 2016. San Francisco History Days. SFBAJGS will have a table there. **Free.** Old Mint, 88 5th Street, San Francisco. <http://www.sfhistorydays.org/>

Wednesday, 9 March 2016. Seminar, "Getting Started with Genealogy." Santa Clara County Historical and Genealogical Society. Santa Clara City Library, Redwood Room, 2635 Homestead Road, Santa Clara. <http://www.scchgs.org/>

Thursday, 10 March 2016. Janice M. Sellers, "Where There's a Will: Probate Records Can Prove Family Connections." Contra Costa County Genealogical Society. LDS Church, 1360 Alberta Way, Concord. <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~caccgcs/>

Monday, 14 March 2016. Pamela Dallas, "Help! The Courthouse Burned! Now I Can't Research My Family." Livermore-Amador Genealogical Society. Congregation Beth Emek, 3400 Nevada Court, Pleasanton. <http://www.l-ags.org/>

Tuesday, 16 March 2016. Katherine Hope Borges, "Interpreting Your DNA Results." San Ramon Valley Genealogical Society. LDS Church, 2949 Stone Valley Road, Alamo. <http://www.srvgensoc.org/>

Saturday, 19 March 2016. Grant Din, "Angel Island Genealogical Resources." California Genealogical Society and Library, 2201 Broadway Suite LL2, Oakland. <http://californiaancestors.org/>

Saturday, 16 April 2016. Judy Russell, Legal Genealogist Seminar. Sonoma County Genealogical Society. Finley Community Center, 2060 West College Avenue, Santa Rosa. <http://www.scgsonline.org/>

Saturday, 22 October 2016. CSGA board meeting and joint seminar with California Genealogical Society. Speakers Wendy Elliott and Janice M. Sellers, talks TBA. **Free.** California Genealogical Society and Library, 2201 Broadway Suite LL2, Oakland. <http://www.csga.com/>, <http://californiaancestors.org/>

For more local events, visit <http://sfbagenealogy.blogspot.com/>.

State and National

Saturday, 19 March 2016. CSGA board meeting and joint seminar with Fresno County Genealogical Society. Mary Ann Vincent, "Mapping Our Ancestors: They Went Where? Why?"; Janice M. Sellers, "Grandma, Who Are You?: Finding the Maiden Names in Your Family Tree" and "Vital Records and the Calendar Change of 1752." **Free.** Woodward Park Regional Library, 944 East Perrin Avenue, Fresno. <http://www.csga.com/>, <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~cafcs/>

2–5 June 2016. Genealogy Jamboree. Southern California Genealogical Society. Burbank Airport Marriott Hotel, 2500 Hollywood Way, Burbank. <http://www.genealogyjamboree.com/>

26–28 June 2016. Redefining Crypto-Judaic Identity: Then and Now. Society for Crypto-Judaic Studies 2016 Conference. Drury Plaza Hotel, Santa Fe, New Mexico. <http://www.cryptojew.com/>

7–12 August 2016. 35th IAJGS International Conference on Jewish Genealogy. Seattle, Washington. <http://www.iajgs2016.org/>

3–6 November 2016. The Holocaust in the 21st Century: Relevance and Challenges in the Digital Age. Claremont, California. <http://goo.gl/3DGfsU>

International

23–25 May 2016. Jewish Soldiers in the Collective Memory of Central Europe: The Remembrance of World War I from a Jewish Perspective. Graz, Germany. Call for papers deadline **31 December 2015**. gerald.lamprecht@uni-graz.at

2–28 November 2016. International Jewish Genealogy Month. <http://www.iajgs.org/jgmonth.html>



Brainstorming with the Mavens

The San Francisco Jewish Community Library hosts a free genealogy clinic every month (except July and August) from 12:00 noon to 2:00 p.m. Bring copies of family charts, documents, and other information and let experienced SFBAJGS Jewish genealogists help point you in the right direction in your research. 1835 Ellis Street, San Francisco. There is free, secure parking in the building. Call (415) 567-3327 x704 or write library@jewishlearningworks.org for more information.

Upcoming dates:

6 March 2016

3 April 2016

1 May 2016

5 June 2016

Online Newspapers Uncover Lost Family History

Deborah N. Cohn

Debbie lives in Highland Park, New Jersey, where both she and her husband grew up. She is a past president of Anshe Emeth Memorial Temple, and her daughter is the fifth generation of Cohns to belong to the synagogue. She has an MA in Hebrew Bible from the Jewish Theological Seminary of America and has taught an Introduction to Tanach class to adults at Anshe Emeth since 2005. She has been the archivist and administrator for the Jewish Historical Society of Central Jersey for 10 years. She and her husband have traveled to 44 states in their RV, and she is a huge Michigan State Spartans football fan. This article first appeared in the Spring 2011 issue of the Jewish Historical Society of Central Jersey *Newsletter*.

In September 1911, the Philadelphia-based Lipschutz 44 Cigar Factory opened a new branch in a building on Spring Street in New Brunswick, New Jersey. On opening day, the factory's superintendent rolled the first cigar and handed it to Theodore Cohn, president of the Elks Building Corporation, which owned the factory building. Theo declared it to be "a cigar of unusual excellence."

This ceremonial occasion was recorded by the *New Brunswick Times*, which I found online through the portal of the New Brunswick Public Library. The library has digitized a collection of five New Brunswick newspapers dating from 1871–1916. The collection can be searched by keyword or date.

For those interested in genealogical research, these newspapers offer far more than marriage announcements and obituary records. The articles they printed offer an insight into the small-town nature of life in the New Brunswick area during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Many stories of human interest were published daily, and for those whose family resided in New Brunswick during those years, it is possible to collect many details of family history which otherwise have been lost.

I recently spent a few hours researching my husband's great-grandfather Theodore Cohn. Theo, as he was known, owned a clothing store in New Brunswick and was active in community affairs, including the Elks Club and local government. Theo was a member of Temple Anshe Emeth, and he raised a family of four children, including my husband's grandfather, Joseph. This was the general outline of Theo's life as handed down to us via family memories. I was able to add a great deal to our knowledge by searching for his name in the online archives.

Theodore Cohn was born in Newark, New Jersey in 1857. He moved to New Brunswick to set up his

business, while his parents remained prominent members of the Newark Jewish community. When they celebrated their golden anniversary in 1905, Theo and his wife, along with their in-laws, Mr. and Mrs. Harry Solomon, traveled to Newark for the affair. The New Brunswick papers reported on the party, including many interesting family details.



Theodore Cohn

Theo's wife, Hannah Weil Cohn, who was also from Newark, died later in that same anniversary year of 1905. The obituary noted that she had come with her husband to New Brunswick 20 years prior to her death, thus pegging Theo's arrival in the city as approximately 1885. The young couple immediately made a place for themselves in the local Jewish community. They joined Temple Anshe Emeth, and Theo helped organize a ball at the Y.M.H.A. in 1887, which was well attended and lasted into the wee hours of the morning. Theo also served on the Board of Trustees of the Temple. The first organizational meeting of Anshe Emeth's Women's Auxiliary was held in the parlor of Theo and Hannah's home in 1900, and Hannah served the organization as an officer. At her death, she was warmly described as "a woman of kind disposition [whose] charitable deeds had brought aid to and relieved the suffering of many persons. No one ever sought her help and was refused."

Theo began in business with his brother-in-law, Harry Solomon, but in March 1891, Theo bought all interest in the store, which was then located on Peace Street. Soon after, he visited the police station in the company of one John Hennslar. A farmer who had come to town that day purchased a coat from Theo's store for \$10, after which he proceeded to get drunk, lose the rest of his money, and leave the coat in the care of a Burnet Street saloonkeeper. When he woke up the next morning, the farmer accused Mr. Hennslar of stealing the coat and his money.

Mr. Hennslar enlisted the aid of Theo, who accompanied him to the police station, where “they each divested themselves of their connection with the circumstances.”

Overcoats were a specialty in Theo’s store. In 1898, Theo announced the “great increase in the custom department of his establishment”, which was originally called the Newark Clothing Store. When the business moved to Church Street, it needed no name other than “Theo. Cohn, Clothier” over the door and in ads. Theo advertised his “specials”, a strictly all-wool suit or overcoat, made to order for \$12 each. He also sold “the finest \$10 overcoat in America for the money”, boasting that “no tailor in this whole country gives more attention to the style and workmanship of his garments than we have given to these.”

The excellence of Theo’s merchandise was perhaps the reason that in 1904 his store was the target of “the boldest robbery perpetrated in [New Brunswick] in a long time.” Burglars entered at night through a window, stealing clothing worth \$200–\$300 and exiting through the front door onto Church Street. The crime was discovered by Theo’s son Barrett at 1:30 a.m. when he returned home from a dance. The newspaper noted that “the burglars were about as nery as any that have been at work here for some time”, as the Cohn family was home upstairs during the robbery. The intruders were fortunate that although a small fox terrier was in the store, which was normally an excellent watch dog, it had been ill and was not aroused by the burglars. The police did, however, apprehend the “professional tramps” responsible for the crime and recovered about half of the stolen merchandise a few days later. In 1907, Theo’s store was robbed again. This time, the burglars left their own clothing on the floor and walked out of the store wearing two brand-new suits and taking along “an overcoat apiece and an extra pair of trousers.”

Theo began his political career as a member of New Brunswick’s Board of Water Commissioners. An early term expired in 1900, but he was later re-elected and served on the Board at least until 1913, including several terms as president. Theo was also active in



Original Elks Club building at Albany and Spring streets, c. 1906

Lodge No. 324 of the B.P.O.E., serving as a member of the Elks Building Corporation, which was organized in 1904 to raise funds for and oversee construction of a new lodge at the corner of Albany and Spring streets. The corporation continued to prosper after the completion of the lodge in 1905, purchasing more buildings, including the cigar factory mentioned earlier. The corporation declared a dividend of 5% at its annual meeting in 1910, at which time Theo was elected as president. Although the newspapers only go up to 1916, other resources inform us that Theo again held the position of president when the Elks sold the Albany Street property and built a second lodge, which still stands on the corner of Livingston

Avenue and New Street. An engraved silver trowel in the archives of the JHSCJ states that “This trowel was used by Theo Cohn, President Elks Building Corporation . . . at the laying of the cornerstone of the Elks Building, June 3rd, 1925.”

Besides contributing to the prosperity of the Elks Building Corporation, Theo served several times as president of the Security Building and Loan Association and as treasurer for the Elks Lodge No. 324. In 1916, Theo was made an honorary life member of the lodge and presented with a gift in token of appreciation for his services as treasurer for 18 years. But while Theo was serious about money, he had a playful side. On 26 July 1903, while returning from an Elks convention in Baltimore via steamboat, Theo sent out a “message in a bottle.” He wrote a request on the back of one of his business cards that if found it should be returned to him, and tossed it overboard. Several weeks later, the *Daily Times* reported, the card was returned by a surfman from the life-saving station at Beach Haven, New Jersey, who retrieved the bottle from the beach 2 miles south of his station. This story was subsequently reprinted in the *New York Times*.

Theo was active in Democratic Party politics as early as 1898, when he acted as secretary at a meeting held to elect delegates to various conventions. His presidency of the Board of Water Commissioners and other volunteer civic activities brought him to the

Continued on page 12

It's Complicated!

Susan Steeble

In this article Susan recounts her personal quest to find Brooklyn naturalizations and all the false pathways that did not work in her particular case, because the naturalizations in the county court are indexed on only one site, which does not have the images, and the one site that has the images does not have them indexed by name. The article was first published in *L'dor V'dor*, the quarterly newsletter of the JGS of Maryland, in the Fall 2015 issue, Volume II, #4, pages 13–16. You can contact Susan at ssteebble@gmail.com.

Many of us have ancestors who immigrated through Ellis Island and settled in New York City, but we've learned that, when it comes to finding our forebears' naturalization records, "it's complicated!" My own quest illustrates this frustrating but common experience. In my case, fortunately, it had a happy outcome. I hope that what I've learned can help other researchers.

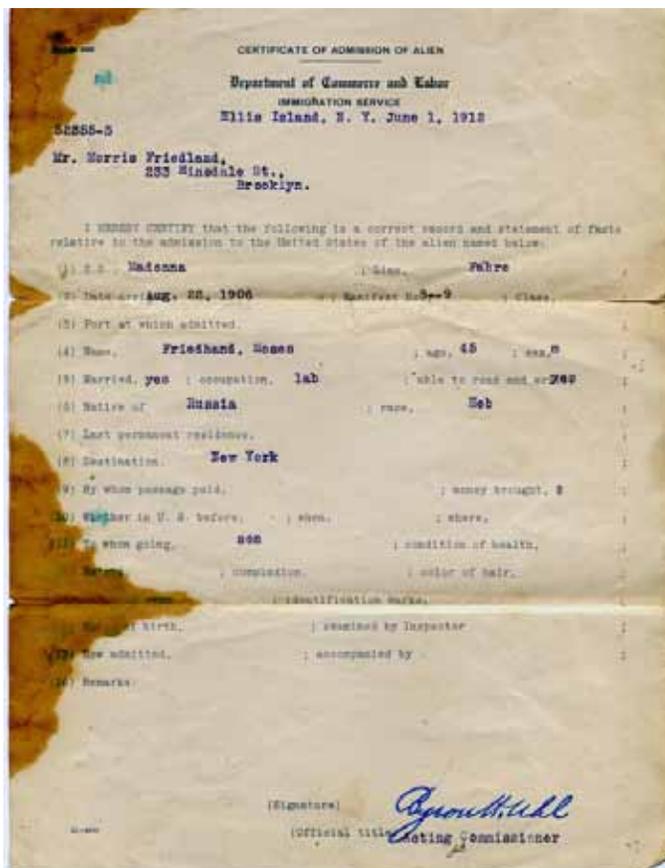
I already knew that my grandfather Meyer Freedhand and his sister Monya immigrated to the U.S. in 1905 and that my great-grandfather Morris (Moishe) Friedhand, his wife, Leah, and other members of the family arrived in 1906. I'd found their passenger lists, census records, and vital records. I even had a copy of Morris's 1912 Certificate of Admission of Alien, which recapitulated his immigration information. But I had never been able to locate naturalization documents for either Meyer or Morris.

According to U.S. and New York State censuses in 1910, 1920, and 1925, Morris had alien status throughout the years he spent in the U.S. He resided primarily in Brooklyn, although he spent a few years on the family farm in Montville, Connecticut and a brief time on a farm near Albany. His son Meyer, my grandfather, lived with relatives in Brooklyn for several years before moving with his wife and children to eastern Connecticut in 1915. His 1920 census record indicated that he had been naturalized in 1914. Furthermore, his son (my mother's twin brother) kept a diary in which Meyer's naturalization certificate number was recorded with a comment that he had become a citizen in Brooklyn in May 1915, but the notation did not mention in which court the naturalization had occurred.

So I knew what I was looking for: Meyer's 1914 or 1915 naturalization papers in a Brooklyn court. I believed that I would find nothing for Morris, because, apparently, he had never attempted to become a U.S. citizen. I fruitlessly searched on Ancestry.com and FamilySearch.org, trying wildcards and every alternative spelling and misspelling I could think of, but I could not find a listing for my grandfather's naturalization. It was not indexed on Fold3.com, either.

During a recent trip to the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) in Washington, DC, I was advised to contact either the Brooklyn courthouse or NARA's regional archives in New York City. Once I returned home, I checked the NARA Web site (<http://www.archives.gov/nyc/finding-aids/naturalization-records.html>) and learned that, between 1906 and 1924, immigrant aliens in New York City could be naturalized in any of eight federal or state courts (the three federal district and circuit courts and the five state supreme courts, one for each county [borough] of New York City). NARA holds records only from the federal courts, not state and county courts, and these documents are kept in the regional archives in New York. Digitized images are available online through Ancestry.com and Fold3.com.

Since I had not found my grandfather's naturalization documents in my online searches, I suspected that he was naturalized in the State Supreme Court of Kings County, in which more than 253,400 individuals filed Declarations of Intention ("first papers") and/



Morris Friedhand's 1912 Certificate of Admission

or Petitions for Naturalization (“second papers”) until 1924.

I also checked the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) site (<http://www.uscis.gov/history-and-genealogy/genealogy/certificate-files-september-27-1906-march-31-1956>). USCIS has all Naturalization Certificates (C-files) from 1906 to 1956; these contain duplicates of records from all courts and may include other material, but they are not online, and an index search (for \$20) and then a records request (for an additional \$20) are required.

Searching on other sites, I found that Ancestry.com has indexed NARA records (both pre-1906 and 1906 onward) from the federal courts of the Eastern District (Brooklyn and Queens) and Southern District (Manhattan and Bronx), as well as records from the New York Supreme Court of New York County (Manhattan) . . . but not those from the Supreme Court of Kings County (Brooklyn). FamilySearch.org has indices to naturalization documents organized by state and county; 1906 and later records from the federal district and circuit courts (but not the county courts) are searchable by surname.

Several genealogical organizations have also undertaken projects to index naturalization records. Among them, volunteers of the Italian Genealogical Group (<http://www.italiangen.org/>) have indexed records from the Eastern District Court, as well as those of the other boroughs—but not the Kings County Supreme Court. The German Genealogy Group (<http://www.germangenealogygroup.com/>) has indexed some of the NARA records for parts of New York City but does not include Brooklyn in its database.

It seemed that indices to records of the State Supreme Court of Kings County were omitted from all of the well known genealogy databases. Where could I find them?

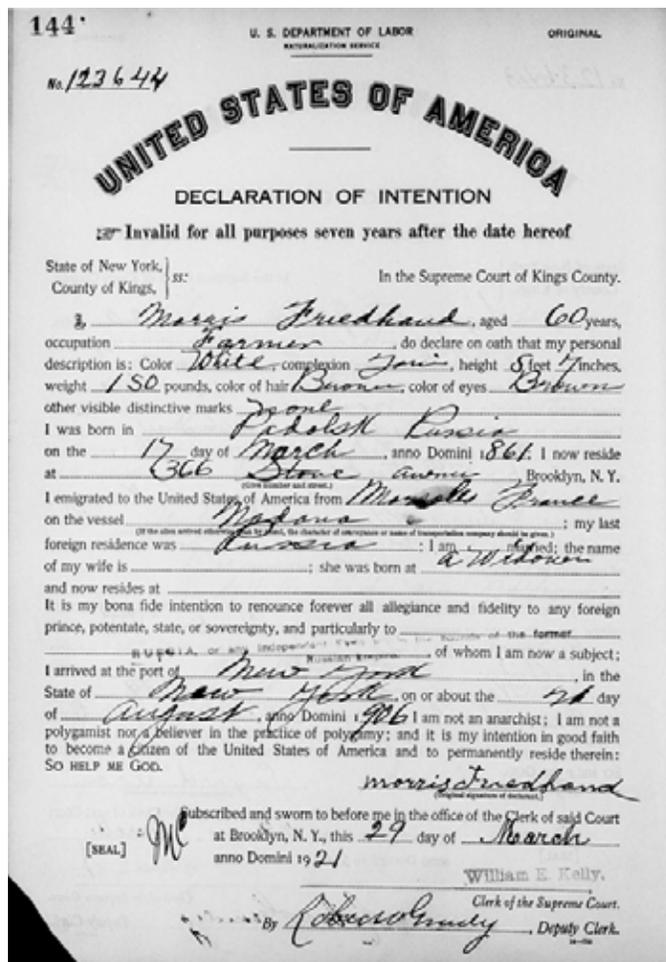
The Steve Morse One-Step Website (<http://www.stevemorse.org/>) at last revealed that indices to naturalization records of the State Supreme Court, Kings County (Brooklyn), as well as Eastern District Court, can be found at the site of New York City’s Jewish Genealogical Society (<http://www.jgsny.org/>), a sister society of the JGSMD. Apparently, it is the only database that includes an index to the state supreme court filings in Brooklyn.

When I accessed the JGS database (<http://www.jgsny.org/index.php/searchable-databases/brooklyn-naturalizations/bnats-search-2>) and entered the search term “Freedhand”, I received the volume and page number for my grandfather Meyer’s Declaration of Intention in 1909 as well as his Petition for Naturalization in 1914. Then, just for fun, I tried the spelling “Friedhand”, which my great-grandfather Morris preferred, and

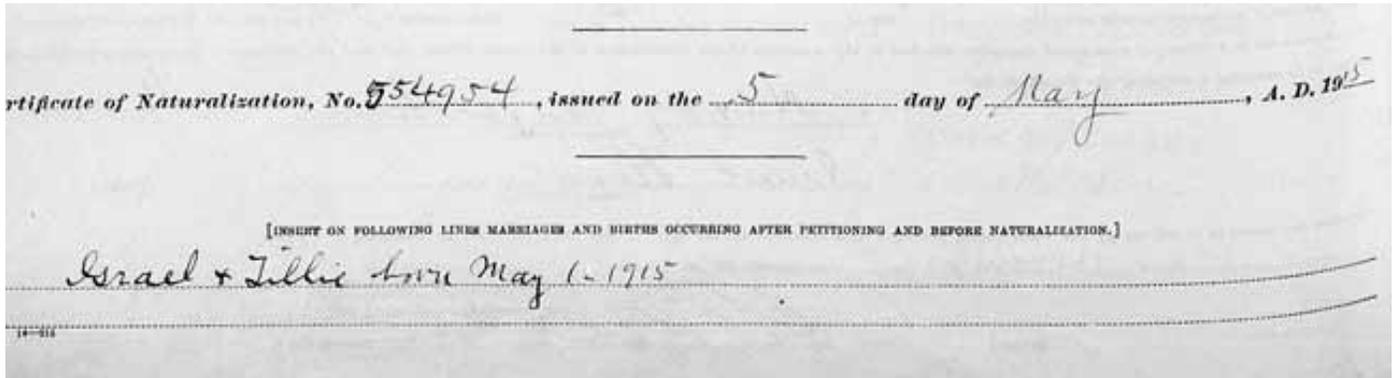
found two Declarations for him; they were filed in 1920 and 1921. So Morris had intended to become naturalized after all! But why had he filed twice?

Now I couldn’t wait to obtain copies of the documents, so I could read the details they contained. According to the Web site, copies of the Declarations and Petitions can be obtained from the Kings County Clerk’s office in Brooklyn (<http://www.nycourts.gov/courts/2jd/kingsclerk/naturalization.shtml>); since I could provide the volume and page numbers, a records search (\$10) would be unnecessary, and copies of the documents would cost only \$10 each. But, they warned, there was a 4- to 6-month wait!

By chance, that same evening, the topic of obtaining naturalization records from Brooklyn was raised on a popular genealogy forum, Tracing the Tribe: Jewish Genealogy on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/tracingthetribe>). I related my experience and lamented that, although I had finally obtained the index numbers, the images of the documents were not online. One reader, Mark Jacobson, corrected me. He told me that images of Brooklyn naturalization records were, indeed, available online



Morris Friedhand’s 1921 Declaration of Intention



Meyer Freedhand's children, born 1 May 1915, listed on his Petition for Naturalization, approved 5 May 1915

at FamilySearch.org, and he gave me the direct link (<https://familysearch.org/search/image/index#uri=https%3A%2F%2Ffamilysearch.org%2Frecapi%2Fsord%2Fwaypoint%2FMS6-NNL%3A326204001%3Fcc%3D1999177>). The images were indexed geographically by state and county and then chronologically by year, so a record could be found only if the volume and page numbers were known. A search by surname would not find them. Fortunately, I now had the necessary information from the JGS database, so I was able, at last, to see images of the records. My hunch was confirmed: All of the documents were signed by the Clerk of the Supreme Court of Kings County.

The two Declarations of Intention for Morris showed his age as 59 and 60 years, respectively, in November 1920 and March 1921. I knew, from his passenger manifest and Certificate of Admission, that he claimed he was 45 years old when he immigrated in 1906, but his tombstone reveals the truth as his family knew it: He was age 76 when he died in 1927. The Declarations of Intention show that he consistently shaved 10 years off his age, at least when dealing with the government.

The Declarations confirmed details that I already knew: that he was from “Nostolia” (Podolia) and “Podolsk, Russia”, that he had sailed from “Marsales, France” on the *Madonna* in 1906, and that he was a farmer. Strangely, in 4 months’ time, he had lost 5 pounds and gained an inch in height; his eyes and hair were gray in 1920 and brown in 1921. In the second Declaration, he noted that he was a widower. Most significantly, the date of arrival changed from September 15 (probably a guess) on the first Declaration to 21 August on the second one (this date is corroborated by the date of arrival,

22 August, 1906, on Morris’s passenger manifest and on his Certificate of Admission), so he had probably wanted to provide the correct date. Also, by 1921, he had moved to a different address, which I recognized as the home of his son Jacob. These may be the reasons he thought he needed to file a new Declaration.

For my grandfather Meyer, I obtained both the Declaration of Intention (filed in December 1909) and the Petition for Naturalization (filed November 1914). It also confirmed details that I already knew: his birthplace, Bershada, Russia; his immigration date, port of departure, and ship; his occupation, chandelier maker; and his address. It described his physical appearance. The Petition gave the name of his wife, Rose, whom he married in 1914; in November of that year, they had no children. His witnesses were two brothers-in-law: his wife’s brother and his sister’s husband.

The back of the Petition gave me the most heartwarming detail. When Meyer returned to the court on 5 May 1915 to take the Oath of Allegiance, his twin children had been born just four days earlier, and they were now listed on the document: Israel and Tillie, born 1 May 1915!

It is unfortunate that the JGS indices for Brooklyn are not linked to the images of the documents, that the FamilySearch images are not indexed by surname, and that the JGS indices do not direct users to the FamilySearch images. And it is surprising that only one database covers the naturalizations in Brooklyn’s state supreme court during the 1906–1924 period. But it’s good to know that there is a way to work around these obstacles. Nevertheless, “it’s complicated!”



Our Day in Eschau, Germany

Judy Vasos

Judy Vasos lives in Oakland, California with her husband, Tony Baczewski, a descendant of Peretz Mosbacher. She has been doing family history since 1990. Recently she completed a manuscript about the Mosbacher family titled *My Dear Good Rosi: Letters from Nazi-occupied Amsterdam*. She is seeking a publisher for the book.

We had only one day in Eschau, 16 October 2015, but because of all the e-mail correspondence that preceded our visit and the warm, enthusiastic welcome from the village historian and his wife, the current mayor, the former mayor and his wife, and Dr. Jurgen Jung, the project manager of the Pathways to Europe's Landscape in Eschau, we felt we were there for an extended stay. Our purpose in visiting Eschau was to see the town where my husband Tony's great-grandfather and many Mosbacher ancestors back to the 17th century had lived and to visit the Jewish cemetery in Reistenhausen, five miles from Eschau, where until 1938 Jews from Eschau were buried.

We took an early morning train from Frankfurt to connect in Aschaffenburg to the Eisenfeld/Oldenbergrain train, where Otto Pfeifer, the Eschau village historian, was waiting for us. Our train from Frankfurt left four minutes late and we missed our connection. The kindly station agent in Aschaffenburg called the Pfeifer residence to tell them of the delay, and I frantically sent off an e-mail informing them we would take the next train, an hour later than planned.

This was our second mishap with Eschau. We had planned to visit soon after our arrival in Germany, but because of problems with my passport we were unable to do so until the end of our trip. I knew that Germans were known for exactness and timeliness, but neither one of our unforeseen changes seemed to matter to the people in Eschau.

As we pulled into the station I looked out the window and saw Otto standing on the landing with a big smile on his face. I knew then that everything was fine and no apologies were needed for either delay. Posing for welcome photos was the first order of business, and then came the drive in Otto's car to nearby Eschau. I'd been doing so much research on Eschau and the Mosbacher family that when I saw the sign announcing Eschau I gave a little scream, as if I hadn't truly believed there was such a spot.

The day was packed with activities. First was a visit to the restored town hall where Otto's wife, Gertrud, awaited us with the former mayor, Ludwig Andreas Reidel, and his wife; the current mayor, Michael Gunther; and Dr. Jurgen Jung. It felt like old home week with all the smiles and handshaking, as if we'd known one another long before this meeting. Offers

of coffee and water and directions to the restroom upstairs were given before Dr. Jung invited us to front-row seats to watch an informative video about the project he's been collaborating on to inform people about the historical sites and landscape of Eschau.

Eschau has a population of only 4,000, a fact that thrilled me, since I was born in a small town of 7,000 in rural Iowa. The village traces its roots back to 1285, when it was a thriving market town. It is located near the Main River in Lower Franconia, south of Frankfurt am Main, Aschaffenburg, and Würzburg and surrounded by lovely green valleys and woodlands. There are castles that date back to the 1200's, castles the local residents are trying to preserve, restore, and brag about to tourists.

Otto had sent me photos of the houses where the Mosbacher family members had lived, including Tony's great-great-grandfather, Peretz Loeb Mosbacher, who was born about 1785 and died in 1849. The photo caption read, "The solid half-timber construction of the house (formerly in the possession of the Feudal Lord of Eschau, the Count of Erbach), with its beautiful outer stairway, reveals the wealth of the owner, Berez Loew Mosbacher."

I was impressed with the photo and description of his beautiful home and was glad that his work as a tradesman had provided enough income for several homes in the village. That income was also enough to provide for his eight children: Chaim, Gudel Freund, Joseph, Fanny, Ricke, Emanuel, Sigmund, and Adolph/Abraham.

The more I learned about Peretz the more I liked him. According to town records, he was the only person to take advantage of the decree, after the enrollment of Jewish families in the so-called Jewish Registers, allowing Jews to use conventional first names instead of their Jewish first names without seeking official permission to do so. The records state Peretz "according to whim" signed himself "Berez", "Bernhard", or "Lorenz."

This information and other facts were recorded in the manuscript of Eva Maria Schlicht, who researched and documented the early history of the Jews in Eschau. Her manuscript is in the possession of Otto Pfeifer and is used by him and others to further document information about the Eschau Jews.



Left to right: Ludwig-Andreas Riedel, Mrs. Riedel, Gertrud Pfeifer (wife of Otto Pfeifer), Tony Baczewski (whose Mosbacher relatives lived in this town), me, and Dr. Jurgen Jung. Otto Pfeifer is taking the photo.

Otto refers to himself as the “Eschau/Mosbacher specialist.” When I asked why Ms. Schlicht and now Otto and his cohorts were interested in Jewish history, people seemed surprised by my question and responded that “these people lived in Eschau, were once our neighbors, and of course we want to know about them.”

We took photos of the formerly lovely home of Peretz and his family and had to admit even though the original structure was still standing it was no longer impressive. The beautiful outer stairway described in the photo was gone, and the half-timber construction had been covered to convert the building to an electrical business establishment.

We moved on and followed Otto to other spots he thought we’d be interested in: the empty grass lot where the synagogue had once stood, the spot where the *mikvah* had been located. We saw the hooks in the old butcher shop where animals had been ritually slaughtered and hung. All these places were now something else or empty lots. It was honestly hard to imagine that Jews had lived, worked, worshipped, and performed rituals in this village where no Jews have lived for 77 years.

For that reason the black plaque mounted on the outside of the old town hall with the names of Jews from Eschau who had been deported and murdered by the Nazis was a bit startling. We all lined up for a photo by the plaque, making sure it had the place of honor in the middle. The name of Lina Mosbacher, a descendant of Peretz’s brother Feibel Mosbacher, was on the plaque. Lina was single, sold her home, and left Eschau in 1934 to move into a Jewish retirement

home in Frankfurt. She was deported to Theresienstadt and murdered in Treblinka in 1942 at the age of 70.

The one place that hadn’t changed was the Jewish cemetery, located five miles from Eschau in the town of Reistenhausen. Jews do not bury their dead in the same place they live, so in the years before automobiles, Jews from Eschau walked or went by horse and buggy the five miles to bury their loved ones in Reistenhausen.

I knew Peretz was buried here after receiving a photo of his tombstone from another relative, Joel, who visited Eschau and the cemetery in June. The gate to the cemetery is kept locked. Mr. Reidel had the key and opened the gate for us. Once inside we were back in time, scanning rows and rows of old tombstones streaked with green moss and inscribed with Hebrew words to honor the dead. No vandalism was evident. The only damage was from the roots of a large tree that had grown under one or two tombstones.

The cemetery is partly located on a hill, and the angle made the search for Peretz’s tombstone somewhat difficult. We looked on the ground for large sticks to use to balance ourselves, and Mr. Reidel, who stayed behind, offered me the use of his sturdy walking stick.

To help identify the tombstone of Peretz, Tony took the photo Joel had sent and as we all spread out to check tombstones, we periodically returned to Tony and the photo to confirm the shape and lettering of the stone we were looking for. I made a quick, silent plea to Peretz for help locating his tombstone. I’d been communicating with him in my own way since learning about him and discovering how much I liked him. I felt comfortable being firm in my reminder that we had not come all this way to fail to find his tombstone.

Maybe it wasn’t *exactly* then that we heard Gertrud shout, “This is it. I’ve found it!” We all rushed over to where Gertrud was standing and compared the stone to the photo. This was definitely Peretz’s tombstone, and the excitement grew as we gathered around the stone and each placed rocks on it, a Jewish symbol of remembrance. Seeing Tony standing beside the tombstone of his great-great-grandfather with all of us around him gave me goose bumps. We’d come all this way, seen the village where the Mosbacher ancestors had lived, and now stood where they were buried—the place that hadn’t changed with time and the place that ironically felt most alive.

A friend, Saar, had translated the words inscribed in Hebrew on the tombstone after I received the photo, so I knew what they said:



Tony Baczewski (left) and Gertrud Pfeifer (right)
next to Peretz's tombstone

Here a precious jewel is buried
A head of the congregation of his community
He did acts of charity at all times
He endeavored to keep the commandments of the
Pact

He sang with his voice at the house of God
He imbibed from the Mishna and Gemara
Peretz Ari son of Gershon (of blessed memory)

It wasn't clear if Peretz was a cantor or if he just
enjoyed singing in synagogue. Either way I added it
to the growing list of things I liked about him.

There are no Jewish tombstones after 1938. This
small village experienced the same anti-Semitism
Jews in large cities were subject to. The lucky ones
found a way to get to the United States or Palestine;
if not they were rounded up and murdered. Peretz
died a natural death on 21 April 1849 (29 Nissan
5609), aged about 65. His descendants were not so
lucky, including his grandson, Hugo, and Hugo's wife,
Clemy, who were murdered in 1943 in Auschwitz,
Hugo at age 63 and Clemy at age 57.

A huge Mosbacher family tree compiled in 1933 and
updated in 1947 lists many other family members
who were murdered or forced to flee Europe for any
safe place they could find, scattering from New York
to Chicago, California, and beyond. Many on this tree
offered help to their relatives trapped in Germany.

Our day in Eschau was over, and our last goodbye
was to Peretz, as we waved from the concrete wall
surrounding the cemetery. As we drove down the
road, I noticed an old wooden sign pointing to the
cemetery: *Judenfriedhof*. Thanks to the caretakers
of this cemetery and the people who are working
to identify every Jewish person buried here and at
other cemeteries in Germany and across Europe,
we'll always know how to find Peretz. I'm glad we did.
I hope Otto, Gertrud, and the other good people of
Eschau will be with us.



Online Newspapers, continued from page 6

attention of the party as a candidate for Middlesex
County's Board of Freeholders. The *Times* considered
him "well fitted to assume the responsibilities of
freeholder", and when he was appointed to fill a Board
vacancy in June 1913, the event was trumpeted with
a photograph and large front-page headline. The
article cited his credentials and deemed him "a very
popular choice."

Theo was a slated candidate that fall and was
handily re-elected. The *Times* reported, "The run
made by Freeholder Cohn, who has been a member
of the board but a few months, was flattering to
him, he keeping pace with the men who have been
in service for years and who are so well known in all
parts of the county. It speaks well of the popularity
of the New Brunswick man." However, despite his
popularity, a hearty endorsement of the incumbent
slate by the newspaper, and the expenditure of \$125
of his own money toward campaign costs, Theo was
defeated two years later in his bid for a second term,
losing by only 36 votes.

Theo's family life prospered throughout the years
covered by the online archives, and the Cohn family
was mentioned frequently in the Women's Pages. In
1912, the Cohns moved from their apartment over the
store on Church Street to a house at 286 Redmond
Street. Some confusion occurred when his competitor
Louis Cohn of Peace Street announced his retirement.
"I am too busy to retire; my customers won't let me,"
Theo told a *New Brunswick Times* reporter, and
proved it by expanding his store with the addition
of a Ladies Department in 1914. In 1915, Theo's
daughter Helen married Leon Samuel in a "very pretty
wedding" at home after several bridal showers, all of
which were reported in detail. Helen's brother Joseph,
who had opened his own "up to date" grocery store
on Church Street three years earlier, served as best
man. Joseph married Blanche Spritzer, "one of the
city's most charming young ladies", in 1914 in a quiet
wedding held at the bedside of her invalid mother. The
popular young couple lived on High Street and was
very active at the Y.M.H.A. Theo's father, Robert, lived
to attend Helen's wedding, and the New Brunswick
papers reported his death in September 1915.

Sadly, the online newspaper trail ends here. I will
have to continue my research with the New Brunswick
Public Library's microfilm collection, a much more
tedious task than searching rapidly though the
newspapers via computer. But the information which
is available in old newspapers is well worth searching
for. Thanks to the online sources which are available
to anyone with a computer, Theo Cohn, his extended
family, and the world they lived in have come alive
again for his great-grandchildren.



Endogamy: One Family, One People

Book Review by Judy G. Russell, JD, CG, CGL

Endogamy: One Family, One People by Israel Pickholtz. Colonial Roots, 34491 Sunset Drive, Millsboro, DE 19966; <https://colonialroots.com/>; 2015. ISBN 978-1-68034-038-9. 224 pages. Paperback \$36.00; PDF \$30.00.

Endogamy is always the elephant in the genealogical room. Defined as “the practice of marrying within the same ethnic, cultural, social, religious or tribal group,”¹ the result is that individuals are “related to each other in a recent genealogical timeframe on multiple ancestral pathways”²—in other words, pedigree collapse.³ Researching in endogamous populations (among them Ashkenazi Jews, Acadians, Polynesians, Low German Mennonites, and early Colonial American groups) is complicated at best when cousins marrying cousins leads to six great-grandparents rather than the expected eight.

It’s no different in genetic genealogy, when we try to bring the 21st-century tool of DNA testing to bear on our research: “The interpretation of DNA results from endogamous populations can be particularly challenging”⁴ The blending of genes from the shared lines often means that a DNA match with a predicted range of second cousin can really be a sixth or seventh cousin several times over.

Whether we’re following the paper trail or the genetic evidence, then, in endogamous populations, the problems are elephant-sized.

And so, the old adage begins, “How do you eat an elephant?” The answer, of course, is, “One bite at a time.”

When the bites are small enough, the morsels well seasoned, even the biggest elephant can eventually go down smoothly. If the chunks are too big, or a little undercooked, even an adventuresome diner can choke.

Therein lies the rub for Israel Pickholtz’s monumental undertaking, *Endogamy: One Family, One People*. Though billed as a guide to inspire confidence in others who hope to use DNA testing in working with endogamous families—“to show you what can be done, to encourage you to say ‘I can do this’”⁵—some of the chunks here are a bit too big, and some a little too undercooked, to be swallowed by anyone other than an advanced researcher with a discriminating palate.

The problems begin right in the introductory DNA chapter, where the effort to provide a basic background on DNA with just enough information to put the genetic testing techniques into context goes off the rails with minor errors. An example is the comment that “[t]he twenty-two pairs of chromosomes residing in the nucleus of the cell

are called ‘autosomal DNA’⁶, while simultaneously referencing “[t]he Y and X-chromosomes . . . the twenty-third pair of chromosomes, . . . located in the nucleus of each cell.”⁷ A beginner can be forgiven for being confused: Are there 22 or 23 pairs of chromosomes in the nucleus of the cell? (There are 23 pairs, 22 pairs called autosomes plus the XX pair for females and XY pair for males.)

The same sort of imprecision of language mars some of the genealogical discussions as well. An example is in an early chapter that sets the stage for the interrelated families, where it isn’t immediately clear whether a reference to “this surname” is to the Pickholz surname or the Kwoczka surname⁸ or whether “this couple” refers to the couple in the immediately preceding paragraph or the one before that.⁹ Particularly with a complex endogamous family, precise identifications are critical, and a little more time in the editing kitchen could have eased these undercooked elements.

The undercooking also appears in the selection of case studies for the book. The representation that “[a]lmost every chapter will tell a success story”¹⁰ is overly optimistic, and the sheer number of cases where the discussion ends with “testing other relatives might be useful”¹¹ or “we would like to think that . . . there will eventually be successful matches”¹² is discouraging. A case study that ends with “I cannot really draw hard conclusions based on the little I have to work with”¹³ or “That of course is speculation, worthy of no more than a dotted line”¹⁴ probably shouldn’t have been included at all. Where the aim is to prove that it can be done, selecting a few clear examples and working through them in detail to a clear conclusion is more likely to encourage a reluctant researcher than a shotgun approach.

Choosing fewer case studies would also have eased the inescapable conclusion that the book bites off too much for anyone to chew. Attempting to cover everything from basic Y-DNA matches to using X-chromosome matches to narrow the potential candidates for common autosomal ancestors is already a broad scope. Adding in the use of tools still being beta-tested such as “Lazarus”—which hopes to use the genetic characteristics of descendants and collateral relatives to recreate enough of a deceased person’s genome for comparison purposes—means that no one aspect can really be discussed in the

kind of depth that would leave a researcher with confidence that he too could apply these techniques.

That's not to say there isn't value in the book. For an experienced researcher who already has a background in both endogamous research and in DNA techniques, there will be nuggets that can be pulled out.

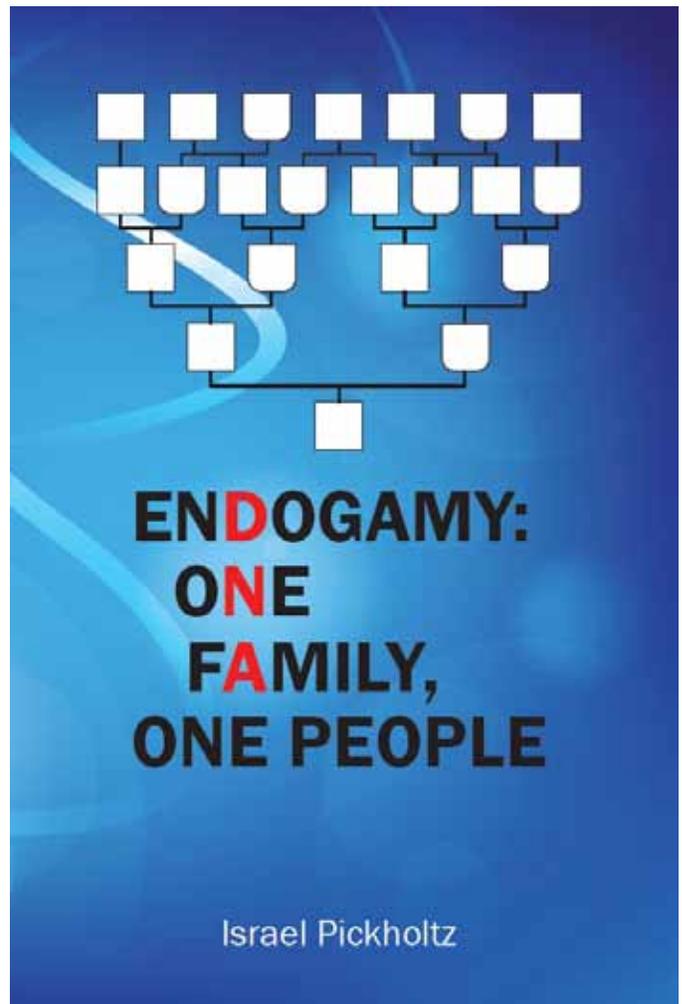
There are also some charming family stories and lessons to be learned along the way, even for a newcomer:

- “[S]ometimes you are completely and demonstrably wrong. But this is a DNA success, not a failure. ‘No’ is also an answer.”¹⁵
- “The more people who test, the better results you are likely to get.”¹⁶
- “DNA research is a long game. You cannot expect to walk in and find meaningful matches right away.”¹⁷
- “DNA cannot stand alone as a determining factor. It can and often does support research or give new direction to research that has run aground.”¹⁸
- “If there is an 85 percent chance that something is so, there is a 15 percent chance that it is 100 percent wrong.”¹⁹

The bottom line here: Not for the faint of heart, and not for the total DNA newbie. But for the more experienced researcher, with time to parse it through with care and with the basic know-how to add some seasoning and carve this elephant into smaller bites, *Endogamy: One Family, One People* may offer hints and techniques of value.

Endnotes

1. ISOGG Wiki (<http://www.isogg.org/wiki>), “endogamy”, rev. 5 December 2015.
2. *Ibid.*
3. See, e.g., Tim Urban, “Your Family: Past, Present, and Future,” *Wait But Why* blog, posted January 2014.
4. ISOGG Wiki (<http://www.isogg.org/wiki>), “endogamy”, rev. 5 December 2015.
5. Israel Pickholtz, *Endogamy: One Family, One People* (Millsboro, DE: Colonial Roots, 2015), xx.
6. *Ibid.*, 3.
7. *Ibid.*, 2.



8. *Ibid.*, xv.
9. *Ibid.*, xvi.
10. *Ibid.*, xix.
11. *Ibid.*, 27.
12. *Ibid.*
13. *Ibid.*, 106.
14. *Ibid.*, 163.
15. *Ibid.*, 20.
16. *Ibid.*, 61.
17. *Ibid.*, 78.
18. *Ibid.*, 119.
19. *Ibid.*, 118.



SFBAJGS Family Finder Update

The surnames and towns being researched by our newest members are listed below. This database is maintained for the benefit of our membership. If you have a correction or update, please write to SFBAJGS at familyfinder@sfbajgs.org or at P.O. Box 318214, San Francisco, CA 94131-8214.

Surname	Town, Country	Member
Citrin/Cytryn	Poland	Louise Swig

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The Journal of the San Francisco Bay Area Jewish Genealogical Society

Volume XXXVI, Number 1

February 2016

Upcoming SFBAJGS Events

Sunday, 28 February, Oakland: *Case Study: Genealogy of Renee Kaufman.* Steve Morse will demonstrate how using online information can help you easily outline your family history, even with names spelled “creatively” in databases.

Sunday, 13 March, San Francisco: *Reclaim the Records: Using Freedom of Information laws for Genealogical Research.* Fresh off a victory over the New York City Municipal Archives, Brooke Schreier Ganz will discuss how Freedom of Information laws can help genealogists gain access to records.

Sunday, 10 April, Oakland: *The Ins and Outs of IGRA’s Database Collection.* Garri Regev will explore the online databases offered by the Israel Genealogy Research Association and show what kinds of records are available.

Monday, 18 April, Los Altos Hills: *Social Media for Genealogists.* SFBAJGS member Meredith Sellers will illustrate how social media sites can assist your genealogy research efforts, discuss the pros and cons of different platforms, and outline ways to maintain a secure online presence.

Monday, 20 June, Los Angeles: *Researching Your Litvak Roots.* Judy Baston will discuss records available for Litvak research and the information you can learn from them.

Sunday, 17 July, San Francisco: *The Power of Digital Photography for Family History.* This presentation will cover the process of digital photography from beginning to end, from taking photographs through to editing, labeling, and filing them.

See page 3 for meeting locations and times and page 4 for other events of interest.

For more program information visit <http://www.sfbajgs.org/>.
