



זכרונות ZichronNote

The Journal of the San Francisco Bay Area Jewish Genealogical Society

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Vaudeville and DNA

Unexpected results from a DNA test lead to an inquiry into the paternity of a cousin's father.
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ZichronNote
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Jewish Genealogical Society

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President's Message

Daniel Leeson

13 July 1932–6 October 2018

Jeremy Frankel, SFBAJGS President

Many of you probably didn't know Daniel "Danny" Leeson. He was, however, known to a number of our older Peninsula members as the husband of our former vice-president, Rosanne Leeson.

Danny, like Rosanne, was born in New Jersey. He had a very successful 30-year career working for IBM, including a stint living and working in Paris, France.

He was also a talented musician, playing clarinet with the San Jose Symphony, San Diego Symphony, San Francisco Opera, and Oakland Symphony. Danny became one of the most knowledgeable people about Mozart and edited *The New Mozart Edition*, which contained 120 volumes of music. He wrote four books about Mozart, and as if that weren't enough, Danny also penned two other books: *The Mozart Forgeries*, a work of fiction, and *Opus Ultimum!: The Story of the Mozart Requiem*. (I have them both.)

Genealogical researchers owe a debt of thanks to Danny as well. In 2001 Danny and Rosanne were awarded the IAJGS Outstanding Contribution via Print Award for their indices of the 1784 Alsatian Jewish census and 18th-century Alsatian marriages. (As the conference was being held in London that year, I was honored to collect the award on their behalf.)

I can't end without mentioning Danny's early contribution in 1996, an article titled "A Jewish Genealogic Fable." I think it has stood the test of time for its relevancy. You can read it at <https://www.jewishgen.org/InfoFiles-dlfable.html>.

On behalf of the board and society members, we wish Rosanne and the Leeson family our most sincere condolences.

Society News

New Members

Anna Cwirko-Godycki may1949anna@gmail.com
Linda Goldman lindbgold@aol.com
Robert Olken rolken@yahoo.com
Amy Shutkin ashutkin@gmail.com

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 Board Member

SFBAJGS is happy to welcome **Dvorah Lewis** as a new board member at large. Dvorah is the Genealogy and Local History Librarian at Sutro Library.

Member Benefit

The researcher who photographs the *matzevot* in Jewish cemeteries in Poland for the Kirkuty project, a project which SFBAJGS supports with donations made possible by our generous members, can accept requests from SFBAJGS members in good standing for photography in cemeteries in specific towns. The towns must be in Poland. Send your request to membership@sfbajgs.org.

In 2018, Kirkuty visited and documented thirteen cemeteries, which includes compiling a list of preserved *matzevot*. The newly documented cemeteries:

Augustów (28 names), <http://www.kirkuty.xip.pl/augustow.htm>

Barczewo (22 names), <http://www.kirkuty.xip.pl/barczewo.htm>

Dzierzgoń (27 names), <http://www.kirkuty.xip.pl/dzierzgon.htm>

Gogolin (34 names), <http://www.kirkuty.xip.pl/gogolin.htm>

Kościan (65 names), <http://www.kirkuty.xip.pl/koscian.htm>

Leśnica (40 names), <http://www.kirkuty.xip.pl/lesnica.html>

Mielec (477 names), <http://www.kirkuty.xip.pl/mielec.htm>

Mordy (40 names), <http://www.kirkuty.xip.pl/mordy.htm>

Nowy Targ (36 names), <http://www.kirkuty.xip.pl/nowytarg.htm>

Ryki (15 names), <http://www.kirkuty.xip.pl/ryki.htm>

Suwalki (220 names), <http://www.kirkuty.xip.pl/suwalki.htm>

Tarczyn (18 records), <http://www.kirkuty.xip.pl/tarczyn.htm>

Tarnobrzeg (15 names), <http://www.kirkuty.xip.pl/tarnobrzeg.htm>

Member News on page 11

Your Story Belongs in *ZichronNote*

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? Do you have a brick wall you want to discuss? Did you meet a cousin at the annual conference, or make contact with a "tenuously, absurdly distant" cousin or a "relative of the heel?"

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

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: NEW TIME: Sunday. Doors open 1:00 p.m. Program begins at 1:30 p.m.
Oakland FamilySearch Library, 4766 Lincoln Avenue

Palo Alto: Monday. Doors open 7 p.m. Program begins at 7:30 p.m.
Congregation Etz Chayim, 4161 Alma Street

See Back Cover for Calendar of Upcoming SFBAJGS Meetings

Genealogy Calendar of Events

Local and Regional

Saturday, 23 February 2019. Eastern European Special Interest Group. California Genealogical Society and Library, 2201 Broadway Suite LL2, Oakland. <http://californiaancestors.org/>

Tuesday, 26 February 2019. Marilyn Simlness, "The California Great Register and Other Poll Books." Sacramento German Genealogy Society. St. Mark's United Methodist Church, McMurdo Hall, 2391 St. Marks Way, Sacramento. <http://sggs.us/>

Thursday, 28 February 2019. Sierra Pope, "Plan Your Genealogy Vacation." Marin Genealogical Society. Marin FamilySearch Center, 220 North San Pedro Road, San Rafael. <http://www.maringenloc.org/>

Saturday, 2 March 2019. Marian Kile, "Guidelines for Entering Consistent Data." Solano County Genealogical Society. City of Fairfield Adult Recreation Center, 1200 Civic Center Drive, Fairfield. <https://www.scgsca.org/>

Thursday, 14 March 2019. Dawn Kosmakos, "Meet Your DNA Match." Contra Costa County Genealogical Society. LDS Church, 1360 Alberta Way, Concord. <https://cccgs.net/>

Friday, 15 March 2019. Steve Morse, "One-Step Webpages: A Potpourri of Genealogical Search Tools." Mt. Diablo Genealogical Society. Club Room, Rossmore Creekside Clubhouse, 1010 Stanley Dollar Drive, Walnut Creek. <https://mdgs.webs.com/>

Sunday, 17 March 2019. Marian Kile, "Using Dropbox for Genealogy." Jewish Genealogical Society of Sacramento. Albert Einstein Residence Center, 1935 Wright Street, Sacramento. <https://www.jewishgen.org/jgs-sacramento/>

Thursday, 28 March 2019. Patricia Burrow and Pam Fujii, "DNA Basics for Genealogists." Free but registration required. Santa Clara County Historical and Genealogical Society. Santa Clara City Library, Margie Edinger Room, 2635 Homestead Road, Santa Clara. <http://www.scchgs.org/>

Monday, 29 April 2019. Adolph Sutro's birthday! Sutro Library, 1630 Holloway Avenue, San Francisco. <http://www.library.ca.gov/sutro/>

State and National

Wednesday–Saturday, 30 May–2 June 2019. Genealogy Jamboree. Southern California Genealogical Society. Burbank Airport Marriott Hotel, 2500 Hollywood Way, Burbank. <http://www.genealogyjamboree.com/>

Sunday–Friday, 28 July–2 August 2019. IAJGS International Conference on Jewish Genealogy. Cleveland, Ohio. Registration is open! <http://www.iajgs2019.org/>

Wednesday–Saturday, 21–24 August 2019. FGS Annual Conference. Washington, D.C. <http://www.fgsconference.org/>

International

Sunday–Saturday, 30 October–28 November 2019 (Cheshvan 5780). International Jewish Genealogy Month. <http://www.iajgs.org/blog/ijgm/>

For more events, visit <http://www.library.ca.gov/sutro/genealogy/calendar/> and <http://www.conferencekeeper.com/>.

Free Webinars

FamilySearch. <https://sites.lib.byu.edu/familyhistory/classes-and-webinars/online-webinars/>

Florida State Genealogical Society. <http://www.flsgs.org/cpage.php?pt=253>

Georgia Genealogical Society. <http://gagensociety.org/events/webinars>

Illinois State Genealogical Society. <http://ilgensoc.org/cpage.php?pt=234>

Legacy Family Tree (MyHeritage). <http://familytreewebinars.com/upcoming-webinars.php>

Minnesota Genealogical Society. <http://mngs.org/eventListings.php?nm=38>

Southern California Genealogical Society. <http://www.scsgenealogy.com/>

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. <https://www.uscis.gov/HGWebinars>

Utah Genealogical Association. <https://ugagenealogy.org/cpage.php?pt=11>

Wisconsin State Genealogical Society. <http://wsgs.org/cpage.php?pt=127>



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:

3 March 2019

7 April 2019

5 May 2019

7 June 2019

A DNA Match Reveals a Century-old Secret

Ann L. Fuller, Ph.D.

Ann L. Fuller is an Affiliate Scholar at Oberlin College and a Geni.com volunteer curator. She grew up in Chicago, Illinois, earned an M.A. in history and a Ph.D. in plasma physics, and served for 28 years as executive director of a social services agency serving low-income persons in Oberlin, Ohio. She started doing genealogy as a retirement activity in 2007 by joining Geni.com, the then-new genealogy-social networking site, and has since expanded her research interests into multiple geographical areas and DNA. She has been a member of SFBAJGS since 2010.

I knew my uncle Ira as a quiet, modest, handsome man married to my father's younger sister, Ruth. Trained as an architect, he worked for many years as an urban planner for the City of Chicago. Ruth, who was talkative and witty, died of lung cancer in 1961 at the age of 51, leaving two teenage children, James¹ and Carlie. In 1962 Ira married Muriel, a gracious woman who as an actress wrote and performed one-woman shows.

While retiring within the family, Ira was prominent in a more public arena. When he died in 1985, his obituary described him as "an author and urban planner whose name ranks with Daniel Burnham in the history of Chicago planning, [who] was appointed to various city posts by five mayors . . . the question [was] how was he able to survive under such different mayors as Kennelly, Daley, Bilandic, Byrne and Washington? He could because he was a unique person with an ability to steer clear of petty political fights by keeping his eye on his goal. He did not lose the main thrust of his plan and did not let any mayor get out of hand."²

A few years ago, Ira's two children did autosomal DNA testing at Family Tree DNA (FTDNA). While their relationship to me and their other maternal 1st cousins who had tested came out as predicted, their ethnicity was a surprise: James was 80% Jewish Diaspora and 19% European, and his sister was 74% Jewish Diaspora and 23% European. All of their maternal relatives had nearly 100% Jewish Diaspora ethnicity, so I assumed that the non-Jewish genetics had come from their father's side. Since we knew both of Ira's parents to be Jewish, there was no obvious explanation for the ethnic anomaly.

In order to understand Ira's ancestry better, I built a family tree from documentation I found on Ancestry.com and other sites. Another source was a memoir about Ira's mother's family written by Ira in 1973, likely with Muriel's help and at her initiative.³

Albert Bach, Ira's paternal grandfather, was born in 1839 in Schwerzenz, Prussia (now Swarzedz, Poland), a small town about 13 km from Poznan. He came to the United States in 1857 and settled in Troy, New York, where he

worked as a cigar manufacturer. He married Bertha Hecht (c. 1849–1907) and together they had at least four children, one of whom was Jacob (Jack) Bach (1874–1913), Ira's father. The family moved to Chicago sometime after 1880, where Albert died in 1888. Jacob Bach was enumerated in the 1900 census as employed in the shoe business and living in Chicago with his mother and two sisters, Nellie and Estella.

Israel Rose (1843–1888) and Jennie Levy (1849–1918), Ira's maternal grandparents, had come from Minsk to Chicago about 1872⁴ with their eight-year-old daughter, Sarah. Quoting from Ira's memoir, "Since Chicago had become the rail center of the growing nation as well as the cattle and hog market of the continent, it was easy for young Israel Rose, upon arrival in Chicago, to join with a group of young cattle buyers and brokers. They would travel to Texas and make advanced purchases of cattle. Acting as brokers for the giant meat purveyors such as Swift, Armour, and Wilson companies, they took great risks. Often their entire resources were locked in with the success or failure of the cattle men to reach Chicago with their cattle intact—pestilence and hijackers being the order of the day."

"In quick succession, Jennie presented Israel with Louis [Louie], Samuel [Sam] and Rachel [Ray] [1882]." In 1888, Jennie was left a widow when Israel disappeared on a cattle ranch in Texas.⁵ In order to support her family, she "purchased a push cart to sell dry goods in the open markets of Maxwell Street, just as other immigrants were doing on the streets of lower Manhattan. Louie and Sam sold newspapers and shined shoes. Sarah was already a widow with a young daughter. Sarah went to work for a theatrical booking agent in a downtown office.

"The idea of the World's Columbian Exposition, scheduled to open in 1892 intrigued Sarah. She decided . . . she could train her daughter, Berdonna⁶ [Birdie] and her little sister, Rachel [Ray], to sing and dance and book them as entertainment right in Chicago at the Exposition! There was much more money in this kind of thing than bookkeeping or any other ordinary occupation . . . and both girls had such talent!

CHICAGO
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 CONTINUOUS VAUDEVILLE.
 WEEK OF OCT. 23.

FELIX MORRIS & COMPANY
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MACHANARA BROTHERS
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Left: Ad for vaudeville shows including the Gilbert Sisters, Chicago Tribune, 22 October 1899, page 44.

Right: Commentary on a performance by the Gilbert Sisters, Chicago Tribune, 18 November 1904, page 7.

"The [Columbian] Exposition opened a year late. It was fortunate because it gave Ray a chance to finish fourth grade before she and Birdie made their debuts as the Gilbert Sisters (what inspired that name no one knows). Their success was immediate and after the Exposition closed on the Midway the girls had offers (inspired by Sarah, no doubt) to travel and perform all over the country. Sarah was now able to leave the confines

of an office, and she reveled in her role of coach, stage-mother, agent as well as savior of the family. For under her watchful eye the Gilbert Sisters earned good money which was sent back home to Mama every week, enabling Louie to go to Law School and Sam to attend Business School. Jennie could now come in out of the cold and once again maintain a household."

In 1905, Ray left the vaudeville act and married Jack Bach. In 1906, "a bouncing 9-1/2 pound baby boy was born to Ray and Jack. They named him Ira, although his Hebrew name, Israel, was to honor his lost grandfather. Their joy was very short-lived because by 1913 Jack had died. Sarah followed the next year and Louie still the next. Ray was to return to the only work she had ever known, vaudeville. It meant of course that she would have to travel and leave Ira somewhere. He was welcome to stay with his Grandmother Jennie, but Jennie was old, scarred by life's tragedies, superstitious, Orthodox. . . . Ray wanted her child to be part of the world she had come to know . . . to be able to look beyond the limits her mother could provide. The Jewish Home Finding Agency was contacted, but to no avail. So little Ira was sent to St. Joseph's Boarding School

DANCERS SHOCK EVANSTON.
Gilbert Sisters at Fire Department Entertainment Performance and Are Dropped from Program.

Two "refined singing and dancing artistes," as they were announced on the program of the entertainment of the Benevolent association of the Evanston fire department, so completely shocked their audience Wednesday evening that they were not allowed to perform their second specialty, and were crossed off the program for last evening.

The Gilbert sisters, as the duo were called, were unable to report for the rehearsal and came on the stage immediately after leaving a republican club entertainment. They arrived at the fire station so late that they were allowed to go on before an examination had been made as to their knowledge of the tastes of an Evanston audience.

Mayor John T. Barker and Fire Marshal Edward Mersch took no more than a look to decide that the "artistes" should not be allowed to return to the stage to answer the encore from a few spectators in the rear.

in suburban LaGrange. It was a terrible wrench . . . from the warmth of an indulgent Orthodox Jewish home where the Sabbath was observed in every detail, traditional prayers, foods, attitudes, to a rigid institution filled with boys and Catholic nuns." He spent the next seven years there.

In January 2018, FTDNA sent me notification of an usually large 1st-3rd cousin autosomal match⁷ to both James and Carlie from a man named Arthur Arndt. Since Arthur's DNA didn't match anyone else in their mother's family, he had to be related to them through Ira and therefore might be able to shed light on the Bach or Rose families. When I wrote and sent him Ira's genealogical information, he shared his family tree: His mother was of Finnish background and his father's family had lived in Tiffin, Ohio for many generations. "My paternal side I have been able to trace to the 1700s [in Virginia]. The name Bach does not appear in my tree but maybe I have not found it." As I studied his tree, I realized that Arthur's family was not Jewish on either side. We ruled out Arthur's mother's Finnish ancestors and concentrated on his father's family as the more likely basis for the match. After some investigation, the only point of overlap I could find between Ira's and Arthur's families was a geographic one: Arthur's grandfather had lived in Chicago and his father had been born there in 1907, a year after Ira's birth.

As our e-mail correspondence continued, Arthur, who was retired from the U.S. Air Force and from public school

teaching, facetiously suggested, "Maybe Ira is the son of my grandfather, George Edwin Arndt (1858–1929), who died 15 years before I was born. He was a traveling salesman and handsome like my dad and me. . . . My grandparents are buried in Rosehill Cemetery in Chicago where they lived most of their life. George Edwin Arndt was a very successful sales rep for Estate Stoves from Hamilton, OH; and he traveled quite a bit. Their residence was at the Webster Hotel in Chicago, I believe; I think my dad and aunt were a bit spoiled."

Could Ray Bach and George Arndt have gotten together somehow and become the parents of Ira? The strength of the DNA match between James, Carlie, and Arthur as well as lack of opportunity due to geographical distance seemed to make any earlier connection between the two families unlikely.

When I let James know about the match to Arthur and the possibilities it suggested, he was as mystified as I was. James and Carlie had known their grandmother, Ray Bach, and Theodore Goldstein, her second husband, whom she had married in 1920. Ira had dutifully taken his children on Sundays to visit her and Theodore. Ray and Theodore both died in 1953, when James was 10 and Carlie was 7. While James had pleasant memories of Ray, Carlie remembered her as old, ailing with a disease that made her shake, and not very "grandmotherly." Neither James nor Carlie remember Ray or Ira talking to them about their early lives.

As I pondered how to go further to determine Ira's connection to the Arndt family, I came up with several ideas. I asked Arthur if any other family members had tested, but he said no. I requested photos of Arthur's grandfather to see if Ira resembled him. While a similarity does exist between them, it seemed insufficient on its own to corroborate any conclusions of parentage. James had no photo of Ray, so I couldn't determine if Ira looked more like her.



Left: George Edwin Arndt, circa 1906.



Right: Ira Bach, 1963

It then occurred to me that if George Arndt was Ira's biological father, James and Arthur would share the same Y-DNA. Arthur had tested with 23andMe, which does autosomal testing and assigns a preliminary Y haplogroup. I was reluctant to ask him to do further Y testing at this point, so I considered what else could be done. If James also tested with 23andMe, then his results could be compared with those of Arthur. If their haplogroups were different, we could rule out that George was Ira's biological father. At my request, Arthur sent me a report from 23andMe which showed his haplogroup to be R-U152.

Another approach was to find close Bach descendants and convince them to do autosomal tests at FTDNA. If the test results did not show that James and Carlie matched them at an appropriate relationship level, we could rule out Jacob Bach as Ira's biological father. Unfortunately there were few Bach descendants, and James was not in touch with any of them. Ira had had a close relationship with his 1st cousin Albert, the son of Jacob's sister Estella. She had died in 1917, and Albert's father had then married a younger woman and produced a second family. James and Ira spent time with Albert when James was growing up. Albert, now deceased, had a daughter, Ella, a 2nd cousin who was older than James and Carlie. With some effort, I found out where Ella lived and tried to contact her through various publicly available e-mail addresses and Facebook, but to no avail. Since she was a woman in her 80's, it seemed possible that she did not use a lot of e-mail. When I looked further, I found that one of her daughters-in-law was a graduate and a trustee of the same women's college I had attended. I wrote her using the college's alumnae e-mail service, and she eventually connected me with her mother-in-law. When I called Ella, explaining my mission, she agreed to help by taking an autosomal DNA test at FTDNA.

James received his 23andMe test results in early April 2018, before Ella's FTDNA results were available. They confirmed that Arthur was a close autosomal match to James, as predicted, and to Carlie's son, who unknown to us had also tested at 23andMe. James' Y haplogroup, R-L2, appeared to be different from Arthur's. Upon closer examination, I discovered that R-L2 was a subclade of R-U152, so their Y-DNA could match after all.⁸ Since 23andMe's Y testing is limited, more detailed testing would be needed to determine whether they may have shared the same biological grandfather. After consulting various people with a greater knowledge of Y testing than mine, I suggested a Y-37 test at FTDNA for both James and Arthur. While perhaps not definitive, it was a place to start and would be more cost-effective than the Y-67, Y-111, or Big

Y test. I suggested that if James paid for the test, Arthur would be more likely to do it. I proposed this to Arthur, and he agreed.

Meanwhile, Ella received her autosomal DNA results. If James and Carlie were related to Ella through the Bach family, they should have matched her at the 2nd-cousin level. However, James did not match her at all, and Carlie was predicted to be only a 5th cousin–distant match⁹, lending credence to the idea that Jacob Bach was not Ira’s biological father. When I analyzed Carlie’s match further, I saw that Ella also matched some of Carlie’s maternal relatives in the same place on some of the chromosomes, so likely the match to Carlie did not originate with the Bach family, to which her mother was not related.

I reviewed what I knew about Ray and George to see if there was a plausible way that they could have gotten together. Had they already known each other before Ray married Jacob? Ray, according to Ira’s autobiographical essay, was working in vaudeville starting with the Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893 and then touring with her niece, Birdie, as the Gilbert sisters until 1905, when she married Jacob Bach.

George Edwin Arndt was born in Tiffin, Ohio in 1858. By 1880 he was living in Cincinnati with his widowed mother and family. George moved to Chicago sometime after 1880 and lived there until his death in 1929. He is listed as a commercial traveler in the 1888 city directory and appears in subsequent city directories. By 1900, according to the census, he lived in Hyde Park¹⁰ with wife Clara Long, whom he had married in Ohio in 1881, and their son, Paul. By 1910, according to the census, he lived with his second wife, Adele Stuhr, whom he married in Iowa on 26 June 1906, and two children: Arthur’s father, Moritz George, born on 25 July 1907, and Louise Adele, born in 1908. Clara and George probably divorced before his marriage to Adele because Clara is listed as a “widow” in the 1940 census, living in New York City with her son, Paul.

A 1936 newspaper article about the history of the Estate Stove Company¹¹ in the Hamilton (Ohio) News-Journal¹² includes information about George’s work as a salesman and describes some of his personal qualities: “There came with the company back in the Hanging Rock days in the year 1876, a 17-year-old boy named George Arndt. He died in 1929 after 53 years of service with the Estate Stove Company. Besides being a very industrious and able salesman, he was a good friend of all three (Kahn) brothers [the owners] . . . After serving an apprenticeship in the Cincinnati warehouse, George Arndt was sent

on the road and given Chicago as headquarters with surrounding territory to work. Within a comparatively few years, he had the state of Illinois so thoroughly dotted with Estate Stove accounts that it became a particularly tough territory for competition. It was often said of George Arndt that he could sell stocks or bonds or automobiles or any other product just as well as he could stoves. His sales technique was far from orthodox, but results proved to be tremendously effective. He was very much the polished gentleman in manner, and he deliberately kept relations between his customers and himself on a dignified, formal plane. Somehow he succeeded in making his customers feel that when Mr. George Arndt called on them, it was an important day in the life of the customer. With all of his dignity and formality George Arndt’s close associates will always remember his unfailing courtesy and kindness, his talent as a humorist, mimic and comedian, his extreme generosity.”

Ray married Jacob Bach on 28 June 1905, and Ira was born just shy of eleven months later, on 19 May 1906. George himself was probably between his two marriages at the time, but what could have happened to bring Ray and George together to conceive a child less than two months after she had married Jacob? Would this have been likely for a woman, raised as an Orthodox Jew, who had spent more than ten years in vaudeville?

Late in my research, I discovered a startling fact about Jacob Bach. He had died in 1913 at age 38 in Elgin State Hospital, known primarily as a mental hospital. Since I had no idea of Jacob’s cause of death¹³, I wondered if Elgin State Hospital had also treated physical illnesses. To check this out, I obtained Jacob’s death certificate from Kane County, Illinois. On it, his cause of death was listed as “General paralysis of the Insane”, a syndrome of mental disorder and weakness occurring in tertiary syphilis. Tertiary syphilis, which is not contagious, can occur years or decades after the initial infection. If Jacob was found to have syphilis early in the marriage, what was the effect of this on the marital relationship? Ray lived another 40 years, so she likely did not have syphilis.

On 8 June 2018 I received the Y-37 test results for James and Arthur: They showed a perfect match on all 37 markers, which meant that they shared a common male ancestor.¹⁴ The Y-DNA results combined with the earlier autosomal ones indicated that the common ancestor was only a few generations back. James and Carlie’s autosomal match to Arthur was consistent with George being Ira’s biological father¹⁵, which would make Arthur a half 1st cousin to James and Carlie.

After consulting some Y-DNA testing experts¹⁶, I concluded that the combination of the close autosomal test results, the complete match on the Y-DNA to 37 markers, and proven geographical proximity at the time of Ira's conception was enough to confirm that Ira's biological father was George Edwin Arndt.

I can only guess at the real story of what brought Ray and George together. Many unanswerable questions remain: Did George know he had another child? Did Ira know that Jacob Bach was not his biological father? If he did know, did he keep it secret from everyone?

My research on my Uncle Ira's paternity took more than six months. During that period, James and I kept our suspicions to ourselves until we had strong evidence one way or the other. We had to be sure that George Arndt and not Jacob Bach was Ira's biological father and also begin to process the outcome emotionally before telling anyone else. After the Y-37 DNA results showed that James and Arthur shared the same paternal line, James shared our conclusions with Carlie and referred her to me for further details. She gave me a first-hand account of her and James' visits to their grandmother and told me that she thought she might have photos of Ray and Jacob. Serendipitously, there were two photos, shown on the right, which provided an opportunity to make a visual comparison between Ira and Ray and Jacob, something that I had been unable to do earlier. While Ira resembles Ray, he does not look at all like Jacob, another small piece of evidence that Jacob was not his biological father.

I started out with an interest in testing my cousins, James and Carlie, to see how their DNA test results connected to those of other cousins. I had no idea that this process would lead to a question about their father's paternity, the answer to which would uncover a 112-year-old secret. This secret would have remained buried if Arthur Arndt had not done autosomal testing at FTDNA. What is the probability that out of the whole U.S. population, a previously unknown half 1st cousin of James and Carlie would appear and upend the view of their ancestral past?

Endnotes

1. The names of living descendants (James Bach, Carlie Bach, Arthur Arndt, Ella) have been changed to protect their privacy.
2. *Chicago Tribune*, 8 March 1985; http://articles.chicagotribune.com/1985-03-08/news/8501130397_1_mayor-daley-byrne-and-washington-mayor-harold-washington.
3. This biographical essay conveys a mood but may not be accurate in all details, both from faulty memory and to make an engaging story.
4. I have found no information about their original name or a ship manifest.
5. Israel is buried in a Leavenworth, Kansas cemetery.



Left: Ira and Ray. Right: Ira and Jack.

6. Berdonna married Ernie Adams and together formed the new vaudeville act of Adams and Gilbert. He became a character actor, mainly playing villains in westerns; <http://www.b-westerns.com/villain66.htm>.
7. The autosomal DNA match between Arthur Arndt and James Bach and Carlie Bach is James (339 cM total match, 65 cM longest segment) and Carlie (381 cM total match, 64 cM longest segment). From the DNA Detectives Autosomal DNA Statistics Chart (<http://hackgenealogy.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Autosomal-DNA-Statistics-Chart.pdf>), James and Carlie's relationship to Arthur Arndt fits into Group D, which includes the relationships of 1st cousin 1R and half 1st cousin. If Ira and Arthur Arndt's father were half-brothers, then James and Arthur would be half 1st cousins.
8. 23andMe has used different chips at different times, which could be responsible for different haplogroup determinations, along with a differentiation of haplogroups over time.
9. Carlie's match to Ella was 77 cM total match, 9 cM longest segment. Even though the total match was on the lower end of the 2nd cousin range, 75–360 cM, FTDNA predicted the relationship to be more distant.
10. His address was 4726 Kenwood, but the same address is listed in the 1896 city directory, so he may have lived there even earlier. This was close to the location of the Columbian Exposition.
11. The Estate Stove Company, which operated in Hamilton for 77 years, originated in 1842 in Hanging Rock, Ohio. It was acquired in 1881 by the Kahn brothers, Lazard, Felix, and Saul. After a disastrous Ohio River flood in 1884, the Kahn brothers began moving operations to Hamilton. <https://sites.google.com/a/lanepi.org/butler/home/e/estate-stove-company>
12. *Hamilton News-Journal*, 29 December 1936 (article on history of the Estate Stove Company).
13. Carlie remembers being told that he had died of a heart attack.
14. According to FTDNA, there is a 59% probability the common ancestor lived no longer than two generations ago and an 83% chance that he lived no longer than four generations ago.
15. Both the size of the autosomal matches between Arthur and James and Carlie and a lack of geographical proximity between Daniel Arndt (George's brother) and Ray rule him out as Ira's father.
16. One DNA group administrator thought that the combination of the autosomal test and Y-37 test was sufficient. The other validated my conclusion but added that a Big Y test would remove any lingering doubts.



Invite a Friend to Join SFBAJGS

<http://www.jewishgen.org/sfbajgs/about.html>

Holocaust Records on Ancestry.com

Ted Bainbridge, Ph.D.

Dr. Ted Bainbridge has been a genealogical researcher, teacher, speaker, and writer since 1969. His genealogical and historical articles are published frequently throughout the United States and in several foreign countries. He is a member of the Colorado Council of Genealogical Societies Speakers Bureau and has served as president of his local genealogical society.

Ancestry.com has data sets and historical/sociological items related to the Holocaust, but finding all of them requires you to use several search terms—one at a time. Search their card catalog with the title word set to Jew, Jews, Jewish, Holocaust, ghetto, ghettos, transport, victims, martyrs, survivors, displaced; and specific names of nations, regions, cities, towns, ghettos, synagogues, and concentration or death camps. In separate searches set the keyword to those same choices.

You can find lists that are named according to where they were published, or by the name of a person associated with the list or its related events. Searching for Schindler won't find his list, but asking for Schindler's will. Some other famous names associated with the Holocaust or resistance to it are not found. One example is the Bielski brothers, who carried out armed attacks against the German occupiers and rescued more than 1,000 Jews.

When you search for a place name try the local name, the Germanized name, and the local name as it might have been adapted by people who spoke Hebrew or Yiddish. Also remember that transliterating from one language

to another, when those languages don't use identical alphabets, can create multiple spellings for the same place. So look for every reasonable spelling of a place name or a person's name in each relevant language.

Index of Places

Using the above strategies generates hit lists that range from a mere handful of items to a few hundred. Places in the titles of items which are related to the Holocaust are listed below, except that places in the United States or Canada are not shown. Items that are location-specific but don't have place names in their titles are not listed here. (An example is the Rudolph Kasztner Transports, which moved Jews from Hungary to Switzerland.) Therefore, you might find information about places not in this list by searching the Ancestry.com catalog as above and looking at each item on the resulting lists. You can find items related to the following places by putting the place names in the title word search box. If you notice an error or omission in this list, please notify ted.bainbridge@gmail.com so that corrections can be published.

Aegean Sea	Bergen-Belsen	Cluj	East Europe
Ahlem	Berlin	Constanta	Estonia
Ain	Bessarabia	Croatia	Eure-et-Loir
Algeria	Beuthen	Czechoslovakia	
Alsace	Biala Podlaska	Czestochowa	Farsleben
Arad	Bialystok		Flossenburg
Auschwitz	Biria	Dachau	France
Austria	Borislav / Boryslaw	Danzig	
	Boryslaw / Borislav	Debrecen	Galicia
Baden	Braunschweig	Dej / Des	Germany
Baden-Wuerttemberg	Breslau	Des / Dej	Gluszyca
Balta	Brest	Dorohoi	Great Britain
Barcelona	Bucharest	Dortmund	Greece
Bedzin	Buchenwald	Drohobycz	Gross-Rosen
Belarus		Dutch	Gurs
Belgium	Chelmo / Kulmhof	Dvinsk	Gusen / Mauthausen
Bergen	Chernivsti		Gyor

Hamburg	Mannheim	Polesie	Switzerland
Holland	Mauritius	Praga	Szombathely
Hungary	Mauthausen / Gusen	Prague	
	Mauthausen / Steyr	Prossnitz / Prostejov	Tarsia
Iasi	Mecklenburg	Prostejov / Prossnitz	Tashkent
Israel	Miedzyrzec-Podlaski		Tehran
Italy	Minsk	Radom District	Teis-Dambovita
	Miranda de Ebro	Rautel	Terezin
Keilce District	Mosonmagyarovar	Reichenberg	Theresienstadt
Kelme	Mszana Dolna	Rezekne	Tirgu Mures
Kisvarda	Muhldorf	Riese	Transnistria
Klooga	Munich	Riga	Trobitz
Kolozsvar		Romania	
Kostopol Forest	Nagyvarad Oradea	Rovno	Ukraine
Kovno	Natzweiler	Russia	Ulm
Krakow	Natzweiler-Struthof		United Kingdom
Krosno	Netherlands	Sabac	Uzbekistan
Kulmhof / Chelmo	Neuengamme	Sachsenhausen	
	North Bavaria	Sarajevo	Vienna
Latvia	Northern Germany	Serbia	Volyn
Lieberose	Norway	Silesia	Vranov
Liepaja	Nyiregyhaza	Slovakia	
Lithuania		Soviet Union	Warsaw
Lodz / Lodsch	Oradea Nagyvarad	Spain	West Prussia
Lubeck	Oranienburg	Spisska Nova Ves	Westphalia
Lublin	Oshpitsin	Stettin	Wurzburg
Lviv		Steyr / Mauthausen	
Lvov	Palestine	Stutthof	Zagreb
	Philippines	Subotica	Zbaszyn
	Poland	Sweden	Zurich



Member News

Member **Steve Morse's** One-Step Webpages were again ranked among the best genealogy sites by Family Tree Magazine in 2018, at <https://www.familytreemagazine.com/best-genealogy-websites/>. In the alphabetical list, he appears on page 17; he also appears under categories 101 Best Websites 2018 (page 9), Best Genealogy Apps and Tech Tools, and Best Websites for Immigrant Research.

The summer of 2018 was the 40th anniversary of the Intel 8086 microprocessor being brought to market. **Steve Morse** was chosen as the sole designer for this new chip. Read more about the anniversary and the importance

of the 8086 at <https://www.pcworld.com/article/146957/components/article.html> and <https://www.extremetech.com/computing/270926-happy-40th-anniversary-to-the-original-8086-and-the-x86-architecture>.

Research Scope of SFBAJGS

The San Francisco Bay Area Jewish Genealogical Society does not limit its scope to the San Francisco Bay area. While our meetings take place in various locations in the Bay Area, our research and pursuits include the entire world, as that's where our ancestors came from. Our members have extensive experience with genealogical research in every corner of the globe and with all types of historical records.

SFBAJGS Is Finding Hidden Death and Burial Records and Making Them Available—With Your Help

Jeff Lewy, SFBAJGS Transcriptions Coordinator

One of our valuable and little-known activities as a genealogical society is finding new and varied sources of data that can be useful in genealogy research for a public far wider than our own society membership.

Jewish Online Worldwide Burial Registry

For about a decade, we have been participating in the Jewish Online Worldwide Burial Registry (JOWBR), which resides on JewishGen, the Jewish genealogy Web site. JOWBR is a database of names and other identifying information from Jewish cemeteries and burial records worldwide, from the earliest records to the present. It is a compilation of two linked databases: a database of burial records and a database of information about each particular cemetery. Photographs of some gravestones (*matzevot*) are also included in this database. To date, JOWBR has recorded more than three million burial records from cemeteries in 125 countries (<https://www.jewishgen.org/databases/Cemetery/tree/CemList.htm>). JOWBR's ultimate aim is to catalog all extant data about Jewish cemeteries and burial records.

Take a Look at JOWBR

JOWBR (<https://www.jewishgen.org/databases/Cemetery/>) depends on local genealogy societies. Each society is encouraged to find records for the Jewish cemeteries in its area, and, working with cemetery owners and managers, we transcribe the burial records on spreadsheets and when possible add photos of gravestones/*matzevot*. Sometimes the records are on individual index cards, typed or handwritten, which we scan and transcribe. Sometimes they are handwritten in ledger books, perhaps with beautiful 19th-century script or hastily scribbled entries. In these cases, we photograph the pages in the books under the supervision of the cemetery officials and then transcribe from the photographs.

Transcribing these records takes time and careful attention to detail, as well as deciphering old handwriting and abbreviated and incomplete entries. Like computer keypunch clerks entering data, the work of each person must be checked by a second person to make sure the transcriptions are as error-free as we can make them.

JOWBR accepts only certain data, such as names, dates, and locations in the cemetery. The records often include

other details, and we transcribe it all. Examples of other data are newspaper obituaries, reburials, transfers to other cemeteries, and plot purchase information. We keep the complete transcriptions in the society's secure archives, in case there is a future need or someone contacts us to learn if we have more data than JOWBR presents. We do this in the interest of complete and comprehensive records and against the possibility that the records at a cemetery may be damaged, lost, or destroyed in the future. We do not publish this extra data; we are very cautious about disseminating information that might dismay or offend living persons.

SFBAJGS Work for JOWBR

We have participated in this endeavor locally for about a decade. We have transcribed more than 20,000 records from local cemeteries which we have uploaded to JOWBR. We started in Colma, California, where most San Francisco burials take place, and have transcribed and uploaded records from Home of Peace, Hills of Eternity, and Salem cemeteries. We have also uploaded records from Home of Peace Cemetery in San Jose. We are currently processing the records of Home of Eternity Cemetery in Oakland.

There are a number of additional Jewish cemeteries and Jewish sections of general cemeteries in the Bay Area which we hope to record in the future.

Other Sources of Vital Records

We look beyond cemetery records for death and burial information that may be of interest to researchers. Most of the civil death records recorded by the City of San Francisco were destroyed in the 1906 earthquake and fire. Investigating death records that may have been archived when synagogues closed, merged, or just ran out of space to store them is another fruitful part of our work. We also search for other sources of death data that might serve as substitutes for official death records.

• Newspapers

Newspaper obituaries are a source, where long runs of newspapers have been microfilmed or bound in oversized volumes. In addition to existing newspapers such as the *San Francisco Chronicle* (since 1863) or the *Oakland Tribune* (since 1874)—now the *East Bay Times*—there are defunct papers such as the *San Francisco Call*, which ran (under various names) from about 1856 to 1959. A major problem

Name	DATE OF BURIAL			AGE	PLACE OF BURIAL			Lodge
	MO	DA	YR		SEC	ROW	SP	
712 Mrs. M. Eisenberg					4	2	17	
771 Mrs. S. Eisenberg				75	4	3	11	
122 Mrs. M. Eisenberg Wolf				55	2	9	2	

Sample page from a cemetery burial register

in using any of these papers would be separating out the Jewish obituaries. There have also been Jewish newspapers, including today's *J, the Jewish News of Northern California*, although none of them contained comprehensive death reports.

• **Magnes Collection of Jewish Art and Life**

The Judah L. Magnes Museum was the repository for many California Jewish records and other materials, including early archives of today's Sherith Israel synagogue and materials from other synagogues, possibly some no longer active. The collection at the Magnes was not fully catalogued, and the entire Magnes collection was donated to the Bancroft Library at the University of California at Berkeley in 2010. It is now known as the Magnes Collection of Jewish Art and Life. The records are still not fully catalogued. We are hoping to work with the Bancroft Library to inventory these holdings with the goal of finding and identifying Jewish vital records (births, marriages, and deaths) that may be stored in Bancroft's off-site warehouse.

• **Sherith Israel Synagogue Records**

We were able to find catalogued archives from Sherith Israel synagogue at Bancroft, including old burial data and synagogue minute books showing payments for burials,

going back to the 1860's. These records would be difficult to access for individual researchers. With Bancroft's permission, we photographed the original handwritten records and are beginning the long process of transcribing them to make the records accessible to all. We expect these records will provide substitutes for some of the missing city records.

• **Funeral Home Records**

Another source of substitute death records is funeral home records. We now have a project underway to transcribe the funeral home records from Sinai Memorial Chapel in San Francisco. Sinai Memorial Chapel is the primary Jewish funeral home in San Francisco and has locations in Redwood City and Lafayette. These funeral records, on more than 30,000 index cards, note deaths and burials at a variety of cemeteries in the Bay Area and shipments between the Bay Area and cemeteries worldwide which were handled by Sinai Memorial Chapel. Many of these burials occurred at Eternal Home Cemetery in Colma, which is managed by Sinai Memorial Chapel. We intend to transcribe these cemetery records, kept separately at the cemetery, in the future.

Would you like to help us?

These records we know about will keep us busy for a number of years, and we continue to search for more records. The work will go more quickly if we can encourage more volunteers to help the few of us now working.

Could that be you? We welcome your help and can train you to do the work at home using Microsoft *Excel*, at your own speed at your own computer. If you would like to help, please contact Jeff Lewy at transcriptions@sfbajgs.org to learn more. We'd love to hear from you!



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
Brand/Brandt	Germany	Robert Olken
Cizon		Amy Shutkin
Dobrov	Belarus; Poland	Robert Olken
Gabriner	Kletsk, Belarus	Linda Goldman
Goldman	Janov Padlovski and Konstantinov, Poland	Linda Goldman
Lederer		Amy Shutkin
Lempert	Kletsk, Belarus	Linda Goldman

Do What I Say, Not What I Did: Preparing for a Natural Disaster

Jan Meisels Allen, President, Jewish Genealogical Society of the Conejo Valley

First published in IAJGS Leadership Digest, 17 November 2018.

I live in the greater Los Angeles area and went through the disastrous 2018 Woolsey fire. We are very fortunate that when we returned from mandatory evacuation orders our home was untouched, while blocks from us some homes no longer stand, and the hills surrounding our area burned all the way. I am writing this article on emergency preparedness for my society's newsletter and thought I would share it; this is relevant whether you live in a area of hurricanes/floods, fires/mudslides, or earthquakes. The fires in Northern California are still raging, so this is pertinent for other areas, and our thoughts are with those in Northern California—with thousands who lost their homes, many deaths, and many missing—as well as in Southern California, for those hundreds who lost their homes. We in California will expect the mudslides if this winter we get any rain. The following is meant for all of us, as disasters hit all parts of world: fire, earthquake, mudslide, hurricane, flood. The article is a guide and not meant to be all inclusive.

Even knowing that a mandatory evacuation was more probable than not, I did not pack up my genealogical binders with papers nor my family photos, and many of the latter have not been scanned, as they are framed. I do have an off-site back-up system (Mozy/Carbonite), which runs several times a day, so everything on my computer could be downloaded to another computer if necessary after a disaster.

When the call came from the Agoura Hills City Manager as part of the outstanding e-notification system, we were out in less than 15 minutes. We each packed a suitcase with clothes for three days, medications, list of medications, and the dog's food and medications. I took my travel laptop with connections so it could be charged, cellphones, and chargers. We took the "important" papers—passports, Social Security cards, wills, trust, credit cards, extra cash (have mostly small denominations available, as larger bills may be difficult to change during a disaster), etc.—but not the genealogy documents I have been working on for twenty years. We were lucky that the house was not damaged. I grabbed my hotel affinity cards on the way out and that helped us find a hotel 50 miles away. We also have two HEPA filters in the house due to allergies, and one of the smartest things we did is leave them on while

we were gone—when we returned we had no smoke odor in our home, unlike some of our neighbors.

So this is what I recommend everyone does before the next disaster hits, no matter what it is:

Not all family members may be home when the disaster strikes. Decide in advance a central meeting place in case of disaster and remind family members several times a year. Know how to contact each family member. Remember, phone lines and cell towers may be down during a disaster.

Make a list of items you absolutely must take: medications, important legal papers, credit cards, hotel affinity cards, additional cash, insurance policy, list of contacts with numbers, cell phone and laptop/tablet and their chargers, extra set of car and home keys, safe deposit box keys, jewelry, first aid kit/supplies (bandages, antibiotic ointment, etc.), glasses, extra cash (ATM's may not be working if electrical power is down), maps (Waze, Google Maps, etc. may not be working during an emergency), family and emergency contact information, scissors, manual razor, matches, plastic (large garbage bags if that is all you can get), work gloves, masks (especially those for particulate matter; we got ours before we returned home from Home Depot), blankets, etc.

After the Florida hurricanes in 2017, on a recommendation from Dick Eastman in his newsletter, I purchased a back-up battery that has outlets for both USB and 120 volt. Keep this charged and in the trunk of your car. The USB port lets you charge your phone when the electricity is down; the regular outlet lets you charge other items, and the model he uses also has the capability to charge the car battery. We took my husband's car, not mine (one car so we would not get separated), so the back-up battery stayed home, but it was charged and ready to go. We just forgot about it, as we were not taking my car. Next time, and there will be a next time, if we take only one car it goes with us!

Start scanning your family photos now, because you may not have the time to take them from throughout the house when you have to evacuate.

Make certain that you have an off-site back-up system so that your computer work is at least stored offline. If your home is destroyed, you can salvage your computer documents.

Set up a large container with canned and dry foods, individual containers of fruit juice and bottled water, paper plates, and disposable forks, knives, and spoons. A rule of thumb is one gallon of water per person per day and food for three days per person. You can place this container in your car and have at least a few days of supplies for an emergency. In that container include extra batteries, a flashlight, a manual can opener, small plastic storage bags, and toiletries, including a brush/comb, toothpaste, toothbrush, hand mirror, toilet paper, paper towels, manual razor, and matches. I also include *yahrzeit* candles and a battery-operated portable radio. If you have a pet, keep extra pet food and portable dishes for food and water. If you can, bring the pet's bed or blanket. Keep a case of bottled water next to your evacuation kit to take with you. At least twice a year look for the expiration dates on the canned and dry foods and bottled water, so that your supplies are "edible" when they are needed. Restock at least one to two times per year depending on expiration dates. While we have all of this, we did not take it for the fires, as we felt we would be able to find shelter; we are lucky we did.

Try to keep your car's gas tank at least half-filled at all times. One never knows when disaster may strike, and you may have to go at a moment's notice. We filled up both cars earlier in the day just in case.

Online Resources

Homeland Security has a page, "Prepare My Family for a Disaster", with suggestions of what to do in advance and when the disaster hits:

<https://www.dhs.gov/how-do-i/prepare-my-family-disaster>

FEMA has Fact Sheets on some disaster topics:

After the Fire: Advice for Salvaging Damaged Family Treasures: <https://tinyurl.com/y8njwm4f>

Original URL: https://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/1452020463438-03d4365a46c620bdd1ad1e854379c237/Fire_FIMA_Fact_Sheet_2015_508.pdf

After the Flood: Advice for Salvaging Damaged Family Treasures: <https://tinyurl.com/y7wtfwj>

Original URL: https://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/1537903646474-713c46c9f75fc24d3184cfc95ab98260/Flood_FIMA_Fact_Sheet_2015_508_rev_092418.pdf

Society Preparedness

Some of the above may be relevant for your society. You also need to prepare in advance. Make a list of your society's "valuables", such as laptop, projector, list of library books, etc. You may not be able to take the books with you, but having a list of what you had may assist in getting a settlement payment from your insurance company. If your society has valuable historical/genealogical documents, try to have them in an accessible place to be removed if time permits, but definitely have photos of them, and both save the photos to an off-site back-up system and place the originals in a vault off-site. I took with me the society's brand new laptop, and the treasurer took the society's checkbook and checks. More than half of our JGSCV board members were mandatory evacuees, ranging from one to four days. Take a list of your board member names and cellphone numbers with you to be in touch. I contacted the JGSCV board members when my husband and I arrived at our location 50 miles away to check on their status and let them know they could contact me. I also took a roster of our members on my laptop and in hard copy, in case we had to contact them; we didn't, but it is something to consider.

I hope none of us ever has to survive the various possible disasters, but we do need to be prepared. Try to do what I say, not what I did.



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.

<u>Surname</u>	<u>Town, Country</u>	<u>Member</u>
Olkenitsky	Belarus; Poland	Robert Olken
Shutkin		Amy Shutkin
Steinklapjer	Janov Padlovski, Poland	Linda Goldman
Stern	Germany	Robert Olken

The Presence of Absence While Remaining Present: The IAJGS 2018 Conference

Dee Seligman

Dee Seligman, a retired English professor from San Francisco, thought she knew how to do research until she tried genealogy! Thank goodness for the guidance of the SFBAJGS mavens. Highlights so far include traveling to ancestral *shtetlach* in Poland and finding her great-great-great-grandfather's name (with the help of a professional genealogist).

I went to Poland last summer with few expectations. I barely knew where Warsaw, the location for the IAJGS conference, is, but I checked it out on Google maps, along with Krakow and Auschwitz. I'd been learning about Jewish genealogy for the last two years largely through SFBAJGS meetings, spending a lot of time in front of my computer exploring databases and Web sites, and making trips to the FamilySearch Library in Oakland.

My companion on this trip was my sister, who has long been interested in Jewish iconography on American Jewish tombstones (*matzevot*). I knew we'd visit a lot of cemeteries, but I had little insight into the potential effect on my emotional thermometer as an American Jew returning to my paternal ancestors' home country. I had read news articles about the nationalistic right-wing Polish government deciding it could legislate away any mention of "Polish death camps", preferring to call them "Nazi concentration camps located in Poland" as their politically correct way of talking about the Shoah. Besides reading about growing incidents of Polish anti-Semitism, I have been shocked by our homegrown anti-Semitism in the white supremacy murders in Pittsburgh and demonstrations in Charlottesville.

Friends, including my husband, advised me to think three times about going, alleging that Poland was and always has been anti-Semitic. They saw Poland only as a place of death for Jews, rather than a country that is slowly revitalizing Jewish identity and life.

However, I was drawn strongly to what I might discover about my family and myself so many years after World War II. (In fact, my middle name, Dee, was derived from being born on D-Day.) I knew that I needed to go beyond books and the figurative footprint of the Shoah stamped on my religious identity. So many books; so many oral histories by survivors; so many movies: All of them contributed to my rather limited perspective about what Poland is today and what it could mean to me as an American Jew.

My single best, and most important, decision before traveling to Poland was to hire a Polish Jewish guide, based on consultation with members of SFBAJGS. We found a gem in Witold Wrzosinski, who spends a large part of his

professional time documenting the inscriptions on *matzevot* in every Jewish cemetery in Poland. His organization is the Foundation for Documentation of Jewish Cemeteries in Poland. Witold is knowledgeable about Jewish genealogy and fluent in Polish, English, and Hebrew, with some knowledge of Russian, French, and German. His patience, and dedication to educating tourists largely ignorant of Polish culture, language, literature, and history, was pivotal to my getting an insider's view of the heritage sites we visited and a better understanding of Jewish-Polish history, both from the war and from current Poland.

Besides finding a guide, I prepared myself in other ways. I read *Shtetl* by Eva Hoffman to understand the daily lives of my ancestors. I had taken an adult education course on Poland that gave me an overview of its history. I checked out videos from the Jewish Community Library. Seeing a new documentary at the San Francisco Jewish Film Festival about the Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute helped me understand life in the Warsaw Ghetto as documented by a heroic group of historians incarcerated in it. I reviewed the sites for the Polin Museum and for the Jewish community of Warsaw.

My first week, spent at the conference and touring Warsaw, surprised me. I could not get over what happens to a city when it's rebuilt from the rubble of war. Warsaw's remnants of the Ghetto and its memorials to that time coexist next to high-rise Western-style towers housing fancy new condos. Although Warsaw does not have San Francisco's frantic rhythm, it is a forward-looking city, full of construction sites, swinging cranes, and business people from all over the world on the move. The little left from before the war sits in stark contrast to today's Warsaw, determinedly moving forward as an Eastern European capital. Perhaps the most ironically unfortunate contrast was a sculpture memorializing the Ghetto resistance fighters emerging up the steps from the city sewers. The sculpture sits in front of a luxury perfume shop!

A lot of work is going on in Poland to restore the Jewish community and revitalize Jewish life, including a famous Krakow Jewish festival that I was unable to attend. My review of the many events presented at the Polin Museum

and the Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute confirmed that Jews are an acknowledged presence in contemporary Polish cultural and religious life.

Through the Warsaw Jewish community site I found what was called a progressive Jewish synagogue, Ec Chaim, which hosts a regular Shabbat dinner that my sister and I attended. That night, probably due to the IAJGS conference, there were more Jewish American visitors from the U.S. than from the local Jewish population, but Rabbi Stas Wojciechowicz from Uzbekistan could not have made us feel more welcome. It was poignant to hear the Hebrew prayers recited among young Jews, including a local father with two squirmy children who tried hard to sit still and listen to the prayers, in the very place where others had tried to annihilate children like them.

The IAJGS conference was an extraordinary opportunity but an overwhelming experience. I was part of one of the largest group of Jews, we were told, to have come to Warsaw as one group since World War II. I carefully planned in advance every workshop I wanted to attend, but the debacle of dealing with a stolen credit card made me more flexible and skip some sessions! Every presenter, as well as the audience, had so much knowledge and experience to share. I felt a little intimidated at first, but later I realized that everyone starts out knowing nothing about genealogy. These presenters were much further ahead of me because they have been doing it for so long. I think of genealogy as a set of problem-solving skills enhanced by good historical knowledge. Everyone wanted to nurture one another to find new ways to uncover and recover the past, which otherwise would be lost. We wanted to bring what could be lost into consciousness. This conference helped bridge my American Jewish identity across the vast Atlantic and span the long timeline of Jewish history. It was an honor to meet those attending. It was overwhelming to know what I don't know and to learn that some history has been permanently lost, although new information is still being discovered.

I learned of available resources in Warsaw, especially at the Polin Museum and the Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute. I took the opportunity to talk with genealogists at both of these institutions, who were exceedingly gracious in offering assistance. They are both willing to work via e-mail with researchers, so I now have some new resources in Poland.

After the conference concluded, my real adventure in Poland began: the chance to return to what we think are our ancestral *shtetlach*. We went to Bialystok, Tykocin, Goniondz, Suchowola, Krynki (all in Poland today), and



Abandoned Jentes Beth Midras Synagogue

Grodno (in Belarus). While still at the conference, I learned of a Jewish woman in Bialystok, Lucy Lisowska, who has headed the restoration of the Bialystok Jewish cemetery and of a Christian woman in Krynki, Cecelia Bach-Szczawinska, who is the self-appointed historian of Jewish Krynki. We phoned Cecilia and arranged to meet her.

Cecilia is a Polish woman in her sixties who has been collecting information on the Jews of Krynki and their historic sites for many years. Her father, from Russia, moved into one of the Jewish homes after the war. Cecilia has been studying the Jews of her town with great interest and has created a resource of photos and a walking tour of significant sites. She looks at Jews as an important element of her town and appears proud of them for their contributions. She took us to the remains of the Great Synagogue Beth Ha Kneseth, now just a rocky skeleton of the building spread across a field in the town. It was blown up by the Nazis during World War II, and all that remains are pieces of its stone foundation.

She also took us to other sites, including the Jentes Beth Midras Synagogue, now boarded up and unused after the Nazis partially demolished it during the war; a Jewish house with lovely wooden carved doors; and finally to the large Jewish cemetery in Krynki, established in the 17th century and still in use until 1941. I was struck that a few of the *matzevot* were still upright and cared for, but most of the cemetery was overgrown and the stones had been vandalized. It was a sad sight, but heartening to know that a local Christian woman cares enough to study her town's Jewish history and communicate it to visitors.

The final place on our tour before returning to Warsaw was a brief visit to Treblinka. A small historical museum is there with a diorama of what the Nazi death camp looked

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My Dear Good Rosi: Letters from Nazi-Occupied Holland, 1940–1943

Book Review by Beth Galletto

My Dear Good Rosi: Letters from Nazi-Occupied Holland, 1940–1943 by Judy Vasos. Oakland, California: Pen Stroke Press, 2018. 321 pages. Paperback, ISBN-10 0999742523, ISBN-13 978-0999742525, \$16.95; Kindle, ASIN B07KJRHH9G, \$6.99.

Like Watching a Train Wreck in Slow Motion

Judy Vasos' book *My Dear Good Rosi* consists almost entirely of translations of more than 200 letters Judy's mother-in-law, Rosi Baczewski, received from her parents, Hugo and Clemy Mossbacher, while they tried desperately to assemble the exit papers that would allow them to immigrate to the United States. It's not an easy read because we know how the story ends—information of which they were mercifully ignorant.

The letters begin in September 1935. Rosi had been able to travel to England, but her parents were still in Nuremberg, Germany, where the family had lived for generations. They inquire about friends and relatives and discuss their daily lives. The letters might even seem boring if we did not have inside information about their situation. It's not a spoiler to say that, after living in ever-worsening conditions in Germany and Holland, Hugo and Clemy were murdered in Auschwitz in 1943. This fact is mentioned in the first paragraph of the book's introduction.

The letters are mostly addressed to "My dear good Rosi." Some letters, addressed to "My dear ones", are written to other members of the family and then sent to Rosi. Family trees at the beginning of the book, as well as sometimes voluminous footnotes, explain how all the family members are connected. As unrelated readers we may not care specifically who they are, but we do form a clear impression that Hugo and Clemy were important parts of a large, close family.

Hugo and Clemy are seen through the letters as down-to-earth, good people who are dealing as well as they can with the difficult situation in which they find themselves. They rarely complain or express their frustration. Whether this is because they want to be as optimistic as possible, or because their letters have to pass before the censors before being sent out, we don't know. It is perhaps their very ordinariness that makes the letters so poignant to read now.

After Kristallnacht in November 1938, Hugo was imprisoned for several months in Dachau, but he was released

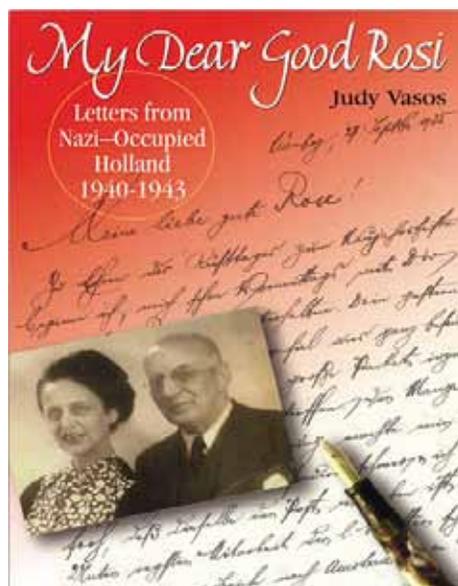
on condition that he leave Germany. Several months later Hugo and Clemy fled to (then neutral) Holland. They had painstakingly applied for and assembled all their necessary exit documents and were booked on a ship to leave for America on 12 May 1940. Then the Nazis marched into Holland on 10 May, deepening their peril and forcing them to start all over again.

As the years went by, the letters took longer and longer to be delivered, and they diminished in number. Rosi, who was able to immigrate to America in 1940, received only four letters in 1942. In January 1943 Hugo and Clemy were sent to Westerbork transit camp and in February they were deported to Auschwitz, where they were gassed.

The book's introduction, written by Jacob Boas, Ph.D., a historian, writer, and translator—and a Holocaust survivor who was born in a concentration camp—contains a chilling quote from U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Breckenridge Long from 26 June 1940: "We can delay and effectively stop for a temporary period of indefinite length the number of immigrants into the United States. We could do this by simply advising our consuls to put every obstacle in the way and to require additional evidence and to resort to various administrative advices which would postpone and postpone and postpone the granting of the visas."

Among the book's supplemental materials and footnotes is a list of the four documents required to leave Germany and the nine documents (many with several subparts, some in multiple copies and/or notarized) required to enter the United States at the time. As readers we can't help comparing the Mossbachers' situation with today's world, in which so many desperate refugees are trying to reach asylum in the United States and Europe.

Rosi Baczewski kept the letters without speaking about them until late in her life, when she began to show them to her son Tony Baczewski and his wife, Judy. Rosi was happy when they expressed a desire to publish them. She died in 2009 at the age of 88.



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like during the war, including even a petting zoo for the Nazis who lived on the premises. I could not wrap my mind around this incongruity of mass murders situated near an entertainment spot for Nazis. But the other learning experience that resonated deeply was seeing the symbolic cemetery at Treblinka. There, 17,000 upright stones stand in



Current condition of Goniondz cemetery

a large field. They are said to represent either the number of Jewish communities no longer in existence because their murdered Jews made up the majority of their populations, or the largest number of Jews murdered in a single day at Treblinka. Either way, this absence is a hole that can never be filled, although these stark anonymous stones pierced their way into my heart. No amount of reading substitutes for the empty ache of what is no longer.

This trip and the conference made me feel more directly connected to my Jewish heritage. I found a country where a small number of Jews have returned or settled to create a new *kehilla*, a Jewish community, and a place where even some Gentiles remember and honor the Jews lost to their towns. But it's Jewish genealogists principally who are reviving our heritage. It's an honor to be a small part of this community.

As a note for the future, my sister and I are working to clean up and restore the Goniondz cemetery, which is in great disrepair, to its original state of caring and peace. We've established an open Facebook group, Friends of Goniadz, Poland Jewish Cemetery, and hope you will help spread the word about it: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/275069113122921/>.



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Upcoming SFBAJGS Events

Saturday–Sunday, 2–3 March, San Francisco: San Francisco History Days takes place at the Old Mint. Visit the SFBAJGS table and other genealogy and history organizations. <http://sfhistorydays.org/>

Sunday, 3 March, Oakland: *Planting a Family Tree Online with MyHeritage to Share and Preserve Your Memories.* Daniel Horowitz, the Chief Genealogical Officer at MyHeritage, describes how to use MyHeritage to create a free online family tree.

Sunday, 17 March, Oakland: *Introduction to “Jewish Genealogy.”* SFBAJGS board member Dale Friedman talks about how to start your family history research and what researching his family has meant to him.

Sunday, 14 April, San Francisco: *Adolph Sutro’s Home and Empire.* Allan Schwartz, who portrays Adolph Sutro at living history events, discusses Sutro’s adventures living in a faraway corner of San Francisco.

Monday, 15 April, Palo Alto: *Jewish Genetic Diseases.* Dr. Neil Risch will discuss the origins of Ashkenazim and Sephardim and diseases that affect them.

Sunday, 19 May, Oakland: *Jewish Records Collections on Ancestry.com.* Crista Cowan, the Barefoot Genealogist, describes the Jewish records available on Ancestry.com and provides some tips for using the site.

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/>.