



זכרון ZichronNote

The Journal of the San Francisco Bay Area Jewish Genealogical Society

Volume XXXIX, Number 2

May 2019

Fretting about Endogamy?

A clear, understandable explanation of what endogamy is, how it affects your DNA results, and how to work around it when doing genealogical research. See page 5.

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Lillian and Alfred



A family history about the lives of
Lillian Darling Dubinsky, Alfred Shail Dubinsky,
and their ancestors,
the Darling, Dolinsky, Dubinsky, Goldfine, Luvinsky,
Miller and Rakatansky families.

*You, too, can publish a book about
your family's history
(see page 9)*

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Jewish Genealogical Society

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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.

Back Issues are available for \$10 per issue. Requests should be sent to SFBAJGS at the address below.

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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President's Message
Cleveland Is Just around the
Corner

Jeremy Frankel, SFBAJGS President

I'll be honest and say that the idea of ever visiting Cleveland has never been on my radar, let alone a so-called "bucket list." I will be there, however, for a week at the end of July because this year's IAJGS International Conference on Jewish Genealogy is being held there.

Conferences can be many things: illuminating, educational, fun, as well as exhausting. And the International Conference on Jewish Genealogy is certainly all that and more. Still, those of us who have been many times will always say to anyone who has never attended one — GO! Because it's worth its weight in gold.

There is simply no substitute for being in the room listening live to some of the best names in the "business" talking about every subject related to genealogy. (There are more than 200 lectures!) There will be presentations about archives, DNA testing, methods, and other arcane subjects. (Go here to see what's being offered: https://www.iajgs2019.org/program_schedule.cfm.)

You can meet with the lecturers one on one. You can meet people researching the same name as you, or the same town. You can get together with SIGs (special interest groups) that are invested with researching the same region your family came from. Heck, you may even bump into a cousin you never knew!

As I always say, you can't imagine what it's like, being "locked up" in a hotel for a week with several hundred Jewish genealogists. What could be better?! You can spend nearly 24/7 eating, drinking, schmoozing, and sharing your knowledge. (That's why it can be exhausting!)

If you're not booked to go to Cleveland, do not fear, next year's conference is going to be a little closer to home—San Diego. Planning is already underway, and the dates are 9–14 August 2020.

If you're going to be in Cleveland, stop me and say hello. Otherwise I look forward to seeing you in San Diego!



Society News

New Members

Jeff Libby JML929@yahoo.com

Mona Siegel mona2733@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.

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 Board Meetings

Did you know that SFBAJGS board meetings are open to members to attend? Well, they are! The next board meeting is scheduled to begin at 10:30 a.m. on Sunday, 11 August at a Peninsula location. If you are interested in attending and learning more about how your board reaches decisions for the society, contact the editor at newsletter@sfbajgs.org.

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.

SFBAJGS on Social Media

SFBAJGS has a YouTube channel, <https://goo.gl/Siy5l2>. This gives us an opportunity to share our activities, lectures, meetings, participation in events, Mavens, etc. So far we have three videos on our page, including one shot at the 2015 San Francisco History Expo with Emperor Norton himself! If you have videos of society or other genealogical events you would like to share online, contact publicity director Janice M. Sellers at publicity@sfbajgs.org.

SFBAJGS also has a Facebook page: <https://goo.gl/23bkt4>. Friend us and visit often for announcements and updates between meetings.

Errata

For the February 2019 issue of *ZichronNote*, the volume should be XXXIX, not XXXIV. (Thank you to Jan Meisels Allen for catching my Roman numeral error.) On page 15, the attendance at the 2019 San Francisco History Days was about 5,200, not 7,000.

Continued on page 8

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 7:00 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

Fridays, 26 July–30 August 2019. “Friday Nights in the Archives in Napa.” Napa County Historical Society, 1219 1st Street, Napa. <http://www.napahistory.org/>

Thursday, 1 August 2019. Stewart Blandón Traidman, “LGBTQ Genealogy.” California Genealogical Society and Library, 2201 Broadway Suite LL2, Oakland. <http://californiaancestors.org/>

Tuesday, 13 August 2019. Richard Rands, “English Civil Registration.” El Dorado Hills Genealogical Society. El Dorado Hills Library, 7455 Silva Valley Pkwy, El Dorado Hills. <http://www.edhgs.com/>

Saturday, 17 August 2019. Maureen Hanlon, “Finding Your Immigrant Ancestor’s Birthplace Using U.S. Records.” California Genealogical Society. Oakland FamilySearch Library, 4766 Lincoln Avenue, Oakland. <http://californiaancestors.org/>

Monday, 26 August 2019. “What’s Available on the Internet AND What’s New in DNA.” Oakmont Genealogy Club. Oakmont West Recreation Center, Santa Rosa. <https://sites.google.com/site/oakmontgenealogyclub/>

Tuesday, 3 September 2019. Megan Thompson, “Bridging the Gap Between Traditional Genealogy and Genetic Genealogy.” Genealogical Society of Santa Cruz County. Santa Cruz Public Library, Downtown Branch, 224 Church Street, Santa Cruz. <http://scgensoc.org/>

Tuesday, 10 September 2019. Pat Burrow and Teri Mortola, “Kickstart, Ancestry DNA.” Free but registration required. Santa Clara County Historical and Genealogical Society. Santa Clara City Library, Redwood Room, 2635 Homestead Road, Santa Clara. <http://www.scchgs.org/>

Thursday, 12 September 2019. Brooke Schreier Ganz, “Reclaim the Records.” Contra Costa County Genealogical Society. LDS Church, 1360 Alberta Way, Concord. <https://cccgs.net/>

Thursday, 13 September 2019. Pat Burrow and Teri Mortola, “Kickstart, FamilyTree DNA /23&Me DNA.” Free but registration required. Santa Clara County Historical and Genealogical Society. Santa Clara City Library, Redwood Room, 2635 Homestead Road, Santa Clara. <http://www.scchgs.org/>

Sunday, 15 September 2019. Tom Weidinger, “The Restless Hungarian: Modernism, Madness, and the American Dream.” Jewish Community Library, 1835 Ellis Street, San Francisco. <http://www.jewishlearningworks.org/library-events>

Tuesday, 17 September 2019. Sarah Clift, “Finding the Unknown for the Adopted or Divorced.” San Ramon Valley Genealogical Society. Danville Family History Center, 2949 Stone Valley Road, Alamo. <http://www.srvgensoc.org/>

Saturday, 28 September 2019. Crista Cowan, “What You Don’t Know about Ancestry.com.” San Mateo County Genealogical Society. Grace Lutheran Church, 2825 Alameda de las Pulgas, San Mateo. <http://www.smcgs.org/>

State and National

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

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

Tuesday, 12 November 2019. Lara Diamond, “Movement between Towns in Eastern Europe” (Webinar). Ukrainian History and Education Center. <https://www.ukrhec.org/civicism/event/info?id=55&reset=1>

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>

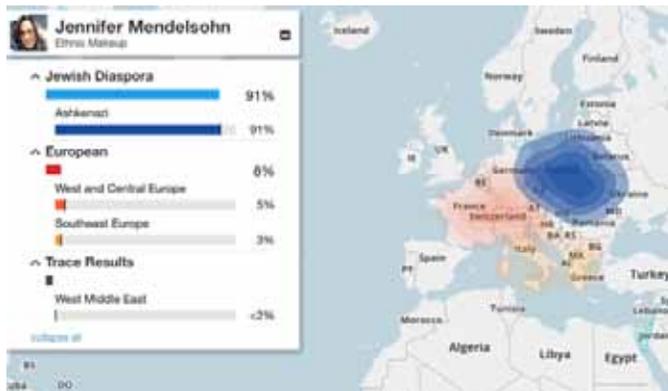


No, You Don't Really Have 7,900 4th Cousins: Some DNA Basics for Those with Jewish Heritage

Jennifer Mendelsohn

Jennifer Mendelsohn is a seasoned journalist and ghostwriter. A former *People* magazine special correspondent and Slate columnist, her work has appeared in numerous local and national publications, including the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*. A passionate genealogist, she is a member of the board of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Maryland. This article was originally posted on 23 May 2017 at <https://medium.com/@CleverTitleTK/no-you-dont-really-have-7-900-4th-cousins-some-dna-basics-for-those-with-jewish-heritage-857f873399ff>. It is reprinted with permission.

Perhaps you've been lured by the siren song of the commercials ("We thought we were German! But it turns out we're Scottish!") and had your DNA tested by a company such as Ancestry, Family Tree DNA, MyHeritage, or 23andMe. You're certainly not alone: Ancestry currently boasts some 4 million [now 15 million] people in its DNA database. Perhaps, like me, your secret hopes of learning you were Inuit or Maori were dashed and the test instead confirmed what you pretty much already knew: that your ancestors were, overwhelmingly, Eastern European Jews. ("You could have paid me a hundred dollars to tell you that," deadpanned my brother-in-law.) Or perhaps the test turned up Jewish ancestry that you had no idea you had.



While the commercials tout the ability to illuminate your ethnic heritage, perhaps less well known is the fact that these tests provide a list of people with whom you share DNA, ranked in order of predicted closeness to you: your genetic "cousins." When I first got my results, I excitedly reached out to many of those listed as probable "second to third cousins", certain I would soon be trading kugel recipes with them. Over time, I became increasingly puzzled and frustrated about why I couldn't connect a single one of them to my known family tree. I quickly discovered that Jewish DNA is, well, different from other DNA. If you are expecting that your DNA test will create a clear-cut breadcrumb trail taking your family tree back to the days of King David, think again. You can definitely use your DNA results to expand your family

tree; without DNA, for example, I couldn't have confirmed that my grandfather's first cousin played Major League baseball with Moe Berg or found the families of two of my mysterious great-grandmothers. Sometimes DNA turns up people thought lost in the Holocaust. But it takes a little legwork, and there is a bit of a learning curve.

Here are a few basic things I wish I'd known before I started:

Learn the meaning of "endogamy." For genetic purposes, Jews are what's known as an "endogamous" population. We stayed in a relatively limited geographical area and typically married only within our own culture—and not infrequently within our own families. (A 2014 study, <https://www.latimes.com/science/sciencenow/la-sci-sn-ashkenazi-jews-dna-diseases-20140909-story.html>, suggested that all Ashkenazi Jews alive today trace back to the same 330 people. Try fitting all those "relatives" at your seder table.) Endogamy means that Jews share much more DNA with each other than average, which grossly inflates our relationship predictions. You might quite literally have thousands and thousands of people listed as being "4th cousins or closer"; my first cousin has almost 8,000 Ancestry DNA matches. But that doesn't mean those people are actually related to you in the way we typically think of relatives. Virtually every Jewish person of the dozen or so I've DNA tested shares enough DNA to suggest that they are a "cousin" to every other Jewish person I've tested, regardless of whether those people are actually supposed to be related by blood. I share DNA, for instance, not only with an old family friend but with both of his son-in-law's parents.

3 Shared Ancestor Hints

2 Starred matches

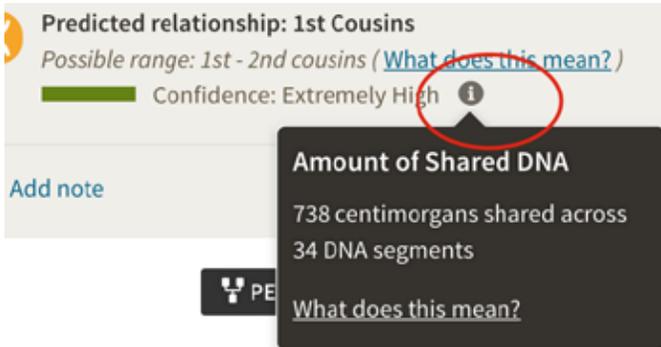
7,900 4th cousins or closer

Um, help?

Know your numbers. The DNA companies predict a relationship between two people in part by looking at the amount of DNA they share, which is measured in a unit called centiMorgans (cM). The closer your relationship, the more centiMorgans of DNA you typically share. (On FTDNA, your match list will clearly show the number of centiMorgans you share with someone; on Ancestry, you need to click the green “view match” button and then click the little “i” in the grey /brown circle. 23andMe uses a “percentage” of shared DNA.)

story. But the DNA Jews share may come from multiple shared ancestors in various parts of your tree, which inflates our relationship predictions.

How? Well, let’s say two Jews share 80 cM, which for anyone else might suggest that they are third cousins. In our case, maybe only 40 cM of that matching DNA was inherited from your great-great-great-grandma Chaya Whatsenfuss on your mother’s mother’s side. The other 40 may have been inherited from your father. So that total number of shared centiMorgans, rather than being evidence of a single relationship, is really the product of more than one smaller relationships. Complicate that even further by realizing that each of those smaller amounts of shared DNA could potentially be divided further: Your father may have inherited 20 of those cM from his mother and the other 20 from his father. And so on and so on. Suddenly it’s easy to see why that “second to fourth cousin” match—based on a sum total that would be typical of a second to fourth cousin for someone who wasn’t Jewish—is really someone only very very distantly “related” to you—a sixth or seventh or tenth cousin in two or three or more different ways. And for many Jews, whose trees often only trace back two or three generations due to lack of easy access to Eastern European records and the fact that most Jews did not take surnames until roughly 1800 or so, tracing cousins at that distance can be virtually impossible.



A first cousin match on Ancestry, showing number of shared centiMorgans.

Those numbers are important because there are known ranges of shared DNA that people at various relationship levels typically fall into. Here, for example, is the chart used by the popular Facebook group DNA Detectives:

DNA Detectives Autosomal Statistics Chart

cM (centiMorgans) ^a		Percentage (%) of Shared DNA ^{b,c}		Group	Relationship	Notes
Average	Range	Average	Range			
1,800		50%			Parent - Child	
3000-2000	3,000 - 2,300*	30% - 17%	54% - 32%*	Group A	Full Sibling**	**Only 23andMe counts
1,800	3,300 - 1,300	25%	32% - 18%	Group B	Half Sibling Aunt/Uncle/Niece/Nephew Doubtful First Cousin Grandparent/Grandchild	34 Siblings***
900	1,300 - 875	12.5%	18.5% - 8%	Group C	First Cousin (1C) Half Aunt/Uncle/Niece/Nephew Great-Grandparent/Great-Grandchild Great Aunt/Uncle/Niece/Nephew	
450	850 - 215	6.25%	9% - 2%	Group D	First Cousin Once Removed (1C1R) Half First Cousin (1/2 1C) Half Great Aunt/Uncle/Niece/Nephew	
225	300 - 75	3.125%	5% - 1%	Group E	Second Cousin (2C) First Cousin Twice Removed (1C2R) Half First Cousin Once Removed (1/2 1C1R)	
112	210 - 30	1.25%	3% - 0.42%	Group F	Second Cousin Once Removed (2C1R) Half Second Cousin (1/2 2C) First Cousin Three Times Removed (1C3R) Half First Cousin Twice Removed (1/2 1C2R)	
56	105 - 0**	0.625%	1.5% - 0%	Group G	Third Cousin (3C) Second Cousin Twice Removed (2C2R)	***10% of 3C won't share DNA
28	75 - 0***	0.3125%	1% - 0%	Group H	Third Cousin Once Removed (3C1R) Other Distant Cousins	****50% of 4C won't share DNA

^acM = Ancestry.com & FTDNA
^bPercentage of DNA = 23andMe
^cSee the bottom of the chart for more details

Groups A & B: 99% within the ranges given
 Groups C - E: 95% within the ranges given

Credit: DNA Detectives

(<https://www.facebook.com/groups/DNADetectives/>)

But here’s where endogamy comes in and makes thing tricky: Jews can’t really go by the charts when it comes to anything past second cousins or so. That’s because for the average person, it’s pretty straightforward: You share 80 cM of DNA with third cousin Harry because you both inherited it from great-great-grandpa Ebenezer Humdinger. End of

Be careful with “Shared Matches.” Most companies have a nifty feature that lets you see what matches you have in common with someone or even which matches you don’t have in common. This tool would help the average person neatly sort which side of your family a stranger is matching on; your mother’s relatives won’t typically also match your father’s, and your mother’s mother’s relatives won’t typically also match your mother’s father’s. But here endogamy strikes again to muddy the waters. “T” is my mother’s first cousin; their mothers were sisters. But when I look at which matches T and my mother have in common, they include both of my mother’s paternal first cousins, the children of her father’s siblings. If those paternal first cousins were strangers on my match list, I would be wrong to assume that they were somehow also related to my maternal grandmother simply because they also share DNA with T. Similarly, my shared matches with my Dad’s second cousin include my mother and all three of her first cousins, both maternal and paternal. When and if you get really granular, you can start looking at exactly which segments of DNA you share to find out how a stranger might be related to you, but for starters, don’t make any assumptions based on common matches.

Don't worry about names. I hear all too often that people look at their DNA matches and are disappointed. "I don't think it really works," they say with a shrug. "I don't recognize a single name on that list."

Wrong answer.

Think about it. Full third cousins share two out of 16 great-great-grandparents: your grandparents' grandparents. For you to recognize the name of a possible third cousin, that means you would need to potentially recognize the surnames of all 16 of your great-great-grandparents, including, for instance, the maiden name of your mother's mother's mother's mother. For the vast majority of American Jews, that's exceedingly rare. Put it another way: A third cousin is the grandchild of one of your grandparents' first cousins. Do you know the names of all of your grandparents' first cousins? Do you know their daughters' married names? And all the last names of their grandchildren? All you actually need is a single woman in your tree whose maiden or married name you don't know, or a single man whose mother's maiden name you don't know, and boom—any of those matches with an unfamiliar name could suddenly make sense. I had a DNA match to a woman with the most quintessentially Irish name imaginable. But sure enough, she was descended from my third-great-grandfather Samuel Birnbaum of Krakow, Poland. You just never know.

It might seem counterintuitive, but in order to get the most out of DNA testing, you should try as best you can—using sites such as Ancestry.com, FamilySearch.org, and JewishGen.org—to flesh out your tree on paper. The more family names and locations you are familiar with, the greater the chance you will recognize how your DNA matches connect to you.

OK, so now you know what not to do. What should you actually do to help find genetic relatives?

Test the oldest person in your family. If you have a living parent or grandparent, or anyone who is in a generation above you on the family tree, testing that person's DNA can help things fall into place; you want to get as close to the source as you possibly can, so to speak. If you have two living parents, test both of them and don't even bother testing yourself; all of your DNA came from your parents, and you only inherited half of it, so you'll learn more from their results than your own. If you have a living grandparent, test him or her before your parent. If you're able, test a couple of additional people—aunts, uncles, or cousins—on opposite sides of your family; the patterns of who matches whom might help you recognize which side a match is on.

Get thee to Gedmatch, pronto. Gedmatch.com is a free, third-party site where you can easily upload your raw DNA from any of the big testing companies. For those from endogamous populations to get any value out of the DNA testing process, it's almost imperative that you use it. There are two great benefits to using Gedmatch. One is that it allows you to match with people who tested at other companies besides the one you chose, so it widens your pool of potential matches. Secondly, Gedmatch has great tools for DNA analysis such as a chromosome browser, which Ancestry lacks. A chromosome browser allows you to see the sizes and locations of the segments of DNA you share with any of your matches. And that's really important. Because the closer the relative, the more DNA you'll share, and typically, the larger the segments, or "pieces" of DNA, you'll share. Those with whom you share several larger segments are more likely to be traceable relatives than those with whom you share lots and lots of tiny segments, which are likely the vestiges of centuries-old, untraceable connections. (On FTDNA, you should re-sort your matches by clicking the "longest block" column on your matches home page. On Gedmatch it's called "largest cM"; clicking the triangle will re-sort.)



Re-sort your FTDNA matches by longest block.

Type	List	Select	Sex	Haplogroup		Autosomal			X-DNA			
				Mt	Y	Details	Total cM	Largest cM	Gen	Details	Total cM	Largest cM
			F	N1b2			3987.1	263.7	1.0	X	196	196
V3			M	N1b2	J2a1b1*		2862.9	239.1	1.2	X	51.9	26
F2			M				3019.2	214.5	1.1	X	151.5	88.9
F2			M	N1b2			2757.7	178.7	1.2	X	44	25.9
F2			M				1976.2	155.5	1.4	X	76.3	34.1
F2			M				840.6	114.1	2.0	X	0	0
F2			F				293.9	90.3	2.8	X	0	0
F2			F				656.1	75.6	2.2	X	62.6	62.6
F2			F				530	75.6	2.4	X	89.1	73.4
F2			M				635.5	75.4	2.2	X	0	0
F2			F				429.5	46.0	2.5	X	0	0

My Gedmatch list re-sorted by "largest cM." With one exception, everyone on this list is a known relative, with my mother at the top and my father's half second cousin at the bottom.

For Jewish matches, anyone with whom your total shared cM is close to or over 200–250 cM is definitely worth contacting; that's almost certain evidence of a traceable family relationship. (But keep in mind: DNA pulls back the veil on a lot of secrets, so it may not necessarily be a relationship you knew about.)

But most of the Jewish kits I manage have hundreds if not thousands of people in the 100–150 total cM range, most of whom are suggested to be second to fourth cousins. So how do you separate the faux cousins from the ones you should

invite to your son’s bar mitzvah? Well, for starters, look for anyone with a total greater than 100 cM and a longest block at least 25 to 30 cM; then open the chromosome browser on FTDNA or click the “A” on Gedmatch to do a one-to-one comparison, which shows a list, by chromosome, of all the segments you share. If there are multiple long segments—one or two over 20–30 cM and several others over 10 cM—you just might be in business. If all you see are a handful of smaller segments, none even close to 20, you may not find your connection in this lifetime.

That’s not to say you can’t be meaningfully related to someone with whom you don’t share a huge amount of DNA; there can certainly be outliers hiding in your matches. It’s also not saying to ignore everyone under 100 cM total. But if you’re feeling overwhelmed by the size of your match list and are looking for a way to increase the odds of hitting genealogical pay dirt, start with those with whom you share the most DNA and the largest segments. And then you can fight over whether they cut the turkey without you.

Chr	Start Location	End Location	Centimorgans (cM)	SNPs
1	177,088,988	195,619,170	14.1	3,420
2	1,402,069	17,095,859	35.8	4,566
3	17,122,967	25,553,896	10.1	2,055
4	25,751,935	39,107,826	15.3	2,642
4	89,481,172	103,768,197	11.1	2,532
6	67,379,277	108,254,337	31.3	8,067
10	12,623,259	17,149,736	11.1	1,772
11	3,136,518	8,077,794	9.4	1,884
17	6,342,414	9,943,970	11.1	1,156
21	18,330,173	21,571,433	7.1	904

Largest segment = 35.8 cM
 Total of segments > 7 cM = 156.3 cM
 10 matching segments
 Estimated number of generations to MRCA = 3.3

Chr	Start Location	End Location	Centimorgans (cM)	SNPs
4	16,174,502	24,024,374	8.2	1,727
4	54,819,217	61,781,532	7.3	1,392
5	91,576,745	106,422,076	10.4	2,504
5	110,392,349	116,581,402	7.0	1,579
7	55,129,799	70,962,694	7.6	1,726
16	19,121,838	26,151,419	11.2	1,559

Largest segment = 11.2 cM
 Total of segments > 7 cM = 51.8 cM
 6 matching segments
 Estimated number of generations to MRCA = 4.1

A “third cousin” match of my mother’s. See how there’s not a single segment over 20 cM? Not likely a traceable match and almost certainly not a third cousin. They are probably related way beyond the scope of our trees.

My father’s half second cousin and I have two segments longer than 30 and five longer than 10 cM. Gedmatch suggests we are about 3.3 generations away from our “Most Recent Common Ancestor”, which is roughly correct.

Continued from page 3

Member News

JRI-Poland announced that it had recently completed and put online a database of Jewish entries in the huge collection of Łódź registration cards from 1916 to 1921: <https://jri-poland.org/psa/lodz-registration-card-scans.htm>.

The database consists of 230,000 Jewish records from a total of 262,000 cards that were reviewed. The project took three years to finish for a dedicated team of volunteers from the United States, Israel, Canada, Spain, France, Belgium, Russia, and Argentina.

The volunteers reviewed each card to identify the Jewish families and then extract key genealogical information: surnames, given names, parents’ names, town of birth, birth date, occupation, marital status, date of arrival in Łódź, and, in some cases, date of death.

The leader of the Łódź Registration Card Project was **Margalit Ashira Ir**, a member of SFBAJGS. The SFBAJGS board congratulates the entire team for the successful completion of an enormous project.

Writing a Family History Book

Donna Dubinsky

Donna Dubinsky is a serial entrepreneur best known for her work as CEO of Palm Computing and then Handspring, pioneers of the first successful handheld computers and smartphones. She currently is CEO and cofounder of Numenta, Inc. Donna earned a BA from Yale University and an MBA from Harvard Business School. In addition to chairing Numenta's board, she currently serves on the boards of Cortical.io (Vienna, Austria), Stanford Health Care (Palo Alto, California), and Twilio (NYSE: TWLO).

I've done a lot of work on our family genealogy over the years, but I had paid little attention to cataloging and documenting the results. I had digital files scattered all over my hard drive: photographs, documents, video interviews, PowerPoint presentations from family reunions, and so on. I had physical objects scattered all over as well: photo albums, more documents, and a treasure trove of my mother's recipes on 3x5 cards. I have a large family tree with 873 people, recorded in a 2011 version of the *Family Tree Maker* program.

After the deaths of both my parents in recent years—at which point I inherited even more photos and documents—I realized that no future family member would likely be able to weave all of this information into a coherent story. Given the pace of technological evolution, I couldn't even be certain that the digital files would be readable in the future if someone wanted to look at them. Surely that old version of *Family Tree Maker* will fail on a new operating system at some point.

I decided that old-fashioned “ink on paper” would be the best preservation and communication method. With a book I could tell the stories, share the photos and documents, and even print the output of the file from *Family Tree Maker* in a format that never becomes obsolete and requires no technology to read. The book is only for the family, so I didn't need to create it as a general interest publication.

In reality, writing this book served two purposes for me. First, it fulfilled my need to preserve the information and pass it along to subsequent generations. Second, focusing attention on my parents was a way to pay them tribute and to say a long good-bye. If people live on in the memories of those who survive them, this book will certainly help them live longer.

Output

I will start by describing the ultimate output of this effort, which took about four months, including many full days of work. Then I will go through, in more detail, the steps I took to get to that output.

My book is printed with a soft cover in an 8" x 10" format and has 125 pages. The contents are an introduction with some general history, stories from my mother's family,

stories from my father's family (about which I have much more information), detail about my father's parents (whom I knew), details about my parents, a description of my childhood, a reference section with given and family names, and an appendix including the eulogies I wrote for my parents, letters from a granduncle who perished in the Holocaust, documents, data dumps of the family tree, and a few recipes.

Steps

The steps below are my process to create the book, not about the prior genealogy work, such as locating immigration records and researching family members.

Digitize Photos/Documents

Before starting, I assembled the many photos and documents I wanted to scan. I decided to use my mother's recipes as a motif in the book, so I selected many of the recipes to scan. I took it all to a local service that has a high-speed scanner. I recommend doing high-resolution scans, which are essential for a quality printed version. Beware that scans of photos you already have may be low resolution, so you may want to rescan the originals.

Select Tools

I evaluated several options for producing the printed book. I selected Blurb (<http://www.blurb.com/>) mainly because I was familiar with it from having done family photo albums from my travels over the years. I considered other services, but they seemed more oriented toward selling books, which was not my intent.

I had previously used Blurb by composing each page individually, *i.e.*, arranging text blocks and photo blocks from within its program. Because of the size of this book, a page-by-page process would not work. I needed text to flow from one page to the next as I edited, so I needed to be able to produce it in one file. Fortunately Blurb could accept a PDF as input, so I targeted creating a PDF for it.

But how best to do the composition of the book before converting to a PDF? I wanted a simple layout tool, and I did not want to spend a lot of time learning an elaborate program such as Adobe *PageMaker*. I decided to use Microsoft *Word*. Although it did the job, it was challenging.

I found myself frustrated many times, even with the help of my husband, trying to juggle the content to get the look that I wanted. In retrospect I should have considered a more robust page layout tool such as *PageMaker*. For a less complex book *Word* should suffice, but for bigger projects you should consider something more sophisticated. On the more positive side, by using the “style” capabilities in *Word*, I was able to develop a consistent format and to generate a table of contents automatically.

Decide Structure, Conventions, Format

The recipes I wanted to use as the motif for the book are handwritten or typed with an old typewriter, full of smudges, spills, and notes. They often list the name of the person who had given mom the recipe, all of whom I knew. Many, but not all, are for traditional Jewish dishes. I decided to begin each chapter with a scanned recipe at the top, a visual notation that a new chapter has begun. I inserted a few pages of recipes in the book (retyped for legibility) and used others for the back cover.



Introduction

As I write this book in early 2019, it's been two years since Alfred died and over five years since we lost Lillian. I have found myself unable to discard the last of their things: the boxes stuffed with memorabilia, documents, and photos. I thought -- I hoped -- that one day, some grandchild, or child of a grandchild, would want to see this stuff. So I embarked on this project, an effort to capture key aspects of their lives into one volume that could be easily stored on a shelf until that grandchild or great-grandchild or great-great-grandchild decided one day to open it. As we say in the Jewish faith, your life after death is the sum of the memories of those who loved you. I hope to have Alfred and Lillian live just a bit longer by passing along my recollections and my love to future generations.



Alfred, Michael, Lillian, Donna, Ann

I debated what “voice” to use in the text. Should I write in third person, *i.e.*, call myself “Donna” and my parents “Alfred” and “Lillian”? Should I write in my own voice, saying “me/I” and “mom” and “dad”? Or should I write for the grandchildren, referring to my parents as “Bubbie” and “Pops”? In the end, I decided on using my own voice, since that felt the most authentic.

I also had to decide which names to use. Many ancestors had multiple names: an Anglicized name, a Hebrew name, a Yiddish name, a nickname. I elected to pick one name to try to stick to. The first time I used that name, I also listed

in parentheses the alternates, *i.e.*, Sam (Samuel, Shmu’el-H, Shmulke-Y). I also struggled with how to list married women. Generally, when a woman was young, I listed her with her birth name, *i.e.*, Edith Goldfine, and when she was married, I listed her with her birth name in brackets, *i.e.*, Edith [Goldfine] Dubinsky. Because I have many repeated names in the family, this technique was a helpful way to distinguish between individuals.

Now also is a good time to select your font and font size, as well as to fine tune the page size. I got all the way through the first draft before I realized that Blurb required a very specific page size different from 8 1/2” x 11” or even 8” x 10”. It is worth doing a few mock pages and uploading them to Blurb in order to learn the right dimensions at the beginning. You can go very far in the process without having to actually order a book. Later layout will be easier if you invest the time up front to get the right margins and the right page dimensions.

I pondered several choices for a title. My starting point was *Lillian and Alfred: Our American Family*, which I ended up shortening later.

Draft Text

After outlining my intended chapters, I drafted the text. Much of the information came from my prior genealogical work. In addition, I reviewed the video interviews that I had done of my grandfather and my parents, which contained a lot of information I had forgotten. I tried to include detail whenever possible; for example, my great-grandfather Boruch Dubinsky was short in stature and had blue eyes, which I learned from his immigration document.

Sometimes as I was working I found myself wondering about some detail and would delve back into the sources to see if I could figure it out. While writing the text I developed several theories about what seemed to be mysteries, and I included those theories. But I tried to make it clear when I knew something was factual and when I was speculating. For example, I felt some birth dates were implausible, and I suggested that perhaps the person fudged the date in order to be older than he was.

The most challenging aspect of the writing was to figure out the best chronology. When I introduce my grandfather’s parents and then my grandfather as a child, it would be awkward to continue following his life through to his meeting my grandmother, and their subsequent children, without first having described my grandmother’s history. As a result, I sometimes leave people at a midlife point in the story, making clear in the text that we will return to them later.

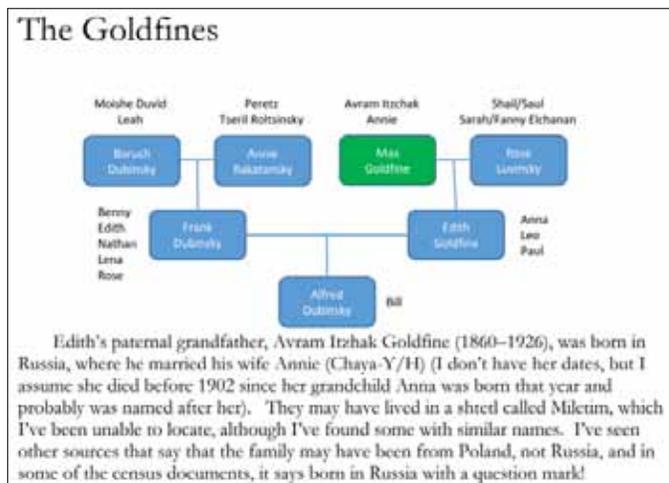
Some of the content had already been prepared for other purposes, and I just needed to import it into the *Word* document. For example, I have a series of letters from my granduncle Moishe, who was murdered in the Holocaust. I had had these letters translated from Yiddish into English several years ago, and I decided to include them in the book as a stand-in for the many members of our family who were lost in that tragedy.

I had written extensive eulogies for both my parents and included these as well. The text in the main part of the book focused on the chronology of their lives, while the eulogies give more of a sense of their personalities. It did not seem redundant to include both.

Insert Photos and Illustrations

Once the text was drafted, I started inserting photos. Although I tried to match the photos to the text, I decided not to be overly precise about it, so the photos are not in strict chronological order and do not always relate to the text on the same page. Although I tried to vary the layout as I went, I let the geometry of the photos themselves dictate the layout. I often ended a section about a branch of the family with modern photos of the descendants of that family branch. I had convened several family reunions while my parents were alive, so I had many reunion photos to use for that purpose. I also requested additional photos from family members if I was missing some.

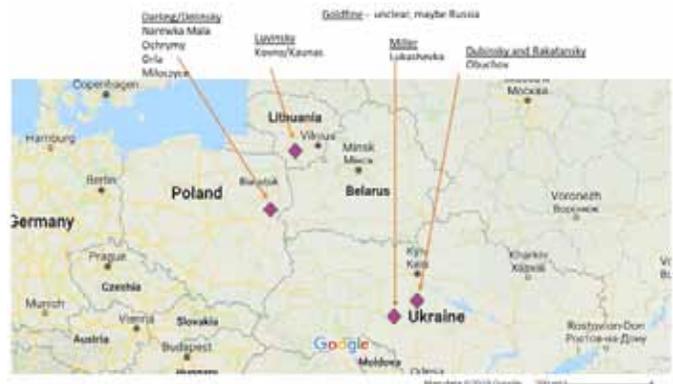
My mother’s side was straightforward, since I had limited information about each of her parents. My father’s side was more complicated, since I could trace back all four of his grandparents, with ancestors even going into the mid-1700’s. I ended up making small family tree diagrams to help guide the reader about where we were in each section. With the similarity of names and stories, it was hard otherwise to know which branch I was describing.



Along the way, I adjusted photos as needed. *Word* has a decent capability to lighten or darken photos, as well as to crop them from within the document. That being said, any more serious photo editing should be done first with a good photo editing tool before inserting the photo into the document.

I added captions to most of the photos. I often did not have a date, and I did not try to research or guess dates, but I did try to identify the people in the photos. In *Word*, the caption text box is not automatically linked to the photo, so I had to get in the habit of “grouping” them so that they would move together. If I later decided to edit either the photo or the caption, I had to “ungroup”, and then regroup them after the edit. I became frustrated with a particular issue in *Word* where it automatically anchors a photo to certain text and then restricts what you can do. It took my husband a bit of research to develop a good workaround.

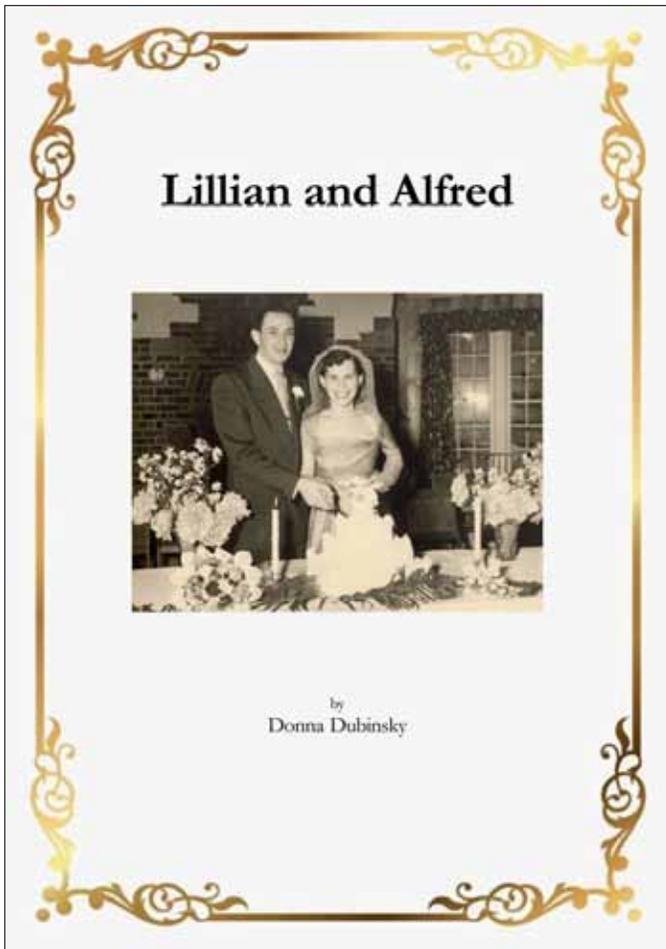
I included historical source documents, such as census reports, in an appendix. Some were hard to read and had to be expanded to the maximum size. I also made a small map (using PowerPoint and then exporting) that shows where all the different family branches came from.



Create Covers

Blurb has two options for covers. One is to create separate PDF’s for the front cover, body, and back cover. The other option, which I selected, is to use the first page of the PDF as the front cover and the last page as the back cover. Blurb required an even number of pages, so I had one page (more recipes) that could either be included or not, depending on whether I needed it in the end.

For the front cover I first used a simple black border, inside of which was the title, a photo, my name, and the date. For the back cover I selected a bunch of recipes for mandelbroit, because my mother had a dozen versions from different people.



Print Proof Copy

Before printing multiple copies—in fact, before even finishing the content—I decided to print a proof copy. Printing one copy is expensive because you can't take advantage of quantity discounts, but I felt it was essential to see how everything was working. Do the photos print well? Are the margins okay, or too big or small? Can I read the text at that font size? How do I like the covers? Which paper should I choose? Having a proof copy also allowed me another editing pass to see whether there were incorrect spellings or captions. Somehow, when reading it on paper, you find things that you just don't see on the screen. I decided to try the soft cover with a glossy paper that is one notch better than the standard paper. I cannot emphasize enough that you should print a proof copy before ordering in bulk.

Revise and Finalize Text

I learned a lot from the proof copy and made substantial changes. On the cover, I decided to shorten the title (making it simply *Lillian and Alfred*), reduce the photo size, eliminate the date, and add a nicer border from clip art that I found on Pinterest. I also realized that I wanted an inside cover,



which most books have. As I looked at other books in my library, I saw that the reverse of the inside cover page is where I could put the date and a dedication (see the front cover of this issue).

The documents at the end were hard to read, so I rotated them 90 degrees and expanded them to fill up more of the page. I had a new idea for the back cover, which was to make a collage of the recipes, rather than lining them up in a row. I put together a solid page of overlapping recipes with different colors and textures. The advantage of this design was that I could fill the back cover without being too particular about where the precise edge of the cover was, plus it was visually much more appealing.

Because my changes were substantial, I decided to make a second proof copy. This time I chose a hard cover and upgraded to a better quality, less glossy paper. I wanted to compare the two proof copies before deciding what I wanted for my final printing.

The content and layout of the second proof copy were near final. I read through it and made only small changes for the print run. After comparing the two versions I decided to use the glossier paper from the first proof, which showed off the photos in much brighter color. I also chose the softcover version because I liked its glossy look, it was much lighter weight, and it was much less expensive. That

being said, I'm still wavering as to whether soft cover was the right choice, since the hard cover feels much sturdier and "important." Of course, I can always decide to print some in hardcover later.

Print

I made a list of those I wanted to send a copy of the book to: my siblings, daughter, niece, nephew, aunts and uncles. I decided not to try to print copies for all of my cousins; if you add first and second cousins, I have many dozens! For any given cousin only a small part of the book applies to them, so I felt it was an unnecessary expense and a lot of work to ship out. I printed 25 copies, earning a quantity discount of 40%, so each book cost roughly \$50.

Distribute: Print and Digital

While the book was being printed, I used the time to reorganize my digital files and put all the photos in directories labeled for the appropriate branch of the family. I eliminated many duplicates and selected the highest resolution version of each photo to keep.

I will be purchasing thumb drives and distributing them with the physical book. Each drive will contain all my photos (many of which were not included in the book), charts and reports from *Family Tree Maker* for each branch, the video interviews of my grandfather and parents, the presentations from the family reunions, and scans of historical documents.

In addition, I plan to set up a Web site to host all of the above plus a PDF of the book. I will compose an e-mail to all my cousins telling them about the project and directing them to the site. All the cousins will be able to access all the materials, but digitally rather than in hard copy. With the PDF, of course, they can print it themselves. Moreover, I'm certain that we will find errors, and I can update the digital version.

Note that Blurb also provides the capability to host the content and enable others to order digital or printed versions. If I didn't want to set up a site myself, I could send people to Blurb, where they could download the PDF for about \$5 or reprint the whole book for \$70 (a single copy being much more expensive than the bulk purchase).

The up-front cost of the project before the big print run was roughly \$300 for digitization, proof copies, materials, etc. The print run for 25 softcover copies cost about \$1,250.

Conclusion

I feel that I accomplished both my goals: cataloging the genealogy, and extending the memories of my parents. But I learned some other things as well. First, I realized how amazing my grandparents and great-grandparents were, most of whom came to this country when very young, with nothing, bravely going to a new world to make a better life. Often they worked to bring the rest of the family over after them, but sometimes they never saw their family again. I finished the project with an enormous sense of gratitude and admiration for their bravery.

Second, I realized that my story is the universal American Jewish story. I have some ancestors who came here in the 1880's, in the earliest wave of mass immigration of Jews to America. I have grandparents who came after the turn of the century, fleeing Ukrainian pogroms. I have relatives—whole branches of my family—who perished in the Holocaust. I have family members who came through Ellis Island, others who came through Canada and Cuba, and some who couldn't come to the U.S. and ended up in Argentina. For the most part they were uneducated. Being shut out of other professions, my relatives often became entrepreneurs. They created businesses peddling rag waste, renting tenements, running expositions, retailing jewelry, selling used cars, and recycling metal. I'm an entrepreneur who comes from a long line of entrepreneurs.

None of my four grandparents had a college education, and only one graduated high school. Yet nearly 100% of their grandchildren, grandnieces, and grandnephews are college educated. In just two generations these penniless immigrants produced a generation of educated businesspeople, nonprofit leaders, lawyers, medical professionals, engineers, and a wide variety of other occupations, contributing substantially to our society.

I look at the book and imagine that perhaps a grandchild or great-grandchild of me, my sister, or my cousins will pluck it off the shelf one day and marvel, as I have, at the amazing story that is our family.



Invite a Friend to Join SFBAJGS

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

Sephardic Jews in Central, Eastern, and Southern Ukraine

Kevin Alan Brook

Kevin Alan Brook is the author of *The Jews of Khazaria*, Third Edition (2018), whose tenth chapter discusses Jewish origins and migrations, and is a genetic genealogy consultant specializing in using autosomal DNA to track Sephardic descendants around the world. His previous articles in the Sephardic series appeared in the May 2016, August 2016, February–May 2017, and February–May 2018 issues of *ZichronNote*.

Descendants of Sephardic Jews settled in a great many areas of Ukraine that became part of the Russian Empire late in the 18th century. Long before then, there had been many Jewish migrations in a west-to-east direction from Poland into western and central Ukraine. Southern areas of mainland Ukraine were settled relatively late by Jews of Ashkenazi and Sephardic descent; those Jews came from elsewhere in the Pale of Settlement, including by migrating south from Belarus and Latvia.

The Spanish Jewish surname Abarbanel was held by Jewish families from the central Ukrainian city of Kiev (modern Kyiv) as well as from Chernigov (modern Chernihiv, northeast of Kiev) and Mena (east of Chernigov). A Jewish family in the city of Poltava (302 km southeast of Kiev) was named Barbanel. A member of JewishGen's *Family Finder* database lists Abravanel from the southern Ukrainian city of Odessa as an ancestral family. They all possibly descended from the original Abarbanel, as Cecil Roth suggested.



Osher Osipovich Abugov

According to the 1895 business directory *Vsia Rossiya*, a Jewish man with the Russified Sephardic surname Abugov worked in the fabric and grocery businesses in the town of Orekhov (today's Orikhiv, which became a city in 1938) in the Berdyansk district in Taurida province, now in southeastern Ukraine. Osher Osipovich Abugov was born into a Jewish family in Orekhov in 1899 and went to school there too. His father, Iosif Abugov, was a merchant. Osher served in a number of assignments in the Soviet Union from 1918 to 1937, including in leadership positions in the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs (NKVD), until he was removed from office in 1937, arrested later that year, and sentenced to death by the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the USSR in 1938 as part of Joseph Stalin's Great Purge. An 1893 census by I. V. Kankrin listed Gersh Abugov as a member of a Jewish

agricultural colony in Yekaterinoslav province, now in southeastern Ukraine.

Aleksandr Abugov was born to Jewish parents in Odessa in 1913 and later lived in Kirovograd (today's Kropyvnytskyi, a city in central Ukraine). Previously a locksmith and fencing instructor, Aleksandr's life changed dramatically after Nazi Germany's invasion of the Soviet Union, although he had already served in the Soviet army before it. Starting in 1941, Aleksandr served in Soviet anti-Nazi resistance army forces, at first as a second lieutenant and later as a commander of a unit of partisans. At one point, the Nazis captured Aleksandr as a prisoner of war, but he pretended to be an ethnic Russian and managed to escape their clutches. Had he not done so, the Nazis would have killed him, just as they killed other Jewish prisoners of war. In 1944, Aleksandr became ill, so he was transferred out of his partisan unit.

Efrus, Efrussi, Efros, and Efrosman are among the surnames that Alexander Beider identified as deriving from the Sephardic surname Efrati from late Medieval Spain. Some Jewish individuals living in Kiev were born with the surname Efrosman. In Odessa, from 1880 until 1900, there were two Jewish children born with the surname Efros and five with Efrus. The Jewish Ephrussi family has had many prominent members in many European countries. Their common ancestor was Chaim Efrussi, who was born in 1792 in Berdichev (modern Berdychiv) in west-central Ukraine. Chaim moved to Odessa, changed his name to Charles Joachim Ephrussi, and became involved in the wheat and oil industries. Chaim's first son, Leonid Efrussi (later Léon Ephrussi), was born in Berdichev in 1826, while his other three sons and two daughters were born in Odessa. Chaim and his sons Leonid, Ignace, Maurice, and Michel opened banks called Ephrussi in Odessa, Vienna, and Paris. Ignace had the Palais Ephrussi built for himself and his family in Vienna in the 1860's. The Nazis seized Palais Ephrussi in 1938 and stole its works of art and literature. Ignace's son Viktor Ephrussi and Viktor's son Rudolf



Palais Ephrussi

Ephrussi owned it at the time but were able to leave Austria, with Viktor moving to England. Jews named Efrussi had also lived in Galician Ukraine and Galician Poland, and Rudolf von Granichstaedten-Cerva believed that the family previously lived in Greece.

Beider told me that he found the Sephardic surname Curiel under the spelling Kuriel among Jews in Odessa circa 1900. According to Yelena Zhalkovsky, they had been there decades earlier: Sophie (Sonya) Kuriel was born circa 1862 in Odessa and married fellow Odessite Moshko Zhalkovskiy. The Curiels originated in Castile, Spain.

Portugalov, a variant of Portugal, was used as a surname by Jewish families in Kiev and Poltava. According to Beider, the surnames Portigula, Partigula, and Partygula could possibly mean Portugal as well. Portigula and Partigula were found among Jews in the Uman district, while Partygula was found in the Kamenets-Podolskiy district. Jewish families with the surname Portugalov evidently lived in Talne, a city within the Uman district's Cherkasy Oblast in central Ukraine. Beider also located the surname Portugal (another variant of Portugal) among Jews in the city of Balta in southwestern Ukraine.

As for disputed Ashkenazi surnames resembling the Sephardic surname Maimon, Ilya Majman and Usher Majman were apartment-dwellers in Berdichev as of 1906, while the merchant Movsha-Zel'man Mejman was living in Radomysl' (modern Radomyshl') in central Ukraine as of 1907.

A particular branch of the paternal (Y-DNA) haplogroup R-M269 (R1b1a2) may be suggestive of a Sephardic origin, since it is shared at least at the 37-marker level by a New Mexican Hispano whose paternal-line ancestor was from Santa Fe and by Ashkenazi Jews, including one whose paternal-line ancestor lived in Kiev and another whose paternal-line ancestor lived in the industrial city of Kremenchuk, which is likewise in central Ukraine, 258 km southeast of Kiev.

The maternal (mtDNA) haplogroup U6a7a1b was characterized as a "Sephardic Jewish cluster" in a 2014 study by Bernard Secher and his six co-authors. Within GenBank and Family Tree DNA and from samples Secher's team gathered itself, this haplogroup has been found among Ashkenazi Jews from multiple central and eastern European regions as well as among two Spaniards (one from Jaen in south-central Spain, the other from an

unspecified town but declaring knowledge of Jewish roots), a Mexican, a Cuban from Havana, a person from Algeria, and a person from southern Italy. Several carriers of U6a7a1b descend from Ukrainian Jewish maternal-line ancestors and one of these people (William Gerald Katz, GenBank sample DQ856317) specified Kiev as the place where his maternal-line ancestress (Chaje Chiprin, born in 1850) lived. Secher estimated "1,500 years ago" for the coalescence time for U6a7a1b having emerged as a descendant branch of U6a7a1.

Special thanks to Debra Katz for giving me permission to name her late father and his ancestress as relevant carriers of U6a7a1b.

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Make Sure to Ask

Gena Philibert-Ortega

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When I was growing up, I worked at my local city library. I was a reference page, which meant that I worked in the basement and retrieved magazines for patrons doing research, among other things. The magazines in our holdings ranged from the newer

popular magazines to bound volumes dating back 100 years. The library's basement also housed some of the archival collections. That archive included all kinds of items, from documents to material items such as textiles. It was a wonderful place to work for someone who loved to read and had lots of questions about history.

Because of my early job experience, I know that libraries, archives, and museums often have great collections kept out of the public's view. It's not that they are trying to hide them, it's just that they don't have space in the public areas to display everything. Quite frankly, some of the items, while important, are not "popular" and are rarely requested. Because of this, sometimes the public or interested researchers don't know everything a repository has. I was reminded of this recently after I presented to the Pomona Valley Genealogical Society, which meets at the Pomona (California) Public Library.

The Pomona Public Library has been around since the 1880's, but its current building dates to 1965. The library is old enough to have a basement, and the basement includes bound periodicals, like the ones I retrieved as a teenager, and special collections, as well as the collections of the nearby genealogical and historical societies.

When the president of the society asked if I wanted to see their collection, I had to say yes. After all, I absolutely love library basements. There were stacks of everything from genealogical periodicals to family group sheets donated by members over the society's 50-year history.

Because I'm always anxious to pass on information about great collections, I asked, "How do people know what you have?" Like most collections, the answer is not simple. Most people don't know this collection exists. Most societies don't have the volunteers or time to make information about their vast collections available. Just like libraries and archives, there is simply not enough time, money, or people to make collections easily available to everyone. While the Pomona Valley Genealogical Society has an ongoing indexing project that is available in printed form from the reference librarian, there's no digitized version of what the library owns.

It's important to remember that not only is not everything online, but online catalogs don't tell the entire story. It's by making contact with societies and repositories in the places where your ancestors lived that you can learn more about what is available. If you have not done this, most likely you have not done an exhaustive search of what is available for your ancestors, because there are clues in the basement.

Take some time to locate the repositories and societies in the places your ancestors lived. Search their online catalogs, digital collections, and finding aids but then contact them and ask about what other collections they house that might be helpful to your research.



Who Is Holding Our History?

Curt B. Witcher

Curt B. Witcher is the Senior Manager for Special Collections at the Allen County Public Library, a job which entails managing the Genealogy Center, serving as general curator for that institution's Rare and Fine Book Collection, and supervising the Lincoln Financial Collection's Lincoln Library. He received the Federation of Genealogical Societies' highest honor, the Rabbi Malcolm H. Stern Humanitarian Award, in 1997. This article was first published in *Genealogy Gems: News from the Allen County Public Library at Fort Wayne*, Number 172, 30 June 2018, and is reprinted with permission.

It is truly amazing to contemplate the vast number of historical items—both documents and artifacts—that are curated by thousands upon thousands of libraries, archives, and heritage organizations all over the country. Without these organizations, many of the documents we use to discover our family histories would not be available. Yet, as important as these organizations are to the pursuit of our families' stories, we tend not to give them much thought unless we need something from them. That very small amount of attention puts the records that document our history in grave danger.

Numerous organizations all over the country are aware of the challenges associated with preserving and making available records at the local, state, and national levels. A few of these organizations not only engage in preservation and access projects themselves, they also fund projects undertaken by other organizations. The Indiana Genealogical Society is one such organization. This society has given tens of thousands of dollars to organizations in Indiana through a number of grant programs to make historical data more available. They also have published databases of indices and transcriptions to records. As of this writing, the Indiana Genealogical Society has 2,168 databases available to members on its site. In addition, the society has granted scanning kits to local organizations throughout the state to digitize and make available local historical records that we all know can be so consequential to our genealogical research.

The Indiana Historical Society is another organization that works to make historical data more available. The society continues to receive support from the Lilly Endowment to make hundreds of thousands of dollars available through its Heritage Support Grants program. Recently, sixteen Indiana local historical organizations

received grants to support their work—work that ranged from properly storing historical items and collection care improvements to entering items into an accessible online database and publishing historical works. Just the two above-mentioned organizations' accomplishments have done much to preserve and present Indiana history.

I encourage you to find out what is being done in your local area as well as your state. Further, I encourage you to be as supportive of those programs as possible. Part of that support should come in the form of your personal membership in those active organizations. There is a reason why genealogists have been encouraged for ages to belong to at least three societies: the local society where they live, the society in the area where their research is focused, and a national ethnic or family history organization. One of the primary reasons for doing this is so that our membership dollars will support preservation and access initiatives.

In addition to our support of organizations that are proactively engaged in preservation and access initiatives, we should be increasingly concerned about the local, state, and national organizations responsible for preserving and providing access to official governmental records. While these governmental organizations typically have the best of intentions, their lack of funding, the corresponding lack of training, and the lack of support and understanding from the political entities that control them in many jurisdictions puts our records at great risk. The general distrust the public has for government and governmental entities also puts our records at great risk.

Who is holding our history? And will we have access to it today and tomorrow? It would be prudent to take increasing interest in the answers to those questions. It's our history—its fate is in our hands.





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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>
Babich/Babitz	Zinkov/Gorodok, Ukraine	Jeff Libby
Brill	Staviche, Ukraine	Mona Siegel
Chase/Zis	Dvinsk, Latvia	Jeff Libby
Freiberg/Freidberg/Fryburg	Zinkov/Gorodok, Ukraine	Jeff Libby
Goldman/Golman	Kosava/Izabelin/Vawkavysk, Belarus	Jeff Libby
Gottehrer	Hungary	Mona Siegel
Hammerschlag	Germany	Mona Siegel
Heimowitz	Máramoros County, Hungary	Mona Siegel
Isselbacher	Germany	Mona Siegel
Kossowicz	Lomza, Poland	Jeff Libby
Mallach	Lomza, Poland	Jeff Libby
Markus	Lomza/Kolno, Poland	Jeff Libby
Meyerowitz	Elopotok, Hungary (Előpatak, Romania?)	Mona Siegel
Przestrzelski	Lomza/Sniadow/Zambrow/Jedwabne, Poland	Jeff Libby
Rose/Rozsa	Hungary	Mona Siegel
Rosen/Rozen	Dvinsk, Latvia	Jeff Libby
Rosenberg	Germany	Mona Siegel
Russonik/Rushonik	Dvinsk, Latvia; Montevideo, Uruguay	Jeff Libby
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Upcoming SFBAJGS Events

Sunday, 18 August, Oakland: *Labor Omnia Vitae: How Your Hard Work Can Conquer All at the Sutro Library.* New SFBAJGS board member Dvorah Lewis will describe how to access Sutro Library's genealogical resources on site as well as online.

Monday, 19 August, Palo Alto: *Finding Presidents and Their Ancestors in the Strangest Places.* Steve Morse will discuss the problems and some solutions in searching census and ship records, using this country's presidents as examples.

Sunday, 15 September, Oakland: *Using Cluster Research to Understand Your Ancestors: When a Tree Isn't Enough.* Rescheduled from last year (when the fires forced a cancellation), Anne Gillespie Mitchell will show how a person's FAN Club (friends, associates, and neighbors) can help break down brick walls.

Special Presentation, Friday, 4 October, Oakland: *Crowdsourcing the Path to the 1950 Census.* The 1950 census will be released in less than three years! Joel Weintraub will describe how he and SFBAJGS member Steve Morse have been preparing using crowdsourcing.

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/>.
