



# זכרונות *ZichronNote*

## The Journal of the San Francisco Bay Area Jewish Genealogical Society

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### Lost But Now Found

The “family genealogist” is often asked to solve longstanding mysteries.

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*Undated photograph of Natalie Baczewska in Vienna.  
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**ZichronNote**  
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**President's Message**

**End-of-the-year Festivities**

Jeremy Frankel, SFBAJGS President

Who would have thought we would still be "lurching" from one extreme situation to another! I'm talking about the pandemic, of course. When I wrote this, Thanksgiving was less than three weeks away; I couldn't believe that Chanukah was only three days after Thanksgiving (which reminds me of the old joke that Jewish holidays are never on time, but either early or late). At least Christmas was almost a month after Chanukah.

They are all occasions when families usually get together. This year the options were face to face (or should that be mask to mask), or, less risky, and slightly less "haimish" — via Zoom.

By the time these holidays rolled around you should have done your homework and had lists of questions to gently foist onto your relatives. Don't forget these queries should also include whether anyone has photos, documents, letters, etc., tucked away in closets!

As an adjunct to the above, an extremely nifty thing I discovered is that my iPhone can (as can an Android phone) scan rather than photograph documents. I can't speak for the Android crowd, but for iPhone users, it's a real cinch. Plus, once the image is captured, I e-mail it to myself for filing. All done in under a minute, and the quality is excellent. I have scanned a number of oversized certificates, and they have all come out very well.

This segues into something I have put off for years and years: scanning all my certificates. Over the past 35+ years I must have purchased more than three hundred certificates. I've also acquired another three hundred from family members, or found them online. The pandemic has, unwittingly, allowed me the time to undertake this project. I'm about two thirds of the way through, and you will hear a huge sigh of relief when I'm done.

Do you have any similar genealogy projects that you just haven't found the time for? Well, now is that time!

As this will be the last President's Column for the year, the board would like to wish all of you and your families a very happy, safe, and healthy secular new year. And for those of you who celebrated Thanksgiving, Chanukah, and Christmas, we hope you drank and ate in moderation!



## Society News

### New Member

Judy Schlosser ..... judyfengshui@gmail.com

In order to continue to receive *ZichronNote* and SFBAJGS News, please send changes in your e-mail address to [newsletter@sfbajgs.org](mailto:newsletter@sfbajgs.org).

### Kirkuty Project Update

Due to the pandemic the photographer again could not travel and visit new cemeteries. He was able to write about 70 new entries for Jewish cemeteries. These are locations with new lists of preserved tombstones:

Brzostek, <http://cmentarze-zydowskie.pl/brzostek.htm>

Cracow (Jewish plot from World War I), [http://cmentarze-zydowskie.pl/krakow\\_cmentarz\\_wojenny\\_387.htm](http://cmentarze-zydowskie.pl/krakow_cmentarz_wojenny_387.htm)

Gorlice, <http://cmentarze-zydowskie.pl/gorlice.htm>

Góra Kalwaria (Ger), <http://cmentarze-zydowskie.pl/gorakalwaria.html>

Grybów, <http://cmentarze-zydowskie.pl/grybow.htm>

Jastrowie, <http://cmentarze-zydowskie.pl/jastrowie.htm>

Kcynia, <http://cmentarze-zydowskie.pl/kcynia.htm>

Miłakowo, <http://cmentarze-zydowskie.pl/milakowo.htm>

Mszana Dolna, <http://cmentarze-zydowskie.pl/mszanolna.htm>

Ryczywół, [http://cmentarze-zydowskie.pl/ryczywol\\_wielkopolska.htm](http://cmentarze-zydowskie.pl/ryczywol_wielkopolska.htm)

Rymanów, <http://cmentarze-zydowskie.pl/rymanow.htm>

Ślubice, <http://cmentarze-zydowskie.pl/slubice.htm>

Szubin, <http://cmentarze-zydowskie.pl/szubin.htm>

Tuczno, <http://cmentarze-zydowskie.pl/tuczno.htm>

### It's Renewal Season!

You should have received your membership renewal. Please don't forget to send it in, and update your family names and contact information (especially e-mail address)!

### SFBAJGS Board Meetings

SFBAJGS board meetings are open to members to attend, and we welcome you to do so! The next board meeting is scheduled to begin at 10:00 a.m. on Sunday, 20 February, **online via Zoom**. If you are interested in attending and learning more about how your board reaches decisions for the society (or possibly about serving on the board?), contact the editor at [newsletter@sfbajgs.org](mailto: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.

### 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](mailto:newsletter@sfbajgs.org).

### SFBAJGS Family Finder Update

The surnames and towns being researched by our newest member 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](mailto:familyfinder@sfbajgs.org) or at P.O. Box 318214, San Francisco, CA 94131-8214.

<u>Surname</u>	<u>Town, Country</u>	<u>Member</u>
Edelstein	Romania	Judy Schlosser
Weiss	Russia	Judy Schlosser

## Searching for a Long-lost Relative: The Mysterious Disappearance of Jacob Heller

Ann L. Fuller

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.

### The Question

I began to research my family history in 2007, creating a collaborative family tree on Geni.com. Once a year, I sent my extended family a report on my research discoveries. In November 2008, my second cousin David Heller (1931–2012) responded to an update with the following e-mail message<sup>1</sup>:

I have a question. Would you consider . . . trying to track my paternal grandfather? I have tried through a service and the trail stopped in 1902 when they obtained the divorce papers showing the legal divorce of Jacob and Julie Heller. . . . After that . . . zippo.

I was told he moved to New York and died in 1920 or so. Always curious whether he remarried and had another family? [My sister] Racky is also. Give it some thought.

I had looked up to my older cousins, Racky<sup>2</sup> and David, in my childhood, but our age differences meant we were not close. They had gone off to eastern colleges and Racky had married and left Chicago while I was still young. Their father, Bruno Heller (1881–1942), had married a mature divorced woman at age 45. He died when Racky was 13 and David was 9, so their widowed mother raised them to adulthood. After they left home, their mother attended my family's holiday gatherings and continued to share the latest news about them.

I became reacquainted with Racky, then a widow, when I spent a year in the San Francisco area in 1981. I visited her many times in the following years and renewed my contact with David through her. Racky was active in the Jewish philanthropic community, and David was president of a successful Chicago financial firm he had founded. When David asked me to solve the mystery of Jacob Heller's disappearance, I agreed enthusiastically. I was gratified by his confidence in me at a time when I was trying to involve family in my genealogical pursuits, with mixed success.

A few days after our initial e-mail exchange, David sent me more information about Jacob's death.

I have some recollection that my mother told me he died in either 1920 or 1922 in the New York area, maybe the Bronx and committed suicide.<sup>3</sup>

I then began a search to find out what had happened to Jacob after his divorce from Julie: I sought information from closely related family members, searched for relevant documents to learn what I could about Jacob's life, and reached out for help from more experienced researchers.

### The Pick Family

Jacob Heller joined my family when he married Julie Pick (1857–1947), the oldest sister of my paternal grandmother, Bertha Pick. Bertha, Julie, and some of their siblings had emigrated from Vienna to the United States toward the end of the 19th century, settling in Chicago. Their parents, Josef Pick (1825–1898) and Eleanor Schneider (1831–1878), married and had their first three children in Alt Langendorf (now Dlouhá Ves<sup>4</sup>), a small village in western Bohemia near the Bavarian border, where the Pick and Schneider families had lived since the 18th century. Josef and Eleanor moved with their family to Vienna in 1856, at a time when Jews were gaining greater freedom to live in cities.

Julie was the first Pick child born in Vienna. Josef and Eleanor subsequently added ten more children (including brothers Richard, Jacob, and Robert and sisters Mathilde, Sidonie, Melanie, and Bertha). Bertha, who was born when Julie was 16, was the next to youngest child. The growing family initially settled in Leopoldstadt (II), where less affluent Jewish immigrants lived; when they rose economically, they moved to an apartment in Alsergrund (IX). Josef worked in several capacities at the Vienna Stock Exchange (Börse)<sup>5</sup> and was also a partner with his brother-in-law in a printing business. According to my grandmother, the children did not attend school but instead were educated by tutors. When Eleanor Pick died in childbirth with her 14th child in 1878, Julie assisted her father and the household servants with the care of her younger siblings. She continued this even after her 1879

marriage to Jacob Heller and the birth of her three children, Ella, Bruno, and Paula.

In 1887, Julie's brother Richard Pick (1867–1938) left Vienna to seek greater economic opportunity in the United States, joining his Mautner first cousins in Chicago. He established a business in leather and fabrics and became prosperous quickly, later employing other family members including Julie's son, Bruno.<sup>6</sup> Most of Richard's siblings, including his five sisters—Julie, Mathilde, Sidonie, Melanie, and Bertha—and brother Robert followed him one by one to the United States between 1891 and 1897.<sup>7</sup> In 1892, Richard married his maternal first cousin Jennie Mautner. The 1900 census shows Richard, Jennie, and their three children living with Richard's sister Melanie.

The five Pick sisters continued to live close to each other once settled in Chicago. Several of them would gather for afternoon Kaffeeeklatsches at Julie's house where Julie, who was confined to her bed after age 60, held court. A teacart was set with china coffee cups and cake. The sisters maintained their Viennese traditions in the new country, and even though they were fluent in English, they spoke German to each other and to the American-born relatives of the next generations who visited them. Julie's great-granddaughter Juliet recalled three-generational visits to Julie with her mother and grandmother, Julie's daughter, Paula:

[T]here was always some of the family there. And I do mean always. I think Sidonie and Melanie and Mathilde when she returned to Chicago, were at Julie's for afternoon coffee almost daily. And that was a 'ritual' too . . . .<sup>8</sup>

[W]hen we visited Julie . . . for the kids it was be seen not heard. Julie had a home helper, Amy, though she didn't live in full time. It helped if Amy was there when we visited because she would play dominos or cards with us away from the living room. Looking back that seems odd no one seemed to live in as Julie was bedridden—although my mother once remarked that they suspected Julie got herself around the apartment at times. (More speculation.) My mother also said that for years after she was married and visited Julie she still was expected to speak only when spoken to. Hard to find out anything that way.<sup>9</sup>

Racky walked to Julie's house with her father on Sunday mornings. Her mother insisted that she continue the visits after Bruno's death in 1942. Racky recalled that Julie had manicured nails and was dressed in a bed jacket, sitting up in bed under a pink coverlet.<sup>10</sup>



*Sisters Julie, Sidonie, and Bertha Pick,  
Fish Creek, Wisconsin, circa 1915*



*Julie (Pick) Heller, 1936*

## The Husbands

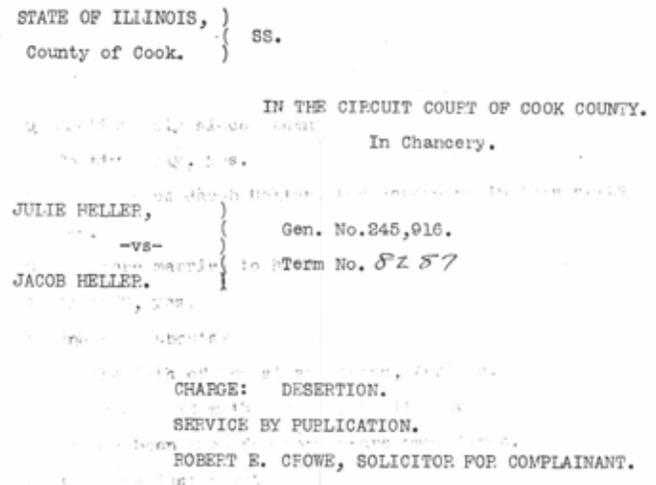
My grandmother Bertha and her four sisters had long lives, and I knew all of them when I was growing up. Bertha was the most assimilated and forward-looking, adjusting to many changes during her century-long life. Most of the husbands of my grandaunts died before I was born, however. The sisters had strong personalities, and their attachment to each other was primary, so, at least in memory, their husbands seemed to have faded into the background. Three of the sisters had married in Vienna: Julie to Jacob; Sidonie to Heinrich Mautner, her first cousin and the brother of Richard Pick's wife; and Mathilde to David Schneider, her maternal uncle. The other two sisters, Melanie and Bertha, met and married their husbands after coming to the United States. When Bertha arrived in Chicago, Julie advised her to shave a few years off her age to become more marriageable. Although she was 28, Bertha claimed she was 24 when she married my grandfather, someone outside of the fold, a Russian-born but German-speaking man.

### What Happened to Jacob?

I wanted to meet David Heller's challenge to find out what had happened to Jacob. I wondered if Julie's closest living relatives knew anything about him, so I located and e-mailed her great-granddaughter Juliet, who up to age 13 had visited Julie with her mother and grandmother. She replied, "Jacob's name was never mentioned—I didn't even know it until into adulthood."<sup>11</sup> David contacted the 93-year-old daughter-in-law of Julie's daughter Ella, but she too was unable to tell us anything about Jacob. I concluded that his existence had been expunged from the family history. With no information beyond what David had supplied, I began to search for whatever documentary evidence I could find of Jacob's life.

The first document I examined was the Certificate of Evidence associated with Jacob and Julie's divorce. David had obtained it from the private investigator whom he had hired to solve the mystery of Jacob's disappearance. I can only guess the reasons behind the divorce, since the family did not talk about such matters. Jacob's infidelity probably was an element.<sup>12</sup> Friction with the tight-knit Pick clan may also have been a factor.

Julie filed a bill of complaint against Jacob in the Circuit Court of Cook County on 20 November 1903.<sup>13</sup> She gave testimony in court on 23 December 1903. She stated that she and Jacob were married on 24 August 1879 in Vienna, Austria. He had been "away for many years many times." He had left her on 18 November 1901 and had not been



*The first page of the "Certificate of Evidence" in Julie's divorce case against Jacob*

back since. She said that she had acted as a true and dutiful wife and had given him no cause to leave her. He had not offered to return or provide a home or support. When asked if she knew where he was living then, she said he was "living somewhere in New York." She had made inquiries but had not found out his address. Julie's sister-in-law Jennie Mautner Pick appeared as a character witness in the proceedings. She stated that Mrs. Heller "was an exceptionally good wife." When asked if Julie had given Jacob any cause to leave her, she said, "No. She was always too good, maybe that was the cause." The judge granted the divorce on 23 December 1903, stating that the defendant was guilty "of willful desertion without any reasonable cause for the space of two years prior to the filing of this complaint."

Julie stated in the divorce proceedings that Jacob had gone to New York City after November 1901. Unfortunately, I had no easy access to New York City directories at that point to see if he was listed. In my mind, it seemed possible that he had stayed in Chicago, gone back to Providence or Europe, or died before the 1910 census. Since I was not in Chicago and the information was not yet online, I couldn't check the Chicago city directories available in the Newberry Library.

In 2008, I used Ancestry.com at my local public library as my primary source for genealogical research. I couldn't find a ship passenger list for Jacob, but I located one for Julie and the three children, who arrived in the United States in June 1891. I knew that the family had lived in Providence, Rhode Island before they went to Chicago, but I was not sure for how long. Bruno declared on a 1926 passenger list that his father had been naturalized in Rhode Island in

1888.<sup>14</sup> Jacob was listed in two Providence city directories, in one of them as secretary of the Providence Turn-Verein, a German social club. By the time of the 1900 census, Jacob was enumerated as living on West Wellington Street in Chicago with Julie, their three children, and two of Julie's siblings, Bertha and Robert. It said that Jacob was born in Germany and had been married for 21 years.

The trail grew cold when I sought records for Jacob for the period after 1900. I checked all the Jacob Hellers of the right age and birth region in the 1910 and 1920 censuses, a tedious job, and only one entry in the 1910 census seemed remotely possible. This Jacob Heller was an inmate of the Cook County infirmary.<sup>15</sup> The age and other details weren't quite right, but census information is often inaccurate. Since I had learned from an oral history interview of my aunt<sup>16</sup> that her obstetrician husband<sup>17</sup> believed that Julie's invalidism might have been caused by secondary syphilis contracted from Jacob, I considered the possibility that Jacob had been treated in a Cook County medical facility instead of going to New York. I ruled that out when I checked Cook County records in the Illinois death index: Pre-1916, the only Jacob Heller listed had died in 1880; post-1916, the earliest death date for a Jacob Heller in Cook County was 1929. I concluded that it seemed more likely that Jacob had died elsewhere, possibly before the 1910 census.

As I needed help to go further, I posted a query to the German Special Interest Group (GerSIG) on JewishGen.org, summarizing what I knew about Jacob and what I was trying to find out. I received useful information within days, demonstrating the power of networking with more experienced researchers. One respondent found an entry in the 1850 Hungarian census for Jacob's entire family, living then in Szlanitz, Arva County, Hungary, now Slanica, Slovakia.<sup>18</sup> Another respondent led me to a site for New York City death records.<sup>19</sup> I checked for deaths in the range 1902–1923 and found two Jacob Hellers in Manhattan who were about the right age when they died, one in 1908 and the other in 1906. No Jacob Heller deaths were listed in the Bronx at all, only in Brooklyn and Manhattan.

The GerSIG respondents had provided clues that set me on a productive path that ultimately led to an answer to David Heller's question. I requested copies of the New York City death records for the Jacob Hellers who had died in 1908 and 1906 from the Family History Library in Salt Lake City, a less expensive and faster way to receive results than ordering the documents from a New York City government office.<sup>20</sup> When I received them ten days later, the 1908 death record was definitely for the wrong Jacob Heller, but the

information on the 1906 one was consistent with the 1850 Hungarian census record for the Heller family.<sup>21</sup> This Jacob Heller was born in Hungary and was a teacher. He died in Mt. Sinai Hospital on 14 March 1906 of "tuberculosis of lung" and "tuberculosis of genito-urinary system" after two months in the hospital. Though he is listed as married, this version of the death certificate has no space for the wife's name—just the parents' names, Moses and Celia, which seemed similar enough to the parental names (Moses and Zissuscha) in the 1850 Hungarian census. The one discrepancy was the notation that he had been living in New York for 17 years (although this may be accounted for by how long Jacob had been living in the United States, which was about 17 years at that point). Jacob was buried in Mt. Neboh Cemetery in Glendale, New York. When I called the cemetery, I found out that he was buried in public grounds, a "cheap grave."

CERTIFICATE AND RECORD OF DEATH		8604
Name: <i>Jacob Heller</i>		
Sex: <i>Male</i>	Race: <i>White</i>	Place of Death: <i>Mount Sinai Hospital</i>
Age: <i>57</i> (Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Min. <input type="checkbox"/> Days <input type="checkbox"/>	Character of Disease: <i>Mount Sinai Hospital</i>	
Single, Married, Widowed or Divorced: <i>Married</i>	Place of Birth: <i>Mount Sinai Hospital</i>	
Occupation: <i>Teacher</i>	Father's Name: <i>Moses</i>	
Birthplace: <i>Hungary</i>	Mother's Name: <i>Celia</i>	
How long in U.S. or foreign birth: <i>17 years</i>	Mother's Birthplace: <i>Hungary</i>	
How long resident in City of New York: <i>17 years</i>		
I hereby certify that I attended deceased from <i>January 16, 1906</i> to <i>March 14, 1906</i> , that I last saw <i>him</i> alive on the <i>14</i> day of <i>March</i> , 1906, that he died on the <i>14</i> day of <i>March</i> , 1906, about <i>7</i> o'clock <i>Afternoon</i> P. M., and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, the cause of <i>his</i> death was as follows:		
<i>Tuberculosis of Lungs</i> <i>Tuberculosis of Genito-Urinary System</i>		
SPECIAL INFORMATION <small>required in deaths due to contagious and infectious and in deaths of non-residents and recent residents</small>		Witness my hand this <i>15</i> day of <i>March</i> , 1906
Former or Usual Residence: <i>606 126 St</i>	(Signature) <i>Chloethus</i> (M. D.)	
How long resident at place of death: <i>2 months</i>	(Residence) <i>Mount Sinai Hospital</i>	

Death certificate of Jacob Heller

Once I had obtained the death certificate for the correct Jacob, I shared the exciting news with David and Racky. David received my phone call and follow up e-mail while on an airplane that was preparing to take off. He asked in his brief e-mail response, "When did he die and where . . . I assume Chicago? Curious if he started another family."<sup>22</sup> Upon receipt of a scan of the document, he said, "In looking at Jacob Heller's death certificate it lists him as being married . . . I wonder?"<sup>23</sup> Contrary to David's fantasy, the grim reality of Jacob Heller's demise made remarriage and a second family seem unlikely.

Racky responded to the news and receipt of the death certificate, "You have done a heroic job tracing Jacob Heller, solving a long-term mystery. The private eye David hired either didn't know how to use the net or didn't have enough information to go on. Anyway, it's sort of sad, how he ended." She went on to raise the question, "She [Julie] referred to herself as a widow in the census (1910), so I wonder if she knew how he died and where . . . ." <sup>24</sup> More about that below.

### **Jacob Heller: Dr. or Not?**

As I was solving the mystery of Jacob's disappearance, I made a parallel inquiry into his formal education. Racky had told me that she had been told that Jacob had obtained a doctorate from the University of Vienna (Universität Wien). She wanted me to confirm this, so in December 2008 I contacted the university archives. They responded with information about a different Jacob Heller. I inquired further, but their response did not reach me. Four years later, in 2013, I wrote the archives again with the same question. It was then that I found out that they had located information about the correct Jacob Heller in 2009 after all. Their 2013 response included the previously lost 2009 e-mail message to me:

We have extended our search and found one Jakob Heller who was a law student between 1868 and 1873. This seems to be the right one. This Jakob Heller was born in Szlanitz Hungary and had 21 years of age when entering the university at the beginning of the winter semester 1868/69. He was Jewish and spoke Hungarian and German as his first language. His father was Moses Heller, a salesman in Szlanitz (later called Slanica). The town does not exist anymore: information is available on Wikipedia. <sup>25</sup> Jakob Heller enrolled in courses and lectures at the law faculty until summer semester 1873. He did not earn a doctor's degree. The certificate that he had completed all prescribed studies was issued on April 25th, 1873. <sup>26</sup>

### **More Details about Jacob's Life**

Even though I had already discovered the fate of Jacob Heller in 2008, I continued to learn more about his life periodically as I gained access to new sources. On a 2010 roots trip to eastern Europe, I found more specifics about Jacob and Julie's 1879 marriage, which had taken place at Vienna's Stadttempel <sup>27</sup>, a synagogue that miraculously survived Kristallnacht in 1938 because of its hidden location. Due to tight security, I could view the sanctuary of the beautiful synagogue only by attending a German-

language Sabbath service. Jacob and Julie's marriage record <sup>28</sup> is included in the oversized Jewish vital record books held at the Israelitische Kultusgemeinde Wien <sup>29</sup> (IKG) archives, housed in a Stadttempel office.

The information about Jacob is consistent with what I have found in other records. His birthdate is given as 14 December 1848, matching the date in the 1850 census and on his 1893 naturalization document. His mother's given name is listed as "Zipuscha id est Cilli." Zipuscha is similar to Zissuscha, his mother's name on the index entry for the family's 1850 census record; the difference may be due to poor handwriting or transcription. Cilli is a nickname for Celia, the name of Jacob's mother as shown on his death certificate.

Over the years, I have traced Jacob's addresses and professions in Vienna, Providence, and Chicago. The University of Vienna archives provided his addresses in Leopoldstadt during his student years, 1868–1873. The Lehmann Vienna city directories include his addresses for the years 1877–1886. <sup>30</sup> His profession is described as Advocat. Concipien and as Dr. Advocat. Concipient in the Lehmann directories and as Advocatur Candidat on his 1879 marriage record. After their marriage, Jacob and Julie moved to 18 Berggasse in Vienna (across from Sigmund Freud's house), where the Pick family had lived earlier in the 1870's. (Josef and the children lived on the next street, Türkenstrasse.)

Jacob lived in Providence from 1888 until 1896, where he became part of the sizable German community. Julie and the three children joined him for the last five years; as noted in a few local newspaper articles of the time, the children attended local public schools and received religious training at the Temple Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David, a Reform synagogue. Jacob is listed in the city directories for the years 1890 to 1896 as a correspondence clerk, clerk, and secretary of Turn-Verein. An article appeared in an 1893 newspaper advertising a speech he was scheduled to give:

Mr. Jacob Heller, Secretary of the Turner Hall, a prominent German lecturer and great thinker, will deliver a lecture on "Capital and Labor" in the German language tomorrow after noon at 4 o'clock at the Turner Hall, corner of Atlantic avenue and Niagara street. <sup>31</sup>

The family left Providence for Chicago in 1896, likely to join Julie's relatives. Jacob is listed in the 1900 and 1901 Chicago city directories as a secretary and in the 1900 census as a patent manager.

## Newspaper Articles Bring New Insight

In 2021, I discovered some newspaper articles that provided insight into Jacob's final years, confirming that he had made a suicide attempt. A brief article appeared in the *Chicago Tribune* on 15 May 1902.

Jacob Heller of Chicago, who has been living with his cousin, Benjamin Hirsch at 1480 Madison Avenue<sup>32</sup>, shot himself in the head on the steps of Mount Sinai Hospital tonight. He was a patient at the hospital five years ago for lung trouble. He will recover.<sup>33</sup>

A longer version appeared the same day in both the *New York Daily Tribune* and the *New York Times*.

Driven to desperation by the thought that he would have to go back to the hospital, Jacob Heller, fifty-four years old of No. 1480 Madison Ave., who for several years has been suffering from an affection of the lungs, attempted to end his life last night on the front stoop of Mount Sinai Hospital. He tried to send a bullet through his brain, but when he pulled the trigger of his revolver, he was so nervous that the bullet grazed his skull and lodged under the scalp, inflicting an injury that will not prove fatal.

The shot caused considerable excitement among several hundred persons who were attending the graduating exercises of the nurses of the Mount Sinai Training School, which adjoins the hospital. Men and women in evening dress rushed from the training school and found him unconscious on the stoop of the hospital.<sup>34</sup>

The *New York Times* article added more details:

Five years ago, Heller spent several months in the hospital. He was discharged as cured and then went to Chicago, where he has a wife and family. When he revived in the hospital last night and was asked why he attempted his life, he replied: "I've got this affliction and cannot stand it any longer."

The police think that he was on his way to the hospital to apply for readmission when he became possessed of the thought that it would be better for him to be dead than to spend the Summer on a cot. He was placed under arrest on a charge of attempted suicide.

Heller is about six feet in height and of a powerful build. He appears to be fairly well-to-do.<sup>35</sup>

I had no doubt that the articles referred to the right Jacob Heller. A suicide attempt was considered a crime in 1902 rather than a mental health problem. Jacob apparently suffered ill health over a long period. In 1897 he was treated at Mt. Sinai Hospital in New York City and pronounced cured of the lung ailment. He may have suffered a relapse by the time in 1901 that he left Julie the final time. His



New York Times, 15 May 1902, page 3

condition worsened by 1902 when he made the suicide attempt. He lived another four years until his final hospitalization at Mt. Sinai. The death record says that he died of tuberculosis, but since he may have had untreated syphilis earlier in his life, he could have suffered at the end from the psychiatric manifestations of the tertiary stage of the disease.

I searched for information on Benjamin Hirsch, the cousin with whom Jacob was stated to be living at 1480 Madison Avenue in New York, but couldn't find a person with that name at that address in New York City directories or in the census. I then searched the 1900 federal census by address<sup>36</sup> and found a Bernard Hirsch at that address. I concluded that the newspapers had gotten his first name wrong or that he had used different names at different times. Born in Budapest in 1862, Bernard Hirsch was living with his wife, Bertha, three children, and a servant. The family was still

living there at the time of the 1905 New York State census, but Jacob Heller was not. Bernard Hirsch was listed as a stockbroker working in a bank in subsequent censuses, a job that seems consistent with what I knew about Jacob's profession. I tried but was unable to determine how Bernard was related to Jacob.

### Putting It All Together

Jacob Heller was born in Szlanitz, Hungary on 14 December 1848. His father was a merchant. Jacob moved to Vienna in the 1860's and attended a law program at the University of Vienna, obtaining a certificate in 1873. He is listed as a Dr. in some records, but if he obtained an actual doctorate, it was not from the University of Vienna. He married Julie Pick in 1879 in the Stadttempel and had three children in quick succession. He worked as a lawyer in training. In 1888, he left Vienna and went to Providence, Rhode Island, which had a sizable German population, where he worked as a clerk. He applied for naturalization in 1888 and obtained his citizenship in 1893. Julie and the children joined him in Providence in 1891. The family moved to Chicago by 1896, where he worked as a manager of patents, according to the 1900 census. He spent five months in 1897 at Mt. Sinai Hospital for treatment of a lung condition. He left Julie and the family in November 1901 and went to New York. Jacob was living in New York with a cousin, Bernard Hirsch, when he made a suicide attempt in 1902, which was reported in New York newspapers and in the *Chicago Tribune*. Julie filed for divorce in November 1903 and received it a month later. Nothing is known about Jacob's life over the next few years. He died on 14 March 1906 after two months in Mt. Sinai Hospital and is buried in a potter's field at Mt. Neboh Cemetery in Glendale, New York.

### What Did Julie's Family Know?

Julie testified at her 1903 divorce hearing that she did not know where Jacob was living. Yet it is hard to believe that no family member saw the *Chicago Tribune* article about his 1902 suicide attempt, which included information about his whereabouts, or at least had it brought to their attention. Bruno stated in his 1925 passport application that his father lived until 1912, so he may not have known exactly when his father had died but apparently did know that he was dead. Since Bruno died before David and Racky were grown, they relied on their widowed mother for information about Jacob. She knew about Jacob's suicide attempt, even though her chronology was inaccurate. Julie and the rest of the family, whatever they knew, successfully hid the truth, which is not surprising given their Victorian

upbringing and the times. Only my obstetrician uncle seems to have guessed at the possible cause of Julie's invalidism, and he did not share his assessment widely. Surprisingly, Julie does not appear to have suffered any ongoing stigma due to her divorce. She lived to the age of 90, 46 years after Jacob exited her life, and continued to rule from her bed surrounded by her close family.

In closing, I think about my late cousins, who inspired my quest for information about their grandfather: David, who raised the question, and Racky, with whom I spent much time sharing memories of our common family members. I mourn their passing and the loss of opportunity to share my latest discoveries with them.

### Endnotes

1. E-mail message from David Heller to author, 23 November 2008.
2. Raquel Heller Newman (1928–2019).
3. E-mail message from David Heller to author, 28 November 2008.
4. "Dlouha Ves: Klatovy, Bohemia", *International Jewish Cemetery Project*, undated; <http://iajgscemetery.org/eastern-europe/czech-republic/dlouha-ves> (accessed 3 December 2021).
5. Josef Pick's Börse positions from Vienna city directories: Börse, Börse Arrangeur, Börse Cashier, Börse Comptoir, Börsesucher.
6. When Richard died, Bruno took over two-thirds ownership of the business, then called Pick and Heller. When Bruno died, his widow, who had worked in fashion in New York City, joined the business, followed by David some years later.
7. Sidonie (1865–1965) came in 1891, Melanie (1871–1955) in 1892, Bertha (1873–1973) in 1893, Robert (1874–1951) in 1895, and Mathilde (1861–1955) in 1897. Two Pick brothers—Arthur (1863–1915) and Jacob (1869–1955)—remained in Vienna. Jacob and his family and Arthur's son and his family were able to immigrate to the United States just before World War II, sponsored by family members.
8. E-mail message from Juliet C. to author, 5 December 2008.
9. E-mail message from Juliet C. to author, 28 November 2008.
10. Interview of Raquel Heller Newman by Ann L. Fuller, San Francisco, California, 10 January 2010.
11. E-mail message from Juliet C. to author, 25 November 2008.
12. Videotaped interview of Eleanor Kanter conducted by Mary L. Gray and Susan L. Kaplan, Chicago, Illinois, 1985. Eleanor also stated that Julie had said, perhaps to Bertha, "I never had a maid that he [Jacob] didn't sleep with."
13. State of Illinois, Cook County, Circuit Court, *Julie Heller vs. Jacob Heller*, Gen. No. 245916, Term No. 8287, Certificate of Evidence, 28 December 1903.
14. The 1888 document was the Declaration of Intention. Jacob was naturalized 13 November 1893. National Archives, Waltham, Massachusetts, *Petitions and Records of Naturalization, 2/1842–ca. 1991*, NAI number 3432872, Record Group 21 (Records of District Courts of the United States, 1685–2009), U.S. District Court, Providence, Rhode Island, (filmed) pages 6146–6146A.
15. In 1900, the Cook County infirmary consisted of an almshouse and an insane asylum; [https://www.asylumprojects.org/index.php/Cook\\_County\\_Infirmary](https://www.asylumprojects.org/index.php/Cook_County_Infirmary) (accessed 8 December 2021).
16. Videotaped interview of Eleanor Kanter conducted by Mary L. Gray and Susan L. Kaplan.

17. Aaron Kanter (1893–1967). He provided charity care at Cook County Hospital.
18. Hungary: Assorted Census Records, 1781–1850: Census Year 1850, Family Number 603; Town: Slanitz; District: Nameszto; County: Arva; Country: Hungary; FHL film 2062256; Record Number: –/609.
19. Italian Genealogical Group, <https://www.ItalianGen.org/> (accessed 3 December 2021).
20. For researchers unable to visit the Family History Library or a Family History Center, the Family History Library offers a free look-up service. Instructions on how to request a look-up are at <https://www.familysearch.org/en/family-history-library/family-history-library-records-look-up-service> (accessed 8 December 2021).
21. State of New York, Department of Health, Certificate and Record of Death 8604, Jacob Heller, issued 15 March 1906, citing death 14 March 1906.
22. E-mail message from David Heller to author, 10 December 2008.
23. E-mail message from David Heller to author, 12 December 2008.
24. E-mail message from Raquel Heller Newman to author, 11 December 2008.
25. Wikipedia contributors, “Slanica”, *Wikipedia, Die freie Enzyklopädie*, Wikipedia, Die freie Enzyklopädie, 20 March 2020; <https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slanica> (accessed 3 December 2021).
26. E-mail message from Mag. Thomas Maisel, Archiv der Universität Wien, to author, 20 January 2009.
27. Wikipedia contributors, “Stadtempel”, *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*, Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, 18 September 2021; <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stadtempel> (accessed 3 December 2021).
28. FamilySearch, Österreich, Niederösterreich, Wien, Matriken der Israelitischen Kultusgemeinde, 1784–1911 (Austria, Vienna, Registers of the Jewish Community), “Heiraten Nov. (Nr. 813 1874–Feb. Nr. 878 1885” (film 5202738), image 288 of 671; <https://www.familysearch.org/>, 9 November 2021 (accessed 18 December 2021). Israelitischen Kultusgemeinde Wien (Jewish Community of Vienna), Municipal and Provincial Archives of Vienna, Austria.
29. Israelitische Kultusgemeinde Wien (Vienna Jewish Community); <https://www.ikg-wien.at/en> (accessed 3 December 2021).
30. “Adolph Lehmann’s allgemeiner Wohnungs-Anzeiger” (Adolph Lehmann’s City Directories) 1859–1922, *Wienbibliothek im Rathaus* (Vienna Town Hall Library); <https://www.digital.wienbibliothek.at/nav/classification/2609> (accessed 3 December 2021).
31. *Evening Bulletin*, Providence, Rhode Island, 11 March 1893, page 8.
32. 1480 Madison Avenue, currently the site of Mt. Sinai Hospital, was a five-story building in 1902, as shown on a Sanborn fire map.
33. *Chicago Tribune*, Chicago, Illinois, 15 May 1902, page 2.
34. *New-York Daily Tribune*, New York, New York, 15 May 1902, page 16.
35. *New York Times*, New York, New York, 15 May 1902, page 3.
36. I used the *One-Step Webpages by Stephen P. Morse* site (<https://SteveMorse.org/>; accessed 3 December 2021) to find the Enumeration District for 1480 Madison Avenue in the 1900 census and then looked up who was living at that address.



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## The Surprising Origin and Development of the Dreidl Game

David Golinkin

Rabbi David Golinkin is Dean of the Rabbinical School and Associate Professor of Jewish Law at the Schechter Institute of Jewish Studies of the Masorti (Conservative) Movement in Jerusalem. His latest book is the *Responsa of the Va'ad Halakha*, Volume 6 (5755–5758). This is an abbreviation of a scholarly article. It is reprinted with permission of the author.

*In memory of Ro'i Shukrun on his second yearzeit; a Maccabee of our time who was killed in action in Lebanon on 25 Av 5757.*

Most of the *laws* of Chanukah are related to the lighting of the *menorah* or *chanukiya*<sup>1</sup>; this article, however, describes one of the best known *customs* of Chanukah. The main difference between laws and customs is that laws stem from rabbinic interpretations of the Torah and Talmud which then filter down to the Jewish people, while customs usually start with the people and filter up to the rabbis. Through customs, the Jewish people have shown their love for God and tradition and immeasurably enriched all aspects of Jewish observance.

### The Dreidl<sup>2</sup>

The dreidl or *sevivon* is perhaps the most famous custom associated with Chanukah. Indeed, various rabbis have tried to find an integral connection between the dreidl and the Chanukah story. The standard explanation is that the letters נ ג ה ש (nun, gimmel, hey, shin), which appear on the dreidl in the Diaspora, stand for נס גדול הושיענו שם (nes gadol haya sham), “a great miracle happened there”, while in Israel the letters are נ ג ה פ (nun, gimmel, hey, pey), for “a great miracle happened here.”

One 19th-century rabbi maintained that Jews played with the dreidl in order to fool the Greeks if they were caught studying Torah, which had been outlawed. Others figured out elaborate *gematriot*<sup>3</sup> and word plays for the letters נ ג ה ש. For example, נ ג ה ש in gematria is 358, which is also the numerical equivalent of משיח (mashiach), or Messiah! Finally, the letters נ ג ה ש are supposed to represent the four kingdoms which tried to destroy us: N = Nebuchadnezzar = Babylon; H = Haman = Persia = Madai; G = Gog = Greece; and S = Seir = Rome.

*Continued on page 18*

## Unexpected Links in Family Research

Jeff Lewy

Jeff Lewy became interested in genealogy to make sense of family photos going back four generations in the United States and Europe and to learn about the people in the photos. Most of his family lines arrived in the United States in the 1840's and 1850's, mostly in Alabama, before settling in Chicago by 1870. His tree now includes seven or more generations for most of his family names. He is the Treasurer of the San Francisco Bay Area Jewish Genealogical Society.

My great-great-grandfather Israel Lewy was born about 1792 in Kobyla Gora, now in Poland, but then known as Haideberg, Posen, Prussia. He moved to the larger town of Ostrowo, Posen, Prussia (now known as Ostrow Wielkepolski, Poland), about 25 miles away, where he married Jette Israel. They had about a dozen children, all born in Ostrow over the next 30 years.

During the two decades I have been working on my family history, I found that eight of the children immigrated to the United States during the period from the 1850's to the 1870's, with six following the first two, who settled in Montgomery, Alabama. All eight of the immigrants lived in Alabama until at least the late 1870's. Several of the immigrant generation stayed in Alabama until their deaths, and some of their descendants still live there. Four of the surviving immigrants moved to Chicago around 1880. I have also been able to trace two of the children who stayed in Europe.

The eighth child who immigrated was my great-grandfather Benno Lewy, who arrived in the United States around 1860 at the age of about 18. The U.S. Civil War began on 12 April 1861, and on 27 September 1861 he enlisted or was conscripted into Company A of the 23rd Alabama Infantry. Details in this article are taken from Benno's Compiled Military Service Record (CMSR) in the U.S. National Archives, among the records of more than two million soldiers who served in the Union and Confederate militaries during the Civil War. From 1861 to 1863 Benno served in Alabama, Tennessee, and Mississippi.

Benno appears on a roll of prisoners of war received on 18 May 1863 at the Union Military Prison in Alton, Illinois, on the Mississippi River about 25 miles north of St. Louis. He had been taken prisoner at Port Gibson, Mississippi on 1 May 1863. His timing was good. His unit, without him, appears to have gone to Vicksburg, Mississippi and taken part in the Battle of Vicksburg in early July 1863, a major conflict with enormous losses on both sides. Benno was subsequently transferred to the Union Prison Camp at Fort Morton in Indianapolis, Indiana.

On 8 December 1863, President Abraham Lincoln issued a proclamation authorizing the release of Confederate prisoners who would take an oath of allegiance to the United States. Benno is shown on a roll of prisoners of war at Camp Morton "who desire taking the Oath of allegiance and give bond." He is shown as residing in Montgomery, Alabama (before his war service). His bondsman was "Lewis Rich of St. Louis." Remarks: Conscript.

Special Order No. 6, issued under place and date of Washington, D.C., 15 November 1864, from the Office of the Commissary General of Prisoners, stated:

In pursuance of instructions received from the Secretary of War, Benno Levi [sic] Private Co. A 23 Ala. a Prisoner of War now confined at Camp Morton, Ind. Will be released on his taking the oath as prescribed in the President's Proclamation of Dec 8, 1863.

By order:

Brig[adier] Gen'l US Vol[unteer]s

Ins[pector] & Com[missary] General of Pris[oners]

W Hart

Capt[ain] & A[ssistant] A[djutant] Gen[eral]

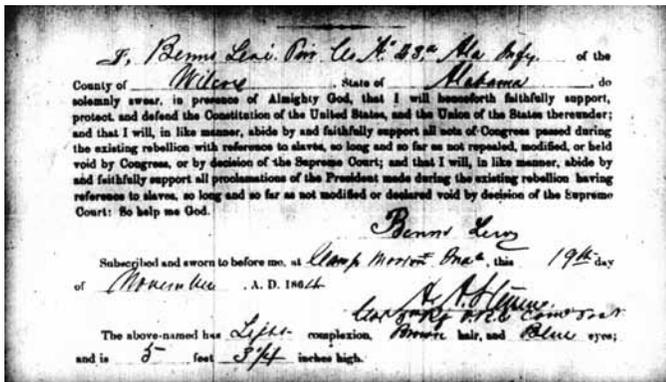
To Col[onel] A[ssistant] A[djutant] Stevens

Com[mand]in[g], Camp Morton

Indianapolis, Ind.

On a printed form with lines for hand entry of each individual's information (shown underlined below), Benno took the oath. The document includes Benno's signature.

I, Benno Levi [sic] Pvt. Co. A., 23rd Ala. Infy., of the County of Wilcox State of Alabama do solemnly swear, in presence of Almighty God, that I will henceforth faithfully support, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States, and the Union of the States thereunder; and that I will, in like manner, abide by and faithfully support all acts of Congress passed during the existing rebellion with reference to slaves, so long and so far as not repealed, modified or held void by Congress, or by decision of the Supreme Court; and that I will, in like manner, abide by and faithfully support all proclamations of the President



Benno Lewy's Oath of Allegiance

made during the existing rebellion having reference to slaves, so long and so far as not modified or declared void by decision of the Supreme Court: So help me God.

/s/ Benno Lewy [sic]

Subscribed and sworn to before me, at Camp Morton, Ind., this 19th day of November, A.D. 1864.

[Name and rank of attester unclear]

The above-named has Light complexion, Brown hair, and Blue eyes; and is 5 feet 3/4 inches high.

When I was first researching Benno's activities during the Civil War, I thought the bondsman Lewis/Louis Rich was a friend, with no idea how they had met or were connected. A bondsman had to be a resident of the Union, not the Confederacy. St. Louis was in Union territory, so Louis had standing to be Benno's bondsman.

Records from Ostrow show that one of Benno's older sisters was named Leie, born in 1832. At the time I researched Benno's Civil War service, I had no idea what had happened to her and assumed she was one of the siblings who stayed in Europe. I only began to learn the story of Leie and her descendants in 2012. That year, my second cousin Judy Lewy Brodner shared information from her childhood friend Audrey Agatstein Mann, that the death certificate for Audrey's paternal grandmother, Jennie Rich Agatstein, indicated that Jennie's mother was Leonora Lewy Rich and her father was Louis Rich. That means that Judy and Audrey were not only friends but 3rd cousins, a fact their parents never mentioned and maybe didn't know.

With this information as a clue for further research, I found Jennie Rich in the 1870 census in Montgomery, Alabama. Three children—Matilda, Julius, and Jennie—were enumerated with Louis and Clara Rich. The children were born between 1860 and 1867, however, so they were likely too old to be the children of Louis and Clara, who had

married in 1870. This was a clue that Clara was probably Louis' second wife. On Jennie's death certificate, Jennie's mother's name was Leonora. So I hoped there would be a grave for Leonora Rich, most likely in Oakwood Cemetery in Montgomery, where about a dozen Lewy family members were buried. A few years earlier, I had walked the Jewish section of Oakwood and found the Lewys, and the sexton showed me his card file created from the gravestones. But I hadn't looked for any other surnames, not knowing of anyone else to look for. When I contacted the sexton again in 2012, he said yes, there is a Leonora Rich in the cemetery, as well as a Matilda Rich Davis—the given name of one of the three children, who was likely Leonora and Louis' daughter and the right age to be the Matilda in the 1870 census.

Several of the Lewy immigrants took English given names rather than keep the German or Jewish given names shown in the Ostrow records. I surmise that Leonora was Leie, the child of Israel and Jette Lewy in the Ostrow records, born the same year, 1832.

After I learned about Leonora Lewy Rich, I realized that Louis Rich was not a random friend, but Benno's brother-in-law—his sister's husband! Louis was also the only known relative living in Union territory, so he was probably the only one with standing to be Benno's bondsman.

I have not definitively identified Leonora in any U.S. census, but I was able to learn about her family and her short life in the United States through other records. Since she and Louis Rich were both born in Prussia, they may well have married in the old country. I cannot find them in the 1860 U.S. Census, even though their first known child was born in St. Louis about 24 July 1860 (only a month after the 1860 census). Leonora died in Montgomery, Alabama in August 1868, before the 1870 census, and was buried in Oakwood Cemetery there 25 August 1868, at just 35 years old. She is the only person with the surname Rich in the cemetery, and her gravestone stands alone, even though at least eight other Lewy burials are in the same small Jewish section of Oakwood.

In the 1870 census, enumerated 29 July, Louis is shown as a clothing merchant in Montgomery with a (presumed) wife named Clara and three children. However, since Louis and Clara (née Gottschalk) were married after Leonora's death in 1868, and the children were born between 1860 and 1867, I believe the children were Louis and Leonora's. This was confirmed by the surviving children's much later death certificates, all three of which state that their mother was Leonora Lewy Rich.

St. Louis was an attractive destination for German immigrants, including Jews. It had a large German-speaking population starting in the 1840's, and because of its location on the Mississippi River and near the junction of the Missouri River with the Mississippi, the city grew rapidly as a transportation and industrial hub of the expanding American West.

The children born in St. Louis were Matilda, about July 1860; an unnamed child who died in St. Louis as an infant 2 July 1864; and Julius, about 1866. The third surviving child, Jennie, was born in Montgomery, Alabama about 1867, so Louis, Leonora, and the children likely moved from St. Louis to Montgomery about 1866, maybe to be with other family members after the Civil War.

Louis and Clara had two children of their own in Montgomery: David about 1871 and Fannie about 1874. Between 1874 and 1880, the family, including Leonora's three children and Clara's two, moved to Nashville, Tennessee. Louis died in Nashville on 3 January 1895, by which time four of the children were already married, and Clara died there 20 November 1928.

Matilda returned to Montgomery by 1880, where she married Augustus Davis, a dry goods merchant. Augustus and Matilda raised a family of three children, and both died in Montgomery. Julius stayed in Nashville, where he married Belle Heilbron about 1891. He worked as a clothing merchant, and they raised a family of three children. Both Julius and Belle died in Nashville. Jennie married Sam Agatstein in Nashville on 15 January 1890, and he worked as a tobacco salesman and cigar manufacturer. They had two children, Milton about 1891 in Montgomery and Louis about 1896 in Nashville, and the family moved to Philadelphia by 1900 before settling in Chicago by 1910, where both Sam and Jennie died.

This story exemplifies the importance of paying attention to even the smallest clues about our relatives and keeping those clues in mind as we gradually learn more about the family. In particular, any unrecognized names that appear on documents should be pursued, because they were connected to your family members in some way.

The story of my family is now richer for the assembly of these seemingly small and unrelated pieces of information.



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## Kokoschka and Natalie

Judy Vasos

Judy Vasos is a family historian/historical detective who has been researching family stories for 30 years. She lives in Oakland, California with her husband, Tony Baczewski. Judy is the author of *My Dear Good Rosi: Letters from Nazi-Occupied Holland, 1940–1943* and has written many family stories published in *ZichronNote*. She and Tony have traveled to Nuremberg and Vienna to have Stones of Remembrance (Austria) and Stolpersteine (Germany) laid to honor the memories of Tony's grandparents, who were murdered in the Holocaust.

My husband, Tony, and I could never have predicted the surprises awaiting us on our June 2018 trip to Vienna to attend a ceremony sponsored by the Association of Stones of Remembrance to commemorate the laying of a stone for Tony's paternal grandmother, Natalie Baczewski, who was murdered by the Nazis at Maly Trostinec on 18 September 1942. Stones of Remembrance (*Verein Steine der Erinnerung*) are similar to Stumbling Stones (*Stolpersteine*), which is what they are called in Germany. They both commemorate individuals, usually at their final residences, who were victims of the Nazis.

In preparation for the ceremony, we were asked to send what we knew about Natalie along with photos for a booklet the association would create.

We didn't know much about Natalie. Tony had never met her. He was saddened and angered that his grandmother had been murdered for the "crime" of being Jewish. I had greater distance and had been very close to my own grandmother. I became interested in putting together a picture of what I supposed was Natalie's full rich life as a mother, wife, and sister based on the few scraps of information we had. A quote from Elizabeth Ben David-Hindler, the founder of the association, strengthened my desire to focus on Natalie's life rather than her unjust and gruesome death. Elizabeth said "not to remember



*Tony Baczewski next to portrait of his grandmother Natalie Baczewski, the first time Tony had seen the painting. Photo taken on lower level of the Leopold Museum in Vienna, where the painting was being kept before being hung for the Kokoschka retrospective.*

the murders but the life—the stone we set brings the victims back into our lives.”

Tony recalled his father, Alexander, telling him how playful Natalie was with him and his brother, Victor, when they were children, adopting the same height they had by sitting on her knees during playtime. She was funny, dramatic, and a great storyteller, using different voices for different characters.

A relative had told us that Natalie and her husband, Max Baczewski, were well-to-do, lived in a comfortable well appointed apartment in Vienna, and had a summer home in Molding, outside Vienna. She told us about Natalie's sense of fairness and generosity. Once, Natalie and Max were visiting his younger sister, Mathilda, who lived close to them. Natalie excused herself from the conversation

taking place in the living room and went into Mathilda's kitchen. She had brought measuring tools with her and proceeded to take the measurements of her sister-in-law's kitchen floor without anyone knowing what she was doing. Several days later, workers from a flooring company came to Mathilda's house to install new flooring, paid for by Natalie and a complete surprise to Mathilda. I can only imagine Natalie's delight at pulling that off.

She and Max belonged to a progressive community. Natalie was involved in abortion rights through various programs initiated by the ideas of Margaret Sanger.

Natalie's mother died when Natalie was 2. Her four siblings were living on their own, and Natalie lived with her father, Sigmund Steinhaus, in Vienna. She was engaged to Max Baczewski, a successful patent attorney, in 1907, and she wanted to give Max a wedding present of a painting of herself.

Natalie and Sigmund went to the School of Arts and Crafts at the Austrian Museum of Art to seek a talented painter to do the portrait. Oskar Kokoschka, a student at the school, was recommended. He later became famous as one of Austria's greatest Expressionist painters.

Kokoschka came to the Steinhaus home over many days as Natalie sat for her portrait. A niece of Natalie's who visited during this time remembered seeing Kokoschka painting the portrait and also enjoying lunch with the family.

Tony's father knew nothing of these details. He knew that a portrait of his mother had been painted by Kokoschka and that his older brother, Victor, had acquired it after the war. It was hanging in Victor's home in Berlin until 1973. On his death bed Victor married his long-time companion, Birgit, and without telling his brother left the painting to her. Of course the painting meant a lot to Alexander. He resented Victor's decision.

Birgit kept the painting for several years and then sold it to a gallery. It went from gallery to gallery and to private individual collectors until 2015, when it was acquired and exhibited at a gallery in Pöchlarn, Austria, a few hours from Vienna and the birthplace of Kokoschka.

We found out about the painting from Eduard Wexberg, whom we met at Natalie's stone-laying ceremony. Eduard and his wife, Anna, live at Waltergasse 4, the same building where the Baczewskis used to live. They invited us and the 40 people in attendance to use the large, elegant lobby of the building for Natalie's ceremony. Everyone crowded in, listened while we spoke of Natalie, and showered us with support for honoring her. We were thrilled to be in the same place where Natalie and her family had lived and imagined them in the lobby as they went in and out of apartment #16 on the second floor every day.

We hadn't mentioned the painting to Eduard, but he was a family historian like myself and was researching what he could find online about the Baczewski family. When he found the image of Natalie's portrait hanging in the gallery in Pöchlarn and sent it to us, we were astonished and immediately contacted the gallery to arrange a time to see the painting. The owner told us the painting was no longer at his gallery and had been given to the Leopold Museum in Vienna on permanent loan.



*Stone of Remembrance for Natalie at her former home, Waltergasse 4, Vienna. Translation of the stone's text: "Here lived Natalie Baczewska, née Steinhaus, born 9 August 1883 / Deported 14 September 1942 to Maly Trostinec / Murdered 18 September 1942." Flowers placed and photo taken 21 June 2018, the day of the ceremony.*

Through others who had been at the ceremony we made contact with the Leopold's curator, Heike Elpeldauer, and director, Hans-Peter Wipplinger, to arrange to see the painting. We were excited.

The painting was kept in the museum's archives. We met a staff person on the lower level of the Leopold, and she rolled out a painting. She removed the protective cover and said, "Here it is." It wasn't Natalie, and we told her so. She looked carefully at the identification and exclaimed, "You're right, this is Mrs. Fisher." I was worried they had lost Natalie. But soon another painting was rolled in and it was, to our great relief and awe, the portrait of Natalie.

Several staff members of the gallery had their mobile phones ready, and the very first photo they wanted was of Tony standing next to the portrait of his grandmother. Tony obliged, and then the rest of us joined him at the painting. When I forwarded the photo to Eduard, he noted that Tony and Natalie's hands were in similar positions. The rest of us had been too emotional and excited to notice. We learned later that Kokoschka placed special emphasis on the hands of the subjects he painted.

We had a million questions for Elpeldauer and Wipplinger about where the painting had been and how it came to be in the possession of the Leopold. The painting was one of Kokoschka's earliest works, and when Wipplinger saw it at the Pöchlarn Gallery in 2015 he negotiated with the owner to let the Leopold Museum have it on permanent

loan. A Kokoschka retrospective was scheduled at the Leopold for April 2019, less than a year away, and Natalie’s portrait would be an important part of the exhibit. It was Kokoschka’s earliest portrait, so it would be the first painting displayed in the retrospective.

We were not going to be able to attend, but I gave Elpeldauer a copy of the booklet created for Natalie’s ceremony with the information we had provided about her. Elpeldauer assured us they would put the text next to Natalie’s painting for the retrospective. She also agreed to give us a copy of the provenance report the Leopold would generate to document the history of the painting.

The question we had was whether Tony and his brother, Steve—the grandchildren of Natalie and her only living descendants—had a claim to the painting? This question required further research, and it was ultimately decided that because no Nazi “pilfering” could be documented in the provenance report, Tony and his brother had no claim.

At our next family reunion, I told of our unexpected experiences in Vienna and of the upcoming Kokoschka retrospective, where Natalie’s portrait would be exhibited. Everyone showed an interest in the story. My younger brother, David, and his wife, Carolyn, planned to be in Switzerland during the time of the retrospective and entertained the idea of a side trip to Vienna to “visit Natalie.”

I let the museum staff know of this possibility, and Dave and Carolyn connected with Elpeldauer’s assistant, Aline. She told them to pick a day to visit the Leopold. They

randomly chose a Tuesday, not knowing this was a day the museum was closed. This was not a problem for Aline, however, and she sent them a map with an arrow pointing to a private entrance they could use. They had the rare experience of being alone in the museum and having the personal attention of Aline to “introduce” them to Natalie, hear stories of Kokoschka, and ask any questions they had. An enlightening and unforgettable day by any measure.

Two other friends happened to be in Vienna that summer and also went to the Leopold to visit Natalie. Both couples took photographs next to her portrait and sent them to us. Natalie suddenly seemed so alive and popular!

Just when we thought our happiness meter was full with the abundance of events related to Natalie, a print of her portrait arrived from the Leopold, a gift from Dave and Carolyn.

We had the print framed, and it hangs in a prominent spot in our home where Natalie can look at us and remind us that you never know what can happen. Tony and I went alone to Vienna for a ceremony to honor Natalie’s death with a Stone of Remembrance only to connect with a large group of people who magically expanded the experience and helped bring Natalie alive to us.

Eduard and Anna remind us periodically they are watching Natalie’s stone in front of Waltergasse 4. When recent construction was done on the building they were careful to cover the stone to avoid any damage to it.

We do not have a claim on the Kokoschka painting of Natalie. But as the founder of the Stones of Remembrance believed, Natalie has been brought back into our lives by so many who connected with her in Vienna during and after our journey there in 2018, a trip we will never forget.

For those interested in learning more about Stones of Remembrance, you can visit the Association of Stones of Remembrance at <https://www.steinedererinnerung.net/>. If you wish to submit to have a stone laid, there is a waiting list, but it’s well worth the wait.



The text next to the portrait of Natalie on display at the Leopold Museum’s Kokoschka retrospective



Natalie’s name on Vienna’s Shoah Wall of Names Memorial, which lists almost 65,000 Jewish victims from Austria who were murdered by the Nazis

<https://www.reuters.com/world/vienna-opens-first-public-memorial-listing-holocaust-victims-names-2021-11-09>



*The Dreidl, continued from page 11*

In truth, however, all of these elaborate explanations were invented after the fact. The dreidl game originally had nothing to do with Chanukah; it has been played by various people in various languages for many centuries (see the table below).

In England and Ireland a game called *totum* or *teetotum* is especially popular at Christmas time. In English, this game is first mentioned as *totum* circa 1500–1520. The name comes from the Latin *totum*, which means “all.” By 1720, the game was called *T-totum* or *teetotum*, and by 1801 the four letters represented four words in English: **T** = Take all; **H** = Half; **P** = Put down; and **N** = Nothing.

Our Eastern European game of dreidl (including the letters ג א ה נ) is directly based on the German equivalent of the game: **N** = Nichts = nothing; **G** = Ganz = all; **H** = Halb = half; and **S** = Stell ein = put in. In German, the spinning top was called *torrel* or *trundl*; in Yiddish it was called *dreidl*, *fargl*, *varfl* [= something thrown], *shtel ein* [= put in], and *gor* or *gorin* [= all].

When Hebrew was revived as a spoken language, the dreidl was called, among other names, a *sevivon* (סביבון)–which is the one that caught on.

Thus the dreidl game represents an irony of Jewish history. In order to celebrate the holiday of Chanukah, which celebrates our victory over cultural assimilation, we play the dreidl game, which is an excellent example of cultural assimilation! Of course, there is a world of difference between imitating non-Jewish games and worshipping idols, but the irony remains nonetheless.



Dreidls by PublicDomainImages at Pixabay.com

### Endnotes

1. In the Diaspora, the Chanukah lamp is called a *menorah*; in modern Israel it's called a *chanukiya*. Technically speaking, the *menorah* is the seven-branched candelabrum which was used in the Tabernacle and in the Temple in ancient times (Exodus 37:17–24; Numbers 8:1–4) and should not be used to describe a Chanukah lamp.
2. Based on Israel Abrahams in Emily Solis-Cohen, editor, *Hanukkah: The Feast of Lights*, Philadelphia, 1937, pages 105–106; Yitzchak Rivkind, *Der Kampf Kegn Azartshpielen bei Yidn*, New York, 1946, pages 49–54; Yom Tov Levinsky, editor, *Sefer Hamo'adim*, Volume 5, Tel Aviv, 5714, pages 225–226; Akiva Ben Ezra, *Minhagey Hagim*, Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, 5723, pages 138–139; Sidney Hoenig in Philip Goodman, editor, *The Hanukkah Anthology*, Philadelphia, 1976, pages 265–266; and Uri Sela, *Yediot Aharonot*, 27 Heshvan 5748.
3. A gematria is an explanation based on the fact that every Hebrew letter has a numerical value, so if word x = 100 and word y = 100, this can become the basis for a homiletic explanation connecting the two words.



International Permutations of the Dreidl Game					
Country/Language	Name of the Game	Take All	Take Half	Put in More	Do Nothing
England, Ireland c. 1500 CE	Totum (Latin)	T = Totum	A = Aufer	D = Depone	N = Nihil
England 1801	T-totum	T = Take	H = Half	P = Put Down	N = Nothing
France 1611	Toton	T = Toton	A = Accipe	D = Da	R = Rien
Sardinia, Italy	Tutte	T = Tutte	M = Mesu	P = Pone	N = Nuda
Germany	Torrel, Trundl	G = Ganz	H = Halb	S = Stell ein	N = Nichts
Hebrew, Yiddish	Dreidl	G א = Gadol	H ה = Haya	Sh נ = Sham; P ג = Po	N ג = Nes

## Genealogy Events

### Local and Regional

Tuesday, 11 January 2022. California Research Series, 6 classes through March 25, Tuesdays. California Genealogical Society. Zoom. [https://www.californiaancestors.org/ngs-2022-family-history-conference/#CA\\_Research](https://www.californiaancestors.org/ngs-2022-family-history-conference/#CA_Research)

Tuesday, 18 January 2022. Kenneth C. Davis, "Why We Don't Know Much about History." Santa Clara County Historical and Genealogical Society. Zoom. <http://www.scchgs.org/>

Saturday, 22 January 2022. Margaret Melaney, "The 1890 Census." San Mateo County Genealogical Society. Zoom. <http://www.smcgs.org/>

Monday, 24 January 2022. "DNA Analysis for Genealogy." Oakmont Genealogy Club. Zoom. <https://sites.google.com/site/oakmontgenealogyclub/>

Thursday, 27 January 2022. Stacey Sanders, "Using DNA to Solve a Lingering Family Mystery." Marin Genealogical Society. Zoom. <http://maringensoc.org/>

### State and National

Wednesday, 19 January 2022. Cari Taplin, "Case Studies in Analyzing Research with Maps." First in 2022 monthly series from Genealogical Society of New Jersey. Zoom. <https://www.gsnj.org/2022-webinar-series-your-roots-pursuits/>

Wednesday–Saturday, 3–5 March 2022. RootsTech Connect. Online and FREE. <https://www.rootstech.org/>

Sunday–Thursday, 21–25 August 2022. IAJGS International Conference on Jewish Genealogy. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. <http://www.iajgs2022.org/>

### International

6 October–4 November 2021 (Cheshvan 5782). International Jewish Genealogy Month. <http://www.iajgs.org/blog/ijgm/>

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

### Free Genealogy Webinars (Registration Usually Needed)

Allen County Public Library. <https://acpl.libnet.info/events>  
FamilySearch. [https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Family\\_History\\_Library\\_Classes\\_and\\_Webinars](https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Family_History_Library_Classes_and_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>

International Society for British Genealogy and Family History, 2021–2022 Winter schedule. <https://mailchi.mp/c808efee8d1e/winter-webinar-schedule-2021-22>

Jewish Genealogical Society of New York. <https://jgsny.org/programs-civi/year.listevents/2021/01/24/>

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

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

National WWII Museum. <https://www.nationalww2museum.org/events-programs/events-calendar> (live); <https://www.youtube.com/c/wwiimuseum/videos> (recorded)

Ontario Genealogical Society. <https://ogs.on.ca/webinars-2020>

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

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

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

### Some Recorded Webinar Libraries

Center for Jewish History. <https://www.facebook.com/watch/centerforjewishhistory/501317183869918/>

Clark County (Washington) Genealogy. <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCU3xUStuw4Na0hAZ0XMfMvQ>

FindMyPast. <https://www.youtube.com/user/findmypast>

Jewish Genealogical Society of Long Island. <https://jgsl.org/>; <https://jgsl.org/youtube/>

JewishGen. <https://www.jewishgen.org/live>, <https://www.youtube.com/user/JewishGen613/videos>

Jewish Lives. <https://www.jewishlives.org/podcast>

JDC Archives. <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCMbxlm35r4F4kHPpp-MFSg>

Los Angeles Public Library Genealogy Garage. <https://tinyurl.com/3rpf7yc>

Moment Magazine. [https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL7oVkadwPksjzJ\\_i0J1UZ6ulledRSclx2](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL7oVkadwPksjzJ_i0J1UZ6ulledRSclx2) (several relevant to genealogy)

Sephardic Genealogy. <https://www.youtube.com/c/SephardicGenealogyAndHistory>

Sephardic World. [https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLmVEojTkF-DPooNu-\\_Jzi4I4t23P0Pweb](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLmVEojTkF-DPooNu-_Jzi4I4t23P0Pweb)

YIVO Institute for Jewish Research. <https://www.youtube.com/user/yivoinstitute>





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## Upcoming SFBAJGS Events

Currently all scheduled events are being held online with Zoom.

**Monday, 24 January:** *Navigating the New York City Census with Fewer Tears.* Member Steve Morse will discuss the 1905, 1915, and 1925 New York City censuses and how to search them using the One-Step Website.

**Sunday, 13 February:** *Genealogy for Sale: Researching in Auction Houses.* Daniel Horowitz (MyHeritage) will demonstrate how to leverage auction sales for your family history.

**Monday, 13 March:** *What's New in Family Tree Maker.* Family Tree Maker Ambassador Mark Olsen will bring us up-to-date on the latest features in *Family Tree Maker* and its partner products, and answer questions about how to use them effectively.

**Sunday, 10 April:** *Bubbie, Who Are You?: Finding the Maiden Names in Your Family Tree.* ZichronNote editor Janice M. Sellers will celebrate her birthday by sharing many of the types of documents that can help you track down elusive maiden names.

See page 19 for other events of interest.

For more program information and to register for a presentation, visit <http://www.sfbajgs.org/>.

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