



זכרונות ZichronNote

The Journal of the San Francisco Bay Area Jewish Genealogical Society

Volume XLIII, Number 2

September 2023

Reaching Across Time

*In this issue we feature two stories of matching descent
In the first, a distant cousin emails a Hello!
In the second, mtDNA serves up a deep history
And so, sometimes another seeker finds us*

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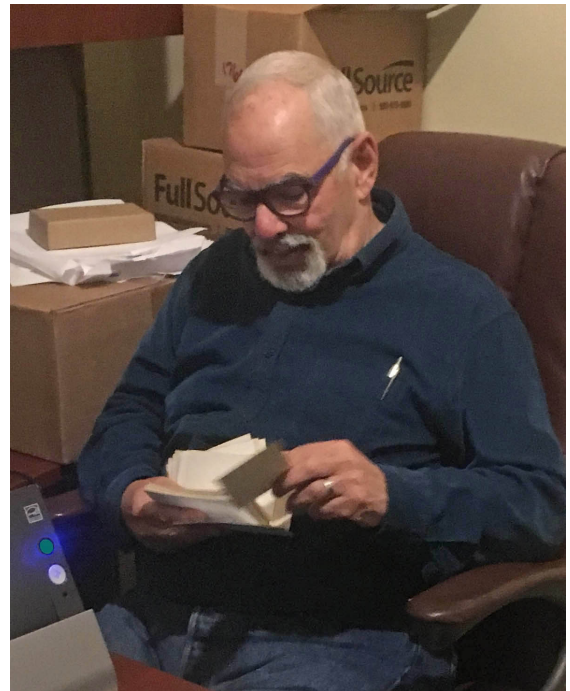
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Invite a Friend to Join SFBAJGS

<https://www.sfbajgs.org/about.html>

ZichronNote
Journal of the

San Francisco Bay Area Jewish Genealogical Society

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Society Addresses

SFBAJGS, P.O. Box 318214, San Francisco, CA 94131-8214

Web site: <https://www.sfbajgs.org/>

Society Contacts

President: Jeremy Frankel, president@sfbajgs.org

Vice President: Preeva Tramiel, vicepresident@sfbajgs.org

Secretary: Shellie Wiener, secretary@sfbajgs.org

Treasurer: Dana Kurtz, treasurer@sfbajgs.org

Membership: Might this be you? membership@sfbajgs.org

Programs: Janice Sellers, programs@sfbajgs.org

Publicity: Might this be you?

Webmaster: Barbara Stack, webmaster@sfbajgs.org

Transcription Project Coordinator: Pierre Hahn

transcriptions@sfbajgs.org

Electronic Newsletter Coordinator: Dana Kurtz,

newsletterexchange@sfbajgs.org

Founder: Martha Wise

ZichronNote

Editor: Barbara Toby Stack, ZichronNote@sfbajgs.org

Proofreading and advice: Dana Kurtz and Janice Sellers

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President's Message

Jeremy Frankel, SFBAJGS President

This issue of *ZichronNote* is coming on the heels of us celebrating the Jewish New Year, that came in on the evening of September 15th. Just two weeks earlier the Society was hit with the terrible news of the passing of Jeff Lewy, long-time board member, treasurer, and co-organizer of the Transcriptions Committee. As you will read elsewhere in these pages, Jeff was involved with several other organizations, and we most certainly benefited from his knowledge and experience gained from working in various capacities. As I previously wrote, and say it again here, his passing will be felt for a long time.

The Society is extremely grateful to Dana Kurtz, past president, who also edited *ZichronNote* for many years, for graciously stepping into Jeff's very large shoes, and assuming the role of treasurer. I say "assuming," in fact the board unanimously and happily voted Dana into the position. I must also thank Preeva Tramiel and Barbara Stack who have answered myriad questions concerning the Society's finances.

Your board is also saying *au revoir* (I hate saying "good-bye") to Dale Friedman, yet another long-time board member. Health issues are demanding more of Dale's attention, and so he has sadly tendered his resignation. Dale is another person whose broad knowledge and enthusiasm will be sorely missed. We are more than pleased to have Roy Ogus join us as a new board member. If his name sounds familiar, it ought to, Roy is Vice-President and Editor of the JewishGen Southern African SIG, and a recently retired computer engineer by profession.

As of this time of writing, it appears that the Nominating Committee may be seeking a new Secretary. If that is the case, then the board really owes an awful lot to Shellie Wiener for her superb work as Secretary since 2011. Shellie has done her best to keep us on track during our occasional meandering discussions, ensure our motions reflected the intentions of the submitter, our meeting minutes were accurate, and sent out in a timely fashion. We wish her well for the future.

That said, the board currently has nine members, and we would love to see a few more new faces sitting around the virtual "board-room table." We're a very congenial group and enjoy shepherding the Society and doing our best for the membership. We meet four times a year (currently via Zoom) and our meetings usually last no longer than a couple of hours or so. If you have any interest or would like to know more, please contact me at president@sfbajgs.org.

Editor's Column

For this issue I reached across time and reanimated the remnants of my facility with InDesign, survived my first bout with covid, which bit off about a month's editing capacity, and began the annual pruning of my vining roses when I needed outdoor branchings. I mirrored the footers, learned how to make images flow with the text, wrangled tables, and ventured into Illustrator to jazz up an image. I also got my mtDNA tested and matched a longtime SFBAJGS member (not Janice).

Our new/old Treasurer Dana Kurtz recently asked me for my thoughts on strengthening our Society. I responded that just as a family with a genealogy and family history can become more confident and potentially a stronger network for having a back story, so might an organization benefit from an accessible history with recognizable actors and accomplishments. I hope *ZichronNote* can continue to serve such a purpose.

What does a child, a future genealogist look like? They might be a curious asker and listener, a photographer, a collector, a reporter, a writer, an organizer of events, people, information. Nurture them.

What does a future SFBAJGS Board member look like? Look in the mirror?

When people ask me about travel, I say that I prefer time travel.

We genealogists routinely reach across time to document and interpret the past and to wrap our albums and genealogies and stories in such a fashion as to send them forward into the future with good prospects. I recently bought some acid-free and lignin-free paper, and dove backward into the *ZichronNote* archive for facts and inspiration. The Internet Archive's Wayback Machine has been a great help in making available old versions of the SFBAJGS website. I might also mention here an invaluable finding aid for the current state of our Society's website, and usable on almost any search engine and website is:

search term(s) site:SFBAJGS.org

Now it's time to quote a Jewish philosopher: "Be Here Now." I am enormously grateful to have found a place on the SFBAJGS team. It is a beautiful thing to have such colleagues as these.

Barbara Toby Stack
September, 2023
Berkeley, CA

A Hello from my Third Cousin Twice Removed

Rebecca Fischel Elliot

Rebecca Fischel Elliot, born and raised in San Francisco, started charting her family's history in the mid-1980s using Ancestry.com, My Heritage and JewishGen. She found her older half-brother through Ancestry in 2012 and has connected more than 600 cousins throughout the United States and Israel. She is a longtime member of SFBAJGS.

Retired in 2011, Rebecca's interests include political activism, genealogy, reading and, since the pandemic, limited travel.

First Contact

Hello!

My name is Lióz, and Wolf Fischel is my great grandfather. I saw him in your family tree and I'd love to fill in the gaps in mine.

How are you related? We are probably relatives as well.

Thank you.

Lióz's message appeared in my inbox on My Heritage in October 2020. It was the first year of the pandemic. I was home and spending a lot of time on genealogy. Lióz's message from Israel began a two-week daily correspondence as we tried to figure out if we were, indeed, related. Towards the end of the second week I received this message from Lióz:

Hello again,

I have another smart match with your tree, Chana Fischel. The dates of birth and death are the exact same ones so I believe it must be the same woman. Also many of her relatives are equivalent. Wolf Fischel was Chana's father, but she also named her son Wolf. That's my great grandfather and now I know about two different Wolf Fischel's.

Two Wolfs

Although I had long hoped to make more paternal family connections, I was dubious about the relationship between the Guttman and Fischel families. I had two Wolf Fischels on my paternal family tree but had not figured out who they were or why they were there. I almost gave up but Lióz was persistent and so we continued our email correspondence.

Professional Help

Finally, I saw the beginning of a connection to Lióz's mother, Malka. The link is multi-layered and it was quite confusing. Like any good armchair genealogist who is uncertain about linking folks to each other I knew I needed guidance. So I reached out to Janice Sellers for help in getting the connections right.

Great Grandfather's Brother Wolf

My great grandparents, Moshe and Machla Fischel, had three children, Mindel, Solomon and David. Solomon was my grandfather. My great-grandfather, Moshe, had an older brother named Wolf who was my great-granduncle.

Wolf Fischel the Elder

Wolf Fischel married a woman named Chaya. They had at least 10 children, most of whom seem to have either died young or left Poland. One of their daughters, Chana, married Israel Glucksman.

Cousin Wolf the Younger

Chana and Israel had four children all of whom took the surname Fischel. One of those children was Wolf Fischel, named after his deceased grandfather. Chana and my grandfather Solomon were first cousins. Wolf and my father, Morris, were second cousins so Wolf was my second cousin, once removed.

Names from Female Line

Malka's mother was Lea Schlesinger, born Glucksman, her mothers surname, most likely because her parents were married in a Jewish, not civil, ceremony. Hence, the newborn children were registered with their mother's name, Glucksman. Lea took her husband's surname Schlesinger after they married.

Wolf Fischel's Line

Lea's father was Wolf Fischel, son of Chana Fischel (Glucksman). He took the surname Fischel from his mother as his father's surname was Glucksman (he married his first cousin).

Wolf Fischel was Malka's grandfather and the grandnephew of Moshe Fischel, my great grandfather.

Malka Guttman is my third cousin and her son Lióz my third cousin twice removed.

A Visible Relatedness

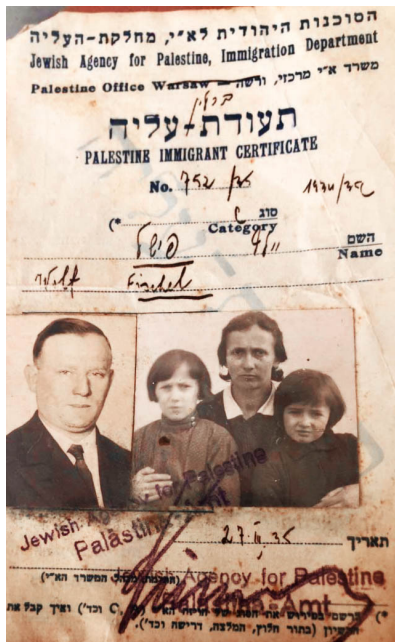
My sister’s reaction when I sent her the photo of Lióz was, “He is so handsome and he has the Fischel eyebrows.” The Fischel eyebrows are a big deal—both my half-brothers have them and so do my sister and I, to a degree.

I met my new cousins over Zoom for the first time in December 2020. Since then, we have exchanged many messages via WhatsApp and talked over the phone. We hope to meet in person either here or in Israel sometime in the near future.



Malka and Lióz Guttman

Like my family, and perhaps your families as well, Lióz’s grandparents did not share many details of their past. So, I know very little about the two men named Wolf Fischel. My grandparents did not speak of their lives in Poland, and neither did anyone else in the family. All I knew was they spent WWII in a Siberian work camp.



Wolf Fischel immigration to Palestine



grandfather Reb Solomon Fischel

Last year back issues of the *The Jewish Community Bulletin*, which was a staple in every Jewish home in San Francisco, were digitized. Perusing back issues I found a trove of information that helped fill in gaps in my paternal family’s story.

4 THE JEWISH COMMUNITY BULLETIN

CONSOLIDATED WITH EMANU-EL Friday, September 19, 1947

**A New Home for a New Year
Rabbi Fischel's Parents Find Haven Here After Long Trek**

L'Shanah Tobah V'tehatem—May you be inscribed and sealed for a happy year.

For Rabbi Solomon Fischel and his wife, the traditional greeting at the end of the Rosh Hashonah eve service had a special meaning.

This New Year already has begun auspiciously for them. The bearded Rabbi took his place at the side of his son, Rabbi Morris Fischel at the holy day services of Temple Chevre Thilim as the last phase in an eight year odyssey which began in Poland for him and his wife.

The Hebrew scholar and his wife fled their native town of Sanok, Poland in 1939 and spent the war years in an internment camp in Siberia. They returned to Poland after the war's end hoping to remake their lives, only to take flight again after the Kielce pogrom.

This time, they rushed westward into the American zone of Germany to the displaced persons camp at Wasseralfingen near Stuttgart. There, their son, Temple Chevre Thilim's rabbi, found them six months ago when he was in Europe for the Vaad Hatzala.

He brought them, his three sisters and two brother-in-laws, to Paris where they were able to live until transportation arrangements could be made. Help was given the family by the Joint Distribution Committee which also arranged ship passage for the old couple.

In the meantime, the congregation appointed the older Rabbi assistant to his son and he and his wife arrived in San Francisco in time to celebrate the New Year.

Rabbi Fischel expects to bring the rest of his family to the United States in the next few months.

My grandparents, Solomon and Blima Fischel, and their three daughters and sons-in-law fled Poland in 1939 to escape the Nazis. They were captured by Russian soldiers and spent the war in a Siberian work camp. They returned to Poland after being liberated with the hope of restoring their lives in the country of their birth.

Sadly, in 1946, they once again were forced to flee Poland during the Kielce pogrom. This time they went westward to the American Zone in Germany where they found refuge at the Wasseraflingen Displaced Persons Camp near Stuttgart.



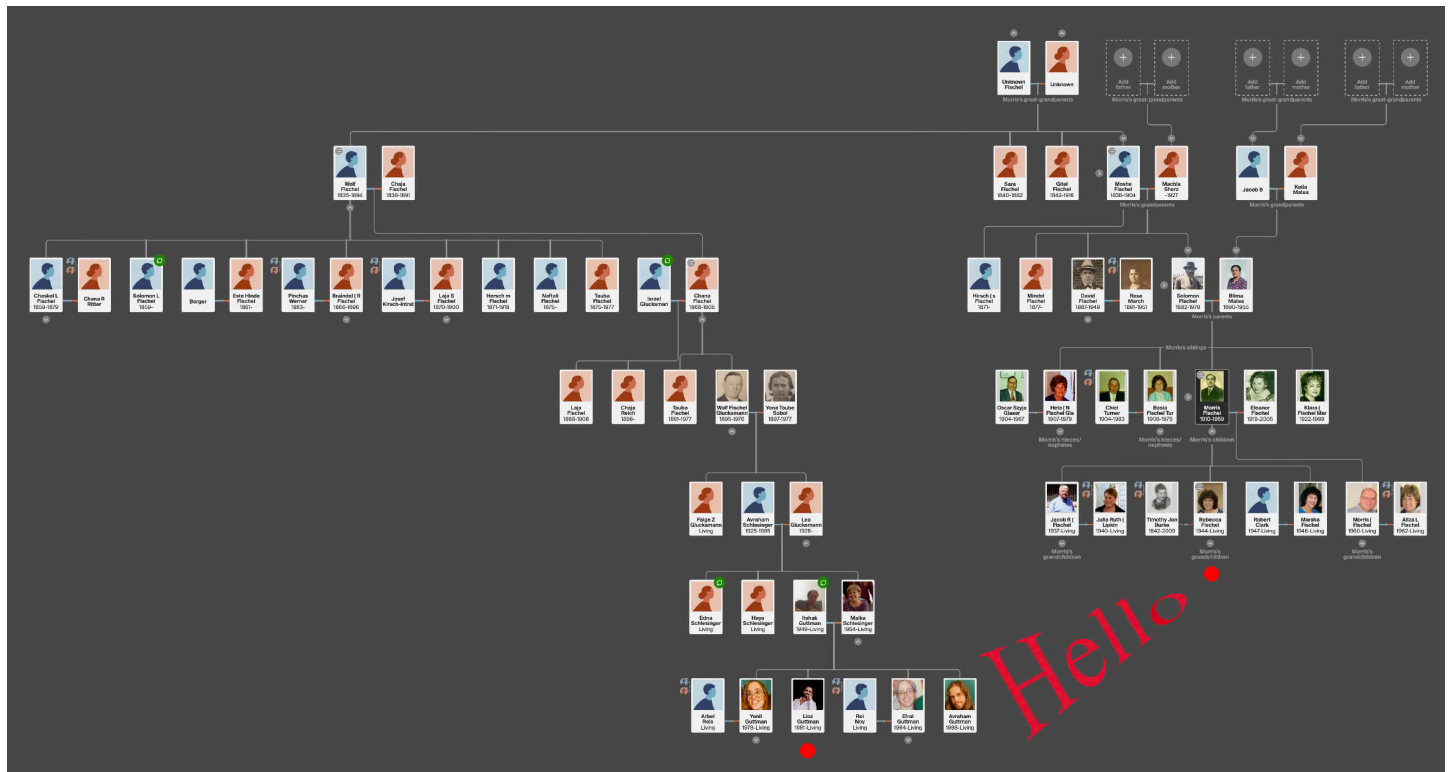
Wasseraflingen DP Camp. My father is in the middle of the second row. His mother and father, my grandparents Blima and Solomon are on either side. My Aunt Helen is in the back row. My Uncle Oscar, her husband, is the the third row, second from the left.

In early 1947 my father, Chevra Thilim Rabbi Morris Fischel, spent two months touring European displaced persons camps as the emissary of Vad Hatzala, the Jewish Welfare Organization. He was part of a United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration supervised mission to visit camps in Austria, Poland, Germany and Czechoslovakia.

Arriving at the Wasseraflingen DP camp he found his mother, father, three sisters and two brothers-in-law. With the help of the Joint Distribution Organization, he was able to get them all to Paris where they lived until he arranged visas for them to come to America.

My grandfather and grandmother arrived in San Francisco in September 1947. My grandfather had to show gainful employment to enter America so Congregation Chevra Thilim appointed him Assistant Rabbi. They arrived in time for my grandfather to take his place at the side of his son and officiate at High Holy Day services - a happy ending to an eight-year journey that began in Poland in 1939.

I continue on my genealogy searches through My Heritage and [Ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com). I am always open to new contacts and/or DNA matches and will now be searching for more connections to the Wolf Fischel branch on my family tree, hoping to add more depth and meaning to my paternal family's story.



Hello across space and time. Living family members included with their permissions.

San Francisco Chronicle
September 4, 2023

Jeff Lewy
August 1, 1942 - July 31, 2023

Jeff Lewy passed away July 31st, the day before his 81st birthday. Jeff was the loving partner since 1979 and spouse since 2008 of Ed Eishen. Jeff was the son of the late Richard B and Jane (Loewenthal) Lewy, brother of Dr. Peter Lewy of Highland Park, IL, fond uncle of Patricia (Lewy) Horing of New York City and Porte Lewy of Bend, OR.

Jeff always felt lucky to have a large circle of friends and biological and chosen family members. He worked in the aviation industry for most of his career, and spent his time after retirement at age 53 in philanthropic work, especially in board service, fundraising, and mentoring others to be philanthropic.

August 1, 2023

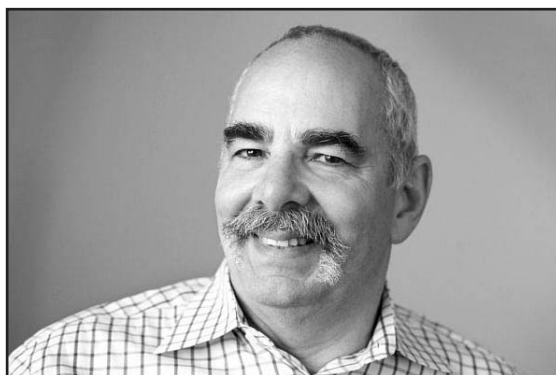
Dear Society Members,

It is with extreme sadness that I report the passing of Jeff Lewy, board member, treasurer, membership director, director of our Transcriptions Committee, and a wonderful friend to all of us. As treasurer, Jeff kept a very steady hand on the tiller of our finances. Along with fellow Society and board member, Pierre Hahn, the two of them, and a small but enthusiastic group of volunteers, add some 40,000 names to the JOWBR project.

It goes without saying the Jeff was also an avid genealogist, proud to say that his family had immigrated to America before the civil war. He self-published several small booklets, detailing his research and discoveries, not least, his magnum opus *200 Years of the Lewy Family*, which he published in 2015.

The board and Society extend their sincere condolences to Jeff's husband, Ed Eishen, both their families and wide circle of friends.

Jeremy Frankel, President



a photo of unknown origin which captures Jeff's warm, knowing, amused and congenial essence.

**Jeff Lewy's Work with SFBAJGS
The Cemetery Project
now called The Transcription Project**

Of course any discussion of Jeff Lewy's contributions is bound to be incomplete. No only was he a longtime Board member, but, according to the official record, *ZichronNote*, itself, in February, 2008, Jeff assumed the office of Treasurer, no small undertaking. And from whom did Jeff take the office? That would be the indefatigable Dana Kurtz, (a past-president who also edited ZN for many years), who is now once again serving as Treasurer.

Then there is the matter of SFBAJGS's Cemetery Project, which might well be known as Cemetery Projects, as it has encompassed so many undertakings over so many years. The Project was first noted in the February 1996 *ZichronNote* with Cemetery Committee Chair: Gordon J. Fine. The November 2002 issue lists the Chair as Sita Likuski. In the May 2004 ZN, the Cemetery Project Co-Coordinator were Sita Likuski and Pierre Hahn. In August, 2005, Pierre assumed the chair, and held it through May of 2017. During the period August to November 2017 Barry Klezmer held the post. Then, in the spring of 2018 until his death, Jeff was the head of the Project and advanced the undertakings in a number of directions, including moving some of the data onto our website.

The SFBAJGS website, like the past issues of *ZichronNote*, holds a lot of our Society's history. What's more, our site holds the entire catalogue of past issues of ZN, except for the most recent year or two, held back for the member benefit of exclusive access. On January 1, 2024, we'll post the issues of 2022.

One of Jeff's innovations was to rebrand the Cemetery Project as the "Transcriptions Project" highlighting the work of his team of hard-working and dedicated volunteer transcribers of the scans created by the Coordinators. (I thought enough of this project to convince my sister in Texas to work with Jeff, whom she very much enjoyed and respected.)

Part of the impetus for the Project was our understanding that the 1906 earthquake and fire destroyed many vital records in San Francisco. We knew that the burial records could provide valuable alternative sources on Bay Area Jewish lives and deaths.

Jeff wrote for our website: "The members of SFBAJGS have already added more than 30,000 local Bay Area records from local cemeteries to JOWBR*. We have transcribed the records at Home of Peace Cemetery, Hills of Eternity Cemetery, and Salem Memorial Park, all in Colma, California. We are now working on Eternal Home Cemetery in Colma, and Home of Peace Cemetery in San Jose, California. In addition to contributing these records to JOWBR, we also give copies of the digitized records to the cemeteries from which the written records came. In some cases, these transcribed records are the first digital records these cemeteries have for their early burials."

Only Beth Israel Salem Cemetery records are now fully available on our site, both as a searchable index and linked Salem leger page images. Pierre Hahn has now graciously again stepped into the Coordinator position. You can email him at transcriptions@sfbajg.org



*JOWBR, the JewishGen Online
Worldwide Burial Registry

March 16, 2018
Jeff Lewy and Pierre Hahn scanning cards

| RECORD SALEM CEMETERY | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------|-----|------|-----------------------------|-----|------|-----|-------|-----------------|---------|-------|--------------|--------------------------|
| Congregation Beth Israel | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Burial No. | DATE OF BURIAL | | | NAME OF DECEASED | SEX | AGE | | | PLACE OF BURIAL | | | Fidger Eolio | REMARKS |
| | Month | Day | Year | | | Year | Day | Month | Block | Section | Lot | | |
| 7 | Dec | 24 | 1891 | Asher Matilda | | 51 | | | 2 | B | 10 | ✓ | Removed 5-A-4 |
| 47 | Apr | 25 | 1892 | Alexander Dora | | 10 | 10 | 16 | 2 | B | 11 | ✓ | |
| 49 | May | 5 | " | Alexander Sarah | | 73 | | | 3 | B | 11 | ✓ | 5-A-6 |
| 66 | Jul | 6 | " | Alexander Isaac | | 57 | | | 2 | D | 27 | | |
| 82 | Sep | 11 | " | Abraham Amata | | 59 | 6 | 10 | 2 | D | 99 | | |
| 118 | May | 2 | 1893 | Abrams Mary | | 3 | 14 | 8 | 4 | B | 2 | ✓ | |
| 129 | " | 29 | " | Alexander Harry | | 34 | | | 5 | A | 6 | ✓ | |
| 130 | " | 29 | " | Alexander Ben | | 32 | | | 5 | A | 6 | ✓ | |
| 174 | Feb | 11 | 1894 | Ash Aaron | | 29 | 3 | | 5 | D | 19 | | |
| 202 | Jul | 12 | " | Adelstein Inf. St. | | | | | 4 | D | 189 | | 4-2-10 |
| 216 | Sep | 30 | " | Adler Louisa | | 66 | | | 5 | A | 5 | ✓ | |
| 256 | Apr | 14 | 1895 | Abrams Bertha | | | | | 2 | D | 77 | | |
| 276 | Jun | 17 | " | Ashim Mame | | 27 | | | 2 | D | 78 | | |
| 280 | " | 27 | " | Abrams M. | | | | | 4 | D | 180 | | |
| 304 | Aug | 18 | " | Alexander Fritz | | 45 | 1 | | 2 | A | 12 | ✓ | |
| 307 | " | 21 | " | Asherson Victor | | | | | 4 | B | 7 | ✓ | |
| 308 | " | 21 | " | Asherson Bertha | | | | | 4 | B | 7 | ✓ | |
| 310 | Sep | 2 | " | Asherson Jacob | | | | | 4 | B | 7 | ✓ | |
| 311 | " | 2 | " | Asherson Bertha | | | | | 4 | B | 7 | ✓ | |
| 323 | Oct | 7 | " | Alexander Lena | | | 1 | 27 | 4 | D | 177 | | |
| 367 | Apr | 10 | 1896 | Ash Wolf | | 72 | | | 5 | D | 15-6 | | |
| 379 | Jan | 1 | " | Abrams Jacob | | 38 | | | 2 | D | 75 | | |
| 383 | " | 14 | " | Asher ^{Mary} Maria | | 86 | | | 3 | F | 18 | ✓ | |
| 387 | Jul | 10 | " | Asherson Louis | | 23 | 14 | 8 | 4 | B | 7 | ✓ | |
| 391 | " | 20 | " | Anthony H. J | | 56 | | | 4 | F | 18 | ✓ | |
| 409 | Nov | 19 | " | Ash Henna | | 70 | 3 | 4 | 5 | D | 14 | | |
| 416 | Dec | 13 | " | Appell Nethe | | | 1 | 10 | 4 | D | 172 | | |
| 426 | Feb | | 1897 | Aaron David | | 68 | 2 | 18 | 3 | H | 4-5 | ✓ | Removed to Block 6-Lot 4 |
| 427 | " | 10 | " | Aronson Philip | | 44 | | | 4 | F | 16 | ✓ | |
| 464 | Jul | 24 | " | Aubrod Stella | | 1 | 2 | | 4 | D | 167 | | |
| 475 | Sep | 3 | " | Anixter Rachael | | 48 | | | 3 | G | 6 | ✓ | |
| 487 | Oct | 7 | " | Asher Samuel | | 56 | | | 3 | H | 10 | | |
| 538 | May | 6 | 1898 | Abrams Richa | | 70 | | | 5 | F | 9 | ✓ | |
| 545 | Jun | 7 | " | Aubrod Inf. S. | | | | | 4 | D | 156 | | |
| 561 | Aug | 11 | " | Asher Bertha | | | | | 3 | H | 10-11 | | |

Page A01 of the Beth Israel Salem Memorial Park Ledger

Sometimes Another Seeker Finds Us

Barbara Toby Stack

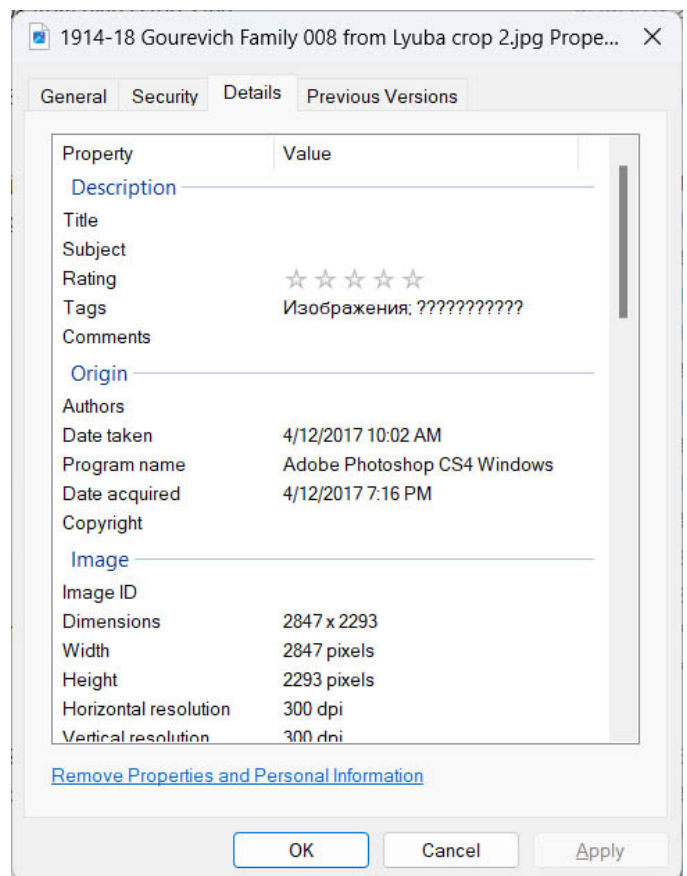
Janice Sellers terms websites “cousin catchers” That can include cousins of cousins

On March 23, 2017 I received an email from Russian teen and genealogist Luba Kirsanova, inquiring about her grandfather’s uncle Morris, who had emigrated to the USA from Russia. My Google Analytics had shown multiple hits from Nizhny Novgorod, Russia, looking at Thorner pages. It turned out that the connection was someone who had married into Paul Thorner’s family—his wife Edith’s father Morris Horowitz.

Lyuba asked after her grandfather’s cousin, Edith Horowitz Thorner, who was listed on my site with photos. Alas, Edith had died in 2008, but I contacted her widower, Paul, and he put me in touch with Edith’s last living sibling, Rebecca Horowitz Mann. Rebecca was surprised, to say the least! And though initially cautious, she was increasingly thrilled to have been found as well as to have found out this large chunk of family history.



1942-43 Edith and Paul Thorner from the collection of Lyuba Kirsanova of Nizhny Novgorod, Russia



The whole episode was delightful and it included sharing two versions of a cherished family portrait from circa 1915. I also include above a screen shot of the metadata for the Nizhny Novgorod image which has, in Russian, the word Изображения; “image.”

The image to the left is Paul Thorner and his wife Edith Horowitz Thorner in 1942 or 1943, before their marriage. Apparently someone sent the photo to the family in Russia, the only copy of the photo. Paul was gobsmacked when he saw it again in 2017.

My experience has been that many photos I would have expected to find in my parents’ albums appear in the albums of cousins. Our family histories are distributed over the trees and networks of family and friends all over the planet. And our collections and our recipes and our stories complete one another’s world.

You can read more here.



1914-18 circa, Liozna, Belarus. Gourevich Family. Collection of Lyuba Kirsanova and Genadiy Gourevich.



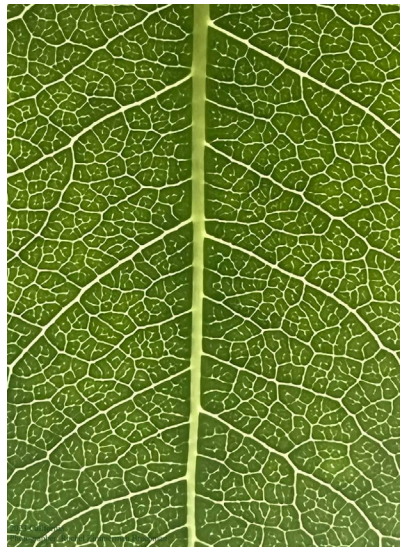
Same photo passed down in Rebecca Mann's American family!

Your Story Belongs in *ZichronNote*

Have you had a breakthrough in your family research, solved a family mystery through a novel resource, pulled together a team of cousins to reconstruct a branch, or walked where your ancestors walked? Have your projects moved forward with the help of online assistance? Has your family's history or pursuing your family's history taught you something about life? Tell us your story, share your discovery! We want to read about it in *ZichronNote*. Please submit materials to zichronnote@sfbajgs.org.

This is a leaf.
It is not a tree.
In mathematics,
it is a network.
It's a like a family
tree with lots of
cousin marriages.

ZichronNote
would welcome
an article written
for the genealogy
community and
perhaps by a member
of the genealogy
community on the
mathematics of trees.



This photo of a leaf
was taken in 2023
in southern California
by photographer
Rachel Zimmerman Brachman.



We have neglected to share with our readers that SFBAJGS was honored in 2022 by the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies at the IAJGS Achievement Awards:

IAJGS Outstanding Publication Award 2022: San Francisco Bay Area JGS for *ZichronNote*

In recognition of its outstanding efforts to inspire active participation among its members and excitement about Jewish genealogy in the wider community, the San Francisco Bay Area Jewish Genealogical Society has been selected as a recipient of the 2022 IAJGS Outstanding Publication Award for its quarterly publication, *ZichronNote*. Edited by Janice M. Sellers, this journal features articles based on original research and timely commentaries written by members.

A Bit of ZN History

Continuing our review of historic *ZichronNote* banners, begun in our last issue, it was in February of 2012 that our now-familiar logo first appeared atop page 1:



Compare with our current version:



The difference, by design, is hard to see, especially at this scale. But the two images have different life histories. When preparing the May 2023 issue, the original artwork for the journal was unavailable and all we had was a relatively low resolution pdf. So, ZN availed itself of the latest digital technology, an online image upscaler to increase the resolution of the text. And so when you next are tempted to excoriate AI, remember what it did for us.

The title *ZichronNote* made its debut in the Spring of 1990. From September 1981 through February 1990 the name of our Society doubled as the name of our publication. Printing developed from dot-matrix technology and color popped onto the scene in May, 2009!

Since the founding by Martha Wise, our editors have included Janice M. Sellers Beth Galletto, Dana L. Kurtz, Carolyn Sherfy, Robert Weiss, Martha L. Wise, and Peter Tannen.

The reader can find pdfs of back issues of *ZichronNote*, September, 1981 through November 2021, here:

<https://www.sfbajgs.org/ZichronNote/ZichronNote.html>

Issues are made available exclusively to SFBAJGS members for two years and are then posted for everyone.

Copyright for individual articles remains with the authors.

Retiring Board Member Dale Friedman

According to our unimpeachable source, *ZichronNote* itself, Dale was elected to the Board in early 2008. Here's what he wrote for our website:

Dale has been a board member of the San Francisco Jewish Genealogy Society since 2007. He has been avidly researching all sides of his own and his wife's family history for over 20 years. This in turn has led to an interest in Jewish life in Eastern Europe, house-centric genealogical approaches and single surname studies beyond that of his immediate family. Dale has been fortunate to find many heretofore-unknown relatives as well as meeting and forming wonderful friendships with other Jewish genealogists worldwide.

We can add that Dale has been active in many arenas, attending and pitching in at IAJGS conferences, advocating for genealogy novices, serving as a maven to both beginning and experienced researchers.

Here's the oldie original from the August, 2007, ZN:



Looking Back at the 2007 IAJGS Conference: Dale Friedman, Marilyn Dornhelm, Michael Feiler, and Vivian Kahn report at the August SFBAJGS meeting in Berkeley. original photo by Jeremy Frankel substituted for ZN b&w



Looking forward to seeing you at a committee meeting, Dale!

The Newest SFBAJGS Board Members

At the SFBAJGS Board meeting of August 27, Jeremy appointed a new Treasurer, Dana Kurtz, and by dint of her appointment, a new Board member. However, new is a relative term here. Dana first shows up in the *ZichronNote* Officer listing in the August 1993 issue as Librarian, a post she held through November of 1995.

In February, 1996, Dana was the Society's new President, and led the Society through 1997, followed by two years as VP. As we noted in our last ZN, Dana also served as Editor of *ZichronNote* from November 1996 through mid-2001 when Beth Galleto assumed the post.

Here is Dana's bio from our Board page:

An IT project management consultant, Dana returns to the Board after a long hiatus. In more than 30 years of membership, Dana has held almost every Board and Officer position: President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Membership, *ZichronNote* Editor, Webmaster, Publicity, Librarian, Family Finder/Roster producer, Annual Workshop Coordinator, Elections Chair; and brought cookies to meetings.

Dana's interest in genealogy really took off in the late 1980s when searching for her grandmother's birth certificate to ensure a proper 90th birthday celebration. To everyone's surprise, that birthday had come and gone, her grandmother was already 93.

Putting her genealogical skills to work, Dana provided research for her brother Glenn, author of the highly acclaimed book *Three Minutes in Poland: Discovering a Lost World in a 1938 Family Film*. The story traces Glenn's journey to identify people in movie film shot by their grandfather in a return visit to the town of his birth. The book and film inspired the award-winning documentary *Three Minutes: A Lengthening*.

Dana continues researching her ancestors and descendants, still excited to find and connect with "new" family after all these years.



Longtime SFBAJGS member Roy Ogus was elected to the Board on August 27 as an At-Large member:

Roy Ogus has been researching his family history since 1985. He has documented his family worldwide, and has traced his ancestors back to Lithuania and Belarus in the early 18th century. Roy was born in South Africa, and has been living and working in the San Francisco Bay Area since the 1970s. A member of the San Francisco Bay Area JGS for nearly 30 years, he has published articles in the journals *Avotaynu*, *ZichronNote* (JGS San Francisco), *Shemot* (JGS Great Britain), and *Roots-Key* (JGS Los Angeles), and has given presentations at numerous IAJGS annual genealogy conferences. Roy is the Vice-President and Journal Editor of the JewishGen Southern African Research Division, a LitvakSIG District Coordinator, and a [former] *Avotaynu* Contributing Editor. He is a computer engineer by profession.



SFBAJGS is a democratic community organization

Following our Bylaws, we hold election of officers every two years. All members in good standing are eligible to vote.

Nominations for President, Vice-President, Treasurer, and Secretary close October 15 and can be submitted via mail to our post office box

SFBAJGS
P. O. Box 318214
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or via email to nominations@sfbajgs.org. The election will take place in December with both online and vote-by-mail options.

Vote!

Members new to SFBAJGS in 2023

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| Charles Rath | |
| Andrew Roth | San Francisco |
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| Ella Tumlin | Novato |
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| Suzanne Waxman | |

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And if, somehow, we have omitted your name, please, please contact our Treasurer Dana Kurtz

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Matching a Medieval Erfurt Jew to Modern Ashkenazic Jews

by Kevin Alan Brook

Kevin Alan Brook is a historian and population geneticist whose most recent book is *The Maternal Genetic Lineages of Ashkenazic Jews*

14th century Jews buried in Erfurt, Germany

One of 2022's most momentous genetic studies presented many types of data from 33 Jews who were buried in the city of Erfurt in central Germany in the mid-to-late 14th century (Waldman et al., 2022). Some of these Jews (called "Erfurt-ME") descended from the Jews of the Rhineland further to the west while others ("Erfurt-EU") were Knaanic Jews who had lived in Czechia and Poland and had spoken Slavic. Although both subgroups had Middle Eastern and Southern European roots in common, the Knaanic Jews had heavily intermarried with West Slavic converts to Judaism around the start of the 13th century, that is, about 5 generations before the Erfurt samples. Modern Ashkenazic Jews from Eastern Europe are descended from both groups but somewhat more from the Rhineland Jews (roughly a 60:40 ratio) and only a very small amount of ancestry was contributed later by Sephardic Jewish migrants and newer Polish converts.

Janice Sellers is a match

The Erfurt sample I will focus on here, because she matches *ZichronNote's* former editor and many other modern people of Ashkenazic descent, has the sample code I14740 and has been uploaded to GEDmatch as kit number EJ7716177. This woman died no later than the year 1398 and her age at death is estimated to have been between 35 and 50. She had 829,090 SNPs tested, which provide decent SNP overlaps with modern Ashkenazim.

Different profile than typical for modern Ashkenazi

In GEDmatch's Eurogenes K36 calculator, she scores a total of 29.14 percent in West Asian elements (adding up 12.52 percent East Mediterranean, 9.26 percent Near Eastern, 3.38 percent Arabian, 2.74 percent Armenian, and 1.24 percent West Caucasian), significantly less than any modern Ashkenazim. For comparison, as a full modern Eastern Ashkenazi, my total for those five elements is 39.83 percent and some Ashkenazim score several points higher than I do. Her Slavic-associated components include 4.47 percent Central European, 13.27 percent East Central European (based primarily on Belarusian, Lithuanian, and Ukrainian reference samples), and zero percent Eastern European whereas mine are only 2.75, 5.01, and 0.71 respectively.

Her mtDNA haplogroup, N9a3a1b1, still extant in today's Eastern Ashkenazi population (GenBank sample OQ732365 from my data set), is identified in the study as being "nested within a Central/East Asian branch" in part because its parent subclade, N9a3a1b, is found among Turkic-speaking Bashkirs from the Ural Mountains area (BioProject samples SRS6892124 and SRS6892238 from the data set of Nagy et al. 2021) and Mongolic-speaking Daurians from northeastern China (GenBank sample ON127764 from the data set of Jia et al. 2022). Simultaneously, she carries higher-than-average total Khazar-associated elements for a Jew: 2.1 percent East Central Asian (based on Daurians and other Mongolic and Tungusic peoples) plus 4.04 percent Volga-Ural (based on Turkic-speaking Chuvash reference samples) but no amount of Siberian for a total of 6.14 percent. I only score 0.39 percent Volga-Ural and nothing in the East Central Asian and Siberian elements.

Surviving autosomal DNA Identity by Descent (IBD)

Inside GEDmatch, I found only two valid autosomal DNA segments of at least 7 centimorgans in length that are shared between this woman from Erfurt and modern Ashkenazim: the one I present below and one on chromosome 22 positioned from 34 million to 38 million. In general, the numbers of valid segments that each medieval Erfurt Jew shares with modern Jews are not large because only a small minority of their segments have remained unrecombined in the Jewish population to the present day. In some cases these segments' survival can probably be attributed to their location in more conserved regions of chromosomes or because of later parental ages in some lineages or because more fathers than mothers transmitted the segment up to the present day (less segments inherited from fathers get completely broken up and recombined by crossovers compared to those from mothers). Except for a few areas adjacent to Excess IBD Regions, the outer limit for survival of intact identical-by-descent segments with lengths of 6 or greater centimorgans is about 20 generations.

I validated these segments by doing triangulation and parent-child phasing and by ensuring none of them are located in an Excess IBD Region. There is no way to determine whether any modern Ashkenazim directly descend from her or only are related to her through a common ancestor, such as one of her parents.

The following participants represent only a subset of the total matches I found to this segment:

EJ7716177: 14th-century Erfurt Jewish sample I14740

T788836: Janice M. Sellers = half-Ashkenazi Jewish + half European Christian; tested with Family Tree DNA

T781846: L. Z. G. = Ashkenazi Jewish; tested with Family Tree DNA

A698401: W. Metzger = 3/4th Ashkenazi + 1/4th non-Jewish Italian; tested with AncestryDNA

T577154: David Şloim Marcus = Ashkenazi Jewish; tested with Family Tree DNA

T731722: Shaun Marcus = Ashkenazi Jewish, son of David Şloim Marcus; tested with Family Tree DNA

M411264: Arnold Marcus = Ashkenazi Jewish, son of David Şloim Marcus; tested with 23andMe

M550241: Hillary D. = Ashkenazi Jewish, granddaughter of David Şloim Marcus' brother; tested with 23andMe

DS6892903: modern Polish Jew "Ashkenazi5788" from Iosif Lazaridis' 2014 data set; has relatively low SNP overlaps with the other kits due to chip incompatibilities

Their shared segment on chromosome 11 positioned from 18 million to 21 million:

| Chromosome | Start Position | End Position | Centimorgans | SNPs |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|------|
| Comparing Kit EJ7716177 (Erfurt I14740) and Kit T788836 (Janice M. Sellers) | | | | |
| 11 | 18,950,092 | 21,425,793 | 7.6 | 540 |
| Comparing Kit EJ7716177 (Erfurt I14740) and Kit T781846 (L. Z. G.) | | | | |
| 11 | 18,787,044 | 21,425,793 | 7.8 | 554 |
| Comparing Kit EJ7716177 (Erfurt I14740) and Kit A698401 (W. Metzger) | | | | |
| 11 | 17,520,339 | 21,425,793 | 9.6 | 630 |
| Comparing Kit EJ7716177 (Erfurt I14740) and Kit T577154 (David Şloim Marcus) | | | | |
| 11 | 18,950,092 | 21,604,897 | 7.9 | 576 |
| Comparing Kit EJ7716177 (Erfurt I14740) and Kit T731722 (Shaun Marcus) | | | | |
| 11 | 18,950,092 | 21,425,793 | 7.6 | 524 |
| Comparing Kit EJ7716177 (Erfurt I14740) and Kit M411264 (Arnold Marcus) | | | | |
| 11 | 18,906,611 | 21,425,793 | 7.7 | 749 |
| Comparing Kit EJ7716177 (Erfurt I14740) and Kit M550241 (Hillary D.) | | | | |
| 11 | 18,973,545 | 21,425,793 | 7.6 | 739 |
| Comparing Kit EJ7716177 (Erfurt I14740) and Kit DS6892903 (Polish Jew Ashkenazi5788) | | | | |
| 11 | 18,278,098 | 21,183,993 | 8.1 | 286 |

Triangulation

Although triangulation technically refers to a minimum of 3 matches (the triangle), in my experience at least 4 matches are needed to be sure the matching isn't by chance. To confirm that a segment is valid, we always look to find at least four matches to a segment who are not close relatives and all of whom match each other in every possible combination with approximately the same start and end points across the same chromosome. It means that person A matches B, C, and D on the same segment, just as person B matches C and D and C matches D. In addition to that, it is beneficial to find that some close relatives share this segment. These processes help to weed out false matches.

View the Triangulations on page 18.

Future experimentation with the medieval Erfurt Jewish samples could involve attempting to match them to other medieval European Jews as well as to members of medieval European peoples to whom they were related within genealogically-significant timeframes such as Czechs, Germans, and Khazars. I already was able to find a 7.1 centimorgan segment match with 480 SNPs on chromosome 16 positioned from 18 million to 24 million between sample I14853 (GEDmatch SQ3204446), one of the Erfurt Jews, and sample SB676 (GEDmatch TU3514934), one of the Tzarfati (Northern French) Jews who were killed in Norwich, England in 1190, although this match has not been triangulated or phased. The Jews in Norwich were very genetically and culturally similar to the early and modern Jews from Rhineland Germany.

Triangulations to establish this cluster of matches is identical-by-descent from a common ancestor:

| Chromosome | Start Position | End Position | Centimorgans | SNPs |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-------------|
| Comparing Kit T788836 (Janice M. Sellers) and Kit T781846 (L. Z. G.) | | | | |
| 11 | 18,796,480 | 22,803,712 | 10.3 | 1,415 |
| Comparing Kit T788836 (Janice M. Sellers) and Kit A698401 (W. Metzger) | | | | |
| 11 | 18,939,666 | 21,654,066 | 8 | 797 |
| Comparing Kit T788836 (Janice M. Sellers) and Kit T577154 (David Şloim Marcus) | | | | |
| 11 | 17,934,383 | 21,610,969 | 9.4 | 1,326 |
| Comparing Kit T788836 (Janice M. Sellers) and Kit T731722 (Shaun Marcus) | | | | |
| 11 | 17,934,383 | 21,654,066 | 9.5 | 1,321 |
| Comparing Kit T788836 (Janice M. Sellers) and Kit M411264 (Arnold Marcus) | | | | |
| 11 | 17,427,363 | 21,654,066 | 10.1 | 1,497 |
| Comparing Kit T788836 (Janice M. Sellers) and Kit M550241 (Hillary D.) | | | | |
| 11 | 16,829,568 | 23,374,739 | 13.8 | 2,002 |
| Comparing Kit T788836 (Janice M. Sellers) and Kit DS6892903 (Polish Jew Ashkenazi5788) | | | | |
| 11 | 18,973,545 | 22,786,413 | 10 | 316 |
| Comparing Kit T781846 (L. Z. G.) and Kit A698401 (W. Metzger) | | | | |
| 11 | 18,562,982 | 21,587,215 | 8.5 | 841 |
| Comparing Kit T781846 (L. Z. G.) and Kit T577154 (David Şloim Marcus) | | | | |
| 11 | 18,787,044 | 21,574,121 | 8.1 | 1,111 |
| Comparing Kit T781846 (L. Z. G.) and Kit T731722 (Shaun Marcus) | | | | |
| 11 | 18,762,983 | 21,587,215 | 8.2 | 1,117 |
| Comparing Kit T781846 (L. Z. G.) and Kit M411264 (Arnold Marcus) | | | | |
| 11 | 18,796,480 | 21,587,215 | 8.1 | 1,064 |
| Comparing Kit T781846 (L. Z. G.) and Kit M550241 (Hillary D.) | | | | |
| 11 | 18,195,348 | 22,395,192 | 10.5 | 1,374 |
| Comparing Kit T781846 (L. Z. G.) and Kit DS6892903 (Polish Jew Ashkenazi5788) | | | | |
| 11 | 18,795,058 | 21,537,221 | 8 | 280 |
| Comparing Kit A698401 (W. Metzger) and Kit T577154 (David Şloim Marcus) | | | | |
| 11 | 18,939,666 | 21,660,464 | 8 | 796 |
| Comparing Kit A698401 (W. Metzger) and Kit T731722 (Shaun Marcus) | | | | |
| 11 | 18,939,666 | 21,660,464 | 8 | 781 |
| Comparing Kit A698401 (W. Metzger) and Kit M411264 (Arnold Marcus) | | | | |
| 11 | 18,882,221 | 21,660,464 | 8.1 | 813 |
| Comparing Kit A698401 (W. Metzger) and Kit M550241 (Hillary D.) | | | | |
| 11 | 18,939,666 | 21,658,844 | 8 | 802 |
| Comparing Kit A698401 (W. Metzger) and Kit DS6892903 (Polish Jew Ashkenazi5788) | | | | |
| 11 | 18,278,098 | 21,983,447 | 9.6 | 304 |
| Comparing Kit T577154 (David Şloim Marcus) and Kit T731722 (Shaun Marcus) | | | | |
| 11 | 198,510 | 50,668,400 | 68.9 | 13,152 |
| Comparing Kit T577154 (David Şloim Marcus) and Kit M411264 (Arnold Marcus) | | | | |
| 11 | 198,510 | 50,668,400 | 68.9 | 12,861 |
| Comparing Kit T577154 (David Şloim Marcus) and Kit M550241 (Hillary D.) | | | | |
| 11 | 12,189,013 | 21,539,055 | 15.9 | 2,705 |
| Comparing Kit T577154 (David Şloim Marcus) and Kit DS6892903 (Polish Jew Ashkenazi5788) | | | | |
| 11 | 18,973,545 | 21,184,613 | 7.1 | 229 |
| Comparing Kit T731722 (Shaun Marcus) and Kit M411264 (Arnold Marcus) | | | | |
| 11 | 198,510 | 44,890,761 | 67 | 11,976 |
| Comparing Kit T731722 (Shaun Marcus) and Kit M550241 (Hillary D.) | | | | |
| 11 | 12,189,013 | 22,119,239 | 17 | 2,810 |
| Comparing Kit T731722 (Shaun Marcus) and Kit DS6892903 (Polish Jew Ashkenazi5788) | | | | |
| 11 | 18,973,545 | 21,184,613 | 7.1 | 222 |
| Comparing Kit M411264 (Arnold Marcus) and Kit M550241 (Hillary D.) | | | | |
| 11 | 12,189,013 | 22,030,566 | 16.8 | 3,693 |
| Comparing Kit M411264 (Arnold Marcus) and Kit DS6892903 (Polish Jew Ashkenazi5788) | | | | |
| 11 | 18,809,542 | 21,262,591 | 7.5 | 325 |
| Comparing Kit M550241 (Hillary D.) and Kit DS6892903 (Polish Jew Ashkenazi5788) | | | | |
| 11 | 18,973,545 | 21,262,591 | 7.3 | 311 |

Postscript

UNESCO names Erfurt's medieval Jewish buildings in Germany as a World Heritage Site.

Erfurt's Jews who were buried in the cemetery and supplied the DNA samples weren't representatives of Erfurt's original Jewish community that had built the Old Synagogue in the 11th-14th centuries and attended it until the Erfurt massacre and expulsion of 1349, but rather those who moved in from other towns a few years later.

Acknowledgements

All of the aforementioned living, non-anonymous GEDmatch participants gave me written permission to have their kits represented in this article and they saw drafts of this article before I submitted it. Thanks to the Erfurt study's co-author Shai Carmi of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem for his feedback on this and similar Erfurt DNA segments. Thanks also to the Erfurt study's co-author Leo Cooper for feedback on a draft of this article.

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