



Etz Chaim

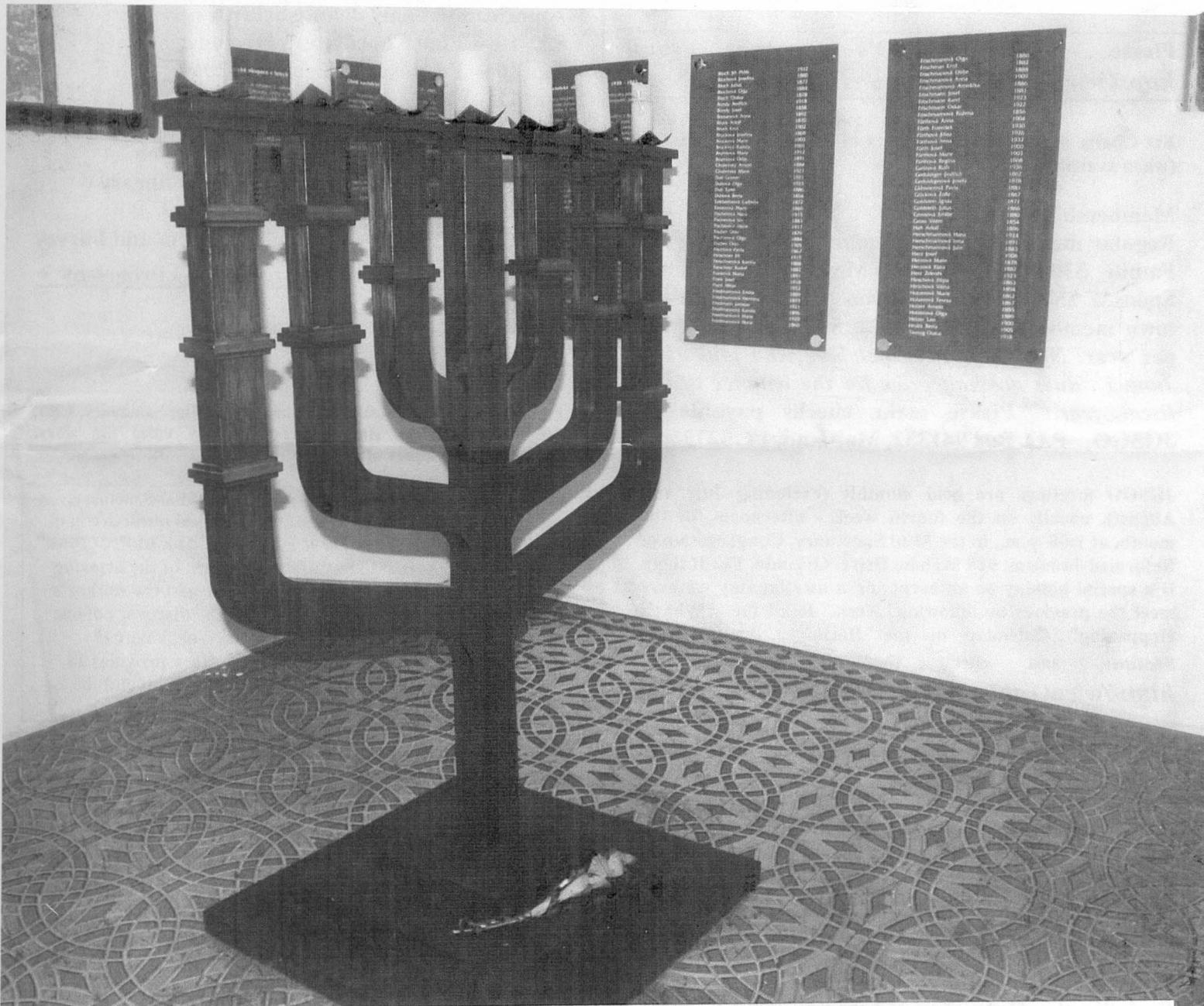
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The Quarterly Journal of the
JEWISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF GREATER ORLANDO

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Winter 2009-10



This Candelabra is displayed in the Memorial Building at the Benesov Jewish Center. Benesov is located about 25 miles southeast of Prague. Benesov is the birthplace of Joanie Schirm's father, Dr. O.A. Holzer. See Part Two of Joanie's story "Czech Threads of The All-American Dream," pages 6-9.

ETZ CHAIM

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Please visit JGSGO's website at:
<http://www.rootsweb.com/~FLjgscf/>

Etz Chaim is free to all members of JGSGO. Back copies (when available) \$5.00 each.

Membership Information:

Regular membership (January 1-December 31)
 Family \$30.00; Individual Membership \$25.00;
 Sponsor \$50.00; and Patron \$100.00 Out-of-town membership (more than 50 miles) is \$20.00 per year. *Note: For new members who join after June 1, dues are half price for the balance of the fiscal year.* Please make checks payable to JGSGO, P.O. Box 941332, Maitland, FL 32794.

JGSGO meetings are held monthly (excluding July and August), usually on the fourth week - afternoon of the month, at 1:00 p.m., in the Mini Sanctuary, Congregation of Reformed Judaism, 928 Malone Drive, Orlando, FL. If there is a special holiday or an event on a meeting day we may meet the previous or following week. Read the "What's Happening" Calendar in the Heritage, the Orlando Sentinel; and check the JGSGO website:
<http://www.rootsweb.com/~FLjgscf/>

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The JGSGO is a member of the
International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies, the Federation of Genealogical Societies and the Florida State Genealogical Societies.

As a member and under the umbrella of the IAJGS, the JGSGO is a 501(c)(3) United States tax-exempt, non-profit corporation.

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CALENDAR: Future JGSGO Programs +

Dec, 22, 2009, Tuesday, Installation and Social Get-together. 1:00 p.m. CRJ Mini-Sanctuary
 Malone Drive, Orlando

January 26, 2010, Tuesday, 1:00 p.m. in the Mini-Sanctuary, CRJ,
 Program: Diane L. Hirsch, President, My video life story, (Preserving the legacy of a life well-lived).

February 23, 2010, Tuesday, 1:00 p.m. in the Mini-Sanctuary, CRJ. Program: Joanie Schirm, genealogical research trip to the Czech Republic. "My Dear Boy – A Book in Progress" - A true story presented by Joanie Schirm of the amazing adventuresome life of Dr. Oswald Holzer and the Author's journey to bring it to light. Based on the discovery of one of the largest personal collections from World War II, including 400 letters by 78 authors, the story provides an intimate window into both the tumultuous times and the human spirit.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

As 2009 winds down and I complete another year as the JGSGO president, I want to thank the volunteer members of the Board of Directors as well as the faithful members for their support. Be assured a lot of planning goes into our activities. The Board met once a month prior to our regular program meetings.

We offered ten program meetings including a Mini-Workshop and a field trip to the Orange County Library in Orlando. We had interesting presentations from a dozen speakers including Stephen Morse, Mark Schulman, Paul Enchelmayer, Gladys Friedman Paulin, Carl Migden, Shirley Needle Cohen, Judy Bowden, Librarians Jane Hebert and Kim Peters and Greg Dawson. Our attendance at meetings varied between 20 and 32 individuals. With good publicity and communications to the membership (thanks to Jerold Wertheimer, Doris Frank, Edith Schulman, and Jerry Kurland) and news releases in the Heritage and Orlando Sentinel we had quite a number of "visitors." Some joined our Society and others have yet to make a decision. Doris Frank, Membership VP, is actively involved in following up on any potential members.

I am pleased to report that our Genealogy Library housed in CRJ's Dworkin Learning Resource Center is kept in good order by our two volunteer librarians, Rae and Marci Wallen, see pages 13 and 14 of this Etz Chaim issue.

Our quarterly newsletter/journal apparently is enjoyed by our members. Jay Schleichkorn, editor, offers something for everyone in each of the 12 or 16 pages. He appreciates input from our members who have a genealogical story to tell. Think about some of your successes and methods that can be shared with others. And by the way, our Etz Chaim has a wide distribution including the Public Library of Cincinnati, the Allen County Public Library, the Genealogical Society of Utah, the State Library of Florida, the Price Library of Judaica (Gainesville), the Jewish National and University Library (Jerusalem), Avotaynu, Central Florida Genealogical Society, Maajan - Zurich, Switzerland, the Seminole Orange County Periodical Departments and a half-dozen other Jewish Gen Societies.

Thanks also to Jose Valle for maintaining our JGSGO web site. Check it often for news of the Society. There's more than just meeting announcements on the site.

And every year when we need a super special "caterer" we have to thank Shirley Michael for handling the refreshments!

Not every member is aware of our host, the Congregation of Reform Judaism. In addition to free

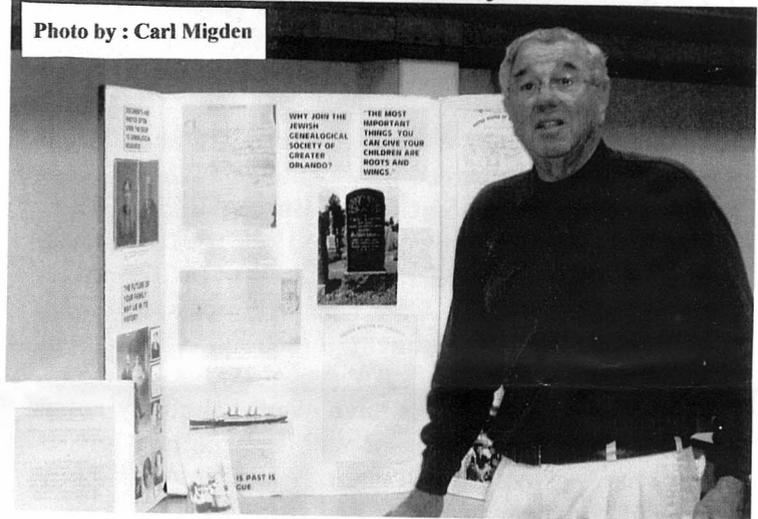
space given for our library, our meeting room and setups are planned with the cooperation of Debra Gold, CRJ's Program Director and Tom Thompson, Maintenance Supervisor. In past years, at our December meetings, JGSGO donated four copies of *The Torah - Modern Commentary*. This year JGSGO is co-sponsoring the publication of CRJ's January 2010 newsletter.

In closing I would be remiss if I didn't remind you all that we need volunteers and we need new members. Make bringing a new member to JGSGO one of your 2010 resolutions!

And again, thanks for giving me the opportunity to serve as the president of JGSGO.

Larry Morrell

Photo by : Carl Migden



October 17, was the day for the Genealogy Expo at the Downtown Orlando Library. JGSGO was one of four participants. We did receive several positive remarks about our display. I want to thank Marcie and Rae Wallen for being there to help. Thank you Jay and Carl for providing much of the display. I brought in numerous books from our JGSGO library plus some from home. I also included copies of our membership application and copies of documents I received via JRI-Poland or from the Mormon Church.

Attendance was not great by any means but we did have seven people stop by between 9:30 AM and 12:30 PM. Despite the poor turnout I think we may have had two people who are really interested. We will have to wait and see to see if they attend our next meeting. In addition to JGSGO there was a display from DAR, The Mormon's Family History Center (Par Street) and the Central Florida Genealogy Society. We did the right thing by participating.

Legal Change of Name- the Real Thing

In our genealogical search, we often see changes in the foreign name to more Americanization. State laws can regulate name changes in the United States; still, they cannot altogether forbid common law name changes. Several specific federal court rulings have set precedents regarding both court decreed name changes and common law name changes (changing your name "at will").

One may be employed, do business, and enter into other contracts, and sue and be sued under any name they choose at will (*Lindon v. First National Bank* 10 F. 894, *Coppage v. Kansas* 236 U.S. 1, *In re McUlta* 189 F. 250).

Such a change carries the exact same legal weight as a court decreed name change as long as it is not done with fraudulent intent (*In re McUlta* 189 F. 250, *Christianson v. King County* 196 F. 791, *Unite. d States v. McKay* 2 F.2d 257). This at will right is guaranteed under the U.S. Constitution, specifically the Fourteenth Amendment (*Jech v. Burch* 466 F.Supp. 714

The federal courts have overwhelmingly ruled that changing one's name at will, by common law, is clearly one's constitutional right. Nonetheless, one may still choose to have a court issued name change.

Usually a person can adopt any name desired for any reason. Most states allow one to legally change their name by usage with no paperwork, but a court order may be required for many institutions (such as banks or government institutions) to officially accept the change.^[1] There are differences in specific requirements among U.S. states, and usually a court order is the most efficient way to change names (which would be applied for in a state court). It is necessary to plead that the name change is not for a fraudulent or other illegal purpose (such as evading a lien or debt, or for defaming someone). The applicant may be required to give a somewhat reasonable explanation for wanting to change his/her name. A fee is generally payable, and the applicant may be required to post legal notices in newspapers to announce the name change. Generally the judge has judicial discretion to grant or deny a change of name, especially if the name change is for "frivolous" or "immoral" purposes, such as changing one's name to "God," "Superman," "Copyright," or "Delicious."^{''}

In 2004, a Missouri man did succeed in changing his name to "They."^[2] The Minnesota Supreme Court ruled that a name change to "1069" could be denied, but that "Ten Sixty-Nine" was acceptable (*Application of Dengler*, 1979), and the North Dakota Supreme Court denied the same request several years before (*Petition of Dengler*, 1976).^{[3][4]}

In nearly all states one cannot choose the name of a notable person with the intent to mislead, a name that is intentionally confusing, a racial slur, threats, obscenities, or a name that incites violence.

Under the federal immigration and nationality law, when aliens apply for naturalization, they have the option of asking for their names to be changed upon the grant of citizenship with no additional fees. This allows them the opportunity to adopt a more Americanized name. In the 2005 version of Form N-400, Application for Naturalization, Part 1 (D) asks whether the person applying for naturalization would like to legally change his or her name. During the naturalization interview, a petition for name change is prepared to be forwarded to a federal court. The applicant certifies that he or she is not seeking a change of name for any unlawful purpose such as the avoidance of debt or evasion of law enforcement. Such a name change becomes final once a federal court naturalizes an applicant.

In some states, individuals are often allowed to return to the use of any prior surname (e.g., maiden name upon divorce). Some states, such as New York, also allow married couples to adopt any new surname upon marriage, which may be a hyphenated form of the bride's and groom's names, a combination of parts of their family names, or any new family name they can agree upon adopting as the married name.

In order to maintain one's identity, it is desirable to obtain a formal order so there is continuity of personal records.

For more information: search legal name change on Google or check out: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Name_change

**Don't watch the clock; do what it does.
Keep going!"**

Sam Levenson

"HIDING IN THE SPOTLIGHT"....

Thanks again to Greg Dawson of the Orlando Sentinel who spoke on the October 27th meeting, about his new book describing the remarkable survival of his mother and Aunt Frina. His mother, pianist Zhanna Arkashyna a child in the Ukraine, was offered a scholarship to the Moscow State Conservatory. Her life changed in 1941 when Nazis grouped her Jewish family with thousands to be executed; Zhanna and Frina, escaped to roam the countryside as fugitives, hiding and surviving. With a new name and a non-Jewish identity, Zhanna performed for unsuspecting Nazis. Arriving in New York in 1946, the sisters enrolled at Juilliard on scholarships. Zhanna married violist David Dawson, and the couple moved in 1948 to Bloomington, Ind., joining the music faculty at Indiana University. To research his mother's homeland, Dawson traveled to Ukraine, including Dorbitsky Yar, where 15,000 Jews were murdered, among them Zhanna and Frina's parents. On a memorial listing the dead, Dawson was shocked to find his mother's name: "I had come that close to nonexistence." With selections from his mother's own writing and a display of photos, Dawson offered the JGSGO a most interesting program.

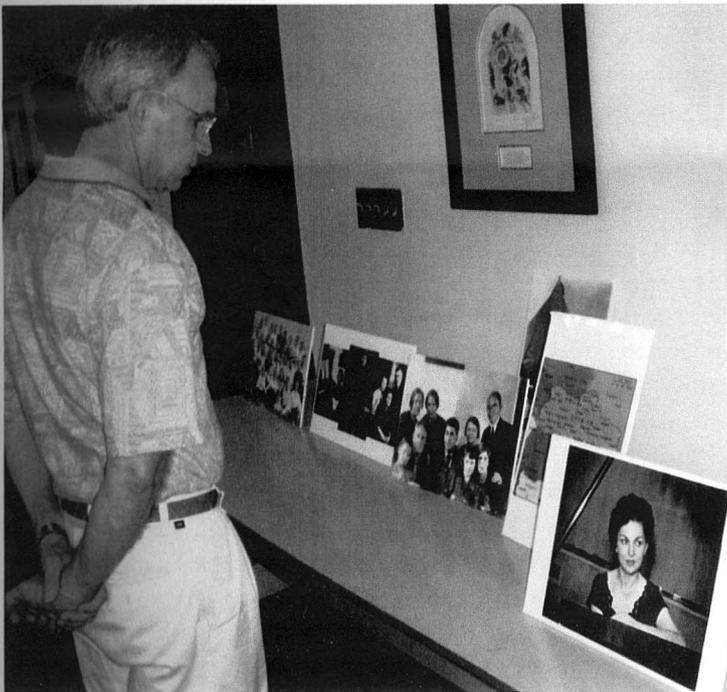


Photo by: Carl Migden

JGSGO member Jose Valle at Dawson's display of material from the book.

News from Footnote.com

Holocaust data. Due to the great interest demonstrated to date, [Footnote.com](http://www.footnote.com) has extended free access to its Holocaust collection until the end of the year. After that date it will become part of their subscription service. For information about the collection read Nu? What's New? Volume 10, No. 20 at <http://www.avotaynu.com/nu/V10N20.htm>. (from What's Nu, Vol. 10 #24 16 Nov 09 Thanks to Gary Mokotoff)

READ PART TWO OF JOANIE SCHIRM'S fascinating experiences on pages 6-9, while searching her father's past in and around Prague.

Writer Joanie Schirm lives on a lake overlooking Orlando's skyline. Her writing has appeared multi times in the Orlando Sentinel, Orlando Magazine, Florida Engineering Society Journal, and Igud Yotzei Sin Bulletin (English version). Credited for bringing World Cup Soccer to Orlando while serving for years as a small business owner and community activist, she has been extensively interviewed and profiled in publications such as GQ Magazine, Britain's Leisure Magazine, Florida Trend, de Telegraaf (Netherlands), Orlando CEO, Orlando Sentinel, Orlando Business Journal, and Orlando Magazine. Production is underway on her memoir entitled *My Dear Boy* detailing her discovery of the essence of her late Czech-American father's life. You can reach her at jschirm@cfl.rr.com

2009 IAJGS CONFERENCE TAPES AVAILABLE

All the sessions recorded at the 29th IAJGS International Conference on Jewish Genealogy (Philadelphia, August 2 - 7, 2009) are available for purchase for online use or on CD. The recordings were done by Content Management Corp. Please note that only those sessions where the presenter gave approval for the recording are included. You can order a set from the whole conference, specific days, or individual sessions.

BY PHONE: With your credit card, please call: (314) 487-0135; CST, Mon - Fri.
ON-LINE: Visit their secure order site by visiting: <http://www.softconference.com/IAJGS>

If you use this second method, click on Educational Content. Then click on "click here for content from the meeting. You can then click on the various options: conference set, specific days, specific presentations to find out cost and to order.

We are pleased to let you know that some of the presenters provided their PowerPoint presentations to Content Management Corp and they are included as well as the audio. (Note that to view the power points you click on "handouts".)

There were many wonderful sessions at the conference and you can enjoy them by purchasing these recordings. They will enhance your research abilities and your knowledge.

(Thanks to: Anne Feder Lee and David Mink, Philly 2009 Co-Chairs)

Czech Threads in the All American Dream – Part Two by Joanie Schirm

Glad to have you back for Part Two. I hope you recall what was going on in Part One but to briefly refresh your memory – I am the daughter of a Czech Jewish refugee, Dr. Oswald “Valdik” Holzer who fled to China in 1939 when the Nazis stole his homeland. In October 1940 in Peking he met, fell madly in love, and married my mother, Ruth Holzer, born in China of American Missionary parents. In 1941 they were driven out of China by the escalation of Japanese warfare, forced to leave their dream of a medical clinic and school behind. They came to America where they raised three children and lived the All American Dream in Indialantic, Florida. My father never forgot his Czech roots. My parents died two days apart at the dawn of the 21st Century. Despite my father’s many attempts to save them, in 1942 his parents perished in the Nazi death camp Sobibor. 42 other relatives shared this fate. As is true for many people, my father’s painful loss kept him from speaking about the details. After my parent’s deaths, hidden in their home, were over 530 secret documents including nearly 400 letters written from 1939 to 1946 by 78 different letter writers. Also stashed away were my father’s escape pants, old pictures, 8 mm film and much more I call it the treasure trove. Add that to my 7 hours of 1989 taped interviews with my father and I found myself with the opportunity and responsibility of a lifetime to tell my father’s last story. I have just completed the draft manuscript for the true story of My Dear Boy. The title is how my grandfather addressed his last letter to his only son, written 3 days before being transported by the Nazis to his fate.

Part Two describes my research trip to Prague in May 2009 for the purpose of tying all my father’s story threads together. Part One left off as my husband, Roger Neiswender, and I were catching our Orlando plane to Prague. In Prague translator, Lukas Pribyl, 36, and Czech Cousin, Tomas Marik, 49, were ready to play starring roles. So let’s continue.

Whisked by Prague Airport Transfers service to our well appointed rented Stepanska 59 Apartment in New Town, Roger and I found ourselves in a 14th century district created by a king. The apartment sits next to Lucerna Gallery, a retail complex built in the 1930’s by the Grandfather of Czechoslovakian President Vaclav Havel. When I returned home in a newly translated 1940 letter I learned that my father frequented the still popular Lucerna Café. It didn’t take long for Lukas Pribyl, translator extraordinaire, to travel by tram to meet us at the apartment. A graduate of Brandeis and Columbia University’s School of International Public Affairs, Lukas is

also a brilliant student of history. His research thesis at Brandeis was about Nisko, one of the small Nazi labor camps, and in 1999 this interest sparked a film career. By the time we met, Lukas had traveled to 20 countries interviewing over 200 Holocaust survivors for his documentary films.

For 10 years Lukas had been working on a documentary series (Forgotten Transports). Each of his four films told gripping stories involving survivors from the Terezin transports through a visual montage of rare archival film. The film approach does not dwell on Nazi crimes but on universal themes such as family life, adventure, death, bravery, and love, much like what was being revealed in the treasure trove letters. The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum referred me to Lukas not only as someone familiar with the backdrop of my collection but also for his ability to do translation.

Terezin, known by the Germans as Ghetto Theresienstadt, was a village that by order of Nazi Reinhard Heydrich was abolished to make way for a Jewish Ghetto. It concentrated Jews in a camp that later was a transport point for victims on their way to extermination camps, mainly to the east in Poland. Most of my 44 relatives who perished had been sent by the Nazis in 1942 to Terezin. When I met Lukas he was completing the fourth film, entitled “Forgotten Transports: To Poland” which involved the Lublin district where my grandparents died from poison gas. With Lukas we set research goals to visit the Charles University Archives (where my father attended Medical School), Benesov archives (where my father was born in 1911 and raised until moving to Prague in 1930 for university studies), Manes Café (a coffee house where my father spent many hours with University and childhood friends), Terezin, and various other places mentioned in my father’s taped stories or written about in letters.

We next met with my cousin Tomas Marik, son of Jiri and Donna Marik, and grandson of Aunt Valda (sister to Arnost). After the war from America my father sent money and gifts to the Marik family to improve their welfare. The last time I saw Tomas and his wife Lida was when they attended my parent’s Memorial Service in February 2000. Tomas returned home with some of my father’s ashes to place in the Benesov Jewish Cemetery beneath his grandfather’s 1904 black marble marker. The marker also commemorated his wife, two sons and daughter and their spouses, who all died in the Holocaust.

Our plan with Tomas was to visit villages of my father’s and grandparent’s youth, hold a Benesov family reunion and for the big trip through the Czech Republic and Slovakia to Poland. The trips destination 1200 kilometers from Prague was the memorial site of the Nazi death camp,

Sobibor. The Reunion originally planned for mid May was changed to May 30 so that all 18 relatives could be present.

Next, Roger and I set about revisiting important sites from our 1995 visit with my father, including the 14th century Town Hall in the Old Town Square, site of the famous 15th century astronomical clock. From there we walked through narrow passageways on cobble stone streets to pay tribute to my grandparents at the Pinkas Synagogue in the old Jewish Town. The Pinkas now serves as a permanent memorial to the 77,297 Jewish Holocaust victims from Bohemia and Moravia. As we entered the building a stream of sunlight shined on the first list of names etched on the Synagogue walls. Quickly I walked to where I remember my grandparent's names were etched along with the dates of their birth and death transport. On my 1995 visit I stood holding my father's hand. This time I stood alone.

May 8th Liberation Day celebrations included a street festival with authentic World War II tanks, jeeps, motorcycles, weaponry, and best of all: men and women attired in 1940's military uniforms of the Czechs, Germans, Russians and Americans. There were even people dressed as Czech revolutionaries and conspirators roaming among us. Several tents were filled with World War II exhibits including Bren machine guns, gas masks and Bata Shoe Company boots. Part of my father's 1939 exodus story from Czechoslovakia involved the role Bata Shoe Company played; that of providing employment documentation for Singapore, completing his requirements for Gestapo paperwork. Mixed in with the WW II soldiers were dancing children from the neighborhood and rock bands playing patriotic and Czech polkas on stage.

The next day again was spent walking back in time. Lukas guided us by the Nazi Gestapo Headquarters at Pecek Palace Bank where countless ruthless interrogations and torture occurred. From there we walked past Woodrow Wilson Train Station where my father said good-bye to his parents and Uncles and Aunts when he left the country in May 1939. He had no idea he would never see any of them again. From there it was a long walk to Vinohrady neighborhood where my grandparents Arnost and Olga occupied two apartments after being forced by the Nazis in 1941 to abandon their apartment home of eight years.

Near Hotel Bristol, where Arnost and Olga had wed in 1908, was apartment 7/2277 Nameski Jiriho, where the Nazi's made them move first. There we found an ominous reminder of not only hate in years gone by but in today's world. Scrawled in white paint on the brick wall beneath the apartment window was the German word "Jude" meaning Jew. My cousin Tomas took us near his home to see the Lidice Memorial, honoring the small village obliterated by the Nazis in retribution for the assassination of Reinhard Heydrich, German Deputy Protectorate for Bohemia and Moravia. Also known personally as the "Butcher of Prague" for the brutality he unleashed upon his arrival for that post, Heydrich played a leadership role in what became known as the Final Solution. For me, his leadership role in the evil development of the death camp Sobibor changed my family forever. We later visited the Catholic Church where the Czech assassins hid out and killed themselves before the Nazis could take them prisoner.

ÚSTŘEDNÍ KARTOTÉKA — TRANSPORTY.	
R. č. 16.325	
Hobace Arnost	
Rodná data: 26.9.1885	
Adresa před deportací: Praha XII, Slezská 125	
1. transport	2. transport
dne: 24. IV. 1942	dne: 25.5.1942
číslo: 530	číslo: 23-906
do: ?	do: ?

We spent hours in the archives of Charles University pouring over university record books from 1930-1937. With Lukas translation skills we were able to review records indicating my father's professors, grades, religious declaration, and proof of medical degree. We noted Arnost's recorded profession as a "businessman" and learned the address - Husova 17 - where my grandparents and father lived for seven years before the Nazi forced move.

Near to that apartment we found in the Military Museum a temporary exhibit entitled "Mobilization 1938", highlighting the exact time that my father served in the Czech military. 1938 was tremendously significant in history as it was the time of Anschluss (the Nazi "annexation" of Austria), Kristallnacht, (the anti-Jewish pogrom in Nazi Germany known as the "Night of Broken Glass" or to the Czechs as the "Night of Long Knives"), and the Munich Agreement (the treaty in which the French, Italians, and British facilitated the giveaway of the Czechoslovak Sudetenland to Hitler setting the stage for World War II). I was able to capture on digital pictures every page of the English version tour guide, completing my needed research for that period of my father's life.

In Prague we went to the site where my grandparents and over 40,000 Jews left to go to Terezin. At a building so modern looking it could have opened in 2008, the people were formally checked in and a system was established for confiscating their apartment and belongings. We traveled an hour by bus north to Terezin viewing the beautiful lush countryside and were dropped off at a small bus stop near the Terezin large Fortress. Bordering the Labe (Elba) River, I remembered words from an August 4, 1945 Aunt Valda Marik letter to my father: "Your parents left in April of the year 1942 for Theresienstadt but shortly thereafter they were deported no one know where. We received a single card from them from the journey to the east. They went to the transport really bravely...Uncle Rudi and Aunt Olga were in Theresienstadt till October of last year, when they wrote to me last. Aunt Olga allegedly still looked well then, Uncle had been sick for a long time, supposedly he had angina pectoris in an advanced stage and I was thus worried for him. Uncle Leo left Theresienstadt on September 25 of last year, alone. He held such a position there that no one would believe that he too would be transported. He was the chief of housing. Supposedly he was content with his employment, looked well but at the end must have been leaving in a terrible mental state. My heart is bleeding when I remember all that he must have gone through...Grandmother, the poor thing, died after a three month stay in Theresienstadt, but that you surely know. I mourned for her a long time but when I later learned about the suffering of old people there, I wished her that peace.

Should I get the urn which was buried there, will have it transferred to Benesov. It is however very uncertain since one of the Nazi beasts took upon himself to empty all these into the Labe before the end of the war. It would be a miracle if the urn remained untouched..." The long journey to Sobibor, Poland was filled with great emotion. We drove through the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Poland to visit important places related to my story writing. As we crossed rolling countryside with the backdrop of the Tatra and Carpathian Mountains, we saw Ruzkovy Lhotice, site of Holzer family reunions since the mid 1800s, Orlik Castle ruins in Humpolec, where maternal relatives may have lived in the 1600s, Brno, the town where my father escaped the Nazis controlled Czech Army, and much more before arriving after 3 days in Lublin, Poland.

As part of what the Nazis called Operation Reinhard (named for Reinhard Heydrich), Sobibor, Belzec and Treblinka were all built for one purpose - human extermination. And there I set foot on Sobibor's blood stained soil 67 years to the very day that my grandparents arrived on the Az Transport from Terezin as passengers #906 and 907. It was an eerie coincidence that I wasn't sure I was ready for.

It was a beautiful blue sky day, very quiet, and the only unwelcome visitors with us were huge horseflies that flew in our air space. They oddly reminded me of my childhood days on the Florida Island. At the entrance was a stone wall with the name Sobibor and eight bronze plaques representing almost all the countries that had people die at Sobibor. The inscription under the large letters spelling Sobibor read: At this site, between the years 1942 and 1943, there existed a Nazi Death Camp where 250,000 Jews and approximately 1000 Poles were murdered. Under that inscription in smaller letters was the story that Sobibor is known for: On October 14, 1943 during the Armed Revolt by Jewish Prisoners the Nazis were overpowered and prisoners escaped to Freedom. Following this revolt the death camp ceased to function. We spent thirty minutes in the small memorial museum learning all we could of the history of Sobibor. Oddly that same week there was big news internationally about a Ukrainian Sobibor Guard who had escaped to the United States and was being extradited to Germany. We saw his name on a list of guards. We learned that most of the people killed at Sobibor were citizens of Poland, but there were also citizens of Holland, France, German, Austria, Ukraine, Belarus and the modern day Czech Republic and Slovakia. On the day of the revolt a brave group of about 300 of the 600 prisoners undertook the attempt and in the end because of barbwire fences, a swamp that surrounded most of the camp and the armed guards shooting, only 58 people survived.

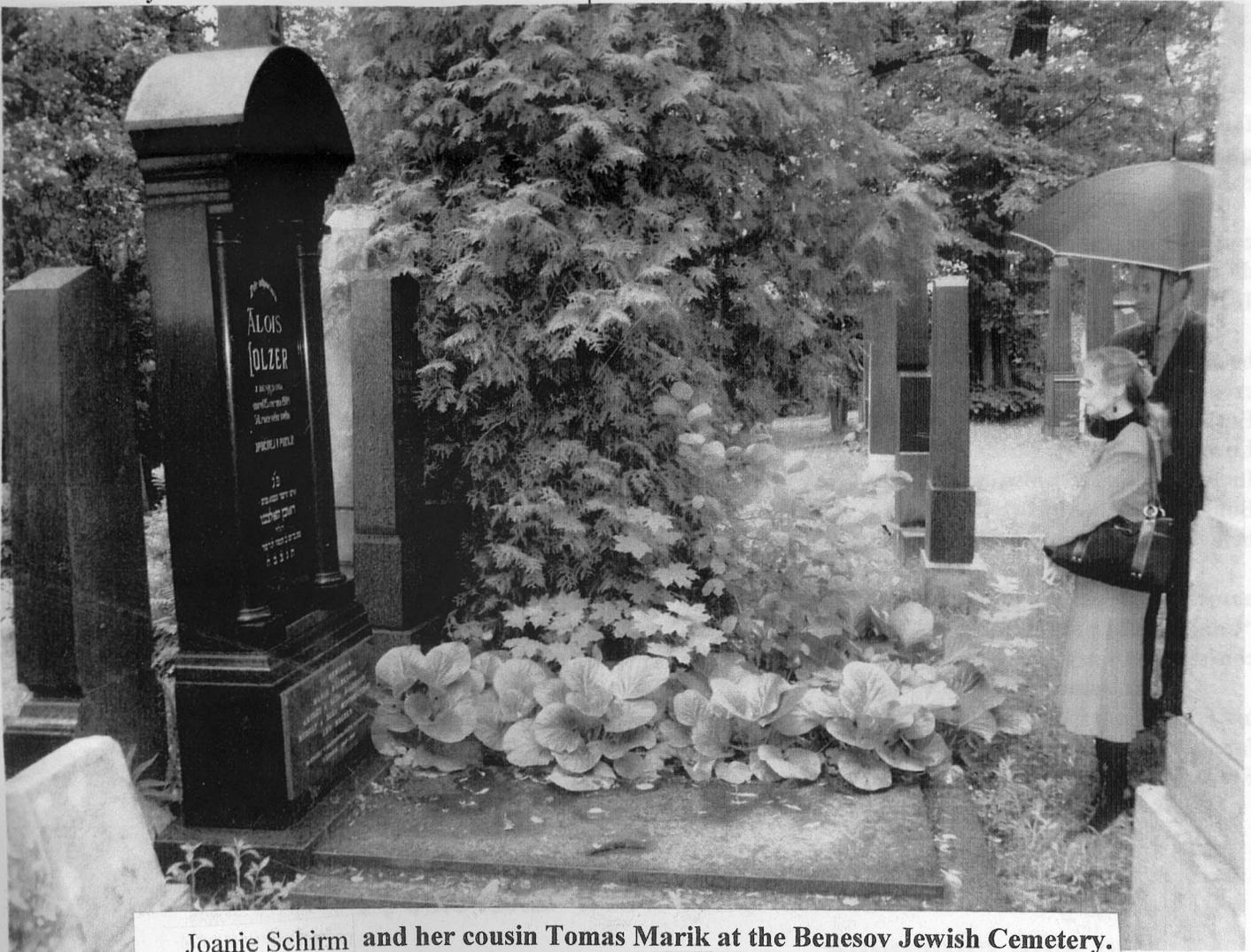
Because they escaped, the Nazis, afraid these 58 would tell their story to the world, decided to hide the atrocities that went on at Sobibor. They tore down the buildings involved in killing those 250,000 people and planted rows of pine trees. Today that is what one encounters – trees, with roots that grew from the blood and ashes of those whose fate ended there.

Two hours after we arrived, with my voice cracking I asked Robert Kuwalek, a Sobibor expert who had traveled with us, how long my grandparents would have been there that fateful day. Robert's empathetic sad eyes looked at me as he responded "They would only have been here about two hours before they would have been killed by poison gas." Exactly the amount of time I had been there. I realized that very day as I visited this horrendous site was that Reinhard Heydrich, the mastermind for this place was shot by assassins on May 27, 1942 – the same day.

On our trip back to Prague, Tomas, Roger and I visited Majdanek and Auschwitz Concentration Camps. It is as so many people who visit these memorials say - life changing. I believe a visit should be a requirement for the world's human family.

It may be the best way for us to prevent the rebirth of an inhumane world that existed then and continues today under cruel totalitarian systems around our world.

As life would have it, the date change for the Benesov reunion allowed all 18 relatives to attend. As I look back on it, following the difficult visit to Sobibor, the change also allowed for it to be a miraculous celebration for the continuation of life. From that dark history little branches of trees still managed to survive, bloom again and produce life. From the "3rd Generation" as my father called himself in "Bubbie's List", came the descendents of siblings Arnost, Leo, Olga, and Valda. The May 30th reunion included the son of Leo, Hanus, 80, and the son of Valda, Pavel, 80. They were only 10 when the war started for the Czechs and 15 when it ended. In adulthood they stayed close with my father from afar until he was able to visit in 1963 and then 10 times more. For this joyous reunion they and their children brought stories, pictures, and hugs that allowed me to see that life has a way of marching on. At the end of our day we honored all those who had gone before us by together visiting the Benesov Jewish Cemetery.



Joanie Schirm and her cousin Tomas Marik at the Benesov Jewish Cemetery.

Joanie wrote, "The experiences we had going to all the places of my father's past were amazing."

Fine Chocolates.... If You're a Bissinger, You're Related

By Edith Schulman

My son, Mark, never expected to find another branch of our Bissinger family when he was researching chocolate. He and his wife, Susan, and his dad, Charles, went to Australia this past September.

Mark found some chocolate there that he liked and wanted to know if anyone sold any like it in the United States.

One place named "Bissinger's" in Saint Louis did. With research we found that in a small kitchen there is a place where tradition and quality are still the most important ingredients in the making of the finest chocolate. Bissinger's is one of the last handcrafted chocolatiers in the world. This company has been making fine French confections

for more than 350 years, and it will not sacrifice quality ingredients or taste to produce a cheaper candy.

Several cousins have told me that all Bissingers come from the same enormous family, and all are descended from a man named Henoch Baruch (1747-1816).

This particular branch of Bissingers has long been linked to fine confections. The family began creating their fine delicacies in 17th-century Paris. Enthusiasts for the Bissinger products included European nobility, heads of state and the Rothschilds. Include in this list also King Louis XIV and Napoleon Bonaparte who gave some of the chocolates to his beloved Josephine upon his return from battle.

Karl Frederic Bissinger, the company's namesake, was named the Confiseur Imperial, or "Candy Maker of the Empire," for his excellence in the confectionary arts.

This same man left France in 1845, bringing his loyal master candy maker and all of the Bissinger family candy making secrets to the United States. Karl Frederic Bissinger settled near Cincinnati, Ohio.

In 1927 his son, also named Karl, opened the

popular City Museum of Saint Louis, so that chocolate lovers of all ages can enjoy it for years to come.



For more information on the Bissingers, Edith Schulman wrote, "The Bissinger branch of my family is by far the biggest I have found. My Family Tree lists 750 of them, and there are many more. All are descended from Baruch. His son Henoch Baruch adopted the family name of Bissinger in 1747, 40 years after his birth from Bissengen, Germany.

I have not discovered yet from which of Henoch Baruch's eight sons Karl Bissinger is descended, but I am working on it. So many of my ancestors were merchants, that to have a world-famous chocolatier in the family is special."

Edith also indicated, "I now have Bissinger's catalogue, and it looks yummy!"

It is still possible to order chocolates from Bissinger's: email: orders@bissingers.com or phone them at 1-800-325-8881 Monday-Saturday 8:30-5:00CST. "Taste a bit of the fine candy still made by my paternal grandmother's family. Enjoy!"

Proposed Officers for 2010

President: Raeburn Wallen (WRProf@aol.com)

VP Membership: Doris Frank

(dofrank@cf.rr.com)

VP Programs: Jerry Kurland, (Surrealgraphics@embarqmail.com)

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Director, Past President: Larry Morrell

(Emorrell@cfl.rr.com)

Librarians: Marcie & Raeburn Wallen

WRProf@AOL.com

Every time I hear the dirty word 'Exercise', I wash my mouth out with chocolate.



Honorable Discharge

US Military Records Ordered Through The National Personnel Records Center

Military records are a wonderful genealogical resource. Many requests to the (USA) National Personal Records Center Military Personnel Records [NPRC-MPR] located in St. Louis, MO, however, are for benefits, and therefore, the response to requests have been looked at, not as a genealogical request even though we are interested in all the documents in a military file, not necessarily those limited to benefits. Since the 1970s, the standard procedure for replying to requests for entire files has been to provide only copies of key documents and extracts of vital information, rather than a copy of every document in a personnel and/or medical file. Exceptions to this procedure are files more than 62 years old, US Marine Corps files, all certified legal cases, and all requests from the Department of Veterans Affairs. In these instances, all documents are provided. As of September 28, 2009 the NPRC includes their policy with all requests.

The NPRC policy has been when only key documents and extracts are provided from the Official Military Personnel File and the Medical Record, the response package contains a copy of all separation documents and specified information is in the file-such as dates of service, promotions and reductions, foreign service and more. If, after receiving an extract of a file, a requester submits a follow-up request for additional information or documents, NPRC will automatically send copies of all the other documents in the file.

The National Archives' NPRC-MPR stores records of individual military service pertaining to former service members who no longer have a service obligation. Included are records of veterans who are completely discharged (with no remaining reserve commitment), or who are retired or have died. The Department of Defense and the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) signed an agreement to make the Official Military Personnel Files a permanent series of records, transferred to NARA custody 62 years after the service member's separation from the

military. The Archival Program Division at the National Personnel Records Center now holds nearly 1.2 million official military personnel files of former US Navy and Marine Corps enlisted personnel who served between 1885 and 1939.

There was a major file in the St. Louis NPRC(MPR) center on July 12, 1973, which destroyed approximately 16-18 million Official Military Personnel Files. The affected record collections include 80% of Army personnel discharged November 1, 1912, to January 1, 1960 and 75% of Air Force Personnel discharged, September 25, 1947, to January 1, 1964 (with names alphabetically after Hubbard, James E.). While there were no duplicate records nor microfilm kept, NPRC-MRC has tried to use alternate sources to reconstruct basic information. It is still worth the effort to submit a request form to determine what records may be available.

If you are a veteran or next of kin of a deceased veteran go to: <http://tinyurl.com/yhbwpom> for information and the form.

To order military records- other than your own or if you are next of kin of a deceased veteran, go to: <http://www.archives.gov/stlouis/militarypersonnel/index.html> for the form (Standard Form 180) All requests must be in writing (e-mails are not accepted), signed and mailed to the address you will find at this url.

The NPRC also is the depository for civilian personnel records for separated Federal civilian personnel and medical records for military family members. For more information see: <http://www.archives.gov/st-louis/>

From: "Jan Meisels Allen" <janmallen@worldnet.att.net>
 Director-at-large, IAJGS and Chairperson, IAJGS Public
 Records Access Monitoring Committee: Date: Fri, 30 Oct 2009,
 16:43:32-0700, X-Message-Number 2

**FROM: JERRY KURLAND FYI RESEARCH
VILNA AND THE LITVAK SIG....**

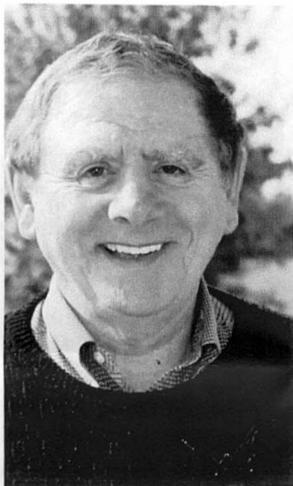
Thanks to Jerry Kurland for agreeing to share the following research information. If you are interested in the Vilna District Research Group of Litvak SIG, check this out or contact Jerry Kurland at: Surrealgraphics@embarqmail.com>

Date: Sun, 1 Nov 2009 10:14:37 -0500
From: surrealgraphics@embarqmail.com
To: Joelrat1@hotmail.com Subject: The JewishGen Family Finder:

Shalom, Joel Ratner,

I am excited to hear from you in following up with my research as a senior member of the Kurland Family.

My parents Jacob Kurland & Emily Kurland were born in Vilna Gubernia, my fraternal Grandfather, Marcus, Mordechai Kurland and Great Grandfather, Joseph, William, Kurland all deceased were from the same area. Can you provide me with some tips to make my research more effective with the sites I need to go to in order to find vital information on my ancestors. I made a \$100 contribution last year but did not hear from anyone. I am prepared to make a new contribution if you can direct me to the source and the agency best to send my check to.



Jerry Kurland

Thanking you in advance for contacting me, I am, Yours truly,

Jerry Kurland (researcher code 320716)

From: "JoelRatner"
joelrat1@hotmail.com

To: surrealgraphics@embarqmail.com

Sent: Sunday, November 1, 2009 11:27:32 AM

Subject: The JewishGen Family Finder:
Dear Jerry,

I contacted you because you listed yourself as researching the city of Vilna specifically. Do you know if the family actually was from there? The name KURLAND can be found in many places as you must be aware.

Concerning your \$100 contribution from last year, if it went to JewishGen, that would explain why you have not heard anything. LitvakSIG is the

organization that actually raises funds and translates Litvak records. JewishGen only hosts our data online. The appearance can be that JGen actually does the translation work and they do not. Ancestry also has our data online however, a subscription to their service only gives one access to our data on an annual basis and does nothing to promote further translation work.

If you have any further questions, please check out: www.litvaksig.org.

Best regards, Joel Ratner

P.S. - My GURLAND family was from Vilna city.

From : Joel Ratner, (researcher code 6437)
To : Jerry Akibe Kurland, (researcher code 320716)
Subject: The JewishGen Family Finder:

The Vilna District Research Group of LitvakSIG obtains non-vital records from all shtetls in the Vilna Uyezd of Vilna Gubernia . The District includes the shtetls of Antokol, Bagaslaviskis, Bezdony, Ciobiskis, Gedrovitz, Gelvan, Inturik, Jasiunai, Laibiskis, Maisiagala, Mikailiskis, Moletai, Musnik, Naujoji Vilna, Nemencine, Novygorod, Paberze, Rudamina, Salcininkai, Sheshol, Shirvint, Snipiskes, Stundishki, Turgeliai, Vilna, Yakubantse

LitvakSIG also has a separate vital records project which deals with all extant birth, death, marriage and divorce records for the same towns listed above.

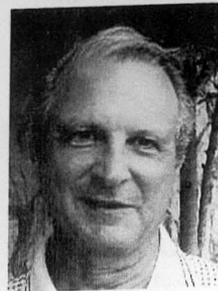
We acquire copies of records, translate and database them. We have indexed over 65,000 non-vital records for this district as well as over 100,000 vital records and if you are interested in the latest information regarding those records please let me know, and I will be glad to bring you up to date.

Best wishes, Joel Ratner

Coordinator of the Vilna District Research Group of Litvak SIG - Coordinator, Litvak SIG Vital Records Translation Project (Vilna gubernia towns)
Joelrat1@hotmail.com

CONGRATULATIONS CARL.....

AVOTAYNU – THE INTERNATIONAL REVIEW OF JEWISH GENEALOGY published an



article by Carl R. Migden, JGSGO member in Volume XXV, Number 1, Spring 2009. The article, "Finding Prisoner B68739, Jacob 'Cuppy' Migden," described Carl's successful genealogical research of a notorious criminal with Carl's family name.

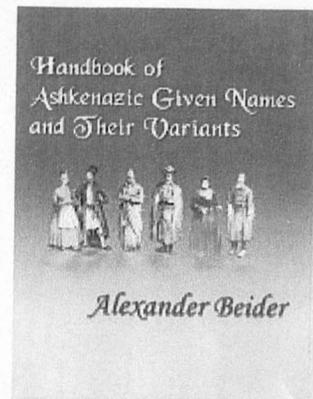
JGSGO LIBRARY ADDS THREE SPECIAL BOOKS

If you are interested in Sephardic History, three new books have been added to our library shelves housed in the Dworkin Learning Center at CRJ. They are not for circulation but if you interested in viewing the publications, contact the JGSGO librarian Rae and Marci Wallen 407-678-7531 (e-mail: wrprof@aol.com)

Handbook of Ashkenazic Given Names and Their Variants

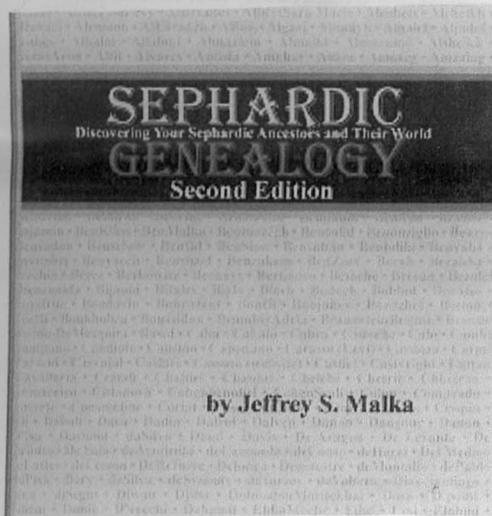
by Alexander Beider

A subset of Dr. Beider's *A Dictionary of Ashkenazic Given Names: Their Origins, Structure, Pronunciation and Migrations*, this book provides the description of the origin and evolution of 735 root masculine and feminine Ashkenazic given names and a tree-like structure of all the name variants which shows how they were derived from the root name. There is an index that identifies more than 15,000 given names derived from the 735 root names. The index is in three sections: names as they appeared in the Latin alphabet, names in the Cyrillic alphabet and those in the Hebrew alphabet.



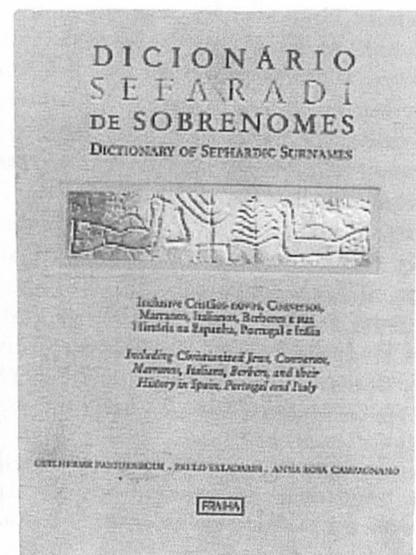
Sephardic Genealogy: Second Edition Discovering Your Sephardic Ancestors and Their World by Jeffrey S. Malka

The first edition, which won the "Best Judaica Reference Book" (2002) of Association of Jewish Libraries, has been completely updated and improved. Nearly 100 pages longer, this new edition revises all the chapters to include new information and updates all internet and mail addresses. It adds a new chapter on DNA as well as new chapters on the available resources for the Sephardic communities of Portugal, England, Rhodes, Hamburg-Altona, and Vienna, Austria. There is also a new chapter on how to research the Spanish archives with clues on deciphering old Spanish script. The section on the Internet is fully updated and now includes more than 300 links to sites that have information valuable to Sephardic research. The book even reveals how to access past websites that are no longer available on the web. With its comprehensive indexes—the surname index alone has 3037 names—bibliography, and data-packed appendixes, this is even more the essential book on Sephardic genealogy and should be part of any Jewish genealogy bookshelf.



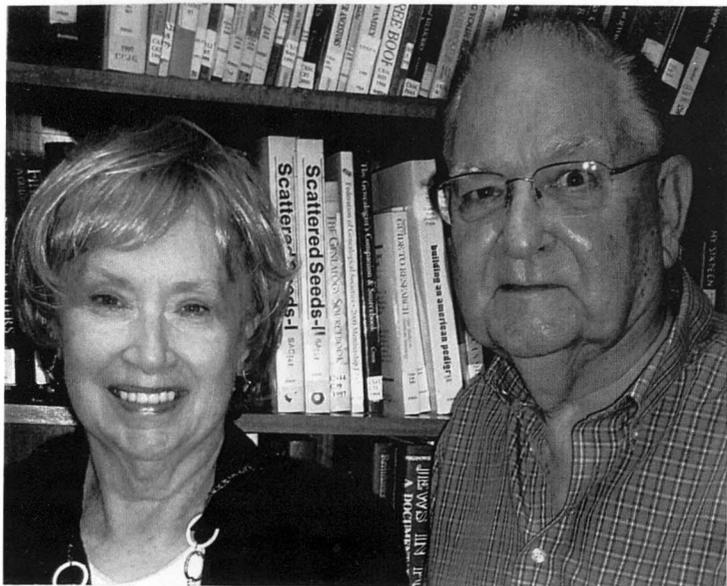
Dictionary of Sephardic Surnames: 2nd ed. (Dicionario Sefardi de Sobrenomes) by: Guilherme Faiguenboim, Paula Valadares, Anna Campagnano
Winner: Best Judaica Reference Book (2003) by the Association of Jewish Libraries. A compilation of 17,000 surnames presented under 12,000 Entries. All names were used by the Jews who lived in Spain and Portugal for 15 centuries and later spread across the world as Sephardim, marranos and conversos. Hundreds of rare photographs, family shields and illustrations. It's more than a dictionary; it also contains a 72-page summary of Sephardic History, before and after the expulsion from Spain and Portugal and a 40-page Linguistic essay about Sephardic names, including an interesting list of the 250 most frequent surnames.

The period covered is 600 years, from the 14th to 20th century. The research area includes most of Europe, Near East, North, South, and Central America. Published in Ladino



THE WALLENS HONORED....

Raeburn and Marci Wallen, were named recipients of the Distinguished Alumni Awards at the October University of Findley, Ohio Homecoming, 2009. The Wallens spend half of their year in Ohio and half in Winter Park. They became involved in the JGSGO in Orlando and serve as the Librarians of our growing collection maintained at CRJ.



Dr. Wallen, Professor Emeritus of World Religions for The University of Findlay, is a world traveler and considered by many as being an expert in his field. He retired from full time teaching on the main campus, but has been persuaded to design and teach a computer course on world religions. Besides being an emeritus professor world on the Findlay campus, he is also an adjunct world religion professor for Defiance College, Defiance, Ohio.

He is listed in various editions of Marquis Who's Who in American and in Who's Who in Religion, a biographical volume of men and women who have distinguished themselves as religious leaders.

Dr. Wallen has conducted over 25 travel seminars for university students. He was given an award by the International students at the 30th anniversary for International Night which read: *"As a token of our esteem for nearly thirty years of service, The International Club of The University of Findlay recognizes Dr. Raeburn G. Wallen as an outstanding faculty advisor who performed his duties with consistent dedication and devotion."*

Dr. Wallen did his under-graduate studies at The University of Findlay. He also holds a Master of Religious Education degree from Oberlin College; a Master of Divinity from Winebrenner Seminary; a Master of World Religions from Case Western Reserve University; and an honorary Doctor of World Religions from The University of Findlay. He was honored as an outstanding professor by the university's College of Liberal Arts in 1999.

Dr. Wallen has been to Japan four times researching religious shrines; in Thailand for an arranged visit with the King's personal Singapore for the Taoist "Festival of the Nine Emperor Gods;" in communist China, Hong Kong, France, Mexico, Italy, Russia, England, and Israel.

Retiring from full-time teaching after the 1998-99 academic year, Wallen was named a professor emeritus of religion. In "retirement," he has found a new frontier in exploring the world through the Internet and a new challenge in developing distance learning courses. His curiosity about the world and his concern for students remain a constant in his life.

Wallen noted that the most satisfying aspect of his nearly 40-year teaching career was helping struggling students to become successful. *"When I can light a fire, when I can bring that student up to an 'A' level ... it takes a lot of time of the professor because you're giving of your own personal time, but then, when you see that student all at once take off and apply those things to his other classes.. that's my greatest joy to see them progress," he declared.*

The statistics are impressive. Wallen and his wife, Marcelene (Owens '59), have traveled abroad 69 times, including 24 trips to Israel, 10 to Hawaii and 16 to Cancun, Mexico. In all, he has visited 41 countries, territories and principalities.

As a recipient of the Distinguished Service Alumni Award, Marcelene Marjorie (Owens) Wallen was recognized for her activities with many community organizations in Findlay as well as the University.

In 1950, she earned a B.S. degree from Findlay College. She has 30 years of teaching (25 in the Findlay Schools) and taught English at a Findlay College Extension School in Missouri. She was named a Danforth Associate for her exceptional community and educational work.

She served as a member of the Executive Committee of the Democratic Party of Hancock County.

At Findlay, Marci was President of the Faculty Wives Club in the 1960's and a member of many of the social groups for the university. She assisted her husband with International Night on the Findlay Campus and in organizing Alumni Clubs throughout the United States.

She was noted for entertaining many of the international students in her home, and assisted them with learning about the customs of Findlay and the U.S.

When residing in Winter Park, Florida, Marci continues her volunteer work. She is on the Board of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Orlando serving as co-librarian for the JGSGO library housed at CRJ (Congregation of Reform Judaism.)

She has been voted into membership of the University Club in Winter Park. The club contains graduates and leaders from throughout the world who have made a contribution to society.

Rae and Marci love to spend time with their three children (Tammy, Ron and Mike, who all attended Findlay College), 4 grandchildren, and 4 step grandchildren, and a foster grandchild. Reminiscing about his years at Findlay, Wallen acknowledged, *"There is just so much for which I am thankful about my life at the University and the many things that I was able to be a part of on the campus ... I'm going to miss that kind of contact with students, but I love my retirement, especially spending time in Winter Park, Florida!"*



JEWISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF GREATER ORLANDO

DUES NOTICE / MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION - 2010 Fiscal Year

Our fiscal year is January 1 – December 31. Please complete the information below **and** on the reverse. Mail no later than **Feb. 28, 2010** in enclosed envelope together with your check payable to:

JGS of Greater Orlando
P. O. Box 941332
Maitland, FL 32754-1332

JGSGO is a 501(c) (3) Organization and your dues are tax deductible

RENEWAL

NEW

- Patron ----- \$100.00
- Sponsor ----- \$ 50.00
- Individual Member ----- \$ 25.00
- Family Membership ----- \$ 30.00
- ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP (Out-of-town – 50 mile radius) ----- \$ 20.00
- I WISH TO MAKE A VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTION OF ----- \$ _____

Total Enclosed ----- \$ _____

NAME (S) _____

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CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP+FOUR _____

PHONE (DAY) () _____ (EVE) () _____

FAX () _____ EMAIL ADDRESS _____

FAMILY NAMES YOU ARE RESEARCHING:

<u>SURNAME</u>	<u>TOWN</u>	<u>COUNTRY</u>
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

We look forward to greeting you at our meetings and hope you become active.

Your INVOLVEMENT is needed.

NOTE: If you are a new member who remitted annual dues after Sept, 1, 2009^{10/1} you are fully paid for the 2010 fiscal year or if you have already renewed your 2010 dues, please complete the information and mail in form. In any event all members must complete the information form.

PLEASE COMPLETE THE REVERSE OF THIS FORM !

2010
**SURVEY for the
JEWISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF GREATER ORLANDO**

NAME: _____

1. What is your reason(s) for joining our JGS?

2. How may we help you achieve your goal?

3. Please list persons whom you would like to suggest as speakers at a JGS meeting? On what topic should he/she speak?

4. Is there a specific subject that you would like addressed at one of our meetings?

5. Please suggest how our JGS might be more efficient to better serve your researching needs.

6. Your **INVOLVEMENT** is needed. Please indicate on which committee you would like to serve:

Membership Cyberspace Telephone Program
Hospitality Library Publicity Cemetery
Newsletter

7. Languages in which you are proficient: _____

PLEASE COMPLETE THE REVERSE