



Etz Chaim

עץ חיים

The Quarterly Journal of the
JEWISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF GREATER ORLANDO

VOL. 6, No. 2

Orlando, Florida, U.S.A.

Winter 1995-96

UPCOMING EVENTS IN THE GENEALOGICAL CALENDAR

- Tues., 12 December 1995** **REGULAR MEETING, 7:30 p.m., "A Social Evening of Genealogical Exchange,"** in the SENIOR LOUNGE of the Jewish Community Center, 851 N. Maitland Ave., Maitland, FL. Spouses and friends are encouraged to attend. Refreshments will be served.
- Tues., 9 January 1995** **REGULAR MEETING, 7:30 p.m., "How to Research Historical Biographies,"** presented by Jay Schleichkorn, himself the author of several biographies and a genealogist, in the Senior Lounge of the Jewish Community Center, 851 N. Maitland Ave., Maitland, FL. Refreshments will be served. Spouses, guests and visitors are welcome.
- Sun., 14 January 1995** **"GENEALOGY WORKSHOP - BEGINNERS AND BEYOND!"**, 12:30 p.m. to 5 p.m., in the Auditorium of the Jewish Community Center, 851 N. Maitland Ave., Maitland, FL. A full-scale introduction to Jewish genealogy for beginners, plus intermediate and advanced courses for those with some experience. See story inside for full details. Refreshments will be served. Spouses or guests are invited to attend.
- Tues., 13 February 1995** **REGULAR MEETING, 7:30 p.m., "Publishing Your Family History,"** representatives of Heart of the Lakes Publishing Co., Interlaken, NY, in the Senior Lounge of the Jewish Community Center, 851 N. Maitland Ave., Maitland, FL. Refreshments will be served. Spouses and visitors are welcome.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE ...

From the President	Page 2	Jews from the South - Delaware, Kentucky and Missouri ..	Page 5
My grandparents came from China and Japan	Page 3	Never Say Die	Page 9
Death Books from Auschwitz	Page 5	Articles in other JGS quarterlies	Page 12

... and other news in the world of Jewish genealogy



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is published quarterly by the

JEWISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY of GREATER ORLANDO

P.O. Box 941332
Maitland, FL 32794

Library of Congress ISSN 1084-323X

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The Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Orlando

is sponsored by the

Central Florida Jewish Community Center

and is a member of the

Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies

Federation of Genealogical Societies

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Etz Chaim is free to all members of JGSGO. Back copies may be obtained for \$5.00 each. Regular membership dues (September to August) are \$20 per year for JCC members, \$25.00 for non-members. Out-of-town membership (more than 50 miles) is \$15.00 per year. Please make checks payable to JGSGO and mail to JGSGO, PO Box 941332, Maitland, FL 32794.

JGSGO meetings are held monthly, usually on the 2nd Tuesday of each month, at 7:30 p.m. in the Senior Lounge of the JCC, 851 N. Maitland Ave., Maitland, FL.

From the President . . .

Genealogy is about families and Jewish genealogy is about families that are Jewish or from a Jewish background. Do not think that genealogy is only names, dates and places. It involves the living as well as those who have gone before. Several times in the past month, I have been made more acutely aware of this.

In October, I published a newsletter for my Dad's paternal family—including other families with the same name from the same ancestral area. Many of the recipients had never heard of me—even some of my own second cousins. In the three weeks since I mailed that issue, I have heard from people in Israel, Canada and the United States. A man from Israel called and told me that he did not know if we were related, but he would be sending me his family tree as he developed it with his daughter for a school project. In Israel, all high school students must do a family tree project before they can graduate.

Last week, on a Wednesday evening, I returned home to a message on my answering machine. My second cousin Diane from Winnipeg was in town, accompanying her husband to a medical conference, and wanted to meet. I had met her grandfather many years ago, but had never met Diane. Sheila and I had a delightful visit with her on that Friday. She told me that she grew up in a small town in Saskatchewan, that her family was very much assimilated and she knew few Jews and less about her religion. She was sent to a boarding school run by Catholic nuns and knew more about the Mass than Judaism. But the nuns had taught her that you could not know where you were going until you knew from where you came. She took that lesson to heart and, after graduation, moved to Winnipeg where she not only met family she did not know before but met her future husband—a man from a religious family whose father was a Cantor. After learning more she knew she was home.

One of our members said that at her first meeting Harry Katzman had helped her by showing how to search for people. She then did just a tiny bit of sleuthing and discovered that an aunt, long estranged from the family, was still living. With much trepidation she picked up the phone and dialed the number. Aunt and Uncle have joined them for Thanksgiving.

Closer to home my brother was afflicted with a serious illness this summer and, as a result of an underlying disease and post surgical trauma, now requires full-time nursing care and may not be able to function independently for some time, if ever. The day before he left for vacation in August, he and I had lunch and agreed to go over the family albums together upon his return. I can only hope that someday this will be so.

Do not only go backwards in your search. Going sideways and meeting and remeeting your living family can be immensely rewarding. Do not procrastinate—none of us can predict the future.

Have a warm, happy and healthy holiday season.

Hag Sameach,

Gladys
President

*FROM BAGELS TO SUSHI**My grandparents came from CHINA and JAPAN**by Lillian Weitzel*

Not everyone emigrated from eastern Europe *westward* to America. My father's family went *east*. Last July, I walked around my Dad's old neighborhood in Kobe, Japan!

My grandmother, Gita Shapiro, was born in Vilna, Lithuania. Her family moved eastward across Russia, settling in Siberia for a time. My grandmother used to say how wonderful the weather was in Siberia -- very dry. Grandma and her mother eventually immigrated to Harbin, China.



Haim Weitzel, Meyer Weitzel, Gita Shapiro Weitzel, a Russian neighbor lady, and Nathan Weitzel (circa 1943). The tiles roof in the upper right hand corner is my father's family house. This house has since been replaced. The house they are standing in front of is shown in the photo on the following page.

textile import/export business in Kobe, Japan.

While visiting the Jewish community in Harbin, he met and married my grandmother. My father's older brother, Nathan, was born in Harbin so that he could have a proper bris.

By the time my father Meyer was born two years later, the Jewish community in Kobe had developed enough so that my father could be properly initiated into the Jewish ritual of circumcision with a bris.

My father and his two brothers went to an English school



Nathan, Joseph, Meyer and Gita (circa 1930); I suppose Uncle Haim hadn't been born yet.

run by Anglicans. Today it is St. Michael's International School. There were many foreign nationals living in Kobe. My father's best friend was Dutch. The family had Russian and German neighbors.

My grandfather tried to expand his business to China but the wars of the time interfered. World War II was very bad for business. It was even hard to get food. My father got an office job in Kyoto and lived there about a year.

After the war the family immigrated to America. They were sponsored by some of Grandpa's brothers who had gone to Philadelphia about the same time Grandpa went to Japan. My father and his younger brother Haim were allowed to come over first. It took two weeks by boat. They stopped briefly in Hawaii before arriving in San Francisco. They liked San Francisco so well they stayed there a month trying to find jobs. Then they gave up and went on to Philadelphia.

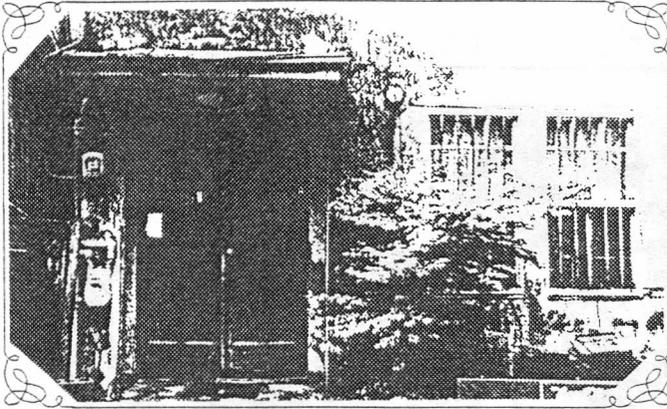
My father worked while Haim went to high school. Their uncles gave them advice, like, "If you wear a patched shirt you'll look like you just came off the boat." Their aunt Sonja taught my father how to cook. Nathan had to make the trip alone. My grandparents came later.

I had heard many of the stories about Japan from my parents and this past summer I visited the places I had heard so much about.

After almost 50 years the two largest department stores in Kobe, Daimaru and Sogo, are still the largest. Motomachi and Shinkaichi are still major shopping streets although there has been much devastation from the earthquake. Today there are

(Continued on the next page)

My grandparents came from *CHINA and JAPAN*



Daddy's next door neighbor's house in Kobe

(Continued from the previous page)

subways, but no streetcars.

As in much of the rest of the civilized world modern plumbing has replaced the outhouses and chamber pots. The zoo has been moved from Suwayam Park.

The only orthodox synagogue in Japan is on the very same site that my father remembers was just a temporary place to pray after the previous synagogue was bombed. My father's house has been rebuilt, but his next door neighbor's original house is still there.

I did not make the trip to Kobe for genealogical purposes, only see the places my father and grandfather had spent so much of their lives. Someday I hope to retrace the steps they had taken ... from Poland and Lithuania to Siberia, China and Japan.

Minsk historical films at Lake Mary LDS shows Jewish vital records from 1839

Microfilm records now at the LDS Family History Library in Lake Mary show births, marriages/divorces, deaths, etc. for many years beginning with 1839 from the Central Historical Archives for the rabbinate of Minsk, Belarus. Some of the films include school certificates.

Made available by Polly Horwitz for extended stay at the Lake Mary library are four reels from the LDS Salt Lake City depository. The reels are:

v. 1226-1/1 1839	Marriages	Film area 1920792 item 3
* v. 1226-1/25 1836-1838	Births <i>Rebecca</i>	" item 27-29
v. 1226-1/27 1839	Deaths	" " "
v. 1226-1/27 1839	Births	" " "
v. 1226-1/27 1839	Births	" 1920793 item 1-5
v. 1226-1/28 1840	Divorces	" " "
v. 1226-1/29 1840	Births <i>Rebecca?</i>	" " "
v. 1226-1/30 1840	Deaths	" " "
v. 1226-1/31 1861	Deaths	" " "
v. 1226-2/10 1899-1907	Birth docs.	" " item 16-19
v. 1226-2/11 1906-1916	School docs.	" " "
v. 1226-2/12 1847	Births	" " "
v. 1226-2/14 1852	Births	" 1920794 item 1, 4, 7, 8, 9, 13
v. 1226-2/17 1857	Marriages	" " "
v. 1226-2/20-21 1861	Deaths, births	" " "
v. 1226-2/22 1862	Births	" " "
v. 1226-2/26 1869	Births	" " "
* v. 1226-2/27 1882	Births <i>Open</i>	" 1920795 item 1,3
v. 1226-2/29 1895	Births	" " "

This record found under

1. Belarus, Minsk - Jewish records
2. Russia (Empire), Minsk, Minsk - Jewish records.

Rebecca 1923 died 6/16/903 died 83 1890 ? 2008 Rebecca d 6/16/903 died 83 yrs 1838 ? born

Jan. 14 workshop expected to be biggest, best yet

With dual working sessions on tap for the JGSGO workshop on Sunday, Jan. 14, genealogists -- both beginners and the more experienced -- will have an opportunity to broaden their skills as never before.

One of the largest classes is expected for this 5th annual seminar being held in the Jewish Community Center auditorium. Both Jewish and non-Jewish participants will be participating.

The beginners' course will touch on all the fundamentals of genealogy with special emphasis on showing where and how to find information pertaining to their personal genealogy research. The "beyond" phase of the program will offer varied intermediate and advanced topics in genealogical study (see flyer on page 11).

JGSGO members will receive a special \$5.00 discount from the regular cost of the Workshop which remains at \$25 for

advanced registration (\$30 at the door) or \$7.50 for individual courses (\$10 at the door).

Beginners will receive a copy of the 200-page looseleaf notebook, *A Beginner's Guide to Jewish Genealogy*. Those taking the advanced courses will be given handouts relating to the specific topic of their session.

All instructors are experienced in the topics they will be presenting, most being well-versed in general genealogy but for the first time, several will be from outside our Society. They will be lead several of the courses, especially in classes involving LDS Family History Library research, digitizing photography, preservation of records and computer programs for genealogy.

Advanced registration has already begun with indications that the workshops will have record attendance. The number of registrants will be limited to the space available in the JCC.

A Book Review:**Death Books from Auschwitz**

by Erwin Denzler

as translated by Harry Katzman

Erwin Denzler lives in Fuerth, Bavaria. He studied modern history and political science at the University of Erlangen, Germany and holds a Masters Degree. He is now teaching Law and Social Science at several academies for further education.

Harry Katzman is the publisher of Stammbaum, the Jewish genealogy special interest journal group for Germany, and a member of our society.

Jewish genealogy often becomes a research in details of the Holocaust. The chance to find information on what happened to individuals is rather high. As a result of the exhaustive Nazi bureaucracy, the fate of many victims can be traced until they were driven into the cattle boxcars, ready to leave for Auschwitz, Majdanek, Treblinka, Sobibor and the other extermination camps in the East.

For the Jews from some countries, large memorial books were published¹ with thousands upon thousands of names. Today experts estimates that about one and a half million victims were deported to Auschwitz. Most of them were murdered the same day in the gas chambers. The other deportees, about 10 to 20 percent out of each transport, were chosen for the "Extermination by labor." They became registered, tattooed with a number and were identified as prisoners of the Auschwitz concentration camp. For many transports, prisoners secretly wrote down the exact number of Jews who survived the selection. These notes have been saved and are published in Danuta Czech's "Auschwitz chronicle"². Therefore one can tell how many Holocaust victims with a probability of 80 to 90 percent, whether or not they died on the day of arrival at Auschwitz.

But still, it remained usually impossible to find out anything certain about the fate of an individual Jew deported to Auschwitz. The prisoners haven't been that anonymous before. To make the Holocaust possible, an extended bureaucracy was necessary. It produced thousands of records, documents and deportation lists. Every convoy to Auschwitz was accompanied by a written and alphabetized register of deportees, usually mentioning individual name, date and place of birth and nationality. Copies of these documents were often saved in the Gestapo files at the places where the trains emanated from. They have been the basic source for the memorial books which were subsequently published. Upon the arrival at Auschwitz, nobody wrote down the names of those unfortunate individuals, who were gassed immediately.

But those people selected for work, were mentioned in many documents. As a necessity to organize the camp, they

were tattooed and photographed. All together about 400,000 persons, not only Jews but all kinds of Nazi victims, became registered prisoners of Auschwitz and its satellite camps. About 200,000 of them died there before the liberation of the camp. The other ones had been transferred to other camps, died during the evacuation in January 1945 or the smallest number could escape or were liberated. Statistics show that the Jews who survived the selection upon arrival hardly had any chance to stay alive for more than 17 weeks. The normal way for them to die was putting them into the prisoners' hospital. If the SS physician there decided that it would take too long for them to be ready for labor again, the patients were killed with a phenol injection into the heart. If there were too many at the same time, they were sent like the anonymous victims into the gas chambers.

But the registered prisoners didn't just disappear without any traces. In order to keep the records accurate and to pretend natural causes of death, the SS had developed an elaborate system of death documentation. In some cases the camp physicians had to sign more than 30 documents for a single death. Like in every Germany city, there was a *Standesamt* (civil register of birth, marriage and death) in the camp. The main function of this office was to keep the *Sterbebuecher* (death books). For every person who died within the camp borders, a page in the books was filled in, mentioning name, profession, religion, last residence, date and hour of death, date and place of birth, names of parents and spouse, reason of death and the name of the physician who had documented the death.

Some prisoners who worked in the *Standesamt* survived. From their testimony we know how reliable the notes in the death books are³. Usually the dates are very accurate, but if too many people died the same day, especially when sent into the gas chambers, the entries were spread over some days. The given reasons of death were falsified in most of the documents. There had been a list of 44 different maladies. The secretaries were instructed to take any one of the listed maladies or causes of death. Only in very few

(Continued on the next page)

Death Books from Auschwitz

(Continued from the previous page)

documents the entries for reasons of death were stated as "executed", "shot while trying to escape" or "suicide". Historians found many examples where executed prisoners were shot or hanged were listed as having died by natural causes.

In September 1944, when the Soviet army was approaching, the SS started to burn documents about dead prisoners. Obviously the German leaders expected something like the Nuremberg trial and made an attempt to destroy evidence, but they had produced too many documents and political prisoners working in the camp administration offices had been successful in hiding records and making illegal copies. Among the saved documents there were about 50 volumes of death books. But only a few became available for research in the archives at the Auschwitz Museum or at the Red Cross Tracing Service. 46 volumes were kept for almost 50 years in the secret depository of the KGB at Moscow. A few years ago, the Russian government finally opened this archive and delivered the death books to the State Museum in Auschwitz-Birkenau. In 1991 the archivists of the museum started a project to compile all available records about individual Auschwitz prisoners in a computer database. With the support of two German institutes, the Technical University of Darmstadt and the Max-Planck-Society of Goettingen, it was possible to digitize the death books, plus eight other registers, which were miraculously saved in 1945.

As a result, the "Memorial Book - The Gypsies at Auschwitz-Birkenau" was published in 1993. The recent edited "Death Books from Auschwitz" are the second published volumes of documents from the infamous death camp. More than 68,000 entries from the original death books produced by the *Standesamt*, have formed the basis for the main register and index. An addendum is based on additional sources like the "report on the removal of dental gold" by the camp dentist or the "bunker book" which listed names of prisoners who died during special arrests. About 11,000 names were added via the aforementioned documents. Both registers are, unlike the chronological sources, sorted alphabetically. The editors decided to publish only names, dates and places of birth, death and reference number of the archival source. This is usually enough to find and identify individuals, but additional information like the last place of residence, profession, or name of the spouse, would have been helpful to trace the often unknown fate of the victims during the years before deportation to Auschwitz. The registers and indexes cover all kinds of prisoners: Jews and gypsies, prisoners of war and homosexuals, political and criminal internees, Jehovah's Witnesses and "anti-socials".

But the documents do not mention to which group each individual belonged. And, of course, due to the fragmentary conditions of the sources, the lists are not complete.

About 30,000 of the prisoners listed in the index are of Jewish descent. That's only 0.5 percent of all Holocaust victims. The "Atlas of the Holocaust"⁴ and books about the war history of individual towns or regions can be used to find out whether the Jews of a certain area were deported to Auschwitz or to one of the other extermination camps. Statistics of the age at the time of death show that more than 70 percent of the mentioned victims were of the age group 21-50. In accordance with the criteria used by the selections, children and old people didn't have a high chance to survive the first day. More than 75 percent of the names were male. In March 1943 the SS stopped the entries of Jewish prisoners into the *Sterbebuecher*. Exceptions were made for those married to a non-Jewish spouse. If a Jew was deported before 1943 to Auschwitz but is not mentioned in the death books, the probability is very close to 100 percent that he was murdered in the gas chambers before registration.

For those listed in the books, reasons of death are given in the original documents, but since usually faked, not in the printed edition. In some cases the "Auschwitz chronicle" may supply hints about the circumstances of death. Volume 1 of the "Death Books", with the subtitle "Reports", supplies the necessary background information. Former prisoners who had worked in the camp offices explain how the original registers had been kept. Special articles inform about the different fate of Polish and Soviet prisoners, of Jews and gypsies in Auschwitz, and about the special records that contain information about each group. Information like this will be very helpful if someone wants to go on with further research in the original documents at the Museum of Auschwitz. A list of transports to Auschwitz, unfortunately only one example, shows where the deportees came from. The computer project in the Museum of Auschwitz is still going on. There are other registers that contain information not mentioned in the printed death books. And there are sources with information on individuals like registers of confiscated property, photos made by the SS investigation service, and lists of prisoners who had been in special departments of the camp. Certainly it has been a good decision not to wait with the publication until all particulars are complete. One of the next plans is to present all available databases on electronic media, probably via CD-ROM.

NOTES:

(1) e.g. the "Gedenkbuch" on German Jews edited by

Continued on page 8)

Searching the South

DELAWARE - KENTUCKY - MISSOURI

by RACHEL B. HEIMOVICS
Eighth in a Series

In this final *Searching the South* column, we will look at some Jewish genealogical resources in three of the so-called border states of Delaware, Kentucky, and Missouri -- specifically in Wilmington, Lexington, Louisville and St. Louis.

The idea behind this series began with a compilation of resources for a program I presented in November 1992. The list below was gathered and researched over several years. The names, addresses and telephone numbers may not be current.

If you missed preceding columns and want to order past issues, they are available by contacting JGSGO, P.O. Box 941332, Maitland, FL 32794, and at a cost of \$5.00 for each column.

The first column was about Tennessee, followed in order by Georgia, Alabama, South Carolina, Virginia-Maryland-Washington, D.C., Texas, Arkansas, and Louisiana-Mississippi-North Carolina.

DELAWARE

Jewish Historical Society of Delaware
1101 Garden of Eden Road
Wilmington, DE 19803
302 / 656-8558

Alternative address: 505 Market Street Mall
Wilmington, DE 19801

NOTE: Julian H. Preisler, free-lance genealogist and archivist for the Jewish Historical Society of Delaware, recently published *Pioneer American Synagogues*, a travel guide to the oldest existing synagogues in each of the 50 states and the District of Columbia. To order send \$10 to

Julian H. Preisler
518 West Fourth St.
Wilmington, DE 19801

KENTUCKY

General genealogy research in Kentucky, see Hathaway, Beverly West, *Inventory of County Records* [n.d.]; Schwitzer, George K. *Kentucky Genealogical Research* (1981)

[from Wilson, Charlest Reagan and William Ferris *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 1989]

LEXINGTON

Temple Adath Israel
124 N. Ashland Avenue
Lexington, KY 40502
606 / 266-3251

Has its own archive.

LOUISVILLE

Jewish Genealogical Society of Louisville
3304 Furman Blvd.
Louisville, KY 40220

Contact: Annette and Milton Russman
Archives of Louisville Jewish community

(1) University of Louisville Archives
Ekstrom Library
Louisville, Ky 40292
502 / 588-6674

Contact: Dr. Tom Owens

(2) The Temple: Congregation Adath Israel Brith Sholom
5101 Brownsboro Rd.
Louisville, KY
502 / 423-1818

Contact: Jack Benjamin

(3) Congregation Adath Jeshurun
2401 Woodbourne Avenue
Louisville, KY 40205
502 / 458-5359

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Searching the South

DELAWARE - KENTUCKY - MISSOURI

(Continued from the previous page)

Best general genealogy resources in Louisville:

- (1) The Filson Club Historical Society
1310 S. 3rd Street
Louisville, KY
502 / 458-5359
- (2) Kentucky Room - Louisville Free Public Library
301 York Street
Louisville, KY
502 / 561-8616

Jewish Community Federation
3630 Dutchmans Lane
Louisville, KY 40205
502 / 451-8840

Best source for history and demographics of local Jewish community.

Naamani Memorial Library
Jewish Community Center
Louisville, KY 40205

Special resource for Jewish genealogist.

MISSOURI

ST. LOUIS

St. Louis Jewish Archives
Saul Brodsky Jewish Community Library
12 Millstone Campus Drive
St. Louis, Mo. 63146

Jewish Genealogical Society of St. Louis
10677 Country View Drive
St. Louis, MO 63141
Contact: Matt Darrish

Translations Available

If anyone needs French, Spanish or Portugese documents translated, our Society member Mauricio Zepeda is at your beck and call.

He also has available a list of Honduran Jewish shopkeepers during the World War II era for anyone interested. Contact him at 670 Trinity Ct., Longwood, 32750, (407) 332-8948.

Death Books from Auschwitz

(Continued from page 6)

- Bundesarchiv (probably well-known to the readers of this journal; a revised edition, covering also the East German states is in the work); see also: Klarsfeld, Serge, Memorial to the Jews deported from France, New York, 1983 (deportation lists, including more than 6,000 German Jews in French exile).
- (2) Czech., Denuta, Auschwitz chronicle, New York 1990 (German edition: Kalendarium der Ereignisse im Konzentrationslager Auschwitz-Birkenau, Reinbek 1989).
 - (3) See vol. 1 of the Death Books and: Shelley, Lore, Secretaries of Death, New York 1986.
 - (4) Gilbert, Martin, Atlas of the Holocaust (many editions).

"Death Books from Auschwitz." edited by the State Museum of Auschwitz-Birkenau. Munich: K.G. Saur Verlag, 1995. 3 volumes, ISBN 3-598-11264-5, \$365. "Reports" and "Index of Names" also available separately; "Reports" (vol. 1) also published in German and Polish. Delivered in USA by Congressional Information Services, Inc., 4520 East-West Highway, Suite 800, Bethesda, MD 20814-3389, phone: 1-800-692-6300.

SPECIAL NOTICE!

Unless you have paid your dues
for the 1995-96 year
THIS WILL BE YOUR LAST ISSUE
of **ETZ CHAIM**

NEW JEWISH SOCIETIES

JGS of Colorado
Sandra Greenberg
P.O. Box 22440
Denver, CO 80222

JGS of Columbus
Randy Wasserstrom
6646 Guinevere Drive
Columbus, OH 43229

Australian JGS-Victoria
Ester Czaky
P.O. Box 30
Balaclava, Victoria 3138
Australia

JGS in Baku
Mikhail Agarunov
c/o JGS Moscow, VAAD
71 Varshavskoye Str
113556 Moscow

NEVER SAY DIE

by Robert W. Marlin

When your back is up against the wall and you can't see any possible way to achieve success, it is time to fall back and reorganize your thoughts. This concept originally applied to a military unit who in the heat of battle lost some of their organization. Their commander would give the order to "fall back and regroup". It was simply a way to change the mind set of the troops. Fortunately, the same principle can be used in genealogical research. It is my firm belief that this type of situation is best explained by actual examples, so here are two of my most recent encounters which involved the "fall back and regroup" tactic.

Jesse R. Phillips is a non-Jewish cousin who like me, is in his early sixties. His father, had died in New York City in 1935 when Jesse was a small child. His mother, Catherine, knew nothing about his father except that he came from a small town somewhere in Georgia. Jesse Sr. had never spoken of his parents except to say that they were farmers. They had met and lived in Brooklyn, several blocks away from where I lived. Jesse and I played together a lot during childhood. Shortly after the start of World War II, Catherine met and married an army officer and they moved away from New York.

Our paths rarely crossed during the next fifty years. In 1993, my sister made arrangements for the three of us to get together here in Florida. We had a wonderful visit during which time Jesse expressed the desire to find out more about his father. His mother in later years had told him that his father's family had lived in the town of Henderson, Georgia. Knowing of my obsession with Genealogy, he asked for my help. A quick check of an atlas showed that Henderson was a small dot along Interstate 75 near Macon, Georgia, located in Houston County.

A trip to the Orlando Library resulted in a 1920 Census check using my own method of Searching the Census Without Soundex. I simply looked up Houston County and found that it was all on one roll. By scanning through I was able to locate the Town of Henderson and within a few minutes located the only Phillips Family in town. It was headed by Jesse R. Phillips who had a wife named Hattie and ten children. The list of children included a Jesse Jr. whose year

of birth was exactly the same as Jesse's father. There was two other male children. They were Ernest and Hunter. I mention this because they would probably be the key names for future research as the family name of female children was usually lost as soon as they married.

All of this information was promptly send to Jesse, who was now retired and living in Northern California. He tried numerous methods of finding living descendents of the people mentioned in the Census. He even called dozens of people with the surname Phillips, who lived anywhere in the Macon area. None of his efforts produced any results. In May of this year, my wife and I drove to North Carolina during a two week vacation. Because we went on I-75, I decided to stop in Henderson and see if I could uncover any additional information for Jesse.

My visit to Henderson was a total adventure in just

On the way back, Sylvia spotted what she thought was a small cemetery in back of a small group of buildings. The buildings turned out to be the Henderson Baptist Church

how rural many parts of America still are. Turning off the Interstate was like going back into the past. The road leading into Henderson was a two lane paved road. After driving about a half mile we came to a read sign which simply read, "HENDERSON-Unincorporated".

After driving for almost four miles and seeing nothing, we turned around. When I say NOTHING, I mean NOTHING. There was not a gas station, a convenience store, a public telephone or even any other traffic on the road. Only an occassional dirt road leading to a farmhouse. On the way back we found another sign which we had overlooked. It also read, "HENDERSON-Unincorporated".

We felt totally isolated. We could have been in the rural America of the 1920s. In all this time we had not passed another car or even spotted another human being. Only two things belied this image. One was the TV antennas on the occasional buildings and the other was an car parked in the distance, on a dirt road driveway.

On the way back, Sylvia spotted what she though was a small cemetery in back of a small group of buildings. We decided to explore that possibility before running out of town. The buildings did turn out to be the Henderson Baptist Church. In back was a cemetery with several hundred grave

(Continued on next page)

NEVER SAY DIE

(Continued from the preceding page)

sites which had not been visible from the main road. There was a pickup truck parked by one of the buildings.

We tried in vain to locate anyone, anywhere in the complex and then decided to explore the cemetery. We covered the entire area in about twenty minutes and were about to give up when Sylvia spotted the inscription Hunter Phillips-Died 1931 on one of the headstones. It almost had to be the same Hunter mentioned in the census. However, that fact still had to be verified. I took pictures and we left Henderson, still without sighting another human being. We both felt relieved to return to the present.

After returning from vacation, I called the Henderson Baptist Church. The lady who ran the office was most helpful and cooperative. It seemed that the records on hand were not complete. As a matter of fact, some of the records prior to 1940 were nonexistent. The ultimate result of her next act of kindness was mind boggling. She referred me to a Mrs. Newberry who was quite elderly and had lived in Henderson all her life. She also provided me with Mrs. Newberry's phone number. This I simply passed on to my cousin Jesse.

My cousin's life will never be the same. He has now heard from dozens of direct relatives including one of his father's sisters. Earlier there was a reunion in California and there is a larger reunion being planned for next year. Jesse is presently in contact with DOZENS of cousins and barely has time to respond to the E-Mail and letters he has received.

My second example concerns the sister of my grandfather. She was Bertha Margolin KATZ, the wife of Samuel Katz of the Bronx, NY circa 1920-33. They had six children. The sons were Harry, Morris and Jacob. The daughters were Sarah, Lillie and Sylvia. I have been trying to locate family members for at least the past ten years, without success.

Both of the parents died in the twenties and early thirties. I have never to able to locate any trace of the sons, in spite of writing hundreds of letters of inquiry. Countless hours have not produced any clue as to where they went after leaving the Bronx. Two of the daughters, Lillie and Sarah both married and their maiden surname vanished into the world of male chauvinism. Sylvia, who was born ten years later than the others was the exception. A cousin in Oregon had informed me that she had married a man named Nelkin and had lived in the Bronx in the mid 1930s. By the trial and error method I was able to establish a link between a Joseph

Nelkin and Sylvia Katz. However, without a marriage license for documentation, it was all theory.

At the time I had even been able to establish that two men named Joseph Nelkin had applied for M/Ls in the early 1930s. I had been able to do this by checking the Indexes to the NYC Marriage License Bureau. At the time, neither of these records had been released and therefore verification of anything was impossible.

Over a number of years, I found out that Sylvia Katz Nelkin had a son named Jerry and a daughter named Nancy. (married name unknown). I wrote to dozens of Nelkins throughout the country and found two first cousins of Jerry. Both men were the sons of Joe Nelkin's brothers. However, neither had been in touch with Jerry or their Aunt Sylvia in years. Another dead end. Once again it was time to fall back and rethink.

A recheck of record sources indicated that later M/L records in New York City had been released to the Municipal Archives and were now available to the public. The information from the Indexes I had copied years before now became important. I simply ordered both M/Ls from the Municipal Archives. Because I was able to supply the certificate numbers, the cost was \$ 10.00 for both. The first came back several weeks ago. It was the wrong Joseph Nelkin. The second one was right on. On June 17th 1933 Joseph Nelkin married Sylvia Katz. The witnesses to the event were Sarah Levine and Lillie Halpern. Do you think there is any chance that these might be the married names of Sylvia's sisters?

I've got to end now as I'm on my way to another adventure trying to locate the descendents of Lillie and Sarah.

New Members in our Society

Marion Brechner
Winter Park, FL

Frank Heymann
Winter Springs, FL

Sylvia Paskin
Orlando, FL

Mildred Potasch
Orlando, FL

Mildred & Ben Rosenbaum
Longwood, FL

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*For additional information, phone Gladys Paulin (671-7485),
Gene Starn (788-3898) or Robert Marlin (834-3037)*

Items of interest you'll find in the latest issues of

JGS Quarterlies

Copies may be found in our genealogy library
in the Holocaust Center

The Quarterly journals of all JGSes from around the world are kept on file in our library in the Holocaust Center, as well as the Special Interest Group (SIG) publications and AVOTAYNU, the International Review of Jewish Genealogy..

All of these journals have information of interest to all genealogists depending, of course, upon their own interests, but the articles listed below were deemed to be of special interest to our readers.

Mass-Pocha - Boston - Fall 1995

Jewish Vital Records from Belarus on Microfilm, p1
Using City (Business) Directories in Genealogical Research, p6

Shemot - Great Britain - October 1995

Historical Files of Tamobrzeg (Shtetl of Dzikew), p10

Mishpacha - Washington - Summer 1995

Jews in Greece, p5
Jews in Palestine, p16
Research in the Midwest, p18

Kosher Koala - Australia - September 1995

Names being researched by new members, p 12

ZichronNote - San Francisco - August 1995

Information in Documents of St. Petersburg, Russia, School, p13
List of Pupils at school, 1906-1917, p14
How to Find Your Long-Lost Relatives, p20

Kol - Cleveland - October 1995

Cleveland records, p13
Names from Margitta (Romania) yizkor book, p47
The Temple membership, April 1, 1950, p66
Convoy list to Waldenburg Concentration Camp, p 91
Death records from Jewish Independent, p113

JGSR News - Rochester - Fall 1995

JGSR Debuts on World Wide Web, p1
Finding Your Relatives with a CD-ROM Phone Directory, p3

Shem Tov - Toronto - September 1995

Whats New at Yivo, p1
Using Voters' Lists to Locate Missing Relatives, p4

Bayou Branches - New Orleans

Directory of Louisiana Genealogical Libraries and Historical Societies, p6

We missed you at the last meeting!!



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