

# שרשרת הדורות

## חקר תולדות המשפחה היהודית



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# The Israel Genealogical Society

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The Israel Genealogical Society is a non-profit organization founded in 1983

Registration No. 58-010-240-8

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**Jerusalem Branch:** Meetings every third Wednesday of the month at 19:30, Beit Frankfurter, Derech Beit Lechem 80 (ask for the bus stop near Yehuda St.) Buses: (from Central Bus Station), 7, 71, 74  
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**Ra'anana Branch** (Hebrew Speaking): Meetings every third Thursday of the month at 18:30. HaShahar Library, Rehov Hazon Ish 9, Ra'anana. **Amnon Atzmon** – Chair [amnonatzmon@013.net]

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## *Sharsheret Hadorot* Journal

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**Submission for Publication:** We welcome submission on all aspects of Jewish genealogy. All articles should be submitted by e-mail using Word format. Please include all visual material: photographs, maps and illustrations, e-mail address and brief biography (100 words).

**Submissions:** Via email attachment to: rose.sharsheret@gmail.com or igs@isragen.org.il or by CD by regular mail POB 4270, Jerusalem, 91041

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## **From the Pen of the Editor**

*Dr. Rose Lerer Cohen*

This edition of Sharsheret Hadorot is dedicated to Gidon Levitas, a valued and beloved member of our Society who passed away in September of this year. I wish to convey my condolences to his wife Erga and to his family. I also wish to express my condolences to Devorah Nezer, a member of the Jerusalem Branch of our Society, on the sudden and tragic loss of her husband Prof. Ehud Nezer.

The articles in this edition vary: Guy Ilan, Esther Ramon and Rose Feldman, each demonstrates the part that serendipity can play in genealogical research; Orly (Kramash) Stettiner and Dr. Isaac Joseph Solomon bring two destroyed communities to life; Harriet Kasow introduces us to the Romanian Archives in Israel; Jordan Auslander gives us expert advice once again; finally, Tony Hausner reviews the Skala Yizkor book, which has been translated into English.

There have been many activities in our society over the last few months. A branch of the Society was inaugurated in Raanana; two events took place at Beit Hatefutzot: the Sixth Annual Seminar and during Sukkot the Society participated in the Family Festival which was held there; we have been holding introductory genealogy classes at the AACI and the Orthodox Union in Jerusalem. You can read reports of these activities in this Journal.

Perhaps one of the greatest milestones of the Israel Genealogical Society is the launching of the Montefiore Census Website and Search Engine. Launching this event took place at Mishkenot Shaananim in Jerusalem. Mathilde Tagger, Billie Stein and Rose Feldman, give us an in depth description of the Montefiore Censuses, website and Search Engine in this edition.

If you have written an article, or made a genealogical discovery, please share this with us. We would be pleased to receive articles from you.

Thank you Hagit and Martha for your tireless assistance and to my board for their backing, to Esther Chipman Frame for the translations and to you, Yocheved, for always being willing to assist and advise.

## ***Sharsheret Hadorot, Outgoing President's Message, December 2010***

*Michael Goldstein*

I write this at the close of my three-year term as president of the Israel Genealogical Society. I am honored to have served as president and relish in our achievements: our membership has grown; we have launched a new Hebrew-speaking branch in Rehovot, and are on the verge of opening another. We have merged with JFRA, and beyond the resulting increase in membership, we have acquired a vital new cadre of volunteers. This merging of forces is a continuation of the process set into motion several years ago when "Shorashim Bagalil" of Kiryat Tivon joined us. November saw our very successful Sixth Annual One-Day Conference. Participation once again reached the level of the very first conference of 2005, where we still basked in the euphoria of the 2004 IAJGS International Conference on Jewish Genealogy held in Jerusalem. This year's outstanding attendance reinforces the fact that this annual conference is a pillar and flagship of our organization. And speaking of the International Conference, we are about to begin working on the 2014 International Conference, to be convened in Jerusalem. Professional conference organizers are being interviewed, helping us to explore the financial viability and other major issues involved in the complex, daunting arrangements in preparation of this event. In the near future, a working committee will be set up to begin planning the operation of the conference.

Our website, HYPERLINK [www.isragen.org.il](http://www.isragen.org.il), provides members with vital information and constantly adds databases both to the open areas and to our members' corner. Our volunteers have worked hard on behalf of the Montefiore Endowment to prepare the groundwork for the Montefiore censuses to be searched online. Our members' corner contains a number of essential databases, as well as all past issues of *Sharsheret Hadorot*.

*Sharsheret Hadorot*, our award-winning journal, continues to be issued in both online and print editions. The subject material has broadened in scope and moved well ahead into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. However, difficulties exist in finding the volunteer manpower to undertake the quality translation required, although this problem is being addressed.

In looking towards the future, I believe that our new administration must aim to continue to increase Israeli participation in genealogy and the IGS. This can best be achieved, in my opinion, by expanding and augmenting the courses we offer, combined with follow-up for course participants and our membership through mentoring and hands-on help. Further, we must continue to assist members whose lack of English language skills hinders them in researching the primarily English-language web and the genealogy world. One tangible example is to volunteer our help in translating IGS, JewishGen and SIG websites, in whole or in part as in the case of JRI-Poland.

Another area upon which our society can focus is incorporating the various groups of Russian, French and Spanish researchers who are already involved in genealogy or wish to do so. However, the greatest focus must be placed upon reaching out to the general Hebrew population to interest them in genealogy and in the IGS. Carrying out this goal can be accomplished by setting our sights beyond our branch programs. After all, we are a countrywide society, and not a number of independent city genealogy societies as is the case in the US and Canada. Hand in hand, I urge that IGS's next horizon be sparked by a major thrust towards bringing the younger generation of Israelis within the genealogical community. An obvious start is by augmenting our cooperation with the Tapuz Forum, and by creating formats that are meaningful and relevant to this crucial population.

In summary, we are doing great work— and our challenge is to do even greater work!

## Message from the Incoming President of the Israel Genealogical Society

*Garri Regev*

As the newly elected president of the Israel Genealogical Society I want to thank all those present at the Annual Meeting for the confidence placed in me. I am looking forward to working with all of you to continue our work and reach out to bring others to this vibrant Society.

I would like to thank Michael Goldstein, Lea Gedalia, Chana Furman and everyone on the Va'ad Artzi for all of their work and continued efforts to take on new challenges and help to make the Israel Genealogical Society a true gem.

Recently we have begun to run short courses in beginning genealogy. We have experience now in several cities and in both Hebrew and English. I am hoping that we can reach out in more communities and have similar courses. There is a desire to learn and a golden opportunity for us to make a difference. We will also need to prepare for the next step, more advanced materials for those who have learned the basics and are eager to learn more.

We have among us amazing volunteers - some working on a variety of projects helping to make databases in Israel available to people around the world, others organizing the events that have become a focal point of our yearly activities and still others contributing on a day-to-day and month-to-month basis. Without you, we would not be able to function. We encourage everyone to find a way to make their contribution.

I welcome your comments, concerns and ideas and hope to see you at our activities during this year.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish all of you a happy and healthy 2011 – may it be filled with accomplishment, progress and peace.

### CONDOLENCES

*The Israel Genealogical Society expresses its sincerest condolences to our member, Dvora Nezer on the untimely and tragic loss of her husband, **Prof. Ehud Nezer.***



### **Gidon Levitas Z"L, a mensch**

תרצ"ו 1936 - תש"ע 2010

Son of Rose and Dov, his wife Erga nee Ashlagi, three children:  
Haggai, Hovav and Zehavit and to date nine grandchildren.

#### **Short biography taken from Gidon's pamphlet about his family**

Gidon was born in Plumstead, Cape Town in 1936 and among his papers a copy of his birth certificate was found. He attended Wynberg Boys School and was a member of the Habonim Zionist movement, where he eventually became a *madrich* [troop leader].

In June 1954 the Levitas family left South Africa for Israel, after traveling through several countries in Europe. In Israel Gidon renewed contact with friends from the time he was a pupil at the Reali School in Haifa, when the family lived there in 1949. He joined the *Nahal* (Pioneer Fighting Youth) unit of the Israeli Army, which later joined Kibbutz Gonen in the Upper Galilee on the Syrian border. Gidon became a member of the kibbutz, working in agriculture and

subsequently as the accountant of the Kibbutz.

In 1963 Gidon left the Kibbutz, met and married Erga, the eldest daughter of the Ashlagi family from Kfar Vitkin. He worked as a reporter for "The Jerusalem Post" and also as a free lance journalist, while studying and completing a B.A. degree in Social Sciences at the Tel Aviv University. In 1973, Gidon earned the M.A. degree from the University of Essex, in Social Services planning. For twenty years he served as social and community worker in the Municipality of Netanya.

Gidon joined the Israel Genealogical Society in 1999, was one of the founders of the Netanya Branch and its president from 2008 to 2010.

\* \* \*

**Remembering Gidon Levitas – Eva Florsheim 12.9.2010**

*To Erga and the family*

Through the years I knew Gidon we shared our hobby of genealogy.

Particularly after I moved to Norway, Gidon seems to have felt I was missing out on information and news that could be useful and interesting in my work, so he forwarded links to newspaper articles and websites. In one of his emails he describes himself as 'your friend and informal career advisor'.

Just to give you a feeling of how generous, dedicated and caring he was, here is most of what he sent me from January 2010 until the last email he sent on August 24th 2010 and that I luckily answered him that same evening.

I will miss Gidon. I will miss his emails.  
ת.ג.צ.ב.ה.

<http://rediscoveringnorway.blogspot.com/2010/09/email-on-friday-dead-on-sunday.html>  
<http://rediscoveringnorway.blogspot.com/2010/09/remembering-my-friend-g.html>

\* \* \*

Gidon left us so suddenly that we were all in shock.

Who can believe that he is no more. Gidon was a mensch.

He was always concerned about others. We often spoke on the phone and he always showed concern for my invalid wife.

He will be sorely missed by our Netanya Club; He was the main force that kept the club functioning.

He and Erga were very proud of their research into their families.

Like me Gidon came from Cape Town South Africa. The Levitas family had their roots in Lithuania and Latvia.

You might be gone but we will always remember you.

*Basil Sandler*

\* \* \*

**It was my privilege – Chana Furman**

Yes, this is how I'm seeing it when I'm thinking on our friend and colleague Gidon Levitas Z"L.

Through our genealogy work we get to know people from all walks of life and establish contacts that we might not find in any other group of people. This is how I feel about my ties with Gidon.

When I'm thinking about Gidon, I first see a smile, which starts in his eyes and spreads

over his entire face. I shall remember his serenity and his understanding, his wisdom which he generously shared with others, and his determination to see any task safely completed.

We can go on and on and still not tell all. When I remember Gidon z"l I remember *a mensch*.

יהא זכרו ברוך

## Siedlce: An extinct community becomes a target for yearning

*Orly (Kramash) Stettiner*

### 1. The story of Siedlce

A few hours from Warsaw  
Amongst Poland's snowy hills,  
My Siedlce rests safely  
And there for generations, rests my family, and  
there are tailors, and writers, and a few  
beggars,  
And the Rabbi sits there with all the Hassidim  
And people laugh, and dance,  
And there is tradition, in my Siedlce  
A village with Jews  
And when I was in Treblinka  
Amongst the stones  
I placed a flower on the stone  
For my Siedlce  
This is a poem full of yearning,  
For my village in which I did not manage to  
grow up  
For my family who I did not know  
May God have mercy

*Written by Or Shai, aged 17, following a trip  
to Poland, December 2004<sup>1</sup>*

Siedlce (or according to its Polish name, Sdelce) is a district town in the district of Województwo Mazowieckie), some 100 km. east of Warsaw, on the highway leading from Berlin through Warsaw to Minsk and Moscow. Siedlce was and is still an important junction for the railways from the south and the west to the north and the east. On the eve of WWII the Jewish population of Siedlce numbered some 15,000 people, about half of the entire population there. The Jews were employed in many branches of industry such as in textiles, as tanners and cobblers, as



carpenters and also in the liberal professions. They had a lively community life, with political parties from Agudat Yisrael through to the Volkists; help and health associations caring for the well being of the Jews in the city; an extensive education system with schools and kindergartens where the children and youth learned in Hebrew, Yiddish and Polish. In all, an active cultural life in which framework a library operated and newspapers appeared weekly.

On September 7<sup>th</sup> 1939 Siedlce was bombed by German planes, and on September 11<sup>th</sup> it was occupied by the Germans who hastened to loot the Jewish shops. A few days later the Germans evacuated Siedlce but returned and reoccupied it on October 11<sup>th</sup>. At the end of November 1939, German soldiers entered the Great Synagogue and the adjacent study hall for the first time and threw out the Torah scrolls, ripping and trampling them. All this was an introduction to the event that occurred on the night of December 24-25<sup>th</sup>, 1939, Christmas night. The Germans surrounded the Great Synagogue, removed the remaining Torah scrolls from it and burned the synagogue building. In a separate bonfire they set the scrolls alight. Jews who were trapped in the synagogue were burned to death.

In spring 1941 a list was drawn up of the homes owned by Jews prior to the establishment of two ghetto areas that were closed, with their residents, on October 1<sup>st</sup> 1941. The ghetto separated the Jews from the rest of the population. No one could enter or exit without special permission. After the ghetto was closed the health and economic condition of the Jews declined significantly, and every day many people died due to the outbreak of plagues. In March 1942, 12,500 Jews lived there.

Towards morning on Saturday, August 22<sup>nd</sup> 1942, Germans, Ukrainians, and Polish





policemen surrounded the ghetto. With dawn, all the Jews were banished to the square close to the old cemetery, next to the burned synagogue. A selection was conducted there during which those who could work were separated from the other Jews. In the triangle made by Sokolov, Osłonaviza and Targova streets the 'small ghetto' was created to which some 500 Jews were transferred. About 1,500 more Jews snuck in stealthily. Several thousand Jews were shot to death in the cemetery. After waiting for several long hours in the heat and without water or food, about 10,000 Jews were led to the train station on August 23<sup>rd</sup> 1942, whence they were sent to the Treblinka death camp, only 70 km. from Siedlce.

The 'small ghetto' was liquidated on November 25<sup>th</sup> 1942. About 2,000 Jews were transferred from it to the Gesi Borek camp (the Limanowskiego settlement). On November 30<sup>th</sup> 1942 the last 2,000 Jews were expelled from Siedlce and its environs and from the Gesi Borek camp to the train station and taken to Treblinka for extermination.

Thus did 400 years of glorious Jewish history come to an end.

## 2. The Organization of Siedlce Jews in Israel

With the worsening of the economic situation of Jews in Eastern Europe at the end of the 1920s due to the severe global economic crisis at that time, efforts were made to help the Jews of Siedlce. To this end a list of former

Siedlce residents living in Israel was drawn up, and on March 2<sup>nd</sup> 1933 the 'Siedlce Jewish Community in Eretz Israel' was founded.

The organization's first tasks were maintaining connections with the Zionist institutions, opening a club for meetings between new and veteran immigrants, making contact with all the Jews from Siedlce around the world, and registering the number and location of veteran immigrants from Siedlce in Eretz Israel. After WWII broke out, letters crying out for help were received from those struggling for their survival in Siedlce, asking for urgent help to save them from death.

Towards the end of the war, in April 1944, it was decided to re-establish an organization entitled 'The Organization of the Former Siedlce Community' headed by Fischel Dromi (Popovski), a veteran Zionist activist. The first memorial meeting was held on August 28<sup>th</sup> 1944 in the Ohel Shem hall in Tel Aviv, attended by many hundreds of city residents. A benevolent fund was established using the contributions of former Siedlce citizens in



Israel, the USA, France and Argentina. This fund provided loans to the needy from Siedlce for housing, subsistence and health. The first steps were taken to establish the organization on an international basis, and it filled an important role in founding an office for searching for lost relatives. Connections were made with survivors from Siedlce, matzot and wine were sent there for the festival of Passover, and money was transferred for repairing the walls of the Jewish cemetery which had been destroyed during the Holocaust.

During the 50's the organization concentrated on publishing a memorial book for the destroyed Siedlce community. With the help of Jews from Argentina, where there was an international publishing center, the book appeared (in Yiddish) in 1956, and rapidly arrived on the shelves of public and academic libraries, and of many homes around the world.

After the death of Fischel Dromi, the organization was headed by David Ben-Yossef, and later, by Eliezer Bar Chaim, Shmuel Levin, and Herzl Kaveh. The organization dealt with various commemoration activities, peaking with the publication of a book in Hebrew in 2004, entitled 'Fathers recount Siedlce' in memory of the community.

The organizational activity waned during that period and the number of members dropped drastically, due mainly to the death of many people of the first generation, disagreements, internal conflicts, and a total lack of interest by the young people in the community – the third and fourth generations.

A 'roots' trip to Poland was held in 2005 on the initiative of the Organization of Citizens of Zamosz and the Environs. Quite coincidentally, the group also included several people from the first, second and third generations of the Siedlce community, including myself. While traveling we decided to do something to reestablish the 'Siedlce

Jewish Community in Israel', this time with special emphasis on the connection of youth from the community with the commemoration activities. Mrs. Bella Prozanski was elected chairperson of the organization, and Mr. Herzl Kaveh, the outgoing chairman and a native of the city, its president.

The renewed organization set itself the goal of gathering and recording testimony and memories, and locating what little documentation still remained, while establishing a closer connection with the young generation in order to expand its knowledge of the heritage left by its members.

### **3. The Organization's activities since 2006**

#### *Establishing the internet site*

During the last three years, since organizational activity was resumed, an intensive process of preserving and restoring the personal and collective memory of former Siedlce citizens began, peaking with the launch of a large impressive internet site ([www.siedlce.org.il](http://www.siedlce.org.il)) wherein recorded memories of survivors from Siedlce are constantly added. A photo archive, currently with 420 photographs, has been developed and is constantly growing. I personally had the honor of planning the site and participating in its construction, and since then I have managed it and edited its content.

The internet site is the site of a community that was almost totally destroyed in the Holocaust, with few remaining survivors – mainly those who managed to leave before the war due to their Zionist ideals. As a community memorial site, there is obviously an honorable place for their stories – those who survived the hell of the war and were lucky enough to be saved, with hair-raising experiences and stories of heart-breaking human heroism.

At the same time, a no less honorable place is devoted on the site to the pre-war stories, those daily stories that enable the surfer to familiarize himself with Siedlce as a place full

of life and not just as a town dripping with death and horrors. For tens and hundreds of years Siedlce was a town with a significant Jewish community, the mention of whose name arouses yearning amongst those born there for the days of Yiddish and Hebrew culture, for cohesive family life and mutual help, for walking along the roads and trim avenues, for recreation in the forest and on the shores of the lake with swans swimming by, for market days and for general household shops, for synagogue melodies, water jug bearers and street vendor carts in the alleys, for Talmud Torah and schools buzzing with children, for public activities and the visits of emissaries from Eretz Israel and so on, and on.

*Pre-war memories*

*'Our town did not produce great leaders, but enjoyed considerable human material of great quality, especially important for our unique youth of all ages. Let us not forget that in the reality of those times, every girl and boy, every pioneer, compared to Don Quixote, hungry for adventures and trouble, wandering and dreaming, seeking the truth, ethical and fighting for integrity..'* (Eliezer Bar-Chaim [Bernholz]).

Ever more stories of citizens of that town and memories of life before the outbreak of WWII are put on the Siedlce site. Through them we can familiarize ourselves with the characters and picturesque figures who were an inseparable part of community life, including those whose names were known outside the community, whether in the field of spiritual, literary, or public leadership, of national creativity, or within the pioneering movement.

Many of the stories are taken from books published by members of the community after the war, and others were gathered in recent years, in a last attempt to save the remaining remnants of memory, and bring the remarkable stories to the knowledge of the third and fourth generations before they are lost for ever. The memories recounted on the site depict a flourishing and lively

community, whose stories are told in the richest language, describing the life of the community and its institutions, which are wonderful testimony to the level of mutual help and concern for the other. The community maintained philanthropic institutions such as 'Orphan Aid', 'Visiting the Sick', 'Loan Credit', a 'Benevolent Fund', an old age home and so on. The TOZ organization was established to preserve and improve the health of the Jews. It initiated sports camps during the summer for the town's children out in the heart of the country, in fields and forests, and together with the 'Women's Group' financed a food project for school children. The Jewish hospital, managed by TOZ, enjoyed the most modern medical equipment, and the good name of the department of internal medicine and the gynecological department was known far and wide.

Stories are told of the town's diverse and broad education system. Several schools served the Jewish children: the school for refugee children from Brisk, the Zionist Hebrew school 'Tarbut', a private Polish school for wealthy Jewish children, two private religious elementary schools managed by Hebrew teachers, and some urban Polish schools for Jewish children where there were no lessons on Shabbat. In 1917 the new Jewish Dinazon School was founded, where all the lessons were taught in Yiddish. In 1920 the Jewish education system suffered a harsh blow due to the scheming and ransacking by the Polish army in a violent reaction to the war that broke out between Russia and Poland. With great effort the Jews of the town managed to rehabilitate the Hebrew schools but barely managed to maintain them.

We also learn, from the memories recounted, about the cultural institutions that existed in the town, the most prominent of which were the Yiddish library (founded as an underground institution in the home of one of the scholars but became legal a few years later), and the 'Yiddishe Kunst' (Yiddish art, its full

name being, 'The Musical, Literary Society for Yiddish Culture'), founded in 1910, and known in the town as the 'Zamir' group. The founders of 'Yiddische Kunst' rented a large, three-story building for it, in which the library was located, and which served as a culture house that concentrated the literary activity, a drama group with its 30 members who presented skits and plays, and musical-vocal activity (with a choir of 50 singers, a string orchestra, wind instruments and mandolins). An audience of hundreds came on the Sabbath for the diverse cultural events and the building was full of life. The organization was known far and wide and many people of culture – writers, actors and singers – strove to visit the town. The local newspapers included several descriptions of such visits, including that of Chaim Nachman Bialik.

The extensive cultural activity was also manifest in the publication of various Yiddish weekly and monthly newspapers. The most prominent were 'Siedke Leben' and the 'Siedlce Wochenblatt'. As part of the memorial project we actively locate and buy digital copies of a variety of newspapers (through the National and University Library in Jerusalem and other sources) and gradually put them on the site.

The Enlightenment (Haskala) movement and the Zionist movement that spread in Poland from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, took hold in Siedlce, especially amongst the youth. All spiritual and social awakening flowed into the national Zionist channel. The first Hebrew teachers, Gurevich and Kaplanski, introduced regular groups for learning the language, held courses on history, discussions in Hebrew, public gatherings in the synagogue and organized trips, all of which intensified the connections between the Zionist youth from all parts of the town. Together with this activity, social and cultural projects were founded in Siedlce that drew the Jews of the town out of their homes. A group of 16-17 year old young boys and girls started a framework of evening courses in

Hebrew in 1924, and called themselves 'Lovers of the Hebrew Language'. The courses were held for a relatively long period of time and served as a source for training instructors for the Zionist youth movements, such as 'Hashomer Hazair', 'Hechalutz', 'Hechalutz HaZair', 'Hashomer Hadati', 'Haoved Hazioni', 'Freiheit-Dror' and others. Many people attended the Zionist gatherings. It was a festive day when a Zionist leader or a representative from Eretz Israel came to visit. Everyone was a member of the Zionist movement: and everyone participated in the festivities: men and women, learned Jews, Chassidim, Misnagdim, merchants, craftsmen, laborers, rich, poor, young and old.

The Zionist and religious parties were an inseparable part of the daily activity of youth and adults in Siedlce. Movements, such as Mizrachi, the Bund, Poalei Zion, were a magnet for members of the community. The Hechalutz pioneering movement trained youngsters for immigrating to Israel. To this end it employed young Jews in creative physical work in pioneer training 'kibbutzim' that were established throughout Poland and even in Siedlce itself, while rooting the Zionist concept and encouraging immigration to Israel. Unfortunately, different means were needed to influence the parents, who did not allow their children to go to a training kibbutz and in general objected to immigration to Israel. The families experienced heartbreaking tragedies and amongst those immigrating to Israel were some whose parents did not correspond with them for years. The parents were angry with their children who defied them, left home, were not deterred by any obstacle and set off to realize their dream; and here they prepared the soil for the independent Jewish state.

The youngsters were attracted to Zionist youth movements that were mainly intended to prepare them for membership in the mother movements. Many graduates remember the movement's summer activities and Lag Ba'omer festivities that were celebrated

with a mass parade, and with singing and dancing till morning. The religious youth also participated in the national-political awakening, mainly through the 'Young Mizrachi' movement (and the parallel girls movement, 'Benot Mizrachi') and the 'Shomer Hadat' movement, which had a nationalist-political character but were also heavily involved with helping the needy Jewish population.

Membership in these movements in Siedlce numbered about 2,500 people during their peak periods (between 1930-1932).

In parallel to the secular cultural life and Zionist activity, Siedlce also had an ultra-orthodox religious community that managed to combine Torah life with work. Many of the town's religious scholars also ran businesses. Both Chassidim and Misnagdim served as rabbis in Siedlce, and almost all were accepted by all. Apart from the great synagogue, that served as the symbol of the Jewish town, prayer houses and shtiebles were also scattered throughout, all full of people mainly at the weekends and the high holidays. Some of the most emotional stories on the website are those told from the perspective of a child, who remembers longingly the Sabbath songs and festival experiences, the order of prayers and mealtime songs with their special tunes.

Siedlce was also a town of merchants and craftsmen. Hundreds of workshops operated in the town, involved in small industries of manual labor and whose workers fulfilled with their hands and their bodies the biblical phrase, "by the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat bread". The largest branch was the leather business. There were about 500 bootmakers, shoe polishers, and manufacturers of sports equipment. Second place was held by those who used a needle and thread – with about 400 tailors. Most of the workers belonged to professional organizations, which were responsible on the one hand for work matters: taking care of the unemployed; problems generated during the slack season;

social help; help during the winter and so on, and on the other hand, also ran cultural activities. The Leather Workers Association, which was under the influence of the communists, also had a drama group and a choir. The Needle Workers Association worked tirelessly to assure its members' interests. There was also a merchants' association, a shopkeepers' association, a laborers' association and others.

#### *Strengthening the connection with the community*

A supreme effort has been made for the last three years to locating members of the former community and their families. From an organization that numbered less than 100 people in 2005 it has grown to some 750 members, and still has room for further growth. Most of the effort in this direction is made by the chairperson, Mrs. Bella Prozanski, who spares no effort to locate ever more members and maintain ongoing contact with them.

In the framework of the efforts to restore the memories, we see special importance in bringing members of the third and fourth generations closer to their heritage. These youngsters, most of whom did not personally know those who came from 'there', can connect with the past through stories, and thereby get to know their family and national history. The young people can peek into the lives of the youth of those days, who lived in such a critical period in the life of the nation: the youth who lived during the period of the flowering of the Zionist movement prior to the establishment of the State of Israel, youth who were pioneers in the revival of the Hebrew language and in the dream about settling Eretz Israel, youth who faced a tough dilemma, and some of whom chose to get up and go alone to an unknown land, leaving behind parents and unknowingly thus saving their own lives.

In order to strengthen the connection between the generations, the 'Siedlce Jewish Community in Israel' assures organizing

meetings in which a dialogue between the generations takes place and in which the youngsters hear stories and experiences first hand. Similarly, the website has an area called the 'Town Square' in which we mention members of the organization who celebrate family events, participate in the mourning for those who lost a family member, and afford a modest stage for artists, authors and other creative people from Siedlce, where they can allow themselves to appear before a broad public. Moreover, we try to prepare a periodic newsletter with updates pertaining to the organization and the internet site, and to distribute it to members by post.

The large photo archive is the main place that enables members of the community to complete their knowledge about family members who are no longer with us. We allow and encourage them to search family albums and provide our archive with as many details as possible – photos, letters and documents – of family members who were born in Siedlce. The photos are placed in the archive together with the family story and known details, and surfers are invited to react to them and to try to complete missing details. Quite a number of photographs have already been identified by surfers on the site, and unknown distant family members have been located thanks to the internet connection.

#### *Future plans – summary*

Currently the Siedlce site is written mostly in Hebrew, and we hope to collect money in order to translate it into other languages, especially into English, Spanish and French for the sake of members of the community who live in the USA, France, Belgium and Argentina.

Another plan that needs considerable investment is the integration of family trees within the site, which will enable organized mapping of the families, reconstructing dynasties, and finding family connections between members of the third and fourth generations, many of

whom are interested in expanding the family and community genealogical research. I personally am involved in such genealogical research – of my family on my father's side, the Kremerez family, for whom I have a partial mapping of five generations who lived in Siedlce until the war.

The current Siedlce members organization – in particular the intensive activities regarding our internet site – afford a tool for preserving the memories of a wonderful community that ceased to exist physically due to the Nazi oppressor, but whose spiritual and cultural aspects survived. Thanks to internet technology and the computer, the memory of the community is passed on to members of later generations in Israel and throughout the world, who devote themselves to the task, lead it and make Siedlce a province of memory and yearning.

***Orly (Kramash) Stettiner** was born in Haifa and now lives in Ramat HaSharon. She is the mother of two children.*

*Orly is an electronics engineer, holds BA and MA degrees from the Technion and MBA from Tel Aviv University. She studied design and development of computer games at Bet Berl College and is now studying for her doctorate in "Science, Technology and Society" at Bar Ilan university.*

*She worked with several high-tech companies in various capacities, at algorithm developing and marketing. Today she works part-time designing and developing computer games.*

*She is the founder and head of the organization of former Siedlce residents in Israel and is researching her family. She is a member of IGS.*

*During the last few years she became involved in artistic photography (nature, culture and street photography) and is exhibiting her work in Israel and abroad.*

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## The Story of my People, the Bene Israel of India

*Isaac Joseph Solomon*

To tell a 2500 year old story of a people, historians usually rely on ancient documents, myths, folk songs, travellers' documents and archaeological and of course, their own calculations and judgments. My people have the Old Testament for their record of past history before landing on the shores of Konkan in India, travellers' records and 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century historical writings found in the Indian Gazetteer, and a number of books written in the 19<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. Our names, cemeteries, and synagogues tell the story of my people most prominently.

According to Biblical records, the Bene Israel lived in Israel, in the northern kingdom belonging to the 10 lost tribes of Israel. In the 8<sup>th</sup> century BCE, at the time of King Ahav and Queen Izabel, when the Bene Israel were forbidden to visit the Temple in Jerusalem, they received instructions from the Prophet Elijah and conducted festive ceremonies at home as instructed by the Prophet. He was present at the circumcision of their children as well. But the time came when his support was lost, but his promise remained, that he will appear before them whenever they needed him the most, and this he did. The Bene Israel believe that Prophet Elijah appeared before them twice, once when they were shipwrecked on the coast of Konkan on Tisha Bav and again on Tu Bishvat. Even today, the Bene Israel celebrate his coming, at the rock near Alibaug, where the hoof marks of his horses appear. In almost every Bene Israel home there is a picture frame of the Prophet Elijah sitting in a horse drawn chariot flying in the sky.

When they left Israel Bene Israel took shelter in Judah, the southern Kingdom. From here they found their way to southernmost city of Etzion Gaver i.e. Eilat. It seems that they sailed in ships which were either on a mission from the court of King Solomon from Etzion

Gaver to India to fetch elephant tusks, peacocks, apes, precious stones and spices, or as some historians say, the Bene Israel left Israel in 175 BCE at the time of Antiochus Epiphanes prior to the event that led to the festival of Channukah.

As a result of the shipwreck, almost all the people drowned, except a few men and women. The dead were buried in two separate graves, one for men and the other for women, at Navgav Cemetery which exists even to this day. All their belongings including Torah scrolls and religious artefacts were lost.

Thanks to the Indian caste system, the Bene Israel had to live in excluded groups and marry within their close community. They were not allowed to enter the homes of Hindus. As a result, they became close friends with the Muslims. The Marathi language the Bene Israel speak has a lot of Muslim words. The Muslims did not have intermarriages with the Bene israel.

In rare cases where the Bene Israel girls married outsiders, they were lost to the community. If the Bene Israel boys married outsiders, the men were not allowed to bring their wives to the synagogue and their children were treated as outcasts or Black Israel, by the Bene Israel community.

In the beginning, their names were from the Tanach, Moshe, Itzhak, Yoseph, David etc. and they were known as, for example, Itzhak ben Yoseph, David ben Moshe and so on. But to live with these names among Indians was to remain strangers in a strange land. The Hindus and Muslims had either village names or trade and profession names as surnames. So the Bene Israel followed a similar practice. Now they were at home with the locals. They were one of them after they Indianized their family names. Their trade name, Teli, Oil Presser, was given to them by the villagers.

There are about 144 family names almost all of them coming from the names of villages in which they lived. For example people living in the village of Shapur were Shapurkars and those living in Nawgav were Nawgavkars. "KAR" meaning belonging to, like Elati, Tel Avivi, Haifani, etc. Some family names like Gadkar were the keepers of forts at the time of Hindu king Shivaji.

When I researched the history of Indian villages in the Konkan, I realized that the history of villages like Cheul or Chemul went back more than 20 centuries. There weren't any surnames to honour the central metropolitan villages of Revdanda, and Alibag, which were established in the 4<sup>th</sup> century CE. I also realized that when David Rahavi, a Jewish trader, probably Rambam's brother, discovered the Bene Israel some 800 years ago, they had their present family names. David Rahabi, after satisfying himself that the Bene Israel were one of the lost tribes of Israel, appointed three family chiefs, Ziratkar, Shapurkar and Rajpurkar, as Kazis, in charge of religious revival among the Bene Israel. Considering all the facts, I realized that the Bene Israel must have taken these surnames sometime in the 2<sup>nd</sup>.or the 3<sup>rd</sup> century CE. The history of the other similar Indian family names does not go back further than this. My cemetery and village office records show the registration from the latter half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

At first, the prayers were conducted in our village homes. Bene Israel families gathered at one home for Friday prayers. When the synagogues were built, the people started visiting them and other than daily and festive prayers, our marriages, circumcisions, naming ceremonies and other such functions were held at the synagogue premises. The Hindus and Muslims respected our religious practices.

During the time of the Muslim rule in India, calling ourselves 'Bene Israel' saved us from annihilation. The Muslims, as per their Koran, respected the Bene Israel who are

mentioned in Sura 17 as Isra, The Night Journey, the Bene Israel, who were freed from the Egyptian bondage by Moshe or Nabi Musa. Some Bene Israel served at the courts of Muslim rulers as well.

A story goes that Tipu Sultan, the Muslim ruler of Mysore, captured some British soldiers during the II Mysore War. He used to bring his captives before the court and ask them to become Muslims or die. Two of his captives were Bene Israel soldiers, Samaji and Isaji Divekar. On asking who they were, they answered that they were Bene Israel, they would not change their religion and that they believe in Musa Paigambar, prophet Moses. Tippu's mother who was sitting behind a curtain told her son that the Bene Israel are mentioned in the Koran and that they are his cousins. Tippu spared their lives. When the British defeated Tippu Sultan in the III Mysore war, Divekar brothers were brought to Bombay. After they finished their army service they built the first Bene Israel synagogue, Shaar Ha Rahamim, in Bombay, in the year 1796 from the pension fund they received from the British.

In Indian villages, my people followed the trade of oil pressing and carpentry. They kept their machines closed on Saturdays, therefore the local people called them Saturday Oil Pressers. The Bene Israel believe that they learned the trade of oil pressing in Israel as the members of Naphtali and Zebulun tribes.

During the Muslim period, i.e. 16<sup>th</sup> century, CE, the Hebrew names were Muslimized. For example Moses became Musa, Isaac became Isak, David became Dawood, etc., During the Maratha period in the 17<sup>th</sup> century CE, the respected family members added suffix "JI" to their Muslimized names, and so Musa became Musaji, Isak became Isakji or Isaji, and Dawood became Dawoodji and Samuel became Samaji. This was in line with Shivaji, or Tanaji, The Marathas.

From 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards, our names were influenced by the British. My people started



getting English education, working in British companies and firms on respectable posts, so their names became Anglicized. Musaji became Moses, Isakji became Isaac and Dawoodji became David etc. Our family names also changed during this period. For example, Mhashilkar became Massil, Shapurkar became Shafer, Walwatkar became Walter, Ashtamkar became Ashton and Kolatkar became Kolet.

Even in Israel, teachers began to find it difficult to pronounce the family names of our children. In addition, other students teased our children because of their names. So people either Israelized their names or took their grandfather's names or great grandfather's names as their family names. For example, I am Isaac Solomon in Israel, but all my certificates from India are Isaac Joseph Solomon Shapurkar. My children are registered as Avi Solomon and Yuval Solomon. By doing this, I am afraid, we are following a wrong path. Two generations more and we will forget our original family names and as a result, the ancestral link is likely to be lost for ever.

The Bene Israel began to shift to Bombay of those days in the 18<sup>th</sup> century in order to get jobs in the British army. In addition, local wars among the Hindu and Muslim rulers in the villages made living dangerous. Their children could get better education in Bombay and hope to work for British companies in India and abroad. With the Bene Israel community shifting to Bombay from the villages, a need for synagogues arose to cater to their religious needs. In Mumbai and the surrounding villages the Bene Israel built about 30 synagogues and prayer halls all during the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Only one synagogue was built at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The aim of these synagogues was to cater to the religious needs of the community and therefore, where there were a sizable number of Bene Israel homes, a synagogue came up in a temporary residence first and then a perma-

nent house was constructed with the help of public and private funds.

As a result of their higher earnings, they bought property and land in the villages. Now they became owners of fruit orchards. The local people worked their lands and watered their orchards. They became sahibs in foreign land.

Most of the Jewish heritage sites were built by the Sassoons. David Sassoon (1792-1864), founder of the Sassoon dynasty in India, escaped from the persecution of the Pashas and fled to India in 1828 through Bushire in Iran, along with his father, who died there.

At first, the Baghdadi Jews prayed in Bene Israel synagogues, and buried their dead in Bene Israel cemeteries as well. When their community developed, they built their own synagogues and founded their own cemeteries.

David Sassoon and his large family of eight children established an international empire of trade and commerce. The establishment of many educational, religious and charitable institutions by David Sassoon and his sons benefited the Jewish communities of Mumbai, Kolkatta and Pune.

In 1861, Sassoon built the Magen David Synagogue at Byculla, and some of the most important cultural and civic institutions, including hospitals, orphanages, libraries, museums, docks, schools, charitable organizations, and cemeteries. The Chinchpokli cemetery was built in memory of Albert Sassoon, who was buried in Shanghai.

I was educated through a Sassoon scholarship fund. David Sassoon supported scholars and scholarly publications in Pune. He built the David Sassoon Hospital, an infirmary and leper asylum, and the Ohel David Synagogue, whose 90 foot spire is a Pune landmark.

Today, there are about 65,000 Bene Israel living respectively in Israel, 2000 in English speaking countries of the world and 4500 in

India, mainly in Mumbai, Thane, Poone, Delhi and Ahmedabad.

We have some 30 odd synagogues in every corner of Israel. We have our own Hazans. Some of our Rabbis are permitted to conduct circumcisions as well as marriages.

In 2002, a DNA test conducted on the Bene Israel in the villages of Konkan by Tudor Parfitt, revealed that they carry the unusual Moses gene that would make them literally the Children of Israel

In order to get the names of Bene Israel cemeteries in India registered in the Burial Registry of International Association of Jewish Genealogists, (IAJGS), I travelled to India 3 years ago. I went to 55 cemeteries scattered all over the Konkan villages, many of them almost destroyed. There are very few Bene Israel families living here to care for the living memories of their dead. The local people have cleared the graveyards and built residences on them. Some cemeteries are converted into ploughing fields. Fences around them are broken down and intrusion is made for animals to graze. Just a few cemeteries at Alibaug, Cheul, Pen, Panvel, Pali and Navgav are still operating. Jews in Israel whose relatives are buried in long lost Kolaba cemeteries are building fences to protect the remaining graves of their ancestors, but the local people are posing a threat to their existence.

In village cemeteries, each family was allotted a plot for the burial of its dead. As such, I found all the graves of the Shapurkar family clustered together on a piece of land. This helped me to trace the family tree of various families according to the names and the dates of birth and death recorded on the grave-stones.

In Poone, I visited and recorded a 300 year old ancient cemetery which received publication and today the local municipality is planning to preserve it as a heritage site. Only five graves are left in this cemetery. The rest were destroyed during the construction of a

huge water pipe line which went through the cemetery premises.

In Surat, Lonavla and Grant Road, Jewish cemeteries are converted into dumping sites. No amount of complaining helped to get proper answers from the local authorities about this shameful behaviour.

In Mumbai there are two very big cemeteries, one at Chinchpokli, with more than a thousand burials belonging to the Baghdadi community, and the other at Worli, belonging to the Bene Israel community with 4500 burials to date. But surprisingly, one third of this cemetery, consisting of old graves, is cleared and a multi story residential complex is built on it. Though the cemetery committee is answerable to the Bene Israel community at large, the matter is hushed up and nobody wants to talk about it. The Bene Israel cemetery at Kurla in Mumbai has suffered a similar fate.

Cemeteries in Bandra and Thane are looked after by the cemetery committees there and are still operating. I learned that families burying their dead at the Thane cemetery have to pay a certain amount as a donation to the local synagogue.

As the children of Indian Bene Israel families are leaving India for Israel, their old parents are seen to be leaving after them. If this trend continues, very few Bene Israel families will be left behind in India and their memory of 2000 years might come to an end.

The aim of my study is to awaken the existing Bene Israel community in Israel, India and the rest of the world to the fact that the Bene Israel have a very rich past which may be lost to our children and grandchildren. Our duty is to make them aware of our ancient heritage by bringing to their attention that we are Bene Israel by strictly following our customs and religious practices which will remind us that we are The Bene Israel of India.

*Dr. Isaac Joseph Solomon – Born at Cheul in Konkan, near Mumbai, on April 26, 1937.*

*Received B.A in Economics and M.A in History from the Elphinston College, Mumbai. During this period, taught at Sir Jacob Sassoon High school, his Alma Mater. Also served in the work force of Vinoba Bhave; Mahatma Gandhi's philosophical heir. Worked as a Marketing Manager in India for 12 years. Migrated to Israel with wife and baby boy in 1974. Worked at Eilat sea port for 12 years. During this period taught at Eilat College in the evenings. Then taught English at Eilat high schools for 20 years. While in Israel,*

*received Masters in Education from the Liverpool University in 1999, and Dr. of Arts in Education after five years.*

*At present, as a retired educationist, volunteering in various religious schools in Eilat. An active member of the Indian Jewish community in Eilat. Manager of Eilat Cricket Club. For the last six years working on the cemetery project in the Konkan and Mumbai with a view to search for roots of the ancient Bene Israel community in India.*

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## The Luck of a Roots Researcher

*Guy Ilan*

Miracles don't happen often, but I experienced one. A real miracle after I had lost all hope of locating Grandma Rifka's relatives or any details about any of them. I found myself in the heart of a surprising and moving story.

Young people tend to look forward to the future, and not to deal with their past or their origins. However, a point comes in life when a person asks himself more "Whence did I come?" rather than "Where am I going?". The yearning for those whom we loved, who left and did not return causes us to search our past, to cling to our childhood memories and to try to "restore" in our memories images and places from the distant past, to seek our roots. In most cases, when the need arises and we begin to ask questions, we find there is no longer anyone to ask. Much and valuable information is buried together with the elderly and we suffer a cruel feeling of missed opportunity. Since the death of my father in the summer of 1999 I have felt the strong need to research the origins of his family, the Ageyev family, a family of Russian converts, to try to reconstruct their history and even actually to visit the pro-

vinces of their childhood, be impressed by the scenery, hear the sounds and smell the aromas. I was particularly curious as to what caused my grandfather, Rodion Trofimovich Ageyev, the son of Russian farmers, one day to get up and forsake his family, his religion, and the village where he was born, to pack and load his few personal belongings onto a cart harnessed to a horse and, together with his wife Yekaterina Petrovna Illina, the daughter of the local priest, and their three toddlers, to travel southwards along the banks of the Dnieper river with the final goal of reaching the Holy Land and living there as Jews. I was interested in knowing what went through his mind, from where he got the courage, what he expected.

And, as I said, if I had known as a youngster that I would one day ask these questions, everything would have been simple and clear. To my great misfortune, I will never find the answers to many questions, especially regarding what a person thought and considered. More than 85 years have passed since that step and no-one who was connected in any way is still alive. What remains now is to gather pieces of information, to construct a

theory, and to try to connect this fascinating puzzle.

After conducting a comprehensive study from personal documents that I found amongst my grandfather's papers, which included certificates and personal notes, I still did not obtain satisfactory answers and I decided to try to seek additional information in the village itself. The next question was, what was the name of the village and where is it? (I did not even manage to discover these details when I was younger. My grandmother and grandfather may have mentioned it but who listened to them? Who was interested? My father only told me that he was born in a village in the Mogilovski Oblast, Belarus.)

The most wonderful technology came to my aid here – the Internet. Fortunately, it was not available during my grandfather's youth as he definitely would not have chosen to seek his future here, in the hot, dry, dusty, war-ridden Holy Land. He probably would have chosen somewhere else and the loss would have been all mine.

Using the Internet I came across a Russian specializing in seeking out places and people. I sent him a document that had served as a travel document (a type of passport) issued by the village church to my grandfather in 1918, and that included details regarding his place of birth, his parents' names, the names of his wife and children and their dates of birth. He helped me to find the exact location of Kosachyovka, the village in which my grandfather Elisha was born, and of Kostyukobka, the birthplace of my grandmother Rifka (some two km apart). Already I was surprised to discover at this stage that my family's village of origin was in Russia and not in Belarus. It transpired that the border changes between Russia and Belarus after World War II found the village of Kosachyovka transferred from being a part of the Mogilev Oblast, in Belarus, to the Smolenski Oblast, in Russia.

A search in the district telephone book produced the phone number of someone

with our surname, Vladimir Ageyev, living in the township of Shumyachi. One phone call confirmed that, in addition to the villages, we also found a relative (the son of my grandfather's cousin) himself born in Kosachyovka, and who knew the story of grandfather's departure for the Holy Land despite not knowing grandfather (he is 50 years of age and heard the story from his father). Vladimir was pleased to hear that there is someone in the world who is interested in him and the village of his birth, and sent a message (through the agent) that he would be pleased to meet me and host me should I decide one day to visit the area. That was six years ago, and I decided that I would visit there, come what may.

I arrived with my wife in August 2003. Although I did not discover much new information I could then state with satisfaction that I managed to close the circle. However, I was wrong. The circle was not closed but opened. There, in the deserted and remote village of Kosachyovka, about 100 km south of the city of Smolensk, the seed of curiosity was sown in me and the ambition to thoroughly research my grandparents' history.

I decided to try to write the biography of grandfather Elisha who, according to everyone, was a special person and did "irregular things" in his life. I resolved to research, as far as possible, the history and roots of my grandparents' families and to try to find answers to the questions I had not managed to ask the old people during their lifetimes. I realized that for me to be able to access as much material as possible, I would have to learn Russian. And so, immediately upon returning from my visit to Russia, I began to learn that language, registering for a course at the Berlitz School of Languages and continuing with private lessons after completing the basic course. I am now able to read, write and communicate in Russian and to surf Russian sites on the Internet. With the help of my private teacher I translated grandfather's personal handwritten diary

from Russian to Hebrew (how it was found and finally came into my hands is also a miracle that should be told). To my great sorrow, I did not find the answers to my questions there, despite the great importance of the information it contained that will be useful for writing a book. In addition to learning the language I participated in a workshop on writing biographies at the Open University, where I gained greater confidence and an immense appetite for writing the biography.

As I have mentioned, I made efforts to gather facts and locate people, relatives, acquaintances and friends who perhaps knew or heard details and stories about my grandparents' childhood. I was very interested in hearing what happened to my grandfather's village and family during the Nazi occupation. I knew that the entire area (of western USSR) was overrun by the Germans immediately with the start of the war. I also knew that in the area of my grandfather's village, Kosachyovka, there were also many villages with large Jewish communities, and that all the places that were under the Nazi heel had local informants who were often far more vicious than the Nazis themselves. In my heart of hearts I prayed I would not encounter mention of hostile activity by a non-Jewish member of our family against the Jews or the Partisans.

Since my knowledge of the language was improving I began to seek and translate material in Russian about the period of the occupation there. Fortunately, I remembered that when we visited the village of grandfather's birth and stayed with Vladimir Ageyev, a relative, I received a gift from him, a book entitled "Shumyachkii Almanac"<sup>1</sup>, a historical diary of the neighboring villages in which the lives and hardships in various periods are recounted. I found

several personal stories of people from my grandfather's village, including two fascinating stories written by Semion Ageyev, Vladimir's father, that mention his leaving his homeland and emigrating to Israel, a fact that caused trouble for the members of his family who remained in Russia. For example, Grandfather's cousin, Vladimir's father, was not accepted as a member of the communist party "because his cousin went to Israel", and here, in fact, starts the fascinating story I wish to tell.

In that same almanac I found a story told by someone named Lidia (Lidia Sidorova), born in the village of Kosachyovka. It recalls her childhood and her family's history during the Nazi occupation of her village. She recounts, amongst other things, what the Germans did to the large Jewish community in the neighboring village of Petrovichi, and mentions the family of her beloved teacher, Lidia Petrovna, who hid a wounded Jewish partisan youth, Lyova Gurevich, in their house: after being informed on, the teacher and her daughter were taken for interrogation in the Gestapo basement. She narrates how the mother and her daughter preferred to be tortured to death rather than hand over the child and thus to seal his fate; and how the teacher's husband, Prokofi Vasileyevich, who was the principal of the village school, endangered his life and hid the child, Lyova, throughout the occupation in a pit he dug in the floor of the family's house, until the day of liberation.

Although difficult and moving, the story is fairly standard, and there are many like it. But I suddenly had a flash... the name Prokofi Vasileyevich suddenly sounded familiar to me... and I remembered that in the old photographs that I found amongst grandfather's belongings was a small picture of a young boy whom I did not know, nor did I

1. Гршршрсьрсьр? я]фц'сі'/ ьь°фышы]? D. Выіс'ф']і? D±A± Vчщ"ыічт? B/B. Vчщч§чт?.Сфчършіс? В§-ютч CUE? 1997: - 336 '.. ISBN 5-88984-025-8, Available in the reading room at Yad Vashem, Jerusalem

know his connection to my grandparents. A dedication was written on the back of the photo in Russian, which I translated into Hebrew while rummaging through every text written in that language. With hands shaking, I began to search for the photograph in the pile of pictures, and when I finally found and held it, I again translated the writing on the back. I froze in place, and it took a few minutes till I could say one word... "Wow!"

The photograph of Lyoba Gurevich with a dedication to his savior, has a dedication on the reverse side:

*Look and remember!! The terrible and black years  
That we experienced during the Fascist occupation  
Dedicated to Prokofi Vasilevich  
By the person he saved from death*

*Lyova 1/3/45*

I suddenly understood that Lidia Sidorova's sad and awful story provides evidence both about the tragic history of the Jewish community in Petrovichi and the connection between this community and that of my grandfather's village. The photograph that I found amongst his belongings also made my grandparents, and myself indirectly, part of the horrific persecution planned for Jews by the Nazi murderers and people from my grandfather's village, and perhaps his family, the non-Jews, who risked their lives to save the soul of one Jewish child.

The first question that arose in my mind was "How, and under what circumstances, did Lyova Gurevich's photograph find its way to my grandfather's photograph album?" The second question was "Who were Lidia Petrovna and Prokofi Vasilevich, and what was their connection to grandfather Elisha (Rodik Terpimovich Ageyev) or to grandmother Rifka (Yekterina Petrovna Ilina)?"

Thinking quickly, I understood that there is only one way to obtain answers to these questions – I must find Lyova Gurevich! He was a youngster during the war. If he's still

alive he must be a man of about 75 or more... so where does one start looking?

I am a great Internet enthusiast and also believe in miracles. I never imagined that I would find Lyova Gurevich on the first site on which I sought him, but life is full of surprises, and occasionally, rarely, there are good surprises.

Based on inexplicable intuition I entered the Yad Vashem site. I surfed to the pages of testimony and there wrote Lyova Gurevich in Hebrew. I pressed "Enter" ... nothing. And then the considerable experience I had accumulated during my Internet surfing came to my aid. I switched to English and completed the search field again. Gurevich Petrovichi. Enter. That's it!!! I found three pages of testimony with the name Gurevich, from the village of Petrovichi, there. (A page of testimony is a form completed by a witness who was present at or knew about the circumstances of the death of a Jew during the Holocaust.) The first page was testimony about the execution in 1942 by the Nazis of Yeshayahu Gurevich from Petrovich. The second page was testimony about Yisrael Gurevich, aged four from Petrovich, who was shot to death that same year. The third page was testimony about the death in a battle with Germany that year of the partisan Chaim Gurevich, aged 17 from Petrovich. I rubbed my eyes – all three pages were signed by Lev Gurevich, who lived at 1/4, Rehov Hallanot, Yokneam. Bingo!!! Finding Lev Gurevich's phone number was really easy. Of all the Gurevich families in Yokneam offered by the Bezeq directory inquiries I found the name I was looking for late at night – Lev Gurevich. At 9.a.m. the next morning I was already talking to Mrs. Gurevich in my broken Russian. She told me that Lyova was not at home. "He'll be back in an hour and will phone you". And indeed he phoned. Despite having immigrated in 1991 his Hebrew is not good – but he is the son of Lyova Gurevich, hidden by Prokipfi Vasilevich in his house in the village of Kosachyovka.

I asked him to explain to me how his photograph with a dedication to Prokofi Vasilevich came to be in my grandfather's photograph album, who although born in Kosachyovka left and immigrated to Palestine, to the Holy Land, in 1923, long before the horrors of World War II? Lyova was so astonished and my Russian was so bad that I could not clarify this point. We agreed that I would mail him a copy of the photograph and the story written by Lidia Sidorova; we would meet in Yokneam and, with combined efforts and God's help, would try to find answers to all the questions.

A week later I took my Russian teacher with me (lest I have difficulty speaking the language) and we went to Yokneam to meet Lyova Gurevich. Of course I took the original photograph dedicated by Lyova to his savior, Prokofi Vasilevich with me, as well as other old photographs that I thought would interest him. The meeting was very emotional. Lyova immediately identified the photographs and burst into tears, as did Maya (my teacher) and I. Lyova told us his tragic story of the family that saved him, the Ivanov family, from the village of Kosachyovka. Sobbing, he recalled how the Gestapo took Lidia Petrovna, the teacher, and her young daughter, Lucia; how Prokop Ivanov heard that his daughter was beaten to death in the Gestapo basement and her little body was found in the next township of Roslavl, how he prepared shrouds and went to bring her home for burial, and how, despite all Prokopi Ivanov's suffering and sadness, he continued his superhuman task of hiding and caring for the Jewish boy.

I asked Lyova how he thought my grandfather had his photograph with the dedication to Prokofi Vasilevich Ivanov – but he couldn't explain. He said that as far as he remembered the Ageyevs were neighbors of the Ivanovs, but could not define the connection. At this stage the riddle remained unsolved. Of course we agreed to join Lyova and his wife who prepared Russian delicacies for our lunch, and after we ate our fill, I

showed him the additional photographs I brought with me. One of them was a portrait of a woman. I always thought this was a photograph of grandmother Rifka's mother. When Lyova held it he suddenly began to cry again. After he calmed down he said: "This is a photograph of Lidia Petrovena Ivanona, the woman who gave her life and didn't turn me in to the Germans". The mystery intensified, shattering my theory that the woman in the photograph, whom I always "knew" to be my grandmother, was not whom I and all the members of the family thought. I left Lyova the envelope with all the copies of the photographs that I brought with me, and parted from him and his wife with a promise to meet soon again.

That same evening Lyova phoned and somewhat agitatedly told me that amongst the photographs that I had left was one of the entire Ivanov family – Lidia Petrovena with her family, Prokofi Vasilevich, the father of the family, the daughter Luba and the young daughter Lucia. The mystery became clearer – the childhood photographs that I thought were of my grandmother, Yakterina Petrovena's, her father, mother and sister, were of the Ivanov family, the family that saved Lyova Gurevich, the young injured Jewish boy whom the Partisans brought to their home, whom they protected like the apple of their eye and for whom they even sacrificed themselves.

Lyova told me that for these deeds the Jewish nation gave Prokofi and Lidia Ivanov the distinguished title of Righteous Gentiles. Lyova then told me that Prokofi's second wife, Yelizaveta Kondraitayeva, was also awarded this title. Yelizaveta shared Prokofi's secret, knowing he continued to hide Lyova even after the Germans hung his wife Lidia and beat his young daughter, Lucia, to death. Yelizaveta, who was the Ivanov's neighbor, helped Prokofi to treat Lyova. After the war she became his second wife and bore him two sons and a daughter. Lyova gave me the address of Valeri Ivanov, Prokofi and Yelizaveta's younger son. Valeri

Ivanov lives in Minsk, Belarus, but I managed to locate his telephone number according to the address Lyova gave me. I phoned him and asked him about the connection between my grandfather, Rodion Terfimovitz (Elisha) Agayev and his father, Prokofi Valsilevich Ivanov, and how he thought the photographs reached my grandfather? I received the answer I expected but did not dare to believe: “My father, Prokofi, and your grandfather, Rodion, were brothers-in-law. Lidia Petrovna, my father’s first wife, was Yakterina Petrovna’s sister, Rodion, your grandfather’s, wife!”

Valeri Ivanov told me further details and names, of which I had not known, about my grandparents’ families, and promised to answer all the questions I would send him. The solution to the mystery of how the photographs of the Ivanov family appeared in my grandparents’ album became a secondary problem. The following question now needed an explanation: Why had my grandparents been silent and not told us, their family in Israel, the heroic story of members of their family who remained in Russia and who experienced the horrors of the Nazi occupation first hand? I only know that after the war my grandfather said to my grandmother “You whined all the time and asked why I took you away from your homeland and family and brought you here, to this hot, dusty arid place called Palestine. Well, you must surely realize now that if we had stayed there our fate would have been bitter and quick..”

Several weeks later I went to Yad Vashem to take some photographs in the “Valley of the Lost Communities” for an American friend who had established several memorial sites for Jewish communities from eastern Poland, including the Radzilow community, the town of origin of my mother’s family. When I finished I went through the “Garden of the Righteous Gentiles” and found the names of Prokofi, Lidia Ivanov, and Elizaveta Kondrietaiva engraved on memorial plaques. From there I continued to the Yad Vashem

offices where I met Katia Gusarov, the woman who coordinates the subject of Russian righteous gentiles. I told her my story and she seemed both stunned and elated. She showed me the file of the Ivanov family and I discovered that there was no other material in the file, such as photographs and the like, apart from Lyova Gurevich’s testimony and a copy of the certificates of recognition to the Ivanov family. The following day I sent her photographs, articles and links by email. Katia thanked me for the material and said that all her friends at Yad Vashem had heard the story and found it particularly interesting. She asked whether I would agree for it to be told and published by that institution. My answer was affirmative.

Lyova Gurevich, it transpires, is a particularly talented person, a real survivor. After the war he continued his life in Russia with great success, built a career and established a wonderful family. They immigrated to Israel in 1991 and acclimatized well. The son is a software engineer in the Electric Company, the daughter is a doctor at a Haifa hospital. Below, are a few lines of background about Lyova as they appeared in the opening to a lengthy article about him and his success story in one of the Israeli Russian-language newspapers.

*“For many years (Lyova) was the leading expert in a large factory producing heavy metals. He was the senior lecturer in the Department of Metal Technology at the Railway Institute in Irkutsk, winning the Minister of the USSR prize for inventions. He has twenty-two important inventions to his name. All these are the results of his life’s work. But the start was thus:*

*Lev Issayevich Gurevich was born in the Village of Petrovichi in the Shumiazhi district of the Smolansk Oblast. The place was known to be multi-national. Here lived Russians, Ukrainians, Belarussians, Jews. Perhaps because of this, when in 1929 a Kolhoz was established it was called the Third International Kolhoz. Lyova Riskin was appointed its*



director and filled this position for more than thirty years. Of the 110 families in the Kolhoz eighty were Jewish, therefore it was also known as the “Kolhoz of the Hebrews”. Lyova’s parents worked in the Kolhoz, the children studied there. In 1941 Lyova was 14 years of age and his brother Chaim was 17 years of age. The family also had a three-year old child. The older children dreamt of studying and had all the attributes to succeed. Chaim completed his high school studies with outstanding grades and prepared for his entrance examinations to the Donyachani Gorni higher school but the war disrupted their plans, as it did to the lives of all the residents of Petrovizi...”

Here are two photographs from those I found in my grandparents’ estate and that were identified by Lyova, with inscriptions on the reverse side. One is of Lidia Petrovna, the sister of grandmother Rifka, and the other of the entire Ivanov family. Gurevich said that the older daughter, Luba, was studying at the University in Moscow when the war broke out. She was drafted to the army and was killed in one of the battles for Moscow.



Lidia Petrovna Ivanov



The Ivanov family – Lidia, Prokofi, and the two daughters, Luba and Lucia

The story told here did not end with the revelation of the surprising and moving details. As a result of the connections I made with some of the story’s heroes, channels of new information about my (Russian) grandparents’ families were opened to me, through which I managed to locate many family members, make further connections and to discover many details, which, had luck not played a part, would never have been discovered. I now have a family tree with details of over 500 members of my grandparents’ families. I established a family website – <http://www.ageyev.co.il> – in which many details about the family history can be found, including a link to the online family tree. The story of Lyova Gurevich’s success, as well as my tale, were recently posted on the Yad Vashem site:

**[http://www1.yadvashem.org/righteous\\_new/russia/ivanov.htm](http://www1.yadvashem.org/righteous_new/russia/ivanov.htm)**

The tragic story of the Petrovichi Jewish community was not even known to Yad Vashem, as only a few of the Jews from there survived, and apart from Lyova Gurevich no one came to testify and tell his story.

Only in Shumiazu’s almanac, that same book I came across, is the destruction of the Petrovichi community documented, the village in which Isaac Asimov, the greatest science fiction writer, was born. That book, written and edited by village non-Jews, offers an authentic description of the suppressive events and the destruction of an entire Jewish community. It includes the names of each of the 400 saintly members of the Petrovichi community who were murdered by the Nazis on July 22<sup>nd</sup> 1942, and were buried in a common grave in the place where they were murdered on the outskirts of the village. The local community of non-Jews fenced in the place, planted birch trees and built a memorial there. The plaque says:

*Here are buried Soviet citizens who were shot to death by the Fascists, July 22<sup>nd</sup> 1942*

Since retiring, the writer, **Ilan Guy**, a resident of Ashdod and a member of Israel Genealogical Society, is mainly involved with researching his and his wife's family roots. In addition to researching his father's families, the Ageyev and Illin families from western Russia, he also researches his mother's families, the Niedzwiecki and the Czerwinski families, whose

origins are from the area of Lomza in eastern Poland, his father-in-law's families – the Abulafia and the Habib families who originated in Gallipoli, Turkey – and his mother-in-law's families – the Pardo and the Elbachari families originating in Bitola, Monastir and Macedonia.

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### Additional further Information from an Incredible Source

*Esther Ramon*

In the early 1990s, while doing renovations on his house in the small village of Kippenheim in the state of Baden in Germany, Hans Hofer, a butcher, found bundles in the loft of which 800 were documents. They seemed important historically, and thus he gave them to the local museum which was once a synagogue. They were then sent to the District Archive in Offenbach, where they underwent preliminary restoration.

Lina-Mareike Dedert, a research student of Jewish history at the University of Potsdam, chose to study two thirds of the papers in the framework of her MA thesis for the Albert Ludwig University in Freiburg. She had to overcome many difficulties – some of the pages had suffered water damage and some were torn and had holes which seemed, partly, to have been made when someone tried to remove the stamps. Most of the letters were written in German but some were in Hebrew or Yiddish.

She found that the documents were written in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (between 1819-1891) and may be divided into two main groups: some referred to Lippmann and Mina Weill, and were mostly written in German and addressed to farmers and innkeepers in nearby villages. They entailed demands for payment, confiscations and even public auctions. They dealt with an interest-bearing loan, and with animal trade from which many German Jews made a living during this period. Only a few

of the documents refer to the husband, and as of 1845 they are addressed to Mina, calling her “Widow Lippman Weill”. The husband apparently died in the early 1840s and his wife continued to manage the business.

The other group, with more numerous documents, most of which were also written in German, belonged to their daughter Eva and her husband Loew Weill, and their sons Heinrich, Nathan and Yakob. Here, too, only a few letters make mention of the husband, Loew, who also dealt in interest-bearing loans. All the other documents refer to “Loew Weill's widow”, and her sons. It transpires that, on the initiative of the sons, Nathan and Yakob, the family developed an iron goods business in a permanent shop in their house. Most of the documents pertain to the business accounting. The author professionally analyses the basis for the development of the new family business in trading in iron goods. She describes the development of the network of railway lines, that enabled the creation of connections with suppliers of goods from a broad geographic area (in which the large iron business of Ettlinger and Wormser, Karlsruhe, was prominent) and with the customers in the village and its surroundings. This branch of trade in iron and its products was new amongst the Jews, but had chances to succeed.

Three generations of the family lived in one house. Eva's marriage contract (*Ketuba*)

which was also found amongst the documents, states that Lippman left Eva the house. And apparently after his death Mina, the widow, moved to the house and was a partner in the new business. (At this time many Jews lived in homes they owned.) The family also owned land and they leased additional fields that were worked by local farmers. Their economic situation was good. Some of the products were grown on their lands and they made wine from their own vines. Bills found show that they ordered soap, clothes, candles, vinegar, sugar, salt, etc. from outside sources.

In 1900 the family sold the house in Kippenheim and transferred the business to the large city of Mannheim on the initiative of Leopold, Nathan's son, the grandson of Eva and Loew, and Mina and Lippmann Weill's great grandson. (Many Jews moved from the villages to the large cities in the period following the emancipation in Baden in 1862.)

This is the information about the Weill family as detailed by LIna-Mareika Dedert based on the "Hoefer documents". My great interest is due to the connection to the

history of my own family – the Homburger family from Karlsruhe. Nathan Homburger (1726-1794) had three sons who remained with most of their progeny in the city until the rise of the Nazis to power, and his only daughter, Zerlina, married Sandel Weill in Kippenheim in 1792. Their oldest son, Loew Arie Weill, married Eva Weill, the daughter of Lippmann and Mina Weill prior to 1819. The names of their children are detailed in my book, "The Homburger Family from Karlsruhe", that I published in 1992.

*Esther Ramon was born in Germany in 1924 and immigrated to Israel with her parents in 1936. She completed her schooling in Haifa and continued to the Teachers' Seminary and the Hebrew University where she received her M.A. degree. She taught history and geography at the Hebrew University High School in Jerusalem and became a founding member of the Israeli Genealogical Society where she was active throughout the years. Ramon researched the families of her four grandfathers, all of whom were born in Germany, back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century.*

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## Who's the Woman on the Cover of that Book?

*Rose Avigael Feldman*

In the January 2010 newsletter for the Haifa municipality, a new book called *The Women in Red Haifa* was mentioned. Out of curiosity, I borrowed the book from the Tel-Aviv University library to see if there was any mention of my Aunt Hannah who lived in Haifa in the early twenties. I doubted that she would be mentioned because at the time, she was probably busy with her twins Tamar and Dudu who were born in 1925. I had heard the story from my Aunt Esther, about how she went to Haifa for a few months to

help Hannah because it wasn't easy taking care of the twins.

Though the book is about women, I did find mention of her husband Moshe Cherkasky, who was the second secretary of the Workers' Council in Haifa, and was quoted twice as supporting the women workers in Haifa. The cover of the book is a collage of women at work, with the main picture being that of a woman in pants, sitting atop a pile of stones with a hammer and chisel, breaking the stones into gravel. I compared the picture

with pictures from my mother's picture album, and realized that the picture on the cover was of my aunt, when she worked on building the road between *Zemach* and Tiberias. The next day I got in touch with the author and told him that the woman on the pile of stones is my aunt, photographed when she was working on the road between *Zemach* and Tiberias. His reply was, "I don't believe it! It is a famous picture and no one knew who the woman is. We didn't know if the picture was from the road between *Zemach* and Tiberias or from work on the railroad."

Hannah Epstein-Cherkasky was born around 1902 in Mscibow, Belarus. In 1911, at the age of 9, she came to Eretz Israel with two younger sisters Esther and Yehudit, two older brothers Zvi and Avraham and her parents Shlomo and Razel Epstein, and settled in Petah Tikva. Though her father Shlomo Epstein was one of the founders of the Shonei Halachot Synagogue in Petah Tikva, at some point Hannah and her sister Esther became

active socialists. Hannah was at *Tel-Hai*, worked on the road between *Zemach* and Tiberias, and worked at *Naharayim* with her sister Esther and their husbands. Both couples were among the founding members of *Moshav Kefar Azar*. Her son Dudu was killed as he led his *Palmach* brigade against the walls of Nebeyusha (Mezudat Koah) in the upper Galilee, a few days before Pesach and a month before the formal founding of the modern State of Israel.

The author of the book *The Women in Red Haifa* sent me a copy and I had the privilege of giving it to my Aunt Hannah's daughter Tamar, a month and a half before Tamar passed away.

*Rose Feldman is a member of the Israel Genealogical Society and has been keeper of her family tree since 1985, which includes descendants and spouses from four continents. She is the IGS webmaster and involved in the database projects of IGS.*

<http://www.tau.ac.il/~rosef/>



## The Montefiore Censuses, Website and Search Engine

*Mathilde Tagger, Rose Feldman & Billie Stein*

At the request of Sir Moses Montefiore, five "statistical accounts" of the Jewish population of Eretz Israel, each separated by about 10 years, were prepared mainly for the purpose of understanding how best to provide aid to the poor population. The first of these "accounts", dated 1839, appears to be the first census of the Jewish population of Eretz Israel since biblical times. The censuses were taken in 1839, 1849, 1855, 1866 and 1875. There is an additional census of the Jewish population of Alexandria, Egypt, dated 1840.

A standard form was sent by Montefiore for registering the requested information, but not all clerks used it. Therefore, the information included for each family differs from place to place and from community to community, depending on who was the enumerator.

The original manuscripts of the censuses are bound into several volumes which are housed in the library of the Montefiore Endowment in London. The project to transcribe, translate and digitize the census is overseen by a steering committee comprised of three mem-

bers of the Israel Genealogical Society in accordance with a contract signed in 2008 with the Montefiore Endowment. There are two main conditions stipulated in the contract:

1. The Montefiore Endowment is committed to putting the censuses with a search engine on their website, with access to the public at large at no charge.
2. The Israel Genealogical Society agrees to provide to the Montefiore Endowment a fully translated and digitized census every year until the project is completed.

It was impossible to use the microfilms that are found at the National Library in Jerusalem for the project for several important reasons: the original photography was done 50 years ago, using what is now outdated technology resulting in poor quality; the physical condition of the microfilms is poor, making them impossible to work with; using the microfilms requires the use of special equipment available only at the National Library, making it very inconvenient for the transcribers. It was therefore decided to work from a set of microfiche which previously had been prepared by the Montefiore Endowment as a commercial venture. These microfiche in turn were digitized and copied to a CD. The first census is available in printed form, edited and introduced by Hadassah Assouline and published by the Dinur Institute in 1987. This printed version, rather than the digitized microfiche, was used to process the data of the 1839 census.

While working on the 1855 census using the digitized version of the microfiche, it was discovered that there were pages that were impossible to read due to the poor quality of the original photography. The Montefiore Endowment came to the rescue, and had the problematic pages photographed by an amateur using a digital camera. As work progressed, it became apparent that large portions of the remaining censuses (1849, 1866 and 1875) were also illegible. The Montefiore Endowment then hired a profes-

sional company to scan large sections of the 1849 and 1875 manuscripts, and all of 1866. The resulting files were in full color and remarkably clear due to the color contrast and the sharpness of the image.

### Structure of the Censuses

The censuses are divided into cities. The four Holy Cities – Jerusalem, Hebron, Safed and Tiberias – appear in all five censuses, while the population in the smaller towns – including Haifa, Jaffa, Gaza, Acre, Peki'in, Ramla, Nablous (Shkhem), Shefaram and others – varied from census to census. It is noteworthy that either Sidon or Beirut (never both in one year) in Lebanon was included in the census of Eretz Israel.

In the four Holy Cities, the population was divided between the Ashkenazim and Sephardim. The Ashkenazim belonged to, and were enumerated according to *Kolelim* based on their European origins. The *Kolel* was a support society which served as an umbrella organization for all their needs, including distribution of *Haluka* funds. The Sephardim, regardless of their origins, were enumerated as a single group. Starting with the 1849 census, the North Africans (Morocco, Algeria, Libya and Tunisia) living in Jerusalem were listed separately under the heading Westerners (*Ma'arivim* – from the Maghreb). In the smaller towns, there were no subdivisions of the population, although the majority of the residents were Sephardim.

In each of the *Kolelim* and groups of Sephardim, families, widows and orphans were listed separately. Beginning with 1855, there are also detailed reports on the various religious, educational and charitable institutions of each of the communities.

The census forms had columns for the name of the head of family (including title if he had one), his birthplace, age, time of arrival, property, occupation, marital status, wife's name, number, name and ages of his children and observations. In many instances, the

rabbis and community leaders were listed first, followed by a more or less alphabetical-by-first-name listing of the rest of the population.

In the 1839 census, it was surprising to find that no family information was provided for the rabbis and community leaders. We made the assumption that these men could not have reached their lofty positions before the age of 30, nor could they all be unmarried. We therefore added unnamed wives for each of them.

### Methodology

For the 1839 and 1849 censuses, a form was provided for the clerks to copy. Beginning with 1855, a printed form was provided, but not all of the clerks used it. In many cases, they created their own, hand drawn forms, sometimes without the appropriate headings specifying the date, city and *Kolel* details. Due to the apparent lack of instructions issued to the clerks, and the resultant irregularities in the completion of the forms, the steering committee had to make several methodological decisions, among them:

- \* When the pages of the original manuscript were all bound together with those that had headings or introductory pages, and they were in the same format and handwriting, we assumed that they were all of the same date, city and *Kolel*.
- \* On 74 sheets there were two dates noted – 1866 and 1875. Here, after cross checking the ages of several people who appeared in earlier censuses, we accepted the theory posited by Dr. Michal Ben Yaakov<sup>1</sup> that the clerks in 1875 used leftover forms from 1866, and didn't cross out the original date.
- \* Each person listed in the census would be listed on a separate line in the database as opposed to a single line per family.
- \* In the case of a person being listed without a name (e.g. an unnamed wife and/or a

specified number of unnamed children), a line would be assigned, and all known information about the person would be included (husband's and/or father's name, surname, etc.), while "unknown" would appear as the given name.

- \* An effort would be made to copy every bit of information supplied about a family, even if it sometimes meant moving it to a different column.
- \* When translating the census to English, given names would be transliterated according to the rules accepted by the National Library for transliterating from Hebrew to English. Therefore מרדכי would appear as Mordekhai and not Mordechai, רחל would be Rahel and not Rachel. These same rules would be applied to all given names, including those of Hebrew, Yiddish, French, Spanish and Turkish origin.
- \* The English spelling of surnames would be according to the most common usage rather than following the transliteration rules. Therefore, שטיין appears as Stein not Shtain, and שורץ is Schwartz and not Shvartz.

Once these decisions were made, an Excel template was prepared. Each census in its turn was then divided into sections and distributed to a group of dedicated volunteers who had the job of deciphering the handwriting and entering the data into the template.

### Content and Difficulties in Understanding Some of the Entries

#### *Surnames*

Most of the Sephardim had surnames, whereas they were very rare among the Ashkenazim. There were many instances where acronyms and abbreviations appeared after a given name in order to differentiate between two or more people with the same given name. It was difficult to discern if these

were actual surnames, or if they were just patronymics, designations or occupations, which at some later stage may or may have not become surnames. Some examples are: נהר"א *Nehar"ā* (grandson of Rabbi A.), ב"ק Be"ck or Bo"ck (Ben Kedoshim), בהר"ש Behara"sh (son of Rabbi Sh.), חהר"נ Chara"n (son-in-law of Rabbi N.). In the case of שוי"ב Shu"b (ritual slaughter and examiner) and חייט Chait (tailor), unless a different occupation for the person was given, we would assume that these are occupations rather than surnames. As the project progresses, we are preparing a list of the acronyms and abbreviations that we come across.

There were also a few amusing epithets, such as the widow Esther, whose late husband was called "Troncho" (cabbage head) or the widow Sultana the poker addict.

### Variant spellings

In order to avoid writing out the name of G-d, names ending with the letters *yod* and *hei* or *yod hei vav* were often written with an apostrophe following the *yod*. In this case, the transcribers were instructed to replace the missing letters. In other instances, an *aleph* may have been substituted for the *hei*. As a result, the name Yehuda, was found in three different versions: יהודה, יאודה, and יהודא. In general, there was little consistency in spelling of names, even on the same page written by the same clerk. Yiddish and Hebrew spellings were used interchangeably.

### Age and Year of Arrival in the Holy Land

There was no consistency in the way numbers were written. Some used ordinary numerals, while others wrote out the numbers in words, and still others used the Hebrew alphabet equivalents. Furthermore, each clerk interpreted "year of arrival" differently. There

were those who wrote in a year of arrival in Eretz Israel, and others wrote the number of years in the land. Still others interpreted "arrival" to apply to the city rather than Eretz Israel, so that often there is an arrival year given for a person who was born in Safed, but living in Tiberias. In all cases, however, if a date was given it was always according to the Hebrew calendar.

### Places of Birth

In most cases, names of cities were registered, although on occasion the name of country was given. When the city was listed, the transcription team added the name of the present day country. Place names of the origins of the Sephardim rarely changed over the centuries, but those of Eastern Europe changed frequently according to the many wars and treaties, historic events and changes of borders and political powers. Furthermore, the names used by the Jews were not always similar to the official names. For instance the town know as Sede Lavan to the Jews is, in fact, officially named Bila Tserkva in Ukraine. For all place names, the English translation is according to the present day name rather than the name at the time of the census.

### Property or Financial Standing

We didn't count the number of words and phrases used to describe poverty (poor, destitute, without anything, ...), but there were also a few references to amounts of money that some people had – or to the size of their debts. These amounts were listed in various currencies, among them the Turkish lira (Eretz Israel was part of the Ottoman Empire), British pound sterling, French franc, and Egyptian piaster, among others. The amounts were low except for a very few instances indicated wealthy Jews.

<sup>1</sup> Ben Yaakov, Michal. *Peamim 107*.

## Occupations

Some of the occupations listed no longer exist, and others were transliterated words in other languages, probably due to the paucity of the Hebrew language at that time. Words were found in Yiddish, Turkish, Ladino, Arabic and even French, all spelled in Hebrew or Yiddish. Apparently, the Hebrew word for tinsmith was not yet in use, because an Ashkenazi tinsmith was called a *blecher*, whereas his Sephardi counterpart was a *tenekedji*. A *pipas* was always a Sephardi [smoking] pipe maker.

## Observations

Most of the observations referred to the economic condition or occupation of the head of household. Wherever applicable, these comments were moved to the appropriate column to suit the requirements of a searchable database. However, there were also some interesting comments about some of the people: a widow from Tiberias whose husband converted to Islam in Damascus, and she escaped to Tiberias with her two children; a righteous convert whose daughter converted along with him, but his son remained Christian; a widow who has children to marry off, and more. On occasion, the length of a title of a rabbi or wise man (e.g. "the most eminent and learned teacher and rabbi...") required entering it as an observation rather than as a title. An additional column was added for the transcribers to add their own comments about things that didn't make sense to them, such as the notation of a year of arrival prior to the year of birth.

## Addendum

In addition to the population census, as of 1855 forms were provided to list the many public institutions, including synagogues, schools, *batei midrash* and charitable institutions, as well as a description of the

agricultural activities in the area. These forms are in a completely different format from the population census forms, and are therefore not included in the database. At a later stage, these, too, will be transcribed and translated.

## Where Does the Project Now Stand?

Census of 1839 – completed and on line

Census of 1840 (Alexandria, Egypt) – completed and on line

Census of 1849 – completed and on line

Census of 1855 – completed and on line

Census of 1866 – transcription in progress. Estimated date to go on line: August/September 2011.

Census of 1875 – not yet in the works. Estimated date to go on line: late 2012

<http://www.montefiorecensuses.org/search/>

*Mathilde A. Tagger holds an MA degree in Library and Information Sciences from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Member of the Israel Genealogical Society from 1988. She was a member of the editorial board of Shasheret Hadorot for 15 years, the society journal. She has created the Sephardim SIG inside IGS- the very first one of its kind in the world. In 1997 she has founded the first Sephardim SIG in the world, in the framework of IGS. She has published many articles in various genealogical journals. Jointly for the last 15 years, she has built tools for Sephardic genealogical research, parked in [www.sephardicgen.com](http://www.sephardicgen.com). She was the coordinator of the genealogical projects prepared for the 24th IAJGS International Conference held in Jerusalem in July 2004 and has conducted half of them. She is the co-author of "Guidebook for Sephardic and Oriental genealogical Sources in Israel. Avotaynu, 2006" awarded by the Association of Jewish Libraries. She received*



*the 2007 IAJGS Lifetime Achievement Award. She received the 2008 award of "Yakir IGS". From 2008 is part of the Montefiore censuses Project team for which she got an IGS Appreciation Award in 2010.*

*Rose Feldman is a member of the Israel Genealogical Society and has been keeper of her family tree since 1985, which includes descendants and spouses from four continents. She is the IGS webmaster and involved in the database projects of the Israel Genealogical Society.*

*Billie Stein has been living in Israel since 1968, and spent thirty years as an incoming tourism travel agent. After a 40 year hiatus, she recently completed her BA degree in Jewish Social Studies at Hunter College, CUNY. She served as a member of the board of the 2004 IAJGS Conference which was held in Jerusalem, a member of the organizing committee for the 2nd, 3rd and 4th IGS Annual Seminars, and has been president of the Tel Aviv branch of IGS since 2005. She is one of the three members of the steering committee of the Montefiore Census project, along with Mathilde Tagger and Rose Feldman.*

## **MISSING PERSONS BUREAU: SEARCHING FOR RELATIVES IN ISRAEL**

Yisroel (Yonasan) Shapiro ben Chaim  
Moshe Zeev ben Yisroel ben Tanchum ben  
Zalman Vevel of Rugvua, Lithuania

**yonatanshapiro@gmail.com**

Is looking for family connections in the following places:

Augustowsky – Bialystok Poland

Fajnstadt – Pinczow Poland

Gordon Salakas – Lithuania

Gottesfeild Zalishchyky Ukraine

Krinzman – Kaunas Lithuania

Levin Sztabin Poland

Munitz – Salakas Lithuania

Nissenbaum/Nusbaum – Grajewo Poland

Shapiro – Panevezys Lithuania

Shapiro – Raguva Lithuania

Zimmerman – Bialystok Poland

Weltman – Kaunas Lithuania 5 Aug 2007

Weltman – Kupiskis Lithuania

### **The Palestine Directory and Handbook 1932 online!**

Read about it in English at <http://www.isragen.org.il/siteFiles/1/617/5115.asp>  
and in Hebrew at <http://www.isragen.org.il/siteFiles/13/226/5989.asp>

## NEWS FROM ISRAELI MUSEUMS, ARCHIVES AND LIBRARIES

### An Archive and a Library in Israel

*Harriet Kasow*

Discovering new archives and libraries is a busman's holiday for me as I was a librarian for more than 30 years. Exploring an archive and library in Israel that may be of interest to Jewish family researchers is a bonus. This visit took place within the past few months and I will describe it and what it contains.

The World Cultural Association of Jews from Romania/Asociatia Culturala Mondiala a Evreilor Originari Din Romania is based in Tel Aviv. The Association was established in 1959 and the Archives/Library was created formally in 1980 at its current location. The location is inside an older lovely building in the heart of Tel Aviv that is in tune with the timeframe found in the collection.

The Director of the Archive is a former Israeli diplomat, Dr. Shlomo Leibowitz-Laisch. He has written several books and has taught at several universities. Dr Leibowitz-Laisch provides personalized access to the myriad collections in the Archive/Library.

Housed at the facility are an archive and a library. The archive and library contain the following materials: original documents, Romanian books, translations of Romanian books into Hebrew, clipping and photograph files, periodicals, books in various languages not related to Romania or its Jewry.

**There is a catalog to the archival material and various lists. It has objects of art and ephemera. Unfortunately, despite there being a wealth of material, it has not been substantially cataloged. Therefore it is somewhat inaccessible without help. However the help available is of such a caliber that as a result numbers of books have been written based on what is contained here. At least 12 books have been published under the auspices of the Archive.**



Dr. Shlomo Leibowitz-Laisch, Director of the Archive

It has a reference section for background material. It is ideal for family researchers researching Romania. There is a vast amount of information especially about the large Romanian aliyah to Israel. This would include places where they settled.

There were many organizations, unions, immigration groups that were established with the birth of the State. Their internal archives provide a history of their absorption in Israel. As such they are valuable in providing an historical context for a specific time period.

Address and Contact Information.

The hours are 9:00-11:30 Sundays to Thursdays. You can make appointments after those hours with Dr. Leibowitz-Laisch at 972 641 8078. The Archive/Library is located at the address below.

1 Har Sinai St., Tel Aviv, Israel 65816

Tel: 972 03 566 0165 Fax: 972 03 560 3311

*Harriet Kasow is the retired Media Librarian from the Bloomfield Library of Hebrew University in Jerusalem. She was the Librarian for the Israel Genealogy Society for 12 years and contributes to Sharsheret Hadorot and other genealogical periodicals.*

## ACTIVITIES AND REPORTS

### Sixth Annual One Day Seminar – November 9, 2010

The sixth annual conference focused on one central idea – Eretz Yisrael. Our working assumption was based on the desire to build the One Day Seminars, beginning in 2010 until the date of the 34<sup>th</sup> International Genealogy Conference that will be held in the summer of 2014, with the issue of Eretz Yisrael as the linking and leading thread.

The conference themes this year were, for the lectures in Hebrew: *Eretz Yisrael as an ideal – indeed?* and *The aliyot to Eretz Yisrael and the migration [yeridot] from Eretz Yisrael*.

The theme of the lectures in English was *Jewish Families Migration Split – Some Went East (Eretz Yisrael) and Some Went Elsewhere*.

The dream of the return to Zion, the land of Israel, was in the hearts of all Diaspora Jews throughout history. The subject of aliya to Eretz Yisrael played a crucial role in the life stories of great and important people, as well as of the masses of Jews in the East and West. This yearning and longing have created masterpieces of poetry and fiction.

The period that we decided to include in the lectures was from the beginning of the eighteenth century and on: From the aliya of the students of Yehuda Hechasis (1700) to the members of Yehuda Hatzar, from students of the Vilna Gaon (1800) and the followers of The Baal Shem Tov to *E'ele Batamar* (1881-1882), from the *anusim* [forced converted to Christianity] of Mashad and the Shiraz Community to the aliya of the Russian proselytes, from the aliya of Rav Bibas and his students (Gibraltar-Corfu 1852) and the aliya of Rabbi Yehuda Ben Shlomo Chai Alkalay (Sarajevo-1874) to the First Aliya (1881-1904), the Second Aliya (1904-1914) and so on.

The idea behind choosing this variety of lectures was to provide a stage for groups

that not always stood in the spotlight and sometimes even disappeared from the pages of the history books. The extent of the lectures embraced east, west, north and south.

The history of the communities that were at the center of the lectures gave the possibility, for some of the participants perhaps for the first time, to discover unknown stories.



Mrs. Gilda Kurtzman – words of thanks after receiving the 2010 IGS award.

Mrs. Esther Ramon – founder and honorary president of IGS.

Although there was no connection between the lecturers it was impossible not to notice the common themes, not only in the historical part but also in parallel problems in the various communities during their absorption in Eretz Yisrael.

**Dr. Arieh Morgenstern** gave the opening session lecture: the ideological, social and demographic characteristics of the aliyot to Eretz Yisrael in the years 1801-1881. This lecture served as the “umbrella” of the rest of the lectures given by the different lecturers.

This year, for the first time, a number of archives, mainly from the north, were represented as well. Five of them (the Museum Center “From Generation to Generation” in

Kiryat Bialik, the Colony Givat Ada, the Regional Council of Emek Yizre'el and the Agricultural School Hanna Mizel of Nahalal, the Museum of the Jewish Heritage of Hungarian speaking countries and the Israel Electric Corporation Archive) brought the lists of their holdings, two others contributed printed material to the participants' folders. There was also one vendor table.

This year, the enormous importance of personal encounters among the participants was proved once again, as was demonstrated by the many meetings around the tables in the lobby of the Diaspora Museum.

The conclusion of the conference coincided with the terrible event that marked the

beginning of the Shoah, the pogrom known as the Kristallnacht – the night between the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> of November, 1938. This coincidence of dates stresses more than anything the importance of our gatherings, all of us who are engaged in the research of our family roots.

This is the opportunity to thank once more all the lecturers who participated in the conference and shared with us their knowledge and experience.

Many thanks go also to all the volunteers who helped with the registration and all other assignments related to this day. All contributed to the success of an exciting and interesting day.

### **A New Branch of the Israel Genealogical Society in Raanana**

On October 14, 2010, a new branch of the Israel Genealogical Society has been opened in Ra'anana. The new branch is added to the list of Hebrew-speaking branches of the association. The branch is located in the "Hashachar" Library, 9 Chazon-Ish Street, Ra'anana. The monthly meetings take place in the dignified appearance reading hall of the library on the second Thursday of each month (might be exceptions). Free parking places and access for disabled is promised.

The opening night graced all members of the Israel Genealogical Society managers for the various branches from the north to south.

Things looked up at the opening evening when, Vice Mayor of Ra'anana, Ms. Ronit Weintraub made her speech followed by a speech from the President of the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies (IAJGS) and the Israel Genealogical Society (IGS), Mr. Michael Goldstein.

The evening continued with debates which include a number of friends who introduced themselves and their studies. We hope to continue with this interesting discourse in

the following meetings. Furthermore, we plan to issue a database of family names and Shtetels searched by members which will be accessible to other members of the group.

The focus of the stimulating evening was listening, with great interest, to our professional guest lecturer, Dr. Ofra Keinan, who specializes in preserving our heritage and legacy. Her lecture was titled "The virtual museum as a heritage conservation". We



Vice Mayor of Ra'anana, Ms. Ronit Weintraub, giving a speech at the opening night of the new branch (*Photography: Ayana Kimron*)

learned what a virtual museum is? What its contribution to heritage conservation. How it becomes a central tool to the community and ways to establish a virtual museum. Among other things, we were exposed to the line of thoughts behind the establishment of “Shturman Museum”, the “Hadera Museum” and “Alumot Museum” which was established by Dr. Keinan and still managed by her today.

Our vision of the new branch is to become a place where many new and old-timer members will find room for a wide range of activities concerning our common interest – Genealogy.

Due to the wide spectrum of the term Genealogy, we strive to present a wide range of public lectures on topics relating to both traditional genealogy issues as well as historical, geographical, sociological, anthropological, psychological issues and many more. In light of technological developments in computers in recent years, many materials have

become more accessible and we see this as an opportunity to try and draw the younger generation to the subject. Our hope is to connect the experienced members to the young generation by guiding them to practice and search their family roots, building their family trees and interview their older relatives.

Finally, we thank the association board members of the Israel Genealogical Society which helped us and gave their support during the process of establishing the new branch and special thanks deserve the founding team members of the branch – Michal Itzhaki, Ayana Kimron and Joseph Goldschmidt.

*Yours,  
Amnon Atzmon  
Raanana Branch Chairman*

**E-Mail: [amnonatzmon@013.net](mailto:amnonatzmon@013.net)**



### **Launching of the Montefiore Census Website and Search Engine at Mishkenot Sha'ananim in Jerusalem**



Mathilde Tagger, Rose Feldman and Billie Stein

## IGS's Virtual Library

**Did you know that as a member you have access to our virtual library?**

**IGS is proud to be the first Jewish Genealogical Society to enter the 21<sup>st</sup> century with a virtual library.**

**Our library contains three types of items:**

*Sharsheret Hadorot* – current and past copies

Two past publications of IGS from 1989 – 1992

*Annals and Deeds in Family History: Research and Sources* No. 2

*Their Father's House: Studies and Sources in Family History* 5-6

*(If you happen to have the other copies we would appreciate your letting us scan them.)*

**Newsletters from around the world**

**If you don't have your code and password please contact [webmaster@isragen.org.il](mailto:webmaster@isragen.org.il)  
Enjoy!**

## Introductory Genealogy Classes

Following a successful "Introduction to Genealogy" seminar given at the new AACI Jerusalem facility in March, 2010, the Jerusalem Genealogical Society was asked to teach a four session course on "Beginning Genealogy".

The four session course which was open to the general public was held in November 2010. Garri Regev ran three of the sessions, where she introduced the participants to basic research skills, useful charts, a variety

of websites, a variety of software options, using sources, organization hints with emphasis on researching their families and beginning their family tree. Dr Rose Lerer Cohen provided the participants with tools for oral history. This session also touched on Eastern European and Holocaust research.

A similar five session course has begun in December at the Orthodox Union under the auspices of Touro College.



## Family Festival at Beit Hatfutsot during Hol Hamed Sukkot

There was very exciting genealogy happening at Beit Hatfutsot this past Sukkot. *MyHeritage* set up fifty computers for families to use to start their family trees. There were a few advantages to doing it at the museum: first there was MyHeritage staff available to help the families, second the family automatically received a code to continue updating the family tree on line, and third the tree would go into the Beit Hatfutsot database of family trees. Over 1,400 trees were collected in the three days of the festival.

It was exciting to see children building their trees on line with the help of their parents.

Usually it was the child typing in the information on the computer with the parent supplying the information. There were hours when people had to wait to get to a computer. One grandfather was there on all three days. Each day he came with grandchildren from a different one of his children.

IGS was invited to join *MyHeritage* as the part of the team being able to mentor people in the second step of building the family tree, that of finding out information about the past generations of the family. From this experience IGS has started to develop its plan for participating in future events such as these.

## ASK THE EXPERTS

### Metaphors for Working Backwards by going Forwards and Sideways to Find Origins

*Jordan Auslander*

In my last column we explored how to trace immigrants to the United States from their arrival manifests. Another approach is to work back from a name and address obtained from a letter, or a census entry. Suppose you have someone's name, believe they are related to you, but don't know how. Their surname may be a variant, Anglicization or contraction, tantalizingly close or wildly off from your known bloodlines. How do you work backwards? We know names were not changed upon arrival, but when the immigrant naturalized. Origin clues may be further muddled when the new name is subsequently retrofit to parents on marriage and death certificates. In these cases we go to the source, the naturalization paperwork.

As immigration law evolved, so did documentation. Before 1907, a naturalization might list the subject's age, address, occupation, former nationality, date and port of arrival, but not always. A witness may be a relative or just a colleague. In 1907, information requirements become more rigid and after 1924, even more

biographical data was asked about spouses (women who, with the right to vote, could no longer simply derive their citizenship from their husband's naturalization).

A genealogical investigation drives a wedge into the past; each ancestor back discovered usually yields cousinhood on the shoulders of that branch and a cascade of descendants. So, when older records fail at revealing details, another relative's documentation may fill in details. It's like completing a puzzle with the benefit of overlapping elements. Extended families rarely emigrated as complete units; some came over years and perhaps decades if extended to the cousinhood. The clues are in whom the immigrant listed on arrival manifests as their relatives or origin and destination as well as witnesses on their naturalizations. Later arrivals bring more detailed documentation. There might even be a pre-World War 2 surge in sponsored relatives, bypassing restrictive general immigration quotas.

Refugee status was a post-WW2 innovation and may involve family of living memory. The Cold War slowed things down, but there was some movement from Communist Eastern Europe, with spikes in the late 1940s and 1956 for Hungarians. Local political instability and economic considerations resulted in temporary residencies regardless of original migration intent. Some have family who may have transited from Europe to the United States via South America or Israel.

Lodgers and borders enumerated in censuses may be landmen. Burial societies and congregations listed on marriages can also be clues for geographical origin. The point is that

if you feel the information is critical to your investigation, there are many stones to overturn.

*Jordan Auslander – a New York based professional genealogist, lecturer and expert witness. Since 1982 pursued real estate histories, title search in addition to genealogy, across the United States, Europe and Israel. Jordan translated, created and published an index to vital records in the Slovak State Archive system, and completed an alphabetized translation of “Magyarország Helységnevelő,” a gazetteer of 1877 Hungary.*

## BOOK REVIEW

### “Skala on the River Zbrucz,” a translation of the Skala Yizkor Book.

*Tony Hausner*

In 1978, the Skala Benevolent Society (SBS) published a *Yizkor* [memorial] book called *Skala*. The book was written by the town's (shtetl's) former Jewish residents who either had survived the Holocaust or had been born in Skala and previously had emigrated. Its purpose was to honor Skala's Jewish community, which had been annihilated by the Nazis and their cohorts. Most of the contributors to the original book were the survivors themselves, who felt a deep inner compulsion and moral obligation to those who perished, to tell the story of Jewish Skala and to share with their children and future generations their memories of suffering, struggle and loss. The *Yizkor* book was written primarily in Yiddish and Hebrew and was largely inaccessible to many modern researchers, most of whose families came from this shtetl. **Skala on the River Zbrucz**, a translation of the entire *Yizkor* book into English, now has been published by the Skala Research Group (whose members are investigating their roots in Skala) and the SBS.

Situated in eastern Galicia and once ruled by Austro-Hungary, the town of Skala was part of Poland during World War II. It now is called Skala Podil'ska and is part of Ukraine. The *Skala Yizkor* book includes articles, photographs, and documents on the history of the town's Jews lived in Skala from the 15<sup>th</sup> century up to and including the Holocaust, when the Jewish community was completely destroyed. This material recalls a once vibrant *shtetl*, its people, the environment in which they lived, their hopes, dreams and struggles for survival. The *Yizkor* book also describes the tragic events of the Holocaust, stories of those who survived and provides a list of Skala's Holocaust victims and survivors. The English translation contains a new chapter about the town's righteous gentiles who saved Jews during the Holocaust, as well as photographs showing Skala as it is today. It is a precious legacy that deserves to be preserved.

For copies, please contact Tony Hausner,

**thausner@gmail.com**