

QUEST

Newsletter of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Connecticut

Volume 25, Number 4, November 2013

<http://www.jgsct-jewish-genealogy.org>

Sunday November 17, 2013

1:30 - 3:30 PM

Godfrey Memorial Library

Dr. Leon Chameides, Past President of the Jewish Historical Society of Greater Hartford, will discuss his recently published books. In *Strangers in Many Lands*, our speaker traces his family back to 1790. *On the Edge of the Abyss* is a collection of essays written by his father, who was Rabbi of the Katowice Jewish community, from 1932-1936.

Directions to Godfrey: From I-91, exit 22S onto Route 9 South. Exit 15 onto Route 66 West (Washington Street). At fifth traffic light, turn right onto Route 3 North (Newfield Street). The Library is 1/4 mile on the right.

From I-95, take Exit 69 onto Route 9 North. Take Exit 15 and follow above directions. For information: jgsct-jewish-genealogy.org, or call 203/397-3253

President's Message
Doris Loeb Nabel

Boston 2013 Benefits? Part II of III

Did I worry that I previously heard the best speakers, learned the 'how-tos', or would be bored? No, I had no doubts about the benefits of attending my 8th consecutive IAJGS conference, the best annual resource for genealogists.

Each year, the moment I arrive in the conference hotel's lobby, friends from around the world greet me. Online communications support the bonds. Each year, I meet knowledgeable genealogists, learn new strategies, and enlarge my network of collaborators.

Boston 2013 did not disappoint; its many components help me be a better genealogist and JGS president. The following chronological overview of those highlights most important to me reveals some of the strengths of Boston 2013:

- The most valuable contents of the briefcase bag I received at registration included the flash drive sharing the Syllabus, Speaker Bios, Session Summaries, Speaker handouts; the spiral-bound Daily Planner, and the important 140-page Family Finder, which enables attendees to discover others researching the same surnames and locations.

- SHARE Fair, an acronym for SIGs and BOFs, Historical Societies, Archives, Repositories, Eminent Jewish Genealogical Societies, welcomed all who wanted to learn about the resources available. JGSCT had a table, adjacent to that of the Mac Users' BOF, which I started in 2007, and which, gratifyingly, grows annually. The BOF

concept empowers individuals who believe a need exists for a new group that could be beneficial to genealogists, to create and grow that BOF.

- Sunday evening's fascinating, charismatic keynote speaker, Aaron Lansky, founder and president of the Yiddish Book Center in Amherst, Massachusetts, captivated his audience.

- A new record, I believe: the number of JGSCT members who attended the conference, included many first-timers, and repeat participants. Not only do all benefit from the huge number of opportunities; each contributes to our JGS's ability to share newly learned competencies with our members.

- JGSCT also participated in the Boston 2013 program, with three board members presenting sessions: Barney Miller shared *What Information And Documents Are Available in Connecticut and Where They Can Be Found*. Georgia Haken and Rabbi Ed Cohen spoke about *Jewish Research in Connecticut: History, Cemeteries and Sources of the Jews of Connecticut*.

- Archivists and historians from Europe served as invaluable resources. Both excellent sessions planned by GerSIG, featuring expert members, and by the founder of alemanniajudaica.de, as well as presentations by two other outstanding German historians, met my needs.

With so many more impressive aspects, additional details about the relevance of Boston 2013 remain for inclusion in the next *Quest*.

Now, it's time to put Salt Lake City 2014 on your agenda!!

IAJGS Boston 2013 Reports

Rochelle P. Gershenow

The 33rd IAJGS International Conference on Jewish Genealogy held in Boston, Massachusetts was the fourth IAJGS International Conference on Jewish Genealogy that I attended. The others were also on the East Coast--New York, Philadelphia, and Washington.

I reviewed the program, which was provided online, ahead of time and decided what sessions, films, food functions, etc. I wanted to attend. I downloaded a copy, marked it up with my 1st, 2nd, and 3rd choices, and took a copy with me to the conference. This proved to be valuable as the printed Daily Planner handed out at the conference only provided session titles.

I went this year primarily to stimulate my interest again in doing genealogical research, and to help me determine what I want to do with all of the family information I already have. With these goals in mind I primarily chose sessions that would provide the context in which my families lived, and attended sessions on producing a family book. The contextual sessions usually had an academic slant – the speakers were often college faculty - and were extremely informative.

I am in the very beginning stage of writing a family book. One of the presentations I attended on family books provided me with some good ideas about incorporating text, photos, maps, and charts on a page. I also received some valuable input from one of the vendors who can assist in producing a book at any step of the way.

A number of months ago I had one of my male cousins take a Y-DNA-67 test. I was very confused as to how to interpret his

results and did not know whether it made any sense to contact his matches, who matched on 12 out of 12. To learn more I attended the breakfast with a DNA discussion, sessions on DNA, and spent a good amount of time in the Vendor Room talking with FamilyTreeDNA representatives.

Unfortunately, at the current time, it appears that our chances of finding a relative within four generations is limited. Another attendee, who I know from other contexts, is searching the same surname from the same shtetl as I am. She had taken the Family Finder DNA test and convinced me to do it also. I am anxiously awaiting the results of the test to see if we are closely related. If so, we can move forward in our collaboration on the family.

Although I didn't meet anyone new who was researching my family name, I met a woman from Australia, originally from South Africa, whose best friend in South Africa had the same maiden surname as one of my family names. I was quite intrigued as four of my maternal great-grandmother's nieces emigrated to South Africa. So there we sat in Boston, with an iPad, talking to her friend in South Africa. Isn't technology amazing!

I have subsequently been in touch via email with this woman in Capetown and her cousin in Toronto. I don't know yet if our families are related but have made some new friends. I was recently told by cousins that my paternal grandfather had a brother who emigrated from Ukraine to Minas Gerais, Brazil. At the conference I met a woman who was researching her family in the same province/state. I hope to hear from her soon with information on researching in this particular location.

There were a few negatives that related primarily to the facility, i.e., meeting rooms and networking space. Old hotels are charming but their meeting space does not lend itself well to modern day meetings.

1. Not enough large rooms. I was shut out of two sessions and a film I wanted to see as the rooms were filled to capacity. This year's conference was the first time I experienced not being able to attend a session/film.
2. Shape of rooms. Too often the smaller rooms were long and narrow. For people seated in the back of the room, it was difficult to see or hear the presenter in the front of the room.
3. Acoustics in the ballrooms. It was difficult to understand some of the presentations as the sound bounced around the rooms.

The idea of a food kiosk was good but there was no place to sit and eat the food that was purchased.

All in all, my experience at the conference was positive. I was inspired by some sessions and wowed by some presenters. I connected with old friends, shared meals and transportation with JGSCT members and got to know them better, and met new people. I also had some wonderful dinners in Boston with family members I don't get to see often.

**Deborah Samuel Holman (First Timer!),
Board Member at Large**

Having never been to a conference of ANY kind, I was quite unsure what to expect. By the end of the first day, I began to relax. Everyone I encountered was helpful, willing to chat and provide helpful suggestions.

One of the best things I did was to sign up for the group dinners. I was attending the conference alone and didn't really know anyone. I met some great people and made a super connection with one of my meal-mates who lives near me! I'm sure we will get together for future genealogy jaunts to NYC.

I tend to get a bit anxious in unfamiliar surroundings but found the app (created for androids/iPhones/iPads) to be FABULOUS. It was so easy to use – maps of the conference floors, my scheduled activities, bios of the speakers, and loads of documents I could download. I had purchased a new iPad mini specifically for the conference. It proved to be extremely useful. I carried the “mini” in my purse, referring to it probably 20+ times a day! In the evening I reviewed the notes I took on the mini and transferred them to my laptop.

Even the exhibitors were helpful. I received several suggestions not just related to genealogy but my other hobby, dollhouse miniatures, as well. Double-dipping!!

Thanks to our JGSCT President, I was prepared with all the things I needed for the week. Doris Nabel forwarded to me several documents written to help attendees get the most out of IAJGS conferences. Thank you, Doris – that info really lowered my anxiety!

I cannot even begin to imagine the work that went into planning this event. It was definitely worthwhile. Having to choose programs that would appeal to an audience with such diverse interests must have been daunting. The committee did a superb job. There most definitely was enough variety to reach everyone.

I attended almost every session on writing, publishing and photography as well

as those on research and organizational techniques. My only “complaint” is that I now plan to follow Phyllis Kramer’s advice and create research logs for the work I have done over the past 5 years. That will take some time!

I was also spurred into action by Mike Karsen, who had us sign a “Legacy Pledge” – to share our family history with family members within the next 6-12 months. So, I have created a blog: <http://whoweareandhowwegotthisway.blogspot.com>

Looking forward to a financially stable year so I can travel to Salt Lake City. I think I’m hooked! Thank you to everyone, including the Park Plaza staff, who were very polite and accommodating. I had a great time!

From the JGSCT Library Georgia Haken, Librarian

Two new books have been donated to our Library:

Revisiting Our Neighborhoods; Stories from Hartford’s Past - Joan Walken, Editor and Susan Juster Viner, Researcher.
We Are Here: Memories of the Lithuanian Holocaust - Ellen Cassidy.

We also have *Avotaynu; The International Journal of Jewish Genealogy*, and newsletters from other JGS groups around the world.

Searching For Family

Members of JGSCT may submit a list of names and towns they are researching for publication in *Quest*. Send to Arthur Meyers, 854 Long Hill Rd, Middletown CT 06457, or email: marciarthur@sbcglobal.net

***Would you like to receive Quest by email? Email us at:
marciarthur@sbcglobal.net***

Reasons To Receive Quest by Email Richard Sperber, Board Member At Large

1. The electronic version is searchable. It is so much easier to electronically search for the topics, places, and surnames in which you are interested than it is to eyeball a hardcopy for those things.
2. It makes it easier to use web links. If you want to use any of the many wonderful web links provided in each edition, all you have to do is click on it! No more typing of those long web addresses into your browser and having to take three shots at it to get it right! Who has time for that?
3. It’s cost effective. The production and mailing of paper copies costs the JGSCT both money and time that could be better spent on event programming.
4. You’ll get your Quest faster. As genealogists, we have all learned about being patient. But why wait extra days to receive your newsletter while volunteers print, fold, stamp, and mail your paper copy via the United States Postal Service?
5. Go green! Reducing the number of copies we print helps to save our forests. It is a mitzvah to preserve our environment. Think *tikkun olam!*

Upcoming JGSCT Programs

December 15 - *An Afternoon of Personal Research Time with Assistance.*
January 19 *The Joy and Wonders of Genealogy Research Trips* - Monica Talmor and Doris Loeb Nabel.

How I Began My Search

Nearly everyone reading our newsletter has already begun the search for family history. Many of us encountered obstacles soon after, but we persevered.

Share your story of how you began your journey. The length of the write-up could be short, medium or long - but please share it! Send your story to marciarthur@sbcglobal.net.

***N'Shoma* with Richard Kamins Sundays, 11am, WLIS 1420, WMRD 1150**

Richard Kamins is on the air as host of the Sunday morning Jewish music show. *N'Shoma*. Music is played from all over the world, Broadway to Israel to South America. He interviews authors, musicians, composers and newsmakers as well as presenting live music in the studio.

Looking Ahead to IAJGS!

2014 July 27-August 1, Salt Lake City
2015 July 6-10, Jerusalem
2016 Seattle, Washington

Document Binders Barney Miller, Vice-President

Have you ever considered organizing all of those documents that you have accumulated (with much sweat and tears, probably), including birth, marriage, and death certificates, naturalization papers, military papers, census, manifests, directories, school papers, newspaper articles, and any other types of documents? A Document Binder could be the answer to your family history.

Doing so will provide easier access to documents to review their contents. It will better secure your valuable information and allow for easy movement when you need to take them someplace. These items, which you have toiled to find, are one of your most valuable possessions and deserve better than to be left laying around in a pile of papers or just stuffed into file folders. In addition, you would have a handsome binder to show to other family members.

When you start this project, consider putting together a duplicate binder for each one that you create. This will allow you to store copies of your work safely with someone in another location, as a back-up.

Start by going through all of your documents and arranging them according to each person. Obtaining a set of copies will provide for the duplicate binders mentioned earlier. A local office supply business has a nice assortment of various binder covers at reasonable costs. Utilizing page dividers and tabs provides for easy organization.

Arrange your binder by individuals, and documents could be inserted in chronological order to follow the person's history. Tab dividers will allow you to divide the binder into individual sections.

Some items, such as city/town Directory pages might better be inserted together in one section of the binder for the entire family, since several different family members may appear on one directory page for different years.

To add a little something extra, you might want to consider an Introduction Section to explain what documents are in your binder, and a Photo Section showing the old apartment houses that family members lived in, in addition to city-town maps of where they lived. You'll be pleased!

**Holocaust Tracing Service
Still Reuniting Families
David Crossland (*Der Spiegel-Germany*)**

<http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/holocaust-tracing-service-in-bad-arolsen-still-reunited-survivors-a-869289.html>

Wilhelm Thiem was two years old when an SS man pulled him from his mother's arms in 1942 in Lodz, Poland. He never saw her again. He has spent a lifetime wondering what became of his mother, who his father was, and whether any relatives were left.

Last month, Thiem, now 72, received a letter from the International Tracing Service (ITS). The ITS is the world's largest archive of documents on the Holocaust. It reunites 30 to 50 families per year.

"They told me I have an aunt in Lodz who's still alive and who knew me," Thiem said. "They also sent me my birth certificate and that of my mother. Now I know for the first time my birth date."

**Launch of New Jewish Cemetery
Database in New Haven
Jan Meisels Allen, IAJGS Vice President
Chairperson, IAJGS Public Records
Access Monitoring Committee**

http://www.newhavenindependent.org/index.php/archives/entry/jewish_cemetery_database_launched/

Greater New Haven's 49 Jewish cemeteries are the foundation of a new database by Rabbi Eliezer Greer. The 49 cemeteries hold the remains of 26,000 deceased Jewish persons. The cemeteries cover south central Connecticut from Madison to Moodus, from Deep River to the Havens.

The free online database may be accessed through the Jewish Cemetery Association of Greater New Haven: www.jewishnewhaven.org, or at: <http://www.yeshivanewhavensynagogue.org/cemetery.asp> The database also includes information on which synagogues took over responsibilities for now defunct congregations.

**Polish Genealogy Conference
Central CT State Univ., 10/12/13
Thomas Sadauskas**

- "If you don't have at least five spellings of your family surname, you haven't found enough documents."
- "Databases are always being updated and expanded, so don't just look one time and never go back."

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**Polish Genealogical Society of
Connecticut and the Northeast
Surnames Being Researched**

http://www.pgscctne.org/ResearchingSurnames/Research_Surnames.aspx

The Society provides this database so members can see who is searching which surnames. The surname appears with a geographical designation and an e-mail or postal address which you can use to make contact with the person who submitted the names. Check back periodically if you do not find what you are looking for. New names are being added continuously.

**Hartford Synagogues
Through the Centuries**
An online exhibit by the Jewish Historical
Society of Greater Hartford
<http://www.jhsg.org/exhibit.html>

Although a synagogue structure is not necessary for Jewish prayer, the building of a synagogue represents the creation of a center for both worship and community. In a synagogue, Jews join together not only to pray, but to study, socialize, educate their children, and to care for the needs of their own members as well as the larger community. There were once thirteen synagogues in Hartford. This web exhibit utilizes the archives of the Jewish Historical Society of Greater Hartford to offer images and information on the synagogues that once existed in Hartford.

Welcome New Co-Editors!

Gail Kalison Reynolds
and Deborah Samuel Holman

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Happy Hanukkah!
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