

From Our Contributing Editors

AUSTRALIA (Caplan)

Kosher Koala, newsletter of the Australian Jewish Genealogical Society, February 2012.

Ann Wunsch was raised Catholic. Her mother only revealed that the family was Jewish at a grandmother's funeral when Wunsch was 35 years old. Her article "Falling in Love with Budapest," describes Wunsch's 15-year journey to explore her Jewish roots, culminating with a trip to Hungary to visit all the addresses she had found and to reconstruct the life of her great-grandparents in Debrecen and Budapest.

Dani Haski reports that relatives of the 10 victims of a 1936 Hawkesbury ferryboat disaster gathered in November 2011 to begin clean-up and conservation of the graves and memorial at Rookwood Cemetery in Sydney. The Hawkesbury River Memorial Conservation Project is working under the auspices of the Jewish Cemetery Trust and the Australian Jewish Historical Society. Since European settlement began in Australia, more than 80 percent of all Jewish burials in New South Wales have been at Rookwood. Burials date from 1837 with birth dates from 1763. The cemetery is one of the most significant historical sites of the Sydney Jewish community.

Jeannette Tsoulos reviews *Empire Day*, a novel by Jewish author Diane Armstrong. This is an account of a year in the lives of residents on a street in the Australian suburb of Bondi in the late 1940s where residents see the suburb changing with the arrival of a number of Jewish Holocaust survivors struggling to deal with their grief and loss while determined to make a new life.

The Australian Jewish Historical Society has published a collection of essays written as part of their studies into Jewish history by students at Moriah College, a Jewish school in Sydney. Most were based on interviews with grandparents who were Holocaust survivors.

Friends of Maitland Jewish Cemetery are preparing a conservation management plan and would like to hear from anyone with information about the chapel or building that was on the grounds or has photographs or personal memories about the state of the cemetery before the 1970s.

Hatte Blejer is compiling lists of surnames associated with various towns in Siauliai. To contribute names, write to blejerh@gmail.com. The Klaipeda (Memel) community would like to hear from anyone with roots in that area, including all of Zemet/Zemaitija in western Lithuania. Write to Felix Puzemskis at felix-bonasta@yahoo.com.

AUSTRALIA (Sharpe)

Jewish Genealogy Downunder, quarterly publication of the Australian Jewish Genealogical Society (Vic), Vol. 14, No. 1, March 2012.

Member Judy Levron has donated to the society library a book newly published by the Archives of Amsterdam entitled *In Memoriam*, about the deportation from The Nether-

lands and murder of Jewish, Roma and Sinti children in the years 1942–45. The book lists names, dates of birth, place of residence and, sometimes, photographs. [The U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum has ordered a copy—Ed.] The Lamm Jewish Library of Australia was launched in Melbourne on March 18, 2012, and was named for its benefactor, Dr. Danny Lamm, president of the Executive Council of Victorian Jewry.

Currently, 234 Australian newspapers and magazines are accessible online via TROVE at <http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper>. Society member Rodney Eisfelder contributes a list of e-mail addresses for historical newspapers online in Austria, England, Israel, Germany, The Netherlands, New Zealand, the United States and what he calls "the rest."

Israeli Daniel Horowitz, on a recent visit to Australia, spoke to the society on researching genealogical resources in Israel from their couch. Among the resources he cited are the Israel Genealogy Research Association, www.isragen.org.il; the Douglas E. Goldman Jewish Genealogy Center at Beit Hatfutsot, www.bh.org.il, and Yad Vashem, www.yadvashem.org.

Lionel Sharpe details a recent Solomon family reunion attended by 160 relatives out of a list of 4,500 descendants of Jewish pencil maker Samuel Moss Solomon whose sons, Emanuel and Vaiben, were transported to Australia as convicts in 1818. Years later, the parents, Samuel and Esther, followed as free settlers.

ProQuest, <http://proquest.com/en-US/aboutus/pressroom/11/20110927.shtml>, has added the following American Jewish newspapers to its Historical Newspapers Collection: *Jewish Advocate* (Boston) and *The American Hebrew & Jewish Messenger*. It expects to add *The Jewish Exponent* and *The Jerusalem Post* later in 2012.

ENGLAND (Joseph)

Shemot, publication of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Great Britain, Vol. 20, Part I, March 2012. As regular AVOTAYNU readers are aware, our editor likes to have a theme for each issue. This one is based on Lithuanian Jewry and connections.

Jeremy Schuman opens with an article on his ancestral background from Kaunas followed by Professor Aubrey Newman giving a general overview of Lithuanian history and its Jewish communities. This provides a setting for how a genealogist might look for information sources. Sam Aaron, also the author of JGSGB's *Guide to Jewish Genealogy in Lithuania*, furnishes additional data that supplements Newman's account. Howard Margol has written a "guest paper" on Lithuanian passports, 1919–40, and their genealogical use. Still generalizing on sources, Saul Issroff discusses genetic markers and whether Lithuanian Jewry is different from that of neighboring regions, especially Galicia.

Howard Kramer follows with his own Lithuanian family

research, and Rose Lerer Cohen discusses some aspects of the impact of the Holocaust on Lithuania. Mike Gordon offers a small personal vignette concerning a Lithuanian Jewish family who had a lucky escape just before the Nazi invasion of their country. Dorothy Leivers, a board member of LitvakSIG, introduces details of Lithuanian databases searchable on the Internet. At this point, there is a slight change of focus as Saul Issroff provides an account from a piece of Russian research.

Your correspondent (myself) uses his regular column to tell about the family of his great-great-grandfather who is his only Lithuanian direct link, this ancestor having been born in Vilna. Henry Waxman offers a family story that has left unresolved problems, and Gina Marks discusses some further Australian connections of the well-known Mendoza family. Saul Issroff has compiled data on synagogues with Lithuanian connections in many parts of the world. Hilary Thomas and John Cowell offer an account of a Rubin family that settled in Bolton, Lancashire.

Mike Gordon returns with a personal account of a visit he made to Arlington Cemetery outside Washington, DC, and the Jewish links associated with that elite American graveyard. There are the usual book reviews, correspondence columns and Doreen Berger's "Footsteps in the Past" which is a personal selection of interesting sidelines from Jewish genealogical activity. This year is the bicentenary of Charles Dickens' birth so Doreen has used this anniversary as part of her exploration, mentioning Dickens' interaction with the London Jewish community (not always favorable).

France (Graner)

Revue du Cercle de Généalogie Juive, publication of the Jewish Genealogical Society of France, Issue 109, Spring 2012.

Anne-Marie Fribourg's article describes the history of the Haas family from Upper Alsace. Her ancestor Meyer Marc Haas was born in Colmar in 1797. His sons, Jacques, Nathan, Leopold and Benjamin, founded two watchmaking companies in 1848, one in New York, the other in Paris and Geneva. They were famous for miniature watches made of precious stones which were true works of art. The French company closed in 1938, but the Swiss one is still active and celebrated its 160th anniversary in 2008.

Daniel Vangheluwe and Louise Flacher were looking for two families, Hajwentreger and Brzostek, in a small village called Powązki, incorporated into Warsaw in 1916. This was a difficult task because the village had no civil registry during the 19th century. Eventually, he found a register in which families and individuals were recorded from time to time over the years. The authors analyze the documents found, develop hypotheses about the relationship of the two families and suggest additional paths to explore.

The Jews of Tunis belonged to two different communities, the Twânsa and the Grana, which did not mix. The former were supposedly the natives, whereas the latter

came from Livourno (Leghorn), Italy. Gilles Boulu focuses on the heads of the Twânsa community, called *caïds*. For more than a century, this position was occupied by a member of the Scemama (or Samama) family. Most famous was the *caïd*, Nessim Scemama (1805–73), who served as a type of finance minister to the Bey of Tunis and became immensely wealthy through swindling and corruption. Scemama left Tunis in 1864 when he felt he was in danger, lived for a while in Paris and, eventually, died in Livourno.

Until the French Revolution, the Pope owned a portion of France near Avignon, in which four Jewish communities were allowed to exist as a sort of island. Zosa Szajkowski suggests that they also formed a linguistic island. In his book, *The Language of the Jews in the Four Communities of Comtat Venaissin*, Michel Alessio strongly contradicts Szajkowski's thesis. Searching for a lost Judaic language, Szajkowski found only the typical Provençal idiom with a few Hebrew words. A Judaic language is always a language brought from somewhere else, which was not the case in a country where Jews lived without interruption since Roman times.

ISRAEL (Cohen)

Israel has a new genealogy society. Carol Hoffman of the Israel Genealogical Research Association writes this issue's column. She was born in the United States and made aliyah in 1972.

The Israel Genealogy Research Association, <http://genealogy.org.il>, emerged from the desire of a number of leading Israeli genealogists to share their capabilities with a broad group of multilingual researchers using modern technology as the primary communication tool in a way that had not been achieved before.

The association evolved as a revival of a genealogy society that had existed in Israel for the past two decades and included a decision to appeal to a multi-lingual audience. Israel is a multi-ethnic and multi-lingual society. Official languages of Israel are Hebrew and Arabic. Popular languages used frequently are Russian, English, French, Yiddish, Spanish and more. Of the daily newspapers published in Israel, 4 are in Arabic, 2 in English, 1 in French, 1 in German, 11 in Hebrew and 5 in Russian.

In recent years, Jewish genealogy has developed a global approach facilitated by the Internet and its search tools. Archives throughout the world are digitizing files for preservation while also making many of them available online. Seeking family roots is a hobby and a popular pastime, particularly in western societies. Interest in Jewish genealogy, i.e., has increased accordingly throughout western countries. Israel, as the national home of the Jewish people, has the advantage of being able to draw on a multitude of resources, both from living people and documentation, to help in searching one's roots. These resources include various pre-state publications of professionals, candidates to local elections, municipal street censuses and directories. Post-state resources also are varied, including some official gov-

ernment publications and a multitude of professional societies' publications.

IGRA's major resource is human—a pool of knowledgeable members who are ready to help, advise and guide. Our website, <http://genealogy.org.il> states:

The Israel Genealogy Research Association (IGRA) ...[is] focused on genealogy—helping people with their family research, and making available to the public a wide variety of material from the Ottoman period through the early years of Israeli statehood, as well as additional documents which are located in Israel regarding Jews from the diaspora. We will attempt to work with people from many nationalities and provide information in as many languages as possible.

In keeping with our goals, we have developed a multi-lingual website. We focus on webinars, online publishing of original articles and other electronic documents, creation of databases and new resource guides. These are current and useful tools. IGRA initiated webinars at <http://genealogy.org.il/videos> and enabled participation in global webinars in English, Spanish and French. More are planned for the future. The interactive calendar posts upcoming events that may be linked to personal calendars with a simple click. Original articles include peer-reviewed articles submitted by those interested in sharing their genealogical research on the net. Peer reviews are conducted by a committee of three volunteers with an additional group of volunteer experts in specific fields. Each article submitted is independently reviewed by two people. We have capable editors in Hebrew, English and French. Resources are reliable referrals to various tools without duplicating what is done by other societies. Databases are focused on resources found in Israeli archives, libraries, museums, and those of local and regional government organizations. These databases will have multi-search ability and imaging where the donor organization has given permission to permit viewing the scanned document. IGRA intends not only to provide access to the genealogy treasures found in Israel for researchers throughout the world, but also to teach and help those living in Israel with ancestors and relatives anywhere.

Databases are multi-criteria searchable. Surnames and given names can be searched according to the following: “is exactly,” “sounds like,” “starts with,” “contains,” “ends with.” All names are searchable in both Hebrew and English. Currently searchable databases include: Nurse Certification from the Mandate Period, Land Registries from 1928, Earthquake Donations 1927, and Compensation for the Loss in the Disturbance 1929. Additional databases are ready to post and likely will be available on the site as this article goes to press. Some databases in the preparatory stages include: doctors in Israel, Histadrut election in 1949; Knesset members, accountants in Israel, and teachers in Israel. Scanning, sorting, transliteration and preparatory work has been done by Rose Feldman and Mathilde Tagger, both of whom have helped to develop many databases posted on other sites.

Four original articles have been posted on the website:

- Passover Break—Fifth Episode, by H. Daniel Wagner of the Weizmann Institute, inaugurated IGRA's original articles. In addition to his academic background he brings a rich history and experience in genealogy, is a member of the Academic Committee of the International Institute for Jewish Genealogy and co-chaired the 2004 IAJGS conference in Jerusalem.

- “Using Newspapers and Land Registries to Find People,” by Rose Feldman of Tel Aviv University, the key figure in finding and designing genealogy databases in Israel, has four Kehilalink sites on JewishGen, and can be found on Twitter <http://twitter.com/#!/jewdatagengirl>.

- “Moyal Surname” [in Hebrew], by Mathilde A. Tagger, who has published extensively, including databases, has been a leader in researching Sephardic Jewish genealogy and project coordinator of the IAJGS 2004 conference in Jerusalem. Both she and Rose Feldman have actively worked on the Montefiore Census, www.montefiorecensuses.org/search.

- “Visiting Grandpa Tuvia in America,” the most recent article, was written by Miriam Gil, an avid genealogist and volunteer archivist at the Association of Lithuanian Jews in Israel.

Resources available through the society include guides for regional and ethnic sources; the website provides information on more general resources that are available online that may be of interest to members. These are available to all registered users of the site. Examples include: *Latin America*, by Daniel Horowitz; *Courland/Latvia*, by Martha Lev-Zion; *Poland*, by Jean-Pierre Stroweis; *South Africa*, by Paul Cheifitz; *United Kingdom*, by Rosemary Eshel; and *Sephardic Genealogy Resources*, by Jeffrey S. Malka.

IGRA has posted *Hevra Kadishot*, by Shalom Bronstein, an English translation of the complete list of burial societies in Israel—the original found at www.dat.gov.il/religion/console/mng/kadisha_list.aspx?current_posting. Additional resources include links to Jewish genealogy blogs and a rich selection of useful forms for doing research. Example of the various forms can be found at <http://genealogy.org.il/resources/forms/>. Among others, included are an ancestor form, family form, sibling form and U.S. immigrant census form.

Meetings with interesting speakers are held regionally. Beer Sheva, Jerusalem, Petah Tikvah, Ra'anana and Tel Aviv have been the venues to date. Thirteen lectures have been heard in IGRA's first three months. Regional coordinators Susan Edel, Linda Geffon, Martha Lev-Zion, Ingrid Rockberger, Barbara Seigel and Hinda Solomon have helped to make these possible.

IGRA is a member of the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies (IAJGS), www.iajgs.org/index.php. Members of IGRA will be represented in the forthcoming 32nd IAJGS International Conference on Jewish Genealogy, www.paris2012.eu, in Paris with 13 members delivering 16 papers in four different languages, among them: Rosemary Eshel, Rose Feldman, Michael Goldstein, Carol Hoffman, Daniel Horowitz, Paul King,

Martha Lev-Zion, Garri Regev, Jean-Pierre Stroweis and Mathilde Tagger.

Philip Tauring and Daniel Horowitz have volunteered their technical expertise with Garri Regev centrally coordinating the multi-faceted operations of the new organization. The first general meeting will be held at the end of April. Details may be found on the IGRA website <http://genealogy.org.il>. IGRA welcomes all who are interested in searching their roots.

LATVIA (Feigmanis)

Sources for Rabbinic Genealogy in Latvia and Lithuania.

In February 2012, I successfully defended my Ph.D. dissertation, “Rabbinical Literature in Latvia before 1940; Personalities and Directions,” at Latvia University’s faculty of theology. My aim was to clarify which streams of Judaism influenced Latvian rabbinical literature by:

- Providing information about the authors of rabbinical literature in Latvia—their biographical information, education, social and political position
- Defining the stream of Judaism to which they belonged
- Explaining specific trends in the development of rabbinical thought in different regions of Latvia in the context of the history of each region
- Illustrating changes in religious views and practices in different Jewish communities in Latvia in the 18th through 20th centuries, as well as the influence and reaction of religious authorities to such changes

My research demonstrated that no fewer than 71 authors of rabbinical literature who collectively published more than 120 works were born, occupied a rabbinical post, or lived in Latvian territory. Jewish religious life in Latvia benefitted from the great diversity of Jewish thought and scholarship—Lithuanian orthodoxy, the orthodoxy of Central and Western Europe, neo-orthodoxy from Germany, kabbalah, and musar, haskalah and Hasidism—all stemming from authors of rabbinical literature who lived and worked in Latvia.

The large diversity of traditions in Latvia is a specific feature of the country when compared with neighboring regions—Belarus, East Prussia and Lithuania—a diversity that reflects the specifics of Latvian geography. Jews migrated to various regions of Latvia from different countries during different historical periods. As a result, strong linguistic and cultural differences appeared between Jews of Latgale (eastern Latvia) and Kurzeme (Kurland, in western and southern Latvia). Even within Kurzeme Jewish communities, differences existed between the wealthy elite (formed mostly of immigrants from German lands and their descendants), and Yiddish-speaking immigrants from Lithuania.

Some resources I used for my research are resources for genealogical research as well. Most useful in identifying the authors of rabbinical literature in Latvia was the *History of Jews in Latvia*, by Rabbi Leib Ovtchinsky, published in



Aleksandrs Feigmanis, a professional genealogist and AVO-TAYNU Contributing Editor for Latvia, on February 17 defended his doctoral thesis at the Faculty of Theology of Latvian University. The theme of his thesis was “Rabbinical Literature in Latvia before 1940: Directions and Personalities.”

Yiddish in Riga in 1928.¹ The book has short descriptions of the history of Jewish communities in Kurzeme and Zemgale, as well as information about rabbis of these communities and their works. Unfortunately, the book does not include information about Jewish communities in Vidzeme and Latgale, though it does present some data about rabbis of Daugavpils, Krustpils, Ludza, Preiļi, Rēzeknes, Riga and some other towns in Latgale.

Ovtchinsky devotes most of his book to biographies of rabbis (including their ancestors and children and family connections); their literary works are just mentioned without any detailed description or analysis. Nevertheless, on the base of Ovtchinsky’s book I compiled an almost complete list of the literary works of the orthodox rabbis and Torah experts of Latvia. Armed with this list, I copied large portions of rabbinical books at the Israeli National Library in Jerusalem, as well as in the Latvian and Lithuanian national libraries.

Rabbi Leib Ovtchinsky (born 1871 in Vilna province, murdered in July 1941 in Jelgava) was author of another precious resource for rabbinic genealogy in the Russian Empire, a book entitled *Nahlat Avot*, a biographical rabbinical dictionary published in 1894 in Vilna. Once I undertook genealogical research for Dmitry Shorochin of Moscow, whose wife is a granddaughter of Nachman Yudel Margolis, rabbi in Jekabpils (Jacobstadt) and in Jelgava (Mitau) in the 1870s through the 1890s. Thanks to *Nachlat Avot*, I could trace the Margolis genealogy to the Maharal from Prague (Liva ben Betsalel, 1512–1609) and also discover which books had published the rabbinical responsa of Nachman Yudel Margolis.

Information about rabbis and Talmudists from Kurzeme can be found in the well-known book *Geschichte der Juden in der Provinzen Liv-und Kurland, seit ihrer fruehesten Niederlassung daselbst bis auf die gegenwaertige Zeit* (History of Jews in Livonia and Kurland from the start of their settlement till modern times) by rabbi and writer Reuven Joseph Wunderbar.² The book focuses on the history of Jewish communities in Kurland and especially their struggle for emancipation. Although biographical information about Torah experts is given, their works are merely mentioned without any analyses or detailed description of their content.

The book *Latvia, Synagogues and Rabbis, 1918–1940*, published by the Shamir Society in 2004 was another useful resource.³ In this collection of articles is precious and new biographical information about Latvian rabbis, although, again, their literary works are just mentioned.

An important source of information was Yehuda Mirsky's dissertation, dedicated to the Latvian and Lithuanian period (1865 to 1904) of Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook when he lived in Bauska, Daugavpils, Griva, Ludza, Preili and Žeimelis.⁴ Mirsky illustrates how the spiritual climate in Latvia and the thoughts of Latvian and Lithuanian rabbis influenced Kook. In Israel, Kook is known as an inspirational figure of religious Zionism, but Mirsky shows that his writings in Latvia centered on the spiritual and moral self-perfection of man and correct fulfillment of *halacha* (Jewish law).

Dr. Lara Lempertiene, chief of the Judaica department of the National library of Lithuania, recommended the following biographical dictionaries of Lithuania rabbis:

- *Shem A-Gdolim* (names of sages), by Moshe Mark-

ovitch, published in Kedainiai in 1932

- *Kiriya Neemana* (faithful city), by Samuel Joseph Finn, [Hebrew], Vilna, 1860

- *Ir Vilna* (city of Vilna) [Hebrew], Hillel Noach Magid-Steinschneider, Vilna, 1902

- *Dor Rabanow we-sofrow*, by Bentsion Eisenstadt, a collection of biographical articles about Russian rabbis and Jewish writers, published in the years 1895–1905

- *Rabane Minsk we-Chachameha* (Rabbis and sages of Minsk), by Bentsion Eisenstadt, (1899)

Sometimes rabbinical books themselves are the source of genealogical information. Just from the title page of a book, we learn an author's place of residence and name of his father. Introductions often include where the author studied, the names of his teachers and sometimes a short biography. At the end of a book might to be the *prenumeranten* (subscriber) list for a second volume of the work. The list of sponsors also may be included. For example, the introduction to *Tzilel Knafaim*, by Rabbi Itshak Hirschson of Sabile (Zabeln), published in Warsaw in 1900, expresses gratitude to important inhabitants of Kurland gubernia who sponsored the author. They are listed by name: Josef Berman, Maischel Freidenstein, Yehuda Hirschfeld, Jakov Isaakson, David Jakobson, Rabbi Rafael Mandelkorn and Josef Rabinovitch.

Of course, for much of my research I used traditional genealogical resources—vital statistic records and censuses. In the 1897 census of Daugavpils, we find information about the famous Rabbi Josef Rosin (Rogachover gaon, 1858–1936). He lived on Myasnitskaya Street 43 (currently Viestura Street), between Kr. Valdemara and Imantas Streets in apartment 2a with his wife, Perla (41 years old); daughter, Rachel (16 years old, born in Warsaw); relative of his wife Hana Ceilon (5 years old, born in Warsaw) and cook, Freide Arik (21 years old, born in Zarasai). Following the link, <http://tinyurl.com/74np8fo>, it is possible to see the graves of the Rogachover gaon and of another Jewish sage, Rabbi Meir-Simcha Katz (1843–1926), in the Daugavpils (Dvinsk) Jewish cemetery.

Generally speaking, rabbinical genealogy research is easier than that of most other Jews, both because of the existence of biographical rabbinical dictionaries and also because rabbis traditionally knew their *yichus* (lineage). By studying biographical dictionaries and rabbinical literature it is quite possible to trace the genealogy of a 19th-century rabbi back to some 16th-century sage of XVI century—maybe with a tradition of descent from King David.

Notes

1 Leib Ovtchinsky, *Di geschichte fun di idn in Letland (1561-1923)* (Riga: L.Remigolski, 1928), 192.

2, Reuven Wunderbar, *Geschichte der Juden in der Provinzen Liv- und Kurland, seit ihrer fruehesten Niederlassung daselbst bis auf die gegenwaertige Zeit* (Mitau: J.Hoffmann und A. Johansohn, 1853), 80.

3. Natans Barkans un Rita Bogdanova, comp. *Latvia: synagogues and rabbis, 1918–1940* (Riga: Shamir, 2004).

4. Yehuda Mirsky, *An intellectual and spiritual biography of rabbi Avraham Yitzhak Ha-Cohen Kook from 1865*

Ashkenazi and Sephardi Research in France, especially in Paris

- French Vital Records
 - French Naturalizations
 - Quai d'Orsay (Foreign Office) Archives
 - Jewish Consistory Archives
 - Shoah Records
 - Alliance Israélite Universelle Library and Archives
- and many other sources

*Personal genealogical research
for more than 25 years
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to 1904. Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of doctor of philosophy. (Harvard University: Faculty of arts and sciences, Committee on the study of religion. March 2007).

SOUTH AFRICA (Plen)

SA-SIG Newsletter, Vol. 12, issue 2, March 2012. *Shalom, the Beloved Country* is a five-part TV documentary on the work being done by Rabbi Moshe Silberhaft, South Africa's Country Communities Rabbi, available on YouTube at:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=f8eyQySqPpU,
www.youtube.com/watch?v=N50AflWdGYQ,
www.youtube.com/watch?v=C8p9clx-kxQ,
www.youtube.com/watch?v=E3LWZgszmw8, and
www.youtube.com/watch?v=iuE1TbC6NXM.

SIG president, Saul Issroff, notes that Rabbi Silberhaft's work recording, photographing and caring for rural cemeteries has been of inestimable value to genealogists. Most of his data soon will be available on the JewishGen Online Worldwide Burial Registry (JOWBR) database.

The Genealogical Society of South Africa (GSSA) makes a number of services and resources available free of charge to anyone, whether a society member or not, at www.eggsa.org. For a nominal fee, it will photograph documents from the Natal, Orange Free State and Transvaal repositories of the National Archives and provide electronic images. The Cape Town Archives repository has banned mechanical copying of its documents. Database resources include gravestone photographs, death notices and other archive documents, books of genealogical and historical

interest, marriage and burial registers, newspaper extracts, passenger lists and a list of Natal estate files.

Former Cape Town residents Abel and Glenda Levitt have worked for more than a decade to preserve the memory of the Jewish community of Plungyan, Lithuania. They describe their work and the recent dedication of a memorial in "A Wall of Memory in Lithuania." With much work, they have recovered the names of 1,200 victims (with 600 more still to be discovered). They also report on the memorial they helped create to the Jewish community of Kedainiai. The Plunge yizkor (memorial) book is on the web at www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/plunge/plunge.html. Also of interest is "Memories of Plunge" at www.kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/plunge/plunge.html and "Yankle Bunk of Plungyan (in Yiddish), www.youtube.com/watch?v=syiMAz YIP48.

Maurine Skikne writes of the South African contribution in World War II when many South Africans, including Jews, joined the British forces. Skikne details the history and lists some names of Jews involved in various branches. He cites the book *South African Jews in WWII*, published by the South Africa Jewish Board of Deputies, 1950.

Justin Bryne, a British historian, is beginning a project on South Africans in the Spanish Civil War. So far he has identified 20 individuals, about half of whom appear to be Jewish. He seeks more information on Leon Boyarski, Samuel Epstein, Vera Elkan, Jacob (Jack) Flior, Wilhelm Herriberg, Jacob Nuss Mandelson, Paul Schuster and a pilot identified only as "Jacobs." Bryne's address is Center for Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences, Instituto Juan March, Madrid, Spain.

Start friends or family the right way with

Getting Started in Jewish Genealogy

by Gary Mokotoff

This book will be a definite asset to friends/family who are interested in genealogy and those you would like to get interested in genealogy. Help someone get started.

It is a getting started guide meant to convince the reader that tracing one's Jewish ancestry can be done. The resources described are primarily those found on the Internet, a source which has revolutionized family history research. What used to take days or weeks now takes minutes or hours because of the wealth of resources on the Internet.

It describes in detail such sites as JewishGen, Morse One-Step site, FamilySearch, Ancestry.com and many others. It alerts the readers to what types of documents of their ancestors will aid in their research—such as birth, marriage, death, immigration, census and naturalization records.

Special focus is given to two problems often voiced by neophyte Jewish genealogists: (1) My name was changed at Ellis Island, and (2) I do not know the town my family came from.

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