



Fall 2017

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Meetings are held on Sunday afternoon
at B'nai Yehuda Beth Sholom (BYBS)
1424 W. 183rd St. Homewood, Illinois

Our Board meetings are at 1:00 open to all paid members
Our General meetings are at 2:00 members and guests welcome

September 10 (2nd Sunday) Following Old Picture Clues

Penny Shnay will tell us what clues to look for in dating an 'old' picture.
Do you have a family picture that you can not date? Was it taken in America or Europe?
Bring it with you and we will try to date the picture for you.

October 15 (3rd Sunday)

We will show the movie 'Little White Lie'
Little White Lie tells Lacey Schwartz's story of growing up in a typical upper-middle-class Jewish household in Woodstock, N.Y. with loving parents and a strong sense of her Jewish identity-- despite the questions from those around her about how a white girl could have such dark skin. She believes her family's explanations that her looks were inherited from her dark-skinned Sicilian grandfather. But when her parents abruptly split, her gut starts to tell her something different.

October 29 (5th Sunday)

The Curious Life of Grace Mailhouse Bernham McDonald.
Member Barry Finkel and genealogist for many years will tell us how he discovered Grace and traced her life.

November 12 (2nd Sunday) **meeting in the back chapel**

Sherry Dieckman, friend and former teacher, will talk about the book "*Love and Joy About Letters*", which was published in Switzerland in 1963 by Ben Shahn. He was born in 1898 in Lithuania to an Orthodox Jewish family, emigrated to New York, where he died in 1969. He was a practitioner of Social Realism and provided inspiration for artists as Leon Golub.

THANK YOU

Deby Eisenberg for the interesting talk about her book, *Protecting Paige*.

Barry Finkel for changing the July meeting date for us and learning about his research methods finding Grace.

Everyone who helped and attended our annual Deli Dinner.

Penny Shnay teaching us to date an 'old' picture of our ancestors.

Sherry Dieckman for introducing us to Ben Shahn

IJGS Tribute Cards

To purchase donation cards at \$1.50 each please email IJGS@comcast.net or call Trudy to arrange pick up at a prearranged time.

We also have beige color stationary - "Greetings from one leaf on our family tree to another"

Both calligraphy by Roslyn Greenberg, may she rest in peace.

IJGS BOARD MEMBERS

| | | |
|-----------------|--|----------------|
| President | Trudy Barch | (708) 932-4022 |
| Vice President | June Shifrin | (708) 754-7620 |
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Trudy's Topics

As the calendar year comes to an end, Illiana JGS will end its 33 years of existence in the southern suburbs. It is with sadness but a necessity. Because of the demographics of the community, we are not getting new and young members to continue the work that a few of us have been doing for the last number of years.

THIS WILL BE OUR LAST NEWSLETTER.

Our P. O. Box will be closed, so please do not mail anything new to us.

We are currently researching a good home for our extensive library.

To all IJGS members I say a sincere THANK YOU for supporting our society through the past and most recent years. We, as volunteers, have made it all possible.

I recently received an email that says: Cousins Are Awesome (at least my family is. Is yours?)

For those that have been following my de-cluttering, garage sales, and preparing for moving, the actual time has arrived. My husband and I will be moving to North Fort Myers, Florida in November.

In between all of this, I tripped (on a sidewalk) the end of July and fractured the left side of my right foot. This is putting a damper on my planned garage sale schedule. Hopefully in a few weeks, I will, again, be strong enough to stand and work setting up for the sale.

Let's keep in touch. When you have an extra moment, I would love to receive an email/letter/phone call from you.

Trudy

In this issue we will share tips that have been accumulated through the years by our society. They have come from many different sources. Thank you to everyone for sharing your genealogical tips. Hope some might remind you of something to do in your genealogical research or help you 'break' your brick wall.

GENERAL

- a) When writing the year on any record always use 4 digits.
- b) Don't use abbreviations. It might mean something else in a different state or country.
- c) Document and save the record correctly the first time so you do not have to research it again.
- d) Proofread as you are recording the information.
- e) New records are always being made available. Periodically re-check your sources.
- f) Do not force genealogy on the uninterested family member.

ORGANIZATION

- a) Whether organizing on the computer or using a file cabinet, organizational skills are a must.
- b) A research log on each ancestor/relative helps you keep track of what you have and what you are missing.
- c) A time Lines is a visual method of your ancestor's life. You can see what you are missing on that individual and possibly where to look for that missing information.

GENETIQUETTE (genealogy etiquette)

- a) Be respectful of the time given by others.
'Please' and 'thank you' means a lot to someone helping you.
- b) When something frustrates you, keep it to yourself. "Think before you speak."
- c) Sometimes it's better not to speak up at all. Note your conflicting genealogy, so that others will be able to make up their own minds.
- d) Do not publish discoveries about living persons.
- e) Respect privacy. Just because someone shared their data with you, it doesn't mean you have permission to forward or share that information with others.
- f) Do give back. Share your findings, and if you have benefited from the genealogy research of others, do a favor in return.

NAME

- a) Which is Your Ancestor?
Several people have the same name. Look for a clue to distinguish which is your ancestor. Make notes that there are others with the same name for your future use.
- b) If you can not find your ancestor, switch the order of their name. Surname then first name. Some countries use surname first and then given name.
- c) In Ashkenazic Judaism often newborns are named after at a deceased relative.
Among Sephardic Jews, it is not unusual to name a child after a living relative.
- d) The ship's manifest read in America had to match the names that were given when the passenger boarded the ship in Europe. The person writing the name on the manifest 'heard' the name through the filter of their own language, so in many cases the spelling of the name was not 'accurate' but as it 'sounded' to the ship's clerk.
- e) New immigrants often changed their names to an American version making it easier to pronounce and spell.

DOCUMENTS

- a) Don't forget original documents, microfilms, certificates, banns.
Original Documents are best. Abstracts may not include all the genealogical relevant information.
- b) There are records, other than vital records, which may be of assistance in tracing family, such as local utility bills and other town/city records that a local archive may have in its files.
- c) Census Records are a good source of genealogical information but not always accurate.
Remember census records originally were taken to count people. Handwritings are often hard to read and the translation to the computer could have errors. Check the date of the census

- d) Sometimes the census taker would use initials instead of the complete name. If you cannot find your relative, check a neighbor. Look for that neighbor in the prior census year. After you find the neighbor, look up, down, forward and backward a few pages for your ancestor.
- e) Who gave the information? Did they have the correct information? On ships, what was the age for the child's fare? On marriage certificates, sometimes the wife or husband lowered or raised their ages.
- f) Records are not always filed in chronological order. Sometimes they are filed by location.
- g) Use common sense. How old were brides in that time span? A female of 15 possibly had a child in the early 1900s. In the 2000s it would be more unusual.
- h) Do a range of 10 years when not sure of the year. This is good for birth, marriage, and death records.
- i) Don't forget to look in state, national, city, and county records.
- j) Check those witness names on all documents. Often the witnesses on the document were relatives.
- k) Names often had many spelling variations in a person's life time. Check all spelling variations on every document.
- l) Never alter an original document. Make a copy and add a note.
- m) Do preserve, protect and defend the right of future generations to have access to original materials.

FAMILY

- a) Ask family members to see their pictures. Check the back and corners of the picture. Is it dated? Does it have a name or place of person or photographer?
- b) Ask to see their bibles, genealogies, histories, cemetery books. They are all excellent sources of family names and dates.
- c) It's amazing how many memories and stories an old photograph can elicit. Ask your interviewee if they have any family photos or heirlooms to show you. For photos, ask when and where the photo was taken, the event, and who the people in the photograph are.

INTERVIEWS

- a) If you're relaxed, then it's more likely your interviewee will be relaxed as well.
- b) The best interview should be a conversation. Let the conversation flow naturally.
- c) Interview parents and other relatives now before it is too late. Otherwise those personal stories will never be heard again.
- d) Sometimes an older sibling will remember things that younger ones do not know. Sometimes a parent had more time to talk to a younger sibling telling the family lores.
- e) Older generation immigrants may not be willing to speak at first, wondering why you want to know their 'old country' experiences. However, when interviewing and asking nonthreatening questions, you will be able to learn about their lives in their homeland.
- f) People are generally much happier to share their stories when they feel that you are truly interested in what they have to say.
- g) Don't let periods of silence fluster you. The whole point of an interview is to allow your family member to tell their story. When they pause they may just be thinking or remembering; it can take time to call up memories of events they haven't thought of in years. Give your interviewee a little time to see if they have anything else to add before moving on.
- h) The best interview stories come from questions that ask when, why, how, where and what, instead of just requiring a 'yes' or 'no' response. Emotions are a big part of your family's story and something you won't learn from documents and records. Keep your questions brief and present them one at a time.
- i) For any event brought up during the interview, follow up with additional questions to find out what the person did, what they thought and felt about what they did. You should also try to establish where your interviewee was and what they were doing at the time of the event. This helps you to learn how much of what they are telling you is first-hand knowledge, and how much is based on the stories of others.
- j) Don't interrupt a good story. Jot down your follow up questions so you will remember to ask them later. Even if your subject gets off track a little, let them finish their story before steering them back on topic.

- k) Some of the best stories come from the personal questions - the ones that are slightly embarrassing, sensitive, or elicit laughter or tears. Keep these types of questions for after you've established a rapport with your interviewee.
- l) Don't challenge stories or accounts that you think might be inaccurate. Your interviewee may just have a different perspective. If you have heard another version of the story, you may want to tactfully mention this and give your relative the opportunity to respond.
- m) Its possible there is conflicting evidence you haven't examined.
- n) Seeking answers to "why" questions typically build context that lead to a richer and deeper knowledge of those whose forbearers we are seeking
- o) When a group of relatives get together and start reminiscing you will hear some of the best family stories. Ask a question or two to get the stories started and let it build from there.
- p) If possible and allowed, video all (planned or unplanned) interviews.
- q) The study of our ancestry often reveals personal and societal struggles

DEATHS

- a) Evidence of a death can often be the first link to a person's life, be it a death record, an obituary or cemetery listings.
- b) Can't find a female ancestor? Check under her husband's name.
- c) If you are having trouble finding death information for a male ancestor, check to see if their widow received a pension for their military service.
- d) Not all funeral homes will share the information they have on the deceased. But if they do, accept it graciously.
- e) When visiting a cemetery, leave your card with your name, address and telephone number in a baggie near the headstone where it won't blow away. The next visitor might find it and contact you.

BRICK WALLS

- a) Are you stuck in your research back through time identifying ancestors? Descendancy research utilizes much of the same methodology as ancestral research but can lead to a whole way of looking at your genealogy. Often it can lead to discovery of cousins who have missing pieces of the puzzle needed to complete your picture of common ancestors.
- b) Talk to other genealogists, whether in person or via the many internet ways. Maybe someone has found a source that you are unaware of that could possible shed light on your ancestor.
- c) If you are having trouble reading or understanding a document, ask someone else. They might be able to read or understand what you are missing.
- d) Put this problem away for now. Come back to it several months later. New data is being added daily to the internet.
- e) If you find another genealogist looking for the same family members as you. Share your research. Don't do duplicate work.

COPYRIGHT

- a) Documents in personal collections may not be copyrightable, even if they passed through the family.
- b) Just because something is on the Web doesn't mean it is in the public domain.
- c) Never reprint something as if it were original to you. Copyrighted works are not required to carry a copyright disclaimer.
- d) Give credit where credit is due. To cite a source, consult the author or publisher directly.
- e) If you haven't read the *Copyright Law of the United States*, don't claim to be an expert. It has changed over time.

TIDBITS TO SHARE

If you can't get rid of the family skeleton, you may as well make it dance.

Some family trees have beautiful leaves, and some have just a bunch of nuts. Remember, it is the nuts that make the tree worth shaking.

For all genealogists that visit cemeteries, their wish is that the stone be granite and not marble.

Happy Rosh Hashana to you and you family.
May you have an easy fast.

Happy Thanksgiving.

Happy Chanukah.

Healthy and happy New Year.

Happy and healthy all 2017 holidays.

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