



# JEWISH GENEALOGICAL AND ARCHIVAL SOCIETY OF GREATER PHILADELPHIA

May 31st, 2026

Dear Members,

Raquel presented a comprehensive analysis of the Montefiore censuses conducted in the Land of Israel between 1839 and 1875, which documented approximately 55,000 Jewish residents across multiple cities including Jerusalem, Safed, Tiberias, and Hebron. The censuses revealed that Jewish immigration to the region predated the commonly cited 1882 first aliyah, with significant Sephardic immigration occurring in the early to mid-19th century, followed by increasing Ashkenazi immigration in the latter half of the century. The analysis showed that while the Jewish population was extremely poor and young, with over 80% under 50 years old, they maintained a robust community structure organized around religious and educational institutions, with approximately 950 institutions managed by 3,500 individuals serving the total population. (Zoom AI generated summary)

I found the talk to be very interesting and learned some new information about Jewish migration history.

**Here is the recording:**



Duration: 01:00:15

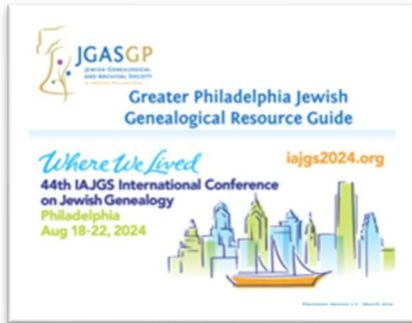
Shareable

link: [https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/share/I5HZJkW4QG7OqhArNpnuc2wY5sRjGp\\_Y3-4\\_ZqQ\\_2QzK1xYW0u5JxVnIG5VU12vM.5iKm7MuoU6guXmpv?pwd=DltZ1azpsUP9SI85ZQAAI-AAAAN8dz0WluYTEGPMMHVYzNr4pfDiYYT94FHy-cixp9NKIAF3qeR\\_FQ4Om9h8AMAKitqzAwMDAwNA](https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/share/I5HZJkW4QG7OqhArNpnuc2wY5sRjGp_Y3-4_ZqQ_2QzK1xYW0u5JxVnIG5VU12vM.5iKm7MuoU6guXmpv?pwd=DltZ1azpsUP9SI85ZQAAI-AAAAN8dz0WluYTEGPMMHVYzNr4pfDiYYT94FHy-cixp9NKIAF3qeR_FQ4Om9h8AMAKitqzAwMDAwNA)

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## Beginner’s Corner and Research Tips

Two fabulous resources are available on our website:



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## Book Club Update May-July



Hope to see many of you at our Book Club meeting. All are welcome any time! Our books are either written by an author with Jewish heritage or is one who writes about a Jewish theme. The link will be sent out to all on the morning of each meeting. See our website under Events for updated Book Club titles and descriptions. Meetings are the 4th Wednesday of the month unless there is a holiday. PLEASE RSVP to [membership@jgasgp.org](mailto:membership@jgasgp.org).

**Our Book club always starts at 7:30 PM.**

**If you’ll be joining us, please RSVP to [membership@jgasgp.org](mailto:membership@jgasgp.org).**

Our meetings are usually on a Wednesday night. I’ve adjusted the dates to be the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of the month except for April. We are meeting on a Thursday night instead. I’m going to pick books with Jewish content due to their popularity.

Thank you to everyone who joined me for our last discussion of On Her Own. We all enjoyed the book!

**2.The Little Liar by Albom, Mitch, July 1st, 2026 7:30PM \* **DATE CHANGE****

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**3.The Invisible Harry Gold: The Man Who Gave the Soviets the Atom Bomb by Alan Hornblum Date TBA**

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**4. A Place to Hide by Ronald Balson Date TBA**

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**5. This is Not about Us by Allegra Goodman  
(Xandra recommended) Date TBA**

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**6.. The Lost Family: How DNA Testing Is Upending Who We Are by Libby Copeland  
Date TBA**

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## Chronicles

*Dear JGASGP Members,*

*Spring hard copies will be mailed out next week. If you paid for a copy and don't receive it, please contact Jim: [Webmaster@jgasgp.org](mailto:Webmaster@jgasgp.org). New subscribers to Chronicles for 2026 will receive the SPRING edition as your first copy.*

**Debbie Terman, *Chronicles* Acting Deputy Editor, has recently updated the *Chronicles* Index covering every issue from Vol 1-1 in 1982 through Volume 43-1, Spring 2026.**

The index is accessible to members only - on our website under the Publication Tab > Chronicles - at the bottom of the page. It is sorted Chronologically and by Author, includes each article title and its starting page. There are also some keywords and notes included. The index is in Excel format, enabling users to sort and organize their research as necessary. Every back issue of Chronicles is also posted on our website under publications for members.

***Do you have a story to tell? Did your research teach you something new?***

***Did you uncover a family secret? Did you meet any new relatives through your research? Have you made any unusual finds in your attic? We'd love to hear from you!***

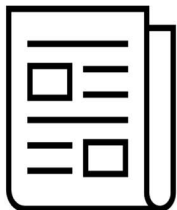
***Our editors will help you! Don't be shy!***

***Please send your draft articles to [editor@jgasgp.org](mailto:editor@jgasgp.org).***

***With our thanks,***

***Ed Flax, Acting Editor [editor@jgasgp.org](mailto:editor@jgasgp.org)***

***Debbie Terman, Acting Deputy Editor [dcterman@jgasgp.org](mailto:dcterman@jgasgp.org)***



## Everything Genealogy

**Our next meeting: June 1st at 7:30 PM. ZOOM only**

**Bring you questions, brick walls, and suggestions! You never know** <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84288984402?pwd=0oceDDMi6bk8dDpNQUZ29IbY8AnB9K.1>

The Zoom link will also be sent out at 8AM. \* **FRED will walk us through finding our ancestor's immigrant bank passenger records in JewishGen.**

## JGASGP Meeting Schedule and Updates



The Zoom link or Livestream link will be sent out on the morning of the meeting at 8 AM. There will be no chat and shmooze on Livestream; only when we use Zoom. Most of our programs will be recorded with the permission of the guest lecturer. Using Zoom, if anyone does not wish to be recorded, please do not participate in the live program Q and A.

All microphones and cameras will be turned off during the lectures. We will use closed captioning.

**See our website for more details about the speakers and the topics**

**Date: Sunday, June 28, 2026**

**Time: 1:00 PM for Check in, Schmoozing and Mentoring – in-person only)**

**1:30 PM official meeting start time**

**In-Person Location: Main Line Reform LIVE ONLY. The recording will be made for members and will only be sent out after the meeting occurs.**

**Speaker: Ellen Kowitt, Professional Genealogist, Writer, and Presenter**

**\*Make sure you plan to attend our meeting with Ellen Kowitt in June!**



## Endgame Genealogy

What do you do with all of your research, documents, trees, etc.

Where does it go?

Who gets it?

**Ellen** operates Sole Searching Genealogy & Historical Research. She is a frequent presenter at national conferences and has published articles in *NGS Magazine*, *Family Tree Magazine*, and *Avotaynu: The International Journal on Jewish Genealogy*. Topics include getting started in Jewish genealogy, methodology, Jewish institutional records, comparing Jewish resources on the genealogy giant websites, Russian Empire research, and Holocaust in Ukraine. Ellen has completed the ProGen study program and several genealogical institutes, she is a member of the Association of Professional Genealogists, and while accepting clients, she continues to volunteer as JewishGen USA Research Division Director and D.A.R. Jewish Specialty Researcher. Originally from New York and Washington DC, Ellen resides in Colorado with her husband and is mother to two college students. [www.EllenKowitt.com](http://www.EllenKowitt.com).

### Topic: Endgame Genealogy

Is it the journey or the destination? Many enjoy the process and camaraderie that comes along with the act of doing genealogy research. Others have goals to answer a specific question, find a living relative, build a family tree, or publish a book. What happens when you move onto other pursuits or suddenly depart midstream before completion? End of life planning typically does not include instructions for hard-earned and meaningful genealogy research. How would loved ones or fellow landsman find and navigate your online passwords, final version of a family tree, photos, acquired documents, translations, instructions on next steps, or manuscript in process? Let's explore big picture questions about setting expectations, create a planning checklist to ensure your intentions are honored, and start organizing today for tomorrow. This lecture will allow time for participants to share best practices.

## H A M E C



Holocaust Awareness Museum and Education Center  
Preserving History to Learn From the Past | Est. 1961

We offer personalized in-person or virtual tours for individuals, families, and classes during the week by appointment. These can last anywhere between thirty minutes to more than two hours. Please contact us beforehand to schedule a tour or you can perform a self-guided tour below. See the website.

<https://hamec.org/>

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## In the News



The In-Person Conference has been moved to 2028  
The 2026 Virtual Conference has been moved to April 4–6, 2027

## Membership

Thank you to everyone who has paid their dues!

**\*MAKE SURE YOU REGISTER ON OUR WEBSITE!**

It is NOT automatic because you are a JGASGP member. Jim needs to activate you individually. Don't delay. All members become inactive on Dec. 31st unless Jim has a current membership for you.

Only paid-up members have access to all areas of our website, JGASGP Newsletters, Chronicles, and meeting notices. Members have access to our members-only portal. Tell your friends!

Contact Marilyn [membership@jgasgp.org](mailto:membership@jgasgp.org) if you have any dues-related questions.

Contact Jim [webmaster@jgasgp.org](mailto:webmaster@jgasgp.org) with web access questions or receiving hard copy problems.

Contact Ed Flax [ejflax@gmail.com](mailto:ejflax@gmail.com) or Debbie Terman Acting Deputy Editor - [dcterman@jgasgp.org](mailto:dcterman@jgasgp.org) with Chronicles article questions.

*Our new fiscal year runs from January 1st - December 31st, 2026.*

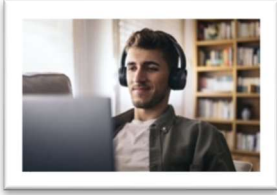
## Mentors

THANKS to [Alicia Weiss](#) and [Beth Steiner](#) who have joined our Mentor Team! They have been very helpful to those who have contacted them.

**If you need a mentor or would like to volunteer to be one, let me know!**



***We love our volunteers!***



**Do you have website skills?**

**We could use your help. Please contact**

**Jim: [webmaster@jgasgp.org](mailto:webmaster@jgasgp.org)**

**Programs from other societies and/or by our own members-  
there are so many.**

**\*Check out the calendar from L'DorV'Dor!**

**The L'Dor V'Dor Foundation (LDVDF) Announces Worldwide Jewish Event Calendar.**

The calendar, called JDays, was unveiled at the 44th IAJGS International Conference on Jewish Genealogy. Read more including FAQ's at: [JDays - L'Dor V'Dor Foundation \(LDVDF\)](#) This is a real "game changer" in the posting and discovering Jewish educational events 24/7/365 from around the world. A single place to post and a single place to view Jewish events!

You can have the programs sent to your calendar, so you don't miss anything. See instructions on their website!

**\*Live Chat\***

Did you know that [American Ancestors](#) has a free 'Live Chat' feature on their website, available Monday through Saturday 9am to 5pm ET? Just enter your question in the chat box during the times listed, and one of their expert genealogists will respond. You can access the feature directly [here](#), or find it on the home page of the [American Ancestors](#) website, scroll down just a bit to the "Stay in Touch" section, where "Ask a Genealogist - Live Chat!" is one of the options. Click on Chat Now and ask away.

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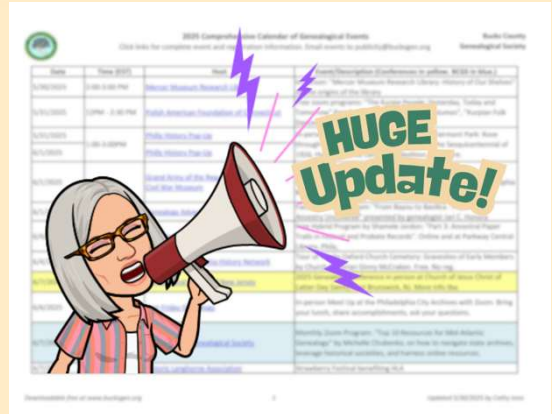
**\*See the calendar of genealogy events posted on the Bucks County Genealogy Society website.**

<https://www.bucksgen.org/index.php/bcgs-programs>

The calendar has again been updated - as we begin to add a few going forward to 2026! It includes community and heritage fairs as well as many new in-person, hybrid and virtual events!

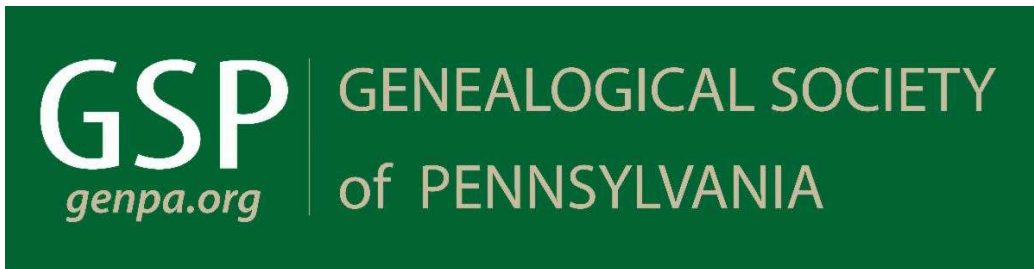
If you know of another that you would recommend, or are looking for a specific topic, please email: [publicity@bucksgen.org](mailto:publicity@bucksgen.org).

Here is the link: [Comprehensive Calendar of Events](#)



Did you know you could search for specific topics? Simply click control+F once opened. Be sure to scroll through to take advantage of early bird registrations and deadlines! At the bottom there is a list of other sites with even more courses, webinars and podcasts!

Sign up for Newsletters too: JewishGen.org Discussion Group - Daily Summary <https://groups.jewishgen.org/g/main> and Eastman's online genealogy newsletter [Eogn.com](http://Eogn.com).



Click the green box to see the available programs at GSP.

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PODCAST and INFORMATIVE NEWSLETTER. <https://www.amyjohnsoncrow.com/>

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<https://globaljgs.org/>

**Check out all of their terrific programs! \$5 for non-members of their society.**

## Global Jewish Genealogy Society



The Santa Cruz Jewish Genealogy Society has changed our name to Global Jewish Genealogy Society!

### UPCOMING LECTURES ON ZOOM



#### Finding your Family with Routes to Roots: Utilizing RTR Foundation Resources in your Research

Sunday, June 14, 1 pm Pacific

Speaker: Ellie Vance, Russian Genealogy Research Specialist

**Description:** From maps, to archival inventories, and to databases galore, Miriam Weiner's Routes to Roots Foundation website is a treasure trove of resources to help you find your Jewish ancestors! Come learn about how to use this important tool in your genealogical research.

Jewish genealogists seeking family documents from Eastern Europe are now able to search this single online source for listings of their ancestral towns. The database includes the combined archival holdings in Belarus, Lithuania, Moldova, Poland and Ukraine (as well as selected archive holdings from archives in Russia, Latvia, Romania, Israel and Washington, DC). Also included are documents from civil registration offices in Poland and civil registration offices in Ukraine, Belarus and

Moldova (ZAGS Offices); the Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw, Poland); *Pinkassim* collection of the V. Vernadskyi Library (Kiev, Ukraine); Regional Museum (Ostrog, Ukraine) and the private collection of Rabbi Moishe Leib Kolesnik (Ivano Frankivsk, Ukraine).

### About Ellie Vance Christensen

Ellie Vance Christensen graduated from Brigham Young University with degrees in Russian and Family History and Genealogy. While at BYU, she studied abroad in Russia and interned at the International Genealogical Center in Moscow, Russia. Upon graduation from BYU, she worked as the Slavic research specialist for the FamilySearch Library, where she enjoyed helping Library guests locate their ancestors in the Russian Empire. She later worked as a technical historical records expert at FamilySearch aiding in the development of AI handwriting recognition tools for Cyrillic languages. Ellie enjoys helping others trace their roots in the Russian Empire and especially enjoys teaching others to do it themselves. She currently spends her days as a stay-at-home mom doing occasional client and speaking work.

Non-Members pay \$5, Zoom link will be sent the week of the event. Members automatically receive a free Zoom link

Register

### Suggestion Box



Do you have any ideas for our society? We want to hear from you. Please send your ideas or thoughts to me. Subject: Suggestion Box! I appreciate the program offerings and Youtube videos I've been receiving!  
Below are a few suggestions I've received:

### Condolences

If you know of the passing of any member, please let me know so I can inform everyone.



**Disclaimer:** The purpose of our group is to help foster research and education, collect family records, and make family connections. No political comments or advertising for services or merchandise are permitted.

