

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE  
MASSACHUSETTS GENEALOGICAL COUNCIL

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**JEWISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY  
OF  
GREATER BOSTON**

[The following article was compiled from information supplied to the Editor by Warren Blatt of the JGSGB]

The Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Boston (JGSGB) is an organization which develops and promotes the growth, study, and exchange of ideas among people interested in Jewish genealogical research and family history.

The Society was formed in 1981 as a study group for people looking into their family history. We have evolved into an active group of over 100 members. We are affiliated with 43 such groups worldwide.

The local and national Jewish genealogical societies provide a wealth of information for both the novice and the experienced researcher. In the JGSGB we are fortunate to have members with a broad range of skills in various research techniques.

We conduct monthly workshops, meetings and seminars with speakers on a wide range of topics. We provide access to extensive research materials.

We encourage you to participate in the Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Boston. Please join us at our next meeting.

Our dues are currently \$15.00 per year, \$20.00 for a Family membership, \$35.00 for Contributing membership, or \$50.00 for Sustaining membership. Membership runs from January through December.

Benefits of Membership include:

- \* Interesting and informative monthly meetings and workshops, free admission to all members

- \* Monthly meeting notice, with updates of happenings of Jewish genealogical interest
- \* Exchange of information with others interested in Jewish genealogical research
- \* Advice and consultations by local experts who can help you in your search
- \* Access to the JGSGB's library of research materials
- \* Boston Jewish Family Finder -- a computerized cross-reference to all towns and family names being researched by our members
- \* Annual Beginner's Workshop
- \* Discounts and pre-publication notice of new Jewish genealogical publications
- \* Members receive the Federation of Genealogical Societies' quarterly publication, the F.G.S. Forum
- \* Notice of all National and International Conferences on Jewish Genealogy, and other events
- \* Discounts on our own publications

The JGSGB provides publications to help those interested in doing their own research, and can give advice to researchers; it does not engage in individual research projects.

Referrals to professional researchers and speakers can also be given.

Meetings.

Meetings are held monthly (except July and August) at a variety of locations throughout the greater Boston area. Usual locations are at Hebrew College in Brookline and the Jewish Community Center in Newton. Programs are also held at local research facilities.

The programs presented at the meetings vary, but many include "How To" workshops on genealogical research, Jewish history, and resources for research in the Boston area.

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Meeting topics have included:

- Research trip to Poland
- Translation Workshop
- Ethical Issues in Genealogy
- National Yiddish Book Center
- Cemetery Records
- Boston Public Library tour
- Computers in Genealogy
- Boston Jewish History

Our meetings are free to members, and open to the public for a small fee.

For more information, write or call:

Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Boston  
P.O. Box 366  
Newton Highlands, MA 02161-0004

(617) 277-5622 Sara Schafner  
(617) 924-4029 Phil Bloom  
(617) 449-9158 Nancy Arbeiter  
(508) 620-0659 Warren Blatt

Resources

- \* Jewish Genealogical Family Finder (JGFF) - a computerized cross-reference to over 9,000 ancestral surnames and 7,000 town names currently being researched
- \* Maps and Gazetteers of Eastern Europe
- \* All publications of the Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies
- \* Microfiche catalog of the Family History Library in Salt Lake City
- \* Directories of: Immigrant Ship arrivals, Synagogue histories, Memorial (Yizkor) Books, Holocaust survivors, Russian Consular records, and more
- \* The experience and expertise of the members of the JGSGB

Publication in preparation

Scheduled for publication in the summer of 1992 is, "Resources for Jewish Genealogy in the Boston Area" which will be a comprehensive research guide, based upon an extensive survey of facilities in the area and the accumulated expertise of the members of the JGSGB. It will be accomplished through the dedicated volunteer efforts of our members.

The guide will be modelled after the New York JGS' outstanding book "Genealogical Resources in the New York Metropolitan Area" (1989), though it is not nearly as ambitious in scope. Our guide will focus on resources applicable to Jewish genealogy, that is, records pertaining to Jews of all areas, as well as Massachusetts secular records after 1850. (Pre-1850 New England genealogy is already extensively covered in many other guides).

Outline: The publication will be in two major sections, plus appendices. The first section will cover major Record Types, such as Vital Records (Births, Marriages Deaths), Immigration Records, Naturalization Records, and Census Records. The second section, which is the bulk of the publication, will cover Record Location, the institutions where genealogical materials can be found. Appendices will include a bibliography, an inventory of Yizkor Books in local repositories, and a thorough index.

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## RHODE ISLAND VITAL RECORDS

[Notice from the Rhode Island Vital Records Division]

Commencing August 1st the division will be closed to walk-in requests on Tuesday and Thursday so that the office can concentrate on processing mailed requests for records. The office will be open Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. The division is in Room 101 in the Cannon Building, 3 Capitol Hill, Providence, RI

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Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. A New York State Council of Genealogical Organizations was formed on April 14, 1991 and will publish a quarterly newsletter containing council news, articles of interest to those researching in N.Y. state, book reviews, etc. according to a note received from Julie Steitz, Trustee. We will be exchanging newsletters with our NYS counterpart and reprinting any notices of interest.

## ROUNDTABLE

The Genealogical Roundtable meets on the 4th Monday of the month in Sept., Oct., Jan., Feb., Mar., Apr., and 3rd Monday in May at 1 o'clock in the Concord Library, Concord, MA. Their program features speakers on topics of interest to genealogists and they have occasional field trips. For further information call: Mrs. Donald M. Perkins at 508-369-7726 or Shirley Barnes at 508-358-7444

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## NEW YORK VITAL RECORDS

[Notice from the new York State Archives and Records Administration

### THE INDEXES TO OLDER NEW YORK STATE VITAL RECORDS ARE NOW AVAILABLE AT THE NEW YORK STATE ARCHIVES

The Department of Health has transferred a copy of its genealogical indexes to vital records to the New York State Archives where they are available for public use, Monday through Friday from 10:00 - 4:00. The indexes are to birth records on file for over 75 years, and marriage and death records on file for over 50 years.

The indexes contain the following information: name, place, date, certificate number. They cover the following time periods:

Index to births, 1881- 1916  
Index to marriages, 1881- 1941  
Index to deaths, 1881- 1941

There are no indexes for New York City vital records and none for Albany, Buffalo, and Yonkers prior to 1914.

### NEW YORK STATE DOES NOT HAVE VITAL RECORDS PRIOR TO 1881

New York State did not compile vital records until 1881. Sometimes information on pre-1881 births, deaths and marriages found in local government records offices, church or cemetery records.

## ON-SITE ACCESS TO THE INDEXES IS NOT RESTRICTED

The indexes are on microfiche. Access to the indexes is unrestricted. However, researchers are required to follow archival security procedures. The Department of Health will not allow transcription or copying of the indexes.

## THE ARCHIVES DOES NOT HAVE THE ORIGINAL VITAL RECORD CERTIFICATES. THEY REMAIN IN THE CUSTODY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Researchers requiring a copy of the actual certificate may place an order with the Department of Health or with the local registrar. A directory of local registrars is available at the Archives along with order forms from the Department of Health Vital Records Unit.

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## PLEASE WRITE!!!!

Please send news of your society/association to the Editor so that we can publicize what is happening in the genealogical community. We are your liaison with other societies & associations. We need your input. Please communicate. Tell us what you're doing, when and where you hold meetings, it doesn't have to be finely polished, cleverly composed or of world shaking significance - just the basic ingredients. We'll polish it up, correct spelling and grammar, after all that's why we're called "editors", that's our job.

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## QUOTABLE QUOTES

Middle age ends when you have more descendants than friends!

Some people make mountains out of molehills but genealogists make mighty oaks out of little acorns.

What's the cheapest way to have your roots searched? Run for public office!

What's the fastest way to locate long lost relatives? Win the lottery!

## ONTARIO VITAL RECORDS

[Notice from the Ministry of Culture and Communications]

### ONTARIO VITAL STATISTICS TRANSFERRED TO THE ARCHIVES OF ONTARIO:

On August 29th 1991, the Archives of Ontario received, from the Office of the Registrar General of Ontario, a transfer of Birth/Marriage/Death (BMD) Registrations, including their historical indexes. The records cover the following dates:

Birth: 1869-1895  
Marriages: 1869-1910  
Deaths: 1869-1920

Also transferred were certain related historical vital statistics records held by the Registrar General's office in Toronto, including, for example, direct clergy returns for BMDs and registration of deaths of Ontario residents overseas during and immediately following World War II. These special series for the most part do not have indexes.

There are significant gaps in the BMD Registration records, especially in those dated between 1869 and the late 1890s, which arose from failure to register vital events during this period. (See the journal *Families*, Nov. 1990, Vol. 29 no. 4, pp. 224-225, for details.)

Subsequent transfers of later registrations will occur annually according to formal records schedules. For the time being, Vital Statistics records dated later than the above dates are still in the custody of the Registrar General. If you seek information from these later records:

Births after 1895  
Marriages after 1910  
Death after 1920

please write to:

The Office of the Registrar General  
P.O Box 4600  
Thunder Bay, Ontario  
P7B 6L8  
Telephone #: 1 800 461-2156 in Ontario  
1 807 343-7420 outside Ontario

## HOW ARE THE RECORDS INDEXED?

The main Birth/Marriage/Death Registrations have been indexed first by year of event, then alphabetically by surname and first name within that year. Geographical location of event is given in the index. Each entry in the indexes gives a registration year and number which allow researchers to go to a registration book and locate a particular entry.

An inventory to these records, and more detailed instructions on how to use both the indexes and the main registration books, will be made available when microfilm copies of the records are placed in the Archives of Ontario reading room.

## WHEN WILL THE TRANSFERRED RECORDS BE MADE AVAILABLE?

Determining the effects of the Freedom of Information/Protection of Privacy Act (FOI/Privacy Act) on access to the Vital Statistics Birth and Marriage records has not yet been completed. The Archives has requested and is awaiting a legal decision to open them to all researchers. This process may take several months. We will announce the decision when we have received it. Death records of the dates transferred are not restricted under FOI/Privacy Act.

Any record declared open under the Freedom of Information Protection of Privacy Act will be made available to the public in three stages:

### STAGE 1: PARTIAL REFERENCE DURING MICROFILMING - 8 MONTHS TO A YEAR FROM DATE OF TRANSFER

The Archives of Ontario and the Genealogical Society of Utah are microfilming the records. During the filming, information may be obtained from open records by written request. See the following pages for details on how to submit requests for searches during the microfilming period.

### STAGE II: AFTER COMPLETION OF THE FIRST SET OF MICROFILM

Microfilm for all open records will be available to researchers on self-service in the Reading Room of the Archives of Ontario.

### STAGE III: FILM AVAILABLE FOR SALE OR LOAN

Two sets of the film will be added to the Archives' inter-institutional loan service. This film will be available for loan nationally and internationally. The film will also be available for purchase. Information on prices, set sizes and ordering procedure will be available only after microfilming is complete. We estimate that a full set of film will total approximately 500 to 600 reels depending on reduction.

### HOW CAN YOU OBTAIN INFORMATION DURING THE MICROFILMING PERIOD

The Archives of Ontario will provide a limited search service during the microfilming period. Due to the uncertainty of access rules on Birth and Marriage records under the FOI/Privacy Act, we cannot anticipate when this service will begin. When it does, the service will be limited to the following types of requests:

- 1) requests from persons requiring certified transcripts for legal purposes or to meet other mandatory requirements for documentation. There is no limit to the number of searches that can be requested in this category. Such requests must be accompanied by a letter of support from a solicitor or a person with similar authority stating clearly the mandatory requirement for the request.
- 2) requests from Ontario residents: wanting information for research purposes, AND who can provide a full name, date and place of event, AND to a limit of 4 searches per person for this transition period (ONE EVENT (B or M or D) = ONE YEAR = ONE SEARCH).

The Archives will begin to receive and process applications for searches from the above categories as soon as the process in determining which records are open under the FOI/Privacy Act has been completed. PLEASE DO NOT SEND US REQUESTS FOR SEARCHES UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.

ALL REQUESTS WILL BE SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING:

Requests must be submitted on a "Vital Statistics Search Application form. These will be made available as soon as the access question is settled.

For regular research requests, the year provided will be searched. We cannot undertake to search approximate dates OR more than one year per search.

For legal or mandatory requests, the year provided, as well as 2 years on either side of that year, will be searched. This follows the practice established by the Registrar General.

Whenever possible, researchers will be given a transcript of all information contained in the original record. Official "Certificates" cannot be issued. This remain the responsibility of the Registrar General.

For legal or mandatory request, transcripts will be certified as true copies under the Archives of Ontario Act.

Only the main Birth/Marriage/Death Registrations, to which there are indexes, will be searched. Other series will be made available on microfilm for research use, subject to any FOI/Privacy conditions.

There may be delays in responses of up to 2 months for requests that require a search of records that are being prepared or are under the camera for microfilming.

**THERE WILL BE NO CHARGE FOR THIS SERVICE. PLEASE DO NOT SEND MONEY OR SELF ADDRESSED ENVELOPES.**

During this microfilming period, searches are limited to legal/mandatory requests and research requests from Ontario residents. Any changes to this search policy will be announced in an update of this bulletin. In the future, the film will be available in the Archives of Ontario Reading Room and on loan for those who do not qualify for a search.

## WHAT ACCESS AND COPYING RIGHTS WILL RESEARCHERS HAVE?

At no time will researchers have access to the original registration records. We estimate that the records would not last more than a few years if used by the public.

When the microfilm is available (Stage II and III), researchers will be able to make copies from the microfilm for their use from all open records.

## DO YOU NEED MORE INFORMATION?

For more information on this subject, please write to:

Public Service Section  
Attn. Vital Statistics Reference Archivist  
Archives of Ontario  
77 Grenville Street  
TORONTO, Ontario  
M7A 2R9.

Or call our Vital Statistics HOTLINE at (416) 327-1593 for our recorded updates, 24 hours a day.

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## NATIONAL ARCHIVES

The Microfilm Reading Room of the National Archives - New England Region has been temporarily relocated to Building 135, Waltham Federal Center, 424 Trapelo Road, Waltham, MA. The new location is only a short distance from the current location at 380 Trapelo Road and is adjacent to and immediately behind that facility. Researchers desiring to use microfilm of the census records, passenger lists, and Revolutionary War military service records and pension applications, as well as any other of the more than 60,000 rolls of microfilm in the Archives should go to the new location. Individuals who want to use original records, including the naturalization records should continue to go to the old location on Trapelo Road.

The relocation is necessary to accommodate the construction of the new wing to the 380 Trapelo Road facility. Both locations will continue to be open to the public Monday through Friday, 8:00

A.M. to 4:30 P.M. (Federal holidays excepted). Only the Microfilm Reading Room will be open on the first Saturday of each month. This means that only microfilm will be available for use on that day.

We are sorry for this temporary inconvenience. We expect that the construction of the new wing will be completed by late Spring of 1992 at which time the Microfilm Reading Room will return to 380 Trapelo Road. If you have any questions, please call us on 617-647-8100.

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## PROOF

[Editor's notes on a lecture delivered by William H. Schoeffler, LLB, staff member of the New England Historic Genealogical Society, Boston, MA, on October 19, 1991 at the 16th annual meeting of MSOG.]

**PROOF:** Proof is the persuasion of an argument built on the evidence. Proof in Criminal cases requires that it must be "beyond a reasonable doubt", [99 44/100 % sure.] Whereas Proof in Civil cases requires only that it be a "preponderance of the evidence", that it is "more likely than not". [51 % sure.] Proof in genealogical cases requires that it be a "greater preponderance" based on all the evidence, where every item of evidence must be presented and explained" [80 - 85 % sure.]

The Genealogist must look at the evidence from the view points of both the prosecution (plaintiff) and the defense (defendant).

**EVIDENCE:** Reliability of the evidence.

Questions to ask:

- 1) Was the information taken at a contemporary time?
- 2) Did the provider of the information have good knowledge?
- 3) Did the provider have any reason to give other than true and accurate in-

formation? [example: What you tell the tax assessor is the value of your property and what you tell an insurance adjuster is the value to be compensated for a loss].

- 4) Should a sworn statement be accepted without questioning? [rule of thumb: "The higher the stack of Bibles the more likely the witness is lying!"]

The "weight of the evidence" is its "believability" and not the number of times it has been repeated or cited.

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Please note on the mailing label on the back-page the **expiration date** of your membership. Our subscription "year" runs from August 1st to July 31st so if your label shows a 1991 date it means you are in arrears.

Please take a minute to fill in the accompanying membership form and return it with your check to the treasurer.

If you are receiving this on behalf of an organization please see that it gets to the attention of the officer responsible for renewing and making out checks. Thank you.

MGC

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### MGC NEWSLETTER REPRINTS FOR SALE

**Mass. Divorce Records: Where to Find Them**, by Roger Joslyn, 50¢

**New England Naturalization Records Index**, by Roger Joslyn, 50¢

**Records of Massachusetts Congregational Churches**, by Mary Morgan, 50¢

**Civil Records: Massachusetts Updated 1988**, by Melinde Lutz Sanborn, 50¢

**Genealogical Research at the Boston Public Library**, by William Schoeffler, \$1

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**17th and 18th Century Massachusetts Court Records of the Supreme Judicial Court**, by Ann S. Lainhart, \$1

Order from:

Alicia C. Williams, MGC Reprints  
18 Martin's Cove Road  
Hingham, MA 02043

Please make check payable to Massachusetts Genealogical Council and enclose a business size SASE (self-addressed stamped envelope).

**HAPPY HOLIDAY**

**GREETINGS**

**TO**

**ONE AND ALL**

**MASSACHUSETTS GENEALOGICAL COUNCIL**  
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