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Spring 2011

## T458: Old INS Correspondence & Case Files at the National Archives

James Gross, *Drexel University*



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# CHRONICLES

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## JGSGP NEWS

**W**ith great enthusiasm, we pick up the task of communicating our love for genealogy while striving to share our knowledge, successes and genealogical challenges with each other.

On behalf of JGSGP, we want to extend a huge “thank you” to Mark Halpern, who single-handedly published and distributed *Chronicles* to our membership for many years. Today, that job is simply too much for any single individual, so your new editorial board, consisting of Evan Fishman, Ed Flax, Cindy Meyer, Selma Neubauer and Kaye Paletz, has agreed to work together on all aspects of *Chronicles*. Our efforts will include soliciting articles from members, searching for items we can reprint from other genealogical and general publications, graphics and design, editing, electronic and traditional mail distribution.

Many of us are computer literate and actively online, and consequently we are moving in the direction of distributing *Chronicles* as an electronic file, that will reach each of us more rapidly, appear in full color with online links to additional information and resources, and allow complete flexibility when it comes to the page-count and organization of our journal. Those who aren’t quite as computer savvy yet can still look forward to a print edition. We look forward to a continuing conversation with you, as we refine our concepts and consider your ideas and suggestions and to increased connections with our friends in the genealogical community.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our love of genealogy with each of you. ♦

*Your Chronicles Editorial Board*

## PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

**W**elcome to the return of *Chronicles*, with our new look and a new editorial board. Unfortunately we have been unable to publish *Chronicles* for some time, but we are now up and running. Our thanks to Mark Halpern, who for many years was our editor and did an outstanding job. He has given us a wealth of information that we will be publishing along with many new articles.

Our society has been very active. We hosted the IAJGS Conference in 2009 with over 1000 attendees from around the world. We received rave reviews for the programming and our volunteers. We continue to have monthly meetings with a variety of informative speakers at various locations; Keneseth Israel, Rodeph Shalom, Mikveh Israel and the Gershman Y.

Our new Strategic Planning Committee, chaired by Steve Schechter has great plans for us and has motivated many of us to get more involved. Steve has also created a Beginners Workshop curriculum that he has been teaching in New Jersey and other locations. Jim Meyer has volunteered to take on the improvement of our website. These are key projects to improve our member communication and outreach to the community.

Another exciting development is a project by Boy Scout, Ian Montgomery. For his Eagle Scout project Ian took on the enormous task of cleaning, photographing and indexing the graves at the now-closed Mt. Carmel Cemetery. Ian has given us his data which we are placing on the JewishGen JOWBAR site.

Again, I would like to give special thanks to Mark Halpern, Steve Schechter, David Mink, Evan Fishman, Ed Flax, Jim and Cindy Meyer and Stan and Shelda Sandler for their service to our society. More information to come in future issues of *Chronicles*. Looking forward to seeing you at our meetings.

*Fred Blum - President*

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## LOOKING FOR ISAAC WAGMAN

a/k/a JSK UGMAN

(my maternal grandfather)

by Selma Neubauer

It all began with Isaac's Certificate of Naturalization, saved by my mother, which led to his Declaration of Intent and Petition for Naturalization at the National Archives Mid-Atlantic Region in Philadelphia, PA. His Declaration gave all the necessary information, including the facts that Isaac left from the port of Antwerp, Belgium on May 6, 1902, on the ship "Philadelphia", and came to the port of Philadelphia on May 20, 1902. But, the ship "Philadelphia" did not leave from the port of Antwerp, nor did it come to the port of Philadelphia; it went to New York. The soundex of the name Wagman (and many spelling variations) did not lead to Isaac arriving at the ports of Philadelphia, New York, Baltimore, etc.

As the years went on, I began to use the HIAS and Ethnic Bank records at the Philadelphia Jewish Archives Center. I learned that on April 9, 1904, Itzek Wugman purchased a ticket for his son Josel at the Rosenbaum Bank. On June 29, 1904, Itzuk Wugman purchased another ticket for his son, Josel, at the Blitzstein Bank.



Isaac Wagman - Atlantic City, NJ

On his Declaration, Isaac said that he arrived on May 20, 1902. From the Bank records, I knew that he was in Philadelphia in April 1904. Another record at PJAC is called "Record of the Association of Jewish Passengers Arriving at the Port of Philadelphia". The records are handwritten, and are recorded by month, date, year, ship, names of Jewish passengers, sex, age, place of nativity, vocation, ticketed for (usually city, state). For nearly a year, three times a week, for ½ hour each time, I went through the films starting in 1901.

On May 20, 1903, there he was, ISAAC UGMAN, age 32, on board the "Switzerland", from Russia, no vocation,

After World War II, my mother asked the HIAS organization in NYC to determine whether her brother, Baruch Yitzhak Thau, and his wife, Esther Kunig Thau, survived the Holocaust. After HIAS made a search, they reported that no trace of the Tai Family was to be found and that they probably were killed by the Nazis. Before WW II, they were living in Kolomyja, Poland. We were told by HIAS that they had many reports indicating that Kolomyja suffered greatly during the Holocaust.

Now that the ITS Records were becoming available to the USHMM, I submitted a request on May 20, 2008 [1] to get information on the fate of Baruch Yitzhak Thau. I received a response on September 17, 2008 indicating that no index card in the ITS files was located but that several other records concerning Baruch Yitzhak Thau were found. This case was then transferred to a senior research staff member at the USHMM for further review.

I was very fortunate to have the USHMM available in the Resource Room at the Conference. To my surprise and good fortune, the senior research staff member (Ms. Megan Lewis) who had worked on this case was present. With her computer resources, she was able to check her file and said that a very long e-mail was sent to me but it may have not been possible to be received by my computer. On her return to Washington, DC, she transferred the documents that she found [2] to a CD and mailed the CD to me. I opened the file and found documents covering the years 1932-1939 [3]. These documents indicated that Baruch Yitzhak Thau was a member of the Jewish community in Kolomyja, Poland and that he was paying his yearly dues as shown on the lists in the documents. We now know that he was alive in Kolomyja, Poland at least until 1939 when all correspondence with him was abruptly terminated. We can only surmise that he and his wife were killed in the Shoah.

I was also very fortunate to meet Rabbi Shalom Bronstein at the Conference and hear his talks [4]. It was at his urging that I submitted Pages of Testimony to Yad Vashem's Holocaust-Shoah Victims Data Base for Baruch Yitzhak Thau and his wife, Esther Kunig Thau.❖

1. USHMM Case #6973.

2. According to the USHMM, the original documents are located in the Ivano-Frankovsk Archive in the Ukraine. The Archive only sent copies to the USHMM.

3. Documents were listed in Fond: 320, Opis: 1 and Delo: 2, 4, 10, 12, 14, and 15, for documents titled: "Gminy Wyznaniowej Zyd, na rok

1932, 1933, 1936, 1937, 1938 and 1939" "Lista platnikow sladki-Kolomyja.,Stanislawow.

4. Rabbi Shalom Bronstein's talks were entitled: "Galicia Doctors' Project (at Yad Vashem)" and "Yad Vashem-A Potential Genealogical Resource"-29th IAJGS Conference in Philadelphia, PA, August 2-7, 2009.

Stanley R. Sandler is an active member of JGSGP

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## Sharei Israel Synagogue 4th & Porter Streets, Philadelphia, PA

by *Harry D. Boonin*

One of the most popular synagogues in South Philadelphia, Sharei Israel, 4th & Porter Streets, Philadelphia, closed thirty years ago.

When synagogues closed, they made different decisions as to what to do with their yearzeit boards. A yearzeit board from Sharei Israel was transferred at some point to Congregation Keshet Israel, 412 Lombard Street, Philadelphia, and it hangs there today. The lights are still lit to commemorate the death of those whose name appears on this board.

The board itself is dated 1962 although individual deaths are noted on the board that predate that date. Most of the dates of death are after World War II, many being in the 1940s. There are a few older plaques. There are 100 individual plaques on this board. I have abstracted all the names and if you will send me an email, I will see if a name you are looking for is there. The information on each plaque includes the name of the person who died and the date of death.

Sharei Israel began in 1913 and was incorporated in 1916. It closed in 1978. When it closed it transferred its other assets to Emes V'Zedek in Beit Shean, Israel. Their new name is Shari Israel-Emes V'Zedek.❖

*Harry D. Boonin is the founding president of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Philadelphia and well-known genealogical researcher and writer. Contact him at: harryboonin@gmail.com*

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## T458: Old INS Correspondence & Case Files at the National Archives

by *James Gross*

For the determined and methodical researcher, doing research on NARA microfilm, Series T458, RG 85, entry 6, may prove to be time well spent. This mi-



crofilm series (T458) is an obscure source relating to immigration. This 31 roll series, entitled, "Subject Index to Correspondence and Case Files of the Immigration and Naturalization Service," consists of old INS microfilmed index cards which contain file numbers used by NARA staff to identify and pull the textual files. Be aware that not all files can be located. Some files have been disposed of, lost, misfiled or transferred. According to Reference Archivist Suzanne Harris, the index to the series is referred to as RG85, entry 6, while the actual records reside in several series and are identified as entry 7, entry 9, entry 26, and so forth.[1]

According to the T458 Finding Aid (INS Reference Guide), the textual collection, housed at the National Archives (Archives I) in Washington, DC, consists of old INS immigration correspondence as well as case files dating from approximately 1906-1957, though a few cards date back to 1903. [2] Per the T458 Finding Aid, the majority of T458 references are to INS subject correspondence in the "56,000 Series". The 2 files which I researched were from the "56,000 Series" aka "Subject & Correspondence Files". Archivist Suzanne Harris advised me that the T458 material may *also* include references to Bureau of Naturalization correspondence, Chinese correspondence, visa files, and alien registration records, as well as naturalization files which are in the custody of the US Citizenship & Immigration Services (USCIS). [3]

The researcher should be aware that this roll series, given to NARA by the INS, is arranged by a somewhat challenging subject list and not by surname. There is no complete listing of subject headings. A basic roll list, indexed by subject, is at the end of the T458 finding aid as well as on the LDS Family History Library website. [4]

I developed an interest in this roll series based upon 2 genealogical articles. The first article appeared in "Avotaynu". [5] It was co-written by Marian Smith and Valery Bazarov. Marian Smith is the Senior Historian at the History Office of USCIS. The authors listed, as one of their source references, NARA series T458, RG 85, entry 9. The second article entitled,

"Hebrew Immigrant Cases, 1906-1914", appeared in "Chronicles".[6] It listed as reference, T458 ,RG 85, entry 9.

The *Chronicles* article referred to a website [7] with a database listing of Hebrew immigrants for the period 1903-1924 who had cases brought before the immigration board. With Ms. Harris help, I obtained a small file on a possible relative. Though I managed to find one relevant file, I was able to determine that not all files exist.

I limited my search to a few key items. I looked for "Jews" on roll 18, and found an entry which read "See Hebrews". On roll 16 there are a number of entries under the heading of "Hebrews". On roll 15 there is an entry for "German-Jewish Childrens Aid, Inc." This was a WWII era, US based, nonprofit refugee organization. [See images below]. These entries turned out to consist of 2 large folders. Suzanne Harris had both folders pulled for me. I went through the folders in Archives I, Central Reading Room. On roll 21 are listed many civic as well as social organizations, under "Organizations."

With regard to accessing these 31 rolls, the researcher is in luck, even if they do not happen to live near a regional National Archives facility. [9] There are a number of libraries who own this film series. [10] and, the LDS (Mormon

Church) family history library micro-filmed a copy of this roll series. [11] You can therefore access the microfilmed index at any LDS family history center in the world.[12] ♦

James Gross previously worked for the National Archives in College Park, MD. He can be reached at: [larklane@juno.com](mailto:larklane@juno.com)

Hebrews	12-6-34k
55,875-652	German-Jewish Children Aid, Inc., re adm of 250 children refugees from Germany u/b of \$25,000
55,850-796	High Commission for Refugees (Jewish & other) coming from Germany)
53,173-4	El Paso transmits letter from Rabbi Joseph M. Roth requesting permission for the parole of certain Jewish children in Juarez, Mex., to obtain religious instruction in El Paso
55,883-751	Hechalutz Organization of America, by Shmuel Zahler, Secy., relative to procedure necessary for the Canadian members of this
Hebrews	10-21-39 d
55,953-319	HOW: THOMAS F. FORD; M.C., in half-a-La constituent who req something be done about rumored illegal entry of thousands of Hebrews from Europe a/c the relaxation of immg. restrictions
56,026-23	GERMAN-JEWISH CHILDREN'S AID INC., -to facilitate entry of German-Jewish children to US. This file contains lists of names of the children admitted to US.
55,882-926	ADOLPH SCHWARZ, Phoenix, object to classification of Hebrews in our statistical reports who their actual religion is not shown.

1. Conversation with Suzanne Harris, NARA, Washington, DC.

July & Aug 2005.

2. "Reference Guide to T458, Subject Index to Correspondence and Case Files of the Immigration & Naturalization Service," content & cover letter written by Marian Smith, US Dept of Justice, US Citizenship & Immigration Services, Dec 8, 1999.

3. Finding Aid (INS Guide) is available at NARA. Contact Suzanne Harris, National Archives, Washington, DC (202-501-5395,x330)

4. T458 Roll list found at: [http://www.familysearch.org/Eng/Library/fhlcatalog/supermainframeset.asp?display=titlesearch&columnns=\\*,0,0 under title search "subject, case files."](http://www.familysearch.org/Eng/Library/fhlcatalog/supermainframeset.asp?display=titlesearch&columnns=*,0,0 under title search )

5. "Children Under 16 Unaccompanied by a Parent: The Family

- Zuser," *Avotaynu*, Vol XX, No. 2, Summer 2004, Pg 43-46.  
6. "Hebrew Immigrant Cases, 1906-1914," *Chronicles*, JGSGP 2005, pg 3  
7. <http://members.aol.com/ImmigrantCases/>  
8. Conversation with Marion Smith, US Dept of Justice, US Citizenship & Immigration Services, History Office, July 2005.  
9. Regional National Archives with this holding include: New York, Chicago, IL, Seattle, WA, San Francisco, CA, and Washington, DC.  
10. University of Chicago, IL; University of California/San Diego, CA; University of Texas, Macalester College, St Paul, MN.  
11. Rolls 1527605 thru 152763  
12. LDS Family History center list is located at: [www.genhome-page.com/FHC/fhc.html](http://www.genhome-page.com/FHC/fhc.html)

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## JGSGP Founding President Harry D. Boonin Receives Award

by Mark Halpern

At the 2009 IAJGS International Conference on Jewish Genealogy Awards Banquet, our founding President, Harry Boonin was the recipient of two honors -- both well deserved.



The International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies bestowed their 2009 award for Outstanding Contribution to Jewish Genealogy via the Internet, Print, or Electronic Product. The award was for authoring two books pertaining to the history of the Philadelphia Jewish Community.

*The Jewish Quarter of Philadelphia: A History and Guide 1881-1930* grew out of the walking tours that Harry conducted around the South Street area. That area was filled with synagogues, sweatshops, bathhouses and Jewish institutions which Harry describes in the book. It was awarded the Ben Franklin Award of Excellence for Educational Books/Directories in 2000. *The Jewish Quarter of Philadelphia* is available through the *Avotaynu* catalogue.

*The Life and Times of Congregation Keshet Israel* is the story of the synagogue at 4th and Lombard Streets in Philadelphia, from its beginnings in 1897 to its recent history. It can be purchased using the order form at [http://www.jewishgen.org/jgsp/Boonin\\_Book.doc](http://www.jewishgen.org/jgsp/Boonin_Book.doc).

JGSGP also honored Harry with a special award for "lifetime" dedication to the Society and its objectives. In presenting the award, David Mink, Conference Co-Chair, cited

Harry for his foresight as a founding member and President of the Society, for his wisdom in recreating the story of our ancestors early years in America and Philadelphia, and for his enthusiasm which is an inspiration to all of us. David presented to Harry an original oil painting of the interior of the "The Little Shul" by Philadelphia artist Ed Bronstein.

"The Little Shul" - Congregation Shivei Yeshuron Ezras Israel - is located at 2015 S. 4th Street, Philadelphia, PA. It is a small synagogue in South Philly, which was founded in 1876. The congregation moved into its current building in 1909, and has continued to hold services on a regular basis. This Orthodox Shul is the last remains of a large Jewish population that Harry writes about in his books. Harry has prayed here and is a supporter of its restoration on its 100th anniversary.

Well known Philadelphia landscape artist, Ed Bronstein (see his website: <http://www.edbronstein.com>), donated his painting as a fundraiser for The Little Shul. JGSGP purchased this painting to support the restoration of the Shul, a cause Harry cares deeply about. ❖



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## An Unexpected Surprise at Philly2009

by Shelda Carol Bachin Sandler

Philly2009, the 29th IAJGS Conference which was held in Philadelphia, was the first such conference I have ever attended. As Co-Chair of the Hospitality Desk, the conference and everything about it was a memorable experience which I will always cherish. I met so many interesting people and enjoyed being at the Hospitality Desk so much that I missed most of the sessions I had planned to attend!

There was, however, one film in particular that I wanted very much to see. I did not know anything about the film. The only "draw" it had for me was its name: "No. 4 Street of Our Lady." I had no idea what it was about except that the title sounded fascinating. Now I know that it was *besht* that I attended that showing.

My story begins back in November 2008 while I was reading the November/December 2008 issue of *The Penn Stater*, a