JEWISH GENEALOGY SOCIETY OF MARYLAND

Meeting of April 26, 2015

1:30 – 3:00 pm

Pikesville Branch, Baltimore County Library

MINUTES

President Lara Diamond opened the meeting at 1:30 pm. She mentioned that cards with information about the IAJGS conference in Jerusalem and brochures from the Gesher Galicia group were available on the sign-in table. She also reminded the group that, this Spring, Dick Goldman was offering a series of genealogy courses in the area.

Sue Steeble said that our newsletter, *L’dor V’dor*,continues to be published quarterly and invited members to submit articles for the next issue and also welcomed the submission of family photos (with short descriptions) that might be of interest to the readers.

Robin Thomas reported no changes in membership since the last meeting. Lara then asked first-time attendees to introduce themselves, and about six persons did so.

At 1:45 p.m., Lara introduced the guest speaker, Ava Cohn, aka Sherlock Cohn, The Photo Genealogist. According to her web site, Ms. Cohn “is an  internationally-known professional genealogist who specializes in the dating, identification, and interpretation of  family photographs and portraits.  Working with professional genealogists as well as those interested in learning more about their family history, she uses a multidisciplinary approach that combines knowledge of immigrant and European cultures and traditions along with research-based fashion, family histories and vital records to tell the background stories within our heirloom photographs.”

Ava has a degree from Brandeis University, with studies in decorative arts, art history, and costume history at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, England.   Of her article in the Fall 2010 issue of Avotaynu, The International Journal of Jewish Genealogy, publisher Gary Mokotoff wrote, “ I had always been cool to the idea that this aspect of family history research had much significance, but after reading the article, I became a convert.” Editor Sallyann Amdur-Sack Pikus, called it “a stunning tour-de-force.”

Ava maintains an extensive library of primary and secondary-source fashion, furniture, military uniform and history references. Her personal family history locales include Belarus, Ukraine, Russia, Romania and the Austrian Empire.

You can reach Sherlock Cohn, The Photo Genealogist, at [Sherlock.cohn@comcast.net](mailto:sherlock.cohn@comcast.net)

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| ***C:\Users\Owner\Documents\JGSMD Jewish Genealogy Society of Maryland\L'dor V'dor issues 2014-2015 orig and edited mss and figs\Summer 2015 orig or old versions and figs\AvaCohn photo 1 (Apr).jpg*** | Ava’s presentation was titled, “Clued-In—Case Studies from Sherlock Cohn, the Photo Genealogist.” In the first part of the program, Ava discussed methodology and presented two challenging case studies as illustrations. Ava stated that family photos can be regarded as puzzles to be solved. An expert in photo genealogy looks objectively at the elements of a photo (the clothing fashions and hair styles, the poses and expressions, the background, and the social, economic, and historical context) and uses deductive reasoning, not emotion, to better understand the person(s) represented and then match the photo information to family history, vital records, and other documentation. |

Ms. Cohn spoke to the group until 3:00 p.m., when the meeting officially adjourned, and then stayed until 4:30 p.m. to analyze photos brought in by more than a dozen members of the audience.

**Next Meeting**

The next program, on May 17, is the re-scheduled presentation by Professor Ken Moss of Johns Hopkins University. He is the director of the program in Judaic Studies at Hopkins. His topic will be, “The Jews of Eastern Europe in the Age of Mass Migration, 1881 – 1914.”

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