

JewishGen

CHANUKAH COMPANION



Chanukah Menorah from the the old synagogue in Brody, Ukraine

תשפ"ד | 5784

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This menorah was used in the old synagogue of Brody (today in Ukraine). It appears in “An Eternal Light: Brody, in Memoriam (Ukraine)” the translation of *Ner Tamid: Yizkor leBrody*, and is described as a “magnificent Hanukkah Menorah, richly decorated with ornaments from the animal kingdom (including winged lions).”

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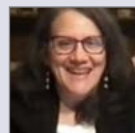
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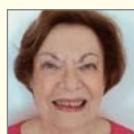


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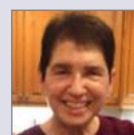
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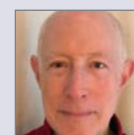
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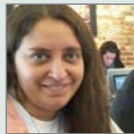


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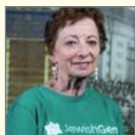


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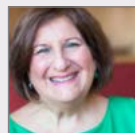


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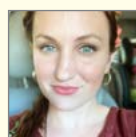
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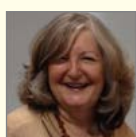
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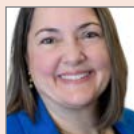
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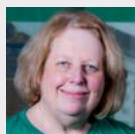


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STANDS WITH ISRAEL

The JewishGen Chanukah Companion 2023/5784 is dedicated to the memory of our brothers and sisters in Israel who lost their lives on October 7th, and with fervent hopes and prayers for the safe return of those who are being held hostage.

CONTENTS

10	Introduction
12	Memories of Chanukah from my Town of Sierpc in Poland Sierpc, Poland
16	Khannuka in the Big Shul Serock, Poland
19	Hanukkah in Shtetl Stryzow, Poland
22	Hannukah Horodets, Belarus



INTRODUCTION

CHANUKAH COMPANION 2023/5784

A few years ago, JewishGen initiated a demographic study of our audience. Overwhelmingly, our members and users described JewishGen's work as an important part of their lives. The research of our collective family roots provides meaning, helps define us, and allows us to provide dignity and the opportunity to sustain the memory of every individual we add to our family tree.

As the second largest Holocaust Museum in the United States, we teach thousands of school children, and other visitors, what devastating consequences can ensue when a society does not respect the intrinsic value and dignity of individual life. Unfortunately, we see this throughout the world until this very day, and we grieve with our brothers and sisters in Israel who have suffered so much since the devastating attack on October 7th.

Conversely, one of the critical messages from Jewish Genealogy is that we should never evaluate someone's worth based upon academic, professional or social accomplishment. Instead, Jewish tradition teaches that each person – no matter their faith - is required to be treated with respect, dignity and compassion.

We value life, we value the people in front of us today (and strive to treat them properly), and we value the lives of those who came before us. We wish to preserve their memory, perpetuate their legacy, and inspire the next generation to remain connected with their rich Jewish family history and heritage.

Within this context, we are pleased to present the *JewishGen Chanukah Companion 2023/5784*, which contains a collection of historical and inspirational vignettes about Chanukah that are found in Yizkor books that JewishGen has translated. (See [JewishGen.org/yizkor/translations](https://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/translations) for a full list of available volumes.) These books were created by Holocaust survivors to help perpetuate the legacy and memory of the Jewish history, heritage, and culture of the Jewish communities destroyed during the Shoah, and the chapters contained in this Companion offer a window into how the holiday was observed from both a communal and personal perspective – told by survivors themselves.

In this Companion, you will read about self-sacrifice, faith, conviction, commitment, family and hope – all of which ultimately recognize the value of individuals. Please take the time to

read it in advance of the holiday – and perhaps consider reading an excerpt aloud during a Chanukah party or other time when you are together with friends and family.

Special thank you to Bruce Drake for organizing the introductions and identifying the chapters to focus on this year, (and publishing the “Weekly Yizkor Book Spotlight” throughout the year), and to Gayle Justman for her proofreading (along with her many hats at JewishGen, serving as social media coordinator, publicity specialist for JewishGen Press, a Yizkor Book project coordinator, and Mozyr District coordinator for the Belarus RD). In addition, we express our sincere appreciation to Lance Ackerfeld for coordinating the Yizkor Book Translation project, and to Joel Alpert for coordinating the JewishGen Press.

Finally, we hope that those who find themselves in the New York area will make the time to visit our Museum, and explore our exhibitions and the recently opened **Peter and Mary Kalikow Jewish Genealogy Center**. Our mission to educate the next generation against the evils and perils of antisemitism is timely and critical as ever, and your involvement and participation will make a difference.

Wishing everyone a Happy Chanukah, with thoughts and prayers for our brothers and sisters in Israel.

Jack Kliger
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Note: These excerpts use several variations of the holiday’s name – Chanukah, Hannukah and Khannuka. For each, we chose to use the spelling as it appeared in the translated Yizkor book.



MEMORIES OF CHANUKAH FROM MY TOWN OF SIERPC IN POLAND

Sierpc, Poland

Sierpc is in north central Poland. It was never a large community; its Jews numbered 3,077, about 30% of the population, in 1939. It was not always called by its current name. The Russians, when they governed Poland prior to 1918, called it Serpec. The Germans, when they occupied Poland during World War II, called it Sichelberg. The Jews called the town Sheps.

The chapter recalls Chanukah as the “lovely weekday festival” where businesses remained open and students revelled in the joy of not having to return to *cheder* after supper (something echoed in several other Chanukah excerpts).

This excerpt has a wonderful description of the holiday meal (“The Chanukah dinner was tastier than all other dinners of the year!”) and the games that followed after the father gave out the Chanukah *gelt* – lotteries, dominoes and *dreidel* – while the men adjourned to the dining room to play cards.

The following account was written by Matel Rajczyk and translated by Jerrold Landau.

FROM MY EARLY CHILDHOOD

and onward, I remember Chanukah as the lovely “weekday festival.” Businesses were open. I did not get any new clothes. I had to attend *cheder* and look at the face of my *rebbe* Chaim Yosef. Still, I felt the festivity.

Something mysterious hung in the air. The white snow covered the holes and the mud on the Jewish streets. One could not make out the mountain around the Vlokes, or the area from the mountain to the synagogue and Mendel Gerlic’s workshop. All the window panes were covered with snow and the frost covered flowers sparkled in the cold.

The most important part of that Chanukah festivity was that I did not have to return to *cheder* after supper. My heart used to pound when I used to go to *cheder* in the dark nights with my homemade paper lantern. Precisely at the moment when the lantern was needed due to a vicious dog, a drunk who was sleeping on the streets and was ready to beat a Jewish child who was in his way, or just an ordinary gentile who threw snowballs and shouted “Jew to Palestine” – exactly at that critical moment, the paper lantern went out. I threw down the burning paper, which went out, and I remained standing in the darkness.

The heart pounded like a drum. Like stones, my feet did not lift themselves off the ground, and the street had been dark for some time. That is why I felt so festive on the week of Chanukah, because for a full eight days I did not need to endure these tribulations. I used to beg G-d that more miracles would take place, and it would be Chanukah for the entire winter.

As the eldest son, on the eve of Chanukah, I had the good deed of cleaning the Chanukah menorah. I removed every speck and cleaned it. The two lions engraved on the menorah sparkled strongly. When the candles burned, one could see the red tongues that hung from their mouths. When my father and I returned home from the old *beis midrash* after *maariv*, the house was lit up. Light shone from every corner. My father held the lit *shamash* high up as he recited the blessings. As he lit the first candle, we children put our hands on his hand so that we could take part in the commandment of lighting the Chanukah candle. We all sang together *Haneirot Halalu*, *Maoz Tzur*, and *Mizmor Shir Chanukat*. Mother looked on and quietly wiped away a tear.

The Chanukah dinner was tastier than all other dinners of the year, for mother was preparing the animal fat for Passover and for the winter. At this time, the animal fat was more plentiful. Every spoonful of food was accompanied by *grivn* with large or small fat globules. After the meat, we would have a course of *latkes*. Throughout the day my mother, with the help of my sisters, would peel and grind the largest potatoes. My mother sifted off the white starch, collected it for a week, and put it in a Passover vessel so that it could be used for cakes on Passover. The amount of *latkes* that mother brought to the table was not enough. We sprinkled white sugar on the *latkes* and ate them along with tea.

After dinner, Father gave us children Chanukah *gelt* and we sat on the floor with the neighboring children to play lotteries, dominoes and *dreidel*. The men sat in the dining room and played



View of Sierpc

“Oko” (a card game). The following men were sitting there: Yosef Koperman (Lipie’s brother-in-law), the Cantor Danielke (Sheike’s), and Avraham Shochet, the bird shochet [ritual slaughterer] (Burgand). Yehoshua Goldman sat at the side and constantly shouted “*Oy vey*, a waste of time!” The kibitzer was Lipia, the “Hershele Ostropoler” of Sierpc. [Note: Hershele was a well-known prankster and jokester, who you can look up on Wikipedia.] When the cantor played a “stake” and was angry, Lipie would sing to the tune of *Tal*, “Cantor, cantor, if you cannot, do not undertake.”

At that time, the house became very hot from the frying *latkes* and from the clouds of smoke from the cigarettes, cigars, and pipes. My father

smoked the pipe that he had inherited from his father, Shlomo Meir Shu”b, the Nasielsker shochet. When my father was occupied with “*Tehiliml*” (cards in the vernacular), I snuck a puff of the pipe. We children, tired and choking from the stinky, smoky air, fell asleep one after the other on the floor...

When I got older and already studied by myself in the old *beis midrash*, I still felt the festivity of Chanukah. The Gerrer Hassid Binyamin Yehuda’s (Yehuda Beker’s brother-in-law) would always reprove us youths when we were sitting with open gemaras and chatting about worldly matters. However, in the week of Chanukah, he turned his head and looked away.

In the evenings, instead of sitting in class, we played chess and a card game called Twenty One. Binyamin looked away and did not reprove us. Even the two large, tiled ovens in the old *beis midrash* knew that it was Chanukah.

Throughout the entire winter when the frost was biting in the street, the ovens were cold. They were almost like a piece of ice. However, in the week of Chanukah, they were hot. Indeed, this was a Chanukah miracle. The wood was dry and the flames were crackling higher and higher toward the chimney.

On the side of the oven, near the copper sink, a few old Jews were sitting and playing cards. I recall only one name of the players: Itzik Kvetcher. The kibitzer on the side, or as we used to call him, Shcaria with the Pipe, smoked the

tobacco that he purchased from Shlomo Chaya's and snatched glances at the cards.

The Chanukah candles burnt festively in the windows on all the streets where Jews lived. The warmth of the candles melted the snow with the frost flowers on the window panes. The clear flames told about the legends of generations ago, the heroism of the Maccabees.

To learn more about **Sierpc**, please visit:

<https://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/sierpc/sierpc.html>



KHANNUKA IN THE BIG SHUL

Serock, Poland

Serock is a town in Poland about 20 miles from Warsaw. When Jews arrived in Serock in the 18th century, the town had already existed for a long time, with a settlement dating back to the Middle Ages. It had a Jewish population of about 2,000 at the turn of the 20th century and, at the start of World War II, Jews constituted nearly half of the town's population. They were rooted out by the Germans by the end of 1939.

“Khannuka in the Big Shul” follows the Jews who streamed to the large shul for Khannuka services. A great calm would come over them when the *Baal Tefila* (the one who led the prayers) began his singing as he lit the main candle in the Khannuka menorah. The spirited children tapped with their toes and their excitement affected the older people. Even the weary workers, whose faces were wrinkled from their hard lives, smiled and laughed with tears.

As with other chapters, this one ends with a premonition of the dark times to come: “From all the windows, the flames of the candles would dance slowly. Maybe the town already sensed the impending destruction that eliminated Jewish life from Poland...”

The following account was written by Yakov Mendzelewski and translated by Pamela Russ.

AS SOON AS the fall rains ceased, a frost froze over the soaked earth, and the first snow decorated the town in honor of Khannuka.

As evening fell, the shul street came alive. From all sides, Jews began to stream to the large shul and *Bais Medrash* to light the first Khannuka candle. Despite the weekday dress, a holiday spirit shone from the faces. The small Khannuka candles related that we have to have hope. It was mainly the children who enjoyed Khannuka, the beautiful young ones who went home from *kheder* in the cold autumn evenings, often hungry, with torn shoes – but on Khannuka night these children shone from joy at the time they would help their fathers light the candles and put them into the Khannuka “menoras” made from dug out potatoes with cotton wicks dipped into oil.

The children’s eyes would sparkle as the *dreidels* fell onto the tables. The *dreidels* were made from spools. Since no one went to *kheder* on Khannuka night, all the boys would come into the *Bais Medrash*, young and old – from those who were learning the alef-bais, to those who were learning *khumash* and Rashi, and Gemara and commentaries. These were students of the more prestigious teachers, such as Khaim Yoine, of blessed memory, his son Shimon Sep, of blessed memory, and Dovid



Holy ark of Serock synagogue. Drawn by Yehoshua Grossberg, Haifa.

Itzik Rubenshtayn, of blessed memory.

A great calm would embrace everyone when the *Baal Tefila* (the one who led the prayers) began his singing as he lit the main candle in the Khannuka menorah and recited the blessings. A resounding “Amen!” came from the shul. The spirited children tapped with their toes. Their great excitement affected the older people. One could see how the embittered workers with their

faces wrinkled from great difficulties, smiled and laughed with tears. The young pranksters discreetly put out the main candle (*shamash*) during the prayers, in order to have to repeat the entire performance. Even the most prominent businessmen who prayed at the Eastern Wall of the shul ...

... with the Rav at the head, smiled happily into their white beards and didn't disturb the children's excitement with Khannuka.

The Khannuka nights were stellar. The snow shimmered, lighting up God's little world. The trees were covered as if with white blossoms. And the river Narew flowed quickly as if rushing before it would freeze. Crowds went sliding down the mountains, and young couples would walk together closely, dreaming about their future good fortune. For the workers, with their books under their arms, their loads were evident, and they were deep in thought

about difficult problems. Life dished out joy for them only on the tip of a knife. On this sort of a night, the moods improved, and they would throw snowballs with energy and fire, until pale cheeks turned rosy.

The Khannuka nights were filled with joy. The delicious aroma of potato *latkes* could be smelled until late into the night. And from all the windows, the flames of the candles would slowly dance. Maybe the town already sensed the impending destruction that eliminated Jewish life from Poland, including our town Serock, together with the small Khannuka candles, forever.

To learn more about **Serock**, please visit:

<https://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/serock/serock.html>



HANUKKAH IN SHTETL

Stryzow, Poland

“When Hanukkah eve arrived and the Almighty was good to us children and sent us down the first pure white snow, it was for us the greatest happiness and exhilaration. Snowballs were thrown at the sextons (gabbais) while they were reciting the blessings during the candle lighting ceremony.”

This is the exuberant beginning to “Hanukkah in Shtetl,” a chapter from the Yizkor book of Stryzow, one of the major towns in southern Poland. It previously had been part of Austria-Hungary.

Like some of the other excerpts in this Chanukah companion, underlying the joy of the holiday is the message in its traditions:

“The soul felt so good during the ceremony. It seemed to me that these little wicks that were burning in oil brought a ray of hope and told the people who gathered here in the rabbi’s house that somewhere far away, there was a land which, a long time ago, belonged to us.”

This account was written and translated by Harry Langsam.

CAN SOMEONE IMAGINE the joy of us children when Hanukkah was approaching? The joy was overwhelming for many reasons. First of all, we were free from studying in the evening because soon after services, the lighting of the candles was required. Afterwards, we were supposed to gaze at the burning candles and sing songs for at least half an hour.

Therefore, there was not much time left to return to the *cheder*.

The air was frosty outdoors and tiny, crisp snowflakes were falling from heaven. It was only the beginning of the brutal winter. The ovens in kloyz and in the Beit HaMidrash were warm and cozy, and the regular occupants of



The marketplace before the war.

the benches nearby sat there before the services and talked politics or reminisced about World War I, stories that had been told many times. It seemed that every winter, these same stories were re-told. How they evacuated to Bohemia and Hungary and how some escaped from prisoner-of-war camps in Italy.

Of course, the rich had no need to sit around the ovens in the Beit HaMidrash because their homes were warm enough and, at Hanukkah time, they already enjoyed the taste of Passover food. Hanukkah was the time when housewives prepared schmaltz for Passover and the goose cracklings were devoured immediately.

When Hanukkah eve arrived and the Almighty was good to us children and sent us down the first pure white snow, it was for us the greatest happiness and exhilaration. Snowballs were thrown at the sextons while they were

reciting the blessings during the candle lighting ceremony.

I have no idea how such a tradition of throwing snowballs at the sexton started. Maybe tens or hundreds of years ago. One thing we were sure of was that the sexton would have felt deprived if, Heaven forbid, nobody threw snowballs at them! No sexton would have relinquished the privilege of being hit with a snowball on his head. And, when snow was not available, a wet towel or a bucket of cold water, which someone dared to spill over them from the women's gallery, was also acceptable. In addition, the sexton was forced to stay under such an avalanche and still try to light the wet Hanukkah candles. In later years, the Rebetzin, of blessed memory, made sure that the gallery was closed thinking that what the sexton received downstairs in the sanctuary was enough without the additional bucket of water.

The festivities began an hour or so before the services while Reb Itzikl, the sexton, was busy preparing the big metal Hanukkah lamp, and putting in the candles. We, the youngsters, began to carry ammunition into the kloyz and storing them under the benches. Until this day, I cannot understand how these snowballs did not melt. When the services were over and the mourners finished saying Kaddish, Itzikl Dayches, the sexton, (Dayches was his wife's name by which he was called), was standing with a candle in his hand like a conductor with his stick ready to begin. He began with a drawn-out and festive voice: "Baaruch A-a-ta". Soon the children began yelling and screaming and the show began.

Hanukkah possessed many more pleasurable activities. For instance, attending the official City Rabbi's candle lighting ceremony or, as my father and I did, attending the ceremony at the home of Rabbi Nechemiah from Sassov. To be present when the rabbi lit the candles was spiritually uplifting. Every night, a few minyanim gathered in the rabbi's house to hear him recite the blessings and light the candles in the beautiful silver menorah. Until the ceremony began, the Hassidim sat around and told Hassidic tales. The room was warm and cozy, and a festive mood reigned everywhere.

Meanwhile, we, the children, were playing with the *dreidel* and many of us lost our "Hanukkah gelt".

Soon, the rabbi was slowly putting on his Sabbath fur hat and his wide silk belt on his

long silk coat. He poured oil into the bright and shining silver Hanukkah menorah while the Hassidim rose and began to sway back and forth, like a wave. The rabbi then recited the blessings with devotion and sang "Al Hanisim".

The soul felt so good during the ceremony. It seemed to me that these little wicks that were burning in oil brought a ray of hope and told the people who gathered here in the rabbi's house that somewhere far away, there was a land which, a long time ago, belonged to us. Then the gentiles tried to expel us but a miracle occurred and we overcame them. Afterwards, a small vial of oil was found, surely not bigger than the vial that the rabbi used and that miraculously found, bringing light for the Jews until this day.

The rabbi sang "Maoz Tzur" and asked Reb Moshe Yacov Mandel to sing "Mizmor Shir". Reb Samuel Moshe Grosskopf sang "Or Haganuz". Next, Reb Elazar Wurtzel began a Torah discourse with the participation of Reb David Wiener and the rest of the congregation.

On Hanukkah, it was also permitted to play cards. It was not a sin. On this account, gambling was taking place in several candy stores and it lasted longer than Hanukkah. The Hassidic young men played in private homes, but only on Hanukkah and on Christmas Eve. The days of Hanukkah were over and were followed by harsh winter days, but the pleasant experience of Hanukkah remained in our memory forever.

To learn more about **Stryzow**, please visit:

<https://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/stryzow/stryzow.html>



HANNUKAH

Horodets, Belarus

Horodets is a town in western Belarus, lying between Brest and Pinsk. From the medieval period until the 20th century, different nations at various times ruled the lands of modern-day Belarus. Horodets through the years had been part of the Russian Empire and later was within the borders of Poland after it was reestablished in 1918. Its Jewish population was ravaged by the Germans in World War II, leaving Horodets empty of her Jews. After the defeat of the Nazis, it was absorbed into the Soviet Union, and emerged as part of an independent Belarus after the dissolution of the USSR.

This chapter opens with the author sitting in a girls' *kheder* where the teacher recounts the heroics of the Maccabees and moves the students to tears with the tragic story of Hannah and her sons. Afterwards, she joins her family at the house of her grandfather who sings the blessings as he lights the first Hanukkah candle. As she gazes into its flame, she has a revelation about the stories she has heard and what they mean.

"Now, whenever I watch the lit Hanukkah candles," she writes, remembering her childhood days, "I visualize the revolt of our brothers and sisters in the ghettos, visualize our martyrs enveloped in flames of fire in the crematoriums and I seem to hear their cry: *"Shma Israel."* Yes, I watch the candles and I see memory-candles for our martyrs and dear ones."

Later, the house becomes full of merriment: eating *latkes*, playing cards and the children at their *dreidel* game.

The following account was written by Tzivia Greenglass and translated by Hannah Kadmon.



Hasidim dancing. Drawn especially for the book of Horodets. By Dvora Zusman, Israel's daughter. (This drawing won the second prize from the "Scholastic" exhibition.)

IT IS HANUKKAH. I look at the Hanukkah-Menorah with the burning candles and I long for Horodets. I long for my childhood, for my home, and for Horodets. —

It is cold outside. The frost "stings". The "Street", the "Market", the river and the fields around – to the horizon – are covered with a shawl of white snow. Trees are white, roofs are white, everything is white, except for the grey smoke that winds over the whiteness.

I am sitting in Khana's *Kheder*. He tells us the story of Hanukkah and the revolt of the great leaders, the Maccabees [father and five sons led the revolt against the Greeks in the 2nd century B.C.]. He tells the story of Hannah and her seven sons – moving us kids to tears. The Rabbi finishes telling the stories of Hanukkah and in honor of this bright Holiday, he sends us home earlier than at other times.

Wrapped in coats, shawls and kerchiefs, the

children run home. I don't go home, I run to my grandfather, where my good mother, my sister and brother are waiting for me. I run and the snow squeaks under my feet and the frost nips my nose and ears.

I run on, out of breath, and reach my grandfather's house. Grandfather, grandmother, mother and the whole household are there. My grandfather is waiting for me to say the blessing over the Hanukkah candles.

The Hanukkah lamp is on the window sill. My grandfather lights the *Shamash* [the serving candle], sings the blessings with a hearty sweet voice, and the first candle is lit.

The lit wicks of the Hanukkah-Menorah, on the window sills of houses, light up the street around them and warm the hearts of children. I stand and watch the burning candle and Hannah and her seven sons march before my eyes. They paid with their life because they were not tempted to betray their belief and their people. Then I see Matityahu the Cohen and Yehuda Maccabee with his soldiers and it seems to me that the Hanukkah candles are in fact a *yortzeit* [memorial candle lit once a year] candle for the soldiers killed in the revolt. I keep on watching, unable to tear myself away from the Hanukkah candle. Then, a warm, loving hand wakes me up to reality. My grandfather says: "My child, here, this is your Hanukkah money." I quickly forget Hannah and her sons and

the Maccabees. I grab the Hanukkah money, hug my grandfather and kiss him with all my childish strength, I take out from my pocket the tin *dreidl* [spinning top] molded for me by my brother Moshe, and we start playing the *dreidl* game.

We actually play the game using buttons that we have torn out of our own dresses, pants, coats and shirts. Suddenly – wow, the smell of fried potato *latkes* [pancakes] reaches our nose. We quickly count our winnings, in buttons, and sit down ready for the *latkes*. It does not take long before grandmother comes to the table with a bowl full of *latkes*. The house becomes full of merriment; eating *latkes*, playing cards and Chinese checkers, and the children renew their *dreidl* game.

And, the Hanukkah candle flickers and flickers until it is no more.

Now, whenever I watch the lit Hanukkah candles, I visualize the revolt of our brothers and sisters in the ghettos, visualize our martyrs enveloped in flames of fire in the crematoriums and I seem to hear their cry: "*Shma Israel*" [Here o, Israel]. Yes, I watch the candles and I see memory-candles for our martyrs and dear ones.

To learn more about **Horodets**, please visit:

<https://www.jewishgen.org/Yizkor/gorodets/Gorodets.html>



The River.

JewishGen Neshama Travel & Preservation Program

Join us for an unforgettable trip to Poland whereby you can learn about Polish Jewish life, clean-up a cemetery that has been largely neglected over the past 80 years, and help preserve - with your own hands - our collective Jewish familyhistory and heritage for future generations.

JULY 30 - AUGUST 8, 2024

Led by highly experienced staff, this 10 day travel and study trip will allow participants to explore Jewish heritage sites in Poland, and help clear-up a long neglected cemetery. Along the way, we will learn from rabbis, scholars, dignitaries, and community leaders, who will offer first-hand insights regarding the imperative (and challenges) of cleaning-up cemeteries in accordance with Jewish law. And we will discuss how local Polish communities view Jewish cemeteries in their towns, the need to preserve Jewish memory, and more.

◆ PROGRAM COST ◆

\$3,099 USD of which \$1,375 USD is eligible for tax-deductions for those eligible for charitable contributions. Reserve your space with a \$1,000 deposit. A Note: Cost is per-person, double occupancy with an option for a single supplement. Airfare is not included.

◆ WHO SHOULD APPLY ◆

Adults over the age of 18 are welcomed. Children 15 and up must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian.



WE WILL VISIT A NUMBER OF PLACES/SITES, INCLUDING:

Warsaw, Łódź, Kraków (where we will spend Shabbat), Auschwitz-Birkenau, Oświęcim, Tarnów, Markuszów and Lublin.

LEARN MORE, AND APPLY AT: WWW.JEWISHGEN.ORG/NESHAMA

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

JewishGen Future Scholars Fellowship Program

Travel to Poland, and help preserve our Jewish family history and heritage for future generations

JULY 9-18, 2024

PROGRAM COST

Fully subsidized (including r/t air from NYC)
except for a \$400 registration fee

WHO CAN APPLY?

Rising second-fourth year undergraduate
students in accredited colleges or universities

This 10-day immersive program focuses on the role of Jewish cemeteries today in preserving the memory and legacy of former Jewish communities. Participants will help clean-up a cemetery, learn about symbols on tombstones, the general state of Jewish cemeteries in Poland after the Holocaust, efforts to preserve them from both a communal, political, and Halachic perspective, and consider the lessons which can be gleaned to inform our own life choices today.



WE WILL VISIT A NUMBER OF PLACES/SITES, INCLUDING:

Warsaw, Auschwitz-Birkenau, Lublin and Krakow

LEARN MORE, AND APPLY AT: WWW.JEWISHGEN.ORG/FELLOWSHIP

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

About the JewishGen Yizkor Book Translation Project



Yizkor Books (Memorial Books) were traditionally written to memorialize the names of departed family and martyrs during holiday services in the synagogue (a practice that still exists in many synagogues today).

Over the centuries, as a result of countless persecutions and horrific atrocities committed against the

Jews, Yizkor Books (*Sifre Zikaron* in

Hebrew) were expanded to include more historical information, such as biographical sketches of famous personalities and descriptions of daily town life.

Following the Holocaust, the idea of remembrance and learning took on an urgent and crucial importance. Survivors of the Holocaust sought out other surviving residents of their former towns to memorialize and document the names and way of life of those who were ruthlessly murdered by the Nazis.

These remembrances were documented in Yizkor Books, hundreds of which were published in the first decades after the Holocaust. Most of these books were published privately, or through *landsmanshaftn* (social organizations comprised of members originating from the same European town or region) that still existed, and were often distributed free of charge.

Sadly, the languages used to document these crucial histories and links to our past, Yiddish and Hebrew, are no longer commonly understood by a significant percentage of Jews today. It is our hope that the translation of these books into English (and other languages) will assist the countless Jewish family researchers who are so desperately seeking to forge a connection with their heritage.

Thank you to Lance Ackerfeld for overseeing the Yizkor Book Translation project, and Joel Alpert for overseeing the JewishGen Press.



Lance Ackerfeld was born in Australia and settled on Kibbutz Yiftah, Israel in 1977 where he has lived with his family since then. By day, he is presently a senior database and BI expert in the global “Netafim” company and after work, devotes time to the Yizkor Book Project in which he has been involved in various capacities since 1999 and has led the project for more than 10 years.



Joel Alpert is a retired electrical engineer, who worked for MIT, Raytheon, the Israeli Armaments Authority and Bell Laboratories. He was born and educated in Wisconsin, lived in Israel, Boston and Tucson. He created the Yizkor-Books-In-Print project in 2012 and is now the coordinator of the project.



At the end of each week, we have been distributing “A Window into our Treasured Past” emails, which feature timely excerpts from Yizkor books in JewishGen’s archive. In choosing the weekly excerpts, JewishGen volunteer **Bruce Drake** tries to balance selections that recall the suffering of the Holocaust with chapters that paint pictures of what daily life was like in the communities of Europe, such as market days, how Jews made their living, the joys and sadnesses of every day life and portraits of memorable characters. Bruce has also overseen the completed translation of the Kover Yizkorbook and created Kehilalinks sites for Kovel and Wojnilow, now known as Voynilov in Ukraine. He spent most of his career in journalism at the New York Daily News, NPR and Congressional Quarterly, and until recently, was a senior editor at the Pew Research Center.

To learn more, and to access
the translations at no cost, please visit:
www.JewishGen.org/yizkor/translations



To purchase hard copies of Yizkor Books that
JewishGen has translated, please visit:
www.JewishGen.org/press



The KehilaLinks project is managed by Susana Leistner Bloch, and until her recent and untimely passing in February, Barbara Ellman, z”l. Barbara began volunteering for JewishGen nearly two decades ago, and oversaw the creation of dozens of KehilaLinks pages which have helped so many thousands of people research their roots. Her work was very much “behind the scenes,” engaging with dozens of project coordinators and technical volunteers to provide support for the development and maintenance of KehilaLinks websites. However, she also traveled to conferences whereby she would make presentations, recruit potential volunteers, and speak passionately about how KehilaLinks served as a critical component of JewishGen’s suite of resources. Barbara will be deeply missed by everyone who knew her, and we continue this project in her memory. For more information, and to get involved, please visit: www.KehilaLinks.JewishGen.org.

Generations

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On *Generations*, we will unravel centuries-old family histories, leveraging the digital resources of JewishGen, the historical resources of the Museum of Jewish Heritage: A Living Memorial to the Holocaust, and the production resources of JLTV. We will not only uncover the many branches of our celebrities' family trees, but we will delve deeply into the places that their ancestors lived, revealing artifacts and objects, documents and photographs that will bring their *shtetls* to life.



JewishGen, a division of the Museum of Jewish Heritage, serves as the largest digital repository of Jewish family history materials in the world, with over 30+ million records, including Yizkor Books (offering expanded historical information about daily life and notable residents from 1,200+ towns), a sizable database of detailed Holocaust records, and a searchable database of 4+ million Jewish burials in 140+ countries.



Jewish Life Television/JLTV is North America's premier 24-7 Jewish-themed, English language television network, providing high-quality, Jewish-inspired programming for audiences of all faiths who share an interest in the Jewish experience in North America, in Israel and around the entire World. More cultural than religious, JLTV is available in over 50 million homes through the largest video providers on the continent, including Bell, Charter, Comcast, Cox, DirecTV and more.



Located in New York City, the Museum maintains a collection of 40,000 artifacts, photographs, films and testimonies. The Museum recently opened the Peter & Mary Kalikow Jewish Genealogy Research Center, and offers special exhibition galleries, memorial art installation, 375-seat theater, and resource center for educators. *Generations* will rely heavily on the Museum's historical assets and the Kalikow Center during series' production.



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