

L'Dor V'Dor

from generation to generation • the newsletter of the Nebraska Jewish Historical Society

AZA Celebrated at NJHS Annual Meeting

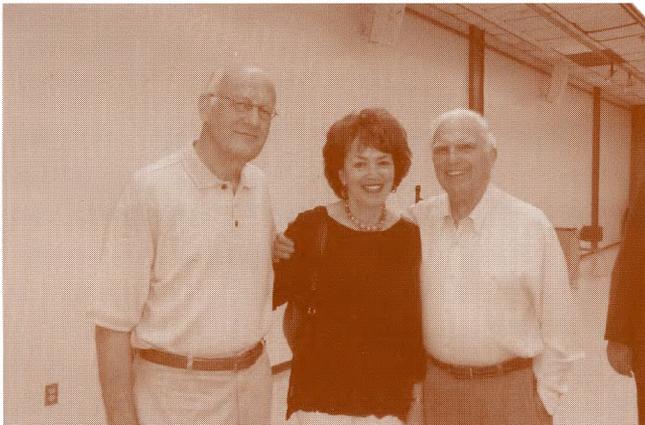
The 85th anniversary of AZA was celebrated jointly by NJHS, B'nai B'rith & AZA on August 16th in the JCC auditorium with a month long exhibit in the gallery and an oral history video of 18 interviews of past and present AZA members created by Ben Nachman. Kevee Kirshenbaum received the Shirley Berman Volunteer Award and NJHS officers and new board members were installed.



*Gary Javitch, George Shafer, Al Abramson,
& Marty Ricks*



*Kevee Kirshenbaum receiving the
Shirley Berman Volunteer Award*



Howard and Gloria Kaslow with Ben Nachman



*Nancy Rips, Mark Javitch, Anne Muskin
Rocky Stern & Dick Rochman*

**PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDARS, SUNDAY,
JULY 18th FOR THE NJHS ANNUAL MEETING**

*This publication was produced through the generosity of the Special Donor-Advised Fund of the
Jewish Federation of Omaha Foundation*

LETTER FROM IRA NATHAN, PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD

A GIFT HAS BEEN MADE TO THE NEBRASKA JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

It is my pleasure to introduce the new Nebraska Jewish Historical Society (NJHS) tribute cards to our membership. The NJHS now has two easy-to-use tribute card options.

Option 1: For only \$5 per card (or 6 cards for \$25), members can purchase and add their personal notes to the post card.

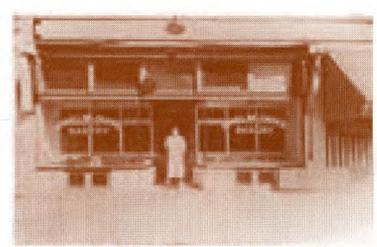
Option 2: These unique two-fold cards cost \$10. The front of the card shows five pictures from the Society's extensive collection. The pictures selected were from the Louis Sommer Grocery Store (48th and Dodge), Reikes Museum, and the Himelbloom Bakery (North Omaha). The inside of the card describes our mission and rich history since our founding in 1982.



Louis Sommer Grocery Store



Reikes Museum



Himelbloom Bakery

We invite all to use the tribute cards for birthdays, anniversaries, personal greetings for speedy recovery, and words of sympathy. The gifts from tribute cards help us to continue our work to archive and preserve memories and treasures of the Jewish community for generations to come.

Please consider using our new tribute cards to support the NJHS. Simply contact the NJHS office at 402-334-6441 or email njhs@jewishomaha.org, and Renee or Kathy will provide tribute cards directly to you. We truly appreciate your financial support so that we can continue fulfilling the Society's mission to "Remember the Past to Preserve the Future."

Please save the date for the NJHS Annual Meeting on Sunday, July 18, 2010. I look forward to seeing you then if not before.

*Remember the
Nebraska Jewish Historical
Society in your Will*

My Father's Tools

By Oliver B. Pollak, NJHS Founder and Board Member

My father Wilhelm, Vilem, Hillel, William, Willi, and Bill, born in 1903 Vienna, left Austria like many Jews after 1933. Buffeted by Hitler he went to Switzerland, France, Belgium, and Holland. In 1938 he lived in Palestine at Ptach Tikva. He served 7 months in the Czechoslovak infantry, fought in France, and enlisted in the British Auxiliary Military Pioneer Corp at the Czech Soldiers Camp, Sutton Coalfields, England, in October 1940. He received a medical discharge for "ceasing to fulfil Army physical requirements" in August 1942, and resumed his trade as an iron turner and engine fitter, a machinist, and ultimately a tool and die maker and foreman.



In London he worked in a factory. He made two aluminum ash trays. Milled, turned and polished they combined form, function and material, exquisite evidence of my father's hands. From 1946 to 1952 he worked at Dyne Engineers, "contractors to H.M. Government," and left for America on good terms, "a first-class man, good timekeeper, of excellent conduct and capable of organizing...we would willingly re-instate him in his old position."

We endured food rationing and received care packages from American relatives including Lipton's chicken noodle soup. Dad spoke of America where he would eat bacon every morning. We left England in November 1952, bacon and meat rationing ended July, 4, 1954. Dad had his share of America bacon,

porcine pleasures peppered memories and arteries. He reminisced about the Wiener Prater Strasse many times, enjoyed Wiener schnitzel, Hungarian goulash, schlagobers (thick whipped cream), strudel, and loved opera.

From 1952-54 he worked at Cleveland Graphite Bronze Co. making bearings and bushings in McConnellsville, Ohio, on the Muskingham River. The West Coast beckoned, and Dad's letter of recommendation stated "We regret his decision to move his family and the loss of him as part of our group. We would welcome his return at any time."

My mother and sister traveled by propeller aircraft and my father, grandfather and I by train via Chicago and Albuquerque. My wife surprised me on our 35th wedding anniversary with a memory trip to Southern Ohio, who knew that I had lived in Appalachia.

Moving to Los Angeles Dad worked at Garrett AirResearch, near LAX Airport, making turbochargers. We had one car, a black and white, 1955 two door Chevrolet automatic without radio, power brakes or steering or white walls. I can still hear Doris Day's jingle, "See the USA in your Chevrolet, America is asking you to come." In 1956 we went to Carmel, memories preserved in a large scrapbook. In 1959 Dad let me drive the oh-so-narrow almost 10,000 feet Tioga Pass in the Sierra Nevada's enroute to Lake Tahoe.

Dad worked lots of overtime. If mother or I wanted the car we drove him to work at 4 to 5 am and picked him up around 6 pm. Long hours paid for the bacon, mortgage, vacations, college educations for my sister and myself, and a second cars including a Desoto, Nash Rambler and Mercury Comet.

My memories of the shop floor include lathes and multiple bit drill presses with milky lubricating fluid, and nasty finger wounds from spirally lacy metal shavings. He wore a blue apron with pockets holding measuring instruments, cigarettes and matches.

Dad smoked. In London he picked up cigarettes from the sidewalk recycling the unburned tobacco. He had his first heart attack in 1960. Despite doctors

orders he could not give up his fags. At his retirement in 1968 his workmates presented him with a La-Z-Boy recliner and cadged together a box of cigarettes. He died in 1977 of heart disease.

Mother moved to a delightful retirement community. Scaling back from a two bedroom and a den home to something more modest, some things had to go, the iconic ashtrays disappeared.

There were no power tools in my parent's house Dad left work at work. My father's few remaining tools include metal files to remove rough edges, spacers, similar to spark plug gap leaves, to check the tolerances between parts, and two 1950's era wood handled ball peen hammers that will go to my two thirty-something sons.



Dad urged me to find a profession where skills were in the head not in the hands or back. He wanted a physician but was happy with a Ph.D. in history. He did not live to see me become an attorney, but he would be pleased. My parents visited us in England, Zimbabwe, then Rhodesia, and Omaha.

Historians writing about family combine the personal and the professional. Selecting the important, what resonates, and what instructs into a narrative reveals the subject and writer. The unremembered, forgotten, glossed over and repressed, could produce another tale. My father's example included a work ethic, taking vacations, enjoying family and food at table, and not following his smoking path.

This also speaks to a much larger point. Once again,

like so many others of this generation and of this synagogue, he was not self-absorbed. Rather, he sought to fulfill what he considered his obligations to his family, his community, and his country. Not a bad way to live.

YOUR MEMBERSHIP NEEDED

Membership renewal letters and envelopes were mailed in December. Our membership year is January 1 through December 31st.

Without your continued support the NJHS would be unable to staff the office, and plan programs and exhibits. Please help us to continue our mission to preserve the history of our Jewish community for future generations by renewing your membership and/or making a donation.

Moving? Please notify us of your address change!

ORAL HISTORY UPDATE

During the past year, the following interviews have been conducted by Ben Nachman and added to our collection of oral histories: Phyllis Aronson, Don & Marlene Dandy, Janey Dann, Lorraine Deneberg, Norman Deneberg, Ann Feinberg, Jon Freiden, Marshall Fried, Orville Fried, David Goldstein, Eileen Jacobson, Rick Kohn, Bennett Kutler, Joan Marcus, Robert Nevsky, Richard & Jerry Rosinsky, Jan Schneiderman, Harriet Singer, Bea Summer, Bill Wolfson, Bob Wolfson and Ron Wolfson.

Please contact us at 334-6442 if you are interested in doing an oral history interview. This is an excellent way of preserving your history for your family and the entire community.

Simon Family Reunion

By *Debbi Josephson, NJHS Board Member & Treasurer*

Getting the family together for dinner can mean many things. But, if you are a descendant of Lazar Shames, born in 1825, it can mean something like dinner with about 150 relatives. Who wants to cook that much or even make the calls to get everyone together! Well, Alan and Fred Simon were willing to organize this big reunion dinner. They are the great-great grandsons of Lazar Shames.

Lazar Shames had three (or four) wives and six children. Those six children had a combined total of 53 children. As the numbers kept compounding it is easy to see now how this Shames/Simon clan has become so large.

Alan and Fred have located many of their Shames/Simon relatives from all over the world. We were all invited to join in a big family reunion this past August. The weekend began on a Saturday morning with an informal check-in and registration at the Marriott Hotel in Omaha. We each received a lovely gift bag, containing Omaha Steaks logo items as well as a gift card for Omaha Steaks, but the most valuable and appreciated item we received was the book, The Simon Family Genealogy.

The Simon Family Genealogy is a very comprehensive look at the family. There are over 1400 names in it. Upon reading the book for the first time it may seem cumbersome but, after twenty minutes of using it, the book is very manageable. Not only does it contain names, dates of births and deaths but there are also notes on some descendents offering census and biographical information if known.

Saturday evening the real fun began; a beautiful and fun-filled evening took place at the SAC museum in Ashland, Nebraska. Bus transportation was provided for out-of-towners who didn't want to make the drive. The evening started with a lovely cocktail hour, hors d'oeuvres and the music of Chuck Pennington and his combo. We could tour the museum or simply meet and greet all of our

cousins. There were people in attendance that grew up in Omaha and left, some who had never been to Omaha before and some even came from overseas. I met many people and I visited with people whom I have known for years, yet never even knew they were our shirttail relatives. Wow! What fun was that? Of course, if we didn't have our handy-dandy Simon Family Genealogy within reach would take a little time to calculate exactly how we are related. Following a delicious and gourmet dinner, the entertainment began. Alan and Fred extended greetings, every table was introduced by a table spokesperson, Janice Meyerson, a Simon cousin, and opera singer delighted us with her talents and Mary Maxwell amused us with her customized comedy. All throughout the evening a photographer was snapping photos. Everyone had such a good time, making new and renewing old acquaintances.

The next morning a brunch was held at the Marriott Hotel. Since I was unable to attend I can't report on it.

Those of us descendants of Lazar Shames, who did attend this reunion, are so thankful that Alan and Fred Simon wanted to put this together for all of us to share and because of their generosity and thoughtfulness each family member's cost was kept to a minimum. What a grand evening. And thanks also to Miriam Simon, Deb Righter, Mary Nimmo and Mary Bernstein for all of their work that went into accumulating the information for the book and organizing the entire weekend.

Not every reunion needs to be on such a grand scale. Just start! Start small. If you want to begin looking for your ancestors the Nebraska Jewish Historical Society, housed in the Jewish Community Center in Omaha, would be a good resource. The Carl Frohm Archival Center has become a repository of documents, manuscripts and photographs for the entire Jewish community. The NJHS archival collection has information about Jewish families, businesses, synagogues, organizations, etc. that can be a great resource for family research. The Society can preserve and catalog family trees in the collection that will be available for future generations.

Teaching the History of Nazi Germany

Written by Michael Gendler, Associate Professor of History, College of Saint Mary, NJHS Board Member

This fall rang in thirty-three years that I have been teaching the history of Nazi Germany at College of Saint Mary, a private women's college of about 1000 students in Omaha, Nebraska. Throughout this time period, hundreds of overwhelmingly non-Jewish students have continued to show a strong interest in learning about the horrors of Nazi anti-Semitism.

Whether the year is 1977 or 2010, students have asked "How could the murder of six million people have been allowed to take place?" or "What made it possible for someone like Hitler to become a dictator in a country the size of Germany?" Questions flow on the first day of class, often stemming from videos seen in high school, of how could some people be so cruel to others, including the torture and murder of infants and children? And finally, often asked while a student shakes her head in confusion, why were the Nazis so determined to murder Jews? As it is sometimes put in three short words, "why the Jews?"

Throughout my years of teaching at CSM, the quality of the questions asked by students in this class, as well as their obvious commitment in terms of time and energy, continue to impress me.

My own interest in this subject goes back to my grade school days. My paternal grandfather, Arthur Gendler (of blessed memory) told me of how, after the Nazis invaded Russia on June 22, 1941, he never again heard from any of the dozens of relatives with whom he kept in touch since he and his family left Russia in 1921. As it turned out, all four of my grandparents lost virtually all of their European relatives to the Nazis. Most likely, the majority of them were lined up next to mass graves and shot by Einsatzgruppen SS. These were "special duty groups" of 600-1000 men who followed Nazi military units into Russia. The only purpose of these volunteer units (nobody was forced to join these groups—in fact, there are no records of Germans being severely punished for refusing to murder Jews as long as they did not then proceed to protest the murder) was to round up the Jewish people in all of the towns under Nazi military control. Groups of 400-500 Jews would be marched two or three miles outside of town and then shot in the back of the neck. As they fell into the mass graves they would be covered with lime and

buried. Horrific scenes of people raising their hands as they writhed in pain asking for another bullet so that they would not be buried alive have been frequently recounted by survivors of such nightmares.

Given my family background, I have had, throughout my life, both an intellectual and a personal connection to the study of Nazi Germany. My particular historical specialization is the area of intellectual history—the history of ideas. This happens to be particularly germane to the study of the Third Reich. (Hitler liked to count the Holy Roman Empire of Charlemagne in the ninth century A.D. as the first empire (or "Reich" in German), the unification of Germany under Kaiser William I in 1871 as the Second Reich, and his own dictatorship of Germany officially beginning in 1934 (he became Chancellor in 1933, a key position) as the Third Reich—which he often suggested would last 1,000 years. He was 988 years off). Rarely in history have the actions of a nation been so directly traceable to ideas—ideas absorbed from European culture and transmogrified by one man, Adolf Hitler. Once, in a lecture that I heard from Erich Goldhagen, a Harvard professor who specializes in the Holocaust, he asked his audience to try to come up with a four letter word that best explains the cause of the Holocaust. After hearing about six or seven responses, he finally wrote the short, deadly, word, on the board. The word---BOOK! To Goldhagen, without the flood of anti-Semitic literature that was so common in Europe, and especially in the city where Hitler spent much of his adolescence and young adulthood—Vienna, Austria—Hitler would not have developed an ideology (which he called his "granite foundation") that had at its center the hatred of Jews. This included hatred of their being foreigners to Germany and not, to Hitler, true Germans, hatred of what he regarded as their communist political ideology (a logical fallacy that Hitler perpetuated, which could allow many to conclude that since several prominent communists were Jews, then most Jews were communists, hatred of what he considered the genetic danger they posed to the pure German race, hatred of their refusal to worship a state or its leader ("Führer" in German) in place of one God, and hatred for their stubborn insistence to continue viewing nature as a creation of God, not a kind of god in itself, from whom one must learn that the unpardonable sin in life is that of weakness in the struggle for survival. This represents quite a set of values for students to reflect upon, to say the least. Indeed, last week in my American Government class, a few students were stunned when I mentioned that the emphasis of the organic unity of all beings in the natural world in the movie *Avatar*, would have been right at home in the world of Nazi Germany! German teachers

during the 1930s loved to contrast how Nazi ideology was superior to the individualism that was the foundation of America's political ideology. Let's hope that popular culture does not lure too many young people away from what has made this nation great—the commitment to protect individual liberty—not the creation of one equal, organic, community.

Whenever I teach this class, I like to give students the opportunity to look closely at the ideas and circumstances surrounding the ideas that Hitler would so passionately embrace. I usually include, in this context, one of my favorite quotes. The great American psychologist Williams James once wrote: "Life is a struggle between good ideas and bad ideas." The reading of a textbook and lectures help to provide a context for the primary source materials, helping students to see how some of the values that they cherish in their own lives were repudiated by the Nazis. Mercy was seen as weakness, democracy in any form was regarded as foolish, equality under the law was viewed as flying in the face of the reality of racial superiority and inferiority of some groups. I hope that by working to understand the historical context of these views, students will not only know something about them intellectually, but they will also find these ideas to be completely disgusting, vile, and even wrong! Yes, for some students, it is difficult to come to a point where they are willing to say that something they believe is "right" and something that another culture in another time believed was "wrong." Often, they feel this is an arrogant position to take, and they do not want to see themselves as the "know it alls." I want to help them take the quotation marks off the words right and wrong, at least in some contexts. It helps when they read about and see on videotape, WCIT soldiers (War Crime Investigating Team) documenting atrocities as American troops liberated one concentration camp after another. Hardened troops often wrote that they saw things that they did not even imagine were possible. They read Nazi log books, such as the one at Hadamar camp where the ten thousandth death was celebrated by the Nazis with champagne. They saw shrunken heads, lamp shades made of human skin, results of medical experiments too brutal to appropriately describe here.

Such descriptions and images are not easy to watch. Students are always invited to leave classroom if they think that they will be made ill or excessively disturbed by some of the video images. They very rarely leave (it has happened, and I respect that decision fully). After class, I let these students know what information was presented while they were out of the classroom. In addition, I am

careful about not using too many vivid examples. A few well selected items make the point all too effectively.

What do students get for all this stress? For one, it becomes evident that there are profound differences between good and evil. While this may seem obvious to some, the unique extremes that appear when one studies the history of Nazi Germany—brutal SS men such as Dr. Mengele, but also great heroism and decency from those who risked or even gave their lives in order to save others (such as Raoul Wallenberg) provide powerful examples of how different some humans are from others in the moral realm. When I started teaching this class, one of the first books that I ordered for the library was *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed*. In this book by Phillip Hallie, the author explains that he set out to write a book about how people could be so evil as to torture children. He began by looking at medical records of the Nazis that included the deliberate breaking of a child's leg, letting it heal, then breaking it in the same place again to see if it would heal better or worse if broken in the same place. After picturing the sheer horror that the child must have experienced whenever the footsteps would be heard of a Nazi coming to break his leg again with no anesthesia, Hallie could stand it no longer. He turned instead to writing about what makes people act in ways that are good rather than evil. He found his subjects in the Trocme family in southern France. Largely because of their Christian heritage they felt an obligation to help those in need regardless of the danger. In fact, their particular religious beliefs sometimes led them to have negative feelings toward Jews. This did not change the obligation they felt to help them. They saved hundreds. Books such as this exemplify how rich this subject matter can be in terms of deriving not only knowledge and understanding, but also perhaps—even some wisdom!

One of the reasons that I like to include discussion about lessons we might learn from the past is to provide what I hope can be a catalyst for a lifelong learning about one or more of these subtopics which can direct intellectual energy into productive and personally satisfying directions long after the course is over. Some of the "lessons" that can stem from a study of the Holocaust for example, might include a renewed appreciation for the dangers of racism, of blind conformity and obedience to authority, the degree to which human beings can be led to take on roles that would normally be foreign to them if they are living in fear for their lives or that of their family, the danger of compartmentalization of our lives into two or more separate realms where no matter what we do in one realm has no effect on the other—thus, one

can murder people in gas chambers during the day while at “work,” but go home to one’s family at night and regard oneself as a great husband and father—and therefore a decent person overall, and the critical importance of maintaining a strong defense against the fury of a brutal enemy force. George Will put it in especially powerful words, when he defended the building of a Holocaust Museum in the United States when there was quite a bit of opposition to it since the Holocaust did not happen in the United States, nor did it happen to Americans.

He wrote that the museum would be an invaluable reminder to all Americans about how dangerous the world outside our shores can be. Also, since we live in a largely tolerant society (especially compared to Nazi standards—there simply is no comparison) it is easy for Americans to forget just how brutal some groups or individual leaders can be. His exact words argued that the Museum would serve as an antidote to the “**recuperative power of innocence in a liberal society.**” In other words, the Holocaust Museum serves as a reminder of how dangerous it can be to become too “innocent” of what lies beyond. Pacifism is not a wise option if we listen to history. Not surprisingly, given the biases of academia, I have found my students to be more receptive to George Will’s point of view than my professorial colleagues. What is more, another reason for hope in regard to the future of Jewish life in America is how mystified the vast majority of these young people are as to why anyone would have hostility toward Jews. This is one form of ignorance for which one may, in a sense, be grateful.

Omaha Ancestral Community Outreach Project - Millward - Friedman

Written by Sue Friedman Millward

I began my family research as an extension of the Krasne Family Tree that was compiled by my mother, Thama L. Friedman, and her cousin, Shirley B. Kulakofsky. Through the Internet I have found distant Krasne cousins from Portland, Oregon to New York City. The most interesting discovery has been not only to find distant cousins, but also to find other “cousins” right here in the Omaha/Council Bluffs area. People we have grown up were relatives. However, like me, we never knew the relationship we had to each other.

Our family, like millions of others, sought a better life for themselves and their descendants. There are no personal journals or diaries, that we know of, only stories that have been

handed down from generation to generation.

There is some discrepancy regarding our village of origin. For instance we know we are from Eastern Europe, an area that changed over the years from Poland, Russia and Lithuania. The Jewish Gen Organization is currently constructing the vital records from this area and with patience I may one day find that answer to our hometown.

My search is further complicated by the change of names of family members from Russian, Polish, and Yiddish. When reviewing the census of an area the first names vary greatly from American derivatives. Even more difficult is determining the original surname of the Krasnes. We believe it was originally Krasna-Glovia, however, I do not find that name anywhere. Instead I find Krzywanowski, Krakinovski or Krasni. I also find the village of Krasne frequently in my research. Did the family change their name to their hometown? And if so, what was the name prior to their departure? Therefore, until I find conclusive documentation, we are still a family of unknown “origins”.

Briefly, here is what we do know. My great-great-grandfather, Louis Krasne, came to America with his five sons in 1888. They came from Poland to avoid conscription into the army. They landed in New York and were each given a \$10 gold piece by the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society.

They found their way to Fremont, Nebraska where some of the Krasne tribe had already settled. Once they arrived they became peddlers. They started on foot with what merchandise or goods they could carry on their backs. After they accumulated enough money, they sent for the rest of the family, the four daughters. (Louis’ wife, Rachel Lofsky, died in childbirth in 1889 in Poland when the youngest daughter was born.)

The family legend states that the family set off from Fremont in a wagon, and got as far as Fullerton, Nebraska when the horse died. Louis traded the goods in the wagon for the General Store and renamed the store Krasnes. All of the family settled into their new life. The older boys, Isaac, Herman, Jake, George, and Frank, became merchants and opened other stores in Aurora, Norfolk, Oakland and Albion, Nebraska. The oldest girl, Dora, kept house and mothered the younger girls Sadie, Sara and Grace while they attended school in Fullerton.

In 1907, George and Frank Krasne, along with Mose and Louis Bernstein, purchased the Eisemans’ department store at Broadway and Bryant streets in Council Bluffs, Iowa. It was established in 1889 and was believed to be the oldest mercantile firm in the city. They renamed the business to the Peoples Store.

In 1911, Jake Krasne left the business in Fullerton and joined the others in Council Bluffs. Ike and Herman joined the other brothers in Council Bluffs.

The Peoples Store became the center of activity for the families. It was four floors of merchandise ranging from shoes,

clothing, notions, hardware and grocery. The business eventually supported all the families of the five Krasne brothers and two Bernstein brothers.

Each department of the store was run by a separate family member, and then passed on to the children of the next generation. In the 1960's my grandfather, Millard Krasne, owned and managed the shoe, toys and menswear department. Lou Bernstein, and his son Harold, managed the hardware and grocery department. Leah Krasne and her son Les managed the notions and dry goods. Ike Krasne and his son Albert managed the women's wear.



Peoples Store

Krasne life in Council Bluffs centered around the store and neighborhood where they lived. It is remarkable that so many brothers and in-laws could participate in the family business. Everyone's home was open to all the cousins and during the 1920-1940s the store experienced great prosperity.

We have the history from then, to now, but my curiosity regarding our roots is not yet satisfied. I will continue my investigation from 1888 backwards in an attempt to find the answer.

This ongoing personal project has now extended to a general passion for genealogy. As I talk with more Jewish families and learn their roots, I realize the close connections we all have. Many of our ancestors lived in "Poland/Russia". The history of the European Jews dates back over a millennium. Poland was home to the largest and most significant Jewish community in Europe and served as the center for Jewish culture because of a long period of religious tolerance and prosperity. According to some sources, about three-quarters of all Jews lived in Poland by the middle of the 16th century.

The weakening of the Commonwealth and growing religious strife (due to the Protestant Reformation and Catholic Counter-Reformation), Poland's traditional tolerance began to wane from the 17th century onward. After the partitions of Poland in 1795 and the destruction of Poland as a sovereign state, Polish Jews were subject to the laws of the partitioning powers, primarily the increasingly anti-Semitic Russian Empire, but also Austro-Hungary and Kingdom of Prussia.



Wedding photo of Shirley Kulakofsky and Thama Krasne Friedman

Many Jewish families originate from this same area and many left during the nineteenth or early twentieth century. They were in search of a better life and a new start in America where they could live free from the growing fears of death and destruction. When the immigrants arrived in this country they often sought out family or neighbors who had already resettled here. Our ties to each other criss-cross often and the family who lived next door to you in your childhood home, may often have been neighbors of your descendants. Or, you may even find you are related...

It continues to amaze me just how much the worldwide Jewish Community has in common. Though I am certain we will not be able to find all the answers to our Ancestral Families, it is certain we will have some amazing breakthroughs and find a new meaning to the word "Mischpocha".

I already have begun the research for several families here in Omaha, in addition to my own. I hope to spend the next couple of months interviewing several of the elderly residents of our community. Their knowledge is the starting point for any family history. They often can remember their childhood, their parents, grandparents, and siblings. They can remember stories that one-day will be lost to us if we don't document them now.

The goal of this project is to unite the Jewish community in Omaha by researching ancestral roots here in America and in the home countries of our families. I strive to use current methods to investigate the family history of yesterday. The knowledge available through the Internet is incredible. Sources such as Ellis Island, Jewish Gen, OneGreatFamily, etc. are often easily accessible, and require only a modest fee or donation to access their files.

As our parents and grandparents leave us, so do the stories and our sense of roots. My hope is to preserve the documents and stories that prove they were here, real people with real lives just like ours.

Donations to the NJHS

In Memory: of **Sheldon Kushner** by Mr. and Mrs. Marshall Kushner, Eunie and Norm Denenberg, Mike and Ducky Milder, Buddy and Shirley Goldstein, Ron and Beth Brodkey, Don and Ozzie Nogg, Lisa Micley, Phyllis Bittner, Paula and Larry Albert, Pamela Martin, Barbara McCulloch, Lela Shanks, Jean Shaw, Barbara Straus, Marcia Wythens, Louis and Rose Leviticus, Karen and Oliver Pollak, Janet Jenson, Gail Wishnow, Max Neiden, Alan Tomkins, Amnon and Beth Dotan, Iris and Marty Ricks, Helen and Tuffy Epstein, Helen Rifkin, Dottie Rosenblum, Sue Schreiber, Joanie and Terry Bernstein; **Rosaline Epstein:** by Bob Belgrade, Helen and Tuffy Epstein, NJHS Board and Staff, George Shafer, Phyllis Bittner, Karen and Oliver Pollak; **Lorraine Abrahamson** by NJHS Board and Staff, George Shafer, Marty and Iris Ricks; **Pauline Guss** by Oliver and Karen Pollak; **Shirley Kirshenbaum** by Karen and Oliver Pollak; **Gene Kaplan** by Oliver and Karen Pollak; **Maynard Saylan** by NJHS Board and Staff; **Anita Kulakofsky** by the NJHS Board and Staff; of **Mary Fellman** by Dr. Larry and Sivi Roffman; **Leonard Lewis** by Myrna and Kevee Kirshenbaum, NJHS Board and Staff, Mort and Muriel Greenberg; **Is Tretiak** by Susie and Marvin Cohn, Midge and Bill Bowers, Debbi and Larry Josephson, Helen and Tuffy Epstein, Mr. and Mrs. Louis Blumkin, Bob Belgrade, Phyllis MacAdam; **Bob Gerelick** by George Shafer; **Hilda Gottlieb** by Cantor Leo and Annette Fettman; **Dorothy and Louis Lipp** by Susan and David Kentoff; **Tham Friedman** by Elaine and Bob Krasne, Shirley and Buddy Goldstein, Allan and Janie Murow, George Shafer, Judy and Larry Brookstein, Sherri and Gary Green, Iris and Marty Ricks, Barbara and Marshall Kushner, Kevee and Myrna Kirshenbaum, Helen Rifkin, Helen and Tuffy Epstein, Gail and Phillip Raznick, Rita Novak, Margaret and Lazar Turetsky, Debbi and Larry Josephson, NJHS Board and Staff, Patty and Mike Sherman, Ann and Donald Goldstein, Jill and Mark Belmont, David and Dana Mann, David and Debi Kutler, Dottie Rosenblum; **Rita Rosenblum** by Renee Corcoran; **Ellie and Henry Greenberg** by Rabbi Jerry and Cyrille Kane; **Babe Galemba** by Renee and Mo Handleman, Harold Siporin; **Diane Bogdonoff** by Renee and Mo Handleman; **Maggie Conti's father** by George Shafer, Louise and Steve Abrahamson, NJHS Board and Staff; **Sally Venger** by Rocky Stern, Dick Rochman, Helen and Tuffy Epstein, Vickie Perlmeter; **Eli Jabenis** by Helen and Tuffy Epstein, Harold Siporin; **Steve Greenberg** by Harold Siporin; **Bernice Wolfson** by George Shafer, Karen and Oliver Pollak; **Bud Greenspan** by George Shafer, NJHS Board and Staff, Debbi and Larry Josephson, Helen Rifkin; **Rose Katzman** by Mickey Stern, Catherine Davis and Family; **Lloyd Maller** by Bud Slosburg; **Julius Falkenstein** by Julian Falk; **Doris Rosinsky** by George Shafer; **Pearl Herzog** by George Shafer, NJHS Board and Staff, Kevee and Myrna Kirshenbaum; **Bus Rubin** by George Shafer, NJHS Board and Staff, Helen Rifkin; **Dr. Sidney Merlis** by NJHS Board and Staff

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Other Occasions: **Larry and Sivi Roffman** grandson's Bar Mitzvah by George Shafer; **Sally and Ed Malashock's** anniversary by Myrna and Kevee Kirshenbaum's, anniversary of **Sandra and Kenneth Freed** by Phyllis Bittner; wedding of **Rabbi Jonathon and Miriam Gross** by Sandra Belgrade, Bob Belgrade, NJHS Board and Staff; appreciation of **Bill Ramsey and Betty Shrier** by Yale and Litzie Trustin; anniversary of **Marcia and Shel Kushner** by Iris and Marty Ricks, NJHS Board and Staff, Jill, Mark, Jessica, Lindsay and Colin Belmont, Barbara and Marshall Kushner

GROCERY STORE INFORMATION NEEDED

The NJHS would like to hear from families with GROCERY STORE stories from the Nebraska and Council Bluffs areas including photographs and memorabilia. Our next edition of our journal, *Memories of the Midwest*, will be about "Mom & Pop" stores and their connection to the Old Market. Please call Renee at 334-6442 or email njhs@jewishomaha.org for information.

NJHS MISSION STATEMENT

The Mission of the Nebraska Jewish Historical Society is to preserve the histories of the Jewish families who settled in Nebraska and Council Bluffs, Iowa. The NJHS will promote the acquisition, cataloging and use of the collected materials which depict this history by: participating in conferences; issuing publications to members and professionals; fostering research; and promoting museum projects and related education and cultural activities.

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We have available for all occasions, cards for donations of \$5.00, \$10.00 and \$25.00 and up. Also available are packets of six (\$5.00 cards) for \$25.00. Please use the form below and we will send the appropriate card. Please make your checks payable to the Nebraska Jewish Historical Society, 333 South 132nd Street, Omaha, NE 68154.

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OR call the NJHS office at (402) 334-6441 between 10:00 AM & 4:00 PM Monday through Thursday. Contributions can be made to the NJHS Fund or the Mary Fellman Permanent Enrichment Fund.