

The Family Slight

News About Our Family and Family Website

Newest Members:

It is such a pleasure to welcome our newest family member registrations: These are by Harry & Marlene Olenberg and Jennifer Olenberg!

Harry, like Ben Director, has proven that you can be an "angry young man" at any age! (That is said with the most respect & admiration.) Or, as Ben describes himself, "Still shouting after all these years."

Jennifer is the wife of Roberto Olenberg, son of Isaac and Nieves Olenberg. The Olenberg clan, of Havana, Cuba for many years is an important part of the Miami, Florida area community. We can't wait until you share some Cuban/Caribbean recipes, that have been adapted to Jewish tastes, to be added to our family cookbook!

Pictures of Harry, Marlene and their whole clan, plus a number of great pictures of the Olenbergs, are in our photo folders.

Back, Back, Back in Time:

Though it won't be definite until more original documents are in hand, the Gilner ancestry of the Olenbergs (Frank-Bernard-Simcha, etc), thru their mother, Sara Gilner, appears to have been traced back another generation, to 1782!

Going backwards, there was:

Sara (Sora/Sura) Ruchla Gilner (born 1871); daughter of...

David Maier Gilner (born 1847, & his wife Feyga, born 1847); son of...

Joseph Isaac(?) Gilner (born 1799-1800, and his wife Chana, born 1810); son of...

(I believe:) Zelig Gilner (born 1782, & wife Sara, born 1787).

If verified, this means that the youngest Olenberg descendants can now trace some of their heritage 7 or 8 generations back to their 5 or 6-greats grandparents!

Conclusive documentation connecting the Olenbergs and the "Atlanta" Gilners, is not in hand, but it is believed that our southern family descends from two of Sara Gilner Olenberg's brothers. That would mean that Sara's father, Maier David Gilner (b1847), is the common ancestor of many of us.

The 2 brothers were:

...**Moishe**, father of Abraham-a/k/a "Al", still living and married to Anita. Dr. David Gilner says Moise left Russia to avoid

being drafted to fight in the Russo-Japanese war.. (So, "draft-dodging" to avoid having to fight in a silly war is nothing new!)

...**Itshak**, father of the Abraham who married Mary Dubin. (Elaine Gilner and Dr. Donald Gilner's father and mother)

Genealogy Urban Legends:

Any place or topic has its own "urban legends", meaning common beliefs that are incorrect. It has been found that Jewish genealogy has at least 3 of them:

1: "The folks at Ellis Island changed my ancestors' name for convenience or because they couldn't understand them."

Immigration authorities insist that this never happened, for two reasons:

First, there were always abundant Ellis Island translators who spoke Yiddish, Polish, Russian, Italian, German, etc.

Second, agents of the actual shipping companies almost invariably created the arriving passenger lists. These agents spoke the language of, and were usually stationed in, the native country of the immigrants to encourage ticket sales.

2: "All of the records of my ancestry were most likely destroyed in WWII."

Only synagogue records were lost to a very large degree. Civil records are, by far, the most helpful documents, and an amazing number of them still exist. In just one country, Poland, 2,000,000 Jews vanished, but surviving birth, death and marriage registration records exceed 9,000,000. These can go back as far as the 1780s and sometimes earlier.

3: "My older family members remember little of our ancestry or family history."

They probably remember more than you can imagine. The shame is that few are ever asked to recount what they can tell. So, very large amounts of historical and anecdotal information are lost with them.

It's in the Records

What's Available & New Clues:

The tracing of our Gilner family lines will ultimately be relatively easy because the Ostrow-Mazowiecka records exist almost unbroken from 1780 to 1903 and the Gilners were almost exclusively from Ostrow-Maz, Poland since the 1780's.

HAPPY ROSH HASHONAH

It is also exciting that, when enough money is available to buy all of the Ostrow-Maz records, they will include limited, but further, record information all the way up to about 1933...a 150-year unbroken chain of records!

As for the Olenbergs and Olembergs, Frank Olenberg's birth registration and those of all of the siblings are available. But the actual birth registration of Mordechai Mendel Olenberg's birth may never be available because the Wyszkw records are only extant from 1874, five years after he was born, unfortunately.

There is possible documentation that Mordechai Mendel Olenberg's mother and father originally came from Vilkija (near Kaunas, a/k/a Kovno), Lithuania to Wyszkw before MMO was born. But this must be positively determined.

There is evidence that at least 4 Olenbergs were deported to Russia/Siberia from Bialystok, before its ghetto was liquidated. There is every possibility that some of these deportees, likely the first cousins of Frank/Bernard/Simcha, may have survived the war.

The Chaleff-Director-Directovich ancestry still remains elusive with little evidence of the family's existence outside of Grodno, Belarus, before WWI.

Peekskill & "The Quarry"



In our Places More Than People photo folder can be found pictures of the Croton Park Colony ("Peekskill"), including this recent "birdseye" view of the Quarry, that span over 80 years.

What's in a Name:

Contrary to some opinions, neither Olenberg nor Olemberg is the more appropriate spelling of the name. There are actually more Polish Olemberg records than Olenbergs. The variation of the name's spelling is as arbitrary as Chaleff/Chalef, Gilner/Gillner or Directovich/Derektowich.

Rapoport derives from Germany in the mid 1400's & from Kohanic Italian Jews from about 1540. This is very unusual as standard Jewish surnames were rare until just before the 1800's.

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Website Visits Have Exceeded 2,600!