

Why Olenberg.org?

Olenberg.org was conceived as a means to archive & disseminate information about the history and ancestry of the Olenberg Family, and related clans. But it is hoped that the website can also live up to a slogan of “Bringing the Family Together”. It would be valuable even if it were only a resource for memorializing, and teaching, where we came from. But, rather than simply an archive, that might only be looked at once or twice, it's value is in providing a means for the family to connect/reconnect with each other and share who we are now. The specific details of the website's intent follow:

PURPOSE: This website is intended to:

1. **Bring Family Together** by providing the means for family members to contact and communicate with other family members that they might never have known, and provide a means to reconnect with those whom contact has been lost. We have a common heritage that should be celebrated. All too often we have permitted distances or petty disagreements to keep us apart. Though our family, branches and clans, are growing and thriving, we began as, and still are, by all reasonable standards, a small family. We can only benefit by coming together, joining together and networking together. As Benjamin Franklin once said, *“If we don’t hang together, we will all, most assuredly, hang separately!”*
2. **Encourage an Interest in Our Origins and in Family History Research** by all members of the family. While a large number of documents from Europe that one would have “logically” assumed had been lost to us, have been found to be available, that resource does not cover our entire history. The intent was not to pre-complete all family history research but, rather, to encourage an on-going, collaborative whole-family project, by every living generation.
3. **Provide An Archival Repository** for images of people, places and events from the past, in addition to family historical documents & translations. These are scattered throughout the family, and generally not accessible to all of us. The option exists to provide other archives, such as audio interviews. A picture is one thing, but an audio interview with anecdotal information could be priceless.
4. **Provide a Graphic Family Tree** that can, collaboratively, be added to by family members and viewed online; as well as basic genealogical tools, forms and resources, pre-selected from the confusing variety available, which will aid in individual family research. Picturing relationships in one’s mind is difficult for many of us. A graphic illustration is very helpful. However, until now, most family genealogical research started “from scratch”, with the new “researcher” probably asking the same questions and duplicating the same investigations that others have done. With no means to conveniently share other’s findings, there was little choice. But, with the Internet and new software, each new family

researcher can build on a base of family information that others have already provided, and share their additions with the rest of the family.

5. **Provide a Fun, Stimulating, Interactive Family “Hangout”** thru the availability of chat rooms, game rooms, forums, blogs, etc, which will attract all ages of family and encourage them to stay and return.

6. **Act as a Nucleus and Means for “Mitzvohs”** such as a non-profit family foundation to distribute an annual award, or even a scholarship, to an appropriate young family member demonstrating excellence in academics or the arts; support regional charities of interest to family members; provide a means for the creative or artistic amongst us to share their works with others, thru a dedicated online retail store, with a portion of the profits from such a store being retained to help support the charitable works.

Who Makes Up Our Family?

So, who are the Olenbergs? Who is considered part of the extended family? For the purposes of Olenberg.org, “Olenbergs” include the descendents of Mordecai Mendel Olenberg, his wife Sura, and their siblings, as well as the descendents of the parents of MM Olenberg, and his spouse, and their siblings. These inclusions mean that the website is for branches of the family that are, or were, named Chaleff, Director, Direktovich, Dubin, Gilner, Olenberg & Olenberg, at this time, though other branches are probably appropriate under this definition of "family".

By our very nature, our definition of family must include the various dispersed and diverse, adjacent branches of the family...the descendents of those “uncles” that were really great-uncles and those “uncles” that were really cousins. Tossed together by times and circumstances, these clans, for many of us, have been "family", as much as our own parents, brothers or sisters.

By world standards, the strict descendents of Mordecai Mendel are relatively few, and even with the side-clans, we are still a small family, but we have "made our mark" out of proportion to our size. While the surname Olenberg is, itself, vanishing, the descendants of the Olenbergs, and related clans, comprise a growing, thriving family of talented artists, businessmen and professionals people with much to offer the world, and each other.

Olenberg.org, as an archive, a tool and a means to bond us together, is for all of us, whether named Chaleff, Director, Direktovich, Dubin, Gilner, Olenberg or otherwise. As Ben Franklin once said (paraphrased...), "If we don't all hang together, we will all hang separately!"