**Special points of interest:**

- Annual Dinner Meeting
- Meet Your New Society Members
- Yizkor Book and Zambrow Cemetery Project
- Memories from Zambrow
- The Early Days of the United Zembrover Society

## United Zembrover Society Dinner Meeting 2007

The United Zembrover Society held its 2007 annual dinner meeting on Sunday, May 6, at Shang-Chai Kosher Chinese restaurant on Flatbush Avenue, in Brooklyn, New York. The current members were introduced to several new ones, and everyone was able to get acquainted with each other.

Jerome Jainchill, the society's president, and Aaron Maslow, the corresponding secretary-treasurer, led the meeting, and of course as was needed, business matters were discussed.



One of the important questions that was posed to us was what should be the functions of the society in the present day. When our ancestors came over to the United States, they brought over their landsmanshaft, or mutual aid societies. In the early days, hundreds of members would meet. Nowadays, over the passing of time, attrition, and the general feeling of the descendants of native Zembrovers not to follow in their ancestor's footsteps and join the society, the numbers and funds have been dwindling.



Questions were posed to the members who attended. How should we be spending what funds we have? Over the prior years, the society's custom donated money to worthwhile causes in Israel. The members present voted to donate \$1,000 each to Shaar Hanegev Sapir College and Magen David Adom. Nonetheless, those present wanted to ascertain the opinions of non-attending members and Mr. Maslow was authorized to send out a survey to all members to see how they felt about future expenditures of money and other questions concerning the society. (Survey responses are still coming in.) Then the question was raised about whether we should be spending money to fix up the Jewish cemetery in Zambrow itself, or would our money better be spent hiring a translator to convert into English the many chapters of Jewish life in Zambrow in the town's Yizkor book, as much of the text is in Yiddish and Hebrew. These questions would be answered once estimates were obtained as to what the costs would be for each project. (Subsequent to the meeting, the officers sent \$180 to the group which cleaned up the Zambrow cemetery.) Also, we would see the results of the mail survey.

It was stressed to all that we must encourage our own family members to join the society if we want our society to be viable in the coming years.

### The Zambrow Forum

Your newsletter editor Steven Lasky is also the founder and "director" of the virtual (Internet only) museum of Jewish family history called "The Museum of Family History." The website can be found at [www.museumoffamilyhistory.com](http://www.museumoffamilyhistory.com). The purpose of the site is to honor and preserve the memory of our ancestors for the present and future generations. You should visit the site if you haven't already (best overview is via the Site Map page.) Of special interest to society members is the "Zambrow Forum." Here you can find some information about Zambrow, and biographical information about some of our family who came from there, along with audio versions of their biographies. One can also use the message board to pose questions to other Zembrovers. Also visit the main Zambrow page at [www.museumoffamilyhistory.com/lee-zambrow.htm](http://www.museumoffamilyhistory.com/lee-zambrow.htm).

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## The Yizkor Book Project



A Yizkor Book is thought of as being a “book of remembrance,” a compilation of recollections of Jewish life in a particular town. They are a series of stories (and photographs) often told by those who either emigrated before the start of World War II, or by those who were fortunate to survive its horrors. These books serve as memorials to these times, opportunities for our ancestors to tell us of their individual and family histories, so that their traditions, way of life, and beloved family members will never be forgotten.

Saying this, for the most part the text in these books are written in the writer’s native language, or at least the language that the person felt most comfortable writing in (usually Hebrew or Yiddish.) So, while these books are valuable memoirs of Jewish life that should be dear to us and read by us with interest, most of us don’t read, nor can we translate Yiddish or Hebrew. Therefore, how can we read or expect future generations to read, appreciate and cherish such memories?

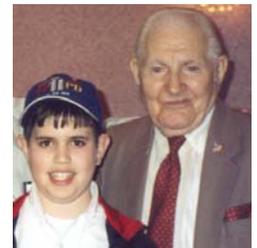
The Zambrow Yizkor Book has a brief English summary of what is mostly in Hebrew and English. The society entered into an agreement with JewishGen, Inc., the world’s major Jewish genealogical society and Web site operator, to coordinate the translation. Society Vice-President Stacy Hankin is our coordinator for the translation project. At our May 4, 2008 meeting, we will again discuss whether to make a larger financial commitment to having the book translated and review the progress made so far.

The recollections of Jewish life in Zambrow, contained in the yizkor book, are valuable testimonials given to us by our ancestors. The Zambrow Yizkor Book paints for us many pictures of what life was like for our family members and fellow Jews in our ancestral shtetl. For us as Jews, being able to make a connection to past generations gives us continuity and may help strengthen our familial roots. To do this, to honor the memories of those who can now only talk to us through the pages of a Yizkor book, we need to consider funding well such a translation project, to preserve the memories of those Zembrovers who came before us.

## Anti-Semitism in Zambrow

from longtime society vice-president Hy Yellin A”H in a 2005 interview conducted by Adina Steinberg

“I went one time to swim. I didn’t know they were coming. We called them *shkotszim*; it means young Gentiles. They came around to swim in the water in the big part. If I couldn’t swim, I would’ve drowned. On the same street where I lived there was a Polish butcher. He had a son. They had a dog. I passed by there and he sicced the dog on me. He ripped my pants. When I used to walk in the street, if I saw a bunch of Gentile boys coming, I used to go across. On Christmas eve I didn’t go into town. They (my family) wouldn’t let me go out: “Don’t go out, they’ll kill you.” In other words, life wasn’t so good. It was bad for a Jew. I came to America because my father was here. I became a citizen of the United States when I was eight years old on my father’s papers. I was fifteen when I arrived here. I got married to a Zembrover girl. She came here when she was six years old. And we were married for forty-five years....”

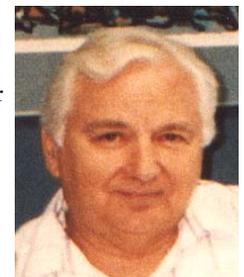


As a child in Zambrow, Hy Yellin went with his mother to have chickens slaughtered by Rabbi Simcha Maslow, grandfather of society Treasurer Aaron Maslow. In 2005, Hy met Rabbi Maslow’s namesake and great-grandson, Simcha Maslow.

“I remember a lot of things. The town is in front of my eyes...”

## Meet New Member Morris Spector

I am the child of a former Zambrovite, Mnucha Choroszcz Spector. She was born in Zambrow in 1899. After the passing of her father, she came to the Golden Medina in 1920 to live with her sister Chia Fejga. We would receive letters and pictures from her brothers and sister Masha until the war. Then silence. After the war we heard from a survivor, her cousin Devorah Choroszcz Friedman who said she alone survived. I became interested in researching my family roots in 1985 after her passing. Aside from a few deadends, I have been very successful – tracing my maternal and paternal ancestry back to the late 1600s. Among the maternal family names are: Chmiel, Kawkiewicz, Slepowicz, Burakiewicz, Zelazo, Kuropatwa, Sokol, etc.



I am married with three daughters and six grandchildren. I spend my working time as a graphic designer and an international marketing consultant. Military service: US Coast Guard and US Army.

## Meet New Member Steve Lasky

Steve is a semi-retired optometrist from Long Island who first became interested in his family history five years ago when he found old photos of his grandparents and other members of his family he had never seen before. He was amazed that, four decades after his grandparents passed away, he could still see (and learn about) his grandparents and others so many years after their passing. He believes that just because our beloved family members are no longer alive, it doesn't mean that our memories of them or of their presence on this earth needs to die with them. We, as Jews, need to do all we can to make sure our legacy, and that of our ancestors, is passed down from one generation to the next.

Steve now spends most all his days creating new exhibitions for his website, a virtual (Internet only) museum of Jewish family history. He believes that our Jewish families deserve to have their own museum! Not only does he include genealogically-relevant material for all to peruse, but he also features exhibitions on those who well-represent the Jewish faith and their people.

Steve has spoken about his website in front of groups, the last time being at the yearly IAJGS (International Association of Jewish Genealogy Societies) in Salt Lake City (last July). He previously was awarded the "IAJGS Salutes" award for his contribution to Jewish genealogy.

Steve's paternal grandfather Michel Laski was from Zambrow. He left for the United States in 1902, though already married with one small baby, with the intention of preparing for his family's eventual immigration two years later.



## The Jewish Cemetery in Zambrow

The Jewish cemetery in Zambrow is not unlike many extant Jewish cemeteries in Eastern Europe. So many of the smaller cemeteries, especially, stand in countries with minimal or non-existent Jewish populations. Many of these cemeteries were devastated not only during World War II, but in its aftermath. Many of the cemeteries are now obscured by vastly overgrown vegetation; others are filled with matzevot (gravestones) that are broken, toppled to the ground or otherwise buried under much vegetation or soil. One can only wonder how many matzevot once filled our sacred burial grounds before the Second World War.

Saying this, there is little motivation on the part of the local townsfolk to care for our cemeteries. For many these grounds are relics of a past time they'd rather not even talk about, let alone care for. Most towns will certainly not allocate any of their local funding to the upkeep of these cemeteries that are no longer in use, e.g. funding for the clearing of the fields of vegetation, the proper erection of the stones, the building of fences around these cemeteries (once the boundaries have been properly determined), etc. As is the case even in the United States, cemeteries are often targets for vandalism and desecration.

There remain a small number of extant gravestones in the Zambrow, Poland Jewish cemetery, although no doubt more of our ancestors are buried in locations where matzevot no longer stand. We have this year allocated some money for its cleanup. At our next meeting in 2008, we shall consider the possibility of increasing our funding toward this cleanup and preservation of our sacred ancestral graveyard.

**"Show me your  
cemeteries and I will  
tell you what kind of  
people you have." -**

**Benjamin Franklin**

## Meet New Members Ron and Carole Miller

Ron recently retired from a successful career as president of a military electronics manufacturing company. His grandfather Benny Miller (Mlecarz), the son of Moshe Enoch and Chana Zissel nee Charfa, immigrated here in 1910 from Zambrow. Benny was very active as treasurer in the Zembrower Branch #149 of the Workman's Circle. He was instrumental in selecting the site of the WC's Camp in Hopewell Junction, N.Y. Ron's mother and her two sisters were counselors there in the 1930s. Ron is a very active genealogist, having started his research in 1960. He currently has identified over 2700 relatives.



Ron and Carole Miller at annual dinner meeting.

Carole and Ron, who live in Dix Hills on Long Island, have two daughters: Elisa Braverman who, with her husband Peter and their son Jason also live in Dix Hills, and Deborah, who lives in Great Neck, N.Y.

### Meet New Member Stacy Hankin

Stacy Hankin is the great-granddaughter of Harry (Hershel) Stein, who served as society president many decades ago. A senior business analyst with BioInformatics, LLC, a market research firm serving the life science industry, Stacy resides in Gaithersburg, Maryland. She uses Internet Jewish genealogical tools to research her family. Stacy was elected a vice-president last May and is our liaison to JewishGen for the yizkor book translation project. Her mom Susan, Harry Stein’s granddaughter, and sister Nicole have also joined.



### This Day in our History

Meeting called for January 26, 1947



“The United Zembrover Relief and Ladies' Auxiliary invite you to a MEMORIAL MEETING for the fallen Zembrover Jews... It is your duty as friends of the people who were born in your hometown Zembrove to honor the memory of the fallen heroes and martyrs who gave their lives that we Jews in America might live... We are glad to know that survivors of Zembrove are now located in all parts of the world, Poland, Russia, France, Germany, Austria, Italy, Palestine and Shanghai. We are in touch with all our Zembrover that now live in the United States... We want you to come and hear for yourself the letters of thanks from your own people of Zembrove. Come and hear the greetings from your families and friends.”

### Welcome, New Members

The following people became members of our society since May of 2007:

- |                           |                        |                    |
|---------------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| Shirley Fineman           | Ronald & Carole Miller | Robert & Fay Sklar |
| Nicole Hankin             | David & Emily Rosen    | Zalman Slowik      |
| Stacy Hankin              | Harriet & Burt Rublin  | Morris Spector     |
| Susan Hankin              | Amy Rublin             | Larry Taub         |
| Louis & Barbara Jainchill | David Rublin           |                    |
| Steven Lasky              | Annette Siegel         |                    |

### Photo from Zambrow

Hy Yellin (nee Chaim Jelen), front row center, and his friends, date unknown



## A Short History of the Zembrover Society

excerpts of an interview with 2nd Vice-President Gershon Tabak,  
conducted in December 2005 by Steven Lasky

Actually the Zembrover society is way over one hundred years old. One of the ex-Society presidents compared it to the Forverts (the Yiddish newspaper “The Forward”) when the society was created. In the same era as the Forverts was created, the Zembrover society was also created.

What kind of element came to the Zembrover society? Actually there came a religious element. Religious people came, and there were two things at first that they had to do. First of all, they raised money for a cemetery plot, and the very first plot was at Washington Cemetery. Washington Cemetery is on Ocean Parkway and Bay Parkway in Brooklyn. And over there the very first people from the society are buried. Now the cemetery is already closed—it's full. And what else did they do? They raised money to buy a building, to make a shul, so that the members would be able to daven in a shul. And this shul was here on 216 Henry St (Lower East Side of Manhattan). I came into the Zembrover Society in 1947. At that time, they still had a shul, and they had a *magid* at the shul. A *magid* is a professional preacher—he's actually like a rabbi. He's knowledgeable in Torah, and everything else, like a rabbi. He was an elderly person and the society supported him.



There were those Zembrovers who came to the United State—there were a lot of them—some of them were business people—they created some businesses—stores, small businesses... And one helped the other, because in those years, there was no Social Security. There was no welfare. Everybody had to live on his own strengths economically. If somebody came to the United States before I came, the citizens from Zambrow who were already living in the United States had to guarantee the prospective immigrant that he would be able to support himself—something like this.

One helped the other in recommending—in that time there were boarders—this doesn't happen so much during your time, but during my time there were boarders—I was myself a boarder. A boarder is—if you had an apartment, a family and you had three or four rooms—in one room you took in a boarder, at that time, for twenty dollars a month. Twenty dollars was a lot of money then—it's not now—and you were a boarder. So this was it—the new immigrants were boarders until they started to get a job—as shoemakers, tailors, other professions—until they could accumulate some money. And then they rented an apartment or something like this. Little by little.

So the society in my time—I was very young in that time, the youngest that came into the society—there were a lot of committees. There were committees on how to organize affairs in order to raise money. In order to make money, there was an auxiliary—a ladies' auxiliary. In that time in the ladies' auxiliary there were about fifty women or maybe more, because we had in our membership when I came to the society over three hundred members or more. As a matter-of-fact, if I came late to a meeting, I already couldn't even find a place where I could sit down, because it was already full. We had committees to help people. It was called a hospitality committee. Now, there's nothing like that.

There was also what they called a “Hospitaler” who is, if somebody got sick, they'd call the Hospitaler. His duty was to come over and visit the sick person. In case the sick person was needy economically, he gave them some money. So this was the job of the Hospitaler. The Society had their own doctors, so to speak. When I came in the society, they sent me to the Zembrover doctor. He was not a Zembrover doctor, but he was a doctor. He took care of the Zembrovers. Two dollars I had to pay. So he examined me. I had to be healthy in order to go into the society, something like this. So they examined me to make sure that I was healthy...

## Photo Gallery

### Zembrover Memorial Meeting in Israel, date unknown



There was a large contingent of native Zembrovers who emigrated to Israel. There they formed a landsmanshaft society, an organization of people, all of whom had some connection to Zambrow. For the most part, they were born there, though spouses and children may have attended the meeting.

Though through time and attrition the Zembrover Society in Israel is no longer active, the society served its members well by offering their members a place in which to meet and feel once again connected to their landsleit (members of their home town.)

If you have any photographs of Zambrow or family from Zambrow, please contact Steve Lasky at [steve@museumoffamilyhistory.com](mailto:steve@museumoffamilyhistory.com).



left to right Mrs. Burstein, Lina Karlinsky,  
Mordechai Blumrosen, Shmulke Karlinsky,  
Zava Marmary



left to right, Burstein, Tabak, Neomi Vax,  
Malka Greenberg, Jabkowsky

# Photo Gallery

United Zembrover Society Annual Dinner Meeting  
Brooklyn, New York, May 2007



## United Zembrover Society, Inc.

Jerome Jainchill, President  
 Gershon Tabak, 2nd Vice-President  
 Stacy Hankin, 3rd Vice-President

Aaron Maslow, Corresp. Sec'y-Treasurer  
 Roberta Jainchill, Recording Sec'y &  
 Cemetery Liaison

## 2008 Annual Meeting

The annual meeting of the society will be held on Sunday, May 4, at 1:00 P.M., at Shang-Chai Kosher Chinese Restaurant, 2189 Flatbush Avenue, Brooklyn, NY.

Agenda to include:

- Election of officers
- Treasurer's Report
- Results of mail survey of membership
- Priorities in expenditures and donations
- Yizkor book project
- Zambrow & New York cemeteries
- Revision of bylaws
- Revision of dues

A \$10,000 Israeli bond matures this November. A determination on the status of the principal must be made.

Please respond promptly to the meeting notice.

## Comments & Submissions

Please submit any comments about and submissions for this newsletter to Steve Lasky, editor, at 25 N. Summit Dr.; N. Massapequa, NY 11758; (516) 541-7824.  
 Email: [steve725@optonline.net](mailto:steve725@optonline.net)

## In Memoriam



The United Zembrover Society wishes to send its heartfelt condolences to the family of our landsman Max (Mendel) Srebrnik, who passed away on April 15, 2007. He was born and raised in Zambrow, Poland and was a survivor of the Auschwitz concentration camp. He was a wonderful man who enjoyed giving talks to both Jews and non-Jews about his experiences during the Holocaust. He will be missed by all who knew and loved him.

Also another one of our landsmen, Hy Yellin, one of our vice presidents, passed away the following month. Both are interred in the United Zembrover Society burial grounds in Beth David Cemetery in Elmont, Long Island, New York.

Anne Cohen passed away in January 2008, and the society has only recently learned of the passing of Louis Goldbrum, financial secretary in the 1960s, in November 2006, and of Fay Levitz.