

# *Der Bay*

## *The International Anglo-Yiddish Newsletter*

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April 2006

Vol. XVI No. 4

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### **The International Association of Yiddish Clubs Tenth Conference: *Marvelous Evening Entertainment***

In each issue *Der Bay* reports on another phase of the IAYC conferences. Last issue covered the special commemorative Conference Journal. Your editor hopes that you will give serious thought to honoring your group/special person and supporting the IAYC. Remember that all of the monthly updates are on the website.

#### **THURSDAY EVENING:**

Katz Family of Milwaukee Opening Night

- Jewish Peoples Philharmonic Chorus  
Premiere Yiddish Chorus  
Binyumen Schaechter, Conductor
- Musical Review:  
Life & Songs of Seymour Rechtzeit  
Mitch Smolkin, Performer, Director  
Zalmen Mlotek, Piano Accompanist
- My Favorite Yiddish Songs  
Phyllis Berk, Songstress  
Zalmen Mlotek, Piano Accompanist

#### **FRIDAY EVENING:**

Mayses, Muzik un Mitsves

- Cantor Hale Porter, Blessings  
Los Angeles Based Singer
- Hester Street Troupe in Concert  
#1 New Jersey Klezmer Group
- Cookie Blattman the Tamarac Belle
- Yale Strom & Elizabeth Schwartz

#### **SATURDAY EVENING:**

Workmen's Circle Gala Banquet

- IAYC Yiddish Achievement Award
- Paul Melrood: IAYC Pres., Presenter
- Chana Mlotek: Musicologist, Recipient
- Peter Pepper: Pres., Workmen's Circle

#### **AMOL IZ GEVEN A MAYSE**

- Adrienne Cooper, W.C. Asst. Exec. Dir.
- Zalmen Mlotek, Folksbiene, Exec Dir.
- Bob Abelson, Baritone
- Phyllis Berk, Songstress

The International Association of Yiddish Clubs Tenth Conference will be held on July 6-9, 2006 at the Glenpointe Marriott Hotel in Teaneck, NJ. Enjoy the warm hospitality of the hosts, and The Jewish Center of Teaneck Yiddish Club.

#### **CONTACT INFORMATION**

**Conference Chairman: Sam Kutner**  
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**Hosts: Gregg & Stephanie Hudis**  
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**See the registration form on the inside cover. Visit *Der Bay's* website to learn all about the beautiful Glenpointe Marriott Hotel, the Teaneck Community and New York City.**

## Tate Tsayt un Mame Loshn

By Philip *Fishl* Kutner

It was a marriage made in Heaven. Like most, it has had its periods of sunshine and its periods of rain, or should I say—rainstorms. They met a thousand years ago, a millennium. The marriage has spawned many children. Some of whom have grown up and brought joy to their tate-mame, and like what happens in all families, some have been the bane of their parent's existence.

Let's take a closer look at this couple and see what this marriage has really been like. In the beginning times were difficult, but the pair stuck very close together, and their children multiplied. As the children left home to become merchants in every land, their stature grew and this was wonderful.

Of course the offspring met many obstacles and were like gypsies on the move as their businesses and lives were pummeled by both the governments and their neighbors. Nevertheless, they were able to grow, raise their families, give the boys a very good education and make their mame very proud.

As sometimes happens in some marriages, tate began to look at other women. At first these were only mere flirtations, but as time went by they turned into clandestine affairs and finally into downright infidelity.

This writer is not one who spreads unfound rumors and creates marital discord, nor is this newsletter a yellow tabloid journal, but let me be truthful. As one who is an honest roving reporter, the *emes* is the *emes*. The marriage got in trouble.

Because tate kept on staying out later and later, even not coming home some nights, and because some of her children began to stray from the old ways, mame become ill. She went to a hospital where most of her *kishkes* were eviscerated. They almost removed her broken heart, but she pulled through and is now in a convalescent home.

Lo and behold tate is finding out what we all know, the grass may be greener on the other side of the fence, but there is no place like home. Mame is very forgiving. As tate is coming home, albeit disheveled from all of his trysts and escapades, she is prepared to forgive him if he promises not to stray.

Even the children in the Home of Homes now are beginning to remember mame. Yes, mame may be in a convalescent home, but when she comes out, she and tate will unite once again. She will not be sent to a moyshev-zkeynim.

## The Hester Street Troupe

This group is the most popular klezmer band based in New Jersey, and it is being featured at the IAYC Conference in Teaneck.

- Alan Sweifach on clarinet: is a Vocational Counselor at the Jewish Vocational Service MetroWest. He earned his master's degrees in Psychology and Counseling from Columbia University.

- Jay Sweifach on keyboards (synthesizer): is a former director of youth services for JCC Metro West, and currently is a professor of social work at Wurzweiler School of Social Work at Yeshiva University.

- Jim Bazewicz on drums: is a professional of theater arts at Drew University in Madison, New Jersey. In spite of their hectic schedules, the dynamic threesome performs up and down the Eastern seaboard some 150-plus times a year.

The Hester Street Troupe, specialize in Klezmer & Jewish music and has been electrifying audiences for the past twenty-one years. Their extraordinary repertoire consists of Klezmer, a style where the clarinet imitates human emotions like laughing and crying, songs from the Yiddish Vaudeville and Second Avenue Theatres, as well as classic older and more contemporary Jewish Melodies.

The group recently released its third recording On Second Avenue that is a celebration of songs from the Yiddish Vaudeville and the Lower East Side. First recording, Generation to Generation, connects you with the traditions of the Jewish experience and asks the question "who will be the Zayde's of our children?". The second, Sounds of the Shtetl, is a peek at a slice of life in the old Jewish community called the Shtetl. You will hear horse hooves clomping on cobblestone as street vendors hawk their wares, and the Klezmer musicians frolicking in the street.

The Troupe has performed extensively in the New York metropolitan area and performed in Florida, playing to standing-room-only audiences. This much sought after group combines its special brand of shtik with popular Jewish songs for an explosive evening of entertainment. You will dance and sing in the aisles as this dynamic trio delights you.

For more information:

Contact Florence Sweifach at 908-276-5245 or send e-mail to [HSTroupe@aol.com](mailto:HSTroupe@aol.com)

## ***Benny Bell: Lost Legend of Elton Street***

**Contact: Joel Samberg 973-857-8070 [bennybellsongs@comcast.net](mailto:bennybellsongs@comcast.net)**

A new CD has just been released featuring the work of one of the most unique Jewish and Yiddish recording artists ever to come out of Vaudeville and the Borscht Belt, the late Benny Bell. It's called *Benny Bell: Lost Legend of Elton Street*.

Bell, whose career spanned more than seven decades, recorded many Yiddish comedy songs, ceremonial tunes for weddings and bar mitzvahs, and ballads such as *Brooklyn Bridge* and the beautifully emotive *Home Again in Israel*, written in 1948. Bell died in 1999 at the age of 93.

The new CD, which has 20 Yiddish and English recordings, was compiled by Benny Bell's grandson, Joel Samberg, an author and producer who is marketing it exclusively through mail order for a limited time.

Benny Bell had his greatest popularity between the mid-1930s and the early 1950s. In addition to Yiddish and Jewish ceremonial songs, he also was known for a series of novelty ditties, such as *Shaving Cream*, and *Pincus the Peddler*, which were jukebox hits throughout New York City.

Even today, thousands of people coast to coast search for rare Benny Bell 78, 45 and 33rpm albums and singles. There have been several Benny Bell fan clubs through the years, and industry pros such as Joe Franklin, Bruce Morrow, Steve Greenberg (president of Columbia Records) and others have called for retrospectives of his work.

"My grandfather was one of the funniest, busiest, most resilient performers ever to come out of Vaudeville and the Borscht Belt," Samberg says. "He was also passionate about his faith, and that shows through in his work. He never hooked up with the right people to help him break out nationally, though, and once he passed away, there were few mechanisms in place to enable his music to live on through reissues and continued publicity."

Born in 1906 on the Lower East Side of Manhattan, Benny's story in some ways parallels that of the young Al Jolson. His Russian immigrant father was a cantor who would have liked for his son to follow in his footsteps. Benny was deeply drawn to his faith, but too deeply drawn to music and humor to consider that a viable path.

In 1922, at the age of 16, he wrote new lyrics to the old standard, *Sweet Violets*, which became a modest success. Throughout the next few years, he was

able to interest artists such as Eddie Cantor and Harry Von Tilzer into listening to his songs. He appeared on radio and entered many contests, winning many fans along the way. By his early twenties, his songs were accepted for recording by Herman Rose, Ted Collins and others—although many were never released. So Benny began recording them on his own.

In the late 1940s he began recording the first of several Yiddish comedy and ceremonial albums, such as *Kosher Comedy* and *To the Bride: G'zint Mit Parnusa*. The songs on them included *Shlimazl*, *Gelt Gelt Gelt*, and *Sammy and Sadie* (a takeoff on *Frankie and Johnny*), all of which are included on the new CD. Other cuts include *Comic Cantor*, *Mendle's Musketeers*, *In the Subway* and a Yiddish radio broadcast from early in his career. Bell also wrote several freylakhs, three of which are part of the new CD.

Bell, who did most of his own arranging and recorded most of his albums in his studio, also had several bands that backed him on much of his work.

At 22 he married Molly Ehrlich whom he had known since they were teenagers. To support his family, he took jobs, like musical transcriptionist and messenger. He performed at hotels and record his own songs. His son Jerry remembers him sneaking union musician friends into his studio on Elton Street in Brooklyn to circumvent the financial requirements of professional recording.

Like his idol, Irving Berlin, Benny wrote elegant ballads, including *If You Promise to Be Mine*, poignant war-time tunes, such as *Ship Ahoy*, *Sailor Boy* (recorded by Rose Marie, famous for her role as Sally on The Dick Van Dyke Show) and quirky romances such as *Brooklyn Bridge*, penned as a response to the song *Winchester Cathedral*, which was popular at the time. He recorded *Home Again in Israel*, a beautiful anthem for the Jewish state.

"Anyone interested in Yiddish music, in lost legends of the New York's Jewish music scene, and cult figures from Vaudeville and the Borscht Belt Circuit should add this 20-song cassette to their collection. It's historical, cultural, intriguing, even a little surreal at times. He was my grandfather, but he was also my entertainment and my teacher."

To order *Benny Bell: Lost Legend of Elton Street* send \$11.00, to Joel Samberg, Lost Legend, P.O. Box 144, Verona NJ 07044-0144. Includes s&h.

# Going AHEAD to Yiddish Basics

Philip *Fishl* Kutner

No, it should not be “Going Back to Yiddish Basics”. Of course the basics of any language, occupation or field of knowledge is essential to advance in that field. Of course you cannot build a skyscraper, highway or dam without a strong foundation. Thus the basics are really the foundation on what you build. So how do you go ahead without going back to the basics? How do you go ahead in your love for Yiddish if you do not have the basic knowledge in any of the many fields of language and culture that our wonderful Yiddish encompasses?

By definition Yiddish is the language and culture that originated in Ashkenaz. Like all aspects of human endeavor it is not a closed circuit, but an evolving and revolving circus ring. The new items of language terminology created by exposure to Spanish, Israeli Hebrew and Americanese along with new customs and inventions like the computer necessitate words that the Weinreichs would not know.

I cannot read Yiddish with the Hebrew letters.  
I do not know the gender of the Yiddish nouns.  
I never was good in grammar.  
I haven't time to take Yiddish classes.  
I haven't time to sit down and study.  
I have the time, but do not have the patience.  
I have trouble reading, for I have poor vision.  
I can't afford to go to classes, institutes, conferences...  
I live where there are no Yiddish speakers nearby.  
I really want to learn/improve my Yiddish, but \_\_\_\_.

Did you come up with a different one that fits into the *but* category. I had a friend who went around all day *butting*. My advice to him was to let the *butting* go for the rams and the billy goats. *Buts* never get you one step closer to any goal in life. So let's start taking the steps.

You learn by making mistakes. That is why there are erasers circular wastebaskets, garbage bins, and other religions have confessions. Learn to differentiate between life and death threatening mistakes and those that are steps on the golden road to knowledge and fulfillment.

Don't swallow a liquid if you don't know what it is.  
Don't go into an unknown area without a light.  
Don't cross a street without looking both ways.  
Don't jump out of a flying plane without a parachute.  
Don't swallow an unknown pill.  
Don't go in deep water if you can't swim.  
Don't smoke when filling up the gas tank.  
Don't remove a baby from its large animal mama.

Yiddish is a loving *mame-loshn* like all mamas she is very forgiving. She understands, and She is there to help when you stumble. Any maven who makes fun of your speech or writing is an uncouth person.

My favorite way of handling an uncouth person is to ask her/him, “When is my birthday?” The usual response is how should I know? My answer is “Then, how can you wish me a happy birthday!”

## Finally, Suggestions

So how do you pick up the basics if you did not get them in your youth? I am presuming that you have one or even most of the shortcomings listed in the column to the left.

IF you are computer literate, you join one or more of the Yiddish discussion lists like Mendele. In the beginning just follow the discussion—later begin to ask questions. There are many sites that can help. Some even are in transliteration like *Der Bay*.

IF you are not computer literate, and live near a Yiddish class or club, attend, and do not worry about marks or presenting.

IF you can afford it, go to a conference, institute, etc. or to KlezKamp, Yugntruf sof-vokh or to one of the Arbeter Ring's summer JCE programs.

IF you can't navigate the computer, cannot read Yiddish with the Hebrew letters, have a minimum income, do not live near a Yiddish club or class, cannot get around without your wheelchair, and are visually impaired, then there still is a great solution in how to improve your knowledge of the Yiddish language and culture.

IF you are all of the above, then you are not reading this article, but perhaps you know someone who is. Here is the solution. In fact Ellen Wertheim and Pearl Lam of the Jewish Braille International will be at the IAYC conference in Teaneck, New Jersey. Their NYC based headquarters is the home for free materials in large print, Braille or on cassette. Your editor is a proud recipient of their services. At the current time he is listening to a series of cassettes of Dr. Mordkhe Schaechter's, Yidish Tsvey.

**Editor's note:** Dear reader what is your method of coping? What method/s do you use to overcome it/them? Your editor is poor in Hebrew, thus many of the Hebrew words are a problem. If they are written, the dictionary has been the answer.

# My Mother's Lower East Side

by Philip Ernest Schoenberg, PhD

**Editor's note:** Dr. Philip E. Schoenberg teaches Jewish history at various colleges in New York City and conducts Jewish walking tours of the Lower East Side, Harlem, and other neighborhoods. He will be presenting at the IAYC Conference, have a booth and will be available for scheduling your tour.

The Lower East Side was part of my life experience because of my mother's stories. She spent 16 years there before moving to the Bronx. She was born on a street that is now a path in a public housing project.

My maternal grandparents arrived at the Lower East Side before 1894. My grandmother had left to flee an arranged marriage to an "ugly older man". My grandfather left to avoid starvation. The major push was the Russian pogroms of 1882 following the assassination of Czar Alexander II.

They went as steerage passengers. My grandmother ate on the ship only herring in the steerage for 4 weeks. She never ate herring again. To recreate what it is like for a ship's hold to smell, go to the National Maritime Museum in Liverpool, England. There they have a recreation of a steerage passenger room complete with the smells.

Jews did not settle haphazardly on the Lower East Side. One section had Hungarian Jews, another the Romanian Jews, still another the Polish Jews, etc. Within these areas, people from one community might be found on one block.

Only 1 Jew in 5, a hundred years ago, belonged to a synagogue or shtetl. My mother's synagogue was Baranower Erste Congregation of 294 Stanton Street. I saw a poster that announced that it was to be demolished. As the Jewish population of the Lower East side declined, synagogues north of Houston Street became housing developments while those south of Houston Street became chapels of other religions. Many synagogues elsewhere: Shearith Israel, Temple Emmanuel, B'nai Jeshuran, and Anshi Chesed were originally there.

My mother was born on Sheriff Street. She went to the communal bathroom, but did not know what type of *vants* she would find—human or insect. Once her father became successful as a tailor, they moved to Jewish suburbia—The Bronx. In 1930, the Bronx was the most Jewish county in America with 44% of the population Jewish. Jews stayed on the average on the Lower East Side 16 years before moving *uptown* as they earned a better income and learned English. Subways facilitated the movement.

My grandmother never learned English. She turned on Yiddish radio. WEVD was the family favorite. I recall listening to its Jewish music programs when "It was the station that spoke your language." She wrote to her European relatives in Yiddish. My mother enjoyed the Yiddish Theater on Second Avenue in the 1930s and 1940s. She dated some of the actors in the Yiddish theater—my teenage mother was a Yiddish actor groupie!

Settlement houses were set up by the upper classes in England to "civilize" the masses. In America, the German Jews "civilized" the East European Jews. My mother went to The Henry Street Settlement, 263-27 Henry Street, founded by Lillian Wald. There is where mom learned to play basketball and to cook. She used the settlement's cookbook.

The Seward Park Branch (192 E, Broadway) of the NY Public Library was the busiest branch of the NY Public Library. It was open 6 AM to 1 AM the next day. It was built with funds donated by Andrew Carnegie in 1909. It had a rooftop garden reading area because land for building was scarce. It houses a large collection on Lower East Side history and collections of books in Chinese, Spanish, Yiddish, and English. This was the first public library in America to have a circulating copy of the Talmud.

Orchard Street is still a bargain center. There was an increase in the variety of East Side retailers and offices: photography, drugstores, barbershops, pharmacists, dentists, ice cream parlors, salons, lunchrooms, optometrists, piano teachers, lawyers, bakeries, butcher shops. In the 1960s and 1970s, my mother went to Orchard and Essex Streets to buy electronic stuff from the Pakistani immigrants—different ethnic group, but still selling bargains.

Rivington Street was filled with pushcarts. When Mayor LaGuardia opened the Essex Street Retail Market, he said, "Now, you're merchants." My mother helped her brother Jack (Jacob) through Fordham University. They sold fruit from his pushcart. In 2002 the Essex Street Retail Market went upscale as it attracted Yuppies and Latinos.

My mother read Harry Golden's *For Two Cents Plain*, a memoir of many stories on the Lower East Side. He said it best, when he saw the many Hispanic names in the tenement of his childhood, "They too are children of hope and will move on."

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# White Paper

## The Translation of Holocaust Memorial Books into English

### Background

In the aftermath of the devastation visited upon the Eastern European Jewish community, during the Second World War, survivors and those who left the old country in prior years, saw a need to document the memories they possessed of their origins, in order to leave a record that could serve as a permanent testament to communities that had been eradicated.

In the ensuing quarter century, nearly 1300 books were written and published, that came to be known as *Yizkor Books*, or *Holocaust Memorial Books*. Most of these books relate to the history of the destroyed Jewish community. Often the contents reach back to the very early medieval history of how the town, in which the community resided, came into being.

They tell stories about prominent and ordinary people, anecdotes about their daily life and of the relationships, political and economic matters, and the variations in the diverse ways in which Judaism was lived and practiced as a way of life. It is a history of their times.

Most of the *Yizkor Books* also contain eyewitness accounts of the devastation wrought by the Nazis during their occupation, and the implementation of their Final Solution. There usually also will be a *necrology*, which lists the people murdered during the Holocaust, to the best of the memory of those participating in the preparation of the book.

The accounting of the Yad Vashem archive shows the following breakdown of the languages in which these books were prepared. These statistics were supplied during May 2003 through the kindness of Dr. Robert Rozett of Yad Vashem. These numbers should be viewed as indicative rather than precise. There is ambiguity regarding which books should be included in this category, and an indication of the one of multiple languages is not a measure of the actual volume of writing.

The category *other* includes Hungarian, French, Polish and Russian. A few contain small English summaries, and occasionally a Table of Contents that has been translated into English. It is important to take note of the fact, that many of the books in German were not written by Jews, but by the local people, in the 1980s and onward, to memorialize the Jews who used to live among them.

### Language Distribution of Yizkor Books

Language	In This Language Mainly	Some Content In This Language	Total
Yiddish	432	—	432
Hebrew	229	350	579
German	376	6	382
English	49	148	197
Other	187	—	187
Total	1273		

### The Issue At Hand

While the Hebrew texts remain accessible to Israelis in general, and others trained in Hebrew as a language, linguistic facility with Yiddish is rapidly fading. Despite well-meaning efforts the prognosis for revitalizing Yiddish as a living language remains very bleak. The excision of the Eastern European Jewish community has cauterized the taproot, from which the vitality of Yiddish, as a living language, would have drawn its sustenance. Assimilation and Israel's past discouragement of Yiddish has added to the problem.

The one third Yiddish portion of this archive, represented by the collection of Holocaust Memorial Books, becomes increasingly inaccessible, as the current generation begins to pass from the scene. At best, we can expect this portion of the archive to remain accessible to a diminished cadre of scholar/specialists, who will make knowledge of Yiddish part of their life's work. The vast majority of the Jewish population, including Israelis, will become orphaned from their own history, cut off from the rich tapestry of folklore, which will lie entombed behind a linguistic communications barrier.

Such an outcome seriously would impoverish the historical record for future generations of Jewish progeny, and other interested parties, who will come to seek some meaningful connection to this dimension of the past.

### What Has Been Done

This issue has not gone unnoticed. The advent of word-processing software and the Internet, has put tools into the hands of motivated people, that begin to make possible a systematic attempt to translate this archive into English.

The principal vehicle, by which this type of work has been carried out, is via the online community called *JewishGen* (the website, [www.jewishgen.org](http://www.jewishgen.org)). It provides a framework through which translation projects can be managed, and published online.

The U.S. Holocaust Museum in Washington has only one person, dedicated to translating the *Yizkor Books*, and she is able to translate only the Table of Contents of such books. This is all her time permits.

*There are serious limitations to these ongoing efforts:*

The *JewishGen* initiative is a framework only. It expects that others will provide their own funding and translation resources, but will assist them in finding help, and in negotiating the process that gets it published online. These people include those who are interested in tracing their genealogy.

To date, between 300-400 of these books have been 'touched.' However, with rare exception, few of these constitute a 'complete' end-to-end translation. In most cases there are only partial translations of those sections of the book that interested the prime mover. Often this is restricted to the necrology lists, while the narrative text is untouched.

This effort comes from the *bottom up*, driven by random people, who have developed an interest—usually in a single book—to understand the history of their immediate ancestors. Consequently, coverage of the geography, of what was the Pale of Settlement, which has been captured in the Yiddish portion of the archive, is uneven.

The translation of the Table of Contents is helpful, but falls far short of satisfying the underlying need for real understanding of the history embodied in these books.

### **What Needs to Be Done**

A *managed effort* is required to bring this entire archive across the language barrier from Yiddish into English. The choice of English is not parochial: the English language, for better or for worse, is emerging as the global *lingua franca*. For the foreseeable future, any literate citizen of the world, who chooses to participate in the global economy, will need to acquire a command of English. Consequently, it is the logical target language for such an effort.

Such a managed effort comes only with a '*top-down*' approach by a focused organization that has been properly funded with financial resources. This would enable it to acquire the necessary skills to get this type of a task done.

This is not a small undertaking. If we assume that it takes 0.4 - 0.75 man-years to translate a book (most of which are quite substantive in length), we are talking about 135 - 300 man-years of raw translation effort.

The core work does not stop with raw translation. Careful editing and integration of the raw product is needed to assure correctness, consistency, and placing the material in context. These three objectives imply the following:

**Correctness** - To assure that original text has not been misread, and therefore improperly translated or transcribed. An interesting example is the newly deployed Ellis Island Data Base, where simple transcription of handwritten ship's manifests (in English) is shot through with rather obvious mistakes, due largely to a lack of familiarity of names and places to the transcribers.

**Consistency** - A plague, associated with the translation from one alphabet to another, is the lack of consistency in rendering the orthography of names and places consistently. A set of standards needs to be adopted for the sake of consistency (rather than correctness).

**Context** - It is important to footnote this text in an informative way, so that the lay reader, unfamiliar with either, language, culture, or the history of the times, can be given an appreciation for the subtleties of the text.

This component of editorial work will add about 25% to the raw translation labor, thus bringing the effort to a total of 170 - 375 man-years.

An administrative infrastructure will be required to manage what will doubtless be a highly distributed network of contributors. This will add approximately another 10% to the base for translation and editing, bringing the effort to a level of 190 - 400 man-years

Dr. Jacob Solomon Berger who is fluent in Yiddish, Hebrew and English has prepared this White Paper. He has translated a number of Holocaust Memorial Books, but recognizes, that no single individual can tackle the task implied in addressing the entire Yiddish portion of the archive of Holocaust Memorial Books. He may be reached at:

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## **The Yiddishist: As An Endangered Species by Philip Fish I Kutner**

Concern has been raised about the survivability of Yiddish. The premise presented here is that we should be more concerned with the survivability of the Yiddishist. Yiddish is man-made-the Yiddishist was created ....

As a gene pool diminishes, the survival potential of a species diminishes. Keeping a diversity in the hereditary gene availability permits a greater adaptation to changing environments. Survival of the fittest does not refer only to physical prowess, but rather to adaptability.

Yiddish has manifested herself in varied forms; the day-to-day mame-loshen of the commoner in the shtetl, the medium of expression in some of our great writers like Sholom Aleichem, and I. L. Peretz, the vehicle of artistic productions on the Yiddish theater, the music of the creative klezmer and even the means of communication among Jews throughout the world seeking a common language.

Hebrew served as a unifying force in the formation of Israel and formed a bond between the Jews of Europe and the Americas, with those of Africa and Asia. It seemed to be the "apparent" death knell for Yiddish, and what Hitler and Stalin did, hastened what the onslaught of assimilation had started.

Returning after continued setbacks has been a trait of Jews throughout history, and so it appears is the rekindled interest in Yiddish. After avoiding her in an attempt to become "Americanized", the pull at our roots has drawn us back to our ancestral days of immigration with its lullabies, songs, humor, and stories of the shtetl.

Yiddish courses at universities, are increasing in number. The National Yiddish Book Center has had a tremendous growth in both book-handling and membership. New Yiddish clubs are being formed, Yiddish classes are springing up, and computer networks have been a boon in bringing together interested people in different countries, forming a Virtual Shtetl.

Yiddish is an international language as is Latin, but unlike Latin, it is far from a dead one. It is far more than some stories, jokes and "cute" words which have been incorporated into the English language. It is a living, breathing body whose soul came from the remnants of our Eastern European Ancestors.

## **William Adelman Asks wadelman@socal.rr.com**

An internet search revealed to me the following notice in Der Bay (Vol. XV No. 2) suggesting that there was a new translation of Rachel Calofs memoirs based on the complete text:

"Her dissertation begins a study of Rachel Calof's Story using a new translation of Calof's Yiddish manuscript and archival work at the American Jewish Archive and the Jewish Heritage Center."

From the International Anglo-Yiddish Newsletter, Feb. 05 Vol. XV No.2 [http: / I  
www.derbay.org/minnconf/ 15-2.pdf](http://www.derbay.org/minnconf/15-2.pdf)

Do you know where this new translation resides, or who did it? I've been talking with Linda Schioff, curator at the Upper Midwest Jewish Archives at the University of Minnesota, who told me that there is no new "translation," but rather an interpretation. I'm researching Adelman family history, and we have a family tradition that the name was changed from Calof to Adelman at some point. We were neighbours in Devils Lake, and there was some intermarriage, but beyond that I haven't been able to find any evidence. I was hoping that if there were more material, I might be able to uncover some more links. The original Calof Story as published supposedly reflected only about a third of the actual material.

In short... do you know if there is really a new translation? And if so, where it can be found?

**SHALOM Y'ALL!  
by Bill Averbach, kiez@bamusic.net**

The Austin Klezmerim's recording features great performances in the Austin Klezmerim tradition. The band that has been called the Rabbis on Rhythm; the klezmer band that takes influences from jazz artists Charles Mingus and Theloneus Monk and Miles Davis; the klezmer band that has beatnik poetry versions of the Megillah is playing "traditional"? Absolutely! Why not?

All the klezmer tunes are original. They do a few swing tunes like Minnie the Moocher by Cab Calloway and a blues about flounders. But in a 100 years, the Traditionalists will be screwing in that proverbial lightbulb talking about how they like the Austin Klezmerim's version better.

Hear the recording Bubba's Waltz Visit us at our web site [www.bamusic.net/bubbaswaltz.htm](http://www.bamusic.net/bubbaswaltz.htm)