

# Friends of Jewish Cemeteries

A Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia Special Volunteer Initiative

## Pilot Project #2 Community Report

Restore | Conserve | Research



[jewishphilly.org/get-involved/volunteer/cemeteryrestoration](http://jewishphilly.org/get-involved/volunteer/cemeteryrestoration)



# Rememberance | Sanctity | Commemorate

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

- Benjamin Franklin

*A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.*

- Lao Tzu

*Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.*

- Margaret Mead

*If Not Now, When?*

- Rabbi Hillel

# What are the activities of Friends of Jewish Cemeteries (FJC)?

1. **Clean-ups** addressing vines, overgrowth, trash, etc.
2. **Pilot Programs** to show what is possible and help build momentum towards a short and longer-term solution.
3. **Research on individuals / families** to tell their stories at a high level.

**Who benefits?**

**All of us!** Descendants, Community Members, Neighbors and in the memory of those at rest.



# FJC In the News

## Check out this coverage...

- Fox29: [Over 100 volunteers gather in Oxford Circle to restore historic cemetery](#)
- [Creating a More Dignified Resting Place: Har Nebo Cemetery Cleanup](#)
- Philly Inquirer: [Conserving Jewish cemeteries, one stone at a time.](#)”
- CBS3: [It Was A Little Jarring’: Project At Har Nebo Cemetery Restoring Gravestones And Peace For Loved Ones](#)
- 6ABC: [Har Nebo Feature](#)

## Jewish Exponent

- [Friends of Jewish Cemeteries Completes Second Phase of Restoration Project](#)
- [Har Nebo Cemetery Cleanup](#)
- [Resting in Dignity: Friends of Jewish Cemeteries Begin Work to Restore At-Risk Cemeteries](#)
- [Cemetery Restoration Pilot Project Underway](#)
- [Cemeteries Get Creative to Offset Dwindling Business](#)



The Philadelphia Inquirer

PHILADELPHIA  
**Jewish Exponent**

 CBS PHILADELPHIA



**Progress... Momentum...**

**FJC extends to Har Jehuda and Har Nebo.**

As long as stones have fallen or at risk.  
And overgrowth covers the locations.  
And too many stories of those who came before us  
are almost forgotten...

There will be a mission.

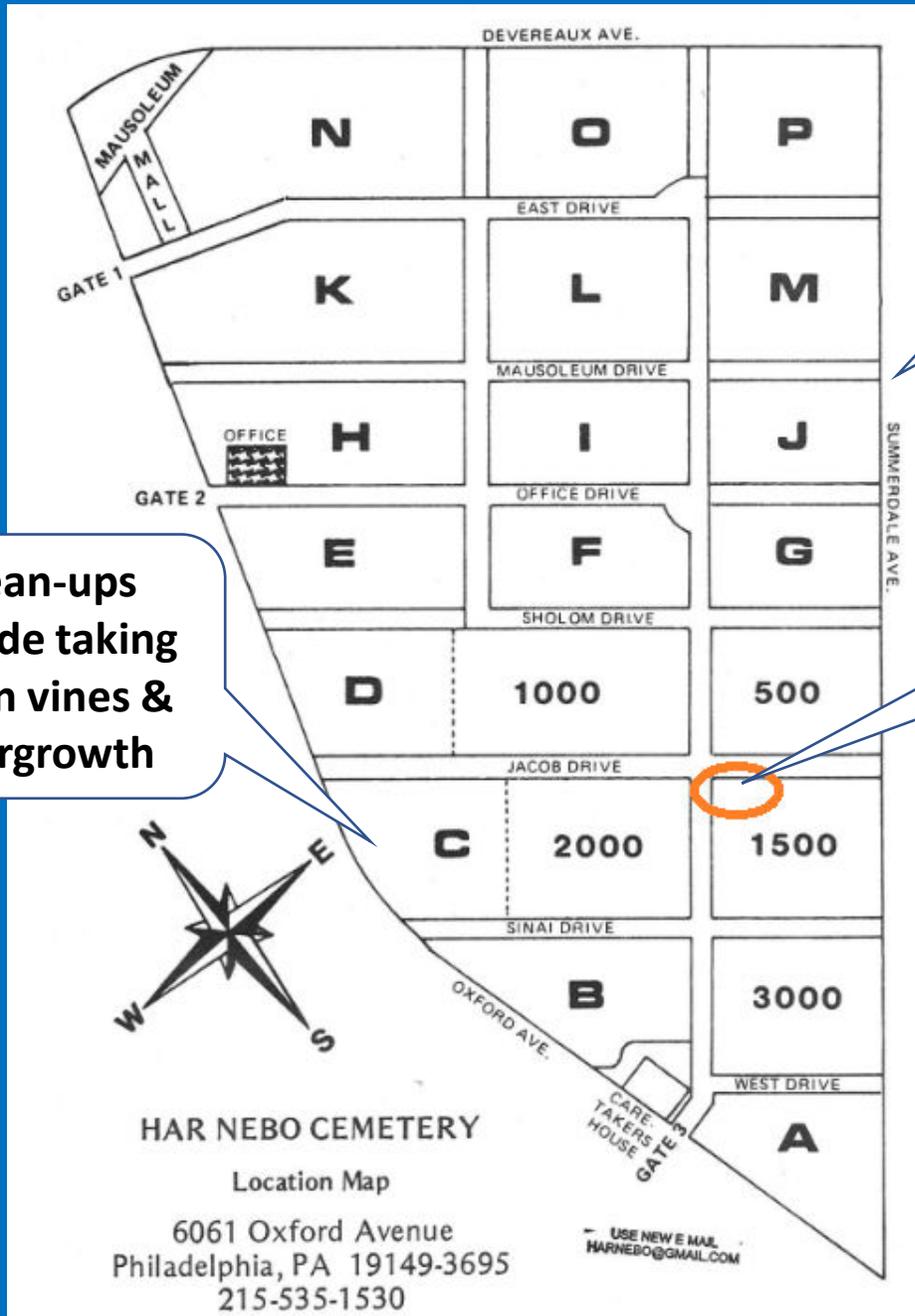
We dream of a day when the historic Jewish  
cemeteries are at a positive level of respectability  
in support of descendants, community members,  
neighbors and those at rest.

Together we can make a difference...

One step at a time!



# Where the FJC volunteer work is located....

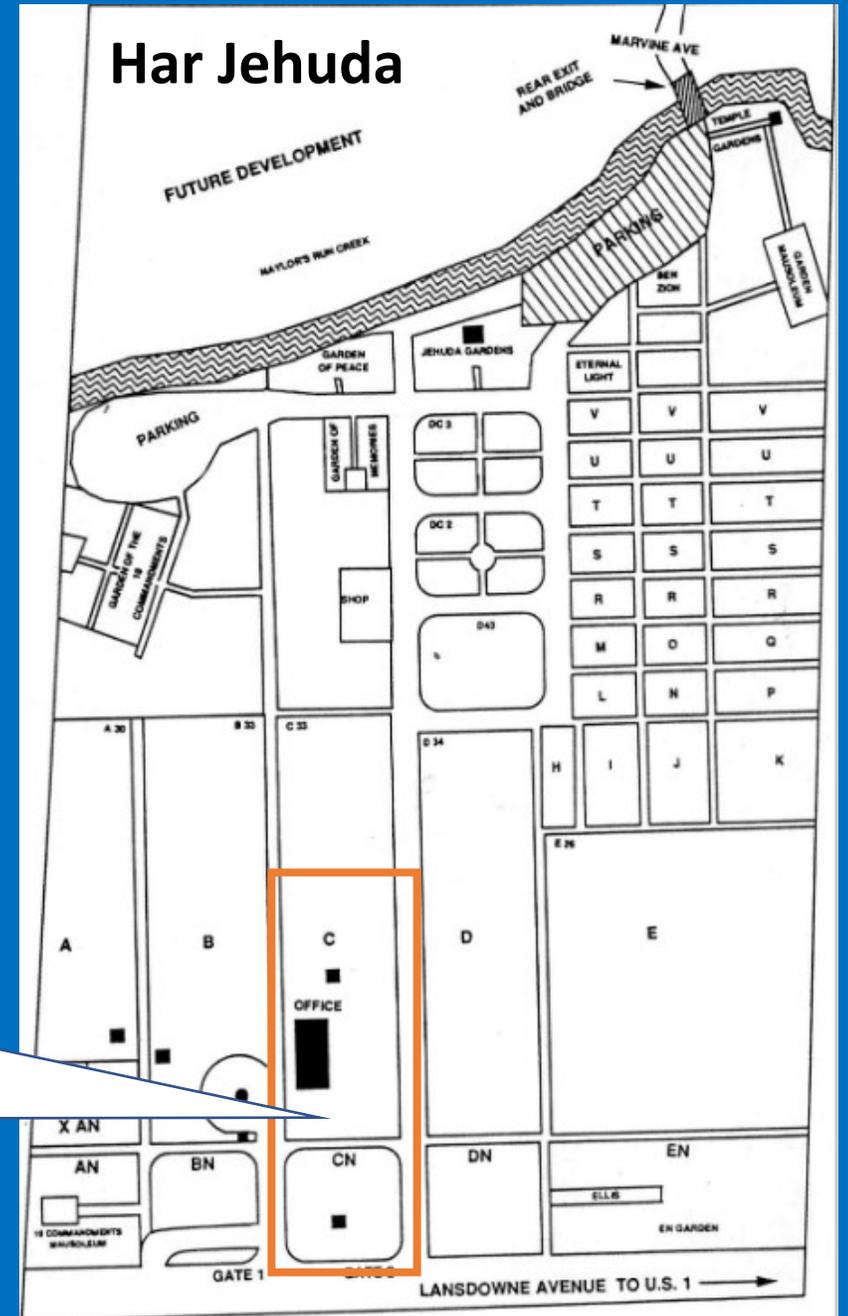


Clean-ups include taking down vines & overgrowth

Trash pick-up takes place on the perimeter.

Pilot Projects #1 & #2

Amazing clean-up work includes, but not limited to these sections.



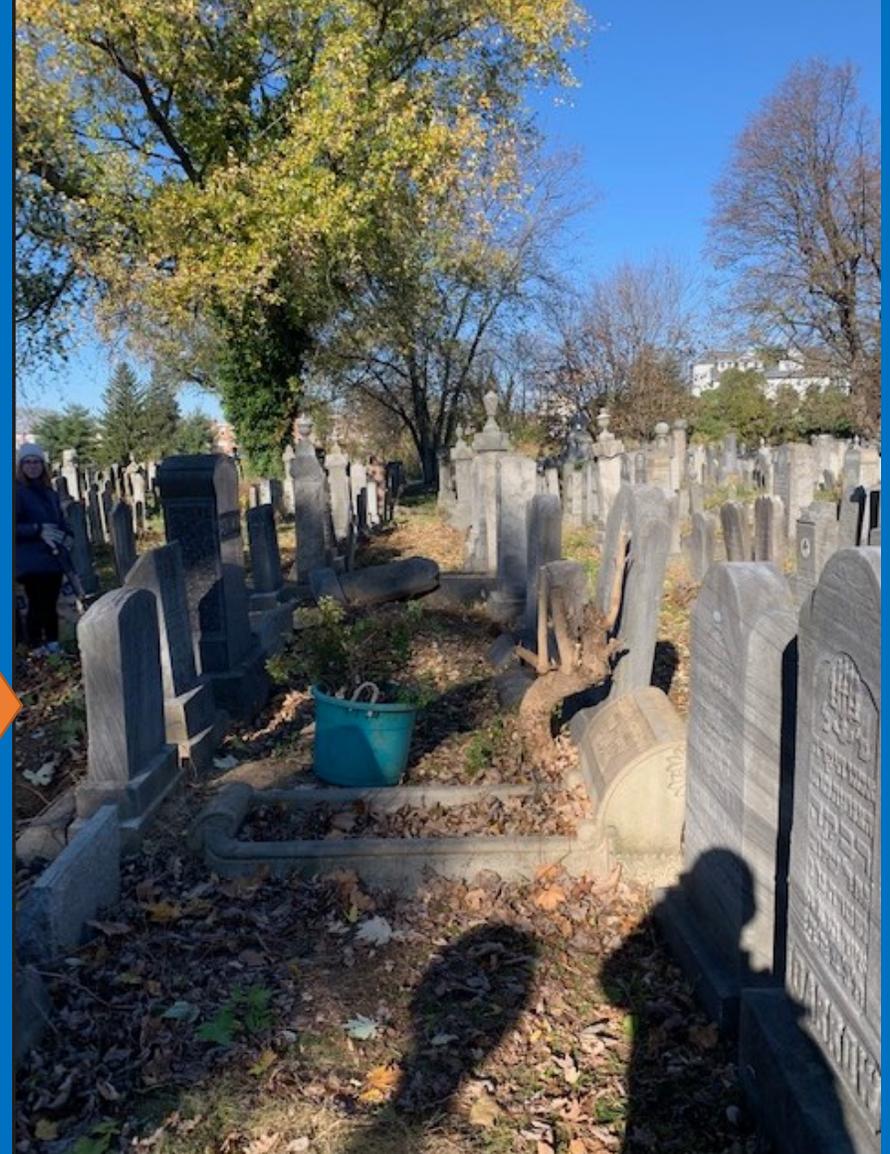


Clean-up days are fun!  
Together we can make a positive impact!

# Har Jehuda Clean-up – What a difference!



Before



After

# Har Nebo Clean-ups Make Visible What was Once Hidden!



Before



After

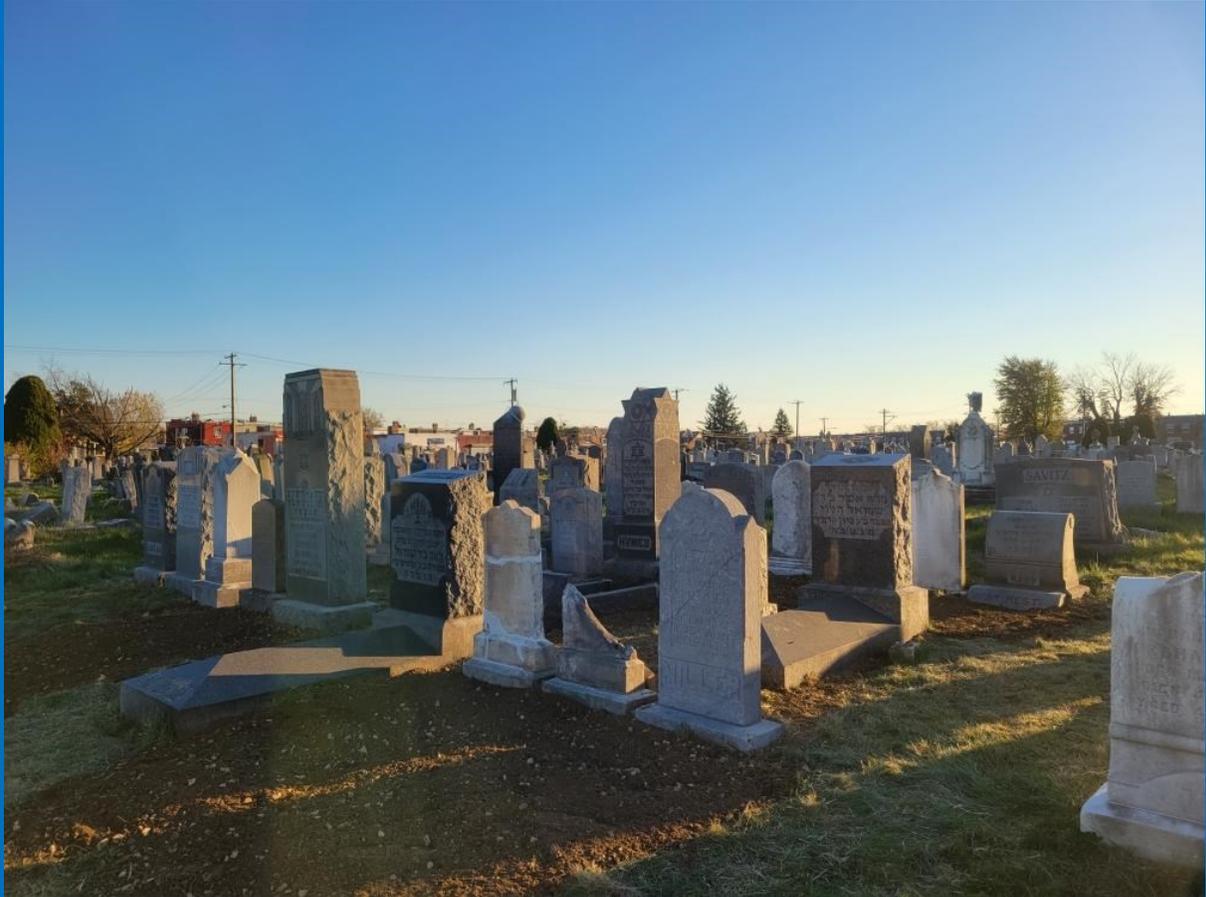


FJC – Pilot #1 – 33 Stones Conserved and Restored

# Har Nebo – Pilot #2 – 27 Stones Restored and Conserved



Before



After

# Har Jehuda Cemetery 20,000+ Digitization Record Project

The Jewish Genealogical and Archival Society of Greater Philadelphia ([jgasgp.org](http://jgasgp.org)) has a group of volunteers willing to spend time at Har Jehuda cemetery scanning records. The team has others working from home to help digitize the records. They have a spreadsheet from JewishGen's Online Worldwide Burial Registry (JOWBR) with easy instructions to follow.

Karen Albert and Helene Rosenfeldt will be the project coordinators.

- Helene Rosenfeldt ([Helene.E.Rosenfeldt@gmail.com](mailto:Helene.E.Rosenfeldt@gmail.com)) will be responsible for scanning
- Karen Albert ([karenalbert48@gmail.com](mailto:karenalbert48@gmail.com)) will be responsible for sending out the pictures of the cards for us to digitize
- Alan Kaminsky ([ajk7810@hotmail.com](mailto:ajk7810@hotmail.com)) will be in charge of collecting spreadsheets and collating them

Plan to participate! The more help the team has the faster this important initiative will be accomplished.



Larry Moskowitz is pointing to the boxes containing over 20,000 Har Jehuda records.



# Remembrance

Remembrance is about bringing loved ones, ancestors and community members who came before us to mind and honoring their memory.

"**We Remember Them**" represents a famous poem which includes these words:

*At the rising sun and at its going down, we remember them.*

*At the blowing of the wind and in the chill of winter, we remember them.*

*At the opening of the buds and in the rebirth of spring, we remember them.*

-- "**A Litany of Remembrance**" by Rabbi Sylvan Kamens and Rabbi Jack Reimer

Jeremiah Silverman's 2100-pound stone at the Har Nebo Pilot #2 was tilting and at risk. Now it's upright, clean, and secure. FJC has conserved over 60 stones with precision.



Joseph Ferrannini (pictured), a certified cemetery conservator expert based out of upstate New York has done the work on both pilots with the support of volunteers.



## Lipman and Rachel Fineman

These are the tombstones of Alene Franklin's great-great grandparents Lipman and Rachel Fineman. She was not aware that they had come to the US. They arrived in 1905 and died in 1910 and 1913. Here is also a photo of Alene at the cleanup. The area around their gravestones isn't as bad as some places in Section C of Har Jehudah, but there are vines underfoot which could easily cause tripping.

>> Descendant: [Alene Franklin](#) | Photos of Stones: [Rebecca Parmet](#)



Minnie and Rubin London (left) on Cantrell St.  
with neighbors (1918)

## Minni and Rose Kanter

Two Kanter sisters, Minucha Rukah (Minnie) and Risha Zlata (Rose) came to Philadelphia from Joniskis, Lithuania around 1890.

Rose and Minnie and their families were very close. They lived in the same neighborhood and, in the 1910s, moved onto the same street, in different homes on the 300 block of Cantrell St. in Philly.

Minnie married Rubin London, a tailor, in 1893 in Philadelphia. Rubin was from Joniskis, Lithuania, where his family had roots. Rubin is remembered as quiet and steady, like many of his sons. He and Minnie had six sons and one daughter. Rubin helped four of his brother Bonos's children immigrate and settle in Philadelphia.

Minnie, Rose and other family members are buried at Har Nebo.



## Nathan Shulman



Nathan Shulman, known as Nissel, was born in Ushomir, Ukraine, which was part of the Russian Empire (The Pale of the Settlement). Ushomir was a very small village of ~1,800 people, which was predominantly Jewish until the Nazi's killed almost everybody.

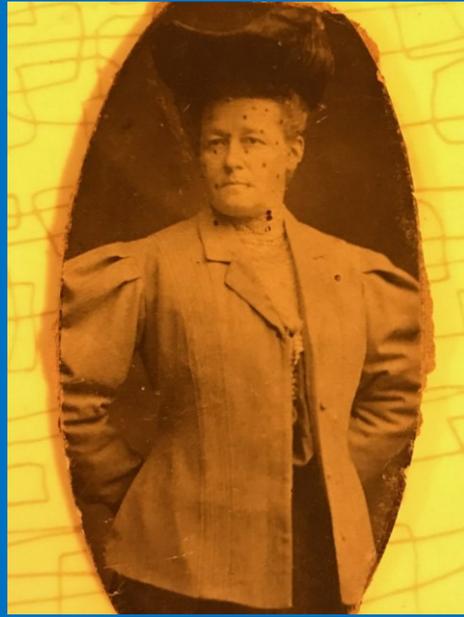
He served in the army when he lived in Ukraine. He was married with a son named Joseph, after his late father. He was the brother of Don Kesselman's grandmother.

He died very young in 1925 because he contracted tuberculosis on the ship to America. There was no medical treatment available 100+ years ago.

He and his family who immigrated, all lived in Philly. Nathan was very poor, religious, and very kind. He was a shoemaker. He used to always give Don's father a nickel to see Tom Mix silent movies. Tom Mix was a famous silent film star as a cowboy.

> [Research & Descendant: Don Kesselman](#)

## Jeremiah & Kate Silverman



Jeremiah Silverman was born in the Russian Empire (Pale of the Settlement) about 1867 and came to the United States abt. 1881, becoming a naturalized citizen around 1887 and locating in Philadelphia.

He married Kate Neuof in 1888 and worked as a cigar maker, tinsmith, grocer, variety storekeeper, hardware dealer, and cutlery salesman. By 1920, Jeremiah owned a home in South Philadelphia, then relocated to a new home in Strawberry Mansion by 1923. According to the 1930 Census, the Strawberry Mansion house was valued at \$4900. On 7 January 1921, he married for a second time, to Deborah (Clara) Gould. Jeremiah died on 14 April 1938 and is interred in Har Nebo Cemetery two plots away from Kate.

Kate Silverman, nee Neuhof, was born in the Russian Empire about 1869 and immigrated to the United States about 1886. She lived in Philadelphia where she married Jeremiah Silverman in 1888 and lived in South Philadelphia. She bore 8 children, only 3 of whom survived to adulthood: Benjamin, Anna, and Edward. Kate died on 7 April 1908 at the age of 38 and is buried at Har Nebo Cemetery.

> Researcher: [Alicia Weiss](#).

> Details from descendant: [Nicole Silverman Gonzalez](#)





## Phyllis Cohen's family at both Har Nebo and Har Jehuda

**Isadore (aka Israel) Sheaffer** was born around 1889 and arrived in the US about 1905. His parent's family name was Cohen. He and his wife **Jennie [Sharf]** changed their last name to Sheaffer when they moved to Wildwood, NJ. He passed away in 1945 and she in 1965. Both are buried at Har Nebo.

**Pearl Zorn** who was born around 1846-49 timeframe and was a widow when she arrived in the U.S. in 1890. Her husband was **Meyer "Maximillian" Zorn**, who was born in 1837 and passed some time before 1890. She lived at different times with her different children in Philadelphia. She passed away in 1927 and rests at Har Jehuda.

**Israel Paley** was born around 1852-59 and arrived in U.S. about 1904-05. His wife was **Dina "Dora" [Zoslovsky] Paley** who was born in 1852. He passed away in 1922 and she in 1948. They rest at Har Jehuda.

**Louis Cohen**, who was born about 1870, was a tailor; his wife **Jennie** was a "segar maker" before their marriage. Louis was naturalized on January 22, 1900 in Philadelphia (arrived about 1887-1888) and passed away in 1929. He rests at Har Nebo.

>> **Descendant: Phyllis Cohen**





## Aaron and Rachel Moses

Aaron (Aron or Harry) Moses came to Philadelphia in 1909, with wife Rachael and three children, all from Bucharest, Romania.

Their ship manifest shows their original surname to be: Moisescu or Mosescu. They were coming to connect with Aaron's mother, Chaia Moisescu, who was living on the 300 block of Queen St. in Philadelphia.

Aaron was a shoemaker with his own shop as of the 1910 census. He was deaf and mute without speech, according to his WWI draft card and unable to sign his name – but he supported his family and children: Edna, Isadore (Israel), and Sarah (later Shirley).

They lived first on Catherine St, but later at 807 Leithgow St., the address on his death certificate.

Aaron tragically died in 1923 of brain tumor. He was only in his mid-forties and is buried in Har Jehuda.

>> Research: Karen Albert



## David and Rose Rossman

David (Reuven) Rossman was born in Boltosani, Romania around 1854/5 and, in his 50's, he immigrated to Philadelphia through NY in December 1903, with daughter, Yetta, who was 15.

At least one son, Joseph/Saul had come to Philadelphia before him, also in 1903. Wife, Rose/Rosa came the following year, with their youngest son, Benjamin/Bernhard, who was five years old.

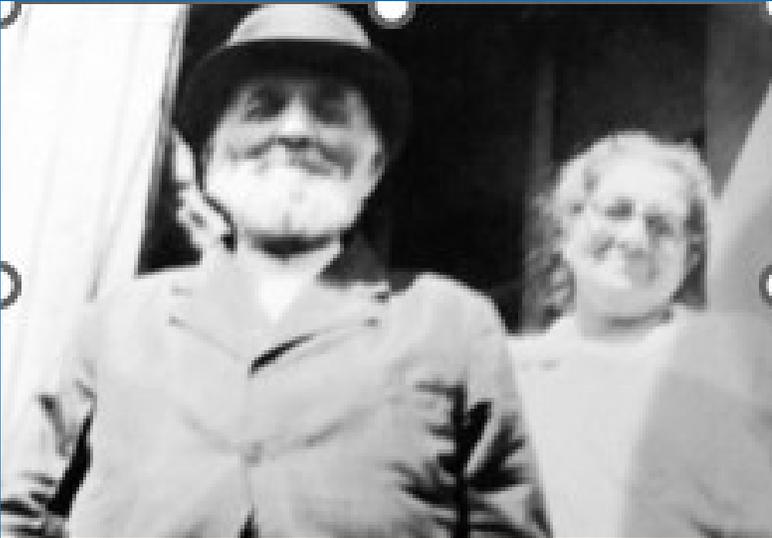
David owned and ran a shoemaker shop for many years. David and Rose had six children in Romania who all came to the U.S.: Goldie (later Berger); Charles (Betzalel); Joseph/Saul; Hyman/Herman, Yetta/Etta (later Katzer), and Benjamin (Bernhard). All eventually married and most had descendants, many living in Philadelphia or New Jersey.

As was also fairly common at this time, David and Rose seemed to raise one of their grandchildren (Leah) as their own child, since her mother, Matilda, who was son Charles' wife, died in childbirth in 1904. Charles remarried in 1907 and had three more daughters. Leah is listed as "granddaughter" in the 1910 census for David and Rose, and as their daughter in their 1920 census.

Rose (7/25/1937) and David (4/13/1936) are buried at Har Jehuda.

>> Research: Karen Albert





## Joseph Lander

Joseph Landau, Londe, London, Lander was born in Proskurov, Russian (now Khmelnytsky Ukraine) on May 15, 1863. He died in Philadelphia on November 22, 1927.

With his first wife Hannah (Anna) Berger he had 4 sons and with his second wife (Sonia Rothstein) he had 4 sons and 2 daughters. His descendants include approximately 24 grandchildren, 28 great grandchildren, 31 great great grandchildren and 21 ggggrand children.

He resided in South Philadelphia at 1047 S. 4th Street and in the Strawberry Mansion Section of Philadelphia at 2611 N 31st Street. The children pursued various professions that included: wallpapering and painting, tailoring, a gas station, real estate, pharmacies, a restaurant, accounting, the law, and various other retail businesses.

Somewhere in the history of this family all the children of Joseph and Sonia changed their name from London to Lander. Ida and Sam started South Philadelphia HS as London(s) and graduated as Lander(s).

> Researcher & Descendant: Walt Spector



By telling their stories we  
honor all of the individuals and  
families at Har Nebo,  
Har Jehuda, and all historic  
Jewish cemeteries in Greater  
Philadelphia and beyond.

Special Community Report prepared by Rich Blumberg,  
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