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HELPING OTHERS

Jewish Genealogical Society

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Featured Lesson: **Written in Stone?**



Rabbi Moshe Feinstein, *Rosh Yeshiva* of MTJ, was born on ז' אדר תרנ"ה (5655) [3 March 1895]. It says so on his tombstone. But is it right? Is it possible? On the arrival manifest of the SS Aquitania for Movcha Fainchtein, he is listed as 55 years old on 13 January 1937 (together with Sima, Faia, Sifra and David – see figure 4 on the next page). That yields a birth year of 1881 (or 1882). If the names of the family structure are not sufficient proof that this is the family of R' Moshe, further detail on the manifest leaves no doubt. It lists the family's destination as Congregation B'nai Jacob, in

Toledo, OH, where Rebbetzin Sima Feinstein's brother was the Rabbi. Also listed (penciled in) was Rabbi Levovitz, her brother-in-law. Furthermore, his WWII draft registration card, dated 26 April 1942, lists the birthday of Moses Feinstein, residing at 220 Henry Street (together with Sima), as 8 March 1881 (which is 7 Adar II

Cont. on next page

MIDRASHIC GENEALOGY

The First Eve ~ הוה הראשונה

Genesis 5:1 implies that Adam and Eve were created simultaneously. Earlier, however, Scripture seems to suggest that Adam was created first and Eve later. Bereishis Rabbah (17:7) tells us that actually G-d created one woman from Adam's rib and later created a second woman, known as Eve, from Adam while he was sleeping. It is noteworthy that Alpha Beta D'Ben Sira (Otzar Midrashim, p. 47) says that Adam's first "wife" was Lilith. See Isaiah 34:14 and also Zohar (ז"ח) (בראשית כה עמוד ב) for further discussion.

ואחד שאינו יודע לשאול: **Don't be the Fourth Son – Know HOW to Ask**

You can Google to find lists of questions to use when conducting an interview. That is WHAT to ask. You should also know HOW to ask. Here are some suggestions:

1. Be extra sensitive when talking to a Holocaust survivor. Note: Just because they never told anyone else their story does not mean they will not tell it to you.
2. If someone says, "I have no idea when So-and-So was born," ask how old the person was when they passed away, and in what year.
3. Display knowledge of the time and place under discussion. People are more likely to open up if they feel their audience understands them.
4. Try to give advance notice by scheduling a time to talk. This gives the person time to think over and remember things that they may not have thought about in decades.
5. Some older individuals may find the morning hours better for remembering details.
6. When talking about geography, keep in mind that there are many ways to refer to a town. As an example, the main city in Eastern Galicia was known as Lemberg. Before the War it was called Lvov, Poland. Today it is known as Lviv, Ukraine.
7. Try not to accept "ah kleyn dorfel near such-and-such a city". You may need an actual town name at some future time to locate vital records.

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info@JGSoB.org

5641!). And the 1940 US Census (taken 15 April 1940) does list the Feinstein family as living at a Henry Street address. The naturalization index card for Sima Feinstein, dated 8 August 1944, also lists her address as 220 Henry Street. The Henry Street location and the reference to a Sima Feinstein should serve as conclusive proof that these records indeed refer to the Rosh Yeshiva and his family. The Social Security Death Index ("SSDI"), as well, lists the birthdate of Moses Feinstein as 8 March 1881 (with a date of passing in March 1986). In view of all these different sources, it would appear that Rabbi Feinstein was in fact born in 1881.

In contrast, the same 1940 census for Henry Street mentioned earlier lists the family with Morris Feinstein, age 45 (not 59), with spouse Sime (41) and children: Fay (16), Sifra (12), David (10) & Sam (2). The age of 45 found on the census would support the idea that R' Moshe was born in 1895. So which is it, 1881 or 1895?

A great-grandchild related that R' Moshe did not have a birth record. In lieu of it, he was evaluated by a physician while still living in the USSR. The doctor certified him to be 14 years older than he actually was. That is why he sent back his Social Security for 14 years!

Figure 1 - completed 16 Feb 1938, age 56

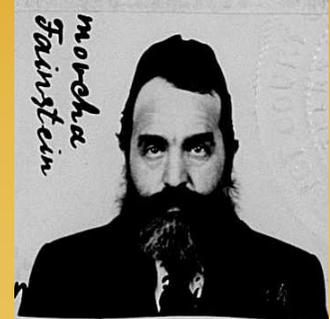


Figure 2 - WWII Draft Registration

**Moses Feinstein
in the U.S., Social Security Death Index, 1935-2014**

Name: Moses Feinstein
 SSN: 086-26-6298
 Last Residence: 10002 New York, New York, New York, USA
 BORN: 8 Mar 1881
 Died: Mar 1986
 State (Year) SSN issued: New York (Before 1951)

Figure 3 - Social Security Death Index

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
 IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION SERVICE

List 12

LIST OR MANIFEST OF ALIEN I

ALL ALIENS arriving at a port of continental United States from a foreign port or a port of the insular possessions of the United States, and all aliens

S. S. AQUITANIA Passengers sailing from CHERBOURG

1 No. on List	2 HEAD-TAX STATUS (This column for use of Government officials only)	3 NAME IN FULL		4 Age		5 Sex	6 Married or single	7 Calling or occupation	8 Able to—			9 Nationality, (Country of which citizen or subject)	10 Race or people	11 Place of birth		
		Family name	Given name	Yrs.	Mos.				Read	Read what language (or if exemption claimed, on what ground)	Write			Country	City or town, State, Province or District	
10		FAINCHEIN	MOYCHA	55		M	M	RABBI	YES	RUSSIAN	YES	RUSSIA	HEBREW	RUSSIA	LUBAU	41
11		FAINCHEIN	SIMA	37		F	M	H'WIFE	YES	RUSSIAN	YES	U.S.S.R.	HEBREW	RUSSIA	LUBAU	41

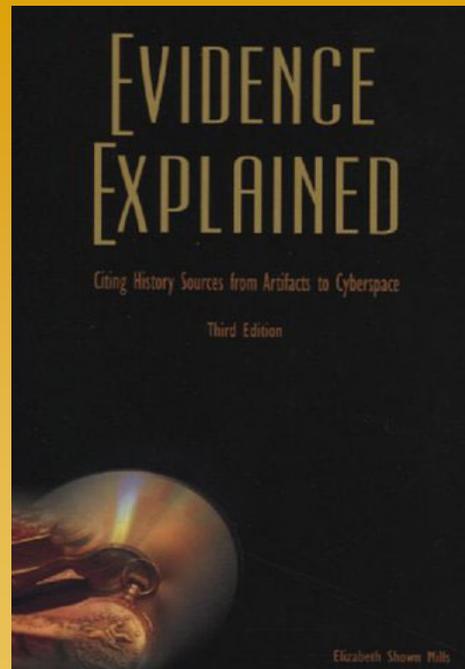
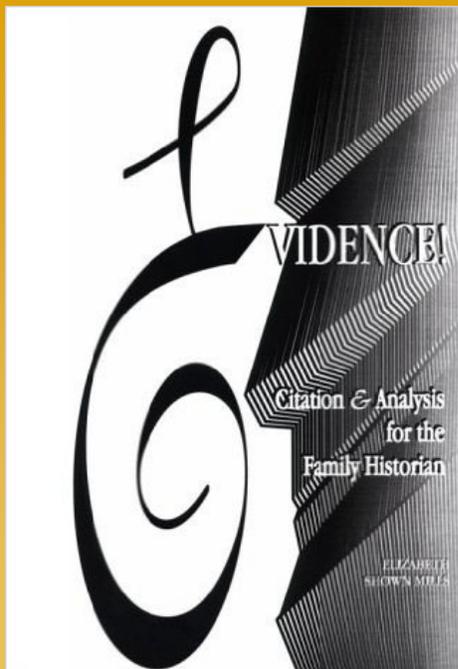
Figure 4 - 13 January 1937 Ship Arrival, Line 10, showing R' Moshe as 55 years old

The First Step When Starting Out

Documentation - don't skip this step:

The most important (and least fun) part of genealogy is documenting your work. Without this step, you will never be able to go back and answer the question, "How do you know?" The Society recommends the book entitled "Evidence! Citation & Analysis for the Family Historian" by Elizabeth Shown Mills. This step is even more important than interviewing all known living relatives. If you do not know how to

properly record and source your information, your interviews will not be recorded in a way that you can later reference accurately. Mills' book will instruct you in both the sound analysis of evidence and the correct form of citing your sources. For further guidance on proper citation, refer to "Evidence Explained: Citing History Sources from Artifacts to Cyberspace, Third Edition", also by Elizabeth Shown Mills. With proper documentation, you will always be able to go back and verify your research against any newly available records.



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אדם הראשון: The Life and Times of Adam

The Bible only records three dates regarding Adam:

- His creation (Genesis 1:27, 2:7, 5:1)
- The birth of Seth when he was 130 years old (Genesis 5:3)
- His passing at age 930 (Genesis 5:5)

The Talmud teaches in the name of R' Meir (Eruvin 18b): "Adam was very pious, for once he saw that death was decreed because of him, he fasted for 130 years and separated from his wife for [those] 130 years.". The Me'am Loez, quoting Tanchuma, explains how it came to be that Adam returned to Eve after 130 years. Genesis 4:23 recounts Lemekh's confession to inadvertently killing his ancestor Cain and son Tuval Cain (or teaching Tuval Cain how to make weapons – see Nachmanides to Genesis 4:24). In response, his wives (Adah and Tzillah) separated from him. They feared Cain and his family would now perish. Why? G-d had told Cain (Genesis 4:15) that whoever kills him would receive a sevenfold punishment (שבעתים יקם). According to Torah Sheleimah on our chapter (#114), G-d told Cain that in consideration of the fact that he had displayed fear of and reverence for G-d, he would have his lifespan extended for seven generations. Onkelos explains that the expression *sevenfold* (שבעתים) refers to receiving punishment spread over seven generations. Just as Cain's eventual death was suspended for 7 generations, so too he who killed him would experience a similar fate. Since Lemekh was the seventh generation after Cain, his wives believed that the line of Cain would now end. They debated with Lemekh and decided to seek guidance from Adam. Adam told the women that it is forbidden to refrain from having children because of fear for the viability of their futures. Adah and Tzillah replied that before Adam corrects others, he should correct himself! Realizing that they thought he had separated from Eve so that no other children of his should die (and not as a form of repentance), Adam resumed his relationship with Eve. Adam did not want others to emulate his actions and refrain from having children.

Seth	130	Jared	460
Enosh	235	Enoch	622
Kenan	325	Methusaleh	687
Mahalalel	395	Lemech	874

Chart of Adam's Age When Each Generation Was Born

Although Adam lived for 930 years, we have a tradition that it should have been 1000 years. The Midrash teaches that G-d showed Adam all of his offspring in all generations. When G-d reached the generation of King David, Adam saw that David was to live only three hours. Adam declared, "I will give 70 of my years to this soul as a gift..." (Yalkut Shimoni, Bereishis, Remez 41). When Adam reached the age of 930, G-d reminded Adam of his pledge and summoned the angel Matat who had witnessed it. Adam then passed away at the age of 930. He is buried in the Mahkpele Cave in Hebron together with his wife Eve.

Standards

Standards in Starting Family Research

Once you understand the guiding principles of source citation, you are prepared to investigate. Contact your living relatives and document everything that you are told. You never know when a place, a name or some other seemingly irrelevant fact will be the key to unlocking something years from now.

Try to:

- ❖ Avoid questions with yes or no answers
- ❖ Use photographs to trigger memories
- ❖ Familiarize yourself with the geography of the area being discussed

While many suggest starting with your oldest living relatives, it is important to have context. If you are already familiar with some of the family structure, you will ask better questions and be a better listener.



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