

RESTORATION OF HISTORIC SILVER LAKE CEMETERY: Goats Clearing Foliage Nature's Way

All through historic Silver Lake Cemetery overgrown vegetation has crept across the gravesites, up trees, along the fences and on any and all surfaces. As we work to restore Silver Lake Cemetery, this has been an intractable problem. The vines and ivy are particularly hard to destroy and the poison ivy is a hazard for visitors and maintenance personnel.

With approval from our rabbinic advisor and with generous funding from **The David Berg Foundation** for this unique project, HFBA contracted with Larry and Ann Cihanek who brought 22 goats to Silver Lake Cemetery. This particular animal crew was experienced at clearing overgrowth and invasive weeds from other cemeteries, parks, historic estates and universities. The goats

arrived at a specific time in the growth cycle of the plants, and spent a week munching the wild greens, poison ivy (harmless to goats), weeds and English ivy, their diet supplemented only with water.

As they ate, forgotten graves appeared where they were previously obscured by the foliage, and the area became clearer, cleaner and more hospitable to those who visit or work in the cemetery.



▲ Before and After ▼



During the goats' residency at our cemetery, Mrs. Leona Kern and her son Bill, substantial partners with HFBA in the Silver Lake Restoration Project, visited the cemetery, met the goats and dedicated a plaque in memory of Mrs. Kern's father, Irving Klein.



HFBA MISSION STATEMENT

THE HEBREW FREE BURIAL ASSOCIATION devotes its resources to performing *chesed shel emet* (the ultimate act of loving kindness). It is the only agency in the New York metropolitan area dedicated to assuring that every Jew, regardless of financial means or religious affiliation, receives a dignified, traditional Jewish funeral and burial.

HFBA as Community Historical Resource

HFBA frequently receives letters asking for historical records and information or help locating a grave site. Below are excerpts from two recent requests, edited for clarity:

My name is Rob Edelman, and I'm a member of the Society for American Baseball Research. I'm presently researching an article on Hilda Chester, the famous Brooklyn Dodgers fan of the 1940s-50s.

Hilda passed away in 1978, at the age of 81-- and I've just learned that she died at St. John Episcopal Hospital in Queens and is buried at Mount Richmond Cemetery, which is run by your organization. Can you tell me any additional information about her? Are there any additional family members that you know of, who either are interred in the cemetery or who have visited her grave over the years?

Any information you might have will be greatly appreciated.

Rob Edelman

HFBA was able to provide the following information: Ms. Chester was, indeed, buried by HFBA in Mount Richmond Cemetery, Section 15, Row 19, Grave 7. She was born on September 1, 1897 and lived in New York City her entire life. She died on December 9, 1978 and was buried on December 15, 1978. Our records do not indicate whether she left any survivors or whether or not anyone attended her burial.

Her grave stone was sponsored by an anonymous HFBA donor.

My name is Kuniko Ashizawa, currently working as a research consultant for the Japanese public broadcasting corporation, NHK, for their documentary film program commemorating the 70th anniversary of the end of WWII. I am writing to request your possible assistance for information about Johanna Angel who was born in Berlin in 1893 and buried at Mount Richmond Cemetery in April 1985, presumably through assistance by HFBA. We hope to make Mrs. Angel's escape from Nazi-occupied Germany to New York in 1941 one of the main features of the documentary.

The film's main focus is on a Japanese musician and orchestra conductor, Hidemaro Konoye, who lived in Germany in the 1930's and 40's. Konoye decided to help his Jewish colleagues flee Germany by using his privileged connection with the Japanese embassy. The records we have indicate that Mrs. Angel, whose last known address was in a senior retirement home in Flushing, NY was one of the Jewish Germans who received Konoye's help.

We have only limited information about Mrs. Angel. We discovered that she was able to get on one of the last ships from Europe to the States, arriving in New York in 1941. She had a brief marriage in the 1920's to Ernest Angel, a publisher/editor in Berlin and Vienna who also escaped to New York, and later became a psychologist. It appears that Johanna had no children, but we discovered that her younger sister's grandchildren are currently living in England.

I hope that there may be some information available at your institution, such as the record of her circumstances before her passing, information about her family and friends, and someone who may remember her.

Kuniko Ashizawa

According to our records, HFBA did, indeed, bury Mrs. Angel in Mount Richmond Cemetery. However, we were unable to provide any information other than a copy of Mrs. Angel's burial application and a photograph of the stone marking her grave, donated anonymously by an HFBA supporter.

Sadly, the paucity of information about our clients is not unusual, and reflects their isolation and poverty at the times of their deaths.

Young Leadership



On May 14, HFBA's Young Leadership Committee hosted a wine and cheese fundraiser at a West Chelsea loft managed by the Pinetree Group. Over 140 young adults spent the evening socializing while also learning about, and supporting, HFBA.

A special thank you to committee members Abby Marcus and Scott Kalmikoff who worked particularly hard to make this wonderful event a success.

Minna Seitelman: Inspired to Help Others



We asked Minna Seitelman – HFBA's treasurer and a long time donor – why she feels so connected to Hebrew Free Burial Association. Here's what she told us.

For Minna, the story begins well before she was born. Minna is a child of Holocaust survivors who met in a concentration camp during the war. Her father, Charles Charmatz, was from Lithuania. One of seven siblings, only he and a sister survived. Minna's maternal grandmother had refused to leave Nazi Germany, mistakenly believing that her husband's heroic service for Germany in World War I would protect the family. She was eventually deported with Minna's mother, Elsa Ikenberg.

Charles and Elsa married in Riga and immigrated to the United States in 1948 with their young daughter, Minna. The family settled on the Lower East Side of Manhattan where Mr. Charmatz worked as a tailor to support his wife and two children.

Being a child of survivors has influenced Minna's life in many ways. She is dedicated to preserving Holocaust history, to the "future of the Jewish people and a just

society." Her philanthropic efforts include the Museum of Jewish Heritage, where she and her husband Mark are overseers, the Folksbiene Yiddish Theater, UJA-Federation of New York, the "Defiant Requiem" program benefitting Holocaust survivors, Laniado Hospital in Netanya, Israel and, of course, Hebrew Free Burial Association.

Minna's concern for aging and impoverished survivors — as well as her antipathy for cremation, so integral to the death camps where so many members of her family perished — make HFBA's mission particularly resonant. Her husband, Mark, shares her commitment and serves on the Board of Capitol Funeral Service of New York, the independent not-for-profit funeral home that works exclusively with HFBA.

Minna is "grateful to be able to share with others." Through her custom of contributing to HFBA in memory or in honor of those whom she loves, Minna has introduced the organization to dozens of her friends and family.

We deeply appreciate Minna Seitelman's continued support and honor her guiding principles. She is an inspiration to her three children, four grandchildren and the rest of the Jewish community for her dedication to *tzedakah* (charity) and *chesed* (lovingkindness).



In the Mail

HFBA receives many letters from people who have had experience with our organization. Below is recent a example.

(O)ne of the hardest days of my life was the day I lost my best friend, my only sister, Kate. When she passed away, my mother and I had no idea where we would lay her to rest as she was 30 years old and had no plan. We were told by a co-worker of hers about your wonderful organization. From the moment I contacted the HFBA office I knew that your team was genuine and understood what I was going through and made this as easy for me as possible. When we got to the cemetery, we met the wonderful Rabbi Plafker. He is a wonderful man and he is the most sincere man and understanding person I have met in a long time. Six years later, unfortunately, my mom joined my sister in heaven. Once again I had the opportunity to work with your organization and again have nothing but good things to say. I visit the cemetery at least once a month. I make sure to pay a visit to the Rabbi and thank him every time.*

I just thought it would be nice to hear what a wonderful organization I feel you have and without you I don't know where my sister or my mother would have been laid to rest.

Thank you again from the bottom of my heart for being such a wonderful organization.

F.T.

** Names have been changed and letters edited for clarity and to protect confidentiality.*

РУССКИЙ ДАЙДЖЕСТ

BELOW ARE TRANSLATED SUMMARIES OF THE
ARTICLES APPEARING IN THIS ISSUE OF *CHESED*.

Восстановление исторического кладбища Сильвер Лейк: новейшие методы расчистки зарослей

Одним из серьёзных препятствий к восстановлению исторического кладбища Сильвер Лейк являются заросли, которые покрывают могилы, стволы деревьев, заборы и любые другие поверхности. Особенно трудно бороться с лозой и разными видами плюща, а ядовитая разновидность плюща представляет угрозу здоровью как посетителей, так и работников кладбища.

Чтобы уничтожать растительные заросли эффективными и современными методами, при этом не нанося ущерб окружающей среде, HFBA использует коз для расчистки кладбища от нежеланных растений. Козы, за которыми присматривает г-н Ларри Сиханек, регулярно используются для расчистки зарослей и уничтожения агрессивных сорняков на кладбищах, в парках, на территории исторических памятников и на университетских кампусах. Их привозят весной, когда растения проходят определённую фазу развития. Козы проводят здесь от двух до семи дней, помимо диеты из диких зарослей нуждаясь только в воде. Они пережёвывают и ядовитый плющ, который для коз безвреден, и английский плющ, и другие сорняки. По мере этого поедания проступают из-под листьев ранее забытые могилы, участки становятся более расчищенными и удобными для посетителей и работников кладбища.

HFBA – источник исторических сведений для общины

В HFBA часто приходят письма с просьбами предоставить исторические записи или оказать помощь в поисках захоронения. Вот выдержки из некоторых писем:

«Меня зовут Роб Едельман, и я состою в Американском обществе исследований бейсбола. Сейчас я занимаюсь одним документом о Хильде Честер, знаменитой в сороковые и пятидесятые годы болельщице команды «Бруклин Доджерс». Хильда скончалась в 1978 году, когда ей был 81 год. Я только что узнал, что она умерла в Епископальной больнице имени св. Джона в Квинсе и похоронена на кладбище Маунт Ричмонд, которое находится в ведении вашей организации. Не могли бы вы предоставить дополнительные сведения о ней? Есть ли родственники, похороненные на этом кладбище или посещавшие могилу Хильды за эти годы? Буду очень признателен за любую имеющуюся информацию.

Роб Эдельман»

HFBA смогло предоставить следующую информацию: г-жа Честер действительно была похоронена на кладбище Маунт Ричмонд, секция 15, ряд 19, могила под номером семь. Она родилась первого сентября 1897 года и всю жизнь прожила в Нью-Йорке. Скончалась г-жа Честер 9 декабря и была похоронена 15 декабря 1978 года. В наших записях мы не нашли сведений об оставшихся родственниках или о тех, кто пришёл на похороны. Установка могильного камня была оплачена анонимным дарителем.

HFBA помогает

• У довольно успешного бизнесмена Питера Ф* были жена и трое детей. К сожалению у него развилось пристрастие к

азартным играм, которое вызвало потерю работы, неприятности с налоговым управлением, развод с женой. Питер не виделся со своими детьми последние два десятка лет. Он пил, много курил и недавно умер от рака лёгких. HFBA разыскало его сына, живущего за пределами Нью-Йорка. Но ни сын, ни остальные дети Питера не пожелали иметь какое-либо отношение к похоронам отца. Разрешение на похороны было получено HFBA от общественного администратора Нью-Йорка.

• Барри Р* умер в возрасте 62-х лет, и два месяца спустя всё ещё не был похоронен из-за юридических препятствий. В HFBA позвонил общественный администратор города Нью-Йорка и сообщил, что жена Барри находится в больнице с умственным расстройством, и что она подписала и нотариально заверила заявление о том, что у неё нет денег на похороны мужа. Штатные сотрудники HFBA убедили женщину дать согласие на погребение мужа, не принимая на себя никаких финансовых обязательств. HFBA организовало похороны Барри, на которых присутствовал мньян из наших добровольцев.

** имена изменены*

Нам пишут

«Одним из тяжелейших в моей жизни был день, когда я потерял единственную сестру К., бывшую мне самым близким другом. Когда сестра скончалась, моя мать и я не имели понятия, где её похоронить, поскольку сестре было всего тридцать, и у неё не было завещания с указаниями на этот счёт. Её коллега рассказала о вашей замечательной организации. Как только я связался с офисом HFBA, то понял, что ваши сотрудники высокопрофессиональны, что они понимают переживания близких усопших и стараются облегчить их по мере возможности. Когда мы приехали на кладбище, то встретили г-на Плафкера, вашего раввина. Г-н Плафкер – удивительный человек, самый искренний из моих знакомых, который проявляет удивительное понимание других людей.

Спустя шесть лет, увы моя мать последовала за сестрой. Снова я связался с вашей организацией, и вновь у меня нет ничего кроме добрых слов в ваш адрес. Я посещаю кладбище по меньшей мере раз в месяц, и каждый раз навещаю г-на Плафкера и благодарю его. И я подумал, что вам будет приятно услышать похвалу вашей удивительной организации. Без вас я бы не знал, где хоронить сестру и мать. Ещё раз спасибо от всего сердца».

Ф. Т.

HFBA благодарит следующие группы добровольцев, которые этой весной помогли на кладбище Сильвер Лейк:

Школу Хершель
Школу для старших классов Фриш
Школу старших классов для девочек им. Стеллы К. Абрахам
Мужчин конгрегации Охеб Шалом (город Саут Орандж, Нью-Джерси)

И особая благодарность всем добровольцам, потрудившимся в день милосердия к усопшим, который проводился в нашей общине этой весной.



From the Director's Desk:

Support HFBA 's \$500,000 Challenge Grant with a Major Contribution

An anonymous donor is making it possible for Hebrew Free Burial Association to meet its most important goals: ensuring free burials to the impoverished, providing emotional support for survivors and maintaining our cemeteries with respect.

What is the donor asking of us in return?

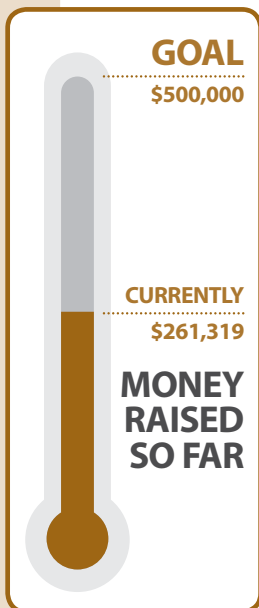
The donor's challenge is that we raise \$500,000 in donations of \$5,000 and greater by December 1st. In return, the donor will contribute \$250,000. While every gift is cherished and most welcome, the donor wants us to increase both the total money we raise annually and impact our revenue with larger gifts.

As of this writing, we are half-way towards our goal! Your contribution can help ensure that every Jew – no matter how impoverished – is buried with dignity and respect.

If you'd like to discuss how your gift can best be put to use, please call me at 212-239-1662 or email me personally at akoplow@hebrewfreeburial.org.

No matter what you can contribute, however, please know that I deeply respect your commitment to HFBA; the *mitzvah of chesed shel emet* is indeed yours.

Amy



HFBA *Helps*



Peter F. had been a successful businessman, married with three children. Unfortunately, he developed a gambling habit which caused the loss of his job, trouble with the IRS, the dissolution of his marriage and estrangement from his children for the past two decades. He drank and smoked heavily and recently died of lung cancer. HFBA tracked down a son who was living out of state. He and his siblings refused to have anything to do with making funeral arrangements for their father. The Public Administrator authorized the burial by HFBA.

Barry R. died at the age of 62 and was still not buried two months later when HFBA received a call from the Public Administrator. Unfortunately, Barry's wife was hospitalized for mental illness and had written a notarized recusal note which indicated that she had no money with which to bury her husband, leaving his body in limbo. HFBA staff members convinced the wife to release the body with no financial obligation on her part. HFBA buried Barry with the HFBA volunteer *minyán* in attendance.

Names changed to protect confidentiality.

We Invite You to Visit Our New Website

www.hebrewfreeburial.org

Our newly designed website gives a clear picture of HFBA's history and mission, how we help and how you can help us and participate in the *mitzvah of chesed shel emet*, ensuring a Jewish burial for New York City's impoverished Jews.

Attractive photos, graphics and videos make this website easy to navigate as a tool to learn about our unique organization.



Thank you to the following groups that have volunteered at Silver Lake Cemetery this spring:

- The Heschel School
- The Frisch School
- Stella K. Abraham (SKA) High School for Girls
- Oheb Shalom Congregation Men's Club (S. Orange, NJ)

And a special thank you to all of the volunteers who attended our Spring Community Chesed Day.



The Heschel School



Stella K. Abraham High School for Girls



The Frisch School

Chesed Shel Emet – HOW YOU CAN HELP

REMEMBER to include HFBA in your will with a bequest.

ESTABLISH an HFBA Forever Gift Annuity or Charitable Trust Plan. In addition to the guaranteed income and tax benefits, these plans ensure that HFBA's promise of a Jewish burial to future generations of indigent Jews will be fulfilled.

CELEBRATE a *simcha* or commemorate a loss with HFBA cards. Cards cost \$18 and can include a personalized message.

CONTRIBUTE to HFBA to ensure an annual *yahrzeit* reminder for your lost loved ones.

INSTITUTE a perpetual *yahrzeit kaddish* for your loved one for a donation of \$180.

ARRANGE for *kaddish* to be said for the eleven month mourning period following a death of a relative or friend for a donation of \$360.

DONATE unused graves. If the graves are not part of a burial society or family plot and are located in New York or New Jersey, please consider donating them to HFBA and receiving a tax deduction for your gift.

SPONSOR perpetual grave care for an indigent's grave for \$600.

ENROLL a Bar/Bat Mitzvah in our "Mitzvah Circle" by suggesting a gift to HFBA to your guests. The generous child who shares his/her *simcha* in this way receives a framed certificate.

VOLUNTEER with your friends, classmates, fellow group members, or family at Silver Lake Cemetery Chesed Days.

GET INVOLVED as a professional with HFBA by donating your expertise and skills in an area that can help us.



PLEASE HELP OUT TODAY BY SENDING A DONATION IN THE ENCLOSED ENVELOPE.

THE HEBREW FREE BURIAL ASSOCIATION was formed in 1888 on Manhattan's Lower East Side by a group of philanthropic and community-minded Jews who were committed to burying their indigent dead according to Jewish tradition, rather than having them buried in a mass grave in City Cemetery. Since its inception HFBA has interred over 65,000 Jews in its two cemeteries. HFBA is also committed to retrieving the identities of those interred and is attempting to provide a gravestone for each unmarked grave.



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