

Dear Reader:

People frequently reach out to HFBA, looking for lost relatives from generations ago. We research our archival records and provide information when we can. Often people will share moving stories with us about their families and loved ones.



This spring, we received the letter below from Gerald Brody. I was deeply moved by his dream of finding the grave of his lost sister and recovering her place

in the Brody family. How gratifying it is to know that she is not forgotten.

HFBA Director of Operations Andrew Parver responded to Gerald's call and photographed the gravesite.

Our staff will help Gerald when he and his wife visit the cemetery. HFBA will continue to maintain Baby Girl Brody's gravesite with dignity and respect.

If you have an interesting HFBA story, or some old HFBA artifacts, please send them to stories@hebrewfreeburial.org

Amy Koplow
Executive Director

A Brother's Story

By Gerald Brody

I'll be visiting my sister's grave soon for the first time. I'm 70 and she was stillborn seventy-five years ago, on December 6, 1945, in Manhattan.

"She's buried in the Mt. Richmond Cemetery at 420 Clarke Avenue in Staten Island in section 28, row 4, graves 28-29. You get to Mt. Richmond by taking the ferry, making a left onto Bay Street, then a series of rights and lefts until you get to Clarke, which is where the cemetery is." Those instructions are from 1945, on a card given to my father when he buried his daughter. He kept it.

By phone, I spoke to a man from the organization, Hebrew Free Burial, which owns and operates the cemetery, and asked him for a picture of my sister's grave. He asked me where in the very large cemetery she was buried. I told him. I heard some voices in the background and then he put me on hold. There was no "musak." About a minute later he

came back and said that I should send the association an email with the specific information about the grave and how I could be contacted. He said that he would get me the photo.

This is all happening 75 years later because I had not been able to find her grave before. I knew that death certificates were issued for stillborn babies. You can get old death certificates for a small fee, but you have to request them by borough. I knew she was

buried in Staten Island. My parents had lived in the Bronx and my mother had given birth in Manhattan. I sent requests to all three boroughs. Twice. Apparently for deaths from that long ago, they have to do a manual search. I was told they couldn't find it. Six times.

I had given up hope of ever finding her grave. Sometimes I thought that maybe she was never buried at all and was thrown

out in the hospital garbage, that my parents had made up the story of the burial because they didn't know what else to say.

NAME Stillborn Brody AGE _____
FROM French Hospital DATE 12-6-45
GRAVE 28-29 ROW 4 SECT. 28

MT. RICHMOND CEMETERY
CLARK AVE., RICHMOND, STATEN ISLAND
OF THE
AGUDATH ACHIM CHESSED SHEL EMETH
OFFICE 218 GRAND STREET, NEW YORK
409
DIRECTIONS:
Take a South Ferry Train (Subway or Elevated) to Staten Island Ferry.
Cross ferry and take Richmond bus to Richmond, S.I. Get off at Court Place.
Walk up Clark Avenue to MT. RICHMOND CEMETERY.

BY AUTO: Cross Staten Island Ferry. Left turn on Bay Street to Vanderbilt Avenue. Right on Vanderbilt Avenue to Richmond Road. Follow Richmond Road to Center Street and turn right on Clarke Avenue to Cemetery.

What *Kaddish* Can Teach Us

K*addish*, the mourner's prayer, is unlike most of our liturgy. Structured as a call and response, the prayer leader declares and the congregation replies. It is only said in the presence of a prayer quorum, because the community must stand with the mourner to comfort and to inspire. The mourner cries out and the congregation amplifies and affirms.

Kaddish is said by mourners three times a day and yet it contains no mention of death. Repeated again and again are the words, "life" and "peace." Mourners are drawn out of their grief and are gently directed to G-d's greatness and His justice. Instead of looking inward, the words point the mourner to the world beyond the personal tragedy.

Yitgadal ve'yitkadash shmei rabba – May His name be exalted. These opening words of the *Kaddish* are drawn from the prophet Ezekiel who witnessed the destruction of the First Temple. As we begin the prayer, we join our personal sorrow to the great catastrophe of the Jewish people.



Other elements of the *Kaddish* are found in the earliest sections of the Talmud. The congregation's response to the opening *Yitgadal* phrase is "*Yihei shmei rabba mevorach*," may Your great Name be blessed. We glorify the name of the Almighty and declare that we accept

His judgment. According to an ancient Talmudic story about Rabbi Akiva, these words – said in faith – may redeem the dead from their sins.

Here Rabbi Akiva teaches us a radical concept, that children may redeem their parents. In most of our prayers, we call upon the merit of our Patriarchs and our Matriarchs to protect us from life's hardships.

How often we call upon the G-d of

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to save us!

Yet the *Kaddish* upends this concept and frames it in reverse. When children recite the *Kaddish* in memory of their parents, it is *their* merit that redeems the parents. As children acknowledge G-d as King of the world, they affirm the values and the *mitzvot* they have received from their mothers and fathers.



AP NYC temporary morgue lingers, a reminder of pandemic's pain; July 5, 2021

An article by the AP describes the distress felt by many New Yorkers over the lag time burying people whose bodies remain in morgues and refrigerated trucks. Below is an excerpt from the article:

Virus deaths alone peaked above 800 a day citywide at one point in April 2020 — deaths from all causes usually average about 150 — and overwhelmed funeral homes, cemeteries and hospital morgues. The temporary

morgue was established that month to give families more time to arrange funerals after the city shortened its timeframe for holding remains before burying them in a public cemetery on remote Hart Island. There is no rule for how long bodies can stay at the temporary facility.

"There was way too much death for the system to handle... We feel really good that we are able to bury these people who have been unburied and in limbo for so long."

recalls **Amy Koplow**, the Executive Director of the Hebrew Free Burial Association, which is interring some Jewish people who were at the temporary morgue.

Still, Koplow feels the medical examiner's office did its best in a maelstrom. Many cases require considerable searching for relatives, a will or other indications of the deceased's wishes, she noted.

For the full article, see: <https://apnews.com/article/coronavirus-pandemic-pandemics-health-e935944e8b5ea915f72aec12cb98dbc7>



HFBA *Helps*

Names and details have been changed to protect confidentiality.

HFBA was contacted by a nursing home social worker to arrange for **Sofia's** burial. Sofia's adult son Gabriel lived with her in the nursing home and was unable to make arrangements on his own, due to his disabilities. The social worker also told us that Sofia had a brother, Alexei, who had died a month prior in a different facility, but nobody knew what had happened to his remains. HFBA's staff discovered that Alexei's body was in the Medical Examiner's temporary morgue facility and proceeded to arrange for Alexei and Sofia's funerals. Brother and sister were promptly buried next to each other at Mount Richmond Cemetery, with Gabriel participating via FaceTime. HFBA reserved a grave for Gabriel next to his mother. HFBA had buried the family's matriarch, Anya, in 1997.

Harry G. came from a poor family and was sent to a group home as a child, only rejoining his family at seventeen. After his parents' deaths, he maintained relationships with his older brother, Sam, and his mentally ill sister, Eleanor. Sam, who worked at the post office and collected used cans and bottles for cash, helped Harry financially as Harry was unable to hold a job. Fortunately, Harry was the beneficiary of his brother's pension after Sam's death.

Last August, Harry died in his apartment; he was 81 years old. His remains were being stored in the city morgue until someone could be found to claim them. When Eleanor's caregiver, Pearl, heard about the death, she recalled that HFBA had buried his brother and mother and called our office.

Eleven months after his death, Harry, too, was buried at Mount Richmond Cemetery.

Yefim, 28, died of self-inflicted stab wounds to the chest. His devastated mother Alina and brother Mikhail attended the burial with several young volunteers who carried the coffin and lowered it into the grave. When Alina saw the casket, she began screaming, hugging and kissing it – and attempted to open it. Although she was gently restrained, Alina's shrieks pierced the air.



In the Mail

Letters below have been edited for clarity and to protect confidentiality.

Thank you for the wonderful service you provided to R.W. She was a long-time friend of my aunt's and a recent friend of mine. I so appreciate that you were kind.

P.S.

I can't thank you enough for all your kindness, support and dedication with the services for my beloved and best friend P.L. This was so sudden and I felt so lost and devastated. I could not have given him the special service and resting place without you. I am forever grateful and appreciate you from the bottom of my heart. P. was so very special to me and I miss him and I love him beyond words.

M.L.

I wanted to thank you for the efficient, compassionate way you handled my cousin B.'s burial. You took so much worry off my shoulders. The rabbi was wonderful and it was so comforting to hear the service by phone as it was occurring. I appreciate being able to give B. a traditional funeral.

T.R.

Congratulations! As a contributor, I am pleased to know that the organization remains highly rated [by Charity Navigator.] I know this year has been a big challenge. I hope you continue to see a reduction in the need for your services as the country recovers from Covid. Wishing you and everyone at HFBA good health now and going forward.

P.H.

Betty Y., a 104-year-old double amputee who had worked as a cashier, lived in a nursing home and had a pre-need arrangement with HFBA. When Betty died, Anne L., the facility's social worker and her husband, as well as two other home residents attended her burial. The HFBA volunteer *minyan* was also in attendance. Anne spoke about Betty's pleasant personality and ready smile, despite having outlived her family and friends. She was surprised, pleased and grateful for the members of the *minyan* who paid their respects to a woman none of them had ever known but who deserved a dignified Jewish burial, complete with the traditional Jewish prayers.

РУССКИЙ ДАЙДЖЕСТ

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

Брат и сестра

Джеральд Броди

Скоро я впервые посетю могилу моей сестры. Мне 70 лет, а она родилась мёртвой семьдесят пять лет назад, 6 декабря 1945 года в Манхэттене.

Моё посещение произойдёт через 75 лет после этой даты, поскольку мне всё не удавалось отыскать могилу сестры. Я знал, что свидетельства о смерти выдавались на мертворожденных. Можно получить старое свидетельство о смерти за небольшую плату, но требуется запрашивать их в соответствующем районе города. Я знал, что сестра была похоронена в Стейтен Айленде, но мои родители жили в Бронксе, а рожала моя мать в Манхэттене. Я посылал запросы во все три района, но везде мне ответили, что не могут найти нужные сведения.

В конце концов, перебирая фамильные документы для передачи их моей семнадцатимесячной внучке Ларкин, я наткнулся на старую карточку с подробностями о месте погребения сестры. Карточка затерялась в потрёпанной коробке семейных фотографий и бумаг. На ней было напечатано: «Она похоронена на кладбище Маунт Ричмонд по адресу 420 Clarke Avenue в Стейтен Айленде, в секции 28, ряд 4, могилы 28-29. Вы можете попасть на Маунт Ричмонд на пароме до Стейтен Айленда, затем сверните налево на Bay Street, затем несколько поворотов налево и направо до Clarke Avenue, где и находится кладбище».

Я долго-долго смотрел на карточку. Я был оглушён, я ведь давно смирился с тем, что это никогда уже не случится... Имея наконец точную информацию, я обратился в Еврейское Благотворительное Похоронное Бюро, которому принадлежит кладбище Маунт Ричмонд. Я не плакал во время этого звонка, только потом, когда рассказал моей жене Пэт эту удивительную историю. «Мы скоро посетим её могилу вместе», ответила она. Я всё ещё всхлипывал, больше ничто не нарушало тишину.

Я всегда думал о моей семье как о родителях и трёх мальчишках. Я изредка слышал о неродившейся сестре, но она была для меня чем-то абстрактным. Теперь же моя семья – это четверо детей, три брата и сестра, и я теперь знаю, где её разыскать.

HFBA помогает

С офисом Еврейского Благотворительного Похоронного Бюро (HFBA) связался социальный работник дома для престарелых, чтобы организовать похороны Софии, их пациентки. Габриэль, сын Софии, жил в том же доме для престарелых, но он не мог заниматься организацией похорон матери из-за своей инвалидности.

Социальный работник упомянул, что у Софии был брат Алексей, который скончался месяцем раньше в другом заведении, но соцработник не знал, где Алексей был похоронен. Сотрудники HFBA смогли установить, что тело Алексея находилось во временном морге, принадлежащем офису нью-йоркской судебно-медицинской экспертизы. В результате и брат, и сестра были похоронены рядом на кладбище Маунт Ричмонд. Габриэль участвовал в обряде погребения через мобильное приложение FaceTime.

HFBA также зарезервировало для Габриэля могилу рядом с могилой матери. Много лет назад, в 1997 году, HFBA организовало похороны Ани, матери Алексея и Софии.

Нам пишут

Мои поздравления! Как один из дарителей, я с удовольствием узнал, что HFBA по-прежнему очень высоко оценивается агентством Charity Navigator. Конечно, я понимаю, что прошедший год был очень трудным. Я надеюсь, что продолжится снижение потребности в услугах HFBA по мере того как вся страна приходит в себя от эпидемии коронавируса. Желаю Вам и всем сотрудникам HFBA в первую очередь здоровья, и сейчас и в будущем.

П.Х.

Что мы говорим, когда произносим Кадиш

Кадиш – молитва скорбящих об усопших – непохож на большинство наших молитв. Он составлен как ряд призывов и ответов: скорбящий, ведущий молитву, возглашает призывы и вся община отвечает ему. Скорбящий восклицает, и община хором подтверждает его слова.

Скорбящие произносят кадиш трижды в день, но при этом в нём никаких упоминаний о смерти. «Жизнь» и «мир» – вот те слова, которые повторяются снова и снова. Эти слова как бы выводят понесших утрату из их скорби и ненавязчиво направляют в сторону Б-жественного величия и справедливости Вс-вышнего.

Некоторые части кадиша можно найти в начальных разделах Талмуда. В ответ на призыв кадиша (Йисгада, «да возвеличится имя Твоё») община отвечает «Ихей шмей рабба меворах» (да будет великое имя Твоё благословенно). Тем самым мы славим имя Вс-вышнего и провозглашаем, что мы принимаем Его правосудие.

Согласно Талмуду рабби Акива утверждал, что слова эти, произнесённые с убеждением и верой, способны очистить усопших от их грехов. Этим рабби Акива преподносит смелую мысль о том, что дети могут искупить грехи родителей. Когда дети читают кадиш в память о своих родителях, то именно заслуги детей преодолевают прегрешения родителей. Дети, признавая Б-га как Владыку Вселенной, подтверждают еврейские заповеди и ценности, которые они усвоили от своих матерей и отцов.

С Новым Годом!

В уходящем году наши молитвы на Рош Хашана и Йом Кипур особенно западали в душу. «Кому жить, а кому умереть» было у каждого на уме когда мы столкнулись с пандемией. Почти каждый знал кого-то, кто уступил в борьбе с новым вирусом.

В новом году давайте вместе возвысим наш голос как часть сильной еврейской общины, чтобы попросить Вс-вышнего о здоровье, мире и долгой и благополучной жизни.

Всем, кто нас поддерживает, желаем счастливого и здорового Нового Года!

Riverdale Community Event

Once again, as in 2020, and unlike the previous years, the HFBA Riverdale Community Breakfast was a virtual event. On April 24th, nearly 180 people "Zoomed" to honor Judy Genack Matthews, Rabbanit Tali Schaum Broder and Sophia Sigal, three remarkable women who have done so much for the Riverdale community and beyond. HFBA looks forward to sharing lox, bagels and coffee *in person* in spring 2022 at next year's Breakfast!



A Brother's Story ...continued from page 1

I found the card with information about the burial when I was looking for family history to give to my 17-month-old granddaughter, Larkin. If I didn't do this now, she will never get to know this stuff. It will be lost.

I remembered there was a box labeled "very old pictures and papers" in the back of a closet. I don't know how I got the box and have no memory of taking it from house to house as I moved over the years, but there it was. Hundreds of pictures and dozens of documents. In the pile was a 3-inch by 5-inch yellowing post card with some Hebrew writing on it. I don't read Hebrew. I was about to toss it into the "not interested" pile but turned it over first. And there it was. The burial information for a "stillborn Brody" baby. They hadn't named her.



Three Brody sons and their father

I just looked at it for a long time. A very long time. I was stunned. This was something I was sure would never happen.

I didn't cry until later, until I broke down telling my wife, Pat, the story.

"We'll visit the grave together soon," she said. I was sobbing and it was very quiet, except for my gasps.

I have always thought of my family as my parents and three boys. I had known about my sister, but she wasn't real to me. Now we are a family of four children, three brothers and one sister and I know now where she is.

Thank you to all of our donors who generously enabled us to meet the challenge that we highlighted in the last *Chesed*.

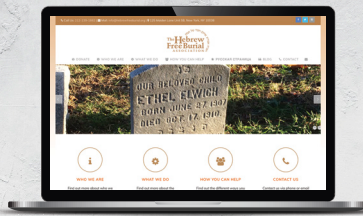
You've stepped up to contribute the needed match of \$100,000 and an anonymous donor has presented HFBA with an additional \$50,000 gift!

With this combined \$150,000, we were able to provide 30 of our brothers and sisters with a proper funeral and burial.

The prayers of the Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur services had special resonance this past year. "Who shall live, and who shall die" was on everybody's mind as we faced the pandemic. Almost everyone knew of someone who had succumbed to the new virus. Old or young, the victims fell...

As we approach the new year, with, thankfully, a vaccine to protect ourselves, let us commit to also protecting, helping and supporting each other. Let us raise our voices together as a strong Jewish community beseeching G-d for good health, peace and long life.

We wish all our supporters a very Happy, Healthy New Year!



**Your help is needed
now more than ever.**

Donate online at
www.hebrewfreeburial.org/donate

Giving on our secure website
is both easy and efficient!

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.

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Fall Holiday Cemetery Schedule

It is traditional to visit "kever avot" (the graves of our ancestors and loved ones) during the High Holy Day period. Please see the schedule below.

Mount Richmond Cemetery

ROSH HASHANA

Monday, September 6

9 am – 3:45 pm

Tuesday, September 7

CLOSED

Wednesday, September 8

CLOSED

YOM KIPPUR

Wednesday, September 15

9 am – 1 pm

Thursday, September 16

CLOSED

Yizkor is recited on Yom Kippur

SUKKOT

Monday, September 20

9 am – 1 pm

Tuesday, September 21

CLOSED

Wednesday, September 22

CLOSED

HOSHANA RABBA

Monday, September 27

9 am – 1 pm

SHMINI ATZERET AND SIMCHAT TORAH

Tuesday, September 28

CLOSED

Wednesday, September 29

CLOSED

Yizkor is recited on Shmini Atzeret, Tuesday, September 28

Silver Lake Cemetery

Silver Lake Cemetery will be open for visitors on Sunday, September 5 and Sunday, September 12, 2021 from 9 am - 3:45 pm.

Расписание работы кладбища в осенние еврейские праздники:

Согласно еврейской традиции принято посещать могилы близких (кевер авот) во время торжественных осенних праздников. Пожалуйста, ознакомьтесь с приведенным ниже расписанием.

Кладбище Маунт Ричмонд – расписание

РОШ ХАШАНА:

Пон. 6 сентября 9:00-15:45

Втор. 7 сентября ЗАКРЫТО

Среда 8 сентября ЗАКРЫТО

СУККОТ:

Пон. 20 сентября 9:00-13:00

Втор. 21 сентября ЗАКРЫТО

Среда 22 сентября ЗАКРЫТО

ЙОМ КИПУР:

Среда 15 сентября 9:00-13:00

Четв. 16 сентября ЗАКРЫТО

Поминальную молитву Изкор будут читать на Йом Кипур

ХОШАНА РАБА

Пон. 27 сентября 9:00-13:00

ШМИНИ АЦЕРЕТ и СИМХАТ ТОРА:

Втор. 28 сентября ЗАКРЫТО

Среда 29 сентября ЗАКРЫТО

Поминальную молитву Изкор будут читать в праздник Шмини Ацерет 28-го сентября