

# B'nai Gombin

*Newsletter of the Gombin Jewish Historical & Genealogical Society*



The Gombin Jewish Historical & Genealogical Society (GJHGS) is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization that seeks to educate the public about the history and genealogy of the Jews of Gombin. To achieve this goal, the GJHGS collects and publishes relevant materials, encourages historical and genealogical research, and undertakes activities aimed at preserving documents and relics of the culture and history of Jewish Gombin.

*B'nai Gombin* is the newsletter of the GJHGS. Everything published in *B'nai Gombin* is meant to provide information for Gombiners and their descendents. Articles, stories, poems, or other genres about Jewish genealogy, Poland, Gombin, or other subjects of interest to Gombiners submitted, may be published in *B'nai Gombin*. The views and opinions expressed in *B'nai Gombin* are not necessarily those of the Gombin Society. For further information, contact the Gombin Society by mail at 185 Skyline Drive, Highland Mills NY 10930 or by email. [www.gombinsociety.org](http://www.gombinsociety.org)

© 2012. Gombin Jewish Historical & Genealogical Society. ISSN #1096-7354

## First Phase of Cemetery Cleanup and Restoration Completed



*Cemetery before clean-up, 2011*



*... and after clean-up, 2012*

With donations from the membership, the Gombin Society has completed the first phase of the restoration of the Jewish Cemetery in Gombin (pronounced Gombin). After three competitive bids were obtained, a construction company based in Gombin was selected to repair the monument and gate and to weatherproof the *matzevot* (grave markers) and concrete of the monument. The total cost was \$4400, of which about \$2000 was raised from Society members.

The local firm selected (Florkewicz) has been building new homes and condo style units in Gombin; the town is going through a period of growth and expansion related to Poland's new western-oriented economy. A major highway is being constructed from Berlin to Warsaw with an exit for the nearby city of Plock (pronounced Plotsk).

The cemetery work began in April after the harsh Polish winter ended. The monument and gate are now restored to their original elegant state. The treatment of the stones should preserve them for some time. While this is an important accomplishment, we recognize that continuing maintenance will be necessary as the weather damage can be slowed, but never stopped.

Much remains to be done at the site. The long, perimeter fence needs to be repainted and the walkway from the gate [**Continued. Page 3**]

# Middle School Students Learn about Gąbin's Past Jewish History and Culture

by Arthur Gertzman

With support from the Gombin Society, the *Forum For Dialog Among Nations* (a not-for-profit organization based in Warsaw) has run an educational program about Poland's Jewish history and culture for Middle School students in Gąbin. The goal is to teach local students about Jews in Poland by having the children investigate the Jewish places in their own town or community. The children create a report through which they can teach their teachers, parents and town officials about the Jewish life that existed in their town before the war.

The Gąbin program was run by a Middle School history teacher, who also runs the History Club. The teacher was very enthusiastic about the program that took place over four separate

days spread over a five-week period in May and June, 2012.

On the first day, the students discussed what a typical day for Jewish students of their age would have been like in the mid 1930's. They were charged with getting information about the town from several sources, but primarily by asking their parents and grandparents about their recollections of Gąbin's Jewish presence. They located and identified the Jewish neighborhoods and places- such as the Synagogue, cemetery, streets, homes and schools. During the rest of the four-day program, the students expanded their knowledge of pre-War Jewish history in Gąbin and prepared a report. The report could be whatever format the students select- video, dramatization, or written report. On the final day the students presented the program and led a walking tour of the Jewish sites in the town [photo]. In July, the class reassembled to meet Minna Packer, a Gombin Society Board member, and led her through the town and reprised their report. We will

be receiving a formal report about the Gąbin program with photos, hopefully before the December 2nd annual meeting in Cranford NJ.; [Don't miss it- see page3]

Since modern Poles know little of the Jewish heritage and history of their towns, the *Forum* builds on the natural curiosity of school-age children to learn and teach Jewish history. The *Forum* hires and trains Polish University graduate students to learn about Jewish history and religion. They are drawn from Departments of Jewish Studies in eight major Polish universities. The *Forum* is funded by private and government funds, including the U.S. State Department. The Gombin Society provided a stipend of \$4000 for this project. We were briefed on the progress of the Gąbin program by the *Forum's* Monica Kuzon.

The *Forum* has run this program for high schools and middle schools in hundreds of Polish cities and towns. The new Museum of the History of Jews in Poland will also be a major institution through which the long trail of anti-Semitism can be brought to the attention of Poles. The museum will open in Warsaw in October 2013.



## Annual Meeting of the Gombin Society

Sunday, December 2, 2012. 11am to 3pm. Temple Beth-El Mekor Chayim

338 Walnut Avenue, Cranford NJ 07016. Telephone 908-276-9231

**Kosher brunch will be served; cost \$10 (included in annual dues of \$65); Agenda includes:**

- Recent trips to Gombin: Dana Boll, Minna Packer
- The repair and restoration of the Gombin Cemetery; Needs for completing the project
- Report and photos of middle school student project on Gombin's Jewish history
- Reports from President and Treasurer; future directions and projects

**Please RSVP to Mindy Prosperi, [mprosperi@optimum.net](mailto:mprosperi@optimum.net) Phone 845-642-7654**

### Donate now to the Campaign for Gombin.

**Goal is to raise \$25,000 for future projects including...**

**Next phase of repair and restoration of the Gombin Jewish Cemetery;**

**Educating the next generation of Jewish Gombiners.**

**Make checks payable to GJHGS, 45 Copper Mine Rd., Princeton NJ 08540**

---

**GOMBINER BURIAL PLOT FOR SALE:** Located in the Gombiner section at Beth David Cemetery, Elmont, Long Island, New York. Originally purchased from Ben Kraut in 1992. Choice of either Section E, Block 6, Plot 1, Row M, or Section E, Block 6, Plot 3, Row L. Current value of similar plot today would be \$3800. Will sell to a Society member or relative for half price, or \$1900. Call Alan (son of Gombiner Joe Wood) at 347-502-7111.

---

### Save the Date - 2013

**Gombin Society's 90th Anniversary Celebration**

**May 19, 2013 at the New York Museum of Jewish Heritage**

---

**Cemetery Restoration continued...** to the monument needs to be reestablished. We do not know how many stones lie buried in the grave area, and a survey of stones and a plan to reset them is needed.

In 1999, the Gombin Society gained legal ownership of the Jewish cemetery property in Gombin. During the War, all of the *Matzevot* had either been removed or knocked over. The Society sponsored a construction project to restore this sacred place. Under the leadership of Jeremy Freedman, Leon Zamosc, Ada Holtzman, other Gombiners and the Nissenbaum Foundation, a wrought iron fence was built around the property and a tasteful monument was constructed comprised of fallen *Matzevot* that were found on the grounds or returned by local Gombin citizens. The new monument was formally dedicated in 1999. A film about the trip to Gombin for the dedication was the subject of the film by Minna Packer, "*Back to Gombin.*" **Arthur Gertzman**



## GOMBIN JEWISH HISTORICAL & GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

GJH&GS BOARD PRESIDENT: Arthur Gertzman; VICE PRESIDENT: Phil Ball; SECRETARY: Mindy Prosperi; TREASURER: Michael Kaplan

BOARD OF DIRECTORS: Elliot Ballen, Dana Boll, Bernard Guyer, Minna Packer, Soren Packer, Arthur Stupay, Rob Stupay; REPRESENTATIVE IN ISRAEL: Ada Holtzman; REPRESENTATIVE IN BRITAIN: Jeremy Freedman; NEWSLETTER: Bernard Guyer

Mailing address: 185 Skyline Drive, Highland Mills NY 10930; Website URL: [www.gombinsociety.org](http://www.gombinsociety.org)  
Dues to Gombin Society, Treasurer, 45 Copper Mine Road, Princeton NJ, 08540

**B'nai Gombin is now available online.**

**Go to our web site: [www.gombinsociety.org](http://www.gombinsociety.org)**

**Register at "Join our mailing list" It's easy!**



**185 Skyline Drive,  
Highland Mills NY 10930**

*Return Service Requested*