Coming Full Circle

This weekend, 170 relatives traveling from across the country and as far away as Israel, will gather in Baltimore, joining up with hundreds of others who live here, for the 110th anniversary weekend reunion of the B’nai Abraham Yehuda Laib Family Society.

They’ll participate in a Havdalah service and barbecue, attend a banquet and dance, and gather at family homes for a Monday morning brunch. More important, they’ll schmooze, share stories and reminisce about shared roots.

The society, which includes 175 active families around the globe, stems from the descendants of Relia Krok and her two husbands, Yehuda Laib and Abraham Abramson. They arrived in Baltimore at the turn of the last century, many from Lithuania’s now long-gone small towns and shtetls.

In Baltimore, a core group gathered every weekend to socialize. If they could afford it, many put 5 cents into a fund to bring other relatives to the country. As the family expanded, members bought a shore home in Anne Arundel County to have a space to gather.

As for many clans, the years marched on and some relatives moved away, so they formed the society and today stay in touch through annual bulletins and email, and they meet in Charm City every five years for a gala weekend.

Rebecca Tucker, president of the group, suggests other families interested in reconnecting should “sit down and trace their family tree.”

If local, contact the Jewish Museum of Maryland (410-732-6400) for help. If not, contact their base community and establish a file if one doesn’t exist. Keep in touch through bulletins updating family accomplishments and every so often hold a family reunion, Tucker adds.

As for this weekend, she says, “It really gets exciting to see the young kids get to know each other. Sometimes, they even discover that they already knew each other but now find out they are related.”

— Rochelle Eisenberg