



San Francisco Bay Area Jewish Genealogical Society

1990 20th Ave. San Francisco, Calif. 94116

February, 1987

FEBRUARY GENERAL MEETING

DATE: MONDAY, MARCH 16, 1987

TIME: 7:30 P.M.

PLACE: SUTRO LIBRARY
480 Winston Dr. San Francisco

PROGRAM: Short business meeting, speaker, refreshments

SPEAKER: JANE JACOBSON

TOPIC: ANSWERS TO YOUR QUESTIONS RE THE BETH HATEFUTSOTH COMPUTER PROGRAM

Mrs. Jacobson who lived in Israel and is very well acquainted with the program has very kindly expressed her willingness to answer all the many questions people have about this computer and what it requires of those who fill out its questionnaires.

Sutro Library is familiar, at least by name, to most of you. It is a state genealogical library. If, however you have never been there it is beyond the Stonestown apartments and homes.

If you are coming from the south take 280 to Stonestown, turning left at Winston Dr. and follow Winston around until you see a low building all by itself on the right side of the road. It is marked Sutro Library but you do not see that until you are right there.

If coming from the East Bay take the Ocean Ave off ramp and follow Ocean to 19th Ave. Make a left turn into 19th then a right at Winston. From the north simply stay on 19th to Winston. We will be meeting at Sutro on a regular basis. It should be far nicer for us than Fort Mason. The room we will be using was not available at the time we signed up for Fort Mason. Please enter through the front door, walk back to the ramp, down the ramp and to the end of the hallway. We will be leaving after the library closes by a separate door and we have been advised to recommend to our members that they park in front of the library rather than in the parking lot as it will be closer to that exit.

Now that we will no longer have to pay attention to the length of time we use the room we can reinstitute a custom dating from the time when we met at the savings and loan on Noriega. That is, invite those who are new to genealogy and wish to ask questions or those who are not new but have hit a snag and would like to talk to others about it to come early and speak to officers or older members who are present. We cannot solve all problems, obviously, but we can try to help.

Also the library itself is open Monday evenings until well past the time for our meeting which enables those who choose, to come early and do some research in the library. They have very little for the Jewish genealogist at present although they would like to have more, but they do have some city directories, census records etc. How much you find may depend on how long your ancestors have been in this country but you may find things of value to your research.

The board viewed the room at our last meeting and everyone approved.

ELECTIONS

Although we will not have elections for six months yet, it is not really too early to begin thinking about who you might like to see as president for the two years that follow the election, whether you might like to be a candidate for office etc.

Our by-laws do not permit a president to serve two consecutive terms therefore a new president must be elected. Other officers may succeed themselves or be elected to another office. The president, too may serve in another capacity.

There will be only one more newsletter prior to election so this is the time to send in any nominations you may have or your own candidacy for any office. We can then publish whatever is received in the next newsletter.

The chairman of a local group has an automatic seat on the board of directors but is not placed in office by the membership at large. The local groups are autonomous except that they collect no dues and are part and parcel of the SFBAJGS. Someday in the distant future when there are enough people in any given area to warrant a fully separate group, no doubt there will be separate societies, in touch with one another, but collecting their own dues, going well beyond simply holding little gettogether meetings as local groups do. At present if we get a decent turnout from the entire membership for a meeting we are happy. We are growing however and have hope for the future.

LOCAL GROUP LEADERSHIP

The East Bay Local Group has fallen apart once again. For some reason, although there seem to be enough people in the East Bay willing to participate no one seems willing to head the group and keep it together. If you are in the East Bay and would like to take on the chairmanship of the East Bay Group, please say so. What it involves is scheduling meetings, sending notices whenever a notice in the newsletter would be too late to notify people, etc. It can be frustrating, of course, just as trying to run anything can be, but it can still be worthwhile and satisfying.

Marin has never had a local group and could use one. That goes for the south bay as well.

COMPUTER GENEALOGY

We receive an ever increasing amount of mail regarding computers and computer use in genealogy which we are able to pass on to you only very sketchily since your editor knows nothing of computers and has no desire to change that.

However, since so many of you do use computers, it would seem the only sensible thing would be to have a computer column written by someone competent to handle such a column. We would allow from half to three quarters of a page per issue and would pass along whatever we receive on this subject. By preference this should be someone acquainted with computers in general rather than only with their own personal computer choice and possibly a member of a computer genealogy society such as the Computer Interest Group which is part of the California Genealogical Society. If anyone would like to be the editor of the computer column please let us know.

COMPUTER INTEREST GROUP

This group is part of the California Genealogical Society but exists as a separate unit. It does have its own officers and nominal dues of \$5.00 or \$6.00. It generally holds its meetings bi-monthly on the same Saturday as the CGS meetings. In order to join this group one must first join CGS. As far as this writer knows it is the only computer group in town although certainly there are other groups all over the country.

ROOTS II WORKSHOP

ComputerRooters, a Sacramento computer group, has sent us notice of a day they have planned featuring the Roots II program with instruction by Howard Nurse, who developed this software. The cost for the day is \$7.50. The date is March 14. The problem is that we have only just received this notice and they want all registrations in by March 4. If you are interested you might call Maxine Roberts at (916) 421-8332 and explain that you did not have notice in time. She may be able to accommodate you.

This "genealogical fair" will also take place in Sacramento but this time there is adequate notice. This, too, is a full day's program, from 8:30 registration until 4:00 in the afternoon. Only two speakers are mentioned, Laverne Galeener-Moore, author of the "delightful, hilarious 'Collecting Dead Relatives'" and Helen Kirkish, a nationally known graphoanalyst who will tell people how to know more about their ancestors through their handwriting. There will also be a photographer present who will copy your old photographs while you wait for \$3.00 each. A self address envelope is requested so that your prints and negatives can be mailed to you but you can take your precious photographs with you. A nice idea since most of us are nervous about our pictures when they are out of our hands, waiting for copies is one thing, waiting to get your only copy of a precious picture back is another. Also \$3.00 is a very good price. They also plan to have a class for beginners conducted by Iris Jones, and they do mean beginners. It is for those who have not yet gotten started but want to. One can search their "Ancestor File" and their "Locality File" as well as their "Cousin Board". Much of this would probably be of very little use to us since the names would not be those of Jewish people but the whole thing does seem rather intriguing. Scarcely the usual seminar but it might be fun. The registration fee is \$12.50 for non-members (this is being put on by the Genealogical Society of Sacramento), if sent in prior to April 15. After that date and at the door the fee is \$15.00.

You can bring your own lunch or you can pay an additional \$5.00 for a cold buffet, salads and sandwiches chiefly.

You can also bring your charts and they will attempt to help if you are stuck.

There was only one registration form but we will photocopy it for anyone who so desires. The photocopy will include all directions etc.

FAMILIAR WORDS

Jon Stein of Philadelphia begins an article in Chronicles with the words, "Like so many of us, I began doing serious research on my family after my parents and older members of the family who could have been so helpful had passed away."

Now that genealogy is becoming ever more popular, possibly there will be fewer of today's young people reciting these familiar words when they are no longer young. In the case of those of us like Jon and Yours Truly, when we were in our twenties, not to mention our teens, the would be amateur genealogist was on his or her own. There was so little available to give one a start. Let us hope the young people will listen to our encouragement and begin at the age so many of us wish we had.

CZECHOSLAVAKIAN RESEARCH

Jon Stein goes on to report a great deal of luck with Czech research. After a false start or two Jon hit paydirt. On the advice of the Leo Baeck Institute he wrote to the State Jewish Museum in Prague. They do not have the records he needed but did very kindly answer, and in English, telling him that all the registers for Bohemia and Moravia are kept in the State Central Archives. Prague, you know, is in what once was Bohemia, and Jon's ancestral town is also in Bohemia.

Jon wrote to the archives, again in English, since he does not know Czech, enclosing some family group sheets etc. to show what he knew and what he was seeking. Six months later he received a form letter from the Czech Embassy in Washington informing him that the genealogical research he had requested was on hand and would be forwarded to him if he would send a postal money order in the amount of \$45.00.

Jon did so and a few weeks later was delighted to receive a letter on the letterhead of the archives, in Czech, giving him an amazing amount of information. When translated Jon found he had names for four great grandparents and eight great grandparents. For some it included dates etc. for others simply the names, but as you can well imagine Jon is far from complaining. He is now eager for more and has written again. The address should you too have Czech ancestry, is:

Statni Ustredni Archiv
Ubrancu Miru 133
160 00 Praha 6
Czechoslovakia

Praha is Czech for Prague, of course. Twelve names for less than four dollars each plus other

data is surely a good value. This is the first we have heard regarding Czech research but the long wait followed by a form letter from the Embassy in Washington in the case of East Germany, or a form letter from the Polish Consulate in Chicago in the case of Poland, is apparently common to all iron curtain countries. The fees demanded do seem to vary with Poland asking for high fees, often for a certificate saying only that there is no information, while East Germany's fees are right in line with those of Czechoslovakia. So far, however, we have no reports of East Germany doing any research for anyone. They send information on an abstract form giving only a minimum although the German records from which the information is taken, like all German certificates, give much more. The names of parents for example, generally what people have in mind when they send for a certificate. Czechoslovakia would seem to rate high as a place a genealogist can feel fortunate to deal with.

GERMAN GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

This item was slated for the last newsletter but was inadvertently omitted. The title given above is a name some dissident members, (now former members) of the Immigrant Genealogical Society of Los Angeles used. These ex-members sent out material indicating that German Genealogical Society was the new name of the Immigrant Genealogical Society and were attempting to simply take over the society and run it more to their own taste. Needless to say, the society took a very dim view of this and wants it known that they have not changed their name and are still the same society in the same place and operating in the same way as previously.

RUSSIAN CENSUS RECORDS

Avi Avot has an article by Miriam Weiner on this subject which is very informative. Although we hear very little about available records in Russia there really were records. There were censuses taken in the second half of the last century and into this century, some covered vast areas and others were simply local but there are records, records the Russians do not feel they owe it to anyone to make information available to genealogists. The fact of the matter is they do not understand genealogy and the reasons behind our desire to know more of our ancestry.

It would be nice to be able to quote the article for you since it gives dates and a list of places but it is copyrighted. Some of it, at least, can be found in published books. A book by Professor Patricia Grimsted called Archives and Manuscript Repositories in the USSR covered Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Belorussia. Another book covering the Ukraine was to be out late last year and should be available by now.

The book, of course, can only list the existing archives. How to get the information contained in these archival records is another story. Perhaps that too will someday change. Meanwhile it would be nice to know if there are any records for your town at the time your ancestors lived there.

VILNA, LITHUANIA

Another article in Avi Avot is excerpted from a book called The Annals of the Aarons Family, Vol. 111, No 1.

This volume is unfamiliar to us. Presumably this book, or series of books, concerns itself with the Aarons family in the main, but it contains some interesting facts about the treatment of the Jews under various rulers going back as far as the 15th century.

THE SHTETL BOOK

The above is the title of a book Arlene Rich reports on in the Cleveland Kol. It has no relationship to the Shtetl Finder which helps one locate towns. This book describes life in Poland in the 19th century, focusing chiefly on a middle sized town, but including more than that. The authors, a couple named Roskies, admittedly wrote only from published material, not personal experience in Poland but Arlene found it a joy and highly recommends it to those of Polish descent who would like to know more about the life their ancestors lived. The publisher is Ktav Publishing and it was published at \$8.95.

Sorry we cannot give you an address for the publisher but none was given. Any book store can check for books in print.

CLEIN FAMILY REUNION

The Clein family is holding a family reunion in Maimi May 15-17, 1987. This family arrived in Ireland in the 1870s from Akmene, Lithuania. From Ireland the family spread to this continent, South America, and Israel and, of course, to England. The family has some missing members and would like to contact all Cleins for the family reunion. Contact Michael A. Clein, 9795 SW 143 Street, Miami, Fla. 33176 if you are a member of this family or know someone who is.

ENCYCLOPEDIA MEOREI GALICIA

This volume is reviewed in Chronicals but since the review includes a good deal of Hebrew reference, the book itself being in Hebrew, thus its very hard to follow for one who knows no Hebrew. Apparently this a valuable resource for those with ancestry from the rabbinical society of Galicia, although according to the reviewer there are faults to be found with the way it is organized. The author is Rabbi Meir Winder and it was published by the HED Press Ltd of Jerusalem at \$20.00 per copy. No doubt that does not include shipping. The reviewer, who offers many hints for using this volume, is Gideon Rath, but we do not know who he is or where he is to be found.

WISHFUL THINKING

Wouldn't it be wonderful if someone would translate all the books in Hebrew and in Yiddish that could be so valuable to the Jewish researcher but cannot be used by those who do not know the Hebrew alphabet and speak neither language. Yizkor books, rabbinical histories and so much more tend to be only in Hebrew or Yiddish. Obviously no one is going to translate hundreds and hundreds of books but must they write current books only in Hebrew or Yiddish even when their daily tongue is neither?

ARGENTINE RESEARCHER

Rootskey tells us that Oscar Pardo, Ciudad de La Paz 948, (1426) Buenos Aires is willing to do Jewish research in Argentina on a fee basis.

SCOTTISH RESEARCH

Several newsletters mention Harvey L. Kaplan of Glasgow as someone willing to assist in research on Scottish lines. Mr Kaplan's address is 121 Aulhouse Road, Glasgow G43 1XB, Scotland. No mention is made of whether a fee is required or not.

GENEALOGICAL COLLECTION SAFE

Rootskey reports that the disastrous fire at the Los Angeles main library did not damage the library's extensive genealogical collection. This is good news indeed. Those who have visited the library's genealogy department know what a loss such a fine collection could have been. In fact many people had been quite worried about the damage the fire might have done since the papers reported chiefly on the number of books rather than on what books were saved and what was lost. There were losses in the history department but most survived. The California Room survived except for the loss of some back files of periodicals. From a genealogist's point of view the most wanted books survived.

ST. LOUIS JGS DISBANDED

Rootskey also reports that the St. Louis JGS has disbanded. Its collection has been contributed to the St. Louis Genealogical Society. This is sad news. We do not know what happened to cause the demise of this JGS. We do know that Matt Darrish is a knowledgeable genealogist who only a year or so ago conducted a mini seminar for those from other societies who had research to do in St. Louis. Three of our members attended and spoke highly of the help they received, their reception and the satisfaction with what they learned. We will miss knowing this JGS is among the two dozen or so now in existence.

MEMBERS FORUM

Increase in Research Costs - Connie Vaughn

If you didn't write for that California birth or death certificate last year it is going to cost you an extra \$2.00 this year. Birth certificates are now \$11.00, and death certificates \$7.00. The additional \$2.00 is a surcharge that expires December 31, 1988, the money going for the State Vital Record Improvement Program in Sacramento. These fees are applicable to documents requested from either Sacramento or the various counties.

Duisberg Jewish History = Walter Hertzmann

Last month I received from the city of Duisburg, a two volume book which could be of interest to those working in Germany. It covers the general history of religious and social life and institutions from the 12th century to 1942. There are many mini and full biographies and a listing of many Jewish families in usable form from about 1900 to 1942, listing children and what became of them, when known. It includes Ruhrort, Hamborn and Duisberg-Sud. Foundations are listed and explained. In other words it has a lot for all kinds of researchers, although not all the information is complete. Still it is a book with which researchers of that area should be familiar.

Title: Geschichte der Duisberger Juden, by Günter von Roden. Published 1986 by the Walter Braun Verlag. I believe the publisher's price is DM90.

Peninsula Resource - Bob Weiss

For those of us who live on the peninsula there is a genealogical resource which may be of help. The Santa Clara (City) Public Library, main branch, has a genealogical reference room which has some materials specifically relevant to researching Jewish roots. To be sure, the bulk of the material pertains to U.S. heritage, and there are other sources such as Sutro Library and the San Bruno Federal Archives that have far more, but closeness of the SCPL, the ability to request interlibrary loans, and the evening and weekend hours make a very convenient place to do research. I have spent a couple of hours browsing the shelves and would like to share my finding with the society.

The following is a list of the mostly standard "how-to" books on Jewish genealogy you may find on the shelves: Shtetl Finder -Cohen GS914.7 C67, Early Jews of New Orleans - KornG696 K84, Jews of San Francisco and the greater Bay Area G296 C67, West Virginia Jewry GR296 S55, Jewish Immigration to the U.S. 1881-1910 GR325.2 383, Finding Our Fathers - Rottenberg G929.1 C67, From Generation to Generation - Kurzweil O929.1 K96, My Jewish Roots - Kranzler G929.1 K89, Jewish Genealogy - Zubatsky & Berent GR929.1 Z93, First American Jewish Families - Stern GR929.20973 S83, A Dictionary of Jewish Names and Their History - Kaganoff GR929.4 K11, Where to write for Vital Records GR312 W56, Trow's New York Directory (1888-1896) GS917.47 T87. Ships of Our Ancestors - Anuta GR929.373 A63 and many issues of the American Jewish Archives. They also have some census records and will order others on interlibrary loan. The federal Archives in San Bruno have all the census records, of course and Sutro Library has most of them through 1900. They lack 1910.

Ed. note) Many of these books can be purchased from a Jewish book store at a cost of from \$8.95 to about \$12.95 each if you are interested in building a library of your own.

SHARING CORNER

A Rare Find - Walter Hertzmann

Finding unusual information can be both interesting and fascinating. When I received a summary of a legal document of March 1752, from the Archives in Newberg on the Danube, West Germany, that covers the Bavarian area of Schwaben, my curiosity was aroused. I wrote and requested that someone translate the handwriting and abbreviations on a typewriter so that I could read it. The result proved to be a mixture of Middle High German and Latin. Roughly translated I found it was the marriage contract of Abraham Israel and Geres Bernheim wherein her father, through his son, promised them five years free rent in a home owned by the son

in a rather complicated transaction. The addendum to the contract gave Abraham Israel the synagogue rights and privileges of the parents, with the consent of Gere's siblings and others, and with the proviso that the parents would continue to occupy their seats for six years or until they passed away. This is a most important document to the Koshland (Koschland) family. Why? This is where it all began. Related documents indicate that Abraham Israel had recently moved to the town of Ischenhausen from Koshlan in Bohemia, then part of the Grand Duchy of Austria. Further research showed that he took on the business-family name of Koschland, later formally registered as the family surname by five of his six sons in 1813.

THE FASCINATION OF OLD DOCUMENTS

How fascinating such documents as the one described by Walter Hertzmann are. This single document reflects so much of the generosity of the family, of its circumstances, which appear to be very good. Only a wealthy family could have provided as much and only a family free of the nasty squabbles that so often arose over who would have what would have enabled the father to make the provisions he did. Synagogue seats were often the subject of bitter family fights. They were a valuable commodity, saleable for high prices and a distinct status symbol if they were good seats.

We also see the origin of a family name. Used first to designate a particular individual so that he might not be confused with the many others who shared the same first name and in time becoming the permanent surname of his family. One son out of six chose another name when required by law to designate a name by which his descendants would be known from that time on. It would be interesting to know what he preferred and why.

In the ancestry of someone who also has traced his own family back to the point where they took permanent surnames there were three brothers one of whom chose a name that derived from the name of the father, one based his new name on the name of his mother and the third chose the name of the town from which the family came. Since siblings did not necessarily take the same name related lines may appear totally unrelated.

FAMILY FINDER

E-2 Rebecca Elliott, 3060 Arlington Dr., Aptos, Calif. 95003 (408) 462-2461

Looking for the families of Chaim Regulant and his wife, Chaya. Lived in the Ukraine, town not known, during the last century. Also seeking Ashkenazi, Rackwalsky and Berenbaum or variations of the name.

2-S Carolyn L. Sherfy, P.O. Box 157, Knightsen, Calif. (415) 625-4280

Searching for all descendants and ancestors of the Cohen, Sachs (Saks), Diamand and Abramovitz (Abramavitz) families of Kovno Gubernia, Lithuania and later St. Louis, Mo. Also seeking information on Fred Schwartz who died in Portland, Ore. early in this century. A daughter, Frieda or Fanny married a Bombeck and had two sons, Alfred and Harold.

V-1 Sara Verschleisser, 1955 35th Ave. San Francisco, Calif. (415) 566-1989

Seeking any Sandmiller originating from the Warsaw area. Ida Sandmiller arrived in this country around 1881 with her husband, Louis Weinberg. Sandmiller cousins are said to have lived in Seattle.

W-2 Martha L. Wise, 1990 20th Ave. San Francisco, Calif. (415) 564-9927

Interested in any Jewish family from the town of Wöllmarshausen, Germany (near Göttingen), particularly the Blumenthal family that lived in Wöllmarshausen in the 18th century. Also any descendants of Jeanette (nee Gans) and Jeremias Blumenthal who lived in Harburg, Germany from about 1820 on, and any Gans family descendants descended from the Gans family of Celle, Germany.

DESCENDANTS OF RABBI ISRAEL OF ROZANOI

Prof. George Sackheim has completed a two volume set, more than 1,300 pages, and 300 family charts make up a history of the descendants of Rabbi Israel, a martyr of Rozanoi. Sorry but we cannot tell you anything about this rabbi but if you descend from him you probably know.

Forty years of work were devoted to this opus called "Scattered Seeds". It is expensive.

because of its great size, \$50.00 shipping included. It can be obtained from George I. Sackheim, 9151 Crawford Ave. Skokie, Ill. 60076.

INSURANCE RECORDS AS A RESOURCE

Chronicles tells us that one can write for a policy search to find out if an ancestor carried insurance. Many people did carry inexpensive insurance so there may be a record you might not expect. Send a SASE to Policy Search, 1850 I St. NW, Washington D.C., 20006. You will receive a form with instruction for filling it out. If you have any luck we would like to hear about it.

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