



San Francisco Bay Area Jewish Genealogical Society

1990 20th Ave. San Francisco, Calif. 94116

February 1990

Editor: Martha L. Wise

MARCH GENERAL MEETING

DATE: Monday, March 19, 1990

TIME: 7:30 P. M.

PLACE: SUTRO LIBRARY
480 Winston Dr., San Francisco

PROGRAM: Short business meeting, speaker, refreshments

SPEAKER: Joe Friedman

TOPIC: Freemasonry and the Jews of California

Mr Friedman, a native of San Francisco, will speak on the role that the Order of Freemasonry has played in the lives of early settlers and later immigrants to California.

His expertise was acquired through interest and research: ultimately he produced a scholarly paper on the subject, when he took an additional degree from UC after his retirement from the IRS as a CPA. His work was published in the July 1984 issue of "Western States Jewish History" and is entitled "Jewish Participators in the California Gold Rush Era Freemasonry".

He is very interested in family history and his talk will include references to those masonic records that the family researcher can access.

HANDS-ON WORKSHOP

Sherrill Laszlo is planning a hands-on workshop for Sunday, June 3, 1990. Chairperson, she says, will be Barry Klezmer. Details will be forthcoming.

PENINSULA GROUP MEETING

The Peninsula Group will hold its regular bi-monthly meeting on Monday, February 19, at Kof Emeth, Palo Alto at 7:30 P.M. At this writing the speaker's name and topic are not yet available. If received prior publication it will be on page 8.

NATIONAL SEMINAR

As reported in the last newsletter the seminar will be held in Los Angeles, June 24-29 at the Westwood Plaza Holiday Inn. By now you should have received a mailing with a portion to be filled in and returned to Hal Bookbinder, P.O. Box 25245, Los Angeles, Ca. 90025 if you were interested in attending. If you did not receive it and do wish to be on the seminar mailing list we advise you to write to Hal Bookbinder. An information packet is due out this month.

SWAN SONG

This will be the last newsletter under this editorship. Editorship was undertaken in 1980, reluctantly. Having edited the newsletter of what, in essence, was a pedigree cat genealogical society, for fifteen years I wanted a little free time to pursue my own interests. A newsletter can be extremely demanding of one's time, therefore although I strongly favored a newsletter and naturally cared deeply about the JGS that I had founded, I did not want to find myself once again involved in writing a newsletter. When in 1983 the then editor left California because her husband had been transferred, Carolyn Sherfy took over, even though she was already writing another newsletter, but she took sick and asked that Joan Simms, president at that time, and I write the next issue between us. We did so. The following time Carolyn was still not up to par and asked if I would write the newsletter just once more. Need more be said?

The JGS was in poor shape at that time. An earlier president intent on emulating Greater Washington which meets alternately at three different locations and does well, decided that we should give up our meeting room and meet alternately in San Francisco, on the peninsula and in the east bay. Attendance plummeted. In Washington they have a large enough membership to insure an adequate attendance at each meeting although each area attracts chiefly those in that area. Here that did not work since no area had enough people to support a good meeting on its own. In addition no place was willing to supply meeting space on such an intermittent basis. Each meeting was in a different place. People stopped coming. The next president's solution was to hold only two meetings a year on the theory that if there were only two meetings a year everyone would be very eager to attend. Membership dropped even further and worst of all many people concluded that the JGS was defunct. I began putting the newsletter out bi-monthly to assure people that we were still alive. It helped. I had previously not wanted to run for the presidency, which at the time meant also being program chairman but accepted it in 1985. Meetings were put back on a regular bi-monthly basis. A regular meeting place was found. With a regular meeting place and a bi-monthly newsletter we began to revive. In fact in time I was able to lighten the load by reducing the newsletter to a quarterly instead of a bi-monthly. We are happy to say that the JGS is now healthy and growing. It has two bases today, San Francisco and the peninsula with San Francisco meetings being held every third Monday of every odd numbered month and peninsula meetings every even numbered month.

The new editorship will no doubt result in a different newsletter. It can never be otherwise. Every newsletter we receive from other JGSs reflects a different format and content. Those who have desired changes in the newsletter will now be able to put their own ideas into practice while I will at last be able to concentrate on my own neglected research and possibly even other interests. I remain vice-president and will of course remain an active member but younger people can now assume the burden of the newsletter.

AUSTIN JGS DISBANDED

Unfortunately the Austin JGS has been disbanded. When Walter Cohen, the founder, was not able to devote full time to it anymore he was unable to find anyone willing to assume any responsibility. Walter, himself, remains interested in genealogy. Too bad to see a young society fail to thrive because the one person doing it all needed help and couldn't get it.

CHICAGO RECORDS

Illiana tells us the Chicago Public Library, Government Publication Department, has the following collections:

Illinois. Secretary of State. State Archives. Marriage record index 1987 26 microfiche
Public domain sales land tract record list. 1984
144 microfiche

The first is an alphabetical listing giving names of both spouses. Where applicable the license number is given as well as the date, county of application, and archival control number. Listings appear to deal only with the 19th century

The second is in three sections, the first an alphabetical listing by purchaser's name, the second by county, the third by geographical location. Location, acreage, price and date are given. These land records seem to be prior to 1870.

LONG LOST VILNA COLLECTION

Several sources have reported that a great number of books as well as torah scrolls, newspapers etc. all part of Yivo's collection prior to WWII but thought to have been lost forever was discovered in a former monastery where it had been hidden to protect it from the Nazis. Yivo, of course wishes to save and protect these records and obviously the project will require funds. They are requesting help from anyone who wants to see this collection saved for future generations. How much there is that has genealogical value is not certain. One person who investigated feels there is comparatively little, but until it is all sorted and cataloged who knows? Certainly it should be preserved and if possible brought to Yivo's current headquarters in New York. Yivo, you know, originated in Europe but had to leave because of Hitler.

LIST OF HEBREW BOOK PUBLISHERS

David Einsiedler, writing in Roots-Key mentions a list of publishers of Hebrew books put out in Israel in 1950. This list includes not only books that were published but the names and families of the publishers as well as the names of towns involved. If you had an ancestor or collateral involved in the publishing of Hebrew books this might prove very helpful. Of course you do need to be able to read Hebrew to tap this source. Check Roots-Key vol. 9, No. 2 for a sizable list of towns mentioned and a couple of dozen of the 170 odd names of individuals that are to be found, along with further family information, in this book. The book which is called *Toledot Ha-Defus Ha-Ivri Be-Polonia* (History of Hebrew Publishing in Poland), is by Chaim Friedberg (pub. Tel Aviv 1950) goes back for hundreds of years in some instances. It is indexed. The Library of Congress has the book but where else you might find it in this country we cannot tell you.

THE JEWS OF LUNEVILLE

If you are interested in the town of Luneville about twenty miles from Nancy, the author of a book on the Jews of Luneville writing in Avotaynu announces the publication of her book based on her own doctoral dissertation. It covers Jewish life in Luneville in the 18th and 19th centuries. While its focus does not appear to be genealogy Mme. Job has included an appendix covering 130 Jewish families. This volume is some three hundred pages long. It is called *The Jewish People of Luneville* and priced at \$25.00 plus postage. Madame asked to hear from those who desired to reserve a copy although by now it is probably already in print. Madame who did research the families she listed even though she did not include all her genealogical research in the book offers to supply information from her files to anyone researching a particular family. For those who have ancestry from this place the book is obviously of considerable value. It might also be of interest to those with an interest in the history of Jews in French towns. If interested write to Mme. Francoise Job, 3 Rue Rivolet, 56 300 Luneville, France.

SURNAME INDEX

Westland Publications has sent a long list of surnames, chiefly non-Jewish but including some Jewish names. Mr Smith, who is Westland Publications, will retrieve individual entries from his computer for \$1.00 per name, with a minimum of \$5.00 required. He will let you know beforehand how many entries he has for a given surname. French, German and central Europe are included although the periods involved vary. The information is from European sources in the main and deals with immigration records. We will bring the list to the next meeting. If you wish to write the address is Westland Publications, McNeal, Az. 85617. The town is so small that no further address is needed.

YIZKOR BOOK

Harry Langsam of 745 N. Croft Ave. Los Angeles, 90069 (213) 655-5896. writes to say he has completed the translation of the Yizkor Book for the Martyrs of Strzyzow, Poland. This town is near Rzeszow in what was Galicia. The book was originally published in Israel in Hebrew and Yiddish. Harry Langsam has translated it into English and is anxious to see

wide distribution in English speaking countries. For information on obtaining a copy he asks to be contacted by mail or phone.

CHICAGO ANCESTOR FILE

Illiana mentions that the Chicago Genealogical Society sponsors an ongoing project called The Chicago Ancestor File. It is designed to help genealogists in various parts of the country who are researching the same Chicago names to locate one another and exchange information. Annually they publish entries in their quarterly but they do not require membership to participate in this endeavor and non-members are encouraged to send in information. They now have available the Chicago Ancestor File 1974 to 1984. (1974 is the year the file was established.) The price for this file was not stated. They request 3x5 cards be used for entries which are to be typed or printed and they have a format that is to be used. If interested contact them c/o Denise Maskovitz 885 North Lavergne Ave. Skokie, Ill. 60077-1613 for exact requirements.

HUNGARIAN JEWISH INFORMATION WANTED

Professor Robert Perlman, professor emeritus of Brandeis University, is collecting material for a book on the immigration of Hungarian Jews into the United States from the early 1800s to 1914. If you have any information on family members or know of anything published that might be helpful to the professor please send him a brief description or call him to tell him. Professor Robert Perlman, 125 Lincoln St. Newton, Mass. 02161. (617) 969 8195

CONCENTRATION CAMP RECORDS

Dorot had an article by Jeffrey Cymbler on records at the National Archives (national, not regional) which could be of considerable value to many. There are rolls of microfilm containing entry reregister questionnaires, transport lists, Totenbücher (death books) and post-war personnel records from various concentration camps.

Jeffrey Cymbler had not seen any of this material at Yad Vashem. An article he happened to read told him of the existence of these records and he wanted to see for himself. Personnel in the microfilm room of the National Archives had never heard of these microfilms. He was directed to a Mr. Robert Wolfe, Director of Captured German Records Staff. The entire article is too long to reproduce here, but at the moment these records may be researched only in Washington and then only with the help of the Captured German Records staff in Room 15 W-1 of the National Archives.

Once the existence of these records becomes widely known it seems unlikely this situation will continue to exist. One would expect to see a demand for copies to be made more available in Washington and for copies to be placed in each of the regional archives.

PICTURE, PICTURE, WHOSE GOT THE PICTURE?

Although you might think people's children would have been the ones to be given pictures of their parents in the days when photography was new and pictures were expensive often only one copy would be kept for the subjects of the picture. Other copies would be sent to relatives not close enough to be able to visit. If the family had more than one child who got the picture? The eldest? The last to leave home? The one who most wanted it? If those siblings moved to different parts of the country, in a generation or two only the ones who actually owned the picture even knew where it was or even that it existed. Even if there were copies for each member of the immediate family after a hundred years or so not every descendant will have a copy. Even in more recent times after the snapshot became commonplace not everyone got a copy. They still dont. People take Polaroid pictures and have nothing to share, and those who do have negatives often forget to share their pictures. If you have old pictures ask relatives if they too have copies. If they dont and are grateful for the copy you have made for them they may reciprocate with with a copy of something you did not have and are very happy to receive. Personally by exchanging pictures with my Danish relatives we have all profited. They did not have my 1866 picture of our great grandparents and I did not have their 1888 picture taken on great grandmother's 75th birthday. The more pictures you have the better idea you have of what people you never knew actually looked like. Even if you send pictures to someone who has nothing to give in return you

have the satisfaction of having helped them to know their family. Should you be among those lucky enough to own an oil painting or pastel from before the days of photography you can photograph it thus allowing more than just the lucky owner to know what an ancestor looked like. Granted that is not too common but there were some pictures made. One genealogy I have seen includes two oil paintings of ancestors of the author one from the 1600s. Of course oil paintings of Jews were rare then in part because many Jews equated them with graven images but this author's ancestors, of whom he has pictures, were court Jews.

GENEALOGICAL FAIR

The California Genealogical Society will hold a genealogical fair again this year. Instead of being in June however it will be in April. The dates are Friday April 20 and Saturday April 21. Once again they are using the Conference Center of St. Mary's cathedral. Admission for non-members is \$4.00 by advance registration, \$5.00 at the door. This is for one day only. For both days it is double. Hours are noon to 8 P.M. on Friday, 9 AM to 4 PM on Saturday. There are classes and lectures, of course, several at any one time, but they do repeat in many cases so that if two that interest one are scheduled for the same time there is a good chance that one or both may be scheduled for a repeat at another time. Each is \$3.00 and of course they would prefer tickets for classes to be ordered beforehand since it does make planning simpler, however they usually can provide tickets on the day of the fair. We will have a table just as we did last year. If we get flyers before this goes to press we will include them otherwise if you need any information just ask us.

COMPUTER BULLETIN BOARD FOR JEWISH GENEALOGISTS

By Jim Serwer

If you do not yet own a computer, first go out and buy one and a modem. Then come back and read the rest of this article.

Now that you have a computer and a modem, you should know that there is a computer bulletin board for genealogists called ROOTS-BBS (Bulletin Board Service). You can call a computer in San Francisco from your computer and read messages or enter your own questions and messages. ROOTS-BBS in San Francisco is part of a continent-wide network called the Genealogical Conference. Overnight, the BBS operators exchange their messages to each other across the continent. Your questions go out to many cities, and you may get an answer back from anyone, anywhere. The messages are broken down into topics. The one of greatest interest to us is called the Jewish Genealogical Echo. There are also Echos for each of a number of different genealogy software packages. If you have a question about how to use your software or what software to buy, that would be a good place to ask.

There are about 350 BBSs that are members of the Genealogical Conference. Of these only about 12 including San Francisco, carry the Jewish Genealogical Echo. The computer's phone number is 415-584-0697. When you call it will ask your name and password. The first time make up a password because you will need it when you call in again. The first time it will ask you for other information about your computer. This is saved with your name so you do not have to re-enter each time.

From the Main Menu enter M to read existing messages. In the Message Menu enter A for Area Change and then enter 3 for the Jewish Genealogical Echo. Or enter some other number for, say, a software package. Back at the Message Menu enter N to read the next message.

To enter your message, go to the Message Menu and enter E. Then follow the instructions. To enter a blank line between paragraphs, press the space bar at least once before pressing Return/Enter. An empty line tells the program you are done with your message. You can still edit your message, but it is less convenient. There is a lot more you can do with the ROOTS-BBS. The BBS has some on-line help, but it is not very good. If you get tired of reading messages, just explore. In Sacramento call 916-363-4962. I do not know whether or not it has the same menus as discussed above for San Francisco.

GUIDE TO JEWISH AMSTERDAM

Roots-Key says there is a book in English called "A Guide to Jewish Amsterdam, De Haan" by Jan Stoutenbeek and Paul Vigeveno. It tells about how the Jewish people first came to Amst-

erdan, the occupations in which they were permitted to engage and how differing areas evolved. Order from Netherlands Board of Tourism, 90 New Montgomery St. Suite 305, San Francisco, 94105. It is \$14.50 plus \$1.50 handling. Or could one just walk in and pick up a copy when downtown? Sounds helpful for those of Dutch ancestry who don't know Dutch.

CAVEAT

Beware of placing too much trust in any list of names and addresses. If you do not get an answer it is not necessarily because the person addressed chose not to answer. They may have moved, they may even have died. How old is the list from which you took the address? Even if it is new consider that some lists are added to regularly but deletions and corrections are never made. Even current lists may be carrying outdated information if they were made in part from old lists. Also bear in mind that the post office in many cases will not deliver to an apartment dweller if the apartment number is not given. You may have no way of knowing its an apartment building but the post office doesn't care. Some mail may come back to you, some addressed to an old address is simply discarded by the new resident. If you receive no answer try to check the address out. If they have a listed phone, information can give you a number. She does not need to know all you want is to verify that that person is still at the address you give.

HAMBURG AS PORT OF EMBARKATION

Illiana's recent speaker provided an explanation for the popularity of Hamburg as the preferred port. Apparently in 1855 a direct railroad line was completed between Berlin and Hamburg. Reaching Bremen required several changes. This is really something to be grateful for if you had ancestors who came that way. The Hamburg records are intact. The Bremen records are not.

The same article also reports that they were told that Salt Lake City now has "Hamburg police records". If someone had to stay over in Hamburg before sailing they had to register with the police. One can only wonder if the police records mentioned were actually not police records, but standesamt records. The standesamt is more a registry office than a police station. To this very day anyone who stays in a town or city more than a certain length of time must either notify the standesamt or someone must do it for them. If you stay at a hotel, the hotel takes care of it. If you visit, your hosts can do it but the standesamt expects to be notified of your presence and how long you intend to stay. These records can supply a great deal of valuable information. The standesamt stores more records than just those of new residents and visitors. The problem has been that in order to tap into them you need to know which standesamt to contact. A small town will have only one standesamt but Hamburg has a number and if you don't know where someone lived at the time you cannot find out which to contact. Having these records in Salt Lake City is wonderful. Possibly before the standesamts came into being the police may have done the recording. The standesamt came into being in the 1870s. The speaker told his audience the records contain more information than ships passenger lists since more questions were asked.

MEMBERS FORUM

At the December meeting of our Peninsula Group Dr. Elena Danielson, Associate Archivist at Stanford University's Hoover Institute, outlined Hoovers' holdings on War, Revolution and peace with particular emphasis on those holdings which are likely to be of interest to Jewish genealogists. Our speaker provided annotated lists of Hoover's archival holdings on the Soviet Union, Poland, Germany and the Holocaust. These materials will be available at meetings. The Library and Archives of the Hoover Institution holdings, covering the years 1900 to the present, document the political, social, and economic changes that have shaped our world in the twentieth century. The Central Collection of publications is housed in the familiar Hoover Tower and includes publications in Western, Slavic, African and Middle Eastern languages. Published sources such as Polish atlases may be found in the Tower Building. The Archives which contain manuscript and archival collections, photographs and ephemera is located on the courtyard level of the Hoover Memorial Building. The Archives are open to the public, without fee, weekdays from 8:15 AM to 4:45 PM. The collections are arranged by source or donor, set up to be used by history scholars and are not arranged for the needs of genealogical researchers. Certain of the collections which may be rich in genealogical materials were cited by Dr. Danielson in her talk. Records of

the American Relief Administration, Russian Unit, document U.S. Gvoernemnt relief efforts in Europe at the end of WWI and contain letters, lists, photographs and maps of Poland that may be of interest. Another collection of potential interest to the Jewish genealogists is a collection of Russian Embassy records complementing the National Archive Consular records recently microfilmed before return to the Soviet Union. The Embassy records held by Hoover are filed under Russia, Posol'stvo (United States) 1897-1947. Indexes to this material may be found in the Stanford Green Library and Sufro Library also. The Hoover indexes do not index by name, however, and much searching will be necessary to locate specific genealogical materials. The piece de resistance of the meeting was the presentation of a portfolio of posters made in 1920 by students of various secular and Jewish religious schools in the Brest-Pinsk area to thank Herbert Hoover for the aid made available through the American Relief Administration. These posters were handdrawn and colored by the students. These posters brought a particular thrill to one of our members, Jan Engel, who remembered being taught to draw and illustrate in the mode of these posters. A leather-bound portfolio of these posters is to be seen at the archives. A worthwhile project might be to index the towns and family names. Volunteers may contact Bob Weiss at (415) 424-1622.

By Bob Weiss

(Ed. note:) Bob, who took notes, promised a report on Dr. William Brinner's very excellent talk at the January meeting. If you missed the meeting look for the report.

Also submitted by Bob Weiss

HOLOCAUST ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

We have received an urgent appeal from Lani Silver, executive director of the Holocaust Oral History Project at the Holocaust Center of Northern California, that we would like to pass on to our members. Time is running out in efforts to capture in words and on video the experiences of holocaust survivors for historical study. There is a desperate need not only for money and equipment, but for volunteers. Aside from the obvious historical value of from the obvious historical value of this effort there is great potential genealogical value. We have already started the indexing of the completed transcriptions, but much more is needed. Please contact colleen McGinn, the office manager at 641-1058 if you can help in any way, or call me, Bob Weiss, at 424-1622 if you want to assist in the indexing project.

SHARING CORNER

Once again no one has had a story of an amazing find, an odd coincidence, a sudden breakthrough after years of fruitless searching, or the like to share with us.

FAMILY FINDER

B-1 Dr. William M. Brinner, 753 Santa Barbara Rd. Berkeley, Ca. (415) 527-2676
Seeking any relations, descendants or ancestors of Herman Kohn and his wife, Teresa Wurczel of Bodroghéesztur, Hungary, later of Syracuse, N.Y. Arrived in this country around 1897 with children including Ety, born 1880, Mendel, born 1882 (later known as Fred Brinner) and Sam, born 1884

C-3 Ingeborg Campbell, 668 Barbour Dr. Redwood City, Ca. 94062 (415) 368-1617
Seeking information on Nathan Wahrhaftig/Wahrhafig son of Jacob Wahrhaftig and Scheine Alpern of Brest-Litovsk or Lodz, born around 1890-94.

S-10 Mallory Schoen, 341 Alcatraz Ave. #4, Oakland, Ca. 94618 (415) 655-6462
Researching ancestors and descendants of Zalman Zirin/Tzirin and wife, Ruhama (Rachel) Nachom, who lived in Gomel, Russia, mid to late 19th century. Their children were Morris, Libbe (Luba) married to Meir Shoulman who immigrated to Israel, Genia (Eugenia), Ita (Ida) and two brothers, names unknown, who left Gomel at the turn of the century.
Also any information on relatives of Louis Schoen and wife Jennie (Shaindel) Goldman who lived in Budapest in the 1880s and emigrated to New York around 1890.

V-1 Sara Verschleisser, 3200 W. Strathmore Ave. Baltimore, Md. 21215 (301) 764-7777
Seeking descendants and ancestors of Moshe Hahn from western Galicia. His son Meyer and wife Cheitel Blaustein, cousins, arrived in in this counvry prior to WWI.

FRIENDS OF THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Although we were aware of the founding of this group we had heard nothing from them. We did hear they were going to take charge of the lecture schedule for the archives but could not get any information on the lectures. The reason turned out to be an outdated address. Now that that is all straightened out it is too late for what we may have missed last year but we do have the 1990 schedule which will be copied and enclosed with this newsletter. There is also a computer bulletin board and Bob Weiss will handle that since he has a computer and can explain to anyone who is interested how it works.

AVOTAYNU

The winter issue of Avotaynu includes a special supplement well worth reading. They say "Avotaynu presents its annual supplement about the human interest side of family history research. Of particular note this year are stories of modern day Marranos." The stories were fascinating. Most of us are aware there are marranos but I doubt many of us had much notion of how they have lived. They lived in Spain and Portugal over the past 500 years. Some blending in and forgetting their history, but for a few still observed customs for which they knew no reason. Others well aware of who they were maintaining family purity by very close intermarriage, seeming outwardly to be gentiles but secretly keeping their own religion. It was very educational. A whole new view of marrano life.

President: Armand S. Cohn 342-3485
Vice President: Martha L. Wise 564-9927
Secretary: Robert Weiss 424-1622
Treasurer: Sherrill R. Laszlo 655-6789

San Francisco Bay Area Jewish Genealogical Society
1880 20th Ave. San Francisco, Calif. 94116