



SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA JEWISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Martha L. Wise 1990 20th Ave. San Francisco, Calif.

April 1985

MAY GENERAL MEETING & SYMPOSIUM

The May meeting will begin with a short general meeting at which the by-laws accepted by the board of directors at their April 8th meeting are to be voted upon by the membership. All full members will receive a copy of these by-laws with this newsletter so please read them over and be prepared to vote on them in May. The symposium will follow.

DATE: SUNDAY, MAY 5, 1985

TIME: 1:00 PM - 4:00 PM

PLACE: ALBERT L. SCHULTZ JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER
655 ARASTRADERO RD.
PALO ALTO, CALIF.

PHONE NO. 493-9400

COST: \$5.00

PROGRAM:

SPEAKER

TOPIC

Christine Rose

Family Associations

Howard Nurse

Computerized Genealogy

Constant Vaughn

Passenger Arrival Lists

According to the Center there is an offramp from 280 for Arastradero. El Camino Real crosses Arastradero if you are coming that way.

The symposium has been arranged by Joan Simms & Carolyn Sherfy. They have chosen speakers knowledgeable on their subjects.

SEMINAR TAPES

The tapes mentioned in the last newsletter as offered by the JGS in New York are intended for their own members only. Sorry if we misled you. The flyer did not make adequately clear that the offer was a members only offer. We also inadvertently caused distress the the New York JGS officer whose name and address we printed as in charge of this offer. It would seem it is a private address intended only for JGS members. Needless to say had we known this name and address was not to be mentioned it would not have been. Since it is customary to share information, other than that in a personal letter, (and we have seen even that in print) it behooves any society printing anything intended only for its own members to make certain it is mailed only to the members and even then to make quite clear that it is not for dissemination to non-members.

TALE OF A LITVAK

This is the title of a book by a Dr. Morris S. Schulzinger. Dr. Schulzinger is a Cincinnati physician born in Serei, Lithuania who came to this country in 1921. Operation Ancestree, the Jewish Genealogical Society of Cincinnati, sent us an announcement

of their March 3rd meeting at which the doctor was the featured speaker. Unfortunately even if we had received the announcement in sufficient time to let our membership know about it Cincinnati would be a bit far to go for a meeting but the book itself sounds very interesting for those with Lithuanian ancestry. Apparently it gives quite a detailed account of life in Lithuania in the early decades of this century. The doctor as a young man also visited other areas of eastern Europe and tells about life there as well.

Books written by those who were actually there at the time tend to far exceed those written later by others who had to rely on earlier books, so the book should be very interesting to those interested in knowing about the area in which their families lived even if they lived there thirty or forty years earlier. It probably did not change too greatly in that length of time.

We have found that the publisher is Philos Library but we cannot tell you where they are located. We can tell you that the book is listed at \$24.95 although the local book stores do not seem to have it in stock.

LEO BAECK INSTITUTE

Discovering that Leo Baeck does not have a name index either in a card catalog nor on a computer was a surprise and something of a shock. They do have a file of family histories but there is no index of names appearing in books unless the book or manuscript pertains to a family history.

That is too bad since one does not always know under what name one's own family history is to be found. You might know your great grandmother's married name but not her maiden name however there could be a family history under her maiden name. A name index would show that your great grandmother and great grandfather were mentioned in a certain book and that might lead you to her entire family and give you her maiden name and a great deal more.

Granted that the Leo Baeck Institute is not basically genealogically oriented, it nonetheless is the repository of an immense amount of material of great value to genealogists. If you know what book to ask for you can get photocopies of the pages you want. You can even get books on interlibrary loan if you are a member, possibly even if you are not. Their lending fees are higher than some but they do lend.

YIVO

Sallyann Amdur Sack reporting on a visit to Yivo in Mishpacha, says the head archivist and his two assistants try to cope with their voluminous mail but they cannot do individual research. One must go to Yivo in person for any real chance of finding anything.

The head archivist would like to do a genealogical finding aid that would cut across all the collections and lists all the names of towns and people scattered among the many holdings. Certainly that would be invaluable but as usual the obstacle in the way is a small matter of \$20,000. Sallyann suggests that if 200 genealogists each give \$100 specifically for a genealogical index it can become a reality however for the great bulk of us such a sum is not possible. There would be a much better chance of getting \$1.00 each but it is doubtful that there are as many as two thousand genealogists willing to contribute even that much. If you are interested in eastern Europe and want to help you might consider sending whatever you feel you easily can to Yivo at 1048 5th Ave. New York, N.Y. earmarked for the "archive genealogical index". If we can't make it a reality in as short a time as we might wish perhaps we can make it possible some years hence.

Yivo, like Leo Baeck, is not primarily dedicated to genealogy but again like Leo Baeck, it does have valuable material. As far as we know it will not lend and it is not much given to making photocopies. Very possibly its all over funding is less than Leo Baeck's.

BOOK SOURCE

Mishpacha also mentions having heard good reports of a bookshop specializing in "old, rare and out-of-print-books". It is called the Austin Book Shop and offers a catalogue on immigration and ethnic studies which is free. Write to Bernard Titowsky, Box 36, Kew Gardens, New York 11415.

FINDING AIDS

As you know the first project under the auspices of the Federation of Genealogical Societies has been completed. That was the "Cross Index to Selected City Streets and Enumeration Districts, 1910 Census!" They have announced that future projects under consideration are, complete pension files for the Revolution and the War of 1812. Navy mothers pension files. Completing index to passport applications and microfilming it. Microfilming Civil War records (service records, volunteer records, etc.)

This you know is the fund to which we each contribute one dollar when we pay our annual dues so these projects should be of interest to you.

FRANCE FOR THE JEWISH TRAVELER

A booklet by this title lists Jewish organizations and synagogues throughout France. It includes addresses and phone numbers. Roots-Key which told us about this booklet says Ruth Quint, phone no. (213) 478-7447 has a copy. We do not have her address but if you need to know more about this probably you can find her address if you do not wish to phone and she might tell you how to get a copy.

There is also a new French genealogical society. So far we don't know too much about it. When we do we will fill you in. For Jewish researchers with French ancestry joining it may be very helpful. Of course you really need to know French.

DORAT

The Jewish Genealogical Society in New York has a new editorial staff for its newsletter, a new format and a new name. It is now Dorot, the Journal of the Jewish Genealogical Society. It has expanded in size and has some new features in mind for the future.

CHRONICLES

The JGS of Philadelphia also has a new name for its newsletter. It is Chronicles a new format and expanded from its earlier size. Best of luck to everyone with their new newsletters.

NEW SOCIETIES

We have several new Jewish Genealogical Societies. Toronto has joined Montreal in having a society. No doubt it is just a matter of time before there are also societies on the Canadian west coast and in the center of the country. Louisville, Ky. Dayton, Ohio and Santa Barbara, Calif. have all founded societies. We would like to give you a complete list of societies but any list we try to keep is outdated before we can print it. Not that this is bad, far from it, the more societies the better. Soon no matter where you happen to be there will be a society.

PATRONYMICS

Patronymics can be a very useful tool for the genealogist researching areas where patronymics were in common use among Jews in the 17th, 18th and sometimes into the 19th century. Patronymics were used in many parts of Germany and in Scandinavia but do not seem to have been common in eastern Europe. We would like to hear from those who have encountered this custom in their own research. If there are books covering this subject we do not know about them. If you know of any speak up please.

Perhaps by now some of you who do not know this are waiting for an explanation. Patronymic derives from the Latin for father and the Latin for name. As we all know, the original Jewish system of naming was Joseph ben Abraham for instance. All of Abraham's sons were identified by "ben Abraham" In the next generation of course, each had the name of his own father as an identification. All of Joseph ben Abraham's sons were ben Joseph while those of his brother, Samuel were ben Samuel.

A useful enough system when everyone knew everyone but not too helpful when there were a number of Josephs, Samuels and Abrahams all with sons carrying their father's name. A

system existed in the Scandinavian countries whereunder Sven, the son of Jens, was called Sven Jensen. When Sven had children of his own their surname was Svensen. This system, which can be quite confusing, survives to this day in Iceland but when in due course of time having a permanent surname became a matter of law throughout Europe everyone had to adopt a permanent name if they had not previously had one, Jew and gentile alike. By that time surnames had been in common use among gentiles in the majority of countries for centuries although among Jews those with permanent surnames were rather in the minority, although such names definitely did exist among Jews as early as the 1600s. However even if you are lucky enough to have some permanent surnames among your 17th century ancestors, sooner or later you are bound to come to those whose name tells you only what his father's first name was, making it very difficult to sort him out from the dozens of others with his first name who also had fathers with the same first name as his father. The use of "ben" or "bas" in Jewish names disappeared in parts of Germany and Scandinavia well before permanent surnames were legally required so that Abraham's sons became simply Joseph Abraham and Samuel Abraham. When surnames were required the custom of giving the father's first name as a surname became the custom of using the father's first name as a middle name, for example, Joseph Abraham Hoffmann, whose sons might be Isaac Joseph Hoffmann, Herman Joseph Hoffmann and if Joseph's father had died by that time, Abraham Joseph Hoffmann. Thus the patronymic can show you the relationship between family members. It can also be confusing when the son of Abraham Joseph Hoffmann was given his grandfather's name and thus there are two people named Joseph Abraham Hoffmann in the same family although they are separated by a gap of years. Years are important in the present but in dealing with the past when you have no dates it is easy to become confused. If there are dates one must pay attention to them.

KEMPELEN BOOK

Some of our members would dearly love to see a copy of this book since it contains information on many, many families but this is a book owned by very few libraries. The few that do have it seem to be university libraries that do not permit the volume to circulate and that will make photocopies only through their photography department. The charge in that case tends to be a minimum of \$5.00 no matter how little is wanted. It also goes without saying that they will not look up anything for you, you must know exactly what you want. As far as we know there is no copy of this book on the west coast but if anyone finds a source of this book we would be happy to be able to pass the information along to our members.

It would be particularly nice if someone knows of a student with access to a library owning this book who for a reasonable fee would be willing to look up names and photocopy the pages concerned. Most libraries do have copying machines that can be used even to copy from reference books that do not circulate.

THE POWER OF THE PRINTED WORD

There is a natural tendency to believe anything that appears in print to a much greater extent than one would if it were not in print. Genealogists, of course, take an interest in things written about places or people pertaining to their own family history. One must however take into account that in writing of things long past a writer relies on earlier writings on the same subject. If a respected writer of long ago got certain facts wrong the chances are excellent that later writers will have accepted what he wrote and incorporated it into their own books until no one questions it. Writers consciously or not tend to give their own interpretation to what they have chosen as something to be used in their own volumes thus in the course of time things may become distorted. Any non-fiction writer seeks facts in earlier works. If he can find contemporary writings so much the better but do not be too harsh on him if you find something you know to be a misinterpretation since writing of the past can be tricky. He may be only repeating what has long been accepted.

GERMANY

A not infrequent question is how much difference the fact that Germany was once not a single

nation but included almost forty different and separate realms can make. Despite that there was an elected emperor from the days of the Holy Roman Empire who in addition to ruling his own realm was the head of all the rulers whose territory constituted Germany.

It was not a public election in any sense of the word. Not even every German ruler had a vote. Of the nearly forty assorted kingdoms, duchies, principalities etc. only a handful of their rulers had the coveted title of Elector. That is why we hear of the Elector of Hanover and the Elector of Saxony although the holders of those titles were also kings. These electors chose one of their number to be emperor.

The various realms were ruled by their own rulers and laws varied, of course, but it was not as though there had been thirty or forty different countries with no connection to one another.

It is around a hundred years now since the entire country was united under a hereditary Kaiser (the German version of Caesar) but still each area had its own rules and still does just as our states have their own rules which are not necessarily the same.

It need be of no concern to genealogists that at one time there were many separate realms in Germany. Whether your ancestors were from Bavaria, Prussia, Saxony, Hesse or whatever, it was, and is, all Germany. What you do have to worry about is whether it is now west or east Germany. If it is East Germany things are much more difficult not because the old records are not as good there as in the west but because it is now iron curtain country, a fact which is only too obvious when you try to deal with East Germany.

IDENTIFYING THE GENERATIONS

Each genealogist who publishes a genealogy chooses his or her own system of generational identification. Some invent their own system, others use systems they have seen used or devise variations of their own.

Naturally each feels he or she has used the best system possible and it is a very clear and easy to follow system. The problem is, of course, that others may not necessarily agree. Standardization would help since once the system had been mastered anyone would be able to follow anyone else's work with ease but there is no system accepted by all as the only one to use.

There is however, a very helpful way of insuring that the reader can follow and that is to note under the entry for each couple the number of their children and the codes assigned to them. It doesn't matter whether it is "four children A - D" or "four children 16.1 to 16.4", but knowing which symbols to look for and how many children to count up in order to be certain you have not missed one who may be pages and pages beyond the entry for the parents. Having encountered this system in more than one Danish genealogy which employed differing systems of identification as well as having worked with many more genealogies which did not mention the number of children after the entry for each couple I can say with certainty that it is a tremendous help and comfort.

If you are among those planning to publish a genealogy do consider this. It will certainly be appreciated by all who see your work.

YISKOR BOOK DEALER

Mishpacha reports that Peggy Pearlstein of the Library of Congress mentioned an Israeli dealer who handles yiskor books and will search for hard to find and out of print volumes. The address is Pinat ha-Sefer, P.O. Box 3427, Haifa 31033, Israel. Cost was not mentioned. Presumably it will not be cheap since searches are expensive but if you know there is a book you want and you can read the language in which it is written it is worth knowing that there is someone who might be able to supply it to you.

MEMBERS FORUM

Once again no one has expressed a desire to be heard. We hope this means everyone is happy. If you have anything to share with others or anything you wish to say on which you would like the opinions of others, this is your column.

GENEALOGICAL FINDS

This is a new column in which we invite people to share with us what they have found through genealogical channels.

Your editor will start it off. Some years ago the New York society put out its first directory. They had the names of those being sought by their members (I happen to be a member) having asked that they be submitted earlier. All the surnames and the places involved were listed and someone found that I had the name Gans in my German ancestry. He was seeking an ancestor whose maiden name had been Gans. He had discovered her in researching her husband's family in Berlin but had no idea she was from the city of Celle although he did have her father's name. I, on the otherhand had been researching the Gans family of Celle, my great great grandmother having been born Gans. I immediately recognized the name of his ancestor and his father having encountered them already. I was able to tell him that are related although distantly. Our last common ancestor was born 1702 but if anything it is more fun to find those to whom you are related through ancestors who lived long ago. Needless to say we shared our information and have remained in touch.

In the same directory I found someone was seeking a Nathan line in Denmark. Since I do have a file with a number of Danish names I offered to help if I could. I had very few Nathans among those listed in my own Danish genealogy (a printed one)done in 1927 and listing all the descendents of an ancestor born in 1695, but I had some other unrelated listings in my file. As it turned out the few Nathans I had included his great grandparents, his grandmother and her husband and even his father and aunt. I was able to give him our relationship and to tell him the title of our genealogy which I knew he could find at the N.Y. public library. Once again it is a distant relationship with our last common ancestor having been born in 1720. We have remained in touch also.

FAMILY FINDER

Queries for the Family Finder should be sent to Mrs. Warren R. Wise, 1990 20th Ave. San Francisco 94116 or you may phone them in if you wish.

The column is free to members. It is \$2.50 per query to non-members.

H-3 Ludwig B. Haas, 18135 Reamer Rd. Castro Valley, Calif. 94546 (415) 582-3300

Seeking information on Marie Rauch nee Sainsky, born 1882 in Berlin, Germany, died 1946 in New York. Her father was Gregor Sainsky born in Kharkov, Ukraine, Russia. Her mother was Dorothea Braus born in Kovno, Lithuania. The Sainsky family lived in Germany where Gregor Sainsky died in 1912 in the German state of Baden. Dorothea Sainsky died 1929 in Freiburg, Germany.

W-2 Martha L. Wise, 1990 20th Ave. San Francisco, Calif. 94116 (415) 564-9927

Seeking information on Rabbi Lieber the Great of Berdichev and his descendants, including female lines. The family later took the surname of Liebersohn.

EXILE

Does anyone know anything about German Jews or converted German Jews being exiled by the Nazis to such countries as Romania? We had never seen any mention of this previously.