



SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA JEWISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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

June 1985

DUES TIME AGAIN

Sorry to have to bring up the subject but as you know our fiscal year runs from Aug. 1st of each year through July 31 of the following year. Dues for full members are \$16.00 per year and \$10.00 for those outside our area.

GENERAL MEETING

DATE: SUNDAY, AUGUST 18, 1985
TIME: 10.00 AM CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST (OPTIONAL) \$2.50
11.30 AM BUSINESS MEETING, ELECTIONS & SPEAKERS
PLACE: JUDAH L. MAGNES MUSEUM
2911 RUSSELL ST.
BERKELEY, CALIF.
PROGRAM: BUSINESS MEETING, ELECTIONS, SPEAKERS
SPEAKERS: CAROLYN SHERFY - JEWISH GRAVESTONE INSCRIPTIONS

CEMETERY RECORDS

TO BE ANNOUNCED

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Breakfast will be in the garden. If you chose to come for breakfast and a get-together with others who want to talk genealogy please call Carolyn at 521-8593. She will need to know for how many to prepare.

The last time there was a meeting at Judah Magnes the breakfast in the garden was a great success, both the breakfast and the networking which is always so rewarding.

The present officers are Joan Morganstern Simms, president, Martha L. Wise, vice president, Carolyn L. Sherfy, secretary and Libby Greengard Rosenfield, treasurer.

According to our by-laws a president may not serve two consecutive terms but may hold other office. Other officers may succeed themselves or be elected to any office or, of course, none at the pleasure of the voting members.

Be part of your society, cast your vote.

NEW GROUPS

Two new groups are making plans for local meetings. There will be a new Peninsula Group and Carolyn Sherfy is reviving the East Bay Group which has been inactive for a time.

The San Francisco-Daly City group which encompasses San Francisco and the upper peninsula as far south as San Bruno has been meeting for almost two and one half years now although it is hard to believe it has been that long.

East Bay Group

This group will meet at the home of Carolyn Sherfy on Monday July 22nd at 7.30 PM. The address is 918 Willows in Alameda. The phone is 521-8593.

Peninsula Group

The newly forming peninsula group has asked that the following message appear in the newsletter:

A Peninsula Group is forming for anyone interested in Jewish ancestor hunting. This will be an informal gathering where we exchange ideas and experiences and help each other. The first meeting will be on Monday, August 5th at 7:30 P.M. If you are interested call Ingeborg Campbell; 368-1617 or Lenore Jacobson, 941-8590. Call before July 20th so that directions to the meeting place can be mailed in time.

Best of luck to both these groups. Carolyn Sherfy is known to all of you as a former president, present secretary and long time member. Lenore Jacobson and Inge Campbell have both been members since the days when we met at California Federal Savings and Loan.

San Francisco- Daly City Group

This group will meet July 25th at 8 P.M. Location of meeting place not set yet. Call Martha Wise at 564-9927 for information.

Future Groups

We anticipate a new group in the south bay area before too long. So far no one has come forward desiring to form a Marin group but possibly someone will.

These small groups have something to offer that large general meetings do not. Together they form a nice adjunct to the more formal meetings and the two together compliment each other nicely.

NEW MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN

Carolyn Sherfy was offered and accepted the post of membership chairman. Carolyn is already one of the busiest people we know but you know what they say, if there is something to be done count on a busy person to do it.

JEWISH CULTURAL FAIR

Carolyn Sherfy and her husband John manned a booth at the Santa Cruz Jewish Cultural Fair in Santa Cruz on Sunday June 2nd. Considerable interest in Jewish genealogy was shown. Carolyn had brought along the computerized directories from New York and people searched through them eagerly for family names.

There is an active genealogical society in Santa Cruz but it cannot meet the needs of the Jewish genealogist so they were delighted at this contact with Jewish genealogy. It even brought us some new members.

The booth was so successful that Carolyn is anxious to have another booth at any similar event. We have missed the chance for Stern's Grove for this year but will try for it next year meanwhile if you know of any similar Jewish event that has booths and might let us have one please let Carolyn know.

SANTA CRUZ GENEALOGY CLASSES

Classes in Jewish genealogy are being planned for later this year in Santa Cruz, probably they will begin this fall. In order to organize classes there must be some idea of how many would be interested in attending. If interested please contact Mrs Arlene Greenberg, 117 English Dr., Santa Cruz or Carolyn Sherfy.

ANNUAL SEMINAR IN NEW YORK

As you know the seminar is right around the corner now. Our society will be represented by Joan Simms, Carolyn Sherfy, Libby Rosenfield and Peter Tannen. Possibly a few others as well. We can be assured of a report in time for the next newsletter.

POLISH TRIP

Sad to say the Polish trip has had to be cancelled. Those planning it hope it is only post-

poned until such time as it becomes feasible once again. JGS in New York reports that the State Department has issued a formal warning for travelers and requested that American citizens with plans for Polish travel in the next few months cancel their plans. On top of that the Polish contacts with whom the New York planners had been working for many, many months removed their support and assistance. Considering everything those who had devoted so much time and effort to planning what surely would have been a fantastic opportunity for those doing Polish research felt they had no choice other than to refund the money already paid and to notify those would be participants who had sent in late applications. Since they hope to try again sometime if you are one of those interested Dorot will forward your letters to the proper people.

BAY AREA JEWISH NEWSLETTER

Joan Simms had an article on genealogy in the above publication. They had been looking for someone to write on this subject for them and had promised to make it a lead article. They gave Joan over two full pages. Joan gave the readers both personal experiences and how-to advice in a nice balance. At least one person is now on our mailing list as a result and several others left messages on Joan's answering machine to express their appreciation of the article but unfortunately failed to leave their names or addresses. Maybe they will in time become active in genealogy too. If you did not see the article and would like to see it appeared in the June issue.

TALE OF A LITVAK

This book was mentioned in the last newsletter but no source was given for the very simple reason that we did not know where it could be obtained. Member Lana Rosenfeld of New York informs us that it can be had from the Philosophical Library, 200 W. 57th St. New York, N.Y. 10019. The price is \$24.95 plus shipping charges.

NEW SOCIETIES

Toronto, Canada has a new society which makes two for Canada now. No doubt there will soon be more. So far there is none in Western Canada and surely the interior of the country must have a need for a society in some city but Jewish genealogical societies are new in Canada. It takes time. With two new societies apparently off to a good start it is just a matter of time until there are more.

The society in Israel has a name and address. It is the Jerusalem Jewish Genealogical Society. Harav Uziel 50, Jerusalem, 96425 Israel.

There is also a new society in France called the Cercle de Genealogie Juive, or translated, Jewish Genealogical Society. It is located in Paris.

Search has a listing of societies with officers and addresses. Joseph Fibel of the JGS in New York has been kind enough to send us a copy of his list but as he says "New ones come up quicker than I can record them." Anyone who has tried to make up a list will sympathize. The best we can do is offer to check for you if you want to know about a society in any given city.

However to complain about the proliferation would be like complaining that the bride is too pretty. The more the better, someday there may be one in every city with branches in all the surrounding areas.

NEW BRANCHES

In addition to the South Suburban Branch of the JGS of Illinois there is now a Long Island Branch of the JGS in New York according to the latest issue of Dorot.

KOVNO BIBLIOGRAPHY

Anna Olswanger of 177 North Highland, #909, Memphis, Tenn. 38111, has a six page bibliography of materials concerning Kovno in the Yivo archives. Also included are references to the village of Valbalnikas in Kovno Gubernia. The title of each document, its file number, number of pages and secular dates are all given. If you would like a copy send \$5.00 to

Anna Olswanger with a self-addressed envelope stamped with 39¢ postage.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS OR PHONE NO.

If you move or if you change your phone number dont forget to let us know.

COPYING OLD PHOTOGRAPHS

Dorot has an article by Helene Schwartz Kevin on copying old family pictures that the owner might not be willing to let out of the house right on the spot. Without knowing much about this technique it is difficult to understand all that is in the article but no doubt it is a very helpful article for those who have the equipment and the ability to use it. The experiences of several fellow members is also mentioned. Carolyn Sherfy has had good luck doing this too. Borrow a copy of Dorot for details. It is worth seeing.

BEATRICE BAYLEY

In issuing a warning against Beatrice Bayley and her family heritage books which, as many genealogists know, are nothing more than lists of all the telephone numbers listed to a particular name across the country, Helene Kevin has an amusing story to tell. Mrs. Bayley unknowingly addressed her offer of a book, invaluable, of course to a genealogist, to a long deceased pet dog!

ROOMMATE WANTED

Carolyn Sherfy would like to find a compatible roommate for the seminar. She will be staying at the Roosevelt Hotel.

CERCLE DE GENEALOGIE JUIVE

This new French society was briefly mentioned under new societies but it rates more notice than that. So far it has published two newsletters (bulletins) and they are excellent. They will publish three per year.

If you have French ancestry or ancestors who lived in Alsace-Lorraine or in one of the north African countries that had sizable Jewish populations such as Algeria, Morocco or Tunisia you will find this society just what you need. You will however need a knowledge of French since the newsletters are, of course, in French.

Although the society is new one gets the impression that it's founding members are not new to genealogy. There are other genealogical societies in France but as we know there comes a time when Jewish genealogy leads us in different directions and therefore we do need societies that concentrate on Jewish genealogy. The French society evolved for this reason. The first issue of the "bulletin" lists research resources, books, libraries and the like and assures it's readers that Jewish genealogy is not impossible. It also offers much useful information. The second issue is equally worthwhile. The members who have written articles are knowledgeable and willing to share. It is possibly the best newsletter this writer has ever seen.

In May the federation of French genealogical societies held a conference in Avignon and invited the fledgling society to have a booth which enabled them to make their existence known beyond Paris. Their hope is to reach all parts of France.

In one issue they have reproduced a Ketubah (only in black and white to their sorrow) and told their readers about the wedding. The wedding took place in Tangier and was a Sephardic ceremony. As part of the ceremony the genealogies of bride and groom were read by the rabbi and were preserved by the synagogue "as is the custom".

Since this custom is unknown among Askenazim so far as I know I called Rabbi Kassorla of Magain David Sephardim to inquire about this custom thinking it was probably a Sephardic custom. The rabbi was not familiar with it. It is not done in his synagogue nor has he ever encountered it before. The rabbi suggested that the people might be people of importance, which as it happens, was the case, it was the union of two families of importance but would only important people have genealogies or would keeping a record of their heritage have been encouraged among all congregants? No doubt not everyone would have a genealogy going back as far as these but even if they went back only half as far, or even less, imagine being

able to start right off with ten generations already at hand. The eldest ancestor in the groom's line fled the Spanish Inquisition in 1492 for Morocco. Only the fathers' lines are given in each case and as you might expect, only the males are mentioned. The bride is the only female named, still it would be wonderful to have so much handed down all at once. Sorry not to be able to tell you more about this custom but where would one even begin to look for a source of information on it?

If you are seeking French ancestry or ancestry from areas the cercle covers a subscription without active membership is 80 francs for overseas members. Full overseas membership is 150 francs. The corresponding secretary is Mme. Rosine Alexandre
38 Rue du Père Corentin
75014 Paris
France

We are indebted for our introduction to all this to our member Beatrice Kirshenbaum who learned of the existence of the Cercle and promptly joined. Much of her own ancestry is from France and from Lorraine so she was interested from the first. When no newsletter arrived after what she felt was adequate time she wrote to Paris with the result that she eventually received two copies of each "bulletin". The second copies have been turned over to us for the use of interested members.

SEPHARDIM

Rabbi Kassorla tells us that some members of his congregation would be interested in genealogy but find that our newsletters and just about everything pertaining to Jewish genealogy is concerned with Askenazic genealogy. We have had nibbles in the past from those seeking Sephardic lines but they have not joined no doubt because we did not seem to offer much for them.

The problem is understandable but it is a vicious circle. We cannot offer much for Sephardim because we know so very little and they are not interested in participating unless and until we can.

If we are to learn about Sephardic genealogy we will need some input from local Sephardim. Granted they would not want to join a society that knows less about their research areas than they do but if enough researchers into Sephardic genealogy come to know one another between them at least a degree of knowledge about Sephardic genealogy might surface. After all the more contact with others doing genealogy the the better the chances that networking will produce something to further general knowledge.

Probably even though the majority of us are concentrating on Askenazic areas the fact that we are doing genealogy at all means that we may have some how-to knowledge to share with our Sephardic brothers and sisters.

In due time one might foresee a national society and newsletter for Sephardic research.. Belonging to the societies that already exist might be one way for Sephardim to locate one another, certainly a first step in accomplishing anything.

The Cercle de Genealogie Juive seems to have members researching in both directions. A good many of those who had to leave their longtime north African homes such as those in Algeria for example, settled in France since they had always considered themselves to be French. The Algerians too considered them French which is why they did not want them in Algeria once they were no longer subject to French rule. As a result the cercle has a different membership than we. Here the majority is so heavily Ashenazic that the feelings of the Sephardim must be those of any minority. We can do nothing to change the numbers but we be friends and we are willing to be helpful if possible.

PATRONYMICS

Last newsletter we asked that those who found patronymics in use in the course of their research let us know if they found them in areas other than those we knew about. Joan Simms tells us that her husband, Michael Morganstern has encountered this custom in tracing his lines in a northern portion of Galicia close to what was then a border with Germany. Rabbi Kassorla says among Sephardim this custom is still in use. His own baby son is named for the rabbi's father in accordance with Sephardic custom and has the rabbi's own first name as a middle name just as the rabbi himself has his grandfather's first name followed by his father's first name. If anyone else can throw more light on when and where the

custom of continuing patronymics after permanent surnames became universal by using the father's first name as a middle name was in use, please do.

SACRAMENTO CONGREGATION MEMBERSHIP LIST

Member Judy Persin has furnished us a list of the membership of Congregation B'nai Israel of Sacramento for the years 1851 to 1869. The list is alphabetical but in some instances there are only initials rather than full first names. The year of membership is given. If this can be of help in your research the list will be gladly checked for you or if you would like the entire list it can be photocopied for you.

OPINIONS

A complaint has been registered that the opinions expressed in the newsletter are all those of the editor without any mention of that fact.

It is true that the opinions tend to be those of the editor but there is a column intended to provide a forum for the opinions, comments and ideas of our members. The Members Forum has had no submission for months now. It is an expandable column which can take care of as much as is submitted but nothing can be printed that has not been submitted. Sharing your ideas, your knowledge, your opinions with others makes for a give and take and an exchange that benefits us all. You might just have the answer to something someone else has expressed an interest in or vice versa.

If no one has anything to say but the editor then of course the opinions are likely to be those of the editor. We presumed you knew the editorial "we" was just that most of the time. It avoids the constant use of "I".

We also have a new column to give our members a way to share their research experiences with others. If you have found new contacts through genealogy for succeeded in finding a fact or an individual you had almost despaired of finding your experience may be very heartening for someone else.

In this issue Carolyn Sherfy is sharing with us. If you have a story to tell dont forget to send it in. Networking is one of the most valuable things imaginable for a genealogist.

MEMBERS FORUM

FAMILY FINDER

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

G-1 David H. Gabriel, 7 Sheldon Terrace, San Francisco, Calif. 94122 (415) 564-1886
Seeking information on the sisters of Jacob Gabriel born 1813 died 1886. His sisters may have lived in Savannah Ga. or St. Louis, Mo. Jacob Gabriel himself lived in San Francisco. The family came from Prussia. Probably the portion of what is now Poznan at the time it belonged to Prussia.

H-4 Ethel Heskin, 317 Vassar Ave. Kensington, Calif. 94708 (415) 527-2492
Searching for the descendants of Meier Heskin and of Pincus Turovsky both from the town of Chernigov in the Ukraine.

Also seeking the families of Samuel Chizik and his wife Ethel Weitzmann and of Joseph Pivnick and his wife, Esther Kaplan. both families originated in Zhitomir, Ukraine.

S-1 Carolyn Sherfy, 918 Willow St. Alameda, Calif. 94546 (415) 886-3119
Searching for all descendants and ancestors of Cohen, Sachs (Saks) Diamand and Abramovitz (Abramavitz) families of Kovno Gubernia, Lithuania. Later lived in St. Louis, Mo.

W-2 Martha L. Wise, 1990 20th Ave. San Francisco, Calif. 94116 (415) 564-9927
Looking for the descendants of Friedchen Hess and her husband Joseph Michael. Their children were Jacob, Michael, Bernard, Dina, Rosalie and Sophie. Rosalie and Sophie married back into their mother's family. Their children would be named Hess. Joseph and Friedchen were married 1823 in Hamburg, Germany.

USING A GUESTROOM EXCHANGE

BY: CAROLYN SHERFY

During the summer of 1982, I attended the Summer Seminar on Jewish Genealogy in Washington, DC. I had reservations for the first week of my trip at the Capitol Holiday Inn and a friend from Los Angeles was going to be my roommate. Since we were there for a genealogical seminar held in that hotel, we were given a special room rate, my half of which was only \$28.00 per night. That was fine but when the convention was over and my friend went home I was faced with cutting my trip short or paying upwards of \$75.00 per night for lodging. This was too much. I called Laura La Gess, President of Visiting Friends, Inc. (I had joined this guestroom exchange group about a month prior to my trip. The cost to join was only \$10.00 for a lifetime membership.) I was apprehensive about staying with someone I did not know, but felt I would be adventurous and it was a way to save money on a genealogical trip. Laura fixed me up with a lady living in Arlington who worked at the Pentagon. It was a wonderful experience. She lived one block from a bus stop which took me to METRO, a BART clone. METRO let me out one block from either the National Archives or the Library of Congress where I spent most of my time during the three days I stayed. In the evenings we met for dinner and it was a pleasure to spent time getting to know one another. My lovely room and private bath were all anyone could hope for and while I saved money, I made a new friend. Three nights cost me \$20.00 total, (the fee payable to Visiting Friends, Inc. for setting up the exchange). Since that time I have had many wonderful experiences with this guestroom exchange. I paid back my three night obligation easily enough by letting a lady from Kentucky stay with me during the National Genealogical Society Conference which was held in San Francisco in May of 1983. During her stay we found out she and my husband were cousins and exchanged all kinds of genealogical information. Last month we entertained an insurance company executive and his wife who is a legislative assistant to a U S Senator from Virginia. We enjoyed each others company so much they have invited us to come stay at their multi-acre home in Virginia. In July we expect to have a couple from Texas visit with us. In addition to all the fun we are having we are building up exchange time my husband and I can use on a vacation or I can use on a genealogical trip. Laura does not give out our name, address or phone number to a prospective guest until we have been contacted and given a chance to decide if it is convenient for us to have guests and feel we are compatible with them. We are not required to entertain them in any way, or feed them any meals. We can refuse to host at any time so the arrangements are never a burden. If you have a room you can make available to guests once in a while, this is a great way to make friends and save money on lodging. There are members all over the US and Canada. You must be 40 or over to join. Contact: Laura La Gess, Visiting Friends, Inc., P. O. Box 231K, Lake Jackson, Texas 77566.

DUES ARE DUE AGAIN

Annual dues are due once again. They are \$15.00 plus \$1.00 for the fund to produce finding aids for the National Archives. This fund is the pet project of Rabbi Malcom Stern and is administered by the Federation of Genealogical Societies of which we are a member. This makes a total of \$16.00 per year to be a member of our society, borrow books and tapes from our library and receive the newsletter. We also invite new members. Make your check payable to the SFBAJGS and send it along with the form below to our membership chairman: Carolyn Sherfy, 918 Willow St., Alameda, CA 94501.

NAME _____ MAIDEN NAME
(IF FEMALE) _____

ADDRESS _____ PHONE _____

FAMILY SURNAMES OF INTEREST
INCLUDE PLACES AND DATES _____

BOOKS

Dorot reviewed a number of books, among them Pioneer Jews: a new life in the far west, by Harriet and Fred Rochin (Houghton Mifflin, Publisher) which deals with Jewish life in the west. It covers ranch life, the earliest Jews in the West and Jews in Spanish California and in the southwest in Mexican days.

We Lived There Too by Kenneth Libo and Irving Howe (St. Martin's/Marek Publishers) also deals with Jewish life in the early days of this country. It has long sections on the original colonies and the south. Much of the material consists of excerpts from diaries, letters and books all written by those who lived in those early days.

Third to None by Saul Jacob Rubin is the story of the Mikve Israel Congregation of Savannah, Ga. takes its title from the fact that the Savannah Jewish community, the first in the south, was the third in the new world after New York and Newport.

The book tells the 250 year history of the Jews of Savannah. Obtainable from the congregation itself, 20 East Gordon St. Savannah, Ga. 31401.

The Jews of Poland by Bernard D. Weinryb (Jewish Publication Society of America) is a history of Jewish life in Poland from 1100 to 1800 and covers such things as where the Jews who settled in Poland originated, the legal, political and economic situation of the Polish Jews of that period and their home, religious and community life.

There are so many books that deal with more recent times but not too many that cover the periods of history this book does. It should be of interest to anyone with an interest in Jewish history and of particular interest to those of Polish ancestry.

Chronicles tells us that one of their members recommends a book called The Jews of Philadelphia. It is by Henry S. Morais and was published in 1894 in Philadelphia. It is out of print but still available in many Philadelphia libraries. If you have a tie to Philadelphia and want to read the book you might be able to get it on interlibrary loan if your own library does not have it.