



GENEALOGY DEPARTMENT

San Francisco Bay Area Jewish Genealogical Society

1990 20th Ave. San Francisco, Calif. 94116

August 1986

SEPTEMBER GENERAL MEETING

DATE: MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 1986

TIME: 7.30 P. M.

PLACE: Fort Mason Center, Bldg. C, Room 217

PROGRAM: Short Business Meeting, Speaker, Question period, Refreshments

SPEAKER: Constant Vaughn

TOPIC: Relationships

Our speaker, who has many years of experience in teaching genealogy as well as doing her own research, will explain how to figure out relationships beyond the simple ones that are no problem. This should be a topic of interest to many.

PERIODICALS RECEIVED

APR 1 1993

Allen County Public Library

LOCAL GROUP MEETINGS

The San Francisco and Peninsula local groups are both planning October meetings. Presumably this applies as well to the East Bay group as well, but it is still too early for exact dates and places to be settled but if there is any information before this newsletter goes to the printer we will let you know. Barring that each group will contact those in its own area. Please see page 8

SALT LAKE CITY SEMINAR REPORT

The seminar in Salt Lake attracted Jewish genealogists from all over the country. The west coast was well represented, perhaps that should be California, was well represented since as yet neither Washington nor Oregon has even a single JGS. The hotel was right around the corner from the Mormon library. It is a thirteen story building with comfortable rooms. It has a restaurant, but since we were right in the middle of town, there were plenty of places to choose from for those who preferred to try someplace else.

On Sunday from 3 to 5 we first stopped to receive our badges in the room assigned to us for the duration of the seminar, then gathered for a reception and a chance to get acquainted or to meet old friends in a large room where refreshments were set out for us. For dinner we were on our own but gathered again at 7:30 for an official welcome and a program on what would be available to us in the library.

Our days were spent chiefly in the library, although some took time out for shopping, shopping and the like, and a few of us had to attend meetings.

In the evening we had a choice of two programs presented simultaneously in neighboring meeting rooms followed by another set of two. Tuesday we had a choice of listening to a talk on "Making the most of Court Records" by Dorothy Horan or Miriam Weiner speaking on "Unusual Sources of Information", followed by a choice of "Passenger List and Immigration Records at LDS" or "Places for Research in Eastern Europe", the first by Jayare Roberts,

the second by Daniel Schlyter, whom many of us remembered from the 1983 seminar in Los Angeles. Dan is the library's expert on eastern Jewish genealogy. He speaks and reads more than one slavic language.

Wednesday there were talks on "New York Research in the LDS Library" by Steve Siegel and "Family History - Writing, Research, Publishing" by Anna Olswanger, Marsha Dennis and Gary Mokotoff. The second set for the evening was "Computers for Jewish Genealogy" by Gary Mokotoff or "Little Known Sources at the National Archives" by Arlene Eakle.

Unfortunately the Monday evening dinner, which should have been a highlight of the seminar, had some of the elements of a disaster. The hotel gave us its largest room but the crowd was too large for the room. If the catering manager had notified the committee that it was not possible to set up a projector at a sufficient distance from the screen at one end of the room and still have room for all the tables, things would have been different.

The tables were so close together people had trouble getting into their seats. Some could not get in at all and those who were seated found that when the seats at the table behind them were filled no one could breathe. There were almost immediate complaints. The catering manager was summoned and asked to have the tables moved. The projector could be pushed out of the way until later and the twenty feet or so that would then be available could provide enough space to at least allow breathing room. The projector was easily moved but moving the tables proved impossible. They were long tables consisting of several long tables each set

which promptly tried to fall apart at the first attempt to move them. Since the waitresses could not get in between the tables the diners had to pass both the used and the filled plates down the tables to and from the waitresses at the ends of the tables. Homestyle, but not exactly what had been planned.

After dinner we were asked to leave for a little while so the tables could be cleared and removed and the chairs set up in rows. The crew was quick but even so it did shorten the time allowed for the program.

Dr. Douglas Goldman ran a film about the Beth Hatefutsoth computer. There was to have been a question and answer period afterwards but since time was short it was cancelled. Probably a bit of luck for poor Doug since several people were already on their feet with fire in their eyes. One source of complaint has been the cost of submitting entries for the computer and Doug apparently is aware of this since he said the rates are set in Israel and he has no control over it at all.

The film was obviously a professionally made promo. Clever and well made, but it did not answer any questions. It did make an effort to convince us that they are just as interested in Jews from eastern Europe or any other part of the world for that matter, as in those from western Europe, rich or poor, white, black or oriental.

Obviously their original information releases had given the impression that only certain family trees were wanted creating some resentment which they wanted to counteract.

During dinner Miriam Weiner told a remarkable story about her search for Russian relatives and introduced a new found Russian cousin now living in this country. Unfortunately he could not stay until later to meet us all. He had to catch a flight home. Miriam tells her story in the latest issue of Dorot.

There was also a problem solving panel that answered a few questions. Time was too short for more.

The Mormon library devotes different floors to different areas of research. Each has rows and rows of microfilm readers, banks and banks of microfilm files, a number of microfiche index files and microfiche readers and much more. Since we were there in mid-season we had to be there early to get a microfilm reader but they do have an astonishing number.

Most importantly they have a booth on each floor staffed with people who will help you.

The booths are open on all sides. The floor that deals with foreign records has people to help with Slavic language problems on one side, with German on another and Scandinavian on yet another. You bring your problems to them and they will try to help. They will tell you where you can look for what you need. If you find the name you want on a document but cannot read the entry you can bring the film to them. They will place it on a machine. Provide you with a translation. Of course you can also have a copy to take home.

Everything is sparkling clean. People obviously respect the way the place is maintained and are careful to keep things neat and clean. A refreshing change from what we so often encounter.

Although some found much more at the library than they had even hoped while others found less than they expected still, everyone seemed to be agreed that the seminar was well worth while. Seminars are always well worth attending whenever possible.

ASSOCIATION OF JEWISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETIES

An association of Jewish genealogical societies was proposed at the Salt Lake City seminar. There is already the Federation of Genealogical Societies to which our society belongs. Both Rabbi Malcolm Stern and Steve Siegel have been active in the federation in official capacities for some time. The proposed new association would not affect our membership in the federation it would simply deal with things that specifically relate to Jewish societies. Approval of the new association by the boards of thirteen of the existing JGSs is required to bring the AJG into being.

The majority of our board has already given approval. No one has objected although some have not yet responded. Since a majority suffices our approval has been forwarded.

Also proposed was an index to all the newsletters. Marcia Eisenberg has undertaken this project.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Carolyn Sherfy has moved. She remains our membership chairman and board member, however if you wish to reach her, her new address is P.O. Box 157, Knightsen, Calif. 94548. If you have never heard of Knightsen, it is not out of the Bay Area. It is in Contra Costa county, it is however more rural than Alameda. Carolyn's phone number is (415) 625-4280.

BOOK ON THE LODZ GHETTO

Charles Elkind found a book called "The Chronicle of the Lodz Ghetto 1941-1944" by Lucjan Dobrozycki in the Mountain View public library. We do not know who published it or where else it may be available but the information should be easily available in your own library in "Books in Print", or books no longer in print.

Charles Elkind found it a worthwhile book for those who had family in that area at that time. According to Dorot there is another book dealing with a wartime ghetto, that of Lwov. The author, Joachim Schoenfeld, was born in Galicia and later lived in Krakow and then Warsaw. In 1939 he and his family made their way on foot to Lwov. There they found themselves under Soviet rule until the Nazis came in. The author lost his wife and two sons but survived to produce two books. "Holocaust Memoirs: Jews in the Lwov Ghetto, the Janowski Concentration Camp and as Deportees in Siberia." and "Jews in Galicia under Austria and in the reborn Poland 1898-1939". These two volumes are published by Ktav Publishing House, Inc. of Hoboken, N.J.

ESSEN MEMORIAL BOOK

Jon Stein, President of JGS Philadelphia has information on a German book by Hermann Schroter, formerly head archivist in Essen, on the history and fate of the Jews of Essen. There are 811 pages of text so there should be much of value for those interested in Essen, Germany.

RESEARCH IN POLAND

Estelle Guzik reports in Dorot on a trip she and Suzan Wynn made to Poland. They apparently encountered no problems in getting around but they did encounter some in getting access to records. Estelle enumerates the archives and the types of archives to be found. She also reports where they were able to see records and where they could not. In some places they were allowed to see some lists briefly but not to go over the records carefully. In Krakow they were not allowed to see the Jewish records since they did not have a letter of approval from Warsaw. They did however, find out something about the records that do exist. Some of these apparently have already been filmed by the Mormons, and it sounds as though there is at least one more book of records for the town of Tarnow which has not yet been filmed.

They seemed to have traveled extensively visiting a number of cities and towns. Dr. Neil Rosenstein and his wife, Mavis also were in Poland this summer. They too covered quite a bit of ground and encountered no problems. Neil sounded extremely pleased with the trip. They had found a very great deal. They did have one very great advantage over many researchers, namely a cousin of Mavis's who speaks the language and knows the customs and ways of the country.

Even in countries where English will get you around well enough, being able to speak the language or failing that, at least having someone along who does, is a great advantage. Adding both reports together it would seem there is more to be found in Poland than you might think but if you want anything the Mormons don't have, than you not only need to go there in person, you need to know the language, and you need to know the ropes, where to go, what you need before you go there, such as permits, knowing what you can ask for and what will only get you a turn down, what not to say if you know you want something they won't give unless they think you are a direct descendant, when you are not.

FINDING RUSSIAN RELATIVES

As mentioned earlier, Miriam Weiner tells of her efforts to find Russian relatives about whom she knew nothing. She knew the area from which her family came and the name of a town but not who she was looking for. One branch of Miriam's family has an unusual name. This is the branch she hoped to research.

As Miriam herself says, research in the Soviet Union ranges from very difficult to impossible. An additional difficulty is trying to trace a common name. Tracing a Cohen, for example is very difficult because there are so many. The more uncommon the name, the easier the task. Miriam succeeded in getting telephone listings from Russian phone books in the holdings of the Library of Congress for people with that particular surname. She wrote letters and had them translated into Russian before mailing copies to the various addresses. It produced nothing. As Miriam later discovered, those phone book addresses were not fully complete, it was therefore doubtful if any reached those to whom they were addressed. Also the phone books were not current.

Eventually though, by dint of much effort, Miriam located a member of the family who had left Russia some twenty or twentyfive years ago for western Europe. This relative wrote to her letting her know that his aged mother was not well and if she wished to interview this elderly lady it should be soon. Miriam made the trip to Europe and spent four days with mother and son. The mother gave the name of the town Miriam knew as the place the family had lived, as the place from which her own family came.

So far it seems to Miriam all the members of this family came either from that one town or from someplace nearby and her impression is that they are all related although she still has to find a way to connect all the family members she has found to one another. Her Russian born relative helped her to try and reach bearers of the name still in Russia. They made some phone calls to Russia, in the main with little help from the Russian operators, and did eventually succeed in reaching some of the people they were trying to call. One told them of another and Miriam came away with the names of a great many people.

Some had been delighted to speak to them. Others although pleased, were scared, and hung up abruptly. Various signs seemed to indicate that the calls were being noted and possibly monitored by the Russians.

One of the newly found Russian relatives mentioned a son who had come to this country. Miriam made a successful effort to find this cousin and finally did even though his phone number was unlisted and there had been a change in his name. Now they are working together on the family tree.

Patience and persistence have always been the two prerequisites for genealogy and these Miriam has in abundance.

RUSSIAN CONSULAR RECORDS

The news from Washington is that the Russian Consular records program should be completed this summer and the microfilming by fall. Publication of the complete index and catalog is expected by early next year if not earlier.

This program has taken a great deal of time and effort on the part of those in Washington. They deserve a lot of credit and a good deal of thanks for their devotion to this project.

PHILADELPHIA RECORDS

It would seem that not only does Philadelphia have a good many records but people have been active in sorting the records, compiling indexes, making abstracts and generally making the Philadelphia records easy for genealogists with research to do in that area, to use.

WEITZMAN FAMILY TREE

Raymond Whitzman of Cote St. Luc, Quebec, Canada has sent us a bound copy of the Weitzman family tree. It appears to have been done on a computer, at least as far as one who knows very little about computers and has no desire to know more, can tell. The family appears to have originated in Lithuania and now has branches in this country and in Canada. It also includes a list of over one hundred fifty names and addresses of family members. It does not go back very far, only to the last century, but it does include a great many people. This will go into our library and be available to anyone who descends from this family. In addition to the name Weitzman there seem to be a number who are now known as Whitzman and of course there are other names as well.

RAY OF HOPE FOR BOSTON RESEARCH

If you have encountered the problems caused by the total neglect of a number of old Jewish cemeteries in Boston you may be happy to know that something is now being done about it. Many of these cemeteries belonged to burial societies, landsleit groups, fraternal lodges and small shuls. When these groups went out of existence no one was left to see to proper care. In some cases there are caretakers but "care" does not seem to include upkeep. Records have often been lost or are incomplete. Now there is an organization called the Jewish Cemetery Association of Massachusetts founded for the purpose of devoting itself to restoring these cemeteries. So far they have worked on a number of them and there are more to be done. Work includes removing the poison ivy which had run riot, removing trees that had rooted on the graves, righting tumbled stones and, of course, mowing the grass, and seeing that the cemeteries do not fall into disrepair again. They are also endeavoring to consolidate and preserve all existing records and archives.

Upon request they will send you a guide, a small booklet that includes cemetery maps showing exact location of the cemeteries by groups. Some are so tiny there cannot well be very many graves in them. A number of these long narrow strips, side by side. Other cemeteries are much larger. Although the guide is free the Association, of course, is looking for members who pay \$100.00, supporters who pay \$50.00 or anyone willing to contribute something to help defray expenses and enable the work to continue. The address is 1340 Centre St. Newton Centre, Mass. 02159.

NEW SOCIETIES

At the seminar in Salt Lake City we were given a welcome list of JGSs, not only in this country but wherever they exist. There is now a JGS in Phoenix, Ariz. Whether this is the same as the one in Mesa, Ariz. or not is not quite clear. The Mesa group's address is Arizona Jewish Historical Society-Genealogy Division, 720 West Edgewood, President Carlton Brooks. The recent list gives addresses and names of those to be addressed but rarely the office held and never the name of the society, therefore we cannot be sure what the relationship is between the aforementioned Mesa group and the one in Phoenix at 6707 N. 19th Ave. % Dr. Robert Kravetz. What is quite clear however is that our Arizona friends bid fair to be an active group. Arizona was well represented at the seminar by some lovely new people.

We have already heard about the society in Paris and the one in Jerusalem and now find a listing for one in Zurich, Switzerland. London also has one called Family History Research Group, apparently part of the Museum of the East End which in its turn seems to be part of the Sternberg Centre. Perhaps a genealogical society that is evolving out of a Jewish Historical group. Walter Cohen writes that the list omitted the society in Houston which is not the same as that in Austin, which was listed. Both are still small but growing according to Walter.

ASK THE EXPERTS

This is the title of a regular column in Avotaynu by Randy Daitch and Miriam Weiner. Miriam tells a questioner that there is a book on the state archives of the USSR on microfilm but it is in Russian. If, like most of us, you do not read Russian, one of the volumes of Patricia Kennedy Grimstead's work on the subject would seem easier to deal with. Volume 2 which Miriam owns is on Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Belorussia. Volume 3 soon to be available, is on the Ukraine.

MEMBERS FORUM

From Connie Vaughn

Archivist of the U.S. Archives

A National Archivist is about to be appointed. While President Reagan apparently favors the appointment of John Agresto (a political plum), the Federation of Genealogical Societies and all concerned genealogists and historians should write immediately to their senators urging appointment of Dr. Donald Wilson, currently of the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library. He is extremely competent in archival management, leadership in dealing with proper agencies and most sympathetic to the genealogical community. WRITE A LETTER TODAY! Senate confirmation of the president's appointment is required, so your letter is essential.

National Archives Gift Fund

A dollar a year from every genealogist supports this fund. You are one of the supporters, but how about your friends, especially those who belong to historical societies but not genealogical societies. Give them a sales pitch. Microfilm of source material in the National Archives is being produced and placed in the various branch archives, one of which is in San Bruno. What a help the Street Index to Major Cities in the 1910 Census has been! The current project is reproducing copies of recently discovered film of the immigration and naturalization records for the ports of San Francisco (470 reels) and Galveston (50 reels). Suggestions for the next project are now being solicited -- your suggestion could be the one selected, so if you have a suggestion or comment, write to Rabbi Malcolm H. Stern, NARA Gift Fund National Chairman, 300 East 71st St. #5-R, New York, N.Y. 10021.

U.S.G.S. Topographic Maps

If you are a user of these very helpful topographic maps and wish to purchase for your own map collection, you should know that as of July 1, 1986 the Arlington, Virginia branch was closed. All mail orders should now be addressed to U.S. Geological Survey, Map Distribution, Federal Center Building 41, Box 25286, Denver, Co. 80225.

EDITOR'S COMMENT

Re Connie Vaughn's first submission to the Member's Forum, this information was received by us from the Federation just after the last newsletter came out, too late for inclusion before this letter. Some members did receive a personal call asking that they write their senators, but calling the entire membership was something less than feasible. Fortunately the position of Archivist has not yet been filled and we urge you to write since the future archivist can make an enormous difference in what will be available to us from the archives.

QUERIES FROM ABROAD

Charles Tucker of 111a Nether St, Finchley, London N12 8AB, England is looking for a needle in a haystack on behalf of the Jewish Historical Society of England. The person sought was a Sephardic woman born Esther Pereira daughter of Joseph and Rosa, Nov. 27, 1825 in London. The father was in Australia from 1827 on, the mother died in London in 1880. Records for the mother show that after her death an officer of the Spanish & Portuguese Jews' Burial Society remarked that he believed she had a daughter in San Francisco. This is precious little to go on since it is not even known if Esther was married, in which case she would be under another name, whether she had any children or even whether she did actually live in San Francisco or even in the Bay Area.

Georges Dreyfus, a Frenchman currently with the French Embassy in Ankara, Turkey is seeking family members who apparently never lived in this country but may have had descendants here. He is looking for the descendants of Simon Dreyfus died 6/15/1811 and his wife Caroline Bloch, died 12/22/1825 whose children Rachel and Joseph, born 1/7/1796 were born in Harbourg, France. He is also seeking Leopold 5/29/1830, Nanette 12/27/1834, Jacques 2/8/1836, Rosalie 8/19/1839 and Isaac 9/21/1840. Also Clement 12/10/1853, Isadore 9/11/1856, Rosalie 12/12/1857 and Caroline 9/28/1860. All dates are birthdates and all were born in Harbourg. It is not clear however just who is whose child or grandchild. Presumably all of these were born Dreyfus. Also sought are Michael 9/14/1896, Johanna 2/1/1852, Leopold 6/14/1853 and Mark 11/28/1856 all born in Iggelheim, Germany, children Joseph Mayer/Emma Dreyfus, grandchildren Loeb Dreyfus/Sara Mayer. Exactly what the slash indicates is not clear.

SHARING CORNER

Where do Genealogists Search?

By Connie Vaughn

Nowadays shopping malls and amusement parks cater to yesteryear with nostalgia boutiques stocked with vintage clothes and various objects of Victoriana. Some even offer pictures from by-gone days for sale, someone's relatives now relegated to the rubbish heap, and I must confess that it makes me sad to see such things. However here follows a tale about such a nostalgia boutique with an unbelievable ending.

Carolyn Sherfy, Libby Greegard Rosenfield and I attended a mini-JGS seminar in St. Louis last May. Days filled with research and evenings filled with lectures and information offered by Matt Darrish.

Our last night in St. Louis was our night out. The three of us had dinner at Union Station, once one of America's finest and busiest train stations. Now, however, the track area, once filled with trains, is covered with acres of parking space. Platforms and waiting rooms are filled with restaurants and shops--the only trains are miniatures running around the wainscoting of the shops.

Union Station has a Nostalgia Boutique -- and a tray of old portraits. Carolyn was fascinated, but I would have been happy to walk on with Libby. Carolyn tried "sell" one to Libby but to no avail and then handed one to me. "Look at the funny hair-do". But you should have seen my face. -- it was my great grandfather!!!! (And the hair-do wasn't all that funny.) The picture, a carte de visite, taken 1901-2, was in perfect condition. Who would believe that I could travel half-way across this country and find a photograph of an ancestor in a tray of discards in a commercial establishment! Which only goes to prove genealogists should look everywhere and anywhere for information and memorabilia -- use your imagination and persevere!

FAMILY FINDER

G-2 Florence Gianfresco, 1568 Willowbrae Ave., San Jose, Calif. 95125 (408) 448-4425
Seeking ancestors and descendants of Isaac Slepian and his wife, Zelda Fein, both born in Minsk, Russia. Emigrated to New York circa 1829 then lived in Rochester.
Also interested in Harry and Max Aranow, either from Minsk, or the sons of Minsk born parents.

P-1 Miriam Pearl, 768 Trestle Glen Rd., Oakland, Calif. 94610 (415) 893-1783
Seeking the Pinto family of New York. One branch of the family was in haberdashery as a partner in the firm of Greiff & Pinto.
Joe and Mindel Pinto had a son, Stanley who at one time lived in Texas.

S-1 Carolyn L. Sherfy, P.O. Box 157, Knightsen, Calif. 94548 (415) 625-4280
Searching for information on Fred Schwartz, died in Portland, Ore. during the first quarter of this century. Daughter Fanny or Frieda married a Bombeck. There were also two sons, Alfred and Harold.
Also searching for all descendants and ancestors of Cohen, Sachs (Saks), Diamand and Abramowitz (Abramavitz) families of Kovno Gubernia, Lithuania. Later St. Louis, Mo.

V-1 Sara Verschleisser, 3200 W. Strathmore Ave. Baltimore, Md. 21215 (301) 764-7777 or 1955 35th Ave. San Francisco, Calif. 94116 (415) 566-1989
Seeking descendants and ancestors of Moshe Hahn from western Galicia. His son, Mayer and Meyer's wife, Cheitel Blaustein, a cousin, arrived in this country prior to WWI.
Also seeking parents of Louis Weinberg and wife, Ida Ann Solomon from Warsaw, Pol. who arrived here between 1880-1890. His parents came later and lived in New York.

W-2 Martha L. Wise, 1990 20th Ave. San Francisco, Calif. 94116 (415) 564-9927
Looking for parents for Jeremias Blumenthal of Harburg, Germany, born 12/19/1789. born in Wöllmarshausen, Germany. Married Jeanette Gans in Celle, Germany circa 1820.
Also seeking the birthdate and birthplace of Heymann Jacob Hess son of Jacob Moses Hess. He lived in Moisling, now a part of Lübeck, Germany where he died in 1797 but it is not known if he was born there or not. Also wanted are names and dates for his wives. He is known to have been widowed more than once and remarried.

LOCAL GROUP MEETINGS

The Peninsula Local Group will hold its October meeting Tuesday, Oct. 21, 1986 at the home of Inge Campbell, 668 Barbour Dr. Redwood City, Calif. 94062 (415) 368-1617. Time: 7:45 P.M.

The San Francisco-Daly City Local Group will meet at the home of Stan Stein, 2171 Bay St. San Francisco, Calif. 94123 (415) 921-3769 on Thursday Oct. 23, 1986. Time: 8:00 P.M.

Since October is still some time away the subjects for the meetings are not quite set yet. If you plan to attend a call to your host or hostess will be appreciated. As you know planning is much easier when you know how many to expect.

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