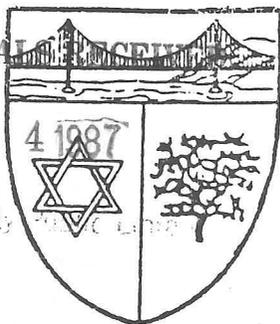


San Francisco Bay Area
Jewish Genealogical Society



1990 20th Ave. San Francisco, Calif. 94116

May 1987

JULY GENERAL MEETING

DATE: MONDAY, JULY 20, 1987

TIME: 7:30 P.M.

PLACE: SUTRO LIBRARY

PROGRAM: Short Business Meeting, Speaker, Refreshments

SPEAKER: RABBI MOSES COHEN

TOPIC: JEWISH CUSTOMS & LAWS THAT AFFECTED JEWS THAT BEAR ON OUR RESEARCH

A knowledge of the past can be very important in interpreting what we find in tracing our roots. Both specific Jewish laws and customs as well as civil laws enacted solely for Jews, as happened in the past in Europe, affected the life of our ancestors. The more we know about their lives the easier it is to understand them as well as to know what to consider in deciding how best to find them.

MEETING AT SUTRO LIBRARY

The March meeting was our first at Sutro Library. Everyone present was very pleased with the new meeting place. Several people came early to put in time on research in the library prior to the meeting. Others who had not previously been to the library planned to come early the next time and take advantage of the opportunity to do a little research while they were in the area anyway.

This is the nicest room we have ever had as a regular meeting place. We are grateful to be allowed to meet there.

Stonestown is a sorry mess at present but many people are looking forward to being able to arrive at Sutro early, do a few hours research and then go to dinner in the new mall before the meeting. The new mall, or at least the portion of it Stonestown calls phase 1, is supposed to be completed by September. Maybe, we hope so.

As mentioned in the last newsletter we have reinstated our one time custom of having someone present prior to the time of the meeting to answer the questions of new people and to offer any advice we may be able to supply for more experienced members who have hit a snag. Monday evenings the library is open until 9:00 P.M. an hour and a half past the start of our meeting so those who want to do research can work until meeting time.

MEETING SCHEDULE

Some of our members seem not to have noticed that for over a year we have been meeting on a regular schedule. We meet on the third Monday of every second month. That is every odd numbered month. The local groups each meet on their own schedule in the even numbered months. We have met at 7:30 since our inception. Last year we met regularly at Ft. Mason. Now we are meeting at Sutro Library. There was a period of time when meetings were held in various locations but that is in the past, and will remain in the past.

BETH HATEFUTSOTH COMPUTER PROGRAM CLARIFICATION

At the March meeting Jane Jacobson answered all our many questions re the computer program so that we now have a much better understanding of how it is set up and what they actually want and do not want.

Possibly the thing people were happiest to learn is that although they are required to purchase the kit, they need not use all the forms. The idea of filling out fifty forms is too much for many busy people who would far rather simply photocopy what they already have. Originally Beth Hatefutsoth had said they would work from printed or typed material if it met their requirements but would charge extra for it. Since then they have found that working with such material is not harder than working with their own forms and they have waived the extra charge.

What they do not want is a pedigree form. They feel that that does not represent a complete family but only the ancestry of a single individual.

What they do want is as many collaterals as possible. When they say five generations they do not mean five generations behind yourself nor four generations of your ancestry counting yourself as the fifth generation, but they do want spouses and as much as you care to provide for everyone. They also would like whatever you can tell them about anyone on that tree.

As some of those who have inquired already know, you can count your children and their spouses and your grandchildren, with your own spouse that makes three generations, and with parents and grandparents you have the required five generations.

Once you know what they want you can follow it, but most genealogists, accustomed to the lingo react to the term five generations by picturing five generations of their own ancestry.

Further, when they state they reserve the right to accept or refuse any family tree they are not saying they will refuse a family they don't think is worthy, they are saying they will not accept a tree they cannot follow. It would seem that since they have not been dealing simply with genealogists, they have been offered such things as information jotted down in a notebook or on bits of paper in no order and in such fashion that they cannot readily tell who is who.

Naturally they want things that clearly identify the individuals and their relationship to one another. A genealogist would take it for granted that they need to know who belongs on what line and cannot be expected to try to work with a Chinese puzzle clear only to its author.

Jane Jacobson also mentioned that members of Beth Hatefutsoth get a 25% reduction in entry costs. She did tell us something of what Beth Hatefutsoth is all about and a few people were interested in joining.

Jane is now one of our members and lives in Saratoga. She is a San Francisco native.

NOMINATIONS

We will be ready to accept nominations for office or candidacy for office at the next meeting. In March there were no nominations for president nor did anyone announce that they would like to be a candidate for that office. Please remember that this is important. According to our by-laws a president may not serve two successive terms. Our term of office is two years and this year new officers must be elected. Other than the president, officers may succeed themselves but they do need to be nominated or to announce their own candidacy. A president can fill another office and the current president was nominated for vice president. As the incumbent I was happy to accept the nomination. Carolyn Sherfy was nominated to continue in her present post as membership chairman and also accepted her nomination. Bob Weiss was proposed as secretary but declined. Libby Rosenfield was nominated to continue as treasurer. She would not mind ceding the job to someone else but will not let us down if no one else is willing to take over. This still leaves us with offices to fill, particularly the office of president.

Please remember that nominations are important and at least make some nominations for those offices for which we lack candidates and plan to vote when the time comes.

GENEALOGICAL FAIR

The California Genealogical Society is holding a genealogical fair Saturday, June 6th. The

fair is to be held in the Parina Lounge of the University of San Francisco. Remember, the University of San Francisco, not San Francisco State.

We have some flyers and will have them present at the May meeting. It would have doubled the postage to have enclosed one in each newsletter but should you want one, tell us and we will see that you get one.

The registration fee is \$4.00 for non-CGS members prior to June 1st. At the gate the fee is \$5.00. There will be a number of "mini-seminars" actually classes, on subjects ranging from ships passenger lists, census records and, of course, computer related subjects, to publishing family history, caring for old books, papers and the like. Carolyn Sherfy will conduct one of the mini-seminars. It will be on the Russian consular records in case you missed the January meeting and wanted to hear about the records. Another class "Starting from Scratch" is a beginners class.

These classes are \$3.00 each in addition to the registration fee, and they too should be prepaid at the time of registration.

There will be some sixty exhibitors there. Various societies will be represented, book dealers and publishers will have tables, there will be genealogists supplies, computer items and photographers who can copy your precious ancestral photograph right there, returning it to you so you need not feel the worry we all do when a precious photograph is out of our hands for copying. Later the copy and negative will be mailed to you.

We do not know the charges at the moment although Carolyn says there will be more than one photographer present and their arrangements could vary.

We, too are to be among the exhibitors. Carolyn had been planning to have a table although she really didn't feel she needed all the space of a full table. Half a table is enough for us too so we will be sharing a table. Should we be lucky enough to be swamped we can help each other.

We will need a bit of relief, however since Carolyn has a class to give, and I would like to be able to attend at least one class, we both will need a lunch break and naturally we would like a little time each to browse among the other tables, we could use a bit of help. Some help has already been offered.

The fair opens at 9:30 A.M. and continues until 4:00 P.M. There is a cafeteria in the same building which will be open to fair attendees. It is, of course, not gourmet cooking, it is college cafeteria food but you can have a sandwich made, there are soups, salads, hot dishes, desserts, beverages etc. You pay the cashier \$4.50 before going through the turnstile. Once inside you may have all you want of as many different things as you would like.

The exhibition room itself will have tea, coffee, punch and pastries for sale, as well.

We have made arrangements for some books to sell for our own table. Many of the books otherwise available at the fair will not be of too much use to the Jewish genealogist but some although not specifically for the Jewish genealogist as those on our table will be, may be valuable additions to one's library.

You may call either Carolyn Sherfy at 625-4280 or Martha Wise at 564-9927 if you wish.

MISSING TAPE

Would the member who borrowed the tape marked #P237-4 - Yizkor-Brinker: A Treasure Trove of Social, Cultural, and Family History by J. Kugelmass please return it to our library. It has been held well past its return date. Our librarian, Carolyn Sherfy, requests its immediate return. You may mail it to her at P.O. Box 157, Knightsen, Calif. 94548 or phone her at the number given above to make an arrangement to return it.

MAAJAN

This is the newsletter of the Swiss Society for Jewish Genealogy. We reported on this society previously after receiving a copy of their first issue. We have since received a second issue. This young society is eager to be in contact with its "sister societies" as they phrase it and would like to exchange newsletters. Although overseas mail is expensive and more expensive for them than for us since as postage goes we pay less than they pay in most countries even if it doesn't feel to us as though we pay a very low rate, we feel this exchange is a very good idea. We placed them on our mailing list some time ago.

They too have a query column and it is free to their members just as ours is. They do charge non-members just as we do. Many societies charge for queries in their newsletters but we have never done so since a charge can discourage some from placing their first query. The

family finder columns are just too valuable to discourage people by charging to use them. We are glad that Zürich agrees. No doubt a society can add to its treasury by charging but isn't helping people to find their relatives what a genealogical society is all about? Maajan is entirely in German except for the name of the society which is given in French and English as well as German. It is perfectly clear that the editors of Maajan understand more than one language, as do most educated Swiss. In a small country with three official languages, where everything is printed in at least two of those languages, it is natural that they would be much more aware of the need to know other languages than are many of our people in a country where nearly the entire continent speaks the same language.

Genealogical Symbols

In this issue, continuing his introduction to genealogy series, Raymond Jung devotes his article to symbols, existing genealogical symbols and a great number that he suggests could be used to indicate almost anything you can think of in genealogy.

We had assumed that certain symbols were international symbols but Mr Jung makes clear that those symbols are simply German language symbols. There is a French set of symbols which is different. He includes our familiar b., m. and d. among the symbols but feels they are not truly useful for non-English speakers since the letters would mean little or even something other than what they actually do mean. For example an m to a Frenchman could stand for either married or died since both words begin with m in French. In German the m would convey nothing at all to one who did not know English. The Danes also use letters but they have never been mentioned here because they mean nothing to those who do not know at least genealogical Danish. They use f. for født (born) g. for gift (married) and d for død (died). The German symbols and the French are truly symbols. The German system includes an asterisk for born, double rings for married and a cross for died. Occasionally you may see a tiny coffin for died. This is better than a cross in the eyes of many of us, Mr Jung included, but his solution of a symbol which seemed to require a typewriter with an accent grave did not seem too practical unless one were willing to put in symbols by hand. Whether too many of our people would be willing to deal with anything that cannot be done on a typewriter or a computer is doubtful. Are we lazy or just always in too much of a hurry? That symbol was shown in the November newsletter. The idea of a symbol other than the cross and less cumbersome than the tiny coffin was appealing. The French symbols, Mr Jung explains, are o for born, x for married and again the cross for died. In place of that Mr. Jung suggests Δ, the Greek delta, to stand for the Greek word danatos or the Latin word decessus. Both Latin and Greek are classical languages, of course. Delta since it is d could also stand for died in English.

Perhaps someday we really will have an international set of symbols, used and understood in all countries. That would certainly help to simplify matters, wouldn't it?

Mr Jung also explained the meaning of the German and French symbols. He says the asterisk represents the star of Bethlehem, the double rings represent wedding rings and the symbolism of the cross needs no explanation. No explanation is given for the French o as the symbol for born, but Mr. Jung explains the x for married, x, as a biology symbol. The cat fancy uses an x as an abbreviation for ex in indicating a mating. Somehow the double rings seem a far nicer symbolism. Mr. Jung suggests o-o to indicate engagement, oo to indicate a religious marriage ceremony and too many more for this space. However if anyone wants to see them all they need only ask. We will be happy to supply a copy of all the suggested symbols.

Samuel Oppenheimer

Another article by a Dr. Oppenheimer is on the famous 17th century Viennese court Jew, Samuel Oppenheimer. Of course the first question to pop into a genealogist's mind is whether Dr. Oppenheimer descends from the same Oppenheimer family. This unfortunately is not addressed. This article deals with the fortunes and misfortunes of Samuel Oppenheimer. Being a court Jew always was a prestigious position but often also a precarious one. Since Austria was never exactly hospitable to Jews the life of a seventeenth century court Jew was not that easy for all its prestige. The antisemites, the jealous and envious, were all there just waiting to pounce. The careers of Samuel Oppenheimer and his brother-in-law, Samson Wertheimer are interesting, no doubt about it still since this was part 1 of the story it can be hoped that part 2 will give some family history. This article does mention Samson Wertheimer but not his relationship to Samuel Oppenheimer yet the relationships and connections of the top Jewish families of the time are fascinating. Marriages in those days were always arranged. When their children reached puberty their parents looked around for a suitable match. Love did not enter into it, that, it was assumed, would come later. Amazingly it often did. Not always, of course, but the record of bad marriages was not only no worse than the

record of failed marriages today but was often considerably better. Possibly because people did not feel they had a choice so they made the best of what they got. The all important consideration was family. Wealth counted too. A bright boy with a potential to become a learned man was appreciated too, but for the top families it was an extra, icing on the cake. Marriages were close. The more prestigious the family the more likely it was that a son or daughter would be affianced to a youngster living at a considerable distance or even in another country. The engagements usually lasted for at least a couple of years and after the marriage the young bride and groom lived for a year or two or even more with parents. They were still too young to set up housekeeping on their own.

Both Samuel Oppenheimer and Samson Wertheimer were German born although their fame is associated with Vienna.

A nephew of Samuel Oppenheimer, David Oppenheimer, married Grendel, youngest child of Leffman Behrens Cohen, court Jew in Hanover. A brief marriage, since the poor young bride died at the birth of her first child. Leffman Behrens himself was the uncle of Jost Liebermann who eventually became a court Jew in Berlin. Jost Liebermann's first wife was a granddaughter of Josef Hameln, Leffman Behrens was the second husband of the widowed Jenta Hameln, Josef Hameln's daughter, A grandson and namesake of Josef Hameln married the daughter of Meyer Goldschmidt, court Jew in Copenhagen and cousin of the younger Josef's father, Chaim Hameln. Chaim Hameln was the husband of Glückel von Hameln whose memoirs you can still buy today. The web goes on and on and learning about all the connections is fascinating. Perhaps in part 2 Dr. Oppenheimer will provide some family information on his subject.

Murbach

For anyone who had ancestors in Murbach in 1706 there is a lot of information dug up by a French member of the Swiss society. This article could provide interesting information for those who can use it.

For the rest there is a translation of Arye Barkai's article in Avotaynu, a query column, information on the London seminar etc.

One thing that is very clear is that this young society wants to interact with all the others and this can only profit everyone.

ANSWERS

In the last newsletter we mentioned a book published by KTAV Publishing but could not say where this publisher is to be found. Sara Verschleisser supplied the answer. The address is 120 E. Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10002.

We also mentioned the Encyclopedia Meorei Galicia which was reviewed in Chronicles by Gideon Rath, whose name was not familiar to us. Jon Stein of the JGS in Philadelphia soon set that straight for us by telling us he is a member of the Philadelphia society and lives at 1926 Benton Ave. Philadelphia, Pa. 19152.

THE TROUBLE WITH ANSWERING MACHINES

Answering machines at times will garble a message. This leaves the owner of the machine unable to respond while the caller feels the person called simply didn't wish to answer. This happened to Joan Morganstern Simms. She heard just enough to know it concerned a possible common genealogical interest but the machine decided to garble the name and phone number of the caller. Joan would very much appreciate it if he would call back, She would very much like to speak to him.

SEMINARS

It would seem there is to be no national seminar this year, partly at least because of the international seminar in London this year. Also taken into consideration was the conference of the Federation of Genealogical Societies to be held in Cincinnati in July. This is an umbrella organization that includes all sorts of genealogical societies including ours. Only societies can join the FGS not individuals. This is however not to be confused with the Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies which is intended to deal specifically with Jewish societies only. We are also members of the AJGS. There is no conflict.

Although many who cannot go to London and do not plan to go to the conference in Cincinnati

may feel sorry there is no seminar in this country this year, there will be one next year. It is already set for Washington D.C. in 1988.

Cincinnati offers a good deal for the Jewish genealogist in that Hebrew Union College is located there with its vast collection of Judaica. There are delegates to the conference. Each member society has two delegates, the SFBAJGS included, however non-delegates may also attend. The dates are July 8-11. The hotel rates for non-delegates are \$52.00 per night if reservations are made through Terry Dunn, 2276 Diamond Mill Rd. Brookville, Ohio 45309, the reservations chairman, prior to June 1st. (513) 854-0477.

There are more than forty sessions offered each day on a variety of subjects. Many of general interest, none, of course, of specifically Jewish interest. There will however be a tour of the American Jewish Archives if that tour is selected.

MISPACHA REVIVING FAMILY FINDER

Mispacha dropped its family finder with the advent of the computerized family finder but has now decided to reinstitute it because so many people want an ad that contains more detailed information than allowed for by the computerized family finder. They plan to charge \$5.00 for 25 words. they will also honor requests for information on places, organizations, synagogues and the like.

THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF JEWISH GENEALOGY

This is the title of a book currently in the works. The authors, Arthur Kurzweil and Miriam Weiner have put out the enclosed sheet. There is however a change in the final date for submissions. It has been advanced to June 15th. No doubt it will be a while before this book is available to us but it will surely be of value when it does come out.

WESTERN JEWISH HISTORY GUIDE

This guide to the oral and archival collections at the Western Jewish History Center in Berkeley by our own member, Ruth Kelson Rafael is now available and we have purchased a copy to present to Sutro Library. They are allowing us the use of a very nice room and we want to show our appreciation by adding to their collection. Should you wish a copy for yourself it is \$24.95. The Western Jewish History Center, as we presume you already know, is located in the Judah Magnes Museum. You can either purchase it there or order it and they will send it. There is a shipping charge of course. We have not removed the stretchwrap from the purchased copy since it is to be presented but we are anxious to find it on the shelf at Sutro so we can read it. The cover is attractive.

MORE BOOKS FOR THE LIBRARY

We will want to present other books to Sutro in future. If you know of any book you think might be nice to order let us know. We must, of course, consider our budget. Recommended books should not go over what we would pay if we were still renting from Ft. Mason.

NECROLOGY FILE

The Cleveland Kol reports there is a necrology file maintained by the Cleveland public library in its newspaper room. Clevelanders simply phone and give the name and date of death and it will be checked while they wait for it. They would like to know if other societies have this service in their cities. Unfortunately the answer for San Francisco is no. If you wish to check old papers they are kept on microfilm at the main library. There are some viewers available, but no one is going to look anything up for you. if it is any different in Oakland or any other Bay city we have not heard about. Sounds very convenient, indeed.

BOOKS AT UNKNOWN PRICES

Sharsheret Hadokot, the newsletter of the Israel Genealogical Society is given to telling us about books that might well be of interest to many but without quoting either the price or telling us to whom to write for information. The latest issue mentions Pinkas Ha-

Kehillot which gives an overview of three areas of Germany, Wurtemberg, Baden and tiny Hohenzollern. This area includes many cities and towns and apparently in some cases people are mentioned as well. The history of towns covers the period from their founding until the holocaust which in some cases would be a long time indeed since many cities within these areas are very old and had Jewish populations hundreds and hundreds of years ago. There is a listing of towns and cities but for the rest everything is in Hebrew.

CONVERSION CALENDAR

A rabbi in Jerusalem has devised a computer program correlating the Hebrew and English calendars with software in English and Hebrew. This no doubt would be much appreciated by many genealogists but apparently it is only available in Israel.

SCATTERED SEEDS

Scattered Seeds by George Sackheim is a family genealogy going back sixteen generations in the author's family. It details his search as well and represents forty years of work. It can be obtained from the R. Sackheim Publishing Co., 9151 Crawford Ave, Skokie, Ill. 60076. The price is \$50.00.

A GUIDE TO JEWISH GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH IN ISRAEL

This book is by Sallyann Amdur Sack PhD., who is well known to most of those who have been in genealogy for any length of time. It describes the resources in Israel, what is to be found at each of them, how to get information from Israel if you cannot go there and much more. It is priced at \$20.00 and can be bought from the Genealogical Publishing Co. Inc., 1001 No. Calvert St., Baltimore, Maryland 21202. Price \$20.00

MEMBERS FORUM

Bob Weiss has sent a list of his own genealogical holdings listing over two dozen books with title, language, author, publisher, year, number of pages and a brief description of contents for each book. Accompanying the printout was a note saying " I requested at the last meeting that each member list his or her resources so that we can share. I believe that is one of the most productive reasons for having a JGS."

That is no doubt true but not everyone is as willing as Bob Weiss to loan their books. If you are willing you may submit a list to Bob and he will make a beautiful printout for you. Presumably these lists would be maintained by someone so that people could know who has what and who will lend their books. I must admit that although I applaud the idea as generous I am afraid that I am not among those who will lend books. It may be selfish but my books stay home. I will gladly give information on anything I can. I will look up anything I can in any book I own but I regret that I will not let anything out of my hands.

Our library, although still not well stocked will allow any member to borrow books and/or tapes. Carolyn Sherfy is in charge of this.

SHARING CORNER

Nothing was submitted for this column this time.

FAMILY FINDER

This column is also vacant this time. This is too bad since query columns can be valuable. True you may never get a response but then again you never know. Although this is a local newsletter we do exchange with most of the other JGSs and your query may possibly be seen by someone in a very different part of the country who might be very helpful to you. Of course you may never get a response but since there is no charge for this column how much do you have to lose?

If you are uncertain how to word your query we will gladly help. The more places you advertise the better your chances. As a member of the SFBAJGS you are entitled to 16 entries in the computerized family finder as most of you know. If you have been unaware of this please know. We will provide you with the form.

JEWISH FAMILY NAMES

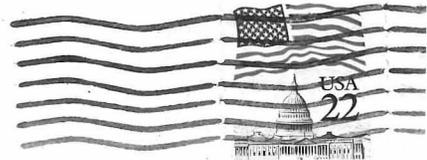
Arlene Rich, president of the Cleveland JGS, received a book by this name as a gift. She mentions it in her newsletter (she is also newsletter editor) but since she did not purchase it she does not give its price. It would seem to be small but interesting. It is by Abraham Stahl and published by the Society for Jewish Family Heritage, 17 Kaplan St., P.O. Box 7053, Tel Aviv, Israel 61070.

If you enjoy name derivations another book on the subject is always welcome.

OTHER SOCIETIES PLEASE NOTE

Sutro Library has a rack of newsletters. Jewish genealogy is represented by this newsletter and Rootskey but they would much like copies of other newsletters. Since this is a genealogical library and may be visited by those not yet aware of societies the more Jewish newsletters on Sutro's rack the more those still trying to work on their own will be aware there are societies and seek them out. Sutro is a state library and visited by people from many places when they are visiting in California.

San Francisco Bay Area Jewish Genealogical Society
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Allen County Public Library
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Attn: John Beatty