



San Francisco Bay Area Jewish Genealogical Society

1990 20th Ave. San Francisco, Calif. 94116

Feb. 1988

MARCH GENERAL MEETING

DATE: MONDAY, MARCH 21, 1988
TIME: 7:30 P. M.
PLACE: SUTRO LIBRARY
480 Winston Dr., San Francisco
PROGRAM: Short business meeting, speaker, refreshments
SPEAKER:
TOPIC: Breakthroughs and Bottlenecks

This time we are asking the members to participate, to tell us either about an important breakthrough they were able to make or about a big bottleneck blocking their further research.

If you would like to speak please let us know in advance in order that we may allot time for those who would like to participate. Whether it will be five minutes, ten minutes or maybe more must depend on how many there are among whom the time available must be divided.

Should more people wish to speak than can be fitted into a single evening we can repeat the program at a later date to allow for those who did not ask in time for the first program.

You are also invited to bring along anything you may have that shows a system you have found helpful to share with others after the program ends. You may find just the tip you need for your own research by learning of how someone else made a breakthrough or you may be able to help someone else with a problem like one you once had.

NEW SOCIETY

There is now a Jewish Genealogical Society in the Netherlands. It is the Nederlandse Kring Joodse Genealogie. This brings the number of overseas JGSs to five, France, Switzerland, England, Israel and now Holland. All of these societies are under five years old. Interest in Jewish genealogy continues to grow world wide.

OLD SOCIETY

There was a Jewish genealogical society in Germany from 1924 until Hitler made it impossible for it to continue. The final issue came out in 1938. The membership was located all over Germany so much of the exchange between members was via the bulletin. The bulletin had a family finder column and, of course, articles, but differed from most news-

letters in the lively exchanges and discussions its pages contained. Many of the members were apparently very knowledgeable on genealogy, customs of the past, name origins, family trees of prominent families of the past etc. A question posed or a statement made in one issue would bring an answer in a later issue and perhaps spark a discussion. The advent of Hitler, of course, meant the demise of the society. Those who survived were scattered to the four corners of the earth. A few who came to this country established a group here in 1941, according to the latest issue of Search. What became of it we cannot tell you.

Search found they could obtain microfilm of old issues of the bulletin of the Gesellschaft für Jüdische Familienforschung from the Leo Baeck Institute in New York. They have had the first editorial translated by Martin Mainzer and have published it. They plan in future to print more of Dr. Czellizer's words. They did not mention publishing any of the genealogical material contained in these bulletins but there is a good deal of it and some of the discussions and exchanges are very interesting as well to those with German ancestry. Possibly in time they will publish some of that as well.

Some of this material can also be found in Los Angeles at in the library of the Hebrew Union College branch there.

FIRST NAMES

The era in which people knew each other well for twenty years without ever addressing each other by their first names, not to mention the instances in which wives never called their husbands anything other than Mr. Whomever, is long past and there is little need to sorrow over it. On the other hand the casual approach can also be overdone.

If you are hoping for genealogical help or information do not address a total stranger, who may be twice or three times your age, by their first name right off the bat. Senior citizens are often put off by being addressed by their first name by a very young voice on the telephone belonging to someone who isn't even a long lost relative. Wait a while and then ask them to call you by your name. If they don't ask you to reciprocate stick to a more formal address. You'll get further.

SURNAMES

We all know that Jewish surnames are of comparatively recent origin, the original Jewish system having been a system of patronymics. Among non-Jewish Europeans surnames did not all originate at the same time. France apparently had surnames earlier than many countries, around the year 1000. The French brought surnames to England with the Norman Conquest in 1066 and many are to be found in the Domesday Book but it wasn't until another two hundred years or so that surnames had gradually become so common they were universal even among the common people.

In some countries especially those who had a system of patronymics which they were loathe to change, surnames were not taken until very late and then only when the government gave them no choice. The Scandinavian countries that had an ancient system of patronymics and Russia that also had a system of patronymics were very late with permanent surnames. The point at which Jews took permanent surnames tends to be earlier or later depending on what happened in the country of residence. Of course for many, surnames were not taken at all until the government made it mandatory, while others had them long before the law forced them to adopt a permanent surname. The more contact a Jew had with non-Jews the more likely it was that he would need, and thus adopt a surname. Thus the wealthier Jews who had wide business dealings with non-Jews, as well as Jews, often were among the first to have a surname in common use. Also those who lived in cities where the houses in which they lived had identifying house signs, such as Worms and Frankfort often were so accustomed to being called by the name of whatever the sign depicted that even when they moved to other areas they continued to use those names as permanent surnames.

AUSTRIAN PAMPHLET

For those with Austrian ancestry, the Austrian National Tourist Office, 500 5th Ave. New York, N. Y. 10110 has a pamphlet, "Tracing Your Heritage in Austria" which is yours for the asking. Has anyone done any extensive research in Austria? If so may we hear from you in order to pass on to others, who have work to do in Austria but do not know how to proceed, any advice you can offer.

NEW COLUMNS

Carolyn Sherfy is now writing a column on Jewish genealogy for Family Records Today, the quarterly publication of AFRA, (American Family Records Association). AFRA began in the mid-west and of course, concentrated to begin with on that area but it has long since added columns for those researching European ancestry, black ancestry, American Indian ancestry and now Carolyn has taken over the area of Jewish research.

Miriam Weiner has written columns for other Jewish newspapers but until recently our own Northern California Jewish Bulletin did not see much point in a column on genealogy. Recently Miriam's first column for this publication appeared. Possibly you saw it and if so we hope you let the Bulletin know you were happy to see it. It is important that they realize that genealogy really is of interest to more than a half dozen people.

The first column was almost more on genetics than on genealogy and no question and answer section was included but the Bulletin promises more columns from time to time and we can hope the day will come when they have a weekly column which would do much to alert those with an interest in genealogy who do not happen to read the calendar, that there is such a thing as Jewish genealogy and to inquire about it.

Our Carolyn in her second column wrote about the Leo Baeck Institute in New York, listing its many collections of value to the genealogist with German ancestry, and sometimes for those with ancestors from adjacent areas. She really did a lot of research for her article.

We wish both our friends well with their columns.

NEW FEDERAL ARCHIVIST

As you may remember from former newsletters, there was concern that the vacant position of archivist would be filled with little concern for the appointee's qualifications. There was danger that the position would be handed out as a political plum which could have set the national archives back sadly. Whether all the letters and all the effort put into promoting a qualified archivist had the desired result or whether we have just been lucky we cannot say, but what we can tell you is that the recently sworn in seventh Archivist of the United States, Dr. Don W. Wilson, is well qualified. The Federation of Genealogical Societies (of which we are a member) featured a picture of the swearing in on the cover of the winter issue of their newsletter plus an article on the subject on an inside page.

YIDDISH FOLK SAYINGS

Arlene Rich reviews a book called Words like Arrows: A Treasury of Yiddish Folk Sayings which she found very interesting and informative. The sayings would seem to be in both Yiddish and English and not in Hebrew characters so that those who understand Yiddish but cannot read Hebrew letters can follow and those who know only English can read the English. The examples Arlene gave from the book bear out the title. Many, while humorous, are also barbed and unkind. Jews in various areas clearly took a dim view of those from other areas. Other sayings are more universal. All reflect the people whose sayings they were. If you are interested in an insight into Yiddish culture via old sayings, the author of the book is Shirley Kumove. Arlene bought her copy in Cleveland but it is available here from Cody's in Berkeley, we know, and no doubt from others as well.

A.I.S. INDEX

We have been notified that the A.I.S. Index is now available at the National Archives. We have yet to use, or even see, this index so we can't say just what it is like, We have heard it can be helpful and we have also heard it has about a twenty percent rate of error. Use it, but don't expect it to be infallible.

GENEALOGY SERVICE

Henning Schroeder, R.G.- Genealogy Service of Gummersbach, Germany offers a service designed with those who do not know the exact place of origin of their immigrant ancestor. For a fee they will check various records for the emigrant you may be seeking. They sent a flyer detailing what they will check, for which areas and for which time periods.

They will check the Rhineland, Westphalia/Detmold and Hesse (including Waldeck). They will also check Luxembourg and some passenger lists for ships arriving at U.S. ports in certain years. Fees range from as little as \$11.00 to as much as \$35.00 depending on how much is available for checking in the area concerned. The flyer is too much to cover here but we can photocopy it if anyone is interested in a copy.

HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED?

Have you ever wondered why so very few maps are properly indexed? If you are looking for a major city you may know where to look for it, in addition, if it is a major city it will be in large type but just try to find some small place you never heard of on the very detailed map you need for tiny places. Such maps never seem to be indexed.

GOOD ADVICE

Unfortunately the information under this heading in the last newsletter was garbled. What it should have reported is that we received advice suggesting one request a death record rather than a death certificate or a marriage register rather a marriage certificate. It will bring more information. Sorry such a good tin was garbled. Poor proofreading.

MAAJAN

This newsletter of the Swiss JGS in Zürich continues to be an excellent publication. In the last issue Raymond Jung continues his series of articles on genealogy, There is also a translation of an article on Sultz, a town in Alsace, that includes loads of family information as well as information on the town. If you had ancestry from here we will be glad to see if your ancestors are included and translate for you if they are. Maajan also has a fine report on Jürgen Sielemann's talk at the seminar in London. Mr Sielemann is the archivist in Hamburg who has been to both international seminars, the one in Israel and the recent one in England. For those with German ancestry Herr Sielemann's talks are enormously valuable and rarely reported on except in passing, since no one with German ancestry seems to have done any of the reporting.

DESTRUCTION OF INFORMATION

The newsletter of the Federation of Genealogical Societies included a letter from Mary E. Schwartz of the American Research Bureau in Los Angeles discussing the intention of Social Security to computerize original application records and then destroy the applications. The computerized version would vastly reduce the information a genealogist would want. They are using the answers to only five of the original sixteen questions. Further Mary Schwartz wrote "It has come to my attention that several states are taking measures to condense vital statistics information to the same degree". This will be a horrifying loss of information for future generations. The letter further urged the FGS to take action to determine the status of the original applications, provide for their preservation and prevent permanent loss of this source. If you are interested in what may be planned to prevent this needless destruction you may call Mary Schwartz at 1-800-626-7221. This type of senseless destruction has robbed us of a great deal in the past. Somehow a great many people cannot comprehend how things for which they see no further use may be worth preserving. It happens in families as well as in government. How often when someone dies do the heirs through out all the papers a genealogist would consider invaluable as useless trash?

BALTIMORE

The Baltimore City Archives seem to have a good deal to offer the researcher. They have some ships-passenger lists for arrivals at Baltimore for the 19th century which they will search for you for a modest fee. They also have some pamphlets containing various types of lists that could be valuable depending on what you need. Write to Baltimore City Archives, 211 E. Pleasant St. Baltimore, Md. 21202 to find out what they have and what the price is. It sounds worth inquiring about if Baltimore figures in your research.

HOW TRUE

Helene Schwartz Kenvin headed an article in Dorot "Why you are Lucky to be named "Pretzelfutser" and then went on to write, "Being a Cohen, a descendant of the ancient priests of Israel may be a source of pride. On the other hand, having a great great grandfather named Abraham Cohen can result in genealogical tension headaches."

Helene Kenvin luckily found her Cohen ancestor but anyone who has ever tried to find a Cohen, a Meyer or other such frequent name will know what she means. Being a Pretzelfutser would be trying but at least if you found one you'd know it must be a relative.

Think I will settle for a more ordinary name, even though looking for parents for my own great great great grandfather Cohen was really daunting.

THE JEWS OF HISTORIC NATCHEZ

Rabbi and Mrs Leo Turitz of 5518 Paseo del Lago, Apt 1-F, Laguna Hills, Calif. 92653 are researching material for a book by the above title. They have previously written a book called Jews in early Mississippi. Now they are seeking those descended from the old time families of Natchez. If you have such descent, or know someone who does, do contact them.

RUSSIAN TELEPHONE DIRECTORIES

The Library of Congress has some Russian phone books among its other foreign phone books. They are quite modern but if you think you have relatives still living in Russia and you want to risk contacting them, they might be of help.

A few people have tried writing, and even telephoning, Russia with some success. They maintain no harm has come to anyone in Russia as a result. Still some of us have hesitated to try it. Apparently some libraries also have foreign phone books. The San Francisco Public Library Main Branch has some directories for major European cities but not too many and none of them old. They discard the old ones for lack of storage space. The main New York library does have storage space, as well as more directories. If you are insistent enough they will hunt up old ones out of storage for you. The Library of Congress is no doubt the best source of all. If you are looking for people recent enough to be in a phone book you might try the Library of Congress if you are going to the seminar in Washington this summer.

RABBINICAL DESCENT

The fall issue of Avotaynu includes a direct descent chart for David Einsiedler. Actually for his granddaughter, but of course compiled by David, whose consuming interest is rabbinic genealogy. The forty generations go back to the year 900, and include about thirty five rabbis without a break. No wonder he loves rabbinic genealogy so much. Possibly if you have any rabbis in the family you may already have had help from David Einsiedler who is not only knowledgeable on the subject, but ever generous and willing to help.

GAMSU

Charlotte Fox Rogers issues an annual newsletter under this heading. She is working on the name Gamsu and its many variations. If you have this name or one similar to it you may wish to contact her. It may help her and it may help you. The address is 802 Ceredo Ave. West Chester, Pa. 19382.

IMMIGRANTS WHO PASSED THROUGH ENGLAND

Heidi Farkash reports on what she found while attending the London seminar, in Roots-Key. Like so many, she had no ancestors who settled in England but again like so many, she did have ancestors who passed through. Heidi discovered the Jews' Temporary Shelter where Jews awaiting transit with little money and no place to stay where sheltered while they waited.

The shelter records are from 1896 on. Many Jews who departed from various ports transhipped from England. If you haven't been able to find anything in ships lists it's worth a try. They can't do your research for you however. You would need to go there or hire a researcher.

QUERIES FROM OVERSEAS

Dan Barlev, Mitudela 24, P.O.Box 1199, 91010 Jerusalem, Israel is looking for Bay Area ancestry. He is seeking the Ehrmann (Ehrmann) family that was in San Francisco as early as 1850. He is also looking for the families of Henriette Greenblatt, Mattie Frank (wife of Albert Frank), Elsa Neustadter (married to Louis Neustadter) and Amy Bachman all née Ehrmann. He would like a detailed list of every Ehrmann (Ehrman) appearing in the 1850, 1880 and 1900 censuses and in return would do some research at the Central Archives in Jerusalem. He feels there should be more than half a dozen families of this name in any census and it would be a minor task.

Chana Agmon, 94 Zahal St., Zahalah, Tel Aviv, 69 934, Israel is trying to locate the children and/or grandchildren of Sidney Charles Caro, born 1900 in San Francisco. He was the son of David Caro and Sadie van Gelder. He had a son by his first wife, Bertha Mildred caro, named Sidney Herbert Caro. Sidney Herbert, though only born April 1927 died in 1949.

Sidney Charles married a second time. His second wife was Mary Bruderer. Sidney Charles for unexplained reasons allowed himself to be baptised into the Mormon church in 1958. Sidney Herbert left a wife, Jean Sautelle but there is no indication of children.

Chana Agmon is the fortunate possessor of a manuscript in German called the Family Chronicle of the House of Caro which chronicles descent from the famous R. Joseph Caro of Toledo. It is not clear whether she is collecting any and all Caros as possible descendants of illustrious family or has a specific reason for thinking these people are descendants.

FAMILY FINDER INCLUSION

It would seem some members believe that having filled in their ancestral names on the membership form they will automatically find their queries listed in our family finder.

That is not the case. The membership forms are kept by Carolyn Sherfy. The family finder entries are from material submitted for that purpose to your newsletter editor.

If you wish inclusion in the family finder all you need do is send in your query or phone it in (415) 564-9927. Our family finder is free and it pays to be listed in more than one place.

The big computerized Jewish Genealogical Family Finder that comes out of New Jersey is also free. The JGSs purchase it which entitles any member of a purchasing JGS to sixteen entries. We find that not all of our members have taken advantage of this. If you do not have the form please ask for one. If the form scares you (and it does some), don't worry; if you cannot find the town you want on the map or don't know the proper spelling don't give up. They really do want your entries. Consult with us we will try to help. Gary Mokotoff is most anxious to have the Family Finder contain as much as possible for everyone's benefit. Do not confuse the Newsletter family finder with the computer version. Use both.

If you choose as some do, to use a family finder column that charges, by all means do so they often have a wide circulation but don't ignore the free ones for those that aren't. Make use of all you can.

MEMBERS FORUM

Connie Vaughn - Good News On Sept. 18th a Postal Service administrative law judge found that American Genealogies and "Elizabeth Ross" were "engaged in a scheme for obtaining money through the mails by means of materially false representation in violation of 39 U.S.C. 3005, i.e. among other things they represented themselves as having done genealogical research and offering a product containing specific information about the addressee's family whereas in fact all books by which they solicited money were basically the same and were general rather than specific.

Connie Vaughn - NARA Gift Fund Our members have faithfully supported the NARA Gift Fund by including an extra dollar with annual dues. Purchases by the fund, such as the Street Index to Major Cities in the 1910 census and the Galveston Passenger Lists will now be identified by gold labels. Look for the gold labels on these microfilms next time you go to the Archives.

Connie Vaughn - New on the Market Look at Sutro Library for Map Guide to the U.S. Federal Censuses, 1790-1920. The book shows county outline maps at ten-year intervals superimposed over modern lines and can be a tremendous timesaver if your ancestor lived in a border area.

SHARING CORNER

As a very new amateur genealogist I am still leaning the trade. My recent association with SFBAJGS has been most beneficial in several ways. Besides meeting some interesting and enthusiastic genealogists, I have discovered a tool that has borne fruit, the Jewish Genealogical Family Finder. (ed. note: formerly the Computerized Family Finder) In the current issue I discovered that a Martha R. Callagher was seeking information about people named Rotenberg. As my maternal grandmother was named Martha Rotenberg, I contacted Mrs. Callagher, Her maiden name had been Martha Rotenberg also. Although we didn't make a family connection we did discover that she had named her daughter Rachel while my grandmother's mother was also named Rachel. In the geographical section of the Family Finder there was a fellow in St. Louis looking for family from Lobsens. As that town name is listed on one of my family's death certificates I contacted him. I told him I had been unable to locate the place on any modern map. He told me of its name change and even sent me a current map indicating its location. Thus thru the contacts generated via the Family Finder who knows what I will learn as I continue my research?

Armand S. Cohn

EDITOR'S COMMENT

Some years ago when I was starting to work on my husband's ancestry I had much the same situation. I contacted someone looking for the name Wise but we found no connection. We were not even looking in the same states. The name Richard did repeat in both families but that was hardly enough to build on. A couple of years later Ginny knew that her great grandparents had left their native state, we were now looking in the same state and we very shortly established that my husband's great grandfather and hers were brothers, sons no. 3 and no. 9 of thirteen children of still another Richard. Time and further research will often establish a connection where there seemed to be none. If it does you have not only a relative, but one who shares your interest in genealogy, someone with whom to share.

FAMILY FINDER

C-3 Armand S. Cohn, 40 West 3rd St., San Mateo, Calif. (415) 342-3458

Seeking ancestors and siblings of Marcus Cohn and his wife, Doris Michalsky of Lobsense/Lubsence, now Lobzenica, once Prussia now Poland. Their children, Samuel, Adolph, Henriette, Hulda and Herman, their children, all came to San Francisco in the mid-1800s. A grandson, Heyman whose parents stayed behind, also came.

Also searching for ancestors and siblings of Abraham Rotenberg, born 1826 and his wife, Rachel Oppenheim who also came to San Francisco in the mid-1800s.

P-2 Daniel L. Peletz, 2415 Kamaloops Court, Santa Rosa, Calif. 95405 (707) 526-3445

Seeking information on the descendants of Nachum and Minna Kantorowitz of Kopyl (near Slutsk) Byelorussia as well as related families, Granat, Sinai, Davidson, Goldberg, Todresic, Brodske (Besbarodke), Masliansky, Siegel (Siegelovich) Palayev, Baumel, Tobenkin and Gardner families.

Also Peletz and Schoer families from Dvinsk and Riga

R-1 Ruth Rafael, 141 Carmel St. San Francisco, Calif. 94117 (415) 564-7857

Seeking information on the Speiser/Spicer/Speicer family of Zbarah, Galicia, Austria, now Poland.

S-1 Carolyn L. Sherfy, P.O. Box 157, Knightsen, Calif. 94548 (415) 625-4280

Seeking all descendants and ancestors of the Cohen, Sachs(Saks), Diamand and Abramovitz/Abramavitz families of Kovno Gubernia, Lithuania and later of St. Louis, Mo.

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

Interested in any Jewish family originating in the town of Wöllmarschausen nr. Göttingen, Germany in the 18th and 19th centuries, Particularly the family of Jeremias Blumenthal who moved to Harburg after marriage ca. 1820. Also any Gans descendant of the Gans family of Celle, Germany. Same period.

The Livermore-Amador Genealogical Society together with Heritage Quest is sponsoring a Heritage Quest Road Show. Heritage Quest sells books and publishes a periodical for genealogists. If you attended the Genealogical Book Fair last June you may have seen their huge table of books.

Leland Meltzer will speak at this event. There will be books, maps, tapes, charts, genealogical paraphernalia, computer software and more.

This event is being held May 22 at the Valley Community Church, 4455 Del Valle Parkway, Pleasanton. The cost is \$5.00 the time 2.00 P.M. to 6.00 P.M. As this is not a Jewish group you must expect the concentration to be on this country and the emphasis on research that may not parallel your own.

COMPUTER COLUMN

We are still looking for someone to edit a column on this subject. We do receive material pertaining to computer genealogy which we cannot share with you because we do not have someone who understands computers to whom to send this material to screen and abstract for a column. Your editor cannot do it because she does not understand computers, nor want to, but it seems to be bad to deprive those who do care about computer genealogy simply because no one will come forward to help.

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