



San Francisco Bay Area Jewish Genealogical Society

1990 20th Ave. San Francisco, Calif. 94116

May 1988

MAY GENERAL MEETING

DATE: MONDAY, MAY 16, 1988

TIME: 7:30 P. M.

PLACE: SUTRO LIBRARY
480 Winston Dr., San Francisco

PROGRAM: Short business meeting, speaker, refreshments

SPEAKER: Melissa Leventon

TOPIC: Dating old Photographs

Bring your ancestral photographs, those you have always wished you could date. Nearly everyone has some old pictures inherited from the family but of uncertain date. Melissa Leventon, an expert on costumes and fabrics of the past, is the assistant curator for the department of textiles of our art museums, the De Young and the Legion of Honor.

Our last meeting was very successful. Only three people came prepared to speak about a breakthrough of their own but everyone enjoyed hearing the stories and, of course, asking questions and discussing breakthroughs and bottlenecks. The discussions, of course, produced ideas for further research channels even for the experienced. We can do it again someday if there are enough requests.

THE NATIONAL SEMINAR

The national seminar will be held in Washington, D.C. from June 26th through July 1st. As usual at seminars the first day is a Sunday. Registration will be open from 9 A.M. until noon but again, as old timers know, most of the afternoon will be devoted to welcoming the attendees, announcements and an orientation, with programs beginning in the evening. The final day is a Friday. Many people will be leaving that day in order to be home by Friday evening. All planned activities will be over by noon. The days in between will be filled with field trips to research centers, workshops, talks by various speakers and, of course, a banquet Thursday evening.

If you have submitted names to the Jewish Genealogical Family Finder (Computerized Family Finder) or if you subscribe to Avotaynu you will be on the mailing list and will have received an envelope of seminar information including registration forms for both the seminar itself and for the hotel if you choose to stay at the hotel which will serve as seminar headquarters. If you have not received this envelope you can obtain one by writing to the Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Washington, P.O. Box 412, Vienna, V 22180.

However if you did not receive your envelope then you have not yet submitted your list of names to the Family Finder. We urge you to do so. You should all have received a form for the purpose. If you did not we will supply one if you inform us that you need one. Some members have been a bit intimidated by the requirements on the back of the form. If you cannot find the name of your ancestral town on the map don't feel you cannot make a submission until you have the correct modern spelling. Just state that you cannot find it. Give the name as you know it. It will not be returned to you.

Gary Mokotoff is trying very hard to make the Family Finder as inclusive as possible. You never know when you may be contacted by someone who shares one of your ancestral names or ancestral towns to the profit of both of you. It is quite possible that someone may not have entered every name which they are researching, but if they see someone else is interested in the same surname or place they may make contact with profit both to you and to themselves. It does pay. We have reason to know it does.

PROGRAM CHAIRMAN

Member Sherill Laszlo has not as yet been willing to accept the title of Program Chairman but she has been working at the job. She has been very helpful and it is our hope that she will in time accept the title to go with the work as well as the board seat that goes with it. Up until now the president has been doing it per force because otherwise there would have been no programs but it is not the president's job and the current president does not feel sufficiently well acquainted with what is needed to undertake it while the past president feels that having served one term should be enough and would love to turn the job over to someone else, although, of course, remaining available to help at all times.

GENEALOGICAL FAIR

This year the California Genealogical Society is once again holding a genealogical fair. Last year we took a table and as a result gained some new members. We would have liked to participate again this year, however the date set for it is June 26, the first day of the seminar in Washington. Not all of our members can attend the seminar but without a staff of dependable members to help man the table we cannot do it and Carolyn Sherfy, the most experienced in running a table, as well as several more of our most dependable members, will be in Washington. If you want us to have a table and are willing to help, let us now. It will however, be pretty much an all day job. Last year with only two people for most of the day there was little time for lunch, little time to see what others were offering at their tables and not enough time to attend any of the scheduled talks. We would need at least three who can plan to devote at least several hours each, so no one has to stay in one spot all day.

ORPHANS' COURTS

We are given to understand that there are states which have Orphans' Courts. Unfortunately we do not know which states. Such courts have records that can be useful to the genealogist. Such courts deal not only with orphans as we think of orphans, youngsters who have lost both parents, but also with half orphans for whom a guardian is appointed, estate administrators property transfers, estate inventories and similar matters. A docket may include information on births, marriages and deaths. Unknown family names may also show up. So if you think such a court might have something for you it is worth investigating.

LITHUANIAN FAMILY TREES

Sharsheret Hadorot, the newsletter of the Israel Genealogical Society, reports having received a list of twelve family trees held in the archives of the Association of Armenians in Israel. Shasheret Hadorot published a transliteration from the Hebrew.

Shifman-Leibovitz from Shavli	Yehuda Rabinovitz from Jurburg	Mindel Sadur from Utjan
Shjedi-Mendelov - Shavli & Shkud	Nevjaski - Shavli, Elbjanski, Kovno	Zingman-Ipp - Kovno
Fin-Katz - Jurburg	Klein - Akaena	Blumberg - Virbaln
Pogirsky-Rabinovitz - Janova	Hovsha-Terushkin - Kelm & Shkud	Shimanski-Faibunski
& Zeserka		from Vibovishki

Anything familiar to anyone in this list? Possibly the JGS in Jerusalem could tell you how to proceed if you want a copy of a tree.

WINSTON DRIVE OPEN

At long last Winston Drive is once again open. From now on we can again drive right down Winston from 19th Avenue to Surto Library. No more detours. Happy news. Also phase two of the mall is soon to be open so that from now on those who choose to come early to do research, can if they wish, find a place for a bite at dinner time. Up until now aside from the market which offers no ambience at all, there has been only a tiny place with good sandwiches soup, salads and excellent baked goods since it is part of a bakery chain, but only plastic tableware.

AN OFFER OF HELP

Member Nina Price has offered to help anyone who needs help learning how to do research at the LDS Library in Redwood City. If they will call her at 493-8654 in the evenings she will try to arrange a time with them.

TORONTO JEWISH CEMETERIES

Selma Sacrob of the JGS of Toronto writes that the current project of her JGS is cataloging the gravestones in the oldest Jewish cemeteries in Toronto. Over the years some of the records have been lost or forgotten. The record keepers and caretakers who knew where to find things have died, so the JGS is making sure there is a proper record for every grave. Should be a valuable record for those with Toronto ancestors.

NEW JEWISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETIES

A new JGS has been formed in Sacramento. Judy Persin is the founder. Judy is one of our members. When we last spoke to Judy, in March, they had not yet elected officers although they had had a first meeting. The Sacramento area has active genealogists but until now there has been no Jewish Genealogical Society, although one has been needed. Under Judy's leadership we are sure it will do well.

Things are stirring in Oregon as well. Sandra Shapiro, who is a member of the JGS in New York tells us it is only being called a study group at present but since JGSs grow from study groups it will no doubt become a full fledged JGS before too long. A JGS has long been needed in the northwest. Neither Oregon nor Washington has had one leaving the Jewish genealogist in the northwest to work alone and belong to a JGS so far away they could not hope to attend meetings.

Our best wishes to these two fledgling societies we welcome them to the growing ranks of JGSs.

DESCENDANTS OF R. JOSEPH CARO

Chava Agmon of 94 Zahal Street, Zahalah, Tel Aviv 69 934 is seeking all descendants of the famous 15th century Rabbi Joseph Caro of Toledo, Spain. Needless to say the Caro descendants are to be found all over the world by now. At times the name is even spelled Karo. Chava Agmon is a member of the Israel Genealogical Society and herself descended from R. Caro.

NAMES AND ADDRESSES

Since very few JGSs indeed have an address of their own the address given for a JGS may be that of the president, the secretary or even some other officer, therefore when there is a change in officers it follows that the old address is not that of the new officer but that of the former incumbent. If you use the name of a new officer and address it to the old address you are likely to confuse things. If you do not have a new address for a new officer address the individual whose address you have and ask for the new officer's address or that your letter or newsletter be forwarded.

MORE ON THE SEMINAR

The latest issue of Mispacha says "We regret our failure to print an address for seminar

registration. Please use our P.O. Box." The address would be, Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Washington P.O. Box 412, Vienna, Va. 22180.

There is also some more detailed information on what is planned for the seminar. We will bring this issue to the May meeting and anyone interested can come early enough to peruse the material and photocopy it before the meeting begins. One thing mentioned is that they plan in response to interest expressed at past seminars to allow for "birds of a feather" groups. One such group already slated will be on rabbinic genealogy to be led by David Einsiedler of Los Angeles. Making it possible for those with specific interests to gather with others who share those interests sounds like a very good idea.

The Russian Consular records can be found in Record Group M1486 in Room 400 of the National Archives. If you are going to the seminar they plan to have Marita Dresner, the person who has been available to do research for a fee on the consular records, present to assist the seminar attendees. She will be employed by GJSGW as part of their effort to have help available where possible to make the seminar more enjoyable and more productive.

COMPUTERIZED SURNAME LIST

Something called Computer Genealogies, Inc. has compiled a list of surnames and addresses appearing in Reuben Donnelly directories. Mishpacha feels it would be useful for relatively uncommon surnames. One of their members used their service and found it satisfactory. Each directory is \$14.85 plus \$2.00 for shipping and handling. Just what you get for this sum is not clear. Just one surname? How large is it? We don't know. The address is Easton Rd. P.O. Box 568, Revere, Pa. 18953 you can write and ask if you are interested.

JEWS IN LITHUANIAN CATHOLIC RECORDS

Suzan Wynne learned that some Jews appear in old Catholic records. She verified this for herself at the Mormon library. However, Suzan warns, the records cover a period when many Jews did not yet use surnames. She found that the most recent films for the towns she was researching were dated 1870 since records had to be at least one hundred years old to be made accessible to the public. The information available to her from the person whose family she was researching did not bridge the gap, nor are later records available either from the Mormons or from Poland. We have heard before that there are at times Jews recorded in non-Jewish records. Has anyone had personal experience with this? If you found anything do tell us about it, or better yet submit it for the Sharing Corner.

Surnames in the area Suzan was working in were taken around 1848. In western areas it was usually well before that but sooner or later you are back to people with no permanent surnames and how do you get beyond that? To make it worse most first names in those days were very common names that you can find again and again. How many men named Moses had fathers named Abraham? How many Abrahams called their daughters Sarah?

FUTURE THREAT TO INFORMATION

The Federation of Genealogical Societies newsletter alerts us to proposed legislation that would in future make it more difficult to obtain death certificates and information. So far it has apparently not been acted upon but in an effort to protect privacy it would make obtaining information from death records much more difficult. It would not apply until 1989 but that is not so distant and it would mean that future researchers would have a lot more difficulty. Let us hope this does not go through. Chances are that if it does those who would really be invading a stranger's privacy will know how to get what they want while the genealogist with every right to the information would have a problem. We know very well that those we don't wish to have information always seem to know all about us. They know if you own your home, what you paid for it and when, they have access to your tax records and no doubt if they cared to know what a death record could tell them they could find that too. Almost forgot to say this is proposed only for California.

Hamburg has laws about releasing some information before the passage of I think its seventy years unless you are a direct descendant and some rules even if you are. This is also to protect privacy and is a nuisance. Getting records for a young relative who wanted to know about her ancestors but did not want to do it herself posed problems. They wanted to hear from her directly because she was a direct and not a collateral descendant.

1852 CALIFORNIA CENSUS

The DAR copied and indexed the census and provided a copy to the State Library. It is available there (Sacramento) and elsewhere on interlibrary loan. Since Sutro is part of the state library system if it does not have its own copy it can easily get it on loan. Should be very useful for those whose ancestors arrived here that early.

AVOTAYNU

The fall issue of Avotaynu was particularly interesting to those of us who like to hear other people's stories of their own research. It had one personal story after the other. Quite a few people have commented on how well they liked it. Apparently a number of people also told Avotaynu about it. So many that they plan a repeat later this year provided they receive sufficient material of high quality to be able to do so. They want all material in by June 30. Material is to be typewritten, of course, and must have interest for others or illuminate a method of research that will help others. If you plan to submit anything and you do not have a copy of Avotaynu borrow one so that you will know what sort of material is wanted.

Czechoslovakian Research

The winter issue of Avotaynu has a long article on this subject. A Washingtonian was able to actually interview the second secretary and consul of the Czechoslovakian Embassy. This is definitely a first. The information is very interesting and the article covers four pages. If you have Czech ancestry it would be well worth your while to read this article thoroughly and perhaps to photocopy it and keep it handy.

Archival Resources

Suzan Wynn has an article on Lesser Known Resources at the National Archives in Washington which should be very useful to those going to the seminar this summer. It would save a lot of time and allow you to go directly to what you want to check out. Needless to say the Washington Archives have things the branch archives do not necessarily have so you can get ideas from the article on new avenues of research. This article runs three and a half pages.

Hungarian Jewish Records in Utah

Avotaynu also has a long list of microfilms available in Salt Lake City for Jewish genealogists with Hungarian roots. There are pages and pages of listings with town and county information, codes for the type of record, numbers etc.

BOOKS FOR SUTRO LIBRARY

It is getting harder and harder to find affordable books to give to Sutro each time we meet. This time we will donate a book on the Jews of Oregon 1850-1950. We need ideas from others for future donations. It is too much to expect one or two people to do it all. Let us know if you hear about a book that seems suitable. Suitable means it must have genealogical value and it must be reasonable.

GESELLSCHAFT FÜR JÜDISCHE FAMILIENFORSCHUNG

This is the name of the German Jewish genealogical society that existed in Germany from Dec. 1924 until 1938 when it ceased to exist because of Hitler. Search has an article on its founding and history. A few copies of its publication still exist. Leo Baeck has a collection and there are some in Los Angeles and no doubt there are others we don't happen to know of. If you are of German heritage and can read German they are very interesting. Quite different from our usual newsletters. It covered all of Germany and its members used the publication a good deal in discussing things with one another. These discussions are interesting. It may or may not shed light on your own ancestry but if you can read German they are well worth reading if you can find copies to read. Some discussions had to do not with the writers' individual ancestry necessarily but with the family trees of prominent people of old.

SHARING CORNER

No Longer a Shadow

by Martha L. Wise

For a long time my great great great grandfather, Salomon Leser Cohn, had been a very shadowy figure to me. There is a genealogy, Slægten Salomonsen, by Josef Fischer who wrote a number of Danish Jewish genealogies, which takes the descendants of Salomon and Sara Salomonsen through some two hundred years to 1927. I am among their numerous descendants. I know from experience with other Fischer genealogies, as well as this one, that it was his custom when someone married into a family to give parents, birthplace and place of birth and of death for that person. Salomon Leser Cohn married into the Salomonsen family when he married Sara Salomonsen (namesake of her grandmother) around 1774. For this second Salomon nothing is given other than his name, an approximate death date, 1786 and the fact that he was in business in Fredericia and died there.

In 1986 when we were in Salt Lake City for the seminar I went to the Scandinavian counter to ask what they might have that would be of help. I had not found what I needed on my own. A young man was standing on my side of the counter speaking what I was certain was Danish, to the man behind the counter. Naturally I took him to be someone seeking his own ancestry and I stood listening to see if I could understand anything at all.

Before long they became aware of me and waved me up to the counter. The young man it seems was a recent convert doing his required stint at the library. All Mormons must put in time working for the group. I stated my worst problem, finding something for the town of Fredericia. What I knew of Fredericia at the time was only that it was on the east side of the Jutland peninsula and that nearly always when Josef Fischer lacked information Fredericia was involved. By that time I had worked with about half a dozen Fischer genealogies in addition to my own and I had also found that a book recording very nearly all Jewish graves in Copenhagen and the ten provincial Jewish cemeteries from 1693 through 1976 in a paragraph heading for the Fredericia cemetery says of the more than 500 graves in the old cemetery only 410 can be identified with certainty. Many of the 18th century graves, the author said, are not recorded.

To be certain I had picked up the gist of it I asked a cousin in Copenhagen to translate the paragraph for me, knowing he too, owned a copy of the book. Olaf verified my understanding of it. I really was beginning to feel less than fond of Fredericia. When Kim, the young Dane, heard I needed information on an ancestor from Fredericia he said he was from Fredericia. The old cemetery is still standing, he said, and furthermore he knew an old school teacher who, though not Jewish himself, had taken an interest in recording the old graves in the Fredericia cemetery. He could not tell me the man's address but he could give me an address for a group that would know where to find him. I did not write immediately because so much else seemed to come first, the newsletter, meetings and other duties associated with the JGS. When I did write it took some time for an answer but when the answer came I had not only a father for Salomon Leser Cohn, but grandparents and even a great grandfather, as well as a brother.

I received a photocopy of an old article written by a man named Alfred Heymann. This man visited Fredericia and wrote this article in 1919. He was seeking his own ancestry. He was descended from Salomon Leser Cohn's brother, Moses. Salomon was mentioned only in passing and he then went on to Moses and his line. However he illustrated the article with a number of gravestones, among them, that of Salomon and Moses' father, Rabbi Elieser Cohn called as a rule, Leiser Cohn. This stone shows faintly the blessing hands of the kohanim surmounted by a crown. There was also the gravestone of the rabbi's father, Abraham and his wife, Eva. There is also mention of Abraham's father, another Moses. Since Abraham died in 1729 and Eva in 1737 it is plain that they were born in the 17th century. The first Moses, then must go back to at least 1650 give or take something.

Quite a lot of ancestry from a standing start. Fredericia is no longer just an annoying stumbling block either. My answers came not from the teacher, although they did give me his name, but from the local historical society. My previously rather low opinion of historical societies improved immediately. I guess it is a matter of whether or not your ancestors came from that town.

I now know that Fredericia, although little known outside of Denmark today, was once quite popular with early Jewish settlers in Denmark. Around 1650 King Frederik III hoping for a town to rival Hamburg and Altona as a center of trade and commerce founded Fredericia.

When it became a religiously free town it goes without saying that it attracted Jews. No doubt, as with other places in Denmark in the early years of Jewish settlement there, one had to prove one could afford to own or at least partly own a home and be in a position to support oneself and family, but there enough who were in that position to soon found communities. By 1700 there were Jews in many places in Denmark. In Fredericia, so Kim told me, new residents not only had religious freedom, they were also not required to pay taxes for the first ten years of residence. What an attractant for those who were accustomed to very little religious freedom and extra heavy taxes just because they were Jews. Since I was hearing from a historical society they included bits of historical material. One tale told how Fredericia acquired its first Jewish cemetery. Another King Frederik, Frederik IV, no doubt the grandson of Frederik III since all Danish Kings for centuries until the present Queen ascended the throne, were alternately Frederik or Christian, on a visit to Fredericia was served a fish dish that he found so delicious he wanted to know who had prepared it. A certain Jewish lady he was told. He then said she might ask any boon of him she wished. Up until that time the Jews of Fredericia had had to send their dead to Altona for burial so the woman asked for a cemetery for the Jews. The king gave instructions that a parcel of land was to be given the Jews for use as a cemetery. My ancestors lie there. By doing a little checking I was also able to determine that the Alfred Heymann who wrote the 1919 article descended not only from Rabbi Cohn via his son Moses, while we descend from his son Salomon, but also from our ancestor Salomon Salomonsen as well. We descend from Salomon Salomonsen's eldest son and Alfred Heymann descended from a younger daughter. I think my Copenhagen relatives will be quite surprised. Over the years, as we all know, connections often become distant and forgotten. Olaf remembers Alfred Heymann as an old man who he knew when he himself was young, but I doubt he ever considered that we might have two lines in common. In the days of Salomon Leser Cohn when one of Alfred Heymann's ancestors was Salomon's first cousin and another was Sara's first cousin the relationship was no doubt close, but by our grandfathers' generation how many still knew of it? What a shame we all lose track of lines that grow more distant.

FAMILY FINDER

G-2 Florence Gianfresco, 1568 Willowbrae Ave. #5, San Jose, Calif. 95125 (408) 448-4425
Seeking information on Isaac Slepian of Minsk, Russia and his wife, Zelda Fine. Upon arrival in this country Isaac's name was changed to Isaac Rubbin. Isaac and Zelda Rubbin had three children, Bessie, Jacob and Freda. The family came into the port of New York and settled in Rochester, N.Y. in 1896.

J-3 Barbara & Michael Jacobs, 1335 Idylberry Rd. San Rafael, Calif. 94903 (415) 491-4433
Seeking Jacobs, Yudelman, Wing and Shandling families from Shudas/Skud, Lithuania. Also Wohlgemuth and Hepner from Memel, now Klaipeda, Lith., Sawyer (Soje) from Golinda, Poland. and Behr Wolff from Deutsches Ostrova.

P-3 Dara Pearlman, 21063 Cristensen Dr., Cupertino, Calif. 95014 (408) 996-1459
Seeking relatives of the Abramowitz, Naftel and Wasserman families that came to Baltimore and Rhode Island from Jakobstadt, (modern Jekabpils) Latvia in the late 1800s. Also interested in any Jewish family originating in Jakobstadt.

P-4 Nina H. Price, 942 Van Auken Circle, Palo Alto, Calif. 94303 (415) 493-8654
Seeking information on any Finkelstein from Lvov or Stanislawow (Stanislav), also Blauer and Landis. Late 19th century.

W-4 Gary Weisberg, 5490 N. Paseo Pescado, Tucson, Ariz. 85718 (602) 299-8184
Seeking descendants of Cody and Manderville Anfenger of Syracuse and New York City, N.Y., who were known to have been in these areas between 1839 and 1879. The name has also been spelled Anfinger and Enfanger.
Also seeking descendants of Ephraim and Fanny Ettenheimer of Syracuse. He was born about 1803 in Germany. The 1855 New York state census shows six children, Rebecca 18, Henry 16, Clara 12, Jacob 11 and Caroline 7.

AN UNEXPECTED SOURCE

The Cleveland Kol had an article by Fred Chenin who found the naturalization information he had been seeking for a long time, via election records. It was suggested to him that he try the Board of Election for a clue. He did so and was given the date, place, naturalization number and age of his grandfather at the time. He later learned that such records were stored in the Court House basement and made a visit there coming away with valuable information on other family members.

Here no one seems to know what became of a voter registration file that once existed in the registrar's office. There is such a thing as the Great Register which begins with 1866 and continues with some gaps until about 1930. Most of this seems to be in the State Library in Sacramento with Sutro Library having abstracts for a few years beginning in 1866 and other places possibly also having something. The fire, no doubt would have destroyed some of the local records, but with enough patience you might uncover something.

If two cities kept such election records then no doubt other cities did as well. Finding people as helpful and cooperative as those Fred Chenin found may not be in the cards.

Many cities no longer seem to know what has become of records no longer in use or even if they ever existed but anything is worth trying.

San Francisco Bay Area Jewish Genealogical Society
1990 20th Ave. San Francisco, Calif. 94116



Allen County Public Library
900 Webster St.
Ft. Wayne, Ind. 46802

Attn: John Beatty