



San Francisco Bay Area Jewish Genealogical Society

1990 20th Ave. San Francisco, Calif. 94116

Aug. 1988

DATE: MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 1988 Please note change of date

TIME: 7:30 P. M.

PLACE: SUTRO LIBRARY
480 Winston Dr., San Francisco

PROGRAM: Short business meeting, speaker, refreshments

SPEAKER: Daniel Leeson

TOPIC: Cemeteries in southern Germany and Alsace-Lorraine

Dan Leeson has long been an active genealogist. On a recent trip abroad he and his wife researched in southern Germany and Alsace-Lorraine where his wife's roots are. Since Dan Leeson has done considerable research into Jewish cemeteries, both here and abroad, he naturally was interested in the cemeteries they had occasion to visit. He will tell us what he found. How much is still standing, what conditions they found, what a genealogist can hope to find researching cemeteries and more.

Dan Leeson has also promised to bring along a copy of the 1784 census of Jews in Alsace. He has one of the few complete copies of this famous census in this country. If you have ancestry from Alsace being able to see this census is an unusual opportunity.

Please note that this time we will be meeting on the fourth Monday rather than the third Monday, a change necessitated by the fact that our normal date falls only one day before Erev Yom Kippur.

ASSOCIATION OF JEWISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETIES

This umbrella organization first brought into being at the seminar in Salt Lake City two years ago at last has permanent officers. The temporary officers deserve much credit for their efforts. Especially Jon Stein of Philadelphia who accepted a temporary appointment as president with no idea of what he was getting into. Anyone with an objection to any proposal took it out on poor Jon. In Washington at this year's seminar the delegates voted for officers. At future seminars meetings will again be held with member JGSs participating through their representatives. Elections will be held at that time. In Washington as in Salt Lake City meetings were held during seminar activity times making more than one JGS officer unhappy over losing the precious research time that is such a big reason for attending a seminar. One officer has a better idea which we hope can be implemented in future.

The association officers elected for the first term are Gary Mokotoff, President, Suzan Wynn, Vice President, Laura Klein, Secretary and Freya Maslov, Treasurer. Rabbi Malcolm

Stern will continue in the advisory capacity in which he has been acting all along. Many of you already know who the new officers are but for those who don't, Gary Mokotoff of New Jersey is a member of the JGS in New York and also of JGS North Jersey. If you subscribe to Avotaynu or have submitted your names to the Jewish Genealogical Family Finder you will know Gary. Suzan Wynne of Vienna, Va. is a member of JGS Greater Washington. Laura Klein belongs to JGSLA. Freya Maslov of Chicago is on the staff of Search as well as a member of the JGS there. All of these people are active in genealogy and are either currently officers in their respective JGSs or past office holders.

Let us hope that from now on things will go smoothly allowing the association to function as it was intended to do.

BOOKS

Some of the books we have donated to Sutro Library are now on the shelves. A number of them arrived all at once from Sacramento. Books donated to Sutro must first go to Sacramento for cataloging. Sutro is unfortunately not permitted to do its own cataloging. The cataloging department handles more than just the genealogical books that seem so important to us. To them are rather low priority. When the public library closed its genealogy room the entire collection was donated to Sutro. Some of those are undoubtedly duplicates but others would be very helpful to some of Sutro's visitors however since one library uses the Dewey Decimal system and the other the Library of Congress system everything had to be recataloged thus keeping the books off the shelves for a long time. Apparently one of the problems with cataloging books on genealogy is that often they do not fit into any of the departments more familiar categories so they are put aside until they have time to figure out new coding. This is frustrating to genealogists but the fact that they may be blocking someone's research if they even realize that, is of little importance to Sacramento.

Does everyone know that Sutro has a small catalog of Jewish listings in a drawer of miscellaneous ethnic catalog cards? Needless to say, all Judaica is listed under both title and author in the regular catalogs, but there is a special drawer with everything of Jewish content together to make it easier for us to locate something without knowing an exact title or author's name.

On the shelves the books we need can be very widely separated but the special file is still so small it is easily run through.

We are trying to increase the size of the Jewish holdings but finding suitable books gets harder all the time. Suggestions are appreciated, but do bear in mind that not all Judaica is suitable for the same purpose. Books on life in a shtetl, immigrant life in this country Jewish history and the like are background material for genealogists but such books belong in our own library collection not in a general genealogical library. Other books from the most horrifying of the books on the holocaust to the most comforting like the story of the rescue of the Danish Jews by their fellow Danes belong in the Holocaust Library. Books for Sutro should be of use for research into family roots.

We do have a small library of our own from which members can borrow. It includes some tapes from seminars which may also be borrowed.

If you have books in your own collection that you no longer wish to keep for lack of space or whatever reason, consider donating them to our library, the Jewish Community Library, the Holocaust Library or to Sutro, whichever is suitable.

GERMAN TRANSLATOR

Mrs. Ursula Heulsbergen,

Mrs. Ursula Heulsbergen of 1908 Alabama St. Lawrence, Kansas 66046 is an excellent German translator who can deal with old documents in cursive German script. Often dealing with cursive script is difficult even for the German born and raised especially when it is an old document written with a quill pen and reflecting the script of the period rather than that of more recent periods. Mrs. Heulsbergen is familiar with this sort of thing. She charges \$12.00 an hour if memory serves.

Ursula Heulsbergen also has an article in the July issue of Family Records Today on German script as written in different time periods which was intended to encourage people to try to read documents for themselves. It is quite interesting although many will not be able to do their own translating even with this help, but if you are interested in that sort of thing you might want to read the article.

ALMOST GENEALOGICAL SOCIETIES

Historical societies have in the past begun with a genealogical division which in due course have developed into full fledged genealogical societies, retaining their tie to the historical society but no longer trying to be both at the same time.

Two societies that seem headed that way are one in Tucson, Arizona and the other in Massachusetts. At the moment both are content to be simply Jewish Historical Societies but each is showing a definite interest in genealogy. Both states do have at least one JGS already but they do not cover quite the same area. Since they are reaching out to JGSs in time they may actually sprout a true JGS.

JEWISH CIVIL WAR DEAD

Melvin Young, P.O. Box 11207 Chattanooga, Tenn. 37401 lives in an area that has many civil war battlefields and cemeteries. He finds the Civil War a fascinating subject and being Jewish himself he became interested in the number of Jewish soldiers, both Union and Confederate, who died in this war. He began compiling statistics. In researching for a book he has planned he was surprised to discover eight Jewish Union soldiers buried in Chattanooga before there was even a Jewish community in Chattanooga. He has now found hundreds of Jews who served on one side or the other and although his files are growing he wishes to make them as extensive as possible. He would like to hear from anyone who lost an ancestor as a result of service in this war. He would like full details if known, or if someone has little information and would like more on a civil war soldier ancestor he will gladly search his files in case he may be able to help.

DONT SETTLE FOR NO

Too often when we are told nothing is available we settle for it regretfully. Even if you have looked for it yourself, the very book or record you need may have been out of place at the time. If you trusted others they may not have made much of an effort. Former member Dick Rees once wrote to a courthouse for records. The answer was negative but at a later date when he was actually in that town he decided to do some work at the courthouse. He watched one employee work through a stack of correspondence. She checked each letter briefly working through six or seven letters in about twenty minutes and placing them all on a not found pile. Having seen that Dick decided it might pay to look for what they had told him was not there for himself. Result, he found both records he had originally asked for, one with the spelling as he had given it, the other with a variant spelling.

Not all those who deal with your requests are as disinterested as the above but some are certainly better at realizing what can be done if they don't find something right away.

This writer once asked a resource for a family surname giving the place of origin of that ancestor. He left that place and settled elsewhere for the rest of his life. It later turned out that they had an entire genealogy for the family beginning with this man and his wife born 1810 and 1813 respectively carrying the family forward to 1952. Granted, this genealogy would not have been of any use to me since I already had it. It was distributed to family members at the time it was compiled. However on the very first page the town I had given was mentioned as the place of birth. Why was it not mentioned? Hard to say, but what can be said is don't give up too soon.

There are many more instances of this sort of thing. Try again later when it is not likely to go to the same person again.

THOSE WHO DONT SHARE

For reasons beyond a genealogist's comprehension there are people who do not see fit to tell their relatives where to find cousins they may not know but would like to find. When asked they claim not to know or find some reason for not giving out the address. Once found the unknown relative is usually delighted to have new relatives. These are the same people who when asked for information they should have had from a parent will be very vague and may claim not to know. Several of our members have had this experience.

Genealogists share so gladly they do not readily comprehend not sharing. Aren't you glad to be a genealogist?

HESSEN WITH HYPHENS

The newsletter of the Immigrant Society included an interesting chart showing the divisions of Hesse over the centuries.

In the sixteenth century the Landgrave Philip the Magnanimous, divided Hesse among his four sons. His eldest son's inheritance was called Hesse-Kassel, that of the second son, Hesse-Marburg, the third inherited Hesse-Rheinfels while the share of the youngest was Darmstadt. In 1803 Hesse-Kassel was reorganized under Napoleonic rule and called Kurhessen (Electoral Hesse) In 1806 this portion of Hesse became part of the kingdom of Westphalia. Sixty years later Prussia took it over along with Nassau (originally a separate duchy) renaming the whole Hesse-Nassau. This never sat too well with either the natives of Hesse nor those of Nassau who considered the Prussians overbearing, loud, boastful, and disdainful of those who were not Prussian. Nevertheless although they had a few choice epithets for the Prussians they had to make the best of it until after WWII.

Meanwhile Hesse-Darmstadt, inherited by the youngest of the four brothers became Hesse-Homburg in 1622, in 1806 with the addition of Rhein-Hessen the whole was reincorporated into Hesse-Darmstadt, The original name, By 1871 Hesse-Darmstadt was being called Hess and included Rhein-Hesse, Upper-Hesse and other areas.

After WWI the official title was Hesse although Hesse-Nassau was still being called Hesse-Nassau by some. In case you were wondering about the territories inherited by the second and third sons, the line of the third son died out in 1583 and that of the second son died out in 1604. Their territories were incorporated into the holdings of the two remaining lines.

After WWII in 1945 most of Hesse and Hesse-Nassau became the present state of Hesse. Today the Hessische Landtag, the governing body of the state of Hesse, sits in the nineteenth century palace erected by the Prussian kaisers for their use when in residence in Wiesbaden. Wiesbaden was originally Nassau.

In this case we are discussing one area that causes researchers problems because the place names they have are not the same as those of today or of yesterday for that matter.

This sort of thing took place all over Germany. Not in every case were matters so equitably decided as in the case of the family of Philip the Magnanimous. Often there were bitter quarrels and serious fighting as rulers added to their territories by aggression, by inheritance, by marriage. In the next generation things could change once more. Expect this and allow for it. Many German borders were fluid. Saxe-Coburg-Gotha is one more example. The Gotha was added when a duke exchanged part of the territory of Saxe-Coburg for Gotha. To confuse you further there was also Saxe-Meiningen and Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach. There is no end to this sort of thing.

AVOID ACETATE SHEETS

We find not everyone is aware of the damage acetate sheets can do to photographs. Do not trust your precious ancestral pictures to an album with acetate sheets especially not those that have sticky sheets.

FROM DOROT

Posen Immigrants to New Orleans

Thomas Sokolosky-Wixon in researching for a book to mark the 1989 yearzeit of his immigrant Sokolosky ancestor discovered other Jewish families from Posen (now under Polish rule called Poznan) arriving in 1851 in New Orleans as his own ancestor did. He would like to hear from others who also had ancestors from Posen arriving in New Orleans in 1851. He can be contacted at Wixon & Co., 1803 Jackson Ave. Pascagoula, Ms. 39567.

Abravenal Family Newsletter

Allen R. Abravenal has initiated the Abravenal Family Newsletter. Others also descended from this famous medieval Spanish family may contact him for information at 111 S.W. 5th Ave. Portland, Or. 97204.

N.Y. City Municipal Archives

The municipal archives recently microfilmed the Manhattan Groom's Index for 1866-1910. This

icrofilm is now available at the archives. The Bride's Index is also available on microfilm for the years 1866-1898. Additional years up to 1937 are soon to be added.

Did you know that in many places, possibly most, cross indexes exist for brides and grooms? Not on microfilm, of course, but things can be found. San Francisco, too has such records, not only post-1906 but also some pre-1906. Our records are incomplete because of the 1906 fire but not everything was lost.

If you are looking for an ancestral marriage record in City Hall, go to Room 167 on the main floor and look for the marriage license desk. If you don't get the help you need you might ask for Ray Siemers who divides his time between the mezzanine of room 167 and the public library. This gentleman knows all about the old records including other ways to find things that are not in the records in which you had expected to find them. People like that are rare indeed and a joy to the genealogist who so often encounters only indifference and a lack of knowledge of anything not current.

There are books to be found on genealogical shelves that list marriages for various places although those this writer has seen seem mostly to be for counties in mid-western states. If you have had any luck with such books or with a marriage records office please share your experiences with the rest via the Sharing Corner.

SECOND MARRIAGES AND HALF SIBLINGS

Among sources of confusion for the genealogist the problems posed by second marriages and half siblings rank pretty high. Because divorce was a disgrace, and therefore rare, (although by no means unknown) people are inclined not even to think about second marriage when researching their family tree unless they are aware that a second marriage did exist.

When someone discovers the right name but the wrong spouse and a child or two with unfamiliar names the normal assumption is that only the name is the same and they have found the wrong individual. This is not always the case. Although divorce was rare in the past, early death of a spouse was not. The maternal death rate was much higher. A widowed young husband often left his infant in the care of the maternal grandparents or other relatives. Many young men did not know how to deal with a very young child. Men were not expected to learn to care for their infants. Some men remarried and raised second families without ever telling the second family much if anything about the first family. Many women were also widowed at an early age. People died of things easily cured today. If the widow remarried the name that seems to be her maiden name may really be the name of her first husband.

Another source of confusion for some seems to be the difference between half siblings and step siblings. It is really quite simple. A step relationship is by marriage only. It is not a blood relationship. It is a legal relationship only. On the other hand a half sister or brother is a blood relative. Remember you can have a step-parent but never a half parent. Those who have one parent in common are half siblings. Half means a blood relationship although on one side only.

JEWISH CHILD CARE ASSOCIATION NEW YORK

JGS in New York knows that some genealogists have had very unsatisfactory dealings with the Jewish Child Care Association in New York. This association is the successor to a number of Jewish agencies apparently mostly dealing with children who were either orphans or in need of care because the parents could not provide. The JGS is gathering information about this association's dealings with genealogists and would like to hear from anyone who has had dealings with or without success. They would like to know what the genealogist knew before contacting this association, what they asked for and what the response was. They would like photocopies of the correspondence especially of the reply from JCCA if possible. It would seem this outfit like just about any that involves social workers is obsessed with protecting those who were once in their custody or received assistance from them or their predecessors. In the name of guarding their privacy they want to keep everything secret even though they are doing more harm than good. This is a familiar attitude to those dealing with adoption records as well as to those trying to find a record of an illegitimate birth. It may be a parent trying to find a child they gave up, a child seeking a parent, the grandchild who wants to find out about their grandfather's heritage etc. etc.

HIAS here in San Francisco takes the same attitude although those asking for a bit of information from their records may only want to know the name of the town where the person was born, the date of arrival or other such information, not how much was borrowed or repaid.

MEMBERS FORUM

The charts below were compiled by member Bob Weiss who understands computers. Your editor does not and is grateful to have something useful to give you. Something that does not need to be explained by me since I don't understand a line of it.

COMPUTERIZED GENEALOGY, USERS' HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE

SOFTWARE	HARDWARE	NAME
Family Heritage File, Word, Excel	Mac Plus, HD-20 Hard Disk	Leland P. Robinson
Wordstar, New Word, Personal Pearl, Family Roots	Morrow MD-3, Star NX-10 dot Matrix	Dorothy L Williams
Dollarhide Family Res. Mgr.	IBM Compatible	Colin James
Wordstar, Roots/II	Morrow MD 3	Myles Johnson
Roots II	Tandy 1000	George B. Wilson
	Macintosh	Bob Seidel
PAF, Roots II, Tiny Tafel, Family Roots	Epson Equity I, LQ800 Printer	Holly Fee
Roots II, Tiny Tafel, Some PAF	Zenith Z-118, Epson FX-185	Lawrence T. Fadner
Multimate Lotus, PAF, dBase III	IBM Compatible	Jack M. Hughes
Roots, Sidekick		Rae Walton
PF, PFS:File, PFS:Report	Tandy 1000, DMPIOS Internal 1200-baud	H. Walter Yoder
Microsoft Word, Roots II	Tandy 1000, Epson FX-80	Will M. Heiser
Roots II, Condor DB	Zenith 100, Dual Processor, 768K	Harley D. Anders
Family Roots, CP/II, MS-DOS	IBM Compatible	Harry Dalke
Roots/II, CP/II Wordstar, Turbo Pascal	Raypro II	Susan B. Farmer
Framework II	AT&T PC 6300, NEC P6 Pinwriter	Steve Catiglioni

COMPUTERIZED GENEALOGY, USERS' ADDRESSES AND PHONE NUMBERS

NAME	ADDRESS	CITY	ST	ZIP	PHONE	DAYS	HOURS
Leland P. Robinson	P.O. Box 270	Magalia	CA	95954	916-873-1669	Any	8AM-8PM
Dorothy L Williams	6417 Dallas Way	Sacramento	CA	95823	916-429-1888	Any	6AM-7PM
Colin James	722 High Street	Denver	CO	80218	303-333-5090	Any	7AM-9PM
Myles Johnson	1400 Floral Street N.W.	Washington	DC	20012		M-F, S-S	6-10PM, 9AM-10
George B. Wilson	313 Bay Harbor Tr	Sebastian	FL	32958	305-589-3218	Any	8AM-10PM
Bob Seidel	1794 Camrose Street	Idaho Falls	ID	83402	208-524-0926		
Holly Fee	P.O. Box 1498	Harlan	KY	40831		M-F	9AM-3PM
Lawrence T. Fadner	10734 Harding Road	Laurel	MD	20707	301-725-1624		
Jack M. Hughes	3630 Bainbridge Court	Waldorf	MD	20601	301-645-1741	M-F, S-S	Eve, Any
Rae Walton	9816 Rosenteel Avenue	Silver Spring	MD	209--	301-585-0340	Any	10AM-6PM
H. Walter Yoder	1422 Wealthy, S.E.	Grand Rapids	MI	49505	616-774-520	Any	Any
Will M. Heiser	180 Fearnington Post	Pittsboro	NC	27312	919-542-4655	Any	Any
Harley D. Anders	Star Rt. Box 1375-F	Forest Grove	OR	97116	503-324-5442		
Harry Dalke	4301 Motter Lane	Camp Hill	PA	17011			
Susan B. Farmer	917 Danville Circle	Knoxville	TN	37923	615-693-4179		
Steve Catiglioni	5516 Old Providence Road	Virginia Beach	VA	23464	804-420-3055	M-F, S-S	6-9PM, 12-5PM

Bob Weiss is very pleased to have been able to acquire a list of all refusniks current to within possibly two years. Some on the list may have been released within that time. Bob feels this voluminous list should be of considerable value to genealogists of Russian descent by enabling them to check for family names and thus locate missing family members. He plans to donate this list to a Palo Alto Congregation, Probably Kol Emeth but he would like to give our members a chance to see it first so for the benefit of those who would find it hard to see it in Palo Alto he intends to bring it to a general meeting. Probably the next one.

GENEALOGISTS SPECIAL

The Howard Johnson Hotel where we stayed during the 1986 seminar in Salt Lake City has notified us of a "one time offer" which we must admit is a very good one. Between Oct. 15 and Feb. 28 and again between April 15 and May 31 they are offering a special genealogists rate of \$38.00 a night single or double occupancy plus tax for groups or individuals. The hotel was quite satisfactory when we were there and very close to the library. This is off season but do serious genealogists need summer to do research? Low rates and fewer people in the library sounds very good, so while we do not ordinarily give space to any sort of advertising this is such a good offer we felt it was in our members interest to let them know about it.

PENINSULA GROUP MEETING

The Peninsula Group will hold its August meeting August 22 at 7:30 P.M. at Congr. Kol Emeth in Palo Alto, 475 Manuela. Karen Zukor will talk about document preservation and those who attend are welcome to bring their own documents for advice. The Group also announces its October meeting will be October 20, same time, same place, This time the subject will be photograph preservation with Loren C. Pigniola explaining how to care for photographs.

BOOK WANTED

Member Lank Felsen is seeking a long out of print book, The Greenebaum Family by Henry Greenbaum, published around 1870 or 1880. If you can help Lank call him at 585-6974 or write him at 706 London St. San Francisco 94112.

SHARING CORNER

The item we had been promised for the sharing corner for this issue was not forthcoming so there is nothing for this column this time. If you have an experience you would like to share with others please submit it for the next issue.

FAMILY FINDER

C-3 Armand S. Cohn, 40 West 3rd Ave. San Mateo, Calif. 94402 (415) 342-3458 seeking ancestors and siblings of Marcus Cohn and his wife, Doris Michalsky of Lobsens now Lobzenica, once Prussia, now Poland. Of their children, Samuel, Adolph, Henrietta, Hulda and Herman all came to San Francisco in the mid-1800s. A grandson of Marcus and Doris Cohn also came although his parents stayed behind. Also searching for ancestors and siblings of Abraham Rotenberg, born 1826 and his wife, Rachel Oppenheim who also came to this area in the mid-1800s.

P-1 Miriam Pearl, 768 Trestle Glen Rd. Oakland, Calif. 94619 (415) 893-1783 Seeking information on the descendants of Robert Myers and his wife Rachel nee Schnell, who lived in New York in the 1800s. Known children are Jacob Myers, Bertha Silberstein, Mary Harris, Henrietta Oppenheimer and Jennie Greiff. Jennie came west around 1906. Presumably the others remained in the east.

S-1 Carolyn L. Sherfy, P.O. Box 157, Knightsen, Calif. 94548 (415) 625-4280 Seeking all Stepakoffs from Russia. Also interested in any Beekman from Bavaria.

W-2 Martha L. Wise, 1990 20th Ave. San Francisco, Calif. 94116 (415) 564-9927 Seeking descendants of Jeremias Blumenthal and his wife Jeanette Gans of Harburg, Germany. Also Bluenthals from Wöllmarshausen, Germany in the 1700s.

W-4 Bob Weiss, 3916 Louis Rd. Palo Alto, Calif. 94303 (415) 424-1622 Looking for relatives and descendants of Rabbi Simcha Zissel Braude/Broida from Kelme, Lithuania, 1800s. Also interested in anything on Kelme, maps, plans, pictures etc.

NEW GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

Another Jewish Historical Society has sprouted a genealogical group. The New Mexico Jewish Historical Society now has a Genealogical and Family History Committee presently just a part of the historical society but as we know these offshoots in time become full fledged JGSs. The person to contact is Steven J. Gitomer, 1428 Miracerros South. Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501. (505) 988-1575.

GERMAN GENEALOGY SERVICE

One of our members has tried the service offered by Henning Schroeder of Gummersbach, Germany mentioned on page 3 of the February 1988 issue of the newsletter and has been well pleased with the results.

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