

שרשרת הדורות

SHARSHERET HADOKOT

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EDITORIAL

This issue of Sharsheret Hadorot inaugurates our fourth year of publication. Interest in the work of our Society, both in Jerusalem and throughout Israel, is constantly increasing, and we try to publish a wide variety of genealogical information, bearing in mind that members outside Jerusalem cannot attend all our meetings.

Our bulletin goes out to Jewish genealogical societies all over the world, and for this reason it is printed in two languages, Hebrew and English. Since the two sections are not identical, those who can, are recommended to read both the English and the Hebrew).

Our readers will be glad to learn that another booklet of longer and more comprehensive genealogical articles is currently in preparation, and will be published by our Society. Details will follow.

Here is an extract from one of the many letters we receive:

"Our last name, Elkus, is very rare in America. We have a family tree of over 100 members, all traced to my paternal great-grandfather. My paternal grandfather (who is still alive) was born in 1902 in Cincinnati, Ohio, the youngest of 8 or 9 children. My grandfather was told that his father was born in 1863, came to the USA in 1891 or 1892 from Grodno, Russia, and that other relatives lived in Vilna. However, he never knew any relatives in the USA or elsewhere, outside his immediate family.

Occasionally, I meet a Russian emigrant who tells me that he knows people in Russia with the name Elkus, but I have never been able to get an address to make contact. One person even suggested that Elkus is not that uncommon a name in parts of Lithuania. I have written without success to a few Russian agencies for more information."

William S. Elkus

With greetings,

Esther Ramon
Ruth Rigbi

LECTURES GIVEN AT OUR SOCIETIES' MEETINGS

November

Dr. Sallyann Amdur Sack and Gary Mokotoff, the editors and the publisher of Avotanu, addressed the November meeting of the Israel Genealogical Society on what is new in genealogical research in the U.S. Dr. Sack suggested a method of getting information on relatives who immigrated to the U.S. at the beginning of the century. The Naturalization and Immigration Service have applications for citizenship, visas and passports as well as accompanying documents. Because of the Freedom of Information Act these are now available. One should write separate letters about each relative, sending as much information as possible to make for easier identification, e.g. the birthplace, birthdate, name or names, where he lived, where naturalized, date of death, etc. Send the number on the naturalization papers, if available. In the letter ask for everything that they have in the file. The letter may begin:

Dear Sir,

Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act, I am requesting any and all information you may have about my relative.....

The address is: F.O.I.A. Office
Immigration and Naturalization Service
425 Eye Street (Room 5114)
N.W. Washington, D.C. 20536

Dr. Sack also gave an update on the Soviet Union archives. Next year it will probably be possible to ask for genealogical information via Washington, writing in Russian or English. Meanwhile some people have managed to receive replies from Vilna and Riga and occasionally from Lwow. The addresses for these archives will appear in the Dec. issue of Avotaynu. The index of the Russian Consular records in the U.S. is completed. Anyone wishing to check out a name in the index may write to Sallyann Sack for the information.

Gary Mokotoff told about a book that he and Sallyann have compiled called Where Once We Walked, which will contain the present name of a town, its other names, the country it is in today, its latitude and longitude, location in relation to the largest city, the Jewish population before the Holocaust and a bibliography of the town. The evening ended with a demonstration of a new software program called Hamishpachah presented by Gabi Shmshon.



AVOTAYNU

The International Review of Jewish Genealogy

December 31, 1989

Dear Esther,

I have wanted to write to you and your society thanking you for inviting me to speak last month and letting you know how very impressed I am with your group.

The level of interest and expertise among your members is wonderful, as is the highly professional Annals and Deeds publication which you have produced. So far as I know, yours is the only genealogical society which has succeeded in getting a monetary grant for this type of work.

Especially nice is the way that your members' roots reflect the whole of world Jewry, with both Ashkenazic and Sephardic families represented. That doesn't happen so often here in the U.S., and it is easy for us with European antecedents to lose sight of the "other half."

I have long felt that Israel represents the "mother lode" of information for Jewish genealogical research, so I think that it is truly essential for the rest of us that there be an organized genealogy society in Jerusalem. Just this past month I have been involved in two activities which highlight just how important that is. One concerns an attempt to find a bone marrow donor for a young Jewish girl living in Washington, D.C. Her best, and probably only hope, lies among those whose relatives came from the same shtetls as her grandparents. How great it was to be able to enlist your help and knowledge about landsmanshaft in Israel. Recently also, I have been assisting a Nazi-hunting Washington lawyer hired by the Australian government. He is looking for survivors from certain Lithuanian towns; Again, the list of Israeli landsmanshaft, as well as the list of attendees at the World Gathering of Holocaust Survivors, has proven invaluable.

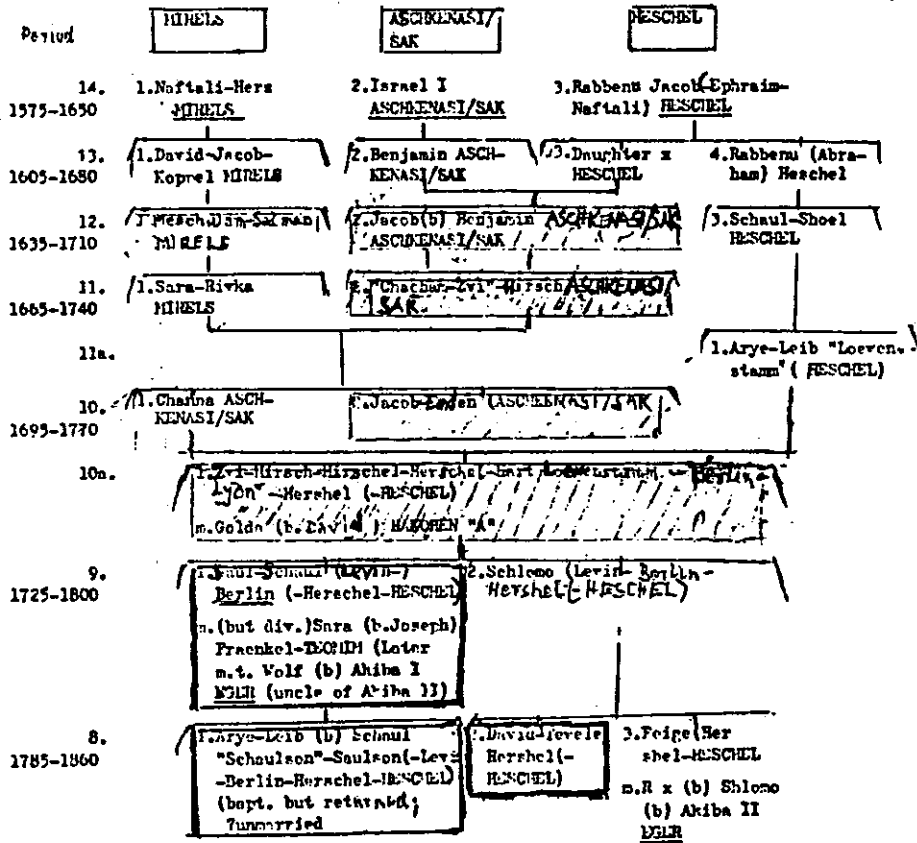
The size of your relatively young society, as well as the fact that members come to meetings in Jerusalem from all over Israel, shows both how much interest there is in the topic and also is a testimony to the excellence of your organization.

Keep up the good work. I hope to be with you again soon.

With best wishes,

Richard L. Rubenstein

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December 1989



= Principal subject's of the lecture
 = Shortly dealt with in the lecture

In December our member Dr. Paul Jacobi lectured on "The heritage of blood". He gave genealogical examples of genetic traits, from the family of the Haham Zvi. The second part of the lecture will be delivered at a future meeting. See the chart.

In January, we heard a lecture by Matityahu Dagan from Haifa on three generations of the Kornfeld family: the speaker's grandfather Aryeh Kornfeld (1853-1933), his father Peretz Kornfeld (Dagan), and himself. The history of the Yishuv was vividly reflected in the history of the family, from the First Aliyah settlers in Palestine under the Ottoman Empire, through the British Mandate to the State of Israel, which the speaker has served in defence, government and the foreign service.

הצגת המידע הנ"ל לראשונה ב-1989
The chart which accompanies the lecture of Dr Jacobi

FORTHCOMING LECTURES

- 14.2.90 Ephraim Levi - THE COHEN-HAROUNOFF (AHARONOV) FAMILY OF MESHEH.
- 14.3.90 Shmuel Even Or - IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF MY ANCESTORS
- 25.4.90 Dr. Malka Shaked - GENEALOGY IN NOVELS
- 16.5.90 Ezry Uval - NAMES AND GENEALOGY IN THE BIBLE

The lectures begin at 7.30 p.m. The building is open from 6.30 to allow members to peruse genealogical material at our disposal.

Venue: "Mevakshei Derech" building
22 Shai Agnon Boulevard
San Simon

Please make a note of the above date, as individual invitations will not be sent.

OUR MEMBERS AT WORK

The Result by Gerda Hoffer

8 years ago when I started to look into the daily lives of my ancestors, I did not dream that this would one day bring me to America nor that it would lead to long and earnest conversations with young Germans as keen to learn about our past as I myself.

After my book on the subject was published, the genealogical societies of Washington, Skokie, and Philadelphia kindly invited me to tell them about my endeavours. It was a great pleasure to see that our sister organizations are thriving, as enthusiastic and keen as we are. They supplied me with a number of family trees which I am now examining with great care. My theory that we are all second or third cousins and can benefit by comparing family trees of people who come from the same region, has already shown results. One of my listeners in Skokie is related to a neighbour of mine here in Jerusalem!

By pure chance I met in Washington as well as in Kiel, Germany, people interested in research in Posen. The first told me of a book entitled: "The Naturalized Jews of the Grand Duchy of Posen" (Scholars Press - Brown Univ. 1987 - Providence USA) by Eduard Luft. The other, a gentleman who had used the newly breached Berlin Wall and had only just arrived in West Germany, suggested I contact the "Instytut Zachochni, St. Rynek, Poznan, Poland" who according to him, are nowadays prepared to deal with genealogical enquiries.

I was asked if any of our members can supply information about descendants of Horowitz or Oppenheim (rabbinic) families of Vilna, Lithuania. Or can someone help to find descendants of a Rabbi Mordechai Stern, born in Latvia, who came about 1902 to Israel, lived and eventually died in Jerusalem. The Jerusalem rabbinical council has been contacted with negative results. In return for this information, the families in America are prepared to help with research there.

While I spoke only to Jews in America, I did not meet a single one of our co-religionists in Germany, where I was asked to address University students in Kiel, Husum and Muenster, as well as high-school classes in Duesseldorf. Most of my listeners had never met a Jew. It is difficult to describe the respect with which I was treated; the honour shown to me was clearly on account of the 6 million dead. The questions about Judaism, Jewish-German relations and Israel were never-ending. One of my questioners was not even dismayed, when she found out that her grandmother's maiden name clearly indicated Jewish roots. At the end I was presented a book called: "Die Jude in Schleswig-Holstein" which I will gladly show to those interested.

To come down to earth after being wined, dined and feted for a period of two months is not easy. The best way to deal with my "hangover" is to carry out the many missions I promised and to show my new American friends that it may well be worth their while to visit us here to dig into their roots at the very source.

Census of Jews in Jerusalem, 1939

In the General Zionist Archives in Jerusalem there are 26 boxes containing the papers of the census carried out in September 1939. These papers are organized according to neighborhoods, and contain information about the head of family, and each member of his family: surname, forename, name of father, age, origin, country of birth, details of army service in country of birth, occupation and place of work.

At the moment it is impossible to get to this information, as the material is not *catalogued*. We wish to catalogue all the material in the boxes and to compile lists of all the names.

All members are asked to give at least three hours a month for this important task. In order to coordinate times for this work, please call our member Carol Clapsaddle, 34 Hahayil Street, Jerusalem 97891, Tel: 322207.

NAMES

The Jewish Family Name File

The Jewish Family Name File was established in 1968 by David L. Gold, who is now the world's expert on the subject. The file constitutes the largest LIST of correctly etymologized Jewish family names ever collected and is constantly growing. It also includes information about Jewish given names and contains some Jewish family trees. D.L.G. can also help you to hebraize family names.

In order that D.L.G. may try to answer your queries, please submit the following information:

1. A list of all known spellings of the name (in whatever language).
2. The place for which it is earliest reported in your family (exact name of town, city, etc. + country; just "Poland", "Russia", etc., are not sufficient).
3. Any family lore about the origin of the name..

a. A check drawn on an American bank in the amount of 18 American dollars (made out to DAVID LOUIS GOLD) should be enclosed for each name on which information is sought.

b. If your query cannot be answered (for many names, information is not available), your check will be returned. Therefore, send as many checks as the names you are asking about (2 names = 2 checks, etc.)

c. From around October to June, write to:
David L. Gold
26/30 Bodenheimer Street
35591 Haifa
Israel

e. The Jewish family trees in the file are from Lithuania and Poland. They may be consulted free of charge. Send a list of family names and the places for which each one has been reported. D.L.G. will tell you whether they appear on any of the trees.

Changes of Surnames in France

In reply to our letter, the JGS in France wrote us that there are lists of changes of surnames in the District Archives on microfilm.

NEWS ASSORTMENT

Workshops in Genealogical Methods

If you would like to take part in a Genealogical Workshop and improve the quality of your research, please write to Esther Ramon, specifying the particular area of interest, and suggesting times to meet.

Members who would like to contribute their own expertise to the workshop are asked to tell Esther Ramon what subjects they are willing to offer. They should also suggest times for the meetings.

Opportunities to do Paid Genealogical Research

From time to time we are approached with requests to find persons qualified to carry out paid genealogical research. Any reader able and willing to undertake such research is invited to apply to the Editors.

Dorot Center

Gary Mokotoff, President of the Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies writes in December 1989:

"I have received a letter from Nissim Tal, Deputy Director of Beth Hatefutsoth, which states that the GEDCOM conversion program is ready and the Dorot Center is now processing family trees. They hope to overcome the backlog within a few months. There are other reports that this conversion program is still in final testing.

There still are no plans to release the Personal Dorot software package due to lack of funding."