



# The Kosher Koala

Newsletter of the Australian Jewish Genealogical Society

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## EDITORIAL

In this Jewish New Year of 5756 we welcome to our fold fifteen new members in Melbourne who have joined Aubrey Schwarz and our ten earlier Victorian members in forming the Victorian branch of the Australian Jewish Genealogical Society. It all started in March 1995 when we thought it was a pity that our Victorian members had no easily accessible resources, and decided to order a copy of the Jewish Genealogical Family Finder and three other books for them to be sent to Aubrey. This inspired Aubrey to call a meeting for the 2nd August, 1995 at which our member, Ephraim Finch, was the inaugural speaker. The written version of his talk is the first contribution from Melbourne in this journal. Rieke and Peter Nash were able to attend this inaugural meeting in Melbourne, and David Grosz attended the second meetin a week later. Unfortunately your President was unable to be present as she was then on a genealogical trip in eastern Europe.

A tripartite agreement has been made with Rosaline Collins, the Executive Director of

Makor Library and Resources Centre in Caulfield, Melbourne, Aubrey Schwarz, the Interim Chairman of the Victorian branch and Sophie Caplan as President of the Australian Jewish Genealogical Society, that the books, journals, tapes, etc. of the Society in Victoria will be kept as reference books for members within the Makor Library and catalogued in such a way that, should there ever be a parting of the ways between Makor Library and the Victorian branch of this Society, it will be easy to establish which books, tapes, periodicals, etc. belong to the Society. In the meantime Rosaline Collins has been chosen by the Victorian branch as their Resources Librarian, which will facilitate everyone's task.

Ester Csaky is Honorary Secretary, Rhonda Lasky is Minutes Secretary, Bettye Susskind is Honorary Treasurer and Les Oberman will do Promotions and Kosher Koala liaison. In the next issue we hope to present you with a full list of the committee in Melbourne.

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In the meantime our South Australian representative, Hilda Hines, is calling a meeting in her home for Thursday 12th October of all those Jews in Adelaide interested in genealogy. We may soon have a vibrant branch in that city also.

In Sydney our monthly Sunday morning workshops are taking place regularly. On 27th June, 1995 we heard Associate Professor Leslie Burnett, who is Assistant Director of the Institute of Clinical Pathology and Medical Research, Director of Clinical Chemistry at Westmead Hospital, Sydney, and his wife, Ruth Pojer, present to us: "GENES AND GENEALOGY: THE TAY-SACHS DISEASE EPIC". It was a fascinating topic to have explained, made more poignant by the presence of one of our members who had been the parent of a child affected by the Tay-Sachs syndrome.

On Sunday 20th August, 1995 Sophie Caplan spoke of her recent genealogical trip to the Ukraine with the Rosa Robota Foundation and to Poland with Geshet

### Office Bearers of the Society

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Secretary	<i>Terry Newman</i>
Treasurer	<i>Stuart Shaw</i>
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Editor of Kosher Koala	<i>Sophie Caplan</i>
Editorial Committee	<i>Rieke Nash</i>

Australian Jewish Genealogical Society  
P.O. Box 154  
NORTHBRIDGE SYDNEY NSW 2063  
AUSTRALIA

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Annual Membership \$Aust30.00  
Pensioner or Student \$Aust10.00  
Annual Overseas Subscription \$US28.30

## WORKSHOPS 1995

Our regular workshops will be held at the Reverend Katz Library, North Shore Synagogue, Treatts Road, LINDFIELD on the following Sunday mornings at 9.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m

November 5

December 3

Galicia. Judging by the flood of questions many people were eager to hear more. We hope to have an article on this topic in the next issue.

No one from Australia attended the Washington, D.C. Summer Conference, but we sent our proxy for the election of a new president of the worldwide Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies. Gary Mokotoff stepped down as president after six years, but he will continue as publisher of AVOTAYNU. Robert Weiss of San Francisco Bay JGS is the new President of the Association, Rolf Lederer of Toronto JGS is Vice-President, Harold Bookbinder of Los Angeles JGS is Treasurer, Steve Siegel of JGS, Inc., New York, one of the founders of TOLEDOT in 1977 which marked the rebirth of Jewish genealogy, is Secretary, and so-called members at large include Scott Meyer, Nancy Arbeiter, Arline Sachs and Linda Cantor. By the time you read this ARLINE SACHS will be in Australia, where she will talk to us on "JEWISH CEMETERIES THROUGHOUT THE WORLD", the big project she is co-ordinating, on 12th October in Sydney and on 26th October in Melbourne.

Congratulations to our long-standing member Sir Asher Joel who was made a Papal Knight a few months ago for his service to the Papacy in arranging the Australian tours of two Popes. Can any other JGS boast of one of their members who is fully Jewish and a Papal Knight? We wish Sir Asher and Lady Sybil Joel continued good health.

*Sophie Caplan, Editor*

### WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

#### New South Wales

<i>Susan Blau</i>	<i>Vladimir Derewianka</i>
<i>Rhoda Green</i>	<i>Ilan Urbach</i>

#### Victoria

<i>Judith Bloom</i>	<i>Albert Braunstein</i>
<i>Solomon Braunstein</i>	<i>Anne Budlender</i>
<i>Leone Engel</i>	<i>Peter Leipnik</i>
<i>June McIntosh</i>	<i>Suzanne McIntosh</i>
<i>Michael Milgrom</i>	<i>Leslie Oberman</i>
<i>Sonja Oberman</i>	<i>Miriam Pollak</i>
<i>Mark Stern</i>	<i>David Stone</i>
<i>Bettye Susskind</i>	<i>Enid Yoffa-Elton</i>

#### Mexico

*Regina Shore*



## TAPESTRY OF LIFE

by Ephraim Finch

*This article is the result of a talk given on 2nd August, 1995 at the Makor Library in Caulfield by Ephraim Finch, director of the Melbourne Chevra Kadisha, at the inaugural meeting of the Victorian section of the Australian Jewish Genealogical Society.*

It is with great pleasure that I speak to you tonight as the inaugural speaker for the Australian Jewish Genealogical Society in Melbourne. I would like to share with you some of my recollections of moments captured in my mind of the "Tapestry of Life" that I see and hear of everyday.

It all began eleven years ago, when I moved from Sydney to Melbourne. I was building and renovating a block of flats in Elwood, where I met a man whom I had been asked to evict before renovation proceeded. He was called "The Man With No Voice" as he spoke through a hole in his throat as a result of cancer. One day I met him on the stairs and politely asked when he would be moving out. To my surprise he asked me if he could delay his move for about one and a half weeks, I assured him that would be okay, as I would work around him. He then answered "What a mitzvah you have done". I was shocked and asked: "Peter Martin Gottinger, you are a Jew?" He answered "My name is Mordechai Zvi Ben Morenu Ha'Rav Israel Pincus". I asked him to repeat it while I wrote it down. Since that time I have not stopped writing. The conclusion to this story is sad, as it is in most cases. I was rung by the police to say that a man had perished in a house fire. They gave me his name, Peter Gottinger, which did not mean anything to me until they described his circumstances. I then made arrangements with the coroner for his release. I was contacted by his relations who came to my office to make the necessary arrangements. It was during our interview that I realised how little information the relatives could give me, I imagine that I was the only person who knew his Jewish name. If he had not told me his Jewish name he would have gone to the grave as Peter, but now his Hebrew name is etched on his monument as a permanent memorial to him and his family.

From that time on I noticed that the Chevra Kadisha, when the Form 19 of the notification of death was completed at the interview with the relatives, did not pursue the history of that family. If questions could not be answered, they were left blank, unfilled. The most astonishing thing was that this form, with however little information, was sent into the Births, Deaths and Marriages registry and we did not keep any record. I have changed that situation - from the government form which, I would like to say is the best form in Australia, as no other state asks for such details in a set order - we

## FOR YOUR INFORMATION

### THE 15TH ANNUAL SUMMER SEMINAR ON JEWISH GENEALOGY WILL BE HELD IN

**BOSTON**  
**JULY, 14-19, 1996**  
**Boston Park Plaza Hotel**

Hosted by the Jewish Genealogical Society  
of Greater Boston, Inc.  
P.O. Box 610366, Newton, MA 02161  
0011-1-617-784-0387

have designed our own family history with a Jewish touch, adding all relevant Jewish details.

We try to gather as much information as possible, and we ask that people bring in documents such as Birth Certificates, family trees, Ketubot, conversion certificates. I even have a Rabbi's Semichah. At present we have a four-drawer filing cabinet nearly full of family histories. We are in the process of upgrading our family tree programme on our computer. Much of our time is taken up in our endeavour to record family genealogies. I have spent countless hours trying to put on computer all Jewish burials in Victoria since 1843. We are gradually getting there. We differ from the Historical Society because we can trace a person back to a particular grave number. For example, I received a phone call from a lady by the name of Alexa Cloud who wanted to know where her great- great-grandfather was buried in 1866. She quoted the name Feldheim. I called it up on my computer and it showed one name, Heiman Feldheim who died in 1866, buried in St Kilda cemetery, a coroner's case, where a jeweller was shot. She then asked me about a baby daughter who had died in 1864. I replied that I only had one Feldheim, and promised to ring her back if I found any more information. I then went through the microfiche for Carlton Cemetery and there was the daughter, Hellena, buried on 1st March, 1864. I then checked the grave number and found that another lady had been buried in the baby's grave some seventy years later! I made another entry and resurrected her on to our cemetery list.

As in all tapestries, the patterns vary and so does human existence. We try to involve the remaining spouse and the children. Unfortunately sometimes, only the children come to my office to make the arrangements, and they do not know all their parent's family tree. Once I had the opportunity of talking with a widower and his son, and found how important it is to probe whilst asking the normal questions; where born, if



married once or twice, father's name and so on. The widower presented his father-in-law as a "businessman and who learned all the time." I asked him if he was a "Misnagid" or a "Chassid". He answered "Of course, a Chassid, a Gerer Chassid and so was his wife". I then asked him for his own details. When we got down to his father's occupation he also described his father as a businessman who learned all the time. I again asked if he was a Misnagid or a Chassid. He answered "Can't you see by my name that I am named after a Rebbe from Alexander". I then asked about his mother and he told me she descended from a Gerer Chassid father. I then looked at him and our eyes met. Pointing to him I asked "What were you before Auschwitz?" He answered "A Gerer Chassid". His son who had been listening all this time to the weaving of his family's history burst out and exclaimed "What are you two talking about? I have never heard any of this". I turned to him and said "You have just learnt about your family and the great tradition from which you came". He made contact with me about a year later and said that he had taken his father back to see where his family originated.

Another tapestry I want you to hear about is a lady who lost her husband. I got to know her very well and I listened to her describe her husband who had walked for eight weeks across Russia to join the Allied Army while she was in Bergen-Belsen. She related to me how she was one of the first ten to get out of the camp and to speak to the American soldiers who were broadcasting on radio, telling the world that these Jews were alive. The radio announced their names.

Meanwhile in Israel her husband was on leave with her family, and they heard the radio announcement. Her husband raced back across the Continent, and boarded a train to get to Bergen-Belsen, while at the same time she was on a train going to Paris. Finally they met. When I came to say his eulogy after learning of their separation and frustrated reunion, I could not do anything to stop myself from crying. Sometime later I met her at her late husband's monument at our cemetery. I inquired about her own family tree. "Why", she asked? "I don't have children". I told her how important it is to me to record her family details so that the world knows that she existed. Whilst filling in the family details, I asked about her father's name, she stated in a proud manner, "My Father said I was always to state that my family name was Ish Horowitz". We parted and the paper was filed. One day at the Melbourne Chevra Kadisha a Rabbi came from Jerusalem. His name was Horowitz/Rabinowitz. I asked him about this lady who was descended from Ish Horowitz. He exclaimed that she had to be related to them for Ish stands for Abraham Isaiah Shabtai which was from the Shelah Hakodesh Rabbi Isaiah Horowitz (1565-1630). I met the lady again and she told me how now, she was excitedly researching her family tree.

Recently, I buried a gentleman, and after going through

the family tree I discovered that he, too, was related to the Shelah Hakodesh. As I was writing about this particular family tree, I went back to this lady's family tree and found that her mother was from the Schaknu-Landau family, which is from the other Horowitz family, the Maharam. So now with the help of our computer program Family Tree Maker, we should be able to make many more connections.

As I listen and observe the vast tapestry of life which is spun in our office, I am always amazed at what a vibrant pulsating people we are, and what has happened to the wandering Jew. Here is another story which shows how intricate and interrelated Jewish family histories can be. When the family gave their name as Rubenstein, I suddenly remembered a story about the family name Rubenstein which had been told to me, revealing that it was not their real name. I guessed that this was the very family Rubenstein behind which lay a mystery. So I revealed that their real name was Pomeranz. They wanted to know from where I heard this piece of information and asked me to please complete the story: there lived in this village two families of the names Pomeranz and Rubenstein. The Pomeranz's were blessed with a lot of children and the Rubensteins were not. As the authorities were making their rounds to collect the children for army service, the Pomeranz's gave a child to the Rubensteins to protect. The family before me nodded in agreement proving me to be correct. There they told me how there is a large family of Pomeranz in U.S.A., with whom they are in contact. As you can see nothing is as it seems. On our records it is shown as Rubenstein/Pomeranz for clarification, uncovering this unique story for all the Rubensteins and Pomeranz's of the future.

*Ephraim Finch has been a member of our Society for some time.*

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### **RABBI MALCOLM H. STERN AWARD**

After the sudden death in January 1994 of Rabbi Malcolm H. Stern, the genial and scholarly father of contemporary Jewish genealogy, the Jewish Genealogical Society of Philadelphia endowed an award in memory of Rabbi Stern's fostering of Jewish genealogy. In 1994 the recipient was HARRY D. BOONIN who is the person behind the SLUTSK Genealogical Society. In 1995 it was ELAINE B. KOLINSKY. Both are known for their activities in their local societies, and from their writings in AVOTAYNU and other Jewish genealogical journals.

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### **FINDING AIDS**

The Polish Genealogical Society of Connecticut, 8 Lyle Road, New Britain, CT 06053-2104, USA publishes in its journal PATHWAYS AND PASSAGES some useful finding aids which also have validity for the Jewish genealogical researcher.  
Enquire from above address.



## IT'S A SMALL SEPHARDIC WORLD!!

by Margot Salom and Kim Phillips

Like the rest of the Jewish world, the Diaspora of the Jews of Spain has been far-flung to many corners of the earth. Expelled from the Iberian Peninsula in the late 15th century, their dispersion has been wide, but along unique routes and usually following the expansions of trade of the mercantile empires of Holland, England and the trading ports of the Mediterranean Sea and Atlantic Ocean and the West Indies. What are the chances of two descendants of the one ancestor from the early 18th century, crossing paths in Sydney in 1994, far from the usual Sephardic routes of settlement?

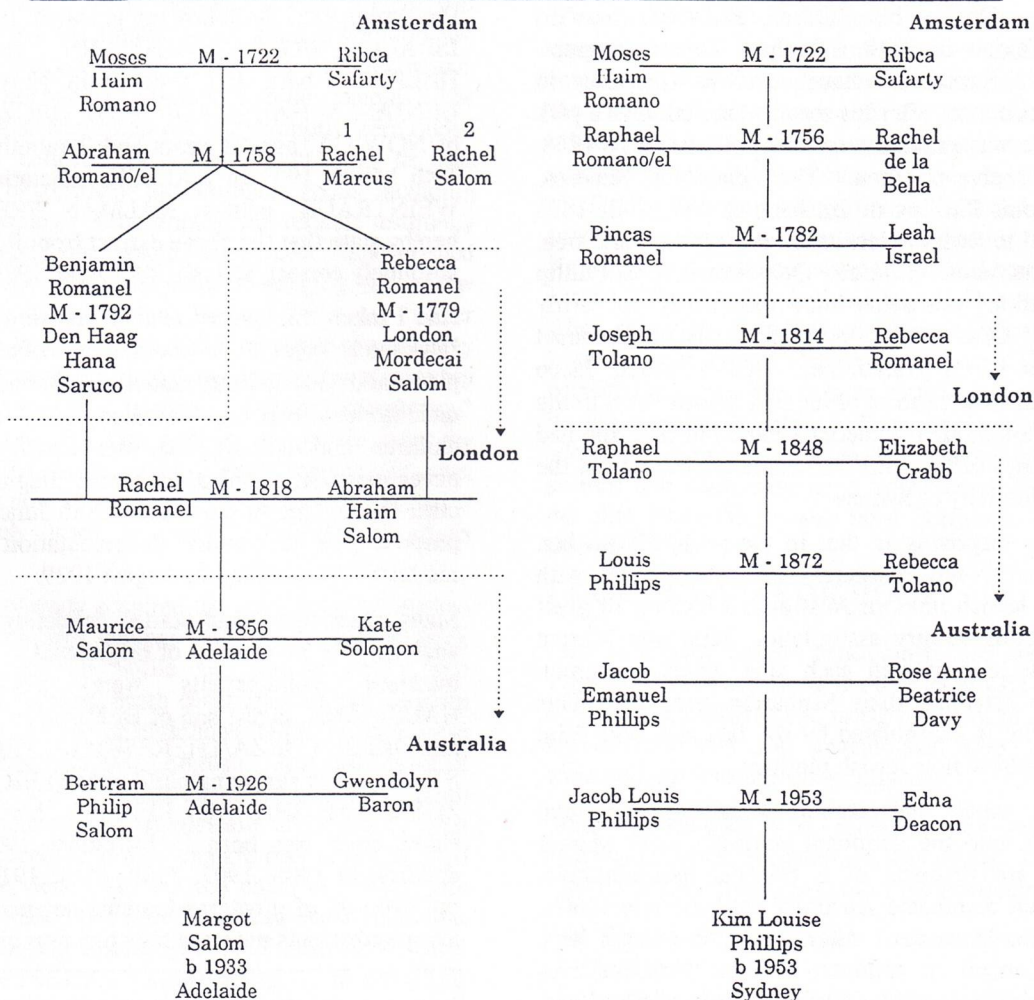
This is exactly what happened to Margot Salom and Kim Phillips when they met for the first time at the Sydney branch of the Australian Jewish Genealogical Society. The name of Romano, later Romanel, was mentioned by Kim at one of that branch's monthly workshops. Margot, new to the Society, immediately

responded with much enthusiasm. This was a name prominent in her family tree. After exchanging information it was ascertained that indeed they shared common ancestors; Moses Haim Romano and his wife Ribca Safarty, who married in Amsterdam in 1722 (19 Iyar, 5482). It appears that Moses Haim and Ribca Romano had at least two sons: Abraham, who formed the ancestral link with Margot, and Raphael whose branch led to Kim. The generational difference between Margot and the ancestor Moses Haim Romano is six generations. For Kim, who is younger, the generations back to Moses Haim are eight.

Margot's Salom family tree, in fact marries three times into the Romano (Romanel) line. One hopes that there are no negative genetic problems with these consanguineous marriages!!

Abraham Romano, eldest son of Moses Haim Romano, was married twice. His first wife was Rachel Marcus, whom he married in The Hague, and who gave him two children, Rebecca and Benjamin. She died in

### DESCENDANTS of MOSES HAIM ROMANO and RIBCA SAFARTY



Family Tree Supplied by Margot Salom and Kim Phillips



childbirth. As a widower he married Rachel Salom, and they had several children together.

Rebecca Romanel, Abraham's daughter by his first wife, married Mordecai Salom in London in 1779 and her brother Benjamin Romanel married Hana Saruco. Their daughter Rachel in turn married her first cousin Abraham Haim Salom, son of Rebecca Romanel and Mordecai Salom. It was this couple and their children who came to South Australia in 1857, thereby establishing the family here.

Amazingly, Kim's ancestors had the same migration pattern; Amsterdam-London-Australia. Or maybe not so surprisingly, as families tended to migrate in the same direction for obvious reasons. However, it is believed that there was no contact between Kim and Margot's recent ancestors in Australia as the Saloms settled in South Australia and the Phillips in NSW.

Kim's first ancestor to arrive in Australia was Emanuel Crabb. He arrived in 1833 with his wife and five children and was the first secretary of the York Street Synagogue which was Australia's first purpose built synagogue. One of his children, Elizabeth, married Raphael Tolano in 1848. Raphael Tolano, a great-grandson of Raphael Romanel, arrived in Sydney in 1837 from London, after his second conviction as a pick pocket. He was granted a conditional pardon in 1848. They had twelve children. Their daughter, Rebecca, married Louis Phillips in Brisbane in 1872. In 1878 they moved to Sydney, settling in the Moore Park area. They had numerous children. One of their sons, Phillip Nathan Phillips was better known as "Stiffy" of "Stiffy and Mo". One of their other sons, Jacob Emanuel Phillips, is Kim's grandfather. Kim's father, Jacob Louis Phillips, spent most of his first fifteen years living with his grandmother, Rebecca Tolano Phillips, and had countless tales of life with Stiffy, and his life within the Jewish community of Sydney.

What is so surprising is that in the mid-1990's when there are very few 'western' Sephardic people with remaining Jewish links in Australia, a country of great 19th and 20th century assimilation, Kim and Margot should have encountered each other over a common purpose to establish their Sephardic ancestry. This synchronicity is accentuated by the fact that both Kim and Margot have non-Jewish mothers.

Is this a small but defiant stand against total assimilation into the dominant culture? Both Margot and Kim are products of a national assimilationist policy which dominated Australia until the late 1960's. In getting to know each other, Kim and Margot have discovered much in common in their personal lives apart from an interest in a common Sephardic heritage. Could this be a genetic pre-disposition or just plain coincidence?

*Kim and Margot are members of our Society who have researched their family trees in great detail.*

## DOCUMENTATION VERSUS ORAL HISTORY AS HISTORICAL TRUTH

by Sophie Caplan

There is a firm belief that when there is a choice of evidential data between documents and family oral tradition to produce accurate facts, then documents ALWAYS are more accurate and should be considered as TRUE EVIDENCE. Documents, it is argued, are contemporary with the events described and have generally not been altered, while human memory is fallible and facts are more likely to be distorted through the prism of people's memories when elicited from family oral history. Recently I have encountered a few documents in the history of my family and that of my husband, which turn that belief upside down.

Firstly, Simon Sekel, the father of one of our members, translated for me from the original Polish a document I found among my mother's papers after her death. In translation the document read: "MARRIAGE CERTIFICATE As a result of the ordinance of the Prefecture, etc...the following is stated: the Bridegroom ISRAEL WOLF HAUSMANN recte (rightly) HALPERN, born and residing in NOWICA, son of BENJAMIN HAUSMANN AND DROZA HALPERN of NOWICA, age 28 years and 2 months, married on 19th March 1909 in KALUSH, officiating rabbi S.W. WEINTRAUB, witness KALMAN FRENKEL. We hereby state that the above extract from Registry Book is absolutely correct, Kalush, 20th June, 1929".

Had I taken this extract of their marriage certificate as "absolutely correct", I would have concluded that my pious and God-fearing maternal grandparents had not undergone a marriage ceremony until they had four children, and moreover that their equally pious parents never married, and that they were illegitimate. It was clear by the date of the extract, 20th June 1929, that its purpose was to provide documentation for my own mother's first wedding in August 1929.

Many years ago I had started collecting names, dates and facts on my family of origin and I knew that my maternal grandparents were ISRAEL WOLF HAUSMANN, eldest son of BENJAMIN HAUSMANN and DREZE (TIRZA/THERESE) HALPERN, and LIBA STEIN, eldest surviving child of MEYER STEIN and of ZOSIE (SHOSHANAH) REITER. My mother, their eldest child was born in December 1903, and other children in 1905, 1907, 1909, 1914, 1916, 1924. Did my two sets of greatgrandparents not marry at all, and my grandparents not until they had four children?

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are now available and can be ordered  
from the Society for  
\$AUS 5.00 plus postage.



Unfortunately I did not encounter this issue until after my mother's death, and could not discuss it with her, but I believe that my Galician grandparents and great-grandparents had what Dr Anthony Joseph recently called "silent weddings", i.e. religious weddings which were not registered by the authorities for certain good reasons. What were these reasons?

In my reading I recently came across Raphael Mahler's book "HASIDISM AND THE JEWISH ENLIGHTENMENT, Their Confrontation in Galicia and Poland in the first half of the Nineteenth Century", 1985, Jewish Publication Society of America, which was first published in Hebrew and then appeared as articles in English translation from 1938 onwards. Raphael Mahler (1899-1977) was an authority on the social and economic history of Polish Jewry, and he wrote of the heavy burdens put on the impoverished Galician Jewish population by the Austrian monarchy under Empress Maria Theresa and Emperor Joseph II, who increased taxes all the time and kept on inventing new ones. (On pp 4-5). Still more invidious was the introduction in 1797 of the candle tax, which was trebled in the course of two decades. Every married Jewish woman was required to pay the candle tax of ten kreutzers on two candles to the tax lessee before the Sabbath began, whether or not she had any money to buy candles. The homes of those who could not pay promptly were raided by the tax collector on Friday night, and he was empowered to confiscate the household goods, including even the bedding. According to the reliable testimony of Wertheimer, one would often meet impoverished people on the street on Fridays begging for a few kreutzers in order to pay the candle tax. "Other burdensome taxes were a special marriage tax, a heavy residence tax and an annual tax on houses of worship and even minyanim (private religious assemblies)." There is more, but this suffices to explain why my ancestors, and many others, chose not to let civil authorities know about their religious marriages, and it retrospectively leads to one's detestation of Maria Theresa.

Then I also recently acquired the birth certificates of all my mother-in-law's siblings born in London between 1891 and 1910 to Millie and Morris Gold, their marriage application, death certificates of two children who died in infancy or childhood, before Morris Gold learned to read and write English. And also those of her cousins. It is clear that the clerks who wrote down the names were writing phonetically according to what they heard. And what they thought they heard differed from clerk to clerk. The maiden name of Morris' wife was KARPINSKI, but the certificates show numerous variations ranging from KAPINSKY and KOPINSKY to GOLDPINKUS, KARPINKIS, KOPINKUS, GARPINKERS, CARPENTER, CARPINKUS and even JACOBS. It is only in December 1902 when Morris Gold registered the birth of his sixth child, at least fourteen years after his arrival in England, that his

wife's maiden was properly spelt and from then on stayed properly spelt. My inference is that Morris had then learnt to read and write English. Indeed the copy of the document in December 1902 no longer states "the mark of Morris Gold", but "signature of Morris Gold".

But what of the name "GOLD" which family legend firmly attributes to Morris' first employer in England who found Morris' original surname hard to pronounce and harder to spell in English. He suggested that Morris take one half of his name which was GOLDSTEIN, either Gold or Stein. Morris opted for Gold. My acquisition of all these certificates was partly in the hope of catching a glimpse of the original surname, which would also allow me to go further back in family research. Alas, even the naturalization papers on which I had pinned my hopes do not mention the real, the true surname. There is no whisper of it on any of these official documents. The only clue we have is a bon mot from our late uncle, Harry Gold. He told a nephew that the original family name sounded like "two coughs and a sneeze". Now go and interpret that.

The birth certificates of the children of Mary/Merel/Miriam Karpinski are even more questionable as far as names are concerned. She married Hyman Schmidt, who came to England before the Public Instruction Act and who never attended any school except cheder. Though he may have learnt to read, he never learnt to write, as shown by the fact that all family documents to which he attested have "his mark", a cross, where the signature would be. Merel Karpinski lived with her sister Millie and brother-in-law Morris "Gold" before her marriage to Hyman Schmidt, when she called herself Gold on her application to the London Beth Din. Once adopted, this Gold name persisted in her children's birth certificates, except when it was written "Gould". Thus her brother-in-law's adoptive surname also became her "maiden name". Just as well that many interviews with her children taught me that Merel/Mary was born Karpinski in Vilna. Documents never lie?

## LETICHEV YIZKOR BOOK

Two American Jewish genealogists are compiling a Yizkor book in English on the district of LETICHEV in PODOLIA GUBERNIYA, using the work of over thirty Jewish historians and genealogists who have been accumulating information on this area.

Other genealogists with roots in this area, which includes Letichev, Medzhibosh, Derazhnia, Zinkov and Valkenivitz are invited to contact the compilers:

Ben Weinstock, 8121 23rd Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11214, USA or  
Stephen Silverman 200 Old York Road, Jenkintown, PA 19046, USA

*Information summarised from article in CHRONICLES, JGS of Philadelphia, Spring 1995, Vol 14, Nol. 1*



## FINDING OLGA

by Beulah-Rose Gross

In the course of compiling my maternal family history I decided to search for Olga Ryss and her son, Yuri. Olga's mother and my maternal great-grandmother were sisters, Johanna and Mariana Mau. The Mau family came from Libau.

My grandmother, Henny, told me that Olga had been a famous opera star in Russia. She also told me that Olga had lived in South Africa for many years and had been involved in opera there before emigrating with Yuri to America. My mother and her siblings clearly remember Olga who is in a family photograph commemorating Mariana's silver wedding anniversary in Port Elizabeth, South Africa.

The first thing I did was write to the Johannesburg Reference Library asking for information about Olga and her involvement with the development of opera in South Africa. They sent me a photocopy of an article about her in the South African Encyclopedia of Music. They also sent a copy of the programme of a concert held in Johannesburg in which Olga was the leading soprano.

The article gave me her proper first name, Golda Olga, and her date of birth. She had emigrated to America in 1935 and from 1956 had been the voice coach for famous opera stars such as Paul Sperry, Martha Schlamme, Vivien Thomas, Mike Trimble, Yoriko Abe and Jennie Tourel, her lifelong friend, in New York. She had also been active in the annual Summer Music Festivals in Aspen, Colorado for many years. The article mentioned nothing about Olga's husband or her son.

I then wrote to the Librarian in Aspen. I waited months for a reply. When it arrived, it was just a note from the Pitkin County Library signed 'Helen Palmer'. Scrawled in pencil at the end of my letter was an apology for taking so long and the suggestion that I write to one of the professional researchers on the list she supplied.

She included a photocopied page from an un-named and undated newspaper featuring a short article about Olga's death in New York plus an obituary notice from the New York Times which stated that Olga was mourned by George, Genia and Raissa in Freeport, New York.

Bingo! I now had a date and place of death and George had to be the Yuri I was looking for! My grandmother had said that two of Olga's sisters were named Henny and Rosa. Could Genia and Raissa be these sisters? Was it possible that they, and perhaps their families, had been living in New York at the time of Olga's death? We had believed that everyone except Olga and Yuri had perished in the Shoah.

On the off chance, I wrote to George Ryss in Freeport New York but was not surprised when my letter was returned, 'Insufficient Address'.

I then wrote to the New York Public Library who could not help but passed my request on to their Music Division. They couldn't help either but they did mention a letter from an official of the Aspen Music Festival requesting support for the Olga Ryss Scholarship Fund.

I wrote again to Aspen, telling Helen what I had learned and asking her to dig a bit deeper.

In the meantime I visited America and contacted Sherrill Laszlo Stern, a Jewish genealogy researcher who had been recommended. After some research, she informed me that Genia and Raissa had died in New York. Raissa had been unmarried and as her surname was the same as Olga's maiden name, they were definitely the family I was looking for. I asked Sherrill to continue searching and returned home.

A letter from Helen was waiting for me. Pencilled on my letter to her is: 'Hello, All I can find is this man (son?) - George Ryss at (address supplied). He sent the money for the Scholarship but it no longer exists. This was given by the Music Associates, Ossia. Hope this helps, Helen'.

Bingo again! I wrote to George at once and, by return post, received an ecstatic reply. He had been about to discard my envelope as he thought it contained Art Union tickets but luckily he didn't.

Since then George and I have enjoyed a wonderful correspondence. He has proved to be a mine of information and has solved many puzzles about the family. He has also sent me original family photographs and newspaper articles about Olga's career as a world-famous voice coach in New York.

I now know that Olga graduated as a Laureate from the St Petersburg Conservatoire. I know that she married, in Tbilisi, Ilya Ryss, one of sixteen children of a rabbinical family from Rostov on the Don. Ilya had commanded a band of Cossacks in the Russian Army and was awarded the Order of St Vladimir medal for bravery by Tsar Nicholas II after being wounded. This was a most unusual honour for a Jew.

After he and Olga were divorced in the early 1930's, Ilya joined Max Perlman's Yiddish Company as manager and died in Buenos Aires in 1934 still in his 40's.

The most important information George has given me are the names and addresses of the grandson of Sarah Mau, sister to Mariana and Johanna, in Massachusetts and two of Sarah's grand-daughters in San Diego.

Needless to say, I wrote to them at once. There has been no reply from Massachusetts but the two ladies, Asia and Henny (a popular name in my family) have been most helpful.

Things took a decided upturn when I visited the United States again a few months ago. I arranged my schedule



so that I could spend time with George in Freeport and Asia and Henny in San Diego. Unfortunately, I was not able to visit Boston to see Herbert but we conversed at length on the telephone.

George was charming and informative. Many photos of Olga and the opera stars she voice-coached and framed cuttings from newspapers about her adorn the walls of his tiny house. Interspersed are old photos of family, including one of his grandparents.

George spent some time adding to and correcting my notes and the information I had taken for this purpose and has promised to have the photos copied and sent to me soon. A valuable addition to the family tree and my project.

In San Diego, I spent a fascinating afternoon with Asia and Henny. I took them photographic copies of very old postcards of Libau (Liepaja) which had been sent to my grandmother in South Africa. Asia and Henny were entranced but did not want to keep the photos as they brought back too many memories of their earlier lives in that city.

Like George, Asia and Henny made many corrections to my notes. In addition, they filled in many names of family members and explained their relationships to each other. They also supplied the names, dates of birth, marriage and death of all these people. The date of death of many of them was December 15, 1941. When I asked why I was told that these members of my family, including Asia and Henny's father and sister, had been annihilated by the Nazis on that day. Many of these people had sent the postcards I treasure to my grandmother. (When I returned home I checked Simon Wiesenthal's excellent book "Every Day, Remembrance Day" to find that on December 14 and 15, 1941, the Nazis and their Latvian collaborators, had massacred 3,500 Jews in Libau).

Henny escaped death but was sent to a camp and sterilised when she was barely twenty years old. After the liberation of the camps, Henny went to Riga where she remained until three years ago when she went to live with Asia in San Diego.

Asia escaped because she was already married and living in Israel.

As promised during one of our telephone conversations, Herbert has sent me information about his branch of the family. He added fascinating details about Olga and her two sisters, Raissa, who was unmarried, and Genia and her husband, Vladimir Fortunato a renowned sculptor. Vladimir also made death masks of famous people and Herbert clearly remembers one of Woodrow Wilson which lay in a corner gathering dust!

The homes of Olga and her sisters were a haven for many Jews newly-arrived in America seeking a new home where they could pick up the pieces of their lives. Hot tea, a meal, advice about life in the 'goldene

medina' and a lot of friendship were always available. Olga gave many free voice lessons to aspiring opera singers from the old country.

The information I've garnered from my recently-discovered relatives has filled many gaps in my knowledge but it has also opened up numerous hitherto unthought-of avenues for further research.

One is to have further dialogue with Asia and Henny, particularly Henny, because they have firsthand knowledge about the lives and deaths of all the people my grandmother told me about. Another is trying to find out more about Olga herself (George is mad keen for me to write her biography!) and yet another is to find out more about the 'home from home' she and her sisters offered to the post-war Jewish and Russian refugees in New York.

Clearly my project is far from finished and I have a lot of work ahead of me. Much of what I've discovered has been sad, even painful, but one thing heartens me. Although too many members of my family died, Hitler and his cronies did not win. My family, and that of many others, is alive and well, flourishing and increasing in numbers all over the world.

Kol Ha'kavod!

*Beulah Gross is the Central Coast representative for our Society.*

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## JEW IN WEST PRUSSIA

*From Shemot: Jan 1994 Vol.2 No. 1*

A general listing of all Jews in the Department of the Royal Government of West Prussia who have been Granted Citizenship Rights has been discovered. There are 2381 Jewish citizens listed with the new surnames chosen between 1800 and 1810 under orders from Napoleon. Most Jews lived in the following cities:

Berendberg,	Bischofswerde,	Baldenburg,
Christburg,	Cammin,	Deutch-Eylau,
Deutch-Crone,	Ebling,	Flatow,
Freystadt,	Pr. Friedland,	Garnsee,
Hammerstein,	Jastrow,	Kronjanke,
Landeck,	Maerkirsch,	Marienwerder,
Mewe,	Neuenburg,	Neuteich,
Neustadt,	Putzig,	Rosenberg,
Schochau,	Schloppe,	Schoeneck,
Schwetz,	Pr. Stargardt,	Stuhm,
Tolkemit,	Tychel,	Tuetz, Zempelburg.

If you are interested in researching any names, write to:

Jewish Genealogical Society of Great Britain  
C/- Shemot

20 Francis Road

Pinner, Middlesex, HA5 2ST, U.K.

There is a £2.00 charge to cover the cost of photocopying (add postage).



## JEWISH GENEALOGY BOOKSHELF

by Sophie Caplan

Those books with an asterisk (\*) in front are held by our Society, books in the personal library of some of our members are marked with two asterisks (\*\*) and books marked with a ☆ can be borrowed from the Reverend Katz Library at the North Shore Synagogue where our workshops are held.

### SOME MORE BOOKS ON POLAND

Although Poland is one ancestral country for which books of Jewish genealogical interest are scarcer than most, the situation is gradually improving. Some books about one particular town or area are being published in England or America, and we are trying to acquire them. Others are being written in Poland, translated into English and sold at Polish museums and tourist sites for the benefit of Jewish tourists of Polish descent. I brought some of these back from my recent trip to Poland.

\* ANDRZEJ K. PALUCH, Editor, **"THE JEWS IN POLAND"**, Vol I, 1992 Jagellonian University Centre on Jewish History and Culture in Poland, Cracow, is a book of learned articles in English, French and Polish on Jewish history and sociology by major scholars. Purchased recently at the above Centre, Ulica Meisela, Cracow \$US 35.

\* EUGENIUSZ DUDA, **"A GUIDE TO JEWISH CRACOW"**, 1990, Jewish Information and Tourist Bureau, Library of Our Roots, Warsaw, is a 65-page booklet giving the basic history of the Jews in Cracow from the 14th Century to the present, with maps, short biographies and suggested itineraries for walks to cover buildings and areas of Jewish significance. A most useful booklet.

\* JERZY MALENCZYK, **"A GUIDE TO JEWISH LODZ"**, 1994, similar to above.

There were other booklets in that series which had been sold out where these were found: LUBLIN, GALICIA, BIALYSTOK AND SURROUNDINGS, PLACES OF JEWISH MARTYRDOM IN POLAND, A GUIDE TO JEWISH POLAND. Cost is \$US 4.50 plus \$US 1.50 for postage, per single booklet, or \$US 3.50 plus \$US 1.50 if one orders the whole series from PIOTR KADLICK, Poli Gojawiczyńskiej 7 m 17, 01-773 Warsaw, Poland.

\* **"HORTUS IUDAEORUM, CMENTARZ ZYDOWSKI W LODZI"**, 1982-1992, is a folder of artistic photographs of the huge Lodz Jewish cemetery, "one of the city's major points of interest" as stated by the author of the introductory essay, given in both English and Polish, by Maria Swiatkowska. There are over 180,000 Jewish graves in Lodz Jewish cemetery and the oldest date back to 1892. It is the largest Jewish

burial ground in Europe and there is a preservation order on the entire cemetery, which has been designated a national monument of Poland. Photographs and graphics by ANDRZEJ PUKACZERSKI, Wydawnictwo Lodzkie, 1992, Lodz. Purchased at Cracow Jewish Museum.

\* ADAM BARTOSZ, **"TARNOWSKIE JUDAICA"**, 1992, Wydawnictwo Pttk "Kraj", Warsaw, is a Polish language book on the history of the Jews in Tarnow in south eastern Poland, formerly Western Galicia, with an abstract in English and one in German. Many photographs of people and buildings and a map of the area showing Tarnow's relationship to surrounding towns and villages, make it worthwhile even for those who do not read Polish. Purchased at the Jewish museum in Tarnow

\* ADAM BARTOSZ, **"IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE JEWS OF TARNOW"**, 1993, Tarnow is another small booklet on Tarnow which has a map in English of the former Jewish district of Tarnow.

\* ANDRZEJ TAZCINSKI, **"THE TRACES OF MONUMENTS OF JEWISH CULTURE IN THE LUBLIN REGION"**, no date, but seemingly recent publication by Wojewodzki Osrodek, Informacji Turystycznej in Lublin, Hotel Orbis-Unia in Lublin, 12 Raclawickie Alley, 20-037 Lublin. Tel:320-61. Entirely in English, this 31-page booklet has excellent illustrations of synagogues and cemeteries as well as short summaries of former Jewish communities such as Wlodawa, Szczepleszyn, Zamość and Bilgoraj, and several others. Also plans for proposed trips to Jewish sites in region.

\* THEO RICHMOND, **"KONIN, A QUEST"**, 1995, Random House, London. This is a marvellous odyssey to find the traces of ancestors and other Jewish inhabitants of the town of Konin in north-east Poland. The author visited survivors from Konin all around the world and spent seven years on researching and writing this moving and informative book. Obtainable from Australian bookshops at present.

\*\* BEN GILADI, Editor, **"A TALE OF ONE CITY, PIOTRKOW TRYBUNALSKI"**, 1991, Shengold Publishers, New York. This is an English language Yizkor book translated from the original version in Yiddish and Hebrew published in Tel Aviv in 1958, with additional contributions bringing the story of Piotrkow Trybunalski survivors up to date. Rabbi Meir Lau and his brother, Ambassador Naphtali Lau-Lavie, are both survivors of the city which had 20,000 Jewish inhabitants. Our senior member Sir Asher Joel is descended on one side from that town also and first made us aware of the work of Ben Giladi in recording the community of Piotrkow Trybunalski and its survivors. Still obtainable from Shengold Publishing, 18 West 45th Street, New York 10036, USA for \$US 37 including postage.



## MORE BOOKS ON AUSTRALIA

☆ BRIAN KINO, "THE CARNIVALS, A HISTORY OF JEWISH AMATEUR SPORTING CONTESTS IN AUSTRALIA, 1924-1974", 1975, York Press, Melbourne, Australia, was only printed in 700 individually numbered copies. It contains a wealth of information, clearly and accurately labelled photographs on all those who played a part in Jewish amateur sport in Australia during the years it covers. Very useful.

\* \* HEDI FIXEL, "HOBART HEBREW CONGREGATION, 150 YEARS OF SURVIVAL AGAINST ALL ODDS", 1995, Hobart, self-published, is a book of just over one hundred pages written by a modern stalwart of the Hobart Jewish community who, with her husband Ferry, was the heart and soul of Hobart Jewish community for many decades. Still available for \$18 including postage within Australia, \$US 20 including postage elsewhere, from Hedi Fixel, 5/57 Cadbury Road, Claremont, Hobart, 7011 Tasmania, Australia.

## LEO BAECK INSTITUTE

The LEO BAECK INSTITUTE which holds information on the history, sociology and genealogy of Jews in German-speaking countries, is compiling a GENERAL USERS' GUIDE FOR GENEALOGICAL RESEARCHERS to be made available to visitors to the Institute.

The Guide is divided into sections by geographic regions or states and will include the following information related specifically to the particular region:

- 1) Reference volumes in the LBI Library
- 2) Major collections in the LBI Archives of genealogical interest.
- 3) Names and addresses of Jewish genealogists with expertise in local families.
- 4) Names and addresses of German researches who specialise in the region.
- 5) Addresses of archives in Germany.

This will add immeasurably to the usefulness of LBI for Jewish genealogists with ancestors in German-speaking countries. The LBI is also appealing for those with expertise in any area of genealogical research in Germany who wish to be listed in the guide to let their interest be known.

Contact Dr Frank Mecklenburg or Karen S. Franklin,  
129 East 73rd Street, New York 10021, U.S.A.

Tel: 0011-1-212-744-6400  
Fax 0011-1-212-988-1305

Our readers are reminded that in 1996 the Leo Baeck Institute, Yivo Institute for Research into Yiddish-speaking Jewry and the American Jewish Museum in New York are to move in to a common site, which is to be known as the Centre for Jewish History. We will keep you informed.



## FOREBEARS AUSTRALIAN FAMILY FINDER

Our Family Finder column will be charged for at the rate of \$AUS 8 for 25 words plus address and telephone number, or fax number of inquirer. For overseas advertisements \$US 5 if sent in cash OR for cheques \$US10 due to new high bank exchange rates for cheques in other currencies. Please communicate directly with inquirer, but kindly inform us if this column has helped you to advance in your research.

00031 JULIAN KEMPER, 59 GATTON ROAD, REIGATE, SURREY, RH2 0HP, ENGLAND. Can anyone help with Leonard Louis **WALTERS**, born London 1894, served RN, RNAS, & RAF. Post WWII migrated to Australia, exact date and destination unknown. Originally dental mechanic. May not have married. Also seeking additional material on De Sola family, which includes Sarah Orkin's recent book.

00032 REUBEN NICHOLAS LUBKA, M.D., 11705 WEST DIANE DRIVE, WAUWATOSA, WI, 53226, USA. Seeking descendants or connections of **SAMUEL FAIVEL LUBKA**, son of Jacob, from Sobkow SE of Lodz, born 1859 Poland.

00033 MARK TUKRNER, 34 HINDENBURG STRASSE, 4970 OEYNHAUSEN, GERMANY. Our local history working party at the Bad Oeynhausen High school seeks information on former Jewish members of our community who emigrated to Australia, to invite them back for a visit. We seek a Mr **MEYER/MEIER** who is said to have a car dealership in or near Sydney, and a man named **STECK** who may have settled in Melbourne and any other emigres from the Bad Oeynhausen, Amt Rehme and Kreis Minden area of East Westphalia-Lippe. Any information about former Jewish citizens from our area is appreciated.

## SLOVAKIAN VITAL RECORDS

Slovakian vital records have started to be filmed by the LDS Family History Library. These will not be available until catalogued, but it is reported that Presov and Kosice will be among the first towns whose records will be available.

*Information summarised from DOROT, Journal of the Jewish Genealogical Society, Inc. New York, Autumn, 1994 Vol 16, No. 1. DOROT is a particularly informative JGS journal with much interesting information, particularly on new books on aspects of Jewish genealogy.*



# **AUSTRALIAN JEWISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY DATA BASE**

Names being researched by our new members

September, 1995

Id	Surname	Old Name of Town	Town	Province	Country	Dates
93	BECKINSTEIN	WOLKOWISK	VOLKOVYSK		BELARUS	1910
98	BEN MAYOR		IZMIRN		TURKEY	1780
97	BERNER					
92	BETTELHEIM		Any		AUSTRIA	1850-1938
92	BLAU		WIEN		AUSTRIA	1850-1938
98	BRAUN		ISTANBUL		TURKEY	1870
95	BRUNNER	KANITZ		MORAVIA	CZECH	Pre 1844
96	CINDEROVSKI		GORODNYA		UKRAINE	Pre 1900
95	DEUTSCH	NIKOLSBURG	MIKULOV		CZECH REP	Pre 1875
98	DOENIAS		ISTANBUL		TURKEY	1870
93	FISHMAN		SEDZISZOW		POLAND	1870
97	GERSTENSELD				AUSTRIA	
94	GOCHMANN		CHELM		POLAND	1800-1940's
94	GOCHMANN	WARSAW	WARZAWA		POLAND	1800-1940's
98	GOLDENBERG	BUCHAREST	BUCURESTI		ROMANIA	1886
96	GREENBERG	WARSAW	WARZAWA		POLAND	Pre 1927
96	GRINBERG	WARSAW	WARZAWA		POLAND	Pre 1927
95	GUTTMAN	SUDOMERICE		MORAVIA	CZECH	Pre 1909
97	HEUBLUM				AUSTRIA	
94	HOCHMANN		CHELM		POLAND	1800-1940's
94	HOCHMANN	WARSAW	WARZAWA		POLAND	1800-1940's
94	HOCHMANN		BERLIN		GERMANY	1913+
93	KRINSKY	WOLKOWISK	VOLKOVYSK		BELARUS	1910
96	LASKI	WARSAW	WARZAWA		POLAND	Pre 1927
96	LASKY	WARSAW	WARZAWA		POLAND	Pre 1927
97	LEIPNIK		BUDAPEST		HUNGARY	Pre 1956
94	LEWIN		PARCHIM		GERMANY	1850-1900
93	MANDEL		SEDZISZOW		POLAND	1870
98	MORDO		CORFU		GREECE	1850
98	MORDO		ZANTE		GREECE	1850
98	NATHAN	SOFIA	SOFIYA		BULGARIA	1875
95	NEUMANN	LEDNICE	LEDVICE	MORAVIA	CZECH	Pre 1844
95	NEUSPIEL	LEDNICE	LEDVICE	MORAVIA	CZECH	Pre 1844
95	PICK	REICHENBERG		BOHEMIA	GERMANY	Pre 1850
98	RACCAH		TRIPOLI		LIBYA	1850
94	RYZMAN		LYCZYCA	LODZ	POLAND	1453-1942
98	SAMAMA		LEGHORN		ITALY	1850
94	SCHNEID		BERLIN		GERMANY	1912+
94	SCHNEID		DZIEWIECIERZ	PRZEMYSL	POLAND	1898-1913
98	SCIAMAMA		LEGHORN		ITALY	1850
97	SIPOS		BUDAPEST		HUNGARY	
95	SISSEL	NEISSE	NYSA		POLAND	Pre 1846
94	SOMMERFELD	CHEMNITZ	KARL-MARX-STADT		GERMANY	Pre 1861
97	SPITZ		BUDAPEST		HUNGARY	
97	SZAUER		BUDAPEST		HUNGARY	
96	VITNER		HIRLAU	BOTOSANI	ROMANIA	Pre 1912
98	VIVANTE		CORFU		GREECE	1775
98	VIVANTE		ZANTE		GREECE	1775
96	WITTNER		HIRLAU	BOTOSANI	ROMANIA	Pre 1912

## **AN INVITATION TO OUR MEMBERS**

WE ARE HAVING AN OPEN DAY ON THE

## **CENTRAL COAST**

ON SUNDAY, 26TH NOVEMBER, 1995 AT 10 A.M. TO 4 P.M.

This day has been organised to give out-of-town members the opportunity to consult our collection of books, periodicals, microfiche, tapes, videos, computer applications, etc. Come and discuss your research problems with others. The day is free to members including those who join on the day.

R.S.V.P. IS ESSENTIAL  
427-6075

Non-members are welcome  
and will be charged \$6.00

BRING YOUR OWN LUNCH  
DRINKS PROVIDED