



Kehila Kedosha Janina

Synagogue and Museum

280 Broome Street, New York, NY 10002

January 2010 e-mail newsletter

Dear Friends of Kehila Kedosha Janina,

As we enter the second decade of the 21st century, we stop to wish you all a healthy and peaceful 2010. In 2000, when we entered the new millennium, Kehila Kedosha Janina was struggling to survive. Many thought we should close and go the way of so many other synagogues on the Lower East Side. Fortunately, we did not listen to this negativity. With the help of countless people, we became an historic landmark in the City of New York, received a matching grant to begin our restoration, won the Lucy B. Moses Award for architectural preservation and drew the attention of the world.



So much has changed in the past 10 years, not only for us, but for everyone. Every country has been touched by terrorism. The naivety with which we entered the new millennium was quickly shattered with the intifada in 2000 and, for Americans, '9/11' would forever destroy our innocence. I vividly remember where I was on September 11, 2001, as do most Americans. The difference was that I was not on American soil. I was in Greece, in the city of Ioannina. I was far away from home and family but I will never forget the love and warmth with which I was enveloped by both friends and strangers.

Therefore, as we enter the second decade of the 21st century, may we continue to experience the positive, override the negative and persevere to do the best we can. May we, here at Kehila Kedosha Janina, continue to be the recipient of your love and generosity, and may we, through our monthly newsletter, continue to inform and act as a means of support for Greek Jews throughout the world.

As always, you all are invited to attend our Saturday morning Shabbat services. Just give our Shamas, Sol Kofinas, a heads up (papusoup@mindspring.com) so we are sure that our Kiddush (traditional Greek Jewish Kosher foods) is sufficient. If you wish to sponsor a Kiddush for a special occasion or an Adara, contact Sol.

We now reach over 4000 households worldwide, with our community of 'friends' continually growing with each newsletter. If you know others who wish to be part of this ever-growing network, please have them contact us at kehila_kedosha_janina@netzero.net.

This newsletter, our 24th, will, as always, cover news regarding Kehila Kedosha Janina and news concerning Greek Jewry. We hope you find our newsletter interesting. Your feedback is of utmost importance to us. If you missed previous issues, they can be accessed on our website (www.kkjsm.org).

Correction: in our last issue there was a mistake made in announcing the passing of a member of the Colchamiro family. It was Beatrice Conan who unfortunately passed and not her daughter Vivian, as was reported in error.

We mourn the passing of Celia Hakim, a long time member of the Kehila Kedosha Janina community. Celia's family came from Veroia. She is survived by her sister Dinah. Jack Tevah, Koula Kofinas' cousin passed away, along with the cousin of Rose Eskononts, Stanley A. Marash. We also mourn the passing of Jesse Asser, the uncle of Tica Negrin and extend our sympathy to his family.

Aliza Marcus and Andrew Apostolou were married on Sunday, December 20, 2009 3 Tevet 5770 at the Magen David Sephardic Congregation-Beit Eliahu, Rockville, MD. We send our congratulations.

Museum News

Upcoming Exhibit on Families (Dikoi Mas/Los Muestros)

Although the family exhibit will not open up until November of 2010, if the response to the wedding exhibit is any barometer, we should receive hundreds of photos. To ensure that most will become part of the actual exhibit, we will, once again, create a DVD and an album, along

with making the exhibit part of our website. The family photos will fall into several sub-categories:

- 1) Baby pictures
- 2) Photos of children, alone or with other family members
- 3) Bar Mitzvah photos
- 4) Studio family portraits
- 5) Street scenes of families showing the old neighborhoods
- 6) Informal family pictures taken in apartments showing the interior

We are looking for photos taken here in the United States and, in addition, in Greece. The older the photos, the better. We are not only looking for photos of Ioannina and Yanniotte families. Many photos of traditional Sephardic families from Greece (primarily Salonika) were submitted to our wedding exhibit. We wish to continue this inclusion.



Eleanor Cohen Behar-Izmir early 1900's



Rachel & Leon Bakola-Ioannina

Kehila Kedosha Janina Website

We are happy to announce that our Wedding Exhibit (Something Old, Something New) is now accessible on our website. Be patient, the files are large and take some time to download. We could not help it. There was so much. It is well worth the wait as attested to by Rose Attas:

"Hi Marcia,

So nice to see the pictures of the brides and grooms on the KKJ site. I recall Murray and Rae Eskononts as neighbors. As a child to help me pass the time my grandmother would take out pictures, and I vividly recall their thank you card amongst my Nona Stamoula Attas pictures.

Another picture that caught my attention was that of Avram and Molly Attias. Do they have a son Jackie? (note: Yes, Jack now lives in New Jersey).

I remember Molly Attias, as my Nona Rose and my mother Becky were pretty good friends with Molly.

Fond memories..I love it. Rose'

Rose also sent us the lovely photo below of her mother and "Jackie" Attias as her pageboy in 1946.



In addition, we have now added to our website a collection of photos called, "The Stones of Ioannina." Our grateful thanks to Sydney Levi for his work.



Annual Film Festival forced to cancel due to blizzard in New York

**THE NEW YORK PREMIER OF "IN THE SHADOW OF THE ACROPOLIS,"
A FILM BY LAURA ZELLE & MAXINE DAVIS, ORIGINALLY SCHEDULED FOR
DECEMBER 20, 2009 AT 2:00 WILL BE RESCHEDULED FOR THE SPRING, DATE TO BE
DETERMINED.**

One of the members of the Ackos family, the family whose story is told in "In the Shadow of the Acropolis," is requesting our help on the following:

"When the Ackos family arrived in New York they lived in Astoria with many other Greek friends from Athens. Often I hear Mary say I wonder what happen to the friends and if they are still alive. While thinking about the film and her inability to attend she still wonders about her younger friends. In that regard would you be able make some type of announcement... that if anyone remembers the family in those early days would they please contact Mary by phone 651 698 5029 or use my email address (scalof@larsonallen.com). Thanks, Stan Calof."

Lower East Side Sephardic Jewish News

Thanks to David Bellel, we have contacted and found some fascinating information on the owner of Ezra Cohen's fabric store. For those not familiar with the Lower East Side, the store of Ezra Cohen, still in existence, had been a prominent feature in the landscape of the Lower East Side. Many assumed that he was a Greek Jew and, although there were many Ezra Cohens in our community and many Greek Jews who dealt in textiles, this was not the case. As discovered by David Bellel, who has long engaged in research on the Lower East Side, sharing many of his findings with us (his family among the original founders of Kehila Kedosha Janina), Ezra Cohen was Syrian Jew. We have now been in touch with his grandson, Michael D. Cohen and plan to collaborate on piecing together the untold stories of non-Ashkenazi Jews on the Lower East Side.



Sephardic Oral History Project

The following article was sent to us by Estelle Benozilio-Hendrickson and was taken from the New Jersey Jewish Standard

"The goal: 5,000 interviews. The deadline: Dec. 31, 2015. The objective: To record the stories of Sephardic Jews who immigrated to the United States or were born here.

Called 'Sephardic America Voices: A Jewish Oral History Project,' it's sponsored by the New York-based American Sephardi Federation (ASF), in partnership with the University of Miami and Hebrew University.

The project is the brainchild of Carlos Benaim, an ASF board member born in Tangiers, Morocco. Benaim said that he conceived the project after attending a recent conference in Barcelona, Spain, where author Helene Trigano presented her film with testimonies of Sephardic Jews living in France, 'à la [Steven] Spielberg's Shoah interviews,' he said. 'I was struck that there is no such initiative for our community in the United States,' he added. 'My idea was to preserve stories [of Sephardic Jews] that could be lost forever.' According to Englewood resident Raquel Benatar, another ASF board member who has been involved in the project since its inception, this is 'a unique opportunity for U.S. Sephardim to publicize their history, customs, and traditions of their countries of origin, their reasons for immigrating [and] their arrival in the United States, as well as the preservation of their Sephardic heritage today.'



This is a long-term project that requires a continuous effort from those involved in it, added Benatar, who was born in Tetuan, Morocco, and who may conduct some of the interviews. Stanley Urman, executive director of the ASF, said, "we realized that nobody is capturing the history of Jews that fled, emigrated, escaped, or were expelled from countries throughout Europe, North Africa, the Middle East, and the Gulf region. This is an important chapter in Jewish history." "The project is long overdue," he added, and "that's why the urgency we are placing to videotape and record as many people as possible in the shortest time, as some are dying."

'There are important pockets of Sephardim in New Jersey, many of whom we hope will be interviewed,' said Urman, who lives in West Orange. There are about 20 Sephardic congregations and minyanim in the state in towns like Fort Lee, Teaneck, Englewood, West Orange, Highland Park, Long Branch, and Deal, but not large Sephardic communities to speak of, with the exception of the latter, where Syrian Jews make up about 16 percent of the population.

'Sephardic,' in the narrow sense, refers to Jews who trace their roots to the Iberian Peninsula or to their descendants, who settled in the Mediterranean basin or in countries of the Ottoman Empire after the expulsion from Spain, known in Hebrew as Sepharad, in 1492. In a broader sense, it refers to Jews who follow Sephardic liturgy, even if they didn't originate in the Iberian Peninsula. (Sephardic liturgy is not to be confused with Nusach Sfarad, a liturgy followed by

some Ashkenazi Jews.) Jews of Asian or North African descent are known as Mizrahim, Hebrew for 'Easterners.'

The ASF project will include Jews with ties to the Iberian Peninsula as well as Mizrahim. According to a 2002 study by the San Francisco-based Institute for Jewish and Community Research, there are some 600,000 Sephardic and Mizrahi Jews in the United States. In the first phase of the project, which started in August and ended in late October, the interview was pilot-tested and 'six or seven' people, of 10, were interviewed, said Urman. 'We hope to hear from people who want to be interviewed or who want to be trained as interviewers,' he said. The ASF will arrange the training locally for New Jersey residents who are interested, he added. 'We welcome the opportunity to work with Jewish day schools in New Jersey and have this [the interviews] as a project of the students themselves,' he said. 'It's more relevant when they interview their own family members.'

The ASF has trained 16 students of the Brooklyn-based Magen David Yeshiva High School, who will conduct as many interviews, he added. The third and last phase of the project will go from next June to Dec. 31, 2015, when the ASF expects to have completed the 5,000 interviews. In some cases, foreign-born parents will be interviewed with their American-born children. In others, the children will tell stories about their parents and stories they heard from their grandparents, Urman said.

Each interviewee will receive a copy of the interview on a DVD. The interviews, which can be up to two hours long, will be preserved in the ASF headquarters in Manhattan and, depending on the money raised, the organization will publish educational materials, books, and videos at the end of the project, said Urman.

According to Shelomo Alfassa, who is coordinating the project and did the bulk of the initial interviews, there are two different questionnaires: one for Jews from Arab countries and one for Jews from the Balkans, Turkey, and Greece. The questionnaire that will be used in the United States was designed by the ASF with input from professors Henry Green, of the Jewish Studies Department of the University of Miami, and Margalit Bejarano, of the Oral History Division of The Avraham Hartman Institute of Contemporary Jewry at Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Participants will be asked about life in their countries of origin, the need to leave when the social and political situation worsened, life in other countries before they settled in the United States, and how they rebuilt their lives here.

The immigration of Sephardic Jews to the United States goes back to pre-colonial times. In 1654, 23 Sephardic Jewish refugees fled from Portuguese-controlled Recife, in Brazil, and landed in New Amsterdam, now Manhattan. Subsequently, more Sephardic Jews of Portuguese Dutch background arrived in the thirteen colonies and founded communities and congregations in Newport, R.I.; Philadelphia; Charleston, S.C.; and Savannah, Ga.

More than 3,000 Jews from the Ottoman Empire, both Arabic and Ladino speakers, came to the United States between 1885 and 1908.

Some 10,000, mostly Ladino speakers from Turkey, arrived after 1908, many of whom settled in the Lower East Side of Manhattan. City officials, in cooperation with Jewish organizations, concerned about overcrowded conditions there, 'relocated' many in several parts of the country, among them Raritan, in Somerset County.

At one time, nearby New Brunswick was home to the largest Sephardic community in the United States outside New York City, write authors Patricia Ard and Michael Aaron Rockland in "The

Jews of New Jersey” (Rutgers University Press). Cong. Etz Ahaim, the best-known Sephardic synagogue in the state, was established there in 1929 and moved to Highland Park, across the river. Its current building was inaugurated in 1963.

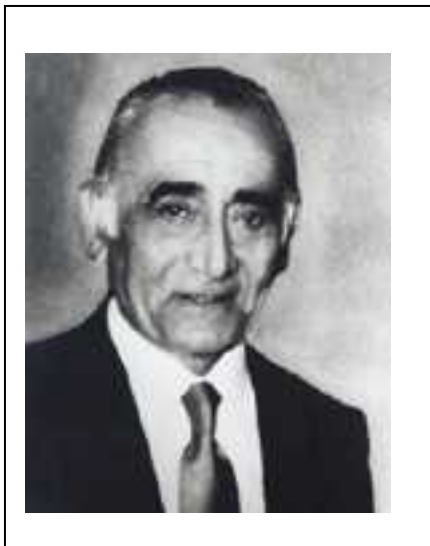
But Sephardic Jews made the Garden State their home much earlier. Historians believe that Aaron Louzada settled in Bound Brook as early as 1698. Daniel Nuñez served as town clerk in Piscataway in the early 1700s, and David Naar, born in St. Thomas, Virgin Islands, of Portuguese background, was appointed mayor of Elizabeth in 1843.”

For more information, call (917) 606-8262 or write info@sephardicoralhistory.org

Recent Articles of Interest

Although most of us know the story of the saving of the Jews of Zakynthos, it is always a story that bears repeating. This one has a very personal take on it.

The miraculous story of the Jews of Zakynthos



Mayor Lucas Karrer

Metropolitan Bishop Chrysostomos



Photos from Kehila Kedosha Janina archives

"Dec. 13, 2009

LEORA GOLDBERG, Special to The Jerusalem Post , THE JERUSALEM POST

ZAKYNTHOS, Greece - I needed a break at the end of a long and exhausting semester. My family was off to the southern end of the Balkan Peninsula, to an unknown island in Greece. I decided to join them.

We flew from Tel Aviv to Athens. From Athens, towards the famous sunrise of the eastern

isles, we landed on the island of Zakynthos - "Fiore di Levante" (Flower of the East) - which is also known by its Italian name - Zante.

During the ride, I read the travel guide, and learned a little about the history, the agriculture, the weather and finally about the poetic origins of the national anthem. I did not read one word about what I was really about to discover on the island.

The drive from the airport to our villa lasted a few minutes. From the coastal plateau, we drove up through twisted village bends to our destination.

An old lady, a typical Greek villager dressed all in black, welcomed us with a warm smile into her home. She asked to show us around her beloved mansion. It was obvious that this place was the source of her pride.

The landlady gave us a short tour of the old-style bedrooms, bathrooms and salon. In the kitchen, we noticed the beautiful authentic Greek dishes that were hanging over her antique-looking stove. All these were for our use.

We explained to her that for religious reasons, unfortunately, we would not be able to enjoy using her kitchenware and that we had brought our own.

This is when it all began.

She seemed confused. She looked at my dad and suddenly her eyes lit up. She noticed his kippa (yarmulke). We were asked to follow her out to the garden.

From the high point where we were standing, we saw a fantastic view of the ocean and the ships. But she pointed the other way completely.

"Look over there!" she said.

She wanted to know what we saw.

"Trees, vegetation," we said.

"Look again and focus!" she demanded.

"Something unidentified that looks like teeth, white dots," my dad said.

She stared at us for a long moment and said: "That is the Jewish cemetery."

I was shocked. We were all astounded. Here were on an isolated island in Greece. Who ever heard of Jews here?

I tried reminiscing about stories and experiences I had heard from friends who had visited here. Nothing came to mind.

From this moment on until I left Greece, the relaxing summer holiday drinking ouzo on the beach became a fascinating journey. By the end of it, I uncovered an unforgettable story.

The next morning, I got on my rented moped and drove to the cemetery. The shudder that went through me started when I first saw the Star of David on the little black gate. The

trembling grew as I walked in. It was a huge cemetery containing hundreds of graves from the 16th century up until 1955. The grounds were well-kept and little stones were set on many graves, as if they had had visitors recently.

1955. I thought for a moment. Whoever knows the history of Greece and its islands even faintly knows that there was no place struck harder by the Nazis.

Rhodes, Corfu, Salonika, Athens. The loss of Jewish life in Greece was devastating.

From 1944, there were almost no Jews left even in the bigger communities.

I did not, however, understand the meaning of the "1955" grave, and decided to investigate.

In a small house that stood in the heart of the property, I found the cemetery keeper, a third generation of custodians of the Jewish graveyard in Zakynthos. My inability to speak the language prevented me from having a deep conversation with him.

I sought to continue my search for the Jewish history of this town, and within five minutes I was at City Hall.

When I told the clerk at the front desk what I was after, he asked if I had already been to the synagogue. The question was posed casually, as though it's asked on a daily basis.

"Excuse me?" I thought I hadn't heard right. "A synagogue on this island?"

He gave me directions.

The synagogue was located on a busy road in the center of the island. Off the main street, in a space between two buildings, was a black iron gate, just like the one I had seen not long ago at the cemetery. Above it was a stone arc with an open book.

It read, in a loose translation from the original Hebrew, "At this holy place stood the Shalom Synagogue. Here, at the time of the earthquake in 1953, old Torah scrolls, bought before the community was established, were burned."

Through the locked gate I saw two statues. Judging by their long beards, they looked to me like rabbis. The writing on the wall proved me wrong: "This plaque commemorates the gratitude of the Jews of Zakynthos to Mayor Karrer and Bishop Chrysostomos."

What was the acknowledgment about? Who were these people? Why the statues? What happened

here? I had lots of questions. I had to find a lead, if not an answer. I returned to City Hall, excited and trembling.

I approached the clerk, who already recognized me, and started questioning him about what had happened here. He referred me to the mayor's deputy on the third floor. I found his room, knocked at his door and asked him if he would spare me a few minutes. He willingly accepted.

HALF an hour later I came out with this:

On September 9 1943, the governor of the German occupation named Berenz had asked the mayor, Loukas Karrer, for a list of all Jews on the island.

Rejecting the demand after consulting with Bishop Chrysostomos, they decided to go together to the governor's office the next day. When Berenz insisted once again for the list, the bishop explained that these Jews weren't Christians but had lived here in peace and quiet for hundreds of years.

They had never bothered anyone, he said. They were Greeks just like all other Greeks, and it would offend all the residents of Zakynthos if they were to leave.

But the governor persisted that they give him the names.

The bishop then handed him a piece of paper containing only two names: Bishop Chrysostomos and Mayor Karrer.

In addition, the bishop wrote a letter to Hitler himself, declaring that the Jews in Zakynthos were under his authority.

The speechless governor took both documents and sent them to the Nazi military commander in Berlin. In the meantime, not knowing what would happen, the local Jews were sent by the leaders of the island to hide inside Christian homes in the hills. However, a Nazi order to round up the Jews was soon revoked - thanks to the devoted leaders who risked their lives to save them.

In October 1944, the Germans withdrew from the island, leaving behind 275 Jews. The entire Jewish population had survived, while in many other regions Jewish communities were eliminated.

THIS unique history is described in the book of Dionyssios Stravolemos, An Act of Heroism - A Justification, and also in the short film of Tony Lykouressis, The Song of Life.

According to tour guide Haim Ischakis (see box), in 1947, a large number of Zakynthinote Jews made aliya while others moved to Athens.

In 1948, in recognition of the heroism of the Zakynthians during the Holocaust, the Jewish community donated stained glass for the windows of the Church of Saint Dionyssios.

In August 1953, the island was struck by a severe earthquake and the entire Jewish quarter, including its two synagogues, was destroyed. Not long afterwards, the remaining 38 Jews moved to Athens.

In 1978, Yad Vashem honored Bishop Chrysostomos and Mayor Loukas Karrer with the title of "Righteous among the Nations."

In March 1982, the last remaining Jew in Zakynthos, Ermandos Mordos, died on the island and was buried in Athens. Thus the circle of Jewish presence came to its close after five centuries.

In 1992, on the site where the Sephardic synagogue stood before the earthquake, the Board of Jewish Communities in Greece erected two marble memorial monuments as a tribute to the

bishop and mayor.

A FEW days before I had planned to leave the island and return home, I went into a bank to convert some dollars into euros. But even in a simple place like a bank, I managed to add another piece to this Jewish puzzle.

A clerk who had been on the phone and eating a sandwich, called on me when my turn came. When I gave her my dollars to be changed, she handed me the converted money in an envelope without asking for any identification.

Later on, when I opened it, I was surprised to see so much money.

The money that had been put into the envelope had not been counted properly, and instead of changing \$1,000, she had given me the equivalent of \$10,000!

This was really no surprise to me, because the clerk hadn't paid me any attention. Ultimately, however, once the bank realized that the money was missing, it would have no way of reaching me since no contact information was requested.

The following morning, I called the bank and asked to speak to the manager. I inquired to know if there was a problem with the previous night's accounts.

'You must be the woman with the dollars,' he said, immediately inviting me to his office.

An hour later, I was at the bank. When I walked into the office, the man sitting across from the manager moved to another chair and gave me his seat.

I shared my bank experience with him, saying how easy it would have been for me to disappear with the money.

The manager himself was profusely apologetic about the unprofessional way I was treated and thanked me repeatedly for returning the money.

To express his gratitude, he invited me and my family to dinner at an exclusive restaurant. I explained that eating out was too complicated for us due to the fact that we were observant Jews.

He asked for my address so he could send us a crate of wine.

"That is a problem too," I said.

I told him I had come from Israel a week ago for a holiday, but had gotten sidetracked.

'A few days after I landed, I was surprised to discover the Jewish community that was here up to 25 years ago,' I said. 'You don't owe me anything. Indeed, you have given me and my people a lot. The least I can do as a Jew to show my appreciation for what you have done for the Jews of Zakynthos is to return this money that doesn't belong to me and say, 'Thank you!''

There was silence for what appeared to be a long minute.

The man who had given me his seat when I walked in and hadn't said a word during the conversation, stood up with tears in his eyes, turned to me and said:

'As the grandson of Mayor Karrer, I am extremely overwhelmed and want to thank you!'"

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In the most recent edition of the news bulletin from the Embassy of Greece, Press and Communication Office, we were made aware of the fact of our mention in an article. We thank Leon Saltiel, a Salonikli based in Geneva with the United Nations for this information. The article reads as follows:

The Jews of Greece

In addition to the publication of K. E. Fleming's "Greece—a Jewish History,"several recent events.... have commemorated the history of Greece's Jewish community, including the often heroic actions of fellow Greeks coming to their aid during World War II. More than 1,000 guests attended the 25th anniversary dinner (October 8) of the Holocaust Memorial Center in Farmington Hills, Michigan, when the Center inaugurated a long-time project: a permanent exhibit honoring the Greeks who risked their lives to rescue their Jewish compatriots during the Nazi occupation.

Among those honored in the exhibit are Archbishop Damaskinos who, in a letter to the Germans composed by the poet Angelos Sikilianos, openly protested the deportation of Jews to the Nazi death camps; Athens police chief Angelos Evert, who worked with the Archbishop and others to issue false baptismal certificates; Bishop Chrysostomos and Mayor Karrer of Zakynthos who, saving all of the island's 275 Jews, responded to the Germans' demand for a list of their names by giving their own names instead; the Greek National Resistance, which provided safe havens to hundreds of Jews in the liberated towns of Greece; and finally, the Anonymous Greek Citizen, honoring—in the shape of a typical Greek family of Patras—the hundreds of Greeks who risked their lives by providing safe houses for their Jewish compatriots.

The museum of the 90-year-old Kehila Kedosha Janina synagogue on New York's Lower East Side—the only Romaniote (Greek-language) synagogue in the Western Hemisphere—reminds its visitors of the fact that, of the 1,960 Jews deported by the Nazis from the north-western city of Ioannina, 1,850 did not return. The synagogue, a New York landmark, is the place of worship of the descendants of those Jews who, taken prisoner during the Roman Empire's 70 AD capture of Jerusalem, jumped overboard when the ship carrying them to slavery was in danger of sinking off the coast of Greece and eventually established 'Greek Romaniote' communities in the region. The synagogue, which has undergone two years of renovation, has a growing appeal and conducts services every Saturday and on Jewish holidays. Its museum, with artifacts, pictures and documents, portrays the history of Greek Jews. On November 22, some 100 visitors attended the opening of a new exhibit celebrating weddings in pre- and post-WorldWar II Greece, with a display of marriage contracts, gowns and clothes reflecting Ottoman influences."

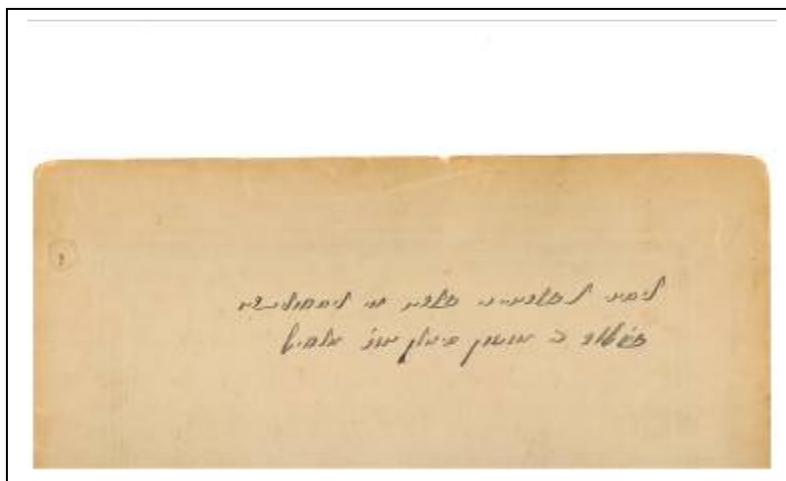
Some interesting developments on that fascinating photo of a 1925 wedding in New Jersey. Thanks to Judith Mazza, we have learned the following:

"If my memory is correct. Solomon Israel is the groom and his bride's first name was Maria. No one I spoke with knew her last name. The only note that I have is that the wedding was held at his farm in Ardsley, NY around 1912, and that Maria was Sephardic and spoke Spanish.... Maria and her infant son both died in childbirth around 1918, and Sol never married again. My notes

also indicate that unlike his siblings, Sol was born in Salonika. His date of birth was July 15, 1890. Judy"

In addition, Judy provided us with a lovely photo of the couple with some interesting details and some questions we are hoping one of our readers will be able to answer.

"The wedding photo is indeed the one that I remembered that my parents had. I saw my mother today and borrowed the photograph itself. It's an original in a cardboard photographer's frame. On the back of the cardboard frame is some writing that I cannot read. I am not even sure what language it is in. Is it Hebrew? I have scanned it.... I thought it might give us further information about the event itself.

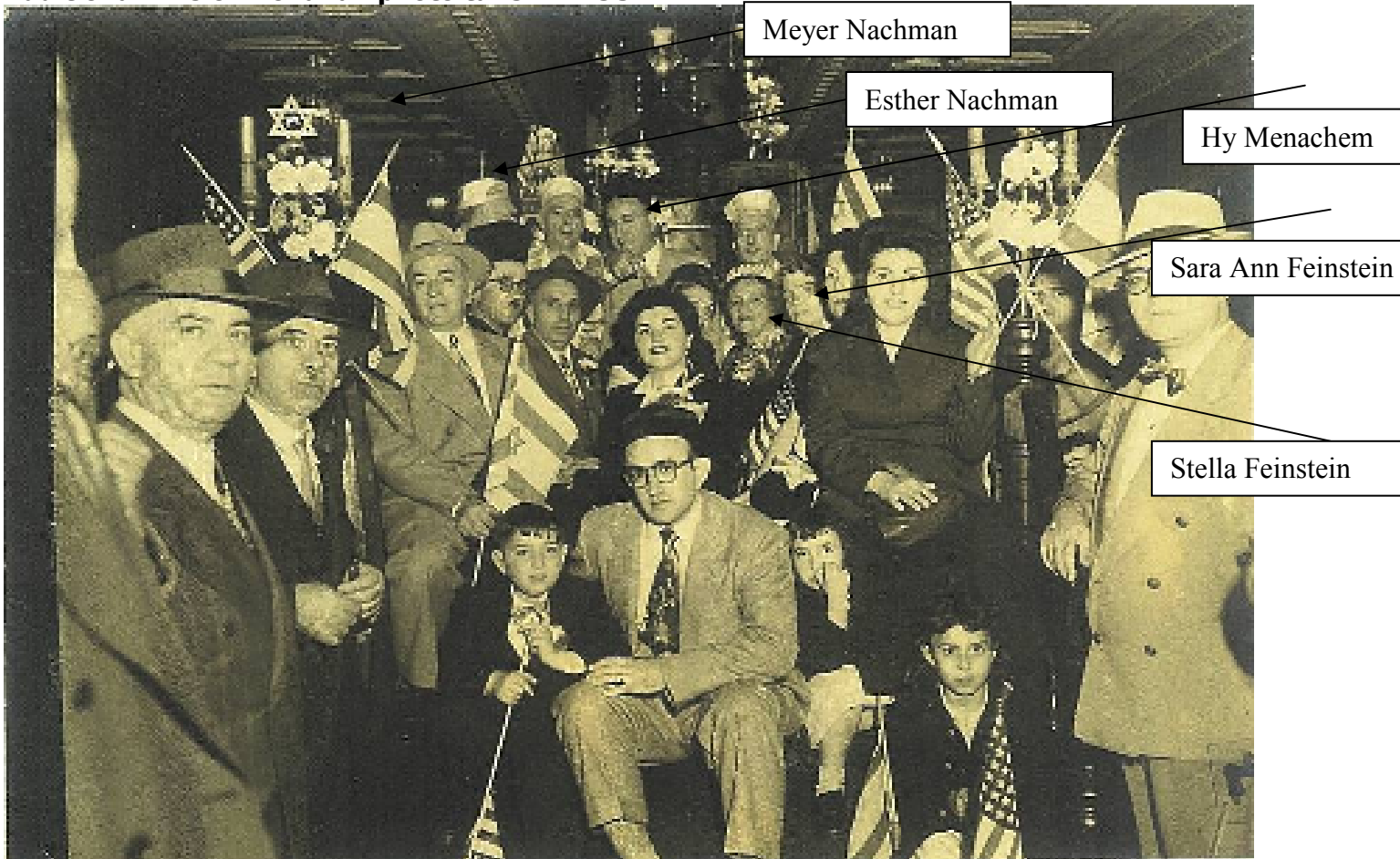


On the front of the cardboard frame, it says "Cooper Bros 135 New Main St. Yonkers, N.Y."

The other attachment is an oval formal photograph (on a metal plate) that was immediately next to Sol's wedding photo (which you already have). When I showed it to my mother, she immediately said it was Sol and Maria, but I am not sure...Embossed onto the face of the oval metal plate that the photo is bonded to, when held in the right way in a certain light, you can see the name of the photography studio. It says, 'Paley & Co. 104 Rivington Street, New York.'
Judy"



Additional ID's on Yohanan photo taken in 1951

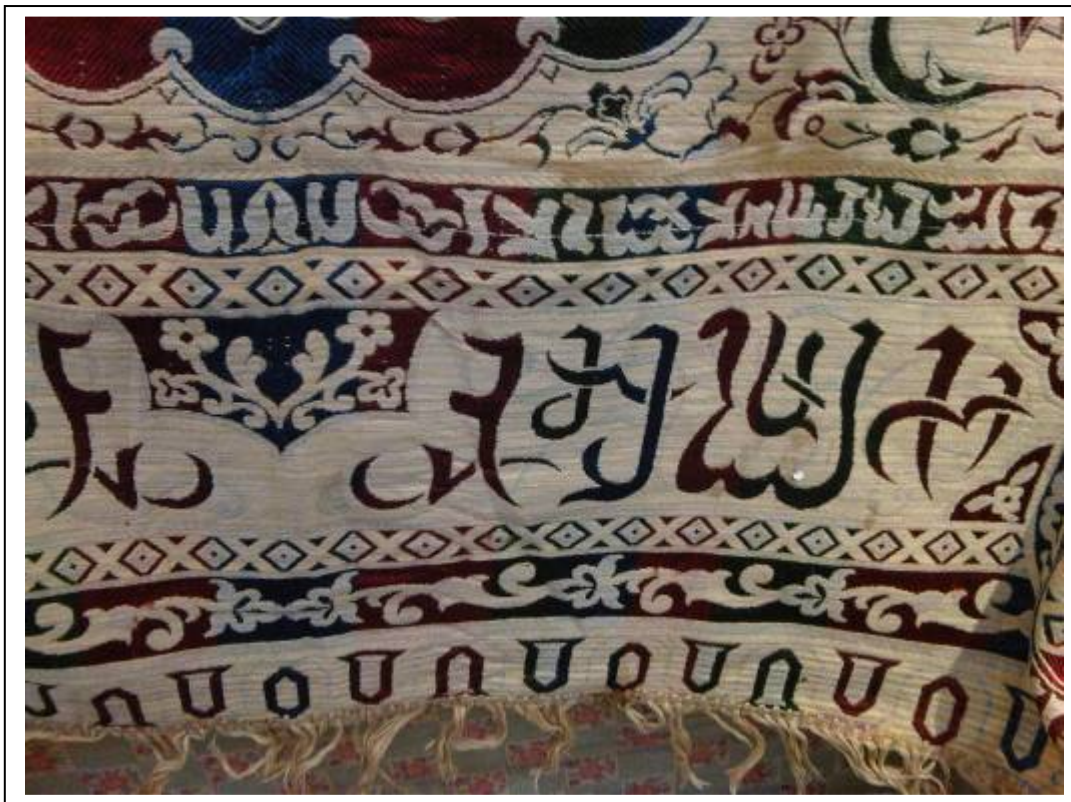


In our last newsletter we printed a photo of Louie Levy in Ioannina in June of 1945. Joe Besca has identified the man in the photo with him:



"Nice edition. I liked the picture of Lou Levy and Joseph Cohen in the Platia in Ioannina. For many years Joseph Cohen held a similar position as my cousin Mosios Eliasas (Moses Eliasof). Joseph Cohen's son Avramike lives north of Westchester and his wife, Esther is in a home outside of Athens. Regards, Joe"

In posting the photo of a recently acquired table cloth, now generously donated to Kehila Kedosha Janina by the Negrin family, we (by mistake—who was to know!) showed the reverse side of the tablecloth, brightly colored in gold and red. Told by an expert on needle work of that error, the 'reverse' side was actually the one that would be used. We now show you the tablecloth again in hopes of translating what looks like Turkish cursive script.



We continue to receive information on the Eames Street Synagogue. Marv Negrin sent us the following.

*"Marcia,
As always a wonderful Newsletter. Were I ever to forget my heritage, your newsletter quickly reminds me. Without the prior generation of those who were born in Ioannina, it is only the memories that remain of the stories etc. Your item about the synagogue in the Kingsbridge section of the Bronx did indeed bring back memories.*

After getting married in 1964, having both lived in Brooklyn (Bensonhurst and Sheepshead Bay), we moved to the Riverdale section of the Bronx. When my daughter was born in 1968, we decided to get here named at the temple in Kingsbridge, where coincidentally I had aunts and uncles living....Julia and Jack Jeuda and Isaac and Sarah Matsil.....a brother and sister married to a brother and sister!!!.....

We were greeted almost as celebrities when we went there and I will never forget the warmth of the folks who welcomed us there. Maybe it's also because the news I was Behorike Matsil's oldest grandson!!! Indeed, we all had a wonderful morning, and my daughter was named in an old fashioned Yianote ceremony etc.

Thanks for bringing back that very special memory. Best regards, Marv Negrin"

This month we also received a request from Leah Matsil. In a previous e-newsletter, we revealed the name of the "crying woman" on our website (see Holocaust in Ioannina on the Kehila Kedosha Janina website: www.kkjasm.org) and the woman, now deceased, is related to Leah! This awakened memories for Leah of other family members who perished in the Holocaust and the few survivors from Greece. Leah is now asking our help in locating members of the Gani family related to Leah. Leah sent us the following request:

"I'm also interested in finding any of the Gani family from the tree who reside in Greece. My grandfather's sister Louisa married Menahem Gani, and it looks like from the tree several children survived. I think Louisa and her husband must have died before the war because they are not marked as having died in the Holocaust and their son, Victor (who married his cousin, Rebecca) named his first two children after them.

I remember my Uncle Alvin (my father's brother) and his son Harley went to Greece about 30 years ago and visited with relatives in Athens that were Matsil descendents, and I think that's from this branch of the family, as the name Elsa is familiar. I think they stayed with her. If you look at the tree, children Mino, Ouriel, David and Eliyah survived. Maybe you know these Gani's of Athens, or have some contact info? My father had had the info ages ago, but we have long since lost contact. My cousin Harley said they had a gorgeous house, and when they all sat down to dinner, with all the local relatives they could muster plus my Uncle and cousin, the Athens cousins broke down in tears of desperation for their losses in the Holocaust. He said they were crying and crying all the names of the family members who would have been so elated to meet their cousins from the U.S., and how many people had died. The extended family was practically decimated - I think my grandfather Isaac being the only one who went to NY was the only sibling spared those losses. Some of the faces from the photos posted on the Yad Vashem website in Pages of Testimony for Matsils really have a resemblance to other family members!

Thanks for all of your help. I may look through my father's things to see if I can find any clues about the Gani family in Athens. Leah"

Do access our website (www.kkjasm.org) for information on our two exciting trips to Jewish Greece in 2010. Our first one, to Spain and Greece in May, is filling up fast. There are only a couple of spots still available.

News of Greek Jews in Israel

We are happy to pass on the news of our dear friend, Yvette Nachmias Messinas:

"Dear family, friends, associates,

I would like to invite you to a performance of my collection of poems 'They All Sound Like Love Songs, Women Healing Israeli-Palestinian Relations' in the framework of the Yamei Shira Bamidbar festival in midreshet Sde Boker, Sde Boker, on Saturday January 9th, 2010. The poems will be presented under the section: with an iron pen, poems of protest and poems of peace. The session will start at 10:15 and will last until 12:00. 'They All Sound Like Love Songs' will be presented at 11:00 in Hebrew (translated by Aviva Shemesh and edited by Roni Simchoni), English and Arabic (translated by Rania Amodi and edited by Tahseen Yaqeen) by Israeli and Palestinian women participants in the Joint Venture for Peace, Antoinette Knessevich, Rania Amodi, Fatina Anani, Nadia Attia, Julia Chaitin and myself.

Our performance will be based on the B-Live guide for live performance taught to us by Daniel Banks and Adam Mckinney, co-founders of DNAWORKS."

Finally, we are overjoyed to report the following to you:

JTA reported on December 14th that a rally in support of the Jewish cemetery of Ioannina took place. While they chose to accentuate the negative, reiterating the recent desecrations of the Jewish cemetery of Ioannina, something we are so painfully aware of, we would like to accentuate the positive. We sent out the news in a separate e-mail but now wish to repeat it. Good news deserves repeating. It is all too rare. Too often, negativity makes the front page. In recent years, anti-Semitism has been all too prevalent. What then can be more emotionally rewarding than to pass on the news of a recent mass demonstration against anti-Semitism? Where did this demonstration take place? In Ioannina. It was organized by the Christian citizens of the city and was heralded as "a human chain against racism." The cemetery was surrounded by the citizens of Ioannina to show their support for the Jewish community of the city and to publically show their outrage at recent desecrations of Jewish tombstones. In addition, a public exhibition was held, highlighting the ancient Jewish presence in the city and the importance of the Jewish cemetery as a monument to the long Jewish presence in Ioannina. The committee that organized the public display of support made the following statement: "The Jewish cemetery is not only the religious space of the Jewish Community but, also, a cultural monument of our city, the protection of which, like other historical monuments of our city, is the duty of every citizen." Let us all applaud the good citizens of Ioannina who organized and took part in this historic event. Kehila Kedosha Janina has sent a letter of thanks and appreciation to the citizens of Ioannina who stood up to be counted, who chose to make a public statement and not be defined by the negative actions of barbarians in their midst.



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