

Half the Jewish community of Ioannina would immigrate to the USA from 1902-1924. They came seeking a better life for themselves and their children. Initially, most settled on the Lower East Side of Manhattan. The Joseph family was typical of this immigration. Leon Joseph came in 1906, followed, in 1909, by his wife Sarah and their 3 children (Joseph, Esther and Mollie). The Hametz family arrival in the United States began in 1920 when the oldest daughter of Israel and Pernoula, Sarina, came by herself. Her grandfather Ovadia Solomon at 546-8 Broadway was listed as her destination. Israel and Pernoula Hametz arrived with the rest of their children (Fina, Esther, Haim, Ovadia, Alberto, Isaac and Molly) in April of 1928.



When the Hametz family applied for immigration to the USA, the quotas (put into law in 1924) had already been filled. Kehila Kedosha Janina wrote

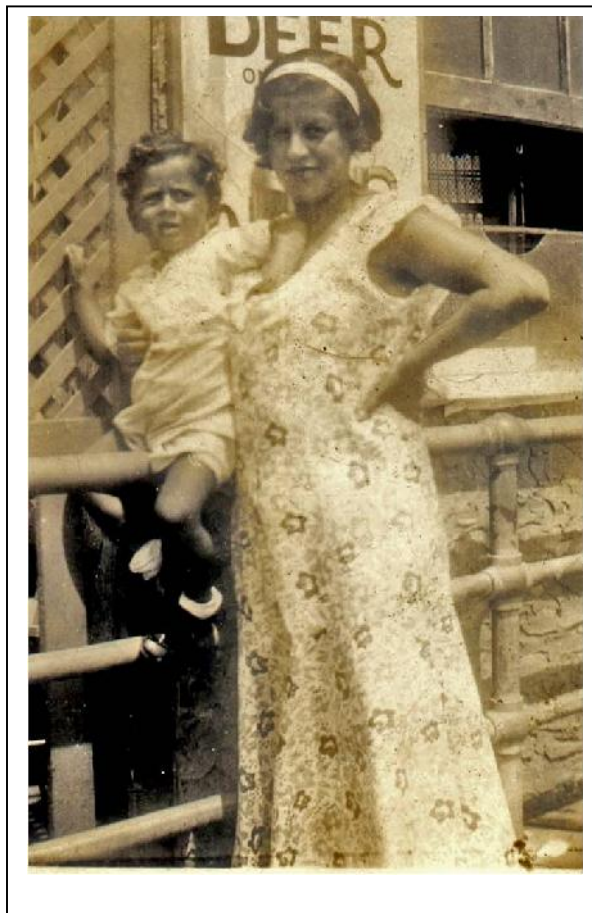
a letter to the authorities requesting that the Hametz family be allowed to come to the USA since the services of Rabbi Israel Hametz were needed at the synagogue at 280 Broome Street. If they had not been allowed to come, the family would have been among the over 1800 Ioannina victims of the Holocaust.

Leon Joseph (the surname originally was spelled without a final 's') is listed on the 1910 US census as living with his family (wife Sara, and children Joseph, Mollie and Esther) at 141 Orchard Street on the Lower East Side. Leon's occupation is listed as a peddler and, in the 1925 NY State census, we learn that he peddled candy. In 1927, when Leon petitioned for US citizenship, the family was living in Brooklyn on Rodney Street (#197). Leon is now an operator, working in the textile industry.



Photo sent to Irwin Josephs' grandfather

Pannonia 1920



Israel Hametz is listed as a Haham in the Ioannina archives and, in the 1930 US census, when the family is living at 271 Broome Street, is listed as a teacher at a Hebrew School. The family pays \$25 a month in rent and is becoming Americanized: Israel is now Isadore and Pernoula is now Pauline. Israel Hametz died at the age of 58 in 1934. Pernoula would raise the

family, the older children helping out by working (Esther as an operator, Ovadia as a cutter and Albert as a 'polisher').

The men of the Hametz family played important roles in Kehila Kedosha Janina as spiritual leaders, often helping to conduct the services.

In essence the story of the Josephs and Hametz families is the story of Greek-Jewish immigration to the Lower East Side. As the years passed more and more Greek Jews would marry into the traditional Sephardic and Ashkenazi worlds but many, like the Josephs and Hametz families, would continue to celebrate their special Greek heritage.

This exhibit was created in loving memory of Irwin Josephs, a man who relished his special Greek-Jewish background and diligently worked in accessing archival material, which he always shared with Kehila Kedosha Janina.

We thank Irwin's widow, Jocelyn, for making this exhibit possible.

Here, at Kehila Kedosha Janina, we believe that you cannot possibly know who you are if you do not know where you came from.

Here, at Kehila Kedosha Janina, we are proud to tell the story of the Josephs and Hametz families.