September 2018 E-Newsletter

Dear Friends of Kehila Kedosha Janina,

We wish our friends a Happy and Healthy New Year surrounded by family and friends. May 5779 bring peace throughout the world. May we continue to grow and flourish. May our wealth be counted, not in material possessions but, rather, in the love of family, friends and community. L'Shanah Tovah, Xronia Polla, Anyos Munchos i Buenos. Attached to this E-newsletter you will find our Holiday schedule. Do join us for services. Our seats are free and our hearts are open.

Rabbi Gabriel Negrin blowing the shofar

Seth Kofinas, Rabbi Nissim Elnecave, Ethan Marcus, and Andrew Marcus blowing the shofar
This newsletter, our 114th 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.

We now reach over 9,000 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 museum@kkjsm.org.

As always, you are all invited to attend our Saturday morning Shabbat services. Just give our Shamas, Sol Kofinas, a heads up by emailing info@kkjsm.org 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.

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Passings

We mourn the passing of Morris Matsil shortly before his 98th birthday. Morris was the sixth of ten children of Rabbi Matsliach ben Isaak Matsliach (Matsil) and Amelia Levy Matsil. He is survived by his sister, Selma, and his brother, Sol (a member of the Board of Trustees of Kehila Kedosh Janina) and his son, Martin, and his daughter, Amy, two grandsons, Matthew and Michael, plus many in his extended family and extended Romaniote community. Our sympathy is extended to his family and friends who will mourn his passing.

Bechoraki Matsil Family
We mourn the passing of Albert Pardo (12/28/81-8/19/2018), beloved son of Klementina Pardo and the late Matthew Pardo, beloved brother of Esther & Eric Koeppel, beloved nephew of Miriam Pardo, and beloved great-nephew of Louise Pardo, beloved nephew of Sava & Fani Negrin, Aris & Dora Negrin, and Anna Angelou Negrin. Our hearts go out to the family and friends of Albert. He will be mourned by his family and friends and the community of Kehila Kedosha Janina.

We recently learned of the passing of Jesse Josephs at the age of 101. Jesse was the son of Jacob (Jack) Josephs and the nephew of Joe Josephs (the first President of Kehila Kedosha Janina). Jesse was the grandson of Isaac and Esther Josephs) both born in Ioannina. He will be mourned by his family and friends and the community of Kehila Kedosha Janina.

We regret to inform you of the passing of Esther Nachmias Calderon (1934-2018), beloved wife of Mickey Calderon; and beloved mother of Ira Calderon, Lori Rossman and Andrew Calderon. Mickey was a past president of the Pashas and Esther came from a traditional Yanniot family. Our sincere sympathies to the family and friends.
**Simchas**

We celebrate of birth of Nash James Negrin, the son of Noah and Sarah SuMing Negrin, the grandson of Linda and Joel Negrin, the Great-grandson of Samuel Negrin and Diana Ganis Negrin and the great, great, great-grandson of Joseph Negrin and Serena Ganis Negrin. Another Yanniote family continues the legacy!

We celebrate the 102nd birthday of Hyman Barouch, Hyman is Rose Attas Ferrari’s uncle, the brother of her mother of Blessed Memory, Rebecca Baruch Attas.

It was so good to see Ralph Battino and wish him a happy 99th in person. Marvin Marcus, Rose Eskononts and Marcia Haddad Ikonomopoulos dropped by to take Ralph out to lunch.
While in Turkey, Marvin Marcus was able to see our dear friend, Matt Hanson. See Matt’s excellent article in this newsletter.

ΔIKOI MAS – Dikoi Mas – Los Muestros

Our synagogue is more than just a place of worship, and a place of study and learning, with our museum and extensive library. It is also a place to preserve traditions and customs and a living memorial to those Greek Jews who perished in the Holocaust. In addition, it as a place to welcome “Our Own.” Each month, Greek Jews, both Romaniote and Sephardic, come to visit the center of Greek Jewry in the United States, often the place their own ancestors worshipped.

In August, we were blessed with visitors from the Marcadis family, the Mathios family and the White family (Colchamiro family).
The Smith family (descendants of Ralph and Esther Colchamiro) with their cousin, Jesse, on far left

Connecting to their heritage.

Abe Marcadis

Mordechai Smith holding a Torah scroll from Ioannina
Visitors Flock to Kehila Kedosha Janina

August was a busy month. Not even the stifling NYC heat and humidity kept visitors away. We had visitors from France, Greece, New Jersey, Seattle Washington and a new friend from around the corner on Allen Street.

Gabriel and Nadia from Paris, France
Charalampous Gappas from Veria, Greece
We Are Proud of the Accomplishments of Our Community

In this issue we highlight the work of three members of our community, Elliot Colchamiro, Matt Hanson and Paul Solomon.

Elliot Colchamiro, one of the original members of our Board of Trustees, moved to Florida a couple of years ago and has been our emissary in the South, not only speaking about Greek Jewry at numerous organizations (always donating his honorarium to Kehila Kedosha Janina) but, just recently informed us that he will be conducting tours of the Adolph Eichman "Operation Finale" Exhibit, which opens at the Holocaust Documentation Center Museum in Dania Beach. The exhibit will be there for six months from September 6, 2018 through March 31, 2019. "It is a blockbuster exhibit! It has taken two weeks just to uncrate it. It is now being assembled for the September grand opening. You'll get an idea of its size from the photos below the poster." What a coincidence. The movie, "Operation Finale", starring Ben Kingsley as Adolph Eichman is opening just now across the country. While living in New York, Elliot was a trained docent at the Museum of Jewish Heritage.

Rabbi Binyamin Yablak from Teaneck NJ and Jeanne Maimon and Al Maimon from Sephardic Bikur Holim in Seattle

Sol Kofinas and Alexandros Tselekidis
Our dear friend, Matt Hanson, a talented and sensitive writer shared some of his most recent work with us. Matt is hoping to get funding to enable him to have a body of his work published by Kapon Publishing in Athens. If you are interested in making this wish a reality, contact us and we will put you in touch with Matt.

Note: all photos are from the archives of Kehila Kedosha Janina

Ottoman Twilight: The Last Pashas of Ioannina
Written by Matt Hanson for Shalom in Turkey

In the last years of Ottoman rule, Nissim Levis, a doctor from the wealthiest family in Ioannina, photographed his city, famed for its silver, silk and separatism under the Lion, Ali Pasha of Tepelene. In Athens, the Jewish Museum of Greece is exhibiting his stereoscopic prints until October 5.

The author and businessman Alexander Moissis retraced the footsteps of his great-grandmother’s uncle Nissim Levis in Ioannina, a small city in Greece’s mountainous northwest. He walked down the rough stone steps of overlapping empires, a snarl of ruins smoothed by metal ramps leading to the 10th century walls that defended the Despotate of Epirus, the 13th century Byzantine successor state that wrote Ioannina into history. Moissis looked back at the vacant museum of Fethiye Mosque behind a row of iron cannons against the alpine horizon above Pamvotis Lake, once furnished to protect a Royal Pavilion that now houses the city’s Byzantine Museum. In a district still known in the tongue of its former Turkish lords as İç Kale (the inner castle), the southeastern acropolis of Ioannina rises over 30 square kilometers of ancient urban space above a panoramic high ground where the seraglio and harem of the pashas ruled under the Sultanate of Constantinople.

It was September of 2017, as Jews around the world convened for Yom Kippur, the holiest day of the year. The indigenous Greek-speaking community of Ioannina preserves Romaniote culture with peerless depth, gathering once a year for the sole remaining Jewish service at the Old Synagogue, said to have been built on a foundation at least as old as the surrounding walls on a narrow alley inside the castle district. Lit by Byzantine lamps and serenaded in mournful, Gregorian-like chants of atonement sung by cantor Haim Ischakis, a full congregation complemented by diaspora solidarity sat, prayed and remembered.

In the shadow of historic cookhouses along the western bastion of Byzantine fortifications dramatically restored during the Ottoman era and renovated for the Silversmithing Museum’s 2016 inauguration, Moissis met with colleagues for secular purposes, to discuss the American distribution of his book, “The Nissim Levis Panorama: Stereoscopic Photos and Travels of a Doctor from Ioannina” with Marcia Ikonomopoulos, the director of Kehila Kedosha Janina Synagogue Museum in Manhattan, housed in the only active Romaniote synagogue in the Western Hemisphere. Inspired by his roots in Ioannina as a Greek educated in Athens College and MIT, he returned to the upland airs of his family history with smiling confidence, optimistic about his book’s reception in New York, with its world-class publishers and voracious readers. Worldly life runs parallel, and often independent from orthodox religion for Romaniotes, especially from Ioannina.

Romaniote life today
“First of all, it is very difficult to have a complete religious life in Ioannina, and not only in Ioannina, in all other Greek cities with the exception of Athens or Salonika. We have to adjust our lives to the specific, prevailing conditions in every society. So, we are not very strict,” said Moses Elisaf, professor of internal medicine and the president of the Jewish Community of Ioannina, in a 2016 interview with an American traveler and
researcher exploring his Romaniote heritage, in which he discussed the secular nature of Jewish life in Ioannina. “We do not to focus on typical religious rules, but on history, tradition, and science. We try to discuss Talmud and Torah, not as religious texts, but for their meaning, for what they teach us in our everyday lives.”

And yet, for Moissis, who found entrepreneurial success in Silicon Valley, his ancestors practically rediscovered him through a nonlinear logic as confounding as the principles of faith. Such truths are echoed in the living folklore of Native American elders, who remind soul seekers that the late departed also search for the living. Hiette and Asher, the great-grandparents of Moissis, survived the Holocaust and returned to the postwar Ioannina of 1945 very much like ghosts in a city that denied its Holocaust.

As the red sun rose, looters preyed on the downtown mansions of the bourgeois Levi family once headed by patriarch Davidjon Effendi (his personal medals included the Osman Devlet Nisanı, Hilal Nisanı and Nisan-i Initiya). Among the spoils were 500 unseparated glass slides kept in a Richard Taxiphote projector owned by Effendi’s fifth son, Nissim Levis. In the eyes of ignorant thieves, the projector would seem like a piece of wooden furniture. A year after it was stolen, the projector appeared in Ioannina for the amusement of lakeside strollers. To the astonishment of Hiette and Asher Moissis, they found the turn-of-the-century invention there, popularly called a “panorama”.

After gazing at the snowcapped Pindos mountains reflected in the glassy waters of the lake that first and bittersweet postwar spring, they paid what seemed a reasonable amount to look inside the panorama. The small, countrified city had no movie house to speak of and they were keen to see foreign lands far from Greece, as the vendor promised. It was not long before they recognized the photos. Hiette saw the handiwork of her uncle Nissim. And as she clicked the shutter, changing through slides that chronicled his years in France, Italy and across the region of Epirus surrounding Ioannina, she could not see the pictures clearly anymore. Then not at all. Her eyes blurred with the tragedy of his loss in Auschwitz, where 1,850 of her fellow Jews from Ioannina also perished.

In the lion’s den
Hungarian novelist Mór Jókai wrote “Lion of Janina: The Last Days of the Janissaries” to capture the orientalist intrigue of the city’s Ottoman past. First published in 1897, it is subtitled, “A Turkish Novel” and translated by R. Nisbet Bain, soon released in New York and London by Harper & Brothers in 1898. Its riveting, pulpy narrative is chock-full of that delicious blend of exoticism and romance that fired the pages of the early modern novel for readers in for a romp. Hungarians had espied the Ottoman imagination with a distinct brand of suspicion and curiosity, as one of the occupied territories of the Turkish Sultan from 1541 to 1699. In literature and with a creative lens, many writers fictionalized Ali Pasha as a premodern anti-hero, from Byron’s “Child Harold’s Pilgrimage” to Balzac’s “Lost Illusions”. Unassimilated by the West, the Lion of Janina also symbolized non-conformism against the East.

“Manifold and monstrous as were Ali’s crimes, his astonishing ability and splendid courage lend a sort of savage sublimity even to his blood-stained career, and, indeed, the dogged valor with which the octogenarian warrior defended himself at the last in his stronghold against the whole might of the Ottoman Empire almost without a parallel in history,” wrote the translator R. Nisbet Bain to preface Jókai’s 1898 edition, which reads: “Better to perish in the deep void than be condemned to the embraces of Ali Pasha...[he] himself had built the whole citadel of Janina, and had been wise enough, as soon as the fortress was finished to at once and quietly
remove all the builders and architects who had had anything to do with it, so that he only knew all the secrets of the place.”

The year Jókai enjoyed literary fame from the bookshops of Manhattan to the salons of Bloomsbury, 23-year-old Nissim Levis picked up a camera with only a year left before graduating from medical school in France. He returned home to Ioannina and began photographing the last years of nearly five Ottoman centuries, and continued with runaway enthusiasm until the Nazis murdered him and his family. On display until October 5th a short walk from Hadrian’s Arch and the National Garden in Athens, the Jewish Museum of Greece curated the life’s work of Nissim Levis after the book by Alexander Moissis, whose father Raphael started the collection. The exhibit has a technological focus, highlighting the influence of early 20th century masters like Yiannis Manakis, who had an early photography studio in Ioannina and is known for having shot the first ever motion picture from the Balkans.

The museum director and exhibition curator Zanet Battinou led a team of researchers, designers, and archivists to open, “Through the lens of Nissim Levis: a family, an era” with a surprise element, bridging photographic history to the present. Through a clever contraption, viewers snap smartphone shots of the double-image prints that Levis developed, to see through a new “panorama” device that recreates the 3-D effect of stereoscopy. It is stunning to examine the lives of the last generation of Ottoman Jews in Greece as they stand in the rustic countryside of lands that would change hands, with people whose lives were too brief.
Thank You Paul Solomon

Our dear friend, Paul Solomon, puts an annual add into his synagogue bulletin to help educate the world on our community. What a great idea!

Representatives from the Sephardic Brotherhood were honored to join the leadership of Temple Moses - The Sephardic Congregation of Florida this past weekend for a special Shabbat in Miami. This incredible Turkish-Cuban Sephardic Community is doing amazing things by engaging the next generation of Sephardic youth in Florida, teaching about Sephardic traditions, and baking delicious bourekas, biscochos, and bulemas all year-round!

Our Museum Director, Marcia Haddad Ikonomopoulos, will be presenting at the Annual Hellenic Heritage Weekend (Oct. 4-7). The theme is “Telling the Story: the Museum’s Perspective,” and the specific topic is “Remembrance: 70 years on, Holocaust Survivors Detained in Cyprus Remembered.”
Kehila Kedosha Janina Synagogue and Museum invites you to join us as we honor Sol Kofinas with the first Hy Genee Legacy Award.

Join us for a special Shabbat when we recognize Sol Kofinas for all he has contributed to our community.

Saturday October 27, 2018
Services begin at 9:30am
Kiddush Lunch at 12:30pm

Kehila Kedosha Janina
280 Broome Street NYC

Please RSVP to amarcus@kkjsm.org
October 28th Oxi Day: Screening of the film on Greek Jews in the National Resistance
Sunday October 28 at 2:00pm in our communal room

November 18th “Stop at the Red Apple” with author, Elaine Freed Lindenblatt at 2:00 pm
Book will be for sale and author will there to autograph copies
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Upcoming Events of Interest

Manhattan Community Selihot Night – Saturday Night September 15 at 12:30am

5th Annual Community Wide
Sephardic Selihot Service

Saturday Night, September 15th
at the Edmond J. Safra Synagogue
11 East 63rd Street, NYC

Participating Synagogues:
Congregation Beit Edmond
Congregation Magen David of Manhattan
Congregation Shearith Israel
Kehila Kedosha Janina
Manhattan Sephardic Congregation
Persian Jewish Center
West Side Sephardic Synagogue

News from Jewish Greece

This upcoming Rosh Hashanah, a small group from the United States and Brazil will be sharing services with the Jewish Community of Corfu.

Ioannina

We are honored to be joining the Jewish Community of Ioannina and Yanniotes from around the world for Yom Kippur.
Kavala

Lighting the Holocaust Monument in Kavala

The Holocaust Memorial in Kavala, on Red Cross Street, is now illuminated (from the beginning of August 2018) by a lamppost placed in the area in order to avoid future attempts of vandalism. The Memorial has been desecrated twice since its construction in the city in 2015. The proposal for adequate illumination of the sign came from Mr. Victor Venouziou, sponsor of the Monument and Chairman of Jewish Community of Kavala and implemented under the responsibility of the competent authorities of the Municipality of Kavala. For more complete security of the monument, the proposal of Mr. Venouziou includes security camera installation. The monument is situated where there were the warehouses in which the Jews of Kavala were held in 1943, prior to their deportation to the extermination camps. (From the website of KISE - Central Board of Jewish Communities of Greece).

Rhodes

One of the most actives Jewish Communities in Greece is that of Rhodes. Although small in number, due to impassioned leadership, especially that of Bella Restis, President, and Carmen Cohen, Secretary, the Jewish Community of Rhodes (JCR). This past summer is a prime example of what goes on in Rhodes, a book presentation, the annual Holocaust Commemoration and visits of tourists and Rhodeslis to celebrate their simchas in Kal Shalom.

Presentation of the Book "Villa of Secrets" by Patricia Wilson in Rhodes

The International Writers and Translators' Center of Rhodes, the DOPAR-City of Rhodes, held Wednesday, August 1, 2018 the presentation of the book "Villa of Secrets" (Zaffre versions) of British Patricia Wilson writer, in cooperation with the British Vice Consulate of Great Britain in Rhodes and the Jewish Community of Rhodes. The novel takes place in Rhodes and refers to a dramatic event, the deportation of Jews of Rhodes at the Auschwitz camp in 1944 and combines mystery, suspense, compassion and family secrets that are revealed at a staggering manner at the end of the novel.
74th Anniversary of the Deportation of the Jews of Rhodes held July, 2018

This year, on July 24th (commemorated one day after the actual anniversary on July 23rd due to Tisha B’Av), Rhodeslis from around the world gathered to remember and honor.

A Collection of Celebrations of Simchas in the Summer of 2018

Ben Alhadeff, Chiara Franco, Caiden
Another step towards the construction of the Museum of the Holocaust in Thessaloniki was taken on August 7, 2018 with the decision of the Minister of Finance, Euclid Tsakalotos, approving the construction financing. In his letter to the Mayor of Thessaloniki, Yiannis Boutari, and the president of the Jewish Community of Thessaloniki, David Saltiel, the government's commitment to practical support in the erection of the Holocaust Museum was reiterated and make known that in the Budget of 2019 there will be provided an amount of 1/4 of the budget project (estimated at 23 m. EUR). Noting that already the German government has decided to fund the project with 10 mil. Euro and a similar amount will be allocated and the Niarchos Foundation.

According to a statement of the Jewish Community of Thessaloniki, "following contacts of the president of the Jewish Community of Thessaloniki and President of the Central Jewish Council, Mr. David Saltiel, with Ministers of the Greek Government regarding the creation of the Museum of the Holocaust in Greece at the old railway station of Thessaloniki, the Finance Minister. Euclid Tsakalotos a letter dated 08.07.2018, stated that the Ministry of Finance will assist the Museum Elapsed construction work and to grant up to one quarter of the total project cost of construction."

More specifically, as noted in the statement, "Mr. Euclid Tsakalotos noted the initiative of creation of the Museum of the Holocaust in Greece that" the completion of this project will be of particular importance not only for the city of Thessaloniki but also for the whole country, as tribute to Jews who were murdered in concentration camps, as vehicle keeping the collective memory as a cultural object itself. "

For his part, the Mayor of Thessaloniki, Yiannis Boutari, stated to ANA-MPA the importance of government support to the work of the Holocaust Museum building in Thessaloniki. "This is a very important project that will showcase the history of Thessaloniki and will be a center for human rights," he said.

Note that according to the Municipality of Thessaloniki, the attendance at the museum each year will exceed 100,000 people. Around the museum there will be created a memory park and metropolitan park in the commercial railway station area, which is expected to contribute decisively to upgrading the entrance of western Thessaloniki. In general, the region has strong symbolism as it is located near the old railway station of Thessaloniki, from where the German Occupation, trains carried Jews to Nazi concentration camps.

Studies for the creation of the memory park will be completed by November and the task of planting 6,000 trees in an area of 27 acres, in memory of the Jews of Thessaloniki who lost their lives in the Nazi camps, will begin. The building to be erected will be circular, will have six floors, and will be built from metal and glass with its height reaching 32 meters.
Newly Released Book (In Greek)

The testimony of Samuel Mizan from Antartiko

"The national resistance was not just a word, not a necessity of the world. It was more the awakening of man ..." Samuel Mizan

From the publisher "International Step" a shocking, just recently published the testimony of Samuel Mizan (1925-2011). Written in 1995, when the Mizan was 70 years old it is an autobiographical text written by hand in a notebook, which his daughters discovered only in 2017, looking for some evidence in a drawer in the parental home.

The book "It was more the human awakening"- The personal testimony of Greek Jew Samuel Mizan on the Guerrillas (Resistance Fighters) and the Occupation" is a testimony "treasure" for two reasons: First, because it is the vision of a common man for events that marked Greece up to the present day. Second, because it concerns the testimony of a Greek Jewish rebel, another proof of the active participation of Jews in the liberation and social struggles of the 1940s and equal relations between people of different religions -but also the relationship developed between fighters in the Resistance and the mountain.

Samuel Mizan, young rebel, takes part in dangerous operations which he describes, while philosophizing about the war, the new society that dreamed, the gloom and political disorder that followed the liberation of Greece. The book was edited by: Moses Litsis, Louisa Mizan, Babis Misailidis Christina Demir and Natasha Terlexis.
Articles of Interest

As American as Apple Pie - The Myth of Jewish Immigration
By Devin Naar published in the Jewish in Seattle Magazine. Full article here.

We might like to think we contributed to “a nation of immigrants,” but in reality the system has always been rigged.

Born in Salonica, then part of the Ottoman Empire and home to the largest Ladino-speaking Sephardic Jewish community in the world, one of my great-uncles fled the city at the end of World War I. Escaping mandatory military conscription, he stowed away to Istanbul and then smuggled himself to Cuba and then to Mexico. He finally crossed the US border at Laredo, Texas in 1925, but, due to a new immigration restriction law enacted in 1924, he did so under an assumed name and claiming to be Mexican in terms of his nationality, place of birth, and race — claims rendered more convincing thanks to his fluency in the Spanish-sounding Ladino.

It was a good thing my great-uncle knew how to game an unjust, racist American immigration system established precisely to keep people like him out. His two sisters and many in the extended family who remained in Salonica, unable to secure visas to the United States due to the quotas, all perished in Auschwitz-Birkenau.

My great-uncle’s story is representative of the illegal nature of much of Jewish immigration to the United States. In fact, during the 1920s and 1930s, Jews were the group most commonly associated with illegal immigration in the American imagination. Scholars estimate that tens of thousands of Jews entered the country illegally during this period. The only reason this story has been forgotten is because Jews have since positioned themselves in the eyes of the government as white. White, civilized, European people don’t come to this country illegally, right? It is time to disabuse ourselves of the myths and recognize that immigration restriction not only historically targeted Jews, among many others deemed “riffraff” and “undesirables,” but also that, in response, Jews, like many others, both entered the country via illicit means and fought against the very restrictionist measures that were keeping them out.

With its immigration restrictions, culminating in the Johnson-Reed Act in 1924, Congress made it impossible for immigrants from Asia and parts of the Middle East to enter the country and set strict quotas for those coming from Eastern and Southern Europe. Ironically, due to the desire for cheap labor for agribusiness in the southwest, no restrictions were placed on Mexicans at the time. Entering as a “Hebrew” (Jews were identified as a separate “race” by the US government until the 1940s) — and one from Greece or Turkey at that — would have been virtually impossible at the time. Hence, my great-uncle’s decision to pose as a Mexican.

Such a decision risked exposure, imprisonment, deportation, and permanent exclusion from the country. But it also demonstrates that Sephardic Jews could draw upon their flexible cultural identities to their benefit to pass as (or be mistaken for) Mexicans, in the case of my great-uncle, or as (non-Jewish) Spaniards, Frenchmen, Italians, or Greeks, depending on the context. Sometimes, however, they were perceived to be less white — Turks, Arabs, or Muslims — to their detriment.

Representing mainstream American Jewry, Ashkenazi Jews often refused to accept “Oriental Jews” — usually considered those “exotic” and “uncivilized” Spanish-speaking Jews from the Muslim world — as their brethren and largely excluded them from participation in American Jewish institutions fearing that association with the newcomers would also jeopardize their own reputation. The ability of Sephardic Jews to build their own institutions and also to form bonds with other communities — especially Latinos in New York and Greeks in Seattle — provided much needed consolation. But associating with other communities or passing as representatives of a different race or nationality posed additional risks. During the Depression, rising nativism and the scapegoating of Mexicans — deemed racially inferior and “unclean, improvident, indolent,” as Mexican-American activist Ernesto Galarza characterized the prevailing sentiment in 1929 — resulted in the deportation of 500,000, half of whom were American-born children with US citizenship.

The first words pronounced by US Congress on the nature of citizenship, in 1790, indicated that only “white persons” were eligible to be naturalized and thereby implanted whiteness as the most important criterion for claiming status as a true American. The 1924 Johnson-Reed Act now permitted only those eligible for citizenship to enter the country in the first place. Jews were among the groups most in search of refuge at that time and numbered among the principal targets of exclusion. We have a local Washington state politician to thank for that.
The chief architect and namesake of the Johnson-Reed Act, Republican congressman Albert Johnson, represented Washington’s third congressional district. As a promoter of eugenics and “race science,” he was fervently anti-Asian, having defended the white mobs who brutalized South Asian workers at lumber mills during the Bellingham riots in 1907. He also opposed inter racial marriage and endorsed the belief that Jews were “filthy, un-American, and often dangerous in their habits.” With the enthusiastic backing of the Ku Klux Klan, Johnson pushed the act through Congress in order to halt the “stream of alien blood” he saw as threatening white America. Upon signing the act, President Calvin Coolidge remarked, “America must remain American.”

As the 1924 Immigration Act came into effect, Adolf Hitler took note. In his infamous manifesto “Mein Kampf,” he praises the United States not only for dispossessing Native Americans, enslaving blacks, and excluding Asians, but now, with the 1924 Immigration Act, finally rejecting Jews: “The racially pure and still unmixed German [Aryan] has risen to become master of the American continent, and he will remain the master, as long as he does not fall victim to racial pollution.” America had become, in Hitler’s mind, the only country in the world actively bringing to fruition the “volkish [racial] conception of the state.”

The 1924 Immigration Act also invented the category of the “illegal alien” — the term was not in use before — and established the United States Border Patrol. But that did not prevent hopeful migrants from working the system, like my great-uncle and tens of thousands of other Jews. Those who applied for visas were often rejected — from Anne Frank’s family to the Barkey family of Rhodes to the more than 900 Jewish refugees aboard the SS St. Louis. By invoking national security concerns and the rhetoric of “America First,” and with the overwhelming 67 percent support of public opinion and fears of an imagined invasion of communists and German spies, the US State Department forced the St. Louis to return to Europe in 1939; many perished in Nazi camps. After their American visa applications were rejected for eight consecutive years, and following seven years in a refugee camp in Tangier, Morocco, the Barkeys were only granted a visa to settle in Seattle in 1946 thanks to a family connection and the intervention of US congressman Hugh DeLacy. Their relatively good fortune was a major exception.

We may like to think that America has always been a “nation of immigrants,” but that expression only emerged during the Cold War — due to Jewish advocacy. With the encouragement of the Anti-Defamation League of B’nai B’rith, John F. Kennedy invoked the phrase for the title of his 1958 book to promote an image of America as culturally plural and open in contrast to the purportedly closed nature of Soviet society. Yet immigration exclusions based on race and nationality continued officially until 1965. Quotas never disappeared; rather, country-based and overall immigration caps remained in effect. The US Citizenship and Immigration Services’ removal of the reference to America as a “nation of immigrants” from its mission statement in 2018 symbolized a return to the more overt racism of an earlier era. The modified “Muslim Ban,” recently upheld by the US Supreme Court, signifies the recrudescence of racial and nationality quotas thinly veiled once again behind the rhetoric of national security.

In short, immigration restriction, like racism, is as American as apple pie.
What Can A Census Tell Us About Sepharadim In America?
By Max Daniel published in the HaSepharadi.com. Full article here

From the Book of Genesis to 23andMe, Jews have always been irresistibly drawn to the practice and study of genealogy. Whether filling out a family tree, finding lost relatives, or hoping to reveal some long-hidden chapter of one’s ancestry, genealogy and genetic testing have given individuals a more concrete and biologically-based grasp on their place in history and the world – accompanied by all the ethical issues arising from such dubiously reliable claims. For Ashkenazi Jews, there are plenty of opportunities and options – but far fewer for Sepharadi subgroups. This availability and relative ease for Ashkenazi genealogy parallels the wide array of historical and scholarly materials available for those Jews – while the inverse is, unfortunately, true for Sephardim. The tools and skills needed to research Sepharadi history are therefore different, and arguably, more demanding. But it is this extra work that reveals the complexity of Sepharadi life. So, if we want to uncover the Sephardic past, especially that of our own families, we might first turn to our genes. However, genes can only explain so much. Many of the popular DNA-based genetic testing services only have specific markers identifying Ashkenazi/Eastern European Jewish background. For example, Ancestry.com has eight subcategories under “European Jewish,” while none for Middle Eastern, North African, or Iberian-origin Jews. 23andMe only has Ashkenazi-specific labels. Only a few, like the thorough Family Tree DNA, include detailed results for markers labeled as Sephardic. Alternatively, MyHeritage includes, aside from Ashkenazi, “Sephardic Jewish – North African,” “Yemeni Jewish,” and “Mizrahi Jewish – Iranian/Iraqi” labels. Despite incomplete resources available and limited explanatory power of DNA results, not to mention the margin of error for these tests, there are alternatives that can shed more accountable and specific information on the Sephardic past – albeit for a much smaller slice of history.

Publicly available US records like census data, naturalization forms, and immigration and port-of-entry information can tell us a lot about Sephardic Jews in the US, especially before 1940 (the 1950 census will not be publicly available until 2022). Often used for genealogical research, especially through Ancestry.com, these sources provide a seldom-seen window into the first generations of Sephardic life in the 20th century United States. But you have to know what to look for. In my research on Sephardic Jews in Los Angeles, two competing narratives and strategies have impeded the visibility of this population in existing studies on the city. Studies and surveys of Jews have typically used the demographic designation Distinctive Jewish Surnames (DJS), which, aside from the ubiquitous Cohen, Levy, and Israel – are all Ashkenazi. Other studies of LA and California which examine ethnic, racial, and immigrant groups often use Spanish surnames – many of which are also shared by Sephardic families, like Cordova, Perez, or Castro. Of course, some Sepharadi individuals married into Ashkenazi and non-Jewish Latino families, adopting their surnames. But this was relatively uncommon.

Thus, Sepharadim have fallen through the cracks or been unwittingly assimilated into different groups by otherwise worthwhile research. The techniques and strategies needed to parse out Sephardim in official US documentation must be specifically tailored and distinct from those used for others, especially Ashkenazim. In the process of working out how to find these Jews, we reveal a world of transnational, border-crossing, and peripatetic Sephardim. Since my research is primarily – but not exclusively – on Ladino-speaking Jews and Jews from Ottoman lands in the 20th century, my techniques apply mostly to them and their descendants. And since, with the exception of Syrian Jews, other “Sepharadi” populations like those from North Africa, Iraq, or Iran came in larger numbers later in the century, the available records tend not to cover those groups because of their relatively small
size before 1940. To get a better sense of the overall profile of Sephardic Jewry in Los Angeles in 1930, I undertook a survey from that year’s Federal Census of 1,112 individuals I identified as living in Sephardic households, which gives us several key pieces of data that both confirm anecdotal information and provide new perspectives previously unavailable. A survey of 239 individuals from the 1920 census was also conducted and used comparatively. I used ancestry.com’s search function for these documents, partly because the number of available search options and configurations allow for flexibility and room for error. Changing imperial and national boundaries where Sephardic Jews were born and lived often leave misleading traces in these records.

To identify Sephardic individuals, a few methods were used. One was to compare membership lists from Sephardic communal documents written around this time and locate those individuals within the census tracts. Another method was to search for “Distinctive Sephardic Names” known to predominate in the community: Angel, Benveniste, Capelouto, Caraco, Notrica, Hasson, Varon, etc. Another effective method was selecting a birthplace of Turkey, Greece, or Italy alongside one’s mother tongue being listed as Spanish. Usually all three methods were used in conjunction, as Jewish surnames like Cohen, Levy, or Israel that are common among both Ashkenazi and Sephardic Jews could be tied to Sephardic individuals if one or both of the parents were born in Turkey, for example. Even so, this might refer to an Ashkenazi family, as a substantial Ashkenazi community lived in the Ottoman Empire and made their way to LA, as attested to one local Los Angeles congregation catering to Ashkenazi Jews from Palestine. 1 Other times, a known Sephardic family – with a unique name like Hasson or Benveniste – might be listed as born in Italy, since Rhodes had been under Italian rule since 1912 (and the country of origin could be recorded simply as “Rhodes,” “Rhodes Island,” or misunderstood for the US state, Rhode Island). The changing imperial and national boundaries of where Sephardic Jews were born and lived often leave misleading traces in these records. Picnic of the Sephardic Sisterhood of Los Angeles, June 1925. Photo courtesy of UCLA Special Collections from the Sephardic Temple Tifereth Israel Archives. Language is another key giveaway for identifying Sephardic Jews in the US Census. Almost always, individuals listed as born in Turkey with Spanish (referring to Ladino) as their mother tongue are Sephardic.

However, Sephardic individuals listed with languages like Turkish, Greek, Italian, Hebrew, Yiddish, and “Jewish” do appear. Though we cannot say for certain, it is more than likely that what is meant by “Jewish” or “Yiddish” is Ladino. Other names given to the language by its speakers were Djidio or Djudezmo, literally meaning “Jewish,” and perhaps responsible for that translation. Furthermore, in official US Census instructions, Spanish and Yiddish were given as possible languages – but not Ladino – thus rendering invisible, at least in official records, the unique linguistic heritage of these Sepharadim. It is difficult to say if the 1920 and 1930 samples are representative of the community at large, especially since we are lacking more substantiating information or research. In 1930, there were approximately 91,000 Jews residing in Los Angeles out of a total 1.3 million, making up 7% of the city’s total. This is a major increase from 1920’s estimate of 28,000 Jews in a city of 575,000. It is harder to estimate the total Sephardic population at either time, but by 1930 it likely did not exceed the 1,500 households estimated in Max Vorspan and Lloyd Gartner’s History of the Jews in Los Angeles, and certainly made up no more than 5% of the Jewish population. Most rightly assume that rapid growth in Southern California occurred in the booming years after World War II, but the city also expanded significantly in the decades beforehand, including a fair share of Jews, Sepharadim included. In addition to name, age, and residential address, census records also recorded occupation, immigration year and citizenship status, marital status, level of education completed, native language of parents and their birthplaces, and veteran status.

In both the 1920 and 1930 records, the Sephardic community appears remarkably young, with an average age of 24. Yet the prevalence of families increased within that decade. In 1920, about 34% of the population was unattached men, as compared to 1930 when the rate was about 23%. Most were single, but some were listed as married yet living alone, perhaps with wives living elsewhere in New York, Turkey, or Rhodes. There were close to zero unattached single Sephardic women in either survey. In 1920, about 35% were female, and in 1930 the rate rose nearly to parity at 47%. The foreign-born – about 55% of the 1930 population – had only been in the country an average of 16 years, and in Los Angeles itself for likely less time. While in 1920, 75% were foreign-born and they had only been in the country for an average of eight and a half years. The diversity of the native-born population also increased between 1920 and 1930, speaking to the mobility of the Sephardic community in the US. If in 1920 roughly three-quarters of the US-born were from California, only 53% were in 1930, with 22% born in New York and 12% in Washington. It is common to find a family whose eldest child was born in Turkey, whose next
child was born in New York, and whose youngest was born in Washington or California. While in 1920 most Sephardim lived in the downtown LA area, east of Main Street, by 1930 a sizable concentration would develop in South LA, especially between Vermont and Main and 47th and 57th. Sephardic households mapped onto contemporary Los Angeles. Red points indicate 1920, while blue indicate 1930. Note the relative absence of Sephardim in Boyle Heights, often noted as the center of Jewish life in Los Angeles at this time.

The occupational distribution of the community also shifted considerably. From an employment rate of 43% of individuals in the 1920 sample, only 31% had jobs listed in 1930. Of those with listed occupations, almost all men, three in particular attracted the most Sephardim in LA. 1920 saw a whopping 38% of employed Sephardic men working as shoe shiners or with shoes. Another 18% worked in the fruit, produce, and grocery business, and 8% in flowers. 1930 saw greater diversification and business success, listing many more individuals as proprietors and owners of businesses. The same professions, however, still tended to color the occupational choices a decade later, but with different proportions. 22% of those employed worked in the fruit, produce, and grocery industry, and another 22% in flowers. Only 7% still worked as shoe shiners or in the shoe business, but with more owners and operators than in 1920. New trends also emerged by 1930. 5.5% worked in dry goods, 2% in insurance, and 2% as tailors. The strong Seattle link is uniquely Sephardic. What do these statistics tell us? For one, it’s immediately clear from this cross-section of Sephardic Jews that they differ considerably from their Ashkenazi co-religionists living elsewhere in Los Angeles. Sephardim tended to concentrate not in the Boyle Heights neighborhood so commonly associated with early Jewish life in the city, but rather in South LA.

Secondly, it reveals the close connection between the Washington (specifically, Seattle) and LA Sephardic communities – a relationship that exists to this day through family and friend networks. While LA and New York Jews have always maintained connections, the strong Seattle link is uniquely Sephardic. Occupationally, Sephardic Jews seem to have been attracted to a far different set of wage-earning jobs than the typical Ashkenazi tailor or white-collar clerk. They managed to stake a considerable foothold in the local produce and grocery business, and in the wholesale flower trade. It’s easy to complain about how “Ashkenormative” models of Jewish history leave out other kinds of Jews and paper over intra-Jewish differences in the name of a unified Jewish experience, especially about the over-mythologized American immigration story.

But what I’ve outlined above, I hope, are some of the methods and results of what it might look like to include – in this case, Ladino-speaking, Ottoman – Sephardic Jews in a substantial way. For all the nonsense and back-and-forth vitriol behind the perennial “Are Jews White?” question, only recently have people specified that they mean Ashkenazi Jews. But, instead of insuring against their exclusion of other Jews, it highlights how little we know (and care?) about Sephardim in America. If we want to fix this problem, we first need to ask the right questions and know who, how, and where, to ask them.

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Montenegro

First Bar Mitzvah in Centuries in Balkan Nation
By Yehuda Sugar 08/08/2018

While locals in Montenegro speculate that with a checkered Jewish past going all the way back to the 12th century, there must have been bar mitzvah celebrations at some point in this Balkan country’s history, no one seems to remember anyone having had one in recent history.

Menachem Mendel Edelkopf, who will reach that milestone on Sept. 6, is going to change all that, just as his parents, the first Chabad emissaries on Montenegrin soil, have begun changing much on the Jewish front since they arrived last year.

Menachem Mendel Edelkopf is looking forward to his Bar Mitzvah in the Balkan nation of Montenegro on Sept. 6
“There were probably no bar mitzvahs here for 170 to 180 years,” speculated Rabbi Ari Edelkopf, 40, who with his wife, Chani, and seven children landed in the Montenegrin capital of Podgorica last August to build Jewish life pretty much from scratch in the former Socialist republic. “I doubt there was something like an organized bar mitzvah here in the past two centuries or so,” he told Chabad.org.

To mark the occasion, Edelkopf and his wife—who he judiciously credits with all that has been accomplished thus far—will be throwing a gala affair at the local Hilton for Mendel, their oldest boy. A guest list of some 150, composed of friends and family from near and far, are expected to attend.

“We are new shluchim [emissaries] to Montenegro after 16 years in Sochi, Russia,” said Edelkopf. “There, I had the merit of arranging many bar mitzvahs for other children, for my spiritual children, but this is the first time my own son will be bar mitzvah. We want to make it special, and an example for all the Jews of Montenegro to see how through this beautiful and precious tradition a boy celebrates his becoming obligated in Torah and mitzvot.”

A Special Focus on Tefillin
Long before the Chabad-Lubavitch tefillin campaign was introduced, where Jews are inspired to don tefillin on public byways, in offices and in out-of-the-way places, the legendary Reb Yona Edelkopf—great-grandfather of Edelkopf and a chassid of the previous three Rebbes of Chabad—was known to have been involved in tefillin outreach.

To honor his memory, Edelkopf said that for the first half-hour of the bar mitzvah celebration, a stand will be set up at the entrance of the hall to provide the opportunity for anyone willing to don tefillin. It will also be staffed by an expert scribe who will demonstrate how phylacteries are made.

Edelkopf settled with his family in Podgorica, becoming what is believed to be the first resident rabbi of the community in more than 100 years in time for High Holiday services in 2017. He came at the request of Montenegro Jewish community activist and president, the late Jasa Alfandari, a spearhead of Jewish revival for many years in the Balkan region and an outspoken voice against anti-Semitism throughout Europe. Among his accomplishments was bringing as many as 500 Jewish leaders to Podgorica once a year from around the Balkan region to what he called the Machar (Hebrew for “tomorrow”) conference. Edelkopf said the annual event will continue in his memory.

Alfandari, who passed away suddenly in mid-July in his 70s, will be remembered and sorely missed at the bar mitzvah, where he had been scheduled to sit at the head table as “an honorary grandfather,” said Edelkopf. Also at the request of Alfandari, the government gifted the Jewish community with land in central Podgorica several years ago to build a synagogue in a city where there was none. Construction is slated to start soon. Until the synagogue’s completion, the Edelkopfs will continue to hold weekly prayer services, including Shabbat services and meals, classes and other events, in modest rented spaces. Larger events, such as High Holiday services, are held in rented halls and hotels for their clientele of locals and Jews visiting on business and leisure.

Checkered Jewish History
The Edelkopfs’ presence in Montenegro comes after an often-difficult past for Jews in what was formerly part of the Ottoman Empire, and then Serbia, and more recently a republic within the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

From the 12th century until the mid-18th century, the small number of Jews in the region were treated relatively well, with many involved in the salt trade. The Serbs, who won their independence against the Turks in 1830, however were not friendly to the Jews. They instituted bans on the most basic of professions, eventually expelled the Jews from provincial towns, and made life difficult for those living in cities.

The Jewish population continually dwindled through the 19th century and never fully recovered, suffering further oppression and loss of identity as part of the Yugoslav Socialist regime, until its breakup in 1992. It wasn’t until 2006 that Montenegro would vote to cease its union with Serbia and declare its full independence. Today, an estimated 500 Jews—largely unaffiliated and virtually devoid of Jewish practice from years of oppression and attack—make Montenegro home.

As a result, Edelkopf said he can’t count on a minyan (a public prayer quorum of 10 men) yet for Shabbat and weekday services or count on the fact that everyone even knows what a minyan is, but between visitors and locals, he said: “We will get there with G d’s help.”
This year, three out of four weeks of September will see us celebrating what we commonly refer to as the "High Holy Days", all in the Hebrew month of Tishrei. If we add the recitation of "selihot", which Sephardim have been reciting since the beginning of Elul and Ashkenazim from the night of September 1st, the entire month is devoted to both solemn and festive commemorations and celebrations.

Given that someone unique situation, I would like to look at this period of time as a unit, since taken on individual levels, there seems to be a dichotomy or even conflict between the very mixed barrel of solemnity and unbridled joy that characterize Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur and Sukkot on their own.

At the outset, based on both the Torah and the Prophets, as well as Midrash, Mishna and Talmud, it is clear that the period from Elul through Yom Kippur is a time of introspection and heavenly judgment, which began with the Israelites great sin of the Golden Calf and Moshe subsequent smashing of the First Tablets of Stone. He must ascend Mount Sinai a second time in order to ask that G-d forgive the Jewish people, which corresponded to the first of Elul. At the end of 40 days, with the second Tablets in hand, Moshe descended the mountain and announced that G-d had indeed forgiven this sin, saving the Israelites from destruction at G-d's hand, which, according to tradition, was Yom Kippur. Thus the Sephardic custom to say selihot from the 1st of Elul through Yom Kippur, inclusive. One may even conjecture that had the sin of the Golden Calf not occurred, we may not have had a Yom Kippur at all.

As for Rosh Hashanah, the 1st of the month of Tishrei, the Torah describes it as simply a day of Teru'ah – blowing the Shofar, which was always used as a means to call the people to a special assembly. Given the tradition that the world was created on Rosh Hashanah, this assembly was to announce, celebrate and coronate G-d as King and Master of the world, which by nature is a joyous occasion. And in fact, Jewish law forbids mourning (some even say crying) altogether on Rosh Hashanah, and we are commanded to celebrate the day as a joyous holiday. But given the special character of the day as being the coronation of G-d, our Sages also saw it as a day of judgement for the entire human race, with Israel acting as "attorney for the defense", so to speak. Therefore, the day took on a very solemn, fearful character as well, as G-d sits in judgement over the world, and records the verdict of life or death for everyone. But, for Israel, as was the case with the entire Israelite nation with the Golden Calf, we are given "10 days of repentance" (including Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur) to improve ourselves and repent our transgressions, and only then does G-d seal our verdict.

This explains the solemn nature from Elul to Yom Kippur, but where does Sukkot fit in? There is nothing "solemn" about Sukkot, which in fact, is considered Judaism's most joyous holiday, which includes the Torah's description of it being the harvest time, and our joy and thanksgiving to G-d for the bounty He gives us. The fact is that Sukkot is the perfect "continuation" of this period. Jewish tradition teaches that we are always confident that G-d forgives the Jewish people as a collective each Yom Kippur. Therefore, once the solemn period ends, we immediately celebrate our confidence that G-d has forgiven our collective (and hopefully individual) sins, and begin our holiday of thanksgiving – which is Sukkot. But there's more: our universal role of "defending the continued existence of the world" continues with the sacrifices offered each day of Sukkot, which total 70 bullocks symbolizing the "70 nations of the world" and our praying for their salvation as well.

Finally, after we have diligently performed our duties on behalf of the world-at-large on Rosh Hashanah, been forgiven for our transgressions on Yom Kippur, and asked for salvation of the human race on Sukkot, G-d asks His special and chosen people to join him in a sort of "private party": Shmini Atzret/Simhat Torah. This convocation is "for members only", as we convene in G-d's home – the Temple - to show and celebrate His appreciation for all we have done for the world.
Therefore, despite the special and unique aspects of each holy day on its own, the entire series operates as a beautiful, synchronized and holy unit that only we as a people enjoy!
Shanah Tova and Hag Sameah to one and all!

This newsletter is made possible due to a generous donation from

**Linda and Michael Krieger, In Memory of**
Louise (Theia Lula) and Michael Eliasof
Rebecca (Red Becky) Eliasof Kailo
and her brothers, Sam, Harry, Morris and Abe Eliasof and her sister, Ann Matza
and
**In Honor of**
Hy (Elias Michael) Eliasof

The Eliasof family exemplifies the founders of our Romaniote community in New York and, through their struggles and achievements vividly tells the story of our early immigrants. The patriarch and matriarch of Linda's branch of the family, were both born in Ioannina, and followed their dreams to the shores of New York, Michael Eliasof arriving in 1905, and his wife, Louise, in 1908. They married in 1909 and started their family. Initially, the family lived on the Lower East Side and Michael worked as a cutter in an apron factory as his family grew. The family, in 1930 is living uptown in the Bronx and Michael is not working. Michael died young, at age 48, leaving Louise a widow with 7 children ranging in age from 6-17. There is no doubt that the close Yanniote community in the Bronx would rally to help Louise.

One of the most illustrious members of the family, Hy (Elias) Eliasof, became Mayor of Closter, NJ. Hy proudly served his country in the US Army, in the infantry, along with four of his brothers. The Eliasof family never forgot their connection to Ioannina and many of Michael and Louise’s descendants have visited, all overjoyed to find their prominent relative, Moses Eliasof, President of the Jewish Community of Ioannina.
Request for Research Help

Yassou, everyone!
I'm gathering old photos and scanning them as well as providing caption info. While this is in progress, would you be related to these relatives of mine from the David (or Vecheropolous or Bechoropolous) and Attas sides of the family? Quite a few blanks here from information that's at least 25 years old. Can you help me fill them in?

Any info missing dates or names means that it's missing.

DAVID family
The lineage begins with Feru who married Moises Matsa. They were born in Janina and moved to Israel. My notes from my grandmother indicate that he was a tinsmith and invented a hydroplane in Janina. No dates given.

They had seven children: Dorothy, Leo, no name, Sam, Joe, no name, Simanto, and Israel. Leo and unnamed died in a concentration camp. Leo had married a woman named Rebecca and had a son named Sam who died in 1984. Another child died in Israel.

Dorothy (Chrissi or Goldi) Matsos married Haim David. They had six children. Morris David, Sam David, David David (my grandfather), Bula David, no name, and Anna David (born in 1916 and was living in Israel). Morris David married Ephemia, had two children, and died in a concentration camps during World War II. Sam David - no info except that he died in a concentration camps during World War II.

David David married Anna Attas (my grandmother). He died in 1964 and owned Greek luncheonettes around the city.
Bula David died in Albania.
Anna David married Sam Matsas who was born in 1914. Both were born in Janina and moved to Israel. They had two children, a son named Joe who was born in 1946 and a daughter, Haya, who died several years ago from cancer. They lived in Israel. I believe she married and had a son.

Then, we have an Israel David but not sure who he was married to. He and his wife had six children. They are:

Stema, Victor (who changed his name to Becker), Astro, Moshe, Jacob, and Tika. Astro and Tika died in a concentration camp. Victor escaped from the Germans, settled in Israel, and then moved to Florida. He married Anoula Levy from Volos. He died in 1987. Moshe married Cecile. No info on Jacob.

ATTAS
We have Astro David who married Abisi Attas. Astro was born in 1867 and Abisi was born in 1857. Astro had three brothers, Israel, Haim, and Nissim. Haim owned a dry goods store in Janina and Nissim worked with the Ganis Brothers in shipping.

Abisi had a sister named Mollie and a brother named Morris, born in 1883 and died in 1963. Astro and Abisi had five daughters. One is my grandmother, Anna David and the others are my great-aunts. All were born in Janina except the youngest, my great-aunt Mollie. Sophie Attas was born in 1899 and died during the flu epidemic of 1918. She was married and lived with her husband in Harlem. He had something to do with the film business. My notes say that she married an Eli Negrin in 1917.

Esther Attas was born in 1902 and died in 1988. She married Louis Eliezer whom she divorced - quite a scandal during those days and quite brave of her. She remarried, to Matthew Nachman. Can't quite make out my notes but Louies Eliezer was born in 1900 and died in 1974. Matthew Nachman died in 1979. Anna Attas married David David in 1933. She was born in 1906 and died in 2002. Mollie Attas was born in 1910 and died in 2002.

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Abraham Attas died in 1981. His father was Calvin Attas, a cousin of Abisi Attas. Uncle Abie had four brothers and sisters, including Solomon and Rachel. Solomon married Anna who had three children, including Calvin Attas and Rose Attas. Rachel had a son named Morris who married Lucy Alkali who had a daughter Rita. There are two unnamed children and one had two daughters, Esther and Tillie (died 1978).

Any assistance is greatly appreciated! Thank you!

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In a collection of photos recently given to KKJ by Annette Binder, a number of photos need identification (if possible). Hopefully some of our readers can help us. The photos are of the Politis and/or Mordechai families.
Zachary Mazur (from the Cohen family of Kastoria and the Samuels family of Ioannina) is looking for help in identifying faces in this old photo (1930) taken in Kastoria. Some faces have already been identified and a face map is included with this photo to help us identify others.
Picture of the Month

The Mordechai sisters
So many of you have applauded our efforts. We thank those who have sent in contributions.

If you would like to make a contribution to Kehila Kedosha Janina, please send your check (in US dollars) made out to Kehila Kedosha Janina, to us at 280 Broome Street, New York, NY 10002 (attention Marcia). Your donation will enable us to continue to hold services and preserve our special traditions and customs, and to tell our unique story through our Museum.

When you are in New York, visit us on Broome Street. We are open for services every Saturday morning at 9:30am and all major Jewish holidays and our Museum is open every Sunday from 11am-4pm and by appointment during the week.

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