



July 2015 e-newsletter

Dear Friends of Kehila Kedosha Janina,

This June/July seven members of the Board of Trustees of Kehila Kedosha Janina visited Jewish Greece. Much of this newsletter is a report from the communities we visited. We apologize for the delay. We just returned on July 6th.



Back row from left: Marty Genee, Andrew Marcus, Len Neuhaus.

Front row from left: Marcia Haddad Ikonomopoulos, Marvin Marcus, Lois Genee, Haim Kofinas and Moses Eliasof, President of the Jewish Community of Ioannina

This newsletter, our 77th 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 7000 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.

As always, you are all 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.

Passings

~We join the extended Matza/Matsa families in mourning the loss of Sarah Matza Amira who left us on June 27th a few weeks short of her 96th birthday. Sarah was the daughter of Joseph Matza and Anna Pitzirilo Matza, both of Ioannina. She leaves behind three daughters (Genette, Rhonda and Marlene) and four grandchildren. As her daughter so appropriately quoted: Death leaves a heartache no one can heal --Love leaves a memory no one can steal.





Sarah Matza Amira (1940s)

~ Our condolences to Mo Soriano of Atlanta Georgia on the passing of his father Joseph Soriano, a Rhodesli.

**Joe Soriano on his
bicycle in the 1930s**



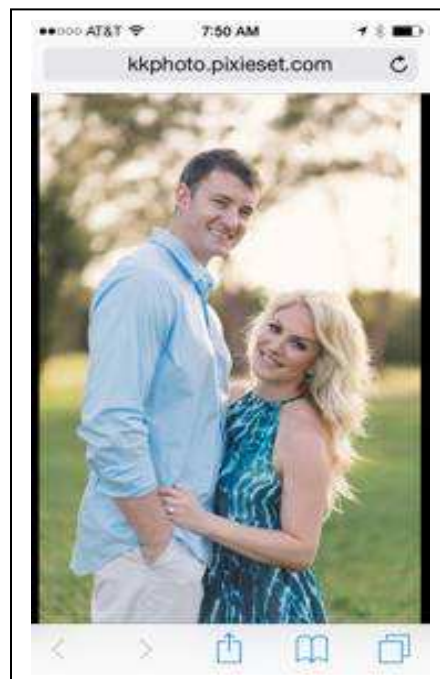
~ We mourn with the Jewish Community of Thessaloniki the loss of Rolly Amariglio, husband of Erika Kounio Amariglio of blessed memory.



The Amariglio family in Salonika in the 1930s

Simchas

~ We congratulate Sydelle Pineiro on the engagement of her daughter Dr. Alisha Pineiro to Stephen Marano. The wedding will take place in January 2016. The future bride comes from a Yanniote family; her great-grandmother was Esther DeCastro Ganis.



~ We congratulate Howard Franco on becoming a grandfather with the birth of his granddaughter Kate. Howard's family was from the island of Rhodes.



We welcome hearing about simchas from our community. It is truly our joy to share your joys.

Aikoi Mas, Los Muestros (our own) come home

In June, we were blessed with the visit of members of the Chernin, Ganis and Matza families.



Jessica Countess and Oliver Noble with members of the extended Ganis family



Stuart Chernin pointing to his parent's memorial plaques. His mother was Stemma Levy Chernin.



Richard and Judy Matza with their grandson

News From Jewish Greece

Hania

This year, in Hania, in the synagogue of Etz Haim, there were services commemorating the deportation of the Jews of Crete.



Kavala

Finally, on June 7, 2015, the long-awaited Holocaust Memorial in the city of Kavala was unveiled. For articles on the postponement of the event from its original May date, see our issue of June 2-16.



This year, we made news in Jewish Greece with our annual tour.



The Association of Friends of Greek Jewry placed a wreath on the Holocaust Memorial in Kavala



The Association of Friends of Greek Jewry donated \$5000 towards the creation of a Holocaust Education Center in Thessaloniki



Visit to Jewish Museum in

Thessaloniki with Heinz Kounio



Visit to former synagogue of Veroia



Visit to Kastoria

**Yanniotes
return with their
photos of their
ancestors who
had left Ioannina
for the United
States in the
early 20th
century**





We placed flowers on the Holocaust Memorial in Corfu



The Association of Friends of Greek Jewry and the International Raoul Wallenberg Foundation honor the small island of Ereikousa for saving a Jewish family during the Holocaust



Members of our group who descend from Arta pay their respects at the Holocaust Memorial in Arta

Shalom to one and all!

Gershon Harris
Hatzor Haglilit, Israel



This year, both the fasts of the 17th of Tammuz and the 9th of Av – which commemorate the conquest of Jerusalem and ultimate destruction of the First and Second Temples by Babylon and Rome - fall on July 5th and July 26th respectively. As it happens, July 26th is almost the exact date of the original expulsion of the Jews of Spain in 1492: most historians agree that July 30th is the date, while according to the Hebrew calendar, the date would be July 24th, so either way July 26th is well within the range.

Furthermore, recent legislation passed by both Portugal and Spain to grant citizenship to Jews the world over who can prove their lineage as descendants of those original victims of the Spanish and Portuguese expulsions of 1492 and 1496, gives pause to consider some facts and influences of these seminal events in Jewish history.

One interesting fact is that on a very formal level, Romaniote Jews would not technically qualify for this privilege, since they are indigenous Greek Jews and not Sephardim per se. Obviously this is a rather moot point, since over the centuries such "pedigreed" distinctions have been quite blurred if not totally eliminated, but it is important to note that until Sephardic Jews arrived en masse to the Ottoman Empire, including Greece after the expulsion, the centers of Greek Jewry like Janina, were Romaniote, Greek/Judeo-Greek speaking Jews.

Another relevant fact is that only practicing and unconverted Jews were the target of the expulsion, and not descendants of Jews who had converted during the anti-Jewish riots and pogroms that swept all of Spain in 1391. These "New Christians" - called "Conversos" by Jews or the derogatory term "Marranos" – swine- by the authorities and general population were the reason the Spanish Inquisition was established, which was to weed out and prosecute what they claimed were heretical and insincere converts, who continued to practice Judaism in secret and/or "Judaized" among others Practicing Jews were persecuted, ghettoized and victimized in other ways, but they were not the official target of the Inquisition. It was Queen Isabella's personal advisor and confessor, Tomas de Torquemada, who convinced her and King Ferdinand that practicing Jews would continue to have an influence on their "Converso" brothers and sisters if allowed to remain in Spain.

Torquemada was the first Grand Inquisitor, and over time, the Inquisition was instituted in all Spanish-empire territory, including parts of South America. In fact, the Inquisition was only officially abolished in 1834, ironically by the original queen Isabella's namesake, Isabella II. And how many people know that the Edict of Expulsion was only officially revoked by the Spanish government on December 16th, 1968?!

The impact of the Spanish expulsion was almost unprecedented in its scope, and in several spheres. For Spain itself, while the expulsion of the Jews may have "purified" Spain of infidel Jews, many historians argue that the loss of the Jews sent Spain into an economic decline from which some claim it never completely recovered. In fact, critics of the recent citizenship legislation feel that both Spain and Portugal's motivation is mainly economic, in the hope of

injecting much-needed capital into their economies. For the Jewish world, the influence was multi-dimensional: The expulsion finally ended the centuries-old era of relative dominance of the Spanish/Sephardic Jewish school of Jewish scholarship and commentary to the Bible and Talmud. Though Ashkenaz was certainly well-established as a Torah center from the 11th century and on, and Sephardic rabbis/scholars continued to have major impact on the Jewish religious world (like Joseph Karo, author of the "Shulhan Aruch") the centrality of Spain and the Sephardic school disintegrated, with the scepter passing on to new, but smaller and scattered, Sephardic Jewish centers wherever the Spanish exiles settled. This major influx of refugees caused far-reaching demographic and even religious changes for every Jewish community that welcomed the new arrivals in the Ottoman Empire (like Turkey, Greece), parts of Europe (Italy, Holland) North Africa and the Middle East. Besides the obvious population explosions, the impact of the newcomers' Spanish school of Jewish law and lore overtook the indigenous Jewish communities in almost every sphere of Jewish practice and interpretation of Jewish law. A paramount example of this is what happened to Romaniote centers like Janina, where the domineering Spanish ritual and rite in many ways the Romaniote rite.

Whatever Spain's and Portugal's true motives for the citizenship initiative, it certainly reminds us of the impact and significance of the Spanish expulsion, which, as it happens, occurred this month 523 years ago!

Looking For Our Help

We received this question in response to our photo in the May 2015 issue:

I recognize this picture is from the Yad Vashem / USHM archives and it is always attributed to Salonika, however I am certain the girl in the white bow in the back is my mother. She was placed in a Jewish run orphanage after the war, she called it the Stayee and remembers it was run by a Celia Bloom. Although my mother was from Salonika this orphanage was in Athens. Could there be an error?



This is the answer we received from Bob Bedford of the Foundation for the Advancement of Sephardic Studies and Culture (FASSAC):

"I can probably shed some light on the photo you have on page 21 (from your May issue).

It's one of 2 photos from the orphanage in Salonika, as prepared by the Jewish Community of Salonika, circa 1946. The other photo from this set is in our Portraits exhibit as well as in the PORTRAITS booklet. As it shows a slightly different view, perhaps her mother is in that also.

I'll need to get to my notes, but it was in an album prepared by the community in Salonika as it was trying to rebuild after the war. Everything else in the album was from taken in Salonika. I can check when I'm back home.

Bob"

Due to participants in our 2015 Tour To Jewish Greece (from the Negrin and Myone families with connections to the Ganis family, we finally solved the mystery of the Ganis family photo initially attributed to Sid Ganis' family. The family historian (Esther Stone) disputed that claim and we have finally solved the mystery. The photo came from Rebecca Myones Negrin's Ganis family and if there is any doubt, the uncanny resemblance between Rebecca and her great-grandmother is certain proof.



Rebecca with Stella Mioni Koen

Please continue to send us family photos. Our photo archives are so important.



Matsil brothers from Andrew Matsil, the grandson of Max Matsil. The photo was taken in 1922. Max Matsil is in the wagon and is with his brothers (Joe, Nathan and Raymond).

Websites of interest

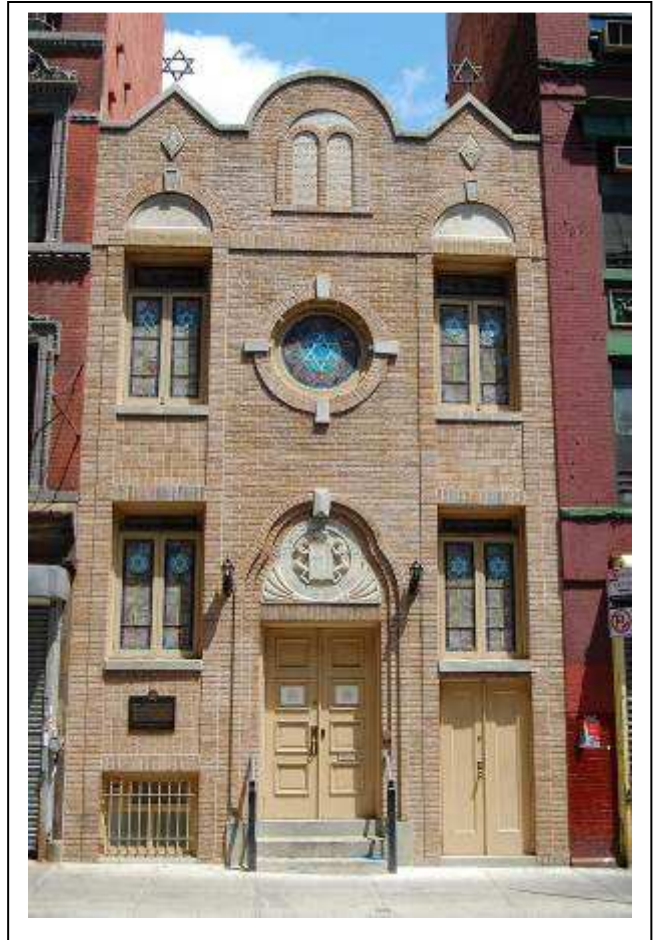
http://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/31/travel/in-morocco-exploring-remnants-of-jewish-history.html?_r=0

<http://tabletmag.com/scroll/191406/the-incredible-history-of-a-greek-jewish-shul-in-nyc>

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) 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 and all major Jewish holidays and our Museum is open every Sunday from 11-4 and, by appointment during the week.



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