Dear Friends of Kehila Kedosha Janina,

We thank all our friends who attended our third annual Greek Jewish Festival. It was an unbelievable success and we thank those who came, those who financially supported us and those who bragged about us on social media. We welcomed old friends and made new friends as our community continues to grow – over 8,000 people attended! Do check out our photos in this newsletter and on our Facebook Page (Kehila Kedosha Janina). As we catch our breath, we prepare for our festival in 2018!
We are excited to announce that we now accept ONLINE DONATIONS! Go to our website at kkjsm.org and click the “Donate” button at the top left of the page.

Please remember our new emails: info@kkjsm.org (President) and museum@kkjsm.org (Museum Director).

This newsletter, our 99th 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 8,500 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 (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.

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Because of the importance of the following item, we are changing the format of this E-Newsletter.

We just received an appeal from the Jewish Community of Ioannina. An earthquake in late October caused severe damage to stone walls of the synagogue. While a grant was received from Germany, it was not sufficient. The Association of Friends of Greek Jewry will be spearheading an appeal. Funds can be sent directly to the Jewish Community of Ioannina (make notation that the funds are for repair of synagogue) or to The Association of Friends of Greek Jewry, 1 Hanson Place, Huntington NY 11743. If you wish to make a bank transfer to the community's bank account (or to that of the Association) email Marcia at museum@kkjsm.org.
Passings

It is with great sadness that we report the passing of Eve Nachmias, beloved wife of Max Nachmias (8/3/1930-4/28/2017). Eve, although born into an Ashkenazi family, loved the Greek-Jewish world. She is survived by her husband, Max, her children, Stewart Nachmias and Pamela Nachmias Sheiffer, her grandchildren, Emily and Rebecca, and her many loving friends.

We mourn the passing of Marianna Moustaki Ischakis, mother of our dear friend Mordy Ischakis. Marianna was a survivor from Corfu. She married Jessoula Ischakis, a survivor from Ioannina. Her two sons, Mordy and Jacob, were born in Ioannina. The family chose to immigrate to the United States. Our condolences to the family. The photo below was taken in Ioannina circa 1951.
We mourn the passing of Sarah Attas Askinazi shortly before her 96th birthday. Sarah was the last surviving child of Chaim Attas and Stamoula David Attas. Her oldest daughter, Beverly Griffenberg, passed in 2015. Sarah is survived by her son, Norman Askinazi, his wife Aita, her son-in-law, Larry Griffenberg, her grandchildren, Stacey Munoz and Neil Griffenberg (the children of Beverly and Larry Griffenberg), Katie Askinazi Lundeen, Emily Askinazi O'Brien and her husband Chris (the children of Norman Askinazi) and her great grandchildren, Carla, Jacob, Jordan, Gianna, Gabriella, Nathan and Conner. She is also survived by her loving niece, Rose Attas Ferrari. Sarah was the sister of Nissim Attas who we will be honoring this June 11th (see article in this newsletter under upcoming events. The picture below was taken at Sarah’s son Norman’s Bar Mitzvah. Sarah is 5th from the left.

On May 19th Greek Jewry lost an icon, Nikos Hanen Stavroulakis, founder of the Jewish Museum of Greece, author, artist, restorer of Etz-Hayyim Synagogue in Crete and impasioned preserver of the memory of Greek Jewry. Many obituaries have been published in honor of Nikos, including one in the New York Times. We chose to publish the words of those who were fortunate to know him, David Saltiel, President of the Central Board of Jewish Communities, and Marcia Haddad-Ikonomopoulos, Museum Director of Kehila Kedosha Janina.
"There are so many thoughts that fill the mind when one needs to talk about Nick Stavroulaki that I needed some time to sort them before starting. Nicholas Stavroulakis was a personality with many virtues and skills and because in my case the relationship that unites us is several decades of friendship, but also many years of cooperation in a number of projects for the preservation of Greek-Jewish heritage.

A man of letters, scholar, researcher, artist, writer, philosopher, Nikos not only devoted himself to these fields but became an authority on each of them separately. He was a virtuous visionary with deep faith in God and simultaneously with unwavering belief in a creative interreligious dialogue that will bring together all the people in a spirit of mutual respect.

Through his paintings and sketches, studies, research for Greek Jews, for Synagogues and especially Crete through books on cooking, Nikos Stavroulakis recorded, raised and preserved much of Greek Jewry.

But, above all, Nick is identified with three of the greatest works of the postwar revival of Jewish life period in Greece: The Jewish Museum of Greece, the Synagogue of Chania and the Jewish Museum of Thessaloniki.

Since the early 70s, when he began to collect antiques, embroidery and ritual vessels from Jewish families from all over Greece, until the opening of the Jewish Museum of Greece in 1979, Nick was the soul of the project. So in the case of restoration of the Synagogue of Chania. From idea to implementation, the stage of the donor search and inspection of reconstruction work, Nikos did everything ... Every separate thing in Etz Hayyim Synagogue is his own plan and his own inspiration. The love of the people who supported and gave life to the Chania Synagogue, the thousands of tourists who visit every year and have made it one of the most famous Jewish sites in the world, all these were the greatest source of satisfaction for Nick.

In my capacity as president of the Jewish Community of Thessaloniki, I had the opportunity to work closely with Nick during his work at the Jewish Museum of Thessaloniki, another project that Nick willingly and wholeheartedly supported by participating in the foundation, character and the operation.

Nick left the potential footprint of the cultural and intellectual production of the modern Greek-Jewish community contribution which has received eternal recognition and gratitude."

David Saltiel  
May 2017

"I first met Nikos Stavroulakis when he was in the process of creating the Jewish Museum of Greece, when the collection of artifacts were being stored in the synagogue in Athens. I had started my research on the Jews of Greece and was visiting Jewish communities throughout the country to learn more about what had happened to my own family in Salonika. I was fulfilling a promise I had made to my Nona Marika to find out what had happened to our large family from Salonika who had disappeared in the concentration camps. I heard about this man, Nikos Stavroulakis, who was collecting artifacts of Greek Jews from all over Greece. I had naively hoped that he might have something of my Errera and Russo families. It was not to be, but this is when I first became an admirer of Nikos. He regaled us with stories of recovering costumes, literally stuffing them down his shirt, before they would be lost. Nikos recovered more than costumes and artifacts, he showed me how important and powerful remembering can be."
Nikos and I went on to become friends and, when he was raising money to restore Etz Hayyim, I attended a number of his fundraisers in New York City. Probably, my most endearing memories of Nikos came from my visits to Hania, first shortly after he was successful in having Etz Hayyim nominated to the World Monument Fund as "One of the Most Endangered Sites in the World" in 1996 and, then, repeated visits as Nikos’ vision of the restoration became a reality. It was during one of those visits that I approached Nikos to help me apply to the World Monument Fund for Kahal Shalom Synagogue in Rhodes. I had learned during a visit in 1997, when approached by the then President of the Jewish Community of Rhodes, Alberto Kovos, that the synagogue was caving in due to dampness in the porous stone. Everyone told me that I did not have a chance, that Kahal Shalom looked "too good" to be considered. This is when I learned one of the most valuable lessons of my life. Nikos said to me, "Marcia, what have you got to lose? All they can say is no. If you do not dream, nothing will happen.” I took my dream of restoring Kahal Shalom to the World Monument Fund and, fostered by the words of Nikos Stavroulakis, proposed Kahal Shalom to become "One of the Most Endangered Sites in the World" for 1999. We succeeded and the oldest still-functioning synagogue in Greece was saved from destruction. During this time, I was fortunate to be treated to Nikos’ cooking and to marvel at his library but, by far, the most important gifts Nikos gave to me were his encouragement and the knowledge that you have to be a little crazy and very obsessed to do what we do. Thank you Nikos. May your memory be Eternal.

Marcia Haddad-Ikonomopoulos
May 2017

Simchas

We are so happy to share the celebration of the 96th birthday of Dora Dostis Cohen. Dora, a survivor of the Holocaust from Ioannina. Thank you Isaac Cohen for sharing the news and photos of your mother’s birthday. Give her a big hug and kiss from all of us at Kehila Kedosha Janina.
Mazal Tov to Renee Yomtov Rosenthal on her 80th birthday. XRONIA POLLA KAI OLA KALA.

Mazal Tov to Rhonda Paganetti and Shirlee Paganetti on the marriage of Maxx and Kelly. It seems like only yesterday that Maxx celebrated his Bar Mitzvah in Ioannina. Maxx is the son of Rhonda Paganetti and Ted Kleiner, the grandson of Shirlee Paganetti and Louis Levy of Blessed Memory, the great grandson on Eva and Morris Cabillis of Ioannina and, on his great grandfather’s side, the great-great grandson of David and Sarina Kabilis (Cabillis) and the great-great-great grandson of Moses Kabilis. On his great grandmother’s side, Maxx is the great-great grandson of Iosef Eliezer and Rachil Eliasaf Eliezer.
Maxx & Kelly

Rhonda Paganetti

Shirlee Paganetti leading Greek dancing

The joyous family
Dikoi Mas (Our Own)

We love when our own come to visit. In May, Mark Nachman, Rhoda Negrin and Harley & Elyse Elias Matsil paid us a visit.

Elyse and Harley Matsil with Elyse’s aunt

Angela Khavan and Mark Nachman

Rhoda Negrin
Visitors

As always, Kehila Kedosha Janina greets visitors from all over the world. We are one of the most popular sites on the Lower East Side.

Jacobs family from Southern California

Solomon Schechter From LI

School group from Boston
Past Events at Kehila Kedosha Janina

Isaak Dostis’ book-signing was a huge success. Great turnout. We sold out of the book. If you would like to order one, contact Isaak directly at act1presents@optonline.net.
Third Annual Greek Jewish Festival

Our festival was an overwhelming success. The pictures speak for themselves.

World-renowned Ladino singer Flory Jagoda and Andrew Marcus

Zino, Mae and Esther Gabrielides
The Hellenic Dancers of New Jersey

Marcia Haddad Ikonomopoulos and Manos Koubarakis

Hadjis Family

Seth Kofinas, Marvin Marcus, and Koula Kofinas
Upcoming Events at Kehila Kedosha Janina

Join us on May 11th at 2:00pm for a day of Remembrance for two brave Greek-Jewish men who gave their lives in World War II dying at the Battle of the Bulge

Please RSVP to museum@kkjsm.org

JOIN US AT KEHILA KEDOSHA JANINA FOR A SPECIAL DAY OF REMEMBRANCE

ON JUNE 11TH AT 2PM WE WILL STOP AND REMEMBER THE HEROISM OF TWO YOUNG MEN FROM OUR COMMUNITY WHO DIED IN JANUARY OF 1945 AT THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE

ABRAHAM MATZA WAS BORN IN DECEMBER, 1924. HE HAD JUST TURNED 20 WHEN HE DIED IN BELGIUM ON JANUARY 6, 1945. HIS MOTHER ASTRO WAS LISTED AS NEXT OF KIN AND WAS LIVING ON SIMPSON AVENUE IN THE BRONX

NISSIM ATTAS WAS BORN ON BROOME STREET IN 1925. HE WAS ONLY 19 WHEN HE DIED IN BELGIUM ON JANUARY 23, 1945.

JOINING US WILL BE MEMBERS OF BOTH THE ATTAS AND MATZA FAMILIES AND AMY GAGNON FOGG, A WOMAN WHO HAS DEDICATED HER LIFE TO UNCOVERING THE STORIES OF THE SOLDIERS BURIED AT HENRI-CHAPELLE.

KEHILA KEDOSHA JANINA
280 BROOME ST NYC

WE WANT TO PACK THE HOUSE FOR THIS EVENT. THESE BRAVE MEN DESERVE OUR RESPECT. REFRESHMENTS WILL BE SERVED AFTERWARDS.
Join us for a Special Benefit Concert on Sunday June 18\textsuperscript{th} at 7:00pm

Kehila Kedosha Janina is honored to host a

**BENEFIT CONCERT**

TO RAISE FUNDS FOR **KALESMA**

![Kalesma Logo]

Sunday June 18\textsuperscript{th} at 7:00pm
Kehila Kedosha Janina
280 Broome St NYC

The concert will feature a mix of traditional music from Greece, accenting the music of Epirus. Performing Artists include:
Vasilis Kostas, Eirini Tornesaki, Nektarios Antoniou, Christiane Karam, Maria Manousaki, Eleni Arapoglou, Miriam Elhajili

Kalesma, ("Calling" in Greek), is a project bringing six internationally acclaimed musicians from the US to perform together on stage with a choir of 40 children who are under the care of Kivotos in Athens, Greece, in July 2018. Kivotos cares for mothers and children in need, many of whom are homeless or neglected.

The six US-based artist-educators will travel to Greece to work with the children for one week before the concert. The final performance will establish the beginning of a series of music programs for the children of Kivotos, so that they can have access to long-term music education.

This is a way to channel their voices for generations to come. Music brings hope and purpose into the lives of children. It motivates them to work with others and to feel part of a community, all trying to achieve something great.

**Tickets: $25 (all proceeds going to Kalesma)**
Tickets will be sold at the door, but to ensure a seat, send a check to Association of Friend of Greek Jewry, 1 Hanson Place, Huntington NY 11743.

For those who cannot attend but wish to contribute, you can do so through “Fractured Atlas,” an online fundraising site, or by sending a check to Association of Friends of Greek Jewry, 1 Hanson Place, Huntington NY 11743.
Upcoming Events in New York Metropolitan Area

Save the date. For those in the NYC metropolitan area, this might be the last chance to see this special film. Marcia Haddad-Ikonomopoulos, Museum Director will be introducing the film. Event is at 5:30pm at the Sephardic Jewish Center in Forest Hills.

Join us for a special showing of the critically-acclaimed film

CLOUDY SUNDAY

Sunday June 25th at 5:30pm
Sephardic Jewish Center of Forest Hills
67-67 108th Street, Forest Hills, NY 11375

“Cloudy Sunday” by Manoussos Manoussakis
Based on the book “Ouzeri Tsitsanis” by George Skarbadonis, inspired by real events.

“Cloudy Sunday” unfolds the forbidden love story between a Jewish girl and a Christian boy during the German occupation in Thessaloniki in 1942. The racist laws have been implemented and the only place to escape the hatred and inhumanity is a small club, where Vasillis Tsitsanis fills the hearts and minds of people with the beautiful rebetika folk music. Despite the resistance, the persistent hunt for the Jews gradually spreads and suddenly simple choices become life-changing decisions.

“Cloudy Sunday” was filmed in Thessaloniki with the cooperation of the Jewish Community of Thessaloniki. Members of the Community, including those from the Ladino Choir, are in the film.

Join us for a movie you do not want to miss. This showing is sponsored by The Association of Friends of Greek Jewry. Marcia Haddad Ikonomopoulos, Museum Director of Kehila Kedosha Janina and President of the Association, will be present to introduce the film and to answer questions afterwards.

Entrance fee: $5 for members of Congregation of Sephardic Jewish Center, $10 for non-members. Refreshments provided by the Sisterhood will be served after the movie.
In June, Sephardic Communities around the world will celebrate Judeo-Spanish (Ladino)
Sundae, June 11th ~ 9:00am to 3:00pm

Honoring our
Ezra Bessaroth Ladies Auxiliary
Celebrating 101 Years of Service

- Classic Sephardic delicacies
- Kids activities
- Calla Ancha Café
- Live music
- Mandraki Mediterranean Grill
- Sephardic learning
- Unique Vendors & Crafts
- Cooking demonstrations
- Special guest presentations

Full event schedule coming soon

Congregation Ezra Bessaroth
5217 S. Brandon St., Seattle, WA 98118

Ezra Bessaroth's Annual Bazaar,
Sephardic Food Fair ~ and so much more!
News from Jewish Greece

TRIKAŁA

We would like to thank those who sent in donations. Please continue to do so. We want to make this restoration a reality.

Photos before the damage:

Photos of damage:
Those interested in taking part in this important project can contact the Central Board of Greece directly (info@kis.gr) and the Jewish Community of Trikala (iakov.venouziou@gmail.com). For those who wish to give a donation within the United States (tax deductible) you can send your contributions to The Association of Friends of Greek Jewry, 1 Hanson Place, Huntington NY 11743. ALL MONEY COLLECTED WILL GO TO SAVE THE SYNAGOGUE.

Substantial donations will be acknowledged with their names engraved inside the synagogue:

500 euros-donor
2000 euros-major donor
10,000 euros-benefactor-name engraved in gold on the marble column

The synagogue followed the Romaniote minhag and, during its height, from 1930-1944, served not only the Jewish community of Trikala but, also that of Karditsa.

The Association of Friends of Greek Jewry has sent 2000 euros towards the restoration of Kal Yavanim and is hoping to encourage others to give whatever they can to save this synagogue.

Thessaloniki

There was a special event in Thessaloniki from May 21-23 celebrating the multiculturalism in the city in the Ottoman Empire and Modern Greece. Details are here.
Ceremony for Greek Righteous in Thessaloniki

On May 15th, in the Monastiriton Synagogue in Thessaloniki, the grandson of Angelos Koutsoumaris received a plaque honoring his late grandfather for saving Jewish children during the deportations from Thessaloniki. The story had stayed hidden for years and many of the children, who had been adopted as Christians, had not idea that they had escaped the gas chambers of Auschwitz-Birkenau.

News of Interest from Around the World

Menorah Exhibit at the Vatican: http://www.jta.org/2017/05/16/life-religion/these-stunning-menorah-depictions-are-on-display-in-the-vatican-and-rome#.WRxixeYKWUM.email


**Israel**

New Commemorative Stamp in honor of Greek Jews who died in the Holocaust

![Stamp Image]

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**Izmir**

From April 19 till 23, a group of 15 curators from 11 different countries studied the Jewish heritage of Izmir – the heritage of a once flourishing Jewish community in a Muslim society. The seminar opened with an extensive tour of local synagogues. Izmir is home to a complex of adjacent ancient synagogues constructed in a unique Sephardic architectural style, dating from the 16th century. Of 34 Synagogues built in Izmir, just 13 remain, 9 of them in the old city of Izmir. Some of these synagogues which are still active today are in good shape and stand as examples of various architectural styles.

The textile collection of the Izmir Jewish community includes about 202 items: Parochot, Torah mantles, binders, etc., embroidered in Ottoman style and telling the history of the community since the expulsion from Spain. The group studied these textiles in a workshop at the Señora Synagogue (17th century) with Christina Meri (Jewish Museum of Greece) and Felicitas Heimann-Jelinek, together with Sigal Benzoor, head of the Conservation Department of the Eretz Israel Museum in Tel Aviv.

In the workshop on paper manuscripts the group took a closer look at mainly Shiviti plaques that decorate the interior walls of the Señora Synagogue. These manuscripts are late examples of the...
wide spectrum of Oriental painted or printed Shiviti and Menorah plaques, as well as the old, strong and lasting artistic tradition of Turkish-Jewish papercuts and collages. In the Beit Israel Synagogue, Izmir’s largest and still functioning synagogue (completed in 1907) the participants researched a selection of ritual metal objects from the collection of the community. These objects originate from different Izmir synagogues, some of which nowadays lay in ruins.

Joanne Rosenthal (Jewish Museum London) interviewed Nisya Isman-Allovi, who led the reopening of the Jewish Museum of Turkey in Istanbul after a major redevelopment of the museum. The talk focused on the concept behind the new core exhibition galleries, the considerations and challenges which this project involved – curatorially and practically – and the way the new museum has been perceived by the public.

The excursion program brought our participants to old community house in Izmir, as well as to the archaeological complex of Sardis dating back to the 3rd century BCE that encompasses Romaniote heritage.
For this A-CEP the AEJM closely collaborated with The Izmir Project, which is conceived of and led by the Izmir Jewish Community and the Mordechai Kiriaty Foundation and that involves documentation, preservation and conservation of treasures from Izmir Jewry. The Advanced Curatorial Education Program is a joint project of the AEJM and the Jewish Museum Berlin and is kindly supported by the German Federal Foreign Office.

Bevis Marks Sephardic Synagogue in London publishes “Alien Lists” of 1803

Bevis Marks recently published a list of “aliens,” or immigrants to the community from 1803. The list is a fascinating glimpse into the European world of 1803 bringing up questions as to why these immigrants had come to England and from where they had originated. If you wish the complete lists, e-mail us at museum@kkjsm.org

Gershon Harris
Hatzor Haglilit, Israel

As we enter June 2017, we celebrate the 50th anniversary of Israel’s astounding victory in the "Six-Day War", fought June 5-10, 1967. By all accounts, this event is seen as a modern-day miracle that changed Israel and world Jewry forever. The implications and outcome of the war totally transformed Israel geographically, economically, socially and religiously, and it is no wonder that on this 50th anniversary of the war, the main focus has been the liberation and reunification of all of Jerusalem. One reason for this is the very fact that Jews suddenly had free access to The Western Wall, the Jewish Quarter of the Old City, ancient (though mostly destroyed and gutted) synagogues, and the Temple Mount itself. Another factor is the more recent attempts in the UN and other arenas to totally disassociate and deny Jerusalem from any connection with Jews, Judaism and Jewish history itself!
But there are other reasons why this 50th year of Jerusalem's return to her people should be commemorated by Jews the world over, and especially in Israel.

First, the very positive fact of our holiest sites being so accessible has a certain downside in that virtually every Jew born and raised since 1967 takes this totally for granted. A visit to the Old City and the Western Wall, and even the Temple Mount for those who wish to do so, has become a standard stop on every tour bus from every corner of the world for every visitor to Israel. The restored synagogues in the Old City, especially the four Sephardi ones, have almost all been renovated and revived as contemporary and active prayer centers and ancient communal institutions once again serve their respective constituencies. This is wonderful, of course, but we must never forget that until June, 1967, no Jew could even approach the Western Wall; that only 19 years, the entire Jewish community living in the Old City was expelled, synagogues vandalized and turned in horse stables, and no Jew had too much hope that the situation would every change. We must not become complacent and forget that modern, revived and very vibrant Jerusalem is a true miracle from God. 50 years may be nothing in terms of a nation's history, but for human memory it is a lifetime, and only by actively learning and understanding the significance and miraculous nature of the 1967 victory can we truly appreciate what we have today.

Perhaps even more important for truly appreciating the miracle of the Six-Day War and its significance for the entire Jewish world is remembering the mood that pervaded in Israel as late as May 1967, and what the Arab world intended and openly proclaimed. Speaking to the UN General Assembly in September 1960, Egyptian president Nasser had stated that "The only solution to Palestine is that matters should return to the condition prevailing before the error was committed — i.e., the annulment of Israel's existence." In 1964 he said, "We swear to God that we shall not rest until we restore the Arab nation to Palestine and Palestine to the Arab nation. There is no room for imperialism and there is no room for Britain in our country, just as there is no room for Israel within the Arab nation." In 1965 he asserted, "We shall not enter Palestine with its soil covered in sand, we shall enter it with its soil saturated in blood." He backed up his rhetoric with deeds, culminating in the act-of-war of cutting off the Straits of Tiran to Israeli shipping in May 1967, and expelling United Nations forces from the Sinai the same month. These acts were obvious a prelude to a planned war of annihilation against the Jewish State. The mood in Israel was very depressed and frightened. Many Israelis left the country in the months approaching the war out of fear for their lives, and contingency plans were even drawn up about how and where to evacuate children whose parents might be slaughtered by the Arab onslaught. The fear of literally being pushed into the sea was real, and in fact contributed to Israel's own preparations, which included massive military reserve call-ups weeks before the outbreak of war, and a preemptive strike against Egypt's air force, among other actions.

The victory in 1967 totally transformed the Israeli and Jewish psyche. The war was rightfully perceived as being no less than a fight for Jewish survival in a very literal sense, and with Israel's astounding victory, not only Jews, but the entire world understood that God obviously had other plans, whereby the Jewish nation and the State of Israel were here to stay. And while there would still be wars and further attempts against Israel's development and even existence, the watershed victor of 1967 is still considered the most significant.

So, while it is extremely important to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Israel's victory in and of itself, it is no less important to learn and teach what preceded it, so that we truly understand and internalize the continued miraculous and God given existence and prosperity of the Jewish People and the State of Israel.
Highlighting the Simcha Colchamiro branch of the Colchamiro Family

We thank Michael Keston for a generous donation to Kehila Kedosha Janina Museum that made this article possible.

Simcha Colchamiro was the second child and oldest daughter of Jessula and Rachel Colchamiro. The Colchamiro family were one of our most prominent founding families and yet, much of their story had remained hidden until a family reunion organized by the Museum at Kehila Kedosha Janina in 2006. We gathered together 156 members of the family from eight of the eleven branches. It appeared that the descendants of the four brothers (Matathias, Asser, Leon and Elias) had stayed in touch with each other, but the descendants of the seven sisters (Simcha, Malka, Dinoula, Esther, Hanoula, Mollie and Refkoula) although most had married into the Yanniote world, had drifted apart. Our research is ongoing and we continuously uncover new and fascinating information. As you can see from this family story, while all immigrants came to the USA to find a better life for themselves and their families, there were often unexpected hardships and losses. What this family shows is how the descendants rose to the occasion and forged productive lives for themselves. Thank you, Michael, for giving us the opportunity to tell your family’s story.

Simcha was born in Ioannina in 1867 and, at the age of 19, in 1886, in Ioannina, married Menachem Negrin, who was three years her senior and, also, like Jessula Colchamiro, Simcha’s father, a buyer and seller of fabrics. Menachem arrived in the port of New York in 1903, going to his brother Joseph Negrin (whose children married into the Ganis and Matza families). Simcha arrived on June 21, 1906 with four of her children ranging in age from six to two years old. She joined her husband in the small Yanniote community in Harlem. Simcha was left a widow by 1915, living with three of her children in Harlem at 77 E. 119th Street. She died in 1921 at the age of 54. It appears she had suffered from a heart condition for most of her adult life. Simcha...
and Menachem had seven children, Esther, Anna, Mollie, Regina, Abe, Dinah and Jessoula. Their oldest daughter, Esther, was the grandmother of Michael Keston, who made a generous donation to Kehila Kedosha Janina. It is in thanks to this donation that we highlight this branch of the Colchamiro Family.

Esther married Isaac (Biro) Dostis, who came from a wealthy family (Moise and Elena Alcalai Dostis). Isaac came to the United States in 1902 and is among the earliest of the Yanniote immigrants. He is described as a handsome, rugged man. He supported the family by selling fruits and vegetables. Esther died in 1926 at the age of 39. The family lived in Harlem. In his later years, after the death of his wife, Esther, Isaac went to work in a cigarette factory in Philadelphia. He died there at the age of 69. Esther had five children but, unfortunately, two would die at a young age, the first in a drowning accident in Central Park and the second during the influenza epidemic in 1916. Michael made his donation in honor of three of Esther’s children, Mary Dostis Kestenbaum, Milton Dostis and Leah Dostis Klarsfeld, who descendants have made our community proud.

Nikos Papanikolaou is looking for our help.

His grandfather, also named Nikos Papanikolaou, saved at least one family, by the name of Cohen or Kones, Jewish Greeks from Kastoria in the village of Aliakmon in Kozani in Western Macedonia. His grandfather kept a small store in Neapolis, across from their village and he knew the family, probably because of business dealings with them. He hid them until the end of the war. His father Aristides was friends with the family’s son. After the war, the family immigrated to the US. He has made repeated attempts, even in Israel, to find them or their descendants but to no avail. Before he passed away, his father asked him to search for his friend but so far there has been no success. Nikos wants to know if anyone has heard of a Cohen or Kones family from Kastoria who spent the Nazi occupation in the village of Aliakmon, please us me know. We will pass the info on to Nikos.
New Weekly Class

Romaniote & Sephardic Insights for Life

Teachings and Traditions from Spain to the Balkans and Beyond

Led by Rabbi Nissim Elnecavé

Class topics include:
- Sephardic perspectives on the Torah
- Ladino songs and Romaniote & Sephardic Liturgy from Greece & Turkey
- Romaniote & Sephardic Traditions throughout the year, and much more

Every Tuesday night at 8pm
Kehila Kedosha Janina
280 Broome St NYC

Food will be served

Open to Young Adults in their 20’s & 30’s
RSVP to GreekJewishYPN@gmail.com
PLEASE REMEMBER: WE DISCONTINUED OUR POST OFFICE BOX
ALL MAIL SHOULD GO DIRECTLY TO 280 BROOME STREET, NEW YORK, NY 10002

OR
USE OUR DONATE BUTTON ON OUR WEBSITE
www.kkjsm.org