

SHEALTIEL GAZETTE

THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF THE FAMILY NETWORK



Official Logo for the Second World Reunion of the Shealtiel Family

The Archives of Catalonia II—
Moshe Shaltiel Gracian

Brothers from Amsterdam II—
Vibeke Sealtiël Olsen

Memories of Salonika—*David
A. Racanti (trans Ed Motola
Saltiel)*

Joseph David Sealtiel—*Vibeke
Sealtiël Olsen*

The Shealtiel Home Page

*Surfing all the way
to Salonika!*

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

*An extensive, and essential, guide to the
Salonika reunion!*

¡Figo Loco!

*“Tales My Mama Told”, Shaltiel the
duck, Announcements*



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Next issue—Summer 1997

The next issue is planned for August/September 1997. We will be covering all the stories and highlights from the forthcoming Reunion in Salonika, as well as an updated report on our new Internet website; Vibeke's tribute to Joop Sealtiël; Herman Bredl's *Fantastic - I found my family* - and much, much more!

¡Figo Loco!

More articles on the lighter side of family life, including hobbies, recipes, travel and social life as well as works of fiction, humour and poetry.

ORGANISATION



THE FAMILY

The current family has three known lines: from the North Sea ports, the Levant, and the Danube valley, with links between them certain but as yet undocumented. All are the descendants of Sephardic—that is Spanish-Jewish—family from Barcelona and *environs* which left before the expulsions of 1492-7. We are variously known as Chaltiel, Chartiel, Saltiel, Sealtiel, Shaltiel and Shealtiel, all derived from the Biblical שאלתיאל, generally translated as “asked of God”.

SHEALTIEL GAZETTE

The *Gazette* is an outgrowth of the *Magazine* published by Vibeke Sealtiel Olsen at the reunion in Amsterdam which first brought us together in August 1994. It is intended to be published and printed on an occasional basis—that is two or three times per year—in London, England. It is distributed to subscribing members of the family and *gratis* to libraries and scholars, as well as to others with a professional interest in our subject matter.

EDITORIAL POLICY

The *Gazette* is to act as an international medium of communication between members of the family; and to support the re-establishment of ties between us. For the time being, the *Gazette* is being edited by Miles Saltiel, who welcomes contributions of all kinds, including material enabling us better to understand our own history, that is personal reminiscences, as well as genealogical or historical material.

We are not, however, to be only backward looking. The

Gazette is intended also to be the forum for the exchange of family news, advice of forthcoming events of interest to members of the family, and reports of newly discovered members or branches of the family; as well as for the organisation of co-operative endeavours.

MATERIAL FOR PUBLICATION

As the *Gazette* very much relies on contributions from members of the family, we look forward to continuing to hear from you. The *Gazette* welcomes text and illustrations that relate to any aspect of the family, its history or its members; as well as opinionated articles and personal reminiscences of any kind. The Editor will acknowledge—but does not undertake to return—material. It is particularly convenient to receive files by e-mail. My mail-box no.is:

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For those unconnected to the Internet, please help by sending material intended for publication on a 3.5 inch disc, either in ASCII text, or formatted for Word for Windows 2.0 or above. to the address below.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

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CORRESPONDENCE

The Editor welcomes letters from readers, whether or not members of the family. Please write to the address below. If intended for publication, please mark accordingly.

OUR COVER

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AS WE PREPARE to assemble in Salonika, it is a good time to ask ourselves questions. For we face uncertainties. We may congratulate ourselves that the BBC is about to join with other broadcasters to make a three hour film which celebrates our family. We can take pride in our continuing programme of historical findings, among them the conclusion in this *Gazette* of Moshe Saltiel's preliminary survey of the archives of Catalonia and a continuation of Vibeke Olsen's Homeric reconstruction of the history of the Dutch family. And we can take pleasure in the informal links attested by our *Open Door* programme and the lighter-hearted contents of *Figo Loco*.



WE CAN ALSO BE proud that dozens of family groups from as far away as Argentina and Thailand will assemble at the forthcoming reunion. But we should also be alert to evidence that the excitement of the initial years of rediscovery will be insufficient in the years to come. One early sign. In 1993 we knew of around one hundred family households—perhaps 250 individuals. That summer around 120 members of the family turned up in Amsterdam. This year we know of over four hundred households—say one thousand individuals—but we have always known it would be foolish to expect anything like a comparable four-fold expansion in the numbers at Salonika.

We think we understand why this might be. Many of our cousins are not at ease in English. Others who exerted themselves financially three years ago to travel intercontinental distances may not—after such a brief interval—find it easy to do so once again; some of our new-found cousins are

focusing on the new lives they are making in Israel. And for all that Salonika means much to those whose families left the city in living memory, it commands less attachment from those with no tradition of links to the “Jerusalem of the Balkans”.

But perhaps we know less than we think. A signal that this might be so is that *Gazette* subscriptions are running so much more slowly than in 1996 that we are at risk of losing last year's hard-won status as a self-supporting journal. So regardless of the ins and outs of coming to Salonika—and, make no mistake, the couple of hundred or so on their way to the reunion are in for an extraordinary occasion—we should recognise that we have to exert ourselves to ensure that the network develops in a way which attracts the largest number of members of the family.

This is a matter for us all. To the extent that households are failing to respond, we should try to work out whether this reflects a failing of communication—which might mean we should do more translating, or alter the style of the *Gazette*; or a lack of means—which would suggest we should be focusing on inexpensive activities; or an interest as yet undeveloped in what we are about—which might mean rethinking our activities, perhaps seeking to create a permanent structure or (alternatively?) stronger local groups.



THERE WILL BE A full debate on the way forward at Salonika. I would also welcome responses to the “brain-storming” questionnaire enclosed with this issue, which is intended to help us understand how members of the family think we should move on.

HISTORY



The Catalan record—II

This is the second of two instalments of findings by researchers led by Moshe Shaltiel Gracian. from the archives of the kingdom of Aragon;

This article is based upon Moshe Shaltiel Gracian's speech to the Israeli Genealogy Society on 15th January 1997

Links to line of Gracian/Hen Now a few words on the family of Gracian or Hen, so often found in association with Shealtiel. I incline to a view that the link with these names has a different explanation from that of the "associated families". My thesis would be that the Gracian or Hen line is an offshoot of the Shealtiel family itself. I have three reasons for taking this view.

- First, medieval references to Shealtiel antedate those to Hen or Gracian by at least a century.
- Second, the *Shealtiel Haggadah* contains a late medieval onomastic form in which a Hen describes himself as "of the...house of Shealtiel".
- Third, I would join with the conjecture of Ambassador Modechai Arbell that Hen was originally an acronymic title of honour, הן, based on the Hebrew phrase הרהמת הנסתר, "the wisdom of the mystery".

On this view, the acronym would have come to be used as a Hebrew name in its own right and this subsequently developed an equivalent in the local vernacular, thus "Gracian". I find this conjecture particularly persuasive in the light of the intellectual distinction characteristic of those bearing the name "Hen".

It is likely that Rabbi Yehuda was the first to be named "Hen" and passed the title onto his descendants. This is to reinterpret the remarks of both the *Tashbetz* in his *Responsa* and Benjamin of Tudela, who said that the Shealtiels were descendants of Rabbi Yehuda Ben Barzilai *Nasi*, known as *Habarzelony*. This cannot be right as references to Shealtiels antedate *Habarzelony* by over two centuries. In my opinion, they must have meant that *Habarzelony* was a member of the Shealtiel family and not the other way around.

Davidic descent Let me now comment on the persistent claim made by the Shealtiels

(among several other families) to descend from the line of David. The claim is reported by several contemporary observers and seems to have been generally accepted by the community of the day. It was acknowledged by the title *Nasi*, (Prince) granted in the early years of the period only to those recognised as having a legitimate such claim.

Nasi is a title going back to the Babylonian Exile, when it was granted to the leader of the community, the Exilarch, whose legitimacy arose out of his descent from the House of David. Evidently our medieval forebears took these matters seriously and felt able to adjudicate between true and false claims. The record survives that an individual claiming the title of *Nasi* was found not to be a descendant of the House of David and was obliged to leave medieval Jerusalem in disgrace. It is noteworthy that the title of *Nasi* was also in widespread use by the "associated families".

Let us look at a few examples. Shmuel ben Shealtiel, who died in an earthquake in 1097 had the title of *Nasi* on his tombstone. Many other documents from the early eleventh and twelfth century refer to the members of the family as *Nasi*. In one, dated 13th January, 1195, Boneta and her husband the *Nasi* R. Saltiell, son of the *Nasi* R. Sheshet, sell to *Nasi* R. Maquir, son of the *Nasi* R. Sheshet for 55 *dinares maravidies*, the field which he had inherited in turn from R Saltiell and which they used to possess together with R Sheshet, father of the seller.

If this looks too complex to comprehend it may be explicable in the light of the Boston Brahmins, of whom we used to say that the Cabots talk only to the Lodges and the Lodges talk only to God. It may have been with such thoughts in mind that Father Riera i Sans has observed that the Shealtiels dealt only with the Sheshets or the Cresces, the only exception occurring when the King needed a loan. The Father also takes the view that the title *Nasi* denoted lineage in the case of the Shealtiels.

You will understand it if my own position on this topic is a shade schizophrenic. As a proud

member of the Shealtiel family, I naturally wish to shout our glorious lineage from the rooftops; as a sober student of history, I will content myself with pointing to the authority arising out of a claim going back some one thousand years to a society in which it was unchallenged.



Circumstances of family What else does the record tell us of the circumstances of the Shealtiel family? The overwhelming number of the entries we have found refer to those bearing the name as Jews. The record shows that the Shealtiels and the “associated families” were property owners, professionals and traders. We have seen that contemporary Hebrew sources refer to these families as among the aristocracy of the Sephardic community. I have already argued that this was more than a form of words. Some Shealtiels converted, either under political pressure or to advance their careers. The Aragonese armorial register shows two coats of arms relating to the name and we are aware of arms borne by a Jewish Shealtiel who was a noted bibliophile in late medieval Crete. We have not yet inspected this last and have yet to investigate the symbolism of any of the heraldic devices.

Judeo-Spanish history in general, and that of Catalonia in particular, is recalled in association with its rich culture, affluence, the forced conversions during the pogroms of 1391, and the departure. Hereunder we cite documents which we have found describing the life of the Shealtiel family.

Affluence The prosperity of the family is attested by early records.

- **3rd March, 1175**, King Alfonso I sold a field he owned in the parish of Palleja to Perfet, nephew of Saltell.
- **21st May, 1227**: Bonastruch, Salomon, Bonjuda, Bonafos, sons of Saltell, and Cresques, Mosse and Perfect, sons of Vidal Gracia, nephews and heirs to the late Perfect, recognised that King Jaime I had repaid a debt of 11,362 *sueldos* by conveying title to an estate that he had inherited from his uncle. Receipt of the estate also repaid a loan to the King’s father.

- **18th April, 1326, Barcelona**: As if to demonstrate that nothing has changed in human nature, the Infante Alfonso, the first born of the King, appointed a special counsel, Count D’Urgellum, to resolve the case of Sobredona, widow of Bonafos Saltell, against Saltell’s heirs, “relating to the dowry of the Jew and of other goods of her late husband”.

As today, a sure way to identify wealth is the size of the associated legal bills. Anyone feeling that their lawyers are complicating their lives by preparing unnecessarily long legal documents may feel better to realise that this is nothing new. We have found ten pages of boilerplate prepared for the spouse of Rabbi Josue Halevi to assure her that she had good title to a property she had bought from Zerachiah ben

Xaltiel. Tax bills, *Ketuba* and other documents were attached, together with a Hebrew copy of it all. A lot of legal fees.

Public service The record shows that from the earliest archives to the conclusion of Jewish life

in Aragon, members of the Shealtiel family held positions in the service of the Crown and of the Jewish community in the community council, the *Aljama*. The protestation of 1305 is arguably most important public document issued by the Rashba. It was signed by the most important Jewish leaders. Of the thirty-seven names (including the Rashba and his son), fourteen are members of the Shealtiel family. Noticeably, most of the non-Shealtiel names appears at the end of the document.

Departure from Spain I now turn to the family’s departure from Spain. The chronological analysis shows that the number of entries referring to Shealtiels falls in the final century, that is after the disturbances of 1391. In fact there are only two (possibly three) entries after 1420. Many entries after 1391 refer to what is now southern France, rather than what was to become Spain.

From the historical perspective the disturbances of 1391 constitute the beginning of the end of the Jewish life in Spain. Most of the Shealtiel family left the country in that year or the one following. And if many of the refugees lost most or all their property, if they survived at all, some Shealtiels were more fortunate. On 1st October, 1392 King Juan I, signed a document that granted Salomon Gracia and his

The record shows that the family held positions in the service of the Crown and the Jewish community

son, Saltell Gracia, “Jews of Barcelona,” a licence to move their residence to other places in the Royal domains within the peninsular Kingdom as well as overseas including the island of Sicily. Permission to travel was also granted to Saltell’s wife, children and all his family, and they were permitted to take their possessions, money and jewellery with them. The King ordered all his officers and citizens to comply with this warrant, specifically enjoining ship-owners to transport the Saltells to lands under royal rule but to no others.

This is likely to have been a preliminary to further or alternative migration. We may surmise that most members of the family saw which way the wind was blowing and left well before the forcible Expulsion a century later, with only a few—perhaps those lacking the means for successful emigration—remaining in Iberia for the final act. Such a view finds support from the Salonikan record already mentioned of Shealtiels in place to welcome the later refugees from the Expulsion.



The past brought to life I would now like to illustrate the liveliness of the human interest which may emerge from the dry record. Two brothers, Gracia and Bonet Saltell, appear in dozens of instances in the archival, *Responsa* and literary record as leaders of the Barcelona community. The archives enable us to trace the formerly unknown story of how they responded to the anti-Semitic disturbances of 1391. The ecclesiastical record shows that both underwent nominal conversions. It tells us that Gracia took the name of D’Angelosa, signifying that he had placed himself under the protection of one of the most prominent families in Aragon. Earlier records show that the link between the two families was already longstanding. The archive tells us that the Bishop of Barcelona, himself a D’Anglesola, became Gracia’s godfather.

We can also see from the tax rolls that the two brothers kept up their residences, while the records of title hint that the brothers then slowly liquidated their property. A few years later a rediscovered fragment of a Hebrew prayer-book shows one of the brothers reappearing as Jews in Perpignan. This prolonged and ingenious series of manoeuvres, touching as it does on political, family, religious, and proprietary

matters can be found in the dusty pages of the archive.



LET US LOOK AT THE story in a bit more detail. Saltell Gracia was a bright kid—very bright. These days, if a youngster shows a talent for business, the father might give him few dollars to play the stock market. Bonjuha Saltell, a Jew from Barcelona, had a better idea, he emancipated his son. On 13th September 1325, in front of the judge and the bailiff, the 14-year-old was declared an adult. How did the lad do? Very well thank you. Thirteen years later, married to the daughter of, (you guessed it) Bonjuha Cresques, he was wealthy enough to loan the city, via its councillors, the unheard sum of seven thousand five hundred *suedos* for public works. The money, according to the document signed by Saltell on Friday, 9th February, 1338, was repaid with interest of twenty percent.

Like any good businessman, Saltell watched his

pennies. In 1339 he certified that he had received the sum of nine pounds for selling the stall he owned in the main synagogue in Barcelona. As he lived mainly in Girona, he didn’t need the stall, and money is money. The stall location is described as bordered on the left by that of Bonet Saltell, probably his brother, and on the right by the stall of Luceff, Jaques’ heir.

Over the years Saltell and his brother Bonet were actively involved in the community and with large scale business, but in the year 1391, the eighty year-old and his brother converted. Saltell was baptised as Arnau D’Anglesola and Bonet became Francesc-Guillaum de Vilarig.

The D’Anglesola family was by far the most important family in Aragon. Related to the royal family, members of the family held the highest position in just about every field, including the Military, trade, government and the church. In fact the bishop of Barcelona who baptised Saltell, and thus became his godfather, was himself a D’Anglesola. As I mentioned before, the two families had close ties that spanned hundreds of years, and it is likely that the quick conversion and the granting of their name, saved the life of Saltell and his family.

Conversion under the duress of the pogrom of 1391 was not unusual. Thirty percent of the Jews of Spain did as much to avoid death. An-

***The bishop of Barcelona
baptised Saltell, acted as
his godfather and gave
him his own name***

other thirty percent could not escape and were killed. What was unusual is what happened to the Shealtiels of this story. In the year after their conversion, they stayed at their former residences, paid taxes and did some business. The record shows Bonet, now the *converso* Francesc Guillaum de Vilarig, releasing Isaac Bonjuha and his father from their pledges to him as they had repaid their loan to him, before the witnesses Berenguer Morell and Mose Llobet, notaries of Girona.

And then Bonet, who was also a physician, moved to Barcelona, where he fell on hard times, became a full-time professor at the medical school and lost most, if not all, his property. The record shows that on 12th November, 1405, King Martin I “with compassion for your needs” gave the former Bonet Saltell permission to divide his properties at the Calle de Girona in order to satisfy his creditors.

Arnau D’Anglesola disappeared from Barcelona to re-emerge in Perpignan under his old name. I have discovered his name on the reverse of the parchment of the Catholic book cover which had a list of the stall-owners in the synagogue of Perpignan. In the light of the fact that his new residence was also part of the Kingdom of Aragon, it is extraordinary that even the well-connected Saltell could have pulled this off. And indeed, some may think that my discovery is erroneously based on a coincidence of surnames. But my conclusion is based on the fact that the son of the Saltell of Perpignan has all the names of the man from Gerona.



THE CROWN OF ARAGON condemned the pogroms of 1391—if not too energetically—and subsequently tried to re-establish Jewish life in Barcelona. But even with the help of Chasdai Cresques, such efforts proved unavailing. Those who survived moved to the small towns or left the country altogether, as was the case with most of the Shealtiel family. From the documents we have found, it seems the Shealtiel name still carried influence. The members of the family who stayed on—most if not all physicians—were treated with special care. On 3rd February, 1400, Martin I “in view of the at-

ention given by the inquisitions to the *Aljama* of Alacaniz and to the other *Aljamas* of the Kingdom of Aragon,” ordered the general receiver of his kingdom not to conduct any investigation against the Jews, “especially against Abraham Saltell and his wife Astruga.”

Many of the Jews who converted under duress started to move their families to safe havens. The administrators of the Crown moved to prosecute the “offenders.” On 1st March, 1408, Martin I ordered the Governor of Catalonia to cease the prosecution of Salomo Garcia “a Jew of the house of the Queen”. He had been charged with the felony of inducing his wife and granddaughter, a *converso*, to relocate to a Muslim country, but was absolved by the Queen.

Life after Spain I should now mention the *Shealtiel Haggadah*, so called because of an *ex libris* identifying its owner:

...אברהם חן בן יהודה הרופא בן
עמנואל בן יהודה לביה שאלתיאל

On August 28th 1994 at the Shealtiel Reunion, Iris Fishof of the Israel Museum identified the writer of this *ex libris* as Abraham Hen Shealtiel, a noted bibliophile of sixteenth century Crete. It is translated as “[This belongs to me] Abraham Hen, son of the nobleman R Ja’udah, physician, son of R Emmanuel Hen the physician of the house of Shealtiel”. This brings the family to sixteenth century Crete, where there lived other Shealtiels, kin of Yehudah. An Isaac Hen is mentioned in the *Responsa* of Joseph b. Loeb. Finally, the ethnographic Museum in Herakleion, Crete, has on display a sculpture which belonged to the Shealtiel family depicting an apparent heraldic device of crowned lions bearing swords. It is speculated that this was on display at the entrance to the synagogue which was renovated by Grazziano Shealtiel.



WE MAY CONCLUDE by taking some satisfaction in this preliminary survey of the medieval record. We have succeeded in bringing to life condition of the forbears of our family and confirming our five hundred year history in the Judeo-Hispanic community of Aragon.

The brothers of Amsterdam—II

This is the second of two parts of an article by, Vibeke Sealtiel Olsen, of Amsterdam, about the families of Joseph David Saltiel and the three sons of David the son of Ribca Saltiel.

THE THREE SONS of David Sealtiel were named Isaac, Samuel and Israel. Isaac, the eldest, was four years older than Samuel, and 13 years older than the youngest son, Israel. Together with their older sister Rebecca, Isaac, Samuel and Israel were the four surviving of the 12 children born to David of Isaac Sealtiel and Sara da Souza Pimentel. Like their father, the three sons had various occupations and founded big families (9-14 children each).

Their sister Rebecca married Jacob Glasoog, a cigar-maker. They had no children. This is all I know about her.

Three baby boys, all born in Amsterdam in 1853, were born, were all given the first name Isaac: Isaac, born 29th March, the son of David Sealtiel; Isaac, born 1st of July, the son of Raphael (a brother of David); and Isaac, born 10th June, the son of Joseph, (the uncle of David and Raphael). The three fathers might have found it appropriate to give their sons this name, but it caused a lot of confusion to the civil servants of the municipal registration of Amsterdam, who regularly mixed them up.



ISAAC SEALTIËL, THE OLDEST SON of David, left his parents home in 1875, aged 22, to become a soldier. In 1876 he met his wife Sara Loezen in London where they married in Synagogue and had their first daughter Sarah. In October 1877, Sara and her daughter returned to Amsterdam to live with her mother.

Isaac left as a soldier for Kraton province, Sumatra, where he fought in the war. He was given a decoration for his courage, and in 1883 returned to Amsterdam to live with his wife and child. In June 1883, Isaac and Sara officially married in Amsterdam. Isaac was 30 years old. It is claimed that he was the oldest wearer of the Kraton decoration.

After the war Isaac became a blacksmith, and his nine children, including twins David and Keetje, were born. Keetje is not a common

Dutch name and seems to be a translation of the English name Kate.

Sara died in 1922 aged 69. Isaac was 89 years old when he was murdered in Auschwitz in 1942. Of his 25 known descendants, only two survived the war. One of these was the daughter of Isaac's daughter Rebecca, known as Rika. She worked and lived at the Waterlooplein market in Amsterdam. Rika and her husband Wolf Schaap lived in a apartment above the cart sheds of the Waterlooplein market. Rika was believed to be very rich. She was

said to own a pin-cushion in which she hid gold and diamonds. No doubt she took it with her, when she was taken to Auschwitz. And no doubt it was stolen from her. Her daughter, whose first name I do not know, was hidden during the war and sur-

vived. After the war, she returned to Amsterdam and became an artist. I understand that she is still alive.

Rumour has it that shortly before the war, Isaac was married to a young woman, with whom he had two children. I do not know the name of the mother or the children. There is no mention of them among the Sealtiels who were killed in the Holocaust, therefore, it is not known whether or not they survived. To his younger relatives, nieces and nephews in Amsterdam, Isaac was know as "Uncle Sak".



SAMUEL SEALTIËL MARRIED Roosje Leever in 1877 when he was 20 years old. Their first four children all died. Samuel had a humble job, but in his spare time he followed his great-grandfather as a servant of the Esnoga. In 1893, when he was 35 years old, he became she shammash of the Esnoga, and continued to perform this task for 40 years.

As the *shammash* of the Esnoga, Samuel became a well-known character in Jewish Amsterdam. He was known as the local commander (the town-major), or as the man with the three beards, because of his impressive ap-

pearance, wearing a uniform with a cocked hat and having a huge moustache. He was also given the nick-name Opa Poppie (Grandpa Dolly), because he used to sit at the steps in front of the Esnoga and cut out paper dolls to please the children. Samuel is said to have been a very dear old man with a big warm heart. His wife Roosje died in 1911, and Samuel remarried Saartje (Sara) Hartog, a widow. Saartje was crippled. Samuel and Saartje lived close to the Waterlooplein. Saartje had a small stall in front of their home, where she sold candies and other goodies for the children. Every Saturday, Samuel went for a walk to visit his daughters and other relatives. As he was very poor, they would usually give him a few guilders whenever he came. This was a kind of welfare.

Samuel and Roosje had raised four sons and three daughters. All of them founded families, and Samuel had 37 grandchildren born 1907-1936, and 14 great-grandchildren, born 1929-1943.

In 1933, Samuel celebrated his 40th anniversary as a *shammas* of the *Esnoga*. On this occasion, his picture was printed in the Jewish Newspaper of Amsterdam on 12 May 1933, together with a small article about his career as a *shammas*: "Mr. S. D. Sealtiel is a faithful servant of the Portuguese Jewish Congregation, and always doing his early duty...the still youthful old man, who appears on time, every morning, not minding the weather...will on 13 May be given an appropriate reward for his commitment. Mr. Sealtiel is welcome to fulfil his duty with the P.J.C. as long as he might wish to do so".

In 1934 Saartje died. Three years later Samuel celebrated his 80th birthday together with his children and their families. They announced his birthday in the newspaper.

In 1943 Samuel was transported to Auschwitz, where he was murdered aged 85. His fate was shared by most of his 57 known descendants. Six of his great-grandchildren survived the war.



ISRAEL SEALTIËL MARRIED Betje Koort, four years his senior, when he was just 17. Their marriage required royal permission as Israel

was under age. The civil servant wrote that the permission was granted 'because of the pregnancy of the bride'. Five days after the wedding Betje gave birth to their first son David. In the next 19 years, ten more children were to arrive.

Israel and Betje lived at several addresses in the Nieuwe Kerkstraat. They had to move whenever they had problems paying the rent. Although they were frustrated with the situation, there was no alternative.

In 1903 Betje died. With eight children between the ages of four and 19 to take care of, life was not easy for Isaac. A year a half later, he married Debora Gompers, a widow.

Debora persuaded her husband to move to Antwerp, from where she originated, with her

shortly after their wedding. But Antwerp did not turn out to be the promised land and within two years, 1906, the family returned to Amsterdam.

Israel's four daughters all died of tuberculosis at the start of the century, and their husbands soon

remarried. Israel returned to Antwerp in 1913, together with Debora and his youngest son Aron. Their marriage was not a happy one, and in 1919, after all his children had left home, Israel and Debora divorced. Israel remarried for the third time. He they lived quietly with his wife Sara Noort, until his death in 1937. Israel became ill and died shortly before his 71st birthday. To his younger relatives, Israel was known as "Uncle Railey".

During the last months of his life, Israel was cared for in the *Verdooner Pension*. M. Vigeveno (relationship unknown) placed a newspaper advertisement, thanking the staff of the Pension for the loving nursing and care they had given to Israel.



SHORTLY BEFORE HE DIED, Israel confessed to one of his younger relatives the reasons for his three marriages. Israel said that he married the first time for love, the second time because of the children, and the third time to have someone to iron his pants.

SALONIKA SPECIAL



Memories of Salonika

*Translation into English by **Ed Motola Saltiel** and his mother **Corina Saltiel Motola Handel** of part of “Zikhron Saloniki, Grandeza i Destruccion de Yeruchalayim del Balkan”, or “Memories of Salonika, Grandeur and Destruction of the Jerusalem of the Balkans”.*

This is extracted from the Ladino summary of the Hebrew text, in Volume II of the book edited by David A. Recanati. The notes in [brackets] are interpretations of questionable passages.

The City: The neighbourhoods of Salonika across the ages by Michael Molho

BEFORE THE CONQUEST of Salonika by the Turks in 1430, most of the Jews lived close to the port, near the centre of the city. When the Jews that were banished from Spain came to live in Salonika they found housing that belonged to the Turks and they concentrated themselves near the walls of the port of the city near the White Tower fort.

In 1545 there was a great fire which destroyed many of the homes in which the Jews lived. The new houses were rebuilt in the Spanish style. There were two types of buildings: homes for the middle class and wealthy with *aranjamentos* [barnyards?] behind the houses and courtyards, and homes for the groundskeepers and servants. The external walls were built around a central courtyard. Each apartment had a part of the courtyard. In an alcove next to the courtyard there was found a covered cabinet, the well, etc. that served all the inhabitants there. The crowding [in each single apartment room] was great because of the regular arrival of Jews banished from Spain and refugees from Italy and other countries.

Before the great fire of 1545 and immediately thereafter, there were no municipal programs for zoning or public works. Everyone built on his land as he pleased. There was neither piped sanitation nor arrangements for collecting manure. Worse still, the rains carried the manure from the Turkish neighbourhoods in the upper city to the Jewish neighbourhoods in the lower city, such that large quantities of manure formed a mound against part of the harbour wall. With time, the mound became so large that it covered part of the wall.

The crowding, the filth and the other above mentioned reasons resulted frequently in great epidemics that caused the death of many, above all children. On another side [of the town], the wooden houses that were built, one against the other, the lack of water, and the great winds from the *Vardar*, the valley behind the city, caused small fires to become terrible conflagrations which would destroy thousands of homes. Such fires occurred in 1545, 1587, 1620, 1734, 1759, 1776, 1839, 1854, etc.

In 1890 there was another great fire that burned over 2000 homes, *Kehiloth* [synagogues], yeshivas, etc. To rebuild the section of the city that had burned, they nominated an expert builder, Menexé. The plans that he made resulted in the building of modern homes and wide streets. Everyone wanted to work in the centre of the city near the Jewish Plaza, near the port and the *Tscharchi*.



THE CUSTOM WAS that each family rented a house paying in advance for the entire year. The annual cleaning from house to house was generally done in the month of *Ihul*, based on the decisions of the great rabbi Asher Covo in 1859.

As already noted, epidemics, fires and other evils, plagued the Jewish population of Salonika throughout its four hundred years. This is why the number of Jews in the city did not exceed twenty thousand at the end of the eighteenth century. With the improvement of conditions of hygiene, together with airier homes and economic prosperity, etc., the number of Jews in the city was increasing at a great pace. In 1865 the Jews amounted to twenty-five thousand souls. In 1876 there were forty thousand. At the beginning of the 20th century there were sixty thousand. By 1912 and later the number reached eighty thousand. At this time, the Jews comprised three fifths of the total population of the city.

In the nineteenth century, the Jews began to go and live in the *Campanias*, or countryside beyond the city limits. With time they settled in this region and because of this, the generous wife of Saul Modiani, the Lady Fakima, decided to build a beautiful and large *Kehila*, synagogue, in memory of her husband. The construction was finished in 1901 and the temple was called *Beit Saul*.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, especially after the fire of 1890, poor Jews and labourers went to live in neighbourhoods that were formed in the region of the *Vardar* because land was cheaper there and the homes were close to the places where they worked.

After the fire of 1890, sixteen hundred families were left homeless. In 1891, two thousand Jewish refugees arrived in Salonika from the pogroms of Kichinev in Russia. To solve the problem of homes for these groups, commissions were

formed, and with the help of Baron Hirsch they gave assistance. They bought land, part in the north of the city near the eastern train station, and another part in the south of the city in a neighbourhood that was called *Calamaria*. In the north was built the neighbourhood named *Baron Hirsch*. In 1897-1898, the poor sanitary conditions of the *Vardar* and *Baron Hirsch* caused the death of fifty people from an epidemic of malaria.

Dr. Moshe Misrahi convinced Baroness Clara Hirsch to donate building lots on which were built three clinics for the sick poor, one in *Hirsch* neighbourhood the second in the *Calamia* neighbourhood, and the third in the centre neighbourhood of the city which was inhabited by Jews.



By 1860-1870 Salonika was beginning to become a modern city. Wide streets were cut straight and lined with trees on both sides. New and modern homes were built particularly in the centre of the city. In 1871 a municipal cleaning service started cleaning the streets. In 1889-1890 two tram lines were inaugurated.

Gas was replacing oil to light the streets and later the homes, and around 1900, gas gave way to electricity. The port was adapted to receive large ships which helped the development of imports and exports. The railroad lines were developed. European banks

and firms opened branches in the city and many of their employees were Jews. A great part of the business was in the hands of the Jews, many of whom were began to absorb French culture. This influence, together with the city's prosperity prompted the Turks to call Salonika "Little Paris".

Despite the conquest of the city by the Greeks in 1912, Salonika, now Thessaloniki, kept its Jewish character. The port and the stores were closed on the Sabbath. The Jews spoke no Turkish or Greek, therefore the foreign Greeks, Bulgarians and Albanians learned Spanish.

At the beginning of the first world war, the status of the Jews was bright, thanks to the arrival in the city of 1.5 million *askieres* of the allied armies. They brought further prosperity to the Jews of the city, but they also brought one of the greatest catastrophes that fell on their heads.

***By 1860-1870 Salonika
was beginning to become
a modern city.***

On the Sabbath of 17th August, 1917, a small fire started in the small old house of a Greek refugee. Strong winds which were blowing from the mountain caused many houses to burn in little time. The sailors from the French fleet emptied and used all the water from the wells to save the military installations from the fire, such that the firemen couldn't stop the fire. A great portion of the city, 4110 homes, all the Jewish schools, thirty-two synagogues, *yeshivas*, the Jewish *Tscharchi*, and all the stores belonging to Jews became ashes. Fifty-two thousand Jews were homeless. The Jewish Community tried to help solve the problem. Many Jews went to live in the countryside and bit by bit new neighbourhoods, schools and temples were built. The government helped not at all. On the contrary, they claimed all the region that burned, with the intention of displacing the Jews from the centre of the city. In 1923, one hundred thousand Greeks who had been banished from Asia Minor came to settle in Salonika, aggravating further the situation of the Jews.



OVER THE CENTURIES, Jews came to Salonika from throughout Europe. Now, by contrast, many were emigrating to distant spots, including America. In 1931, after the pogrom of Campbell and the anti-Semitic campaign of the Macedonian Journal, close to fifteen thou-

sand Jews left Salonika to settle in Israel, especially Tel-Aviv. Despite this emigration, the number of Jews of Salonika before the *Shoah* was about fifty thousand.

Today in Salonika only a few hundred Jews live in the city and the suburbs. The only temple not destroyed during the war, was the Temple of the Monasterlis, because it was used as a first aid station by the Red Cross.



The Jews of Portugal in Salonika by Mercado Covo

In 1496, the King of Portugal, Manuel I, forced all the Jews to leave the Jewish faith and convert to Christianity. On the outside, they adopted this religion, but in fact they continued to be faithful to Judaism—they became *Marranos*. No longer able to live in that country, many of them left Portugal and settled in such countries as Italy, England, Holland and Turkey, etc., as well as in Salonika.

When they arrived in Salonika they took off the Christian mask and turned back to Judaism.

They founded five *Kehilim*—Synagogue congregations—each having its own synagogue, its own Rabbis, *Darchanim*—preachers, *Beth-Din*—religious court], and *Hevra Kadisha*—burial society, and the like.

The five Temples were *Kahal Kadoch*, Evora, Lisbon *Hadach*, Lisbon *Yachan*, Portugal (*Calavassa*) and *Yihia* or *Livyath Hen*.

The first printing press in Salonika was founded in 1515 by Don Yehuda Guedalia, who came from Portugal.

At the beginning the Jews of Portugal spoke Portuguese, but as time went on, they moved to the practice of the majority who spoke Spanish. Traces of Portuguese stayed until our day in the Spanish spoken by the Jews of Salonika.

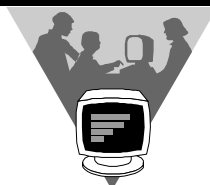
The Rabbis in Salonika formed an *Alahá*—religious precedent, that any woman who had been married in Portugal to a *Marrano*, could marry again in Salonika without a *get*—bill of divorce, or *haliza*—release, because her first marriage was invalid by Jewish law.



IN GENERAL, THE Jews of Portugal who settled in Salonika weren't poor. On the contrary there were among them businessmen, bankers, ex-ministers, doctors, Rabbis, astronomers, and printers.

I'll list here some of the more important: Rabbi Yaacov Ben-Haviv, author of the famous book *Ein-Yaacov*, his son Rabbi Levy Ben Haviv, who edited the book *Cheelot Utchouvot Aralbah*; the descendants of the famous family of the "Ibn Yehia"; Chelomo Molho, the false Messiah; Rabbi Chelomo Levet Halevy, master of the law, famous doctor, who mastered Latin, Hebrew, Portuguese, Spanish and Arabic; Rabbi Yeochua Ibn Chouib and his brother Yoel Ibn Chouib, and Rabbi Joseph Caro, the author of *Chulhan Aruch*, "*Bet Joseph*" and *Kesef Michne*; Rabbi Avraam Benyaech; the Taitatzak family; the poet Ouchke; the doctor Amatos Louzitanos, etc. These personalities and many others contributed to make the Jewish community of Salonika a Jewish centre of primary importance.

The Shealtiel



Home Page

Hats off to Steve Saltiel of Chicago. He has created the family's exciting home page. This includes material on:

- History
- Reunions
- Genealogy
- The family today

And much, much more!!

Surf to www/shealtiel.org to find out more...

MEMOIRS

Joseph David Sealtiel

Vibeke Sealtiel Olsen recounts the life and times of Joseph David Sealtiel, father of one of Amsterdam's famous diamond cutting families, from extensive research that she has carried out.

IN SEPTEMBER 1838 THE CIVIL registration of Joseph David Sealtiels and Abigael Benavente's marriage took place. Joseph was twenty-four and Abigael was three years his junior. She was the daughter of Jacob Benavente, also known as Jacob Baruch (Pardo). At that time, Joseph was undertaking his military service in the third regiment of infantry, but was given special permission by the colonel to get married.

Soon after, Joseph returned to civilian life, and became a hawker like his brothers. By March 1839 the family could afford to pay for the wedding party, and Joseph and Abigael were married under the *chuppah* in the Sephardic Synagogue of Amsterdam.

Like all Sephardic couples of Amsterdam, Joseph and Abigael received a dowry from the treasury of the Synagogue. Immediately after the wedding, Abigael became pregnant and in December 1839 David, named after the father of Joseph, was born. Their second child, Gracia, was born in February 1842. Over the next twenty years, Abigael gave birth to five sons and four daughters: Jacob, Rebecca, Rachel, Abraham, Esther, Isaac, Benjamin, Samuel and Debora.

During the sixty years of their married life, Joseph and Abigael lived in the Kerkstraat (Nieuwe Kerkstraat) where many of the poor Sephardic Jews lived. It is not easy to empathise with the hardships experienced by a family of this size, living in one room in the basement.

A description of the home of a family from the beginning of this century illustrates their critical circumstances: "The dark basement apartment was below street-level. It had no windows and it was almost impossible to see anything in the dark. The family had only one room, in which they cooked, lived and slept.

When it rained, the water would rise from the gutter and flow onto the floor. The children slept six to a bed".

In 1847, the first official primary school for poor Sephardic children was established by the Sephardic Community, and David and Gracia both attended. A new Dutch education law required that all children, boys and girls, were sent to school. All of Joseph and Abigael's children would receive at least five years of education.

Jacob was the only one to graduate and continue his education. He went studied at the school for the poor from age 14. Not all Joseph's children were eager students - Abraham did not even know how to write his own name.

In 1850, for the first time, Dutch school children were vaccinated, and all benefited from the improved infant health care. This may help to explain how all the Sealtiel children survived their childhood, unlike many others of their generation.



JOSEPH AND ABIGAEL HAD a hard time raising their children. For many years, Joseph had no profession, but every day he had to scratch together an income to feed his wife and kids. He worked as a day-worker, carrying blocks of peat or sacks of grain. Often there was no work for him, so he would have to plead with the poor relief fund of the Sephardic Congregation, so as to be able to feed his family.

Abigael spent most of her time at home, fulfilling her duties as a wife and a mother. Her life, however, was also not easy. If Joseph had no money, she couldn't feed her children, and the family would go to bed hungry. If there was money, she would search the market for the cheapest food: often bread and herring, and

sometimes for the Sabbath dinner, chicken soup. Sugar was bought per cup or per ounce, and was only meant for very special occasions.

Physically, Abigael would have also suffered - giving birth every two years was a strain on the constitution. In 1857, a female twin was still-born. Abigael would have had little chance to grieve about this loss, as her other children demanded all of her time. Her three eldest daughters helped her with the housework, while the eldest sons helped their father hawking, to support the family.

Abigael was 44 years old, when her youngest daughter Debora was born in 1861. Debora was considered "the baby" of the family, as her siblings were between 2 and 22 years older. In 1861, Joseph was still working at the market as a carrier of sacks of grain. He was in his fifties, so the weight of the sacks could not have been easy for him



IN MARCH 1863 David, the oldest son, married Schoontje Waterman. They were both 23 years old. Two months later their first son was born and named Joseph. Schoontje was an orphan. During the first years of their marriage, the young couple had to feed and house the three younger siblings of Schoontje, whom she had promised her parents to care for when they died.

Joseph and Abigael experienced great sorrow in 1867 and 1869, when their two eldest daughters, Gracia and Rebecca, died. Their death would probably have been caused by tuberculosis. Both were not unmarried when they died. Although they could barely afford it, Joseph and Abigael had tombstones placed at the graves of their daughters.

These sad events lessened the joy felt at the wedding of their second son Jacob, to Cornelia Glazer in 1869. Like his father, Jacob was a carrier, and had fulfilled his military service. Cornelia was a shop-keeper. She convinced her husband that he would do well with his own shop. Jacob was eager to listen to his wife and start his own business. Shortly after his wedding, he convinced the poor relief fund of the Sephardic Congregation to lend him 100 guilders to open a shop. Jacob and Cornelia

worked together in their shop. They had no children. When Cornelia died after 17 years of marriage, Jacob returned to live with his parents.



FOR MORE THAN one hundred years, the Sealtiels had lived modestly in Amsterdam. No member of the family ever had a real profession, and poverty prevailed. Then a miracle occurred.

Between 1870 and 1876 Amsterdam was spell-bound by the *Kaapse Hausse*—the South African "Cape boom"—in the diamond industry. The reason was the discovery of the South African diamond fields, which superseded all previous fields in richness. In the middle of the winter of 1870, the first cargo of African diamonds arrived in Amsterdam. There was work for 3,000 men, although there were only 1,100 skilled diamond workers

at that time.

Within a few years, almost all the Sealtiels of Amsterdam adopted diamond cutting as their profession. In 1872, a diamond cutter received a salary of 130 guilders per week, thirteen times the average wage of 1860. Experienced freelance diamond cutters could earn between 500 and 1,000 guilders a week.

The financial situation of the Sealtiels improved tremendously. They were able to leave their humble dwellings in the Jodenkerkstraat, and move to larger and newer apartments in the more fashionable Weesperstraat. Some of the Sealtiel families got themselves a housemaid.

Diamond workers were eager to climb up the social ladder. They became members of the Amsterdam Zoological gardens, which in those days was considered most honourable for people of the middle class. Some of them were illiterate, as a result of their poor education, and many were unable to handle the sudden wealth which had fallen into their hands.

They entered upon an extravagant lifestyle, frequently visiting pubs, cafes, theatres, or brothels. They spent their income on luxuries that they had previously been unable to afford,

***Within a few years, almost
all the Sealtiels of
Amsterdam became
diamond cutters.***

eating fish, fruits, pastries, chickens and plover's eggs; a Dutch delicacy. Some spent their income on luxurious clothing and furniture; others collected musical instruments. The money kept rolling in...



BUT THE FANTASTIC, fabulous period only lasted five years. By 1876, most of the diamond workers were sacked, due to the collapse of the diamond market. Many had wasted all their fortune: saving for periods of unemployment was not something that they had considered. They always believed that business would soon recover. And now and then it did. The diamond industry continued to be the profession in which poor Jewish hawkers were able to skill themselves and escape poverty. But there would never be such a boom again.

The Cape boom left a great imprint on Jewish Cultural and Social life.

Numerous Jewish organisations had been founded for sport, singing and culture. Many of the former diamond workers were struck by new socialist ideas. They abandoned religion and considered that less children would mean less worries. Consequently, they were the pioneers of birth control, years ahead of the gentile Dutch population. From the 1880s onwards, the average number of children born to the Jews of Amsterdam did not exceed three, excepting the religious families. This meant that each child received more attention, better medical treatment thus reducing the infant mortality rate, and more opportunities in education.

In 1873 Ester Sealtiel married Benjamin Messias, a cigar-maker, and Isaac Sealtiel married Eva van Beaver. In 1874, Rachel Sealtiel married Meyer van Duin, a cattle-drover, and Abraham Sealtiel married Saartje Serlui, who was a cap-maker. In 1876 Benjamin Sealtiel married Rachel Dreese. Benjamin was a porter and Rachel a daily girl. However, they soon all became diamond workers.

When Samuel Sealtiel married Rachel Winnink in 1880, both he and Rachel were diamond workers. They lived in the fashionable Weesperstraat until 1883, before moving to a basement apartment in the Jodenkerkstraat. This move may have been connected with the sud-

den unemployment of husband and wife. In 1882 their baby daughter Jansje died, but later they had two other daughters: Schoontje and Sippora. The tradition of naming the eldest child after the grandparents was abandoned for the first time.

In 1863 Joseph and Abigael became grandparents for the first time. Their last grandchild was born in 1892. Joseph had fewer grandchildren than his brother Isaac, whose grandchildren were almost a generation older. Hence, Joseph's children were more likely to socialise with the grandchildren of Isaac, who were closer in age, and who also worked in the diamond industry.

After their son David died in 1881, Joseph and Abigael had to look after their four orphaned grandchildren. Joseph, the eldest, aged 19, preferred to live with his uncle Isaac. Meijer and Gracia stayed with their

***But the fantastic, fabulous
period only lasted five
years***

grandparents. Jacob Haim, the youngest, was aged 12. He was blind and the family sent him to a special school for the blind, where he learnt basket-making for a living.

In 1886, the youngest daughter Debora married Lion Soubice, a diamond-cutter. For the first time in their lives, Joseph and Abigael had the chance to relax, and they spent their last years together in retirement.

Joseph went with his sons every week to the Sabbath sermons in the Snoge, where they had their own seats on the benches named "Banco da Seareda de Banda dos". A register was kept which seat belonged to which person, and those who could afford to donate to the Synagogue treasury, could buy a seat.

Abigael and her daughters listened to the sermon from the women's benches on the first floor. After the sermon the family would go home to enjoy a Sabbath dinner together.

On Sunday 19 May 1889 Joseph and Abigael celebrated the 50th anniversary of their marriage, and all their family gathered at their home for a reception. Their son Jacob published an announcement in two different newspapers, to inform "all their relatives inside and outside Holland" and on behalf of "their grateful children, children-in-law and grandchildren".



JOSEPH DAVID DIED aged 78, in August 1892. He was buried at the Sephardic Cemetery at Ouderkerk a/d Amstel.. Abigaël announced his passing in the newspapers:

“Today died at the age of 79 years my tender beloved husband, father, and grandfather Jozef David Sealtiel. Those who knew the deceased will understand what we all lose with him”.



IN 1900 ABIGAËL STILL lived in the basement of the Kerkstraat 60. She lived until a grand age,

and outlived five of her children. When she died in 1905, Abigaël was 88 years old. She was buried at the Sephardic Cemetery next to Joseph. During her long life, from 1817 till 1905, Abigaël knew more than 150 Sealtiels who were born in Amsterdam. They were all descendants of her husband Joseph, or of his brother Isaac Sealtiel.

Sources:

Archive information from the Gemeentearchief van Amsterdam Bregstein, P. ed. Herinnering aan Foods Amsterdam, 1978. Heertje, H., De diamantbewerker van Amsterdam, 1936. Leydesdorff, S., Wij hebben als mens geleefd, 1987.

A Tribute to the Mexican Clan

Ed Motola pays tribute to the late generation of Mexican Saltiels, born at the beginning of the century.

Condolences to the family of Nellie Saltiel de Lazard. Nellie's mother, Julia Algranti Franco, widow of Jose "Pepo" Saltiel, passed away on Sunday 11 May 1997 in Mexico City, Mexico, of natural causes incident to the advanced age of 59 years. She was born on December 7, 1907 in Smyrna, Turkey, and was the senior surviving member of the clan in Mexico.

It seems that all those born at the turn of the century are at last leaving. Of the three clans of the Mexico families, all three widows who married Saltiels died during the past year. Raquel Abouaf de Saltiel died last June, and now Calina Benezra de Saltiel and Julia Algranti de Saltiel have recently passed on. Corina Saltiel de Motola Handel reports that the first annual Yahrzeit for her mother, Raquel, will be memorialised during the laying of the plaque on Friday June 13, in Los Angeles, during which time her brothers Chema and Alberto will be visiting from Mexico to celebrate Pepe's marriage to Muriel Dubin on the 15th.

Calina Benezra de Saltiel died in April 1997, in Mexico at 97 years old. Survived by her daughter Rebeca Saltiel de Danon, and grandchildren Corina Saltiel de Villareal, Jenny Saltiel de Marvan, Dr Alberto Saltiel Cohen, Isidoro Danon Saltiel and Fortuna Danon Saltiel and 12 great-grandchildren. Rebeca is now the senior member of her clan, having survived her brother Dr Jaime Saltiel Benezra, the cardiologist, who died in 1988. Originating in Rodosto, Turkey, they are related to Salti Saltiel and the Ohalvos in Israel, and the Semtov Saltiel clan of winemakers who left Sa-

lonika and settled in Tekirdag, Turkey, early in this century. Semtov's son Salti's sister is Sara Saltiel Ciprut. Calina and her husband Abraham, were first cousins. Abraham's mother, Rebeca Benezra, was sister to Calina's father Jaime Benezra, both of Istanbul.

Ed and Pepe Motola Saltiel visited with both of the recently deceased grand-dames during a visit to Mexico in 1995. Calina Benezra de Saltiel's grandson, the horse veterinarian Alberto Saltiel Cohen, took them to interview her in Cuernavaca, Mexico, where she was being cared for at the Eishel, the retirement home for the aged maintained by the Jewish Community in Mexico City. She was full of ancient memories of her homeland.

Similarly, the Motola brothers met Nellie Saltiel de Lazard's mother, Julia Algranti de Saltiel. Their mother Corina was with them during the interview in her beautiful Polanco apartment, and found her to be a very intelligent and aristocratic lady, a gracious hostess, and very keen on her memories of her homeland in Smyrna on the mainland of Turkey. She was the youngest of nine Algranti Franco children who all preceded her in death. Some died in Smyrna long ago and another emigrated to Sao Paulo, Brazil. Julia's sister Rosa married Leon Alazraki in Mexico, and another pair of sisters were both married to Mateo Behar in Mexico. Mateo presumably first married the elder sister, Rene, and after she passed away, he married her younger sister, Ida.

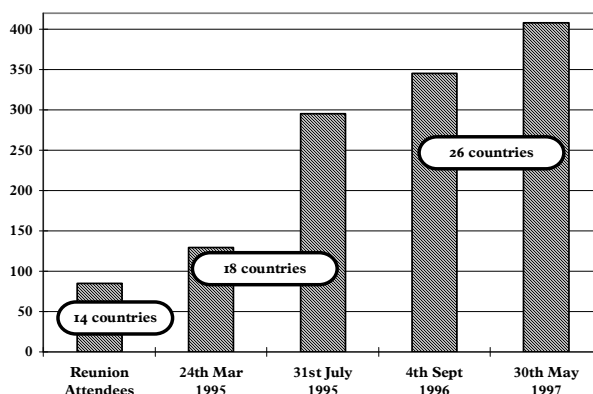
FAMILY MATTERS



Outreach

The graph on the right illustrates how the number of confirmed family households known to us has expanded from 85 in fourteen countries at the time of the Amsterdam reunion to 410 in twenty-six countries now. This excludes perhaps two hundred further households known to us, but not yet contacted, including Saltellis in Italy & North America, Chaltiels and Saltells in France, and US addresses identified by Internet search engines.

Number of known family households—1994-1997



Local volunteers

Social Our local volunteers are our most immediate connection to our family network, helping to maintain local records and to promote local family spirit. Examples of such activities may include:

- Organising national or local social events.
- Receiving newly discovered members of the family.
- Recording births, *brisses*, Bar Mitzvahs, marriages, and deaths.
- Soliciting personal advertisements & announcements for the *Gazette*.

We will include reports from time to time in future issues.

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Genealogy

Ed Motola +Number to be advised

On the basis of the material sent to us by family, follow-up interviews in France, Greece, Israel, Mexico and the US, and examination of the Salonica records from 1915 to 1942 now held in the LDS genealogical archives in Salt Lake City, we have made a preliminary identification of the following:

Danube line.

This embraces the families of Hertha Siegel of Vienna and Natalie Saltiel *et al* in Chicago. It was founded by Reuben Saltiel of Pest (now Budapest), Hungary, born *circa* 1795.

North Sea line.

This line originates with an implicit Isaac Saltiel of London *circa* 1700. Yomtob—the presumed brother of Isaac—founded a line with branches in the US, as well as a recently discovered English branch including David Saltiel of Hull. Isaac's son, Elias, founded the extensive and well-documented London–Amsterdam–Hamburg line with modern offshoots in Australasia & the Far East, Israel, the Netherlands, the UK, and the US, among them (e.g.) Suzanne Best, Robyn Byron, Vibeke Olsen, Rob Sealtiel, Miles Saltiel, Irene Takamizu, and Paula Aaronson.

Ottoman lines.

This includes several branches where we are in the process of documenting links and to which we have given the following working names:

“Han Bechor”: The founder of this branch was Yosef Moshe Shaltiel. He lived in Salonika *circa* 1830 and his descendants include Aron Saltiel of Graz,

Austria and descendants in France, Turkey, Israel and the US.

“House”: This family has been in Israel from the early years of this century, lending its name to the eponymous house, a Tel Aviv land-mark. Members include Thomas Saltiel of London and family in France and Israel.

“Istanbul”: This includes Simon Saltiel of Istanbul and his cousins in Mexico and Israel.

“Moise-Paris”: This Parisian branch was founded by a brother of the founder of the “House” branch. Members include the founder and his children in Italy, as well as his brother, physics professor David Shaltiel of Hebrew University, and his family.

“Salonica”: The Carasso family of Argentina descends from Rabbi David Sadi Saltiel of Salonica. They are also related to Colonel (ret.) Moshe Shaltiel of Re'ut, Israel; and the sub-branch which includes Shmuel Shaltiel, Flora Saltiel Modiano, Maurice Saltiel of Villiers-sur-Marne, Henry Saltiel of Vancouver, and Moshe Shaltiel of Chicago.

We hope to present a complete family tree at *Salonica '97*, the Second International Reunion. Ed is moving house, so for the present new information should go to Moshe Shaltiel at:

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Sealtiel Journaal—Dutch Newsletter

Rob Sealtiel + 31 36 53 54 125

The third edition of the Dutch newsletter came out at the end of 1996. Please send contributions or other support to Rob at

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Trait d'Union—French Newsletter

Maurice Saltiel + 33 1 49 30 22 34

The *Trait d'Union* acts as the periodical medium of communication for the Francophone family. Maurice Saltiel is publishing this at his own expense and would welcome support from interested members of the family. We warmly encourage such support.

New Start—career help for the young and not so young

Maurice Saltiel + 33 1 49 30 22 34

Would all those who wish to contribute their advice, either privately or through the columns of the *Gazette*, please contact Maurice Saltiel or the Editor.

Open Door—Exchange visits

Thea Ronsby-Veltkamp + 45 53 46 20 84

One in ten of our subscribers are now participating in the family's hospitality exchange scheme. For details, please see the panel on page thirty-one. Those wishing to join the scheme should write to:

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4300 Holbaek
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Family History

Vibeke Sealtiel Olsen + 45 36 45 66 30
Moshe Shaltiel Gracian + 1 847 498 8884

Moshe Shaltiel Gracian's research into the Aragonese archive is described in this edition of the *Gazette*, which also contains the latest instalment of Vibeke Sealtiel Olsen's reconstruction of the history of the Dutch family.

Gazette & Administration

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The *Gazette* is the principal medium through which the family communicates. The editor welcomes all comments, letters (for publication or otherwise), book reviews, articles and illustrations. All will be acknowledged. Please see *Organisation* on page three for details.

Letter from the Editor

With the Salonika reunion fast-approaching, I wanted to let you know how the preparation is going and what lies in store.

At present we have confirmed places for over one hundred and fifty people from fourteen different countries. We have cousins attending from destinations as exotic and remote as Argentina, Bulgaria and Thailand. With just under a month before the start of the reunion, we are anticipating responses from up to another fifty people. The response so far has been excellent, and leads us to believe that the reunion will be well attended and a triumphant follow on to our last reunion..

While a lot of work remains to be done, a provisional schedule has been drawn up for the three days. Although the reunion will not officially open until the morning of Friday 4 July 1997, most of you will be arriving in Salonika on the night of the 3rd. Initial registration will take place at the hotel, and will be followed by an informal reception which will give you a chance to socialise and get to know all those long-lost cousins that you didn't even know you had!

The reunion will be officially opened with a plenary meeting on Friday morning. The plan over the following few days is to

run a mixture of informative and social events. We have planned a series of workshops (covering such subjects as history and genealogy), plenary sessions, services at the synagogue with the local community and a memorial ceremony to honour those who were lost to the holocaust, in Salonika and elsewhere in Europe. Without giving too much away, I would also like to mention the three nights of partying and socialising that we have planned. A pool-side dinner is planned for the Friday night; on Saturday we will be dining in true traditional Greek style (you may even get to throw a plate or two...), and finally on Sunday, we will be back at the Capsis for our farewell dinner. Entertainment will be provided on all nights.

In addition to our large network of cousins, you will also get the chance to meet some special guests who have been invited to our reunion.

Dr Iris Fishof

Dr Iris Fishof is an Art Historian, specialising in Jewish Art.

Born in Israel, Iris Fishof graduated from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Her MA thesis dealt with Jewish illuminated marriage contracts from Venice. Her PhD thesis,

also at the Hebrew University, was on the Hamburg-Altona School of Hebrew Illuminated Manuscripts of the First Half of the Eighteenth Century.

Dr Fishof has published many articles in the field of Jewish Art, with special emphasis on Hebrew illuminated manuscripts. At the Amsterdam reunion, she presented a thrilling talk on the Shealtiel Haggadah. Dr Fishof has done curatorial work at various museums in Israel, and for the last fifteen years she has been in charge of the Judaica at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem.

Since 1993 she has been the Chief Curator of Judaica and Jewish Ethnography at the Israel Museum.

Diana Sommer

Diana Sommer is the director of the Douglas E. Goldman Jewish Genealogy Centre in Beth Hatefutsoth, the Nahum Goldmann Museum of the Jewish Diaspora in Tel Aviv.

A native New Yorker, Diana made *aliyah* to Israel in 1976 after living and studying in Italy for five years. She is married to Ilan, assistant department head of internal medicine in an Israeli hospital. They have three sons, the oldest of whom is currently serving in the Israeli

navy. She served as registrar of *Beth Hatefutoth* for seven years before being appointed director of the genealogy centre in 1987. Under her leadership, the Centre has grown into a dynamic international Jewish genealogy centre.

Dr Stanley Hordes

Dr Stanley Hordes received his BA in History from the University of Maryland in 1971, his MA in Latin American History from the University of New Mexico in 1973, and his Ph.D. from Tulane University in 1980. His doctoral dissertation, "The Crypto-Jewish Community of New Spain, 1620-1649: A Collective Biography", was based on research conducted in the archives of Mexico and Spain, supported by a Fulbright dissertation fellowship.

Dr Hordes is currently engaged in a research project, "The Sephardic Legacy in New Mexico: A History of the Crypto-Jews", sponsored by the University of New Mexico's Latin American Institute, where he is Adjunct Research Professor.

Albert Naar

Albert Naar was born in Thessaloniki, where he has lived all his life. He studied at the Faculty of Letters, at Aristotelian University of Thessaloniki. He is a member of the consultants' committee of the Department of History of the Municipality of Thessaloniki.

His work can be found in newspapers, as well as in scientific and prose-written periodicals of Athens and Thessaloniki. The contents of his research studies and his book, focus on the history and folklore of Thessaloniki's Jewish community. His work has been translated into German, English, French and Spanish.

Ilan Ziv

Ilan Ziv was born in Israel in 1950. In 1976, he gained a Bachelor of Arts, majoring in film, from New York University. In the same year, he co-produced the First Middle Eastern Film Festival, which was held in New York. A year later, Ilan founded Icarus Films, an educational film distribution company, one of the largest such companies in the USA today. Ilan is also the founder of Tamouz Media (1980), a New York based Film and TV production company.

Ilan Ziv's films have been reviewed by major national and international publications. Many of his films have won prizes at internationally recognised festivals, including an emmy for *Peru: Fire in the Andes*.

His resume includes a long-list of highly acclaimed documentaries and video diaries. We are proud to have Ilan now working on our project, the Shealtiel Movie.

Other distinguished guests will be attending, although the names are as yet unconfirmed.

We are currently in the process of trying to arrange further alternative activities and entertainment. In the session on 'the future', we are hoping to include a 'brainstorming' session. This would give everyone a chance to offer their opinions on the reunion and the running of the Shealtiel 'network', in general. As you will see, I have already sent out a form to the network to get some feedback about everything that we have been up to. Hopefully, this will enable us to take your ideas into consideration and make any improvements needed in the future.

As you will see on page and in my mail out, we are planning an art show for the reunion. The organisers are hoping to gather a collection of work from all of the creative and talented members of the family (we know that there are plenty of you out there!) to display in Salonika. A form was enclosed in the mail out for anyone who would like to participate.

Aron Saltiel We are particularly happy that Aron Saltiel will be performing from his repertory of Ladino songs at the reunion. He was brought up in Istanbul, where he learnt his first Ladino songs from his grandparents. He has spent many years collecting the rare and beautiful songs of the Sephardic Jews, regularly visiting the communities of Thessaloniki, Belgrade, Sarajevo, Istanbul and Bat-Yam. His recordings and performances have attracted worldwide attention, and he is known for his highly lyrical and expressive interpretations of this unusual and colourful genre.

He has performed extensively in Europe and North America at such renowned venues as the International Festival of Vienna, the *Festival de Musica Antigua*, Burgos, Spain, the *Festival des Arts Traditionnels*, Rennes, France, as well as in Jewish communities in Berkeley, CA, Palo Alto CA, Berne, Zurich, Amsterdam, Berlin and Vienna.

In addition to all of the above (can there really be any more, you must be asking yourselves?), we will be launching the new Shealtiel website and offering demonstrations to all those interested. There will also be a video booth enabling you to appear on camera, to feature in the reunion video and let us know how it is all going.

Formal ceremonials will take place during the Memorial at the burial ground, and at the Gala Dinner. Anyone wishing to make a contribution to the speeches and ceremonials should contact myself, or my assistant prior to the reunion.

Now that you are all excited and are eagerly counting down the days, here's what we need from you:

- Contributions to the family art show. A form was sent out to you in my recent mailing. Please take into consideration methods of transportation and display. It is also worth considering whether you would like to sell the items, or just offer them for display.
- We intend to conduct a memorial ceremony at the cemetery for all those taken in the Shoah, therefore, I would request that you contact me as soon as possible with any relatives that you would like us to remember.
- Contributions to the brainstorming session, as mentioned above.
- Late attendees. Places are still available, by special arrangement.
- As you know the reunion is operating at a deficit. We invite you to help our budget by sponsoring one of the events (as set out in the mail), in whole or in part.

It only remains for me to say how much I look forward to seeing you all in Salonika!

Miles Saltiel



Figo Loco!—named for the Wild Fig from which the Synagogue of the family took its name—is intended to be the family forum for creative material, giving all the opportunity put to their talents on display in the *Gazette*. It will also cover material with a lighter touch, including humour and anecdotes.

To make **Figo Loco!** varied and interesting, we hope to receive contributions from as many members of the family as possible, so this request is aimed at **YOU**.

- Do you have an interesting hobby?
- Do you have a good story to tell?
- Have you met someone worth telling us about?
- Have you travelled somewhere interesting recently?
- What is the favourite food in your family?
- Do you know a good joke?
- Have you written a poem or a song?
- Do you have old family pictures, or do you photograph as a hobby?
- Are you an artist, an hobbyist, a poet-to-be?

We would like to receive any material that you have which relates to our family in some way, either because you have it, or because you made it. We are keen to see what you will come up with, and reassure you that we will return to you any creative material you forward. Please enclose a return envelope.

Shaltiel, The Travelling Duck!!!

Shaltiel - the Wonder Duck - now has his own home page on the Internet:
www.geocities.com/Hollywood/Lot/6460.

If you want to help Shaltiel to travel further, you can e-mail his owner Asaf Shani at asafsh@netvision.net.il

Shaltiel will come to the family reunion in Salonika - he will travel all the way there just to meet all his new-found cousins!!

Shaltiel the Duck is the Israeli dub of a Dutch children's cartoon.

Announcements

Yael Lederman

Minneke Blinder Sealtiel is delighted to announce the birth of her granddaughter, daughter of Laure Lederman-Blinder & Jaime Lederman, in Bogota, Columbia, 8th February 1997.

Jose Motola Saltiel & Muriel Dubin

All congratulations to Jose 'Pepe' and Muriel, who were married at Lake Tahoe, California on Saturday 26th April 1997. The office romance was against company policy and almost resulted in their termination, thus the rushed marriage. The religious ceremony will be celebrated on 12th June, at Temple Isiah, West Los Angeles, California.

Sarah Ann Saltiel

Laurent & Kim Saltiel have pleasure in announcing the birth of their daughter Sarah Ann in Mexico City, 24th March 1997.

Alexandra Saltiel

Mazel Tov to Alexandra, eldest daughter of Abraham 'Aby' and Sabrina Saltiel of Manhattan, who celebrated her *Bat Mitzvah* at the Sefardic Temple in Cedarhurst, Long Island, on Sunday 18th May 1997.

Peter Adrian Veltkamp Ronsby

Gert and Thea Ronsby take pleasure in announcing the confirmation of their son Peter, 14 years old, at the Lutheran Church in Horby, Denmark, on the 27th of April 1997.

Itamar Hensbergen

Jan and Alida Hensbergen-Grunwald take pleasure in announcing the birth of their grandson Itamar Hensbergen, in Kiryat Shmona, Israel, on 12 March 1997. Itamar is the son of Dennis and Orna Hensbergen, and the brother of Eitan.

Michelle Saltiel and Marc Mayer

Congratulations to Michelle and Marc on the announcement of their engagement. Marc has just graduated from the University of Wisconsin Graduate School for Public Policy, where he has received his masters degree. Michelle begins medical school this autumn at Downstate Medical College in Brooklyn, NY. The couple will be living in Brooklyn. Michelle's parents, Victor & Tmima, together with Ellen and Milton Mayer, would like to share their simcha with the Saltiels worldwide.

Julia Algranti Franco

Condolences to the family of Nellie Saltiel de Lazard. Nellie's mother, Julia Algranti Franco, widow of Jose 'Pepo' Saltiel, passed away on Sunday 11 May 1997 in Mexico City, Mexico, of natural causes incident to the advanced age of 89 years. She was born on December 7, 1907 in Smyrna, Turkey, and was the senior surviving member of the clan in Mexico. Survivors include her daughter, Nellie; granddaughters Patricia Lazard, Debora Lazard de Tawil, Lorena Lazard de Kawa, Julie Saltiel de Bronsoiler, Irene Saltiel de Sundelevich; grandsons Jose Saltiel and Mario Saltiel; and 14 great-grandchildren.

Tales My Mama Told

Petticoat Lane in the '20s was the scene of my mum Betty nee Davis' childhood. Her family lived in an apartment block just off the Lane with many others, each tightly compacted in their tiny flats. Many of these families were Dutch-Portuguese Jews colloquially known as *Chooties* to the local population. They were fairly well anglicised, having been in the country for at least one generation. Most had little knowledge of the traditional intricacies of the Jewish faith. Customs had evolved in their own unique manner. Yom Kippur, for instance, there would always be a bread pudding in the oven for hungry kids, and Christmas was hard to ignore especially if you went to the Mission you would be given a new pair of knickers, a vest and a nightshirt. Many words and phrases in common usage were uniquely *chooty* and a recent visit to Great Aunt Sadie brought back happy memories of familiar colloquialisms which also used to scatter our late mum's conversation. (I have started to compile a glossary to that effect.)

Mama's dad, Solomon who married into the *Chooties*, was from his photographs a dashing handsome man, pensive dark eyes 'deep blue'. Mama said thick black wavy hair and later a red beard. 'He used to work so hard', Mama would tell me sadly. 'Seven days a week', mostly as a cabinet maker - a carpenter - and on Sundays, he sold pictures down the Lane. (He must have made the frames.) His family were Polish Jews changing their name from Judawitz to the more anglicised Davis. His mother, who never learnt to speak English, was reputed to have had a child in every country on the family's journey from Poland to England, finally raising a brood of thirteen in this country.

Mum told me her dad was a quiet and thoughtful man. He liked to smoke the occasional cigar and read books about the creation of life. He was given to the concept of Darwinism, but he always conceded that there was something greater than we.

My dear grandpa did not see too many years. In his early forties he

suffered a mysterious illness and passed away. Mum always blamed it on a straw he picked up from the horses' feed, to chew as he contemplated life.

Debbie, Mum's mum, was from the *Chooty* stock of the Saltiel and Valencia families. She had a dark and intense Mediterranean look about her. Her given name, Mama said, was pronounced to rhyme with menorah (Deborah). She had acquired the sharpness in her voice of a truly caring mother who wanted no nonsense from her brood, and in the inimitable East End manner, a swear word would readily leave her lips on occasion. Mama, ever a softie, was always upset at her mother's sharp tongue. She never forgot her mother's attempt to console her. "I never used to swear, darling", Debbie said comfortingly. Young Rebecca heaved a sigh of relief, but it was short lived. "No", continued her mother, "I didn't start swearing till I was at least seven years old!"

My personal memories of Nanny Davis are up to my seventh year when she died at seventy two.

Mama's family were lucky in that they had beautiful clothes to wear even if everything else was a bit scarce, as Debbie was a dressmaker by trade. The family of seven had two rooms and a scullery. The toilet was shared by a few families on each floor. The five children would sleep in the double bed (which was regularly commandeered by their mother as a surface upon which she could lay her cloth to make the lokshen). Debbie and Solly slept in the living room.

Living at such close quarters, inevitably the family got under each others feet. Mama had the habit of singing first thing in the morning and considering she shared the bed with her brothers and sisters, it is not surprising that she regularly had pillows thrown at her.

"Alf was the one with the *Apesht* temper", reminisced Mama. "Once he bought himself some cream and was looking forward to the ecstasy of indulging himself in the sumptuously decadent taste, but his brothers' and

sisters' ardent pleas for a 'shmack' annoyed him so much he chucked most of it down the rubbish chute.

Alf made crystal sets, early radio receivers, wires precariously attached to carefully positioned pieces of furniture, and woe betide anyone who inadvertently bumped into it and caused the wire to shift.

Ralph, the younger brother, tried to help in the building of one of these sets. "Shall I go and dig up some earth now?" He enquired in eager naivety.

In the little scullery above the cooker was a shelf upon which a goldfish was swimming in his bowl. The boys would climb up, balancing on the cooker to feed the fish, only one day one of them leant too hard on the shelf and suddenly it tipped up. Out flew the fish, down went the bowl... Pets just didn't stand a chance in the melee.

Baths happened at home in the zinc tub, or when Mama was older she preferred to go over the road to the public baths where for tuppence you could have a private booth and a fresh towel. Hot water was supplied on request to the commandant of the establishment. "Hot water for number 4" you might cry and 'Fat Sarah' would usually comply shuffling along in her big slippers. It was often a social event, for on hearing a familiar voice someone might call: "Is that you Becky?" and lively conversations would be pursued from booth to booth. "If you spent fourpence", Mama added, "you could go first class and turn your water on and off".

Brunswick Buildings, where the family lived, was on Goulston Street, one of the main thoroughfares of Petticoat Lane. On the opposite side of the street was the Brooke Bond factory where the girls came to pack tea. The big white marble step which led up to the main door provided a centrepiece of a play area for the kids of the Lane. Living at such close quarters, there were many characters who filled the backdrop of the young Rebecca's life, some

veiled in mystery almost legendary.

There were men hawking wonderful watches at bargain prices. How she longed to rush up to prospective buyers and yell "don't buy", knowing only too well the temporarily contented customers would soon find their bargain a hopeless dud. "There were the Lascars", remembered Mama, "black people who came off the ships. We thought they came from Alaska as is sounded so far away. I used to follow them all the way down the street just to keep looking at their babies. They were so cute, I always wanted one for myself." (A Lalscar is an East Indian sailor).

Sometimes the people from the Mission would come by gathering impressionable youngsters and enticing them to the Mission Hall to sing:

'Jesus loves me, That I know,
'cos the BEIGEL (sic) tells me
so(!)' Thence to be rewarded with
a cup of tea and a bun.

Within the Buildings themselves was a mysterious woman who lived in the flat below of whom the children would chant, almost sing "Esther Kovsky, you beautiful spy". There was the red-haired busty lady who lived alone but seemed to have a lot of men friends. There was Clara Levy's mum who seemed to go away for long holidays shortly after an ambulance had been summoned, and someone removed from the flat on a stretcher. On such occasions the people of the buildings would gather round. Later Mama understood that Clara Levy's mum had been carrying out those illegal ops.

News was spread rapidly through the buildings. The call "Row in the first arch" (or whatever number) was not unusual and the crowd would gather to watch the entertainment.

There was Tilly, a 'big square of a woman' who took in washing and 'slopped along in great big men's shoes'. There was Janey Purchase who couldn't afford to wear any knickers so she wore a vest with a safety pin secured beneath. There was the woman who used to cry "Arry, the bells is gawn" every day to send her son to school. There was Sarah Bowman who had a stall down the Land and 'Darkie dee Coon' a shuffling old man, ragged and swarthy, from whom the kids would scatter in fear. 'Ronnie and Reggie's mum, Mrs Kray, lived down Goulston Street too", said Mama, "a beautiful woman".

Later, when Mama learned to Crochet, she made little hats and used to sell them to the Brooke Bond girls. Bessie, the oldest of the Davis children, inherited her mother's talent for dressmaking and made some very stylish clothes of which our mum was the lucky recipient, as many photographs show.

Rebecca developed like her older sister into an attractive young woman, long wavy black hair, large dark eyes and a lovely figure. Not caring for the epithet her name implied - Becky not being a flattering appellation in the early thirties, she started calling herself Betty. A generous bosom, petite waist and skinny legs, she said at first she didn't know why all the boys stared after her. Later she overheard comments of incredulity as to how those skinny pins supported the curves above.

At the leading edge of local fashion she caused a furore in the public swimming pool one day, by wearing a costume scooped so low at the back that the powers that be deemed it indecent and she was subsequently banned.

Bessie and Betty both got involved, at least socially, with the Young Communist Party, Bessie

apparently selling Communist tracts for a time, her future husband Len Arundell being involved to a greater extent with the C.P.

Some time after the youngest child Lily, and then Solomon, died, the remaining family moved from Brunswick Buildings to Hughs Mansions on Vallance Road. Mama was very annoyed that in a new apartment block, and in that day and age of running water, you still had to pump water into the bath.

As Betty was considered a beauty in her day it was suggested that her photograph could grace a calendar for soldiers serving abroad, however, the idea was later rejected on the grounds of looking too Jewish.

She met our dad, 'Micky' Golob, at a benefit gig for the Spanish Civil War at La Boheme on the Mile End Road. Dad was born in Kiev and coming from a family whose first tongue was Russian, probably aided his aptitude for languages. This was helpful when whilst billeted as a soldier in a village near Amsterdam, he learned of the Burger Meister's secret treasure, a hoard of good wines and clarets and persuaded the said gent to stage a memorable party for the locals and soldiers stationed there. We have some lovely letters from local people my father befriended there.

Mum and Dad married January 1st 1941, however it was a wedding without trimmings as the cake and the beautiful wedding dress were destroyed the night before in the Blitz, presumably in the flat from which my Nanny Davis fell two floors down that night. A simple water colour of Mama in her imaginary dress suffices as a souvenir.

Sharon Golob

This *View from Gloucester Square* comes from the unfortunate who has been spending most of her daylight hours buried in the basement right here at Gloucester Square. So for the last few weeks the view has been mostly mine. This is because six weeks ago I assumed the lofty responsibilities of Reunion Administrator. What this means is that I am the one who is facing the organisational nightmares and is destined to endure the headaches which the final stages of organisation of the reunion will inevitably bring.



Miles had placed an advert in the *Jewish Chronicle*, seeking someone, possibly a student of history, with an interest in research and family history. This person would ideally have a knowledge of computers, Hebrew and French. In my initial reply to the advertisement, I told Miles that I am a graduate in Politics and Modern History; I was born in Israel and speak fluent Hebrew; I studied French for seven years—conversations with the French cousins have been OK when scripted and with no interjection from my interlocutors—and claimed some pretty hot computer skills since leaving University three years ago. He seemed impressed; indeed if I remember rightly his exact words were: “Now we’re cooking with gas”. Although I’d never heard the phrase before, I gathered the meaning, and have since come to realise that it is a Milesism.

Shortly after our telephone conversation, I came to meet him here at Gloucester Square. He had a hectic schedule with plenty of candidates to see. I liked the sound of the job and hoped that he would contact me. A week later I was back here going over formalities and work schedules.

Miles explained that of course this is just his hobby and that he would be at work during the day—I would be here on my own. This has turned out to be something of an understatement: I have little idea what Miles’ work involves, but it does

seem to send him all over Europe. So I have ended up seeing little more of him than I do of the other Shealtiels with whom I am now dealing.



My first day was nerve-racking. I found myself confronting a mountain of paper relating to the Shealtiels in general, and the reunion in Salonika in particular. “Where should I start?” I wondered. Eventually I decided that the best idea would be to try to kick off with the most daunting task—the banking. Admittedly I spent the whole day at it, but it all went well. So far no phone calls from irate relatives complaining about astronomical amounts appearing on their credit card bills. Though I did get something of a shock when the bank got in touch ten days later to say that they had been unable to effect the credit as they had lost the paperwork. I have the impression that Miles may then have had to use some fairly firm words with them.

I’m in my fourth week now and those apprehensive days are a distant memory. Other than two slight technical problems—one involving a previously good keyboard and a cup of coffee, the other involving my old friend CompuServe and its less than perfect relationship with the modem—things are running fairly smoothly. And while the work is not directly connected to my future career aspirations (although this page is a step in the right direction towards a career in journalism...), it is proving to be all-consuming. I am never bored and often find myself looking at the clock and wondering where the day went.



When I tell friends and family what I am doing at the moment, they are good enough to seem fascinated. This is pleasing but conversations become less comfortable when they ask what it’s like. “How can I describe it?” I answer. “I guess that the best analogy that I can come up with is the staging of an enormous wedding or

Bar-Mitzvah. The term ‘family reunion’ is an inadequate description for what is about to take place in Salonika—International Conference would be more suitable. But then that’s not quite right either.

“Imagine”, I tell them, “being in touch with all of your distant relatives on a daily basis and trying to arrange a party. They all have their own ideas about what should be done, when they can arrive, what they would like to eat, what they should wear and who they would like to sit next to.”

“And then just think”, I add, “what it would be like if they weren’t even your relatives!”

Working to different time zones is a new challenge. I know that as soon as I sit down to have my lunch, Moshe will call having just opened his eyes in Utah. He will ask me what’s new, tell me a funny story about his family, and then suggest that I make a few phone calls to newly discovered cousins in far-flung corners of the world. “He’s from my branch of the family”, Moshe says, “He must come to Salonika—I will persuade him”. From what I can gather it is not easy to decline when Don Moshe is on the other end of the receiver, driven as he is by his fierce pride in his family background.



Still with all the work to be done and arrangements to be made, I can always console myself that I will get to spend a week in Salonika. No, don’t worry, I am under no illusion as to what sort of ‘holiday’ this will be. You’ll have no problem spotting me—I’ll be the stressed out, hot and bothered young woman trying to co-ordinate the check-in of the large group of international Shealtiels. When the time comes, I’m sure that I’ll be wishing that I could relax as a member of the family—any offers?!

Lianne Kolirin

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