

SASIG

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PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

FROM: SAUL ISSROFF

In response to a growing interest, especially but not exclusively from those with Litvak and Latvian links, Mike Getz and I initiated a Southern African SIG at the Hollywood Chai Seminar in Los Angeles. The scope will include South Africa, Lesotho, Botswana (formerly Bechuanaland) Zimbabwe (Rhodesia), Zambia (North Rhodesia), Namibia (South West Africa), Swaziland, Mozambique and the former Belgian Congo.

While material is freely available on South Africa, it appears that many emigrant families have significant records, especially of smaller country communities. Related synagogue, cemetery and other records are in far corners of the globe. We want to heighten awareness of these. Possible projects include the indexing of shipping and other records, oral histories of families, a specific Southern African Family Finder etc.

We plan to maintain a newsletter and establish a website and discussion group. It seems, by default, that I have become the initial President. Mike Getz (Washington D.C.) will edit the newsletter and act as Treasurer. Rose Lerer Cohen (Jerusalem) will deal with membership.

Roy Ogus (ogus@impact.xerox.com) of Palo Alto CA will co-ordinate in the US. Co-ordinators for Australia are Selma Jackson (Raymond@speednet.com.au) in Sydney and Herb Epstein (heastern@netline.com.au) in Melbourne. Canada: Ed Goldberg (egoli@direct.ca)

Anyone willing to assist please contact:
Mike Getz (mgetz@erols.com) or
Saul Issroff (saul@swico.demon.co.uk)

It is important at this stage to set some goals that define our interests and the scope of our activities. In focussing on our communities important goals are:

- ◆ To create a forum for those with Jewish links to Southern Africa, who are now members of a diverse international community.
- ◆ To reflect the homogeneous character and traditions of Southern African Jewry
- ◆ To address broader based issues related to the region's Jewry, its institutions and maintain contact with them.
- ◆ To assist members intending to travel to South and Southern Africa with information and contacts.
- ◆ To promote, support and assist projects relevant to the family history and genealogy of Southern African Jewry.

CONTENTS

Editorial.....	2
Dutch Jewry and South Africa	3
Ron van der Horst	
An Odyssey of Family Documents.....	5
Herman Merkel	
Woodstock Generations.....	6
Mike Getz	
Enrolled members	8

EDITORIAL

Mike Getz

This is the first issue of our newsletter. Delay was due to the editor's distraction with surgery and his learning the finer points of electronic publishing. South African Jewry and its history must have a place in the evolving field of Jewish genealogy and this is an important first step.

A few willing hands made this issue possible. It cannot be sustained on such a basis. Our future depends entirely on the contribution and involvement of members. I would urge each of us to accept some responsibility to build our SIG and sustain its goals.

It is necessary to set out some broad ideas on content in planning future issues. The President's message and an editorial will be regular features, along with accounts of Southern African communities demonstrating their Jewish character and history.

We should also regularly include the life and work of community figures who perhaps exemplify their life and times. The abstract from Herman Merkel's Family Odyssey is a possible example. Relevant research topics and news from Southern Africa and elsewhere should appear in every issue.

Southern African Jewry belongs in the Family Tree of the Jewish people that is taking shape through Jewishgen. By maintaining a Family Finder, we can encourage and facilitate member's participation.

The extent of member involvement in supporting these projects, will determine the success or failure of this initiative. Please email (fax) Saul or me how you can contribute and be involved.

Ron van der Horst, whose article on Dutch Jewry appears in this issue, has set a standard on the background of that community and the history of his family. It adds an important link to the origin of our own community. He also has an extensive family tree of his Dutch family.

Hessie and Herman Merkel provided a copy of their family affiliation with Zionism through the shekel that typified Jews of Southern Africa.

I found some value in the memories of family members, friends, and neighbors in the family histories from Latvia - a project sponsored by the Greater Washington JGS. My effort on page 6 covers the thirties, forties and early fifties in Woodstock, Cape Town, a community of about 400 in those days.

The membership list features the names and details of those who enrolled during the Hollywood Chai Seminar in LA. The subscription of \$20 is toward publishing and maintaining a quarterly newsletter. This could be reviewed if we decide on an email version, with funding devoted to research if the SIG so decides.

Included is a membership form to be completed and mailed to Saul's address or mine. Please indicate what you are able to contribute to the newsletter either organizationally, as a contributor or with special skills that will be essential to our effort.

This issue has been mailed to all enrolled members - and it will hopefully reach a number who have shown interest in our activities.

We are exploring a linkage with Jewishgen to facilitate a SA SIG Digest email forum. We want correspondents from the various outposts where Southern Africans have

Before concluding I would like to acknowledge the patience and help of friend and neighbour Bernard Lipsky whose total altruism made this issue possible.

To enroll, please complete the enclosed membership form and mail to Saul or me with your check for \$20

Include details of European locations to which your family is connected, using back of the page if needed.

Please mention any topics you could write on for the newsletter and/or suggestions for inclusion. Do let us know any area in which you could assist the SIG.

DUTCH JEWRY AND SOUTH AFRICA

by Ronald van der Horst

BACKGROUND.

With the Spanish-Portuguese Inquisition Jews fled to Italy, France and the Netherlands, including many "New Christians", (oft referred to as marranos), who were forced to convert on the Iberian Peninsula, but continued to observe Jewish customs secretly and returned to open Jewish life when circumstances allowed. An unknown number did not return to open Judaism but continued Jewish practices.

Amsterdam became the great center of Sephardic Jewry and in the 17th Century it was a city of intense economic and cultural life with a relatively tolerant religious atmosphere. This era too, was the Golden Age of the Republic of the Netherlands and Amsterdam became the established center of world trade.

Sephardim had experience in finance and commerce, often with family connections all over the globe and these entrepreneurs carried commodities to and from the Indies.

While the VOC (Verenige Oostindische Compagnie) (which we know as the Dutch East India Company) had Jewish merchants associated with it, 25% of it's shareholders were Jewish yet the Company required all it's servants and settlers at the Cape to be professing Protestants.

The influence of the Sephardic Jews declined in the late 18th century due to their gradual assimilation into the general society: they became baptized, were able to enter guilds as non-Jews and marriages with non-Jews increased.

From the mid 17th century many Ashkenazi Jews came to live in the Netherlands from Poland and Lithuania (escaping the pogroms precipitated by the Chmielnicki massacres and the Swedish invasion of Poland) The majority remained poor, earning a meager living as peddlers, trading in second hand goods and foodstuffs or as butchers and cattle dealers. By 1810, there were 50000 Ashkenazim and 5000 Sephardim

Clearly, the Dutch (who spoke the language of South Africa) were more favored immigrants and if a Jew saw an opportunity to make a better life, I have no doubt that many converted from Judaism to Protestantism to enable them to conform to the regulations of the VOC and its successors. It is my belief that many a prominent Afrikaner in the 20th century in South Africa had Jewish origins and anecdotally at a function in the 60's, a prominent elderly lady confided " that there was a zeide in their family"

There is a story told, (not validated) that the VOC did not wish to have observant Jews on their ships because they would not work on the Sabbath, and therefore, all Jewish sailors who did sail, gave up their religion and belonged to no church. Thus, the name "van Niekerk!". One friend by the name of Nykerk (Jewish) has stated that this is a "bobbemeise" and that his name certainly came from the town, Nykerk in Holland. However, if there was a way to test for Jewish genes?!! In a book published in the Netherlands and listing the names of Jews who died in the Holocaust, there are names such as Broekhuizen, de Vries, de Beer, de Bruin, de Lange, de Metz, de Wied, de Wet, de Wilde, de Wit, de Jong, van Adelsberg, van Dam, van Gelder, van Emden, van Hockheimer, van der Hoek, van der Horst, van der Kaars, van Leer, van Leeuwen, van der Poel, van Reens, van Schreiber and van Velsen!!! Now this is a list of religious Jewish names which might well have raised eyebrows in South Africa.! Anecdotally, on occasion when I called up a family with a "real" Jewish name~ to ask their daughter out on a date, I would have the phone slammed down on me when I announced my name!

It may not be well known that Napoleon Bonaparte decreed that all persons in his territories take a last name and this happened on different dates in different countries in Europe. Naturally, the Dutch Jews took Dutch names!

JEWISH IMMIGRATION TO SOUTH AFRICA FROM THE NETHERLANDS.

Samuel Jacobson and David Hijlbron were the earliest recorded Jews converted to Christianity (1669) to settle in South Africa. How many others went unrecorded?

3 Jewish settlement in an identifiable form (from the Netherlands started in South Africa in the mid 19th century with names such as Klisser, (cont'd)

de Vries, Kisch, and de Lima. The origins of some names from Britain were indirectly from the Netherlands. e.g. the De Pass family.

The first Cape Town Jewish congregation dates from 1841 but itinerant traders, storekeepers and a few professionals in the hinterland (before and after) may have given little thought to their origins. Some opened stores and "trading stations" in small towns, and occasionally, married Afrikaner or English women. Some Jewish men had children by black women and some Jewish women with black men.

Undoubtedly, with the discovery of diamonds in 1869 and gold in 1886, it is likely that a few hundred Jews did originate from the Netherlands to arrive in a land motivated by new economic opportunity and a new life. The subject has not been researched and it is likely that few records exist. I do not believe that there was an "organized" immigration, a single port of embarkation, assisted passage or transshipment of people.

There was restricted immigration from Eastern Europe from 1902 because Jews from these areas could not read "characters of a European language"; In 1906, Yiddish was accepted as a legal European language and this restriction was lifted. A later restriction of the early 1920's based on economic grounds was removed in 1924. What became known as "the Quota Act" of 1930, placed numerical limitations on immigration from specified Eastern European countries and in 1937, immigration was based upon "assimilability"! i.e. whether the "stock of origin could assimilate with the stock of the (white) peoples of South Africa. None of these restrictions applied to the Netherlands.

Amongst the Dutch Jews who came to South Africa in the late 19th century, was a relative (uncle of my father). He was engaged and employed by the Nederlandsche Zuid Afrikaansche Spoorweg Maatschappij to build and operate a railway line from Pretoria to Delagoa Bay (Maputo) in Mozambique (1887-1888). It was to enable the export of gold from the Witwatersrand for shipment overseas without the exorbitant tariff imposed by the British who controlled the ports in Natal and the Cape Province.

I know of one other Dutch Jew Michel Frankfort (of Overijssel) who also was recruited to build and work on this rail-line. There may have been many others.

My father came to South Africa from Hoogeveen in Holland (in 1912) as a lad of 18 years of age (at the persuasion of his uncle, the railway builder) (and his Jewish roots go as far back to 1730 in the Netherlands. He sailed from Rotterdam via Southampton to Cape Town, on a ship (I think) "Galica" and traveled third class, with a ticket costing 13 English Pounds, to seek a better life. My mother also originated in Holland, (having met my father there on one of his visits "home") and came out to South Africa in 1931. All other family members remained in the Netherlands, those who did not die a natural death before World War 11, died in the Holocaust. It is tragic that after a single generation, I have found myself in the United States.!

Ronald van der Horst.
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR'S FAMILY

Ron was born in Cape Town to Salomon ben Aaron van der Horst from Hoogeveen in the Dutch province of Drenthe. He married Christina Turksma from Leeuwarden, Friesland. They married in the Gardens Synagogue in 1931 and lived in East Griqualand.

Ron went to school at Queens College (Queenstown) and UCT where he graduated MB.ChB in 1956 and M. Med. in 1962, He practiced as a Pediatrician Cardiologist in Durban until emigrating to the US in 1976. He was Associate Professor of Pediatrics Cardiology at the University of Illinois between 1976 and 1986. He went into private practice in Chicagoland in 1979 and retired in 1994.

Ron married Maureen Kroll of Kimberly in 1959. They have three children and two grand-daughters.

Generations in Woodstock and beyond.....

Mike Getz

Woodstock is a suburb of Cape Town, about two miles from the city centre on the main road to its Southern suburbs - Observatory, Mowbray, Rosebank, Rondebosch, Newlands, Claremont, Kenilworth, Wynberg, and Muizenberg - epitome of the sea shore.

I was born in Cape Town, grew up and lived in Woodstock until my marriage to Hilda in 1958. Looking back on memories and people, a sort of local genealogy occurred to me.

Our family's location there began with my maternal grandfather, Avrom Leib Gelbart, who settled in the area from Latvia during 1906. My father, Chaim Shaya, came from the same shtetl, Subate, in 1926, my mother Hodel with her sister and brother, followed in 1928. I was born in 1929, my late sister Judy in 1930 and my brother Joe in 1936.

The methodology I have used is intended to record two or three generations in the community - names in bold type represent my peer group. Family names are of parents born between 1900 and 1915. Capitalised family names reflect those probably born in the mid to late 1800's. Most originated in Latvia or Lithuania. Underlined names indicate relocation, mainly to Israel, the UK, US and Canada.

THE THIRTIES

Albert Road (Lower Main Road) was the location of many Jewish shopkeepers beginning with Mr Tworetzky closer to the city and concluding with the Miluns on the approach to Observatory. My father's shop was at No 335. *Albert Road* was an important retailing artery because building of the Duncan Dock at the time, made it a convenient thoroughfare for workers.

The following is a list of families in rough order of their location. They dealt in new and secondhand clothing, shoes, shoe repairs or were grocers, butchers, merchants, metal workers and light engineers.

Tworetzky - Sandler - Epstein - Gatz (my father)
LONSTEIN - Apter - Mendelson - ARENOW - Elkin -
Neipris - Newman - Boyd - SUDAT - Aronstan - Seidel -
Shorkend - Orlin - Praed - LAZEROW - Blachowitz - Frein
- Lipkin - Tworetzky - Berman - OBLOWITZ - Marks -
Gevint - Milun - SLOVIN - NARRON - Bender (Berel and
Koppel) - DERMAN

In the early years, many lived behind their stores, as we did, or close by. This perhaps accounts for the location of Woodstock and Salt River Shul in *Argyle Street*, close to *Albert Road*.

MID THIRTIES AND FORTIES

Albert Rd: Golshevsky, photographer and Barnard Katzeff attorney, set up.

Salt River Road: We have relocated here to No 30 - living among the following:

Berman (Solly, sisters) - Derman (Shulamit, Ruth, brother)
Levine (Jack, Freda) - Kaplans (Desmond, his sisters)
Schwartz (Miriam) - Aronstan - (Abe, Becky, Eddie)
POLITZKY - Krasner - (Joe, Greg)

Kent, York, and Oxford Streets led off *Salt River Road*. The following families lived there during this period:

GELBART Z. (my grandfather's brother) - JALOVITSKY,
Weinkove - Politzky (Cecil, Ruth, Sylvia) - Berman - Eliason
(Rhoda her brother, sisters) - Kantor - Myers (Micheal,
Wolfie, their sisters) - Sorkin (Gertie, sister)

In *Greatmore, Devon and Argyle Streets*, these families lived: - Sandler (Willie, his sister) - Orlin (Abe, Lily, Ettie) Newman (Judy) - Tworetzky (Sam, Meish, Jack) - Zalk (Yvonne, Aubrey) - Dragon (Jack) - Behr - Lipkin - (Jack, Sonia, Diana) - KORODETZ - Elkin (Nathan) - Grawitzky (Rabbi Mottel) - Berelowitz (Reuben, brother, sister) - Weiner (Meyer, Boris, sister) - Yochelowitz (Elaine) Leibowitz (Jack) - Kur (Judy, my cousin).

Burns Road, Pope Street and Portland Road, were in Salt River. I recall the following: GELBART, Avrom Leib (my grandfather) - MILUNS (Ann, Jack, Bessie) - GRAWITZKY Rabbi of Woodstock (Mottel, Osher and sister Esther) Rubin (Ruth, Berenice, Irma)

FORTIES AND FIFTIES:

Victoria Road was part of the Main Road from Cape Town to the Southern Suburbs. It was upmarket commercially from *Albert Road*. Neighbourhoods above Victoria Road were considered more desirable. Shops, businesses and professionals located on Victoria Road (by no means complete):

Bagraim- Herman - Baigel - Barr- Epstein- Schatz- Friedland- Furman - Epstein - Egert - Galloon - Sacks - Diskin - Sakinofsky - Sacher - Slotsky - Rosenberg - Frank - Glaun - Rose - Binder - Katzeff

Doctors - L. Ehrlich, J.Gans, S.Myers, C.Resnekov, S.Walt. Dentist - D. Hotz. Attorneys - C. Barnett. Pharmacists - Richman, Roytowski, Talmud.

Residential neighbourhoods (mostly 5 to 10 minute walk to the shul) and some who lived there:

Victoria Road: Rev S. Kassel (**Bennie, Joe, Cyril, Morris, sister**)-Bagraim (**Mark, Isaac, Riva,**) - Traub (**Wolf, Morris, sister**)-Ehrlich (**Edwin, Rodney Jennifer**) - Talmud (**Leonora, Joseph**) - RICHMAN- Furman A.L - Furman H (**Morris**) -Gans (**Malke, Isaac, Phyllis,**) - Friedlander - Resnekov - Gordon - Blecher (**Israel, Yetta**) - Uranovsky (**Solly, Sarah, Ben**) -Slotsky (**Philip, Freda**)

Avenue Road: Binder (**Harry, Ettie, Doreen**) -Gatz (**Mike Judy, Joe**) to No 16 from *Salt River Rd* - Rosenthal (cousins **Issy and Hannah,**) - Schrock - Lipow (**Boris, Annie, Sylvia**) - Gulis (**Chana, Abe, Malka**). Rev Gulis headed the Talmud Torah. Krensky (**Max**) -Berman - Golshevsky (**Simon, Elyo, sister**) -Baigel - Zalk (**Yvonne, Aubrey, Harold**) - Boyd (**Sidney, Naomi, Ada**) - Bloch (**Eddie, Lovel**) - Galloon (**Meish**)

Birkdale Ave: Marks S. (**Lionel, Gerry, David, Carmel, Zahava**) - Munitz M. (**Norman, Leon, Hymie, Paula**)-Gevint (**Reggie, his sister**) *Booth Rd*: Shell (**Ronnie, Sylvia**) *The Avenue*: Gutman (**Solly**)

Hares Ave: Fligel (**Sharon, Harold**) -Seidel (**Alfie, Leon**) - Salmon (**Naomi, Ethel**) - Scheiner (**Mannie, Ike, Bennie**) - Kramer (**Jack, Freda, Bella**) - Munitz - Gordon (**Dave, brother**)- Kalmanowitz: *Queens Park Ave*: Merkel A (**Dina, Anne**). *Upper Chamberlain St*: Alpert (**Morris**) - Breslau (**Barney and brother**)

Milner Rd: Levine - Gelbart A (**Cecil and Mike**) Idesis (**Harold, Clare**)- Beimel (**Sarah, Hymie**) -Merkel I. (**Ada, Ralph, Menashe**) Lee Dr. (**Alan, Ginger, sister**) - Marks M N (**Uri, Ziona, Herzl, Isaac**) - Press - Joffe (**Arnold sister**) - Egert - Berman - Katzeff I J (**Joe, Doreen, Alec, Bennie**) - Barr (**Hymie, Oscar, Alec, sister**)

Roodebloem Road: Beinart - Jacobs (**Charlie, brother**) - Basker (**Bernie, Morrie**) - Kopelowitz - Levine (**Geoff, Pearl**) - Davidowitz (**Rivkah, Gershel**) -Bunn (**Reuben, Bessie, Freda**)- Gelbart M, my uncle, (**Hannah, Herschel, Sidney, Felicia**) move on to *Vine St* - Levine (**Wolf, Felicia, brother**) - move to *Salisbury Rd* - Simanowitz (**Solly, Abe, Wolf**) -Katzeff M (son) *Roberts Rd*: Gross (**Dave, Max, Effie, sister**) *Cavendish Square*: Kaplan (**Sylvia, sisters**) - Hurwitz (**Oscar**) - Rubik. *Vine St*: Marks P (**Josie, Solly, Shushie, Bertha, sister**) move to Sea Point. *Fairview Avenue*: Langman (**Ruth, Hymie, Berel**) Washkansky (**Harry, Greta**) -Dorfman-Levine (from Milner Rd) *Caleb St*: Katz (**Harry, Henny**) - Sakinofsky (**Isaac, Eziel, Zeld, Charles**) - Geffin. *Barton St*: Katz (**Rose, Rae**) - Klein - Schumacher (**Lily, sister**) *Walmer Rd*: Tankel (**Wolf, sister, brother**) - Shuman (**Alec**) *Queens Rd* - Jackson.

I am in considerable debt to the late Alec Rubin, Secretary and moving spirit of the Woodstock and Salt River Talmud Torah. His immaculate records from 1929 to the 1960's were a key source. He added to these with press items, featuring the community, its activities and life cycle events. My inclusions are less complete and accurate and I would welcome correction.

Major figures in the life of Woodstock include Rabbi S. Grawitzky, a revered, and learned figure. Rev S. Kassel, did service as chazan, Talmud Torah principal, mohel and schochet. He accepts a call to the Great Synagogue. Rev. Baran succeeds him as chazan. They will be followed by Rev. Malamed. Rabbi Mottel Grawitzky assumes his father's seat. Menachem Kaplan, at the Talmud Torah, was a long-serving, beloved teacher, joined by Mr J. Smolenski, a warm and personable pedagogue. Phyllis Sachar and Tamara Samsonava taught the earlier years. Mr. R. Lederman would take over as principal with a modern, disciplinarian outlook. Rev S. Gulis succeeds him and is also a memorable bal koreh and bal tefilah.

The gabbaim of Woodstock from the thirties to the late fifties, were Messrs. P. Gordon, P. Marks, I. Merkel and M. Gelbart. All have gone to their rest. For those who lived there, the special character of Woodstock Jewry is an enduring testimony. They are remembered for their commitment and adherence to a Jewish way of life that remains a standard for those who followed them.

ENROLLED MEMBERS

Name	Email	Towns of interest
Beare, Arlene	arl@dircon.co.uk	Riga, Jekabpils, Birzai
Chilton, Louis	chiltonl@dislink.jctejs.mil	Bulawayo, Jo'burg
Cohen Lerer, Rose	roseron@shani.net	CapeTown, Parow, Durbanville, Jo'burg
Friedman, Irene	Tel. 818-348-1276 (US)	CapeTown, Port Elizabeth, Johannesburg.
Gatz, Joseph	mirisa@iafrica.com	Cape Town, Woodstock, Dublin
Getz, Mike	mgetz@erols.com	Cape Town, Woodstock, Boksburg
Goldman, Elaine	ElaineGoldman@compuserve.com	Johannesburg
Goldstein, Irene	ireneedit@compuserve.com	Jo'burg, Cape Town
Greenblatt, Ada	ada.greenblatt@worldnet.att.net	Port Elizabeth, Cape Town, Jo'burg
Handler, Davida	DNHIOWA@aol.com	Jo'burg, Oudtshoorn, P.E., Kimberley
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Jacobs, Ena	EWABOB@worldnet.att.net	Koltinjane, Lith. Aizpute, Kuldiga, Liepaja
Ogus, Roy	ogus@impact.xerox.com	Daugavpils., Latvia.
Rhode, Harold	hrhode@erols.com	South Africa, Cape Town.
Samuels, Jackie	Fax 0181-203-1990 (UK)	Kingwilliamstown, Johannesburg, Cape Town

Even this modest beginning indicates resources of some potential. Hopefully we can address the genealogy of Southern African Jewry methodically, community by community. This will need volunteers. Are you prepared to step up for your town.? It is difficult, and perhaps unwise to set exacting criteria - but your views would certainly be welcome. A broad coverage of families in the community, their background, role and other key details would be useful. This is particularly important as we aim to tie in communities of our region with families and contemporaries appearing in the Family Tree of the Jewish People.

Saul and I would welcome advice on a standard methodology to pursue this goal. More importantly please volunteer to accept responsibility for the town, suburb and/or communities best known to you. The responsibility for memory rests with each of us.