

SA-SIG

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<http://www.jewishgen.org/SAfrica/>

Southern African Jewish Genealogy Special Interest Group Newsletter

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I have just returned from a week in Marrakesh and environs, Morocco. This was a Jewish Heritage trip, visiting the Jewish community, seeing traces of the past, including old synagogues and cemeteries, and a colloquium on Jewish Morocco past and present. This included a number of talks by Muslim academics who teach about Jewish Morocco, Morocco and Israel, and some teach Hebrew!

The warmth and friendliness of these Muslims was apparent. I can't think of another part of the world where Muslims have such rapprochement with their Jewish neighbours, and also such an interest in the past.

The participating groups were:

- *L'Association "Permanences du Judaïsme Marocain" – Paris* (The Association "Permanences of Moroccan Judaism" – Paris).
- *Le Département d'Etudes Hébraïques de l'Université Paris 8* (The Department of Hebrew Studies at the University of Paris 8).
- *Le CRJM / Centre de Recherches sur les Juifs du Maroc – Paris* (Centre for Research of Jews of Morocco – Paris)
- *Le GREJM/Groupe de Recherches et d'Etudes sur le Judaïsme Marocain – Rabat* (Research group of Moroccan Judaism – Rabat).
- *La Casa de Sefarad - Casa de la Memoria de Cordoba en Espagne.*
- *Jacky Kadoch de la Communauté Israélite de Marrakech-Essaouira* (Jewish Community of Marrakech-Essaouira).

The Jewish population in 2007: 135 Jewish souls are still living in Marrakech; 30% of are over 70 years old, 10% of the population are poor and without resources, 30% of the population live in rather modest socio-economic conditions. However, 60% of the population belongs to the "bourgeois" with quality living conditions. Almost all the young Jews go to Paris. The community is Sephardic, but because of the Lubavicher *Rebbe's* assistance to the community around the times of emigration to Israel some of the community are 'Lubavich' also!

The Southern Africa Jewish Genealogy Special Interest Group (SA-SIG)

The purpose and goal of the Southern Africa Special Interest Group (SA-SIG) is to bring together Jewish genealogy researchers with a common interest in Southern Africa and to provide a forum for a free exchange of ideas, research tips and information of interest to those researching Jewish family history in the communities of South Africa, Lesotho (Basutoland), Botswana (Bechuanaland), Zimbabwe (Southern Rhodesia), Zambia (Northern Rhodesia), Swaziland, Mozambique, Kenya, and the former Belgian Congo.

The SIG has been producing a quarterly Newsletter since 2000 in which is included articles on personalities in the Southern African Jewish community, religious congregations, communities – past and present and general news about the lives our Southern African families led.

Further information on how to subscribe to the Newsletter can be found at:

<http://www.jewishgen.org/SAfrica/newsletter/index.htm>

If you would like to contribute articles to the Newsletter, accounts should include descriptions of families of the community, aspects of local Jewish life, its institutions and particular character. Jewish involvement in the community at large, its history, business life and development could be featured as well.

Articles for printing in the Newsletter should be sent to Bubbles Segall, Editor, at bubbles.segall@wagait.net

General enquiries about the Newsletter can be sent either to Bubbles or to Mike Getz at MikeGetz005@comcast.net

The SA-SIG maintains a set of Web Pages that can be found at: <http://www.jewishgen.org/safrica>

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We visited a number of other towns, e.g. Essaouira (Mogador), where there are the remnants of a Mellah with a synagogue, and Demnate (and the tomb of Rabbi David Ha'levy).

Although a lot of the conversations and talks were in French I managed with English and a little Hebrew.

I was particularly struck by the efforts to restore monuments and memories of Jewish Communities.

The parallels with South Africa, where virtually no non-Jewish historians and clergy have any interest in Jews, were evident.

If anyone wants contact details for the community or for the tour operator (who is doing his PhD on Moroccan Jewry), please contact me.

Saul Issroff

London, saul@issroff.com

EDITORIAL

Previous issues of this Newsletter commended the inspiring and invaluable work carried out by *The South African Friends of Beth Hatefutsoth* in documenting early Jewish life in the country communities of South Africa. Three volumes have now been published with a further two to be produced at a later date. The aim of the project is to maintain a permanent record of the Jewish communities of South Africa.

These volumes contain a wealth of information. Each chapter records the surnames of families who once lived in each town, or in some instances are still there, population statistics, lists of ministers, Jewish organisations, the early history of the place as well as information about the lives of pioneering Jewish settlers. To give you some idea of the information contained in these volumes, the town of Wolseley is featured in this Newsletter for you.

If you would like to purchase any of these volumes, you can contact *The South African Friends of Beth Hatefutsoth* at museum@beyachad.co.za.

The South African Jewish Genealogy Society based in Johannesburg has had an outstanding feast of speakers at their regular meetings. Maurice Skikne, the chairman, and Ada Gamsu, the Meeting

Programme Organiser, have provided a list of lectures members attended between 2005 and 2008.

Ivor Kosowitz continues to regale us with his memories of growing up in South Africa in the 50s and 60s.

Sandra Cassel has written a poignant eulogy about her late father – Leslie Jacobson – who spent most of his life farming in Philippolis in the Orange Free State. According to Sandra, the Jacobson's story is typical of many Jewish families who populated numerous small isolated communities of South Africa. Children were sent to boarding school in the city to acquire a Jewish education and only came home on school holidays. Almost everyone in the Philippolis Jewish Cemetery is related. There are about eight graves and all except the unmarked graves are related to the Jacobson family.

Joy Kropman from **The Revisiting Muizenberg Team** is still looking for information for their forthcoming exhibition – particularly about hotels, other accommodation and the *shul*. For more details, see page 13.

Bubbles Segall

Editor

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WOLSELEY

Published in Jewish Life in the South African Country Communities, Volume 11, and is reprinted here with permission

FAMILY SURNAMES

Allen, Arch, Batten, Braude, Brown, Chiat, Choritz, Cohen, Diamond, Gesundheit, Glantz, Gordon, Harris, Kaczer, Kantor, Katz, Katzenellenbogen, Kirsch, Kriger/Krieger, Kruss, Kupferberg, Lang, Liberman, Miller, Morrison, Negan, Raskin, Sax, Schaffer, Shapiro, Sieff, Singer, Soilski, Soll, Solsky, Tanur, Trosciancecki, Tuch, Yamey

Wolseley, named after Sir Garnet Joseph Wolseley, governor of Natal and at one time supreme commander of the British forces in South Africa, was established on the farm Goedgevonden in 1875. The town, originally known as Ceres Road, became a railhead for the region's fruit growers. It is

situated 137 km north-east of Cape Town and 16 km south-west of Ceres. The railway from Cape Town reached Wolseley in 1876 and a branch line to Ceres was built in 1912. Wolseley attained municipal status in 1955.

Many of Wolseley's buildings were damaged on 29 September 1969 by the same earthquake that struck Tulbach some 15 km to the north. The Yamey's house was so badly damaged that it had to be condemned. Only one Jewish home was left intact; fortunately, no lives were lost.

By the early 1900s four Jewish families lived in Wolseley. They were Mr and Mrs Brown, Abraham and Ray Katzenellenbogen and family from Plungian, Lithuania, Mr and Mrs Isaac Raskin and family, and Nathan and Pauline Sax, who arrived in Wolseley during the Anglo-Boer War. Nathan worked at the Wolseley Hotel before opening his own hotel, the Waverley. Having come from a very devout background, he converted a room in his hotel into a synagogue, brought a *Sefer Torah* and made arrangements for obtaining kosher meat. He also built a *mikveh*. He was very highly regarded by the local Gentiles for his biblical knowledge. Abraham and Ray Katzenellenbogen owned the Wolseley Hotel, a general dealership and a butcher during the Anglo-Boer War. He also operated a horse-and-cart transport service between Wolseley and Ceres. Isaac Raskin had a mineral water business and lived in Wolseley with his wife and family from the early 1900s. He moved to Ceres in about 1912.

The Jews of Wolseley were closely associated with the Jews of Ceres and Tulbach. Rev Galoon, who was the minister of Tulbach from 1913 until the early 1920s, also served Wolseley, travelling by bicycle and later by horse and cart. Thereafter, Rev Natas, who lived in Ceres, was engaged by the two communities of Wolseley and Ceres for 28 years from around 1927. Jewish education for the children of the town was provided by the ministers of Tulbach, Rev Lison and Rev Eidelman, who travelled to Wolseley for this purpose in the late 1920s and early 1930s. At this time, services were occasionally held in the hall of the Wolseley Hotel.

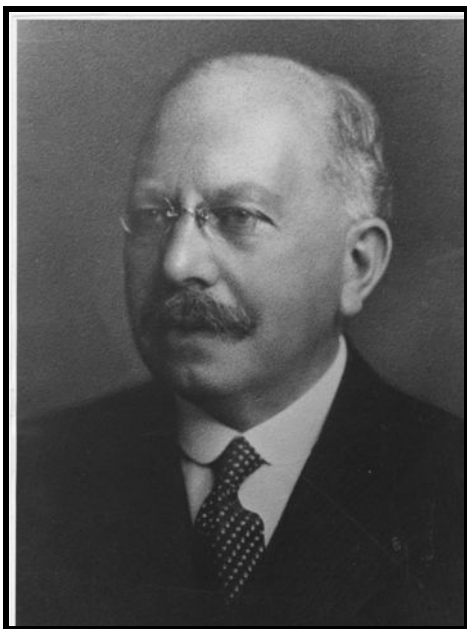


*Sakkie Katzenellenbogen Street with Sakkie and his wife Peggy, 1968.
(Courtesy of Peggy Katzenellenbogen)*

The Wolseley, Tulbach and Ceres congregations were amalgamated in 1944 and became known as the Ceres-Wolseley Congregation. Services were conducted in the Ceres synagogue. However, in the late 1940s the Wolseley community conducted High Holy Day services in their town at the Waverley Hotel. By 1947, Rev Natas was visiting Wolseley each week to perform *shechita*. In 1958, the Worcester community provided kosher meat and sent a Hebrew teacher, Mrs Har-Chen, once a week to teach the 10 children of the combined community of Wolseley and Ceres.

The synagogue building in Ceres was condemned after the September 1969 earthquake, and a new Ceres-Wolseley synagogue and community hall were built and consecrated in 1973. At this ceremony, the ark was opened by five members of the congregation, including Mr F. Batten and Mr Solly Gordon, both of Wolseley to give *cheder* classes. By 1987 the congregation had shrunk to four families, two being from Wolseley. As there was no Jewish cemetery in the town, Jews who died in Wolseley were buried in Ceres.

Woolf Harris of Upington, one of the founders of the South African wool industry, by 1911 had acquired a small textile mill near Wolseley, thus laying the foundations of South Africa's prosperous secondary wool industry.



Woolf Harris (Courtesy SAJBD)

Isaac Raskin started manufacturing "Peak Brand" aerated mineral waters and brewed ginger beer in Wolseley in 1906. He moved to Ceres in 1912. Before the Second World War bottles were imported, the ordinary glass ones from England and the stone ginger beer bottles from Holland. Some of the smaller ones for "Club Soda water" had a marble in the neck. The ginger beer was not aerated but brewed over an open fire using whole ginger which was finely ground by a machine. He also prepared mead for Passover. After his death in 1957 the factory was sold.

The Jews of the town were mainly hoteliers and general dealers, with one lawyer in the 1930s. Prominent among them was Isaac (Sakkie) Katzenellenbogen who was appointed mayor in 1969 and served for a decade. Sakkie Katzenellenbogen Street was named in his honour. Percy Sieff, a well-known South African actor, spent five years of his childhood in the town when his father leased the Wolseley Hotel from Charles Katzenellenbogen in the early 1930s. The family left Wolseley around 1934. Percy Sieff's career in the theatre began at the age of 19. Cynthia Israel of Cape Town married Farrell Batten in 1961 and they moved to Wolseley, his hometown, in 1966.

Cynthia Batten had been a member of the Milnerton branch of Bnoth Zion and continued this affiliation in Wolseley. There she served as vice-chair and later co-chairman of the Ceres/Wolseley branch. When the family moved to Johannesburg in 1977, Cynthia joined the Glenhazel branch of the Women's Zionist League, holding the positions once again of vice-chairman and then chairman. She went on to serve for a number of years as treasurer of the Executive of WIZO Johannesburg, and then as vice-chairman for three years. Cynthia Batten served on the Women's Zionist Council as honorary treasurer in 1987 and was elected vice-president in 1996. In 2000 she became president of the Women's Zionist Organisation of South Africa, a position she held until 2003.



Ginger beer bottled used by Isaac Raskin & Co, Ceres and Ceres Road.

(Courtesy of Lastovica, Ethleen. An Illustrated Guide: Ginger Beer Bottles for SA Collectors. Wynberg CT Gabler Press, 2000)

Jewish Organisations

There is no record of a formal Zionist Society, but Wolseley's Jews gave money for Zionist Funds in the early days. In 1929, members of the Jewish communities of Breë River, Artois and Gouda gathered in Wolseley to protest against the Arab uprising and the subsequent atrocities in Palestine.

The **Ceres-Wolseley branch of Bnoth Zion** was established in 1929 with Mrs Jane Sarembock as chairman. In 1966 its members joined forces with the Union of Jewish Women until 1970, when that

society ceased to exist in the town. The co-chairmen were Mrs Cynthia Batten and Mrs Gladys Fish. The earthquake of 29 September 1969 struck just as the societies were meeting at the home of Mrs Minnie Yamey.

The **Ceres-Wolseley branch of the Union of Jewish Women** was established in January 1941. In 1952 the society had nine members and by 1969, after joining ranks with the Bnoth Zion, their numbers increased to 20 members. The Union of Jewish Women ceased its activities locally by 1970.

The **Wolseley Jewish Benevolent Fund** was established by 1954 with Mrs Minnie Yamey as secretary.

List of Ministers

<i>Minister</i>	<i>Years of Service</i>
Rev Galoon	1913 to early 1920s <i>(joint minister of Wolseley and Tulbach)</i>
Rev Natas	c. 1927 – c. 1955 <i>(joint minister of Wolseley and Ceres)</i>

Population Statistics

There are no census figures for Jews in Wolseley for the years under review

Community Records

<i>Year</i>	<i>Jewish Population</i>
1943	28
1953	72 (in Wolseley and Tulbach)



*Katzenellenbogen/Batten family reunion outside the Wolseley Hotel in 1997
(Courtesy Cynthia Batten)*

WEBSITE

<http://www.faithandresilience.org/FR/index.html>

This website provides information about Jewish tours to South Africa. Please note that the Board of the SA-SIG has no connection to or commercial interest in this organization.

SOUTH AFRICAN SMALL COUNTRY COMMUNITIES PROJECT Volume 3

Volume three of *Jewish Life in South African Country Communities* is now available from *The South African Friends of Beth Hatefutsoth*. The places included in this volume are as follows:

Towns and Villages in the Camdeboo Region

Aberdeen, Aberdeen Road, Adendorp, Bethesdaweg, Graaff-Reinet, Jansenville, Kendrew, Kiewetskuil, Klipfontein, Klipplaat, Kruidfontein, Middleton, Murraysburg, Nieu-Bethesda, Oatlands, Pearston, Petersburg, Rivertjie, Suurplaas, Somerset East, Thorngrove

Towns and Villages in the Cape Midlands Region

Adelaide, Alice, Alicedale, Balmoral, Baroe, Beaufort, Bedford, Berlin, Blaney (Junction), Breidbach, Buxton, Cathcart, Coega, Cookhouse, Cradock, Debe Nek, Draaibos, Dwingfontein, Elandsdrif, Fort Beaufort, Fort Hare, Frankfort, Fullarton, Gaga, Glen Grey, Golden Valley, Gwaba, Hackney, Halesowen, Hartebeestkuil, Hertzog, Hogsback, Hukuwe, Imvani, Iquibica, Katberg, Kat River, Kei Road, Keiskammahoek, King William's Town, Knoetze, Komga, Kubusi, Lady Frere, Loerie, Lovedale, Mabonga, Middeldrift, Mortimer, Mount Coke, Mpetu, Ngwenya, Ntsikizini, Paterson, Peelton, Prospect, Queenstown, Riebeek-East, Rietbron, Ripon, Sandflats, Sandkraalspoort, Sandvlakte, St. Marks, Seymour, Sidbury, Spring Valley, Steytlerville, Stutterheim, Sunnyside, Tamacha, Tarkastad, Tidbury's Toll, Uitenhage, Visrivier, Vondeling, Whittlesea, Willowmore, Witteklip, Yellowwoods, Zigodle

Towns and Villages in the Garden Route Region

Blanco, George, Groot-Brakrivier, Knysna, Pacaltsdorp, Plettenberg Bay, Rondevlei, Saasveld, Sedgfield, Swartvlei, The Crags, Wilderness, Wittedrif, Zebra

Towns and Villages in the Griqualand East Region

Alfred, Bizana, Cedarville, Flagstaff, Franklin, Kenegha Drift, Kokstad, Matatiele, Mount Ayliffe, Mount Currie, Mount Fletcher, Mount Frere, Umzimkhulu

Towns and Villages in the Langkloof Region

Addo, Andrieskraal, Armmansvriend, Barandas, Bluecliff, Blueliliesbush, Buffelsdrif, Buffelsklip, Cape St Francis, Coerney, Eersterivierstrand, Glenconnor, Greystone, Hankey, Haarlem, Humansdorp, Jeffreys Bay, Joubertina, Kareedouw, Kariega, Kirkwood, Kleinpoort, Kleinwinterhoekberge, Krakeel River, Kruisfontein, Milton, Noll's Halt/Noll, Patensie, Sapkamma, Selborne, Sunland, Tregardon, Twee Riviere, Uniondale, Vleikraal, Waterford, Wolwefontein

Towns and Villages in the Little Karoo Region

Calitzdorp, Ladismith, Montagu, Vanwyksdorp, Zoar

Towns and Villages in the N.E. Cape Region

Albert, Aliwal North, Allemanspoort, Ararat, Barkly East, Barkly Pass, Belmore, Bird's River, Burgersdorp, Cala, Cala Road, Clanville, Clifford, Dordrecht, Elliot, Gelegenfontein, Goedemoed, Gubenxa, Halseton, Herschel, Hofmeyr, Indwe, Jamestown, Johnston's Leap, Knapdaar, Lady Grey, Maclear, Molteno, Morristown, Moshesh's Ford, Motkop, Platkoppiesdrif, Quaggasfontein, Rhodes, Roodenek, Rossouw, Siberia, Sterkstroom, Steynsburg, Stormberg, Swempoot, Syfergat, Teviot, Ugie, Venterstad, Witkop, Wolwekloof, Xalanga

Towns and Villages in the Overberg Region

Albertinia, Albertyn, Askraal, Ashton, Barrydale, Bonnievale, Botrivier, Bredasdorp, Buffeljagsrivier, Caledon, Daansbaai, Droevlakte, Elgin, Grabouw, Greyton, Hawston, Heidelberg, Herbertsdale, Hermanus, Houwhoek, Kleinmond, Klein-Brakrivier, Klipkraal, Malgas, McGregor, Mossel Bay, Muiskraal, Napier, Onrus, Port Beaufort, Proteem (Rail), Riversdale, Riviersonderend, Robertson, Stanford, Stormsvlei, Swellendam, Suurbrak, Villiersdorp

Towns and Villages in the Settler Region

Albany, Alexandria, Bathurst, Bell, Bloukrans, Breakfast Vlei, Crossroads, Douglas Heights, Fort Brown, Grahamstown, Hamburg, Kidd's Beach, Langholm, Manley Flats, Martindale, Newtondale, Peddie, Port Alfred, Prudhoe, Salem, Thorns, Zuney

Towns and Villages in the Transkei Region

Bashee Bridge, Bojeni, Butterworth, Cofimvaba, Elliotdale, Engcobo, Idutywa, Jujura, Libode, Lusikisiki, Miller's Station, Mpulusi, Mqanduli, Mtshanyana, Munyu, Ngqeleni, Nkanga, Nqabara, Nqamakwe, Port St. Johns, Qumbu, Tsolo, Tsomo, Umtata, Willowdale

If anyone is interested in acquiring a copy, they can contact *The South African Friends of Beth Hatefutsoth* (see the order form at the end of this Newsletter for more details).

SOUTH AFRICAN JEWISH GENEALOGY SOCIETY TREATS

*Compiled by
Maurice Skikne and Ada Gamsu*

The **Jewish Genealogy Society of South Africa** is based in Johannesburg and meets eleven times a year at *Beyachad*, the headquarters of the South African Zionist Federation and the South African Jewish Board of Deputies. Maurice Skikne is the chairman and Ada Gamsu is the Meeting Programme Organiser.

Here is a list of the lectures members attended from 2005 to 2008. Transcripts and cassette tapes taken from a number of these talks can be obtained from Maurice Skikne at moski@global.co.za.

2005

January

Harry Schwartz, a renowned attorney and South African ambassador to the USA in Washington, spoke about the problems faced by German Jews who migrated to South Africa during the 1930s and settled in Doornfontein, a suburb of Johannesburg. Doornfontein was a popular area for Jewish migrants – housing was cheap and fellow Jews

owned the shops. The area also had an abundance of boarding houses.

February

Miracle of the Survival of the Jews of the Ionian Island of Zakynthos, Greece during the Holocaust was the topic covered by Ronnie Mink, chairman of the local branch of *Yad Vashem*, and a teacher at King David High School, Linksfield. Mink described how the Greek people of Zakynthos rescued Jews and assisted them off the island.

March

Meira Puterman provided an online workshop on doing searches on the Internet. One of her other areas of expertise includes Polish genealogy.

April

Malcolm Chesno showed a remarkable video about the rescue of the Jews of Denmark and their safe transportation to Sweden.

May

Dr Joshua Levy spoke about his grandfather Meier Dovid, a noted journalist and writer, who has written on the Jews of Doornfontein and Lithuania.

June

Margaret Rawicz traced the route and history of the Israelites exodus from Egypt through the Sinai Desert. She described her travels to each station of their journey where she met people who showed her possible artefacts of this historical journey.

July

Meira Puterman ran a second workshop.

August

Aliza Karpes, a nurse, told of her visit to the Jewish communities of India. She visited the Cochin as well as other congregations and showed slides of her travels.

September

Rabbi Dr Mazabow, an expert in Jewish history lectured on the origins of the Jewish organisations of South Africa.

October

Naomi Dinur, an expert on Semitic languages spoke about secrets of the original Hebrew language.

November

The *March of the Living*, an annual event in Poland where thousands of mainly Jewish teens from around the world participate in a march from Auschwitz to Birkenau was the subject of Gershon Hurwitz's lecture. He discussed the attitudes of Polish gentiles.

The year ended on a sad note with the death of our founder and first chairman Ivan Elion in October.

2006

February

Joan Marshall spoke about her newly published book, *Darling Mutti*. This is the story about her German Jewish family; their lives in Germany and in Port Elizabeth where her father found work at the Firestone Tyre and Rubber Company and her mother became a dressmaker.

April

The renowned Paula Slier, now an international broadcaster gave a fascinating account of her adventures into the West Bank and Gaza areas as a news journalist for the Russian Broadcasting Corp.

May

Anne Brest, a professional photographer and researcher, took us back to Ireland, her country of origin and spoke about the Dublinese and Southern Jewish communities.

July

Bernard Duchon, an engineer who hails from the Natal Midlands conversed about the Jews in the mining and farming areas of Dundee and Vryheid – places that are now devoid of Jewish families. Furniture from the Vryheid *Shul* has been moved to Durban.

September

Dr Jack Mink, a renowned Big Band swing fan and chairman of the Big Band Society, gave a slide and music talk, about the Swing era of the 20th Century.

October

Ivan Elion our late and past Chairman is now honoured by a lecture in his memory. David Saks, Deputy Director of *Beyachad* and Editor of *Jewish Affairs* delivered the first anniversary lecture. He spoke about the southern Cape, namely Mossel Bay, Oudtshoorn and Colesburg and the Stein and Elion Families.

November

A workshop was held where a number of members and visitors displayed their family trees. A highlight was the use of the Scrapbook system of display.

2007

January

Marc Kopman, an Insurance Inspector who travels extensively about the country, gave a talk about the Eastern Cape Country Communities. He uses this opportunity to acquire information and photographs about *shuls* and cemeteries, which has proved beneficial.

February

The Maintenance of Jewish Culture and Tradition in South Africa was the topic of Ronnie Mink's talk this month.

March

Rabbi Charles Wallach, the then resident rabbi of the Temple Emmanuel Reform *shul*, spoke on *Conditions Influencing the Jewish Religion through the Centuries*. He traced changes that evolved over the last two millennia, many of those reforming our methods of devotion.

April

Maurice Reznik ran a workshop on genealogical research using computers.

May

Maurice and Elaine Gavshon, newly returned from a trip to Cuba, discussed how poor the country has become and the problems the surviving Jewish community endure at the hands of the current regime.

June

Ronnie Mink following his tour of Poland to join the *March of the Living* discoursed on the state of Polish-Jewish relations.

July

Ellen Oppenheimer gave an account of the 5 years of occupation of the Netherlands experienced by her cousin Dini Oppenheimer.

August

Dr Jack Mink related an account of the music of George Gershwin interspersed with musical selections.

October

Marc Kopman gave the Ivan Elion Memorial lecture where he discussed Jewish communal life in the Northern Free State and the North Eastern Cape Country Communities.

November

The talk at the year's end, was given by Rabbi Dr Moishe Singer, a renowned Jewish antiques expert and a collector of old Jewish books. He used a variety of books to illustrate his lecture, concentrating on *Haggadahs* and daily prayer books, particularly those used by servicemen in both World Wars.

If anyone wants to contact the Jewish Genealogy of South Africa, their details are as follows:

Jewish Genealogical Society of South Africa
P O Box 92267
Norwood, 2117
South Africa
Telephone: 271-887-7764 (evenings)
E-mail: moski@global.co.za

The Society meets once a month, annual membership is R85.00 and they produce a quarterly Newsletter, *Yichus*, available electronically or as a hard copy.

A TALE OF TWO SHULES REVISITED

Ivor Kosowitz

I have been reminded by other ex-Cape Townians that there was much more to write down about the Vredehoek and Schoonder Street *Shules*. As we were members of the latter, my recollections relate mostly to that, although I am sure that it applied to the former as well.

At *Pesach* time, many of us kids went to *shule*, mainly because our parents said we had to. Once there I doubt that many of us actually went inside. So the big event, outside of course, was to play "marbles" with hazel and walnuts. Who said we were supposed to eat them! The walnuts were the "goonies" and the hazel nuts were the "marbles". I recall that this was really big at the Vredehoek *Shule* as it had an enclosed courtyard at the front.

Succot was another special *Chag*. A large curved succah was built at the back of the "Round" *Shule*. After every service, large trays of delicious sponge cake were brought out. You could have wine and salty herring in addition to the cake. Some of us kids thought the cake was great, so we stuffed our *tallis* bags full of the stuff, to take home!

As we became barmitvah, we were invited to attend *Gemorah* classes after service on *Shabbat* mornings. The teacher was a Mr. Kooperman. As he mainly spoke Yiddish, and as the *Gemorah* is mainly in Aramaic and Hebrew, we kids never actually learned much. However we were introduced to "Bob". No not a person, but a Jewish dish made from broad beans.

Other mainly delicious foods which we grew up with were *Taigelach*, *Imberlach*, *Pretzelach*, *Petcha* (made from calf's hooves), *Perogen*, *Kreplach*, *Henzel*, Herring and Chopped Herring, Chopped Liver, *Gefilte* Fish, *Kneidelach* – boiled and baked, Bagels, *Babkes*, *Bulkas*, *Hammantashen* and *Kichel*. Some of these we still enjoy today. Only in South Africa, *Challah* is called *Kitke*. No one seems to know the origin and why this unique to South Africa.

Many maid servants became kosher cooking experts, and this was very desirable if they wanted to work in a Jewish home.

The Saturday night *Slichot* Service was the highlight of the year especially if you were in the choir. We arrived at about 8pm. A 16mm black and white movie was shown, usually a B-rate western “flick”. We had to hire a projector in those days, and the movie was on large reels of celluloid. After that, the **Ladies Guild** put on a large spread for us.

As *Shlichot* is at midnight it was an effort to keep the sopranos (boys under 12) awake, and in any event they were tanked up with sugar so it was extremely difficult for the choirmaster, Jeff Koussevitsky, to keep them under control.

One *Slichot* service, my friend and I smuggled a cassette tape recorder into *shule* and put it under the *bimah*. This way we recorded the service which was full of amazing choral pieces. My friend in Sydney and I still have this recording today, about 43 years later. So the only two copies in existence are in Australia!

When *Rosh Hashana* came around, the *shules* were full to overflowing with standing room only. I remember that every year the *Shamash*, Mr Rivkin, blew the *Shofar*. Except for once, when our Rabbi decided to try. Well, he should have thought otherwise. He could not get one note out properly. We in the choir loft above him could not contain ourselves, and just cracked up laughing actually rolling on the floor! What an embarrassment.

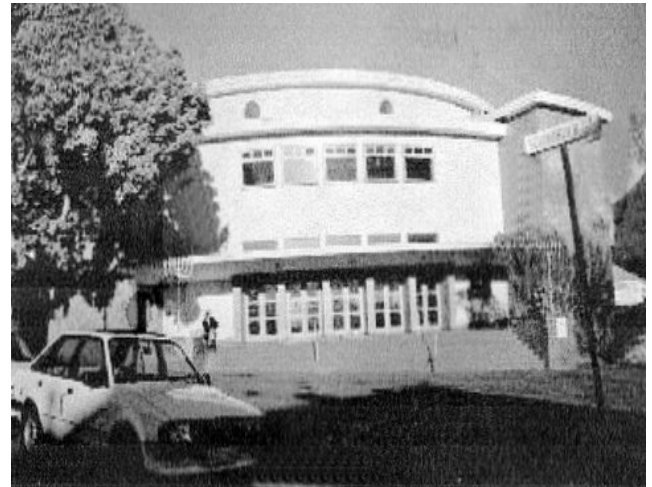
The choir was great, not the best though. The best choir was at the Gardens Shul. We had the best *chazzan*, Cantor Simcha Koussevitzky. Anyway, we used to get paid for rehearsals and services. Two long serving tenors were Jackie Shwartz and Les Wexler. Mr. Herrison sang bass.

One person I almost forgot to mention was Cantor Immerman also known as the “Blind Chazan”. He held the position of *Chazan Sheini*. Sadly, he was blind from a very early age but had an incredible gift. He was able to retain the whole *Torah* and *Siddur* in his memory. He also taught many their *barmitzvah* portions, and could tell your name just by listening to your voice. He truly had a long life having lived to the age of about 95.

It was interesting that in the 50’s the *Gabbis* all wore top hats. This was a “hangover” from the English roots of Cape Town Jewry. Apparently,

such hats are still worn in some of London’s oldest *shules*, even today.

Those were the wonderful days that we were privileged to have experienced.



Schoonder Street Shule

EULOGY FOR GRANDPA – LESLIE JACOBSON

Sandra Cassel

Mom, Rabbi Silberhaft, Family, and Friends,

We are all gathered here today to say farewell to Leslie, son, brother, husband, father, father in law, uncle, cousin, grandfather, friend and mentor. Yes, you wore all those hats, or rather in your case caps, with pride, passion and joy.

Born in Bloemfontein, June 17th 1919 to Leah and Moritz Jacobson, brother to Rosalind, Julius, Naomi and Jack, Leslie attended school in Philippolis where he matriculated and went on to work for Mervis brothers. When WWII broke out he joined the Transvaal Scottish and was later deployed to North Africa and Italy. It was after the war that he realized his path in life. He enrolled at the *Grootfontein Agricultural College* and upon graduating, started farming in 1948 at *Vetkop*, in the Philippolis district, alongside his late Father Moritz and Auntie Cecelia. He later moved to *Te Huis* and in 1950, brought his young bride Alice from Port Elizabeth to settle down with him on the farm. *Boesmansfontein* and *Groenvlei* were added to the farming operation later and the young couple, along with their infant son Benjamin, moved to *Boesmansfontein*. It was here

that Benjamin, Wilfred, Sandra and Rochelle would be raised.

Most of you here know that Leslie was a man of the earth. He farmed with a love for the land through droughts, floods, good times and bad. He never considered it a job, a chore, or an aggravation. He always said he never needed a holiday. The farm was his holiday. He was so proud of his farming operation singularly and collectively, whether during his partnership with his late father Moritz or later with his son Benjamin. He was always happiest when he was on the farm or could show family and friends around. He earned many prizes for his merino sheep's wool at the Philippolis agricultural shows and his knowledge of sheep; wool and farming in general, went far beyond anything one could learn from a book. The double storey shearing shed was his claim to fame with its polished hardwood floors and perfect set up for shearing, sorting and baling. People came from all over the country to see it and he enjoyed every minute of conducting a tour through it. He was extremely proud of the fact that he never ran the farm at a loss but was also not so naive or foolish not to acknowledge that his success was not only due to his hard work and dedication. Mom was there through thick and thin, supporting him, encouraging him and working alongside him. Granny, he told you so many times in the last few weeks what a good wife you had been. Of course he also reminded you constantly that you had a wonderful husband!

Growing up Jacobson or married to a Jacobson, was in his words, *nie perdekoop nie* (not like buying horses). He strove for perfection in all areas of his life, demanded it and in most cases, achieved some comfortable degree of it. He loved being surrounded by family and friends and later on and through the years, derived so much pleasure and joy from his children, grandchildren, extended family and the wonderful Philippolis community. His sense of honesty and integrity, stubbornness and determination served him well. He never put off what he could do at that moment, for another time. *More is nog n dag* was not part of his make up. When not at work on the farm, he was never bored whether he was making *bankies* (stools) in his workshop, reading the paper, writing letters to the editor, or simply sitting on the *stoep*. His hands were always busy and his mind was always churning. He seldom sat still because that is who he

was. He simply could not and would not slow down. His words to everyone were. "I will retire when I am six feet under."

Rugby was his sport of choice. As a schoolboy, he played the game and later would not miss a game on the radio or TV. Mom knew that a chocolate cake better be ready and if she failed to produce one and his team lost, it was because the cake was missing. Food in vast quantities was also very important. He loved a party and made us cook for 100 if 40 were coming. "Rather let there be too much than too little," he would say. He was a real fashion buff and he got a kick out of dressing up. Even when he went into Philippolis, he would change out of his farm clothes. He said one never knew who you could meet in town.

At this point we would like to say that the receiver of revenue or "deceiver of revenue" as he called them, is likely relieved that he did not take them to task about the taxes they owed him since turning 85. He believed that Granny should get a Jaguar with the back taxes he thought they owed him. Don't worry grandpa; she doesn't mind driving the Rover! His love for a nice looking car with no dents or scratches even after ten years was generally not realistic, but he sure washed, polished and tried to keep his vehicles looking like new.

Dad, you have set such high standards in the way that you lived your life. You were a good husband and provider, a fair boss a 'no nonsense Father,' generous donor and someone who never discriminated who you gave to, whether financially or with your time, farm equipment, animal feed or food from your table. You loved the Afrikaans community in Philippolis who you embraced and in turn embraced you. When your late mother passed away and your Father moved to Cape Town, Your late Father, you and your siblings donated your family home to the town to be used as a library. Jewish organization, universities, schools, animal protection agencies and orphanages were recipients of your generosity. You started *The Boesmansfontein Trust* for the *NG Kerk* (church) in Philippolis because the community meant so much to you. You helped anyone who sought help and gave willingly, quietly and readily, and expected nothing in return. You believed and told us many times that the more you gave, the more you would receive in life and how true that is. You believed your health was your wealth and never to take it for

granted. Money was not everything and just enough was plenty.

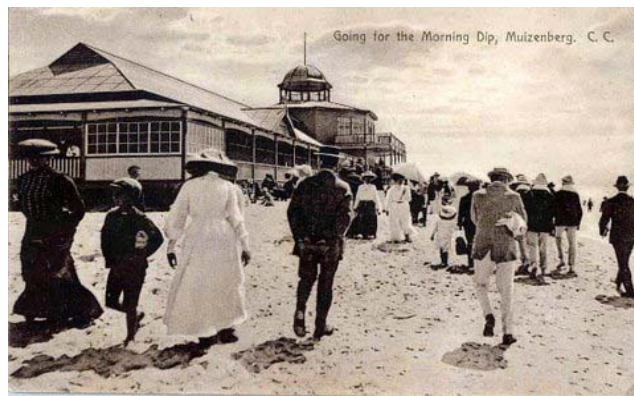
As your health declined over the years and in the last weeks, you still managed to put us in our places, put us to shame with your output of unrelenting energy, and reminded us of how lucky we were. How wonderful that you lived a life with few regrets! We know that you would have loved to see your grandchildren under the *chuppah* (wedding canopy) but know how you and Mom treasured all the wonderful *simchas* you celebrated and attended.

Grandpa, Gumpie, Les, or Oubaas as most of us, your family, friends and staff called you, we will miss you in ways that words cannot express. But, we also take with us all of who you were, what you represented and worked for and all that you taught us. You are *Boesmansfontein*; you are Philippolis and all it represents and we feel truly blessed that you were here for 88 and a half years. You passed away on the farm, a place you loved with all your heart and soul and that gives us great comfort. No more windmills to fix, or water troughs to clean, no sheep to dose or wool to sort. Farewell Mr. *Kaliekatskies*. Rest well and rest in peace.



A section of the Philippolis Cemetery showing the headstones of Leslie Jacobson's parents, Moritz and Leah

REVISITING MUIZENBERG *Latest Update*



Joy Kropman of the **Revisiting Muizenberg Steering Committee** is still seeking additional memoirs and photos. She writes:

Our entertainment file is also growing and to date we have facts and stories about the lizard club, the masque theatre, the pavilion shows, and more. Programmes and photographs are still coming in. No doubt you can all add to this section as it formed such an important part of Muizenberg holidays.

Although we know that there were over 50 hotels in Muizenberg in its heyday, we do not as yet have all the names of the various hotels, annexes, boarding houses and guest establishments that were filled to capacity during the season.

Writes Hymie Jocum in his memories of Muizenberg in the 1930's and 1940's:

There were 55 hotels in Muizenberg in 1939. When we schoolboys played a game called general knowledge we included a category called Muizenberg hotels, for there was at least one hotel for almost every letter of the alphabet from Alexandra to Waverley.

Please rack your brains ... jolt your memories ... dig through your albums ... send us whatever you can that relates to the categories we are currently working on: hotels ... other accommodations ... the *shul* ...

Email: memoriesofmuiz@gmail.com

Phone: (011) 728-8378 Fax: (018) 468-5895

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SURNAMES APPEARING IN THIS NEWSLETTER

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