

# A 'welcome home' Schapira reunion

By MILTON FIELD, Special to The Chronicle

Many families have, through their dedication and involvement, contributed to the betterment and welfare of not only the Jewish community, but to the entire Pittsburgh area and beyond.

One that would rate at the top of the list is the "Schapira Family," and its members came "Home to Pittsburgh" June 24 from

## Community Newsdate

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### MEN'S CLUB

The Adath Jeshurun Men's Club will hold a breakfast minyan at 9 a.m. on Sunday.

The New Light Men's Club Sunday breakfast follows 9 a.m. services.

### NA'AMAT

Aliyah Chapter of Na'amat USA will meet for the second of its summer luncheon series on Tuesday, July 19, at noon at the Harvard Yale Princeton Club. Guest speaker will be Rabbi Sara Perman of Emanuel Israel Synagogue, Greensburg. Catered luncheons are dairy and cost \$10. For further information and to make your reservation, contact the Na'amat USA office at 521-5253.

Medina Chapter of Na'amat USA will hold its annual barbeque to benefit child rescue on Saturday, July 30, at 7 p.m. in the home of Marjorie and Melvin Moidel, 410 Kingston Rd., Eastmont. Members, spouses, and friends are welcome. A donation of \$10 per person will be accepted at the door; reservations can be made by calling the chairperson, Rita Hoffman, at 422-2732.

### SINGLES

The Single's Network of Na'amat USA will sponsor a Moonlight Theater Party and make-your-own sundae bar on Thursday, July 28, at 8:30 p.m. The event, hosted by Gam Yachad (The Thirties) will feature the films of Laurel and Hardy, Charlie Chaplin, and the Little Rascals. The fee is \$4, and reservations can be made by calling the Na'amat USA office at 521-5253.

"Reggae Under the Stars" will be held by the Twenties on Sunday evening, July 17, to celebrate with members who have paid their annual membership dues to Na'amat USA for the 1988/89 year. The evening will feature entertainment; tropical food and drinks; a limbo contest; and a chance to meet other single, Jewish professionals between 20-29. Prospective members are welcome to call for information. Reservations are being taken by

as far away as Denmark. The family directory lists 171 units in 22 states, as well as Canada, Mexico, Israel, Denmark, Holland, England and Switzerland.

Even the name has been modified over the generations. Descendants in Pittsburgh alone are listed as Schapira, Shapira, Sapira and Shapiro, as well as names acquired by female members of the family through marriage.

The American saga began in the first wave of Jewish immigrants from Austro-Hungary (Galicia) back in the 1880's, when three of Shilim and Feigl Schapira's four sons--Yitzhok, Moshe Yankel and Asher Zelig--left the relative security of their little shtetl, saying tearful goodbyes, at different times, to their parents and brother Yehuda Hersh.

They settled in Pittsburgh's Hill District, the center of life for most Jews who came from Eastern and Central Europe.

The brothers' dedication to traditional Judaism was foremost, and they were pioneer members of the Machsikel Hadas Synagogue on Wylie Avenue, a structure which still stands. Their families grew in number. Asher Zelig married for the second time in his early 50's; when he was 65, his wife bore their ninth child, Leah Broudy, who resides in the Highland Park district with husband Joe. The children and families of Judah Hersh emigrated to Toronto, although Judah himself never left Galicia.

Headquarters of the June

reunion was the Sheraton Hotel at Station Square, and 104 descendants, representing five of six generations of the four patriarchs, gathered to renew relationships and update each other on family anecdotes and history.

Would you believe, for example, that Morris (two-gun) Schapira was the deputy sheriff of Galveston, TX, for several years in the early 1920's? This adventure-some son of Yitzhok had joined General Pershing's forces during the Mexican border conflict, and elected to stay in Texas. As Lois Field Shapiro, his grandniece, discloses, he even visited Pittsburgh on a few occasions, wearing his 10-gallon Stetson and boots.

How did the reunions come about? Ten years ago, Nena Dillick, who was born in the Philippines and had married Dr. Sidney Dillick after they met in a graduate program at the University of Pittsburgh shortly after World War II, attended a conference of the National Council of Jewish Women in Pittsburgh as representative of her local council in Birmingham, MI. Her husband was originally from Toronto, and Nena had heard there were "Shapiras" in Pittsburgh. She was determined to find her relatives here.

"I didn't have to," she explained. "I found the name of a prominent Pittsburgher, Frieda Schapira, listed as a discussion leader, and I arranged to meet her." They discovered they had relatives in common in Toronto, and as Frieda Schapira relates,



YITZHAK



ASHER ZELIG



MOSHE YANKEL



YEHUDA HERSH

"Even people living here in Pittsburgh did not know many of their family, especially the descendants of Yitzhok." After an intensive search, Nena found some of them. They, in turn, contacted other family members.

After several meetings, the family decided to hold its first reunion in Toronto in 1983, to coincide with the presentation to the family of the key used to dedicate the Machsikel Hadas Synagogue there more than 80 years ago. Land for the synagogue had been donated by Fannie and Zelig Schapira.

Immediately following the second reunion in Los Angeles in October 1985, planning began for the Pittsburgh family gathering, with Milton Lewinter selected as committee chairman.

Frequent meetings resulted in direct mail and telephone call programs, and a schedule including a river boat ride, a banquet, a special bus tour through all the areas important in family

history (Hill District, Oakland, East End, Squirrel Hill) and a guided visit through the new Jewish Community Center. The three-day event ended with a brunch with hostess Frieda Schapira at her residence.

Robert Shapiro, emcee at the banquet, paid tribute to Lewinter, family historians Mel Bodek and Dr. Sidney Dillick, and Shirley Lazar, without whom the reunion would not have been successful.

The family's renown extends all the way to California; one of the attendees was family member Jean Shanman, who is a seventh-generation native-born descendant of the Spanish settlers of California. The highlight of the evening's festivities was presented by 12-year-old Shana Pike of Toronto, who declared that she and all of the other members of her generation are going to continue the Schapira family traditions, and pass them on to the next one.