

Possible Jewish Family Connections:

From Wilbur Hanson Kalb

From *Finding Our Fathers: A Guidebook to Jewish Genealogy*, Dan Rottenberg (New York City : Random House, 1977) :

BAMBERGER - Ashkenazic name derived from the German city of Bamberg, found in France, Hungary and elsewhere in 19th cent. Some variations are VAMBERY and DOB . . . A German family of Bamberg is descended from Samuel of Bamberg (13th cent.), also known as Samuel of Babenberg.

BEHAIM - Related to ZACUTO [Spanish and Portuguese surname. Behaim is definitely a Jewish surname but this particular Behaim is NOT related to the Zacuto family. He happened to be Martin von Behaim, the father of the “Earth Apple”, and to have a Jewish friend, Rabbi Abraham ben Samuel Zacuto (ca 1450 – after 1510), whose biography is in the online *Jewish Encyclopedia*. Rabbi Zacuto was the Royal Astronomer for two Kings of Portugal, John II and Manuel I.]

von BERG - The name could come from Berg, an independent German duchy (until 1815). Jews were there at least as early as 13th cent.; in 1349 many Jews driven from Cologne settled in Berg. UJ [*Universal Jewish Encyclopedia*, 10 volumes, 1939 – 1948, from New York City] has four biographies. See other names with the “Berg-” prefix. Related to PAGAY, LEVINE.

BIEDERMANN - Listed but origin not given.

BIGENOT - Not listed.

EBNER - UJ [*Universal Jewish Encyclopedia*] has an article on Zionist Meir Ebner (b. 1872 in Romania).

EYB - Not listed. (But it could be short for EIBENSCHUTZ, the name of the Moravian town [now Ivančice, Czechya], where the Jews settled in the 16th Century, and this family has members in Denmark, Germany and Hungary.)

EISSVOGEL - Not listed. (But EIS and VOGEL are listed. EJ [*Encyclopaedia Judaica*, First Edition, 16 volumes, 1971 – 1972, from Keter Publishing House, Jerusalem, and Macmillan Co., New York City] has a biography on an Austro-Hungarian soldier named Eis. Vogel is a popular Jewish surname.)

von GADME - Not listed.

GRUNHOFER - Not listed.

GEYER - Ashkenazic name meaning “vulture” (from Middle German); another variation is SOKOL [actually the Russian word for “falcon”]. Related to

SONNENFELS (also Sonnenfeld — 18th cent. Austrian family and 19th cent. Hungarian family. Also found in Germany.)

GEUSCHMIED - Not listed.

von GRUENLACH - Not listed.

GRUENBERG (also Grunberg) - Listed with members in Russia and Austria. Related to MATSNER and MINZ [surname denoting the resident of the German city of Mainz].

HOLZSCHUHER - Not listed.

ISOLT - Not listed.

ISLER - Listed, but origin not given. Can be spelled as Esler. JE [*The Jewish Encyclopedia*, 12 volumes, 1901 – 1906, from Funk & Wagnalls in New York City] has article on German philologist Meyer Isler (1807 – 1888). CAJ [Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People in Jerusalem] has family records.

KALB - Not listed (but it's in other books about Jewish surnames).

LEMMEL - Not listed (but the Lemmel Archives does have an excellent article about the Jewish branches of the Lemmel family).

von MAYENTHAL - Not listed.

MENDEL - Ashkenazic name from the first name Mandel (meaning “almond”), Mendel was a prominent Hungarian family which flourished in Buda (now Budapest) in late 15th and early 16th cent.

MORLIN - Not listed

NUREMBERGER - Not listed.

PFINZING - Not listed.

PILGRAM - Not listed.

POMER - Not listed but could be short for POMERANTZ (Origin not given)

REICHENBACH - LBI [Leo Baeck Institute in New York City] has a family tree beginning 1825. LBIS [Rudolf Simonis Collection at the Leo Baeck Institute in New York City] has some family notes.

ROSENTHAL / ROSENTHALER - Three different Jewish Encyclopedias [EJ, JE, UJ] have more than twenty biographies from 18th-19th cent. Poland, Germany, England, Austria, Hungary and U.S.A. One Rosenthal family in Russia descended from Solomon of Wirballen (a town on the Prussian frontier [now Virbalis, Lithuania]), came from Skud [actually Schoden, now Skuodas, Lithuania, near the Latvian border] and was surnamed SKUDSKI ; this family is related to BRAININ, JACOBOVICH and SOLOWEITSCHIK. There is also a branch in Lithuania. AJA [America Jewish Archives in Cincinnati, Ohio] has a Rosenthal family tree from Germany and Philadelphia, beginning 1790, related to LEVINE ; and a Rosenthaler family tree beginning 1803 in Bavaria. [The

Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People and its Paul Diamant Genealogical Collection, both in Jerusalem] has Rosenthal family records. [Paul Diamant was a Jewish genealogist who covered Germany as well as Poland, Hungary, Czechya, Slovakia.] See a family tree in *Zur Geschichte der Juden im Gebiet* [German, "The History of the Jews in the Area"] and *Toledot Mishpachat Rosenthal* [Hebrew, "Generations of the Rosenthal Family"]. Related to BERNSTEIN, JAFFE, ROZSAVOLGYI, SELIGMAN, GUNZBERG.

SCHUSSELFELDER - Not listed.

STROM - Related to WARBURG. (Both are German with deep roots and numerous members.)

WUERZBURGER (also Wuerzburger, Wurtzburg) - Ashkenazic name taken from the Bavarian city of Wurzburg, where Jews first settled in the 11th cent . . . LBI [Leo Baeck Institute in New York City] has Wuertzburger family trees beginning 1689 and 1730. Wurtzburg family is related to SCHIFF.

ZOLLNER - Not listed.

From Wilbur Hanson Kalb:

This afternoon I got to open one of the best guides I've ever seen on Jewish genealogy — Dan Rottenberg's *Finding Our Fathers* — and looked up surnames from the Rosenthal Ahnentafel in the book's dictionary of Jewish surnames. Rosenthal and Rosenthaler are in it but they are all over Europe, not just Bavaria. I didn't have enough time to decipher the acronyms to find out which of the sources has the Bavarian family tree that goes back to 1803 but I'm hoping to have it tomorrow morning. Until then, I can tell you that Grunhofer, Geuschmidt, Pfinzing and Zollner are not in the dictionary but Behaim and Geyer are in it. Geyer is an Ashkenazic surname meaning "vulture", which was probably how the Christians saw the Jews in the old days, and Behaim is related to the Portuguese Sephardic family of Zacuto.

That's interesting because Martin von Behaim, the father of the "Earth Apple", was sometimes called Martin of Bohemia because, apparently, his surname sounded like Bohemia and there had been speculation that the Behaim family originated in the Bohemian area of Plavno but there's still no proof of that. Besides, Plavno was captured by the army of the Prince-Archbishop of Magdeburg in 1384 and passed to Saxony in 1466 so it's been known by its German name, Plauen, since then.

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Ohhh . . . Philippsthal is 107 miles northwest of Nuremberg but it's right on the border between Hesse and Thuringia.

And it also happens to be a Jewish surname. That does not necessarily mean that the bearers were from Philippsthal. Philipp the Magnanimous, the Landgrave of Hesse, was one of the strongest supporters of Luther but he could not make up his mind about the Jews. In some years, he was with them but in other years he was against them. He divided his territories between his sons. His successors as the Landgrave of Hesse-Cassel, his son Wilhelm IV the Wise (reigned 1567 – 1592) and his own son Moritz I (reigned 1592 – 1627), were uniformly tolerant towards the Jews. Even after the death of Moritz, the regents of the Landgravine Amalie Elizabeth kept rejecting the petitions of the cities that wanted to expel the Jews but they did put a few restrictions on the Jews. Two lines came out of Hesse-Cassel with the name of Philippsthal — Hesse-Cassel-Philippsthal, created in 1663 by the sixth son of Wilhelm VI, and Hesse-Cassel-Philippsthal-Barchfeld, began in 1721 by that son's own younger son. As far as I know, both lines, like Wilhelm VI, were also tolerant towards their Jewish subjects. So the Jewish Philippsthals were probably bearing their surname in honor of their former Hessian benefactors.