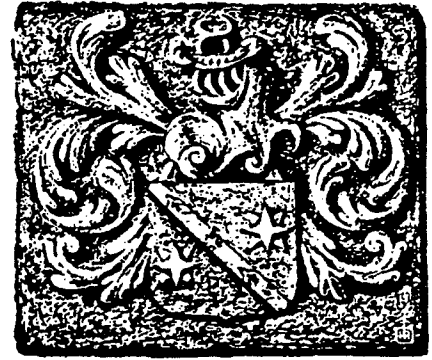


THE ABRAVANEL FAMILY NEWSLETTER

"Basta mi nombre que es Abravanel!"

Issue No. 9
November 1990



SEND HIM TO THE ABARBANEL!

Any resident of Tel Aviv thought to be slightly crazy is a target for the threat, "Send him to the Abarbanel!" The Abarbanel Mental Health Center in Bat-Yam, a suburb of Tel Aviv, has been in existence since 1944, when it was founded by the British Mandatory Authorities.

It has a 620-bed capacity, with 75 day patients. The Center deals with a wide range of psychopathological conditions, including psychoses, personality disorders, neuroses, psychosomatic illnesses and organic mental syndromes. The Center serves as a teaching hospital for both Tel Aviv University and Bar Ilan University.

ידידי
בית-חולים
אברבנאל
בת-ים

ABARBANEL
MENTAL HEALTH
CENTER
BAT-YAM

The Center is not named after Don Isaac Abravanel, but after his son. A brochure published by the Center explains:

"Yehuda Abarbanel...served as physician to the Spanish forces in Naples, and was considered to be a leading physician and an important Jewish Renaissance philosopher. The perpetuation of his name in a psychiatric hospital derives from

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his philosophical teachings on the subject of love, as expounded in his 'Dialoghi di Amore,' a work based on teachings of the Rambam (Maimonides). Abarbanel holds that love, which can elevate to the pinnacle of wisdom, is the dominant and motivating force and loftiest goal of the universe.... We believe that these teachings contain a vital message concerning the treatment of patients in general and psychiatric patients in particular."

The Center is in need of contributions to supplement the support it receives from the government. Contributions may be made to the Friends of the Abarbanel Hospital, whose address is: Association of Friends of Yehuda Abarbanel Mental Health Center, P.O.B. 1, Bat-Yam 59100, Israel.

FURTHER CONSTRUCTION

The Newsletter has already reported that the family name is represented on streets in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem (see Newsletter No. 3). HAIM and MONICA TIBON (Haifa, Israel) add that these two streets are simply the tip of the iceberg, with additional streets named for the family in Ashkelon, Beer-Sheba, Bnei-Brak, Hertzlia, Holon, Yehud, Kfar-Saba, Nathanya, Petah-Tikva, Kiryat Haim, Rishon-Lezion, Rehovot, and Raanana. To the best of our knowledge, only one member of the family lives on an Abravanel Street: DAVID ABRAVANEL, who resides with his family on Rehov Abarbanel in Hertzlia.

SOUTH OF THE BORDER

Many members of the family reside in Latin America, and are active in public life (see Newsletters Nos. 2 and 7, for example, for articles about Silvio Santos). Other articles of note have recently emerged:

Professor Jeff Lesser of Connecticut College reports that one of the first directors of the Jewish Colonization Association of the Colony of Philipppson in Rio Grand do Sul, Brazil, was an Abarbanel.

TSIPPORAH ABARBANEL (Jerusalem, Israel), a lawyer in private practice, reports that her late father, Moshe, always asserted that his uncle, Judah Abarbanel, was either Minister of Finance or in the Finance Ministry in Mexico. Similarly, BURT ABARBANELL (Fresno, California) reports that in trips through northern Mexico several decades ago, he spotted campaign posters pasted to walls reading, "Vote por Abarbanell."

A review of the headstones in the Jewish cemetery in Bridgetown, Barbados, in the work Monumental Inscriptions in the Burial Ground of the Jewish Synagogue, by E. M. Shilstone, indicates that many members of the family lived (and died) in the Barbados during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

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NOTES FROM THE FAMILY

SALLY ABRAVANEL DONALDSON (Tulsa, Oklahoma) was in attendance on October 26, 1990, as her husband, Robert Herschel Donaldson, was inaugurated as the fourteenth president of the University of Tulsa. President Donaldson, the former president of Fairleigh Dickinson University in New Jersey, is an expert in Russian studies.

JAN ABARBANEL (Kathmandu, Nepal), who works in Nepal with a mission/development organization, writes from that distant country:

"Last month I was in the Netherlands for some weeks while visiting my brother in Rotterdam. I have always been rather interested in the background of the family, but have never been able to do much about it.... Once in a while the name cropped up. A building in The Hague is located on a piece of land that centuries ago belonged to a person called Abarbanel. He also owned the land on which later the synagogue was built...."

JEFFREY BARBERNELL (Longwood, Florida) reports that his family came to the United States around the turn of the century from Russia or Poland. His grandfather's name was Moishe Laab Barbanel. He adds that he would like to meet the descendants of his grandfather's brothers. Please send any responses to this inquiry to the Newsletter.

FRANCK-OLIVIER KINDEL (St.-Cloud, France) sent an extensive list of his relations, all of whom are descended from his grandfather, Gaston Abravanel, a late brother of the conductor Maurice Abravanel (see Newsletter No. 4). Gaston, who was married three times, fathered children in each marriage; these children and grandchildren reside throughout France, Switzerland and Germany.

IN PRINT

HOWARD BARBANEL (Miami, Florida and New York, New York), the founder of the Miami Jewish Tribune, has become the chief operating officer of the new English language Forward, a sister paper of the Yiddish language daily, the Forvert. In this role, he will be responsible for the direction of the Forward's advertising, circulation and business administration. Seth Lipsky, the editor of the paper, states that "Barbanel is one of the encouraging surprises for this paper. He has devoted many years to publishing and he is an impressive, daring fellow."

In 1974, SANDRA ABRAVANEL published a book of poetry entitled Bagatelas de Juventud. Although published in Spain by Coleccion Plaza Mayor Poesia, the poems appear to be the work of a Cuban poet, often mourning the exile from Havana. If any reader is familiar with this poet, please contact the Newsletter.

The Enciclopedia Judaica Castellana, published in Mexico City in 1948, contains a brief description of the life of JACOB RALPH ABARBANELL, an American writer, lawyer and editor. He was born in New York City in 1852 and died in Whitestone, Long Island in 1922; in between, under the pseudonym "Ralph Royal," he wrote many stories and plays, which enjoyed a good degree of success in the New York of his day. He stories included "Monte Cristo and his Wife" (1885), "Ma" (1888) and "The Rector's Secret" (1892). One of his greatest successes was his play, "Haydee, Countess of Monte Cristo" (1902), presumably borrowing from his story of 1885.

YOU GOT ME YEARNIN' FOR THE LEARNIN'

*Went to a shiur
Thought it would be queer,
Saw Abarbanel now I'm
Learning for a year.*

* * *

A ba ba ba bar barnell

Anyone raised in the United States in the 1960s may recognize the rhythm, if not the words, of this little song. The rock 'n' roll hit, Barbara Ann, was first recorded by The Regents in April 1961, gaining great acceptance. It had even wider appeal when it was rerecorded by The Beach Boys in January 1966.

Now comes the latest version - Abarbanel, by the New York group, Shlock Rock in their album "Learning is Good" (remember Chuck Berry's "Johnny B. Goode"?). The album (compliments of PHILIP WALDOKS of New York, New York) is one of the few to contain the warning: "Please do not play this album on the Sabbath and Holidays!" Copies of the album can be obtained from the group at 83-15 Lefferts Blvd., Apt. 2B, Kew Gardens, NY 11415.

*Tried Kabbalah
Tried Agadah
Tried Abarbanel
And it all began to jell.*

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