

The Benjamin Family - Interesting Facts



When the Christian soldiers, known as "The Crusaders" returned home from their many attempts in the 12th century to 'free' the Holy Land, and specifically Jerusalem, from the infidels, they took to naming their male off-spring with Hebrew names.

These Adam, Thomas, Isaac, Abraham, as examples, replaced the popular Norman and Anglo-Saxon names such as William and Richard, and in due course they became surnames in their own right. However, although as surnames these were not (in the British Isles) Jewish, when in 1290 King Edward I expelled all Jews from Britain, their popularity waned.

Curiously the Puritans of the 17th century adopted Hebrew names, and Oliver Cromwell himself personally revoked the order of exile in 1655, allowing Jewish adherents to return to Britain. The 'Benjamin' surname, like those above, is Hebrew in origin, but English as a surname, and may be carried either by Christians or Jews.

The name translates from the Hebrew as 'the son of the right hand', and according to the late Professor Reaney, was recorded as a surname in the counties of Berkshire, Wiltshire and Cambridge, before the year 1250, although he quotes no examples. Early recordings do however include Caterina Benjamini of Suffolk in the 1273 Hundred Rolls and Robert Benjamin of Bedford, also in the Hundred Rolls in the same year, but this time in Bedford. The first recorded spelling of the family name is shown to be that of Roger Benjamin, which was dated 1166, in the pipe rolls of the county of Norfolk, during the reign of King Henry II.

One relatively recent invention that did much to standardize English spelling was the printing press. However, before its invention even the most literate people recorded their names according to sound rather than spelling. The spelling variations under which the name Benjamin has appeared include Benjamin, Benjammin, Beniamin, Benjamini, Benjamen and many more.



'Rothschild Buildings', Thrawl Street, Christchurch, London

In the 1891 census Solomon Benjamin (1856 – 1896) was living in a flat in the Rothschild Buildings in Thrawl Street. The name "Charlotte de Rothschild dwellings" or sometimes simply the Rothschild buildings is used to refer primarily to a block of flats taking up parts of Thrawl Street, Flower and Dean Street and George Street in Spitalfields. They were opened on April 2, 1887, and soon after most of the 198 flats were let. Most of the initial tenants were poor Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe. Founded in 1885 by Nathaniel Rothschild, this company was started to provide working class people, especially working-class Jewish people, with reasonably priced and decent living quarters. In the years leading up to the company's formation, this part of Spitalfields

had been dealing with a variety of pressures that made housing scarce and poor quality. Large scale slum clearance projects by the Metropolitan Board of Works (MBW) in the 1880s meant housing was being quickly demolished, while political turmoil in Russia and Eastern Europe meant that Jewish migration was increasing at unprecedented rates.

This particular site had been razed years earlier, but there were few property developers willing to take on a philanthropic project of that scale, leaving the site empty for years. During a commission on Jewish destitution, the United Synagogue identified this location as a prime site for Jewish housing, as it was close to existing Jewish communities.

The buildings' reputation suffered after the Jack the Ripper murders in the autumn of 1888. All of the victims were closely associated with this neighbourhood, and many lived in lodgings on the same or adjoining streets. As a result of the Ripper murders, some Jewish residents became the victims of antisemitic outrage and violence from the wider English population, who believed that the violent crimes must have had a foreign origin.

While researching the military members of the Benjamin family I came across a first in my over 20 years' experience of researching family histories in that I found an error on the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) site.

Nathan Henry William Benjamin (1898 – 1917) died during WW1 and when I found his entry his first name was entered as Narhan. I contacted the CWGC and was informed that I needed to complete their form and provide proof. I sent off for his birth certificate, immediately, although I would have to wait at least a week for it to arrive and then I could complete and despatch their form. The following day I did find Nathan's Medal Index Card which had the correct name and I may have been able to use that as my proof had I found it a day earlier.

Over 100 years after this man died, I still feel it is important that his name is correct as he died for this country. At the moment his certificate is as follows:

In Memory Of
Private
**NARHAN HERBERT WILLIAM
BENJAMIN**
Service Number: 26063
1st Bn., East Surrey Regiment who died on 10 October 1917 Age 19
Son of Samuel and Florence Elizabeth Sarah Benjamin, of 18, Whitman Rd., Mile End, London.
Remembered with Honour
TYNE COT MEMORIAL
Panel 79 to 80.



|||||
COMMONWEALTH
WAR GRAVES
|||||

COMMEMORATED IN PERPETUITY BY THE COMMONWEALTH
WAR GRAVES COMMISSION

In the textual tree at the beginning of the main document, you will see Shochet/Souget repeated as a name many times. This is not actually a name but an occupation as it simply means butcher. Originally when people had the same name, they were differentiated in several different ways e.g., by some characteristic e.g., by being Short, by having Red hair, by where they came from Meadows or by their occupation Smith etc.

Solomon Benjamin (1818 – 1888) and his wife Miriam Benjamin (nee Nathan, 1825 – 1882) seem to have had an amazing total of 19 children, this must be a record.

One of Solomon's children, Rosa Kate Benjamin, (1857 – 1915) married Hyam Jonas (1831 – 1889) in 1888. Was there any relationship between Hyam Jonas and Rosa's grandmother Judith Benjamin (nee Jonas, 1776 – 1841)? Similarly, another of Solomon's children, David Benjamin (1860 – 1908) married Hilda Jonas but we don't know when.

In 1844 Jonas Benjamin (1821 – 1897) married Hannah Solomon (1824 – 1914). Is it just a coincidence that Hannah's mother-in-law's maiden name was also Solomon or was there a relationship between the 2 women? Also, in 1861 David Benjamin (1839 – 1882) married Betsy Solomon (1841 – 1899) was this another member of the Solomon family?

When Louis Benjamin's (1861 – 1934) first wife Clara Ann Benjamin (nee Robinson, 1864 – 1929) died in 1929 he married Daisy Stone (1881 – 1960) in 1933. Sadly however, Louis died in 1934, less than a year after the wedding.

In the 1851 census the enumerator seems to have made a mistake as 2 of Henry Benjamin's (1806 – 1883) sons are both entered as being called Isaac, although one of them was actually Israel Benjamin.

In 1916 Julia Benjamin (1891 – 1982), the daughter of Solomon Benjamin & Goulda Benjamin, nee Davis, married Nathan Benjamin (1891 – 1967), the son of Isaac Benjamin & Rachel Benjamin, nee Phillips. As Solomon & Isaac were brothers this means that Julia and Nathan were first cousins.

Also, in 1917 Estella, known as Ginger, Benjamin (1899 – 1982), the daughter of Isaac Benjamin & Rachel Benjamin, nee Phillips, married Solomon Benjamin (1898 – 1965), the son of Abraham Benjamin & Phoebe Benjamin, nee Symons. As Isaac Abraham were brothers this means that Julia and Nathan were also, first cousins.

Abraham Benjamin (1865 – N/K) married Phoebe Symons (1868 – 1961) in 1890. The first question is why, in the 1891 census, is Abraham with his family and saying he is single? I can't find Phoebe, in 1891, at all. The next question is what happened to Abraham, after the 1911 census? In the 1921 census Phoebe is with their family saying that she is a widow, but I can't find a death entry for him.

I knew that Lewis Joseph Benjamin (1871 – 1948) married sometime between the 1881 and 1891 censuses but I could not find the record until I found a tree on the Ancestry web site that had the record but hadn't got his wife's maiden name recorded. When I looked at the record, I discovered that Benjamin had been entered as Benjman but as it said that they married in 1887 I could find that her maiden name was actually Annie Friedman (1872 – 1940). I wonder how this error occurred!

Also, Lewis Joseph and his wife suddenly gained 10 years as their years of birth were entered as 1861 and 1862 instead of 1871 and 1872. Again, I wonder how this error occurred!

After Israel Benjamin (1843 – 1906) and Rachel Phillips (1844 – N/K) married in 1862 they only were together for one census, the 1871 census. I have been unable to find Israel for the 1881, 1891 and 1901 censuses. Where was he?

Was there any relationship between the wife of Henry Benjamin (1806 – 1883), Martha Benjamin (nee Simmons, 1811 – 1894) and the wife of Samuel Benjamin (1811 – 1867), Mary Benjamin (nee Simmons, 1816 – 1853)? Was this yet another case of brothers marrying sisters?

In 1893 Solomon Benjamin (1873 – N/K) married Fanny Phillips (1876 – N/K) which is interesting as Solomon's mother's maiden name was also Phillips. What was the relationship between the two women, if any?

The following people married members of the Benjamin family and they have the same surname as others people who married in. I do not know whether they were related but, at least, some of them must have been.

One particular example of this is where 2 male members of this family apparently married the same person, at different time.

4th Quarter 1862 District London City Vol. 1c Page 290

Israel Benjamin married Rachel Phillips

1st Quarter 1883 District Whitechapel Vol. 1c Page 617

Isaac Benjamin married Rachel Phillips

Aron ABRAHAMS married Rose BENJAMIN (1895 – 1986), in 1916
Fanny ABRAHAMS married Mordechai BENJAMIN (1849 – 1926), in 1881
Mordecai Jack ABRAHAMS married Bele BENJAMIN (1717 – N/K)

Henry Hart BLANCKENSEE married Irma Paula BENJAMIN (1878 – 1952)
Julius BLANCKENSEE married Isabella Elizabeth BENJAMIN (1861 – 1945), in 1881

Cedric Keith COHEN married Edith Hope BENJAMIN (1895 – 1929), in 1923
Elizabeth COHEN married Arthur Solomon BENJAMIN (1854 – 1924), in 1881
Miriam Ruta COHEN married Edward Lionel BENJAMIN (N/K – N/K), in 1913
Reina Malka Isaac COHEN married Salomon Zadoks BENJAMIN (1707 – 1774), in 1731
Susanna COHEN married Benjamin Zadoks BENJAMIN (1716 – 1780)

Dinah DAVIS married Joseph BENJAMIN (1826 – 1865), in N/K
Isaac DAVIS married Julia BENJAMIN (1850 – N/K), in 1883
Goulda DAVIS married Solomon BENJAMIN (1857 – 1896), in 1881
Abraham DAVIS married Leah BENJAMIN (1867 – 1931), in 1890

Henry EMANUEL married Hannah BENJAMIN (1831 – N/K), in 1854
Solomon EMANUEL married Phoebe BENJAMIN (1826 – N/K), in 1854

Ada Rebecca HART married Nathan BENJAMIN (1852 – 1921), in 1879
Alice Josephine HART married Alfred Leopold BENJAMIN (1855 – 1916), in 1887
Beatrice Amy HART married Louis Stanley BENJAMIN (1863 – 1934), in 1889

Lachman HAYMAN married Amy Rachel BENJAMIN (1856 – 1940), in 1876
Max HAYMAN married Nathan BENJAMIN (1861 – 1939), in 1883

Elias HARRIS married Sarah BENJAMIN (1896 – 1980), in 1916
David HARRIS married Rachel BENJAMIN (1911 – 2000), in 1932
Abigail HARRIS married Isaac BENJAMIN (1864 – 1959), in 1886

Hilda JONAS married David BENJAMIN (1860 – 1908), in 1887
Hyam JONAS married Rosa Kate BENJAMIN (187 – 1915), in 1888
Judith JONAS married Solomon BENJAMIN (1764 – 1843), in 1796

Julia LEVY married Abraham BENJAMIN (1810 – 1855)
Rachel LEVY married Frank David BENJAMIN (1866 – 1937), in 1898
Rosetta LEVY married Alfred David BENJAMIN (1848 – 1900), in 1886
Samuel LEVY married Victoria Dinah BENJAMIN (1897 – 1958), in 1918

Catherine MOSES married Moses BENJAMIN (1805 – 1885), in 1828
Elizabeth MOSES married Israel BENJAMIN (1886 – 1944), in 1910
Miriam MOSES married Lewis BENJAMIN (1779 – 1862), in 1803

Rachel PHILLIPS married Israel BENJAMIN (1843 – 1881), in 1862
Rachel PHILLIPS married Isaac BENJAMIN (1858 – 1931), in 1883
Fanny PHILLIPS married John Solomon BENJAMIN (1872 – 1942), in 1893

Mary Ann RODGERS married Edmund James BENJAMIN (1869 – 1950), in 1905
Sarah RODGERS married Isaac BENJAMIN (1839 – 1922), in 1864

Maria SIMMONS married Jonas BENJAMIN (1801 – 1842), in N/K
Martha SIMMONS married Henry BENJAMIN (1805 – 1883), in 1829
Phoebe SIMMONS married Abraham BENJAMIN (1866 – N/K), in 1891
Mary SIMMONS married Samuel BENJAMIN (1809 – 1867), in 1834

Elizabeth SOLOMON married Mordechai Mark BENJAMIN (1805 – 1885), in 1820
Esther SOLOMON married David BENJAMIN (1815 – 1893), in 1840
Hannah SOLOMON married Jonas BENJAMIN (1826 – 1897), in 1844
Elizabeth SOLOMON married David BENJAMIN (1839 – 1882), in 1861

Morris UNGER married Esther BENJAMIN (1884 – 1956), in 1908
Sarah UNGER married Albert Emanuel BENJAMIN (1907 – 1967), in 1935

In 1947 when Golda Benjamin (1920 – 1981) married Woolfe Schwartz and Aubrey A Benjamin (1925 – N/K) married Rosie Deen they both have exactly the same registration details as shown below. Therefore, I wonder, as Golda and Aubrey were cousins, whether they had a joint wedding as it would have been a very happy occasion without relatives having to choose which wedding to go to and which to miss, which would be a recipe for many arguments.

2nd Quarter 1947 District Hackney Vol. 5c Page 1870
Golda Benjamin married Woolfe Schwartz

2nd Quarter 1947 District Hackney Vol. 5c Page 1870
Aubrey A Benjamin married Rosie Deen

This is the bit where the tree gets really complicated!

In 1916 in Whitechapel, Julia Benjamin (1891 – 1982), the daughter of Solomon Benjamin (1856 – 1896), married Nathan Benjamin (1891 – 1967), the son of Isaac Benjamin (1857 – 1931). Solomon and Isaac were brothers; therefore, Julia and Nathan were first cousins.

In 1917 in Mile End Old Town, Estella Benjamin (1899 – 1982), the daughter of Isaac Benjamin (1857 – 1931), married Solomon Benjamin (1898 – 1965), the son of Abraham Benjamin (1866 – 1890). Isaac and Abraham were brothers; therefore, Estella and Solomon were first cousins.