

Biographical Details of Some Liewer Family Members

Hadrien Rambach, August 2006

Daniel Joseph Jaffé's daughter Ida Jaffé (generation 6) is likely to have actually been born in Altona (which was Danish until 1868), as it was easier for Jews to be born there. Her husband Edouard Silz was working in Nantes, in the linen industry. Almost nothing is known about her, but she probably offered a piece of jewellery to a family member, as it is known as "aunt Ida's brooch". It is now kept by Mrs Diana Khan, 28 Elms Road, London SW4 9EX, tel. 0207 62 232 82.

One of Ida Jaffé's daughters was Edith Silz (1874-1964), who stayed unmarried, but the rumour says that she would have had an affair with the French painter Lucien Lévy-Dhurmer (1865-1953). Arthur Jaffé (son of Sir Otto Jaffé) used to believe¹ that she had married a Mr Lily, but we do not believe this to be exact. He noted that her address was 3 rue Marguerite² (Paris 17). Her mother, an early widow, probably used to live with her.

Another daughter of Ida Jaffé was Marguerite Silz (Nantes 19/04/1866³ – Paris 23/05/1958, generation 5, # 23). She used to live on 26 rue Galilée⁴ (Paris 16), and died there in a fire she had caused by picking up with a candle a button that had fallen under her bed...

She married in Paris on 17/12/1889 Henri Liewer (Ingwiller 31/08/1861 – Paris 12/11/1940, generation 5, # 22), who had seven siblings. A bright schoolboy, he went to a Jesuit school in Lunéville. Claude Dalsace still owns his boarding-school-student silverware, with his engraved number. In 1870, at the start of the Franco-German war, his parents sent him to Paris so that he could stay a French citizen, and he stayed there with an uncle working as an "agent de change". He left his uncle a few years later, privately advising a few wealthy individuals such as Prince Napoleon (who would give him a work of art every year in addition to his fees). Passionate with history, he was an avid reader, and built a large library which included dozens of books on Napoleon; but he was mostly living in his dreams, unable for example to remember the names of his grand-daughters! A moderate

¹) From the notes kept by Sarah Collins, née Jaffé, and shown to Hadrien Rambach at Arundel on 6 June 2006.

²) The Rue Marguerite, in the 17th arrondissement, goes from the Avenue de Wagram to the Boulevard de Courcelles, about 250m away from the Place des Ternes.

³) The legend says that during the German-French war of 1870, aged of c. 13, Marguerite Silz was living in Nancy: worried for her father who was in Paris for work and was stuck by the siege, she wrote a letter to Bismarck, who answered personally that he would make sure she would get a letter transmitted by balloon. Anyhow, the dates (and the place) prevent this story to be possible.

⁴) The Rue Galilée, in the 16th arrondissement, is just off the Place des Etats-Unis, and goes from the Avenue Kléber to the Avenue d'Iena.

Jew, he used to wish to eat kosher, but his wife would give him “veal” (i.e. pork) which he would eat normally⁵!

“Liewer” is a derivative of “Lieber”, both of which meaning better (in Alsatian / in German). The family used to live in Ingwiller⁶ (where the family house still survives), and was specialised in the work of glass, and there is a "Henri Liewer" who signed a Virgin in frosted glass⁷. And in Ingwiller, a street ("d'Liewergass", the "Rue Liewer") was named after Raphaël Liewer, bottle-dealer.

Marguerite Silz and Henri Liewer three daughters, one of whom was Gilberte Liewer, who – as a child – studied piano with Marguerite Long, later a famed artist. She later studied medicine, but WW2 prevented her from finishing. She married a friend of her sister’s husband, Jean André Bloch (born 16/03/1884 Paris 9) who co-wrote the Répertoire de la faïence française (Paris 1933-1935, 6 volumes, reprinted in 500 copies in 1985). In order to host his collections⁸, he kept for his family to live in the 3rd and 4th floor of a magnificent house he had built in 1928 on 73 quai d’Orsay. He is now very famous also for the furniture he designed with Ruhlman for his office avenue Matignon.

Another daughter of Marguerite Silz was Marcelle Fanny Liewer (1890-1929, generation 4, # 11), mother of my own grand-mother Solange Vite Vite Weill (born 1921, generation 3, # 5). Her husband, who did not leave Paris during WW2, died of a “congestion pulmonaire” (antibiotics had not been invented).

Solange’s brother, Gaston Vite Weill was a student of the prestigious Ecole Centrale, but in 1940 after 2 years (of three) the director gave him his degree so that he could flee from Paris. On 17 August 1944, he tried to stop a German column going to Normandy via Albi-Carmaux, and died in Marsac (Tarn) with 17 comrades; he received posthumously the “Croix de Guerre avec Palmes”.

Bibliography:

- Claude Bernard Dalsace, Histoires d’un autre temps, Paris 2006 (I have a copy)
- « Libération de Gaillac, d’émouvantes cérémonies », Le Tarn libre, no. 36, 3-9 September 2004 (I have a copy)

⁵) Anecdote told by Solange Rambach to his grand-son Hadrien Rambach on 8 August 2006.

⁶) Some Liewer left Ingwiller for Cincinnati (USA), we are certainly related.

⁷) Lot 44, 22/03/2006, L'Isle-Adam, Liladam enchères, 35€

⁸) Auction 1: 13/06/1961, Paris, Mes Ader-Rheims, dessins et tableaux anciens, orfèvrerie ancienne, objets d’art et de très bel ameublement, porcelaines montées, sièges et meubles, tapisseries des Gobelins

Auction 2: 2/12/1961, Paris, Mes Ader-Rheims, importantes faïences anciennes de Rouen, porcelaines tendres de Saint-Cloud et Rouen, porcelaines montées

Auction 3: 16/03/1983, Paris, Mes Ader-Picard-Tajan, porcelaines et faïences, principalement du XVIIIe siècle