

# An Analysis of the Solomon Family Tree and Documents (c 1905)

## Preliminary Comments:

Like much of what we have come to find over the years about the life and ancestry of Mordecai Solomon (1800 – 1883), this tree and document are full of speculation and probable inaccuracies, not the least of which is that it is usual under Ashkenazi tradition, that a male child is not named after the father. As it applies here, usually unless a father has passed away before his son's birth, the son will not be given his father's name.

## Structure

To help avoid confusion, we will limit our analysis to just those individuals who are mentioned in the tree and/or the document and discuss them in descending order of ancestry (i.e. from the oldest to the newest generation).

## Generation 1

**(From the tree)** *Myer Salomon. Native of Hamburg. Died in London.*

Not mentioned in the document.

**Comment:** Grandfather of Mordecai, Rebecca & Myer (??). On Rebecca's Marriage Certificate his name is given as **Abraham**. According to Ashkenazi naming traditions, this is more likely his name.

Note the spelling of his surname – Salomon. This is common variation of Solomon, as is Solomons.

## Generation 2

**(From the tree)** *Myer Solomon.*

### **(From the document)**

1. Myer Solomon\_(Generation 4) states that he always heard his father (Mordecai – Generation 3) say that a great deal of money was lying in Chancery but as it was always understood that there was a great difficulty in the way of expense in recovering none of the family bothered much.
2. The Myer Solomon\_(Generation 2)\_who left the money made his money by cane planting, sugar distilleries etc in Kingston Jamaica. He went to London after making considerable money but retained interests in Jamaica - – said to have owned ½ of Kingston. Died in London.
3. After his decease one of the Trustees bolted with about 200,000 pounds, a big lawsuit followed in London and considerable litigation resulted and the whole of the estate was thrown into Chancery. In 1974 Dick Gibson (great grandson of Myer (Gen 4) wrote to Chancery and received the attached reply:
4. Rev A B Davis\_at one time Minister in Jamaica has often told Myer (Generation 4) the Great Grandfather must have been an exceedingly wealthy man from what he has learned in Jamaica.
5. When in London in year 1857 Myer (Generation 4) was advised by his relations to take the matter up but owing to money being plentiful with him and expected heavy costs likely to be incurred, he did not bother – at that time he was about 20.

### **Comment:**

- i) No evidence yet found of these estates in Jamaica or of the lawsuit. The Rev A B Davis was Minister in Kingston, Jamaica from 1854 – 1862.

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- ii) In the absence of any evidence to prove the existence of this Myer Solomon and the supposed Jamaican estates, it may be part of the wider myth of Mordecai's ancestry recounted earlier.
6. The supposed wealthy Myer Solomon (Generation 2 was founder of the Old Hamburger Synagogue, which was built at his own expense. This synagogue was situated near the Monument of King William Street London and was sold by trustees as The Govt required the land. A new synagogue was built with the money in the Mile End Road. The Old Hamburger Synagogue was in existence in 1857 as Myer Solomon (Generation 3) visited when in England.

### **Comment**

This is totally incorrect. The Old Hamburger (or Hambro) Synagogue was founded in London in 1725 by a wealthy gem dealer, Marcus (or Mordecai) Moses (also known as Marcus Hamburger).

It seems likely that Mordecai (if he was the originator of the story) was mixing up Marcus Hamburger with the person he claimed to be his father, Myer Solomon (1782 – 1839), who played an integral role in the Western Synagogue.

### **Generation 3 (Children of Myer – 2<sup>nd</sup> Gen)**

#### **From the tree**

- i. *Myer Solomon (eldest). Taken by pirates on way to Kingston Jamaica- just before "Waterloo. About 1810. Unmarried. No descendants.*

#### **From the document:**

*Myer Solomon about 22 years of age was on his way to Jamaica to claim the estates when he was taken by pirates. His brother (i.e. Mordecai) then about 16 years too lackadaisical to bother after his decease and a little later came to Australia.*

### **Comments**

This is the first mention there has been of Mordecai having an older brother. If he existed

1. His name would not in all probability have been the same as his father i.e. Myer
2. The Battle of Waterloo was 1815.
3. If he was 22 years old when he was on his way to Jamaica, that would have given him a birth year of between 1793 (if 1815 was the year of the capture) That would have made him 7 years older than Mordecai, close to the 'six' mentioned in the document.

#### **From the Tree:**

- ii. *Mordecai Solomon (2<sup>nd</sup> eldest born London about 1800)*

#### **From the document: (As mentioned above)**

*His brother (i.e. Mordecai) then about 16 years too lackadaisical to bother after his decease and a little later came to Australia.*

### **Comment**

As above the years don't match up. However, he certainly did come to Australia (between 3 and 7 years later)

#### **From the Tree:**

- iii. *Mrs Symonds (Rebecca) married one Moses.*

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## **Comment**

This was Mordecai's sister, Rebecca (born about 1802). She married Isaac Symons in 1836. No marriage to a 'Moses'

## **From the document: (As mentioned above)**

It is said that in addition to building this Synagogue he (*i.e. Mordecai and Rebecca's father, Myer*) placed monies in trust to provide wood and coal in perpetuity for all poor Jews connected with the Synagogue. Mrs Symons (Rebecca Solomon – Generation 3) who was in poor circumstances told Myer Solomon (Generation 4) when in London that she herself participated in the wood and coal legacy.

## **Comment**

This is interesting. If Rebecca was in 'poor circumstances' then it would seem that the whole family (including their father, Myer) was in the same boat. Perhaps this explodes the whole myth of them coming from a wealthy background and goes a long way towards explaining why, as a youth, Mordecai turned to a life of petty crime. Or perhaps the stories have some substance to them, and Myer lost all the wealth made in Jamaica.

## **Addenda – Two further extracts from the document**

1. *(Set particulars of what Alph M Solomon has done)*

## **Comment**

This is probably Alfred Mordecai Solomon (Generation 5) son of Henry Solomon and Adeline Joseph

2. *Very valuable documents are said to be held by a Mrs Moses (daughter of Mrs Symons) living with the S M Steenbhom but is a nasty beggar and is not inclined to give any particulars as she contended that she was so badly treated by the family. She got the papers from her mother Mrs Symons.*

## **Comment**

This is a tad confusing. On this side of the tree we have:

- Rebecca Solomon (sister of Mordecai) married Isaac Symons
- Their second daughter, Sarah (1835 – 1920) married Jacob Moses (1831 – 1894).
- Their daughters, Esther (1873 – 1952) and Rebecca (1862 – 1898) both married Solomon Myer Steenbhom (1861 – 1927)
- As both Jacob Moses and his daughter Rebecca had both passed away some years before this document was written, my guess is that at this stage Jacob's wife, Sarah was living with Solomon and his wife (her daughter) Esther.

Therefore by 1905, the "papers" were in the possession of Esther Steenbhom.