

F.

MEMORANDUM

On the Parents, Siblings, and Collateral Descendants
of
LOUIS SLOSS
(REVISED)

The genealogy of the direct descendants of my grandfather Louis Sloss has been carefully assembled, notably in the chart prepared by Jim and Liz Gerstley for the Sloss-Gerstle reunion of 1975. My knowledge of his other relatives has been sketchy, but I have recently had the opportunity to learn much more. I write this memorandum to put that information in order.

What I previously knew came mainly from stories told by my father, supplemented by conversations and correspondence with others and by family books. It comes down to this:

Louis Sloss (originally Löb Schloss) was born on July 13, 1823 at Untereisenheim, a small village near Würzburg in Bavaria. He emigrated to the United States in 1845. He had been preceded there by an older brother, who had settled at Louisville, Kentucky, and had written to Louis urging him to come and join him. Louis was adventurous and imaginative, but his brother was of a more stolid temperament. In fact, when Louis arrived in Louisville, his brother, after greeting him affectionately, added sadly, "Now that you're here, I'm sorry you've come. It's too late; there are no opportunities left in America."

Louis started his own little store in Louisville; he prospered sufficiently that, when news of the discovery of gold in California came, he was able to sell out to a competitor and to buy himself into a wagon train headed for California. His brother remained in Kentucky, but also did well and established a family there. One of his descendants, Amy Sloss Brown, lived in San Francisco and was friendly with "our" Slosses in my parents' time. Another descendant, a lawyer and civic leader in Louisville named Robert Lee Sloss, two years younger than I but probably of the next generation, got into Who's Who in America. He has three children, at least one of whom has turned up in San Francisco.

In addition to the brother, Louis Sloss had sisters. My father used to say that his father had adopted a practice of bringing a young man in each sister's family to America and getting him started in business, with the hope that he in turn would bring others in his own branch of the family here, and so get as many of the relatives as possible comfortably settled in the United States. Two of these related families, with whom we were on close terms, were the Sussmans and the Blumleins.

From the Lilienthal book (O'Neill, Ernest Reuben Lilienthal and his Family), I had learned (correctly) that Louis's father was named Lazarus and (incorrectly) that his

mother's name was Laura; I now know that it was actually Hanna, and Laura must have been a misreading of Hanna as it looks when written in German script. The same book indicates that Louis had three sisters, presumably Mrs. Sussmann, Mrs. Blümlein, and another, but gives no clue to the identity of the third. From the Gerstle book (Gerstle Mack, Lewis and Hannah Gerstle), I had learned that Louis's brother in Kentucky was named Abraham.

That was about the extent of my knowledge until a few months ago, when Joe Blumlein, whom I see regularly at Sloss & Brittain board meetings, started talking to me about his discoveries. He takes a great interest in family history, and has visited Untereisenheim three times. Recently he brought with him to a board meeting a remarkable bound volume -- the handwritten register, in German, of births in the Jewish community of Untereisenheim from 1811 to the late 1840's. Joe had borrowed this from a first cousin of his, Clara Franklin (born Frankenthaler), now a lady in her eighties living in San Francisco, but born in Untereisenheim and later a resident of Würzburg; she is a concentration camp survivor who came to the United States after World War II, bringing the book with her. The usual entry in the register shows the name of the child, the identity of the midwife, the name of the father, the number of the house in the village, the maiden name and place of origin of the mother, and the date. The register, however, is not complete or entirely accurate;

the earlier pages in particular are crude in penmanship and spelling. A xerox of the page recording the birth of L**ö**b Schloss is attached hereto.

Joe has also been in touch with Walter R. Steinberg, originally of Germany and now living in San Francisco; he is a descendant of the mysterious third sister, who turns out to have married a Steinberg. Walter is descended as well from the Sussmann branch, as his grandparents were first cousins; a son of the Steinberg sister married a daughter of the Sussmann sister.

On November 14, 1985, Joe, Walter and I had lunch together, followed by an afternoon conference, during which we went through the birth register and also studied a chart of the Steinberg (sometimes Steinberger) family prepared by an unidentified relative of Walter's; xerox also attached. Aided by these records and drawing on family recollections of each of us, one memory stimulated by another, the three of us were able to establish quite a few facts, which I afterwards summarized in a prior draft of this memorandum. Joe and Walter have reviewed that draft and have supplied me with corrections and additions, which I have incorporated in this revision. The information so assembled is as follows:

1. Louis's Parents. The parents of Löb Schloss were Lazarus Schloss and Hanna Abraham from Bischofheim; they lived in house number 28.

2. Louis's Brothers. Abraham was not Louis's only brother; there were at least two more. The recorded births are: Abraham, 1812; Joseph, September 9, 1814; Jacob, January 1822; and Löb, July 1823. I know nothing about whether Joseph and Jacob left any descendants, or even lived to maturity.

3. Louis's Sisters. The three sisters, in probable order of age, were Babette (not in the birth register), who married Hirsch Steinberg; Jette (not in the birth register), who married Jacob Blümlein; and Marianne, born May 8, 1816 and died May 22, 1886, who married Sussmann Sussmann (sic), who was born December 19, 1814 and died March 15, 1889.

4. Other Schlosses. There was another Schloss family, Samuel and Sara and their children, also living in Untereisenheim but not known to be related. Their house was number 16; several births appear in the register.

5. The Steinbergs' Children. Hirsch Steinberg and his first wife Babette Schloss had five children: Jaidel, Lazarus, Hannchen, Michael, and Baruch. The last of them, Baruch, later called Bernhard, was born April 6, 1847, and his mother died in childbirth on that day. Hirsch Steinberg, two years later, married a different Babette Schloss, of the House 16 family, who also had five children and who died in 1867; Hirsch Steinberg died the same year.

6. The Steinberg Branch in San Francisco. The third of the Steinberg children, Hannchen, married Raphael Strauss; they had four children, of whom the second, Louis Strauss, was the grandnephew of that branch brought to San Francisco by Louis Sloss. Louis Strauss was given a job at the Alaska Commercial Company, and was still there as late as the 1930's; for many years he ran the Company's post at Unalaska. He was a bachelor, and none of his siblings followed him to San Francisco. The only Steinberg descendant now living in San Francisco is Walter Steinberg, who participated in our conference. He is a grandson of Baruch (Bernhard) Steinberg, who, as mentioned above, married his first cousin; she was Babette Sussmann, youngest of the five children of Marianne Schloss Sussmann; she was born January 3, 1855, and lived till 1937. Their son was Hugo Steinberger, born in 1877, and the father of Walter Steinberg. Walter recalls that when he came here in the 1930's, he went to see his father's first cousin Louis Strauss in the Alaska Commercial Building.

7. The Sussmanns' Children. Marianne and Sussmann Sussmann had five children, of whom the eldest was Samuel (see below) and the youngest was Babette Steinberg, identified above. The others were Lazarus, born October 2, 1849 and died August 31, 1930; Hanna, who married one Hirsch; and Jette, who married Philip Mars.

8. The Sussman Branch in San Francisco. Samuel Sussmann, mentioned above as the eldest of the Sussmann branch, was the nephew of that family brought to San Francisco by Louis Sloss. Samuel dropped the second "n" from his surname. He married Emilie Wormser, sister of Samuel Wormser and cousin of Gustav Wormser; the three men founded Sussman & Wormser, later S & W Fine Foods. Samuel and Emilie Sussman had four children: Amy (Mrs. Jesse) Steinhart, mother of Louise Loeb and John; Louise (Mrs. Alfred) Esberg, mother of Emmy Lou and Alfred Jr.; Alice (Mrs. Walter) Arnstein, mother of Eugene, Richard, Cassie Lilienthal, and Peter; and Leo, who died young but whose widow, Ray, lived until very recently; their daughter Peggy Joseph and their son Richard live in the San Francisco Bay Area. In addition to the numerous descendants of Samuel Sussmann, Walter Steinberg also counts as a San Francisco representative of the Sussmann branch by virtue of his grandmother.

9. The Blümleins' Children. Jette and Jacob Blümlein became the occupants of her parents' House 28 in Untereisenheim, and had four sons: Meier, July 1839; Lazarus, January 26, 1841; Emanuel, 1842; and Joseph, 1846. Thus, each of the three sisters of Louis Sloss named a son Lazarus after their father. Joseph Blümlein - Joe's grandfather - married one Klara Schloss, but not of the House 28 Schlosses; perhaps from House 16, though not shown in the register, or perhaps from still a third family of the same name, either in or outside of the village.

10. The Blumlein Branch in San Francisco. Joseph and Klara Blümlein had four sons, three of whom came to San Francisco: Jacob, unmarried, who was brought here by Louis Sloss and who ultimately headed S & W; Emil, father of Claire Matzger Lilienthal and Joe; and Max, father of John. The fourth of the sons, Hugo, died young. Thus Jacob ("Jake Blumlein"), although an intimate friend of my father's and born only one year later, was not his first cousin, as I had thought; they were of different generations, my father being the youngest of one large family and Jake the second oldest of another. As in the case of the Steinberg branch, the young Blümlein brought here by Louis Sloss was not a nephew but a grandnephew. The fact, known to Joe, that his grandmother's maiden name was Schloss is simply a confusing coincidence, as Klara was an apparently unrelated Schloss. In addition to the four Blümlein sons, there were five daughters, of whom the eldest - and the eldest of the whole family - was Ida Frankenthaler, the mother of Clara Franklin, mentioned above as the present custodian of the birth register, and also the mother of Arthur Franken, who married Marian Solomons. In fact, Arthur Franken was only one of five nephews of Jake Blumlein's - sons of his sisters - whom Jake brought to San Francisco and took into the S & W business, thus carrying the Louis Sloss tradition forward into another generation. In those days, fortunately, people were not so quick to cry "nepotism".

11. Still Another Branch? An Abandoned Theory. Before my meeting with Walter Steinberg and Joe Blumlein, I had expected that if I should ever learn the identity of the third Louis Sloss sister, she would turn out to have been the mother of either the eminent merchant and philanthropist Harris Weinstock of Weinstock, Lubin & Co. in Sacramento or his wife Barbara Weinstock. My reason was that I remembered Barbara Weinstock from my boyhood, when she was an elderly widow living in San Francisco whom I was told to call "Cousin Bob", a form of address ordinarily used only for my parents' first cousins and their spouses, and there are no Weinstocks among my father's Greenebaum first cousins or those of my mother on either the Hecht or the Frank side. After I had learned about the Steinberg branch, it still seemed possible that Harris or Barbara might have been the child of still a fourth Schloss sister, and thus a first cousin of my father's. In the first draft of this memorandum, under the heading "Unfinished Business", I mentioned that I had done some research and hoped to do more to try to confirm or disprove that theory.

Harris Weinstock was quickly eliminated. A biographical sketch of him in the National Cyclopaedia of Biography, Vol. 19, p. 440, identifies his mother, not as a Schloss from Untereisenheim, but as the widowed mother of David Lubin, née Rachel Holz, from Russian Poland, who had emigrated to England and had remarried there. The same sketch identifies Barbara,

whom Harris Weinstock married in San Francisco in 1878, as the daughter of Philip and Caroline Felsenthal of Nevada and California.

As to Barbara herself, the key fact would be her mother Caroline Felsenthal's maiden name, but I have not succeeded in ascertaining that, even with help from The Bancroft Library and the Magnes Museum. I have, however, learned a good many other details about Barbara and her mother Caroline, mainly from directories and census records available at the California Historical Society Library. In the 1870 census, Barbara appears as aged 14 and born in California. The Felsenthals, then, must have come West as early as 1855 or 1856. The same source shows Caroline as born in 1825 or 1826, an appropriate time for my theory, but in the wrong place -- in Hesse-Darmstadt, not Bavaria, and thus not another Schloss sister. Besides, these facts establish that Louis Sloss and Caroline Felsenthal were both in California from at least the middle 1850's on, and were both living in San Francisco at least through the 1870's. If Louis Sloss had actually had a sister in California that early, and if his children, while growing up in San Francisco, had had an Aunt Caroline right in the city, those facts would surely have come down in family tradition.

Finally, Walter Steinberg has made further inquiries and can find no Weinstocks or Felsenthals anywhere on the family tree, and Joe Blumlein has pointed out that S & W

did business with Weinstock, Lubin, and that any close family connection between the heads of the two firms would have been spoken of.

I therefore abandon my Weinstock theory, and conclude that either my memory about "Cousin Bob" is at fault or else she was somehow related more distantly or perhaps only a "courtesy" relative, like the family friends that children used to be told to call aunt or uncle.

Frank H. Sloss
March 23, 1986