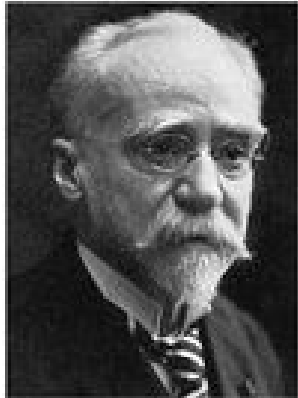


1. Read the following source

THE LIFE AND WORK OF PROFESSOR JACOB-SOLIS COHEN

Type of source: **Obituary**, Extracted from the *Philadelphia American*, 1908

Part of the *Jacob Solis-Cohen Papers Collection* (1925-1960). Collection MSS014, Box #1, Folder 6. Historical Society of Pennsylvania.



Dr. J. Solis Cohen

Professor Jacob Da Silva Solis-Cohen was born February 28 1838 to his parents Mayer David Cohen and Judas Semeda Solis who was a descendant of the Spanish family Da Silva Solis. **A family that maintained the Jewish religion in spite of the efforts of the Spanish Government to force Jews to abandon it.**

Very early in his life Jacob Cohen came to Philadelphia together with his parents who settled here. He received his earliest training in public school and in Philadelphia High School. In 1854 he graduated from the Central High School and received the degree of Bachelor in Arts.

More than any other learning he showed an aptitude for medicine. Soon after he had finished high school he entered Jefferson College in 1857 where he studied medicine for a short time. In 1858 he spent a short time in Memphis Tenn and in the same year returned to Philadelphia and entered the medical dept. of the University of Penna. and continue[d] his studies until 1860 when he graduated and received his degree as Doctor of Medicine.

Soon as he finished at the University he was appointed resident physician at the Phila Hospital.

In a few months later the Civil War broke out. Dr. Cohen now displayed the true Jewish spirit of patriotism and devotion to his country and he volunteered his services with the Penna Volunteers as a private, but in a short time was made a lieutenant. He was appointed as assistant surgeon in the 26th Regiment of the Penna Volunteers under Hookers Brigade, which protected Washington and Flondesburg from the attack of the enemy.

In September 1861 he resigned from the army and was appointed acting assistant surgeon in the US Navy. He accompanied Comodore Dupont in his expedition to Fort Royal with the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron which consisted of the battleships "Florida" "Staten" and "Vermont." In 1864 he was appointed as visiting physician to two military hospitals of Philadelphia. After having given four years in service for his country Dr. Cohen finally resigned from his government work and settled for a short time in New York.

Professor Jacob Solis-Cohen was one of the most valuable scientist in the medical world. He specialized in ear, nose and throat diseases. When he again came to Philadelphia in 1866 there came a young girl patient who had a rare throat disease, not a physician knew what it was as it was difficult to reach the affected part. Dr. Solis-Cohen utilized a round mirror which he had recently discovered and finding the affected part he treated the patient and effected a cure. **His new discovery the laryngoscope** made him famous the world over and this instrument soon was used in all colleges and medical institutions.

Among his noted work that he had written are well known the books "Inhalation as the Treatment of Disease," "Disease of the Throat and Nasal Passages". These two were the best textbooks of Nose and Throat Disease of that time.

[...]

For a long time Dr. Cohen was editor of "Archives of Laryngology" as well as the editor of "Laryngology" and the "American Journal of Medical Science." Dr. Cohen was a fellow of the College of Physicians, one of the professors of Physiology at the Wagner Institute of Science, and one of the four lecturers who opened the Stevens Institute of Technology at Hoboken N.J.

Professor Cohen's activity as teacher and lecturer started in 1867 in Jefferson College, he was one of the founders of the new Jefferson Hospital. He was attending physician at the Polyclinic Hospital, Jewish Hospital, Chestnut Hill Hospital for Consumptives, and in the Norristown Hospital for Mental Diseases.

Professor Solis-Cohen was the one that improved the operations for the removal of the larynx, especially in cases of cancer. When the German Emperor Fredich suffered from a throat affection Dr. Jacob Solis-Cohen was sent for, who made a successful operation on the emperor.

One remarkable case occurred when **Professor Cohen removed the larynx and the patient was able to talk.** On this remarkable discovery Dr. Solomon Solis-Cohen a brother of Jacob Solis-Cohen wrote an article in which he demonstrated how an instrument can be inserted and the patient is able to speak after the larynx is removed.

[...] Professor Solis-Cohen was a **member of the Union League and other patriotic and military organizations.** Many of the most eminent physicians of Philadelphia were his pupils.

Professor Solis-Cohen is survived by two sons Dr. Meyer Solis-Cohen and J. Solis-Cohen Jr. [...] and five daughters, Sophie, Miriam, Elinor, Bertha, and Edith Solis-Cohen, and four sisters and three brothers most of who reside in Philadelphia, also in Portland and Oregon.

II. In groups, discuss the reading and answer the following questions:

1. Where and when was Dr. Solis-Cohen born?
2. Why did his family move to Philadelphia? Where did they come from?
3. What was his profession? Did he do anything else throughout his life?
4. What was Solis-Cohen famous for?
5. Why do you think the author chose to write about Solis-Cohen's life? What can we, as historians, learn from it?