

The Wurtzel Family Story from Mervits 1850–1950

From the desk of Mlynov descendant, Howard I. Schwartz, PhD

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Contents

The Wurtzels	3
1850 and 1858 Census Records (Russian Revision Lists)	5
A Brief Look at the Three Wurtzel Lines.....	7
Ronya Leah Wurtzel and Yankel Volf Katz	7
Soorkeh (Sura) Wurtzel and Isaac Fleischer Line	9
Zailek Wurtzel and Sooreh (Gruber) Line.....	10
The Katz Migration to North America	12
To the Canadian Prairie, 1904–1930	12
The Arrival of David Katz’s Siblings: Maurice, Louis and Bessie	17
The Katz migration to California.....	21
David Katz and Frieda (Cramer’s) Children.....	24
Bessie (Katz) and Abraham Snider’s Children	25
Settling Into Boston: Beila (Katz) and husband Moshe Ber Cohen	25
Chaieh (Katz’s) Husband, David Cooperstein, Comes to NY.....	30
To Philadelphia: Soorkeh (Sura) (Wurtzel) and Isaac Fleisher.....	32
1922 Arrival of Sura and Other Children.....	34
The Fate of Those Who Remained	38
The Fate of Zailek Wurtzel’s and Sooreh (Gruber’s) Line	39
Appendix: Merle (Katz) Gould’s “Very Brief History of the Wurtzel Dynasty.”	44

The Wurtzels

The Wurtzels were a large family from the small town of Mervits (also known as Muravica and Muravitz) which was about a mile north of Mlynov (today Mlyniv in Western Ukraine). Mervits no longer appears as a location on contemporary maps and has been incorporated into the area of contemporary Mlyniv.



Figure 1 Mlyniv on contemporary maps

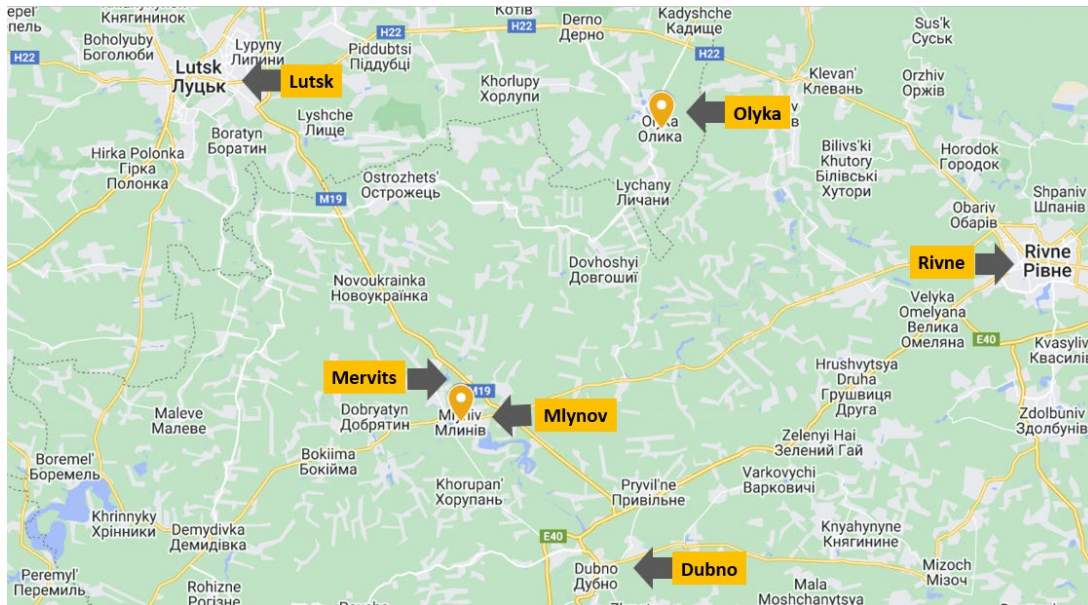


Figure 2 Historical location of Mervits with respect to Mlynov and other relevant towns

The patriarch and matriarch of the Wurtzel family were the couple remembered as “Doovid and Meerel Wurtzel.” Much of what we know about this couple and the descendants of their daughter,

Ronya Leah, comes principally from a short narrative called “A Very Brief History of the Wurtzel Dynasty” written by a granddaughter, Merle (Katz) Gould based on what she learned from her cousin, another granddaughter, Mary “Meril” Gordon.¹ This narrative is referred to in what follows as the “Very Brief History” and is reproduced as an appendix. Merle and Mary are just two of several women in this family tree named “Meril” after the matriarch of the family. As Merle wrote:

Meerel Wurtzel was the matriarch of the clan and decreed that all her grandsons or perhaps it was all of her grandchildren, should name their first-born daughter after her. That explains why there are so many "Meerels" in the family; there is Meerel (Mary Gordon), Meerel (Minnie Katz Schell), Meerel (Merle Katz Gould), Meerel (Myra Snider Bass) of blessed memory, and Meerel Flaisher.

We shall learn a bit about each of these Meerels and others in the Wurtzel family as we proceed.

According to the “Very Brief History,” the Wurtzel family owned and operated a linseed mill in Mervits and were considered well-to-do, relatively speaking. Doovid and Meerel had three children: **Ronya Leah Wurtzel** (1857–?), **Zailek (or Zelig) Wurtzel** (?-?) and **Soorkeh (or “Sura”) Wurtzel** (~1882–1947). The spread of 25 years between the birthdates of Ronya Leah and Soorkeh is not unheard of in this period when women started having children in their late teens and continued into their 40s. The fact that there were only three children born in this twenty-five-year period suggests that Doovid and Meerel either were unable to have children during this time and/or that there were other children whose names and fates are not remembered.

There are three major themes in the Wurtzel family story. One theme involves **the migration to the Canadian Prairies** and involves descendants (from Ronya Leah’s line). They and their families ran general stores in small rural farming hamlets and villages in Canada along the Canadian Pacific Railway (the “CPR”) between larger cities. As one of their grandsons (Jack Kates) explains in a book he wrote about his life in a Jewish family on the prairie, most of the Eastern European Jewish immigrants settled in the larger cities. “But for many of them who were unable to earn a livelihood in the city, there was one possible solution: Move to the ‘country’ and open up a general store. With a few hundred dollars and with the help of wholesalers who extended them credit, they were in business...and nobody was more crucial to the development of the community than was the storekeeper.”²

If the Canadian prairie life constitutes one theme of the Wurtzel story, another is the **migration to the large US cities of Philadelphia** (Soorkeh [Wurtzel] and her husband Isaac Fleischer and family) **and Boston** (Bayla [Wurtzel] Cohen, one of Ronya Leah’s daughters, with her husband and family). The third theme involves **the fate of those who stayed behind**. Nearly all of those who stayed in Russia perished in the Shoah, impacting Zailek’s line most heavily, but also touching Ronya Leah’s. Only one of Zailek’s seven children (Pessia [Wurtzel] Steinberg) survived the Nazi occupation with her husband and child.

¹ Merle Gould was born Merle Katz. Her father was Louis Katz (1887–1954) who was son of Ronya Leah (Wurtzel) Katz. Mary (Meril) Gordon was born Mary Cohen and was a daughter of Beila (Katz).

²Jack Kates, *Don’t You Know It’s 40 Below?* Cypress, California: Seal Press. 2nd Ed. 2002.

The following more detailed account draws on the “Very Brief History” of Merle (Katz) Gould supplemented by a family tree (developed by Merle’s daughter Anita Shaw), US and Russian records where available, relevant oral traditions and records shared by descendants in these three Wurtzel lines as well as the Mlynov-Muravica [=Mervits] Memorial Book (hereafter “Memorial Book”) which is now translated.³



Figure 3 A Wurtzel Family Tree developed by Merle Gould’s daughter, Anita, (left) standing with her sister Diane (right)

1850 and 1858 Census Records (Russian Revision Lists)

We don’t know much about the Wurtzel family from the period before migration began. It appears that the Wurtzels may be one of the families listed in the 1850 and 1858 census for Mervits which has now been located and translated.⁴ In Russia, these censuses were called “Revision Lists” and captured details about families for the purposes of taxes and military conscription. The details for the 1858 “Vortsel” family do not exactly match memories recorded in Wurtzel family but they are so close that it seems highly probable this is the same Wurtzel family.

³ The Mlynov-Muravica Memorial Book is published online and in print. See <https://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/Mlyniv/Mlyniv.html>. Information about the Katz line was provided by Anita Shaw and Diane Baines. Information about the Fleischer/Fleisher family comes from descendant and family historian, Scott Crespy, and information about Soorkeh’s descendants comes from written narratives and oral traditions of the Steinberg family, particularly Gerry Steinberg and Hanina Epstein. I also want to thank Cyndi Cramer for sharing information about the Cramer line with me and Doug Cohen for sharing information about Beila’s husband’s family, the Cohens.

⁴ <https://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/Mlyniv/Mervits-Muravica-Revision-1858.html#Vorstel87>

6 – From the Desk of Howard I. Schwartz, PhD

In 1858, this family is called “Vortsel” and includes a one-year-old child named a “Rotya-Leya” (very similar to Ronya Leah). Her mother’s name is Mirlya (similar to Meerel). She is age 23 with an implied birth year of 1835. The husband’s name, however, does not match the family oral tradition. He is listed here as Sakhar-Moishe (Yissachar? Moshe), age 24, born in 1834. He is head of the family in 1858. Although his name is not the “Duvid” of the family memory, it seems significant that his father’s name was “Duvid-Ovediye.” Furthermore, in keeping with the traditions of the time to use patronyms, Sakhar is also known as “Sakhar-Moishe Duvid Ovediyev” in this record. In other words, Sakhar was “Duvid’s son” and “Duvid” was used as part of his name. This could explain why the descendants remember him as “Duvid.”

Appears in 1850?	Fam # / Fam # in Supplementary revision	Surname	Name	Father's Name	Estate	Implied Year of Birth (based on age in 1850)	Implied Year of Birth (based on age in 1858)	Previous Census Year	Age	Cause	When Exactly	Year	Age	Relation	Male Relative	Female Relative	Gender	1851 Supplement Date
yes	87	VORSTEL	Sakhar-Moishe	Duvid-Ovediye	townsman	1834	1834	1850	16			1858	24	head of family			male	–
no	87	VORSTEL	Mirlya	not indicated	townsman	–	1835	1850				1858	23	wife	Sakhar-Moisha Duvid-Ovediyev		female	–
no	87	VORSTEL	Rotya-Leya	Sakhar-Moishe	townsman	–	1857	1850				1858	1	daughter	Sakhar-Moisha Duvid-Ovediyev	Mirlya	female	–

When we turn from the 1858 to the earlier 1850 census eight years earlier, we see that this same family surname is transliterated “Vertsel” and is clearly the same family. In that year, “Duvid-Ovediye Vertsel” is listed as head of the family. He was the son of a man named Gersh-Leib. In a story told below, “Leib” was added to the name of Ronya Leah and Yankel Volf’s son Louis (Shmuel “Leib”) Katz, lending further grounds for assuming this may be the same family line.

“Duvid-Ovediye” died in 1848 at the age of 40, implying his year of birth was 1808. His wife’s name was Shendlya and she was born in 1814. Her birth surname is not given. Their son, called here Sukhar-Moishe (a variation of Sakhar-Moisha), was born in 1834 when his parents Duvid was 26 and Shendlya was 20. The record suggests they were already in Mervits by this time. When Duvid died in 1848, their son Sukhar-Moishe was 14 years old.

Appears in 1858?	Fam # in 1850 Fam # in 1851 Supplementary revision	Surname	Name	Father's Name	Estate	Implied Year of Birth (based on age in 1850)	Implied Year of Birth (based on age in 1858)	Previous Census Year	Age	Cause	When Exactly	Year	Age	Relation	Male Relative	Female Relative
no	88	VERTSEL	Duvid-Ovediye	Gersh-Leib	townsman	1808	–	1834	26	died	1848	1850	not indicated	head of family		
yes	88	VERTSEL	Sukhar-Moishe	Duvid-Ovediye	townsman	–	1834	1834	newborn			1850	16	son of	Duvid-Ovediye Gersh-Leibov	Shendlya
no	88	VERTSEL	Shendlya	not indicated	townsman	–	1814	1834	newborn			1850	36	wife of	Duvid-Ovediye Gersh-Leibov	
no	88	VETSEL	Reyzya	Duvid-Ovediye	townsman	–	1838	1834				1850	12	daughter of	Duvid-Ovediye Gersh-Leibov	Shendlya

A Brief Look at the Three Wurtzel Lines

As noted above, Doovid and Meerel Wurtzel had three children. **Ronya Leah, Soorkeh (Sura), and Zailek.** What follows is a brief summary of each of the three children's lines followed by a more detailed account.

Ronya Leah Wurtzel and Yankel Volf Katz

Ronya Leah married a man named **Yankel Volf Katz** (HaCohen) sometime before 1881. Descendants pronounce the surname "Katz" with a long "a" as if it rhymes with "Dates" as grandson Jack Kates explained in a book he wrote about growing up on the Canadian Prairie.⁵ It is not known why the family pronounced Katz this way—whether it reflects the original Hebrew/Yiddish pronunciation (e.g. קצ)⁶ or was an effort at anglicization.

It is uncertain where Yankel Volf Katz was born since a family named Katz does not appear in the 1850 or 1858 censuses for either Mlynov or Mervits and very little about his family or background is recorded in family memories. However, there were a number of Katz (קצ) individuals in Mlynov who were martyred during the Holocaust and could be related to Yankel Volf.⁷ Only one shared memory of Yankel Volf Katz seems to have been remembered by grandchildren Merle (Katz) Gould and Jack Kates. Both were told or recall that he was scholar. Merle gives a bit more detail:

Ronya Leah, who married Yankel Volf Katz, also owned a linseed mill, and lived in Maervitz, Russia, which was close to the Polish border. Her husband, [Yankel Volf] HaCohen, was a descendant of the priestly tribe of Aaron and a dedicated biblical scholar. He spent more time in studying than in trying to make a living for his large family. It was eventually left to his sons to support the family.

Merle and Jack ascribe a different number of children to their grandparents, Ronya Leah and Yankel Volf. Merle writes that "Of their nine children, five emigrated to the United States and Canada, and four remained in Russia." In his book, Jack Kates says they produced twelve children.⁸ The Wurtzel family tree (done by Merle's daughter Anita) and the "Very Brief History" list nine Katz children in presumed birth order: Chaieh (married name Cooperstein), Bayla (married anglicized name Bella Cohen), David, Maurice ("Moishe"), Louis ("Schmeel Leib"), Bessie ("Pessie"—married name Shnider), Dvorah [married name unknown], Shlomieh, and Meyer. A photo of this Katz family (below) also includes another woman who is remembered as "Haika," who could conceivably be one of the other 12 children whose names are no longer remembered.

⁵ Jack Kates, *Don't You Know*, p. 3

⁶ A family by this Hebrew spelling appears in the list of Mlynov martyrs though it is not known if this family is related. See next note. This Hebrew spelling appears on the tombstone of Abram Katz, though Frieda's tombstone spells the surname "קצ"

⁷ The Yiddish poet Aleph ("Moshe") Katz was born in Mlynov. His father Chaim Yerukhem Katz came to Mlynov from Chelm and married one of the Hirsch daughters before the family migrated to New York. It is unknown if there was any relationship between Yankel Volf Katz and Chaim Yeruchim Katz. From Yad Vashem records, we also know that a Shmuel (Zanvil) Katz from Dubno married Brakha Gelberg from Mlynov. Several of their children Abraham, Arie, Faiga, were born in Dubno but were living in Mlynov before WWII and perished. The records were submitted by a daughter of theirs, Batya Katz, who married Yitzhak Mohel. She and husband were living in Mlynov before fleeing the Germans in 1941 and surviving. See the Katz names in list of martyrs in the Memorial book p. 406 and a photo of this family, p. 473. For a discussion, see footnote 1 on page 475.

⁸ Jack Kates, *Don't You Know*, p. 3.



Figure 4 A Wurtzel Family photo back in Russia, four children already in Canada



- 1 Ronya Leah (Wurtzel)
2. Yankel Volf Katz
3. Haika [relationship not known, daughter?]
4. Chaia [Katz] Cooperstein, eldest daughter
5. Dvoorah [Katz] married name unknown
6. Meyer Katz
7. a wife [name unknown]
8. Shlomieh Katz

Since Ronya Leah was born in 1857 according to the Russian census, it is likely she married Yankel Volf by about 1877, which is consistent with the birth dates of four of their children in the 1880s. Four of their children migrated to Saskatchewan, Canada: David Katz (1883–1926), Maurice (Morris) Katz (~1885–1918), Louis (“Shmeil Lieb”) Katz (1887–1954), and Bessie (Pessie Katz) Shnider (~1891–?). One of their daughters, “Beile or Bayla” (Bella Cohen) (~1883–1955) left Mervits for the town of Olyka with her husband before the family migrated to Boston.

At least four of the Katz children stayed behind in Russia. The eldest, Chaieh, married a man named David Cooperstein. According to the Wurtzel family, Chaieh and David had five children: Shmeelik ("Sam), Lifsha, Twin girls who died at 5 years of age and Avrum. Shmeelik and Avrum died in WWII.

For unknown reasons, David Cooperstein came to the US while the rest of his family remained behind. Perhaps his wife Chaieh was reluctant to leave because she was raising the child of her sister **Dvoorah** (married name unknown) who died in childbirth according to the "Very Brief History." The two younger brothers, **Shlomieh** and **Meyer**, also stayed in Russia. According to the "Very Brief History," their older brother **Louis Katz** saved up money to bring them to Canada. But their mother Ronya Leah "begged them not to leave, so they did not. Sadly, they were killed, along with their families in World War II."

A family photo of Wurtzel's from back in Russia must have been taken when four children were already in Canada. The photo shows Ronya Leah and Yankel Volf in the center surrounded by children and grandchildren. Perhaps the woman who is remembered as Haika in the photo is one of their other children who is unnamed in the family narrative or tree.

Soorkeh (Sura) Wurtzel and Isaac Fleischer Line

Soorkeh (hereafter Sura) Wurtzel was the youngest child of Doovid and Meerel Wurtzel. She married a man named **Isaac Fleischer** (also called Eisig Flaisher) by 1896 when their eldest daughter Chane (married name Anna Schwartz) was born. In America, the family dropped the "c" and appears most often as Fleisher. Isaac and Sura had 5 children in addition to Anna: Mirellen Mira (1901–1945) named for her grandmother Mereel, Ester/Malka ("Mary") Flaisher (1904–1986), Serel (Sarah) Flaisher (1908–1983), Alter ("Morris") Fleisher (1908–1963), and Motel ("Martin") Fleisher (1911–1990). Records inconsistently list the children's birthplace as Dubno or Rowno.

Sura's husband, Isaac Fleischer, and their eldest daughter Anna migrated together to Philadelphia in 1912 and hoped to save enough to soon bring the rest of the family to join them. WWI intervened preventing the rest of the family from joining them until 1922. In the meantime, Anna married a man named Max Schwartz in 1915 and settled in Philadelphia. Isaac's wife, Sura and four of their other children finally arrived in Philadelphia in 1922. Only Sura's and Isaac's second eldest daughter "Mirellen" or "Mira" (named for Meerel) stayed behind and died in Warsaw in 1945.



*Figure 5 The Fleisher Family circa 1922
Standing (left to right) Anna (Hannah), Sarah (Soorkeh
Wurtzel, the mom), Mary (Ester Malka). Seated: Morris,
Martin, Isaac (the dad)*

Zailek Wurtzel and Sooreh (Gruber) Line

Doovid and Meerel's second child (and first son), **Zailek Wurtzel** (also spelled "Zaileg" or "Zalig") and sometimes called "Zaileg Ulinik" in the Memorial book, married Sooreh (or Sura) Gruber, from the large Gruber family from Mlynov.⁹ Zailek and Sura's family stayed in Russia and did not migrate.

In the Mlynov-Mervits memorial book there are several memories of Zailek by former Mervits residents Mendel Teitelman and his wife Sonia (Gruber). Sonia who escaped the Mlynov liquidation with her husband Mendel was a niece of Zailek's wife, Sura.¹⁰ In one of their essays, they mention the industry that was found in the shtetl at that time: especially, "the so-called oil presses, driven by horses. The largest oil press was Zeylig Wurtzel's, of blessed memory." They also recall that when Mervits was under Polish rule (1921–1939) Zailek built a mill with partners when antisemitic restrictions made it increasingly difficult for Jewish merchants.¹¹

Zailek and Sooreh had seven children, six of whom were killed by the Nazis with their families, totaling at least twenty individuals based on the fragmentary information that is available and summarized in detail later. Only their youngest daughter Pessia Wurtzel (1905–1994) and her husband Getzel Steinberg (1902–2003) from Mlynov miraculously survived the Nazi occupation with

⁹ Sura was one of eleven children of Mordechai and Perel Gruber according to the family tree recorded by descendants in the Gruber/ Teitelman family in Israel.

¹⁰ Sonia (Gruber) was a daughter of Sura (Gruber's) brother Yosef Gruber.

¹¹ "People of a Shtetl!" See the Mlynov-Mervits Memorial Book, pp. 92-93.

their young son Zelig (Gerald or “Gerry” Steinberg) and with Getzel’s sister, Bunia Steinberg. Pessia’s husband, Getzel, managed to get his wife and son Zelig out of the ghetto by bribing guards. They lived in crawl spaces under piles of hay, in lofts of granaries, in pits under pigsties, and in fields among other impossible places. The Steinberg’s incredible survival story has been documented in a book length account which is now translated to English and summarized online.¹²

Pessia, Getzel and Zelig appear in the photo of survivors who gathered in the fall of 1944 at the ravine where the liquidation took place to commemorate their family and friends who were lost. A video presentation about this photo appears on the Mlynov website.¹³ A photo of Getzel, Pessia and Zelig appears in the Memorial book from their stay in the displaced persons camp called Pocking.

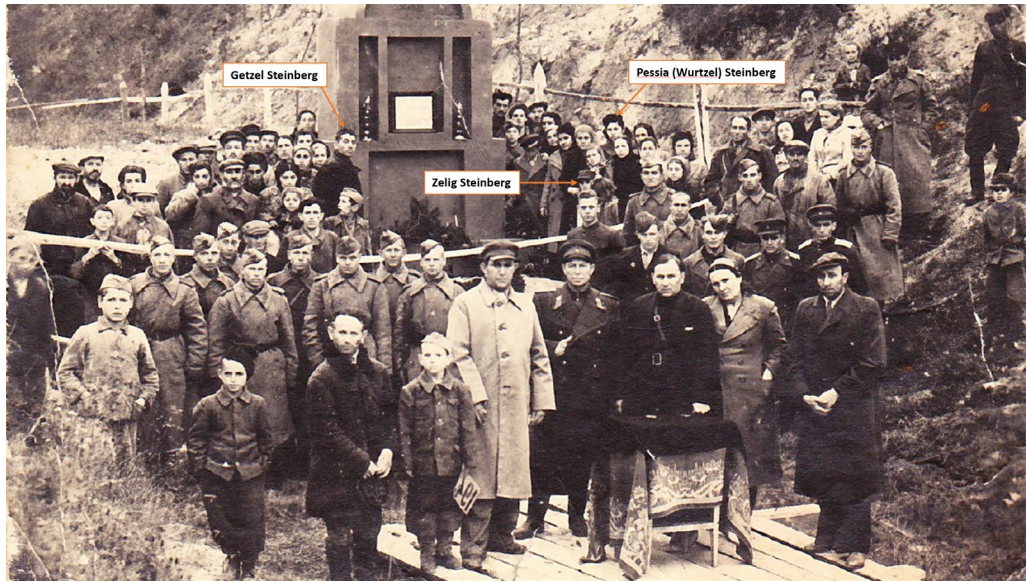


Figure 6 Survivors in Fall 1944 commemorating their lost family and friends in ravine where liquidation took place



Figure 7 Pessia (Wurtzel) with husband Getzel, son Zelig (top) with rescued young girl Aviva Feldman (front)

¹² <https://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/Mlyniv/families.html#Steinberg> and for the book length narrative see https://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/Mlyniv/documents/A_Struggle_to_Survive.pdf

¹³https://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/Mlyniv/Mlynov_Memorial_Commemoration.html

Pessia had Gruber relatives in Springfield, Massachusetts (the Alman family) who sponsored the family’s entrance into the United States. The Alman family was originally from Mlynov where they had the surname of Gelman (also spelled Helman). The mother, Riko Alman, was an aunt of Pessia and a sister of Pessia’s mother, Sooreh (Gruber) (who married Zailek Wurtzel). Her husband, Gedaliah Alman, had settled in Massachusetts before WWI and was joined by his wife and children after WWI. They sponsored the Steinberg family to come to America after their stay in the displaced persons camp of Pocking.

26	44	163	NC	ND	Steinberg, George	Head	W	M	48	man	Poland	W	no	WK
27					—	Wife	W	F	45	man	Poland	W	no	H
28					—	Son	W	M	12	man	Poland	W	no	OT

Figure 8 1950 Census for George (Getzel), Pessia and Gerald (Zelig) in Springfield, Mass.

The Katz Migration to North America

To the Canadian Prairie, 1904–1930

As noted earlier, four of Ronya Leah and Yankel Volf’s children migrated to the Canadian Prairie. They settled in small villages of Sheho and Guernsey along a train route between larger cities of Winnipeg and Saskatoon, a route that had only recently begun to develop in the Canadian province of Saskatchewan. Whether they migrated with the intention of settling there or only learned about the developing opportunities along the Canadian Pacific Railway after they arrived is not known. But here, in these small villages where there was only one other Jewish family if they were lucky, they set down roots and made their life. Were they aware of the irony that these tiny villages were as small as if not smaller than the shtetl they left?

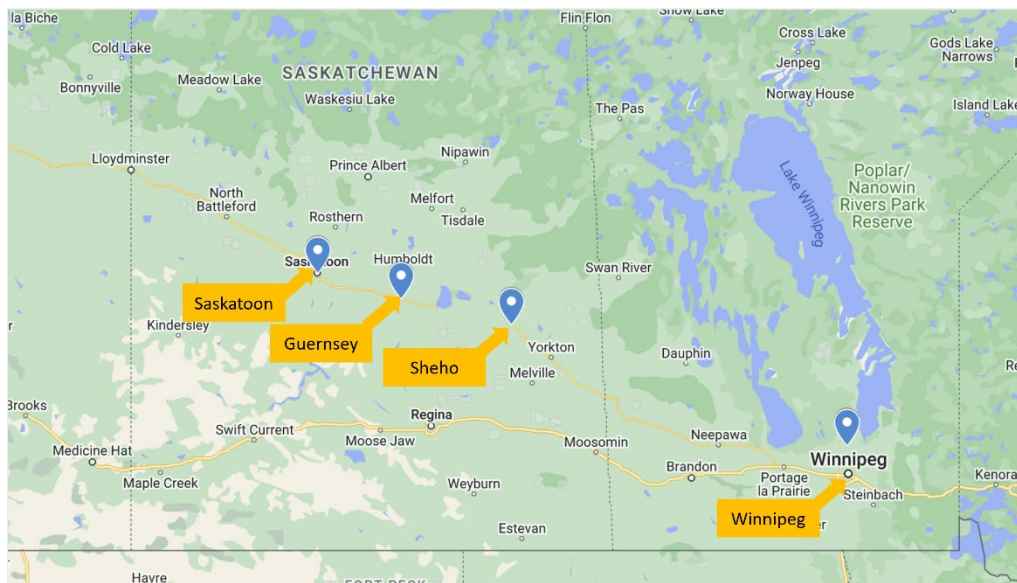


Figure 9 The route from Winnipeg to Saskatoon in Saskatchewan where the Katzes first settled.

David Katz the eldest son (and third child) of Ronya Leah and Yankel Volf, was the first to migrate to Canada in about 1907. He was born in ~1883 in Russia, probably in Mervits, and died on April 3, 1926 in Guernsey, not far from Saskatoon, in the Province of Saskatchewan, Canada. Three of David's siblings, **Louis** [Shmuel Lieb], **Maurice** [Morris/Moshe], and **Bessie** [Pessie] (married name Shnider,) followed David to this area of the Canada prairie and the rural life in Canada shaped their lives and the lives of their children.

According to the "Very Brief History," David "came to Canada with the Cramer family." The Cramer family refers to the family of David Katz's wife, Frieda Cramer (also "Freda"/ "Freida") (1883–1960). A bit more information appears in a letter that David and Frieda's daughter, Rachel Katz (married name Rachel Neumann), wrote to her cousin Jim Cramer (son of Solomon Cramer) in 1999.¹⁴ The letter is principally about the Cramer family history and a photo of the Cramer grandparents she was sending to her cousin. In the letter, Rachel recalls that it "was in 1904 when my mother [Frieda (Cramer) Katz] came to Canada from the Shtetl (village) of Muravetz, province of Volhynia, which was at that time in Russian hands..."

Based on research into Canadian records discussed below, it appears that David probably followed Frieda and at least one of her several brothers, who appear in Canada around the same time. It seems likely that David Katz and Frieda Cramer were already betrothed or at least in love before Frieda migrated and that David followed her and they married in Canada.¹⁵

It is not known if the Cramer family was also from Mervits, though it appears plausible. We know Frieda was living there before she left for Canada from her daughter's letter. At least one record located from 1921 indicates that Frieda's brother Usher (Asher / Oscar) was from "Volhynia," the name of the district where Mervits was located and that his wife was from Lutsk, which was close to Mervits.¹⁶ It seems possible that Frieda and her siblings could be descendants of one of the families known from the 1858 Mervits census listed as "Kreymer" or "Kremer" though it is not possible to identify an unequivocal link via the names in the census.¹⁷

¹⁴ A copy was shared with me by Cindi Cramer.

¹⁵ Manifests and naturalization papers have unfortunately not been located as of this writing for the Cramer siblings. The earliest record located is a 1911 census which shows Frieda's brother, Moses Cramer, living with Frieda and David (discussed in the narrative below). That record says that Frieda and Moses Cramer arrived in 1906. A 1921 census for Moses Cramer and Oscar (Usher/Asher) Cramer in the village of Sheho suggests that they came in 1905. Their brother, Shlomo (Solomon) Cramer, appears to have arrived in 1911 according to his 1931 census. It is not known when Frieda's other siblings (Shea, Isaac or sister Vera) arrived, but in the letter written by Frieda and David's daughter, Rachel (Katz) Neuman, mentioned earlier, she indicates her mother's brothers, Moshe (Morris), Shea, Isaac and Usher (Asher/Oscar) were all in Canada before 1921 and contributed to bring over their nephew (Percy Stollar) who arrived in 1921. According to Rachel's letter, the Cramer brothers raised enough money to bring over their other siblings, but WWI intervened before they could leave. By the end of the War, Frieda's other siblings Rala (Cramer) Stollar and Toba (Cramer) had succumbed to "malnutrition and typhoid."

¹⁶A 1921 census for Winnipeg for Oscar "Clamer" (or Cramer) appears to be of Usher Cramer's family. In the record, someone wrote Volhynia and scratched it out and wrote the more familiar "Russian."

¹⁷ There are two Kremer and Kreymer families in the Mervits 1858 census, and they were likely related as discussed there. Frieda's father, whose name is remembered as "David Joshua Hacoen," could be the son identified as Duvid Vigdor who was born in 1851. Frieda and her siblings were born in the 1880s, so Duvid Vigdor would have been in his 30s. Duvid Vigdor was the son of Yankel-Mendel and his grandfather was named Vigdor. His mother's name was Touba, and one of Frieda's siblings is named Touba, another possible connection. See <https://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/Mlyniv/Mervits-Muravica-Revision-1858.html#Kreymer111>.

It is not known whether other Cramers preceded Frieda and David to Canada and therefore it is not clear why the couple headed to Canada when so many other immigrants from Mlynov and Mervits appear to have headed to large US cities especially Baltimore during the same time frame. From the records that have been located, it appears that David and Frieda probably arrived in Canada in 1906 and 1907 respectively and by 1910 at the latest when their eldest son Abraham (“Abie”) was born.

A 1911 census from the district of MacKenzie, Saskatchewan,¹⁸ almost certainly belongs to David Katz and Frieda (“Forwody”) with son “Abby” (Abie/Abraham) age 1. Frieda’s brother Moses Cramer, age 27, is also living with them. David Katz is listed as a salesman in dry goods. Both Frieda’s and Moses’s immigration date is given as 1906, suggesting they came together. David’s immigration date is 1907 suggesting he did in fact follow them to Canada. They are all listed as “Jew” for religion and David and Frieda are listed as Russian for nationality. For their son “Abby,” “Russian” is scratched out and it appears that Canadian is written over it. They are the only family listed as “Jew” on any of the census pages nearby.

21	223	Just George H	M	27	1884	gnt	1906	gnt	1906	1910	Scotch	Canadian
22	224	Frayda	M	27	1884	Wife	1906	Russia	1906	1910	Jew	Canadian
23		Moses	M	27	1884	Brother	1906	Russia	1906	1910	Jew	Canadian
24		Abie	M	1	1910	Son	1907	Russia	1907	1910	Jew	Canadian
25			M	27	1884	Son	1906	Russia	1906	1910	Jew	Canadian
26	225	Cramer Moses	M	27	1884	Son	1906	Russia	1906	1910	Jew	Canadian

Figure 10 1911 Census for David Katz and Frayda (Cramer) with Frayda’s brother Moses and son Abie

Five years later, a 1916 Canada census shows the family has moved and is living in the district 18 of Humbolt, Saskatchewan. The municipality is listed as “D. Lcart” and along the side of page is written “Guernsey” suggesting that they were living on D’Lcart street which was the main street in the small town of Guernsey.

20	148	David	M	33	1883	Head	1906	Russia	1906	1910	Canadian	Jew	yes	no
21		Freda	F	33	1883	Wife	1906	Russia	1906	1910	Canadian	Jew	yes	no
22		Abie	M	6	1910	Son	1907	Russia	1907	1910	Canadian	Jew	yes	no
23		Mary	F	2	1910	Daughter	1907	Russia	1907	1910	Canadian	Jew	yes	no

Figure 11 1916 Census for David and Freda Katz in the town of Guernsey

The tiny village of Guernsey is in central Saskatchewan and is approximately 113 km (70 mi) E of the larger city of Saskatoon. It is approximately 300 km (186 mi) further west from where they were living in 1911. Guernsey was named in 1906 as the Canadian Pacific Railway was constructing its route between Winnipeg and Saskatoon.¹⁹ The site, about 70 miles east of Saskatoon, was named for the Island of Guernsey, lying in the English Channel, midway between France and England. Each street was named for places on the Island. The first train arrived on February 8, 1908. The train

¹⁸ This 1911 census was accessed via Ancestry and an automated genealogy project transcribing Canadian censuses: <http://automatedgenealogy.com/index.html>. The census appears in Saskatchewan District 210 (MacKenzie), Sub-district 18, Township 30. MacKenzie was an electoral district name during this period. This family appears on a page called “sub-district 18.” It is not clear which town they are living in, but the towns mentioned on nearby pages include Stornoway and Wroxtton, which appear in eastern Saskatchewan not far from the border of Manitoba. It thus appears that David and Frayda had not yet made it to Sheho where they are by a 1916 census. The definition of the MacKenzie electoral district suggests it was from the area where the Assiniboine River meets the Saskatchewan province border towards Yorkton. See https://lop.parl.ca/sites/ParlInfo/default/en_CA/ElectionsRidings/Ridings/Profile?OrganizationId=5029.

¹⁹ See Doreen Snider, *Called To A Place: The Story of Guernsey and Surrounding School Districts*. <https://digitalcollections.ucalgary.ca/archive/Called-to-a-place---the-story-of-Guernsey-and-surrounding-school-districts-2R3BF1FJT5BVJ.html>. Accessed Aug. 20, 2023.

passed through town twice a day: "Westbound everyday at 1:20 p.m. except on Monday. Eastbound everyday at 1:45 p.m. except Sunday."

David and Frayda were in the middle of nowhere, like the other Jewish immigrants who could not find work in the larger cities and opened general stores in small towns in the prairies. As their nephew, Jack Kates, later wrote in his book from 2002 reflecting on his life in the Canadian Prairies:

The general storekeeper not only served the community, he was its center. Without him, the community could not have existed. Not only did he stock practically everything the community needed to survive, but more importantly, he extended long-term credit to his customers without any interest whatsoever. Although a community may have had more than one general store, at least one was usually owned and operated by a Jewish immigrant. Often the store owner "lived upstairs or in the back of the store itself. He eked out a livelihood. But he was "independent."

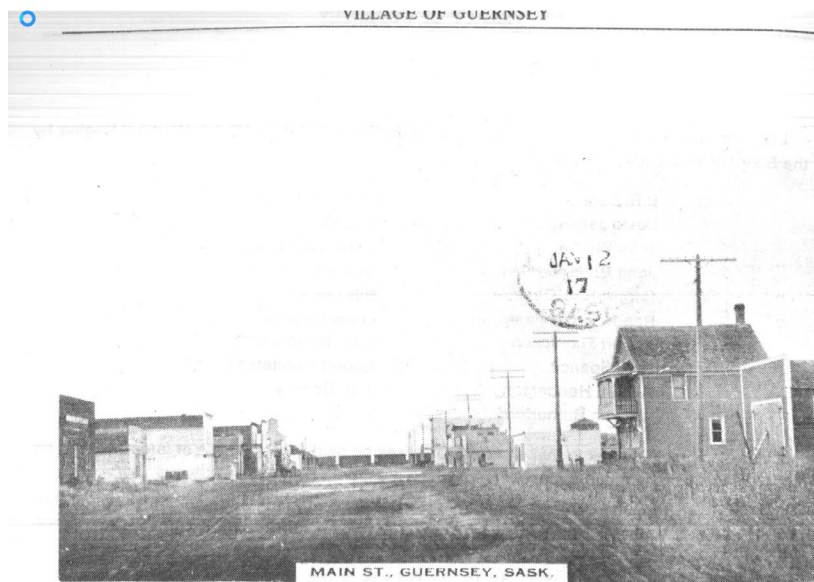


Figure 12 An early photo of Guernsey showing Main Street²⁰

In the 1916 census record, David and "Freda" are both age 33. Their son "Abie" (later Abraham Katz) is age 6 and their daughter Minnie (married name Schell) is age 2. Abie's birthplace is listed as "Man" [Manitoba province] and Minnie's is listed as "Sask" [Saskatchewan province] suggesting that between 1910 and 1914 David and Frayda migrated west to Guernsey. According to family memories, a child Pinchas was born in 1912 and died a year later and thus does not appear on the 1916 census. Frieda's brother, Moses, is no longer listed with them.

David and Frieda are both still "aliens" in this record. "Canadian" is struck out and "Russian" is written over it for nationality. For race, they are listed as "Jew." For their religion, the census lists "none" whereas all of the others on the same page have various forms of Christian faith identified: Anglican, Presbyterian, Methodist, Lutherans, and Mennonite. The "none" perhaps indicates they didn't want to be listed as Jewish. As they appear to be the only Jewish family listed in Guernsey, they probably didn't have anyone else to celebrate with anyway. Indeed, a perusal of the 26 pages of the Humbolt district census for that year suggests they were the only Jewish family in the area.

²⁰ Doreen Snider, *Called To A Place: The Story of Guernsey and Surrounding School Districts*.

In the 1921 census, the family is still living in the village of Guernsey. David and Frieda are 38, "Abie" is 11, Minnie 7 and the new daughter, Rachel, is 4. (Rachel Katz, by the way, is the one who wrote the letter quoted earlier that indicated her mother came in 1904). This 1921 record indicates that the daughters, Minnie and Rachel, were born in Saskatchewan but that Abie was born in the province of Manitoba, suggesting that David and Frieda were not in Saskatchewan until after 1910. This record also suggests that David Katz migrated to Canada in 1907 and Frieda in 1906, again suggesting that Frieda came first and David followed her. David is listed as a General Merchant and both are now naturalized.

25	99	Katz, David	H Peter	Guernsey	P. (C)	S.	W.A.	(C)	Head	M	38	Russia	Russia	Russia	1907	1914
26		Frieda							Wife	F	32	Russia	Russia	Russia	1906	1914
27		Abie							Son	M	11	Manitoba	Russia	Russia		
28		Minnie							Daughter	F	7	Sask	Russia	Russia		
29		Rachel							Daughter	F	4	Sask	Russia	Russia		

Figure 13 1921 Census for Guernsey

A list of graduates from Guernsey shows Abie Katz having graduated in 1923–1924 from grade 9.

* GRADUATES *		
Guernsey School District No. 2351		
<u>1923-24 Grade 9</u>	<u>1923-24 Grade 11</u>	<u>1933-34 Grade 11</u>
Alice Curtis	Herril Baker	Joan Kunkel
Winston Gierrier	Arthur Bailey	Marshall McLeod
Stewart Hall	Robert Crane	Luene Pedrotti
Alfred Howes	Glen Loy	Jack Spence
Dorothy Hill	Clifford Hendrickson	Laura Stackhouse
Abie Katz	Edna Shuh	Elsie Tendeck
George Con	Edna Hood	Marion Wood
Elmer Snider	Edna Hood	Margaret Wood
Teacher—Mr. Cassell	Teacher—Mr. Henry	Teachers—Mr. Garry
		Mr. Dymond

Figure 14 Abie Katz, graduate of Grade 9. From Doreen Snider, *Called To A Place*, p. 69

Sadly, David Katz passed away on Apr. 3, 1926 at about 43 years of age. In the 1931 census, "Freda" is widowed and is living with her three children still running the general store in Guernsey. "Abraham" is 21, Minnie 16, and Rachel 14. The family has a Polish man as hired help who is also living with them. This 1931 record gives Manitoba as the birthplace of Minnie as well as Abraham, suggesting that the family moved to Guernsey after 1914 when Minnie was born. Frieda's year of immigration is here listed as 1908 and her naturalization as 1914.

25	6	Hawes, Steven			0,300	S	W	1	W	Head	M	40	England	England	England		
26	7	Katz, Frieda	H. Minnie	Guernsey	0,200	S	W	1	W	Head	F	48	Russia	Russia	Russia	1908	1914
27	7	Katz, Abraham								Son	M	21	Manitoba	Russia	Russia		
28	7	Katz, Minnie								Daughter	F	16	Manitoba	Russia	Russia		
29	7	Katz, Rachel								Daughter	F	14	Sask	Russia	Russia		
30	7	Godwin, W.A.								Head	M	21	Poland	Poland	Poland	1928	al

Figure 15 1931 census for "Freda" Katz and children in Guernsey



Figure 16 1933 Abie Katz, front row third from left.
Doreen Snider, *Called To A Place*, p. 159



Figure 17 Frieda (Cramer) Katz tombstone with the spelling of Katz as ק"ץ



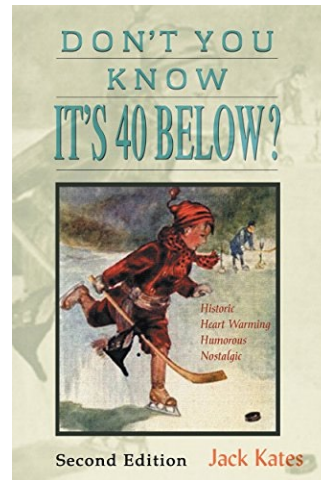
Figure 18 Abram Katz tombstone with spelling of Katz as קצ

The Arrival of David Katz’s Siblings: Maurice, Louis and Bessie

It is not entirely clear when David Katz’s siblings arrived in Canada. According to the “Very Brief History,” David’s brother, Louis Katz (Shmul Leib) came to Winnipeg, Canada between 1912–1916. Not long after arriving, he found employment as a salesman working for Mr. Dashevsky in his store in Theodore, Saskatchewan. He soon managed to save and borrow enough money to start his own business as a general store proprietor in Sheho, Saskatchewan, Canada. His brother Maurice (Morris/Moshe) Katz, worked with him and their sister, Bessie, kept house for them.

A somewhat different account that offers more details was written by Louis’s son (and Merle’s brother), Jack Kates, who was born in Sheho Saskatchewan in 1928 and grew up there. Jack was named for his grandfather Yankel Volf Katz. In addition to a short family narrative, Jack also wrote a nostalgic book about his experiences growing up on the Canadian prairie, called *Don’t You Know It’s 40 Below*. The book provides a charming window into life in a small village for a Jewish family who is still speaking Yiddish, trying to keep kosher but is miles from most other Jews.

Figure 19 Jack Kates, son of Louis Katz, reflects on Jewish life in a small town



In his book, Jack provides additional details about the Katz family. He tells the story of how his father Louis got the name “Leib” and provides a bit more information about his father’s migration.

In the latter part of the nineteenth century, Yankel Volf Katz, a rabbinical scholar in the tiny hamlet of Mervits, in the Ukraine, and his wife Ronya Leah, produced twelve children, one of whom, named Schmeel, was born in 1886 or 1887. While the infant lay deathly ill, special prayers were held for him, pleading with God to let him live. In exchange, he was given another name “Leib,” meaning “to live.” He survived, and in 1912, along with his younger sister Bessie, he followed in the footsteps of his older brothers David and Moishe, and emigrated to Canada where Anglo immigration officers, who frequently had difficulty with non-English names, gave him the name of “Louis,” pronounced “Louie.” (p. 4).

In a separate family narrative shared with me by descendants, Jack adds some other details.

My father, Louis Katz (pronounced Kates as in Dates), was a Saskatchewan pioneer, who owned one of Sheho's earliest general stores--from 1914 until 1947--when he moved away to Winnipeg. He was born in a tiny village in the Ukraine around 1887, one of twelve siblings, two of whom--David and Maurice--had already settled in Saskatchewan. In 1912, he and his younger sister Bessie also migrated to Saskatchewan.

Louis Katz first went to Theodore [Saskatchewan] where he worked in Dashefsky's Store for two years. In 1914 he and his older brother Maurice pooled their savings of \$600.[00] to open their own business in Sheho. The store, a large two-story structure flanked by two smaller building, had been built by Rufus Darling, one of Sheho's earliest pioneers, [...] He had earlier built his own home at the western end of the village, where the sidewalk began, next to the town well. The store was directly across the tracks from the new Canadian Pacific railroad station.

Sheho, like Guernsey, was a tiny village, not so different in fact from Mervits back in Russia with one big exception. The Katzes were one of only two Jewish families in town.

Jack describes Sheho as a farming village of about seventy families totaling approximately 350 people. The big claim to fame according to Jack’s narrative was that it had four and not three grain

elevators which were a status symbol on the Canadian prairie. Jack has a number of other quaint memories about the layout of the small town and memories of incidents that occurred during his childhood growing up there, including memories of his parents speaking Yiddish, trips on the train to visit family in Manitoba, getting their first radio, and the time he was allowed to have non-kosher chicken soup because he was anemic and his family couldn't get a daily kosher chicken for fresh soup (p. 37).

Jack's account of the chicken soup memory is humorous in portraying the ways orthodox Jews on the prairie dealt with the challenges of keeping kosher:

In those days we had never heard of Campell's Chicken Soup. And even if we had, it certainly was not fresh. Fresh means fresh. It means freshly killed. There was one problem, however. Both Mama and Papa were orthodox and kept kosher. And in order to have kosher chicken soup, we would have to ship the live chickens by railroad express to the shochet in Yorkton, a religiously ordained person who was qualified to slaughter animals in accordance with the kosher food laws— biblical instructions in the Old Testament. After the shochet had slit the throats of the chicken and bled them, he would ship them back to us. We would then pluck the feathers, after which we would hold the plucked chicken over the fire to burn off the "pin feathers," the small, hair-like quills that remained. Finally, Mama would remove the internal organs and prepare the chickens for cooking. Unless the bird or animal had been killed by a shochet, it was not kosher, and we would not eat it.

Because it was impractical to ship only one chicken to Yorkton every day and have it shipped back to us, a procedure taking up at least three days; and because the chicken would not be "fresh" enough to qualify for fresh chicken soup, Mama and Papa decided that they would waive the kosher food laws exclusively for me—more precisely, for my delicate health. Instead, they would serve me fresh chicken soup that had been freshly prepared by cooking a freshly killed chicken the goyishe [gentile] method. (p. 37)

A 1916 census record, which seems almost certainly to belong to the three Katz siblings, appears in the village of Sheho. The siblings are listed by their first initials only, M [orris] L [ouis] and B[ayla] and described as Head, Brother, Sister thus matching the three Katz sibling names and relationships. They are listed as ages 33, 30 and 20 respectively. This record indicates the three siblings arrived in 1914 and all of them were still Al[ien].

7	306	Katy	Head	M	33	Russia	1914	al
8	306	L	Brother	M	30	Russia	1914	al
9	310	B	Sister	F	20	Russia	1914	al

Figure 20 1916 Census for the village of Sheho showing the three Katz siblings

It was probably sometime in this early period that Louis reportedly saved enough money to send for his two younger brothers, Shlomieh and Meyer. Unfortunately, as noted earlier, their mother Ronya Leah "begged them not to leave, so they did not. Sadly, they were killed, along with their families in World War II."

According to Jack's family narrative, the three siblings, "Louis, Maurice, and Bessie all lived upstairs in the main building until 1918, when Maurice died during the influenza epidemic." According to the family tree, Maurice married a woman named Chaika and had two daughters, Pearl and Etta. What became of this family is not known.

A year later, the sister, Bessie, married Abe Shnider, “a cowboy who was managing a ranch owned by Mr. Dachas from Yorkton.”

A marriage record indicates “Bassie” Katz married Abraham “Shnider” on August 13, 1919 in Winnipeg. Jack recalls that “As a wedding gift, [his father] Louis made his new brother-in-law a partner in the business, known for nine years afterwards as ‘Shnider and Katz.’ The Shnider family and Louis Katz continued to live upstairs until 1922, when Louis married Rose Izen, a newly arrived immigrant from Poland, whom he had met through a matchmaker in Winnipeg.” It makes sense that a matchmaker was involved since there were so few other Jews living in Sheho and the other nearby towns. Jack continues:

“The two families continued to live upstairs for the next six years, with three children born to each family. Then in 1928, when I was born, the Shnider family moved to Inglis, Manitoba. From then on the business was known as ‘Katz General Store’-- until 1947, when my father sold it to Fred Kereliuk.”²¹

Jack tells the touching and somewhat humorous story of his first car ride and the complicated machinations of the trip to go visit his aunt Bessie and Uncle Abe Shnider in Inglis when he was a young boy (chapter 2). Inglis was slightly smaller than Sheho and about 150 miles away. Unlike Jack’s father’s store, his Uncle Abe had a telephone in his own store.

The 1931 census shows Louis Katz, age 46, and his wife Rosie, age 29, with three children “Merla Sarah” (author of the “Very Brief History”) age 8, “Eitea” age 6, and Jack, age 3. In this record, Louis’s immigration date is listed as 1911 and his naturalization date is listed as 1927. Eitea is listed as born in Sask[atchewan] and Merla and Jack in Manitoba. Jack notes in his book that he and his oldest sister Merla were born in a hospital in Winnipeg, Manitoba but that his other two sisters Etta and Sylvia as well as his cousins in the Shnider family were all born at home in Sheho (p. 34).

11	2	Head	U.S.A.	U.S.A.	U.S.A.	1901	1907	Canada	Irish
12	Wife	U.S.A.	U.S.A.	U.S.A.	1903	1907	Canada	Irish	
13	3	Head	Poland	Poland	Poland	1911	1927	Canada	Jewish
14	Wife	Poland	Poland	Poland	1911	1927	Canada	Jewish	
15	Daughter	Manitoba	Poland	Poland	1921	1921	Canada	Jewish	
16	Daughter	Sask.	Poland	Poland			Canada	Jewish	
17	Son	Manitoba	Poland	Poland			Canada	Jewish	
18	Son	Sask.	Poland	Poland			Canada	Jewish	
19	Son	U.S.A.	Poland	Poland	1918	1913	Canada	Jewish	
20	Son	Manitoba	England	U.S.A.			Canada	English	
21	4	Head	Russia	Russia	1901	1902	Canada	Jewish	
22	Son	Manitoba	Russia	Russia			Canada	Jewish	

Figure 21 1931 Census for Sheho

Next to the Katz family on the 1931 census are the names of families that Jack Kates mentions in his book. He recalls the Leckie’s store (p. 7) and that Mr. Leckie was “the only other Jewish merchant in Sheho” (p. 11). He also writes about the Darling family, who are listed as Irish in this census:

Mr. and Mrs. Darling were retired. Their house was right behind our woodpile. When the woodpile was used up, there was just open space between us-one big yard. We never ever thought of a fence. Good neighbors don’t need fences. A fence just gets in the way. Merle and Etta, my older sisters, and I were always going over to their house. We never knocked...Maybe their home wasn’t exactly our home, but it sure felt like it because Mrs. Darling was always there and I could always sit on her lap. She was my make believe grandma.” (p. 12)

²¹ Jack Kates, “Biographical Note,” unpublished family narrative.



Figure 22 Family of Louis Katz and Rose (Izen).
 seated (l to r): Louis Katz, Sylvia (Katz) Landa, Rose (Izen) Katz.
 standing (l to r): Etta Katz Lackman, Jack Kates, Merle (Katz) Gould

A 1931 census for Abraham Shnider (or Shneider) and his wife “Bess” [Bessie Katz] shows them living in Manitoba. Their children are listed as Myra age 11, “Morriss” age 8 (probably named for Bess’s brother Morris who died in 1918) and Charles age 7. The record lists 1912 as Bess’s immigration date which is consistent with the narrative of her nephew Jack Kates.

4	100/00	Shneider	Abraham	Man	36	22	28	M	R	60	W	6	400	Head	2	43	Russia	Russia	Russia	1910	1914
5		Shneider	Bess											Wife	2	40	Russia	Russia	Russia	1912	1914
6			Myra											Child	7	11	Russia	Russia	Russia		
7			Morriss											Child	2	8	Russia	Russia	Russia		
8			Charles											Child	2	7	Russia	Russia	Russia		
9			Frank											Child	7	7	Russia	Russia	Russia		

Figure 23 1931 Census for family of Abraham Shnider and Bess (Katz)

The Katz migration to California

The Katz migration to the US began when Louis and Rose’s daughter, Etta Dorothy Katz, married a cousin H. (“Herbert) Lawrence Lackman (also called Lawrence H. Lackman) (Nov. 21, 1926–May 31, 2006). Lawrence and Etta married on June 12, 1947. Six days later a record shows Etta entering the United States on June 18, 1947 to permanently join her husband who is living in Long Beach, CA. She entered the US via Mexico in San Ysidro which is in San Diego. The record is hard to read but shows Etta Lackman nee Katz was born in 1924 and her father, Louis Katz, is living on Ethelbert St. in Winnipeg. She indicates she has visited the US once in 1947 and that her intent now is to reside permanently. In Long Beach, Lawrence and Etta had three daughters: Rachele (Lackman) Ellinoy, Louise (Lackman) Marak, and Cheryl (Lackman) Feinberg.²²

²² Obituary <https://www.hillside memorial.org/obituaries/etta-d-lackman/4887/>

MANIFEST		San Francisco, Calif		Date: 6/19/47		Manifest No. A 61	
Family name: LACKMAN		Given name: Etta Dorothy		Sex: Female		Age: 31	
See Note: PL 271 application No. 212812		Country of birth: Canada		Date of entry: 6/19/47		Port of entry: San Francisco	
Place of birth: Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada		Date of birth: 6/29/16		Sex: F		Race: White	
Language or dialect: English		Nationality: Canadian		Last permanent address: Winnipeg, Canada		Date of last visit: 1947	
Name and address of nearest relative or friend in country: Father, Louis Katz, 180 Ethelbert St., Winnipeg, Can.		Purpose of visit: Self		Passage paid by: Self		Date of departure: 6/19/47	
Name and address of relatives or friends in this country: Husband, Lawrence Herbert LACKMAN, 2390 Lombard Ave., Long Beach, Cal.		Purpose of stay: To reside permanently		Date of arrival: 6/19/47		Date of departure: 6/19/47	
Height: 5 ft. 6 in.		Weight: 125 lbs.		Complexion: Fair		Hair: Light	
Eyes: Blue		Mouth: Normal		Nose: Normal		Ears: Normal	
Signature: Etta Dorothy Lackman		Date: 6/19/47		Port of entry: San Francisco		Date of departure: 6/19/47	
Inspected by: COB		Previously inspected: Yes		Admitted: Admitted		Refused by: Asst	

Figure 24 Etta Dorothy Lackman Border Crossing

Descendants tell me Etta’s siblings followed her to the US. Merle (Katz) Gould and her husband Arwin Gould and daughter Rhoda (Gould) followed Etta to be closer to Etta (and Arwin’s siblings), to live in a warmer climate and to have more opportunities to earn a living.

Merle married her husband Arwin Gould on July 1, 1946, in Winnipeg. Arwin’s naturalization record shows he entered the US as “Ezeydore Goldstein,” at Grand Forks North Dakota on Feb. 28, 1950. They appear in Long Beach in the 1950 census with their daughter Rhoda who was born in 1949. They had two additional daughters in California: Anita (Gould) Shaw and Diane (Gould) Baines.

Etta and Merle’s brother, Jack Kates, followed his sisters to California in July 1955 according to his book (p. 24). His Petition for Naturalization from Aug. 31, 1965 shows he entered the US in Blaine, Washington under the name Jacob Katz on July 8, 1955. In August 1965 he married his first wife, Barbara Ann (Berner). She was born in Vancouver, Canada and entered the US on Oct. 28, 1947. Jack was naturalized on Jan. 14, 1966. He subsequently married Marilyn J Somsen, Apr. 7, 1968.

The siblings’ youngest sister, Sylvia Fay (Katz) Landa married and had a son Craig Landa (1955–1980) who was born in 1955 and a son Robert Landa born 1957. Sylvia Fay followed her siblings to the US with her two sons on Dec. 14, 1961 after her divorce.

Sylvia (Katz) Landa passed away in 2018, Merle (Katz) Gould in 2019, Jack Kates on Sept. 6, 2022 and Etta Dorothy (Katz) Lackman on July 22, 2023.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION SERVICE

Form approved.
Budget Bureau No. 43-R083.9.

ORIGINAL
(To be retained
by Clerk of Court)

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
PETITION FOR NATURALIZATION

No. **271935**

Filed under **316**

To the Honorable
The **U.S. District Court of Los Angeles, Calif.** at **Los Angeles, Calif.**

This petition for naturalization, hereby made and filed, respectfully shows:

(1) My full, true, and correct name is **JACOB KATZ**

(2) My present place of residence is **183 Argonne Ave., Long Beach, LA, California**

(3) My occupation is **CLOTHING SALESMAN**

(4) I was born on **3/26/1928** in **Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada**

(5) My personal description is as follows: Sex **M**, complexion **red**, color of eyes **brn**, color of hair **brn**, height **5** feet **7** inches, weight **150** pounds, visible distinctive marks **NONE**, country of which I am a citizen, subject, or national **CANADA**

(6) I am **XXXX** married; the name of my wife or husband is **Barbara Ann (NEE: BERNER)**, we were married on **6/24/1962** at **Los Angeles, California**, he or she was born at **Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada** on **5/16/1939** and entered the United States at **Blaine, Washington** on **10/28/1947** for permanent residence in the United States and now resides at **Apart from me (113 So. Arnez Dr., Beverly Hills, Calif.)** was naturalized on **10/28/1947** at **Beverly Hills, Calif.** certificate No. _____; or became a citizen by _____

(7a) (If petition is filed under section 319 (a), Immigration and Nationality Act.) I have resided in the United States in marital union with my United States citizen spouse for at least 3 years immediately preceding the date of filing this petition for naturalization, and have been physically present in the United States at least half of that time.

(7b) (If petition is filed under section 319 (b), Immigration and Nationality Act.) My husband or wife is a citizen of the United States, is in the employment of the Government of the United States, or of an American institution of research recognized as such by the Attorney General of the United States, or an American firm or corporation engaged in whole or in part in the development of foreign trade and commerce of the United States, or subsidiary thereof, or of a public international organization in which the United States participates by treaty or statute, or is authorized to perform the ministerial or priestly functions of a religious denomination having a bona fide organization within the United States, or is engaged solely as a missionary by a religious denomination or by an interdenominational mission organization having a bona fide organization within the United States, and such husband or wife is regularly stationed abroad in such employment. I intend in good faith upon naturalization to live abroad with my spouse and to resume my residence within the United States immediately upon termination of such employment abroad.

(8) I have **no** living children.

(9) My lawful admission for permanent residence in the United States was at **Blaine, Washington** under the name of **Jacob Katz** on **7/8/1955** on the **Stage**

(10) Since my lawful admission for permanent residence I have not been absent from the United States, for a period or periods of 6 months or longer, except as follows:

Figure 25 Petition for Naturalization, Jacob Katz (Jack Kates)

BARNES & NOBLE, 720 Lancaster Ave., Bryn Mawr. Jewish-Canadian author Jack Kates signs his anecdotal homespun memoir, "Don't You Know It's Forty Below?" 2-4 p.m. Friday. 610-520-0355. 2300 Chemical Road, Plymouth Meeting. Book signing by Jack Kates of "Don't You Know It's Forty Below?" 2 p.m. Saturday. 610-567-2900.

Where is the logic for allowing hybrids in carpool lanes? How will single-driver hybrids move traffic more efficiently in the already packed carpool lanes during peak-hour traffic? Allowing single drivers in carpool lanes punishes those who share rides to use carpool lanes as intended. Do car buyers really need carpool lanes as an incentive to buy hybrids? No! Hybrids were built to save gas — not time on the freeway. That's incentive enough.

JACK AND MARILYN KATES
Cypress

Figure 26 Jack Kates on Book Tour, Philadelphia Daily News, Oct 11, 2001, p. 60

Letter to Editor of Jack and Marilyn Kates, Aug 25, 2005 LA Times, p. 125.

David Katz and Frieda (Cramer's) Children

David and Frieda's son, **Abraham "Abie" Katz** (1910–1962) married a woman named Shirley Wilmas (or Barclay) in 1954. They had two children: Joyce Katz (married name Stevenson) and David Katz. Abie predeceased both of his sisters.

David and Frieda's daughter **Minnie Katz** (~1914–May 20, 1995) married Wilmot "Bill" Louis Schell (July 11, 1923-Feb 9, 2010) on April 15, 1954. He was born in Detroit, Michigan but his family returned to Canada in 1927. After serving in the Canadian armed forces, he returned to Saskatoon. Bill began his teaching career in Guernsey. He married Minnie Katz on April 15, 1954. According to Minnie's obituary, "she dedicated her life to music and teaching and was a member of the Saskatchewan Registered Music Teachers Association. Her music sustained her through trials of ill health and she continued teaching until shortly before her death. She also had a passion for cats and devoted much to her pets. No children are listed for the couple in the obituary or in the family tree."²³

David and Frieda's youngest daughter **Rachel Katz** (Mar. 21, 1917–July 17, 2004) had "a deep interest in agriculture and moved to Saskatoon in 1943 where she was employed as a Polutry Division manager for the-then Saskatchewan Coop Creamery. That same year she met Herman Neumann (Jun. 29, 1907–Nov. 27, 2003) and married him on Aug. 7, 1946 in Saskatoon. They had two sons: Jack Neumann (Calgary) and Seymour Neuman (of Edmonton). The family tree indicates a daughter died in infancy."²⁴



Figure 27 Minnie, Abe, Frieda (mother), and Rachel Katz. Courtesy of B. David Stollar.

²³ Minnie Schell's Obituary appears in *The Leader-Post* (Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada) May 23, 1995, page 33. Bill Schell's obituary is published in *The Leader-Post*, Feb. 12, 2010, p. 35.

²⁴ Rachel (Katz) Neumann's obituary appears in the *Star-Phoenix* (Saskatoon) July 19, 2004, p. 26.

Figure 28 Katz house still standing 2005.
Courtesy of B. David Stollar.



Bessie (Katz) and Abraham Snider's Children

As discussed earlier, Bessie Katz married Abraham Snider in 1919 and they had three children in Sheho before moving to Inglis, Manitoba.

Myra Shnider (Jan. 7, 1920–Jul. 22, 1977) married Eric Bass (Apr. 24, 1920–Jun. 1, 1992). Eric and Myra appear to have migrated to Minnesota. A naturalization record for Eric was issued Aug. 27, 1955. Myra was naturalized in the US on May 1, 1968. They had one daughter Audrey Helen Bass in 1956.

Maurice Shnider (~1923–Oct. 3, 2013 in Inglis, Manitoba). From the Wurtzel family tree and obituaries, it appears he married a woman named Renee Taylor. The couple had three children: Janet Shnider (1948), David Shnider, and Lee Shnider. Janet married John David Brett (Apr. 28, 1951–Oct. 10, 2013) and they had a daughter Molly Brett.

Charles "Charlie" Shnider (June 30, 1924–Aug. 27, 2002). After growing up in Inglis, Manitoba Charlie was a director of the Manitoba Retail Merchants Association from 1948 to 1953 and then joined Trans Canada Airline where he held a number of positions. He married Diana Grossman. They had one daughter Sharlene (married name Forest) (1962) and two grandchildren Shauna and Evan. They moved to Victoria in 1986.

Settling Into Boston: Beila (Katz) and husband Moshe Ber Cohen

While four of the Katz siblings were settling in the Canadian prairie, two of their siblings stayed in Russia, probably because they both had married and had other responsibilities.

Beila Katz (~1881–1955) married a man named Moshe Ber Mashuris (among other variations of the surname such as Mashures). Beila moved to his hometown of Olik, Russia (today Olyka, Ukraine) which was 24 miles northwest of Mervits and Mlynov. In America, Moshe Mashuris became Morris Cohen (1878–1941) and Beila became Bella Cohen (~1883–1955), as discussed below.

Beila and Moshe were married by 1900 when their eldest daughter Merle (named for her grandmother Meerel) was born. Her married name in America became Mary Gordon and she was

the primary source for information in the “Very Brief History.” Two of Mary/Merle’s siblings were also born before the family migrated to Boston. They were Rose (married name Fink) (1908–1955) and Harry Cohen (anglicized surname Harry Colton) (1909–1980). Another son, Israel Cohen (1915–1918), apparently was born in Boston after the family migrated.

The family’s migration took place in two steps. Beila’s husband Moshe, called “Moses Kohan” on his manifest, traveled to the US on the SS Martha Washington from Trieste, Austria (now Trieste, Italy) and arrived in New York on March 17, 1909. Beile must have been pregnant when her husband left for Boston, since their son Harry was born in August of that year back in Russia, several months after Morris landed in the US.



Figure 29 Manifest of SS Martha Washington Sailing from Trieste Austria

No.	Name	Age	Sex	Profession	Place of Birth	Place of Residence	Closest Relative
1	Moses Kohan	32	M	Ladies' tailor	Russia	Olyk	Nachman Kohan
2	Avraham Kohan	22	M	laborer	Russia	Olyk	Max Kohan
3	Chaim Goldman	20	M	laborer	Russia	Olyk	Max Kohan

Figure 30 “Moses Kohan” sailing with Avraham Kohan and Chaim Goldman last residence “Oliki”

“Moses,” age 32, is listed as a “ladies’ tailor” (laborer is scratched out). His last residence was “Oliki” (Olyk) and his closest relative there was his father “Nachman Kohan.”

Moses was clearly traveling with two other men from Olyk. Next to him on the manifest is Avraham Kohan, and below Avraham is a Chaim Goldman from Olyk. I suspected that Abraham Kohan was a relative of Moses. A grandson of Abraham Cohen whom I located (Doug Cohen) filled in some details of the family tree and background.²⁵ Abraham was indeed a brother of Moses. The second page of the manifest indicates he was headed to his older brother Max Cohen who was the first of the Mashuris brothers to arrive in America. Max immigrated as Mottel Mashuris in April 1906, according to his Petition for Naturalization and manifest. No one is sure how or why Max transformed Mashuris to Cohen in America.

While Abraham was headed to his brother Max, Beila’s husband Moshe/Moses was headed to the home of his uncle “Leo[n]? Kaufman at 21 Carpenter Street in Boston.” Abraham’s grandson, Doug, tells me this was a brother of the Moshe/Moses’s mother (Malka Kopyt) whose family name Kopyt was transformed to Kaufman in America.

The presence of Moshe/Moses’ brother Max Cohen in America and his maternal Kaufman uncles explains why Beile and husband migrated to the US and did not head to the Canadian prairie with her siblings.

²⁵ I appreciate Doug Cohen, a grandson of Abraham Cohen, for sharing his knowledge of the family and photos with me. He also pointed me to Beila’s passenger manifest.

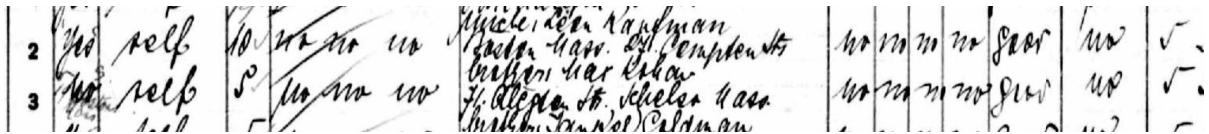


Figure 31 Page 2 of Moses's manifest showing destination addresses: uncle Leon? Kaufman

Why did Moshe (Morris) and Abraham Cohen travel to New York via Trieste? Trieste was a relatively new port for immigration in Austria (now Italy) that had begun competing with the northern ports of Amsterdam and Rotterdam. Perhaps Moshe's wife, Beila, who was from Mervits knew that a family from Mlynov (the Rivitz family) migrated successfully on the SS Martha Washington via Trieste in January 1909 on their way to Baltimore. And another Mlynov man, Meier Fishman, left Trieste to New York in April 1909 on the SS Alice.²⁶

Morris declared his intention to be a citizen in Boston on Jan. 13, 1913 probably anticipating his family's arrival. His family migrated in 1914. His wife Beila and children left Libau, Russia on Feb. 20, 1914 on the SS Russia and arrived in New York on March 9, 1914.

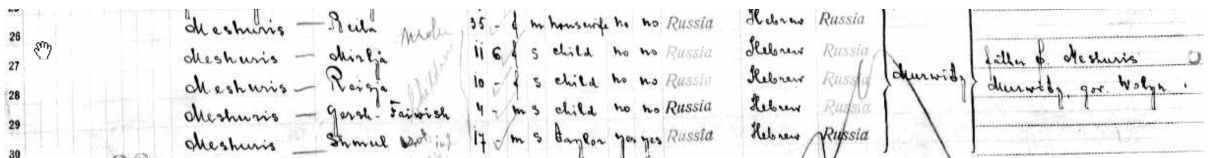


Figure 32 Manifest of SS Russia showing Beila Meshuris and children

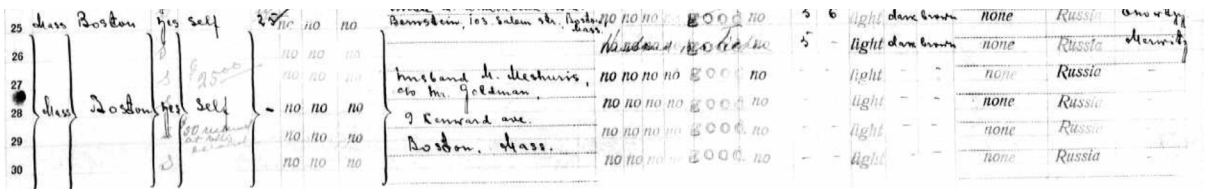


Figure 33 Destination of Beila and children on the manifest and birthplace

"Beila Meshuris" was traveling with her children and her brother-in-law Shmuel (Moses's younger brother, Samuel). Their last residence is listed as "Murwitz" (Mervits) suggesting that Beila went back to her hometown to be with her family while her husband was in America. Beila is 35, Mirlja (Mary Gordon) is 11, Reiza (Rose Fink) age 10, Gersh Feivish (Harry Cohen Colton), age 11. Moses's brother Shmuel is 17.

On the second page of the manifest, the family's destination is "husband M. Mashuris c/o Mr. Goldman ...in Boston." Apparently, Beila's husband, Moshe/Morris, was staying with either Chaim Goldman who traveled with him to the US in 1909 or Chaim's brother Yankel Goldman.

By the time Morris filled out his Petition for Naturalization on April 17, 1915, the family was living with him on 81 Dover Street in Boston. Morris indicated his occupation was teacher, that his birthdate was Sept. 21, 1877, and that he was born in Olik, Russia. Though hard to read, the record also shows he emigrated from "Triestse, Austria."

²⁶ See https://kehillalinks.jewishgen.org/Mlyniv/documents/The_Mlynov_Mervits_Migration.pdf for details on all the Mlynov and Mervits migrations located to date.

The children’s names are already anglicized, and their dates of birth are given as well: Mary, June 29, 1900, Harry, Aug. 10, 1909, and Rose Oct. 28, 1913. They were born in Russia and another son, Israel, was born on Jan. 31, 1915 in Boston.

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
NATURALIZATION SERVICE

238
ORIGINAL

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

PETITION FOR NATURALIZATION

To the Honorable the District Court of the United States for the District of Massachusetts

The petitioner of Massachusetts Boston hereby files, respectfully shewing:

First. My place of residence is Massachusetts 81 Dover Street, Boston.

Second. My occupation is Teacher.

Third. I was born on the 17th day of March 1877 at Quasia, Russia.

Fourth. I emigrated to the United States from Quasia, Russia on or about the 17th day of March 1907 and arrived in the United States at New York N. Y. on the 17th day of March 1907 on the vessel Martha Washington.

Fifth. I declare my intention to become a citizen of the United States on the 17th day of January 1913 in the U. S. District Court of Massachusetts.

Sixth. I am Single. My wife's name is Bella and now resides at Boston. She was born Quasia.

I have four children, and the name, date and place of residence of each of said children is as follows:

<u>Mary</u>	<u>June 29, 1900</u>	<u>Quasia</u>
<u>Harry</u>	<u>Aug. 10th, 1909</u>	<u>do</u>
<u>Rosa</u>	<u>Oct. 28th, 1913</u>	<u>do</u>
<u>Israel</u>	<u>Jan. 31st, 1915</u>	<u>Boston, Mass.</u>

Seventh. I am not a disbeliever in or opposed to organized government or a member of or affiliated with any organization or body of persons teaching disbelief in or opposed to organized government. I am not a polygamist nor a believer in the practice of polygamy. I am attached to the principles of the Constitution of the United States, and it is my intention to become a citizen of the United States and to renounce absolutely and forever all allegiance and fidelity to any foreign prince, potentate, state, or sovereignty, and particularly to NIKOLAI II EMPEROR OF ALL THE RUSSIAS of whom at this time I am a subject, and it is my intention to reside permanently in the United States.

Eighth. I am able to speak the English language.

Ninth. I have resided continuously in the United States of America for the term of five years at least, immediately preceding the date of this petition, to wit, since the 17th day of March 1907 and in the State of Massachusetts, continuously next preceding the date of this petition, since the 17th day of March 1907, being a residence within this State of at least one year next preceding the date of this petition.

Figure 34 Morris Cohen’s Naturalization Petition, April 17, 1915

By the 1920 census, the family is in Boston on Oak Grove Terrace. Morris is 42, Bella 39, Mary 19, Rosa 16, and Harry is 10. The youngest son, Israel, is not listed in the 1920 census and was too young to have left the household on his own. He died in 1918 perhaps during the influenza epidemic.

62	21	31	75	Cross	Emma	Head	3	R	M	W	42	M	1906	Na	1914	Yes	Yes
63	21	31	76	Cohen	Morris	Head	3	R	M	W	42	M	1906	Na	1914	Yes	Yes
64					Bella	Wife			F	W	39	M	1914	Na		Yes	Yes
65					Mary	Daughter			F	W	19	S	1914	Na		Yes	Yes
66					Rosa	Daughter			F	W	16	S	1914	Na		Yes	Yes
67					Harry	Son			M	W	10	S	1914	Na		Yes	Yes

Figure 35 1920 Census for Morris and Bella Cohen and family

Morris and Bella’s daughter, Mary Cohen, married George Gordon sometime in 1920 and became Mary Gordon. They had one son, Robert J. Gordon, who was born in November 1920. In 1930, Morris and Bella’s daughter Rosa and son Harry are still living with their parents in Boston. Rosa married Albert Fink on Dec. 25, 1933. Their son Arthur was born in 1936.



Figure 36 1938 Passover dinner with Cohen and Kaufman family. Bella Cohen (Beila Katz) with daughter Mary Gordon and her husband and son. Courtesy of Doug Cohen.

Front row: Jacob Kaufman, Joe Cohen [brother of Morris], Thelma Kaufman, Bertha Kaufman, Sonya Cohen (Sulkie) [wife of Joe Cohen], Melvin Cohen (“Smillik” Samuel Cohen’s son), Samuel Cohen (brother of Morris), Anna Kaufman, Rose Cohen [Samuel’s wife], Rose Skoletsky, Marlene Skoletsky, Rubin Skoletsky, **Bella Cohen** [Beila Katz, daughter of Ronya Leah and Yankel Volf Katz], **Mary Gordon** [daughter of Bella and her husband Morris Cohen]

Back row: Leonard Mjurys [son of Joe Cohen], Norman H. Cohen [son of Samuel], Ben Zion Cohen [son of Joe Cohen], Sylvia Kaufman, Lillian Cohen [daughter of Joe Cohen], Marilyn Cohen [daughter of Samuel Cohen], Rachel ?, Mildred Kaufman, Ruth?, **Bobby Gordon** [Mary Gordon’s son], **George Gordon** [Mary Gordon’s husband].

Harry Cohen married Estelle Sandler on Apr 12, 1935. In online trees, Harry’s nickname is “Happy.” In 1940, Harry is still using the surname “Cohen” but by 1950, the family has adopted the name “Colton” and they had four daughters: Jean Renee (Colton) Platzman (1936–), Myrna (Colton) Goldman (1939–2007), Marcia (Colton) Lasoff (1944–) and Janice (Colton) Rosenfield (1946–).

6	2nd 47	—, Emma	daughters	W	F	10	New York
7		—, Colton Harry	Head	W	M	40 Mar	Russia
8		—, Estelle	Wife	W	F	36 Mar	Mass
9		—, Jean	daughters	W	F	14	Mass
10		—, Myrna	daughters	W	F	10	Mass
11		—, Marcia	daughters	W	F	6	Mass
		—, Janice	daughters	W	F	3	Mass

Figure 37 1950 Census for Harry (Cohen) Colton and family

Chaieh (Katz's) Husband, David Cooperstein, Comes to NY

Chaieh, the oldest child of Ronya Leah and Yankel Volf Katz, stayed back in Russia as several siblings were settling in Saskatchewan and as her sister Bella and her family settled in Boston. For unknown reasons, Chaieh's husband, David Cooperstein came to New York to seek his fortune without her. We know a bit about David Cooperstein from US his naturalization records. He filled out a Declaration of Intention once in 1921 and again in 1928, after the first one expired.²⁷ He signed both documents in Hebrew lettering and both indicate that his wife "Chaia" was still back in Russia at the time.

In both documents, he gave his birthday as June 15, 1867 and indicated he was a "laundryman." The first document lists his birthplace as Volyn (which is the district where Mlynov was located) and the second more specifically lists "Mlinow." In both records, he is living in the Lower East Side, first at 96 Ludlow St. and in the second at 86 Ludlow St. Both Declarations indicate he sailed from Liverpool on the SS Caronia arriving in New York on Oct. 2, 1906.²⁸ Both indicate he was married to Chaia who was still residing in Russia. In one record he was 53 years old, in the other he was 60.

244 ORIGINAL
No. 94824
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
NATURALIZATION SERVICE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
DECLARATION OF INTENTION
Invalid for all purposes seven years after the date hereof
State of New York, } ss: In the District Court of the United States.
Southern District of New York, }
I, David Cooperstein, aged 53 years, occupation laundryman, do declare on oath that my personal description is: Color white, complexion dark, height 5 feet 5 inches, weight 130 pounds, color of hair brown, color of eyes brown, other visible distinctive marks none.
I was born in Volyn, Russia on the 15th day of June, anno Domini 1867; I now reside at 96 Ludlow St., New York City, N. Y.
I emigrated to the United States of America from Liverpool on the vessel Caronia; my last foreign residence was Russia; I am married; the name of my wife is Chaia; she was born at Russia and now resides at Russia.
It is my bona fide intention to renounce forever all allegiance and fidelity to any foreign prince, potentate, state, or sovereignty, and particularly to the Republic of Poland and the State of Russia, of whom I am now a subject; I arrived at the port of New York, in the State of New York, on or about the 2nd day of October, anno Domini 1906; I am not an anarchist; I am not a polygamist nor a believer in the practice of polygamy; and it is my intention in good faith to become a citizen of the United States of America and to permanently reside therein; SO HELP ME GOD.
Subscribed and sworn to before me in the office of the Clerk of said Court at New York City, N. Y., this 21 day of June, anno Domini 1921.
ALEX GILCHRIST, JR., Clerk of the District Court of the United States.
By [Signature] Deputy Clerk.

Figure 38 1921 Declaration of David Cooperstein

262021 ORIGINAL
No. 262021
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
NATURALIZATION SERVICE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
DECLARATION OF INTENTION
Invalid for all purposes seven years after the date hereof
State of New York, } ss: In the District Court of the United States.
Southern District of New York, }
I, David Cooperstein, aged 60 years, occupation laundryman, do declare on oath that my personal description is: Color white, complexion dk, height 5 feet 5 inches, weight 120 pounds, color of hair brown, color of eyes brown, other visible distinctive marks none.
I was born in Mlinow, Russia on the 15 day of June, anno Domini 1867; I now reside at 86 Ludlow St., New York City, N. Y.
I emigrated to the United States of America from Liverpool, England on the vessel Caronia; my last foreign residence was Mlinow, Russia; I am married; the name of my wife is Chaia; she was born at Russia and now resides at Russia.
It is my bona fide intention to renounce forever all allegiance and fidelity to any foreign prince, potentate, state, or sovereignty, and particularly to the Republic of Poland and the State of Russia, of whom I am now a subject; I arrived at the port of New York, in the State of New York, on or about the 2 day of October, anno Domini 1906; I am not an anarchist; I am not a polygamist nor a believer in the practice of polygamy; and it is my intention in good faith to become a citizen of the United States of America and to permanently reside therein; SO HELP ME GOD.
Subscribed and sworn to before me in the office of the Clerk of said Court at New York City, N. Y., this 18 day of March, anno Domini 1928.
[Signature] Deputy Clerk of the District Court of the United States.

Figure 39 1928 Declaration of David Cooperstein

A 1930 census in Manhattan for a David "Kuperstein" appears to be the same man. He is married but no wife is listed with him. This David is described as a "helper" in the laundry business which suggests it is the same man. He still has the status of an alien and is living at 250 Willet Street which

²⁷ A Declaration of Intention expired after 7 years if one did not submit a Petition for Naturalization in that period.

²⁸ The SS Caronia manifest has been located, but David's name has not been located on the manifest: https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/7488/images/NYT715_776-0004?pid=4013543637

is still in the Lower East Side. His year of arrival is given as 1907 which is close to the year given on his Declarations. A 1940 census shows David Kuperstein as age 72, still an alien and a “machine dryer” in the laundry business. He is living at 262 Columbia Street also in the Lower East Side, not far from his 1930 address.

98			עקרה	Wife - H			Y	F	W	48	M	21
99		750	Kuperstein, David	Head	R	\$ 6	20	M	W	62	M	22
100		751	Wife - Louis	Head	R	\$ 1	20	M	W	44	M	20

Figure 40 1930 census for David Kuperstein age 62 in 1930 census at 250 Willet Street in Lower East Side

A death certificate from New York on April 30, 1942, filled out by a nephew (“Sevin Chlar”), indicates that David’s parents’ names were Samuel and Rebecca “Coperstein,” that he was married to “Ida Coperstein” and was retired from the laundry business. The certificate indicates that he was buried in the Rosedale Cemetery in Baltimore. The executor is listed as a nephew “Irving Skeor” (Sklar?).

The announcement of his death in an obituary in *The Evening Sun* newspaper from Baltimore suggests he was in touch with Mlynov relatives or friends there which would explain why he was buried in Baltimore at the Tifereth Israel Anshe Sfard Cemetery in Rosedale.



Figure 41 Tifereth Israel Anshe Sfard Cemetery in Rosedale Maryland

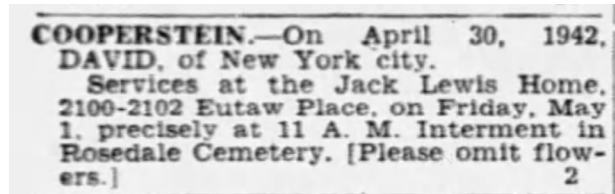


Figure 42 *The Evening Sun*, May 1, 1942, p. 49

David’s tombstone in Baltimore indicates his father’s name was “Shmuel the Cohen.” Based on the information available about Chaia’s husband David Cooperstein, it appears very possible he was a descendant of the family called Kipperstein in the 1858 Mlynov census and is son of the man named Shmul Kipperstein who was born in 1835 and was 23 and married in 1858.²⁹

²⁹ <https://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/Mlyniv/Mervits-Muravica-Revision-1850.html#Kuperstein28>

Appears in 1850?	Fam # revision 10 / (revision 9)	Surname	Name	Father's Name	Estate	Implied Year of Birth (based on age in 1850)	Implied Year of Birth (based on age in 1858)	Previous Census Year	Age	Cause	When Exactly	Year	Age	Relation	Male Relative
yes	2 (2)	Kiperstein	Abram-Ber	Yankel	townsman	1833		1850	17	died	1854	1858	not indicated	head of the family	
yes	2 (2)	Kiperstein	Shmul	Yankel	townsman	1835	1835	1850	15			1858	23	brother	Abram-Ber Yankelev
no	2 (2)	Kiperstein	Beila	not indicated	townsman		1837	1850	not indicated			1858	21	wife	Shmul Yankelev
yes	2 (2)	Kiperstein	Milka	Yankel	townsman		1843	1850	not indicated			1858	15	sister	Shmul Yankelev

To Philadelphia: Soorkeh (Sura) (Wurtzel) and Isaac Fleisher

While several *children* of Ronya Leah and Yankel Volf Katz were settling in the Canadian prairie and in Boston, Ronya Leah's *sister*, **Soorkeh / Sura (Wurtzel)**, and her husband **Isaac Fleischer**, were beginning their migration to Philadelphia.

Soorkeh (hereafter Sura) was the youngest daughter of Doovid and Meerel Wurtzel as noted earlier. She married a man named Isaac Fleischer by 1896 and in America became Sarah Fleisher. According to Isaac's manifest, he was born in Dubno, which was not far from Mervits where Soorkeh (Sura) was born.

Soorkeh and Isaac had six children, four daughters and two sons: Chana (Anna) 1896, Mirellen 1901 (named for her grandmother Mereel), Malka (Mary Ester) 1904, Perel (Sarah) 1908, Alter (Morris) 1909, Mordche (Martin) 1911. From existing records, it is difficult to determine with certitude where the children were born, as we shall see.

In 1912, "Eisig Fleischer" and their eldest daughter, Chane (Anna), left Hamburg on Dec. 7, 1912 on the SS President Lincoln headed to New York, where they arrived on Dec. 21st. Eisig is listed as age 37 with an implied birth year of 1875 and Chane is listed as age 18, with an implied birth year of 1894. Eisig lists himself as a peddler and Chane is described as a tailoress. Their last residence is listed as Dubno and their closest relative there is Isaac's wife "Sure" suggesting the family was living in Dubno when they left. On the second page of the manifest, Dubno is also listed as Isaac and Chane's birthplace suggesting that Sura went to live in Dubno with Isaac after they married and their children were born there. Page 2 of the manifest also shows they are headed to a friend "Berl Blaustein" who is living at North 3rd Street at what looks like No. 717.³⁰

16

Form 5000 is
Department of Commerce and Labor
IMMIGRATION SERVICE

SALOON, CABIN, AND STEERAGE ALIENS MUST BE COMPLETELY MANIFESTED.

LIST OR MANIFEST OF ALIEN PASSENGERS FOR THE UNITED STATES

Required by the regulations of the Secretary of Commerce and Labor of the United States, under Act of Congress approved February 20, 1907, to be delivered

S. S. President Lincoln sailing from Hamburg, December 7th 1912, 19

Figure 43 Manifest of SS President Lincoln

³⁰ Research by Scott Crespy suggests that Benjamin Bluestein/Blaustein was born in Radzivilov (Radyvyliv) Russia and came to the US in 1906. His mother's surname at birth was Fleischer and possibly a relative of Isaac's.

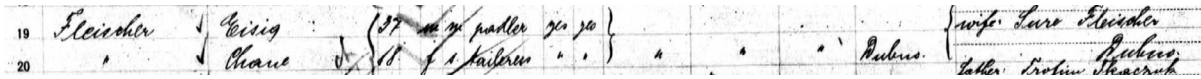


Figure 44 Eisig and Chane Fleischer on SS President Lincoln sailing from Hamburg to NY

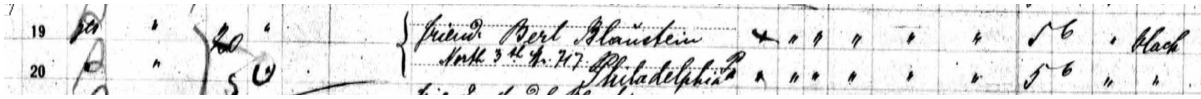


Figure 45 Page 2 of manifest showing destination is friend Berl Blaustein (or Glaustein)

Isaac intended to have the rest of the family join him and his daughter Anna in Philadelphia. But WWI intervened and they remained behind until after the War.

A man named Isaac Fleisher appears at 4105 Market Street in the 1913 and 1917 Philadelphia directories. He is listed as associated with a business called "I Fleisher & Co." Just below his personal listing is one for his business "I & Co (Isaac Fleisher) tailors" at 808 Walnut & 4105 Market. Isaac apparently purchased the property from William Lumby, which was recorded in the Philadelphia Inquirer in October 1913.

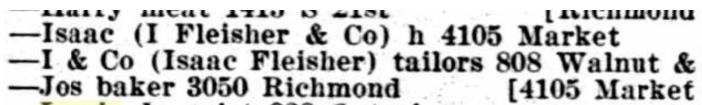


Figure 46 Philadelphia City Directory

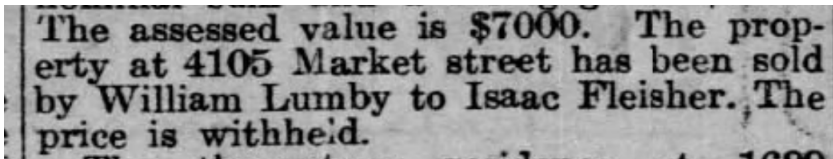


Figure 47 The Philadelphia Inquirer, Oct 5, 1913 p. 63

In 1915, Isaac’s daughter Anna married Max (“Moische”) Schwartz. According to Max’s Declaration of Intention from July 30, 1919, he arrived in New York as “Moische Schwarz on the SS New Amsterdam on Sept. 25, 1911. His Petition for Naturalization signed Dec. 20, 1923 includes more information. His birthdate is given as Nov. 15, 1895 in what looks like “Beltz Russia.”

The family is living at 2231 South Reese St. in Philadelphia. He lists the birthdate of his wife Anna as Mar. 18, 1895. They have four children by this point: Joseph, born Dec. 12, 1917, Ruth born Dec. 15, 1918, and Mary born Sept. 19, 1921.

“Annie” and Max appear in the 1920 census with their three children. In addition, Anna’s father, Isaac Fleisher, is living with them. They are still living at 2231 South Reese St. in Philadelphia.

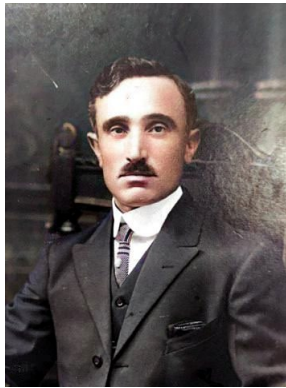
2231	56	59	Schwartz, Max	head	R	M	W	24	M	1910	Pa	Poland	Russia	Russia
			"	wife		F	W	24	M	1910	Ru	Poland	Russia	Russia
			"	Joseph	son	M	W	3	M	1917	Pa	Poland	Russia	Russia
			"	Ruth	daughter	F	W	1				Poland	Russia	Russia
			Fleisher Isaac	father		M	W	43	M	1910	Al	Poland	Russia	Russia

Figure 48 1920 census for Anna (Fleisher) and her husband Max Schwartz. Anna’s father is also living with them

The record indicates Anna and Max are 24, Joseph is 3 years and one month old and Ruth is 1. Isaac is 43. Ancestry interprets Max’s occupation as “truck manufacturer” but it could also be “trunk

manufacturer.” Annie and her father Isaac’s immigration date is listed as 1913 but is off by a year since they appear on a manifest in 1912. Max’s naturalization is listed as “PA” [pending].

Annie apparently also had the naturalization status of “PA” [pending] but it is scratched out and “AI” [alien] is written instead. It is interesting that Annie does not have the same status as her husband Max. Wives were still grandfathered into their husband’s naturalization status up until 1922 when under the pressure of the Women’s Suffrage movement, the Cable Act was passed and women went through an independent naturalization process.



*Figure 49 Isaac Fleisher. Touched up photo.
Courtesy Scott Crespy*



*Figure 50 Sura (Wurtzel) Fleisher, later in life
Courtesy Scott Crespy*

1922 Arrival of Sura and Other Children

We don’t know how Sura and the children fared during WWI, though the Memorial book makes clear that Mlynov and Mervits were evacuated and many of the residents were refugees during the fighting on the Eastern Front. After the War ended, migration began again and families that had been separated during the War made plans to reunite.³¹

Isaac’s wife Sura (Wurtzel) and three of their children traveled from Danzig (now Gdansk) to New York on the SS Estonia, leaving Oct. 27, 1922, arriving on Nov. 22nd. They are listed as Polish citizens because the entire area of Volhynia was part of the newly recreated Poland that was created at the end of WWII on Nov. 3, 1918.

The manifest lists “Rowno” Poland as their last residence. Sura is listed as age 42, with an implied birth year of 1880, making her about 5 years younger than her husband Isaac. Ester is listed as 18, Serel (“Sarah/Saraellen”) is 16; the age of Alter (“Morris”) was initially written as 19 but was corrected to 16, and Motel (“Martin”) is 10. On the right-hand columns of page 1, the manifest indicates their closest relative was daughter Mira Fleischer who stayed behind in Rowno.

³¹ See https://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/Mlyniv/mlynov_in_WWI.html for a discussion of WWI in relationship to Mlynov and Mervits.

Page two of the manifest shows the family was headed to Sura's husband Isak Fleischer at 223 So Rose Str. It seems likely they were headed to 223[1] So Reese Street where Isaac was living with his daughter and son-in-law in the 1920 census.

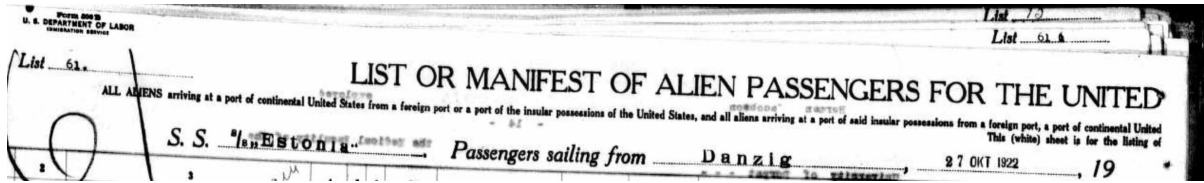


Figure 51 Manifest of the SS Estonia sailing from Danzig on Oct 27, 1922

22	Fleischer	Sura	42	F	M	wife	None	Polish	Hebrew	Poland
23	Fleischer	Ester	18	F	Domestic	yes	Jewish	Polish	Hebrew	Poland
24	Fleischer	Sarel	16	F	S. worker	yes	Jewish	Polish	Hebrew	Poland
25	Fleischer	Alta	14	F	S. worker	yes	Jewish	Polish	Hebrew	Poland
26	Fleischer	Motel	10	M	S. pupil	None	None	Polish	Hebrew	Poland

Figure 52 Sura and children on SS Estonia

fe	None	Polish	Hebrew	Poland	Kowel	"	"	N. J. Passaic
atio	yes Jewish	yes Polish	Hebrew	Poland	Rowno	Daughter: Mira Fleischer, Row-	no, Poland	Pa. Philadelphia
ker	yes Jewish	yes Polish	Hebrew	Poland	Rowno	"	"	Pa. Philadelphia
cer	yes Jewish	yes Polish	Hebrew	Poland	Rowno	"	"	Pa. Philadelphia
lil	None	Polish	Hebrew	Poland	Rowno	"	"	Pa. Philadelphia

Figure 53 Right-hand columns of page 1 showing daughter Mira Fleischer was still in Rowno, Poland.

Husband: Isak Fleischer, 223 So. Rose Str., Philadelphia, Pa.	perm.	yes	kkkk	kkkk	good	kk	56	fairdark	dark	None	Pinsk	Rowno
"	perm.	yes	kkkk	kkkk	good	kk	56	fairdark	dark	None	Pinsk	Rowno
"	perm.	yes	kkkk	kkkk	good	kk	55	fairdark	dark	None	Pinsk	Rowno
"	perm.	yes	kkkk	kkkk	good	kk	-	fairdark	dark	None	Pinsk	Rowno
"	perm.	yes	kkkk	kkkk	good	kk	-	fairdark	dark	None	Pinsk	Rowno
Uncle: George Karsh, 809-14th	perm.	yes	kkkk	kkkk	good	kk	57	fairdark	dark	None	Pinsk	Kowel

Figure 54 Page 2 of the manifest showing destination Husband: Isak Fleischer, 223 South Rose Str. [probably 2231 So. Reese St.], Philadelphia and birthplace "Pinsk [Country] and Rowno [City or town].

The second page of the manifest lists Rowno as the family's birthplace. This seems unlikely given that Isaac and Anna's earlier manifest from 1912 lists Dubno as their birthplace and given that Sura was born in Mervits according to Wurtzel family oral memories. It seems probable they listed Rowno as their birthplace to stay consistent with their last residence and reduce any inconsistencies dealing with Polish custom officials. Several families who left Mlynov in 1921 and 1922 list Rowno as their

last residence and birthplace, even when they were born elsewhere.³² Some of these families may have been evacuated to Rowno during the fighting of WWI.

More mysterious is the manifest's listing of the Country as "Pinsk" rather than Poland. Pinsk is a city and district in contemporary Belarus. Between the wars it was the name of a town and district in the newly recreated Poland but not in the area of Rowno or the other towns (like Kowel) listed on the manifest as in "Pinsk." Pinsk seems likely to have been a mistake of some sort by the person filling in the forms perhaps because the newly created Poland's geography was still relatively new to ship captains and other officials filling in the forms.



*Figure 55 Morris and brother Marty with sister.
Courtesy Scott Crespy.*



*Figure 56 Morris and his wife Charma (Palat).
Courtesy Scott Crespy.*

³² My own Shulman family listed Rowno as their birthplace when they left in 1921 even though most of them were born in Mlynov. <https://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/Mlyniv/families.html#Shulman>



Figure 57 Morris with his three sisters
 Courtesy Scott Crespy

By 1930 Isaac and his wife Sura, now called Sarah, are still living at 2231 [So] Reese Street. Only their youngest daughter, also called Sarah now and age 22, is still living with them. Isaac at age 55 is still working as a presser in the tailoring industry. Daughter Sarah is listed as a “pocket maker”

20	2231	318	346	Fleisher, Isaac	Head	C	3,000	NO	M	Y	55	M	22	NO	YES	Russia
21				— Sarah	Wife			Y	F	Y	48	M	02	NO	YES	Russia
22				— Sarah	Daughter			Y	F	Y	22	S		NO	YES	Russia

Figure 58 1930 Census for Isaac and Sarah (Sura) and daughter Sarah

By 1930, Isaac and Sarah’s daughter, Anna (now called “Fannie”) and Max Schwartz are living in Brooklyn with four children. In addition to Joseph and Ruth, they have two additional children, Miriam age 9 and William age 1.

Isaac Fleisher passed away in 1933. In 1940, Isaac’s wife, Sarah, appears still in the same house at 2231 Reese St. She is listed as wd [widowed] age 59. Her youngest daughter Sarah is still living with her age 28. They have a lodger with them as well. Sarah, who was born as Soorkeh/Sura Wurtzel, passed away in 1948.

33				Fleisher, Isaac	Head			NO	M	Y	59	M	00	NO	YES	Russia
34	2231	700	1500	— Sarah	Wife			Y	F	Y	59	M	00	NO	YES	Russia
35				— Sarah	Daughter			Y	F	Y	28	S		NO	YES	Russia
36				Buchman, Katie	Lodger			Y	F	Y	28	S		NO	YES	Russia

Figure 59 1940 Census for Sarah [Wurtzel] Fleisher, widowed with daughter Sarah

In 1940, Sarah and Isaac’s daughter Anna Schwartz and her husband Max are living at 342 Powell Street in Philadelphia. Max is listed as a “tinsmith” in “ice boxes.” He is 45 and Anna is 44. Daughter

Ruth, age 22, is a typist. Mariam, age 19, and William age 11, are both in the household on the next page. Mariam is listed as a beautician. Their son Joseph is already out of the house.

The image shows two handwritten pages from a 1940 US Census. The top page lists Max Schwartz (32, head, born 1898, Poland) and Anna Schwartz (32, wife, born 1908, Poland). The bottom page lists their children: Ruth (22, typist, born 1918, Poland), Mariam (19, beautician, born 1921, Poland), and William (11, born 1929, Poland). The handwriting is in cursive and includes various notations and corrections.

Figure 60 1940 Census pages for Max, Anna and four children

It appears that Max and Anna’s daughter, Ruth Schwartz, married a man named Henry Resnick that year. Max and Anna’s daughter Mariam married Charles Stein by 1942 and they had two children: Rochelle and Sandra. Max and Anna’s son, William, is 21 in the 1950 census and still living with his parents. It appears he married Esther Lachman in 1952.

Isaac and Sarah’s daughter, **Ester / Malka Fleisher** (1904–1986) became Mary Fleisher and married Morris (Moshe) Padow (1905–1958) on Jan 4, 1950. It does not appear that they had any children.

Isaac and Sarah’s son, **Morris (Alter) Fleisher** (1905–1962) married Charma Palat (1908–1978). Her family was from Teplyk, Vynnytsya, Ukraine and her surname was shortened from Palatnick. They had five children: Miriam Esther (married name Crespy) (1928–2012), Jerome W. (George) Fleisher (1929–2014), Ruth Fleisher (married name Eisenberg) (1933–2014), Louise (married name Stein) (1947–2017), and another still living son and daughter.

Isaac and Sarah’s youngest daughter, **Serel (Sarah /Saraellen)** (1907–1983) is still living with her mother in the 1940 census. Later that same year, she appears to have married a man named Hyman Bronstein and to have had one child, Rebecca (married name Sheftel).

Isaac and Sarah’s son, **Martin (Motel) Fleisher** (1911–1990) married Mildred Ozernicki (1916–1997). They had three children: Joel Barry Fleisher (1940–2013) Arnold (1935-2020), and David.

The Fate of Those Who Remained

We have only bits and pieces of information about the fate of the Wurtzel relatives who stayed behind in Mervits as it came under Polish rule between the Wars and then fell first under Soviet control in Sept. 1939 and then into German hands in June 1941.

All we have left of those who stayed behind are a few photos in the Mlynov-Mervits Memorial book that includes lists of martyrs remembered by survivors and relatives, a few Yad Vashem records, and some oral traditions and family trees. Descendants of Ronya Leah (Wurtzel) and her husband Yankel Volf Katz indicate that the sons Shlomieh and Meyer Katz stayed in Russia and were killed in WWII. They are not listed among the known martyrs in Mervits or Mlynov and their specific fate is not known.

In the line of Soorkeh (Wurtzel) and her husband Isaac Fleischer, a manifest shows that their second daughter, Mirellen Mira (1901–1945) stayed behind in Rowno when her mother and siblings left for Philadelphia in 1922. The family oral tradition recalls that she died in Warsaw in 1945 but nothing else is known about her and her fate.

The Shoah fell most heavily on the children and grandchildren of Duvid and Meerel's son, **Zailek Wurtzel** and his wife **Sooreh/Sura (Gruber)** and their children and grandchildren. We know a bit about what happened to them.

The Fate of Zailek Wurtzel's and Sooreh (Gruber's) Line

As noted earlier, there were a few memories of Zailek Wurtzel before WWII by former Mervits residents and survivors Mendel Teitelman and his wife Sonia (Gruber), the latter a niece of Zailek's wife, Sooreh (or Sura) Gruber. Zeylik was remembered for being industrious and having the largest oil press, which was driven by horses.³³

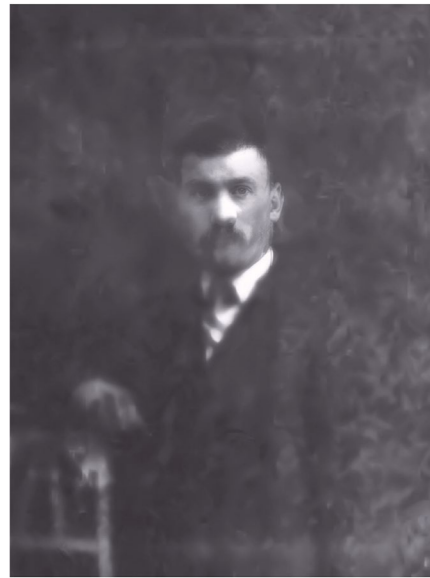
Zailek and Sooreh had seven children. Their exact birth order is not certain since we don't have reliable birth years for all of them. Some Yad Vashem records provide approximate birth years but the records are based on memories by survivors and are not always consistent with each other.

- **Ester Rachel Wurtzel** (married name Milhalter or Milgater) (b. ~1890/1893–1942)
- **Gitel Wurtzel** (married Fishel Kleinberg) (b. ?–1942)
- **Shrulick Wurtzel** (also called Israel or Yisrael) (b. ~1895/1898–1942)
- **Yosef Wurtzel** (born ~1895/1898–1942)
- **Meyer (or Meir) Wurtzel** (born ~1910–1942)
- **Moshe Wurtzel** (?–1942)
- **Pessia Wurtzel** (survivor, married name Steinberg) (1905–1994).

Photos of three of Zailek and Sooreh's martyred sons appear in the Memorial book.



Figure 61 (left to right) Three Wurtzel brothers: Moshe, Yosef, and Yisrael (Srulik), and friend, p. 471



Moshe Wurtzel, p. 475

³³ "People of a Shtetl," Mlynov-Mervits Memorial Book, pp. 92–93.

Yosef Wurtzel is remembered as one of the wagon drivers who worked 18 hours a day carrying heavy burdens on their back, in the reminiscences on the poor and difficult lives of the Mlynov and Mervits residents between the World Wars written by his first cousin Sonia (Gruber) and her husband Mendel Teitelman, who both survived.³⁴

Nahum Teitelman, the husband of another of Yosef's first cousins,³⁵ recalls in his essay in the Memorial book that in an early stage of the German occupation Yosef and Nahum were together when they were brought before the Germans and interrogated with questions about their occupations and many other questions until late at night. They were gone for so long that their loved ones were certain they had been murdered since every day several people were taken to the Mantyn forest and shot. Nahum described how he and Yosef Wurtzel were threatened with death by the Germans if they did not amass an impossible amount of goods.

After sitting there for several hours, I was the first one to be called in. The result: I had until tomorrow 12:00 pm to deliver 120 cakes of good soap; if not, I would be shot...Yoysef Wurtzel: [had to bring] 3,000 cigarettes. And we were escorted home since we were not permitted in the streets after 6:00 pm.³⁶

The next morning the wives managed to amass the needed items and the men were fortunately not shot that day. Nahum later survived to tell his story. Yosef did not.

Yosef Wurtzel (b. ~1895/1898–1942) is listed among the Mlynov martyrs with Rachel (1907–1942) his wife, (daughter of R. Chaim Berger), and Yosef's sons, Mordechai, Zelig (~1930 /1939–1942), Gedaliah, and Yaakov (~1937–1942).³⁷ One Yad Vashem page of testimony lists the children's ages as 17, 15, 14, 10 and 8 at the time of the ghetto liquidation. The family was probably among those shot in the ravine between Mlynov and Mervits where the killing took place, which occurred between October 8–10th 1942, according to survivor accounts.³⁸

Yosef Wurtzel's brother, **Srulik Wurtzel** (Srulik a shortened form of Yisroel and Israel), was remembered by survivor Mendel Teitelman, a husband of his first cousin, Sonia (Gruber).³⁹ He was born in 1895 or 1898 according to different Yad Vashem pages of testimony submitted by survivors Mendel Teitelman and Pinhas Berger. In the Memorial book, Mendel recalled being among "the lucky ones" under the German occupation who got to work in the mill: "as a former owner of a mill, I was grouped with the six families who were employed in Yisroel Wurtzel's mill. There I succeeded in being a 'useful worker' as was Srulik Wurtzel z"l, his brother **Meyer** z"l, his brother-in-law Fishel [Kleinberg] z"l, and his cousin Yosef Feldman z"l from Berestechko.

³⁴ Sonia (Gruber) Teitelman was a daughter of Yosef Gruber, a brother of Sooreh (Gruber) Wurtzel, Yosef's mother. See Sonia and Mendel's essay, "Poor Lives," *Memorial Book*, p. 219

³⁵ Nahum was married to Rachel (Gruber). Rachel was a daughter of Yosef Gruber who was a brother of Zailek Wurtzel's wife Sooreh (Gruber) Wurtzel.

³⁶ Nokhum Teitelman, "In the Depths of Hell," *Memorial book*, p. 303

³⁷ Mlynov martyr list, *Memorial Book*, p. 404. Yad Vashem records summarized in an appendix submitted by survivors Pinhas Berger, Asher Teitelman and Mendel Teitelman indicate the birth year of Yosef and some of his children

³⁸ On the liquidation and its location see the Introduction to the Memorial book. On the date of the liquidation see Memorial book, p. 52, footnote 2.

³⁹ Mendel Teitelman's wife, Sonia (Gruber) was the daughter of Yosef Gruber, brother of Srulik's mother, Sura (Gruber) Wurtzel.

While in hiding, survivor Bunia Steinberg recalled encountering **Srulik Wurtzel**: “After wandering the entire night, we were exhausted. It was pouring. We fell asleep in the hut. Fifteen Jews were hiding at this Christian's place. Among them were my sister-in-law Pessia's brother, Srulik Wurtzel, his wife Eta (“also Yita” or “Ita”) [Kavenberg],⁴⁰ and their three children — Peteh (the oldest), Leye, and Zelik.⁴¹ In a Yad Vashem page of testimony, the children are called Pep, Lea, and Azriel. Later, when Bunia's brother Getzel and his wife Pessia (Wurtzel) returned to that same Christian's house, they received very bad news that the fifteen Jews had been killed. Srulik Wurtzel with his wife Ita were murdered on the spot with their three children.⁴² Israel [“Srulik”] Wurtzel is listed among the Mervits martyrs with his wife Eta, his daughters Perel and Leah, and son Azriel.⁴³ (5 murdered).

Meir Wurtzel was born in Mervits in 1910 according to a page of testimony submitted by survivor Mendel Teitelman. He married Rakhel Lakritz. They had two daughters ages 8 and 6 – their names are not recorded. **Moshe Wurtzel** married a woman named Mariam and had 1 child according to what Pessia's son, Gerry Steinberg, was told.

Gitel Wurtzel married Fishel Kleinberg who was born in Beresteczko in 1895 to Azriel and Lea Kleinberg.⁴⁴ He was a flourmill owner. During the war he was in Młynov, Poland. They had three daughters 10, 8 and 6 whose names are not recorded. According to a family tree documented by Naomi Tomer in the Teitelman family, Fishel's mother's maiden name was Leah Gruber and she was a sister of Sooreh (Gruber) Wurtzel. That would make Fishel and his wife Gitel first cousins (since their mothers Leah and Sooreh were sisters). According to the same family tree, Fishel was one of eight Kleinberg siblings, Ester, Moshe, Sarah, Etel, Rahel, Eta, Freida, all of whom perished.

An episodic comment by Chaya Fisher, another survivor who contributed to the Memorial book, suggests that a Ukrainian who saved her life may have been the same one who shot the Wurtzel family. Chaya was captured and interrogated by the Ukrainian police while she was in hiding. They suspected that she was Jewish and interrogated her for a period of time. One of the Ukrainian policemen, who once worked in her family's flour mill, told his police colleagues he would interrogate her alone and would kill her if he came to the conclusion she was a Jewish girl. His intent was to save her. When he was alone with her, he instructed her to maintain her claim that she was a Christian girl because they didn't have any proof she was Jewish. “That same righteous man” Chaya recalled, wiped out the Wurtzel family even though he also worked with them.⁴⁵

⁴⁰ The surname Kavenberg is mentioned as Ita's birth surname in the page of testimony by Mendel Teitelman that appears transliterated as “Israel Worcel.”

⁴¹ See Bunia [Steinberg] Epstein, “Wandering During the Terrible Catastrophe (Excerpt from witness testimony in Yad-Vashem)” *Memorial book*, p. 359. Bunia was the sister of Getzel Steinberg, husband of Pessia (Wurtzel). She survived with them and their son Zelig.

⁴² Bunia [Steinberg] Epstein, *Memorial Book*, p. 361

⁴³ List of Mervits martyrs, *Memorial Book*, p. 417.

⁴⁴ According to a Yad Vashem page of testimony submitted by survivor Mendel Teitelman.

⁴⁵ Chaya Moses Fisher, “My Family,” *Memorial Book*, p. 383.



Figure 62 Gitel Wurtzel's husband, Fishel Kleinberg and daughter (far left) working for local peasant named Baialkosy⁴⁶

Zailek and Sura Wurtzel's daughter **Ester Rachel Wurtzel** (she is also remembered as Leah Ester) (1890 or 1893–Oct. 13, 1942)⁴⁷ married Rabbi Yosel David Milhalter who was from Miscocz (today Mizoch, Ukraine). She went to live in Miscocz with him. On contemporary maps, Miscocz is 50 km or an hour's driving time from Mlynov today. According to Yad Vashem records, this family perished in the Miscocz ghetto liquidation. Their sons Yaakov (Yankel) and Yeshayahu were in the Russian army at the time. Yaakov survived and later submitted the Yad Vashem records from Israel. It is believed that descendants of this Wurtzel line are still living in Israel. (3 murdered)



Figure 63 Miscocz Jews prior to liquidation⁴⁸

According to online sources, the Miscocz ghetto of about 1700 Jews were surrounded by the Ukrainian Auxiliary police and German policemen on Oct 12, 1942. The Jews fought back in an uprising which may have lasted as long as two days. About half the residents were able to flee or

⁴⁶ Identification of Fishel Kleinberg in this photo courtesy of Gerald Steinberg, a nephew.

⁴⁷ A Yad Vashem record submitted in Russian by Moshe Milhalter gives her birth year as 1893

⁴⁸https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Jews_from_the_Mizocz_Ghetto_rounded_up_with_the_assistance_of_the_Gendarmerie_and_Ukrainian_Schutzmannschaften_for_execution.jpg This photo is in the public domain.

hide during the confusion before the uprising was put down. The remainder were taken to a ravine and shot on Oct. 14th and 15th.

As discussed earlier, Zailek and Sooreh’s daughter, Pessia (Wurtzel) Steinberg was the only survivor among the children. Pessia’s husband Getzel managed to get his wife and son Zelig out of the ghetto. They stayed in crawl spaces under piles of hay, in lofts of granaries, in pits under pigstys, and in fields. The Steinberg’s incredible survival story has been documented in detail elsewhere.⁴⁹ After returning to Mlynov, the family made their way to the displaced persons camp of Pocking.

26	44	165	NC	NO	Steinberg, George	Head	W	M	48	man	Poland	W	me	WKS
27					— Rose	Wife	W	F	45	woman	Poland	W	me	H
28					— Gerald	Son	W	M	12	boy	Poland	W	me	PT

Figure 64 1950 Census for George (Getzel) Pese and Gerald (Zelig) in Springfield, Mass.



Figure 65 Gerry (Zelig) Steinberg and his wife Barbara surrounded by family

⁴⁹ https://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/Mlyniv/Steinberg_Family_Story.html

Appendix: Merle (Katz) Gould's "Very Brief History of the Wurtzel Dynasty."

This is a very brief history of the WURTZEL DYNASTY.

Meerel and Doovid Wurtzel lived in Maervitz, Russia in the latter half of the 1800's. They owned and operated a linseed mill and were considered to be well-to-do for that era. Meerel Wurtzel was the matriarch of the clan and decreed that all her grandsons, or perhaps it was all of her grandchildren, should name their first-born daughters after her. That explains why there are so many "Meerels" in the family; there is Meerel (Mary Gordon), Meerel (Minnie Katz Schell), Meerel (Merle Katz Gould), Meerel (Myra Shnider Bass) of blessed memory, and Meerel Flaisher.

Meerel's three children were Ronya Leah Katz, Zailek Wurtzel, and Soorkeh Wurtzel Flaisher.

Ronya Leah, who married Yankel Volf Katz, also owned a linseed mill, and lived in Maervitz, Russia, which was close to the Polish border. Her husband, HaCohen, was a descendant of the priestly tribe of Aaron and was a dedicated biblical scholar. He spent more time in studying than in trying to make a living for his large family. It was eventually left to his sons to support the family.

Of their nine children, five emigrated to the United States and Canada, and four remained in Russia. After several years of scrimping and saving, Louis Katz, who had by this time settled in Sheho, Sask. Canada, did send tickets for his youngest two brothers, Shloimeh and Meyer, to emigrate to Canada; however, their mother, Ronya Leah, begged them not to leave, so they did not. Sadly, they were killed, along with their families, in World War II in Russia.

Ronya Leah's brother, Zailek Wurtzel, had seven children, of whom six--four sons and two daughters--were murdered by the Nazis in the Holocaust. Only Paula (Pesse) survived. She now lives with her husband, George, and son Gerald, plus three grandsons, in Springfield, Massachusetts. They are prominent and active members of the Kesser Israel Synagogue since their arrival in Springfield in 1949.

Ronya Leah's only sister, Soorkeh, married Isaac Flaisher. They had four children. After Isaac's death, she remarried, eventually settling in Philadelphia. Little is known about this branch of the family.

Incidentally, my brother, Jack Katz, is named for his grandfather, Yankel Volf Katz, and my daughter, Rhoda Goldstock, is named for her great-grandmother, Ronya Leah.

Following are a few brief highlights of Ronya Leah's children:

- (1) Chaieh remained in Maervitz, Russia, while her husband, David Cooperstein, came to New York to seek his fortune. She died in Russia. She was the oldest of the children.
- (2) Bayla, who had married Moishe Cohen, lived in Oolik, Russia with his family. Their daughter, Mary Gordon, remembers coming to visit Bayla's relatives in Maervitz every summer from the time she was eight years old. Eventually, Bayla and Moishe moved to the suburbs of Boston, Massachusetts.
- (3) David Katz came to Canada with the Cramer family. He married Frieda Cramer and eventually settled in Guernsey, Saskatchewan, where he owned and operated a general store. After his untimely death, his children, Abie and Minnie managed the store for many years. David was instrumental in sending tickets to Russia for his sister, Bessie, and his brothers, Louis and Maurice, to emigrate to Canada.
- (4) Louis Katz, shortly after coming to Winnipeg, Canada from Russia, around 1912-1916, found employment as a salesman working for Mr. Dashevsky in his store in Theodore, Sask. He soon managed to save and borrow enough money to start his own business as a general store proprietor in Sheho, Saskatchewan, Canada. His brother, Maurice Katz, worked with him, and their sister, Bessie, kept house for them. Maurice died in Sheho during the great flu epidemic of 1918 and was buried in Winnipeg.
- (5) Bessie married Abe Shnider in 1919, and in the 1920's Abe and Louis Katz became partners in the store in Sheho. In 1927 the partnership was dissolved. Louis remained in Sheho with his family until Dec. 1946, when he sold the store and house and moved to Winnipeg, where he spent his remaining years. Abe and Bessie and their family moved to Inglis, Manitoba, where they had bought a general store. The business was sold in 1953, and the family then moved to Winnipeg.
- (6) Dvoorah died in childbirth in Russia. Her son was raised by his aunt, Chaieh.

I am deeply indebted to my cousin, Mary Gordon, of Boston, for supplying me with almost all of the background history of this genealogy. I also wish to acknowledge the contribution of my newly-found cousins, George and Paula Steinberg of Springfield, Massachusetts.