

**THE HIRSCH FAMILY SAGA  
A MLYNOV FAMILY STORY**

**mlynov**

**Version 22**

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**From the desk of Howard I. Schwartz, PhD**

**Cell: 408.838.5410 / Email: [hsaccount@yahoo.com](mailto:hsaccount@yahoo.com)**

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A note about the researcher/author:  
Howard I. Schwartz, PhD, is descended from  
the Demb and Gruber families in Mlynov.

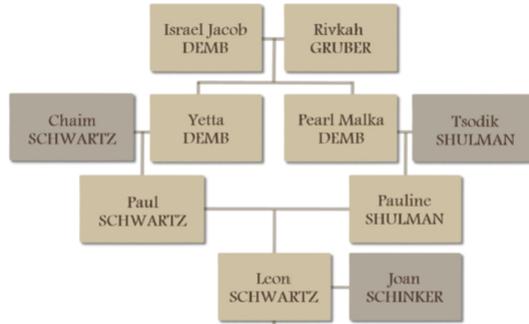
**HOWARD SCHWARTZ'S  
PATERNAL ANCESTRY**

Howard's great-great grandparents were Israel Jacob Demb and Rivkah Gruber.

Two of their daughters were Yetta and Pearl Malka Demb. Sister Yetta married Chaim Schwartz and Sister Pearl Malka married Tsodik Shulman.

The son of Yetta and Chaim, Paul Schwartz, married his first cousin, the daughter of Pearl Malka and Tsodik Shulman, Pauline Shulman.

Paul and Pauline, both born in Mlynov, were Howard's paternal grandparents. They were the parents of Leon Schwartz, Howard's father.



Howard I. SCHWARTZ

After Howard's parents, Joan and Leon Schwartz, passed away, Howard began researching his family roots, an effort which almost naturally expanded into an interest in the story of his ancestors' hometown Mlynov. As was the case in his own family, he discovered that interfamilial marriages were common among many of the families in the small town of Mlynov.

Howard has been publishing the results of his research on a website about Mlynov. This website tells the story of what became of Mlynov and the families that once lived there.

<https://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/Mlyniv/>

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## Introduction

I became interested in the Hirsch family story along two separate paths that converged together and made learning their story a pressing matter. Over the last few years, I had found a few records of Hirsch men who had listed “Mlynov” as their birthplace and I had set them aside as a research project to which I wanted to return someday. Along the way, as I let people know of my interest in the Mlynov shtetl, and what became of the people there, a cousin of mine named Saul Fishman, gave me a digitized version of a homemade film, made in the 1935, that was supposedly taken in the shtetl of Mlynov.

Saul is my second cousin. Our grandmothers were sisters. Saul’s family had gotten the copy of the movie from his cousin, Irene Siegel, also descended from two Mlynov families and who had herself become a family historian. Irene had saved many stories and photos, some of which had come into my hands as people learned of my interest.<sup>1</sup>

Saul summarized what he knew of the film in an email to me.

I think the story of the Mlynov video is as follows: Irene Siegel, a cousin on the Fishman side of the family, was attending an elder hostel. She met some woman there who mentioned that her family had come from a small shtetl called Mlynov. So they got to talking. When Irene learned that someone in that family had been back to Mlynov in 1935 with a movie camera, she asked for a copy. I don't know if the Hirsch family is related at all (although Mlynov was small enough that maybe if we looked far enough and wide enough).

The home movie that was passed to Irene and on to Saul’s family and then onto me, was incredibly precious. How lucky we were to have film from that small shtetl before the town and its residents were liquidated.

I had earlier seen some photos of Mlynov from the 1930s. In fact, my great-grandmother had gone back to Mlynov in the mid-1930s, and I had seen a few photos of her with family from that trip. But this homemade movie, though poor in quality, showed living and moving people in Mlynov, and what houses looked like, and how people walked and dressed, at least how they dressed on the festive occasion of having a visitor from the United States. You can tell it was a big event for the small town of about a thousand Jews who had become part of Poland after WWI and were suffering from worldwide depression and the growing antisemitism of the Polish government.

Ever since that movie came into my hands, I had wanted to track down descendants of the Hirsch family and learn more about them and the history of this home movie. I suspected that the records of the Hirsch men from Mlynov I had found earlier were related to the Hirschs who

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<sup>1</sup> The movie came to me from Saul Fishman, son of Ted Fishman, son of Clara (Shulman) and Benjamin Fishman. Saul had gotten it from Irene Siegel’s family. Irene is the daughter of Eta (Goldseker) and David Fishman from Mlynov.

had taken this film, an assumption that would eventually be confirmed. At the time, I had no idea that I would eventually learn not only the story of the trip that produced that home movie but would eventually share a copy of that movie back to some of the Hirsch family descendants who had never seen it before. I was returning the gift.

At some point after the home movie was made, someone had added a soundtrack of a woman speaking in a Yiddish accent and naming people in the film. She identified herself at the start as “Luba Kravitz” and calls out the names of people she recognized in the film. “There’s Abie Hirsch,” I thought she said several times. And there’s “Ruth and Ellen Hirsch.” I suspected that the “Abie Hirsch” she identified was in fact the Abraham Hirsch from Mlynov whose record I had earlier found. But I could find nothing about him and had looked in vain for some of his descendants. I would eventually learn that what she was really saying was “there’s A. D. Hirsch” and I would come to know a lot more about the interesting story of A. D. and his family.

In the meantime, some doubt was thrown on the authenticity of the movie which gave me pause and made me wonder whether it was in fact an artefact from Mlynov after all.

Here’s what happened. About a year ago, I had begun a project with another Mlynov family descendant named, Rich Polt (a descendant of the Goldseker family), to capture high quality video interviews of some Mlynov immigrants who were still living. Rich and I had met for the first time when I sponsored a Mlynov descendants reunion in Baltimore in August 2019. Rich is a legacy film producer and loved capturing stories via video interviews. For my part, I was becoming an expert of sorts on what became of Mlynov families. “Wouldn’t it be amazing,” Rich said to me, “if we could find someone from Mlynov who is still alive?” And so, I set out to find out if any Mlynov-born individuals were still living.

In the past year, I tracked down four individuals still living who were born in Mlynov and had survived the Holocaust. We were fortunate enough to be able to video interview one of them, Ezra Sherman, shortly before the COVID-19 pandemic shut down the country. When we showed Ezra the homemade movie of Mlynov during the interview, we had anticipated it would be a moving moment for him to see the streets he remembered as a young boy before fleeing the ghetto. To our disappointment, Ezra didn’t recognize the place and shook his head, “this isn’t Mlynov,” he seemed to mutter. That left us wondering whether the film actually was of Mlynov, though the narrator, Luba Kravitz, had referred to Mlynov several times.

It took me a while before I eventually tracked down, Deborah Dickmann, a descendant of the Hirsch family. I found her when a family tree I was building for the Hirsch family matched a tree she had put online. It was not the first time I had found a descendant this way. As I messaged her online, I couldn’t wait to ask her about the home movie. “I saw that movie,” she told me, “in the 1990s at a family reunion of the Hirsch family. One of my family members went back to Mlynov in the 1930s.” Bingo. I had found the Hirschs and confirmed this precious movie was indeed of my family’s shtetl in Mlynov. Deborah even confirmed that the narrator, Luba Kravitz, was a Hirsch descendant, a cousin of hers. What follows is the Hirsch family story that I was

able to piece together with her help and by connecting with other Hirsch descendants over time.

## The Story of the Hirsch Family from Mlynov

Ephraim Hirsch was born in about 1862 in Mlynov. His father’s name was Aaron (“the Cohen”<sup>2</sup>) in circulating family trees) and his mother’s name was Liebe or Liba. Ephraim was one of at least six children born there. His siblings were Chaya Hirsch (later Clara Newman) (1879–1962), Henie Hirsch (later Anna Katz) (1875 –?), Moishe Hirsch (1846?–?), Pessia (Hirsch) Halperin (1864–1942?), and Zelda (Hirsch) Berger (1865–1938).<sup>3</sup>

A 1858 census (revision list) from Mlynov suggests a bit of earlier history of the Hirsch family. Three Hirsch (Irsh) family members are listed in the census of that year. Ephraim’s father, Aron Irsh, listed as head of the family, is age 31 in the 1858 census implying his birth year was 1827. Aron’s father’s name is given as “Gershko” and he is called “Aron Gershov,” which probably explains where the family name Hirsch came from, “Aaron son of Gersh.” Liba Irsh is listed as Aaron’s wife in the census. She is age 30 in the 1858 census implying her birth year was 1828. They have one child in the census: Mordko Aron, whom I assume was the sibling of Ephraim remembered as “Moishe Hirsch.” Mordko is age 12 in 1858 implying his birth year was 1846.<sup>4</sup>

*Table 1 The Children of Aaron and Liba Hirsch*

Name	Years of Birth and Death If Known
Moishe Hirsch	1846? – ?
Ephraim Hirsch	1862–1929
Chaya Hirsch (later Clara Newman)	1879–1962
Henie Hirsch (later Anna Katz)	1875-?
Pessia (Hirsch) Halperin (1864–1942?),	1864–1942
Zelda (Hirsch) Berger (1865–1938).	1865–1938

<sup>2</sup> The identification of Aaron as of the priestly (Cohen) family is found on his daughter Zelda (Hirsch) Berger’s tombstone. <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/125177782/zelda-berger#view-photo=172169053>

<sup>3</sup> A Hirsch descendant chart from 1995 has another sibling, Daniel Mordko Hirsch (Hirsz) (1886–1961) listed, but his passenger manifest indicates his mother’s name was Dwoira, not Liba, the name of Ephraim’s mother. It is possible he may have been a cousin or a step-sibling of Ephraim. I discuss what we know of Daniel below.

<sup>4</sup> The census data does not all fit perfectly with what is known from later records since there would be a big gap in ages between Moishe, whose implied birth year is 1846 and the next eldest, Ephraim, whose birth year is around 1864.

We know that Ephraim Hirsch married a woman named Gitel Kolter by at least 1879 when their oldest son, Isaac, was born in Mlynov. Ephraim and Gitel had four other sons and two daughters in Mlynov before their migration to the US. The children were Isaac (1879), Ruchel Leah (~1881), Abraham (or Abram, later known as “A. D.”) (1881), Hersch (Harry) (1884), Gershen (Jacob) (1889), Abe (“Lewis Albert”) (1897) and last, but not least, the youngest daughter Jeanette or Jennie (1899).

*Table 2 Children of Ephraim Hirsch and Gitel Kolter born in Mlynov*

Name	Years of Birth and Death If Known
Isaac Hirsch	1879
Ruchel Leah Hirsch (later Gurtin)	~1881
Abraham Hirsch (later “A. D.”)	1881
Hersch (Harry) Hirsch	1884
Gershen (Jacob) Hirsch	1889
Abe (later Lewis) Hirsch	1897
Jeanette (“Jennie”)	1899

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## The Early Migration of the Hirsch Family

The Hirsch family began their migration in 1905. Immigration was already underway from Mlynov to the US, triggered in part by the repressive rules that emerged in the wake of Tzar Alexander II’s assassination in 1881 but also by the desire to seek economic opportunity and a better life. In 1890–1891, Getzel and Ida Fax left Mlynov for Baltimore when they lost their property under the new laws. Two of my own great-uncles, David (Rivitz) Hurwitz and Samuel Roskes, both husbands of Demb sisters from Mlynov, also arrived in Baltimore by February 1901.<sup>5</sup> In New York, Gedale (Joseph) Gelberg from Mlynov had arrived in 1898 and taken up

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<sup>5</sup> Bessie Demb had married David Rivitz and her sister Mollie Demb had married Samuel Roskes. Both of my great-grandmothers were Dembs as well.

residence in Jersey City where he opened a business as a blacksmith and made repairs to wagons.<sup>6</sup> A few other Mlynov immigrants were starting to arrive in Baltimore between 1901 and 1905 when the Hirsch migration started.

### 1905 Arrival of Hersch (Harry) Hirsch

In the Hirsch family, the first to arrive was the third oldest brother, Hersch, who was soon to become Harry Hirsch in New York. From the 1858 census, we now know that Hersch was named for his grandfather “Girsch,” which is also where the family name had come from.

“Hersch Hirsch” arrived in New York on July 8, 1905 having traveled from Antwerp on the SS Kroonland. His manifest indicates he was 22 years old and his occupation, which is not very legible, seems to say “founder” and the word scribbled above it may say “iron” possibly indicating he was involved in metal working. “Mlinow” is listed as his last residence and in later documentation, such as his Declaration of Intention, he lists “Mlinow” as his birthplace as well.



Figure 1 Hersch Hirsch arrives in NY on July 8, 1905 on the SS Kroonland

Hersch is headed to a friend with the last name of what looks like “Israel” or “Maisel” and a first initial which may be a J or F. The friend is living at what is looks like 55 Rullzer Street which I suspect is probably “55 Rutgers” Ave “NY” on the Lower East Side of Manhattan.

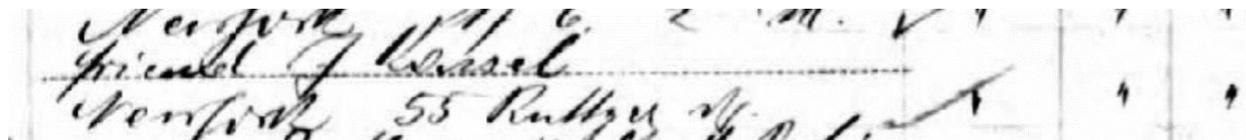


Figure 2 Hersch is headed to a friend J or F “Israel” or “Maisel” at what is likely 55 Rutgers Ave in the lower East side.

By September 5, 1906, Harry has become sufficiently comfortable in America to fill out his Declaration of Intention to naturalize with the anglicized first name of “Harris Girsch.” The name change probably sounded better to his adapting American ear than “Hersch Hirsch.”

<sup>6</sup> See the Gelberg family story from Mlynov: <https://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/Mlyniv/families.html#threebrothers>  
See also [https://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/Mlyniv/Ravings\\_of\\_a\\_genealogist.html#Migration](https://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/Mlyniv/Ravings_of_a_genealogist.html#Migration) for the flow of immigration of Mlynov families over time.

The Declaration shows that by fall 1906 Harry had already moved to 86 Lewis Street around the corner from Rutgers in the Lower East Side. This address will be the destination address of several of his brothers who are soon to arrive and helped me confirm that the manifests belonged to them.

Most of Lewis Street disappeared later in the century to make way for three housing complexes that were built. Only a small block of Lewis Street remains on current maps of the Lower East Side between Grand Street and Delancey. It runs under the Williamsburg bridge, which was completed in 1903 a few years before the Hirsch brothers arrived.

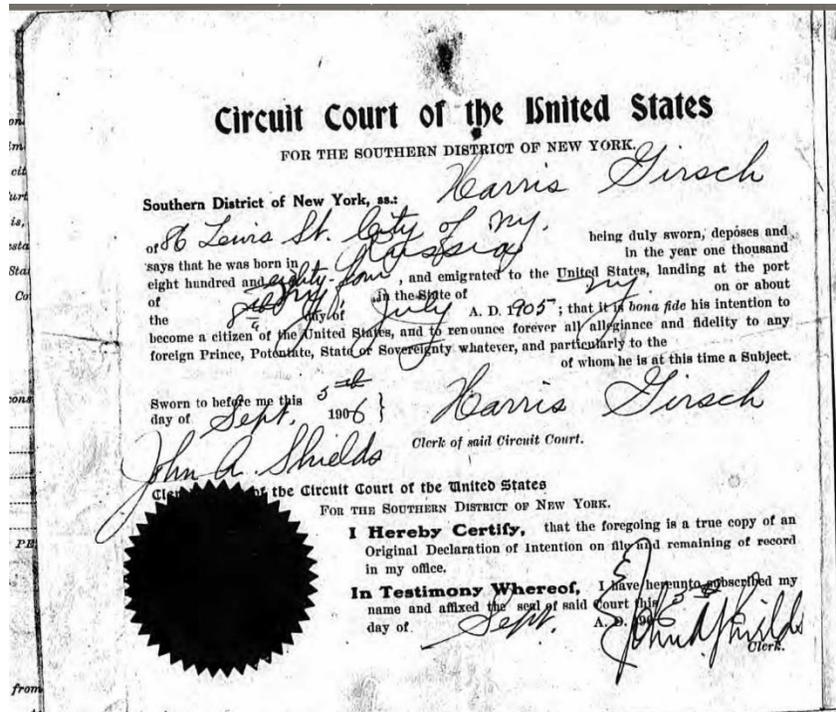


Figure 3 "Harris Girsch" Declaration of Intention Sept. 5<sup>th</sup>, 1906

When the Hirsch brothers were living there, Lewis Street continued further and ran diagonally from Grand Street to East 8th Street between Avenue D and the East River. The 1905 census shows that 86 Lewis Street, where Harry and his arriving brothers were living, was in a part of Lewis that no longer exists, between Stanton and Rivington.<sup>7</sup> There were 13 heads of households at the address and 74 individuals being mostly families with some boarders. The dominant occupation listed was "tailor" among this group, with a few listing "peddler," "carpenter," "painter," and so on.

<sup>7</sup>1905 Census: [https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/7364/images/004518309\\_00131](https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/7364/images/004518309_00131)

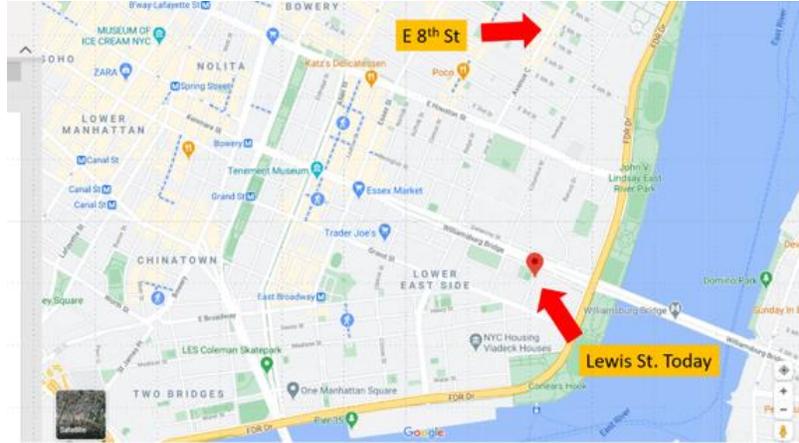


Figure 4 Lewis Street used to run from Grand at the bottom of the map to E 8<sup>th</sup> Street at the top

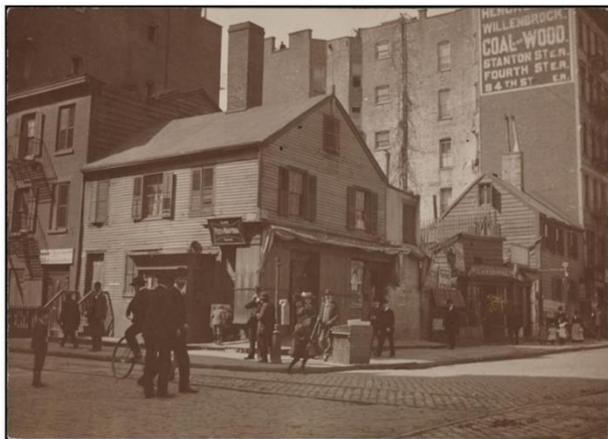


Figure 5 The Southwest corner of Lewis and Houston Street in 1902

### The 1906 Arrival of Gdalie Girsch (Jack Hirsch)

Not long after Harry filled out his Declaration of Intention, his younger brother “Gdale Girsch” (soon to be Jack Hirsch) arrived in New York.

Gdalie/Jack arrived in New York on Dec. 10, 1906, having traveled on the SS Rijndam from Rotterdam. He is listed as 18 years of age, single and in an occupation related to “metal” but which is not legible. His last residence is also listed as “Milinoff.” Gdalie /Jack is headed to his brother “H. Girsch” at **86 Lewis Street** where his brother had taken up residence, c/o of what is apparently the same friend his brother previously listed, but whose name on this manifest looks like “J. Waitzer.”

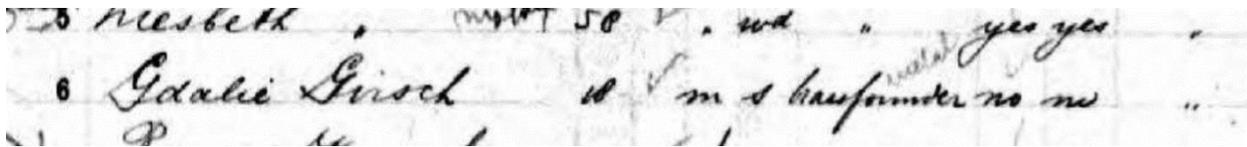


Figure 6 "Gdale Girsch" (Jack Hirsch) arrived in New York on December 10, 1906 on the SS Rijdam

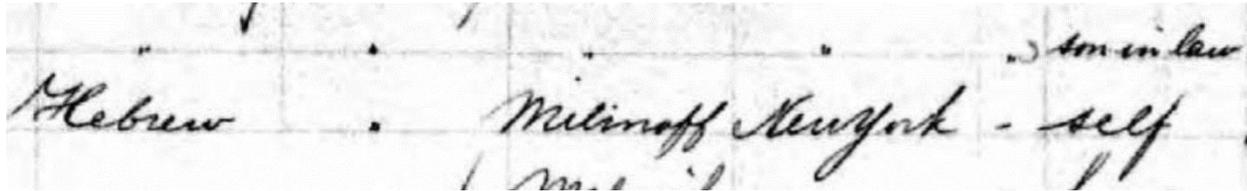


Figure 7 Gdale's last place of residence was "Milinoff"

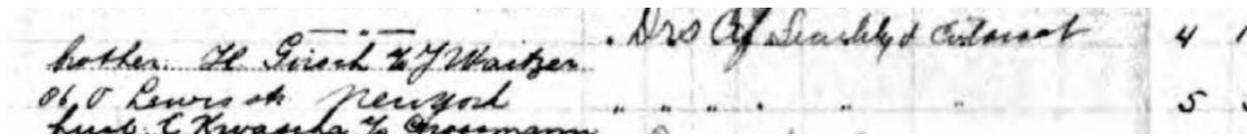


Figure 8 Gdale is headed to his brother H. Girsch c/o of J. Waitzer at 86 Lewis Street

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### Abraham Hirsch's 1907 Arrival

Eight months after his brother Gedalie/Jack Hirsch arrived, a third Hirsch brother, Abraham, arrived. He would be known later in the US as "A. D." Hirsch. He landed in New York on August 21, 1907 traveling on the SS Nordam from Rotterdam. "Abram" is listed as age 16 at the time and a laborer. He was traveling with another large family and listed as the nephew of his aunt Pearl, the mother of the large family with which he traveled.

I am unsure of Perl's last name on the manifest. Ancestry transcribes it as Perisi but the family lists their closest relative back in Dubno as Mechel Koller or Kohler, likely a variation on Kotler, the maiden name of Abraham's own mother, Gitel. I suspect this was the family of Abram's mother's sister.

Abraham and his aunt's family are also headed to his brother and their "cousin Harry Hirsch" at **86 Lewis St**, the same address seen before, c/o apparently the same friend that now appears to be listed as "A. Waitzer". Next to Abraham (towards the bottom), the custom official has written that he is headed to his "bro Aaron" (apparently another name for brother Harry).

Dubno is listed as the birth location of Abraham and his cousins, though it is likely Abraham's information was aligned to their profile to reduce trouble with customs. Abraham was almost

certainly born in "Mlinow," like his brothers, which is what he put down on his Declaration of Intention which he signed on January 18, 1910.

23	Perl	57	✓	ms	Russia	Russia	Dubne Jaluse
24	Jakob	18	✓	m	Russia	"	"
25	Anna	16	✓	f	Russia	"	"
26	Surrye	12	✓	f	"	"	"
27	Pepi	9	✓	f	"	"	"
28	Chase	7	✓	m	"	"	"
29	Hirsch, Abraham	16	✓	m	Russia	"	"

Figure 9 Abraham Hirsch (line 29) was traveling with his aunt Perl (line 23) and her children on the SS Nordam from Rotterdam to New York

57	Meckel Kohler		✓	ms	Russia	Russia	Dubne Jaluse
18	Meckel Kohler		✓	m	"	"	"
16	Jacobine		✓	f	"	"	"
12	Ch.		✓	f	"	"	"
9	Ch.		✓	f	"	"	"
7	Ch.		✓	f	"	"	"
16	lab.		✓	m	"	"	"

Figure 10 The family's closest relative is Meckel Kohler (or Kolter) back in Dubno, Volyn

23	Self		✓	m			
24	mother		✓	f			
25	"		✓	f			
26	"		✓	f			
27	"		✓	f			
28	"		✓	f			
29	Aunt		✓	f			

Figure 11 Aaron (line 28) is headed to his Bro Aaron (aka Harry) with his aunt's family who was also headed to Harry Hirsch at 86 Lewis Street c/o A Waitzer

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Table 3 Ephraim Hirsch, siblings and spouses and those who were arriving in America (non shaded) (1909–1914)

<b>Mlynov Born Hirsch Siblings</b>	<b>Spouse</b>	<b>Children</b>
Ephraim Hirsch (1862–1929)	Gitel Kolter (1863–1915)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harry (Hersch) Hirsch (1884–1986)</li> <li>• Gedalie Girsch / Jack Hirsch (1889–1981)</li> <li>• Abraham “A. D.” Hirsch (1881–1975)</li> <li>• Eisik (Isaac) Hirsch (1879–1973)</li> <li>• Abe Lewis Albert Hirsch (1897–1975)</li> <li>• Jennie (Hirsch) Levine (1899–?)</li> </ul>
Moishe Hirsch (?–?) remained in Mlynov	Bluma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ester</li> <li>• Others?</li> </ul>
Pessia Hirsch (1864–?) remained in Mlynov	Lipa Halperin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chaya Goldenberg</li> <li>• Faiga</li> <li>• Sarah</li> <li>• Yosel</li> <li>• Tzipa (or Cipa) Rywiec (Rivitz?)</li> <li>• Israel</li> <li>• Avraham</li> </ul>
Zelda (Girsch) Berger (1865–1938)	Ben Zion Berger (1865–~1912)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chava Berger (Eva Neistein) (1884–1947)</li> <li>• Nathan Berger (1889–1958)</li> <li>• Sheindel / Sarah (Berger) Berger (1892–1972)</li> <li>• Symon (Samuel Berger) (1894–1986)</li> </ul>
Hennie Hirsch (Annie / Anna Katz) (1875–?)	Chaim Yerukhem Katz (1872–?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shifre Katz (Sophie Cohen) (1893–1982)</li> <li>• Shmuel (Samuel) Katz (1895–1969)</li> <li>• Aleph (Morris /Moishe) Katz (1898–1969)</li> <li>• Chana Katz (Helen Goldstein) (1904–1997)</li> </ul>
Chaya Hirsch (Clara Newman) 1879–1962	Jacob Newman 1871-1941	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hyman (1896–1970)</li> <li>• Harry (1898–?)</li> <li>• Sophie (1902–1995)</li> <li>• Benjamin (1906–1989)</li> <li>• Leo / Leon (1915–?)</li> </ul>

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### The 1907 Arrival of Uncles Jacob Newman and Chaim Yerukhem Katz

On May 21, 1907, two of the Hirsch brothers' paternal uncles arrived along with two cousins. They arrived on the same day but on different ships. Both uncles had married sisters of the brothers' father, Ephraim Hirsch, and both uncles came ahead of their wives to settle into America before their families followed. They arrived two months before A. D. Hirsch who arrived in August this same year.

One of the uncles to arrive was **Jacob Newman** and he was married to Ephraim's sister, **Chaya (Hirsch) Newman** (who became Clara Newman in America). The second uncle to arrive was Chaim Yerukhem Katz, and he had married another of Ephraim's sisters, **Henie (Hirsch) Katz**, who became Annie Katz in the US.

### Uncle Jacob Newman

Uncle Jacob "Neuman" arrived in New York on May 21, 1907 on the SS Astoria having traveled from Glasgow, Scotland, where he likely landed from Bremen or Hamburg. He is listed as 35 years old, a "dealer" and his last residence is given as "Mlynov." His birthplace is listed as simply Russia, though his later Petition for Naturalization indicates he was born in "Comen Coshercki, Russia," a town I have not yet been able to identify. How Jacob ended up in Mlynov, where he married his wife, Clara Hirsch, is not known. But he must have arrived in Mlynov by



*Figure 12 A postcard photo circulating in the Schwartz family. Handwriting on the back identifies woman as Clara Newman with her son Leo [Hyman Leo]*

1896 when Jacob and Clara's oldest son Hyman was born.

When I learned about Jacob Newman, and that he had a wife named Clara, I recalled an unidentified photo that had come into my hands a year or so before. A postcard photo was among a packet of photos sent to me by one of my father's first cousins, Marvin Schwartz, who had gotten them from Irene Siegel, who had gotten them from Gene Schwartz, another one of my cousins. Marvin was currently in his 90s when he sent them to me. "Here," he wrote, "I don't know who any of these people are. Maybe you can figure it out." On the back of one of the photos someone had written "Clara Newman and Son Leon Newman." I had no idea who Clara Newman was at the time, but now I knew. She was Chaya Hirsch. The fact that her photo was in a packet of photos circulating in the Schwartz family illustrated the way that these earlier shtetl relationships had once been maintained.

I was partly through a draft of this research, when I subsequently meet Clara's granddaughter, Caryle Katz. I told her what I was doing and when she saw a draft of this narrative, she was so excited. She had never seen this photo of her grandmother as a young mother. She surmised it was Clara with her first born, who was called Leo or "Hyman Leo" and had been born in 1896. That explained why it was printed on a photo postcard and had probably been sent or hand carried by a Mlynov immigrant to my family in Baltimore, who must have been a friend or relative. Caryle wrote:

Amazing, Howard! I am positively overwhelmed by the comprehensive picture you have managed to put together of the Hirsch family and the Newmans and the Katzes. When I got to the photograph of Clara holding baby Leon, I almost leaped out of my seat with excitement and kept repeating aloud to myself, "It's my grandma it's my grandma!" It was such an emotional moment for me. How amazing that somebody in your family would have this photo postcard.

When Clara's husband, Jacob Newman, traveled to America, he was clearly traveling with another young man from Lutsk who was listed two lines above him (line 8) named "Pinchas Hersch Neustein". We know that they were traveling together because both young men were both headed to the address of "Hersch Girsch", again c/o of the same unidentified man named Weizer or Waizer. Uncle Jacob's fellow traveler, Pinchas, lists Hersch Girsch as his cousin.

There may be a discrepancy in the addresses the two fellow travelers give for Hersch. Pinchus lists the familiar "86 Lewis Street" which we have seen before, while Uncle Jacob lists Hersch's address as what may be "86 Division Street". The two addresses were about a mile apart in the New York's Lower East Side and it is unclear whether that was a mistake or Jacob was headed somewhere else.



Werbers. His sister Esther and her husband, Louie Werber, had immigrated in 1907 and 1904 respectively and Jacob must have gone to join them. We'll return to the Newman family in Providence below and we'll see that they will eventually return to New York where their story recombines with that of the Hirsch nephews.

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Uncle Chaim Katz from Chelm, the Father of Aleph Katz

The other Hirsch uncle, Chaim Yerukhem Katz, also landed in New York on May 21, 1907, the same day as Uncle Jacob Newman. He was traveling with his eldest child, Shifre Katz, who would become Sophie Cohen in America. Families often sent the oldest daughter with the father to set up home before the rest of the family arrived.<sup>9</sup> It seems likely the two uncles had planned their arrivals to coincide though they traveled on different ships. Uncle Chaim, as noted above, had married Henie Hirsch, one of the other sisters of Ephraim, the Hirsch brothers' father. In America, Chaim would become **Hyman Katz** and his wife Henie would become **Annie** (and occasionally Jennie) **Katz**.

Aunt Henie Hirsch, had been born in Mlynov in 1875, and was thus quite a bit younger than her older brother, Ephraim, who had been born in 1862. She had met and married Chaim Yerukhem Katz sometime before 1893 when their eldest daughter, Shifre Katz (later Sophie Cohen) (1893–1982) was born.

Shifre was followed in the birth order by Shmuel (Samuel) 1895–1969, Moses / Morris (Aleph Katz), 1898–1969, and Chane Katz (Helen Goldstein), 1904–1997. At least three and very likely all four of the children were born in Mlynov.<sup>10</sup>

It is not clear how Chaim Yerukhem first met Henie Hirsch from Mlynov. According to two of his naturalization records, "Hyman" was born in Chelm, a city that in East European Jewish folklore functions as an imaginary city of fools, often referred to in stories as "The Wise Men of Chelm." I had always thought Chelm was a fictitious place, but it was in fact a real town that was 190 km east of Mlynov (approximately 3 hours and 10 minutes driving time today). No one knows why Chelm was thought of as a town of Jewish morons.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Hasia R. Diner, *Jews of United States, 1654-2000*, University of California, 2004, 109.

<sup>10</sup> The three younger children were listed as born in "Blinow" on their passenger manifest from 1913, as we shall see. Chaim and Shifre's manifest says their last residence and birthplace was "Ludzsk" (Lutsk). Anna's later naturalization papers lists her as born in the district Volhynia, but does not give the town. It seems probable, however, she too was born in Mlynov.

<sup>11</sup> See "Wise Men of Chelm," Yivo, [https://yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Wise\\_Men\\_of\\_Chelm](https://yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Wise_Men_of_Chelm)

Department of Commerce and Labor  
NATURALIZATION SERVICE

No. 49111 ORIGINAL

## UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

### DECLARATION OF INTENTION

(Invalid for all purposes seven years after the date hereof)

State of New York, } ss: In the Circuit Court of the United States.  
Southern District of New York, }

I, Hyman Katz, aged 30 years,  
occupation cutler, do declare on oath that my personal  
description is: Color white, complexion dark, height 5 feet 4 inches,  
weight 122 pounds, color of hair black, color of eyes gray  
other visible distinctive marks none  
I was born in Cherin, Russia  
on the 14 day of April, anno Domini 1874; I now reside  
at 135 Broome Street, New York City, N. Y.  
I emigrated to the United States of America from Rottterdam, Holland  
on the vessel New Amsterdam; my last  
foreign residence was Dubne, 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  
Nicholas II, Emperor of all the Russias, of which I am now a subject; I  
arrived at the port of New York, in the  
State of New York, on or about the 22 day  
of May, anno Domini 1904; 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.

Hyman Katz  
(Original signature of declarant.)

Subscribed and sworn to before me at New York City, N. Y., this  
[SEAL] 24 day of January  
anno Domini 1904

John A. Cheed  
Clerk of the Circuit Court of the United States.

By John A. Cheed Deputy Clerk.

Department of Commerce and Labor  
NATURALIZATION SERVICE

No. 49111 TRIPPLICATE (To be filed in the same order as the Declaration)

8409

## UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

### DECLARATION OF INTENTION

(Invalid for all purposes seven years after the date hereof)

State of New York, } ss: In the Circuit Court of the United States.  
Southern District of New York, }

I, HYMAN KATZ, aged 30 years,  
occupation cutler, do declare on oath that my personal  
description is: Color white, complexion dark, height 5 feet 4 inches,  
weight 122 pounds, color of hair black, color of eyes gray  
other visible distinctive marks none  
I was born in CHELM, RUSSIA  
on the 14th day of April, anno Domini 1874; I now reside  
at 135 Broome Street, New York City, N. Y.  
I emigrated to the United States of America from Rottterdam, Holland  
on the vessel New Amsterdam; my last  
foreign residence was Dubne, 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  
Nicholas II, Emperor of all the Russias, of which I am now a subject;  
I arrived at the port of New York, in the  
State of New York, on or about the 22nd day  
of May, anno Domini 1904; 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.

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[SEAL] 24 day of January  
anno Domini 1904

John A. Cheed  
Clerk of the Circuit Court of the United States.

By John A. Cheed Deputy Clerk.

Figure 16 A handwritten and typed version of Hyman Katz's Declaration. In the typed version his birthplace is given as Chelm. In the handwritten version, his birthplace is given as Cherin, probably the transliteration of the Yiddish. Chelm is also given in his Petition for Naturalization.

A handwritten version of Hyman's Declaration to naturalize suggests he was born in "Cherin," Russia, which may also be an attempted transliteration of "Chelem" or "Khelem", the Yiddish name for Chelm.<sup>12</sup> How and why Chaim got from Chelm to Mlynov is not known. By all accounts, he certainly was no fool.

I had actually known something about this Katz family from Mlynov long before I learned they were related to the Hirsch line. In fact, I had earlier tracked their movements to America because their son, **Morris / Moishe Katz**, had become a kind of celebrity in circles of Mlynov family descendants as a well-known Yiddish poet with the nom-de-plum of "Aleph Katz" and often just "Aleph." He was thus called out for special attention in the Mlynov Memorial Book and he is one of three individuals born in Mlynov about whom articles are published.<sup>13</sup>

Aleph would publish his first Yiddish poem in 1917 and then wrote a steady stream of Yiddish poems and books throughout his career. Beginning in 1925 he would also serve as editor of the Yiddish division of the Jewish Telegraphic Agency (JTA), for which he wrote the news and edited the JTA-syndicated column "Literarishe naves" (Literary News).

It is an interesting irony that Moishe / Morris Katz would spend his life as a writer of Yiddish poetry and be remembered for that career. That trajectory could certainly not have been predicted when Moishe arrived in 1913 at the age of 16. His Hirsch cousin, Abraham "A. D." Hirsch, for example, who had also arrived at the age 16 as well, would have a very different trajectory, working to build a successful family laundry business. It is a bit of a mystery what makes one new immigrant go one way and another a different way and undoubtedly has to do with many factors including personal inclinations, capabilities and luck.

Aleph was, in fact, not the only young man from the tiny shtetl of Mlynov who would become a well-known poet. The other was, Yitzhak Lamdan, born in Mlynov in 1899, just a year younger than Aleph. The two boys undoubtedly knew each other growing up in the small shtetl of Mlynov. Lamdan, for his part, immigrated to Palestine in 1920 and became famous there for his Hebrew poem "Masada," which drew on his experience of dislocation during WWI. Aleph, by contrast, having arrived in America in 1913 before WWI, would eventually be writing his poems in Yiddish. Both were drawing on experiences and memories from their youth in Mlynov and both were interpreters for the culture in which they had landed.

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<sup>12</sup> I actually found two versions of Chaim's Declaration of Intention with slightly different details on them. One is handwritten, and the second is typed and accompanies the later Petition. I suspect that the person typing read "Cherin" on the handwritten version and knew that "Chelm" was the Americanized name for the place and replaced Cherin with Chelm.

<sup>13</sup> Most of the literature about Aleph is for obvious reasons in Yiddish. Articles in English about him appear in Encyclopedia.com (2019) and a fairly detailed literary bio appears in a Yiddish blog called the Yiddish Leksikon. <http://yleksikon.blogspot.com/2017/01/alef-kats-aleph-katz.html> (retrieved 2/18/2019).



Figure 17 “Henia Arelas” (i.e., Anna Hirsch Katz) (center) standing with Bassa (Teitelbaum) Barditch (left) and Sylvia Goldberg (right) and Marilyn Israel (front), granddaughter of Bassa. *Mlynov Memorial Book*, 500.

In 1964, when Aleph had published his eighth book at the age of sixty-five, a reviewer in the *Wisconsin Jewish Chronicle*, April 10, 1964 (p. 6) would write:

Aleph Katz' poetry is mystical, yet vivid, tinted with rare imagery but in a mold and a technique that rank him among the master of the word. It has been said that art begins when the artist has bridged the abyss between groping and finding. Aleph Katz had bridged that gap with sagacity and a truly unique art form.

This same reviewer of Aleph's poetry was also a good friend of Aleph's father and gives us a bit of insight into Chaim Yerukhem Katz. Writing earlier in the *Wisconsin Jewish Chronicle* on Dec. 19, 1952 (p. 12), the same columnist writes:

A good friend of mine, Chaim Katz, father of the noted Yiddish poet Aleph Katz, confided to me that when age began inscribing itself upon his frail body he decided to write an autobiography. He is sure, he told me, that writing has sustained him through the elder years. He has been busy on the autobiography for close to thirteen years and he hopes to keep at it until the traditional hundred and twenty years.<sup>14</sup>

Apparently, Chaim Yerukhem's Yiddish autobiography ended up being a thousand pages and is available in the Yivo collection.<sup>15</sup> One article about Aleph provides a bit of biographical detail about his father Chaim: “Khayim-Yerukhem Hacoheh Kats, had received ordination into the

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<sup>14</sup> The *Wisconsin Jewish Chronicle* (Milwaukee, Wisconsin), Dec 19, 1952 · Page 12

<sup>15</sup> See Yivo summary: <http://www.yivoarchives.org/index.php?p=collections/controlcard&id=33007>

rabbinate, but was a follower of the Jewish Enlightenment at the same time; he left behind a manuscript of some 1,000 pages of memoirs from his youth and his first years in America.” Apparently, Aleph’s mother also wrote a memoir for the weekly newspaper *Der amerikaner* (The American) in New York. I wonder someday whether we’ll be able to get those interesting documents translated and what interesting tidbits of information we would learn.



*Figure 18 Painting of Aleph Katz, circa 1940. Courtesy of Alexis Conerty.*

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#### Eureka: Finding the Manifest of Chaim Yerukhem Katz

As I mentioned earlier, I had known about the Katz family well before I had learned about their connection to the Hirsch family from Mlynov and I had spent quite a bit of time trying to track the immigration of Katz family members. I had, in fact, found the 1913 manifest of Chaim’s wife, Henie Katz, with her four youngest children, which we shall see below. But I had failed, despite a great deal of effort, to find the passenger manifest of Chaim Yerukhem Katz, and their oldest daughter Shifre. This was frustrating to no end because I knew the name of the ship and date on which they had supposedly arrived.

From Hyman Katz’s later naturalization papers, I knew that he had arrived in New York on May 22, 1907 in New York, traveling from Rotterdam on the SS Nieuw Amsterdam. And according to

the later naturalization petition that his oldest daughter, Shifre Katz (Sophie Cohen), filled out on December 7, 1942, she too had traveled on that same ship with her father to America, ahead of the rest of the family.

Despite all this information, I could not find Chaim and Shifre's manifest. I search and searched. I had even tracked down the manifest of the SS Neiuw Amsterdam from May 21, 1907 and discovered several other Mlynov immigrants were on that ship. In fact, I had earlier found that a great uncle of mine, Moses (Morris) Schwartz, was on that same ship that Chaim and Shifre were supposed to be on, and next to him on the manifest was one Isak Gelbstein whose last residence was also "Mlinow." On another list from the same manifest, I also found a Simon Goldberg from "Mlinow."<sup>16</sup> It made sense that Chaim Yerukhem and Shifre Katz might be traveling with others, since Mlynov immigrants often traveled together to the States.

On multiple occasions I had gone through this manifest, page by page, name by name, looking for Katz. I had also looked at the last residence of each person thinking I would find the tell-tale sign of "Mlinov." All to no avail. Recently as I was working on the Hirsch migration story, I decided to try one last time to the search for Chaim and Shifre's names before I finally gave up. I sat down in front of the TV, being a bit obsessed with the news lately, since the Capitol had been stormed on January 6, and voila!, I found them.

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<sup>16</sup> Moses Schwartz was the brother of my paternal great-grandfather, Chaim Schwartz. Simon Goldberg is unidentified, but we know quite a bit about other members of the Gelberg/Goldberg family from Mlynov. <https://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/Mlyniv/families.html#Gelbergs>

They were listed not under the name Katz but under the name **Jerichem Girsch and Shifre Girsch!** No wonder I couldn't find them! They had used Chaim's wife's maiden name "Girsch," a variant spelling being used by the Hirsch family who had begun arriving to New York. I'm guessing they used her family name, and not his, because they had "Girsch" relatives in the US already, and this would help them get through customs, or because they were able to secure a visa under that name. The other reason I had missed them previously was that Chaim didn't use his first name, but rather his second name which appears on the manifest as "Jerichem." Eureka!

The destination address that Chaim and Shifre provided confirmed that I had indeed found them. They were headed to 86 Lewis Street, the same address found on the manifests of Chaim Katz's nephews, several of whom had already arrived in New York. (Harry and Jack Hirsch had already arrived, Abraham "A. D." Hirsch would arrive soon in August of 1907).

There is one additional interesting insight to be gleaned from this discovery. The manifest of Chaim Yerukhem and Shifre indicates their destination was a "cousin J. Weitzger," whose name also appears on the Hirsch brothers' manifests, though they had described him as a friend, not a cousin. Whether he was a Hirsch or Katz relative is not known.

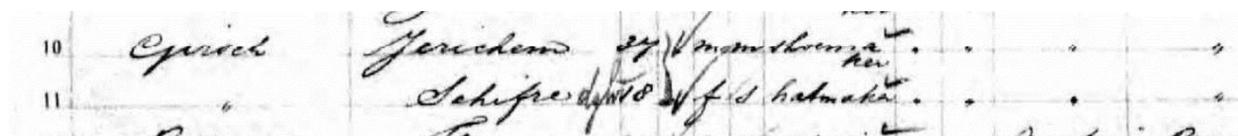


Figure 19 Jerichem Girsch (Chaim Yerukhim Katz) and daughter "Schifre" on the 1907 manifest of the SS Nieuw Amsterdam

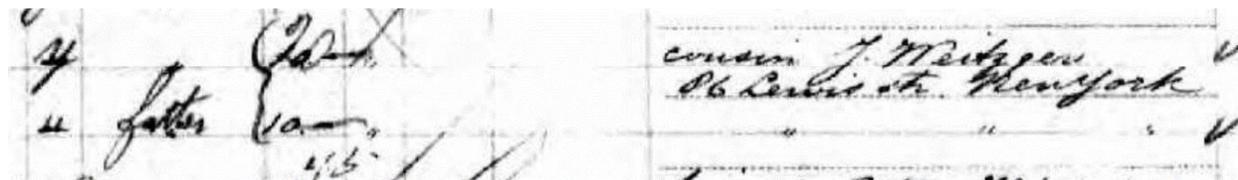


Figure 20 Chaim and Schifre are headed to cousin J. Weitzger, 86 Lewis Str. New York

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### 1909 Arrival of Isaac Hirsch

By 1907, three of the Hirsch brothers had arrived (Harry, Gdalie/Jack and Abraham). Nealy two years after Abraham Hirsch arrived, the fourth and oldest Hirsch brother, Isaac, arrived in

America. He is the only one of the brothers who left behind a wife and children, which probably explains why it took him longer than his younger brothers to immigrate.

“Eisik Girsch,” as he was listed on the manifest, traveled from Bremen to Baltimore on the SS Frankfurt, arriving July 15, 1909. He is listed as 30 years old, and a factory laborer. Like his brothers, he lists “Mlynov” as his birthplace.

His last residence, though somewhat illegible, appears to be “Trochenbrod, G Wolhynea [for Gubernia Volynhia, the name of the district],” a town 30 miles north of Mlynov, which seems to be confirmed by the fact that there are a few other travelers from Trochenbrod listed more legibly just above him on the manifest and with whom it appears he was traveling. His closest relative listed still back there is his wife “Sure Girsch.” Online family trees suggest her maiden name was “Coopersmith,” though it appears from her 1912 manifest, that it may have been a Yiddish variation of that, since her mother’s name there is listed as Rifka Kyfer or Kypher.

We can speculate that, upon arriving in Baltimore, Isaac stayed with one of the other several Mlynov immigrants who had already arrived in that city, before he headed to New York by train. His traveling companions on the ship were headed to family on Lombard Street, close to where other Mlynov immigrants had already settled.<sup>17</sup>

Isaac’s final destination, however, is New York and his brother “H. Girsch” again c/o J. Weitzer at 86 Lewis Street.

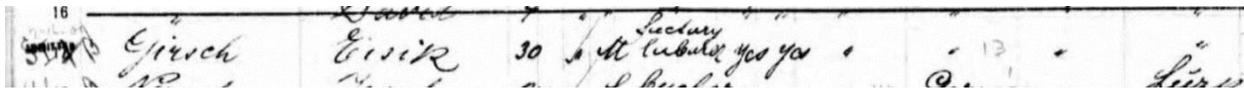


Figure 21 Eisik Girsch traveled from Bremen to Baltimore on the SS Frankfurt arriving July 15, 1909

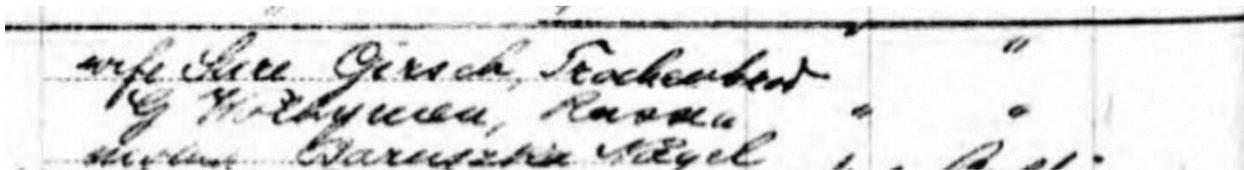


Figure 22 Isaac’s wife Sure Girsch is back in Trochenbrod

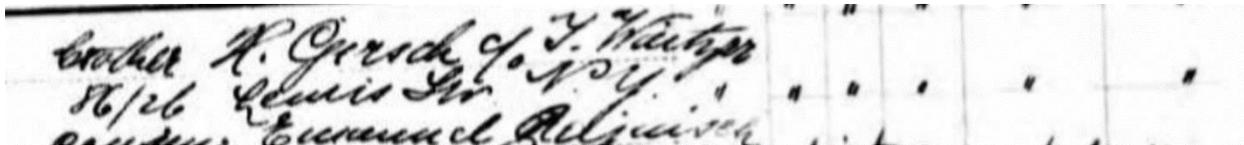


Figure 23 Isaac is headed to his brother H. Girsch c/o J. Waitzer at 86 (#26) Lewis Street in New York

<sup>17</sup> The family he was traveling with list their destination as 1109 E Lombard Street in Baltimore

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1909 Parents, Ephraim and Gitel, and Two Siblings Arrive

It also took me a while to track down the manifest of Ephraim and Gitel Hirsch, the Hirsch brothers' parents, who arrived a few months after the eldest brother Isaac in 1909. I had already found their father Ephraim's Declaration of Intention because he signed it the same day as his sons, Abraham and Isaac, signed theirs on January 18, 1910 (see below). The other son, Hersch, who had arrived first of the brothers, had signed his Declaration earlier.

From Ephraim's Declaration of Intention, I learned that he too was born in "Mlinow," which was also his last residence, and that he had arrived in New York on December 14, 1909. He had traveled from Antwerp on a ship the name of which on the document looked like the SS "Frailand."

372  
No. 31854 ORIGINAL

**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**  
Department of Commerce and Labor  
BUREAU OF IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION  
DIVISION OF NATURALIZATION

**DECLARATION OF INTENTION**  
(Invalid for all purposes seven years after the date hereof)

State of New York ss. In the \_\_\_\_\_ Court  
~~Southern District of New York~~ of the United States

I, Ephraim Hirsch, aged 47 years,  
occupation Saggingman, do declare on oath that my personal  
description is: Color white, complexion fair, height 4 feet 7 inches,  
weight 148 pounds, color of hair bride, color of eyes brown,  
other visible distinctive marks none

I was born in Mlinow  
Russia on the 15 day of September, anno  
Domini 1862; I now reside at 220 East 116 Street, City of New York  
I emigrated to the United States of America from Antwerp Belgium  
on the vessel Frailand (If the alien agent or other person in charge of the vessel or immigration company should be given); my last  
foreign residence was Mlinow 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  
Nicholas II, Emperor of all the Russias, of which I am now a citizen subject I  
arrived at the port of New York, in the  
State New York  
Territory of \_\_\_\_\_ on or about the 14 day  
of December, anno Domini 1909; 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.

Ephraim Hirsch  
(Original signature of declarant.)

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 18  
day of January, anno Domini 1910

[SEAL.]  
By W. B. Gross Clerk.  
W. B. Gross  
Clerk of the \_\_\_\_\_ Court.

11-508

Figure 24 Ephraim Hirsch's Declaration of Intention indicating his birthplace and the name of the ship he arrived on, signed Jan. 18, 1910.

I searched in vain, however, for his manifest under variations of Ephraim Hirsch, Girsch and Hirsz, all to no avail. About to call it quits, I tried a technique that had worked for me before and that often made me feel my research had become a bit overly obsessive. But obsession sometimes breeds results. And, in this case, it worked again.

I had discovered that when I couldn't identify the name of the ship, I could look in Ancestry at the name of every ship that arrived at Ellis Island during a particular month. In this case, I was looking for a ship with a name beginning with the letter "F" that had arrived in December 1909. When I found the manifest of the SS Finland arriving on December 14<sup>th</sup>, I began reviewing names of passengers, page by page, one by one. Often the names are difficult to read or have been incorrectly transcribed from the manifests. It is often slow going.

Imagine my surprise when I bumped into the name of another Mlynov immigrant whose family story I had already written about. Her name was Mollie Shargel.<sup>18</sup> "It couldn't be an accident," I said to myself, and so I looked closely under her name and found a family that was traveling with her that was from Mlynov. The name of the family was transcribed by Ancestry as "Fisz" and their last permanent residence as "Ulynara." When I looked closely at the record, it was clearly to my eyes "Mlynov." No wonder my searches in Ancestry hadn't pulled up the record. The first names matched what I knew about the Hirsch family so far and the last name Fisz may have been a custom official's attempt at the Yiddish pronunciation of Hirz, a variation that also appeared in the family's records.

The father was Efraim, who was 48, and the mother was Gillel (or Gittel), who was 47. Their companion "Mali Schargel" (later Molly Shargel) was a young woman of 19. There were two children with Efraim and Gitte: Abe, age 11, and Yeute, age 10. "This had to be them," I thought to myself. "Abe" must be the one who appears in the 1910 census as Abe and who later evolved to Lewis Albert. He had adopted "Lewis" to avoid being confused with his older brother Abraham, as I was to learn from his granddaughter, Deborah Dickman, with whom I was now communicating. "Yeute" [Yenta?] must be the younger sister, Jennie.

The clincher was their destination address. They were headed to a son Harry (something illegible, "Eisig? George?", perhaps a transliteration of Eisik Girsch?) at 248 E. 116th Ave.<sup>19</sup> This was the same address that appeared on son Isaac's Declaration of Intention which he filled out only a few weeks after his parents' arrival, as we shall see below.

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<sup>18</sup> See <https://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/Mlyniv/families.html#Shargels> for the story of Mollie Shargel and her family.

<sup>19</sup> In the 1910 census all the children have a mysterious E. after their first names.

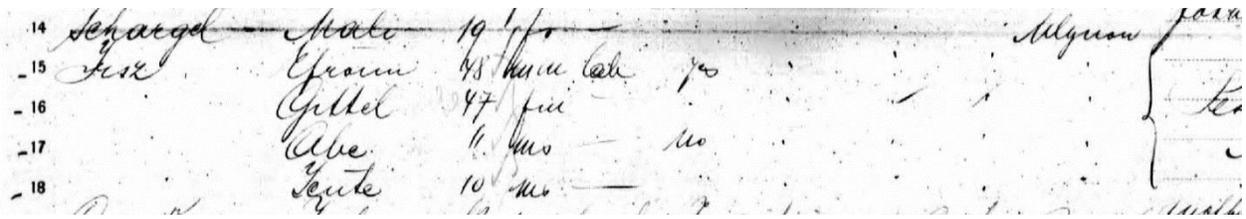


Figure 25 Ephraim and Gittel "Fisz" traveling with "Mali Schargel" (line 14) from Mlynov to New York on the SS Finland

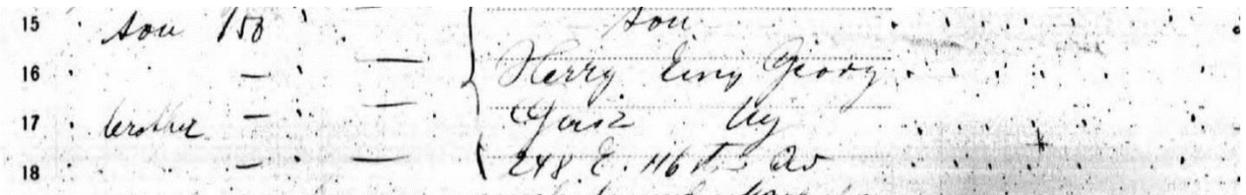


Figure 26 The family is headed to son Harry Eisz? Georg? (Girsch?) at 248 E. 116<sup>th</sup> Ave [sic]

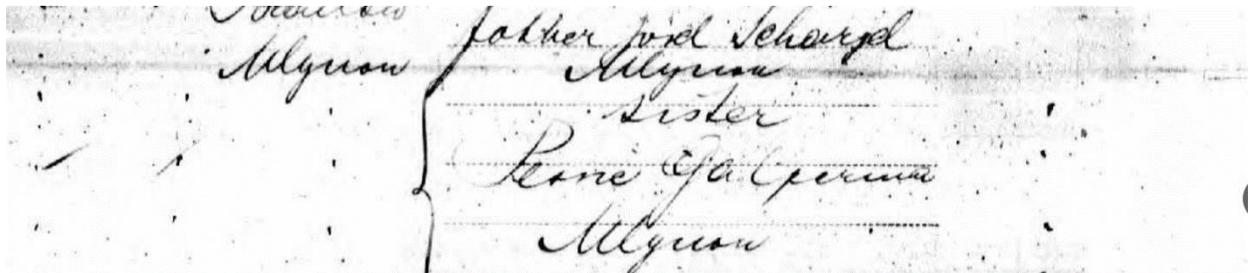


Figure 27 Mollie Shargel's closest relative back in Mlynov was her father, Josel Schargel, and the closest relative of Ephraim back there was a sister, apparently Pesse Galperin (=Halperin).<sup>20</sup>

Certain I have found their manifest, I showed it to Hirsch descendant, Deborah Dickmann, who had her doubts. Why wasn't the younger daughter, Ester Hirsch, also on the manifest? A 1920 census provided the answer. There Ester was listed as a stepdaughter of Ephraim. By 1920, Ephraim's wife, Gittel, had passed away and Ephraim had remarried a woman named, Mollie, who already had a daughter named Ester. Mollie and Ester had arrived sometime in 1907 according to their 1920 census.

<sup>20</sup> Ephraim had three sisters, Chaya (Clara) Newman, Annie Hirsch (married name uncertain) and Pessie (Hirsch) Halperin.

Table 4 The Sequential Arrivals and Addresses of the Hirsch Family

July 8, 1905	Hersch (Harry) Hirsch arrives going to 55 Rutgers to “J. Israel” (?)
Sept. 5, 1906	Harry Declares his intention and is on 86 Lewis Street
Dec. 10, 1906	Gedalie/Jacob arrives going to brother Harry c/o J. Waitzer, 86 Lewis St.
May 21, 1907	Uncle Chaim Yerukhem Katz arrives with daughter Shifre, using the last name Fisz (variation of Girz or Hirz)
May 21, 1907	Uncle Jacob Newman arrives with Pinchas Neustein headed to 86 Lewis or 86 Division St (or both) c/o Waitzer or Wazer
Aug. 21, 1907	Abraham arrives headed to brother c/o A Waitzer at 86 Lewis
July 15, 1909	Eisik (Isaac) Girsch arrives via Baltimore headed to brother Harry on 86/26 Lewis St c/o J. Waitzer
Dec. 14, 1909	The brothers’ parents, Ephraim, Gitel, with siblings Abe (Lewis) and Jennie arrive, headed, home of Harry, now at 248 E. 116 <sup>th</sup> . They were traveling with Mlynov-born Mollie Shargel.

### Moving Uptown to East Harlem

Sometime between July 1909 when Isaac arrived and was headed to Lewis Street on the Lower East Side, and December 1909, when his parents and two of his other siblings arrived, the Hirsch brothers had in fact moved to E. 116<sup>th</sup> street, where they were already involved in “hand” laundry work.

This new address was in East Harlem, an area that since 1895 had been filling up with Eastern European Jews as conditions continued to get more crowded in the Lower East Side (“downtown”) and as immigrants looked to better themselves. Both Eastern European Jews and Italians were moving uptown into the area.<sup>21</sup>

The conditions downtown continued to worsen after the turn of the century with the continual influx of more impoverished immigrants. In addition, well-intentioned reformers had succeeded in implementing new regulations that improved housing conditions there, but ironically also reduced the living spaces available as tenements were cleared away for public parks or the building of the Williamsburg and then the Manhattan bridges. By 1905, the Lower

<sup>21</sup> This section draws on Jeffrey S. Gurock, *When Harlem Was Jewish, 1870–1930*. New York: Columbia, 1979, and Gurock, *The Jews of Harlem: The Rise, Decline and Revival of a Jewish Community*. New York: New York University, 2016, 49–53.

East Side had lost 2/3 of its population to other neighborhoods of Williamsburg and Brownsville, in Brooklyn, and to Harlem.<sup>22</sup>

The undeveloped areas of East Harlem started attracting real estate investment and a building boom, with the approval finally in 1894 that the elevated subway system, the “El”, would be extended to that area. It was finally finished by 1904. Poorly constructed buildings were rushed to completion to beat the new building regulations that were slated to go into effect in 1900. Thousands of Jews left the Lower East Side for East Harlem to take advantage of what were apartments that were cheaper and of better grade.

Harlem had become a beacon. As one writer of the time observed more optimistically than was indeed the reality, “From a presser the man may become a cutter, then a designer, and at last open a shop in Harlem and his wife wears diamonds. Harlem is the goal and the further uptown he moves the larger, one may be sure, is the bank account.” This path to wealth was more available to the German speaking Jews who had moved up to Harlem first and occupied the brownstone flats and apartments west of Lexington avenue. They were followed by their poor brethren, the Eastern European Jews, who began arriving in large numbers around the turn of the century and followed them uptown principally to East Harlem.

By 1900 more than 17,000 East European Jews made up the first wave to invade East Harlem. By 1910, as the Hirschs moved uptown, there were 100,000 living there.<sup>23</sup> Initially they crowded into a tenement district along Second and Third Avenues starting at 96<sup>th</sup> Street and reaching initially to 105<sup>th</sup> St. The area between 98<sup>th</sup> to 102<sup>nd</sup> Streets between Second and Third Avenues was called “Jewish Market.” Increasingly, Eastern European Jewish immigrants encroached on the Irish and German ethnic sections below 125<sup>th</sup> Street and filled the area next to Little Italy.<sup>24</sup>

The 1910 census reflects the new situation of the Hirsch family. The census taker was on their street on April 18<sup>th</sup> of that year. They were enumerated at the street address 226–230 East 116<sup>th</sup> Street between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue in what appears to have been a tenement building. Twenty-six other families were listed at that address, most with Jewish names like Greenberg, Taub, Roth, Scheider, Rabinowitz, Livshitz, Levinson, Levitan and most being listed as Russian Jews, though a few were of Austrian and German extraction.

There were apparently still a few Italians sprinkled in at that same address such as #48 Farande Gaetano and #47 Teresa Pino. Other residents at that address were bakers, paper hangers, painters, a bookkeeper, a mason, a barber, and salesmen. There were also two dressmakers and a tailor, though the “needle trades” had tended to move to Brooklyn when they left the

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<sup>22</sup> Hasia Diner, *The Jews of the United States*, Berkeley: University of California, 2004, 106-107.

<sup>23</sup> Gurock, *When Harlem Was Jewish*, 28.

<sup>24</sup> Gurock, *When Harlem Was Jewish*, 40.

Lower East Side. The head of the Horowitz family, the Hirsch family's immediate neighbor, was a waiter at a restaurant and the family were also Yiddish speaking Jews from Russia.

Of the Hirsch sons, Isaac was the only one who was married by this point, but his wife and children had not yet arrived, and he was still living with his brothers and parents. He would not bring his family over for another two years. The 1910 census shows that both of Ephraim's parents were from Russia (probably Mlynov) but the mother of Ephraim's wife, "Gaucy" (Gittel), is listed as from Austria.

53	Hirsch Ephraim	Head	M	W	44	M	32			Rus	Yiddish	Rus	Yiddish	Rus	Yiddish
	Gaucy M	Wife	F	W	47	M	32	7	7	Rus	Yiddish	Rus	Yiddish	Rus	Yiddish
	Issac E.	Son	M	W	31	M	10			Rus	Yiddish	Rus	Yiddish	Rus	Yiddish
	Henry E.	Son	M	W	26	S				Rus	Yiddish	Rus	Yiddish	Rus	Yiddish
	Jake E.	Son	M	W	21	S				Rus	Yiddish	Rus	Yiddish	Rus	Yiddish
	Abraham E.	Son	M	W	19	S				Rus	Yiddish	Rus	Yiddish	Rus	Yiddish
	Abba E.	Son	M	W	13	S				Rus	Yiddish	Rus	Yiddish	Rus	Yiddish
	Bessie E.	Daughter	F	W	11	S				Rus	Yiddish	Rus	Yiddish	Rus	Yiddish

Figure 28 1910 Census showing Hirsch family settled in unit 53 at 226-230 East 116<sup>th</sup> Street

Rus	Yiddish	Rus	Yiddish	1909	Pa	Yiddish	Laundry Work	Hand Work	NA	No		Yes	Yes		RV
Rus	Yiddish	Rus	Yiddish	1909		Yiddish	None					Yes	Yes		
Rus	Yiddish	Rus	Yiddish	1909	Pa	English	Laundry Work	Hand Work	NA	No	0	Yes	Yes		
Rus	Yiddish	Rus	Yiddish	1905	Pa	English	Laundry Work	Hand Work	NA	No	0	Yes	Yes		
Rus	Yiddish	Rus	Yiddish	1906	Pa	English	Laundry Work	Hand Work	NA	No	0	Yes	Yes	No	
Rus	Yiddish	Rus	Yiddish	1907	Pa	English	None					Yes	Yes	Yes	
Rus	Yiddish	Rus	Yiddish	1909		English	None					Yes	Yes	Yes	
Rus	Yiddish	Rus	Yiddish	1909		English	None					Yes	Yes	Yes	

Figure 29 1910 Right columns from 1910 census show the men in the family involved in "Hand Work" in "Laundry Work" and having their naturalization "PA" (pending)



Figure 30 Gittel (Kotler) Hirsch, the wife of Ephraim Hirsch. Courtesy of Deb Dickmann.

*Figure 30 School House Photo of "Abe" Hirsch - August 12, 1912- the day the Titanic went down. Abe is in Row 5, 2nd from right. In 1916–17 he legally changed his name to Lewis Albert Hirsch before he joined the army. Courtesy of Deb Dickmann.*



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#### Back in Mlynov: Ruchel Leah Gurtin

With the arrival in 1909 of the Hirsch brothers' parents, Ephraim and Gitel Hirsch, and their two youngest siblings, Abe (Lewis) and Jeannette, most of the nuclear Hirsch family had been reunited and were settling into America. Only one sibling of the nuclear family was missing. Ruchel Leah was still back in Russia with her family. She had been born in Mlynov in 1881 and appears to have been the second or third oldest of Ephraim and Gitel's children.

She had married a man named Jankel (Jacob) Gurtin from Kowel and settled in nearby Lutsk by at least by 1903 when they had their first child, Saul (Sowoel) Gurtin. By the time her parents left for America in 1909, they had a second child named Basia (Beatrice) Gurtin who had been born in 1907. Three other children followed: Malka (Miriam) Gurtin was born in 1909, Enia (Edna) in 1912, and Michel (Milton) in 1915.

Perhaps because she was more settled than her other siblings, and perhaps because her husband's family was more religious, they didn't join the rest of the Hirsch family migration until after WWI. Tragically, by the time they arrived in 1922, her mother Gitel had passed away and her father had remarried and had a step-daughter living with him. Ruchel's mother, Gitel, for her part, never met Ruchel's youngest children who had been born after Gitel and Ephraim had left for the States.

31853 ORIGINAL

**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**  
 Department of Commerce and Labor  
 BUREAU OF IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION  
 DIVISION OF NATURALIZATION

**DECLARATION OF INTENTION**  
(Invalid for all purposes seven years after the date hereof)

I, Abraham Hirsch, aged 18 years, occupation student, do declare on oath that my personal description is: Color white, complexion fair, height 5 feet 2 inches, weight 125 pounds, color of hair brun, color of eyes brown, other visible distinctive marks slight upturn lips.

I was born in Mlynov, Russia, on the 15-day of November, anno Domini 1891; I now reside at 220 East 116th Street, Southern District of New York.

I emigrated to the United States of America from Holland on the vessel Wardian; my last foreign residence was Mlynov 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 Nicholas II, Emperor of all the Russias, of which I am now a subject; I arrived at the port of New York, in the State of New York, on or about the 21-day of August, anno Domini 1910; 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 this 18 day of January, anno Domini 1910.

[SEAL.] W. H. Crockett  
 Clerk of the U. S. District Court.  
 By W. H. Crockett, Clerk.

372 No. 31854 ORIGINAL

**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**  
 Department of Commerce and Labor  
 BUREAU OF IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION  
 DIVISION OF NATURALIZATION

**DECLARATION OF INTENTION**  
(Invalid for all purposes seven years after the date hereof)

I, Ephraim Hirsch, aged 47 years, occupation tailor, do declare on oath that my personal description is: Color white, complexion fair, height 4 feet 7 inches, weight 148 pounds, color of hair brun, color of eyes brown, other visible distinctive marks none.

I was born in Mlynov, Russia, on the 15-day of September, anno Domini 1863; I now reside at 220 East 116th Street, Southern District of New York.

I emigrated to the United States of America from Antwerp Belgium on the vessel Wardian; my last foreign residence was Mlynov 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 Nicholas II, Emperor of all the Russias, of which I am now a subject; I arrived at the port of New York, in the State of New York, on or about the 18-day of January, anno Domini 1910; 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 this 18 day of January, anno Domini 1910.

[SEAL.] W. H. Crockett  
 Clerk of the U. S. District Court.  
 By W. H. Crockett, Clerk.

374 No. 31856 ORIGINAL

**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**  
 Department of Commerce and Labor  
 BUREAU OF IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION  
 DIVISION OF NATURALIZATION

**DECLARATION OF INTENTION**  
(Invalid for all purposes seven years after the date hereof)

I, Isaac Hirsch, aged 30 years, occupation tailor, do declare on oath that my personal description is: Color white, complexion fair, height 5 feet 6 inches, weight 140 pounds, color of hair brun, color of eyes blue, other visible distinctive marks none.

I was born in Mlynov, Russia, on the 15-day of October, anno Domini 1880; I now reside at 248 East 116th Street, Southern District of New York.

I emigrated to the United States of America from Germany on the vessel Wardian; my last foreign residence was Mlynov 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 Nicholas II, Emperor of all the Russias, of which I am now a subject; I arrived at the port of Baltimore, in the State of Maryland, on or about the 15-day of July, anno Domini 1909; 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 this 18 day of January, anno Domini 1910.

[SEAL.] W. H. Crockett  
 Clerk of the U. S. District Court.  
 By W. H. Crockett, Clerk.

Ephraim Hirsch and his two sons, Abraham and Isaac, signed their Declarations of Intention on the same day, January 18, 1910. They all list "Mlynov" as their birthplace. Ephraim and son Abraham were living at 220 East 116th St. and Isaac was nearby at 248 E. 116th St.

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### Arrival of a Wife and Aunts

In addition to Ephraim and Gitel's daughter, Ruchel, who was living back in Lutsk, Isaac still had yet to bring his wife and family to New York. In addition, there were a number of other Hirsch aunts, uncles and cousins, still back in Mlynov and other nearby towns, some of whom began arriving in the US in this period. Three of Ephraim's sisters, Zelda (Hirsch) Berger, Annie (Hirsch) Katz and Clara (Hirsch) Newman, would each make their way with families to the US before WWI, as we shall now see. The other siblings remained in Europe and we shall return to their stories later to see what became of them.

### 1911 Arrival of Aunt Chaya (Hirsch) Newman and Children

In 1911, while the Hirsch family was still settling into their new life in East Harlem, Ephraim's sister, Chaya Newman, arrived with her four children. She would soon be called "Clara Newman."

Figure 31 Jacob Newman's Declaration of Intention, signed Nov. 1, 1909 in Providence, RI, living at 284 Charles Street and listed as a "Pedler."

112  
No. 3112

ORIGINAL

**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**  
Department of Commerce and Labor  
BUREAU OF IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION  
DIVISION OF NATURALIZATION

**DECLARATION OF INTENTION**  
(Invalid for all purposes seven years after the date hereof)

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA } In the UNITED STATES DISTRICT Court  
DISTRICT OF RHODE ISLAND } ss: of \_\_\_\_\_

I, Jacob Newman, aged 38 years, occupation Pedler, do declare on oath affirm that my personal description is: Color white, complexion light, height 5 feet 12 inches, weight 145 pounds, color of hair brunet, color of eyes brunet, other visible distinctive marks none.

I was born in Prussia, Bohemia, Prussia, on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of September, anno Domini 1871; I now reside at 284 Charles St., Providence, R.I. I emigrated to the United States of America from Glasgow, Scotland on the vessel Rotaria; my last foreign residence was Dubno, Prussia.

It is my bona fide intention to renounce forever all allegiance and fidelity to any foreign prince, potentate, state, or sovereignty, and particularly to \_\_\_\_\_, NICHOLAS II, EMPEROR OF ALL THE RUSSIAS, of which I am now a citizen, subject, I arrived at the port of New York, in the State Territory of New York on or about the 22<sup>d</sup> day of May, anno Domini 1909; 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.

Jacob Newman  
Subscribed and sworn to before me this 1<sup>st</sup> day of November, anno Domini 1909  
Thomas Hoopes  
Clerk of the UNITED STATES DISTRICT Court.  
By \_\_\_\_\_ Clerk.

[SEAL.]

11-209

Clara and her children probably stayed with Ephraim’s family in East Harlem when they arrived. But this was not their final destination. They were headed ultimately to her husband, Jacob Newman, who had arrived in 1907, and had, as we have already seen, gone to Providence, RI, to join his sister’s family. Jacob’s 1909 Declaration of Intention shows he is “a pedler” living at 284 Charles Street in Providence, Rhode Island.

A year later, the 1910 census shows Jacob and his brother, “Ike” (Isaac), living with the “Verbers” (Werbers) at that same address on Charles Street. The extended family is living in a house with four other families and several boarders. Jacob is listed as a “dry goods peddler,” his brother as a “salesman,” and his brother-in-law, Louis “Verber”, a rag sorter. A year later, in 1911, the year Jacob’s wife Clara and children arrive, Jacob is still at the same address in the Providence City directory but now listed as a “painter,” although he reverts to listing himself as a peddler not long thereafter.

172	Verber, Louis	Head	W	28	M	10	Mrs. Spadock
	Ethel	Wife	W	25	M	10	Mrs. Spadock
	Aron	Son	M	8	S		Mrs. Spadock
	Morris	Son	M	7	S		Mrs. Spadock
	Newman, Jacob	Brother-in-law	W	33	M	10	Mrs. Spadock
	Ike	Brother-in-law	M	29	S		Mrs. Spadock

Figure 32 Jacob and Ike Newman in the 1910 Census living with the “Verber” [Werber] family at 284 Charles (family # 172 counted that day)

Jacob’s wife “Chaje Neuman” (Clara Newman) and their four children, arrived in New York on July 31, 1911 having traveled on the SS Rotterdam from the city of the same name. Clara is listed as age 33. The children with her are Chuna (Hyman) age 12, Hersch (Harry) age 9, Sure (Sophie) age 7, and Pinches (Benjamin) age 5. The ages of the children given here do not precisely match their dates of birth as later recorded, but there are many possible reasons for the discrepancy.

The manifest indicates the family’s last permanent address is Kowel [also Kovel], Russia, a town that is 118 km (68 m) northwest from Mlynov. Why the family had been living in Kowel is not clear, since Clara, her siblings, and all her children had been born in Mlynov. The manifest indicates Clara’s closest relative in Kowel is her mother, “Lipe” [Liba] Hirsch. We know that this was not Lipe’s permanent residence since all of her children (i.e., Clara’s siblings) were born in Mlynov. Furthermore, by 1913, Lipe was apparently back in Mlynov as indicated on the manifest of Clara’s sister, Zelda (Girsch) Berger, who arrived in the US in 1913 headed to Chicago.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Zelda (Girsch) Berger arrived in the US on May 29, 1913 traveling on the SS Chemnitz from Bremen with two of her daughters. On the Berger family story, see <https://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/Mlyniv/families.html#Berger>



Figure 33 A photo of Newman family in Providence, circa 1912. Standing center: Clara (Hirsch) Newman and husband Jacob Newman. To the right of Jacob, continuing clockwise, son Hyman (Leo) Newman, Sophie Newman, Benjamin Newman, brother Isaac (Isadore) Newman, Isaac's wife Lena (Goldstein) Newman, Harry Newman and Abraham Newman. Courtesy of Caryle (Newman) Katz.

+	Newman	Chaje	23	f in home	Russia. Helen Russia Towel
+		Chana	21	in home	
+		Hersch	9	mono	
+		Sure	7	f	
+		Pinales	5	m	
-	Curryca	Katarina	26	f	1-370825-2/1/11 (1911) Austria Rukhman Austria Rukhman

Figure 34 "Chaje" Neuman and her children arrive in New York on July 31, 1911 on the SS Rotterdam

	Russia. Helen Russia Towel	no relation	Kowel - Wolin	St. Providence

Figure 35 The last residence of the family was Kowel and her mother Lipe Hirsch was her closest relative there

The manifest indicates that Clara was headed to her husband Jacob Newman in Providence at 248 North St. However, the destination address looks like a conflation of two of Jacob’s addresses and perhaps Clara had gotten confused.

Jacob had been at 284 Charles Street with the Werbers in 1909–1911 and the “248” on Clara’s manifest could easily be a transposition of those numbers. But the name of the street she provided appears to be “North” something Street. In fact, sometime between 1911 and 1912 Jacob left the Werber family home and moved to 20 N. Davis Street, which is where he appears with his family in the records of that year. I suspect that Clara had conflated 284 Charles Street and 20 North Davis Street, to get “248 North Davis Str,” probably an easy mistake for a Yiddish speaking immigrant.

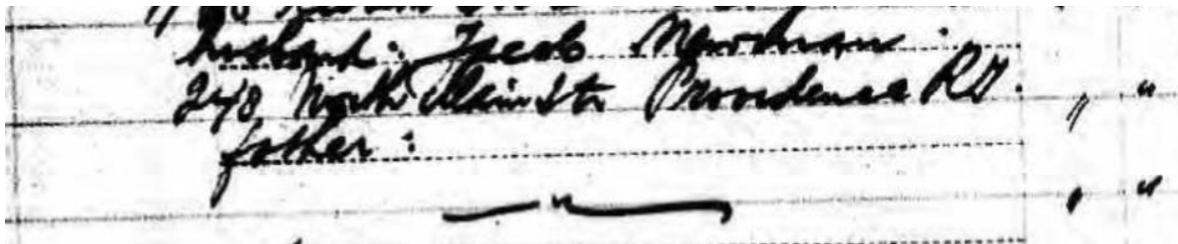


Figure 36 Clara and children are headed to husband and father “Jacob Newman at 248 North [Davis?] Str

Jacob, in fact, shows up at 20 North Davis Street in two records from 1912. The first is his Petition for Naturalization from May 22, 1912 which also shows that the whole family is together at that address. One of the witnesses on the Petition is his brother-in-law, “Louie Werber.”

Jacob’s Petition confirms that Clara and the children had all been born in “Mlynov, Russia.” Jacob has by this time reverted to being a peddler and the children’s names have been partly Americanized as Heyman, Harry, Sophie, and Benny.

\*\*\*

#### 1912 Isaac’s Wife and Children Arrive

While the Newman family was settling down in Providence, Isaac Hirsch, the eldest of the Hirsch brothers back in East Harlem was getting ready to receive his family in America. Isaac had been separated in New York from his wife and children since 1909. By 1912, he must have accumulated enough money and the situation felt stable enough to send for wife, Sara and their six children.

They arrived in New York on August 19, 1912 having traveled from Bremen on the SS Prince Friedrich Wilhelm. The family is listed as “Hirsch,” further indicating this spelling had begun to be codified in the family, rather than the alternative “Girsch,” which had also been used. His wife, “Sara,” is listed as age 27, and the children, Leah (Lillian) 11, Chaim (Hyman) 9, Moische

(Morris) 7, Abraham 5, and Basie (Bertha) 3. They list their last residence as Wolyn, which is the province of Russia of which Mlynov was then part, but no town name is given.

No. 1760 ORIGINAL

## UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

### PETITION FOR NATURALIZATION

To the Honorable the District Court of The United States for the District of Rhode Island

The petition of Jacob Newman hereby filed, respectfully sheweth:

First. My place of residence is 20 North Davis St., Providence (Give number, street, city or town, and State.) RHODE ISLAND.

Second. My occupation is Caddy

Third. I was born on the 10 day of September, anno Domini 1871, at Roman Goshordi, Russia

Fourth. I emigrated to the United States from Warsaw, Scotland on or about the 6 day of May anno Domini 1907, and arrived in the United States, at the port of New York, on the 21 day of May anno Domini 1907, on the vessel Alstina (If the alien arrived otherwise than by vessel, the character of conveyance or name of transportation company should be given.)

Fifth. I declared my intention to become a citizen of the United States on the 1st day of November, anno Domini 1909, at Providence, R.I. in the U. S. District Court of Providence, R.I.

Sixth. I am married. My wife's name is Abess and now resides at Providence, R.I. She was born in Moscow, Russia

I have 4 children, and the name, date and place of birth, and place of residence of each of said children is as follows:

<u>Reynard</u>	<u>born</u>	<u>Sept. 21, 1896</u>	<u>at</u>	<u>Moscow, Russia</u>	<u>resides</u>	<u>Providence, R.I.</u>
<u>Harry</u>	<u>"</u>	<u>June 12, 1898</u>	<u>"</u>	<u>"</u>	<u>"</u>	<u>"</u>
<u>Sophie</u>	<u>"</u>	<u>July 4, 1902</u>	<u>"</u>	<u>"</u>	<u>"</u>	<u>"</u>
<u>Benny</u>	<u>"</u>	<u>July 1, 1906</u>	<u>"</u>	<u>"</u>	<u>"</u>	<u>"</u>

Figure 37 Jacob Newman's Petition showing his wife and children living with him in Providence on North Davis St

Family name	Given name or names
Newman	Jacob
Address	
20 N. Davis St., Providence	
Certificate no. (or vol. and page)	Title and location of court
Vol. 4 P-10 C-309604	U. S. District, Prov.
Country of birth or allegiance	When born (or age)
Russia	Sept. 10, 1871
Date and port of arrival in U. S.	Date of naturalization
May 21, 1907 New York, N.Y.	Sept. 28, 1912
Names and addresses of witnesses	
Morris Gorin, 33 Ashburton St., Providence	
Louie Werber, 302 Charles St., Providence	
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR, Immigration and Naturalization Service. Form No. 1-IP. 14-3202	
1	

Figure 38 Naturalization record of Jacob Newman showing address 20 N. Davis Street and witness Louie Werber

The family was headed to Sara's husband and the children's father, "Hirsch Isaak" at 244 East 116<sup>th</sup> Ave New York, which was just a couple doors away from where Isaac had been living with his family in the 1910 census. He had enough money now to afford a unit for his own family.

Sarah lists her closest relative back in Europe as her mother Rifka Kyfer or Kryfer (or something like that). It appears that Kyfer was later Americanized into Coopersmith, which is the maiden name remembered for Sarah.

A handwritten immigration manifest for the Hirsch family. The names listed are Sara, Leah, Chaim, Moishe, Abraham, and Basie. There are checkmarks and handwritten notes in the columns, including 'de homanij' and 'yes'.

Figure 39 Isaac's wife Sara and children arrive on August 19, 1912 on the Prince Friedrich Wilhelm from Bremen

A handwritten note in a table format. It reads: 'Ryfa', 'Walya', 'with Rifka Kyfer, sister of Walya', and 'M.F. New York'.

Figure 40 Sure's closest relative is her mother Ryfka Kyfer

A printed immigration manifest entry for Sara Hirsch. The entry number is 31. The name is 'Hirsch Sara & son'. The date is '5 15/20'. The destination is '6 To husb'.

Figure 41 The family was held for special inquiry in customs but eventually admitted to the US

A handwritten note in a table format. It reads: 'husband: Hirsch Issak', '244 East 116th New York N.Y.', and 'father:'.

Figure 42 Sarah is headed to her husband Issak Hirsch at 244 E 116<sup>th</sup> Str

The name of the town under her mother's name appears to be something like "sohnied." Since Isaac had earlier indicated on his manifest that his wife had been back in Trochenbrod when he left, I suspect that this town name may be an attempt by an official at one of the many alternate variations of Torochenbrod: Zof'yuvka [Rus], Zofjówka [Pol], Trokhymbrid [Ukr],

Sofievka, Sofiovka, Sofiyevka, Trochenbrod, Trochinbrod, Trokhinbrod, Trochimbrod, Trokhnibrod, Zofiówka, Zofiuvka.<sup>26</sup> Sara's birthplace is similarly obscure. It appears to be something like "Kolumbia Sustosh".

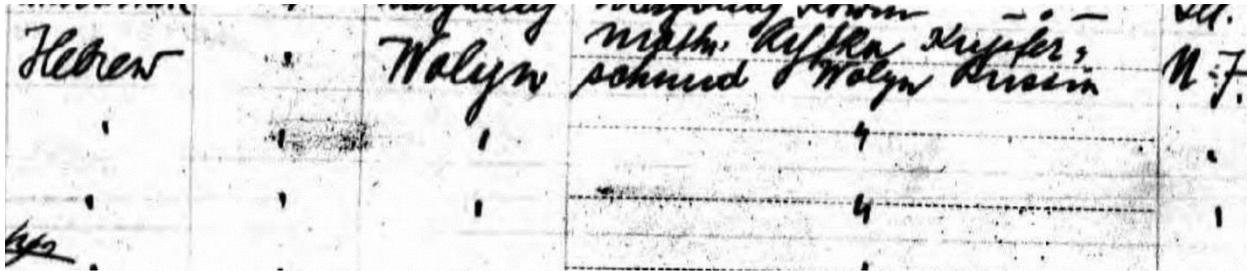


Figure 43 Sarah's closest relative back in [Mlynov] Wolyn is her mother Rifka Kryfer in some town starting with an S.

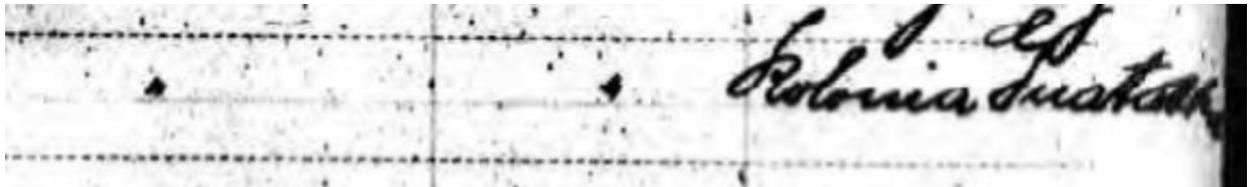


Figure 44 The birthplace listed for Sarah and the children



Figure 45 Ephraim Hirsch with three of his sisters.  
Courtesy of Jenny Silverman.

<sup>26</sup> On the Trochenbrod name variations, see <https://www.jewishgen.org/communities/community.php?usbgn=1060970>

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1913 Aunts Zelda Berger and Henie Katz Arrive With Cousins

In 1913, two other aunts of the Hirsch brothers arrive with their children. Both of them are sisters of the brothers' father, Ephraim. The first to arrive was Zelda (Girsch) Berger with two daughters, two grandchildren, and some other Mlynov travelers.<sup>27</sup>

Zelda had been born in 1865, between the ages of her brother, Ephraim, and her sister, Henie. She had married Ben Zion Berger from Mlynov by 1884 when they had their daughter, Chava (Eva Neistein) and three other children, Nathan, Sheindel (Sarah Berger) and Symon (Samuel) Berger. Already in 1911, Zelda's son, Nathan Berger, had arrived in the US and headed to Chicago following his sister's husband, Pinchus Neistein (Paul Neistein), who had arrived earlier in January 1910.

Passenger	Age	Gender	Relationship	Destination	Language
Steinberg	32	f	Daughter	Russia	Hebrew
Berger	44	f	Wife		
Schindler	21	f	Daughter		
Neistein	40	m	Daughter's husband	Russia	Hebrew
Wulach	28	f	Wife		
Chawe	4	f	Child		
Reisel	2	f	Child		

Figure 46 “Selda Berger, her daughters Sheindel Berger and Chawe Neistein (Eve Neistein) and Chawe’s two children travel on SS Chemnitz from Bremen to Philadelphia on their way to Chicago with two other Mlynov travelers, Ruchel Steinberg (future Rachel Berger) and Jankel Wulach (Jacob Wallace)

By 1913, Zelda's husband, Ben Zion, had passed away and so she and her two daughters headed to Chicago to be with her son and son-in-law. They traveled from Bremen to Philadelphia on the SS Chemnitz, arriving on May 30, 1913. Their destination was her son Nathan in Chicago, though one suspects they probably paid a visit to her brother, Ephraim, and his sons who by this time had relocated to Jersey City, as we soon learn.

<sup>27</sup> The Berger family was traveling with Mlynov immigrants, Ruchel Steinberg (later Rose Berger) (incidentally a first cousin of mine 2x removed) and Jankel Wulach (Jacob Wallace). The details of the Berger family is told in a separate account. [https://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/Mlyniv/documents/The\\_Berger\\_Family\\_from\\_Mlynov.pdf](https://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/Mlyniv/documents/The_Berger_Family_from_Mlynov.pdf)



was given as “Blinuv,” a transliteration I have seen on other records as well. It is odd that a daughter “S. Katz” is listed as their closest relative back there, since the oldest child Shifre had already arrived in the state with her father, unless she had gone back to assist them.

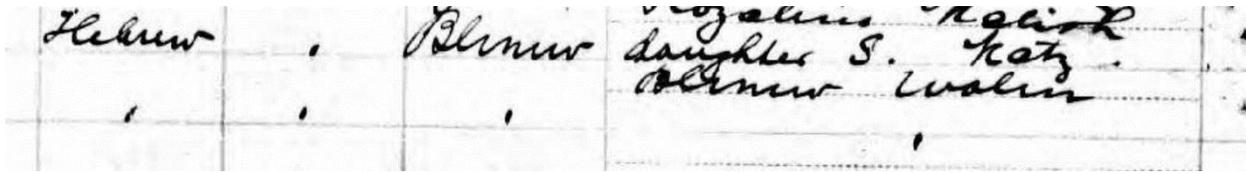


Figure 50 The Katz’s last residence was “Blinuv and Henie’s daughter S. Katz was the closest relative back there.

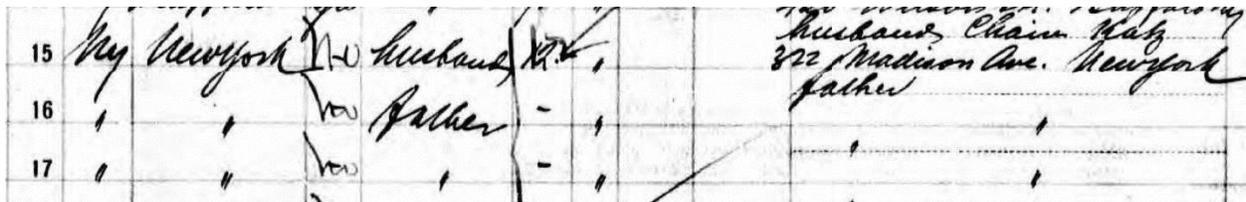


Figure 51 They were headed to join Heine’s husband Chaim Katz at 322 Madison Avenue. They

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### The Move to Jersey City and the Wet Wash Laundry

It appears that shortly before Isaac’s wife and children arrived, the Hirsch family had made a decision to move their business to Jersey City. The story of their “wet-wash” laundry is recounted in a full-page advertising style article written in 1930 by one of the Hirsch brothers, “A.D.” Hirsch [Abraham D.], looking back at the family’s success in this new business.

It seems likely that the Hirsch family wanted to leave the area of 116<sup>th</sup> street in East Harlem, which was getting increasingly crowded with immigrants. In 1913, the Charity Organization Society declared that the “problems of poverty, need and congestion in East Harlem” were comparable to those in the Lower East Side and that the tenements in the area were “narrow and thickly populated with a poor class of people.”<sup>28</sup> In leaving East Harlem, the Hirschs beat the Jewish exit which really began in earnest in the 1920s and had been completed by the end of the decade. By the end of the 1920s, East Harlem’s hey-day for Jewish life was over.

Looking back from 1930, A. D. Hirsch recalls that the family purchased a laundry business called “Garfield Wet Wash Laundry” that at the time was on 975 Garfield Ave in Jersey City. A search of that address in the local *Jersey Journal* from those years shows that Standard Wet Wash Laundry was up and running by at least May 1911 and may have launched that month, given a string of ads that appear from May 13th through the 24th that month.

<sup>28</sup> Jeffrey S. Gurock, *When Harlem Was Jewish*, 162.

It does not appear, however, that the business the Hirschs purchased was in fact called the “Garfield Wet Wash laundry,” as A. D. remembered. It was after all twenty years later. At that same address, 975 Garfield Ave, there appears to have been a business called the “Crystal Steam Family Laundry” that advertised between March 1908 and October 15, 1910. The business initially had “steam” in its title but by 1910 that term had disappeared, probably feeling the pressure of the new “wet-wash” technology, described below. It seems reasonable to conclude that between October 15, 1910 and May 13, 1911, the Hirschs purchased that business. In 1949, the Hirschs would celebrate the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their business remembering that the business had started in 1909 but that seems to have been a mistaken recollection.

**IN 1909 AND TODAY** -- In 1909 two single horse-drawn wagons hired from Burke Bros. livery stables was the first delivery service the Standard Laundry inaugurated. Motorized gas trucks were purchased in 1916 and 45 electric delivery trucks in 1921. Since then gas delivery trucks have been added. Today 75 trucks are in operation throughout four counties including seashore and mountain resorts. The upper photo shows the first electric truck Standard Laundry used in 1921. The lower photo is that of a large section of the truck fleet.

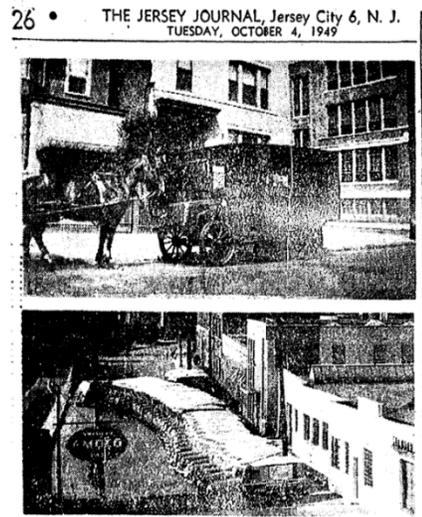


Figure 52 In 1949, Standard Wet Wash celebrated its “40<sup>th</sup>” anniversary with photos from before and after.

Table 5 Ads for the Crystal Steam and Crystal Laundry at 975 Garfield Ave

<p><b>WANTED—Women to canvass, no selling; congenial occupation; clever women can easily make \$20 per week. Call immediately CRYSTAL STEAM FAMILY LAUNDRY, 975 Garfield Ave.</b></p>	<p>Figure 53 the earliest ad found for Crystal Steam Family Laundry at 975 Garfield Ave. Jersey Journal, March 24, 1908, p. 13. Ads for the Crystal Laundry appear periodically from 1908 through October 15, 1910.</p>
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<p><b>CANVASSERS for wet wash laundry, salary and commission; big money. CRYSTAL LAUNDRY, 975 Garfield Ave., Between Bramhall and Union.</b></p>	<p>Figure 54 In this ad from April 29, 1909, the Crystal Laundry begin to switch the business model to “wet wash” and is trying to hire “canvassers” [salespeople].</p>
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It is interesting to note that the first ad for Standard Wet Wash Laundry (see below) is situated just above a larger ad for a competing steam laundry with a “rough dry system” that advertised that “nothing returned wet.” The earlier system was trying to hold off the new “wet wash” method that was taking over the industry.

*Figure 55 The first Standard Wet Wash Laundry ad, at 975 Garfield Ave, Jersey Journal, May 13, 1911, p. 17. This ad runs multiple times between May 13 and May 24, 1911.*

**Laundress, Day's Work.**

WOMAN wishes position: washing, ironing or housecleaning. JENNIE SLAVANSKI, 331 Warren St.

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STANDARD Wet Wash Laundry—If you want your weekly wash done satisfactorily at 50c., send postal, 975 Garfield Ave. Phone 1039, Bergen.

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WASHING—and most of the ironing; just think of the convenience of our ROUGH DRY SYSTEM. We do all the washing, and such pieces as bed, table linen, flannel underwear, stockings, etc., are ironed ready for use; other pieces are returned rough dry, to be finished at home. **NOTHING RETURNED WET.** 20 pounds for 75 cents. We keep each wash in a separate compartment. This does away with the necessity of marking your goods with ink. Phone 2220-J, Bergen. WARDELL STEAM LAUNDRY, 291 Monticello Ave., Jersey City.

It is unknown what prompted the Hirsch family to set up shop in Jersey City in particular. Perhaps it was the business opportunity they fathomed there or perhaps they knew of the other Mlynov immigrants from the Gelberg family who had arrived and setup shop as wagon makers in Jersey City at 457 Pacific Ave less than a mile away from the Hirschs' new business.<sup>29</sup>

Joseph Gelberg, from Mlynov, had already arrived in 1898 and was followed by his brother, Abraham Gelberg, and nephew Gershen (Jacob) in 1907. Abraham Gelberg's daughter and then his wife and children joined them in 1909 and 1910 and another Gelberg brother, named Nathan, arrived in 1911. It seems probable that the Hirsch family who was migrating from the small shtetl of Mlynov during these same years, knew of the Gelberg brothers and heard from them that Jersey City was in fact a good place to live and offered economic opportunity.

In any case, the opinion that Jersey City was emerging a good business opportunity and place to live was also reinforced independently, as you can see in the headline below.

By this point in time, Jersey City had become the second largest city in the state of New Jersey, which itself had become a kind of manufacturing automation center under the influence of Thomas Edison, who had developed innovation labs that were transforming and bringing

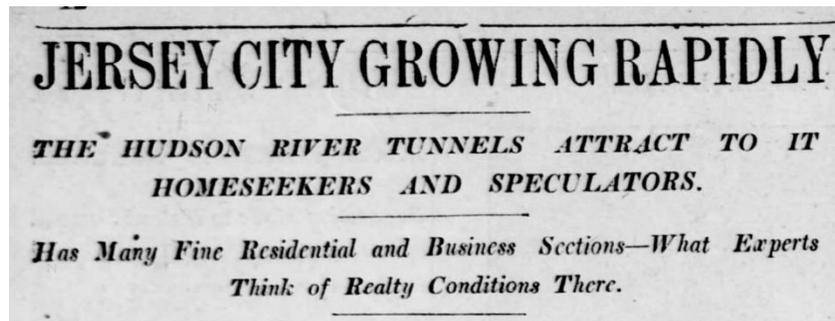
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<sup>29</sup> Joseph/ Gedale Gelberg from Mlynov had arrived in 1898, followed by his brother, Abraham, and nephew Gershen (Jacob) in 1907, Abraham's family in 1909 and 1910, and another Gelberg brother, Nathan, in 1911. See the Gelberg Family story from Mlynov <https://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/Mlyniv/families.html#threebrothers>.

manufacturing to the State.<sup>30</sup> In the late 1880s, three passenger railroad terminals opened in Jersey City next to the Hudson River, making the city an ideal location for shipping and doing business with New York. The Hudson Tubes which connected to New York were completed in 1906 and the first test run of trains through the new tunnels was front page news in the *New York Times* on December 18, 1907, just a few years before the Hirschs moved there.



Figure 56 *Pennsylvania's Railroad Jersey City Station 1893. From the Mechanical Curator collection.*<sup>31</sup>



The up-and-coming character of Jersey City was heralded in New York papers like this article from the *New-York Tribune* (Mar. 8, 1908, p. 12). The article expounds on a growing change in perception about Jersey City:

“For years the realty charms of Jersey City were usually enveloped in a lot of nonsensical talk about its being a place especially noted for swarms of quick **eyes** mosquitoes. No men who know Jersey City refer to it in any such fashion nowadays. They acclaim it a wideawake city, with many alluring and business

<sup>30</sup> See Paul Israel, “The Garden State Becomes An Industrial Power,” In *New Jersey: A History of the Garden State*. Ed. Maxine N. Lurie and Richard Veit,, Loc. 2260–2611. New Brunswick, Rutgers University, 2012.

<sup>31</sup> [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:\(King1893NYC\)\\_pg123\\_PENNSYLVANIA\\_RAILROAD,\\_JERSEY-CITY\\_STATION.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:(King1893NYC)_pg123_PENNSYLVANIA_RAILROAD,_JERSEY-CITY_STATION.jpg). Public domain.

sections, not only to experienced realty investors, but beginners in the real estate field.

“What realty investors and speculators mostly want to know before becoming active in any place is whether or not realty conditions there are sound and what are its present values. It does not take the expert a long time to be amazed at the cheapness of property in Jersey City.”

Whatever shaped their decision to move to Jersey City, the Hirsch family were clearly capitalizing on the emergence of a new social practice that was only a few years old when they got involved in it. It was a method of doing laundry that catered to the overwhelmed mothers of large immigrant families and it was called “Wet Wash.”

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### The Development of “Wet Wash” Laundry

There were already labor-saving washing machines in city laundries in the early 1900s. But these laundries tended to cater to those with money. Most immigrant mothers had to scrub and pound their wash by hand on boards. Many had large families, lived in crowded conditions in tenements, and the effort to clean the family clothes was burdensome. Around this time, the laundries expanded their offering. In addition to offering service to those who could afford to have everything beautifully starched and pressed, they began to offer a service to housewives, who were living in crowded conditions with large families, who needed help with the laundry but couldn’t afford the fees for the whole service.<sup>32</sup>

It was a new market segment and “wet-wash” was the emerging solution. Bags of dirty linen and clothes were picked up by these laundries, washed in the machines, and returned still damp. This business opportunity was getting underway near Massachusetts in 1907 and would eventually spread across the country. The first time the term “wet-wash” appears in the *Jersey Journal* was July 6, 1908 but it was advertising a business that had started in Philadelphia.

The marketing for the new technique was targeted at the needs and concerns of women consumers and emphasized the modern nature, the sanitary process, and the convenience. For example, the pioneer of wet wash in Camden, NJ was started on Sept. 16, 1907 as recounted in an article published on the front page of the *Camden Courier Post* on April 16, 1914. The article was part of a series on local businesses. Wet Wash was news.

The *Courier Post* explained the “wet wash” service and its transformational impact on the mother of the family:

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<sup>32</sup> A short history of clothes washing: <http://www.oldandinteresting.com/history-of-washing-clothes.aspx>

Monday morning used to be washday at home. In the old days this meant a soap-suds smell, a hurried breakfast [sic], poor appetite [sic] for the noonday meal, tired and cross faces when evening shades drew down over the home, and general domestic dissatisfaction—Monday morning started the week wrong. It was enough to make one forget the good teachings he was supposed to have received the day before.

This is all changed, and the modern laundries, with their marvelous improvements, have brought it about. No more back-breaking process of doing the family wash. No more must mothers labor over a streaming tub, and the elder sister remain from school to help with the weekly agony. Instead a man calls, takes the clothes away with him, and - presto! the work is done.

The term “wet wash laundry” in fact was just gaining currency in the period the Hirsch brothers were landing in the Lower East Side. An ad for a new “wet wash” business from Dec. 13, 1906 in Fall River, Massachusetts, is one of the earliest ads that appear in the newspapers of the day. It wasn’t long before such ads were appearing in Brooklyn, New Jersey and New York. A graph from Newspapers.com shows the currency of the term “wet wash laundry” between 1900, when it was nonexistent, to 1910 when it was becoming more and more popular.

*Figure 57 The growth in the use of the term “wet wash laundry” between 1900–1910 across all newspapers in the US. Source: Newspapers.com*

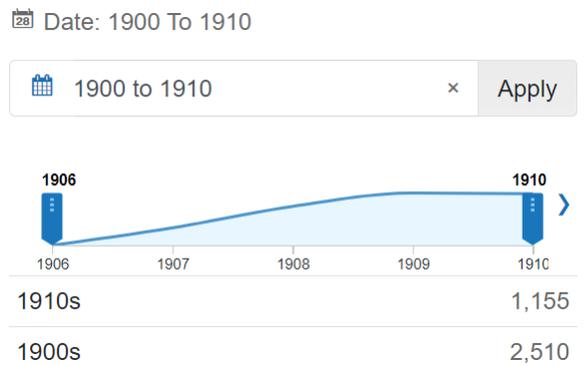




Figure 58 An early ad for Wet Wash Laundry, Fall River Daily Evening News, Dec 13, 1906



Figure 59 A new Wet Wash plant announced, Passaic Daily News, Oct 24, 1907 p. 3

Looking back from 1930, A. D. Hirsch described the primitive start of the Garfield Wet Wash business when the family took it over. The operation consisted “of a single horse drawn wagon, a leaky boiler, an antiquated steam engine and a few old washing machines, all housed in the Sherwood Fire House, located on what was then known as the Garfield Plank Road”....

A. D. explained that the family kept the Sherwood Fire House “as a relic of the old days of Eighteen Hundred and Seventy.” The number 1870 is still faintly visible on the keystone imbedded in the arched doorway, shown in a drawing of the original fire house included in the article.



By 1930, as A. D. was looking back, the business had grown and changed. “Alongside the old relic, today stands a modern plant, housing up-to-the minute laundry equipment, a fleet of attractive delivery cars, and what counts more than either, an organization of over three hundred conscientious workers.”

Among those many workers, as we shall see, were extended family members.

Abraham recalls that in the beginning the “housewife had little, if any faith in laundries and their methods and we frankly admit that she was not entirely to blame.” He goes on to say that the Hirsch family had pioneered a better method, namely washing in nets, so that “the net instead of the linen bears the wear.”

Abraham was not alone in making claims about the transformational nature of the “wet wash” method. As early as 1907, the new wet wash laundries were all pitching their efficiency, the

sanitary nature of the process, the safety to the clothing, and the positive impact on the lives of the housewife who had previously been burdened with difficult scrubbing techniques.

In 1909, the Camden Family Wet Wash advertised that it was opening for inspection and "ladies who call will be shown through the establishment from end to end. Mr. Rhoades, the manager and proprietor, wants the ladies to see the sanitary condition and the process used in his wet wash work. Mr. Rhoades claimed that through his wet wash laundry much hard work has been abolished in Camden... (*The Morning Post*, May 22, 1909, p. 10)

Wet wash laundries also claimed to wash the clothes even cleaner than they could be done at home over a board and that the wear and tear was less ("New Method Wet Wash Laundry," *Fall River Globe*, Nov. 3, 1910, p. 77). The advertising of the new laundries was aimed at what were understood to be women's concerns: the sanitation of the process, the protection of the clothes' fabric, and the improvement of efficiency and household life.



Figure 60 *The Morning Call*, Nov. 8, 1911, p. 12  
Paterson, NJ



Figure 61 *The Morning Call* Dec 31, 1915 p. 1  
Paterson, NJ,

Reflecting on the hesitation of people to initially adopt a new revolutionary practice, the *Evening Herald* wrote that:

This is true in the case of the wet-wash laundries. The feminine mind was fain to adopt the practice of sending washings away from the house, feeling that the watchful eye and general supervision was necessary to insure spotless results. This prejudice, this period of doubts and fears, has been fully overcome. Its disappearance should be credited to Mr. H. L. Leonard, the progressive owner of the New Method Wet Wash Laundry. ("New Method Wet Wash Laundry," *The Evening Herald*, Sept. 30, 1910, 15).

Phone Delaware 3-1500      Phone Delaware 3-1500      Phone Delaware 3-1500



**One of America's Great Laundries**

**THE STANDARD LAUNDRY**  
—of Jersey City—

**And Back of Its 19 Years of Progress Is a History That Reads Like Fiction**

**A** NEAT electric truck painted navy blue and vermilion red, bearing the name STANDARD LAUNDRY, stops in front of your house. A uniformed, courteous customer with a neat laundry package in his hand knocks at your door. You greet him with a smile, pay your bill, and the man is off, ready to be at your service again.

Back of all this routine, however, is the history of the progress of the STANDARD LAUNDRY COMPANY, a history that reads like fiction.

Less than a score of years ago—it was in the year sixteen hundred and eleven, the present owners of the STANDARD LAUNDRY purchased what was then known as the Garfield Wet Wash Laundry, consisting of a single horse drawn wagon, a leaky boiler, an antiquated steam engine and a few old washing machines, all housed in the Sherwood Fire House, located on what was then known as the Garfield Wash Road.

The horse and wagon are things of the past; the washing machinery and other equipment have long since been relegated to the junk heap; but the Old Fire House still stands. We have kept it as a relic of the old days of Eighteen Hundred Seventy. The number 1879 is still faintly visible on the bricks—imbedded in the arched doorway.

But just as the fire-fighting has changed from the volunteer fireman to the paid, well organized department of today, so too has the Garfield Wet Wash Laundry become the STANDARD LAUNDRY of today.

**WHY**  
Goods Laundered  
The **STANDARD** Way

**"LAST"**  
Almost Twice  
As Long

**B**ECAUSE we take our time in doing them. We never try to see how "fast" we can launder an article, but how "good."

Of course, we all like to get our goods back from the laundry as quickly as possible. And the Standard never fails to take this into consideration.

But just the same, we never sacrifice "thoroughness" for "speed."

Where this is done the goods suffer—the life is taken out—and just when they should only begin to give you service—they are all played out and fit for nothing but the ragbin.

Another thing! Everything sent here is not washed alike. Something else conducive to longevity.

We use waters of different temperatures with "special" kinds of soaps for different kinds of goods.

So, is it any wonder that everything sent here lasts much longer than it should?

No wonder like to buy new articles more often than necessary. She can use the money to better advantage on other things.

But when this is prevented—when she has to buy out for new ones shortly after the label is washed off the previous ones—something is wrong in treatment.

The Standard has consideration for your purse as well as your person in everything it does.

Which is something well worth giving a little thought to the next time you give us the family bundle.

Our Serviceman Passes Your Door  
Twice Every Week

Phone Delaware 3-1500 When  
You Want Him to Call

Phone Delaware 3-1500

Phone Delaware 3-1500

Phone Delaware 3-1500

Figure 62 A. D. Hirsch wrote about Standard Laundry in *The Record*, June 19, 1930.

It was perhaps no accident that the term "progressive" was used to describe the new technique. The progressive era had arrived. Individuals calling themselves "progressive" were advocating for all sorts of social reforms, such as the monitoring of tenement buildings, changes in the practices of taxation, the building of parks, etc. The term was in the air and the owners of the new wet wash method were linking themselves to the movement for improvement, health

and modernization.<sup>33</sup> Now laundry would be picked up at your home, washed and returned the next day to be ironed or hung out to air dry. Laundries that before had had hundreds of “ironers,” fired them in favor of this new method.

The new wet wash laundries caught the attention of newspaper editors as a kind modern transformation that was taking place and improving the quality of life. This new conception of the laundry was competing with and helping to replace the earlier stereotypes of the “Chinese laundry” and “Chinamen” who owned them.



Figure 63 Stereotype of Chinese laundrymen from a 1901 paper, *The Courier-News* (Bridgewater, New Jersey) Aug. 12, 1905, p. 5.

Because laundry was picked up and returned to the home the next day, wet laundries started hiring drivers. Initially those drivers picked up laundry in wagons. I think about the fact that another Mlynov immigrant, Joseph Gelberg, had landed in Jersey City and started a wagon repair business. It is entirely conceivable he had worked on the wagons of the Hirsch family's laundry.

The new process invariably generated new types of crime. News stories began to report that bags of laundry could disappear right off the wagon and that drivers were being charged with embezzling money paid to them [*Morning Call* (Paterson, NJ,) July 22, 1914, p. 11]. By 1915, housewives were up in arms in protest when the wet wash laundries raised their rates above 50 cents and accused the proprietors of a monopoly.<sup>34</sup> They had become attached to the new technique.

The horses and wagons, of course, were eventually replaced by trucks. By 1930, when A. D. Hirsch wrote his retrospective, Standard Laundry had grown from its start to a fleet of cars: “Alongside of the old relic, today stands a modern plant, housing up-to-the-minute laundry equipment, a fleet of attractive delivery cars, and what counts more than either, an organization of over three hundred conscientious workers.”

<sup>33</sup> On the progressive movement in New Jersey, see Brian Greenberg, “The Progressive Era,” Loc 2611, Lurie and Veit, *New Jersey*, Loc 2611-3039.

<sup>34</sup> “No Trust Formed Say These Men,” *The News* (Patterson), Feb. 22 1913, p. 1.

Humorous family lore passed on in the Hirsch family relates to the family business and the delivery cars. Deborah Dickmann retells the story her father, Edward Hirsch, told her about learning to drive when he was sixteen. Edward was born in 1934, just four years after his uncle A. D. Hirsch published the retrospective about Standard Laundry. He was the son of Lewis (“Abe”) Hirsch, the youngest of the Hirsch brothers, who had arrived in New York with his parents. When Lewis’s son Edward turned sixteen, Lewis taught him to drive. Deborah explains what happened.

Back then the driving test was at a race track. One lap around and my dad had his license. Lewis looked at him and told him he had to go to the laundry and start working as a driver. My dad had his license for about 2 weeks when the following occurred.

The laundry trucks were electric. He was either going/coming from the laundry via the tunnel. The truck died. You can't tow these trucks. They have to be put on a flat bed. You can't use winches to pull them up as the wheels are locked. Traffic had to be stopped in both directions so a flatbed could come in from one end and a crane from the other. The police officer at the scene "strongly suggested" that my dad NEVER travel the tunnel again. And he never has to this day even by car. I asked what his dad had to say when he finally made it back, not a word.

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### [Life in Jersey City, 1911–1920](#)

While the Hirsch family purchased their laundry at 975 Garfield Ave in 1911, it is not clear whether the family had made the move to Jersey City right away. In August 1912, Isaac’s family, still list an address in East Harlem as their destination on their manifest suggesting Isaac may still have been there at the time or perhaps news hadn’t reached them back in Russia that the family had moved.

By 1915, some of the Hirsch brothers show up in the local Jersey City directory listing their business as the Standard Wet Wash Laundry. Harry Hirsch is living with his brother Jacob (Gershen) at 213 Woodward just a few blocks away from the location of the laundry at 975 Garfield Ave (see map below). There is an “Emil” Hirsch living at the same address as Harry and Jacob, whom I suspect is an Americanized name for one of the other brothers, perhaps Lewis or Abram, or could even be the name of their father Ephraim. Isaac and his family are living at 41 Lafayette, another block away. I am not sure where Abraham (A. D. ) is at this point and doubt he is the Abraham selling shoes at 476 Central Ave.

Hirsch Abraham shoes 476 Central av h  
236 Cambridge av  
" Abraham stationer 78 Brunswick h 213  
Mercer  
" Arthur G W chiropodist 476 Central  
av r 236 Cambridge av  
" Benj F mgr r 236 Cambridge av  
" Bertha sten r 236 Cambridge av  
" Carl jeweler r 28 South  
" Chas clk h 175 N Y av  
" Clarice r 236 Cambridge av  
" Edmund lather h 28 South  
" Edw carp h 237 Hutton  
" Edw jr electn r 237 Hutton  
" Emil h 213 Woodward  
" Emil C elev opr h 933 West Side av  
" Gertrude clk r 237 Hutton av  
" Harry (Standard Wet Wash Laundry)  
h 213 Woodward  
" Isaac (Standard Wet Wash Laundry)  
h 41 Lafayette  
" Jacob h 213 Woodward  
" Louis h 213 Mercer  
" Morris plmbr h 68 Grant av  
" Richd phys 175 Ocean av h do  
" Sarah clk r 237 Hutton

Figure 64 A 1915 City Directory shows Harry and Isaac listing their business as Standard Wet Wash Laundry and their home addresses.

In the front pages of the 1915 City Directory is a street index which indicates that 975 Garfield Ave was between Union St. and Bramhall Ave. Today Daley Auto Body is at that location, just opposite the tennis courts at Berry Lane Park. In an older map from 1939, one can see a train or trolley line running alongside Garfield and you can see how close the location was to the train stations and harbor (on the right). The map also shows how close the home addresses of Harry (on Woodward) and Isaac on (Lafayette ) were to the laundry.

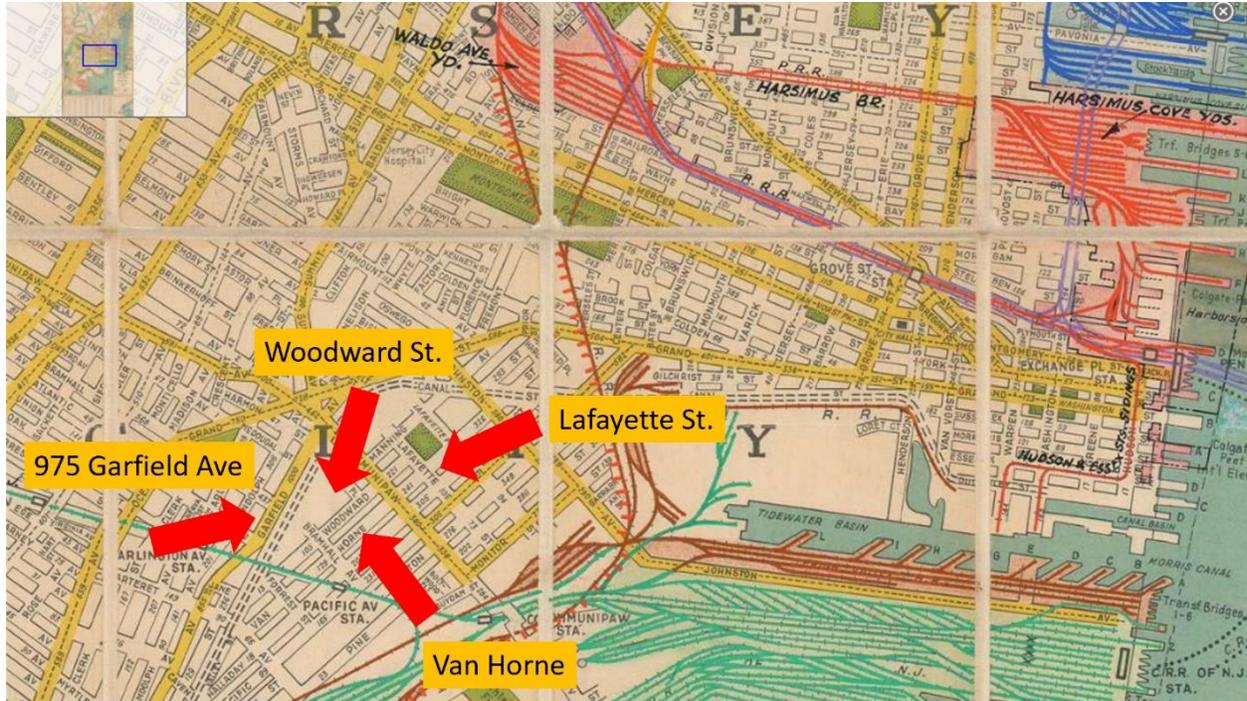
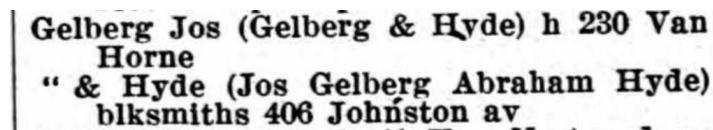


Figure 65 Hirsch Laundry at 975 Garfield and nearby home addresses

When I mapped these 1915 addresses, I was intrigued by the fact that the addresses were very close to Van Horne Street. In 1915, this was the home address of Joseph (Gdale) Gelberg, who was the first of the Gelberg brothers from Mlynov to arrive in America.

As noted earlier, Joseph Gelberg had arrived in 1898 and established a wagon making business in Jersey City with another man named Abraham Hyde. By 1914, Joseph's home address had moved to 230 Van Horne St. Also living there in 1914 was Joseph's brother Nathan Gelberg from Mlynov. Nathan's wife, Ruchel, arrived in 1914 and on her manifest put the Van Horne address as her destination. Nathan's son, Morris Gelberg, appears in 1918 at 206 Woodward Street, only a few doors away from where A. D. Hirsch was living at that time. It is hard to believe the Hirschs would not have known of their Mlynov lantzmen nearby and it suggests that these Mlynov immigrants had settled close together on purpose.



*Figure 66 1915 city directory showing Joseph Gelberg's address on 230 Van Horne*

According to Hirsch family memories, Ephraim's wife, Gitel, passed away around 1915. This seems consistent with the fact that in 1916 Harry named his eldest daughter, Gertrude, apparently in memory of his mother, Gitel. Harry had gotten married to Bertha Rosenblatt sometime before 1916. Jacob (Gdalie) also got married around this time to Clara Bayer and they had their first son Arthur in 1916. When their daughter was born in 1919, they too named her Gertrude.



*Figure 67 Ephraim with his second wife, Molly (Ganz) Hirsch ~ 1916-1919. Courtesy of Edward Hirsch and Deborah Dickmann.*

Sometime in 1918, Ephraim, the patriarch of the family, married Mollie Ganz and brought her and her daughter, Ester, into the family. They appear as a family unit in the 1920 census along with Ephraim's other two younger children, Lewis and Jeanette, who are still in the household.

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#### [Clues from 1917-1918 Draft Registrations](#)

The movements of the Hirsch family and the expansion of the Standard Wet Wash business appear from the WWI draft registration cards, the first compulsory draft in America since the Civil War. Three of the brothers registered on September 12, 1918, which was the third of the three registrations for men who were 18–45 and who had not yet been previously eligible. Isaac, age 38, Harry, age 34, and young Lewis, age 21, all qualified and registered on that day.

Two of the other brothers, “Abram D” and “Jacob Gdale” registered on the first of the registration days, on June 5, 1917, for men between the ages 21–31. “Jake” was 28 years old at the time and clearly eligible. The registrar wrote on the second page of the record that “physical O.K. claims exemption on account of wife and child.”

It is less clear why “A. D.” registered with this first group of men. His census records (1910, 1920, and 1930) and his later Social Security records imply his year of birth is 1881 or 1882, which would have made him 35 or 36 in 1917 and too old to register on that day. To confuse matters further, his Declaration of Intention and 1917 draft registration card suggest he was ten

years younger and list his birth year as 1891 and 1892 (*not 1881 or 1882*). If so, then he would have been 25 or 26 in 1918 and thus the appropriate age for the registration that day.

Why, then, did “A. D.” enlist in 1917? Was he eager to enlist, perhaps? Was he thinking of his aunts and uncles still back in Mlynov or just feeling the patriotic fever which was sweeping the Country?

On the second page of his draft registration card, someone has written in a different hand that he was “Phys[ically] unfit underweight Aug 7.” While records of other young Mlynov immigrants show they were listing reasons to be excused from this draft, this was apparently not the case for A. D. A record from the Veterans administration indicates that A. D. went ahead and enlisted in the Army on July 30, 1918, only months before Germany surrendered and before his other brothers had to be registered. When queried, his grandchildren recall that he was in training in Virginia during this time and did not serve overseas. He was discharged on March 16, 1919. It was just a few months after the Paris Peace Conference took place to set the terms for the defeated Central Powers. Nothing more is known at this point about that period in his life, but one suspects he was aware that Mlynov had become part of Poland after the War and was thinking of his sister who was still back there during this time.

On their registration cards, all the brothers indicated they were working at Standard Wet Wash. Isaac and Harry, both married, indicate they are both “part owner.” A. D., still single, indicates he is a “bookkeeper”; Jake puts simply that he does “laundry work,” and Lewis, the youngest, indicates he works at the laundry and still lives with his father Ephraim. Three of the brothers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are naturalized by this point. Harry is still a “declarant,” meaning he submitted his Declaration but not yet his Petition. Lewis has not even started his naturalization process.

The 1918 city directory also provides insight into how the family business was being managed by the brothers. Harry is listed as general manager, Abraham D now listed as secretary treasurer, Isaac as the manager of the delivery department, Jacob as Supt (superintendent) and young Lewis as the route foreman. When I see Lewis’s title of route foreman, I can’t help but think again about the story of his son, Edward, with a breakdown of the truck in the tunnel and wonder if Lewis felt chagrined when his own son caused such a traffic mess. Hirsch family descendants recall humorously that the brothers shifted to acronyms for their names, “AD,” “JG,” etc since employees couldn’t differentiate by using “Mr. Hirsch”. As one might imagine, the family business generated frictions among the brothers that lasted long into the future and are still recalled laughingly by their descendants.

Form 1 3706 REGISTRATION CARD No. 45

1 Name in full *Abram D. Hirsch* No. *25*

2 Home address *215 Woodward St. Jersey City*

3 Date of birth *Nov. 15, 1892*

4 Are you (1) a natural born citizen, (2) a naturalized citizen, (3) an alien, (4) or have you declared your intention (specify which)? *Naturalized Citizen*

5 Where were you born? *Minnow Russia*

6 If not a citizen, of what country are you a citizen or subject? *Citizen*

7 What is your present trade, occupation, or office? *Bookkeeper*

8 By whom employed? *Standard Wet Wash Co.*

9 Where employed? *973 Garfield Ave. Jersey City*

10 Have you a father, mother, wife, child under 18, or a sister or brother under 18, wholly dependent on you for support (specify which)? *No*

11 Married or single (which)? *Single* Race (specify which)? *Can.*

12 Do you claim exemption from draft (specify grounds)? *No*

I affirm that I have verified above answers and that they are true.

*119* *Abram D. Hirsch*

Figure 68 Abram D. Hirsch, bookkeeper, living at 215 Woodward St. June 5, 1917

REGISTRATION CARD No. 206

SERIAL NUMBER *5550*

1 *HARRY* *HIRSCH*

2 PERMANENT HOME ADDRESS: *134 WEGEMAN PKY. JERSEY HUDSON N.J.*

3 Age in Years: *34* Date of Birth: *MARCH 16th 1884*

4 Are you (1) a natural born citizen, (2) a naturalized citizen, (3) an alien, (4) or have you declared your intention (specify which)? *X*

5 Where were you born? *Russia*

6 If not a citizen, of what country are you a citizen or subject? *Russia*

7 What is your present trade, occupation, or office? *LAUNDRYMAN*

8 By whom employed? *STANDARD WET WASH CO PART OWNER*

9 Where employed? *973 GARFIELD JERSEY HUDSON N.J.*

10 Have you a father, mother, wife, child under 18, or a sister or brother under 18, wholly dependent on you for support (specify which)? *No*

11 Married or single (which)? *Married* Race (specify which)? *Russia*

12 Do you claim exemption from draft (specify grounds)? *No*

I affirm that I have verified above answers and that they are true.

*BERTHA* *HIRSCH*

Figure 69 Harry Hirsch "part owner" living at 134 Wegeman [sic] PRY. June 5, 1917

REGISTRATION CARD No. 274

SERIAL NUMBER *5550*

1 *Isaac Hirsch*

2 PERMANENT HOME ADDRESS: *121 Wegman Pkwy Jersey City*

3 Age in Years: *39* Date of Birth: *Sept 15th 1879*

4 Are you (1) a natural born citizen, (2) a naturalized citizen, (3) an alien, (4) or have you declared your intention (specify which)? *X*

5 Where were you born? *Russia*

6 If not a citizen, of what country are you a citizen or subject? *Russia*

7 What is your present trade, occupation, or office? *Bookkeeper*

8 By whom employed? *Standard Wet Wash Co.*

9 Where employed? *973 Garfield Ave Jersey City*

10 Have you a father, mother, wife, child under 18, or a sister or brother under 18, wholly dependent on you for support (specify which)? *No*

11 Married or single (which)? *Married* Race (specify which)? *Russia*

12 Do you claim exemption from draft (specify grounds)? *No*

I affirm that I have verified above answers and that they are true.

*Isaac Hirsch*

Figure 70 Isaac Hirsch "part owner" living at 121 Wegman Pkwy, Sept. 12, 1918

REGISTRATION CARD No. 398

SERIAL NUMBER *473*

1 *Lewis Albert Hirsch*

2 PERMANENT HOME ADDRESS: *106 Claremont Ave. J. City Hudson*

3 Age in Years: *20* Date of Birth: *Oct 18, 1897*

4 Are you (1) a natural born citizen, (2) a naturalized citizen, (3) an alien, (4) or have you declared your intention (specify which)? *Russia*

5 Where were you born? *Russia*

6 If not a citizen, of what country are you a citizen or subject? *Russia*

7 What is your present trade, occupation, or office? *Laundry*

8 By whom employed? *Myself*

9 Where employed? *973 Garfield Ave*

10 Have you a father, mother, wife, child under 18, or a sister or brother under 18, wholly dependent on you for support (specify which)? *Ephraim Hirsch*

11 Married or single (which)? *Married* Race (specify which)? *Russia*

12 Do you claim exemption from draft (specify grounds)? *No*

I affirm that I have verified above answers and that they are true.

*Lewis Albert Hirsch*

Figure 71 Lewis Albert living at 106 Claremont Ave with his father "Ephraim", Sept. 12, 1918

REGISTRATION CARD No. 185

SERIAL NUMBER *3861*

1 *Jacob Gedale Hirsch*

2 Home address *194 Woodward Str. J.C.*

3 Date of birth *July 16, 1889*

4 Are you (1) a natural born citizen, (2) a naturalized citizen, (3) an alien, (4) or have you declared your intention (specify which)? *Naturalized Citizen*

5 Where were you born? *Russia*

6 If not a citizen, of what country are you a citizen or subject? *Citizen*

7 What is your present trade, occupation, or office? *Laundry work.*

8 By whom employed? *Standard Wet Wash Co.*

9 Where employed? *971 Garfield Ave. J.C.*

10 Have you a father, mother, wife, child under 18, or a sister or brother under 18, wholly dependent on you for support (specify which)? *Wife & Child.*

11 Married or single (which)? *Married* Race (specify which)? *Russia*

12 Do you claim exemption from draft (specify grounds)? *wife & child dependent*

I affirm that I have verified above answers and that they are true.

*Jacob Gedale Hirsch*

Figure 72 Jacob Gedale Hirsch married and living at 194 Woodward Str, Sept. 12, 1918



Figure 73 1918 City Directory for the Hirschs

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### Cousin Aleph Katz Comes To Standard Wet Wash

It is also of note that the Wet Wash laundry was successful enough between 1915–1920 that other cousins got involved in working there. The future Yiddish poet, Morris (Aleph) Katz, first cousin to the Hirsch brothers, was working at Standard Laundry by the time he signed his draft registration card on September 12, 1918.

You'll recall that Aleph had arrived with his mother, Henie (Hirsch) Katz and his two siblings in 1913. By 1918, Aleph is apparently commuting to Standard Wet Wash in Jersey City from Brooklyn, where his family had by this time settled at 309 Roebling Street close to a candy store that his father Hyman now ran.

The Brooklyn candy store appears to have been a step up for Hyman who had been a "overalls operator" in the 1915 census when the Katz family was still in the Lower East Side on Canal Street, house number 65. At that point, their son Samuel was a "push cart pedler," and Morris (Aleph) a "hankerchief operator."

By 1920, the family has moved to 1559 Pitkin Ave, near the intersection of Herzl St. The building had ten other families living there. Hyman and son, Samuel, are listed as candy "storekeepers." Morris and Helen have no occupation at this point. Living one house number over at 1560 Pitkin, together with five other families in the building, was Sophie Cohen (Shifre Katz) and her family. She had married Israel Cohen in 1914. On May 23, 1915, their first daughter Fannie (known as Florence) was born. Then in 1918, a second daughter Libbie was born. A son Jack was born in 1920. In the 1920 census, her husband, Israel, is listed as a clothing operator.

**REGISTRATION CARD**

SERIAL NUMBER	3026	ORDER NUMBER	2456
1. Name: <i>Morris Abraham Katz</i>			
2. PERMANENT ADDRESS: <i>309 Roebling St. Brooklyn Kings 70.2</i>			
Age in Years	Date of Birth		
3. <i>19</i>	4. <i>January 15 1899</i>		
RACE			
White	Negro	Oriental	Indian
5. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6. <input type="checkbox"/>	7. <input type="checkbox"/>	8. <input type="checkbox"/>
U. S. CITIZEN			
ALIEN			
10. <input type="checkbox"/>	11. <input type="checkbox"/>	12. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	13. <input type="checkbox"/>
14. <input type="checkbox"/>			
15. If not a citizen of the U. S., of what nation are you a citizen or subject?			
16. PRESENT OCCUPATION		17. EMPLOYER'S NAME	
<i>Laborer and Student</i>		<i>Standard Wet Wash Laundry</i>	
18. PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT OR BUSINESS: <i>Garfield Ave Jersey City Hudson, N. J.</i>			
19. NEAREST RELATIVE: Name <i>Hyman Katz</i>			
Address: <i>309 Roebling St. Brooklyn Kings 70.2</i>			
I AFFIRM THAT I HAVE VERIFIED ABOVE ANSWERS AND THAT THEY ARE TRUE			
P. M. G. O. Form No. 1 (10-2)			
<i>Morris A. Katz</i>			

Figure 74 First cousin, Morris Katz (Aleph Katz), son of Henie (Hirsch) Katz indicated he was working at Standard Wet Wash on his draft registration on Sept. 12, 1918

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
<i>Samuel</i>	<i>65</i>	<i>Laudan</i>	<i>Leile</i>	<i>head</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>70</i>	<i>Russia</i>	<i>23</i>	<i>al</i>	<i>no occupation</i>
"	"	"	<i>Sosia</i>	<i>wife</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>70</i>	<i>Russia</i>	<i>23</i>	<i>al</i>	<i>no occupation</i>
"	"	<i>Katz</i>	<i>Hyman</i>	<i>head</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>40</i>	<i>Russia</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>ci</i>	<i>General's operator</i>
"	"	"	<i>Jennie</i>	<i>wife</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>38</i>	<i>Russia</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>ci</i>	<i>Housewife</i>
"	"	"	<i>Samie</i>	<i>son</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>Russia</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>ci</i>	<i>Push cart peddler</i>
"	"	"	<i>Morris</i>	<i>son</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>Russia</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>ci</i>	<i>Handyman, operator</i>
"	"	"	<i>Hellen</i>	<i>daughter</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>Russia</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>ci</i>	<i>housewife</i>

Figure 75 1915 Census for the Katz family

<i>112</i>	<i>Katy Hyman</i>	<i>head</i>	<i>6 R</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>W</i>	<i>48</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>1906</i>	<i>na</i>	<i>1914</i>	<i>yes</i>	<i>26</i>
	<i>Jennie</i>	<i>wife</i>		<i>F</i>	<i>W</i>	<i>38</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>1904</i>	<i>na</i>	<i>1914</i>	<i>yes</i>	<i>26</i>
	<i>Sam</i>	<i>son</i>		<i>M</i>	<i>W</i>	<i>23</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>1914</i>	<i>na</i>	<i>1914</i>	<i>yes</i>	<i>41</i>
	<i>Morris</i>	<i>son</i>		<i>M</i>	<i>W</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>1914</i>	<i>na</i>	<i>1914</i>	<i>yes</i>	<i>44</i>
	<i>Helen</i>	<i>daughter</i>		<i>F</i>	<i>W</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>1914</i>	<i>na</i>	<i>1914</i>	<i>yes</i>	<i>46</i>

Figure 76 1920 census of the Katz family at 1559 Pitkin Ave

By the 1925 census, the Katzes had moved again in Brooklyn to 52nd St, house number 5202 and Sophie's family is at the same address. Hyman and son-in-law, Israel Cohen are both listed as candy store "owner." Samuel is still involved in the candy store and Morris (Aleph) is now listed at this point as in college. Their daughter, Helen, has become a stenographer.



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### Some Family Memories of Aleph Katz

After much searching, I finally tracked down and got to meet Alexis Conerty, a granddaughter of Aleph Katz, who introduced me to Aleph's two children, Deborah (Katz) Falcon and Efi (Ephraim) Katz. It was a great honor for me to meet the children of Aleph since I had been hearing for some time about Aleph Katz as one of the famous people from Mlynov. I felt like I was reaching back in time and touching the past.

Aleph's family laughed as they reminisced over family memories of their father Aleph, providing a glimpse into the kind of man he became. While they didn't know why he had adopted the name "Aleph", they indicated that even his parents called him Aleph while he were growing up.

Like many family memories that get passed along, some of these are quite humorous and capture the personality of their father. As one might guess, Aleph had a natural facility with languages. Laughing, his daughter, Deborah, recalls that her father would often insist that the dictionary was wrong. She also tells me that he could pass for any kind of immigrant in New York, being able to say some words in most languages and putting on the accent. This occasionally got him in trouble. One time, for example, when he was working with Italians, he was trying to talk about making a food dish and inadvertently said "il cazzo" meaning "penis." It was an incident that lives on in the family's memory.

Aleph's children grew up in Manhattan because their father would not move further than walking distance to the Café Royal, "a former mecca for Jewish intellectuals and artists."

Café Royal was in existence from 1908-1952. It was located on the ground floor of 190 Second Avenue on the southeast corner of Second Avenue and East 12th Street on the Lower East Side of New York City. Today, a Japanese restaurant stands in place of Café Royal...

With the Lower East Side flourishing with Yiddish theater, Café Royal was the central restaurant, where socialists, artists, rebels, writers, and chess players socialized with Broadway stars and Yiddish performers. It was the forum for Jewish intelligentsia, where one could learn about Yiddish culture and life. The most glamorous of Lower East Side coffeehouses, Café Royal was walking distance from more than five Yiddish theaters and a quick subway trip from others. Actors and audiences alike frequented the café between shows and after shows, often staying until 3 o'clock in the morning. The restaurant had a loud and noisy ambiance like "a hive of buzzing bees". As told by the New

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Yorker, “everybody who is anybody in the Jewish creative world” would go to the café at least once a week.<sup>38</sup>

Aleph’s children remember him as progressive among his Jewish peers. People in the Jewish community at the time still used the derogatory word “Schvartze,” his daughter, Deborah, recalls. When a group of her father’s friends from CCNY (the City College of New York) threw a party and invited people in the class to a party, they had not expected the two African American students to show up. When they did, the party sponsors said, “I didn’t mean you.” When the two African Americans left the party, Aleph left with them.

His children recall that their father’s family was very supportive of his literary aspirations. When he wanted to publish his first book, it was a big family effort and celebration.

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#### Hyman Leo Newman Comes to Standard Wet Wash

In addition to Aleph Katz, a draft registration card indicates another first cousin from the Newman family also came to work at Standard Wet Wash. “Hyman Leo” or as he was subsequently called Leo H. Newman, was the oldest son of Aunt Clara (Hirsch) Newman. You’ll recall that Aunt Clara had arrived in 1913 and gone to join her husband in Providence, RI. On his registration card from May 31, 1918, her son, “Hyman Leo” still had a Providence home address. But he indicates he is working at Standard Wet Wash in Jersey City and signed his registration card in a Jersey City registration board.

Serial No.	7857	Registration No.	7813
1 Name in full	Hyman Leo Newman		
2 Home address	32 Bannan St Providence RI		
3 Date of birth	Sept 18 1896		
4 Where were you born?	Haimov Volinia Russian		
5 I am	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1. A native of the United States <input type="checkbox"/> 2. A naturalized citizen, by naturalization <input type="checkbox"/> 3. A citizen of the United States by treaty <input type="checkbox"/> 4. A citizen of the United States by marriage (Strike out that of words not applicable)		
6 If not a citizen, of what Nation are you a citizen or subject?	Citizen		
7 Father's birthplace	Volinia Russian		
8 Name of employer	Standard Wet Wash Laundry		
9 Place of employment	975 Garfield Av Jersey City N.J.		
10 Name of nearest relative	Clara Newman		
Address of nearest relative	32 Bannan St Providence RI		
10 Race—White, Negro, Indian, American, etc. (Strike out if words not applicable)			
I affirm that I have verified above answers and that they are true.			
P. M. G. O. <i>Hyman Leo Newman</i> Form 1 (1918) (Signature or Mark of Registrant.) REGISTRATION CARD.			

Figure 78 First cousin, Hyman Leo Newman, still had a Providence address but was working at Standard Wet Wash when he signed his draft registration card on May 31, 1918

<sup>38</sup> Quote from <https://myny.ctl.columbia.edu/content/cafe-royal-0> [retrieved 03/17/21].

It appears that Hyman Leo was the advance guard for the rest of the family, who would move in the not-too-distant future to Brooklyn. When I ask Caryle Katz, daughter of Benjamin Newman, if she knew why the Newmans left Providence for Brooklyn, it is not a story that was passed along. Except for “Hyman Leo”, they are all found in Brooklyn in the 1920 census at 1564 St. Marks Avenue. Jacob is now 47, Clara 43, Harry, 19, Sophie 17, Ben 14, the younger Leo is 5. Jacob has no occupation listed but Harry is listed as a “belt machinist,” and Sophie is listed as a sales lady in a “Dept store.”

61	1564 St. Marks Ave.	1564	22	164	Newman Jacob	Head	24	K	M	U	47	M
62					Clara	Wife			F	U	43	M
63					Harry	Son			M	U	19	M
64					Ben	Son			M	U	14	M
65					Leo	Son			M	U	5	M
66					Sophie	Daughter			F	U	17	M

Over the course of the decade, the younger children begin to leave home.

In the 1925 census, all the kids are present except for Harry and Benjamin. The family has moved to 7<sup>th</sup> Street near Sherman Street and Greenwood Ave. Jacob is listed as a cigar clerk and Sophie, now “Sophia”, is a cigar saleslady. The older Leo (Hyman) is 24, single and back home and also appears to be a “cigar specialist.” There was, in fact, a dense concentration of Jewish laborers and employers in the cigar industry.<sup>39</sup> The younger Leo, now called “Lenard” is here as well and is in school.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
East 7 <sup>th</sup> St.	24	Newman Jacob	Head	M	57	Russia	17	U	Supervisor	Cigar Clerk	0-A
East 7 <sup>th</sup> St.	24	Newman Clara	Wife	F	46	Russia	14	U		Housework	X
East 7 <sup>th</sup> St.	24	Newman Leo	Son	M	24	Russia	14	U		Cigar Specialist	U
East 7 <sup>th</sup> St.	24	Newman Sophia	Daughter	F	19	Russia	14	U		Cigar Saleslady	U
East 7 <sup>th</sup> St.	24	Newman Lenard	Son	M	10	U.S.	10	U		School	X

Figure 79 1925 Census of the Newman Family in Brooklyn

By the end of the decade, on 20 Aug 1929, a record shows that the eldest son, Leo Hyman, married Edith Obshatkin, nine years his junior.

<sup>39</sup> Hasia R. Diner, *Jews of the United States*, 103.

Marriages	Spouse	Date or Year of Marriage	Children
Leo Hyman	Edith Obshatkin	Aug 20, 1929	No Children
Harry Newman	Sally Rubin	~ 1929	Leona Newman b. 1929
Benjamin Newman	Rhoda Jacobson	1928	Caryle (Newman) Katz b. ~ 1930
Sophie Newman	Mortimer Mendelson and later Sol Lehmann	~ 1943	No Children
Leo / Leon Newman	Florence Davis		Jay Newman



*Figure 80 The five siblings later in life. Foreground Leon. Rear (l to r): Leo (Hyman), Ben, Sophie, Harry. Courtesy of Caryle Katz.*

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**1922 Sister Ruchel Leah Gurtin And Family Arrive**

You'll recall that the Hirsch brothers who had settled in Jersey City had left their older sister, Ruchel Leah (Hirsch) Gurtin and her family, back in Russia before the War. A recollection from her youngest son, Milton, later in life, recalls childhood fears during the Russian Polish war following the end of WWI.

In 1920 war broke out between Russia and Poland. The men of our village, on learning of this state of affairs, immediately took to the digging of a huge hole in the ground. That night it seemed as if the whole world had been thrown into chaos. I was aroused from slumber by weird noises thundering through the air.

My mother in a frenzy quickly snatched me in her arms, and gathering the other children to her side, ran to this hole which was to be our dungeon of security until the next day. Women and children from every possible direction could be seen running to this place of seclusion. The men covered the gaping hole with boards and bags of dirt to make it unrecognizable. The darkness seemed to penetrate our very being, and silence, caused through fear, made this place unbearable. Infants were crying! Mothers, with quivering voices, were trying to console them!

The older children, close mouthed, open eyed, were waiting for what--we didn't know, but hoped for the best. The next day we were released from this dungeon. It was then that I actually realized what daylight and safety meant. We were fortunate that our humble dwelling was not destroyed. Humble did I say? At that moment it was like a palace to us, after having spent an interminable, miserable night huddled together in the dark, dreary hole.<sup>40</sup>

Now that the war was over, Mlynov had become part of the newly created Poland, and immigration began to flow again to the US. The Gurtins took advantage of the immigration flow to make their way to the States to join the rest of the Hirschs.



*Figure 81 The Gurtin Family: (from left) Edna, Jacob, Saul, Miriam, Ruchel, Beatrice and Milton. Courtesy of Andrea Carter.*

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<sup>40</sup> Courtesy of daughter, Andrea Gurtin Carter.



*Figure 82 Milton Gurtin, Miriam Gurtin, Edna Gurtin. Courtesy of Andrea Carter.*

*Figure 83 (from the left): Saul Gurtin, Edna Gurtin, Miriam Gurtin, Milton Gurtin, Baby Beatrice. Courtesy of Andrea Carter.*



Milton, age seven at the time, recalls the exciting preparations and the fear provoked by childhood taunts.

The preparing for the journey was in itself an adventure. The taking of passport pictures, the selling of the house and of its contents, the hurrying and scurrying about, excited us. Preparations were high for our trip to America.

The day before we left will always be fixed in my mind. My friends gathered in a group and we were discussing my prospective journey. One boy predicted that the boat would sink and we would all drown. He exerted all his imagination to paint this scene and by the time he was finished I was terribly frightened.

The others came to the rescue by saying they heard that the streets are paved with gold and silver in America. They ended up in wishing me Bon Voyage and asking me to spare a few gold coins for them. I remember the trip vaguely, - the getting on and off trains, the surge of the crowds around the stations, the hustle and bustle of the larger cities.

The journey across the ocean is hazy. A few times I had to take a cold shower of salty water and then was inspected. I dreaded this procedure because the brine would splash into my mouth and eyes leaving a stinging and thirsty feeling. The third class passengers enjoyed their journey better than the first or second. The many songs and dances that filled the air showed their enthusiasm and happiness in the thought of beginning a new life in a new country with every chance of success. At the sight of the Statue of Liberty everyone began to sing, shout, dance, and even to cry for sheer happiness.

The Gurtins departed from Antwerp on September 28<sup>th</sup>, 1922 and traveled on the SS Finland, arriving in NY on October 8<sup>th</sup>. "Jankiel" is listed as 45 and a merchant, "Ruchla Leja" is 40, and the children, Malka (Miriam) 13 and Enia (Edna) 10, both are listed as "scholar," Michel (Milton) 7, Szowel (Saul) 18 and a laborer, and Basia (Beatrice) is 15 and a student. I have no idea why the manifest distinguishes between "scholars" and "student."

20		GURTIN	✓ JANKIEL	45	M	M	MERCHANT	YES	RUSSIAN	YES	POLISH	HEBREW	PINSK REG.	LUCK
21		GURTIN	✓ RUCHLA LEJA	40	F	M	H. WIFE	YES	RUSSIAN	YES	POLISH	HEBREW	PINSK REG.	LUCK
22	UNDER 19	GURTIN	✓ MALKA	13	F	S	SCHOLAR	YES	RUSSIAN	YES	POLISH	HEBREW	PINSK REG.	LUCK
23	UNDER 19	GURTIN	✓ ENIA	10	F	S	SCHOLAR	YES	RUSSIAN	YES	POLISH	HEBREW	PINSK REG.	LUCK
24	UNDER 19	GURTIN	✓ MICHEL	7	M	S	CHILD	NO	CHILD	NO	POLISH	HEBREW	PINSK REG.	LUCK
25		GURTIN	✓ SZOWEL	18	M	S	STUDENT	YES	RUSSIAN	YES	POLISH	HEBREW	PINSK REG.	LUCK
26	UNDER 19	GURTIN	✓ BASIA	15	F	S	STUDENT	YES	RUSSIAN	YES	POLISH	HEBREW	PINSK REG.	LUCK

Figure 84 The Gurtin family left Antwerp on the SS Finland on Sept. 28, 1922

The family indicates their last residence had been Luck [Lutsk]. Ruchel had been born in Mlynov and her husband "Jankiel" in Kovel, but they had settled in Lutsk which is where their children had been born and which was their last residence. Their closest relative there was Jacob's sister, "Ester Klejnbut."

It is not at all clear to me why the manifest lists "Pinsk Reg" in the column for "Country." There are many other persons on this page of the manifest from other cities with the same designation and it is differentiated from "Poland." Pinsk went back and forth between the Red and Polish army but by 1920 had become part of the reborn Poland.

M	MERCHANT	YES	RUSSIAN	YES	POLISH	HEBREW	PINSK REG. LUCK	SIS ER ESTER KLEJNBUT. LUCK	N.J.	JERSEY CITY
M	H. WIFE	YES	RUSSIAN	YES	POLISH	HEBREW	PINSK REG. LUCK	SISTER IN LAW	DO	N.J. JERSEY CITY
S	SCHOLAR	YES	RUSSIAN	YES	POLISH	HEBREW	PINSK REG. LUCK	AUNT	DO	N.J. JERSEY CITY
S	SCHOLAR	YES	RUSSIAN	YES	POLISH	HEBREW	PINSK REG. LUCK		DO	N.J. JERSEY CITY
S	CHILD	NO	CHILD	NO	POLISH	HEBREW	PINSK REG. LUCK		DO	N.J. JERSEY CITY
S	STUDENT	YES	RUSSIAN	YES	POLISH	HEBREW	PINSK REG. LUCK		DO	N.J. JERSEY CITY
S	STUDENT	YES	RUSSIAN	YES	POLISH	HEBREW	PINSK REG. LUCK		DO	N.J. JERSEY CITY

Figure 85 They list their last residence as Luck [Lutsk] where Jacob had a sister and where the children were born

The family is headed to the home of Ruth's brother, "Hersch Lewis," at 100 Clerk Street which is where Lewis was living with their father, Ephraim. As noted earlier, Ruth's mother, Gitel, had died in 1915 while Ruth was still living back in Europe.

20	NO	SELF	NO	BR. IN LAW	HERSCH LEWIS. JERSEY CITY. 100 CLERK STREET	no	always	yes	no	no	no	no	no	no	good	no	5
21	NO	HUSBAND	NO	BROTHER	DO	no	always	yes	no	no	no	no	no	no	good	no	5
22	NO	FATHER	NO	UNCLE	DO	no	always	yes	no	no	no	no	no	no	good	no	
23	NO	FATHER	NO		DO	no	always	yes	no	no	no	no	no	no	good	no	
24	NO	FATHER	NO		DO	no	always	yes	no	no	no	no	no	no	good	no	
25	NO	FATHER	NO		DO	no	always	yes	no	no	no	no	no	no	good	no	5
					DO	no	always	yes	no	no	no	no	no	no	good	no	5

Figure 86 The Gurtins were headed to 100 Clerk Street which is where Rachel's father, Ephraim, and his blended family were living.



Figure 87 Yankel Gurtin with his wife Ruchel (Hirsch) (seated left), possibly Yankel's family seated right. Courtesy of Edward Hirsch and Deborah Dickmann. On the right, Yankel standing left as a soldier. Courtesy of Andrea Carter.

Milton recalls the landing at Ellis Island and the shock of driving in American cars.

After an inspection at Ellis Island we were placed on board another boat and finally landed at the Battery. Here our relatives met us and brought us to Jersey City in their cars. I was terrified by the seeming speed, as it was the first time I had ever been in an automobile. We were brought to my grandfather's house, which was situated on Clerk Street. During the month I stayed there I became very spoiled, for my aunts and uncles in appreciation of the stories about the journey showered me with gifts of toys. Later we moved to Bostwick Avenue.



Figure 88 Ruchel Gurtin's Passport. Courtesy of Andrea Carter

By 1925, the Gurtins had moved into their own place on 22 Stegman Street which ran one block parallel to Wegman where a number of the Hirschs were living.

Gurtin Herman (Ruth) hlpr h22-A Stegman  
Gurtin Jacob (Ruth) hlpr h22-A Stegman  
Gurtin Saul hlpr r22-A Stegman  
Gurtin Anna dom r210 13th

Milton's childhood memories during this period capture the difficulty facing a young boy trying to acclimate to the American scene and fit in.

In the first school I attended, number 29, I spent a half term of agony, for I registrated [sic] in the middle of the term. I wanted to forge ahead in the learning of the new language, but it did not prove as easy as I expected. The teacher must have had a hard task trying to convey a new idea in a language

that I did not understand, but finally she overcame this difficulty by asking a girl to act as an interpreter. Slowly, I became accustomed to certain sounds, then to pronounce them, and finally to know their significance. Toward the end of the term, I managed to utter a few recognized sounds, but to my regret and sorrow I was not promoted with the others.

Then we moved to Stegman Street and I began to attend Number 15. The teachers in the lower grades prompted me in reading and writing for I was always called upon to render a recitation. Many times I noticed smiles on the faces of the other pupils and sometimes even on the teacher's when I did not pronounce a word correctly, in that famous Jewish-American pronunciation which one hears over the radio. In the course of time I made up the lost grade by being put in a double class and passing it.

I shall never forget the first time I was before an audience. It was during a Lincoln's birthday celebration. I was to tell a story concerning his boyhood. I became panic-stricken, towards the end and began to flounder, and finally failed to remember what I had to say. If you have ever been before an eager audience who at the slightest sign of embarrassment would burst into laughter, you will know how I felt.

The reader might [think] that I was the model boy or that I did not have my pleasures of romping around with others, but I do not want anyone to have this wrong opinion of me. When I moved to Stegman Street a smaller boy than I, spurred on by his brothers began pestering and annoying me. It was quite common to hear him yell "Greenhorn" whenever I passed. This finally lead [sic] to the first fight in my life. I did not know anything of this art and as can be guessed I was sadly beaten. Overcome with his easy victory, he began to disturb me even more, making life unbearable to me. At last overcome with anger we fought again. My soul was just a burning mass of vengeance.

Under this influence I just struck in any direction, hoping that I might hit him. In a fit of rage, I somehow got his head between my hands, I was going to beat his head against an iron pole. Fortunately for him and likewise for me, my mother arrived in opportune time.

In 1931, Milton's older brother, Saul, got married to a girl from Toronto named Irene Hoffman. It is not clear how they met though by this time Saul was a salesman and perhaps that brought him into contact with Irene. Their wedding provided an opportunity for one of Milton's warm childhood memories of a vacation driving north.

During the summer vacation of 1931 we enjoyed a motor trip to Canada. The most interesting and colorful scenes, I think, were in our own state. Did you

ever see the fertile [sic] soil stretch out before your eyes? The grass and plants all of different colors, even the mountains in the background seemed to blend into an indescribable color to harmonize with the scene.

The next scene that I shall always remember is that of Niagara Falls. This is one sight that everyone should see as part of their education. I was impressed by the dazzling height [sic]. The water rushing to the precipice, toppled over the edge, plunged to its doom what seemed to be a gaping hole at the bottom, then came up in a thick blanketing spray. I do not know which made the most noise, the singing as it went along, or the cry of despair as it toppled over, but the din was terrifying.

On the Canadian side we continued our trip to Toronto. At a gap between Lake Ontario and Lake Huron, a wonderful scene is visible. The sun was just setting throwing a softening color on the waters. One side seemed to be the harmonizing of green and blue, while on the other it was the harmonizing of blue and red. The trip was made to witness the marriage of my brother to a charming girl who lived in Toronto.



*Figure 89 Milton Gurtin as young man*

One can understand how these traumatic experiences from his youth made Milton struggle with fear as a young man. Not only had he experienced the bombing in Lutsk, but another tragedy struck in America not long after they arrived. Milton's sister, Basia (Beatrice) died sometime after they arrived and before 1930.<sup>41</sup> As he notes in his memoir, the fear generated by the bombing in Lutsk "...was heightened later in life when my sister died, and I became so fearful of being alone in the dark, that I had to sleep with a light on in the room and the door wide open."

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<sup>41</sup> Milton notes that he was 15 years old when he decided to overcome his fear, suggesting his sister died between 1926 and 1930.

In an eloquent testimony to the human spirit, Milton recounts a key turning point in his life.

I was about 15 years old when I finally decided to cure myself of this fear which was becoming unbearable to me. I had always enjoyed going on hikes, and thought that if I went on one overnight, I would overcome this fear. I obtained the permission of my parents and packed my tent and a few other things on my bicycle, and went on a two-week camping trip alone. I refused the company of a few of my other friends who wanted to come, as that would have defeated my purpose.

It was both my good luck and misfortune that the weather for almost the entire two weeks was very bad. The first night I camped near the Boonton Reservoir at Boonton, N.J. I had just finished making camp and my meal, when it started to drizzle. It rained all that night and I did not get too much sleep due to both the weather and the things my imagination created. I was very much tempted to go back home, but in the morning, everything looked so bright and crisp that I decided to carry my plan through.

I paddled out to Hackettstown the next day, and made my permanent camp out there. The experience of having overcome one night after another of being alone and nothing happening to me gave me the courage for the next night, and even though it thundered and the lightning flashed, I was no longer afraid of being alone. I was at peace with myself and nature.

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Miss Miriam Gurtin, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Gurtin of 141 Stevens Avenue, whose engagement to Mr. Morris M. Fidel of Newark has been announced. Miss Gurtin was graduated from Public School No. 15 and Dickinson High School. No date has been set for the wedding.

By 1940, Milton, age 24, is still living at home with his parents, Jacob and Rachel at 141 Stevens Ave. Jacob is a “helper” in the laundry. Living with them in the same household is their daughter Miriam who has by this point gotten married to Morris Fidel (spelled Fidle in the census) and given birth to their daughter Elaine, who was then three. Morris Fidel was a salesman in a furniture company.

Jacob and Rachel’s oldest son, Saul, his Canadian born wife Irene, and their six-year-old son, Morton, were living two blocks away on Rutgers Ave and Saul had become a supervisor in the Laundry.

By 1938, Jacob and Rachel’s daughter, Edna, had married Aaron Aronson and they had moved by the 1940 census to live with his family in Brooklyn on Carroll Street.

78	141	26	0	75.00	No	Gurtin Jacob	Head	0	M	W	65	M	No	6
79						Ruth	Wife	1	F	W	59	M	No	6
80						Milton	Son	2	M	W	24	S	No	5

Figure 90 1940 Gurtin Census at 141 Stevens Ave

1						Fidel Morris	Head	0	M	W	30	M	No	2/4
2						— Miriam	Wife	1	F	W	30	M	No	2/4
3						Elaine	Daughter	2	F	W	3	S	No	0

Figure 91 Miriam and Morris Fidel living with her parents in the 1940 census

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Table 6 The Gurtin Children's marriages in the 1930s

Children	Spouse and Year of Marriage	Grandchildren
Saul (Swoel) Gurtin (1903-1986)	On Aug 30, 1931 m. Irene Hoffman from Toronto	• Morton Gurtin, b. 1934
Basia / Beatrice (1907-~1926-1930)	Died young and did not marry	N/A
Edna Gurtin (1912-1995)	On Dec. 25, 1938 m. Abraham "Al" Aronson (1911-1988)	• Harmon Aronson, b. 1942 • Beverly (Aronson) Marcus, b. 1946
Miriam Gurtin (1908-2002)	In 1933 m. Morris "Moe" Fidel (1908-1997)	• Sheila "Dolly" (Fidel) Feigenbaum, b. 1945 • Myra (Fidel) Schiff, b. 1943 • Elaine (Fidel) Sinowitz, b. 1938
Milton Gurtin (1915-1977)	In 1947 m. Beatrice Soled (1918-1993)	• Steven River Gurtin, b. 1949 • Andrea Gurtin Carter, b. 1951

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### 1926 Arrival Daniel Mordko Hirsch and Family

There was one additional Hirsch family member who arrived in the 1920s. His name was Daniel Morko Hirsch (also Hirsch). In some family trees online and circulating in the Hirsch family,<sup>42</sup> Daniel is listed as a sibling of Ephraim, but it appears to me that he may have been a cousin, or a step-brother, since his mother's name, as given on his passenger manifest, is different than Ephraim's. Ephraim's mother's name was "Liebe" and Daniel Morko lists his mother's name as "Dwojrah". Since we don't know the name of Daniel's father from any records so far, we can't be sure if he was a cousin or half-sibling of Ephraim. However, we do know that Daniel Mordko was a relative because he was from Mlynov and when he arrived in America went to live with Isaac Hirsch who is listed as a cousin.

Daniel, his wife, Rachel,<sup>43</sup> and daughter, Dolli (sometimes Dolly), somehow made it just into the US just in the nick of time in 1926 before immigration completely shut down. In fact, the Immigration Act of 1924 substantially curtailed immigration from Eastern and Southern Europe by setting quotas based on national origins and limiting the number of new immigrants to two percent of each nationality in the US as of the 1890 national census. Because of these quotas, a number of young men from Mlynov could only get to the US circuitously via Buenos Aires and Mexico between 1923–1926.<sup>44</sup> Daniel Morko's immigration in 1926 is the last *direct* legal immigration of Mlynov born individuals found to date.

The family's manifest indicates they are going to cousin Isaac Hirsch at 121 Wegman which we know was the address of Isaac. Daniel indicates he was born in "Mtynow" and his closest relative there is his mother "Dwojra Hirsch". I suspect Dwojra Hirsch is probably a sister or sister-in-law of Ephraim's parents, Aaron and Liebe Hirsch.

"Mordko Daniel Hirsch" sailed from Southampton on Nov 10, 1926 on the SS Majestic, arriving in New York on Nov. 16. He is listed as 40 years old, a merchant, and someone has written by hand that his "wife and child in 2<sup>nd</sup> class". He apparently was in the hospital and discharged which may account for why his wife and daughter appear on a different page of the manifest. "Rachil" (Loshak) Hirsch, is listed as age 34, and daughter, Dolli, as age 6. The birthplace of all of them is given as "mtynow" and their last permanent residence was "Rowne" (Rivne).

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<sup>42</sup> A Hirsch family descendant chart sent to me lists Daniel Hirsch as married to Sara and having two children Brida and Dolly. This information appears incorrect from available records. On the manifest, his Declaration of Intention and Petition for Naturalization, Daniel's wife's name is Rahil or Rachel. Only the child "Dolli" is listed on the manifest and the Petition for Naturalization signed in 1932. In addition, as we shall see below, writings in the Loshak family also indicate they had only one child named Dolly.

<sup>43</sup> See previous note.

<sup>44</sup> See [https://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/Mlyniv/mlynov\\_in\\_WWI.html#BuenosAires](https://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/Mlyniv/mlynov_in_WWI.html#BuenosAires) for the boys from Mlynov who went to Buenos Aires.

9	HIRSZ	HERN ADLRO	94	m	S	Labourer	Yes	Portug
		MORDKO DANIEL	40	m		merchant	Yes	Polish

*Handwritten notes: "The 9 children in 2-2-22" and "Winfred T.D. 2-2-22" with a circled signature.*

Figure 92 Mordko Daniel Hirs listed on SS Majestic leaving from Southampton to New York, arriving Nov. 16, 1926

6	HODENSTEIN							
7	HIRSZ	RACHIL	34	F	m	H-wife	Yes	Polish
8	HIRSZ	DOLLI				Infant	No	Polish

*Handwritten notes: "V. 640/801" and "DW" with a checkmark.*

Figure 93 Mordko's wife Rahil (Loshak) Hirsz, age 34, and daughter Dolli Hirsz appear on a different page of the manifest

Poland	mtynow	Warsaw	19th. Sept. 1926	Poland	Rowne
--------	--------	--------	------------------	--------	-------

Figure 94 The birthplace of all of them is "mtynow" and their visa was issued Sept 19<sup>th</sup> in Warsaw and last residence was Rowne

9	Mother - Hirsz, Dwojra, Utynow, Poland.	N.Y.	Jersey City.	No	Self
---	---	------	--------------	----	------

Figure 95 Their closest relative was Daniel's mother "Dwojra Hirs" in "Mtynow"

Self	530	No	98. Ferry St., Newark, N.J.	No
			Cousin - Isaac Hirsz, 121 Wegman, Jersey City, N.Y.	No

Figure 96 They were headed to cousin "Isac Hirsz" at 121 Wegman in Jersey City

We know a bit about Rachel and Daniel from the Petitions for Naturalization that they filled out in 1932. Rachel apparently was born May 20, 1892 as Rachel Loshak. Rachel's own Declaration of Intention and Petition indicates she was born in "Grycow, Russia," which Jennifer Feinstein, my informant from the Loshak family, tells me was probably Gritsev (called Hritsiv, Ukraine today), which is 175 km southwest of Mlynov (a 2.5 hour drive today). Daniel's 1932 Petition is thus likely wrong in suggesting that Rachel's birthplace was Kovna, Russia.

For his part, Daniel Hirsz was born on July 10, 1886 in Mlynov and they met and married in Rovne (Rivne), on March 2, 1920 shortly after the War. Daniel was already 34 at the time. It seems likely that the dislocation of the War years brought them together at some point in Rovno. Their daughter Dolly was born there on Oct 22, 1922.

2194  
 No. 82123  
 Certificate of Arrival  
 No - N - 11083

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
 Form 2388-1  
 PETIT U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR  
 NATURALIZATION SERVICE 2 235836

TRIPPLICATE  
 (Duplicate to be presented  
 to the Bureau)

**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**  
**DECLARATION OF INTENTION**  
 Invalid for all purposes seven years after the date hereof

State of New Jersey, }  
 County of Hudson, } ss: In the Court of Common Pleas of Hudson County

I, Daniel Morko Hirsz, aged 40 years,  
 occupation Drug Clerk, do declare on oath that my personal  
 description is: Color White, complexion Fair, height 5 feet 9 inches,  
 weight 135 pounds, color of hair Brown, color of eyes Brown,  
 other visible distinctive marks Scar on Thumb Right Hand  
 I was born in Mlynov Russia now Poland  
 on the 10th day of July, anno Domini 1886; I now reside  
 at 121 Wegman Parkway Jersey City, New Jersey.  
 I emigrated to the United States of America from Southampton England  
 on the vessel Majestic; my last  
 foreign residence was Russia Poland; I am married; the name  
 of my wife is Rachel; she was born at Russia  
 and now resides at Jersey City New Jersey  
 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 STATE OF RUSSIA  
THE REPUBLIC OF POLAND  
 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 17th day  
 of November, anno Domini 1926; 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.  
Daniel Morko Hirsz  
 (Original signature in Russian)

Subscribed and sworn to before me in the office of the Clerk of said Court  
 at Jersey City, N. J., this 29th day of January  
 anno Domini 19 27  
 JOHN J. MCGOVERN,  
 Clerk of the Court of Common Pleas.

Figure 97 1927 Declaration of Daniel Morko Hirsz living at 121 Wegman Parkway with Isaac Hirsch

The Hirszes, now Hirschs, lived for a time in Jersey City at 219 Van Horne and then moved to 121 Wegman Parkway by 1927. Daniel is listed as a “drug clerk” in his Declaration. It seems probative that Daniel did not go to work in Standard Laundry during this time like everyone else and makes one wonder whether there was some other family issue underlying this decision. By the 1930 census, the family has moved to 1601 48<sup>th</sup> Street in the Bronx and Daniel is a foreman in a novelties enterprise.

42														
43	1601	118 R	35	Hirsch Daniel	head	M	W	53	M	0	-			
44				Rachel O	wife	F	W	48	M	0	-			
45				Dolly	daughter	F	W	19	S	4	0			

We know that in 1932, when Daniel fills out his Petition they are living at 1778 Vyse Ave in the Bronx and “Dolly” is still living with her parents. In 1933, Daniel became a citizen. The trail of the family peters out after that.

I was able learn a bit about what happened to them from Jennie Feinstein, a Loshak descendant (Rachel’s relatives), who came into possession of a few family letters that mentioned the family.

Jessica’s great-grandfather, Meyer Loshak, left his sister, Rachel Hirz, £250 in his will. In addition, Jessica’s grandfather, Harry (b 1908), included this brief note in his memoir:

Finally there was Rachel [Hirsz], the only one of my father's sisters I ever met. With her husband and only daughter, Dora, she emigrated to New York in 1920. She died about 1942 or 1943, and her husband died a few years later. Dora is the same age as I, and is therefore now 64. Eliot told me that she had gone to California, but had no other information about her, not even whether she married.

Jessica found three additional references to Rachel and Dolly in letters from her grandmother who was in New York during WWII:

16 Jul 1941: I had a very pitiful letter from Aunt Rachel [Hirsz] this morning. Both she and Daniel are terribly worried and upset because of their relatives living in the part of Russia where fighting is going on. Her heart is not strong and she makes herself very ill worrying.

25 Sept 1941 I took the children over to see Aunt Rachel on Saturday. Poor thing spends her entire day worrying about her sisters in Russia and is not at all well.

5 Dec 1941 Yesterday I went over to see Aunt Rachel and got an awful shock. She looks very bad and really ill. She has had two strokes in one of her eyes and can’t see with it, and spends her time worrying about losing her sight in the other eye. Her heart is weak too and she has to live very quietly. She has lost a lot of weight. They are setting the stone for Uncle Max next Sunday a week, and she is very upset that she won’t be able to go. They had a daughter Dora (Dollie), born in 1921, but I don't know what happened to her.

And then one final note about Dolly, again from Jessica’s grandmother in 1940/41:

You will be pleased to hear that Dolly is “walking out”. It appears to be quite serious and nobody seems to be in the least perturbed that he is not Jewish. She has improved considerably and is quite attractive. I took the children to spend a day with Aunt Rachel and Dolly’s young man was there. He is a

perfect darling, name Lee Andrew McIntosh. He comes from a family of professors and himself won a \$1200 a year scholarship to Columbus. He is absolutely crazy about Dolly but I don't think she will marry him. In fact, at present, she has no wish to ever marry. She wants no children and feels she is cut out for a career rather than marriage. He adores children and David and Ruth had a wonderful time, climbed all over his head and shoulders and he told them stories all the afternoon. He comes from Iowa and has a delightful drawly way of talking, much pleasanter than a N.Y. accent. He told Dolly he would be willing to become a Jew if that was what she wanted. It seems so strange that he should fall so heavily because although she has improved a lot, she's still no Venus – maybe it's her brains that attract him.

I decided to follow up on this last clue that Jessica had given me and searched for a Lee Andrew McIntosh from Iowa. It seems Dolly must have resisted him. He apparently married a Sarah Osborn from Salt Lake City, and they had gone to live in Skagit, Washington. It looks like they had nine children and then divorced in 1983. What became of Dolly or Dora Hirsch, is not clear as there were many people by that name in Manhattan, among other places, and there are not enough clues to disambiguate them. Perhaps Dolly kept true to her plan and did not marry and chose instead that alternative working path that was opening up for women during the War.

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### 1920–1930 Making It In Jersey City

While the Katzes and Newmans were settling into Brooklyn, and the Gurtins and Hirszes were arriving in America, the Hirsch brothers were continuing to build their lives around the successful Standard Wet Wash business.

The Hirsch nuclear family pretty much had settled down and established a vibrant life around Standard Wet Wash. Abraham (“A. D.”), back from a stint in the army, had married Ellen Waldman on June 14, 1919. Ellen was born in New York and was quite a bit younger than A. D. In their 1920 census, A. D. is listed as 38 and Ellen as 22. In September 1920, their only daughter, Ruth (“Roo”) was born.

I would later learn that it was this Hirsch household (A.D., Ellen, and Ruth) that went back to Mlynov in 1935 and were responsible for the film footage that had sent me looking for the Hirschs in the first place. I will tell the compelling story of their trip back to Mlynov below when we get there. But one of the ironies of this effort to trace the Hirsch family was learning that this family unit would later settle in Marin County, California, where I am now writing. In fact, it was only when I found Ruth's obituary and learned that she had been a long time Marin resident that I was able to finally track down and locate her children and learn the story of trip that produced the 1935 film of Mlynov, which I had set out to learn about when I started this narrative.

Ruth Hirsch and her husband William Silverman had moved to Marin in 1968. Ruth's parents, A. D. and Ellen, had moved to Marin in the early 1970s and A. D. passed away two years after they arrived. Ellen would live until 1995. They lived for a time just over the hill from where I am now sitting and when I virtually met their three children, Jenny, David and Dan, they knew exactly where my house was and Dan had ridden his bike regularly on the open space nearby. As I read Ruth's obituary, I realize that they had had a remarkable impact in Marin.

I was not in Marin when the Hirschs were here, though I had arrived in the Bay Area in 1990. Still, I find it evocative living so close to the spot where this family unit, who had once gone back to Mlynov and captured the only film I have seen of my ancestral place, had once lived. It felt in a curious kind of way like I was living near hallowed ground.

Of course, when Ruth was born in 1920, the family was still settled near Standard Wet Wash in Jersey City where Ruth grew up. In the census of that year, A. D. and Ellen were living at 136 Arlington Street. They were just around the corner from A. D.'s father, Ephraim, at 100 Clerk Street, the address to which the Gurtins had been headed when they arrived. Ephraim, now age 60, was living there with his relatively new wife, Mollie, age 50, his two youngest children, Lewis, age 22, Jeanette, age 20, and his step-daughter, Esther, age 18. Ephraim is listed as a "foreman" at the laundry, Lewis is the "route foreman" and Jeanette is a bookkeeper at the laundry. Stepdaughter Esther is a stenographer at a novelty house.

A handwritten census record for the Hirsch family at 100 Clerk Street, Jersey City, 1920. The record is organized into columns for name, relationship, sex, age, marital status, and birthplace. The entries are as follows:

Name	Relationship	Sex	Age	Marital Status	Birthplace
Charles B	Son	M	39	S	
Hirsch, Ephraim	Head	M	60	M	1404 Pa
Mollie	Wife	F	50	M	1408 Pa
Lewis	Son	M	22	S	1909 Pa
Jeanette	Daughter	F	20	S	1909 al
Esther	Stepdaughter	F	18	S	1907 al

Ephraim's three sons, Isaac, Jacob, and Harry, are all living nearby, a couple doors apart from each other, on Wegman Place (now called Wegman Parkway). Isaac, now 47, his wife Sarah, 36, and their four children are living at 121 Wegman Parkway in the 1920 census. Their eldest child, Lillian was already 19 and was working as a bookkeeper in the laundry. Hyman was 17, Morris, 15, young Abe, 13, and Bertha 11. None of them were officially working in the laundry yet.

Isaac's brother, Jacob, was living one house address over, at 125 Wegman Place, and shared the address with two other families. Jacob is 30, listed as manager at the laundry, and his wife Clara is 23. Their daughter, Gertrude, is now 3 and son Arthur is 4 and 3 months.

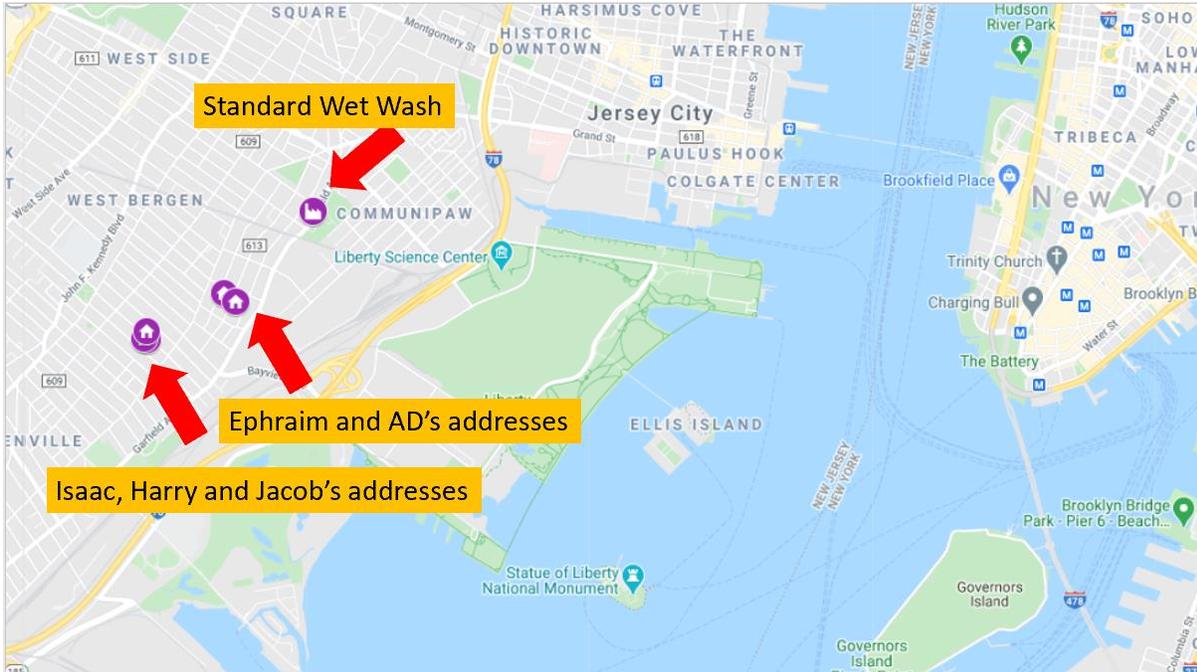


Figure 98 The Hirsch Family Addresses in 1920

Brother Harry is at 134 Wegman Place. Someone made a mistake on the census and entered the years of birth in the column intended for years of immigration. Harry is 34, listed as a manager of the laundry. His wife, Bertha, 31, and daughter, Gertrude, is 4. Harry's mother-in-law Hinda Rosenblatt is living with them.

By 1925, the brothers have settled into different roles for the laundry. A. D., now married to Ellen, has become President of the company. Jacob and Henry (Harry) are Vice Presidents, Isaac is Treasurer and Lewis is a clerk.

Hirsch Abr clk r121 Wegman pkway  
**HIRSCH ABRAHAM D (Ellen), Pres**  
**Standard Laundry Co Inc, h138 Ar-**  
**lington av**  
 Hirsch Alf (Florence) buyer h715 Bergen av  
 Hirsch Alvin pres-treas Ideal Quilting Co 154 Lin-  
 coln  
 Hirsch Arth (Obendorf & Hirsch) 476 Central av  
 Hirsch Bertha sten r121 Wegman pkway  
 Hirsch Carl factory wkr r519 Palisade av  
 Hirsch Chas J (Barbara) clk h519 Palisade av  
 Hirsch Clarice J sten r236 Cambridge av  
 Hirsch Edmund C (Wilhelmina) letterer 58 Co-  
 lumbia av  
 Hirsch Edw (Sarah) mach h1 St Paul's pl  
 Hirsch Ephraim (Dora) h18 Stegman

**HIRSCH ISAAC (Sarah), Treas Standard**  
**Laundry Co Inc, h121 Wegman pkwy**  
**HIRSCH HENRY (Bertha), V-Pres**  
**Standard Laundry Co Inc, h121 Weg-**  
**man pkway**  
 Hirsch Heyman clk r121 Wegman pkway  
**HIRSCH JACOB G (Clara), V-Pres**  
**Standard Laundry Co Inc, h125 Weg-**  
**man pkway**  
 Hirsch Jos lab r1 St Paul's pl  
 Hirsch Junius (Minnie) pipeftr h208 Warren  
 Hirsch Leo h189 Wayne  
 Hirsch Louis h59 Brunswick  
 Hirsch Lewis confr 78 Brunswick  
**HIRSCH LEWIS A, Sec Standard Laun-**  
**dry Co Inc, h100 Clerk**  
 Hirsch Morris (Tina) plmbr h97 Van Cleef  
 Hirsch Murry clk r121 Wegman pkway  
 Hirsch M stationery 265 Grove  
 Hirsch Rose slsldy Women's Specialty Shop 111  
 Orient av  
 Hirsch Rosie r78 Brunswick  
 Hirsch Sadie hlpr r1 St Paul's pl  
 Hirsch Walter student r1 St Paul's pl  
 Hirsch Zoe assmblr r1 St Paul's pl  
 Hirsch S r126 Bostwick av

Figure 99 1925 Jersey City Directory showing the various titles of the Hirsch brothers in Standard Laundry

I wonder how the decision was made to make A. D. president among the brothers. I would have liked to have been a fly on the wall for that decision and make a note to myself to ask the descendants.

The Hirsch family was clearly doing well and starting to appear in the society pages of the local, *Jersey Journal*, as for example, in 1923 with the engagement of the Hirsch brothers' younger sister, Jeanette, to Peter Levine. Their two sons, Marvin and Alfred Levine, were born in 1924 and 1926 respectively. Among the guests present at Jeanette's wedding were Molly and Rose Crystal, whom I suspect, but can't prove, may have been friends from the family that ran the Crystal Laundry that the Hirsch family had first purchased.<sup>45</sup>

The growing financial success of Standard Laundry and the Hirsch brothers dovetailed with the growing capacity of the local Jersey City Jewish community to raise money for buildings and create new institutions. The two successes were clearly intertwined.



Figure 100 The Jersey Journal, Nov. 12, 1928, p.5

A. D. and his brothers gave generously to the fledgling organizations that were developing in the emerging Jewish communal structure. In November 1928, the brothers attended a fundraising banquet for a new Jewish community center that was to be located at the intersection of Belmont and Bergen Avenues. The Hirsch brothers gave the largest donation of the night: \$25,000 to equip an auditorium, in honor of their mother, Gertrude (Gitel) Hirsch, who had passed away in 1915. Their donation represented 25% of the money raised that evening, showing their growing stature in the community. The next day an article appeared with A. D.'s photo and indicated that "this was the second highest single contribution ever made to a campaign in Jersey City, with the exception of the \$1250,000 donated to the Y. M. C. A drive by the Colgate Co."

<sup>45</sup> See Jersey Journal, Jan. 29, 1923, p. 9.

The highest contribution received thus far in the campaign came from Abraham D. Hirsch and his four brothers, who gave \$25,000 for the endowment of the grand auditorium in memory of their mother, Gertrude Hirsch. This is the second highest single contribution ever made to a campaign in Jersey City, with the exception of the \$250,000 donated to the Y. M. C. A. drive by the Colgate Co



Abraham D. Hirsch

Reading about the Hirsch brothers' financial leadership illustrates just how fundamental was the transformation these Mlynov immigrants to America had undergone and how tightly interwoven their lives had become with the developing Jewish communal structure.

I have, of course, read the general histories describing the Jewish immigration to America and about the large wave of Eastern European Jews who arrived from 1880–1920. But I reach an understanding that is more emotional and evocative in tone, when I see that transformation unfolding in one particular family from Mlynov, my own ancestral shtetl, that made it in America by starting a laundry and by capitalizing on a new technique that was then emerging. They were not, of course, the only Mlynov family to do well in America. But their story is powerful nonetheless.

I think too of the fact that A. D. would soon embark on a trip back to Mlynov, with his wife Ellen and daughter Ruth, to see the place where he had been born and to visit his cousins and friends still remaining. It had been twenty years since A. D. and his brothers had arrived in America. Perhaps he was already thinking about such a trip back there when he and his brothers donated to the new Jewish community center auditorium in honor of their mother.

The future Gertrude Hirsch Auditorium would soon become the place where many of the Jewish communal activities took place such as high holiday services, card games and other cultural events. Gertrude Hirsch's name was indeed remembered and appeared regularly in the 1930s announcement for communal events and religious services that would take place there. When the Jews of Jersey City got together, they often did so in the Gertrude Hirsch auditorium.

A year later, on October 10, 1929, A. D. Hirsch was nominated to be on a panel of officers for the newly created Jewish Welfare Foundation which would handle charity drives for the 22 local Jewish bodies that would join the Federation as charter members. Together the Federation would take over raising the \$150,000 that the community contributed to Jewish

philanthropies annually and was expected to save \$20,000 for the Jewish community through increased efficiency in handling fund raising centrally across those agencies.



*Figure 101 A. D. Hirsch, Standard Laundry Parade Float. Courtesy of Jenny Silverman.*

One year later, on August 7, 1930, A. D. was among a “group of business and professional men” who formed a new modern Orthodox Jewish Congregation that was to be named Congregation Emanu-El. The congregation was organized “in answer to a definite community need. It has long been felt that the modern American Jew desired modern orthodox service and that if such could be furnished, it would attract to active participation in these religious services, hundreds of young men and women, business and professional leaders in the city, their wives and children.” The Congregation’s first activity of high holiday services would take place in the Gertrude Hirsch Auditorium.

A. D. became vice president of the new congregation and chairman of the Committee on Administration. Articulating the purpose of the new organization, he explained:

that the idea of a modern orthodox congregation is bringing active response from all over the community and that people are rapidly making reservations for tickets for the services, which will be held in the Gertrude Hirsch Auditorium of the Jewish Community center. Mr. Hirsch says, “The American trained or American-bred business or professional man, his wife and children were deeply rooted in the historic traditions of their fathers. All that was required to make them responsible to formally organized religion was to modernize the service and its surroundings without sacrificing anything that was vital. (Jersey Journal, August 30, 1930, p. 4.)



Mr. Hirsch says, "The American trained or American-bred business or professional man, his wife and children were deeply rooted in the historic traditions of their fathers. All that was required to make them responsive to formally organized religion was to modernize the service and its surroundings without sacrificing anything that was vital. The new congregation under the direction of Rabbi Benjamin Plotkin, well known throughout Hudson County, will conduct beautiful and inspiring services that will be at once orthodox and modern."

The congregation hired Benjamin Plotkin to be their first rabbi. He had been the spiritual leader of Temple Emanu-El of nearby Bayonne, New Jersey, for the past six years. Prior to his service in Bayonne, he had occupied a pulpit in Providence, R. I. Rabbi Plotkin was American-born, a graduate of Columbia University and the Jewish Theological Seminary, which had started in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century to educate a new breed of Conservative rabbis who were educated in Jewish traditional texts and practices but also in modern historical thinking. The intent was to preserve tradition yet embrace modernity. Over the next few decades, the boundary between the Conservative and more traditional Orthodox streams would sharpen.

A. D. had apparently become enough of a recognized community figure that the *Jersey Journal* included him in a silhouette identification contest it published in December of that year. However, no one was able to identify him from his silhouette.

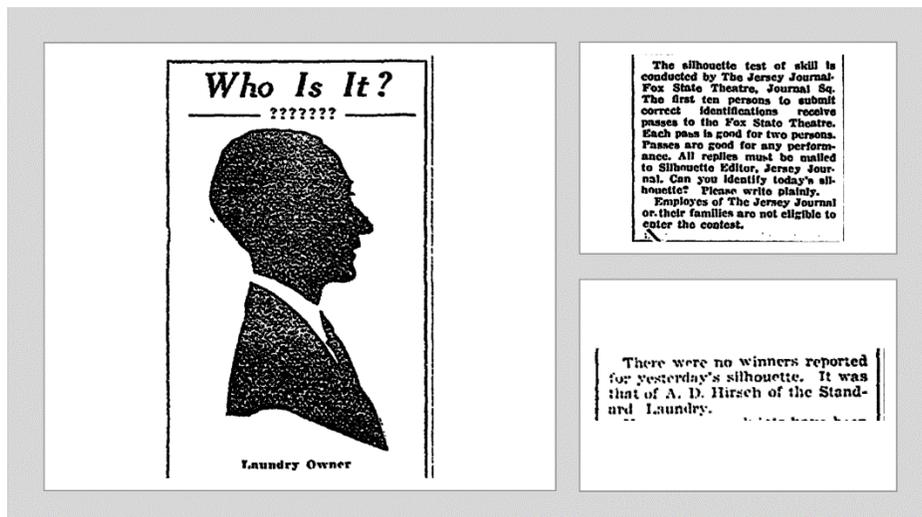


Figure 102 A. D. Hirsch was thought to be sufficiently recognizable that *The Jersey Journal* chose to publish his as part of the "silhouette test of skill."

That same year A. D. and Isaac both took out ads in the Jersey Journal extending best wishes to family and friends. The Great Depression had already started a year earlier, but the two Hirsch brothers still had disposable income.

**Mr. and Mrs. A. D. Hirsch and Daughter, 25 Gifford Ave., extend their best wishes to their relatives and friends for a Happy and Prosperous New Year.**

**Mr. and Mrs. Isaac Hirsch, 121 Wegman Parkway, extend their best wishes to their relatives and friends for a Happy and Prosperous New Year.**

Figure 103 September 22, 1930 Holiday Wishes to the Community Jersey Journal, p. 12

The new organizations that the Hirschs had been supporting were flexing their muscles that fall of 1929 just before the start of the Great Depression. Black Tuesday occurred on October 29, 1929 not long after the new fundraising and dedications. A year later as the impact of the Depression was setting in, Standard Laundry apparently was sufficiently resilient that the Hirschs were able to actually offer support to the community during the economic catastrophe. An article explained that Standard Laundry and one of its competitors would invest in building extensions to their laundries to generate work for people in the local economy.

**Brunswick and Standard to Erect Additions Which Will Give Work During Business Depression.**

Following the recommendations of President Hoover that business be speeded up by the construction of additional industrial buildings with the subsequent employing of more persons from the ranks of the unemployed, two Jersey City laundries, among others, have given orders to rush to completion new additions which will create jobs for more than 800 more people.

Henry Sieminski, president of the Brunswick Laundry, of 222 Tonnele Av., has ordered work on his spacious addition be rushed. When the

work is completed more than 500 additional people will be employed.

A. D. Hirsch, president of the Standard Laundry, another of Jersey City's leading business establishments, as is the Brunswick Laundry, has issued similar hurry orders. The company is erecting a large addition to its plant on 985 Garfield Av. The addition is being erected on the park-like space next to the present laundry. It will be in the form of an angle, running back from the street and to the rear of the present building.

**A. D. Hirsch, president of the Standard Laundry, another of Jersey City's leading business establishments, as is the Brunswick Laundry, has issued similar hurry orders. The company is erecting a large addition to its plant on 985 Garfield Av. The addition is being erected on the park-like space next to the present laundry. It will be in the form of an angle, running back from the street and to the rear of the present building.**

**Both concerns are consistent advertisers in The Jersey Journal.**

Figure 104 Jersey Journal October 28, 1930, p. 1.

The Hirsch family continued to expand in the 1930s. Engagements and marriages continued among the next generation. Isaac and Sarah's two youngest children married. Their youngest daughter, Bertha, got married to Philip Blum in 1932. Their youngest son, Albert, married Ruth Horchlick in 1937.

I recently had the opportunity to speak by phone with Bertha’s son Robert (“Bob”), now in his 80s, and probed his memories of this time period. Bob had only a vague knowledge of his family’s immigration story, and didn’t recall the name of the shtetl his grandparents had come from. Like most of us, when he was younger, he was focused on his career and family, and didn’t have time, patience or interest to dig up family lore. Robert was born in 1939, had gone to Rutgers University and then went to Georgetown University School of Medicine in Washington and became a doctor.

Dropping suddenly into his life as I did via an email prompted him to do a search on Mlynov and read about what I have discovered about the town. “This is wonderful,” he said unabashedly to me on the phone. “I didn’t have anything to tell my children [about where the family came from] and now I do.”

As our conversation shifted back to his parents, I learned that he was always too shy to ask why his parents waited seven years before having him. However, a fascinating story came tumbling out about a car accident that had brought his parents together. His mother and father had each been dating someone else when a serious car accident had put his mother into the hospital and blinded her for a while. “My father came to the hospital to visit her and she subsequently regained her sight and they got married.”

*Jersey Journal*, August 28, 1931, p. 14

**Jersey City People  
Injured in Collision**

In a collision last night between an auto and a truck on Route 25 at

Haines Avenue, Newark, five persons were severely injured and a new car demolished.

Isaac Hirsch, 48, of 121 Wegman Parkway, Jersey City; his daughter, Bertha, 23; and a friend of the family, Bertha Seide, of New York City, are in St. James' Hospital, Newark, while Mrs. Sara Hirsch is in Elizabeth General Hospital, as is Archie Stoia, 18, of Clifford Street, Newark, driver of the truck.

All the injured, with the exception of Stoia, were seriously hurt, sustaining possible fractures of the ribs, skull and legs. Stoia suffered minor injuries.

*Jersey Journal*, April 1, 1933, p 2.

**\$8,200 Awarded  
In Collision Suit**

Damages approximating \$100,000 were sought in an action started yesterday before Judge Thomas Brown and a jury in Supreme Court in which Isaac Hirsch, his wife, Sarah, and their daughter, Bertha Hirsch, 121 Wegman Parkway, with Mrs. Beatrice Seid, 553 W. 166th St., New York, were the plaintiffs and Patsy Ragonese and Arcangelo Stoia, both of Elizabeth, were defendants. Mrs. Seid also sued Hirsch. A verdict was found in favor of the plaintiffs for \$8,200.

Plaintiffs testified that while in the Hirsch car Aug. 27, 1931, a truck owned and operated by defendants collided with the first machine at the State Highway and Haynes Av., Newark. All plaintiffs were injured and their car wrecked, it was alleged.

Michael Halpern was counsel for plaintiffs, while defense counsel were Gerald Foley and Joseph Paul.

*Figure 105 Auto accident involving Isaac Hirsch and daughter, Bertha*

This is one of those family stories that gets told and retold because it was traumatic and transformative. It becomes part of family lore that gets passed on, from parents to the children and next generation.

This car accident had been serious enough to be covered in the *Jersey Journal* and I had in fact already made clippings of the story before I had even spoken to Robert. When I told Robert that, he was eager to see them. According to the news account, in August 1931, a truck had slammed into the car Isaac Hirsch was driving with his wife and his daughter Bertha and one of her friends. All of them ended up in the hospital with serious injuries. The Hirschs were eventually awarded \$8,200 in damages.

Bertha and Robert got married a year later in 1932. Bob recalls seeing the photos of his parents' wedding with the many bottles of whiskey on the table even though it was in the middle of the Depression. His memory seems consistent with the record of those years. In the middle of the Depression, the Hirsch family laundry was still able to put on significant sales meetings and celebrate the success of their sales team.

When I reach out to Bob's sister, Betsy Ann, to get her version of the story, I was shocked to learned Bob had suffered a stroke later that very day I had spoken to him. I am told now a few weeks later that he is recovering at home and am wishing him well.



Figure 106 May 20, 1932 4<sup>th</sup> Annual sales banquet of Standard Laundry Plaza Hotel. Courtesy of Jenny Silverman.

## Standard Laundry Employees Celebrate

(Reprinted From Final Edition Yesterday)  
Celebrating the successful ending of a three months' sales contest, members of the sales staff of the Standard Laundry Co. gathered with their families Saturday night in the auditorium of the plant at 985 Garfield Av. at a reception and entertainment arranged by the management of the concern.

Edward T. Dixon, sales manager, was master of ceremonies and, while a buffet supper was being served, the orchestra of seven pieces made up of employees of the plant provided music for the dancing. At intervals, a sextet of the employees provided entertainment with a harmonica band.

Over \$1,000 in awards were presented to various winners in the contest.

The awards were made by Abraham D. Hirsch, head of the company, and addresses were made by his business partners and brothers, L. A. Hirsch and Isaac Hirsch.

Figure 107 Sales reception celebration at Standard Laundry, Jersey Journal, March 26, 1935, p. 18.

During those lean years of the Depression, the Hirsch family was also pulling its weight in other ways for the community. A. D. went to bat for non-Jewish causes that were critical to the Jersey City community, such as the building fund for the Jesuit St. Peter's College which was struggling with its fundraising efforts.

## St. Peter's College Building Fund



**MR. A. D. HIRSCH**

As a civic-minded business man and public spirited citizen, I consider St. Peter's College a great asset to Jersey City. I think my opinion is shared generally by people of all faiths.

I understand that in response to his appeal Father Dinneen has received about \$27,000 in cash from about 3,200 people. Certainly this is a somewhat generous response in hard times, but it is not enough. No business man could embark on a \$500,000 building program with only \$27,000.

I am not a rich man. Nor are my brothers, associated with me in the Standard Laundry Company, rich men. But we want to help St. Peter's College to start building this year. Hence, the following offer:

**\$5 for Every Contributor, Up to 200, on  
Wednesday and Thursday, June 1st and 2nd**

**Statement of Mr. A. D. Hirsch, President of the  
Standard Laundry Company, Jersey City**

"From the novel newspaper appeal two things are clear to me:

- 1 St. Peter's needs a College building and needs it right now.
- 2 The Jesuits have no money and cannot build unless they have help.

As a business man I have been extremely interested in the appeal means adopted by Father Dinneen to raise funds in these times.

His modest appeal for FRIENDS OF ST. PETER'S to contribute A Dollar a Month for 10 Months shows that he understands the present times.

The small sum suggested, amounting to 25 cents a week, makes it possible for everyone who has any money to be associated with this worthy cause.

By eliminating solicitors and high-pressure salesmen he shows a delicate consideration for those who would like to help but are unable to do so, sparing them the embarrassment of repeated urgings to come across.

By depending exclusively upon newspaper advertisements and voluntary contributions through the mail, or brought to him personally, he has done away with high-salaried "drive" directors and their percentage of receipts. Every dollar contributed goes into the Building Fund.

Figure 108 Jersey Journal, May 31, 1932, p. 5.

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### The Return to Mlynov in 1935

It must have been after the sales reception in 1935 that A. D., his wife, Ellen, and daughter Ruth made their trip back to Mlynov. They must have bought or owned a movie camera and brought it with them on the trip. It was source of the digitized home movie they had taken of Mlynov that had come into my hands two years ago, via a cousin, who got it from another cousin, and which had sent me off at the outset to learn about who the Hirsch family was that had memorialized Mlynov.

They had given me, and other descendants of Mlynov families, a precious gift of this home movie, showing Mlynov residents alive at a time when many of our families and their relatives were still there and it was still a Jewish populated place. What an amazing artefact. We could, of course, imagine what Mlynov looked like from photos that we have from that time. But it is much more powerful to see real living moving residents of Mlynov walking in the streets and dressed up for the occasion of their US visitors. I hope that by pulling together the various threads and records to tell the Hirsch story from Mlynov, I am in some small way returning the gift to their family.

There was also a second more personal reason this home movie of 1935 Hirsch visit to Mlynov moved me. I had a similar story in my own family of a trip back to Mlynov. My great-grandmother, Yetta (Demb) Schwartz had apparently gone back to Mlynov in the mid-1930s with Israel Herman, the husband of her niece, Mollie Herman.<sup>46</sup> I wonder now whether she had heard about the Hirsch trip back to Mlynov or whether she had gone on her own accord. There are two photos from that trip that have been saved in my extended family. Both of them show my great-grandmother, Yetta, with relatives and friends who didn't survive the Shoah. They are the last photos we have of those friends and relatives. In my family lore, the story is told that my great-grandmother, Yetta Schwartz, would help herself whenever she wanted to her son Benjamin's cash register in the grocery store that he owned. And this is what she did to make her trip back to Mlynov.

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<sup>46</sup> Mollie (Gruber) Herman was from the large Demb family in Mlynov. Her father, Simha Gruber, was the brother of my great-grandmother Yetta Schwartz.



*Figure 109 Photos of my great-grandmother Yetta (Demb) Schwartz (seated center) back in Mlynov about 1935.<sup>47</sup>*

For all these reasons, I was thus deeply moved when I finally tracked down and met A. D.'s grandchildren, the children of his daughter Ruth or "Roo" as she was later called. Ruth had been fifteen years old on this trip back to Mlynov. It was not so easy to track them down. Ruth Hirsch had married a man named William Silverman and tracking down their children, Jenny, David, and Dan Silverman on the Internet, had taken a while. Fortunately, I figured out from various records and obituaries that David had married a woman with an unusual name (Stacya Shepard) who had a business profile online and where I left a message for the Silverman family. Bingo, I heard back from Jenny pretty quickly.

Jenny Silverman organized a meeting of her siblings and invited some cousins who would be interested in a conversation and we had a zoom meeting. I was copied on the invite and it turned out that one of the cousins recognized my name. Jonah Sinowitz was the great-grandson of A. D.'s sister, Ruth Gurtin. A one line email came back to me: "Howard I Schwartz my former professor at Stanford — Rabbi Dr?"

I was stunned. Most of the people I had met through my Mlynov project knew little about me and my history, that I had been trained as a rabbi once upon a time and had been a professor of Religious Studies at Sanford. But that was a long time ago and now, most of the time, I was just this anonymous researcher telling the Mlynov story. Suddenly that anonymity was gone. Jonah Sinowitz had been a graduate student in history at Stanford in 1993 when I was teaching there

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<sup>47</sup> In the photo on left, Yetta Schwartz (center) sits next to her niece's husband, Israel Herman on her right, and behind her, her niece, Nechuma (Shulman) Meiler with her family. In the photo on the right, Yetta Schwartz is seated center and behind her is Liba Tesler with Liba's two sisters.

in the Religious Studies department and he had taken a course with me. What a magical moment. My work had come full circle. A Hirsch descendant from Mlynov had studied with me and we had never known that we had this historical connection. I can imagine our ancestors, who undoubtedly knew each other, getting “nachas” watching Jonah sitting in a class on some topic of Judaism that I was teaching. I suspect his great-great-grandparents and my great-grandparents had grown up together.

The Silverman children were a treasure trove of information about that 1935 trip that their mother, Ruth, took back to Mlynov at the age of 15. When her daughter Jenny heard of my interest in that trip, she wrote to me the following:

My mother was writing her "memoirs" during the end of her life. She had an amazing memory of every detail of her life. In 1935 she travelled with her parents to Europe and travelled extensively. I thought you would like to see the account of their visit to Mlynov (which is when they took that video that I think you have seen).

I couldn't believe I now had in my hands the story of that trip they made back to Mlynov. I'll let Ruth Silverman recall the story of that trip in her own words.

When we were about to leave Prague to continue on to Poland, and my Dad's hometown, Mom went to a travel agency in the city to check on our train reservations. (There had been many itinerary changes because of my illness). She learned we were routed part of the way through Germany, and sharp-eyed and alert as she was, she noticed—UPSIDE DOWN—on the papers the agent was reading, the word “JUDEN”. She knew that meant Jews. She questioned the agent about why that appeared on our travel schedule and he tried to reassure her with the words: “Don't worry, Madame, you will be in a locked car”. That was very worrisome, and he had no acceptable explanation for that. Mom told him that would not do. I don't recall exactly how our train route was altered but WE DID NOT TRAVEL THROUGH GERMANY! And we had no notion of what was actually beginning to take place there. We only knew that Hitler was already in power.

Our train ride seemed endless. At some point another passenger in one of our compartments told my parents to keep a watchful eye on me as there was much kidnapping of young girls to be sold into prostitution. As I said earlier, we had much too much luggage, we had to change trains at busy stations, porters who did not speak English grabbed luggage and seemed to disappear as we ran after them and watched as they threw our luggage into the car through open windows. Sometimes we couldn't find seats together. At one such change, I took it upon myself to jump into the car to try and save seats

without telling my parents that I was going to do so. Of course, they looked around, couldn't see me and immediately assumed I had, indeed, been kidnapped. My Mother always claimed that her hair started turning grey that day. She was 38 at the time.

Eventually , we pulled into the station in Warsaw and checked into the Hotel Bristol. (I have just finished reading Diane Ackerman's book, The Zookeepers Wife, about Warsaw during the German occupation and the Hotel Bristol is mentioned). I don't seem to remember much about the city of Warsaw. I can't recall sight-seeing there. Don't know why it is so vague in my memory.

I do vividly remember that a hired car drove us to the city of Lutsk where we had a hotel room and it wasn't very nice. In the hall bathroom there was no toilet tissue , just pieces of newspaper held together with string!! God-awful. I wondered why I was there!

Dad's older sister, Tante Ruchel had married her first cousin, Yankel Gurtin, and they and their four children had emigrated to the U.S. from Poland after WWI with Dad's help. Well, Yankel still had a married sister who lived with her family in Lutsk and that was the reason we were there, to see them. I can picture her and her husband. I think she was Esther and the last name perhaps Klimbard.

The next day we travelled by hired car to Dad's birthplace—Mlinov (now in Ukraine). I don't have the ability to accurately describe the emotions my Dad exhibited on arriving there. We pulled up in front of a very small, frame house, one of many just like it, on an unpaved narrow street. There, waiting for us, must have been 20 to 25 various relatives, old, middle-aged, teenagers and children, dressed in their best and crowding around Dad to hug and kiss the man they remembered as "Avram", my Father's Hebrew name. There were tears of joy, much laughter, and introductions for Mom and me. Of course, Yiddish was their language (plus some Polish or Russian and they must have thought I was a mute since I could not (at the time) understand what they were saying. Mom could understand but, she, too, could not speak Yiddish. The older relatives were aghast at the way I looked—still pale and skinny from my illness (about 90 pounds at 5'5'.) They had assumed with food so available in America that everyone looked fat and healthy.

I recall that when we went inside the little house to eat, I ate virtually nothing, perhaps some bread and butter and maybe a boiled potato. Herring and onions were being served. The smell of the herring made me feel ill. To this day, I never touch it.

The young people, ranging perhaps between 15 and 20 or so, made every effort to welcome me and we managed some form of sign and body language. They were ALL ardent Zionists and attended camp to learn about farming and cultivation of the land in anticipation of a future move to “Eretz Yisroael” – then Palestine – to become pioneers there. They invited me to a dance they were having and I remember dancing with a handsome young , charming cousin.

We spent the night in the home of Dad’s Aunt Bluma and her husband , Moshe Hirsch, and I shared the room of their daughter who was about 20 or 25 . I remember that she coughed a lot and that she had very red cheeks. My guess is that she probably had tuberculosis.

Dad had always told me about how, as a child, he had enjoyed ice-skating on the large pond in town. He referred to the pond as “the tarch” (pronounced with a very guttural ch). I don’t really know if the word comes from Russian, Polish, Hebrew or Yiddish but over the years that Dad was away, either by drought, evaporation, or that when he was little it seemed big, his pond was now about 15 or 20 feet in circumference. He was shocked at how small it was.<sup>48</sup>

Next we walked to the “shul” in which he had had his “Bar mitzvah” at age 13. It was certainly not the big, lavish catered affair so common today, but a simple ceremony in a small, wooden building. The shul was small and dark on the inside.

Dad also recalled that one of his boyhood friends had been the son of the town apothecary and wonder of wonders, he was still in the town and the local pharmacist.

One of the cousins we met was Luba, a very bold, brash young woman. She emigrated to Palestine in about 1936 and ultimately became the tax collector in the city of Eilat. We visited her and her family in Eilat with our kids in 1960. It was still pretty undeveloped at that time. Another young cousin from Mlinov, Lipa Halperin, emigrated to Palestine shortly after our visit and had joined a kibbutz, married a woman named Tolle and raised a lovely family.

Bill and I saw both Luba and this cousin when we went to Israel in 1949 and Jenny [my daughter] also visited them during her “Year Course” in 1968-69 and again during her Junior Year at the Hebrew U. Their son became

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<sup>48</sup> A description of this “pond” is also found in the Mlynov Memorial book by Lipa Halperin, one of A. D.’s cousins. He refers to it as “Cologia” or “swamp.” <https://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/Mlyniv/mly007.html#Page13>

enamored of Jenny and she was not happy about the situation. He was killed during one of the subsequent wars, a great tragedy.

As I mentioned when I wrote about the beginning of our odyssey, we had our 35 mm. movie camera and, in addition to filming in many of the places we toured, of course we took pictures of Dad's family in his hometown. It is very painful to watch this film and recall meeting these relatives and realize not too long after our visit they became victims of the Holocaust.

Of the many other relatives we met in Mlynov, one emigrated to Canada<sup>49</sup> and another to someplace in So. America. After our return home and brief news from Mlynov, all correspondence and communication ceased. We never learned of how or exactly where they met their deaths.

When we finally said our goodbyes, and they were very tearful for Dad and all of his relatives, we returned to Warsaw where we made train connections which took us north and east to the city of Riga in Latvia.



*Figure 110 A. D. Hirsch (right) in Mlynov in 1935*

#### [Mlynov Halperin Relatives and Their Fates](#)

As I read Ruth's recollections of her trip back to Mlynov as a 15-year-old girl, I'm thinking about my own father, and how profound the difference that existed between the experience of those who were born in Mlynov and those who were born to Mlynov immigrants in America. Ruth was born a few years before my own father who was also born in America to immigrant parents from Mlynov. Going back, Ruth felt like Mlynov was a foreign place. The hotel rooms in Lutsk were not up to American standards. Nor could she communicate with her relatives who spoke Yiddish, Russian and Polish. I know my father, focused as he was on sports as a young man

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<sup>49</sup> Ruth is referring to Saul (also Shurlick) Halperin

growing up in Baltimore, would have felt the same way. Mlynov was a distant place, a foreign country, one his parents probably did not talk much about, and a place he never got to visit.

On her own trip, Ruth did pick up on the fact that most of the youth in Mlynov in 1935 were Zionists and were longing to make aliyah to Israel.<sup>50</sup> During this trip she met several of her cousins and her aunts and uncles. She mentions meeting her father's Aunt Luba and her husband Moishe Hirsch, who was brother of her grandfather Ephraim. They all perished in the liquidation of the ghetto in October 1942. Ruth also mentions three other second cousins she met who were grandchildren of Pessia (Hirsch) Halperin, sister of her grandfather Ephraim.

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Ephraim's sister, Pessia Hirsch, was one of the sisters who never came to America. She had married a man named Lipa Halperin in Mlynov sometime before 1882 when they started having their six children: Israel Halperin (1882–1942), Avraham Halperin (1924–1942), Sarah Halperin (–1942), Yosel (Joseph) Halperin (–1942), Faiga Halperin (–1942), and Chaya (Chaika) Halperin (–1942).

These six children in turn produced at least twelve grandchildren whose names have been preserved in family trees. Of those twelve grandchildren, only three lived past October 1942, the date when Mlynov ghetto was liquated. Two of them made aliyah in the 1930s and one survived the liquidation of Mlynov. They were Luba Goldenberg (later Luba Kravitz), Lipa Halperin and Saul (Shaul) Halpern. Ruth mentions meeting all three of these third cousins during her trip in 1935 and one can see Saul Halpern in the home movie.

Ruth recalls the brash Luba Goldenberg, who made aliya in about 1936, shortly after Ruth met her and would eventually move to Eilat where she was a tax collector. It was Luba's voice that had at some point been merged into the Hirsch movie of Mlynov that I had received and who is identifying people in the video.

Luba was the daughter of Pessia (Hirsch) and Lipa Halperin's daughter, Chaya (or Chaika) who had married a man named Beryl Goldenberg from Mlynov. After her aliya, Luba married twice in her life, the first time to Don Pesis and had two sons in Israel, Rafi and Ari. She had later married Shmida Kravitz became Luba Kravitz and had another son Ron. I connect with her son Rafi and ask him to share what he knows about Luba's life.

Unfortunately, Rafi does not have much information about his mother and his brother Ari, who would have more information passed away four years ago. Rafi's memory is that his mother Luba and his father, Dov, were from Kremenets and came to Israel around 1934. The details we have are not all consistent. Since we know that Ruth Hirsch met Luba in Mlynov in 1935 when she visited there, we can either assume that Luba was visiting there or Rafi is mistaken and Luba was born in Mlynov but married someone from Kremenets.

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<sup>50</sup> On Zionism in Mlynov, see [https://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/Mlyniv/Zionist\\_Youth\\_in\\_Mlynov.html](https://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/Mlyniv/Zionist_Youth_in_Mlynov.html)

Table 7 Children and Grandchildren of Pessia (Hirsch) and Lipa Halperin

Children	Grandchildren
Chaya (or Chaika) Halperin married Beryl Goldenberg	• <b>Luba (Goldenberg) Pesis / Kravitz</b>
	• Ethel Goldenberg
Faiga Halperin married Yishayahu ?	• ?
Sarah Halperin married Yalka Schlian	• Moishe Schlian married unknown
Yosel (Josef) Halperin (1880–1932) married Tzipa (or Cipa) Rywiec (Rivetz?) (1880–1942)	• Ada Halperin (1903–1942) m. Berel Gebert
	• Roza Halperin (1904–1942)
	• Lipa Halperin (1906–1942) [* a cousin of the Lipa who survived]
	• Aron Halpern (1908–1942)
	• <b>Saul (Shaul) Halpern (1912–1996)</b>
	• <b>Benjamin Halperin (1914–1986) lived in Russia</b>
Israel Halperin (1882–1942) married Rivka-Rachel Shrentsil (1888–1942)	• <b>Lipa Halperin (1907–1969) married Tola Mack (1914–1988)</b>
	• Elka Halperin (1909–1942) not married
	• Chaya (Chaika) Halperin (1912–1942)
	• Batya Halperin (1920–1942)
	• Avraham Halperin (1924–1942)

In any case, Rafi indicates that soon after they arrived in Palestine they were wounded by the Arabs while in a bus from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. After recovering they went back to Kremenets to be with family. There Luba gave birth to Rafi's brother, Ari, in 1938 and just before the war, they went back to Palestine because they had British certificate permitting immigration.

In his email Rafi tells me he was not aware of the 1935 film about Mlynov which I sent him and it was very emotional to hear his mother Luba speaking in the film. The gift had just come full circle.



*Figure 111 1949 Ruth (Hirsch) Silverman (back) with Luba Kravitz and husband during visit to Tel Aviv*



*Figure 112 Luba Kravitz during same visit*

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### [Lipa Halperin's Story](#)

On that trip back to Mlynov in 1935, Ruth also met her third cousin, Lipa Halperin, who made aliyah in 1938. There are a number of "Lipa Halperins" in this family line and it is a bit difficult to keep them all apart. They were all named after the patriarch, Lipa Halperin, who, as previously noted, had married Pessia Hirsch, one of Ephraim Hirsch's sisters.

I was intrigued when I first had learned that there was a Lipa Halperin among the Hirsch family descendants. The name Lipa Halperin was familiar to me. I had earlier seen his name listed as one of the eight members of the Book Committee that organized the Mlynov Memorial book. Despite searching, however, I had been unable to figure out who he was or what had become of him. Over time, I realized that this same Lipa Halperin had also contributed an interesting essay to the Memorial volume called "The Mill" (13-15) in which he talked somewhat critically

about the lack of historical interest among the residents of Mlynov and about legends surrounding the origin of the town's name and the name of the Ikva River that flowed nearby. The legend of how the Ikva acquired its name has reached us via Lipa who heard it from his maternal grandfather. Lipa wrote:

Grandfather, Mordechai-Meir [Shrentzil], may peace be with him, told me once, that the name of the river Ikva came from [the verse in Genesis 1:9] "Let the waters (yikavu hamayim) be gathered."<sup>51</sup>

The relevant incident happened many generations ago. It was a difficult winter and snow fell in an unusual amount. The beginning of spring the water of the river rose dramatically, chunks of ice accumulated along the posts of the bridges, and "stood straight up like a wall" [quoting Exodus 15:8] and blocked the passage of the water. The river kept rising higher and higher, the towns in the surrounding area and the Jewish dwellings were inundated and the danger was great. This is why we were accustomed to say, "Water is more dangerous than fire" – from fire you can flee but from a flood, which comes suddenly, there is no escape or rescue.

The Jews went into prayer and read in a chapter of Genesis (Parashat Bereshit) "Let the waters be gathered and behold the dry land appeared" (Genesis 1:9). The sun came out and melted the ice, and the water broke through in a tremendous stream, the pillars and the bridges were destroyed, "and behold the dry land appeared." This is the reason the river is called the "Ikva." The name sounded good to the non-Jews and this became its name until today...

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<sup>51</sup> The full verse from Genesis 1:9 reads: "God said, 'Let the water below the sky be gathered into one area, that the dry land may appear.' And it was so." The implication is the name Ikva (אִקְוָה) was an allusion to the Hebrew verse "let the waters be gathered" (יִקְוּ).

*Figure 113 Lipa Halperin  
pictured in Palestine in 1938-39  
in the uniform of the Notrim,  
Jewish Settlement Police (JSP),  
under the British Mandate.*



Lipa's essay in the Memorial volume has a haunting quality to it and I wanted to understand the undertones that I had picked up on in reading the essay. What could I learn out about Lipa's life?

With the aid of a descendant in Israel from the Mlynov Berger family, I have had the pleasure of being connected with Lipa Halperin's daughter, Miriam Ahroni, who was delighted to share with me the details of Lipa's life.<sup>52</sup> With Lipa's story, I had now uncovered the story of seven out of the eight individuals on the Memorial Book Committee that preserved the memories that have come down to us and have so fascinated me. As I record the story of Lipa, it strikes me that I am recovering the story of the lives of those who were themselves recovering the stories of Mlynov and its inhabitants. I guess that makes me a second generation recoverer of sorts.

As I correspond with Lipa's daughter, Miriam, in Israel, I ask her whether she has seen that movie from 1935 when the Hirschs family visit Mlynov. She writes back that she knows about the 1935 movie although she has never seen it and she recalled that someone from the Hirsch family told her many years ago that some members of her father's family are in that movie. And so, I send her a link to the movie, which I had posted on YouTube. She writes back:

Thank you so much for the link to the movie from 1935. [The voice of] my beloved aunt Luba (who actually was my father's cousin) helped me by her clear explanations to recognize the places and identify the family members: My grandparents Rivka and Israel, my father's sisters and brother, the cousins of my father and of Luba, the brothers Binyamin, Rosa, Lipa (same name, but not my father!), Aharon and Shaul Halperin. Me and my sister and brother were very excited indeed and watched this short movie over and over again.

I again ponder the way that movie had made its way in Miriam's hands. A cousin of mine, had gotten it from a cousin of his, who had gotten it from a Hirsch descendant in an adult education

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<sup>52</sup> I want to thank Hagar Lipkin (a Mlynov descendant from the Berger and Chizik family) for helping me contact Lipa's daughter, Miriam Aharoni.

weekend. Now it had come full circle and I had returned it to the Hirsch family in Israel. I had become a link in the chain.

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Miriam tells me the story of her father's life:

“My father was born in Mlynov in 1907. He was the oldest son of his parents: Israel Halperin and Rivkah-Rachel (from the Shrentzil<sup>53</sup> line). Both of his parents were born in Mlynov. His father, Israel Halperin, was the second son of Lipa Halperin and Pessia (in the Hirsch line). My father was named, as is obvious, for his grandfather.

“Father had three sisters and a brother. His parents and siblings were tragically killed in the Shoah. Father became aware of circumstances of their death (the kehilla Mlynov was liquidated in 1942) from a letter from his first cousin, Shaul Halperin, who managed to survive the mass killing. Shaul was then in a displaced person camp in Germany, and later he migrated to Canada. The murder of the family and the community did not give my father rest until his last day.



*Figure 114 A 1937 photo of the Halperin siblings in Mlynov with their mother, Rivka-Rachel (nee Shrentzil), standing back left. Lipa is standing in the back between his sister, Batya (right) and his younger brother, Abraham (center). His sister, Chaika, sits on the right and sister Elka on the left. Courtesy of Miriam Aharoni.*

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<sup>53</sup> Variations on the transliterated spelling of Shrensil include Shrenzel, Schentzel, Shrentsil, and Sherentsil.

*Figure 115 The Halperin family and Gertnich family. Lipa sitting center with his mother Rivka (Shrentzil) Halperin seated right.*



*Standing (l to r): Lipa's sister Elka, a Gertnich cousin, sister Batya, brother Abraham, unidentified, sister Chaika. Seated left, Lipa's aunt Sorke/Sarah (Shrentzil) Gertnich, with small baby Faiga.*

*Figure 116 Halperin family in Mlynov in theatrical pose. A younger, Liba, sits with the guitar. Seated on the right is sister Batya.*





*Figure 117 The Halperin and Gertnich families, Mlynov 1937. Lipa standing on the left next to Yosef (Gertnich) Ganon.*

Miriam continues with Lipa's story.

“My father's family in Mlynov made a living from a small haberdashery (photo below). The home was Zionist, all the sons and daughter spoke and wrote Hebrew. I have preserved letters written in Hebrew that father received from his siblings in Mlynov after his aliyah. They were talented. In particular, the two youngest, also sent stories and poems, out of a significant identification with what needs to be done in the Land of Israel, and they clearly dreamt of aliyah. The parents also hoped to make aliyah – his father from religious motivations and his mother from Zionist-nationalist ones. She was unusually enlightened in comparison with women who were her age in Mlynov.”

When I looked more carefully at the photo Miriam had sent me of the Halperin haberdashery in Mlynov, I froze. Was that A. D. Hirsch standing with a tie in the back row and his arm draped over the shoulder of the woman in front of him? I am pretty sure that it was and that this photo was taken in 1935 when A. D. went back to Mlynov for that visit. I excitedly emailed both Miriam and A. D.'s granddaughter, Jenny Silverman, and asked whether my hunch was correct. Jenny confirmed that in fact that was her grandfather A. D. and his arm was draped on the shoulder of his wife Ellen. The photo was taken during the 1935 trip of the family back to Mlynov.



*Figure 118 Mlynov haberdashery of Halperin family, from 1935 visit of American cousins.*

*Back row (l to r): Israel Halperin (Lipa's father) and A. D. Hirsch. Next row: Lipa's sisters, Chaika, Elka, Ellen Hirsch, Lipa's mother, Rivkah (Shrentzil) Halperin.*

*Seated: siblings, Batya and Abraham. Lipa does not appear in this photo and was already in his preparatory training for aliyah.*

Miriam continues:

“Father was involved in the Zionist youth movement, *Hashomer Hatzair*, and had many friends in the movement. In Mlynov, there was a preparatory kibbutz (*hachsharah*) for the small youth movement and they engaged the young people in activities which excited them.

“When he was 26, in 1933, Father left Mlynov and joined a preparatory kibbutz (*hachsharah*) in Golina.<sup>54</sup> He was older than most of the members by a number of years and promptly became one who had to care for all of them, seeking sources of financial support and advice in moments of crisis. After a year and a half, he was called to work in the center of ‘General Zionist Pioneer’ (*Hechalutz*) in Warsaw, even though he was not a charismatic or organized man. The movement was seeking a man who could in fact strengthen the spirit of the members in the preparatory kibbutzim, which were beginning to disintegrate as the British government began halting aliyah. Father’s friends so appreciated his understated and consistent activities on the ground, that they refused, time after time, to guarantee him a certificate for aliyah at the end of his year of work. Finally, father was able to make aliyah to the Land of Israel with vigor in 1937.

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<sup>54</sup> Golina was 670 km from Mlynov and 236 km east of Warsaw.



*Figure 119. Preparatory Kibbutz in Golina, Lipa holds the handle of the plow in the center.*

*Figure 120 Lipa (fourth from the right) during his stay in the preparatory Kibbutz in Zawiercie, January 1936.*





*Liba first from the right with friends on the deck of a Polish boat, March 1937*

*A photo of Lipa about to leave Mlynov, 1937*



*Figure 121 The Hirsch family, May 1939. The Soviet invasion of Poland occurred in September of that year.*

“Immediately after aliyah, Liba joined the kibbutz of the Zionist Youth movement in Ramat Hasharon (today a city). There he met Tola Mack, our mother, born in Łódź. When the small kibbutz broke up, our parents moved to another Kibbutz of the movement – Kefar Saba (also a town now). When this Kibbutz also broke up, our parents moved to the Kibbutz Hasharon in Ramat David. In 1954, Kibbutz HaSharon moved entirely from Ramat David to Yafat.”

In 1938, Lipa received two letters from his sisters that anticipated his upcoming visit back to Mlynov when they would be able to answer his many questions about life back in Mlynov. The letters are terse and I have the sense that perhaps the sisters are not speaking openly about how life was then going.

Mlynov, July 1938

**From sister Elka**

To my dear brother Lipa, Shalom.

Lipa, you know why we did not write to you. We have two businesses (one of them is the family haberdashery store) and we have no time. On hot days we make ice cream and this takes half a day. Since today is a cloudy day, we have some free time.

In Mlynov now there is a real revolution. Two sides are fighting with each other: one wants a school and the other wants a public bath house. The religious people ("klei kodesh", ironic expression) with the rabbi at their head don't want a school. But I am sure everything will be fine.

Batya asks if she can send you a story she wrote, because she does not want to publish it in the Diaspora (Galut).

With the end of this paper, I am finishing my letter. With yearning, I await your visit.

When you come, we shall discuss everything. Regards to [your wife] Tola and to all our family. Elka

**מהאחות אלקה:**

לאחי היקר ליפא שלום!

ליפא, אתה יודע מדוע לא כתבנו לך: יש לנו שני עסקים ואין לנו פנאי. בימים החמים אנחנו עושים גלידה וזה אורך חצי יום, ולפי שהיום יום מעונן, יש לנו פנאי.

במלינוב עכשיו ממש מהפכה. שני צדדים קמו: אחד חפץ בית-ספר והשני מרחץ. רבים ביניהם, וכלי הקודש ובראשם הרב אינם חפצים בית-ספר. אבל אני בטוחה שהכול יהיה בסדר.

בתיה שואלת אם היא יכולה לשלוח לך סיפור שכתבה, כי בגלות אינה חפצה אותו להדפיס, ואיך?

עם גמירת הנייר אני גומרת את מכתבי.

בכליון עיניים אני מחכה את בואך. כשתבוא נדבר על הכול.

די"ש לטוליה ולכל משפחתנו.

**From sister Batya**

My dear brother,

You asked so many questions and I am not able to answer even one. It is not smart to put down any of this on paper that will go to Holy Jerusalem. The answers will remain in Exile (galut). When you come you will know all of it. Don't think that I am too lazy to write to you. As a proof, I am sending to you a very long poem, although a bit old, since it was written last year.

אחי יקירי,

שואל אתה כל כך הרבה שאלות ואני אינני מסוגלה לענות אף לאחת. כל זה אין כדאי להעלות על נייר שצריך לבוא לירושלים הקדושה. יישארו התשובות בגלות. כאשר תבוא תדע הכל. אל תחשוב שמתעצלת אני לכתוב אליך, כי הרפיה: שולחת אני לך שיר כל כך ארוך, אף שהוא מעט ישן, כי עוד מאשתקד.

**אחותך בתיה**

Lipa and Lupa's aliyah to Palestine in the 1930s saved both their lives. They were the only two siblings in their respective families who were left after the Shoah, apart from two cousins, whom we meet below. And while they had helped to build what in 1948 became Israel, the Jewish State, Lipa's life was not protected from further tragedy.

On June 6, 1970, his son Yisrael Haperin, named after Lipa's father, died in the Suez Canal while in battle in a combat unit in the War of Attrition. Yisrael had been born on April 11, 1950, just two years after the State had come into existence. He would die the same year that the Mlynov memorial book was first published. He was not the first of the Mlynov descendants to die fighting for the new nation state.<sup>55</sup>

I try to imagine the profound grief that Lipa must have experienced, leaving his family in Mlynov for aliyah, then losing his primary family, seeing with pride and hope the State of Israel come into existence, and then losing a son to a subsequent war. As I ponder the bookends of tragedy that Lipa faced in his life, and the web of tragic world events in which he and the Mlynov families were all suspended, I grasp the profundity of that insight that, whom we become in the end, is shaped by powerful and deep currents that transcend all of our lives, and that any choice we make, about how to proceed in life, comes with costs that cannot be calculated when those choices are made. I know that truth well.

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<sup>55</sup>The story reminded me of the tragic story of Hanoch Holtzeker, who was 9 years old when WWII broke out and who survived the ghetto liquidation. After surviving in the forests with another family, he eventually joined his sisters in Israel in Kibbutz Negba. Hanoch fell on May 25, 1948 from an Egyptian shell at a position in the Negev near a machine gun. He was laid to rest in the Negev military cemetery.

*Figure 122 Israel Halperin (1950 – 1970) fell on June 6, 1970*



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### [The Survival of Saul Halpern](#)

Lipa Halperin learned of the liquidation of his family and the Mlynov ghetto from his surviving cousin Saul Halpern, who shared the same grandparents, Lipa Halperin and Pessia (Hirsch). Fifteen year old, Ruth, also met Saul during that same 1935 trip back to Mlynov. I had heard about Saul Halperin previously from another Mlynov born survivor of the Shoah, Gerry (Zelig) Steinberg. The survivors of the Mlynov ghetto had stayed in touch and Gerry's family had gone to family celebrations of the Halpern's in Canada. Recently I managed to find Saul's daughter, Arlene Leder, by discovering and writing to the Saul and Lila Halpern Foundation in Toronto. Arlene, graciously shared with me Saul's story.

Shaul was born on May 15, 1912 in Mlynov to Joseph (Yosef) Halperin and Cipa Rywiec (possibly a variation of Rivitz). They had six children: Ada (1903), Roza (1905), [another] Lipa (1906), Aron (1908), Saul (1912), and Benjamin (1914). All of Saul's siblings and his mother perished in the Shoah, except for Benjamin who left for Russia in 1939, as a bookkeeper, and never left Russia. Benjamin married but had no children. He died in Leningrad in September 1986. I learn from Arlene that the iron curtain was lifted too late for the brothers to ever meet again face to face but they did reconnect and exchange letters.

"Saul was a member of a Zionist youth group in Mlynov. In this photo below, he is in the back row third from the left. His house was on a street called Rynkowa, which was the Main Street in town. It was a large house with a store front where his family conducted business.

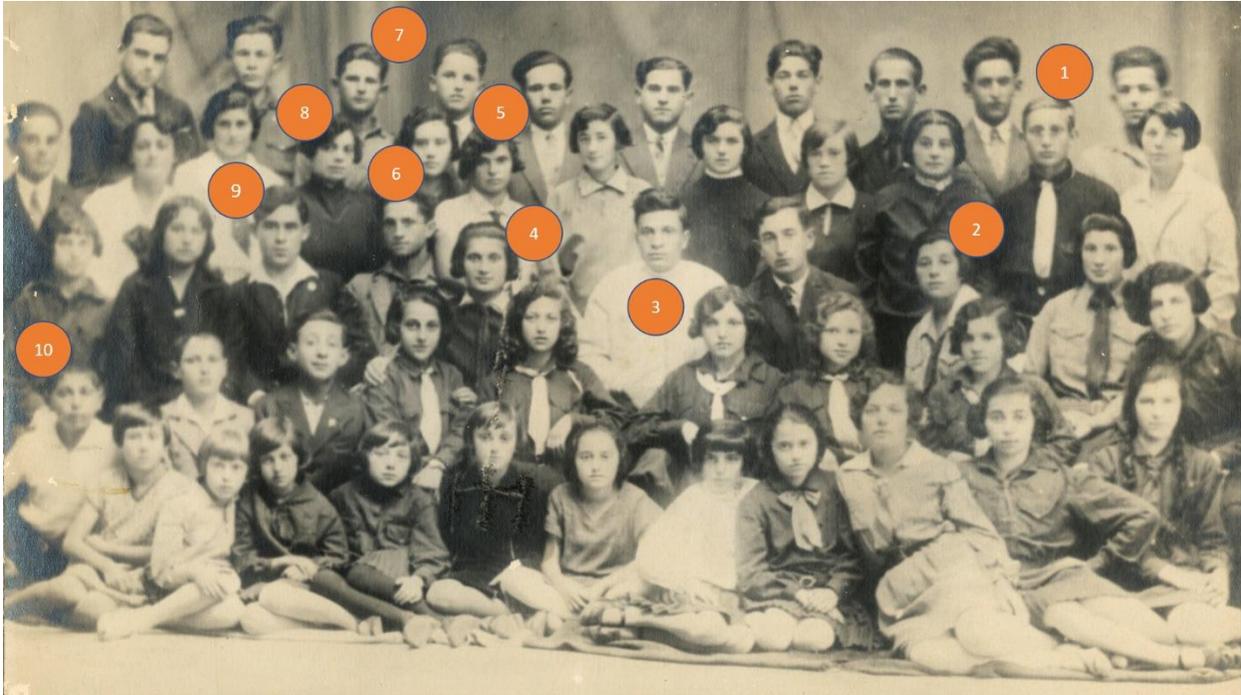


Figure 123 Saul Halpern (#7) in HaShomer Hatzair in Mlynov with 1) Yaakov Mohel 2) Dvorah Mohel 3) Yehuda Mohel 4) Bayta Mohel 5) Rosa Berger 6) Aaron (Berger) Harari 7) Saul Halpern 8) Rachel Shapovnik 9) Moshe Chizik (also "Tzizik") 10) Yitzhak Gelberg. Photo Courtesy of Mohel descendant, Dani Tracz.

Saul remembered Mlynov as a happy, close community. There was no industry, mostly merchants and tradesmen. Life was hard. There were Zionist organizations, cheders and three Shuls.

Saul and his siblings stayed in Mlynov to support their mother who was a widow but in 1943 Saul ran away.<sup>56</sup> He hid on the farm of a gentile school friend's parents in a hole buried in their barn. He hid until 1944 when the Russians freed the town. The Russians conscripted him into their army where he remained until the end of the war. He did return to Mlynov after the war. From there he was sent by Betar to a DP camp in Pocking, Germany as an administrator to head the education department. In Pocking he met, Leah Fijalkow, who was from Pinsk. They married in 1946 and had a daughter, Arlene (Halpern) Leder. In 1949, the family immigrated to Toronto, where Saul was offered a position as a Hebrew teacher at the Associated Hebrew Day School in Toronto.

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<sup>56</sup> I assume Saul ran away before October 1942 when the ghetto was liquidated.

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Page

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P E A G R E E H S

160.	2414	19-1-49	12-1-49	BUNIKIS	Pranas	Jonas	C Lith.	r.cath.	S M	27-10-25	Lith.	student	3	Rebdorf
161.	1131	"	"	HALPERIN	Saul	Josef	C Poland	Hebrew	M M	25-12-18	Poland	teacher	4	Pocking Waldstadt
162.	1132	"	"	HALPERIN	Lila	Israel	C "	"	M F	15-05-24	"	housew.	4	"
163.	1132A	"	"	HALPERIN	Chasia	Saul	C Germany	"	S F	20-02-48	Germany	housew.	4	"
164.	1728	19-1-49	13-1-49	SEMIENIK	anna	Sedor	C Poland	orth.	W F	09-12-98	Poland	housew.	4	Regensburg G...hofers.
165.	2049	"	"	SROCZYNSKA	Bozenna	Josef	S "	r.cath.	S F	16-11-24	"	housek.	3	Bamberg Friedrichstr.

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Bl 49730 B 37025  
B 94457

//////////////////////////////////// Last Item //////////////////////////////////////

  
**JANE TOCHAN**  
 Group Resettlement Officer  
 Amberg Resettlement Center

Figure 124 Saul, Lilia, and Chasia (Arlene) Departure on Jan. 25, 1949 from Munich to Canada

The Hirsh Family Circa 1947



Figure 125 Hirsch Brothers at Edward Hirsch's bar mitzvah, circa 1947. Taken at Lewis & Fannie's house. Top Row (l t r) Isaac (eldest Hirsch brother), Abraham (A. D.), Jacob (J. G.), Lewis (L. A.), Yankle Gurtin, Saul Gurtin (Yankle's son), Nathan Kotler.<sup>57</sup> Middle row (l t r): Ellen Hirsch (Abe's wife), Clara Hirsch (Jacob's wife), Fannie Hirsch (Lewis's wife), Ruchel Gurtin (oldest Hirsch sister), Jeannete (youngest Hirsch sister), Annie Kotler (Nathan's wife) Front row (l t r): Sondra Hirsch, Edward Hirsch, Gloria Hirsch. Courtesy of Edward Hirsch and Deborah Dickmann.

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<sup>57</sup> An article in the *Jersey Journal* (Oct. 4, 1949) identifies Norman Kotler as an employee of Standard for 16 years.

### Acknowledgments

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