

Letter Dated February 3, 1959.

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Dear Thelma;

Today I will begin to write about your mothers side of the family; that is as much as I have learned from the time I have been with them.

Your mothers grandfathers' name was Hershel Spector. Grandma's first name was Chaia-Braina. Grandpa Hershel died long before I came into the family. He left grandma the shop where they were making taleisim. (Prayer Shawls.) Also the store. The children left were: Alter (your grandfather), Shloime, Yankel and Boruch. Also Beila, (your mothers aunt) and another girl who died very young. I did not know her. When she died she left one son named Notech, who later committed suicide when he was 19. (He hung himself.)

Your mothers father was a very sick person, and on top of this was burdened with the store. Its location was on Fish Street in Zhitomir. I think you may still remember your mothers uncle Shloime. He was still making taleisim at home. Your mama was working for him for 30 kopecks a week. She was 9 years at the time.

Uncle Shloime's wife Bassia Brocheh was not a very good person. So I have been told, but later I found out that poverty made her that way, and I told them not to malign her. This made her a very good friend of mine. ~~They~~ They went to America before I did, and later on when they (her family) heard that I was here, they searched for me through the papers.

Uncle Shloime became a Shochet (ritual butcher) in Chicago.

In January of 1921 I went to Chicago looking for a clue to the whereabouts of our family (my family), and as I entered their home, I was instantly recognized by Dverka. (Must be one of the daughters.) She escorted me to the many places I visited in Chicago. She was ⁿ newlywed of 4 months, and when I came back to Houston I sent them a wedding gift of \$25.00. Her husband wrote to me and thanked me for "such a generous gift."

Uncle Shloime had several children, but I only remember three; Hershel, Dverka (Dora) and Sorkah (Sarah.)

And now back to grandpa Alter, your mothers father. He was a very smart and well educated man, but he was a very sick person. And also very poor.

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Grandmother's name was Sarah and she came from a well to do family. But then she had to share grandpa's poverty with him. However, she was of a very jolly disposition and made fun of all the poverty. The children's names were: Dweira, Hershell, Esther (your mother), Sheindle and Shaia. Dweira, the eldest, was at one time being proposed as my bride. Since I was only 17-18 years at the time, I did not wish to tie myself down before completing military service. She was then betrothed to a friend of mine Motel Shamas; also of Korostishev. When both of us were drafted into the army at the same time, he was already the father of two girls; Chasia and Esther. These babies were being cared for by grandma Sarah, while their mother Dweira became "nursing mother" in one of the richest homes in Zhitomir. (The Boyarsky Family SM). She was liked very much. When my friend Motel and I were discharged and came home October 8, 1900, Motel immediately got a job in their store. Dweira went back home to be with her girls. They had seven more children, but all perished in the Hitler holocaust.

Upon my discharge from the army October 8, 1900, I was trying to find work in my hometown: Korostishev, but I could find nothing. I then went to Zhitomir hoping that my friend Motel may help ~~make~~ me find work in the store where he is working.

I came to his house about 7 in the morning, but Motel already left to work. I told his wife Dweira that I was his friend from the army, and she asked me to wait till he comes home. As we were talking a girl stuck her head in the door from another room. She still had her nightdress on and her hair was disheveled. Dweira called to her "Get dressed and come in Esther, we have a guest." That girl is your mother. Shortly after she came into the room dressed, but still barefoot. We all had breakfast together. By that time the girl's mother (your grandma) came home.

After a while your mother sat down to work. She was a cigarette maker. (Cigarettes were being produced at home with a minimum of equipment.) Your mother invited me to sit at the table and watch her work. When Motel came home we all had dinner and then we went for a stroll on the "Boulevard". (This was a park

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arranged in 4 sections and all designed for strolling paths and walks. There was a band stand in one the sections for summer band concerts. Also a place for fireworks displays. The last of the " Boulevards " led to a series of numberless stone steps that led to beach of the river Teterev for summer bathing and for boat rides. Since this was the era before the movies, many families would go out for a stroll on the "Boulevard " almost every evening. SM)

Grandma strolled with her sister Dobe. Grandpa was still at the store. Motel followed with his wife Dweira. And Esther and I behind them. As we were strolling I asked Esther : How would you like to have me as your "Chosen " ? Her reply was " that from what she heard about me- She would be very happy. " " only, she hopes that God would provide them a good living. " Three days after we were engaged, and were married on March 15-th the same year. We had 5 children. Sam, Dweirkala (who lived only 13 months), Charles, Freida and then you. You were named after the wife of my employer. Her name was Thelma. I worked for them for over 8 years. She thought a great deal of me, She died holding my hand in hers, and imploring me to look after her youngest child. Her husband used to be away from for long periods. He was also ~~xxx~~ an ardent gambler and she was very much against it. She was pious, good natured and very pretty. I was made guardian of the children.

That's all for today

Your Father Gershon.