

## Müller Great Grandfather

Ignatz Müller was born in 1857 in Cigand, Zemplen County (Until 1923 Cigand was split along the main street into two separate communities—Nagy Cigand and Kis Cigand). Cigand lies in the flood plains of the mighty Tisza River, which drains the entire northeastern Carpathian basin. Until the flood control canals were built in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, life in Cigand has been entirely at the mercy of nature which brought snowmelt from the mountains, flooding, disease and death.

The lands around Cigand were mostly marshes and Cigand itself was a small village that could support only about 500 people for most of its 800 years of existence. Because of the low lying land and lack of firewood, wells were not possible and water from the river was used for drinking without boiling. This was a major source of disease and death in the village. Dombrad lies across the river on higher grounds and is not affected by the floods.

The census, taken in 1869 shows a total of 49 Jewish families (there was also the estate of Görsö). Ignatz's family was related to eight of them. By the time Ignatz was a young man, the Müllers, Heimlichs, Starks and Elefants formed a strong clan of farmers and landowners. The economy in the entire region was based on farming, but the partaking of the Jews in it was a clear exception. Ignatz's professional advancement is witnessed in his children's birth records, from laborer to estate supervisor.

The position referred to as 'ispan' and 'gazdatiszt' was to carry out, on behalf of the absent landowner, all the necessary steps to insure the functioning of a fairly large farming enterprise. It was a respectable position that required a lot of farming knowledge and political skill. Often the ispans were the target of the farmers' anger towards the landowners and the scapegoats in times of trouble.

Ignatz was a very handsome man with clear-cut features and pure blue eyes, to be seen in the two surviving pictures. In the first, sent to his children in America, he looks youthful, proud and energetic. The photo carries the caption: To my children with love, your father, age 66. At the age of 20, Ignatz married Rezi Klein, age 17 from the remote village of Baksa, Abauj County. In 1895, giving birth to their seventh child, Rezi died at the age of 35. Within a year Ignatz married Peppi Gutman the widow of Mr. Stern, who brought her own children to the family. Their first child together was named Rezi, in memory of the deceased wife. In 1902, the 5 year old Rezi, the 3 year old Hermina and the 17 year old Benjamin died within a month, adding to an earlier double death of Cili and Maria in 1885.

Although death was a common and accepted event, entirely in the hands of God, seems that Ignatz got more than his fair share of it. His second wife died as well in 1930 and Ignatz lived by himself in Dombrad another ten years. At the age of 83 he moved to Dioszeg to live with his son Abraham. The second photo seems to be a passport picture taken to travel to Rumania.

Ignatz died in Dioszeg in 1942 at the age of 85. He is resting in the Jewish cemetery overlooking the village. When the family gathered, remembers one grand-daughter, Ignatz would sit his many grandchildren on the floor and bless them one by one with a handkerchief. A postcard written to her in 1940 reveals a deeply religious, positive Ignatz with good disposition. His faith has sustained him through life and helped him overcome his terrible afflictions. He remains my favorite ancestor.

Ignatz's older brother, born in 1852 was Majer-Samuel named after their maternal grandfather. He too had pleasant features and pure blue eyes. He lived in Cigand all his life and made a living as shoemaker and a grocer. His 'tzures' equaled, if not surpassed Ignatz's. His many children from his two wives died at young age, except Salomon and Geza. Salomon, a soldier in WW I lost his life in the war. His name appears on the WW I memorial in Cigand (a Salomon Muller first-cousin also died in WW I ). Geza died in labor camp in WW II. His

wife and three children were deported. Samuel died in Cigand in 1936 at the age of 85 without any offspring. His gravestone stands in the Cigand Jewish cemetery.

Lena was the oldest sister. She was born in 1860 and married Farkas Schaffer, a widower with children who lived in Gava, Szabolcs County. She was deported at the age of 85 along with most of her family. Of her surviving grandchildren I met Elisabeth Green who lived in New York. She was actually raised by her grandmother and had a lot of praise for her.

Sara was the second sister to stay in Hungary. She was born in 1864 and married Simon Stark, a local childhood chum. They lived in Cigand and worked the land. Her son Ignatz lived in America and later went to Israel. Her other son Béla lived in Budapest. Sara died in 1929 at the age of 65 and rests in Cigand. Her tombstone is still standing. In a surviving photo she seems like a woman with many worries.

Rozsi was born in 1862. She came to America as a young woman, married twice--Grosz/Weiss and lived a long life in New York. She died in 1941 at the age of 80. She rests in Mt Hebron cemetery in New York, under an impressive tombstone. In the surviving pictures she has brown complexion like her brother David and sister Regina, and a contented smile. Her son appears in photos as a handsome and playful young man, fully adapted to the life in the new country.

David was the only brother who came to America. He came probably at the same time as the sisters, i.e. mid-eighties and found employment in the garment shops in Manhattan. Later he developed asthma and ended up working for his synagogue, as he was quite religious.

Regina was born in Cigand in 1871. She too came to America as a young woman and married Adolf Lipkowitz. They lived in the Bronx and Manhattan and owned a cigar factory. Adolf died at a young age and 'tanti' Regi, as she was known in the family, lived the rest of her life and fended for self rather well as a widow. Allegedly she kept smoking cigars, which seemed to have had no affect on her health. She died at the age of 90 and is resting in the Mt Hebron cemetery.

Hani was born in Cigand in 1869, married Fulop Weinberger, a butcher and lived in Semjen, Zemplen County. She was a strikingly beautiful woman with high cheekbones and pure blue eyes. The surviving photo shows a person worn by the hardships of life. She was deported in WW II, at the age of 75.

Raizl was the youngest sister, born in 1972 in Cigand. She was the third 'R' sister to come to New York as a young woman. She married Bernard Herzog and lived in the Bronx. Of her descendants I spoke with Roberta Shapira and Herbie Herzog, both in Florida. Raizl died in 1959 at the age 77 and is buried in Mt Hebron, New York.

It is fulfilling to know that family research also produced family unification. The Müller reunions, now held for the eighth time, brought together family members who have not heard from one another for fifty years, or had thought that they were the only surviving Müller descendants.

Jakob-Dov Müller was remembered well by his granddaughter and her friend who described him as an 'old-fashioned' man under five feet who walked around the village in baggy white peasant pants. He was born in 1826 in Makkoshotyka (pop. 400), Zemplen County about 20 miles west of Cigand. Cigand belongs to the district of Bodrogkoz with the old seat in Kiraly Helmec, while Makkoshotyka is in the Sarospatak district with the seat in Sarospatak. Jakob-Dov married Erzsebet-Frimet Elefant, whose family resided in Cigand and owned sizable land. Jakob became a landowner himself. His possessions are recorded in the village annals and stored in the county archives in Satoraljaujhely.

There is no surviving photo of Jakob-Dov. Jakob-Dov must have felt in his milieu in the village among his farming relatives. He had a decent livelihood, without political upheavals and still virile at age of 56 when his last child was conceived.

He outlived his wife and returned to his creator in 1916, at the unheard age of 90. There is a picture of his gravestone, but the actual grave can no longer be found. His father's name can be seen as Itzhak (Ignatz) thus corroborating the name on his death record.

In a Mad record Herman, 24, son of Ignatz/Izsak Müller and Rezi/Rosi Heimlich married in 1866. In light of the dearth of records from this period this discovery particularly precious. Ignatz died before the birth of his eponymous grandson in 1857. Rezi Heimlich, age 70 died in 1869 in Hotyka as shown in the Sarospatak vitals.

Consecutive censii of Renters/Arendators were taken in 1811/12. The extent of the discrepancies may point not only to issues of eligibility but also to conflicts of interest among the authorities. Hotyka had 18 Jewish 'renter' families and a teacher, atypical at that time. That number of families actually declined over the years.

The censii show no Müllers. It does show Lazar Heimlich, husband of Fani Müller. They appear in the Cigand death record of their daughter Rachel. The 1869 census of Cigand shows Rachel as born in Hotyka, 1816. This suggests that Ignatz followed his older married sister to Hotyka and married into the Heimlich family himself.

Hotyka is part of the Tokaj Valley wine region, famous for its 'Asszu' wines. Kosher wine exports to Galicia and distilling of spirits was the magnet for the Jewish settlement in the southern Zemplen County, also known as Hegyalja.

The oldest archival record is the 1771 Conscription of Jews. There is only one listing in Hotyka and even though Jews had no last names at that time the person is unmistakably a Heimlich: Abraham son of Lazar who had lived there for 34 years. Abraham's 20 year old son was living with him.

Accordingly, the Heimlichs came to Hungary before 1735 shortly after the end of the Kuruc wars, as the region was repopulated. A large number of Jewish families were set up in the next-door village of Tolcsva.