

Jocum family

Farming near Taung by Hirsch Jocum and others 2016 – 2025

Hirsch Jocum wrote in April 2016

I was born in 1953 . I Went to Kimberley Boys' High School where I was I was a border as my parents, Cyril and Taube were farmers in the Taung Area. I have very fond memories of Barney Horwitz and his parents; of Franklin Dubowitz and his parents who were very good to me. Had my Barmitzvah in Kimberley on 26 March 1966 Parsha **Va Yikrah**. I was taught by Rabbi Oscar and Mrs Leah Werner. I remember them very fondly. I matriculated in 1971.

I left Kimberley in 1971 after matric at the age of 18 when I went to Pretoria University. I Did a BSc and then medicine MBChB and have been practising as a General Practitioner in Pretoria ever since.

I Married Hilary, nee Abratt, in Pretoria in December 1979. Hilary was born in Pretoria and is a French Teacher.

Our children, are Darren born 1982, an Actuary married and living in Camps Bay. Jonathan, born 1984, an anaesthesiologist at Washington University Medical School and Barnes Jewish Hospital in Saint Louis, Missouri, USA and Gary, born 1988, a Veterinary Surgeon in Private Practice in Sydney, Australia.

My father, was Cyril Jocum who was a farmer in the Taung area near Kimberley later lived in Umhlanga Rocks. He passed away 26 February 2017, four months short of his 90th birthday. My mother, Taube nee Herzenberg passed away 1981.

The Farming Jocum Family

Leon Chonin recalled that his great-uncle Sam's other daughter **Dinah**, married **Mike Jocum** who came from the Beaufort West area. He was encouraged by his brother-in-law, **Israel Oshry** also to enter the farming business in the Taung area. Mike Jocum purchased farmland in the Reivilo district 50 km due West of Taung in 1938. **Mike and Dinah Jocum** had four children, **Laurie, Maisy, Mildred**



The Jocum family – Isaac, Liesel, Anita and Cyril on their farm. (Courtesy Isaac Jocum)

and Cyril. They were very friendly with Kimberley folks, **Jeff Geller** and the **Goldenbaums, Myra and Joseph.** Laurie went into the farming business with his father Mike.

Liesel Jocum answered Jane Beth Cantors question if any Jews still lived in the Taung area: my husband **Isaac** and I, live near Taung on a farm. My father-in-law was **Laurie Jocum.** We are the only Jews still living near Taung. We live on the farm *Kokwaan.* My father-in-law spoke of a Jewish shop owner by the name of Abrahams? (Perhaps it was Abe Bayer)

Jane replied to Liesel: Wow Liesel, glad to hear from you still living in the area. When my mom lived in Taung she said there were only a few Jewish families. I don't know about Abrahams.

Liesel said: Hi Jane, we live on a farm 50km from Taung and not in Taung itself. Unfortunately, none of your family's names do we recall as we are the third and probably the last generation. My father-in-law **Laurie Jocum** started farming here in 1938 and the only other Jewish family he mentioned was the three **Rauff brothers.** Another Jewish shop trader near us was called **Natie Bayer.** Very interesting to hear the history of Taung.



[Geraldine says in the early 50s she was at school with **Adele Bayer** from Taung (Natie's niece, Abe's daughter) who was at Beit House, the GHS boarding school (left). Her Brother **Arnold** was also at school in Kimberley as a boarder at CBC.]

Hirsch Jocum, son of **Cyril and Taube Jocum**, who was born in Cape Town in 1953 wrote: **Michael and Dinah Jocum** and their son, **Laurie**, farmed 50 km from Taung Station, in the direction of Reivilo (to the west). Taung Station and

Taung Village were roughly five km apart, each with its own post office. In 1958 my father **Cyril** joined his brother **Laurie** and their father **Mike** in the farming business. Their business was cattle ranching. (Cyril later married Anita)

Hirsch continued: I vividly recall my father, **Cyril Jocum**, after collecting the post, at Taung Station going to greet **Abe Bayer** and his sister **Rita** at their general dealer store, which if I recall accurately, was very close to the station post office. There was also a daily South African Railway bus service between Taung Station and Reivilo. One of the stops was officially called Bayers Halt. It was close to **Nathan Bayer's** farm "Quo". These memories stretch back to the very early 1960's.

The farms exist to this very day still owned by the family. Hirsh said: I went to school in Kimberley. I was at KHS with **Franklin Dubowitz** and **Jeff Katz.** I was a boarder and remember the **Schatz , Lenhoff and Kurland** boys from Upington also boarders very well. I was friendly with **Barney Horwitz** (grandson of Polly Horwitz). Barney unfortunately went to CBC. I say 'unfortunately' because CBC just could not beat us at rugby or swimming! The Chonin family are cousins of mine.

Hirsh Jocum said: After matriculating I went to further my studies at Pretoria University. I am a practising General Medical Practitioner in Pretoria. I have 3 sons, all professionals, and 3 beautiful granddaughters. They reside in Cape Town, Sydney and Saint Louis.

Leon Chonin asked if they were related to **Neil Odes** who is now in Toronto (where Leon is). Jane replied: I think my cousin Dr Ivan Cohen is related to Odes family. Dov Senderovitz had a sister Lulu and when they were very young their mother Dinah was electrocuted aged 33. I think Dinah was an Odes. (See confirmation on her gravestone in Kimberley.) Their father was Heyman Senderovitz brother of Aaron. Lulu had three sons Ivan Cohen and Alan and David Alperstein. All became successful doctors and Lulu and Henry Alperstein were Mayor and mayoress of Kingwilliamstown. Alan is a top fertility gynaecologist in Cape Town and David a plastic surgeon in America. Also, there are many Senderovitz or Sender family members in Cape Town and Israel.



Taung is famous – for discoveries regarding the origin of man

Taung is well-known for an paleo-anthropological discovery of international renown. In 1924 a fossil of a juvenile skull was discovered having been blasted out of the local limestone quarry. It found its way to Professor Raymond Dart at Wits University who immediately recognised it as a hominid species – a missing link between ape and man. The skull became known as the **Taung Child**.

The Taung Child's fossilised skull showed the first evidence of early human-like upright, two-legged (bipedal) walking. The evidence was the position of the Taung Child's foramen magnum, or the hole through which the spinal cord connects with the brain. This spinal cord hole is positioned toward the front of the Taung Child's skull, a characteristic associated with bipedal



Professor Phillip Tobias and the 'Taung Child' skull.

locomotion. This bipedal adaptation allows the head to balance atop of the neck and leaves the arms free; while contrastingly, a four-legged ape has its foramen magnum positioned toward the rear of the head to keep its eyes facing forward (and not down) when it moves. The cast of the brain is preserved by the filling of the skull with limestone breccia. The little Taung skull is thought to be from an approximately three-year-old child that had lived in Southern Africa around 2.5 million years ago.

This species was named [Australopithecus africanus](#), supporting [Charles Darwin](#)'s concepts that the closest living relatives of humans are the [African apes](#). The skull is housed at the University of Wits in Johannesburg.

When this 3-year-old child's skull was found in 1924, it was among the first early humanoid fossils to be found in Africa, and the first to draw major attention to this region as a place of origin of the human family tree. Scientists did not want to believe that man might have evolved in Africa. They had been taken in by a fake skull called the [Pitldown Man](#) of a proposed human ancestor from England. It took more than 20 years for Raymond Dart to be vindicated and for the Pitldown Man to be exposed as a fake, and for scientist to accept the importance of Africa as a major source of human evolution. The [Taung Child](#) is thus among the most important early human-like fossils ever discovered.

Palaeoanthropologist, **Professor Lee Berger** from the University of the Witwatersrand demonstrates on video in 2020, the original Taung Child fossil (seen above in Professor Tobias's hands). It is one of the many original fossils housed at Wits University Museum. He explains how it was found and how it came to be that Professor Dart – the one person who would be able to recognise what it was, was able to see it. It seems there was a Jewish aspect that connected up all the dots: see what this is in this fascinating lecture by Professor Berger by clicking here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0mWOJ56_Et0

How do we know how the Taung Child died?

The Taung Child is thought have been attacked and killed by an eagle. Scientists suspect an eagle killed the Taung Child because puncture marks were found at the bottom of the 3-year-old's eye sockets. These marks resemble those made by a modern eagle's sharp talons and beak when they attack monkeys in Africa today. Other evidence for the eagle kill hypothesis includes the presence of eggshells at the site and an unusual mixture of animals bones found alongside the Taung Child's skull. Many of these small animal bones also have damage resembling that made by modern birds of prey.

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## Read also

### [Taung Jewish families and connections](#)

Compiled by **Geraldine Auerbach MBE**, London, June 2024 from information supplied by Arnold Bayer, Jane Beth Cantor, Leon Chonin, Liesel Jocum, Hirsch Jocum,

as well as information and pictures from Volume 2 of ***Jewish Life in South African Small Communities*** researched and published by the South African Friends of Beth Hatefutsoth.

(Also, from Wikipedia and other internet resources).

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On the next pages you can read Pearl Senderovitz's personal memoir of growing up in Taung.

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## Pearl Senderovitz wrote about her life in Taung

Pearl's Memoirs

MEMOIRS BY PEARL MIRWIS  
ABOUT HER EARLY DAYS IN TAUNGS

I do not know if any of my family would be interested to read about my life. I was telling a friend of mine some of the incidents that have occurred to me and she suggested that I put these matters down on paper. I was born in Taungs now called Taung on the sixth of April, 1918 making me now eighty five in the year 2003. I am well and remember so much, but my sight, even though I recently had a cataract operation is not too good.

My father Aaron, during his first marriage, had eight children. I do not know how his first wife died but when he married my mother Zlata, his children were all grown up and out of the house with the exception of Betty. My mother came from Latvia as a young girl of twenty five and a marriage was arranged to my dad who was thirty five years older than her. They had four children; Michael, Pearl, Mendel and Ethel. My dad was 72 ½ when Ethel was born. He was 75 when he died of throat cancer. I have just had the seventy fourth Yartzheit for him ( August, 2003 ). He was born in Lithuania and came to South Africa as a young man and on the boat here he met another man with the same surname as him, Senderovitz, but spelt with a "w" instead of a "v". They were not related. The two of them went to Kimberley and opened a general dealer's store.

After a year my father received a cable saying that his father was in bad health and that he should return. He did so but unfortunately he arrived a few days too late as his father had already passed away. He remained in Russia for a few years, got married and had a son Lewis. The family then returned to South Africa and went to live in Taungs and the remaining seven children were born. He started a General Dealer's store. The shop was adjoining the house where we lived; it had a kitchen a lounge dining room and two bedrooms, the bathroom was in the shop area. Later four additional bedrooms were built in the back yard as well as a stable for our horses. We had a cart for our own use and another for the goods in the business. Nearby the house was a kraal for our cows which supplied us with milk. As children we used to enjoy watching the cows being milked the taste of the fresh milk and especially the froth was delicious. My mother made white cheese and cream. Twice a week we received a parcel from Kimberley containing Kosher meat, polony, fish and chalas. This was

packed in ice and it arrived by train at the station four miles away where we picked it up. My mother was very kosher. We had poultry in the yard and when we needed a chicken to eat, Dad would cut its throat while saying a brocha. The chicken would go into convulsions and died a few minutes later.

Dad was a very learned man and knew the Torah as well as any Rabbi. At one time when it was Rosh Hashonah and Yom Kippur people would come from Kimberley and the surrounding areas for the services. At first we used to make use of other semi Rabbis to conduct the proceedings but later my father took over because he knew how to do it and also because he never charged the community. The services were held at a hotel near the Taungs station which was owned by Morris Bayer who had the same name as the Morris Bayer who was married to Harriet, one of my mother's sisters.

The white population of Taungs was made up of Roman Catholics, Seven Day Adventists and Jews. Only one Afrikaans family lived in the area; they had a daughter named Topsy who was a real bully. Once she forced me to suck on a bone and then said to me that it was from a pig. I hated her! The Seven Day Adventists were a fine group of people. Their minister was a Mr. Cooper who once went on an overseas visit and on his return he gave my father a present of a book which he had bought for him. Also from this group, were the Renou family; father, mother and fourteen children. They were all very good looking and I enjoyed visiting them. I was friendly with one of the daughters by the name of Mona. They stayed some distance from us and to get there I had to walk through a wooded area, but everything was very safe in those days. The Roman Catholics had at the time what was considered to be the best convent in the country in Taungs and often on a Saturday afternoon the Father and Brothers used to come and visit my father to discuss the Bible. The convent had a beautiful orchard and vegetable garden and used to sell produce to the community.

My mother, Zlata, as I mentioned earlier was very religious and used to say her prayers three times a day. We were not allowed to come to eat at the table if we had not washed our hands. We always had to say a Brocha before meals. If the meat and milk knives and forks were ever mixed up, my

mother insisted that they be stuck in the ground for twenty four hours. Once, when a visitor to our house saw the knives stuck in the soil, she in all innocence asked if we grew knives and forks! Mom managed the shop the in Taungs while my father went to Mokasa some six miles away where he had another shop. He usually left home early on a Monday morning and returned on the Friday afternoon in good time for Shabos. We always had a fine meal that night and Dad insisted on "kishcka", which was made from flour, fat and other fillings and then stuffed into a casing of intestine and boiled. It was delicious. I have not tasted it for ages. Mom was always busy in the shop and she did not have much time to devote to cooking. She was a wonderful mother who never complained and when I think back her life could not have been easy. She was widowed at an early age with four young children. When Mike the eldest, finished standard six my mother wanted to send him to Kimberley or Vryburg to continue his education, but my father insisted that he leave school and manage one of the shops. Dad died shortly afterwards and Mom sent Mike to board at Kimberley Boys' High where he completed his matric.

The village school was a mile away from home. The building consisted of only two class rooms. The whole school had a total of about thirty children, which were divided up in two sections from grade one to standard two and from standard three to standard six. The two teachers would give lessons to each group of children while the others were still in the class so a pupil who was bright, such as my brother Mendel could while in standard three, take advantage of the lessons given to the standard sixes. On my first day of school, my brother Michael, who owned a bicycle said that I must sit on the handle bars for a ride to school. Why I accepted I will never know, while going through a dry river bed I was thrown off and badly hurt my nose. I walked the rest of the way.

Mike was a daredevil and got up to all sorts of mischief. One of his talents was bareback horse riding and one day he again told me to climb up onto our beautiful horse, Prince. This time I clung onto Mike for dear life. I think I was about eight at the time and it was some two years after the bike trip with him. It was a terrifying experience, fortunately safe, but I have never been near a horse since.

When my mother went into labor with what was to be my young sister, Ethel, she woke up Mike and told him to go and call Dr. Clayton and the midwife Mrs. Samson who lived near the school. After the delivery, Mike and one of his friends went on their horses leaving a note to say that they were going to spend some ten days at Hall's farm which was some thirty miles away. In those days there were no telephones so we naturally could not get in touch with him, so we had an anxious wait until his return. My aunt Minnie who had come to stay with us to help with the new arrival was so outraged that on Mike's return she had him tied to a peppercorn tree in our garden and taking one of the thin branches she whipped him with it. Minnie, however always had a soft spot for him no matter what he did. When Mike was a bit older he dressed up as a bandit and with a shotgun rode to Minnie's house which was four miles away and knocked on her door and announced that it was a robbery. Minnie after the initial shock realised that it was Mike and forgave him. Mike and a cousin of ours Max who had come to stay for a holiday conspired to dip two of our kittens in water. They then went to my mother and said that they had just saved them from drowning due to the cruelty of Mendel and another cousin, Hymie who everyone called "Pappala". My mother was shocked and laid into Mendel and Hymie. Four years later Mike confessed to my mother and she was naturally disgusted with him and refused to speak to him for a whole week.

To get back to our house. Outside, we had a well which had natural spring water of wonderful quality. A bucket was lowered on a rope and the water was brought up which was crystal clear and cold. All day the local Tswana people would line up to use the well and carry the water away with buckets balanced on their heads. Years later when we were living in Johannesburg, we heard that the well had dried up. Our toilet was a hundred metres from the house and was six feet deep with a wooden box seat. Of course we had to use a candle at night for illumination. We had paraffin lamps in the house as well as candles for lighting. When our bookkeeper Mr. Mortimer left us Mike had to take over. My dad could be very impatient and I remember him once shouting at Mike that he was too slow and that he (Dad) had already arrived at a total for a column of figures. He was a very clever man in this

respect. One of our back rooms was used to store food for the horses and cows.

I was born four years after Mike and I cannot ever remember my Dad picking me up and hugging or kissing me. Mendel was the third sibling and is four years younger than me, he was my Dad's favorite and he was always lifted up to sit on his lap. We all loved him as he was so sweet and good looking. By the time he was six and before he started school at this age, he could already count to one hundred. The two of us used to walk to school together. Towards the end of his first year at school the regional inspector came to do his annual check up. The day of his arrival, Mendel decided not to go. The teacher asked me where he was and I replied that he was sitting under a tree some distance from the school. One of the biggest boys at the school, Bertie Cloete was dispatched to bring Mendel in, which he did - on his back. But Mendel ran off again and went home. Nevertheless Mendel was promoted to standard two, skipping two classes. Mendel and I were always doing things together like going to the library.

Ethel, my dearest sister is eight years younger than me. During my early years my Mom sent me to stay with my aunt Minnie who lived near Taungs station, some four miles from our home. There was another school with a teacher whom my mother considered to be better than the local one. Thereafter, I was sent to a convent in Klerksdorp for eighteen months and after that to boarding school in Kimberley so I missed out on Ethel's company for quite awhile, in total. I hope that Ethel will write her own memories of her early life during this period. What I do remember is that Ethel in her early childhood had legs that were quite bowed but they straightened out as she grew and everyone admired them for their beauty. I also remember that as a very young girl she went through a phase of crying continuously. This after a time really irritated me, and one day, I could not take it any more so in a fit of rage and temper I spat down her throat and she was instantly cured. I was a real bitch and hope that by now she has forgiven me. In later years when I was about sixteen I returned from Johannesburg for a stay in Kimberley and Ethel immediately commented that I had such big nostrils - so she got her revenge. From then on we have been so close and all her children are as dear to me as my own.

I want to carry on about my memories of Taungs. It had a post office and a Magistrates Court run by a Mr. Winstanley. A doctor who also doubled as a dentist and pulled out teeth when necessary. Two tennis courts, a library (as mentioned) and a second General Dealer store run by a family of the name; James. Opposite us lived an English family - the Shepherds. Their house had a lovely garden with a dam which was filled from a bore hole utilising a windmill. My father took Mike to the dam one day and ordered him to jump in and take his first swimming lesson which he promptly did. He mastered the rudiments immediately. The Shepherds had two grown sons who farmed in the region but I did not see much of them. The Harts river was very close to our house and we all went there for swimming in the summer; one spot was called "Sandgat Beach", one as 'Langgat' and a third as "Diepgat", (Sandhole, Longhole and Deephole respectively). My late cousin Maxie who was my age came on holiday one year and we used to soak pillow slips in the water and then run with them until they filled with air. We held them tightly with the air trapped inside and used them as flotation devices when jumping into the fast flowing water which took us quite far down the river.

Some more about Taungs village. There was a boarding house run by a family; Damelin, who had two sons, Wally and Oscar. Wally was my boyfriend when I was very young. I was devastated at the age of six when his family decided to move to Johannesburg as we had promised each other that we would get married one day. In later life Mendel got to know the Damelin family when he moved to Johannesburg and he and Wally became great friends. Wally never got married. Perhaps he did not find another Pearl.

I learned to play tennis in Taungs where we had a very active social life. The O' Reilly's who lived near us had a gramophone record player and we used to dance to whatever tunes they had. Another O' Reilly had a General Dealer store as well as a Mr. Spitz who had the fourth - which I thought was the best. He used to keep lovely sweets and I remember the nigger balls which seemed to last forever and cost a penny for four. Mrs. Spitz had a sister, a Miss Friedland, who came to Taungs from Johannesburg for holidays with

her two children, Sylvia and Harold and at one stage actually lived in Taungs for a short while. We all became friendly.

Why all these people came to Taungs Station and Taungs Village I will never know. The O'Reillys came from Ireland and were Catholics, the Shepherds came from the U.K. but I do not remember them going to any church. The Renous were Seven Day Adventists who had their own minister a Mr. Cooper. The Jews came from Latvia and Lithuania, but the Spitz's came from England. Taungs Station was quite busy with trains coming in and out a few times a day as the station was on the main line to Botswana and Rhodesia. The train to Rhodesia was called the Rhodesian Express. Taungs Station was a more up market area than Taungs Village.

Auntie Minnie, my mother's sister and Lewis the eldest son by my dad's first marriage, were married. My dad's son became his brother - in - law and my cousins Rachel ( Ray ), Max (Mottela) and Hymie ( Pappala ) were also my niece and nephews. Minnie had a big house and she was very meticulous about its upkeep. We were always very close and I lived there for awhile ( as previously mentioned ) where I went to school. I used to walk home from school with Ray and Max and they would let me get ahead of them, as I was about to go through the gate to the garden, Ray would give me shove with her bum and knock me out of the way, which forced me to go through last. While I am on this theme, I must mention something about my favorite nephew from the first generation of nieces and nephews. Keep in mind that one of my nieces, Ann Shapiro, is older than me. I am speaking about Dov who with his sister Lulu are the children of Hyman and Dinah. Anyway, Max and Rachel were invited to stay for a few days at their house in Kimberley. Lewis thought that it would be a good idea if I went along as well, so we duly took the train to Kimberley. I was eight at the time and Dov was three. On arrival Max who loved to tease, took Dov aside and told him that I was an uninvited guest, Dov then took up a stick and tried to hit me while shouting to all and sundry that I was an "uninvited guest". I have long since forgiven Dov and he has always been so kind and loving to me for as long as I can remember.

years later, on Guy Fawkes night, while Morris Edelman was staying with us we made fireballs with hessian soaked in paraffin and tied with wire. These we threw in the air, all of a sudden a gust of wind seemed to come from nowhere and one of the balls held by Pappala landed on the thatch roof of Minnie's house. All the neighbors came to help us take all the movables from the house. Everything was saved as well as a portion of the building under a metal roof but the building under thatch was destroyed. Minnie and Louis were in Kimberley at the time sorting out their financial affairs as it happened. Fortunately the house was insured and it was later rebuilt.

For our annual holiday we would hire a wagon with a pack of sixteen oxen from the local Africans and move about four miles away to a lovely spot on the Harts River. The river had a nice bank which was like a beach and we camped there for ten days or so. Other families also joined in. One year it rained heavily and we all had to climb into the wagon and cover ourselves with canvas to try and keep dry. It was an awful time for a few hours. Each night we went to an open space, like a village green, and danced and played games including kissing. They were happy days.

To get back to my Dad. When I was about eight I went with him for a few days to his shop in Mokasa to keep him company. A small house was attached to the shop. It had a bedroom, a dining room and a kitchen. His servant used to make a yeast from potatoes from which he used to make bread. I cannot remember in detail what we ate during that week but my dad's favourite was homemade farfel soup plus onions boiled in milk which he or his servant prepared. I also loved it. The local blacks used to sell mealies and sugar cane in season. On Fridays when he came home he would always bring us sugar cane or special boiled sweets as a treat. We always had a stock pile of almonds which were kept in our cellar. Dad had many facets. He could be very kind and also very hard. I remember one night he discovered that Ma had taken ten pounds out of savings to help bringing out uncle Morris Edelman from Latvia to South Africa. Well, he shouted at her all night and the only break came when he stopped the next morning to pick up Mendel and hugged him. But we learnt a great deal from him. Pesach nights were something special. He went through the whole seder first in brew and then translated it into Yiddish - we never finished until about

mid night but we loved it. He was respected by one and all, black and white and when he was on his death bed there was a long queue of people waiting to say farewell to him. The only person who he refused to say good bye to was Morris Bayer the owner of the hotel and bar at Taungs Station because he persisted in selling liquor to Lewis and Isaac who both had drinking problems. His mind was clear right until the time he passed away later that day. We went to Kimberley for his funeral in two cars, with his coffin on top of the one. The rabbi said that I was too young to attend a funeral but my mother wisely insisted that I was mature enough at ten and a half to attend. Thank you Ma. This was 74 years ago. Shortly after Dad died my mother sent Mike to board at Kimberley Boys' High School. Dad had wanted him to make his career in one of the shops. Ethel, my sister, had the hardest time of us all in her youth. She was only two and a half when my dad died. At a very early age she contracted diphtheria, which was then generally fatal and contagious. We were all sent to stay with Minnie while the Doctor and Ethel fought to overcome the situation. After six weeks Ethel was better and we came home. Later, when Mike and I were at boarding school in Kimberley, Ethel contracted Scarlet Fever and Mendel had to stay home in quarantine. Ethel and my mother formed a strong bond and she would be very pleased that Ethel went to live in Israel. My mom always spoke of our land but she never lived long enough to see the State of Israel proclaimed.

My mother had another sister, Harriet who was married to the other Morris Bayer whose father was Ben Bayer who wanted to marry my mother when she became a widow but she decided not to accept his offer. Morris and Harriet lived in Border station on the border of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State. Later the town of Jan Kempdorp was established adjacent to Border and forty kilometres south of Taungs to cater for the farmers who settled in the area covered by the Vaalharts irrigation scheme. Morris and Harriet owned the hotel and shop in Border, and we all went to stay there on a few occasions. Harriet and her husband were responsible for arranging the marriage of my mother and bringing her out from Latvia. Harriet was a lovely lady and often gave my mom her dresses which she never wanted. She had two daughters, Taubie and Freda and a son Harriet who died at the age of twelve.

At the start of World War Two, Mike joined the Transvaal Scottish Regiment and was sent up North to Egypt to fight the Germans and Italians. He was captured after the Battle of Tobruk, but for many weeks we did not know if he was dead or alive. Isaac, my half brother who was living down at the South Coast, Natal used to listen to a station which broadcast from the Vatican and he heard that Mike was safe. Mendel also joined the South African Airforce and became a navigator. Mom told both of them that if there was no other food available then it would be all right if they ate pork - it was more important to survive. I truly believe that she was one great lady and must be one of the angels in heaven.

Very recently I was visiting my life long friend Ann Solomon who is now eighty six years old and she mentioned that she had met a family by the name of Gerson, one of them said by way of conversation that their grandfather had once told them that he had spent a few days, many years ago in Taungs. This got me thinking; and I then remembered that during the Great Depression my mom's business went insolvent, a Mr. Gerson came from the city to wind it up. He stayed in the house with us. One day he was all alone and he was undressing but our dog Jumbo, refused to let him take off his trousers completely. He barked whenever Gerson wanted to make a move, so the poor man had to sit still on the bed. When we came home we got Jumbo out of the house and Gerson was able to change his clothes. It was hilarious.

Well, I could go on and on, but the above I feel is the main impressions that I have of my early life in Taungs.

Germiston, November , 2003.