



Gertrude Haas (née Goldberg) and her husband **Ivor**, and parents

Solomon and Deborah Goldberg & family

Gertrude (Gertie) Haas, was a sought after and much loved musician, piano teacher, speech and drama teacher and music appreciation teacher in Kimberley and Cape Town. She was born in Kimberley 07 July 1918 and lived there until 1945. She died in Cape Town in 1990

She was the eldest living daughter of **Solomon Goldberg** and **Deborah Taube Goldberg** (née Hyams).

Gertie and her four siblings, all born in Kimberley were:

Abraham (Abe) Myer Goldberg (b. 1914 – d. 2017)

Isidore (Issie) Goldberg (b. 1916 - d. 1995)

Gertrude (Gertie) Haas (b.1916 – d 1990.)

Hyman (Hymie) Goldberg (b. 1920 - d. 1998)

Molly Emdin (b. 1922 - d. 2004)

(A first child Sarah Goldberg b. 1912 - died in infancy in 1914)

Here is picture taken in Kimberley in 1924 and one taken in Cape Town in 1986.

Abe

Issie

Gertie

Hymie

Molly



Molly

Hymie

Gertie

Issie

Abe

Gertie's Parents, Solomon and Taube Goldberg

Gertie's father Solomon Goldberg was born in **Dvinsk** on 16 May 1880. The family name was originally Peletz. It is not known at which time the name-change occurred. It is possible that the family name of Solomon's mother, Sora, was Goldberg, and that the sons adopted that name, perhaps for political reasons or to escape conscription.

Solomon was the first of the Goldbergs to emigrate to the free world. He left his home in about 1897-8 and spent a brief period in England where he worked as a barrow boy buying fish at the Billingsgate Fish Market and hawking it in London's East End.

He travelled to South Africa in about 1900 where he hawked produce purchased at the market in Sir Lowry Road, Cape Town. He soon moved to Kimberley where the diamond mines were attracting thousands of people and established himself as an egg merchant.

By 1912 he had saved sufficient funds to travel to London, England where he married **Deborah Taube Hyams**. They returned to Kimberley on the Balmoral Castle in July 1912 and in due course lived and brought up their family at 38 York Street, Kimberley.

With Deborah's help, Solomon opened a **small dairy business in Jones Street** near the city centre and maintained a morning stall on the city market selling butter, eggs and cheese.



He became an institution in the city, to be seen striding down Jones Street in the early morning alongside his overloaded hand-cart, trundled by Piet, his trusty and only assistant. They were on their way to Market Square (left) returning to the store around midday with cheerful greetings to friends and the constable on traffic point-duty at the Dutoitspan Road intersection where trams ran down the centre of the road.



He became a pillar of the Jewish community, serving for many years on the synagogue and other committees. Later, he added a bakery to the business and in advance of his time **built cold storage rooms for the dairy products**. Experts had to be brought in from Johannesburg, more than 300 miles distant, for this advanced concept. The business, known as The Enterprise Dairy, was situated at 74 Joubert Street. He also bought numerous small rental dwellings in mainly low-income areas and a small licensed hotel, near the Kimberley Open Mine, that famous "Big Hole". It was called the **Masonic Hotel**, but later renamed the **Colinton Hotel**. A number of managers ran it unsuccessfully. In 1946 he retired and settled in Sea Point, Cape Town where the family was to settle.



Gertie married Idel (Ivor)

Haas, in the Kimberley synagogue on 10 March 1940.

Idel Haas, was born 25 November 1911 in Pavilosta, Latvia. He was the son of Markus Peisach Haase (b. 1861 - d. 1936 in Libau, Latvia) and Basshewa (Sophie) Haase (b. 1872 - d. 1941 in the Holocaust)

His known siblings were Sarah (died in the Holocaust), Meier Haas, Johanna Milwidsky, Beile (Betty) Kursan, Erna Haas (died in the Holocaust), Isaac (Ike) Haas, David Lieb Haas and Samuel Haas. Other than as noted, all the siblings died in South Africa.

Idel grew up in Libau, a port city in Latvia now called Liepaja. He left in 1928 at the age of 17

for South Africa. After a short sojourn in Molteno, Cape, Idel Haas (now known in South Africa, as Ivor) moved to Kimberley where he worked for a time for the Kimberley Jewellers, 'Blumenthals'. He soon set up his own business as a Watchmaker and Jeweller at 55 Dutoitspan Road.

In 1940 he joined and served in the South African Army in the Middle East until 1945

Gertie and Ivor Haas' Children

Gertie and Ivor had three sons: **Selwyn Philip Haas** (born in 1942 in Kimberley) currently (2020) living in Jersey, Channel Islands, **Raymond Colin Haas** (born in 1946 in Cape Town) currently living in London and **David Simon Haas** (born in 1951 Cape Town) currently living in Cape Town.

Selwyn writes in January 2020 'Resulting from research into our father Ivor's youth in Libau / Liepaja, my brother Raymond and I have, since 1998 when we first visited the Latvian town, become involved with the existing Liepaja Jewish Community. We have been instrumental in setting up the Liepaja Jewish Heritage Foundation and continue to support it - which includes an annual visit to Liepaja by me. This Liepaja association has proved to be one of the most gratifying and meaningful activities we have been involved with. You might like to access the website <http://www.liepajajewishheritage.lv>.

The family move to Cape Town

Gertie and Ivor and their little boy Selwyn, 3, left Kimberley in 1945 for Cape Town. They were soon joined by Gertie's parents, Solomon and Deborah Goldberg, who retired to Sea Point in 1946.

Ivor established a Jeweller and Watchmaker business in Sea Point, Cape Town in 1948 and was a well-known personality on Regent Road and Main Road Sea Point for over thirty years before he retired. He died in Cape Town on 2 August 1989.



Gertie's achievements and reputation

Gertie Haas, the wife, mother, friend, leader and teacher, was a dynamic, inspiring and creative woman of great intelligence and substance. She touched so many lives and helped hundreds more. She had earned distinctions in her Music Teaching and Licentiate Diplomas. She blossomed when she arrived in Cape Town. She performed in theatrical productions and on radio and was a sought-after music teacher and adjudicator at Eisteddfods and Ballroom Dancing Competitions. She also held prominent positions on various professional associations and charity boards.

By the early 1950s, Gertie had established several 'Educational Entertainment Centres' in which she became **everyone's favourite piano, speech and drama and music appreciation teacher**. She was known affectionately by thousands of children and parents alike, as '**Auntie Gertie**'.

For nearly 40 years her Educational Entertainment Centres were filled with children who enjoyed learning about music and singing songs, old and new. Auntie Gertie regularly took her 'children' to entertain at Orphanages, Children's Hospitals, Homes for the disabled and at Senior Centres. The children also performed annually in the spectacular 'Gertrude Haas Variety Concerts' that were held on stages that include Cape Town City Hall, Civic Centre, Alhambra Theatre, Baxter Theatre and more. These annual concerts comprising songs, original playlets and dance, raised funds for many different charities around Cape Town and were a family favourite for all.

Fitness for the Over Fifties

When Gertrude was in her sixties, she left her children's' music studios in the hands of her assistants including Zola Piatka (who had herself studied with Auntie Gertie since a child) so she could spend time in London attending lectures and learning about '**fitness for the over fifties**'. After her return to Cape Town, she resumed teaching her piano and singing classes and soon opened her new 'Autumn Aerobics' classes for Cape Town's women over fifty! In the early 80s Gertrude focused on expanding the reach of her 'Autumn Aerobics' studios to other major cities around South Africa.

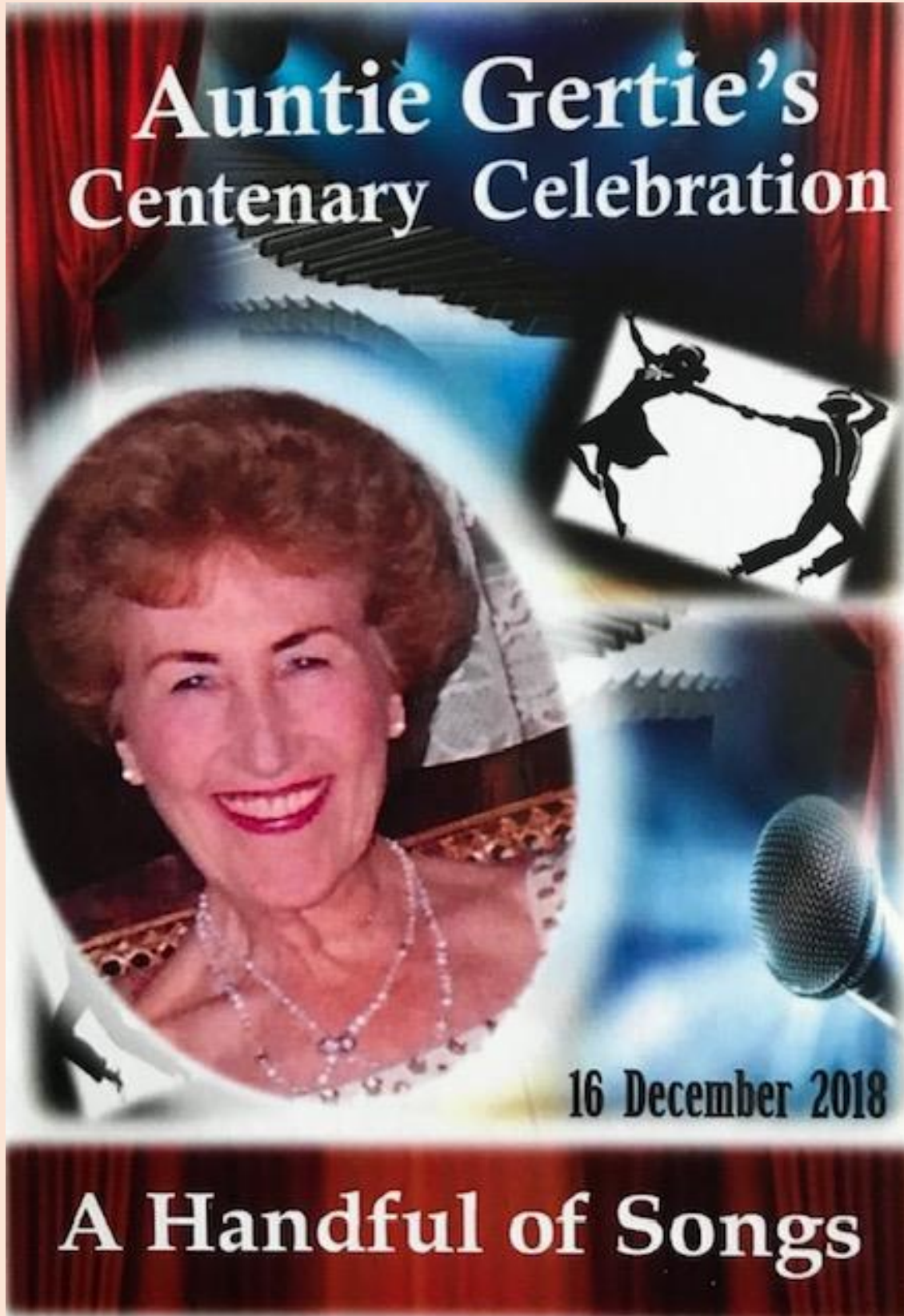
After Auntie Gertie passed away, the **Gertrude Haas Performing Arts Scholarship** fund was created in her memory at the University of Cape Town. This scholarship has funded UCT students in music, dance and drama since 1997 and continues to do so.

Auntie Gertie left a lasting and powerful legacy for all her friends, family and student alumni.... and her love and the joy of music, is still being passed down through the

generations. She died in Cape Town 11 September 1990 at the age of 72 and is buried there.

Below is the cover of a booklet printed by her family and friends and those she inspired on the occasion of her centenary in December 2018.

And on the next page are some of the posters for her pupils' variety shows.





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Compiled by Geraldine Auerbach MBE, London 2020

From material supplied by her son Selwyn

Read also the stories of her siblings:

[Goldberg, Abe](#)

[Goldberg, Isidore](#)

