

# Jewish Wholesale firms and families in Kimberley

Compiled by Geraldine Auerbach MBE, London November 2019 – Updated March 2022, from research and with many thanks for contributions of stories and pictures from the families of those who created the firms and/or who worked there.

## A Natural Progression: Smous – General Dealer – Wholesaler

Wholesale distribution is a buying and selling operation – one that requires good negotiation skills, a nose for sniffing out the next “hot” item, keen salesmanship and knowing your customers. So, from trading door to door, as a smous, getting your goods from a Jewish general dealer who was already established, it was a natural progression to creating a general dealer shop yourself and having *landsman* and family as your travelling salesman.



**The next step was to do it wholesale.**

I have identified 10 of the best-known Jewish wholesalers in Kimberley and tried to write the story of their emporia and families. I am very grateful to family members such as Robin Apter, Bernard Benjamin and Jennifer Lipsitz, Delia Benn and Rick David, Gussie Haberfeld (in a 1985 interview) and Lance Michalson for words and pictures. Many have their own pages on the family list.

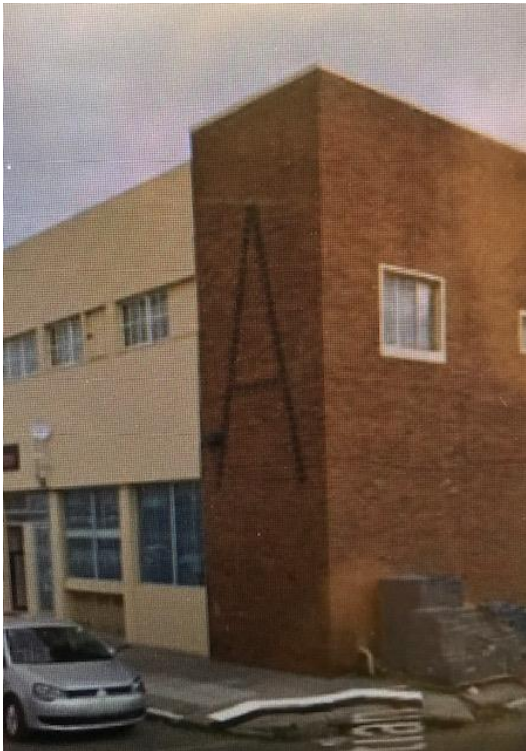
1. **S APTER and Co (Pty) Ltd** General Wholesalers
2. **AWERBUCK AND BROWN & Co (Pty) Ltd** General Wholesalers
3. **BENJAMIN BROS** Wholesale Softgoods
4. **E BENJAMIN & CO** Wholesale Softgoods
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6. **L ISAACSON & CO** Wholesale Softgoods
7. **KLEIN BROS** General Wholesalers (more info needed)
8. **R. SENDEROVITZ AND CO** Wholesale Groceries
9. **SUSSMAN BROS** Premier Meat Supply
10. **JC WIGHTMAN AND CO** Manufacturers Representatives

Jews had plied their trade from peddler to becoming a general dealer in and around the shtetelach of Lithuania and Eastern Europe. On arrival in South Africa, the 'Jewish economic system' got everybody on their feet. First, they were set up by landmen to trade door to door, then with a barrow they could trade around the town. After that they might graduate to having a donkey cart, to travel further afield. The Jewish trader, referred to as a 'Smous', opened up trade routes deep into the countryside, serving both the Dutch and the Black populations, bringing much needed supplies to the farms and shops in the country districts. (See the article here on [Smouse](#) and whether 'smous' was a descriptive, affectionate or derogatory appellation)

It is no surprise then that almost all the wholesalers in Kimberley from the 1930s to the 1960s were Jews. Now the 'traveller' was a part of the firm he was representing – not having to buy goods from others – and probably part of the family as well. The Kimberley 'reps' travelled widely all over the Northern Cape, supplying farmers and small-town shops building great relationships and trust with their customers be they Dutch, Greek, Indian or African. .

After the 1960s things began to change. Senior family members died. Manufacturers were sending round their own representatives. (Gus said the improvements to the roads and in motor vehicles brought great competition, see the Louis Isaacson section). Retailers began switching their custom directly to manufacturers (in order to cut out the middleman's profit) thus leaving the wholesalers, vulnerable. The demise came in the late 1960s to the 1980s when the spread of large chains of supermarkets in country districts, rendered their efforts in vain. Most of the Jewish wholesale firms closed or were sold around that time.

Some of the firms are still in existence to some degree, but no longer related to the original families who have all moved away from Kimberley. Many thanks to all who have sent in stories and pictures charting the history and characters who ran the successful wholesale businesses in Kimberley.



**S APTER and Co (Pty) Ltd General Wholesalers  
Southey Street, Kimberley**

**Established by Solomon (born Zalman) Apter** from Dvinsk in Latvia in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Information Contributed by **Robin Apter** (son of Alec), Australia (October 2019)

In the early 1900's **Solomon (born Zalman) Apter** emigrated from Dvinsk in Latvia to Cape Town. He spent some time in Cape Town and was on his way to Johannesburg when, it was said, through lack of travel documents, he had to stop in Kimberley.

Soon after his arrival, he opened up a corner shop selling general merchandise. This developed over the years of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, to become **S Apter & Co**, what we believe was the first General Wholesaler in Kimberley and the Northern Cape area.

Solomon and his wife, **Tetcha** whom he married after she had emigrated from Poland to South Africa, had five children in Kimberley – **Lionel, Emanuel (Mendel), Nina, Alexander (Alec)** and **Ethel**.

All 3 sons joined the armed forces during WW II, Lionel as a Doctor in the Army, Mendel the Navy and Alec the Air Force mainly as a bomber pilot but with a stint on the Spitfires as well. Read about their War Service here [Kimberley Jews and the Second World War](#)

After the War, **Lionel** continued his medical practice in Johannesburg. **Mendel and Alec joined the family business** helping their father until his death in 1955. Solomon had also brought in a *landsmans* **Phillip Kaplan** to help in the business and was also later joined by his (Solomon's) nephew, **Bert Apter** who also played a major part in the running of the business.

**Harry Klein**, in his formative years, also worked for Solomon Apter for a time until he left to start his own business which would later become another big wholesaler in Kimberley, Klein Brothers. Mendel, Alec, Bert, and Phillip for a time, continued to run S Apter and Co until 1969 when Alec passed away suddenly at the very young age of 45. The business was sold soon thereafter in 1970 and Mendel left Kimberley for Johannesburg to pursue other interests.

**S Apter & Co was situated in Southey Street** approx. 300 metres from the opening circumference of the Big Hole. During the late 50's early 60's when the building was further expanded to include a larger basement area, the site was closely guarded 24/7 by persons associated with De Beers to ensure that all the excavated groundworks were taken to De Beers processing facilities.



The business was a **General Wholesaler** in the true sense of the word in that it dealt in a multitude of products (other than perishables). The main divisions were Groceries, Cigarettes and Tobacco, Sweets, Photographic Equipment, Arms and Ammunition, Bicycles, OTC Pharmaceuticals. The extended basements were built to house bags of grain and staple foods.

**S Apter & Co serviced the entire Northern Cape** with Commercial Travellers calling on commercial customers of every description. They did not sell to the public. I do remember being told of the many new arrivals / immigrants being granted extended credit by Solomon to

assist in the start-up or expansion of their businesses. This practice was continued by the business after Solomon's passing. Many great relationships and friendships were established as a result of this and as a child I remember meeting many of these customers when accompanying my father into the country areas to call on and say hello, attending their family occasions and weddings etc. Many Greek and Indian families were particularly welcoming and fun to visit both in Kimberley and the greater part of the Northern Cape.

The building still stands to this day with the everlasting "A" in the brickwork on the front edifice. Next door was Southey Street Motors, the well-known Volkswagen Distributor and service facility. Southey Street Motors was owned then, from memory, by three wholesalers, Apters, Awerbuck Brown, A David and one other individual / entity. It still exists to this day having moved further up the road into new premises having added Audi to its distributorship. Lois Apter sent the picture above of Mendel Apter's eldest grandchild **Tim Apter** catching the big A. She says that sadly Tim never met his grandfather, Mendel.

**The Apter Family** Read about the [Apter Family](#)

- **Solomon's wife Tetcha** passed away at a young age in 1935 and Solomon in 1955. They are buried in Kimberley. All the next generation of siblings have also passed on.
- **Lionel and Miriam's children** – Alan a Psychiatrist in Israel, Jeffrey a Psychiatrist in USA, Tessa a Clinical Psychologist in Israel
- **Mendel and Winnie's children** – David a Geologist in South Africa, Steven (deceased) (served in the SA Airforce)
- **Nina and Hymie's children** – Ivan Tockar (deceased) an SAA Pilot, Trevor Tockar a Barrister in Australia
- **Alec and Syb's children** – Robin a Chartered Accountant in Australia, Gaby in South Africa, Clifford an Advertising Executive in USA
- **Ethel and Buddy's child** – Diana (deceased) in Canada



**AWERBUCK AND BROWN & Co (Pty) Ltd**  
**General wholesalers, including groceries**  
**Transvaal Road, Kimberley**

Established by Harry Brown and Raphael Awerbuck in 1932 after a partnership in fisheries from 1907. Compiled by Geraldine Auerbach MBE. Picture from Delia Benn (née Brown daughter of Ikky)

**I found this wonderful article about the originators of this firm Harry Brown and Raphael Awerbuck on the internet - reprinted from the Diamond Fields Advertiser (DFA) on 19 Apr 2013** Both Harry Brown and Raphael Awerbuck were born in Lithuania and their families were old friends. Brown immigrated and prior to the Boer War, worked in Johannesburg. At the outbreak of the Boer War he left Johannesburg for Cape Town. He met his wife at Paarl and they were married shortly afterwards. In 1907 he decided to go back to Johannesburg and on route stopped over in Kimberley.

**He met Awerbuck on the Market Square**, where Awerbuck had established a small business in dried fish. Awerbuck suggested to him that they join forces and commence business with fresh fish. This was during July 1907 and Awerbuck had been in Kimberley for one month prior to Brown's arrival. Awerbuck's proposition made Brown change his mind about going to Johannesburg and a partnership was formed. This was the foundation of the present South African Fisheries.

After a few years in the fish business, **they branched out into groceries** and moved their premises to the site of Potgieters Motors. From this site they moved to **17 Transvaal Road**. As the business expanded, it was decided to dissolve the partnership and form a company



and the company of **Awerbuck, Brown and Company (Pty) Ltd was incorporated on November 23, 1932.**

In the early days there was no till or cash slip system in the grocery department. Both Brown and Awerbuck wore carpenter's aprons with big pockets, which acted as tills and at the end of the day each one emptied his pockets and the money was checked and banked. The property they rented at 14 Transvaal Road was put up for sale and they decided to buy it. They agreed to pay £400 for the property and Brown was to do the bidding. The property was finally knocked down to Mr Brown at a figure of £800.

But in spite of this terrific increase over the figure mutually agreed upon, Awerbuck's only comment on being told by Brown of the purchase was a shrug of the shoulders and a laconic "All right".

At no time did Awerbuck have any idea of what shares Brown had bought nor how much he bought in the Market, **but all profits and losses were shared equally between the two partners.**

On the death of Awerbuck in 1951 the shares were held by the administrators of his estate, but Brown continued to dispose of the shares at his own discretion and all dividends were still equally shared. They also held jointly a 50 percent interest in Lee's Garage and this investment was a very profitable one.

Harry Brown's sons **Benny and Harold** (usually known as Icky) with Raphael's son **Frankie Awerbuck** took over as Directors in the 40s to 60s. **Ivor Brown** returned to SA in 1961 when his father Bennie became ill. He came back to Kimberley and took over the distinguished family wholesale business, Awerbuck Brown & Co, which had been founded by his grandfather in the 1920s.



Ivor built a very successful business career and was a respected and well-liked member of the community. He was also the chairperson of the local Industrial Council for the Distributors' Trade for a number of years. He had numerous property and other business interests in Kimberley including interests in car dealerships, a hotel and clothing store. In 2001, Ivor retired to Cape Town with Laurian, his wife of more than 20 years, to be closer to their family.

Awerbuck Brown & Co. prospered under Ivor's control, and he grew the company into possibly the largest wholesaler in the Northern Cape, until he **closed it down in 2001** when he retired to Cape Town. And that was the last of the Kimberley Jewish wholesalers.

Read the family stories here [Brown, Harry and family](#) (Awerbuck and Brown)  
[Awerbuck, Raphael and family](#) (Awerbuck and Brown)  
and [Brown, Ivor](#)

## **BENJAMIN BROS**

**Wholesalers in soft goods. Beaconsfield**



Owners **Solomon Benjamin** and his brother **Japie Benjamin**, who were later joined by Solomon's sons Basil and Philip.  
[Benjamin, Basil](#)

Solomon and Hinda Benjamin came to Kimberley from Telz in Lithuania in the 1920s. They already had a daughter **Esther** b. 1927 in Lithuania. A son **Basil Louis Benjamin** (left) and a younger son **Philip Benjamin** were born in Kimberley.

Solomon started **Benjamin Brothers**, with his brother Japie Benjamin, as wholesalers and with a retail store in fabrics in Main

Road. It lasted two generations, as Solomon's sons Basil and Philip joined the business. Solomon died many years before Hinda, in 11/04/1956, and is buried in Kimberley.

Solomon's younger brother **Yechiel Benjamin** came to Kimberley in the early 1930's. He joined Solomon and Japie in Benjamin Bros. Yechiel married Freda Rosenstein in 1937, who was well versed in accounting and business admin and had her own Commercial College. After a few years Yechiel and Freda started their own wholesale business and E Benjamin & Co, Wholesale Softgoods Merchants was born. In 1955, aged 17, their son Bernard joined them in the business, and it was then renamed E. Benjamin & Son. That also survived two generations until 1981 when Bernard left for Cape Town.

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## **E BENJAMIN & CO**

**Wholesale Softgoods, Beaconsfield**

Owners **Yechiel and Freda Benjamin** and son **Bernard**

Contributed by Bernard Benjamin (5 October 2019) [Benjamin, Bernard](#)



Bernard Benjamin pictured here with his bride Hellen who both worked in the firm, wrote: My father Yechiel Benjamin came to Kimberley in the early 1930's after his older brothers had already been there for a few years. He joined them in the wholesale business known as **Benjamin Bros.** He married Freda Rosenstein in 1937, who who was well versed in accounting and business admin and had her own Commercial College. After a few years my mother and father broke away from Benjamin Bros and started their own wholesale business and **E Benjamin & Co, Wholesale Softgoods Merchants** was born.

In 1955 I joined them in the business, and it was then renamed **E. Benjamin & Son.**



In this picture above, we see my mother **Freda Benjamin** bottom left and Helen Brown (née Maresky) is bottom right. with behind her left Rae Allen and right Hilda Hotz (née Lincow). Next to Freda is an unidentified woman in the middle (whom Geraldine thought was Violet Toube – but her children disagree. Another suggestion was Rae Dubowitz as it looks like her son Brian. Yet another suggestion is, is it Mrs Shles?). the mystery was sorted when ‘Da Benj’ wrote on the Kimberley shul Facebook in December 2021 to say that his father remembers the woman seated in the middle as Phoebe Eberlin, married to Harry. They had a lady’s dress shop Annette’s on Pan Road. They moved to Johannesburg in 1954 after Harry died suddenly at a very young age. Read the [Stanley Eberlin](#) story here.

**We employed travellers** who called on the mine stores, farm stores and country shops. Many of these customers were hundreds of kilometres away. We provided our customers with goods which were generally delivered by rail. I married Hellen Baitz in 1963 and she also helped in the business.

The wholesalers provided a very important link supplying goods to the country stores. The hotels in the country districts were always abuzz with travellers from all over and they also had an annual Travellers ball at the Constance Hall. Unfortunately, with the advent of the large chain stores opening up all over the country areas, the wholesalers became redundant. **We closed E Benjamin and Son in 1981** when our older son, Darryl matriculated and went to university in Cape Town.

We then left Kimberley in 1981 and we now live very happily in Toronto. Our son **Darryl Benjamin** lives in Philadelphia with his wife Julie and two children. **Neil Benjamin**, our second son lives in Toronto with his wife Michelle and two children and our daughter, **Leanne** is also in Toronto with her husband Gary and their two children. We have very fond memories of Kimberley both in business and socially.

We applaud your good work **Geraldine, Leon and Eli** in keeping memories of Kimberley alive and also Barney Horwitz's untiring efforts in the community.



**A DAVID & CO**  
**General wholesalers, Beaconsfield**

[David, Louis and Connie](#) (of A David & Co)



**Abraham Moses David** is the one who started the business which is named ‘A David and Co’. According to his tombstone in the Pioneers’ cemetery, Kimberley he died in Kimberley in July 1929 aged just 58. He had married **Esther Dixon** (formerly Duksh). In the 1930s and 40s his sons **Louis and Bennie David**, and sons-in-law **Angie (Louis) Jacobson** and **Monty Dave** were active in the business. They employed several travellers, amongst them, **Dave Price** and nephew **Solly Jacobson** (Angie’s son).



**Louis David**, Abraham's son (pictured above right) was born about 1900. Louis, a brilliant boy, who was the Dux Medallist in 1918 at Boy's High School, had three siblings – all involved on one way or another in the business. His brother **Bennie David** was born about two years later in 1902. Bennie was a traveller for the firm. He married **Sadie Lincow** of Kimberley (sister of **Hilda Lincow** who married **Charlie Hotz**). Bennie and Sadie had 3 sons, Gerald b c1940 Eric b c1942 Roger b c1946. They all lived in Kimberley.

Louis and Bennie also employed their brothers in law: **Monty Dave** of Kimberley who married their sister **Rebecca (Becky)** – they had two children Alan Dave b c1936 and Barbara Dave b c1939 lived in Kimberley. Barbara died in 2017 – see her entry in the family pages [Grigson \(nee Dave\), Barbara](#). Louis and Bennie's other sister **Dora David** married Louis (known as 'Angie') Jacobson. Their children were Harry Jacobson who married Naomi Wolman and Israel (Solly) Jacobson b1922 who married **Julie Lurie** of Kimberley (read about them here: [Jacobson, Solly & Julie \(nee Lurie\)](#))

Louis married **Connie Bennett** (full name, Annette Marion Bennett) sister of crime-writer, **Bennie Bennett**. Louis and Connie had two sons: **Bobby David (Evan Robert)** b c1928 – died 2019, who married the beautiful Lorraine Hendler, (daughter of Alec and Chrissie Hendler of Jhb) in about 1955. (They lived in Kimberley where Lorraine was well known for her roles acting in plays at the Kimberley Theatre, and for giving swimming lessons at her home in Carrington Road. They had four boys Anthony b c1956-died Ricky b c1958 Neil b c1960 Christopher b c1964. Bobby worked for his father in A David and Co for some years. The second son **Aubrey Marcus David**, b c1933. Became an architect, married ballet dancer Muriel Jones. They went to live on the Costa Del Sol. Aubrey David was one of the pioneers building the first exquisite tourist and ex-pat homes in Malaga. Louis and Connie lived out their days in Kimberley at 75 Milner Crescent and were buried in the Kimberley Cemetery.

You can read about them here [David, Louis and Connie](#) (if and links do not work, please go to the family page <https://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/kimberley/Families.html> and look up the families you want to read about

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## **L ISAACSON & CO**

### **Wholesalers in Linens and soft goods, Bean Street, Kimberley**

Owners: before 1920 Louis Isaacson, then from 1936, after Louis died in 1931, Gus and Cyril Haberfeld and Abe Pollen took over.

Louis Isaacson who started the business, was a prominent and much-admired person in the Kimberley Jewish Community. He died in 1931 aged 66 years. The HoD lodge started in Kimberley was inaugurated in 1931, in his name.

The business was situated in Siege Building, Bean Street, corner De Beers Road, and opposite Roderick and Brook motors. The business was taken over in 1936 by his team of Gus Haberfeld, Finance, Cyril Haberfeld Traveller, and Abe Pollen all of whom who had all been running the business with Louis Isaacson.



Of his business career, Gus says in an interview for the Kaplan centre at UCT in 1985: 'I gave up cheder teaching when I was offered a position in a firm in which my brother Cyril, younger than myself had been working as a traveller for about a year. He advised me to come and see the owner-of the business Louis Isaacson. He knew that his daughter was leaving the business and there would be a vacancy. As it happened, the owner of the business Louis Isaacson was the chairman of the synagogue board then, and he was at that stage also the President of the shul and he knew that I was employed by the shul. He said to me I'll take you on, I said I have to give the shul a month's notice so he said you go to the Boys High School in the morning, you start work for me at half past nine, you go to the cheder again at three o'clock that would be in your month's notice.'

So, at 19 in 1923, Gus joined Louis Isaacson in his wholesale linens business. He was in the invoicing department. Later he studied with an accountant and when the non-Jewish bookkeeper left in 1926, Gus was appointed the bookkeeper. Gus explained: 'It was a wholesale goods firm what we called 'cattle truck' in

those days: blankets, shawls, boots and shoes, more or less everything that the Black community needed. We supplied shopkeepers around the country.

'In 1931, Louis Isaacson died, aged just 66. His son who inherited the business was not living in Kimberley anymore and I was running the business for him. In 1936, together with my brother who was a traveller on the road for the business, and another friend of ours, Abe Pollen, the three of us took over entirely the business. We bought him out and we became L. Isaacson and Son Pty Ltd. We continued in business till 1965 when this kind of business was no longer viable.

Gus (pictured above in his mayoral robes) explained the situation to his interviewer Lynette Douglas: 'Let me put it to you this way, in the early days there were very bad roads in this part of the country, very few firms' travellers ventured out on those roads and our firm was one that did. We used to go right out to the border of Rhodesia through what was then known as Bechuanaland Protectorate. we had to carry spare springs in case the springs of the car broke. We had to carry chains in case they got stuck in the mud to be pulled out by donkeys. The shopkeepers in that part of the world looked forward to a wholesaler coming along because they were their only source of supply.

But as time went on roads were improved and more and more competition had to be faced by travellers from other parts of the country, say they would come up from Port Elizabeth or East London, they did not come before, and we had a sort of preserve of our own.

Let me put it to you this way, the more the roads were improved, contrary to some ideas, the businesses in the country did not thrive because the customers of those people in the remote areas were able to come into Kimberley more often and they bought goods directly at shops

in Kimberley, at competitive prices and the poor shopkeeper in the country districts was a sort of stop gap. They only went there when they did not have any money and he was able to give them goods on credit. Thus, we could see that the time was coming when the wholesaler would gradually fade out.

Another blow to our sort of business was that in 1925 and 1926, the government encouraged local industry/ Previous to that there was hardly a factory in this country, everything was imported. Once goods were being made in this country, Manufacturers' representatives were going out and these travellers were not only confining themselves to wholesalers like us, they were going directly to the wholesaler's customers, and there might have been a discount of five or ten percent on the prices, whereas the wholesaler had to purchase five hundred pairs of trousers, so the whole structure of business changed. We could see the writing on the wall, and the days of the wholesaler as such were numbered. That is one of the reasons that prompted us in 1965 to close down the business.

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**KLEIN BROS**

56 George Street, Kimberley 8301  
General Wholesalers furniture and appliances. Kimberley



The Klein Brothers, Harry, Mike and Philip first created the Diamond Fields Bazaar business. Here is a picture of the original Diamond Fields Bazaar building in Dutoitspan Road opposite Willies outfitters and Louis Goldenbaum's 'Bargains' store. The building was owned by Harry Stoller, the brother of the Klein brothers' mother, Bessie Klein. When the building was sold, it became the site of Kimberley's Woolworths Store.

Harry Klein signed up and went on active service during the war years while Philip minded the shop. After the War, they formed Klein Brothers wholesale merchants and their sister Ray Dubowitz ran the Diamond Fields Bazaar.

Harry married Lila Arenson, born 31/12/1924 daughter of Louis and Bertha Arenson of Bloemfontein. She came to Kimberley in 1952 when she married Harry, and like her contemporaries, she mainly looked after her home, husband and children and contributed greatly to Jewish life in Kimberley.

In this picture below of four Kimberley 'boys' on active service in 1941 or 42, **Ivor Haas Haas, Gertie, Ivor & Family** is on the left. Marshal Hotz recognises his father **Charlie Hotz Hotz, Hilda & Charlie**, on the extreme right and says that next to him is **Harry Klein Klein, Jennifer (now Lipsitz)**. Selwyn Kanushevsky recognises his father **Willie Kanushevsky** standing at the back. Read about them on their family pages, links above, and in [Kimberley Jews and the Second World War](#)



**Harry Klein** was born in 1914 to Jacob and Bessie Klein of Kimberley. After World War 2, with his brothers, **Philip and Mike, Harry Klein** started the wholesale firm, Klein Bros. They were General Dealers, and also dealt with furniture and appliances at their well-known and respected firm in New Main Street.



The Klein brothers and their families all played a significant part in the Jewish Community taking leading roles on the synagogue committees and women's groups like the Union of Jewish Women and Zionist League. Harry died on 20/6/1971 aged only 56 and is buried in Kimberley. Lila died in Melbourne Australia 26/11/2001 at 77.

Jennifer, born 1953, is Harry and Lila Klein's eldest child, and only daughter. She says life as a child growing up in Kimberley was happy, fulfilling and special. Jenny says: 'In 1981, when our first son Hayden was 2 was years old we returned from Cape Town to live in Kimberley and Roy went to work at Klein Bros. Our second son, Marc, was born in Kimberley in December 1981.'

Above we see Jenny and Roy with her mother Lila and brother Louis at their wedding (with those iconic three arches of the shul foyer behind them)

Jenny wrote: 'We lived a very fulfilling life in Kimberley. I started the first multi-racial Nursery School at CBC. (My aunt Miriam, Mike Klein's wife had already started the Hebrew Nursery school, which is still active today in the small hall of the Memorial Road Synagogue – though there is not a Jewish child in sight.) During our 9-year stay in Kimberley, Roy my husband served as treasurer of the Kimberley Shul. He also served as a member on the Chevra Kadisha.

'In 1991 when I was 38 – we finally left Kimberley and South Africa when we emigrated to Melbourne, Australia. We felt that this would provide more fruitful Jewish opportunities for our children's futures. I started working at a religious School and worked there for 8 years. I then worked at Bialik a Zionist School for 2 years and then moved to Mount Scopus the largest Jewish Day school in the Southern Hemisphere. I am still teaching there since 2002. We are well settled here.' Jenny's three brothers were all born in Kimberley, Louis Klein 1955, Malvin Klein 1958 and Bentley Klein 1961 (Bentley sadly passed away in 2021). All the Klein siblings went to live in Melbourne Australia!

Klein Brothers became Klein Office Furniture and is now called 360 Office Furniture. The current owners say: Since our humble beginnings in Kimberley over 70 years ago (trading as **KLEIN BROTHERS**, a general retailer for that community and the outlying areas), we have always prided ourselves on having an excellent reputation amongst customers and suppliers. The **Klein** name has always been synonymous with the supply of a wide range of quality office products.



**R. SENDEROVITZ AND CO**

Produce merchants and Wholesale Groceries  
Market Square, Beaconsfield  
read his story here: [Senderovitz, Raphael](#)

Gwynne Robins, née Schrire, his great-granddaughter writes: In the early 1880s my great-grandfather, Raphael Senderovitz who had married **Ite Chaie** (née Epstein) came to South Africa with his wife. He had been a **tea taster in Moscow** but started out again as a peddler in Kimberley hawking goods across the country.

Diamonds had been discovered in volcanic pipes in Kimberley in 1874 (the 'Dry Diggings'). This accelerated the diamond rush when thousands of penniless fortune seekers rushed to peg a claim, and a tent city grew up overnight around the rapidly growing diamond-

rich holes. The diggers and their hangers-on needed food and supplies and Raphael Senderovitz decided that the diamond fields would be a good place to make a living.



He settled in Beaconsfield, adjacent to Kimberley, in the 1890s, rented a stand on Market Square and opened a shop and a mill. Gran said he would buy mealies and mill them into flour which he sold all around Kimberley and in the Transvaal. They lived in a house next to the mill and had a stable for the horses that delivered the flour. They also kept chickens and cows. His ability was so highly respected that the locals used to come to him at election time to ask him for whom to vote. In the picture above Raphael is standing on the right with some of his mill workers.

Later he gave up the mill but continued as a R Senderovitz and Co, Produce Merchant and Wholesale Grocer. Terms: NETT CASH, 60 days. Interest

at 8 per cent per annum will be charged on all overdue accounts.

See more at [Robins \(nee Schrire\), Gwynn](#) and [Senderovitz, Raphael](#)

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## **SUSSMAN BROS – entrepreneurs in the Meat Industry Premier Meat Supply**

**New Main Street, Kimberley**

Contributed by Cecil Sussman 2 January 2018

[Sussman, Cecil and Natalie \(nee Kroll\)](#)

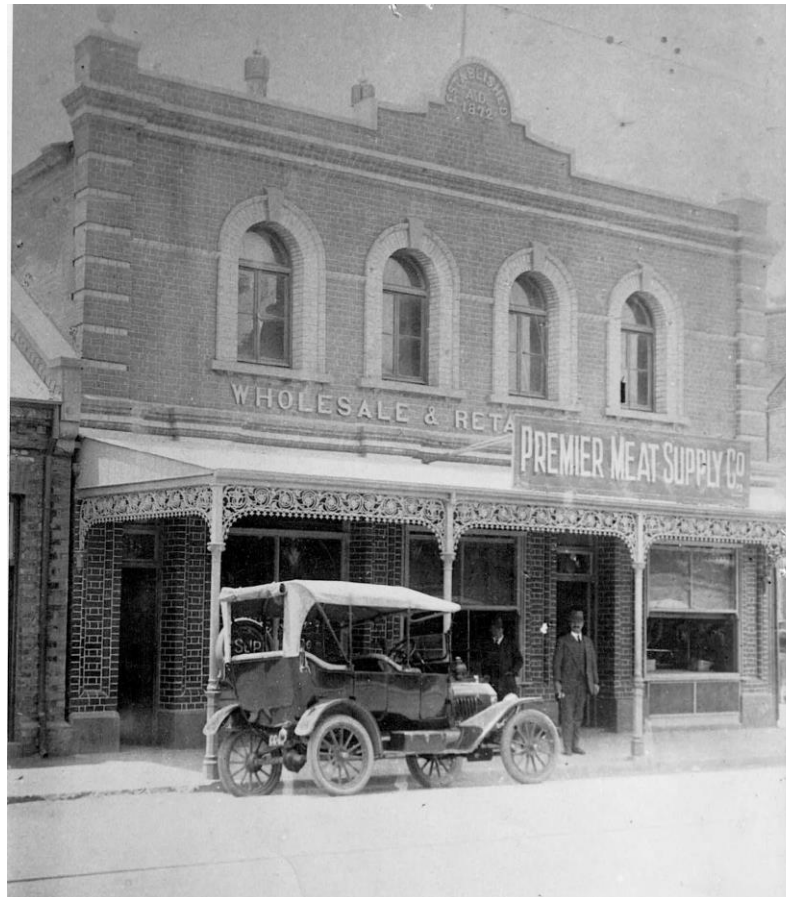
[Sussman, Philip and Augusta \(nee Cohen\)](#)

Brothers **Philip, Guttel, Kollen and George and Kollen's son Cecil** were the partners who were wholesalers in the meat industry and manufacturer of meat products. They had a kosher counter in operation for many decades and owned several farms in the area.

Kollen's son Cecil who joined the firm in 1946 wrote on 2 January 2018, I Thought you might find the origin of the Sussman Bros interesting. The **company was formed in early 1900**, by **Philip Sussman**, who emigrated from Taverig, Lithuania.

Having come from a background of dairy farming, it was natural for him to turn to what he knew best - farming. Years later he was joined by several other brothers, **Guttel, Kollen, Isaac** (who became a diamond buyer) and **George**. The family prospered as farmers, livestock dealers and entrepreneurs in the Meat industry.

They established **Kimberley Ranching Co** and the **Premier Meat Supply**, the most significant butcher shop in Kimberley in De Beers Road, (see the building right) which dealt in wholesale and retail. They pioneered cold storage facilities. Kollen was regarded by his peers as an expert judge on the weight of livestock. He was seldom out by even a kilo or two.



In 1935 **Philip** left to pursue other interests, opening up infrastructure business for the mining interests of Anglo-American in the copper belt of Northern Rhodesia and the gold mines in the Transvaal. Among the interests Philip shared with Sir Ernest Oppenheimer was horse racing. Incidentally one of his horses, Sun Tor, won a Durban July.



In this photo inside the Premier Meat Supply - probably taken around 1950, we can see left to right Cecil, his father Kollen, Guttel Sussman, Chaim Katz (?), unknown, Mr Cvi

Cecil mentioned – when I asked about him - that Jack Sussman – married to Sadie and father of Leon, was a cousin of his father Kollen. Jack was also in the meat trade in Kimberley with Newton Meat Market in Jones Street – but this was not part of Sussman Bros – rather in opposition though the remained friends. You can see Leon Chonin’s table of Kimberley businesses here <https://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/Kimberley/bus.html>

### **Pioneer of butcher shops within supermarkets**

Jeff also understands that Kimberley pioneered butcher shops within Supermarkets when one of the licences was converted to be used within Woolworths. He remembers many trips Cecil took to Pretoria to negotiate with the authorities to comply with the Health Regulations associated with this then unique concept. In 1966, Cecil took over the management and running of the farming enterprises, which he continued doing until he left Kimberley in 1973, to make a new home for his family, who were at university in Cape Town. He commuted from Cape Town to Kimberley, until 1978, when he finally sold all the farms. Incidentally one of the farms "Platfontein" was sold and later bought by the South African Govt. to resettle the Khoi San, who were loyal to SA, by using their tracking skills in the war with Angola.

Kollen died in 1968 aged 77 and is buried in Kimberley. You can see more about Philip’s and Cecil’s family history on his family page on the website by clicking the links [Sussman, Philip and Augusta \(nee Cohen\)](#). and [Sussman Cecil and Natalie](#) , where you can also see pictures of the rock engravings on Platfontein and read about Cecil’s time as Mayor of Kimberley

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### **JC WIGHTMAN AND CO**

Manufacturers’ Representatives  
Stockdale Street, Kimberley.

Dinah Lotter wrote in December 2021. I joined this firm as a Bookkeeper and Shorthand/typist in the 1950’s and remained with them until the close of business in approx 1968 (not sure of the exact date). I’m now aged 93, will hit 94 in March 2022 (God willing). I’m not residing in Kimberley since 1983 as my hubby (deceased in 2006) and I left Kimberley for Somerset West to be closer to our 2 daughters who were at Stellenbosch University at the time. I will always have a keen interest in Kimberley where I grew up. Amazingly most of those names you mentioned as wholesalers were known to me.

Dinah says: JC Wightman & Co were not trading as wholesalers though, they were ‘Manufacturers’ Representatives’, they only worked with samples supplied by the different factories which they represented. All orders from clients were supplied direct to them by the factories.

The factories represented were all well-known. The goods they carried were ladies’ garments, ladies’ underwear, knitwear, men’s suits, jackets, shirts, shoes, underwear, blankets, biscuits, cigarettes, tobacco, sweets and chocolates.

The travellers and their drivers used to leave Kimberley early on a Monday morning in their vans packed with samples in huge box-type suitcases, going into the country as far afield as



Vryburg and Stella and beyond and returning on a Friday-afternoon with plenty of orders which were then sorted, and written in the correct order books for the different factories. There were two Lady Clerks who dealt with that section.

Sadly, Nate Hendler and his son Owen and Archie Sandler all three Directors, have passed on. Bernard Rosen (a cousin) was one of the travellers that I remember) but unfortunately lost contact.



Geraldine Auerbach, London 2019, wrote: Nate and Archie were my uncles – Owen was my cousin. My recollection of going into the premises in Stockdale Street was a strong smell of tobacco mixed with bone meal and other fertilisers. There seemed to have been blankets of the type favoured by the Basutos. As a treat we were given some 3XXX strong mints from the sweet section. They served the outlying farming areas – and also dealt in alluvial diamonds on their trips to places like Lichtenberg.

Cecil Cohen, renowned Kimberley diamond dealer, and his father also participated in the exciting and massive Grasfontein farm diamond rush at Lichtenberg of March 1927 depicted below. Read their stories here [Cohen, Cecil and Jean](#) [Cohen, Barnerd \(Barney\)](#).

