

THE STORY
OF
**ELIEZER AND YEHUDIS
MILBERG**

and
THEIR CHILDREN



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INTRODUCTION

This is the story of Eliezer and Yehudis Milberg, and their 10 children born between 1875 and 1899. The Trustees of the Milberg Family Trust decided in July of 1994, that a family history be written. It was their hope to create a record of a very special group of people - the forebears of the more than 300 descendants alive today.

Most of the interviews for this story date from after July 1994. We are fortunate, however, to have some audio tapes and videos from before that time.

The following is a list of the children of Eliezer (born 1856) and Yehudis (born 1852), their spouses, and some important dates which are probably accurate within one year. There is an abbreviated family tree opposite page 4, that includes almost all contributors to this story. In a supplemental printing there are detailed family trees based on information available to us through March 1995.

NAME	BORN	SPOUSE	MARRIED	TO U.S.	DIED
Moishe (Morris)	1875	Tauba	1896 (*)	1920	1943
Benjamin (Benny)	1877	Yetta	1905	1901	1950
Leon (Louie)	1881	Ida	1907	1899	1941
Susan (Suzy)	1883	Morris Wolfson	1902 (*)	1907	1933
Samuel (Sam)	1885	Mollye	1912	1900	1962
Joseph (Joe)	1888	Ida(#)	1912	1907	1937
Saul (Sol) (Solly)	1889	Pauline(#)	1914	1907	1964
Simon	1894	Sadie	1923	1907	1985
Sarah	1897	Abraham Krumbein	1917	1907	1960
Lena	1899	Benjamin Littman	1923	1907	1962

(*) married in Romania

(#) sisters

An important source for this story has been an interview with Simon Milberg, the youngest son of Eliezer and Yehudis. The interview was done in 1978 by his granddaughter, Marjorie. This is the only direct testimony we have from one of the children of Eliezer and Yehudis. Simon's contribution is therefore uniquely valuable. Simon, of course, lived with them in Romania, traveled with them to this country in 1907, and continued to live with

them until their deaths in 1912 and 1913, respectively. His recollections about Rudacaneni are also meaningful because he was 13 years old when he left Romania. Ben Milberg (son of Moishe and a grandson of Eliezer and Yehudis), says that he remembers Eliezer and Yehudis "vividly," but Ben was only 6 years old when Eliezer and Yehudis left Romania. Fay Diamond (daughter of Susan and a granddaughter of Eliezer) also speaks a little of their life in the U.S.

We also have an audio tape of some remarks made by Ben Milberg (son of Moishe) at a 1981 family reunion; another audio tape of Ben done around 1979; a video of an interview in 1992 with Larry Milberg (also a son of Moishe; and another with Anna Lubin (a daughter of Moishe), also done in 1992.

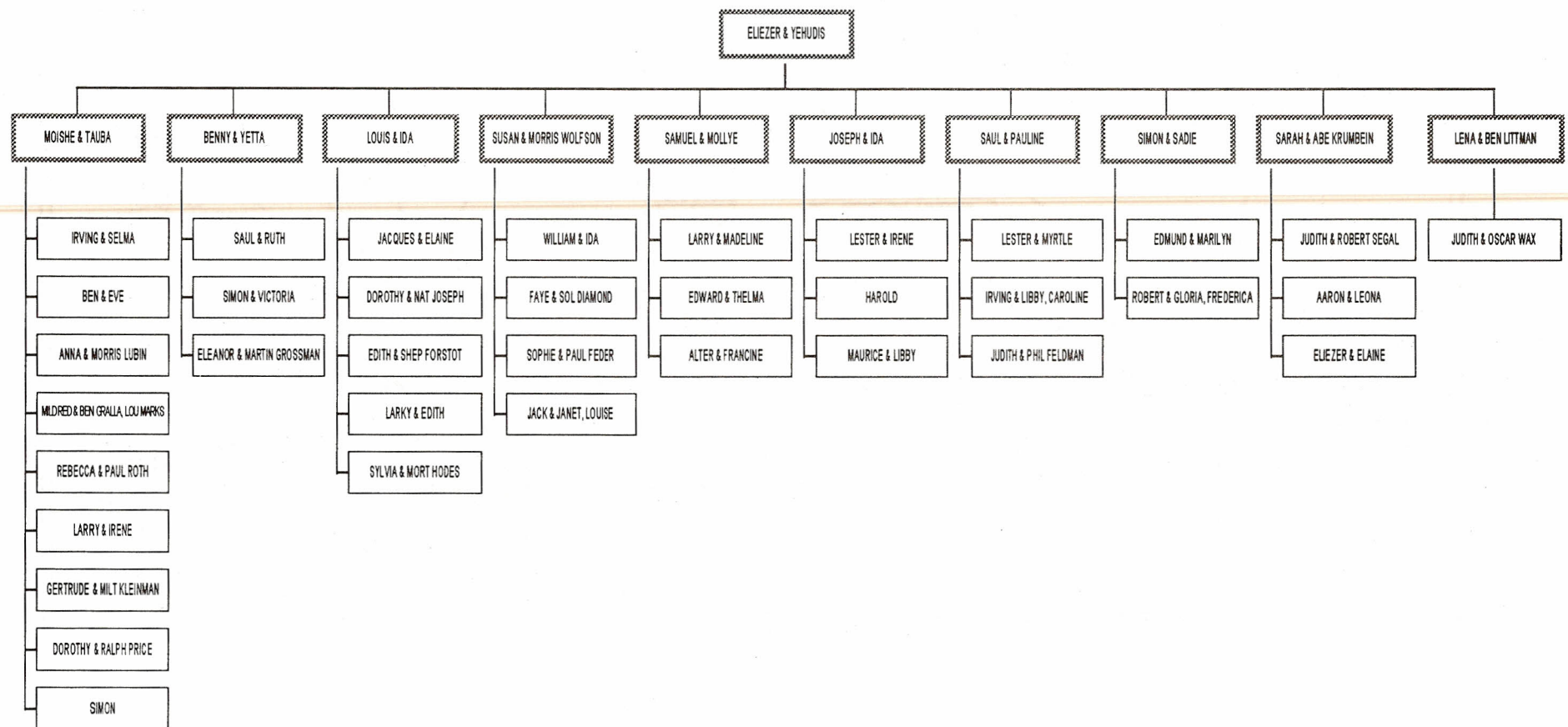
In August, 1994 the Trustees sent a letter to each of the grandchildren of Eliezer and Yehudis asking for their help with this history. The Trustees also wrote to all of the great-grandchildren asking them for help with anecdotes, photos or anything else which might be useful. We then spoke with, or interviewed, everyone who had any information.

What follows is not intended to be a verbatim presentation of the material we collected, but there are frequent verbatim materials throughout. We have tried to select and summarize the important facts and the interesting stories, and we have tried to tie together interviews when the speakers refer to the same events. There are often different recollections of the same event.

The "speaker" in each section, unless otherwise identified, is a first generation child in the captioned family. Bracket-style parentheses enclose editorial comments. When in doubt about whether or not to include something, we included it.

In the following section, we provide background material in order to put the story into some historical context.

FAMILY TREE





Europe in 1914



Map 1. Jewish communities in Rumania on the eve of World War I. Based on *Pinkas ha-Kehillot: Rumanyah* Vol. I, Jerusalem 1907. Courtesy Yad Vashem Archives, Jerusalem.



BACKGROUND

Evidently the entire family emigrated from Rudacaneni, a *stetl* about 25 miles from Iasi, the second largest city in Romania, then and now. Both places are located in northeastern Romania, just across the Prut River from what was Bessarabian Russia but what is now called The Moldavian Peoples Republic. The map on the preceding page shows the locations of both Iasi (Jassy) and Rudacaneni.

The area of Moldavia around the city of Iasi has had a significant continuous Jewish presence since the year 900, if not earlier. But by far the greatest part of Romanian Jewry was descended from immigrants from Poland who began to arrive in the first half of the 17th century, and continued in a continuous stream. Large numbers also came from Galicia, and from Russia, especially during the 1850's when the Russian conscription laws were imposed with special cruelty.

In 1827, as part of his program to integrate Jews into Russian society, Czar Nicholas directed the drafting of Jews into the army for 25 years of service. The drafting of adolescents was permitted in order to fill the quota. Every Jewish community had special officers known as *khapers*, kidnappers, who seized children, and locked them up until they were handed over to the military. The minimum age was twelve, but often younger children of eight or nine were taken. Orphans and poor children were sent, and children were often kidnapped by one community from another. This naturally tore apart Jewish society.

The youngsters were sent to distant barrack communities known as *cantons*. Large numbers died on the trips to the *cantons*. Military training was enforced by threats of starvation and beating. Jewish observance was, of course, forbidden. There was also training in Christianity, followed by baptism. Even those who survived were almost surely lost forever to the Jewish community.

After the death of Nicholas in 1855, Alexander II relaxed the rules somewhat: no more drafting of children, no more forced baptisms of Jewish children and some travel permitted. Still, it is easy to understand that large numbers of Jews, including very possibly some Milbergs, fled Russia under these conditions.

There is another possible explanation of why the family left Russia, (if in fact they were from Russia). That theory concerns the movement of the Halperin Chassidic dynasty from Russia to Romania. (See Note 1 in Appendix B.)

Romania also had a long and notorious history of anti-Semitism including the years between (a) the marriage of Eliezer and Yehudis in about 1872, and (b) the departure for America in 1920 of Moishe and Tauba, the last of the family still remaining in Romania. Mob attacks on Jews, burning, looting and anti-Jewish legislation were routine in Romania. So blatant and systematic was Romanian anti-Semitism, that there was world-wide reaction. Indeed, President Ulysses S. Grant appointed an American Consul whose only job was the protection of the Jews of Romania.

The Congress of Berlin, which officially ended the Turkish-Russian War in 1878, technically granted civil rights to the Jews of Romania, but in reality, anti-Semitism remained rampant. Jews were treated as aliens, were denied civil rights, and were excluded from most professions and many businesses. In 1893 the Jews were expelled from the public schools. We do not have any information about the education of the children of Eliezer and Yehudis in Romania, but in the pages that follow you will see that Moishe's children went to public school in the early 1900's.

Many important Jews and other liberals who fought for emancipation were expelled from the country, and beginning in 1910 there were specific anti-Semitic political parties. Conditions were so onerous, including rioting against Jews, that in 1900 a mass emigration of Jews began, with thousands traveling on foot as far as Hamburg and from there to the U.S., Canada and Great Britain. From 1900 to 1914, about 70,000 Jews left; this was about 1/5th of the Romanian Jewish population.

In 1907, the so-called "Peasants' Revolt," which began as a Pogrom against the Jews, resulted in the pillaging and destruction of many villages and cities of Moldavia. Many historians say that it resulted in the almost complete uprooting and expulsion of Jews from some counties of Moldavia, including Iasi, where no Jews are said to have remained except veterans of the 1877 war. This is obviously an exaggeration, or inaccurate reporting, since we know that Moishe, the oldest son of Eliezer, and his family, remained in Rudacaneni; and Moishe's family tell about other Jews, and synagogues, etc. - sometimes almost glowingly. [The new Holocaust Museum in Washington, D. C., shows that the Jewish populations of both Iasi and Rudacaneni were wiped out in WW2.]

Nevertheless, Simon (the youngest son of Eliezer) tells us that this Pogrom in 1907 convinced Eliezer and Yehudis to leave Romania. And within months the entire family that still remained was on its way (except for Moishe and his family who stayed behind for reasons we're not sure about). Subsequently, of course, Balkan turmoil followed by WWI intervened, and Moishe probably could not have left even had he so wanted.)

After much negotiating with both sides, Romania entered WWI in 1916 on the side of the "Entente," England, France and Russia. Bulgaria, a member of the Central Powers, invaded Romania from the South, overran the southern part of the country, and caused the government to flee from Bucharest to Iasi. Romania exited the war in 1917 after its ally, Russia, withdrew following the Bolshevik revolution.

Saul (son of Eliezer), and a part of the family who left Romania in 1907, talks about terrible anti-Semitism. Nat Joseph (son-in-law of Leon) remembers terrible attacks against the Jews after WWI by the Russians around Iasi. Mildred (daughter of Moishe) talks about warnings to her brothers, also after WWI. But, strangely, neither Anna nor Ben, both the children of Moishe, who left Romania in 1920 at the ages of 16 and 19 respectively, mentions anti-Semitism. In fact, Ben specifically says that he does not recall any. The only allusions of either of them to any kind of outside political events is Anna's statement that her parents came to America because her mother was so concerned that Irving and Ben would have to serve three years in the Army; and Irving's statement to his daughter Toby that his father Moishe bribed officials in order to keep Ben and Irving out of the Army. [It was the case that although Jews had few civil rights, they did have an obligation to serve in the Army, and, of course, to pay taxes.]

Based on conversations with Moishe's children, it seems that not only was life comfortable in Rudacaneni, but Moishe was a man of some importance. The family may thus have been insulated from anti-Semitism, to a certain degree. This may partly explain why Moishe and his family remained in Romania 13 years longer than the rest of the family.

[For additional information about the historical background which affected the Milbergs, see Appendix A.]

ELIEZER (1856-1912) and YEHUDIS (1852-1913)

SIMON (born in 1894, speaking in 1978): Life in Rudacaneni had been pretty good. We were what you would call "monied." We lived in a beautiful house, nicer than anything we ever lived in even here in the U. S. My father (Eliezer) had three bakeries and a wholesale flour mill. To give you an idea, my father used to go to Vienna every year or so to buy English socks, shirts, ties, materials for suits for my older brothers. They were the best dressed boys in Rudacaneni.

ELIEZER/ELI (son of Sarah): My mother told me that on the days her brothers were married in the United States, her parents had a big party in their yard. The yard was strung with lanterns, "like a *Yerid*," (a fair), with a band, music, dancing, and a dance floor.

ANNA (daughter of Moishe): Whenever someone got married in America, we had a big party in Romania.

IRVING (son of Saul): My father told me that his father, Eliezer, owned land. My father, at the age of 14, would be sent out to collect rents.

[It seems that Eliezer was either one of the few Jewish landowners in Romania, or a manager for a non-Jew. Or, he may have leased land from a non-Jew. However, Irving is sure his father said "owned."]

SIMON: My father decided to come to this country as the result of the Pogrom which occurred around Pesach time of 1907. Approximately 6000 civilian rioters attacked a town about 20 miles away from Rudacaneni. There were 1500 to 3000 families in Rudacaneni, Jews and non-Jews, and we were all threatened. Our mayor tried to make an agreement with the rioters but was not able to do so, and had to call in the soldiers to protect us. We actually had 6 soldiers living in our house for 6 weeks to protect us. They never ate so well. They had gefilte fish and capons. Not chickens. We were monied people. They had capons. But my father decided that we'd better get out, so he went to Iasi and bought tickets for all of us. At the same time he wrote to my brothers in the U. S., Benny, Louie, and Sam, and told them that we were leaving.

My father sold everything and we left. He left the bakeries and the mill with my oldest brother, Moishe, who remained in Romania with his family. The rest of us left: my parents, myself, my unmarried sisters Lena and Sarah, my brothers Joe and Sol, and my married sister Suzy, her husband Moishe (Wolfson), their 4 1/2 year old son, William, and their 2 1/2 year old daughter, Fay.

My brothers Benny, Louie, and Sam had left Romania earlier in order to avoid the draft. I think that if they had stayed, they would have had to serve for 5 years, starting at age 21. [Louie and Sam did not serve; we believe Benny did. This is commented on frequently in the pages which follow.]

JUDITH (daughter of Lena): My father had a younger brother who recently died. In talking to him, he told me about the Milberg family bakeries in Rudacaneni.

ELI (son of Sarah): My mother told me that Yehudis had a prayer group in her kitchen for women, on Shabbos and holidays, and that she interpreted the prayers and Bible readings in Yiddish. She had a Bible Reader in Yiddish. After her death, Sarah had the Reader and gave it to her mother-in-law, Chana Fischler Krumbein, when she, Sarah, was married in 1917. Her mother-in-law used it until her death in 1939.

FAY (daughter of Suzy): We lived on the same floor as my grandparents on Broome Street. My grandparents had the front apartment, and we lived in the rear apartment. There was a window separating the apartments. If I stood on the sofa and looked through the window, I could see my grandfather. He was a lovely man. He did not work. He went to synagogue morning and evening. He had a full red beard.

I was very close with my grandmother (Yehudis). My grandparents took me to the mountains with them for a month in the summer, when my parents went to the sea shore. Thus I spent weeks with them every summer. [Fay was 7 and 8 when her grandparents died.]

MAURICE (son of Joe): I recall hearing that Eliezer was called *Roita* because he was a red head, with a red beard.

SYLVIA (daughter of Louie): All of my brothers and sisters have at least one red headed child.

BEN (son of Moishe): Eliezer wore a beard, but everyone else was clean shaven, except perhaps for a mustache. We were not at all like the present day Chasidim.

[Except for the few comments above, we do not have much information about Eliezer and Yehudis from the time they arrived in this country in 1907, until they died in 1912 and 1913. Their Death Certificates state that when Eliezer died in 1912, they lived at 249 Broome Street, Manhattan. When Yehudis died in 1913 she lived at 106 Keap Street, Brooklyn. **JUDITH SEGAL (daughter of Sarah)** tells us that after they died, their unmarried children went to live with Louis and Ida. **IRVING** says that Saul, his father, told him that Eliezer died at Montifiore Hospital, which then was a chronic disease hospital. **FAY (daughter of Susan)** tells us about the apartment on Broome Street.]

[The following remarks concern the origin of the name "Milberg".]

ANNA (daughter of Moishe): I remember conversations when my father was asked about the name "Milberg," which is not a Romanian name. My impression is that he said that the family had come from Russia and that the name was changed.

REA (daughter of Moishe): The family had come from Russia to escape the draft. The name had been "Schneerson" and had been changed to escape detection. [We are not sure about the spelling of "Schneerson" which we have used here.]

MILDRED (daughter of Moishe): The family came from Russia and changed the name from Schneerson.

MADELINE (Sam's daughter-in-law): Sam definitely told me that the family name had been changed from Schneerson, or Schneer.

ELI (son of Sarah): My mother told me several times, that Yehudis' mother lived in Russia. Yehudis went to Russia where her mother was midwife at her births. Also, her

mother came to stay with her, and Yehudis was midwife with her mother, presumably with younger children.

[Rudacaneni is directly across the Prut River from Russia.]

IRVING (son of Saul): My father mentioned several times that Eliezer had a brother living in Philadelphia, whose last name was Schneer. [Perhaps he was a brother-in-law. According to Eliezer's Death Certificate, his mother's maiden name was Schneer. But note that Irving is quite clear that Saul said "brother," not "brother-in-law." See Note 3 in Appendix B.]

AARON (son of Sarah): There was a cousin from Montreal by the name of Schneerer. They used to come down to visit us once in a while, and have Shabbos lunch with us. He had a big body shop in Montreal. His real name was Schneer Schneerer. But this was difficult for the workers in his body shop, so he called himself George Schneerer.

ELI (son of Sarah): I remember a cousin who said that the name (Schneer Schneerer) was difficult for the immigration people, and that they changed his name to George. I recall that one morning we woke up to find George on our doorstep. He had arrived in the middle of the night, and had not wanted to wake us. He spoke French, which I helped to translate.

AARON: (son of Sarah): I also have a theory about where the name Milberg came from. I am guessing that it was Eliezer who changed the name from Schneer or Schneerer. When he needed a new name he took his wife's name, which was Lemberg, and simply reversed the first three letters; thus Milberg.

ELI (son of Sarah): My mother Sarah specifically said that the names Lemberg and Milberg were somehow connected.

LENORE (grand-daughter of Benny): My dad (Si) said that he was told that the family changed the name. I thought he said that the name had been Rabinowitz, or something like that.

LARKY (son of Louie): I think that I heard that the name was changed from Rudelhein, or something like that.

[Significant is the inscription on Eliezer's tombstone, which describes him as *Eliezer-ben-Schneer*. Since his father's first name was Schneer, it is probable that his grandfather, or great-grandfather was also named Schneer, and that when Jews were required to take last names around 1800, Schneer became Schneer-son, a common practice. Based on the tombstone, (see Appendix C), and the testimony directly below, there seems little doubt that the original family name was Schneer or some variation thereof. However, the story gets muddled by some of the statements on Eliezer's Death Certificate; see Note 5 of Appendix B.]

A name change probably took place around 1873. Sarah told Eli that Yehudis went back to Russia for help with the births of her children. Thus, it was Eliezer and Yehudis, and not any earlier generation, who came over the Prut to Romania. Yehudis' parents were still in Russia when Yehudis gave birth, in 1875 to Moishe, in 1877 to Benny, etc. Yehudis and Eliezer almost certainly lived with their respective parents, till their marriage. They were probably married a year or two before the birth of their first child, Moishe, in 1875. If we assume that they were married in 1873, Eliezer would have been 17, a good time to leave Russia if they drafted 18 year olds. A good time too, to change your name, using a variation of your wife's name, as Aaron suggests.

On the other hand: Rudacaneni and Yehudis' home in Russia were right across the river from one another. Maybe there was an arranged marriage between her and this nice boy from just across the river in Rudacaneni. And Eliezer's death certificate, does say, for what it is worth, that his father was from Romania. So there we are: Yehudis was from Russia, but maybe Eliezer was not, and Eliezer changed his name to avoid the Romanian draft. Or his name was already "Milberg," and someone else changed it at some other time. Take your choice.]

[From this point on, except for **Simon and Sadie**, the presentation is in the order of the ages of the children of Eliezer and Yehudis as shown on the chart on page 3, that is, from Moishe the oldest, to Lena the youngest. **Simon and Sadie** are presented first because of the material from Simon which tells us about the trip to America. We also note that Moishe, with his nine children, almost all of whom contributed to this story, comprise, with their descendants, more than 1/3 of the total number of the descendants of Eliezer and Yehudis. Furthermore, since they remained in Romania longer, they of course have more memories of Romania.]

SIMON (1894-1985) AND SADIE (1904-1992)

SIMON: My brothers knew that we were leaving Romania and they made arrangements with **Thomas Cook** to greet us at every stop. At every stop there was someone from **Thomas Cook** shouting "Milberg Family," and they escorted us to the local hotel where we usually stayed for a couple of days. We stayed in Paris for 3 days. It was "easy sailing." My father paid for all of the tickets, but my brothers paid for all these other things.

My brothers used to import a lot of lace for the garments they manufactured. They therefore had many contacts with importers. They were therefore able to come out into the harbor in a small boat and greet us before we actually landed. They had also arranged for a very nice apartment on the East Side in Manhattan. Our arrival in 1907 coincided with the economic panic here in the United States, and a time of severe unemployment. [See Larky's comments on page 43.]

I was about 13 when we arrived (1907) and I spoke absolutely no English, but I went to the Educational Alliance and learned. There were about 50 kids in my class. I also had an excellent Jewish education here. I was the youngest and my father hired a special tutor, a Rabbi, for me. We were Orthodox and all my brothers were Orthodox. None of my brothers worked on Saturday. I believe in God, and I believe that the Orthodox religion is broad.

I enlisted in the Army in WWI. I was in the service for 2 years and 4 months, stationed in Philadelphia. My first business was jobbing. In 1921 came my great success. I saw a three column headline in **The New York Times** that the Japanese silk market had crashed. The price of silk went from \$5.00 a yard to 75 cents, in one day. We were in business. I went to my partner Leon Moscovitz, the greatest salesman who ever lived, and told him we'll make silk camisoles; we'll call it "Hold Me Tight" and we'll be able to make them to sell for \$1.00. Leon went to work, I went to work and the orders rolled in. Leon had been drawing \$125 a week and I had been drawing \$5.00 plus \$5.00 for utilities. Inside of 3 months we were each drawing \$500 a week. Six months after that we were making \$1000 each. From the camisoles we switched to pantalettes, also silk. We did not actually manufacture. We bought the goods and sub-contracted it out. I didn't care if the other guy made a profit as long as we made ours. Of course the sub-contractors were thieves. They stole 2 yards out of every 20. But still we made "big money." There was a time we

bought one number, a night gown for \$5.00 [a dozen?], and sold it for \$5.25. If we got paid fast enough, we made a lot of money without manufacturing. We bought these nightgowns from Sam Schnierson [a relative?] who sold out to Kohn-Hall-Marx, but died a poor man. Eventually, however, we had to go into manufacturing because our margins were so slim.

EDMUND (born 1924): My father never told us anything about Romania. It was probably his way of protecting us. However he did love to sing Romanian songs.

ROBERT (born 1929): My father talked about Romania all the time. He liked to say that the Romanians were the greatest horse thieves.

SIMON: I met Sadie at 520 Broadway, which is where our business was. Sadie was the cashier at her father's place downstairs, called the Spring Street Cafeteria. I did not eat there. I ate at a swank place. One day I sent Sadie a fancy lunch on a silver platter. By then I already had 38 nieces and nephews. I was 27. Sadie was only 17 and her mother objected. She turned out to be the best mother-in-law possible, but at the time, word was that I was a playboy and gigolo. We waited till Sadie was 18 and then we got married.

JACK (son of Suzy): I introduced Simon to Sadie. Sadie was the cashier at her father's cafeteria. She was very pretty and very pleasant. I asked her out, but she said "no." I was all of 16. So I told Simon about her. The rest you know.

I worked for Simon when I was still in public school. That's how I learned the underwear business. I went in on Saturdays to straighten out the inventory and clean up the place. At about 12:30 we locked the door, and 6 or 7 manufacturers would come in to shoot craps. Then Si would take me home. My mother (Suzy) would be heating up lunch on the stove which was on all day because of Shabbos. Si would say that something smelled great. My mother would ask him to take a taste. Before long, Si had tasted everything, and had had lunch.

JUDITH KRUMBEIN SEGAL (daughter of Sarah): Simon and Sadie were married at Sam and Mollye's. I was present. I was 5 years old.



Above: Simon with nephews



**Above right: Simon
around 1918**

**Right: Simon and Sadie
with grandchildren Marjorie and Michael
1959**



SADIE: My mother and father were Rose and Moishe Rosenthal. My mother came here at the age of 15. My father had been here. My brother Harry is 16 months older than I. My mother was divorced when I was 2 years old, and at that time I went to live with my Aunt and Uncle for 7 years until my mother married Max Hirsch. Jerry was born in 1914, and Victoria was born 16 months later. My Aunt and Uncle were wonderful, generous people who always had room for one more at the table. They were always ready to welcome a newcomer from Russia and help him get started.

My mother worked as a blouse designer at the Triangle Shirt Waist Company. My father proposed to her and asked her to stop working, which she did, two weeks before that terrible fire in which hundreds of girls were killed. Simon and I were married when I was 18. We met when I worked as a cashier at my father's (Max Hirsch) cafeteria. We actually lived in the same neighborhood in Brooklyn, but we met at the cafeteria.

Simon was a perfect gentleman. He came into the cafeteria 2 or 3 times a day for fruit until he finally got up the courage to speak to me. My mother liked Simon. She just wanted me to be sure and to think about it with care. We were married at home with only the family but that in itself was quite a number of people.

We first lived at Avenue K and East 10 Street, for about 3 or 4 years. Then we moved to East 35 Street and Kings Highway. It was beautiful farmland then. After we were married I kept kosher for Simon's family.

EDMUND: I believe that my father was the first in the family to do over \$1,000,000 a year in business. He sold to the chains for their basement operations. The product was made here but finished in Puerto Rico. He told me that his mistake was to expand during the early years of the depression.

LESTER (son of Saul): The nature of the business changed after the First World War. Until then the chains bought from distributors like Simon. Then they discovered that they could buy directly from the manufacturer.

ROBERT: In 1936, my father and Sol and Joe rented a floor in the Clark Building in Kearney, New Jersey. At that time it was one of the largest loft buildings in the country. My father made them buy a Cushman scooter to go from one end of the building to the other. I think it was the first year they made those Cushman scooters.

They used to drive to work in three separate cars. Sol was a wild man when he got behind the wheel. Every cop knew him. One day all three of them were tearing along, and a cop stopped them all. The cop goes over to Sol in the first car, and Sol says to him: "I'm Sol Milberg." Then he goes over to the second car and Joe says to the cop: "I'm Joe Milberg." Then the cop goes over to my father and the cop says to my father: "Don't tell me. You're a Milberg."

ELI (son of Sarah): One evening in the 40's, during the war, Simon, after a long absence, appeared at our door for dinner. That was when we lived at 1561-50 Street. Simon was in his entrepreneurial mode, describing a number of investments. He showed us one: wrapped in a piece of plastic were some beautiful dinner napkins, made of church linen. He said they were from a set with many places, perhaps over fifty, and a huge matching banquet cloth, at which Pope Pius XI had eaten. Simon had bought it, I think for \$1,500. He had had it laundered, planned to hold it, and then to sell it for a large profit.

ROBERT: My father loved to buy my mother things, especially jewelry. Once he went over to this jeweler he dealt with on Canal street and bought her a beautiful diamond bracelet. Then he went to Essex Street and bought schmaltz herring in cream sauce and put the bracelet in the container. When my mother emptied the container she "found" the diamond bracelet.

EDMUND: I knew Uncle Joe and Uncle Sol pretty well because we went up to New Hampshire every summer for my mother's asthma. We stayed at a boarding house or hotel not far from the house which Joe shared with Sol. Their families stayed up there all summer. Irving (Sol and Pauline's son), and Maurice (Joe and Ida's son), owned an old Ford convertible named Leo. We spent delightful summers up there.

ROBERT: My father had an old Huppmobile. It just quit one day on the way up to the White Mountains. We pushed it into a Ford dealer, and my father bought a new Mercury. I think it was the first year they made the Mercury.

IRVING (Son of Saul): I remember the day that Huppmobile quit. Simon took out a valise full of dollar bills which he proceeded to lay out on the hood of the new Mercury at the dealer's. Uncle Simon soon had a new car.

SADIE: Since 1942 we've lived in Miami Beach, where we bought the apartments 36 years ago. It's been lots of work but the results have been good. During the war we had Army and Navy boys staying here, many wonderful young people. They still send us Christmas cards, and many visit us when they come to the "Beach."

ELI (son of Sarah): My parents, Sarah and Abe, went to visit Simon and Sadie in Miami, and stayed at the **Harvard & Yale Apartments**. Ed and Bob used to knock on their door each morning, with a tray with two tall glasses of fresh-squeezed orange juice, calling out, "Room Service".

ROBERT: My father had tenants named Spector. Mr. Spector had been gassed in WWI and could not do too much. Mrs. Spector worked part-time as a bookkeeper. My father told Edmund and me that if something should happen to him, we should not raise the rent of the Sectors, except for maybe \$3.00 a month on a three year lease so they wouldn't think they were getting charity.

When my father became so sick that my mother could no longer take care of him he lived at the Hebrew Home. It turned out that Mrs. Spector was very active there as a volunteer, and carried a lot of weight at the Home. She made sure that he had a good room, and proper attention. When my mother couldn't get to the Home, Mrs. Spector fed my father. Events went full circle.

SADIE: Ed enlisted and went into the Army. He was in the hospital in France, not wounded, but suffering from battle fatigue. My greatest pride and pleasure are my sons Edmund and Robert, my 5 grandchildren and our one great grandchild. Simon and I have had a very good life.

GERTRUDE (daughter of Moishe): I lived with Simon and Sadie after my mother (Tauba) died, and my father re-married. I spent a good deal of time with Sadie, and I have very fond memories of both of them. They were very good to me.

MILDRED (daughter of Moishe): We used to receive packages of clothing from my Uncle Simon in America. My father would take the dresses and give them to various officials in town.

LESTER (son of Saul): Simon was very helpful to Myrtle and me after our first son Barry was born prematurely. Myrtle went to spend the winter in Florida with Barry. Simon found them an apartment which would take children, and he got them a car. Every week he delivered steaks "fit for a millionaire" he said. Of course, we paid for them. At the end of the winter, he bought back the car. The following winter he sold them the same car again. He was very helpful.

FAY (daughter of Suzy): I loved Aunt Sadie. She was so good to me. She was kind and soft-spoken. She took me and her other nieces to Broadway shows. She was extremely helpful in those early days when Sol and I were struggling, as so many young lawyers did then. When I had my first child, she gave me a layette with gauze diapers. She wanted to be sure that I had everything I needed.

ANNA (daughter of Moishe): I do remember that in *this* country we spoke Romanian at home and I clearly recall Uncle Simon scolding me and telling me that if I wanted to speak English, I should stop speaking Romanian at home.

MILDRED (daughter of Moishe): I heard that Simon lent Ben and Irving the money to go into business.

LARRY (son of Moishe): I remember that Uncle Simon took me for my first automobile ride. And the first day here he took me to be outfitted, at a store I later learned belonged to Sam Marcus. I had never seen so many wonderful things. Marcus later married the Aunt Ida who was the widow of Uncle Joe who died of asthma in his 40's. Ida was Pauline's sister.

EDMUND: My father was a red head. Larry (Lubin), you have a remarkable resemblance to my father.

MOISHE (1875-1943) AND TAUBA (1877-1936)

Moishe and Tauba and their children arrived in this country on August 16, 1920, aboard the **La Lorraine**, out of Le Havre, France. He was 45, she was 43, and their children ranged in age from under a year (Dorothy), to 21 years, (Irving). As we know, the rest of Moishe's family preceded them to America. [Tauba's mother was here too, but not her father, from whom her mother was divorced. He re-married and had a son named Ben-Zion Nachman who emigrated to Israel. Ben and Irving met with Ben-Zion on visits to Israel some years ago. Rea Roth, with her son and daughter-in-law, Jesse and Susan, also visited Ben-Zion about 4 years ago. If alive, he's now about 90 years old.]

BEN (born 1901): Rudacaneni was a "*stetl*" with maybe 1000 Jewish "souls," as distinguished from a "*dorf*" which would have maybe 2 or 3 Jews. [The pre WWI map which appears following the Introduction indicates a population of 500-1000 for Rudacaneni. From the information we have from several sources, it seems the population was much greater. See the section above, devoted to Simon, for his statement about the population, where he gives us the number of approximately 1500 to 3000 families.] Ben continues: The difference was important because it meant that we had schools, both State schools and schools run by the Jewish community. It happens that I went to a Gentile school. There were also some cheders. All of the business people were Jews and all of the people in agriculture were non-Jews. [Jews were not permitted to own rural land. However, see Irving's (son of Saul) remarks in the Eliezer and Yehudis section.]

I remember when we received a telegram in Romania telling us of the death of Eliezer, and were given the date, so that my father could say Kaddish. [Eliezer and Yehudis are buried in Acacia Cemetery on Liberty Avenue at 84th Street, in Queens, New York. Eliezer died in 1912, aged 56. Yehudis died in 1913, aged 61.]

REA (born 1909): It was a little *stetl*. The streets were muddy.

ANNA (born 1904): I think everyone in town was Jewish. They made a living because on Sunday everyone from the surrounding area came to town. It was like what we call a "flea market". Of course, we also did some business during the week. There was a court house

in town, a couple of lawyers, and a tremendous hospital with gorgeous grounds. Both my father and my mother were each in the hospital at one time that I can remember. My father traveled a lot to other towns and to Iasi. He often took me with him, probably because he wanted company. He went on these trips to buy flour. If I needed a pair of shoes, he took me to Iasi. We went by horse and buggy.

REA: Whenever my father came back from Iasi, he brought presents.

ANNA: As for religion, we were not ultra orthodox, like the Chasidim. As far as I can remember there were 2 or 3 shuls in town. However, if my father had a very important matter on which he wanted an opinion he went to see Rabbi Shalom Halperin, the Vaslui-er Rebbe. [See Appendix B for a copy of a letter which dates from about 25 years ago, in which the then Vaslui-er Rebbe, Jacob Joseph Halperin, living in Tel-Aviv, thanks Paul Roth for his \$100 and asks Paul to send regards to his brothers-in-law (Irving and Ben). Jacob Joseph was the grandson of Shalom Halperin, and a great grandson of David Halperin, the first Vaslui-er Rebbe. For more about the Vaslui-er Rebbe, see Note 1 in Appendix B.]

BEN: We were not overly religious. We were what you might call "modern religious." We kept kosher and we kept the Shabbos to some extent. By that I mean that we went to Shul but we did not object if others did not, or if they did not observe. There was no anti-Semitism, except maybe for an undercurrent, like here.

REA: We lived in an all-Jewish neighborhood. I do not remember any anti-Semitism. I think we spoke Yiddish at home, but I'm not too sure about that. Of course, we also spoke Romanian.

BEN: My father met Tauba through a *shadchan*. She was from another town. Previously, my father had been "engaged" to another girl, something *his* father had arranged. But my father didn't like that other girl.

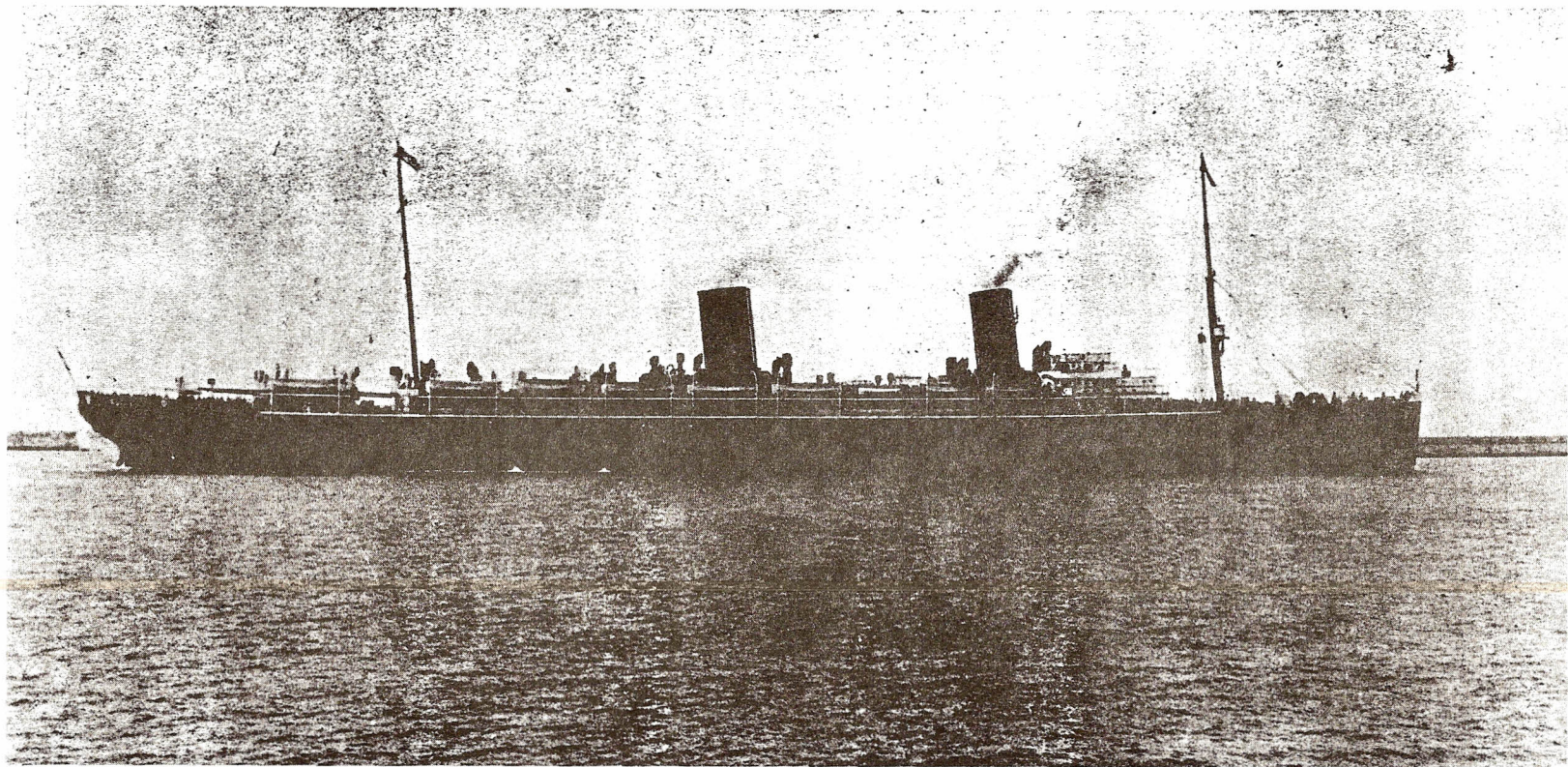
REA: My mother's family came from Austria. They spoke a different Yiddish from that of my father's family.



Taube and Moishe, with Simon
around 1935



Anna, Ben, Irving, and Mildred
in Rudacaneni, 1908



LA LORRAINE

Builder: Compagnie Generale Transatlantique,
St. Nazaire, France.

Completed: 1900.

Gross tonnage: 11372.

Dimensions: 580ft × 60ft. Depth 35ft.

Engines: Two four-cylinder, triple expansion.

Screws: Twin.

Decks: Four.

Normal speed: 20 knots. (Attained a speed of
21.80 knots on her trial runs.)

Officers and crew: 410.

Passenger accommodation: 446 first, 116
second and 552 steerage.

Maiden voyage: Le Havre—New York on
August 11, 1900.

Last voyage: New York—Le Havre on October 14,
1922.

She had 18 boilers and 190 stokers to man the stokeholds. Employed in the Le Havre—New York run year-round. She was mobilised as a transport at the outbreak of World War I in August 1914 and renamed *Lorraine II*. She was later converted to an armed merchant cruiser in April 1917 and resumed

regular sailings after the war under her original name. The *Lorraine* and her sister ship *La Savoie* were fast steamers of their day and became well known on the Atlantic Ferry. Sold for scrap at St. Nazaire, France, in December 1922.

Sister ship: *La Savoie*.

"La Lorraine
The ship on which Moishe and Taube and family arrived, 1920



Jessie Roth's Bar Mitzvah, 1947

Standing in the rear: Mel Lubin, Irving Milberg, Ralph Price, Larry Milberg, Paul Roth, Morris Lubin, Ben Gralla, Dave Isacson, Larry Lubin

Seated in the middle: Jack Beeber, Ben Milberg, Evelyn Beeber, Eve Milberg, Dorothy Price, Anna Lubin, Selma Milberg, Mrs Roth (Paul's mother), Rea Roth, Mildred Gralla, Gertrude, Irene Milberg

Seated on the floor: Toby Gralla, Sheila Milberg, Audrey Gralla, Jesssie and Sylvia Roth, Eddie Lubin.



Larry, with Gertrude and Simon
around 1924

MILDRED (born 1906): We lived in a big, new one-family corner house. The porch was built to be used as a *succah*. [The building of *succahs* was forbidden by the Romanian government sometime in the 1890's.] We had animals to supply our needs: a cow, horse, turkeys, chickens and geese. It was traditional to have goose for Chanukah.

There were 3 or 4 synagogues in town. One of them was quite beautiful. I also went to a beautiful school until the war started. After that the school was used to house internees. One of the detainees taught us French and German. My mother wanted us to learn.

ANNA: There were 3 synagogues on the street behind our house. One of them was quite lovely. It was the "new" synagogue. The women sat upstairs.

Ben and Irving and I all went to public school which met 6 days a week. We therefore went to school on Saturday, but as Jews, we were not required to carry books or do any writing. The public school went from ages 6 through 10. After that, if you could afford it, you went to the "gymnasium" in one of the larger communities, or if you were really well-off, you went to Iasi, or even to Paris to continue your education.

I also had a tutor who taught me Hebrew. Irving studied with my grandfather, my mother's father, and as a result he had an excellent Jewish background. Irving lived with my grandfather while he learned. I think Ben had a teacher who came to the home. I believe that after the war ended in Romania, Mildred was able to continue her schooling. During the war detainees were housed in the school building. They may have been Romanians, at least that is my impression.

REA: I attended Kindergarten in the public schools, but around that time [around 1916] my schooling was interrupted because the school buildings were being used to house internees. Many were Jewish, but many were not. I heard them speaking Yiddish and Romanian. Many of them were Rabbis. They were internees, much like our own Japanese internees in California during WW2. [The Romanian government probably questioned the loyalty of the Austrians or Germans near the border of Transylvania, an area that was sometimes part of Romania, and sometimes part of Austria-Hungary.] One of the internees was an artist who did pencil portraits of my grandfather and grandmother. The portraits were done from photos which my father provided the artist. My father got the photos from his brothers in America. [See Cover]. My father bought for the artist the materials which he'd told my

father he'd need. I have the portraits. My mother used to send Mildred to bring bread to the internees for Shabbat.

ANNA: I recall that many of the internees brought with them many valuable possessions such as candelabra and other silver objects. My parents hired one of them to be a tutor of German and French for me and Ben and Irving. I had five years of French. Irving lasted for one lesson, but Ben was an excellent student. I got my Jewish education from an old woman to whose house I would go.

REA: The custom was that the first child went to study Torah at the mother's father. Irving went to study with my grandfather in Podulioaiei (pronounced "Podoloy").

ANNA: I still have a printed program of a play performed by our Zionist youth group. Ben and I both had roles, as you can see. One of the other young people in the cast is Moishe Huberman who was a friend of Ben's. He lives in Haifa today, where he is a friend of Ben-Zion, assuming they are both alive. The program is printed in Romanian. The title was "On The Road." [This was in 1919, only 22 years after the First Zionist Congress of 1897 in Basel. But there were earlier Zionist movements too, prior to Theodore Herzl, notably in Romania. Two of the earliest modern settlements in Palestine were *Zichron Ya'akov* in Samaria, overlooking the Mediterranean, and *Rosh Pina*, both established by Romanian Jews in 1882. The establishment of these two communities created great excitement in Romania.]

REA: After the first World War there were Zionist groups all over Europe. We had one in town. They were usually run by outside people.

TOBY (Wolfson): My father, Irving [born 1899], told me that the reason the family came to America was because of the draft. He and Ben were about to be drafted. They had to pay off everyone in order to keep them out of the Army and to arrange to leave. They paid them off with diamonds.

MILDRED: Ben and Irving had non-Jewish friends in the local militia who warned them that things were very dangerous for the Jews, and that they ought to flee.

STEVEN WOLFSON (Irving's grandson): Poppy (Irving) told me that there was terrible oppression against various groups. I think he meant the gypsies. Poppy's father (Moishe) thought that the Jews would be next.

NAT JOSEPH (son-in-law of Louie): We came to this country right after WWI from an area near Iasi, just a stone's throw from Russia. I can tell you that conditions were terrible. I was 7 years old, and I remember. My father had served in the Army and been captured by the Germans, and was released after the War. We were quite well-to-do and lived on a large estate. But after the war, money did not mean anything. You could not buy food. There was none. I remember going hungry. My mother fed us *mamaliga* and cheese. After the war, pogroms began, by Russian mobs. The Cossacks came to Iasi. The Jews, especially the women, had to get out of the way. Those were very difficult times. My father decided we had to get out, and we did - around 1920. My parents, and my brother and I traveled here first class. We did not have to go through Ellis Island.

[This may also help to explain the departure of Moishe and his family.]

MILDRED: We used to receive packages of clothing from my Uncle Simon in America. My father would take the dresses and give them to various officials in town.

REA: We left in 1920 because the boys were old enough to go into the army. It was a very difficult move.

LARRY: I'm not sure why we did not come to the United States earlier. I think we were pretty comfortable in Romania. When we did come, Moe Davis played a part in convincing my father. Moe had a knack for getting things done. When Irene and I were "dating," Irene lost her job. I mentioned it to Moe Davis, and he told me to have Irene call Miss So and So at Sears Roebuck. Irene called the next morning, and she got a job. Moe had called in advance and set it up.

My father and Moe had great times together, laughing and telling stories. Moe was a very funny guy. I don't think he himself knew how funny he was.

AARON (son of Sarah Krumbein): Moishe did not come to America with his parents and brothers and sisters, etc., because he had a dispute with his father Eliezer in which he

testified against him in a Court case. So he either could not or would not come to the U. S. as long as his father was alive. [No one else mentions this.]

A *landsman* by the name of Moe Davis who was in the paper and twine business here in the United States, played a role in getting Moishe to come to this country. Moe knew the family but we knew him especially well because he lived in Lido Beach and we had a summer place in Long Beach and so were neighbors. He used to drive my father Abe and me into the City in the morning. He was such a lousy driver that after a while I refused to go with him any more, although my father continued, because he did not drive a car and did not appreciate how bad a driver Moe was.

Anyway, after WWI, Moe decided to go back to Romania to visit his mother who had remained there. Moishe had been alerted and arranged to meet Moe at the hotel in Iasi, pronounced "Yosh". Moe arrived exhausted and dropped down on the bed into a deep sleep, which is how Moishe found him. Moishe proceeded to lie down on the same bed to wait for Moe to wake up. He too fell asleep and that's how Moe met Moishe in Iasi. When the two of them got down to the lobby there was a cablegram waiting for Moe, signed by all of the brothers, saying that they would never forgive him if he did not bring back "our brother and his entire family."

[Note: It seems that if there had been a break with Eliezer, it did not extend to the brothers. Note also the "break" referred to by Irving (son of Saul, see page 37) between Moishe and Benny relating to Army service. Maybe there is a connection, or a confusion between these stories. We don't know.]

BEN: Our branch of the family was the only group left in Rudacaneni, since the rest of the family had come to America maybe 10 years earlier. [It was 1907, 13 years earlier]. After my grandfather died, they wanted my dad to come to America because he was the oldest. But he had a pretty good business and he didn't want to leave Romania. I even think he invested in crop futures.

FAY (daughter of Suzy): When my grandparents Eliezer and Yehudis came to this country, Moishe got the bakery business. I heard that Tauba did not want to come to America [in 1907], when we came.

LARRY (born 1912): My father never wanted to come to this country. He later said that he wanted to be buried in Romania. One of the things he used to say was that America was

a good place to go to the bathroom, but not a good place to eat. I think he meant by that that the mechanical things in America were better, but that quality of life was better in Romania.

REA: In Romania, my father used to take a leisurely walk around town every morning, greeting people.

GERTRUDE (born 1918): I remember being told that my father was an "important" man in Romania.

STEVEN WOLFSON (Irving's grandson): Poppy (Irving) told me that the family lived very well in Romania. He said that they were in charge of food distribution after WWI, for that entire part of the country.

ANNA: A short time after we arrived, when we were living on 17th Avenue, the Romanian minister, a man by the name of Lupu, visited my father. He took my father and his brothers in his big car, and they went to eat at Grunberg's on the Lower East Side. I also recall that, out of respect for my father, he put on a hat when he came into the house. [There is another reference to Dr. Lupu by Aaron in the section on Sarah and Abe Krumbein.]

DOROTHY (born 1919): Although I was only a child, I definitely remember that we were visited by the Romanian Minister. I also remember hearing that during WWI my father was involved with the government in food distribution, and that he used to go to Bucharest, by wagon, for food.

IRENE (Larry's wife): When I first came into the family my father-in-law, Moishe, bragged to me about his connections in Romania. He told me that he and Tauba had been part of the coronation procession when King Carol was crowned. He told me he was going back to Romania to die.

GERTRUDE: Around 1932, when I was about 13 or 14, my father received an invitation to a reception for the Queen of Romania, to be held at the Waldorf Astoria. My mother did not want him to go but he took me and we went. We got to the Waldorf and, at the last minute, my father decided not to go in.

TOBY: I used to kid my father [Irving] about the large sums of cash he always carried with him. He told me that he'd been carrying cash since he was eight years old, that he had always had money, that he and Ben always worked for their father. In addition to working in the bakery and the grocery store, my father and Ben had a bottling business. They bottled seltzer in those spritz bottles which you still see around sometimes.

ANNA: Sure I remember the bottling business. Irving and Ben worked on a table in the back. The bottles had to be held upside down when they were filled.

[There is more information of the possible connection between Moishe and the Romania royal family in APPENDIX A. This would have happened in 1912 when Bulgaria invaded Romania, and the Royal family fled to the Iasi/Rudacaneni area.]

BEN: It's true that my father's brothers did send two emissaries to convince him to leave, but he refused. And everybody who came back after visiting America told us that everyone in the family was a millionaire. Then, after WWI, they sent this fellow named Davis, who told my father that, as the oldest and the head of the family, he could have anything he wanted in America. That did it. We left. We came under our own power. By that I mean that we had enough money to get here.

ANNA: My mother (Tauba) was terribly worried about Ben and Irving going into the Army. She spoke to my father often about this. That's the main reason we came to this country in 1920.

AARON (son of Sarah): When my mother wanted to get married in 1917, she wrote to Moishe to ask permission because he was the oldest and therefore the head of the family. Moishe wrote back and said that anyone she chose would be OK.

ANNA: Whenever someone got married in America we had a big party in Romania.

BEN: When we left Romania we told everyone we were going for a visit. My father sold the house and sold the business but told everyone we were going for a visit.

ANNA: When we left Romania we told everyone we were going for a visit. No one would believe that we were really leaving because we were pretty comfortable. We had a bakery and a store and our own house. We all worked in the store but my father did not really work. He had people working for him.

The trip began by train to Bucharest, then to Trieste, and from there to Le Havre, where we boarded the ship to America. When we arrived at Le Havre there was a wait before we could board. The names of the ships were the *Rochanbaux* and *La Lorraine*. One was the ship we took, and one was the ship we could not get on, but I'm not sure which was which.

Arrangements had been made for us to stay with a family in Le Havre. We had to board on Saturday, and my poor mother carried Dorothy, who was an infant, the entire way, from where we stayed, to the ship. I don't remember too much about the ship itself. I do not recall that the trip was either luxurious or physically difficult. If there was such a thing as a kind of middle way, or general class, I imagine that's how we traveled. I personally was miserable and cried myself to sleep night after night. I hadn't wanted to leave Romania and all my friends and the life I knew. Remember, I was 16.

DOROTHY: I heard that we came to Le Havre on the Orient Express.

MILDRED: We came over on *La Lorraine*, but I don't remember anything about the trip itself.

LARRY: The only thing I remember about the trip is the Alps. And I remember taking Gertrude for a walk and that she lost a white glove. We retraced our steps and to my great relief we found the glove stuck up on a picket fence.

BEN: We had booked passage, of course, and had reservations, but when we got to Le Havre, we found that we could not get on the ship. It was right after WWI and things were very difficult. Getting passage to America was difficult. But fortunately, we had money, and we took care of whoever had to be taken care of, and we got on the ship. They gave us what was probably the worst space in Second Class, but it wasn't that terrible. It wasn't

steerage. I got along because although I did not speak English, I spoke French. I was not too happy about leaving Romania and my friends. I was 18. [Soon to be 19.]

REA: We were in Second Class but I remember sneaking into First Class.

DOROTHY: Aunt Pauline told me that I had contracted dysentery on the ship and that what saved my life was an old fashioned remedy. They rubbed herring on my tongue, which made me thirsty, and caused me to drink water and eat.

ANNA: The ship arrived in New York on either a Saturday or a Sunday, so we could not disembark that day of arrival. Uncle Benny couldn't wait to see us, so he hired a small boat and came out to wave at us. The following day or the day after we got off at Ellis Island. Everyone went through Ellis Island. You had to be processed and examined. I remember the huge room there. I remember the examination. I still have a slight nick behind my ear as a result of the examination.

[In Appendix C you will see a photostat of the Immigration records showing the arrival of this group of Milbergs on *La Lorraine* on August 16, 1920. There is a column on the Passenger List which asks for your destination here in the United States. Moishe gave the name "Milberg" at 512 Broadway. This was Joe and Saul's place of business.]

LARRY: We got off the boat onto some sort of a "tender". I don't remember going to Ellis Island.

MILDRED: We got off the boat in minutes. There were 2 women there to assist us. Someone had made the arrangements.

REA: We never went to Ellis Island.

BEN: We did not go through Ellis Island. We got off somewhere in the fifties.

[We have been told that 1st and 2nd class passengers did not go to Ellis Island, that they were examined and processed on the ship.]

ANNA: When we got ashore, Uncle Benny was waiting with his chauffeur and car. There were others waiting for us. We were a large family. [According to Mildred, as you will see below, the other car was driven by Mollye, the wife of Sam (1920!)]. The brothers had an apartment waiting for us, furniture and all, diagonally across the street from where I now live in Brooklyn. It was on 47 Street, a few houses in from 16th Avenue. There was no heat and no electricity. But there was a large cooking oven and that provided heat. There were gas fixtures on the wall that provided light. It wasn't too long before we moved to 4510 - 17th Avenue, where we rented the house. We did not own it.

DOROTHY (daughter of Uncle Louie): The day that Moishe and Tauba arrived they came over to our house and we all sat around on the porch, and talked.

LARKY (son of Louie): I remember when Moishe and Tauba came to this country. They all came over to our house.

REA: When we arrived we were distributed to various families. Pauline was wonderful. [This may have been only for a few days.]

LARRY: I spent my first night here at Pauline's.

BEN: Everyone who came to America got a job with the Milbergs.

ANNA: I went to work for Uncle Benny and Uncle Louie at **Union Star**, as an "Examiner." I checked every garment before it was shipped, and cut off the loose ends with a little scissors. You can still see the place on my finger where the scissors rubbed all day. My mother hated that I had to work, but I brought home \$10 a week. Everybody contributed to the household.

After a while, we opened the store in Brooklyn, on 3rd Avenue and 52nd Street. It was a big store and we all worked. I dealt with the customers because I spoke English so well. I had gone to night school to study English. Nobody would believe that I had just come to this country. They thought I had come before my father.

Ben and Irving went to work for Uncle Joe and Uncle Sol, "**J & S Milberg**". But they saved their money and soon went into business for themselves. I don't think anyone helped them.

BEN: My father wanted this big department store on 3rd Avenue, but the brothers didn't want to get it for him. So he said, you fellows told me that I'm the head of the family, that I can have anything I want. I want the store. So they put up the money and got him the store. They "lent" him the money. You know how those loans were. [Ben is suggesting that these so-called "loans" were not repaid.]

JUDITH (Sarah's daughter): Our father Abe, also lent money to Moishe for the store.

LENNY (grandson of Moishe): When my father Ben, and Irving, went into business, the very first order they got was a large one from one of **J & S's** best customers. Joe and Saul tried to undo the order, but couldn't, and in the end, wished my father and Irving well in their new business.

LARRY: They were friendly competitors. Once they ran into each other out of town at **G. C. Murphy Co.** They asked each other where they were going next. One said St. Louis, and one said Chicago. When the train stopped at Chicago, they both got off.

REA: My father was an independent guy. He had had his own apartment in Romania before he was married. He knew how to cook and take care of himself.

GERTRUDE: The store was a major problem. It was large, and it was open long hours; it required that many in the family work, even on Saturday, when my father did not work (until Shabbos ended). It was not a good situation.

ANNA: After a while, he sold the store and went into **Criterion Thread**. He did quite well there.

LESTER (son of Saul): In all the years we were in business I cannot recall that we ever bought thread from anyone except **Criterion Thread**.

LARRY: I don't remember too much from my first years here, say from age seven when we got here, to eleven or twelve, and I've often wondered why. I think it was because I did not speak the language and had no friends.

Aunt Sarah took me to school to register me, at PS 192. When I got into trouble in school and the principal asked to see my mother, Aunt Pauline would come and everything would be OK. Uncle Benny's chauffeur used to take me to school and pick me up. But I did not like school. I wanted to work.

I think that I started to work part-time when I was twelve and full time for **Milberg and Milberg** (Ben and Irving) when I was fourteen. This was in 1927 when Ben and Irving were in business on Mott Street. Three years later, they expanded and moved to 599 Broadway.

One afternoon the union stink-bombed the plant. Fifty or sixty of the girls fainted. The Union racketeers loaded about ten or twelve of the girls into a truck, took them to the Union Hall, and signed them up. David Dubinsky told Ben and Irving that they were being unionized; that they were being singled out as an example. He showed them the list of those who had signed up, and gave them the opportunity to refuse to take back anyone they did not want. Ben and Irving thus eliminated some of the trouble-makers.

A couple of years later, the Union contract was expiring at the same time as the lease at 599 Broadway. Ben and Irving met with Dubinsky and told him they could not continue with the increased rent, and the increase the Union was demanding. They asked for some consideration from the Union. Dubinsky told them that if they didn't like it, they should go elsewhere. Not trusting the Union, Ben and Irving hired some trucks, and over the weekend moved the inventory and the machinery to a plant in New Holland, Pennsylvania. Irving moved his family to Lancaster.

I also worked in our store on Third Avenue, Brooklyn. We were open till 10:00 Saturday night. I also helped around the house. That's the house on 17th Avenue between 46th and 45th Streets. There were a lot of us. We all helped. My job was to keep the basement clean.

My father helped too. He was the first one up in the morning, usually around 5 or 5:30. He said his prayers, and then he made breakfast for the entire family. That included hot cereal every morning, except of course Saturday, when we had cold cereal. He set the table. My mother did not get up till around 8. My father went to the lower East Side every Thursday morning to shop for the week for the entire family. That saved money. I would help my mother with local shopping.

DOROTHY: As I recall, our house was very well organized.

LARRY: My father was very patient with the kids. A good guy. He strongly believed in helping people and was active in the loan society which helped people get started. He was also very busy around Pesach giving away Matzo and wine.

DOROTHY: I remember a very pleasant life on 17th Avenue. It was wonderful, terrific. We had neighbors who were very nice to us. One of them would put earphones on me so that I could listen to the radio. My father seemed to be happy here. He liked the thread business. One of the things he liked about it, was that the business was conducted in English. At one time, he was involved in some sort of a law case down South, concerning the business. He *davened* on the train if he had to, putting on his *tallis* and *tefillin*.

GERTRUDE: I don't think my father was happy here. I think that the reason was - that he never achieved the status here that he had in Romania. He was also unhappy that almost all of his brothers and sisters had abandoned their orthodox or traditional Jewish ways. Even most of his own children had become "Americanized."

GERTRUDE: We all got dressed every day for dinner, when Papa came home.

REA: My mother was very educated and very smart. After we got here she would stay up every night reading the newspaper in English. By the time she died, she had taught herself to read and write English very well. My father made breakfast because my mother had stayed up so late learning English.

GERTRUDE: My mother introduced me to opera. She had a recording of Madame Butterfly which I loved.

DOROTHY: My mother encouraged us to speak and write English. I went to business school after I finished High School. In those days girls were not encouraged to go on with their education. If anything, they were supposed to go to work to help pay for the education of the boys, if the boys went on with their studies.

MEL (Moishe's 1st grandchild, born 1926): My Uncle Larry picked me up one day and told my mother he was taking me to the park. In fact, he took me to Floyd Bennett Field, in Brooklyn, where he took me up, with a pilot, in a sightseeing plane with an open cockpit. I

believe that it was around 1936. When Larry took me home, he reminded me to tell my mother we had gone to the park.

Larry also took me to the Giant-Dodger football game at the old Polo Grounds, the exact date of which is easy to remember. It was December 7th, 1941. Larry has told me that my cousin Lenny [Ben's son] was with us but I do not remember that. There were all kinds of ominous sounding announcements during that game, summoning members of this or that Army or Navy group. But it was not till we got into the car, after the game, and turned on the radio, that we learned that the Japanese had attacked Pearl Harbor.

My grandfather (Moishe) made wine. It was quite an operation. There was this "cool" room in the basement of the house on 52nd Street where there must have been 6 or 8 barrels of wine on two levels. There were barrels on the ground level, and another group of barrels on a rack above the first level. There was also a shelf loaded with gallon jugs of wine. I helped, occasionally, with the squeezing of the grapes in the wine press, and I also remember helping him take some jugs over to "Rabbi Kaplan's shul" (on the corner of 53rd street and 16th Avenue) before Passover, to be given to people who couldn't afford their own.

ANNA: Around 1937 or 1938, after my father had married Katy, he donated a *Safer Torah* to a synagogue in Roosevelt, Long Island. It was a new community at that time, Katy's daughter lived there, and they did not have their own *Torah*.

REA: My father bottled the wine in jugs, and he saved a few bottles from each year. Then on special occasions, like a *bar mitzvah*, he would bring out the wine that he had bottled the year that the *bar mitzvah* boy was born. [We have a copy of a doctor's prescription for Moishe, dated July 27, 1933, prescribing **Old Forester**. Moishe's brewing of wine may have been for other than ritual purposes. The final ratification of the repeal of Prohibition was on December 5, 1933. See Appendix C.]

DOROTHY: Orthodox people would come to the door before the holidays, asking for wine, which my father would give them. The day before *Yom Kippur*, all of my father's brothers and sisters, nieces and nephews would come over to the house to wish him well. As the oldest he got a tremendous amount of respect. I must say that when his brothers were kidding around with him, they would call him a horse thief.

At one time they made a party for him at a Romanian restaurant downtown which was not kosher. I believe that this was the cause of a rift between him and Uncle Benny, although later they were very close.

MEL (Anna's son): I also remember standing with my grandfather in the backyard of the house on 52 Street, as he talked with the carpenter about putting up a *succah*. The carpenter was an old friend of his, and I could sense an affection between them. (I believe I heard that Moishe helped him get started by lending him the money for the equipment and tools he needed.) I think that was the first "modern" *succah* I ever saw. It was made up of separate fitted and framed plywood sections which hooked together. It was a revolutionary departure from the more traditional *succah* made up of old doors. "Papa" was also the first one I knew who had an electric razor. Tauba and Moishe were also the first I knew to own a modern streamlined Sunbeam electric toaster. I saw one not long ago at the Cooper-Hewitt in an exhibition of great industrial designs of the 20th century.

ELI (son of Sarah): My father Abe liked Moishe because Moishe was observant. However, he noted that Moishe often tooted his own horn (as did my father) and paraphrased Moishe as often speaking of an imposing Trinity: "Ich, Me, I." He said that in the early days of radio, Moishe made up a ditty about Alka-Seltzer:

" *Alka-Seltzer is sehr git* (good)

Is git fur die microben (microbes)

Is git fur die blut (blood)"

MEL (Anna's son): I think it was the summer I was 15, 1941, that I worked for my grandfather at **Criterion Thread**. I was order picker, packer, errand boy, delivery boy, phone answerer, for which I was overpaid, earning \$12.00 a week. This was terrific, because my friends, those who could find work, were getting \$10.00.

One of my jobs was to make the bank deposits every day. One day, Papa, as we called him gave me a thousand dollar bill to deposit. He did it to give me a thrill and it sure was a thrill. I was terrified as I walked from 621 Broadway, where Criterion Thread was located, down to the Chemical Bank, a couple of blocks south. I was sure that everyone could tell I had all that money and I made a great effort to look inconspicuous. On second thought, maybe I was younger than 15. My overall impression was that he was a nice,

gentle, good guy. I can tell you that the lower right hand drawer of his wooden desk was full of receipts for *tzedakah*. He did not seem to turn anyone away.

He sometimes would take me down to Coney Island on Sunday morning. There were covered piers that extended out over the water and which had benches on them. We would sit out there and relax, and my picture of him is of a relaxed fellow with a goatee, reading the paper. It was very pleasant out there.

EDMUND (son of Simon): Uncle Moishe was looked up to as the oldest. When I was about 8 or 9 or 10 or 11 years old he discovered that my parents had never had a *Pidyon ha-Ben* for me. Moishe insisted they have one. So they did, at Moishe and Tauba's house.

LARRY: Louie, Benny and Saul always visited my father on Sunday morning.

EDMUND (son of Simon): My father used to call Uncle Moishe "The Baron" because he was such a dapper dresser, with his cane, his Van Dyke, his hat. Always well dressed. Quite impressive. As a matter of fact, all of the brothers were well dressed.

ROBERT (son of Simon): Moishe was very good looking, very dapper. He would come to our house on Sunday.

LESTER (son of Saul): Uncle Moishe had a twinkle in his eyes and was a kibbitzer.

MEL (grandson of Moishe): There was a long period of time when I went to synagogue with him, starting when I was quite small, perhaps four or five. My father (also Morris) worked on Saturdays in those days (around 1930). But before he went to work, he would walk with me to the corner of 52nd Street and 14th Avenue and just leave me there standing up against a brick pillar on the corner. My grandfather would soon come along and take me with him to the Sephardic Synagogue on 45 Street and 14th.

After services, we'd go back to my grandparents' house, where, it seems to me, the family convened every Saturday. I'm referring to Mildred and Rea, plus whoever still lived at home with my grandparents. This went on for years, I think. Perhaps as a result, I became quite close to Simon, my grandfather's youngest son, who was only about 5 years older than I. He was my mother's youngest brother, born in the United States in 1921.

Simon would take me with him, those Saturday afternoons, to visit with his friends on the block; his friends called him "Turkey" or "Red," because of the color of his hair.

The big event of Saturday was listening to the college football games on the radio. Simon and his friends were pretty observant Jews, so putting on the radio was a bit of a problem. The problem was solved by carefully positioning me against the side of the console radio so that my shoulder was just under the toggle switch. Then I was instructed to stand on my toes. Suddenly the radio was on. Well, accidents happen.

Simon died in 1940, at the age of 18, of cancer. He had been sick for a number of years. My mother (and others) took him for radiation treatments and I recall that either Ben or Irving, or maybe both, took him to Florida in the hope that maybe the milder climate would help him. I was terribly shocked when he died even though I knew that he was very sick. I hadn't understood that the illness was going to kill him.

ELI (son of Sarah): I recall sitting at the back of someone's car at Simon's funeral, and Uncle Moishe coming out of his house and turning to lock his door before joining us. It was a hard day. I remember how beautiful Simon was.

LARRY: My father wanted Simon to become a Rabbi. He received an education that no one else in the family got. He went to *Yeshiva Eitz Chaim* on 13th Avenue and later to Yeshiva High School on the Lower East Side. Of course, by that time, my father was more comfortably off. Simon, as the youngest, and the only one born in this country, benefited.

IRENE (Larry's wife): Larry and I delayed being married, because Larry did not want to leave Simon alone. Tauba had died a few years earlier, and Moishe had remarried.

The family was wonderful to me. There was a closeness and camaraderie I had never seen before. I was treated well by everyone (except for Abe Krumbein who could be sarcastic). My father-in-law would tell me stories about his wonderful Tauba. This was after he had already been remarried to Katy.

If ever I needed help or advice, I would call Anna. Rea would drive her over and they would help. Anna was like a second mother to me. Even after our four children had been born, Anna invited us over for the *Seders*.

BENNY (1877-1950) AND YETTA (1880-1970)

LARKY (son of Louie): My father, Louie (Leon) (Leib), came to this country in 1899, when he was 17 or 18, in order to avoid the draft. He came alone and brought over Benny and Sam in the next 2 years. I think that Benny had served in the army in Romania, but Sam came to avoid the draft.

IRVING (son of Saul): I believe that Benny served in the Romanian army in place of Moishe, and that there was a serious dispute afterwards, as a result of which they did not speak to each other for a long time. [No one else mentions this. Furthermore, Moishe and Benny always seemed very close. Also note: Moishe was born in 1875. Moishe's first child was born in 1899. There was time for him to have served 5 years in the army, and to have married in 1898. But see Dorothy's comment just below, about Moishe's eyesight.]

GERTRUDE (daughter of Moishe): I have the impression that I heard that Uncle Benny did not serve in the Romanian Army.

DOROTHY (daughter of Moishe): I recall seeing a picture of my father in uniform. But I don't understand how he could have served in the Army, because his eyes were so bad. He wore very thick glasses. I think he served a short time, till they found out about his eyes.

MEL (grandson of Moishe): When reading the newspaper, he used to hold it inches, literally inches, from his eyes. His eyes were very bad.

[Louis arrived here in either May or October, 1899, on the **S.S. City of Rome**, probably out of Glasgow. If he were born in 1881, he would thus have avoided the draft.

Sam arrived on the **S.S. Maasdam** out of Rotterdam, on July 30, 1900. He too would have been young enough to have avoided the draft. In fact he was only 15 or 16.

Benny (Bini) arrived on the **S.S. Ciltic**, on September 15, 1901. In 1901, Benny would have been about 24 years old, old enough to have served 5 years in the Army.]



Benny and Yetta

SIMON (brother of Benny): My older brothers, Benny and Louie, were extremely successful. They were in business together. Sam was in business for himself. Benny and Louie had a couple of hard years at the beginning. One was a cutter, and one worked in a bakery. One supported the other. One lived in a place without heat, and when his brother woke him up in the morning, he would have icicles on his nose.

After a while they started their own business on Allen Street. After 2 years they had 40 girls working. At one time, they had about 600 girls, 25 cutters, and 25 shipping clerks.

LESTER (son of Saul): Both my father and Joe worked for Louie and Benny for about 2 years, before going into business for themselves. Sam also worked for them before he went into the brassiere business.

AARON (son of Sarah): Benny needed a special fabric for a rush order and so he called the mill for a quotation. While waiting for the quotation Benny called Solly and asked him if he, Solly, had the fabric. Yes, said Solly, and you can have it for the same price I paid the mill. The mill's quotation arrived. It was higher than Solly's price. Benny bought the fabric from Solly, of course.

Then he turned around and sued the mill for quoting two different prices. Benny picked my father Abe to be his representative at the arbitration. (That's how I know this story.) Benny won the case against the mill. But who lost out? Solly, because the mill was angry not at Benny for suing, but at Solly for revealing the low price. But Solly had a terrific sense of humor, and he asked Benny to kiss him, because, he said, he liked to be kissed when he got *+/-=:&%-ed. (!)

BEN (son of Moishe): Uncle Benny had a big factory with hundreds of operators. I don't know if he was rich but it certainly looked that way. They owned the entire building at 457 Broadway and occupied all six floors. They also had a building on Division Street.

ELI (son of Sarah): My father, Abe, told me that early in WWI, Uncle Benny used to host him, Leon Trotsky, and others for lunch at Grunbergs. Then Trotsky disappeared, and next surfaced in Russia where he became one of the leaders of the Bolshevik Revolution. [Trotsky was in New York from mid January 1917, to near the end of March. While in New York, he spoke two, three, sometimes four times a day mostly to Left Wing Socialist groups, mostly immigrant, (as distinguished from Right Wing Socialist), and wrote many

articles for the Socialist press. He was, even then, an internationally known Socialist Revolutionary, and was greeted with much acclaim here in New York.]

LARKY (son of Louie): You are right. Benny liked to be president of everything. He was president of the **Manufacturers' Association**. I don't remember the exact name. In that capacity he became a friend of Sidney Hillman, who was the President of the **Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America**, the workers' counterpart of the **Manufacturers' Association**. I believe that he knew Hillman quite well, probably as a result of negotiating with him on behalf of the **Association**. [Hillman was a Lithuanian Jew who came to the U. S. in 1907, began as a worker, led a famous strike, and by 1913, had risen to become president of the **Amalgamated**. He was a moderate who believed in cooperation between labor and management, which may be how he came to be close with Benny. Hillman may have been the bridge between Benny and Trotsky.] Larky continues: I do believe that I heard something about Benny knowing Trotsky.

MADELLINE (Sam's daughter-in-law): Someone told me, I think it was Sam, that Uncle Benny played chess with Trotsky.

LESTER (son of Saul): Uncle Benny was always a distinguished looking man. He dressed in a great-coat with a velvet collar, a Homburg hat, and carried a cane.

IRVING (son of Saul): Benny was very vain, self-centered, removed. Not an affectionate man.

DOROTHY (daughter of Louie): Benny and my father were involved with several synagogues. They built the Rabbi [Harry] Halperin synagogue on 14th Street and Avenue J, [**East Midwood Jewish Center**]; and the Rabbi Mintz synagogue on Ocean Avenue. One of them was the **Talmud Torah of Flatbush**. I believe that they were also involved with the **Flatbush Yeshiva**. They gave a lot of money.

ELI (son of Sarah): I recall each time we went to the Krumbein family plot with my dad, we would pass the gateways of various burial societies, and Uncle Benny Milberg was listed on the gates as an officer of several of these. I guess he was charitable and bankrolled them.

On a private level: We have the invitation to my parents' wedding. "Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin Milberg invite you to the wedding of their sister . . ." I have the receipt showing that Benny paid the deposit. Based on the reading of the invitation, Benny and Yetta probably paid for the entire wedding.

ANNA (daughter of Moishe): When we got off the boat (1920), Uncle Benny was waiting for us in his chauffeur driven car.

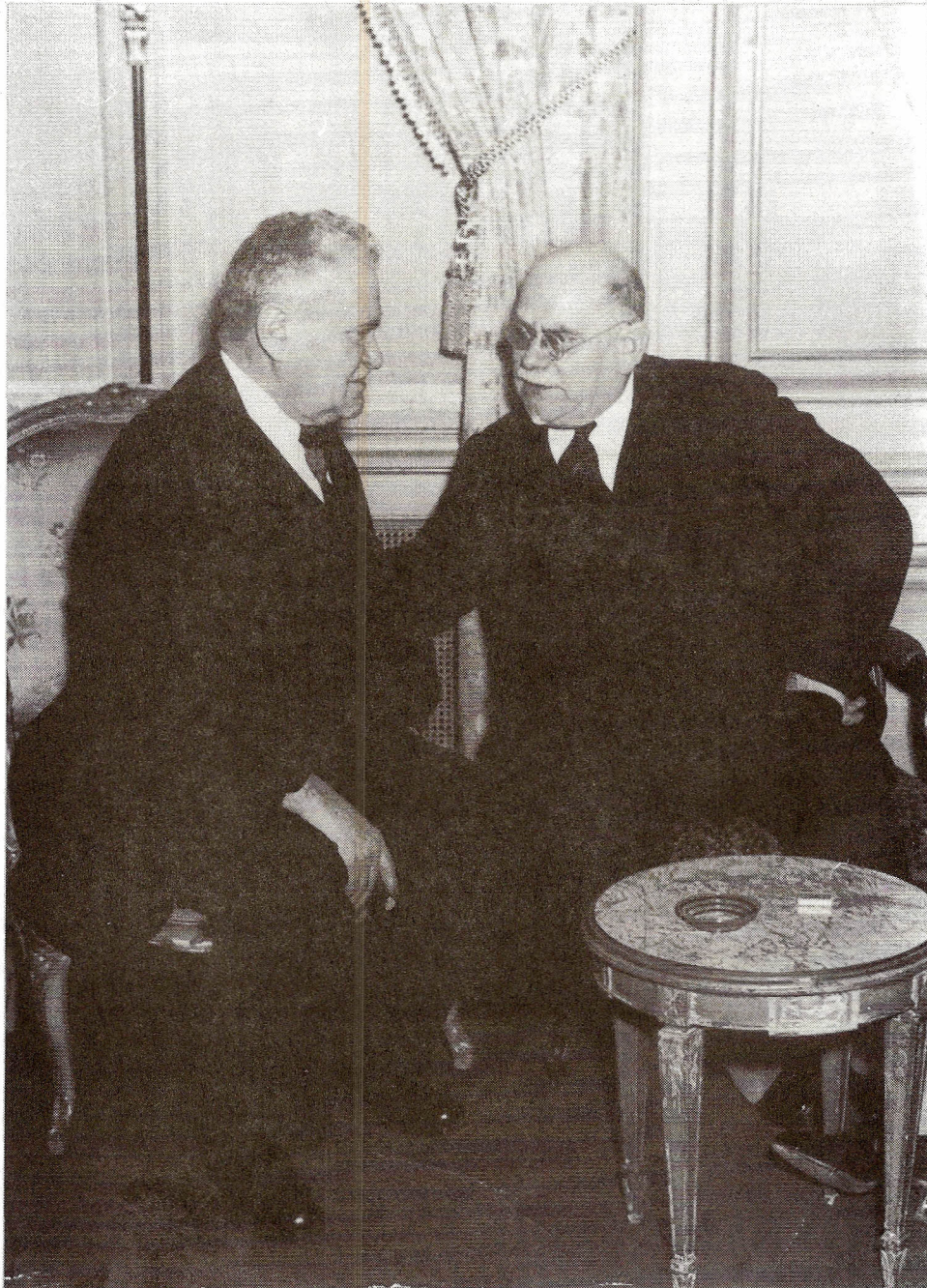
MILDRED (daughter of Moishe): Benny didn't drive, but he would pick up my father with his chauffeur and they would go to Coney Island for a dip, and then they would go into the City.

ANNA (daughter of Moishe): They had lockers at the beach.

AARON (son of Sarah): My mother, Sarah, went to work for Uncle Benny. Benny would open all the mail in the morning looking for the checks. He kept the checks and chucked everything else into the wastepaper basket. My mother's job was to go through the wastepaper basket and retrieve the orders, the letters, etc. Benny was only interested in the checks.

Benny seemed to be president of everything. He was president of his shul in Williamsburg, and when he heard that my mother was going to marry this orthodox fellow, Abe Krumbein, he was delighted. He invited my father to attend a Board meeting, told my father he would put him on the Board and that he was going to groom my father to be president of the shul. The meeting turned into a brawl. Benny had brought up the subject of the precarious finances of the shul and his recommendation for a solution. As you know, it was the custom (and still is in many places) to make a pledge to the shul when called up to the Torah for an *aliyah*. In those days, if you pledged, say, \$5 or \$10, you were expected to pay only 25% of the pledge. Benny recommended increasing the 25% to 50%. The furniture flew. A bench landed not far from Benny. My father told me that the moral of the story was that if you wanted to enjoy shul, you should stay out of the politics.

LESTER (son of Saul): Uncle Benny had to be President of the shul. He was president of the **East Midwood Jewish Center**, which happened to be the shul which my wife Myrtle



**Benny and Moishe in conference
around 1940**

and her family attended. So on *Yom Kippur*, during the day, I would go over there from our *shul*. I would give Uncle Benny a big hug, and sit next to him. He loved it.

One nice winter day, Myrtle and I were walking on the boardwalk with Myrtle's parents, when Uncle Benny approached from the opposite direction. He was wearing his great-coat with the fur collar, his beaver hat, his cane. He did not say "hello." Later on, he said to me: "What's the matter? You don't come over and hug your Uncle when you see him?" He loved that stuff.

JACK (son of Suzy): I used to play pinochle with Uncle Ben. He and Yetta lived just around the corner from us. Ben got me into **Young Israel**. And he was always coming to me for contributions for this and that, including later on for some Chasidic organization. Yetta used to make a matzoh ball soup for lunch. It was her favorite.

FAY (daughter of Suzy): Uncle Louie and Aunt Ida were great hosts. They were always hanging from the rafters at Louie's. Benny and Yetta lived just two doors away, but no one went there. You couldn't touch anything at Yetta's. She did not like a mess.

Benny and Yetta's daughter Eleanor was born with an arm defect. A nurse came in every day to massage the arm, and I used to go over to their house to help distract Eleanor while the nurse worked on her arm. We lived just a couple of blocks away.

JACK (son of Suzy): When their son Saul was married to Ruth, they were married out of Benny and Yetta's house. After the ceremony we invited all the young people over to our house. The champagne flowed. We all got smashed. There was plenty of food. We had a great party. Uncle Benny and Aunt Yetta did not have a reputation for throwing great parties.

ELI (son of Sarah): Aunt Yetta drove a blue/black Lincoln or Pierce Arrow that was as high as it was long. Yetta was a very tall, open faced, warm-hearted woman, who always fed me goodies when we visited her in Brooklyn and on a few occasions in the summer, in Saratoga, where she went for the waters, and lived in a large wooden hotel, with a big porch and rocking chairs.

Yetta was born in Brooklyn, but her English was a pidgin of Yiddish and English. The daughter of a well-to-do family, I don't believe she ever attended school. She was barely literate. She did not have to read or write in order to drive a car. There was no

licensing and testing when she first started to drive. She could not dial the phone or take messages. When dial phones were introduced, she and Uncle Benny leased a line to the last exchange in Brooklyn that used operators to place a number. She had German immigrant maids who did her dialing. I recall, she told us about a relative's early flight on a "*luftplan*" (airplane). My dad said she was literate enough to read the newspaper stock pages, to follow her investments.

Her children were very large. Si, who was a very big adult, weighed 13 1/2 pounds at birth; Solly 12 pounds and, I believe, Eleanor weighed almost 11 pounds. Yetta was anxious for the boys to be good students. My Mom and Dad used to recall her saying, "Soliker, Sayich, take a book in your hand."

LENORE (Benny's grand-daughter): Benny loved to make corn meal "mush" [known to some of us as "mamaliga."] He would not let anyone interfere when he was making the "mush." [See Note 8, Appendix B, for important technical information.]

AARON (son of Sarah): In the late twenties or early thirties, Benny had very serious business troubles. I think he went bankrupt. He told my father Abe that he was going to chuck the whole thing, go to the Canadian woods, and write his life story. My father told him he could write it, but nobody would read it.

LESTER (son of Saul): **Union Star** went bankrupt in the late twenties or early thirties. Benny and Louie split up at that point. Louie then went in with his sons Larky and Jacques; Benny went in with his sons, Saul and Simon. My father was in business with my cousin Lester (Joe's son) and me.

ROBERT (son of Simon): I knew Benny very well. I can tell you that he was the worst handicapper of horses in the entire world. But Yetta made the best *bagelach* in the world.

KENA (Benny's grand-daughter): When Benny died, he left an Ethical Will, in which he articulated the ethical ideals according to which he hoped his descendants would live. The document was handsomely calligraphed, on a parchment-like material, and presented in an individual leather binder. [A copy appears in Appendix C.]

LEON/LOUIE (1881-1941) and IDA (1888-1976)

LARKY (born 1913): My father, Louie (Leon) (Leib), came to this country in 1899 when he was 17 or 18 in order to avoid the draft. He came alone and brought over Benny and Sam in the next 2 years. I think that Benny had served in the army in Romania, but Sam came to avoid the draft.

[Louis arrived here in either May or October, 1899, on the **S.S. City of Rome**, probably out of Glasgow. If he were born in 1881, he would thus have avoided the draft.

Sam arrived on the **S.S. Maasdam** out of Rotterdam, on July 30, 1900. He too would have been young enough to have avoided the draft. In fact he was only 15 or 16.

Benny (Bini) arrived on the **S.S. Ciltic**, on September 15, 1901. In 1901, Benny would have been about 24 years old, old enough to have served 5 years in the Army.]

Louie met Ida because he was a boarder at Ida's mother's, my grandmother, Zelda Kleger. He knew of Ida's mother because she was also from Romania, also from around Iasi, as was my mother Ida, who was brought here as a babe-in-arms. Later my father lived on Eldridge Street, which is the address shown on my parents' Marriage Application. But at the start, my father lived at Mrs. Kleger's.

It was through Mrs. Kleger that my father learned the garment business. Ida's mother did lingerie piece work at home, and Louie learned by watching. Later he went into business. We have a picture [see Madeline re Sam, below], which shows Louie and Benny and Sam in their office in 1907. I think it was taken shortly after they went into business. The original business was making corset covers.

Although they had gone into business only a year or two before, my father told me that 1907 was one of the best years they ever had in business. [It is interesting to note that the Milberg's great presence in the ladies' undergarment business may have been due to the chance circumstance of Louie boarding at Mrs. Kleger's (Ida's mother) house. In the "Benny" section above, Simon talks about one of the brothers living in an unheated place, and waking up with icicles on his nose. It must have been Benny with the icicles.]

JACK (son of Susan): When Louis and Benny needed money to go into business, my father sent them money from Romania to get started.

DOROTHY (born 1911): My father never talked about life in Romania, and I never heard any talk about Russian origins. He came to this country with Uncle Benny and later brought over all the brothers and sisters. He was 18. I believe, that at the beginning, he worked in a bakery for a while. I think that my grandmother, Zelda Kleger, also worked in a bakery. [The same bakery? He boarded with Mrs. Kleger at the beginning.] My father was very successful, very soon. We were always "comfortable." However, he lost all of his money at the end.

SYLVIA (born 1921): My father did very well right at the start. We lived in a large house which had, I think, five bedrooms.

JUDITH (Sarah's daughter): Larky and his sister, Edith, went to Montauk Jr. High School in Brooklyn, when it first opened. They came to our house every day, for lunch, because our house was nearer than theirs.

LARKY: I graduated from High School at age 15, and went to N.Y.U. for one year. Then I had to quit because of bad times. Later, in Scranton, I took Industrial Engineering courses. I knew everything about production including cutting, sewing, purchasing, fixing machines. I could do everything in the factory.

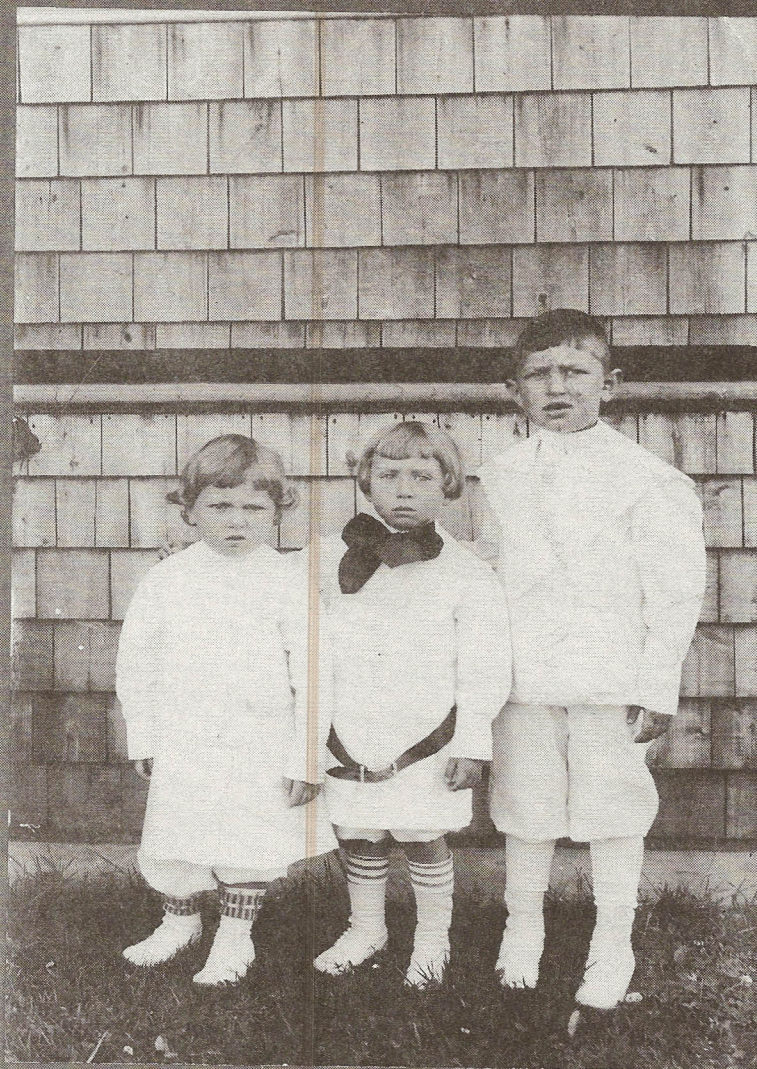
Union Star eventually went bankrupt around 1929 or 1930 or so. My father then went into business for himself, as **La Fille**. Then he had his heart attack, and took in partners, including Sherman. They became **Allan Undergarment**. My brother Jacques, and I, took over our father's interest. Thus, when I was 18, I ran the factory in Hawley. Sherman left the business, and then around 1950, we decided to liquidate the business entirely. I then worked with Si and Saul [Benny's children] in Glens Falls for about 3 years, at **Milestone**.

I went to Georgia from Glens Falls, but we hated it. I was looking for something else, and sent my resume in answer to an ad. I got a job offer. It turned out to be from Harvey and Barney Moss, brothers of Leon Moscowitz, relatives from Yetta's side. Yetta was a Moss (Morse). Thus it was that we came out to California in 1953. I was with the Moss brothers for 35 years. (Abe Krumbein was in business with Leon Moscowitz early on, as was Simon who moved to Florida.)

LARKY: My father never talked about Romania.



Louis and Ida
1910



Si, Jacques, Saul Allen
around 1910



Louis, Benny, Sam (on the left),
with three employees (on the right). The calendar on the wall is dated 1907



Louis
1940

LESTER (son of Saul): Union Star went bankrupt in the late twenties or early thirties. Benny and Louie split up at that point. Louie then went in with his sons Larky and Jacques; Benny went in with Saul and Simon, Benny's sons. My father was in business with my cousin Lester and me.

SYLVIA: My mother went back to work after 1929. She did the bookkeeping for my father.

NAT JOSEPH (Dorothy's husband): If the brothers had gotten together, they could have been the biggest in the country.

EDMUND (son of Simon): I think there was a time in the late 20's that the brothers tried to combine forces. This would have made them a powerful force in the industry. But it never worked out, probably because they could not agree on who would be the managing director.

LARRY (son of Moishe): Louie's house was a hangout. If you had nothing to do you went to Louie and Ida's. They had the best lox and sturgeon and everything else. (One of Louie's pinochle buddies was the owner of Vita Brands, the fish distributors.) You were always welcome at Uncle Louie's, 7 days a week. They had a lovely house, with a big porch. Louie was a good guy.

AARON (son of Sarah): I recall some of those feasts (also referred to as Romanian *fresserei*). Uncle Louie was not only a good cook, he made his own wines, smoked meats and poultry (and probably also cigars). He also made his own pickled preserves, of which the watermelon rind was extraordinary. His delicacy-de-resistance was *genzene* pastrami, a delicious smoked goose. If you ingested a few cubes of pickled watermelon with your *genzene* pastrami, you were well on your way to a gastronome's heaven.

LARKY: We had a room in the basement with barrels of pickles, sour tomatoes, pickled watermelon. We had *genzene* pastrami made from smoked goose. My father made 100 gallons of wine each year. [100 gallons was the maximum permitted for personal use under

Prohibition.] He used to go to the market himself to buy the grapes. When he first came to this country, he worked as a baker, so he was quite a cook himself.

IRENE (Moishe's daughter-in-law): After a Saturday night date with Larry, it was just natural to end up at Uncle Louie's. He and Ida were the most generous and warm people possible.

FAY (daughter of Suzy): If someone in the family could not afford a wedding, Uncle Louie made the wedding. We were at Louie's all the time.

EDMUND (son of Simon): Food at Uncle Louie's was gourmet. Mrs. Kleger, Ida's mother, who lived with them, was a great cook. Her cookies and cakes were superb. She had quite a reputation as a cook. I believe that Aunt Ida worked with Uncle Louie at the factory, and that Mrs. Kleger ran the house.

SYLVIA: My grandmother, Zelda Kleger, who lived with us, was a great cook. She made fabulous nut cakes and gefilte fish. Her eggplant salad was a treat. She cooked the eggplant directly on the flame till it got black. She chopped it up, added the onions, oil, garlic. Delicious.

In the late afternoon, after she had finished her cooking, she would go upstairs to her room, bathe, dress, have a "drink," and then come downstairs, prepared for dinner, which my mother would serve.

ROBERT (son of Simon): They were big eaters at Uncle Louie's. They would take two walnuts in one hand and crack them in their bare hands.

DOROTHY: On one of her important birthdays, we had a big party for my grandmother (Mrs. Kleger). Uncle Simon gave her a beautiful diamond watch.

NAT JOSEPH (Dorothy's husband): Ida couldn't boil water.

LESTER (son of Saul): Uncle Louie and Aunt Ida lived on East 8th Street. The dining room table was always set for 20, in case anyone should show up. Their cellar was stocked

with pastramis, cheese, salamis. Uncle Louie sat at the head of the table, smiling and sipping his wine and eating pastrami. He was a jolly fellow. Mister 5 by 5.

EDMUND (son of Simon): Uncle Louie lived in a big house, a very big house. He used to make his own wine.

DOROTHY: Our house was not a house. It was a hotel. There was always a house full of people. There was lots of card playing. My father was a wonderful, terrific guy. He loved people. He made great parties. My mother would buy loads of food: 25 pounds of coffee at a time, dozens and dozens of eggs, etc. One room in the basement was a very large ice-box. We also had a wine room. Every year, we had a great New Year's Eve party, except for one year when I was terribly ill. That year the party was shifted to Uncle Benny's. Those were wonderful times.

JACK (son of Suzy): Louis was a great host. Uncle Benny and Aunt Yetta on the other hand, never had much company.

SYLVIA: Uncle Benny and Aunt Yetta lived only a block away. But no one ever went over there. She had covers on everything.

LARKY: On Sundays our house was like Grand Central Station. It was not unusual for my grandmother to cook for 20 or 30. For the *Seders* we never had fewer than 25 or 30.

ELI (son of Sarah): I visited either Joe or Louie's sub-basement which was loaded with wine, pickles, smoking geese and meats.

SYLVIA: Often on Sunday afternoons, my father would take us to Nathan's. He loved those hot-dogs.

THELMA (Sam's daughter-in-law): Eddie told me that he had a great life with his cousins, many of whom were near contemporaries. Every Sunday they went over to Uncle Leon's (Louie's) house because there was always a great open buffet. Leon did the cooking, and he was a great cook.

GERTRUDE (daughter of Moishe): I have good feelings about Uncle Louie. We used to go there on Saturday night - they had wonderful food. I remember I once asked him if I could marry someone non-Jewish. He said it was OK with him, but that I had better check with Papa. Aunt Ida was also very good with Uncle Louie, letting him think he was in charge of the kitchen.

SYLVIA: All of the Milberg men died of heart attacks. I want to caution all of the Milberg men: be careful, take care of yourself.

REA (daughter of Moishe): Paul and I were married in 1932. Uncle Louie came to my father and told him that unless all of his (Louie's) children were invited to the wedding, he would not come. They were all invited.

DOROTHY: We had quite a religious house. Benny and my father were involved with several synagogues. They built the Rabbi Halperin synagogue on 14th Street and Avenue J; and the Rabbi Mintz synagogue on Ocean Avenue between J and K. I believe that they were also involved with the **Flatbush Yeshiva**. They gave a lot of money.

SUSAN (1883-1933) AND MORRIS WOLFSON (1879-1934)

FAY (born 1905): When my parents come to this country in 1907, I was 2 years old, and my brother, Willie, was 4 1/2. My mother was pregnant with Sophie. Sophie and Jack were born in this country.

We lived on the same floor as my grandparents [Eliezer and Yehudis] on Broome Street. It was a very nice apartment, with its own private bathroom. My grandparents had the front apartment, and we lived in the rear apartment. There was a window separating the apartments. If I stood on the sofa and looked through the window, I could see my grandfather. He was a lovely man. He did not work. He went to synagogue morning and evening. He had a full red beard. [Eliezer died in 1912.]

I was very close with my grandmother (Yehudis). When my grandparents went to the mountains in the summer, I would go with them. My parents would go to the shore. Thus I spent weeks with her every summer. [Yehudis died in 1913.]

JACK (born 1909): My father had been in the barrel business in Romania. I have the impression that he did pretty well. As a matter of fact, when Louis and Benny needed money to go into business, my father sent money to them in America to help them get started. One of them had been working in a bakery here in the United States, and was quite unhappy with the hard work and the late hours.

However, when he came to this country, my father had nothing, or close to it. [Maybe they were not permitted to take out money.] However, on his first day here, he was in business with his push-cart, although of course he did not know a word of English.

FAY: The Milbergs had been in the bakery business in Romania. My father on the other hand, had been in the grain business. He was very successful. As a matter of fact, he sent money to Benny and Louis in America when they wanted to go into business.

However when we came to this country, we did not have any money. Uncle Louis set him up with goods for his push-cart. Thus on his first day here he was in business. He also worked on a farm on Long Island. It was a way to make money. This was at the

same time he had the push-cart on the Lower East Side. Within a short time, he was in business with Uncle Louie's brother-in-law, Jack Kleger.

I had known my husband Sol since I was 13. My mother-in-law (to be) told me when I was 15 that I would be her daughter-in-law some day. I guess she was right.

JACK: After a while, Ida's brother (Uncle Louis' wife) and my father went into business. They were very successful for a while. My father sent for his entire family and when they got here, he gave them all jobs. Then along came World War I, and they lost it all. They had had a warehouse full of merchandise, which was suddenly almost worthless. Later, my father went into the contracting business for Uncle Simon and others. My brother William went in with my father and Uncle Benny Littman. When I grew up, I also went into the business. After my father died in 1934, Benny went into the contracting business for Saul and Si.

I worked for Uncle Simon when I was still in public school. That's how I learned the underwear business. I went in on Saturdays to straighten out the inventory and clean up the place. Then Si would take me home. My mother (Suzy) would be heating up lunch on the stove which was on all day because of Shabbos. Si would say that something smelled great. My mother would ask him to take a taste. Before long, Si had tasted everything, and had had lunch. Si bought me tickets to the first Broadway show I ever saw. It was a bit *risqué*. I think it was Si's way of introducing me to the facts of life. I went to the show with my cousin Jacques Milberg.

The family often came to our house to smoke and drink wine. There was a kind of a competition as to who made the best wine.

In those days it was fashionable for the men to smoke cigars, and my father (Morris) always had a humidor of cigars for the guests who were always coming over. One day, Saul (Benny's son), Jacques (Louis' son) and I hid under the dining room table and lit a cigar. All 3 of us passed out from the smoke. They had to carry us out.

On Saturday night, my father would send me out for a gallon of ice-cream for the family. He would give me a \$10 bill, which was big money in those days. One Saturday, I lost the \$10. I was terribly upset. My father did not get angry. He simply took me out to retrace my steps. We never found the money. Then he took me out to buy ice-cream.

Saul and I were fraternity brothers in high school. The main purpose of the fraternity was to shoot craps. This reminds me that a bunch of us used to shoot craps at



Left: Susan & Morris Wolfson

**Below: Morris & Susan Wolfson
with Willy, Fay, Jack and Sophie
on vacation, Rockaway, 1914**



some of the Family Circle meetings at my house. We had a pool table in the basement, which we covered with a board, and were thus able to shoot.

The last few Family Circle meetings were held at our house. No one else volunteered to have the meetings, so there simply were no more.

I must say that I worked very hard in business, doing the work of three people and I'm proud of it. There was a time that Joe and Saul (J & S) were in trouble. Their factory in Newark was loaded with merchandise which they could not sell. Someone told them to talk to me. I sold all the merchandise and saved them.

Later I ran into Uncle Benny. He and his son Saul had 10 or 12 thousand dozen women's shirts up at their plant in Hoosick Falls. They had tried everything but they couldn't sell them. Benny said to sell them for \$3.50, and he hinted that he would reduce the price if I had a good prospect. I sold the entire inventory for \$4.25.

I set up a jobbing business with Saul and my brother William. After a while we changed the arrangement, and my brother and I remained in the business.

When I was in business I maintained two tables for lunch at Longchamps. I had an arrangement with them that any of my buyers could come in, mention my name, and be my guest even if I wasn't there. I was at Longchamps one day with a few friends, when Ben Milberg (Moishe's son) passed by. I suggested that he join us, but he said that he couldn't because he had a horse running in Florida and had to get back to the office to listen to the race. Everyone at the table started giving Ben hundred and fifty dollar bills to bet on the horse. Its name was **Madame K**. I was not a horse better, but in the spirit of things I told Ben to bet \$25 for me. He told me to keep my money and that he would bet the \$25 for me.

Months later I was driving north on Riverside Drive on my way to the Club to play golf when I saw Ben also headed north, probably also on the way to play golf. I pulled my Cadillac alongside his Cadillac. He rolled down the window and asked when he would see me. I asked why. He said: "You have to come up to the office to collect the money you won on that \$25 bet. It's sitting on my desk." After that I joined Ben many many times at his box at the track. Ben was a good gambler.

Uncle Benny and Yetta lived just around the corner from us. I used to play a lot of pinochle with Uncle Benny. Ben got me into **Young Israel**. And he was always coming to me for contributions for this and that, including later on for some Chasidic organization. Yetta used to make a matzoh ball soup for lunch. It was her favorite.

EDMUND (son of Simon): Suzy was a redhead. (My father also was a redhead. Uncle Moishe's Simon was a redhead.)

LESTER (son of Saul): Morris was a quiet man. We were in partnership with Jack and Willy for a while.

LARRY (son of Moishe): Morris Wolfson died very young. At the time of his death, he was in business with Benny Littman.

FAY: My mother and father (Suzy and Morris) died within 4 months of each other. It was my father who had been sick for a long time, but it was my mother who died first, very suddenly. I had seen her in the afternoon. That evening around midnight my brothers knocked on the door with the news that mother had died. It was the evening of *Rosh-Hashana*.

Our daughter Joyce who died 3 years ago was a genius, and talented. She excelled in everything. Sol used to call her "my little genius." She was reading before she went to school. She skipped 5 times even though I pleaded with her principal to let her stay with children her own age. She entered Brooklyn College at age 15. She took 3 Civil Service exams in her life, and she was first in all three. She also had a beautiful voice. She served as Cantor for a congregation in California for 15 years, without pay of course. She truly was a genius.

[The interview with Jack Wolfson was done by Sheila Foster, Moishe's granddaughter, and Ben and Eve's daughter. At one point in the interview Jack says that he first met Sheila's mother Eve when Eve was enrolled in his eighth grade class upon her arrival here in the United States.]

SAM (1885-1962) AND MOLLYE (1893-1963)

LARKY (Louie's son): My father, Louie (Leon) (Leib), came to this country in 1899 when he was 17 or 18 in order to avoid the draft. He came alone and brought over Benny and Sam in the next 2 years. I think that Benny had served in the army in Romania, but Sam came to avoid the draft.

[Louis arrived here in either May or October, 1899, on the **S.S. City of Rome**, probably out of Glasgow. If he were born in 1881, he would thus have avoided the draft.

Sam arrived on the **S.S. Maasdam** out of Rotterdam, on July 30, 1900. He too would have been young enough to have avoided the draft. In fact he was only 15 or 16.

Benny (Bini) arrived on the **S.S. Ciltic**, on September 15, 1901. In 1901, Benny would have been about 25 years old, old enough to have served 5 years in the Army.]

MADELINE (Sam's daughter-in-law, married to son Larry): I have a photo of Uncle Benny, Louie, and Sam in their business office. As you can see, the calendar in the back says 1907, and the sign says, "Milberg Brothers."

LESTER (son of Saul): Sam worked for Louie and Benny before he went into business for himself.

MILDRED (daughter of Moishe): When we got to this country two cars picked us up. Uncle Benny with his chauffeur; and Sam and Mollye. Mollye was driving.

ELI (son of Sarah): Aunt Mollye was a long time auto driver. One summer, Sam and Mollye and Sarah and Abe and I (age about 4 or 5) went on a sales trip together, by car to Pittsburgh and to northern New York. Mollye did most of the driving.

THELMA (Sam's daughter-in-law, married to Eddie): Mollye told me that she drove a car in 1916, and that when she went out driving, she was the only woman on the road. She worked with Sam at the factory, where she supervised the office. Mollye was a very straightforward lady.

They had a housekeeper, named Dora, who ran things at home. This was just fine with the boys, their sons, because this housekeeper let them do whatever they wanted to do.

Eddie and I were married in August, 1945. By that time, Sam and Mollye had sold the business and were living in Florida. Sam had retired at age 59. They were always extremely nice to me, gracious, pleasant, and generous.

ELI (Sarah's son): Sam had heart trouble for many years. My parents told us that his retirement was always a matter of great stress because it was made possible by disability insurance. I gather that the insurance companies were not happy with the claim and Sam and Mollye were often under surveillance, because Sam was not supposed to be able to do anything more than lead a sedentary life. I remember being told that the insurance companies sometimes gave them a very hard time.

GERTRUDE (daughter of Moishe): I worked for Uncle Sam and Aunt Mollye for either three or four summers. They were wonderful to me. They took me out to lunch every day. One day, when they had a meeting to attend, they could not take me out. However, they were thoughtful enough to tell me that they had made arrangements for lunch for me, "on the house." I said "Great," but I had no idea what "on the house" meant. It was the first time I had ever heard that expression.

At lunch we would always have interesting discussions. They encouraged me, and they helped me to register at the New School to take courses.

I admired Mollye enormously. She was a partner of Sam's in every sense of the word.

Sam was a wonderful man. I heard that, one time, when things were difficult for some cousins, he offered to pay their rent for a year.

MADELINE (daughter-in-law): Simon and Sadie were married out of Sam and Mollye's home.

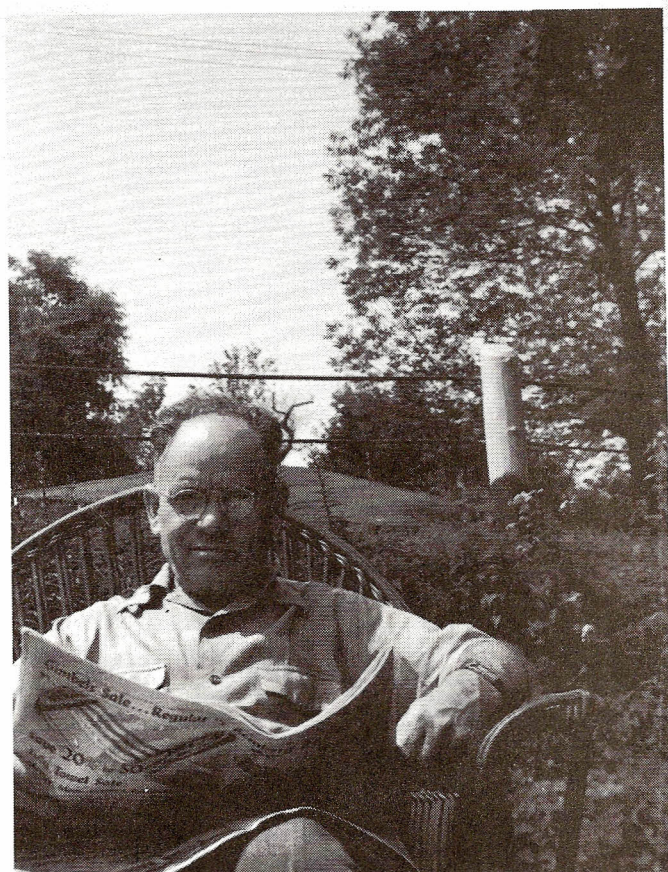
ROBERT (son of Simon): We went to Sam and Mollye's almost every Friday night. I loved it for two reasons. First of all, they had an "unlimited" phone. We did things like call the local druggist and ask him if he had Prince Albert in a can. When he said, "Yes," we'd tell him to let the Prince out of the can. The other thing was that they always had

**Right: Mollye & Sam
early 20th Century**



Above: Lena, Sam, Sarah

Right: Sam in Hawley, 1942



**Left: Sam
with Eddie, Altie & Larry**

chocolate covered raisins. Sam and Mollye were Reform Jews, and there was many a heated discussion over that subject.

THELMA (daughter-in-law): I believe that Sam was involved in the founding of the Avenue "R" Temple which may have been Reform. The synagogue no longer exists. [The building is still there, although now occupied by a different Jewish institution.]

LARRY (son of Moishe): Sam was very learned, especially in Jewish law. I recall seeing him in discussion with Rabbis, in which the Rabbis deferred to Sam and his opinion.

Sam was also the person in the family who made sure that anyone who needed help, got help. In such cases, Sam was the one who collected the money from the various members of the family. Even after the creation of the State of Israel, Sam arranged for a loan to some cousins in Israel who wanted to go into business. They did, and were successful.

JACK (son of Suzy): For many years, Sam came to me every few months for money to send to needy relatives in Romania.

ROBERT (son of Simon): Mollye was notoriously cheap. When I was visiting New York in 1946, they invited me for dinner. Dora, their maid and cook, served me first because I was the guest. She put a small bowl of salad in front of me. I was about to dig in when Larry said: "Please pass the salad."

MADELINE (daughter-in-law): Mollye would take the Queensboro Bridge instead of the Queens Mid-Town Tunnel, in order to avoid what was then a 25 cent toll.

JACK (son of Suzy): Mollye was a dynamo. She worked for Uncle Sam, and she drew a check every week. She saved every penny, in the form of gold. I guess that she did not trust anyone. She saved over \$100,000 in gold. Then the government called in all gold, to be converted to paper money. I don't think that she was too happy at that.

ELI (son of Sarah): My Dad said that Mollye was very tight and had the "first dollar she ever earned, and pressed out her dollar bills every night with a cool iron." He said this to her face and she accepted it with remarkably good grace. Sam and Mollye and my parents

loved each other. My father also claimed that if Mollye invited you out to eat, she would be the first to look at the menu and then would say "Who is hungry? I'm not hungry." I never believed him.

When Elaine and I were married in Highland Park, Illinois, in 1950, Aunt Mollye and Uncle Sam attended the wedding. In 1951, Elaine and I visited New York, and Aunt Mollye took us to her beach club for the day, with her two granddaughters. She had some cheese and crackers and would not hear of our purchasing food, during the day. We were joined by Larry and Madeline and Eddie and Thelma, and she and Uncle Sam took us to dinner at Sheepshead Bay. As we sat down to dinner, she said "Who is hungry? I'm not hungry!" We had a lovely dinner.

Sam and Mollye were very loving but they sometimes differed on financial matters. When my sister Judith was engaged to Robert Segal, Uncle Sam made a private appointment with her and took her out to several lingerie houses and purchased a lingerie trousseau for her.

EDMUND (son of Simon): We used to visit Sam and Mollye a lot, and have dinner there. I used to play ping-pong there. Sam loved to make a cocktail, which consisted of B & G Sauterne, which he bought by the case, plus seltzer. My impression is that Sam was extremely learned as a Jew, and that he continued his learning.

FAY (daughter of Suzy): Aunt Mollye had a silk-covered light fixture in the dining room. The silk had a tear in it. I fixed the tear. From that time on she invited me to dinner at least once a week.

ELI (son of Sarah): I remember the house well. They had a ping-pong table in the basement. First one I had ever seen. We played each time we visited. They were very generous. Alty, the youngest son, was the best of the three sons as a tennis player.

Once when I was about thirteen or fourteen, Alty took me, and I think Bobby (Uncle Simon's son), to the National Tennis matches at Forest Hills Tennis Club. It seemed very grand to me. I had never seen girls like that nor had I ever seen grass tennis courts before.

LESTER (son of Saul): Sam was quiet. More the intellectual. Very pleasant.

MEL (grandson of Moishe): We visited Sam and Mollye at their house in Flatbush. It must have been the early 1930's. The house had an enclosed front porch with windows all around. Inside, under the windows, all around the room, were shelves loaded with phonograph records. The boys, I think it was Eddie and Larry, were playing the records, kind of showing off to whoever was there. These were the old 78 rpm shellac records. You had to flip each record when it finished. That's the way it was before the automatic changers. The phonograph itself was manual, not electric, and so it had to be cranked. And the needle was not diamond or steel, it was bamboo. So they were constantly jumping up and down to flip or change the record, or crank the phonograph, or change the needle which only lasted for a record or two. And the records were constantly being taken out of an album, or being replaced in an album. It was quite a scene.

There were recessed book shelves in the living room, which were full of tennis trophies. Eddie, Larry and Alty were all great tennis players.

IRVING (Saul's son): I always thought that Larry was the smartest person I knew. He was Phi Beta Kappa, and got a scholarship to Harvard Law.

SYLVIA (Rea's daughter, Moishe's grand-daughter): I loved to go to Sam and Mollye's. They had a basket of used tennis balls in the basement and we were each allowed to take one.

MADELINE (Sam's daughter-in-law): On our first date, Larry picked me up in his car. The radio was tuned to a station playing classical music and I was very impressed. We were married in 1942, during the war. Sam and Mollye had sold the business by then, and were living in Florida. Sam was lovable, and the two of them were very nice to me.

ELI (son of Sarah): I recall going to the World's Fair in 1939 or 1940 with Larry, Madeline, Sam, Mollye and my parents. It was lovely to see the young lovers. My father wasn't so certain that Madeline was Jewish. Sam said her mother was an authentic Litvak - Jewish however!

ROBERT (son of Simon): Abe Krumbein and Sam used to come down to Florida together. They were like the odd couple. They liked each other, but they were always arguing.

JOE (1888-1937) AND IDA (1891-1989)

MAURICE (born 1918): My father did not tell me much about Romania. He said that there was not that much that was good to tell about it. He did tell me that he and some brothers were in the cheese business. They would lease goats from farmers and make Brinza cheese from the milk. The Brinza cheese was used to make *Mamaliga*. [The following is from the 1911 Edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica: "**For months together, a Ruman will subsist on vegetables and Mamaliga, the maize porridge that forms his staple diet.**"] Maurice continues: My father also told me that he used to get up about 3 in the morning in sub-zero temperatures and go to the Rabbi's house to make a fire. Then the Rabbi would give him his lesson.

My father and Solly were partners; they married sisters; they were business partners, and they lived, back to back, on Webster and Lawrence Avenues in Brooklyn. You could say they were close. However, when I was about 8 or 10, we moved to the Bronx because my parents had been told that the climate in the Bronx would be better for my asthma. By that time my brother Harold had died, so my parents took the advice.

I went with my father, several times, to the Luxor baths on 2nd Street for the "*shvitz bood*," the steam baths. Several brothers would be there, and after their steam room, rub-downs, eats, and ARGUMENTS, they would play pinochle or sleep.

I remember many family meetings at a Romanian restaurant on 2nd Avenue. I can still smell the garlic.

There is a story that one Sunday morning, several of the brothers and brothers-in-law and Leon Moscovitz, a first cousin, dropped in on a small restaurant for breakfast. This was a restaurant that used to open on Sunday mornings just for the Church crowd. Then they would close. By the time the Milbergs got through eating the rolls and bread that Sunday, the restaurant had to close before the Church crowd got there. Leon was later killed crossing the street in New York.

The most memorable times were the Milberg Family Circle New Year's Eve parties, to which friends were also invited.

LESTER (son of Saul): Joe and my father went into business together in 1912. They had both worked for Louie and Benny (**Union Star**) for a couple of years before they went into

business. The name of the business was **J & S** (for Joe and Saul) and they were located at 512 Broadway. My cousin Lester and I joined the business in 1935. Lester quit dental school, and I quit my third year of college. We moved to McAdoo, Pennsylvania. Then we moved to East Newark, New Jersey. In 1936, the business became **Monterey**. Joe died in 1937. I left the business in 1960 or 61. Lester (Joe's son) stayed on.

LARRY (son of Moishe): In 1937, when Joe and Saul had been in business for 25 years, several of their employees and some of the brothers got together and made them a grand party. All of the brothers and sisters, their spouses, their children and their spouses, and dear friends were there. Uncle Saul rose to speak, but he was so overcome with emotion that he could hardly do more than thank everyone. Tears of happiness rolled down his cheeks. It was an unforgettable moment.

IRVING (son of Saul): Joe died very young of a heart attack and allergies. In those days, there was no treatment for his problems. Joe had a place up in the White Mountains of New Hampshire where he hoped that the clear air would help him.

EDMUND (son of Simon): I knew Uncle Joe and Uncle Solly pretty well because we went up to New Hampshire every summer for my mother's asthma. We stayed at a boarding house or hotel not far from the house which Joe shared with Sol, on the road to Bethlehem. Their families stayed up there all summer. Irving (Sol and Pauline's son), and Maurice (Joe and Ida's son), owned an old Ford convertible named Leo. We spent delightful summers up there. Joe used to love to wear cable-knit sweaters. He had a great car, a late 30's Chrysler Imperial Air-Flo.

LESTER (son of Saul): Joe was a nice guy. He came up to New Hampshire on August 1st and stayed till November. He had high blood pressure, and was very volatile.

MAURICE: My father and Saul used to spend time together in the White Mountains. They rode a lot. Saul was quite a horseman. He had served in the cavalry. I remember seeing a picture of him in his cavalry uniform. Saul started me on my equestrian career by giving me riding lessons when I was 4 years old, against the wishes of my parents.

I was known as "Little Moishe." This was to distinguish me from my father's brother Moishe, and from my father's brother-in-law, also Moishe. It wasn't till years later,



Joe and Ida
around 1912



Joe
around 1935

when I saw my birth certificate, that I learned my name was Maurice. My Hebrew name is *Moshe ben Yosef*. I tell you this so that you can see that my father Joe was not named *Jonah*, which I understand is the name shown on Eliezer's death certificate as his father's name.

Unfortunately, I did not spend too much time in this area with the family. I spent 4 years at the Lowell Textile School in Lowell, Massachusetts, then 1-1/2 years with the Army Air Force overseeing manufacturing and purchase of parachutes; then 20 years in Cumberland, Maryland, where I started a manufacturing facility, then Georgia for 10 years, and then retiring to Texas.

IRVING (son of Saul): Maurice and I had been out on a double-date together. I suggested to Maurice that he sleep over at our house, and that he go home to the Bronx in the morning, instead of making the long subway ride late at night. But Maurice said that he felt that something had happened, and that he felt he had to go home at once.

I received a phone call from Maurice later that night. Uncle Joe had had a heart attack that evening, and had died.

Joe was a mild mannered fellow, the least bellicose of the Milberg brothers.

JACK (son of Suzy): Uncle Joe was one of my favorites. He was very pleasant, calm. A nice man.

SAUL (1889-1964) AND PAULINE (1892-1994)

IRVING (born 1918): My father told me that when he was 14, he was collecting rents in Romania for his father, Eliezer. One day, when he was supposed to be collecting rents, my father encountered the circus and followed them all day instead of collecting the rent. When he got home, his father asked for the rent money. Sol told him that he had no money, and told Eliezer about the circus. Eliezer beat him up "fiercely."

My father served in the Romanian cavalry at the age of 17. He did not like Romania. He said that life was bad there and that they were a bunch of no good anti-Semites. He hated Romania. Many years later he went back for a visit. He said that the visit confirmed what he felt all along. It was no good before, and it was no good later. He hated the place. [Saul may have had the same memories as Simon had, of the 1907 Pogrom, and perhaps military service.]

LESTER (born 1916): Joe and my father went into business together in 1912. They had both worked for Louie and Benny (**Union Star**) for a couple of years before they went into business. I heard that my father's older sister, Suzy, hocked her earrings for \$150 and that he used the money as part of his capital, needed to go into business. The name of the business was **J & S** (for Joe and Saul) and they were located at 512 Broadway. My mother worked for my father as a sewing machine operator before they were married.

My cousin Lester and I joined the business in 1935. Lester quit dental school, and I quit my third year of college. We moved to McAdoo, Pennsylvania, because the unions killed us here in New York. Then we moved to East Newark, New Jersey. In 1936, the business became **Monterey**. Joe died in 1937.

In 1946, our office was at 34th and 5th in New York. My parents had an apartment on Park and 35th. It was great for my father because, although he was supposedly retired, he could walk over to the office and kibbitz. I left the business in 1960 or 61. Lester (Joe's son) stayed on.

LARRY (son of Moishe): In 1937, when Joe and Saul had been in business for 25 years, several of their employees and some of the brothers got together and made them a grand party. All of the brothers and sisters, their spouses, their children and their spouses, and

dear friends, were there. Uncle Saul rose to speak, but he was so overcome with emotion that he could hardly do more than thank everyone. Tears of happiness rolled down his cheeks. It was an unforgettable moment.

LARRY LUBIN (grandson of Moishe): A friend of mine named Lou Weinstein, (who happened to be Pauline's nephew) and I, were studying for the actuarial exams and we needed a quiet place. Aunt Pauline offered her apartment which was available on the weekends, when she and Uncle Sol were in Belle Harbor. She was a gracious lady.

LESTER: When I was a child we used to go to my maternal grandparents in Williamsburg for the holidays. My grandfather was quite religious. My father used to give the little shul \$1000 every year, and we sat in the front row with my grandfather. My grandmother sat behind the curtain in the first row of the women's section, where she read for the women.

When I was small, my cousins Anna and Mildred (Moishe's daughters), used to pick me up and take me to P.S. 134.

My *Bar Mitzvah* was at a wonderful time, in January, 1929, before the "crash." I "walked away" from the *Bar Mitzvah* with \$5200 in gold coins. My cousin Lester had a similar experience. Years later when we went into business, he and I each put in \$5000. It was our *Bar Mitzvah* money.

I had an excellent Jewish education. I attended **Machziki Talmud Torah**, and later, a year at Yeshiva. When later I attended **Northwestern University** for one year, I was able to hold my own with pride in discussions with non-Jews. The education has stood me in good stead. When I went to **Northwestern** as a sophomore in 1933, I roomed with another Jewish boy who soon dropped out. So my room had space to become a hangout. My father had a distributor in Chicago. I went to their home for dinner on Friday nights. They sent me back with pastramis, turkey and so on. The other kids loved my room.

The proctor or head of our dorm was a fellow by the name of Clark Kuebler, a graduate of **Heidelberg**, complete with the dueling scar on the face. He said that Hitler was a madman and that if we did not stop him, 50,000,000 people would die. Kuebler later became the President of **Northwestern**.

IRVING: When my parents were first married, Sarah and Lena came to live with them. [Yehudis died in 1913. Saul and Pauline married in 1914. Several people mentioned that they married to provide a home for Lena and Sarah.]



Saul and Pauline
at the Concord



25th Anniversary Party, J & S Milberg
(see next page for enlargement)



Enlargement of Anniversary Picture

My father had a great sense of humor. He was kidding my mother about the way she spent money, "as if it grows on trees." A few days later, instead of leaving money for her on the dresser the way he usually did, he hung the bills on the shrubs in the garden.

He supported my mother's mother. He also bought her a false eye which she needed. Whenever he would get angry with her, he would yell: "That eye I got you is a pig's eye."

One day, my father's workers sprung a surprise strike on him at the plant. When he came home he was furious. He was steaming. He was especially furious at the 10 or 15 of my mother's relatives who were on the payroll. "They should at least have given me some advance notice. I'm going to fire them all." "No you're not," said my mother. "Yes I am," said my father, "I'm the head of this family." "You may be the head," said my mother, "but I'm the neck and I'll tell you what to do." No one was fired.

My mother had a truly great voice, a voice of operatic quality. She sang with Jan Peerce who felt that she should go on to opera. However, my mother had perpetual stage-fright. When she was called upon to sing at some sort of family function, she had to go up to a balcony, or get behind a screen. Only then could she sing.

LESTER: This will give you some idea of my father's approach to life. When I became aged 16 in 1932 during Prohibition, he gave me a special card which you could show at the door of any speakeasy, and they'd let you in, and you could order liquor.

IRVING: Lester was *Bar-Mitzvah* before the crash of 1929, but my *Bar-Mitzvah* was after the crash. We had it in Williamsburg. I was so short that I had to stand on a wooden box to reach the *bimah*.

I attended **P.S. 192**, and later, **Montauk Jr. H. S.** At **P.S. 192**, I studied Latin with Mr. Smith. I failed. Mr. Smith failed me and my brother Lester, my cousin Lester, and Gertrude. Mr. Smith was my sister Judith's home-room teacher. When she came to school for her first day, he asked her if she was planning to take Latin. "No," said Judith, "I think I'll take French."

We used to call Gertrude "the officer" because she was always in the principal's office.

In 1929 a bunch of us attended **Camp Kadimah**, which was later called **Camp Keeyuma**. The head of the camp was Rabbi Sam Borofsky, who was also the principal of **Machziki Talmud Torah** of Boro Park. That summer of 1929, Lester, Judy and I, Aaron

and Judy Krumbein, Larry, Eddie and Alty, all went to camp. I remember that my father paid \$250. for the three of us. When we got up to camp the baseball field wasn't ready. As far as I was concerned it was a good summer because I beat Alty for the tennis championship, and we later teamed up to win the doubles.

There were separate girls' and boys' camps. Thus when we boys put on a play, my brother Lester and Herman Wouk took the female parts. They would invariably forget themselves, and sit with their legs apart. This always got the biggest laugh of the evening. Herman Wouk's book *City Boy* has a pretty good description of the camp.

My father had a tremendous sense of color. He came up to camp wearing an orange Harris Tweed suit with knickers, a chocolate brown shirt, an orange tie, and a cap.

JUDITH (daughter of Lena): Saul was very smooth and dapper.

ROBERT (son of Simon): Saul had a lifetime membership in *Arthur Murray*. There wasn't a dance step he didn't know. He was very dapper on the dance floor, with his suede shoes.

IRVING: My father had great coordination. He could hit a baseball a mile. I thought he was the Jewish Babe Ruth. He was an excellent dancer, and loved to dance.

JACK (son of Suzy): Pauline and Saul were great dancers, and they loved to dance. It was their hobby the way other people like to play golf. They would go up to the mountains every week, to go dancing.

LESTER: One of the Romanian delicacies I love is *Icre*, which is fish roe prepared with oil, vinegar and onion marinade. Romanian caviar. Years ago when Myrtle and I were in Israel, we arrived at our hotel in Haifa at about 9 in the evening, after a long day of travel. We were starving. The kitchen was closing. So I went into the kitchen to plead with the chef for some food. "No, no," he said. "What do you Americans know about food." We got to talking about *Icre* and whether pink was preferable to black and how it should be prepared. Naturally, it came out that my father was from Romania, and so was he. He not only prepared supper for us, but he joined us at our table.

DOROTHY (daughter of Moishe): When Ralph and I were in Israel in 1990, I was amazed at all of the traditional dishes which were available. I learned that an extremely large number of Romanians had come during WWII. The Romanian Government had sold them rather than kill them.

EDMUND (son of Simon): I knew Uncle Joe and Uncle Sol pretty well because we went up to New Hampshire every summer for my mother's asthma. We stayed at a boarding house or hotel not far from the house which Joe shared with Sol. Their families stayed up there all summer. Irving (Sol and Pauline's son), and Maurice (Joe and Ida's son), owned an old Ford convertible named Leo. We spent delightful summers up there.

ROBERT (son of Simon): My father had an old Huppmobile. It just quit one day on the way up to the White Mountains. We pushed it into a Ford dealer, and my father bought a new Mercury. I think it was the first year they made the Mercury.

IRVING: I remember the day that Huppmobile quit. Simon took out a valise full of dollar bills which he proceeded to lay out on the hood of the new Mercury at the dealer's. Uncle Simon soon had a new car.

LESTER: We had a picture of my father in uniform, but I don't think he served in the Army. But he was a great horseman and when we were up in the White Mountains we rode together a great deal.

IRVING: When I was away at college my father sold our house for \$500, including the refrigerator. When I came home from school, no one was home.

SARAH (1897-1960) AND ABRAHAM KRUMBEIN (1892-1980)

AARON (born 1921): My mother, Sarah, came to this country in 1907, together with Lena, Suzy and her family, Sol, Joe, Simon, and their parents, Eliezer and Yehudis. I think the other boys had come here before. [They actually came in 1899, 1900, and 1901. See the Benny, Louie, or Sam sections.]

ELI (born 1926): My mother, Sarah, described to me with anguish, how she returned from school one day, after the death of her parents, to find the apartment empty. She asked after her mother's silver candlesticks and was told they had been given to the moving man (perhaps to pay for the move).

AARON: My mother's mother (Yehudis) died in 1913 and her father (Eliezer) died in 1912. She and her sister Lena then went to live with Aunt Pauline and Uncle Saul, who married and made a home for them. (In 1917, my parents were married from Pauline and Sol's home.) At that same time of Eliezer and Yehudis' deaths, Uncle Simon went to live with Uncle Louie, I believe. [It may be that in 1913 - immediately after the death of Yehudis - Simon, Lena and Sarah all went to live with Louis and Ida. When Pauline and Saul were married, in 1914, Lena and Sarah went to live with them.] That first year that Lena and my mother moved in with Pauline and Saul, Lena became critically ill. Pauline nursed Lena through many months of sickness until her recovery. Lena had had viral encephalitis

ELI: At the Family Reunion of 1983, held at Irving's home in the Adirondacks, Aunt Pauline told me that she and Saul were very young when they married, but that they loved Sarah and Lena and wanted to provide a home for them. She also baby-sat for my sister Judith. I don't remember our families being that close, but I am nine years younger than Judith. It may be that, later, business deals gone awry and differences in religious thinking, distanced them. Also, Abe and Sarah moved to Boro Park and Saul and Pauline lived in Flatbush.

Aunt Pauline said that my father used to kid her about the fact that she was "old," but that she was, "as old or maybe younger than" my mother, Sarah, whom she had taken into her home. My father could be a tease.

Recently, I found Simon's draft card and sent it to his son Ed. Simon's address in 1917 was my parents' newly-married address on Bedford Avenue. Simon and Lena lived with my parents at one point. Uncle Benny Littman always affectionately referred to my mother, Sarah, as *schwiger*, or mother-in-law. She was the "mother-in-law" he dealt with when he was courting Lena. There were also the brothers to contend with. My father said that when one of the sisters was considering a husband, the brothers would take him over to the Russian Baths one night, to "look him over." There would be swimming, massage, schwitz, dinner, and "a looking over."

AARON: My father Abe came from Eastern Galicia, but his family came from Romania, way back. I think his grandparents emigrated to Galicia.

ELI: Our grandfather, Aaron Krumbein was a postmaster in a town called Bolechow, about 35 miles from Lemberg (Lvov), now in the Ukraine - and brewer of beer under government license, some distance from Bolechow. [The brewing of beer and/or whiskey was a common Jewish business, as was the ownership of inns.] He came home on the holidays, and his wife Chana would become pregnant. He was bankrolled to come to the United States by a cousin of Chana's named Morris Raphael. He had a button and trimmings store, I think on Eldridge Street. My grandmother, Chana, was pregnant with my father Abe, when Aaron left for America. Thus Abe did not see his father until he was almost five, when the rest of the family came to the United States.

My parents told me that Uncle Simon made friends with Abe's father, Aaron, who had a men's woolen cloth store, to sell to merchant tailors. Abe, (and the Krumbeins), lived at 50 Delancy Street at the time he married Sarah. The family store, **Aaron Krumbein & Sons**, was on the ground floor. The family lived above. It was the first time that Abe had lived in a building that had inside plumbing. It was Simon's contact with Aaron Krumbein, my grandfather, that made Abe, "a Galitzianer," acceptable to the Romanian Milbergs.

My father, who made his share of caustic remarks, always had deprecating remarks to make about Romanians. I did not realize, until after his death in 1980, that his father, Aaron (Aron), was actually born in Moldava, and moved to Bolechow in Eastern Galicia.



Sarah & Abe Krumbein



Aaron, Eliezer, Judith

AARON: My mother and father were married on February 11, 1917. They chose that day because it was Abraham Lincoln's birthday and they were both great Lincoln admirers. In fact, they started their honeymoon in Washington, D. C., so that they could visit the Booth theater where Lincoln was assassinated, and the house where he died. Only then did they go to Niagara Falls, which in those days was the traditional destination of newly-weds.

ELI: The invitation to my parents' wedding reads: "Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin Milberg invite you to the wedding of their sister . ." I have the receipt from the **Knapp Mansion**, a few doors down on Bedford Avenue, showing that Uncle Benny paid the deposit. Based on the invitation, he probably paid for the entire wedding. [There is a copy of the contract and the invitation in Appendix C.]

REA (daughter of Moishe): Abe and my father were close. In those days there was no such thing as approved Kosher wine. The only way to be sure was to make it yourself. I think Abe got his Kosher wine from my father. Abe liked my father because my father was observant.

LARRY (son of Moishe): I used to deliver wine to Abe every Friday.

AARON: We used to get our wine from Uncle Moishe. When we ran low, my father would send my sister Judy and me to Uncle Moishe, each of us carrying an empty bottle for refill. By the way, this was during prohibition, so we carried the bottles in paper bags.

One day my father told me to tell Uncle Moishe that the wine was good, but Moishe should package the flies in a separate container. I did not understand that it was a joke and being a good little boy, I delivered the message. Not only did we not get the wine but it was the beginning of a rift between them which escalated from that point. At that time, they both attended **Temple Beth-El** in Boro Park where they sat only a few rows apart. After the rift, they would pass each other without greeting.

ROBERT (son of Simon): Abe and Sam used to come down to Florida together. They were like the odd couple. They liked each other, but they were always arguing.

DOROTHY (daughter of Moishe): There was a dispute between my father, and Abe and Sarah. I think it had to do with wine for the Rabbi.

LARRY (son of Moishe): Abe was a character. His place of business was near ours (Ben and Irving's, at 599 Broadway), so we used to pick him up in the morning, when Abe and Sarah lived on 17th Avenue and 43 Street (Brooklyn). Abe was never on time. We would wait for him every morning. My brother Irving drove, and every morning he would say that he was not going to wait another minute. But he always waited.

ELI: My father was a terrific salesman. Once he went on a selling trip for **Union Star** (Benny and Louie). They tried to contact him in the second city of his scheduled trip, but my father was not at the hotel where he was scheduled to be. They called my mother. Did she know, they asked, where my father was. "Sure," she said, "he's on the beach playing with the kids."

My father explained to Benny and Louie that he had sold so much merchandise on the first stop of his trip, that they couldn't deliver it anyway. What was the point of getting more orders, he asked, and alienating several customers, when this way he would only alienate one.

At the time my parents were married in 1917, my father Abe was in business with Leon Moskowitz. They were selling agents for **Union Star** (Benny and Louis), and for **J. & S.** (Joe and Saul), and others. I believe that by 1936 or 1937, my father was again in business with Leon Moskowitz. I remember this because Leon had a large 1937 Buick. [This is the same Leon Moskowitz that Simon was in business with in the early '20s. See the **Simon and Sadie** section.]

AARON: In 1912, my mother was valedictorian at graduation from her elementary school, **P.S. 62**.

JUDITH: (born 1918) Sarah went to **Washington Irving High School** but did not graduate. Her English teacher was Dr. Garriel R. Mason who later became principal of the newly opened **Abraham Lincoln High School**. When my mother took me to **Abraham Lincoln** to register me, he recognized her.

AARON: Sarah did not go on to high school for economic reasons.

JUDITH: Mother was interested in Art History. She enrolled for courses at **Teachers' College, Columbia;** and painting courses at **Hunter.**

ELI: Sarah pursued her studies in child development and psychology at **Columbia,** as an adult education student, and at **N. Y. U.** She was an avid disciple of Rabbis Mordecai Kaplan, Milton Steinberg and Robert Gordis, at **The Jewish Theological Seminary.** She made friends with the teachers and the young rabbinical students. Anxious to spread the gospel to other women,, she established a Shabbos afternoon *Oneg Shabbat* Program with **Hadassah.** This usually met, at tea, at the **Menorah Temple** on 50th Street, corner 14th Avenue in Boro Park each month.

The speakers, were our "*Oneg Shabbat*" guests. I heard lots of gossip and learned lots of songs and Yiddishkeit in this manner. Later, when my sister Judith met Robert Segal, who lived at the **Seminary** while attending **Julliard School,** she met, and she invited many other young rabbis to address groups in Boro Park. We benefited from having them speak, and they benefited from the few dollars they were paid.

My mother was a Zionist as a kid on the Lower East Side. She was a member of a group whose members included Rabbis Abba Hillel Silver and Barnet Brickner, both later of Cleveland, and Rebecca Brickner. She interested my father in Zionism. Over the years he became Treasurer (*Gizbor*) of the **J. N. F. (*Keren Kayemet*) of the United States,** and Treasurer of the ***Keren Hayesod* (Palestine Foundation Fund of the United States),** each for 25 years, or more. He was a member of the Finance Committee of the **Zionist Organization of America** and during the Second World War, was a member of a rump Executive Committee of **The World Zionist Organization,** called **The Zionist Actions Committee,** representing countries of the free world. My brother-in-law, Robert Segal, told me that my dad signed and guaranteed many bank loans for the **United Palestine Appeal,** when they were short of money. He said that Abe signed the notes that made the first purchase of aircraft possible for the soon-to-be, and later, for the just-established, State of Israel.

JUDITH: I believe that my mother was a Zionist as far back as the days when she was a youngster in Rudacaneni.

ANNA (daughter of Moishe): My present tenant upstairs is a woman by the name of Moscovitz. Her husband, who died a few years ago, used to work for Abe Krumbein.

Years ago it was very difficult to get a job if you were a *Shomer Shabbos*. But Abe, who was himself observant, employed other religious people. I know of someone else, a man by the name of Berlin, whose daughter still lives on 17th Ave, who worked for Abe. Abe made it possible for these people to get jobs.

Sarah could do anything. Everybody in Boro Park knew Sarah Krumbein. Sarah was the one who brought **JNF (Jewish National Fund)** to Boro Park. She was a terrific fund-raiser. She was an orator. And she had a beautiful home.

AARON: Early in the 1920's, the Romanian Minister of the Interior, a man by the name of Dr. Lupu, visited Uncle Moishe. Moishe called to say he was bringing the Minister over to our house. He felt that my mother could entertain him for a while. My mother was not prepared but she took some wine, chopped up some ice from the ice box, put the ice in the wine to cool it, and then served the wine to the Minister when he arrived. He diplomatically explained that the way to cool wine was to surround it by ice and not to put the ice into the wine.

After the Second World War, I saw a reference to Dr. Lupu in **The New York Times**. He was being considered for the office of Interim President of Romania. [There are other references to Dr. Lupu by Anna and Dorothy in the section on **Moishe and Tauba**.]

GERTRUDE (daughter of Moishe): Aunt Sarah made beautiful parties for my cousin Judy, to which I was invited. Sarah was meticulous, and I always had to pass inspection to make sure I was properly dressed. I always was. At these parties, Aunt Sarah gave out presents to all of the children, which was thrilling for me because I was not accustomed to that kind of thing.

JUDITH (daughter of Lena): When my parents moved up to Hoosick Falls, I lived with Aunt Sarah and Uncle Abe until I finished school at **Flatbush Yeshiva**. Abe always brought flowers for Sarah on Friday afternoon, for Shabbat. Abe could be a good teaser and sarcastic. For a while I did not speak to him, even though I was living with him. But he was actually a very nice man. Later when he was traveling, he sent me post cards from all over the world.

I remember sitting with Aunt Sarah and listening to the radio as King Edward VIII made his abdication speech, "for the woman I love." We were both in tears.

ELI: My mother was greatly respected. When Uncle Moishe at first objected to his son Irving's engagement to Selma, Irving came to our home to discuss it with Sarah and Abe. Then he and Selma came to our house to plan their wedding, at our dining room table. When Uncle Sam and Aunt Mollye's sons, Larry and Eddie, were planning a surprise 25th wedding anniversary party for their parents, to take place at their synagogue in Flatbush, they planned it over Sunday breakfast and lunches at "Aunt Sarah's" dining room table. There was some quibbling over who should pay what portion of the costs. The question was whether the costs should be divided into three equal parts, or according to ability to pay based on salary.

My mother had a speech pattern unlike the special twang of her siblings. And over the years, she added a bit of high tone, almost British accent. Abe and Sarah only spoke a little Yiddish at home, when we children were not to understand. She pushed Hebrew language study. She helped organize the first Hebrew-speaking *gan*, Kindergarten, in the United States, at the **Machziki Talmud Torah**, a remarkable Boro Park institution. Judith was a student in the kindergarten.

AARON: My mother was very active with **Hadassah**. She founded two or three chapters, one in Boro Park, one in Kensington and still another, I think. Because she was so active, she was able to get Henrietta Szold to speak at one of her **Hadassah** groups one afternoon. Following the afternoon meeting, Mrs. Szold told my mother that she was scheduled to speak that same evening at another **Hadassah** chapter not too far away and that she was very tired. My mother invited her to our house to take a nap. When I came home from school, she was asleep in my bed. That's the story of the day that Henrietta Szold slept in my bed.

ELI: I think that it was **Hadassah Medical Organization** (and **Hadassah Hospital**), and **Youth Aliyah** that were Sarah's special loves.

My parents were passionate Zionists and sponsors of Hebrew and Jewish studies. Louis Lipsky, Stephen Wise, Barnett Brickner, were old and current friends. They ate with us, regaled and dazzled us, charmed us and inspired us. They spoke at fundraising events in our home and community and at educational programs.

My parents' inspiration was Dr. Samson Benderly. He was a Palestine born scholar, who came to **Johns Hopkins**, I believe before WWI, to study medicine. In Baltimore he decided that Jewish education in America needed him more than medicine in Palestine. He

established the first **Bureau of Jewish Education** in Baltimore and then in New York. When Abe died in 1980, he was the only surviving member of **The Bureau**, which became **The Jewish Education Committee** and the **New York Board of Jewish Education**. He was a member of the succeeding groups.

In the 1930's he and a few friends bankrolled **Camp Achvah**, first in Arverne, Long Island, and then on an old Patroon estate in Godeffroy, New York, the first U. S. Hebrew speaking camp. Judith, Aaron and I attended. It was the most important educational experience in my life. I am grateful that I had the privilege of knowing Dr. Benderly, the father of modern Jewish education in America.

My mother supported Abe in all of this. Though they were unbelievably charitable and generous to family and friends, and though they collected antiques when they were inexpensive, and had a beautiful apartment in Brooklyn and later in Manhattan and a summer home in Long Beach, they were personally rather frugal. Inexpensive apartments, no automobile, in order to have money for charities and for quiet loans to family and friends, in time of need. It was often a source of contention between Abe and Sarah, that there was too much public and private charity, at the expense of family life, for them.

Abe made a fortunate investment in Eastern Life Insurance Company of New York, which financed his extensive charities to **The Weizmann Institute of Science**, **The Hebrew University**, **The Jewish Theological Seminary of American**, **The Haifa Technion** and the **Albert Einstein College of Medicine of Yeshiva University**. After the State was established, Abe believed that more emphasis should be placed, again, on American Jewish life, and he put his money where his mouth was. I sense that he gave away more than 75% of his money in the last years of his life. His only regret was that it was not 100%. However, his colleagues, whose larger contributions constituted only a fraction of their wealth, thought Abe and Sarah, and then Abe alone, were in their big league. And Abe loved being among the "big boys," even if only a lesser "big boy." He was a very poor boy, with a grade school education, who sponsored higher education, and loved it and valued it, above all else.

Abe and Sarah relished the notion that their kids spoke, read and wrote Hebrew and were educated to the teeth, and that their grandchildren were provided with such opportunities.

LENA (1899-1962) AND BENJAMIN LITTMAN (1894-1973)

ANNA (daughter of Moishe): Benny Littman's family was from Rudacaneni. His mother was my grandmother's sister. Thus his mother Malka, was my great aunt. Benny came to the United States some years before us, but I don't remember when exactly.

His father, Yossel, was a *shochate* (ritual slaughterer). They lived in a large house down the hill from us, where Yossel did the slaughtering of the chickens in the back yard.

Benny had an aunt named Devora, after whom my sister Dorothy is named. She was Malka's sister. When Devora was old and frail, she wanted to go to Palestine. Yossel, Benny's father, took her to Palestine. I heard that the trip took six months. I don't know if that was round trip, or one way.

Benny also had an unmarried sister, named Rochal, a beautiful girl who contracted typhus, and died, I think in her early twenties. I was a kid at the time. Women did not go to the cemetery but I heard that they made a *chuppah* for her at the burial, as was the custom for an unwed woman of marriageable age.

Benny also had a brother by the name of Murray who lived in the Bronx. He had come to the U. S. some years earlier. He always wrote to his parents in Romania, Malka and Yossel. They would read us the letters. The letters always said, "things are very different in the U. S." In one letter, Murray, to make his point wrote, "even the garlic is different." Murray had a retail store on 163 Street and 3rd Avenue, in the Bronx. I don't think he ever had any children.

We were very close with the Littmans. When we left Romania, Sheva, another sister of Benny's, gave me something to remember her by. It is like a little place-mat, needle-pointed and with fringes. I have it to this day.

ELI (son of Sarah): I understand that Benny emigrated shortly before WWI. Uncle Ben served in the U. S. Army in the First World War. He wrote to my father, Abe, from Camp Jackson, South Carolina. Benny was under bombardment during the war. [In Appendix C, there is a copy of a postal card which Benny sent to Abe, announcing his safe arrival in Europe.]

Benny told us about his first bombardment, and about the furor among the American troops as the Armistice approached; the feeling of the troops was that the war should be carried to German soil at Metz, and their chagrin that it was not. He sang "Mademoiselle from Artmentiers, Parlez-Vous," and many other marching songs, all in his inimitable accent. Benny was very special to me.

I have a letter from my father's brother Morris J (Moishe) to my father and mother, from an army hospital in Georgia, asking to have Lena write to him, Moishe. Lena and Moishe were always close, but Benny Littman won the prize.

One of the benefits of serving in the Army was that he became a naturalized citizen as a result of his service, with Aunt Lee, as his wife, also gaining citizenship. When they moved up to Hoosick Falls, Aunt Lee registered as a Democrat in solidly Republican territory. The good folk up there challenged her citizenship credentials, and as a result, she had to go through the naturalization process in the ordinary way.

My mother and Lena were always very close. They were two orphan girls who clung to each other. They lived together in their various brothers' homes after the deaths of their parents. I have this sense that the relationship which Lena and Sarah had with each other was the primary relationship of their lives, even after they married. In later years, when my parents went out of town to Florida or elsewhere, Aunt Lee, Uncle Ben and Judy moved in to take care of Aaron and me. My sister Judith was already out of the house, at college perhaps. In Sarah's final year before she died in 1960, Lena came to New York several times to nurse her and to take care of our household.

I started school at **P. S. 192**, but in the third grade I enrolled at the **Yeshivah of Flatbush**. Judy Littman was a few years ahead of me and the most brilliant Talmud student in the school. She helped me with my homework, and introduced me to the mysteries of Rashi, *Mishneh* and *Gemarra*. I used to walk home, for lunch with Judy in Aunt Lee's kitchen.

As Judy entered the eighth grade, Uncle Benny Littman's business failed. One day I found him home at lunchtime and he asked me to keep it to myself. My parents suspected something was wrong and asked me if he was at home, since his factory was closed.

JUDITH (born 1924): I was an "only child," and among the youngest of my generation, and was invited to most of the family *simchas*. I was the flower girl at Lester and Myrtle's wedding.



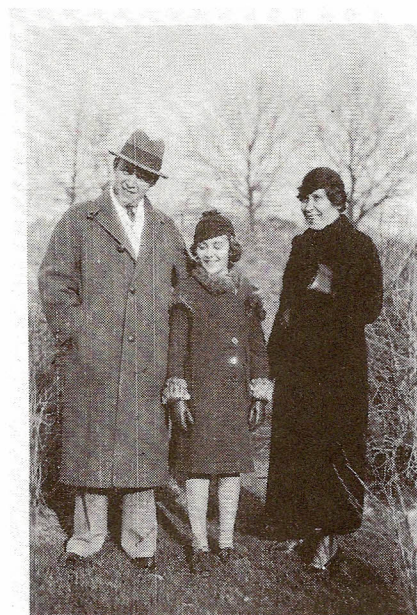
Ben & Lena Littman

**Right: Lena & Sarah
(in the middle)
with 2 friends**



**Sam, Sarah, Abe
around 1917**

**Right: Ben & Lena with Judith
around 1935**



I remember the family as being very close. We were especially close to the Krumbeins - my mother and Sarah being the two "baby sisters." We're still close. My daughter is at the University of Chicago, and has met with Eli Krumbein several times.

When we had to move to Hoosick Falls in 1936 in order for my father to be in business with Si and Saul, it was traumatic for my mother. Not only was she separated from the rest of her family, but I had to stay behind in Brooklyn for six months until graduation from the Yeshiva of Flatbush. I lived with the Krumbeins for that period.

Before moving to Hoosick Falls my father had been in business with the Wolfsons, but that did not work out. Earlier, my mother had worked for Benny, and for Louie.

ELI (son of Sarah): Then the Littmans moved up to Hoosick Falls, New York, where Benny [Littman] worked for Uncle Ben [Milberg]. I think it was called **Milestone Undergarment Company**. Judy lived with us during her 7th and 8th grades when her parents moved to Hoosick Falls. We were extremely close, like brother and sister. When she went up to Hoosick Falls, I felt abandoned. My mother too loved her, like a daughter. When I introduced my future wife, Elaine, to my mother, the highest praise she could give was that Elaine resembled Judy Littman, in her intellectuality, in personality, and in appearance.

JUDITH: During the time I lived with the Krumbeins, I remember that Abe always brought flowers for Sarah on Friday afternoon, for Shabbat. Abe could be a good teaser and sarcastic. For a while I did not speak to him, even though I was living with him. But he was actually a very nice man. Later when he was traveling, he sent me post cards from all over the world.

I remember sitting with Aunt Sarah and listening to the radio as King Edward VIII made his abdication speech, "for the woman I love." We were both in tears.

ELI (son of Sarah): Si Milberg [Benny's son], as a bachelor, lived with the Littmans for several years, until he married Vicki. I used to visit Aunt Lee, Uncle Ben, and Judy in the summer and at other vacations. I roomed with Si the summer of my 12th and 13th birthdays (1938 and 1939). He was charming. Took me out on some dates, drove me in his fast cars and took me to Saratoga Springs, to the races and to visit with his mother (Yetta), who was visiting there.

LENORE (Benny and Yetta's grand-daughter): My father, Si, said Uncle Benny (Littman) was not the world's best cutter. My father thought that Uncle Benny wasted a lot of material, because he used a great thick pencil which left a mark half an inch thick on the fabric. As this was his guide, he naturally wasted a lot of fabric. But Uncle Benny would never admit that he was wrong.

Finally my father caught Benny in a mistake so blatant that even Uncle Benny had to admit his error. To mark the occasion, Dad had Benny give him a dollar bill, which he then had framed. The kids loved Uncle Benny.

LESTER (son of Saul): Benny opened his own contracting place in Troy, New York. We did some business with them. Benny was a good party-er.

ELI: When Lena's oldest grand-daughter, Teena (Tovah) was *Bat Mitzvah*, my sister Judith and I went to Troy for the event. Aunt Lena spoke of my mother's death, and of how much she missed her.

FAY (Susan's daughter): Judith's husband Oscar used to be on radio quiz shows. We used to call him "the brain."

ELI: Uncle Ben was a rough diamond, innovative, impulsive and loving. He was a careful cutter of garments. He stayed so close to the pattern and was so focused on saving cloth, that he several times cut off his finger tips with the huge rotary cutting knife. I can still smell the cigar he chewed on as he cut through 18 inches of cloth.

Benny was strong. He could bend a bottle cap between his fingers, or his teeth.

Uncle Ben loved that last cigar before *Shabbos*. He referred to that last smoke as *pikuach nefesh*, a life saver, in advance of those long summer Saturdays.

I think it was around 1970 that Benny called me from Troy and said he'd like to come and visit us in Highland Park, Illinois. Hair still curly, though grayer. A little stooped, dancing grey eyes, cigar, double breasted suit. He liked sitting in the living room, watching the kids, telling a story, singing a song.

He had come on the overnight Pullman. When it came time for him to go I bought him a ticket on TWA because I thought that would be easier for him. Foolish me! Benny wanted to "travel" a little. He felt confined by retirement. He was beautiful.

APPENDIX A - MORE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

*I*n the 18th and early 19th centuries, Romania was a Turkish province but ruled by Greek princes for the benefit of the Turks. In turn, the Greeks used Romanian aristocrats to exploit their local fiefdoms, the latter, in their turn, often employing Jewish managers. The whole purpose, of course, was to squeeze the peasants to the maximum. As Turkish power crumbled, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, on the west, wanted more than the Transylvania it had already grabbed. They wanted Walachia and Moldavia as well but had to contend with Russia which had the same idea. As a matter of fact, Russia had already attempted to invade Moldavia a few times under Nicholas. Rudacaneni is in the province of Moldavia. We are now talking about the years around 1855-1860. (Bear in mind that Eliezer and Yehudis were born in 1856 and 1852, respectively.)

The Russian occupations ended with the Treaty of Paris which ended the Crimean war in which Britain, France and Turkey had fought Russia. The famous charge of the Light Brigade took place in Balaclava in the Crimea, on the Black Sea, not too far from where the Prut and the Danube empty into it. The treaty guaranteed the integrity of Moldavia and Walachia, which almost immediately declared themselves the Romanian nation, on December 23, 1861.

The Romanian politicians figured they needed a King, something that seemed important in those days. They got themselves a German prince, later known as King Carol I (Charles) who turned out to be a good find. He is credited with bringing Romania into the modern world.

In 1877, Russia decided to go to war with Turkey, got Romania's help and the two armies got to Istanbul (Constantinople). The Treaty of San Stefano, which ended that war, recognized Romania as a state completely independent of Turkey but also gave Bessarabia to Russia. The Prut became the eastern border of Romania.

Subsequently, and because of the continuing state-sponsored atrocities against the Jews in Romania, the Congress of Berlin was convened (1878) to review and settle the "Eastern Question." The Jewish "Alliance Israelite Universelle," representing Jews of Europe and America, sent a delegation to defend the rights of the Romanian Jews.

England, through Disraeli; Germany, through Bismarck; Austria, Italy and France all insisted that Romanian independence be conditional on the granting of equality of rights to all, including absolute freedom of worship, and that no religious belief should be a bar to the enjoyment of any political rights. The 1866 Romanian Constitution said that only Christians could become citizens of Romania and own rural land. Romania had to accede to the demands of the great powers, but popular opinion at home made it impossible to put these new provisions into effect, so almost no Jews became citizens. They were regarded as foreigners and had no civil rights, but were liable for military service and the payment of taxes.

In 1907 there was a great agrarian revolt called the Peasants' Revolt, but which we would call a Pogrom. It started as an attack on the Jews and soon spread to all large landowners. Many towns and villages were sacked and burned, especially in Moldavia and especially around Iasi where the Jewish population was centered. This is the Pogrom that Simon experienced and talks about. After the suppression of the Revolt, land reforms were instituted to improve the condition of the peasants.

In 1912, Serbia seized Macedonia. Bulgaria in turn attacked both Serbia and Greece. Trying to take advantage of the situation, Romania attacked Bulgaria from the north. But Bulgaria soon overran Southern Romania, including Bucharest. The Royal family and the government fled from Bucharest to Iasi and its environs. There is a story floating around the family that someone in the family cooked for the Royal family. Maybe the story is true. Maybe the Royal family bought challah and bagels from Moishe Milberg when the Royal family fled to the Iasi area. It may all tie together. And it also serves to confirm that Moishe was a man of some influence, and may, in turn, explain his apparent hesitancy in leaving Romania.

Romania did not enter WWI until 1916, but exited in 1917 when its so called ally, Russia, exited following the Bolshevik Revolution. As a reward for entering the war, Romania received Bessarabia back and kept it till it was seized again by Russia in 1940. Romania deserved this reward for the suffering it underwent during the war, not at the hands of its enemies, but at the hands of its ally, Russia. Russia entered Romania across the Prut to "assist," but really looted, stole, pillaged and lived off the Romanians. Much of this took place - guess where - around Iasi. This is what Nat Joseph personally experienced. These conditions may well have played a part in Moishe's decision to leave, as they did in the case of Nat Joseph's family.

Through the years, one thing remained constant, namely, Romania's anti-Semitism. At Versaille in 1919, Clemenceau roundly criticized its own ally, Romania, for not having granted the Jews the civil rights it had promised to grant, both by the Treaty of Paris (1858), ending the Crimean War, and the Treaty of Berlin (1878), ending the Russo-Turkish War.

In 1900, the population of Romania was about 6 million, of whom about 300,000 were Jews. This made the proportion of Jews the highest of any country in the world. Since we know that Eliezer was quite successful in the bakery and milling business by the time he left Romania in 1907, and that, after all, the family name was Milberg, it is of special interest that in 1900, Romania was the third largest producer of wheat in the world, behind only the United States and Russia. [The source of most of this historical information is the 11th Edition of the **Encyclopedia Britannica**.]

APPENDIX B - OTHER COMMENTARY

In the process of collecting information for **THE STORY**, we ran into bits of interesting, sometimes contradictory, material, provocative theories and/or questions which did not seem to quite fit into **THE STORY**, but were too interesting not to be mentioned. They are mostly about the family origins in Romania, and the change of the Milberg name.

Note 1. This is a theory about the reason for the move of the family from Russia to Romania. We know that Moishe was a "follower" of the Vaslui Rebbe, Rabbi Halperin. We know this because his daughter, Anna, tells us that Moishe often traveled by horse and wagon, to consult with the Rebbe. The original Vaslui Rebbe came from Russia with his father-in-law, the Ruzhin-er Rebbe, who was perhaps the foremost chassidic leader of the early 19th century. After some problems with the Russian government, the Ruzhin-er Rebbe moved to Kishinev, not far from the Romanian border. In 1840, expecting exile by the government, he fled again (with his followers), this time to Iasi in Romania, and shortly thereafter, farther west to Austria.

However, his son-in-law, Rabbi David Halperin, remained in Romania, settled in Vaslui, and was known as the Vaslui-er Rebbe; Vaslui is about 30 miles south of Rudacaneni. Moishe, Eliezer's son, was apparently something of a disciple of the descendant of this Rebbe. A theory might be that a Schneer ancestor went with the Ruzhin-er Rebbe from Kishinev to Iasi, and that that was the connection which ultimately resulted in Moishe being a follower of the Vaslui-er Rebbe, the Ruzhin-er's son-in-law. See the remarks by Anna about this, and also see the letter in Appendix C, from a descendant of the Vaslui Rebbe to Paul Roth. Further indication of the strength of this connection: Rea tells us that whenever her brothers, Ben or Irving, would visit Romania, they would visit the Rebbe, and of course, help him out with money. [*Schneer* is a chassidic name and means something like "radiance."]

Actually we have one other (admittedly far-fetched) support for this theory. There is an eye witness report, recorded in the Jewish Encyclopedia, of a visitor to the Ruzhin-er Rebbe who says "he [the Rebbe] has no beard, only a mustache." This was the style of

Moishe (and his brothers), who may have emulated the style of their Rebbe - although we must also note that their father, Eliezer, wore a beard.

NOTE 2: Larry, the son of Moishe, tells us that when Irving and Ben and he were in business at 599 Broadway, they received a visit from a Luther Milberg, who said that he was from Shanghai. His family had fled Russia (or Romania?) and headed East. He was trying to find out if there was a connection between himself and our Milbergs. They could not find any. (Luther? Leizer?)

NOTE 3: We now have been told that Eliezer had a brother or maybe a brother-in-law in Philadelphia, named Schneer, and that there was a Montreal cousin named Schneerer. Was there also a Montreal brother named Schneerer? If the Philadelphian was a brother and had a different name, then it seems pretty certain that Eliezer changed his name to Milberg, and not the father. If Eliezer changed his name, why not his brothers? Did they leave Romania at different times? Were they impacted by different events? Here is a possibility:

In 1877, when Eliezer would have been 21, Russia and Romania went to war with Turkey, and marched on Constantinople. Eliezer could have changed his name at that time to avoid the Romanian draft. If by that time his brothers had already come to America, they would have had no need to change their name. And by age 21, Eliezer was already married to Yehudis Lemberg, thus supporting Aaron Krumbein's theory about the source of the name Milberg. Further information might be available from the Philadelphia or Montreal parts of the family, if someone could track them down.

NOTE 4: Benny Littman's mother was Yehudis' sister. Thus a Lemberg sister married a man named Littman. That might be a mine of Romanian and other information for someone willing to dig into the Littman connection. Yehudis also had a brother-in-law by the name of Schlomo Littman. Schlomo had a son named Sol. They lived right around the corner from Moishe and Tauba, on 45th Street in Borough Park.

NOTE 5: We have a copy of Eliezer's Death Certificate, which is reproduced in Appendix C. If the information on this Death Certificate is correct then our theories about the name change and the Russian origin are not correct. The Certificate says that Eliezer's father's name was Jonas Milberg, and that Jonas was born in Romania. It also says that Eliezer's mother's maiden name was Schneer, and that she, too, was born in Romania. The

Certificate also says he died at age 60, and that when he died in 1912, he had been in the United States for 9 years.

We believe that the information on the Death Certificate about the name is incorrect or incomplete; and that the age at death is wrongly stated. We believe that the information on the tombstone is correct. Too much time and care go into the preparation of a tombstone for it to be otherwise. Thus Eliezer's name was almost certainly *Eliezer ben Schneer*. Besides, Aaron Krumbein remembers his father saying Kaddish on Eliezer's *yahrzeit*; and referring to him as *Eliezer ben Schneer*; and Saul's Hebrew name is Schneer; and none of the children is named any variation of Jonas. The "Joes" are named for a *Yosef*. There is a possibility that Eliezer's father was named Jonas Schneer Milberg, or Schneer Jonas Milberg, or Jonas Schneer. There is a good possibility that the "Milberg" was added retroactively so as not to confuse the doctor filling out the Certificate.

As for the age at death stated on the Certificate, we believe that it, too, is incorrect. After some investigation or reflection, the correct age was put on the granite. The tombstones of Eliezer (and of Yehudis), are among the largest and grandest in that part of the cemetery, each covered with a long inscription describing the virtues of the deceased. It is very hard to believe that either of these tombstones, on which so much attention and money was lavished, states an age which is not correct.

How about the fact that, on the Death Certificate, Eliezer's mother's maiden name was also "Schneer"? Possible explanations are: (a) It was not terribly unusual for cousins to marry in those days. (b) It is also possible that it was her married name that was "Schneer" before it was changed to "Milberg," and that in filling out the Death Certificate, a mistake was made.

About the birthplace of Eliezer's parents: if our original theory is correct in that the Schneer family came from Russia and changed the name to avoid detection, then it would be only logical to continue the deception on the Death Certificate, and to say that the parents of Eliezer were born in Romania. Why look for trouble?

NOTE 6: We add this note just to compound the confusion. The following comes from the Fall 1994 edition of the **ROM SIG NEWS**, Jewish Geneological Special Interest Group for Romania: "Jewish children . . . in Romanian legal documents, used their father's first name, and sometimes also their grandfather's first name, too, as their own last name. Wives had the same last name as their children, because they used the husband's first name- and sometimes their father-in-law's, as well- as their legal last name. Obviously, by this method,

"surnames" are not passed on from one generation to the next because each generation has a different father than the previous one."

NOTE 7: It is interesting that in all the interviews, only one person mentioned THE MILBERG FAMILY TRUST. Shortly after the beginning of WWII, THE TRUST FUND was created by the "cousins" (grandchildren of Eliezer and Yehudis) and their aunts and uncles, for the purpose of helping family members in need. The act speaks for itself and is testimony to the values they held to be important.

NOTE 8: Genuine authentic Mamaliga recipe:

- 1 quart of water
- 1 tablespoon of salt
- 1 box of yellow cornmeal

In a deep pot, bring water and salt to a fast boil. A handful at a time, sift the cornmeal slowly into the boiling water, stirring constantly with a large wooden spoon. Continue adding corn meal until you get the desired thickness. Be careful when adding the cornmeal to lower the heat when it begins to boil again. There is a tendency to boil up suddenly.

Continue to heat and stir until the mush is very smooth. Cover the pot and let it cook slowly for 10 to 12 minutes or longer.

Wet a long knife in cold water and cut around the sides of the pot, loosening and pushing away the mush from the side. Turn the pot over onto a wood cutting board. Then cut slices with a white thread. Serve instead of bread with meat, stews, soup, etc.

APPENDIX C - DOCUMENTS

- a. Eliezer (Lazar) - Death Certificate, 1912
- b. Yehudis (Edith) - Death Certificate, 1913
- c. Photos of tombstones of Eliezer and Yehudis
- d. Marriage Application - Louis (Leon) and Ida, 1907
- e. Marriage Application - Joe and Ida, showing "Lemberg" as mother's name, 1912
- f. Letterhead of **Moscowitz and Krumbein** showing that in 1916 they represented **Union Star** (Benny and Louie), and **J.& S.** (Joe and Saul). The letterhead has a draft version of the invitation by Benny and Yetta to Sarah and Abe's wedding, 1917.
- g. Benny's contract for Sarah and Abe's wedding, 1917.
- h. Post card from Benny Littman to Abe Krumbein announcing Benny's safe arrival in Europe with the American Expeditionary Forces, probably 1918.
- i. Program of play by Zionist Youth Group, 1919, in Rudacaneni. Anna and Ben (Moishe's children) performed **On The Road**.
- j. Passenger list of the **S.S. La Lorraine** showing the arrival of Moishe and Tauba and family, August 16, 1920.
- k. Dr. Eisenberg prescribes **Old Forester** for Moishe, 1933.
- l. Family Circle New Year's Eve Party, December 31, 1945.
- m. Benny's Ethical Will, 1950.
- n. Abe Krumbein sponsors Elie Wiesel for honorary degree, 1967.
- o. "Thank you" letter from Rabbi Halperin to Paul Roth.

1 PLACE OF DEATH

STATE OF NEW YORK
Department of Health of The City of New York
BUREAU OF RECORDS
STANDARD CERTIFICATE OF DEATH
6794

Character of premises,
Tenement, private,
Hotel, hospital or other place, etc.

2 FULL NAME

Registered No.

6794

SEX

4 COLOR OR RACE

5 SINGLE,
MARRIED,
WIDOWED,
OR DIVORCED

13 DATE OF DEATH

Male

white

married

Febr. 29th 1912

DATE OF BIRTH

AGE

OCCUPATION

(a) Trade, profession, or
particular kind of work(b) General nature of industry,
business or establishment in
which employed (or employer)BIRTHPLACE
(State or country)(8) How long in
U.S. (if of for-
eign birth)(9) How long resi-
dent in City
of New York

PARENTS OF DECEASED

10 NAME OF
FATHER11 BIRTHPLACE
OF FATHER
(State or country)12 MAIDEN NAME
OF MOTHER13 BIRTHPLACE
OF MOTHER
(State or country)14 Special INFORMATION required in deaths in hospitals and institu-
tions and in deaths of non-residents and recent residents.Former or
usual residence

Where was disease contracted, if not at place of death?

"I hereby certify that the foregoing partic-
ulars (Nos. 1 to 14 inclusive) are correct as near
as the same can be ascertained, and I further
certify that I attended the deceased, from
March 1911 to Febr. 29, 1912,
that I last saw him alive on the 29th day of
Febr. 1912, that death occurred on
the date stated above at 6 P.M., and that
the cause of death was as follows:

Carcinoma
of the stomach

40

duration yrs. 9 mos. ds.

Contributory
(Secondary)

duration yrs. mos. ds.

Witness my hand this 29 day of Febr. 1912

Signature 25-446-1912 M. D.

Address 65 Second St.

17 PLACE OF BURIAL

DATE OF BURIAL

Academy

March 1912

18 UNDERTAKER

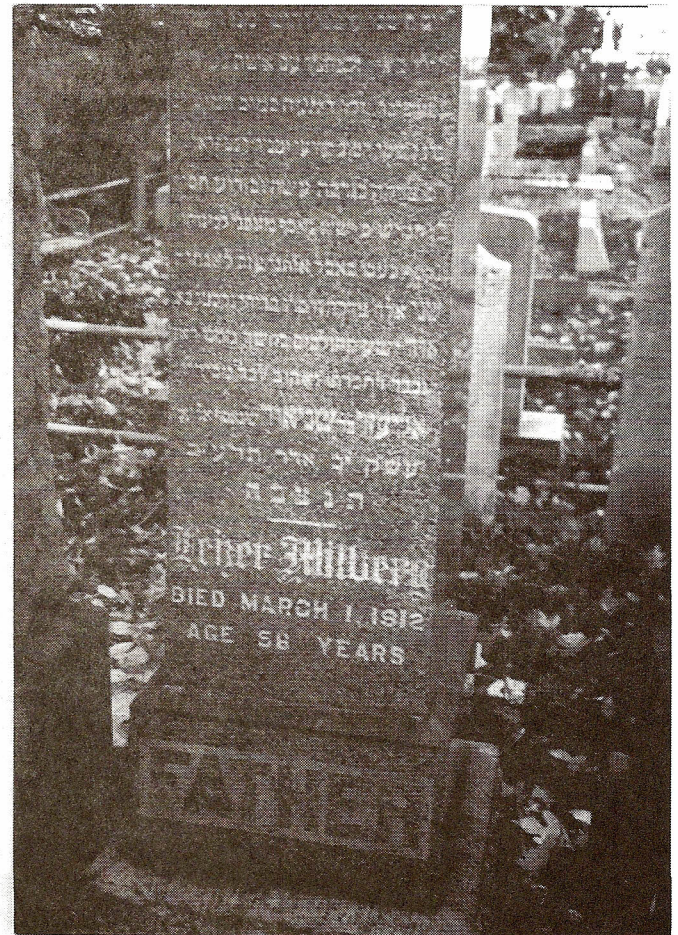
ADDRESS

Schwartz 101-125 1st St.

STATE OF NEW YORK
Department of Health of The City of New York
BUREAU OF RECORDS
STANDARD CERTIFICATE OF DEATH

1 PLACE OF DEATH *Brooklyn*
2 OF *De Graaf*
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4 OF *De Graaf*
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97 OF *De Graaf*
98 OF *De Graaf*
99 OF *De Graaf*
100 OF *De Graaf*

11 FULL NAME *Edith Hilberg*
12 COLOR OR RACE *White*
13 SINGLE, MARRIED, WIDOWED, OR DIVORCED *Widowed*
14 DATE OF DEATH *November 15, 1913*
15 I hereby certify that the foregoing particulars (Nos. 1 to 14 inclusive) are correct as near as the same can be ascertained, and I further certify that I attended the deceased from *November 4, 1913 to November 15, 1913*, that I last saw her alive on the *15* day of *November* 1913, that death occurred on the date stated above at *11 P.M.*, and that the cause of death was as follows:
Colera pneumonia
16 duration yrs mos *3* ds.
17 Contributory *Chronic corticis and myocarditis*
18 duration yrs mos *3* ds.
19 Witness my hand this *15* day of *Nov* 1913
20 Signature *Joseph H. Murray, M.D.*
21 Address *65 Second St. Man*
22 PLACE OF BURIAL *Graveside*
23 DATE OF BURIAL *Nov. 16, 1913*
24 UNDERTAKER *L. Kwan*
25 ADDRESS *107 Fourth St.*



THE CITY OF NEW YORK,
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH.

STATE OF NEW YORK.

No. of Certificate

CERTIFICATE AND RECORD OF MARRIAGE

22878

OF

Leon Milberg

and

Ida Kleyer

Groom's Residence	115 Eldridge St.	Bride's Residence	30 Sent Mark Pl.
Age	26 years	Age	19 years
Color	White	Color	White
Single, Widowed or Divorced	single	Single, Widowed or Divorced	single
Occupation	Manufacturer of White goods	Maiden Name, if a Widow	Ida
Birthplace	Rumania	Birthplace	Rumania
Father's Name	Lazar Milberg	Father's Name	Jacob Kleyer
Mother's Maiden Name	Judith Gensberg	Mother's Maiden Name	Zelda Smully
Number of Groom's Marriage	First	Number of Bride's Marriage	First

I hereby certify that the above-named groom and bride were joined in Marriage by me, in accordance with the Laws of the State of New York, at De Meffen Hall (Street), in the Borough of Manhattan, City of New York, this 1st of Sept. 1907

Witnesses to the Marriage

Aron Grinfeld

J. Graver

Signature of person performing the Ceremony
Official Station

Rev. M. G. Siegel
Pastor

Residence

44 Livingston St.

DEC-11 15:39

DAVAL SALES/MMC - MILBERG

904 893 3196

P33

DEC 28 1961

STATE OF NEW YORK, COUNTY OF NEW YORK, ss:

I, JAMES McGUIRE, County Clerk and Clerk of the Supreme Court, New York County, do hereby certify that I have compared the attached marriage certificate and attached with the original thereof filed in my office and that same is a correct transcript of the original and of the said thereof. IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and attached my official seal.

NOT VALID UNLESS
OFFICIAL SEAL IS AFFIXED

CLERK OF THE SUPREME COURT, NEW YORK COUNTY

STATE OF NEW YORK

Affidavit for License to Marry

STATE OF NEW YORK

County of New York - City of New York

Joseph Milberg
and *Jeta Berliner*

applicants for a license for marriage, being severally sworn, depose and say, that to the best of their knowledge and belief the following statements respectively signed by them in this affidavit are true and that no legal impediment exists as to the right of the applicants to enter into the marriage state:

Full name: *Joseph Milberg*
Color: *White*
Place of residence: *45 E. 12th St. New York*
Age: *24*
Occupation: *Insurance*
Place of birth: *Germany*
Name of father: *Max Milberg*
Country of birth: *Germany*
Marital name of mother: *Ulla Milberg*
Country of birth: *Germany*
Number of marriages: *None*
Former wife or wives living or dead:
Is applicant a divorced person?
If so, when and where divorce or divorces were granted:

Full name: *Jeta Berliner*
Color: *White*
Place of residence: *68 E. 12th St. New York*
Age: *21*
Occupation: *Teacher*
Place of birth: *Poland*
Name of father: *Isaac Berliner*
Country of birth: *Poland*
Marital name of mother: *Rosie Berliner*
Country of birth: *Poland*
Number of marriages:
Former husband or husbands living or dead:
Is applicant a divorced person?
If so, when and where divorce or divorces were granted:

Joseph Milberg
Subscribed and sworn to before me this

Jeta Berliner

29 day of Dec 1961

DEC 29 1961

LEON N. MOSKOWITZ

TELEPHONE FARRAGUT

ABRAHAM KRUMBEIN

UNION STAR CO.
CORSET COVERS

EMINENT WAIST CO.
LADIES WAISTS

Moskowitz & Krumbein
SELLING AGENTS OF
MUSLIN UNDERWEAR & WAISTS
1133 BROADWAY

J. & S. MILBERG
LADIES DRAWERS

U.S. MUSLIN UNDERWEAR CO.
MUSLIN PETTICOATS

NEW YORK.

Mr & Mrs. Benjamin Melberg
request the honor of your presence at
the marriage ceremony of their sister
Sarah.

to
Abraham Krumbein
Sunday evening, February 11th 1917
Knapp Mansion
554 Bedford Ave. Brooklyn
Six o'clock sharp.

Kindly respond before Feb. 1st.
457 Broadway.
Mf.

AGREEMENT

KNAPP MANSION

BEDFORD AVE. AND ROSS ST.

Brooklyn, N. Y. December 2nd 1916

Agreement made this 2nd day of December 1916 between

MAURICE GOLDSCHMID, party of the first part, and eth Bellberg of 476

Bedford Street N.Y., party of the second part, as follows:

Party of the first part agrees to let and hereby does let, and the party

of the second part agrees to hire hereby does hire the Knapp Mansion

on February 11th 1917 the hours of 5 P.M. and 1 P.M.

for the purpose of a Wedding Dinner and agrees to pay for the same

\$3.00 per couple Deposit Received, \$25.00 on December 2nd 1916

by Chauvire Goldschmidt Balance Due, \$ on

February 11th 1917, Received by 19

Extras included in the above Waiter & Son Attendance

Remarks: Chauvire the same as the one in hand of eth Bellberg 75 couples

granted a new at 3.00 per couples including drinks & 1/2 price
Washings and Dishes \$10.00 extra Chauvire Goldschmidt

?
C. LOTIT NAKKINS? +

THE SHIP ON WHICH I SAILED HAS ARRIVED
SAFELY OVERSEAS.

Name

Benny Littman

Organization

6th Batt. A.A.R.V.

American Expeditionary Forces.

SOLDIERS' MAIL.



~~Soldier's NO POSTAGE~~

~~NECESSARY.~~

THE AMERICAN RED CROSS

U.S. ARMY BAGO

THIS SIDE FOR ADDRESS ONLY.

Mr. Littman

1005 1st Ave.

Chicago, Ill.

PROGRAM

I.

1. „Luceafărul Mântuirii” tablou alegoric
de D-ra Filotea Kanner.
2. „Copilul Zionului” de D-ra Filotea
Kanner, recitat de D-ra A. Milberg.
3. „Copila Mizeriei” de Friedman,
recitat de D-ra Anușa Rabinovici.
4. Limanul, monolog de I. Marcus,
recitat de I. Ghetzler.
5. Conferință: „Despre rolul femeii în
mișcarea zionistă” de D-ra Filotea Kanner.

II.

PE DRUM

în 3 acte de Heinrich Grinau

PERSOANELE:

Leo Vinter . . . D-l M. Aronovici
Agata soția lui . . . D-ra L. Marcovici
Rubin, fiul lor . . . D-l M. Huberman
Irene, fiica lor . . . D-ra A. Feldman
David Lubetzki, pro-
fesor de muzică . . . D-l B. Milberg
Gina Fridman văduvă . . . D-ra L. Marcovici
Ana, fiica ei . . . D-ra A. Milberg
Hirsch Mandel preșe-
dintele comunității . . . D-l M. Kupermann
Pindias, servitor . . . D-l I. Ghetzer
Sussel Vortzmann . . . D-ra Sarah Goldstein
Bătrânul . . . D-l M. Leibovici

9 LIST OR MANIFEST OF ALIEN PASSENGERS

ALL ALIENS arriving at a port of continental United States from a foreign port or a port of the insular possessions of the United States, and all aliens arriving at a port of said insular

S. S.

LA LORRAINE

Passengers sailing from

Le Havre

2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
HEAD-TAX STATUS	NAME IN FULL	Age	Sex	Married	Calling or occupation	Abled to	Nationality (Country of which citizen or subject)	Race or people	Last permanent residence	The name and address of friend or relative in U.S.
Family name	Given name	Yrs. Mon.							Country	City or town
	Maher	22	m	none	yes	5-26-40	syrian	Syrian	Syria	Damas
	Mour Dissi	16	m	labor		5-30-40				
	Bahnsouri	27	m	tailor		5-16-40				
	Rougina	50	w			5-26-40				
	Brunberg	20	f	none		5-26-40	romania	Romanian	Romania	Hotin
	Chelva	13	f							
	Grunberg	55	f			160				
	Griehman	35	m	barber					Bessarabia	none paren
	Haim	12	m	none		5-26-40		Hebrew		Galati
	Milberg	43	m			3-6-40				Raducan
	Debera	6	f							
	Meise	45	m	labor		3-16-40				
	Golan	2	f	none						
	Strul	2	m			3-26-40				
	Benin	18	m			3-26-40				
	Haka	16	f			3-26-40				
	Malca	4	f			2-76342-505-1/23/40				
	Rifca	12	f							
	Chizer	8	m							
	Cohen	26	m	merchant		3-5-40			France	Paris
	Lions	27	m	toolmak					Romania	Paradany
	Wolff	18	f	student						Bucarest
	Ernestine	21	f	none						
	Bourguin	25	m	sweetmak		franch	swiss	french	Switzer	Chaux
	Gaschet	30	f	clerk			french		France	Billancourt
	Tobias	46	m	shoemak		5-6-40	polish	Hebrew	Poland	Lundau
	Fuhrel	38	m	none		franch	french	french	France	Fannenkirch
	Gilbert	9	m							
	Clement	8	f						Nancy	parent Cl
	Katz	55	m	labor		5-26-40	romanian	romanian	Roumania	Lukovina

DO NOT CANCEL
PRESCRIPTION FORM FOR MEDICINAL LIQUOR

FORM 51

R *Rye (old formula) 1 lb. 31.7.9*
KIND OF LIQUOR QUANTITY DIRECTIONS

Marie Mulvey *July 27/33*
FULL NAME OF PATIENT DATE PRESCRIBED

PATIENTS ADDRESS *1651 52 St. N.Y. N.Y.*
NUMBER STREET CITY STATE

J. C. Greenberg *84195*
PRESCRIBERS SIGNATURE PRESCRIBERS PERMIT NUMBER

PRESCRIBERS ADDRESS *46 E 83 N.Y. N.Y.*
NUMBER STREET CITY STATE

CANCELED
DRUG STORE NAME AS ON PERMIT PERMIT NUMBER

DISPENSERS SIGNATURE DATE FILLED AND CANCELED STRIP STAMP NUMBER

STORE ADDRESS
NUMBER STREET CITY STATE
SEE REVERSE SIDE FOR INSTRUCTIONS
DO NOT FILL OUT THIS SIDE

**ISSUED UNDER AUTHORITY OF THE
NATIONAL PROHIBITION ACT**

NEW YEAR'S EVE DINNER
AND DANCE

in honor of

MILBERG FAMILY CIRCLE

*Monday, December Thirty first
Nineteen Hundred and Forty five*

MILBERG FAMILY CIRCLE

NEW YEAR'S EVE
DINNER and DANCE

Monday Evening, December 31st, 1945

MENORA TEMPLE

50th Street and 14th Avenue
Brooklyn, N. Y.

INFORMAL
ADMIT ONE

MENU

Buffet Russe Chaut et Froid.

Pineapple Surprise

Crisp Celery
Gherkins

Queen Olives
Dills

Rolled Filet

Parisienne Potatoes

Caper Sauce

Vegetable Soup Julienne

Roast Maryland Turkey, Chestnut Stuffing
Derma Farci

Legumes

Glazed Sweets

Ices Fantasies
French Cookies

Petit Fruits
Cafe Noir

Mineral Water

Ginger Ale

WHITMAN & COHEN
Temple Caterers Inc.

MENORA MASONIC TEMPLE
5000 14th Avenue
Brooklyn, New York

Testament of Benjamin Milberg



Although fully realizing the essential propriety of the maxim
that the departed should not attempt to rule the living from the grave,
I feel it to be a duty devolved upon me by the understanding which
the years have given me to set down for my children, their spouses and
my grandchildren, certain standards of conduct to which it is my desire
and hope that they may always adhere - not only out of respect for my
memory, but in realization of the fundamental rightness of the ideals
which these standards embody. I therefore solemnly enjoin upon my
beloved children and grandchildren and their spouses:



hat they and their families become and always remain
affiliated with Jewish religious and communal organizations and
activities.



hat they continue to conduct themselves, in their relations
with each other, in every way as brothers, sisters and cousins should;
that they always be vigilant against the tendency of passing years and
other interests to draw them apart, and that they be diligent to cling
together and to seek out each other's company; that they be quick to
respond with aid or comfort to each other's need; that they give to each
other no cause for grievance and hold no grievances, each against the
other, whether just or unjust, but always strive to maintain intact the
love and amity enjoined upon them by the ties of blood and the teachings
of their parents.

THE JEWISH THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY OF AMERICA
NORTHEAST CORNER, BROADWAY AND 122ND STREET
NEW YORK 27, N. Y.

May 25, 1967

Dear Mr. Krumbein:

We are very glad that you have consented to sponsor Mr. Elie Wiesel for an honorary degree at the Commencement Exercises on Sunday, June 4, 1967. We will expect you at Temple Ansche Chesed at 2:30 p.m. on Sunday.

By mistake, another card seems to have been enclosed with the request that you sponsor Mr. Wiesel. Please disregard the Minhah Service and Dinner referred to on the card, as it is only for the students of the Seminary. I am sorry for any confusion this may have caused.

I look forward to seeing you on June 4th.

Sincerely yours,



(Mrs.) Renee C. Gutman

Mr. Abraham Krumbein
113 West 42nd Street
New York, New York

RCG:hk

Rabbi J. S. HALPERIN
Voslui-er Rebbe
71 Keren Kajemeth Bld.
TEL-AVIV / ISRAEL

הרב יעקב יוסף שלמה הלפרין
מוסלוי-גאלאץ
תל-אביב, שדרות קרן קימת ו'

ביה, תל-אביב יום פ' מו"ב שנת תש"ל לפ"ק.

שלום וברכה וכל טוב סלה לכבוד ידידני היקר
והנכבד וכו' מוה"ר פאול ראהט נ"י.

אחדשה"ט!

ראשיית קימס אייך מעלדען אז מיר האבען בעקייממען פ"נ סך 100 ל"י פיר וועלכען
מיר דאנקען אייך פיעל מאול, האבער עס האט אונז לייד געטוהען וואס האבען
זיך נישט געקענט זעהען פערזענליך, השי"ת זאלל העלפען דער בריעף זאלל
אייך אללע סרעפען געזינד אין מיר זאללען זיך קענען שרייבען בשורות
טובות אכי"ר.

אין קימס אייך אללע ווינטשען אז השי"ת זאלל אייך אללע בענטשען מיט געזינד
בשלימות אין שפע ברכה ופצלחה ופרנסה בריוח אמן.
אויך הערצליכע גריססע די ליבע שוואגערס הנכבדים שיח"י מיר האבען זיך
געפרייט הערענדיג פון זייער געזינד השי"ת זאלל וואסער העלפען צי הערען
בשורות טובות, וויילל שאן לאנג האבען מיר פון זיי גור נישט בעקייממען
קין שרייבען.

פון אונזער זייד קען ליידער מיט שטילען אז זוג הרבנית היקרה חחי
האט גנמיסט מאכען צוויי אופיריישען אוף ביידע אויגען, זי האט געהאט א אויכען
דרוג אין די אויגען (גלאקאממע) ר"ל ב"ה עס איז מיט חסד זי איז געליגען צוואכען
אין אוספייטעל אין עס האט געקאסט זעהר פיעל געלד, ב"ה עס איז אוזגעגאנגען צי
געלד, השי"ת זאלל העלפען מיט זאללען שאן אללע אויסגעהוט וויירען פון שלופקייטען
אין זיך זוכע זיין צי זעהען מיט פרייליכע הערצער אין עס זאלל זיין שלום על ישראל
עס איז געבארען געווארען א זאהו בייא דער קליינער טאכטער שחחי"א אין דאס קינד
שיח"י האט מען א נאמען געבייבען נאך אז "הרה"צ הקדוש שלום זצ"ל השי"ת זאלל
העלפען אז עס זאלל האבען געברייכט שלום על כל ישראל אין מיר זאללען שאן זוכה
זיין אללע צי ביאח גואל צדק בב"א.

הרב יעקב יוסף שלמה הלפרין
מוסלוי - גאלאץ
תל-אביב, שדרות קרן קימת ו'

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The interviews for this story were conducted by Suki Sandler, an oral historian and Director of the Oral History Library of the **American Jewish Committee** and by Marjorie Milberg, Larry Lubin and Mel Lubin. Some were also done by Sheila Foster, Judy Fichtenholtz and Sheryl Kastriner.

Larry Lubin coordinated this project. Aaron Krumbein and Eliezer (Eli) Krumbein both reviewed a couple of the early drafts. Eli provided large amounts of material, especially about his parents and the Littmans. Larry and his wife Ellie read the many drafts and contributed many important suggestions. Alan Bloom assisted with the computer printing preparation.

Soon after we began collecting this material it became clear that we had begun a few years too late. Several people told us that the recently deceased Pauline, Irving, Ben, Uncle Sam's Larry and others, would have been able to give answers to key questions which have had to remain unanswered. So if any of you is interested in enriching this story, or in extending it, backward or forward, we urge you to begin tomorrow morning.

There are a huge number of sources out there, including the new electronic highways, as well as national telephone directories on CD ROM. There is the **Jewish Geneological Society**, the **National Archives**, which has passenger lists; there are Naturalization Records, Census Records, and the **Family History Library of the Mormons**. There is *Avotaynu*, *The International Review of Jewish Genealogy*. There is even *Rom-Sig News*, Jewish Geneological Special Interest Group for Romania. There is the **American Jewish Historical Society**. There are birth records, marriage records, death records, cemetery and probate records, and so on, and on, and on. We hope there is some young person who will become interested in this fascinating enterprise. We might perhaps publish a periodic supplement.

Finally, The Trustees wish to thank all of those named above, and everyone who participated in this project - but especially we must thank Mel Lubin for his several months of work in putting **THE STORY** together.

Anyone with additional anecdotes, stories, information should mail the material to:

Mel Lubin, 250 Sunset Avenue, Englewood, N. J., 07631, (201-567-7429)

* * * * *

This sentimental journey was funded by the Milberg Family Trust. The Trustees hope that preserving the family history will be a benefit to all. Time, extended families, job locations and retirements, have tended to separate us, but with so many family members willing to participate, it is apparent that this was a project worth undertaking.

The Trustees:

Sheila Foster

Claire Helfgott

Lawrence Lubin

Frances Milberg

* * * * *

MORE ABOUT
ELIEZER AND YEHUDIS MILBERG
AND THEIR CHILDREN

JUNE 1996

Introduction

Since our successful family reunion of June 1995 and the compilation of material for our book , **The Story of Eliezer and Yehudis Milberg and Their Children**, new material has come our way which we think is interesting. There is no special organization to what follows. Direct quotations are in italics. Titles of books and articles are in bold type.

The Arrival of Eliezer and Yehudis, 1907

At the time of last year's reunion, we did not know the exact date of arrival in the United States of Eliezer and Yehudis and the others in the family, including Fay Wolfson Diamond, their grand-daughter, who had come with them. At the reunion in June 1995, we spoke with Fay and asked her if she knew the date of arrival. Fay was only two years old in 1907 and so of course she did not remember the exact date. But she said that she had always been told that they

all arrived on her birthday, which is August 12th. With that information we were able to write to the National Archives and obtain a copy of the ship's Manifest of Passengers. [See Document 1, 2 pages, attached.]

Eliezer, and Yehudis (nee Lemberg) arrived on August 11, 1907, on the S.S. La Bretagne, leaving from Le Havre. Arriving with them were: Yosuf (Joseph), Sneir (Saul), Saim (Simon), Suro (Sarah), and Libo (Lena). Also, the following listed as Wolfsons: Moishe (Morris) and Zissl (Susan), with their two children, Lupu (William), and Feige (Fay). This accounts for all of the children. Benny, Louie and Sam had come earlier. Moishe remained until 1920. On the Manifest, Eliezer describes himself, Joseph and Saul as bakers. He lists as his destination his "son Milberg" at 249 Grand Street. Especially interesting too, is the fact that Eliezer gives his place of birth, and that of Yehudis, specifically as Rudacaneni, not merely as Romania. If true, this places the Milbergs there as early as the 1850's when Eliezer and Yehudis were born. [See column 29 of the Shipping Manifest.]

Not only have we now accounted for the arrival of all of the children, but we have found what seems to be an extra child. There is someone called Elder (or maybe Alter), age 19, who is listed with the other children, is shown as the oldest, and is also described as a baker. The next oldest listed was Joseph. Who was Elder? Where is Elder? Does anyone know? Can anyone guess?

Russian Roots

Based on the evidence of the Shipping Manifest, we must conclude that both the Milberg and Lemberg families had been in Rudacaneni continuously from at least the early 1850's. We have additional evidence that both families were in Romania even earlier. On Eliezer's Death Certificate [Document 2], the family said that both his father and mother were born in Romania. And on Yehudis' Death Certificate [Document 5], the family said that her father Lemberg, and her mother Wiener were born in Romania. If these

statements are correct, then the families were in Romania as early as around 1830. And the Milberg residence in Rudacaneni may have been continuous from that time when we recall that Moishe, in his Declaration of Intention (to file for Citizenship) [Document 3], says he was born in Rudacaneni in 1875.

Where did the Milbergs come from before Rudacaneni? Probably from Russia. (Note the section below, page 8, concerning the Sudits.) Remember that Sarah Krumbein told her daughter Judith that Yehudis went home to her mother in Russia, when it was time to deliver her children, or maybe to midwife for her own mother. Rea Roth also thinks she remembers hearing the family was from Russia. My mother, Anna Lubin, recalls that people would ask her father about the name "Milberg," because it does not sound Romanian. Her father Moishe answered that the family came from Russia. Marcel Sheer (Canadian branch - see below) says that his father Yakov told him that the family was from Russia. In the face of all of these family memories which Sarah and Rea and Anna and Yacov have, I think we have to accept the probability that the Milbergs came from Russia. Remember too, that when these stories were told to our witnesses, the events were within the memories of people then living.

The obvious problem here is that on the one hand Yehudis' Death Certificate says she was born in Romania, and on the other hand we have Sarah Krumbein's story that Yehudis went back to Russia to her mother. How could her mother be in Russia if Yehudis was born in Romania? Whatever the answer, it must be consistent with the fact of the family being in Romania in around 1830.

Where in Russia did they come from? And when? We may be able to make a pretty good guess as to "when." Until the Partition of Poland, which was begun in 1772 and completed in 1795, there were almost no Jews in Russia. None were permitted. Furthermore; there was no Russian land contiguous with Romania until the Partition. So if the Milbergs said they came from Russia, and if they came prior to the 1830's when Schneer Milberg and Chava Weiner (Eliezer's parents) were supposedly born in Romania, then they almost surely came from the Pale of Settlement, that is, from what had been Poland, and what later became absorbed into Russia by 1793 and 1795. [Document 7] Only then did Russia acquire Jews. This was the first time that there were any Jews in any Russian lands proximate to Romania. The Milbergs therefore probably came

from the Ukraine, just north and west of the Black Sea, and they came between 1795 and 1830. They may have come after 1827 which was the year that Czar Nicolas I of Russia imposed the twenty five year draft on the Jews, taking children at the age of twelve, forcing them to abandon their customs, and forcibly converting them. We guess further that the Milbergs came from an area around Nikolaev in the year 1829 or 1830. In 1829, Jews were expelled from that area. It is immediately contiguous with Romania, not far from Rudacaneni. [See Document 7 again].

Canadian Cousins

Soon after the reunion of 1995, we received an enormously informative letter from Marcel Sheer (previously Schneer). The letter [Document 4] speaks for itself, but the thrust of it is that the Canadians are probably descendants of a younger brother of Eliezer, named Moishe. The name certainly seems to run in the family. Marcel himself is also Moishe ; his grandfather (Eliezer's brother) is Moishe; and we have Eliezer's son, another Moishe. A good guess would be that the grandfather of the brothers Eliezer and Moishe, was the Moishe after whom they were all named. We have the evidence of Eliezer's tombstone that his father's name was Schneer. We can even hazard a guess that Schneer, the father of Eliezer and Moishe, died in 1888. In 1888, Eliezer names a son Yosef (Joseph), but in 1889 he names a new son Schneer (Saul). In 1901, Moishe also names a son Schneer (George). Furthermore, and to give equal time to their mother Zissel [Document 2, again], both sons named a daughter Zissel. Eliezer's Susan was Zissel; and Moishe's Zissel was one of his three children who emigrated to Canada in 1912. This name-play is by no means conclusive, although it is strong evidence. [Document 6 - *Canadian Family Tree* may help clarify this.]

There is more, much more to tie the families together. There were visits, many visits, back and forth, to and from Canada, we think in the late 20's

and in the 30's. Anna Lubin remembers visits of Canadian relatives to her father and mother. The Canadian relatives slept over. Aaron and Eli Krumbein remember visits to their home in Borough Park, Brooklyn. There was also the famous episode involving Harry Goldner, the oldest son of Mary Schneer Goldner of Montreal. When he finished school Harry decided to see the world by hitch-hiking from Montreal to Florida, (late 30's?). The Georgia police decided that he was a vagabond and a vagrant, and arrested and jailed him. Harry had worked in New York for Abe Krumbein (Sarah's husband), and had his phone number. He called Abe. Abe called the local Rabbi, sent clothes and money and rescued Harry from what could have been a terrible situation. Harry (born 1922) has never forgotten, and is thankful to this day.

Ed Schneerson from Montreal attended the 1995 Reunion, and we were able to speak with him. Ed is a son of George who changed his first name from Schneer, and who is referred to in Marcel's letter. He is thus Marcel's first cousin. Ed confirmed that his father Schneer was born in Rudacaneni in 1901 and attended technical school in Iasi. Schneer left Romania after WW1, around 1919, and went to Paris, where he became part of the Romanian community. Around 1928 he came to Montreal, probably because he spoke French by that time, says Ed. There was also the important consideration that George had three siblings already living in Montreal. His sisters Zissel and Mary, and his brother Jack, had immigrated there in 1912.

So far as Ed knows, his father George spoke only Romanian, French and English. He never heard him speak Yiddish. Ed thinks that his father changed his first name from Schneer, after he got to Montreal. The name Schneer Schneerson was so confusing in Montreal, that he changed his first name to George. Ed confirms that his grandfather Moishe's name was Schneer or Schneerer. Ed says his grandfather had a bakery in Rudacaneni.

In his letter Marcel refers to Husi where his father lived with this parents and worked in his grandparents' bakery. I mentioned Husi (pronounced Hoosh) to my mother, Anna Milberg Lubin. My mother says that her father (Moishe) took her to Husi often when he went there on business. She does not remember what kind of business.

More Name Games

Once again we are confronted with the question of how come two brothers had different names: Schneer or Schneerson or Schneerer on the one hand, and Milberg on the other? We are no closer to a definite answer now, than we were when we wrote **The Story** for the Reunion. Aaron Krumbein had told us that Moishe Milberg had had a dispute with his own father Eliezer, and had testified against his father in Court. We wonder if the dispute which Eliezer had was not with Moishe Milberg his son but with Moishe Milberg, his brother. Judy Fichtenholz (grand-daughter of Moishe) told us that her father, Ben, told her that there was a family dispute between cousins. Maybe it was the Moishe (Schneer) branch that had the fight with the Eliezer branch over something to do with the bakery businesses, and maybe as a result there was a name change by one of the brothers. Or, maybe the name change was purely a practical decision by Eliezer who was in the same business as his brother, and wanted to distinguish the two businesses.

Here's another theory. Suppose it was other way around. That is, suppose Milberg was the family name, and suppose it was Moishe (Eliezer's brother) who changed his name to Schneer. Anna Lubin told us that her father Moishe (the son of Eliezer) explained the Milberg name as being Russian. He did not explain by saying that it was an invented name, and that the name was really Schneer. Furthermore: Eliezer and Moishe's mother's maiden name was Schneer. If younger brother Moishe changed his name, what would have been more natural than to use his mother's maiden name? He could have done so for any of the reasons mentioned above.

The Peasant Revolt of 1907

If you read our story you will remember Simon's eye-witness report of the Riots of 1907. Simon (the youngest son of Eliezer and Yehudis) told us

that the Mayor of Rudacaneni tried to negotiate with the rioters (i.e., buy them off), but was unable to do so, and how eventually the mayor of Rudacaneni had to ask for protection by soldiers from the rioters. These peasant revolts of 1907 are often called Pogroms, but Pogrom suggests a government directed and controlled attack on Jews, and such was not the case here. These revolts were peasant uprisings resulting in attacks against all, with widespread plundering. They were countrywide, and the result of longtime repression and exploitation of the peasants. After the revolt, land reforms were promised by the government. In the case of riots, the government sometimes protected the towns from the rioters, as in the case of the Milbergs in Rudacaneni. In Romania, the Jews were the bourgeoisie, and as such were the intermediaries between the rich nobility on the one hand, and the peasants on the other. It is not surprising therefore, that in the case of the 1907 Peasant Revolt, the general rampaging soon became directly against the Jews, whom the peasants identified with their oppressors.

We subscribe to a publication called the **ROM-SIG NEWS** (Romanian Significance News). In the Winter 1995-96 issue, they began printing extracts from articles dating from April 19, 1907, which appeared in **The Jewish Exponent**, a Philadelphia newspaper. The articles were translated from news stories which appeared in Bucharest, March 7-20, 1907. The stories are amazingly similar to the story Simon told us.

The headline from **The Jewish Exponent** was: *"The Roumanian Atrocities - Anti-Semitic Outbreaks Worse than First Reported. At Rosnov - About 400 peasants with sticks and iron bars went to the residence of G. Herscovici and have broken up everything in the house. All of the Jews of the town fled, leaving all of their belongings behind. The hooligans plundered everything, and they demolished several stores. The store of Janeu Herscovici was plundered and totally devastated, and the damages caused are enormous. Rabbi Friedman escaped to Platra, leaving all his property in the hands of the hooligans. The entire Jewish population ruined, the peasants then proceeded to the railroad depot, but here they met with resistance from the gendarmes and were dispersed.*

This is from a description of events at Bottashany: *"The sorrowful weeping and shouting and fear of the Jews cannot be described. They were*

running shouting like crazy: hiding in cellars of storage houses. The women, with little children in their arms, were running to the fields in the deep snow, even the poorest Jewish houses were devastated. The poor victims are crying bitterly upon every path and road like little children. It breaks your heart. The damages are enormous, over one-half million.

This took place at Vaslui. We mentioned Vaslui in **The Story** as the place to which Moishe travelled in order to consult with his Rebbe. Vaslui had been the home of the Vaslui Chasidic dynasty for some time and thus probably Eliezer also knew the town and would have known of this disaster. *"Yesterday was a bloody day here. At no other place in Moldavia were the horrors so great as here. For two days and nights the plundering continued. The streets were flooded with Jewish blood. Buluni David was terribly injured, his safe broken open and the contents stolen. A large number of prominent merchants were beaten and robbed of everything they had.*

This then is the background against which Eliezer and Yehudis left Rudacaneni in 1907, while their son Moishe, with his family, chose to remain.

The Sudits of Romania

We also learned of a category of Romanian residents called Sudits from the **ROM-SIG NEWS**, Spring 1996. The Sudits were a group of foreign residents living on Romanian soil in the 19th century, who were given special economic privileges by the Romanian government, and who had the diplomatic and legal protection of a foreign power. These foreign powers, including Austria-Hungary, Russia, Prussia, France and England, had made this arrangement with the Ottoman (Turkish) overlords of Romania in a set of documents called the Capitulation Treaties. Their purpose was to import a ready made middle class and thus to accelerate the development of the country.

Jews made up about 50% of the Sudits. They were a distinct urban social group that played an important role in the Romanian society in the period of the collapse of feudalism and the development of capitalism. They were active as wholesale merchants dealing in grains, livestock, and luxury items, as well as bankers with international connections, land tenants, renters of mills and inns, and salesmen. They were the most financially well-established part of the Jewish community of Moldavia, which is of course where Rudacaneni is located. Among their special privileges were the rights to practice retail commerce and to own rural property. We know the Milbergs practised retail commerce. And we recall the story that Eliezer's son Saul told his son Irving, about being sent by Eliezer to collect rents. It is possible then, that Eliezer (or his father, Schneer) was permitted to own property as a Sudit. In general, Jews were not permitted to own property.

With this new information, we have no choice but to consider the real possibility that the Milbergs were Sudits, specially protected foreign nationals. We know for example that Moishe was in charge of food distribution in the area of Raducaneni after WW1, and we know that the Minister visited him from time to time, once even after he had emigrated to the U.S. We recall too the story that Simon told of his father going to Vienna to buy material so that his sons' suits could be custom made. And he did own three bakeries and a mill.

Some of the Sudits were native Jews of Moldavia. But many were recent arrivals from the former Poland, after Galicia was annexed by the Hapsburg Empire in 1772, and from the Russian Pale of Settlement, which countries they fled in order to avoid oppressive conditions. It could well be that the Milbergs were Sudits.

Infrastructure

Before there was the word infrastructure, there was an infrastructure in Rudacaneni. We asked my mother, Anna Lubin, to tell us what the physical town was like.

Anna Lubin told us: *"The streets were not paved. They were just plain dirt. We never saw any automobiles, except when the Minister, Lupu, visited. He came in a large, open car. [Why did the Minister visit? Was Moishe a Sudit?] There was no running water. We had to obtain water from a pump near the river, a few blocks from the house. Occasionally, someone brought the water in. Our neighbors, the Meltzers, had their own pump, and we would sometimes get water from them. There was a mikve in town, and my parents would go there.*

In **The Story**, we mentioned the Zionist play in which Anna and her brother Ben had appeared, in 1919. We asked Anna where the play was presented: *"We used the lovely stage at the new school. I went to the "old" school, where you remember I said I had to attend on Saturday. But by the time Mildred started school, two years after me, the new school was ready. They taught both Romanian and Yiddish.*

Anna again: *"The only doctor in town was at the hospital. If you wanted to see him, you went to the hospital. The midwife took care of births, and she was an important person in her own right. There was quite a nice pharmacy in town, owned by non-Jews. They had two girls. One was a friend of mine, and one a friend of Mildred."*

Rudacaneni - 1986

Sheryl Kastriner, Benny's great grand-daughter, visited Rudacaneni in 1986. Her report reached us too late to be included in the 1995 **Story**. Here is what she told us:

"I visited Romania in 1986, in the hope of tracing our roots to Rudacaneni. I can only tell you from my visit (which was during Communist rule) that the situation for Jews living in Romania is not very good. There are no Jews left in Rudacaneni, and the Jewish cemetery there was desecrated and destroyed. There is a Jewish Museum in Bucharest, but we found no mention of Milbergs. It appears that whatever Hitler did not get to, the Communists did. Almost all synagogues in the country have been destroyed.

Sheryl's story speaks for itself.

The Brown Bag and the Evil Eye

In our 1995 story, we reported one of Aaron Krumbein's memories of early days in Brooklyn. He told us how he and his sister Judith used to go to their Uncle Moishe's house for wine re-fills, and how they would carry the bottles in brown bags or newspaper so that no one would know what they were carrying. I assumed, and I think Aaron did too, that the reason for this concealment was that these were the times of Prohibition. We like the following explanation better.

The following is from **This Year in Jerusalem**, by Mordecai Richler, Alfred A Knopf, 1994, p.42. *"...I used to be sent, as a child, to the home of a*

shammes (sexton) on City Hall Street, to pick up our Passover wine. The old man would bundle the bottles into newspapers before slipping them into a heavy-duty brown bag - not to ensure them against breakage, but to make them proof against the evil eye. If a goy so much as glanced at an uncovered bottle in passing, it was instantly rendered trayf, unclean, and had to be poured down the sink." [This took place in Montreal.]

Summer Reading

Robert D. Kaplan is the author of an excellent history/travelogue of the Balkans called Balkan Ghosts, A Journey Through History, 1993. The book has a section on Romania, which may be read separately from the rest of the book. It is enormously informative, rich in historical information, and with detailed reports of Kaplan's recent travels. The book tells a grim and ugly story of both past and present complete with descriptions of Romanian atrocities against the Jews which even Eichmann found unacceptable. Difficult to take, but highly recommended. It may be ordered from Encore Books 200-795-5049.

More Research

We think it very unlikely that we will discover many new stories, or anecdotes, or helpful documents about the Milbergs, using the sources we have used til now. We think the family have told us just about everything they remember of any importance. We think that if anything new and interesting is to be found, it will be found in Romania, possibly in the Iasi archives which have opened in the last few years. As a practical matter it is impossible for any of us to do the research. The expense would be prohibitive, and of course the language problem is insurmountable.

Accordingly, we (in conjunction with the Trustees of the Milberg Family Trust) have contacted a gentleman by the name of C. Marcusohn, of Bacau, Romania, whom we discovered through the **ROM-SIG NEWS**. A reader

wrote that he had retained Mr Marcusohn and was tremendously pleased with the results, which had been achieved at a relatively modest cost. We hope that he will come up with new information about the Milbergs, or the Schneerers, of Romania.

If you have new material, thoughts or comments, please contact:

Mel Lubin - 250 Sunset Ave - Englewood, N.J., 07631, 201-567-7429, or FAX 201-871-1420, or

Larry Lubin - 384 Audubon Rd - Englewood, N.J., 07631, 201-568-3145, or FAX same.

DOCUMENTS WHICH FOLLOW

- 1) Shipping Manifest showing family arrival in 1907, with child "Elder," and showing birthplace of both Eliezer and Yehudis as Rudacaneni. (2 pages)
- 2) Eliezer's Death Certificate, showing Rudacaneni as birthplace of him and his parents.
- 3) Moishe's Declaration of Intention, showing Rudacaneni as birthplace.
- 4) Marcel Sheer's letter suggesting that Moishe Schneer was a brother of Eliezer.
- 5) Yehudis' Death Certificate, showing both mother and father born in Romania.
- 6) Canadian Family Tree.
- 7) Map showing the various partitions of Poland .

22

Form 200-2
Bureau of Customs and Border
Immigration Service

BALCON, CABIN, AND STEERAGE ALIENS MUST BE COMPLETELY MANIFESTED

LIST OR MANIFEST OF ALIEN PASSENGERS FOR

Required by the regulations of the Secretary of Commerce and Labor of the United States, under Act of Congress approved February 24, 1919

S. S. LA BRETAGNE.

sailing from Haarlem

No. on List	NAME IN FULL		Age	Sex	Calling or Occupation	Able to Read	Able to Write	Nationality (Country of which citizen or subject)	Race or People	Last Permanent Residence	The name and complete address of the country where born
	Family Name	Given Name	Yrs. Mos.							Country	City or Town
1	Vasil	Eacho	41	m	Factor	yes	yes	Russian			
2	Pandeli	Anton	18	m	Tailor	yes	yes	Russian			
3	Joni	Mikail	14	m				Russian			
4	Jilii	Hotel	17	m	Tailor	yes	yes	Russian			East Yarn
10	Mulberg	Eliezer	38	m	Teacher	yes	yes	Russian			East Yarn
11		Judit	35	f	Wife	yes	yes	Russian			East Yarn
12		Elder	45	m	Teacher	yes	yes	Russian			East Yarn
13		Yacob	18	m				Russian			
14		Levir	15	m				Russian			
15		Saim	12	m	Child			Russian			
16		Luro	11	m				Russian			
17		Alba	9	m				Russian			
18	Wolfsohn	Yair	22	m	Labrer	yes	yes	Russian			
19		Jail	10	m	Wife			Russian			
20		Levir	4	m	Child			Russian			
21		Frige	2	f				Russian			

STATES IMMIGRATION OFFICER AT PORT OF ARRIVAL.

to the United States Immigration Officer by the Commanding Officer of any vessel having such passengers on board upon arrival United States.

Arriving at Port of New York

AUG 11 1907

190

219

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION (LAST APPROVED JUNE 20, 1906)

No. on List	Whether having a ticket to next final destination	By whom was passage paid?	Whether in possession of \$50 and if less, how much?	Whether ever before in the United States; and if so, when and where?	Whether going to join a relative or friend; and if so, what relative or friend, and his name and complete address.	Whether a Polygamist.	Whether an Anarchist.	Condition of Health, Mental and Physical.	Deformed or Crippled. Nature, length of time, and cause.	Height. Feet. Inches.	Complexion.	Color of— Hair. Eyes.	Place of Birth. Country. City or Town.	
1	Yes	Self	No	No	Friend Kachoff, Amsterdam to to to to Good			Good		5 4	Light	Fair	Born	Lithuania
2	"	"	"	"	Friend Kachoff, Amsterdam to to to to Good			Good		5 2	"	"	"	Sweden
17	"	"	"	"	Friend Kachoff, Amsterdam to to to to Good			Good		5 5	"	Gray	"	Sweden
18	"	"	"	"	Friend Kachoff, Amsterdam to to to to Good			Good		5 11	"	"	"	Rudacaneni
19	"	"	"	"	Friend Kachoff, Amsterdam to to to to Good			Good		5 2	"	"	"	"
20	"	"	"	"	Friend Kachoff, Amsterdam to to to to Good			Good		5 2	"	"	"	"
21	"	"	"	"	Friend Kachoff, Amsterdam to to to to Good			Good		5 6	"	"	"	"
22	"	"	"	"	Friend Kachoff, Amsterdam to to to to Good			Good		5 8	"	"	"	"
23	"	"	"	"	Friend Kachoff, Amsterdam to to to to Good			Good		5 2	"	"	"	"
24	"	"	"	"	Friend Kachoff, Amsterdam to to to to Good			Good		5 2	"	"	"	"
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26	"	"	"	"	Friend Kachoff, Amsterdam to to to to Good			Good		5 2	"	"	"	"
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2271

Form 2994
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
NATURALIZATION SERVICE

DUPLICATE
To be forwarded to the
Bureau of Naturalization

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

DECLARATION OF INTENTION

☒ Invalid for all purposes seven years after the date hereof

State of New York,
Eastern District of New York

ss:

In the District Court of the United States

I, MOISHE WILKINS, aged 48 years,
occupation Merchant, do declare on oath that my personal
description is: Color White, complexion Fair, height 5 feet 8 inches,
weight 212 pounds, color of hair Dark, color of eyes Blue,
other visible distinctive marks None.

I was born in Rudacaneni Roumania
on the 24th day of July, anno Domini 1875; I now reside
at 4510 - 17th Avenue, Brooklyn, New York.

I emigrated to the United States of America from Haute France
on the vessel La Lorraine; my last
foreign residence was Rudacaneni Roumania; I am un married; the name
of my wife is Tobie; she was born at Roumania
and now resides at with me.

It is my bona fide intention to renounce forever all allegiance and fidelity to any foreign
prince, potentate, state, or sovereignty, and particularly to Nerdinand I, King of Roumania,
of whom I am now a subject;

I arrived at the port of New York, in the
State of New York, on or about the 16th day
of August, anno Domini 1920; I am not an anarchist; I am not a
polygamist nor a believer in the practice of polygamy; and it is my intention in good faith
to become a citizen of the United States of America and to permanently reside therein;
SO HELP ME GOD.

Subscribed and sworn to before me in the office of the Clerk of said Court
at Brooklyn, N. Y., this 7th day of August
anno Domini 1923.

[SEAL]

Deputy

Clerk of the District Court of the United States.

By

Deputy Clerk.

Marcel M. Sheer, P.Eng.
51 Ealing Drive, Willowdale, Ontario M2L 2R4
Phone: (416) 447-9323 Fax: (416) 447-4660

Mr. Larry Lubin
384 Audubon Rd
Englewood, NJ
07631

August 20, 1995

Dear Cousin Larry:

I would like to thank you and Mel for sending me *The Milberg Story*. I was very surprised and pleased to read such a well researched and put together family history.

My name was Schneer until 1978 when I simplyfied it by dropping two consonants. I came to Canada in 1948 with my father and stepmother, having been sponsored by uncle George (Schneer Schneerer). I worked for four years in his autobody shop, mentioned on page 11 of *The Milberg Story*.

When I graduated in 1957 from McGill Engineering School, I went to New York City for a vacation. My father asked me to contact his Milberg cousins there and I called them up. They invited me to visit with them. They lived in a beautiful appartment on top of the Waldorf-Astoria hotel. There were two (what seemed to me at that time) elderly, charming couples who were very friendly. Too bad I don't recall their first names. We spent two hours discussing news from our respective families and trying to figure out how we were related. It is amusing that for awhile they confused me with my own paternal granfather Moishe Schneer, who I was named after. We finally concluded that my grandfather was probably Eliezer's younger brother.

Moishe and Malca Schneer had ten children, of whom my father Avram was the youngest (b.1903, d.1989) and uncle George (Schneer) the second youngest (b.1901, d.1974). The other eight were born during a span of some 20 years, so Moishe and Malca were probably married in the late 1870's, after Eliezer and Yehudis in 1872. From this I conclude that my grandfather Moishe was probably Eliezer's younger brother. Incidentally, uncle George also left Romania in 1922 or 1923 to escape the draft, whereas my father did undergo romanian military service in 1925 and forever regretted not leaving the country together with his brother George.

The Milberg cousins were especially interested in a trip I took with my father in 1938 at the age of seven to Raducaneni, where my father was born, and to Husi where my father lived with his parents afterwards and worked in my grandparents bakery (there is the possible connection with Eliezer Milberg who owned 3 bakeries). We visited several relatives in both towns but I don't remember any names.

Now for a few brief personal biographical notes. I was born in Jassy (Iasi), Romania. I am 64 years old and married to Lucy, who is also an engineer with a very successful high tech business. In 1962 I temporarily moved from Montreal to Israel for 11/2 years. While working there I met and married my lovely Lucy. We have two children, Giselle and John, and two grandchildren, Taylor and Brandon. Our son John studied dentistry in Cleveland, OH for 4 years. They all live now in Toronto.

We would like to meet you and Mel, as well as the other members of the Milberg clan, hopefully at the next reuniuon. Please let me know when it occurs.

Kind Regards and Best Wishes,



1 PLACE OF DEATH

STATE OF NEW YORK

Department of Health of The City of New York

BUREAU OF RECORDS

STANDARD CERTIFICATE OF DEATH

20982

21112

19

14

19

1913

1913

1 FULL NAME

2 DATE OF BIRTH

3 COLOR OR RACE

4 SEX

5 MARRIAGE

6 DATE OF DEATH

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7 PLACE OF BIRTH

8 OCCUPATION

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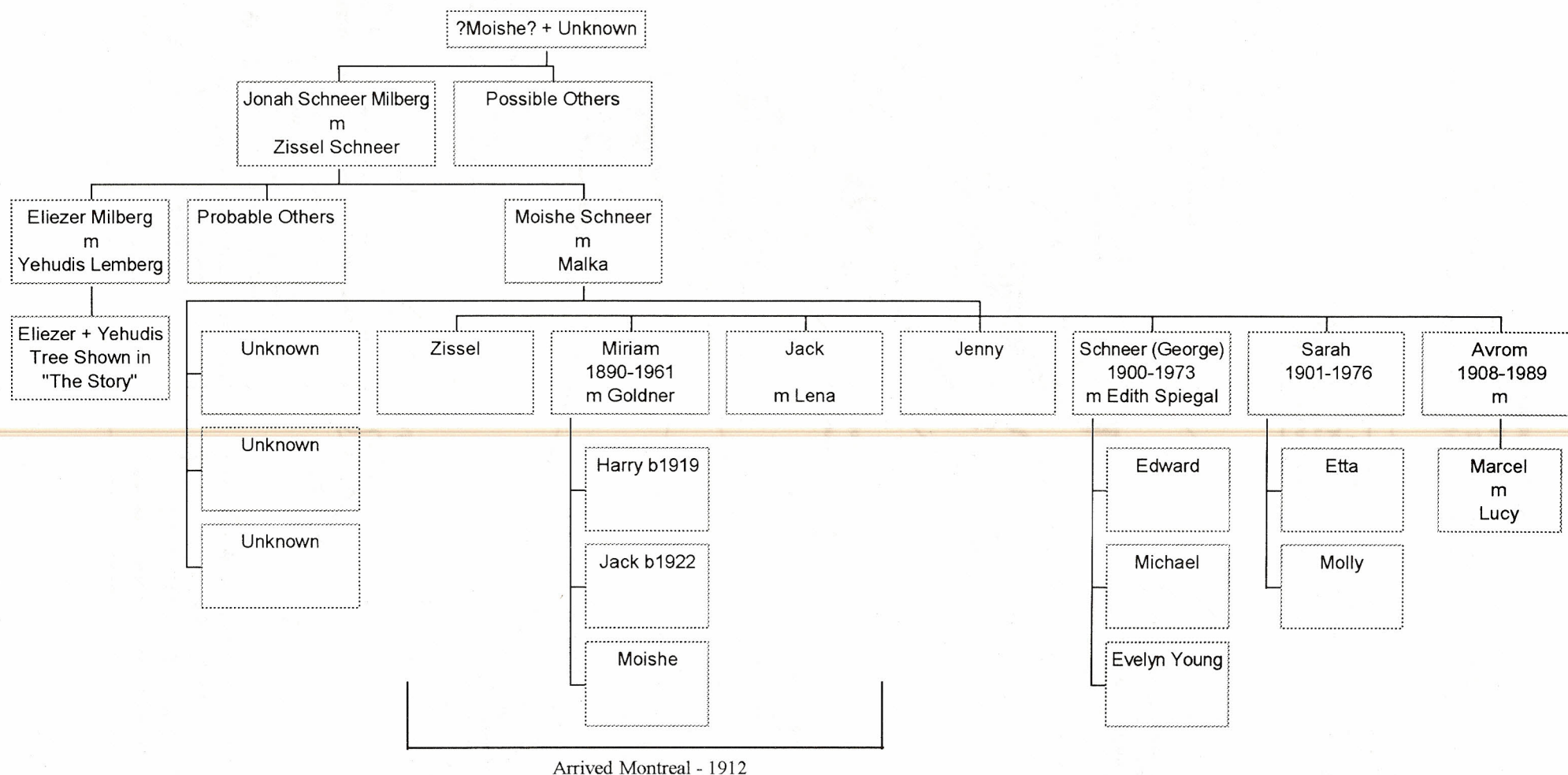
99 PLACE OF BIRTH

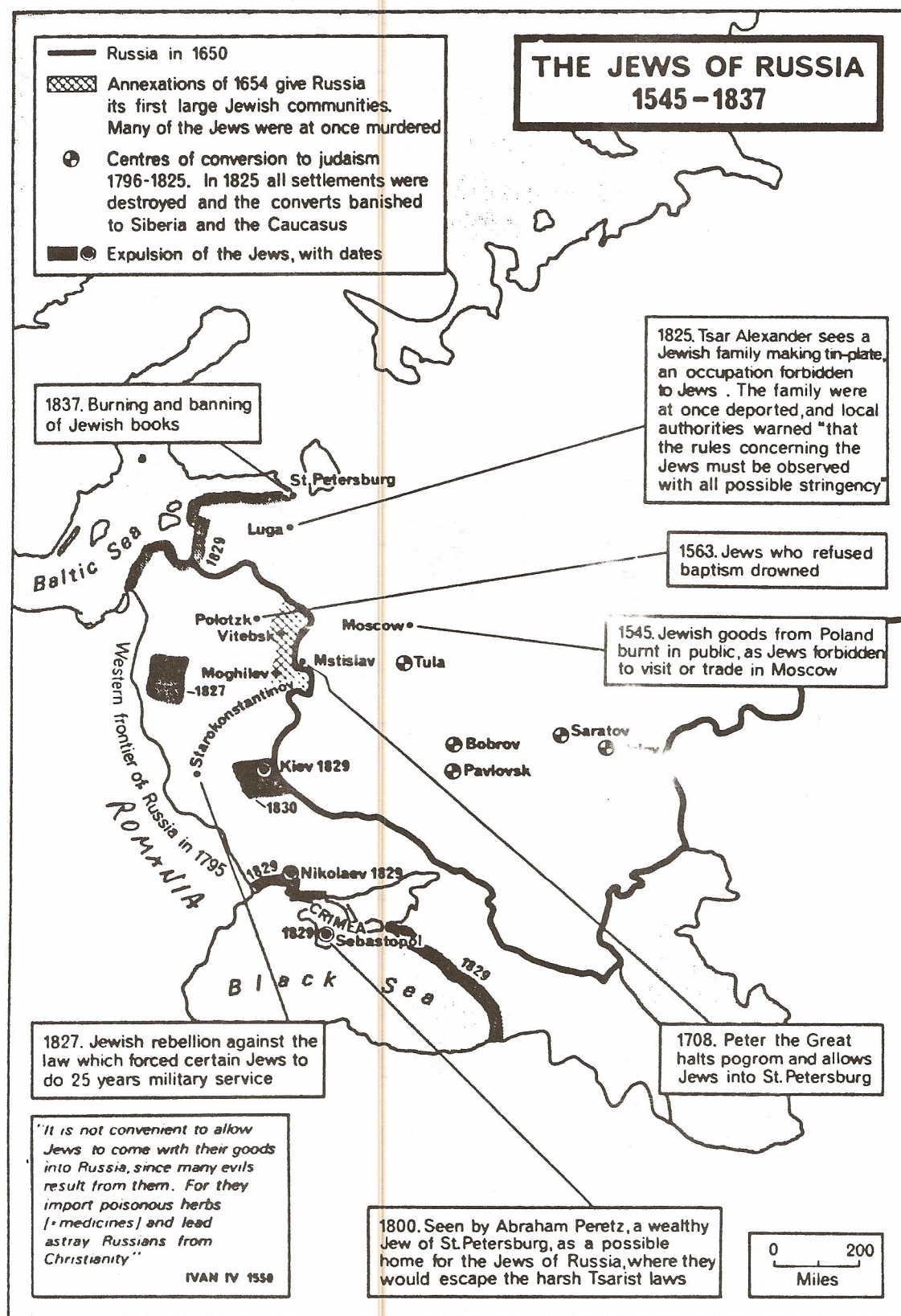
100 PLACE OF BIRTH

1913

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SCHNEER (CANADIAN) FAMILY TREE





DOCUMENT 7. Map showing land acquired by Russia from Poland between 1772 and 1795. It is the land between the line on the left, and the heavier line to the right. Also shown: area around Nikolaev from which Jews were expelled, 1829.

STILL MORE ABOUT
ELIEZER AND YEHUDIS MILBERG

**THEIR DESCENDANTS
+
THE SCHNEER FAMILY**

Second Supplement

**THE STORY of ELIEZER and YEHUDIS MILBERG
and THEIR CHILDREN**

APRIL 1997

Shaarey Shamoyim (THE GATES OF HEAVEN)

There was an article in the NEW YORK TIMES around July 1st, 1996, describing the plight of the "First Roumanian-American Congregation" on Rivington and Orchard Streets, on the Lower East Side, in New York City. SHAAREY SHAMOYIM is a synagogue with 1,800 seats housed in a decaying building. The congregation has been losing members steadily over the years, and is now down to two dozen people. The Rabbi is soliciting contributions in order to restore the building, which at one time was one of the most imposing and prominent on the Lower East Side. We have all read stories like this before.

We were especially interested in this story because, who knows? maybe Eliezer who lived on Broome street, *davened* in this *shul*. We called Fay Wolfson Diamond to find out what she remembers. Fay came to the U.S. with Eliezer and Yehudis in 1907, lived in the same building on Broome Street, and remembers them well. Fay does not remember which *shul* her grandfather went to. She does remember that he went to *shul* every day.

The TIMES article had a picture of the synagogue. It is an impressive building. None of this tells us anything new about the Milbergs, but it testifies to the devotion and commitment of large numbers of Orthodox Jews from Romania, back in 1888. That would have been about ten years before our earliest pioneers, Uncles Benny, Sam and Louie, arrived in the U.S. Evidently the early Milbergs arrived to an already well established Romanian community.

When Aaron Krumbein read this, he remembered a story his father Abe told him. Abe was working at a store on the Lower East Side. Every day he would see this fine-looking man with a red beard passing the store on his way to *shul*. A few years later (after Eliezer had died), when Abe was courting Eliezer's daughter Sarah, she showed Abe a picture of her late father. Her father Eliezer, needless to say, was the same man with the red beard who used to pass the store every day.

First Yassir Congregation

In July 1996, we visited the Acacia Cemetary in Queens, New York, where Eliezer and Yehudis are buried. Re Roth and Anna Lubin wanted to visit the graves of their grandparents. We are pleased to report that the plots are well maintained. They receive Perpetual Care, thanks to the efforts of Aaron Krumbein a few years ago.

Eliezer and Yehudis are buried in a section of the cemetary which is entered through a stone portal consisting of an arch supported by two stone posts. The writing on the arch says "First Yassir Congregation." The writing is in Hebrew characters, but is an exact transliteration of the English. The right-hand supporting post says, in English, "Established in 1910." Below that is the heading "Committee," and below that is a listing of the committee members. One of the people listed in "L. Mulberg." That may be our Eliezer who was known as "Leizer." In fact, that is how he is described on his tombstone and on his Death Certificate. Or, it may have been his son, Louie.

Romanian Archives

BIRTH CERTIFICATES OF THE CHILDREN OF ELIEZER AND YEHUDIS

We have scored a great breakthrough. We have heard from our Romanian researcher, Mr. Carol (Charles) Marcusohn who has produced some remarkable results. Marcusohn has sent us photostats of the Birth Certificates of most of the children of Eliezer and Yehudis (as well as of children of their first child Moshe and of his wife Tova). Except for Lena's Birth Certificate, Marcusohn found the documents in the district capital of Iasi, where he made photostats. He found Lena's in Raducaneni where they do not have a copying machine. He had to write it out himself, and later he typed a copy.

On the following page, you will see a copy of the Birth Certificate of Moshe, the first born. If you would like a copy of your ancestor's Birth Certificate, let us know and we'll send it to you. They all seem to follow the same form as Moshe's, and of course, they are all written in Romanian. We have copies of the Birth Certificates of the following children of Leizer (Eliezer) and Idis (Yehudis): **Moshe**, the first born, 1874; **Zisla** (Susan) 1878, **Struel** (Leon ?) 1882, **Davidu**, (not previously known), 1883. Also **Sloim** (Samuel) 1885, **Josub** (Joseph) 1887, **Sneer** (Saul) 1889, **Oisie** (Simon) 1893, and **Liba** (Lena) 1897. All of the births were described as having taken place in Raducaneni. Marcusohn was not able to locate the birth certificates of **Beni** and **Sura**. He also sent us the Death Certificate of three year old **Davidu** who died in 1887. We sent the documents to Marcel Sheer, who was born in Raducaneni in 1931, and who arrived in Canada with his father in 1948. Marcel translated Moshe's Birth Certificate. Moshe's is typical of the others. In his cover letter, Marcel says:

I have succeeded in translating most of your grandfather's and all of your mother's birth certificates. The handwriting is quite illegible, so in the place of words which I could not understand I left a marked space. I will still try to fill in the missing words, as I find that the more I read it the more words I make out.

I tried for as literal a translation as possible so as to maintain authenticity. The grammar is not too good but I refrained from adding commas or qualifiers so as to retain the "flavour" of the original document "

Here is Marcel's translation:

CIVIL REGISTER FOR NEWBORN

From the year one thousand eight hundred seventy four, month (July?) in thirty days here Act of birth of the child Moisa of masculine sex, born the day before yesterday in his parents house from the community of Raducaneni son of Mr Leizer Milberchi of 28 years of profession merchant domiciled in the community of Raducaneni and a Mrs Idis Leizer Milberchi of 24 years, without profession domiciled in the community of Raducaneni. According to the declaration made by the father who brought the child before me the first witness Mr Iancu Clurman of 40 years of profession merchant domiciled in the community of Raducaneni and the second witness Mr Iancu Rabinovici of 36 years of profession merchant domiciled in the community of Raducaneni. Both with the declarers have underwritten this act together with us, after I read them and after I have found the birth . . .

. . . . (mayor?) of the community of Raducaneni and Officer of Civil Register.

Leizer Milberchi Declarer
Iancu Clurman Witness
Iancu Rabinovici Witness

First Officer of Civil Register (name).

We learn many interesting things from these new documents, the most interesting being that the documents exist at all. As we said, Mr. Marcusohn found these records in Iasi, which is the provincial capital of Moldavia. Marcusohn tells us that Romania began to require civil registration of this kind, starting in 1865. This means that it's very unlikely that we will obtain any more civil documents going back farther than the 1874 Birth Certificate of Moshe, although any given document may refer to an event which took place earlier. For example, later on in this report we refer to the Death Certificate of one of the Schneers which gives the date he was born, back in 1842.

The documents were obviously all written by a clerk. Even the names at the bottom of the document were written by the clerk. The clerk writes Leizer or Lazaire or some other variation of Eliezer, in Latin cursive script, but Eliezer signs alongside in Hebrew script. Thus the clerk may have written Milberci, but Leizer signs, in Hebrew characters, "Milberg," spelling out the name phonetically. The seal which appears at the bottom of each Birth Certificate is dated 1869. It is the same on all Certificates and does not refer to the date of any of the documents.

In addition to the Birth Certificates of the children of Eliezer and Yehudis, Marcusohn was also able to obtain those of the children of Moshe and Tova. You will recall that Moshe stayed on in Romania 'til 1920, long after the rest of the family had left in 1907. We have the following Birth Certificates of Moshe and Tova's children: Ruhla, 1898, (we had never before heard of her); Strul (Irving), Meer Binim (Ben), Sura Chana (Anna), Haim Moise (born in 1910, died in 1912), Malca Blima (Mildred), Rifca Roiza (Rea), Leizer (Larry), Leia (born and died 1915, and Eida, born and died 1916), Golda (Gertrude) and Hana Devora (Dorothy). Simon was born in the United States in 1922. My mother Anna remembers Haim, who died at the age of two. She remembers him running after her father's wagon as Moshe left for a short trip to Iasi. By the time Moshe returned a very few days later, Haim was dead, of typhus, Anna thinks.

These are the years in which Tova gave birth: 1898, 1899, 1901, 1903, 1906, 1908, 1910, 1912, 1915, 1916, 1917, 1919, 1922 - thirteen pregnancies over a 24 year period. They say that the first commandment in the Bible is to "be fruitful and multiply, and fill the land" (with

people). Moshe and Tova obviously took this literally. Again: anyone wanting a copy of any of the Birth Certificates should let us know.

The documents relating to Moshe's children were all found in Raducaneni. Marcusohn copied them out by hand. These Birth Certificates give the religion, i.e., "Hebrew." There is a note at the bottom of my mother Sura Chana's (Anna Milberg Lubin) Birth Certificate. It says: "Found (by us) that according to the law at the newborn's parents house was not transported here due to the fact that it is a frosty winter time . . ." It was December.

It is informative to look at the names of the witnesses on the Birth Certificates. One witness of Moshe's Birth Certificate is Iancu Clurman. My mother says that he was the richest man in town, lived in the most impressive house, and lent money to farmers, (probably to tide them over 'til the sale of the next crop). So we know now that Eliezer had at least one rich friend, supporting our previous information that Eliezer was well off. One of our oral sources, (I think either Ben (the son of Moshe), or Simon (the son of Eliezer)), told us that his father speculated in wheat futures. Lending money to farmers against future delivery may have been one way of doing this. Since rich people usually hang out with other rich people, this relationship with Clurman may hint at Eliezer's financial situation. Clurman also shows up as a witness on Zisla (Susan's) Birth Certificate.

This Clurman fellow appears in another document we have. In a document of Moshe's, written in Yiddish, Moshe tells us (around 1943) that when in Romania he borrowed money from Clurman to buy the bakeries.

Zisla's (Susan's) Birth Certificate is witnessed by "Saim" Lemberg. Lemberg was Yehudis' maiden name, so this witness was probably a brother of Yehudis. It was not her father, since we know from her Death Certificate in Brooklyn in 1913, that her father's name was Jonas.

Eliezer was a witness for two of Moshe's children, his grandchildren.

Lena's Birth Certificate was witnessed by her uncle, Naftuli Lemberg. Naftuli was Yehudis' brother, the father of four children, two girls and two boys. Naftuli Lemberg himself emigrated, and went to California. Anna tells us that this was "much before her father Moshe took his family to America in 1920," although she does not remember when exactly Naftuli left. His letters back to Romania were eagerly awaited. Everyone gathered around when the letters were read. Naftuli reported from California that everything was magnificent. The fruit was bigger

and better. Even the garlic was better !!!! The weather was glorious, and so on. Naftuli's children emigrated to Brooklyn, and Naftuli returned from California. Lena later married Benny Littman, whose mother was also a Lemberg, a sister of Yehudis. Lena and Benny were first cousins.

One would have thought that all of these documents would have told us exactly when Eliezer was born. Not so. With documents in hand, we now know for a "certainty," that Eliezer was born in 1846, 1848, 1849, 1850, 1851, and 1863. Yehudis was "definitely" born in 1850, 1851, 1852 and 1853. (Nothing like hard documentary evidence.) In any event, we do now know with certainty the dates of birth of their children. These after all are the dates on which the documents are recorded with the civil authorities. We' have learned some new things, and confirmed some previously held theories.

1) We now have proof that the Milbergs were in Rudacaneni as early as 1874 when Moshe was born there. This is confirmed by what Moshe stated on the Shipping Manifest when he arrived in the United States in 1920.

2) We also now have written proof that Eliezer called himself Milberg in 1874 when Moshe was born; not Schneer.

3) When his son Moshe was born in 1874, Eliezer gives his own age as 28, meaning that he would have had to have been born in 1846 or 1847, meaning in turn that he would have been 53 in 1900 when Lena was born, meaning that he would have been 65 when he died in 1912. This is also consistent with the age he gave when he arrived in New York in 1907. He said then that he was 59, which would have made him about 65 in 1912. However, this is not what his tombstone says. There it says he was born in 1856. That would have made him just 18 when Moshe was born. It is possible. Suppose that 18-year-olds were being drafted at the time. It probably would have been better to say you were 25.

4) We now know that in 1874, Eliezer called himself a "merchant." What kind of a merchant was he? Was he in the bakery business?

5) The family names which appear on the Birth and Death Certificates may also tell us something else, of a more general nature. In addition to the names of Milberg and Lemberg, there was Clurman, as we mentioned. Then Rabinovitz, Goldenberger, Lazzerovici,

Rudelheim, Dascalu. Tova's family name was Nachman. Yehudis' sister Malka married a Littman. Do these names tell us where the family originated? Except for Dascalu, they certainly sound more Austrian (Galician), than they do Romanian.

Swimming the Prut

One objective in doing this kind of genealogy is to try to push back into the past as far as possible. We had speculated at length about the possibilities of the family having come from Russia prior to Romania. Now we seem to have a confirmation. We have spoken with Mildred Milberg Gralla-Marks, and she told us a story which has the feel of authenticity. (Mildred is the Malka-Blima born in 1906.) Mildred says that her mother Tova told her that Eliezer swam across the Prut river from "Bessarabia" to avoid the Russian draft; that he was seventeen or eighteen, that he met Yehudis in Romania, and that he married quite young.

It could all fit. Swam the river at seventeen in 1872, married Yehudis in 1873, father of first-born Moshe in 1874. All of which brings us back to Aaron Krumbein's theory that Eliezer adopted his wife's family name "Lemberg," reversing the first syllable to make it Milberg. It makes a lot of sense in the context of avoiding detection after having fled Russia. This would mean that the date on the tombstone is correct, and that Eliezer was eighteen when Moshe was born. This would also be consistent with the theory that the family name in Russia was Schneer, which is what all of the anecdotal reports said in the first place.

Where do we go from here? If Eliezer swam the Prut back around 1872, how will we find out anything that took place prior to that? Where did he come from? If we wish to continue the research we need some kind of hypothesis, some kind of theory about where the family came from. One theory we had previously mentioned was that the family came from an area around Kishenev, which was the home of the Friedman Chassidic dynasty which fled Russia around 1835, for Romania and Hungary. The Rebbe's son-in-law settled in Vaslui, not far from Raducaneni. Moshe Milberg, Eliezer's first-born, used to go to Vaslui to consult with the descendant Rebbe, Shalom Halperin. Why? Had Eliezer's father *ne* Schneer been a follower, then his son, and then his grandson, Moshe?

Maurice Milberg on The Cutting Edge

We have recently received a letter from Maurice Milberg, now living in McAllen Texas. Maurice is the son of Joseph Milberg, Eliezer's son. Here is what he writes: *As a youngster, I would accompany my Dad to the factory at 512 Broadway. There was a Sol Lemberg, the head cutter, who would put me on the cloth spreading machine and ride me up and down. I know he was referred to as a cousin of Joe [Maurice's father] and Sol [Maurice's uncle]. Sol Lemberg was the son of Naftuli. Naftuli was the brother of Yehudis, as we wrote above. Thus Sol Lemberg was indeed a first cousin of Joe and Sol Milberg.*

More Documents

We have just received the Marriage Certificate of Suzy Milberg and Morris Wolfson ! Fantastic! Of course it is written in Romanian, but we can make out some things. They were in fact married in 1902, as previously believed. But: Suzy (Zisla) was born in 1878, not in 1883. Morris (Moise) was born in 1875, not 1879. She was from Raducaneni, he from "Podoleni." (Moshe, the son of Eleizer, also married someone from Podoleni, i.e., Tova Nachman.)

We also received a number of Sheer or Schneer documents which we again forwarded to Marcel Sheer in Ontario for translation. Marcel translated the Death Certificate of Iancu Schneer, who died in Raducaneni in 1914. We learn that Iancu was born in 1841. The Death Certificate gives his mother's and father's names as Zislu and Schneer sin Schneer. (The 1841 date, by the way, is the earliest documentary date we have.) Marcel does not know what "sin" means. He says it may even be "siu." Here is an extract from Marcel's translation of the Death Certificate:

From the year 1914 month of November day one, passed away Mr. IANCU SCHNEER at his house in the community of Raducaneni, county Falciu, of the age of 73 years, of profession baker, married with Feiga Schneer of 70 years of age without profession, domiciled in this community; son of deceased Schneer sin Schneer and Zisla Schneer.

The death was verified by us (ourselves).

This declaration was made by the following witnesses:

Mr. Avram Schneer of the age 48 years, and

Mr. Zisu Schneer of the age 31 years,

both of the profession baker and domiciled in this community, the children of the deceased; who, after I read them this act have undersigned it together with us.

The witnesses, Avram and Zisu, were Marcel's great uncles, brothers of his grandfather, Moishe Schneer, all of them the children of Iancu and Feiga. Thus Marcel learned the names of his great-grandparents, Schneer sin Schneer, and Zislu. And I believe that we who are descendants of Eliezer and Yehudis learned the names of our great-grandparents, the very same Schneer and Zislu.

To see why this is so, let us turn for a moment to the Death Certificate of ELIEZER, who died in 1912 in New York City. Whoever filled out the Death Certificate, said that ELIEZER's mother's name was ZISLA. The Certificate also said that his father's name was JONAS. However, the name on his tombstone in Queens is ELIEZER ben SCHNEER. And, important, Aaron Krumbein says he remembers clearly that when his father Abe said Kaddish on the Yahrzeit of ELIEZER, he called him ELIEZER ben SCHNEER. That seems conclusive. One cannot imagine that Abe Krumbein made a mistake in this context. Thus: ELIEZER's parents appear to be the same ZISLA and SCHNEER as IANCU's parents. The two must have been brothers. Assuming birth dates of 1854 for Eliezer, and 1842 for Schneer, it would have been very possible ELIEZER was a SCHNEER until he changed his name to MILBERG. A Family Tree which reflects these ideas is included in the Family Tree section of the Who's Who.

Short Summary and Short Conclusion

The Eleizer + Yehudis family history in Romania centered in Raducaneni, where all or most of the children were born, and where the family were bakers. The family seems to have been Russian before being Romanian. Eliezer swam the Prut around 1872 to escape the Russian draft. He was about 18, and met Yehudis in Romania shortly thereafter. It seems that in Russia, the family name was Schneer. Aaron Krumbein is probably correct in that Eliezer

changed his name to Milberg after he met Yehudis and based his new name on his wife's name of Lemberg. Their first born was Moshe in 1874; Lena, the youngest, was born in 1897. By 1907, all of the Milberg side of the family had emigrated to the US, except for Moshe + Tova and their children who came in 1920. Most of the Schneer side of the family stayed on in Raducaneni until years later. It seems likely that the parents of Eliezer, and of Iancu, the heads of the Milberg and Schneer families respectively, were Schneer + Zisla. They were probably born around 1815 - 1820. We hazard a guess that the family came from the Kishinev area of Bessarabia, which was the home of the Ruzhiner and Friedman Chassidim, one of whose sons-in-law became the Vaslui-er Rebbe, who was often consulted by Moshe Milberg. Interestingly, this is one of the few times that religion enters our story. We have not come across one Schneer or Milberg who was a Rabbi, or any descendant who is a Rabbi.

Almost all, if not all, of the children of Eliezer and Yehudis who arrived in the US by 1907 were extremely successful businessmen. This probably means that they came from a entrepreneurial culture which took for granted material success, and knew how to go about getting it. Far from waiting a generation or two to achieve financial success, the Milbergs seem to have done so in a matter of a very few years. Louie arrived in 1899. Incredibly, by 1906 there is a photo of Louie, Benny and Sam looking very affluent in their new office. Benny was President of the Manufacturers Association by 1912, and negotiated across from Sidney Hillman. They ran large businesses, often employing hundreds. Most made and spent a lot of money and seem to have adapted to American ways instantly. In their chosen fields they excelled. They owned big houses, big cars, and were not embarrassed to have chauffeurs and housekeepers and the other accoutrements of wealth. They do indeed seem to have been an unusual group.

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