

## The Schenker Family

This was material submitted by Jerome B. Shapiro: [jeromebshapiro@aya.yale.edu](mailto:jeromebshapiro@aya.yale.edu)

My grandmother's maiden name was Schenker. If the stories are true, the family was fairly prosperous. In the early twentieth century, they owned a piano, and I was told, gilded furniture. There was at least one Christian servant girl working for them.

There is one story that I don't know whether to believe. It seems the Czar (probably the visit of the president of Lithuania in 1928) came to visit the vicinity of Sveksna. As per usual protocol the Count gave his home to the Czar and his entourage. Then needing a place to sleep the Count showed up at my great grandfather's home. My only problem with this is why didn't he pick a Christian home to stay at? There may have been good reasons and my great grandfather may have been a respected member of the community, but I still wonder.

Here is the photograph of the family home (This photo is reduced from a much larger wall hanging that my grandmother had.):



My grandmother had a picture of a cemetery in what I assumed was Sveksna. I found the picture and looking at it again it clearly is not a cemetery in the usual sense. I wonder if it is one of the Monuments placed on the Common Graves of the Holocaust Victims.\* I have also included the reverse of the photo. If the Yiddish can be translated it might help explain what this is. What does stand out is the Julian date Feb. 19 1959, which is when I presume this was when the photo was taken.



It is the Memorial for the Holocaust victims of Sveksna.

The translation is: A remembrance from the terrible, bloody mass grave, where the closest members of your family are. It was taken at the time of the opening.

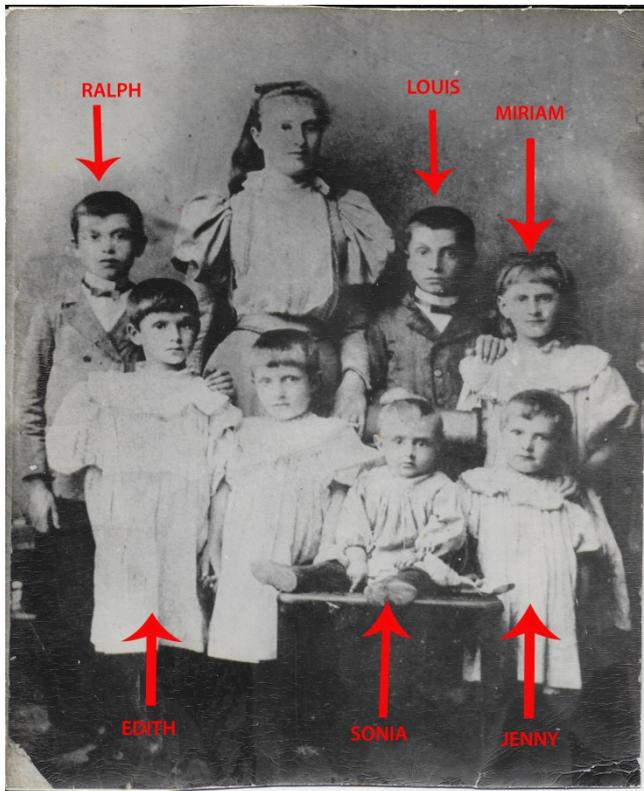
28 days in the month of Elul, is the Yahrzeit of your closest relatives.

19 February 1959 Kaunas were the pictures completed. Some of them were given to ?? [I am not sure about the name, may be Moshe – YK].

(It was translated by Yocheved Klausner of Be'er Sheva, Israel.)

In going through my parents photographs I found one photograph of the Schenker family.

Please continue to the next page.



There were (tentative) identifications of only some members on the back of the photo. I will give you the birth years of the family members who I know came to the US. These years and the year of immigration were reported by the individuals to the US Census. They seem to agree with records in the Ellis Island database. The older members of my mother's family who came from Crimea appear very well assimilated in their early twentieth century photographs but had no idea of their actual birth dates, or even it seems the Hebrew year of their birth. I assume that it was the same situation in Lithuania.

NAME	BIRTH	DEATH	ARRIVAL
Louis Scheinker	1888	1975	1905
Edith Schenker	1892	1980	1909
Jennie Schenker	1898	1977	1913

I don't know why Louis Scheinker's name was spelled that way by someone on the steamship line and he never changed it.

My grandmother Edith, who never really learned to speak English well, has NO last name specified on the steamship manifest.

Sonia Schenker settled in Argentina. I do not know when she was born, her married name, or when she arrived there. She had two sons.

The "Ralph" in the picture may have died by 1924 because Edith had a son that year who she named Ralph. I cannot find in immigration information on Miriam Schenker and I can do nothing with the other people without their names.

As I assume was typical, the Schenkers traveled with Yiddish names and Americanized their names once they were in the US. The record for Jennie Schenker is cross referenced for some reason and I am sure that it is correct. The records for Louis and Edith correspond to the correct dates. Here is a photograph of Jennie. Jennie was a favorite great aunt of mine.



Jennie Schenker and Peter Nemiroff agreed to marry in October 1939. Images of the English translation of the agreement and the original Hebrew and Aramaic document appear after page 5 of this document.

"Kowno" is given as the last place of residence of Edith and Louis. It may have been the only place in Lithuania that the shipping people knew. Google Earth states that today it is a "county" in Lithuania while Wikipedia states that it is the Polish name for the city Kaunas. Again the ages and years of immigration agree to what both passengers report. Edith's surname name is a bit misspelled.

NAME	TRAVEL NAME(1)	TRAVEL NAME(2)	RESIDENCE	ARRIVAL	SHIP	PORT
Louis	Gdalic	Scheinker	Kowno	7 June 05	Kaiser Wilhelm II	Bremen
Edith	Heine	Schemkar	Kowno	11 June 09	Mauretania	Liverpool
Jennie	Scheine	Schenker	Sweksi	26 Sept 13	Pretoria	Hamburg

There is one interesting point that I cannot confirm. The ship's manifest listing Edith states that she was a servant. There was at least one older woman said to be from Kowno on the vessel. Whether she really worked as a servant or this was a fiction to facilitate her passage through Ellis Island because of her age I do not know. Like so much else, I never heard this story.



Edith



The sisters, Edith, Jennie, and Sonia (left to right)

A quick look at the Jewish Gen website did not seem to reveal information about the Crimea in general or Simferopol, in particular, which is where my mother's family hails from. I do not know that I feel up to writing a 1000 years of Jewish history of the area even though the topic does interest me. As you probably know, in 1492 when the Jews were told to leave Spain the Ottomans sent a fleet of ships to fetch them. They did not want that talent to go to waste. It must be an interesting story with ups and downs like everywhere else.

Translation of Marriage Agreement between PETER  
NEMIROFF and JENNIE SCHENKER.

The first day of the week, 21st day of the month of Shvat, 5628, since the creation of the universe as we figured in New York City, at which time, Pincus, the son of Solomon, told a girl, Jennie, daughter of Jacob, to be unto me a wife according to the laws of Moses and Israel. I will work, I will respect her, I will feed her, I will support her, I will give her everything the way Jewish men who work, support, respect and cherish their wives in all honesty.

I give you a maiden's dowry of \$200.00, which you are entitled to according to the Bible, and feed and dress you and also give you general expense, and everything which you need, as according to the customs of the land, and she was satisfied and she agreed to be his wife, and this is the dowry, and that she agreed to be his wife, and this is the dowry, and that she agrees to turn over all her dowry to her husband, whether it be silver, gold, jewelry, clothes, furniture for the apartment, linens, and he assumes the responsibility, at an agreed price of one hundred dollars in silver, and Pincus, our bridegroom, gave her another one hundred dollars, all together the sum of two hundred dollars in silver, and so, Pincus said, our bridegroom, the responsibility of this contract, the dowry which he received from her father, and the other one hundred dollars in silver which he gave to her that he is responsible for the two hundred dollars, and unto her, who also is responsible for the same amount to Jennie, so that she should be paid from the best assets which he has, wherever it may be situated, which I now have, and which I will get, and my property wherever situated, and whatsoever kind and nature should be responsible both for the one hundred dollars dowry which she gave and the one hundred dollars which he gave, even from my wearing apparel she may collect when I live or after death, from this day on forever, and the responsibility of this agreement of the dowry which she gave and what I gave, Pincus Assums this responsibility, shall be enforced strictly as all other agreements in writing and it is irrevocable as all other agreements as is the custom among Jewish folks as the Rabbis have proclaimed, may their memory be blessed.

This agreement is permanent and perpetual; this is evidenced by the customary token from Pincus, son of Solomon, our bridegroom to Jennie, the bride, which is prescribed by law and everything written herein this agreement shall remain valid and enforceable.

I, ABRAHAM WEINSTEIN, attorney and councillor-at-law of 110 West 40th Street, New York City, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and accurate translation of the Articles of Agreement of Marriage between Peter Nemiroff and Jennie Schenker.

*Abraham Weinstein*  
Dated: New York, N. Y., October 25, 1939

State of New York, County of New York: ss.:

On this 25th day of October, 1939, before me personally appeared Abraham Weinstein, to me known, and known to me to be the same person described in and who executed the foregoing instrument and duly acknowledged to me that he had executed the same.

*Sauveur Miller*  
*Cour. & Secy*  
*Myal*  
*In presence of 16/10/1939*

