

CHAPTER 1 OVERVIEW-JEWISH MIGRATIONS

Today almost all Jews living in the United States and Europe descended from about 5,000 Jews who lived in Italy some 1100 years ago.

We are told that the Jewish population in the world around the year 1700 was probably one million strong. If this were the case, then chances of interrelationships among any two Jews living today are very high. And, if these people came from the same small shtetl (town), or the same area, the chances of a relationship are even greater.

In the last 200 years many Jews moved away from their homes. Some moved only a few miles and some moved across vast expanses of land or oceans. There were some common reasons for these moves and for earlier ones in the 1400's. In the late 1400's, the Jews were expelled from Spanish territories during the Spanish Inquisition. Later, Jews were persecuted by pogroms, long-term military conscriptions and high taxes. Jews also left their homes for economic reasons.

In those days, as it is now, it was difficult to leave the U.S.S.R. Jews needed official permission to leave the country. They had to pay taxes and special fees or bribes. The men needed to show proof that they had fulfilled their military duty. Because of these reasons, many Jews "stole" across the frontiers, thus exiting illegally. Each country had its own regulations. Some made it easy to leave and others made it almost impossible.

Where the immigrants ended up, in North and South America and other parts of the world, largely depended upon the city from which they sailed. For example, if they got to Germany, the Germans made them buy tickets on German steamships. These ships sailed from Bremen and Hamburg and usually docked in New York City. Ships sailing from Libau, on the Baltic Sea, also arrived in New York City. Those immigrants sailing from Libau were usually legal immigrants (they had exit visas).

The immigrants who made their way to Antwerp or Rotterdam were likely to sail on a Canadian ship, and most likely ended up in Canada. Many of those immigrants then made their way, via railroad, to various parts of the United States. Some stayed in Canada. There were some immigrants who sailed to South America and to South Africa. My grandmother Stearn's sister, Rachel Kruk Gomez, settled in Brazil.

It took great courage for people to leave their families, their homes and their birthplaces. Even though life was not easy for many of them in these shtetls, it was still "home".

CHAPTER 2 A LITTLE HISTORY

The Northern Kingdom of Israel (the Ten Lost Tribes) was conquered in the 6th century B.C.E. by the King of Assyria and the people were dispersed among alien nations. This is called the First Diaspora.¹ The smaller Kingdom of Judea (Judah, Benjamin, Levites and parts of Simeon) became the ancestors of present day Jewry.

In the Second Commonwealth, 70 C.E., there was a large diaspora. Good-sized Jewish communities existed in Egypt and Iraq (then called Babylonia). Smaller communities existed in the Roman Empire, in North Africa, Greece, Asia Minor, Spain, Gaul (France), and even in China.

In the Middle Ages, world Jewry was divided into three groups: Oriental, Sephardi, and Ashkenazi. The Oriental was the oldest group. It had its origin in the time of the Babylonian Exile. There was a great Islamic influence on these Jews who were "the descendants of that portion of Babylonian Jewry which declined to return to Jerusalem with Ezra and Nehemiah to rebuild the Temple."²

The Sephardi, between the tenth and the twelfth centuries, experienced "The Golden Age of Sephardi Jewry". These Jews reached Spain via Egypt and North Africa following the Arab conquest of this area in the eighth century C.E. Maimonides (1135-1204), one of the most outstanding Jews of all times, lived at this time. "Learning flourished until the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492."³ The Sephardim migrated to North Africa, to Italy, and some to the Ottoman Empire (Turkey, Greece, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and Israel). Some fled to Amsterdam or Hamburg, and others went to England and France. Some brave souls went to the new world.⁴ The Sephardic Jews brought with them a well-developed culture and many learned men.

The Ashkenazim's roots go back to the Kingdom of Judea, the laws and customs of which they maintained.⁵ The Ashkenazim are the forefathers of most of the world's Jews today. "Even before the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 C.E., there was a substantial Judean population in Rome and other parts of Italy,"⁶ which was increased by the tides of war. The Jewish prisoners of war were ransomed by free Jews and all of them established a Jewish community on the Italian Peninsula, "Europe's oldest continuously-settled Jewish community."⁷ By the ninth century, C.E., only about 800 Jewish families remained in Italy. These were the survivors of repeated barbaric invasions and Christian persecutions. These Jews were successful merchants and scholars of the Torah.⁸

¹Diaspora-the settling of scattered colonies of Jews outside of Palestine after the Babylonian exile; Jews living outside Palestine or Israel.

²*My Jewish Roots* by David Kranzler; Sepher-Herman Press; N.Y.C.; 1979; p. 8.

³Kranzler; p. 8.

⁴In *Sales of Hope*, the author, Simon Wiesenthal, puts forth the theory that Columbus was actually searching for a homeland for the Jews after their expulsion from Spanish territories.

⁵Kranzler, p. 9.

⁶*Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁷*Ibid.*

⁸*Ibid.*

In 800 C.E., these remaining Italian Jews were invited by Charlemagne to live in Germany and help establish trade and commerce. This settlement grew into what is now known as Ashkenazi Jewry.¹ These Jews prospered and brought great benefits to their new country.

The year 1096 brought the beginnings of the Crusades. Mass pogroms reduced the Jewish population.

By the 13th and 14th centuries, Jews were "reduced to the deplorable social and economic state usually associated with the Medieval Jewry".² Jews were highly taxed, expelled from some communities, and were excluded from international trade. They were severely restricted economically. Jews were often forced to wear a yellow badge. We see this practice used by Hitler in the bad years leading up to the Holocaust.

The years 1147-1192 brought more crusades. Conditions deteriorated further and the Jews migrated once again, this time to Eastern Europe. They migrated to Poland and Lithuania, which were not unlike what Germany had been like centuries before. Polish leaders welcomed them. They used the abilities of the Jews much as the Germans had before them. Migrations continued eastward until the 17th century.

Jewish migration from Germany and Austria to Poland and Lithuania (and other parts of the U.S.S.R.) during the 13th and through the first half of the 17th century provided the basis for the development of the most populous and most intensely Jewish community. By the 16th century, Polish Jewry came into its own in Jewish scholarship, economic well-being and self-government.³

The years 1618-1648 brought the Thirty Years' War and a general destruction. Between 1648 and 1658 there was a further decline of Polish Jewry. A monster named Bogdan Chmielnicki and his Cossacks attacked and killed thousands of Jews. They destroyed many Jewish communities. The Muscovite-Swedish Invasions of Poland also caused a major shift of Jewish population. There was a reversal in migration from the east to the west. Jews fled to the calmer countries of Germany, Austria, France, England, Bohemia and Holland. Jews were very mobile at this time when so few restrictions on travel were on the "books". Westward migrations continued for the next two centuries. Some Jews went to the American colonies.

The first group of Jews to settle in New Amsterdam (New York) consisted of 23 Jews who had escaped the Inquisition in Brazil in 1654. The first two centuries of Jewish settlement in North America is called the Sephardic Period.⁴

The second group of Jewish immigrants to the

United States was made up of Jews from Germany, Austria, and Bohemia. This took place in the 1820's and 30's. These people migrated for economic reasons and because of laws permitting only the oldest son in Jewish families to marry legally. This was done to keep down the Jewish population.⁵

The third group of Jewish immigrants to the United States came between 1880 and 1920. In fact, this was the largest number of Jewish immigrants to arrive on our shores. "They were part of the world's greatest human migratory movement."⁶ The reasons for these moves were "the population explosion in Europe, the Industrial Revolution, a switch from rural to urban areas, and social, economic, and political upheavals."⁷ Poland's various divisions, 1772 through 1796, sent many Jews to America. South Poland (Galicia) had 900,000 Jews by 1910. It was annexed by Austria and stayed Austrian until 1918. These Jews were treated fairly well, especially after a new constitution was adopted in 1867. This granted the Jews equality in the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

The rest of the Jews (after the Polish divisions) were domiciled under Russian rule. This was unfortunate. Russia had almost completely rid itself of Jews in the 16th century and was not happy about letting in another three-quarters of a million. Russia did not want the Jews to come into contact with her Greek Orthodox people. Because of this, the "Pale of Settlement", a restricted area of residence for Jews, was created. This lasted from 1835 until 1917 when the Czar was overthrown. Jews could only live in another place if they held a special permit. The Jews of the Pale lived an uncomfortable life. There were cruel laws, the kidnappings of young Jewish boys for the Czar's army, harsh physical and economic conditions, and few freedoms. Many of the kidnapped Jewish boys were involuntarily converted to the Greek Orthodox religion.⁸

By 1880 there were four million Jews in the Pale. By 1881 the pogroms started again and many Jews escaped Russia to search for freedom. Between 1880 and 1898 over one-half million Jews came to the United States. The United States was considered a paradise to these persecuted Jews. From 1890 to 1903 100,000 Jews arrived each year in this land. World War I brought restrictive immigration laws and radically reduced the number of Jews permitted to enter this country. There was a smaller migration during this period from Eastern European countries to Western European countries, such as Germany, France, and England. Other Jews went to Argentina, Mexico, Brazil, Canada, South Africa, and the Holy Land.

Between 1900 and 1914 about 10,000 Sephardim and

¹*Ibid.*

²Kranzler, p. 10.

³*Ibid.*

⁴Kranzler, p. 11.

⁵*Ibid.*, p. 12.

⁶*Ibid.*

⁷*Ibid.*

⁸Kranzler, p. 12.

Oriental Jews migrated to America. They settled in close-knit communities. Most of them spoke neither Yiddish nor English. The Ashkenazi, on the other hand, spoke Yiddish. This created a common tongue for the Ashkenazi.

To digress a bit, Yiddish, as a language, originated over 900 years ago as a German dialect and was transformed by mixing in Hebrew and Slavic sounds.

Movements to the Far East: In the middle of the 19th century a group of Jews from Bagdad (including the famous Sassoon family) established a network of very lucrative enterprises and Jewish communities in many cities of India, China, Japan, East Indies, and Singapore. At the end of the 19th century some Ashkenazi Jews (Russian Jews) went through Siberia to Manchuria and on to Japan and China. These Jews did not mingle with the Oriental Jews.

World War I caused a dislocation of many of the Jews in the Pale of Settlement and in Austrian Galicia. The Czar accused the Jews of helping the Germans. Some Jews were pushed eastward. There were massacres and pogroms in the Ukraine during the Civil War in 1917-1920. Some Jews were pushed in the opposite direction, west toward German-Austrian lines. About 100,000 Jews settled in Vienna. A smaller number of Jews continued onto Germany via Hungary. Some stayed in Hungary.

Between 1840 and 1940 over 4,000,000 Jews gave up their homes. About 3,600,000 traveled overseas. About 550,000 went to Western European countries; Of the 3,600,000 who went overseas, about 2,700,000 of them emigrated to the United States. Approximately 1,000,000 Jews settled in other overseas countries, including Israel.¹

The Holocaust and the establishment of the State of Israel account for the most recent Jewish migrations. Between 1933 and 1945 many German and Austrian Jews escaped from Hitler's atrocities. Because of the terrible American immigration quota system, only 200,000 were permitted to enter our country. This in itself was an atrocity. Great Britain took in 50,000 Jews; Shanghai took in 18,000 - China was the only country in the world which offered unrestricted entry!²

Between 1938 and 1947 about 150,000 Jews illegally entered Israel. This was called "Aliya Bet". These desperate Jews had no visas and the British were extremely rigid concerning Jewish immigration to the Holy Land.

In 1939 the world population of Jews was 16,500,000. Following the war in 1945 the world population of Jews was 10,850,000. The Holocaust wiped out great centers of Jewish learning and scholarship, as well as 6 million Jews.³ Most of the Jews murdered were Ashkenazi.

America became the country with the largest center of Jews - 5,000,000. The Soviet Union has the second largest number of Jews - 2,000,000. Israel took in

1,500,000 altogether and now has the largest number of Oriental and Sephardi Jews in the world.

This coverage of Jewish migration patterns should help you put into perspective how our ancestors came to live in various parts of the world.

CHAPTER 3 THAT'S MY NAME - OR IS IT?

For thousands of years Jews did not have family names. Jews did not generally adopt a surname until forced to do so by governments, usually in the 18th or 19th centuries. Before that, a Jewish man was known by patronymics, i.e. their father's name (Joseph ben Yakov, Joseph son of Jacob).

Names are very important to the Jews. There are even some rules on the naming of Jews. The Talmud, for example, forbids the use of the name of an evil person.⁴

Ashkenazim usually name their children after deceased ancestors. This is done to honor their memory and to remember their existence. This is very helpful to the genealogist. It often provides clues as to names of past generations.

Sephardim and Oriental Jews usually name the oldest child after the father (or another living relative). Some of them do name the child after a deceased relative.

Jews have their local (secular) name and their Hebrew name. The Hebrew name is used in religious matters while the secular name is for daily business or civil matters. Using a Hebrew name is one very important way of preserving our identities as Jews.

Names are taken from many sources: the Bible, combinations of Hebrew and Greek names (or other nationality names), ancestors, places of origin, holidays, occupations, patronymics, etc. One can often pinpoint a place of origin from a name. For example, Metzger, Schachter, and Shocket all mean ritual slaughterer. However, Metzger is German, Schachter is German-Galician-Hungarian; and Shocket is Polish-Russian.

In Slavic countries, many place names contain the following suffix: ski (native of . . .) Examples of this are Poznanski-native of Posen and Warshawski-native of Warsaw.

Acronyms are also used in Jewish names to identify scholars. An example of this is RASHI-Rabbi Shlomo Itzhaki. The priestly tradition is carried on through the names: "Hakohen" is called Cohen. "Halevi" becomes Levy or Levi. Kohanim usually have outstretched hands carved on their tombstones or Ketubah. Levites usually have a jug carved on the stone. This carving refers to the washing of the Kohan's hands prior to the blessing. The Levites served the Kohanim, the priests. The Bohm Family is Kohanim.

¹Kranzler, 9, 15.

²Kranzler, p. 17.

³Ibid.

⁴Kranzler, p. 24.

Many people with the names of Cohen and Levy are not truly Kohan and Levite. These names may have been chosen because they were easy to spell or because some immigration official at Ellis Island decided this name would be easier to write down than some complicated foreign name.

Feminine names have also become the root of some Jewish surnames. Examples of this are Ediel becomes Edels, Sarah becomes Sirkles, Rifka becomes Rivkes and Chaya becomes Chayes.

Other names mean "husband of", such as Roseman and Braverman. Some names mean "son of", such as Dvorkes, son of Devorah and Gittelson, son of Gittel.

As I said earlier, the Ashkenazim did not adopt surnames until they were forced to do so at the end of the 18th century and the middle of the 19th century. The Austrian Empire compelled Jews to adopt surnames in 1787; Napoleon commanded the same in 1808. Jews were suspicious of anything to do with governments. Thus, they were not anxious to identify themselves in any way. When the government official came to take their names, the Jews were made to pay for their names! If a Jew could afford to pay a high price, he was given a "nice" name. If one could not afford the price, he was given a name which ridiculed him in some way.

been given another name to fool the "angel of death". Many names changed because emigrants were forced to use illegal passports to escape their home country. They continued with the new name because they feared the Czar could still "reach" them in the new world.

Officials at Ellis Island often wrote down what they thought they heard, or simplified a difficult name, or simply wrote down "Cohen" or "Levy" (as noted earlier). Many emigrants wanted to Americanize their names and so adopted new names.

In Israel many immigrants change their names to Hebrew ones. For example, one of our relatives, Itzak Bohm, now uses the name Itzak Ben-Ari.

In the Bohm family some relatives use the name "Bohm"; some use "Bahm", while others may use "Böhm" or "Boehm". Bohm is an Ashkenazic name meaning "Bohemian". There are Bohms in Germany, Russia, Lithuania, and Hungary and Austria.

On my mother's side of the family, the name "Stearn" has been spelled "Stern"; and on the ship's manifest the name is listed as "Steirin" for Grandpa Gershon Stearn. "Stern" means "star". It can also be a geographical name taken from the village of Sternianyin, White Russia.

**CHAPTER 4
FROM WHERE DID WE COME?
BOHM FAMILY**

Bilke and Huszt are two family towns for the Bohms. I am told that many Bohms had their roots in Lukavo, a small shtetl about three or four kilometers from Bilke. Some of the Bohms came from Irshawa, another small shtetl about eight kilometers from Bilke. These towns are presently located in the U.S.S.R., which makes access to them almost impossible. Huszt, for example, is not on an approved visiting list because it is the site of some uranium plants. Prior to the U.S.S.R. status, this area belonged to Czechoslovakia during the years 1918-1938. Between 1938 and the end of the second World War, this area was annexed to Hungary. After the war, the U.S.S.R. took over.

Huszt (Khust, Chust, Huste) is the town where Avrum Bohm's family lived. The town is located in the province of Maramaros on the border. It is located in South Carpathian Oblast (mountains), Ukrainian U.S.S.R. It is near the Tissa River and is a goodsized city. Huszt is about 32 miles southeast of Munkachevo. The town was a trading center. It contains an airfield and is on a railroad line.

Prior to 1918-1920, this area was part of the Austria-Hungarian Empire. Nearby the city are the ruins of an 11th century castle and a 16th century castle. Huszt also has a Gothic church dating from 1459.

"The Jewish community was established in the middle of the 18th century. It numbered 14 families in 1792. Jacob of Zhidacher was the first Rabbi. He was appointed to the post in 1812. By the mid-19th century, Huszt had become one of the largest and most important Jewish centers in northern Hungary, mainly through the authority of the Orthodox leader, Moses

(1)
Beilage zum Amtsblatt No. 1.
vom 7. Januar 1816.

General-Verzeichniß
der
am 2ten März 1812 in der Provinz Pomeranien anfolgende
jüdischen Familien, welche in Königs-Preussischen
Gemeinden anwesend sind.
Nach der eingetragenen Anzahl der Familien geordnet.

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List of adopted family names, 1812, in Pomerania. (Courtesy Leo Baeck Institute, New York)

Please notice the fourth name from the bottom of this list is Israel Bohm-there were 4 people in his family.

Name changes were common occurrences among our ancestors. There were many reasons for a name change. One reason was to evade the military service in the old country. In Russia, for example, the service could be a 25 year commitment! Often changes occurred at the immigration centers. Another reason for a change was to make it possible for a younger son to be able to marry. In certain countries, like Bavaria, there was a law in the early 19th century permitting only the eldest son in a Jewish family to marry. Because of this many Jewish boys were "adopted" by childless older couples. They received a new name and could then marry. If a child were very sick, he may have

Schick, Rabbi of Huszt from 1861 to 1879. Most of the Orthodox rabbis in Hungary were trained in his Yeshivah, which had 400 students. Schick's successors, Amram Blum and Moses Grunwald (1893-1912) prevented the development of Hasidism in the community.

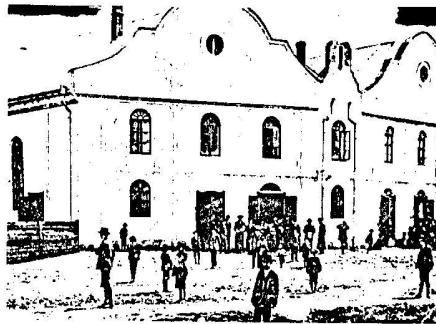
Under Czechoslovakian rule Huszt had an active Jewish life; five town councillors represented a United Jewish Party in 1923. The Rabbi of the city from 1921-1933 was Joseph Duschinsky, later Rabbi of the separatist Orthodox community of Jerusalem. The number of Jews living in the town was 3,391 in 1921 and 4,821 in 1930; in that same year 11,276 Jews lived in the district. Jews of Huszt were among the first to suffer when the area came under Hungarian-German rule in 1938. Jewish men of military age were forced into the labor battalions.

In 1942 there were approximately 100-130 Yeshivah students in Huszt. About 10,000 from the town and district were concentrated in a ghetto in the spring of 1944 and from there deported to the Nazi death camps. In April, 1944, the town was declared "judenrein" (free of Jews).

After the war, the community was revived. In the late 1960s authorities permitted a synagogue to open in Huszt, the only one in the district. The community had a shohet. At the time the number of Jewish families in the town was estimated at 400.¹¹

A cousin of Aranka Böhm Böhm, Samuel Zelig Wald (son of Morris Wald, né Ronis, and Goldie Fried who was a sister to Aranka's mother, Frieda) remembered Huszt. He recalled Huszt as having a wonderful location - near a river and a mountain. The Jews were mainly storekeepers and wholesalers. They sold merchandise to truckers who drove during the night to different marketplaces. The town had open markets on the streets, much like the Lower East Side of New York City. The children went to public school and to cheder. Most of the Bohms were Orthodox, as were most of the Jews in the town. However, there were some who were less traditional.

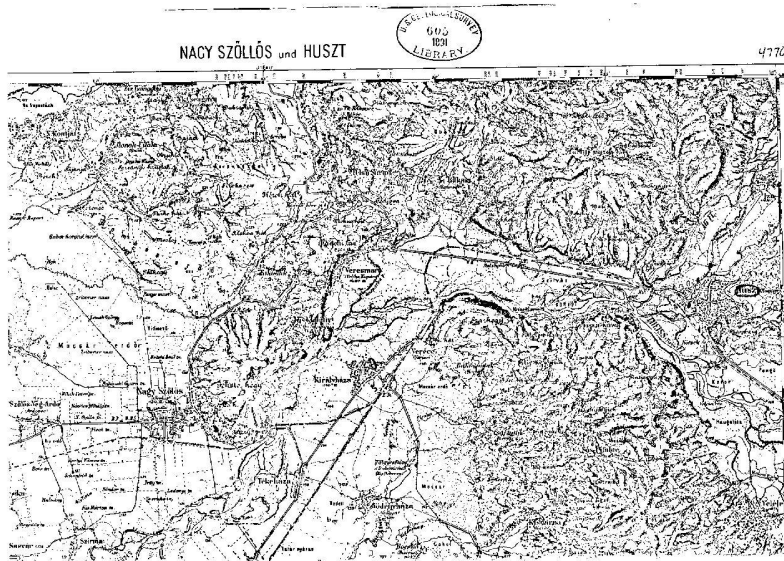
Another past resident of Huszt, Helen Berger, recalled Huszt as follows: "People worked very hard to survive; families were very close to each other, and all were taken away by the Nazis."



57. Huszt — הוּסְט

One of the main synagogues in Huszt.

¹¹ *Encyclopedia Judaica*, Vol. 10.



Map of the town of Huszt. Dots indicate locations of the town's synagogues. Town is located near the Tisza River.



Huszt is in the county of Maramaros. Bilke is in the county of Bereg.

Bilke is a small town in the province of Bereg. It is situated in the South Central Transcarpathian Oblast, Ukrainian U.S.S.R. It is on a railroad line and is 12 miles northwest of Huszt.

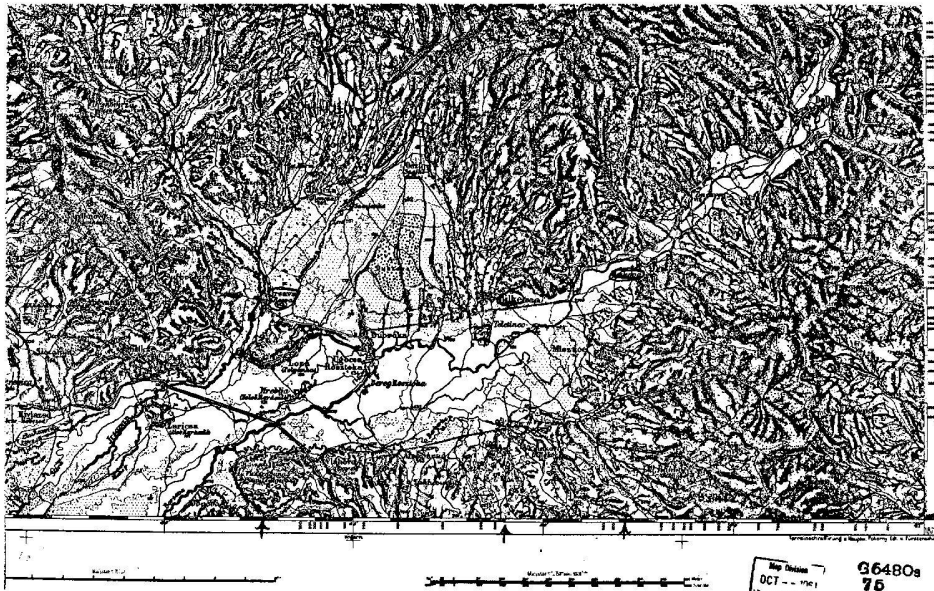
Ruth Josevitch Bohm of Philadelphia has these memories of Bilke. "Bilke was established about 600 years ago in the 1300s. It is located in the Carpathian Mountains. After the pogrom by Bogdan Chmelnitzky, many people emigrated to Bilke from Poland. The town belonged to Hungary until 1918; after that it was taken over by the Czech Republic. Following the Second World War, Russia annexed this area. Until the "destruction", there were about 2,000 Jews. There were five synagogues. The most beautiful one was on the main road. Whoever walked by felt a sacredness. Even non-Jews respected this House of Worship.

Bilke was surrounded by high mountains and tall forests. There are small streams running through the

town. In spring and summer Bilke looked like a magic world. The Jews of the town were tradesmen, storekeepers, and craftsmen. There were matzo bakeries and mikvahs.

The Chief Rabbi was Armin Lieberman. He had a big Yeshiva. The Rabbi was an intelligent and respected person, who served Bilke for 12 years. There was an extreme religious group who worked against him and he resigned his post in 1927. He went to Hungary and was later deported to Auschwitz.

In 1927 Rabbi Naftali Zvi Weiss of Sopinke (Spinker) was chosen as Rabbi of Bilke and he spread Torah through all Ruthenia (another name for this area). Bilke's Yeshiva became the College for certifying rabbis and schochtim (ritual slaughterers).



Irshava Bilke Lukova
Town maps.

Bilke also had Zionist clubs, Misrachi¹, Betar² and other groups. The Dayan, Rabbi Leibish Halech, held the Bank of the American Joint Committee to help the poor of the town. It helped tradesmen who needed loans. The greater part of the country's intelligentsia was recruited from amongst the Jews. Considering the limited educational facilities, the Jews' knowledge of foreign languages was remarkable.

In 1938 the Hungarians took over this area by order of the Nazis. Antisemitism was rampant. War broke out and persecution let loose. In 1941 Jewish men, ages 20-50, were inducted to slave labor camps. Businesses were confiscated overnight. The Jews were left without a livelihood. In 1944, all the Jews were deported.³

Isidor Reisman³, son of the schochet of Bilke, has written a thesis on Bilke, as well as some stirring articles about life in Bilke. With his kind permission, I am able to share his wonderful and warm memories and knowledge with you.

**BILKE, MY HOMETOWN
A BITTERSWEET REMEMBRANCE**
by Isidor Reisman

"There is a beautiful folksong about . . . 'A shtetele . . . my little home where I spent my childhood years . . . to me it is just like a remote dream . . . as I remember Bilke.'

That sentimental song of the past has turned into a lament in my thoughts and my heart. Recollections of a person's hometown inevitably evoke nostalgic memories of early childhood years.

All the Jews of Bilke were like one big family living in clusters around the main street. To anyone born and raised in Bilke, our hometown meant more than just where our families lived. It was a place of joyful sorrowful creativity, growing up, raising families, and developing the home community.

My faraway hometown, Bilke, is situated in the Sub-Carpathian Mountains in Eastern Europe. That region was first part of Hungary, then Czechoslovakia, and now a part of the U.S.S.R.

Some 2000 houses were scattered throughout a large area of the town's boundaries. Six quiet brooks flowed through the mountain valleys of the village. About one dozen water mills added unusual charm to form winter sculptures and summer water falls. On the outskirts, the deep and raging river of Borzava flowed.

The population consisted of about 10,000 inhabitants, mostly Ruthenian farmers. Over 1000 Jews lived there peacefully for three centuries. The Jewish population lived an idyllic community life in their own tradition. Most Jews lived on farming, trade, or small home industry-tailors, cobblers, and storekeepers.

During World War II, Bilke was relatively calm but not without anxiety. It was not devastated and it did not experience any fighting. However, the Jewish population was not so lucky.

Alas, the entire Jewish community was displaced

and deported to that awesome concentration camp, Auschwitz. Only a handful of the fittest, less than one hundred in the community, survived the horrors. We fell victims to the dreadful Nazi Holocaust by being overcomplacent and ever-trusting and never losing faith.

My dearly beloved parents, three brothers and three sisters were among the six million Jews brutally martyred in the gas chambers in the spring of 1944. Only my two teen-age sisters returned and established families and their homes in Israel.

I was recruited to work in a military labor camp at the age of 21. Only five percent of my work unit survived the war to return home - home that was no longer there. I came to the USA and have rebuilt my life and family life in Cleveland.

PREPARATION FOR SABBATH

If a person in Bilke was asked whether he was making a living, his reply was affirmative, as long as he could provide enough for Sabbath necessities. One worked hard all week to afford a comfortable Sabbath. The weekdays were unimportant; everyone struggled through until the weekend.

Friday was the busiest day of the week. The chicken and meat were cooked with the choicest ingredients. Some families had to forego meat or chicken menus and substituted homegrown delicacies in honor of Sabbath.

Anyone who approached a Jewish home on Friday felt a sensation that flavored every home - the chicken soup especially.

Every home had its own outside bakery oven for weekly bread baking. The aroma of fresh baked challa and braided rolls for the Sabbath table made the spiritual day begin a day earlier. The family was able to have a preview taste of the Sabbath - a small piece of freshly baked bread.

Mother and the girls were exhausted from overwork to complete preparations for Sabbath. Everything was done hurriedly, going to the mikva (ritual bath) and cleaning up the house in order to meet the Sabbath on time.

THE HOLY SABBATH ARRIVES

Before sunset, candle lighting time signaled a complete halt of all work. In every home the mother ushered in the holy Sabbath by the lighting of the candles with a prayer. That ceremony turned off momentarily the workday routine and brought in a holiday. Our home was filled with the glow of 11 lighted white candles - one for each member of the family.

The sensation of the Sabbath transformed the house into a castle of the spirit. The table was draped with a festive tablecloth. Wine and white braided Sabbath bread, challa, herring or fish, and chicken were a promise for a filling holiday meal. Mother was radiant

¹Religious Zionist movement which rallied many religious Jews to its banner and fought secularism within the Zionist movement.

²Brith Trumpeldor-the Revisionist youth organization, formerly part of the Revisionist World Union, and then part of the New Zionist Organization.

³Mr. Reisman lives in Cleveland, Ohio, and teaches in the Hebrew schools. He also lectures at the College of Jewish Studies.

and relaxed, dressed in her finest attire. She looked like a well-to-do noblewoman surrounded by shining faces aglow from the candlelight.

For every family it was the fulfillment of the week. The entire community filled the synagogue for Sabbath welcome worship. The hymns for the Sabbath bride, the Queen of Days, were intoned with delight. The father and the boys arrived from the synagogue. All the little ones who had remained home ran to the door to be first to greet, "Good Shabbos, good Shabbos."

The candles cast a mellow glow of contentment and inner dignity upon the family. Everyone around the table rose for the "Kiddush". The regal father, relaxed from mundane worries and problems, with a divine spirit reflected on his face, intoned the chant. All of us stood at attention watching the family head utter each holy word of prayer ending in chorus-Amen.

This home ritual was the focal point of the entire Sabbath, the first feel of Sabbatical bliss. We all experienced ecstasy during the Kiddush chant. Our father kept his eyes closed, his facial expressions reflected the meaning of every word: "Blessed are Thou who Sanctified us with his commandments . . . Wanted us, chose us of all nations . . . Made us inherit your holy Sabbath . . . Blessed art Thou hallowing the Sabbath."

We children imitated our father by closing our eyes halfway. Looking through dimmed eyelids towards the candles, we discovered to our fascination twinkling candles like faraway stars. Everyone played this magical game and felt elated to see shining stars in a make-believe heaven. When the time came to say "Amen" at the end of the chant, we all opened our eyes-back to an earthly heaven at our Sabbath table.

THE RABBI AND SYNAGOGUE

I stand in awe when I recall the pious image of our Bilker Rabbi, the teachers, and the scholars. They continued the golden chain of tradition from generations past and commanded respect and dignity. To look at them, one could see the ancient image of our patriarchs. Their spark within me cannot be consumed and will keep the light of our heritage aglow.

Back home, on the Torah ark cover of dark blue velvet in the synagogue, I remember the following biblical Hebrew inscription embroidered in faded gold: "They were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not parted." (Samuel 2:33) This saying was meaningful and poetic then; it will remain a testimony forever to reflect the grim realities of life.

Our daily routine life was centered around religious observance, learning, working and the house of worship. The synagogue was the spiritual home of our heritage in times of tranquility. From it we draw courage and hope for redemption in time of distress.



Largest of the Three Synagogues in Bilker, as remembered by Isidor Reisman

THE SPIRIT OF THE SABBATH

At nine the next morning, we all had to be at Sabbath services. Some had to walk for almost an hour to arrive there since no one ever desecrated the Sabbath by riding. Our beloved shochet, Reb Shia-the "Shliach-Tzibur", the cantor, and his choir of six sons chanted the prayers in pleasing, melodious voices.

Marching songs of hassidim or pastoral tunes were fitted to the Sabbath psalms and prayers. The entire congregation joined the chants in harmony. These prayers uplifted the spirit, charged with exaltation and ecstasy. The Torah reading of regularly weekly Bible readings was dutifully followed by everyone. The seven adults called to the Torah for the honor of reciting the blessings for Torah chanting were filled with pride and privilege for the "Aliyah".

Strolling home was a beautiful sight, with each family unit together, following the father with his talis (prayer shawl) draped around him like royal garb. No one dared to run on the Sabbath in order not to get exhausted on that day. Even in our walks we felt it was not an ordinary day.

It was a festive day of glory, a day to walk upright with pride for every bypasser to see. An aura of mysticism in our hearts stayed with us throughout the day. Even the air felt different on that day.

The Sabbath spirit and glory prevailed over all who observed it. In the words of the scholars, "The Sabbath preserved the people of Israel more than the people preserved the Sabbath." That Sabbath day gave everyone of us strength to withstand all hardships throughout the week.

The Sabbath grew stronger with the people for almost 40 centuries. The Sabbath is time-tested, and was a time-hallowed day for past generations. The food tasted heavenly, delicious, like no other food because of one ingredient, the Sabbath.

On Sabbath afternoon we had a short nap to add to our pleasure. Visiting our grandparents, relatives, and friends was the recreation of the day of leisure. Happy family get-togethers were appropriate and endearing. That Sabbath day does not last long; it is never too long. The ending of the Sabbath is slow. It begins at

sunset, prolonged twilight, into darkness-until three stars could be seen clearly in the sky. Sabbath parting prayers were in order. At home, mother recited the prayers with cautious optimism for the week ahead.

This kind of community life was destroyed. In our hearts and minds it will never be forgotten. It is our heritage to uphold. Bilke Kehila Kedosha-Holy Congregation-remembered with blessing."

This picture is of the Milk Exchange in Bilke. Chaim Bohm thinks that one of the men might be a Yutkevich. This photograph is on file at the YIVO Institute in New York City.



CHAPTER 5 THE BOHM FAMILY AND THE FRIED FAMILY

In this chapter, I portray the lives of several family members. I present anecdotes and other information provided to me by others in the family.

There is a great disparity in the amount of information for various people. I have included all the information I received from family members and all I obtained through my research.

HERSHEL AND RIFKA YUTKEVICH BOHM

Hershel and Rifka were born circa 1830s-50s. Rifka

was born in Polona and died in Lukova in 1919. Hershel was born in Lukova and there he died in 1918.

Hershel was a farmer and he made a good living. By the standards of the time they could be considered well-off. They had a nice home which Hershel built for his bride. They were good people and good parents. They had eight children: Fishel, Yonkel, Avrum, Yeda Lieb, Aaron, Devora, Genisa, and Chana.

Hershel and Rifka were religious people who cared about their community and their synagogue. They contributed heavily to the little synagogue and helped with its upkeep. In their community the main life style was farming. There was very little industry. All the boys and the girls went to Chedar. There they learned to pray and to speak Yiddish.

Hershel had at least three brothers: Fishel, Aaron, and Moische Mordecai. Fishel was called Phillip. He travelled to the United States several times to visit with his son's family (Joseph). He was a shoemaker. Aaron died early, probably before 1920. Nothing is known of him. Moische Mordecai will be covered later in this chapter.

Rifka had six brothers and sisters: Mutte, Hersh Baer, Aaron David, Avrum Woly, Moische, Mendel, Basse Gittel and Sara Chana. Mutte had three children; Hersh Baer had three children; Aaron David had five children; Avrum Woly had an unknown number of children; Moische had four children; Mendel had six children; Basse Gittel had four children; Sara Chana had eighteen children. All or most of these children were killed during the Holocaust; but some had children of their own who survived.

YONKEL AND NESE FREEDMAN BOHM

Yonkel was a son of Hershel and Rifka Yutkevich Bohm. He married Nese Freedman. They were well off and owned lots of land. They raised cattle, sheep, goats, and horses for plowing the fields. Yonkel and Nese were the g-dparents of Martin Bohm.

They lived in Lukova. They probably perished in the Holocaust along with some of their children: Chaya, Mutte Arye, Sara, Aaron, Devora, Hersh, and Libo. Two other children, Ignace and Rifka migrated to Israel.

YEDA LIEB AND ETHEL WEISS BOHM

Yeda Lieb was a son of Hershel and Rifka Bohm. He was born in 1885 in Lukova. Ethel was born in 1890 in Lipsha. The marriage of Yeda Lieb and Ethel was an arranged one. This was a common practice in those days. Ethel was seventeen when they wed. When Yeda Lieb married Ethel in 1909 in Lipsha, he built a large house. He had lots of land and fields. They had tenant farmers who did the plowing and planting of such crops as potatoes and corn. For their labor the tenants received 1/3 of the profits and Yeda Lieb received the other 2/3s of the profits. Yeda Lieb was also in the lumber business and he used to buy and sell horses.

Hersh and Rifka were happily married with eleven children: Beryl (1918), Sara (1927), Rifka (1919), Favel (1914), Martin (1915), Shindel (1910), Moische (1911),

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Aaron (1913), Chana (1924), Hersh (1929), and Sruel (1932). The last six were killed in the Holocaust. All were alive and well until the concentration camps. The family was strictly Orthodox-no lights were lit on the Sabbath and women covered their heads.

MARTIN AND EVA HERSKOVITZ BOHM

Martin and Eva were neighbors. Martin was born in 1915 in Lukova. His parents were Yeda Lieb and Ethel Weiss Bohm. Eva was born in 1922 in Dovhe. As they grew up, Martin used to watch out for Eva because she was younger than he. Eva's mother told Martin that he should take good care of Eva, because someday she might be his bride! And so she was. The two of them used to meet at a well where they went for fresh water.

Martin said that before the First World War there was little anti-semitism. It was only after that war and towards the Second World War that feelings of anti-semitism emerged.

Martin and his family now reside in Cleveland, Ohio. Martin and Eva have two sons: Arthur and Marvin.

AARON AND LEAH MOSKOVITZ BOHM

Aaron was a son of Hershel and Rifka. He was born in Lukova and Leah was born in Bilke. Leah was named for her maternal grandmother. Herman Bohm has fond memories of his parents. He recalls his parents as nice people who lived a hard life, as did many of the people in the village. They were religious and the women wore wigs. At one time Aaron and Leah were each engaged to someone else. When they met they fell in love. They were married in 1919 in Bilke. Aaron was a farmer. Their children are Herman (1920), Malka, Sara Esther, and four more who were killed in the Holocaust, as were Aaron and Leah.

Malka, their daughter, remembers life before the war as beautiful. The family was close and warm and the Sabbath was so very special. The way of life was simpler, but the quality of life was very rich. Malka's husband, Alex Peck (Peskovich), is a cousin. Their mothers were sisters. The Pecks have three children: Francine, Ira, and Andy.

Herman, their son, is married to Margaret Manglovitz. Herman was named for his paternal grandfather, Hershel. He is a butcher. Herman and Margaret have two children: Steve and Linda.

JOSEPH AND ROSE GOTTLIEB BOHM

Joseph is the son of Fishel Bohm and Ella. Fishel is one of Hershel's brothers.

Joseph was born in Hungary in 1886. He had one sister, Hya Ester, who married a Schwartz. He came to the United States when he was 16 or 17.

Rose was born in New York City in 1890. Her parents were Pepi Weiss and Ignatz Gottlieb. Pepi died in 1929 and Ignatz died in 1930 in McKeesport, Pa. When Rose was two, the family moved to McKeesport. Rose's mother taught her German from the German newspapers. Rose was able to speak nine languages. She

was largely self-taught. By the age of 6 or 7, Rose was able to do translating for the town magistrate. During World War II she wrote many letters for different groups in McKeesport. When she was 16 or 17, she was the secretary of the Hebrew Ladies' Beneficial Society.

Rose's parents had a general or variety store.

Both Rose and Joseph were excellent dancers and enjoyed dancing together.

Joseph worked in a clothing store and did such a good job that he was quickly promoted to manager.

Helen Bahm Beck fondly remembers her parents. She recalls them as being "typical, loving parents". They were the "best in the world". Her mother was an excellent cook and made wonderful stuffed cabbage-the Hungarian way!

Joseph and Rose's children are Sid, Lillian, Flora, Rosella, and Helen. Joseph died in 1955 and Rose died in 1958 in McKeesport.

MOISHE MORDECAI AND CHAI RIFKA FELMAN BOHM

Moishe Mordecai was born in Lukova circa 1840s-60s. Chai Rifka Felman was born in the same area circa 1860s.

For many years Moishe Mordecai had a little inn in the town of Bilke. He was successful in this business. They lived a good life in Bilke but they decided to go to America because their children had gone there. They came to Sharon and Farrell, Pa., because other family members had already settled there. They lived first on Broadway Street in Farrell and later moved to Fruit Avenue. Because Moishe had done well in business in Bilke, he did not have to work in this country.

It seems that all of their children were in America by 1907. Joseph (Ignace) was the last of the children to come over; he arrived in 1907.

Chai Rifka was a "tall, good-looking woman" according to her grandson, Harry Hirsch. She was so "healthy, thank G-D, if she ever had an ailment no one knew about it."

After Harry Hirsch's mother, Grace Bohm Hirsch (Herskovitz), died of typhoid fever in 1910, Moishe and Chai Rifka took care of the children: Rose, Freda, Harry and baby Eddie. Later Ben, Grace's husband, was able to hire an Hungarian maid to help him with the children. About a year and a half after Grace's death, Ben remarried a wonderful woman. She named her first child after Grace and her second child after Moishe Mordecai Bohm.

Moishe and Chai Rifka decided that life in America was not as good as life in Bilke. They preferred the way of life in the old country. Around 1910 they returned to Hungary where they had relatives and friends, leaving behind all their children and grandchildren. Moishe died during World War I, around 1915. He was too old to serve in the war. Chai Rifka lived to be around 93 years old, according to Harry Hirsch. Another granddaughter of Moishe and Chai Rifka, Ruth Bahm Olikier, also remembers that Moishe and Chai Rifka lived here for awhile. Her parents often talked about them living here before Ruth was born.

The children of Moishe and Chai Rifka are Grace (1879), Jenny, Bertha, Jacob (1886), and Ignace (1887). Ignace is called Joseph by his family.

JACOB AND GITTEL ROSENBERG BAHM

Jacob was born in 1886 in Lukova or Bilke, Hungary. His parents are Moishe and Chai Rifka. Gittel was born in 1891 in Hungary. They were married in 1907 in Sharon, Pa.

Al Bahm has many memories of his parents. His mother was an excellent cook. Some of her specialties were Hungarian goulash and plum schliiskes. "Dad worked very hard, from early in the morning until late at night." He had a grocery store. In the early days the kids helped out. Al remembers helping to unload truckloads of potatoes. He said it was a terrible job, especially when there were rotten potatoes!

Jake and Gittel were Orthodox. They left Sharon and moved to Midland, Pa. where they also had a grocery store. Their children are Carl (1910-1957), Samuel (1912), Alfred (1908), Ruth (1914), Frances (1917), Rita (1921), and Harold (1919).

Jake died in 1940 and is buried in Allegheny, Pa., and Gittel died in 1977 in Pittsburgh.



JACOB BOHM AND GITTEL (GRACE) ROSENBERG
Married in 1907 in Pennsylvania

SCHLIMA (SLIME) AND YANKOF NEUTA FRIED

These are my great, great grandparents on Aranka Bohm's side. They lived in the town of Huszt. They sold woolen yardage at market and stores in different towns. Schlima and Yankof had four daughters: 1) **Devora**, who married Isaac Akasman (they made woolen garments which they sold to peasants); 2) **Goldie**, who married Morris Wald, ne Ronis, (they had a general store and dealt in hides and furs); 3) **Giza**, who married Farkas Fried (he was a student of Torah and the son of a Rabbi); and 4) **Frieda (Fanny)**, who married Avrum Bohm (he was in the lumber business). Fanny's second husband was Schare Yutkevich, a cousin of Avrum's. Giza also remarried after the death of Farkas. Her second husband was Morris Eisler.

Schlma and Yankof were good people who always helped their children and grandchildren. They helped raise the Wald children after their stepmother deserted them.

Schlma always cooked a plentiful amount of good food, according to her grandson, Sam Wald. She was a very warm and loving woman.

Yankof was a strong person who tried to see that justice was done. He tried to get the stepmother to behave better towards the Wald children.

Devora and Isaac Akasman had at least one son. His name was Lajos and he was a dentist.

Giza and Farkas had three children: Max, Joseph and Esther.

Frieda and Avrum Bohm had four daughters: Bertha, Aranka, Chai (Honika), and Sarah.

Goldie and Morris Wald, ne Ronis, had five children. The first two were twins, a girl and a boy. The boy suffered from bad eyes and the girl died in infancy. The other children were Samuel Zelig, Jack (Azik), and Sadie (Szuri). Morris Wald was born in Meshbish, State of Podolsk in Russia. He left his country to escape the dreaded military service under the Czar. He escaped over the Carpathians and crossed the border to Hungary. Here he met and fell in love with Goldie. Their son, Samuel Zelig, wrote a wonderful autobiography before he died in 1982. It tells of the meeting of his parents, his early life, teens, and later years. For further information on this autobiography contact Sam's daughter, Grace Wald Fait. (see directory)



DEVORA FRIED AKASMAN
AND TWO CHILDREN-HUSZT



LAJOS AKASMAN, Son of Devora Fried
and ISAAC AKASMAN in his Dental Office in Huszt



BERTHA (BLIMELE) BOHM ALTMAN
Daughter of Avrum and Fanny Fried Bohm.



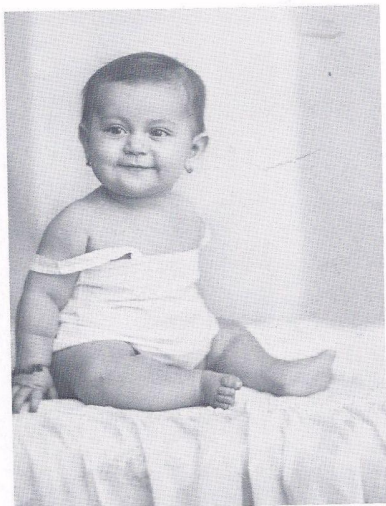
DEVORA FRIED AND ISAAC ASKASMAN-HUSZT



FRIEDA (FANNY) FRIED and second husband,
SHARE YUTKEVICH
Frieda's first husband was Avrum Bohm.



BERTHA BOHM AND HUSBAND SAMUEL ALTMAN
In 1937 in Huszt



SARAH BOHM, Daughter of
Avrum and Fanny Fried Bohm



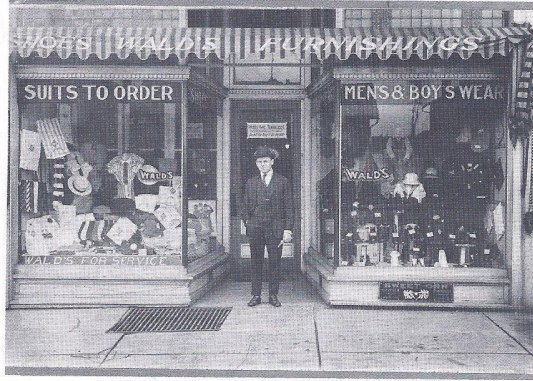
ADOLF FRIED, Son of Giza Fried and Farkas Fried.



SARAH BOHM AND HERMAN LEBOVITZ
AND LILLY AND IRENKE (IRENE)



WIFE OF ADOLF FRIED



SAMUEL ZELIG WALD, son of Goldie Fried and Morris Wald. This is Sam's store in 1920 in Girard, Ohio. Below is a recent picture of Sam.



MAGDA AND SANDOR FRIED
Chaim Fried's children. Niece and nephew to Giza,
Goldie, Devora and Fanny.



**JOSEPH (IGNACE) AND
ARANKA (IRENE) BOHM BOHM**

Joseph was born in 1887 in Bilke. His parents are Moishe Mordecai and Chai Rifka. Aranka was born in 1898 in Huszt. Her parents are Frieda (Fanny) and Avrum Bohm.

Grandpa used to tell me the story of how he met Grandma. He called it the "matchmaker story".

Joseph came to America in 1907, but when he was ready to marry, it was decided he should return to Hungary to find a bride. His father, Moishe Mordecai, took him on a trip to meet a cousin who might be a good wife. On the way, they stopped over in Huszt and stayed a few nights with Moishe's nephew, Avrum Bohm.

While at Avrum's house, Joseph met Aranka, Avrum's daughter. Aranka and Joseph went for a walk and she told Joseph that he would like the cousin his father wanted him to meet and perhaps marry. Joseph looked at Aranka and said, "I like the matchmaker!" And so, Aranka became betrothed to Joseph.

Another version of this story is one recalled by Jack Bohm, my uncle. He writes, "My father told Liz (Jack's wife) that he met my mother when he went back to visit his father in Hungary in 1913 after getting his American citizenship. He said he was walking down the street, saw mother, inquired who the beautiful girl was and pursued her. Even though they were second cousins, he had never known her before."

My uncle, Milford Bohm, has yet another, but similar version of the meeting of Joseph and Aranka and of their life together.

"My dad told me a few years before he died that he first met my mother when she was six years old and he was sixteen and about to leave for America. They were cousins who lived in different places. He fell in love with her on sight and never could forget her. When he was twenty-six he returned to Hungary from America to marry her. Mother told me she had always remembered dad as she grew up as a virile and handsome man, and she could not wait for his arrival to carry her off to America." They were married here because Aranka had an older, unmarried sister in Huszt. In the old country, it was thought that the older daughters should marry before the younger ones.

Until Mil continues with his thoughts: "It would be wonderful to be able to report that theirs was an idyllic marriage. It wasn't. But they lived together till death did them part, and when dad was 82, two years before his death, he told me that he had never loved another woman. This was 13 years after mother's death.

These two people, each so different, but so good in his (her) own way, were wonderful parents. Through the worst of economic times they raised seven children, one severely retarded whom they never abandoned, and all the rest of whom grew into the kind of 'mench' hood that made them proud. They gave each of their children that love and concern without which nobody grows up whole."

Whichever of the meeting versions is the correct one, they all point out that Joseph was very attracted to

Aranka, who was a lovely young woman.

Joseph travelled to America on the steamship, Kronprinz Wilhelm, which sailed from Bremen, Germany, on May 1, 1907, and landed in New York City on May 10, 1907. He was seventeen years old and the last child of Moishe and Chai Rifka to come to America. Joseph, who was named Ignace, was born July 15, 1887, in Bilke, Hungary. This is the information found on Joseph's immigration papers.

Once here, Joseph (who was sponsored by Adolf Eisenberg and Sam Greenberger, his brothers-in-law) found a job working in a mill. Later on, he learned to be a butcher. He became a citizen of the United States on September 30, 1912. His description on the certificate of naturalization states he was "age 25; height 5'7"; color, white; complexion, dark; eyes, blue; hair, light; no visible distinguishing marks; not married. Address at this time was 1027 Spearman Avenue, Farrell, Pa." He applied for his citizenship on July 9, 1912, so it took him only a few months to secure it after he filed his first papers. He states he was a millworker. Joseph's passport has the same information on it.

Before Aranka left Huszt for America, many of her friends and relatives signed an autograph or memory book. Aranka brought this book with her and her children recall that she often looked through this book. In it she entered her wedding date and the dates of the births of her children. There are some beautiful water colors in the book painted by M. Munkaczi. He also wrote many lovely poems to Aranka. He seems to have been quite fond of her and asked her to always remember him when she glanced at this book. Two of his poems, roughly translated, follow:

TO REMEMBER-ARANKA

*One sees this boat at sea
And on it one sees the small maiden
sailing on the boat.*

*Oh! Supposing we were a couple-happy
and content.*

*Young, heavenly body, unmindful of unrest,
Be tranquil, set your mind at rest.*

*I should have loved an engagement
Instead of an arrangement.*

*M. Munkaczi
Huszt, 1913, June 26*

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
To be given to the person naturalized.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
 OFFICE OF IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION

No. 278699

Dist. Volume 2 Page 92 Nat. Volume 10304 Page 49

Description of holder: Age 25 years, height, 5 feet, 7 inches, color, White, complexion, Dark, color of eyes, Blue, color of hair, Light, visible distinguishing marks, None

Name, age and place of residence of wife, Not Married

Names, ages and places of residence of minor children

ORIGINAL *Ignac Bohm*
(Signature of holder)


State of Pennsylvania ss: County of Mercer

I, the undersigned, Clerk of the Court of Common Pleas of Mercer County held at Mercer Pa. on the 30 day of September, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and twelve, Ignac Bohm, who proposes to be naturalized, was a subject of the Kingdom of Hungary, and was admitted to the citizenship of the United States of America, having applied to be admitted a citizen of the United States, for at least five years and on this day of the month of September, and that said petitioner contends to reside permanently in the United States, and in all respects complied with the law in relation thereto, and that he was entitled to be so admitted, it was therefore ordered by the said court that he be admitted as a citizen of the United States of America.

In testimony whereof the seal of said court is hereunto affixed on the 30 day of September in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and twelve, and of our Independence the one hundred and thirty-sixth.

W. J. Huret
 Notary Public
(Notarial character in office)

Certificate of Naturalization for Ignace Bohm - September 30, 1912.



 United States of America,
 Department of State

To all to whom these presents shall come, Greeting

I, the undersigned, Secretary of State of the United States of America, hereby request all whom it may concern to permit Ignac Bohm a citizen of the United States, to pass and freely to pass and in case of need to enjoy every all lawful and Protection.

Description:
 Age 25 years
 Height 5 feet 7 inches long
 Complexion Dark
 Eyes Blue
 Hair Light
 Nose regular
 Mouth regular
 Chin strong
 Features light
 Complexion Dark
 Hair round

Ignac Bohm



Given under my hand and the seal of the Department of State at the City of Washington, D. C. on the 30 day of September in the year 1912, and of the Independence of the United States the one hundred and thirty-sixth.

H. J. Bryan

No. 12013

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REMEMBERING ARANKA

*Fresh as rosebuds, as the perfume
drops in a bottle.*

*Today is an agony (a torture) remembering
and looking at you for the final time.*

*And I entrust you to look sometimes with
love and remember me
When you look at this book.*

*M. Munkaczi
Huszt, 1913, June 26*

Aranka travelled to America on the steamship S.S. President Grant. It arrived in New York City on June 10, 1914. The information given about her on the ship's manifest states: her age as 18 (she was only 16!); occupation-dressmaker; Hungarian of the Hebrew race; mother-Freda Bohm; father-A. Bohm; parents are in Huszt, Hungary; destination-Farrell, Pa.; amount of money-\$3.00; brother-in-law-Adolf Eisenberg; 4 Maryland Avenue, Farrell, Pa.; physical description-5'4" (she was not that tall!); brown hair; brown eyes; and fair complexion. My aunt, Ruth Bohm Strifling, remembers that grandma was actually a wigmaker and not a dressmaker.

There is no information about who met Aranka at the boat and how she got to Farrell, Pa. It is possible that Joseph met her or that he was even on the boat with her. I could not find his name on the passenger list of the immigrants; however he was already a citizen and therefore would be on a different list. I could not yet locate this list. Once she arrived in Farrell, she stayed with one of Joe's married sisters.

Shortly after her arrival in Farrell, Aranka and Joseph applied for their marriage license. The date was July 6, 1914, and the application was filled out in Mercer County. On the application they state they were not related by blood or marriage to each other. This, of course, we know to be a falsehood. Joseph married his first cousin's daughter. Another falsehood on the marriage application was the age given for the bride-to-be. Aranka stated she was 18; in reality she was 16.

According to our cousin, Harry Hirsch, Joseph and Aranka had an "elaborate wedding". Harry and his sister, Rose, were at that wedding. He remembers the wedding taking place at Neiman's Hall in Farrell, Pa. The date was July 9, 1914. Happily, I was able to verify all this information. **The Sharon Herald** has microfilms of its earlier editions and they were nice enough to send me a copy of the wedding announcement! It reads as follows:

The marriage of Miss Aranka Bahm to Isadore Bahm of this place took place at the synagogue on Greenfield Avenue at 8 o'clock last night, the Rev. M. Brown officiating.

Following the wedding ceremony, a supper was served in Neiman Hall, at which about 60 guests

participated. Music for the evening was furnished by a Youngstown orchestra.

The bride came to this country only a few weeks ago. The groom has been a resident of Farrell for some time and was employed as a driver for Sam Greenberger.

Miss Grace Kirshonbaum was the bridesmaid and William Weiss of Farrell acted as best man. The couple left this morning on a honeymoon trip.

Sam and Sarah Bohm, my parents, got a little chuckle out of the "honeymoon trip". They remember Grandma saying, "On our honeymoon he took me to Wheatland!" Wheatland is a small community right beside Sharon, Pa. There is nothing there!!!

The newly-wed couple settled in Sharon, Pa. They had a store on Dock Street and this was also their first home.

I remember Grandma was a wonderful cook. One of my favorite recipes of hers was schliskes, a breaded dumpling. The recipe for this, as supplied by Aunt Ruth Bohm Strifling is as follows:

SCHLISKES

2 medium size potatoes	one egg
1 cup flour	½ teaspoon salt
¾ cup bread crumbs	1 small onion
2 tablespoons schmaltz	

Boil potatoes until soft. Put through food ricer; combine with egg, salt, and enough flour to make a soft dough. Roll out dough; cut into 1 inch strips; roll strips into cylinders with hands; then cut into short lengths.

Put dumplings into boiling, salted water. When they rise to the top, remove and rinse in cold water; drain.

Brown bread crumbs in skillet in which schmaltz and onion have been sauteed together. Dumplings are rolled in sauteed crumbs until coated. Keep warm in oven. Can be reheated. Good cold, too!

Another variation is to add small prune plums to the dumplings. This is an Hungarian specialty that's hard to beat.

Aranka was a gracious, beautiful woman. She dressed very attractively. According to Aunt Ruth, Grandma had a special dream. She hoped that one day she would own a large estate. On this estate there would be seven houses surrounding the main house—one house for each of her children and their children. She wanted everyone around her so she could see the grandchildren grow. This was a wonderful dream which unfortunately never came true. Grandma died before any of

her grandchildren got married.

Aranka often said that she was surprised that none of her seven children had red hair because her father, Avrum, had red hair and a red beard. He, too, died young.

My cousin, Stephanie Strauss Shuchart, recounts the following anecdotes about Joseph and Aranka.

Certificate of Marriage

Duplicate

I, Rev. Max From, hereby certify that on the Ninth day of July, A.D. 1981, at Ferrisill, Pa. and Joseph Bohm and Arankah Bohm were by me united in marriage in accordance with Licenses issued by the Clerk of the Orphans' Court of Mercer County, Pennsylvania, No. 13720.

Rev. Max From
Minister of the Gospel

Residence Not Listed

I hereby certify that the above is a true and correct copy of the Duplicate on file in this office.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the seal of the Orphans' Court for the County of Mercer, Pennsylvania, this 8th day of May, 1981.

Mary A. Gray
Clerk of Courts

MARRIAGE CERTIFICATE
OF JOSEPH AND ARANKA BOHM BOHM

"Sandy (her sister) and I grew up with Grandpa living in our home. During the time we were teenagers, he allowed us to get away with some things that he probably would not have permitted his own daughters to do. When I was in high school, my parents were in a Thursday night bowling league for which they left about 8:30. This was about the time Grandpa went to bed. I was dating Johnny (her husband now) at the time and he would arrange to leave his house on Thursday nights by telling his parents he was going to

the library. Then, about 9:00, after we were certain my parents were gone and Grandpa was asleep, he would sneak over so we could neck for awhile in the living room. One Thursday night, I'll never know why, Grandpa woke up and decided to come upstairs to the living room. Hearing him approach, Johnny bent down beside a table on the side of the sofa and pretended to be a piece of furniture! (I guess he wasn't too bright in those days!) Grandpa walked over to him and told him very calmly to get up and go home. Grandpa never mentioned the incident again to me or to my parents, who did not find out until we told them several years after we were married."

"My memories of Grandma are sketchier because I was still so young when she passed away. I guess we invariably associate our grandmothers with their kitchens and the wonderful smells and goodies that came out of them. I remember Grandma's kitchen having a very old-fashioned refrigerator... I loved the days she baked bread because she had two miniature loaf pans in which she made my sister and I our own little loaves. (at the time we lived upstairs in the duplex) I also have fond memories of schlisles, kugels, and stewed fruit. Quite frequently Sandy and I would sleep downstairs with them on Saturday nights if our parents went out. I remember Grandma making roast chestnuts... I remember having Sedars and other family dinners in their home. Now that I can appreciate what it must have taken to prepare those marvelous dinners, I am amazed that it was done so splendidly, without so many of the modern conveniences we take for granted in our kitchens today.

Having seven children, Grandma must have acquired a fair share of common sense medical expertise.¹ I remember that once I cut my forehead quite deeply and apparently there was a good deal of blood. Rather than rush me to the doctor, Mother called for Grandma, who patched me up quite well.

Many of my other memories of Grandma are associated with pain... I remember spending long hours in the waiting room at Jewish Hospital and occasionally being allowed a minute to visit with her. That must have been toward the end (of her illness).

One incident that does stick in my mind occurred at the High Holidays, 1958. I was nine at the time... and I stayed home with Grandma... she was stretched out on the couch of the small bedroom they used as a den. She asked me to read the service to her and I did as best I could. She explained various portions to me and also told me some stories from her childhood. What she said I can no longer recall, but the experience of sharing the holiday with her in such a close and intimate way made a deep impression. I always look back on it during each High Holiday season."

Sandra Strauss Birenbaum (Stephanie's sister and daughter(s) of Lillian Bohm) has these memories: "I remember Grandma singing a lullaby, I believe in Hungarian, about a retarded child whose parents had died and he had no one. Grandma would would cry

¹Author's footnote: Grandma always said that vaseline was good for almost any problem.

while she sang it and say she was worried about Irving.¹ I remember Grandma baking apple strudel and pressing sheets, etc. on a large machine in her breakfast room (mangle).

Grandpa bathed once a week on Saturday morning. While he lived with us (for 12-13 years), he might discipline us, but he never told on Stevie or myself."

Sandra also contributed this recipe for chulent. Please notice the difference between this recipe and the chulent recipe found in the Stearn chapter.

CHULENT - BOHM STYLE

Stewing hen (heavy fryers or split broilers, cook frozen)

¼ cup barley, not instant
1 pound Northern or navy beans
paprika
salt and pepper

Kugel-2 cups flour
2/3 cup melted schmaltz
1/2 cup chopped onion

Season meat, barley, and beans with salt and pepper. Cover with water, not to the top! Put the kugel on top of the meat. Season with paprika. Cook 7-8 hours at 300* or 325*.



ARANKA BOHM BOHM, born 1898; died 1959. Daughter of Frieda (Fanny) Fried and Avrum Bohm. Wife of Ignace Bohm (also a blood relative).



IGNACE (JOSEPH) BOHM, born 1887; died 1974. Son of Chai Rifka Felman and Moishe Mordecai Bohm of Bilke. Husband of Aranka (Irene) Bohm.

SAMUEL AND SARAH STEARN BOHM

Samuel is my father. He is the son of Aranka and Ignace Bohm. He was born on March 7, 1919, in Sharon, Pennsylvania. He was the third of seven children. As a youth he worked very hard to supplement the family income. He eventually went to work in a photographic studio.

Sarah, my mother, is the daughter of Rebecca Kruk and Gershon Stearn. She was born on July 7, 1921, in Canton, Ohio. She was the fifth of seven children. She and her twin sister, Ida, worked part-time after school to help the family. At one time, they sang a duet on a radio show.

My parents met at a party when mother fell into dad's lap. They dated for awhile and when they decided to get married there was very little money and so they eloped on January 20, 1940. Sarah was seventeen and Sam was nineteen. A rabbi in Wooster, Ohio, married them.

Together they worked to make a good life for their family. They both became excellent photographers and eventually owned their own studio.

Dad served in World War II in an artillery division. While stationed in Germany, he was able to use his knowledge of Yiddish to translate German for his

¹Irving is the youngest child of Ignace and Aranka Bohm. At birth the midwife dropped him and he suffered brain damage. Although Aranka took him to many doctors and hospitals (including the Mayo Clinic), there was nothing to be done to help Irving.

division. His brothers, Milford, Jack, and Albert, were also in the war and all the boys were in Europe. Through luck, Jack and Sam ran into each other at one point. Only Albert, who was in the engineering corps, sustained injuries. A brother-in-law, Al Belmont (married to Ruth Bohm Belmont Strifling), was killed in action in November, 1944. He is buried in France. I am named Aline Belmont in memory of him. It must have been very difficult for my grandparents to have so many sons in the war.

After the war, my parents continued their work in the photographic business. Dad's brothers and sisters are also involved in the photography business. Eventually my parents sold their studio to their chief photographer. They then went into the retail camera business and had a few shops. Both my parents have a vast knowledge about cameras and camera equipment.

Even though they both worked long hours, they found time to create a good, wholesome family life. We had many special times together-family dinners, Sunday brunches (this was the only time we were allowed to read at the table!), vacations and holidays. On Sunday morning Daddy used to go to a wonderful bakery in Farrell, Pennsylvania, and buy all kinds of pastries and rolls. He always bought cream puffs for me! The Bohm Sunday brunches were famous among our friends. We all enjoyed those mornings. As we girls got older and learned to drive, we took our turns going to the bakery. Today, when we visit with our parents in Florida, Daddy still treats us to these special delights.

Our parents encouraged us to try new things. They set guidelines and then they trusted us to make mature

decisions. They taught us manners and they taught us how to behave in public and in the privacy of our own home. Dad often said we would make many acquaintances in life but true friends were rare, and that our best friends would be each other. We three girls are all different but we love and respect each other. We can talk honestly with each other and we can confide in each other. For this and other things, I give credit to our parents.

For one year we had another sister, Heidi Urscheler Brechbuhl. She was a foreign exchange student from Switzerland who lived in our home during my sophomore year in high school. This was a wonderful experience for all of us. Heidi is very fond of my parents and we are still in touch with her. We have since exchanged visits over the years.

My parents went through some rough times both financially and medically. They weathered these times. I think their devotion to each other and to us girls helped them through the bad times. This is a family where love was given and received by all. I admire and respect my parents. The grandchildren all adore them.

My parents now live in Tamarac, Florida. Dad still works and Mom does his bookwork. They are still working together. They both enjoy golfing. Both are avid readers. Dad is a fantastic card player. Mom and Dad both bowl and Mom plays some tennis. She is an excellent cook and housekeeper.

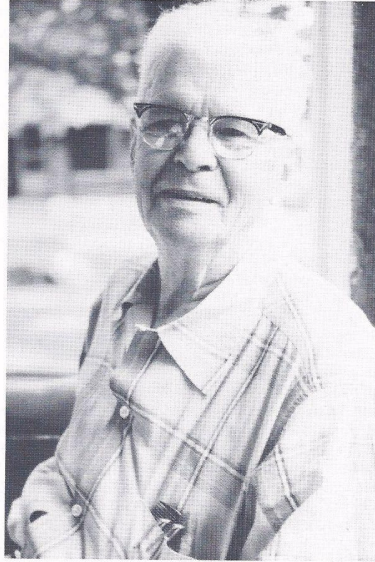
Sam and Sarah are good parents and grandparents and much loved by all their family and their many friends.



40th Wedding Anniversary of Sam and Sarah Bohm. Front row: Julie Greif, Irene Levy. Middle row: Robin Jacobs, Gloria Jacobs, Sam, Sarah, Sharon Levy, Aline Greif, Jeffrey Greif. Back row: Daniel Jacobs, Marvin Levy, Joseph Greif, and David Levy. 1980.



JENNY BOHM GREENBERGER,
daughter of Chai Rifka Felman
and Moishe Mordecai Bohm.



SAMUEL GREENBERGER, husband
of Jenny Bohm Greenberger.



JENNY BOHM GREENBERGER
and son, LEO



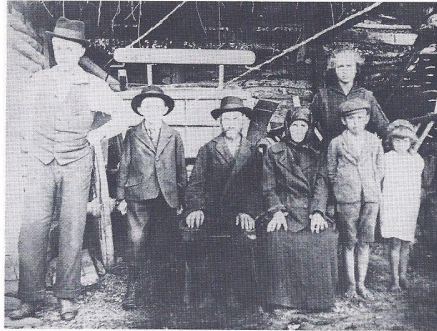
Back row: LEO, SIDNEY, ROSE, HARRY, EDDIE
Front row: FREDA, SAM, JOSEPH GREENBERGER

BEREL BOHM AND BELLA (BEILE)

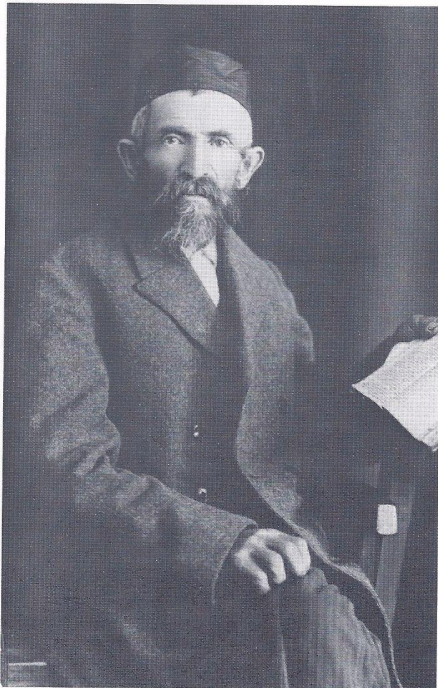
Berel was born circa 1840-60s and he died in 1933. He was the son of Noach Moishe Mordecai Bohm. Bella (Beile) was born circa 1850-60s and died about 1920. She was the daughter of Noach Menachem.

Berel (Dov) Bohm is remembered fondly by his grandson, Mickey Bohm. "He was a very forceful man. When he spoke everybody listened. He was a great man, but a simple man. He was a shoemaker, but later he practised his trade for family members. They had some land and farmed it." Mickey was only eighteen months old when Bella died.

Their children are Nachman (Nandor), Yossel, Ignace (Yitzhok Leib), Schmuel, Sheindel (Szeny), Rose, and Genisa (Ginesah).



SHMIEL Bohm, Bleema's brother, BERYL Bohm, BEILE (Bella), HERSHEL Kline, ETHEL Kline Gulkis, GNESA Bohm (behind Ethel and Hershel). 1915 Bilke, Carpathia.



BEREL (DOV) BOHM, Son of Noach (Moah) Moishe Mordecai Bohm. Bilke, Hungary.



Back row: HERSHEL Kline (Rose's nephew), SCHMIEL Bohm, JOSEPH Bohm, YITZHOK LEIB Bohm, NANDOR (Nachman, the photographer) Bohm; Front row: JOSEPH Stern (Rose's husband), TOBA Jacobovich (Schmiel's wife), SZENY (Sheindel) Bohm, GNESA Bohm, MORDECAI Jacobovich (Gnesa's husband). 1936 in Bilke Carpathia.



GRAVESTONES OF BEREL AND BEILA BOHM

Dov (Berel), son of Noach (Moah, Noah) Moishé Mordecai, the Kohan-may his soul rest in peace-Bohm. Died on the 12th of Nisan, 1933. May his soul be with G-d.
 Beila, daughter of Moah (Noach, Noah) Menachem-may his soul rest in peace-Wife of Dov. Died on the 25th of Tishrei, 1919.



MEMORIAL PLAQUE

Memorial forever for the Holy Congregation of Irshawa and the surroundings in the Carpathians that were killed and were burned by the cruel Nazis and Hungarians-may their names be forgotten. (a curse on them)

On the day of the 4th of Sivan, in the year of 1944, and in the memory of the Holy that were killed and died of hunger and sickness and hard labor in the concentration camps in the years 1942-1945.

May their souls be remembered with the help of G-d. From the organization of those who came from Irshawa who are now in Israel or abroad. Megilla (scroll of those who were exterminated). This plaque is in the city of Jerusalem.

**CHAPTER 6
THE STEARN AND THE KRUK FAMILIES**

There is not a lot of information available at this time on the Stearns and the Kruks. I am hopeful that more information will be learned in my future research.

STERN AND KRUK

My grandfather Gershon Stearn was born in a small town called Melnitsa (Melnitzer) Podalskaya. It was a Polish-Russian village. The Jewish population there in 1855 was 1500. In 1931 there were 4750 Jews. The town is located in the southeast Ternopoloblast Ukrainian SSR. The town is located in the Dniester River Valley, 14 miles south, southeast of Borohchev. It is 17 miles east, southeast of Kovel. It has a railroad terminus, flour milling, tanning, brickworking and vineyards. The town has an old palace and a beautiful old church with medieval paintings. This town is now in Russian territory. My grandparents always spoke of themselves as Russian.

My grandmother Rebecca Kruk Stearn came from a town called Kovel (Kowel). It is west of Kiev and west of the Dnieper River. It is located in the central Volynoblast, Ukrainian SSR on the Turya River. It is 43 miles northwest of Lutsk and 135 miles from Brest. Four lines of the railroad join in Kovel. It has an agricultural processing center, sawmilling, candlemaking and a manufacturing center for hosiery and knitwear. Jews predominated in light industry, building construction, wholesale and retail trade before the last war. The first settler of Kovel is said to have been a smith, a "KOVAL" in Ukrainian, hence the city's name.

In 1227, this area was part of the Mongol Empire. It later developed under Russian rule. In 1310 there is a mention of a Kovel settlement when it was first visited by King Kazimir the Great of Poland. Kovel Castle was destroyed by the Crusades in 1327. In the middle of the century Grand Prince Gedimir of Lithuania presented Kovel to a Prince Sangushko. Kovel was granted "town status" and given the Magdeburg Law in 1518. (town status) Thereafter Kovel changed hands and after the death of Prince Kurbisky in 1583, became the property of the Polish royal family.

The Jewish community in Kovel dates from around 1536. The Jews suffered terribly during the Chmielnicki Massacres (1648-1649). One hundred thousand Jews were murdered. The community was reconstituted under the protection of King John II Casimir in 1650.

In 1755 King Stanislaw gave Kovel to Count Rzewusky of Cracow and the town was deprived of the Magdeburg Law. Kovel became Russian in 1795 after the Third Division of Poland, but Polish remained the language of the court and for business dealings.

In 1795 the Jews of Kovel numbered 811 (38% of the

total population). The Russians permitted the Jews to select a deputy mayor.

Kovel became a commercial center during the 19th century. In 1897 the Jewish population was 8,521 (48% of the total population). At the end of the First World War, Jews suffered horribly at the hands of Haller's Army. In 1921 there were 12,758 Jews in Kovel (61.1% of the total population). Half of the members of the municipal council were Jewish.

There was an active Jewish life in Kovel. Kovel's last rabbi before the Holocaust was Nahum Twersky, a member of a famous rabbinical family. His brother, Wolf Twersky, also a rabbi, wrote a card to Gershon Stearn in 1939. I have this card in my possession.

Kovel had trade unions which had a big effect on Jewish life. The Yiddish periodicals **Di Kovler Shtime** and **Unzer Lebn** were published in Kovel in the 1930s. In 1939 the Jews numbered 17,000. (out of 33,000 people).

The Soviets occupied Kovel in 1939 and organized Jewish public life was discontinued. Factories were nationalized, craftspeople were organized into co-operatives, and the private sector of enterprise was almost totally destroyed. The Jews of Kovel continued to teach their children Yiddish, religion, and so on, but only in secret.

The Nazis captured the town on June 27, 1941. They shot 8 Jews on that day. A few weeks later the Germans took the Torah scrolls from the city's synagogues and burned them.

A ghetto was established on May 25, 1942. The Jews were grouped according to age, health, and ability to work. The children, the aged, and the sick were immediately sent to death camps. On July 22, 1942, the city ghetto was liquidated. Later the rest of the Jews were gradually exterminated. Some Jews tried to escape to the forests outside the city. Many of these Jews were killed by Ukrainian gangs. Some Kovel Jews joined partisan groups which sabotaged Nazi projects and worked against the Nazis and their collaborators in the city.

On June 7, 1944, the Soviets again came into the city. About 40 Jewish survivors returned to the city, but Jewish life was not re-established and these people soon left for Israel and other countries.

In 1959, plans were announced to convert the Jewish cemetery into a site for an industrial plant. In 1970 the Jewish population was about 250 (50 families). There are groups of Kovel Jews in Israel and Argentina.