Josowitz - Meyerowitz Families
Drahovo (Kövesliget) and Lypcha, Ulkraine
by
Jo K. Nasoff-Finton, USA

Family Members from Drahovo and Lypcha:

Grandparents of Ethel Meyerowitz Josowitz
Hershell (Hirsch) Meyerowitz
Frieda (Florence) or Frima Lebowitz

Parents of Ethel Meyerowitz Josowitz
Yussel Meyerowitz (father)
Sura (Sara) Meyerowitz (mother) her married and maiden names were the same
Siblings of Sura: Chava Meyerowitz Ingber and Moishe (Moses) Meyerowitz (both from Lypcha). Chava had a daughter, Helen Ingber Herman who was born in Europe (probably Lypcha) but both came to the U.S. in

Max (Meyer) Josowitz b. 1893, Drahovo d. 1945, New York City	Married	Ethel (Yetta) Meyerowitz b. 1893, Lypcha, Ukraine (or Hungary) d. 1973, New York City

Siblings of Max:

Itzik Josowitz (Drahovo and NYC)
Eddie Josowitz (Jose) (Drahovo and NYC)
Batsheva Josowitz (Drahovo) - married David Solomon

Siblings of Ethel:

Anna Meyerowitz Hoffman b. 1906, Lypcha (emigrated to US around 1921)
Jack Meyerowitz, Lypcha (emigrated to US 1908) - married Regina, b. 1897

Note: Max Josowitz and Ethel Meyerowitz Josowitz were my grandparents. Their descendents were all American born although their oldest son, Edward Justin, returned to Lypcha and Drahovo with his mother, Yetta, for a short visit just before WWI when he was very young

I cannot go back futher in my grandfather, Max Josowitz' family. I am assuming that the Josowitz clan mainly was from Drahovo while the Meyerowitz' lived in Lypcha, 8 miles from Drahovo. In fact some may have been born elsewhere but lived in either Drahovo or Lypcha until they emigrated to the US (as indicated).

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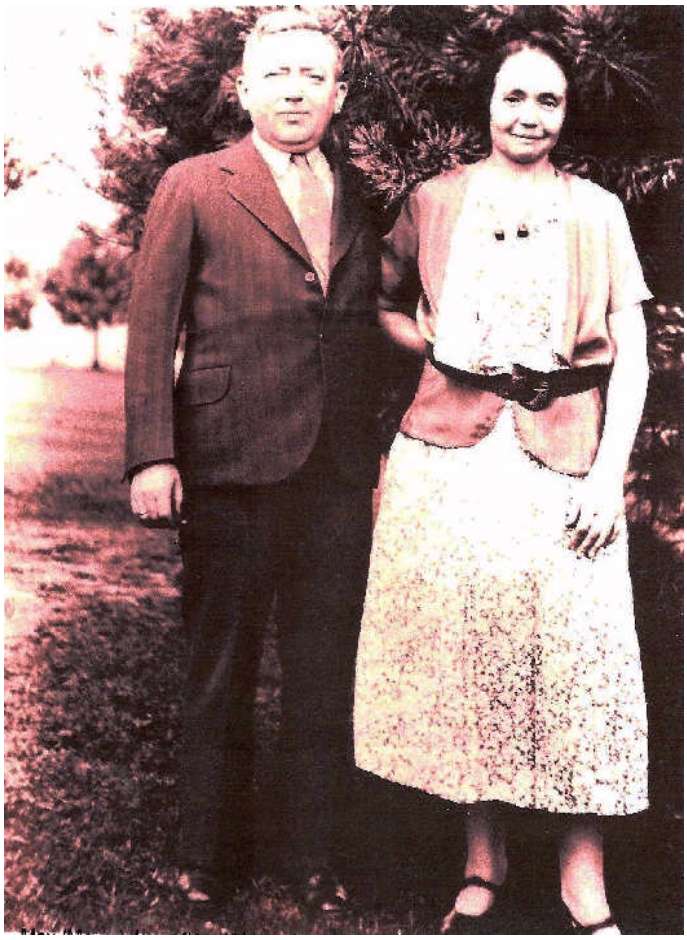
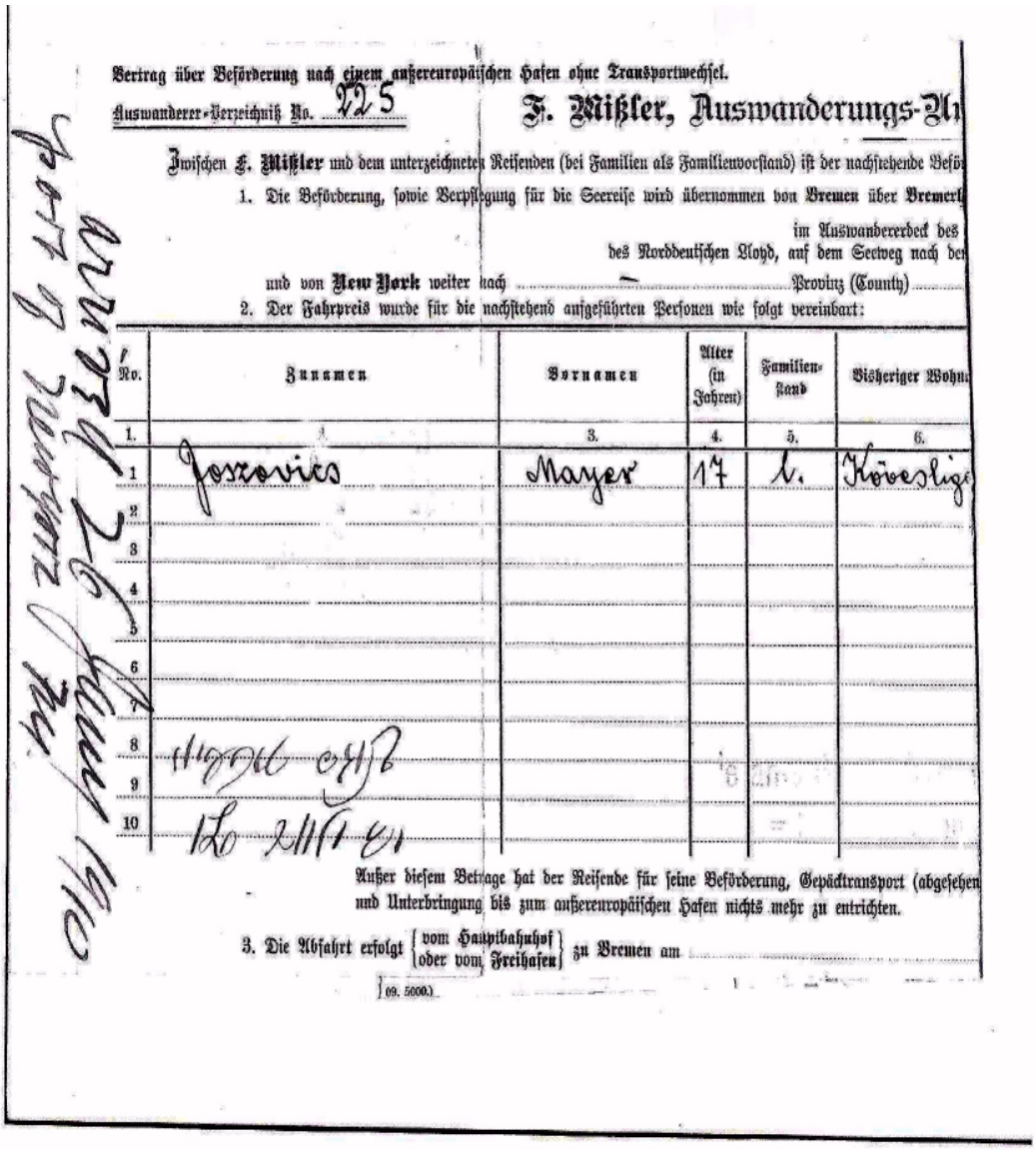
Max (Mayer) and Yetta (née Meyerowitz) Josowitz



Max (Mayer) Josowitz exit papers (1 of 2)



Vertrag über Beförderung nach einem außereuropäischen Hafen ohne Transportwechsel.

Auswanderer-Verzeichniß No. 225

F. Mißler, Auswanderungs-Al

Zwischen F. Mißler und dem unterzeichneten Reisenden (bei Familien als Familienvorstand) ist der nachstehende Beför

1. Die Beförderung, sowie Verpflegung für die Seereise wird übernommen von Bremen über Bremerh
im Auswandererdeck des
des Norddeutschen Lloyd, auf dem Seeweg nach der
und von New York weiter nach — Provinz (County)
2. Der Fahrpreis wurde für die nachstehend aufgeführten Personen wie folgt vereinbart:

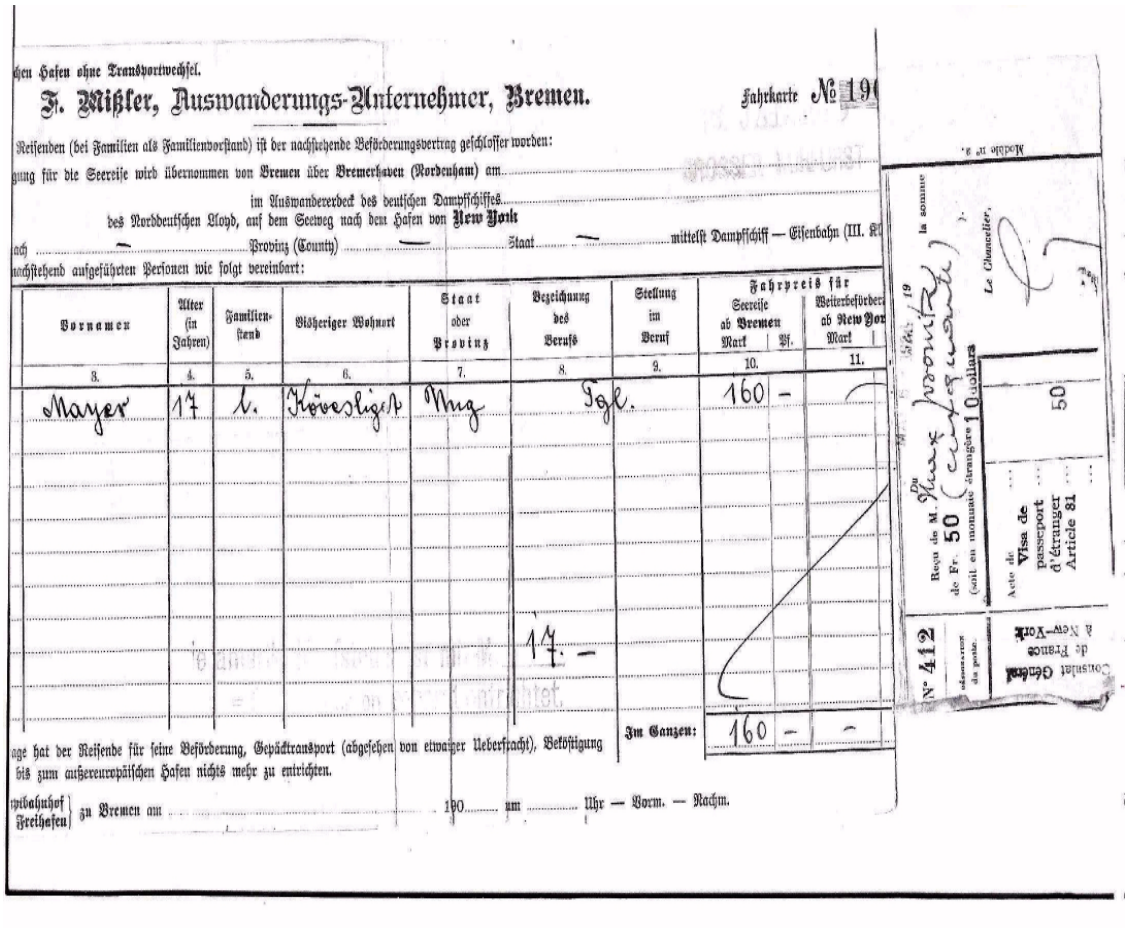
No.	Zunamen	Vornamen	Alter (in Jahren)	Familien-Stand	Bisheriger Wohn
1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
1	Josowics	Mayer	17	L.	Kövesliget
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					

Außer diesem Betrage hat der Reisende für seine Beförderung, Gepäcktransport (abgesehen
und Unterbringung bis zum außereuropäischen Hafen nichts mehr zu entrichten.

3. Die Abfahrt erfolgt { vom Hauptbahnhof / oder vom Freihafen } zu Bremen am

(09. 5000.)

Max (Mayer) Josowitz exit papers (2 of 2)



hen Hafen ohne Transportwechsel.

J. Mißler, Auswanderungs-Unternehmer, Bremen.

Fahrkarte № 19(

Reisenden (bei Familien als Familienvorstand) ist der nachstehende Beförderungsvertrag geschlossen worden:

gung für die Seereise wird übernommen von **Bremen** über **Bremerhaven (Nordenham)** am .....

im Auswandererdeck des deutschen Dampfschiffes .....

des Norddeutschen Lloyd, auf dem Seeweg nach dem Hafen von **New York**

nach — Provinz (County) — Staat — mittelst Dampfschiff — Eisenbahn (III. K

nachstehend aufgeführten Personen wie folgt vereinbart:

Vornamen	Alter (in Jahren)	Familienstand	Bisheriger Wohnort	Staat oder Provinz	Bezeichnung des Berufs	Stellung im Beruf	Fahrpreis für Seereise ab Bremen Mark	Pf.	Weiterbeförderung ab New York Mark
3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.		11.
Mayer	17	l.	Kövesliget	Ung	Tgl.		160	-	
					14.-				
						Im Ganzen:	160	-	-

age hat der Reisende für seine Beförderung, Gepäcktransport (abgesehen von etwaiger Ueberfracht), Beköstigung bis zum außereuropäischen Hafen nichts mehr zu entrichten.

...ahnhof Freihafen zu Bremen am ..... 190.... um ..... Uhr — Vorm. — Nachm.

Modèle n° 9.

Reçu de M. Max Josowitz la somme de Fr. 50 (cinquante francs) (soit en monnaie étrangère 10 dollars)

Le Chancelier,

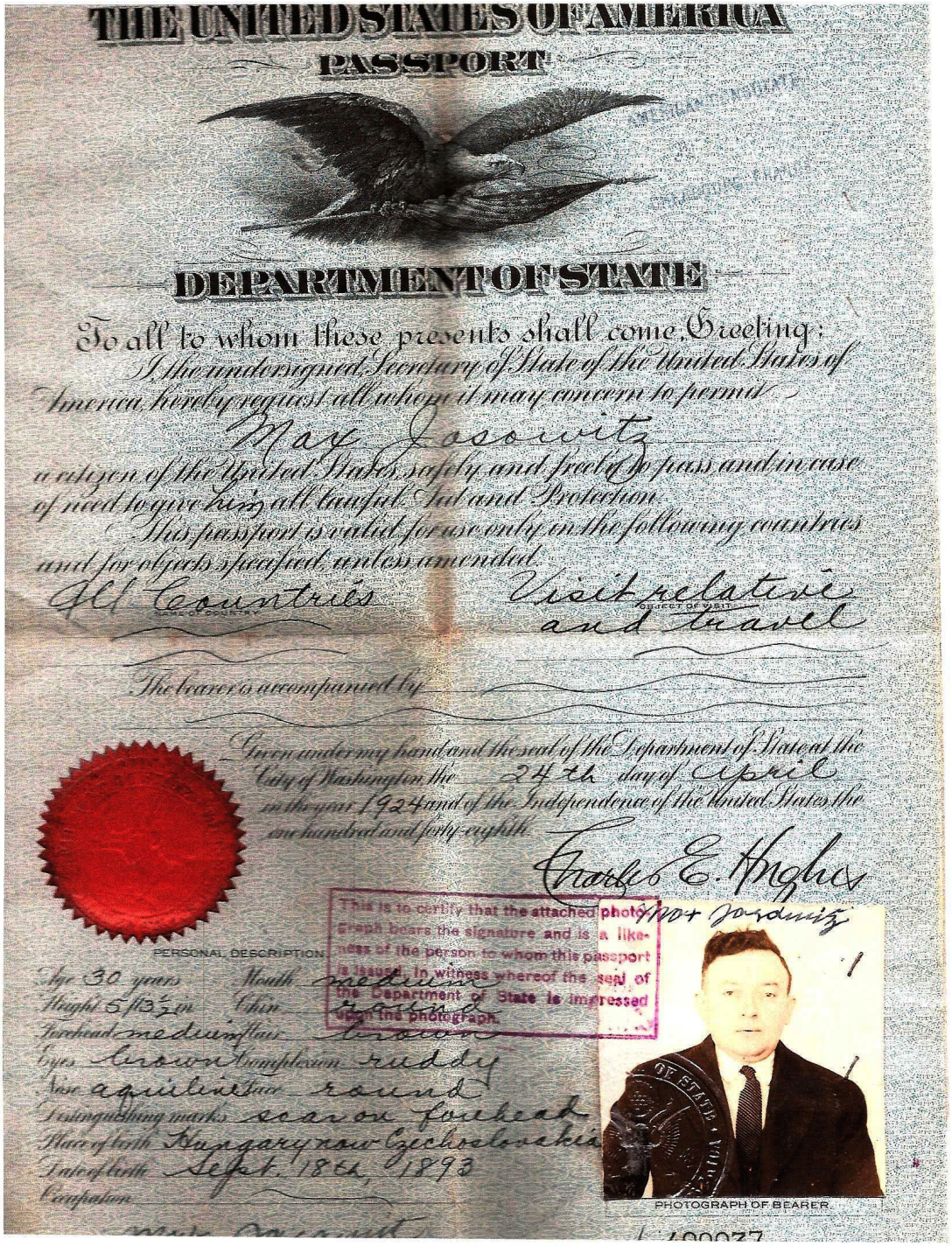
Acte de Visa de passport d'étranger Article 81 ... 50

N° 412

Consulat Général de France à New-York

Josowitz - Meyerowitz Families
Drahovo (Kövesliget) and Lypcha, Ulkraine
by
Jo K. Nasoff-Finton, USA

Max (Mayer) Josowitz Passport (1 of 2)



THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

PASSPORT

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

Max Josowitz

a citizen of the United States, safely and freely to pass, and in case of need to give him all lawful aid and protection.

This passport is valid for use only on the following countries and for objects specified, unless amended.

All Countries — Visit relatives and travel

The bearer is accompanied by

Given under my hand and the seal of the Department of State at the City of Washington the 24th day of April in the year 1924 and of the Independence of the United States the one hundred and forty-eighth

Charles E. Hughes

PERSONAL DESCRIPTION

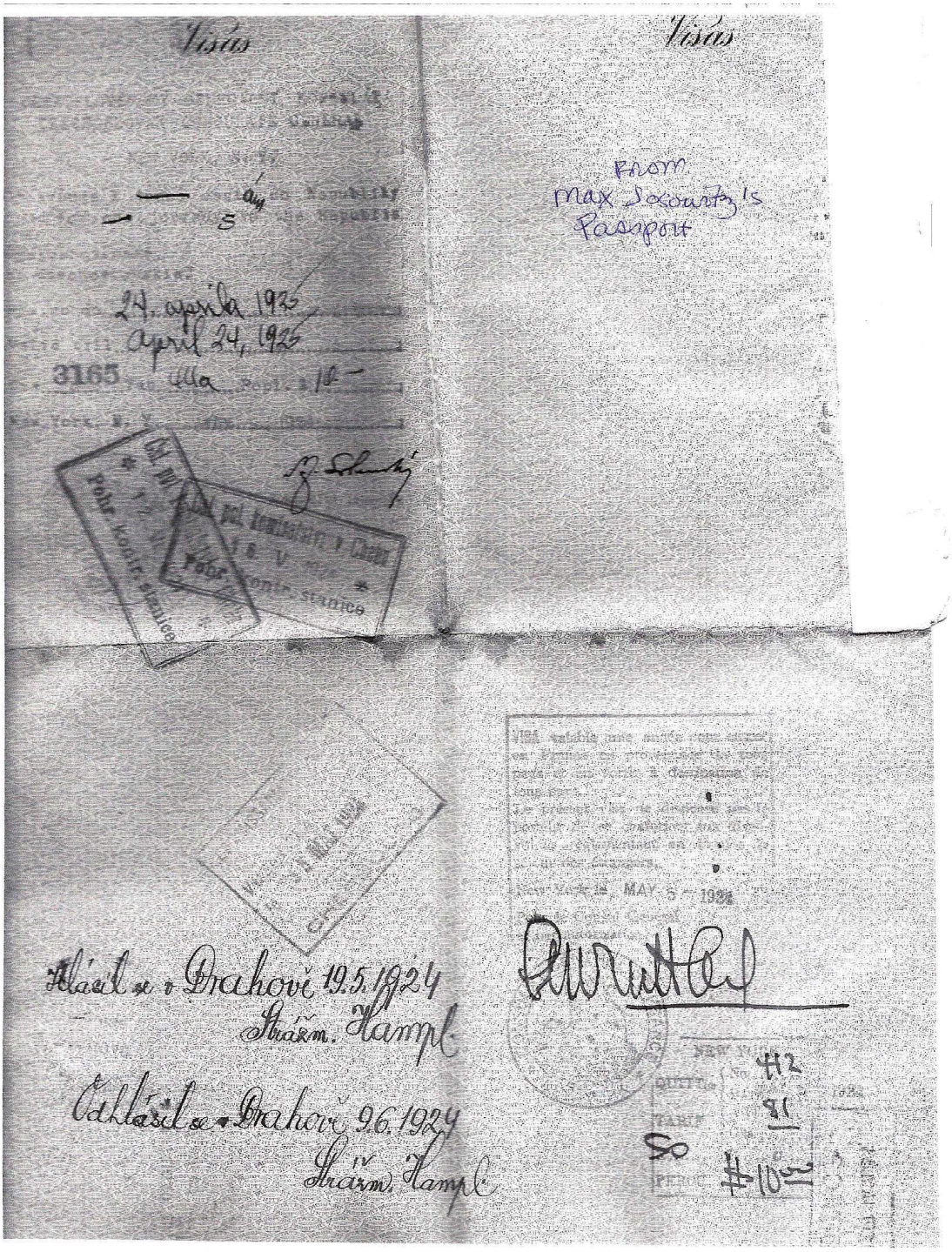
Age 30 years — Mouth medium — Hair brown
Height 5 ft 3½ in — Chin — Forehead medium — Eyes brown — Complexion ruddy
Nose aquiline — Face round
Distinguishing marks scar on forehead
Place of birth Hungary now Czechoslovakia
Date of birth Sept. 18th, 1893
Occupation

This is to certify that the attached photograph bears the signature and is a likeness of the person to whom this passport is issued. In witness whereof the seal of the Department of State is impressed upon the photograph.

Max Josowitz

PHOTOGRAPH OF BEARER

Max (Mayer) Josowitz Passport (2 of 2)



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Note:

The following are excerpts from several different stories/recollections written by my late uncle Edward Justin (nee Josowitz) the son Max Josowitz (a native of Drahovo) and Yetta or Yetti Josowitz (nee Meyerowitz) from Lipse (or Lypcha) a village located 8 miles from Drahovo. Ed Justin entitled the entire collection of stories (mostly about his family and life in America) Carpathian Roots. References to Drahovo and the people who lived there (some family, some not) are found in several of the pieces and I have extracted them to share with others interested in Drahovo. (In these excerpts, "Pop" refers to Max Josowitz and "Mom" to Yetti Josowitz).

---Submitted by Jo Kaplan Nasoff-Finton (grandaughter of Max Josowitz from Drahovo and Yetti Josowitz from Lypcha)

Excerpts from Carpathian Roots (a collection of memories):

Excerpt # 1: from "Knights of the Talking Table"

Pop and Mom were born in the same year (1893), in small, not-so-far-apart towns in the Carpathian Mountain region of what was then Hungary, later (after World War I) Czechoslovakia, and then (after World War II), Russia.

Drahovo, Pop's birthplace, was not unlike an American frontier settlement. Even its Jews, or at least some of them, were brawlers, horse-thieves, barn burners (after quarrels) and smugglers – among other things.

My paternal grandmother operated a "kretchma" (the Drahovoan equivalent of a "speakeasy") which she had inherited from her mother, a legendary character who allegedly wore out three sets of shrouds, (which "devout" women wore to religious services at the synagogue). Along with the shrouds, she wore out either five or six husbands. My paternal grandmother didn't quite measure up to her mother. Shroud-wearing to the synagogue went out of fashion in her time; and she never made it beyond three husbands. However, Pop assured me that she operated the at-home "kretchma" (illegally, or course,) efficiently, fairly profitably, and with little or no help from her various spouses. And, not incidentally, she gave birth to and raised a brood of hell-raising sons and one, very self-reliant daughter, all in a one-room, all-purpose house.

Mom's birthplace, Lipsce (I think it means "small stream" in Hungarian), was the spiritual opposite of Drahovo. It was a quiet, orderly, sleepy little community, and its Jews were, in the main, law-abiding, God-fearing, second-class, non-citizens.

My maternal grandmother operated a "mikvah", (a totally legal, Talmud-prescribed ritual bathhouse for orthodox Jews). I gather that she worked herself to death at an early age, hauling water from the Lipche (the small stream) to the mikvah's boiler. Her only husband, Mom's father, was more into praying than working and he lived to a ripe old age after re-marrying one of Mom's childhood playmates.

Mom had two older brothers, one younger sister, and then one, much younger half-sister. Both brothers, (my uncles), ran away from home to escape studying to become rabbis. The older of the two told me, years later, that when he was apprenticed to a rabbi before he ran away, it was like being sold into slavery. "Compared to that rabbi", Uncle Jack said, "Simon Legree was a real nice guy! And", he added, "he was planning to get me to marry his daughter who was so ugly, she could have turned milk sour by looking at it!"

But to get on with the story:

One of the big events in both of those towns was the occasional appearance of a group of gypsies. Arriving in picturesque caravans and garbed in colorful costumes, they came to trade, to cheat and to be cheated, and sometimes, to "find" a thing or two that wasn't nailed down. They also came to earn a bit of cash for entertaining with singing, dancing, music playing, whoring and fortune-telling.

I was told that the gypsies were welcomed with open arms (but sewn pockets) in Drahovo; and in Lipsce, with mostly bolted doors and shuttered windows. Pop did most of the telling and as a Drahovoan chauvinist (like most Drahovoans), he may have been guilty of a bit of overstatement. He even tried to tell me that one of his half-brothers stole a horse from a gypsy.

Pop had two, special, never-to-be-forgotten and too often told memories of the gypsy visits to Drahovo.

On the occasion of one visitation, he fell off a horse and split his skull on a rock. A gypsy-lady gave him first aid by tying a piece of stale, water soaked bread to the crack in his skull. As instructed, he kept that tight, bread-holding bandage on his head for ten days. The gypsy had warned him that the bread would grow moldy but that it was not to be untied. When he removed the bandage and the moldy bread, the wound was completely healed except for a small scar which remained as proof to be pointed to whenever he retold the story.

On another occasion, the gypsies demonstrated a "talking fortune-telling table". Pop remembered, and always told, that it was an ordinary, four-legged, all-wooden table, held together with wooden pegs instead of nails. Apparently, the basic requirement was a total absence of metal.

"Eight people sat on three sides of the table," he recited, "with their hands on it, palms down, fingers spread, fan-like and stretched, so that there was an unbroken chain of touching fingers around three sides of the table. A gypsy sat at the head of the table and asked the questions, and the table 'answered' by rising up on one end, like a horse on its hind legs, and rapping. Those answers that we could check," Pop said, "were all correct."

Pop was a great story teller and a first rate saloon operator, (His lifetime vocation). He probably got a certain amount of his basic training in his mother's kretchma – where he was born and breast fed.

Excerpt # 2: from "A Bit About Mom"

..... in 1914, my mother, with me in a carriage, we took off to Hungary to spend a little time with her soon-to-die mother. It is worth remembering that at that time she still could neither read or write, and spoke and understood very little English. Also, a transatlantic trip in those days still was something of an odyssey. In good weather it took an ordinary steamship some ten or eleven days to make the crossing from New York to Rotterdam or Hamburg. We made it. I don't remember the crossing at all but I have heard the story of that voyage, and of the events that followed, told and retold so many times that I find it difficult to distinguish between actual recollection and recalled tellings.

Evidently my mother's biggest problem on board ship en route was discouraging the advances of out "protector" Itzik, the irrepressible Don Juan of my father's tribe. "I didn't tell your father about that slob," she said, "til years later. No sense in getting your father upset. He meant well when he sent that fool with us."

When I was quite grown up I asked my mother, "How in hell did you get the nerve to undertake such a trip with a two year old and a carriage?" Her reply was simple. "I loved my mother," she said, "and I wanted to spend some time with her. I knew that she was dying and I wanted her to have the pleasure of knowing that I was alright: and I knew that she would enjoy meeting her first grandchild – you."

I know from hearing it told and repeated, that when we got to my mother's home town of Lipsce, she received a royal welcome. I have been told that she had been very well liked before she had left for America and now, added to that, there was the general understanding that she had undertaken the journey to visit with her dying mother and that she had brought with her a two year old grandson to add to her mother's pleasure.

Also, she was very beautiful and tastefully dressed in American clothes, and she had brought, along with her son, an American carriage the like of which had never been seen in Lipsce. Aunt Anna, my mother's younger sister, was able to extract bribes from the other kids in town for allowing them to push that carriage, with me in it, down the main (and only) street in Lipsce. After a while my father's mother came in a two horse carriage-with-driver and took us to her village, Drahove. There we received another royal welcome.

My only personal recollection of the weeks spent in both of those little towns is that I asked my mother's father to take me to a park. He took me out to his back yard and told me to play with his goat. "This is a park," he said. Evidently, I created a local sensation by replying in Yiddish, "Don't try to fool me grandpa. This is no park. It's a yard and the goat stinks."

I think I remember that my grandfather wore a goatskin short-coat and that he had a raggedy beard which scratched when he held me close.

My mother remembered, "We were still in Drahove when the World War began. Hungary got right into the war. Somehow, probably by cable, your father got word to us to try to get to the American consul in Budapest as quick as possible. Evidently he knew that it might be hard to get out of Hungary and back to the U.S.

"We were driven back to Lipsce. There were enough tears shed," she said, "in Drahove and in Llipsce, to make a small lake. All of us understood that we were saying goodbye forever." I learned later that there was special anxiety because my mother was still a Hungarian citizen despite my father's having filed an application for U.S. citizenship for himself and for her. Evidently there was a two year waiting period between the first filing and the granting of U.S. citizenship. "If your mother had been a male," my father told me when I was old enough to understand, "they wouldn't have let her out of the country. A twenty year old male trying to leave would have been thrown right into the army. Lucky it was your mother, not me."

From Lipsce my grandfather horse and buggied us to Chust, the nearest town with a small railroad station. "There we stayed with relatives overnight," my mother related, "and at daybreak my father bribed a guard and got us on a coal train going to a city where we could transfer to a regular passenger train to Budapest. Luckily for us that guard was a nice guy and didn't rob me and let us off at the right place."

"I had plenty of money", she told me, "but I was too scared to use it. We had nothing to eat or drink on the coal train for nearly twenty hours. You never stopped crying and if I hadn't been ashamed to do so, I'd have cried with you. Then, when we were in the station waiting for the train to Budapest, there must have been food and drink for sale but I was afraid to go look. I was scared to death that we'd miss the train."

"And when we got on the train," she said, "they may even have had a dining car, but in those days, what did I know about dining cars? I'd hardly ever been on a train except on the way to America the first time and then on this trip. If it hadn't been wartime, probably a man would have walked through the train selling sandwiches, candy and drinks. On that train – nothing! You kept crying and repeating in Yiddish, "Mama, I want eat. I'm hungry."

"Some nice German lady across the aisle understood what you were saying and offered you a sandwich and some milk from her lunch basket. I let you take it and I thanked her. She offered me a sandwich but I couldn't take it because I was sure that it wasn't kosher. I thanked her and told her that I wasn't hungry. She must have known that I was lying because she insisted that I take an apple. I can still taste that apple!"

"When we got to Budapest," she said, "I was totally lost. Budapest, that day, looked bigger than New York. Luckily, we only had two small suitcases. Everything else, even the carriage, I had left behind in Lipsce, thank God. So, I don't know how I knew enough to do it, I got us into a carriage-taxi and told the driver, 'Americanski consulate'. He understood and took us there without trouble. I didn't know how to pay him, so I held out a big bill and waited for change. Whatever he took, he was welcome to it. I hope he took a very good tip because I didn't remember to give him one. I was too nervous."

"Inside the consulate a nice older man who spoke German but understood my Yiddish, looked at our papers and said not to worry. 'It will take a day or two,' he said, 'but we'll take care of you. After all, your son is an American citizen and you are his guardian; and certainly he is too young to travel alone.' If that's not exactly what he said, my mother always insisted, "it's what I thought he said." He made me so happy that I began to cry. And when you saw me crying, you tried to cry even harder. That nice man, God bless his soul, led us to a big, clean, marble bathroom where we were able to use the toilets and to clean up a little. Then he took us to a small hotel run by a Jewish couple. We were safe at last!"

"Two days later we were on a train to somewhere in Italy. We had tickets on an Italian steamship which was going to New York." My mother never remembered the name of the Italian port or even the name of the steamship. "What I'll never forget," she always said, "is how small and rusty it looked compared to the nice German ship on which we had come to Europe. And when we got on board and I had a look at where we were going to live, I wasn't sure that we shouldn't have remained in Lipsce – where everybody was sure that Germany, with the help of Austria-Hungary would easily win the war in a month or two."

"I guess that the man at the consulate was anxious to get us home and he probably got us whatever he could get in a hurry. What he got us was two little beds, really cots, in a big room – it must have been the whole bottom of the ship – laid out to sleep probably two hundred people. The room stank already, while it was still practically empty. It must have been an old leftover stink, like from unwashed feet."

"I gave money, I don't know how much, to a man in some kind of a uniform who seemed to be in charge. He put our bags on two cots and copied something from our passports, probably our names, onto two pieces of paper which he pasted on the ends of the beds. Then he showed me by sign language that it would be better to get out on deck. There were so many people on the deck there was hardly room to stand. Lucky for us, you began to cry real loud, so people gave us a little room and we were able to work our way to the ship's rail. Then I did probably the smartest thing that I did on the whole trip; maybe in my whole life."

"There were peddlers in little rowboats down in the water by the side of the ship. They were selling food and drinks and all kinds of things by hoisting them up in baskets on ropes which they threw up to the decks. By a miracle, I decided to buy you a potty and somehow I managed to make the peddler understand what I wanted. I got one of the passengers to count out enough money to pay and a nice white enamel potty was heisted up on a rope."

Amazingly, after all these years, I would take an oath that I truly remember the sight of that potty being lifted over the ship's rail.

According to my mother, "That potty was a life saver. There were only two toilets for all the people in that tremendous room. And probably even before the ship sailed, they were already out of order. And they were never fixed. The trip was a nightmare. It took sixteen days but it seemed like sixteen years. Columbus probably had it better. That old tub was so small that it tossed like a toy. Everybody was sick. That big room stank so of vomit, we must have spent eighteen hours on deck. We were miserable but at least the stink was less."

"We couldn't eat the ship's food. It wasn't fit for humans. Luckily that man that gave us the beds when we arrived, came around a few times every day, probably to see if the passengers were still alive. From him, by sign language, I was able to buy – probably stolen – rolls and butter and coffee for me and milk for you. I think we did that usually twice a day except when we were too sick. And a few times I even got fruit juice for you."

"And you started crying when the ship was pulling out of the harbor in Italy and you didn't stop, except when you were eating or sleeping, 'til I showed you the Statue of Liberty and said, 'Look, there is New York. If you look real hard you'll see papa waiting for us'." I have it on good authority that within an hour after we arrived at home on Columbia Street, my mother had heated water on the coal stove and had me in the washtub for bathing and delousing. It is told that I protested vehemently.

It probably took many years for me to fully appreciate the full significance of that journey but I have the feeling that, even before my father, I sensed that underneath my mother's beautiful, gentle, seemingly delicate exterior, there lived a very strong lady. Time was to prove that to be the case.

Excerpt #3 from "The Duke of Drahove – Almost":

Sometime in the spring of 1924, my father decided to go home to visit Drahove, the village in which he was born (For years, he and I spelled it Drahovo, but in his passport, which I still have, the spelling by the consular authorities is Drahove).

My paternal grandfather had died a long time before, possibly even prior to my father's second-time departure for America in January of 1910. I know that he was not among the living when my mother, with me in tow, visited there in 1914. It is my impression that my paternal grandmother also had died. My guess now, which I have no way of verifying, is that my father was going to Drahove to arrange for a proper tombstone to be placed on his mother's grave.

Still, or once again, living in Drahove at that time, were my father's sister and her husband and at least two half-brother's, plus a huge flock of nephews, nieces, aunts, uncles, cousins, and old acquaintances. I wrote "still, or once again," because some of the Drahovers, including two of my father's half-brothers, had been in America before World War I, and at least one of them, along with some of the villagers, had been in the Hungarian army during the war.

Pop's half brother Itzik had been a sergeant in the Hungarian army and had been taken prisoner by the Russians. While a prisoner, he had demonstrated such a remarkable gift for healing sick animals, that the Russians had treated him exceptionally well and even had permitted him to accumulate a fair amount of money before his release.

And I referred to my father's "second-time departure for America in January of 1910," because my father had been in America once before. For some reason which I can no longer recall, he had been brought to New York by and uncle named Something Herman, who had represented to the immigration authorities that my father was his son.

As a twelve year old, my father, then known as Max Herman, had worked as a butcher's errand boy and later, in some strange capacity in a South Street waterfront saloon.

I hate myself now, for not having asked the million questions which I should have asked. There still lurks somewhere in the back of my mind a hazy memory of my father's tales of a strange, live-in life in that waterfront saloon.

When, or why, that uncle went back to Europe, and why he took my father with him, I cannot even guess. If I was told, and I must have been, I plead guilty to forgettery – guilty with great regret.

Now, back to my father's impending journey:

Drahove, which had been part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire prior to World War I, was, as indicated in my father's passport part of Czechoslovakia in 1924. And, if I didn't know it then, I learned later, that the people in Drahove, and in nearby Lipsce, my mother's birthplace, were even poorer as Czechoslovakians that they had been as Hungarians.

What I did know was that every letter that came to my father or mother from Europe, included some calamitous news and always, an urgent plea for money or for a package of clothing – usually for both.

The birthrate among the relatives seemed to be astonishingly high, ("What the hell else is there to do in Lipsce or Drahove" my father often said), and every announcement of a new arrival was accompanied by a frantic plea for extra money for milk and other necessities for the baby, lest it starve to death.

At the same time, the mortality rate appeared to be keeping pace with the birthrate. And with each obituary notice there came a tearful plea for money to keep the surviving members of the deceased's family from being driven to cannibalism; and, in due time, a cry for the wherewithal with which to buy a proper tombstone,

In 1924, we still were living at 273 Stanton Street, in the building in which my father had operated his pre-Prohibition saloon. Pop's speakeasy was at 159 Lewis Street, in the small building which he owned.

Toby would be six years old that May, I would be twelve in June, and George (still Izzy), eight in July. Pop would be thirty-one in September, and Mom, thirty one in December,

All five of us were in seeming good health and the business in the speakeasy was good. In fact, for a small-time speakeasy operator, Pop must have been doing quite well because it seemed to me that neither he nor mom failed to respond with a money order or a package, or both, to each plea from Drahove or Lipsce.

Pop was to sail for Cherbourg on the 7th or 8th of May (The passport indicated that he disembarked there on May 15, 1924). I well remember that Mom seemed to spend a week packing his bags, mostly with things to be given to various relatives in Drahove and Lipsce.

During that same week, Pop spent many hours stuffing and re-stuffing U.S. paper currency into the money-belt which he planned to wear. Evidently, everyone with a relative in Drahove or Lipsce, or in a neighboring town or village, wanted my father to hand-deliver U.S. currency. I didn't know it then, but I would guess now, that there was a terrific black market in U.S. Dollars.

After a while my father had to stop accepting money. "I can't take big bills," he explained, "What the hell would they do with Hundred Dollar bills in Lipsce or Drahove? The Czechs would take the money away from them and throw them into jail. And I hear that Czechs don't even take bribes."

"Already," he said, "I'm gonna look a little pregnant. If I try to wear two money belts, they'll lock me up. Enough is enough!"

.....

The really important part of the trip story broke at the supper table, after Pop had been home about a week.

We had finished eating and Mom was about to begin clearing the dishes when Pop said, "Yettie, sit a minute. There's somethin' we gotta talk about."

"Who's sick?" Mom asked.

"Nobody," Pop said, "and nobody died. Just listen for a few minutes."

"When I was in Drahove, I learned that the Graff (is it one f or two ff's), (the Hungarian equivalent of a Count) who owned all the land for miles and miles around our town, is broke"

"How could he go broke when he owns half of the country and everybody works for him for practically nothing?" my mother asked.

"He didn't go broke in Drahove," Pop explained. "He spends most of his time and all of his money in Budapest, and places like that, on whiskey and women."

"So how do you know that he's broke?" Mom asked.

"Because he told me so, himself," Pop said.

"You talked with him?" my mother asked, unbelieving. "The Graf talked with a Jew? You really mean it?"

"Yettie," Pop said, "He musta been visitin' in the neighborhood, and he musta heard that I was there. And I suppose whoever told him, probably said that I was a Jew Millionaire from New York. Anyway, he sent a messenger and a carriage to pick me up and bring me to his place."

"When I got there, I saw at least two fancy cars in his barn but I guess on what they call roads in Drahove, a carriage still makes more sense. Those roads haven't changed since I was a boy. They're still for goats."

"His home must be a regular palace," Mom said.

"No," Pop replied, "it was a dump. The guy probably hasn't spent a dime on fixing anything in twenty years. It probably would take a year to fix everything there that needs t' be fixed – but it musta been a beauty of a house when it was in good shape."

"So, what happened?" Mom asked.

"So, he offered me a drink and told me his troubles. He's in hock up to his ass, and he wants to sell out and live in Budapest. I could tell from listening to him that he thinks the people in our towns are animals – and he wasn't only talking about the Jews."

"I hope you didn't offer to lend him money," Mom said, "or to cash his check."

"Yettie," Pop said, "I'm not joking, and I'm telling you all this for a reason."

"So get to the reason," Mom said.

"OK" Pop continued, "he offered to sell me all of his property – which seems like a quarter of what used to be Hungary for Fifty Thousand Dollars cash."

"So," Mom said, "you don't have Fifty Thousand Dollars cash."

"I could raise it," Pop replied. "If we sold the building and the business, we probably could put together Fifty Thousand Dollars."

"And then what?" Mom asked.

"Yettie," Pop said, "I think that if lived in that guys house and fixed it up, and if we looked after the use of the land, we could live like kings. And we'd never have to lift a finger to work."

"Max," Mom said, calmly, "I think you're losing your mind."

"No," he replied, "I've been thinkin' about this all the way on the trip home."

"Max," Mom said, "listen to me. First of all, your meshpoocha (relatives) and mine all could stop writing letters to ask for money. They'd be on a doorstep, or in the house, everyday, twenty four hours a day, seven days a week."

"Second, I wouldn't want to live in or near Drahove or Lipsce again, not even if I was going to be the Queen. I was glad to get the hell out of there and I never want to go back. Max," she continued, "life here is not easy, but we're doing OK. Eddie is already in High School and he's going to be Bar Mitzvahed next year, God willing. Izzy and Toby are doing alright in school. For the children, it's a whole, wonderful world. You wouldn't expect me to take them out of school and move them to Drabove. What would they learn there? How to milk cows?"

If I had been asked at that time, I probably would have voted "Go," because I was having trouble with Algebra in the 9th grade, trouble with Algebra and with the teacher, "Blubberhead" Nagurney. Fortunately no one asked me.

"And what would we do there," Mom continued, "take a week off to go to a movie in Budapest? Max, get it out of your head. I ain't going! And the kids ain't going! You want to be a Graf in Czechoslovakia, be my guest! But don't try selling me. I ain't buying!"

If Pop had prevailed, he'd have lived long enough to see all of us rounded up by the Nazis in 1944. When they had finished, there wasn't a Jew left in that part of Europe.

Thanks Mom!