

The Bernman's  
My grandparents were  
Chouan and Chasha  
Their children were  
Chana Esther - m. Myer (Mishalov) Bernman  
Goldie - m. David Russian  
Bertha - m. Aaron Levitz  
Hymen - m. Jennie Kaplowitz  
Benjamin - m. Pauline Siegel  
Barnett - m. Mae Rogovin  
Gus - m. Lillian Bernman (no relative)  
Harvey - m. Gertrude White

The next generation -  
Chana Esther and Myer's family  
Morris - m. Minnie Sear  
Gus - m. Adele  
Dora - m. Ben Sprafkin  
Louis - m. Adele  
Louis - m. Edith

Goldie and David

Dora - m. Louis Adowitz

Bessie - m. David Doff

Herman - m. Bernice Greenberg

Frances - m. Sam Levin

Natalie - m. Sidney Rehrun

Bertha and Aaron — that's us!

Celia - m. Charles Byer — that's you!

Hyman - m. Martha Rutstein

that's me! - Bessie - m. Nathan Barkan (Henry Diamond)

Faye - m. George Heller (Louis Batt)

Hyman + Jennie

Max - m. Ruth

William - d. age 17 - diving accident

Bessie m. Hy Levine

Saul d. age 20 - medical O.D to lose weight

Benjamin and Pauline

Mildred m. + (

Ruth m. Sidney Harris

Sidney m. Billie + (

Barnett and Mae -

Heleu m. Sidney Rhein

Arnold m. Rosalyn

Gus and Sil -

Milton - m. Martha

Eugene - m. Carol

Harry and Gert -

Arthur - m. Anne

Judith m. Howard Levine

I wont go into the next generations because I've  
been out of touch - family is scattered - I've

been away from New Haven too long.

The family circle gave me a reason to go up - but no meetings - no reason.

Barbara - perhaps you can continue the next and next, etc.

My father had 3 brothers, Elyah was older and two, Benjamin and Carl were younger.

Uncle Elyah had 2 children - Cyril ~~A~~ about my sister, Celia's age and Harry, my age. By the way Celia's (your mom) Jewish name is Cyria.

Uncle Elyah was an Orthodox Rabbi. He came to the U.S. in 1919. He served a congregation in New Haven.

Because he could not bring his family to the U.S. (his wife was inadmissible because she had Trachoma) he returned in 1928 to Russia. Came Hitler and the entire family perished except for Harry's baby son who was hidden and then raised in a monastery.

After the war, thru the efforts of

and the Red Cross we found this boy, now about 15 (Joyce's age) I wanted to adopt him but he refused to leave the monastery. He had been baptized and was being trained for the priesthood.

My father's <sup>younger</sup> brother was Benjamin Antell. They came to the U.S. together — at Ellis Island, June 1904 — Aaron and Benjamin Antellewitz. A "goy" there had trouble with that last name and ordered a short version. The brother couldn't bear the thought of losing such a beautiful name so they just split it and Aaron Levitz and Benjamin Antell came to New Haven. For years we were explaining the 2 names.

Uncle Benjamin (he was Uncle Benjamin in my father's family. Benjamin

min was Uncle Ben) was a Shochet. He was married to Aunt Leah. They had 2 children. Pauline was 8 months younger than I and Harry was 3 years younger. Harry refused to become a rabbi & became an electrical engineer. But my uncle Benjamin was a dear, pious man and G-d answered his prayers. Pauline married Abraham (Al to us) Gris, an Orthodox Rabbi. Pauline & Al had 2 children, William & Charlotte. History repeated itself -- William refused to study for the rabbinate and Charlotte married a Rabbi.

Uncle Carl - my father's youngest brother - came to the U.S. in 1912. My father paid for his passage so he honored

my father by becoming Carl Sevitz.  
He married Teeny and had  
one daughter, Gladys.

An aside to the Sevitz Saga —

My uncle Elyah was coming to  
New Haven in August 1919. My mother  
didn't want him to think our Hebrew  
education was being neglected because  
my father had died, so —

Celia was 16 — working and old  
enough to say "no"

Hymie was already Bar Mitzvah  
Faye was only 6 yrs. old. So

I was IT!

As soon as school was over in  
June I started Hebrew School.

I really crashed the course.

In 7 weeks I learned to read Hebrew



learned to read and write a Jewish letter. And that was enough! I can still read Hebrew but very slowly. My mother and I - when I lived in N.Y. - wrote Yiddish letters to each other. My mother wanted at least half of my letters to be in English. She wanted to perfect her English reading (and found my printing and script ~~easy~~ easy to read). I wanted not to forget my Yiddish so it worked well for both of us.

When I am in Temple I can follow the Hebrew with my eyes but I can't read it aloud as fast as the Reader does.

My father died Feb. 27, 1915. It was Purim, a happy Holiday for Jews - but not for us. All her life my mother refused to observe the day as a happy holiday. She never made hamantaschen. When other children went to the synagogue on Purim, Cele, Faye and I never did because to them it was a time for revelry. My brother went but to say Kaddish. My uncle Benjamin's wife, Leah, used to bring us hamantaschen because "There's a time to stop mourning. Let the children know it's Purim."

My mother and father were second-cousins. It was a true love's match. Love existed "way back then" so don't think you invented it.

I remember my father - his red hair and mustache and his blue eyes. He called me his "little Yankee" because I was their first American child. Celia and Nymie (4 and 3 yrs. ~~younger~~ <sup>older</sup>) were born in Russia. Faye - 6 years younger than I.

He loved my mother and was a most devoted and loving father - the short times we had him.

I remember the little surprises gifts not for birthdays. The doll with the porcelain face - the glass ball with the boy and girl skating inside and the snow falling on them when you turned the ball - the patent leather 2 strap pumps like Celia's that mama thought I didn't need - so many more!

My mother was smart. She had a marvelous sense of humor—deep, loyalty to family—and a heart big enough to hold love for all, of the family—this was Bubby.

I could write volumes about her. In the following pages will be anecdotes about Bubby and her parents, my Bubby and Zaydie. You couldn't have inherited better genes.

Zaydie was 86 when he died. My grandmother was 82. Your Bubby was close to 87. All were bright—active—with full use of their faculties till the end.

My grandfather was wise and learned—Above all he revered music and education. He did the best he could for his children in a small

town (in the state of Minsk) in  
Russia. There was nothing  
offered to Jewish children, so  
he hired a music teacher for  
his brood. Three of his sons were  
talented but only one would make  
music his life's work. Harry, the  
youngest was almost 9 when the  
family came to the U.S. He studied  
under the best violinist in New Haven  
Hans Milke, and then went on to  
The Damrosch Institute in New York.  
In New Haven he became known as  
Mr. Music. Harry brought fame to the  
Berman name and music to New Haven.  
To this day New Haven continues  
projects introduced by Harry Berman.

A formal education was the  
Zaidie's dream for all his children.

In Russia a rabbi was brought into his home and not only the 5 boys got a Hebrew education: Shades of ERA! the 3 girls also were educated.

It is from the genes of Chona and Chaska that our family - the Berman's - have so many musicians - so many educators and educateds - so much love for music and the arts. It is why the Berman's are special. The drive to learn - to succeed we all inherited from them.

My grandfather was a good Jew. He lived a strictly Orthodox, religious life upholding all the precepts of Judaism. He was

well versed in the Old Testament and the Talmud. When Zayde wanted to prove or emphasize a point we always heard, "Even the Bible says—"

Zayde was born several generations too early. He might have become a Reform Jew. He might have changed many traditions. So many times I listened to him discuss Jewish customs with his friends I always thought he was trying to shock them. Following are some of his arguments—

1. Of course there had to be separate milk and meat dishes centuries ago. Dishes were made of wood or clay. Food could soak

into them - particles become embedded. Certain milk and meat combinations - impossible to wash out - might develop germs which could infect food served later. Today our dishes are made of glass or porcelain - everything washes off dishes and silverware are all sanitary. This law should be changed.

2. The Sabbath had to be a day of rest even for animals. Otherwise man would work like an animal would be worked to death. So riding on the Sabbath was taboo.

Today, a motorman (a goy, usually) takes his day of rest when he want

In it, work for a Jew to sit on



a trolley and let the goy take him to visit a friend he cannot see during the week?

3. Lighting a fire for heat or light entailed work - so it was forbidden on Sabbath. "Do not disturb the Sabbath rest" was law 5000 years ago. Today a finger presses a button - no work - we have heat and light.

4. A Mikvah - the Jewish communal ritual bath - was a must in those long-gone days. If the rabbis did not decree that a woman go to the mikvah every month she might never bathe. Jewish beauty might be hidden by encrusted dirt. But why must a woman go to that

dirty mikvah on Oak Street where she has a nice, clean bathtub at home?

Etcetera! Etcetera!

In spite of his contentious reasoning my grandfather upheld every law, custom and tradition of orthodox Jewish life and all the teachings of his youth

After my father died, to save money we doubled up and shared an apartment with my grandparents. The closeness in our everyday lives developed into a great love, by me, for my grandparents. Especially

a buffer between me and my mother. Mama was always teaching us "chores" - which I hated - dishwashing, dusting, etc. I had to develop "responsibility". Bubbie was protective - I didn't have to learn housework - I was just a "kind" - a small child.

On Saturdays if we kids were at home when my grandfather came from synagogue lunch was always late for us. Nobody was served before Zayde and nobody left the table until he gave the O.K. Such a lovable tyrant! This meant that we would be late for the movies that elegant (?) structure on Davenport Avenue, most inaptly named

"The White Way": The solution — leave the house before Zayde goes home. I never learned how my mother explained or expiated for our absence. But what about lunch? Your Bubbie invented the Hero! She sliced a cholly thru the center, crosswise, and filled it with gefilte fish or garlic-scented meat balls. Then she sliced the cholly into fist-sized sandwiches. Thus we went forth to enjoy "The Perils of Pauline" and stink up the place with the odors of our food.

There were some Saturdays that we could not go to the movies. The 5¢ admission fee was sometimes

more than my mother could afford. On any Saturday that I stayed at home, my Bubbie would read Jewish stories to me. This was such a treat that I almost didn't mind missing the movie. She had this big book which she read on Saturdays. Every story had a moral, a lesson, a code of ethics. I found these stories fascinating, spell-binding. Through my growing-up years, much of my conduct was influenced by what I learned from my beloved Bubbie's Saturday Afternoon Reading.

It was the end of June, 1966.  
We (Joyce, her children and I)  
had visited Bubby because I  
wanted Bubby to see them before  
they went to camp for the summer.  
We knew the doctors expected her  
not to have much longer time.

I said to Joyce, "Bubby looks  
awful, doesn't she?"

Jayne piped up, "Bubby doesn't  
look awful. She just looks very  
sick and very old and that's  
because of her face changing.  
Her inside is like it always  
was."

Children's insight and wisdom!

The Berman Family Group would get together for the First Seder at Passover. Each year the president would pin an orchid on Bubby and she'd be asked to speak.

For weeks in advance Bubbie worked on her speech. Come Seder night she would rise slowly from her chair and act so surprised to be called on. She would hope that she could think of something to say because "this is so unexpected." She deserved an Oscar for acting - and her speech was always a delight.

There was the time she started, "My dear children and grand-children, my devoted

brothers, my brothers-in-law,  
my sisters-in-law, my dear  
nieces and nephews —

Then she paused, scanned  
the room and added, "I'm  
looking for the ladies and  
gentlemen."

Oh! She could be funny

Bubby died June 26, 1967. With her  
passing the Berman Family Group —  
the descendants of her parents num-  
bering over 100 at that time — just  
faded. The adhesive that had kept  
the family together was gone.



A Eulogy for Bubby - June 1980

Bubby was lucky: she had a family who adored her. A family who is instilling love for an unknown Bubbie in the younger generation of our family.

Bubbie was unique. She was soft in her concern and treatment of those she loved. Yet she was like steel when we needed her strength. When G-d dealt her the worst blow of all - when she lost her only son, aged 42 - her strength sustained her and us.

We have no reason to feel sorry for Bubby that she has gone to her rest in

Heaven. — this angel with the other angels there. We do have reason to feel sorry for ourselves that we no longer have her. Let us thank G-d for all the years we had her for help, advice, comfort and her love.

There is a hereafter. How good it is to think that I will be with her again.

Bubbie enriched the life of everyone she touched. It is 13 years since she died, yet it seems but a day. She is so vivid in my mind and in my heart.

Bubby will always be

missed - can never be  
replaced. There is not  
nor ever be anyone like  
your Bubby.

Barbara -

Did you ever know how your parents got together? Here goes -

The young men of New Haven in those ancient times - had a Club called The Atlas Club. I think it was all Jewish.

They even formed a Basketball team that was very good - played teams thru out Conn. and N.Y. They were also very social - dances every Sunday night - parties of some sort on various occasions. Members brought their best girls or even just dates and if you dated an Atlas guy you were lucky.

mother was back in circulation - she had just broken her engagement to a guy (David Cooper) By the way your mother was one of the most beautiful girls in New Haven. She had more fellows in love with her.

My uncle Harry belonged to the Atlas Club and used to take Cele to their affairs now and then.

Your dad was president of Atlas so Cele knew him.

One day in July Cele came home from work for lunch (most times did not) Walking back she met Charlie - they walked & talked & he asked her if Harry was taking her to the Atlas boat ride. When

she said - no - Charlie asked if  
she would go with him --

And that was the beginning.

Aren't you glad that Cele  
went home for lunch that day?

I loved the Seders that your father conducted. I was fortunate to be at a number of them - a treat for my family. Each person took part reading a section, a line, a paragraph. Every so often your father would stop the Hebrew reading and explain a passage. Where applicable Charlie would find similarities in Biblical times with our life and times.

And one night after the 3rd cup of wine when the door is opened - an uninvited guest walked in. Oh, such excitement!

Your mother was the most gracious, hospitable hostess but she certainly didn't call for this one.

And who can forget your mother's gefileh fish?  
and her tzimmes?  
and her cookies?  
and her pies?  
etc. etc. etc.



