

THIS IS US
Berman Family History

By Eugene B. Berman, Sr.

**Our Family
Is a Circle of Love
and Strength.
With Every Birth
and Every Union,
The Circle Grows.
Every Joy Shared
Adds More Love.
Every Crisis
Faced Together
Make the Circle
Stronger.**

- Anonymous -

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Head Note

The version of the ***Berman Family History*** that follows is an unedited downloaded posting of an earlier, printed edition of the book that is a work in process. Because of the original technology employed in the storage of the document, pictures that were an integral part of the ***History*** did not "copy". In places where pictures were incorporated in the text, either blank spaces appear or only the captions or descriptions are printed without the accompanying photograph.

We have elected to post this rough draft believing that members of the family will find it to be of interest and, of greater importance, take the opportunity to provide the author with comments, corrections and additions to assure that a final draft will be more complete and factually accurate. The ***Berman Family History*** is a work in process.

You are assured that this draft will be superseded and will be replaced with subsequent drafts as they are prepared and edited. Pictures will be included in the text as editing permits and all of the photographs will be added to the family website, **bermanfamily.com**

Eugene B. Berman, Sr., Author
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July 16, 2009

THIS IS US

Descendants of **CHONON & KHASIA BERMAN**

BERMAN FAMILY HISTORY

INDEX

Frontpiece

Introduction

I. Russia Before The Birth of Chonon & Khasia Berman	Page
II. The Ancestors of Chonon Berman	Page
III. Russia At The Time of Chonon & Khasia Berman	Page
IV. United States Before Chonon & Khasia Berman	Page
V. New Haven Before Chonon & Khasia Berman	Page
VI. The Arrival of the Bermans, The Family of Fannie (Berman) & Meyer Kravitz	Page
Abraham Kravitz	Page
Bertha (Kravitz) & Louis Berman	Page
Rose (Kravitz) & Meyer Burack	Page
VII. The Arrival of the Bermans The family of Khasia & Honon Berman	Page
Chana Esther & Meir (Mishalov) Berman	Page
Golda (Berman) & David Russian	Page
Balía (Berman) & Aaron Levitz	Page
Hyman & Jenny (Kaplowitz) Berman	Page
Benjamin & Pauline (Siegel) Berman	Page

Barnett & Mae (Rogovin) Berman	Page
Gustave & Lillian (Berman) Berman	Page
Harry & Gertrude (White) Berman	Page

APENDECIES

Historical Chronology

Original Documents

DNA Reports

Eugene B. Berman

Revised: August, 2009

THIS IS US

Family of **CHONON & KHASHA BERMAN**

INTRODUCTION

This Is Us, Berman Family History, is an updated and revised draft of one volume of a fifteen volume treatise relating to the genealogy, background, history, remembrances and events that make up the dazzling tapestry of The Berman Family. The original project was undertaken as a Bar Mitzvah gift for my twin grandsons, Alexander Jacob Nemtzow and Zachary Adam Nemtzow, the children of my daughter Caren (Berman) & Andrew Nemtzow, who were Bar Mitzvahed on May 3, 2003. A little more than three years was expended in the preparation of the original project.

The Berman Family History has been separately reproduced here as a stand alone for inclusion on the website, bermanfamily.com; other up-dated contents of the original volumes are likewise incorporated separately on this website and are retrievable as “Chonon Berman Family Genealogy”, “List of All of the Descendants of Chonon & Khasia Berman”, “Current Mailing List of the Living Descendants of Chonon & Khasia Berman”, etc. with other materials being up-dated and revised for inclusion. One of the major projects in process is the preparation of individual biographies of each member of the family, an undertaking that will require the aid and assistance of all members of the family.

During the intervening years as I struggled to keep the project current, I drafted various Introductions reflecting the circumstances and audience for whom the project was then intended. Those Introductions reflected the agony and the ecstasy of the laborious project of attempting to keep the information current...an ever increasingly difficult task with an ever increasing family.

The opportunity to “publish” this Berman Family History on line as part of a Berman family website (bermanfamily.com) has provided a new found freedom for maintaining both this History and other Berman family information current and accessible to all members of the family. It has transformed an arduous, manual task into one of electronic simplicity. I liken it to being as liberating to me as the invention of the printing press was to the scribes of yore.

Please note that “This Is Us” and its prodigy that appears here has a companion work, “This Is Me”, an autobiographical memoir by and about me that does not appear on line here or elsewhere and is probably being reserved for posthumous publication...limited distribution.

“This Is Me” will be my gift of remembrance to my children, grandchildren and, who knows, my descendants unto the generations.

Ever since being asked to up-date and revise an Introduction for this online, family wide edition of the Berman Family History I have been struggling with what to include, how to present a project into which I have poured so much of my time, my heart, my soul and, yes, my love. I have carefully considered an objective Introduction, one removed from the personal identification that I feel for the writing. The writing did not flow. Even my editor, my son Bruce, observed that such an Introduction did not have the pathos of the original Introduction that was written for the original edition that was the gift to Alex and Zach. Bruce is a pretty savvy editor and sometimes a constructive critic.

After agonizing introspection during which I have objectively considered my own motives, I have concluded that this is my work product, my effort to immortalize the Berman family and, hell, my opportunity to preserve the spirit and purpose for which “This Is Us” was originally undertaken. I have – selfishly, if you will – decided to incorporate in this Introduction of the electronic edition of the Berman Family History the Introduction to the original gift to Zach and Alex, the circumstances thereof being of everlasting significance to me and the contents being equally appropriate to this and future revisions and editions of the history. I thank you for the indulgence.

The May 3, 2003 Introduction to the entire “This Is Us” work product follows:

It was a little over three years ago that daughter Caren informed me, with the certainty of a soccer mom whose life – and the lives of her children – were carefully calendared with music, Chung Moo Doe and assorted other lessons and “play dates”, that the guys would be Bar Mitzvahed on May 3rd and that I should save the week-end.

“May 3rd?”

“May 3rd...2003!” she added, clarifying that the date was set in stone...some three years hence.

“But the guys are only nine,” I astutely observed.

“They’ll be ten in a month” Caren responded dismissively as if the fact that Zachary and Alex would be 10 years old on March 16, 2000 was justification enough for the setting of a date so far in the future.

“Oh!” I replied having no other retort to the dismissive logic that the guys would soon be double digit.

I realized that in my organized life my personal calendar was limited in scope to only 18 months. (I had learned to buy “teacher’s calendars” that go to September of the following year.) I had no safe place to record the future event. Finally I solved the problem by “docketing” the date in Kamberg, Berman’s computerized docketing system that was designed, in part, to avoid legal malpractice by missing a statute of limitations or a future court date. From Caren’s tone, it was evident that not being constantly aware of the date of the three-year-in-the-future Bar Mitzvah would carry with it a far greater penalty than any monetary damages that could be assessed against me for something as mundane as legal malpractice. No insurance could provide sufficient coverage for

missing the happy event.

Recognizing that the die had been cast and that Alexander and Zachary were, in fact, actually scheduled to be Bar Mitzvahed (to become “men”) on May 3, 2003, my mind immediately posed the obvious question: What does one (me) give his grandchildren (Zachary and Alexander) for their 13th birthday (Bar Mitzvah) ?

I pride myself as one who gives unusual and unique gifts, person and occasion appropriate and specific. For the son of a friend who had an interest in magic, I gave a lesson by a local magician; for the son of a friend who was a baseball nut (a Red Sox fan, of course), I gave a Peter Pan Bus Lines trip for two to a Red Sox game at Fenway Park in Boston; and to the basketball fan son of a friend, I made the young man a Sponsor of the Basketball Hall of Fame and gave him season admissions for two. Different is good!

But what do you give your own grandchildren?

A trip to Israel, a fountain pen or a trust fund are not gifts Papa Cuckoo appropriate. Anything that I would give the guys had to be something of myself...a unique gift that they would remember for a lifetime. It could not be store bought; it had to be a part of me. A kidney perhaps? My heart?

Then it came to me. A good name! A gift of their families, their genealogy and their family history! A perfect gift!

Aware that I had more than three full years, I decided that I would prepare the genealogies of the four families that converged to be Alexander and Zachary Nemtzow, the families of their parents...the families of their grandparents: the family Nemtzow of paternal grandfather Joshua Nemtzow, the family Adelman of paternal grandmother Freida Adelman Nemtzow, the family Marks of maternal grandmother Carol Marks Berman and, of course, my own family, the family Berman of maternal grandfather me. Each of the four grandparents had a mother and a father, hence genealogies of eight families. A significant undertaking, but one believed to be doable within the available time frame. It should be interesting thought I,

I set about organizing family information by retrieving the work products of my earlier false starts on the family genealogy of my father (Gus Berman, son of Chonon) and obtaining the Marks family genealogy started by Carol's nephew, Jonathan Marks (son of Albert J. Marks, Jr., son of Albert J. Marks, Sr.). I circulated questionnaires to all of the then known living members of the families and, oblivious to the extent of the project that I had undertaken, started to chart the families simultaneously. Great progress was being made and I then prioritized the project first to the family of my deceased wife, Carol Hydeman Marks Berman, in the belief that hers would be the most difficult because it could be traced back in America and before to the earliest date. Orderly, calculated progress was being made until...

In February or March of 2001, about six months of immersion into the project, I received an invitation to a Berman Family Seder from Sue Ellen (Berman) & Michael Zamkow, residents of London, England. The Seder was to be held in New York on April 7, 2001.

How fortuitous was the convergence of the invitation to the Zamkow Seder and the genealogy that I was preparing!

I did not then know – nor do I now care – that Sue (Samuel Berman, Chana Esther), the midwife to the rebirth of the tradition of a Berman Family Seder, was a Berman by adoption. Indeed, her story, like so many of the stories of the Bermans, is of intriguing interest. She has written about her entry into the Berman family in context of Ben Sprafkin, The husband of Dora Berman (Chana Esther):

I wouldn't be a Berman if it wasn't for my Uncle Ben. He called in his favors to help my parents (Sam Berman and Edith Alper) to adopt a baby after Edith had six miscarriages. They were in their forties at the time which in those days was way past the age of adopting....or conceiving for that matter. Through Jewish Family Services, Uncle Ben arranged for my adoption.

Upon the receipt of the invitation, I did the only sensible thing for me; I called the hitherto unknown Sue and, after introducing myself, accepted her invitation. (When asked, I go; when invited, I accept.) After introducing myself in what was the first of regular transatlantic conversations, I discovered that she had but a limited list of Bermans and she was delighted to learn that I could provide her with the names and addresses of relatives that she did not know existed. She eagerly accepted all of the names and addresses that I had developed and proceeded to invite all of the relatives – known and unknown – to an expanded event that had to be moved from a small New York restaurant that had been selected and booked for the original event to a ballroom at New York's Grand Hyatt Hotel. The coincidental contact with Sue, the excitement of the event – a wonderful, hospitable occasion – and the new and renewed contact with the family of my father, quickly shifted the focus of my efforts solely to the descendants of Chonon & Kashia Berman, my paternal grandparents. The family of my mother, Lillian Berman (unrelated) Berman, the Marks Family and the families of Josh & Freida Nemtzow were set aside and all my efforts were channeled into the descendants of Chonon & Khasia Berman. My priorities were changed...Chonon & Khasia took front and center.

By the time of the Seder, I had made substantial progress in diagramming the Berman family tree and made copies for distribution to those who attended the Seder and for mailing to all of those individual Bermans whose names and addresses were then known. The project was greeted with such support and enthusiasm that I was hooked. To complete the record of the descendants of Chonon & Khasia Berman became an all consuming passion overwhelming the good intentions of doing the rest of the families. They could wait. Patiently, I hoped.

Many years ago, in the 1950s, before the annual Seders were interrupted because of the illness of Dr. Arthur Herman (Harry Berman), I had started to record a family tree. Perhaps because the continuity of the Seders was interrupted, the project was not pursued. But I did have the information that was then developed. It was a start.

In the three years that I have been working on this Berman genealogy project, I have (or thought that I had) located and have been in contact with each and every one of the living members of The Berman Family. It has been an exciting journey of discovery requiring the investigative skills of sleuth, patience and persistence.

Genealogical work is a never ending process. It has been likened unto a path taken by

dogged creature something like “a blind and curious worm that works its slow way through the rings and ups and down the sap-lines of a centuries old olive tree.” Never-ending!

There are Bermans who did not want to be found and families who did not want some of their members located. As I wrote to one individual who sought to have her brother excluded:

“One is born, adopted or married into the family and no one’s continued membership is subject to revocation. One is not voted a Berman...and once a Berman, always a Berman...for better or worse!”

I have corresponded with or spoken to some of those who had withdrawn from the family and some of those who were shunned by their families. It is a source of pride and satisfaction that a resurrection of the Family has resulted in a renewed interest in family by some of those who had been lost or alienated. Unfortunately, not all!

During the years that it has taken to locate the approximately 283 plus individuals who, as of this date, are known to be included in The Berman Family (the descendants of Chonon & Khasia Berman), I have solicited personal information from each of them and have become the depository of stories galore about the individuals and the family. I could not leave the stories unreported and have been compelled to write the Remembrances that are the minute biographies of each and every descendant of Chonon & Khashia Berman...living or dead. The compilation of the Remembrances required delving into the lives of each of the individual descendants. The Remembrances constituted several volumes of “This Is Us” (but are not included in this presentation of the Berman Family History. They will constitute a separate section of this project.)

(While writing this history I have been troubled in how to deal with information that could be embarrassing to members of the family.) I have flip-flopped in the manner in which to deal with these and other issues. They have been troubling, particularly as I become privy to very personal information.

While wrestling with these moral, ethical and unanticipated issues, I came across a letter to “Dear Abby”, the popular newspaper advice columnist, in which a writer signed “Ghosts In The Closet” – obviously a kindred spirit – wrote:

Dear Abby:

I am retired and contemplating writing a memoir of my family’s history. There are many family secrets I can reveal, but some events are shameful.

Should I include only “good” memories in my memoir?

Abby’s reply to Ghosts:

If you feel comfortable revealing your own transgressions, do so. Do not write

about anything that might be hurtful to a living family member or one who has sensitive descendants.

In these matters, I have attempted to follow the Hippocratic admonition of the medical profession: do no harm. I sincerely apologize if I have caused any harm or undue embarrassment. It has been unintentional.

As the individual information gleaned in the preparation of these genealogies planted the seed and gave birth to the Remembrances, so did the totality of the project require the preparation of the more comprehensive Berman Family History.

As I corresponded with and spoke to members of the family...recalled events with Herman Russian and exchanged stories with Sherman Padowitz, I could not help but to recall with tear-in-the-eye nostalgia one of my fondest memories, an evening in the 1960s in Florida when, with wife Carol, children Caren and Bruce, I stopped over to visit my parents – Gus and Lil – en route on our return from a vacation in Jamaica. As was my father's want (my mother was a lousy cook), we went to dinner at a small continental restaurant on U.S. Route 1 in Dania...not too far from the Jai Alai futon. I shall remember that evening for as long as I live. Oh, how I wish that the conversation of that evening had been recorded!

In an atmosphere of warmth and love, good food and drink, for the first and only time that I remember, my father spoke in detail about his early childhood in Russia.

Bruce and Caren were in awe as we sat talking well after all the other diners had left. The waiter did not approach us to leave; he inherently sensed the importance of the conversation. The conversation lasted for hours as my father told his recollections that had been previously unspoken

He told of being apprenticed as a tailor when he was eight or ten years old.

He told us of the poverty.

He told us of the pogroms...the rampant anti-Semitism to which everyone was subjected.

He told of secret meetings in the woods where anti-Czarist speeches were made and plots against the system were espoused.

He told of his own brother's personal involvement in the revolutionary plotting.

He told of helping his brother, a conscript in the Russian army who was on a train headed for the front during the Sino-Japanese War, change out of uniform into civilian clothes, desert and go off to America.

He told of his own voyage to America where he was sponsored by someone from his village who had himself immigrated to America.

(Gus always questioned why someone would want to visit Europe. He would quip that he was there once and didn't like it. He would add that when he came to America he bought a one-way ticket.)

He told us that on arriving in New York and going to work for the Jo-Lo Ice Cream Company in Brooklyn that was apparently owned by a Mr. Davis, someone whose family came from his home town back in Russia. He told of hating the smell of vanilla forever after that.

He told of saving his pennies to go to Carnegie Hall on Saturday afternoons where he would sit in the uppermost balcony to hear Enrico Caruso sing.

He told us many stories, some of which I unfortunately do not now remember.

Oh how I wish that I had had a tape recorder!

The family stories told by others and my father's recollections that were so vividly shared that one, single night were the impetus to the writing of the history that is included in "This Is Us". Because the history demanded an understanding of the times, I was set out on a wondrous voyage of discovery, learning history and viewing times past from the perspective of the history of the Berman family. In the limited time expended for the history, I have learned more than I did from any prep school or college history class. History became real and very personal.

And, of course, the telling of the history mandated the Historical Chronology that is included in the assembled materials to give an historic perspective to the lineage of the Bermans.

The preparation of the genealogy and the writing of what is best described as a pseudo-history of the family was undertaken by me, an amateur. I am neither a genealogist nor an historian, so in receiving these volumes, please be understanding that these are not the work of a professional but, rather, of one who's goal is to preserve for his grandchildren the memories of family.

I have never been good at either spelling or foreign languages was, perhaps, oblivious to the issues involved in the spelling of names, the original Russian and/or Yiddish names of our ancestors, of the original immigrant generation or even the cutesie names and spellings of subsequent generations.

I do not always know what the original Russian or Yiddish names were, are or might have been. The names have been phoneticized, Americanized, spelled and misspelled on official records and even within the family. Diminutives and nick names were used interchangeably and there was not always a clear indication of the actual name, never mind the spelling.

Take for example the name "Chonon", the patriarch of this Berman family. The name is spelled Honon, Honan, Chonan, etc. interchangeably throughout all of the research materials. I initially used "Honon" but changed to "Chonon". A choice had to be made and I chose "Chonon". Whereas consistency is the hob goblin of small minds, the inconsistent spellings may appear unexpectedly in the text.

It has been suggested that the names that should be used are the names that appear on the gravestones. One of the problems is, of course, that the tombstones were chiseled in

Hebrew and their translation is phonetic at best. Another problem with the rule is that even tombstone's are not always correct as illustrated by the case of my mother. My mother's tombstone reads "Lillian" although her birth name was "Lally".

Take "Tante Balia" for further example. Is there any doubt that it is the name "Tante Balia" should be preserved for posterity? Who knew her by any other name or title? The "Tante" portion of the name meant "Aunt", a title to which she was not born but one that she earned for reasons of her wisdom, concern and love...for being the matriarch of the family...and that was universally ascribed to her. But even the spelling of the name "Balia" has been a problem, it appearing as "Balie" "Bailia", Bayla", etc. It reminds me of a college friend who, in his thesis on the medieval author Wycliffe, spelled Wyclife's name differently each time it appeared. Not intending to emulate my college friend, after using several different spellings (and retyping the project several different times, the spelling "Balia" was chosen, right or wrong, as the spelling – or misspelling – as the case may prove to be.

Need I raise the problems presented by "Chonnesta"? Everyone spelled it phonetically as one name...and everyone spelled it differently. A foreign name! In the evolution of this project the name into two words, "Chana", suggested to be "Anna" with an accent ("Ch") and "Esther", a perfectly acceptable first name. Because no one referred to the oldest sibling of Chonon & Khashia Berman except as "Chana Esther", it was not practicable to adopt "Anna" as her first name or to drop the Chana and refer to her only as "Esther". "Esther who?" would have been the question. "Tante Balia" and "Chana Esther" they have been Christened and "Tante Balia" and "Chana Esther" they are and will be."

While I have opted to not use the diminutive or familiar "Goldie" and "Balie" for the more formal "Golda" and "Balia", we have sometimes used the abbreviated "Ben" for Benjamin or "Gus" for Gustave, the shortened version being the name the individuals were called. However, in the later generations, where I was certain of the correct name, I have used the full given name, sometimes incorporating in parentheses any name by which the individual was more generally known. It ain't easy!

No deceased member of the family has ever challenged my exercise of editorial prerogative of naming or renaming our ancestors. It is important that we honor them by remembering them...whatever their names may have been or how the names were spelled. I make the point of the spelling of names primarily to alert others who may do more serious research on the Russian (Lithuanian/Belarusian) origins of our family to be aware that the spellings – or the names themselves – may be different than the actuality or as set forth herein.

I have tried as best I can to be relatively consistent throughout.

I point out here, as I have elsewhere in the several volumes that now comprise "This Is Us" that even the name of my own father is uncertain. It is recalled that once, in New York, a taxi driver greeted Gus as "Gidalia", apparently the name by which he was known back in the village from whence he came. The taxi driver was from the same town. He remembered Gidakia from more than 50 years earlier.

As I have sat at me desk, in my den or at my dining room table listening to Russian and gypsy music – the songs of the violin – for the past three years certain truths have become apparent. The Berman branch begot by my father, Gus, is to lose the Berman

family name. My son Bruce is without issue; my daughter's surname is now "Nemtzow", the family name of her husband and, therefore, of her children, and will be the name of my descendants (hopefully) unto the generations yet to come. Indeed, my brother Milton's family branch likewise loses the Berman family name and hereafter becomes "Yoeli". The "brand name" will have faded and our grandchildren, great grandchildren and issue unto the generations will not have the common denominator of the Berman name to recognize one another.

It is sad to note that the Harry Berman will itself come to an end with the eventual and inevitable passing of Cousin Judy. Harry's son Arthur (the Doctor) married while incapacitated with Multiple Sclerosis and died without issue. Judy married and divorced never having had children. The genealogy is, therefore, a remembrance of them and of their family.

The satisfactions experienced in compiling this project have been unexpected and satisfying. Besides providing an unending source of conversation and materials for my writings, the rewards derived from this project have been manifold and multifaceted. There is the wonderful warmth of meeting – personally, by mail, on the telephone or through e-mail – a whole array of relatives, many of whom I did not know existed. The immediate familiarity and sharing of related experiences brought a sense of expansiveness and of belonging. The contribution that the preparing of the genealogy and of the writing of the History has made to a rejuvenation of the Berman Family and to a resumption of the Seders and/or family reunions kindled an ever greater appreciation of family as evidenced by comments of family members such as Frances (Russian) Levin (Chonnesta) who wrote that "never in my generation" did she expect to see the family brought together and that her "dream has been Fulfilled." She and her son Bruce and daughter, Jane Levin Maslow, came from Florida to attend the 2002 Seder and are planning to attend the 2003 family picnic.

I have learned and have been broadened by the study of history and my imagination stimulated by the images of the role, however humble, of Bermans. One realizes that one's own ancestry reaches back to the beginning of personkind. My appreciation and understanding of history has been broadened and has been given a different perspective, a personalization heretofore lacking. I have a renewed desire to know more.

And, yes, there is a personal gratification obtained from the expressions of appreciation exemplified by the e-mails received from an unknown cousin, Andrew Jay Berman, the great, great, grandson of Chonon & Khasia Berman, who wrote from far away Mill Valley, California:

"I am not without thought, respect and pleasure at your undertaking. The information that you have compiled and shared has filled us with joy. It has added value to the lives of our children too. (Morissa recently had a "family history" project [second grade], and needless to say, her project was a hit.)

Andy saw only a draft of the genealogy...he did not have a copy of the history.

And there have been many expressions of deep and spontaneous appreciation from other members of the family, many of who had been separated from the family by distance and circumstances and had no prior knowledge of their Berman roots. These testimonials are the stuff that book jackets are made.

The discovery of Berman Family Artifacts was like unto an archaeological dig, the finding of material ties to our historical past. There is the official Berman Family Gavel, the ornate silver head of Chonon's walking stick that was passed down through Sherman Padowitz (Golda Russian/Dora Padowitz), the first American born great grandchild of Chonon & Khasia Berman, who was given the cane at the time of his Bar Mitzvah in 1937 and, through Francis Russian Levin (Golda Russian/Dora Padowitz), was passed to Arnold Berman (Barnett Berman) while he served as President of The Berman Family. The can was cut to serve as a gavel at family meetings. The gavel is now held "in trust" by Barry Berman, one of Arnold's sons. The gavel is a tangible reminder of the continuity of the lineage of the family intended to be passed from President to President for all eternity.

As Sherman told the story of how he received the cane as a Bar Mitzvah gift from his grandfather, I must confess to a feeling of kinship – family solidarity – with Chonon; we share a mutual appreciation of the fine art of gift giving.

Other family heirlooms discovered during the archaeological dig that has been one aspect of the preparation of "This Is Us" and this Berman Family History is the pair of brass candlesticks that have been donated to the family by Janet Berman Chussil Fein (Chana Esther/Lewis Berman). The candlesticks were brought to America by Janet's grandmother, Chana Esther, and are believed to have been given to her as a wedding gift by her parents, Chonon & Khasia. It was out of this tradition of the parents of a bride giving Sabbath candlesticks to the newly married couple that The Berman Family began its own tradition of giving candlesticks to newlyweds. Unfortunately, the tradition was discontinued at times when the family was inactive and a sense of "family" dormant. Thanks to Janet's unselfish generosity and her own sense of family, I now have "in trust" the family candlesticks that I bring each year to the Berman Family Seder. To rub the candlesticks is to conjure up a sense of history and of the family! As I have polished the candlesticks, I would not at all have been surprised if, poof, Chonon and Khasia appeared like Aladdin. There are so many questions that I would like to ask them!

Two other family artifacts are in the possession of Judy Berman Levine, the daughter of Harry & Gert Berman. One item, a jar, was Khasia's. Judy recalls having been told by her mother that Khasia kept chicken fat in that jar. The other "possession" is an imposing brass samovar that belonged to Chonon & Khasa and was passed on to Harry, their youngest child. I have a memory of the samovar being prominently displayed on a side board on the window side of the dinning room of Harry & Gert's home at 519 Norton Parkway, New Haven.

There are other items, documents and pictures, many more of which are undoubtedly undiscovered in trunks, cartons, basements and attics of younger generations of Bermans. I have attempted to include as many of the old photographs as reasonably possible interspersed in the various sections of these volumes. Frequently a picture is worth a thousand words! We are fortunate to have a number of photographs of Chonon & Khasia and of the family thanks in part to the tradition of taking a family picture at the annual Seders. Herman Russian (Golda Russian), who contributed the photograph of the earliest family Seder, cherished the photograph as one of his most prized possessions.

We are all familiar with the old saying that no one has ever said on his death bed that he was sorry that he didn't spend more time at the office. One of my regrets at this stage of my life is that I haven't spent enough time researching and compiling a more complete

genealogy and history of the Berman family. I sincerely regret not having spent face-to-face time with my cousins Herman Russian, Bessie Berman Levine, Benjamin Sprafkin and others to have heard their stories and thus enriched the family history by their recollections. How I wish that I could have conversed with Aunt May and drawn from her the stories of her life. And, more particularly, how I so deeply regret not having had more frequent and detailed discussions with my own parents about their own recollections that have been lost forever. I am the poorer for it. There is a lesson here!

As I have been in contact with so many of the family it has become evident to me that a focal point – the single most remembered and unifying event – has been the Seder. The Seder appears to have been the mortar that has held the family together, the thread that runs throughout the family history. Some remember attending and some remember by osmosis from the stories of their parents and grandparents. Now, almost fifty years since the last Seder, the events live on in memory as the occasion when and where everyone came together...aunts, uncles and cousins galore. It was more than a Christmas or Thanksgiving...it was everything combined...and more. It was the nostalgia of the Seder that was, in part, the impetus for the coming together of the members of the family.

I have recollections of the Seders of my youth...a group of very old men muttering in a language that was foreign to me. We drove from Holyoke, MA to New Haven to attend. Sometimes we would stay with members of the family, me at Uncle Harry's, mother, dad and Milton at Uncle Barnett's. I have recollections of the people and only at the Seder did I get to know them. It is not surprising that it was at a Seder that I introduced my fiancé and later wife, Carol Hydeman Marks, to the family. Talk about cultural shock!

The Berman family is no longer culturally, religiously or even racially monolithic. Through religious intermarriages, conversions and adoptions, the descendants of Chonon & Khasia Berman come in an array of colors, different religions and from a wide variety of national heritages and diverse cultures. It is undoubtedly a surprise to those who know me that I appear to be a Seder advocate in the context of Berman family activities. The Seder has no religious significance to me, an atheist, and while I find the theme of deliverance from slavery quite acceptable, I find abhorrent the promotion of an animosity toward Egypt and an apparent delight in recounting the plagues wrought on the Egyptians. These are but disposable trappings...the real meaning of the Seder to me has become "reunion". The Thanksgiving of our forbearers! As orthodoxy and the necessity for a Kosher event have quietly passed, hopefully so will the aspects of the event that tend to exclude, all without undermining the family aspects of a traditional Berman family reunion. The spirit of Elijah should prevail...the stranger should always be welcome in our midst...as family.

The genealogy and history have not been prepared to establish the superiority of the Bermans. I have not sought to find royalty, power or fame; au contraire, the Berman Family History is a story similar to so many American families...drawing its origins from distant lands and cultures and, as immigrants, establishing new lives and new family lives in America. We are the same; we are different. We are no better; we are no worse. But, we are special...each and every one of us!

One of my goals in preparing "This Is Us" and its component "Berman Family History" is to encourage and maintain the continuity of Berman family events...even if but once a year or so. It has been disconcerting to have learned that some of the descendants of Chonon & Khasia Berman do not know one another...and worse, did

not even know of the existence of one another. I have been chagrined to discover that friends at college did not know that they were related, that cousins who lived in the same cities and towns and neighborhoods did not know of one another or even of their parallel existence, that young people attended college in towns where they had relatives and were unaware of their existence or, therefore, the availability of a good, home-cooked meal. Nancy Levitz Katz Bayuk went to American International College (A.I.C.) in Springfield, Massachusetts without knowing that her Cousin Mark Berman (Gus Berman/Milton Berman) was a Trustee or that the homes of Milton and I were open to her. What a shame. It should not be allowed to happen again!

I do not regret the long hours – the evenings, the early mornings, the Saturdays, Sundays and holy days of obligation – that I have expended in these compilation. I do regret the time that I have not spent in researching the missing information and in seeking out additional facts and family stories. I regret with a deep nostalgia my not making time to research the family's Russian roots and to open all of the doors of discovery that would have been found. I regret my own shortcomings in many aspects of this project and I apologize for them.

Nothing would please me more than were the process and preparation of this project to precipitate the formalization of a renewed Berman Family Group, an organization with structure, by-laws, officers, a Newsletter and even committees to assure its continuity. It has been my organizational experience that everyone contributes to failure but that it takes only one or two determined individuals to assure success. Hopefully, "This Is Us" and the Berman Family History will kindle a renewed interest in the organization of the family and that active participation in building a family organization will fan the flames of success. Yes, one of my goals is to light a fire in new generations of Bermans who will take up the challenge of rekindling the pride of being a Berman. It is a worthy cause!

I now look at this first edition of "This Is Us" as but a beginning, a work in progress...as yet having no beginning and never having an end. It is my earnest hope that some anal attentive relative will be horrified to find that there are missing dates and places and will search out the missing information to complete the puzzle. It is my earnest hope that a caring relative will underwrite the cost of printing, binding and distributing to all members of the family copies of "This Is Us" or at least the Berman Family History and other selected portions. It is my sincere hope that a genealogist amongst us will redo and expand in a professional manner the rudimentary charts that I have created as vessels to record the raw information that has been mined. It is my earnest hope that someone – a lover of history – will use the rough and rudimentary history that I have fashioned to create a more complete and accurate coordinated history of the family and its times. It is my most earnest hope that someone or someones will have had their interest peaked and will set about researching the Russian roots of the Berman family and will embark upon the wondrous voyage that is genealogy.

I would very much like to see a Berman Family Medical Survey that, in the state of present day medicine, could be a source of invaluable medical information available to each of us and our descendants. Such a survey, like all contemplated Berman family projects, is easier to compile and of more value the earlier it is undertaken. Certainly there are enough physicians and other medically oriented individuals among us who would find the undertaking of such a study to be of serious interest. Is it true, as Judy Berman Levine has always maintained, that there is a higher than normal incidence of diabetes and of hypertension within the family ?

And I would particularly like to see a sociological study of the family undertaken. What have been the effects of inter-marriage? What are the religious beliefs of today's Bermans...and do they change the further out one goes generationally? And the political beliefs? What about "family values" and the value of education? There are a myriad of questions that can be posed that the answers to which would be of immense interest to me and, I assume, others. The stuff out of which Ph.D. theses are made!

As I complete the volumes that now comprise the epic proportions of this first edition of "This Is Us", I am bursting with information, curiosity that compel me to go further...and further...and further. I have not learned enough and yearn for even more information.

Yes, it is true that I have made a pact with the devil: he can not claim my immortal soul until such time as I have completed those tasks that I have undertaken for myself in this life.

There will be other occasions for gifts to the guys, their sixteenth birthdays, their graduations from high school, their eighteenth birthdays, their graduations from college, their graduations from law, medical or graduate schools, their engagements, their marriages and, of course the births of their children. Then there will be a whole new generation for whom to write and to record. I have already started "This Is Me", intended as my legacy to the boys.

Let there be no doubt that with the cooperation and participation of all Bermans everywhere, it is my intention to continue to up-date the information in "This Is Us" and to add to it with information obtained from the family in continuing correspondence and from conversations at the annual Seders.

It is but fitting that I conclude this more-than-an-Introduction with a quote from the editorial appearing in The Berman Family Announcer, Vol.2, No. 2 dated June, 1953:

As we have been composing this edition, we have been noting with great pride and awe, the achievements of the members of our family. They have distinguished themselves scholastically, socially, in the world of business, and in the arts. It is not usual that in any one family there should be so many who have accomplished so much. Our children are the prettiest, our young people are the smartest, and our parents are the cleverest to have produced the children and the young people about whom we are talking.

WE'RE ONE HELLOVA FAMILY !

Now, some six years after the "publication" of the 2003 first edition of "This Is Us" and the Berman Family History, fast moving technology has granted me most earnest hopes by allowing the publication of the History "on line" at bermanfamily.com where it can be easily up-dated and is effectively made available to every family member. Look, no costs of printing and distribution! See, "earnest hopes" can come true!

The Berman Family History has been, as was contemplated, rewritten and revised to

incorporate newly discovered facts about the family and its history. Members of the family have come forward with additions and corrections constantly improving the content of our story, the facts about the Bermans. Such contributions – additions and corrections – continue to be welcome.

Subsequent to the 2003 first edition prepared for Zach and Alex, a door was opened to the family of Fannie Berman, the sister of Chonon. Photographs of the Berman Family Seders in 1917 and 1925 included Fannie (Berman) with her husband, Meyer Kravitz and their daughter Rose. It was not until after the 2003 first edition that we finally had an opportunity to step back and ask, “Who are these people?” Some remembered that Fannie was Chonon’s sister, that Meyer Kravitz was her husband and that Rose was their child. Roslind Schub Berman, a Berman by choice (the widow of Arnold (Sonny) Berman (Barnett)), remembered that Rose had a son, Michael, a lawyer in Washington, D.C. The story of locating and being able to contact Michael and undertaking to track his branch of the family proved to be one of the many highlights of my adventure into the wondrous world of genealogy.

The families of Chonon Berman and his sister, Fannie (Berman) Kravitz, had been estranged for some 75 years with but little known contact between them. The genealogical mystery was “Why?”. The exploration for the answer to the why question has uncovered information fascinating in the discovery.

For purposes of this Introduction, it should be noted that my father, Gustave, was one of the children of Chonon & Khasia Berman. I am a grandson of Chonon & Khasia. My mother’s maiden name was also Berman, she being a child of Sam & Minna Berman, an unrelated Berman family also resident in New Haven.

The facts turn out to be that Bertha Kravitz, a daughter of Fannie Berman, married Louis Berman, a son of Sam & Minna, a brother of my mother and, therefore my uncle. Wow! I am related by blood to Chonon & Khasia and separately by marriage to the family of Chonon’s sister, Fannie Berman Kravitz. Michael and I discovered ourselves to be cousins by blood and cousins by marriage.

The information obtained to date in researching the family of the Kravitz branch is included in the History. Fannie Berman Kravitz and her descendants are now included as members of the Berman Family. The fountainheads of the family – at this time at least – is therefore really the mutual parents of Chonon and Fannie. There is evidence of at least another sibling, a sister, about whose identity we shall continue to search. There is so much more to discover and to know.

One of the reasons that I address the interrelationship of the two Berman families is to explain my very personal involvement in this history. Indeed, as I read and edit the text of both this Introduction and of the History itself, I find that I have probably violated the rules of objective historians and, in my passion for the stories, have all too often – and with obvious inconsistency – abused the use of the first person “I”, have sometimes used my name objectively and confused the pronoun “we” as being either singular, editorial or, perhaps, even royally. For the writing sins I do humbly apologize. I guess that I am just too damn involved with the story. Because my life spans so much of the time of the History, I also sometimes confuse tense, i.e. “is” or “was”. Another grammatical sin for which I seek indulgence and forgiveness!

This history, like the Berman family itself, is vibrant and growing. It is my intention to continue to research and chronicle the genealogy and history of the Berman family so long as

I am able. We Bermans an exciting, marvelous family with a rich and diverse history...present...and future.

It is a ponderous experience to be a Berman. It's great to be a Berman!

Eugene B. Berman
Enfield, Connecticut
August 7, 2009

THIS IS US

Family of **CHONON & KHASIA BERMAN**

BERMAN FAMILY HISTORY

I. Russia Before the Birth of Chonon & Khasia Berman

(The general content of this history as been substantially quoted without quotation marks or attribution in the text to its source, the comprehensive 4000 year survey, "A History of The Jews" by Paul Johnson (Harper & Ross c 1987, Library of Congress Catalog Number 85-42575, ISBN : 0-06-091-53-1). There has been other research on the history of the Jews used in the preparation of this composite history. Mr. Johnson's text has been selectively culled, rearranged, added to, frequently edited and personalized to the Berman family. This head note is, therefore, an acknowledgement of Mr. Johnson's scholarship and major contribution to this history. Poetic license has been exercised extensively. Mr. Johnson's book is a comprehensive source of almost unlimited knowledge of the subject. It is a volume well worth reading in its 644 page entirety and in its original text.

(This text has not been prepared for general public consumption nor for profit nor as an academic submission. It has been prepared for "the grandchildren," to provide them with a sense of their history and to whet their appetites to learn more about history generally and about their own historical roots specifically. It is hoped that the borrowings from the work of Paul Johnson will be a stimulus to the reading of the full, unabridged and unedited text and other sources of history. It is a worthwhile pursuit.

(See also the Source Notes of "A History of the Jews" for an almost unlimited reading list to expand one's knowledge and understanding of the origin and role of Jews in Russian history and in the history of the world.)

* * * *

Except for that which we ourselves experience or is passed on orally from generation to generation, we learn our history from books that chronicle the acts of governments and the large events – that make history. We can read the biographies of those who have shaped history or who have significantly contributed to it. Archeology has dug into the events of daily life during specific historic periods, and, while factual, is all too often devoid of the personal.

Because we relate best to people, we personalize and crave information as to the life of the individual. This desire to "individualize" is, perhaps, the basis for popular interest in the contents of the Egyptian pyramids containing the every day objects of ancient Egyptian life and the excavation of Pompeii where everyday life was preserved in time by the epic eruption of Mount Vesuvius in the year 79. The depth of personalization is illustrated by the Diary of Ann Frank, the written history of a young girl whose very personal experiences in hiding during the German occupation of the Netherlands during World War II allowed people to

personalize her experiences and, therefore, to relate to and thus better understand the true horror of the times. Events become “real” only when viewed with a personalization, when we can feel it, when it becomes living history. The personalization and individualization of history that has recently caused such an intense interest in the re-discovered manuscript “The Bonds Woman’s Narrative By Hannah Crafts, A Fugitive Slave Recently Escaped From North Carolina” is but a continuation of the genre of Huxley’s epic “Roots.” The descendants of American slaves likewise seek to discover the realities of their ancestor’s day-to-day existence. What history means to them.

While we can read about the history of the Russia from which the Berman family emigrated, we have no real nexus to our ancestors’ life in context of the vistas of the history of eastern Europe. The Russian and eastern European Jews who emigrated to the United States at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries are not like their Italian, Irish or French fellow citizens who can return to their native Italy or Ireland or France to visit the relatives, the living descendants of those who chose not to emigrate. They can visit the places of the birth of their parents or grandparents and check genealogical records and visit with relatives and friends who knew the family back then. Many of our Italian, Irish, French and other friends “go back home” regularly and experience their roots. For the Eastern European Jews, the ghetto villages and towns from which they came no longer exist, destroyed by the ravages of war and the inhabitants killed or dispersed. In the case of the Eastern European Jews, few survived the Holocaust to return to live in their places of ancestral birth; there was no “home” to which to go back. There are no records to check.

Those who came from Italy or Ireland or France can go “home” and trace their family roots through public records, church records or in the local graveyards. None of these sources are available to those of us who have been deprived of our roots . . . of our origins . . . of our “home.”

Another of the difficulties in endeavoring to trace family genealogy or history for the Jews of Russia was that they had no surnames but were known as so-and-so, son of someone. Everyone in the small villages knew Gus, Son of Chonon and the family relationship sufficed for everyone’s then purposes. However, in 1827, when Nicholas 1 issued the “Canonist Decrees,” which conscripted all male Jews from twelve to twenty-five, the establishment of surnames was mandated to better keep track of those subject to military service. It is presumed that it was then that the “Berman” family was formalized with a surname. It is to be noted that Jews at that time had no allegiance to their new surnames and changed them when necessary, especially to evade the draft. It is interesting to note that the concept of “Senior” and “Junior” is now rejected in Jewish culture that decried naming a child after a living person, it being the old wives’ belief that to name a child after a living person would result in the blindness of the person after whom the child was named. Naming a child after a deceased person gave the deceased eyes on this world. Modern Israel has adopted the “son of” practice as in David Ben Gurion, David the son of Gurion, “ben” meaning “son of.”

Lore has it that in assigning names, the Russian bureaucracy randomly assigned traditional Russian or Russian-sounding names. However, for a few kopecks or a ruble or two bribe, one could “purchase” a more prestigious “German name” such as “Schwartz” or “Feinstein,” hence the dichotomy of so many Jewish Russian immigrants having German names. In America it was (and is) sometimes difficult to distinguish by surname the “German Jews” from the “Russian Jews”. . . or from anyone else.

Although the family name “Berman” has not been researched as of this writing, it is interesting to study derivatives of some of the names:

Burstein means “from Bursztyn,” a town in Poland. *Feigan* and *Fogelman* from the woman’s name “Feige,” misunderstood as “fig” or “Bird” in Yiddish. *Feit* probably from “Chaim.” *Fox* may stem from a nickname given to red-heads. *Frankl* was assumed by Jews from Franconia who settled in Vienna before being expelled in 1669. *Geiger* means “violinist.” *Gerber* means “tanner.” *Greenspan* was a dealer in verdigris. *Grimovich* probably meant “son of Greynem.” *Guttman* from the Hebrew name “Tuvia.” *Haberman* meant a dealer in oats. *Heilman* comes from “Samuel.” *Hirsch* means “deer.” *Hoffman* means a farmer who owned his own land. *Katz* is an acronym for “priest of righteousness.” *Levinson* from the first name “Levin” is Yiddish. *Levitan* is of Levitic descent. *Mackler* is Yiddish for “middleman” or “broker.” *Medlinsky*, from the village of Medaliszki. *Meltzer*, either from the Polish for “brewer” or from a Hebrew word meaning “steward.” *Orlen* may have come from “Aaron,” or from one of the many towns in Poland and Lithuania that begin with “Orl,” meaning “eagle.” If *Palant* wasn’t shortened, it is a Polish word for “battledore,” which is a game. If originally *Palanter*, from the village of Poalanty, near Kovno. *Perlow* means a descendant of a woman named “Perl.” *Polansky*, from the village of Polany. *Radofsky*, from the village of Radowka, near Vilna. *Rubin* from “Reuven.” *Schwab* means “from Swabia” in Germany. *Shapiro* means “from Speyer” in Bavaria, a place from which Jews were expelled in the 14th century. *Silverberg* is a town in Poland, and a town in Silesia. *Sokoloff* means “falcon.” *Tanzer* is Yiddish for “dancer.” *Zass* may have come from the first name “Zusman,” Yiddish for “sweet man.” *Zeleviznsky* means a person from Zelwa, a townlet not far from Slonim.

The most common surnames are called toponyms, meaning names adopted from a person’s city of origin. They also derived from trades, physical descriptions, or Hebrew first names, many which were animal names, such as lion, wolf and deer (Leib, Wolf and Hirsoh). Spellings often changed when Jews moved from city to city, or country to country, to fit local practices.

Contrary to popular belief, there are no rules in Jewish law regarding names that can or cannot be given to children, but there are any numbers of traditions. In Jewish folklore it was commonly believed that a person’s soul was bound up with his name. From this belief it followed that a person’s soul would be deprived of its rest after death if his name was bestowed during his lifetime on one of his descendants. Thus arose the Jewish practice, still widely followed today, of naming a child after an ancestor only after the ancestor has died.

This practice, however, is not followed by Sephardic Jews. They traditionally name the oldest grandson for his paternal grandfather, the oldest granddaughter for her paternal grandmother, whether the grandparents are alive or dead. Succeeding children are named for the maternal grandparents, then for uncles and aunts. This pattern isn’t strictly followed by all Sephardim, of course.

Whatever their differences, both Ashkenazim and Sephardim seem to believe in naming children after ancestors. It’s a curious tradition because there is no trace of the custom in the Bible. Almost every name in the Bible is an original: in two thousand years of biblical history you will find no repetition of names like Adam, Eve, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David or Solomon.

The custom of naming children after departed relatives apparently began during the age of the Maccabees (second century B.C.E.). By the first century C.E. it was fairly well established, but it was not until some eight hundred years later that Jews began to give their children Biblical names (Abraham, Isaac, Rachel, Sarah, etc.)

In Christian lands, Jews very early began giving their children Christian names. The non-Jewish names chosen for children tended to conform to local Christian practice. The practice became so widespread after the twelfth century that the rabbis required every Jewish boy also to be given a purely Jewish name. Thus began the custom of giving *two* names – a religious name used in synagogue, and a non-Jewish name used for secular affairs. The tradition persists even unto today.

As European Jews moved from country to country, they would continue to name children after ancestors but would alter those names to suit their new homelands. Thus a name like Shprinzel is actually a Polish variation of the Italian Esperanza. A European name like Yente comes, believe it or not, from the Spanish Juanita. This suggests that Yente, the Matchmaker in *Fiddler on the Roof*, for all her Russian *shtetl* ambiance, probably had a Sephardic ancestor somewhere in her distant past.

In eastern Europe, women usually had a Yiddish name and a Yiddish nickname. Men had Yiddish names, Hebrew names for being called to the Torah, and Yiddish nicknames. They were all too poor to afford a middle name.

The practice of modifying names continues in America, of course. When American Jews name a child today, very often all that remains in the secular name is the ancestor's first initial. (The Hebrew name, of course, continues to be given.) Thus the Hebrew name Abraham becomes Arthur or Alan, Broucha becomes Barbara, and Rezel becomes Rhoda or Roberta.

The ways in which names were misspelled and changed as the non-English speaking immigrants from Eastern Europe arrived in the United States are legion. The Americanization of the Hebrew and Yiddish names to comport with a new country and a new language is illustrated by an incident recalled by Milton Berman, a son of Gus (Gustave) and Lillian Berman. In the late 1950s and early 1960s when he and his father were in New York together on a buying trip, Gus took them on a side trip to Macy's to purchase a case of his then favorite wine, Lancers's, in the crock bottle from Portugal. Leaving Macy's, they hailed a cab and when they got in, the driver greeted Gus as a "Gidalia," apparently the name by which he was known in his childhood village in Russia — the driver was from the same place. He remembered and recognized Gidalia from fifty years later.

"Gidalia" became "Gus" or "Gustave" when the name first arrived in America and, in later generations became "Gilbert" or the like. Dr. Jeffrey Alan Arons, the son of Cyvia & Dr. Marvin Arons has the Hebrew name, "Gidalia" in memory of his great grandmother, Golda Berman Russian.

In the tradition of naming children in memory of a deceased grandparent or other cherished deceased relative, the first letter of the deceased name became in America a sufficient nexus so that an "Alexander" could be named after "Abraham." Yes, we are all named after someone.

Someday someone may trace the derivations of “Behrmann”, “Bermano” and “Berman” at least three of the known variations of our family name.

It is an historical fact that the Jews who came from Eastern Europe almost never spoke of what life in Russia was like. On occasions, as we shall see, they confided generalities to their children, but never luminated on what it was really like to live in those times and in that place. Some have postulated that the reason for their silence was that they were ashamed of the abject poverty from which they come. Most were the poorest of the poor, the wretched refuse of Russian Society. Their memories were not pleasant ones.

There are, however, recorded histories of Russia and of the Jews which can at least gain a sense of the history of our forefathers and a sense of their lives in Eastern Europe, a general overview without being family specific. While our family goes back as far as any, we just cannot trace it as others can. We must look to the history of the area and to the times to speculate as to the history of our forefathers.

One aspect of history records that after the Romans conquered Jerusalem in 70 A.D., what we now know as the Ashkenazi community followed routes from the Holy Land into Italy, Spain, Alsace and Portugal, then moved north and east after various expulsions. The majority settled in the Rhine Basin, in what is now Germany, from which they were expelled after the Black Plague. In fact, the word Ashkenazi means “German.” Most Jews then emigrated east to what is now known as the Pale of Settlements, in the borderlands of Russia, places that changed hands many times. The Pale of Settlements included, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Belarus, the Ukraine and parts of southern Russia. The area between eastern Poland and Western Belarus has been known as “white Russia.” since the Revolution.

One article hypothesizes that “Modern Ashkenazi Jews are believed to descended from about 1,500 Jewish families dating back to the 14th century.” Because most Ashkenazi Jews married within their own community, it is postulated that almost all Ashkenazi Jews are related. Although documents purport that they are “from Russia,” few of them actually lived in “Mother Russia.”

History also records that the Jews had been active in the Russian border territories, especially on the shores of the Black Sea, at least since the Hellenistic time. Legends connect the arrival of Jews in Armenia and Georgia with the Ten Lost Tribes of the despoiled Northern Kingdom of biblical Israel. From early medieval times Jews had been active over a vast swathe of territory in southern Euro-Asia, both as traders and as proselytizers.

Frequently marginalized in written history is the aggressive proselytizing by the Jews and the conversion to Judaism by others. In the first half of the eighth century (c.750) the bellicose Khazar tribes north of the Caucasus had been converted to Judaism.

In the 1470s, in the rapidly expanding Principality of Moscow, Jewish

activists brought into existence a semi-secret sect of proselytizers which the authorities termed the “Judaizers”; and ferocious efforts were made to stamp it out. Tsar Ivan IV Vasilievich, “Ivan the Terrible” (1530-94), ordered Jews who refused to embrace Christianity to be drowned, and Jews were officially excluded from Russian territory until the partition of Poland in the late eighteenth century. The Russian barrier to further eastern penetration led to extensive Jewish settlement in Poland, Lithuania and the Ukraine. It has been estimated that in about 1500 there were only 20,000 - 30,000 Jews living in Poland out of a total population of five million; by 1575, while the total population had risen to seven million, the number of Jews had jumped to 150,000, and thereafter the rise was still more rapid.

A common thread binding the Jews of Europe was the “Jewish language”, Yiddish, which made most, and entirely spontaneous, progress in the nineteenth century. Yiddish was old, almost as old as some European tongues. Jews first began to develop it from the German dialects spoken in the cities when they pushed up from France and Italy into German-speaking Lithuania. Old Yiddish (1250 - 1550) marked the first contact of German-speaking Jews with Slavic Jews speaking a dialect called Knaanic. During the 200 years 1500-1700, Middle Yiddish emerged, becoming progressively more Slavic and dialectic. Finally, modern Yiddish developed during the eighteenth century. Its literary form was completely transformed in the half-century 1810 - 1860 in the cities of Eastern Europe as Yiddish newspapers and magazines proliferated and a secular Yiddish book-trade flourished. Philologists and grammarians tidied it up. As the Jewish population of eastern Europe grew, more people spoke, read and wrote Yiddish.

Yiddish was a rich, living language, the chattering tongue of an urban population. It had the limitations of its origins. There were few Yiddish words for animals and birds. It had virtually no military vocabulary. Such voids were filled by borrowing from German, Polish and Russian. Yiddish was particularly good at borrowing: from Arabic, from Hebrew, from Aramaic and from anything with which it intersected. On the other hand, it contributed: English-American. Its chief virtue lay in its internal subtlety, particularly in its characterization of human types and emotions. It was the language of street wisdom, of the clever underdog, of pathos, resignation and suffering, all of which it palliated by humor, intense irony and superstition. It has been said the Yiddish is the only language never spoken by anyone in power.

In the Russian Pale, Yiddish was often the language of secularization. In the second half of the nineteenth century, almost every sizeable Jewish community in Eastern Europe had a circle of atheists and radicals, whose language of dissent was Yiddish.

In daily life the Jews of Eastern Europe spoke Yiddish; in the market place they spoke the local lingua franca which would have been either Polish or Russian.

Eugene Berman recalls, somewhat tongue in cheek, that his maternal grandfather, Samuel Berman, spoke seven languages – Yiddish among them –

but that “Hanglish he spoke the bestest.”

(The National Yiddish Book Center, 37,000 square feet of interconnected work, exhibition and performance spaces designed to resemble a 19th - century Eastern European shtetl, dedicated to serving the rapidly disappearing volumes of Yiddish literature, is located at the campus of Hampshire College in Amherst, Massachusetts. The Center’s founder, Aaron Lamsky, states, “It began as an effort to rescue books, but somewhere along the line, it became apparent that what was in the books was a whole civilization, a whole world, and it was disappearing from memory.”)

By the three partitions of Poland (1772, 1793 and 1795), the Russian empire, which had heretofore refused to admit Jews at all, acquired a million of them as a result of its territorial greed.

Russia never gave to the Jews the rights of residence except within The Pale of Settlements, where their numbers, poverty and disabilities increased rapidly.

The Pale of Settlement, which took its final form in 1812, consisted of twenty-five western provinces stretching from the Baltic to the Black Sea. Jews could not travel, let alone live, outside the Pale except with special legal authority. The Pale of Settlement was the forerunner of the ghetto in other places where Jews were confined to their own towns or portions of cities, segregated from the Christian community. The expression, “outside the pale” continues to this day as referring to an individual or idea that is “outside” of a proscribed area or established concept or view.

A series of statutes, beginning in 1804, determined where the Jews could live inside the Pale and what they could do there. The most damaging rule was that Jews could not live or work in villages. This destroyed the livelihood of a third of the Jewish population who held village leases or ran village inns (another third were in trade, and most of the rest craftsmen). In theory, states Paul Johnson, the author of what was a 1988 best seller “A History of the Jews,” the object was to push the Jews into “productive labor” on the land, but there was little or no land available, and the real aim was to drive Jews into accepting baptism or getting out altogether. In practice, the rules led to the Jewish impoverishment and a steady stream of poor Jews into the Pale towns.

In 1827, Nicholas I, one of the most savage of the autocrats, issued the “Canonist Decrees” which conscripted all male Jews from twelve to twenty-five (a thirteen year term of military service), placing the younger boys in canon-schools at the military depots, where they were liable to be forced into baptism, sometimes by whole units.

Gradually, over the century, an enormous mass of legislation discriminating against Jews and regulating their activities, accumulated. Some of it was never properly enforced; much of it was frustrated by bribery. Rich parents could buy Jewish children to take the place of their own in state schools or in the army. They could pay to buy legal certificates entitling them to travel, to live in cities, to engage in forbidden occupations. The attempt to “solve” the

Jewish problem created, or rather immensely aggravated, another one: corruption of the Tzarist bureaucracy, which became incorrigible. Government policy was never consistent for long; it oscillated between liberalism and repression. In 1845, four years after Chonon Berman was born, the new Tsar, Alexander II, introduced a liberal phase, granting certain rights to Jews if they were long-server soldiers, university graduates or “useful” merchants. That phase ended with the Polish revolt of 1863 and the attempted assassination of Alexander II. There was another liberal phase in the 1870s, again brought to an end by an attempt on the Tsar’s life – this time the assassination of Tsar Alexander II in 1888. The three Berman girls who survived infancy were born during this liberal phase, (Chana) Esther in 1874, Golda in 1876 and Baila in 1879. Thereafter, the position of Jews in Russia deteriorated sharply. The Berman brothers were born during the time of a deterioration of the position of the Jews, Hyman in 1882, Benjamin in 1885, Barnett in 1887, Gustave in 1889 and Harry in 1897. In the last half-century of imperial Russia, the official Jewish Regulations formed an enormous monument to human cruelty, stupidity and futility.

A Jew’s passport stated that he was a Jew and proscribed where he might reside. Even in the Pale, most areas were banned to Jews, and ‘legal’ parts were constantly being eroded. Jews were banned from Sebastopol and Kiev. The Don territory was suddenly taken out of the Pale, then the Caucasian Kuban and Terek; then the Yalta health resort.

In the Caucasus, so-called ‘Mountain Jews,’ who claimed their forefathers were deported there by Nebuchadnezzar in 597 BC, had rights of residence; on the other hand, they could not go anywhere else.

There were privileged categories of Jews who were permitted to travel or even reside outside the Pale, but they needed special papers which were very difficult to obtain and had to be renewed constantly. All these categories tended to be whittled down, especially after 1889. Struck from the category of privileged artisans were tobacco-worker, piano-tuners, butchers, galosh-menders, bricklayers, carpenters, plasterers and gardeners. There is in the oral history of the Berman Family that one of the family was, in fact, a galosh-mender.

Enforcing these constantly changing codes was a nightmare for all concerned except the corrupt policemen or bureaucrats. Visitors from the west were shocked to see hordes of frightened Jews being driven to streets by police posses in the early hours of the morning, the result of *oblava* (a Russian and/o Polish word meaning “attack”) or night raids. The police were entitled to break into a house during the night using any force necessary and demand documentary proof of residence rights of everyone, irrespective of age or sex. Anyone unable to produce documentary proof of residence instantly was taken to the police station.

Occasionally, the police organized massive ‘Jew hunts.’ In the Smolensky district, at Pochinak, in 1909, mounted police surrounded the entire town and flushed out only ten ‘illegals’; they had a hunt through the woods and found seventy-four more. When business was slack, police chiefs would encourage Christians to draw up petitions calling for expulsion of Jews on the grounds that they were ‘causing local discontent.’ The poor, returning to the Pale, became a growing social problem. In Odessa, for instance,

over 30 percent of the Jewish population was dependant on Jewish charities.

The residence laws, however, were only the beginning of the Jews' troubles. The government demanded fixed quotas of Jewish conscripts from the local communities. From 1886, families were held legally responsible for non-service of conscripts and fined heavily. The state forced Jews to soldier, and it narrowly circumscribed how they did it. Jews were banned from the guards, the navy, the frontier or quarantine service, the gendarmerie, the commissariat and clerical grades. In 1887 they were banned from all military schools and army examinations, thereby being effectively excluded from becoming officers. In 1888 they were banned from army dispensaries, in 1889 from military bands. All Jews were banned from any kind of civil service in Moscow and St. Petersburg.

Because the Jews in Russia were historically and continually mistreated, none of them wanted to serve in the military. The rules of military conscription provided that if there was only one son in a family, he was exempt from military service. To avoid military service in the Tsar's army, young men would take names other than that of their parents and claim exemption as being an only son. It was common for families to give one of their sons to a family that had no sons allowing the "loaned" son to escape conscription. Many young men left Russia to avoid military service or, in not an unusual situation, would desert the army and leave the country for America.

The evasion of military service by the Russian Jews was akin to the practices in the United States during the Civil War where one could have another serve in his stead. There was not, however, such an easy (and lawful) evasion available to Russian Jews.

Jews formed the majority of the urban population in six main regions and, in many towns, they constituted a large majority, but they were not allowed to vote in municipal elections or to stand for office. They were forbidden to buy, rent or manage land beyond the immediate precincts of the Pale towns own shtetels. (Shtetl, also shteli. Yiddish from Stetl, small place, small town, diminutive of state, place, town, city; a Jewish small town or small-town community in Eastern Europe.) Jews could not even buy land for cemeteries.

Russia was the only country in Europe, at that time, where anti-Semitism was the official policy of the government. The Tsarist regime persecuted other minorities beside the Jews, but it was skillful at setting them off one against the other, and, in particular, in inciting Poles, Letts, Ukrainians and Cossacks to go for the Jews. The object of the government was to reduce the Jewish population as quickly and as dramatically as possible.

The first modern Russian pogrom came in 1871 in Odessa. (Pogrom is a Russian word originally meaning, literally, a riot. It has come, however, to be applied to attacks on Jews in Russia or Russian controlled countries.) There was an ethnic element in most of the disturbances of the 1870s, Slove nationalists being particularly violent in their anti-Semitism. But after the assassination of Alexander II in 1881, the state took over and the so-called "kicks in the behind" followed in rapid succession. The major pogroms which began on April 29, 1881 were incited, condoned or organized by the Minister of Interior, Ignatiev, an enthusiastic Slovophile. The pogroms occurred in over one hundred communities, lasted nearly a year, and in some cases involved huge mobs. Not only the

government but the police and innumerable ethnic groups were involved. The revolutionary Norodnaya Volya party incited the Ukrainians to Kill the Jews in August 1881 under the slogan: 'Rise against the Tsar of the *pans* (nobles) and the *zhids* (Jews).

The pogroms were followed by a mass of anti-Semitic legislation known as the May Laws. The pogroms were used to justify the legislation, the argument running: mob attacks on the Jews, while deplorable in themselves, indicate the extent of popular indignation against the Jewish minority, therefore the activities of the Jews must be restricted. Of course the government inspired and permitted the mob action in the first place, and the whole aim of the regime was to bolster its crumbling popularity by attacking an easy target, the proverbial scapegoat. Hence, the thirty years of 1881 - 1911, the years that the Berman brothers were born and emigrated from Russia, were a long calendar of anti-Jewish actions: 1882, May laws; 1886 -1889, restrictions of Jewish entry to the professions and reduction of the Pale area; 1891, over 10,000 Jews expelled from Moscow; 1893 - 1895, huge expulsions from non-pale areas; 1894 - 1896, introduction of the spirits monopoly, an economic catastrophe for the Jews; from 1903, a series of vicious pogroms in which the Jews were not merely robbed, but killed. At Kishinev, in 1905, fifty Jews were murdered and 500 injured. In Odessa, a four-day pogrom in 1905 killed more than 400 Jews. In Bialystock, the police and the army joined in the pogroms of 1906. From 1908 to 1911 there were more large scale expulsions.

A half a century later, the Nazis in Germany were to duplicate the techniques of the Russian government. It is one of the ironies of history that some 50 years later, the grandchildren of Chonon & Khasia, then American citizens, would fight the totalitarianism and anti-Semitism of Hitler's Germany. Among those who served in the American armed forces during the Second World War were, among others, first-generation, American-born Herman Russian, the son of Golda & Meir Russian, and Milton Berman, the son of Gustave and Lillian Berman.

From 1881, the vicious, mounting and cumulatively overwhelming pressure on Russian Jewry produced the inevitable consequence – a panic flight of Jews from Russia westward. The first big rush to get out came in 1881 - 1882. Thereafter, Jews left at an average of 50,000 to 60,000 a year. With the Moscow expulsions, 110,000 Russian Jews left in 1891 and 137,000 left in 1892. In the pogrom year 1906, over 200,000 Jews, including the Berman brothers, Barnett and Gustave, and the parents, Chonon & Khasia Berman with their nine year old son, Harry left. Benjamin and Hyman left during the preceding year, 1904.

Of the emigrants from Russia and the other countries of Eastern Europe, more than two million came to the United States. It is recorded that as late as 1820 there were only 4,000 Jews in the United States.

II. The Ancestors of Chonon Berman

This Is Us is a work in progress, a genealogical and historical search into the past and a continuing history of the family of Chonon & Khasia Berman. It has no defined beginning or end. It is an infinite tapestry of the history of a family that one finds is not so easy to define. The family tree has many branches...and even splinters that distract any effort to remain focused. At least for me!

As this project has evolved from its original purpose of introducing my grandchildren to the family of their paternal great grandparents, Chonon & Kashia Berman, three additional, interrelated purposes have evolved:

- (1) To trace the ancestry of the family of Chonon & Khasia Berman to the earliest ascertainable date;
- (2) To determine if Chonon and his sister Fannie (Berman) Kravitz, had siblings, and if so, to identify and locate their descendants. (It has been suggested that there may have been at least one other sibling who did not immigrate to America, but that is as yet an unproven hypothesis.);
- (3) (For whatever the motivation may be), to establish a family relationship to one or more of the victims of the Holocaust.

It is obvious that that (1) is a prerequisite to (2) and (3). One has to know the parents of Chonon to determine if there were other siblings, children other than Chonon and Fannie. And, of course, the discovery of other siblings mathematically multiplies the number of potential relatives. It is said that we are all related. Our research is not an attempt to prove that proposition, but is, rather, to attempt to trace the Chonon Berman family tree as far back as records will allow. This Chapter is, therefore, a depository for all known information and information as it become known. A work in progress!

In addition to my own amateur efforts to trace the family roots, I have engaged the professional services of Ted Gostin, a professional genealogical researcher from Sherman Oaks, CA. to provide his services in the quest. Ted's address is: P. O. Box 56321, Sherman Oaks, CA 91413-1321. He can be reached (voice and fax) @ (818) 501-5852 and by e-mail at tedgostin@generationspress.com. His website is generationspress.com/research.html.

In his research, Ted has availed himself of colleagues and professionals in Lithuania including Ms. Ruta Puisyte of the History Faculty at Vilnius University, University 7, Vilnius, Lithuania. Ruta, about whom more will be written later, has been retained to coordinate additional research in Lithuania, Belarus and Russia. What was once the Russian Empire from which our family came has now been fragmented into separate, independent nations with archival records scattered among them with many of the records back in Moscow. A genealogical nightmare!

The information contained in this Chapter is substantially the work product of Ted Gostin and his collaborators. Attribution is made to his research and his invaluable and

detailed reports. As of this writing, there is no other source.

Here are the Research Results presented by Ted Gostin in his January 2, 2007 Report #5:

The report from Ruta Puisyte, the researcher in Lithuania, shows that she found a number of BERMAN and similar surnames in the revision lists of Vileyka uyezd from the years 1834, 1850 and 1858, Vileyka uyezd was the district or county in which the town of Dolginovo was located and revision lists were the tax censuses taken at irregular intervals in Russia. She was only able to review the full lists for 1834 and 1850; the files in the Vilnius archives for 1858, the last full revision taken, were only an alphabetical index to the original revision list. She reported that the actual census schedules were not available in the Vilnius archives, although copies of them may be available in Minsk. A copy of her report is enclosed.

Many of the entries she found were for families residing in towns other than Dolginovo, and given how common the BERMAN surname is, I doubt that most of these are related. The entries from Dolginovo may be related to Honon BERMAN's family, though, since they are from the correct town, and because they include someone named Khaim BERMAN, which was the name of Honon's father. I therefore asked Ruta to copy only these records that seemed likely to be related to your family, and she copied three records for us.

From the documents we have from Honon, it would appear that he was born in the early 1850s. On his death certificate from 1936, he is listed as 72 years old, suggesting a birth year of about 1864. His gravestone, however, lists his age at death as 86, suggesting a birth year of about 1850. Other documents suggesting an age for him include census records from 1910 and 1920, where he is listed as 47 and 67, respectively, suggesting birth years of 1862/63 or 1852/53; his naturalization petition, which states that he was born on April 3, 1852 in "Dolginow", and his passenger list from 1906, on which he is listed as 53 years old, suggesting a birth date of 1852 or 1853. Thus, the earliest records we have, and the ones which Honon himself provided the information; suggest a birth date of about 1852/53. (The 1910 census record is probably just has a miscalculated age and should have read 57 instead of 47.)

The name of his father is available only from his death certificate, where it is listed as "Hyman", and from his gravestone, where it is listed as Khaim Eliyahu. These are not inconsistent, since the Yiddish name Hyman is associated with the Hebrew name Khaim, or Chaim. If we assume that Honon was born about 1852, and that his father was probably between 18 and 45 years old when Honon was born (a common age range in which men generally had children) then his father Khaim BERMAN would have been born sometime between 1807 and 1834.

The census records we found for Dolginovo do include a Khaim BERMAN born during this time period in Dolginovo, but unfortunately, do not provide us with any direct link to this Khaim BERMAN's children in later life, or to Honon himself. So while the records are consistent with an assumption that this Khaim BERMAN of Dolginovo may, in fact, be Honon's father, they do not provide any proof of

such an assumption.

The records that the researcher found are described briefly below. I have provided you with two copies of the records: the original photocopies provided by the researcher, and prints from scans she made of the images. On the scanned copies, I have printed a translation so that you can see how the record format matches up with the translated information.

*** 1834 revision list. Record Group (F.) 515, inventory (AP.) 15, file (B.) 649, page (L.) 290-291, line (\$) 14.**

Head of household is listed as Nokhim Berkovich (son of Berko) TSYRULNIK, age 51, age at last revision 35 (at home 1818). Underneath are listed “his 1st son Berka BERMAN”, age 26, 13 at last revision at home in 1821; Berka’s son Khaim, age 6, newborn since last revision; and Nokhim’s 2nd son Yenkil, age 5, newborn since last revision. On the second page, the women in the household include: Nochim Berkovich’s wife Nekhama, age 45; Nokhim’s daughters Bluma, age 14, and Khanna age 13; and Berko Nokhimovich’s wife Khanna, age 25.

*** 1850 revision list. Record Group 515, inventory 15, file 934, page 232, line #13.**

Nokhum Berkovich TSIRYLNİK, missing since 1848, 51 at last revision (1834); Nokhum’s sons Berko BERMAN, age 42, 26 at last revision; and Yankel, missing since 1848; and Berko BERMAN’s son Khsim, missing since 1847, age 6 at last revision. Women listed in this census include Nokhum Berkovich TSIRYLNİK’s wife, Nechama Abramova (daughter of Abram), age 61; Berko BERMAN’s wife, Khana Itskova (daughter of Itsko, or Isaac), age 40; Khaim Berkovich BERMAN’s wife Revka, age 22; the daughter of Khaim and Revka BERMAN, Pesya, age 3; and Yankel Berkovich BERMAN’s wife Pesya, age 22.

*** 1858 alphabetical index to Dolginovo revision list.**

Name BERMAN, Berko Nokhimovich appears on either page or household #19.

These records describe a family that includes a boy named Khaim BERMAN, son of Berko and Khanna BERMAN, who was born about 1828. This age would fit perfectly with our expectations for Honon BERMAN’s father. Khaim BERMAN and his father Berko were present in Dolginovo at the time of the 1834 revisuin, and Berko was also present in 1850. In 1850, though, Khaim BERMAN himself was listed as missing since 1847, three years earlier. This could represent an attempt to avoid being listed in the census and to avoid the draft, which would have been very common (he would have been 19 years old in 1847). It could also represent an earlier move to Glusk than we had expected, when Khaim BERMAN was not yet 20 years old. I suspect that Khaim was simply absent, either in an attempt to avoid the draft, or for work purposes, since his wife and three year old child are listed. I have had difficulty translating the explanation for his absence,

but the word seems to be a spelling variation of the word for “nonappearance,” which isn’t very specific. I think it basically says “non-appearance since 1847.”

If this Khaim BERMAN, son of Berko, and your Khaim Eliyahu BERMAN are the same person, then it would suggest that Honon BERMAN, most likely born a couple of years after the 1850 census, had an older sister named Pesya, born in 1847 and still alive in 1850. It would further suggest that Honon’s mother was probably Revka BERMAN, the wife of Khaim Berkovich BERMAN in these records. We had not seen any reference to Honon’s mother’s name in any of the documents that we had previously uncovered.

Another aspect of these records worthy of comment is the fact that the Berko BERMAN’s father apparently had a different surname: TSYRULNIK, or barber. This wasn’t all that uncommon in those days. Most Jews in Russia did not carry fixed, hereditary surnames until sometime between 1808 and 1835, when they were legally required to adopt surnames by the Russian government. It was not uncommon for different members of the same family to adopt different surnames during the same period. Nochum Berkovich TSYRULNIK, the father of Berko BERMAN, was born about 1783, according to the revision lists. He would therefore already have been an adult with an occupation by time most Jews starting using surnames in the revisions of 1818 and 1834. One of the most common origins of surnames were occupational applications, such as “Nochum the barber”, or in Yiddish, Nochum tsyrulnik. It is possible that Nochum simply used the occupational appellation as a surname. It is possible that his son, Berko, chose not to do so because he himself was not a barber. Instead, he may have chosen the surname BERMAN, which generally is a name formed from the personal name Ber. Since Nochum’s father was also a Ber (his patronymic name is Berkovich, or son of Berko, a diminutive of Ber), Berko BERMAN may have selected this surname to designate descent from his grandfather Berko. It is also possible that the surname was derived from his own personal name, although from what I have read, this seems less likely to me. In any case, it is not unreasonable to think that a father and son would adopt different surnames, especially if one adopted a surname based on an occupation that the other did not share.

Ted Gostin goes on to report as to the results of Additional Research:

We have now found some census records from Dolginovo that appear as if they might be for Honon BERMAN’s father and grandfather, although these records do not include Honon himself.

Assuming the validity of the assumptions hypothecated by Ted Gostin and the validity of the research that has been undertaken to date, we can creatively suggest the ancestry of Chonon (Honon) BERMAN and diagram it as follows:

Presumptive ANCESTRY of CHONON (Honon) BERMAN

BERKO*

(A diminutive of Ber)

b. 1758ish, assuming a 25 year generation

@ Dolginovo

* The name BERKO is presumed from the fact that his son's name was Nokhim Berkovich (son of Berko) Tsirylnik (barber).

NOKHIM BERKOVICH TSIRYLNİK

(Berkovich = son of Berko, Tsyulnik = barber)

b. 1783

@ Dolginovo

Married

NEKHAMA ABRAMOVA

(Daughter of Abram)

b. 1789

@

Children:

BERKA NOKHIMOVIC

(Son of Nokhim)

b. 1808

@

BLUNA

b. 1820

@

KHANA

b. 1821

@

YENKIL BERKOVICH BERMAN

b. 1821

@

Married:

PESYA

b.

@

Source:

Record Group (F.) 515

Inventory (AP.) 15

File (B.) 649

Page (L.) 290-291

Line 14

Note: Surnames were required by the Russian Government, 1808-1835.

Children:

PESYA BERMAN
b. 1847
@

FANNIE BERMAN Married **MEYER KRAVITZ**
b.
@

MOSHE ELHANAN BERMAN
(Chonon/Honon/Elchonon)
b. April 3, 1852/1853
@ Vilna/Dolginovo
d. August 3, 1936
@ New Haven, Ct

Married **ANNA LIPSHITZ**
(Chashe/Khasia Lipshitz)
Daughter of Gedalia Lipshitz
(Gedaliah = Gustave/Gus)
b. 1864
@ Minsk/Glusk
d. March 30, 1931
@ New Haven, CT

Note:

Emigrated from Liverpool, England
on June 12, 1906, arrived in New York
on June 20, 1906 aboard the
vessel Coronia

Children:

Chana Esther Berman (Mishalov)
b. July 15, 1874
@

Golda Berman Russian
b. August 8, 1876
@

Balia Berman Levitz
b. August 25, 1879
@

Hyman Berman
b. May 5, 1882
@

Barnett Berman
b. October 1, 1887
@

Gustave Berman
b. March 15, 1889

@

Henry Berman
b. August 15, 1897

@

Thus, by availing ourselves of the initial genealogical research to date, we of the Chonon Berman family can trace our ancestry at least back to Berko (b. 1758ish) and before, assuming that Berko had parents, grandparents, etc. Not the Mayflower yet, but we are getting there.

Unfortunately, for genealogical information preceding Berko – the arrival of our ancestors in Russia – we will, at this time, be obliged to choose between concepts of the migration of the Jewish People or, perhaps, speculate that our ancestors were indigenous People who converted to Judaism. Based upon physical characteristics of some of the members of the Berman family, an argument has been made for the conversion theory.

I have elected not to research or include here a history of the Diaspora of the Jewish people and of the wanderings of the tribes since the destruction of the Temple. The fact that I have declined to pursue the subject does not mean that it does not hold a strange fascination and is, after all, a part of the history of the family. But...

Modern technology and understanding of genetic codes will undoubtedly open the doors to unimagined genetic research. I have no doubt that through the use of DNA future researches will be able to trace the genealogy of man to times and places about which we can now only speculate and hypothecate. I do believe!

You will, therefore, not be surprised that consistent with my desire to trace our family roots as far back in time as possible and my belief that genetics and DNA testing are keys to open doors now closed to our present inquiry, I have had a “Premium Combo DNA Ancestry Test” and that my DNA and the results of the test are available for future generations as needed. Surprised? I will bet not

For the record, the testing was performed by Donald N. Yates, Ph.D., Principal Investigator, DNA Consulting: Unlocking your DNA, P. O. Box 2895, Santa Fe, NM 87592, Tel: (505) 473-5155, Toll Free: (877) 473-5155. E-mail: dpy@dnaconsultants.com. Check the website: <http://dnaconsultants.com>. My Case Number is: T106387/B0820.

This is what they did and the results::

A sample of the male subjects Y-chromosome DNA was extracted multiplied and screened by Sorenson Genomics. Chromosomes are the double-helix genetic structure by which hereditary information is physically transmitted from one generation to the next. The Y-chromosome is passed only from a father to sons; its entire purpose is to determine maleness. Because of its stability over time, it is useful in tracing paternal ancestry (Jobling and Smith 2003). The allele values for 43 key markers on the DNA were reported as follows:

<u>Locus</u>	<u>Allele</u>	<u>Locus</u>	<u>Allele</u>	<u>Locus</u>	<u>Allele</u>	<u>Locus</u>	<u>Allele</u>
DYS19a	14	DYS437	15	DYS452	30	DYS464a	15
DYS19b	--	DYS438	13	DYS454	11	DYS464b	16
DYS385a	10	DYS439	12	DYS455	11	DYS464c	16
DYS385b	10	DYS441	14	DYS456	17	DYS464d	18
DYS388	12	DYS442	16	DYS458	18	DYS464e	--
DYS389I	13	DYS444	12	DYS459a	9	DYS464f	--
DYS389II	29	DYS445	12	DYS459b	9	DYS635	23
DYS390	23	DYS446	14	DSY460	11	GGAAT1B07	10
DYS391	10	DYS447	25	DYS461	12	YCAIIa	19
DYS392	13	DYS448	19	DYS462	11	YCAIIb	23
DYS393	13	DYS449	32	DYS463	24	Y-GATA-A10	14
DYS426	12					Y-GATA-H4.1	22

To explore geographical origins of the subject's type in history, we compared 11 of these scores, representing the subject's haplotype with the worldwide forensic gene bank known as the Y Chromosome Haplotype Reference Database (YHRD) in Berlin. A single match was found in a world sample of 52,655 haplotypes in 464 populations.

I am compelled to record that when I read the words “we compared ...the subject’s haplotype with the....gene bank...in Berlin”. I shuddered and had trepidations. There was something ominous about the prospect. An uneasy feeling! What hath we wrought?

Before we explore the “single match” that was found, let us consider Dr. Yates’
Analysis and Conclusion:

On his father's side, the subject descends from a male ancestor who belonged to haplogroup R1b, sometimes (although somewhat misleadingly) called the Atlantic Modal Haplotype (AMH, Wilson). Hispanic matches suggest that the progenitor of this mega-lineage might have lived in Spain. It reaches its highest frequency on the Atlantic Fringe, in Connacht, Ireland. Bryan Sykes in his book ***Blood of the Isles*** gives the populations associated with R1b the name **Oisín** for a clan patriarch, much as he did for mitochondrial haplogroups in his work ***The Seven Daughters of Eve***. Oppenheimer in his book ***Origins of the British*** calls this type Ruiz and maintains Ruiz was the first and most numerous male type to populate the British Isles following the last Ice Age (pp. 188f). The subject's particular haplotype is probably Polish in origin. Haplogroup R1b is the most common male type in modern-day Europe, found in approximately 40% of all males. The mutations characterizing it are M173 and M343 (Y Chromosome Consortium).

The report correctly states that Berman is an Ashkenazi Jewish surname derived from the Yiddish *bar* (“bear”) used as a *kinnui*, or secular name for Issachar. Variants cited are Berezyk, Berson, Berenson, Berowitz, Berer, Bermant, Burman, Bergman, Bergsub, Berekman and many more.

While it may not be immediately germane to the genealogical research that has been and

is being undertaken and pursued relating to the male line of the ancestors of Chonon Berman, the Ancestry Report records that a mitochondrial specimen was extracted, amplified by the PCR process and sequenced by the laboratory for markers or mutations in the control sections of the D loop known as Hypervariable Regions I and II containing several hundred base pairs of DNA. According to the Report, the following differences from the reference series mutations were reported (rCRS, Andrews, Anderson). A mutation is any inheritable change in a nucleotide of DNA sequence of genes. Although mutations in the D loop of Mitochondrial DNA do not change the individual or have any effect, we are told that they have been found useful in tracing female, or mitochondrial, lineages.

The test revealed that my original female ancestor belongs to haplogroup K. In his report, Dr. Yates explains the character of the group:

The founder of this lineage most likely lived around 50,000 years ago. Her descendants gave birth in several different subgroups, some of which exhibit very specific geographic homelands. The old age has led to a wide distribution of the descendant subgroups that harbor specific European, northern African, Indian, Arab, northern Caucasus Mountains and the Near East. While some members of the group headed north to Scandinavia or south to North Africa, most women in this group crossed the Caucasus Mountains in southern Russia and moved on to the steppes of the Black Sea. Haplogroup K is currently shared by over 3,000,000 people. Approximately 32% of the haplotypes of modern people with Ashkenazi Jewish ancestry are in haplogroup K (Thomas). Analysis of the mtDNA of Otzi the Iceman, the frozen mummy from 3300 BC found on the Austrian-Italian border, has shown that Otzi belongs to the K1 subcluster of the mitochondrial haplogroup K, but that it cannot be categorized into any of the three modern branches of that subcluster. The subject belongs to the K3 subcluster,

Eureka! We have discovered early ancestors – not by name but by subclusters. DNA is a key to our pre-recorded history. Now, if we can only personalize the history and identify with it through specific genealogy, DNA and personal histories!

While DNA may be an integral part of genealogy as the science is perfected and the data bases expanded, a present impediment to the process is the fact that old and ancient records of life cycle events are buried in forlorn archives not easily accessible and therefore not as yet digitalized or translated for easy of searching. While substantial progress has been made by The Church of Latter Day Saints in Salt Lake City, Utah and, impressively, by Jewish groups chronicling the victims of the Holocaust, the task is monumental, time consuming and expensive. Even though substantial strides are being made in “computerizing” the records, it will be many a year before it is accomplished. Indeed, I have seen the records in places such as Lithuania where they are stored, row on row of fragile parchment documents, a treasure trove of genealogical history accessible only by but few professionals. Our family history is constantly expanding – on both ends, as it were – as we gain access to more remote genealogical records and, of course, as we continue to multiply and proliferate.

Ted Gostin, the genealogical researcher on whom we have so heavily relied in searching our family roots, brings a professional’s search for certainty to the process in his Report:

We have now found some census records from Dolginovo that appear as if they might be for Honon BERMAN's father and grandfather, although these records do not include Honon himself. The primary research goal at this point should be to try to verify whether these Dolginovo records are really for Honon's family.

Not having the benefit of DNA or digitalized and/or translated records to continue his efforts "to verify whether these Dolginovo records are really for Honon's family", in a Section entitled "Additional Research", Ted outlines a laborious and uncertain course of action:

We can best do that by finding some type of census record after 1850 that would include Honon and his father in the same record. With such a record, we would be able to verify a number of things, including the ages of Honon and his father, and the name of Honon's father's father (because of the Russian patronymic naming pattern). By comparing this information to the Dolginovo records, we could attempt to verify whether the Dolginovo information we have found is really for Honon's family.

He goes on to outline the methodology and to identify the difficulties of the research:

The first and possibly most useful record we could find would be the 1858 revision list for Honon and his family, which we have so far been unable to locate. He may have been enumerated in either Dolginovo, where he was said to have been born, or in Glusk, where he later lived. This would depend on whether he re-registered when he moved from Dolginovo to Glusk. We know from the Lithuanian research that Berko Nochumovich BERMAN, the father of the Khaim BERMAN of Dolginovo who might be Honon's grandfather, was listed in the 1858 Dolginovo revision list, but we haven't been able to obtain a copy of the actual revision list. The Lithuanian archives apparently only have an index to this census, but not the actual census itself. There may be other members of this family in this household who were not listed in the index, including Honon and his father Khaim. It is possible that a copy of the original census has survived in the Belarus archives, and that was one of the records that I was trying to have reviewed by the Belarus researchers, without success. Even if we find the record, however, it might not include Khaim BERMAN, since he was reported as missing in the 1850 Dolginovo census, and we know that Honon apparently moved from Dolginovo to the area of Glusk sometime around this time. It is possible that Khaim BERMAN may be listed in Dolginovo in 1858. He might have been in that household, or his absence might be explained more fully in the 1858 census.

Therefore, we should continue to search for Honon and his father Khaim in the revision lists of both Dolginovo and Glusk in 1858. We suspect that Honon's family was registered in Dolginovo based on the 1905 additional revision list the Belarus researchers reported to us, and people were enumerated in the revision lists based on their place of registration. Many people changed their place of registration when they moved though, so if Honon and his father moved to Glusk before 1858, it is possible that they re-registered in Glusk and might be listed in the revision list there. This is also a search I requested from the Belarus researcher, but is one that doesn't seem to have been completed. We basically have three choices for trying to get this census searched: we can request a search from the

archives staff; we can hire someone else in Belarus to attempt this search; or you could always send me to Belarus to research it myself! (The last option would be quite expensive, so while I'd like to go, I don't really expect you to offer the possibility.) Getting the archives to perform such a search is a risky proposition. If they are willing to undertake the search (which is not guaranteed), they will ask for some money upfront, and then we will just have to wait a very long time (probably a year or more) before we hear anything from them. The most likely response, based on other researchers' experience, is that they will report that they couldn't find anything. Some researchers have had limited success asking the archives staff to do research in Belarus, but archivists are not genealogists, and this option is probably less likely to yield results than hiring another genealogist in Belarus.

I say probably because trying to hire someone in Belarus is always difficult. Researchers come and go, and from my conversations with other genealogists, no one is having much luck right now finding someone reliable to do research there. At the moment, I know of only one other researcher living there who could do this research, and while he is quite capable, he has a reputation for very poor communication. He is the head of the Minsk Genealogy Group (a genealogical society) and a university professor, I believe. This contributes to his being very busy, and he sometimes takes on research assignments that he doesn't complete for one or two years, with little explanation to the client. I have never hired him before, but have talked with several people who have. While some people have gotten good results from him, almost everyone has complaints about long lapses in communication.

There are some other possibilities, though, even though I have never used their services either. Another option is to hire a company here in the U.S. called FAST Genealogy Services. It is run by Boris Feldblyum, a Ukrainian immigrant with many contacts in Eastern Europe. I have e-mailed him to ask if he thought his researchers could do this research, but haven't received an answer yet. Boris doesn't do the research himself (he lives in Maryland now), but has a network of researchers in Europe who do this research. I'll let you know what he says about possibly handling this work. There is also another researcher I know in Belarus who seems capable based on what I have read of his qualifications, but I don't know anyone who has hired him to research their family, so I don't have any references to go on.

The bottom line is that we will struggle to find someone to do this research, but without finding someone, we will not be able to connect what we know of your family in the Glusk area to the records we have found in Dolginovo. You will need to decide whether you want me to continue with this effort into the old Russian records. If you want me to continue, I will have to investigate several possibilities before hiring someone else to try to review the 1858 revision lists for Dolginovo and Glusk to see if we can find Honon and his father.

I was not surprised at the last sentence of the paragraph:

We will also need to set a budget for this additional work.
What to do? What would you do?

Continuing correspondence with Ted revealed additional tidbits of information:

- * "...documents suggest that Khonon BERMAN and his family remained registered in Dolginovo while they lived in Glusk and Staryye Darogi"
- * From my own research and the Reports received from Ted Gostin, I was able to compile a list of places to which the family had a nexus:

DOLGINOW/DOLGINOVO, Belarus
The last place of residence of Barnett Berman

DOROYA (Doroja)
The last place of residence of Beile (Belah/Bertha) Berman
& Chamme Michelow Berman

GLUSK (Gluck), Minsk gubernia, Belarus
The place where Barnett Berman was born

LIBOV, today Lepaja, Latvia
The last place of residence of Golda (Berman) & David Russian

LURAJA DUROGI
The last place of residence of Chonon & Chasse and Gus and Harry

STARI DOROGI (Staryye Dorogi; Staryja Darohi)
Now STARJA DAROHI, Belaruse
Last place of residence of "the family"?
At least some of Chonon's children were born here.

MINSK (City or Province?), Belarus
The last place of residence of Hyman Berman

SLUTZK
The last place of residence of Meyer (Mishelov) Berman

WILNA, today VILNIUS, Lithuania
The last place of residence of Benjamin Berman

- * That the name of the Lithuanian researcher that had been engaged by Ted Gostin was Ruta Puisyte of the History Faculty, Vilnius University in Vilnius, Lithuania, and
- * The name of the Belarussian researcher that had been engaged by Ted Gostin was Yuri M. Dorn, the Coordinator of Jewish Heritage Research Group in Belarus, Minsk, Belarus.

What to do, that is the question!

What would you do?

My decision: to go to Lithuania and Belarus.

Like so many happenings relating to this adventure in genealogy and family history, it as a fortuitous, unanticipated event that propelled the decision and made it possible. Somewhere, somehow, I came across a promotional letter for s Jewish Heritage Trip to Lithuania sponsored by the American Fund for Lithuanian & Latvian Jews located in Atlanta, GA. Of which Howard Margol was the founder and principal. His associate, Peggy Freedman was to lead the trip, June 24 – July 4, 2008. And yes, a side trip to Belarus could be arranged. Sold!

I shall not recount here the adventures of that trip. The experiences were personal and shall be recorded elsewhere...in *This Is Me*, my personal autobiography and memoirs. It was a trip – an experience – of a lifetime. Suffice it to be written that we (my girlfriend Patricia Kozaczka and I) visited the places to which the Berman family had a connection: Dolginovo, Minsk, Glusk and Starye Dorogi.

Talk about fortuitousness - the luck of the Bermans – Howard Margol was able to obtain the services of Ruta Puisyte (the Lithuanian researcher who had been employed by Ted Gostin) to serve as our guide and companion joining us and our driver on our three day excursion into Belarus. And, yes, while in Minsk we were able to meet with Yuri Dorn (the Belarusian researcher who had been employed by Ted Gostin). As a result of these contacts, I was able to accomplish the foremost purpose of the trip: to arrange for continued research of the Berman family genealogy.

We were able to introduce the Lithuanian Ruta Puisyte to the Belarusian Yuri Dorn and to obtain their pledge of mutual cooperation in coordinating between themselves and others the continuing research. A diplomatic victory bringing together two very different countries and cultures! The promise of progress; the promise of results!

It is with frustration and disappointment that I report that as of this writing, the coordination that was negotiated has not come to fruition and no progress has been accomplished on the research front despite serious efforts to initiate the same. Ted Gostin did not exaggerate the difficulties of accomplishing genealogical research in Eastern Europe. Frustration and disappointment!

I admit the failure of efforts to date to expand the parameters of the family history. I have concluded that alternative sources must be explored and new approaches undertaken. Such action is now being investigated and will be pursued to supplement and expand the already discovered fact of the genealogy and history of the Barman family....the ancestors of Chonon – and, yes, of Khasia – Berman.

Speaking of fortuitousness and alternative paths of discovery, let us return to the DNA Ancestry Report that reported “A single match was found in a world sample of 52,655 haplotypes in 464 populations.” The Report states:

The male in Poland and the subject are genetic cousins descended from the same forebear as the subject within about the past approximately 3,000 years (heyer et al. 1997). The haplogroup is R1b. In ysearch, there was an exact match on an extended basis to a descendant of Yacov Epstein ha Levi, born about 1820 in Slonim, Belarus (DJF3C: contact sorlen@email.arizona.edu). This descendant and

the subject are very likely cousins in a genealogical, as well as genetic, sense.

For reason of other matters of perceived importance, contact with soren@email.arizona.edu was delayed and contact not made until July, 2009. (When will we remember to not delay genealogical contacts? All too often the sources of otherwise unascertainable information die and the history of which they are the depositories are lost forever.) My “I sincerely hope that this is not an intrusion..” letter of introduction resulted in a response and a surprise. And what a surprise!

The reply was from Steve Orlen, a poet and an English Professor at the University of Arizona in Tuscon. His wife, Gail Marcus Olen, is a painter from Kew Gardens, Queens, NY and their son is Cozi, 24, who graduated from UMass (as did his father) and who now lives in Los Angeles. Quite a coincidence, but...

Steve Orlen’s e-mail begins: “It so happens that I was born in Holyoke in 1942 and grew up there.” Wow! Of all the people in the world (or at least of the world sample of 52,665 haplotypes), the one individual who is very likely to be a cousin in a genealogical, as well as a genetic, sense was born and lived some three blocks from where I was born and raised in Holyoke, Massachusetts, the United States of America. And we didn’t even know one another much less know of or presume a genealogical or genetic relationship!

As our correspondence evolved, the “scary” part was that I knew all of his family and relatives in the Holyoke-Springfield area and that his cousin, Gilbert A. Haberman and his wife, Lynn, were the best friends of my wife and me. Indeed, we had a bridge fund named Ha-Berman. The concept of a traceable genetic or genealogical relationship was beyond conception. But, lo! The very sad part is that Gil died in 2005 and we therefore never had an opportunity to compare our family histories or establish our relationship.

So, despite the impediments and temporary delays in tracing the more immediate ancestry of Chonon & Khashia Berman, utilizing the tools of modern genetics, we have been successful in unearthing a forbearer “within about the past 3,000 years” and have an exact match on an extended basis to Yacov Epstein ha Levi, born about 1820 in Slonim, Belarus. We have new tools for research and the possibilities are infinite...or almost so.

“This Is Us” is destined to see many more editions as we and others avail ourselves of existing and new tools to discover the past!

III. Russia At The Time of Chonon & Khasia Berman

In the context of the history of Russia and the turmoil of the times, Chonon Berman was born in 1852, and Khasia, his wife, in 1849 in the Pale of Russia.

Bessie Levitz Berman records on her handwritten narrative genealogy of the Berman Family that her grandfather, "Elchonon" Berman was born "in a small town (in the state of Minsk) in Russia." Chonon is said to have been born in Dolzinow, Russia and Khasia in Glusk, Russia. The apparent fact that at least Barnett, Hyman and Benjamin, three of their children were born in Glusk, it would appear that Chonon settled in his wife's home town.

(There is some question as to the spelling of the names of Chonon & Khasia, the spelling adopted in this history of the Berman Family. The basis for the choice of spelling is that it is the spelling of Chonon's 1912 Petition of Naturalization. However, the names as they appear on their tombstones at the cemetery in East Haven, Connecticut are "CChonon" and "Chashe." The handwritten history by Bessie Levitz Barkan ascribes the name "Elchonon" to the patriarch. It is now generally agreed that the English equivalent of (Khasia is "Sarah".)

Two years before Chonon's birth there were revolutions in France, Germany, Austria and Italy. Two years after his birth there was the Crimean War (1854 - 1856). Four years earlier, in 1948, Marx and Engels published the Communist Manifesto. The world was in turmoil; changes were sweeping the world.

When Chonon Berman was born, Millard Fillmore was president of the United States. Six years after his birth, the American Civil War would begin on April 12, 1861 with the bombardment of Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor, South Carolina. There were only twelve United States Presidents who served prior to Chonon Berman's birth.

Using twenty-five years as the measure in time of a generation, Chonon's Great Grandfather was born about the time of the American Revolution and the 1776 birth of the United States.

The earliest historical memory of the Berman family is the lumination of Dr. Sidney Berman and Ruth Berman Harris, two of the children of Benjamin Berman, that Chonon & Khasia Berman lived in Minsk Gebernia (the Minsk ghetto) where Chonon was purported to be the (or a) Forest Manager for a wealthy Baron's large estate. Perhaps a forester or gardener? Compare this history with the comments of Helen Berman Rhein, the daughter of Barnett & Mae Berman who wrote "I have no idea as to where they came from in Russia. We were too young to ask questions and nothing much was ever said – sadly!"

Minsk, The Berman ancestral home, is presently the capital of Byelorussia located on the Svisloch River, a tributary of the Berezina. First mentioned in 1066, Minsk was an

outpost on the road from Kiev to Polotsk and was part of the Polotsk principality. In 1101 it became the capital of the Minsk principality and part of Lithuania in 1326. At the end of the 15th century it became a great craft and trade center.

Joined to Poland by the Union of Lublin (1569), Minsk passed to Russia in the second partition of Poland (1703). The city's industrial development began in the 1870's, the period during which it is probable that Chonon and Khasia were married and when (Chana) Esther, Golda and Baila were born.

It was one of the largest Jewish centers of Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages. Before the Second World War, some 40 percent of the population was Jewish. In 1941 - 1943 Minsk was a concentration center for Jews prior to their extermination by the Germans.

While the Bermans deem themselves to be of Russian ancestry, the history of Minsk illustrates that, depending upon the historic dates of the arrival of their forebearers to the area, their land was at various times a part of Lithuania, Poland and Russia. Minsk and Byelorussia were part of Russia for 150 years prior to the birth of Chonon Berman.

Our family sources for understanding what it was like in Russia for Chonon Berman and the family is Bessie Levitz Barkan Diamond (1907 - 2000) the daughter of Balia (Berman) and Aaron Levitz, and granddaughter of Chonon & Khasia, who wrote:

“My grandfather (Chonon Berman) wise 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 work.”

She went on to record:

“A formal education was my Zaydie's (grandfather'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 three girls were also educated.”

We know that Chonon had at least one sister, Fannie, who married Meyer Kravitz. They lived in New Haven and were included in the Berman Family; they appear in the pictures of the early Berman Family Seders. The Kravitzs had at least one daughter, Rose, who likewise is included in a Berman Family Seder photograph.

We have prepared and include herein the beginning of a genealogical chart of the parents of Chonon Berman including skeletal information of the family of this sister, Fannie. There is no presently known information as to other siblings.

(The next phase in writing the history of Chonon & Khasia Berman is, of course, doing genealogical research to trace the family back through the parents of Chonon and his own brothers and sisters. Any information that can be provided relating to the forefathers (and foremothers) of Chonon & Khasia is earnestly solicited and will be very much appreciate.)

GENEALOGY OF THE PARENTS AND CHILDREN OF CHONON BERMAN

(See Chapter 11, The Ancestors of Chonon Berman)

BERMAN

b.

@ RUSSIA

— Married —

@ RUSSIA

b.

@ RUSSIA

Children:

CHONON BERMAN

b. April 3, 1852

@ Dolginow, RUSSIA

d. August 3, 1936

@ New Haven, CT

FANNIE BERMAN

b.

@ RUSSIA

d.

@ New Haven, CT

Married:

@ RUSSIA

Married

@ RUSSIA

KHASIA – x –

b. 1849

@ Glusk, RUSSIA

d. March 30, 1931

@ New Haven, CT

MEYER KRAITZ

b.

@ RUSSIA

d.

@ New Haven, CT

Children:

CHANA ESTHER BERMAN (BERMAN)

b. July 15, 1874 @ RUSSIA

ROSE KRAVITZ

b.

GOLDA BERMAN (RUSSIAN)

b. August 8, 1876 @ RUSSIA

x

BALIA BERMAN (LEVITZ)

b. August 25, 1879 @ RUSSIA

x

HYMAN BERMAN

b. May 5, 1882 @ RUSSIA

BENJAMIN BERMAN

b. April 12, 1885 @ RUSSIA

BARNETT BERMAN

b. October 1, 1887 @ RUSSIA

GUSTAVE BERMAN

b. March 15, 1889 @ RUSSIA

HARRY BERMAN

b. August 15, 1897 @ RUSSIA

Arnold Berman, the son of Barnett and Mae Berman and grandson of Chonon & Khasia, submits that a Kravitz girl, Gladys, married a high school mate of his, Sidney Epstein. He suggest a family relationship. We know nothing further about the Kravitz lineage or descendant.

In writing their memories of their father, Benjamin Berman, in 2002, Sidney Berman and Ruth Berman Harris, two of the children of Benjamin and Pauline Berman and grandchildren of Chonon and Khasia Berman, recorded their collective memory:

“Our father, Benjamin Berman, studied Hebrew in a local Yeshiva. After his Bar Mitzvah, he was sent to live with a family in the big city, so he could further his education. In exchange for room and board and the Russian equivalent of \$12.00 a year, he tutored the family’s sons. Each year, when he returned home from his Hanukkah visit, he would bring his mother 12 oranges, which cost him his yearly salary. Khasia would make marmalade, which the whole family enjoyed for the entire year.”

“When he completed his Hebrew education, he was sent to apprentice at a tailor shop. In his late teens, he became a member of a Socialist group that met in the woods, often at their peril, when soldiers would arrive to break up their meetings. Benjamin sometimes swallowed his notes on paper to avoid arrest. Because he had a photographic memory, he was later chosen to give speeches in the streets of the larger cities; when the soldiers arrived, they found nothing on him and they could never arrest him.”

It is therefore not surprising that Ruth and Sydney go on to record that which is their family oral history:

“When the war of 1905 was declared, our grandfather Chonon was worried that his second son, Benjamin, because of his age, 19, and his Socialist activities, would either be arrested or drafted into 25 years of compulsory service in the Russian Army. His oldest son, Hyman, was a very good trumpet player and was reasonably safe in the army band.

“Benjamin heard from his Socialist buddies that he was about to be arrested and drafted; it was then that Chonon called on a wealthy relative to whisk him out of

the country. As it happened, the cousin was about to take a business trip to Germany, traveling in an exquisite carriage drawn by a team of four stallions. The cousin was accompanied by his assistant, with Benjamin on the floor of the carriage, with boxes and blankets on top of him. As they nonchalantly crossed the border, making an impressive appearance, wrapped in their fur garments and hats, the German border guards waved them through without the usual close inspection.”

The “war of 1905” to which Sidney and Ruth refer was the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905 in which Russia suffered a resounding defeat. Korea was the main issue in the Russo-Japanese wars, first in 1894-1895 and thereafter in 1904-1905. As a result of Japan’s victory in 1905, it gained a protectorate over Korea that was extended to outright possession in 1910.

There is some irony that members of the Berman Family including Eugene Berman, Donald David Berman and Arthur Berman served in the United States Army and Navy respectively during “The Korean War” in 1950 - 1953. A generation after and half a world distant!

During the period of the Russo-Japanese War, before and after, the then Russia’s rulers would yield nothing to the desire for reform growing among the intelligencia or to the idiosyncratic Russian Socialism. The abortive revolution of 1905 evidenced that the autocracy grew worse under the incompetent successors of Czar Alexander II who was assassinated in 1881. Russia’s ruling class responded only to old traditions like anti-Semitism.

It was in Russia that Jews were most predominantly and spectacularly identified with revolutionary violence. It was Lenin, the architect of *putsch* that placed the Bolshevik government in place in October 1917, who wrote in 1903 that “The idea of a Jewish nationality runs counter to the interests of the Jewish proletariat, for it fastens among them, directly or indirectly, a spirit hostile to assimilation,” the spirit of the “ghetto.” Johnson (“A History of the Jews” @ p. 450) concludes that “the whole philosophy of the proletarian revolution was based on the assumption that the Jews, as such, did not exist except as a fantasy promoted by a distorted socio-economic system. Destroy that system and the caricature Jew of history would vanish, like an ugly nightmare, and the Jew would become an ex-Jew, an ordinary man. It gave to their revolutionary struggle a peculiar emotional vehemence, because they believed its success would involve a personal liberation from their Jewish burden as well as a general liberation of humanity from autocracy.”

(Although Lenin was a non-Jew, the executive agent of the Bolshevik government that came to power in October 1917 was Leon Trotsky (1879 -1940), born Lev Davidovich Bronstein, a Jew, the son of a Ukrainian farmer, but himself a product of Odessa Cosmopolitanism. The second wife of Sam Berman, an unrelated Berman, the father of Lillian Berman Berman, the wife of Gustave Berman, one of Chonon & Khasia Berman’s sons, was a first cousin of Leon Trotsky (Bronstein)).

Milton Berman, the older of the sons of Gustave and Lillian Berman, recalls a picture among the family photographs showing his father and others, including some of Gus’

brothers, around a table in the middle of which was a large pistol. The scene was in a wooded area back in pre-revolutionary Russia.

Gus Berman recounted to his younger son, Eugene, his own experiences in Russia during those years when he was 14, 15 and 16. At dinner with Eugene, Carol, Bruce and Caren at a fine continental restaurant in Dania, Florida in the 1960s in one of the few conversations in which he talked about his life in Russia, Gus spoke of being apprenticed as a tailor when he was eight or ten years old, of the poverty in which the family lived, of the pogroms and the rampant anti-Semitism to which everyone was exposed and of the secret meetings in the woods with anti-Czarist speeches and the espousal of revolution against the system. It was in this caldron of social upheaval that the family lived and that eventually precipitated their emigration to a new life in America.

Information extracted from the genealogic research done on the families Berman and Lifshitz resident in the towns of Glusk and Starye Dorogi on Bobruisk yezd provide interesting snippets into the lives of the family during those pre-emigration days:

April 17, 1903. Certificate verifying that Berka Berman belongs to the conscript district
Fond 295 opis 2 delo 50 page 1172

Berka, son of Chonon Berman, petit bourgeois of shtetl Dolginovo of Vilno yezd, 18 years old, illiterate, occupation-tailor will be drafted in 1906. Personal marks: height - 2 arshina 3 vershka, hair and browse color – dark blond, eyes color – brown, mouth, nose and chin – regular, face – clean (no moustache and bear). No distinctive birth marks.

May 18, 1905. Passport issued to Berka son Chonon Berman by Dolginovo
administration.
Fond 295 opis 2 delo 50 page 1173

Religious – Judaism. Listed with Dolginovo community of Vilno guberniya..
Age – 20 years old, single.

Berka Berman signed the document in Russian.

June 15, 1905. Passport issued to Gdallya son Chonon Berman by Dolginovo
administration.

Religious – Judaism. Listed with Dolginovo community of Vilno gubernia.
Age – 14 years old, single, occupation – his father's assistant. Personal marks – 2 archina 3 vrshka, hair color – dark blond, no distinctive birth marks.

July 14, 1905. Foreign passport application for Chonon son of Chaim Berman, petite bourgeois, from Dolginovo of Vileika yezd
Fond 295 opis 2 delo 50 page 1166

I am submitting my passport #161, passports of my sons: Berka #162 and Gdaliya #207 which were issued by Dolginovo administration, as well as the prove belonging to the conscript district of Dolginovo volosti of my oldest son Berka, he goes by #414. Also I am submitting the receipt of Bobruisk treasury as a prover of paid fee (20 ruble) for the foreign passport and two stamps for 60 kop. each. I am asking to issue me a foreign passport and add in it my sons for traveling abroad.

Vasilli Chrapko signed instead of illiterate Chanon Berman.

There is a note on the document that Chanon Berman resides in shtetl Glusk of Bobruisk yezd.

August 11, 1905. Letter from Vilno governor to Minsk governor.
Fond 295 opis 2 delo 50 page 1169

I am notifying that there are no obstacles for Chaim, Berka and Gadalia Berman to travel abroad.

August 20, 1905. Petition of Chanon Berman son of Chaim Berman, petite bourgeois, to the administration of Minsk governor

Fond 295 opis 2 delo 50 page 1167

I have submitted a foreign passport request for myself and my sons Berka and Gdaliya on July 15. I still haven't received one. I have to leave abroad in a very near future for earning more money. I am asking to expedite the process of issuing me the foreign passport.

There is a receipt attached to the document saying that foreign passport #2776 was sent to Bobruisk on August 18.

Note on the document says that on December 9, 1905 Chonon Chaim Berman have gotten back his Russian passport # 161 and foreign passport # 2776.

Yuda Zeldin signed instead of illiterate Chanon Berman,

The other note says that Chanon Berman lives in shtetl Glusk of Bobruisk yezd.

The genealogist's comments are particularly interesting. After noting that Chonon son of Chaim Berman and his sons Beka and Gdaliya were listed as petite bourgeois with the Dolginovo Jewish community at the beginning of the 20th century, all archive records for the family have to be looked up in the Vilnius historical archive, he goes on to share his

speculations:

Foreign passport of Chonon son of Chaim Berman was not found (passports were attached to the archive files incase if applicant would return back home). Because of that fact we can assume that neither Chonon nor of his two sons had returned back to Russia.

There is an interesting note on the document from August 20, 1905 Petition of Chanon Berman son of Chaim Berman, petite Bourgeois, to the administration of Minsk governor, Fond 295 opis 2 delo 50 page 1167, which we would like to explain:

Note on the document says that on December 9, 1905 Chonon Chaim Berman have gotten back his Russian passport # 161 and foreign passport # 2776. Yuda Zeldin signed instead of illiterate Chonon Berman. The other noe says that Chanon Berman lives in shtetl Glusk of Bobruisk yezd. The record should mean that Chonon came from abroad and “returned” (this word is missing in the original document) his foreign passport, and received Russian passport instead.

Often Jews were practicing following trick: if they knew they are not going to return back to Russia they would send their foreign passport with someone who was going back and that person would get to keep two passports (since there were no photos on it at that time). That would allow them to “own two identity” and play it in a difficult life situation.

The information that you provided us says that Bewrka and Gdalia entered United States on September 17, 1905. My assumption is that their father Chonon sent his sons via ship, went back to Russia, applied for a new travel passport for himself, his wife Chasya, son Girsha, and his married sisters, and entered United States on June 13, 1906. Unfortunately we couldn’t find any archives proves for that theory.

As to the relocating Berman Family to Glusk. There are no archives records were found proving that fact. It is true that in 1850 and 1858 census some Jewish boys were concealed. It was done for the purpose of not letting Jewish be drafted to the tsar army. It is very possible that at the time of 1858 census Chonon Berman was underage to be listed, because only heads of the families and their older sons were listed.

In order to prove relationship between Chanon and Chaim it is necessary to look for records from their permanent residency place, which is Dolginovo. It could possibly be not only 1858 revision list, but also 1860-1870 additional revision lists for Dolginovo Jewish community. Also 1874 mail census of Vileika yezd can be researched. These records should be at Vilnius historical archives as well.

Our researcher goes on to summarize the status of his research:

In 1906, 1912 lists of State Duma voters in Bobruisk yezd there were no voters by the last name Beman or Lifshitz whose first name or father’s name would be Gdalia.

We have also researched 1859-1876 additional revision lists of Glusk Jewish Community, 1899-1916 draft lists, 1905 list of tax payers, 1896-1905 foreign passport applications, 1904 family lists of petite bourgeois (the list mentions 12 Lifshits family, but no Chasya daughter of Gdaliya Lifshits). I have to note that this list is only $\frac{3}{4}$ preserved. Metric Books for Glusk Jewish community are missing altogether.

As to other names related to the family Berman. Last name Rosin was mentioned in shtetls Bobruisk, Timkovichy, Rogachev, Nesvizh and Minsk. Last name Myshelov was not mentioned anywhere. Possibly the name was spelled incorrectly, most likely it used to be as Sigelvich or Segalovich. These names were found in 1858 Glusk revision list and in 1904 family list of Gluck Jewish petite bourgeois.

The Genealogists Comments conclude with a reference to some other records that might be related to the searched families:

1906 year Berman Chonon son of Itzka traveled abroad. He is 45 years old, petite bourgeois of Volozhin, Oshmya ny yezd. Resided in town Bonruisk with his wife Riva 47 year's old, daughter Chaya, 19, son Iosel-Girsh 16.

1910 year Myshelova Chana traveled abroad, Place of her permanent residency is shtetl Gorki of Bobruisk yezd. Her nephew Leizer son Ar'ye Sigal, 8 years old, and his father, Ar'ye son of Yudka Sigal, Slutsk petite bourgeois, have traveled with her.

The new life in America would prove to be genealogically simpler to track.

IV. United States Before Chonon & Khasia Berman

*Give me your tired, your poor
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-toss't to me.
I lift my lamp beside the golden door.*

*Sonnet,
The New Colossus
The Statue of Liberty*

The America to which the Berman family would emigrate had, since its fifteenth century “discovery” by Columbus, was a haven to Jews fleeing persecution. It was no coincidence that Christopher Columbus sailed from Spain in 1492 on the eve of the enforcement of the Edict of Expulsion physically driving from Spain any Jew who would not accept immediate conversion to the Catholicism of Spain that had conquered the old Moorish kingdom of Granada. Christopher Columbus, who was legally Genoese, did not write Italian, and is believed to have come from a Spanish family of Jewish origin. Columbus’ navigator, Luis De Tores, was Jewish – though baptized just before they sailed to America. The physician and many of the crew aboard the Nina, Pinta and Santa Maria were Jews escaping from the consequences of the Edict of Expulsion.

In 1654, the French privateer *St. Catherine* brought twenty-three Jewish refugees from Recife in Brazil to the Dutch colonial town of New Amsterdam. As in Amsterdam itself, the position of Jews under Dutch colonial rule was uncertain. The Governor of New Amsterdam, Peter Steyvesant, protested to the Dutch West India Company against this settlement of what he termed ‘a deceitful race’ whose ‘abominable religion’ worshiped at the feet of Mammon. The Jews were allowed to stay but they were not accorded any rights and the Dutch West India Company and governor united to forbid them to build a synagogue. Any ambiguities were resolved in 1664 when the town fell to the English and became New York. Thereafter, the Jews enjoyed not only the advantages of English citizenship but the additional religious freedoms the colonists in the New World had taken for themselves.

Richard Nicholls, New York’s first English governor, stressed the right to freedom of worship when he proclaimed in 1665: “No person shall be molested, fined or imprisoned for differing in judgment in matters of religion . . .” The next governor, Edmund Andros promised equal treatment and equal protection to law abiding persons “of what religion soever.”

It was recorded in 1740 that Jews “enjoy all the privileges common to the other inhabitants of this town and province.” It was the same in Philadelphia where an important Jewish colony began to grow up from the 1730s onward.

At the time of the great emigration, American Jewry seemed fated to remain yet another

strand of fabric of American religiosity, weaving and fading imperceptibly into the whole. The panic set in motion by the events of 1881 changed the prospect irrevocably. In the decade 1881-92, Jews were arriving in the US at the rate of 19,000 a year; in the decade 1892-1903, the average jumped to 37,000 a year; and in the twelve years 1903-14 it averaged 76,000. The Berman clan contributed to the influx during the years 1904-1906. These two million refugee Jews had very little in common with the quarter-million, Reformist, well-healed, American-minded and increasingly apprehensive established Jews who greeted them. The new arrivals were overwhelmingly Yiddish-speaking, Orthodox or Hasidic, wild-eyed and frightened, superstitious and desperately poor. For the first time, American Jewry began to fear new arrivals, especially in such staggering numbers. They rightly judged that an anti-Semitic reaction was inevitable.

Since the Civil War, when the Jews had been perceived as war-profiteers, anti-Semitism had become noticeable. In 1876, a hotel on the New Jersey shore announced publicly in the newspapers that it would not admit Jews. Throughout the New York area, resort hotels split into those which would and those which would not accommodate Jews. The habit spread to Masonic lodges and country clubs and some schools and colleges began to adopt quotas.

The mass arrival of poor Ashkenazi Jews, the Jews from east-central and eastern Europe, in New York force-fed the growth of this new anti-Semitic sub-culture.

The Bolshevik scare effectively ended the policy of American unrestricted emigration which had been the salvation of east European Jewry — and the Berman Family — in the period 1881 - 1914. There had been efforts to impose immigration quotas even before World War I. The war ended the ultra-liberal phase of American democratic expansion; it introduced a phase of xenophobia which was to last a decade. In 1915 the Ku-Klux Klan was refounded to control minority groups, including Jews, who (the Klan claimed) challenged American social and moral norms. The same year a book entitled “The Passing of the Grand Race” by Madison Grant achieved instant notoriety by the claims that America’s superior racial stock was being destroyed by unrestricted immigration, not least of which were eastern European Jews. America’s intervention in World War I was followed by the Espionage Act (1917) and the Sedition Action (1918), which had the effect of associating aliens with treason.

The result of the growing xenophobia was the 1921 Quota Act providing that the number of immigrants admitted in any one year was not to exceed 3 per cent of their existing stock in the US in 1910. The 1924 Johnson-Reed Act cut the figure to 2 per cent and pushed the bar-date back to 1890. The net effect was to cut total immigration to 154,000 yearly and reduce the Polish, Russian and Rumanian quotas, almost entirely of Jews, to a total of 8,879. It was effectively the end of mass Jewish immigration to the United States.

The Jewish community in America between the wars should not be seen as embattled. Numbering over four and a half million by 1925, it was in the rapid progress of becoming the largest, richest and most influential Jewish community in the world. Judaism was America’s third religion. The Jews were not merely accepted they were becoming part of the American core and already making decisive contributions to shaping the American matrix.

In the 1920s, Jews occupied positions of strength in banking, stock brokering, real estate, retail, distribution and entertainment. More important, perhaps, was the growing Jewish success in the professions made possible by the enthusiasm with which Jewish families converged on the opportunities open to them in America to secure a higher education for their children. Some colleges, especially in the Ivy League, imposed Jewish quota limitations. Helen Berman Rhein, the daughter of Barnett, a 1904 immigrant, was a 1935 graduate of the Yale University School of Music. The Berman family enjoyed the opportunities that America provided and through their own efforts, reaped the rewards of the country that lifted its lamp to them, and the Bermans became a part of the fabric of America.

When Chonon Berman was born in 1852 and Khasia, his wife, in 1849, the United States was embroiled in the moral and political debate over the issues of slavery. It was the times of the infamous Dred Scott Case, of John Brown, of Abraham Lincoln and, in 1861-1865, the American Civil War and, in 1863, the Emancipation Proclamation.

It was a time when Southerners argued that “to take a black from Africa and set him up in comfort on a plantation was the equivalent, allowing for perceived racial differences, of allowing a penniless European peasant free entry and allowing him, in a few years, to buy his own farm.” It was a time when the unresolved constitutional issues, “the knotty problem of slavery” that was the subject of several compromises at the Constitutional Convention held in Philadelphia in 1787, demanded the attention of the country and a moral resolution.

It was a time of Western expansion, of Mark Twain, of the Wild West, of the first “settlement” of San Francisco and of the California Gold Rush following the discovery of gold at Sutler’s Mill in the Sacramento Valley on January 24, 1848. It was the time of cowboys and Indians. The Great Sioux War of 1876 - 1877 was by no means the fiercest of the many Indian wars but it included one of the best remembered incidents, the annihilation of General George Custer’s command on June 25, 1876 near the valley of the Little Bighorn River. Chonon Berman was 24 at the time; (Chana) Esther was born two years before the Great Sioux wars and Golda the year of the Battle of Little Big Horn.

It was a time of industrialization, the rise of unfettered capitalism and monopoly as well as the time of Jesse James (1847 - 1882), the railroad bandit and notorious killer, and Billy the Kid (1859 - 1881) who were unknown contemporaries of Chonon Berman who lived half a world away and in a different society.

In the 1870s, 1880s and 1890, Americans were conscious that they were the proud inhabitants of the world’s wealthiest country, enjoying living standards unprecedented in the history of mankind. The archetypical hero of the age was Andrew Carnegie (1835 - 1919) who understood what America was about — the freedom to get rich and then, for him, the duty to give that wealth away. The individual names of the times were Carnegie, J.P. Morgan; the names of “corporate” America were Standard Oil, American Tobacco Company, American Bell Telephone Company and the Pennsylvania Company. It was in 1890 that the Sherman Anti-Trust Act began federal regulation.

Very high buildings began to make their appearance in Chicago in the late 1870s and early 1880s. The New York skyline was beginning to assume its characterization from as early as 1876. The ten story Western Union headquarters was erected in 1873 - 1875,

following quickly by the eleven story Tribune Building, the twenty-story Manhattan Insurance giant of 1893. In 1909 - 1910 Metropolitan Life built and occupied a building 700 feet high, the world's tallest for a time.

New York had begun as a Dutch city, had exploded to a mainly English city and in the 19th century had broadened into a multiethnic city much favored by Germans and by the Irish. Thereafter came the Italians, the Greeks and the Jews from eastern Europe. The savage state pogroms in Russia from 1881 saw dramatic rises in the number of Jews arriving in New York in the 1890s and, particularly during the twelve years, 1903 - 1914, the time when the Berman family arrived.

The refugees and the "huddled masses yearning to be free" crowded most particularly into the Lower East Side of New York, one and a half square miles bound by the Bowery, Third Avenue, Catherine Street, 14th Street and the East River. In 1894 the density of Manhattan reached 142.2 people per acre as compared to 126.9 in Paris and 100.8 in Berlin.

Over half a million Jews were crowded into the Lower East Side and the heart of New York Jewry was the Tenth Ward, where, in 1893, 74,401 people lived in 1,196 tenements spread over six blocks. In the 1890s the Tenth Ward was probably the most crowded habitation in the whole human history. By 1900 there were 1,585,000 people in Manhattan.

New York was a contrast of luxury skyscrapers surrounded by slums, an image of rich-and-poor America. The Jewish immigrant poor were "sweated labor", most of them in the needle trades. By 1913 clothing was New York's biggest industry. But the apparent rich-poor dichotomy was different in kind to that of Russia in that it offered huge opportunities of upward mobility. The whole of America was upward mobility, but New York was the epic center of ascent for the penniless immigrant. Many immigrants stayed in the Lower East Side for only a matter of weeks or months. The average Jewish residence was fifteen years. Then they moved to Brooklyn, to Harlem, to the Bronx and Washington heights, then further to places such as New Haven, Connecticut and inland. Vast numbers became doctors and lawyers. Others set themselves up as small businessmen and then became big businessmen. One-time Jewish peddlers became mail-order tycoons, epitomized by Julius Rosenwald's Sears, Roebuck & Company. The family of Benjamin Bloomingdale opened a dry-goods store in 1872 and had over 1,000 employees in its East Side shop by 1888. The Altman Brothers had 1,600 employees. Isodore and Nathan Strauss took over R.H. Macy,. Other families created Gimbals', Stern's and Abraham & Straus.

The ability of America to transform millions of emigrants into self-confident citizens was the strength of the expanding republic and the lure of the torch of the Statue of Liberty who responded to the invitation extended to the "huddled masses" and the "wretched refuse" that included the Bermans.

The Bermans were not among the early wave of immigrants that initially settled in New York and then moved on. It would appear that it was the family of Chonon Berman's sister, Fannie Kravitz, who moved on to New Haven, Connecticut where they would welcome the members of the Berman Family beginning in 1904 and thereafter.

It was the Kravitz family whose settlement in New Haven was the reason that first Benjamin and, thereafter, the rest of the family that left Russia and settled in their new homeland, New Haven, Connecticut, United States of America.

IV. New Haven Before Chonon & Khasia Berman

John Davenport, who with Theophilus Eaton and a company of parishioners and families from the English counties of Kent and Hertfordshire founded what is now New Haven, Connecticut, in 1638 was, at one time, the lecturer of the Church of St. Lawrence, Old Jewry, London. Davenport and about 500 followers hoped to create a Christian utopia on the banks of the Quinnipiac; Christian in the sense that the church would provide the force to hold the community together and utopian in the sense that the community was to live in perfect unity, perfect peace and perfect order.

A hundred and fifty years later, in 1783, two years after the battle at Yorktown, the final battle of the American Revolution, New Haven began to reorganize politically for the dawning national era.

As part of New Haven's design for economic growth, immigration was encouraged by the town that had in colonial times freely "warned out" transients. In 1784 the city voted to re-admit to citizenship "such Tories as are of fair character and will be good and useful members of society." At the same time, in a further demonstration of efforts to establish an open society, a distinguished city "Committee of Hospitality" was created "to assist all such strangers as shall come to the city for the purpose of settlement therein." New Haven stood poised on the threshold of unprecedented urban growth.

Slavery had existed in New Haven since the days of Davenport and Eaton, but slave labor had never been an important part of its economy. In the reforming atmosphere of the Revolution, Connecticut passed the Gradual Emancipation Act in 1788 that prohibited slave trade.

The horrors of the slave trade were vividly brought home to New Haven's citizens in an incident of national significance and historic import.

On September 1, 1839, a United States coastal patrol boat brought into New Haven Harbor as the nearest port with a United States District Court, the Spanish Schooner *Amistad* of which the patrol had taken possession near Montauk Point, Long Island. Imprisoned on the ship were about 50 Mendi warriors, their young and handsome chief Cinque and two Cuban plantation owners. It appeared that Mendis had been captured in Africa and taken to Cuba by Spanish slave traders. The plantation owners bought them and were transporting them to another port in Cuba when the Mendis mutinied. They captured the vessel, killed the captain and cook and, after the crew had fled, tried to force the owner to sail the *Amistad* back to Africa. Instead, the Cubans had zigzagged in coastal waters, hoping for just such an opportunity as the appearance of the United States coastal patrol presented.

The Mendis were brought to the County Jail on Church Street and a steady stream of anti-slavery leaders visited them. The prisoners' daily exercise period on the green soon drew curious and admiring crowds from all over the city. The exotic warrior tribesmen, so unlike the New Haveners' conception of downtrodden slaves, gave the city an

opportunity to envision the African heritage of its own black population's disadvantages. While community understanding of the anti-slavery impulses grew, the owners, the officers of the American "salvage" ship and the Spanish government fought over possession of the *Amistad* and its passengers until a Supreme Court decision returned the Mendis to Africa in 1842.

It is an interesting aside to history that it was John Quincy Adams, a President of the United States, who defended the involuntary passengers of the *Amistad* and their rights. Because Martha Wheeler Berman, Milton Berman's ex-wife was a descendant of the Adam's family, it can be rightfully said that the Bermans are related to Presidents. Much to Milton's dismay, however, it is not he but only his children, Mark and Meredith and her descendants who can say that they are descendants – related by blood - of those who arrived in America on the Mayflower. Only on their mother's side! By the same token, the Mayflower descendants can likewise claim that they are related – by marriage – to the Chonon & Khasia Berman Family.

A replica of the historic *Amistad* is now anchored as an historic monument and tourist attraction in New Haven harbor.

By the election of 1860, even though New Haven's town politics had been dominated by local Democratic leadership, there was just enough nationalist and anti-slavery sentiment to give Lincoln's Republican party a 128-vote majority in the three-way ticket that split 6,154 votes among the Republican and the Northern and Southern Democratic Parties.

By the mid-19th century, the time when Chonon and Khasia were born in Russia, the City of New Haven had assumed a modern shape. Its population doubled between 1830 and 1860. It was no longer ethnically and religiously homogeneous because great waves of immigration to America had already brought many newcomers to New Haven as Connecticut's chief receiving port.

As early as 1861, a map of New Haven identifies nine Congregational, five Episcopal, two Baptist and two Roman Catholic Churches and one Jewish Synagogue. It has been stated that "the greatest change in New Haven was in the attitudes of its people – in ideas about progress through commercial and industrial innovation and improvement through civic and social action." The beginning of the Civil War not only confirmed the nationalist implications of the American Revolution but also marked "the final surrender of traditional society."

Expanding economic opportunity during the 1830s, 1840s and 1850s attracted a diversity of people to the city among whom were Europeans of Irish and German descent, who entered the United States through New York or Boston, and native born Afro-Americans. New Haven's population jumped from 10,678 in 1830 to 40,000 between 1850 and 1860. While most of the newcomers were unskilled or semi-skilled laborers for whom the promise of upward mobility went unfulfilled for many years, opportunity seemed unlimited for those few individuals with entrepreneurial experience, occupational skills, capital to invest and drive. They were able to start their own businesses, shops and stores.

The influx of newcomers upset some long-time New Haven residents who saw their traditional neighborhoods dotted with non-Yankee, non-Protestant Irish and German "foreigners." Close to 3,000 inhabitants in 1860 were foreign-born, mainly Irish

Catholics but also a sprinkling of Germans, both of Jewish and Christian religious affiliations. One reflection of the city's increasing cultural diversity was the proliferation of religious institutions. In 1855 six years after the birth of Chonon Berman in the ghetto of Tsarist Russia, New haven had 27 churches and one synagogue.

Yale university contributed immeasurably to New Haven's cultural atmosphere, preventing the city from becoming just another factory town as Bridgeport and Waterbury would become. It was in 1840 that Bavarian Jews organized the first Jewish Congregation in New Haven and in 1843 that the state of Connecticut amended its statutes to permit Jews to form a congregation

The Collegiate School was founded at the beginning of the 18th century and was brought to New Haven shortly thereafter. In 1716 Elihu Yale, a wealthy entrepreneur in the Indian Trade, gave a large benefaction to the Collegiate School in New Haven which has since borne his name.

It was in 1848 that Sigismond Waterson of New Haven, a German instructor at Yale, became the first Jewish graduate of Yale, receiving the M. D. degree. It was about a quarter century later, in 1874 that Edward Bouchet became the first black graduate of Yale and who was awarded his PhD in 1876, the first earned by a black person in America. While Bouchet was a student at Yale, the college became the beneficiary of a bequest of Mary Goodman, a black resident of New Haven who left her entire estate to establish a scholarship fund for black students.

The "openness" of Yale in meeting the Berman quest for education was a dividend paid in the family's settlement in New Haven. Over the years – over the generations – more Bermans attended Yale University than any other college or university.

Helen Berman Rhein, the daughter of Barnett, a 1905 immigrant to the United States, thirty years after her father's arrival in New Haven, graduated from the prestigious Yale School of Music in 1925.

Sidney Berman the son of Benjamin, a 1904 immigrant to the United States, 35 years after his father's arrival in New Haven, graduated Yale in 1939 and thereafter its Medical School.

Milton R. Berman, son of Gus Berman, a 1906 or 1907 immigrant of the United States, some 40 years after his father's arrival in New Haven and after his own service as a fighter pilot attaining the rank of captain in the United States Air Force in the European Theater of Operations during the Second World War, graduated Yale College in 1946.

And the flow of Berman Yalies has continued unabated unto the generations – first, second third and fourth to date.

The Berman relationship with Yale was not limited solely to academic. Morris Berman was a night guard at Berkeley College at Yale; Dr. Sidney Berman went on to joint the faculty of the Yale Medical School. Ben's clothing store in New Haven was "Yale Clothing" and when Gus migrated to Springfield, Massachusetts and opened his own men's clothing store, he named it the "Yale Sample Clothing Company" that subsequently became Yale Clothing Company, the predecessor of a merger with his son

Milton's business, Genton Clothes, to become Yale-Genton. When asked why the store was named Yale, he would reply with great pride, "I'm originally from New Haven."

An aside is that during the 1910s and 1920s, Samuel Berman, not a real Berman but, rather, the father of Lillian Berman Berman, Gus' wife, ran a saloon adjacent to the Yale campus that catered to the Yalies.

Yale and the Berman Family have had a long and intertwined relationship. Indeed there is a family member, Yale Chussil. Had the family settled elsewhere, his first name could have been Harvard or Brown or, perhaps, Bennington.

Until the late 1840s, emigration to New Haven had been gradual. The first major wave of immigrants came from Ireland immediately after the potato famine. In 1880 Italians and Eastern Europeans began to pour into the city. The Immigrant ethnic groups organized their own social agencies such as the Hebrew Benevolent Society and the Knights of Columbus.

By 1900, 28 percent of the city's population of 100,000 was foreign born. There seemed to be no end of growth in sight as the economy boomed and the population swelled.

New ethnic neighborhoods emerged in the 20th century. The area around Wooster Street was settled by Italians. In the "Hill" section of the downtown area, Irish and Germans were replaced by Eastern European Jews and some Italians. Oak Street and its western extension, Legion Avenue, had a European air with a multitude of small shops, sidewalk stands and pushcarts that were closed on the Saturday Sabbath and open on Sunday.

One Yale student of the class of 1907, a Minnesotan named Sinclair Lewis, was fascinated by the Oak street ambiance and pointed out to his fellow students that "All of us can learn many things about New Haven, to our exceeding profit. How many of the Class in "American Social Conditions" think that only New York has slums?"

Ten years after leaving New Haven Lewis gave literary life to that memory in his short story, "Young Man Axelrod":

They reached the campus about five in the morning . . . policemen wondered to see the celluloid-collared old man and the expensive looking boy rolling arm in arm down Chapel Street in search of a restaurant suitable for poets. They were all closed.

"The Ghetto will be awake by now," said Gil, "We'll go buy some eats and take 'em up to my room. . ."

Down on Oak Street, a place of low shops, smoky lights and alley mouths they found the slum already astir. Gil contrived to purchase boxed biscuits, cream cheese, chicken-loaf, a bottle of cream. While Gil was chauffeuring Knute stared out into the street milkily lighted by wavering gas and the first feebleness of coming day; he gazed upon Kosher signs and advertisements in Russian letters, shawled women and bearded rabbis; which he could never lose. He had traveled abroad tonight."

It was at this time and place that the Bermans – Chonon & Khasia and each of their children — came and became a part of the immigrant community. Khasia could have been the “shawled woman” and Chonon the “bearded rabbi” upon whom Knute gazed that fictional morning.

It was New Haven, a diverse and vibrant community, that in 1917 would have its first Jewish mayor, Samuel Campner, that welcomed the poor, huddled masses, the wretched refuse of foreign shores that were the Bermans.

VI. The Arrival of the Bermans, The family of Fannie (Berman) & Meyer Kravitz

The 1917 and 1924 photographs of the Berman Family Seders that were held at the home of Chonon & Khasia Berman include photographs of Fannie (Berman) & Meyer Kravitz and their daughter, Rose Kravitz. Fannie Berman Kravitz was a younger sister of Chonon Berman who was born between May 29, 1870 and May 27, 1871. The photographs demonstrate a close relationship that existed between brother and sister.

Although nothing is presently known about the parents of Chonon and Fannie or if they had other siblings, the fact that the children of Fannie (Berman) & Meyer Kravitz were born in New Haven, Connecticut in the late 1890s and early 1900s would evidence that Fannie and, probably her husband were residents of New Haven prior to the arrival of any of the children of her brother. Fannie's children were born in New Haven 18 __ (Abraham Kravitz), 1896 (Bertha Kravitz), May 27, 1904 (the twin daughters, -x- and Rose Kravitz). The first of the family of Chonon Berman did not arrive in America until 1904 (Hyman and Benjamin), 1905 (Barnett), 1906/07 (Gustave) and 1906 (Chonon and Harry). It has not as yet been determined as to the date of the immigration of Chonon's daughters, Chana Esther, Golda and Balia and their husbands and children. Whereas it had not been previously determined as to the reason that the Chonon Berman children settled in New Haven, it now appears that they came to the city where their Aunt Fannie Berman Kravitz was located. The unanswered question is now, therefore, why Fannie & Meyer chose New Haven as their home. A question yet to be answered¹

Once the spark of inquisitiveness had been ignited as to Fannie (Berman) & Meyer Kravitz and their descendants the question was first put to Arnold Berman in December of 2002, at the time of the funeral of his mother, Mae. Arnold, the son of Barnett & Mae Berman, hesitated a minute and recalled that a Kravitz girl Gladys, married a high school mate of his. Sidney Epstein. He suggested a family relationship.

It was in May of 2003, on the occasion of the funeral of Arnold that the question of the whereabouts of the Kravitz family was raised with Rosalind Schub Berman, the widow of Arnold. Roz had a recollection that Rose Kravitz, one of the children of Fannie (Berman) & Meyer Kravitz, had married a Meyer Burack and that they had a son, Michael who was a lawyer in Washington, D.C. We found Michael, of counsel at the Washington office of the prestigious law firm of Wilmer, Cutler & Pickering. It is through Michael the grandson of Fannie (Berman) & Meyer Kravitz, that the information for this family history has been obtained.

In response to a letter of introduction and inquiry, on October 27, 2003 Michael replied by e-mail:

“My parents were Meyer Burack and Rose Ann Kravitz Burack, both from New Haven. My mother’s father was Michael Kravitz, and my mother’s mother was Fannie Berman Kravitz. So you and I are indeed related. Somehow Fannie apparently became estranged from the rest of the Berman family back in the 1930’s. (I don’t know why, though I do have a theory.)

His e-mail provide further proof of the family relationship:

“I remember occasions in the 1950’s when my parents and I were driving through Springfield and my mother mentioned that one of her cousins owned a clothing store there.”

He went on to ask:

“Was that someone in your family?”

The answer, of course, was that it was my father, Gus Berman, the owner of Yale Clothing Company. After a fire destroyed Yale Clothing Company, my father merged with his son Milton’s Genton Clothes to form the successor Yale/Genton on Riverdale Street in West Springfield, Massachusetts.

It is through Michael that we have initially traced the genealogy and history of the family and descendants of Fannie (Berman) & Meyer Kravitz.

Preliminarily, there were factual differences in family remembrances:

Σ Michael’s information was that his grandmother, Fannie, was born in Vilna, Lithuania rather than in Dolginon, Russia where our available information states that Chonon was born.

Σ Michael’s information was that his grandfather’s name was “Michael” rather than “Meyer” as is recorded in all of the Berman family records. He wrote “If he was indeed named Meyer, it’s news to me.”

It is suggested that “Michael” was an Americanization of “Meyer”.

Σ Michael’s information was that his grandparent’s name was spelled “Krawitz” rather than “Krayitz” that we have recorded.

It was suggested to Michael that many of the Russian immigrants had trouble pronouncing the vowel “v” that came out as “w.” My own father, Gus, was fond of wodka martinis.

Σ Michael refers to his grandmother, Fannie, as “Pearl”, a reasonable name substitution.

Dates that did not compute in context of the family history were reconciled with

“Grandma Rose’s Stories, memories of Michael’s mother, Rose Kravitz Burack, we have been able to weave a history of the family of Fannie (Pearl) Berman & Meyer (Michael) Kravitz.

The earliest information we have available is that provided by Michael who has written:

“Rose Ann Kravitz (my mother) was born on May 27, 1904”

“According to the Copy of Birth Record for my mother, her father, Michael Kravitz, was 34 years old when my mother was born, which would mean he was born between May 28, 1869 and May 27, 1870.”

“According to the same Copy of Birth Record, mother’s mother, Fannie Berman, was 33 years old when my mother was born, which means that Fannie was born between May 28, 1870 and May 27, 1871.”

Fannie & Meyer, who are believed to have married in New Haven, Connecticut, are purported to have had four children, Abraham Kravitz (18__), Bertha Kravitz (1896) and twins, – x – and Rose (1904).

Michael confirms that his mother was born in 1904, had a twin sister who died in infancy, “had an older sister, Bertha, who was born in 1926” and “had a brother, Abe (short for Abraham, I assume), who I believe had a trash business in New Haven.”

Michael raises questions concerning Abe:

“Abe may have been a half-brother of my mother; I always had the impression that Fannie had a first husband – Abe’s father – who died, and thereafter she married Michael Kravitz and had the daughters Rose and Bertha with him, but I’m really not sure about this.”

Even were Michael’s hypothesis to be correct, Abraham Kravitz and his progeny would still be members of the Berman Family tracing their blood line through Fannie. The questions of a first marriage and the descendants of Abraham Kravitz are being researched. Our hints are that Abe had a daughter, Gladys, who may have married Sidney Epstein.

Grandma Rose’s Stories recall remembrances of her family:

My Family

I was born May 27, 1904 in New Haven, Connecticut. My mother and father were Pearl and Michael Kravitz. I had a sister Bertha and a brother Abraham. My sister was 8 years older than me and my brother was older than Bertha. I had a twin sister that was born with me on May 27th, but she was much smaller and weaker than I was and she died when we were only six months old. I don’t remember my twin sister but I always wished I had a sister or brother that was my age.

(Records indicate that the correct names of Rose’s parents were not”Pearl and Michael Kravitz but rather “Fannie and Michael Krawitz. It should be noted,

however, that in the version of “Grandma Rose’s Stories” provided to me, the family name is spelled Kravitz rather than the presumably original Krawitz.)

I was very lonely at times when I was a child. I always thought that when I was a mother I would have a least one son and one daughter. I had a wonderful son but had to wait for more than 40 years before I got a lovely daughter, Maria, and two wonderful granddaughters Victoria and Cristina.

My Father

I always had blond hair until I became a grandma and then my hair turned white like it is today. In Yiddish cup means head. My father always used to call me his goldener cup or gold head.

(This text is unedited. The word “cup” should be the Yiddish “kaupf” that translates to “head” as in the admonition, “Use your kaupf, use your head!”)

My Mother

By the time I was old enough to drive the automobile was firmly established in our city. My mother wanted me to learn to drive as soon as I could. She thought it was important for me to learn to drive so I could be more independent. And, so I could take her places that she wanted to go.

When I was about 17 my mother hired Mr. Smith to teach me how to drive. I learned quickly and got a drivers license right away. What do you think my father said when he found out I had a drivers license? He said he would never ride in the car when I was driving.

The stories also preserve her remembrances of her childhood in New Haven.:

An Early Memory

One of my earliest memories is about something that happened when I was 4 years old in 1908. In those days my family had a horse and wagon because the automobile had not been invented yet. One day I was looking out the window when I saw a very funny site. It was winter time and there was a lot of snow on the ground. My father, Michael Kravitz was outside with our horse and wagon. All of a sudden the horse slipped on the ice and fell down on the ground. I thought it was very funny to see our poor horse on the ground trying desperately to get up. My father pulled and pushed and pushed and pulled for a long time until finally, the horse was on his feet again.

Sunday Rides

Every Sunday from our horse and buggy days until we had an automobile my family and I would take a ride on Sunday. There are two big rocks on either side of New Haven. One to the east and one to the west. Every Sunday we would take a drive either to the west rock or the east rock.

One day after I had my license for some time, my mother, father and I were going

to take a ride in the country. All of a sudden my mother turned to my father and said, "Let Goldener Cup drive today." My father surprised us all by saying yes. After that my father always let me drive whenever we went out for our Sunday drives.

My Friend Norma

I am very glad Victoria has a close friend like Katie. I know they will be friends all their lives. Their friendship reminds me of my friend Norma Thalberg. I was thinking of Norma today because her birthday was January 29. January 29 always meant a big party. Of course everyday was like a party at Thelma's house. With 5 brothers and all their friends it was always a lot of fun.

There were a lot of kids in my neighborhood when I was a kid. All our backyards backed up to on another so we had a large area to play in. When it snowed we would all get together to play. The boys would make a huge mountain of snow, then we would get cardboard boxes and slide down the hill. It was great fun.

Michael provides us with additional information about the Kravitz family:

My mother, who was born in 1904, had an older sister, Bertha, who was born in 1896. Bertha went to California in the early 1920's. Around 1924-25 she married a man named Lou Berman. They had a daughter whose married name was Minna Mott and who at one time lived in Encino, California. Minna had a son named William (Billy) Mott, who at one time lived in Pershing Park, Pennsylvania. As for Bertha, so far as I know she lived in the Los Angeles area for the remainder of her life. She died in 1971. My mother went to California by train in September 1929 to visit Bertha. Bertha tried to get my mother to stay there, but my mother wanted to return to New Haven to be with her mother. She returned by ship, leaving from San Diego in March 1930 on a two-week trip via the Panama Canal.

As has been true throughout the Berman family, the photographs of the Seders evoked warm memories of the traditional family event and sparked specific memories and remembrances as illustrated by Michael's reaction to his receipt of the picture of the 1925 Berman Family Seder:

The picture of the 1925 Berman Family Seder is one I have seen before. My mother had a copy of it and used to show it to me from time to time. My mother is indeed No. 13 in the picture, and her mother Fannie is No. 24. No. 32 does indeed look like my mother's father Michael (or Meyer), although I never before focused on his presence there, probably because I never knew him. This picture must have been taken not long before he died. My mother told me that her father died of asthma, exacerbated by coal dust from the furnace in their home.

(Michael Burack never met his maternal grandfather, Meyer Kravitz, after whom he was named. Michael confirms that his grandfather "died long before I was born...I believe in the mid-1920s)

The 1925 photograph evoked other memories that Michael has related:

I noticed that the 1925 photo was taken on Ward Street. My father's father, Charles Burack, and two of his children and their families used to live on Ward Street, where my parents and I would visit them every couple of weeks. (We would drive in from our home in Willimantic and, after January 1951, from Hartford.) The Burack house was on Ward between Congress and Davenport, around the corner from the Jewish Home; for some reason, I have a feeling that the street number was 36, but this is really only a guess.

On receiving a copy of the photograph of the 1917 Berman Family Seder, Michael observed,

The picture of the 1917 Berman Family Seder is new to me. No. 28 is indeed my mother's father, but I am unsure about the attributions of my mother and her mother. My mother is identified as No. 10 and her mother as No. 18. When the photo was taken, my mother was 12 years and 11 months old. (She was born in May 1904). Person No. 10 looks to me a lot older than that; indeed, at first I thought it was my mother's mother. But after all, she is sitting on the floor with the older kids. And person no. 18 doesn't look to me like my grandmother, but then I didn't know her when she was that young. In the end, I'm uncertain about the 1917 photo.

A question can be raised as to why Rose, 13 at the time of the 1917 Berman Family Seder and 21 at the time of the 1925 event, is the only child of Fannie & Meyer present at the events. The answer is presumed to be that Bertha would have been 20 in 1917 and 28 in 1925. It is likely that she had already gone west to California. Abe was even older.

In tracing the family of Fannie (Berman) & Meyer Kravitz and contacting their grandson, Michael L. Burack, it was clear that there was an estrangement that occurred in the 1930's between the families of Chonon Berman and his sister, Fannie (Berman) Kravitz. It was a family situation of which I had no prior knowledge or suspicion.

The matter was one that was initially alluded to by Michael Burack and his theory of the cause of the schism and the facts relating thereto is the stuff that mysteries are made of, twists of history that add excitement to genealogy and the discovery of family history. The story was one of the highlights – and rewards – of the years of searching.

In a letter dated December 17, 2003, Michael wrote:

“On to the estrangement. As I mentioned, my mother's sister Bertha went out to California in the 1920's and married Lou Berman there. Lou was in some aspect or other of the financial/investment business. Lou had a brother named Jack Berman who, according to my mother, became implicated to some kind of fraudulent stock scheme involving the Signal Hill oil wells. I did some research on this in the Library of Congress. It seems that one Jacob Berman (who went also by the name Jack Bennett) was involved in a financial scandal involving an entity called the Julian Petroleum Corporation. Articles in the Los Angeles Times describe Jack as a “confessed briber” and the “bright young man” of the scheme and say that he turned State's evidence. At one point he refused to answer

questions in court and was charged with criminal contempt. The articles are not very clear, and I couldn't tell exactly what the nature of the scheme was, but the articles certainly suffice to corroborate the general thrust of any mother's accounts.

"Now the important thing is that my mother said that Jack Berman got Lou Berman – Bertha's husband – "into trouble." I never knew what that "trouble" was, but I do know that this was a source of considerable embarrassment to my mother and, almost certainly, to her mother, Fannie Berman Kravitz. So my theory of the estrangement is that Fannie cut herself off from the rest of the Berman family because she felt humiliated by her son-in-laws disgrace. (It may also have gone both ways; perhaps she was to some degree been ostracized by some members of the Berman family because of this stain on the family's reputation.) I don't really know, but it is consistent with what facts I do know and with the personalities of my mother and her mother. (I should add that my mother used to tell me that the estrangement had a different cause – that the rest of the Berman family was bent out of joint because they weren't invited to Bertha's wedding. This never seemed plausible to me, and I've never believed it.)"

What Michael Burack knew at the time he related his explanation of the circumstances that had separated the Berman and Kravitz families for some seventy-five years was that the Eugene Berman to whom he was speaking was the son of Gus & Lillian Berman. Gus was the son of Chonon & Khasia Berman, the brother and sister-in-law of Fannie (Berman) & Meyer Kravitz. Eugene through his father was the direct descendant of the parents of Chonon Berman and Fannie (Berman) Kravitz, brother and sister and that he and Michael were therefore cousins.

What Michael Burack did not know at the time he related his explanation of the circumstances that had separated the Berman and Kravitz families for some seventy-five years was that the Eugene Berman to whom he was speaking was the son of Gus & Lillian (Berman) Berman. Lil's maiden name was Berman. She was the daughter of an unrelated Samuel & Minna (Merman) Berman, also of New Haven, in the early 1900s. Lil was one of five children, her siblings having been Louis Berman (b. 1893), Jacob Berman (b. 1895), Mary Berman Cohn (b. 1900) and Henry Berman (b. 1910). Louis and Jacob were the Berman brothers to whom Michael referred, Louis (Lou) Berman as the husband of Michael's Aunt Bertha and Jacob Berman (Jack Bennett), who "was involved in a financial scandal involving an entity called the Julian Petroleum Corporation and who, it is generally conceded got Lou Berman – Bertha's husband – into trouble."

The families of Chonon & Khasia Berman and of Samuel & Minna (Merman) Berman intermarried twice: first Gus & Lillian (Berman) Berman and thereafter Bertha (Kravitz) & Louis Berman. The families and their descendants were "related" by marriage. The children of Gus & Lil were related by blood to both of the Berman families as was Minna Berman, the only child of Bertha & Louis Berman and her child, William (Billy) Mott and his descendants. Minna Berman Mott, her husband, their son, William (Billy) Mott and his descendants have not been located as of this 2004 writing. They will, however, be traced and identified.

While there may well have been other causes or contributing causes for the estrangement (i.e. "The rest of the Berman family was bent out of joint because they weren't invited to

Bertha's wedding"), the facts of the story recounted by Mike Burack are, unfortunately, true.

Jules Tygiel, a Professor of History at San Francisco State University, is the author of **The Great Los Angeles Swindle, Oil, Stocks, and Scandal During the Roaring Twenties** published by Oxford University Press in 1994. It is a must read history for the families of Louis Berman and Bertha (Kravitz) Berman. Michael Davis, author of the City of Quartz, wrote, "Like a latter-day Philip Marlowe, Tygiel brilliantly unravels the secret history of Los Angeles, in the frenzied era of C.C. Julian and Aimee Semple McPherson, when oil jobbers and evangelist stole the dreams of the masses." The names of Jacob Berman and Louis Berman could well have been added to the list of those named.

We refer to you the Great Los Angeles Swindle for the historical details of the involvement of the Berman brothers – the sons of Samuel & Minna Berman – in an extraordinary bit of roaring twenties history. The back jacket teaser is submitted as an enticement:

In Los Angeles in the 1920s C.C. Julian and the Julia Petroleum Corporation were household words, and the Julian Pete swindle ranked with Teapot Dome as one of the great scandals of the era. It symbolized not merely what FDR would call "a decade of debauchery of group selfishness," but the failed hopes and dreams of the great boom of the 1920s. Indeed, no single story captures the essence of that decade in America – its bootlegging and rampant speculation, its entrepreneurial mania for mergers, its overlap of business and politics, and its infatuation with wealth, whiskey, and Hollywood glamour – quite so well as the Julian Petroleum swindle.

The Great Los Angeles Swindle begins with a murder (the sudden courtroom shooting of banker Motley Flint, the debonair movie financier and city booster), ends with a spectacular suicide in Shanghai, and, in between, takes as many unexpected twists and turns as any mystery novel. Jules Tygiel offers a gripping account of this wonderfully complex scandal, which features such legendary figures as Louis B. Mayer, Cecil B. DeMille, Charlie Chaplin (who decks Julian in a fist fight in Hollywood's posh Café Petroushka), *Los Angeles Times* publisher Harry Chandler, H.M. Haldeman (grandfather of Watergate's H.R. Haldeman), and pioneer radio evangelist "Fighting Bob" Shuler. Bankers, conmen, underworld kingpins, political bosses, corrupt public officials, bribed jurors, and other colorful characters round out the cast.

At the book's center stands the flamboyant C.C. Julian, a likable if suspect promoter whose life was flavored with controversy. Tygiel follows Julian to Los Angeles, where during the spectacular oil boom of the 1920s, his innovative newspaper advertising and early successes won him a devoted following. Forced by major oil companies to cut back production, he created Julian Petroleum, which he promised would soon rival Standard Oil. Dispensing "Defiance Gasoline" from its pumps, Julian Petroleum fought off the efforts of state regulatory agencies and federal investigators to shut it down before Julian surrendered ownership to oilman S.C. Lewis. Lewis and his crafty associate Jacob Berman issued millions of shares of counterfeit stock while pyramiding stock pools and loan schemes into a \$150,000,000 fraud. The infamous Million Dollar Pool (which included Flinty, Mayer, Haldeman, and other prominent Los Angeles businessmen) delivered lucrative profits to its elite members. While tens of thousands of small investors lost their nest eggs when Julian Petroleum collapsed in 1927. The aftermath of the scandal included the longest trial in the history of the county, unseated a district attorney and a governor, enthroned a former Ku Klux Klansman as mayor of Los Angeles, and filled the courts with related cases and scandalous revelations well into the Depression decade.

The Great Los Angeles Swindle is a saga of the roaring twenties, with its glorification of business, its get-rich-quick mentality, and its paucity of government regulation, which bred speculation, corruption, and corporate chaos throughout the nation in a manner not dissimilar to the financial chicanery of our own era. Above all, it is a compelling story and swiftly moving narrative that readers will not soon forget.

Both the Berman brothers – Jack and Louis - were sentenced to and served time at Alcatraz, the notorious California island prison located in the middle of San Francisco Bay.

The stories of the exploits of Jacob and Louis Berman are enough to have caused any family embarrassment and to have caused "estrangements."

It appears that although there was an estrangement, Rose Kravitz did maintain contact with some of the cousins, notably Mae Berman and her daughter-in-law, Roz Berman.

Michael Burack remembers that his mother (Rose) used to spend time with Mae “after when she lived in West Haven in the late 1970's and 1980's. She and Mae ultimately lost touch, and I had always assumed that May had died.” He was amazed to discover that she had lived to 108 and was, as of April, 2002 still alive. Mae died on December 9, 2002.

Whatever the real reason for the estrangement, with the contacting of Michael Burack in 2003, the families were reunited and the descendants of Fannie (Berman) & Meyer Kravitz added to the list of Berman Family members and invited to participate in the 2004 Berman Family event, a picnic to be held at the Beardsley Zoo in Bridgeport, Connecticut.

The Children and Grandchildren of Fannie (Berman) & Meyer Kravitz identified as of the date of this draft of the Berman Family History were:

Abraham Kravitz	(18__ -)
m.	(18__ -)
Gladys Kravitz	(-)
m. Sidney Epstein	(-)
Theodore (Teddy) Kravitz	(-)
m. Sylvia (- x -)	(-)
Bertha Kravitz	(1896 - 1971)
m. Louis Berman	(1893 -)
Minna Berman	(-)
m (- x -) Mott	(-)
William (Billy) Mott	(-)
(Twin Baby) Kravitz	(1904 - 1904)
Rose Kravitz	(1904 - 2003)
m. Meyer Burack	(1899 - 1979)
Michael L. Burack	(1942 -)
m. Maria Del Carmen Callego Velazquez	(1949 -)
Victoria Luisa Burack	(1982 -)
Cristina Maria Burack	(1987 -)

ABRAHAM KRAVITZ &

As of this April, 2004 writing, we know little about Abraham Kravitz, his family or his descendants.

While we have recorded Abe as the oldest of the children of Fannie Berman & Meyer Kravitz, Michael L. Burack, the son of Rose (Kravitz) & Meyer Burack and grandson of Fannie (Berman) & Meyer Kravitz, provides his own take on the relationship!

“ . . . my mother had a brother, Abe (short for Abraham, I assume), who I believe had a trash business in New Haven. Abe may have been a half-brother of my mother. I always had the impression that Fannie had a first husband — Abe’s father – who died, and then she married Michael (Editors Meyer) and had the daughters Rose and Bertha with him, but I’m really not sure about this.”

It is beleived but have no evidence that Abe was born in New Haven. His birth date has to be prior to the 1896 birth date of his younger sister Bertha, therefore eighteen ninety something (189__).

Michael notes that he has the least information about Abe. He provides us with what he remembers:

“I can’t recall the name of Abe’s wife. I do know Abe had a daughter, Gladys. I believe he also had a son named Teddy (personably his full name was Theodore) who married a woman named Sylvia. They all lived in Connecticut. The last time I saw any of them was in 1978 at a party that my parents had for Maria and me at the Yale Motor Inn in Wallingford shortly after we were married.”

As an amateur genealogist and sleuth, oh, what I would give to have the invitation list to that 1978 party!

The other recollection that we have is that of Arnold (Sonny) Berman, the son of Barnett & Mae Berman, who recalled that a Kravitz girl, Gladys, married a high school mate of his, Sidney Epstein. Arnold suggested a family relationship. He was, of course correct, he and Arnold were, in fact, related.

Michael Burack informs us that the “last time I saw any of them was in 1978 at a party that my parents had for Maria and me at the Yale Motor Inn in Wallingford shortly after we were married.”

BERTHA (KRAVITZ) & LOUIS BERMAN

Bertha Kravitz was born in New Haven in 1896, the daughter of Fannie (Berman) & Meyer Kravitz. She does not appear in the Berman Family Seder pictures although her younger sister, Rose, does. Bertha moved to California in the early 1920s.

Around 1924-25 “she married a man named Lou Berman.”

Michael L. Nurack, the son of Bertha’s younger sister, Rose Kravitz Burack, recalls:

“My mother went to California by train in September 1929 to visit Bertha. Bertha tried to get my mother to stay there, but my mother wanted to return to New Haven to be with her mother. She returned by ship, leaving San Diego in March 1930 on a two-week trip via the Panama Canal.”

The family history is recounted by Michael:

“Lou was in some aspect or other of the financial/investment business. Lou had a brother named Jack Berman who, according to my mother, became implicated in some kind of fraudulent stock scheme involving the Signal Hill Oil Wells. I did some research in the Library of Congress. It seems that one Jacob Berman (who also went by the name of Jack Bennett) was involved in a financial scandal involving an entity called the Julian Petroleum Corporation. Articles in the *Los Angeles Times* described Jack as a “confessed briber” and the “bright young man” of the scheme and say that he turned State’s evidence. At one point he refused to answer questions in court and was charge with criminal contempt. The articles are not very clear, and I couldn’t tell exactly what the nature of the scheme was, but the articles were certainly sufficient to corroborate the general thrust of my mother’s account.”

The scheme was a Ponzi scheme reported in great detail in **The Great Los Angeles Swindle, Oil, Stocks, and Scandal During The Roaring Twenties** by Jules Tygiel and published by the Oxford University Press in 1994. Julius Tygiel is a Professor of History at San Francisco State University. He is also the author of the acclaimed volume, *Baseball’s Great Experiment: Jackie Robinson and His Legacy*.

The Berman brothers, Louis and Jacob, are major characters in **The Great Los Angeles Swindle**, a book that is described as “a saga of the roaring twenties, with its glorification of business, its get-rich-quick mentality, and its paucity of government regulations, which bred speculation, corruption and corporate chaos throughout the nation in a manner not dissimilar to the financial chicanery of our own era.”

As the cover flap promises: “Above all, it is a compelling story and swiftly moving narrative that will not soon forget.” Certainly not family!

Michael continues his family revelations:

“Now, the important thing is that my mother said that Jack Berman got Lou Berman – Bertha’s husband – “into trouble.” I never knew that this was a source of considerable embarrassment to my mother and, almost certainly, to her mother, Fannie Berman.”

Michael goes on to explain his theory of the estrangement of the families of Chonon Berman and his sister, Fannie Berman Kravitz, to which he made reference in his very first e-mail communication of October 27, 2003 in which he related that “(s)omehow Fannie apparently became estranged from the rest of the Berman family back in the 1930’s. (I don’t know why, though I do have a theory.)”:

“So my theory of estrangement is that Fannie cut herself off from the rest of the Berman family because she felt humiliated by her son-in-law’s disgrace. (It may also have gone both ways; perhaps she was to some degree been ostracized by some members of the Berman family because of the stain on the family’s reputation.) That’s my theory. How true it is, I don’t really know, but it is consistent with what facts I do know and with the personalities of my mother and her mother. (I should add that my mother used to tell me that the estrangement had a different cause – that the rest of the Berman family was beent out of joint because they weren’t invited to Bertha’s wedding. This never sounded plausible to me, and I’ve never believed it.)”

Louis Berman was born in New York, NY in April, 1893, the son of the unrelated Berman family of Sam & Minna (Merman) Berman. He was the oldest of five children: Louis (b. 1893 at New York, NY), Jacob (b. 1895 at New York, NY), Lillian (b. 1898 at Spencer, MA), Mary (b. 1900 @ Putnum, CT) and Henry (b. 1910 at New Haven, CT). Sam and Minnie Berman settled in New Haven sometime between the 1900 birth of Mary in Putnum and the 1910 birth of Henry in New Haven. Described as an “itinerate artist” (a portrait photographer) at the time of his daughter Lally’s (Lil) birth, Sam was the owner of a bar in downtown that is said to have been frequented by the “Yallies”. The family is believed to live “upstairs” from the barroom that was located on or near the corner of Church and Chapel Streets. Future research will determine where the family lived during this time period and the relationships by, between and among the several Berman families that lived in New Haven at that time.

As Michael would say, **now the important thing is** that Bertha married the older brother of the Lillian Berman who was married to Gus Berman, the son of Honon & Khasia Berman. Bertha & Lou and Gus & Lil became brothers and sisters-in-law as well as blood relatives. The marriage of Bertha Kravitz and Louis Berman was the second time the families of Chonon Berman and the unrelated Samuel Berman would intermarry, a fact unbeknownst to me (Eugene Berman, one of the sons of Gus & Lillian Berman) until my own “reconciliation with Michael Burack. Genealogically we are twice related...we are family family.

If you are confused, consider the following exchange of correspondence:

From Erica Berman Romitelli to Michael Burack:

“I would like to introduce myself....another Berman relative coming out of the closet !!! My maiden name is Erica Berman and I am from New Jersey. I’m 34,

married to Gino Romitelli and have four busy children. Nicholas, 8; Emily, 5; Anna, 2; and Grace, 5 months. I work for an international transportation company and am so happy to have a new branch of the family tree. Eugene has sent me copies of your mutual correspondence and I'm just thrilled !!!

"Jack Berman was my parental grandfather. Jack Berman begat David Berman who begat Marvin Berman who begat ME !!! All of your theories surrounding Jack Berman and family disgrace are absolutely correct. He was a crooked swindler who was big news in his day."

Are there "swindlers" who are not "crooked"?

From Michael Burack to Erica Berman Romitelli:

"It's a pleasure to meet you. It's not quite accurate for you to say that 'I'm another Berman relative coming out of the closet'. Until Eugene wrote to me one day out of the blue, I didn't even know that there was a closet to come out of. Moreover, he wrote to me not about *your* Berman family – the one on Eugene's mother's side – but about *my* Berman family – the one on his father's side. It was the strangest coincidence that I provide a bridge between his two Berman families."

The Abbott and Costello routine of "who's on first?" and the song, "I'm My Own Grandfather" take on a new meaning in the Berman genealogy. I am reminded of my experiences in the Army as a new law school graduate being asked during basic by some Sergeant: "What's your mother's maiden name, soldier?" "Berman" I would reply. "You college kids are all the same...you don't know nothing." "But, Sergeant...."

Michael promised to send to Erica a photograph, "probably taken in the 1950's, of Mina Mott, the daughter of Lou Berman & Bertha Kravitz Berman (my mother's older sister), and Minna's toddler son Billy. Minna would have been the first cousin of your grandfather David."

(As of the time of this revision of the Berman Family History, efforts to complete the genealogy of the family of Sam Berman have not been pursued and there is no present record of what happened to Mina Mott and/or her son, the child of the marriage of Lou Berman and Bertha Kravitz. There is apparently another branch of the family yet to be discovered...the descendants of Minna Berman Mott.)

Michael wrote an aside in his e-mail letter to Erica in reference to the photograph:

"According to the printing on the matt, the photo of Minna and Billy was taken by Joan

Ludwig. I searched that name on the web and found that she was one of the best known photographers of dogs of the 20th century. That clicked because I remember my mother telling me that Bertha and Mina used to do the dog show circuit with their dogs."

In concluding his first communication with Erica, his new cousin by marriage, Michael wrote:

“The only other thing that I can tell you about the Berman brothers is my mother’s recollection that, when she visited her sister and Lou in Los Angeles in the late 1920s, they had a beautiful home in the hills right near the Hollywood Bowl. I’ll bet! It’s amazing what a nice life one can lead using other people’s money.”

By way of additional background, it should be noted that sometime in the 1980s, I received a letter from a 15 or 16 year old girl who introduced herself as a relative, the great granddaughter of my Uncle Jack. She knew of me from her grandmother Lois and, because she knew of no other Berman relatives, sought to establish contact. She stated that her father, Marvin Berman, and her mother were divorced, that she lived with her mother (who had remarried) and that she knew her grandfather, David Berman. Her name was Erica Berman.

The letter arrived at a time when Aunt Mary Berman Cohen (of the Sam Berman family) from San Francisco was visiting her sister Lillian. When told of the letter, Mary said in no uncertain terms, “Don’t answer her; don’t have anything to do with that family.” My mother, Lil, Agreed...as she always did with her older sister Mary.

I did not then understand the degree of the hostility to all things Jack...and Louis.

For whatever reason – weakness of character, lack of curiosity, undeveloped passion for things genealogical – I did not respond to the letter and Erica’s reaching out for family was spurned. In the early 1990s Erica and her father, Marvin, called and left a telephone message introducing them selves. My return of their telephone call began the end of the family estrangement and the establishment of family ties with Marvin, his family and with Erica. Indeed, when Erica was getting married in 1993, she invited her new found relatives – me, my wife Carol and my brother Milton – to attend the wedding as her Berman family. Consistent with my personal philosophy of “when invited, go,” Carol and I attended the wedding and I established a family bond with Erica and her father, Marvin. Milton elected not to attend the wedding.

As time thereafter progressed, Marvin and Erica were introduced to the California relatives, the families of Mary Berman Cohen and of Henry Berman – by whom they were received as the prodigal relatives....although with some trepidation by Aunt Mary and Uncle Henry. There was no open discussion concerning Jack Berman or of his brother Louis. The black sheep of the family were ignored, not to be spoken of.

The sins of Jack and Louie reverberated through families: the family of Bertha Kraviz Berman, the family of the descendants of Chonon & Khashia Berman and the family of their own father, Sam Berman and his wife, Sonia. Because the sins of the parents should not be born by the children, a rapprochement was accomplished albeit much too late.

In an earlier edition of this historical/genealogical chapter about Bertha (Kraviz) & Louis Berman, I was then – as I am now – confused by the pulls of family loyalties, i.e. is this a history of the families of Chonon or of Sam Berman? My conclusion has been that it is a part of the heritage of both sides, hence its incorporation here.

In the earlier telling of the “history”, I recorded the then known facts:

“Bertha & Lou Berman apparently had only one child, a daughter Minna. Minna is

said to have married a man by the name of Mott by whom she had a child, William (Billy) Mott. She is said to have lived at one time in Encino, California at one time. Bully is believed to have lived at one time in Pershing Park, Pennsylvania. Nothing additional is known about the family or its progeny. No dates, names or addresses have as yet been ascertained.

“According to Ronald (“Ron”) Berman, one of the sons of Henry Berman, the younger brother of Louis and Jack, Henry and his family maintained contact with Lou who, after his release from San Quentin, owned a candy store in San Francisco. Bertha and Lou were divorced in California; Ron refers to Lou’s second wife, Frances. Ron remembers vividly Louie giving him bubble gum as compared to Jack who gave him nothing but always said, ‘I wish I had brought a five dollar bill for you.’ He never did.

“Ron’s contribution to this history is that Louis died at Mount Sinai Hospital in San Francisco as a result of an automobile accident.

“The divorce of Bertha from Louis, his remarriage, his remaining in San Francisco following his release from the prison on the island in the bay and the details of his life and death in San Francisco are presently undocumented. One can, however, give credence to the information provided by Ron.

“Michael Burak, the source of so much of the information used in the compiling of this history, proffered:

‘As for Bertha, as far as I know, she lived in the Los Angeles area for the remainder of her life. She died in 1971.’

“We have enough information to pursue the genealogy and history of these presently missing descendants of the family of Fannie (Berman) & Meyer Kraviz. And pursue it we will!”

What I intended by the MacArthuresque declaration of “(a)nd pursue it we will!” was to evidence my determination to pursue the genealogy and history of my mother’s side of the family, the descendants of Sam & Minna Berman, once I had completed that of Chonon & Kashia Berman, my father’s side. Two sides: father and mother thought I. Simplistic!

Alas, genealogy and family history are not always simplistic.

At the time of my summer, 2009 revision of this (Chonon) Berman Family History, it was unexpected and fortuitous that one Marc J. LeClere of Granger, Indiana made contact inquiring about the family of my father, Gus, and Sam (my maternal grandfather) who he thought was Gus’ father. A natural mistake, even for us amateur genealogists, considering the same surnames. It turns out that Marc is the husband of Felicia, daughter of Thelma, a descendant of the Shoher family that came to the United States from Odessa around 1900 or so. Felicia’s great aunt was Sonia Berman, the second wife of my maternal grandfather, Sam Berman.

Marc. A serious amateur genealogist was researching Sonia Berman and her family, Sam

Berman and his children. A relationship by marriage, but family none the less! There were no children born of the marriage between Sonia and Sam. Henry, Sam's youngest child, was, however, brought up by Sonia.

Sonia ("Auntie" as my mother called her) was the only maternal grandmother that I ever knew. My mother's mother, Minna Merman Berman, died the year before Lil's marriage to my father. A third family has now been added to the story of the marriage of Bertha (Kraviz) & Louis Berman and an alliance formed to explore the family genealogy and history of Bertha and Louis through their subsequent marriages and their children and their children.

From the newly established contact with Marc LeClere and the flurry of e-mails that followed our sharing the correspondence from Marc with members of the known descendants of Sam Berman, our attention was diverted to that family and those relationships from which additional vignettes of family history have been gleaned, history of interest to all three family lines. Fascinating!

I shall not here recounting the background of "Auntie" Sonya and of her family. I will save those stories for the already-in-the-process-of-being-written *History of Sam & Minna & Sonya Berman*. It too promises to be a best seller.

The teaser for this chapter of *This Is Us* is the e-mail from Ron Berman whose memory was refreshed by the exchanges of e-mail with Marc LeClere and in reiterating his memories of his Uncle Louis Berman advised that he was "fascinated by the amazing correspondence" and wrote:

"When my Uncle Louie Berman passed away in SF, (I saw him at the hospital the day before he died), he left a widow name Florence. (My folks jokingly called them "Louie and Flooie")

"Florence, as I recall was not Jewish, but I think that Louie had a previous marriage or two. I'm not sure his previous wife or wives were Jewish. What I do remember is that he had a candy store and was able to secure boxes of Fleer's Double Bubble Gum (the one's wrapped in a mini comic strip with a character named 'Pud') that was nearly impossible to obtain during the war years. That made me the most sought after kid at Cabrillo Grammar School in SF."

Without knowing it, Ron had laid down the genealogical gauntlet: "I think Louie had a previous marriage or two." Even if Ron was unaware that Uncle Louie's first wife was his Aunt Lil's husband's cousin or that there was a child (Minna Mott) of that marriage, Marc and I had that knowledge. Now there was confirmation of wife Florence and, perhaps, other wives and, perhaps, even other children.

The challenge to trace this branch of the Berman families was a challenge collaboratively accepted by Marc LeClere and myself who joined forces in the pursuit of genealogical information. The search was on.

ROSE (KRAVITZ) & MEYER BURACK

Rose Kravitz (Burack) was born at New Haven, Connecticut on May 27, 1904, one of the four children of Fannie (Berman) and Meyer Kravitz. Her mother, Fannie, was the sister of Chonon Berman. She had a twin sister who died in infancy. Her sister Bertha was born in 1896 and was married to Louis Berman, one of the brothers of Lillian Berman, the wife of Gus Berman, one of the sons of the unrelated Chonon & Khasia Berman. Her brother, Abraham, is said to have been born in New Haven sometime before the birth of his sister, Bertha, in 1896.

There is a question as to whether Abe Kravitz was the son of Fannie (Berman) & Meyer Kravitz or if he was, perhaps the child of a prior husband who may have died. As of this writing, there is no evidence of a prior marriage of Fannie or that Abe was not the child of her marriage to Meyer.

Rose first appears in photographs of the 1917 and 1925 Berman Family Seders. She and her parents, Fannie (Berman) & Meyer Kravitz, were the non-descendants of Chonon & Khasia Berman at the Seders. Fannie was Chonon's sister and Rose was his niece. It is postulated that in the 1917 and 1925 pictures, Rose was 13 and 21 respectively.

Rose married Meyer Burack in New Haven on September 13, 1936. She was 32 at the time. They had one child, Michael L. Burack, who was born in Willimantic, Connecticut on October 10, 1942. Meyer's brother-in-law was Phil Sheff, the New Haven furrier.

In submitting a photograph taken at the September 13, 1938 wedding of his parents, Rose Kravitz & Meyer Burack, Michael wrote:

“The second figure from the left is my mother's mother, Fannie Berman Kravitz, looking none too pleased with the happenings. And the figure on the far left is my mother's older sister, Bertha Berman, the wife (by this time, I imagine, the ex-wife) of Lou Berman. So far as I know, this is the only photo of her I have.”

Apropos of the fact that the 1925 photograph was taken at the then home of his maternal grandparents, Michael notes the parallels between the Berman and the Burack families:

“my father's father, Charles Burack, and two of his children and their families used to live on Ward Street, where my parents and I would visit them every couple of weeks. (We would drive in from our home in Willimantic and, after January 1951, from Hartford.) The Burack house was on Ward between Congress and Davenport, around the corner from the Jewish Home; for some reason I have a feeling that the street number was 36, but this is really only a guess.”

We presently have little specific information about Rose (Kravitz) & Meyer Burack other

than that which we have gleaned to date from correspondence from Michael:

- * Rose & Meyer lived in Willimantiuc, Connecticut where their only child, Michael, was born in 1942.
- * In January, 1951 the family moved to Hartford, Connecticut.
- * For reason or reasons unknown, the Burack family had reason to drive through Springfield, Massachusetts where Rose would maintain that one of her cousins owned a clothing store. (The cousin was, of course, Gus Berman, a son of Chonon & Khasia Berman.)
- * Despite the apparent estrangemetr between the families of Chonon Berman and his sister Fannie Berman Kravitz, Rose Kravitz Burack used to spend time with Mae Berman, the wife of Barnett Berman (another of the sons of Chonon) when she lived in West Haven in the late 1870s and the 1880s.

We do have some information about Rose in her own words from a transcription of remembrances that she dictated to a friend not too long before she died in 2003 at the age of 99. The autobiographical material is entitled “**Grandma Rose’s Stories**” as shared with us by her son Michael:

An Early Memory

One of my earliest memories is about something that happened when I was 4 years old in 1908. In those days my family had a horse and wagon because the automobile had not been invented yet. One day I was looking out the window when I saw a very funny site. It was winter time and there was a lot of snow on the ground. My father, Michael Kravitz, was outside with our horse and wagon. All of a sudden the horse slipped on the ice and fell down on the ground. I thought it was very funny to see our poor horse on the ground trying desperately to get up. My father pulled and pushed and pushed and pulled for a long time until finally, the horse was on his feet again.

My Family

I was born May 27, 1904 in New Haven, Connecticut. My mother and father were Pearl and Michael Kravitz. I had a sister Bertha and a brother Abraham. My sister was 8 years older than me and my brother was older than Bertha. I had a twin sister that was born with me on May 27th, but she was much smaller and weaker than I was and she died when we were only six months old. I don’t remember my twin sister but I always wished I had a sister or brother that was my age.

I was very lonely at times when I was a child. I always thought that when I was a mother I would have at least one son and one daughter, I had a wonderful son but had to wait for more than 40 years before I got a lovely daughter, Maria, and two wonderful granddaughters, Victoria and Cristina.

My Father

I always had blond hair until I became a grandma and then my hair turned white like it is today. In Yiddish cup means head. My father always used to call me his golden cup or golden head.

When I was 17 I wanted to have the latest hair style like all the other modern girls. I made an appointment with the hair dresser and had my long blond hair cut short in a “bob”. When I came home my father was so upset that he wouldn’t talk to me for a week.

I had some cousins in New York that were in show business. They talked to my father for me and told him all the young girls were cutting their hair. It was the style and all young girls that were stylish had short hair. It took him some time but finally he got use to my new modern hair “do”.

My Mother

By the time I was old enough to drive the automobile was firmly established in our city. My mother wanted me to learn to drive as soon as I could. She thought it was important for me to learn to drive so I could be more independent. And, so I could take her places that she wanted to go.

When I was about 17 my mother hired Mr. Smith to teach me how to drive. I learned quickly and got a drivers license right away. What do you think my father said when he found out I had a drivers license? – He said he would never ride in the car when I was driving.

Sunday Rides

Every Sunday from our horse and buggy days until we had an automobile my family and I would take a ride on Sunday. There are two big riches on either side of New Haven. One to the east and one to the west. Every Sunday we would take a drive either to the west rock or to the east rock.

One day after I had my license for some time, my mother, father and I were going to take a ride in the country. All of a sudden my mother turned to my father and said, “Let Goldener cup drive today.” My father surprised us all by saying yes.

After that my father always let me drive whenever we went out for our Sunday drives.

My Friend Norma

I am very glad Victoria has a close friend like Katie. I know they will be friends all their lives. Their friendship reminds me of my friend Norma Thalberg. I was thinking of Norma today because her birthday was January 29. January 29 always

meant a big party. Of course everyday was like a party at Thelma's house. With 5 brothers and all their friends it was always a lot of fun.

There were a lot of kids in my neighborhood when I was a kid. All our backyards backed up to one another so we had a large area to play in. When it snowed we would all get together to play. The boys would make a huge mountain of snow, then we would get cardboard boxes and slide down the hill. It was great fun.

Meyer Burack died on August 3, 1979 at New Haven. Rose Kravitz Burack died on May 27, 2003 at Rockville, Maryland where she resided near by to her son, Michael, her daughter-in-law and her grandchildren.

Michael Leonard Burack is the only child of the marriage of Rose (Kravitz) & Meyer Burack. He was born in Willimantic, Connecticut on October 10, 1942.

Michael earned his B.A. in Physics from Wesleyan University in Middletown, Connecticut. He studied at the California Institute of Technology in 1965 and received an M.S. (Physics) from Stamford University in 1967. He was granted a J.D. from Stamford in 1970. He was the Managing Editor of the **Stamford Law Review**. He was admitted to the California Bar in 1971 and the Bar of the District of Columbia in 1972. Michael served as Clerk to Judge Ben C. Deniway of the United States Circuit Court of Appeals, 9th Circuit.

Until his December 31, 2000 retirement, Michael was a partner in the Washington, D.C. office of Wilmer, Cutler & Pickering where he later served as "of counsel".

He was a co-author of *An Introduction to the Use of Risk Analysis Methodology in Accident Litigation*, 42 *Journal of Air Law and Commerce* 133 (1976), an Associate Editor of the Public **Contract Law Journal** of the American Bar Association's Public Contract Law Section, 1988-1994. He served as a member of the Judicial Evaluation Committee, District of Columbia Bar, 1992-1994.

His practice areas included Litigation, Civil Practice, Government Contracts, Computers and Software, Commercial Law and Antitrust Law.

On October 20, 1978, Michael Burack married Maria Del Carmen Gallego Velazquez at Washington, D.C.

Maria Del Carmen Gallego (her father's family name) Velazquez (her mother's family name). The village where she was born is San Roman de Hornija; the province where she was born is Valladolid. Her husband, Michael, adds the incidental comment, "the village where my wife was born now produces a sensational red wine called Vina San Roman" which, he adds, "can be purchased on the internet at about \$40/bottle."

In noting that his wife is from Spain, Michael suggests that "if you want to have an amazing cross-cultural experience, go to a record store and get a CD of a good male Flamingo singer (for example, the CD of the singer Fasforito with the guitarist Paco de Lucia). See if it reminds you of an old-time chazzan."

Mike and Maria live in Bethesda, Maryland. They have two daughters, Victoria Luisa

Burack (born in Washington, D.C. on December 11, 1982) and Cristina Maria Burack (born in Washington, D.C. on July 4, 1987). As of 2004, Victoria was a Junior at Northwestern University and Cristina was a Junior in High School.

Michael has listed fencing as his hobby and has provided a photograph of himself and his daughter Cristina “to prove that I am really involved in the arcane sport of fencing.”

When asked When would be the best time to contact him, Michael, a retired lawyer and doting father, replied, “Evenings are generally not a good time, what with my daughter’s activities and my fencing schedule.”

VII. The Arrival of the Bermans, The Family of Chonon and Khasia Bermans

CHONON & KHASIA BERMAN were not the first of the Berman family to emigrate to America. When they arrived from Liverpool, England at the Port of New York (Ellis Island) aboard the vessel *Coronia*, on June 20, 1906, Ben, who arrived in 1904, Chana Esther & Meir (Mishalov) Berman who are also said to have arrived in 1904 with their children, and Hyman who arrived on November 22, 1904, were all ensconced in their new home town, New Haven, Connecticut, where Chonon's sister, Fannie, and her husband, Meyer, had settled earlier.

In recording the history of the immigration of the Berman family, it should be noted that the Berman sisters were older than the Berman brothers . . . Chana Esther having been born in 1874, Golda in 1876 and Balia in 1879, were married, had children in Russia and came to America as family units. The brothers — Hyman, Benjamin, Barnett, Gustave and Harry — were younger and single when they came to the United States. There was a twenty-four year age difference - a generation - between Chana Esther (b. 1874) and Harry (b. 1897). Three of Chana Esther's children, Gus (b. 1890), Morris (b. 1889) and Dora (b. 1890) were older than their Uncle Harry, who was born in 1897, the youngest of the children of Chonon & Khasia. We do not have the stories of the Berman girls or even of all of the Berman brothers.

As a footnote to history, it is believed that the vessel *Coronia* on which Chonon & Khasia and child Henry arrived at Ellis Island was a sister ship to the vessel *Caparthia* that on April 15, 1912, some six years after their arrival, was the rescue ship that came to the aid of the survivors of the *Titanic*, the *White Star Liner* that struck an iceberg in the North Atlantic shortly before midnight on April 14, 1912 and sank hours later, killing 1,517 passengers and crew.

Had any of the Berman family been on board the *Titanic* at the time of its fatal voyage they would have been traveling steerage. The academy award winning motion picture "The *Titanic*" vividly portrays the "class" differences between the travelers, those traveling to and from Europe as tourists, and those traveling one way to the United States as immigrants. Vessels such as the *Coronia*, the *Belgravia*, the *Kronland*, the *Zuland* and others aboard which the Bermans crossed the Atlantic from Europe to their new lives in America, were cargo ships whose major cargo were the immigrants, the poor, huddled masses, the wretched refuse of foreign shores yearning to be free.

And wretched and huddled masses they were – they came steerage.

The story of their grandparents' odyssey to the United States and New Haven, Connecticut, according to Dr. Sydney Berman and his sister Ruth Berman Harris, was that their father, Ben, the first immigrant Berman "worked hard and opened his own clothing shop within a couple of years." They recorded that "He then started saving money and making plans to bring his family to America."

A vignette of the emigration to America has been provided by Sydney Berman and Ruth Harris who tell the story:

Back in Russia, a neighbor of Chonon & Khasia's, whose husband was already in America, asked them to take her son with them as if he was one of their own. After processing at Ellis Island, the boat docked in New York Harbor, where the boy's father came to meet them. The little boy saw his father and cried out "Papa! Papa!" and the father waved back and called out his son's name. Customs agents, sensing that something was wrong, made them all go back to Ellis Island, the first stop on their way back to Russia.

Benjamin immediately went to Washington, D.C. to talk to his Senators (not yet Joe Lieberman) and Congressman (not yet Chris Shays), staying nearly three weeks, until everyone was released from Ellis Island.

If our calculations are correct, Ben was but 21 years old and in this country but for some two years before he took on the government of the United States in its capitol, Washington, D.C. . . and won. Not bad for a greenhorn from the Pales of Russia!

Dr. Sydney and Ruth go on to record the family history:

Benjamin bought his family a white house on Ward Street in New Haven, where Chonon & Khasia lived for the rest of their lives. Chonon never really adjusted to life in America; Benjamin, who supported them, was very generous to his family in quiet ways. And we have been repaid in kind by the traditions that they, uprooted in mid-life, began in another country, in a place that only exists in our collective memory, and a few photographs retrieved from an earlier time.

While there is no doubt that Ben was generous to his parents and did substantially contribute to their support, Milton Berman, son of Gus, recalls that every few weeks, on a Sunday, Gus and his family would go to New Haven to visit Chonon & Khasia. Milton reports the ritual that Chonon and Gus would have a slivovitz together and that when Gus was about to leave he would place money on the table, his contribution to the care and maintenance of his parents.

Eugene Berman, Gus' other son, has a memory of those visits reaching back to when he was 8 years old or younger, Chonon having died in 1936 at the age of 84 or 86 depending upon your calculation. Judy Berman confirms that his gravestone in the cemetery in East Haven, Connecticut has the age 86 etched in stone. Eugene remembers his grandfather as a bearded old man who could not speak English and with whom he could not communicate except by a smile.

At the time of Chonon's naturalization in 1912, he listed himself as a "Peddler" although as of this writing no one has any recollection of his ever having worked. His address at the time of naturalization was 31 Gilbert Avenue in New Haven.

In 1980, Bessie Levitz Barkan, daughter of Balia (Berman) and Aaron Levitz, who died in 2000 at the age of 93, wrote a family history, in which she most accurately observed:

"It is from the genes of Chonon and Chasha that our family – the Bermans – have so many musicians – so many educators and educateds – so much love for music and the arts. It is why the Bermans are special. The drive to learn – to succeed – we all inherited from them."

Bessie went on to describe her grandfather, her "Zaydie":

(In preparing this portion of the Berman Family History I have been sorely tempted to edit the hand written remembrances of cousin Bessie and to remove or change such works as “goy” that are personally repugnant to me, but like those who refrain from editing the word “nigger” from Marl Twain’s “Huckleberry Finn”, I have opted to stay with the original text. It was a different time and place, a different generation.)

My grandfather was a good Jew. He lived a strictly Orthodox religious life upholding all the precepts of Judaism. Hew was well versed in the Old Testament and the Talmud. When Zaydie 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 from 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 wants. Is 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 when 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 the orthodox Jewish life and all the teachings of his youth.

Balia’s husband, Aaron Levitz, died in 1915 at the age of 37 when his children were young: Celia, the oldest, age 12, Hyman his only son, age 11, Bessie age 8 and Faye only age 2. Bessie writes about the time that her mother and her four children moved in with Chonon & Khasia and gives further insights to their character and lives:

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 for my grandmother who was a buffer between me and my mother. Mama was always teaching me “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 got home. I never learned how my mother explained or expiated for our absence.

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

An anecdote about Chonon Berman is provided by his grandson Arnold (“Sonny”), son of Barnett, who’s Yiddish apparently did not very well survive a generation of Americanization:

Anecdote re: Chonon — On visiting Chana Esther, he would always have a pocket full of candy to give her kids who would be playing in front of the house. However, on his way out, the kids would ask for more candy, of which, having emptied his pocket, he had no more. Obviously, the kids were very disappointed. One day, as he entered Chana Esther’s flat, he said to her, “Yich hob opgenardt dee kinder . . . Obsz yich hob arreirrge – Kurnen dee mobil, yich hob zay gegeben nor ah holben dee kendy. Und fetzt hob yich dee under holb zay & zu geben.”

The translation according to Arnold – not literal but figurative – is that wise old Chonon fooled the children by breaking the candy in half, giving one half on the way up and the other half on the way down.

Leila Berman Schulman, daughter of Morris David and Mina (Lear) Berman, the granddaughter of Chana Esther (Berman) & Meir (Mishalov) Berman has an historically inaccurate memory of

“a visit when I was about 5 years old, with my Dad to a “very nice lady” who was a relative. Memory fails what her name was. All I remember is that she was “slump,” and had this weird hair! Sort of orange-red-auburn. And she had lots of wispy white hairs coming out from under what I realized years later had to have been a wig. I really thank now that memorable visit was with my great grandmother.”

Leila's recollection may be correct, i.e. that she visited her great grandmother, but it couldn't have been Khasia who died in 1931, the year before the remembered visit. If it had been Khasia, Leila would have remembered Chonon, who outlived his wife by 5 years.

Doctor Sydney and Ruth Harris' remembrances include a vivid recollection of the traditional Berman Family Seders:

The Berman Family Seders at our grandparents home on Ward Street were the event of the year. Chonon & Khasia would remove all of the dining and living room furniture, except for the piano. Everything went out into the garage in the back yard. They lined the walls with long tables and benches to seat everybody and we would have the most wonderful Seders! And after the Seder was over, the music began! They sang wonderful songs. With his brothers lined up behind him, Harry the only American-born brother, played the piano, Benjamin, who knew the words and melodies of a multitude of Russian and Jewish songs, started the singing, with the other brothers joining in. We remember the song "The Shranim" (The Neighbors) was a favorite one of the family.

The linear male descendants of the Bermans do not appear to have been – or are – a particularly observant lot. Sherman Padowitz, the son of Dora (Russian) and Lois Padowitz, remembers his grandfather David Russian, the husband of Golda, going to shul every day with his great grandfather, Chonon. There are no family stories attesting to the religiosity of the Berman brothers. Indeed, the Berman sons-in-laws — Meir, the husband of Chana Esther, David, the husband of Golda and Aaron, the husband of Balia were the mainstay of the traditional (religious) aspects of the family Seders. Everyone remembers the old men conducting a painfully long Seder that was incomprehensible to those who did not understand Hebrew. The "elders" demonstrated an "old country" orthodox occasion even into the fifties when they were busy with their own service even as the "public" presentation of a more modern version took hold. Indeed, one of the reasons for the interruption of the Seders and suggested to have been the cultural clash between those who demanded the orthodox approach, the conservatives who did not want to offend the elders, and the reformers who wanted a more Englacized version. As the family assimilated into a more American lifestyle, the Seders changed when they were renewed although then retained the cultural and religious undertones – kosher or non-kosher — etc.

There are, of course, many Seder stories.

Sherman Padowitz recalls that he, the youngest great grandchild, was the one who was asked the traditional four questions. Of more pleasant memory, he recalls that Gus and his other great uncles, the Berman Brothers — Hyman, Benjamin, Barnett, Gus and Harry — would pass the juice of fermented fruit — Schlivoitz — to him under the table out of the sight of his parents and their wives. The Berman Brothers were a drinking lot not opposed to bringing the younger members of the family into the fraternity.

Sherman remembers the experiences with great warmth and fondness.

It was Sherman who on October 18, 1942 married Pauline Langlois, thus became the first “Berman” to marry outside the Jewish religion. He sired what became a large Florida contingent of Berman relatives — five children: Peter, Glen, Phyllis, Dave (“Lou”) and Dan. Sherman describes himself as “somewhat of a rogue.” The story of his life and family — like all of the family stories — is fascinating.

Helen Berman Rhein, the daughter of Barnett & Mae (Rogovin) Berman adds to the picture of Chonon seated in his easy chair or at a table with a cigarette and a shot of brandy, as she remembers:

In my young days Bubbi and Zadie lived on Asylum St. We visited very frequently. Zayde had his glass of tea, his cigarette and I don’t know where Bubbi was. He offered me a cigarette to which I said “girls don’t smoke; I’m only 14 years old.” In any case he always offered. His red beard and sharp eyes always glistened - and he was fun to be with. Bubbie was quietly busy plumping up bed pillows or cleaning chicken. She was so gentle, so quiet, so loving. I remember once my mother was ill and Bubbie came to take care of us. I still see her as she came up the back stairs from the cellar, pail of coal in hand to our kitchen on the 2nd floor, to feed the kitchen stove.

The portrait of Chonon drawn by Helen is the same as Milton Berman remembers his grandfather. The picture was Chonon Berman!

There are no known letters or other writings from Chonon & Khasia and very few photographs. The best of the photographs are of the Berman Family Seders starting with the 1917 Seder held at the Arch Street, New Haven family homestead. It is in the Seder photos that one can see the changes in and watch the growth of the family.

There are, however, family artifacts that pre-date the family’s emigration from Russia:

Chonon apparently had a grand walking stick, a cane, the head of which was ornate silver. The origin of the cane is unknown. What is known, however, is that Sherman Padowitz, born in 1924 in New Haven, the son of Dora Russian and Louis Padowitz, was the first born great grandchild of Chonon & Khasia Berman. He remembers that it was black and that he was allowed to play with it. He recalls “strutting” around his great grandfather’s house with cane in hand.

Sherman recalls that his great grandparents did not speak English. .. They communicated in Yiddish, a language that he understood as a child. He remembers with certainty that Chonon promised him the cane on the occasion of his Bar Mitzvah. Although Chonon died in 1936, the year before Sherman’s Bar Mitzvah in 1937, he did acquire the cane at the time of his Bar Mitzvah and kept it until 1956 when he left Connecticut for Florida. He reports that the cane was given to his aunt Frances who, in turn, presented it to Arnold Berman, the then President of the Berman Family Group, to be passed on from President to President.

At sometime after its deliver “in trust” to Arnold, the stick was apparently cut with the “head” becoming a gavel to be wielded by the President of the Berman Family Group. The official Berman Family Gavel has a display stand on which it rests. While it was

intended that the gavel be passed from President to President as a royal challis, as of this writing, it is ensconced on the piano of Arnold and Roz Berman in their home at 80 Barnett Street in New Haven.

Another family “heirloom” is a pair of brass candlesticks that Chana Esther brought with her and her family when they came to the United States in 1904. They have been donated to the Berman Family by Chana Esther’s granddaughter, Janet Berman Chussil Fein, the daughter of Louis & Nellie (Goodman) Berman. Janet wrote, “They were given to my mother who benehed licht on them faithfully every Friday night.”

Janet commented in her letter donating the candlesticks — her most precious possession — “I do remember, probably from Fiddler on the Roof, that it was the tradition for the parents of the bride to give the young couple Sabbath candlesticks.” We like to believe that the candlesticks were originally those of Chonon & Khasia and that they are being preserved as a family heirloom.

At this time, the candlesticks are in the protective custody of Eugene Berman and were used at the 2002 Seder and are intended to be used at all future Seders unto the generations.

Judy Berman, the daughter of Harry & Gert Berman, has the candlesticks of her grandparents, Chonon & Khasia. In addition, Judy has a jar in which her grandmother kept chicken fat, a staple of the generation’s kitchen. Judy veils the origin of the covered jar an incident that she recalls from her childhood when her mother, Gert, was washing dishes and her father, Harry was drying. The jar slipped and Harry almost dropped it. Gert exclaimed “Be careful! That jar was your mother’s . . . she kept chicken fat in it.” What better historical verification could one have?

Judy also has a brass samovar that was always preeminently displayed and used by Harry and Gert in their home. It is assumed that the samovar, that has Russian makings, was owned by Chonon & Khasia and passed to Harry, their youngest child who came with them from Russia. Additionally, Judy has of talen and tefilin that she believes was that of her grandfather. Chonon included in Judy’s uncatalogued cache is a document that, although unseen, is believed to be a judgment of foreclosure of a mortgage on property at 68 Asylum Street, New Haven held by Chonon & Harry Berman but assigned by them to one Pauline Guess of New York City. The owners of the property are believed to be Anna Abramavich, Harry Berman and Edward Brown. The document is dated 1934.

The children and grandchildren of Chonon & Khasia were:

Chana Esther Berman	(1874 - 19__)
m. Meir Misholov	(18__ - 19__)

Morris David Berman	(1890 - 1988)
m. Mina Lear	(1902 - 1943)

Dora Berman	(1890 - 1986)
m. Benjamin R. Sprafkin	(1910 - 2001)

Gus Berman	(1890 - 1988)
m. Adele Pickerstein	(1907 - 1972)
Samuel Berman	(1907 - 1988)
m. Edith Alper	(- 1956)
Lewis Berman	(1908 - 1995)
m. Nellie Goodman	(1912 - 1997)

Golda Berman	(1876 -)
m. David Russian	(1873 - 1955)

Dora Russian	(1899 - 1988)
m. Louis Padowitz	(1894 - 1983)
Bessie Russian	(1908 - 2000)
m. David Doff	(1904 - 1998)
Herman Russian	(1909 - 2001)
m. Bernice G. Greenberg	(1911 - 1997)
Frances Russian	(1912 -)
m. Samuel Levin	(1911 - 2003)
Natalie Russian	(1918 - 1988)
m. Sidney Rebhun	(1915 - 1989)

Balia Berman	(1879 - 1967)
m. Aaron Levitz	(1903 - 1915)

Celia Levitz	(1903 - 1988)
m. Charles Byer	(1896 - 1983)
Hyman Levitz	(1904 - 1947)
m. Martha Rutstein	(1906 -)
Bessie Levitz	(1907 - 2000)
m. Nathan Barkan	(1896 - 1972)
Faye Levitz	(1913 - 1996)
m. George Heller	(1909 - 1972)

Hyman Berman (1882 - 1936)
m. Jenny Kaplowitz (1885 - 1958)

Max Berman (1908 - 1964)
m. Ruth Lapides (1912 - 1997)

William (Willie) Berman (1910 - 1927)

Bessie Berman (1915 - 2002)
m. Herman Levine (1914 - 1985)

Saul (Sonny) Berman (1926 - 1947)

Benjamin Berman (1885 - 1963)
m. Pauline Siegel (1891 - 1983)

Mildred Berman (1912 - 1988)
m. (d) Jacob M. Feinberg ()
m. Irving Sherman Mitkowski (1899 - 19)

Ruth Berman (1916 -)
m. Sydney Harris (1906 - 1989)

Sidney Berman, M.D. (1919 - 2009)
m. (d) Billie Anne Geller (1923 -)
m. Jeanette Kelly (1931 - 2002)
m. Greta Ruth (1919 - 2008)

Barnett Berman (1887 - 1943)
m. Mae Rogovin (1894 -)

Helen Berman (1915 -)
m. Sidney Rhein (1916 -)

Arnold Berman (1919 -)
m. Rosalind Schub (1925 -)

Gustave Berman (1889 - 1972)
m. Lally (Lillian) Berman (1898 - 1988)

Milton R. Berman (1921 -)
m. (d) Martha Robinson (1922 -)

Eugene B. Berman (Sr.)	(1928 -)
m. Carol Hydeman Marks	(1932 - 1999)

Harry Berman	(1897 - 1974)
m. Gertrude White	(1899 - 1985)

Arthur Berman, M.D.	(1928 - 1975)
m. Ann Haley	(1934 -)

Judith Berman	(1933 -)
m. (d) Howard Levine	(1927 -)

CHANA ESTHER & MEIR (MISHALOV) BERMAN

Correspondence from Leila Berman Schulman suggests that her grandparents, Chana Esther (Berman) and Meir (Mishalov) Berman, were the second “Berman” family to arrive in the United States:

“The family came to America via Ellis Island in 1904. My dad (Morris David Berman), the eldest, was 6. I could never understand why Zaida had the same last name as my Bubba’s (Chana Esther) brothers. My dad told me when they arrived, immigration could not spell Misholov, and since one of (the Berman) brothers was here first and was sponsoring the family, they were also given the Berman name. Mayer (Meir) and Chana and family settled in New Haven, with 4 boys and 1 girl; Morris, Dora, Gus, Lewis and Sam. There was another child that died in infancy.”

Although Leila’s reference to the fact that one of the Berman Brothers was already in America and was sponsoring the then “Misholov” family that arrived in 1904, based on those facts, logic would say that it was Benjamin who was already in the United States and who was the sponsor of his oldest sister and her husband and their family. However, it appears that the two youngest children of Chana Esther and Meir, Samuel and Lewis, were born in Russia in 1907 and 1908 respectfully.

If the dates and places of the birth of Samuel and Lewis are correct, the 1904 immigration date of Chana Esther and Meir cannot be accurate, it would have to be 1908 or thereafter; if the date of immigration and the dates of the birth of Samuel and Lewis are correct, then they would had to have been born in America.

Like many of the remembrances, the story does not jibe with the facts. There are many contradictions in the remembrances of the family. Some “facts” might not be “true” at all. The inconsistencies have been, for the most part, left unresolved. Perhaps as research progresses the chronology of events will be put in accurate order.

Recollections have it that Meir’s surname in Russia was “Mishelov” or some reasonable equivalent thereof. It is the family history that when Meir Mishalov and his family arrived at Ellis Island in 1904 (or whenever), the immigration officer could not spell “Mishalov” and therefore recorded, depending on who is telling the story, either Chana Esther’s maiden name or the surname of their sponsors. Meir became “Mayer” and/or “Meyer” as the family assimilated into American life.

Eugene Berman, one of the sons of Gustave & Lillian Berman, is sympathetic

to Leila's confusion for the reason that Lil's maiden name was also Berman although not related to the Chonon & Khasia Berman family. During his early years, Eugene did not know who was who, which Berman was related to his father and which to his mother.

Morris and Lewis were plumbers, Dora was a social worker and "Sam was always in sales." Gus was the only college graduate, graduating from Yale with a degree in Chemistry.

Leila, who prides herself as being "the oldest child of the oldest child (Morris) of the oldest child (Chana Esther) of Khasia and Chonon, confides that

"I do not know how my Zaida (Meir) supported his family. Growing up he and Bubba (Chana Esther), always lived next door (on Gilbert Ave.) and always was home."

Arnold Berman reports that Meir was a construction worker. Sherman Padowitz confirms that his grandfather was a bricklayer, a mason.

Both Chana Esther and Meir died and were buried in New Haven. They were survived by their five children, Morris (b. 1898), Dora (Sprafkin) (b. 1900), Gus (b. 1900), Sam (b. 1907) and Lewis (b. 1908).

The Children of and Grandchildren of Chana Esther Berman and Meir Mishalov Berman were:

Morris David Berman	(1898 - 1973)
m. Mina Lear	(1902 - 1943)
Leila Jean Berman	(1927 - 2009)
m. Harold Shulman	(1924 -)
Samuel Lear Berman	(1935 -)
m. Susan E. Cohen	(1930 -)
Dora Berman	(1900 - 1986)
m. Benjamin R. Sprafkin	(1910 - 2001)
Reva S. Sprafkin	(1937 -)
m. Jon A. Wurtzbarger	(1934 -)
Robert P. Sprafkin, Ph.D.	(1940 -)
m. Barbara Marcus	(1940 -)
Gus Berman	(1900 - 1988)
m. Adele Pickerstein	(1907 - 1972)

(Donald)David Berman	(1932 -)
m. Deborah Helen Shavelson	(1934 -)

William H. Berman	(1936 -)
m. Judith Robbins	(1938 - 1996)

Kenneth Lloyd Berman	(1940 -)
m. Allene Rosenberg	(1939 -)

Nancy E. Berman	(1943 -)
m. Floyd Greene	(1934 - 2002)

Samuel Berman	(1907 - 1988)
m. Edith Alper	(- 1956)
m. Gertrude Stull	(1914 -)

Sue Ellen Berman	(1954 -)
m. Michael Zamkow	(1956 -)

Lewis Berman	(1908 - 1997)
m. Nellie Goodman	(1912 - 1999)

Janet R. Berman	(1930 - 2007)
m. (d) Yale Chussil	(1924 -)
m. Harry Fein	(-)

Robert J. Berman	(1934 -)
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James Robert Berman	(1943 - 1995)
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GOLDA (BERMAN) & DAVID RUSSIAN

Golda Berman, the youngest of the Berman daughters, was born just 100 years after the American Declaration of Independence, on August 8, 1876 in Russia. She married David Russian in Russia and one of her children, Dora Russian Padowitz was born there. David was born on August 4, 1873, he apparently being the only Berman son-in-law who was older than his wife. Golda and David arrived in the United States somewhere between 1899 (the date of Dora's birth in Russia) and 1908 (the date of the birth of their second child, Bessie Russian Doff in Providence Rhode Island). While the date of arrival is unknown, the story of the family name is a familiar one oft repeated in the family genealogy.

Either at the European port of emigration or at Ellis Island in New York, the port of immigration, a bureaucrat, unable to spell or pronounce what was David's actual surname, assigned as the family name, the nationality of the country of Russia – Russian. Henceforth Golda & David were the family Russian. It could have been worse!

There is, however, a twist to the derivation of the "Russian" name. A copy of the September 30, 1920 Certificate of Naturalization of David Russian/David Riession is included here. The typed name of David is given as "David Riession" and the signature appears to be "Russian". The signature could possibly be "Riession" if the one letter "u" were read to be the two letters "ie". The "a" in Russian could well be the "o" in Riession. Look and decide for yourself.

As of this writing, we do not have available David's immigration records or other information from which we can vet his surname. Because we have but just obtained a copy of the Certificate and because he and his family have chosen the "Russian" surname, we shall adopt that name and spelling for purposes of this history.

From the Certificate of Naturalization we learn that David what's-his-name was 45 years old in September of 1920, that he had a "dark" complexion, brown eyes, dark brown hair and that he had a goatee and mustache. He was 5 feet 4 inches tall. Goldie was 40 years old and the family lived at 94 Elliott Street in New Haven at the time of naturalization.

The Naturalization papers list the children of David and Goldie:

Dora	Age 19	(Dora Russian Padowitz)
Besse	Age 13	(Besse Russian Doff)
Hyman	Age 11	(Herman Russian)

Fannie	Age 7	(Frances Russian Levin)
Nettie	Age 2	(Natalie Russian Rebhun)

It is obvious why tracing genealogy can be so difficult in the United States, imagine the challenges of pre-emigration.

Although the Berman family nexus in the United States was New Haven, David Russian apparently had family in Providence, Rhode Island where he took his bride and first born child. The family name of the relatives in Rhode Island is unknown; hence our history of David's kin is incomplete.

Bessie Russian (Doff) and Herman Russian, the only Russian son, were born in Providence in 1908 and 1909 respectively. At sometime between 1909 and 1912 the Russian family moved to New Haven and was back in the fold of Golda's parents, sisters and brothers. Frances Russian (Levin) was born in New Haven in 1912 and Natalie Russian (Rebhun) was born in 1918, also in the new family hometown in New Haven.

Arnold Berman records that David Russian was the shamos at Congregation Beth Havedrosh Hagodah in New Haven.

Sherman Padowitz, the son of Dora Russian and Louis Padowitz, the oldest grandson of Golda & David and indeed, the first American-born grandchild, confirms Arnold's information and remembers his grandfather David as the shamos of a local, New Haven synagogue who had the title, "Reverend" on his driver's license. It is remembered that the "Reverend" on the driver's license saved David from many of traffic ticket for speeding, etc. Sherman recalls that when in his mid-eighties, David owned a new Model A Ford and would drive obliviously through stop signs.

Sherman also recalls that at fifteen he restored a motorcycle but that his parents, concerned for his safety, refused to register it. At only fifteen, Sherman could not register a vehicle in his own name. Grandfather David came to his grandsons rescue and registered it in his own name. The registry "girl" came out to see this 80 year old man and his motorcycle. David may not have been a Berman by blood, but her certainly was by spirit!

The children and grandchildren of Golda (Berman) & David Russian were:

Dora Russian	(1899- 1988)
m. Louis Padowitz	(1894 - 1983)

Sherman Padowitz	(1924 - 2007)
m. Pauline Langlois	(1923 - 1992)
m. Carol Maybury	(1947 -)

Howard Padowitz (1930 - 1974)
 m. (d) Patricia Marks (1936 -)
 m. Janet Osmun (1935 -)

Besse Russian (1908 - 2000)
 m. David Doff (1904 - 1998)

Herman Russian (1909 - 2001)
 m. Bernice G. Greenberg (1911 - 1997)

Cyvia R. Russian (1934 -)
 m. (d) Marvin Shield Arons (1931 -)
 m. Robert C. Peters (1926 -)

Susan H. Russian (1940 - 2007)
 m. (d) Harris Faigel, M.D. (1935 -)
 m. Frederick Greenberg (1926 - 1990)

Frances Russian (1912 -)
 m. Samuel Levin (1911 - 2003)

Jane Levin (1940 -)
 m. Robert Alan Mallow (1939 -)

Bruce Levin (1943 -)
 m. (d) Eileen Joseph (1946 -)

Natalie Russian (1918 - 1988)
 m. Sidney Rebhun (1915 - 1989)

Gilbert Rebhun (1944 -)
 m. (d) Carol Krall (1946 -)
 m. Lynn Mellilo Gaudio (1951 -)

Gary Rebhun (1948 - 2008)
 m. Roberta A. Baird (1942 -)

BALIA (BERMAN) & AARON LEVITZ

Balia (or “Bertha” as her daughter Bessie Levitz Barkan refers to her in her 1980 family history) and her husband, Aaron, were both born (1879 and 1878 respectively) and married in Russia. Their first two children were born in Russia, Celia in 1903 and Hyman in 1904. Because the other two children were born in the United States, Bessie in 1907 and Fay in 1917, assuming the accuracy of the dates, we can justifiably hypothecate that one or both of them, Balia and Aaron, came to America to sometime between the end of 1904 (when Hyman was born in Russia, and the spring of 1907 when Bessie was born in New Haven.) Both Bessie and Faye were born in New Haven, the new hometown of the Berman clan.

We learn from Bessie that Balia (Berman) and her husband Aaron Levitz were cousins, not an unusual circumstance we are told. Bessie, in her twinkley way, observed “It was a true love match. Love existed way before them so don’t think you invented it.”

The significance of the revelation of the second cousin relationship is that it establishes a Berman family branch growing out of the generation prior to Chonon and Khasia. This history has as its focus the children and descendants of Chonon & Khasia and has not attempted to establish other relationships. It is incidental that we have noted the Kravitz family, the family of Chonon’s sister, and now the Levitz family, second cousins of either Chonon or Khasia. Bessie’s personal recollection and history contain personal information about her father’s three brothers, Elijah, Benjamin and Carl.

Because the brothers of Aaron Levitz share a common, presently unknown ancestor and because there are no holocaust remembrances within the Berman family, it is appropriate that we relate the story of Elijah Levitz, the brother-in-law and second cousin of Tante Balia, who came to this country in 1919.

Because Elijah, an Orthodox Rabbi who served a congregation in New Haven, could not bring his family to the United States (his wife was inadmissible because she had trachoma), he returned to Russia in 1928. With the communing of Hitler and the war with Nazi German, the entire family perished except for the baby son Elijah’s son, Harry. Elijah’s grandson!. The grandchild was hidden and raised in a monastery.

Bessie reports the story:

After the war, thru the efforts of Rabbi Al Gris, several Jewish agencies 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 priest-hood.

The stories of unwitting conversion, apropos of the Spanish Inquisition, are not uncommon. Madeline Albright, the European born Secretary of State during the Presidency of Bill Clinton, is said to have discovered her Jewish origins only during the time she was the Secretary of State. And there is, of course, the story of our own John Kerry.

Aaron Levitz died February 27, 1915 at the age of 37. Balia assumed the widow's responsibility of providing for and bringing up her four young children. To save money, the young family moved in with her parents, Chonon and Khasia. Helen Berman Rhein's childhood memory that her "father was so caring for Tante Balia – he frequently went to her house in the a.m. before opening his store and that since she was widowed with four children he would leave some money for food or coal" in testimony not only to Barnett but indicative of the familial devotion among the Berman brothers and sisters.

An aside to the second cousin, brother-in-law saga of the Elijah Levitz, Bessie has written:

My Uncle Elijah 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 young.
Celia was 16 – working and old enough to say "no"
Hymie was already Bar Mitzvah
Faye was only 6 years 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 letter to be in English. She wanted to perfect her English reading (and found my printing and script easy to read). I wanted not to forget my Yiddish so it worked well for both of us.

An aside to the story is obviously Tante Balia, an emigrant from the Pales of Russia, was not an illiterate peasant but one who could read and write – at least in Yiddish.

Aaron Levitz died on Purim, February 27, 1915. In the words of Bessie Levitz Barkan, "a happy holiday for Jews – but not for us."

Bessie goes on to record her mother's mourning:

All her life my mother refused to observe the day as a happy holiday. She never made hamantashen. When other children went to 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.

And thanks again to Bessie's foresight in recording her memories, and

recollections of her father Aaron:

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 Hymie (4 and 3 years older) were born in Russia. Faye – 6 years younger than I.

He loved my mother and was a most devoted and loving father – the short time 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!

Bessie preserved many stories about her Balia , mother:

Dr. Roth was taking my mothers case history. He wanted to know how old her parents were when they died and the cause of death. She answered, “My mother was 82 and my father was 86 . . Did they need a reason?”

Balia was one who, even in old age, could adapt:

When Bubby was in St. Raphael Hospital there was the cross with Jesus on the wall over her bed. One of the nuns, knowing that Bubby was Jewish asked if she wanted it removed. Bubbie’s classic response - “Of course not. After all, he was related to me before he became related to you.”

You have to know that the sandwich on long Italian bread that is called a Sub (or submarine in some places) is called a Hero in New Haven where Bessie insist that Balia 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.

Helen Berman Rhein has her own memories of the close relationship that existed among the Berman siblings and was aware of the family intrareliance:

My father was so caring for Tante Balia – he frequently went to her house in the A.M. before opening his store. Since she was widowed with four children he would leave some money for food or coal They were so devoted to each other. Tante Balia was a very wise and brilliant lady. You have perhaps heard the story about her chat with an M.D. who tended her – when he questioned her about her past and parents – asked her “What did your father die from” her answer to him was “He was 87. Did he need a reason?” I loved her so very much. When I had problems I went to Tante Balia.

And when it was about friends – my cousins were my friends! I didn't need others. We all had each other. It was wonderful!

It is amazing how some stories – like the one about Tante Balia and the doctor – have been passed on even among the different family branches and have survived the generations. It is hoped that this recordation will preserve the story for generations yet to come.

For Bessie and the early Berman Family, Seders were a vivid memory of Balia:

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. Came 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-laws, 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."

and Bessie adds with the love of a devoted daughter:

Oh! She could be funny

Bessie relates a story that is perhaps more about her own family than about her mother but demonstrates Bessie's desire to have her children and grandchildren know their "Bubby", their grandmother Balia"

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 doctor 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!" concluded Bessie.

While Bessie's report of the 1967 death of her mother marked the end of an era, it alone did not cause the fading of the Berman Family Group — the tragic illness of Dr. Arthur Berman precipitated period when the Seders were not held. Bessie wrote:

Bubby died June 26, 1967. With her passing the Berman Family

Group — the descendants of her parents — being over 100 at the time — just faded. The adhesive that had kept the family together was gone.

It was in June of 1980 that Bessie Levitz Barkan wrote this eulogy for her mother:

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.

In writing a history — abbreviated at best — of the Berman Family, we should not forget the background and history of the Anti-Bermans, a term invented by Ben Sprafkin, the husband of Dora Berman, to describe those fortunate enough to have married into the all-embracing Berman family. The text of Bessie's history includes stories and vignettes relating to her father's family, the Levitzs.

While it is not intended that this History be a comprehensive study of the Bermans, their husbands and wives and their families unto the generations, the following is a "name story" similar to the one told about Balia & Meir, that Bessie has preserved:

My father's younger 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 brothers 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 two names.

To set the record straight, regarding name changes, according to Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) historian Marion Smith, immigrants' names were not changed by immigration inspectors. The names on passenger manifesto, that is, immigration records, were written down by ship officials at the port of departure, not by officials at Ellis Island or other ports. Though there may be spelling variations due to the fact that a ship official was writing what he heard from the immigrants, the name on the immigration records is usually very close to the name the immigrant provided.

Perhaps the most astute capsulation of the essence of Balia Berman Levitz, Tante Balia, was recorded by her daughter Bessie:

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.

The children and grandchildren of Balia and Aaron Levitz are:

Celia Levitz	(1903 - 1988)
m. Charles Byer	(1896 - 1983)

Richard Aaron Byer	(1927 - 2000)
m. Diane Podrat	(1941 -)

Barbara A. Byer	(1933 -)
m. Laurence B. Tiven	(1931 -)

Hyman Levitz	(1904 - 1947)
m. Martha Rutstein	(1906 -)

Judith Lois Levitz	(1934 -)
m. Robert Chernoff	(1933 -)

Nancy Levitz	(1943 -)
m. (d) H. Bradley Katz	(1939 -)
m. Bruce Bayuk	(1929 -)

Bessie Levitz	(1907 - 2000)
m. Nathan Barkan	(1896 - 1972)
m. Henry Diamond	(-)

Joyce Barkan (1932 - 2001)
m. (d) Marvin Furman (1926 -)
m. Harold Lilie (1942 -)

Harriet Barkan (1935 -)
m. Edward Kimmel (1934 -)

Faye Levitz (1917 - 1996)
m. George Heller (1909 - 1973)
m. Louis Batt (1897 - 1986)

Alan C. Heller (1941 - 1982)
m. Evelyn Jager (Sandground) (1943 -)

William Heller (1945 -)

HYMAN & JENNY (KAPLOWITZ) BERMAN

Hyman, the oldest of the Berman brothers is said to have deserted the Russian Army and to have followed quickly behind Ben, departing from Antwerp, Belgium on November 14, 1904 aboard the vessel Kroonland and arriving in New York on November 22, 1904.

Although Sidney and Ruth's history reports that Hyman "was a very good trumpet player and was reasonably safe in the army band," there is another recollection that he was in the quartermaster corps. In any event, as was common when conscripts were shipped from the European area of western Russia to the east, across Siberia to the war front, they deserted. Like the underground railroad in the United States to help slaves escape, there was an established procedure: a friend or relative would board the troop train that was headed to the western front and would have with him civilian clothes into which the soldier would change and together they would get off the train at the next stop and return home or go on to a port of embarkation for the voyage to the United States. As stated, Hyman departed on November 14, 1904 from Antwerp, Belgium aboard the vessel Kroonland and arrived in New York eight days later on November 22, 1904. It is to be presumed that he went on to New Haven, Connecticut where his brother Ben had arrived in May, some six months earlier.

Hyman, born on May 5, 1882 in Glusk, Russia, was 22 and single when he arrived in America.

Hyman listed himself as a "vegetable vendor" in his 1912 Petition for Naturalization. He was at that time married to Jenny (Kaplowitz) who was born at Smorgon, Russia. They lived at 33 Arch Street in New Haven. At the time of his naturalization there were two children, each born in New Haven; Max (b. 1908) and William (b. 1910). Bessie (Levine) was born in 1915 and Saul (Sonny) was born in 1925.

Arnold Berman reports that Hyman had a feed store with Arnold's father, Barnett, who then owned a men's clothing store.

After Hyman's death in New Haven in 1936, his widow, Jenny married one Isaac Steinman. Jenny, who was born in 1885, died in 1958 at Meriden, Connecticut.

Of the four children of Hyman & Jenny Berman, two of the boys suffered early tragic deaths. William (Willie) Berman died at the age of 17 as a result of a broken neck sustained in a diving accident at the Wilcox Pier in Savin Rock, West Haven, Connecticut in 1927. Saul (Sonny) Berman, a famous and talented jazz trumpeter, died in 1947 at the age of 21 of a drug overdose.

Max, the oldest child of Hyman & Jenny, married Ruth Lapidès in 1942 and sometime between the birth of their daughter Liz in New Haven in 1943 and their son Robert Saul in Los Angeles, in 1947, moved to California with his wife and daughter. The Berman Announcer (Vol. 2, No. 3) dated October 1954 reported:

“Aunt Jennie recently returned from visiting Max and Ruth in California. We call her the Flying Berman. Those periodic air flights to California are quite usual with her!”

Jenny was 69 (or perhaps 73) years old at the time she died in 1956 in Meriden, Connecticut.

The children and grandchildren of Hyman & Jenny Berman were:

Max S. Berman	(1908 - 1964)
m. Ruth Lapidès	(1912 - 1997)
Liz Berman	(1943 -)
m. d. Roger Morgan	(1940 -)
Robert Saul Berman	(1947 -)
m. Cinthia Lippincott	(1941 -)

William (Willie) Berman (1910 - 1927)

Bessie Berman	(1915 - 2002)
m. Herman E. Levine	(1914 - 1985)
Arthur W. Levine	(1941 -)
m. (d) Susan Lang)	(1947 -)
Gerald D. Levine	(1944 -)
m. Sarah Pokempner	(1946 -)
Susan Levine	(1947 -)
m. James Weiss	(1947 -)

Saul (Sonny) Berman (1925 - 1947)

BENJAMIN & PAULINE (SIEGEL) BERMAN

Sidney Berman and Ruth Berman Harris continue the story of the “escape” from Russia of the first of the Bermans to emigrate, Benjamin, their father, and provide by vignette a key to the nexus of the Berman Family to New Haven, Connecticut:

“With the Russian border, and most of the Berman family behind them, Benjamin was brought to the docks to board a ship that would bring him to America. But not before he bought some pastry for his cousin, Rose Kravitz, with whom he would live in New Haven. For the entire journey, the intoxicating smell of the German pastry tempted his fellow passengers to beg him for a taste. Herefused; only in hindsight, after the authorities at Ellis Island informed him that he couldn’t bring baked goods into the country, did he wish that he had shared the goodies on board.”

Rose Kravitz, the cousin with whom Benjamin was to live in America, was the child of Chonon Berman’s sister, Fannie Berman, and her husband, Meyer Kravitz. Fannie, Meyer and Rose Kravitz appear in the pictures of the early Berman Family Seders at Ward Street in New Haven. Their positioning in the photographs of the Seders evidence the strong family tie between Chonon and his sister Fannie. The Kravitz family lived in New Haven, hence when Benjamin came to America he came to New Haven and the rest of the family followed establishing New Haven as the Berman’s home town.

The naturalization records confirm the story written by Dr. Sidney and his sister Ruth: **Benjamin** Berman, the Second son of Chonon & Khasia Berman (born on April 12, 1885 at Gluck, Russia) within a month of his 19th birthday, departed Hamburg Germany on May 6, 1904 on the Vessel Belgravia and arrived in New York on May 20, 1904. It is to be assumed that he went directly from New York to New Haven, and his to cousin, Rose Kravitz, and her family. Ben thus became the first “American” Berman and the first of the family to settle in New Haven.

When Benjamin Berman, one of the 76,000 Jews to come to the United States in 1904, arrived in America, Theodore Roosevelt was President.

It is represented that in New Haven, Ben worked as a tailor in a clothing store during the day and at night went to school to improve his English. Dr. Sydney and Ruth record that “He worked hard and opened his own clothing shop within a couple of years.” They add, “He then started saving money and making plans to bring his family to America.”

The February 16, 1912 Petition for Naturalization of Benjamin Berman lists

his occupation as “tailor” and goes on to state that as of that date he was “not married.” The naturalization records do not provide information representing that Ben was married to Pauline Siegel on May 5, 1911 nor the birth of their first child, Mildred, on February 24, 1912.

It has been related that Pauline was born in New York City. Pauline’s mother, Sarah Siegel, was the daughter of the owner of a clothing factory in the City. Sarah was the High School “Beauty Queen” of Sangelies, New York. She “ran off” with the foreman of her father’s clothing factory. She latter married a Mr. Schwartz. (None of this informational tidbit has been confirmed, of course.) The information does, however, appear to reconcile or explain other information that has been recorded.

Arnold Berman confirms that Ben first owned a men’s clothing store and then a restaurant. Other information suggests that he also owned a moving picture theater, The Rivoli Theater, on Campbell Avenue in West Haven

Ben had three children, Mildred (b.1912), Ruth (b. 1916) and Sidney (b. 1919). Ruth is a concert harpist who lived in New York, played as a member of the New York Philharmonic Orchestra and recorded a record or records featuring her playing. Sidney is a psychiatrist in private practice in New Haven and a professor of psychiatry at the Yale University School of Medicine.

Ben did save money and did arrange for Chonon and Khasia to come to the United States. Chonon’s Petition for Naturalization indicates that he came from Liverpool, England on or about the 12th day of June 1906 on the vessel *Coronia*.

Ruth and Sidney tell a story of Chonon’s emigration:

Back in Russia, a neighbor of Chonon & Khasia’s, whose husband was already in America, asked them to take her son with them as if he was one of their own. After processing at Ellis Island, the boat docked in New York Harbor, where the boy’s father came to meet them. The little boy saw his father and cried out “Papa! Papa!” and the father waved back and called out his son’s name. Customs agents, sensing that something was wrong, made them all go back to Ellis Island, the first stop on their way back to Russia.

As reported by Susan Harris for her mother Ruth and Uncle Sydney:

Benjamin bought his family a white house on Ward Street in New Haven, where Chonon & Khasia lived for the rest of their lives. Chonon never really adjusted to life in America; Benjamin, who supported them, was very generous to his family in quiet ways. And we have been repaid in kind by the traditions that they, uprooted in mid-life, began in another country, in a place that only exists in our collective memory, and a few photographs retrieved from an earlier time.

Arnold Berman questions the historical accuracy of Susan's report suggesting that "Ward Street" should read "Asylum Street" or they moved to Asylum Street in later years.

Ruth and Sydney go on to recall:

The Berman Family Seders at our grandparents home on Ward Street were the event of the year. Chonon & Khasia would remove all of the dining and living room furniture, except for the piano. Everything went out into the garage in the back yard. They lined the walls with long tables and benches to seat everybody and we would have the most wonderful Seders! And after the Seder was over, the music began! They sang wonderful songs. With his brothers lined up behind him, Harry the only American-born brother, played the piano, Benjamin who knew the words and melodies of a multitude of Russian and Jewish songs, started the singing, with the other brothers joining in. We remember the song "The Shranin" (The Neighbors) was a favorite one of the family.

Ben and Pauline rented a summer home in Woodmont before the Second World War, the early 1930s.

Ben died December 15, 1964 in New Haven and Pauline died on March 6, 1983, also in New Haven.

The children and grandchildren of Ben & Pauline were:

Mildred Berman	(1912 - 1988)
m. (d) Jacob Feinberg	(-)
m. Irving Sherman Mitkowski	(1899 -)

Harvey Feinberg	(1936 -)
m. Susan B. Elconin	(1940 -)

Ruth Berman	(1910 -)
m. Sydney Harris	(1906 - 1989)

Mark Harris	(1948 - 1980)
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Kenneth Harris	(1950 -)
m. Deborah Leah Rachel Grossman	(1949 -)

Susan Harris	(1954 -)
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Sidney Berman, M.D. (1919 – 2009)
m. (d) Billie Anne Geller (1923 -)
m. Jeanette Kelly (1931 - 2002)
m. Gretta Ruth (- 2008)

Leslie Berman (1951 -)
m. Geoffrey Alexander Oelsner, Jr. (1949 -)

BARNETT & MAE ROGOVIN BERMAN

From his March 25, 1916 Petition for Naturalization, we know that Barnett Berman, who then lived at 18 Scranton Street in New Haven, Connecticut, was born on October 29, 1877 at Gluck, Russia, emigrated from Antwerp, Belgium on October 3, 1905 and arrived in the United States at the port of Hoboken, New Jersey on October 11, 1905 aboard the vessel Zuland. At the time of his denunciation of Nicholas II, Emperor of all the Russia, Barnett was a cap maker.

(Of passing historical note, Danbury, Connecticut was at that time and later the hat producing capitol of the United States.) The Petition for naturalization lists as his wife, Mae, born in Russia and his child, Helen, born on June 28, 1915 at New Haven. Helen was a native born citizen who also had derivative citizenship through the naturalization of her father. Arnold ("Sonny") was not born until April 9, 1919, also at New Haven.

Arnold reports that his father ran a hay and feed store "until 1923 when the automobile beat out the horses," then the pawnshop. He was associated in the feed store with his older brother, Hymie.

Barnett and Mae's children were both musically talented in the Berman Family tradition.

Helen Berman Rhein was a 1935 graduate from Yale. After graduation from Yale she became the organist at Keser Israel and from there to Congregation Mishkar Israel where her uncle, Harry Berman, was the conductor of a professional choir and her brother, Arnold, blew the schofar for 25 years.

Helen married Sydney Rhein, a 1937 graduate of the University of Connecticut who became a well-known "swing" musician playing the bass violin and arranging for such famous orchestras as Eddie Duchin and Sammy Kaye.

Their son, William, played the bass violin with the New Haven, Symphony Orchestra at the age of 14. He subsequently went on to the renowned Julliard School of music and earned such a reputation as a bassist that he received a call one day from Leonard Bernstein asking Bill to audition for the N.Y. Philharmonic. At the audition, Bernstein placed a music score in front of Bill, a piece that Bill had never played before and asked him to play it. The piece was the bass solo part of Beethoven's ninth symphony, perhaps one of the most difficult bass passages in the symphonic world. Bernstein was totally impressed with Bill's rendition and offered him the position on the spot.

Arnold – under the name Sonny Berman – was an accomplished trumpeter who had his own very popular orchestra playing throughout New England during the 40s and 50s.

Arnold gave up his “on the road” traveling to take over his father’s pawn shop when his father was stricken with Lou Gehrig’s disease.

But, Mae’s life spanned three generations. At the age of 108 Mae attended the 2002 Berman Family Seder in New Haven and none then present had any doubt that she would be there next year . . . and the year after that . . . and. She was then a resident of the Jewish Home for the Aged in New Haven.

Mae’s nephew Eugene (Son of Gustave) remembers her as a kindred spirit, a supporter of Henry Wallace in his third-party bid for the Presidency in 1948 against Harry Truman and Thomas R. Dewey. She was an old time liberal who gave her son, Arnold, the middle name “Wilson” in honor of President Woodrow Wilson.

The children and grandchildren of Barnett & Mae (Rogovin) Berman are:

Helen Berman	(1915 -)
m. Sidney Rhein	(1916 – 2006)

William Rhein	(1939 - 1981)
m. (d)	(-)
m. (d) Donna Przybylowicz	(1943 -)
m. Lauren Lazarus	(-)

Judith Rhein	(1942 -)
m. Larry Sulkis	(1939 -)

Arnold Berman	(1919 - 2002)
m. Rosalind Schub	(1925 -)

Barry Berman	(1950 -)
m. Peggy McCarthy	(1950 -)

Kenneth Berman	(1952 -)
m. Paula Callahan	(-)

Mark Berman	(1954 -)
m. (d) Isabelle Duvernois	(1961 -)

GUSTAVE & LILLIAN (BERMAN) BERMAN

Gustave Berman, the second youngest of the five Berman brothers, was born in Russia on or about March 15, 1889.

Gus was apprenticed as a tailor in Russia at about the age of 12, depending on who does the recollecting. The only Russian-based history of Gus is that related by him at dinner in Florida with his wife, Lil, and son, Eugene, and Eugene's wife, Carol, and their young children, E. Bruce Berman, Jr. and Caren. Although Gus seldom spoke of his life in Russia, on this evening, after a good meal in a fine European restaurant on Route 1 in Dania, Florida and after several indulgences of cocktails, wine and after dinner cordials, he spoke of some of his recollections.

He remembered being very, very poor. He remembered being an apprentice tailor. He remembered political meetings in the woods and talk of revolution. He remembered the desertion of his brother, Hymie, for the Tsar's army and of the emigration of members of his family. His remembrances were not warm and fuzzy of a happy childhood or of toys or events or family, but rather of circumstances that he normally did not seek to recall.

It is one of Eugene's major regrets that the conversation of that evening was not recorded or that he did not immediately diary that which his father retold. Gus, like others of his generation, did not freely talk about what it was like back there . . . in Russia from which they had fled.

Gus' exodus differs from that of his brothers who came directly to the new Berman family hometown of New Haven, Connecticut. Indeed, there are dates and ages that are not reconciled for reasons of the realities of the times.

It is believed that Gus arrived in America in 1906 or 1907 at the age of 16 or 17. Unlike the family who came before him, he initially settled in New York where it is believed that he went to work for Jo-Lo Ice Cream Company in Brooklyn that was owned by a Mr. Davis who is believed to have come from or was related to someone in Gus' Russian hometown. He arrived in New York and lived there without family or known friends.

There are two stories that Gus told that comprise the family lore:

(1) Although he was a poor laborer, Gus would save his money and on Saturday afternoons, for a quarter, would buy a seat in the second balcony of

the Metropolitan Opera House to hear Enrico Caruso perform.

(Gus, a born Berman who himself had developed no musical talent, Loved music all of his life and listened to it on the radio and on records, 78 rpm at the time)

(2) While working in the ice cream plant of Jo-Lo, the makers of Fudgicals and Popsicles, he developed an aversion to the smell of vanilla and attributed his aversion to his leaving his job at the plant. Throughout the rest of his life, Gus abhorred the smell of vanilla.

It is unknown how long Gus lived in New York or was employed by Jo-Lo. It is known that while in New York he did work as tailor, the trade to which he apprenticed back in Russia. He was a tailor by trade. In any event, he eventually found his way to New Haven where he rejoined his family.

Factually, his parents, Chonon & Khasia Berman, arrived in the United States in 1906 and were naturalized in 1912. Gus was 17 years old when his parents came to America and 23 years old when his parents became citizens. He did not marry until 1918 when he was 29 years old.

It can be inferred that Gus was, perhaps, more on the wild side than his brothers who originally settled down in New Haven. There is reason to believe that he drank and gambled and was a womanizer, a rogue if you will.

While little is known of his life in New Haven, it is known that he did own a men's clothing store and that he married Lillian Berman, the daughter of Sam and Minnie Berman. Sam Berman owned a saloon near the Yale campus that catered to the Yale students. When Gus and Lil married on August 18, 1918, Gus was 29 and Lil was but 19, ten years his junior. It was during World War I.

At the time of their marriage, Lil suffered a facial paralysis that was brought on by the death of her mother that same year. Lil never entirely recovered from the trauma induced facial paralysis. She suffered from chronic headaches, and in 19__ , had brain surgery performed by the famous brain surgeon, Dr. German, at the then New Haven Hospital, to remove what was thought to have been a brain tumor. No tumor was found. The surgery did not alleviate her headaches from which she suffered for the rest of her life. It did leave a scar in the middle of her forehead which she frequently hid by wearing a wig.

A newspaper article in August, 2002 dealt with "pseudo tumor", idiopathic intracranial cerebral hypertension that has symptoms that are similar to those of a real brain tumor. It is reported that "it can strike any age or sex, but it most often strikes young women." The condition translates as high fluid pressure in the brain without a known cause.

The purpose of this medical analysis is to demonstrate discoveries of modern medicine and explanations of diseases and conditions that were not previously

comprehended or understood. Lil undoubtedly suffered from idiopathic intracranial cerebral hypertension, a condition that had not as yet been identified during her lifetime. It would appear that Lil was not a hypochondriac after all. Perhaps she could have been cured.

Lillians birth name was “Lally” and was born in Spencer, Massachusetts, the daughter of an “itinerant artist,” in 1898. While she celebrated her birthday on October 10th, her birth certificate lists her as having been born on October 29th.

The October 10th date on which Lil celebrated her birthday was, in point of fact, the birthdate of her brother Henry. It was therefore only fair that Henry, who had no middle name, took “Eugene”, the name of his sister’s son, as his own, hence Henry E. Berman. Tit for tat as it were.

At the time of her marriage, Lil was employed as a milner at Mally’s Department Store in downtown New Haven. Throughout her life, Lil continued to make her own hats and did extensive knitting and crocheting. Her children and grandchildren all have hand-knitted afghans that attest to her handy work.

It is believed that a business failure and search for new opportunities that led to Gus and Lil’s departure from New Haven sometime after the birth of Milton, who was born on November 12, 1921 at New Haven. It is postulated that the year was 1923.

There is no known reason why the family moved from New Haven to Springfield, Massachusetts. It could hardly have been the admonition of Horace Greeley to “go west, young man,” Springfield being north and east of New Haven. The more plausible reason, as unlikely as it would appear, is that Gus bought a railroad ticket to a place as far away from New Haven as his limited resources would allow . . . all the way to Springfield.

Milton tells the story of a friend of his, the son of a very, very successful men’s clothing store proprietor in Westchester County, New York. Said Milton to his fellow retailer, “If my father had gone the other way, I could have been you!”

It was, however, in Springfield where Gus and Lil and their first born son, Milton, settled. And, at sometime thereafter, Lil’s family – her father, step-mother and siblings also came to Springfield. Milton remembers the family living in Springfield when the family first moved from New Haven. He remembers Sam, his maternal grandfather, his second wife, Sonja, and his youngest child, Henry, living with them. Henry was only 16 years older-than his nephew Milton.

Gus, Lil and Milton originally lived in Springfield but thereafter moved to Holyoke and subsequently purchased a two family house at 1846 Northampton Street in Holyoke, at sometime before June of 1928 when son Eugene was born. The family lived on the second floor of 1846 until after

Eugene went off to college.

While it is uncertain what Gus' occupation or business was while resident in Springfield, it is known that in Holyoke he operated a cleaning and dying business, Modern Cleaning and Dye House, and, perhaps a clothing store. There are pictures of a vehicle, made to look like a house, the Modern Cleaning & Dye House, which was one of Gus ventures. Eugene remembers as a kid a vehicle shaped like an airplane with wings that could be raised upward when necessary, i.e. to go around the rotary in the center of the intersection of Northampton and Dwight Streets in Holyoke. Says Eugene, I know not what was the purpose of the 'vehicle' and have no other recollections of the contraption that was, I guess, vintage Gus."

It had to be sometime after June 1, 1928 that Gus established Milgene Cleaners in Springfield perpetuating the names of his sons Milton and Eugene, a combination that would be continued in the reverse in Genton Clothes . . . Eugene and Milton.

Gus started his real business in 1921, Yale Sample Clothing Company on Dwight Street in Springfield. The business was the forerunner of Yale Clothing Company and eventually Yale-Genton.

When asked why the name "Yale", Gus would always reply that he chose the name because he was from New Haven. Gus, proud to live in the United States, when asked where he was from would quite honestly reply, "I'm from New Haven." He so wanted to be known as a real American. Similarly, in later life, when his family and friends were taking trips to Europe and he was asked to join them, on why he never "went to Europe" he would reply with his usual sense of humor, "I was there once and didn't like it" or "When I came here I only bought a one-way ticket."

In the series of volumes entitled "The Story of Western Massachusetts" published by the Lewis Historical Publishing Company, Inc. in 1949, the authors pay tribute to Gustave Berman:

"The longest mercantile enterprise of its kind in Springfield is operated by Gustave Berman. This is the Yale Clothing Company, occupying its own building at Dwight and Bridge streets. Mr. Berman is known throughout New England in the clothiers' and furnishers' trade and is active in various phases of life in Springfield and at Holyoke, where he resides."

"The story of Western Massachusetts goes on to record that Gus Berman moved to Springfield in 1923 and that:

"In Springfield he opened the small furnishings store which has grown into the tremendous business of today. The store was first located on Dwight Street, near Worthington. Later, little by little it grew until it came to be the largest in its field in Springfield. The business expanded to such an extent that it required a building of its own, and

this is the structure Mr. Berman acquired for it at Dwight and Bridge Streets known as Yale Clothing Company.”

His obituary, the top left lead in the Springfield, Massachusetts Daily News of Thursday, February 17, 1972, reported his death in Hollywood, Florida, where he and Lil had retired:

He was the founder of Yale Clothing Company on Dwight Street, which later merged with Genton Clothes to become Yale-Genton, now of West Springfield. The later firm was owned by his son, Milton R. Berman.

Gus was always thinking ahead of the rest of this world and out of the box with his retailing ideas. He envisioned roadside shopping, a place to which customers could drive and park their cars free and without hassle. His simple idea for his own business was, of course, the cursor for the shopping malls.

Because Yale Clothing Company was located in Springfield and Gus lived in Holyoke, he drove Riverdale Road twice each day, to the store and back. It was only natural that once his son Milton had spent a few years in the store learning the trade after his discharge as a Captain in the Air Force, that Gus decided to establish a road side store for Milton on Riverdale Road in West Springfield and to name it Genton Clothes after his two sons. Genton Clothes prospered and, at one time, had two additional stores, one in Pittsfield, Massachusetts and the other in East Hartford, Connecticut.

After Yale Clothing Company was destroyed in a spectacular fire in 1957, it was Gus’ sound business judgment to merge Yale Clothing Company and Genton Clothes into one business and to locate it in an up-scale, new building on Riverdale Road. Voila, Yale-Genton, the largest men’s retail store in New England!

Both “The Story of Western Massachusetts” and the Springfield Daily News obituary listed the civic fraternal organizations of which Gus was a member: Springfield Lodge of Elks, Mt. Tom Lodge of Masons in Holyoke, Scottish Rite Bodies and Melha Temple. He was also a member of Sinai Temple and its brotherhood and the Jewish Nursing Home of Western Massachusetts. Gus was “hail and will met”, active in the Shrine and, with his wife, regularly attended conventions including the national conventions.

The Springfield Daily News added a civic involvement dimension to the multi-faceted personality of Gus Berman:

“He was a member of United Fund of Greater Springfield, Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce, and one of the originators of the Breakfast Club and a member of New England Clothiers and Furnishers Association.”

Gus was active in all phases of the business community in Springfield. He served as a Greeter for the Breakfast Club of which he was a founder — a

group of downtown merchants who met for breakfast once a month. Over the years the Breakfast Club expanded and became a major function for the business and professional people of greater Springfield, frequently drawing an attendance of 1,000 or more at its regular monthly meetings. It remains a major activity of the Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce.

One of Gus' favorite things was his daily lunches at what became known as the Round Table Club. A group of fifteen or twenty leading business and professional men met for lunch each day — first at the Hotel Highland and thereafter at the Kimball Hotel. They formed a “club” that periodically had social functions to which the wives were invited. Gus enjoyed the fellowship of his peers in the Round Table Club and was accepted and embraced by the “members” for his jovial personality and real values.

Indeed, it is said that Gus could have been the Mayor of the City of Springfield if he wanted. He was aware of his short comings, a slight accent involving Vs and Ws, a reluctance to speak in public and an inability to remember name and faces. His constant admonition to his sons was to learn public speaking and to recognize and remember names and faces. Both Milton and Eugene took elocution lessons in their youth. In any event, Gus lived in Holyoke and was therefore and otherwise ineligible to be elected Mayor in Springfield.

During the years that he was active in business, Gus was in New York once a week; his routine was that after Sunday dinner (mid-day) with his family he would take the train from Springfield to New York where he would spend the night and spend the following day (Monday) in the market buying. He would leave New York late Monday afternoon and was met by his wife at the Springfield railroad station Monday evening. It was a well established routine. He took the four o'clock home.

As a result of his weekly “buying trips”, Gus was quite familiar with the City and made a point of eating at the finest restaurants, always among the first to try the newest entry into haute cuisine. Gus loved life . . . he loved people, he loved women and he loved to eat and drink.

Milton recalls an incident in the late 1950 or early 1960s when he and his father were in New York together on a buying trip. Gus took them on a side trip to Macy's to purchase a case of his favorite wine, Lancer's, in the crock bottle from Portugal. Leaving Macy's, they hailed a cab and when they got in, the driver greeted Gus, “Gidalia”, apparently the name by which he was known in his village in Russia. The taxi driver was from the same village where Gus was born. He remembered “Gidalia” more than fifty years later.

Gus loved to play cards. He and Lil had a regular card games with their friends in Holyoke; Gus played with the same group of men every Thursday night. The group included, among others, the Resnics, The Epsteins, the Jacobsons, the Gerbers and sometimes the Blums and others. When they retired to the Presidential Towers in Hollywood, Florida, several of the old Holyoke gang also had apartments in the same building and the games of

pinochle and Gin Rummy continued . . . on a regular daily basis.

Gus died in Florida after being stricken with a cerebral hemorrhage while playing Gin Rummy with his group in February, 1972. Both of his sons were with him at the time of his death. Eugene sought out the other players in the game of Gin and found his father's partner. Eugene asked the partner if they were winning at the time of his father's stroke and learned that the amount of the winnings was \$8.60. Eugene asked a shocked partner for \$4.30 representing Gus' share. The money was paid over by a man aghast at the unseemly request. Fittingly, Gus Berman was buried with the \$4.30 in his pocket.

After moving from Springfield to Holyoke, Gus and Lil owned two family houses:

1846 Northampton Street, Holyoke, Mass.

with (Dr.) Carl Webber and Lena Rosenbloom and Frank and Miriam Hano as next door neighbors.

And in the early 1950s moved to a secluded home located at

1057 Northampton Street, Holyoke, Mass.

From the late 1930s until the late 1940s they maintained their summer house at the corner of Hawley Avenue and Clinton Streets in Woodmont (Milford), Connecticut:

81 Hawley Avenue, Woodmont, Conn.

After selling their 1057 Northampton Street homestead, Gus and Lil lived for short times in a suite of the Sheraton Hotel on Chestnut Street in Springfield and then in an apartment on Union Street, also in Springfield. They then moved to a house.

Cooley Drive, Longmeadow, Mass.

where they remained until they began to winter in Florida at the Presidential Towers on South Ocean Drive, Hollywood, Florida. They sold their Cooley Drive residence and moved into an apartment, the Georgetown Apartments in Springfield on the Longmeadow town line, until they retired full time to Florida.

After Gus died in Florida in 1972 at the age of 83, Lil would take an apartment or live with Carol & Eugene until she took an apartment in the Porter Lake apartments on Porter Lake Drive in Springfield where she moved permanently until she eventually became a resident of the Jewish Nursing Home of Western Massachusetts where she died in 1998 at the age of 99.

The children and grandchildren of Gustave & Lillian (Berman) Berman are:

Milton R. Berman	(1921 -)
m. (d) Martha Robinson	(1922 -)
Mark Robinson Berman	(1951 -)
m. (d) Mary Ann Fiero	(1948 -)
m. Martha Baker	(-)
Meredith Ruth Berman	(1953 -)
m. Gideon Yoeli, MD	(1953 -)
Alexandra L. Yoeli	(1987 -)
Max Daniel Yoeli	(1990 -)
Eugene B. Berman (Sr.)	(1928 -)
m. Carol Hydeman Marks	(1932 - 1999)
E. Bruce Berman (Jr.)	(1955 -)
m. Patricia Foley	(1953 -)
Caren Marks Berman	(1957 -)
m. Andrew Morton Nemtzow	(1956 -)
Zachary Adam Nemtzow	(1990 -)
Alexander Jacob Nemtzow	(1990 -)

HARRY & GERTRUDE (WHITE) BERMAN

Harry Berman, the youngest of the Berman children, was born in Russia on August 15, 1897. He immigrated to America as a child with his parents Chonon & Khasia Berman. Chonon & Khasia Berman and their 8 year old son, Harry, arrived at the port of New York on June 20, 1906 aboard the Vessel *Coronia*.

The story of the immigration of Chonon, Khasia and Harry is told by Dr. Sidney Berman and his sister, Ruth Berman Harris, children of Benjamin Berman:

Back in Russia, a neighbor of Chonon & Khasia's, whose husband was already in America, asked them to take her son with them as if he was one of their own. After processing at Ellis Island, the boat docked in New York Harbor, where the boy's father came to meet them. The little boy saw his father and cried out "Papa! Papa!" and the father waved back and called out his son's name. Customs agents, sensing that something was wrong, made them all go back to Ellis Island, the first stop on their way back to Russia.

Benjamin immediately went to Washington, D.C. to talk to his Senators and Congressman, staying nearly three weeks, until everyone was released from Ellis Island.

In chronologizing the early life of Harry Berman, we refer to the writing of Bessie Levitz Barkan whose foresight in writing a family history created the source document from which we have drawn so extensively. She wrote about Chonon's reverence for music and the music heritage of the family:

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.

It should be noted that in the remembrances of Benjamin's children, Dr. Sydney and Ruth Berman Harris, they refer to "Harry, the only American-born

brother.” Their recollection is factually incorrect. Harry was born in Russia in 1897 and arrived in the United States with his parents in 1906 and was nine years old. He was the only brother who did not have an occupation when he arrived in the United States and the only one who attended American public schools. There was nothing about Harry in his later life that evidenced that he was, in fact, an immigrant.

Official records confirm that the Petition for Naturalization filed by Chonon Berman on February 16, 1912 indicates that son, Harry, was born on August 15, 1897, A Certificate of Citizenship, obtained by Harry in 1976 pursuant to the Nationality Act of 1940, confirms that he became a citizen on June 29, 1912, citizenship derived as a minor child of a father who became a citizen on that date. Harry was but twelve years old at that time. . . too young to be subject to the military draft or to serve in the military during World War One, the War to End All Wars!

Harry’s wife, Gertrude White (1899 - 1985), whom he married on October 24, 1926, was born in New York on March 15, 1899. Her father founded, and thereafter her three brothers were the owners of White’s, that even in the early 1900s was a “preppie” men’s clothing store catering to the Yale and ivy league college trade.

The March 26, 1974 obituary of Harry Berman is headlined “Funeral Services Wednesday For New Haven’s ‘Mr. Music’” and has as its lead, “. . . the originator and conductor at the Pop Concert in Yale Bowl and the man known to many as New Haven’s ‘Mr. Music.’”

Eugene Berman and all of the New Haven Bermans remember the series of summer concerts at the Yale Bowl in the 1940s. The members of the Gus Berman family, who summered in Woodmont, were regular attenders of the concerts of which Richard C. Lee was the master of ceremonies. Lee went on to become the Mayor of the City of New Haven.

The obituary recounts The Young People’s Concerts of the New Haven Symphony and the performances of Peter And The Wolf where:

“Berman conducted the symphony, introducing each musical instrument to children in an unusual manner bringing entertainment into musical education for young people who were often getting their first exposure to serious music.”

Eugene remembers as a child being driven by his mother to attend the concert at Yale’s Wcolsey Hall.

The obituary chronicles Harry’s public life:

“He began his career in 1913 as a violinist at the Old Bijou Theater on Church Street.”

Harry was then only 15.

“He devoted much of his life to the Business and Professional Men’s Orchestra, which he organized in the 1930s, comprised of people in Other fields who had talents as instrumentalists.

“He worked with choral groups, such as the Southern New England Telephone Co. Choir, and St. Mary’s and Notre Dame High School Choir. His studio, where he taught violin and viola for many years, was last located on Chapel Street.

“He played an engaged all types of music and in addition to his symphony duties, conducted and played in dance bands, accompanied vaudeville shows and was a standard local addition to the pit orchestra for Shubert Theater musical comedies.”

Eugene Berman remembers that Harry played in a chamber music group or in a trio that, played every summer Saturday night at Wilcox’s Seafood Restaurant at the pier at Savin Rock in West Haven, Connecticut and that his parents, Lil and Gus, who had a summer home in nearby Woodmont would frequently spend their Saturday night with other family members dining and dancing at Wilcox’s.

“Mr. Berman was a violinist in the famed Yale String Quartet for many years and held the first violinist chair in the New Haven Symphony from 1920 to 1953.

“He was the founder and conductor of New Haven’s Johnson Junior Symphony Orchestra and brought Young Peoples Concerts to Woolsey Hall for 36 years prior to his retirement in 1968.”

Harry’s daughter, Judy, adds to and clarifies the facts reported in the obituary noting that Harry was not the first violist but was actually the principal violinist of the New Haven Symphony and that her father played the viola in the Yale String Quartet. She informs that the Johnson Junior Orchestra was for young people 8 to 18 and rehearsal at Johnson’s clothing store on Church Street in New Haven, hence its name.

Harry’s obituary lists some of the honors bestowed upon “Mr. Music” during his lifetime:

“He was a member of the New Haven Rotary Club, an honorary member of the Junior Chamber of Commerce, was a member of the executive committee of the New Haven Festival of the Arts and was the recipient of the Brotherhood Award of the Sgt. Stanley Fishman Post 86 of the Jewish War Veterans in 1960.

“In 1972, Mr. Berman was cited by the Yale University Alumni Association for ‘distinguished service to the art and profession of

music””

* * *

Harry is said to have played a supporting role in the introduction and marriage of his cousin, Celia Levitz (the daughter of his Aunt Balia and Uncle Aaron Levitz). According to chronicles Bessie Levitz Barkan in her history:

“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 here from work for lunch (most times did not). Walking back she met Charlie – they walked and 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.”

* * *

As it is true that all musicians are not Bermans, it is also true that all Bermans are not musicians. Gus & Lil Berman, taking the occasion of their son Eugene’s being at their summer house in Woodmont, asked Harry if he would give violin lessons to their younger son. Harry was, of course, delighted and arrived at the house one day by pre-arrangement to begin the musical education of his nephew. He spent over the normal hour with his new student and, filled with hope, scheduled the next lesson for the following week. After the second lesson, Harry is said to have told his brother and sister-in-law to save their money and his time – Eugene had no musical ability! The family was devastated and assumed that this child was a genetic aberration.

* * *

Gert Berman is remembered as having a knack for expressions in a Pennsylvania Dutch sort of way, i.e. “The rich ain’t crazy.” Judy remembers many of them.

* * *

On the occasion of Harry’s death, former New Haven Mayor and long time collaborist with Harry, Richard C. Lee said of his friend, Harry Berman “in every way was always a gentlemen, a musician and for his friends who loved music the way he did, he was an inspiration. There is no one left like him in New Haven today.”

It is revealing of the man that it was requested that any contributions in memory of Harry Berman “be made to the New Haven Symphony Orchestra to be used as prizes for Young People’s Concerts.”

It is a sad irony of life that some families die out, that there are no heirs to carry on the family name. Harry & Gert's family is one that will not survive the next generation.

Harry and Gert (White) Berman had two children: Arthur born on February 18, 1928 in New Haven and Judith Berman Levine born on June 9, 1933 also at New Haven. It seems that the family always lived at 519 Norton Parkway, a three family house that Harry and Gert owned and in which they lived on the second floor.

Arthur was bright, a graduate of both Yale University and Yale Medical School '53 (an unusual accomplishment), a doctor, a veteran Naval Officer and an accomplished concert violinist. He was a child prodigy as a musician and, as a very young man, was a guest soloist with the New Haven Symphony Orchestra.

Dr. Arthur Berman did his internship at the Philadelphia General Hospital and later served at the Naval Hospital in Portsmouth, Virginia. It was shortly thereafter that he was tragically stricken with a severe and debilitating case of Multiple Sclerosis. The disease terminated his medical career and was devastating to his immediate family and the entire greater Berman family. His mother, Gert, was heart sick and would lament on the occasion of an upcoming Berman Family Seder "who can celebrate a happy occasion when Arthur is so ill?" No one challenged a mothers' anguish and the Seders were suspended in the mid-fifties in deference to Arthur's illness.

During his illness, Arthur married his then physical therapist, Anne Haley, who attended him until his death in 1975. There were no children born of this marriage. Anne never remarried and remained a close family member continuing to live at the home she and Arthur shared in Milford, CT.

Judy Berman graduated Syracuse University in 1955 and went on to work in the Psychology Department of the graduate school of Yale University. At one time she served as the recruiter for the Yale New Haven Hospital School of Nursing and was a salesperson for a printing firm.

Judy married Howard Levine on October 26, 1956 in New Haven. The couple was divorced in 1980. Judy and Howard had no children. Judy never remarried.

The Children of Harry & Gertrude (White) Berman were:

Arthur Berman	(1928 - 1975)
m. Ann Haley	(1934 -)
Judith Berman	(1933 -)
m. (d) Howard Levine	(1927 -)

The family line of Harry & Gert does not appear to be destined to continue.

