



**THE SER-CHARLAP FAMILY
NEWSLETTER**

Vol. 3, No. 2

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THE FAMILY AND THE LOVERS OF ZION

In the middle of the nineteenth century Jewish thinkers, increasingly concerned with emerging nationalist movements, began to ponder the predicament of the Jews in the new Europe. In 1862 Moses Hess published *Rome and Jerusalem*, in which he advocated the restoration of the Jewish people to Palestine. Hess viewed a new Jewish nation as a spiritual center for the entire Jewish people and a model for other emerging nations of the East and West. He secularized the messianic Jewish belief into a dream of a national guardianship of morality - a paradigm for others to emulate.

Peretz Smolenskin carried these ideas further, stating that the Jews were a nation of intellect, kept together by the Hebrew language. His ideas were propagated through *HaShahar (The Dawn)*, which he founded in 1868 and in which he published his famous essay *The Eternal People*. Smolenskin was an advocate of cultural nationalism and was an opponent of those *haskalah* (enlightenment) proponents who believed in the cultural assimilation of the Jewish people. With the large scale pogroms that erupted throughout Russian controlled territory, Smolenskin proposed a complete evacuation of eastern Europe. He warned the Jews not to repeat the terrible errors of the past by emigrating to America and a new exile. Rather, their place was in a restored Zion where Jewish genius would flourish.

During the 1880s, these ideas found fruition in the establishment of the *Lovers of Zion* movement. One of the ablest leaders of this movement was Judah Pinsker, who was energized after observing the mutilation of Jews during the Odessa pogrom. In his masterful pamphlet *Auto-Emancipation*, he urged Jews to elevate their national consciousness into a movement for territorial independence. Like Smolenskin, he saw no hope in migrating to another country where, once again, the Jew would be in a minority status.

The *Lovers of Zion* movement was not the province solely of secularists. Indeed, credit for its formal founding goes to Rabbi Shmuel Mohilewer, who was Chief Rabbi of Suwalk from 1860-1868. Here lies the connection between our family and *Lovers of*

 Zion. Suwalk and the surrounding towns was a center of our family, especially the Charlaps. Suwalk Gubernya (governing district) encompassed the extreme northeastern corner of Poland and extended into what is now Lithuania. To the west was Prussia and to the east, Russia proper. Being a border city, Suwalk was a center for trade, rumors, ideas, and burgeoning movements. The *Lovers of Zion* movement found many adherents among our family. One was Yaacov Charlap, whose son, Yechezkiel Eliyahu Charlap, later rose to prominence in the Zionist movement. Yaacov, was a direct descendant of the Wilna Gaon; his wife, Faiga Chana Blaus, came from the family of Rabbi Yisroael Salanter.

(cont. page 2)

Lovers of Zion (cont.)

Yechezkiel Eliyahu Charlap was born in Baklerowe in 1897. He studied in the cheders of Suwalk and then in the Suwalk Yeshiva. During World War I, the family sought refuge in Georgia, where he became a member of the local Zionist council. Charlap rose to the head of the *Tzeire Tzion* (Zionist Youth) party in Georgia. He participated in the All-Russia Zionist Conference and in the *Tzeire Tzion* Conference in Petrograd in 1917. In 1921 he made *aliyah* to *Eretz Yisroael*. He became very active in the Labor movement and was a many-time delegate to *Histradut* conferences. Y. E. Charlap contributed many articles to *Davar* and *Hapoel Hatzair*.

There were many Charlaps from Suwalk Gubernya who, influenced by the *Lovers of Zion* movement and religious fervor, emigrated to *Eretz Yisroael*. One of the earliest was Yitzhak Charlap (3157, Pl.A-4) of Vilkavishkis, who made *aliyah* in 1850 with his family. R' Yitzhak's father may not have been a Charlap, but his mother, Chaya (3147, Pl.A) was a daughter to Abraham Charlap (2153), the progenitor of our family tree. Yitzhak married another Chaya Charlap (3158), the daughter of his uncle Yehuda Leib (3148), and adopted the Charlap name.

Another early settler in Israel was Sarah Freidel Charlap (3180, Pl.A-2) who married Yisroael Moshe Lapin (3189) of Grodno. Together, they made *aliyah* in 1862 or 1863. Ze'ev Charlap (3215, Pl.A-2a), son of the Gaon Rabbi Ephraim Eliezer Tzvi Hersh (3169) of Mezritch left eastern Europe and lived in Jerusalem for many years. So did his nephew Ephraim Tzvi (3228, Pl.A-2aa). The latter was born in

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Tiraspol ca. 1856 and died in Rehoboth where he was a renowned rabbi. Betzalel Lapin (3323, Pl.A-2b) was born in Grodno circa 1855. His parents were Yitzhak Lapin and Sarah Freidel Charlap. Betzalel emigrated to the United States and lived in New York City for awhile. Stirred by his love of Zion he later made *aliyah* and joined the rest of his family.

These are just a few of the Charlaps who were early settlers in *Eretz Yisroael*. Today their descendants are "numerous as the stars." They have been joined by relatives from every branch of our family and it is not hyperbole to say that our members are living throughout the modern State of Israel and contributing significantly to the growth of the Jewish nation.

ISRAEL FLIGHT TEST CENTER

One family member who has made a major contribution to Israel is Harry Mankuta (1832, Pl.17b), son of Kalman Mankuta (1787) and Yehudis (Haddas) Parczewski (1785). Harry was born in Ciechanowiec and at an early age came with his family to the USA. After graduating college as an engineer, he was working at the Bell Helicopter Company in Buffalo, N.Y. He was approached with an offer to help the new nation of Israel build up their aircraft industry. As Harry puts it, "It was the coldest, snowiest winter on record in Buffalo. It didn't take much to convince me to make *aliyah* to the Land of Milk and Honey."

Harry rose to the position of Chief Engineer of Israel Aircraft Industries and later was partner with Moshe Arens in a consulting firm. On the way he established the Flight Test Center at Ben Gurion Airport, which has been a major factor in guaranteeing the superiority of the Israel Air Force. This year, on the thirtieth anniversary of the establishment of the Flight Test Center, Harry was honored by the Israeli government and IAI in recognition of his outstanding contributions to Israeli aviation.

Harry lives in Ra'anana with his wife Sarah (2382). They are the parents of four children who have given them five grandchildren.

VINICKS RECIPIENT OF B'NAI B'RITH AWARD

The Schenectady, New York Chapter of B'nai B'rith presented its Fifteenth Annual Youth Services Award to Ted (135,Pl.3ec) and Raquel (134) Vinick in recognition of their work for Soviet Jewry. The award was presented at a testimonial breakfast held on March 22nd at Beth Israel Synagogue in Schenectady.

Raquel was born and raised in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Her father, Yehoshua Ser (128) emigrated there early in this century. Subsequently, he was known as Jose Scher. One of nine children, Raquel attended high school and college in Argentina and won a scholarship to Tulane University Graduate School where she was inducted into the Romance Language Honor Society. While visiting her Ser (known as Sahr) relatives in Schenectady, she met her husband, Ted Vinick, and secured a position at Union College, where she taught Spanish for 25 years, retiring in June 1991.

Richard Theodore (Ted) Vinick graduated from Union College with a degree in Business Economics. During World War II he served with the U.S. Army 100th Infantry Division in France and Germany. After the war he joined his father in operating The Myers Children Shop. Ted also served as an Administrator with the New York State Department of Transportation.

In accepting the award, Ted and Raquel both made moving speeches. Here is an excerpt from Ted's: "What appeared to be a small, short task has evolved into a long-standing, permanent relationship and we find the effort one of the most meaningful experiences of our lives. We consider the Russian families part of our extended family [Ed. What more ???] as we celebrate many *simchas* together. Yes, we have helped the Russian Jews in many ways and they are very grateful - but we in turn say *spazeebah* (thank you) to them for opening our eyes to a different culture and enabling us to appreciate the freedom and opportunity we have in this country. This was brought vividly to mind when we accompanied Rabbi Bloom as he mounted *mezzuzahs* on the doorposts of the new homes of several Russian Jewish families. He explained the meaning and significance of the wood encased parchments to Jews who had never seen a *mezzuzah*! I stood there agape. Here were Jews learning to be Jewish! . . . We have helped 73 Soviet Jewish men, women, and children. Of these, 35 came in 1991. We are proud of the progress of our new friends and are happy to have them here to add diversity and strength to our congregation and our community. They have truly enriched our lives. . . When we orient our synagogue youth group for community service work, we tell them, 'When you give a gift or write a check, that is one form of giving - but when you give of yourself, then you truly give. We Jews live by deeds, not just words.' We thank B'nai B'rith for honoring us. They exemplify this concept through their social action and many charitable programs. These affirm the highest values of the human spirit."

In her comments, Raquel remembered, "I was also an immigrant to this country. I came from Argentina under very different circumstances. I was a student and I already knew the English language. Besides, there were caring relatives in Schenectady who welcomed me. Yet, the adjusting process was not all that easy. There were moments of loneliness, discouragement, and frustration. However, there were warm people who befriended me and made my path less difficult. I have not forgotten."

Nor will Ted and Raquel be forgotten. They have added to the dignity and *menschlichkeit* of our family. We are thrilled at their accomplishments in helping the Jews of the former Soviet Union.

"All Israelites are mutually accountable for each other. In a boat at sea one of the men began to bore a hole in the bottom of the hull. On being remonstrated, he answered: 'I am only boring under my own seat.' 'Yes', said his comrades, 'but when the sea rushes in we shall all be drowned with you.'

So it is with Israel. Its weal or its woe is in the hands of every individual Israelite."

- The Talmud

NEW ADDITIONS

Daughter Benson (7212,Pl.7ea) arrived early in 1992. She is the second child of Murray (1086) and Sheila (1111) and the seventh grandchild of Martin (1053) and the late Leah (1064) Benson. The new baby has both Kuhr and Parczewski genes. Marty's grandmother was Chaya Gittel Kuhr (677, Pl.7) who was the daughter of Mattis Leml Kuhr (672) and Shayna Parczewski (671).

Eliana Berkoff (7105,Pl.7b) was born on Feb. 27th in Rochester, N.Y. She is the first for Jonathan (1357) and Lori (999). Lori's mom is Judith Palay (833) who is the daughter of Rabbi Sylvan Schwartzman (830) and Sylvia Cohen Schwartzman (827). Sylvia's father, Joseph Cohen (674,Pl.7), was a brother of Chaya Gittel Kuhr, Marty Benson's grandmother.

Brittany Megan Blaier (7226,Pl.23b), born April 14th, is the third child of Alan (5755) and Michelle and also the third grandchild for Robert (5749) and Rosa (5746) Blaier. Rosa is the daughter of Chaya Lew (4646). Chaya's father was Mordecai Lew (4641,Pl.23) and her mother was Rivka (4642). The records show Rivka's maiden name in abbreviated form as Parketz'. This may have been derived from Parczewski.

Susan Danielle Charlop (7227,Pl.A-8) was born on April 18th, the first child for Gordon (4351) and Ellen (5361). Susan is the seventh grandchild for Bernard (4343) and Simone (4346) Charlop. She is named for her great grandmother, Susie (3802), Bernie's mother. Susan Danielle's great grandfather was Abraham (3794) son of Harris (3789) son of Dov (6436) who lived in Neshvhyz. Harris (Tzvi Hersch) was born in that shtetl ca. 1860 and came to the USA in the mid 1890s.

Noam Gilad Cohen (7116,Pl.26d) and **Eitan Shai Cohen** (7117) are twins born Dec. 13, 1991. That makes numbers three and four for parents Irving (7112) and Chaya (7113). Irv's great grandmother was Doba Lewin (5010) who married her Chechanoffzer sweetheart and in 1903 came with him to America, where they settled in Kansas City.

Doba's father was Yisroael Aharon (5004). Recent evidence indicates that he is probably the Yisroael Lewin (6912,Pl.H-1) son of Ilko (Elias) (3933) son of Leib (3923) son of Chaim (3920) son of Zalman (3918). Chaim died in the village of Godlewo Mierniki prior to 1815. Zalman must have been born no later than the middle of the eighteenth century.

Marti Gavriel Kuhr-Bair (7094<Pl.7f) was born on February 26th to Beryl Kuhr (1141) and Patrick Bair (1506). She is their first child and also the first grandchild for Anne Kuhr (1135). The baby was named for her grandfather, the beloved Martin Stanley (Mort) Kuhr (1131). Mort's father was Isaac David (678), who was the son of Mattis Leml Kuhr (672,Pl.7) and Shayna Parczewski (671).

Max Beryl Morer (7033,Pl.19b) was born Jan. 12th in Las Vegas. Max's parents are Paul (2423) and Bonnie (7032). Max is the first grandchild for Irving (2410) and Ann (2402) Morer. Ann is the daughter of Itzhak Moshe Kafka (1870) and Fruma Mankuta (1862). Her grandparents were Yankel Mankuta (1855) and Rachel Leah Tama (1852). Thus, Max is assured of a place on our tree through the Tama and Mankuta lines. We are also investigating the close relationship of the Kafkas to our family.

Michal Moskowitz (7102,Pl.30) is our newest Sabra. She was born in Haifa on Feb. 26th to Itzhak (7098) and Bathsheva (6299), their second child. Bathsheva is the daughter of Yehuda Manor (Mankuta) 6294), who was a heroic figure in Poland during World War II. We will write more of him in future newsletters. This Mankuta line is intermarried with the Glovnia and Krystal families, both of which may be mishpocha. We believe that the Mankutas of Plate 30 trace back to Judko (Yehuda) (5099,Pl.19), who was born on Dec. 28,1855 in Andrzejewo, close by Ostrow Mazowieckie, Zaromb, Czyzewo, Ciechanowiec and other shtetlach associated with our family.

Micha Sapitsky (7106,Pl.11bb) arrived March 3rd in Dallas, Texas to join her sister Jacoba Rachel. Parents are Norman (4269)

(cont. on page 5)

"ELEPHANT MEL"

We've all heard about "Buffalo Bill" Cody. Well, our family has his equal in "Elephant Mel" Cohen (5036, Pl. 26d). Mel is the emperor of collectors of objects d'elephant. His collection now numbers over 6,000 and is still growing. Mel's penchant for elephants has caught the attention of the press and he has been featured in newspapers in South Africa, Mozambique, Rhodesia and, of course, in these United States. The ABC network beamed him all over the world via satellite TV. Walter Kronkite has stated, admiringly, "It's the largest collection of its kind in the world." He was the hit of the GOP (Republican Party) Convention of 1976 when he displayed his collection.

Mel's collection includes: elephants carved from a block of salt, a coin from Israel showing an elephant, an antique elephant made by Tiffany, an elephant on a jumbo peanut butter jar, twelve carved ivory elephants so small that they all fit into a hollow pea, an elephant pencil sharpener, many Republican campaign buttons, a Barry Goldwater tie tack elephant wearing horn-rimmed glasses, hundreds of postage stamps from all over the world, dozens of comic books with elephants on the covers, elephant candles and candle holders, a coconut carved into an elephant, beer cans from South Africa, elephant necklaces, animal cracker boxes, ties and socks decorated with elephants, an elephant weathervane, a painted elephant made from a camel's bladder, elephant bookends, whiskey bottles in the shape of elephants, and many precious pieces made from such materials as gold, jade, and silver. When Mel sends out letters, the envelopes are stamped with an elephant seal and labeled Elephant Post.

Mel's hobby started during World War II. He was a gunner aboard a B24 with the 14th U.S. Air Force, stationed in China and India. While there, he picked up his first elephant carved from ivory. The next was of coconut wood. And then he caught elephant fever.

Mel served with the Flying Tigers and then ran a private detective agency in the Kansas City area. He now lives in Gravois Mills, Missouri with his wife Iola May

(7048). They have three children: Deborah Sue (7055) married to Jeffrey Katz (7068), Daniel (7056) married to Diane (7069), and Stuart (7057). The three grandchildren are all named Katz: Warren (7083), Michael (7084), and Martin (7085). Mel's grandmother was Doba Lewin Cohen, whose lineage is discussed on page 4 of this issue.

With all his love of elephants, Mel admits to being a Democrat. When he displays his vast collection, he often scatters a few donkeys among the elephants to test how observant viewers are. One observer remarked, "Wow, 6,000 elephants and a donkey or two - that ain't hay".

NEW ADDITIONS (cont. from page 4)

and Linda (4279) and grandparents are Samuel (4152) and Frances (4245) Sapitsky. Sam's mother was Chaya Pearl Kur (2719, Pl. 11b) who emigrated with many of her siblings to Kansas City from Nur. This Kur branch is intricately related to Kopyto, Kiejmacher, and Smolarczyk lines.

MARRIAGES

Adam Robert (Avraham Zvi) Brown (4584, Pl. 21aa) was united with **Giselle Ann Winkler** (7211) on April 5th. Adam, who is an active researcher into our family roots, is a graduate attorney and real estate developer. Giselle is a physical therapist. Adam's grandmother was Sarah Lew². That superscript should read "squared". Both of Sarah's parents were Lews. Her father was Pinchas Beryl (4478, Pl. 21a) and her mother was Esther Malka (4479). Adam and Giselle have settled down in Englewood, New Jersey.

Stephan Leimberg (1079, Pl. 7ea) was wed to **Joanne Egley** (7213) on Dec. 31, 1991). Stephan is a widely known expert in the fields of estate and financial planning and taxation. He is the creator of The Leimberg Library which provides the tools and techniques of these disciplines. Stephan's mother Sylvia (1052) has been very active in family affairs. Stephan is in the Kuhr/Kristol/Parczewski branch of the family. He and Joanne are making their home in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania.

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MARRIAGES (cont.)**OBITUARIES**

Myriam Plaskienos (188,Pl.3ec) was married to **Yonah Biniashvili** (7039) in Israel on March 31. Myriam made aliyah to Israel from Argentina. She is the daughter of Daniel (159) and Lidia Scher (152) Plaskienos. Lydia is the daughter of Yehoshua Ser (128) and the granddaughter of Avraham (125,Pl.3e) and Liebe (124) Ser. Avraham was a Ser from the Wilna area of Lithuania. Liebe was born in Nur and lived in Ciechanowiec with her four children after Avraham died. Myriam and Yonah are living in the religious community of Safed, the beautiful city in the Galilee.

Danniel Vinick (137,Pl.3ec) was married to **Randa Azzu** (7040) in Groton, Connecticut on February 22nd. Danny is an M.D. graduate of the Albert Einstein Medical School of Yeshiva University and is an officer in the U.S. Navy. His wife is an industrial engineer. Danny's parents are Ted Vinick (135) and Raquel Scher (134). Raquel is a sister of Lidia Plaskienos.

Howard Vinick (136) was wed to **Gabrielle Bertez** (7205) on April 11th in Schenectady. Howard is also a son of Ted and Raquel Vinick. The genealogy from there goes back along the Yehoshua ben Avraham Ser line, same as for Lidia Plaskienos. Howard is in sales and is planning a business venture with his lovely Gabrielle.

MAZEL TOV TO ALL ON THEIR SIMCHAS

ERRATA

In the last issue of the Newsletter, we inadvertently referred to Larry Levy's (1339,Pl.8b) wife as Rachel Trotz Levy. Larry is, of course, married to the lovely lady we all know as Toby Trotz Levy (1342).

All that is best in the ethics of the modern world, in so far as it has not grown out of Greek thought, or Barbarian manhood, is the direct development of the ethics of old Israel. There is no code of legislation, ancient or modern, at once so just and so merciful, so tender to the weak and poor, as the Jewish Law.

- Thomas Henry Huxley

Oscar Cohen (Kafka) (1389,Pl.10) died on February 22nd at the age of 89. Oscar was the husband of Rachel Cear (1386), daughter of Yankel Eliezer Cear (Ser) (1383) and Malka Liebe Kafka (1384). Malka Liebe was the sister of Oscar's father, Arka. Arka left Czyzewo with his family and came to the USA. He was a shoemaker in Chicago. Oscar followed in his father's footsteps, but practiced in Brooklyn. Oscar changed his name to Cohen; his two brothers remained as Kafkas. One, Pesach, was a Cantor in Chicago. His son became an M.D. Oscar's other brother was a haberdasher in Anderson, Indiana. We are investigating the relationship of the Kafka family to ours. We are getting more evidence that they may be another branch of the family. If anyone knows the whereabouts of Oscar's nephews and nieces, we'd appreciate that information. Oscar and Rachel had no children of their own. Rachel had two siblings in the United States who married and had children. One was Isreal Cear (1385) and the other was Chava Lopkin (1387). Oscar was a religious man; his body was flown to Israel and he was buried on the Mount of Olives.

Henry Hurwitz, Jr. (4061,Pl.A-3ab) died on April 14th after a long illness. Henry was a research and theoretical physicist who worked on plans for the hydrogen bomb and nuclear reactors. Born in New York City, Henry earned his bachelor's degree from Cornell University. He went on to graduate studies at Harvard, receiving his master's degree in physics in 1939 and his Ph.D. in 1941. In 1943 he joined the staff at Los Alamos National Laboratory where he worked with Edward Teller and other leading scientists in developing advanced nuclear weapons. In 1946 he moved to the Knolls Atomic Laboratory which was organized by the General Electric Company for the Atomic Energy Commission. He was a leader in the design of nuclear power plants and set safety standards that were adopted worldwide. In 1954, *Fortune* magazine listed him as one of the "Ten Top Young Scientists in Industry" and said he "was probably the most brilliant student of nuclear reactor

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OBTUARIES (cont.)

theory." Henry held other positions at G.E. He directed their high-temperature physics program, was manager of nucleonics and radiation, and also directed the theory and systems division. At the University of Rochester he did research on laser fusion, worked on microprocessors for automation, and signaled a warning on indoor radon pollution. In 1961, the AEC awarded him the coveted E. O. Lawrence Award for his contribution to reactor physics. In 1989, he received the Glenn Seaborg Medal, the highest award of the American Nuclear Society. Henry was a member of Phi Beta Kappa, held 15 patents, and was the author of over 100 scholarly publications.

Henry was also an accomplished jazz pianist and an avid wind surfer and ski racer. He was a medalist in the 1988 Western Region/National Masters Championship in both slalom and giant slalom skiing events.

Henry's parents were Henry Hurwitz (4049) and Ruth Sapinsky (4041). Both were published writers of note. In particular, the original Henry Hurwitz was founder and editor of the *Menorah Journal*. (see Newsletter, vol. 2, no. 1, Spring 1991). Ruth's mother was Minnie (Dinah) Charlap (4019, Pl.A-3). She, in turn, was the daughter of Yosef Ze'ev Charlap (3159, Pl.A). Henry leaves his wife Alma (4074) and their three married children: Robin Inwald (4085), Julia Coleclough (4086) and Wayne (4098). He is also survived by Barry Dayton (4084), a son by his first wife, and nine grandchildren. Henry's brother David lives in Manhattan where he has been the archivist of the family files.

Netta (Yentl) Kahn (1881, Pl.18c) died on March 26th at the age of 70. Netta was a source of great encouragement in our family research. Despite suffering from Parkinson's Disease for several years, she was always there when somebody in the family needed her. Netta's husband was Sidney Kahn (1883), who was born a Kuropatwa and is therefore on our family tree in his own right. Netta met Sidney while visiting some of our relatives who were living in Cuba. They were married and

came to America in 1951. Even though his wife was a citizen, the immigration authorities refused to let Sidney stay in this country. They went to Canada and in 1952 re-entered the U.S., coming across from Windsor to Detroit. Netta's father was Velvel Simon (1872, Pl.18). Her mother was Sarah Mankuta (1864). Velvel's mother was Maite Tama (1854). Sarah's mother was Rachel Leah Tama (1852). Rachel Leah and Maite were half-sisters. Their father was Yisroael Tama (1849). Sarah's father was Yankel Mankuta (1855, Pl.19). The relationships get very intricate, but it is certain that Netta and Sidney along with Velvel and Sarah were cousins. Netta and Sidney had two sons who survive her, Lester (1926) and Harvey (1927). She also leaves four grandchildren and sisters Anne Fishman (1892) and Marcia Gikner (1893).

Sylvia Miller Pearlman (291, Pl.3be) passed away on May 3rd after a long illness. She was the daughter of Jenny (Shaindel) Silverburg (33) and Harry Miller (275). The Millers originated in Bialystock and may be related to us. However, Sylvia is on the present tree through her maternal side. Shaindel was one of nine children of Shlomo Silverburg (6, Pl.3b) and Sarah Ser (Sahr) (5). Sarah's father was Sender Ser (1, Pl.3). Shlomo and Sarah emigrated from Zareby Koscielnie early in this century. They settled down on Henry Street on the Lower East Side and eventually found their way up to Schenectady which was becoming a center of the family. We were told that Sylvia was a stunning beauty in high school and was very attractive to the young men. One in particular was young Bernie Pearlman (298) who persisted in his quest. Sylvia and Bernie were married three weeks before Pearl Harbor was attacked in 1941. They raised two sons, Howard (367) a teacher living in Hopewell Junction, N.Y. and Philip (368) a music teacher and jeweler of Gansvoort, N.Y. Both sons married and gave Sylvia and Bernie three grandchildren. Sylvia is also survived by Bernie and her sister May Fingerhut (295). Their brother, Stewart Miller (297) passed away on Dec. 14, 1990. All have been strong supporters of the family research.

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OBTUARIES (cont.)

Charles (Shlomo Leib) Ser (7182,Pl.31) died on February 6th in Paris. He was part of a grouping of the Ser family that left Nur and the Warsaw area for France before World War II. Charles was born on Aug. 22, 1907 in Wilomin, near Warsaw. He had at least one sibling, a brother Abram (7181), who also lives in Paris. Their father was Moshe Ser (7179) who was born in Nur. Moshe was married to Esther Yente Bialy (7180). Charles is survived by two sons. One of the sons is Michel (7187) who provided this information. We are corresponding with him and expect to learn the exact relationship of Moshe Ser and his family to the other Sers of Nur.

Irving (Issur) Sier (473,Pl.2a) died on March 15th at the age of 61. Irving, affectionately known as Icky, suffered from Down's Syndrome. It is rare that a person so afflicted reaches the age of 61. Doctors have attributed his longevity to the love provided by his family, especially his devoted sister Tillie (475). Icky was the son of Tifke (Tuvia) Sier (470). Tifke was a family member through both of his parents: Herschel Tzvi Ser (468,Pl.2) and Hannah Kuhr (469). Irving was the youngest of five children. His siblings all survive him. They are, besides Tillie, Anna (472), Morris (474), and Sidney (502). Anna, Tillie, and Morris were born in Nur, Sidney and Irving in the USA.

May the survivors find comfort in the warm memories and good deeds of the deceased, and may the souls of the departed be bound with the immortal souls of our Patriarchs and Matriarchs and all the other righteous men and women of our family who have preceded them.

FROM THE MAILBOX

To the Editor:

The letter from Shmuel Levine of Tel Aviv in the February-March Newsletter was on target in reminding us of the treatment we received at the hands of the British and our own U.S. government. Its biting statements created quite a bit of soul searching and alerts us to the need for

vigilance. We must insist on protection for our rights. Perhaps Alan Dershowitz is right about *Chutzpah!* We must never act like sheep or lemmings.

Shalom and love,
Ted Vinick (135,Pl.3ec)
Schenectady, New York

Sir:

I have received a copy of a letter and several plates you sent to relatives of mine, Adolph (5027) and Tillie Lewin (5020) Koch. I've been unable to take my eyes off the charts, showing the names and bloodline of my family! It is the first time I've really thought about my forefathers and foremothers, and I'm sometimes lost in wondering about them and what their lives were like. I applaud and admire your hard work and, what must be, hours and hours of time spent in this endeavor. . .

Shalom,
Paul Dalen (6945,Pl.26c)
Sheffield, England

Sir:

I am very interested in your project to translate the Ciechanowiec Yizkor Book. My father's paternal family came from there. My great grandfather's first cousin and his brother helped put the book together in Israel. They were Nathaniel and Alter Pioro. Both of them are in photos in the book, as is my great-great-grandfather's brother, Shlomo Pioro. My great-great-grandfather was Abraham Pioro (Pollack) who emigrated to New York City ca. 1909. I have corresponded with Nathaniel for over a decade, but have not heard from him or his family in two years. I cannot read Yiddish or Hebrew fluently, so I look forward to the translation, especially those parts written by Alter Pioro. I have had no success in finding him in Israel. Some of my Ciechanowiec family were shot during the war, others were deported to Treblinka. My great-great-great-grandparents are buried there. Please keep me posted on your progress.

Marya Pollack
New York, N.Y.

Accustom thyself to complete any good work thou hast undertaken.

-Derech Eretz Zutta, 8th century

THE HOLY TREASURE OF MY SOURCE

by

Albert Jablowsky (4408, Pl. A-9a)

Editor's Note: Al Jablowsky has done a remarkable job in publishing an anthology of his mother's poetry. Esther Charloff (4392) was a Yiddish poet whose work was inspirational to many immigrants and Yiddish readers for the better part of four decades. The following excerpt is from the Prologue to the book, The Holy Treasure of My Source. (Reprinted with permission of the author).

This book is intended as a memorial to my mother, who loved to write poetry, verse, and song. From her early childhood through her adolescent years and into old age, my mother wrote to express her feelings on paper; this gave her consolation and peace in a troubled world.

I recall my mother writing about every significant event that occurred in her life, whether it affected her or another family member. She also wrote about events affecting Israel and matters relating to Jewish people.

Her autobiography, written in Yiddish and comprising several volumes, goes into extensive detail about her life. She wrote of her voyage to America from her native home in Poland, of her life experiences as a young woman embarking on a new life in the America of the 1930s, of her marriage and, later, of her children and grandchildren. . .

Her poetry was written for purposes of self-expression, but she also wrote pieces to perform for various groups, notably charitable organizations celebrating Jewish holidays or special events. My mother wrote extensively from 1940 to 1975. For this book I have chosen only a small selection of her poetry. Most originally appeared in a column devoted to poetry in *Tog-Morning Journal*, a leading Jewish newspaper of the time. Some of her works appeared in other Jewish newspapers - the *Forward* and the *Algemeiner Journal*.

The poetry was all originally written in Yiddish. Both Yiddish and English versions are given in this book - on facing pages.

What comes through in my mother's writings, specifically in her poetry, is an account of the human struggle to prevail over often difficult and adverse conditions; it is a celebration of the courage found to face life's many hardships. All this is an outgrowth of her own life situation, which was often difficult and required strength and courage to endure . . . May this book be a fitting remembrance of all those she loved and who loved her.

From IMPRESSIONS OF ISRAEL

by Esther Charloff Jablowsky

. . . Yearning for mother Zion opened the wells -

A stream of warm love in my sadness
Moved me to hold the Jewish flag,
To see the "Jewish Legion" which battled
bloodily

For every inch of our soil,
In the huge Negev - so hot its sands,
In the woods and fields of green
And in the hills and valleys of the Jewish
Land.

. . . Seeing the land in all its splendor,
Mirrored in its brilliant light -
Brightly praising her so joyful,
Praising to the highest height.
And the fire column which lighted,
Warmed and attended me everywhere,

On the road to that distant shore
To see the hoped-for-land so fair -
That sends its tower beam abroad
Over all that rings around it,
Widely branching and restored . . .

Note: This exquisite volume is a work of love. It is hard bound in cloth, stamped in gold. The Yiddish and English typefaces are highly readable and there are several photographs of family interest. There are a limited number of copies available to family members at the cost of production, which is \$22.00. Anyone interested in purchasing a copy should contact:

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**BILLY CHARLAP —
JAZZ VIRTUOSO**

CONVENTION NEWS

Billy Charlap (3787,Pl.A-6a) is one of the fastest rising pianists in the world of jazz. Dick Hyman (3716,Pl.A-3), whose credentials in the music pantheon are unimpeachable, has told us that Billy is an "outstanding talent - a terrific pianist with great technique and sensitivity. I love to hear him play and to play with him."

At age 25, Billy is the 1992 recipient of the Robert and Adele S. Blank Jewish Arts Award. This award, endowed by the Blanks, was established in 1985 to recognize the talents of developing artists in all fields of expression. It was presented on April 26th at the Stephen Wise Free Synagogue on West 68th Street in New York City. Billy accommodated those present with a virtuoso concert in the main sanctuary. The program included works of Cole Porter, Irving Berlin, Charlie Parker, Jerome Kern, Duke Ellington and George Gershwin. Billy also included some of his own compositions.

Billy has already had an illustrious music career. He was a member of the Gerry Mulligan Quartet for two years and has performed under the baton of Zubin Mehta at the New York Philharmonic. Billy has also been featured at major jazz clubs in the New York area, including the Blue Note, Village Gate, Knickerbocker Saloon, J's, and St. Peter's Church. He has performed in the famed jazz series at New York's 92nd St. YM/WHA, which is directed by Dick Hyman.

Billy is the son of "Moose" Charlap (3780) and Sandy Stewart (3783). Moose was the famous Broadway composer, whose best known work is the musical "Peter Pan". Sandy is a super song stylist, who has often appeared with her talented sons. Yes, sons. Billy's brother, Tommy (3785), is also an exceptional jazz musician, concentrating on the bass fiddle. The boys' great-grandfather, Morris, was an immigrant to the USA in the 1890s. He settled in Philadelphia where he ran a clothing store. His father, Isaiah, remained in Europe. Billy and Tommy are expressing their musical talent in their own unique way, as generations of musical Charlaps have done.

Overland Park, Kansas

The plans for our Kansas convention are complete and registration is proceeding apace. The main family function will be the brunch and all day meeting on Sunday, June 14th, at the Jewish Community Center in Overland Park. No other formal meetings have been established, but the family members in the Kansas City area have offered their hospitality and those coming from out-of-town are planning to meet for luncheons, dinners, and visits to those who can not make the Sunday meeting. We expect relatives to converge on KC from California, Oklahoma, Tennessee, New York, Utah, and other diverse locations. We are looking forward to a gala meeting. Bring cameras, video and audio equipment, and paper and pens for notes. The saga of our family is intriguing.

Loch Sheldrake, New York

The dates for the Catskills convention at The New Brown's Hotel in Loch Sheldrake has been moved up to the weekend of August 21-23. The entertainment will be superb. Brown's is planning on having Theodore Bikel and Claire Barry as featured performers. The full facilities of this famed resort will be available to us at no extra charge. There is every conceivable activity and facility: two champion 18-hole golf courses, tennis, indoor and outdoor pools, ultra-modern health club and gym, hiking in the mountains, horseback riding, etc. There is continuous live dancing every night in the Jerry Lewis night club and in the Brown Derby disco/club. Not the least there is Brown's famous glatt kosher gourmet cuisine serving three full meals a day. Unusual treats are in store, for many of our relatives are very talented people.

Enclosed is a brochure and reservation form. Please make your reservations early to insure best accommodations.

There are three crowns: the crown of learning, the crown of priesthood, and the crown of royalty; but the crown of a good name exceeds them all.

-R' Simeon

Ethics of the Fathers