FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS

No man is an Island, intire of it selfe; every man is a piece of the Continent, a part of the maine; if a Clod bee washed away by the Sea, Europe is the lesse, as well as if a Promontorie were, as well as if a Mannor of thy friends or of thine owne were; any mans death diminishes me, because I am involved in Mankinde; And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; It tolls for thee.

The English poet John Donne penned these words some 400 years ago, but many Jews seem to have lost the message, especially in regard to their own kind. On August 19, 1991, a young Australian Jewish scholar, Yankel Rosenbaum, was murdered during a violent pogrom in Crown Heights, Brooklyn. A black mob had been outraged that a black youngster had been run over and killed in an automobile accident. That the car was driven by a religious Jew, a member of the Lubavitcher Hasidim, was enough to set off the frenzied black masses. During the Crown Heights riots, Jews were beaten, injured, and Jewish stores were wrecked, burned, and looted. And Yankel Rosenbaum was stabbed to death just because he was Jewish. These were scenes reminiscent of Kishinev, Odessa, Bialystok, and Kielce. Despite the obvious anti-Semitism of the black crowd and the similarity to the East European pogroms from which our ancestors had fled, most “mainline” Jewish organizations had little to say. There was no organized protest against the perpetrators, no memorial services for the martyred Hasid, no petitions to the government to take strong actions against the savages responsible for these crimes. Only the Orthodox community and a few “radical” groups like the followers of Rabbi Meir Kahane staged any protests. Certainly protests were an appropriate response; the New York City government under Mayor David Dinkins and Police Chief Lee Brown did little to interfere with the rioting crowds.

Yankel Rosenbaum lived long enough to identify one Lemirick Nelson as his murderer, but a largely black jury refused to convict one of their own and after the verdict, jury members went partying with Nelson to celebrate the acquittal. Unlike cases where “minorities” are the victims, the Federal government did not immediately intervene. It took years of effort by Yankel’s brother Norman Rosenbaum, a Melbourne lawyer, and help from some prominent politicians such as Senator Al D’Amato and Dov Hikind to force Attorney General Janet Reno to indict Nelson and his accomplice Charles Price on charges of violating Yankel Rosenbaum’s civil rights. This unholy pair were finally convicted but Norman Rosenbaum said that the handling of the case was a disgrace and the investigation was flawed. There are still accomplices in the mob who are walking free.

Why were so many Jews reluctant to take a strong stand against the Crown Heights pogrom and its handling by the authorities? Was it fear of offending black militants? Was it hesitation to criticize liberal city and state governments which a majority of the New York Jews supported? And, after all, was it necessary to make waves to stand up for the rights of these “other” Jews, right wing religious zealots, who are an embarrassment to the more assimilated Jewish main stream?

(Continued next page)
CROWN HEIGHTS (cont.)

Those who were sanguine in their position in American society forgot John Donne's admonition, "Never send to ask For Whom the Bell Tolls, it tolls for thee." For our family, this is especially poignant; Yankel Rosenbaum is on our family tree - he is one of ours, as a Jew and as a cousin.

Yankel (13147, Pl. 202) and Norman (13146) are the sons of Max (13139) and Fay (13142) and grandsons of Nathan (13037) and Basia Komesaroff (13029) Rosenbaum. Basia's father, Menachem Mendel (12804) was born in 1864 to Chaya Sarah Levin (12687, Pl. 197), wife of Pinchas Komesaroff (12799). Chaya Sarah's parents were Yaakov Levin (11528, Pl. 194) and Freida Don Yechiya (9801). There is our common relationship. Freida was the daughter of Baruch Don Yechiya (9793) who is discussed in detail in The Book of Destiny: Toledot Charlap. His grandfather was Ephraim Eliezer Zvi Hersch Charlap (9789, Pl. 172). Baruch's wife Dinah (9797) was herself a Don Yahya. Furthermore, this branch of the family is intertwined with those Donchins (Don Yahya) who have connections to the Vilna Gaon.

The Don Yahyas, after the expulsion from Spain and Portugal at the end of the 15th century, had settled along the Baltic Sea in the Hanseatic League city-states. From there they moved south and east into Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, and Belarus. Ludza in eastern Latvia and nearby Disna had a Don Yahya presence for several generations. The Don Yahyas were intricately inter-married with the Kudritzin and Zioni families. It is interesting that Don Yahyas went north from Iberia and eventually found themselves in regions that would be home to relatives who had been separated from them for almost two centuries. Some of our Iberian Don Yahyas took the southern route. Leaving Spain and Portugal, they settled in Italy, North Africa, and the Ottoman Empire. From Salonika and Constantinople they found their way to Suwalk, Tykocin, Lomza, Ludza, Disna, and all the other towns we are so familiar with. In these areas they linked up with those Don Yahyas who had taken the Baltic route. The two family lines forged alliances and effected marriages. It is in this milieu that the ancestors of Yankel Rosenbaum continued the scholarly and observant heritage. Yankel, in keeping with this tradition, was doing research for his doctoral thesis when he was felled by the semi-literate assassins who abide by a savage code.

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MY MOTHER
by Jennie Miller (33, Pl. 106)

Jennie (Shaindel) Silverburg was born on Sept. 2, 1899 in Zareby Koscielnie, Poland. Her parents were Shlomo Silverburg (6, Pl. 101) and Sarah Ser (5). Shlomo took his family to America and initially lived at the Henry Street Settlement on New York's Lower East Side. Eventually they joined other family members in Schenectady, New York. In October of 1918 Jennie was wed to Harry Miller (275), a baker and grocer, who had emigrated from his native Bialystok. They continued to live in Schenectady where they raised two daughters and a son: Sylvia (Pearman) (291), May (Fingerhat) (295), and Stewart (297). May wrote that her mother "was an up person who educated herself after leaving school at age 12 to work in a paper box factory for $3.00 per week. Many, many times I watched her reading an encyclopedia when she did not have money for a Sunday newspaper. "Jennie Silverburg Miller died on May 3, 1962.

When I think of my mother [Sarah Ser Silverburg], I picture her sitting at the table sipping a glass of tea. The way she held the glass was interesting. She would hold it between her forefingers at the bottom and she would sip the tea slowly, biting occasionally on a piece of lump sugar. I can also picture her standing in front of the black coal stove cooking supper for her family. The smell of whatever she was cooking filled the air with such a delightful aroma that it would make everyone hungry.

I don't remember ever seeing her without an apron. On week days she would wear gingham aprons. On Shabbos, of course, she would wear her best lace-trimmed white apron. My mother was a pious woman, dark complexioned, with big black eyes and jet black hair which was streaked with gray at the temples and across the top of her head. My mother wasn't much of a talker, but the few words she spoke were worth listening to. I remember quite well her words of advice. Oh, how well they come in handy today.

What wouldn't I give to sit next to her now and rest my head on her shoulder just to laugh a little and cry a little and show deep love and respect. I can dream, can't I? Now I'm awakened to the reality and remembering one of my mother's wise sayings, "A good dream is also good."

Sarah Ser Silverburg was born in Nur, Poland in 1865 and died in Schenectady, New York in 1917. Sarah's father was Sender Ser (1, Pl. 14) and her mother was Chaya Podkowa (2). Sender and Chaya were cousins. The Podkowa line is essentially the same as the Kopyto line of our family. Sender was born Aug. 12, 1835 in Nur. His wife, Chaya, also from Nur, was born Aug. 4, 1836. They were married on Oct. 27, 1857 with Rabbi Leib ben Shmuel Burshteiny officiating. Sender was a religious man but worked as a bookkeeper to a gentile-owned lumber business. He and Chaya had ten children, five boys and five girls. Some of their children married cousins with names Kiejsmacher, Danowitz, and Ser. Chaya Podkowa's parents were also cousins, Lazer Podkowa (2964) and Esther Elka Lewin (2965). They had eleven children, many of whom also married cousins: Kiejsmacher, Lewin, Podkowa, and Ser. All of these lines branch off from the Charlaps, the main trunk of our family tree. These complex inter-relationships will be clarified in the forthcoming book, Ancilla to Toledot Charlap.
THE DISGRACE OF LITHUANIA

The Charlap and Don Yahya families have a long and dignified history in Lithuania going back to the beginning of the 17th century and possibly earlier. They provided leaders of the Jewish population in the religious, intellectual, and communal realms. After World War I, most of the Jewish community supported Lithuanian aspirations for independence. Recognizing this contribution, in 1919 the Lithuanian delegation to the Versailles Peace Conference issued a guarantee to the Jews of Lithuania for the "right of national-cultural autonomy." By 1923, with independence in hand, the Lithuanian government, goaded on by the Christian clergy and reactionary elements began to renege on this promise. Under the slogan "Lithuania for the Lithuanians" the government passed legislation which made it increasingly difficult for Jews to earn a livelihood. Similar attitudes were developing in Poland. Russia, already under the domination of the Bolsheviks, was beginning to impose restrictions on religious practice and considered the Zionist movement an enemy of Communism. Lithuanian Jews had spread out from the small area which today we recognize as Lithuania. About 154,000 Litvak Jews lived in Lithuania proper. Another 93,000 were in Latvia, 400,000 were in Belarus, and a like number in northern Poland. As World War II approached, the situation in Poland and the Baltic states became ever more precarious for Jews. On June 22, 1941 the Nazi hordes attacked the Soviet Union and crushed Lithuania in a few days. Lithuanians, already bred on a constant diet of anti-Semitism and freed from any constraints, assaulted Jews with reckless abandon, looting their property and slaughtering those who were helpless. Nancy and Stuart Schoenburg point out in Lithuanian Jewish Communities (New York:Garland Publishing, Inc., 1991) that "as the Nazi occupation took control, the slaughter continued, but in an organized manner. Enthusiastically helped by their Lithuanian assistants, the Germans would transfer Jews from the small shtetls to larger towns where ghettos were set up. Out of these ghettos the Jews would be killed. By the end of 1941, the job in Lithuania had been substantially completed."

Under the auspices of The Association of the Lithuanian Jews in Israel, a four volume book called Lithuanian Jewry has been published. Volume 4 details the accounts of the Nazi period in all the cities and towns of Lithuania. Among these are several that were home to Charlap and Don Yahyas. For example, Butrimonys is the birthplace of Henry Hurwitz (4049,Pl.16), founder of the Menorah Movement at Harvard. Butrimonys (Buttrimantz) was one of the earliest Jewish communities in Lithuania. Between the two World Wars 200 Jewish families, perhaps 1200 people, lived there in a total population of about 1630. Most of the youth belonged to Zionist groups and many, fortunately, made aliyah to Eretz Yisrael. Chona Boyarski, a survivor and witness of the Holocaust recalled his experience, "When we entered Butrimonys we encountered a terrifying scene: all the windows and doors were shut; people were afraid to venture out; a gang of hooligans was running wild in the town, grabbing Jews and tormenting them. Particularly conspicuous among these rogues were Savickas the teacher and Kasperunas, a former captain in the Lithuanian army. These rogues belonged to the 'Activist Front.' They shot the Jews of Butrimonys on September 9, 1941; they shot the children by a separate pit, burying several of them alive."

Mariampole was a center of the Charlap family. Yehuda Leib Charlap (3148,Pl.4) was rabbi from 1865-1872 and it was here that his son, Yosef Ze'ev Charlap (3159), reigned as both a religious scholar and scientific intellectual. Jews played a large part in developing the town and by the eve of World War I, the 5,000 strong community constituted most of the population. Abraham Chaim Charlap (3712,Pl.8) chronicled some of the Jewish history in "Toledot Edat Mariampole," in Yalkut Maarabi, vol. 1, edited by Herman Rosenthal and Adolf Radin, New York: Ohole Shem Association, 1904. Joseph Melamed, an Israeli attorney and active in the Association of Lithuanian Jews in Israel relates that "In August 1941 the Jewish population of Mariampole was compelled to move into a ghetto. The Lithuanian partisans forced the rabbi of the town, Lenski, the chazan, and other prominent members of the community out of their homes; they were tied to horses and dragged around until their blood flowed along the road. On September 1 all the Jews of Mariampole were brought to previously prepared open graves and murdered. Only Lithuanians were involved in the shooting. Many were buried alive. The small children were not shot. Their heads were smashed with spades and poles. . . Neither was the Catholic church a shining example of humanity. . . the heads sent greeting telegrams to Hitler and priests gave their blessing to the murder battalions as they were leaving to commit their bloody work."

Over 55 years have elapsed since the annihilation of practically the entire flourishing Jewish community where our relatives lived. The Lithuanian government has done little to undo the damage their collaborationists inflicted on our people. They refuse to prosecute those who murdered Jews. Rather, they are considered heros and given awards and pensions. Legislation has passed which prevents stolen Jewish property from being returned to the rightful owners and the murderers continue to enjoy that which was confiscated from the victims. Jewish cemeteries and symbols are regularly vandalized. The Jewish archives of Vilna have not been returned to the YIVO Institute. Lithuania remains an open refuge for Nazi era criminals. All this represents the shame and disgrace of modern Lithuania.
WATERGATE AND WHITEWATER

Professor Samuel Dash (10715,Pl.56), a graduate of Harvard Law School, has been recognized nationally and internationally as a leading lawyer and scholar in the administration of criminal justice and professional responsibility. Professor of Law and Director of the Institute of Criminal Law and Procedure at Georgetown University Law Center since 1965, he has also had extensive experience in the practice of law. He has been both a federal prosecutor in the Criminal Division of the U.S. Department of Justice and District Attorney of Philadelphia. He is best known for his service to the Senate of the United States and the American people as Chief Counsel of the Senate Watergate Committee in 1973 and 1974. He continued work on major investigations in Pennsylvania, Alaska, and Puerto Rico. In October 1994 he was appointed Ethics Counsel in the Whitewater investigation. In 1958 he founded and became the president of the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers. He also served as Chairperson of the American Bar Association’s Section on Criminal Justice. He has received awards from both organizations. Professor Dash has been active in the protection of human rights throughout the world. He serves on the Board of Directors of the International League for Human Rights, a consultative body with the United Nations. Among his investigations have been the 1972 "Bloody Sunday" affair in Northern Ireland and human rights violations in Chile. He and his wife Sara (10709) traveled to the Soviet Union in 1972 and were successful in getting out of the country a young nuclear physicist who was a disciple of Dr. Sacharow and was about to be arrested for his human rights activities. After an interview in a South African prison, he publicized the views of Nelson Mandela, resulting in Mandela’s release from prison. Sam served in World War II as a Second Lieutenant in the U.S. Army Air Corps as a bombardier-navigator on the B-24 "Liberator." He saw action with the 15th Air Force over Italy. With all his busy schedule, he has given of himself to worthy causes including serving on the Board of Governors of Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Among others, he has been a member of the Executive Board of the Jewish Community Council of Philadelphia and of the metropolitan Washington area, a trustee of the Washington chapter of the American Jewish Committee, Philadelphia regional chairman of the Anti-Defamation League of B’nai B’rith, and trustee of the Albert Einstein Medical Center. His publications include two books: The Eavesdroppers (1959) and Chief Counsel (1976). Now, with the Monica Lewinsky scandal being the major news story across the country, the Ken Starr investigation of the White House is on everyone’s minds. Sam continues to be advisor to the Special Prosecutor and the following article recently appeared in The New York Times.

Kenneth Starr and His Watergate Star

By WILLIAM GLABERSON

WASHINGTON, Feb. 10 — If there have not been enough reminders of Watergate lately, Kenneth W. Starr, the independent counsel, brought another one with him to court this morning.

Mr. Starr's companion at the courthouse was Samuel Dash, a hero to pursuers of a different President, Richard M. Nixon. If Mr. Dash's presence alongside the embattled independent counsel was intended as an act of political symbolism, it was at least as blunt as any father-daughter picture from the White House.

Mr. Dash, a Democrat who is now 72, was the chief counsel to the Senate Watergate Committee a quarter-century ago and, because of television coverage of those hearings, something of a Government integrity celebrity. Critics of Mr. Starr have suggested that he associates himself with Mr. Dash to cloak himself in the credibility of the Watergate inquiry.

Today, Mr. Dash looked older and bolder than the last time he was on the national stage. But he still looked enough like the man in heavily framed glasses who used to whisper in the ear of the legendary chairman of the Watergate Committee, Senator Sam J. Ervin Jr., to make a visual point for Mr. Starr.

For students of Whitewater, Mr. Dash's appearance was not surprising. Since 1994, Mr. Dash has been a part-time ethics adviser to Mr. Starr, rendering opinions on the many assaults on Mr. Starr's fairness.

Since he has always seemed to clear Mr. Starr of accusations against him, Mr. Dash has sometimes been ridiculed by Mr. Clinton's supporters. James Carville, one of those taking part in the White House's attack, has accused Mr. Dash of bringing a Mad magazine standard of ethics to Mr. Starr's investigation. Mr. Carville once said that Mr. Dash was the "Alfred E. Neuman of ethics counselors. He doesn't worry about anything."

Mr. Dash, a one-time Philadelphia district attorney who has been a law professor at Georgetown University Law Center for more than 30 years, has sometimes appeared uncomfortable as an ally of Mr. Starr.

But, particularly when Mr. Starr has been under attack, Mr. Dash has defended him. In an interview two weeks ago he dismissed critics who said Mr. Starr was being too aggressive in pursuing the accusations involving Monica S. Lewinsky.

"He's very rule-of-law oriented," Mr. Dash said of Mr. Starr. For Washington lawyers, that was tantamount to: he's a guy who can be trusted.

It was not just what was said, though. It was who was saying it and about whom: the famous former Watergate counsel about the besieged Whitewater independent counsel.
Herman Donchin (12516) was described as one of the warmest, friendliest characters around. His handshake or hug, which expressed soft love of humanity, seemed inconsistent with his image of tough boxer, wrestler, and police officer whose life was spent in seamy atmospheres.

Herman was born in Lund, Sweden in June 1907, the youngest of five children of Bernard (12473) and Gertrude (12481) Donchin. The family had emigrated from Pikeln, Lithuania. Bernard’s grandfather was Meir (11506, Pl.172) ben Baruch (11501) Donchin whose grandmother, Pesche Batja (11496) was the daughter of the Vilna Gaon. Herman recalled that at age three he was so proud of his father’s striking up a conversation with a uniformed policeman who was wearing a tall helmet and saber, that he wanted to be a law enforcer ever after. Lund is near the southwestern tip of Sweden. It was a pretty town just outside of Malmo and across a narrow strait from Copenhagen. There was an active Jewish community in town and some streets were totally Jewish. There was no feeling of isolation. The Jews had very good relations with their Swedish neighbors, could pursue their religion, follow their traditions and live in peace. Nevertheless, in 1911 the family left Sweden for America and settled in Jersey City.

Jersey City is where this kinky-haired kid who talked with a Swedish accent got his name “Curly.” He also learned to fight off big bullies picking on the little Jewish kid who wasn’t afraid of being out-numbered. The fighting eventually led to a career. While working at odd jobs, Curly boxed as an amateur in the Golden Gloves and in 1927 won the state middleweight championship. Bad economic times steered Curly into professional boxing and he put together a string of 31 straight victories. He often sparred with the great champion Mickey Walker.

While boxing, Herman met and dated a charming and beautiful school teacher from Point Pleasant, New Jersey. He soon proposed but Lily Stambovsky (12521) refused to marry him unless he retired from the ring. Before their marriage, Curly Donchin not only had a brilliant boxing career, he spent several years as a wrestler and became so good that he won the World Junior Heavyweight Championship. He wrestled in every state, Canada, Mexico, and Bermuda. Of more than 2,000 “authentic” bouts, he won 90%. Curly wrestled the best of them including the famous Jim Londos. In 1940 an appointment to the Jersey City Police Department brought his ring and mat career to a close and brought him another new career as husband. He took Lily to the fights only once. Barney Ross, who is considered one of the greatest boxers of all time, invited them to see Floyd Patterson’s first defense of his heavyweight crown in appreciation of Herman’s help in interceding for a juvenile offender. Patterson won in the 10th round and Herman lost Lily’s company for all future boxing events.

His brilliant police career was marked by 12 commendations and three honorable mentions. He became a detective in 1942 and in 1951 was assigned to the Flying Squad, a special detail of trouble shooters who patrolled the city. Among his more meritorious deeds was the arrest of three men for a series of armed robberies. He had to fly to Miami to nab two of them. He personally apprehended four looters in another $62,000 heist. And then he arrested eight thugs for a series of armed robberies culminating in a gun battle in which he fortunately was not hit. In 1972 he was promoted to Inspector and assumed command of the Youth Division. Officials said they could not find a gentler, more understanding candidate for the position.

Herman Donchin had many fond memories of prominent world figures he had met. He glowingly recalled his several meetings with Lord Mayor Robert Briscoe of Dublin and his wife. Briscoe, a Jew, was especially appreciative that Herman organized a scholarship foundation for poor Irish Catholic students. Herman knew Mayor Frank Hague of Jersey City and Jack Dempsey as well. He corresponded with the King of Sweden and was received by the Ben Gurion family in Israel.

While being tough with delinquent youths, his heart remained soft for under-privileged people regardless of color or religion. He started another scholarship fund at St. Peters College with his friend Father Yanatelli, the former college chancellor. His hand was always extended in friendship, benevolence, and charity and that has made his name legendary in Jersey City. He was Commander of Knights of Pythias lodges in both Jersey City and Covered Bridge, NJ and has worked for B’nai B’rith and Hadassah. During his lifetime Herman received innumerable awards for his work with youngsters. His advice to parents was always to “provide love, guidance, and discipline.” Herman died in 1989 in Freehold, New Jersey.

Herman and Lily had a son and daughter and no children could be prouder of their parents. Daughter Trudy is an elementary school teacher in Jersey City. A native of Fort Lee, she is married to Ezra Chityat (12573), of Iraqi-Jewish descent, and veteran of the Suez campaign of 1956 with the Israel Defense Forces. They have a son George (12576). Trudy’s brother Norman (12572) is a sales engineer for a large electronic technology firm. He and his wife Sandra (12574) have two children and reside in Billerica, Massachusetts.
BIRTHS

Diana Renee (Dinah Rachel) Charlop (13941,Pl.43) was born on July 16, 1997 in Manhasset, NY. She is the 3rd child of Gordon (4351) and Ellen (5361) of Great Neck, NY and the 9th grandchild of Bernard (4343) and Simone (4346) Charlop who also live in Great Neck. Diana is 5 generations removed from Dov Charlap (6436) who was born in Tykocin, Poland and moved eastward to Nesvizh (now in Belarus) to join a growing Charlap presence in the Nesvizh, Slonim, Baranowicze, Novogrudok region.

Hillel Jacobson (13918,Pl.276) was born on Oct. 23, 1997 in New York City, the 1st child of Ephraim (11336) and Adeena Mermelstein (2372) Jacobson. Hillel is also the 1st grandchild for David (2362) and Nina (2354) Mermelstein of Monsey, NY and the 1st great-grandchild of Rabbi Seymour (2253) and Beverly (2265) Atlas. Seymour's grandmother was Yettah Pakciarz (2127,Pl.275) who was born in Wysokie Mazowieckie, Poland. Hillel lives in Brooklyn, NY.

Yair Achiad Landau (13936,Pl.178) was born on Jan. 10, 1998 in Israel, the 1st child of Avishai (13902) and Adi (11797), the 1st grandchild of Daniel (11786) and Michal Shamiir (11781) Shachor, and 1st great-grandchild of David (11766) and Reva Arond (11763) Shachor. Yair is the latest in a line that extends back to the Kudritzin and Donchin families and thence to the Don family. Yair is named for his mother's maiden name as his surname.

Esti Nayman (13940,Pl.135) was born in Jerusalem, Israel in Jan. 1998. She is the 1st child of Shmuel (11339) and Zahava Wietschner (531) Nayman, 4th grandchild for Rabbi Isaac (477) and Miriam (524) Wietschner, and 15th great-grandchild of Anna Sier Wietschner (472). Anna's grandparents were Herschel Zvi Ser (468,Pl.134) and Chana Kur (469) of Nur, Poland.

Benjamin Eli (Binyamin Eli) Peretz (14000,Pl.102) was born on Feb. 15, 1998, his mother's birthday, in Port Jefferson, NY. Benjamin is the 1st child of Eyal (8986) and Deborah Menton (71) Peretz. Arthur (58) and Nancy (189) Menton are delighted to add Benjamin to the Ser-Charlap Family Tree. The baby is also the 1st grandchild for Eyal's parents, Yossi and Rachel Peretz, of Arad, Israel, where Eyal was raised. The baby is about to move into a new house in Stony Brook, NY where his mother is Program Director of Hillel at the State University of New York. His Abba is an electronics and software engineer.

Julia Candice Rodman (14033,Pl.105) arrived on Feb. 20, 1998 in Miami, FL. Julia is the 1st child for Ronald (221) and Jessica (10407) and 3rd grandchild of Sheldon (216) and Lenore Family (210) Rodman. She is also the 3rd great-grandchild of Sid (198) and Mimi (204) Family. Sid was born in Warsaw, Poland to Etka Ser Family (190) and spent his early days in Ciechanowiec. His family immigrated to America and settled in Schenectady with the branch that spelled the name Sahr. Now the family lives for the most part in South Florida, although Julia's grandparents still maintain a home in Saunderstown, Rhode Island.

Oren Savidor (13661,Pl.29) was born in Kfar Saba, Israel on Oct. 22, 1997, the 2nd child of Dov (5232) and Mikal (1691). Oren's grandfather was the late Menachem Savidor (5224), prominent in the Likud party and Speaker of the Knesset. Menachem had Herzicized his father's surname from Chodorowski to Savidor, however his father, Boris (5218), was the son of Yehoshua Charlap (5215). Hence, the new baby Oren might have been born Charlap. Whatever the name, he has settled in at his family's loving Tel Aviv home.

MARRIAGES

Amanda Scher (8059,Pl.45), daughter of Dr. Jonathan (8043) and Brenda (8051) Scher of Scarsdale, NY was wed on Aug. 24, 1997 to Nathan Cohn (13937). Amanda is descended from that branch of the Charlap family that left the Slonim area of Poland/Belarus and settled in Cape Town, South Africa.

Jennie Warsowe (3471,Pl.34), daughter of Robert Warsowe (3462) of Oceanside, NY, was married on Oct. 4, 1997 to Joshua Feiger (13926). Jennie, who resides in Berkeley, CA has a Ph.D. in genetics. Joshua is a film critic. Jennie's grandfather, David (3458) resides in Ft. Lauderdale, FL. His grandfather was Charles Lappen (3406), who was the son of Israel Betzalel Charlap (3181,Pl.23) and Shayna Fruma Lapin (3190). Charles, born in Sokolka, Poland, took a variation of his mother's maiden name as his surname.

MAZEL TOV TO ALL ON THEIR SIMCHAS

MIDDLE EAST NEWSPEAK

David Hurwitz (4062,Pl.16), no stranger to the readers of B‘rayshit, has once again demonstrated his erudition and astute historical perspective with an excellent article in the monthly Jewish review of The Theodore Herzl Foundation ("Middle East Newspeak," Midstream, Dec. 1997, pp. 17-19). This keenly analyzed essay on the Israeli-Arab conflict is available free, upon request, to members of the Ser-Charlap Family Association. David's earlier scholarly treatise on "Churchill and Palestine" received much praise after appearing in a publication of the American Jewish Congress (Judaism, Winter, 1995, pp. 3-32).
The above chart shows the inter-relationships of the various branches of the family tree discussed in The Book of Destiny: Toledot Charlap. Shortly after the family appeared in Moslem controlled areas of North Africa and Iberia, they were known by the surname Ibn Yahya. Some family members changed the name to Don Yahya in Christian controlled regions of Spain. This took away the stigma of the Arabic-sounding Ibn from the name. In the early 12th century, Chiya -al-Daudi, a family leader was prominent in Portugal. He was often referred to as CHARLAP (Chiya Rishon L’Galil Portugal). That acronymic title was revived 5 centuries later when Eliezer Ibn Yahya left the Ottoman Empire to become Rabbi in Tykocin, Poland. Now the title stood for Otacham Rosh L’Golei Polin. Eight generations after Eliezer, David Charlap (4082) of Nowogrod became the modern father of the Charlap and Ser families. One of David’s brothers, name unknown (9878) was the ancestor of the Pakciarz line. Another brother, Kalman (13954), gave rise to the families shown in the above chart. We note that the relationships are much more complicated than shown. For example, we have testimony that the Ser and Kiejsmacher families were one and the same and that a given person could be known by both names. Sender Ser (1,Pl.14) was also known as Sender Kiejsmacher. Furthermore, Pakciarz is another variant of this family name. Intra-family marriages were the norm. Ser, Pakciarz, Kiejsmacher, Kur - indeed, all of these families had arranged marriages within and between them. We have uncovered many metrical records from 19th century Poland to confirm this phenomenon. Oral testimony from elderly relatives born in Europe corroborate these complexities. Some of this testimony leads us to believe that there were most likely other siblings or antecedents of David and Kalman Charlap whose wives and children added to the inter-relationships.

Chaim Freedman, the eminent Israeli genealogist, has recently published a book entitled Eliyahu’s Branches: The Descendants of the Vilna Gaon and His Family. This tome documents that many of these descendants are also on the Ibn Yahya-Charlap tree. Freedman discusses the role of oral tradition in reaching genealogical conclusions. “Given the rapid advances in modern Jewish genealogical research, much of it based on newly available vital statistics records, researchers have tended to play down the importance and validity of oral research. Oral tradition still has, and always will have, a valuable place in Jewish genealogical research.” Freedman then goes on to discuss why this is so and adds that the greater the number of generations removed from a particular ancestor, the more likelihood there could be a discrepancy. Hence, he feels justified in recording all reasonable oral traditions in order to assist future generations should they try to uncover a missing link. “Oral tradition and
COMMON ANCESTRY (cont. from p.7)

documented sources complement each other in pursuing lines of research. A competent genealogist takes into account all the above factors in considering the validity of oral tradition, uses the available documented sources, and comes to a conclusion that is valid beyond reasonable doubt."

Reconstructing a family tree, especially after many generations have passed, is like putting together a jigsaw puzzle. We have uncovered vital statistics which take us back to the 18th century. There are also parchments of the Charlap genealogy going back to King David; 17 independent trees have been accumulated. Additional documentation are immigration and census records of several countries, including Ottoman controlled Palestine. And then there is the oral tradition of the different branches of the family. In very much the way Chaim Freedman proceeded, “documented evidence was sought diligently and exhaustively... Oral tradition was considered objectively. In many cases the author consulted genealogical colleagues and evaluated their opinions.” The conclusions have been discussed in The Book of Destiny: Toledot Charlap and the detailed charts and genealogical data, along with additional testimony will be presented in Ancilla to Toledot Charlap.

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OBITUARIES

Beverly Diamont Atlas (2265,Pl.276) died on Dec. 18, 1997 after a long illness. Born in Kovno, Lithuania on Jan. 5, 1923, she arrived in the United States in 1939, barely escaping the Nazi onslaught. She married Rabbi Seymour Atlas (2253) on Jan. 3, 1943. Seymour’s paternal grandmother was Yetta Pakciarz (2127,Pl.275). Beverly had always encouraged Jewish tradition and had been a solid supporter of the family research. She volunteered to translate many documents from Yiddish into English. A good portion of the Ciechanowiec Yiskor Book was translated by her. She is survived by Seymour, three children: Vivian Zelcer (2353) of New Hempstead, NY, Nina Mermelstein (2354) of Monsey, NY, and Dr. Arthur Atlas (2355) of Highland Park, NJ. She also leaves 15 grandchildren. Beverly bravely fought cancer and lived long enough to become a great-grandmother (see Births).

Alexander Donchin (12448,Pl.189) died on Jan. 22. Alexander was a widower; his wife Jeanette Lesser (12453) having died in 1976. He was the son of Isaac Donchin (12448,Pl.189) died on Jan. 22. Alexander Donchin (12448,Pl.189) died on Jan. 22. Alexander was a widower; his wife Jeanette Lesser (12453) dying in 1976. He was the son of Isaac Donchin (12448,Pl.189) who was born in Ludze, Latvia and his ancestry is traced back directly to the Vilna Gaon.

Bernard Haines (Hymowitz), husband of Louise Lapin Haines, died on Oct. 9, 1997 in Los Angeles. He was born on April 21, 1910 in Paris, France. He was a pilot and had over 50 years flying experience. Bernie was a charter member of the world’s first all-Jewish flying club. They engaged in stunt and formation flying in the skies over Los Angeles and across the country. Bernie took Louise stunt flying on their first date and, unlike other squeamish girls, Louise didn’t scream. Bernie interpreted that as she must have been a daredevil. In truth, Louise was scared speechless and couldn’t utter a sound. Bernie was a flight instructor for American volunteers to the Royal Air Force. After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor he assumed that role with the U.S. Army Air Force. In his senior years, he served as docent at the Clover Field Air Museum, Santa Monica. He also served as President of his B’nai Brith chapter and Chancellor of the Knights of Pythias Beverly Hills Lodge. Bernie was a humorist with an immense repertoire of jokes. He conducted many roasts and was a sought after raconteur. It was said of him that he had no enemies at all. He was also multi-talented. An excellent musician, he played flute, saxophone and organ, but his love was the violin which he played with the Los Angeles Civic Symphony. He and his father, on mandolin, would hold jam sessions of Jewish folk music, long before Klezmer became popular. He was also adept in calligraphy, but his greatest talent was that he fulfilled his mother’s mandate to be a good and philanthropic man - a mensch. Bernie and Louise were married 61 years. Rabbi Mark Sobel told the congregation that the soul resides in the breath, as it says, “The soul which Thou Oh G-d has given unto me came pure from Thee. Thou hast created it; Thou hast formed it; Thou hast breathed it into me; Thou hast preserved it and at the appointed time, Thou wilt take it from this earth that it may enter into life everlasting. While the breath of life is within me, I will worship Thee.” Louise had been trying to administer resuscitation when Bernie’s last breath, warm and as a gentle breeze caressed her cheek. The Rabbi said that Louise was very fortunate for the soul of Bernie had kissed her farewell as it departed on its journey to Paradise. In addition to Louise, Bernie is survived by his son Richard.

David Pack (2081,Pl.271) died on Dec. 1, 1997 in Montevideo, Uruguay. He had recently moved there from Santiago, Chile where he had run a floor covering business for many years. David was born in Wysokie Mazowieckie, Poland on Oct. 14, 1909. In the 1930s, as war clouds gathered in Europe, he left for South America. He was successful in bringing many of his relatives out of Europe before the Nazi onslaught. David’s loyal struggle is told in Toledot Charlap; herein we wish to add that he was a man dedicated to his family and people. Once he learned of the family research he took long journeys to New York, Florida, and Israel specifically to gather information and contribute to our body of knowledge. David was married five times but his first and last wives were one and the same, Perla Beresosky (2086). He is survived by Perla, his daughter Inez Yawetz (2501) of (cont. next page)
WALTON STREET TREE
( FOR DAVID)
by Hannah Koplowitz Stein (603,Pl.161)

This piece was selected as one of “The Best Poems of 1997” for publication in The Sound of Poetry. Hannah is the wife of Zvi Stein (579), son of Benjamin (569) and Rosalind (572) Stein, grandson of Meyer Stein (548) and Chaya Faiga Pasternak (546), and great-grandson of Baruch Pasternak (504,Pl.153) and Kayla Kur (503). Hannah’s poetry has graced these pages before, last appearing in B’rayshit, vol. 8, no. 2.

I stood straight, tall,
Branches reaching out,
Leaves soaking sunshine, drinking rain,
Drawing strength up, up.

You came, Vicious Vandal!
You felled my proud head,
But my feet, firmly planted in earth,
Drew strength up, up.

I stand stunted, crippled,
Branches reaching out again,
Leaves soaking sunshine, drinking rain,
Drawing strength up, up.

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OBITUARIES (cont. from p. 8)

Montevideo, two sons Sergio (2500) and Liber (2499), both of Santiago, eight grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

Carolyn (Kayla) Brill Twersky (766,Pl.162) died on Aug. 20, 1997. She was born in New York City on Nov. 7, 1932 to Louis (551) and Rose Stein (550) Brill. She was married to Prof. David Twersky (767) who survives her. She also leaves her mother Rose and two children Israel (772) and Leora (773).

Morris David Zoldan (1478,Pl.121) died on July 18, 1997 of pancreatic cancer shortly before his 79th birthday. He was born on Aug. 8, 1918 in Prislet, Hungary where his father was a schochet. Arriving in the United States in 1920, he first went to Sharon, PA and then to Cincinnati, OH before settling in Chicago. He worked in clothing sales and then insurance. Morris was married to Ann Sier (1476) who bore him three sons, Gerald (1479), Jack (1480), and Robert (1481). He is survived by his sons and seven grandchildren. His son Jack writes, “He left a positive impact on many people. The world is a better place for his having been in it. I only regret that my mother was not able to be a part of it for longer.”

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IN TRANSIT
by Ann R. Rubin (12053,Pl.281)

Ann Rubin’s parents were Fisher Wolfson (12051) and Deborah Schelefsky (12047). The Schelefsky pedigree goes back to Yisrael “Charif” (12036,Pl.7), brother of Moshe Rafael Charlap (10837), and son of Mashke Leah Charlap (10835) and her husband Yosef Aryeh (10836). Yosef Aryeh may have been a Charlap as well. Certainly, Mashke Leah’s father was He was Zev Charlap, Rabbi of Tykocin. Ann Rubin, now in her 90s, continues to turn out award winning poems. Her Haiku appeared in the last issue of B’rayshit.
This piece was published in the anthology, World of Poetry, 1991. Ann was named Golden Poet of 1991.

I, an elder in my eighties,
As I toss and turn from lack of sleep,
During the early morning hours,
Count the departed, instead of sheep.

The interminable procession
Of by-gone friends and kin
Drop like autumn leaves from aging trees
To return to earth, their source of birth.

Joyful remembrances shared together
Prop me up in all sorts of weather.
Yet I do not wish to dwell only
With memories of the dead, it’s too lonely!

I yearn to breathe the fresh breath of spring,
To watch birds in flight, to hear them sing,
Marvel at the birth of life, whether babe or flower,
Sooth my cares in an April shower.

To ponder the future, is that so wrong?
When I know I’ll soon join the throng
Of ephemeral voyagers leaving space
To ease the population explosion race.

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CLARINET CONCERTO

Dr. Susan Harlap (6313,Pl.53) writes, “Here’s a snippet for your next edition. “On April 4, 1998, Aharon Harlap’s Clarinet Concerto will have its world premier at a concert of the Haifa Symphony Orchestra in Haifa. Repeat performances on other days of the week.”

Aharon Harlap (4401,Pl.150) was born in Chatham, Ontario, son of Mottel (4386) and Etta (4394) Charloff. Born in Tykocin, Poland, Mottel, son of the famous cantor and rabbi Yitzhak Yaacov Charlap (4383), was himself a cantor, teacher, and mohel who passed on the fabled Charlap musical talent to his son. Aharon now lives in Kfar Saba, Israel with his wife Hadassah (4411) and their three children, Dana (4442), Jonathan (6988) and Leor (6963). Aharon is Conductor of the Israel National Opera and Tel Aviv Philharmonic Choir.

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FAMILY TRIP TO POLAND

There is still time to sign up for the Ser-Charlap Family Association trip to Eastern Europe. This exciting and educational tour is planned for the first two weeks of August 1998. The trip was conceived and organized by our own Pat Levy (1346, PI. 120) of Lee Travel, New Canaan, CT. Pat writes, "The tour is especially designed to emphasize the individual small towns and villages that are important to our family. We are fortunate to have a personal native guide familiar with the Jewish heritage of the region. We will be traveling in our own private bus." In addition to our family towns, we will spend some time in Warsaw and Cracow and then leave Poland for a tour of Budapest, Hungary and Prague, Czech Republic. There are opportunities for personalized excursions. You can contact Pat via a toll free number (888)972-0080.

NEW BOOKS ON THE VILNA GAON

Rabbi Elijah of Vilna has long been recognized as one of Judaism’s greatest scholars. This past holiday of Succot marked his 200th Yahrtzeit. Perhaps it is this fact that has spurred the publication of two new excellent books concerning the genealogy of the family of Rabbi Elijah, the Vilna Gaon. Both books are by eminent researchers, well respected in the field of Jewish genealogy. One is entitled The Gaon of Vilna and His Cousinhood by Dr. Neil Rosenstein. It is published by The Computer Center for Jewish Genealogy, 654 Westfield Ave., Elizabeth, NJ 07208. The second book is Chaim Freedman’s Eliyahu’s Branches: The Descendants of the Vilna Gaon and His Family. This volume is published by Avotaynu, Inc., P.O. Box 900, Teaneck, NJ 07666. Both books can be acquired by writing directly to the publisher. Both books also contain significant information about members of the Ibn Yahya-Charlap family, corroborating and inter-relating with our own research findings. Hence they are excellent companion volumes to The Book of Destiny: Toledot Charlap and the forthcoming Ancilla To Toledot Charlap. The expected date of publication of the latter is toward the end of 1998. The Book of Destiny is available directly from King David Press, P.O. Box 108, Cold Spring Harbor, NY 11724. Cost is $54.99, which includes shipping ($56.99 to other than USA).

Palestine and the Jew can never be separated. No power on earth can take from this land its magic attractions for its people. I have seen the living, the youth, the believers, planting the waste places and adorning the land as a bride is adorned by gifts from the bridegroom. These things are evidence that in the heart of Judaism there is love, and that in the Jew’s mind there is a quest which he will pursue in the face of all obstacles, and through wearily long generations, until the prophecies of his ancient teachers and of his own heart have been fulfilled. I have seen them bestriding heaps of stones; I have met them, rough-handed, in the ragged garments of laborers, working on the land, and they were happy. Such men do not shirk, they are the soul of communities, the influences that shame dishonesty, the inspiration of their fellows. Such is the Jew who is going to Palestine. He is an idealist and a worker. He has a vision of Palestine which is to be the home of his people, and love enters much into his labors.

- J. Ramsay Macdonald in The Pioneers, 1924

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