



THE SER-CHARLAP FAMILY NEWSLETTER

Vol. 9, No. 4

Kislev 5759; December 1998

FROM DRUSKIENIKI TO PARIS

by Leonora Rozen

Leonora Rozen (12274, Pl. 185) is the daughter of Sarah Charlap Muller (12268) and the granddaughter of Avraham Gershon Charlap (3691). She lives in Brussels, Belgium.

Druskieniki (Drosknik) was a charming resort town with thermal springs on the Nieman River near Sejny. It was situated in the middle of magnificent pine forests punctuated by a multitude of lakes. Druskieniki was the paradise of my childhood. It was there that my great-grandfather David Shlomo Charlap (3176, Pl. 20) had built a beautiful home. My mother would send me from our home in Grodno to Druskieniki in June, whether or not the school semester had ended. She felt I needed the fresh air. And every summer in those years before World War I, children and grandchildren of the Charlap family would arrive, making the town a veritable family vacation spot. My grandfather Avraham Gershon Charlap would walk around Druskieniki with me, introducing me to all his friends. He pointed out the House of Prayer and the Hospital for Needy Jews, both constructed by his father David Shlomo. Unfortunately, I don't remember my great-grandfather or his wife; they passed away approximately about the time I was born.

Shortly after my birth, my grandmother Gittel (9992) and her sister-in-law Minna Shereshevsky Charlap (8888) decided to set up a family hotel in Druskieniki, initially in the family home. The family hotel was an immense success from its inception. So much so that my grandmother and Minna called a meeting of the family and everyone decided to sell the house and acquire new property for an even greater hotel. They found a superb area located in a large and attractive park setting. It was in that Poganka neighborhood that Marshall Pilsudski, later to be leader of independent Poland, lived. There were two main buildings to our hotel and another structure which housed accommodations for the personnel. The kitchen and dining rooms were located behind the main buildings. Family quarters were situated above the main dining room. This included a large sunny balcony which overlooked the large property to the rear. A big sign hung out front, "Family Hotel of the Charlap Brothers." My great aunt Rachel Charlap Krinsky (Krynski) (3694), the sister of my grandfather, had also acquired a beautiful hotel. She hired a physician for the summer season, and operated the Krynski Sanatorium.

Near David Shlomo's original house lived the Lipszyc family. They were relatives of the Charlaps and later became renowned because of the achievements of Jacques Lipchitz, the great artist and sculptor. His sisters were very close with my mother and my aunt Rita (12269). One of these sisters later died from tuberculosis, leaving a young orphaned daughter about my age. This poor girl perished during the Holocaust. Jacques' younger brother, Ruben, left to study in France. In 1946/47 he gave me a warm welcome in Paris. Ruben had become an engineer and was employed by the City of Paris. A Bohemian bachelor, he was totally devoted to his brother. In the 1950s he organized an exhibition of Jacques' work in Brussels and offered me a book of his brother's sculpture. I dared not ask for more.

My paradise in Druskieniki ended in 1914 with the advent of war. My mother, Sarah Charlap had been born in Grodno to a family that had been established in the region for centuries. My grandparents spoke Russian as well as Yiddish. Before World War I, my grandfather Avraham Gershon had owned a factory for the production of parchment paper. [Note: Avraham Gershon Charlap supplied paper to his Lapin cousins who owned a large printing plant in Grodno.] He was also involved in foreign trade, especially with the Far East - China and Japan. Grandfather owned important warehouses in Vladivostok, the Russian gateway to the Orient. In Grodno, our family was very close knit and socialized with many cousins residing in our city. My mother and her siblings had been enrolled in Russian high schools, segregated by sex. Around 1915, the Russian governor ordered the evacuation of Grodno in the face of an impending German attack. The first to be evacuated

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DRUSKIENIKI TO PARIS (cont.)

were government agencies and schools. The school of Uncle Betzalel (12270) and Uncle Lev (12271) was relocated in Lipetsk deep into Russia about 200 miles southeast of Moscow. My grandparents decided to keep the boys in the school and resettle in Lipetsk. My mother and Aunt Rivka (Rita) were enrolled in the local high school. My grandparents rented a house in an area where their Russian neighbors had never before seen Jews. They were surprised that the Charlaps did not have horns and split hooves. Despite the war and the relocation, my grandfather's business prospered. Everything should have been fine - but then came the Russian Revolution which led to civil war, famine, and desolation. In 1917 the family, under great duress returned to Grodno. That is, everyone except my mother. She decided, at great risk, to stay over in Moscow to hear the great opera star Fyodor Chaliapin. She succeeded in rejoining the family after Chaliapin's performance, experiencing great dangers and difficult trip conditions.

Grodno and Druskieniki were both under the control of the budding Polish government and there was relative safety. But the family finances were in total shambles. The Germans had completely emptied my grandfather's factory, leaving only the bare walls. The warehouses in Russia had been looted. Grandfather's Russian currency was worthless; it was useful for wallpaper. The family jewels and gold had been largely dissipated, having been used in the escape from Russia and to pay for the primary needs to re-establish the family in Grodno. Grandfather secured a sales position with the tobacco firm owned by his Shereshevsky cousins. That job didn't last long. On a business trip to Lwow he was insulted and beaten by Polish hooligans who were soldiers of the Haller brigade. (General Haller was an extreme Polish nationalist known for his virulent anti-Semitism.)

The difficulties were not only with finance. The new Polish authorities did not recognize the Russian school diplomas. Children had to go abroad to continue their studies. Mother left for Vienna where she studied biology. Aunt Rita studied piano at the Conservatory of Berlin. Uncle Lev went to Liege, Belgium to study engineering. Betzalel left Europe for America where his aunt Elka Charlap Shereshevsky (3690) *****

THE SER-CHARLAP FAMILY NEWSLETTER is published quarterly. We encourage submittal of news items, essays, poems, and historical articles. Correspondence should be directed to:

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welcomed him. During the same period, two children of Moshe Aron (3692) and Minna Charlap also went abroad. Gregory (8891), the youngest, studied in Antwerp and Sonia (8889), the eldest, went to Berlin where she married a certain Rabinovich (8892), to the great displeasure of her friends. Many years later, their son George (8896) assumed the Charlap name.

My father, Oscar Muller (12272), was born in Olomouc, now in the Czech Republic, then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Father studied law at Jagiellonian University and philosophy in Vienna. His family, originating in Austria, spoke German. My paternal grandfather Julius was appointed Director of the Conservatory of Cracow and my father attended Polish language schools. Father participated in World War I as an officer in the Austrian army. Towards the end of the war, Marshall Pilsudski formed a Polish militia which agitated for independence. Father joined him and participated in the formation of modern Poland in 1918. My father was then appointed Vice Attorney of the Regional Court in Grodno. He was specifically charged with bringing a Polish presence to this region which had been under Tsarist domination for 150 years. My parents met in Grodno but were married in Vienna in January of 1924. Toward the end of the decade, my father was advanced to the Court of Appeals in Warsaw, one of only two Jews of such a high rank in Poland.

In 1933, Grandfather Avraham Gershon Charlap came for a visit to Warsaw. During that visit he died from a stroke and was buried in Warsaw. My grandmother disposed of the house in Grodno and moved to Warsaw where three of her children lived. In 1935 Pilsudski died and conditions deteriorated for the Jewish population. Anti-Semitism was raging and an economic boycott of Jews was instituted. My father, despite his dedication to Polish nationalism, also suffered. Because he refused to convert to Catholicism, he was transferred from Warsaw to Lwow, a provincial city, manifestly a sign of disgrace. My parents kept their lovely Warsaw apartment and rented a flat in Lwow. So as not to disturb my studies, I stayed in Warsaw with my grandmother and Aunt Rita. It was not long that Father resigned his position with the courts, returned to Warsaw and attempted to practice law. Unfortunately, in February of 1939 he succumbed to angina leaving us totally distraught on the eve of World War II. That last summer of 1939 we spent in Druskieniki where my grandmother struggled to manage the hotel on her own. Minna had already left to rejoin her two sons in Canada. By August, The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact had been signed and an indescribable panic ensued. There was a rush by everyone to return home. Our cousins Isaac Kochevnik (15440) and Gregory Charlap managed to exit the country. The remains of our family returned to Warsaw where, some days later, the German bombs began to fall. I will not describe here the years of the war. It is too vast a subject to summarize so briefly. My

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JACQUES LIPCHITZ

Several family members have reported that the great 20th century sculptor Jacques Lipchitz was a Charlap or a cousin of the Charlaps. We are continuing the investigation of this claim. A summary of what we know at this point follows.

Jacques Lipchitz was born on August 22, 1891 in Druskieniki, Suwalk Guberniya, not far from Sejny. Named Chaim Yaacov, he was the first child of Avraham Lipszyce and Rachel Leah Krinsky. Avraham came from a wealthy Grodno family with close ties to the Charlaps, Lapins, and Shereshevskys. His father, Shia David, was in banking, real estate, and owned several factories. We know that Shia David had a brother who was a physician. Avraham's mother, Chava Leah, was also from a wealthy Grodno family. She died circa 1910 in Grodno. Avraham was a successful building contractor who settled in Druskieniki upon his marriage. Avraham had at least two brothers. Julian Lipszyce owned a cork factory in Vilna and brother Nicholas operated a brewery in Vladislovowa near Kovno.

Chaim Yaacov's mother, Rachel Leah, was born in Druskieniki into a pious family. Although Avraham maintained the traditions, he was considered too "worldly" by Rachel Leah's parents. Druskieniki was blessed with clean air filtered through the dense pine forests and its plethora of mineral springs formed the basis of its fame as a resort area. Rachel Leah's maternal grandparents had been in the resort hotel business and her parents, Chaim Yonkev and Chaya Faiga, continued to operate hotels. Rachel Leah, herself, operated a spa known as the Krynski Sanatorium Hotel. Rachel Leah's bother, Eliezer (3704, Pl.20) married Rachel Charlap (3694).

Avraham Lipszyce and Rachel Leah Krinsky had five other children after Chaim Yaacov: Fanya, b. 1893; Henia, b. 1895, d. 1928; Dina, b. ca 1897; Paul, b. 1903; and Reuven (Ruben), b. 1907. The children were raised in a strong Jewish tradition but Chaim Yaacov was easily distracted from his studies and felt an urge to express himself visually. His father hoped that he would study mechanical engineering and work to expand the family business. Rachel Leah, despite her adherence to a religious life, was sympathetic to her sons creative aspirations and arranged for him to study in Paris. He was encouraged by his parents to introduce himself to a well-known Jewish printer from Grodno who had been living in France. Surely, that must have been one of the Lapins. In 1912 he was ensconced in a Montparnasse studio and became friendly with Chaim Soutine, Max Jacob, and Amedeo Modigliani. Jewish artists and intellectuals, some 75% of the total, dominated the Montparnasse scene and Chaim Yaacov Lipszyce, now Jacques Lipchitz, fit right in. He was especially interested in Modigliani's striving to know more of the Judaic heritage which had been denied him. Jacques was helpful in exploring these traditions with his friend. In 1916 Jacques signed a contract with art dealer Leonce Rosenberg who also represented Diego Rivera, Juan Gris, and Pablo Picasso. Gris and Picasso had a great influence on him as he began to experiment with Cubist expression. By the 1920s he had achieved a modicum of fame and in 1924 he married Berthe Kitrosser. From 1926-1930 Jacques worked on some monumental commissioned works. In 1927 he finished *Joy of Life* which was to cheer his sister Jennie (Henia) who was fatally ill in a hospital. In the 1930s he began a slow return to his Jewish roots. His works increasingly concentrated on biblical themes and from 1937 on the defense of democracy as opposed to fascism and National Socialism. With the German invasion of France, Jacques and Berthe fled first to Toulouse and then to New York. It was in this period that his work assumed a more autobiographical cast and his interest in Jewish welfare and Zionism intensified. *Our Tree of Life*, a bronze work at Hadassah Hospital in Jerusalem, specifically included a series of subjects depicting the growth of Judaism. A final version was installed on Mount Scopus in 1978. In 1947, Jacques and Berthe were divorced. A year later he married Yulla Halberstadt, also a sculptor. They had been introduced by Leib Jaffe (3382, Pl.22), who was both a Charlap and a Lapin. Leib was a leader of the Zionists and was instrumental in the establishment of the State of Israel. His family had originated in Grodno and were well known to Jacques' parents. Jacques had done a portrait of his friend (and relative?) Leib Jaffe. He called it "the best portrait I've ever done." Leib had met Yulla through her work with the American Jewish Congress. A native of Berlin, she and her husband were refugees from Germany. That marriage faltered in America and at the time, Yulla was living with her son Frank in New York. After Leib brought Jacques and Yulla together, he returned to Eretz Yisrael. During the War of Independence he was murdered by Arab terrorists as he sat in his office at Keren Hayesod in Jerusalem. Jacques' only child, Lolya Rachel was born in 1948. Jacques Lipchitz's return to Judaism was highlighted by his friendship with Menachem Shneerson, the great Lubavitch Rebbe. Jacques died on May 26, 1973 on the Isle of Capri. He was buried in Israel which he considered his spiritual home.

So was Jacques Lipchitz a Charlap? He certainly had connections to the family but, as of this writing, there is missing conclusive evidence to place him on the family tree. His aunt was Rachel Charlap Krinsky. His parents and Aunt Rachel Krinsky were both in the resort hotel business in Druskieniki. His family had social and business relationships with Charlaps, Lapins, and Shereshevskys. The maiden names of both his grandmothers are still unknown to us, as is the name of Rachel Charlap Krinsky's mother. Any one or all of these could be blood relatives - members of our family. The few characteristics we know of them would encourage such speculation. Yet, we need more data before we can declare Jacques Lipchitz a Charlap. (see page 6)

I BELONG TO YOU

by Lisa Forstein

Lisa, granddaughter of Ben and Ruth Kristol, lives in Golden Valley, Minnesota. She states, "I wrote this monologue in an acting class after visiting Yad Vashem in Jerusalem. It was a way to express my many new emotions while doing what I love to do best . . . being creative."

I belong to Yosi.
 However, I am not with Yosi anymore.
 I was violently ripped from Yosi's hands fifty years ago.
 Now, I am surrounded by many others like me in one room.
 We all have unique covers, but we have one thing in common;
 We are siddurim.
 We are the prayer books of men, women, and children whom
 we have not seen since
 Those terrible years.
 Those Holocaust years.
 The air in this room is still.
 The siddurim around me are piled one on top of another.
 They remain as they did when they were hatefully thrown here
 fifty years ago.
 I miss the warmth of Yosi's jacket pocket.
 I miss being opened and closed three times a day,
 And sometimes more.
 But most of all,
 I miss hearing G-d's words while Yosi recited them.
 I hope that someday Yosi's grandchildren
 Will keep me in their school bags,
 And learn my prayers,
 And carry on the traditions I hold so close to me.
 I forever belong to Yosi.
 And I forever belong to his Jewish people.

Ben and Ruth Kristol, write: "We are in the midst of sorting out our 30 year research project of preserving the memory of Clarion, The Jewish Agricultural and Colonization Project of Utah (1912-1925). We attended a Kristalnacht memorial program at the Orthodox synagogue here in Jacksonville, FL. We were invited to read Lisa's poem 'I Belong to You.' We are very proud of her. She led a 40 member Bnai Brith Youth Organization group to Bulgaria. There she taught the resurging Jewish community how to conduct Passover services and instructed them in other areas of Jewish practice. Then she led the group to Israel, where they did volunteer work, studied, and toured. She is an accomplished musician and is seeking a college program which combines music and Judaic studies. Lisa's brother Michael is an honor student and was captain of the all-state soccer team. Their mother Merrie is very active with Hadassah and father Bruce has raised the funds to establish a chair in Judaic studies at the University of Minnesota."

FAMILY REUNIONS AND TRIPS

Our Ser-Charlap Family Association has sponsored many reunions and trips since our very first meeting at Brown's Hotel, Loch Sheldrake, NY in September of 1989. The most recent was our journey to visit our ancestral homes in Poland this past August. That trip was such a resounding success that we are being encouraged to have more frequent gatherings and excursions. Several suggestions that have been made follow:

- A summer journey to the ancestral family home in Spain and Portugal.
- A reunion with our relatives in South America, specifically Argentina, Uruguay, and Brazil. Best scheduled over winter break (late Dec. to early Jan.)
- A reunion in Israel with our vast Israeli family. A side trip to Turkey, which gave safe haven to many of our ancestors is a possibility. Schedule is flexible; summer or possibly Passover or High Holy Days
- A Caribbean cruise or cruise to Bermuda.
- A summer reunion at resort hotel in California, home of many family members.

All of these suggestions would include, not only family activities, but also all those activities that sophisticated travelers enjoy and expect. That is how the East European trip was organized. Not only did we experience Poland, but we had several days in Budapest and Prague. A questionnaire to poll the family is enclosed. Please take a few minutes to fill it out so we can make our next reunion as successful as the last one.

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mother had survived the Warsaw insurrection and in August 1944 had been sent to a concentration camp. Conditions were horrible and she contacted a severe illness but was still alive when the camp was liberated. She returned to Warsaw and in March of 1945 died. She was buried along side of my father.

With the liberation of Poland, our names were placed on survivors lists. We hoped to find dear Uncle Lev who had disappeared in Lwow during the German onslaught. We were unsuccessful. Our cousin Leib Jaffe (3382,Pl.22) in Palestine sent emissaries to Poland to search for us. Leib was very close to our family. On every visit to Poland he used to stay with our family. He held my father in very high regard. Leib proposed that we make aliyah but my priorities were different. I had plans to study in Paris. Furthermore, my grandmother's deteriorating health made such a trip impossible. Other relatives and friends from Grodno had all been massacred. We lost cousins from among the Lapins, Shereshevskys, Lipszyce, and Gitis. Grodno then became Byelorussian and was incorporated into the Soviet Union. I left for Paris in the Spring of 1946 and immediately began my studies at the university.

TO MOM - ON HER RETIREMENT

by Rick Hellman

Rick Hellman (7409, Pl. 252) is the Managing Editor of the Kansas City Jewish Chronicle. This article originally appeared in that journal and is reprinted with permission. Rick is the great grandson of Yospe Lewin Cohen (7368). The family originated in Ciechanowicz, Poland.

It was the sort of incident you remember, even if it occurred more than 25 years ago. I was playing with the neighbor kids in our driveway.

"The last one up the hill is a green nigger!" I yelled, repeating a phrase I had picked up from my playmates.

My mother heard me, grabbed me by the ear and pulled me into the house.

"Don't you ever let me hear you say that again. Do you understand? Or I'll wash your mouth out with soap! That's a bad word! How would you like it if somebody called you a kike?"

To cause my normally mild-mannered mother to become that upset, I knew I had done something serious; that my behavior had crossed a line and that I had disappointed her. Moreover, her reasoning made sense, even to my young mind. I wouldn't like it if I was teased about being Jewish, so I had better watch what I said and thought about other minority groups.

At that time, in the late 1960s, my mother Judy Hellman (7391), was already moving beyond the roles of mother and housewife, modeling integrationist behavior as a Jewish representative on the Panel of American Women. That was an innovative group of volunteers, dedicated to improving understanding among racial and religious groups by sharing their ethnic experiences. A panel consisted of women representing Jews, blacks, Hispanics - even the white majority. They spoke frankly about their experiences in ways that surely opened the eyes of '60s suburbanites.

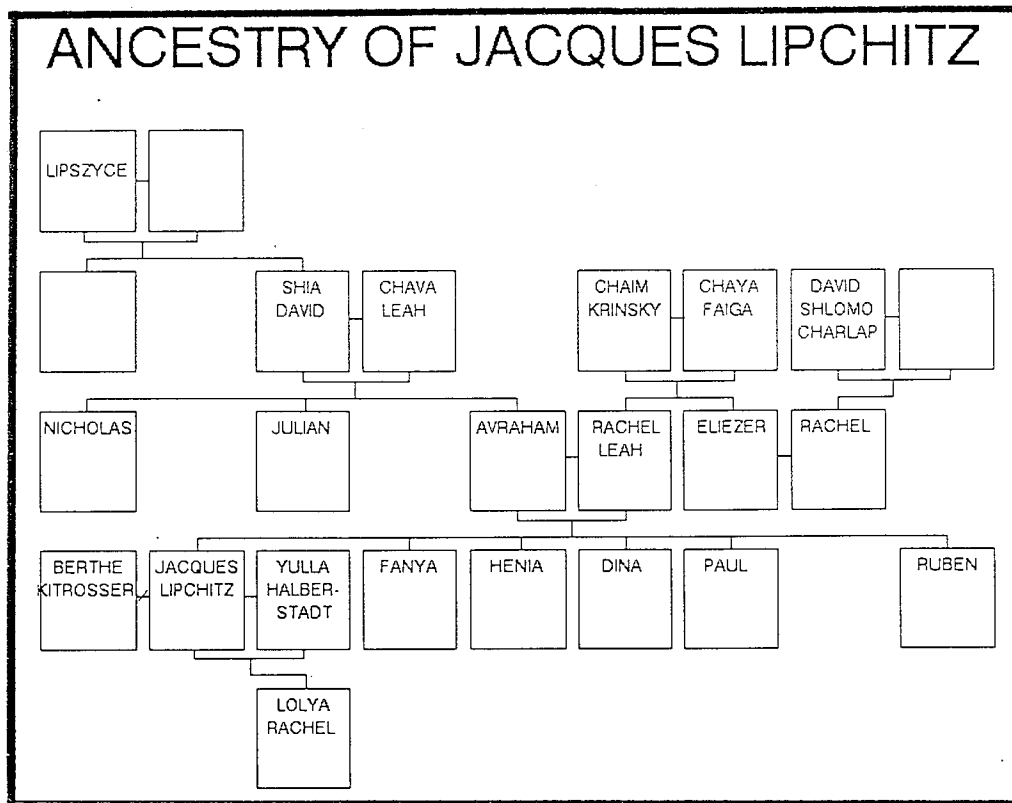
As my sister and I grew older, Mom returned first to school and then to the work force. Twenty years ago, she was fortunate to be able to put her religious and social beliefs into action by landing a job with the Jewish Community Relations Bureau. She has held the title Associate Executive Director for the past decade. Like its counterparts in cities around the country, the JCRB is charged with representing the Jewish community to the larger community, and vice-versa. In the aftermath of the Holocaust and in the light of ongoing racial and ethnic tensions in America, this is seen as a valuable service. Together with her working partner, Executive Director David Goldstein, my mother has built relationships with leaders of all sorts of "communities" within our community - blacks, gays, business people, politicians, and educators. And it's all done with an eye toward benefiting the Jews of greater Kansas City and the world. Her work has taken her from inner-city churches to the farmland of Kansas to the Soviet Union of the early 1980s, where she met with refuseniks to offer the support of the organized Jewish community here.

Since joining *The Chronicle* as a staff writer 10 years ago (and then becoming Managing Editor three years ago), I have been called upon to report on the affairs of the JCRB and its partner agency, the American Jewish Committee, many times. It's always been uncomfortable for me. Journalists are supposed to be objective, but I can hardly be objective about my mother. And so I've always tried to quote David Goldstein and members of the Board of Directors when reporting about the agency. In so doing, I've probably slighted the contributions my mother has made to the JCRB/AJC, and for that I'm sorry. Fortunately, Mom isn't the publicity-hungry type.

But it feels good, now that she's retiring, to be able to sing her praises. She's been an inspirational role model, what the Bible calls "a woman of valor." And she has certainly made my job as a Jewish journalist in this town easier. I can't count the number of times I've been asked, "Are you Judy Hellman's son?" and then listened with a smile on my face as others praise her.

I hope Mom enjoys her retirement. I know her granddaughters will.

Judith Hellman and her sister Marcia Rittmaster (7392) of Overland Park, KS were born in Kansas City, the daughters of Samuel (7385) and Ann Cohen (7380) Eisberg. Graduating from high school in 1953, she went on to the University of Missouri but never went back after her freshman year. In 1954, at Rosh HaShana services, she met Lloyd Hellman (7398), also a native of Kansas City. Lloyd was a former Marine who had returned home from his base near Seoul, South Korea. The couple were married soon afterward and Lloyd became an attorney. In addition to Rick, they have a daughter Anne (7410) who is a sales representative for St. Martin's Press book publishers in Chicago. Judy's father operated a pharmacy in Kansas City. Her grandmother Yospe Lewin of Ciechanowicz married Itche Cohen (7369), a blacksmith from nearby Nur, Poland. After coming to America Itche worked in retail clothing. Yospe was one of eight known children of Ezriel Aharon Lewin (5004): Chaya Genenda Lew (4488), Kalman (5007), Itche (7041), Etel (5009), Avraham Yoel Levine (5008), Dora Cohen (5010), Betzalel (5006), and Yospe. Yospe's mother, Rachel Toba (5005) was also a Lewin. Her parents were first cousins. Her father Yaacov (6425, Pl. 144) ben Betzalel (1739) Lew was born in 1805 in Ciechanowicz. Her mother, Mindel (6426) bat Aryeh (6413) Lew was born in the same town in 1807. Aryeh and Betzalel were brothers, sons of Avraham.



BIRTHS

Yotam David Charlap (15461,Pl.323) was born in Jerusalem on Sept. 5. Yotam is the sixth child of Gideon (7215) and Yael (7220). Grandparents are the late David Charlap (4729) and his wife Esther (6311). David was the son of Zvi Michel (4701) ben Yaacov Chaim Betzalel (4699) ben Yitzhak Eliezer (3728) Charlap. Yotam's Abba is an architect and Eema is a counselor. They live in Maale Adumim.

Joshua Young Joon Sahr (15606,Pl.101) was born on Aug. 14 in Seoul, Korea. He is the first child of David (26) and Lori (7901). Grandparents Morey (21) and Sarah (22) Sahr of Charlottesville, VA now have five grandchildren. Joshua and his parents live in Washington DC.

Alyssa Nicole Taylor (15607, Pl.101) was born on Oct. 28 in Marion, IL. She is the 2nd daughter of Steven (6842) and Janet Sahr(129) and the 5th grandchild of Morey (21) and Sarah (22) Sahr. Alyssa's great-great-grandfather was Yankel Lazer Sahr (Ser) (3) who was born in Nur, Poland and left Ciechanowiec for America around 1890.

MARRIAGES

David Lowell Belluck (12337,Pl.280) and **Jocelyn Holly Burman** (14297) were married on Oct. 25 at the Standard Club in Chicago, IL. David is the son of Raymond (12326) and Frances Schell (12323) Belluck of Roslyn Heights, NY. Frances descends from that branch of the Charlap family

which was centered in Goniadz and Szczuczyn, Poland. David graduated magna cum laude from Harvard University from which he also received an M.B.A. degree. He is a partner in a general investment firm in Boston, MA. Jocelyn, a graduate of Brown University, was raised in Highland Park, IL.

Keith Landau (8411,Pl.273) was married to **Raquel Hernandez** (13338) at the Coral House, Baldwin, NY on July 26. Keith is the son of Bernard (8407) and Barbara Yablok (8403) Landau and grandson of Ida (8394) and the late David (8384) Yablok. David's mother was Sarah Rivka (8370) bat Shimon Velvel Pakciarz (8365) of Wysokie Mazowieckie, Jablonka, and Tykocin, Poland. Keith is a student of occupational therapy and Raquel is a high school guidance counselor. The couple has set up home in Flushing, NY.

Guy Pessach (11026,Pl.40) and **Orit Ochana** (14418) were married in June in Kiryat Gat, Israel. Guy is the son of Ehud (11023) and Yael Charlap (9900) Pessach. Yael's father Amnon (3314) was a son of Rabbi Ephraim Zvi Charlap (3228,Pl.26), prominent Zionist leader and a founder of Rehovoth, Israel.

Baruch Zlotowitz (900,Pl.158) was married to **Chani Moskowitz** (15430) on Oct. 27. Baruch's parents are Rabbi Meir (661) and Faiga Rachel (752) Zlotowitz. Meir is the founder and publisher of ArtScroll Books, Brooklyn, NY. His father was the renowned gaon, Rabbi Aaron Zlotowitz (565,Pl.157) who married Frumke (564) bat Chaim Hersch Pasternak (554). Chaim Hersch was the son of Baruch Pasternak (504,Pl.153) and Kayla Kur (503).

LETTERS

I am the great-grandson of Beinisch Kramer (2496,Pl.269) and Esther Faiga Leah Pakciarz (2294). Esther Faiga came from the large Pakciarz family centered in Wysokie Mazowieckie and Tykocin, Poland. Beinisch was a rabbi and scholar born in Semiaticzi, a little south of Wysokie. My great-grandmother, beside caring for her large family, dealt in ice cut from the frozen rivers and also made soda water. Their daughter Anna (2512), my grandmother, came to America along with one of her brothers. The others stayed in Poland. Two of her brothers, Mendel (6434) and Chaim Mordecai (6435), and one sister (name unknown) died in the Holocaust with their families. I don't know the names of many of these martyrs.

On the Kramer side, the information is still sketchier. Beinisch came from a large family. As far as I know, except for one male, they were all murdered. Yet, there have been family rumors that some of them may still be alive. The original name may have been Krummer, Krumer, Kremer or some other variant spelling. I have looked in the *Semiaticzi Yizkor Book* to no avail. I am searching for the names of these dear relatives who were murdered simply because they were Jews and am hoping to find some survivors or descendants of survivors.

Does anyone have any information that might give leads. Thank you for whatever help you can provide.

- Paul Falcon (5790,Pl.269)
Seattle, WA

The following was sent in by several family members. It is a letter that appeared in the newspaper Jewish Week. The writer is a member of the branch that descends from Israel Lapin (10538,Pl.37) and Rebecca Collier (10539).

As a member of a Reform congregation, I must respond to many letters and articles on incidents that have recently taken place at the Western Wall. Please consider that Jewish practice and tradition from time immemorial have been for men and women to pray separately. This practice, still carried on by the Orthodox, has extended to the Wall, and it is a practice that has been respected by Israelis. Is it unreasonable to permit our Orthodox brethren to continue this tradition, given their steadfast, unwavering, fervent devotion to this sacred place for centuries before the Conservative and Reform movements even existed?

The Orthodox agree that the Kotel is the property of Klal Yisrael, not just the Orthodox. The Orthodox share this treasure with everyone willingly. They do not ask those who come to stand before the Wall if they are Reform, Conservative, or even Jewish. They ask only that men cover their heads, and that women pray in an area of the Kotel separate from the men. Is it really asking that much of Reform and Conservative Jews to adhere to a centuries-old tradition?

Our rabbis and Jewish leaders have a far larger challenge than how we visit the Wall. They must assist our American Jewish community in finding its place in the battle for Jewish continuity. The battle for our Jewish souls, tradition, culture and religion is here in the United States.

The leaders and rabbis are taking the easy way out as they try to have us devalue, even hate the Orthodox at the expense of putting our own house in order. There is no doubt we can help promote pluralism in Israel. Our help must be positive; by demonstrating the vibrancy of a pluralistic Jewish society.

We must demand of our rabbis and leaders that they not fall prey to the curse of consuming self-interest that has divided and bedeviled our people since the Exodus. It is beyond rational understanding that we are being diverted from seeing that our children remain Jewish, our synagogues filled, and our Jewish educational system reflect the support and respect our people have always given education.

If we fail at home, may the Lord forgive us.

- Robert Israel Lappin (10582,Pl.37)
Swampscott, MA

As participants in the August family trip to Eastern Europe, we found your cover story "Jewish Poland: Glory and Tragedy" accurate and memorable. In fact, there were some things neither of us remembered that you wrote of. It is so helpful to have your article along with the itinerary and memorabilia.

We are writing now to let family members know that there is a Yiddish Passover song that has traditionally been sung at Sir (Ser) seders. It was always included at the seders of Harry Sir (1405,Pl.120) [grandson of Zebulun (1285) and Chaya Kopyto (1286) Ser] and was also sung at my father, Abraham Sir's (1412) seder table. I remember always feeling that this song was very special. It came at the very end of the seder and everyone had fun singing it. The song is "Eppel Vil Nit Fain" and though I know the melody, I do not know the Yiddish words. I would like to preserve this legacy for my children and believe it will be lost if not memorialized on paper or tape. I am hoping that someone can help in preserving this bit of Ser Yiddiskeit.

Again, it was a great family trip to Poland.

- Ellie (1716) and Dennis (1717) Krumholtz
Florham Park, NJ

We have investigated the background of this song at the Yivo Institute for Jewish Research and have found several variants. Two are in a rather thick Polish-Yiddish dialect; the third refers to pears instead of apples, but is substantially the same song "Barelach Vil Nit Fain." Please see the following for the Yiddish text of the song.

ידי ישיע פאר קסלידער

געזאמלט, דערקלערט און ארויסגעגעבן

טון

נח פרילוצקי.

ערשטער באנד

רעליגיעזישע און יום-טוב'דיקע

ערשטע סעריע.

— 000 —

פערלאג, בינער-פאר-אלע, חזרשא.

תרע"א.

VI.

נאָם אָם נעשוקט אײַן אָקס אין וואַלד אַראָן, —
זאָל דאָס וואַסער אָסטרײַנקען, זאָל דאָס וואַסער אָסטרײַנקען.
דער אָקס ווײַל ניש דאָס וואַסער אָסטרײַנקען,
דאָס וואַסער ווײַל ניש דאָס פֿייער לעשן, — און ג. וו.

VII.

נאָם אָם נעשוקט אײַן שוּחט אין וואַלד אַראָן, —
זאָל דעם אָקס שאַטן, זאָל דעם אָקס שאַטן.
דער שוּחט ווײַל ניש דעם אָקס שאַטן,
דער אָקס ווײַל ניש דאָס וואַסער טרינקען, — און ג. וו.

VIII.

נאָם אָם נעשוקט דעם מלאך-המות (י) אין וואַלד אַראָן, —
זאָל דעם שוּחט שאַטן, זאָל דעם שוּחט שאַטן.
דער מלאך-המות ווײַל ניש דעם שוּחט שאַטן,
דער שוּחט ווײַל ניש דעם אָקס שאַטן, — און ג. וו.

IX.

נאָם אַז אַלץ אַראָן אין וואַלד אַראָן, —
דער מלאך-המות ווײַל שוין דעם שוּחט שאַטן,
דער שוּחט ווײַל שוין דעם אָקס שאַטן,
דער אָקס ווײַל שוין דאָס וואַסער טרינקען,
דאָס וואַסער ווײַל שוין דאָס פֿייער לעשן,
דאָס פֿייער ווײַל שוין דעם שטעקן פֿערברענען,
דער שטעקן ווײַל שוין דאָס הײַנמל שלאָגן,
דאָס הײַנמל ווײַל שוין דעם פּאָק באַסן,
דער פּאָק ווײַל שוין דו עפל ראָסן,
דו עפל ווײַל שוין פֿאַלן, דו עפל ווײַל שוין פֿאַלן.

I.

נאָם אָם אַראַנגעשוקט אײַן פּאָק (י) אין וואַלד אַראָן, —
זאָל דו עפל ראָסן, זאָל דו עפל ראָסן.
דער פּאָק ווײַל ניש דו עפל ראָסן,
עפל ווײַל ניש פֿאַלן, עפל ווײַל ניש פֿאַלן.

II.

נאָם אָם אַראַנגעשוקט אײַן הײַנט אין וואַלד אַראָן, —
זאָל דעם פּאָק באַסן, זאָל דעם פּאָק באַסן.
דער הײַנט ווײַל ניש דעם פּאָק באַסן,
דער פּאָק ווײַל ניש דו עפל ראָסן,
דו עפל ווײַל ניש פֿאַלן, דו עפל ווײַל ניש פֿאַלן.

III.

נאָם אָם נעשוקט אײַן שטעקן אין וואַלד אַראָן, —
זאָל דאָס הײַנמל שלאָגן, זאָל דאָס הײַנמל שלאָגן.
דער שטעקן ווײַל ניש דאָס הײַנמל שלאָגן,
דאָס הײַנמל ווײַל ניש דעם פּאָק באַסן, — און ג. וו.

IV.

נאָם אָם נעשוקט אײַן פֿייער אין וואַלד אַראָן, —
זאָל דעם שטעקן פֿערברענען, זאָל דעם שטעקן פֿערברענען.
דאָס פֿייער ווײַל ניש דעם שטעקן פֿערברענען,
דער שטעקן ווײַל ניש דאָס הײַנמל שלאָגן, — און ג. וו.

V.

נאָם אָם נעשוקט אײַן וואַסער אין וואַלד אַראָן, —
זאָל דאָס פֿייער לעשן, זאָל דאָס פֿייער לעשן.
דאָס וואַסער ווײַל ניש דאָס פֿייער לעשן,
דאָס פֿייער ווײַל ניש דעם שטעקן פֿערברענען, — און ג. וו.

BOOK ANNOUNCEMENT

The compilation of a family tree is a never ending task. The natural processes of life - birth, death, marriage - necessarily effect continuous change. In late 1996, when *The Book of Destiny: Toledot Charlap* was published, the family tree consisted of about 11,000 names. Two years later it is approaching 16,000.

The Book of Destiny is a narrative history. Its pages introduce more characters than the most complex of Russian novels. To place all these people in their proper context and to position them on the family tree requires of the reader an extremely analytical mind. At the time of publication, it was apparent that the inclusion of family charts would ease the problem. To do so presented two obstacles: it would have delayed the publication date by over a year and would make the book prohibitive in size and cost. The decision was to publish the narrative history of the family at that time and to publish a separate volume of detailed information at a later date.

That date has arrived. This volume contains all the charts of every known branch of the family. Information on each member of the family is presented. Interspersed throughout this information is commentary on history and achievements learned since the publication of the first volume. That is, there is additional narrative history. The second volume, *Ancilla to Toledot Charlap*, stands on its own as a depiction of the vast Charlap-Ibn Yahya family; it is best used in conjunction with its predecessor *The Book of Destiny: Toledot Charlap*. The following is an excerpt of a review which appeared in the journal *Shelanu*.

Arthur F. Menton's sweeping history of the Charlap/Ibn Yahya family is a well-written, beautifully produced volume, which will become a standard in the field of genealogical history. Indeed, this book exemplifies just how closely the studies of genealogy and history are intertwined. Genealogy is simply history told in personal terms and Menton's tome is nothing less than a microcosm of the history of the Jewish people told through the experiences of his extended family.

The Book of Destiny is the story of a distinguished family whose record is traced back from eastern Europe to Spain and Portugal, and from there to the Babylonian exile and back to the royal families of Judah and Israel. The story is told largely in terms of men and women, who with hope in their hearts, faced all sorts of adversity, who suffered, persisted, and finally prevailed. Some are famous, others little known, but their personal testimony brings to life the major events in Jewish history. Here we have a magnificent panorama of a people told through the experiences and memories of one vast family.

This is also an amazingly intricate genealogical portrait of a family that was concentrated in Suwalk and Lomza Guberniyas of northeastern Poland and subsequently spread throughout the world. It is a highly readable tale of their tragedies and triumphs interspersed with an astonishing amount of personal information.

OBITUARIES

Manuel Crane (2674,Pl.228) died on Nov. 24. Manuel was born on March 2, 1913 in Kansas City, MO and was a life-long resident of that city where he was involved in luggage sales. One of eight children, he was a family member through both his parents, Hyman Capito (Kopyto) (2623) and Etta Smolarczyk (2617). The original name of Kopyto was changed to Crane by two of the children; Manuel's brother William (2673) changed it to Coleman; and the others kept it as Capito, a variant of the Polish spelling. Manuel was the father of one son, I.J. Crane (4812), by his first wife Edith Leventhal (2675). He was married a second time to Harriet Glass (2676). Manuel is survived by his wife, son, grandson Randall (4814), granddaughter Terri Richardson (7016), and three grandchildren.

Such an ambitious undertaking entails a prodigious organizational problem. Initially, the casual reader may be convinced that the author was confused as to what type of book he was writing. Is it a personal memoir of his childhood in the Bronx and Rockaway sections of New York City; is it a scholarly treatise on Sephardic Jewry; or is it a Holocaust testimony? The fact is that it is all of these and more. Menton's genius is that he is able to weave so many threads of the Jewish experience into a cohesive portrait. At times he is giving us gossipy tidbits of family relations. Then he launches into descriptions of life in the shtetls of Europe. The reader is transported to the streets, homes, and synagogues of Ciechanowicz, Nur, Tykocin, Zaromb, Mariampole, Bialystok, Slonim and other Jewish communities. From there he moves on to the rise and fall of the family's fortune in Spain and Portugal. There is a scholarly treatise on the lineage going back to the Exilarchs in Babylonia and Persia. Menton claims to have gathered some fifteen independent patrilineal trees dating back to King David. In an extraordinary chapter he analyzes these, discusses the discrepancies and advances what he calls the most authentic case for Davidic descent. At first I was incredulous about these claims, but the evidence that is presented is very convincing and the scholarship is unimpeachable.

The author has traveled around the world to take testimony from those who have lived through, or have knowledge of, the historical adventures of the Charlap family. Interviews with Holocaust survivors rival in poignancy anything that has been published elsewhere. But Menton does not dwell on the tragedies alone. There are detailed descriptions about life with the partisan groups that fought the Nazis. Of particular interest is the section on the Bielski Brigade, which not only wreaked havoc on the invading Germans but maintained a mini-Jewish state in the forests of Byelorussia. Then there are the stories of family members who participated in the Zionist dream and forged Israel into a modern nation. Many in the family emigrated to the New World and their stories are also here, told often in the first person. The author's own grandfather landed at Castle Garden, New York in 1891, having fled from Lomza Guberniya, Poland. His story is here, along with others who populated the American continent from the

(cont. on p. 10)

BOOK ANNOUNCEMENT (cont. from p. 9)

Canadian Maritimes to the Deep South, Far West, and many Latin American countries.

Arthur F. Menton's dedication to the well-being of the Jewish people is apparent from this work. It is one of the reasons he undertook such rigorous research. He states: "We must strengthen the present and future generations of Jews with informed comprehension of how and why we got to where we are. The first step is the recognition that we are a people that is built on family. We must learn the history of our own families and through that gain an appreciation of the history of the Jewish people. The Charlap family has participated in every climactic event recorded in the annals of the Jewish people. Through the lives of this family we can know something of the great scholars, religious teachers, philosophers, poets, and musicians who imbued our people with real nobility. It is often stated that Jews have made greater contributions to the world than any other people, past or present. Some part of that reputation has been earned by the Charlap family. . . Knowing that I am a Charlap has given me a profound sense of being a link in what Neil Rosenstein calls The Unbroken Chain. The realization that link after link has been added to this chain through the millennia brings one to the awesome obligation to continue that chain. Let us never shirk from that task."

The Book of Destiny: Toledot Charlap belongs not only on the library shelf of every Jewish genealogist, but also in the home of every Jewish family where it will be read by succeeding generations with continued interest. It is a tribute to meticulous research that portrays, through one family, the compelling story of the Jewish people. There is no way to read this book without coming away with a deeper appreciation of what that people is all about.

Ancilla To Toledot Charlap continues the story that is told in *The Book of Destiny*. But in the new volume we have some 330 charts showing every branch of the family, every known member of the family, and their exact relationships. It also expands on the historical documentation of the relationship of the Charlap family to that of King David. New details of the Ibn Yahya family and the Lapin branch are presented for the first time. And the ancient family crest, recently discovered in a medieval Portuguese document, has been recreated by our own Louise Lapin Haines and is included.

We are expecting that *Ancilla To Toledot Charlap* will be available for distribution in March of 1999. There will be an extremely limited first edition. Advanced subscribers will get first consideration and we already have many pre-announcement orders. After the first printing is distributed there is no guarantee that the book will be reproduced. It is strongly suggested that you fill out the accompanying order form and submit it now.

"Arthur Menton is doing on a family level what I attempted in my book A History of the Jews. He is personalizing our story and, in so doing, is giving a very human perspective to our people's history"

- Abram Leon Sachar

"I have been ordering copies as gifts for friends and as Bar Mitzvah presents. I can think of no present more appropriate than a gift of one's heritage. And everyone tells me how much they appreciate this beautiful book."

- Tillie Sier

"A magnificent achievement. . . a testament to the immortality of our people."

- Irving Greenberg

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