

Searching for identity

1

Writing the past into life

By Claire Bruell



COVER
*Cipre and
Samuel (Jurmenn)*
see page 139





earching for identity

Preface



IN compiling these four books I have tried to show how our family intersected with history. It covers 300 and more years, and roams the globe, from the Old World to the New.

When I began researching it was a laborious task, writing letters to archives, waiting months for replies, better yet, faxes or personal visits. Early on the response was often a photocopy of the record book. Later the information was merely extracted and summarised by letter. Today, in 2024, the same information can be had for the taking, within minutes, by searching the internet – Jewishgen.org, Geni.com, Arolsen Archives – to name just a few. But trolling the Internet doesn't beat the thrill of being physically in an archive and seeing the handwriting of an ancestor on an original document – goosebump inducing experiences.

Book 1: covers what we know of the origins and lives of Peter's and my great grandparents and what life was like for them in the towns and villages where history placed them.

Book 2: tells the stories of our parents' new lives. Those two couples who were brave enough to journey into the unknown and start a new life. We respect, admire and honour them.

Book 3: contains the stories we have of family members who experienced the Shoah in different ways, first hand. I have collected the testimonies of various cousins, some who experienced the hell of the concentration camps, others who escaped on Kindertransports, still others who survived by luck.

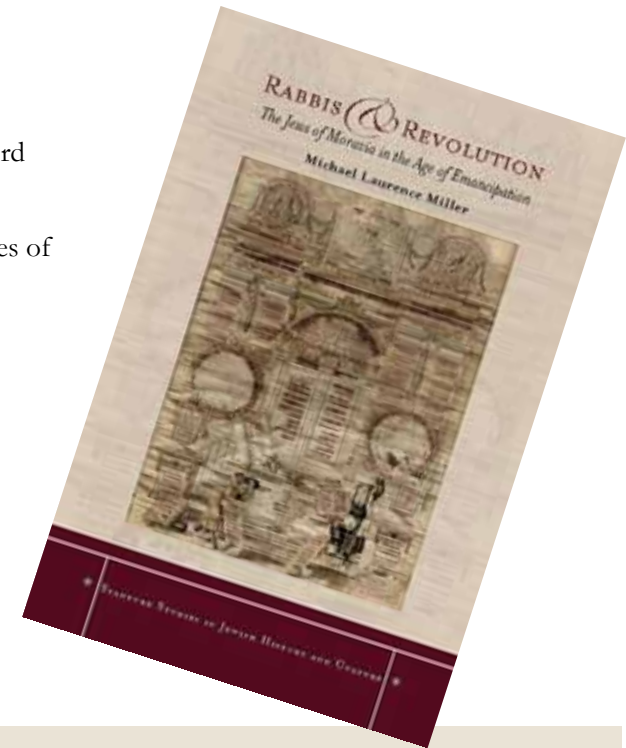
Book 4: is a collection of articles, mostly written by me, pulled together, as well as from a few people who stood out by their achievements and are people of their time. ■



Resources:

I have relied heavily on the following:

1. *Rabbis & Revolution: the Jews of Moravia in the Age of Emancipation*. Michael Miller, published by Stanford University Press, Stanford, California 2011
2. *Die Juden und Judengemeinden Mährens in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart*. (The Jews and Jewish Communities of Moravia in Past and Present; 1929) Hugo Gold published by Max Hickl.
3. <http://maps.geshergalicia.org/>
4. *Schilderungen aus dem Ehemaligen Ghettoleben vom Jahre 1838–1848 mit streiflichtern bis in die gegenwart und jugenderinnerungen eines 78 bezw. 89 jährigen von Ignaz Briess sen. in Olmütz*, Publisher Max Hickl, Brno, 1922. (Memories of a former ghetto life 1838-1848 with examples from memory of a 78-89 year old Ignaz Briess Sr). Translated by Simon A Gilmore.
5. Oral histories recorded by the USC Shoah Foundation and by me, Claire Bruell.



By way of explanation rather than excuse . . .

I need to comment on apparent inconsistencies in spelling, and the use of diacritics, particularly in transliterated words. Accents, some of which, specially the Czech accents, were not able to be reproduced in the computer design programme used by the designer.

Most of the place names have multiple forms in multiple languages – German, Yiddish, some-

times Hebrew, Czech, Polish – depending usually on custom or the nationality of the ruling authority. (See table on page 20 of Book 1), also some of the common diacritics for example, the umlaut (¨), the acute (´), the grave (`) and some beyond the ability of my keyboard or my ability. Mostly I have tried to keep the names historically correct. For example, if a postcard was produced in

Galicia or Moravia, I kept the name on the postcard which usually denoted the time it mentioned or depicted.

Abbreviations have been used for instance Wall. for Wallachisch, Val. for Valasske, (Wallachian), Ung. Ungarisch, Uh.Uhersky (Hungarian), Mähr. for Mährisch (Moravian).■



Leipzig 1905.



Mährisch Schönberg (Sumperk).

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Cypre Kittenplon



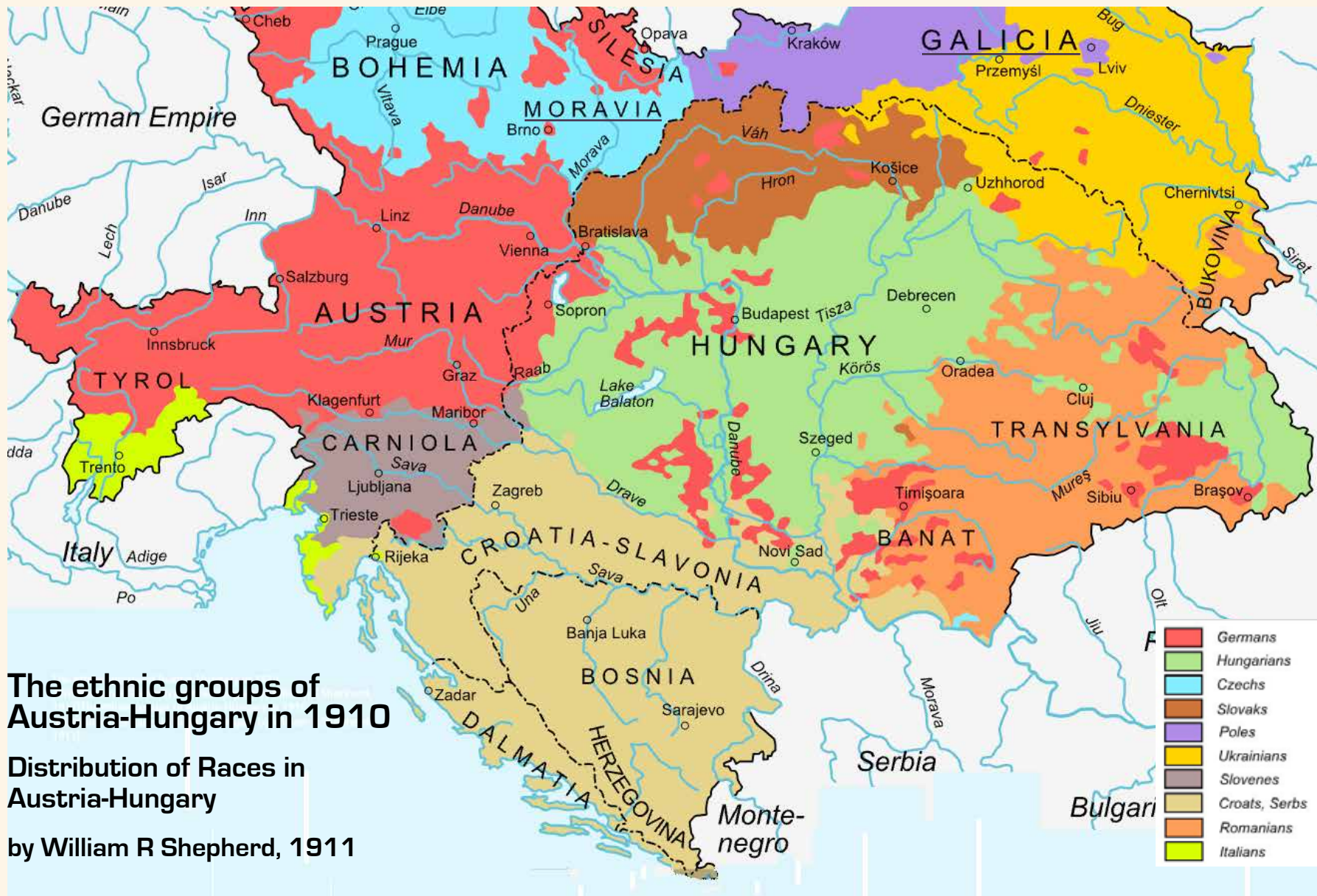
Emil Berger



Franziska Briess



Isidor Löwy



The ethnic groups of Austria-Hungary in 1910

Distribution of Races in Austria-Hungary

by William R Shepherd, 1911

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JEWISH MONUMENTS IN MORAVIA AND SILESIA

BOHEMIA



POLAND



PRAGUE

LEGEND

- A Jewish quarter, preserved for the most part
- A Jewish quarter, partially preserved
- A functioning house of prayer (synagogue)
- A synagogue
- A Jewish cemetery with a ceremonial hall or mortuary
- A Jewish cemetery
- A monument related to the Jewish history

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AUSTRIA

SLOVAKIA

RETZ

BRECLAV-KÚTY

Introduction



THE aim of this book is to preserve what I have discovered about the history of my own and Peter's families over the past 30 years of research and preserve it for future generations.

This distant past I explore may seem irrelevant. However, what we have been and where we have come from informs our lives today and tells us much about ourselves and our families – our attitudes, our interests, our values, our aptitudes and our character and our physical traits. Inevitably when discussing the times of our parents and grandparents, shadows fall on the period 1939-1945 when 120 or more of our families were killed in the Holocaust – either directly in the camps or in events surrounding and related to the Holocaust. Such a discussion is always tinged with sadness and a sense of what has been lost. It may also be that looking at the past will shine a light into the future. What kind of world can our children expect to inherit?

Another reason driving me to put fingers to the keyboard is the need to connect or reconnect with our family's collective past. The Holocaust was a catastrophic event for Jewry as a whole and our extended family was affected as were so many others. The immediate post Holocaust world I grew up in was a very different one from the one which nurtured my parents. They grew up as part of large nests of affirming and secure families. Even my mother, an only child, was not far from both of her parents' large families. I, on the other hand, grew up without brothers or sisters, with only a few remnants of family - most of whom passed through New Zealand and settled in Australia. There were few family stories about the past for me to hang my emotional hat on. My story is a classic Second Generation one, played out all over the world. Many years after the war I have collected the oral testimonies from some of

my father's (Frank) cousins and others who survived the Nazi concentration camps, mostly done by the Shoah Foundation. A separate section contains them. The material of nightmares rather than family anecdotes.

There was, however, a time before the horrors of the Holocaust when life for Jews in Europe was better than it had ever been. Historically, any betterment in the situation of the Jews has typically given rise to feelings of jealousy in those around them. Economic success of our people was often a corollary to the decline in the economic status of Christian neighbours. Antisemitic expression often followed. It might even be argued that the rights gained in the earlier century led ultimately to the Holocaust in the following century – the extreme expression of antisemitism left unchecked.

The books span roughly the lifetime of our great grandparents from the late 1700s to 1990s. This period saw Jews gain equality under the Habsburgs, a progression that began with the Enlightenment in Central Europe (a movement which stood for knowledge and reason) and gradually built up momentum until emancipation was passed into law in 1848 and had become a reality “on the ground” by 1867 in the Austrian lands. I begin by looking at the background history to give context to the lives of our families. Then I take each great grandparent couple and investigate the places they came from and as far as I can, some details of their lives. Finally, I shall add some research on various well known family members, their life and times and public contribution.

Most of Peter's and my 16 great grandparents began life after 1833 and the oldest died in the 1930s, of natural causes. Some lived quite long lives even by today's standards. But it is instructive that they were all born in small

towns, confined to Jewish areas and by the time they died had gained freedom of movement and had relocated to larger centres such as Vienna, Olmütz, Linz, Wallachisch Meseritsch and Znaim. Only three out of the 16, Samuel Moses Kittenplon, Hermann and Betti Löwy, died in the same places as they had been born. Our families in Moravia were to be found in places where prior to 1848 there had been no Jewish communities: Znaim (Simon and Louise Brüll), Wallachisch Meseritsch (Samuel and Rosa Berger), Brünn (Otto and Helen Brüll) and Olmütz (Ignaz Jr and Franziska Briess). In Galicia the Rosenblums and Jurmanns, Kittenplons and Dankbergs swelled the population in Buchach, then joined the flood of Jews heading to Vienna and later to the United States, in the nick of time.

This is a reflection of the momentous changes that occurred in the Habsburg lands during the period. Jews achieved the freedom to move around and could take advantage of opportunities for business, entering the professions and improving their lives. Once one member of a family had moved to explore opportunities, others quickly followed and families helped one another to become established in new places.

Where did our ancestors live?

All of our families can be traced to two areas within the Habsburg realm. -Peter's Jurmann, Kittenplon, Wolfthal, Dankberg and Rosenblum families were settled in Galicia, (today's Ukraine) while the towns and villages of Moravia were home to the Brülls, Hofmanns, Sommers and Benedikts. All of Claire's Heller, Briess, Schimmerling, Brück, Löwy, Thorsch, Berger and Wolf great grandparents were also to be found in the towns and forests of Moravia where crops of hops and grains grew in fertile rolling green fields interspersed with vineyards and fish ponds. Both Moravia and Galicia were ruled by the Habsburg monarchy during the 18th and 19th centuries and were provinces within that Empire. Jewish history developed along similar lines in

both areas, although the Jews of Galicia were the poorest of the Jews in the Empire. Differences between the Galicians and Moravians were mainly due to history, geography and size of Jewish population. All suffered oppression and discrimination.

Before World War 1 Jews made up the fifth largest nation of Galicia, after Germans, Czechs, Poles and Ukrainians. In 1900 Galician Jews amounted to 66.9% of the population in the Habsburg lands excluding Hungary. By comparison, the Jews comprised only 3.6% of the Moravian population. Most Moravian Jews lived in towns and cities but those in Galicia and Russia were the only areas where they formed the majority ethnic part in many urban areas. For instance in Buchach Jews comprised 57.3% of the population.¹

Moravia

Moravia takes its name from the Morava River that begins in the northwest of Moravia near the Polish border and flows south along the border with Slovakia.

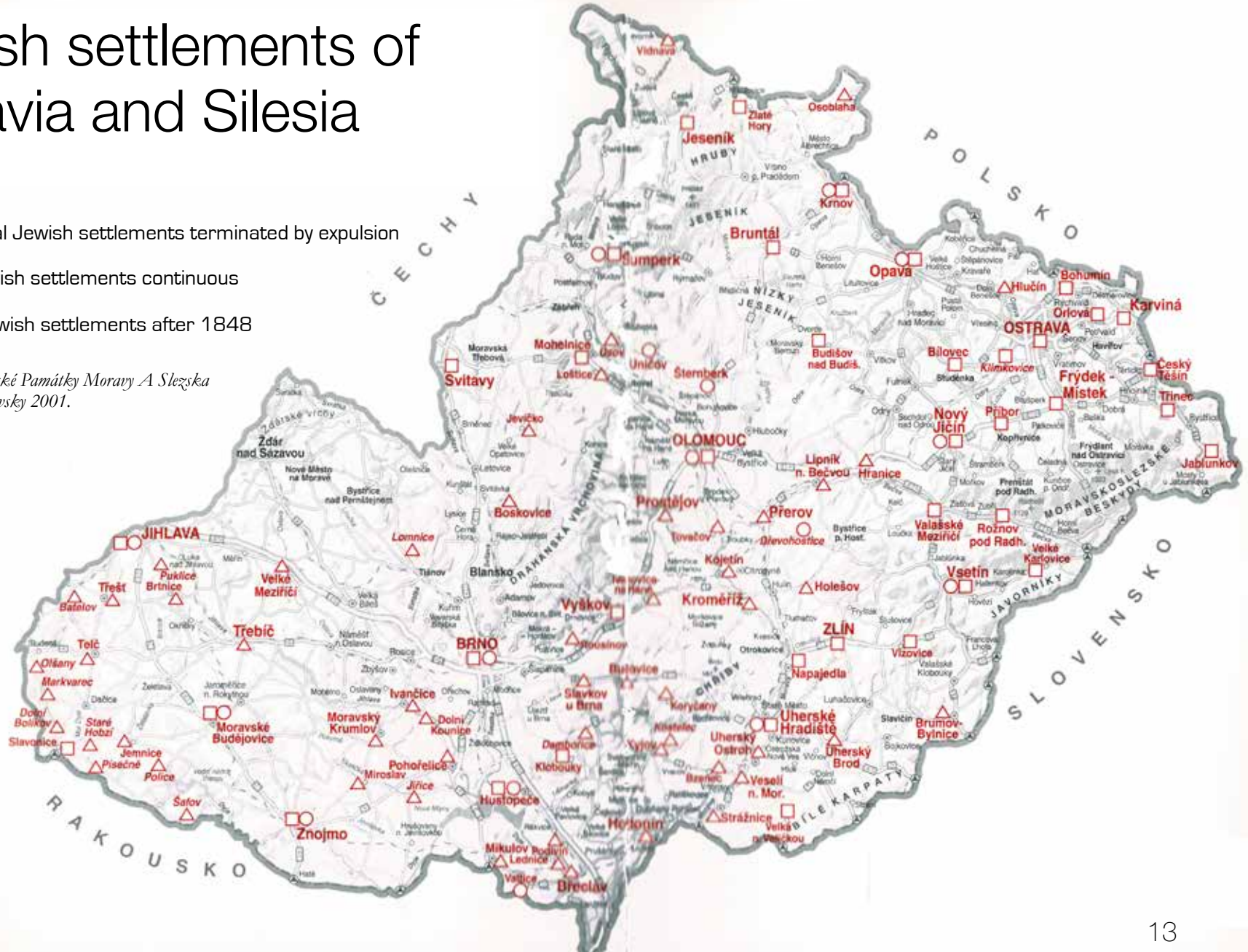
The Premyslid dynasty ruled Bohemia and Moravia from the 9th to the 16th century. In 1348, Charles IV, Holy Roman Emperor, made Prague the capital, establishing the Charles University there, the oldest university in Central Europe. Ferdinand 1 who was a Habsburg ruled from 1526 and full independence from the Habsburgs was not regained until the end of the First World War in 1918. In these early times, feudal law held sway with the oldest son taking the hereditary seat of Prague and subsequent born sons inheriting the seats in Olmütz, Brünn and Znaim.

Under Premyslid rule the Bohemian lands prospered economically – the amount of land being farmed increased, silver mines were discovered, new villages were founded and towns became the sites of commerce and hand-work trades. Many German speakers had migrated to the Bohemian lands of Moravia and Bohemia in the 12th and 13th centuries and had settled in Znaim,

Jewish settlements of Moravia and Silesia

- Medieval Jewish settlements terminated by expulsion
- △ Old Jewish settlements continuous
- New Jewish settlements after 1848

Map from *Zidovské Památky Moravy a Slezsky* by Jaroslav Klenovský 2001.



Brünn, Olmütz, Iglau and Mährisch-Neustadt which were given the status of “royal town” during the 13th century. It is assumed that Jews came to these places from German speaking states during the 11th and 12th centuries when the first evidence of Jewish settlement there is found. It appears that their main occupation at that time was as money-lenders and there is evidence that they were familiar with Slavic/Czech languages.

Jewish expulsion from the Royal Free Towns of Moravia in the 15th and 16th centuries

The fate of the Jews has waxed and waned throughout the history of Central Europe. They were tolerated and even given privileges when it suited those whose protection they enjoyed, and taxed and expelled and otherwise controlled and persecuted when they were perceived to have taken sides in religious wars or aroused the jealousy of Christians around them by prospering economically. And so it was for the Jews in Moravia.

Before the 15th century the Jews were mostly settled in the Royal Free Towns. After the Hussite wars, in the 15th century when Jews were seen as allies of those supporting the religious reformer Jan Hus, at the expense of the Catholic Habsburg cause, a series of expulsions began from the Royal Free Towns. After the expulsions, the Jews came increasingly under the protection of the ascendant nobility. For instance the Lichtenstein family owned much property in Moravia and gave protection to Jews and to this day their castles dot the countryside there. These nobles gave Jews protection in return for taxes known as *schutzgeld* (Protection money). They also encouraged them to engage in trades and handicrafts such as brewing where at times their competition caused friction with the burgher guilds that controlled these activities. These noble families recognised the economic advantage of giving

protection to Jews, as did their counterparts in Poland. As the fortunes of the nobility improved, Jewish settlement moved to the places where these nobles were established. Thus the Jews from Olmütz settled in Holleschau, Leipnik and Prerau, those from Brünn made their way to places such as Kanitz and Gewitsch and so on.

When Moravia came under the rule of the Habsburg dynasty in 1526 its Jewish population was already concentrated in small and medium sized noble towns. This meant that no one Jewish community could be regarded as the centre of the Jews of Moravia, unlike Bohemia where Prague dominated. Nikolsberg (today Mikulov) was the seat of the Moravian Chief rabbinate and housed 10% of the Moravian Jews. Other communities however, including Holleschau and Leipnik which concern our family, had communities of some size and even attracted students from other Habsburg areas. The Moravian towns, where we find most of our ancestors living in 1830 were big enough to allow Jews to prosper and to vie with one another in economic and demographic terms. These clusters of towns and villages in Moravia were larger than the demographic spread in Bohemia, Germany and Hungary where Jews were scattered in many smaller towns and villages. Mostly these smaller clusters of Jews could not support their own Jewish community requirements such as employing their own rabbi, unlike the Moravian communities.

Jewish occupations at the time of the expulsions

In 15th and 16th centuries most Jews were engaged in small trading and money lending however their move to the noble towns after their expulsion from the royal towns, brought new opportunities, for instance in handicrafts. The noble landowners even encouraged Jews to learn handicrafts and to compete directly with the burgher (middle class) guilds. Thus their activities expanded to include glassmaking, metalworking, the textile industry (tailors, hat-

ters, stocking makers and sack makers) and they became also bakers, dairymen, tanners, cobblers, potters, rope makers, bookbinders, weavers and musicians.² Peter's great grandmother's family, the Hofmanns were involved in the textile (wool) trade in Lomnitz, the Bergers from Claire's great grandmother's family, in tanning, trading in and processing skins in Mähr. Weisskirchen, Hermann Schimmerling, Claire's great grandfather from Holic was a baker in Kanitz and so on.

The Thirty Years War and the growth of the Jewish population

The Thirty Years War was the major conflict in Europe 1618-1648. It began as a challenge to Habsburg authority in Bohemia and ended with a reassertion of Catholic Habsburg power. Essentially a struggle between Catholic and Protestants, the Thirty Years' War had little effect on Jews since they could not fight in armies and were not interested in taking sides in a religious war that didn't concern them. In 1650 in the aftermath of the Thirty Years' War, a constitution was drafted, laying down the foundations of Jewish self-government. It established a supranational government, recognised by both the Austrian government as a Jewish representative body and also by the local Jewish communities as Moravian Jewry's supreme legislative body. Delegates were elected by the Jewish communities to the Council of the Land (of Moravia) that met every three years to legislate on the fiscal, administrative, religious and educational affairs of Moravian Jewry. The chief rabbi was the supreme authority in matters of taxation and administering justice as well as in religious matters.³

The period after the end of the Thirty Years War was a time of population growth for Moravian Jewry. After massacres in Poland and Ukraine many Jewish refugees fled westward, some stopping in Moravia where they found a quiet and peaceful haven. Refugee rabbis brought Talmudic study and culture to yeshivas in places like Holleschau, Leipnik and Mähr. Weisskirchen.

Immigrants from Poland made up about 20% of the Jewish population of Moravia in 1675⁴. In Leipnik Claire's great great grandfather Josef Berger had been head of the yeshivah for a time, a fact that is praised on one of the few remaining headstones in today's Lipnik nad Bécvou.

Moravia as a centre of rabbinic learning was home to a group of famous yeshivas that attracted students and rabbis from Bohemia, Hungary, Galicia, Lower Austria and even further afield. It was a crossroad for communities in Central and Eastern Europe and by the late eighteenth century Moravia had become an important centre of Jewish learning. Despite this, Hasidism (an orthodox religious mystic movement) never gained much foothold there and was always stronger in Galicia and Hungary than in Moravia.

Another wave of Jewish refugees came as a result of expulsions from Vienna and Lower Austria. This Jewish population growth took place at the same time as a marked decline in the general population of Bohemia and Moravia, which fell from 2.5-3 million before the Thirty Years' War to 750,000 after it. While war accounted for some of the population decline, it was made more severe by the incidence of disease. In effect the ratio of Jews to the general population had changed rapidly over a comparatively short period of time. The Bohemian and Moravian authorities were under pressure to take steps to restrict the Jewish population on the grounds that the Jews had simply reached a level that for the Christian population was unacceptable, since the Christian nature of Moravian society would be subverted.⁵

Familianten Laws - 1724/1726

To gain an understanding of how Jewish life changed in the Habsburg lands in the period 1830 to 1930, it is important to take a look at the changes that came about during the 18th and 19th centuries. The main influence on the lives of the Jews in Moravia in the eighteenth century were the draconian Familiants Laws (Familianten Gesetzen) which governed and completely re-

Edict of Toleration for the Jews of the Habsburg Empire

January 2, 1782

1. In the future also, the Jews in Vienna shall not constitute their own community, under their own direction; each individual family enjoys the protection of the law of the land; no public worship, no public synagogue, no press of their own for works in Hebrew, for which they must use the press in Bohemia.

2. It is also intended that the number of Jews and the conditions under which they are at present tolerated in Lower Austria and here in Vienna shall remain unaltered, and where no Jews have ever been domiciled, none shall be allowed to settle in the future.

3. Thus, as in the past, no Jew shall be free to come to Vienna from another Hereditary Land, to settle here permanently. Foreign Jews must apply for permission for this to Us personally.

4. A person applying for a permit must state the trade or occupation which he proposes to pursue, and show what are his means, and also show how he proposes to utilize the toleration granted him. The Government will

then determine the amount of the protection fee, which it may fix higher or lower as it thinks right.

5. On payment of this protection fee he may reside in Vienna with his wife and minor children, and pursue the calling on his permit. If, however,

6. A son marries and sets up his own household, he must obtain a permit for himself or, if he prefers, pay for a permit to leave. Similarly, a permit is required for a son-in-law, or if the daughter has received permission to marry a foreign Jew, the leaving permit must be paid out of the dowry going abroad.

7. No Jew is permitted to settle in a rural district of Lower Austria, unless he proposes to introduce a manufacture or a useful trade, for which he must apply to the Government for a permit, when he will enjoy the same rights as in the capital. The facilities enjoyed by the Jewish religion under the present regulations, which entirely supersede the last regulations,

of May 5, 1761, are, accordingly, as follows:

Since it is Our purpose to make the Jews more useful and serviceable to the State, principally through according their children better instruction and enlightenment, and by employing them in the sciences, arts, and handicrafts:

8. We permit and command the tolerated Jews, in places where they have no German schools of their own, to send their children to the Christian upper elementary schools, so that they shall learn at least reading, writing, and arithmetic, and although they have no synagogue of their own in Our capital, We yet permit them to build for their children, at their own expense, a normally equipped school, with a teaching staff of their own religion, which shall be subject to the same control as all the German schools here, the composition of the moral books being left to them.

9. In respect of higher schools, the permission enjoyed by them to attend these is herewith renewed and confirmed.

◀ restricted the lives of Jews in the Austrian Empire from 1724 on.

The passing of these laws was the single most important event influencing the lives of the Jews. Their purpose was social engineering - to limit growth in the Jewish population. In 1726, following an order of the Habsburg ruler Charles VI, the number of Jewish families was limited by quota to 8,541 in Bohemia and 5,106 in Moravia, later increased slightly. To enforce this quota, a so-called 'Familianten' order was issued. According to this order, only the first-born son of each Jewish family was given permission to marry or own a property, though a son couldn't marry or inherit until his father had died.

The Familianten order was in force until 1848. These infamous laws proscribed Jewish life in the Bohemian Lands and forced all Jews to live in certain areas that came to be known as ghettos or 'Judenstrassen' in each town. By 1731 Jewish ghettos were clearly marked throughout Moravia. Not only was the Jews' ability to own houses limited, but they were not able to buy more houses as families increased in size until eventually the overcrowding became so intense that even the government worried about the moral and sanitary issues that resulted. An example cited by Michael L. Miller (Rabbis and Revolution) is that in Prossnitz, (a town owned by the Lichtenstein family), 48 Jewish houses were divided into 120 apartments with a total of 320 rooms where 328 families lived, in 1829.

As a result of these restrictions, many second and subsequent born sons who could not obtain marriage permits emigrated from Bohemia and Moravia, despite the punitive emigrants' taxes. The aim of the Familiants Laws was to limit the number of Jews, since if the number grew too high, the government was subject to complaints from local merchants who resented the competition. If the number was too low, the amount of tax able to be collected was reduced. Therefore, for the government it was a balancing act between allowing the Jews to prosper and so filling the tax coffers on the one hand, and appeasing the local population on the other.

In Moravia there are four former ghettos which have been restored – Holesov, Mikulov, Trebic and Boskovice – where one can easily visualize the ebb and flow of Jewish life in former times.

Generally, the province of Galicia was exploited by its rulers and Jews were very oppressed. Empress Maria Theresa (1717 to 1780) was a bigoted anti-Jewish Catholic who legislated against the Jews and levied onerous taxes on them.

Her successor was Joseph II who was Holy Roman Emperor ruling the Central European Germanic states from 1765 – 1790 and ruler of the Habsburg lands from 1780 to 1790. He was a supporter of the Enlightenment who decided to reshape Jews to become loyal subjects and taxpayers and importantly, a source of soldiers for the monarchy. He brought in changes, partially giving civil rights, education and access to many professions from which they had previously been barred. Jews were allowed to settle in all cities and to employ Christians. However the old Jewish social structure based on ideas contained in the Familiants Laws that remained in place until 1848, resulted in almost half of the Jewish population in Galicia continuing to live in ghettos and in poverty.

The Patent of Joseph II of 1781 granted religious freedom to Lutherans, Calvinists and Greek Orthodox and this was extended to the Jewish population. However, the prologue stated:

“This policy paper aims at making the Jewish population useful to the state”. Under the terms of the Edict Jewish children were allowed to attend schools and universities, the type of jobs available to Jews was widened and some restrictions on allowable clothing and taxes were eliminated. German Schools were to be set up where students would learn mathematics, geography, German language and morality. Written Hebrew and spoken Yiddish were to be replaced by use of German instead.⁶

The Yiddish language



YIDDISH was the vernacular language of most Jews in Eastern and Central Europe before World War II. It is a High German language of Ashkenazi Jewish origin and developed as a fusion of Hebrew and Aramaic into German dialects with influences of Slavic and even traces of Romance languages.

The basic grammar and vocabulary of Yiddish is Germanic. It is written in the Hebrew alphabet since that alphabet was known by most Jews through their cheder education. Yiddish, however, is not a dialect of German but a complete language.

The Yiddish language thrived for many centuries and grew farther away from German as the 19th century progressed, developing its own unique rules and pronunciations. The language also developed a rich vocabulary of terms for the human condition, expressing our strengths and frailties, our hopes and fears and longings. Many of these terms have found their way into English, because there is no English word that can convey the depth and precision of meaning that the Yiddish word can. It is a language full of humor and irony, expressing subtle distinctions of human character that other cultures barely recognize let alone put into words.

As Jews became assimilated into local culture, particularly in Germany in the late 1700s and 1800s, the Yiddish language was criticized as a barbarous, mutilated ghetto jargon that was a barrier to Jewish acceptance in German society and would have to be abandoned if emancipation were to be achieved. Non Yiddish speaking Jews of Central Europe derided their East European counterparts for speaking the language of the stetl which to them signified poverty

and lack of education. German was very much the language of culture and status, the mark of an educated person.

At the same time that German Jews were rejecting the language, Yiddish was beginning to develop a rich body of literature, theater and music. The development of Yiddish began in literature and political writings and the first Yiddish daily was established in 1904. Eventually it became the language of politics and journalism. The most famous Yiddish writer is Isaac Bashevis Singer who in 1978 won a Nobel Prize for Literature for his writings in Yiddish. He gave his acceptance speech in both Yiddish and English, and spoke with great affection of the vitality of the Yiddish language. Singer was born in Poland, the son of a Chassidic rabbi. Words such as “chutzpah”, “schmooze” and “schlemiel” have now been adopted into mainstream American English.

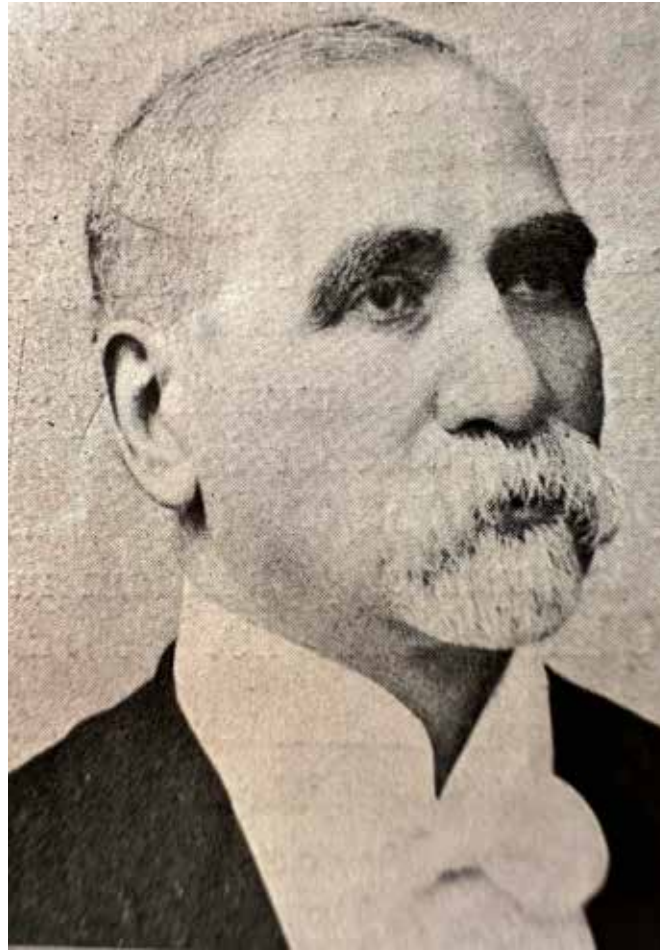
At its height less than a century ago, Yiddish was understood by an estimated 11 million of the world’s 18 million Jews, and many of them spoke Yiddish as their primary language. Today in 2012, fewer than a quarter of a million people in the United States speak Yiddish, about half of them in New York. Most Jews know only a smattering of Yiddish words, and most of those words are unsuitable for polite company. But in recent years, Yiddish has experienced a resurgence and is now being taught at many universities and some Jewish communities provide classes to learn Yiddish. Many Jews today want to regain touch with their heritage through this nearly-lost language and are doing this by consciously promoting Yiddish language and music. Klezmer music, from the shtetls of Eastern Europe is now enjoying a renaissance fed by a fusion with jazz and a fair amount of nostalgia. Songs such as “Bei Mir Bist du Shain” are now recognised by Jews and non-Jews alike. ■

While appearing to be a liberalisation of previous restrictions, the most restrictive laws remained in place – those relating to Familiant Laws, Jewish quarters and taxes. Jews paid two basic types of taxes – a family tax and a consumption tax. The latter tax was charged on such items as kosher meat, goose fat, wine, vinegar and so on.⁷

The Enlightenment

The Enlightenment was a cultural movement of intellectuals aimed at reforming and advancing knowledge by promoting science and intellectual exchange. In Germany, the philosopher Moses Mendelsohn (1729 to 1786), known as the father of Reform Judaism, educated himself in German secular thought and literature and his ideas were embodied in the Haskalah, or Jewish Enlightenment. He aimed to bring Jews closer to German culture and to this end he translated the Pentateuch (Five books of Moses) into German. At the time most Jews spoke only Yiddish but were literate in Hebrew, so the translation enabled Jews to learn German quite quickly. Mendelsohn was also behind the idea of a modern public school for boys. At the same time he adhered strictly to the tenets and beliefs of orthodox Judaism. Mendelsohn worked for the betterment of the Jews' situation in general, trying to obtain further rights and acceptance.

After 1782, it wasn't long before German Jewish schools began to appear in Moravia, where secular subjects were taught in German, existing side by side



Ignaz Briess Sr, 1833-1931.

with the traditional cheder or religious school, often taught by a retired salesman or trader in his own home. Ignaz Briess Sr in his book “Die Juden und Judengemeinden Mährens in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart” recalls his childhood teacher who was an educated pedagogue, probably an old and failed businessman. Classes were held in his lounge where the teacher's wife and family also sat. The teacher was hard of hearing and dispensed discipline liberally with his cane. There was more than one rebbe or teacher, each teaching with his own method and materials although the subjects were uniform.

Ignaz wrote in his account of ghetto life in the years from 1832 that he was taught German subjects in 2-3 hour lessons on weekday mornings and afternoons at the German School for Jews and at the end of each year public exams took place in front of the Catholic Archbishop who doubled as the official school inspector. Best pupils were rewarded with prayer books and reading books. Writing books and fountain pens didn't exist at that time and the teacher drew up lines in writing books and the pupils used quills that had to be sharpened regularly.

Jewish knowledge such as reading, grammar and in depth learning of the Torah (the Old Testament) was acquired at the cheder from 10 to 12pm and 3 to 7pm. In 1842 Ignaz Briess Sr was taken to Leipnik to sit exams where he and the other 6 pupils had attained the highest mark. As a reward the students

were taken to the Wednesday market in Olmütz nearby. They travelled in a large handcart in which only the teacher's seat was upholstered. The boys sat on plain plank seats.

Once emancipation was attained, Jews used the opportunities to establish businesses, marry legally, buy properties and build houses and factories. Many freed themselves of the constraints of orthodox Judaism and by the end of the nineteenth century Yiddish was no longer spoken by the Jews of Moravia.

Jewish occupations during the 18th and 19th centuries

Although the Familiant Laws applied to all the Bohemian Lands, they were most deeply felt in Moravia, because the way that the numbers were allocated there meant that Familiants were bound to a particular place, meaning that they could not move around at all. If a town was, for example, allocated 10 Familiant places, then those Familiants had to stay in the town if they wished to retain their Familiant status. Of course Familiant numbers or 'stellen' (places) were in great demand and abuses were common. Also because Familiants were the only ones in the family who could marry, it often meant later born sons might marry under Jewish law only and any resulting children were not regarded as legitimate by the government and so carried the family name of their mother. An example of this is the case in Peter's family of his great grandmother Cipre Jurmann. Her children were given their mother's family name of Jurmann, rather than their father's since that was how they were officially known.

The overcrowding meant there was little room in the Jewish quarters for the large workshops required by some trades such as weavers, dyers, goldsmiths and carpenters so that the 30% of adult Jewish males in some Jewish communities engaged in artisan crafts in the 1750s, were almost exclusively glaziers or

butchers, as they were activities which required little space.⁸ Also because of the lack of space, the more affluent set up stalls at fairs and markets in nearby towns however the poorer Jews known as *dorfgeher* (village traders), peddlers or *pinkeljuden* (carrying a bundle) had no choice but to sell their wares further afield. Often these men left home on a Sunday morning, returning only on Friday afternoon. This lifestyle, of course, had a deleterious effect on family life. According to some estimates up to one-third of all Moravian Jews were peddlers in the 18th and 19th centuries.⁹

One alternative to this kind of life was for Moravian Jews to lease distilleries, breweries, potasheries, fisheries, tanneries, taverns and the like, from local landowners. Such a leaseholder generally had to bid for the privilege, and once gained, could move with his family to reside at the site of the lease for as long as the duration of the arrangement.¹⁰ Taxes would have to be paid to the nearest Jewish community. Examining our families, we find for instance the father of Franziska Heller, Gottlieb Heller from Leipnik, born 1813, was a leaseholder in Stiebzig (today Jistebzig) nearby. He leased a lake or pond where he would have farmed fish. Franziska's grandfather on her mother's side, born in 1792 and living in Leipnik was a leaseholder of a winery in Botenwald (today Butovice) near Prossnitz.

Many *nachgeborenen* (later born) Jews moved to Hungary or Slovakia just over the border and this exodus led to a number of allied Jewish communities near the border on both sides. For instance, one of these communities was Holic, where Hermann Schimmerling was born on 1 May 1842. He found his bride Johanna Brück in Kanitz, not far from Brünn in Moravia and in fact he wasn't the only Schimmerling male born and residing in Holic to find a mate in Kanitz, west of the border. Moritz Schimmerling from Holic, surely a relation, also found a bride from Kanitz, marrying Sali Süßsmandl whose father Abraham born 1815, had been *Bürgermeister* (mayor) of the town for some years.

In Hungary, by comparison with Moravia, Jews could marry with the permission of the lord of the manor without problem.¹¹ In the census of 1735-38 an estimated 38% of Hungary's 2,531 Jewish family heads were born in Moravia and only 35% were born in Hungary.

The Revolution of 1848

From 1800 to 1848 there were increasing demands for repeal or relaxation of the Familiants Laws. At the same time the objective of Jewish emancipation that would grant equal civil and political rights with other citizens was part of the great burgher movement of emancipation of all citizens from the old aristocratic order that gained momentum as the century wore on.

The Revolution of 1848 brought a new age of freedom which heralded demographic, financial, economic and social transformations impacting directly on the lives of previous generations. In the case of each of our 16 great grandparents bar one, they lived and died in a place different from where they had been born. In this respect their lives differed markedly from the lives of their ancestors who would have been born and died in the same place. Our families took advantage of the changed conditions to move to larger centres of Jewish life and build houses, start businesses, educate their children and to prosper.

Emancipation

Article 19 of the 1867 Basic State Act, valid only for the Austrian part of Austria-Hungary, which included both Moravia and Galicia, said:

“All races of the empire have equal rights, and every race has an inviolable right to the preservation and use of its own nationality and language. The equality of all customary languages in school, office and public life, is recognised by the state. In those territories in which several races dwell, the public and educational institutions are to be so arranged that, without applying com-

pulsion to learn a second country language (landessprache), each of the races receives the necessary means of education in its own language.”

The dual monarchy: The Austrian Habsburgs join with the Kingdom of Hungary

At the time most of our great grandparents were born, the Austrian Empire was declining in strength and power at the same time as the Central European German states were gaining in power. In 1867, in a bid to shore up their waning power, the House of Habsburg entered into an agreement with the Hungarian government to form a constitutional monarchic union. This so-called Austro-Hungarian Empire was a multinational realm, which held a powerful position in the politics of the time and lasted until 1918 with the end of the First World War.

The Empire consisted of today's Austria, Hungary, Bosnia, Herzegovina, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, large parts of Serbia, small parts of Italy, Montenegro, Poland and Ukraine. These countries were inhabited by 11 various national groups who spoke 11 different languages and disputes between and amongst these were the foundation of political life, leading ultimately to the outbreak of the First World War. After the war these groups that had only been vaguely identified before the war, erupted into national entities and gained independence. It so happened that at the very time when the Jews were attaining their freedom in Bohemia and Moravia, feelings of Czech nationality were growing stronger and created tension between ethnic Germans and ethnic Czechs. This was also a portend of what was to come in the twentieth century. By the time of the 1910 census, 71.8% Moravians gave Czech as their main language, and 27.6% as German. Overwhelmingly, the main language of our families by this time was German, though the Moravians

The towns and cities which featured in our history

Names of towns and cities	Pre 1914	Post 1918	Current	Province pre WW2	Jewish pop pre WW2	Governing body pre 1914 pre WW1	Country pre WW2
Buchach, Buczacz	Buchach, Buczacz	Buchach, Poland	Buchach, Buczacz	Poland	3858	Austria-Hungary	Poland
Znaim	Znaim	Znojmo	Znojmo	Moravia	743	Austria-Hungary	Czechoslovakia
Brünn	Brünn	Brno	Brno	Moravia	11,003	Austria-Hungary	Czechoslovakia
Olmütz	Olmütz	Olomouc	Olomouc	Moravia	2216	Austria-Hungary	Czechoslovakia
Linz	Linz	Linz	Linz	Austrria	671	Austria	Austria
Vienna/Wien	Vienna	Vienna	Vienna	Austrria	176,034	Austria	Austria
Uhersky Ostroh	Ungarisch Ostroh	Uhersky Ostroh	Uhersky Ostroh	Moravia	355	Austria-Hungary	Czechoslovakia
Tarnov	Galicia	Poland	Poland	Galicia	15,608	Austria-Hungary	Poland
Wal. Meseritsch	Wal. Meseritsch	Valasske Mezirící	Valasske Mezirící	Moravia	142	Austria-Hungary	Czechoslovakia
Ungarisch Brod	Ungarisch Brod	Uhersky Brod	Uhersky Brod	Moravia	529	Austria-Hungary	Czechoslovakia
Prerau	Prerau	Prerov	Prerov	Moravia	278	Austria-Hungary	Czechoslovakia
Kanitz bei Brünn	Kanitz bei Brünn	Dolní Kaunice	Dolní Kaunice	Moravia	53	Austria-Hungary	Czechoslovakia
Leipnik nad Becvou	Leipnik	Lipník nad Becvou	Lipník	Moravia	154	Austria-Hungary	Czechoslovakia
Ungarisch Hradisch	Ungarisch Hradisch	Uhersky Hradiste	Uh Hradiste	Moravia	Not given	Austria-Hungary	Czechoslovakia
Weisskirchen	Weisskirchen	Hranice	Hranice	Moravia	211	Austria-Hungary	Austria-Hungary
Holic	Holitsch	Slovakia	Holic	Slovakia	386	Austria-Hungary	Slovakia
Holleschau	Holleschau	Holesov	Holesov	Holesov	282	Austria-Hungary	Austria-Hungary
Lomnitz	Lomnitz	Lomnice	Lomnice	Moravia	Not given	Austria-Hungary	Austria-Hungary
Gewitsch	Gewitsch	Jevicko	Jevicko	Moravia	107	Austria-Hungary	Austria-Hungary
Borszczów	Borszczów	Poland	Borshchiv	Ukraine	58	Austria-Hungary	Poland
Skala Zruch	Skala	Poland	Ukraine	Ukraine	Not given	Austria-Hungary	Poland
Drohobycz (city and area)	Drohobycz	Drohobycz	Drohobych	Ukraine		Austria-Hungary	Ukraine

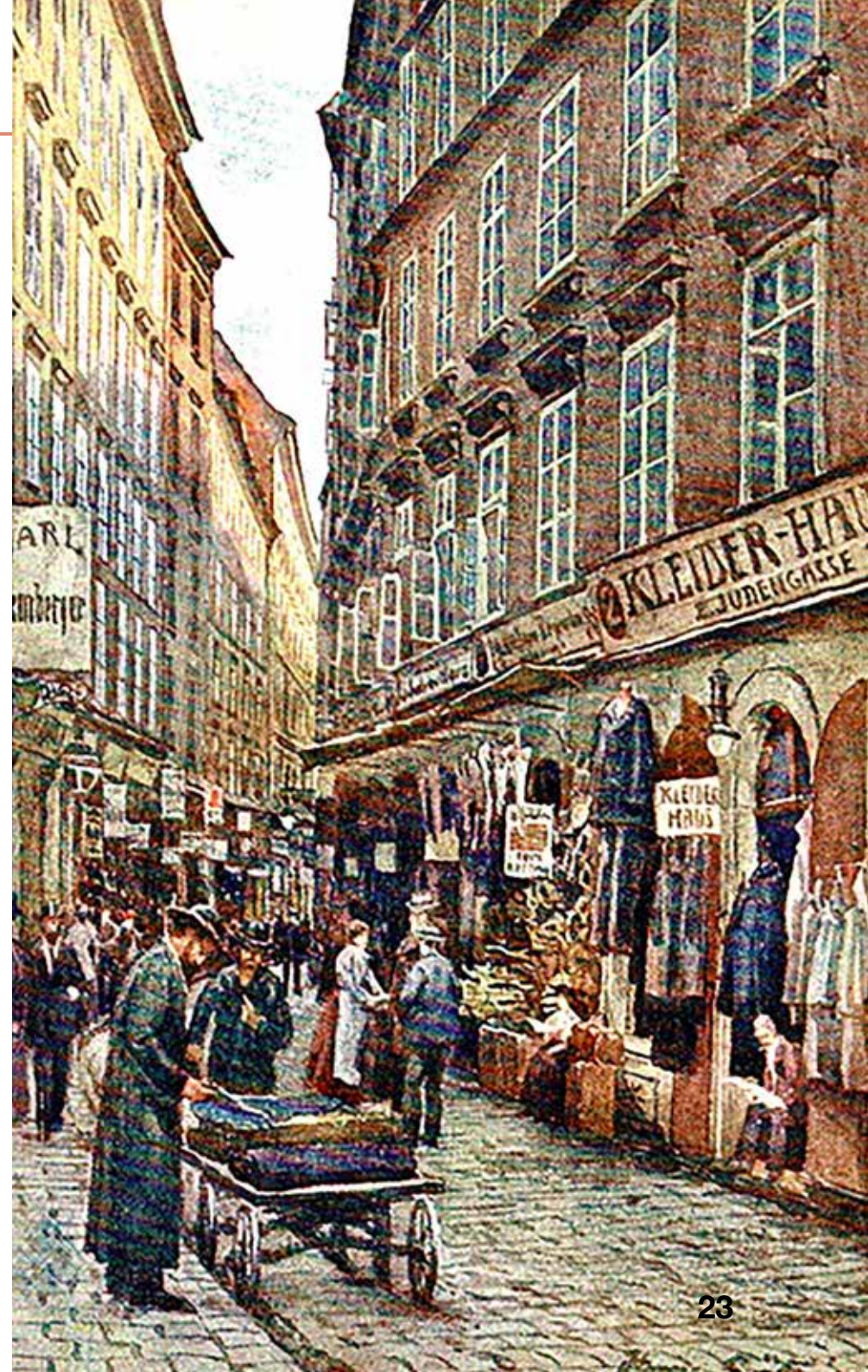
spoke both Czech and German and the Galicians spoke German, Yiddish and probably Polish as well. In many cases they had also learned Russian, French or English.

Industrialisation and urbanisation

During the years of the dual Austro-Hungarian Empire 1867 to 1918, the economy of Central Europe changed dramatically. The capitalist system of production spread quickly, replacing medieval institutions. Technological change accelerated industrialisation and urbanisation. The gross national product per capita grew roughly 1.76% per year from 1870–1913.

Rail transport expanded rapidly throughout the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Its predecessor state, the Habsburg Empire, had built a substantial core of railways in the west, originating from Vienna, by 1841. At that point, the government realised the military possibilities of rail and began to invest heavily in construction. Bratislava, Budapest, Prague, Kraków, Graz, Laibach (Ljubljana) and Venedig (Venice) became linked to the main network. By 1854, the empire had almost 2,000km of track, about 60–70% of it in state hands. We find Peter's great grandfather David Sommer working as an "Oberkondukteur" (supervising conductor) of the railway and Max Löffler, husband of Adele Berger, Claire's great aunt, working as "Ingenieur Oberstaatsbahnrat der Staatsbahn", (engineering supervisor of the state railway) both in the late nineteenth century. Wilhelm Briess, Claire's great great uncle sat on the Boards of the State Railroad Council and the Council of the Moravian Regional Railways. The ability for people to move from place to place became much easier throughout Europe during the nineteenth century with the development of the railways.

The railways also contributed to the decline of smaller towns that were bypassed by the railway while conversely the attractiveness of those places on the railway network increased. The Vienna to Brünn railway was completed in 1839, thus making journeys between these cities much easier than previously. The Jewish population of



*Wien Judengasse -
Jew Street Vienna*

SEARCHING FOR IDENTITY: Writing the past into life

Brünn surged when freedom of movement finally came in 1869. The 10,809 Jews living in Brünn by 1890 made it the single largest Jewish population centre in Moravia, comprising 11% of Moravian Jewry. The city became a large centre for the manufacture of woollen goods and many were attracted to the expanding opportunities for trading and markets available in Brünn. The 4505 Jews living there in 1868 made it the single largest Jewish population centre, while in 1900 8,238 Jews lived there constituting 19% of the total Jewish population of Moravia.¹² After their marriage in 1903 Peter's grandparents Otto and Helen Brüll moved to live their married life in Brünn.

The pull of Vienna

Before the 1848 revolution Jews were not allowed to live in Vienna unless they bought a "Patent of Toleration" which was very expensive but gave them the right to live in the city. In 1826 only 135 Jews had this patent which along with their households made up about 2000 people. The revolution in 1848 by 1859 had seen further liberalisation of laws, effectively reducing restrictions on Jewish residents, which resulted in a huge influx of Jews to the city. These included our Schimmerling, Rosenblum, some Briess and Benedikt families.

The first wave of immigrants arrived from Bohemia and Moravia in the 1850s and 1860s (e.g. Adolf Briess, see below). Next came a group from Western Slovakia and Hungary, both close to Vienna. Many came from Pressburg (today Bratislava), the centre of non Hasidic Hungarian Orthodoxy. As a result of these immigrations by 1914 about 25% of the Jews of Vienna were born in the Czech lands, a further 25% were from western Hungary, about 20% from Galicia (including Jochanan and Cecila Rosenblum) and about 25% had been born in Vienna to settlers previously there. During World War One hundreds of thousands of Jewish refugees fled Galicia of whom 70,000 settled in Vienna. Most returned home or migrated further, mainly to the US. After the war, there were more Galician Jews in Vienna than there had ever been before.

In Vienna there were more opportunities to become prosperous and Vienna became very attractive to German speaking Jews who regarded the city as the pathway to a better life for their families.

Meanwhile in Galicia.....

From 1772-1795 a series of moves took place that ultimately divided the former Kingdom of Poland amongst the rulers of Austria, Russia and Prussia.

The area that came under the jurisdiction of Austria was known as Galicia, a province of the Empire in the same way that Moravia was also a province of the Empire.

The defining moment came in 1795 with the fall of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Galicia proper was inhabited by Ukrainians, Poles and Jews and was a royal province within the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Galician Jews primarily spoke Yiddish. Most of them lived in poor circumstances, largely working in small workshops and enterprises and as craftsmen – includ-



Dr Aron known as Adolf Briess, son of Jacob Briess and Betti Bruck, single, shown on his marriage record Vienna 15 October 1871



Kingdom of Galicia and Lodomeria

1914

Map created by Mariusz Pazdziora.

SEARCHING FOR IDENTITY: Writing the past into life

ing tailors, carpenters, hat makers, jewellers and opticians. Almost 80 percent of all tailors in Galicia were Jewish, including Peter's Rosenblum family.

Before the partition of Poland, Galicia had not had its own identity within the Polish lands. There, also, at that time, most Jews lived in small noble-owned country towns, however they usually had larger populations than most of the 52 Jewish communities in Moravia.

The Jewish population of Moravia in 1754 was 20,000 whereas the Jewish population of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth at the time numbered 750,000. In both Moravia and Poland-Lithuania the Jewish communities were large enough to support rabbis, mikvahs, synagogues and often yeshivahs as well.

Under Habsburg rule, Galicia's Jewish population increased sixfold, from 144,000 in 1776 to 872,000 in 1910. This growth was due to a high birth rate and a steady stream of refugees fleeing pogroms in the neighbouring Russian Empire. They constituted one third of the population of many cities and came to dominate parts of the local economy such as retail sales and trade. They were also successful in the government; by 1897, Jews constituted 58 percent of Galicia's civil servants and judges. During the 19th century Galicia and its main city, Lemberg (today Lviv), became a centre of Yiddish literature. Lemberg was the home of the world's first Yiddish-language daily newspaper, the *Lemberger Togblat*.

Galicia had more Jews than any other place under the Habsburg monarchy and operated as a bridge between east and west. It was also the largest province of the empire, and the poorest and most backward. Ruled more harshly than the neighbouring Russian and provinces of former Poland, it became a source of manpower for the Austrian army and its citizens lived under the multiple burdens of excessive bureaucracy, many border garrisons and Germanization of its Polish people. Roughly, Galicia was divided into Western and Eastern Galicia. The western part included Tarnow where David

Sommer and Franziska Benedikt's children were born when David worked there as an engineer for the railways.

The Jews of Eastern Galicia (now Ukraine) were more numerous than those in the Western part. This Eastern part included Skala, Borszczow home to the Rosenblums, and Buchach which was the home of the Jurmanns, and Kittenplons and later also the Rosenblums. The Dankbergs appear to have lived in Horodenka where Miriam Dankberg/Wolfthal was born. Altogether the number of Jews increased in Galicia over two times between 1850-1914, despite emigration.

In 1785 there were 150,000 Jews in the Habsburg provinces outside Galicia. There were approximately 70,000 in Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia, and about 80,000 in the Hungarian Kingdom.

Galician Jewry was comparatively large, numbering over 315,000 in 1785 and so comprising almost 9% of the entire Galician population.¹³

In 1848 the Habsburg Jews joined the revolutionary spirit pervading the Empire and demanded equal rights. By the time of the constitution of March 1849 Jews were given full civil rights and allowed freedom of movement and to purchase property.

However, in Moravia, as in Galicia, it wasn't until 1867 that equal rights for Jews translated into the abolishing of all feudal restrictions. With the revolution of 1848 came ideas of equality and emancipation that led to a new period of economic and social change.

Freedom of movement led to the decline of the small communities; because people shifted away they no longer paid taxes which meant the small communities couldn't afford to employ rabbis, butchers, teachers, cantors etc. This led to a change in profession for many of those previously employed in those occupations.

Life in Galician Jewish communities

The Galician Jews lived in substandard housing and health conditions, like their counterparts in Moravia. Dense building and unhealthy diets led to dirty and dark living conditions and frequent suffering of disease. Even in Lviv, the capital of Eastern Galicia, there were not many paved roads by the late 1860s. Open sewers and gutters lined streets that were covered in sand and mud and cholera epidemics were a frequent threat.

The religious community was the most influential institution. Members were cared for, hours of prayer and festival celebration and even ways of dressing and eating set. Work stopped on Friday night for Shabbat and all Jewish shops and workshops were closed on Saturdays. Sundays were the Christian Sabbath so Jews could not be seen to be openly engaged in commerce until Monday. Most communities had financial difficulties and requested aid from their more affluent communities outside the country.

Feelings of solidarity were intensified by antisemitism and political and economic oppression. Every community had several chederim or religious schools that began at age three and taught Torah with commentaries which accustomed the students to learning and meant that all students had a basic knowledge of Hebrew, as well as some history and geography.

Antisemitism was felt from Polish gentry as well as from peasant classes. The latter were prompted by a sense of economic competition just as in Habsburg Moravia. Jews were blamed by populist leaders for everything from the disastrous economy, alcoholism to illiteracy and political conflicts. Political booklets imported from Austria itself contributed to Jews being regarded as scapegoats for all of society's problems.

The poverty of Galicia's Jews, their backwardness and provincialism caused

them to appear as if they were from the Jewish shtetls of Russia in Eastern Europe, different and separated from the outside world. Although Galicia was closer to central Poland and Ukraine in terms of culture, way of life and social structure, than to Austria itself, this similarity to the Jews from the shtetls of the Russian Empire meant that they, together with their Slovak, Romanian and Moravian brothers were referred to by the pejorative "Ostjuden". (Eastern Jews). The positive results of emancipation were that Galicia's Jews, from the 1860s on, could participate in political life and many economic activities. In fact the Zionist organisations of Galicia gained ground and constituted the largest group of Austrian Zionism. Jews could also enter the professions (which they could not in Russia and Romania) and could acquire land more easily.

Emigration from Galicia

Economically Galician Jews generally suffered from hard times and lack of opportunities to improve their lot and many fled when they were able. During the First World War there were many refugees from Galicia who flooded into western parts of the Empire, especially into Vienna. By the end of the Second World War Jewish Galicia had disappeared from the map well and truly, remembered only by its landsmänner (former inhabitants) in places like New York and Tel-Aviv. These compatriots had shared memories and kept alive the often romanticized spirit of the "old country".

Amongst those who migrated to Vienna was Adolf Briess from Olmütz, cousin of Ignaz Briess Jr. Adolf is said to have arrived in Vienna in the 1860s after a family dispute and in 1870 is shown as living in Vienna at Leopoldsgasse 6 with his brothers Markus and Salamon. Clearly all three of these young men were attracted to this growing and lively city as somewhere that would give them more opportunities for a better life. Perhaps being freed of the burden of family control also helped attract them to Vienna. The city grew to

become a large Jewish city in Europe second only to Warsaw. Galician Jews also made up 5% of the residents of Berlin by 1910.

1881-1910 the US naturalised over three million people from the Austrian lands and 9.1% of these were Jews, most of the Austrian emigrants having come originally from Galicia. During this period some of the Rosenblum family were amongst those immigrants to the US, descendants of Chaskel and Miriam Rosenblum who took the first step to Vienna, completing the journey to the New World on the eve of the Second World War. That meant that by the early years of World War II most of the Rosenblum descendants were in the United States and so escaped the Holocaust. Only Peter's great uncle Mendel Jurmann was deported to Buchenwald concentration camp where he supposedly died of a weak heart. Mendel's wife Ida and their 11 year old daughter were deported to Opole ghetto in Poland and were not heard from again. His son David escaped on a Kindertransport to the United States

Whatever we do, our dreams, our aspirations, we stand on the shoulders of those who have gone before. To not know our roots is to live in a void. We should honour the generations that came before us and by extension familiarise ourselves with the world that was theirs so that we can aspire to a better future, keeping the promise for those yet to be. We owe it to history and to our children to retell the family stories of our origins. ■



Brin is Brno, Olmunz is Olomouc.

Resources

1. *Images from a Bygone Ghetto-Life from the year 1838 to 1848, together with highlights from later years and the Memories of the Youth of a 78, later 89 year old*, Ignaz Briess Sr, ed. Hugo Gold, published by Max Hickl, translated into English from the original German by Simon J. Gilmour.
2. *Rabbis and Revolution: the Jews of Moravia in the Age of Emancipation*, Michael Laurence Miller, published by Stamford University Press in 2011. I have used this book extensively. Miller used sources in archives in Czech Republic, Austria, Israel and the US.
3. *The Jews of Galicia under Austrian-Polish Rule, 1867-1918*, by Piotr Wrobel.
4. *Osudy olomouckých sladoven a sladovnických firem v kontextu vyvoje sladovnickeho prumyslu (od 60.let 19. Stoleti do roku 1948)*. Malt Houses and Malt Companies of Olomouc: Their Fortunes in Context of Malt Industry Development between 1860 and 1948, by Michael Viktorik 2007, published by the Palacky University of Olomouc Philosophy Faculty.
5. *The Jews of Austria*. Ed. Josef Fraenkel, Valentine, Mitchell and Co. Ltd. Great Britain, 1967.
6. *Die Juden und Judengemeinden Mährens in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart (The Jews and Jewish Communities of Moravia in Past and Present; 1929)* Ed Hugo Gold, published by Max Hickl.
7. *Dictionary of Jewish Surnames from Galicia* by Alexander Beider published by Avotaynu.

8. Moravia: Jewish Virtual Library,

www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/judaica/ejud_0002_0014_0_14167.html

<http://maps.geshergalicia.org/>

Footnotes

1 - Michael Miller *Rabbis & Revolution: the Jews of Moravia in the Age of Emancipation* in 2011. Much of the data and facts I quote come from this book.

2 - *ibid.*

3 - *ibid.*

4 - *From East to West* 39-40, 46 by Moses Shulvass.

5 - *Rabbis & Revolution: the Jews of Moravia in the Age of Emancipation.*

6 - *ibid.*

7 - *ibid.*

8 - *ibid.*

9 - *ibid.*

10 - *ibid.*

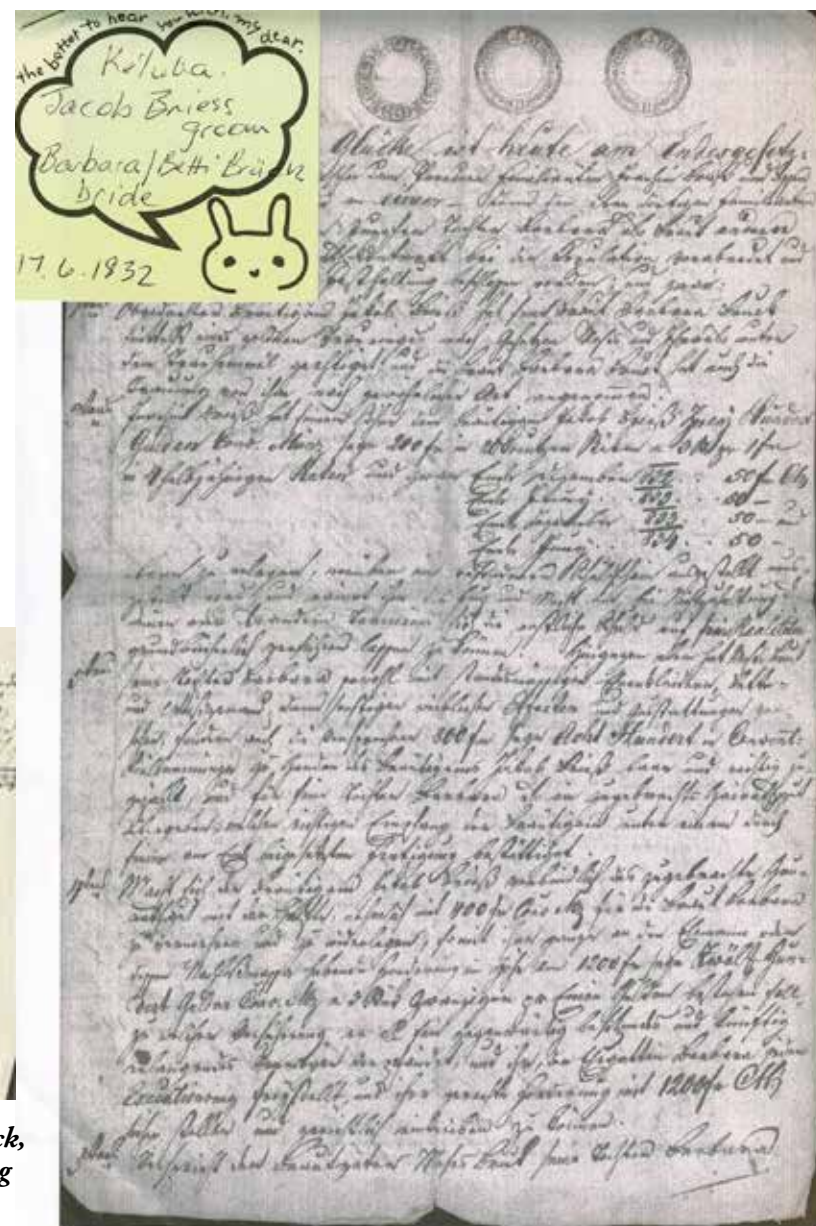
11 - *ibid.*

12 - *ibid.*

13 - *ibid.*



The marriage contract of Jacob Briess and Betti Brück, 1832 with a section (above) of the third page showing their signatures.





Wien. Wienthalbahn Kettenbrückengasse (Chain bridge Way) 1899.

The great grandparents

Family introduction

Löwy and Thorsch

Berger and Wolf

Briess and Heller

Schimmerling and Brück(ner)

Brüll and Hoffman/Hofmann

Sommer and Benedikt


The Galizianers



Josef Berger with his mother, Berta, and father, Sigmund.

Family names

Mandatory adoption of German surnames

 **I**t was in 1787 the Austrian Emperor dictated that all citizens must take German surnames and these had to be approved. This was yet another tool the government used to limit the increase of the Jewish population, to educate citizens in the German language and culture and to keep control of them so as to levy more taxes. Increased Germanisation of all the people under the Habsburg rule was the goal.

“Jewry in all provinces is advised every head of household [Hausvater] has to accept as of January 1, 1788 a distinct family name and a German first name for his family, as a guardian for orphans and single and other persons under his guardianship. Unmarried females also have to accept the names of their father and married ones the name of their husband. This name without exception is not to be changed during their lifetime.”

So it was that out of 16 of our great grandparents' families, most had family names deriving from German: Jurmann, Berger, Schimmerling, Fried, Sommer, Rosenblum, Dankberg, Brück, Thorsch,

Benedikt from the latin Benedictus, (meaning blessed) or from Hebrew. Löwy was a German derivative of Levite, whereas both Briess and Brüll were acronyms. Briess – ben Reb Itzhak Siegal (Segol designating a Levite) and Brüll – ben Reb Jehuda Levy. Levy and its derivatives were common names in Ukraine. Names beginning with “Br” were family names taken by hereditary rabbinical families in Eastern Europe. (*A dictionary of Jewish surnames from Gali-*



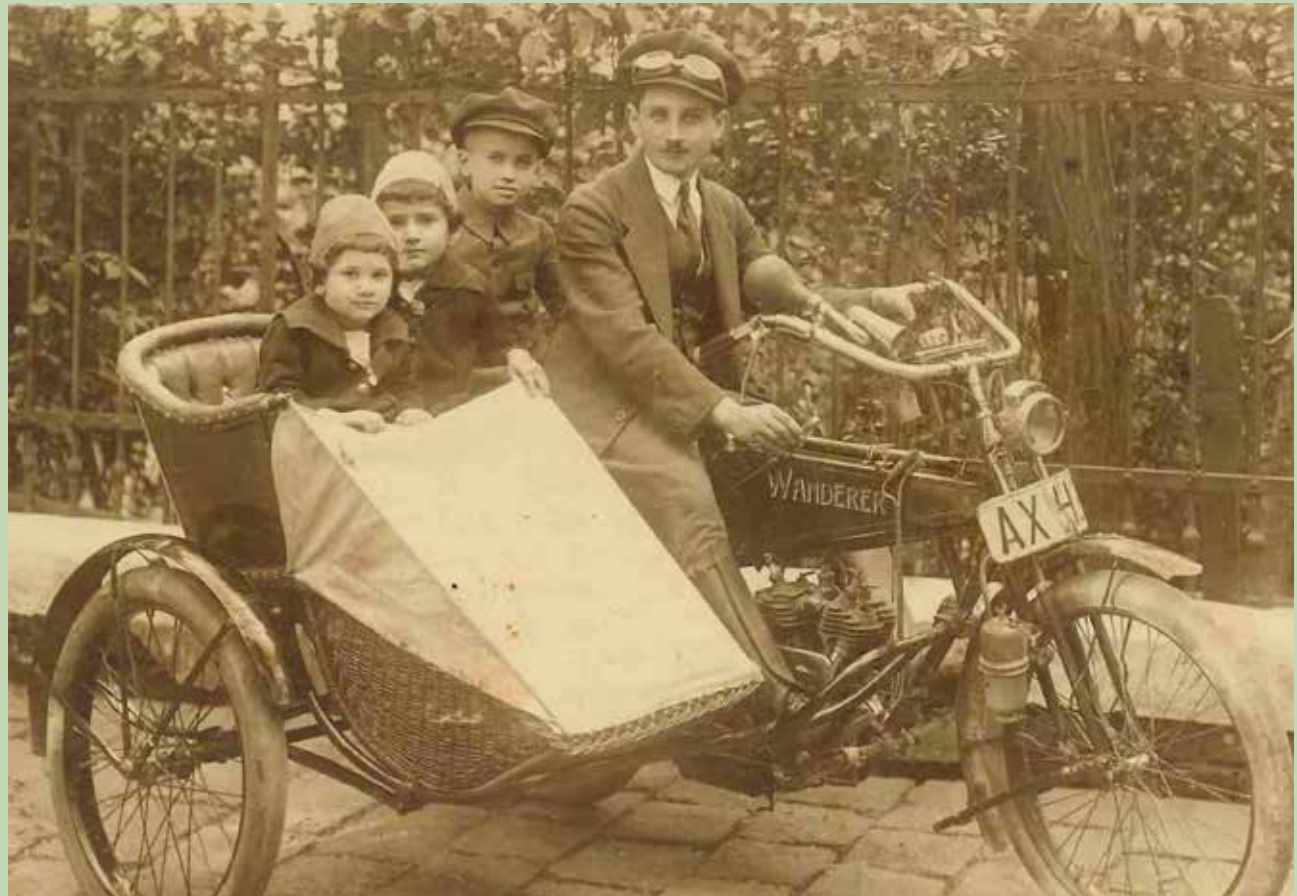
The Berger family c. 1914. (rear left) Sigmund, (rear right) Samuel, (front left) Josef (front second from right left elbow on table) Rosa.

cia, Alexander Beider). According to Beider, Jurmann was a common name adopted in the Krakow and Lvov areas, Dankner (no mention of Dankberg) in the Lvov area in Poland, as well as in Borszczow. Rosenblum was also common in Lvov and Borszczow as well as in Buchach. Rosenbom and Rosendorf were common in Borszczow. At the time of the mandatory adoption of surnames the Jewish population of Galicia was 225,000. Local authorities were to be responsible for ensuring the adoption of surnames was carried out.

In the Borszczow district 95% of the surnames ended in -mann. Hof means court so that in Peter's great grandmother's family, the name Hofmann, meant "a man of the court or gentry". Acronymic Hebrew names starting with Bar and Char were popular in Eastern Galicia and Volhynia. (Brüll and Briess).

Regarding the name Hoffman or Hofmann, I found the following on Geni.com:

"German and Jewish (Ashkenazic): status name for a steward on a farm or estate, from German hof(f) 'manorfarm', 'courtyard' + Mann 'man'. Originally, this was a status name for a farmer who owned his own land as opposed to holding it by rent or feudal obligation, but the name soon came to denote the manager or stew-



Jochanan Rosenblum with his children Otto, Lilly and Mitzi.

ard of a manor farm, in which sense it is extremely frequent throughout central and eastern Europe; also among Jews, since many Jews held managerial positions on non-Jewish estates."

According to Beider, the most common Jewish names in Galicia were Berger, used in 62 districts, Wolf, in 56 districts, Heller, in 53 districts and Grün, in 51

districts. These are all names to be found on Claire's family tree.

In Bohemia it is possible to find original name adoption papers however, in Moravia these are elusive. The only document found to date, relating to our family was the document whereby Peter's great great great grandfather Sallomon Jacob Lob had taken the name Sallomon Bril (ben reb Judah Leib) and his brother Daniel Jacob Lob had taken the name Daniel Bril (see document page 34). Later this became Brüll, anglicised in New Zealand to Bruell.

The Jacobi papers

Paul Jacobi Israeli genealogist spent 50 years investigating the lineages of leading Ashkenazi rabbinic families. Four volumes were published by *Avotaynu*. On a visit to Jerusalem in 1993 we visited him with Ezra and Anton and he showed us his extensive library. He told the boys how his research included the name Bril, Brillin, Brull, Brullen and so on and that they are descended from an old Jewish family. No photo unfortunately. ■



Fredy, Marianne and Franz Briess c.1910.



Peter and Ronny c. 1966.



Anton, Peter and Ezra in Jerusalem, 1993.

A rare name change document

This name change document shows Peter's great great grandfater Sallomon Jacob Lob who took the name Sallomon Brill and his brother Daniel Jacob Lob who took the name Daniel Brill. For Moravia it is rare to find these documents. It's written in Old German.

Handwritten document titled "Hilff-gabbe mit Namen" (Help-gabbe mit Namen) and "Abgänger des Sallomon der Sallomon". The document lists names and their corresponding names in Old German script. The text is written in a cursive hand. There are two red triangles pointing to specific entries in the list.

Line	Original Name	Changed Name
18	15 Ulan-Jacob	Ulan-Jacob
19	16 Jofeph-Jacob	Jofeph-Jacob
20	17 Jofeph-Jacob	Jofeph-Jacob
21	18 Jofeph-Jacob	Jofeph-Jacob
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Our family names

Grandparents – Peter

John Rosenblum

Cipre Jurmann/Kittenplon

Otto Brüll

Helen Sommer

Great grandparents – Peter

Samuel Moses Kittenplon/Kittenplan (born 1858 Buchach and died Buchach)

Cipre (Cipora/Cipry) Jurman 1858-1931 (born Buchach died Vienna)

Chaskel Rosenblum 17.10.1860-1918 (born Skala died Vienna)

Miriam Dankberg c.1860-1917 born Horodenka died Vienna

David Sommer 14.7.1841 – 8.2.1918 (born Uhersky Ostroh died Linz)

Franziska Benedikt 4.11.1845 – 6.9.1923 (born Uhersky Ostroh died Linz)

Simon Brüll 29.6.1833 – 1918 (born Gewitsch died Znaim)

Louise Hofmann/Hoffman 16.6.1841 – 1928 (born Lomnitz died Znaim)

Grandparents – Claire

Isidor Löwy

Marta Berger

Rosa Schimmerling (1)

Siegfried Briess

Adele Fried (2)

Great grandparents – Claire

Samuel Berger 12.5.1848 – 20.5.1927 (born Mährisch Weisskirchen died Wallachisch Meseritsch (Mährisch can be abbreviated to Mähr).

Rosa Wolf 18.6.1857 – 18.6.1934 (born Holleschau died Wallachisch Meseritsch

Ignaz Briess Jr 2.1.1842 – 9.6.1900 (born Prerau died Olmütz)

Franziska Heller 1846 – 26.10.1918 (born Leipnik died Olmütz)

Hermann Löwy 19.3.1841 – 3.9.1911 (born and died Ungarisch Brod)

Betty Thorsch 28.10.1851 – 29.12.1913 (born and died Ungarisch Brod)

Hermann Schimmerling 1841 – 1.3.1909 (born Holic died Vienna)

Johanna Brück 5.7.1844 – 12.2.1930 (born Kanitz bei Brünn died Vienna)

Family data

Name	Date born	Place born	Date died	Place died	Lived in	Occupation
Leslie Peter Bruell	1.8.1943	Auckland			Auckland	Engineer, director
Claire Ginette Briess	10.4.1947	Auckland			Auckland	Historian
Peter's parents						
Lilly Rosenblum	23.6.1914	Vienna	11.4.1998	Auckland	Vienna, Auckland	Factory owner, clothing
Fred Bruell	23.10.1910	Brünn	16.12.1996	Auckland	Linz, Auckland	Factory owner, engineering
Claire's parents						
Frank Briess	5.12.1907	Olmütz	3.5.1979	Auckland	Olomouc, Auckland	Owner food companies
Alice (Lizzie) Löwy	8.7.1912	Lundenburg	8.3.1986	Auckland	Breclav, Auckland	Homemaker, braille transcriber
Peter's grandparents						
Jochanan/John Rosenblum	21.4.1888	Buchach	10.2.1971	New York	Buchach, Vienna, NY	Tailor
Cecilia/Cilli Kittenplon	16.12.1888	Buchach	19.1.1973	New York	Buchach, Vienna, NY	Assistant
Otto Brull	3.3.1870	Znaim	13.5.1915	Brünn	Znaim, Brünn	Sales agent
Helene Sommer	1.10.1881	Tarnov, Linz, Auckland	3.2.1965	Auckland	Linz, London	Homemaker
Claire's grandparents						
Isidor Löwy	3 Feb 1882	Uhersky Brod	18-Jun-34	Brünn	Uhersky Brod, Lundenburg	Doctor of medicine
Siegfried Briess	10 Oct 1871	Prerau	4-Oct-42	Theresienstadt	Prerau, Olmütz	Business trading in grains
Rosa Schimmerling	21 Mar 1880	Kanitz bei Brünn	23.11.1921	Olmütz	Kanitz, Olmütz	Housewife
Adele Fried	11 May 1876	Ung. Hradisch	8.4.1951	Auckland	Ung.Hradisch, Olmütz,	Governess, Housewife
Peter's great grandparents						
David Sommer	14.7.1841	Uhersky Ostroh	8.2.1918	Linz	Uh Ostoh, Tarnov, Linz	Railway engineer
Franziska (Fanni) Benedikt	4.11.1845	Uhersky Ostroh	After 1920	Linz	Uh Ostoh, Tarnov, Linz	Housewife
Chaskel Rosenblum	17.10.1860	Skala	1919	Vienna	Buchach, Vienna	Tailor
Miriam Dankberg	c.1860	Buchach	1917	Vienna	Buchach, Vienna	Housewife
Simon Brüll	29.6.1833	Gewitsch	1918	Znaim	Znaim	Cucumber merchant
Louise Hofmann	16.6.1841	Lomnitz	1928	Znaim	Znaim	Founded women's welfare organisation
Samuel Moses Kittenplon	1850	Buchach	Before 1900	Buchach	Buchach	Shoemaker
Cipre/Cipora, Cipry Jurmann	3.3.1858	Buchach	1931	Vienna	Buchach, Vienna	Housewife
Claire's great grandparents						
Samuel Berger	12 May 1848	Weisskirchen	20.05.1927	Wal.Meseritsch	Weisskirchen, Wal.Meseritsch	Merchant in leather business
Rosa Wolf	18 Jun 1857	Holleschau	28-Jul-34	Wal.Meseritsch	Holleschau, Wal.Meseritsch	Housewife
Ignaz Briess Jr	2 Jan 1842	Prerau	9-Jun-00	Olmütz	Prerau, Olmütz	Business trading in grains< Ignaz Briess Jnr
Franziska (Fanni) Heller	1846	Leipnik nad Becvou	26-Oct-18	Olmütz	Prerau, Olmütz	Housewife
Hermann Löwy	19 Mar 1841	Uhersky Brod	3-Sep-11	Uhersky Brod	Uhersky Brod	Salesman
Betty Thorsch	28 Oct 1851	Uhersky Brod	29-Dec-13	Uhersky Brod	Uhersky Brod	Housewife
Herman Schimmerling	1.5.1842	Holic	1-Mar-09	Vienna	Holic, Kanitz bei Brünn, Vienna	Baker
Johanna Brückner	5 Jul 1844	Kanitz bei Brünn	12-Feb-30	Vienna	Kanitz bei Brünn, Vienna	Housewife

Family Bible

*Engraver Gustav Doré **

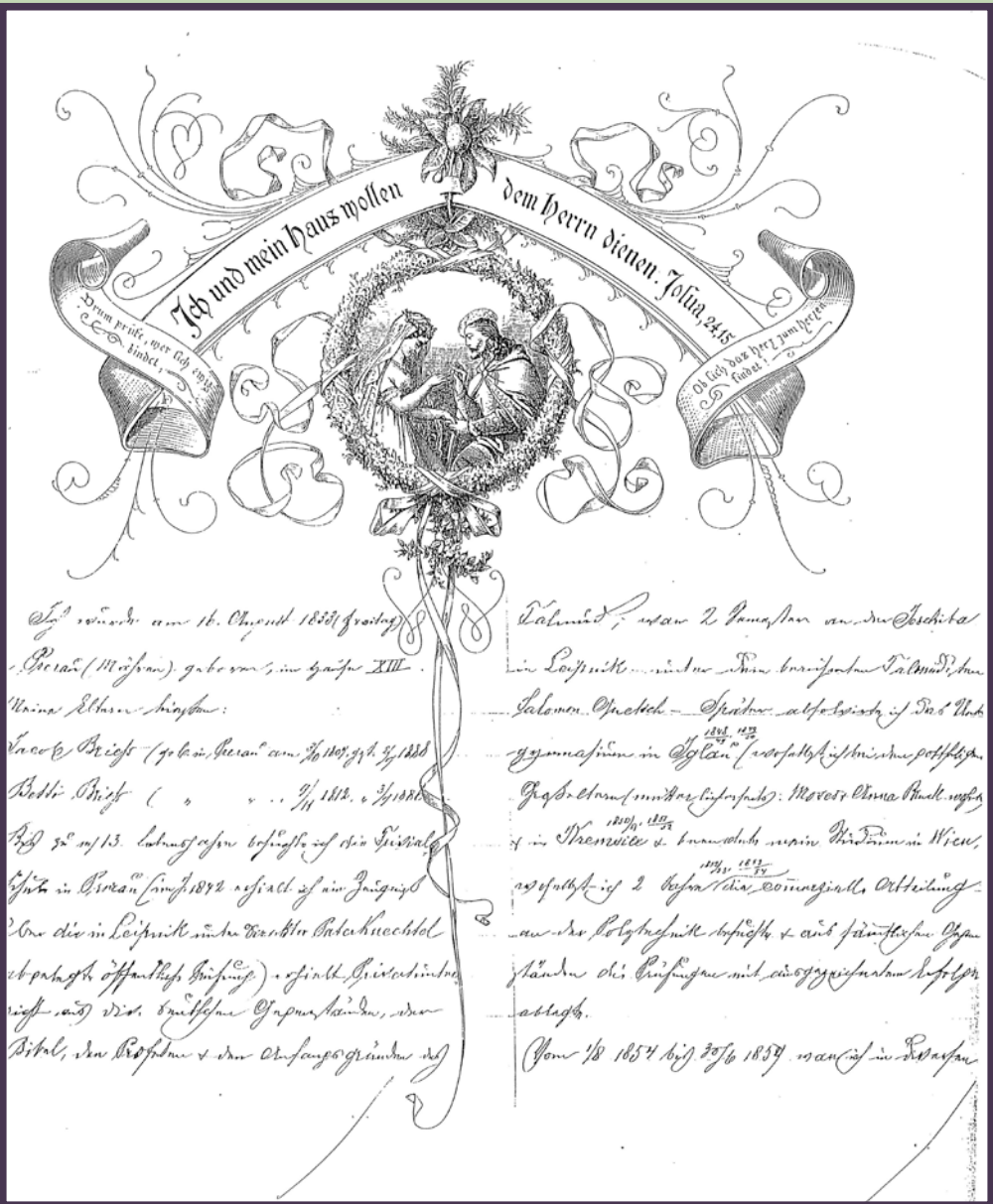
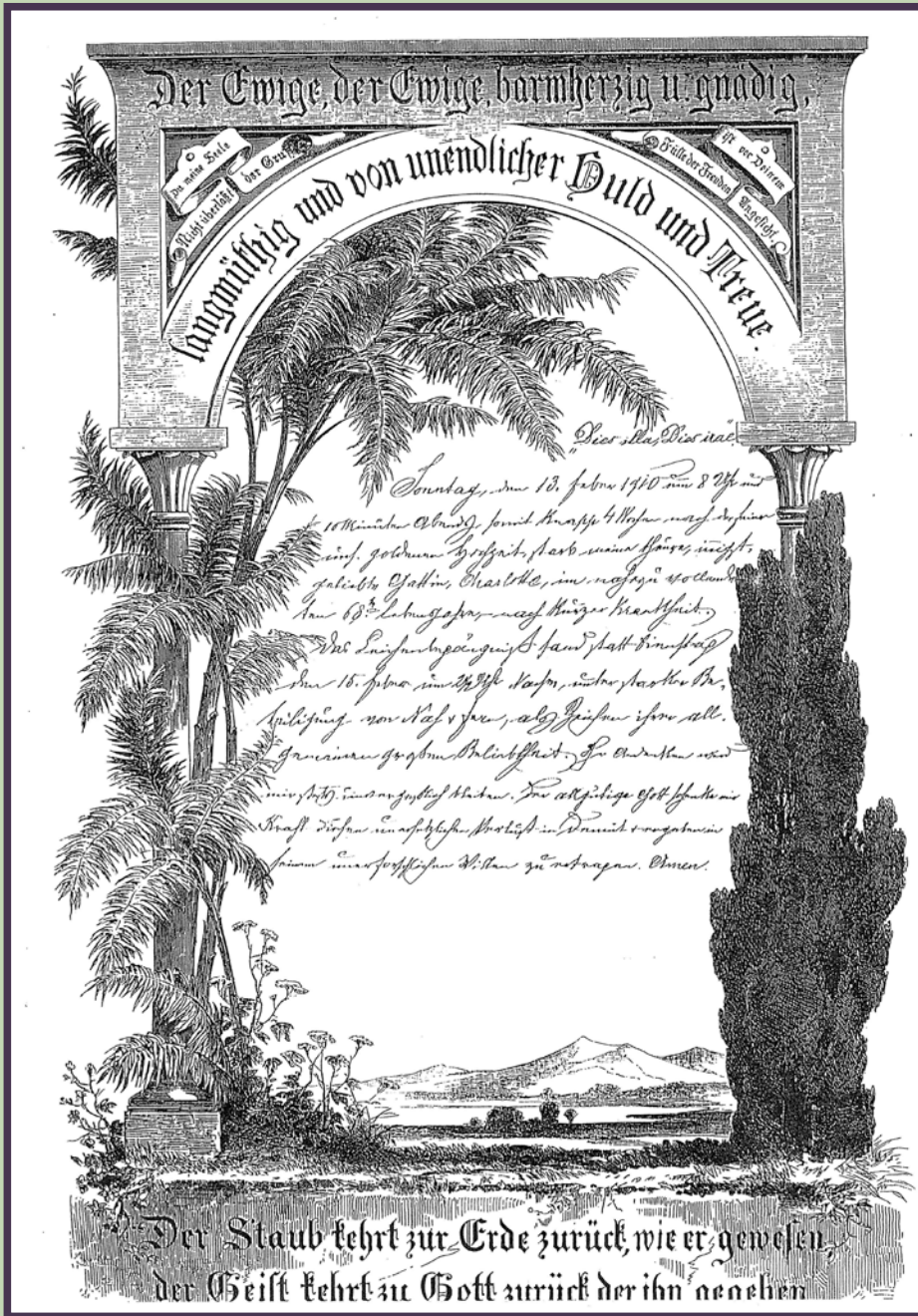
A magnificent family chronicle was presented to Ignaz Briess Sr on his 70th birthday and inscribed with thanks from the family of Rabbi Dr B Oppenheim who was the rabbi in Olmütz, dated 16 August 1903. It is written in Old German (aka Kurrent) which is difficult to read and translate.

The text begins: “With patience and with endless grace and fidelity on Sunday the 13 February 1910 at 8.10pm, slightly four weeks after our Golden Wedding celebration, my very beloved wife Charlotte died after a short illness in her 68th year. The funeral took place on Tuesday 15 February at 2.30pm with the participation of many from near and far which was a sign of her popularity. The Almighty God give me the strength to survive this irreplaceable loss and in his unquestionable will, amen.”

From this beginning Ignaz began to keep a family record. From his marriage to Charlotte he mentions their children noting significant dates and details including their spouses and children. He wrote about the death of his nephew Josef Berman (19 October 1923) after a heart attack: “Such a death is enviable for the person who dies like that but doubly painful for the wife and children”. Ignaz notes he was a quiet, pleasant man, very concerned about financial affairs.

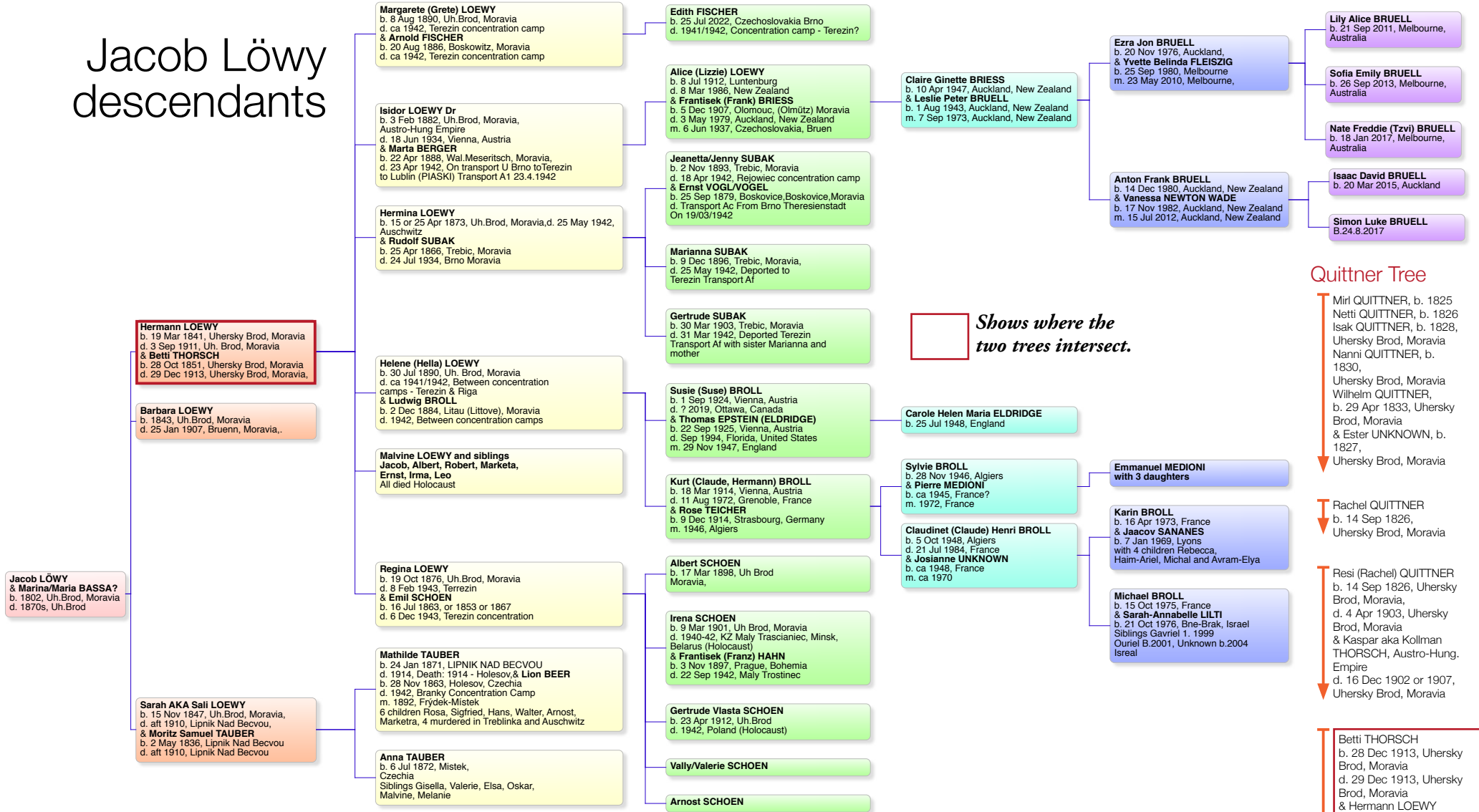
Ignaz ends by noting that on the 8 July 1929 his sister-in-law Julie Briess, widow of his cousin and business partner, Wilhelm, died, having suffered a great deal from a variety of illnesses in her last years, her death coming as a relief. There are no further entries and Ignaz died on 6 July 1931 at the age of 97. ■



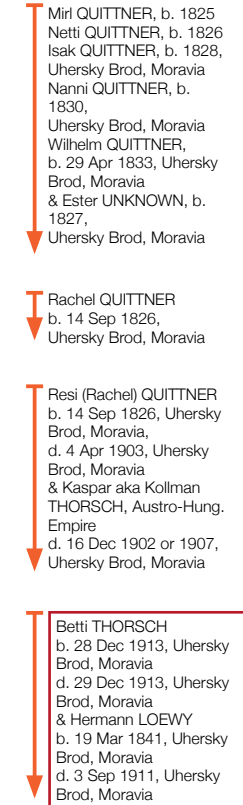


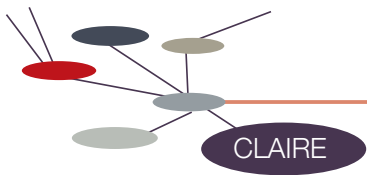
* French engraver Gustav Doré 1832-1883, was famous for his bible illustrations but also excelled at his paintings, wood engravings and caricatures, producing over 10,000 illustrations.

Jacob Löwy descendants



Quittner Tree





Löwy and Thorsch

Hermann Löwy 19.3.1841–3.9.1911
Betti Thorsch 28.10.1851-29.12.1913
Ungarisch Brod (today Uh. Brod)



WEDNESDAY 13 March 1991 was a special day. It was our first foray into family history in the Czech Republic after the Velvet Revolution of 1989 when the communist regime of the CSSR was demolished. Before this time it was a complicated process to gain entry into the CSSR – the former Czechoslovak Soviet Socialist Republic. I had unsuccessfully tried to gain a visa many years before in 1969. Peter, Ezra and I set off with cousin Tom Lachs from Vienna and began a journey mapped out by Tom in his meticulous, detailed way.

Leaving Vienna in fog and traffic, we found border crossing a mere formality after the recent political changes. We passed Bratislava without entering the city and drove through pretty countryside and villages not unlike the Austrian versions though not as colourful. The streets were peopled either by young people wheeling prams or by older wrinkle faced women in babushka scarves. Renovation and restoration were



Hermann Löwy.

evident everywhere though there seemed to be few people or cars to our Western eyes.

Our first stop was Uhersky Brod, ancestral home of the Löwy and Thorsch families. Most of the descendants had been murdered in the Holocaust except Sue Eldridge and her brother Kurt, who became Claude in France after the war, and my mother Lizzie Briess (née Löwy), their cousin. Sue and Kurt's mother Helene (aka Hella) was the sister of my grandfather Isidor Löwy and they had lived in Vienna before the war. Sue escaped on a kinder (children's) transport to England, married and moved to Canada, living there for the rest of her life. Kurt married and raised a family in France where his family live today. His children were Sylvie and Claudinet, the latter dying in a climbing accident in 1984. The children and grandchildren of both are living in France and Israel. Helene (Hella) Löwy married Ludwig Broll. Ephra Schön was a relative of Ludwig's who survived the Holocaust and married and lived in Israel. His

daughters were Ruti and Naomi whose children and grandchildren now live in Israel and the United States.

Ungarisch Brod had been one of the largest of the Moravian communities before 1848. The archives in Prague had told me that there were no death records



Hermann and Betti Löwy graves Uh. Brod.



Isidor Löwy, Kurt, Helene, Kurt and Sue Broll.

for my great grand-parents Herman Löwy and his wife Betti Thorsch but we ignored this information and asked directions to the Jewish cemetery. (Zidovsky Hrbítov). The older man we asked for directions decided to come in the car with us, rather than explain in Czech which we didn't understand. A few streets further on we arrived at the Jewish Memorial House at the cemetery. Apart from the names of the Shoah victims on a memorial plaque, where the name Löwy featured many times, the building was empty. The name 'Löwy' (German) means 'Levy' in Hebrew. Still we were surprised to find a host of Löwys residing in the cemetery that made our search very difficult.

Surprise was the understatement when we found two large headstones belonging to Hermann Löwy and Betti Löwy née Thorsch, my great grandparents, tall and straight and in good order. While searching for clues to shed light on their lives, some time after our visit to Uh. Brod, I found Betti's name on a list of members of the 1909 Ung. Brod Jewish Women's Charity Association (Moravia).

Uh. Brod is in the Zlin region of the Czech Republic in the south-east of Moravia. It lies in the Vizovice Highlands near the White Carpathian Mountains. Loosely translated the town's name means 'Hungarian ford' or 'river crossing to Hungary'

By 1615 (before the 'Thirty Years' War) the Jewish population had amounted to just 18 families. Given its proximity to the border with Slovakia and areas of Hungarian influence, it is quite possible that both the Löwy and Thorsch families came to Ung. Brod from these lands or from Austria, since many Jewish families came to Ung. Brod in 1670 after being expelled from Vienna. The town was allocated 160 families by the time of the Familiant



Dr Isidor Löwy.

Laws of 1724-6 and the Jewish population peaked in 1857 about the time when Hermann and Betti were growing up.

The community was one of the largest in Moravia and the ghetto was quite overcrowded by the 18th century. Ung. Brod was one of the most Orthodox of the Moravian communities. In 1872 the ultra-Orthodox group in the community seceded, in protest against the moving of the bimah and the introduction of a choir. Bitter strife divided the community for more than a generation. Both factions observed the Orthodox tradition. Hugo Gold's book quotes great grandfather Hermann as a facilitator in trying to get the sides to negotiate. In fact Ung. Brod became known as 'the true mother town of Hungarian Jewry' because of the large number of Jews who came to Hungary from this town during the period of the Familianten Laws of the 18th and 19th centuries.

Hermann and Betti Löwy

Other facts known about Hermann are that he was a shopkeeper, salesman or merchant – a common occupation for Jews since there were still few openings for other occupations that were dominated by the Christian townspeople. Hermann was orthodox and head of the Jewish community for some years. His lineage is not clear – he may have been the son of Jacob and Maria/Marina. On his headstone he is described as 'Altburgermeister' which probably refers to his period of leadership of the Jewish community.

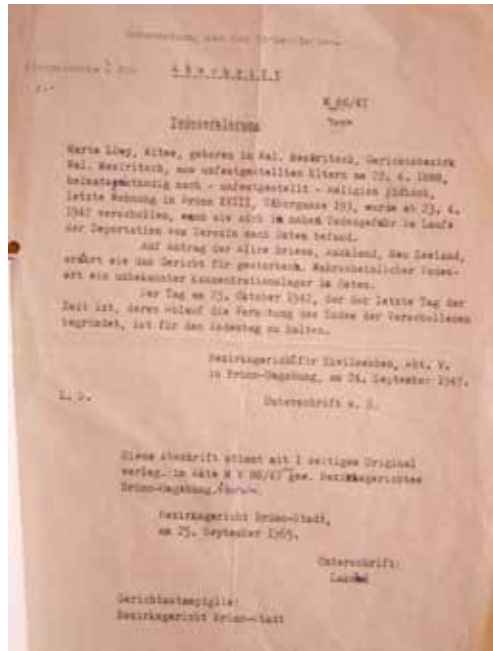
The family of Betti Thorsch

The family of Betti Thorsch also appears to have lived in Ung. Brod for some generations. Her father Kaspar (Kolman) Thorsch (1826-1907) was born in Ung. Brod and at the time of the 1869 census was living in Bojkovice dis-

SEARCHING FOR IDENTITY: Writing the past into life



9 Sienergasse, Lundenburg, where Dr Isidor had his medical clinic and Lizzie grew up.



Declaration of Death of Marta Löwy - Lizzie's mother. The date of death is assumed to have been the last day on which she was seen alive – 23 April 1942.

Hlavní základní list.

Ověřena dopisováním VELIKOVEM	Rok ročníku odvodu	Rok odvodu 19 ²⁷ 1906		Číslo listu 264		
		Jméno a příjmení Leopold Löwy				
		obec	obec	okres	okres	Rozsah rozemí
		okres	okres	okres	okres	Stav
Číslo listu	Narozen	Narozen		Náboženství		
		Narozen		Náboženství		
Ověřeno a přivolen		19 ²⁷ při hlavním odvodu (dodatečném hlášení) na ... roky v praxi službě a ... roky v záloze k				
Zařazen		M. r. 1920 Cs. pěší pluk č. 27				
Popis osoby.						
Vlast	Obilice	Odkováni		Mír		
Obec	Zvláštní znamení	Mír		Mír		
Nos	Jméno vady	Vyska postavy		Třída velikosti nohy		
Číslo						
Brada						
Změny.						
Hodnost	Začala	den m. měsíce	v roce	Popis		
Pod. vojín	počínán	1920	15/12	za odvedeného na základě klasifikace a převeden do I. zálohy, odvodní číslo 1920/1920 jako ... v záloze		
vojín 2. tř.	proměněn		19	Převáděn r. a. k. 88 00, 61-00 Sr. a z re. do obn. stavu, č. r. a. M. r. č. 470, v. st. M. N. O. bod č. 470/1920.		
	stažen		19	K ... rot. Km. rok. ...		
	přeložen		19	31/12. 1922 přeložen z I. do II. zálohy kmenový registrační č. ...		

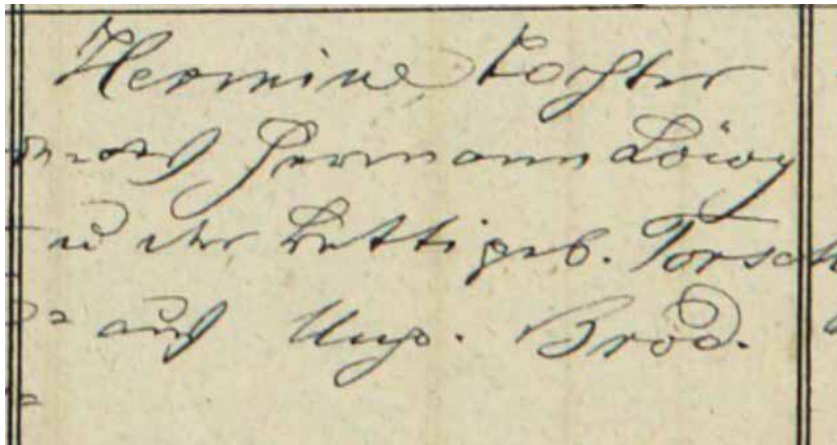
Leo Löwy, Lizzie's great uncle's military record. Born 1884, from Uh. Brod, a merchant.



Marta Löwy and Fredy Briess, Marta Löwy. Brünn 1937.



Paris 1953 - Lizzie and Frank with cousin Claude Broll.



Hermine Subak daughter of Hermann Löwy and Betti Thorsch from Ung.Brod.



Hermann Löwy death notice in the Neue Freie Presse.

trict, House No. 146. His occupation is given as ‘private person’ and his parents were Isak and Anna Thorsch. Isak was also born in Ung. Brod, perhaps around 1800.

The inscription on his headstone, translated from Hebrew reads:

“A special man who respected God, his name is seeded as Kolman

Beloved son of Jichak Thorsb.

He died on the second day of the month of Tevet in the year 5665.

He released his spirit and died.

He respected God and Heavens that was his faith while living.

He was working for reward of mercy.

He did a lot of good things and his charity stands for ever.”

Betti’s mother was Resi (Theresia, or Rachel) Quittner. The Quittners were a large family and many lived in Slovakia, Vienna and some even in Wallachisch Meseritsch. Resi was born in Ung Brod, 1826-1903 and is described in the census records in Uhersky Hradiste, which was close by, as ‘working in the household’.



Kollman and Resi Thorsch graves in Ung. Brod.

Betti’s grandmother (my great great great grandmother) was Rachel Quittner, born in Ung. Ostroh a small town near to Ung. Brod and Ung. Hradiste. She is shown on the 1869 census records as living with her son William, a businessman and his wife Netti or Ester and their three sons in Ung. Hradiste. One of these sons, Anton was shown on the census records of 1890 as a rabbinical school student.

My mother told me, describing her own childhood in Lundenburg around the time of the First World War, that she and her parents bathed once a week. The bath would be run, father had first turn, then mother Marta. Then finally my mother, the child.

Isidor and Marta Löwy

Hermann and Betti’s household must have been a very busy place between the years 1872 to 1900 with thirteen children arriving one after another. In all likelihood the older ones might have even left home by the time the younger ones were born. There would have been household

help – at least a cook and a maid.

My mother Lizzie, who was like me, an only child, told me that Hermann and Betti had 16 children, the oldest Jacob born 1872, the youngest Arnost, born 1894. The only one to receive an education was my grandfather Isidor who studied medicine in Vienna, completing his studies in 1907. Michael Miller reports that the Jewish school in Ung. Brod began offering Czech as an elective course in 1894 which was taken as a great step forward. Perhaps Isidor and some of his siblings were able to take advantage of this liberalisation. Isidor went to high school in Ung. Hradisch, (today Uhersky Hradiste). His military record from the Czech Military Archive in Prague rounded out my mental picture of the grandfather I never knew – green eyes, brown hair, broad nose, mouth ‘in proportion’, spoke and wrote German and Böhmisch (Czech), 1.7cm tall, size 10 shoe. He is described as a medical student who was in the 3rd regiment of the Tiroler Imperial Hunters. During the First World War he had served as ‘Regimentsarzt’ (Doctor to the regiment), in the Austrian army.

A further enquiry to the Military Archive in Prague yielded information on two of Isidor’s brothers. Jacob, (1872 to 20 March 1920) was a shopkeeper who may have worked with his father. He is recorded as 1.68m tall, spoke Czech (Böhmisch) and German, had black hair and brown eyes. He entered the army in 1894 and attended a trade school. The oldest of Hermann and Betti’s children, he was married to Gisela Weisskopf. There were no children. It appears that he may have had some kind of illness as he was not conscripted into the First World War. A second brother was Leo, (1884 to 1943). He is also described as a merchant/shopkeeper and was conscripted into the army



Austrian Hospital where Isidor worked during World War 1.



Isidor Löwy.

possibly twice – first in 1906 into Infantry regiment No. 27 on 15 December 1920, then immediately moved to be a reservist of the first category and on 31 December 1924 moved to the second reserve category. He was discharged from military conscription in 1934.

The descendants of Hermann and Betti Löwy, alive at the end of the Second World War are as follows:

Son, Isidor Löwy and wife Marta’s daughter was Alice/Lizzie, my mother. I have two children, Ezra and Anton and five grandchildren. Ezra (Australia) has three Lily, Sofia and Nate, and Anton has Isaac and Simon in New Zealand..

Daughter, Helene Löwy married Ludwig Broll and had a son Kurt/Claude and a daughter Sue who escaped Europe on a Kindertransport, married and had a daughter Carole who lives in New Brunswick. Kurt/Claude lived in France where he had two children, Claudinet and Sylvie. Claudinet married,

SEARCHING FOR IDENTITY: Writing the past into life

had two children Karin and Michael, and died in a climbing accident at 35. Their descendants today live in Israel and France. Ludwig and Helene were deported to Theresienstadt and murdered at Riga.

Daughter, Hermine Löwy married Rudolf Subak. Of their three daughters - Jenny, Gertrude and Marianna - Jenny married Ernst Vogl and all were murdered with their families. (See Book 4 for 'Abandoned Treasures').

Daughter, Regine Löwy married Emil Schön and were murdered in the Holocaust with their five children. Ludwig Broll had a sister Elsa who married Arthur Schön; both died in the Holocaust with their daughter Ruth. However, their son Ephra went to Israel, arriving 7 March 1939. He became a teacher and married Ann/Chaya, also a teacher. Their daughters Ruti and Naomi, and grandchildren Tal, Nirit, and Rani live in Israel and the US. In Israel their family name changed from Schön to Shen.

ÚSTŘEDNÍ KARTOTÉKA — TRANSPOR	
R. č. 89.415	
Löwyová, Marta	
rodná data: 22. 4. 1888	
Adresa před deportací: BRNO 18. Táborská 193a	
1. transport	2. transport
čas: 23. 4. 1942	čas: 23. 4. 1942
číslo: 1	číslo: Al-196
do: 3. 5.	do: Piaski

Marta Löwy's transport card to Piaski, a sub camp of Lublin.

All the other children of Hermann and Betti living in 1939 married and moved to Vienna and Brünn and were murdered in the Holocaust.

August 11, 1911 Ung. Hradisch: Josef Berger, Lizzie's Berger cousin remembered the day quite well. He had been at the wedding of Marta and Isidor Löwy with his parents and reported in a letter of 18 July 1960 written from London to my mother Lizzie, that getting Marta married off hadn't been an easy matter. He hadn't approved of all the matchmaking that had preceded the wedding. Until her marriage Marta had lived with her family in Wallachisch



Main square Uh. Brod 2008.



Claire, Ezra and Carole Eldridge 1985.

Meseritsch (today Valasske Mezirici). She didn't get on well with her mother Rosa who had predicted that it would rain on her wedding day. Despite the prediction, 11 August 1911 was humid and sunny and Josef was put in charge of looking after two of Isidor's nieces at the wedding, the daughters of Isidor's sister Hermina Subak. Josef was of the opinion that Marta had found herself a fine husband and he visited Isidor and Marta the following May 1912 probably in Luntenburg, making a 'proper' (i.e. formal) visit on his way to Vienna. Apparently Samuel Berger remarked of his new son-in-law that he loved food so much that he was capable of eating half a goose at one sitting. This may well be part of the reason for the heart attack that killed him in 1934 at the age of 52. Samuel speculated that Isidor would have made a good salesman since he preached moderation to his patients, yet did not take his own advice. It seems that the diabetes gene which was passed on to us, his unfortunate descendants, came from the Löwy family.

My grandfather Isidor worked as a doctor and lived with Marta and their daughter (my mother) Lizzie in Luntenburg (today Breclav), not far from Ung. Brod. My mother Lizzie was born 8 July 1912. Isidor enjoyed fencing as a hobby and horse riding. There were pet turtles in the garden in summer.

Hermann died in 1911 and Betti Löwy soon after in 1913, so Lizzie wouldn't have known her Löwy grandparents. Others of Hermann and Betti's children married and moved to Vienna and Brünn (today Brno) but most of the family alive in 1939 died during the Holocaust. Helene and Isidor's many siblings Margarete, Hermine, Leo, Ernst, who were living in 1939, their spouses and children were all annihilated in the Holocaust. Uh. Brod became a centre of concentration for Jews from the whole of southeast Moravia before deportation. In January 1943, three transports (2,837 Jews) were sent first to the Theresienstadt ghetto, and later to the Auschwitz death camp; only 81 survived.

In the late 1800s Daniela Torsh's grandfather moved to Ung. Brod from Boskovice, also in Moravia, further to the north. Daniela's parents were in

Theresienstadt during the war and immigrated to Sydney after the war. We speculate if there is a relationship between our families, assuming that her grandfather might have come to Ung. Brod for work or family related reasons but we have not been able to find any definite connection. Nevertheless we have become good friends via genealogy.

There is a Thorsch family tree at <thorsch.com> where 21 lines of Thorsch families have been collected. Our line is N° 13. What we don't know is how we connect to any of the other lines.

The only Löwy/Thorsch descendants living in 2024 at the time of writing are Carole, Sue Eldridge's daughter in New Brunswick, Canada, Claude Broll's daughter Sylvie and grandchildren in France and Israel, and me, Claire with grandchildren in Melbourne, Australia and Auckland, New Zealand. ■

Resources

Die Juden und Judengemeinden Mährens in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart ed and pub. Hugo Gold, Jüdischer Buch und Kunstverlag, Brünn, 1929.

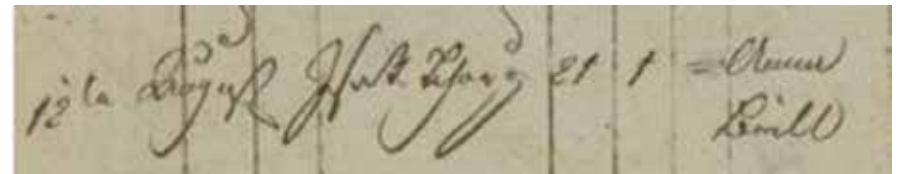
Birth Death and Marriage records, Uhersky Brod.

Letters from Josef Berger 1959/60 to Lizzie about the Berger family history in archive of Claire Bruell.

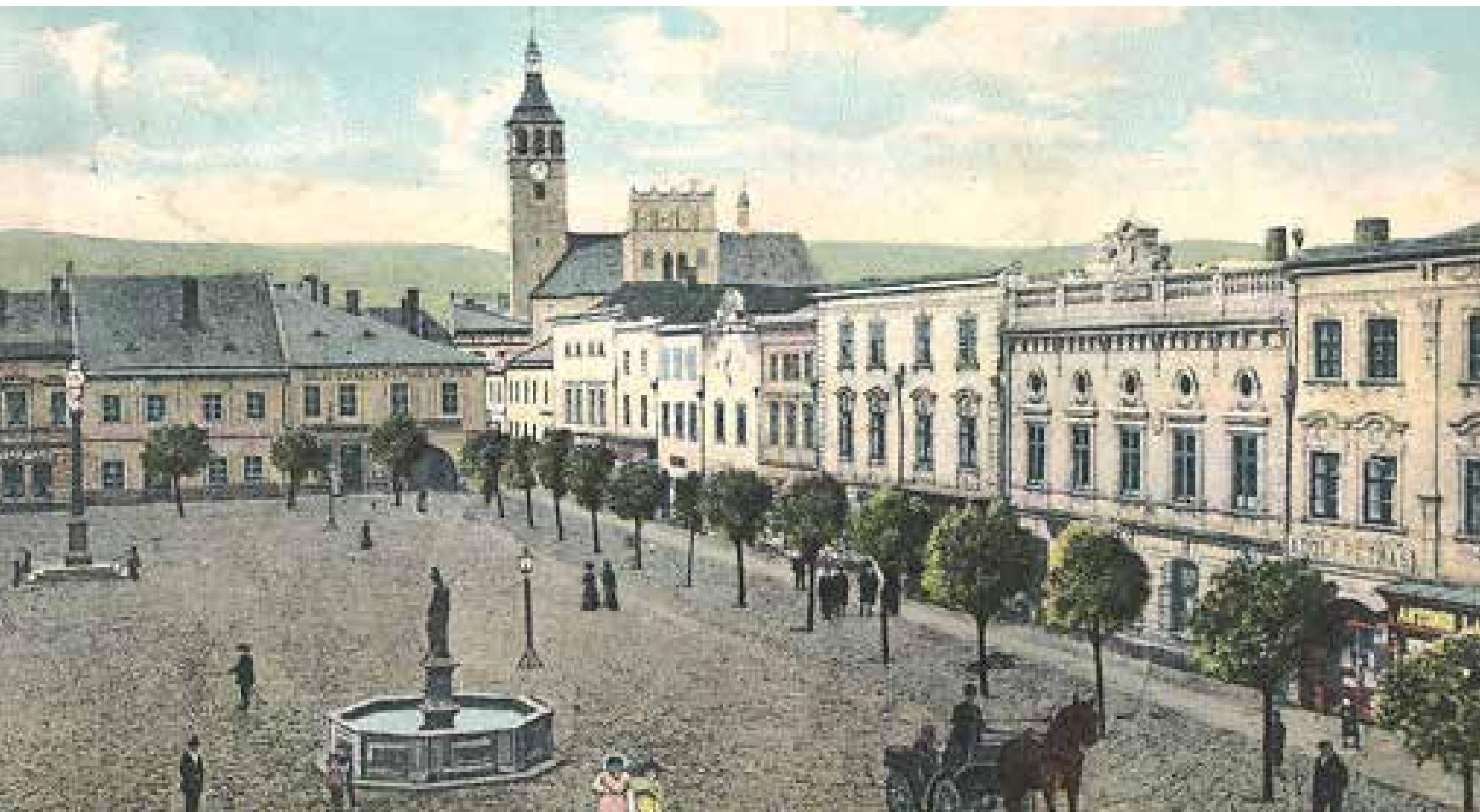
Military Archive, Prague <https://www.vuapraha.cz/>

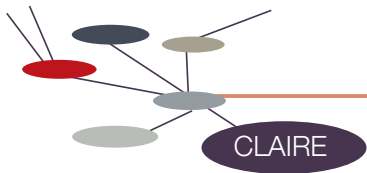
Thorsch family tree: thorsch.com

Photographs and documents in the archive of Claire Bruell.

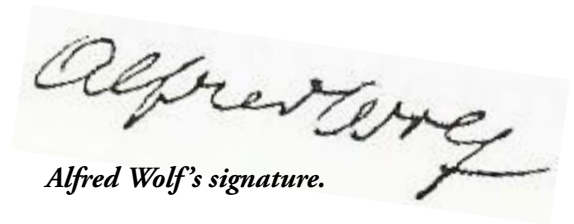


Signature of Isak Thorsch, born 1795 in Ung Brod. Census form.





Berger and Wolf



Alfred Wolf's signature.

Samuel Berger 12.5.1848–20.5.1927
Rosa Wolf 18.6.1857–28.7.1934
Wallachisch Meseritsch (Valasské Mezirici)



ON Wednesday 15 March, 1939, a convoy of German military vehicles drove through the town of Valasské Mezirici and came to a stop in the square. Some German officers in green uniforms entered the shop at No. 6 Namestí and looted the shop of its furs. Successive groups of officers and then soldiers, went into the shop and helped themselves to the stock.

The building belonged to the Berger family and the shop was owned and operated by Josef (Pepi) Berger, my great uncle, brother of my grandmother Marta Löwy, née Berger.

The following night Pepi hanged himself in the building, unable to face an uncertain future of German domination and what that might mean. The police report states that Josef lived quietly with his wife and was worried about the rise of Nazism. He was a rich, popular and honourable man and served on the council of the Jewish community. According to the police report, the reason for his suicide was accepted as having

been because he was apprehensive about German occupation. The event was witnessed by a bystander.

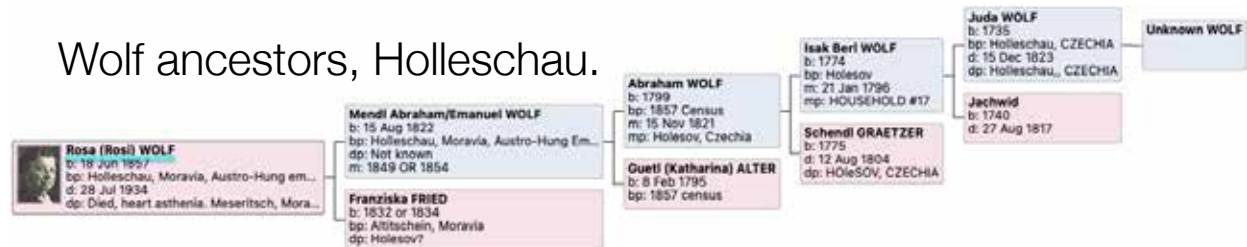
Great great grandparents: Josef Berger and Anna Singer

Time travel back 100 years to an earlier century to find Pepi's grandparents Josef Berger (1804-1866) and Anna Singer (1817-1902), newly married and living in Mährisch Weisskirchen (today Hranice), not far from Meseritsch. The earliest Berger we can trace is Josef's father Salomon Hersch Berger from Leipnik (today Lipnik) and his wife Frumeth. Josef was born in Leipnik in 1804 in House No. 39 where he later became a Familiant (head of a household).

There is also a Joachim Berger shown as witness on the marriage record of Josef and Anna Singer so perhaps it is reasonable to assume Josef's father was Joachim rather than Salomon Hersch.

Hugo Gold's book on the Jewish communities of Moravia notes that the Berger family was one of the mainstays of the community between 1750

Wolf ancestors, Holleschau.



CEMETERY EXPLORATIONS

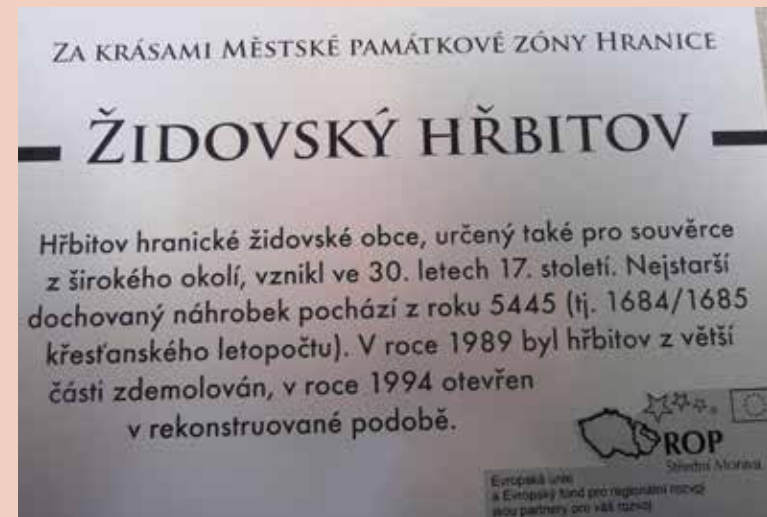


*Josef Berger's
grave Hranice,
Moravia*



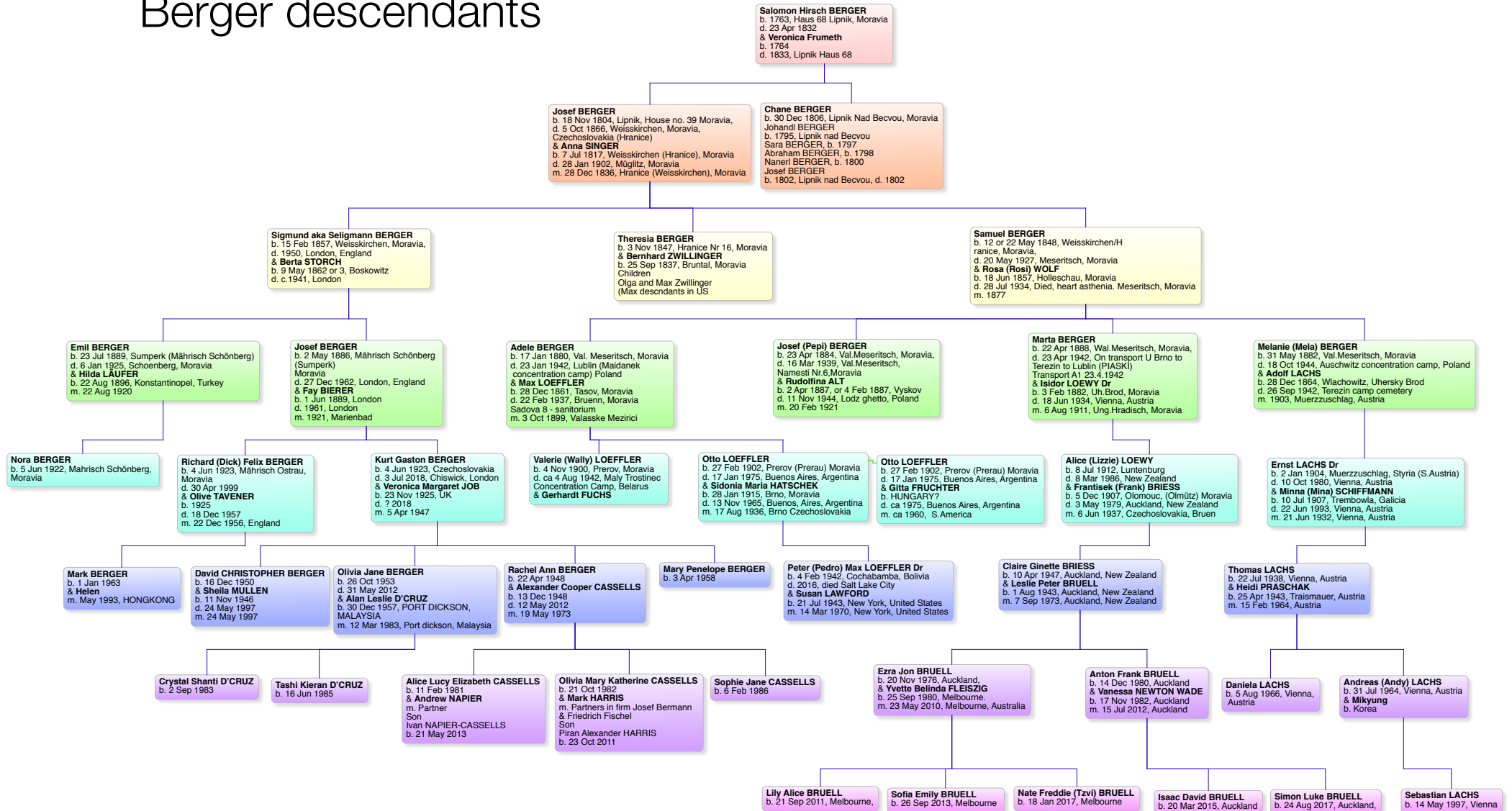
Claire in Holleschau Cemetery 2003 hunting for graves.

It was a warm sunny day when Peter, Jaroslav Klenovsky and I set out from Olomouc with Peter Briess to visit Hranice. The cemetery was restored after partial liquidation however, there were few headstones still in tact. One that was still standing was the imposing headstone for Josef Berger, Familiant, who died 1866. It is noted on his headstone that he headed the Yeshivah in Leipnik for some years. He was Claire's great great grandfather.



Zidovský Hřbitov – A plaque from the Jewish cemetery in Hranice.

Berger descendants





Salomon Wolf, born 2.1.1850.



Mähr. Weisskirchen (Hranice) Synagogue.

and 1850 in Leipnik. Josef apparently headed the yeshiva for a time and this is noted on his headstone.

In 1857 there were approximately 30 Jewish families with the surname of Berger living in Leipnik. It was said of Josef (by his namesake and grandson Josef who was Claire's mother Lizzie's cousin) that he married into a family in Mährisch Weisskirchen so that he could pursue Talmudic studies that would reflect well on the whole family. He studied under the famous Talmudic teacher Baruch Frankel, in Leipnik.

Anna Singer, Claire's great, great grandmother, was brought up by an aunt in Mährisch Weisskirchen as her own mother, Anna Auerhahn, had died giving birth to her. She was probably given her mother's name in accordance with Jewish tradition when a woman dies in childbirth. Anna's father Israel Singer, also a Familiant, had been born in 1792 in Mährisch Weisskirchen and is shown on the oldest register of Jewish families dated 1805 as living in house No.8 with his parents Abraham and Jachet Singer.

At the time of the birth of great grandfather Samuel Berger in Mährisch Weisskirchen in 1848, his father Josef Berger is shown as a 'Familiant from Leipnik, renter of a city weighing house'.

Josef, a merchant, is living with his wife Hanni (Anna) in House 16/1B in Mährisch Weisskirchen, in the 1857 census. This house was two storied and



*(back row) Adolf Lachs and Max Löffler.
(row 2) Melanie Lachs, Ernst Lachs, Otto Löffler and Adele Löffler.
(centre front) Valerie Löffler who died in Maly Trostinec in Belarus, a Nazi concentration camp.*

located near the town wall and the local castle in the Judenstrasse. During the first half of the 19th century this house was the location of the mikve and on the second floor there were two apartments. The Berger family lived in apartment No.1 with their four children – Samuel, Sigmund, Fanni and Rosa. The Steiner family lived in the second apartment. Juda Steiner looked after the mikve (ritual bath). The water was brought by a pipe from the public fountain in the square. Only limited amounts of water could be taken from the fountain as it was also used by the local brewery.

In 1860 after Josef died, Anna Berger moved to Wallachisch Meseritsch (today Valasske Mezirici) nearby, with their four children. According to cousin Josef Berger, the Berger family operated a successful business supplying meat to the army and trading in hides and skins.

This could be true since there was a cavalry and cadet military school in the town and possibly the family business began by supplying meat to the school. Anna Berger operated the leather business that she passed onto her son Samuel when he married in 1877. At this time she withdrew from the business. Apparently there were other members of the family who moved to Meseritsch from Mährisch Weisskirchen around the same time. It had been

quite a struggle for Anna to support herself with the four children. So she may have moved to be closer to her family.

SEARCHING FOR IDENTITY: Writing the past into life



Military institution Mähr. Weisskirchen.



Rosa and Samuel Berger's graves in Val.Mezirici, just a few remaining after the cemetery was destroyed in 1972. There is also a military cemetery nearby where German and 205 Turkish soldiers are buried, dating from the First World War.

Wall. Meseritsch

Aufnahmebogen v. Arc

zur Dählung der Bevölkerung und der wichtigsten häuslichen Verhältnisse
nach dem Stande vom 31. December 1856.

NAME	Wohnort	Stand	Religion	Profession	Wohnort	Stand	Religion	Profession	Wohnort	Stand	Religion	Profession
Samuel Berger	Mezirice	1	1874-18	AB	Mezirice	1	1874-18	AB	Mezirice	1	1874-18	AB
Rosa Berger	Mezirice	1	1874-57	AB	Mezirice	1	1874-57	AB	Mezirice	1	1874-57	AB
Josef Berger	Mezirice	1	1874-84	AB	Mezirice	1	1874-84	AB	Mezirice	1	1874-84	AB
Adele Berger	Mezirice	1	1874-80	AB	Mezirice	1	1874-80	AB	Mezirice	1	1874-80	AB
Melanie Berger	Mezirice	1	1874-82	AB	Mezirice	1	1874-82	AB	Mezirice	1	1874-82	AB
Marta Berger	Mezirice	1	1874-88	AB	Mezirice	1	1874-88	AB	Mezirice	1	1874-88	AB
Martha Berger	Mezirice	1	1874-67	AB	Mezirice	1	1874-67	AB	Mezirice	1	1874-67	AB
Margareta Berger	Mezirice	1	1874-74	AB	Mezirice	1	1874-74	AB	Mezirice	1	1874-74	AB
Johanna Berger	Mezirice	1	1874-78	AB	Mezirice	1	1874-78	AB	Mezirice	1	1874-78	AB
Franciska Berger	Mezirice	1	1874-46	AB	Mezirice	1	1874-46	AB	Mezirice	1	1874-46	AB

Census 1857 Wall. Meseritsch showing Samuel, Rosa, Josef, Adele, Marta and Melanie Berger.



Plan of Namestí 6.

Prior to this time (1860) there had been no Jewish community in Meseritsch.

Josef and Anna Berger's children

Josef and Anna had four children who survived infancy. Fanni lived her life in Müglitz, on the German-Czech border in Bohemia. She and husband Leopold Goldberger had three sons, Artur, Victor and Josef, who lived in Berlin, Vienna and Brünn, all dying before the war. Rosalie born 1851 married Samuel Frisch, their two children being Josef who died in 1917 and Fritz Siegfried in 1937, Sigmund and his wife Berta operated a leather business in Mährisch Schönberg. (Sumperk).

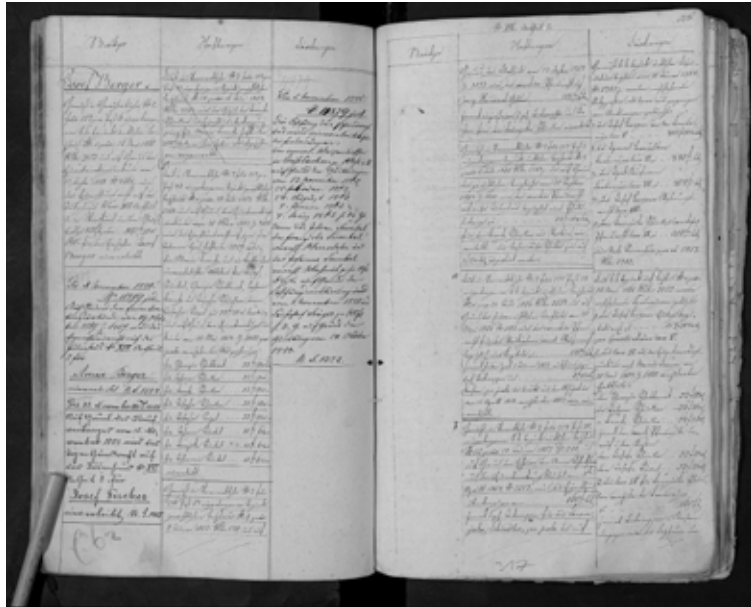
The loosening of restrictions for Jews led to the formation of a number of new communities and Wall. Meseritsch was one of these. Samuel, my great grandfather, was active in building up the Jewish community of Wall. Meseritsch. In 1868 a chevra kaddisha was formed and two years later, land for a cemetery was acquired. Samuel Berger was one of the people who facilitated this. He was on the Board of the synagogue and head of the community for some time. His son, Josef (Pepi) Berger was on the town council and he also headed a Zionist society.

After acquiring the building at No.6 Namestí (see plan), the family leather business operated from the downstairs, while the Jewish school was located on the upstairs floor for some years. A facility for the tanning of leather was situated on the fringes of the town.

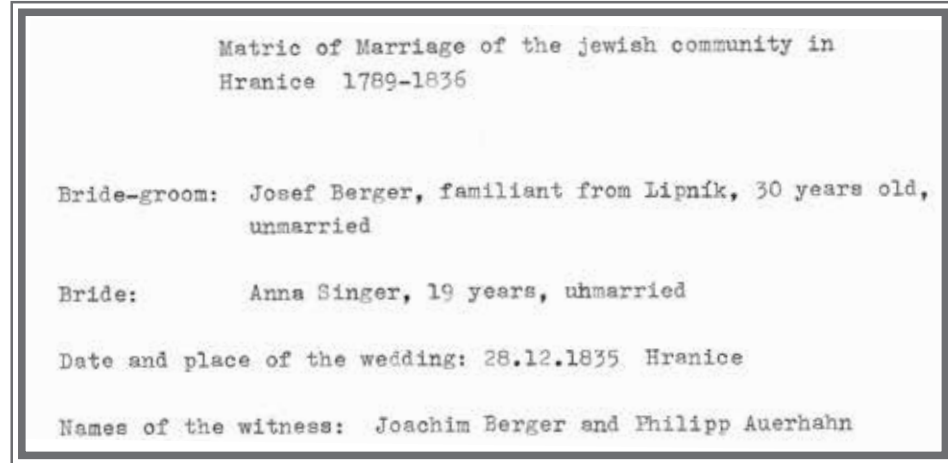
The Berger family business

The business the family had operated in Mährisch Weisskirchen seems to have prospered even more in Wall. Meseritsch. By the 1930s, Josef (Pepi) and his uncle Alfred Wolf were the only two partners in the business. A bystander recorded how Josef and Alfred counted the skins and then they handed them over to a Mr Knöpfelmacher who had a carting business. They had a special drying factory on the outskirts of the town and the stink of naphthaline pervaded the air for miles around. It seems potash was being produced in Wall. Meseritsch and Krasno nearby. Since this is used in the process of tanning leather, it seems likely that that may have been one of the

SEARCHING FOR IDENTITY: Writing the past into life

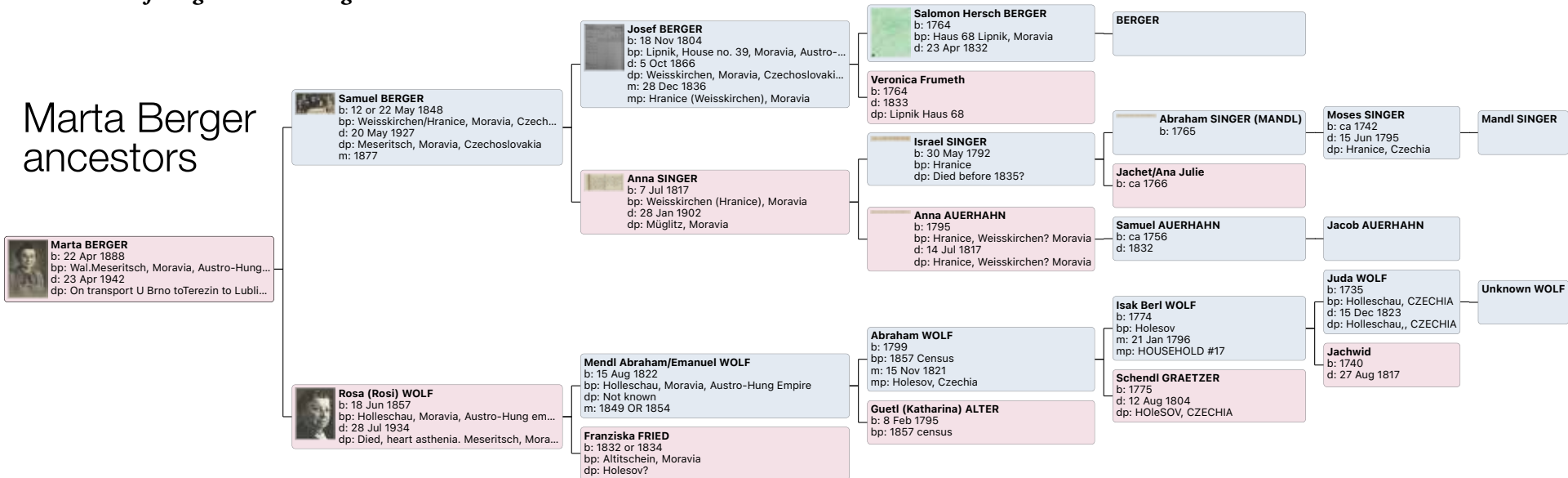


Record of Berger land holding.



Marriage record for Josef Berger and Anna Singer, Marta's grandparents, 1835.

Marta Berger ancestors





Map East Moravia.

Name	DOB/born	Origin	Residence	Deported	Occupat			
BERGER, Rudolfine	04/02/1887	Łódź, Poland	Korb Gasse 13 Flat 7 Klein Strasse 57		Gartner			
BERGER, Rudolfine	A.I.T. 04/02/1887	Łódź, Poland	Klein Strasse 57 Flat 1 Siegfried Strasse 48 Korb Gasse 13	04/02/1943 ABG (removed to)?	Gartner			
BERGER, Ruth	03/04/1931	Origin: Koeln Am Rhein	Klein Strasse 23 Flat 4	05/11/1943 ZAM	Schuelerin			
Name	Maiden/Other Surnames	Born/Age	Residence	Ghetto Street House	Date Reg	Deported/ Type	Died	Notes
	Marital Status	Gender	Address	Next Address	Type	Transport/ Destination	Place	Occupation
BERGER, Ryka		1916	Łódź, Poland	Sattler Gasse 31 Flat 10				Historian

Record of Rudolfina Berger in Lodz ghetto.

Name	Birth Date	Religion	Profession
Abraham Mendl Wolf	1. 1858	israelitisch	Produktenhandel
Hilda	1. 1858	israelitisch	Produktenhandel
Emil	1. 1858	israelitisch	Produktenhandel
Berta	1. 1858	israelitisch	Produktenhandel
Josef	1. 1858	israelitisch	Produktenhandel
Fay	1. 1858	israelitisch	Produktenhandel
Sigmund	1. 1858	israelitisch	Produktenhandel
Joseph	1. 1858	israelitisch	Produktenhandel
Marie	1. 1858	israelitisch	Produktenhandel
Anna	1. 1858	israelitisch	Produktenhandel
Hilke	1. 1858	israelitisch	Produktenhandel

Census in Holleschau includes Abraham Mendl Wolf and family, 1858.

Family of Sigmund Berger, Nazi Political file, stating names and vital record details of Sigmund, Berta, Emil and his wife Hilda. Emil was injured in the First World War and earned a medal for bravery. Record also mentions Jud Dr. Josef Berger, lawyer employed in a bank and gives details of his English wife Fay and twin sons. Josef fought in the First World War and was a prisoner of war in Italy, released 3-2-1919. He is a “cunning, arrogant, disgusting JEW”. The father Sigmund is a retired leather dealer and is an ingrained, Orthodox official of the Jewish community.”





494 Sokolska St was the home of Alfred and Josephine Wolf and their son Hanus and daughter Greta.

Josef (Pepi) and Rudolfina Berger

THIS Torah mantle was donated to the synagogue by Samuel and Rosa Berger on the occasion of the Bar Mitzvah of their son Josef 1896 and is now in the collection of the Jewish Museum, Prague. Its label states: “Acquisition wartime shipment from Valašské Mezirici” - Date of origin 1897. However, the story surrounding Josef (aka Pepi) is tragic. He married Rudolfina Apt but committed suicide by hanging in the upstairs of the family building on Namestí 6 (photo right) on the day the Germans marched in and was cremated (see certificate below left) while Rudolfina was deported to Lodz (via Prague) – Prisoner no.974 – and perished in the ghetto there, probably of starvation. There is a document of the Lodz ghetto census listing her name. ■



Wall. Meseritsch, Namestí 6 the Berger's building with his name, barely visible, removed from the facade, 2006.



Josef Berger, committed suicide by hanging 16 Mar 1939.



Rudolfina Berger (née Alt) died in the ghetto in Lodz, Poland.



JEWISH MUSEUM IN PRAGUE

reasons the Berger family moved to Wall. Meseritsch. Alfred originally lived with his family in a building at No.11 Namestí however he later built a house on Sokolska Street. Alfred's children Greta and Hanus were born in 1910 and 1917 in Wall. Meseritsch and all were murdered in the Holocaust, as well as Greta's husband, Stepan Berg, and two children Georg and Eva (Sobibor and Auschwitz).

Great grandfather Samuel Berger

Cousin Josef has a lot to say about great grandfather Samuel in his letters to my mother Lizzie written 1959/60. Samuel attended secondary school in Troppau (now Opava), 60 kms to the north of Wall. Meseritsch, whereas his brother Sigmund was schooled in Kremsier (now Kromeriz), a similar distance to the south west. Samuel took over the business in skins and furs that his mother Anna had operated for many years. He suffered from shingles in later life and cousin Josef visited him regularly when he was sick. Samuel's brother-in-law Alfred Wolf and his wife Josephine were also good to him. Samuel was an orthodox Jew whose business and family were his whole life. He had the reputation of being a very decent and simple man, 'a mensch'. All the Bergers were very stubborn and never accepted any advice, according to cousin Josef.

Great grandmother Rosa Berger née Wolf

Samuel married Rosa Wolf from Holleschau. For generations, the Wolf family had lived in Holleschau (today Holesov) not far from Leipnik and Mährisch Weisskirchen. It had been inhabited by Jews since the second half of the 15th century and was one of the largest Jewish communities in Moravia. The old



Samuel Berger.

synagogue which dated to the end of the 16th century is now the Moravian Jewish Museum.

Listed in the census of 1857 is the household of Mendl Abraham Wolf, (born 1822, child of Abraham Wolf and Gütl Alter) in Holleschau, a produce and grain merchant together with his wife Franziska Fricel (or Trim/Frim) from Altitschein (today Starý Jicín) born 1837. Amongst the seven children listed is Rosa not yet 1 year old. Her younger brother Alfred was not born until 1877. When Rosa married Josef and Anna Berger's son Samuel she joined the family's household in Meseritsch.

The family, according to cousin Josef Berger

In a letter from London dated 16 September 1959, cousin Josef Berger wrote that Anna didn't get on with her daughter-in-law Rosa and they avoided each other although they lived in the same house. It seems that Rosa was not on good terms with many people. By the time of his letter cousin Josef was an elderly man who seemed quite bitter and wrote negatively

to Lizzie about every family member except his uncle who was also Lizzie's grandfather, Samuel Berger.

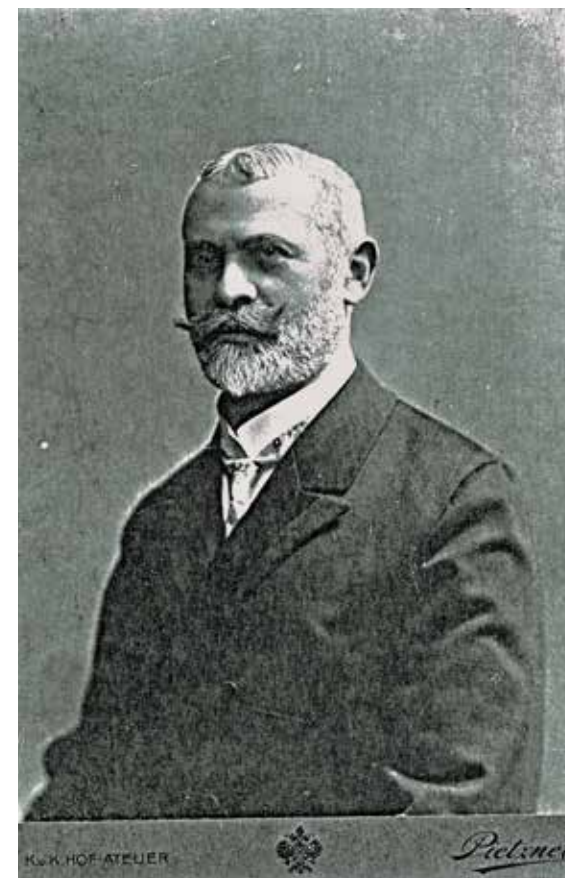
About Samuel, he was positively effusive! Samuel was apparently the most distinguished and worthy person in the family. Some might have considered him miserly however this was seen by cousin Josef as thrift. This prudent attitude to money enabled him to become well-to-do. The family lived frugally and Samuel did a lot for his wife Rosa's family. Cousin Josef went with his parents twice a year to visit Rosa, despite the discomforts due to lack of



Emil Berger, son of Sigmund Berger.



Rosa (née Wolf) Berger.



Samuel Berger.

Modern photo of houses on one side of the square in Val.Mež.





Engagement of Melanie Berger and Ernst Lachs, approx 1903.



Rosa and Samuel Berger.



Peter Löffler with his parents, Sidonia and Otto c.1955.



Kurt Gaston Berger's birth certificate. Born 4 Jun 1923 in Mähr. Ostrau son of Josef Berger and Fay Bierer. Stamped by the Jewish community records.

good drinking water and absence of inside toilets. The living quarters in the building at No.6 Namesté (the Square) where Samuel and Rosa lived were fairly spartan, no excesses at all. Rosa was the daughter of Mendl Abraham Wolf born 1822 and his wife Franziska Fried born 1832 from Holleschau, a large and well established Jewish community nearby. Their ancestor was Juda Wolf born 1735 and Jachwid born 1740. Next came son Isak Berl Wolf born 1774, married to Schendl Grätzer born 1775. Their son was Abraham born 1799 and wife Gütl Alter born 1795 who were the parents of Mendl Abraham. Thus were Juda and Jachwid my 5x great grandparents! (see tree page 56)

The whole building was enormous, dark and gloomy, but as cousin Josef remarked, in those times people lived frugally. There was however, a 'best' room which had furniture from a Trade School exhibition, held to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the founding of the town. The furniture was kept polished and was not used on a daily basis. According to cousin Josef, Rosa's father Mendl Abraham was sometimes in trouble over business dealings and his son-in-law Samuel always helped out.

Sigmund, Samuel's brother born 1857 was good at drawing and figures but despite that he became a businessman also in the leather trade. In 1885 he married Berta Storsch from Boskowitz and he lived in Mährisch Schönberg (today Sumperk) from 1882 on. His son, who was Lizzie's cousin Josef, says that in contrast to his brother Samuel, he was a terrible spendthrift. Samuel and Sigmund were very close. Sigmund was deputy chairman of the Jewish community in Mährisch Schönberg while Berta was president of the Jewish Women's Association.



Old buildings Val.Mez town square.



The twin sons of cousin Josef Berger born 1923. See Geburtschein opposite

Sigmund and Bertha lived in a three storey detached house in Sumperk which was divided into three flats. It was designed by the architects Henry Popp and Ernst Ulrich in 1903 and often featured on postcards of the town at the time. The bottom and top were rented out. It was a corner site with neglected garden. Sigmund, after retiring from his leather goods shop on the market place, spent much of the day saying prayers or reading the Torah. Bertha was stout and an excellent cook. Sigmund shared his daily paper with a friend and would walk each day across the park opposite to deliver it, sometimes in the company of his grandsons Kurt and Dick born in 1923. They were living in Ostrau (Ostrava) and were sent to Mährisch Schönberg for the school holidays.

Cousin Josef's letters to Lizzie written in London after the war explained much about the family of her great grandparents. Sigmund and Berta Berger had had two children: the younger was Emil who worked with his father and who died in 1925. He was awarded a gold medal for bravery during the First World War. He had been married to Hilda Laufer from Constantinople and they had a daughter Nora. After Emil's death Hilda and Nora moved to Vienna where Hilda remarried a Hans Kellerman. Hilda escaped to Shanghai and died there in 1941. Nora apparently survived the war but her whereabouts is unknown.

He, the second son, Josef, born 1886 studied economics at Vienna University and worked for the Böhmisches Eskompte Bank. Injured during the First World War, he spent the war years in an Italian Prisoner of War Camp and while in prison he studied languages.

SEARCHING FOR IDENTITY: Writing the past into life

According to one of his twin sons, Kurt born in 1923, Josef suffered from shell shock and had unreasonable temper tantrums.

For a time in 1920 Sigmund lived in Prague, but from 1923 to 1929 he lived in Mährisch Ostrau (today Ostrava) where he was employed by the bank Bebka as a Jurist and deputy director while at the same time he was on the board of the Strassmann Brewery in Mährisch Ostrau. Josef married Fay, an English-woman from London, with a German Jewish background which is how he escaped the Holocaust in London. They met while in Karlsbad. Josef was already naturalised in England before the war, having lived there from 1935 to 1937. The Nazi records in Sumperk note that Josef was a ‘cunning, arrogant and disgusting Jew’. He was an outspoken critic of National Socialism, in fact he was ‘a hardcore profiteer’!

The files describe his father Sigmund as a ‘hardcore orthodox Jew’, active in the Jewish community as a cantor in Mährisch Schönberg and head of the community, who had a business as a leather dealer.

After the Nazi invasion of the Sudetenland in 1938 Josef brought Sigmund and Bertha to London. He installed them in rooms about 30 minutes away from where Josef and Fay and the boys lived. They must have had a hard time, knowing no English, needing kosher food and having no friends, with the anxiety over the coming war overriding everything. If they were in London during “the Blitz” it must have been a very frightening time for them. Bertha died in 1950, however Sigmund lived to the age of 93.

Many years after the war, I, curious about cousins Kurt and Richard, enlisted the help of a local genealogist and found Kurt, aged 90, living in Chiswick. On a stay in London sometime later Peter and I spent a day with Kurt and his wife Margaret in the Chiswick Gardens and on a ferry down the Thames to Hampton Court. Margaret provided a lovely picnic lunch of roast beef sandwiches and fresh new season’s strawberries.

This chapter ends as sadly as it began.

All of these families died or were murdered during the Holocaust, deported to various extermination camps. The sole survivors of this large family are Thomas Lachs, Peter Löffler, (d. 2016) and me, the grandchildren of Melanie Lachs (née Berger), Adele Löffler (née Berger) and Marta Löwy (née Berger) – all only children and spread from Vienna to Salt Lake City to Auckland. Peter Löffler had no children. Tommy’s son Andi and grandson Sebastian live in Vienna. Who would have thought that this beautiful area in eastern Moravia informed by the Becva river, its rolling green countryside and wooded hills which today are a peaceful oasis known for outdoor tourism and criss-crossed by walking and cycleways, holds such a dark, grim history. ■

Resources:

Memoirs and photographs by KG Berger.

Letters 1959 and 1960 Josef Berger to Lizzie Briess.

Arolsen Archives, Germany.

Census records Valasské Mezirici 1880.

Zidé v dejinách Valasské Mezirici by Ladislav Baletka. Publisher: Mestský Úrad ve Valasské Mezirici 2004. (Jews and the community of Mezirici).

Die Juden und Judengemeinden Mährens in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart, Jewish Communities of Moravia in the Past and Present (Hugo Gold; 1929).

Photographs and documents in the archive of Claire Bruell.

Local research Jaroslav Klenovsky.



Tom Lachs, grandson of Melanie Berger, flanked by his wife Heidi and Peter in Prague 2011.



Andi and Mikjung Lachs' wedding. Andi is the son of Tom Lachs, grandson of Melanie and great grandson of Samuel and Rosa Berger, Vienna.



Valašské Meziříčí - the Berger home, 406 Týrsov St.



Mähr. Weisskirchen (Hranice).



(above and below) Leipnik railway station, 1867, where Ignaz Briess and Franziska Heller were married.



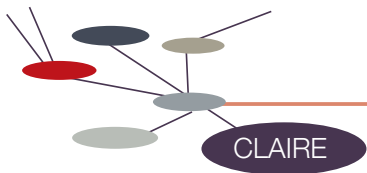
Franziska Briess née Heller.



Ignaz Briess Jr.



Rudolf, son of Ignaz Briess Jr, and his wife Aurelie Huber. He died in Theresienstadt in 1942 and she in New York in 1956.



Briess and Heller

Ignaz Briess Jr **2 January 1842 – 9 June 1900**

Franziska Heller **1846 – 26 October 1918**

Leipnik (Lipnik), Prerau (Prerov), Olmütz (Olomouc)

Wedding Day in Leipnik



IGNAZ and Franziska (Fanni) married on 6 May 1867. The bride's home was in Leipnik nad Bécvou and the setting for the wedding was the railway station there. Trains first ran to Leipnik in 1842 and the new station had been built in 1848, designed by the architect Ehrenhaus - it was a two-storey building in the classical style, with modifications which lasted up to the present day, despite alterations in Communist times. Why Ignaz and Fanni were not married in the synagogue – who knows? The answer is hidden in the mists of long ago.

I imagine the festivities that day, a joyful occasion – it would have been considered a suitable match. In my mind I see a large wedding party on a fine spring day with many members of both large families present. No doubt the groom's parents Abraham and Rosalie (née

Horowitz) from Prerau were there along with his siblings Wilhelm, Charlotte, Bertha, Regina, Ferdinand and Cacille with their families.

Most likely Ignaz's uncle and aunt, Jacob and Betti Briess, together with at least some of their eight children and their families came from Prerau not far away. Perhaps the guests came by train to Leipnik as the wedding was at the railway station.

Since Ignaz's grandmother Julie (Judith) Briess was still alive in 1867 it is possible that she also attended the wedding, although old age may have prevented her being there as she would have been 90 years old.

The bride, a young woman of 21, also came from a large family who are mentioned in Hugo Gold's book on the communities of Moravia as having been mainstays of the Leipnik town since the community began. Whether her maternal grandparents Simon and Karoline Gorge, born in the closing years of the eighteenth century, lived long enough to celebrate her wedding is not known, however her paternal grandparents Marcus Heller and Jachyd (Chaye or Sara) Glück, being older, had probably died by then. Fanni's parents, Gottlieb (Gadl, Gedalya) Heller and Lilly (Cecilie) Gorge had six children; all appear to have been born between 1840 and 1847! Gottlieb Heller

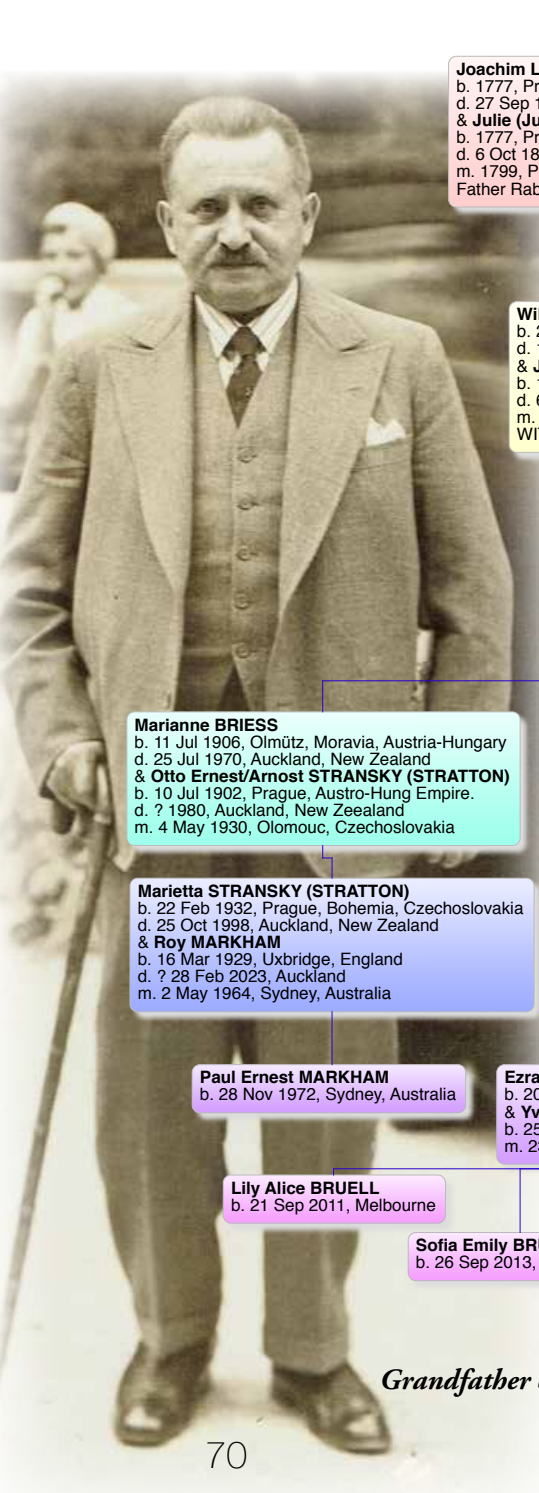


Ignatz and Fanni graves Olomouc.

Descendants of Joachim and Julie Briess



Connects to tree on page 71



Grandfather Siegfried Briess.

Joachim Loeb (Löbl) BRIESS
 b. 1777, Prerau, (Prague archives)
 d. 27 Sep 1849, Prerov Nr.13, Moravia, Austro-Hung Empire
 & **Julie (Judith, Juditha) GRUEN**
 b. 1777, Prerov, Moravia, Austro-Hung Empire
 d. 6 Oct 1870, Prerov, Moravia
 m. 1799, Prerov, Moravia
 Father Rabbi Aron Grün b.ca1750?

Abraham BRIESS
 b. Jan 1815, Prerov, Moravia, Austro-Hung Empire
 d. 20 Jun 1882, Prerov, Moravia, Austro-Hung Empire
 & **Rosalie HOROWITZ**
 b. Jul 1812, Prerov, Moravia, Austro-Hung Empire
 d. 17 Apr 1879, Prerov, Moravia, Austro-Hung Empire
 m. 30 Aug 1849, Prerov, Moravia, Austro-Hung Empire

Wilhelm BRIESS
 b. 26 Jul 1840, Prerov, Moravia, Austro-Hung Empire
 d. 15 Apr 1909, Olmütz, Moravia, Austro-Hung Empire
 & **Julie BASS**
 b. 15 Jun 1843, Prostejov Moravia, Austro-Hung Empire
 d. 6 Jul 1929, Olomütz, Moravia
 m. 28 Aug 1864, Not known
 WITNESSES Valentin Löw and Ignatz Epstein

Ignaz (Ignatz) Jnr BRIESS
 b. 2 Jan 1842, Prerov, Moravia, Austro-Hung Empire
 d. 9 Jun 1900, Olomouc, Moravia, Austro-Hung Empire
 & **Franziska HELLER**
 b. 1846, Leipnik nad Becvou, Moravia, Austro-Hung Empire
 d. 26 Oct 1918, Olomouc, Moravia
 m. 6 May 1867, Leipnik nad Becvou, Railway Station

Siegfried/Vitezslav BRIESS
 b. 10 Oct 1871, Prerov, Austria-Hungary
 d. 4 Oct 1942, Teresin Concentration Camp
 & **Rosa (2) SCHIMMERLING**
 b. 21 Mar 1880, Kanitz bei Bruenn, Moravia
 d. 23 Nov 1921 or 1.12.1921?, Olmutz, Moravia, Cz.
 m. 3 Jan 1904, Olomouc by Rabbi Oppenheimer
 2. Adele Fried

Rudolf BRIESS
 b. 26 Feb 1869, Prerov, Moravia, Austro-Hung Empire
 d. 8 Sep 1942, Terezin concentration camp
 & **Aurelie HUBER**
 b. 25 Jan 1875, Borkovany (Borkovan)
 d. 1956, Newport, New York
 m. 7 Jun 1896, Vyskov
 SEE SEPARATE TREE

Theodore, Dori BRIESS
 b. 11 Nov 1875, Olomouc, Moravia, Austro-Hung Empire
 d. 12 Jan 1942, Holicce, nr Olmütz
 & **Paula BAUML**
 b. 6 Jan 1881, Jaegerndorf, Silesia
 d. 28 Jul 1943, Baranovice concentration camp
 m. 29 Jun 1902, Olomouc, Moravia, Czechos.

Marianne BRIESS
 b. 11 Jul 1906, Olmütz, Moravia, Austria-Hungary
 d. 25 Jul 1970, Auckland, New Zealand
 & **Otto Ernest/Arnost STRANSKY (STRATTON)**
 b. 10 Jul 1902, Prague, Austro-Hung Empire.
 d. ? 1980, Auckland, New Zealand
 m. 4 May 1930, Olomouc, Czechoslovakia

Frantisek (Frank) BRIESS
 b. 5 Dec 1907, Olomouc, (Olmütz) Moravia
 d. 3 May 1979, Auckland, New Zealand
 & **Alice (Lizzie) LOEWY**
 b. 8 Jul 1912, Luntenburg
 d. 8 Mar 1986, New Zealand
 m. 6 Jun 1937, Czechoslovakia, Bruen

Alfred (Fred) BRIESS
 b. 15 Aug 1909, Olomouc, Moravia,
 d. Sep 1944, To or at Auschwitz Concentration Camp
 & **Irene BERKOVA**
 b. 15 Mar 1912, Pribor, Moravia,
 d. ca 1970/1980, Olomouc, Moravia?
 m. 16 May 1939, Svaty Kopecek

Herta BRIESS
 b. 1 Jun 1903, Olomouc, Moravia, Austro-Hung Empire
 d. 1942, Baranovici concentration camp
 & **Siegfried, Friedl (Vitezslav) GRAETZER**
 b. 22 Mar 1900 or 1899 or 1896, Olomouc, Moravia, Austro-Hung Empire
 d. 1943, Baranovici, Poland
 m. ca 1925, Olomouc, Moravia

Marietta STRANSKY (STRATTON)
 b. 22 Feb 1932, Prague, Bohemia, Czechoslovakia
 d. 25 Oct 1998, Auckland, New Zealand
 & **Roy MARKHAM**
 b. 16 Mar 1929, Uxbridge, England
 d. ? 28 Feb 2023, Auckland
 m. 2 May 1964, Sydney, Australia

Claire Ginette BRIESS
 b. 10 Apr 1947, Auckland, New Zealand
 & **Leslie Peter BRUELL**
 b. 1 Aug 1943, Auckland, New Zealand
 m. 7 Sep 1973, Auckland, New Zealand

Eva GRAETZER
 b. 3 Feb 1926, Olomouc, Moravia, Czechoslovakia
 d. 18 Nov 2012, Sydney, Australia
 & **Ken (Kurt) WINTON (WEINSTEIN)**
 b. 20 Nov 1919, Stuttgart, Germany
 d. 31 Dec 2002, Auckland, New Zealand
 m. 27 Jun 1946, London, England
 &2. Alan Binder

Anita GRAETZER
 b. 23 Mar 1931, Olomouc, Moravia, Czechoslovakia
 d. 22 May 2004, Sydney, Australia
 & **Jack (Icik) CHAJMOVIC (CHARD)**
 b. 16 Aug 1922, Iza, near Chust, Czechoslovakia
 d. 16 Jan 2005, Immigrated to Sydney, Australia
 m. ca 1960, Sydney, Australia

Paul Ernest MARKHAM
 b. 28 Nov 1972, Sydney, Australia

Ezra Jon BRUELL
 b. 20 Nov 1976, Auckland, New Zealand
 & **Yvette Belinda FLEISZIG**
 b. 25 Sep 1980, Melbourne, Australia
 m. 23 May 2010, Melbourne, Australia

Anton Frank BRUELL
 b. 14 Dec 1980, Auckland, New Zealand
 & **Vanessa NEWTON WADE**
 b. 17 Nov 1982, Auckland, New Zealand
 m. 15 Jul 2012, Auckland, New Zealand

Eric WINTON
 b. 28 Jun 1947, London, England
 & **Evie (Evelyn) SPIRO**
 b. ca 1948
 m. 1970, Wellington, New Zealand &2.
 Janelle Sharon Margaret LEGGE

Gary CHARD
 b. 2 Aug 1963, Sydney, Australia
 & **Iiona BARRATT**
 b. 16 Jan 1966, Sydney, Australia?
 m. 5 Mar 1989, Sydney, Australia

Deborah CHARD
 b. 15 Jun 1966, Sydney, Australia
 & **Dean GOMEL**
 b. 27 Dec 1962
 m. 6 Apr 1997, Sydney, Australia

Lily Alice BRUELL
 b. 21 Sep 2011, Melbourne

Sofia Emily BRUELL
 b. 26 Sep 2013, Melbourne

Isaac David BRUELL
 b. 20 Mar 2015, Auckland,

Simon Luke BRUELL
 b. 24 Aug 2017, Auckland,

Ariel Michael WINTON
 b. 8 Sep 1973, Haifa, Israel
 & **Elana BENJAMIN**
 m. 24 Dec 2000, Sydney, Australia

Daniel Jonathan WINTON
 b. 15 Sep 1975, London, England
 & **Aviva Malka BARD**
 b. 24 Oct 1976, Sydney, Australia
 m. 6 May 2007, Sydney, Australia

Daniel CHARD
 b. 28 Jan 1998, Sydney,

Jake Edward CHARD
 b. 1 Dec 1995, Sydney

Ariel GOMEL
 b. 4 Mar 1999, Sydney

Jamie Sharonne GOMEL
 b. 6 Jan 2001, Sydney, Australia

Zara Hannah WINTON
 b. 28 Nov 2004, Sydney, Australia

Asher Avraham (Abraham) WINTON
 b. 28 Sep 2008, Sydney, Australia

Akiva Shmuel Jacov WINTON
 b. 2 Mar 2008, Sydney, Australia

Hillel Benjamin WINTON
 b. 25 Nov 2010, Sydney, Australia



Descendants of Theodore and Paula Briess

Theodore, Dori BRIESS
 b. 11 Nov 1875, Olomouc, Moravia
 d. 12 Jan 1942, Holice, nr Olmütz
 & **Paula BÄUML**
 b. 6 Jan 1881, Jaegerndorf, Silesia
 d. 28 Jul 1943, Baranovice concentration camp
 m. 29 Jun 1902, Olomouc, Moravia, Czechos.

Hans/Johann BRIESS
 b. 2 May 1904, Olomouc, Moravia,
 d. 13 Nov 1973, London, England
 & **Eise SCHULHOF**
 b. 29 May 1906, Olomouc, Moravia,
 d. 5 Feb 1990, London, England
 m. 29 Jun 1929, Olomouc,

Herta BRIESS
 b. 1 Jun 1903, Olomouc, Moravia,
 Austro-Hung Empire
 d. 1942, Baranovici concentration camp
 & **Siegfried, Friedl (Viteslav) GRAETZER**
 b. 22 Mar 1900 or 1899 or 1896, Olomouc,
 Moravia
 d. 1943, Baranovici, Poland
 m. ca 1925, Olomouc, Moravia

Peter BRIESS
 b. 12 Sep 1931, Olomouc, Moravia
 1. **Annamarie SCHWARZ Dr**
 b. 30 Jun 1934, Czechoslovakia
 d. 8 Dec 2015
 m. 25 Aug 1966, London, England
 2. **Helen LOWE (DENMAN)**
 b. 14 Mar 1936, London, England

Hana BRIESS
 b. 25 Feb 1936, Olomouc, Moravia.
 & **Stephen Anthony RAYNER**
 b. 12 Jul 1934, London, England
 d. 28 Jan 2005, London, England
 m. 3 Jan 1960, London, England

Eva GRAETZER
 b. 3 Feb 1926, Olomouc, Moravia,
 d. 18 Nov 2012, Sydney, Australia
 1. **Ken (Kurt) WINTON (WEINSTEIN)**
 b. 20 Nov 1919, Stuttgart, Germany
 d. 31 Dec 2002, Auckland,
 m. 27 Jun 1946, London
 2. **Alan BINDER**
 b. 26 Dec 1914, Leipzig, Germany
 d. 31 Mar 1979, Sydney, Australia

Anita GRAETZER
 b. 23 Mar 1931, Olomouc, Moravia
 d. 22 May 2004, Sydney, Australia
 & **Jack (Icik) CHAJMOWIC (CHARD)**
 b. 16 Aug 1922, Iza, near Chust,
 d. 16 Jan 2005, Immigrated to Sydney,
 m. ca 1960, Sydney, Australia

David Andrew Otto BRIESS Dr
 b. 27 Sep 1968, London, England
 1. **Tanya RICE**
 b. 8 Sep 1972, Cork
 m. 14 Jul 2000, Henley, England

Marianne Elizabeth RAYNER
 b. 25 Nov 1963, London, England
 & **Clifford Marc WEISFELD**
 m. 4 May 1986, London, England

Daniel Andrew Jonathan RAYNER
 b. 12 Aug 1961, London, England
 & **Alicia GLEN**
 b. Jul 1966
 m. 9 Oct 1994, New York

Eric WINTON
 b. 28 Jun 1947, London, England
 1. **Evie (Evelyn) SPIRO**
 b. ca 1948
 - 1970, Wellington, New Zealand
 2. **Janelle Sharon Margaret LEGGE**
 b. 23 Feb 1962, Sydney, Australia

Gary CHARD
 b. 2 Aug 1963, Sydney
 & **Ilona BARRATT**
 b. 16 Jan 1966, Sydney,
 m. 5 Mar 1989, Sydney,

Deborah CHARD
 b. 15 Jun 1966, Sydney
 & **Dean GOMEL**
 b. 27 Dec 1962
 m. 6 Apr 1997, Sydney, div

Annabelle Rose BRIESS
 b. 5 Oct 2005, Henley-on-Thames
Alexandra Oriole BRIESS
 b. 3 Jan 2004, London, England
 d. 1 Jun 2021, London, England

Benjamin Marc WEISFELD
 b. 23 Aug 1988, London, England
 & **Odette BERG**
 b. 10 Sep 1988, London
 m. 14 Nov 2015, Savoy, London

Natasha Elsa Muriel WEISFELD
 b. 19 Oct 1991, London, England

Olivia Else GLEN-RAYNER
 b. 19 Feb 1996, New York,
 Rosa Beatrice GLEN-RAYNER
 b. 27 Apr 2000, New York

Ariel Michael WINTON
 b. 8 Sep 1973, Haifa, Israel
 & **Elana BENJAMIN**
 m. 24 Dec 2000, Sydney

Daniel Jonathan WINTON
 b. 15 Sep 1975, London, England
 & **Aviva Malka BARD**
 b. 24 Oct 1976, Sydney, Australia
 m. 6 May 2007, Sydney, Australia

Daniel CHARD
 b. 28 Jan 1998, Sydney,
 & **Jake Edward Chard**
 b. 1.12.1995

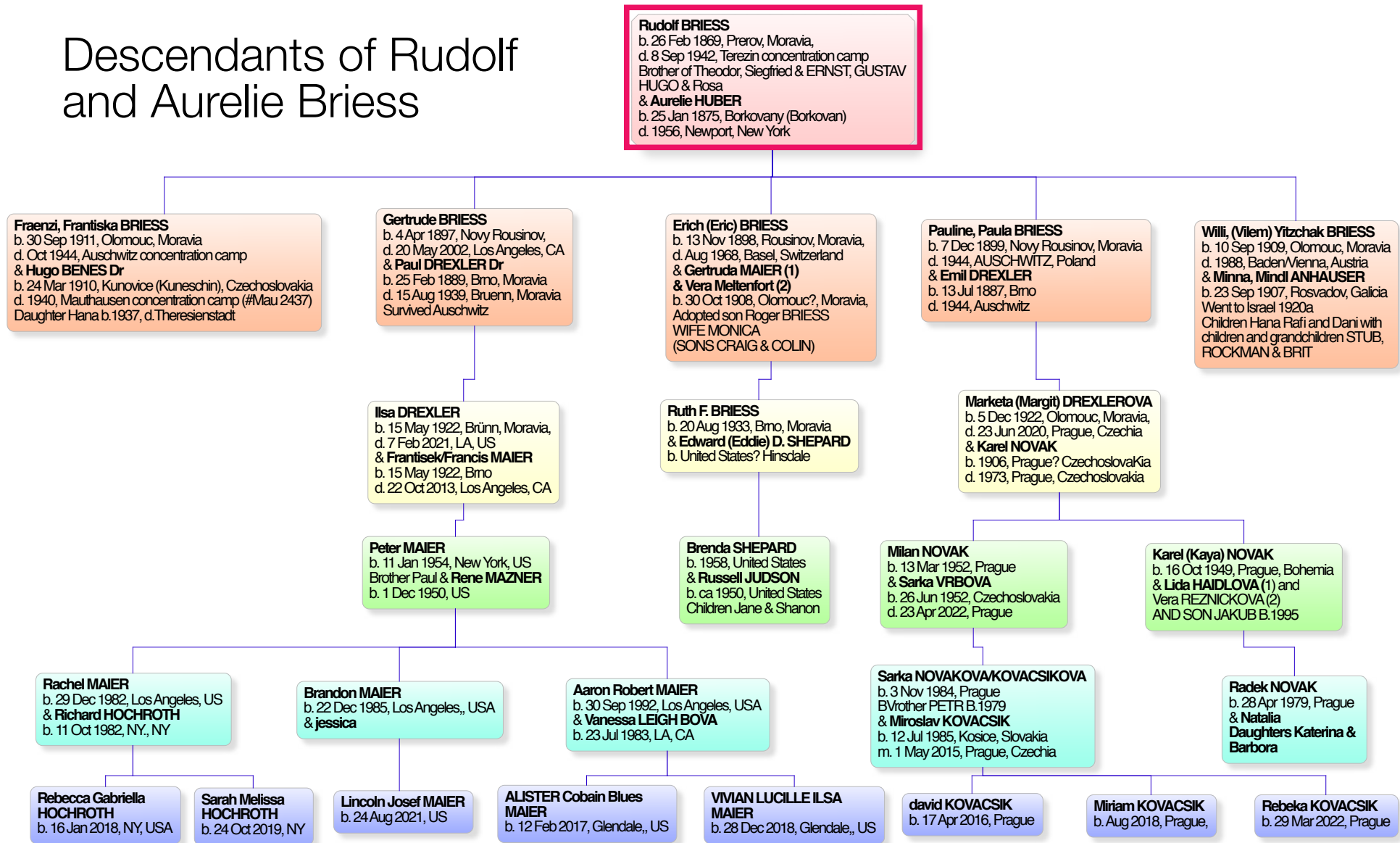
1. Ariel GOMEL
 b. 4 Mar 1999, Sydney
 2. **Jamie Sharonne GOMEL**
 b. 6 Jan 2001, Sydney

Luca WEISFELD
 b. 29 Mar 2019, London
 Zachary WEISFELD
 b. 6 May 2021, London

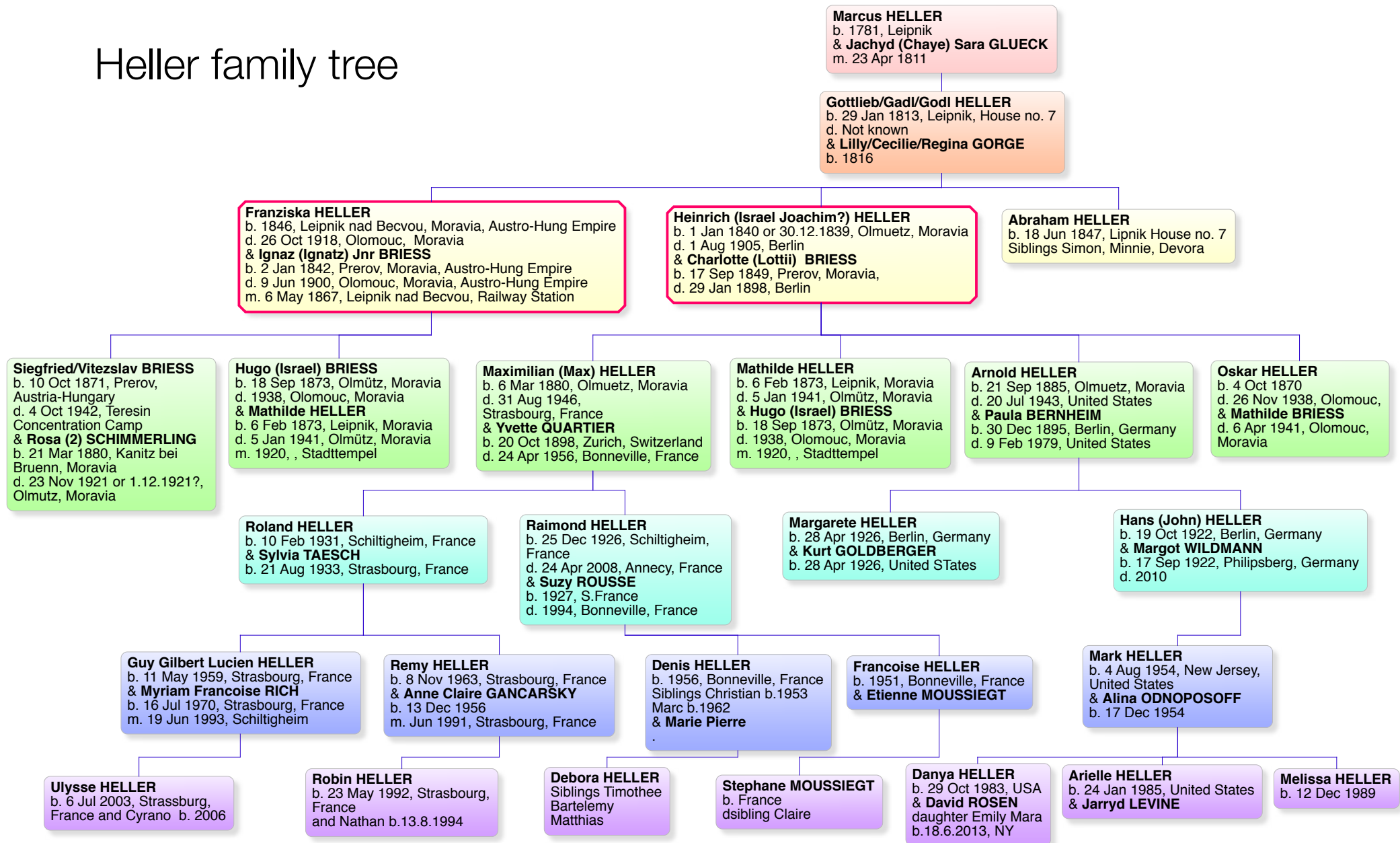
Zara Hannah WINTON
 b. 28 Nov 2004, Sydney,
 Asher Avraham WINTON
 b. 28 Sep 2008, Sydney,

Akiva Shmuel Jacov WINTON
 b. 2 Mar 2008, Sydney, Australia
 Hillel Benjamin WINTON
 b. 25 Nov 2010, Sydney,

Descendants of Rudolf and Aurelie Briess



Heller family tree



is documented as “a Familiant from Leipnik, a lessee in Stiebnig” (today’s Jistebník) in the years prior to 1857. Steibnig was a small town that had a system of artificial fish ponds and an administration centre in the town for this kind of business, so it appears that Gottlieb leased a fish pond where he farmed fish for a living. Ignaz Briess Jr’s sister Charlotte married Heinrich Heller, Fanni’s brother, so the two families were doubly related. Charlotte and Heinrich later moved to Berlin with their eight children and both of their graves are in good order in the Weissensee cemetery there. Their children and grandchildren re-

remained in Berlin. Many did not survive the Holocaust although a branch of Hellers today lives in Strasbourg, France. (See family tree on P 71)

Fanni’s maternal grandparents, Simon and Karoline Gorge are recorded as being lessees of a vineyard in Botenwald (today’s Butovice near Prostejov). Their daughter Lilly was Franziska’s mother.

It must have been a large family group indeed at the Briess/Heller wedding and given the year 1867, when Jewish emancipation was sealed, the view to the future must have been overwhelmingly bright and full of hope for the young couple.

Abraham Briess, Ignaz’s father, was a trader in grain who spent his early years in Prerau like all the Briesses of his generation. Ignaz (also known as



Postcard of old Olomouc.

Ignaz Jr to distinguish him from his cousin Ignaz Sr) traded in agricultural products and moved his business to Olmütz in the early 1860s. His sons and their families soon followed. Perhaps by the time of his marriage in 1867 Ignaz Jr was already living in Olmütz. Ignaz Jr and Fanni were living at 530 Belidla St by 1874 and at the same time Ignaz received a licence to trade in grain in Olmütz. In 1888 Ignaz was granted the right of domicile in Olmütz and from the 1890s on, the wholesale business was based at today’s 11 října 28 ulice. Here the company operated premises that included of-

fices, a laboratory, areas for grading and cleaning seeds, cereal grains and grass seeds. A limited company “Ignaz Briess Jr” was formed in 1903 and after Ignaz died the management was taken over by his two sons Siegfried (my grandfather) and his brother Theodore (Dori). Sadly Ignaz didn’t live long enough to meet many of his grandchildren.

The first generation of Olomouc maltsters

Abraham Briess and his sons were part of the “founding generation” of malster families who came to Olmütz and who laid the groundwork for later prosperity. In the nineteenth century, these men were involved in economic, political, religious and cultural affairs in Olmütz. During the 1860s most of these families, still in the ghettos, traded in agricultural commodities. As a natural consequence of the boom in malt export they gravitated to Olmütz, eco-

*Rosa Briess (née Schimmerling) in
Olmütz with children
- Marianne, Franz
and Fredy - c1911.*



economic centre and transport hub. Here they made malt and prospered. Abraham Briess and his contemporaries were liberals, firm believers in the German spirit of progress. As well, they were an important lobby group with connections in the city council, active members of the Jewish community which was formed in 1865, just two years before Ignaz Jr and Franziska were married.

Families were connected through intermarriages and trade. When a man married into a maltster family he was generally taken into the family businesses. It was into this busy and influential society that Abraham Briess and his wife Rosalie, raised their brood of seven children. Ignaz Jr was no doubt inducted into his father's business as a young man, eventually formalising the business as a company called Ignatz Briess Jr.

In 1905 Ignaz Jr's two sons Siegfried and Theodore took over the business of Ignaz Briess Jr. With others of their generation, they lived in a different environment than their fathers had been born into. By the time they were born, their family had acquired status and was financially well off, providing for the many children and grandchildren of the large extended family.

Michael Viktorik, Olomouc, writes over 100 years later in his book about the maltster families of Olomouc.

Michael Viktorik's book about Jewish maltsters is written in the Czech language with only a single chapter translated into English. He writes that in the 1860s, the malt industry began to flourish as a new industry of the food sector in Central Moravia. Up to that time, breweries that didn't have enough base material had to import barley to be processed into malt. When factories could supply breweries with the finished product, as well as with barley itself, the ba-



Rosa and Siegfried Briess.

sis of a new sector of the food industry began, heralding 30 years of growth for the Austrian malt industry.

At the same time as the development of the malt houses in Moravia and elsewhere in the Habsburg Empire, there was an explosion of beer consumption in Europe. The Jewish businessmen, who increasingly had the means to do so, invested in this developing industry.

The industry was facilitated by the political and economic reforms of 1848 and 1867. The Jewish businessmen first leased then bought obsolete breweries and began to refashion them as business malt houses.

The boom in malt exporting enabled them to build new modern plant as well as to update technologically outdated plant and equipment.

Olmütz was in the centre of the barley producing area of Central Moravia where it was surrounded by business malt houses. The city was a natural focal point of the whole barley producing area and the site of important economic and administrative organisations as well as being a centre of transportation.

Goods produced in Olmütz by well known companies had a reputation for excellent quality which was safeguarded by the Olmütz maltster families. Other Jewish families such as Morgensterns, Fürsts, Haases, Brachs and Zweigs were also based in Olmütz but had their production plants all over Moravia, Bohemia or Slovakia and even further afield. Of the 15 or so families in Viktorik's study, only three were not Jewish.

By the time Frank and Hans, Siegfried and Theodore's sons, became active in the management of Ignatz Briess Jr in the 1920s and 1930s, the company was trading in home grown agricultural products, seeds, cereals, pulses, oil-seeds,

SEARCHING FOR IDENTITY: Writing the past into life



Ignaz and Wilhelm Briess, Olmütz Chemical Works, 1936.



Siegfried, Irene, Adi and Marietta, 1939, Olomouc.

Ghetto Theresienstadt
Der Militärarzt

Podatečný zápis narizen. No. 113
Datum 25. 4. 1945 Podpis: [Signature]

TODESFALLANZEIGE

Name (bei Frauen Nachnamen) *Briess* Vorname *Siegfried* Tr. Nr. *44 202*

Geboren am *11. 10. 1877* in *Wien* Hebr. *Wien*

Bau *mittel* Beruf *Chemiker* Religion *Christl.* Gestirb. *Christl.*

Staatsangehörigkeit *österreichisch* Heimatgemeinde *Wien*

Letzte Wohnort (Adresse) *Platz d. d. Maria 11*
Wohnort in Theresienstadt Gebäude No. *27* Zimmer No. *77*

Name des Vaters *Briess* Name der Mutter (Nachnamen) *Briess* Letzter Wohnort *Wien*

Sterbetag *1945* Sterbestunde *16* Sterbeort: Theresienstadt

Genaue Ortsbezeichnung (Gebäude, Zimmer) *Et. 27 ch. 77*

in Theresienstadt

in Proletariat

Tag der letz. Erkrankung *1945* Ort der letz. Erkrankung *Theresienstadt* Zahl d. Kinder aus letz. Ehe

Art des Fatales ereignisses *Herzinfarkt* No. *113* Ausgestellt von *Dr. [Signature]*

Zuschickender Arzt: *Dr. [Signature]*

Krankheit (in Blockschrift) *NEPHROCYTICUS HAEMORRAGIA CEREBRI
SCHUMPE NIERE GEHIRNBLUTUNG*

Todesursache (in Blockschrift) *HAEMORRAGIA CEREBRI
GEHIRNBLUTUNG*

Todesbescheinigung durch *Dr. [Signature]* Tag u. Stunde der Todesbescheinigung *4/10 16.15*

Ort der Einlieferung *Theresienstadt* Tag u. Stunde der Einlieferung *4/10 11.42*

Theresienstadt, am *25. 4. 1945*

Der Zeugnisschauer: *[Signature]* Der Agensat: *[Signature]* Der Chirurgen: *[Signature]*

Siegfried Briess – death certificate issued at Theresienstadt.

Name: B R I E S , Adele	
BD: -	Nat: -
Kam in das Ghetto Theresienstadt mit Transport No. AAh - 251 und war dort noch Ende April/Anfang Mai 1945 inhaftiert. <u>Siehe Originalliste.</u>	
Zimmerlisten des Ghettos Theresienstadt. [REDACTED] Az: OCC 26/30.m II/G 2 Folder 12 S. 153	

Ghetto census record for Adele Briess, Franz's step mother liberated at war's end on 9 May 1945. Shows the room allocation in the Theresienstadt ghetto.

Name: MORGENSTERN - RIKOVSKY, Eveline Liselotte	
BD: 29.1.33	Nat: -
War vor dem 31.12.44 in Theresienstadt inhaftiert. Letzter Wohnort: .0190949.... Anschrift in Theresienstadt:7.....	
Verzeichnis der in Theresienstadt inhaftierten Personen, aufgestellt von "Czechoslovak Relief Action" in London im März 1945 Az.: OCC 26/43	
Ordner: 14	Seite: 141

Eveline Liselotte Morgenstern-Rikovsky born 29 Jan 1933 on list of people imprisoned in Theresienstadt drawn up by the 'Czechoslovak Relief Action' in London in March 1945. She was the great granddaughter of Ignaz Briess Sr.

USTREDNI KARTOTEKA - TRANSPORTY.

a.e. 102361

Grätzerová Herta

16. 1903

Primořice (příleží k)

1. transport	2. transport
čas: 8 VII 1942	čas: 12. 7. 1942
AAO	AAy 666
čas: 6/4	čas: 12.

Herta Grätzer (née Briess) Transport Card.



Wellnerova 21, Olomouc. This three level villa was designed by architect Jaques Groak for Siegfried Briess and built in 1937.



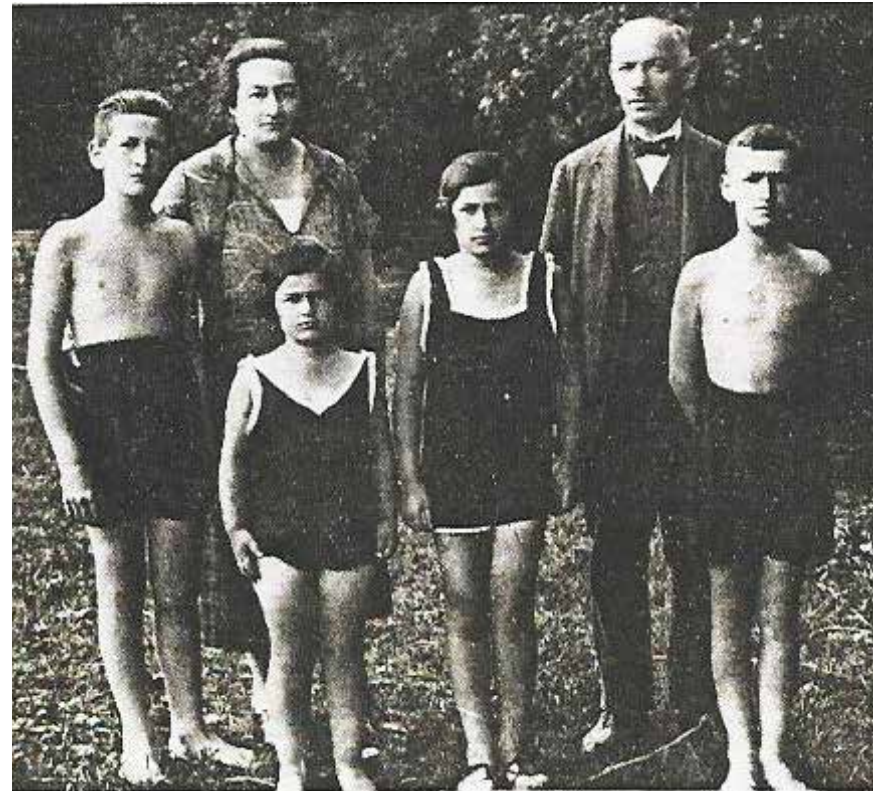
Ice hockey, Frank 4th from right 1922.



Rudolf Briess 1938.



Theodore's son Hans Briess 1949.



Fleischmann family: Paula Briess, granddaughter of Ignaz Briess Sr, with her husband Wilhelm and children Gerty, Elly, Kurt and Artur. Only Artur and Gerty survived the Holocaust and lived in Israel after the war.



Ignatz Briess, Olmütz - headed paper for wholesaling of agricultural products, seeds, grains, flour, animal feed.

cumin, rice, dried fruits, nuts and margarine and similar produce. These were purchased for resale and distribution in Europe and overseas. They employed many commercial travellers. The firm was the country's biggest importer and wholesaler of caraway and poppy seed. For the malt trade, they supplied milling products, 15 kinds of split peas, 30 types of pearl barley, bran, pollard and other products. The company was also one of the principal importers, wholesalers and suppliers to the bakery trade of Canadian, American and Australian flour of high gluten content.

Ignatz Briess Jr represented several big flour mills and had 21 representatives in Czechoslovakia as well as buying agents overseas. The company also had an interest in piggeries in the Olmütz area, to which they supplied the by-products of their grain and produce business. For many years the company supplied the Czech army. Included in the company's assets were real estate and other property, shares in companies, government loans and other securities. The name of Briess was to be found on local, regional and national bodies concerning the malt industry, social, sports, religious and benevolent organisations.

Wilhelm, Ignaz Sr, and Ferdinand Briess

Wilhelm, brother of Ignaz Jr, studied trade and commerce in Vienna and moved to Olmütz in 1865. In 1866 he joined forces with his cousin and brother-in-law Ignaz Briess Sr and they formed their own firm known as "Ignaz and Wilhelm Briess". Their export malt house at Olomouc-Pavlovicky was one of the first of its kind and it flourished. By 1935 they had established another branch at Olomouc-Klosterne Hradisko with a malt house and chemical works. By then 99% of the malt production was for export with further exports of malt coffee, butanol, acetone and acetates. Their markets extended to Germany, Belgium, USA, South America, Australia and Japan.

Wilhelm was president of the Olmütz Chamber of Commerce and Trade from 1904 to 1909, having been an active member since 1876. He rose to become in 1887, the co-founder of the Verein Österreichischer

Malzfabrikanten (Society of Austrian Malt Producers) with its headquarters in Vienna and activities throughout the Habsburg Empire. Ignaz Sr and Wilhelm worked closely with Marcus Grün, also born in Prerau, who had married Wilhelm's sister Cacille Briess. Ignaz Sr and Wilhelm were further connected as they had married sisters, Julie and Charlotte Bass from Prossnitz, to the north of Olmütz. The Briess family in Olmütz formed a cohesive lobby group with which to exert influence in all spheres of economic and political life in Olmütz.

Wilhelm sat on the state Railroad Council and on the Council of the Moravian Regional Railways. He was a member of the Regional Tax Commission for Moravia and many other bodies. Both Wilhelm and Ignaz Sr received the Order of the Emperor Franz Joseph I and the Order of the Iron Cross of the Third Class.

Ignaz Sr and Charlotte had three daughters and a son (Bertha, Hermine, Anna and Richard), while Wilhelm and Julie had five children (Emil, Gustav, Ludwig, Adele and Dora). All of their sons and sons-in-law were gradually taken into the family businesses and were given positions of responsibility as the older generation aged.

Another of Abraham's sons, and brother to Wilhelm and Ignaz Jr, was Ferdinand, also a buyer of barley who lived in Olmütz 1874-1883. He had a trading license to operate as a grain merchant and was engaged in the wholesale trade. In 1884 he moved to Vienna where he was a barley buyer for Ignaz and Wilhelm Briess malt houses and others in Olmütz as well. In 1895 he returned to Olmütz and joined the business of Ignaz Briess Jr at 11 rijn 28 Street. There he worked as a barley buyer for local malt houses and breweries.

Between the wars

Not all of the third generation of maltster families considered themselves as solely businessmen. Some were intellectuals and quite a number were involved



Tennis team - Frank bottom left.



Pinchas Museum Prague showing 'Alfred Briess Born 15 August 1909' inscribed on the wall recording his deportation.



Prima-Malz advertisement.



Siegfried and Rosa Briess in Marienbad.



Mourning room on the death of Rosa Briess 1921, Olomouc.



Marianne and Frank, Siegfried and Rosa's surviving children, at Auckland Road 1967.



Home of Richard Briess, Olomouc - son of Ignaz Sr 1938.

in the arts, such as Dr Otto Morgenstern who was a key figure in the malt exporting industry while at the same time being a professor of philosophy at Prague University.

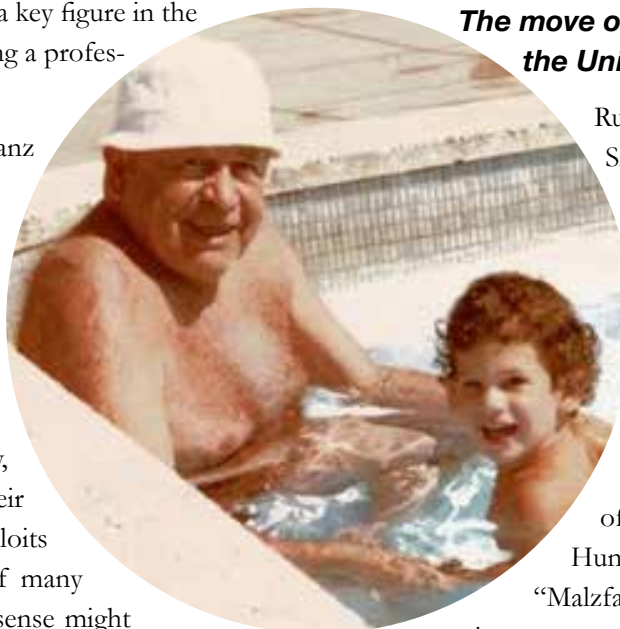
The third generation sons, such as my father Franz and his brother Fredy, also excelled at sport.

As a child I remember being told that the family had “sponsored a sports stadium” for ice hockey and the like, to the city.

Certainly my father and uncle’s sporting prowess is obvious in the surviving album of newspaper cuttings brought from Czechoslovakia. Ice hockey, tennis, skiing, football (soccer) were a big part of their young lives. These tales of sports contests and exploits with army mates in the 1930s formed the basis of many long stories telling me about the past. Some 6th sense might have told Frank that telling stories is how we contribute to our collective memory.

The period between the wars 1918 to 1939, when Czechoslovakia became a country in its own right was a time of increased national feeling and identity building, economic development and progress in all fields of endeavour, only to come crashing to an end in 1939.

The company, as well as Siegfried’s new home in Wellnerova St, was taken over by the Germans after they invaded the country and after the war Ignatz Briess Jr ceased to exist, the successes of its heyday confined to history. After the war from 1945, through the communist times, as a satellite of the Russian state to the Velvet Revolution in 1989, Czechoslovakia became an economic backwater, constrained by politics and economics and its democratic past became a mere memory.



***Frank and Ezra
Auckland Rd 1978.***

The move of the Moravian malt companies to the United States

Rudolf Briess, born in 1869, another brother of Siegfried and Theodore, developed the business begun by his father and grandfather, from his own base in Brünn, less than an hour’s drive from Olmütz. In 1894 he began expanding his business, exporting malt for brewing, developing ingredients for bakers, including Maltoferm malt extracts. These were produced in a brewhouse located next to the family’s malthouse in Moravia. “The finest barley is grown in Moravia, and particularly that of the ‘Hanna Plain,’” - an 1891 report on Austrian-Hungarian commerce noted. In time, Rudolf Briess’s “Malzfabrik” became renowned worldwide, specialising in exports to Germany, Belgium, the United States and Latin America. By 1891, there were 100 malthouses in the region, 60 in Moravia alone and the name of Briess attained a global reputation.

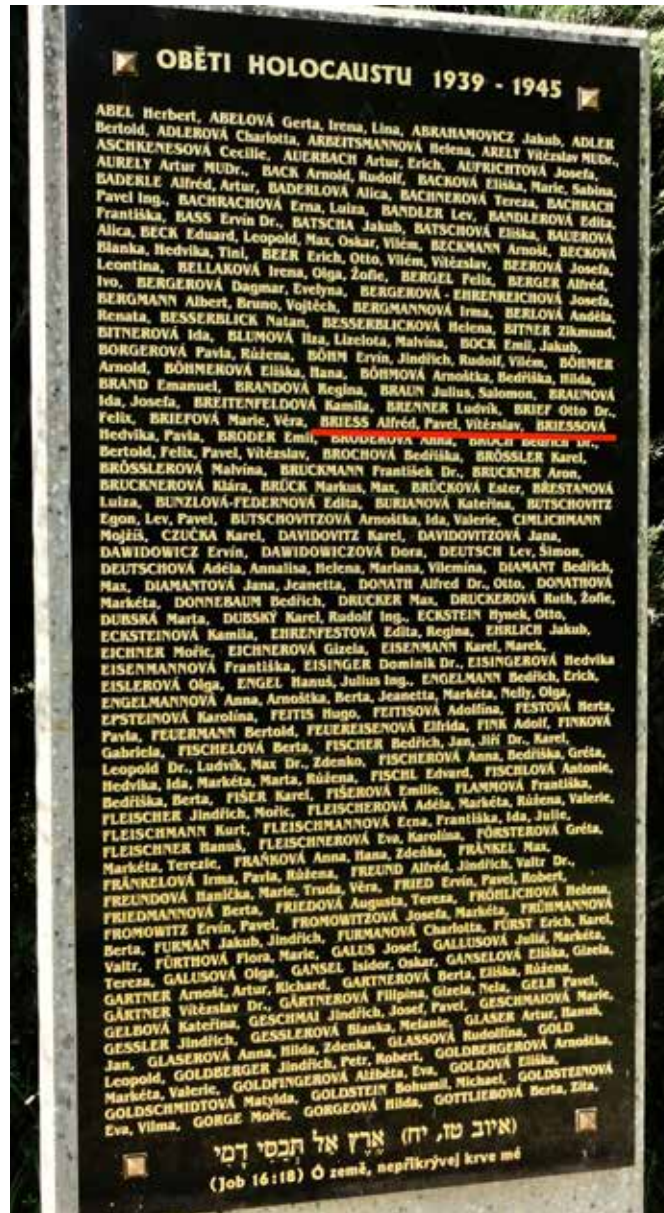
In the 1930s Eric Briess, Rudolf’s son, moved the family business to the US just in time to avoid being caught up in the Second World War. Here, he continued the family business by sourcing domestically produced malt and supplying customers whose sources of malt were cut off as a result of the war. When Eric died in 1971, the company passed into the hands of his son Roger who expanded the business further. The company trades today, based in the United States, in Briess family hands for more than a century.

The Briess family from 1939

During the war, many members of the family lost their lives at the hands of the Nazis: Rudolf, Siegfried and their wives were sent to their deaths in



Stolperstein for Siegfried Biess born 1871 deported 1942 to Terezin and murdered there. Placed outside 11 rijna 28, Olomouc. Claire's paternal grandfather..



Holocaust memorial to Jewish citizens from Olomouc including (underlined) Pavel and Viteslav (Siegfried) Biess.

Ghetto Theresienstadt
Der Jüdischer Rat

114. Dodávka 114. Podpis: [Signature] No. [Blank]
Datum: 8. VII. 1948 Podpis: [Signature] Sterbematrik: SMH

TODESFALLANZEIGE

Název (pro Pánev i sč. Měšťanstvím)	B R I E S S	Vřívame	Budolf	T. No.	711/Ad
Úmrtí am	8.9.1948	St. Převis	Střik	Theresien	
Míst.	Theresien	Bar	Publikant	Střik	Čestk.
Státní příslušnost	Protěstov	Domovská obec	Brum		
Letos ubíval (Adress)	Brum Zelle 74				
Ubytování in Theresienstadt (Gebäude, Zimmer)	E.VII	Zimmer No.	63		
Název des Václ.	Imma Biess	Střik	Olétra		
Název der Mutter (Platznamen)	Fanny	Střik	Olétra		
Úmrtí am	8.9.1948	Střikbestunde	8--	Střikort:	Theresienstadt
Genoue Ortsbezeichnung (Gebäude, Zimmer)	E.VII	Zimmer	63		
Název	Tr. No.	Verwahr- schlüssel	Wohnadresse (St. Gassen u. Kadere nach Gebäudefeld)		
in Theresienstadt	Aurilla Biess	711/Ad	Fřik	E.V. Zimmer 220 b	
in Theresienstadt	Bertruda Braxler	711/Ad	Tochter	E.V. Zimmer 209	
in Theresienstadt	Paula-Brester	711/Ad	Bruder	E.V. Zimmer 209	
in Theresienstadt	Silfřina Biess	711/Ad	Bruder	E.V. Zimmer 77	
Tag der let. Überweisung	8.7.1898	Ort der let. Überweisung	Wiesch	Zahl & Kinder aus let. Ehe	5
Art der Pannschreibung	Blomkessin	No.	13876/40	Ausgestellt von	Polizeidirektion Brum
Behandlungs Arzt	Dr. Rudolf Gieser				
Krankheit (in Blockschrift)	Lepra	Lepra	Lepra		
Todesursache (in Blockschrift)	Lepra	Lepra	Lepra		
Todesort	Dr. Jan Friedman	Tag u. Stunde der Todesbesche	8.9.1948		
Ort der Beisetzung		Tag u. Stunde der Beisetzung			
Theresienstadt, am	8.9.1948	Der Todesbesche	Der Anzeiger	Der Beisetzer	
		[Signature]	[Signature]	[Signature]	

Rudolf Biess' death certificate at Theresienstadt.



Paul Markham, Anton and Ezra Bruell 1983 descendants of Siegfried Briess.



Prague descendants of Rudolf Briess with Margit Novakova (centre front) 2018.



Anton and Ezra Bruell at Tutukaka c. 2007.

the camps. In the following generation, Alfred (Fredy) Briess, Herta Grätzer, Frantiska Benes, Paula Drexler, Gertrude Drexler as well as their children Margit Drexler, Ilsa Drexler, Hana Benes met the same fate. Of the family of Charlotte Briess and Heinrich Heller in Berlin, many were deported, including Sidonie, Paula, Arnold, Eugen, together with their spouses and children Irma, Lotti, Alex Katz, and little Egon Levi, great grandson of Charlotte Briess and Heinrich Heller. The Nazi war machine did not discriminate between generations, gender or age.

Hans (John Heller), grandson of Charlotte and Heinrich Heller, escaped Berlin with the help of the ORT organisation. This group helped young refugees by teaching them trades and today is a global education network driven by Jewish values. Arnold and Paula Heller succeeded in leaving Europe in 1941 via France and Portugal. After the war John joined his parents Arnold and Paula Heller in New York where their descendants live today.

Descendants of Ignaz Briess Sr were also annihilated during the Holocaust: Bertha Fischel, and daughter Anna, Otto Morgenstern-Rikovsky, Hedwig Briess, wife of Richard, Anna Zweig together with sons Rudolf and Felix Zweig who hanged himself while in Gestapo custody in Olomouc on 23 March 1939. Other descendants of Jakob Briess included Paula Fleischmann and her husband and children Kurt and Elly, Anita Storsch aged 5 and 1 year old Jiri Fleischmann, together with Fritz Briess, his wife Blanka and Ella Briess and quite possibly her adult children Gusty and Alice. Also Elsa Briess, married to Samuel Mandl with her sons Bruno and Erich and Erich's young wife.

Still more of the wider family, like my father Frank, together with my mother, had their lives turned upside down by the Holocaust but escaped to make new homes outside of Europe. After the war Eric Briess brought to America all the surviving Briess family members except Margit Drexler who chose to remain in Prague. Her sons, grandchildren and great children are all the family that remain in Czechia now. Today the Briess family descendants are spread

widely, living in countries as diverse as the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, the Czech Republic (now Czechia) and Israel. Many are in business and even in food and allied products, building on family knowledge and experience garnered over several generations. In New Zealand Paul Markham, great grandson of Siegfried lives and is close to my family - one son Anton who is in Auckland with two sons Isaac and Simon and another, Ezra with his wife Yvette Fleiszig, living in Melbourne with three children Lily, Nate and Sofia.

They are still bound by the ties that hark back to the ghetto of Prerau in the eighteenth century and regularly keep in touch with one another. ■

Resources

Photographs and documents in the archive of Claire Bruell.

Die Juden und Judengemeinden Mährens in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart ed. Hugo Gold, Jüdischer Buch und Kunstverlag, Brünn ed. Hugo Gold. 1929.

Beit Theresienstadt archive, Givat Chayim, Israel.

Židovská obec in Olomouc. Historie, osobnosti, památky. (The Jewish Community in Olomouc. History, Renowned Figures, Historical Buildings.) Klenovsky, J. - Papousek, M. Olomouc 1998.

Jugend - Erinnerungen eines 78 jährigen und Schilderungen aus dem Prerauer Ghettoleben vom Jahre 1838 bis 1848 published in 1911. (Memories of a 78 year old of life in the Prerau ghetto from 1838 to 1848) Ignatz Briess Sr.

Research by Jaroslav Klenovsky and Julius Muller in Czechia.

Rabbis and Revolution: The Jews of Moravia in the Age of Emancipation. Michael L. Miller Pub. Stanford University Press, California 2011.



America descendants of Rudolf Briess – Ilsa Maier’s children and grandchildren.



David, Rebeka and Miriam Kovacsik in Prague – great great great grandchildren of Rudolf Briess.



Peter Briess, Claire and Peter, Grenada 2008.



Claire with Eva and Milan Novak - visit to NZ 2019.



Otto, Eric, Claire, Marianne, Marietta, Eva Winton, Lizzie Briess, Frank seated centre and dog Nicky - visit of Eric Briess 1965.

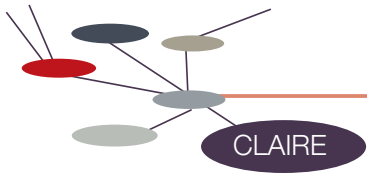


1960 Eric Winton's bar mitzvah. (l-r) Anita, Frank, Ken, Eric, Eva, Lizzie, Marianne and Otto.



*The Schimmerling house
at 69 U Synagogy, Dolní Kounice.*

Ideální plán židovské čtvrti v Dolních Kounicích s čísly popisnými domů, kresba autora



Schimmerling and Brück

Hermann Schimmerling

1.5.1842 to 1.3.1909

Johanna (Hanni) Brück

5.7.1844 to 12.2.1930

Kanitz bei Brünn.

(today Dolní Kounice)

Brück, my Briess grandmother's parents, before they died. Like Chaskel and Miriam Rosenblum they had followed their children to the Jewish areas of Vienna, to the second district known by the pejorative – Matsos Insel – (Matsos Island). The Schimmerlings must have arrived perhaps about 1904 when Rosa, their youngest married and moved to Olmütz to marry Siegfried Briess. The young Rosenblums arrived between 1910 when they married and

1912 when Otto was born.



THE building at Thiergartenstrasse 4/9 in Vienna is a stone's throw from the River Danube. It is in the second district that was mostly populated by Jews in the waning decades of the nineteenth century. It was also very close to Zirkusgasse 21 where Lilly Rosenblum and her siblings spent their childhood and where Jochanan Rosenblum (aka John and Jon) had his tailor's shop. These facts came to light many years later when research showed that our families may well have walked the same streets of Vienna, perhaps even at the same time - the two addresses are a mere 25 minute walk apart. The Thiergartenstrasse building was the last address of Hermann Schimmerling and Johanna



Postcard, Kanitz bei Brünn.

Brück family

The records on the Schimmerling and Brück families are sketchy and confusing.

Johanna (Hanni) Henriette Brück or Brück was born on 5 July 1844 in Kanitz bei Brünn (today Dolní Kounice) to Joseph Löbl Brück and his wife Ester in house no. 69 of the town. It seems she was the youngest of their six children. The records of the Jewish community in Vienna showed she married Hermann Schimmerling, a young baker from Holic in her home town of Kanitz in 1869.

Some years later (1880?) they appear in the census of the town of Rajhrad some 17 kms from Kanitz. At that time the children shown to be living in

The Schimmerling family showing three surviving lines

Joseph Loebi BRÜCK
 b. d. & Ester
 b. d. d. m.

Johanna aka Hanni Henriette BRÜCK
 b. 5 Jul 1844, Kanitz bei Bruenn, Moravia
 d. 12 Feb or Dec 1930, Vienna, Zentral Friedhof, Austria
 & **Hermann (B) SCHIMMERLING**
 b. 1 May 1842, Holic, Moravia
 d. 1 Mar 1909, Vienna, Austria
 m. 1859

Gustav (2) SCHIMMERLING
 b. 21 Mar 1877, Kanitz bei Bruenn, Moravia (or 1976?)
 d. 25 Jul 1912, ZentralFriedhof, Vienna IV Tor Gruppe 50 Reihe 18, 62 AB6A
 & **Henriette (Jetty) SCHIMMERLING**
 b. 28 Aug/Sept 1879, Vienna, Austria
 d. abt 5 Mar 1941, Deported Modliborzcyce Camp, Poland,



Ernestina Löwy-Schimmerling.

Alice (Lizzie) SCHIMMERLING
 b. 23 Mar 1906, Vienna, Austria
 d. c.2006?, Israel
 & **Karl HATSCHKEK**
 b. 21 Mar 1902, Pohrlitz, Moravia, Austro-Hung Empire
 d. 21 Sep 1978, Israel
 m. 9 May 1931, Vienna, Austria

Eilfriede SCHIMMERLING
 b. 8 Jan 1918, Vienna, Austria
 d. 12 Jun 1988, Ramat Hascharon, Israel & **Josef GLICKSMAN (GILAM)**
 b. 14 Oct 1913, Chenstechow, Poland
 d. 14 Dec 2000, Israelm, Kfar Saba

Susanne (Susy) HATSCHKEK
 b. 3 May 1938, Vienna, Austria
 & **Meir BEN JOSEPH**
 d. 1986, Israel
 m. 12 Feb 1962, Tel-Aviv, Israel

Gabriel (Gabi) GILAM
 b. 25 Jan 1944, Tel-Aviv, Israel
 & **Shoshana PRIMAK**
 b. 5 Nov 1944, Jerusalem, Israel

Ruth Miriam (Miri) GLICKSMAN (GILAM)
 b. 5 Dec 1957, Tel-Aviv, Israel
 & **Avshalom ELAZAR**

Abraham (Avremo) GLICKSMAN (GILAM)
 b. 29 Jun 1947, Tel-Aviv, Israel

Tamar (Tamy) BEN JOSEPH
 b. 2 Feb 1963, Jerusalem, Israel
 & **Josef (Yossi) SMANDER**
 b. 17 Aug 1960, Israel?

Guy GILAM
 b. 7 Mar 1975, Tel-Aviv, Israel & **Cynthia**

Gideon (Gidi) GILAM
 b. 9 Feb 1977, Tel-Aviv, Israel
 & **Naama HOFMAN**

Gad(i) GILAM
 b. 5 Dec 1980, Tel-Aviv, Israel & **Avital DOV**
 m. 31 May 2010, Israel

Eylon ELAZAR
 b. 20 Dec 2000

Stav ELAZAR
 b. 24 Jan 2003, Israel

Eynat (Naty) SMANDER
 b. 24 Dec 1988, Jerusalem, Israel & **Natan BIBELNIK**
 b. 18 Feb 1987

Oz SMANDER
 b. 30 Mar 1991, Jerusalem, Israel

Netta SMANDER
 b. 15 Sep 1999

Mika GILAM
 b. 21 Dec 2008, Israel

Idan GILAM
 b. 23 Mar 2011, Israel

Lavy GILAM
 b. 27 Nov 2018, Berlin, Germany

Nadav GILAM
 b. 21 Nov 2011, Israel

Amir GILAM
 b. 8 Jan 2015, Israel, Jerusalem

Ron GILAM
 b. 3 Jul 2020, Palo Alto, California

Yaara BIBELNIK
 b. 24 Jul 2023, Israel

Naomi BIBELNIK
 b. 15 Jul 2021, Israel



Rosa Schimmerling and Siegfried Briess.

Otto SCHIMMERLING
 b. 12 or 28 Feb 1878, Kanitz bei Bruenn, Moravia, Czechoslovakia.
 d. 1943, Mauthausen Concentration Camp & **Ernestina (Erna) LOEWY**
 b. 7 Jan 1886, Biello, (Biala) N.E.Moravia
 d. 1941, Mauthausen Concentration Camp

Rosa (2) SCHIMMERLING
 b. 21 Mar 1880, Kanitz bei Bruenn, Moravia
 d. 23 Nov 1921 or 1.12.1921?, Olmutz, Moravia
 & **Siegfried/Vitezslav BRIESS**
 b. 10 Oct 1871, Prerov, Austria-Hungary
 d. 4 Oct 1942, Teresin Concentration Camp

Herma SCHIMMERLING
 b. 21 Oct 1912, Vienna, Austria
 d. 22 Sep 2012, Milano, Italy
 & **Antonello (1) GERBI**
 b. 15 May 1904, Florence, Italy
 d. 26 Jul 1976, Civenna, Italy
 m. 12 Jan 1940, Lima, Peru

Marianne BRIESS
 b. 11 Jul 1906, Olmütz, Moravia, Austria-Hungary
 d. 25 Jul 1970, Auckland, New Zealand
 & **Otto Ernes/Arnost STRANSKY (STRATTON)**
 b. 10 Jul 1902, Prague, Austro-Hung Empire.
 d. ? 1980, Auckland, New Zealand
 m. 4 May 1930, Olomouc, Czechoslovakia

Frantisek (Frank) BRIESS
 b. 5 Dec 1907, Olomouc, (Olmütz) Moravia
 d. 3 May 1979, Auckland, New Zealand
 & **Alice (Lizzie) LOEWY**
 b. 8 Jul 1912, Luntenburg
 d. 8 Mar 1986, New Zealand
 m. 6 Jun 1937, Czechoslovakia, Bruen

Daniele (Dani) GERBI
 b. 28 Nov 1941, Lima, Peru
 d.
 & **Miram (Myriam) POLACCO**
 b. 29 Apr 1944, Losanna, Switzerland
 d. 8 Oct 2011, Milano, Italy
 m. 26 Apr 1969, Milano, Italy

Alessandro (Sandro) GERBI
 b. 31 Oct 1943, Lima, Peru
 & **Margherita DEZI**
 b. 6 Oct 1952, Torano Nuovo, Teramo, Italy
 m. 5 Mar 1983, Italy

Marietta STRANSKY (STRATTON)
 b. 22 Feb 1932, Prague, Bohemia, Czechoslovakia
 d. 25 Oct 1998, Auckland, New Zealand
 & **Roy MARKHAM**
 b. 16 Mar 1929, Uxbridge, England
 d. 28 Feb 2023, Auckland

Claire Ginette BRIESS
 b. 10 Apr 1947, Auckland, New Zealand
 & **Leslie Peter BRUELL**
 b. 1 Aug 1943, Auckland, New Zealand
 m. 7 Sep 1973, Auckland, New Zealand

Jacopo GERBI
 b. 25 Dec 1970, Milano, Italy

Ester (Etti) GERBI
 b. 18 Mar 1974, Milano, Italy
 & **Jacopo MORESCO**
 b. 15 Oct 1970, Italy

Antonella GERBI
 b. 1 Nov 1976, Seregno, Milano, Italy
 & **Tito**

Martina GERBI
 b. 22 Sep 1984, Milano Italy

Antonello (2) GERBI
 b. 30 Jan 1988, Milano, Italy

Paul Ernest MARKHAM
 b. 28 Nov 1972, Sydney, Australia

Ezra Jon BRUELL
 b. 20 Nov 1976, Auckland, New Zealand &
Yvette Belinda FLEISZIG
 b. 25 Sep 1980, Melbourne, Australia
 m. 23 May 2010, Melbourne, Australia

Anton Frank BRUELL
 b. 14 Dec 1980, Auckland, New Zealand
 & **Vanessa NEWTON WADE**
 b. 17 Nov 1982, Auckland, New Zealand
 m. 15 Jul 2012, Auckland, New Zealand

Rebecca MORESCO
 b. 23 Oct 2007, Italy, Milano

Elia MORESCO
 b. 30 Mar 2012, Monza, Milano

Anita
 b. 11 Sep 2017

Alessandro Jr
 b. 9 Nov 2021, Italy

Lily Alice BRUELL
 b. 21 Sep 2011, Melbourne, Australia

Sofia Emily BRUELL
 b. 26 Sep 2013, Melbourne, Australia

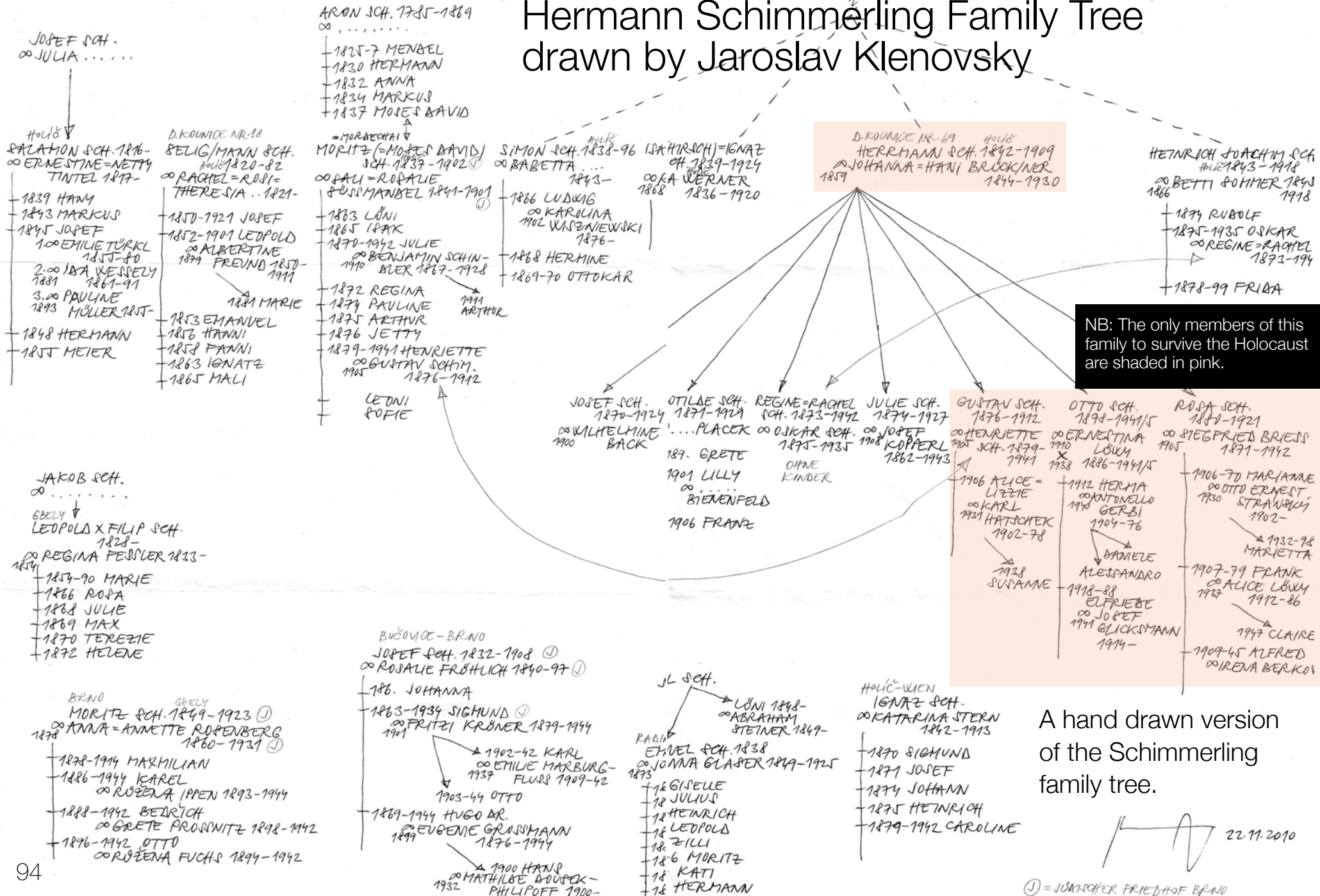
Nate Freddie (Tzvi) BRUELL
 b. 18 Jan 2017, Melbourne, Australia

Isaac David BRUELL
 b. 20 Mar 2015, Auckland, New Zealand

Simon Luke BRUELL
 b. 24 Aug 2017, Auckland, New Zealand

Hermann Schimmerling Family Tree

drawn by Jaroslav Klenovský



NB: The only members of this family to survive the Holocaust are shaded in pink.

A hand drawn version of the Schimmerling family tree.

22.11.2010

① = Jüdischer Friedhof Brno

56 0 29A

Schimmerling Hermann

Charakter: *gew. Bauknecht* Beerdigt am: *3/3 1909*

Alter: *67*

Wohnort: *Thiergartenstrasse 4*

Sterbeort:

Amtvermerk	Tag	Jahr	Belegungen
	<i>12/2</i>	<i>1930</i>	<i>Schimmerling Johanna</i>

Cent. PHA

Meldzettel für Jahresparteien. Pr. Nr. *17/11 1906*

Bezirk *II* Gasse *Zingstergasse*

Vor- und Zuname	Abmeldung	Rückmeldung
<i>Johann Schimmerling</i>	<i>Privat</i>	<i>ausgezogen (ab-</i>
<i>Holie Moravia</i>	<i>im Jahr 1841</i>	<i>geführt) am</i>
<i>Johann Schimmerling</i>	<i>im Jahr 1844</i>	
<i>Johanna Schimmerling</i>	<i>im Jahr 1844</i>	
<i>Bezirk VII</i>	<i>Gasse Neubaugasse</i>	<i>13.11</i>

17. November 1906
Johann Schimmerling

Unterfertigung des Hausbesizers (Hausbesitzer):
Anton Brück

Schimmerling cemetery record Zentralfriedhof, Wien.

Meldezettel (population register). The annual population return for Hermann Schimmerling showing that he was born in Holie, Moravia in 1841 together with his wife Johanna, born 1844. They were residing in the Second District, Vienna in Thiergartenstrasse and it is dated 17 November 1906, previously living in the VII district. Some details are illegible.

Name u. Familienname (Zunahme), Wohnort (Kaufname), Geburtsort und Wohnort	Ge- schlecht	Geburts- jahr	Religion	Familien- stand	Beruf oder Beschäftigung		Geburtsort	Zu- füg
					Kat. Katholisch, Griech. u. d. m. u. d. m. u. d. m.	Wohnt- oder Dienstort		
<i>Schimmerling Hermann</i>	<i>männlich</i>	<i>1841</i>	<i>kat.</i>	<i>ledig</i>	<i>Lehrer</i>	<i>Lehrer</i>	<i>Prag</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Schimmerling Johanna</i>	<i>weiblich</i>	<i>1844</i>	<i>kat.</i>	<i>ledig</i>	<i>Lehrer</i>	<i>Lehrer</i>	<i>Prag</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Schimmerling Johanna</i>	<i>weiblich</i>	<i>1844</i>	<i>kat.</i>	<i>ledig</i>	<i>Lehrer</i>	<i>Lehrer</i>	<i>Prag</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Schimmerling Johanna</i>	<i>weiblich</i>	<i>1844</i>	<i>kat.</i>	<i>ledig</i>	<i>Lehrer</i>	<i>Lehrer</i>	<i>Prag</i>	<i>1</i>

Hermann and Johanna Schimmerling 1869 census Znaim area.

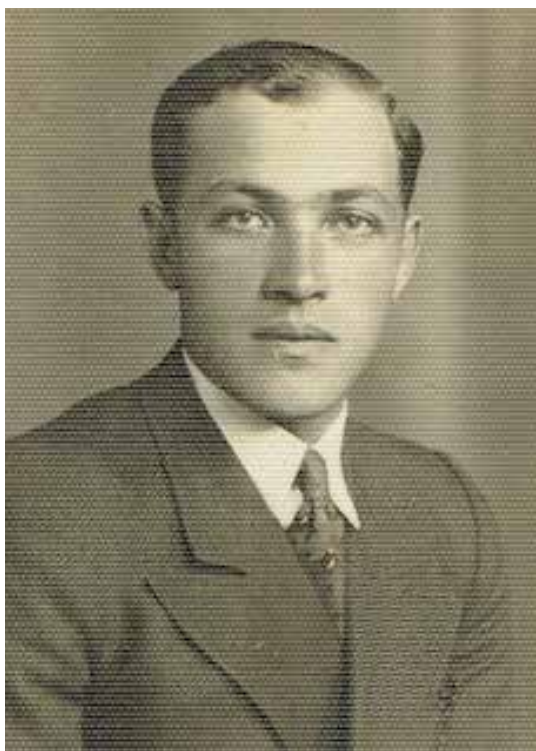
the household were – Josef born 1870, Clodetta/Chlothilde born 1871, Regina 1873, Julie 1874, Gustav 1876, Otto 1878. Rosa, the youngest and my grandmother was born in 1880. Hermann's occupation on the census form is shown as baker. Most of the children married and moved away to Vienna, Rosa to Olmütz when she married grandfather Siegfried Briess and Hermann and Johanna moved to Vienna where they are both buried in the Zentralfriedhof.

Schimmerling Family

The same census record for the town of Rajhrad shows that Hermann was born in Holic on the border between Slovakia and Moravia on 1 May 1842. Holic is located in Western Slovakia. The region is Trnavsky, Skalica district, just over the Moravia/Slovakia border. The name Holic (also Holitsch) refers to a type of earthenware faience made in the area and is near the Morava River. The Morava also flows through Olomouc in the north, running roughly southwards to form the border between Slovakia and Moravia. The Briess and Heller families lived in and around Olmütz.

Other communities are nearby in Egbell (today Gbely) to the SSW in Slovakia, Ung Brod (Ung. Brod) to the NNE over the border in Moravia, and Straznitz (Straznice) to the NE, also in Moravia, Czechia. There were Schimmerlings spread throughout all of these towns and villages. The word –Schimmerling– translates from German as shiny thing.

Holic was always closely connected to the Moravian town of Hodonin, a few kilometres distant and in the 18th century the Hodonin community became one of the largest and most important in Slovakia. In 1751 under the rule of the Habsburg Empress Maria Theresa a generous charter of rights and



Josef Glicksman.



Elfriede Glicksman.

privileges was granted that covered the 63 Jewish families in Holic. A Jewish school was opened in 1784, teaching German studies and religious studies in Hebrew. In 1786 the baroque style synagogue was dedicated next door to the mikva and school.

The Jewish population reached its highest number in 1869, 10 years after Hermann married Johanna in Kanitz. There were 1316 Jews out of a total population of almost 5000 in Holic the same year as their marriage. Later, younger Jews such as Hermann Schimmerling moved away and the Jewish population declined as was typical of what happened in the many other



*Postcard
Dolní
Kounice.*



*(left, above and below) The interior and exterior of
the Dolní Kounice synagogue.*

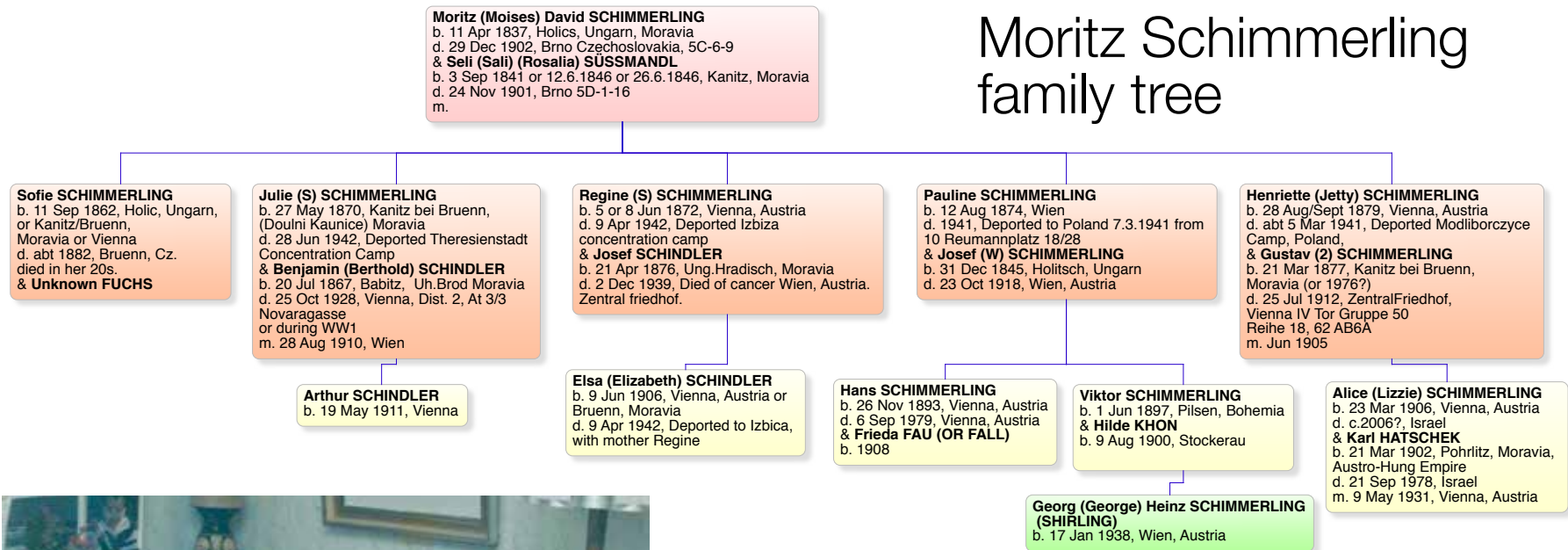


Great grandmother Johanna Schimmerling [née Brück].



Hermann Schimmerling grave in the Zentralfriedhof, Vienna.

Moritz Schimmerling family tree



Susy Hatschek, Lizzie Hatschek (née Schimmerling), Tamy and Eynat Smander.



Gerbis - Herma, Antonello, Dani and Sandro.

SEARCHING FOR IDENTITY: Writing the past into life



Holic 1857.



Haymaking time Frank and Lizzie.



Frank on the farm, Massey, Auckland, 1940.

small communities of the Habsburg realm. The last remaining Jews of Holic died in the Holocaust.

It seems probable family connections drew Hermann to Kanitz bei Brünn, 77kms to the west of Holic on the Moravian side of the border.

Kanitz bei Brünn is a picturesque town about 25km south of Brno in the valley of the Jihlava river. On the western edge of Masaryk Square there is a Jewish synagogue in moorisch-renaissance style from 1652 and it is one of the oldest synagogues in Moravia, recently restored. There used to be a Jewish ghetto around the synagogue; today there are just a few preserved houses. In 1848 there were 650 Jews living in Kanitz. They made up about a quarter of the total population. During World War II all 57 remaining Jewish residents were deported to the concentration camp in Theresienstadt. After the war the synagogue was used as a vegetable warehouse. At present the synagogue is open to the public and cultural events are held there.

Family life

Life in Kanitz in House #69 with seven children born within 11 years, must have been fairly hectic. Electricity in domestic use was still quite some years away and the streets were lit by gaslights. With the children in bed at night it must have been quiet in the town, only the sound of animals to break the still night air. No refrigeration, no washing machines, no vacuum cleaners. Hermann and Johanna, working in a bakery, would have had early nights and very early mornings. With so many people in the Schimmerling household, bathing would probably have been infrequent. Without regular washing in the late 1800s, the strong personal odour of people living in close proximity with one another must have been a given.

Hermann and Johanna's seven children were Josef, Rosa, Otto, Clothilde, Julie, Regina and Gustav.

Josef was married to Wilhelmine Back, living in Olmütz. He was a dealer

in knitted goods and they lived in an elegant flat on the banks of the March (Morava) River.

Otto was married to Ernestina Löwy and lived in Vienna where she operated a dressmaking atelier and he worked as a sales representative for a chocolate factory. They were divorced before the war. Their two daughters Herma and Elfriede escaped the Holocaust to England. Eventually Herma married an Italian, Antonello Gerbi and lived her long post war life in Milano with her two sons Alessandro and Daniele and their five children Jacopo, Esther, Antonella, Antonello and Martina. Elfriede (Freda) went to Israel, married Josef Glicksman and had three children Gabi, Miri and Avremo who now also have children and grandchildren of their own. During the war Antonello was posted to a branch of his employer bank in Lima, Peru where the couple lived for 10 years before returning to Milano. In Israel the name Glicksman changed to Gilam. Since Hermann Schimmerling died in 1909 and Herma was born in 1912 it seems likely that she was named after him, as is Jewish custom.

Clothilde married Richard Platschek and lived in Brünn where she brought up her husband's three children.

Julie married Josef Kopperl who owned a delicatessen shop in Vienna.

Regina married a Schimmerling relation by the name of Oskar who was a jeweller. It appears he may have also come from Holic and may have been the son of one of Hermann's brothers.

Claire's grandmother Rosa lived in Olmütz with Siegfried (Friedl) Briess, the husband she married early in 1904. Sadly she died aged 41, leaving him to care for their three young children who included my father Franz (also Frantisek, Frank), Marianne the oldest and Alfred, the youngest. Probably their youngest married off, in 1904 Hermann and Johanna no longer had any ties to Kanitz so they moved to Vienna to be with the majority of their children.

Gustav, born in 1877 also married a Schimmerling relation and lived in

Vienna. She was Henriette Schimmerling, born 28 August 1879. Henriette and Gustav owned a sweet shop and had a daughter, Lizzie. Lizzie Schimmerling, Gustav's daughter remembered that when some of the parents went on holiday – Grossmama Hanna – came to stay and look after the children (Lizzie and her cousins, Marianne, Franz and Fredy) and she had a pretty difficult time managing them. Lizzie described Rosa as having had an – “advanced progressive attitude” – Lizzie Schimmerling escaped the Holocaust with her young daughter Susy, born 1938. After a time in England they went to live in Israel where Susy and her daughter Tamy now lives with Tamy's husband Yossy and children Naty, Oz and Netta in Jerusalem. Netta is now married with two daughters of her own.



Civenna 2011 Antonella and Ester Gerbi.

What we know from Henriette's Vienna birth record is that her parents were Moritz David Schimmerling and Seli/Sali Süssmandl. Moritz was also born in Holic and Sali's family had been in Kanitz for some time. Sali's parents were Abraham Süssmandl and Elisabeth Steiner.

Miscellaneous Schimmerlings

Regarding the relatives of Hermann we have the following situation: Both Moritz (born 1837) and Hermann (born 1842) were from Holic and both of their wives Johanna (born 1844) and Sali (born 1841) were from Kanitz. Moritz and Sali were just a few years older than Hermann and Johanna – there simply must have been a relationship between them. Either Hermann and Moritz were brothers or perhaps cousins. Whatever the relationship, Moritz, a seller of household products and Sali, lived for a while in the 1860s in Holic where three children were born, then moved to Kanitz.

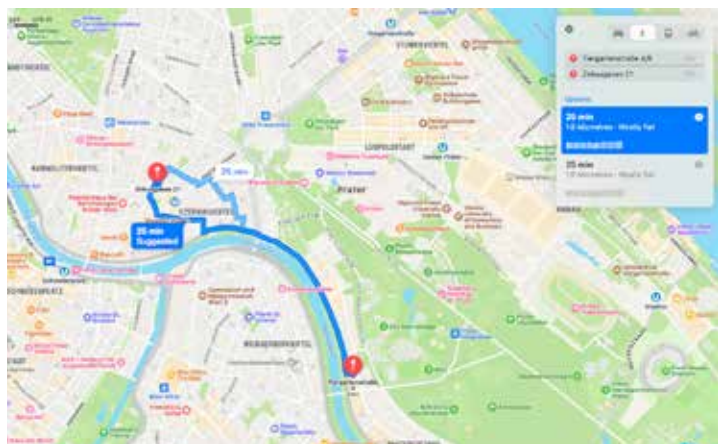
They lived there for a time during the 1870s, (judging by the birth details of some of their children) but moved to Vienna where they appear on the 1881 census. By 1882 they were in Brünn where they lived till their deaths. A son, Arthur, died in his 20s in Brünn.

Moritz and Sali (also known as Rosalie) had nine children in total and here it gets complicated as some of the names they gave their children were also given to Hermann and Johanna's children. Sali died in Brünn in 1901 when her daughter Henriette, was only 22. We met Henriette and Gustav's daughter Lizzie Schimmerling (Hatschek) in Jerusalem in 1992. She lived to be over 100 years old and remembered meeting Herma, then a young child, while still in Vienna before the war.

One of the oldest of Moritz and Sali's children was Sofie. She was born in Holic and died shortly before her wedding and her trousseau was divided amongst her four sisters Julie, Regine, Pauline and Henriette. Julie was married to Benjamin Schindler who worked in silver in Vienna and his brother Josef married Julie's sister Regine. He was a railway clerk also in Vienna. The four sisters and their families in Vienna were very close. It seems that most of the surviving descendants of Hermann and Johanna died in the Holocaust, except Herma, Elfriede, Lizzie Hatschek, my father Franz/Frank Briess and his sister Marianne Stransky. Of Moritz and Sali's larger family, the only known descendant alive at the end of the war was Lizzie Hatschek with her daughter Susy.

The State District Archives of Bratislava found many Schimmerling records in Holic, but only two records for a Hermann Schimmerling, one who was





The map of Vienna showing the short walk from the Schimmerling home in Thiergartenstrasse 4/9 to the Rosenblum's address at Zirkusgasse 21.



Daniele, Claire and Sandro – cousins.



Gerbi cousins Jacopo, Ester, and Antonella.



Daniele Gerbi and Claire.



Jacopo and Ester Moresco, Antonella and Jacopo Gerbi 2011.



Gabi Gilam and grandchildren, Israel, 2015.



*Schimmerling cousins
Claire, Gabi Gilam
and Daniele Gerbi
with Peter and Shosh.*

born in 1830 and the other in 1848. The one born in 1848 certainly was not the man who married Johanna in 1859 and the one born in 1830 would have been too old.

As far as Moritz David is concerned, the archives report that he and his wife Sali Süssmandel were living in Holic in the early 1860s. Later they moved to Kanitz, then Vienna. Certainly they moved around between Holic, Kanitz, Vienna and Brünn, a relatively small geographical area.

Moritz is connected to Stu Cooper's large Schimmerling tree but we were never able to work out how. Since we have no proof that Hermann and Moritz were related, we cannot say with conviction that our family is connected to that tree, despite our best efforts to find out. Trying to unravel the Vienna records about Schimmerlings is a minefield since there were so many of them and many names are the same and records contradictory. However my DNA results show a connection to some Schimmerlings on Stu Cooper's large tree and DNA doesn't lie.

Although extensive research has been done on the Brück family and many of them appear in the records of Dolní Kounice/Kanitz, there is no mention of Johanna's birth or marriage and therefore no information on any parents, siblings or other family other than on the census form.

Sali Süssmandel's family had been in Kanitz for generations. Father Abraham, born in 1815 was burgermeister (mayor) of the town some time between 1849 and 1900 and is shown on a list of synagogue seat holders



Herma Gerbi, daughter of Johanna Schimmerling who was Frank's cousin.

in Kanitz between 1821 and 1873. In the 1857 census in Kanitz he is shown living at house #23, giving details of his wife Elisabeth Steiner, mother Katharina born 1770 and son Leopold born 1848.

There is a Jewish cemetery in Dolní Kounice just beside the synagogue where there are about 1500 gravestones. ■

Resources:

Birth, Death and Marriage records, Vienna.

Census 1880 Rajhrad, Moravia.

Letters from Lizzie Hatschek describing the Schimmerling cousins.

Family tree by Jaorslav Klenovsky.

Translation of – *Holic* – chapter from *Pinkas Hakebillot* Slovakia published by Yad Vashem 2003.

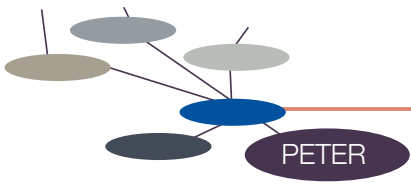
Photographs and research by Jiri Osanec and Jaroslav Klenovsky.

Rabbis and Revolution: The Jews of Moravia in the Age of Emancipation. Michael L. Miller Pub. Stanford University Press California 2011.

Letter dated 10.8.2000 from Magistrat der Stadt Wien re their records for the Schimmerling family.



Helen, Trude, Hans, Fritz and Eva Brüll c. 1916.



Brüll and Hoffman/Hofmann

Simon Brüll	29 June 1833- 1918
Louise (aka Eleonora) Hoffman	15 June 1841 -1928
Znaim	(today Znojmo)

looking for him. He had painstakingly documented the Jewish graves in the dilapidated cemetery and had put the names online in a database. He raced down to the cemetery on his bicycle and excitedly showed us the obscured graves.

The Jews of Znaim and their community

The Jewish population of the city began to grow after 1848 when Jews gained freedom of movement. In 1861 only 136 Jews were counted in Znaim whereas by 1869 the congregation had grown to 360 people. The Jewish area became established on the site of what had been the two streets comprising the Jewish ghetto in the Middle Ages. The reestablished Jewish area spread over Grosse Frohlichergasse, where House no.15 was owned by Peter's great uncle Arthur and his wife Friedericke. Here, House no. 1, had been owned by Simon and Louisa Brüll. Fröhlich translates into English as "happy" which perhaps alludes to the fact that brothels for the king and his entourage were located in these streets during the seventeenth century.



HOPE for a brighter future brought Simon and Louise Brüll to Znaim. They married on 23 June 1867 in Brünn (today Brno) and lived their married lives in Znaim to the south of Brünn near the Austrian border. They joined the influx of young Jews flocking to the newly formed Jewish community in Znaim. Their first child Maximilian was born in Znaim in 1868.

Serendipity played a part in bringing Peter and me to Znaim. A reference to a website of Jewish burials in Znaim led us to find the graves of Simon and Louise, Peter's great grandparents, and we visited them with Ing. Jaroslav Klenovsky in 2003.

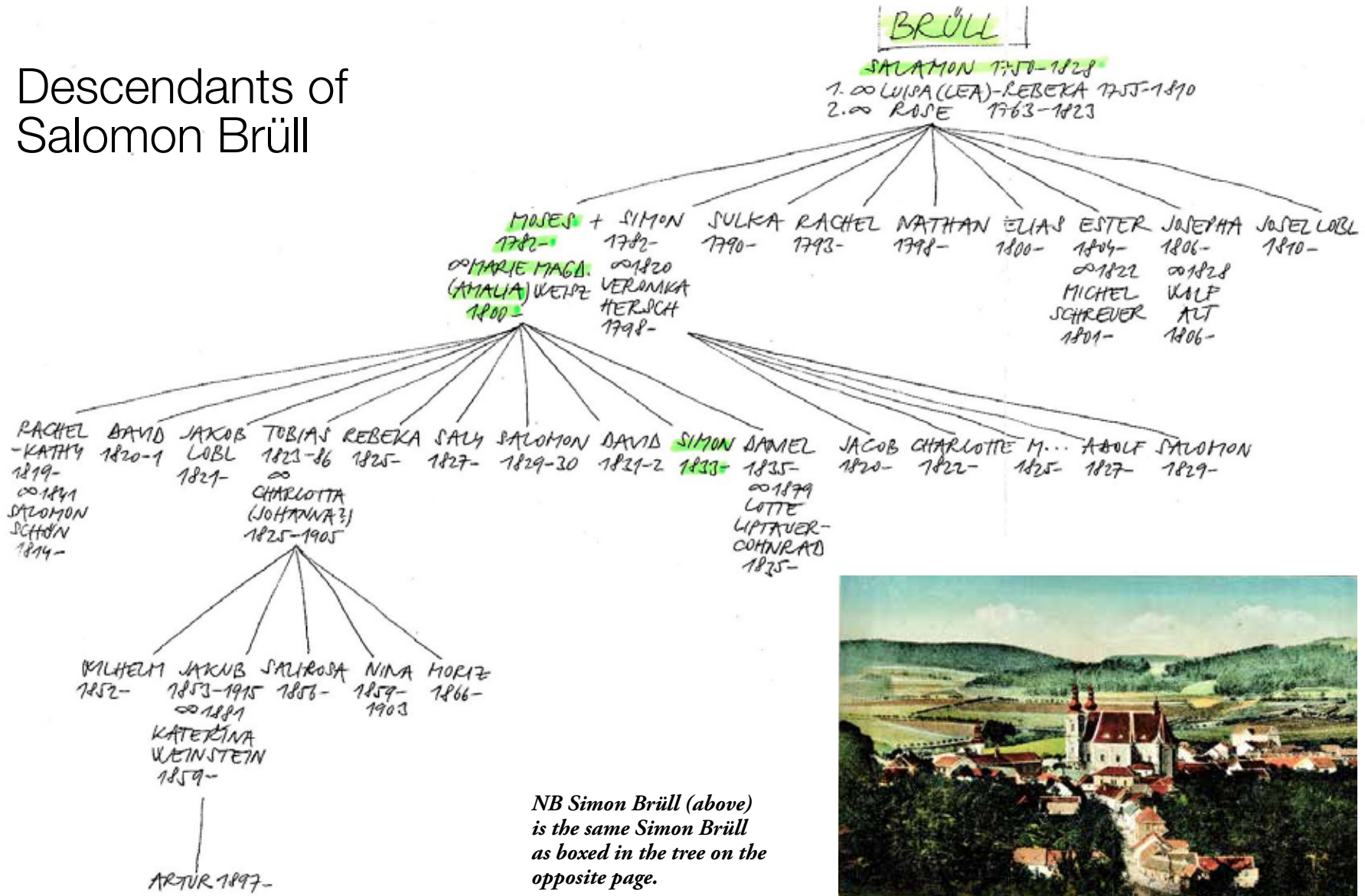
The headstones, set against the cemetery wall and with the barest details, had been mostly obscured by lichen and undergrowth. It was a strange feeling to think we were probably the first family to visit the graves since the war. Amazingly, we had only located them with the help of a young non Jewish journalist from Prague who had originally come from Znojmo. He had been home in Znojmo for the weekend when we came



Luise Brüll, née Hoffman. Photograph from Hugo Gold's book.

Religious services in the town were not held until 1858. In 1870 the Jewish community was granted the right to form a Kultusgemeinde (community centre) and in 1888 a new synagogue was built. At that time there were 160 families, including Simon and Louise and their children while 120 lived in the town and the rest in the outlying areas. The new synagogue was built in the Moorish style. The Jewish women's charity gave beautiful curtains and an altar cloth as

Descendants of Salomon Brüll



NB Simon Brüll (above) is the same Simon Brüll as boxed in the tree on the opposite page.



Postcard of Lomnice 1916.

Descendants of Simon Brüll and Louise Hoffman

Simon BRILL
 b. 29 Jun 1833, Gewitsch, Moravia, A/H Empire (or 3.7.1833? or 1835)
 d. 1918, Znaim, Moravia
& Louise aka Eleonora HOFFMANN
 b. 15 Jun 1841, Lomnitz (Lomnice) Moravia, nr Tischnowitz
 d. 1928, Znaim, Moravia
 m. 23 Jun 1867, Bruenn, Moravia

Arthur BRÜLL
 b. 12 Mar 1872, Znaim, Moravia,
 d. 25 Jul 1943, Terezin concentration camp
& Friedricke (Fritzi) (Bedriska) ZEISEL
 b. 9 Sep 1877, Guerein, (bein Tischnowitz) Moravia
 d. 15 Dec 1943, Auschwitz
 m. 13 Apr 1902, Bruenn, Moravia

Maximilian BRUELL
 b. 27 Sep 1868, Znaim, Moravia
 d. 21 Sep 1942, Treblinka?
& Marie HUSSERL
 b. 13 Mar 1878, Wien
 d. 21.9.1942?, Treblinka

Otto BRUELL
 b. 3 Mar 1870, Znaim, Moravia, Austro-Hung Empire
 d. 13 May 1915, Landes-Irrenanstalt, Brünn,
& Helene SOMMER
 b. 10 Oct 1881, Tarnov, Galicia? Or 3.8.1881?
 d. 3 Feb 1965, Auckland, New Zealand
 m. 4 Aug 1903, Linz, Austria

Frederick (Fritz) BRUELL
 b. 23 Oct 1910, Brno, Moravia
 d. 16 Dec 1996, Auckland, New Zealand
& Lilly ROSENBLUM
 b. 23 Jun 1914, Vienna, Austria
 d. 11 Apr 1998, Auckland New Zealand
 m. 12 Apr 1938, Vienna, Austria

Gertrude (Trude) BRUELL
 b. 19 Oct 1904, Znaim, Moravia
 d. ca 1985, Linz, Austria
& Theodore GRILL
 b. 15 Oct 1902, Bad Ischl, Austria
 d. 6 Aug 1986, Linz, Austria
 m. 1929, Austria

Eva BRUELL
 b. 7 Dec 1912, Bruenn, Moravia
 d. 25 Oct 1937, Linz, Austria

Hans BRUELL
 b. 30 Jun 1906, Znaim, Moravia
 d. 29 Dec 1969, Israel
& Elsa (Elisheva) ROSENBERG
 b. 18 Sep 1907, Vienna, Austria
 d. 1971, Natania, Israel
 m. ca 1927, Vienna, Austria

Hans BRUELL
 b. 30 Jun 1906, Znaim,
 d. 29 Dec 1969, Israel
& Eitel STEIN
 b. 23 Dec 1899, Romania
 d. 10 Apr 1978, Israel
 m. 1929, Israel

Walter BRUELL
 b. 5 Feb 1903, Znaim
 d. 10 Apr 1938, Bruenn
 Kurt Bruell
 b.7 Oct 1909 Znaim
 d. Transferred to Lodz 28.10.1941

Charles (Karl) BRULL
 b. 21 Oct 1905, Vienna, Austria
 d. 29 Dec 1976, Sydney, Australia
& Joan DIAMANT
 d. 13 Nov 1992, Sydney, Australia

Ronald David BRUELL
 b. 4 Dec 1941, Auckland

Leslie Peter BRUELL
 b. 1 Aug 1943, Auckland, NZ
& Claire Ginette BRIESS
 b. 10 Apr 1947, Auckland, NZ
 m. 7 Sep 1973, Auckland, NZ

Lorraine Eve BRUELL
 b. 11 Aug 1945, Auckland
& Irving GORDON
 b. 26 May 1942, Hull, England
 d. 10 Sep 2014, Sydney Australia
 m. 17 Sep 1973,

Uri BRUELL
 b. 5 Jul 1938, Israel
 d. Apr 1976, Natania, Israel
& Miriam MAGEN
 b. 6 Aug 1945, Israel
 m. ca 1965, Israel

Jehoshua (Shi'ie) BRUELL (BAR-EYAL)
 b. 9 Nov 1930, Zernovich, Romania
& Miriam BRUNN
 b. 29 Jan 1933, Uh.Hradisch, Moravia
 m. 17 Jun 1952, Israel

Vivienne BRULL
 b. 1946, Sydney?

Ezra Jon BRUELL
 b. 20 Nov 1976, Auckland, New Zealand
& Yvette Belinda FLEISZIG
 b. 25 Sep 1980, Melbourne, Australia
 m. 23 May 2010, Melbourne, Australia

Anton Frank BRUELL
 b. 14 Dec 1980, Auckland, New Zealand
& Vanessa NEWTON WADE
 b. 17 Nov 1982, Auckland, New Zealand
 m. 15 Jul 2012, Auckland, New Zealand

Natalie GORDON
 b. 6 Oct 1977, Sydney,
& Leigh PACEY

Daniel GORDON
 b. 13 May 1980, Sydney, Australia
& Lisa MITCHELL
 b. 22 Jan 1981, Sydney

Roni BRUELL
 b. 13 Jan 1968, Israel
& Eran ZALCMAN
 b. 26 Mar 1968, Israel.

Vered BAR-EYAL
 b. 16 Nov 1958, Shaar-Chefer, Israel
& David DADON
 b. 6 Apr 1958, Bath-Yam, Israel
 m. 16 Nov 1981, Beit Izhak, Israel

Neta BAR-EYAL aka SHINE
 b. 2 Sep 1962, Shaar-Chefer, Israel
& Gil SHEIN
 b. 8 Sep 1960, Israel
 m. 18 Jun 1984, Tel-Kazir, Israel

Osnat BAR-EYAL
 b. 17 Jun 1956, Israel
& Ran KENEDY
 b. 22 Nov 1954, Israel

Lily Alice BRUELL
 b. 21 Sep 2011, Melbourne, Australia
 Sofia Emily
 b.26.9.2013 Melbourne
 Nate Freddie Bruell
 b.18 Jan 2017 Melbourne.

Isaac David BRUELL
 b. 20 Mar 2015, Auckland,
 Simon Luke Bruell
 b.24 Aug 2017

Alexander Jacob PACEY
 b. 7 Aug 2014, Sydney

Charlie Cooper GORDON
 b. 24 Oct 2015, Randwick, Sydney
 Georgia b.2 Dec 2018 Sydney

Naamah ZALCMAN
 b. 11 Aug 1998, United States
 Maya b.3 Apr 2003
 Uri b.26 Sep 2008

Kineret DADON
 b. 16 Feb 1985, Israel
& Ronen REFAELI
 b. 2 Aug 1975, Israel
 m. 31 Mar 2016, Israel
 Maayan Dadon
 b.27 Jul 1988
 m.Yaniv Freiberg
 b.27 Apr 1988
 Roel Dadon
 b.12 Oct 1992
 Amit Dadon
 b. 1986?

Oded SHEIN
 b. 7 Feb 1988, Israel
& Krista PORNICIE
 m. Aug 2015, CYPRUS?

Inbar KENEDY
 b. 6 Jun 1980, Israel
& KUBI
 Niv Kubi
 b.30 Sep 1982
 Mor Kenedy
 b.9 Aug 1987

Connected to the tree on the previous page. highlighted in green.

Gewitsch/Jevícko, Moravia

Map of the Jewish ghetto in Gewitsch (today Jevícko) showing the synagogue, school and the old Jewish cemetery. The Brüll family lived in Gewitsch before Simon married and moved with his wife Lousie to Znaim.



well as lighting fixtures and in 1889 the first marriage took place there.

There were two charitable societies operating under the auspices of the community – a chevra kaddisha to look after matters to do with death and dying and a women’s welfare and benevolent society headed by Louise for 47 years which gained for her a mention in Hugo Gold’s famous book on the Jewish communities of Moravia. Her photograph is one of the very few photographs of women in this book. She was apparently always willing to bring help to the needy and the poor, working particularly hard for the society during times of war when refugees needed assistance and resources had to be stretched significantly.

Since most of the Jews in the town were merchants, it is likely this was also Simon’s occupation. The town was known for its cucumber production and again it seems likely Simon was involved in this business. Son Artur appeared in the Znaim census in 1900 with his wife Friedricke living in what was previously the Jewish ghetto area in the Middle Ages.

During our visit we walked through the old part of the town and were able to visit the remains of the mikveh. It was a strange feeling to imagine Louise visiting here each Shabbat.

Maximilian and Marie Brüll

Vienna was the home city of Maximilian, the oldest of the three sons, and his wife Marie Hussler before World War II. A bank employee, he was deported to Theresienstadt with Marie and from there to Treblinka where they both were killed. Their son Charles (Karl) born 1905, escaped to Sydney where he married and worked as a manufacturer, dying in 1976. We know something of their sad final years from reading the Declaration of Assets made by Maximilian and Marie under a law of 27 April 1938 requiring Jews to list all their property. On examination of their assets, it did not appear they were well off, however I note that he did not declare the Swiss Bank account we learned

about many years after the war. Sadly Maximilian filed a Change of Circumstances declaration stating he had had to cash up some of his investments in order to support his son Karl and his wife and her mother as well, as Karl had lost his income. His loan to Karl meant half his house and half of his cinema/theatre became aryanised (taken by the Germans). His assets had been reduced and he asked the tax office to take into account his reduced situation. How difficult it must have been, living under these circumstances.

Otto and Helen Brüll

The record of Otto’s army service obtained from the Military Historical Archive in Prague, shows that Otto entered army service in 1890 and served for three years; his hair, eyes and eyebrows were black, height 1.71 metres. He served in the Reserves for a further seven years, “K und K Corps-Artillerie-Regiment” (Kaiserlich und Königlich, meaning the Imperial Empire of Austria and Hungary), Verwaltungs commission (Administrative section). Otto married Helene Sommer in Linz in the summer of 1903. Linz was the home city of the bride Helen(e). Otto and Helen lived in Brünn where Otto had a job as a sales representative for a porcelain factory. The family lived at Beischlägergasse 15, until Otto’s death in 1915. Helen and her four children including, Peter’s father Fritz (Fred), then went to live in Linz, Austria, where she had grown up. Living in Linz meant she had family support available. Geographically it is quite close to Znaim, perhaps an hour’s travel away.

Arthur and his wife Friedericke Zeissel

Arthur, the youngest of the sons, lived in Znaim where he worked in the pickled cucumber trade, possibly taking over a business from his father. I have no proof of this – only that it would have been a typical situation in a Jewish family where the whole family worked together in business.

Both the older boys had left Znaim and Arthur was the youngest son, the only one remaining to take over his father’s business.



Jewish cemetery Gewitsch.



The graves of Luise and Simon Brüll, Znaim (restored).



Postcards from Znam with views over the town and the cucumber market.



Maximilian Brüll's transport card to Theresienstadt.



Fritz Brüll travel pass, page 2.

SEARCHING FOR IDENTITY: Writing the past into life

Nr.	Name	Geburtsjahr	Geburtsort	Beruf	Dienst der Bevölkerung		Schulort	Jahreszahl	Zustand	Dienst	Bemerkung
					Von	Bis					
1	Hoffman, Josef	1877	Mährisch	Lehrer	1914	1918	Prag	1	1		
2	Langl, Josef	1877	Mährisch	Lehrer	1914	1918	Prag	1	1		
3	Widmann, Josef	1876	Mährisch	Lehrer	1914	1918	Prag	1	1		
4	Florschütz, Josef	1875	Mährisch	Lehrer	1914	1918	Prag	1	1		
5	Šteinhilber, Josef	1875	Mährisch	Lehrer	1914	1918	Prag	1	1		
6	Šteinhilber, Josef	1875	Mährisch	Lehrer	1914	1918	Prag	1	1		
7	Šteinhilber, Josef	1875	Mährisch	Lehrer	1914	1918	Prag	1	1		
8	Šteinhilber, Josef	1875	Mährisch	Lehrer	1914	1918	Prag	1	1		
9	Šteinhilber, Josef	1875	Mährisch	Lehrer	1914	1918	Prag	1	1		
10	Šteinhilber, Josef	1875	Mährisch	Lehrer	1914	1918	Prag	1	1		
11	Šteinhilber, Josef	1875	Mährisch	Lehrer	1914	1918	Prag	1	1		
12	Šteinhilber, Josef	1875	Mährisch	Lehrer	1914	1918	Prag	1	1		
Zusammen		11			11	11		11	11		

Hoffman census Lomnitz.



Lomnitz, Hoffman building.



Postcard of Znaim (Znojmo).

Meldezettel für Mieter.		
Znaim, Kamenčarova Nr. 31, 1. St. 8		
Mr. and Name	Walter Brüll	Name der Eltern:
Profession and Address	Handlungsgehilfe	Mr. and Name:
When, City, Street and No. for Birth	5.2.03, Znaim, Kamenčarova	Walter Brüll
Parents, Street and No. for Birth	Znaim	Anna Brüll
Religion and Race	Mosaisch	Fritz Brüll
Mr. and Name of Parents	Arthur and Fritzi Brüll	Address:
When and City of Birth	5.2.1903, Znaim	
Profession	Sales Employee	
Znaim, am 9. 1. 1921		

Meldezettel (population register) showing Walter Brüll, sales employee in Znaim, "Mosaisch" meaning Jewish. Born 5.2.1903, parents Arthur and Fritzi Brüll dated 19/4/1921.



Brüll house (white) in Znam.



Lomnitz – showing houses in the Jewish ghetto (top left), the synagogue and the school.



Beischlägergasse 15 - the home of Otto and Helen Brüll née Sommer where Fred Brüll was born in Brno.

Name		Religion	Charakter oder Beschäftigung	Geburtstag	Geburtsort	Anmerkung
Geburts-Tag und Jahr	Ort, Pfarre, Bezirk, Land					
Familienhaupt						
Simon Brüll						Wohnungsgewinnl. b. 27. 12. 1871 gest. 1902 jenseits begraben?
29/6 1833	Gemitsch Lfd. Th. Trnava prof.	unf. prof.	Agnes	23/6 1867	Brno	
Gehattin						
Louise geb. Hoffmann						
15/6 1841	Lomnitz Lfd. Tischowitz prof.	unf. prof.	Friedrich		Th.	

Matrik Znaim
 Simon Brüll b. 29. 6. 1833
 M. Brno 23. 6. 1867
 born in Gemitsch?
 heissa Hoffmann b. 6. 1841
 Kommitz, Tischowitz?
 selb Maximilian b. 27. 9. 1868
 Znaim

Simon Brüll Matrik Znaim – population register.

Arthur was killed at Theresienstadt Concentration Camp and Friedericke in Auschwitz. Their son Walter, a travelling salesman, died in Brünn on 10 April 1938. Their second son Kurt was shown as a car mechanic in the records from Lodz ghetto where he died in 1941. It appears he was living in Vienna before the war as he was deported from there.

The Brüll ancestors from Gewitsch (today Jevicko)

To achieve a sense of where Simon and Louise had come from we took a day trip from Brno with Jaroslav Klenovsky. Jaroslav had found out for us that Simon had five brothers and three sisters and they had all been born in Gewitsch, between 1819 and 1831. Moses, Simon's father is shown as a tradesman living at House #30 with his wife Amalia Weisz. Amalia came from Eibenschitz (Ivancice). Moses's parents were Salomon Brüll (also Bril) (1750 to 1828) and Luisa Rebeka (1755 to 1810). Salomon had been a Familiant no.66 living in House #19. We have the name adoption papers dated 1788 for Salomon Brüll and his brother Daniel Brüll. Their previous names had been Sallomon Jacob Lob and Daniel Jacob Lob before the compulsory taking of German family names by law 1788. Moses had four sisters and four brothers.

Under the Familliants Laws, Gewitsch was permitted to have 138 Jewish families. In 1830 there were 776 Jews there and the number rose to 989 in 1848 and declined thereafter. A fire in 1869 destroyed the main part of the Jewish ghetto and many Jews abandoned the town. In 1939 the remainder of the Jews were deported to concentration camps. The synagogue is now used as a Hussite church. All that is left of the cemetery is a sad looking little group of old Hebrew-inscribed headstones fenced off under a tree. Apparently they are regularly vandalised. (See P110)

As Salomon had been a Familiant, his oldest son would have inherited this status so it would have passed to Moses. Moses's son Simon however, as a later born son, would not have inherited the Familiant position and by the time of his marriage in 1867 the system would have been abolished in any case.

The Hoffmans from Lomnitz

Olomouc lies 23 miles to the east of Jevicko and Lomnice is 21 miles to the southwest of Olomouc. Brno is 18 miles SSE of Lomnice. The Jews were thought to have come to Lomnitz from nearby Lysice between 1710 and 1720.

The Jews of Lomnitz were manufacturers of woollen goods, textiles and linen that were brought to the markets under the trademark "made in Lomnitz". Washing of wool was also a profitable business, as well as tanning. Louise's Hoffman family were involved in the wool and textile manufacture in Lomnitz. Her parents were Markus and Katharina Hoffman. Markus is shown in the records as having been born in 1795 and his father was Jacob (1770-1822). Jacob's occupation is shown as 'tuchmachermeister', a master textile manufacturer. Markus requested permission to marry in 1833 and by the time of the 1880 census Markus is shown living in Znaim with Simon and Louise.

There are a number of Jewish buildings and sites in Lomnice from which it is easier to imagine Jewish life there 200 years ago than in most places. The old cemetery stands on a grassy hillside with almost 1000 tombstones, the oldest of which dates back 200 years. The Jewish quarter has a complex of 35 houses and a late Baroque synagogue from about 1780-85. It was reconstructed and now operates as a community cultural and social center. The mikveh and the school stand as a testament to different times.

Simon and Louise, like so many young Jews took advantage of the new freedoms and moved to Znaim, where they became active in the newly revived Jewish community. In the same way two of their three children moved to the bigger cities of Brünn and Vienna as many of their contemporaries did, hoping for a better life. There was more economic promise, the result of easier and increased transport and new business opportunities coupled with expanded industrial activity. Widespread literacy and a relatively settled political environment also characterised this period. All of these factors contributed to make the last decades of the twentieth century an era of development and

SEARCHING FOR IDENTITY: Writing the past into life

prosperity. This shift in population to the larger centres meant the decline of the smaller towns such as Gewitsch and Lomnitz. ■

Resources

Census records Znaim.

Die Juden und Judengemeinden Mährens in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart ed. Hugo Gold, Jüdischer Buch und Kunstverlag, Brünn ed. Hugo Gold. 1929.

Photographs and research by Jiri Osanec and Jaroslav Klenovsky.

Rabbis and Revolution: The Jews of Moravia in the Age of Emancipation. Michael L. Miller Pub. Stanford University Press, California 2011.

Military Archive, Prague <https://www.vuapraha.cz/>

Arolsen Archives, Germany.



202 of 317

Vor Ausfüllung des Vermögensverzeichnisses ist die beigefügte Anleitung genau durchzulesen!

Zur Beachtung!

1. Wer hat das Vermögensverzeichnis auszufüllen?
Jeder Vermögensbesitzer, also auch jeder Ehepartner und jedes Kind für sich. Die unter nachstehende Rubrik ist das Vermögensverzeichnis zum Ende der steuerlichen Periode über den vom Verwalter angegebene.
2. Bis wann ist das Vermögensverzeichnis abzugeben?
Die zum 30. Juni 1938. Das amtliche und berufliche Verzeichnis ist aber für Vermögen- und Erbschaftssteuer nicht über mehr als ein Jahr zurück zu führen. Es ist jedoch über die letzten drei Jahre (1935/36, 1936/37, 1937/38) die Vermögensverhältnisse anzugeben.
3. Wie ist das Vermögensverzeichnis auszufüllen?
Es müssen sämtliche Gegenstände angegeben werden. Nichtverfügbare sind zu verzeichnen. Falls der in dem Vermögensverzeichnis angegebene Name nicht mit dem in dem amtlichen Register übereinstimmt, ist dies anzugeben.
4. Wenn Zweifel bestehen, ob nicht oder jene Werte in dem Vermögensverzeichnis aufgeführt werden müssen, sind die Werte anzugeben.

38792

Verzeichnis über das Vermögen von Juden
nach dem Stand vom 27. April 1938

von *Maximilian Brüll* (Name des Steuerpflichtigen)
in *Wien III, Karmelgasse 5* (Ort, Ortsgemeinschaft)

Angaben zur Person

Sie sind geboren am *27/IX 1868* in *Kraupitz* (Geburtsort).
Sie sind Jude (§ 5 der Ersten Verordnung zum Reichsbürgergesetz vom 14. November 1935, Reichsgesetzl. I S. 1333) und — deutscher — (Staatsangehörigkeit) — *österreichischer* — (Staatsangehörigkeit) — (Geburtsort) —
Da ich — Jude deutscher Staatsangehörigkeit — (Geburtsort) — bin, habe ich in dem nachstehenden Vermögensverzeichnis mein gesamtes inländisches und ausländisches Vermögen angegeben und bewertet.
Das in dem Vermögensverzeichnis angegebene Vermögen ist dasjenige, das mir zum 27. April 1938 zugehört hat.
Ich bin verheiratet mit *Anna Brüll geb. Hlasek* (Ehepartnerin im Ehestand).
Mein Ehepartner ist der Halle nach — *österreichischer* — (Geburtsort) — und gehört der *mosaischen* (Religionsgemeinschaft) an.

Angaben über das Vermögen

I. **Land- und forstwirtschaftliches Vermögen** (vgl. Anlage 20, II):
Wenn Sie am 27. April 1938 land- und forstwirtschaftliches Vermögen besitzen (spezielles Verzeichnis s. Zgl. und nur aufzuführen, wenn aus der Beschreibung hinreichende Angaben über das Vermögen zu entnehmen sind):

Trage das eigene oder gepachtete Betriebs- und keine Rechte in Abzehr?	Wirt des eigenen oder gepachteten Betriebs?	Arbeitslohn ist an einen eigenen Betrieb oder an eine Pachtung?	Wert des Betriebs?	Ursprüngliches Vermögen (Vermögen zum 27. April 1938) (s. Anlage 20, I, 2)
1	2	3	4	5

II. **Grundvermögen (Grund und Boden, Gebäude)** (vgl. Anlage 20, III):
Wenn Sie am 27. April 1938 Grundvermögen besitzen (Grundstücke, die nicht ja dem verbleibenden unter I und nachfolgend unter III bezeichneten Vermögen gehören):

Trage das Grundstück?	Wirt des Grundstückes?	Wert des Grundstückes?	Ursprüngliches Vermögen (Vermögen zum 27. April 1938) (s. Anlage 20, I, 2)
1	2	3	4

3. **Städtevermögen** (s. Anlage 20, IV):
Wohnvermögen (s. Anlage 20, IV, 1, II)

Maximilian Brüll's Asset Declaration, pursuant to a law of 27 April 1938.

Aerial view of Lomnitz synagogue.

Unterabtheilungs-Grundbuchsblatt.

4485

Haupt-Grundbuchs-Heft (Alten-Jahrgang)		1890	Blatt-Nr.	117	
Vor- und Zuname <i>Otto Brüll</i>					
Ort	Znaim	Ortsgemeinde	Znaim	Geburtsjahr	1870
Bezirk	Ho	Bezirk	Ho	Religion	evangelisch
Comitat		Comitat		Stand, Gewerbe, sonstiger Lebensberuf	Lehrer
Land	Mähren	Land	Mähren		

Identifiziert *physisch* am *27. Juli 1890* freiwillig auf drei Jahre in der Linie, sieben Jahre in der Reserve und zwei Jahre in der Landwehr zum Infanterie-Regimente Nr. 1

Eingereicht *21. Juli 1890*

Personals-Beschreibung

Wachse	<i>blond</i>	Rund	<i>gerade</i>	Gehehrt	<i>ja</i>
Augen	<i>blau</i>	Rinn	<i>gerade</i>	Spricht	<i>deutsch</i>
Augenbrauen	<i>blau</i>	Angesicht	<i>gerade</i>	Schreibt	<i>deutsch</i>
Haar	<i>blond</i>	Besondere Merkmale	<i>keine</i>	Abdruckmaß in Finger	<i>14</i>
		Erwünschte Gewandarten	<i>keine</i>	Größensclasse der Fußbekleidung	<i>14</i>

Veränd

Charge	Beränderung	im Jahre
erbkannnen	eingetruht eingetruht	1890
Wittgen	Wittgen	1890

Otto Brüll - landwehr Factory owner - volubles - black hair, brown eyes - mainly nose - chin well long face - volubles - speaks German / Czech - speaks German

Military record Otto Brüll.

1b.

Land *Mähren* Bezirk *Znaim*

1870 Census, Znaim 1870
b. Gumbach - Jovitch

Anzeige

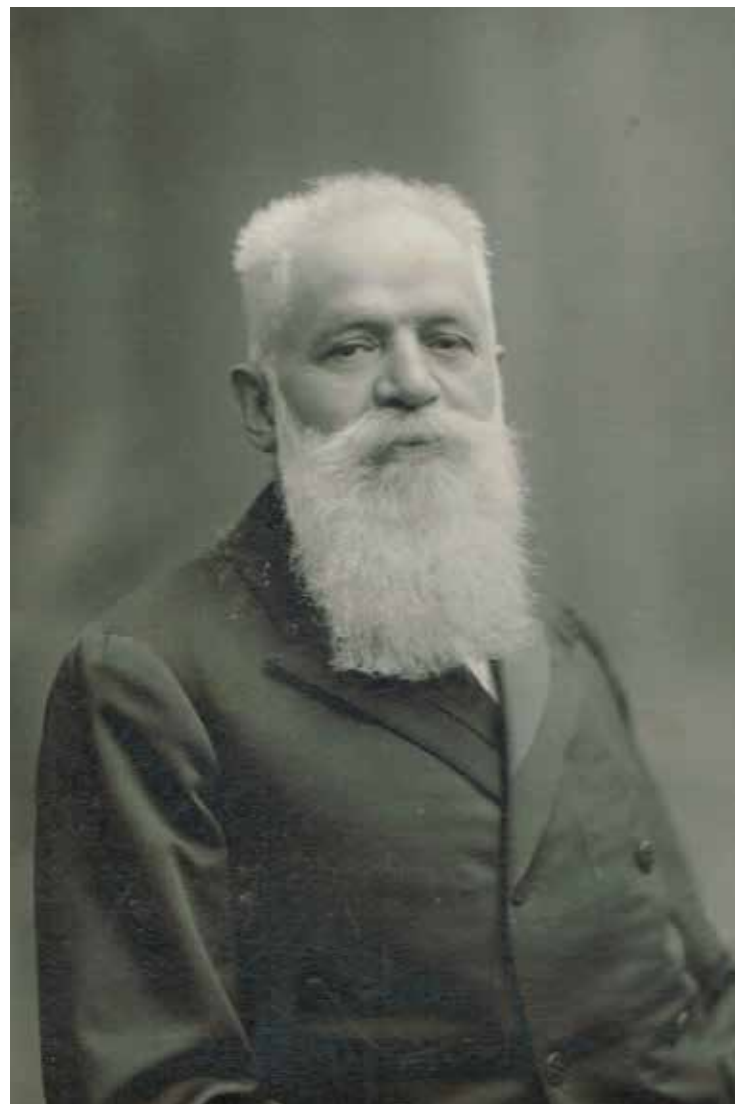
Die Vermählung

Name	Ge-schlecht	Religion	Familienstand	Beruf oder Beruf
Simon Brüll	1	evangelisch	ledig	Handlungsführer
Louise Brüll	1	evangelisch	ledig	
Maximilian Brüll	1	evangelisch	ledig	

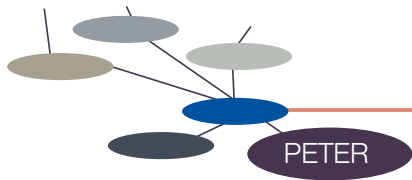
Simon Brüll census 1869, Znaim showing wife Luise and son Maximilian.



Uh Ostroh Jewish ghetto.



David Sommer - Peter's great grandfather.



Sommer and Benedikt

David Sommer 13 Jul 1841 - 8 Feb 1918

Franziska Benedikt 4 Nov 1845 - 6 Sep 1923

**Holleschau, Ung. Ostrau, Tarnov, Linz, Vienna
(Holesov, Uh Ostroh, Tarnów, Linz, Wien)**



THE streets of modern day Uhersky Ostroh in Moravia no longer echo with the sounds of feet on their way to prayer. Once, long ago, the Jewish families of the town hurried along Nabrezní and Kostelní Streets in the Jewish quarter. From the 36 houses there, they would have passed the school on their way to the synagogue, to be in time for prayers – adults walking purposefully, children perhaps dancing at their side.

Now consigned to the memory of a few, the synagogue, in the baroque-classist style and dating from the 17th century, was destroyed by the Nazis in 1944. A low wall at the junction of Nabrezní and Kostelní Streets marks its original ground plan. In this synagogue, Gutman



The graves in Vienna of Markus Benedikt and Julie (née Herzka) brought from their previous internment in Ung.Hradisch in 1902.

Sommer would have married his wife Nehame Kretschin in 1806. They were Peter's great great great grandparents.

Gutmann and Nehame Sommer

Gutmann Sommer and Nehame Kretschin are the oldest members of the Sommer family we know of. Gutmann Sommer is listed as a Familiant in Ungarisch Hradisch (today Uherské Hradiste), 75km east of Brno in Moravia. The information is held in the Jewish Museum in Prague where Gutmann appears on a list of Jewish Familiants 1790 to 1802.

During the period 1798 to 1848 there were 89 Jewish families in the town. 1806 was the year of Gutmann and Nehame's wedding. 27 of the original 36 Jewish houses have been preserved. Among the buildings preserved are the old and new schools.

Sallomon Sommer and Rebekah Strauss

On 6 May 1807 Gutmann and Nehame's son Sallomon arrived, a bare nine months after their wedding. A merchant, probably a trader in goods, Sallomon married Rebekah Strauss, born in 1814 and from the same town. He is shown on the records as Familiant no. XX1V. They



Extract from the Familianten Bücher of Ung. Hradisch showing Sallomon Sommer as Familiant no. 24

lived in Ung. Ostrau (Uh.Ostroh) until at least 1857 when they were noted on the census there. By the time of the census of 1869 Sallomon and Rebekah had moved away from Ung. Ostrau as they no longer appear in the census records for the town. They are both buried in Vienna in the Zentralfriedhof, Sallomon in 1875 and Rebekah in 1890.

Rebekah was the child of Abraham Strauss and Rachel Löwen of Ung. Ostrau who were married in the summer of 1802. David Strauss and Simon Löwen were witnesses to the marriage of Rebekah to Sallomon Sommer, so perhaps they were the fathers of the bridal couple.

Simon Löwen was at one time treasurer of the Chevra Kaddisha in Ung. Ostrau according to Hugo Gold's book. The 1848 Jewish population of Ung. Ostrau at its height numbered 478. This number dropped to 220 after the First World War. The Sommer family was amongst those who moved to greener pastures, some time between 1857 and 1869.

Sallomon and Rebekah Sommer had nine children: Simon born 1836, Bernard 1838, David 1841, Samuel 1843, Ester/Agnes 1845, Aron 1848, Anna 1852, Rosi 1855 and Marie. (Information from the Archive in Ung. Hradisch). Of these, Simon, Bernard, Agnes and possibly Aron and Samuel appear to have moved to Vienna at some point in their lives as they are all buried in Vienna's Zentralfriedhof.

David Sommer: Railway engineer

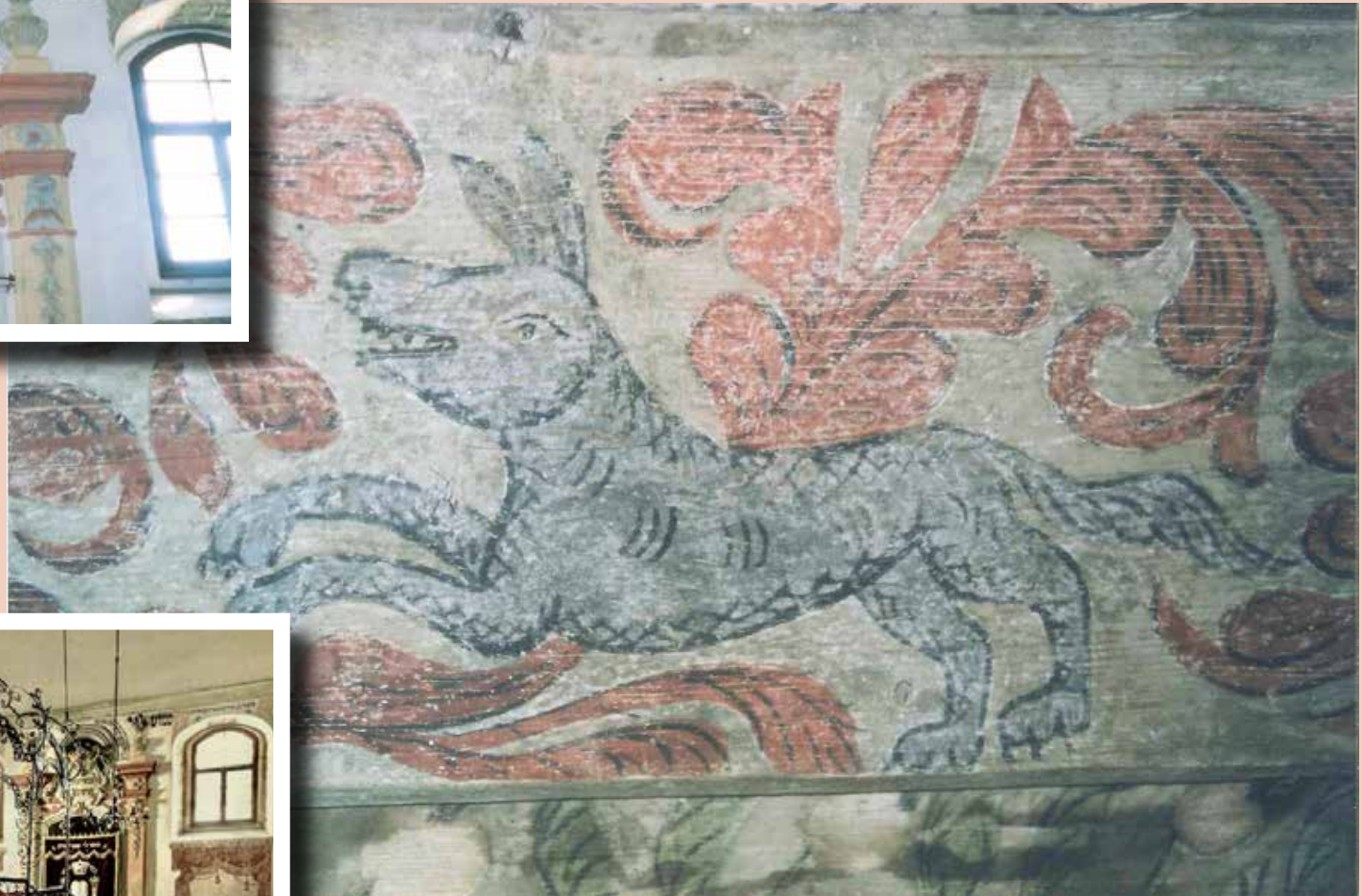
David Sommer, third son of Sallomon and Rebekah, and his wife Franziska (Fanni) Benedikt are Peter's great grandparents. Both were born in Uh. Ostroh in 1841 and 1845 respectively. It seems that shortly after their marriage in Vienna in 1874 David Sommer with his wife Fanni went to work in Tarnow, Galicia, as a railway engineer.

Galicia was that part of Poland which was taken over by Austria after Poland's defeat in the late 18th century at the hands of the Russians, Prussians and Austrians. The victorious entities divided the Kingdom of Poland amongst themselves and the southern part of Poland became known as Galicia, lasting as a province of the Habsburg Empire until the end of the First World War.

By about this time, the large Jewish community in Tarnow numbered over 11,600 people, comprising 42.4% of the total population of the city. Once an important centre of religious life, the city maintained a few synagogues and a dozen small prayer houses. There were Jewish schools, presses, cultural and social organizations and a rich social life. (Kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/tarnow)

Here in Tarnow, the Sommer children - Sigmund (born 1879), Helen (1881), Grete (1877 or 1878), Pauline (1875) and Clara (1886) - were born. We don't know exactly when, or for how long they lived in Tarnow before moving to

Holleschau's restored synagogue



Holleschau was an important Jewish centre, the home of the Herzka and Benedikt families. The synagogue, was burned down by the Nazis but has since been beautifully restored.





Postcard of Holleschau.

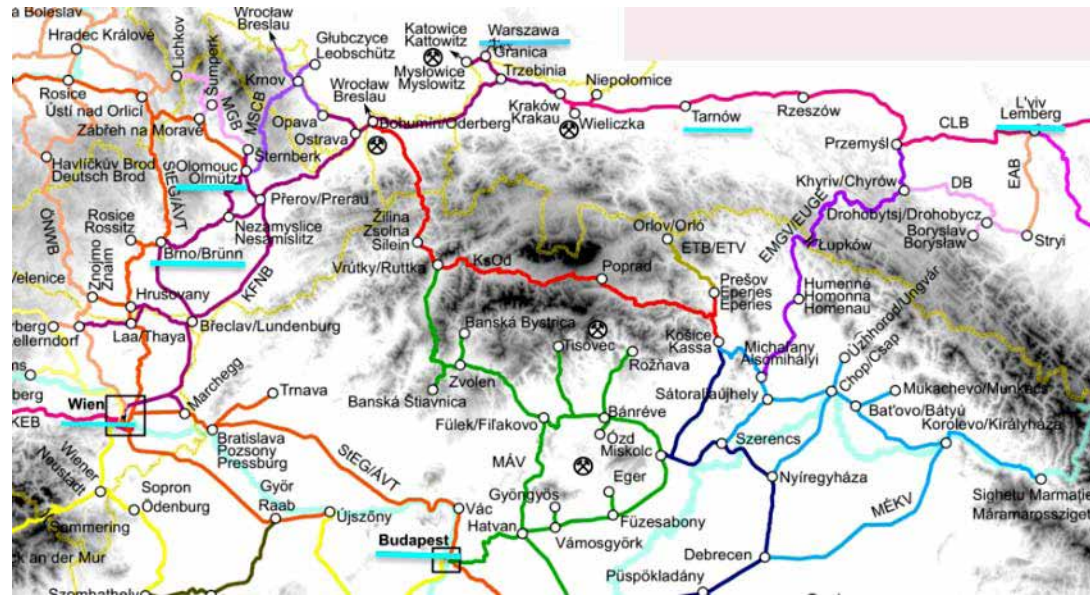


Young Fritz Brüll c.1916.

Lin, but apparently the children grew up in Linz. The move to Linz must have taken place some time around 1885 according to the census records of the city of Linz.

With the increasing development and use of the railways, David Sommer's choice of occupation as a railway engineer would have been a good one, assuring him of work. He is described as engineer and senior national railway councillor. Tarnow must have been an interesting post. History tells us that the Krakow Republic, which included Tarnow, was brought into the Habsburg Empire in 1846 and the plan to connect Krakow with Lwow by rail via Tarnow was formulated then. In the years following, Tarnow entered a period of rapid development. Rail connection with Krakow was constructed by 1852.

This railway system was built under license from the Emperor Franz Josef in 1858 and not completed until 1892, but once finished, the line crossed the whole of Galicia from east to west, connecting the principal provincial centres of Krakow, Tarnow, Przemysl, Lwow and Tarnopol. It is thought that the construction of permanent train station buildings in Tarnow began in 1860. This station was in use for over 40 years until the construction of a new and larger station began to service the growing number of people using rail.



Map of the Austrian Railway 1874.

The rail system was connected to the Bohemian and Austrian railway systems in the west and in the east it connected over the Zbruch River to the railroads of the Russian Empire. By 1884 Tarnow connected to the rail network of the Kingdom of Hungary. It is tempting to think that David Sommer played a part in this spread of rail networks throughout central and Eastern Europe.

In 1878 gas lighting was adopted in the city of Tarnow and at about this time the first daily newspaper began to be published. The railways brought about an expansion in trade and light industry. David and Fanni Sommer's family, living there for approximately a decade from the mid 1870s, were witness to exciting times!

David Sommer has been described as Oberkondukteur of the Railway which implies some kind of supervisory role, however more than that it is difficult to imagine exactly what his job entailed.

Suffice to realise that he came to Tarnow at a time of rapid change and worked in a field that was at the forefront of the developing city.

The Sommers in Linz

I found this interesting information about Linz:

It was only in the first half of the 19th century that Linz attracted Jewish traders from South Bohemia. Although Jews obtained equal rights in 1849, implementation was difficult because of antisemitism from their Christian neighbours. By 1858 however, there were some 50 Jewish families living in Linz, working as traders. Religious services were held under police supervision. The first house of prayer was formed in 1861 and two years later the community bought a piece of land for a cemetery. Before that any deceased Jew had to be taken to South Bohemia for burial. In 1872 a house and garden were acquired which became the location of the community administration and synagogue. In 1876 a temple was built.

Jews in Linz mixed with their Christian neighbours, in a conscious effort to assimilate. This led to a distancing of most of the community from religious observance and ritual. In the final years of the century there had been a decline in Jewish migration to the city however after World War One there was a big flow of refugees to the city. The Jewish community became increasingly isolated with the growing antisemitism and anti-capitalism of the Pan Germans. The Pan Germans were those who thought that all German speaking people should be contained within a single political entity and who formed a group pushing for this end. By the close of the century Linz became a centre of the anti-Semitic Pan German movement and Zionism became well established there. Cultural interest clubs became affiliated with the synagogue and groups such as “Girls Club Ester” and Youth club “Blue and white, the gymnasts club”, also were formed.



Irene Unger (née Dorfman) married to Fred's cousin Paul Unger, and Lilly Bruell in Sydney.

In this way Jews bolstered their own self-confidence and sense of identity.

World War One ended the centuries of rule of the Habsburgs and the political vacuum was taken up by bourgeois parties and the Social Democrats. Many Jews found a home in this party. Young Zionists in Linz felt that they were representatives of a new Jewish nation, not only focused on religious needs. Linz became a centre of Zionist propaganda, distinct from events in Vienna over 200 kilometres away to the east. There was conflict between the young Zionists and the assimilationists, and the period saw the development of Zionist causes, the establishment of a department for Palestine, a job centre, promotion of sports and the expansion of youth work. Against this background it is not hard to see the young Fritz Brüll, Peter's father, supporting religious reform and youth groups involved in physical activities, while his brother Hans became convinced the future of the Jewish people would be in Palestine. By 1929, Hans was divorced from his first wife whom he had married in Vienna, and was in Israel marrying his second wife Ettel from Romania. Their son Jehoshua was born

the following year and would head a new dynasty in Israel, changing the family name to Bar Eyal.

By 1923 the Jews in Linz numbered 931, the largest number ever, swollen by the arrival of refugees from the east during World War One. In 1927 the community was able to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the synagogue. The occasion was celebrated by church and city council authorities of Linz alike.

(Durchstift) 94

Geheime Staatspolizei Linz, den 26. Mai 1943.

Staatspolizei-Mitt.-stelle Linz
Tel. Nr. I 4 - 9221/42 II A 5 -

An das
Reichsicherheitshauptamt
— Referat IV B 4 b-4 —
in Berlin

Betreff: Vermögensverfall bei Juden auf Grund der 11. Verordnung zum Reichsbürgergesetz vom 25. November 1941 (RGBl. I S. 722 ff.)

Besug: Erlaß vom 9.12.1941 - II A 5 Nr. 230 V/41 - 212 -

Anlagen:
Ich bitte die Feststellung zu treffen, daß das Vermögen des (der) nachstehend aufgeführten Juden (Jüdin), der (die) jüdische Staatsangehörigkeit besessen hat, auf Grund der 11. Verordnung zum Reichsbürgergesetz vom 25. November 1941 (RGBl. I, S. 722 ff.) dem Reich verfallen ist.

1. Name: **Sommer** Nachnamen: **Sigmund**
(Bei Frauen auch Geburtsname) (Nachnamen entsprechen)

2. Geburtstag: **18.3.1879**

3. Geburtsort und Kreis: **Tarnov**

4. Letzte inländische Wohnstätte: **Linz/Donau, Lessinggasse 14**
(Sommers Wohnstätte)

5. Zeitpunkt der Abwanderung: **30.4.1939 nach Palästina; Aberkennung der deutschen Staatsangehörigkeit u. Vermögensbeschlagnahme d. Bekanntmachung des RMdI. v. 7.3.1940 (Reichsanzeiger Nr. 187 v. 12.8.1940).**

6. Inländische Vermögenswerte: **Grundstücke in Attnang-Puchheim-Einl. 21.627 u. 628 der ab tot und über das Vermögen KG. Attnang-Puchheim; Steuerguthaben bei der Finanzkasse Linz-Stadt i. d. Höhe von 764,94 RM (Überzahlung an Einkommensteuer u. Judenvermögensabgabe); Guthaben von 336,66 RM bei der Abteilung für Entjudungen - Reichstatthalter in Oberdonau - aus der Liquidation der Fa. "Papierwarenfabrik-Gesellschaft in Kleinmünchen".**

(Die Vermögenswerte befinden sich bereits in Verwaltung des Oberfinanzpräsidenten Oberdonau).

7. Angaben, ob Renten, Verfallgebühren usw. bezogen.
gez. Dr. B a s t . Befehlshaber

Bezeichnung der
Anlage

Bezeichnung der
Anlage

State Security Office document stating taxes owed on the liquidation of Sigmund Sommer's factory in Linz. Note: Nazi eagle stamp.

Despite these ostensibly good relations, Nazism was gaining traction during the 1930s and the political climate worsened. Unsurprisingly, the Jews of Linz became nervous. With Hitler's accession to power tensions mounted and measures against the Social Democrats (the party supported by Fritz Brüll and his brother and sisters) were instituted. These culminated in an uprising in 1934 that started in Linz. The revolt was quashed, the Social Democratic Party was dissolved and Fritz was imprisoned in Linz for his part in the uprising. His refusal to eat lamb stemmed from his three months spent in prison when the inmates were served a diet of stewed hogget. He could not even abide the smell of lamb cooking for the remainder of his life.

The whole Brüll family were involved with the Social Democratic Party. It is easy to understand the development of Fritz's secular brand of Judaism during his formative years of the early 1930s. While a great supporter of Israel and community throughout his life he was religious only to the extent that it affirmed his Jewish identity.

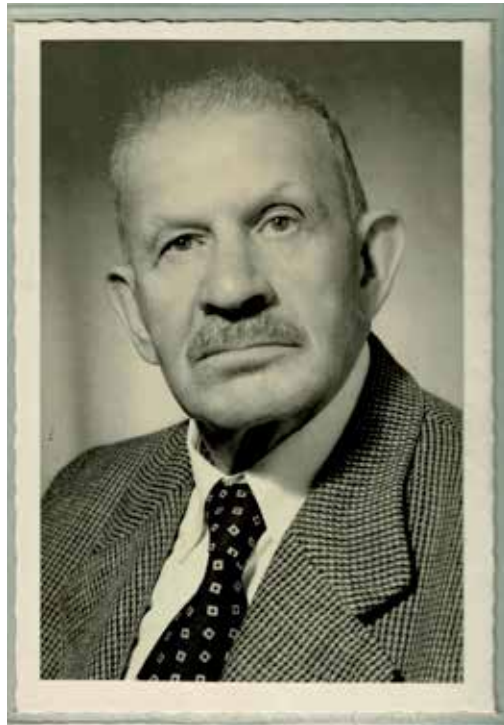
We know something about the lives of David and Franziska Sommer's children Sigmund, Helen, Clara and Pauline.

Sigmund Sommer

After spending his early years in Tarnov, Sigmund matured in Linz. By the 1920s he owned a paper factory in Kleinmünchen in the city and employed two of his sister Helen's children at the factory, Fritz and Eva. Fritz managed to visit Vienna every six weeks or so, but wrote daily to Lilly, who was to become his wife, about the state of politics and the economy in Linz and Austria generally. Lilly destroyed all the letters Fritz wrote in case they could have incriminated them, if found. During the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) Lilly was a conduit for passing information. Trude's husband Theodore (Dorl), was involved with the dissemination of information during the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) and he was the person who involved Lilly as a contact for passing information. Eventually Dorl was himself in danger and he and Trude left for Belgium where they worked

for the Socialist party until the German invasion caught up with them in 1940.

Fritz was a good salesman but Uncle Sigmund was very controlling. Although the plan was that Fritz would take over the factory eventually, he and Sigmund both had strong personalities and they had an uneasy relationship. Eventually Fritz was given a car but could visit Vienna less and less frequently. Sigmund did not approve of Fritz's relationship with Lilly and tried to influence Lilly against Fritz. He always found a reason to keep Fritz in Linz. The relationship between Sigmund and all the Brüll



Sigmund Sommer 1957.

children was a difficult one. Sigmund had supported Helen with her four children when she came to Linz as a solo parent but kept her on a strict budget and tried to tell her how she should spend the money he gave her. Apparently David Sommer had left some funds when he died but the money was all devalued and was not worth much.

Sigmund was married to Auguste (Gusti) who was very orthodox. They had no children and eventually divorced. She was deported to Theresienstadt and died after being sent to the east. (Page of Testimony at Yad Vashem).



Clara Sommer - author of the letter opposite

When the Germans came, Sigmund was sent to Dachau concentration camp after Kristallnacht. The consideration for his release was that he had to sign over the rights to the factory. So the Kleinmünchner factory became the Göring factory. Ruth Sife, granddaughter of Pauline Sommer, reported from Australia in 1999 that Sigmund had visited her family in Vienna infrequently, though always without his wife. After his release from Dachau Sigmund returned and fell inside the apartment when the door was answered. He had severe head wounds and broken fingers and stayed with the family for several weeks while they nursed him back to health.

The family story is that Paul Unger, his nephew, personally went to Dachau to try to negotiate his release. In the meantime, Paul arranged for him to make aliyah to Palestine and Sigmund left on 30 April 1939. He lived in Herzlia until after the war when he joined his sister Helen Brüll in Auckland.

Eventually he left Auckland and went to the Ungar family in Sydney where he lived with them until his death in 1966. Sigmund and Helen were the only family of their generation who lived in Auckland.

Helen Brüll, née Sommer

In a book on the Jews of Linz, Helen Brüll (née Sommer, Peter's grand-



Clara
Sommer's
letter to
her aunt
Adele
Benedikt in
Vienna

(I have always questioned how this document came to be in New Zealand. The only thought I have is that it arrived with

Helen Bruell who brought a number of documents with her and maybe kept this one as a memento of her sister who died in 1915 of encephalitis.)

Aug, 8. III. 1873.

My dearest Aunt,

You can I thank you for your kindness! You gave me great pleasure with the books and now I have read an "Ideal Husband". But in my literature have not got so wide yet I am reading Keat's poems. Therefore you can see what a great deal I have still to do but I can assure you that I am very happy in my studies.

I must apologise for not having called on you when I was in Vienna, but I was only few hours there and then I got a severe attack of Influenza. In that case it was very disagreeable to pay calls and I am always very afraid of infecting other people. If I passed my examination well, I want to go to Vienna for some days, and I hope to find all my dear once very well and in high spirits.

My sister told me that our dear Fraulein Langbein

is not very well, I hope that
now she is all right again.

My dear mother got influ-
enza from me, but as you
now she can not sleep and
works ~~the whole~~ all day long,
instead of keeping her bed.

How are you getting on
all this long time? Are you
quite well? I hope that in
a short time, my dear Uncle
and Aunt will not have
so much to do because
peace is in view.

Shall you spend Easter
on the Semmering. If so

I very much hope that you will
have nice weather for your
stay there, that you can
take long walks.

Thanking you again and
again dear Aunt and Uncle
for your kindness and for
the money which I received
now, I remain with much
love yours gratefully

Harry

mother) is cited as one of the leaders of the Blau-Weiss Wanderbund (Blue White Hiking Group) in 1919. Helen had married Otto Brüll from Znaim in 1904 and they had lived together in Brünn until Otto's death 11 years later. Otto had served in the military from 1890, as a corporal in the Landwehr Infanterie-Regiment. He served for three years in active service and spent seven years in the reserves K(König) und K(Kaiser) Corps-Artillerie-Regiment. He worked as a sales representative for a porcelain factory. Helen, left a widow in 1915 with four young children, moved back to her family in Linz with her young children Hans, Trude, Fritz and Eva. There she had the support of the Sommer extended family.

Clara Sommer

Helen's sister, mentioned in *Jüdisches Leben in Linz 1849-1943*; Institutionem was Clara Sommer who attended the Girls Lyceum there for three years and was one of the first students to graduate.

In 1901 the Lyceum was granted the right to assess for graduation for the first noncompulsory graduation. Out of 13 girls, seven applied and Clara was one of them. Only two students, Clara included, had reached the necessary age.

We have another glimpse of Clara, from a letter (opposite) dated 3 March 1913 written to her aunt, Adele Benedikt, wife of Moritz of the *Neue Freie Presse* in Vienna. It is written in English, on faded note paper:



Fritz Brüll ID.

"My dearest Aunt,

How can I thank you for your kindness! You gave me great pleasure with the books and now I have read an Ideal Husband (a play by Oscar Wilde). But in my literature I have not got to Wilde yet. I am reading Keat's poems. Therefore you can see what a great deal I have still to do but I can assure you that I am very happy in my studies.

I must apologise for not having called on you when I was in Vienna but I was only few hours there and then I got a severe attack of Influenza. In that case it was very disagreeable to pay calls and I am always very afraid of infecting other people.

If I passed my examination well, I want to go to Vienna for some days and I hope to find all my dear ones, very well and in high spirits,

My sister told me that our dear Miss Langbein is not very well I hope that now she is all right again.

My dear mother got influenza from me, but as you know, she cannot obey and works all day long, instead of keeping to her bed.

How are you getting on this long time? Are you quite well? I hope that in a short time, my dear Uncle (Moritz) and Ernst (Moritz and Adele's son) will not have so much to do because peace is now in view.

Shall you spend Easter on the Semmering? If so I very much hope that you will have nice weather for your stay there, that you can take long walks.



Cartoon painted on the wall of the canteen (aka The Mural Room) - possibly by prisoners.



Note the sign: suitable for 40 men or eight horses!



Les Milles camp where Dorl Grill was interned.

Camp des Milles where Dorl Grill was interned.

ON September 5, 1939, French authorities released a list of ‘official enemies’ of state requiring they report to local assembly points. The directive targeted German and Austrian men ranging in ages from 17 to 50, including ex-nationals recently made stateless. At the various assembly points, local authorities rounded up the so-called ‘ressortissants ennemis’ [enemy aliens] and sent them to internment camps around France.

One such camp was Les Milles.

The French authorities rushed to transform Les Milles, a former tile factory in the south of France located between Aix-en-Provence and Marseille, into an enemy alien internment camp following the declaration of war on Germany. Many of those interned in Les Milles in the months leading up to the fall of the French Third Republic were in fact refugees who had fled the Third Reich due to Nazi anti-intellectual and antisemitic politics.

A vibrant intellectual and artistic community formed in the camp. Several famous German artists and intellectuals were interned in Les Milles in these early months including Hans Bellmer and Max Ernst. The artistic community created over 400 works of art as well as murals painted on the camp walls between 1939 and 1942. These works of art often depicted the conditions of internment.

In 1982, the French government released plans to tear down the Mural Room in Les Milles camp. In response, CRIF (The Representative Council of French Jewish Institutions), the municipality of Aix-en-Provence, along with several survivors and resistance fighters, petitioned the government to save the room.

In 1993, the Committee reformed to begin restoring the Mural Room.

In 2004, the French government named the entire camp of Les Milles a historic monument. ■

BUREAU SPECIAL DES PASSEPORTS DE L'ARRONDISSEMENT DE BRUXELLES

QUESTIONNAIRE
à remplir par les personnes qui sollicitent un titre

SIGNALEMENT.

Cheveux: Bruns
Yeux: Bruns
Visage: Oval
Signes particuliers: /s/

Nom et prénoms: B. B. & L. L. Gertrude
Etat civil (éventuellement nom et prénoms de l'épouse ou de l'époux): épouse Grill
Theodor
Lieu et date de naissance: Berlin (Feb. 01.) le 19 octobre 1904
Domicile (localité, rue et numéro): 3, rue du pont neuf, Bruxelles
Profession: employée au Secrétariat de l'Internationale Ouvrière Socialiste.
Nationalité actuelle: allemande (autrichienne)
Situation sous le rapport de la milice: /s/
Motifs de voyage: professionnels

Durée du voyage:
Prise d'indiquer des références précises: Le Secrétariat de l'Internationale Ouvrière Socialiste.
Secrétaire: Monsieur le Docteur Friedrich ASLER
Trésorier: Monsieur le Sénateur Joseph VAN ROOYEN

Titres produits à l'appui de la demande de passeport:

- 1) ~~Attestation d'identité~~ satisfait à ses obligations fiscales
- 2) Carte d'identité (jeune) No. 82454 (Dossier à 188048)
- 3) Certificat de bonne conduite, vie et mœurs.
- 4)
- 5)

A BRUXELLES, le 22 décembre 1939
Signature: Gertrude Brill - Brill

Avis de la Sécurité Publique: FAVORABLE
Avis de l'E. M. G. A.: 12
37 39

Getrude (aka Trude) Brill from the Belgian Secret Police file.

Thanking you again and again dear Aunt and Uncle for your kindness and for the money, which I received now, I remain, with much love yours gratefully.

Clara”

The letter provides us with a stark reminder of life before antibiotics. We can see that Clara was possessed of a helping disposition as she was a volunteer nurse during the war. This occupation may well be the vehicle through which she caught the encephalitis that killed her at 29 years of age. Antibiotics might well have saved her.

Pauline Sommer

Pauline Sommer was the oldest child of David and Fanni Sommer, born in 1875, a year after her parents' wedding. She married Emanuel Ungar, and they lived in Vienna with their children Albert, Grete and Paul. From here Pauline was transported to Theresienstadt concentration camp in July 1942 and two years later to Auschwitz. She never returned.

Paul and his wife Irene escaped to Sydney, to be joined later by his brother Albert. Paul and Irene's daughter Ruth married Herbert Sife, another Holocaust refugee and their children Jacqui and Danny and their grandchildren made Sydney their home. Paul was interned as an alien during the war in Australia as he had come from an enemy country. The hearing of his objection to his internment by the Alien Tribunal is public information held in the National Archives in Canberra. After the hearing he was released.



Helen Brüll née Sommer (centre) with her children Trude and Hans.

Helen Brüll's children:

Hans Brüll

Helen and Otto's son, Hans, born in 1906 is on record as having applied to help with the maintenance of the cemetery in Linz.

The motive behind this move was to help teach young Jews about gardening, with a view to their working in Palestine and putting gardening skills to use there. Hans himself moved to Palestine by 1929 where he became an agronomist. Lilly said of Hans: "He was always wrapped up with Maccabi, more in Jewish affairs than political activity like Fritz and Trude."

It must have been a tough time in Linz in those summer months of 1915. In addition to the privations of wartime Helen Brüll not only lost her young husband in May of that year, but her sister Clara as well two months later.

The growing anti-Semitism and German nationalism adding to the mix, it is no wonder the young widow returned to Linz to be with her family. By 1919 her father David, the railway engineer had also died.

Trude Brüll

Trude married Theodore Grill in 1929. Shortly after they married, they went to Belgium where they worked for the Socialist Party up until the time of the German invasion of Belgium. They fled to France where eventually the non-Jewish Theodore (Dorl), was imprisoned as a socialist. His arrest in May

1940 in Brussels led Dorl to St Cyprien internment camp. A few weeks later he was transferred to the camp at Gurs in October 1940, and on January 1941 he was taken to the camp at Les Milles where he waited for his visa to exit France. In March 1941 he left the camp, sailing with Trude from Lisbon on SS Nyassa on 3 June 1941 to the United States. Although not incarcerated herself, Trude “got him out of the camp” according to family lore, whatever that means. Dorl and Trude spent the war years in the United States, returning to Linz after the war where Dorl worked as a member of the City Council as magistrate and secretary to the mayor. In 1968 he became mayor of Linz for a year. Trude and Dorl both died in Linz in the 1980s. Peter and I visited the camp at Les Milles when it opened to the public as a museum. It was created on the site of a tile factory and even had a railway stop which had been used prior to the war and again after it to transport the tiles made at the factory. During the war 2,500 Jews were transported to their deaths from that railway station.

Eva Brüll

Eva’s story is a tragic one. Fritz never spoke about this sister, the youngest of the Brüll children, born in Brünn in 1912. She grew up in Linz and after leaving school, the first we know of her is when she was working for her uncle Sigmund Sommer in his paper factory as a clerk. Eva had apparently taken money from the company to support her boyfriend, 400 schillings, which was a paltry amount. When she was found out, she committed suicide by drinking



Eva Brüll 1937.

the chemicals Fritz used for developing his photographs. The family, of course, were devastated and this contributed to the growing uncertainty of the times and unpredictability of the future.

This happened in October 1937, just a few months before the Anschluss when Germany troops annexed Austria. Lilly said “Eva was a very intelligent girl, like all the Bruell kids were: active, a great sportswoman. She was a first class skier, mountaineer, climber and hiker.” It was through Eva that Lilly met Fritz and Eva was often in Vienna to visit friends.

Fritz/Fred Brüll/Bruell

Fritz married Lilly Rosenblum in Vienna on 12 April 1938 after the Anschluss. The newlywed couple took advantage of Fritz’s Czech passport, obtained by virtue of his birth in Brno and fled across the border to the as yet free Czechoslovakia, where they were joined for a time by Helen Brüll. This proved merely a temporary reprieve; they were soon overtaken by the Germans.

The story of Fritz and Lilly’s escape from Europe is best listened to, told by Lilly herself on her oral history recording made in April 1994. (see Book 2)

The Benedikt family

David Sommer’s wife was Franziska Benedikt – Peter’s great grandmother. To find the origins of the Benedikt family we must look to Ung. Ostrau, in South East Moravia, about 75kms from Brno, then to Holleschau. Holleschau is a similar distance to the north of Ung. Ostrau. Slovakia and Hungary were

also home to a sea of Benedikts/Benedicts, Binets, Binneters and so on.

The presence of a Jewish settlement in Holleschau dates back to at least the 16th century after the expulsion of the Jews from the royal free towns such as Olmütz and Brünn. At that time Jews from Olmütz settled in Holleschau and the city grew to host one of the most important Jewish communities in Moravia, a centre of culture and education. The Jewish population of the town reached 1,700 (one third of the whole of Moravia) by the mid-19th century. The pogroms in 1774, 1899 and 1918 left the community diminished. It is today formally part of the Jewish Community of Brno. The Jewish quarter in Holleschau (today Holesov) consisted of an independent district northwest of the Square. Of the initial 103 houses 45 buildings have been preserved – among them, a school at No. 123, a house of religious study (bet ha-midrash) at No. 134 and a hospital at No. 260. The new synagogue built between 1891–1893 in the Historicist style by architect Jakob Gartner was burnt down by the Nazis as early as 1941 and torn down.

The old synagogue called Shachova, was built in 1560 in the Renaissance style. During alterations in the 1730s, the interior of the building was uniformly decorated with valuable ornamental illuminations and Hebraic liturgical texts, the work of Jewish immigrants from Poland. Following the complete reconstruction in 1956–1964 the synagogue houses the exhibit “Zidé a Morava” (Moravia and the Jews). The layout and facilities of the interior have been preserved exceptionally well.

The oldest record we have of the Benedikt family is the birth certificate of Marcus Benedikt, recorded in 1810 in Holleschau. We also have the mar-



riage record of Marcus to Katrina Juli (known as Juli) Herzka, wed on 7 November 1841 in Ung. Ostrau. Marcus and Juli were the parents of Peter's great grandmother Fanni/Franziska. Their other children were Moritz, Samuel, Karoline, Marie, and Katty. Marcus Benedikt's father was Moses Benedikt who was Peter's great great grandfather born 1774. We have a number of original documents attesting to the records. In December 1995 Peter and I visited the small archive in Holesov just as it was closing. The two archivists had prepared for us the 1869 census documents signed by my great great grandfather Abraham Mendel Wolf and Peter's great great grandfather Marcus Benedikt. It was amazing seeing the documents signed in their own handwriting, quite different to the feeling of finding a record online.

While Fanni Benedikt had been born in Ung. Ostrau, her mother Juli was born in Eiwanoowitz not far away, on 4 August 1821. Fanni's parents are shown to be Katrina Juli Herzka and Marcus Benedikt. Juli Herzka's father was Simon/Samuel Herzka, a Familiant in Holleschau (see p120). The family was still living there during the 1869 census. Some time later they must have moved away, first to Ung. Ostrau where Katty was born on 22 December 1843, also Franziska, born a short two years later. Juli died in Vienna, in November 1891, whereas Marcus Benedikt her husband, had died in March 1883 in Ung. Hradisch (today Uh. Hradiste). Ung. Hradisch is a town very close to Ung. Ostrau. Marcus Benedikt's remains were brought to Vienna and were later buried in a tomb with the remains of his daughter Karoline (Lina) who had died 1916 in Vienna. Fanni died in Linz in 1923. The tomb is in the Zentralfriedhof, which has almost 80,000 Jewish burials.

Marcus and Juli's son Samuel married Josefina from the extensive Winternitz

family and they had two daughters Clara and Alice. There is a Page of Testimony at Vad Vashem for Alice who was living at one time in Währingerstrasse, Vienna and died in the Lodz ghetto in 1941. Marcus and Juli's daughter Marie married Wilhelm Sachsl and they both died before the Second World War, leaving a son Heinrich who was deported to Theresienstadt and then to Auschwitz where he is presumed to have been murdered.

From 1200 Jews in 1914, the Jewish population of Ung. Ostrau declined to just 274 people in 1930. This number was just 4% of the total population. Hugo Gold notes that in 1898 a Jonatan Lamberg was the head of the community and an alms collector. Members of the advisory council of the Jewish community were Sallamon Sommer and Jakob Strauss. Abraham Strauss, Moses Lamberg, Ascher Lamberg and Mordechai Herzka were all treasurers of the Chevra Kaddisha at various times. There are many Lamberg, Sommer and Strauss graves in the cemetery in Ung. Ostrau. An original Lamberg document made its way to Auckland however, its connection is unknown.

Rabbi Mordechai Benet

Rabbi Mordechai Benet (1753-1829) was a highly regarded chief rabbi of Moravia. Although probably related, there is no known connection to Peter's Benedikts however, it is thought his son Naftali might have been the brother of Peter's great great grandfather Marcus.

According to Michael Miller, Rabbi Mordechai Benet earned the respect and support of a broad swath of Moravian Jewry. Known as Rabbi Reb Mordkhe, a larger than life figure who used his tenure as chief rabbi of Moravia to defend traditional observance in the face of new ideologies that



Dorl and Trude Grill.

promoted Jewish Enlightenment and religious reform.

Benet understood Moravian Jewry better than his successors and was familiar with the fiercely independent communities that had been strengthened by the common experience as important centres of Jewish life and learning. He was a man of profound talmudic erudition and charisma and legendary humility.

In Moravian Jewry, there was a balance between East and West – a place where moderation existed in the face of growing religious and political ferment. This state was facilitated by the politics of the Austrian state. All the restrictions on residence, livelihood, movement and marriage meant small country towns such as Holleschau and Ung. Brod near Ung. Ostrau and Ung. Hradisch could flourish as important centres of Jewish life and learning. In

SEARCHING FOR IDENTITY: Writing the past into life

Europe's network of Jewish communities each had its own specific characteristics. The repeal of the harsh Familiants law in the mid 19th century meant a changed landscape for Moravian Jewry. Up to then, many Holleschau families had emigrated to Upper Hungary (today's Slovakia) to escape the punitive conditions of Moravia.

Emigration continued as sporadic outbursts of anti-semitism followed in succeeding years in the face of liberalisation. As Martha Rozenblit has noted, the new emancipation translated into expanded horizons for Moravian Jewry, while at the same time the supranational Moravian identity came up against the struggle between Czech and German national identities. Unlike the earlier "Emigranten" who left Moravia for Hungary to escape the troublesome Familiants laws, the Jews of the late 19th century left their small town communities for Vienna to escape the insularities that resulted from emancipation. Here they established not satellite communities as in Hungary but Landmannschaften (hometown societies) which had ties to small country towns in Moravia, Bohemia and Galicia which had been centres of life in the preceding century.

Today the descendants of the Sommer and Benedikt families can be found in Australia, Israel and New Zealand. ■

Resources

Rabbis and Revolution: The Jews of Moravia in the age of Emancipation, by Michael L Miller, Stanford University Press, Stanford, California.

Reconstructing a National Identity: The Jews of Habsburg Austria during World War 1, by Marsha L. Rozenblit published by

Oxford University Press 2001.

Die Juden und Judengemeinden Mährens in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart ed. Hugo Gold, Jüdischer Buch und Kunstverlag, Brünn ed. Hugo Gold 1929.

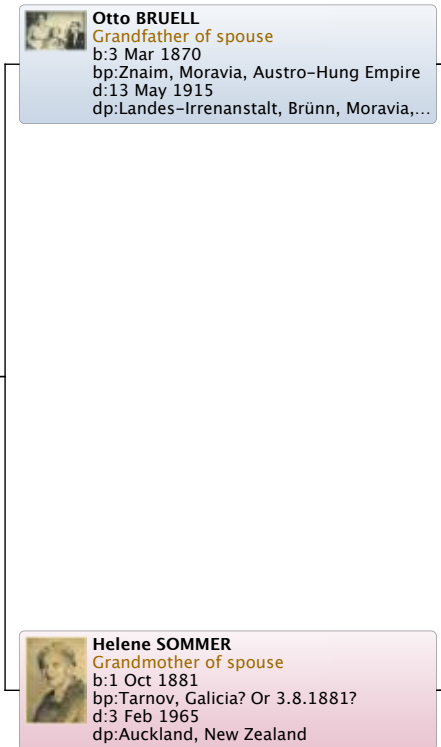
Information on Sigmund Sommer and life in Linz, from oral history interview with Lilly Bruell, April 1994.

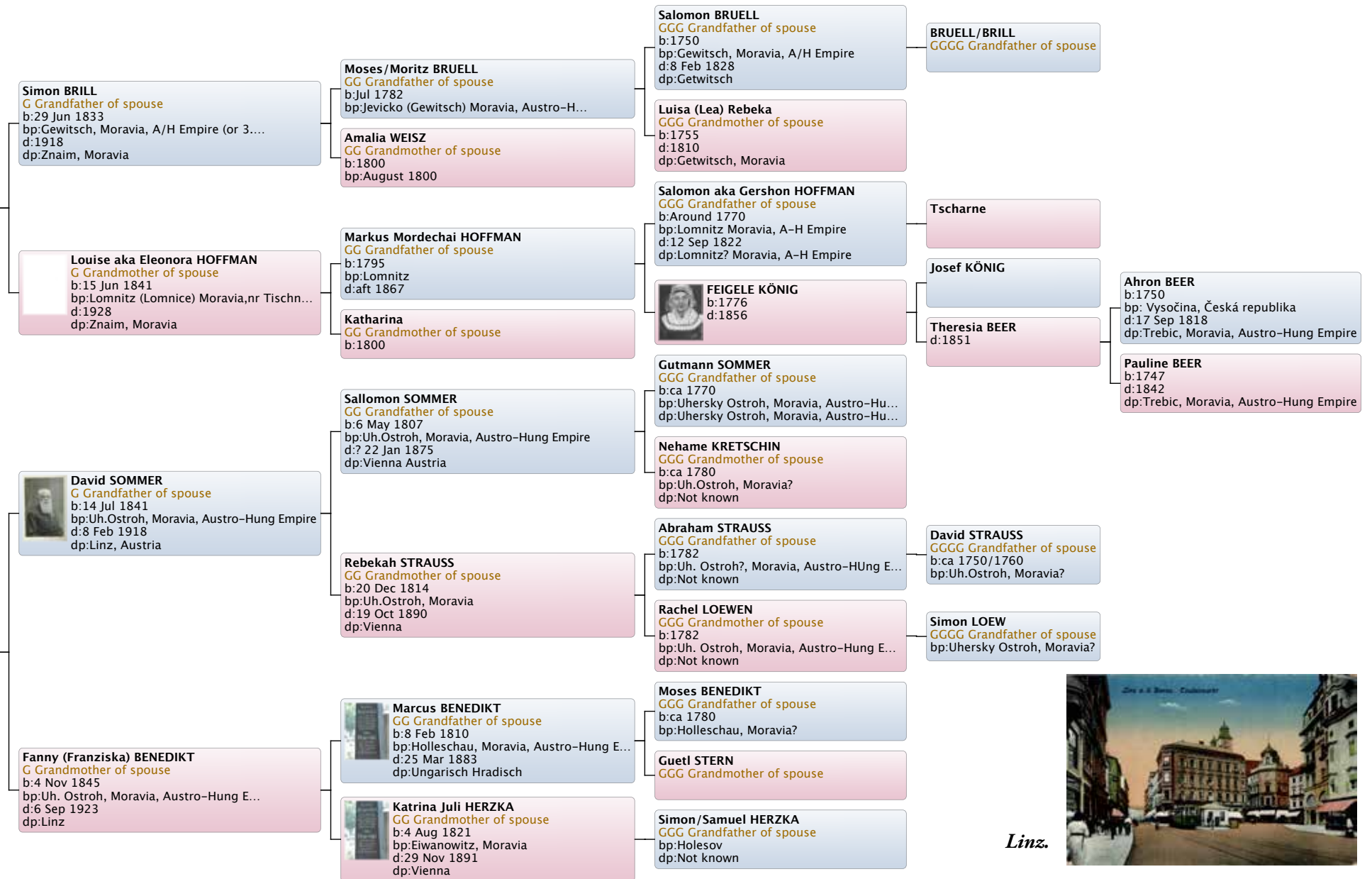
The Jews of Linz - Jüdisches Leben in Linz 1849-1943: Institutionen by Verena Wagner.



Linz.

The ancestors of Fred/Fritz Bruell



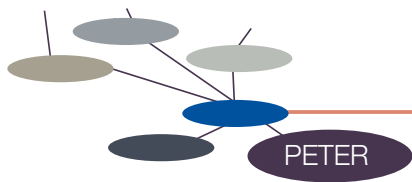




*Lilly Bruell's
grandmother
Cipe
Kittenplon -
1858-1931.*



*November 10, 1938 - Granny Cilli, in front of her shop
still showing signs of the Kristalnacht outrage when
30,000 Jewish men were humiliated and imprisoned and
shops and homes were looted and destroyed in Germany
and Austria.*



The Galizianer great grandparents

- Chaskel Rosenblum** (1860-1918)
Miriam Dankberg (Wolfthal) (1860-1917)
Samuel Kittenplon (1858-1910)
Cipre Jurmann (1858-1931)
Borshov, Skala, Buchach, Horodenka

Vienna, they hoped for opportunities for their children, denied to them in the shtetls of Galicia, the most backward area in the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

In the face of the latent antisemitism of the dying days of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Rosenblums set up their tailor shop in the building where they lived near the Prater, (fun fair) joined later by grand-



ON 10 November 1938 John and Cilli Rosenblum couldn't believe the events taking place in front of their eyes. On this night, known by history as Kristallnacht, or "the night of the broken glass", Jewish shops all over Germany and Austria were looted and defaced and Jews were beaten up and humiliated. Across the front of their shop at Zirkusgasse 21, the word "Jud" was scrawled in large, accusing and insulting letters.

Fear and apprehension must have taken over from the hope and dreams that had accompanied them when as newlyweds in 1910 they had arrived in "Matsoh Insel" (Matso Island), the part of Vienna where poorer Jews lived.

Despite the crowding together there with other Jews flocking into



Samuel Kittenplon and Cipre Jurmann Kittenplon

parents Chaskel and Mirel Rosenblum and Cipre Kittenplon/Jurmann. Jochanan was supported by Cilli, and his tailoring skills were put to use making to order, religious garments for the Orthodox. Just as well the grandparents were on hand to help with the children of the household who arrived in quick succession – Otto in 1911, Lilly 1914, Mitzi in 1917 and finally little Eddie in 1920. The Rosenblum grandparents had died by the end of the First World War – only Cilli survived to witness Austria’s mutation to a shadow of its former glory. Cilli died in Vienna in 1931.



Cilli Rosenblum 1908.

Other members of the family had also arrived in Vienna, where the Jewish population swelled from 6,000 in 1860 to 147,000 by 1900. Most of the family who had come from Buchach in Galica, had found their way to the United States by 1940. All three of the grandparents who came to Vienna are buried in the Zentralfriedhof there. Samuel Kittenplon, the fourth grandparent, a shoemaker, died much earlier in Buchach before John and Cilli left in 1910.

A number of Buchachers in Vienna were deported to concentration camps; in September 1939, Mendel Jurmann, Lilly’s uncle. The Bad Arolsen archive records show he died in Buchenwald supposedly of a “weak heart”. His ashes

Your dear letter I received with joy.

I am overjoyed to see your lovely handwriting. I am very glad that you are staying in touch with the aunt by mail. May you always be well and you shall stay healthy and strong. I inform you that we both are in Poland as I had told you already, but have not received an answer back. Unfortunately, just like Sofi, I am not doing well either. I can not afford the most basic necessities. We would so much want to be with you. Dearest child, see that you remain healthy and strong and eat much so that you will become a gentleman, otherwise no news.

Greetings and kisses your mother.

Dearest Child. I try to look after mother but unfortunately I cannot help her much. I would like it best to be with mother at your place.

Kisses your sister

Sofi.

Deinen Lieben Brief habe mit Freude

erhalten es freut mich sehr das du so goldig schreibst. Es freut mich sehr das du mit der Tante in Postverbindung bist. Es sol dir weiter imer gut gehen und du solst gesund und stark bleiben. Teile dir mit das wir beiden in Polen bin wie ich dir schon mitgeteilt habe aber keine Antwort erhalten habe. Es geht mir leider wie der Sofi nicht gut ich kan mir nicht das notwendigste kaufen. Wir möchten schon so gern bei dir sein. Liebstes Kind schaue dazu das du gesund und stark bleibst und esse viel das du ein Gentleman wirst sonst nichts neues.

Grüsse und Küsse deine Mutter,

Liebstes Kinderl. Ich schaue mich auf die Mutter um aber kan ihr leider nicht viel helfen am liebsten möchte mit der Mutter bei dir sein.

Küsse deine Schwester

Sofi.

were returned to the family and are buried in the Zentralfriedhof in Vienna – or are they his ashes at all?. We will never know! His wife Ida (née)Hirth died in Opole concentration camp together with their 11year old daughter Sofi who, as a diabetic, had been unable to get her insulin medication. See letter above from Ida Jurmann and Sofi to son and brother David Jurmann, in America.

All we know about Mendel is that he was very orthodox, was born on 5 June 1892 in Buchach, was very poor and a shoemaker by trade. This information came from Lilly Bruell, his niece. This camp record (P. 150) shows his status



Gemeinde Parochia Liczba parochy- kowna	Der Bräutigam Narcezonogo				Der Braut Narcezonoi			
	Vater und Mutter Ojciec i matka, imię i nazwisko, miejsce urodzenia, zatrudnienia i miejsce zamieszkania, Nr. domu narcezonogo i jego rodziców		Kirch Wiek	Stand Stan	Vater und Mutter Ojciec i matka, imię i nazwisko, miejsce urodzenia, imiona, zatrudnienia, miejsce zamieszkania i Nr. domu jej rodziców		Kirch Wiek	Stand Stan
	Ojciec Rosenblum, wdowa w Jarosławiu. prawa Dziękuję za Borowice pod Hłom K 499. zamieszkała w Chimnow i Tudy Ro, senblum. Prawie i włoszciel. calnowa Borowice	50	/		Mama Dwosie Szneider wdowa w Hłom. ciska Gersona i Mariomy Szneider Prawie i włoszciel. calnowa w Hłom K 250.	44	11	

Marriage record for Ojser and Dwosie Rosenblum 1883 - Peter's great great grandparents.



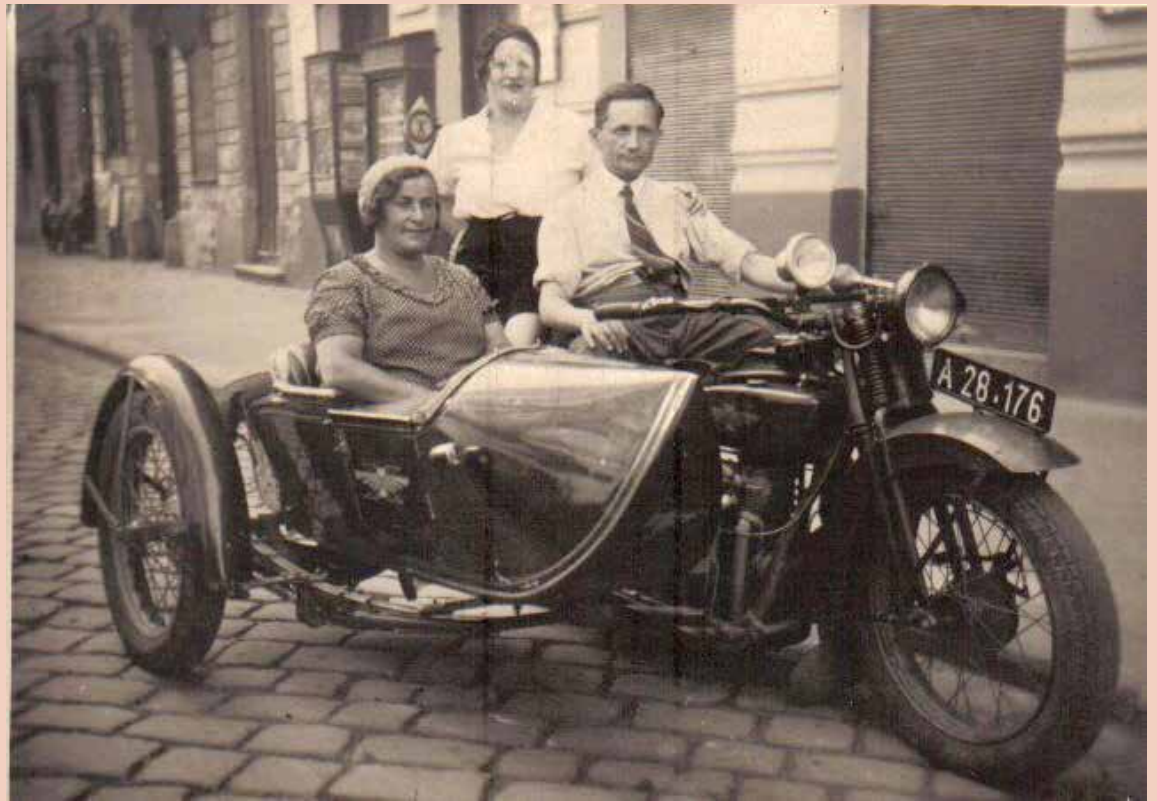
Buchach.



The market stalls next to the city council.



Borschow.



Jochanan Rosenblum and his motorbikes (clockwise from above) his Harley, with Cilli and Lena Jurman, with Otto, Mitzi and Lilly, with his pushbike and with Otto on a side car with the Harley.



as a “stateless Jew”, his Austrian nationality having been taken away.

Only their son David escaped to the US on 20 November 1940, according to a letter from the Magistrat der Stadt Wien (20.06.2009). He died in 2009, leaving a son Glen, born in 1950. In the letter (P142) written by his mother Ida, from Opole Concentration camp to David who would have been about 14.

David’s son Glen had two children Christopher and Jennifer. Information from David’s second wife Marjorie.

The Rosenblums, Kittenplons, Jurmanns, Dankbergs and Wolfthals had spent their childhoods in the forested hills, towns and rivers of Eastern Galicia, not far from the Russian border. Rosenblum records from Skala and Borschow 14 kms distant, attest to their presence in these country towns. Buchach was the biggest of these three towns. I did find quite a number of Rosenblum documents in the archives for Skala and Borschov. Three towns therefore are the ancestral towns of these families – Borschov, Skala and Buchach. From the Yizkor books of these three towns we can catch a glimpse of what kind of life these ancestors lived.

Moses Jurmann (father of Samuel) was born circa 1820. He died in Buchach aged 82 in 1902. He had married Freyde Riwe in 1840 and their children were Jacob, Chaim (Berl), Cipre and Brane (Sara). Cipre Jurmann married Samuel Kittenplon and they were Lilly’s grandparents. Cipre’s brother Berl Jurmann



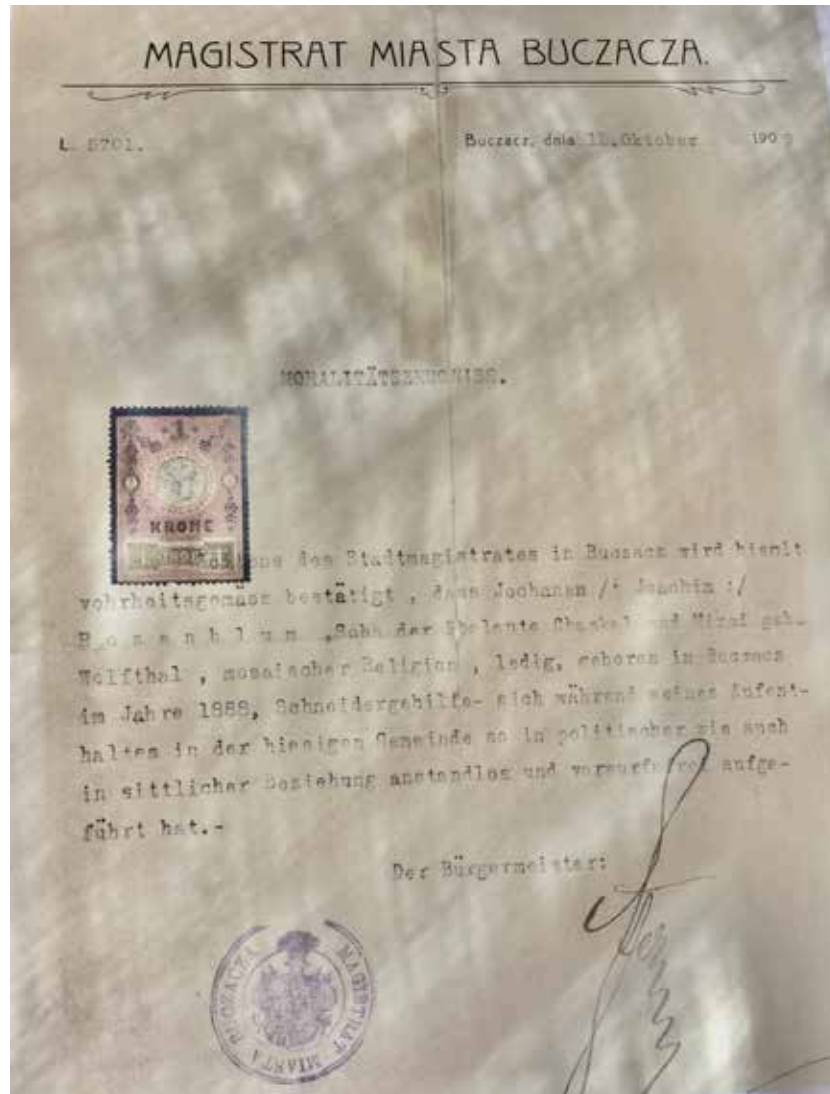
Zirkusgasse 21 with Jochanan and Cilli with Lilly, Mitzi and Eddie.

Mirel Rosenblum

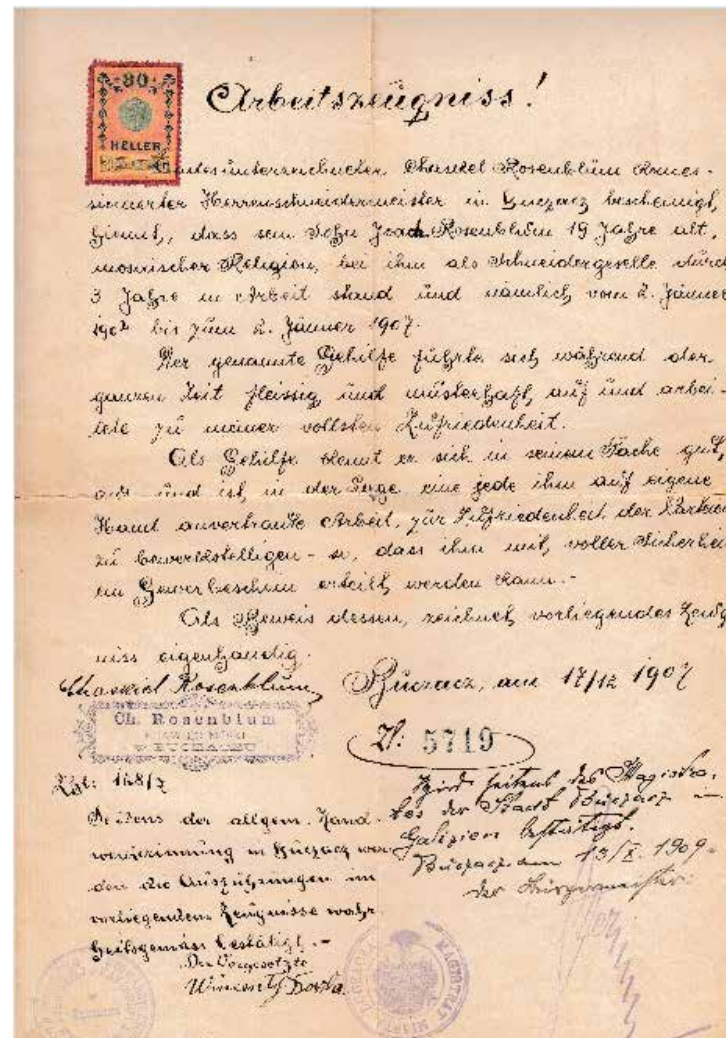
For some years I tried to find any record of Mirel Rosenblum née Dankberg/Wolfthal. Though she had lived her married life in Buchach there was no record of her birth there. Finally in a recent search of Jewish Records Indexing - Poland I found a record of the surname Dankberg in the surname list for Horodenka which is close to Skala, Buchach and Borshov, so I assume that she came from the Dankberg family in that town. Peter also has DNA in common with some Americans by the name of Dankberg.

married Chana Schupler in 1871 and between 1873 and 1900 they had 10 children. Ignatz (Nat), Moshe (Max), Chaia, Toba, Sala (Slava) Lena, Julius (Joe), Devora (Dora), Etká (Ethel), and Hersh. Berl and Chana both died in Buchach – a number of their children immigrated to the US. Judy Zimmer, a Schupler descendant has extensively researched the Jurmann/Schupler families and the information is on ancestry.com.

Mitzi was in touch with Hannah Scholl, who completed a Jurmann family tree in the 1990s, tracing the family that had come to the US. Her research has now been incorporated into Judy Zimmer’s research. Alicia Appleman Jurmann and the Rehfield family, are all Jurmann descendants. Stephen Price from Oklahoma once turned up on our doorstep at Auckland Rd around 1990. He is descended from Julius (Joe) Jurmann.



Certificate for good behaviour for Jochanan Rosenblum. The Magistrate in Buchach confirms that Jochanan (Joachim) Rosenblum, son of Chaskel and Mirel born Wolfthal, Jewish religion, single who was born in Buchach in the year 1888....”



Apprentice certificate for Jochanan Rosenblum. “Chaskel Rosenblum, mens tailor, in Buchach, certifies that his son Joch. Rosenblum, 19 years old, Jewish religion, completed his three years of apprenticeship as a cutter from 2 January 1902 to 2 January 1907”. Dated Buchach 17.12.1907. Signed and stamped.

Hannah Scholl was the daughter of Etká Jurmann. The Rehfields are descended from Berl Jurmann.

I located a number of Rosenblum documents which came from the Polish State Archives and the information in the documents together with research done by Jim Ostroff in Washington DC, has enabled us to put together a fairly clear picture of the Rosenblum family. Jim is a descendant of Avrum Rosenblum, brother of Peter's great grandfather Chaskel. The earliest of these records show Chune Rosenblum born 1817 and his wife Taube Cohen. Both died in Borshov, where presumably they had lived. Their son Oiser born in 1833, married Dwsie Szneider, who was born in Skala, a town nearby. Their numerous children are shown variously as having been born in "Austria" or Borshov. It may well be that Oiser moved to his wife's town when they married, as was common amongst Jewish families in Galicia at the time. We know that Oiser had been the town scribe in Skala, responsible for keeping records as his signature appears on the bottom of some of the copy documents we have. Oiser was known to have been a bit of a rascal. Certainly Chaskel, Peter's great grandfather was born in Skala in 1860, his mother's home town, so Oiser and Dwsie appear to have been living in Skala at the time. Skala was a small country town that today would be considered primitive, with dirt roads and no electricity, however Borshov was a little larger town. They were about 70-80 kms from Buchach, the nearest large centre. Jochanen Rosenblum, Chaskel's son, was the oldest of his siblings and was born in Buchach in 1888 so by that time the immediate Rosenblum family were living in Buchach. Skala and Borshov were both Judicial Districts within the jurisdiction of the Borshov administration district, so that "Borshov"



as a place of birth, death or marriage might mean Borshov town or Skala town, in the administrative district of Borshov.

Borshov, a typical Galician Jewish town

Borshov, Borshobun, Borshchiv, Borchow, Borshchev, Borshchon, Borshtchev, Borszczow, Borszow - location: 56km N of Chernivisti 48deg48'/26deg03'.

Borchov and Skala, were two typical Jewish towns in Eastern Galicia, situated on the Zabrutz River, bordering on Poland.

Both had the same sort of nondescript main street with mostly single storey small houses that were quite shabby. The other streets on both sides of the main thoroughfare fanned out east and west. Fifteen hundred Jewish souls lived in the centre of each city – a sort of unintentional ghetto – a ghetto without walls or gates. It was unspoken where the Jews lived rather peacefully. Thousands of Ukrainians, hundreds of Poles could be seen on Sundays going to their two churches and crowding the "Jewish" streets.

Early records for the Rosenblum family, Chune (Chime, Chiel) born about 1817 suggests he and his wife Taube Cohen lived in Borshov, as did Chune's parents Salomon and Perala Rosenblum. It appears that the family had moved from Borshov to Skala by the time their first child was born in 1860. The partially translated Yizkor book for the town of Borshov suggests that the town was quite large. It was on a direct trade route that went through the village from Tarnopol to Chortkov to Okip, a neglected place on the Polish Russian border and Romania. It had in earlier times been a fortress and trading centre, the route continuing to Hartin and Yaz in Turkey. Another trade route led to Kiev.



Jochanan and Cilli Rosenblum and family Otto Mitzi, Lotte and Eddie (front).



Jochanan and Cilli in New York c. 1970.



*(above right) Great Uncle Mendel Jurmann's grave, Zentralfriedhof, Vienna.
(right) Also in Vienna, great grandmother Mirel Rosenblum's headstone buried together with her husband Chaskel Rosenblum.*



Rosenblum cousins mid 1930s in Vienna. (l to r) Cilli, cousin Katie, Jochanan, Lilly (seated), Eddie, Mitzi and Otto.



Galicia (c. 1780) showing the towns of Skala, Borszczow, Buczacz and Horodenka.



Dinner of Buchacher Landsmannschaft in New York.



Jochanan and Cilli with Otto, Mitzi and Lilly Rosenblum. Photo taken during 1914-1918 as Jochanan appears in military uniform.

"If you want to talk about a paradise on earth, it was Borshov in the summertime. As soon as summer started people left their residences and went to cool off in the waters of the river. There were four rivers in, or near the town. The largest river was the Dniester. This river flowed in an area full of malaria. From the northeast the river was surrounded by hills on which grew all kinds of grasses. On the western side there were fields where wheat, corn and tobacco grew, and the whole area, particularly Borshov, was very rich with all these crops. When you stood on the surrounding hills the flat fields looked like a design of all kinds of colors. Water flowed through like quicksilver."

Smuggling played an important role in the life of people in Borshov and in Skala. Borshov was 15kms from the Polish/Russian border and a little further from the Romanian border. Thus the Jewish population was increasing until the First World War, because smuggling was flourishing in the town. Many new sources of income arose, for instance, people were required to act as guides and porters. In 1921 there were 5,011 people in the town, of whom 1637 were Jews, this number remaining constant up to 1939.

Food

Common foods were Kasha, black buckwheat cooked with beans, pot roast eaten with a bun or roll, potato latkes (grated potato cooked with flour). There were several different styles of Shabbat challahs. One was a large round loaf formed with up to 13 side rolls. A special challah was baked for Purim, lochshen or noodle kugel was eaten with cinnamon and sugar or fat, or sometimes a rice kugel was made with apples or with coconut oil. At

Date	5.1.50./M R.	Bu.No.	10 42	Polizei.	(7713).
Name	JURMAN, Mendel	File	GC02/ID/1		
BD	5.6.92.	BP	Bucsaça/Polen	Nat	Jew Stateless.
Next of Kin					
Source of Information Buchenwald Questionnaire					
Last kn. Location			Date		
CC/Brisov	Buchenwald.	Arr.	2.10.39.	lib.	
Transf. on		to			
Died on		6.11.39.		in	
Cause of death					
Buried on		in			
Grave			D.C.No.		
Remarks Details see Quest.					

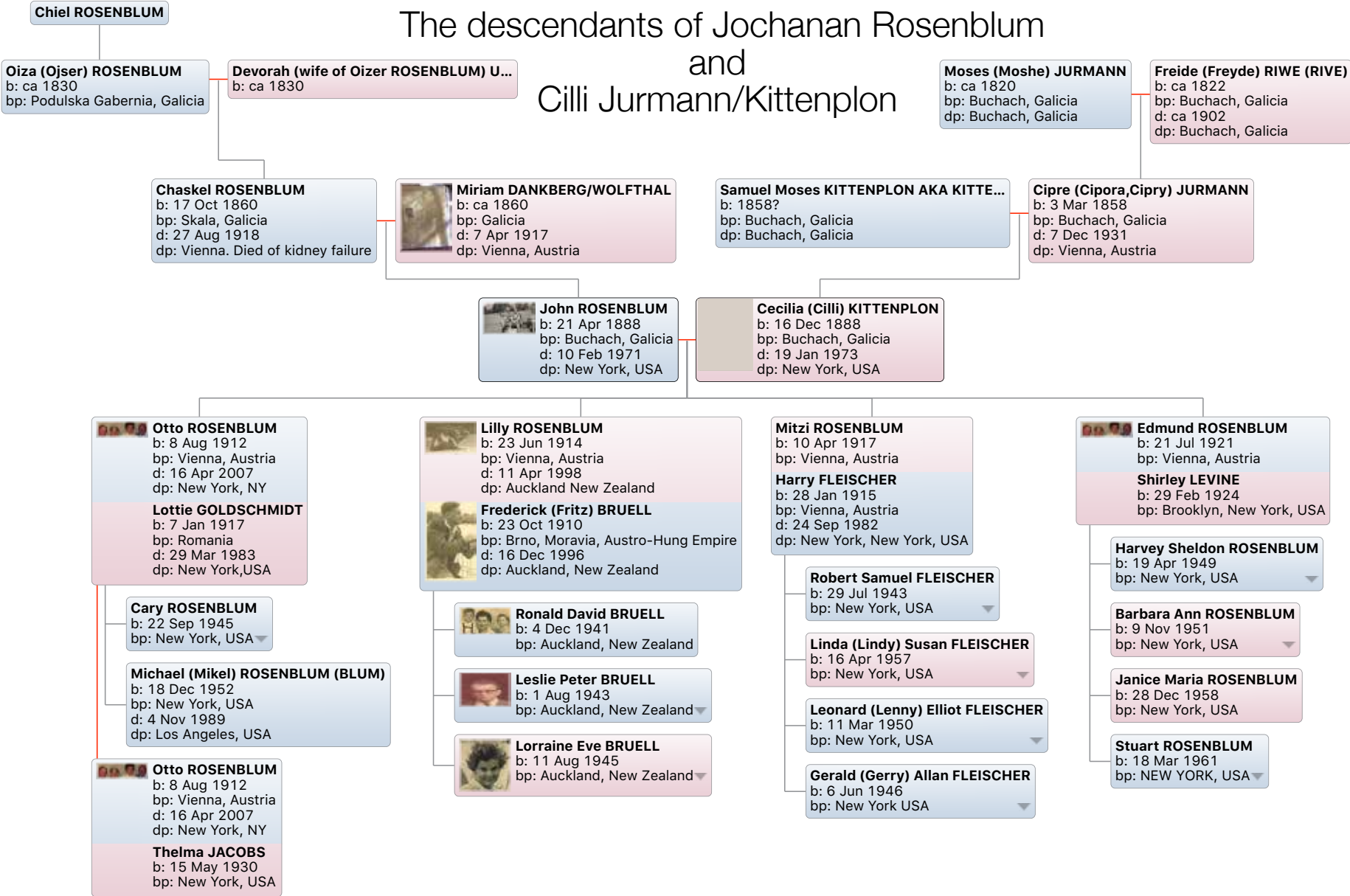
Mendel Jurman's deportation to Buchenwald.

They also had egg bagels that were baked in deep dishes, as well as a variety of buns and rolls. In the shtetl there were also unofficial coffee houses. People would gather and chew on sunflower seeds and gossip. Another venue was Mordechai Fachman's inn where the Yiddish theatre was staged with imported performers. Large benches were set up as well as a stage with a few kerosene lamps. In the years before the First World War young people started to perform and the first play was Moshe Richter's comedy "Moshe the Tailor" which was very successful. Drama groups were established in Borshov and in the surrounding shtetls such as Skala.

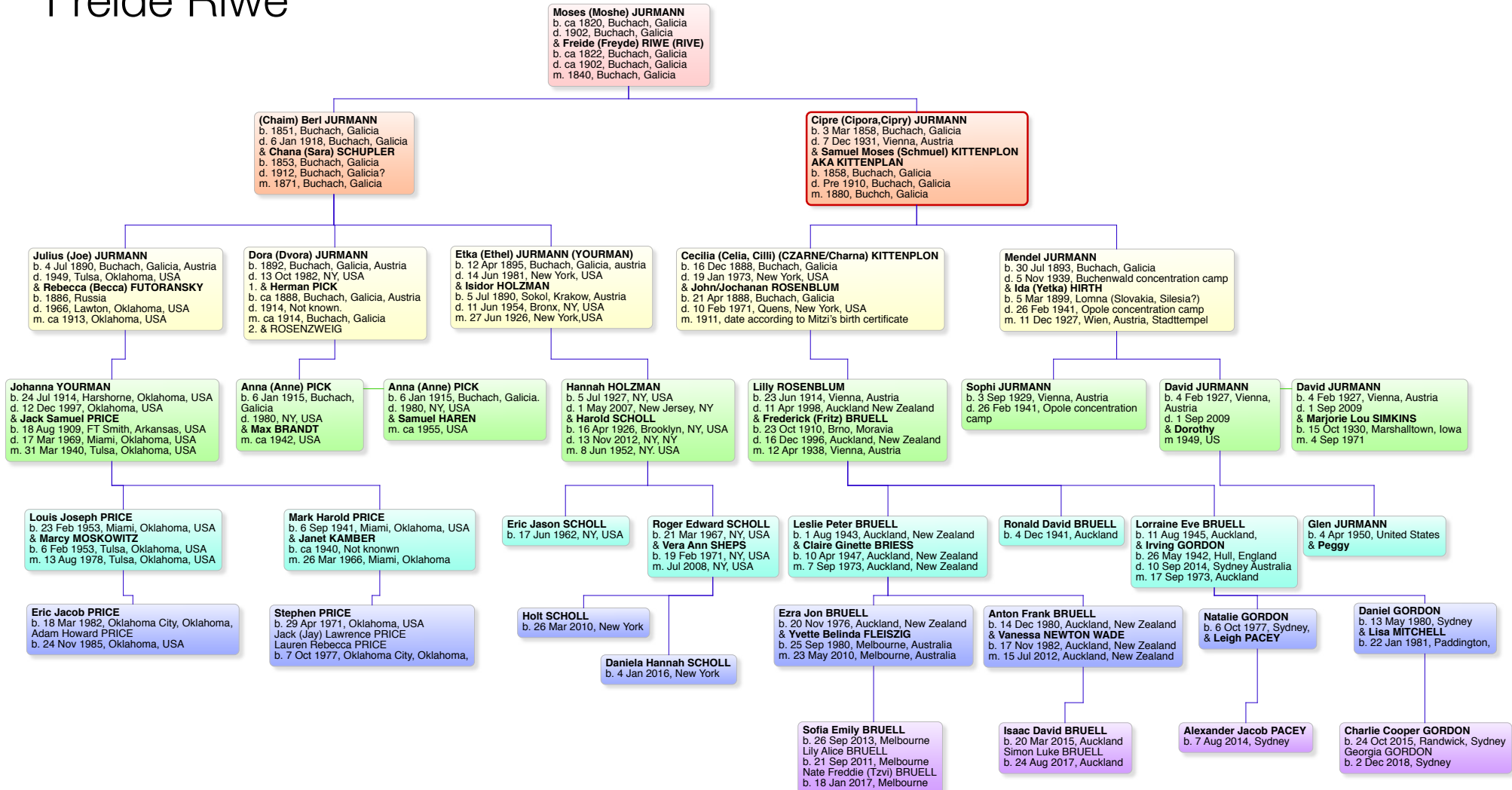
Leisure activities included occasional visits to the market by gypsies with a bear that danced to melodies played on a flute and drum, sometimes with a monkey instead of a bear. Accordion players would come and play in the middle of the shtetl and might also have a parrot. Fortune tellers were popular mostly with non Jews. There might be all manner of travelling musicians, clowns, even a mini zoo with perhaps a lion, or a wolf and smaller animals. Circus visits, although rare were popular, though expensive.

Passover a potato kugel was called a Kiesel. Kugel was eaten at midday on Shabbat and on Friday evening, tzimmiss was eaten, sometimes with compote. Various cakes were cooked as treats for celebrations – cheese kuchen at Shavuoth, fruit layered cake for weddings and so on. Honey cake was made for a woman giving birth, also served after the bris and at the naming of a baby girl. On a Jahrzeit (anniversary) whisky was served by the men in shul with a plain biscuit. Each shtetl had different customs – in Borshov they sold pretzels but no bagels while in Skala bagels were sold in the street.

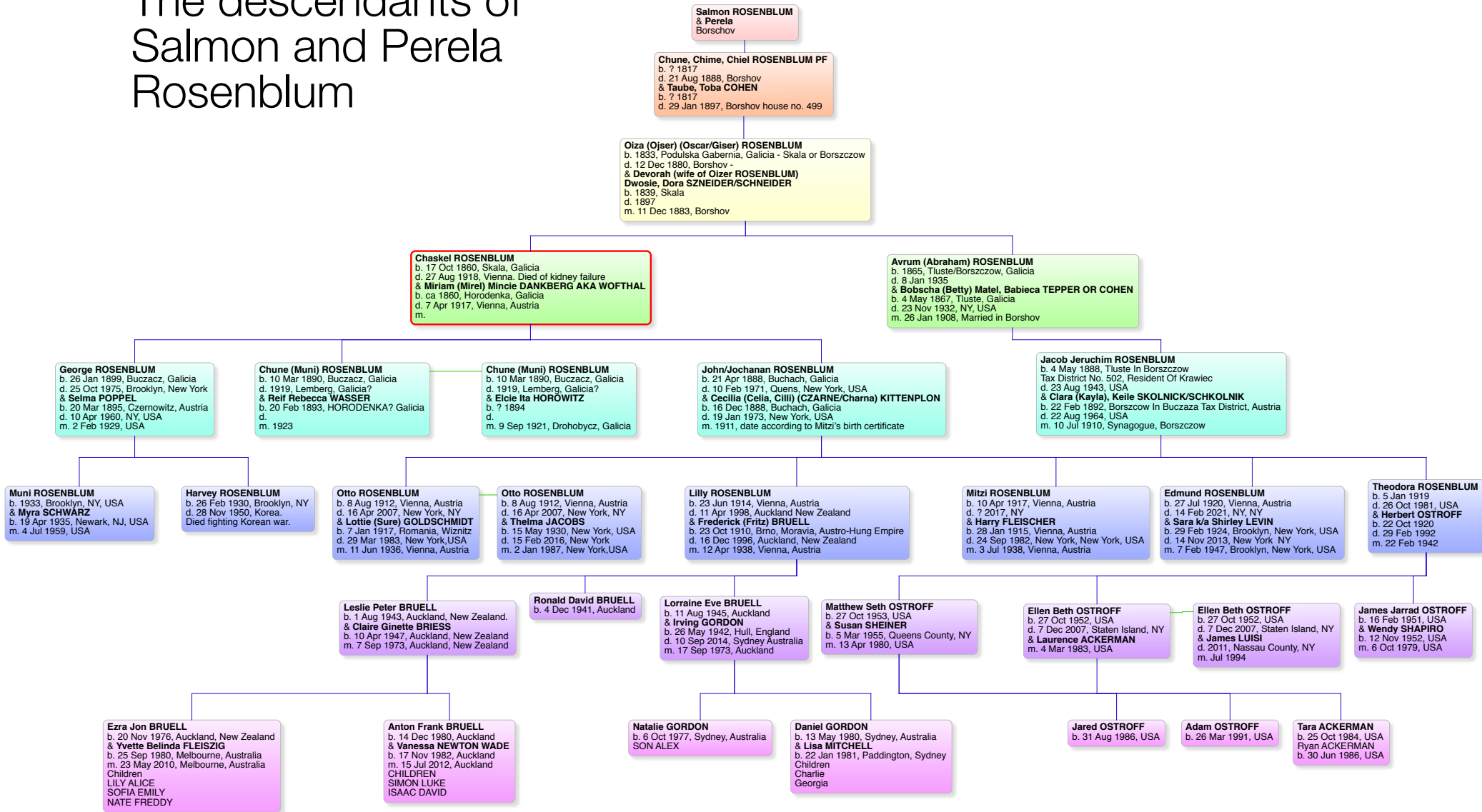
The descendants of Jochanan Rosenblum and Cilli Jurmann/Kittenplon



The descendants of Moses Jurmann and Freide Riwe



The descendants of Salmon and Perela Rosenblum



Markets

Every July there was a big market in Lashkovitz, frequented by merchants but also ordinary men and women who went there to buy things not available in Borshov. People from surrounding shtetls would arrange to meet friends and relatives there and sometimes even a wedding would be arranged to take place there. Activities at the market were the subject of gossip for months after. As well as merchants, there were all sorts of agents, handlers, rabbis, scribes and magicians there. Bargains would be boasted of and the stories of their acquisition the stuff of comment for many months after the market was over. One could tell the people who had been to Lashkovits by the nice and different clothes they wore.

Occupations

Before the First World War there were tailors, mostly for men: about 20 families sewed for the peasants, according to the Yizkor Book. There were fewer shoemakers, but they were professionals who made new shoes and boots, there were furriers who made hats, three or four Jewish hairdressers, brewers of whisky, a saddler made saddles, as well as smaller leather items such as bags. Another family made rope, there was a photographer, a monument engraver, yet others who made a living as a notary or advocate. Dairymen controlled the production of milk, made cream, cheese and butter and women would carry these products around to sell door to door. A Jewish cow provided income as kosher milk was in demand and more expensive.



Buchach Bridge over the river Most.

Klezmorim played musical instruments such as fiddle, flute and bass, earning money by playing at weddings and other simchas (celebrations). Porters and wagoners owned a wagon with horses and transported people to and from the train station and to nearby shtetls such as Skala. A wagon with only one horse could take two passengers, still others transported goods such as stoves, building materials and so on. Gentiles would be hired to drive on Shabbat or Yom Tov (holidays). There were also porters in the middle of the town with a string tied around them like a belt and who tried to earn money by carrying things. They

used to be able to carry a sack of flour that weighed 100kg on their shoulders for quite a distance. Approximately 10 families were butchers operating from a special street where there were two rows of butcher shops on both sides of the street – on one side were the kosher shops and on the other side were the non-kosher shops. In front of each shop was a large wooden chopping block where the meat was cut. Butchers would go out into the villages to buy a little calf or a cow that they would tie to the wagon while the butcher would ride back very slowly. One or two would be loaded into the wagon.

Bakers & others

There were two or three baker families registered with signs outside their premises but also women bakers who did a little bit of home baking which they sold in secret from their homes, so avoiding paying tax. Most women baked bread only once a week. One family were millers, with a flour mill, others kept orchards that they rented from a nobleman either in Borshov or

nearby. They sold to retailers and to private houses, to housewives who would make plum jam for the winter, and wine.

A few Jews worked as forest guards and there were two glaziers who put in panes in new homes or repaired broken ones. There were builders and carpenters who built shops and houses, with amazing accuracy, sometimes with no formal training. Other tradesmen were painters, tinsmiths to make locks and roofs, soap and candlestick makers. Three or four families were blacksmiths who made shoes for horses and wheels for the wagons, another was a farrier who made shoes for horses. Most Jews were traders but there were five larger shops in the village that occupied not only the one family but had one or two employees as well. Water carrier: this was an important occupation and the water carrier transported water in barrels. The horses suffered considerably under the heavy loads.

Jews who lived in the two towns, Borshov and Skala, earned their living as merchants and tradesmen, some earning barely enough to get by, while a few others lived quite comfortably. Culture and education played an important role. The Polish language, its literature, its education system and even some of its spirit enveloped some of the young people, the majority of whom in both cities attended Polish gymnasia. There were libraries that contained Yiddish classics plus many books in translation, so that even though the Jews were not in their own homeland there was a rich cultural life.



Jochanan in army uniform World War One.

Knowledge of the Hebrew language and culture slowly developed from a meagre start. In this respect Skala advanced more than its neighbour. There was a wonderful “Tarbut” school, (secular, Hebrew language schools) a “Bet Am”, a large Hebrew library, various youth movements and active parties who all competed against one another, all using the renewed Hebrew language. The sound of Hebrew could be heard in the streets of the city. There were concerts, cultural evenings, much loved theatre presentations, Zionist activity. The chalutz (pioneering) spirit even extended from across the Polish border. It was like a Zionist bridge. Zionism was on the march in the 20th century, with an emphasis on Aliyah (immigration to Palestine).

A snapshot of life in Skala from the town's Yizkor book

Skala Podolskaya, administrative district of Borshov (under the Austrians) Location: 64km NNE of Chernivisti 48 deg51' / 26deg12'.

Skala lies in western Podolia on the western bank of the river Zbrucz. The river flows through a pretty valley, narrowing and widening according to the terrain and ultimately joining the larger Dneister river about 35 kms south of Skala. The town is typical of the landscape of South Eastern Galicia – beautiful, strong colours, soil ideal for growing. The countryside benefits from a temperate climate receiving heavy snows in winter when it is very cold, summer is hot and rainy but spring

comes with the smells and promises of new growth while autumn is the most colourful season. Skala is built on a high hill which slopes down to the river valley, set into this beautiful landscape, with a small town centre supported by rural suburbs. Birches, acacias, poplars, elm and white oak trees line the access road to the town.

Apparently Skala was one of the earliest of nine Jewish settlements in today's Ukraine. The fortress at Skala was built to protect against invasion by the Tartars. Altogether there were 115 Jewish communities established in the Ukraine between 1503 and 1648. It appears that the beginning of the Skala Jewish community dates back to 1526. In 1648/49 there were terrible pogroms known as the Chmielnitski revolt culminating in widespread destruction. 742 Jewish communities were destroyed and more than 600,000 souls were killed. Poverty throughout Galicia was everywhere. Briefly under Turkish rule from 1672 to 1699, Jews settled down once again to peace and quiet, settling wherever they wanted. Up until the partition of Poland in 1772, there was no border.

Between the Partition of Poland in 1772 and the First World War the Counts Goluchowski were the landholders of Skala and the Jews there flourished under their benevolent rule. According to the 1570 census, Skala had 232 houses of which 10 were occupied by Jews but after many invasions and battles by the last census of the Polish reign in 1765, Jews were employed as tenant farmers, small traders, peddlars and innkeepers. At that time there were 362 Jews there.

Under the period of Hungarian rule (1860 on) there were many improvements in the lives of Jews in Galicia. Previously denied basic freedoms, they were granted the right to own land, and were able to engage in expanded business activities. Skala was a mercantile and industrial centre and Skala Jews were very enterprising. Oil was produced from anise and caraway and the oil and seeds were exported and made into distilled spirits, perfumes and toilet soap. The anise and caraway were imported from Bessarabia and brought to Skala

on gentile-owned horse-drawn wagons. The residue of the boiled anise from the oil enterprises was used to fatten up cattle and their milk was sold in the city by retailers. Count Goluchowski leased his beer brewery, as well as a flour and a water mill to Jews. Bead selling was another occupation, the beads being brought from Italy and then smuggled into Russia.

As Skala was a border town smuggling was rife, smugglers known as "peklmachers". The profit lay in the fact that smuggled merchandise did not attract taxes. Many of these peklmachers (little package carriers) had relationships with guards on both sides of the border and bribery took care of any potential reporting. Also from time to time Jews fleeing to the west or avoiding Russia's military service were smuggled from Czarist Russia. Horse drawn wagons or carriages, provided local transport around the area and within the town. Confectionaries were sold from premises which became a type of youth club as young people gathered there to eat ice-cream, tarts, cream cakes and bottles of seltzer.

Further occupations ranged from porter and peasant to wealthy landowner, from market-peddler to well-to-do exporter. Several oil presses produced lubricants that were exported and raw materials for production were imported from Russia. Jews also owned distilleries for whisky and liqueurs marketed throughout the region. Coral necklaces were imported from Italy, to be smuggled into Russia for subsequent sale and the export of eggs to Western Europe was also controlled by Jews. By the early 20th century, beans, chickpeas and flax began to be exported as well as export of wheat, rye, oats and barley. These activities provided jobs for many families. Cattle feed was bought in Russia and sold to farmers and tenants in Galicia, geese were likewise bought in Russia and there was a brisk trade in flesh, fat and livers. There were large shops for fabric, woollen goods, clothing, leather for footwear, notions. Groceries operated next to shops for hardware, tools, metals and farm implements. Some goods manufactured in Brno, Vienna and Prague were smuggled into Russia: anything that came from the West was in high demand there.

Roads and railways required large amounts of stone and gravel and this material was taken from local stone quarries and shipped to other areas.

On the whole Poles, Jews and Ukrainians lived together reasonably peacefully up to 1918 and there was little overt antisemitism. All were represented in the municipal administration in the town: there was always a Ukrainian Mayor and a Jewish deputy. Occupations in the town of Skala were similar to those in Borshov – shoemakers, tinsmiths, carpenters, locksmiths, glaziers, bakers, musicians, tailors were all well represented. Clothing was mostly sold at local fairs in Skala and neighbouring towns. Even people were carried across the border.

The railway line was built in Skala in the 1880s. The arrival of the first train was a tremendous occasion and those who had not seen one before were totally amazed.

Politics were a source of disagreement amongst the Jews of Skala, being divided into two groups – the Zionists and the Socialists and there were many heated debates. The Jewish community was however, on good terms with the gentiles and Jews were in the majority until the late 19th century, making up a little less than half of the town's population before World War One. The Rosenblum family were amongst those who had left for greener pastures in Buchach and beyond to Vienna and America.

A snapshot of Jewish life in Buchach taken from the town's Yizkor book

Buchach, Buchach.

Location: 95km NNW of Chernivisti 49deg.05'/25deg24'



Buchach.

Buchach is situated above the western bank of the Strypa River, 55 km from Tarnopol and 130 km from Lvov/Lemberg, Galician's capital at the time of the Austrian rule and the capital of Red Russia in the Polish period before 1772. During the Austrian period Buchach was only 62 km from the Russian border, which Galician Jews regarded as an iron curtain. Settlement developed at that place as it was a convenient point for crossing the river over a bridge and there were 12 towns built in this way north of the Dniester River. The Strypa River is a tributary of the Dniester.

The annual average temperature is approx. 9 degrees, ranging from five degrees below zero to 21 above and the amount of rain is sufficient to ensure forests of deciduous trees extending on both sides of the Strypa all the

way to the Dniester. Nearby to the south is an area of agricultural land where wheat, barley, oats, potatoes and pulses were produced, as well as apples, pears, plums and cherries. Probably these crops were bought by firms such as Ignaz Briess Jr, in Olmütz, Moravia where they were processed and on sold. Buchach horses were well known, whereas the chickens, geese and turkeys were considered inferior. Horse and cattle trading were common occupations in Eastern Galicia.

The owners of the large estates were Poles and the town of Buchach was largely Jewish as were most East Galician towns since the 17th century. Up to the 16th century Buchach was owned by the Buchachki family, then from the 17th century by the Potocki family. Jews had lived in Buchach since the days of the estates and the number increased when it became a town. The Jewish community is mentioned from 1500 on. The Polish noblemen who owned the estate gave the Jews privileges and trade, work and housing and settlement conditions were unrestricted. They had the right to vote in municipal council elections.

In the 1765 census there were 1055 Jews recorded in Buchach and in the surrounding neighbourhood, a further 303 Jews; a total for the area of 1267 adults and 91 children. The number remained more or less constant for the next century and by 1870 Jews comprised 67.9% of the population. At the time of the partition from Poland, there were almost 225,000 Jews living in Galicia, comprising 9.6% of the population. By 1910 there were 811,103 Jews



Erstklassiges Affidavit unterwegs. Telegram to Cilli and Jochanan in Vienna to tell them their first class Affidavits to support their application to immigrate to the US had been sent. These were eagerly anticipated and much prized – they meant the difference between life and death.

Buchach became one of the most important Zionist strongholds in Eastern Galicia.

In the Yizkor book, compiled after the war, there are occasional Jurmann and Kittenplon references. For instance Itzik Wolf Yorman and Fischel Kittenplon in 1920 were elected committee members for the Board of a new/upgraded hospital and old age home, both in terrible condition – no linen nor furniture, no towels, terrible nutrition, no source of heating, patients were literally starving. A fundraising campaign provided money for building repairs, food, linen and fuel, beds, medical devices, soap, toothbrushes and more (Page 209 of the Buchach Yizkor book). This was the only hospital in the entire area.

there, forming 11% of the population. In 1869 when the Jews of Galicia were emancipated, of 820,000 Jews in the whole of Austria, 575,433 lived in Galicia and the majority of those lived in Eastern Galicia. There was much overcrowding and disease and between 1830 and 1850 the death rate exceeded the birth rate. Outbreaks of typhus and cholera were frequent.

Crafts were popular occupations and at the end of the 18th century factories and workshops provided work for Polish Jews manufacturing bricks, lime, soap, and candles, as well as operating water mills and breweries. The Yizkor book, mentions in the 1870s, an Ezra Danberg amongst a group of lovers of Hebrew literature who founded a Bet HaMidrash Library which became a centre of the intelligentsia. An upsurge of Zionism developed in the 1880s and

The beautiful, large synagogue was called “Das sneiderische shilachil” and was directed, amongst others, by A.V.Yurman, and Fischel Kitenflon. “Sneider” means “tailor” in Yiddish. There was a workers’ association in Buchach – it was a general workers’ association of a cultural and social nature for the group whose members wanted a special social framework, feeling they had been excluded from the more middle and upper class youth.

This group eventually became a socialist organisation and its members were Yiddish speaking Jews, later associated with the Bund (the International Jewish Labour organisation). Apparently the Kittenflon brothers and Yonah Rosenblum and his wife from the Kitenflon family (then in America) were very active in the group. This is the only direct mention I can find in the Buchach Yizkor book, of Peter’s grandparents Jochanan Rosenblum and his wife Cilli née Kittenplon.

After World War Two a Landsmannschaft (a society of former Buchachers) welfare organisation of former Buchachers was formed in New York and mentioned amongst those who were active were Bernard and Sally Gotfurcht. Peter’s great great uncle and aunt.

Sally was the sister of Jochanan and was the first of the family to migrate to the United States. It was she who provided the necessary Affidavits to enable the rest of the family to leave Vienna for the US. They could only send two at a time, so the first two went to Mitzi and Eddie, the last to the parents



Otto and Eddie Rosenblum.

Jochanan and Cilli. It was Sally and Bernard who first welcomed Mitzi and Eddie when their ship docked in New York.

These Affidavits were very important because without them you had no chance of entry to the United States.

Leisure

The recreational areas of Buchach are described in several places in the Yizkor book. There were many places for leisure activities when time permitted. Because of overcrowding and geographical boundaries of the town in a valley, there were poor conditions of hygiene. The land around the river sloped steeply up from the valley so houses were built on the slopes above the river. The town was surrounded by the beautiful mountains and forests of the Carpathians that looked out onto wonderful landscapes and enjoyed very clear air. The town was built on a crater between two mountains and the houses appear to be one above another, while several bridges spanned the river. On one mountain there was a poor Jewish area and cemetery – on the other mountain,

surrounded by the river on three sides was a Christian cemetery and an area of lovely villas mostly owned by clerks and Polish intelligentsia. Here, in the beautiful mountains, the social life of the young people was centred.

There were few playgrounds in Buchach or any of the other towns in the area – so the Strypa River was where the locals went for recreation. The riverside was perfect for summer evening walks, bathing and sailing and in winter there

was tobogganing and skating. The large flour mill near the city park, leased by Jews, was the only sports area for young Jews. There were also agricultural shows. In later years a coffee house was even established there and doubled as a meeting place and event venue.

It's easy to imagine the Rosenblum children begging for permission to attend a wandering circus, a zoo or primitive cinema (called a panorama) that might be in town for a few weeks. Many itinerant entertainers came to Buchach in summer – perhaps a gramophone player, juggler or magician. Gimpel's Jewish theatre would also visit for a few weeks at this time.

Occupations

Buchach was basically a Jewish town and the centre was completely Jewish while the Christians lived in the suburbs. The economic situation of the town declined in the later 19th century as it did in many Galician towns. Having no industry, the large estates around the town housed many agricultural workers who were paid minimal wages. A source of income for the merchants were the fairs, of which there were three. A local animal market was held weekly, a larger fair at Tluste where traders would go to purchase goods to bring back and sell in Buchach. A big annual fair took place at Lashkovits that lasted for 2-3 weeks.

Tailors, all Jewish, were busy before the holidays at the end of summer.



Rosenblum cousins, 2022, in New York – Lindy, Lenny, Bob and Gerry.

The furrier trade was also dominated by Jews, while there were only a few Jewish shoemakers. Jews also owned the carriages, used for transport. Eventually shoe factories took over the trade from individual shoemakers. Barbers and tin-smiths were all Jews while both Jews and Christians were furniture makers, carpenters and so on. Poverty caused many to immigrate, including the Rosenblums, Jurmanns and Dan(k)bergs. Begging was common and bad living conditions contributed to the prevalence of epidemics. The cholera epidemic of 1884/5 was particularly bad in Buchach and spread throughout Galicia.

By 1870 Buchach had a population of 8,959 – 67% Jewish and in 1900 of a total population of 11,755, 57.3% were Jews.

Education and culture

In 1789 most Galicians were illiterate and even some of the gentry were illiterate.

However, almost all Jewish males knew some basic mathematics and could read Hebrew. Education was both Jewish and general. Children could attend both the heder or sometimes the teacher would even come to the home to teach the children. Girls learned both Hebrew and Yiddish, while the boys studied longer hours at the heder and some of the brighter boys studied from morning till late at night, six days each week. 3-5 year olds studied together at the heder. Lighting expenses to provide oil for the oil lamps, or candles, were

shared by all the students. Most of those who attended the general schools gave up Torah study and only the outstanding few students remained to study on through the evenings. Punishments were liberally meted out. In the lower grades the teacher had a cat-of-nine-tails that he wielded at will. Also in the general schools there was a turban with feathers that was put on a sinner's head, requiring him to stand on a table in front of the other pupils and be made to look stupid.

In 1892 a Baron Hirsh Fund helped establish a Jewish school with 262 students. In 1907, 180 pupils attended the school and in 1908 the gymnasium had 696 pupils of whom 216 were Jewish. Parents who wanted a general and structured education for their children could send them to the Baron Hirsh Fund School which most Jewish children attended. Or they could go to a primary school up to four grades, where the pupils studied for six hours a day. Teaching was in Polish, German and Ukrainian and was thorough. Torah and some grammar were taught.

From this school, students went on to the gymnasium or to an apprenticeship in commerce or crafts. Few Jews attended the Polish general school. Poor students were given clothing and hot meals. In 1890 Jews comprised about 10% of the population, but represented 18% of gymnasium students and 21% of university students.

In 1891 a committee for the renewal of the hospital was set up and in 1908 an old age home was set up on the first floor of the hospital building with room for 15 people and in 1920 after the first World War a new board was



Uncle Eddie Rosenblum 2019 age 99.

installed to run the two institutions. Although most of the known family had left Buchach by this time, family names appear in the list of board members: Moshe Wolftal, Fischel Kittenflon, Alter Goldberg and Itzik Worl Yorman.

“Der Jüdische Wecke”

“Der Jüdische Wecke” (The Jewish Awakener) was published weekly in Stanislaw and then in Yiddish in Buchach in 1905 and gave a vivid picture of life in the town. In the 1880s there was an upsurge of the Zionist movement. Zionist activities were reported on, reviews of theatre productions written up – groups such as Itztrubal performed plays such as “Daughters of Jerusalem” and “Mishnah for the King” to a capacity crowd. Another extract lamented the four diseases afflicting the towns-people of Buchach: typhus, rubella, diphtheria and whooping cough and all were showing signs of developing into epidemics. Schools were closed and bathing in the Strypa river was forbidden, on the assumption that the river was the source of the illnesses. Nevertheless the water from the river was poured onto the streets to clean them and the playground of the Baron Hirsh Fund School was polluted. It was hoped that the children would be healthy and clean by the time of the coming

High Holy Days when the “evil eye” would cease to have power. There was to be an attempt to prevent overcrowding at services so as to stop the spread of disease.

Language

The lands of Galicia had historically been both Polish and Ukrainian. There

was considerable autonomy in choice of official languages. In 1869 German was designated the official language of all government offices in Galicia, however in 1872 this was changed and Polish and Ukrainian were to be official languages along with German. After 1877 official documents were printed in German and Polish. After 1918 when Poland became independent some forms could include Ukrainian.

1918 Galicia absorbed into Poland

The national movements of the provinces of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, straining to bursting point, finally succeeded in establishing themselves as independent countries – Czechoslovakia, Poland, a shrunken Austria, and so on. Galicia was incorporated into a new and powerful Poland which in turn became part of the Soviet bloc of countries for much of the remainder of the 20th century, ultimately becoming an independent country, one of the largest in Europe.

The shtetl culture of our forefathers was finally obliterated by the Nazis during the Second World War, with few survivors returning after the war. That world and its culture, music, Yiddish language has become only a distant memory, often romanticised by literature and history. The country, which in 1991 became Ukraine, included the family's shtetls of Galicia destined always to be looking over its shoulder at avaricious, bellicose Russia on its border. At the time of writing 2024 modern Ukraine backed by NATO allies, is fighting for its life, against a more powerful and better equipped Russia.

A note on family names

Up to 1867 Jews needed permission to marry. Since this involved payment to the civil authorities, many Jewish families chose to marry under Jewish law only. In such cases, the children were legally regarded as illegitimate and took the mother's family name. Sometimes, after the law changed, couples who had earlier been married under Jewish law only, married under civil law also. This

meant that the wife was often known by both family names eg. Cipre Jurmann (her family name) was also known as Cipre Kittenplon (the family name of her husband Samuel Kittenplon).

The Rosenblums after World War II

Otto and his wife Lotte, Mitzi with Harry, Eddie and the parents Jochanan and Cilli made a post war life in and around Brooklyn, then as they became established, in Long Island, New York. Mitzi in New York maintained a close connection with Lilly in Auckland and there were visits back and forth. The 13 cousins, their children, also kept in touch. Eddie became a high class tailor, and when retired was able to indulge his hobby of horseriding, Mitzi worked as a seamstress for many years between bringing up four children. Otto worked as an engineer all his life, for which he had trained in Vienna. His great interest was photography and also horseriding. Lilly in Auckland started her own fashion manufacturing company, retiring in 1976. During the First World War Jochanan had served in the Austrian army and part of his job had been to care for the horses. He obviously passed to his sons his love of horses. Today the Galitzianer descendants are spread throughout America, New Zealand and Australia.

In 1994 Lilly gave an oral testimonial about her family history and the transcript appears in Book 2. Her oral history was completed under the auspices of the Auckland Holocaust Oral History Group and forms part of their collection.

Lilly and her husband Fritz made Auckland, New Zealand their home in 1940, where they raised three children, Ronny, Peter and Lorraine. Lorraine and her family of husband and two children moved to Sydney around 1998 while of Peter's two boys, Ezra who married a Melbourne girl Yvette Fleiszig and had three children Lily, Sofia and Nate while Anton married and stayed in Auckland and had two sons Isaac and Simon.

Otto, Mitzi and Eddie all gave oral history interviews with the Shoah Foundation (see Book 4 - 'God bless America'). ■

Resources

Skala on the River Zbrucz: A history of the former Skala Jewish Community, published 2009 by the Skala Research Group and Skala Benevolent Society. Original copyright 1978 by the Skala Benevolent Society.

Buchach: The Memorial Book of the Jewish Community of Buchach, Galicia originally in Hebrew. Edited by Yisrael Cohen, published in Tel Aviv 1956. Published by JewishGen.

The Galizianers: The Jews of Galicia, 1772-1918 Suzan Wynne 2006.

Extracts from *The Book of Borschiv, Ukraine* Translation of *Sefer Borszczow*, published in Tel Aviv, 1960 ed. N.Blumenthal, Tel Aviv, English translations hosted by www.jewishgen.org/Yizkor/Borshchow.

Documents and photographs held by Claire and Peter Bruell.

Documents from Fond 300, Warsaw Central Archives of Historical Records in Warsaw (AGAD)



Peter, Vienna.



Jochacan Rosenblum's declaration of Austrian citizenship on April 15, 1921.

Austrian citizenship is granted to Peter.

REPUBLIC  ÖSTERREICH

Zahl: MA 35 – 779316-2022 00005299

**Bescheid
über den
Erwerb der Staatsbürgerschaft
durch Anzeige**

Die Wiener Landesregierung stellt hiemit fest:
Leslie Peter Bruell,
geboren am 01.08.1943 in Epsom, Auckland,
hat am 22.03.2022 die

österreichische Staatsbürgerschaft

gemäß § 58c Abs. 1a des Staatsbürgerschaftsgesetzes 1985 erworben.

Gegen diesen Bescheid kann binnen vier Wochen Beschwerde an das zuständige Landesverwaltungsgericht erhoben werden.

Wien, am 28.08.2022

Für die Wiener Landesregierung
(Behörde)



Kamleitner

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