



THE SER-CHARLAP FAMILY NEWSLETTER

Vol. 8, No. 1

Adar I 5757; February 1997

CENTER FOR JEWISH HISTORY

This article has been edited from material that appeared in CJH News.

It has been heralded as the future Library of Congress and Smithsonian of the Jewish people. Prominent members of the academic community predict it will become a magnet for scholars from around the world. The mayor of New York City, among others, hails it as a new cultural landmark. The excitement is about The Center for Jewish History, the outgrowth of an unprecedented partnership among four leading Jewish cultural and research institutions to create a vibrant campus complex devoted to the advancement of Jewish scholarship, art, and culture. It is projected that by 1998 the collections of these four unique yet complementary institutions - the American Jewish Historical Society (specializing in American Jewry), the Leo Baeck Institute (specializing in German-speaking Jewry), the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research (specializing in East European Jewry), and the Yeshiva University Museum (interpreting and exhibiting Jewish art, culture, and history) - will be housed together.

An extensive renovation project is transforming two existing Manhattan buildings into one imposing 105,000 square foot facility for documentation, preservation, research, teaching, exhibitions, and public programs. Holdings of the four institutions include more than 80 million archival items, over 500,000 library volumes, and close to 10,000 artworks and artifacts. The exciting architectural plan for renovating a four-story landmark building on 16th Street, just west of Fifth Avenue, and its adjacent twelve-story structure on West 17th Street, will incorporate the latest technological advances, providing a computer and communications environment that will facilitate research and foster collaboration among the partners. Erica Jesselson, Chairperson of the Yeshiva University Museum Board stresses that the new Center will "teach future generations our common history: the richness, the beauty, the intellectual commitment, the meaning of the People of the Book, and the Jewish cultures that were created before the Holocaust." Dr. Allan Nadler Research Director at YIVO reflected on the extraordinary symbolism of the Center's mission. "... four institutions spanning the spectrum from Orthodox to Reform to secular Eastern European to the American Jewish tradition, coming together under one roof."

All of the Center's component organizations have provided assistance in our ongoing research of the Ser-Charlap family but YIVO Institute and the American Jewish Historical Society (AJHS) have been of special help. As the only pre-Holocaust scholarly institution to transfer its mission to the new world, YIVO is at the core of the renaissance of interest in the lives of East European Jews. Librarians Dina Abramowitz and Zachary Baker have given of themselves unselfishly in providing professional expertise. At the AJHS, currently on the campus of Brandeis University in Waltham, Massachusetts, there is a rich collection that bears eloquent witness to Jewish contributions to life in the Americas. Housed here is the nation's most complete collection of American Jewish newspapers and periodicals which capture Jewish life in a way that mere memory cannot. Among these is a complete set of *B'rayshit: The Ser-Charlap Family Newsletter*. There are also records of major Jewish communal organizations which have revealed much about our family. We can all look forward with eager anticipation to the opening of the Center for Jewish History.

IN THE STEPS OF THE RAMBAM

Moses Maimonides, the Rambam, is recognized as one of the truly great minds of the Jewish people. He was a fervently pious Jew, yet a model of tolerance, ever seeking the light, employing rational thought and rigorous science to interpret sacred texts as well as the physical world. He was a legendary physician who befriended the greatest of Moslem leaders, Saladin, and turned down an offer from King Richard of England, the so-called Lion Hearted. The Rambam has long been a model for committed Jewish medical doctors.

One such modern-day physician is our own Herbert Sier (521,Pl.2). A modest man, he has achieved an undeniably distinguished record in his chosen field of geriatric medicine. Herbert is an Associate Professor at the University of Chicago Medical School, is Director of the Arlington Heights Nursing Home and is Chief of Geriatrics at Lutheran General Hospital, Chicago, Illinois. Now he has been recognized as one of "The Best Doctors in America." Described in a book of that name by Woodward White, is a poll taken of 20,000 physicians. They were asked to name the leading practitioners in various fields of medicine. Herb was selected as one of the four finest geriatricians throughout the eight states of the Midwest.

Herb and his wife Susan (527) live in Northbrook, Illinois with their two children Michael (535) and Rachel (2807). He is the son of Morris (474) and the late Dorothy (511) Sier and the grandson of Tifke Sier (470) who ran a bakery with his brother Samuel (552) at 242 Delancey Street on New York's Lower East Side. Tifke, who was very active in his Chechanoffzer (Ciechanowicz) *landsmanschaft*, was the son of Herschel Zvi Ser (468) and Chana Bella Kur (469) of Nur, both of whom descended from the Charlapps. Indeed, Chana's mother was a Kuropatwa and her grandmother was a Ser. Herb Sier's ancestors provided him with a tradition of piety, community service, family cohesiveness, and dedication to learning. All of these have found resonance in this young physician who dedicates his life to care of the elderly.

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

Arthur F. Menton, Editor
 P.O. Box 108
 Cold Spring Harbor, N.Y. 11724
 Tel. and Fax.: (516)754-1742
 e-mail: nmenton@eagle.liunet.edu
 Copyright © 1997

YOUNG ISRAEL OF TREMONT

This article by Charles and Sam Levine originally appeared in somewhat different form in the Winter 1996 issue of Viewpoint. It was submitted by Sidney Goldstein of Brooklyn, New York.

The building at 2075 Clinton Avenue in the Bronx, that once housed the Young Israel of Tremont, is being torn down. The history of this congregation reflects many different aspects of Jewish history in America.

Young Israel began in 1912 as a movement for Americanized, English-speaking Jews who did not feel comfortable in Yiddish-speaking synagogues. In 1924, a group of young Orthodox Jews who attended the Bronx Jewish Center, which was located at the corner of Marmion Avenue and 178th Street, started the Young Israel of Tremont. The Bronx Jewish Center was an Orthodox congregation with a mostly immigrant membership. The new Young Israel had a more observant membership as its charter required all board members to be *Shomer Shabbat*. In addition, the requirement of donations by those receiving *aliyahs*, which was prevalent in many synagogues, was abolished.

At the time, the rabbi of the Bronx Jewish Center was Judah Damesek. In 1925, he was succeeded by Rabbi Yechiel Michel Charlop (3736,Pl.A-4). Rabbi Charlop would serve until 1972, when, because the neighborhood demographics had changed, the Bronx Jewish Center closed. Rabbi Charlop also served as leader of the new Young Israel of Tremont, which was started in a classroom of the Bronx Jewish Center.

Around 1937, due to the increase in its membership, the Young Israel needed its own building. It found one a mere five blocks away at 2075 Clinton Avenue in a building that had been home to the Shalom Aleichem Folk Institute, a socialist Yiddish cultural center. For the next three years, Rabbi Charlop served both the Young Israel and the Bronx Jewish Center on the High Holidays. He also came to the Young Israel on a number of Saturdays each month.

In 1940, Rabbi Philip Paretzky became permanent rabbi of Young Israel of Tremont but Rabbi Charlop maintained his ties with the congregation. By 1965 the neighborhood had declined to the point that the synagogue was forced to close. Many of the congregants, including Rabbi Paretzky, moved to the Pelham Parkway section in the northeast Bronx. Rabbi Paretzky would go on to be one of the many Bronx rabbis and rabbis' sons to hold posts in Yeshiva University. This list includes Rabbis Israel Miller, Melech Schachter, Herschel Schacter, Maurice Lamm, Chaim Bronstein, Asher Siev, and our own Zevulun

(continued on page 6)

THE UNLUCKY WINDOW TRIMMER

by Seymour Menton (55,Pl.3c)

Seymour Menton is retired Chairman and Professor of Foreign Languages at the University of California at Irvine. He has been recording his memoirs as "Confessions of an Apparently Happy Professor." One section was previously published here in B'rayshut, vol 6, no. 3. Gratified by the response to this piece, entitled "The Listener's Revenge", he has graced us with this latest installment.

Kineahoras notwithstanding, I am totally convinced that I was born lucky. The simplest example is that no matter how crowded a parking lot may be on a blistering hot day, I always find a nice shady spot. The explanation for that constant good luck is more complex, if not irrational: it's compensation for the constant bad luck of my father. Although he was not an embittered man, he was very much aware of the misfortunes that seemed to plague him and which he never tired bemoaning. In his daily reading of *The New York Times*, he would scrutinize the obituaries of famous men in search of the "lucky breaks" that life had bestowed upon them. In the case of a son or nephew (very few women were honored with obituaries in those days) of an important politician, doctor, or movie star, he would proclaim ironically: "I made a success."

His bad luck actually began before his birth. His mother Yetta, who during my childhood appeared to be on the verge of death every winter in Brooklyn, was born in Krasnopole, Suwalk Guberniya, Russia/Poland and married a man who treated her very well in spite of, or perhaps because of, his impotence. This condition was known to us because the family would always whisper that "he could not give her children." Around the year 1890 she decided to leave him and look for another husband in New York City. There she met a fellow Russian immigrant known as "Good-time Charlie" Mintz. After marriage, Charlie fulfilled her dream by giving her four children within ten years. It was his only positive accomplishment. A horse thief back in czarist Russia and an occasional house painter in New York, Charlie preferred to spend his time playing cards, taking a periodic nip, and chasing the "stars", his term for women.

When my father, the oldest of the four children, was ten, Yetta, tired of Charlie's gambling and philandering, threw him out of the house. Soon after, my father was forced to leave elementary school to help support the family. His first major job was as a blue-print reader with R. Hoe and Company, a large metal fabrication firm. During the rest of his life, Dad struggled to acquire the knowledge that he had been unable to receive in school. He learned the names of all the nations of the world and their respective capitals. He would obsessively study one page of dictionary and one page of encyclopedia every day. Dad would listen faithfully to the live radio broadcasts from the Metropolitan Opera with the dramatic introductions by Milton Cross: "The house lights are dimming and the curtain slowly rises for the first act of Verdi's *Rigoletto*." At the age of 60, he decided to study algebra on his own and asked me to provide a suitable textbook.

How did Dad make a living? Early on, his cousin Jake Bersson tried to interest him in house painting. That didn't last long but Jake did have a client with a big Victorian house up on Belmont Avenue in the Bronx. That was the six-gabled house whose owner had six eligible maidens. A week after seeing them, Dad telephoned and asked to speak with the one who had worn the brown dress. But she was in the Bronx and Dad was in Brooklyn, a total train ride of ninety minutes, the last leg on the famed Third Avenue El. The courtship was very brief, because Dad, wanting to avoid the long trip from Brooklyn, proposed to Ma on their third date.

Returning to the theme of his work, I don't know exactly how, but Dad began to work as a window trimmer arranging the displays in the windows of the department stores and drug stores and painting signs known as show-cards. I still remember the special signs he would paint for the annual back-to-school sales. At the same time, he taught himself how to paint with oils. As a child, I enjoyed sitting at his side as he painted a copy of Emanuel Leutze's "Washington Crossing the Delaware" and Albert Bierstadt's "Rocky Mountain Indian Village," in which he inserted a squirrel for me in the lower left-hand foreground. I guess he didn't have sufficient training, talent, or self-confidence to paint his own original pictures. His procedure was to go to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, accompanied by his five-year-old son, and buy a black and white reproduction of a famous painting. He would then divide it with ruler and pencil into small squares. The next step was to divide the canvas into proportionally larger squares; then he was ready to draw. Once the basic sketch was transformed to the canvas, he would start painting from memory. From time to time, he would return to the museum to study the original painting and soak up the colors. That was around 1932. Later on, he concentrated on floral arrangements, selecting photos of the individual flowers from Burpee seed catalogues.

He could not have painted more than thirty pictures in his whole life because he rarely had any free time. For many years he worked for the Surprise chain of department stores in the neighboring states of New Jersey and Pennsylvania. He would leave home at 6 A.M. and return at 8 P.M. or later. Sometimes he would work on weekends, arranging the window displays for client pharmacies in the city. In 1956 I photographed him through the plate glass

(continued next page)

UNLUCKY WINDOW TRIMMER (cont.)

windows of Klingman's Pharmacy on 183rd Street and Grand Avenue, five blocks from our Bronx apartment. Shortly after that, the Surprise Stores, living up to its name, fired Dad in order to hire a younger man at a lower salary. Dad had never joined a union because, as a self-made man, he rejected the very concept. Hence he had no pension, no unemployment insurance, and no vehicle for protest. In spite of the totally unfair bolt from the blue, Dad fought back, and with the help of Aunt Charlotte Sahr's (48) connections with the Republican Club, he applied for a job with the post office. After studying for several weeks, he gleefully memorized every street in the Bronx and the respective zip codes. He was able to sort the mail so rapidly on the performance test that they gave him the job in spite of his age. However, his new career was cut short by the advent of his final serious illness.

With his work, his intellectual pursuits, and painting, Dad had no time for sports. Besides, he had never practiced them as a boy because his father's debauchery had deprived him of the joys of playing stickball, stoopball, boxball, and triangle on the streets of New York. Nevertheless, when he became aware of my early passion for sports, he would occasionally take me to see baseball games at the Polo Grounds or Yankee Stadium, where the beautiful green grass contrasted sharply with the dismal gray canyons of the Bronx. Even more memorable were the Sunday mornings in the beach resort of Rockaway where we would spend summers. Dad would interrupt his reading about the Japanese invasion of China, the growing menace of Nazi Germany, or labor strife in the U.S. to pick up the sports section of *The New York Times* and try to stump his ten-year-old son: "Who is the centerfielder of the Cleveland Indians?", "The catcher of the Detroit Tigers?", "Who was Joe Gantenbein?", "Lou Chiozza?" It wasn't long before I had memorized the names of all the players on the then 16 major league teams. When I reached the age of 65, and still a boy at heart, I proved to myself that I was still capable of learning something new: I studied my baseball encyclopedia in order to memorize all the teams that had participated in the World Series from 1903 to the present. Actually, I now realize that my fascination with baseball goes back to pre-Rockaway days. When I was barely learning to walk, every Sunday Dad would wheel me in my stroller to the world famous Bronx Zoo where my favorite animals were the sea lions because of their dexterity in making over-the-shoulder and diving catches of the live fish tossed by the trainers.

Once I started high school, Dad and I drifted

somewhat apart. All my free time was spent in the street and schoolyard trying to compete in basketball, stickball, and touch football with stronger and more agile neighborhood toughs. I could never quite reach their level but I learned to accept being only a slightly better-than-average athlete.

Our family solidarity did continue in the evenings when I would join Mom, Dad, and my younger brother Artie in the living room to listen to the radio. Our favorite variety show was Fred Allen, especially the Allen's Alley segment featuring Senator Klaghorn, the bombastic Southern reactionary, Mrs. Nussbaum ("Nu, you're expecting Betty Grable, maybe?"), and the rustic Titus Moody ("Howdy Bub"). Of the many quiz shows, Dad and I preferred "Information Please," one of whose stars was the Shakespeare expert John Kieran, sportswriter for *The Times*. On a somewhat lower level, we all enjoyed "Dr. I.Q." ("I have a lady in the balcony, doctor") where Dad and I competed to see who could blurt out the correct answer. Of course, we couldn't miss the news, delivered dramatically by Gabriel Heatter (Ah yes, there's good news tonight") and Walter Winchell ("Good evening Mr. and Mrs. North and South America and all the ships at sea, FLASH"), but more to my liking, the laconic Elmer Davis ("It's 8:55 P.M. and CBS and Elmer Davis bring you the news. The Russians are reported holding fast outside of Stalingrad tonight.")

At sixteen, my life changed radically. I graduated from high school in June 1943 and instead of spending the summer in Rockaway, I crossed the archetypal threshold and began to work as an office boy with Standard Oil Company of New Jersey in Rockefeller Center. Since I was the first Jew they had employed, I had to learn to cope with anti-Semitism. However, the fringe benefits more than made up for it. Every evening I would return home with my pockets bulging with stamps from Curacao (site of Esso refineries), which I would then trade with a local stamp dealer for mint sets from the British Colonies. Rockefeller Center was home to the NBC radio studio and I would often stop in to tap my toes to Dixieland jazz played by Eddie Condon, Muggsy Spanier, Peewee Russell, et al. In the meantime, Dad was taking his weekly injections for varicose veins and lying on the living room couch for a Sunday nap.

After two years at City College of New York (CCNY), studying Latin on the subway and spherical trigonometry beside the Esso rotating mimeograph drum, I was drafted into the Navy in June 1945. Once again, my good luck manifested itself. Within two months, the dropping of the atomic bomb on Brother Artie's birthday put an end to the war thus preventing me from becoming

(cont. on page 6)

The following article is reproduced from THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS, Nov. 28, 1996

Family discovers its tree may have 12,000 branches

By ZE'EV GLICENSTEIN

In genealogy, as in geography, all rivers run eventually to the sea.

When Revie Walman, nee Budovitch, moved from Frederic-



ton, N.B. to Kitchener, Ont., in 1982, she met up with her cousins, the Budds, whose grandparents had left St. John, N.B. for Kitchener early in the century. The question was, how were the two families related?

About 18 months ago, Walman and her cousin Esther Budd made a concerted effort to find the answer. Questioning uncles, aunts and other relatives, they ascertained that their respective great-grandfathers had been brothers from the neighboring towns of Lachowicze and Baranowicze, near Slonim, Poland.

As a bonus, a Fredericton cousin provided the names of their great-great-grandparents: Shmuel Bud-owla and his wife Chaya Zlata, née Charlap. As it happened, not only did this add another generation to the tree, it connected the family to a distinguished rabbinical line reaching back into antiquity. Arthur Menton, an American genealogist, had visited Fredericton the summer before to collect details of the Charlap connection.

In remarkably short order, Walman and Budd had charted a family tree containing about 600 names. Last month, more than 100 relatives arrived in Kitchener from as far away as Fredericton, New Jersey and Houston to attend a family reunion. Menton, who came from Long Island, used the

occasion to unveil *The Book of Destiny: Toledot Charlap*, his newly published 700-page magnum opus on the Charlap family, of which the Canadian Budd and Budovitch families compose but a small branch.

Menton, a 63-year-old engineer and management consultant, lives in the former whaling village of Cold Spring Harbor, N.I. Over the past decade, he has travelled the world seeking Charlaps with intensity and single-mindedness.

In discovering Arthur Menton, Walman and Budd found an instant link to a family tree bearing some 12,000 names, including relatives living in Israel, Australia, New Zealand and most countries in eastern and central Europe, Britain and the Americas. As Menton explained, their shared lineage crosses the formidable Ashkenazi-Sephardi divide, contains historical figures from medieval Spain and Constantinople, and reaches into ancient times with a claimed descent from King David.

It took Menton some years to follow his river to the sea. At first, all he knew was that his grandfather, Max Ser, had arrived in New York in 1891 from Ciechenowicz, a town midway between Warsaw and Bialystok. From this, he traced the Ser line back to an ancestor, Zebulon Ser, an innkeeper who had changed the name from Charlap about 1805. (Menton cannot explain why he chose the name Ser, which means "cheese" in Polish.)

Charlap is an acronym of the Hebrew phrase, *chacham rosh -l'golei Polin*, which translates as "the chief sage of the exiles in Poland." The first rabbi to bear this title was Eliezer Don Yahya, the scion of a prominent Sephardi family who arrived in Tykocin, Poland, from Constantinople about 1600. Zebulon Ser's father, born about 1740, was Rabbi

Abraham Charlap, a documented descendant of Eliezer Don Yahya.

Menton possesses fragments of letters that his relatives wrote in the 11th and 12th centuries, and can even explain how the family reached the Iberian peninsula. "One of my ancient relatives was hung by the emperor of Persia in Pumbedita, and his son fled to Spain..."

Independent claims of the descent from King David arose repeatedly during his many interviews with farflung relatives. "These people would pull out ancient scrolls and unravel them for me, to show me how they arrived at this," he said. "They lived all over the place: one family in Tblisi, Georgia, another in Tykocin, Poland... They knew nothing of each other."

Many scholarly articles written on the alleged descent from King David "have concluded that this was one of the few families that could prove that it was so," said Menton, who publishes his own quarterly, *B'rayshit: The Ser-Charlap Family Newsletter*. Related family names include Cear, Danowitz, Donchin, Ibn Yahya, Kiejsmacher, Kopyto, Kuhr, Kur, Kuropatwa, Lapin, Levine, Lew, Lewin, Mankuta, Packciarz, Parczewski, Pasternak, Podkowa, Rosansky, Sahr, Sharlip, Sier, Sir, Smolarczyk and Tama.

"It came as a total surprise to me that our family was originally Sephardi. But after doing my research, I've learned that such distinctions don't really matter. What my research has given me is the profound understanding that all Jews around the world are part of one united family."

LUCKY WINDOW TRIMMER (cont.)

a hero or a corpse on a Pacific island. Proudly displaying my good-conduct ribbon and armed with the G.I. Bill, I completed my B.A. at CCNY with a Spanish major. During my senior year, Dad developed a tumor on his left eyelid which the surgeon removed but not without damaging a muscle, so that Dad had to learn to sleep with one eye open.

When Esso refused to give me the opportunity to work my way up in their foreign marketing department because I was "over-qualified," I decided to go to Mexico to study for the M.A. degree at the Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico because I was convinced that I could not become an acceptable high school Spanish teacher without acquiring real fluency and a knowledge and appreciation of Mexican culture. Sad as they were to see me leave the Bronx, Ma and Dad accepted my decision. Fully Mexicanized, I returned to our Bronx apartment and studied intensively for the Ph.D. at New York University, between 1949 and 1952. Evening classes enabled me to teach English as a Second Language full-time in a south Bronx junior high school. The new Puerto Rican immigrants were engaged in turf wars with Blacks and the neighborhood came to be known as Fort Apache. One of my students, Francisco Santana, was later convicted of murder and became the subject of a book by psychologist Frederick Wertheim, featuring a reproduction of a good-conduct certificate I had awarded to Santana. Despite the dangerous environment, my good luck held out and I completed the doctorate unscathed. I left the "Blackboard Jungle" for the incredibly idyllic Hanover, New Hampshire and Dartmouth College, famed for its winter carnival with its elaborate ice sculptures. In addition to teaching, skiing, and ice skating, I staged two plays with my male students from Dartmouth and female students from Smith and Middlebury. Dad collaborated by painting attractive posters, shortly before a gall bladder attack led to another operation. He proudly displayed the seventeen gallstones in our china closet.

After I moved to Kansas, got married, and bought my first house, Dad's misfortunes culminated in a terrible form of bone marrow cancer, multiple myeloma. After excruciatingly painful biopsies, he was treated with experimental drugs at Brookhaven National Laboratory Hospital on Long Island. By December 1995, when I experienced my first bone marrow biopsy after a blood test revealed a deficiency in red, white, and blue corpuscles, the procedure had become considerably less painful. The biopsy results relieved the worst anguish of my life: I did not have multiple myeloma but pernicious anemia, a formerly fatal condition, but now

easily treated with monthly B-12 shots.

The last time I saw Dad was at Brookhaven. He was in a coma connected to countless plastic tubes. He died in March 1962 at age 64. I regret that he never got to know his grandson Allen, born two years and five months later and named for him.

YOUNG ISRAEL (cont.)

Charlop (3742), son of Yechiel Michel, who is Dean of the Rabbi Isaac Elchanon Theological Seminary. Today, as the Young Israel of Tremont faces demolition, it joins the approximately 40 synagogue buildings that have been razed in the Bronx. The Bronx Jewish Center building remains as one of approximately 100 synagogue buildings that still stand below Kingsbridge and Fordham Roads. Only eleven of these still function as synagogues or Jewish institutions.

The Young Israel of Pelham Parkway is in a neighborhood that over the past 30 years has been home to a major Jewish community. While the community had been in decline during the last decade, in the past few years there has been an influx of Soviet Jews. Whether the community will decline further as it did in the south Bronx or expand as it has in the Riverdale area of the northwest Bronx is yet to be determined.

THE FUTURE OF AMERICAN JEWRY

The following information, provided by Rabbi Zevulun Charlop, is culled from an in-depth sociological and demographic research project by A. Gordon and R. M. Horowitz. It confirms our own research concerning the Ser-Charlap family. The table shows how an initial 200 person group grows or diminishes over a span of four generations.

	Secu- lar	Reform	Conser- vative	Orthodox	
				Centrist	Hasidic
First Generation	200	200	200	200	200
Second Generation	73	102	125	302	591
Third Generation	27	62	77	457	1,748
Fourth Generation	10	27	48	692	5,175
Rate of in- termarriage	72%	53%	37%	3%	3%
Avg. child.	1.62	1.72	1.82	3.23	6.4

BIRTHS

Esther Anfllick (11338,Pl.A-4i) was born on July 19, 1996 in Baltimore, Maryland. She is the second daughter for Rabbi David(10732) and Michelle (10738) Anfllick and the second grandchild for Martin (10717) and Betty (10711) Anfllick. Betty was born in Jerusalem and is the granddaughter of Uri Segal Hamburger (5517) and Dvora Leah Charlap (5516). Dvora Leah was the daughter of Rabbi Yitzhak Eliezer Charlap (3728) and granddaughter of the revered Rabbi Zevulon Chaim Charlap (3747).

Moriah Naomi Atlas (11307,Pl.32ac) was born on Sept. 20, 1996, the first child of Pierre (2356) and Debra (7206). Moriah is also the first grandchild for Raphael Atlas (2251). Raphael is one of five children of the late Rabbi Elias Atlas (2244) and Laura Morrell (2248). R' Elias was born in Bialystok but came to America around 1906 where he served as an Orthodox rabbi throughout the southern USA. His parents were Rabbi Aryeh Leib Atlas (2128) and Yetta (Etk) Pakciarz (2127). Pierre, Debra, and Naomi reside in Woodbridge, New Jersey.

Chava Rachel Charlap (11296,Pl.A-4c) was born in Brooklyn on Sept. 23, 1996, the fourth child for Yaacov Moshe (3843) and Tsipora Leah (3845). She is the ninth grandchild of Ephraim (3835) and Sarah (3839) Charlap. Chava Rachel, whose family has a distinguished Charlap rabbinic pedigree including Rabbi Zevulon Chaim and Rabbi Yaacov Moshe of Jerusalem, lives in Queens, New York.

Danielle Lopez (11306,Pl.32ad) was born on Nov. 5, 1996 in New York City. She is the first for Robin (2332) and Herman (11305) and the first grandchild for Jack (2321) and Adrienne (2327) Snyder, Robin's parents. Danielle's grandmother is the late Celia Mayerson Snyder (2306), daughter of Goldie Pakciarz (2295) who came to the United States from Wysokie Mazowieckie, Poland.

Max Michael Stirling (11308,Pl.7ea) was born on Nov. 29, 1996, the first child of Robert (8126) and Charlee (1118). Charlee's father is the noted financial expert and author Stephan Leimberg (1079) and her grandmother is Sylvia Leimberg (1052). Sylvia's father was from the Benson family which was active in the Woodbine, New Jersey Jewish agricultural colony. Sylvia's grandparents were Morris Kristol (683) and Chaya Gittel Kur (677). They were immigrants to the United States very early in the 20th century and settled in Wilmington, Delaware where they ran "The Curiosity Shop".

MARRIAGES

Adeena Mermelstein (2372,Pl.32ac) was married to **Ephraim Jacobson** (11336) in Brooklyn on June 23, 1996. Adeena, oldest of the six children of David (2362) and Nina (2354) Mermelstein, was raised in Monsey, New York. Her grandparents are Rabbi Seymour (2253) and Beverly (2265) Atlas. Seymour's grandmother was Etk) Pakciarz (2127) and this branch of the family also has ties with the Sukkieniks.

David Silverburg (303,Pl.3b) was married to **Kristine Pasto** (11294) in Salisbury, North Carolina on Aug. 31, 1996. David's parents, Sanford (301) and Lea (302), moved to Salisbury when Sanford became Professor of History at Catawba College. David's grandfather, Harry Silverburg (271), was born in Zareby Koscielnie (Zaromb), Poland to Shlomo (6) and Sarah Ser (5). The family arrived in America at Castle Garden, New York on June 15, 1891, having sailed from Hamburg. They settled in Schenectady.

OBITUARIES

Myron Charlap (3530,Pl.A-2cb), a widely respected ophthalmologist, died on Dec. 4, 1996 and was laid to rest in Cedar Park Cemetery, Paramus, New Jersey. The son of the late Jacob Fischel (3521) and Rachel Kaplan (3525) Charlap, Myron was born in Berlin, Germany on Oct. 17, 1921. He served in the U.S. Army during World War II and from 1947-49 was stationed at the West Point Hospital eye clinic. He served his residency in ophthalmology at Bellevue Hospital, New York and was a professor of clinical medicine at Montefiore and Albert Einstein Medical Center of Yeshiva University. In 1952, he established a practice in Newburgh, New York and was a leading ophthalmologist at St. Luke's Hospital and the Cornwall Hospital. In 1963 Myron wed Miriam Marcus (3535). They raised two sons and a daughter: Jeffrey (3541) of Newburgh, Robert (3542) and Jennifer (3543) of the Phoenix, Arizona area. All survive him.

Meyer Morits Donchin died on June 12, 1996 at the age of 93. Donchin is a Russified version of Ibn Yahya (Don Yahya), our ancestral Sephardic name. Trudy Donchin Chityat of Fort Lee writes:

Meyer Morits Donchin was born on Sept. 29, 1902 in the little town of Pikeli, Lithuania. When he was about one, his parents took him and his two older brothers and older sister to live in Lund, Sweden, where a younger brother was subsequently born. The family resided in Lund until Meyer was nine, at which time they sailed to

(cont. next page)

OBITUARIES (cont.)

the United States, settling in Jersey City. During his long life, Meyer earned his living first from the jewelry business and later in the world of banking. He was always delighted to find someone with whom to converse in Swedish. On July 7, 1946, he married Celia Cohen and moved to Brooklyn. After his beloved Celia died in 1992, Meyer became actively involved in several senior citizen centers in Brooklyn. Trudy adds:

Uncle Meyer was a very unassuming, modest person, simple, sincere, and genuine. His was not a life of ostentation and worldliness. As we talked during the years, I became increasingly fond of this loving man. Everyone who knew him enjoyed his sense of humor and admired this fiercely independent man who until the age of 93 was able to live unassisted. He provided me with many useful leads in my genealogical research and gave me priceless photos of relatives from long ago. I recently decided to give Uncle Meyer a Fathers' Day card, the first he'd ever received in his life. I told him he had become like a father to me, especially after my own father died seven years ago.

Larry Eusler (10386,Pl.A-14dba) died on December 2, 1996. Larry was born in the Moldavian region of Roumania and came to Canada around 1950. In that year he married Rose Budovitch (10385), daughter of Louis Budovitch (9590) and Riva Chippin (9597). Rose and Larry lived in Fredericton, New Brunswick where he was a tavern owner, bank manager, and businessman. Larry is survived by Rose, a son Sheldon (10387), a daughter Shelley (10388), and three grandchildren, all of Fredericton.

Phillip (Pesach) Mayerson (2304) died in Los Angeles on Dec. 9, 1996. Born in Brooklyn in 1909, Phillip was one of six children of Benjamin Mayerson (2298) and Goldie Pakciarz (2295). In 1941 he married Thea Bennett (2310) who came from an Egyptian Jewish family. Thea survives him, as do his son Robert (2317) of Los Angeles and daughter Shana Lefton (2318) of Mercer Island, Washington. Phillip also leaves his three grandchildren Sarah (2755), Zachary (2754), and Micah (2756) Lefton.

Breine Weisman (9034,Pl.A-9e) died on Dec. 20, 1996. She was the daughter of Shmuel Judelowicz (9031) and Sarah Rosansky (9027). Sarah's grandmother was Breine Charlap (9016). The family originated in the Slonim/Baranowicze area of Byelorussia/Poland but Breine made *aliyah* and with husband Yaacov (9041), raised a son Yosef (9046) in Israel. Yosef, a pediatric endocrinologist survives along with his four children.

FROM THE MAILBOX

Since the publication of THE BOOK OF DESTINY: TOLEDOT CHARLAP, we have been gratified by the deluge of mail, most with favorable comments. A few samples follow:

I received the book earlier this week and am thoroughly enjoying it. I'm coming across names of relatives I knew when I was a child but had totally forgotten. Thank you for bringing them back to me and making all of us immortal. Most important are the pictures of my great-grandparents Yisrael (1849,Pl.18) and Shaindel (1851) Tama. I had never seen them before.

- Marcia Gikner (1893,Pl.18c)
Woodstock, New York

Congratulations on the publication of this important jewel of a book. I admire your scientific and historic knowledge. We travelled to Uruguay to celebrate my daughter Ines (2501,Pl.32ad) reaching 60 years. The ladies of the Womens International Zionist Organization honored her at a banquet. Their world president travelled specially from New York. Then I flew to Israel where I stayed for 22 days with my sister Chana (2301). I think it was our farewell since she is 90 and I 87. Only heaven knows if we will meet again. In Israel I saw my two granddaughters and their children. Both are expecting, one with twins. So soon I will have five great-grandchildren. I am a rich man; am I not?

- David Pack (2081,Pl.32ad)
Santiago, Chile

Thank you for the Newsletters. They are an inspiration. I plan to save them for my daughters to read in the future so that they can appreciate the extent of our family's links throughout the centuries and across the world.

- Adrienne Swinton (7689,Pl.A-14a)
Queanbeyan, NSW, Australia

I want to tell you how much I've been enjoying *Toledot Charlap*. What a tremendous accomplishment! I'm half way through and every page impresses me. I've recommended it to several fellow genealogists. You're to be congratulated.

- Trudy Donchin Chityat
Fort Lee, New Jersey

The Book of Destiny is wonderful, a great work.

- Aharon Manor (6298,Pl.19d)
Beersheva, Israel

(cont. next page)

LETTERS (cont.)

This is a monumental work. I am grateful you were able to complete this incredible history of our family. Now we will have a sense of our rootedness in the world and in history.

- Jack Zoldan (1480,Pl.8d)
Wilmette, Illinois

A magnum opus, a lifetime's dedication. . .eminently deserving of time and attention. . . flows smoothly and with not a little elegance. The physical contours and reality of the book itself are spectacular! Congratulations on a job well done.

- Rabbi Zevulon Charlap (3742,Pl.A-4a)

What a glorious job you did in gathering such a storehouse of information from here and around the world. What an enormous expenditure of time went to research the project. . . I attended an Elderhostel at the Warwick Conference Center in New York. At our introductory meeting we were asked to tell about our name. I was able to take the tale back to our Sephardic roots in Istanbul, Spain, and beyond. They were flabbergasted. One attender said she didn't think I was Jewish let alone one with such a venerable name. Does such information influence behavior and attitude? I think so. I walk with my head held a bit higher and with greater pride. I do know that I've learned a great deal of Jewish history not usually found in textbooks. I can't thank you enough. G-d bless.

- Leon Sharlip (9488,Pl.A-14c)
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

I've just completed my first reading of *The Book of Destiny*. It's truly a work of scholarship and research. Wonderful, a great work! Absolutely fascinating! Not only have you written a history of a long and distinguished family but you have also captured a description of life in the Pale especially amongst the common people. And also the description of the life that the immigrants faced once they left the big city for the semi-rural south and mid-west.

- Avrum Lapin
Upland, California

The Book of Destiny is beautiful and very impressive.

- Desiree Gezentsvey (1690,Pl.13)
Lower Hutt, New Zealand

An enormous achievement.

- David L. Hurwitz (4062,Pl.A-3ab)
New York City

REUNION AND BOOK-SIGNING

As we reported in the last issue of *B'rayshit*, BOOKS & BOOKS, Inc. in Coral Gables, Florida is a family owned business and one of the finest privately owned book stores to be found anywhere. On Sunday, January 6, Mitch Kaplan (1673,Pl.8cb) and Julius Ser (1440), founders and owners of this establishment, hosted a family reunion and book-signing in honor of the publication of *THE BOOK OF DESTINY: TOLEDOT CHARLAP*. Author Arthur F. Menton discussed the history of the family and lively discussions ensued in the packed store. It was estimated that about 70 family members attended as well as many other South Florida cultural lovers. Everyone had a grand time.

I am impressed by *The Book of Destiny: Toledot Charlap*. An excellent job to be highly praised.

- George Sackheim
Skokie, Illinois

The Book of Destiny is fabulous.

- David Sahr (26,Pl.3a)
Washington, D.C.

I am so proud of your vast, dedicated efforts to memorialize our families. As my father often quoted, "To live in the hearts we leave behind is not to die." You give life anew to our matriarchs and patriarchs. It is a privilege to do as our ancestors in Europe did - to subscribe to a book of one of our great scholars.

- Louise Lapin Haines
Los Angeles, California

We have just returned from a visit with your cousin Batja Gershoni (256,Pl.3h). We've known her for 32 years, first as the kindergarten teacher of our sons Boaz and Ariel. One day she told my wife Esther that an apartment in the building where she lived was for sale and we became next door neighbors. She is our dear friend and a great conversationalist. We see her once a week or so. Batja is sorry she does not write in English but she asked to convey to you that she reads all of the letters she receives from America. And reading *B'rayshit: The Ser-Charlap Newsletter* makes her happy and proud. I can find links with Zionist history too. My grandfather Arie Leib Rabin lived in the *shtetl* of Moinesti, Roumania. About the turn of the century, it was said that "the road to Palestine goes through Moinesti." They were strong Zionists. Zichron Yaacob and Rosh Pinna were founded by Moinesti landmen.

- Nolly Rabin
Tel Aviv, Israel

THE BOOK OF DESTINY: TOLEDOT CHARLAP

By Arthur F. Menton

The story of the Jewish people as told through the experiences of the Ser-Charlap family.

If you are descended from Blatman, Bochko, Budovitch, Burstein, Charlap (ip, op, off, up), Danowitz, Donchin, Don Yahya, Glovnia, Grappa, Harlap (aff), Kopyto, Kristol, Kur, Kuropatwa, Kwiatek, Lapin, Lew, Lewin, Mankuta, Migdal, Pakciarz, Parczewski, Pasternak, Ser (Cear, Sahr, Sear, Seer, Sier, Sir, Syr), Sharlip, Shereshevsky, Smolarczyk, Sukiennik, Tama, Yarmos (Jarmusz) - this is your story. If your family originates in Northeastern Poland or adjacent areas of Lithuania and Byelorussia - this is your story. If you are Jewish - this is your story.

**AN EXCELLENT GIFT FOR PURIM AND PESSACH. A KEEPSAKE FOR BAR MITZVAHS AND WEDDINGS.
ORDER A COPY FOR EACH OF YOUR CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN.**

Still Available at

**KING DAVID PRESS
P.O.Box 108**

Cold Spring Harbor, NY 11724 / (516)754-1742

Gentlemen:

Please send _____ copies of *THE BOOK OF DESTINY* at the special introductory rate of \$64.99 (\$49.99 to family association members), plus \$5.00 (\$7.00 foreign) shipping and handling.

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Enclosed is _____
NY res. add sales tax _____
Total _____

For simplified gift giving: Just provide the name, address, and zip code for each recipient and we will do the rest.

SPECIAL INTRODUCTORY OFFER

For a limited time

This \$74.99 book for only \$64.99
FOR SER-CHARLAP members, only \$49.99

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

*- Tillie Sier (475, Pl. 2a)
New York City*

**THE SER-CHARLAP FAMILY ASSOCIATION
P.O. BOX 108
COLD SPRING HARBOR, NY 11724**