

**JEWISH FAMILIES**  
*of*  
**COAHOMA COUNTY**  
**1880-1889**

**MARGERY KERSTINE**

## **COPYRIGHT**

Unpublished Work © 2020 Margery Kerstine  
All rights reserved

First Printing 2020

ISBN \_\_\_\_\_

Library of Congress Card Catalog Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed in the United States of American by \_\_\_\_\_

Text Design by Margery Kerstine

Cover Design by [Cover photograph (Optional)]

No material in this book may be reproduced or otherwise used without the prior written consent of the publisher. An excerpt not to exceed 500 words may be used only by newspaper and magazine editors solely in conjunction with a review of or feature article about this book, the author (or editor) or KDP.

Disclaimer: Every effort was made to present information in this research very accurately as of the publication date. Government documents and other resources often contradict dates and data; thus, your information may differ from the authors. The author makes no guarantees regarding the information. You should check directly for the most current up-to-date references and decide on the reliability of all resources. Including checking directly with each company for the most up-to-date information regarding their practices, policies, and pricing.

**CHAPTER 3**  
**1880 TO 1889**  
**JEWISH IMMIGRANTS CONTINUE TO SETTLE**

**1880**

The railroad track miles increased to 1,119 miles with nearly 2,000 Mississippians employed by railroad companies.

The first election held for county seat between Clarksdale and Friars Point.

From the famous gunman and train robber, Jesse James was in Friars point in the 1880's. He came into town and spent the night with the Methodist minister. Before that he played poker and had some drinks at the local saloon. The next morning, he was gone. Actually, his identity was not revealed until several days later when the minister told Jesse James was there to rob Mr. Dickerson, and he had persuaded James to give up the idea. The minister said he convinced James that Mr. Dickerson was not a Yankee but a fine Southern gentleman. Jesse agreed to leave Mr. Dickerson alone provided the minister would not tell anyone in Friars Point of this visit until Jesse had several days head start on any posse that might try to catch him. The minister kept his word.

1

**BODENHEIMER**

Marital status was single. 1880 Census reports he is a German Peddler and 1900 Census reports he is a Bavarian merchant. (1880/1900 Census) [NOTE: May be two different or the same individual as the statistics are the same. Note: listed on any other list, such as Memorial Board or Cemetery]

**MANNHEIMER**

**ISAAC AND N**

Isaac was single store clerk, born in Germany in 1856s. "N" was a peddler, born in Germany in 1858. This was Beat 3, Coahoma County because Clarksdale was not incorporated.

**RICHBERGER**

**JACOB & FANNIE**

Living in Beat 3. Both were born in Russia and list forty five years old in the 1880 Census.

**GEORGE**

The 1800 census reports George, a single man, is a merchant and selling whiskey as a merchant in Jonestown (Beat 3). Ten years later, the 1900 census reports he is a Russian banker in Jonestown.

**1881**

**HISTORICAL RUSSIAN DATES RE: POGOMS**

TIME                      EVENT(S)

- March 1: Alexander II assassinated by terrorists.  
Articles published on how Jews were responsible for it.  
Alexander III was anti-Jewish.
- April 15: Pogroms started--Elizabethgrad in New Russia with Jewish population of 15,000 (eve of Greek Orthodox Easter).
- April 23 Podol pogrom.
- April 26: Kiev pogroms
- April 29 Manifesto of "political safety" set up the pogroms.
- April-May: 50 villages and town-lets in Kiev, Volhynia, Polia attacked.  
Odessa pogrom
- May: Jews expelled from Kiev, Moscow, Oryol and other places outside the Pale of Settlement.
- May 18: Court case proved there would be no legal justice available.
- June 30-May 1: Series of summer pogroms started in Pereyaslav, which harbored fugitives from Kiev.
- Town-lets and villages in surrounding region followed these.
- July 20-22: Nyezhin pogrom
- March-Sept: Total of over 100 localities in South of Russia.<sup>2</sup>
- December: Pogrom in Warsaw, Poland-1500 businesses, residences and houses of prayer destroyed.<sup>3</sup>

Jerome Magdovitz toured in 1989 the Russian/Lithuania regions of his ancestors and tries to describe what he say and knew about the time period.

The day we arrived in Moscow is the day the Lithuanian delegation walked, out of the Politureau. We were scheduled for 3 days in Vilnius, but were not allowed to go. We ended up staying in Latvia and Estonia for 3 a piece. -We did not get to Lithuanian.

Well, all the towns were very much all alike in the Balkan countries. What we had was a main street. The main street was all brick and stone buildings, more big stones, rather than brick. Even now. they are two and three hundred years old: just like they were built. Inside they are very elementary. When our folks lived there, they had no plumbing. When they were built, they had no electric lights. So. you can see all the old history of the building. All those' things had been added.

The shops were downstairs and the houses where the people lived were upstairs: not on the main streets. The main streets were where lot of the wealthy people had their shops and stores. The Jewish people were just off those streets. There were dirt streets, right: they weren't paved? Were they cobblestones?

J: The main street was usually cobblestone of some kind of stone or tile-type a quarried material. The streets off [main street] were lumber and dirt. They are

still using, in the country, even now. horse and buggies Wagons going to town on the days they don't work.

Horse is very important...The towns [my] grandparents came from primarily all farming. I have maps of Vilnius that I brought back...show Jewish locations of synagogues and things like that. Mostly-grain. crops—corn, wheat, and barley. See. all of my people grew all this stuff. They would charter a ship. They would take shiploads of gains and foodstuff and stuff that they would take to Africa. In Africa they would trade that merchandise for horses. On board, they would train the horses, as they would come back from Africa. By the time -they landed on the Baltic coast, they had the horses broken. They would break them on board ship then: they would be conscripted, sold to Russian army. They used to be 3 trips a year made of that purpose. Of course, the Bay of Finland was frozen during the winter, so they couldn't make but three, one a season. It took about 6 weeks to go down and 6 weeks to come back. They did not always sellout. Sometimes they took more or less. Sometimes they took things that people wanted. Sometimes they didn't want what they took—couldn't find a buyer.

[People] were poor, but they were not destitute. They always worked hard. They were able to save money. They did not own the vessel. They chartered/rented the vessel or space on board. The vessels that they would take were one that people did not want to haul livestock, because livestock messed up the ship pretty bad. When they got home and got unloaded they were responsible for cleaning up the ship. Horses had to be transported in a sling. I have pictures of the type boats that were used. If you would like to see how the horses actually were slung in a sling, like a corset.

The horse's feet never touched the floor of the ship They had people, who did this regularly, had troughs built in the back where the horse's rear was so that they could try to keep the ship as clean as possible

Yea. these things you do not find in books. I found the ship. I have looked for the ship all my life. I finally told someone in London at the Maritime Museum what I was looking- for. They said, it you go up the Thaness, the place we'll tell you about, the Maritime Museum there. It is a day's trip and back on a boat. You'll find what you want. I went, up there, and I did.<sup>4</sup>

Hebrew Immigration Aid Society started in 1881 and closed in 1883. Originally called Hebrew Emigrant Aid Society. Then, functioned under different names until 1902, but with the same mission: to assist Jewish immigrants. Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society was organized in 1902, which in its turn merged with Hebrew Sheltering House Association in 1909. Our records that are in possession of our organization started in 1909, however some files created as the result of appeals on Ellis Island could be traced to 1906.<sup>5</sup>

**1882**

Most destructive flood in the history of the river up to this time. Again, the unorganized counties of Delta were entreated by the lower levee district to co-operate under one general system; again, they declined.

Clarksdale is incorporated under its present name, Clarksdale.<sup>6</sup>

Disastrous overflows of the Mississippi occur. From 1876 to 1882, the area was without levees because in 1876 the upper Delta counties that formed a levee district of their own had gone bankrupt.<sup>7</sup>

#### **BINDER**

#### **PHIL**

Lived in Friars Point and paid personal property tax.

#### **BRENNER**

#### **ABE, HARRIS, AND CHARLES**

Three brothers came to Coahoma County as carpetbaggers after the Civil War.<sup>8</sup> These brothers knew the Jacobsons and encouraged them to come to the Delta. Brenner and Jacobson Collection shared the following:

#### **CHARLES/CHARLEY**

Charley immigrated in 1882: He was born in 1869 in Russian.

#### **HARRIS**

Harris was in Oxford in 1869.<sup>9</sup> Uncle Harris was the full brother of my grandmother's mother, Hannah Brenner Jacobsohn. Uncle Charlie was their half-brother. They had numerous siblings. My great-grandmother was the only one who did not immigrate to America. My grandmother came from Goldingen, Courland, which is now Kuldiga, Latvia. Her mother, Hannah Jacobsohn, who never came to America, had the maiden name Brenner.

Uncle Harris married Mary, who was the niece of President Grover Cleveland. (He was appointed post trader in Pawhuska, Indian Territory [now Oklahoma]). He became very wealthy, owning a bank and oil interests. After his death, Aunt Mary came to visit my grandmother in Clarksdale. I am not sure that I have a copy of Uncle Harris' two-page bio from Charlie Brenner in Jackson.<sup>10</sup>

#### **KERSTINE**

#### **ADOLPH & MOLLY**

December 15: Married: at Peabody Hotel, Memphis TN.<sup>11</sup> Corinne, my mother daughter-in-law to Adolph and Molly added: "Rabbi Samfield married everybody in that area. He married everybody in my family. ) No, mean, he married most of the people that moved to Clarksdale. I don't know whom they used because the majority of them were Orthodoxy Jews and the Reform Jews went to Memphis.

”<sup>12</sup>

Different comments about Molly and her family who lived in Helena, AR (across the Mississippi River from Jonestown, MS).

1. Corinne said there were two families. Molly Brush's mother was the first wife.<sup>13</sup>

Selma, who was raised by Mollie and Adolph, Aunt Lily, and three uncles, heard many stories from Mollie: She said Mollie told her that her father married two sisters. One of them died, and he married the other one to come in with the children. He had two children by the second wife. Mollie's other sisters and brothers: Julia (Julius/Julian), Sally (Sarah), Minnie, Somber, and Zollie. The second wife had Zollie and Minnie.<sup>14</sup> Mollie's siblings were born in this country.<sup>15</sup>

3. We don't know when her parents' line immigrated to this country. We believe both Molly's parents were born in America. Forst could not prove that Mollie was born in Memphis. But Corinne said. "They were all born in Memphis, but the old man had settled in Helena. ] I don't know if he was the first. I don't know if his family came over here and brought him."<sup>16</sup>

4. Selma said: "Mama used to talk about her father, Isaac. He was living during the Civil War. Mollie talked about some Northern General who came by and told her father to shoe his horse. He didn't do it to suit him and he hit her father."<sup>17</sup>

5. Corinne said: "Isidor's mother Molly wasn't too friendly. I think it was a *mismatched* affair. I think it was one of these situations where it was, "I have a daughter, marry her. It was a shotgun affair: they were mated or something through pictures."<sup>18</sup>

6. Molly wasn't much of a politician: She could get into trouble like that. She just spoke her mind. Lily had the problem bad. Another person Mama was friendly with was a fella named George Bellamy. He was some kind of City Clerk or something else and he was running for it. Mama stuck her neck out. She was sitting in a chair outside of Isidor's store. Gary Banner was running for city clerk or something. I don't know who was running against him but the fella who was running against him stopped and talked to her. She didn't know who he was. She told him she sure hoped George Bellamy got it because he needed it. I remembered she was so embarrassed when she found out."<sup>19</sup>

7. Charlie was "Miss Pearl's son. This was Miss Pearl and she was Guy Clark's wife. I think they were all related to John Clark. Mrs. Pearl used to visit my grandmother [whom she called Mama ] When she had trouble [she would always tell how much she liked her coming to see her because she made her laugh. Everybody liked both women.

8. Mollie had a charge account at the grocery store. Mollie cooked lots of German sweet bread with raisins, cinnamon. Sh32e was known for her coffee and sponge cakes. Caesar's favorite was her chicken and duck."<sup>20</sup>

7. Margie visited the Helena cemetery, and it is not that clear. Yetta, the second wife is buried there with a headstone. The first wife may be there, but no headstone was found. According to Marion Raymond (Helena Jewish resident), "They moved some graves from another location to this Jewish cemetery. They were unable to distinguish who some of the individual grave sites were at the time. They have the original headstones, but who can't make out the script."<sup>21</sup>

## **CHILDREN BORN**

1) **Rosa**            1885 Arkansas

- 2) **Max**            1887 Mississippi
- 3) **Lily**            1890 Mississippi
- 4) **Isidor**        1892 Mississippi
- 5) **Caesar**       1897 Mississippi

Corinne once said: "Molly and Adolph had lost their first child. No, I do not know the name of that child. The oldest child died at one year old."<sup>22</sup>

### **MARCUS**

#### **CHARLES AND LENA**

1900 Census showed Charles was born in 1867 in Russia and immigrated in 1882. Beth Israel Cemetery stone said born October 31, 1871. Lena was born in 1879 in Russia. They married in 1898. Charles was a merchant in Jonestown (Beat 3). Their first son Nathan was born in 1899.

NOTE: The Clarksdale Jewish Cemetery tombstones show Charles was born in 1871 and Lena in 1881.

#### **CHILDREN**

- 1) **Nathan Edward**
- 2) **Martha**
- 3) **Maurice**

### **PACHTER**

#### **DAVID**

In David Pachter's unpublished manuscript he mentioned visiting the Richberger family who were related to him. But he did not go into a great deal of details as to how.<sup>23</sup>

#### **SARAH**

Mother of Anne Pachter (Mrs. David Salomon) lived with George Richberger

### **1883**

The Yazoo and Mississippi Valley Railroad was a road paralleling the Mississippi River between Memphis and New Orleans. Like McComb's system, the Yazoo and Mississippi Valley eventually became a part of the Illinois Central system.<sup>24</sup>

Another serious flood of the upper Mississippi counties.

### **JACOBSON**

#### **HARRY/ HARRIS AND YETTA**

According to Gilbert,

Grandpa also had a cousin who lived and was buried in Clarksdale. He was known as 'Little Harry' Jacobson. He was born in Riga, Latvia. I never heard him referred to as Harris, only Harris A., or H.A. His Hebrew name - *Tzvi Aharon*. Yiddish name – *Hirsch Aharon*. He lived in Coahoma County and listed as a Russian merchant. He and my grandmother were cousins, hence the same last name. Grandpa was also on the

Chevra Kadisha (Jewish Burial Society, purpose was to prepare children's bodies for burial.). He was not as religious as he opened his store on Saturday

Yetta's Hebrew name: Gittel both Yiddish and English was born October, 1869. Grandma is referred to as Jetta in census records. Yetta was born Kourland, a Scandinavian Province. She immigrated to American with Harris when she was young bride. Grandma was Orthodox. She observed a kosher Sabbath. She was active in the Chevra Kadisha. Grandma never worked on the Sabbath. Her close friends were Mrs. Abrams and Mrs. Binder. Gilbert added,

My grandparents spent about 6 months in New York before moving to Clarksdale. Grandpa had a store in Glendora, MS, for a while, even though they lived in Clarksdale. He was not successful, and opened his shoe shop on Sunflower Avenue shortly afterwards.

Originally, my grandparents lived in old Clarksdale. Grandpa built a house at 176 Catalpa. This was one of the first houses on the other side of the Sunflower. Grandma took care of the house and her nine children.

My Grandma [Yetta] had a brother, sister and numerous other relatives in Kansas City.<sup>25</sup>

#### **CHILDREN BORN**

- 1) **Ella** 1892 Second Jewish Girl Born In Coahoma County.
- 2) **Anna** 1893
- 3) **Bessie** 1896
- 4) **Sarah** 1898
- 5) **Minnie** 1900
- 6) **Nell**
- 7) **Ben**
- 8) **Louis**
- 9) **Irvin**

#### **HERMAN**

According to Gilbert, Uncle Herman was Grandma's brother.<sup>26</sup> 1900 U.S. Census stated: Herman was born in Russia in August, 1871 and married his wife, Lena in 1897. She was born in Russia in 1877. They were living in a rented house with H. Gordon, Lena's brother. In 1900, he was a dry goods merchant.

Herman and Aunt Lena had a grocery. He was relatively religious, put on tefillah and daven every morning, but kept his store open on the Sabbath.<sup>27</sup>

#### **CHILDREN**

- 1) **Sam Jacobson**
- 2) **Tilly**

#### **KERSTINE**

#### **ISIDOR (ADOLPH'S BROTHER)**

About 1882 Isidor Kerstine, Adolph's brother, moved to Westburg, MS area, a town in Washington County that is not listed as a Mississippi town on the internet. While living there he served as Postmaster from January 26, 1883, to September 21, 1886. Then the post office was closed and transferred to Hollandale, eighty miles directly south of Clarksdale.

#### MARCUS

#### CHARLES & LENA

Charles, born in Russia in 1871, immigrated to Mississippi in 1883. His wife Lena, born in Russia in 1881, immigrated to USA in 1894. They married in 1899. The first son, Nathan was born in Illinois and had their first son. It is unknown what year they moved to Coahoma County.

#### PACHTER

#### HENRY

David Pachter wrote,

About 1883, Henry Pachter came south when he was about eight or ten years old. He joined his older brother, John, working in a store owned by their relative, George Richberger, in Rich, Mississippi". Rich, later known as Lula, was a small community twenty miles north of Clarksdale. David continued, "My dad told tales: how every Saturday night they were held up at the store; and how he and Uncle John looked forward to the Saturday night fights." Somehow they both moved to Webb, about seventy miles south. David added, "Uncle John was a cotton farmer, while my dad had a store and cotton farm."<sup>28</sup>

#### RICHBERGER

#### GEORGE

Gertrude Nelson said: "Yes George was mayor of Jonestown in 1883. This is related to her father or grandfather being mayor of Jonestown. Only thing I remember is that he took me out and showed me on the sidewalk. His name was there. I was so little; I wouldn't have known how to spell it."

According to Weeks, Richberger, also started the *Jonestown Eagle* but it became extinct by November.<sup>29</sup>

Gertrude Nelson added, "I don't know this for sure that is why I am saying I think this match [George and Mary] was made for them. Gertrude Nelson added, "I don't know this for sure that is why I am saying I think this match was made for them. At that time, it seems to me that was what was being done."<sup>30</sup>

At that time, it seems to me that was what was being done."<sup>31</sup> Rabbi Samfield's Marriage registry showed Mary Pollewada married George Richberger in January 14, 1883 in Memphis, TN.<sup>32</sup> However, her married name appeared in the Land Deed Index, 2nd District Coahoma County between 1878 and 1883. No previous transaction dates could be determined because the Land Deed Index did not record transactions between 1860 and 1878.T. Rosalie Marks Goldstein, the granddaughter's records, show they married in 1875.

#### CHILDREN BORN

- |                       |             |
|-----------------------|-------------|
| 1) <b>Rosa</b>        | 1887        |
| 2) <b>Abraham/Abe</b> | <b>1888</b> |
| 3) <b>Daniel</b>      | 1890        |
| 4) <b>Helen</b>       | 1896        |
| 5) <b>Isador</b>      | 1898        |

## **1884**

March 12: At this time Coahoma County schools only went to the 10th grade. Families sent their daughters to this “finishing school” for etiquette and additional academic training. The Nation's first college for women, now known as the Mississippi University for Women, was established in Columbus in 1884.<sup>33</sup> For example, Lenora Sacks and Rosa Kerstine were two Jewish girls who attended.

December: Passenger train scheduled between Memphis and New Orleans.<sup>34</sup> Louisville, New Orleans and Texas Railroad came to Clarksdale. It increased the property values as it brought new people to the area.<sup>35</sup>

R. H. Wildberger tells what he found when he came in December to be the accountant for Major Fargasonat, the Sunflower Oil Mill Co:

When he asked why the Major had trouble keeping someone there, he was told there was no society there. It was in the woods practically. He said: “there was no place to board there but that the trains ran daily to and from Memphis.”

When he arrived, he found Clarksdale consisted of a railroad eating house where the Delta Grocery & Cotton Co. [stood] on Sunflower Avenue, a saloon just back of it run by old man Fogarty with Phil Doan in charge of it, the oil mill and the Mobile & N.W. depot just south of the mill and a few houses north on Sunflower Avenue: John Suddoth’s residence on the corner of Second Street (south) and his store on the north where Markham’s drug store [stood]. John Clark’s store was on the corner of First Street, and Morrison’s saloon was across the street near where the jail now stands. There wasn’t a house back or east of Sunflower Avenue then. It was a one street town facing the Sunflower River.

The first house built back of this street was Dr. Pierce’s where the Imperial Garage [stood]. George Epps and Bob Moore and Negroes owned the corner where the Planter’s National Bank [stood]<sup>36</sup>. Some lots had been sold by Mr. John Clark from a preliminary map, but the first official map of the town was made in 1888 by W.L. Polk who found that the preliminary measurement of lots had been 10 feet over what constituted a block. So, to correct this error an alley of 10 feet was necessary to count out, in block “C.”

The only stores then were James Suddoth’s, a Chinaman (whose name sounded like a bell ringing and who could always find change for our pay roll) and Mr. Clark’s store. I believe W. D. Boyd built a dwelling about this time on the corner of Third Street and

Sunflower Avenue which later accommodated boarders. The only young lady in Clarksdale at that time was Miss Blanche Clark [who later married J.W. Cutrer.] Mrs. Hancock, widow of Russell Hancock lived just across the river, and these two residences housed the only society in Clarksdale, except that which gathered at the two saloons, which of course was nondescript.<sup>37</sup>

## **LEVEE**

Three serious floods occurred during the year—something that never occurred before. The people of the upper and back counties finally put aside their little differences and in 1884 organized the Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee District.<sup>38</sup> The record of the early struggles of this new levee district is too long for this manuscript. Strong men at the helm, supported by a determined constituency, ultimately succeeded in launching in its simple beginning the levee that was destined to become renowned.

Another serious flood occurred without levee protection. The people of the upper and back counties finally put the difference aside and organized the Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee District.<sup>39</sup>

## **KERSTINE**

### **JULIUS**

March 22, 1884: The Coahoma County Land Deed Index shows Julius sold land to Mary Richberger.<sup>40</sup>

## **RICHBERGER**

### **JACOB & FANNIE**

Gertrude said Jacob died on a ship. He had five thousand dollars in a bank in Jonestown. The bank went busted. Five thousand dollars then was supposed to be a lot of money. She reported she never heard of him having children but reported his wife's name was Anna? Margie found in the census "J Richberger", who stated that his wife was "Fannie." And, that Anna Pachter was a niece. Now, it may or may not have been related. It may have been someone else. Gertrude said she didn't know anybody else though that was by the name of Richberger. Gertrude did not confirm anything related to the census.<sup>41</sup>

## **1885**

## **MARKS**

### **LEOPOLD/PAULINE**

March 17: Leopold and Pauline married by Rabbi Samfield.<sup>42</sup>

## **1886**

The Kansas City, Memphis and Birmingham Railroad, incorporated in 1886, traversed the northern portion of the state and included nearly one hundred fifty miles of tracks.<sup>43</sup>

Levee Board moved from Tunica County to Clarksdale.<sup>44</sup>

## COHEN

### CHARLES AND MARY MARCUS

According to the 1910 US Census, Charles, born in Russia in 1871 and immigrated in 1883, married Mollie (Mary) Marcus Marcus's daughter in 1872. She was born in Coahoma in 1874 in Russia. They lived in Lula.<sup>45</sup>

Bernard “Budgy” Hirsberg commented during his interview: “Charles Cohen from Coahoma was very friendly with my family. Rebecca and David use to come to school in Clarksdale. There was another daughter that married a Goldsmith from Helena.”<sup>46</sup>

According to Adele Cohen-Kline, Charles Cohen was not related to Sam or Fred Cohen.<sup>47</sup>

### CHILDREN BORN

- 1) **Sadie** 1899 Mississippi
- 2) **Rebecca** 1900 Mississippi
- 3) **Hyman** 1902 Mississippi
- 4) **Sally**
- 5) **David**

## KERSTINE

### ADOLPH AND MOLLIE

Adolph put land deeds in Molly's name almost immediately upon marriage. Adolph started in the whiskey business, but changed to general merchandise.

## 1887

The Grange disbanded this year. However, it left behind the older cemetery in Clarksdale. After the Hall was built, they purchased additional land by each member paying \$25. A deed was given to that member for a lot in the yard to be used for burial purpose. Even later additional land was purchased increasing the cemetery and the old hall turned into burial lots.

New Coahomian newspaper started.

Another election held for county seat; Clarksdale loses again to Friars Point.<sup>48</sup>

## KERSTINE

### MAX

Max, was the first Jewish boy born in Coahoma County.<sup>49</sup> The author believes he was creative because she remembers as a child Corinne always commented on Shankerman’s well-dressed men’s wear windows which was Max's responsibility. He also attempted art when he was younger; however, Caesar did the colored pencil drawing of Margie has in the family scrapbook.

### ISIDOR (ADOLPH'S BROTHER)

Isidor’s estate papers show uncollected invoices which had a date overwritten as December 7, 1883, and was printed: “Jonestown, Miss, 1887—“, I. Kerstine”, “Goods, Groceries, Feed, Boots,

Shoes and Hat (Forst2, 13) Other uncollected invoices, dated from May 10, 1883 to December 31, 1885 were printed with the heading: "I (or Isidor) Kerstine Westberg, Washington Co", "Dealer in General Merchandise". They were invoices without any preprinted headings that were dated between October 1884 and November 1886.<sup>50</sup>

In April of 1887 Isidor borrowed \$1531 from S. Lehman and Sons, assigning his house and lot in Hollandale as collateral. Then on July 9, 1887 (about 13 days before his death) he borrowed an additional \$500 from Lehman & Sons using a future 50 bales of cotton and his 4 mules as collateral. His estate's gross worth was about \$2700. Forst concluded Isidor did not plan on dying, but Forst could not prove that he was killed.

The question of why Isidor died has not been answered as of this publication. The cause of death, as given in the newspaper article, was hematoma—blood in the urine. Many of the relatives have been told he was killed in a hold-up on his store. A reference to his death is found in the Greenville Times (Mississippi of July 23, 1887.): "Died, Mr. Isidor Kerstine, merchant at Hollandale, died at 2 o'clock this morning of hematuria. He will be buried here tomorrow morning at 9 o'clock."<sup>51</sup> Buried in Old Hebrew Cemetery, Greenville, MS (currently a park) of the date shown.

From the estate papers it is concluded that that there was no widow and that he was not sick long. The estate papers state that and that he died without a will. Adolph takes over his estate, which is on file at the Washington County Court House in Greenville. They indicate that Adolph was the executor of his estate, that a lot in the Hebrew Congregation Cemetery was purchased, and that the funeral directors, Snowberger & Brown, were paid to bury Isidor. The estate was closed in January 1892, some five years after his death in July 23, 1887).<sup>52</sup>

#### **NACHMAN**

##### **AL**

According to the WPA interview, Al Nachman, born in Limburg, Germany, in 1866, came to American and lived in Greenville in 1883 at age eighteen. Although he lived in various city initially, he moved to Clarksdale in 1887.<sup>53</sup>

His sister Jenny Frank, also resided in New Jersey. Her obituary states: "Mrs. Frank was born in Limburg, Germany. She live in Clarksdale as a girl. She attended Mississippi School for Christian Women."<sup>54</sup>

#### **RICHBERGER**

##### **ROSA**

My mother was Rosa Richberger. The family did not come from Helena, but Rosa went to school there, Nelson said.<sup>55</sup>

### **1888**

County Jail at Friars Point completely destroyed by fire. Five prisoners bum to death and county records saved (1<sup>st</sup> floor) with great difficulty.<sup>56</sup>

#### **BAKER**

##### **LIFE IN RUSSIA**

Julia Belle Baker Glassman provided this information which combines a home interview and information she had written to keep in her genealogical collection: At the time the village of Skoviedill, Russia, was located on the border between Latvia and Lithuania. Oro response of April 16 when asked by the *Hebrew Watchman, Memphis Tennessee* reporter to describe his life before he traveled to America:<sup>57</sup>

The village Daddy (Morris Baker) came from was about the size of Clarksdale, and the village [In Skoviedill, Russia] where Cousin Celia Friedman was born was about the size of Jonestown--very close to each other and close to the German border. [When] the German Jews came over they settled in the big cities like Memphis. The Russians and Polish Jews went to the smaller towns. My father told me...the reason...he and my Uncle could speak German as well as Yiddish and Hebrew, because they are all similar. He said sometimes the German government took over their village. If the German people got mad at the German government, they would come over to their village. If the Germans came into their village then the Russians would go to the German villages. They were going back and forth. So, lots of time there was Germans living in their village. That is how they got to know German.

Daddy was born to Grandfather Ora Baker and his second wife. Daddy had one older sister and a younger sister, and also a younger brother named David, who died as a child. Cousin Celia's mother and our Grandfather [Ora] were sister and brother. Her mother died when she was a little girl leaving her with a father and three older brothers. Her father said he would never marry again unless he could find a [Rivka who did not have any children from a previous marriage and also could not have children].<sup>58</sup> He found the right one when Cousin Celia was 15 year. [Celia] learned to do a lot of things such as knitting and hand work when she went to Daddy's house and learned from his sister [who] would buy her supplies in their town and go home and make her own stockings, sweaters, etc. Grandmother Baker was a baker. I thought Daddy [Morris] was kidding me when he used to say my ancestors were bakers. That is why our name was Baker! Grandmother was a marvelous baker, and I know that Daddy often spoke of the black bread she made....Grandfather worked in the bakery with her. They lived behind the bakery.

When Grandfather[Ora] came to America he was a peddler. When he went to South Africa he bought horses for the tsar of Russia. Ora was on board the ship with Jerome's Magdovitz's grandfather when he was a young single man. They went back to Russia and found out they lived close by. Ora told them about his two beautiful daughters and invited them to come to meet them. So, they did, and they both married these girls. In Skoviedill, Russia, Magdovitz married Fannie, and Mr. Taub married Eide. Magdovitz went to Connersville, Pennsylvania. Fannie looked a great deal like Joy Magdovitz Bearman , Memphis, TN.<sup>59</sup>

Grandmother was a very religious woman. She prayed three times a day. Daddy went to Hebrew School in their town and as you know he learned arithmetic and other subjects there, too. He was now allowed to go to the public schools. Uncle Harry spoke

good German, and Cousin Celia said he might have learned it from neighbors, mixing his Yiddish in. These neighbors moved to the towns from Germany.

Daddy's older sister, who looks just like him in the picture we have in a big album, was a good seamstress as well as being good with her hands in doing handwork. The picture shows her at a sewing machine.

The last time Grandfather was in America, was before Alma [my sister] was born Alma... [She] was named after him. Some of the pictures I have were made in Vicksburg, Mississippi. Cousin Celia said the Frank sisters (Mother's maiden name, Ida Frank Baker) loved to dance and went to dances in the different towns. She always said Daddy [Morris] was a handsome man and she said Sammy [brother] looks just like him.

<sup>60</sup>

People said: 'move south', because there are no inexpensive stores for the sharecroppers and the farmers to shop...Grandfather Baker moved to Clarksdale from Marvell, Arkansas.... He bought property and built three stores and had a store [on Issaquena]...Until about the mid 30s...the merchants were on Sunflower,...[because that was the cheaper stores]...Then they moved...because the trade people were moving...to different locations to buy things. More people were going to Issaquena.<sup>61</sup>

### **FIRST TRIP TO AMERICA**

When Morris was a very small baby about 1888, Ora and Frank, an older son who may have been in his 30s and was unmarried, came to America. Julia added, "I think they came because of conscription. They didn't want their sons to go into the Czar's army." When Ora and Frank arrived in New York, they got in touch with some distant relatives. They told them to go to the Jewish Welfare who gave them a back pack from which to sell little items. They started traveling across the country.

The two men were for Memphis; then, Clarksdale where Max Friedman lived. Along the way, Ora said: "Look they are working on the railroad." They were putting ties on the railroad beds. So, he said: "Look we can get room and board and work our way across." So, they did. They worked their way to Memphis. From Memphis they went to Clarksdale for a few days. Julia did not know what route was used; however, they walked along the railroad track line and they were hired along the way. They got to Memphis. They first settled in Dublin to sell mules and horses or mules and cattle.<sup>62</sup>

Ora stayed with Frank until he had a comfortable place to stay and a job; then, he returned to his Russian family.<sup>63</sup>

### **GENTSBURGER**

[Unknown first name] Gentsburger was Postmaster in Friars Point.<sup>64</sup>

### **LEVINE**

Russian Jewish families had to protect their second, third sons from being conscripted into the Russian army. The Russian army would take these boys and put them on the front line of firing without guns or training. Most Jewish genealogists know many young Jewish boy disappeared and

showed up in America. The families found childless couples because the first son was not eligible for conscription. Morris Baker told Julia a Shepp family took Charles Levine's father.<sup>65</sup>

#### **RICHBERGER**

##### **ABRAHAM**

Abraham "Abe" Richberger married but Gertrude did not know to whom because he was much older. His daughter Rosa Estella Richberger Bloom lived in Memphis.<sup>66</sup>

##### **GEORGE**

From 1888 to 1890 Postmaster Registry of February 1890, shows George Richberger is listed in Rich as Postmaster as of 1888. Richberger's store, a flag stop, became the town's name, "Rich." According to Gertrude. "I am just saying what I have always been told since I have been little, Rich, Mississippi, was named for my family."<sup>67</sup>

#### **SACK**

##### **SAMUEL G.**

According to the 1900 US Census, Samuel G. Sack, a Russian merchant born May and immigrated to US; in 1862, remained a bachelor. He first lived in Beat 4, not Clarksdale; but later moved to Delta Avenue and Leflore Street. He listed dry goods merchant as his occupation. His brother had a lot of money.

## **1889**

Construction work on the Riverside Division of Louisville, New Orleans and Texas Railroad enters the county from the south and is completed by way of Friars Point, to a junction with the main line at Coahoma.<sup>68</sup>

April 6: Clarksdale fire on Sunflower destroyed all stores. Newspaper article:

#### **"CLARKSDALE FIRE: The Little Town of Clarksdale a Mass of Ruins":**

Clarksdale, a thriving little place of a thousand inhabitants, about fifteen miles from this point on the L. N. O. & T. railroad, was the scene on last Saturday morning of the most destructive fire ever know in its history. Nearly the entire business portion was destroyed. The origin of the fire is unknown. A Negro hostler was burned to death in the stable of C. W. McCroy, together with several horses and the most plausible theory as to its origin is that some hay among which the Negro was sleeping caught fire from a spark from the Negro's pipe and he being in a half drunken stupor at the time was suffocated before he could make his escape. Others are of the opinion that it was of incendiary origin. A large buggy house was blown up with powder in order to prevent the flames from spreading beyond the business portion town. All of the buildings were framed and burned like tinder. The merchants [have] ordered thirty carload of bricks, and they will begin work of rebuilding at once. C. W. McCroy, who had a flourishing livery business, lost everything and no insurance. J. P. Riley, a watchmaker also lost everything. Charles Graham, who had one of the finest saloons in the county, lost

everything and no insurance. Below we give the official list with amount lost and covered by insurance:

<b>MERCHANT NAMES</b>		
John Clark	C. W. McCroy, Livery Business	Greenbaum & Kahn
Banner Printing Office	Price & Co.	A. Kerstine
A.B. Carruthers	J. P Reilly, watchmaker	R. H. Wildberger
T. A. Buford	Mrs. Anna Durham	M. J. Yancy
E. B. Clark	J. L. Simmons & Co.	Charles F. Graham
J. T. Ferguson	J. A. Suddoth & Co.	Mrs. Ruby M. Suddoth
Mrs. J. Fisher		69

#### **FRIEDMAN**

##### **CHARLES AND EDA**

Charles Friedman, born in Russia in 1845 and immigrated to Philadelphia in 1888, was living in Clarksdale by 1889. He married an Eda born in Russia in 1850. Father and son established a small grocery store.<sup>70</sup> They were married in Russia in 1865, and the first son was born in Russia. Charles was a retail merchant by 1900.

<b>CHILDREN</b>	<b>BORN</b>
1) <b>Max Morris</b>	1879
2) <b>Rachel</b>	1876
3) <b>Bell Binder</b>	1898
4) <b>Sam</b>	1889 Pennsylvania

#### **NACHMAN**

##### **AL**

As the result of an interview for the WPA Historical Research Project, Tom Gibson reported:

[Nachman] was a bookkeeper in Clarksdale until the fire of '89. Soon afterwards...[he] opened the first ice house...For quite a while he represented the Standard Oil Co. as local agent; was engaged in the insurance business with Mr. Bouldin and has been in the insurance business off and on ever since...[He] owned the first brick building erected I Clarksdale after the fire of '89. It was built on lot owned at time by Mr. Jackson Fisher, Friars Point, Miss...He was fortunate enough to own the Indian

Mound that the first church was built upon, later selling this mound to Mr. Henry Davis. Mr. Nachman has always been an outstanding Mason.<sup>71</sup>

### **CHAPTER 3: 1880 TO 1889 JEWISH IMMIGRANTS CONTINUE TO SETTLE**

---

<sup>1</sup> Miriam Dabbs, *Here's Clarksdale*, 1974 May-June, pp. 22, 23.

<sup>2</sup> Dudnow, Semen M. *History of the Jews in Russia and Poland from the Earliest times until the Present Day*. New York: KTAV Publ. House, 1975. (This is the right author, but not sure this is the exact book because it was at the Jackson, MS Public Library in 1993.)

<sup>3</sup> Dudnow, Simon M. *History of the Jews in Russia and Poland from the Earliest times until the Present Day*. (New York: KTAV Publishing House), 1975.

<sup>4</sup> Jerome and Barbara Shepp Magdovitz, phone interview, August 9, 1994.

<sup>5</sup> "History" Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, digital image: Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society accessed April 1, 2020, <https://www.hias.org/who/history>.

<sup>6</sup> "Beth Israel & 75th Year to Be Celebrated," *Clarksdale Press Register*, October 10, 1969, 3.

<sup>7</sup> Baucom and Sage, 30.

<sup>8</sup> Gilbert Jacobson, E-mail exchange with author. January 7, 2015.

<sup>9</sup> Gilbert Jacobson, email message to author, August 19, 2001.

<sup>10</sup> Gilbert Jacobson email message to author, October 19, 2001.

<sup>11</sup> Rabbi Sam Samfield, *Marriage Registry: 1877-1895*, Temple Israel Archives, Memphis, TN, 79.

<sup>12</sup> Weeks, *Clarksdale*, 57.

<sup>13</sup> Corinne Kerstine, interview, 1977.

<sup>14</sup> James and Kerstine, interview, September 16, 1993.

<sup>15</sup> Corinne Kerstine, interview, 1977.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> James and Kerstine, interview, September 16, 1993.

<sup>18</sup> Corinne Kerstine, interview, 1977.

<sup>19</sup> Selma Weinberger James, interview by author, Jackson, MS, November 14, 1999.

<sup>20</sup> Selma Weinberger James, interview

<sup>21</sup>, Solomon, Marion Raymond, interview by author, Helena, AR, April, 15, 1999.

<sup>22</sup> Corinne Kerstine, interview, June 3, 1989.

<sup>23</sup> John Pachter, *My Life and Times*.

<sup>24</sup> Richard, Aubrey McLemore, *A History of MS, Volume II*. Hattiesburg, MS: University & College Press of MS, 1973, 307.

<sup>25</sup> Gilbert Jacobson E-mail message. October 19, 2001.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> John Pachter, *My Life and Times*.

<sup>29</sup> Weeks, *Clarksdale*, 164

<sup>30</sup> Gertrude Friedman Nelson, interview, 1995.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Samfield, Rabbi Sam. *Marriage Registry #1, :1877-1895*, Temple Israel Archives, Memphis, TN.

<sup>33</sup> Baucom and Sage, *1836-1936*, 30.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> "Clarksdale, The Queen City of Delta Has Future That Is Most Promising." *Clarksdale Press Register*, August 26, 1926, 20.

<sup>36</sup> Baucom and Sage, *1836-1936*, 30.

- 
- 37 Anona Jenkins, comp. "Early Days in Clarksdale as Witnessed by R.H. Wildberger, Makes Most Interesting Story." January 28, 1925, Volume. 1, Carnegie Album #1, 6.
- 38 Baucom and Sage, 1836-1936, 30.
- 39 Ibid.
- 40 Land Deed Record, #M, March 22, 1884, 234.
- 41 Gertrude Friedman Nelson, interview, 1995.
- 42 Rabbi Max Samfield 1877-1895.
- 43 McLemore, Volume I, 604-605
- 44 Baucom and Sage, 30.
- 45 Julius Bloom, interview by author, Clarksdale, MS, November 18, 1993.
- 46 Bernard Hirsberg, interview by author, Clarksdale, MS, April 27, 1994.
- 47 Corinne Kerstine, Aaron Kline, and Adele Cohen-Kline, interview by author, Clarksdale, MS, November 28, 1993.
- 48 Baucom and Sage, 30.
- 49 Weeks, Clarksdale, 99.
- 50 Corinne Kerstine et al., interview by Harold Forst, January 7, 1985.
- 51 Kerstine's Private Genealogical Collection.
- 52 Ibid.
- 53 USA. Works Project Administration, "Mr. Al Nachman," Mr. Tom Gibson, Interviewer, Assignment #13, Project 2984. Source Material for Mississippi History, Box 10677, In folder: Interviews. Jackson, Mississippi, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, October 27, 1936.
- 54 "Mrs. Frank Buried Today." Clarksdale Press Register. December 20, 1961. 1.
- 55 Gertrude Friedman Nelson, interview 1995.
- 56 Baucom and Sage, 30.
- 57 Julia Baker Glassman, interview by author, Memphis, TN February 16, 2003.
- 58 Ora Baker, "A Memorable Interview," August 1916, Julia Baker Glassman Private Genealogical Collection.
- 59 Greenberg.
- 60 Julia Belle Baker Glassman, "Information on Morris Baker." Glassman Private Genealogical Collection.
- 61 Ibid.
- 62 Julia Belle Baker Glassman "Correction of Website." Julia Belle Baker Glassman, February 16, 2001.
- 63 "Ora Baker.
- 64 U.S. Postmasters Registry.
- 65 Glassman, interview, February 16, 2003.
- 66 Ibid.
- 67 Gertrude Friedman Nelson, interview 1995.
- 68 Baucom and Sage, 30
- 69 "CLARKSDALE FIRE: The Little Town of Clarksdale a Mass of Ruins," The New Coahomian, Friars Point, MS, April 13, 1889, 3.
- <sup>70</sup> USA. Works Project Administration,. "Mr. Max Friedman," In folder: Interviews, 1936.
- <sup>71</sup> USA. Works Project Administration, "Mr. Al Nachman,"