

JEWISH FAMILIES
of
COAHOMA COUNTY
1900-1909

MARGERY KERSTINE

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CHAPTER 5

1900 TO 1909 THE JEWISH COMMUNITY GROWS

1900

1900 to 1904 *Clarksdale Challenge* newspaper items inferred the Alcazar Hotel opened its doors by 1901.

Bank of Clarksdale organized.¹

During the interview with Alvin Fink he provide the data about trains during this decade:

Trains brought the salesmen as there were about five to six trains a day. The salesmen stayed overnight. The Illinois Central (IC) and the Yazoo and Mississippi Valley (YMV) ran through Clarksdale.

The “Yellow Dog” was a Columbus & Greenville (C&G) railroad which crossed with the Y&MV at Sunflower. That is the one that the black people used to ride to Clarksdale on. It went in above Tutwiler and down towards Greenwood to Vicksburg. Clarksdale was the head of it.

They ran trains from Memphis. It really started in Chicago. They had a train from Memphis to Vicksburg that used a certain route, a different route from that train that ran from Memphis to Jackson. The main line of the IC Railroad and the one that came through Clarksdale was the Y & MV. They used to have a cut out at Ruleville that went down to the riverside. It picked up at Rosedale and that way. But the Y&MV came through Clarksdale to New Orleans. When it got to Leland, it had to back into Greenville, and then came out; they didn't have a turn chamber there.²

COHEN

SAMUEL AND DAVID

1900 Census said he is a twenty-three years-old New York merchant living in Beat 4 of Coahoma County with his partner, David Cohen, who was nineteen years old and also born in New York

N. SAMUEL

Fred's brother was N. Samuel Cohen who was born in 1897; died on 2/10/1958. Fred had 2 brothers who were here.³

FRANK

HARRY AND SARAH KATE FREUD

Harry was born in Poland. in 1852 He immigrated in 1895. Sadie Katie Freud, who was also referred to as Sarah, was born in Poland in 1858. They married I 1875 in Poland. The 1900 U. S.

Census shows they had six living children'; however, they moved to Clarksdale by the 1910 US Census.

CHILDREN	BORN
1) Annie	1883 New York
2) Lillie	1886 Kentucky
3) Nellie	1887 Kentucky
4) Ida	1888 Kentucky
5) Joseph	1890 Kentucky
6) Isadore "Izzy"	1895 Arkansas

GORDON

HARRY

According to the 1900 US Census, Harry lived with his sister Lena and her husband Herman Jacobson. Harry was born in Russia in 1867. It reports he had been married thirteen years but his wife was not with him as he was working as a peddler.

HIRSBERG

JACOB

The 1920 U. S. Census reported Jacob Hirshberg was born in Russia in 1870. Bernard 'Budgy', Jacob's son remembered:

[Jacob] didn't get married until after he had moved to Friars Point. He met [Nellie] on a visit to Louisville. He had two sisters [living] in Louisville. Mama had a sister who also lived in Louisville. During one of their visits there, they met. Papa then visited in Evansville several times where she lived. Mama was born in Evansville, Indiana, in 1884. I think he was about 31 or 32 years old when he got married.

After they got married they roomed and boarded for a period of time until the house was built for them. Life was very pleasant in Friars Point....Mother wouldn't keep kosher, plus the fact that it was impossible. I'll tell you this, as far as Papa was concerned, whenever he would go to Memphis, if he had the opportunity, he'd...buy kosher meat and bring it home. It always tasted better than the meat...we brought locally. This was standard. He used any kosher butcher shop in Memphis. I do not know if there was a special one.

Mama was a free spirit, very cheerful person. She was raised in an Orthodox home. They kept kosher, but we didn't. Her father was the cantor of his schul. He had a part-time, or he did it without compensation. And frankly, on rare occasions, we would have, without Papa's knowledge, bacon and sausage. Mama was...was a very much-indulged person. [She] was a fanatic on cleanliness.... We never had less than three servants. The beds had to be torn down; the mattresses taken out on the porch and the bedsprings thoroughly cleaned every week, every Monday. Mama didn't do the cooking. [She] did the supervising and was sure that all the servants had plenty to do. She kept them busy.

And that was displayed in her later life. She became senile when she was about 87, 88 years old, and prior to that time she had been living in Friars Point by herself.

My father read Torah every day. Unfortunately, he didn't pass this tradition on to his sons. I was never Bar Mitzvah. He would read Torah --was that the right expression? - every day. Of course, Saturday was the big business day, and if you had kept the store closed on Saturday, he would have been broke within two months. You had no choice as far as your business was concerned, but we would go to Memphis for the holidays. Close the store, and we would all go up there. Papa would go to the Orthodox; Mama would go to the Temple. Second day, she would go to schul.

[We wouldn't come to the Clarksdale synagogue] because of these differences, Papa liked orthodox services. We had an arrangement here a great number of years that [the] Orthodox start their services at 7 o'clock in the morning and go to 10, then the Reform would take over from 10 until 12. The Orthodox would start back at 1 o'clock and go until 3 or 4 then the Reform came in. [Papa] just didn't like this 'put up' deal...as a result it was only on rare occasions that he would ever come here.

Basically...We observed Pesach (Passover). He didn't keep kosher. No way to get...well, you couldn't get kosher meat...except eight days of Pesach. And, uh, my father never ate [pork] knowingly. That was not true of my mother. During periods of time we would actually have ham, bacon, but Papa would not know it. In other words, we ate in shifts because of the store. Papa would eat first-during the week. Then, the rest of us would eat. And so, if we wanted bacon and eggs, Mama would fix us bacon and eggs. But he never knew it. Put it this way, he never raised the issue. He didn't like it. I'm sure he knew it was happening. [Mama prepared] pork [even though my] father didn't like it, [because] my mother was [raised in an orthodox home but she said you either go all the way or none at all. When they went out to eat,[or] when they went to Memphis, [or] came over here, whatever it may be, Mama would never order pork when Papa was there, but she [ate] shrimp which is just as bad isn't it? But, in deference to Papa, she wouldn't eat pork...when he was there. But, when he was not there, she would eat a barbecue sandwich, barbecued pork, a ham sandwich or anything else. No, [she was not] trying to break with her past. She didn't have the same feeling that we had.

My father was really, truly, a religious man, and he was a very virtuous person. I would say that my father was the most virtuous person I have ever known in my life. If he ever did a wrong, he did not know it. He had tremendous opportunity to take advantage of people. He was kind of trusting and because of his business dealings with the blacks and with the smaller farmers ...was one of total trust, but we never exercised any advantage the truth the other way around.⁴

When asked this question in Rabbi Joshua Plaut interview: How did your parents decide what to transmit to the children --Reformed Judaism or Orthodox Judaism? Bernard answered:

Well, you understand there was a dearth of children my age. I did go to Sunday School here. We'd come over here to Sunday School. My father sent my older brother

Sol to Louisville – he sent him to high school in Louisville in order that he could be Bar Mitzvah, and he was. But after he got Bar Mitzvah, didn't mean anything, he came on back down here. He never came in with my father, no. He learned to read [Hebrew], after a fashion, enough to be Bar Mitzvah. We were raised strictly in a Gentile neighborhood area. All of my associates--I had no Jewish associates--there were no children my age. I didn't have any Jewish associates until I went to college. I went to Ole Miss and the University of Illinois.

[It was been reported that I heard] they actually knew where merchants were needed. They would tell new immigrants to head south to Arkansas or Mississippi because there were business opportunities. [My] father would go up to St. Louis in the late summer, in August or September. He would go there and then, of course, ultimately, he would go to New York. There was a connection between Rice-Stix, wholesaler in St. Louis, and the dry goods merchants down in Mississippi. [As they were] one of the big suppliers. My father did a lot of business with Rice-Stix. I don't know if it was a Jewish company or not. The salesmen were not. The salesmen that I knew, the ones that worked this area, they were not Jewish. Rice-Stix, originally, the founders were probably Jewish. Fuller was a department store in St. Louis. Sticks-Baer and Fuller. They had two Jews in there, at least.⁵

JIEDEL

JAKE

March 18: According to the *Clarksdale Challenge*, “left Tuesday for Memphis where he will accept a position in the wholesale house of I. Jiedal & Co. Mr. Jiedal has made many friends during his several years’ residence in Clarksdale, whose good wishes will go with him to his new home.”⁶

Jo Croner said she had heard of a bachelor in the Jiedal family. She didn't meet him and wasn't sure that was his name. She knew he lived somewhere in Mississippi. The 1900 and 1920 U. S. Census showed Jiedals in Memphis, Clarksdale and Helena Arkansas. B. H. Hirsberg said he remember the Jiedals from Rosedale.⁷

KAUFMAN

MAX

March 1 Visited Memphis today.⁸

KERSTINE

Miriam Dabbs wrote in article, Tuttle Hotel: “Clarksdale's Tuttle Hotel until 1930 stood...at 225 Yazoo.... Miss Pearl [Tuttle] moved to Clarksdale in 1908 with her parents from Yazoo City... Miss Pearl remembered...the Tuttle Hotel backed toward the Landry Store on Delta. The streets were neither paved nor graveled.... Between Tuttle House and the Alcazar was the home of the early Kerstine family.”⁹

238 DELTA AVENUE

April 5: Newspaper article said “ Mr. L. [Adolph]. Kerstine is erecting a cottage on Yazoo Avenue.”¹⁰ However, on August 16, the same column “Local Department” in the *Clarksdale Challenge* wrote, “Dr. R. W. Perkins, osteopath,

has rented the Kerstine Cottage on Yazoo Avenue, and has fitted up a nice office.”¹¹ He is not listed in the 1910 Mississippi' census.

October 25: According to the *Clarksdale Challenge*, “Mr. A. Kerstine has returned from an extended trip to the Old World which included a visit to the Paris Exposition and a trip to the Faderland.”¹²

KLINE

MEYER

1900 Census lists Kline living with L. and Annie Jacobson as a boarder. Born in Russia in 1888, he immigrated in 1897. Although he claims he is eighteen years old, the math reports he was 10. He also says he is working as a merchant.

LANDAU

LANDAU BROTHERS

September 13: According to a newspaper article the Landau's opened their store and moved to Clarksdale in 1900: “Read the enterprising ad of Landau Bros., recent additions to our commercial world, and you will be convinced that they are as enterprising as their ad. Clarksdale is always ready to extend a cordial welcome to men of ability, pluck and determination—such as we feel sure ---compose the above firm. May they prosper.”¹³

To the People of Clarksdale and Vicinity:

We beg to make known that on Saturday, September 15, 1900, we will open

“THE FAMOUS” Dry Goods Store.

We intend to sell for **CASH ONLY.** We will place before you full lines of

Dry Goods, Clothing, Shoes, Men's Hats and Caps, Men's Furnishing Goods,
Ladies' Ready-made Skirts and Waists, Trimmed Hats, Hosiery, Capes, Cloaks, Etc.

All our goods are entirely new and up-to-date. Most of our goods we bought direct from the manufacturer; we are therefore in a position to compete with any retail market in the South. It will be our motto to give you 100 CENTS WORTH for your dollar.

Please come and examine our stock and remember you will see only the most stylish and latest productions in the market.

WE PAY PROMPT ATTENTION TO MAIL ORDERS. A call respectfully solicited.

NEW BLOCK, DELTA AVE.
BETWEEN 2nd & 3rd STS.

LANDAU BROS., Clarksdale, Miss

Advertisement, September 13, 1900

MAX, MOSE, BERTHOD, RUDOLPH

Corinne said: “The brothers arrived about the late 1890s. These brothers were merchants who had their store on Yazoo Street. I do not know when they married and brought their wives to Clarksdale. I know one went to Memphis, and Max and Mose came to Clarksdale. I don't know

where they came from or where they were born in Germany. Corinne believed Max and his brother Moses arrived together as bachelors and married later.”¹⁴

MOSE

Corinne said:

Mose married Minnie Brush, Molly Brush Kerstine’s sister. Minnie and Mose had one daughter, Gertrude, who married Stanley Allenberg, Memphis, TN. Later in life Uncle Mose married Jenny Small. He died in Clarksdale or he was living in Marks because he had a store in Marks. He also worked for a man by the name of Kress as he had given up his own store years before

Uncle Mose was a little taller [than Max]. He wore glasses. He was a jolly man, amiable man, well liked in the gentile community as well as the Jewish community. He had a haberdashery named Landau's in the middle of Yazoo Street when I came to town. He had help in the store. Carlie [Jacobs], Max’s wife, helped him run it. They had medium prices for the average man. Yes, he liked good music I don’t know about sports. They traveled a lot in the early days.¹⁵

According to the 1910 US Census, Mose was born in German in 1874. He immigrated in 1890 when he was thirty-six years old. He married to Minnie in Memphis in January, 1901. Minnie, his wife was born in Arkansas in 1875, and his daughter Gertrude was born in 1902. Yetta Brush, his mother-in-law was living with them,. She was born in Germany in 1833, and was listed as a widower.

NACHMAN

AL

The 1900 Census reported he was born Germany in October, 1864.

- January 4: Acting as Record Clerk, Nachman’s name is attached to the 1899 Statement of Receipts and expenditures for the City of Clarksdale. ¹⁶
- March 8: Acting as Clerk for the Board of Alderman he put notice in *Clarksdale Challenge* regarding the request to report the failure of burning streetlights so that they could improve the services of the light. Co.¹⁷
- May 10: According to the *Challenge*, Nachman left Saturday for New York City when he expects to be joined by his sister, Mrs. Al Frank, of that city, on a trip to the Paris Exposition. Mr. Nachman will be absent the remainder of the summer visiting several countries on the continent before his return to America. His relatives have their home at Limberg, Germany when he will spend a considerable part of his time.¹⁸
- September 6: According to the *Clarksdale Challenge*, Al Nachman returned from his Old World trip.¹⁹

November 29: Nachman published his notice as candidate for Mayor of the Town of Clarksdale to be voted on December 11, 1900. NOTE: No article showing results of election. His obituary shows he was major in 1905.²⁰

For quite a while Nachman represented the Standard Oil Co as local agent. He engaged in the Insurance business with M. J. Bouldin and has been in the Insurance business off and on ever since. At different times Mr. Nachman served as city clerk, alderman, and mayor. Has traveled extensively, having been abroad more than thirty times, covering every country on the globe. Mr. Nachman owned the first brick building erected in Clarksdale after the fire of 1889. 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.²¹

PACHTER

HENRY L.

Copied from John Pachter's Genealogical narrative taken primarily from his father David's memoirs, "My Life and Times":

David Pachter and Sara, had four children: John, Annie, Henry and Abe. Henry and Abe were twins. Henry L. Pachter, my grandfather, was born in New York City in 1877 on Mott Street in the lower east side. He said he was expelled from school in the third grade for throwing an eraser at the teacher and never returned.

Because the family believed David drowned in the tragic Johnstown, Pennsylvania, flood of May 31, 1889, in which more than 2,000 souls perished when an old earthen dam burst, sending an avalanche of water down the mountain above the town.²²

Left alone to care for her four children, Sara was saved by family connections in Mississippi – a marriage between two first cousins, Sara's nephew George and niece Mary [Richberger].

Uncle John had a farm about five miles east of Webb at Buzzard's Bayou. He eventually made his way to the hamlet of Webb, Mississippi (population approximately 500, then and now) where he owned a dry goods store and a cotton farm....My dad's farm was west of Webb about six miles at Blue Lake, Around 1900, Henry (now age 23) and his older brother John moved to Webb, about seventy miles south of Rich. [John's] general dry goods store [was] called Pachter's, [and] Henry worked as salesman.] ...John had a family clothing store and bought much of his merchandise from wholesale firms in St. Louis. Train mailed shipped goods in large wooden boxes.

(The townspeople had trouble spelling and pronouncing the name (the "h" is silent), and many referred to him as "Mr. Henry." He also owned a cotton farm about ten miles west at Blue Lake. (As late as 1982, it was still called the Pachter place, even though it had passed from the family more than fifty years earlier.)²³

RICHBERGER

GEORGE

Several fragments about Richberger have appeared but could not be pieced together:

1. Weeks reported: "Two banks emerged that actually later merged as the Citizen Savings Banks....Al Nachman served as cashier. Nachman resigned and George Richberger of the Bank of Jonestown took his place."²⁴
2. The *Jonestown Eagle*—edited by the town's major, George Richberger. According to Abernathy.²⁵
3. November 1: During the year, several items in the Clarksdale Challenge reported Richberger was no longer living in Clarksdale, but had moved to Jonestown. On this date, the newspaper published a Bankruptcy Petition for Discharge which had been filed on October 23.²⁶

Hirsberg said the Richbergers lived in Jonestown. He was a banker, and possibly owned a big share of it. Hirsberg added, "I do not remember whether or not he was connected with the Planters Bank. I have forgotten what happened but I did hear my father talk about the problems George Richberger had."²⁷

According to Gertrude Friedman, George and Mr. Cutrer were real good friends. They used to do gambling together. They used to play poker, a bunch up at the Cutrer's house. I remember him telling me about the times they played poker all night at the Cutrer house."²⁸

SACKS

AARON

- March 3 He returned to Clarksdale...from Marion, Illinois, when he has been engaged in business for some months past. "We understand it is Mr. Sack's intention to resume his mercantile business in our city."²⁹
- March 15 The paper reported he had purchased the Bazaar of G. P. Clark & Co. and will take charge in the future."³⁰

CHILDREN BORN

- 1) **Lenora** 1899 Mississippi
- 2) **Alma** 1901 Mississippi
- 3) **Gwin** 1903 Mississippi
- 3) **Lester** 1906 Mississippi
- 4) **Jeanette** 1908 Mississippi
- 5) **Lillian** 1911 Mississippi

1901

BAKER

FRANK

According to Baker's obit, he resided in Clarksdale for thirty-five years and died in 1936. The 1910 Census reports he was born in 1869 and immigrated in 1888. He married Rosie Shefsky, Memphis, in 1894 but was not living with her at the time of the 1910 Census when he worked as a general store merchant in Clarksdale.

CHILDREN BORN

- 1) **David** 1900 Tennessee
- 2) **Isic [Isaac]** 1902 Tennessee
- 3) **Benjamin** 1904 Mississippi
- 4) **Jennie** 1906 Tennessee
- 5) **Jeanette** 1909 Tennessee
- 6) **Sarah** 1912 Tennessee

One of his stores was in Riverton; one on the corner of Third and Delta. For a while he had the same store John Small had. ^{His obituary said he was in both merchandising and cattle businesses. 31}

Max worked in Ruleville, MS. Both Max and Frank worked with Morris and Harry in their business when they were all in Dublin; then, Frank moved to Clarksdale and opened a store.³²

KLINE

MYER

While Kline went to Alligator in 1901, it is only in recent years that his business has expanded to its present proportions.³³

1902

November 16: The Washington, D.C. Washington Star ran a cartoon which depicted President Theodore Roosevelt refusing to shoot a bear in the Mississippi Delta, an incident from which the Teddy Bear originated.

1902 STATISTICS ABOUT LIFESTYLE

The average life expectancy in the US was forty-seven.

Only fourteen percent of the homes in the US had a bathtub.

Only eight percent of the homes had a telephone.

A three-minute call from Denver to New York City cost eleven dollars.

There were only 8,000 cars in the US and only 144 miles of paved roads.

The maximum speed limit in most cities was 10 mph.

Alabama, Mississippi, Iowa, and Tennessee were each more heavily populated than California.

With a mere 1.4 million residents, California was only the 21st most popular state in the Union.

The tallest structure in the world was the Eiffel Tower.

The average wage in the US was 22 cents an hour.

The average US worker made between \$200 and \$400 per year.

A competent accountant could expect to earn \$2000 per year, a dentist \$2,500 per year, a veterinarian between \$1,500 and \$4,000 per year, and a mechanical engineer about \$5,000 per year.

More than ninety-five percent of all births in the US took place at home.

Ninety percent of all US physicians had no college education. Instead, they attended medical schools, many of which were condemned in the press and by the government as "substandard."

Sugar cost four cents a pound. Eggs were fourteen cents a dozen. Coffee cost fifteen cents a pound.

Most women only washed their hair once a month and used borax or egg yolks for shampoo.

Canada passed a law prohibiting poor people from entering the country for any reason.

The five leading causes of death in the US were:

Pneumonia and influenza

Tuberculosis

Diarrhea

Heart disease

Stroke

The American flag had 45 stars. Arizona, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Hawaii and Alaska hadn't been admitted to the Union yet.

The population of Las Vegas, Nevada was thirty.

Crossword puzzles, canned beer, and iced tea hadn't been invented.

There was no Mother's Day or Father's Day.

One in ten US adults couldn't read or write. Only 6 percent of all Americans had graduated from high school

Marijuana, heroin, and morphine were all available over the counter at corner drugstores.

According to one pharmacist, Heroin clears the complexion, gives buoyancy to the mind, regulates the stomach and the bowels, and is, in fact, a perfect guardian of health.

Eighteen percent of households in the US had at least one full-time servant or domestic.

There were only about 230 reported murders in the entire US.

BINDER

JULIUS DAVID

Parents were Isadore/Rachael Leah. Immigrated with his mother in 1902. They came through the port of New Orleans. The other children were born in America.³⁴

FINK

ABRAHAM AND LEAH

In 1886 Jake was the youngest of seven children who were born-in Vilnius, Poland, a part of the Russian empire. His father, Abraham, a grain and coal merchant, immigrate! and established himself in New York City, When approximately two-years old in 1888, his mother Leah, immigrated to New York with the seven children.³⁵

CHILDREN BORN

1) **Charles**

2) **Celia**

- 3) **Ida**
- 4) **Ruben**
- 5) **William Fink**
- 6) **Unknown**
- 7) **Jacof (Jake)** 1886 Poland³⁶

The family established life in a cold water flat on the lower east side of New York. His father developed pneumonia about 1891/1892 and died when Jake was six or seven years old. He remained in school through the 3rd grade. He was a very avid reader and quick learner, especially in business, commerce, figures and legal matters. His sister, Celia married Bernard Wolff and moved to Mississippi.³⁷

According to Alan Fink and a manuscript he provided which was lost:

In 1902, Jake was approximately sixteen-years old. He boarded a train in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania travel to seek his fortune either in the same town or near where his el brother and a sister and her husband were living. Not for Jake the life of the itinerant Jewish peddler roaming the countryside with a pack on his back. His siblings promised him room and board as well as a job in their dry goods store in Beulah Landing.

When Jake Fink came to the Mississippi Delta he was self-assured and dressed like a dandy in a dark suit and felt hat. The young man stepped off the train into the smothering 1 and humidity of an early fall day in Shelby, MS. In those days the railroad in Shelby was built on a high embankment and there was a level area to a light from the train. It was muddy as he got off the train, and they had used board walks and stair plants across the ditches on each side of the railroad to get to the street or to stores on both sides.

Jake decided to start by looking in Shelby, 23 miles south of Clarksdale because his brother Joe moved there the year before. Jake cocked his derby and looked around at this low, wooden buildings lining the town's muddy streets. He crossed the ditch on a plank, crunched down the narrow gravel thoroughfare, and spotted the post office where he hoped to find someone who knew the whereabouts of his brother Joe and to pick up his mail. All of a sudden and before he knew it, somebody pushed the derby hat down over head. He turned around. There were all these country yokels that were having a great laugh and much sport from his discomfort of being a city boy. He pulled off the derby and it back on keeping his eye peeled for whomever would touch his hat to push it down again. All of a sudden he caught a flash of somebody reaching out to hit his hat. He swung around and caught the man right on the button. It was a much older person so he dropped like a shot. After they didn't give him much trouble.

Somehow Jake's reputation traveled before him as a fighter. Down through the years Alvin, his son, met people who said Jake could be awfully tough when he had to be. He sat an unknown time with his brother Joe in Shelby.

Jake traveled on down to Beulah Landing where he moved into the house with his sister and went to work in their store for several seasons. Fiction soon arose between brother ; brother-in-law, both of whom were strong-minded individuals. Bernard, a shrewd merchant, cast his eye around and found a way to get Jake out of his household and expand his own business interest at the same time. He opened a store in the neighboring town of Duncan, a hamlet close to Clarksdale, Beulah Landing and Shelby and sent Jake to run the new store. All of these towns were within a 20 mile radius of each other. They used horse back and buggies between Duncan and Shelby but used trains to travel between Beulah and Shelby. Trains only ran North and South with no cross trains in that area.³⁸

PACHTER

HENRY

Copied from John Pachter's genealogical narrative and primarily from his father's [David] memoirs, "My Life and Times" who wrote:

Henry married in 1902, built a home, and began a family of Southern Jews now in its fourth generation. Lived in Webb, MS and married Ruby Hyman, St. Louis, MO. Her mother was Hedwig R. Hyman, [and father was Pincus.]

My father built a very small house he and mother lived in during the early 1900's. Much of the framing in the house was made from the wooden crates from goods received at store. When David Pachter visited the house in 1979, the owner told him he had found a board with the name Henry L. Pachter, Webb, MS. stenciled on it, apparently about 75 years old. As for the house, the large front porch, the fence around the yard is gone, along with the two story divided garage with servants quarters on the back of the lot. J.T.'s father built a long row of small adjoining rooms. One was a washhouse with wire around the upper one-third of the walls and roosts for the chickens. At the end of the yard was an outdoor toilet for the kitchen help. Between the garage and the row of sheds was a light for the home. As a boy, I remember helping my dad once a week flushing the tank with water. Then we would put fresh crystals in a container and refill the water tank. After a while, this would build up a gas piped to each room in the house with one or more fixtures in each room. It made a soft light that I thought had a magical glow that was easy to read by. My fondest memories of the light were probably overshadowed by its actual effectiveness as reading light.

Near these buildings was a large iron pot about 3 feet across with iron legs that raised the iron pot 6-8 inches off the ground. Every Monday morning, Eunie, the Negro house girl, would build a wood fire under the pot and wash the family clothes and sheets. The fire would blaze and vast amounts of smoke would rise from the wood fire. In the midst of the smoke would be Eunie stirring the clothes with a used broomstick, having put soap and bluing in the water to get the clothes clean and white. This was a laborious process for a large family that included my mother and father, then three children, my mother's brother and her father. After mother was satisfied the clothes were clean, they

were moved to the washhouse where they were rinsed until all soap and water was out. Then all were hung to dry on clothesline strung out in the back yard with wooden clothespins. Later in the day, everything was ironed and folded and put away. So, Monday was another full day for Eunie and mother. While the time and effort required for this today is still considerable, it is minute compared to what was necessary in the days of my youth in Webb. We did get electric lights in Webb but I don't recall a washer and dryer.[My dad had a commissary on his back lot where he sold staples to his farm families or "hands" as they were called. This was necessary in those days as travel was difficult with dirt roads by mule and wagons and it provided the farm worker the basic food stuff on a once a month trip. He bought much of his merchandise from wholesale firms in St. Louis. Train mailed shipped goods in large wooden boxes.

Credit was a way of life when I was a little boy. The husband provided the living and paid off expenses. The wife ran the household. She charged her food bill at the local grocery store, charged her clothes [Sam2] and other clothing allowance could only be used at a store in Webb. The farmer had arranged to credit him until the cotton was ginned and sold, usually some time from September until December. For this extra work and money, the merchant added on a carrying charge percentage agreed to by both merchant and farmer. The share worker received his "furnish money and allowance" each month until the cotton was ginned. Then he Then he received part of the seed money in September, October and November, as long as the cotton was ginned. The farmer also had an arrangement with a doctor and dentist to tend to the workers medical needs during the year. He also furnished any money for other worries, just a hard life working mules to plow and to plant and pick the cotton by hand. [66]

The black people out on the farms would trap small animals and bring the skinned hides in for cash. There were plenty of animals then, as there were lots of trees and lakes. He was a small, quiet person. The was always the first to the dinner table when mother called us to eat and the last to leave.

There was always a school nearby and always a church. The church and the social life connected with it played a big part in the Negro's life.

After the cotton was picked, ginned and sold, the farmer would calculate the cash received for each sharecropper's part. The percentage of this agreed on at the start of the year, less furnished him during the year. The rest was the sharecropper's part in cash. This was generally done in December. Then about the first of the year, after settlement time came negotiating for the coming year furnished along with the bonus or "advanced cash" against the crop not yet planted. This always took the best part of a week and was a very trying time for my dad. Almost always there was one or two out of the thirty or forty families whom he couldn't reach an agreement with and would more to another farm. The new farmer would have to pay off any debt still owed the original farmer. When my dad lost a family, he would have to find one to replace him with or perhaps give it to a grown son on his farm then only enough to start on his own.

Many farms had several generations of the same family whose life span was on only one farm. The arrangement left the head of the sharecropper's family free of money

worries. Assuming the agreed amount was adequate and assured the farmer of enough workers to adequately make a crop on a given acreage. His share cropping arrangement lasted, in principal, until about the early 1950s when mechanical farming came into prominence in the Delta.

When I was about four years old I had ridden out to Blue Lake with my dad. It was during cotton-picking time. As usual, I was playing with some small Negro boys, Pica ninnies, as they were called. The cotton bolls were fluffy and open and the cotton plants were taller than my head. We were playing "gin" and were removing the cottonseeds from the cotton by hand, when one of the Negro boys dared me to put a cottonseed up my nose, which I did. It didn't seem to bother me until we got home. That night when my mother bathed me and cleaned the "buggers" out of my nose the fact that I had a cottonseed in my nose came out I told her what I put in my nose-that Uncle John and Aunt Minnie lived in Webb just a block from my parents. I spent many a happy hour there. Their maid, Earabell, who was Eunie's older sister, taught me card games, like coon can, playing in the little one room cottage on the back lot she lived in. Often I ate meals in their home. As Aunt Minnie never had any children, I was like an adopted child to them. My dad used to tell the story that he was expelled from the third grade in New York City for throwing an eraser at his teacher and quit school. He loved to read and was self-educated. He played a mandolin by heart and kept it at Webb in a love seat in the living room. He used to play it in Webb when I was little.

John Pachter had a boxer named "Bowser." He was a dignified, aloof dog except he loved John. At the age of four, Bowser and I were about the same height. He loved to lick my face after I had eaten one of Earabelle's jelly biscuits.

Uncle John had a concrete walk put down in the backyard from the back porch to Earabelle's and other out houses when I was about four. There was a picture of David in a white shirt and shorts with a white cap made out of a flower sack. I put my footprints and date in it. Note: the manuscript said he returned in 1970 to find this, but did not because he realized someone was watching him, so he left.

David Pachter's grandfather Pincus Hyman lived in Webb until 1924. He talked about being a mule tender as a boy for a Confederated Artillery Battery in the Civil War. When he lived in Webb, he shared a room with his son, Sam Hyman, who was Ruby Pachter's youngest brother. Sam lived there until he married at age 35 (no year given)

David described his Grandfather (Occurred between 1906, after his mother died and 1924 when he left to live in St. Louis. Grandpa shaved with a straight razor and often cut himself, coming to breakfast with a piece of toilet paper to stop the blood. He sold animal hides in the back of my father's store for a little pocket money.

After the evening meal in the summer time, my father would take the family riding in our eight passenger Studebaker. Whenever Daddy said: 'Let's go for a ride,' Grandpa would already be in his favorite seat in the car. My daddy jokingly said Grandpa came to this country at the age of five before he could work and retired at the age of 52 before he started working.

Grandpa loved to smoke cigars. As he grew older, he would pass wind walking around the house. That would burn my daddy something awful. Mother would say, 'Now Henry, he's old.' As for me as a little boy, I thought it amusing."³⁹

1903

FLOOD:

Flooding occurred from Cairo, Illinois, all the way down to the Gulf of Mexico. Many levees along the way failed, but work done on the local levees paid off and spared the region from the massive damage that occurred elsewhere⁴⁰

CLARKSDALE HOSPITAL:

Started in 1903 and incorporated in June 1904, the Delta Hospital of Clarksdale began in a one-story frame at 221 DeSoto. It was maintained by the King's Daughters Circle of Clarksdale. Brief summary of the hospital movement in Clarksdale by an anonymous writer was mounted on the Flowers Wall across from the mirroring nurses' station⁴¹

FATHER OF THE BLUES:

W C. Handy's 1941 autobiography describes how he became focused on composing blues while living on Issaquena Avenue between 1903 and 1904. The famed blues composer and musician led the Knights of Pythias band in Clarksdale in 1903-1905. This year he wrote his first blues composition. Prior to this blues singers composed on-the-go and never actually wrote the song on paper.⁴²

ALPERN

ARTHUR

Married Rebecca Marcus in Coahoma, Mississippi on June 7, 1903 in the home of Charles Cohen. A. Schaffer and George Richberger were listed as witnesses.⁴³ A. Schaffer and George Richberger were listed as witnesses. Alperin and Charles Cohen were brothers-in-law; there were married to two sisters.⁴⁴

CHILD: Bessie ⁴⁵

BAKER/FRANK

MORRIS

According to Glassman,

Morris was born to Ora and his second wife. Morris went to Hebrew School in their town Skoviedill, Russia, and as you know, he learned Arithmetic and other subjects there. He was not allowed to go to the public schools.

Uncle Harry spoke good German. Celia Friedman said he might have learned it from neighbors, mixing his Yiddish in. These neighbors moved to the towns from Germany. Morris's older sister; was a good seamstress as well as being good with her hands in doing handwork.

He came to this country at the age of 16 (1903). His brother, Harry was twenty years younger than his brother, Frank. See Jerome Magdovitz's tape also for some of this data in which he talked about selling horses to the Czar.⁴⁶

BINDER

JOSEPH H. AND ESSIE

According to Marilyn Binder Abrams,

Joseph married Ashna Ovseiobitch (spelling and pronunciation not verified) who was from a little Villaowm as Fauragen (please note that we have raised some question here as to the spelling of this town and its whereabouts).

The Bender family came from a little town Upena, Covna Geberne, Lithuania. Joseph served four years in the Russian army and afterwards immigrated to America. He served four years under the King of Russia, Nicholas II, It is believed he might have contacted tuberculosis while serving in the army. Joseph immigrated to this country in 1901. He came thru w Port of New Orleans, it is believed. He cane South after peddling a year In Pennsylvania. He was living In the South, we presume, when he sent for his wife and child. Ashna and her oldest child, Julius, who was a year old at the time, immigrated in the year 1902, thru the port of New Orleans, it is believed. The rest of the family, six in all who lived pasted infancy, were bom in America.⁴⁷

According to Joe's naturalization documents, he immigrated on May 19, 1902.

CHILDREN	BORN
1) Julius	1901 Russia
2) Louis	1905 Mississippi
3) Mike	1907 Mississippi
4) Morris	1908 Mississippi
5) Toga	1913 Mississippi
6) Rachael/Rae	1915 Mississippi

VICTOR

According to his Petition for Naturalization, William Victor Binder was born September 1876. It confirms he return to live in Clarksdale permanently by 1903. Although he went by the name of Victor, his legal documents and the US Census lists his official name as *William*.

According to Marilyn Binder Abrams,

Victor returned to America and to Clarksdale; he made his living as a peddler until he opened a store of his own. The first store known about was located on 3rd street in Clarksdale. Victor moved his store from 3rd Street to Issaquena Street in Clarksdale in the late 1930s or early 1940s. The family originally lived in the area of town where the Joe Binders lived, but as early as 1925 or so moved to a house on Oakhurst Street, where they lived till Victor passed away,

Edith Bloom Thomas, daughter of Belle Binder Bloom, tells us a humorous incident that happened to her involving her grandfather, Victor. Although she may not have thought of it in that respect at that time. (Quote, "I think he was disappointed that at the time I made him a great grandfather, he did not have any grandsons to carry on the

Binder name. He told me when Wanda was born that he was more excited about one of the nieces giving birth to a son than becoming a great grandfather because the boy would carry on the family name⁴⁸

CHILDREN	BORN:
1) BELLE ESTER	1897 Philadelphia.
2) IDA	1906 Mississippi.
3) ANNIE SOPHIA	1906 Mississippi .
4) SARAH	1908 Mississippi.
5) MAX	1909 Mississippi.
6) DAVID	1911 Mississippi
7) ABRAHAM SAMUEL	1913 Mississippi

FRIEDMAN

MAX AND ROSA FRANKLE

The 1920 Census shows, born in Poland and immigrated to New Madrid, MO in 1900. He sold hides and furs. Max married Rosa Frankle in 1903. They had three children.⁴⁹

CHILDREN	BORN:
1) Morris	1905 Mississippi
2) Anne (Cissy)	1907 Mississippi
3) Robert Stanley	1926 Tennessee

JIEDEL

SAMUEL/(JAKE)

Selma James always referred to him as “Jake” but the reference show his name is either Jacob or Samuel. He is a resident of Clarksdale, Mississippi. The 1900s Memphis City Directories show he lives with and is partner with Isadore Jiedel for a both a retail and wholesale clothing company in Memphis, Tennessee. ⁵⁰ During 1903, he moved his residence to Clarksdale but continued his listing in the Memphis City Directory.

MAY

HARRY AND SARAH NEVETT

Both Harry born in Lithuania in 1876 and his wife Sarah Nevett born in 1877 grew up and married in Lithuania. The 1920 U. S. Census, Harry was a grocery merchant. The family immigrated in 1903.

CHILDREN	BORN
1) Rosa May	1903 Lithuania
2) Mike	1907 Mississippi
3) Lenabelle	1908 Mississippi

- 4) **Edith** 1911 Mississippi
- 5) **Sidney** 1913 Mississippi
- 6) **Abe** 1916 Mississippi

1904

First automobile was seen on Clarksdale's streets.⁵¹

FINK

JAKE

Tucker and Kerstine's article said:

The association with B. Wolf only lasted a couple more years. This arrangement between Jake and Bernard became the old trouble. Jake told his son, Alvin, about the time Bern rode his horse to Duncan to see Jake on business and found him, with the sun halfway up the morning sky, still asleep in the living quarters above the store. Bernard was irritated to find his shopkeeper lazing away in bed when there was good money to be made. He stood in the street below and threw rocks against the window to wake up Jake. Young Jake was persuaded to seek his fortunes elsewhere. Now eighteen years old the young dandy said his good-byes in Coahoma County and traveled South to New Orleans.⁵²

HIRSBERG

JACOB

Jacob L Hirsberg married Nettie Greenberg in Indiana on January 27, 1904, when he was 34 years old. In addition, the 1920 U. S. Census reported Jacob Hirshberg was born in Lithuania in 1870. His wife Nettie, born in Indiana in 1884.

CHILDREN	BORN
1) Sol	1905 Indiana
2) Leah	1907 Indiana
3) Bernard (Budgy)	1909 Indiana
4) D. H.	

Bernard said:

Actually, I was born in Evansville, Indiana; I was the third. That's where Mama's parents lived, and she would go up there to have each of her children. I had one older brother, an older sister, and one younger brother. There was Sol, the older brother, Leah, my sister, and D. H. my younger brother.

We had a ferry from Friars Point across the river, but our prime contact was Clarksdale more so than Helena. We went to Arkansas occasionally, but there was no relationship and certainly no social relationship between Helena and us. It was more economics. There was a wholesale dry goods house in Helena and a wholesale grocery, that did serve Mississippi. I never really knew the people in Helena at all. My father never really did any business with them, but we knew who they were.⁵³

1905

Earl Brewer announced his candidacy for the governorship of Mississippi.

FIRST SCHOOL

H. B. Heidelberg appointed Superintendent of Clarksdale's public school, than a frame structure on Sharkey Avenue adjoining the present Episcopal Church.⁵⁴ This school was; originally a two room frame building with four rooms added. At this time there were three teachers and sixty-five children.⁵⁵ “The school had ten grades and each teacher taught several grades.”⁵⁶

Corinne said: “When Isidor was in school, he used to get out of school by agreeing to go with another boy do to the Sunflower River to get water for the school. They obviously had no good plumbing to bring the water into the schoolhouse for the teacher. It was quite a walk down to the river to get the water. Isidor told Corinne that they had stoves in each school room.”⁵⁷

FACTS ABOUT LIFE IN 1905

Average life expectancy was 47 years old.

Only 8% of the homes had a telephone

Minute call from Denver to New York City was \$11.

Maximum speed limit in most cities was 0 mph.

The tallest structure in the world was the Eiffel Tower.

Average wage in the U.S. was 22 cents/per hour.

The average worker made between \$200 and \$400/per year.

More than 95% of all births in the U.S. took place at home.

Most women only washed their hair once a month and used borax or egg yolks for shampoo.

Sugar cost 4 cents/per pound; eggs were 14cents a dozen; coffee was 15cents a pound.

The American flag had 45 stars. (Arizona, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Hawaii and Alaska not admitted yet to the Union.

There was no Mother's or Father's Day.

Two out of every 10 adults couldn't read or write; only 6% of all Americans had graduated from high school.⁵⁸

RICHBERGER/FRIEDMAN

GEORGE

George and family members move to Memphis, Tenn.⁵⁹

FRIEDMAN

ROSA AND JAKE

Rosa, George's oldest daughter, married Jacob Friedman married on April 30, 1905.⁶⁰ The 1910 U. S. Census reports Jake was born in Hungary in 1880. However, during the interview, Friedman, said: " [I] heard that [my dad] was born in Hungary but, I never knew if this was true or not. He immigrated in 1895. The 1910 Census shows he is a dry goods retail.

Nelson described her mother and their home life:

Rosa was a mother and a homebody...When she finished school, they were married just that early. I think she was eighteen when she married [Jacob] in Memphis. George was a banker at that time, because I remember...gifts she got at that time were so beautiful. Her daddy was a banker. So, everyone gave her such beautiful gifts. I remember that comment but I don't remember except that she was a very accomplished musician. Daddy played the violin, and she played the piano. My brothers played. On Sunday nights, people/crowds use to come to the house. We never had to invite anyone. They just knew that it was Sunday night, and they could come to the house.⁶¹

CHILDREN	BORN
1) Herman Leon	1906 Memphis
2) Gertrude	1909 Memphis
3) Milton	
4) Emanuel ⁶²	

Friedman added:

Of course, I only knew them when I was in Jonestown, but my grandparents were in Memphis. We would go there to visit. Herman was not married; however, he always went with Amelia Weil in Memphis. "Both Rosa's and Jake's families lived there in Memphis. Uncle Dan lived there. Uncle Abe, I remember very little about him. Jake was not related to anyone in Clarksdale or Jonestown. His relatives were in Memphis. His sister was Brode, who lived in Memphis. Selma Brode was married and all her children live up there. He moved to Jonestown when he married Rosa."⁶³

1906

First steel bridge across the Sunflower River at Second Street is erected.⁶⁴

CONGREGATION BETH ISRAEL

Seventeen congregations of Jews with 746 families in Mississippi.⁶⁵

1st Rabbi in Clarksdale: Rev. Lubchansky between 1906 and 1912.⁶⁶ According to 1910 US Census: Harry Lubchansky, born 1872 in Russia; wife, a woman named Minnie, born in 1874 in Russia. Family immigrated in 1903. No data regarding when he started his service in Clarksdale. They lived at 403 Third Street.

CHILDREN	BORN
1) Bill	1896 Russia
2) Pearl	1896 Russia
3) Massie	1897 Russia
4) Sallie	1903 Russia

5) Gittle 1908 Mississippi.

KERSTINE

ROSA

Selma did not know if her mother graduated from Mississippi State College for Women (MSCW). She mentioned Lily said Rosa was on the basketball team and was popular. She remembered Lily told her how Rosa and Lily were good friends.⁶⁷

Because there was no high school beyond the 10th grade, when Freda Woolbert, graduated from Itta Bena School, she went to Mississippi Institute Training for Women (today it is Mississippi State College for Women, Columbia, Mississippi). Besides Freda, Rosa Kerstine and Lenora Sack had to travel to Columbus by train. They would ride the Columbus and Greenville (C&G) Railroad to Greenwood to transfer to another train to travel to Columbus, MS.⁶⁸

Corinne said: "Rosa was mated with her husband Morris E. Weinberger."⁶⁹ Corinne suggested it may have been a "match", like 'The Fiddler on the Roof' in those days. I think she must have met him there when she was living with her parents there at one time."⁷⁰

Rosa had two uncles that lived in Hot Springs. Charles Kerstine, Adolph's brother who lived in Hot Springs, worked together buying property on Issaquena. She may have met this man via her uncle but we really know nothing about it. Information shows Weinberger was from Germany. Selma talked about how they had put Rosa's wedding presents behind the store in a little makeshift building and somebody got in there and got all the gifts.⁷¹

Morris Weinberger, born in 1873, immigrated from Germany in 1896. He married Morris Edward Weinberger on December 26, 1906, at the Clarendon Hotel, Memphis, TN.⁷² They lived in Hot Springs, AR. After her first child died at birth or sometime before her second pregnancy, she was warned by her doctor not to have a child because she had tuberculosis.⁷³

Evidence in the 1910 U.S. Census shows Morris claimed his wife was still living, and he had a baby, Selma; however, see 1908 about Rosa's death, and Selma permanently living with her grandparents in Clarksdale.

POWERS

MIKE

Michael Powers (Mike), the son of Mr. and Mrs. Sam Powers, was born in Nashville, TN, in 1865. Before arriving in Clarksdale, he worked in Nashville and Birmingham, Alabama, New York, Boston and Shreveport, LA. He married a Jessie in 1901.

Mike Powers, CEO of Powers and Company, came to Clarksdale as the manager of the W.S. Campbell's ladies-ready-to-wear store about 1906.⁷⁴ Evidence from the local newspaper shows he owned and managed Powers & Co by 1912. "He was always active in civic and fraternal circles, holding memberships in a number of organizations";⁷⁵ however, Mike did not participate in the Jewish society and very few knew he was Jewish.⁷⁶

SMALL/SMOLINSKY

JOHN AND JENNIE WEISS

Jenny Small's 1911 passport application showed she was born in Ripen, Poland, in 1885. The application includes John's European name, Smolinsky was changed to Small when he immigration date in 1891. He moved from Tennessee and Texas and was living in Mississippi when he acquired his citizenship in 1898. She described herself as five foot, three one-half inches in stature, with round face and black eye and hairs, a short nose, medium round chin, dark complexion.

According to the 1910 Census, John, born in Poland in 1872, immigrated in 1891. He was living in Monroe, Arkansas in 1900 but married Jennie in 1906 and working in Clarksdale as a dry goods merchants. According to Selma James, he moved to Clarksdale in 1906 and opened a shop at the intersection of Delta and Third Street.⁷⁷

CHILDREN	BORN
1) Isadore	1907 Mississippi
2) Lillian	1910 Mississippi
3) Abraham R	1914 Mississippi

Selma said that John Small wanted to marry her mother and the author's Aunt Rosa Kerstine He gave her a diamond ring. Rosa decided not to marry him and gave it back to him. He refused to take it. Later gave it to her sister. Lily who passed it on to her daughter, Evelyn, not Rosa's daughter, Selma.⁷⁸

1907

CONGREGATION BETH ISRAEL

September 14 "Our Jewish Population observed Rosh Hashanah, the 5668 Jewish New Year Monday and Tuesday. All their houses are closed. Next Wednesday will be Yom Kipper, and they will be closed all day."⁷⁹

JEWS IN MISSISSIPPI

Another source reported that 353 Jews were settled in 46 towns in Mississippi between 1907 and 1917.⁸⁰

HOTELS

- 1) Tuttle Hotel
- 2) Alcazar Hotel,
- 3) Mosby Hotel
- 4) Wingfield House

According to Miriam Dabbs article:

Turtle Hotel opened by Arthur C Tuttle and his wife They bought the one and a half-story frame house from John Clark family, and they expanded. He worked for the

Levee Board as an accountant, later he served as the town clerk, and still later worked as bookkeeper for Johnson Harlow Lumber Company (This was J. H. Johnson and Will Harlow). He also was secretary of the Elks Club. Mrs. Tuttle eventually expanded her business to include other hotels in Milan, TN, Humboldt, TN Paris, Huntington, TN and Crystal Springs, MS.

Clarksdale's Tuttle Hotel until 1930 stood...at 225 Yazoo. It had [twenty] rooms and a fine cuisine, which was the mecca for hungry traveling men coming into Clarksdale by train, on horseback or by buggy...Mrs. Pearl moved to Clarksdale in 1908 with her parents from Yazoo City, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur C. Tuttle....They bought the one and a half-story frame house which they expanded into Tuttle Hotel from a member of the John Clark family, Miss Pearl reports. She and the other children entered grade school in a frame building on Sharkey next to the Episcopal Church.⁸¹

The Alcazar was a frame building in those days. Facing Tuttle House, across Yazoo was Mrs. Margaret Wingfield's Boarding House... Mrs. Mossye Smith lived in a small green house next to the Kerstine home...never remarried...the terms of her husband's will, Mossye could stay in the house only if she remained single.

Across from Mrs. Smith on Yazoo was the Mosby Hotel and farther out near the railroad on the left was Crawley's Ice Factory. A livery stable was on the site of the Me Williams Building.

The railroad was Clarksdale's life line in those days. Actually, a traveler could go almost anywhere on a railroad. Mrs. Tuttle travelled by train to see after her chain of hotels.

The Sunday evening train brought traveling men to Clarksdale. Carrying their bats, they headed for the hotel of their choice. Early Monday morning found them at the livery stable renting a horse or horse and buggy for the run to Sherard, Friars Point., Farrell and Stovall. They took orders for groceries and dry goods, which were shipped by rail from Memphis or maybe New Orleans. Tuesday found these drummers on No. 1 (railroad) to Gunnison, Marigold, Cleveland, etc.

A well-remembered visitor to Tuttle House was W. C. Handy, who with his band sat on the front steps of the hotel and played to the crowds that gathered round. When Handy had finished, he passed his hat for money. The notes of his famous 'St. Louis Blues" and other songs drifted along Yazoo many times. .⁸²

WOOLBERT

ABRAHAM & YETTA

Alvin Fink said:

The family moved to Clarksdale about 1907 or 1908. My grandfather [Abraham] had moved to Warren, AR. I don't know the reason why, but he was a merchant there...And Yetta told my grandfather. 'I don't need to die in Arkansas when all my sisters and relatives are over in MS. I want to go there myself. I am not going to live here.'

Freda said that they crossed the river practically in a rowboat. My grandmother had all the money and valuables in a little suitcase. It wasn't in any boat. Somebody got it back, and they went through. By that time Abraham went to Itta Bena, I think it was, my mother used to tell stories about that in those days, they had kids back when they didn't have anything. And my grandfather in his store had to move his stock of wood up on the high shelves. The water, the store was right on the banks of the river, the back of the stores. And the water would come in and she said she would recall my grandfather waiting on customers in a rowboat. That was one of those little vignettes I could tell you.

According to *Corner of the Tapestry*, “Abraham and Yetta married by Rabbi Isaac M. Wise, October 19, 1891.”⁸³ No date has been determined as to when Abraham and Yetta first came down the river and settled in Vicksburg.

According to Yetta’s granddaughter, Pauline Adelson,

“Abraham opened a tobacco shop.” Soon after that, Abraham moved to Warren, Arkansas, and continued as a tailor and merchant. By this time, Yetta had brought Minnie (Mrs. Leon Woolbert) in 1892 and Becky (Mrs. Joe Friedman, Hollandale) to United States. There was another sister of Yetta, Fannie Wisehammer, Yetta's sister, also lived in Mississippi At some time while they were living in Arkansas, Yetta asked to move back from Arkansas to Mississippi because all her family lived in that State...The first house on Street dead-ends into Sunflower Street at the Sunflower River. My grandparents lived in a house next door until 1909 when they built the house on Oakhurst.”⁸⁴



The Six Woolbert C

CHILDREN BORN

- | | |
|--------------------------|------------------|
| 1) Francis/Fannie | 1889 Mississippi |
| 2) Freda | 1892 Vicksburg |
| 3) Esther | 1899 Mississippi |
| 4) W. K | 1900 Mississippi |
| 5) Celeste | 1902 Warren, AR |
| 6) David B. | 1909 Mississippi |

According to Pauline, most of the children were born in Clarksdale except Freda who was born in Vicksburg, and Celeste, born in Arkansas. They had a third boy who died practically at birth and is buried in Chattanooga. Amy commented that even her mother, Celeste, worshipped Freda.⁸⁵

Amy Morrow Greenwood did not think any of Abe's daughters worked in his store. Amy's mother Celeste worked for Powers for a little bit. Esther taught school but I don't think Freda worked. She didn't have to when she married Jake Fink because he was really rich. All the daughters went to MSCW, except maybe Fannie, who is the oldest sister.⁸⁶

Amy continued:

Yetta was a wonderful cook who helped in the store. They always did what was up to date. They had one of the first telephones in town—the box type that you crank up. The farmers used to come into the store, and sometimes they didn't have cash; so, they wanted to trade a chicken or something for merchandise. Sometime, Abe was able to do that because he needed it and sometimes he didn't. So, when this farmer came in and wanted to trade chickens or something for merchandise, Abe said: "you will have to wait a minute while I call my wife to see if she needs it." So, he cranks up the telephone and called home and asked my grandmother if she could use it. I guess she said ok. He returned to the man, and the man said. 'Mr. Woolbert, I maybe just an ignorant farmer, but you can't make me believe your wife is in that little box.'

87

Celeste told Amy that her dad always sent to New York for books about Judaism and Jewish history. They would be delivered by river boats. He read to them to be sure that his children would have some knowledge about their background.⁸⁸

LEON & MINNIE

Alvin Fink explained the two Woolbert families because of the duplication of names: "One child was "Little Freda". As stated somewhere else, there were 2 Freda's and 2 Celeste's between Leon and his brother, Abraham. These were double first cousins because brothers married sisters. Uncle Ed was their father and a brother to my Yetta. These were called 'arranged marriages.' Yetta had a sister, Birdie, who lived in Philadelphia. She married into the Baird family. I wanted to sell her watch when I went to Germany. A.W. Woolbert is a cousin; his brother was Leon who married Yetta's sister. They all lived in Clarksdale at one time."⁸⁹

1908

FIRE DEPARTMENT

The year when the Clarksdale Fire Department...was organized with a fire chief, John "Jack" Donohue and one fireman.

They used a two -wheeled hand drawn cart, which held 30 gallons of chemical and 100 feel of hose. Later, they gained speed with a wagon and a mule, which was affectionately known as 'Old Jim.'

Two years later, the City purchased a team of horses and a hew hose wagon.../the small but energetic fire unit set up housekeeping in the old King and Anderson barn on Yazoo.⁹⁰

FINK

JAKE

Alvin Fink talked about his dad:

Jake returned to Duncan from New Orleans around 1908 to return and to work again for his brother-in-law Bernard. He had earned monies in several ways while in New Orleans: exercising horses at the Fairgrounds, walking hot horses, boxing semi-pro at the Athletic Club, and in preliminaries as he qualified as a very light fly weight or a little above, and was very good with his fists. He also went to work in the shoe department at Kaufman's, a dry goods store and for Edmund Klotz, owner of a sugar plantation on the Bayou La Fouche in Klotzville, Louisiana. It was near Paincourville, a small village on Highway 1 that Jake ran the commissary on this large sugar plantation.

One of his experiences while in Louisiana was being treated for malaria in a Catholic hospital, Hotel Dieu. (Fink Family, Tucker, 4) He enjoyed watching the sisters in their long white habits as they came into his room. After dipping their fingers, the nuns made the cross. All of this was a novelty to young Jake who had never before been around practicing Catholics. One day, after lighting a cigarette with a long kitchen match with phosphorus in it, he dropped the match in the holy water to douse the flam. He was unaware that the Sisters and nurses used it to put their hands in the holy water before crossing themselves. That night when the nun came into the room, she did turn on the light so as not to disturb her sleeping patient. As she usually did, she touched the holy water with her fingertips. The phosphorus in the bowl glowed in the dark phosphorus in the bowl glowed in the dark. She was sure that she had witnessed a miracle. The same nun later became the Mother Superior of the sisters who ran the hospital in New Orleans and she made trips all up and down the Mississippi River raising money for her order. She never failed to stop in Duncan to call on Jake who was by that time a prosperous merchant and cotton factor. Jake always remembered the hospital and the nuns who had nursed him back to health and always contributed generously to the sister who had witnessed the miracle. [125]

While in New Orleans he became friends with another Jake Fink who was a big pawn broker on Rampart Street. They maintained this friendship even when the pawn broker moved to Memphis, TN.[126]

Jake was no longer the callow youth who first appeared in the Delta; however, he missed the high living that he had experienced in New Orleans. He had grown accustomed to gambling and saloons and fancy restaurants, as well as the companionship of virtue with monies he saved from his salaries and with some of his single friends from Duncan, soon he began to spend his weekends in Greenville, a wide open river port that offered many of the same pleasures that he'd grown used to in New Orleans. One of those weekend trips would prove propitious for him. [127]

On the way to Greenville he overheard a conversation on the train, two men discussing cotton futures. Although he knew very little, if anything about the cotton futures market, as soon as Jake stepped off the train, he went straight to the cotton

exchange, and acting on the tip?, bought cotton futures on margin Jake then went to have a good time. First, to the barber shop for a bath and a shave as these things were not available in Duncan. He wiped away the rest of the weekend in a 'house of ill repute' where he was a favorite of the madam who was a very wealthy woman in conversation, he told her that his brother-in-law had offered to sell Jake the store in Duncan if he could come up with the cash, but he was not literally asking her for it, only talking about his current interest. As he prepared to take his leave, the woman gave him the full amount, \$2,500, and told him to buy the store and pay her back whenever he could. He often said that he had qualms about taking the money, but he was under no obligations to her; he did not have to consider whether the money came from or any of that sort of thing. He did not solicit the money; thus, he took it. He was going back to Wolf to close the deal [128]

With the money in his pocket, he left to catch the train. A certain Mr. Fass, a St. Louis Cotton man caught up with Jake at the station and told him that there was a world of money waiting for him at the cotton exchange. The market had gone up three days in a row very high and he had between \$2,000 and \$3,000 in profits, Alvin Fink said: "most families would leave it (that story) hidden in a closet." But Jake Fink was always open and frank and willing to give credit to those who had helped him.

In a single weekend, by means of coincident and good luck, Jake had his stake. It was not the last time that he would resort to unconventional means in order to do business. In mid-summer of July or August, he went to St. Louis to buy goods for the Fall He walked into Rice Sticks and told them who he was and asked to open an account. At that time, he made lifelong friend with two people: Johnny Isaacs, who was in charge of credit in Mississippi and surrounding states and Fred

Eisman, who was part of the official family of Rice Sticks. Both Jake and Fred benefitted from their friendship.

Another wholesale house had a very tough credit manager. The man he talked to weighed almost 300 pounds. Jake was twenty-one years old He asked to open an account and told the manager what he had in assets. The man said: "Hey kid! Get out of here. We don't need any business from the likes of you!" Jake argued with him They got into quite a fist fight. Jake gave him a pretty good whipping. Afterwards, Jake became a good account of this firm; the credit manager often said that he was the only account he ever had gotten whipped by,⁹¹

KERSTINE

ROSA

Rosa returned home to Clarksdale in April to give birth to her only child, Selma on April 17, 1908. Rosa died of tuberculosis three weeks (May 9) after Selma was born. She was buried in Helena, AR, with her grandparents, Yetta and Isaac Brush. Carolyn LeMasters verbally reported no obituary found because no newspaper in Helena from 1905 to 1914.

Selma was premature-and weighed one and a half pounds at birth. Mollie and Adolph kept her in a drawer in cotton. Mollie and Adolph, Selma's grandparents did not adopt her because they wanted her to keep her father's surname. They raised her, but she retained her father's last name.

Rosa's husband went back to Hot Springs. He had-a cleaning and tailoring shop in Hot Springs.⁹²

Selma added, “[My dad] did try to participate in my life by coming to see me in Clarksdale once a month. He would come in on one train and go out on the next one. When; he remarried and moved to Chicago, I went to visit him. He died when I was six-years old. (1914) My step-mother was very nice to me.”⁹³

According to Selma, she had a step-brother who was "not quite normal. Selma did not explain his abnormalities.⁹⁴

MOVE TO COLORADO

Al Nachman walked into Kerstine's store right after Isidor graduated from high school and asked him why he was not going to college. Isidor could not answer him but went to Adolph to request he be allowed to go to college. Within a short time, which included the family moving to Colorado, Isidor registered and attended Colorado College, Colorado Springs, during his freshman year.⁹⁵

The family moved to Colorado because of the doctor recommended the climate to help Caesar's health. It is not sure but they lived in Denver and Manitou. They moved to Denver first. Lillie met Isidor Rosenblum in Denver while he was in law school.⁹⁶

1909

SCHOOL

1909 Oakhurst School completed on a site donated by Elizabeth G. Dorr. The Booker T. Washington School was completed.⁹⁷

According to Alvin Fink,

The Annex was a light/crème brick building which sat closer to Second Street. There was a covered walkway between the Annex and Oakhurst and to the left was Elizabeth Dorr Junior High School. Although it was often referred to as the “Bobo Cemetery, ” it was the Dorr family cemetery. Elizabeth Dorr, had the original English land grant. Her family owned it. They owned all the way across the river to the northern limits of Clarksdale. It used to be called the Herrin Plantation. It extended to about the location of the 300 block of Second Street (where Dave Bernstein home was over to the railroad tracks).⁹⁸

ALPERIN

ARTHUR

Budgy Hirsberg said: “I knew him from the time I was born. He was a clerk for Jacob Hirsberg who was living in Friars Point before he moved to Rich.” Alperin and Charles Cohen were brothers-in-law; there were married to two sisters. Arthur was a short fat man who had a general store in Rich.⁹⁹

BRENNER

CHARLES

Charles Brenner had a store in Friars Point.¹⁰⁰ [NOTE: Not yet able to determine if Brenner lived in Beulah's Landing or Beulah, which are two different places. Hermine Davidson shows he was living in Beulah in the 20's, 30's and/or 40's. However, his grandson, also named Charles Brenner, talks about Beulah's Landing (which is in Coahoma County).

FINK

JAKE

According to the magazine article "Jake Fink: A Delta Entrepreneur,"

The first decade of the twenties was a fine time to be young and energetic and Jake was definitely feeling his oats. All around him he saw prosperity. He was energized by the possibilities that he saw. He reveled in being his own boss, in being allowed to make his own decisions, use his skill and intelligence for his own profit. The population of the Delta was growing, the streets were being paved to facilitate the automobile. The building industry demanded timber; the swamps were cleared and drained thus opening more land for agricultural use.

By this time Jake was twenty-three years old he had become a very good salesman. Because Jake was the sole owner of his business, his work habits had changed. His dry goods store was almost instantly successful thanks to hard work and Jake's affable manner. The young merchant could be quite a charmer when charm was called for instead of fists. He had opened the store early and stayed nights.

By this time, -Jake was not satisfied with shop keeping in Duncan was a little tame for a man who'd seen the bright lights of big cities, a man who'd swum in the East River in New York when he was a chap in knee britches, and brawled in the French Quarter of New Orleans as a young dandy. Looking around at the riches that the Delta offered, Jake saw opportunity all around him; he saw that the 'real money' was being made in cotton. Thus, he became learned to grade cotton and with this knowledge in his pocket, he used his native intelligence and all his charm to establish a business connection with Fisher Cotton Company in Greenville, Mississippi. He not only learned to class cotton. He began to buy cotton for Fisher and at the same time, he bought cotton for himself. He used to call Fisher several times a day to get his limit, to know what the market was doing; then, he would go out and buy cotton in the midmorning or afternoon. After the market closed in the afternoon he would come back and work in the store. He used to work on his books 'till 1:00 or 2:00 am. He was making money hand over fist. It was just unbelievable how fast he was making it.¹⁰¹

HIRSBERG

BERNARD "BUDGY" HIMAN

Budgy said:

Actually, I was born in Evansville, Indiana; I was the third. That's where Mama's parents lived, and she would go up there to have each of her children. I had one older

brother, an older sister, and one younger brother. There was Sol, the older brother, Leah, my sister, and D. H. my younger brother.

We had a ferry from Friars Point across the river, but our prime contact was Clarksdale more so than Helena. We went to Arkansas occasionally, but there was no relationship and certainly no social relationship between Helena and us. It was more economics. There was a wholesale dry goods house in Helena and a wholesale grocery, that did serve Mississippi. I never really knew the people in Helena at all. My father never really did any business with them, but we knew who they were. No, we had no contacts over there.¹⁰²

WOOLBERT

Alvin Fink added this to the family's activities in Clarksdale:

Before they moved to Oakhurst, they lived at the junction of Third Street and Sunflower. The first house on Street dead-ends into Sunflower Street at the Sunflower River. My grandparents lived in a house next door until 1909 when they built the house on Oakhurst. Abraham had his store where they cut the alley-way to the restaurant. It was where Holcomb, started making that shopping center there, they cut that walkway through. Well, those two stores belonged to Abraham. Later, the Joffey's had a store there. Freda had taken music and/or violin lessons from someone in Memphis for years.¹⁰³

CHAPTER 5: 1900 TO 1909 THE JEWISH COMMUNITY GROWS

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- 7 Bernard Hirsberg, interview with, Rabbi Joshua Plaut, 1986.
- 8 "Local Department," *Clarksdale Challenge*, March 1, 1900, 3.
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- 10 "Local Department, Clarksdale Challenge (Clarksdale, MS), April 5, 1900, 3.
- 11 "Local Department," Clarksdale Challenge, August 16, 1900, 3.
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- 35 Alvin Fink et al., interview, 1993.
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