

# Chapter Five:

## From Telz to America

### Part one: The family of Moses and Sarah Rolnick, of Annapolis MD

The Annapolis Historical Museum is situated in a fine building, close to the city's waterfront. The building is now in immaculate condition, restored from what we see in the following photograph taken "before 1910"<sup>1</sup>:



*Rolnick's Furniture and Stoves*

Few who enter the building know that, at the time the photograph was taken, this was the home of Moses and Sarah Rolnick and their seven children. Sarah had bought the shop in 1903.

Moses had certainly prospered since his arrival in America in 1884. He had left Sarah and three children (one just recently born) in their home town of Vainutas, a shtetl 25 miles southwest of Upyna, in

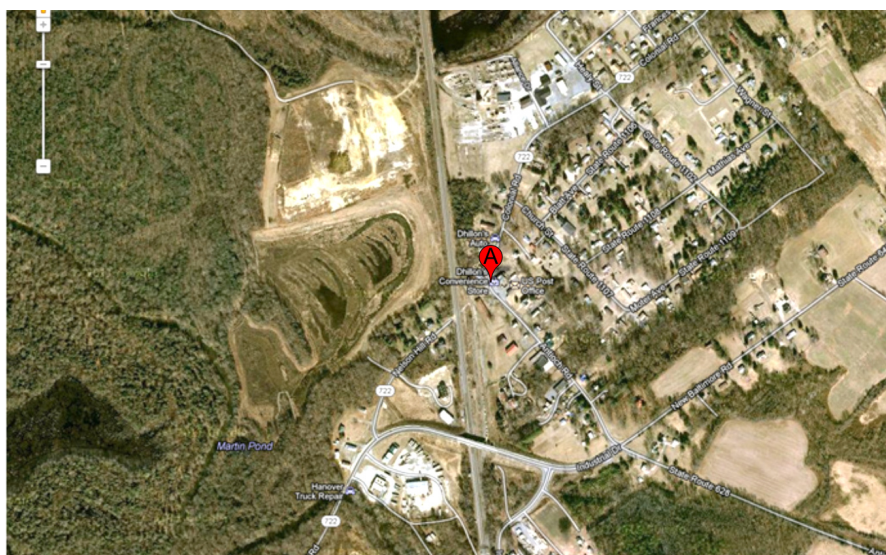
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<sup>1</sup> "Rolnick's Furniture and Stoves", Accession No.: Maryland State Archives SC 2140-1-129

Lithuania. As Moses’s father, Tanchum Rolnik<sup>2</sup>, is listed as “poor” in the Lithuanian records of 1881, it is no mystery why Moses was eager to leave Lithuania for the USA. Sarah and the children were to follow him, which they did in 1887. Their first stop seems to have been Bowling Green, Virginia, where their first American child, Dora, was born in 1888<sup>3</sup>. Dora was followed by Frances, Harry and Malachi, all born in Milford, Virginia, a tiny town close to Bowling Green<sup>4</sup>.

The Children and Grandchildren of Moses and Sarah Rolnick of Annapolis MD			
Children	Birth – death	Spouse	Grandchildren
Rachel (Mollie)	1881-1956	Harry Wertz	Minnie (Baker), Morris
Lena	1883-1954	Albert Waitsman	
George	1885-1950		
Dora	1888-1926		
Frances	1889-1954		
Harry	1893-1949	Ida Abel	Charlotte (Gordon), Morton, Richard
Malachi	1896-1951	Rose Abel	Stanley, Jerome

Even now, Milford is only three or four streets wide in either direction:



Milford, VA

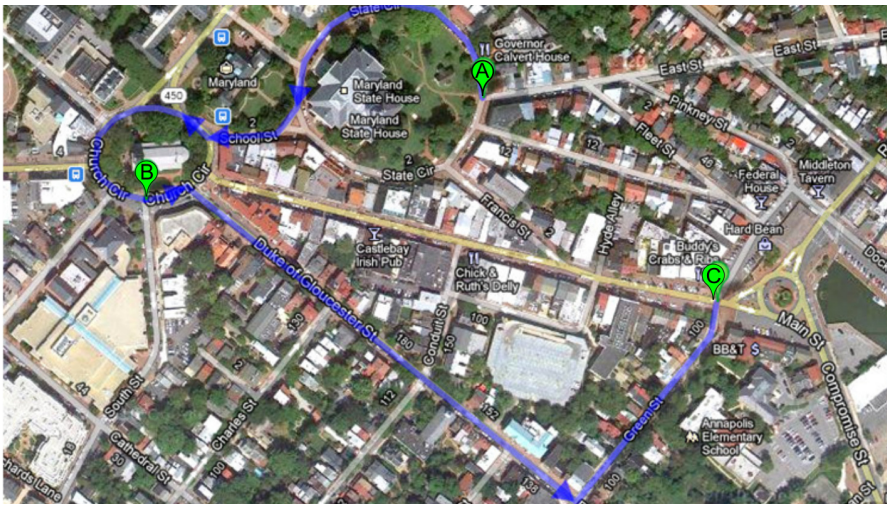
<sup>2</sup> Tanchum was the son of Yitschak, himself the son of Leyba of Telsiai, so Moses and his family are from the tribe of the Northern (Telsiai) Rolniks.

<sup>3</sup> Dora had a twin sister, Sarah, but she probably died very early on, as we learn nothing more about her.

<sup>4</sup> A grandnephew writes: Frances was born in Dejarnet, VA another little town close to Milford, I heard Grandma (Mollie) say. “Dejarnet is even smaller than Milford.” Indeed, no houses can be seen in Google’s map of it.

Moses was naturalized in 1895, recorded at that time as a peddler but perhaps already a shopkeeper.

What had made Moses choose this little corner of Virginia as his American destination? Just possibly because there was another Rolnick there. Louis Rolnick, from the shtetl of Upyna<sup>5</sup>, only 50 Km from Moses's home town of Vainutas, had been active as a peddler in and around Richmond, Virginia since 1882. Louis had amassed enough capital to buy a shop in Richmond itself<sup>6</sup>. Moses bought two shops, with their stock of liquors and cigars, for \$850 just a few doors from where Louis' had been. These goods came in handy when Moses and his family made their final move to Annapolis, the Maryland capital. By the time of the 1900 census, they were living in Annapolis and Moses was running a liquor store. (In the map below, A is the liquor store at the corner of East and State Streets, B is their home at 99 Church Circle, five minutes' walk away, across the State House gardens, C is the shop and house on the waterfront that they bought a few years later). Quite a change from little Milford, VA.



<sup>5</sup> There is a record of a Sore Rolnick from Upyna arriving in Baltimore with her son on 17 May 1891. The birth year given for this Sore is correct for our Sarah, as is the birth year of her son George (but his name – Israel Yosef in Hebrew - is given as Scholem, which is not right). If this is, indeed, our Sarah (and in the US records I can find no Sarah or Scholem Rolnick of those birth years) then, coming from Upyna, she would certainly have known Louis Rolnick.

<sup>6</sup> I have found little data on the rate of capital accumulation of peddlers. Joseph Bennet's "The Life of an Immigrant" (Yotam, Eilat, Israel 1997) describes how Joseph started, aged 14, by investing all his 75 cents in a stock of matchboxes, ending the day with \$1.50. Eight months later, adding notions, laces, handkerchiefs, pins and needles to his wares, he had accumulated \$250, all of which he gave to his father to set his father up in a business, which later failed.

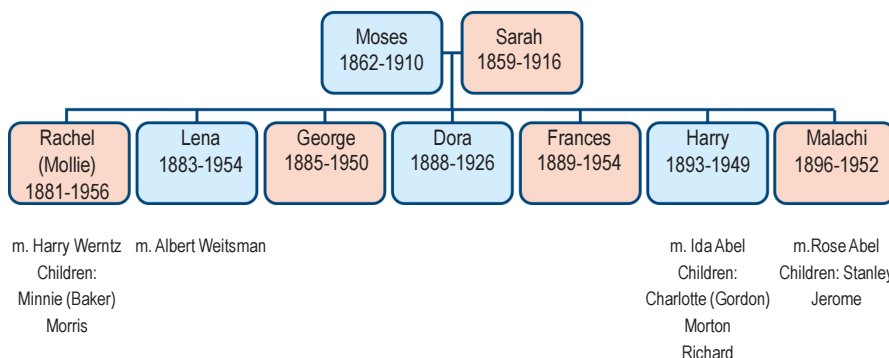
The liquor store must have done well as Moses and Sarah were soon able to buy their second shop (at C, see map on previous page). This was the one, shown in the opening picture, that became the family residence.

The cigar and liquor shop was still in the family in 1910, with Rolnick's Special Havana cigars a big attraction (The mustachioed gentleman is Moses Rolnick himself<sup>7</sup>):



In the 1910 Census, their son George lists his occupation as “bartender” in a saloon. Did the family liquor store also sell drinks by the glass? Unlikely.

## The Rolnicks of Annapolis and then Baltimore and Brunswick



The formative lives of most of the Rolnick children were, therefore, spent in this comfortable setting in Annapolis, first close to the State Capitol and then in the family house not far from the waterfront. But

<sup>7</sup> A grandson of Rachel (known also as Mollie) writes: “He sold cigars there under his own name. Margie (Mollie’s granddaughter... wds) has a cigar box labeled “Rolnick’s Special” with Moses’ picture; it has a cigar scent!” Moses died in 1910, of typhoid.

they were growing up and, on a fine day in June 1908, the eldest daughter, Mollie<sup>8</sup> married Harry Werntz. (Harry was generally known as “HN”, and I will follow this tradition, but he often used Hyman on official documents):



*Top row l to r: Harry, Lena, Frances, Mollie, HN, Dora, George  
Bottom row l to r: Sarah, Malachi, and Moses Robnick. (You will recognize Moses from the cigar box).*

It is the story of Moses and Sarah’s son-in-law, HN, that we must now follow. HN was such an engaging character and has remained so much in the memory of many of the older Brunswick folk that I cannot resist writing about him and, of course, about Mollie herself<sup>9</sup>

### HN Werntz’s early days in America

Chaim Nasan ben Azrael Zelik v’Zipporah Varanc (or Hyman Nathan Werntz) was born in Utena in the south of Lithuania in 1883, one of 11 children. He originally studied for the rabbinate in the Ponevezh yeshiva, but abandoned his student life to avoid the Tsar’s draft. He arrived in the USA in 1902<sup>10</sup>, going to Baltimore where his

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<sup>8</sup> Rachel was always known as Mollie, a tradition I will continue.

<sup>9</sup> I am indebted to a grandson of HN and Mollie for much of this information and also to Mary Jo Brown whose father, and she herself, helped in HN’s store for many years. Additional extracts from Mary Jo’s wonderful reminiscences are included in this chapter. Judge William Wenner, of Brunswick, also contributed from his store of memories.

<sup>10</sup> Three other brothers also came to the USA, Abraham also to Brunswick, later moving to Baltimore, David Schmerl to Norfolk, Virginia, and Saul, first to

aunt, Ella Silverman, had a grocery store<sup>11</sup>. It was probably the Silvermans who helped HN find a job with Victor Kaplon<sup>12</sup> who, with his brothers, owned many shops in Virginia and Maryland. HN joined Victor in his shop in Harper's Ferry on the Potomac River. His wages were \$12 a month with board and lodging and HN saved every penny so that he could buy a store for himself, which he did in 1907. His new store was in Brunswick, Maryland, a railroad town, one of the principal hubs of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, the oldest railroad in the USA<sup>13</sup>. The railwaymen's pay was the basis of the town's commercial activity and Friday evening, payday, was the busiest time for shopping<sup>14</sup>.

HN had abandoned his yeshiva studies in the Old Country but not



*The Brunswick Synagogue*

his Judaism. He had completed his training as a shochet (a ritual slaughterer) and so prepared all the kosher meat for the Jewish inhabitants of Brunswick and its surroundings<sup>15</sup>. HN was devout, laid tefillin (phylacteries) on week days, and davened (prayed) every day. He helped found the Brunswick synagogue in 1917<sup>16</sup>:

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Brunswick and then to San Antonio and Corpus Christi, Texas. Their last names became Waranch. Another brother Elia Warentz went to Sunderland and then to Manchester, in northern England.

<sup>11</sup> At 1005 E Pratt St., in the heart of Jewish Baltimore. Ella and her husband (deceased by the time HN arrived) had been living in the USA already for ten years.

<sup>12</sup> Victor was born in Alsedziai, near Telsiai. Chaya Rolnik, Moses's second cousin, is recorded as also living there; perhaps it was through this connection that Mollie and HN found one another in Virginia. HN taught the Kaplon children Hebrew.

<sup>13</sup> Brunswick, known as "Smoketown"<sup>4</sup> from the coal-fired engines that were in continuous use there, had a large Round House, where engines were serviced as needed and also a "hump" on the west-bound line, where trains were taken apart and linked together. <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Smoketown-History-Brunswick-Md/307806060207>

<sup>14</sup> Mary Jo Brown writes that until HN saved up enough to buy a house, he slept on the counter tops of the store.

<sup>15</sup> His grandson still has the knives that HN used for his work as a shochet.

<sup>16</sup> When the Brunswick Jewish community dwindled, HN saw to its sale on behalf of the community. The building became a private dwelling house and the Shields of David were removed and put into storage.

Mary Jo Brown recalls “I always took a cheese sandwich and a lunch meat sandwich to school. Mr. Werntz told my Mom she could not pack the meat and cheese together.”

All the numerous stories about HN from older Brunswick folk describe a fine and generous person. Mary Jo again: “Mr. Werntz had helped my family purchase our first home at the Courthouse in Frederick, so far as handing my Dad the money in an envelope to go bid on the property.” All remember the Red Goose shoes that Mr Werntz stocked. Mary Jo: “You know, the white hightops, that my Mom made me wear in the first grade. “ Ann Griffis: “I remember buying a pair of shoes at his store. He had a clerk helping him, but he was the only one who could ever find anything in the pile of shoes that was in that store. He had boxes of shoes packed to the ceiling!”



*The Werntz Department Store. It looks like HN Werntz standing on the ladder.*

Another story from Mary Jo Brown: “Mrs. Sine ... resided in the upstairs apartment. Her name was Bertha but he called her Berta. Apparently when her husband passed away she was losing her home. Mr. Werntz bought the house and she moved into the upstairs apartment. Mrs. Sine did not have much money and did not get a lot in her monthly check. Mr. Werntz sent her to Social Services and got her the help she needed. She would work for him if I was sick. Another from his grandson: “He was a highly respected member of the community, became a director of the People’s Bank of Brunswick. At

dinner meetings of the board of directors, they always served him a fish meal. In the 1970s or early 1980s probably, Mother [HN's daughter Minnie...wds] attended a testimonial in Brunswick to past citizens. The mayor wrote of Grandpa that "he fed half of the town during the Great Depression<sup>17</sup>."



*This stone is set into a Brunswick street.*

Mollie and HN's two children were born in 1910 (Minnie) and 1913 (Morris<sup>18</sup>) and grew up in Brunswick. Mollie's house there took the place of the Annapolis home as the center of the family when Moses and Sarah passed on, and she retained the role of the eldest sister, sheltering her siblings when needed and being the focus of family celebrations.

### **The six younger Rolnick children**

Mollie's siblings were also growing up and leaving the family home. Frances had trained as a school teacher and by 1913 was teaching French and French Literature at the Annapolis High School<sup>19</sup>. World War 1 caught the three Rolnick boys at the beginning of their careers. Harry had qualified as a druggist<sup>20</sup> and was working in an Annapolis pharmacy. George was already working in the laundry at the US

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<sup>17</sup> Confirmed by Mary Jo Brown: "Mr. Werntz made sure everyone in Brunswick had the things that they needed during the Great Depression".

<sup>18</sup> For Morris's circumcision, the renowned mohel, Rabbi A.N Abramowicz came to Brunswick from Baltimore. Rabbi Abramowicz kept a numbered record of the 7968 circumcisions that he performed, the first on his son in 1906, and 7451st on a grandson in 1925. These journals are preserved in the Jewish Museum of Baltimore (<http://www.jhsm.org/>).

<sup>19</sup> [http://www.archive.org/stream/report1919mary/report1919mary\\_djvu.txt](http://www.archive.org/stream/report1919mary/report1919mary_djvu.txt)

<sup>20</sup> The three sons of Wolf Rolnick, also a shopkeeper, in Wynberg South Africa, had funds only to support them as students of pharmacy, rather than the more expensive education that a doctor would have needed. Perhaps Harry had the same constraint.



Army base at Fort Meade when he received his draft notice, while the youngest son, Malachi (the boy in the big white bow-tie in that wedding photograph) was working in his brother-in-law Werntz's shop in Brunswick.

Harry's war was on the Meuse-Argonne front where he served as pharmacist. After the war, he opened his own drug store in Baltimore, on Pratt St., living with his brother George. A year or two later, he married Lillian Abel<sup>21</sup>. Harry kept his pharmacy going until competition with the drug store chains became too strong, when he became a senior employee of Maryland's Reade Drug and Chemical Company<sup>22</sup> (now Rite-Aid). He and Lillian had three children, Morton, Richard and Charlotte<sup>23</sup>.

George served out the War at Fort Meade as a laundryman and after the War remained at Fort Meade, a bachelor, eventually becoming Supervisor of the Quartermaster Laundry prior to his death in 1950<sup>24</sup>.

Meanwhile, Malachi (known as Mutt) who was an amateur baseball player in his youth<sup>25</sup>, had been drafted into the US Navy.

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<sup>21</sup> from a Baltimore family with many daughters, of whom two others also married local Rolnicks, one being Harry's younger brother Malachi, the other a son of Louis Rolnick.

<sup>22</sup> [http://www.e-yearbook.com/yearbooks/University\\_Maryland\\_School\\_of\\_Pharmacy\\_Terra\\_Mariae\\_Yearbook/1939/Page\\_104.html](http://www.e-yearbook.com/yearbooks/University_Maryland_School_of_Pharmacy_Terra_Mariae_Yearbook/1939/Page_104.html)

<sup>23</sup> The eldest son, Morton, partially followed his father's military career being drafted as a pharmacist's mate into the US Navy during WW2, and served on the transport ship USS Hyde ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS\\_Hyde\\_%28APA-173%29](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS_Hyde_%28APA-173%29)) during the Pacific Ocean campaign. After discharge, he entered the real estate business and was a property developer in Baltimore and later in Florida, "building a sales force of over 1000 individuals in 300 offices throughout the United States and Europe" (<http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/thedesertsun/obituary.aspx?n=morton-jacob-rolnick&pid=137450358>). His brother Richard was in the merchant navy during the war, as a ship's purser on an armed oil tanker, the SS Lyon's Creek in the Caribbean, and on a trans-Atlantic voyage of the Liberty ship, SS Neils Poulson. (Richard's circumcision, like his uncle Morris's, is recorded in Rev Abramovicz's journal, as number 7092, giving him the name Rachmiel Shraga, Rachmiel being the also the name of Moses's brother, who had remained in Vainutas. Presumably both were named after some ancestor, on the maternal side of the Vainutas Rolnicks.)

<sup>24</sup> A great nephew writes: "George was a bachelor; 'Poor George' said Grandma after he died", while a nephew adds that George was a 32<sup>nd</sup> degree Mason. <http://32nddegreemasons.org/what-is-the-scottish-rite/the-degrees/the-4th-32nd-degrees/>

<sup>25</sup> The Phoenix Athletic Club "will be strengthened by the services of M. Rolnick, the hard-hitting second baseman". *Sun*, Baltimore 19 June, 1908.



*Harry Rolnick*

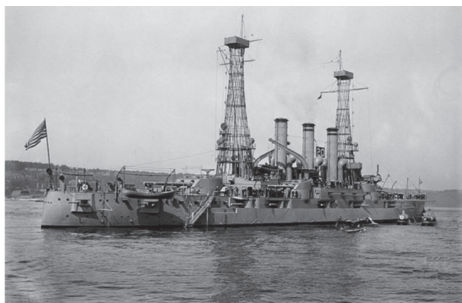


*Lillian Abel Rolnick*



*Morton Rolnick*

The picture on the left below shows Malachi while he was serving in the Navy; that in the middle was taken at a ceremony of naval veterans. For his navy service he was originally based in Norfolk Virginia on the training ship, the USS Kansas<sup>26</sup>; and later on a battleship, doing escort duty in the North Atlantic, the crew reaching France at one point.



*Malachi Rolnick: in the navy and as a veteran.*

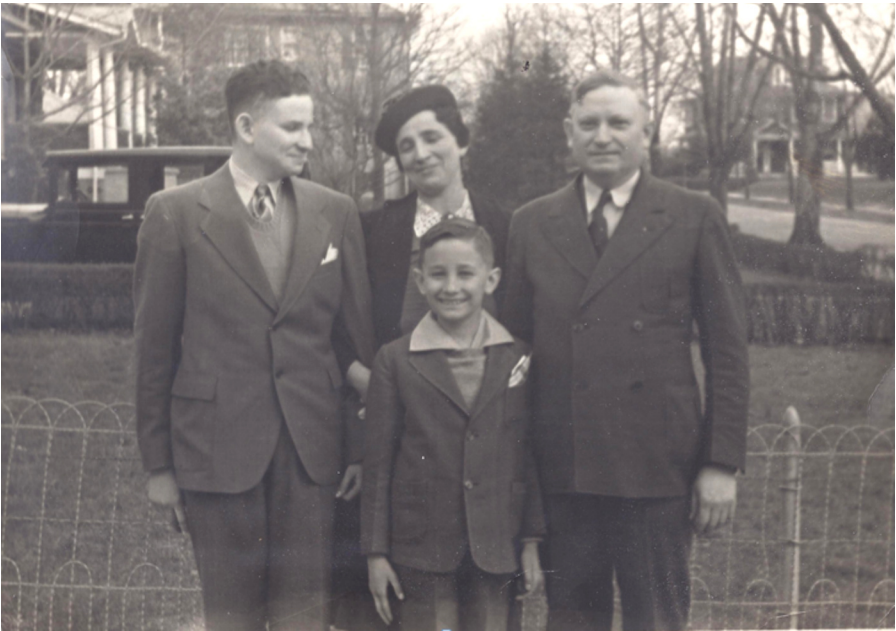
*USS Kansas.*

After his discharge, he went back to work in the Werntz store, staying with the Werntzes in their Brunswick home, together with his sisters Lena and Dora<sup>27</sup>. In January 1924, Malachi married Rose Abel, sister to Ida, his brother Harry's wife. Their children, Stanley and Jerome were born in 1924 and 1931.

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<sup>26</sup> The photograph on the right. Information from War Service Certificate #369434 for Malachi Rolnick

<sup>27</sup> Lena also worked in the store, until her marriage in 1928.



*The Rolnicks in the 1940's: Stanley, Rose, Malachi and (in front) Jerome*

Malachi worked in the Werntz store all his working life, his specialty being the grocery section<sup>28</sup>. Malachi was very active in communal affairs in Brunswick, particularly those concerning veteran's affairs, being at times Post Commander of the local American Legion and its treasurer for fifteen years, as well as being an active Mason. He died very suddenly. Speakers at his funeral (honored by a guard of six Legionnaires in full dress uniform) told of "his unselfish devotion ... and the esteem in which he was held by those fortunate in knowing him", and in a letter, a nephew writes: "a gentler and more honorable soul never lived".

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<sup>28</sup> Mary Jo Brown again: "This side of the store housed the grocery business run by Mr. Mutt. Shelves of fruits and veggies. On the counter... the cash register and to the left of this was the lunch meat and cheese". and "We continued to deliver the grocery orders until I was in the Seventh Grade and then Mr. Mutt passed away. Mr. Werntz called my parents and told them he needed me in the store, all of the groceries needed to be boxed up for sale. I worked over in the dry goods (Mr. Werntz's side) after school. My Mom and Dad helped boxing up the produce. Mr. Werntz could not pay me in cash so he told me to pick out of the store what I could wear. I guess I probably stayed with Mr. Werntz until everything was gone from the grocery side."



*Malachi and Rose Rolnick family house in Brunswick<sup>29</sup>*

Malachi and Rose's two sons went on to have fulfilling professional careers<sup>30</sup>.

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<sup>29</sup> Picture taken by Jerome Rolnick in 2013.

<sup>30</sup> The elder son, Stanley, distinguished himself at Brunswick High, earning a scholarship to the University of Maryland and from there a Fellowship to the University of Wisconsin where he did a PhD in History, with a thesis on the history of Academic Freedom in Higher Education. It was while he was teaching military personnel in Germany, accompanied by his wife Virginia (nee Goodwin), that he received the news of his father Malachi's death. After a number of academic appointments, he joined the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse and remained there until his retirement thirty years later, teaching mainly social and intellectual history. From the Rabbi's eulogy at Stanley's funeral: "Stanley was opposed to the war in Vietnam and if there was a teach-in or protest he would be right in there." He was involved in the Campus School at the University, a teaching laboratory where local children were taught by teachers-in-training. Both Stanley and Virginia's children (David and Laura) attended the Campus School. Laura added: "Concerning the Campus School, the first thing that comes to mind is my first grade teacher's frequent admonition to 'Be your own policeman.' Her name was Rhea Pederson. I now encourage my grandchildren with this phrase."

Jerome, the younger of Malachi and Rose's sons, also a scholarship awardee at the University of Maryland, took an engineering path. Jerome graduated from UM with a BS in chemical engineering with honors, and was in the engineering honor fraternity Tau Beta Pi. After two years as a Lieutenant in the US Airforce as an electronics officer, including a stint in Alaska, he went into industry, developing electrodes used in arc welding (US Patent 3453142, "Welding electrode and composition;" Dorschu and Rolnick 1969, and a second patent). Jerome, an excellent bridge player, has accumulated over 10,000 Master points in that game. In September 2013, he wrote: "In bridge, I have exceeded 10,000 master points, and have the rank of Platinum Life Master." He and his wife, Eta (nee Edelman) had a son, Mitchell, trained as a radio engineer but who died tragically at an early age.



*Jerome, Stanley, his David, and grandmother Rose*



*David, on the right, at the U of Wisconsin's Campus School that Stanley supported. <http://murphylibrary.uwlax.edu/digital/uwl/Recollections/0001000A.htm>*

After the War, and perhaps influenced by it, Moses and Sarah's youngest daughter, Frances Rolnick began a new career and studied Nursing at Johns Hopkins<sup>31</sup>. The picture below shows the 1924 class<sup>32</sup>.



Frances is on the top row, twelfth from the left (standing second from the right of the leftmost column). She became a psychiatric nurse and worked in the Phipps Psychiatric Clinic in Baltimore, living first

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<sup>31</sup> Perhaps the family finances here again could not support her studying medicine, unlike Claribel Cone, daughter of a wealthy German-Jewish family of Baltimore, whose family was able to support her medical studies (and her taste for the paintings of Picasso and Matisse) (<http://www.thejewishmuseum.org/exhibitions/conecollection>), but maybe Frances felt the special call of the nursing profession.

<sup>32</sup> <http://www.flickr.com/photos/35812814@N06/5264176316/>

on her own and then as part of the Werntz household, until she died in 1954<sup>33</sup>.

In 1928, Moses and Sarah's second daughter, Lena, who had also been living with the Werntzes in Brunswick, married Albert Weitsman, who had been left a widower with a newborn child<sup>34</sup>. Albert worked for the FBI, among other activities investigating the US Communist Party<sup>35</sup>. After Albert died, Lena returned to Baltimore, again living in the Werntz home. She and her sister Frances both died there, within a day of each other.

## **The Holocaust strikes Utena - the vain struggle to get a US visa for HN's brother Benjamin**

Soon after the end of WW1, HN went to England to take part in the first post-war meeting of the World Zionist Organization. Two years later he went again to Europe, to Lithuania to visit his family there (see photo on top of next page).

The family has kept letters that HN wrote to his wife and children from Utena, describing his warm reception there, his success as a cantor in the main synagogue of the town and his love for his Brunswick family. Benjamin, a shopkeeper in Utena, but on a smaller scale than was HN in Brunswick, sent him the self-disparaging postcard shown on the bottom of the next page.

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<sup>33</sup> A 1934 shipping manifest records Frances returning from Naples that August, presumably after a well-deserved European tour. A great nephew writes: "I have never heard a more beautiful eulogy ("hesped" in Hebrew) to match that delivered by Rabbi Rosenblatt at Aunt Frances' funeral, referring of course to her nursing career." The youngest sister, Dora, died in 1926 of tuberculosis.

<sup>34</sup> The child, Dorothy, lived with her aunt Sadie Weitsman, became a nurse, married a physician and lived in Florida.

<sup>35</sup> From a 1921 FBI report on communist activities by Special Agent Albert L Weitsman: "At 4:30 pm subject left building carrying a package, proceeded to 201 West 41st St., a cigar store, and remained there about three minutes. After leaving cigar store subject walked up and down on the north side of 41st St. between 7th and 8th Avenue until 5:00 pm, at which time he was joined by another man, since identified as ABRAHAM JAKIRA. They walked west on 41st St. to Eighth Avenue, where they turned south on Eighth Avenue and entered a doorway between 40th and 41st on the east side. At this place subject gave bundle which he had carried from 226 West 41st St. to Jakira, when they shook hands and parted." (Jakira was a member of the second Russian branch of the Communist Labor Party....wds) <http://www.cddc.vt.edu/marxists/history/usa/government/fbi/1921/0501-weitsman-onlindgren.pdf>. Later Albert was an investigator for the National Board of Fire Underwriters in New York.



*HN is in the front row, on our right, very much the “Uncle from America” with his white suit and straw boater. Benjamin, his youngest brother, center of the front row.*

The Yiddish reads: *A picture with a poorly-written notice in Uytan (Utena) 21 March 1923.*

The sign in Lithuanian “Krautuve” translates as “Market”, and below “A variety of goods”. How different this is, of course, from HN’s fine store in Brunswick.

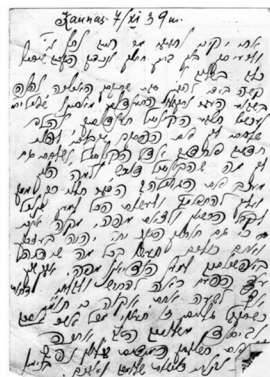
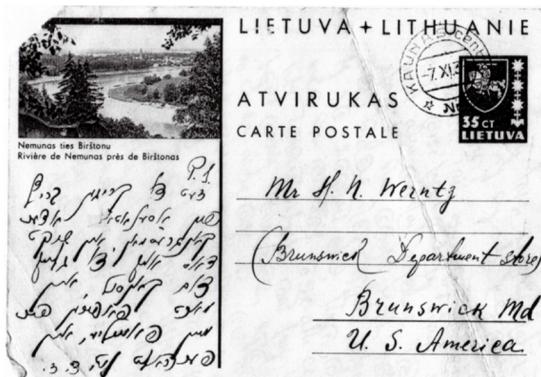
HN’s 1922 visit was the last time that HN saw these members of his family.

The next communication with the family that has been preserved is a desperate postcard (7th November 1939). The card and the reverse side (a translation, follows)<sup>36</sup>:



"My dear beloved brother, Mr. Chaim Natan, may your light shine, and to your dear wife, your son, your daughter, and your grandchildren, may they all live in peace.

<sup>36</sup> Noteworthy is the fact that the letter was written in Hebrew, rather than Yiddish, testifying to the excellent educational system in Lithuania when the brothers were growing up. The Hebrew itself is in a beautiful style with numerous formal phrases (“nayro ya’ir : may his light shine” “kilyon nefesh”: great impatience) that mark an educated writer.



It is hard for me to understand your long silence; and behold within the past week documents were received from our brother Saul, may he live. And now I have returned your documents to the consul; and indeed I sent you the note that I received several months ago from the consul, and I also sent to you just what the consul requires; and why is he holding back on the salvation? We are dependent upon you for our family's welfare and you must exert yourself to do everything for me so that we are able to obtain the permit to leave here. I hope with you that also your dear father-in-law, may he live, will help you and all of you will do whatever is possible in order to get us out of here. I ask you again to hurry and not put matters off even for a moment. I am hoping that just as soon as you get this postcard, you will do all that needs to be done. I await, with great impatience, to receive your immediate reply. My wife and my daughters send their warm regards and wish for your good fortune. Benjamin.<sup>37</sup>

The distress in Benjamin's letter is poignant. After all, this is a letter to his elder brother, towards whom he wishes to show respect. But Benjamin saw, that with the entry of Nazi Germany into Poland at the beginning of WW2, the situation in Europe was becoming dangerous for the Jews. Benjamin's visa application was one of tens of thousands that were never sanctioned by the US State Department in spite of the fact that there were many thousands of slots unfilled in the quota for US Visas<sup>38</sup>.

The family has preserved also a letter from HN's brother, Saul Waranch, then living in Corpus Christi, Texas<sup>39</sup>. Saul writes: "I have

<sup>37</sup> Based on a translation from the Hebrew by HN's grandson.

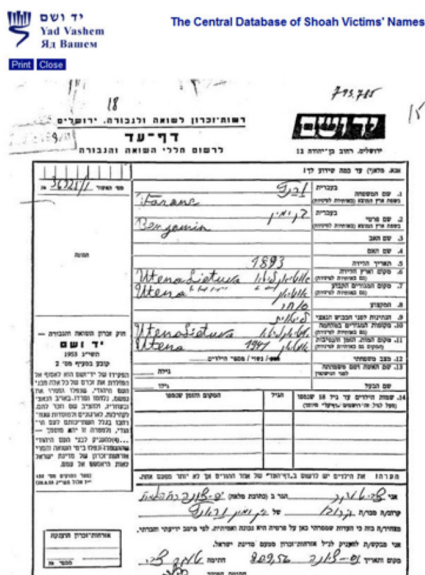
<sup>38</sup> The terrible struggles to obtain US Visas in the face of the obstacles placed by the US State Department are well described in David Wyman's book "The Abandonment of the Jews", <http://www.wymaninstitute.org/articles/2005-04-book.php>

<sup>39</sup> Owner of the "Waranch Iron and Supply Company, Dealers in Oil Field Equipment", Corpus Christi, Texas.



... received a letter from the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Society who are helping me to try to obtain a visa for Ben. ... Again, I am asking you please not delay. ... I am sure that he can work with me and earn a nice living, and should he not want to do so I am almost positive he can get a job here as schochet and cantor .... Within the next few days I am going to start to build a small place for him so they will have a home where they can live when they get here."

But Benjamin never received the visa that would have allowed him and his family to escape the Holocaust. See this testimony:



The Yad Vashem testimony for Benjamin Varantz.<sup>40</sup>

Moshe, in the list below, would have been one of the children in the photograph of the Varantz family. Some of the other brothers of Benjamin in the photograph were in that tragic list.

### The Werntz family in Baltimore

Some time after HN's visit to Utena, the Werntz family moved to

#### The Central Database of Holocaust victims (Yad Vashem) records for Varanc in Utena show the following<sup>40</sup>:

Name	Town District	Region	Country	Birth Date	Source
Varancas Jakob	UTENA UTENA	LITHUANIA		1890	Page of Testimony
Varantzas Meras	UTENA UTENA	LITHUANIA		1894	List of persecuted
Varantzas Mendelis	UTENA UTENA	LITHUANIA		1906	List of persecuted
Waranc Benyamin	UTENA UTENA	LITHUANIA		1893	Page of Testimony
Bak Hana	UTENA UTENA	LITHUANIA		1900	Page of Testimony
Garber Raska	UTENA UTENA	LITHUANIA		1902	Page of Testimony
Varantz Moshe	UTIAN UTENA	LITHUANIA		1922	Page of Testimony
Varantz Zelig	UTIAN UTENA	LITHUANIA		1881	Page of Testimony
Toker Feiga	UTENA UTENA	LITHUANIA		1884	Page of Testimony

<sup>40</sup> "Waranc Benyamin" is, of course, HN's brother, Benjamin Varantz (Werntz), of the postcard. Those with a name other than Varantz as surname were HN's nieces, having Varantz as maiden name). [http://www.yadvashem.org/wps/portal/!ut/p/\\_s.7\\_0\\_A/7\\_0\\_2KE?last\\_name=Varanc&first\\_name=&location=Utena&next\\_form=results](http://www.yadvashem.org/wps/portal/!ut/p/_s.7_0_A/7_0_2KE?last_name=Varanc&first_name=&location=Utena&next_form=results)

Baltimore<sup>41</sup> and their house there was again the center of the Rolnick family. HN would work in Brunswick in his shop during the week, returning for the weekend to the family in Baltimore, being driven there and back by one of his children, Morris or Minnie.



*Mollie Rolnick Werntz*



*Sarah Rolnick and  
granddaughter Minnie*



*Morris Werntz*

The Werntz daughter Minnie was an excellent student at Goucher College, Baltimore, and married Morris Baker, a Baltimore attorney<sup>42</sup>. Minnie's brother, Morris Werntz, also an excellent student, in his case of German literature at Johns Hopkins<sup>43</sup>, never married but was a warm and well-remembered uncle and great-uncle<sup>44</sup>. Both Minnie and Morris graduated Phi Beta Kappa<sup>45</sup> from their colleges.

The inhabitants of that house near the Annapolis waterfront, Moses and Sarah Rolnick, through hard work and personal integrity, had built themselves a good life in the New Country. They provided a fine example to their children, who repaid the debt to the society that had given shelter to that first generation.

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<sup>41</sup> A grandson writes: "Grandma and Grandpa Werntz always made the first seder for Pesach, the second one being celebrated at my other grandparents' home. He (HN .... wds) conducted a melodic and beautiful service. Grandma was the oldest of her siblings but outlived them all; therefore we sat shiva (the memorial week for the dead) a number of times at their house".

<sup>42</sup> The couple had three children, Earl, Robert and Marjorie.

<sup>43</sup> Kotzebue's *Der hyperboreische Esel*. Morris Werntz *Modern Language Notes* Vol. 51, No. 7 (Nov., 1936), pp. 442-443

The Johns Hopkins University Press Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2911837>.

<sup>44</sup> A nephew writes: "Uncle Morris always mailed to me, Bobby, and Margie \$2 in bills on our birthday. He continued to do this for our children, Bobby's son and undoubtedly Margie's. Our kids appreciated this immensely; on receiving, they immediately hied to the nearby store to buy candy."

<sup>45</sup> Phi Beta Kappa is the most prestigious academic honor society in America.

## Part Two: From Telz to New Jersey

### The Jersey City Rolnicks

On the 4th of February 1890, in New York, Morris Rolnik (later, Rolnick) of Telsiai, Lithuania, married Rebecke (Rebecca) Tauberson of Kedaina, Lithuania. Their marriage record, found with the help of Family Search.com, is a treasure for genealogists:

#### New York Marriages, 1686-1980

**groom's name:** **Morris Rolnik**  
**groom's birth date:**  
**groom's birthplace:**  
**groom's age:**  
**bride's name:** **Rebecke Tauberson**  
**bride's birth date:**  
**bride's birthplace:**  
**bride's age:**  
**marriage date:** **04 Feb 1890**  
**marriage place:** **Manhattan, New York, New York**  
**groom's father's name:** **Isaac Rolnik**  
**groom's mother's name:** **Zlate Back**  
**bride's father's name:** **Nathan Tauberson**  
**bride's mother's name:** **Mimes Gleen**

In that period, such records held not only the names of the father of the groom and bride (seldom found in more recent records) but also their mother's names and maiden names.

This enables us positively to identify Morris as a son of Isaac and Zlata Rolnik, placing him in a family in the Lithuanian Jewish database with five other birth-recorded siblings:

Searching for Surname rolnik (D-M code 986500) and GivenName itsyk (D-M code 045000)						
Number of hits: 5 Run on Friday 21 October 2011 at 15:11:25						
Name	Father, Grandfather Mother, Grandfather Mother Maiden Surname	Date of Birth DD/MM/YY Hebrew Date	Town Ujezd Guberniya	Comments	Place Recorded Year Record #	Microfilm / Item Image Archive / Fond
<b>RALNIK</b> , Samuil Josif	Itsyk, Girsh Zlata, -	15/2/1864 20 Adar	Telsiai Telsiai Kaunas		Telsiai 1864 M16	2205131 / 2 767 LVIA1226/1/774
<b>RALNIK</b> , Khana	Itsik, Girsh Zlate	1/2/1855 25 Shevat	Telsiai Telsiai Kaunas		Telsiai 1855 F5	2205131 / 2 LVIA/1226/1/757
<b>ROLNIK</b> , Gita	Itsyk, Girsh Zlata	14/3/1856 19 Adar II	Telsiai Telsiai Kaunas		Telsiai 1856 F5	2205131 / 2 LVIA/1226/1/758
<b>ROLNIK</b> , Girsh Iankel	Itsyk, Girsh Zlate	21/12/1868 19 Tevet	Telsiai Telsiai Kaunas		Telsiai 1868 M54	2205132 / 1 LVIA/1226/1/797
<b>ROLNIK</b> , Rute	Itsyk, Girsh Zlate	8/10/1870 25 Tishri	Telsiai Telsiai Kaunas		Telsiai 1870 F45	2205132 / 2 LVIA/1226/1/810

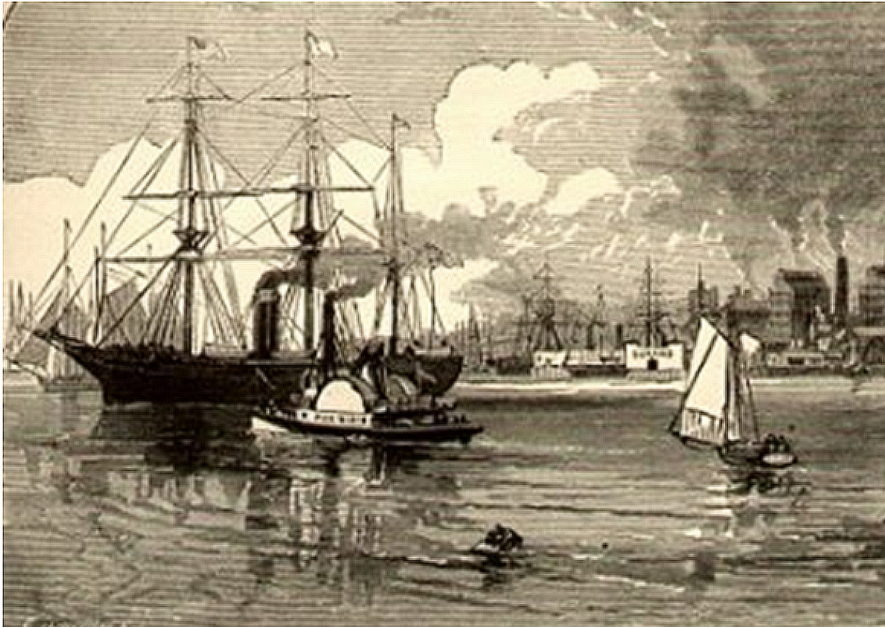
The five births recorded here represent a large fraction of the eighteen Rolnik births recorded in the whole Lithuanian database<sup>46</sup>, so we are fortunate to have them and to be able to locate Morris in a family with his siblings, even if his own record is not in that database. Of Morris's siblings, one brother Girsh Yankel died young. The three "Kelme Rolnicks", who had emigrated to Chicago as discussed in a previous chapter, may have been children of the brother listed above, Samuil Yosif. I have not been able to trace his sisters. Morris, being a

<sup>46</sup> Of the eighteen, four were from the Plungyan (Plunge) family that we read about earlier, one was a brother of Congo Joe Rollnick and another his cousin Hannah, a daughter of Berl Rolnik. So we have followed up eleven children of the eighteen whose records survive.

son of Isaac and Zlate Rolnik, is definitely from the tribe of the Northern (Telsiai) Rolniks.

The town of Kedainai (Keidan), where Morris's wife Rebecca Tauberson was born, was somewhat larger than the little shtetlach (villages) like Upyna and Skaudvile that we have been visiting. It was the town where the Vilna Gaon had studied and where he had found his wife, Chana. Keidaners have a particular pride in their origins, in the USA are often buried in Keidaner cemeteries (as were Rebecca's cousins), and have a well-maintained historical society<sup>47</sup>.

Morris and Rebecca had come to the USA, separately, in 1885. Rebecca's uncle, Gustav Tauberson, was already living with his family in New York, Rabbi of a congregation. After their marriage Morris and Rebecca moved across the Hudson River to Jersey City, New Jersey, where Morris is recorded in the 1892 City Record as a peddler.



*Jersey City in 1890, view from the Hudson River.*

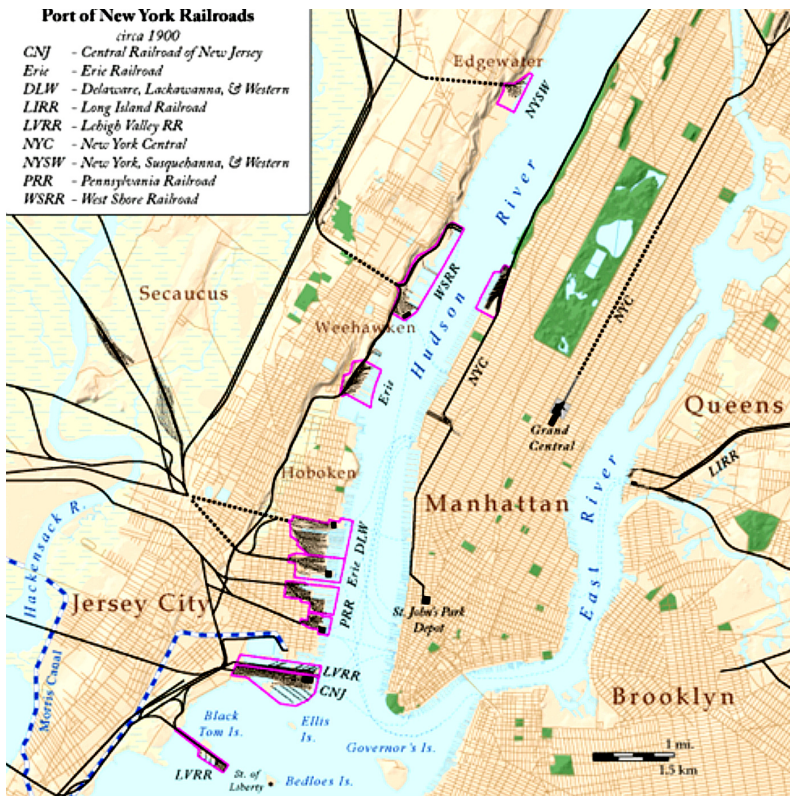
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:HudsonRiverJerseyCity1890.jpg>

Jersey City's growth came with the mid-century development of the Pennsylvania Railroad which had important terminals there.

Many Jersey City residents found employment with the railroad as did two of our Rolniks. Famous citizens of Jersey City were Frank

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<sup>47</sup> Keidan was not just another Lithuanian town; it was a city, with an important lineage. Proud was the Jew who, when asked "Where do you hail from?" could answer, "I'm a Keidaner!" <http://www.litvaksig.org/index.php/component/sug/?id=117&view=details>



Hague, its mayor for thirty years<sup>48</sup> - and Frank Sinatra, who married and lived in Jersey City, his two children being born there.

The first Jewish family arrived in Jersey City only in 1858, and the Jewish population was always small, of course, compared with New York or Baltimore, Philadelphia, and other cities on the Atlantic coast. Around the time of the end of the Civil War, probably about 1864-65, a group of Jews in Jersey City began to meet in study and prayer and formed the Beth Israel (later Beth El) Congregation in 1871, downtown at 96 Montgomery Street<sup>49</sup> and close to where Morris Rolnick was to

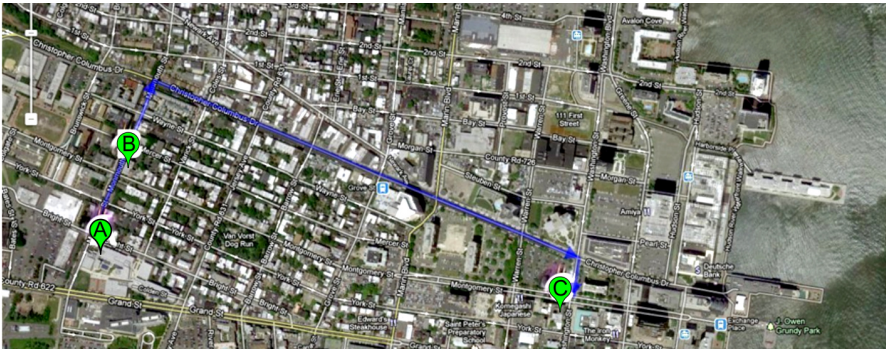
<sup>48</sup> Frank Hague served an incomparable eight consecutive terms as the mayor of Jersey City from 1917 to 1947, including the critical years of the Depression and World War II. The mayor's tenure is known as the "Hague era" in Jersey City history and is identified with "bossism" in American politics. Hague's stranglehold on politics transcended beyond Jersey City to the county, the state and the nation bringing him both significance and notoriety.

[http://www.njcu.edu/programs/jchistory/pages/h\\_pages/hague\\_frank.htm](http://www.njcu.edu/programs/jchistory/pages/h_pages/hague_frank.htm)

<sup>49</sup> Earliest synagogue records date back to 1891, with planning for the High Holy Days of that year, when Morris and Rebecca were already in Jersey City.

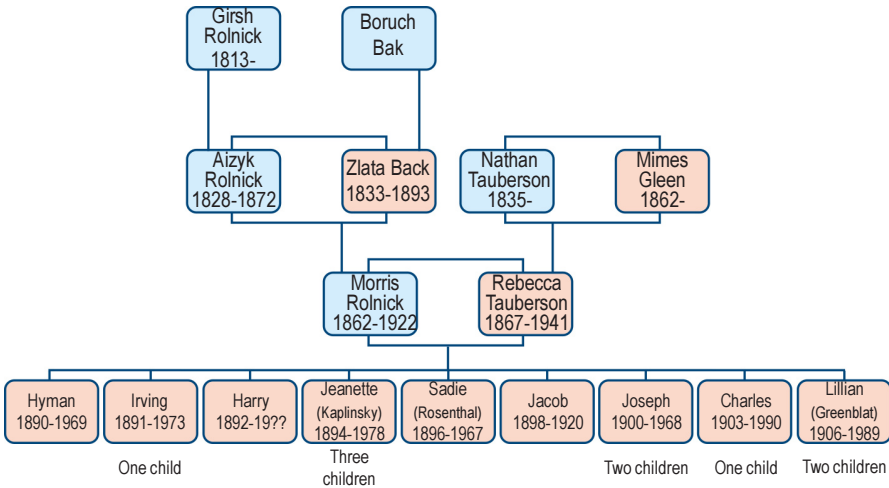
<http://www.betheljc.org/aboutus/history/>

live with his family. The Rolnicks' first recorded dwelling in 1892 is at 151 Bright St, (A) in the map below where Morris and Rebecca lived with Morris still a peddler, in 1895. Morris was a salesman in a dry goods store by the 1900 Census, still on Bright St. By 1910 they had moved nearby to 321 Monmouth St, at (B), Morris now a salesman in a clothing store. Monmouth St remained the Rolnick residence (with Morris in the same occupation) through to at least 1920. (C) shows the Beth Israel synagogue, a mile away. (Not one of these buildings remains today). The Hudson River and the port are the grey-green areas to the right, downtown Jersey City being in the blocks to the North of Monmouth Street (B).



By the 1895 Census, four of Morris and Rebecca's children had been born, by 1900 six of them and by 1910, nine had been born and all had survived. These were Hyman, Irving (Irwin), Harry, Jeanette, Sadie, Jacob, Joseph, Charles and Lillian.

### Family Tree of the New Jersey Rolnicks



In the 1910 census and again in 1920, Hyman was listed as a machinist on the Pennsylvania railroad. By the 1920 Census, four other children were working: two as clerks, one as a bookkeeper, and Sadie an operator in a moving picture house. Jeanette, had left home, marrying Isidore Kaplinsky (a lather in building construction<sup>50</sup>), while the younger children were still at school.

In 1930, four unmarried children were still living at home with their widowed mother, pictured below. Charles had joined the work force as a school teacher and Sadie was secretary to a manufacturer.



In the middle picture above, Jacob is looking sad in his heavy Army greatcoat. The 1920 Census, taken on January 3-4, found Jacob at home but, unlike his younger brother Joseph, not working. The gravestone, "the young man Jacob son of Moshe", shows he died a short four months later.

The other members of the family, those in the picture on next page<sup>51</sup> taken in the late 30's, were by then pretty well established. Herman, when he left the railways, became for a while a clerk in a hardware store and later an elevator man at the City Hall of Jersey City.

Irwin (who married Dorothy Kaplan) was a Public Accountant, living in Jackson Heights, New York. Irwin was very active in the

<sup>50</sup> Lathers install support framework for ceiling systems, interior and exterior walls and building partitions. [http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/labourmarket/ojf/pdf/7284\\_e.pdf](http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/labourmarket/ojf/pdf/7284_e.pdf)

<sup>51</sup> Jeanette and her husband Isidore, and Harry and his wife Mabel, are missing from the picture.



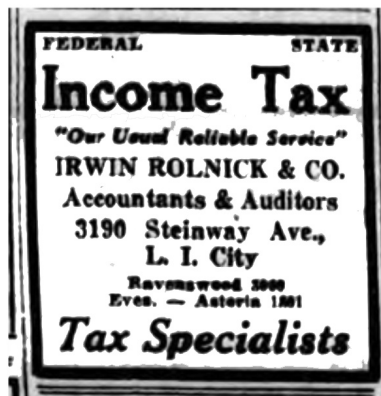


Astoria Kiwanis<sup>52</sup>, treasurer in 1930<sup>53</sup> and president in 1939. Irwin and Dorothy's exciting coast to coast and return trip across America was a subject at one Kiwanis meeting, illustrated with photographs<sup>54</sup>.

THE JERSEY JOURNAL, JERSEY C



LAST RIDE - Herman Rolnic (left), who operated City Hall elevators for past 24 years in Jersey City, receives scroll signed by hundreds of city employees from his last passenger, who commends him for 'long and faithful city service'.



<sup>52</sup> "Kiwanis is a global organization of volunteers dedicated to changing the world, one child and one community at a time."<sup>1</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kiwanis>  
Astoria, a section of New York City, is named after the Astor family.

<sup>53</sup> "Irwin was told that he was 'keeper of the funds'. As treasurer, Irwin has an important job...he looked very serious and as seriously promised to give his best efforts to...judicially handling the Club's money" NY Daily Star Jan 30 1930. As an accountant, he was an obvious candidate for the post.

<sup>54</sup> Daily Star, Long Island City, Sep 15, 1932.

Dorothy was active in Hadassah, hosting its meetings in her home, cultural committee chairman in 1942, and singing at a concert that year to entertain the soldiers<sup>55</sup>. Harry, married to Mabel Edelman, was living a mile away. He had set up the Rolnick Steel Equipment Company that made steel shelving, much used in libraries<sup>56</sup>. Joseph (who married Anna Horowitz) was a lawyer in Jersey City<sup>57</sup>. Lillian's husband was Abraham (Al) Greenblat<sup>58</sup>. Charles, the school teacher<sup>59</sup>, had married Minna Weitz. Sadie married Samuel Rosenthal who had grown up in Troy, NY<sup>60</sup>. The two unlabeled people in photo on previous page are David and Ruth Sugarman. David Sugarman's mother, nee Sarah Tauberson, was a cousin of Rebecca Tauberson Rolnick.

There is a wealth of photographs in the family archives (sent to me by a son of Joseph). I have collected together a few, below and next page:



*Jeanette and Isadore*



*Jeanette's son Harold*



*Jeanette's son Ira*

The generations had somewhat overlapped. Charles is seen (next page bottom right) in his WW2 Army uniform, as are his nephews, Harold and Ira. By 1952, Jeanette and Isidore's smiling sons, Harold and Ira, had moved to the West Coast taking their parents with them. Harold was an accountant at that time, Ira a clerk in the Post Office.

<sup>55</sup> Irwin and Dorothy celebrated their 20<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary at their home in Jackson Heights. The guest list included Harry and Joseph and their wives and the other siblings, still unmarried. Long Island Star Journal Oct 27 1942.

<sup>56</sup> Their son served in the Marines in WW2. Later he owned the Boca Beauty Supply store in Boca Raton, Florida. <http://www.beautyweb.com/distributors/florida.htm>

<sup>57</sup> Their daughter lived in Long Beach, NY and their son in Garden Grove, CA.

<sup>58</sup> Al worked as an order clerk for a Wholesale Music Publisher and later for Warner Brothers. After their children were grown, Lillian worked at the Montefiore Medical Center in the Bronx. The children moved to Maryland.

<sup>59</sup> Charles taught wood working at Ferris High School in Jersey City. He was active in the Boy Scouts movement, his troop being of the finest in Jersey City. He was Activities Director at the Boy Scouts Kamp Kohl during the 30's and 40's. His and Minna's son lives in Miami, FL.

<sup>60</sup> At that time, Troy was still a thriving industrial town. Rosenthal ran the Troy Stamp Manufacturing Co.



*Joseph and Anna*



*Lillian and Al*



*Charles and Minna*

## The Bay Shore Rolnicks

A mystery remains. Joseph Rolnick's daughter remembered her father speaking on the telephone with a Betty Rolnick who lived, perhaps, in Lindenhurst in Suffolk County, NY<sup>61</sup>. There are indeed records of a Rolnick family in Lindenhurst. There is a gravestone for Jennie Rolnick in the cemetery of the Lindenhurst Hebrew Congregation<sup>62</sup>:

Jennie had been living with her two sons, Isaac and Harry, her daughter Bessie Kaplan, and her seven year old granddaughter Lillian Kaplan, in Islip, Suffolk, ten miles from the Lindenhurst Cemetery. Harry, in the 1920 Census, is listed as the Head of the family, working as a machinist in a garage and the sole support of



*The Hebrew reads:  
here lies the modest woman  
Etta Zlata  
daughter of reb Dov  
died on the 13th Shevet 5686  
may her dear soul rest in peace*

<sup>61</sup> Joseph's son quoting his sister: "She does not know much more about Betty Rolnick. Our father apparently never elaborated on the relationship. We could only guess that the contacts took place sometime between 1935 and 1945. She believes that Betty lived in Suffolk County, N. Y., maybe in the village of Lindenhurst." Email message 5<sup>th</sup> September 2011.

<sup>62</sup> Jennie is the Hebrew cognate of Zlata, a Hebrew name on the gravestone

the family<sup>63</sup>. His elder brother is “unemployed”.

In his WW1 draft card Harry gives his birth details as born 1895 in Meridan, Connecticut, while Isaac gives his as Bay Shore, NY, in 1894.

There is a record for a Rolnick in Meridan. It is Lewis Rolneck who had a dry goods store there in 1895 and 1896, with the 1896 record annotated with “rem to Europe”. It would be too much of a coincidence for Harry Rolnick to have been born in 1895 in Meridan, CT to some father other than “Lewis Rolneck, dry goods, 1896, rem to Europe”. It looks as if Lewis, Jennie, Bessie, and Isaac Rolnick had been living in the Bay Shore region of New York<sup>64</sup>, but had removed to Meridan in the hopes of finding a better living there. But perhaps, with that try being unsuccessful, Lewis had returned to Europe, leaving his wife and children to go back to the Bay Shore where, in the 1915 Census, Jennie was running a dry goods store, Harry was a chauffeur and Isaac a “day worker”. Bessie had married and had a daughter Lillian, but was already widowed.

A sad story follows. Isaac, who had been working as a fireman on the Pennsylvania Railroad, and living in Harrisburg, PA, volunteered for action on August 18, 1917, a few months after the US had entered WW1. He was trained as a machine gunner and was with the 28th Division, the 8th Pennsylvania Infantry, in actions at Chateau Thierry<sup>65</sup> and the Aisne River.

Wounded in the thigh by shrapnel and gassed, he was in Army Hospital in France for many months (“exhaustion” is written on his hospital papers) until repatriation to further hospitalization, at an Army hospital in Newport News, VA. His Army record lists a letter of thanks from General Pershing and from his Congressman, the “Hon. F. C. Hicks”. He never really recovered. As we saw, he was listed as “unemployed” in the 1920 Census, but in the 1930 Census he is in the Veterans Administration Hospital in Huntington, Suffolk, in the neuropsychiatric ward. He died in 1970, and may well have outlived all his direct family members.

The 1925 Census records Jennie as still living in Islip with her son Harry (now a salesman), her daughter Bessie and granddaughter

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<sup>63</sup> In the 1917 WW1 draft record his occupation is “Taxi Business .... doing business for myself”

<sup>64</sup> Jennie and Bessie had arrived in the USA in 1889.

<sup>65</sup> The Battle of Château-Thierry was fought on 18 July 1918 and was one of the first actions of the American Expeditionary Force (AEF) under General John J. “Black Jack” Pershing. It was part of the Second Battle of the Marne, initially prompted by a German offensive launched on 15 July against the AEF, the newest troops on the front. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle\\_of\\_Ch%C3%A2teau-Thierry\\_\(1918\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Ch%C3%A2teau-Thierry_(1918))

Lillian, but with Isaac no longer with the family. Harry married Anita Cooper in 1926, half a year after Jennie died, and the couple remained in the Bay Shore region<sup>66</sup>.

Bessie Rolnick Kaplan<sup>67</sup> and her daughter Lillian appear in the 1930 Census, still living in Islip, Suffolk County. Bessie is listed as a “saleswoman in her own shop”. By the 1940 Census she was living on Rockaway Parkway in King’s County, New York with Lillian (married as Sunasky, but widowed) and a granddaughter Sylvia<sup>68</sup>.

Is this the Rolnick family with whom Joseph was in contact? The place and dates are correct...Suffolk County between 1935 and 1945...but the name is Bessie rather than the remembered Betty. But a Bessie can become a Betty<sup>69</sup>.

How were Joseph Rolnick and Betty (Bessie) related? Two possibilities suggest themselves. The first is that the Lewis Rolneck listed in the Meridan City Directory for 1895 and 1896 (“rem to Europe”), and probably the father of Bessie, was a brother of our Morris Rolnick, another unlisted son of Isaac and Zlata Rolnik. This is not too far-fetched. Not only is Morris’s own birth not recorded in the Lithuanian Database, but neither is my grandfather Wolf’s, nor those of his siblings. The records are sparse and fragmentary.

Another possibility, this indeed somewhat far-fetched, arises from the fact that I have been unable to find any records of Jennie and Bessie’s arrival in 1889. (Their arrival is recorded on the 1920 Census sheet as 1889, but as 1900 on Bessie’s 1930 Census.) But I have found a true Rolnick family arriving in 1889. This is Meier Rolnick of Namoksht (Nemaschai) in Lithuania, born in 1859, his wife Rasche, born 1861, and their daughter Dobe, 11 months old. Also with them is Meier’s sister Gittel, born in 1869. Now, we met Rolnicks of Namoksht in the chapter on the Chicago Rolnicks. Members of that family (David, Samuel, and Bessie) came to Chicago, arriving there between 1899 and 1903. Their father, Ekel Rolnik, lived in Namoksht and was born in 1840 so possibly was a brother to Meier of Namoksht. Certainly he and Meier would have known each other<sup>70</sup>. I have found no further USA record for Meier or any of his family. Was Meier, then, the Lewis Rolnick of Meridan? Was Rasche, Jennie? and was little Dobe, Bessie? Bessie’s age and date on immigration, if we take the date in the 1920

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<sup>66</sup> Their daughter Libby was born in 1932. Anita travelled to California, alone, in 1936.

<sup>67</sup> Bessie had married a Max Kaplan in 1921.

<sup>68</sup> Lillian was working as a clerk in a “Country Club office”.

<sup>69</sup> Both can be diminutives of the Hebrew Batsheva or Batya/Basya

<sup>70</sup> There were under a thousand Jews living in Namoksht in 1897.

Census record, are exactly right for Dobe. But why the name changes? Dobe generally “translates” as Deborah or Dorothy<sup>71</sup>. Why did they all change their names? Dobe to Bessie, Meier to Lewis, Rasche to Jennie?

If these Namoksht Rolnicks did become the Suffolk Rolnicks, they and the Jersey City Rolnicks may well have been in contact in the Old Country. Remember, as we learned at the beginning of this chapter, that children of our Morris Rolnick’s brother, Shmuil Yosef, may have been living in Chicago. They were in contact there with the Namoksht Rolnicks. Perhaps it’s not so far-fetched, after all, that the Suffolk Rolnicks had emigrated from Namoksht.

I started this section with “A mystery remains”. This is probably a good way to end it.



*Field artillery at the Battle of Chateau Thierry*

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<sup>71</sup> Dobe is the feminine form of Dov, Jennie’s father’s name, so Dobe may be named for her grandfather if the Dobe/Bessie exchange is allowed.