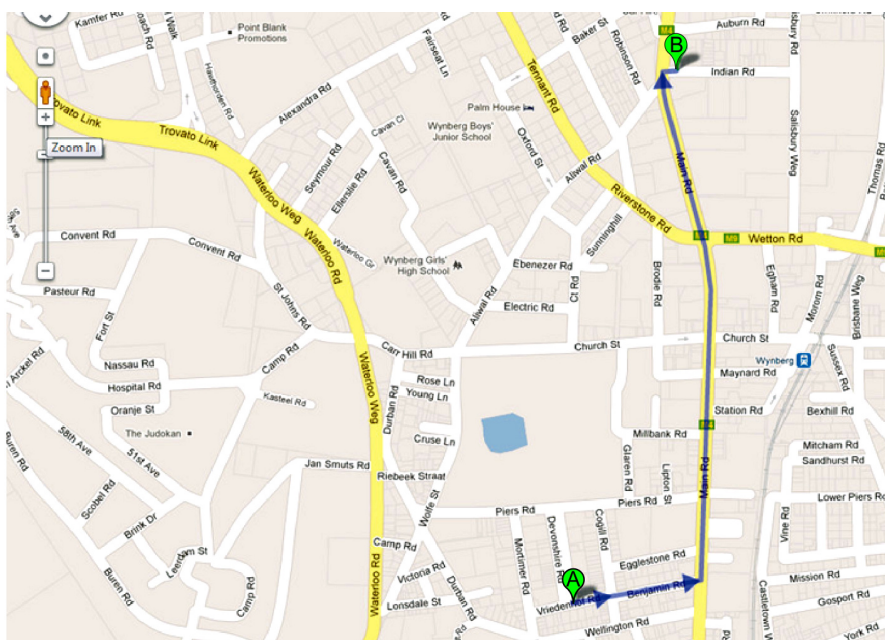


CHAPTER SIX: FROM TELZ TO SOUTH AFRICA AND ENGLAND

Part one: From Telz to Johannesburg - The Jacobsons (Rolniks by marriage)

The genealogical tools now available on the World Wide Web have put me in touch with a South African family, the Jacobsons, who, like us Rollnicks, are direct descendants of Rolniks of Lithuania. Why did our Wynberg Rollnicks not know of our connection (at least by name) to these other members of the Lithuanian Rolnik tribe? I have not found any living Rollnick descendant who recalls that we and the Jacobsons were connected. (I always assumed that my mother knew all of the Jewish South African community and their inter-relationships!) The family of one of these Jacobsons, Mannie, spent long summer holidays in Wynberg itself, in a cottage at 2 Cotswolds, Indian Road (B on the map below). My grandfather, Wolf Rollnick, who had lived half a kilometer away at Vriedenhof Road (see A on the map below) was long gone, but other Rollnick descendants lived one street further south on Wellington Road, and their shops straddled the Main Road, from which the Jacobsons' Indian Road led off.



The Jacobsons might well have done their shopping in one of these Rollnick-related shops. But the owners' names had by then become Matz, Rifkin and Lewenson. Why should the Jacobsons have worked out the Rolnik connection?¹ But now the genealogy websites (Geni.com, initially, in this case) have brought the families together, and we can email one another every day! Here then is the story of these Jacobsons and their roots in Lithuania.

You will remember the Rolniks of Plunge (Plongyan) who were so devastated by the Holocaust, and you will remember that some of them managed to survive, one to write a famous ghetto diary and visit Israel, another to settle there well before World War 2, and a third who came to Israel after the war. They were descendants of Movsha Rolnik, "Sialuiai Rabbi assistant for Vieksniai". (Movsha was a son of Girsh Rolnik, youngest son of Leyba, so these Rolniks were of the Northern (Telsiai) tribe.)

Tax and Voters Lists Searching for Surname rolnik and Town Vieksniai Run on Tuesday 8 May 2012 at 02:27:00				
Name	Comments Type of Record	Day	Town	Archive/Fond/Inventory/File
		Month	Uyezd	Record #
		Year	Guberniya	Page #
ROLNIK, Movsha	Sialuiai rabbi assistant for Vieksniai	17	Vieksniai	LVIA/1567/1/2610
		January	Sialuiai	25
	Voters	1889	Kaunas	2

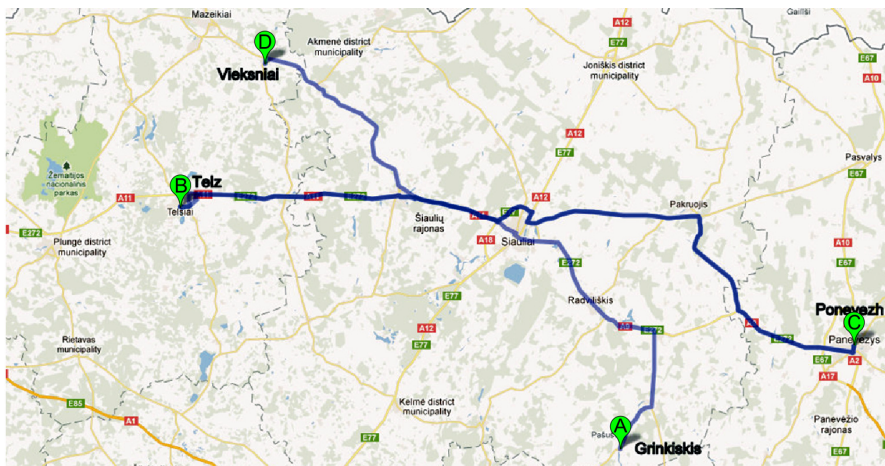
Now Movsha had a son, the Itsyk-Abel who married well (to Chana Levi) and went to live in Plunge (Plongyan), but Movsha had also a number of daughters. Their shtetl of Vieksniai was not that far from the famous Yeshiva of Telz and it was probably there that Zvi Girsh Yakobson (later to be Harris Jacobson) was enrolled as a yeshiva bocher, a young student². Girsh was an earnest student. He could

¹Indeed, the new DNA investigations do not show any genetic link between the Wynberg Rollnicks and the Jacobson Rolnicks.

² His birth record is one of the few that we have for people in this book: Yakubson, Girsh son of Yankel Notka, Itska and Riva Leah, 9/12/1874 13 Tevet Grinkiskis

Kaunas [http://data.jewishgen.org/wconnect/wc.dll?jg-jgsearch-model2-\[lvmebw\]lvmebw16](http://data.jewishgen.org/wconnect/wc.dll?jg-jgsearch-model2-[lvmebw]lvmebw16)

have studied perhaps at the yeshiva of Ponevezh, far nearer to his birth town of Grinkiskis:



Indeed, we do not know really where he studied, but we do know that he often ate meals, and probably stayed for Shabbat, with the Rolniks of Vieksniai, just 50 Km from Telz. We know that, since he married one of the family's daughters, Riva Rute, who became Grandma Ruti to the South African Jacobsons. There is a story remembered by one grandson, but denied by another: "Do you remember what Mom used to say about grandpa & grandma? You know how, according to custom, the bride-to-be appears heavily veiled and only after the ceremony has been concluded is the veil thrown back? Well, grandpa wooed and proposed to one sister and the other sister turned up for the ceremony and he married the wrong sister the uglier of the two (of course)." But this may be just apocryphal.

Below on the left is a picture of Ruth and Harris:



Ugly? Hardly ... even decades later.



*This is Golda Meier.
Also a Rolnik?*

The family record is rich with stories. Here is another³: “Herscher had decided to go to South Africa and was making the journey alone, without his wife Ruti [Rolnik] and baby son Ecky [Isaac] who was about 5 months old. He loaded his Rabbinical books onto a donkey cart that was to have delivered the books to the ship. Herscher travelled to the port to board the ship, destination Cape Town, South Africa. He was to send for Ruti and Ecky when he had established himself in SA and made sufficient money to pay for their tickets. However, the donkey cart with his books didn't arrive and the ship was due to sail. Herscher refused to sail without his books. So he left the ship to find the cart with his precious rabbinical books. En route to SA the ship on which he should have been sailing sunk!!”

So why did they go to South Africa? It is true that prospects for them in Lithuania were not good. Here is a description of what would have awaited Harris, had he and Ruth decided to settle back in his home town, Grinkiskis⁴: An article published by a local inhabitant in ‘Hamelitz’ of May 1883, stated; “It is two years now that our Bet Midrash (study house) has neither candles nor wood and the 'gabaim' [beadles] spend their time looking for money and all in vain, as most buyers of the Aliya⁵ don't pay. Things have reached the point in which a policeman collected debts on behalf of the authority.” Ruth's home town of Vieksniai was equally destitute. Her brother was alright, having married into a rich family in Plunge⁶, while her sister Mere who married a merchant, Leizer Krieger, struggled for a living⁷. So this economic misery was the push that drove the Jacobsons out of Lithuania, but what was the pull? I can find no family links to South Africa, but there was a prior flow from Vieksniai. The Reebbs, Rabies, Katzes, and Joffes are just some of the South African families that trace their roots back to that shtetl at around this time.

Referring to Vieksniai, in an article in JewishGen, former South African Sharon Joffe writes⁸: *My grandfather spoke lovingly of Vieksniai. The old land, he called it. His place, his country. Oupa Hymie is long gone. But his memories of Vieksniai live on in his recollections of the farming life and the pristine beauty of the surroundings.*

³ This story was attested to by two grandchildren.

⁴ http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/pinkas_lita/lit_00197.html

⁵ Aliya here refers to being called to read a Portion of the Law in the synagogue. Donations to mark the honour were a major source of income for the congregation.

⁶ But there, the Holocaust would catch and murder him...see the Chapter on the Rolniks of Plunge.

⁷ Their children did eventually manage to benefit from the post WW1 improvement of economic life in Lithuania, but perished in the Holocaust together with their own children.

⁸ http://www.lituanus.org/2008/08_4_01%20Joffe.html

Pristine beauty or not, it was hard to make a living there and so Harris Jacobson followed these other Lithuanians to South Africa.

It was indeed hard for them at first. "Herscher then sailed to Cape Town, where he became a bones and bottle man with a cart and horse. The bones were ground up and sold, and the bottles returned to a company that paid him for the service. He then sent for the family and they lived in Durban where the next child Solomon was born". An alternative history: "Harris at first ran a vegetable stall in the market in Johannesburg, but with the outbreak of the Boer War, they left for Durban where Harris collected bones and bottles". My paper trail evidence is that, in those early years, Harris, and later his family too, lived in the Cape, in the Transvaal and also in Durban, probably in that order, until they eventually settled in Johannesburg, the economic centre of the country. A granddaughter writes¹⁰: "He had a feel for retailing and started a furniture business which ultimately became the family business known as Harrowes, named after Harris Jacobson.... The company was listed on The Johannesburg Stock Exchange in about 1950 but never rose to great heights and was sold in 1983. Ruth never ever learnt English and spoke in Yiddish only. They first lived in Yeoville (a lower middle-class mostly Jewish suburb of Johannesburg... wds) and the children went to the commercial High School, except for Solomon who went to Jeppe Boys High. When Herscher was making a better living the family moved from Yeoville to [upscale.. wds] Houghton".

And about those books of Harris's that came to the boat on a donkey cart: "When he (Harris) died, cousin Philip went to the flat wanting to take his religious books, but someone had been there before him and taken the lot."

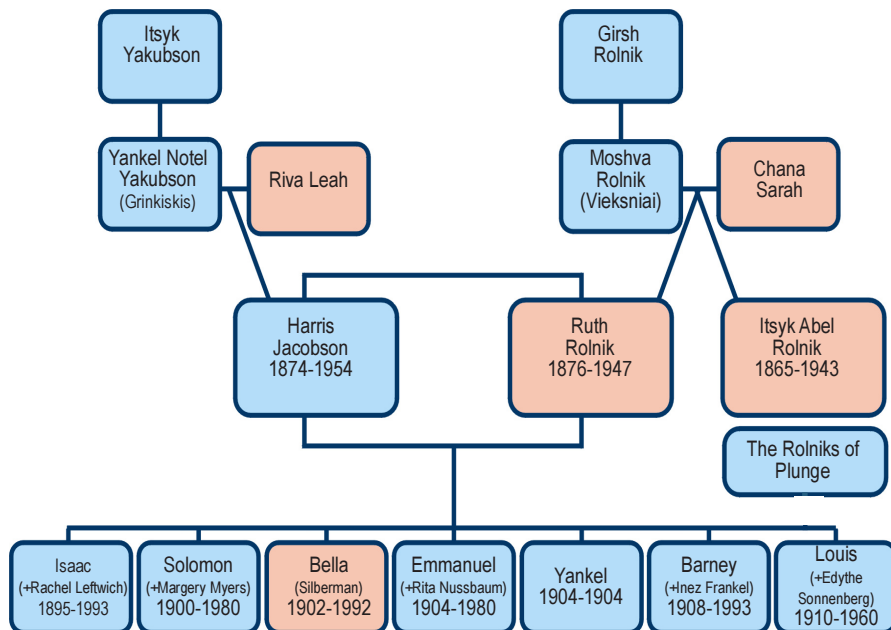
Harris and Ruth had seven children¹¹, six of whom survived and, making use of the manifold opportunities open to them in South Africa, went on to fulfilling careers.

⁹ Both accounts are family oral history communicated by Pam Jacobson Karp. I have documentation from the South African Archives for Harris taking out mortgage bonds in the Cape in 1900 and the few years following, but also for him claiming, in 1903, "compensation (Witwatersrand Area)" in the Transvaal courts, obviously attesting to his having been in the Transvaal and suffered some damages during the Boer War, and at least two of the Jacobson children were born in Durban.

¹⁰ Pam Jacobson Karp, personal communication.

¹¹ Isaac Wilfred Jacobson b. 10 September 1895 in Viekšniai, Lithuania; Solomon Philip (Jacko) b. 6 September 1900 in Durban; Bella b. 24 September 1902 in Durban; Emmanuel b. 18 July 1904, also in Durban, with Yankel, a twin boy who died in infancy; Barney b. 1 December 1908, and Louis b. 20 November 1910, both in Johannesburg.

The seven children of Harris Jacobson and Riva Rolnik



Isaac and Barney¹² joined their father in Harrowes, and the company later opened several branches around South Africa. The family built a nine-story building in the center of Johannesburg, designed by Harold le Roith, one of the city's more famous architects. Another six floors were added in 1946¹³, and by 1995 the building was occupied by the Highveld Technical College, and became known as the Jacobsons' Building. The two brothers also went into property development, initiating the Harrowdene Estates in Sandton outside Johannesburg¹⁴. Solomon Jacobson became a doctor, one of the first to graduate from the then newly-established Medical School of the University of the Witwatersrand, while Louis graduated in Electrical Engineering at the same University. The Engineering Department's

¹² Barney's daughter writes: "Barney met Inez Frankel [his future wife..wds] when he was 17, and she just over 14. Inie (as she became known) was playing tennis with friends, and hit the ball over the fence, where Barney was visiting his friends. That led to a 58 year old marriage."

¹³ http://www.joburg.org.za/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=2925&Itemid=203

¹⁴ As a granddaughter writes, this was originally "a farm off the road leading to Pretoria.... Milk and butter were produced although my father, Barney, always said that the cost of butter was " 5 pounds a pound " [so]... not much money was made from this enterprise. One of the reasons seemed to be that the farm regularly suffered drought, being out of the rain belt !" The properties remained in the family for many years <http://www.saflii.org/za/cases/ZASCA/1990/77.html>

history describing its “numerous luminaries” writes as its first luminary¹⁵: ‘Louis Jacobson, who graduated in 1931, founded Alpha Harris which was later incorporated into First Electric Company of South Africa. Jacobson’s companies were responsible for the design and manufacture of a wide range of heavy electrical machinery. He later joined with Carl Fuchs to start F.W.J. Electrical Industries which became legendary.’ One of this company’s most important products was its Residual Current Circuit Breaker¹⁶, widely-used in the mining industry to overcome the hazards arising from direct contact between a live electrical conductor and the earth. Henri Rubin, an engineer working for F.W.J. Industries developed this device, the world’s first high-sensitivity earth leakage protection system¹⁷.

Emmanuel (Mannie) Jacobson had perhaps the most dramatic career. He qualified as a lawyer but, living in the center of South Africa’s gold-mining industry, was always captivated by the excitement of prospecting for gold. His role in the discovery of the gold buried deep below the surface at Odendaalsrust in South Africa’s Orange Free State, the biggest gold strike in the twentieth century, is best described by Mannie himself¹⁸:

“When Mr. Megson first saw us, he¹⁹ told us that he had discovered a new Rand 200 miles from Johannesburg with Upper Witwatersrand Reefs outcropping. He said he had done work there in 1904 and had sunk a shaft to a depth of 100 feet and had found good values in the shaft. As he could not get financial assistance he was compelled to close down the shaft, but he had filled the shaft up with dynamite so as to preclude others from interfering with the work he had carried

¹⁵ <http://www.eie.wits.ac.za/about/history>

¹⁶ A Residual-Current Circuit Breaker (RCCB) is an electrical wiring device that disconnects a circuit whenever it detects that the electric current is not balanced between the energized conductor and the return neutral conductor. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Residual-current_device#History_and_nomenclature

¹⁷ Louis’ son David and grandson Sven, both graduated in Electrical Engineering from their father’s University, David going on to become President of the South African Institute of Electrical Engineers and Chairman of the South African Mathematical Society.

¹⁸ I edit this material somewhat, taken from the Oppenheimer biography

http://www.farlang.com/diamonds/gregory-oppenheimer-biography/page_577

¹⁹ While he (that is, Freedman, a prospective investor in another project..wds) was giving his reasons for declining he was interrupted by a stranger—Archibald Megson—who said, as all old-timers do, ‘Have you time to listen to a story?’

From: <http://www.libertyparkusafd.org/Hancock/CD-ROMS/GlobalFederation%5CWorld%20Trade%20Federation%20-%20135%20-%20Ernest%20Oppenheimer.html#Chapter1>—The Orange Free State

out. The story interested both Allan Roberts²⁰ and myself but it was only on 9 March 1933 that we came to an arrangement with Megson for both him and Allan Roberts to go down to 'Aandenk'. . . . This visit took place at a time when both Roberts and I were very short of money and we borrowed £50 to enable Roberts to go down to visit the work done by Megson. When Roberts returned, he said that he was very interested as there were conglomerate reefs extending along the surface of the farm 'Aandenk' for many miles and he believed that these reefs belonged to the Upper Witwatersrand Series (the gold-bearing strata...wds).

"The immediate task was to prove the existence of a payable reef. The site selected for the first borehole was situated on the farm 'Aandenk', 80 yards to the north of Megson's original shaft, and sinking began on 23 October 1933. The company was dogged by continual financial difficulties:

"One well-mineralized horizon was struck at 3,656 ft depth. . . . The incompletely recovered core gave a value of 7-4 dwt [dwt=pennyweight or 1,55 grammes...wds] and held out sufficient promise to warrant further exploration . . . the drill was carried on to 4,046 ft . . . but the total finances of the company had become exhausted, [and] the company was compelled to stop drilling."

Mannie's daughter continues: "Unfortunately my father and his partner ran out of money with only 400 feet short of reaching payable gold!. Ernest [Sir Ernest Oppenheimer...wds] was approached to invest in their company Wit Extensions as it was called, and the borehole was taken over by Anglo American [Oppenheimers] in 1945." By the 1950's gold had been found in many drillings in the area and a huge mining industry developed around the town of Welkom.

A monument was erected by the Historical Commission on the site of the first borehole. The pictures on the next page show Mannie himself in his WW2 army uniform²¹, the monument, and Mannie's wife Riva²², pouring the first liquid gold extracted from the mine.

²⁰ Also from reference 15: "a dental mechanic. They had been friends for a long time, had attended the same school in Doornfontein, and shared the same love for prospecting and mining. Although not a qualified geologist, Roberts had a 'feel' for mines."

²¹ One of his tasks in the war was to guard Italian prisoners of war.

²² Riva herself was a very distinguished bridge player, representing South Africa in Bridge Olympics over twenty years, and then again, aged 74, representing Australia after she immigrated there in 1972.

Mannie is listed, in distinguished company, among the Mining Greats²³.



²³ <http://www.geni.com/projects/Diamonds-Dust-Gold-Ganja-Mining-South-Africa> : Mining Greats

• Barney Barnato • Cecil John Rhodes • George Harrison - prospector (dates unknown) who discovered the gold bearing Main Reef on the farm Langlaagte in 1886, which lead to the gold rush on the Witwatersrand and the creation of Johannesburg. • Harry Oppenheimer (1908-2000). Businessman - De Beers, Anglo American • Hans Merensky 1871-1952, geologist who discovered many of South Africa's mineral deposits • Mannie Jacobson 1904 -1980, gold prospector, most notable being Aandenk in Orange Free State.

Part two: From Telz to Rolnick's Drift

I have little doubt that none of our Wynberg Rollnicks knew anything of another family of Rolnicks, also from Lithuania, who lived on the border between the Orange Free State and what was then the Transvaal (now Gauteng) and, indeed, on the Vaal River itself. My first indication that there was such a family came from the South African Rootsweb site records in the South African Rootsweb site²⁴:

(http://chrysalis.its.uct.ac.za/CGI/cgi_RootWeb.exe):

Surname	ROLNICK	Surname	ROLNICK
First Names	Nachman	First Names	Sheina
Maiden Name		Maiden Name	
Hebrew Names	Nachman b Tanchum Leib	Hebrew Names	Shaina b Moshe HaCohen
Date of Birth		Date of Birth	
Died Date	1905-04-16	Died Date	1905-04-26
Hebrew Date of Death	Morcheshvan	Hebrew Date of Death	4 AdarB
Parents Names		Parents Names	
Spouse's Name		Spouse's Name	
Notes	wife, children	Notes	
Region in SA	Free State	Region in SA	Free State
Listing	Heilbron cemetery	Listing	Heilbron cemetery

Who were these two? A Nachman Rolnik is found in the Jewish Genealogy records: **Tax and Voters Lists**

Searching for Surname rolnik (D-M code 986500) and Given Name Nachman (D-M code 656600 or 646600) Number of hits: 1					
Run on Sunday 26 August 2012 at 13:36:02					
Name	Father Age	Comments Type of Record	Day Month Year	Town Uyezd Guberniya	Archive/Fond/Inventory/File Record # Page #
Rolnik, Nachman		4 people in family Both taxpayers	1892	Zemaiciu Naumiestis Kaunas	KRA/1-19/1/17527 206 38

²⁴ The correct dates for Nachman and Sheina's deaths are 11 Nisan and 21 Nisan 5665, respectively. These were the first two burials in the Heilbron Jewish cemetery.

So here we have Nachman Rolnik, living with four in his household, in Zemaiciu Naumiestis (known to the Yiddish-speakers as Neishtot-Tavrig) a town in Lithuania, 24 miles from Taurage. From Neishtot, many Jews came to South Africa, including Sammy Marks (the friend of Paul Kruger, President of the Transvaal Republic), whose success there enticed many Lithuanian Jews to follow him. Nachman Rolnick was presumably one of these. From his burial record, Nachman was the son of Tanchum. A Tanchum Rolnik is found in the Jewish Genealogy records, living in 1881 in Telsiai, Lithuania “poor, unable to pay” his tax that year. We know of another two sons of Tanchum. One was Moses Rolnick, the founder of the Rolnick family of Annapolis and later Baltimore. Another was Rachmiel who stayed on in Lithuania, dying in Taurage in 1930²⁵. Having identified the ancestry of Nachman Rolnick as the Northern (Telsiai) Rolniks, the grave records of Nachman and Sheine pose our next mysteries: Why did they die within two weeks of each other? What happened to their orphaned children?

Heilbron is a small town in the Orange Free State of South Africa, about 50 miles south of the city of Vereeniging in the Transvaal. It had a large and thriving Jewish population in the early days of the twentieth century, but the Rolnicks seem to have been the first to be buried in Heilbron’s well-annotated Jewish cemetery.

Searching for “Rolnick” in the South African State Archives²⁶ only deepened the mystery. The earliest record is for 12th February 1906 in which N. Rolnick of Engelbrecht’s Drift wrote to the Resident Magistrate of Heilbron, asking for a licence to deal in poisons. Had not Nachman Rolnick and his wife died mysteriously half a year before? Who was this N. Rolnick, asking half a year later for a licence to deal in poisons? Of course, this must have been Nachman’s son, now running the family store at Engelbrecht’s Drift.

Engelbrecht’s Drift was not so much a town as a geographical location, a “drift” being an Afrikaans word meaning a ford or river crossing²⁷, a suitable location for a general dealer’s store.

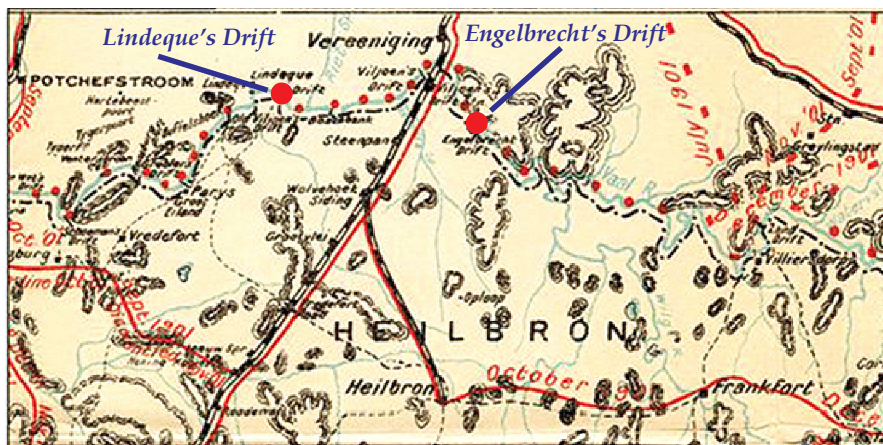
Engelbrecht’s Drift was the scene of action during the war between the British and the Boers in 1900, being a strategic point where the

²⁵ Wolf Rollnick, founder of the Wynberg Rollnicks migrated to South Africa from Taurage in 1894. Did the two Rolnik branches meet there?

²⁶ <http://www.national.archsrch.gov.za/sm300cv/smws/sm300gi?20110915041040061A8585%26DB%3DRSAE>

²⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ford_%28crossing%29, used for instance in Rorke’s Drift, scene of a famous battle between British forces and the Zulus (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Rorke%27s_Drift).

Vaal River could be crossed by the British Army under Lord Roberts on its way to occupy the Transvaal. Or rather, it might have been the scene of action, had the war played out differently. The Boers were expecting the British to cross over at Engelbrecht's Drift and had "concentrated all means of resistance" there²⁸, but the main British force crossed at Lindeque's Drift, some 60 miles to the west²⁹, as this Boer War map shows:



Presumably Nachman Rolnick had already established his store at Engelbrecht's Drift while all this action was taking place. The wartime strategic importance of Engelbrecht's Drift was clear, but another important development had started as soon as the Transvaal was conquered. It was becoming obvious that the expansion of the industrial town, Johannesburg, required the development of water supplies. Plans were put forward to build a dam at the Drift³⁰ and even to use the water flow to produce electricity for the gold mines. The riparian rights on the Vaal in the neighbourhood of Engelbrecht's Drift were bought up, a barrage was put across the river (...Photo page 234).

but plans to extend this to build a proper dam were put on hold until the huge Vaal Dam was built in the area during the 1930's³¹.

²⁸ "With the flag to Pretoria: A history of the Boer War of 1899-1900" Volume 2 by H.W. Wilson, Harmsworth Brothers, p 643-4 and http://books.google.com/books?id=_mDIAAAAMAAJ&pg=PA643&lpg=PA643&dq=%22Engelbrecht%27s+Drift%22&source=bl&ots=TPCzCgjFZS&sig=RDA6sQS3UWEMIKh3ccfwLbeoFX8&hl=en&sa=X&ei=SIY6UOy_IOiS7AG9soGoDA&ved=0CFgQ6AEwBw#v=onepage&q=%22Engelbrecht%27s%20Drift%22&f=false²⁹ http://www.warmuseum.ca/cwm/exhibitions/boer/boerwarmaps_e.shtml

³⁰ <http://www.ewisa.co.za/misc/School/Dam%20History/Vaal%20Barrage%20%28WW%20Jan-Feb%202009%29.pdf>

³¹ The Dam is a much-frequented leisure spot for Johannesburgers. I remember sailing on the dam in the 1950's with my friends Tikvah Alper and Max Stern who kept a boat there.

The Rolnicks have left us with another mystery, however: “N. Rolnick” of the poisons application is, in later correspondence, recorded as Nachman Rolnick. Now it is most unusual for a Jewish child to be named after his father, but perhaps he took on his father’s name after the original Nachman died. In any event, N. Rolnick asked for a licence to sell “patent and dutch medicines”, since he is living “9 miles from the nearest storekeeper in Viljoen’s drift”. On the recommendation of a neighbor, who knew him well, Nachman was given his licence and renewed this a few years later. The next important record in the State Archives is a long one in which Rolnick, and a Laurie Miller now trading as Miller and Rolnick, were in court in 1915 for repayment of a debt of £329 5s 6p³² owing to the firm of Dunnell, Ebden and Co of Port Elizabeth³³. The court proceedings tell us a good deal about Rolnick and Miller.

But first, also buried in Heilbron Cemetery, we find Lena Miller, daughter of Nachum³⁴, and wife of Nachman’s partner, Laurie or Lazarus (as he was later known) Miller³⁵. So Lazarus Miller was Nachman Rolnick’s son-in-law, who had married Lena (aged 23 when her parents died) and become senior partner in the business.

What happened to Miller and Rolnick was that they got caught up in the Maritz Rebellion. With the outbreak of the World War in 1914, a group of disaffected Afrikaners, most of them from the “bitter-enders” and led by General Maritz and others, revolted against the South African government³⁶ hoping that, with Britain engaged in the war against the Axis powers, they could regain their freedom and again set up a Boer Republic. The Lydenburg commando under General De Wet, a prominent Boer war leader, took possession of the town of Heilbron, held up a train and captured government stores and ammunition. Some of the prominent citizens of the area joined him, and by the end of the week he had a force of 3,000 men.

³² Somewhere between \$30,000 and \$150,000 today, depending on what measure of value is used. <http://www.measuringworth.com/ukcompare/relativevalue.php>

³³ Dunnell, Ebden and Co were an old-established firm of wholesalers with interests also in gold and diamond mining. They were still active in 1951, their catalogue of that year being listed in Google Books.

³⁴ Surname Miller; First Names Lena; Maiden Name Hebrew Names Leah b Nachum; Date of Birth; Died Date 1953-09-18; Hebrew Date of Death Erev Yom Kippur; Age 61; Notes; husband, son, daughter, son-in-law, grandchildren Region in SA Free State Listing Heilbron cemetery.

³⁵ Miller, Lazarus Spouse Annie Miller (born Cohen). Predeceased spouse Lena Miller (born Rolnick).

<http://www.national.archsrch.gov.za/sm300cv/smws/sm300ds?201208262002220A558E84&DN=00000000>

³⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maritz_Rebellion

liabilities and assets at the time, that gives some picture of the scope of their activities. By then, their debt to Dunnell, Ebden had amounted to over £1000, by far the major sum, but other liabilities, most less than £100, were to firms such as the South African Milling Company, the New Transvaal Chemical Company, J.W Jagger's, (the wholesale dry goods merchants), Starfield and Starfield, (a major grain dealer), and some individuals in the neighbourhood: T.Shepstone at Viljoen's Drift, H . Kok at Engelberg's Drift and, finally, W. Roets at Rolnicks Drift, the latter putting the name of Rolnick on the map for us. Their creditors owed them some £1100, they had stock in hand of £600, farming implements, hides and skins, 45 head of cattle, vehicles and horses and bags of maize of value some £300. These values were what the local assessor estimated, but Dunnell, Ebden sent their own man to value the estate and came up with a much more skeptical assessment: "I state as my opinion the defendants are insolvent... if the business be continued, matters will speedily become worse and the creditors will get practically nothing". It was this view that seemed to convince the court, and the firm of Miller and Rolnick ceased to function.

There is little more to discover about Miller or Rolnick. We saw above that Lena died in 1953 and was buried near her parents. Lazarus married again and lived in Johannesburg until 1966. A Lazarus Miller was active as a bespoke tailor in Johannesburg in the 1930's but this could have been another Lazarus Miller (two possible Lazarus Millers are listed in the South African Rootsweb). Of the younger Nachman Rolnick and his descendants I have found nothing.




The Vaal River near Englebrecht's Drift.

Part three: From Telz to London

Descendants of the Wynberg Rollnicks had already been living in England for fifty years before I found that another branch of the Lithuanian Rolniks had been well-established in London by 1901. These were the wife and children of a Kalman Rollnick, and at that date they were living in London's East End. The eldest son, Abraham, then 26 years old, worked as a tailor. His brother Reuben, 23 at the time, was a harness maker and their two sisters, Bella, 22, and Esther, 20, were box makers. The mother, Bessie (or Betsy in a later census record), was "supported by her children".³⁷

I learned about these Rollnicks by what must now be a common pattern in genealogical networking. I was trying to get clear the story about Louis Levy, husband of my aunt Sarah Rollnick of Wynberg. Louise³⁸, who had much information about Louis, wrote in an email: "I have sent your emails to my brother-in law (my twin sister's husband). His sister is married to a ROLLNICK and she had done lots of research, you never know you may be related to them." Sure enough, with a little research, Louise and her sister found that the UK Rollnicks were the descendants of a Kalman³⁹ Rolnik of Telsiai. Reuben's father's name was written on Reuben's marriage certificate as "Coleman Rollnick (deceased, Dealer)."



CERTIFIED COPY OF AN ENTRY OF MARRIAGE GIVEN AT THE GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE

Application Number 3295834-1

1902. Marriage solemnized at <i>East Endon Synagogue</i> in the District of <i>St. Paul's Old Town</i> in the County of <i>London</i>								
Column	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.
944	Subsist March 1902	Reuben Rollnick Hornie Linger	23 years	Bachelor	Postmaster	20, Broad St St James's	Coleman Rollnick (deceased)	Nestor
		Hornie Linger	20 years	Spinster	—	Same place	Louis Linger (deceased)	—
Married in the <i>East Endon Synagogue</i> according to the <i>usage</i> of the <i>Jews</i> by <i>certificate</i>								
This Marriage was solemnized between us, <i>Reuben Rollnick</i>			in the Presence of us, <i>R. Weinstal</i>			<i>Joseph F. Allen</i> <i>Registrar</i>		

The connection Coleman to Kalman was easily made, and the Kalman Rolnik found in the Lithuanian Jewish Genealogy database

³⁷ England census, 1901

³⁸ Surname withheld

³⁹ The name Kalman has a lovely origin. It is derived from the Greek Qalonimos meaning Good Name or Shem Tov, itself an often-found Hebrew Name.

See: <http://www.jewishgen.org/databases/GivenNames/>

gave him with a likely age, born in Telsiai (Telz) in 1836, the son of Itsyk. In the Tax Records for Lithuania of 1881, Kalman is listed as “poor, unable to pay”. Being a son of Itsyk of Telsiai, he was of the tribe of the Northern Rolniks.

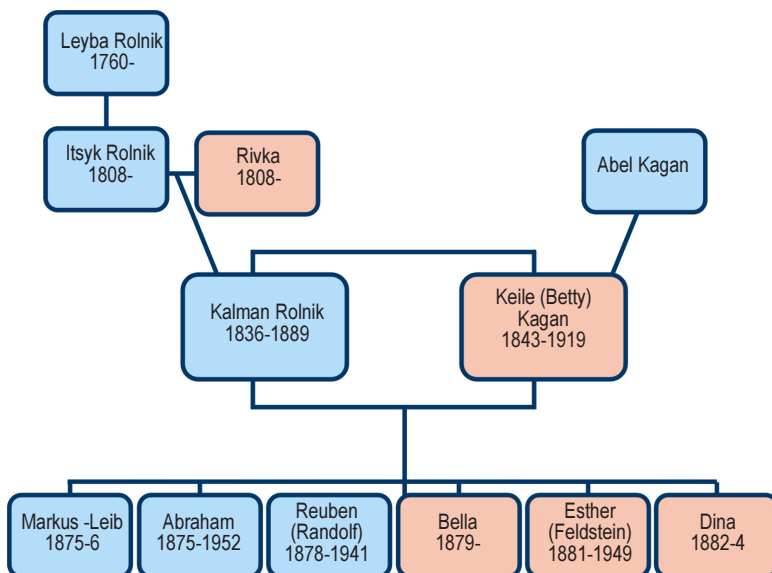
Kalman married Keila Kagan in 1873:



Lithuania Marriages and Divorces

Searching for Surname Kagan (D-M code 556000) and Given Name Keyla (D-M code 580000) and Town Telsiai (D-M code 384000) Number of hits:2 Run on Friday 18 October 2013 at 08:48:00						
Marriage Place Town /Uyezd/Guberniya	Groom Name	Groom Father Mother Place	Groom Age		Rabbi	Place Recorded
Marriage Date (DD/MM/CCYY) Hebrew Date	Bride Name	Bride Father Mother Place	Bride Age	Comments	Witness 1 Witness 2	Year Recorded Record Type Record #
Telsiai Telsiai Kaunas	ROLNIK, Kalman	Itzyk	37		A. KHAIMA	Telsiai 1871
29/6/1873 15 Tammuz	KAGAN, Keila	Abel	30	both divorced	KALON A. SHER	Marria 16

The six children of Kalman and Keile Rolnik



But a genealogical problem arose. Reuben, by then a bootmaker, is listed in the England Census of 1911 as having being born in Courland, Russia. Courland is, of course, Kurland in Latvia, then part of Russia. But Kalman lived in Lithuania in 1881, not Latvia. An enquiry to the

Latvian State Archives gave me: “Dear Mr. Stein, Unfortunately we did not manage to find any information about the family Rolnik. This surname does not appear in our documents and we think it could be of Lithuanian origin. Sincerely, Leading researcher, Rita Bogdanova.”

This was as far as I could go until I recently discovered, in the Jewish Genealogy Latvian database, death records for four Rolniks in the hospital at Hasenpoth (Aizpute) in the Kurland⁴⁰. Two recorded the deaths of children of Kalman Rolnik, a third was that of Kalman himself: “ Kalman Rolnik, married man from Telsh, Peddler, died of Anemia in 1889”. Poor Kalman, losing two little children, Markus Leib, 10 months old, and Dina, dying of croup at 15 months, and then himself dying of Anemia⁴¹.

Latvia Deaths Database



Searching for Surname rolnik (D-M code 986500) Number of hits: 4 Run on Saturday 19 October 2013 at 12:10:31							
Name (Click to view book of images)	Father	Residence	Date of Death	Town	Place Recorded		Archive / Fond / Aprakst. [List] / Lieta [Item]
			Day/Month/Year		Uyezd	Year	
	Hebrew Date	Guberniya	Record #				
	Age			Image			
Comments			Cause of Death				
ROLNIK, Lea	-	-	14/1/1873 [27 Tevet]	Hasenpoth / [Aizpute]	Aizpute / Hasenpoth / Gazenpot		LVVA/5024/2/79 4
	--	-	36	Gazenpot	1873		
	-	-	Tumor	Courland	F2		
ROLNIK, Markus- Leib	Kalman	-	9/9/1876 [3 Tishri]	Hasenpoth / [Aizpute]	Aizpute / Hasenpoth / Gazenpot		LVVA/5024/1/3 12
	--	-	10 months	Gazenpot	1876		
	-	-	-	Courland	M9		
ROLNIK, Dina	Kalman	Telsh	17/7/1884 [7 Av]	Hasenpoth / [Aizpute]	Aizpute / Hasenpoth / Gazenpot		LVVA/5024/2/96 10
	[Beila]-	Peddler.	15 months	Gazenpot	1884		
	-	[Born on 23-May-1883.]	Croup	Courland	F12		
ROLNIK, Kalman	-	Telsh	7/2/1889 [18 Adar]	Hasenpoth / [Aizpute]	Aizpute / Hasenpoth / Gazenpot		LVVA/5024/2/115 5
	--	Married man	60	Gazenpot	1889		
	-	-	Anemia	Courland	M1		

Apparently Kalman’s widow took her four remaining children with her to England at some time between Kalman’s death and the first

⁴⁰ The Jewish Vital Records of Latvia Database Phase I: Rabbinate Death Records. Transcription, transliteration, and translation by Christine Usdin (France). The records for this period have an interesting structure. One page records the deaths for that day or days, written in Lithuanian or Russian, while on the facing page is the same material, but now in Hebrew as written by the local Rabbi.

⁴¹ I have not been able to further identify the person on the first record, Lea Rolnik, born 1836, who died in 1873 of a tumor.

relevant England census record, 1901. Whom did they join in England? I have found no Rollnicks there at that time. Did they join her family, the Kagans/Cohens? Perhaps, but there seems no way of locating the Kagan/Cohens in question.

The census lists the family, living in 8 Blossom Street Stepney. Keila had taken the name Betty, later changed to Betsy. Blossom St is just ten minutes' walk from Petticoat Lane, where the Rollnicks could buy everything that they needed and could afford.

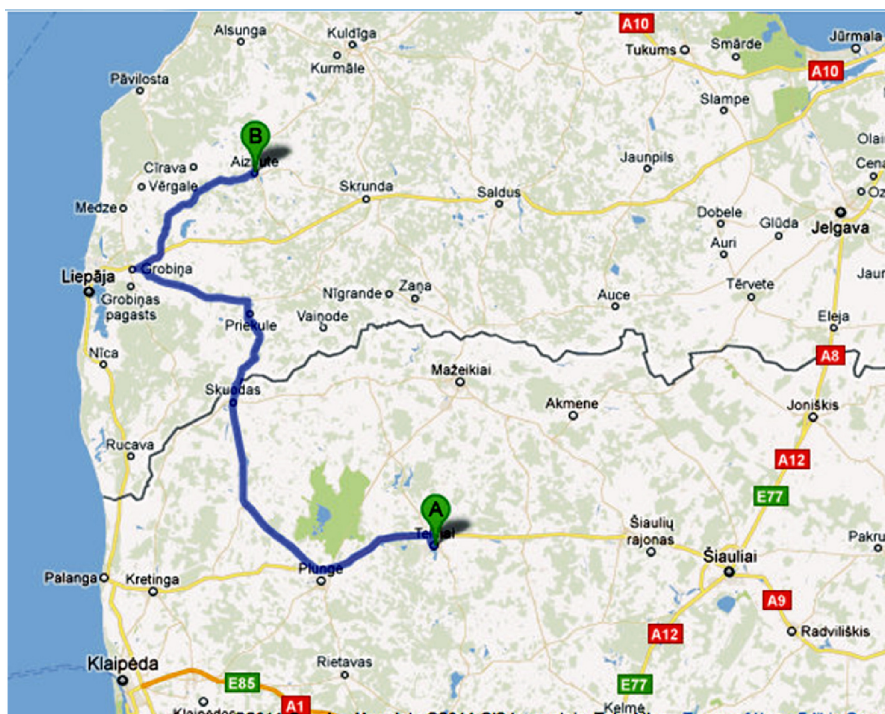
Administrative County		Civil Parish		Ecclesiastical Parish		County Borough, Municipal Borough, or Urban District		Ward of Municipal Borough or of Urban District		Sanctuary		Parliamentary Borough or Division	
London		St. Mary Abchurch		St. Mary Spital St.		St. Stepney		St. Spitalfields		St. Spitalfields		St. Whitechapel	
No. of HOUSE	ROAD, STREET, &c. and No. of NAME of HOUSE	HOUSES				Name and Surname of each Person	RELATION to Head of Family	Age last Birthday of Person	PROFESSION OR OCCUPATION	Employer, Worker, or Own account	Working at Home	WHERE BORN	
		Uninhabited	Inhabited	Partly Inhabited	Partly Uninhabited								
2						Henry Thomas	Head	57	Black Horse Carver	Worker		S. Lee Old St.	
						Mary A	Wife	46				Kingston Rd	
						George	Son	7	school attendant			Bethnal Green	
						John	Son	5	school attendant			St.	
						Margaret Cobrell	Daughter	5	Corn baker	Worker		Hawbury St	
						Arthur	Son	5	Box maker	Worker		Kingston Rd	
						Rita	Grandchild	5	school attendant				
						Wilhelmina Adams	Wife	60	Widow	Worker	at home	Germany	
						Adolphus	Son	24	Footpath painter	Worker		City of London	
						Anna	Son	8	Widow	Worker		St.	
						Samuel	Son	19	Widow	Worker	at home	Hawbury St	
						George	Son	18	Miller			Whitechapel	
						William	Son	13				St.	
						Betty Rollnick	Head	57	Widow			Russia	
						Abraham	Son	26	Printer	Worker		St.	
						Joseph	Son	23	Widow			St.	
						Rita	Son	5	Box maker			St.	
						John	Son	5				St.	



Blossom Street as it looks today:

Thus Kalman the peddler lived and worked both in Telsiai and in the Kurland. Telsiai (at A on the map below) is some 150 Km from Hasenpotoh (Aizpute at B on the map), using the modern road system, perhaps only a 100 Km using the roads of Kalman's time.

The present road goes through Plunge where Itsik Abel Rolnik, son of Kalman's first cousin Movsha, was living at the time Kalman was travelling that route.



Betty Rollnick died in 1919, with a Rebecca Rollnick⁴² dying around the same time, perhaps casualties of the influenza epidemic. The UK birth records give Abraham as the father of just one child, Reuben of six, Esther (married to Gedalia Feldstein) had four children. (I have found no further trace of Bella Rollnick). The descendants of the London Rollnicks have now spread out into the nearby Counties.

⁴² The two were successive names in the same Death Record. Rebecca was recorded as having the same age as Betty and also lived in Wandsworth. Were they, perhaps, sisters-in-law, or was this simply a doubled entry on the record, Betty and Rebecca being one and the same person? I can find no record for a Rebecca Rollnick in England at around this time.