



*Family stories uncovered through
genealogical research*

Jewish Genealogy
Society of NE Florida

Bernie Grossman
Marla Westberg
January 9th, 2019

Agenda: Jan. 9, 2019



- ❖ Introductions (first timers)
- ❖ Society Business
- ❖ Presentations
 - ❖ Family stories uncovered through genealogical research - Presented by our members
- ❖ Adjourn

Society Business



- ❖ If you have not paid your dues, \$10. per person, \$15. per family, please do so.
- ❖ If anyone would like one on one mentoring, please let Marla know and we will schedule a one hour meeting with one of our experienced researchers before one of our monthly meetings, from 4:30 to 5:30 pm
- ❖ Please let us know about any ideas that you have for future meetings and please consider volunteering to make presentations at our meetings
- ❖ Don't forget our website, especially **Upcoming Events**, **Useful links** and **Presentations**
 - ❖ <https://jgsofneflorida.wordpress.com>

Next Meeting



- ❖ Scheduled meeting on Wednesday, February 13 at 6:00 pm has been **CANCELLED**
- ❖ Instead we will have a **special Sunday morning meeting**. The meeting will be jointly sponsored by the Federation's Shalom Jacksonville, the JGS on NE Florida and the River Garden Hebrew Home and will take place here on February 17th at 10:30 am.
- ❖ The meeting will screen the film: **"The Land Was Theirs,"** set in New Jersey, and about Jewish farmers and their communities. It opens a window on the wider experience of immigrants who came to America in search of a better life and found it in the rural countryside.
- ❖ We will be joined by Roy Goldman, the son of one of the farmers in the film, who grew up in that environment and who will provide commentary on the film.

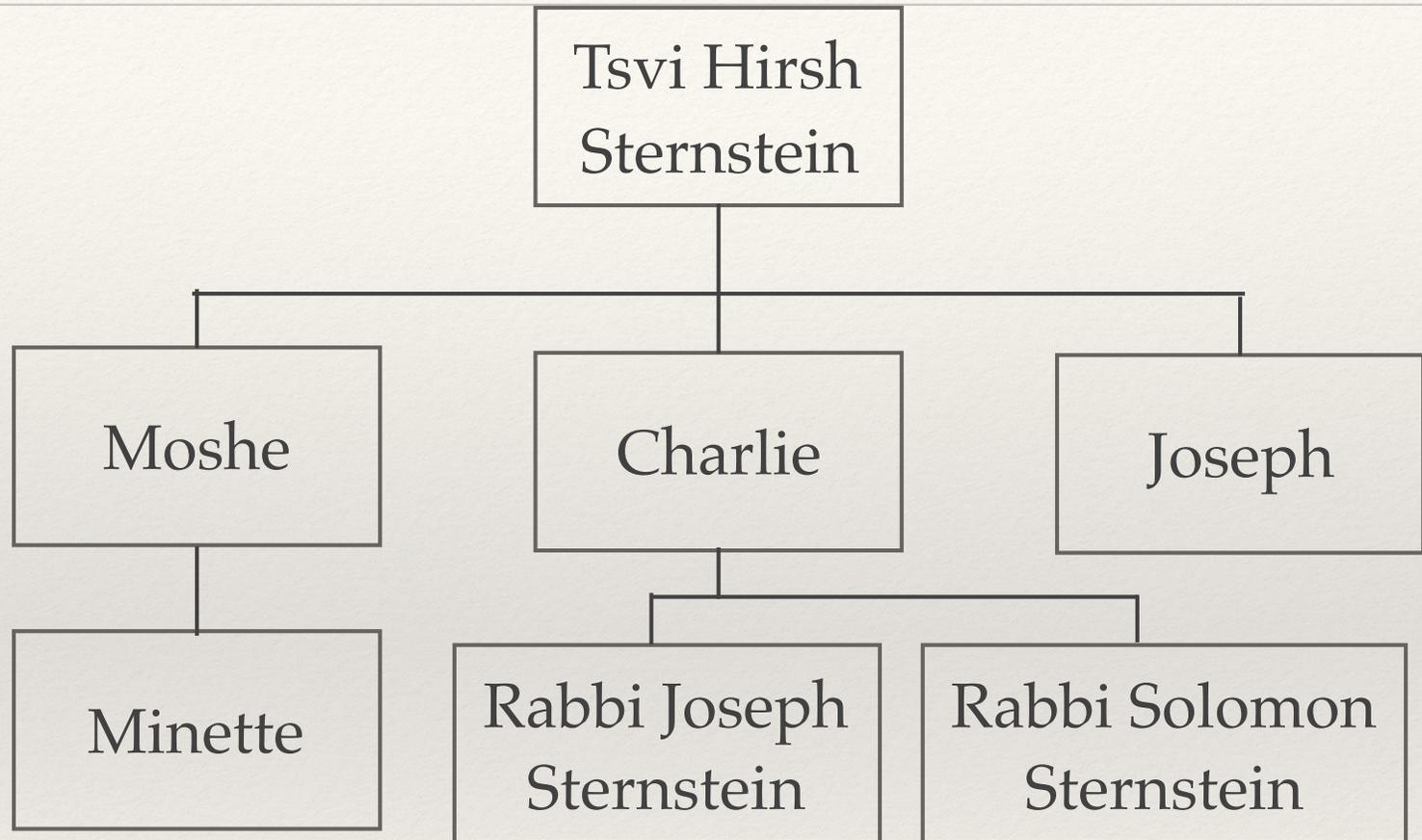
Upcoming Meetings



- ❖ Sunday, February 17 at 10:30 am
- ❖ Wednesday, March 13 at 6:00 pm
- ❖ Wednesday, April 10 at 6:00 pm

Family stories uncovered through genealogical research

Marla Westberg: What happened to Uncle Joseph?



- ❖ Joseph Sternstein was my grandmother Minette's uncle
- ❖ He was born in 1893 in Yampol, Ukraine, came to the U.S. in 1907

Arranged Marriage

- ❖ In 1920 Joseph had an arranged marriage
- ❖ But it wasn't a good match
- ❖ My family said he was serious and studious
- ❖ She wanted to have a good time

Didn't work out

- ❖ They had a daughter in 1922
- ❖ But his wife was unhappy
- ❖ She had brothers who didn't want to see her so unhappy
- ❖ The brothers were like gangsters
- ❖ They planned to kill Joseph

Joseph disappeared

- ❖ So Joseph disappeared during the night
- ❖ My grandmother still cried when I asked about this
- ❖ A couple of the brothers were still in touch with him
- ❖ Said he went to Argentina

His daughter wanted to know

- ❖ Joseph's brother Charlie owned a Jewelry store
- ❖ One day his daughter brought in a watch inscribed with Joseph's name
- ❖ His brother fixed it and didn't mention that the young woman was his niece

Trying to find Joseph

- ❖ I had asked a couple of different people in Buenos Aires to look for signs of Joseph
- ❖ He was not in the Jewish cemetery
- ❖ No record of him, at least not with that name
- ❖ I was stuck

A cousin found more info

- ❖ A distant cousin, a granddaughter of Charlie, collaborates with me
- ❖ She found Joseph's marriage record

New York City, Marriage Indexes, 1907-1995



[View Image](#)

[View Record](#)

Name Joseph N Sternstein

Gender Male

Spouse Sarah Shackitt

Household Members

Name
Joseph N Sternstein
Sarah Shackitt

Wife was Sarah Shackitt

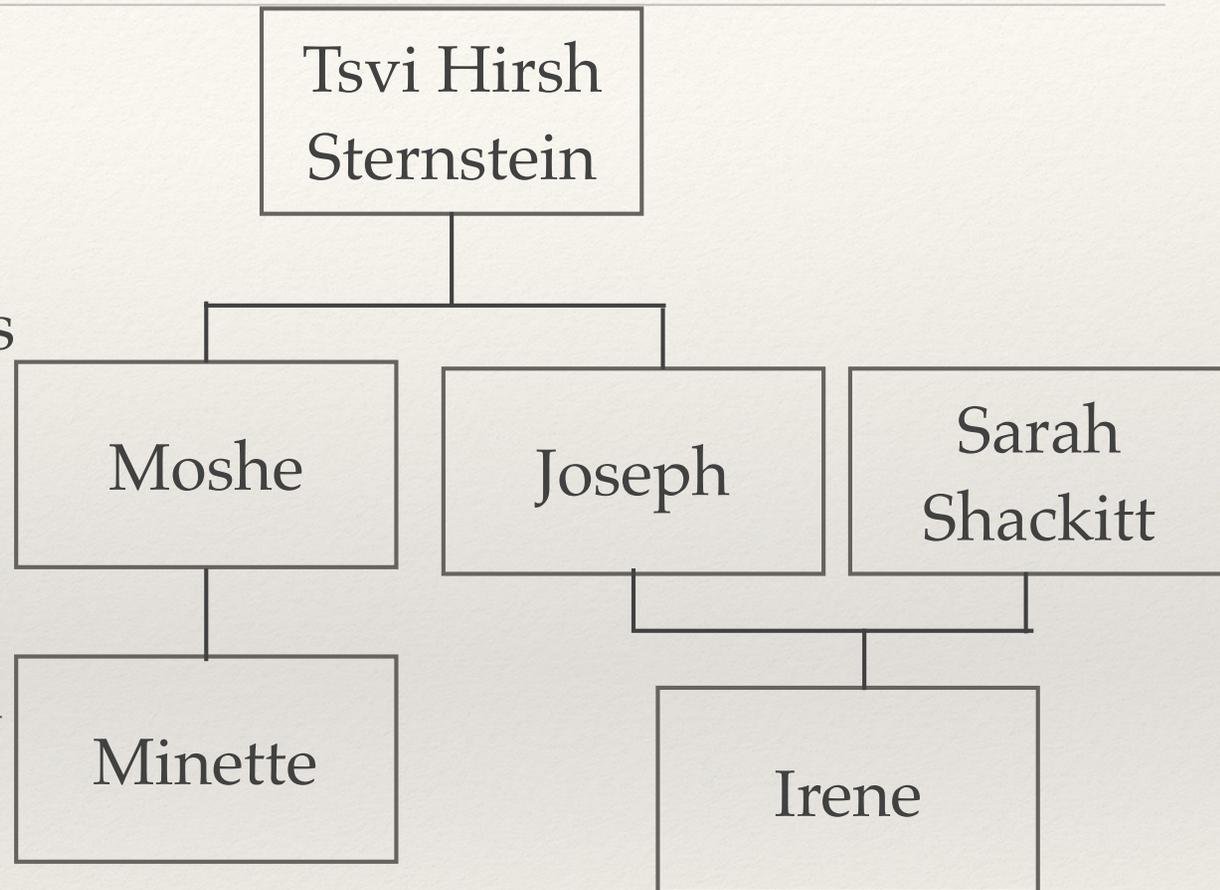
Irene

- ❖ With the mother's name we also found records for the daughter Irene
- ❖ Born in 1922, died in 2002
- ❖ Married name Hornstein
- ❖ Irene lived in Miami, not far from her first cousin, my grandmother Minette
- ❖ They never met

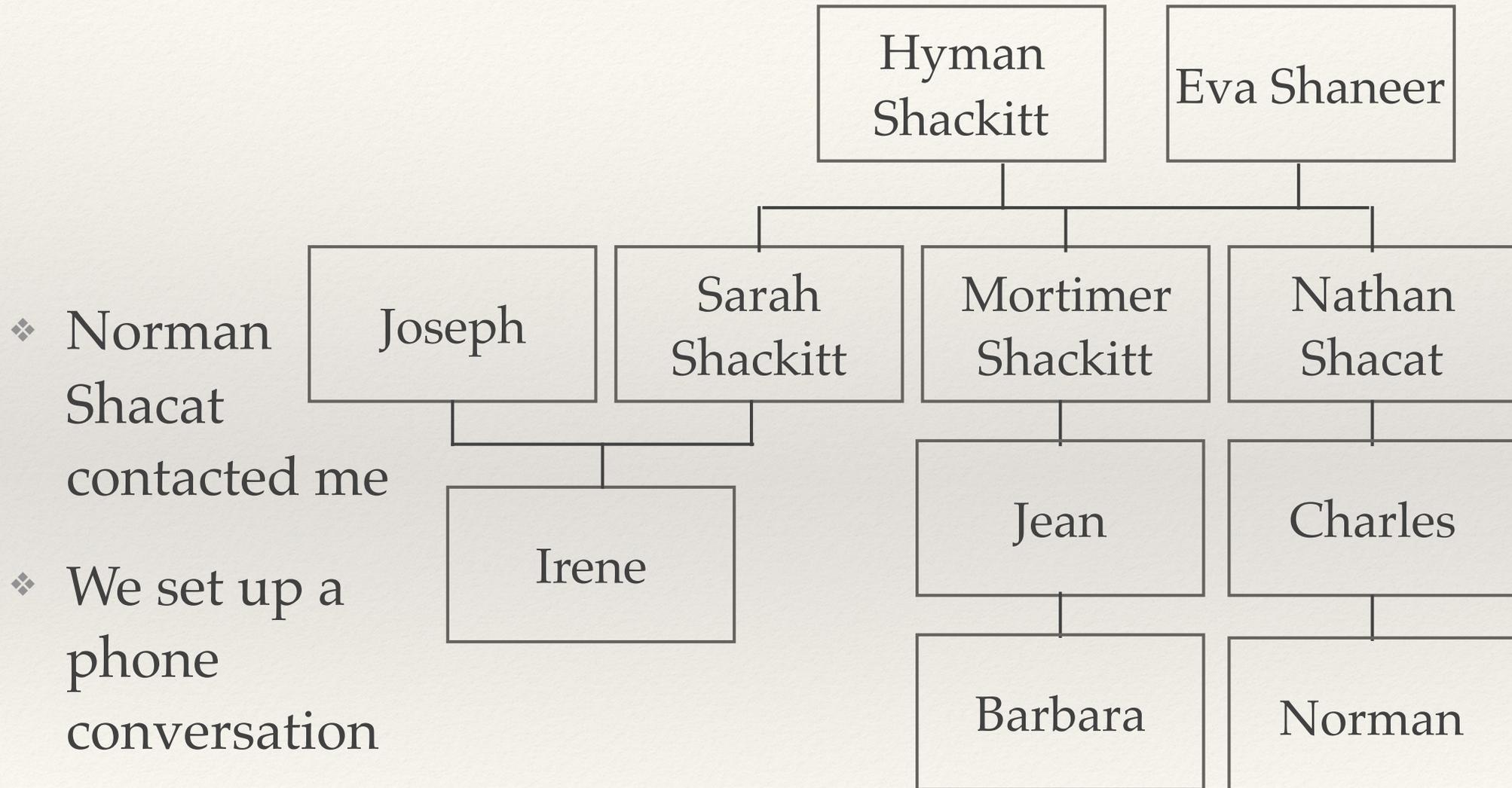
Name:	Irene Sternstein [Irene Sternstein Hornstein] [Irene Hornstein]
Gender:	Female
Race:	White
Birth Date:	31 Jan 1922
Birth Place:	Brooklyn, New York [Brooklyn N Y??, New York]
Death Date:	10 Sep 2002
Father:	Joseph Sternstein
Mother:	Sarah Schackitt
SSN:	052163869
Notes:	Aug 1938: Name listed as IRENE STERNSTEIN; Apr 1942: Name listed as IRENE STERNSTEIN HORNSTEIN; 20 Sep 2002: Name

Adding to the family tree

- ❖ I added Sarah and Irene to my family tree
- ❖ I was able to find Sarah's parents and siblings
- ❖ A descendant of this family was friends from college with my nephew
- ❖ Tried to make contact but that didn't pan out



They found me



This is what he told me

- ❖ The Shackitts had a business working with someone who figured out a way to freeze and transport eggs
- ❖ They provided eggs to Hellman's mayonnaise and Mueller's noodles
- ❖ The Shackitts made the cans for the eggs

And also

- ❖ Joseph and Sarah had an arranged marriage
- ❖ It didn't work out
- ❖ Sarah was a nice girl, but sort of plain
- ❖ Joseph was very handsome - a real catch!

And then....

- ❖ One night Joseph disappeared and abandoned Sarah and their 2-year-old daughter
- ❖ And he took all the money from their family business

The aftermath

- ❖ Sarah and Irene went to live with Mortimer, one of her brothers
- ❖ I'm in touch with Barbara, the granddaughter of this brother
- ❖ Barbara's mother Jean grew up in the same household as the fatherless Irene
- ❖ She was a brat because she got whatever she wanted, since she didn't have a father

Irene's family

- ❖ Irene married and had two daughters
- ❖ Barbara tried to help me find them
- ❖ I left phone messages, saying I was a relative of their mother
- ❖ Never heard back

Still looking for Uncle Joseph

- ❖ Two of his brothers knew where he went
- ❖ They never told
- ❖ Maybe some day DNA will provide a clue

Judy Benwick Story

Rhoda Goldstein Story

Alan Golin Gass Story

- ❖ I received this in an unsolicited email on January 5th. I do not know him:
- ❖ I have been living with a family mystery for many years. My grandfather, **Albert Golin**, never told anyone where he was from. All that my mother and her four sisters could ever tell me was that he had a brother, who was adopted. His adopted surname, they thought was **Friedman**, or some variant. The brother married a **lady from Jacksonville** who owned a hotel. The other fact that I know, from a Colorado Springs newspaper clipping (the Golin family lived in Colorado Springs from 1908 until 1920, when they moved to Denver) is that my aunt, May Golin and my grandmother, Mollie Chisdes Golin, visited the brother sometime in the 1920's.

Can you help?

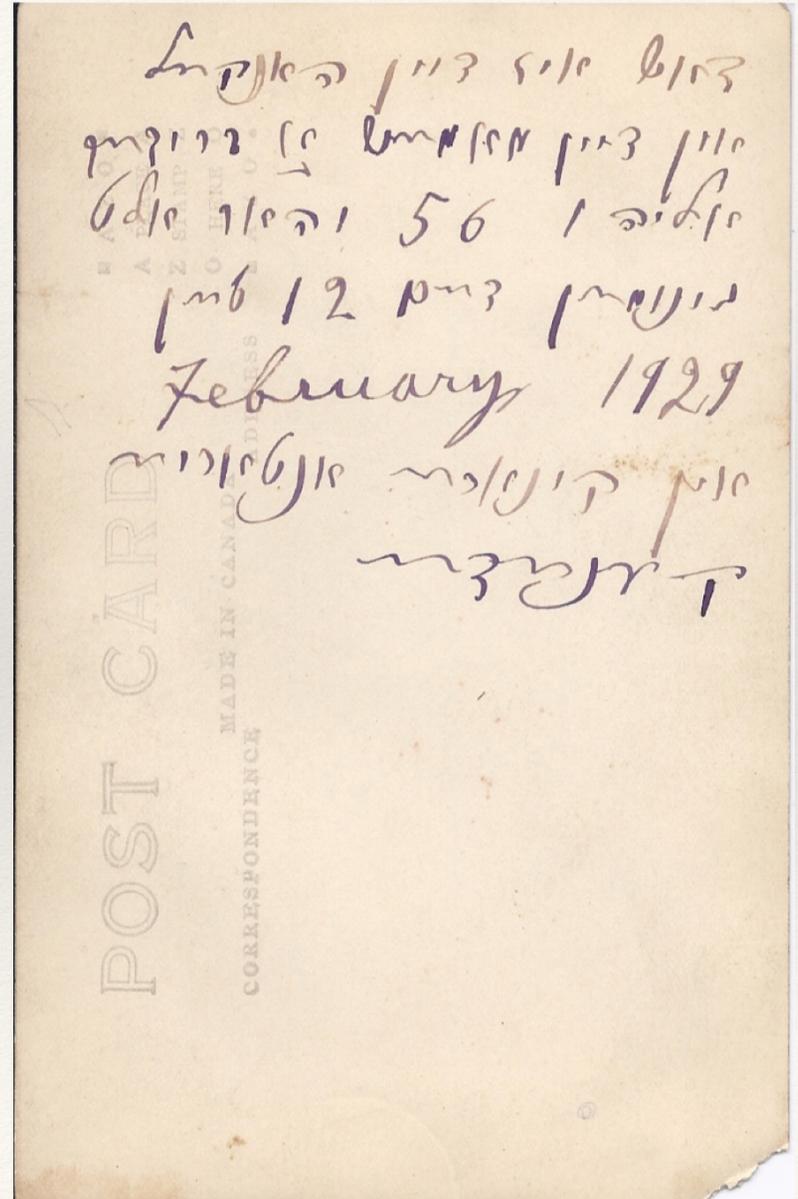
- ❖ I am attaching a photo, possibly take at that time
- ❖ My aunt, May Golin, is in the center. I need to verify that this image was taken in Jacksonville, FL. , in the 1920's sometime.
- ❖ I further hope to find the identities of the other two ladies in photo.
- ❖ I know this is scant information, but I have been researching this needle in a haystack for over thirty years, to no avail.
- ❖ I would appreciate any information that you or any of the resources in Jacksonville might be able to furnish.

Do you recognize this place?

- ❖ Is this Jacksonville in the 1920's?



Bernie Grossman: Who is this man?



Didn't think he was a relative

- ❖ I had this postcard in a stack of old photos and it always intrigued me. I assumed that he wasn't a family member, since he looked prosperous.
- ❖ A few years back, through Jewish Gen Family Finder I had made contact with Cheryl in Canada. We discovered that her great grandmother Hena Berzon and my grandmother Sora Bayla Berzon were sisters in Kamai Lithuania. We had shared many interesting family stories.
- ❖ Since I new that Cheryl was an expert in translating Lithuanian Yiddish dialect, I asked for a translation. I didn't imagine the photo was a relative

Cheryl's translation

- ❖ This is my translation of the Yiddish inscription:

This is your uncle
and your mother's brother
Eliyahu 56 years old
Taken the 12th
of February 1929
in Kenora, Ontario
Canada

Cheryl's Story

- ❖ Bernie: Through our oral family history, I was told that my grandfather Hilel went to live with his uncle in Kenora, Ontario after emigrating to Canada. By the time I learned this, no one remained living who had either known him or recalled his name. My mother thought that the uncle was a brother of Hena, so that he likely had the surname Berzon.
- ❖ I have actively been searching the existence of this uncle's existence in Canada. I was thrilled to see the photograph of the man wearing the winter coat

Bernie: How is friend Rafi related to cousin Sylvia

- ❖ My good friend Rafi Haftka was born in Palestine. His parents and grandparents emigrated there from Poland in the 1930's. Rafi came to the US to go to graduate school after completing his degree at the Technion.
- ❖ Rafi has remained in the US since the early 1970's. Here, he met a cousin, Silvia Haftka who emigrated to the US from Poland in 1939 with her father Alexander and mother Ola. Sylvia is now in her late 80's and Rafi in his mid 70's
- ❖ Rafi had always thought that Alexander was his grandfather's Joseph Haftka's brother.
- ❖ Just recently Sylvia told him that her father told her that he didn't have any brothers. How could this be?

How are cousins really related

- ❖ Fortunately Haftka is not a common name which greatly helps research. This is what I found
- ❖ From the ship manifest: On 14 March, 1941 Alexander Hafftka, age 50, his wife Ola, age 57 and daughter Sylvia Maria age 9 sailed on SS. Hirmaru from Yokohama Japan to Seattle Washington. Their nationality was listed as Polish, with Alexander born in Czestochowa, Ola in Zarki and Sylvia in Warsaw. Their last residence was Lithuania
- ❖ From Jewish Gen, they are listed in "Lithuania, Jews Saved by Passports from the Japanese Diplomat Chiune Sugihara, 1940"

How are cousins really related

- ❖ But the real help came from searching the JRI - Poland database on Jewish Gen:



Jewish Records Indexing - Poland

Czestochowa Book of Residents 1870-1900
(Click here for more Information about Books of Residence)
Piotrkow Gubernia / Katowice Province
Located at 50°48' 19"07"
Last updated May 2007

Searching for Surname HAFTKA
(D-M code 573500)
and Town CZESTOCHOWA
(D-M code 443570 or 443470)
where year >= 1870 and year <= 1930.
In Piotrkow Gubernia
In ALL data

Surname	Given Name	Maiden Name	Father	Mother	Mother Surname	Born
HAFTKA	Aleksander Zyskind		Tobiasz	Gitla	ERLICH	22 Nov 1888
HAFTKA	Szamsia Lejb		Tobiasz	Gitla	ERLICH	10 Dec 1905
HAFTKA	Rywka Nechuma		Tobiasz	Gitla	ERLICH	18 Jun 1895
HAFTKA	Laja		Tobiasz	Gitla	ERLICH	16 Jul 1898
HAFTKA	Judessa		Tobiasz	Gitla	ERLICH	28 Feb 1899
HAFTKA	Estera		Tobiasz	Gitla	ERLICH	22 Apr 1900
HAFTKA	Dawjra		Tobiasz	Gitla	ERLICH	15 Nov 1907
HAFTKA	Josok Ieek		Tobiasz	Sara	GRADON	10 Oct 1884

Mystery Solved

- ❖ From the Czestochova Book of Residents we see:
- ❖ Alexander Haftka, had 6 sisters and no brothers. Parents Tobias Haftka and Gitla Erlich: Sylvia correct ✓
- ❖ Alexander had a half-brother, Joseph Isaac Haftka, parents Tobias Haftka and Sura Gradon: Rafi correct ✓
- ❖ Rafi didn't know his great grandparents names. His middle name Tuvia is the Hebrew of Tobias

Marla Westberg: How are we related to the Muchnicks?

- ❖ When my parents were married, the ceremony was performed by Rabbi Mordechai Leib Muchnick, and his son, Nathan.
- ❖ They owned a catering hall in Brooklyn.
- ❖ They were chosen since they were relatives of my mother's family.
- ❖ At that time, my father's grandmother said "They're my cousins too".

But how are we related?

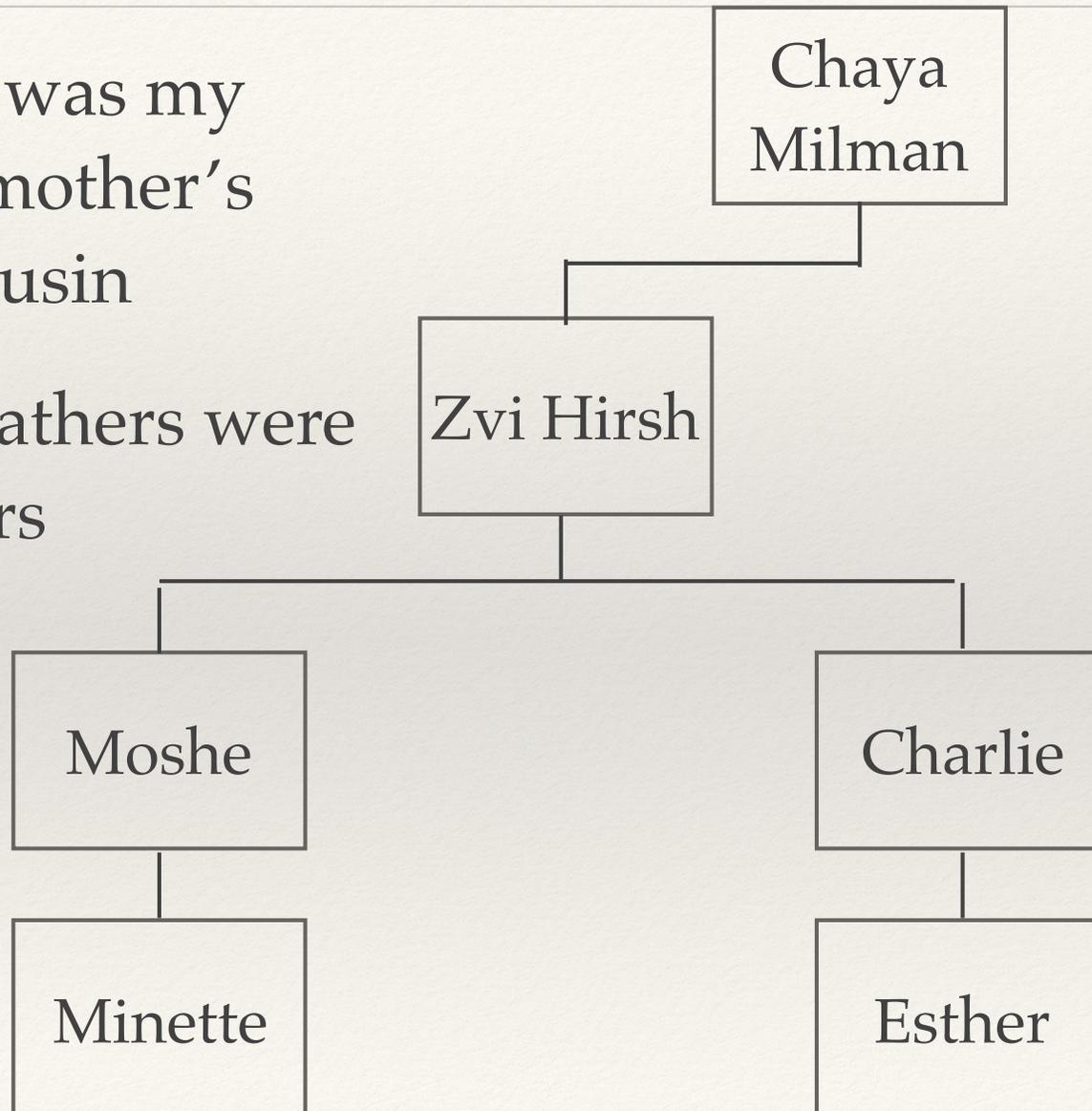
- ❖ No living person on my mother's side or my father's side could tell me how we were related.
- ❖ Fast forward to the present day... my parents are friends with Rabbi Muchnick's grandson Sheldon.
- ❖ Everyone knows that we are family.
- ❖ No one knows how we're related.
- ❖ Everyone I asked said "We're second cousins".

Clues

- ❖ Back in the '80s I lived in Israel for a number of years
- ❖ Visited in Jerusalem my grandmother's cousin Esther
- ❖ And Jeanette Halpern
- ❖ Jeanette was Rabbi Mordechai's youngest child
- ❖ Jeanette told me that she was closer relative to Esther, but we were related going back another generation or two

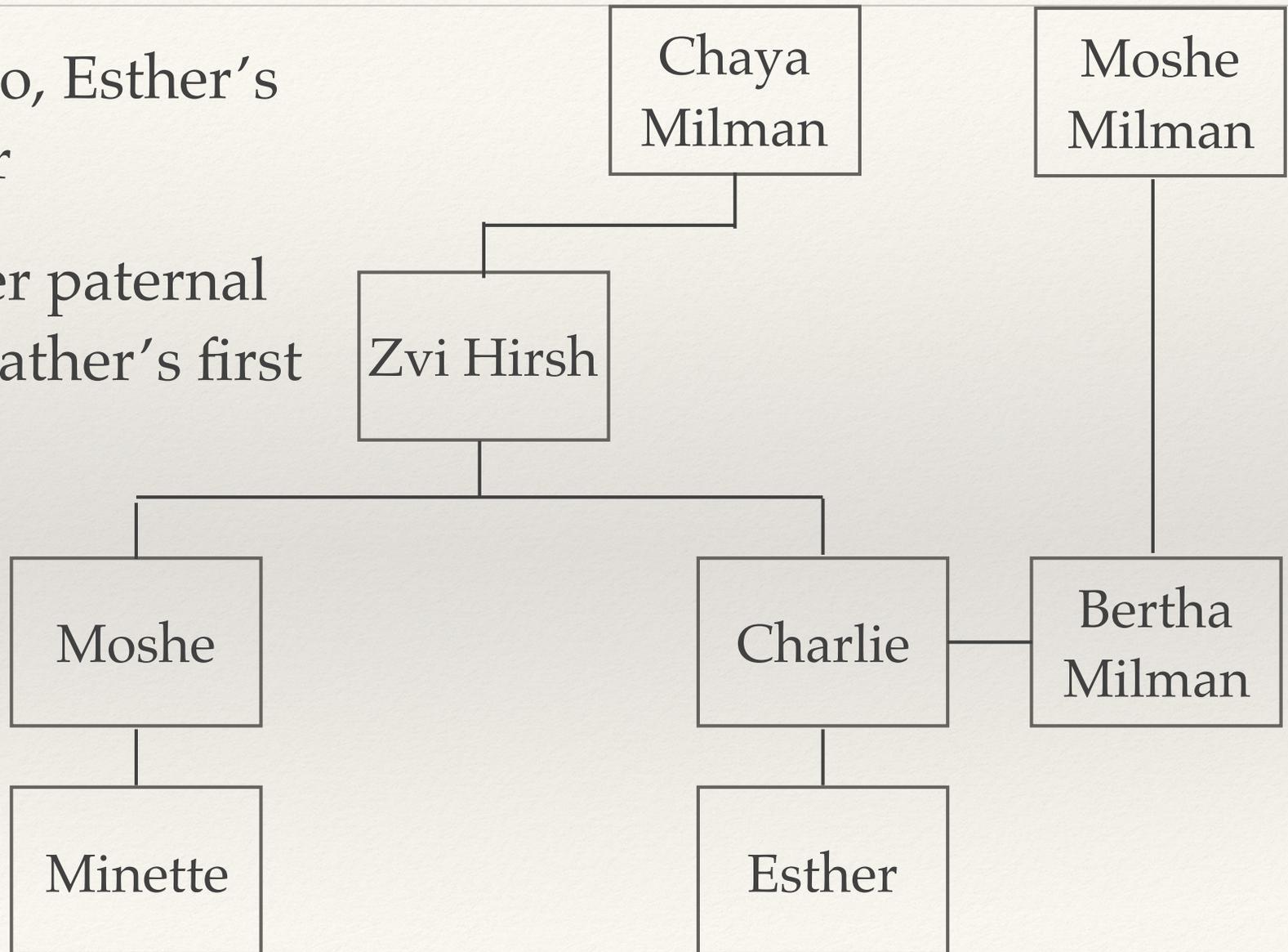
Relationship to Esther

- ❖ Esther was my grandmother's first cousin
- ❖ Their fathers were brothers



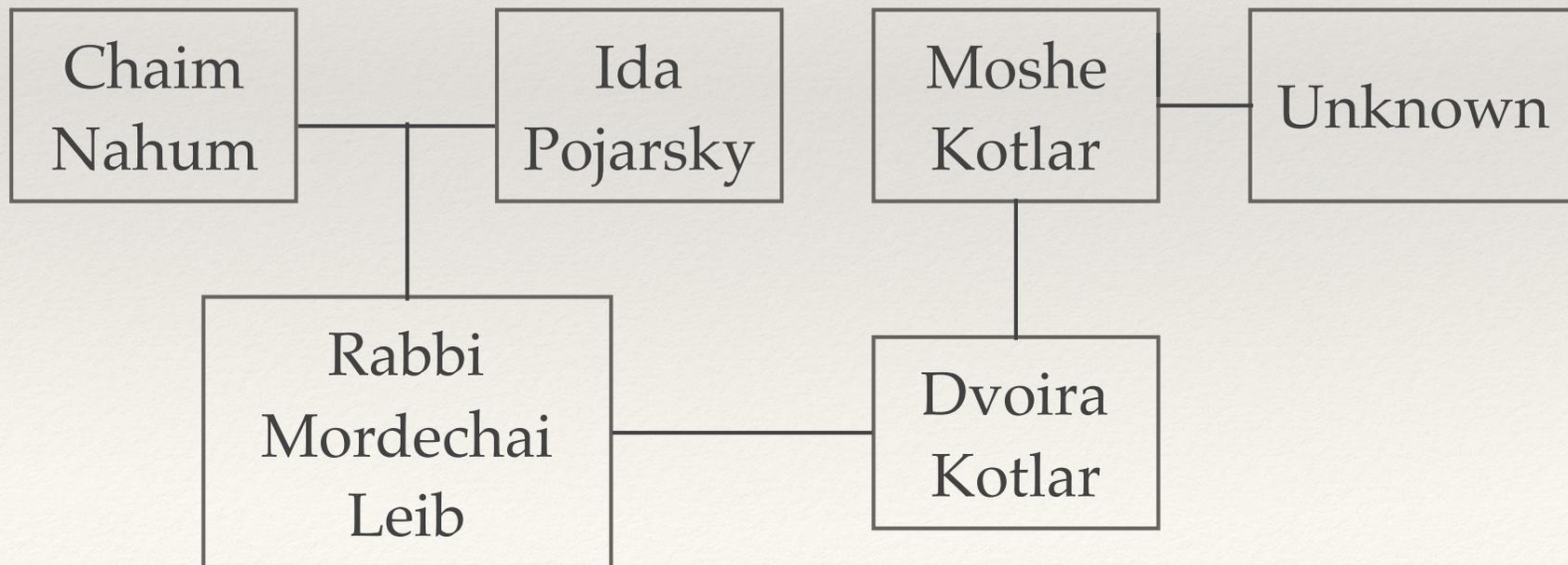
Relationship to Esther

- ❖ But also, Esther's mother
- ❖ Was her paternal grandfather's first cousin



Muchnick family tree

- ❖ Talked with Sheldon, my parents' friend
- ❖ A descendant had put a family tree on Geni



Rabbi Mordechai's Petition

(To be retained by clerk)

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
No. 207228

fb PETITION FOR NATURALIZATION

To the Honorable the U S District Court of Eastern District at Brooklyn, NY

The petition of Mordco Muchnik hereby filed, respectfully shows

(1) My place of residence is 583 Linwood Street, Brooklyn, NY (2) My occupation is rabbi

(3) I was born in Uman, Russia on February 5, 1879 My race is Hebrew

(4) I declared my intention to become a citizen of the United States on March 19, 1930 in the U S District Court of Eastern District at Brooklyn, NY

(5) I am married. The name of my wife or husband is Dwoira we were married on December 10, 1901 at Teplik, Russia; he was born at Tepli, Russia on December 5, 1881; entered the United States at New York on September 2, 1930 for permanent residence therein, and now resides at 583 Linwood Street, Brooklyn, NY I have 7 children, and the name, date, and place of birth, and place of residence of each of said children are as follows: Sholim, February 15, 1902, Russia; Chawa, May 15, 1910, Russia; Enta, July 30, 1911, Russia; Mechamia, April 10, 1913; Nochim, May 12, 1915; Esfira, September 10, 1916; Sheindla, November 25, 1918; the first four were born in Russia and the last three in Rumania; all reside New York, N.Y., except Sholim who resides in Palestine.

(6) My last foreign residence was Chernowitz, Rumania I emigrated to the United States of America from Cherbourg, France My lawful entry for permanent residence in the United States was at New York, under the name of Mordco Muchnic on December 6, 1929 on the vessel Leviathan as shown by the certificate of my arrival attached hereto.

(7) I am not a disbeliever in or opposed to organized government or a member of or affiliated with any organization or body of persons teaching disbelief in or opposed to organized government. I am not a polygamist nor a believer in the practice of polygamy. I am attached to the principles of the Constitution of the United States and well disposed to the good order and happiness of the United States. It is my intention to become a citizen of the United States and to renounce absolutely and forever all allegiance and fidelity to any foreign prince, potentate, state, or sovereignty, and particularly to

The State of Russia and or Carol II King of Rumania

of whom (which) at this time I am a subject (or citizen), and it is my intention to reside permanently in the United States. (8) I am able to speak the English language. (9) I have resided continuously in the United States of America for the term of five years at least immediately preceding the date of this petition, to wit, since December 6, 1929

Info from Records

- ❖ He was born in Uman, Ukraine
- ❖ He was married in Teplik
- ❖ His wife Dwiora was born in Teplik
- ❖ Immigration information led to ship manifest
- ❖ Various SS records confirmed Dvoira's maiden name
- ❖ Clue: My father's grandmother (Tzvia) was from Teplik

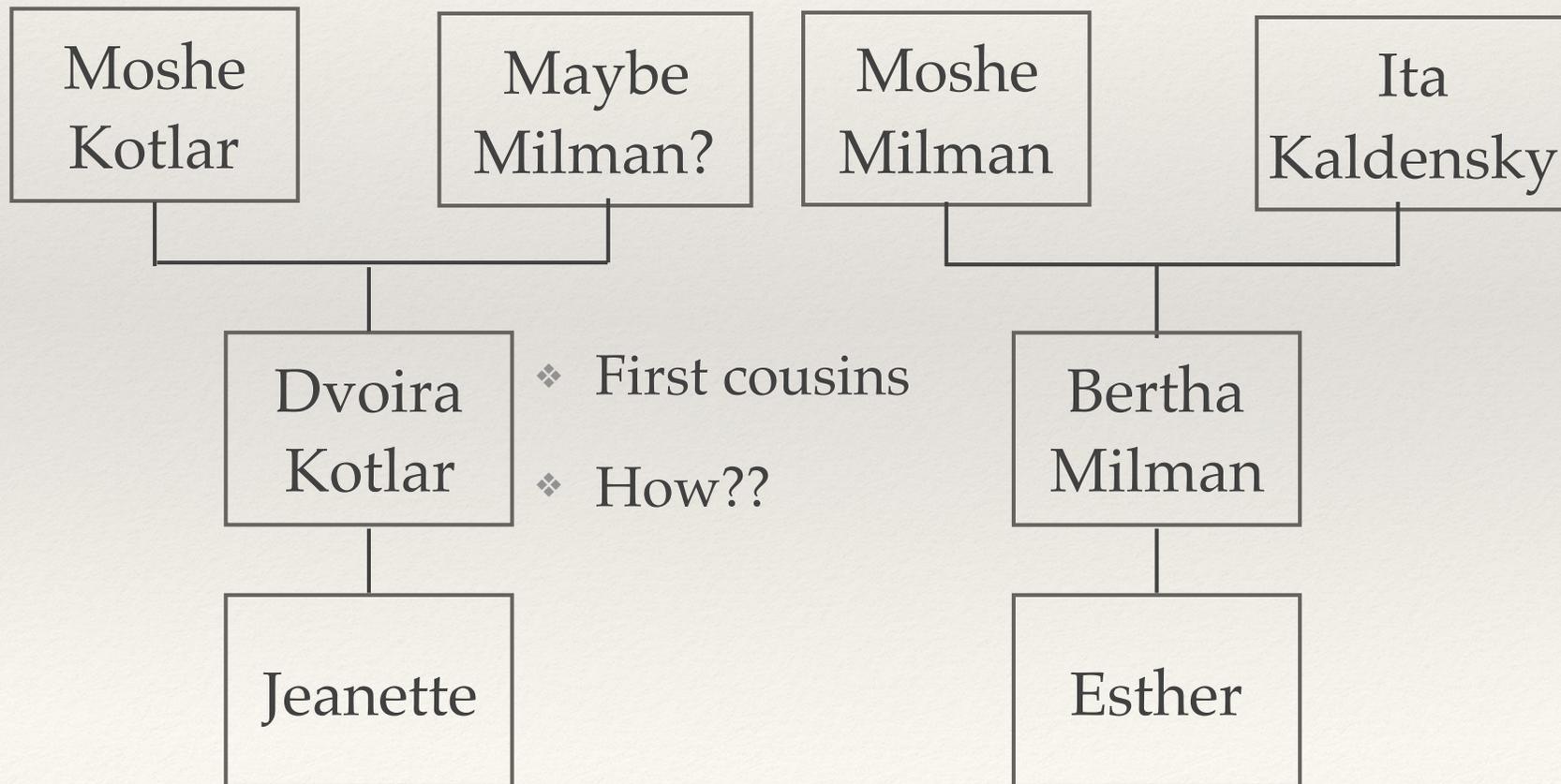
Talking to everyone

- ❖ I found a niece of Mordechai, Rochelle
- ❖ Her mother was Mordechai's sister
- ❖ Lots of info about the family, but she didn't know my family
- ❖ Maybe the relationship was on Dvoira's side?
- ❖ She said she thought Dvoira's maiden name was Shenker

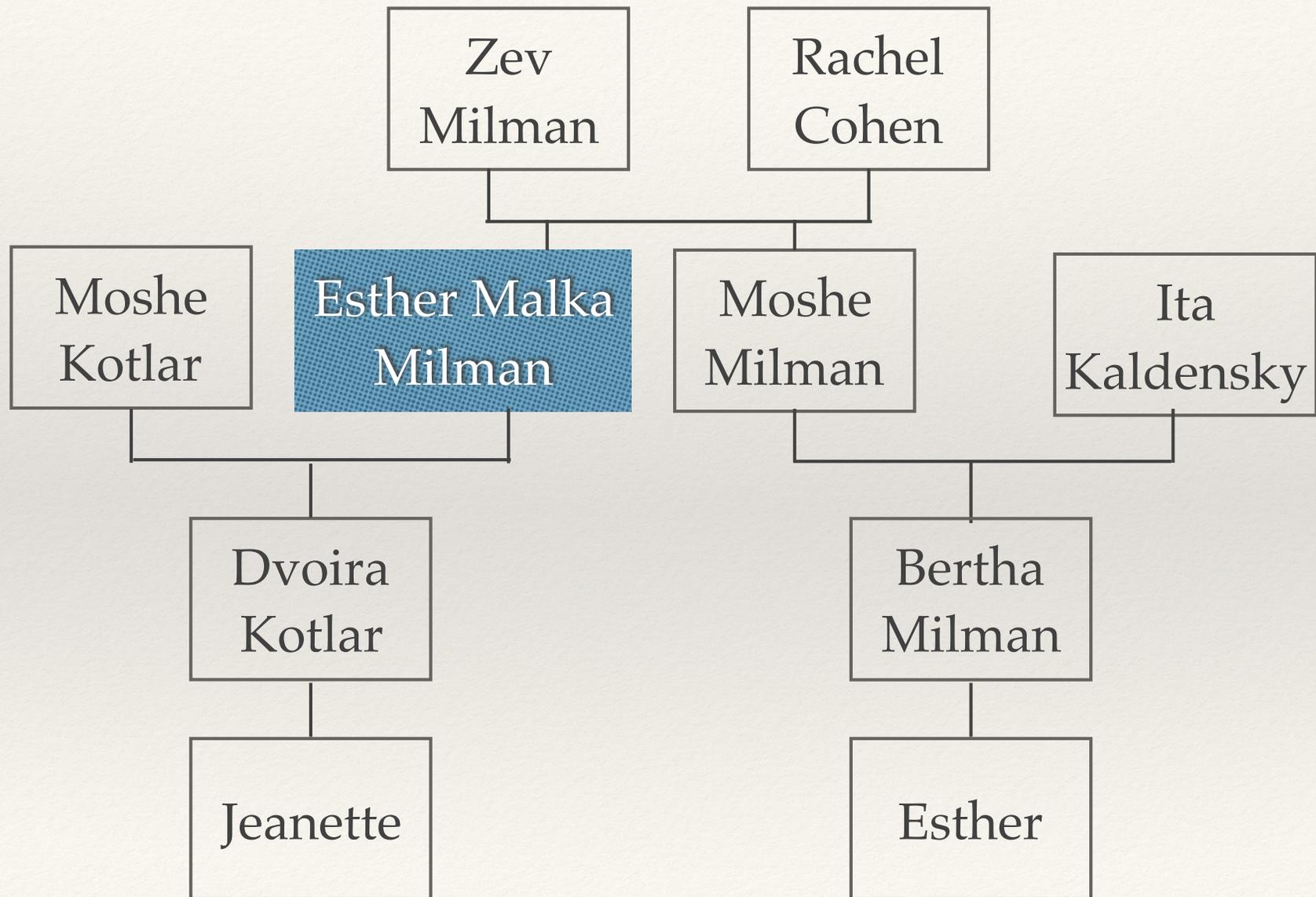
Someone had more info

- ❖ Rochelle gave me the email address for Chaim Fertig
- ❖ Chaim's mother, Esther Malka, was a daughter of Rabbi Mordechai (and Jeanette's sister)
- ❖ He told me that Esther and Jeanette (and also Esther Malka) were related in this way:
- ❖ Their mothers were first cousins!

How were they first cousins??



Fertig family tree

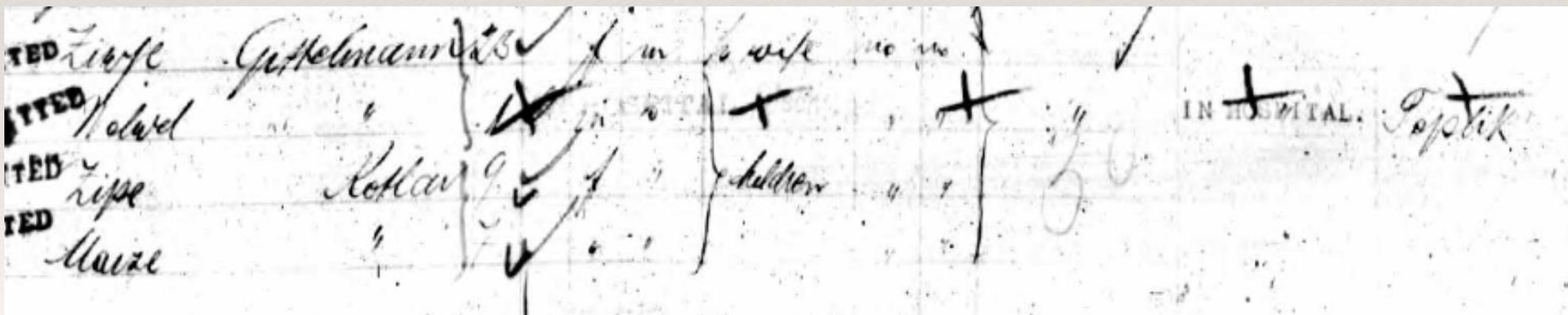


One mystery solved, another remains

- ❖ But how were they related to my father's family?
- ❖ Dvoira was from Teplik, same place as my father's grandmother
- ❖ Rochelle sais she thought Dvoira's maiden name was Shenker
- ❖ But we know it was Kotlar
- ❖ My great-grandmother's maiden name was Shenker

Zipe and Maize Kotlar

- ❖ Ship manifest April 13 1906
- ❖ My great-grandmother brought two girls
- ❖ Zipe and Maize Kotlar, ages 9 and 7
- ❖ Still working in this one!



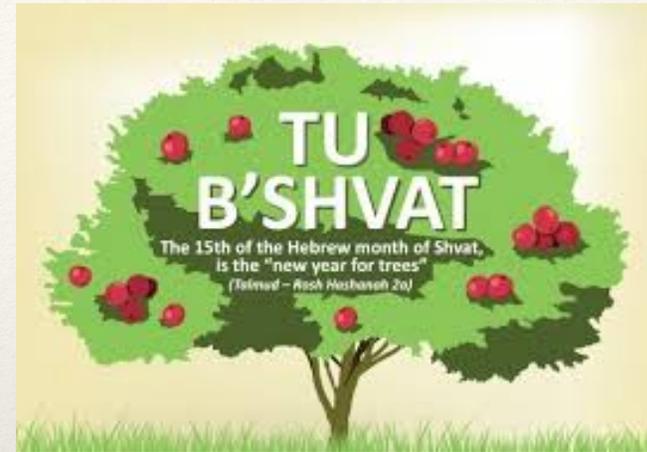
What I now know

- ❖ Both of my parents are related to Rabbi Mordechai's wife
- ❖ My mother is related on Dvoira's mother's side
- ❖ My father is related on Dvoira's father's side
- ❖ I believe my great-grandmother was related on her father's side, the Shenker side.

And finally



Have a wonderful Tu B'shvat
Jan. 20-21, 2019



Join us for our next
meeting

**Sunday Feb. 17 at
10:30 am**

Film: *The Land Was Theirs*
commentary from Ron Goldman

