

Slavjaciski and Jochelman families.

My father Leib(a) Slavjaciski was born in Tukums, Latvia, in 1908, as the fifth son of Haim Yitzhak and Bluma Slavjaciski. On birth he was given a Hebrew name, Yehuda, but when arriving in Israel (then Palestine), in 1933, he registered as Arie. He passed away in Israel in 1986.

Haim Yitzhak Slavjaciski, my grandfather, was born in Lithuania, in 1874, in a small town (now Suvainiskis? or Krakinova) near Panevezys. The name Slavjaciski indicates the town where he came from. His parents, and he himself, as he admitted, made, occasionally, some changes in the name until it became Slavjaciski. He studied in the famous Ponevezh yeshiva, in Panevezys, and in the Slabodka yeshiva, in the Vilijampole suburb of Kovno (now Kaunas), in Lithuania. His father was Yeshayahu (Shaye) Slavjaciski, and his mother was Zlate. Both his parents passed away when he was a very young man. He moved through little towns in Lithuania, teaching Talmud, all the way to Latvia, to become a "Shub", Shochet Ubodek, basically a butcher, in Tukums. It was a Rabbi Lichtenstein who recommended to him to become a Shub, and his teacher in studying for a Shub was one Yankelevich from Kandau (now Kandava), Latvia, whose oldest daughter was Bluma. They soon got married. He was a modest man, hard worker and spent all his life learning and teaching the Torah to his children. He had one sister, named Rosa - Friedl, or Rose, who immigrated, as a young girl, to Richmond, Virginia, in the U.S., where she married into a Glick family. She had 5 children all living in the U.S. My grandfather did not have a permanent resident status in Latvia and was constantly worried about his residency situation. In order to be accepted as a resident he studied and later became a bookbinder – a profession which would allow him to stay as a permanent resident in Latvia. It is assumed he worked as a part time bookbinder for the bookbinding business of Seldow, on Schlosstrasse now Pils iela number 10, in Tukums.

Bluma Slavjaciski, my grandmother, was born in Kandau (now Kandava), Latvia, in 1878, to the Yankelevich family. She was the oldest child to Menachem and Sarah Yankelevich, from Kandau, and had 5 brothers and 3 sisters. Two oldest brothers moved away from Latvia. Brother Yaakov- Zurah, moved to Germany and later to Israel, to the town of Bnei Brak, and brother Nahum moved to Salant in Lithuania. Other brothers and sisters, Meir, Shmuel, Miriam, Nehemia,, Anita and Dvora remained in Latvia. My grandmother was considered a very beautiful girl and married my grandfather at a very early age. My father remembered that she wore a wig all her life and that he had hardly ever seen her hair.

Both my grandparents spoke Hebrew, Idish, Latvian, German and Russian. They lived all their life together in Tukums, apparently, based on few remaining records, on either Myasnickyaya street (a Levy house) or on Brivibas Laukums 10 (or on both).

My father had 4 brothers and 3 sisters: the oldest was Yeshayahu (Shaye), born in 1901 in Tukums and passed away in Petah Tikva, in Israel, in 1990. My uncle Shaye was active in teaching and promoting the Hebrew language in Tukums, and when growing up he formed a Hebrew school in Tukums teaching and promoting Hebrew studies in the Hebrew language, which he managed for a few years. He moved to Israel in 1934, following my father, and married Nehama Shibolet- Zand, from Kedainiai, Lithuania. They had no children.

My father's other brothers and sisters, Yaakov -Meir, Shmuel, Eliahu -Dov, Rivka-Lea and Hana -Henia, remained in Latvia. Yaakov married one Malke and had a son Hirsch. Malke ran a perfumery shop in Tukums, on Brivibas Laukums 10.

During the First World War my grandparents and their children ran away from Tukums, worried about the advance of the German army, and stayed, first in Riga, for a short time, and then moved to live in Vezenberg (now Rakvere) in Estonia. They stayed in Estonia for some 3 years where they had a very difficult time. They were almost the only Jews in this small Vezenberg town and suffered from Anti-Semitism.

After the end of the first world war, in 1919, my father's family returned to Tukums and my father and his brother Eliahu-Dov were sent to study in a yeshiva in Riga. Both took the opportunity and, without informing their parents, attended also an evening high school. Both felt that in order to get a decent job in Latvia one had to attend a regular high school.

My father was the only one in his family who accepted full military service in the Latvian army, which he did as almost the only Jewish soldier in an army most Jews were trying hard to avoid. My father's military training and service helped him when moving in 1933 to Israel and becoming, inter alia, an instructor in the Haganah.

While in Riga my father became active in Zionist youth movements, and towards 1930, when he was 22 years old, he was already seeking to move to Israel (at that time Palestine). After many attempts he managed to get a "certificate", permit, to move to Palestine, from the British authorities who ruled Palestine at that time, and arranged, as was customary at that time, to take with him a young Jewish girl who was also planning her future in Palestine. Each and every recipient of such "certificate" was allowed to take with him his or her spouse, and my father's fictitious spouse was a certain Rosa Jochelman from Riga. Rosa, later my aunt, had 3 sisters and one brother. Her youngest sister, Hadasah – Dasha, became my mother. My parents got married in Israel on October 16, 1937. My mother came to Israel as a fictitious spouse of another man. I was born in Tel Aviv in 1940, and my only brother Aviem, was born in Haifa, in 1946.

I was named Menachem. I was born little more than a year after the break of the Second World War and contacts between Israel and Latvia broke. My father did not have any information on his family and his concerns grew each and every day. Menachem is the Hebrew word for condolences. My brother was born in 1946 when it became clear that my father's entire family, parents, brothers sisters and their families, who remained in Latvia, perished in the holocaust. His name means father and mother. A list of Jews murdered in Tukums compiled immediately after the war, includes all my father's family mentioned above as well as additional two unnamed grandchildren of my grandparents.

My mother Hadasah-Dasha Slavjaciski was born on July 14, 1914 in Riga to the Jochelman family. She passed away in Haifa, in Israel, in 1960. Her parents were Shimon (Simon) and Esther Jochelman, from Riga, and her father, was also a "Shub", a butcher. She was the youngest daughter and had 3 older sisters, Miriam-Marusia born in 1909, Riva, born in 1910, and Rosa, born in 1911. She had a younger

brother, Yehiel-Ilya, born in Riga in 1921, who was killed as a soldier in the Israel army, in 1948, during Israel Independence War, defending the Etzion Block. His body has never been recovered.

My mother went to school in Riga and became active in Zionist youth movement in Riga. Her family, parents and sisters, moved to Israel in 1935 following my mother and her sister Rosa.

My grandfather Shimon (Simon, Simanis) was born in Riga in 1871. He had one brother, Ber-Isaak, born in Riga in 1876 and one sister, Nechama, born in Riga in 1873. His brother passed away in Riga, at the age of 21. My grandfather was the son of Yehiel Jochelman born in Vidzy (Widze), then Lithuania, now Belarus. He worked as a Shub, butcher, in Riga and spend most of his time studying the Torah. My grandfather Shimon passed away in 1949. He could not overcome the death of his only son. My grandmother passed away in 1958. They ran a small restaurant for workers, at the living room and balcony of their apartment in Tel Aviv.

My grandmother Esther Jochelman was born to the Klatzkin (Klachkin) family, in 1880, in Kovno, now Kaunas, in Lithuania. Her parents were Israel-Iser and Miriam Klatzkin.

My grandparents on my mother`s side lived together in Riga, since their marriage and until moving to Israel. During the 1920`s they were registered as living in 103 Elisabethes street and in the 1930`s, and until they moved to Israel, they were registered as living in 91 Gertrude street.

My mother`s sisters all got married in Israel. Miriam married Aharon Rosenberg and had 3 children – Ami, Nehmia and Etziona. Rosa married Shura - Alexander Meerovitch and had 3 children - Daniel, Raya and Talma. Riva – Rivka married Mordechai Kamzon and had no children. All the Jochelman sisters and spouses have now passed away in Israel.