

# SECRETS OF JACOB

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DEBRA A. HARKINS

*Illustrated by*  
AUTUMN RAVEN

PURPLE OWL PUBLISHING

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ISBN: 978-1-7326371-2-2

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**Purple Owl Publishing**

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Check out the *Rosen (wald) Descendants* Facebook page. Introduce yourself and stay in touch with our family.

*Dedicated to our descendants*

*May you learn the struggles of the Rozen (wald) family to avoid repeating the  
past.*



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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

SYLVIA SARAH ROSEN HARKINS (James daughter) was an incredibly good sport, agreeing to a constant barrage of questions from her daughter Debra. Although Sylvia said she knew little about her father's past, she often remembered small but significant facts and stories her father told her when she was young. Thanks Mom! You made this happen. Caroline Franks Rosen (James 2<sup>nd</sup> wife) provided invaluable family information to her granddaughter Debra as part of a college genealogy interview assignment just six short months before she died.

MARK (Jimmy) TORBIN (James grandson) who wanted to learn about his namesake, our grandfather James Rosen. Jimmy kept genealogical records on ancestry.com that we were able to use to track down information about James including important details of his first marriage to Jimmy's grandmother, Sarah, and the military records of James and many other relatives in the Rosen family that served in England and the US during WW1, WW2 and the Korean War. I'm not sure this project would be completed without Jimmy's dogged pursuit of those military records.

SARAH ROSEN BIGGINS (James granddaughter) who, along with her son, MATT FOLEY, wanted to learn about the Rosen family line too and shared important documents and photos that she had obtained from her reluctant mother, Dorothy— who understandably did want not to discuss her painful memories. Thank you Sarah, Matt and Dorothy!

RUTH FISCH PADORR (Itta's daughter) is a fellow genealogist and kind soul. She was invaluable in sharing photos of James siblings, conducting phone interviews of Rosa's descendants including daughter Fanny, granddaughter ESTHER HALFRON and grandson JAMES IMIAK. Ruth also willingly shared her recollections of her mother Itta and Ruth's siblings. We owe a huge debt of gratitude to Ruth for generously providing much of the information collected on James siblings and their descendants and introducing us to relatives we never knew existed. Our family grew thru Ruth!

FANNY NOVIGROD (Rosa's daughter) sweetly recalled and shared her memories with Debra (via her son Sal's Spanish-English translation) of her grandparents, Sura and Mendel, her mother Rosa, her Aunt Itta, and her Uncles Adolfo and Henry. Fanny's son SALOMON (Sal) IMIAK (Rosa's grandson) graciously translated between Debra and his mother Fanny while Fanny was in a nursing home in Miami Florida. Sal openly shared the incredible story of how he and his brother, Abraham, were released from Castro's labor camps with the unwavering support of his Aunt Ruth Novigrod. A heartfelt thank you to Fanny and Salomon for sharing even the painful memories with us!

DEBBIE COHEN (Rosa's great granddaughter) who with her father Roberto Cohen—who wanted our family story told too— provided records and photos of Mendel and Sarah and their descendants and willingly shared recollections of James brothers Henry and Adolfo.

GARY BALESTRIERI for his amazing photography help, taking photos of old photos is never easy.



## FOREWORD

Before I began working with my cousin Jimmy to research the Rosen side of our family, we each had hit a major roadblock trying to find our maternal grandfather, James Rosen's, birth certificate. Basic questions like: What year was James born? Where was he born? led us to many dead ends, surprises, sadness, anger, happiness and every feeling between.

We learned a lot about our family roots, our connection to the historical suffering of Jewish people, and how and why most of our family ended up in the US, some in the UK and some in Cuba.

Most importantly, we bonded as cousins and found and made connections with family members that we never knew existed and for that we are eternally grateful. Little did we know that the search for our grandfather would reveal so much about the historical exiles of Jews; and of immigrants who so often find themselves caught up in political and religious persecution and violence; and the valiant attempts of those immigrants to find safety for themselves and their families.

Here, we share our journey to find our Rosen roots. Here is our Ashkenazi Jewish immigrant story.



# PART I

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## INTRODUCTION

*When the time came for her to give birth, there were twin boys in her womb.*

*The first to come out was red, and his whole body was like a hairy garment; so, they named him Esau.*

*After this, his brother came out, with his hand grasping Esau's heel; so, he was named Jacob."*

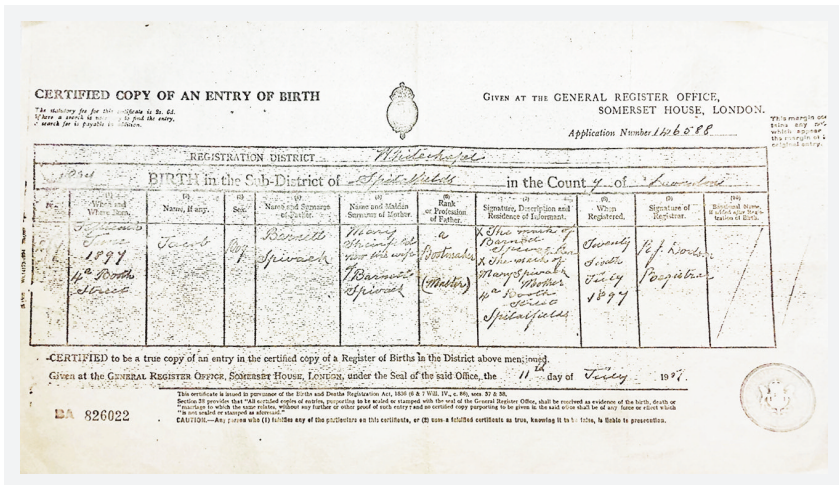
— GENESIS, 25:24-26

### The Search for James

Since our maternal grandfather, James Rosen, died in 1960, before Jimmy was born and when Debra was only 2 years old, we couldn't ask him when and where he was born. Unfortunately, our grandmothers' (yup, we have different grandmothers) had already passed by the time we decided to focus our genealogy research on our Rosen ancestors. Jimmy's mom, Eve (James 2nd daughter) died in 2001. Debra's mom, Sylvia (James

youngest daughter), was helpful with some family names and dates that guided our research; but, Sylvia reminded us that her mom and dad did not talk about “such things” like when and where they were born; and she had never thought to ask her father about his family while he was alive.

Jimmy and I started working together to try to find James in early 2017. Confusion quickly rose when we discovered that James “birth certificate” found within Caroline Rosen (Debra’s grandmother, James 2nd wife) personal belongings listed James as Jacob Spivack. Wait, what? Here, check out the birth certificate.



*Birth certificate: Jacob Spivack born 4 June 1897 to Mary Scheinfeld and Barnett Spivack in Whitechapel, England*

Was Jacob our grandfather’s real name and not James? We quickly learned that James is an anglicized version of Jacob; so, we thought *maybe the Spivack birth certificate does belong to our grandfather*. The birthdate seemed to match what Sylvia thought but she was also told

that James mother name was Sarah so that did not fit with the birth certificate. Did James wife, Caroline, believe this birth certificate to be James? We think so, since James death certificate which was completed by Caroline identifies James father's name as Barnett--the same name as what appears on the Spivack birth certificate. However, Caroline lists James mother as Sarah. Check out James death certificate below.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT--REGISTRY DIVISION, CITY OF BOSTON  
CITY OF BOSTON, COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
 CERTIFIED COPY OF RECORD OF DEATH IN OFFICE OF THE CITY REGISTRAR

Certificate No. 492  
W

I, the undersigned, hereby certify that I hold the office of \_\_\_\_\_ City Registrar of the City of Boston and I certify the following facts appear on the records of Births, Marriages and Deaths kept in said City as required by law.

No. 6627 Date of Death June 27, 1960 Name and surname of Deceased JAMES ROSEN  
(If Married, Widowed or Divorced, Maiden Name)

Sex and Color	CONDITION (SINGLE, MARRIED, WIDOWED OR DIVORCED)	REGISTERS AGE			NAME AND SURNAME OF HUSBAND OR MOTHER (If Married, Widowed or Divorced, Maiden Name)	RESIDENCE (STREET AND NUMBER)
		YEARS	MONTHS	DAYS		
M.	Married	62	--	---	Charoline Franks	79 Orchard St Cambridge
W.						

OCCUPATION	PLACE OF DEATH	PLACE OF BIRTH	NAME AND RESIDENCE OF FATHERS (MARRIED NAME OF MOTHER)
Machine Operator	818 Harrison Ave	London England	Barnet Rosen, Poland Sarah --- Poland

DISEASE OR CAUSE OF DEATH (REMARKS OR PREVIOUS)	PLACE OF BURIAL (NAME OF CEMETERY)	DATE OF RECORD
Coronary occlusion	Ashkgnaz Everett	Jun 30 1960

I further certify that by annexation, the Records of the following named cities and towns are in the custody of the City Registrar of Boston:--

ANNEXED	ADDRESS	ANNEXED
East Boston.....1822	Chelsea.....	1824
South Boston.....1841	Dorchester.....	1870
Roxbury.....1863	West Roxbury.....	1912
Dorchester.....1870	Hyde Park.....	1912

WITNESSE my hand and the SEAL of the CITY REGISTRAR  
 on this 26th Day of July A. D. 19 60  
*Charles J. ...* City Registrar  
 By Chapter 214 of the Acts of 1892, "the certainties or attestations of either Assistant City Registrar shall have the same force and effect as that of the City Registrar."

*James Rosen death certificate*

Initially, we were told by our mothers that James was born in England; but, we could not find him in any of the English birth records. An early family autobiography project<sup>1</sup> Debra completed for one of her doctoral courses in June 1994 indicates that through interviews with her grandmother, Caroline, that James was born in Poland and arrived in England at the age of 9 to live with his uncle. So, the Spivack birth certificate and the family lore was not making

sense in many ways including the notion that James was born in England. Jimmy even hired a genealogist to try to find James birth information; but, the genealogist couldn't find our grandfather either. I spoke with a professional genealogist by phone who thought it would be fun for her and her English born genealogist husband to try to find James using the many (costly) databases available to professional genealogists. They searched for James free of charge. However, after three hours, she and her husband were stumped. She said: "*Well this is rare. We don't usually get stumped. You have quite the "red herring"*"--which I learned in genealogy parlance means you have a piece of information that doesn't belong, that is not really part of the story. Jimmy and I suspected that it was the Jacob Spivack birth certificate that was the red herring but did not know how to prove it since we could find no other birth certificate for James Rosen. We continued to search for James not knowing the red herring or even whether we had a red herring. So, just imagine our surprise when we found a newspaper clipping tying James Rosen to the name Jacob Spivack.



1964 THE LONDON GAZETTE, 14TH MARCH 1961

- aforsaid, FOOTWEAR REPAIRER, and GENERAL DEALER. Court—PLYMOUTH. No. of Matter—5 of 1961. Trustee's Name, Address and Description—Ellis, John Edwin, Ford Park Chambers, Ford Park Road, Plymouth, Chartered Accountant. Date of Certificate of Appointment—10th March, 1961.
- HORSEMAN, George, Van Driver, residing at 39, Glamis Walk, West Hartlepool in the county of Durham, and lately carrying on business at that address and at 56, Brunswick Street, West Hartlepool aforesaid, as a MOBILE GROCER, and formerly residing and carrying on business at 1, Barnard Street, West Hartlepool aforesaid, as an OFF-LICENSEE, and GENERAL DEALER. Court—STOCKTON-ON-TEES. No. of Matter—2 of 1961. Trustee's Name, Address and Description—Cook, John Alan, Barrington House, 2, Bowesfield Lane, Stockton-on-Tees, Chartered Accountant. Date of Certificate of Appointment—9th March, 1961.
- RELEASE OF TRUSTEES
- COOK, Sylvia (married woman), trading as "Dyne Engineering Co.", residing at Ambassadors Hotel, Meyrick Road, Bournemouth, Hants, and lately carrying on business at 17-23, Londale Road, Kibbory, N.W.6, London, MACHINE TOOL MANUFACTURER. Court—HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE. No. of Matter—464 of 1950. Trustee's Name, Address and Description—Mackled, Toroull John Murdoch, Chartered Accountant, 4, Bucklersbury, London, E.C.4. Date of Release—3rd March, 1961.
- DOBBS, Raymond, of 2, Station Road, Waulwlyd, Ebbw Vale in the county of Monmouth, Steelworks Labourer, lately carrying on business as a BUILDER, at 2, Station Road, Waulwlyd, Ebbw Vale aforesaid. Court—CROCKWOOD, TREDEGAR and ABERTULLERY. No. of Matter—10 of 1959. Trustee's Name, Address and Description—Meredith, Walter Harold, County Court Buildings (First Floor), Westgate Street, Cardiff, Official Receiver. Date of Release—9th March, 1961.
- TOMPSON, Gladys, (married woman), of 17, Oakland Road, Rodley in the city of Leeds, lately carrying on business at 3, Rodley Lane, Rodley aforesaid, under the name or style of "Pat Thompson", LADIES and CHILDREN'S OUTFITTER. Court—BRADFORD. No. of Matter—4 of 1959. Trustee's Name, Address and Description—Williams, John Lewis, 20, North Parade, Bradford, Official Receiver. Date of Release—8th March, 1961.
- BEECH, Reginald Gilbert, residing and carrying on business at 21, Bedford Place, Brighton in the county of Sussex, under the style of "Salon de Gilbert", as a LADIES HAIRDRESSER. Court—BRIGHTON. No. of Matter—35 of 1950. Trustee's Name, Address and Description—Parker, Thomas Henry, 8, Old Stone, Brighton, 1, Official Receiver. Date of Release—10th March, 1961.
- DARE, Frederick Victor, of 36a, Pawaons Road, West Croydon in the county of Surrey, BUILDER, and PAYNE, Frederick John, of 423, Lodge Hill, New Addington, Croydon in the county of Surrey, BUILDER, lately trading together as D. & F. Builders, (a firm), at 423, Lodge Hill, New Addington, Croydon in the county of Surrey, BUILDERS, lately carrying on business at 3, Beacken Avenue, Shirley, Croydon in the county of Surrey, Court—CROYDON. No. of Matter—35 of 1959. Trustee's Name, Address and Description—Hill, William Joseph Wallis, 58-61, York Terrace, Regent's Park, London, N.W.1 (Official Receiver). Date of Release—9th March, 1961.
- BONSALL, Stanley, of 7, Church Walk, Eastwood in the county of Nottingham, BUILDER and CONTRACTOR, lately residing at and carrying on business at 44, Park Crescent, Eastwood aforesaid, and previously residing and carrying on business at 113, (renumbered 111), Main Road, Underwood in the said county of Nottingham. Court—DERBY and LONG EATON. No. of Matter—13 of 1959. Trustee's Name, Address and Description—Jordan, Walter William, 27, Regent Street, Park Row, Nottingham, Official Receiver. Date of Release—10th March, 1961.
- PHILO, Sydney Joseph, of 171, Normanshire Drive, Chingford in the county of Essex, TRAVELLER. Court—EDMONTON. No. of Matter—17 of 1958. Trustee's Name, Address and Description—Whitehead, Wilfred, 58-61, York Terrace, Regent's Park, London, N.W.1, Official Receiver. Date of Release—8th March, 1961.
- CONDON, Michael John, of 40, North Parade, Halifax in the county of York, no occupation, but lately carrying on business as a CAFE PROPRIETOR, at 40, North Parade, Halifax aforesaid. Court—HALIFAX. No. of Matter—3 of 1959. Trustee's Name, Address and Description—Williams, John Lewis, 20, North Parade, Bradford, 1, Official Receiver. Date of Release—8th March, 1961.
- ANDERTON, Monica Audrey, (married woman), residing at 71, Green Lane, Ilkeston in the county of Derby, lately residing and carrying on business at 93-95, Snetinton Boulevard in the city of Nottingham, as a GROCER, and GENERAL STORE PROPRIETOR. Court—NOTTINGHAM. No. of Matter—43 of 1959. Trustee's Name, Address and Description—Jordan, Walter William, 27, Regent Street, Park Row, Nottingham, Official Receiver. Date of Release—10th March, 1961.
- EWEN, George, of Priory Cottage, High Road, Fobbing, Stanford-le-Hope in the county of Essex, carrying on business as a BUTCHER and GROCER, under the style of Hanson Stores, (J. Ewen), at High Road, Fobbing, Stanford-le-Hope aforesaid, (described in the Receiving Order as a Butcher, Grocer and Draper). Court—SOUTH-END. No. of Matter—34 of 1959. Trustee's Name, Address and Description—Clifford, John Basil, Chartered Accountant, 4, Bucklersbury, London, E.C.4. Date of Release—24th Feb, 1961.
- THOMSETT, George Herbert, Clerk, 14, Plough Lane Close, Wallington, Surrey, lately residing and carrying on business at 123, Camden Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, as a CAFE PROPRIETOR. Court—TUNBRIDGE WELLS. No. of Matter—9 of 1959. Trustee's Name, Address and Description—Parker, Thomas Henry, 8, Old Stone, Brighton 1, Official Receiver. Date of Release—10th March, 1961.
- INTENDED DIVIDENDS
- LOODMER, John Bernard, formerly of 78, Wigmore Street, London, W.1, but whose present address is unknown, MANUFACTURER of LADIES WEAR. Court—HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE. No. of Matter—879 of 1954. Last Day for Receiving Proofs—28th March, 1961. Name of Trustee and Address—Vaz, J. J. Nung, C.A., Balfour House, Finsbury Pavement, London, E.C.2.
- SPEVACK, Jacob (commonly known as James Rosen), described in the Receiving Order as James Rosen, of 220, Arlington Road, London, N.W.1, lately of 32, Fountains Road, London, N.16, and lately carrying on business as J. Rosen, at 64, Christian Street, London, E.1, LADIES TAILOR. Court—HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE. No. of Matter—384 of 1948. Last Day for Receiving Proofs—28th March, 1961. Name of Trustee and Address—Walter, Arthur Aaron, Bankruptcy Buildings, Carey Street, London, W.C.2, Official Receiver.
- EVANS, Noel Griffith, residing at 6, Gambier Terrace, Garth Road, Bangor in the county of Carmarvon, of no occupation. Court—BANGOR. No. of Matter—12 of 1955. Last Day for Receiving Proofs—28th March, 1961. Name of Trustee and Address—Pagan, Ronald William Francis, West Africa House, 25, Water Street, Liverpool 2, Official Receiver.

James Rozen aka Jacob Spivack

Our confusion continued when we obtained James marriage certificate to his 1st wife Sarah Reuben (Jimmy's grandmother) from 1918 and the marriage certificate to his 2nd wife, Caroline Franks (Debra's grandmother) from 1939. We noticed that James identified

his father as Solomon Rosen in 1918 but as Mendel Rosen in 1939. Also, he used the name Jacob, aka James, in the 1939 marriage document. We decided that James was a *scallywag!* Yup, we were frustrated. If you're still following along with all these names, you'll notice that at this point, we had three names for James father: Barnett, Solomon, and Mendel; two names for his mother: Mary and Sarah; and two names for James himself: James Rosen and Jacob Spivack. Changing his name and his parents' names willy-nilly from one document to another, our grandfather was driving us crazy from the grave.


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

Application Number 8153195-1

1918. Marriage solemnized at <i>The Central Synagogue</i> in the District of <i>St. Marylebone</i> in the County of <i>London</i>									
Date	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	
	<i>100 September</i>	<i>James Rosen</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>Bachelor</i>	<i>Driver</i>	<i>110, Albert Street, N.W.</i>	<i>Salomon Rosen</i>	<i>Communist</i>	
	<i>1918</i>	<i>Sarah Reuben</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>Spinster</i>	<i>Communist</i>	<i>same place</i>	<i>Reuben</i>	<i>Traveller</i>	
Married in the <i>Central Synagogue</i> according to the <i>Usages</i> of the <i>Jews</i> by <i>certificate</i>									
This Marriage was solemnized between us <i>James Rosen</i> and <i>Sarah Reuben</i>			In the Presence of us <i>Herbert Weiss</i> and <i>Robert S. Spencer</i> <i>Minister of the Synagogue</i> <i>Secretary of the Synagogue</i>						

CERTIFIED to be a true copy of an entry in the certified copy of a register of Marriages in the Registration District of Marylebone

*James Rosen marriage to Sarah Reuben 1 Sept 1918*

CERTIFIED COPY OF AN ENTRY OF MARRIAGE  GIVEN AT THE GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE  
Application Number 8849410-1


1939. Marriage solemnized at <u>East London Synagogue</u> in the District of <u>Stepney</u> in the <u>Metropolitan Borough of Stepney</u>								
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
22	January 24th 1939	<u>Jacob Ottovise James Rosen</u>	44	Widower	Tailor	<u>Parrywood Road, Edlington</u>	<u>Mendel Rosen</u>	<u>Worked Proprietor</u>
		<u>Caroline Franks</u>	33	Spinster	—	<u>same place</u>	<u>Joseph (David) Franks</u>	<u>Cabinet Maker</u>

MARRIED in the East London Synagogue according to the Usages of the Jews by Antiquate

This Marriage was solemnized between us: James Rosen in the Presence of us: Morris Lidenberg Henry Fawcett Idenry Hart  
Caroline Franks

Secretary for Marriages

CERTIFIED to be a true copy of an entry in the certified copy of a register of Marriages in the Registration District of Stepney  
Given at the GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE, under the Seal of the said Office, the 14th day of January 2018

MXH 255950 

*James (aka Jacob) Rosen marriage to Caroline Franks 24 December 1939*

We were running out of ideas of ever figuring out who was our grandfather when a woman named Ruth Padorr from Miami, Florida contacted us via email and said she believed we were related. Ruth said her mom grew up in Cuba but that her mother—Itta Rosenwald and family—were originally from Poland. Ruth said the family always went by the surname Rosenwald and that the parents of James and her mother Itta were Sura and Mendel Rosenwald.

*Hmph... We're not Rosenwalds, we're Rosens! Ruth is confused.* Yes, we were in denial.

Except, it turns out that Ruth and I had copies of the same old photo. My photo originally belonged to my grandmother, Caroline, and on the back of the photo it said *James parents*; while Ruth's photo had originally belonged to her mother, Itta, and her colorized photo version of the same photo always hung in Ittas' living room. Who

were the people in that photo? Meet James and Ittas' parents, our great grandparents, Sura and Mendel Rosenwald.



*Sura and Mendel Rosenwald*

Shaul Stampfer<sup>2</sup> wrote that in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Jewish Eastern Europe “*The ideal man was the retiring, pale, delicate, Talmudist, with sensitive hands and long white fingers, while the ideal woman was an active, even aggressive, full-bodied woman with multiple chins.*” As can be seen in the photo above and in recollections by their granddaughter, Fanny, Grandpa Mendel was a smallish more delicate man while Grandma Sura was a full-bodied woman. James parents, our great grandparents, were the ideal 19<sup>th</sup> Century Eastern European Jewish couple!

Although we wanted to believe that Sura and Mendel were our great grandparents, Jimmy and I were still a bit skeptical as we still had no legal documents to prove the family connection to Ruth—who told us that these were James parents—we still had several documents with two different names for James and differing names for his parents. Our skepticism finally ended when our genetic results from *23andMe* confirmed that Ruth Fische Padoor (daughter of Itta Rosenwald) is a first cousin of Sylvia Sarah Rosen Harkins (daughter of James Rosen).

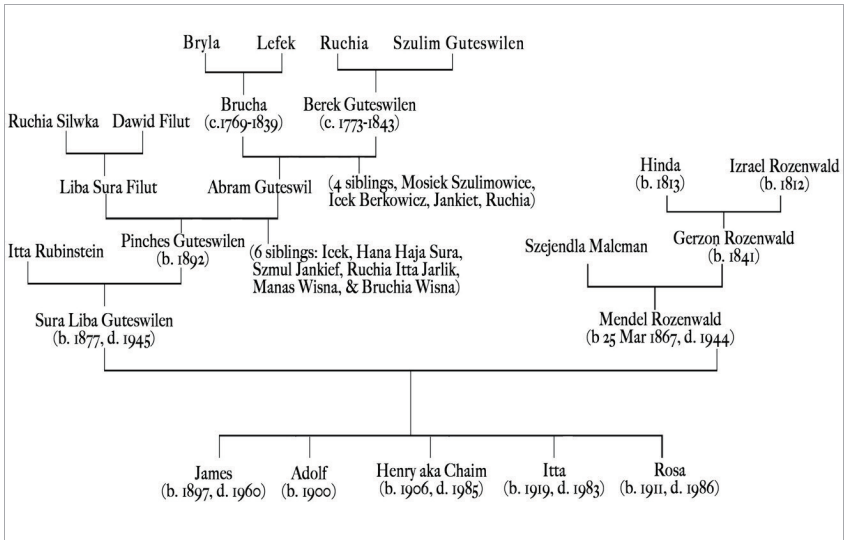
We were both excited and confused by this genetic realization. Excited to finally find someone that we were related to on the Rosen side of our family and confused for many reasons. We were excited to know that James parents had lived in Cuba and that he had siblings who lived in Cuba. Sylvia was stunned; and we were excited to learn that we had at least one great aunt and several cousins in Cuba. Simultaneously, we had an explosion of questions that we now needed to explore. Why did James never speak about his parents and siblings in Cuba? Did James know where his parents and siblings were? Did James parents know that he was living in England? Why did James have an alias? Why was James using the surname Rosen while the rest of his family used the surname Rosenwald? Why was James in England and his family in Cuba? Why did his mother and father leave him in England when he was so young? Why did James parents take his siblings to Cuba and not

James? How did James get to England from Poland? When did James and his parents leave Poland? Why did James family leave Poland?

We tell you our genealogy attempts to find James because it turns out that our grandfather's story is the story of many Jews during this historical period, it is a story shrouded in Jewish persecution and exile. We begin our story with James parents in Poland.

- 
1. 1994 autobiography paper in Debra's papers.
  2. Source: Stampfer, Shaul 1992. Gender differentiation and education of Jewish woman in 19th Century Eastern Europe. *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry*, 7: 63-87

# JAMES' ANCESTORS







## ESCAPES ANTI-SEMITISM IN POLAND

“If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh?  
If you poison us, do we not die?”

— WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, *THE MERCHANT OF VENICE*  
(ACT III, SCENE I)

### Antisemitism in Poland

**A**ntisemitism can be traced to the time of Christ and sadly continues to the present day. Each time antisemitism arose during the past 2,000 years, Jews were forced to leave their home and find a new place to live. For hundreds of years, Poland was the most tolerant Eastern European country until it wasn't.

### Poland's<sup>1</sup> unique tolerance for Jews

Poland represents the birthplace of *Ashkenazi*, or the Jewish Eastern European culture. Locked between the then superpowers Prussia,

Austria and Russia, Poland was the most culturally diverse country in Europe during the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century, a tolerant cultural oasis surrounded by a vast expanse of religious intolerance on all sides. Not only did Poland have the largest Jewish populations of any country before WWI, there were large numbers of non-Christian, Protestant and Unitarian religious sects that settled there seeking similar religious respite from Christian zealots (Polonsky, 2013<sup>2</sup>). Note, the movement into Poland beginning in the 10<sup>th</sup> Century all the way through the 14<sup>th</sup> Century as Jewish expulsion continued throughout Europe as Christianity expanded (See Figure 1).

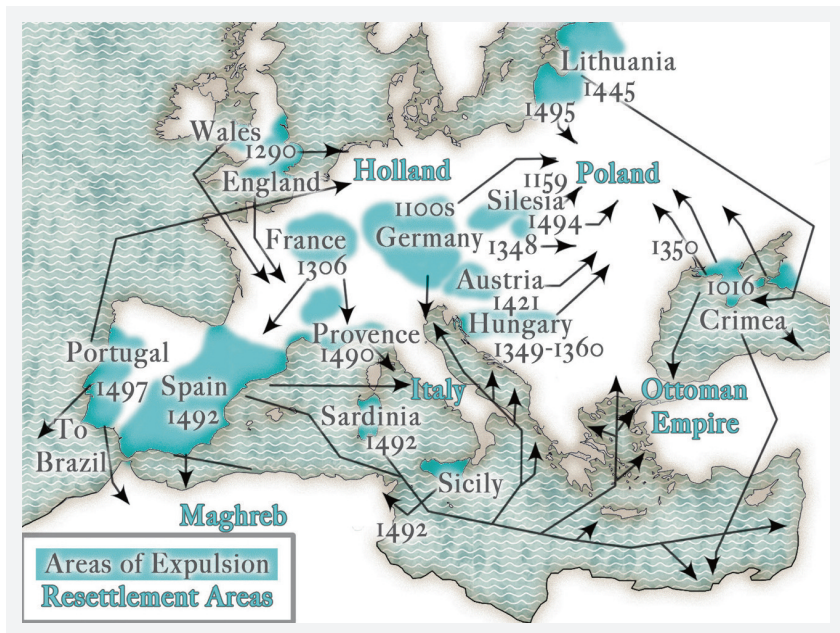
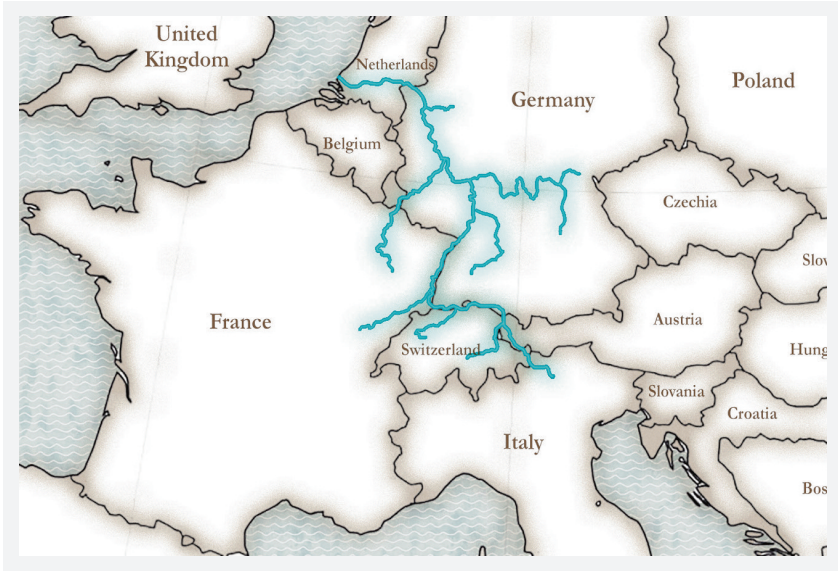


Figure 1: <https://fcit.usf.edu/bolocaust/people/displace.htm>

Jews are an ethnoreligious group that can trace their ancestry back to the ancient Israelites of Levant. Religious and political persecution is a sadly defining feature of the Jewish people dating back to before the 8<sup>th</sup> C BCE. The Jews experienced at least two Diasporas or dispersion of the Jews out of their ancestral motherland and their eventual settlement across the globe. Historical evidence of their

migratory pattern suggests that Ashkenazi Jews represent the 2nd diaspora that occurred during the Jewish-Roman wars around 135 CE when Jews were forbidden to enter Jerusalem. This Jewish group exodus immigrated north to Central and eastern Europe. They ended up in Germany (Germania) and Northern France during the Roman Era (around 800-1000 CE) and were likely merchants that followed the Romans during their conquests. One or several of those Jewish groups included our family. It is within this larger historical and political context that we can begin to situate Poland's role in Ashkenazi Jewish heritage in general and the more local historical and political context of our great grandparents, Sura and Mendel.

Persecution in Europe resulting from the crusades and outbreaks of the plague (of which Jews were blamed), and the Spanish Inquisition in the late 15<sup>th</sup> century led many Jews to migrate to the Polish Kingdom seeking safety. Before Poland, Jews came from Bohemia (i.e., Czech Republic) and Germany along the Rhine River known as *Ashkenaz*. Jews from this region were recorded as early as A.D. 321. These migrants from Germany and Bohemia are referred to as Ashkenazi Jews and represent the early ancestors of Sura and Mendel. But why, you might be asking, did Ashkenazi Jews head to Poland? Well, that's because Poland needed a workforce to develop their new economy.



*Figure 2: Rhine River, Germany*

Taking advantage of the Jewish exodus from Western Europe, Polish kings and the nobility invited Jews to help develop their newly formed Eastern European feudal farm-based economy. This led to Jews playing a unique and pivotal role in developing the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, created in 1569 through a Poland and Lithuania union. Jews provided not only financial services, crafts, and commerce, but estate and farm management labor. Granted exclusive rights over production and tax collection on the private lands of the nobility, Jews were responsible for many aspects of building this feudal economy by helping to manage the estates of the Polish lords, cutting timber, providing raw materials for commerce and collecting taxes and payments from the poor; thereby, serving as the middle managers for the Polish nobility and the poor.

While finding more freedom and security in Poland than in Western Europe, Jews still represented the minority in this new land and continued to experience resentment and hostility as Christians still have significant political power over them. For example, Jews were

not allowed to vote, could not hold political office, could not purchase immovable property, could not buy or lease land from peasants, could not employ apprentices or Christian servants, could not participate in peddling, could not live on Warsaw's main streets and were restricted on where they could settle throughout Poland (Polonsky, 2013). The Czarist empire further prohibited Jews from being able to draft documents or wills in Hebrew or Yiddish or from acquiring mines. Jews were levied taxes if they wished to visit Warsaw, taxed on Kosher meat and were taxed for being exempted from serving in military "until they were given full political rights." Even with all this resentment and restrictions, Poland was a safer place to live for Jews than surrounding countries.

Many possible reasons for the antagonism between Jews and the Polish can be extrapolated, including the Jews unwillingness to convert to Christianity, the ever present use of propaganda and military force by Germany and Russia to divide Jews and Poles and weaken Poland, fear or distrust of how weirdly the Jews dressed, the oddness of their Yiddish language, and their incomprehensible customs<sup>3</sup>. Some reasons also connect to how Jews were positioned within the economic structure of Poland at the time. In the feudal period, which lasted until the second half of the 19th century in most of the Polish lands, Jews served as the middlemen between landowners and the poor who labored on the land. For example, Jews were often granted the sole privilege to produce alcohol and run the local bar.<sup>4</sup> A system developed in which Jews helped the landlords to exploit their peasants: collecting grain grown by the poor, making it into alcohol, and selling it back to the peasants, often on credit. The poor resented this process and it was easier to resent Jews than the lords themselves with whom they had no direct contact.

Some of the ways Jews differed from other communities in Poland included in their clothing, food choices, language and names.

. . .

**Ashkenazi food.** As Orthodox Jews<sup>5</sup>, Sura and Mendel family likely ate the following foods on the Sabbath, New Moon and annual holidays: wine, matzo soup, challah bread, peppered peas, chopped liver with onions or roasted mutton, sweet noodles, ginger cake, and chicory tea. Everyday food<sup>6</sup> likely consisted of coarse rye bread, potatoes, herring, and beet soup.

**Ashkenazi language.** Given that Sura and Mendel and their children were Orthodox Jews they likely spoke Yiddish<sup>7</sup> and Polish while growing up in Poland. While the original language of the Jews was Hebrew, it was followed by the Aramaic language (after the Babylonian exile) with Jews picking up linguistic elements of the countries from which they were expelled as they made their way to Poland. *Yiddish* is considered the historical Germanic language of the Ashkenazi Jews. This language began in the 9<sup>th</sup> century of Central and eastern Europe, and represents a fusion of High German, Hebrew, Aramaic, Slavic and Romance languages. Many Jews could read and write in Hebrew (as required by Orthodox Jews) and spoke a Judeo-German Yiddish dialect (Polonsky, 2013). Sura and Mendel were Orthodox Jews and likely learned and spoke Yiddish and Polish.

**Ashkenazi surnames.** Ashkenazi Jews did not use surnames before mid 17<sup>th</sup> century making it near impossible to trace our earlier family lines. Most Christians in Eastern Europe had surnames by the 10<sup>th</sup> century. As Germans and Eastern Europeans countries wanted to keep track of all their citizens, governments demanded that Ashkenazi Jews choose, or were given, a surname<sup>8</sup> in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century and early 18<sup>th</sup> century. Surnames were often chosen based on geographical place or occupation.<sup>9</sup> Our family surnames suggest most surnames were given by occupation. James mother, Sura, family surname *Guteswilen* means rabbi; while her mother's maiden

name of *Rubinstejn* means ruby stone cutter; and her paternal grandmother's maiden name *Filut* means flute player. James surname *Rozenwald* means rose woods while his mother's maiden name *Malcman* means beer-maker. Note the origins of our Ashkenazi Jewish family surnames are Germanic and Old French supporting the thesis that Sura and Mendel ancestors arrived in Poland from Germany and Eastern France along with many of the Ashkenazi Jews of the time. These migrants from Germany and Bohemia are referred to as Ashkenazi Jews and represent the early ancestors of Sura and Mendel (See Table 1).

Family Surnames	Polish Towns and Gubernia located**	Origin & meaning of surname***	Total in Poland Before 1910s	Total records in S or M town****	After 1930s.....
<b>GUTESWILEN</b>	Town: <b>Ciechanow</b> Gubernia: Plock	Germanic "God's will"	61	59	0
<b>MALCMAN</b>	Town: <b>Siedlce</b> Gubernias: Lomza, Lublin, Radom, & Warszawa	Germanic "sickly or malt/beer man"	459	58	0
<b>FILUT</b>	Town: <b>Ciechanow</b> , Gubernias: Krakow, Plock, & Prussia	Old French "flute"	305	112	0
<b>ROZENWALD</b>	Town: <b>Siedlce</b> Gubernias: Checiny, Kalisz, Kielce, Krakow, Lublin, Lwow, Piotrkow, Radom, Tarnopol, & Warszawa	Germanic Eastern Prussia "Rosewood"	1,447	97	2
<b>RUBINSTEJN</b>	In every Polish town	Germanic "Ruby stone"	18,071	467	??
<b>Total</b>			<b>20,343</b>	<b>783</b>	<b>2</b>

\*Polish town with largest family surname records & Gubernias (counties) with highest rates (more than 20 records) <https://jri-poland.org/urjplweb.htm>  
 \*\*Data from JRI-Poland Records <https://jri-poland.org/urjplweb.htm>  
 \*\*\*Most surnames originated from location or occupation, source <https://ancestry.com>  
 \*\*\*\*Total in Sura and Mendel birth town <https://jri-poland.org/urjplweb.htm>  
 \*\*\*\*\* Numbers likely result of pogroms, death camps and emigration respectively

## Sura Liba Guteswilen Rozenwald

James' mother, SURA LIBA GUTESWILEN, was born in Ciechanow, Poland/Russia in 1877<sup>10</sup>. She was the daughter of Itta RUBINSTEJN and Pinches Guteswilen and had two siblings: Laja and Wolff<sup>11</sup>. Let's explore what life was like for our great grandmother Sura in Ciechanow, Poland circa 1860-1940. Read

more about Sura Liba's ancestors in Part II, *Sura and Mendel genealogy family summary*.

According to the *Memorial Book for Ciechanow*<sup>12</sup> (2013), the first recorded Jew in Ciechanow was 1569. Several events happened in the 1600s that may have impacted the ancestors of *Sura Liba Guteswilen* including a huge fire and an epidemic that broke out in the town in 1662 killing many.



Ciechanow is strategically located between the then superpower Russia and the rest of Europe and had been the epicenter for war from its very beginnings. Ciechanow became a town in the early 11<sup>th</sup>



century, shortly after Poland became a country. Attempts to take control over Ciechanow land began as early as 1267 with a war between Lithuania and Prussia. A second war broke out 70 years later between Lithuania and Prussia in 1337 and again approximately 100 years later with the Crusaders in 1460 and then with the Swedes in 1657 and again in the 1700s when Napoleon occupied all of Poland.



*Poland Partition 1795-1895*

Before WWI, Ciechanow had a thriving Jewish community with famous rabbis, synagogues, schools and community centers. Many from Ciechanow were craftsman and peddlers. During WWI, Russia invaded Poland and life became extremely difficult for all Polish Jews with the Czar's regime and the terror of pogroms. Both the

Germans and the Russians hated the Jews. Ciechanow sits close to the German-Russia border, only 100 kilometers from Russia and 40 kilometers to the nearest German village. It's not surprising then to learn that Ciechanow was one of the first towns to fall during WW1. At this time, the Czar ordered that all Jews had to leave Proshnitz which is located 12 kilometers from Ciechanow. It is only a few short years later, approximately 1922, that Sura and Mendel left Poland and ended up in Cuba. Many of Sura's relatives likely did not have the money or means to leave during this volatile period in Poland.

As Germany broke through the Polish front during WW2, Ciechanow holds the sad distinction of being the first Polish town invaded and occupied by Germany. In 1939, Germans completed the Jewish genocide started in WW1 of Ciechanow killing Jews on the spot or sending them to the death camps of Auschwitz and Nurstadt (see Table 1 above). Hated by both the Russians and the Germans and sitting strategically between both superpowers of the time with water to the north and an unfriendly Austria to the south, Polish Jews had little options. Sadly, the USA and England had closed their doors to Jews at this time and secret emigration to Israel was dangerous, costly and rare. There were only a few emigration options at the time for Jews and only those with the money and means could do so: Israel, Canada and Cuba. Thankfully for us, Sura and Mendel had the means and money to travel.



*Germans leading Ciechanow Jews to their death, Source: jewgen.org*

Germans destroyed many of the Ciechanow synagogues; confiscated property; required all Jews to wear the yellow star and forced them to live in the Jewish Ghetto where poverty, hunger and disease led to many deaths. Elderly Jews were beaten and shot to death. The younger Jews were confined to the Jewish ghettos or were placed on trains and brought to the death camps where they were starved, suffocated, tortured or shot. Sadly, many died in the Jewish Ghettos and death camps. You can find the names of Guteswilen and Rubinstejn Ciechanow relatives in the Jewish (Yizkor) Memorial Holocaust Books.

Initially, Ciechanow was attacked for its strategic location but by the 1500s war continued to break out due to growing anti-Semitism of the large majority Jewish population located there. For example, check out table 2 below which reveals that by 1802, Jews were the majority ethnic group representing 85% of the total 1,397 inhabitants of Ciechanow. However, a steep decline occurred in the number of

Jews living in Ciechanow from a high of 86% in 1880 to a low of 42% by 1897. The year 1897 is a very significant time for our family as it represents the year following the marriage of Sura Liba Guteswilen and Mendel Rozenwald and when our grandfather, James, was likely born. A few years before James was born, Yassini (2013) reports that there were no Jewish hospitals, orphanages or guest houses left in Ciechanow. Another significant event occurred around this time that likely impacted Sura and Mendel's decision on where to live: A Cholera epidemic. In the first three months of the outbreak, Yassini reports, 90 people died in Ciechanow. Many of the wealthy of the town fled to the city (Warsaw), trade ceased, and rumors spread, as usual, that the Jews were responsible for the epidemic.

Mendel and Sura likely met in the City of Warsaw as many families would bring their trade goods to sell. Sura Liba was born in Ciechanow almost 100 miles from Lukow Poland where Mendel was born. Ciechanow is approximately 47 miles north northwest (52° 53' N 20° 37' E) from the City of Warsaw and Lukow is 63 miles east southeast (51° 55' N 22° 23' E) from Warsaw.

**Table 2: Ciechanow Population 1800s\***

Year	General Pop.	Jewish Pop.	% Jewish
1802	1,397	1,194	86
1827	2,640	1,644	62
1860	3,575	2,394	67
1880	5,469	3,761	69
1897	10,000	4,223	42

\*Data from *Memorial Book for Jewish Community of Ciechanow*, Yassini, 2013

## **Mendel Rozenwald**

James father, MENDEL ROZENWALD was born in Lukow, located in the Gubernia of Siedlce, Province of Lublin, Poland/Russia on March 25<sup>th</sup>, 1867. He was the son of Sejdndla MALCMAN and Gerszon Rojzenwald. Note, the not uncommon shifts in spellings of surnames, reflecting the Russian, German, Polish, and Hebrew influences also known as Yiddish.

The province of Siedlce<sup>13</sup> Poland went through many significant upheavals including partitions, incorporations, and liquidations<sup>14</sup> that likely impacted Mendel and his ancestors. At the time of Mendel's birth, the primary occupation in Siedlce was agriculture primarily wheat, barley, rye, oats, potatoes, followed by livestock breeding, with minor manufacturing or trade occurring in Siedlce at this time (Classic Encyclopedia, 1911)<sup>15</sup>. As antisemitism continued to rise, many buildings, homes, synagogues, and hospitals were destroyed leaving very little documentation of the life of Jews in Siedlce.

What is known about Siedlce is that Jews represented approximately 70% (18,000) of the residents during the turn of the 18th century. Yiddish was the more common language heard by Jews in the area although many Jews likely understood and could speak Polish. Most Jews had a difficult time selling their wares as there were no charitable organizations to ameliorate the famine and poverty and no loans available except through extortion. To be a Jew in Siedlce was probably stressful and may be why Mendel likely chose to get married in Ciechanow and live and work in Warsaw.


**Siedlce Pogrom:** What must have it been like to be a Jew living in Siedlce when the pogrom of 1906 broke out? According to Kopowka, the Siedlce pogrom started when the Russian secret police

declared a state of emergency after planning and organizing a massive attack in the hopes of causing enough unrest between the Jews and the Polish that antisemitism would increase, and Poles would want to force out the Jews. Russian soldiers killed 200, wounded 1000, and arrested more than 3,000 Jews. Jewish-owned stores were robbed, buildings burned, and most homes were destroyed. Historical records describe this 3-day pogrom as an attempt by Russia to exterminate the Jews of Siedlce. The aftermath of this particular pogrom was reported across many major US and Europe papers at the time (see Appendix for news reports from 1906). The 1906 Siedlce pogrom marks the beginning of mass fear and exodus of Jews from Poland. Political and military pressure from Russia helped to make Poland a less tolerant country for Jews.

Luckily, for us, Sura and Mendel were married in Ciechanow and probably did not live in Siedlce during the 1906 Siedlce pogrom but Mendel's family of origin did. Perhaps, Sura and Mendel were living in Warsaw where at least two of their children were likely born (Itta and Rosa). Warsaw is not far from Siedlce where this brutal pogrom occurred that terrorized and likely killed some of Mendel's family and friends. You can find the names of probable Rozenwald and Malmman Siedlce relatives in the Jewish (Yizkor) Memorial Holocaust Book

What happened to Mendel's hometown area? In WW2, as the Germans marched through Poland on their way towards Russia, most of Siedlce was annihilated. Nazis loaded more than 12,500 Jews onto freight cars and sent them to the death camps in Treblinka. It is estimated that 17,000 Jews were murdered from Siedlce during the Nazi occupation. Besides the death camps, the Nazis destroyed every trace of Jewish life in Siedlce burning the synagogues, destroying the cemeteries, building and documents. As a result, sadly, very little documentation exists of this time. The few Jews of Siedlce who escaped went to the US or Israel



Deportation of 10,000   
Polish Jews to Treblinka during  
the liquidation of the ghetto in  
Siedlce beginning 23 August  
1942<sup>[109]</sup>

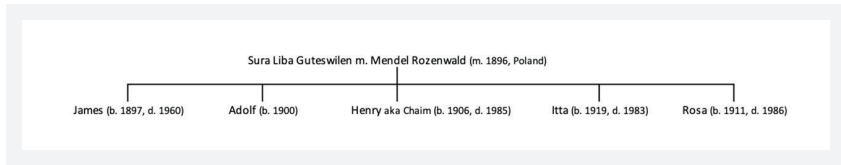
*From Wikipedia*

### Sura and Mendel Rozenwald

Our great grandparents, Sura Liba Guteswilen and Mendel Rozenwald were married<sup>16</sup> on June 18, 1896 in Sura's birthplace of Ciechanow, Poland when Sura was 18 years and Mendel was 20 years of age, suggesting this was a first marriage for both of them. Sura's mother's maiden surname was RUBINSTEJN and Mendel's

mother's maiden surname was MALCMAN. The marriage certificate is written in Yiddish (see Appendix for their marriage certificate and translation extraction).

Sura and Mendel had five children from approximately 1897 through 1912, three boys (James, Adolf and Henry) and two daughters (Itta and Rosa). Given there was no birth control at this time, there were likely miscarriages and/or infant death, but we have no way to confirm. James was likely the oldest sibling followed by Adolf, Itta and Henry. Rosa was the youngest and most of Sura and Mendel's children were likely born in Warsaw, Poland. Unfortunately, almost all Jewish records of that period were destroyed during WW2 by Nazis, so we have no birth records for James and his siblings. James and Adolf were close in age and the boy on the left in the picture below is either James or Adolf. Rosa in the middle is approximately one year old and Itta is approximately 3 years old.



Ruth Fiche Padoor reported<sup>17</sup> to Debra that James father, Mendel, had been a successful businessman in Poland supplying meat to local businesses— a highly desirable and well-paid occupation. The picture below provides support to Ruth's story of Mendel's success as Sura and her three children are taking a formal photo for the time and are dressed in fine apparel. Many Jews in Poland at the time were peasants and would have been unable to afford a formal photo sitting. Sura's hair and clothing are neatly arranged and everyone appears well fed.





*Sura (back) with James or Adolf (L), Rosa (center), and Itta (R) likely Poland, c. 1912*

### **Sura and Mendel leave Poland**

Granddaughter Ruth Fisch recalls that Mendel *was a successful business man who sold kosher meat to restaurants and hotels in Poland*. Kosher meat which is created by means of ritual slaughter—involves draining the blood of conscious animals—has been an essential component of the Jewish diet as Jews are forbidden to drink the blood of an animal. Critics<sup>18</sup> of the practice—mainly Christians —sought to ban or limit the ritual practice<sup>19</sup> and the issue became especially heated in 1918 just as Poland was trying recover from WW1 and unite as an independent nation. The tension that rose around the issue of ritual slaughter likely impacted Mendel’s kosher meat business negatively and Mendel and Sura likely began to seriously consider leaving the country.

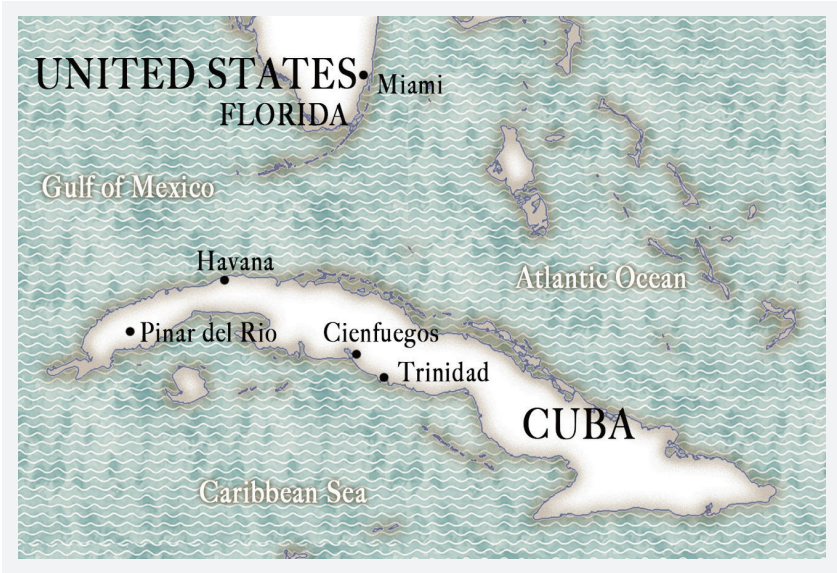
In March 1921, the signing of the *Treaty of Riga* between Russia and Poland marked the end of WW1 for the Poles. Many Poles and Jews thought this would be the beginning of independence as a new democratic constitution was adopted. Sura and Mendel must have believed that things would change for the better as they continued to stay. However, many political factions existed, and politics were volatile as Russia and Germany resented losing control of the Polish land they had obtained during the earlier partitions. The period after WW1 became an extremely stormy time with the possibility of civil war seeming to be close at hand. One year later Mendel and Sura said: “enough.”

James parents, Sura and Mendel took their two daughters, Itta and Rosa and left Poland, like thousands of Jews before them, to immigrate to the US. Unfortunately, they waited one year too long to enter the US. Antisemitism and the *KKK* were also rising in the US leading to new US immigration policies between 1921 and 1924 that imposed strict quotas of people from Eastern European countries—places that happened to have the largest Jewish populations. Hence, James family was not allowed to disembark from their boat and instead were sent to Cuba where they eventually settled. When Sura

and Mendel landed in Cuba, they arrived with their two younger children, Itta and Rosa. According to James niece, Ruth Fische, Adolf (Abraham) and Henry (Enrique) arrived in Cuba sometime later. Hey, you may ask where the heck was James and his brothers when their parents and sisters left Poland? Why are the Rosenwald boys not with their parents? We address those questions in the next chapter. Before we get there though, let's check out what happened to Sura and Mendel when they arrived in Cuba.

### **Sura and Mendel lived relatively peacefully in Cuba**

When Sura and Mendel arrived in Cuba, they found many other Ashkenazi Jews there, as Cuba was one of the few safe harbors available to escape the growing antisemitism gripping Eastern Europe at the time. While there were some Jews in Cuba<sup>20</sup> before the 1880s, changes to the Cuban constitution in 1902 promoting freedom of religion, suddenly made Cuba an ideal refuge for Eastern European Jews trying to escape the escalating pogroms. Many Jews were seeking to immigrate to the USA, but the stiffening immigration laws prevented this from happening and instead these Jews found themselves settling in Cuba. Sura and Mendel with their two daughters, Itta and Rosa, arrived in Cuba in 1922 at the height of the Jewish immigration wave from Poland to Cuba.



**Jews in Cuba.** According to Levine,<sup>21</sup> in *Tropical Diaspora: The Jewish experience in Cuba*, Cuba provided more refugee status to Jews than any other Latin American country and proportionally more than the US. Although there was some antisemitism in Cuba, most Jews received a welcome reception from Cubans partly because Jews settled throughout the country avoiding the ghetto situation that often occurred in Europe and because Cuba had an open economy that allowed Jews to take up a variety of jobs. Another reason antisemitism may have been less is that the Cuban elite were well traveled and hence more open to cultural differences. Finally, there were several waves of Jewish migration beginning in the 12<sup>th</sup> Century that may have helped each successive Jewish migration assimilate more easily into Cuban society.

Ashkenazi Jews who migrated to Cuba were generally referred to as “Polanco’s” who tended to be more orthodox and integrated less easily into Cuban society than the earlier waves of Sephardic Jews. In addition, the Ashkenazi Jews who entered around 1920 and through WW2 viewed Cuba as a “way station” or an “immigration

hotel” as they waited to enter the US. The unintended consequence of Ashkenazi Jews aloofness toward Cuba (as they awaited their final journey to the US) might have reduced the antisemitism that often arose in other countries.

*According to granddaughter, Ruth Fisch Padoor, Grandpa Mendel, had been a successful businessman in Poland supplying meat to restaurants and hotels, so he decided to open a little kosher restaurant in Havana. All early Jewish immigrants ate there. My mother and aunt Rose were the waitresses. That is how my parents met, in grandpa Mendel Rosenwald's little restaurant. My father fell in love with my mom and he romanced grandpa first to get his support with mom. Ultimately, grandpa made it happen.*

Below is a photo of Sura and Mendel, likely taken at the same time as the photo in the introduction of this book. Wearing the same clothes as the previous photo but here Mendel is standing with a cane. Sura is a stocky woman and Mendel is not much taller than Sura. They are dressed in fine clothing suggesting they had a successful restaurant business in Cuba.



*Sura and Mendel*



*James' Mother Sura*

Below is a photo of Sura with her granddaughter Ruth (Itta's daughter) in Cuba in approximately 1942. Sura looks quite happy and relaxed. This is one of the few photos of Sura smiling. Fanny,<sup>22</sup> Sura's granddaughter (Rosa's daughter) described her grandmother Sura (and her grandfather) as *very loving people*.



*Sura with granddaughter Ruth (Itta daughter)*

Below is a photo of Mendel with his two daughters Itta and Rosa. In a formal photo shoot, all our dressed up and Mendel is wearing glasses and still appears thin even in his 60s.





*Mendel (center sitting) with Itta (L) and Rosa (R) with Itta's husband Abraham  
Fiuch (center back) circa 1950*

According to Sura and Mendel's granddaughter Fanny<sup>23</sup> (Rosa's daughter), Mendel suffered from a mental illness<sup>24</sup> and he was involuntarily hospitalized by his daughter Itta in Cuba. Sura could

not take care of Mendel and he died shortly after he got into a fight over some cigarettes. During the fight, Mendel was stabbed in the abdomen from which he later died at the age of 77. Sura had a heart murmur, suffered from heart issues<sup>25</sup> and died less than two years after Mendel. According to Fanny, Sura and Mendel were very close and Sura died of a broken heart in 1945 at the age of 73. Both Sura and Mendel are buried in Havana,<sup>26</sup> Cuba very close to each other.<sup>27</sup>

What happened to James and his brothers? As we'll see, most of James life was a thinly veiled deception like his namesake Jacob. In Genesis, Jacob—the farmer—usurped his older brother, Essau—the hunter—not once but twice receiving the coveted blessing from his blind ill failing father Isaac. As a result, Jacob became the father of Abraham—the father of the 12 nations of Jews. The biblical meaning of the name Jacob means *usurper* or *deceiver* since Jacob grabbed the heel (blessing) of his older brother at their birth. For many biblical scholars, Jacob was a “righteous deceiver” as God intended Jacob—the thinker—to usurp his older brother—the brute. In the next chapter, we explore James *righteous deception* as he seeks freedom from the antisemitism and violence spreading throughout Eastern Europe.

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1. An ancient legend purports that the name *Poland* derives from two Hebrew words, Po-lin (*Here abide*), inscribed on a note that descended from heaven and found by Jewish refugees from Germany following the Black Death (ca. 1350 C.E.) and the attendant Jewish massacres. In fact, the earliest known evidence of a Jewish presence on Polish lands, is a description left by a Jewish merchant from Spain in the mid-10th century (Polonsky, 2013).
  2. Polonsky, A. 2013. *The Jews in Poland and Russia: A Short History*. Oxford: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization.
  3. The play *Fiddler on the Roof* is based on the book by Joseph Stein that was set in the Pale of Settlement of Imperial Russia in 1905, Pale of Settlement represented almost all of Poland conquered by Russia including the birthplaces of James parents. Tevye and his daughters attempts to maintain their Jewish religion while Russia and Christianity expanded across Eastern Europe is the story (e.g., abject poverty, religious customs, language, and dress) of our family and many Eastern European Orthodox Jewish families at that time and place. Source: Wikipedia
  4. Jews were less likely to imbibe the alcohol than other peasants due to Jewish customs. Although Jews use wine in religious ceremonies, inebriation is

discouraged. For Jews, the Adam and Eve story refers to a grapevine not an apple tree (Jewish Action, 2019). More recent genealogical studies point to a rare gene that discourages alcohol dependence (Genes, Brain and Behavior, 2014).

5. As reported by their granddaughters Fanny and Ruth.
6. Source: [http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Food\\_and\\_Drink](http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Food_and_Drink)
7. This is confirmed by letters written in Yiddish by James and his siblings when they were adults.
8. Jews were required to adopt a surname, have a “useful” occupation (farming or artistry) and to have a permanent residence before they were allowed to receive state permission to marry, Source: Polonsky, 2013 p. 49.
9. Source: Wikipedia and Polonsky (2013)
10. Source: Marriage certificate from JRI-Poland website, Ciechanow records
11. JRI-Poland birth records
12. *Memorial (Yizkor) Book for the Jewish Community of Ciechanow* Ed by A. Wolf Yassini 2013. NY: JewishGen, Inc.
13. Source: *The Jews in Siedlce 1850-1945*, by Edward Kopowka 2014. NY: JewishGen, Inc. According to Kowpowka (2014), Siedlce, Poland has many meanings including “Shed lets.” *Shed* meaning devil and *lets* meaning jester give the Jewish meaning “evil spirit”. Given the bad luck to those that lived in Siedlce, this name seems sadly fitting. Siedlce sits very close to the border of Russia, is the third largest province of Poland, and had one of the largest Jewish populations outside of Warsaw. Hence, it is perhaps not surprising that Siedlce was targeted by the Russian and the Germans in WW1 and WW2, respectively.
14. Upheavals included:
  - Siedlce was first mentioned in 1448, and Jews are first mentioned in a charter granted by Wladyslaw IV on Dec 1634.
  - In 1730, there were only 29 Jewish families listed in property inventories and approximately 375 Jewish families are mentioned in property inventories in 1794.
  - After the partition of 1804, Siedlce, Poland became part of Austria.
  - After the war of 1809, Siedlce became incorporated into the Duchy of Warsaw.
  - In 1815 after the creation of the kingdom of Poland, Siedlce becomes the city of Podlasie Province
  - which shortly later (1845) was liquidated to become Siedlce District of Lublin Province.
  - In 1867-1912, Siedlce became the provincial seat of newly created Siedlce Province.
15. Classic Encyclopedia 1911 <https://encyclopedia.jrank.org>
16. Sura and Mendel marriage certificate, located in JRI-Poland records for Ciechanow Plock Gubernia, (records in Fond 572 Warszawa Archive Mlawna Branch), Located at 52°53' 20°37'
17. email correspondence in 2018
18. Critics of the practice represent some of the earliest animal welfare movements in Europe. Plach, E. 2014. *Ritual slaughter and animal welfare in interwar Poland*. Eastern European Jewish Affairs, 45:1, 1-25

19. Christians argued that the practice was unusually cruel to the animal and instead stun the animal from consciousness during the bloodletting. Polonsky, 2103
20. Source: <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/cuba-virtual-jewish-history-tour>
21. Levine, R. M. 2010. Tropical Diaspora: The Jewish experience in Cuba.
22. Debra interviewed Fanny through her son Salomon by phone in February 24, 2019. Salomon translated as Fanny spoke Spanish. Fanny was in a Miami nursing home at the time.
23. Phone interview, see above.
24. Fanny's description of Mendel's symptoms sounded like he suffered from dementia or Alzheimer's per Fanny's son, medical doctor, Salomon Imiak and to Debra Harkins, a clinical psychologist.
25. Heart disease is a very common cause of death in our Rozenwald family. Sura's heart disease suggests that the heart issues may have originated from the Guteswilen line. Check out Rozenwald heart disease incidences chart in Part 2.
26. Mendel's burial location, Havana, Cuba, Plot located on Street E. Block 5, Grave #18  
Sura Liba's burial location, Havana, Cuba, Plot located on Block 3, Grave #4
27. As of March 2019, Sura and Mendel had 5 children, 20 *known* grandchildren, 27 *known* great grandchildren and more than 50 great great grandchildren.

## BIOGRAPHY

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