

History of the Gurman family

Until lately we knew a lot about the family of our great-grandfather, Moshe Shraga Fejwel Sochaczewski, but we knew very little about his wife. But we have found a new source of information - a search of Yad Vashem's website revealed a document of "Pages of Testimony" for the registration of Holocaust victims.

רשות זכויות לשואה ולגבורה. ירושלים
דף-עד
לרשום חללי השואה והגבורה

יְדִישֶׁם
ירושלים, רחוב בני-יהודה 12

א. מלא (מלאי) עד כמה שידוע לך	
שם האב	1. שם המשפחה בשפת א"י הנכנס (במחנות לשיטת)
שם האם	2. שם פרטי בשפת א"י הנכנס (במחנות לשיטת)
שם הילד	3. שם האב
שם הילד	4. שם האב
המדינה הישנה	5. המדינה הישנה 6. מקום הגירה הישנה (במחנות לשיטת)
המדינה החדשה	7. מקום הגירה החדשה (במחנות לשיטת)
המקום הישן	8. המקום הישן
המדינה לפני הכניסה למחנה	9. המדינה לפני הכניסה למחנה
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מקום הגירה החדשה	11. מקום הגירה החדשה (במחנות לשיטת)
מספר זהות	12. מספר זהות
שם המשפחה	13. שם המשפחה לפי הישן
שם הילד	14. שם הילד עד גיל 18 שנכנס (שם ליל או רושם יד-ע"י שיטת)

הערות: את הילדים יש לרשום ב"דף הנפרד" של אחד התורים אך לא יותר משניים אחת.

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1. Pages of Testimony of Fejga - Zipora Sochaczewski

The page states that Fejga (Hebrew: Zipora) Sochaczewski died in the Warsaw Ghetto in 1942. Her maiden name was Gurman and the names of her parents were Bonim and Sarah. We knew from the birth record of our grandmother Yocheved that her mother's name was Fejga Sochaczewski, maiden name Gurman, and therefore it is clear that the page of the witness refers to our grandmother's mother. When Nefthali Aharon Vekstein, our relative who is researching family trees, saw the Pages of Testimony, he immediately said that we are the descendants of R' R' Simcha Bunim¹, and within a few minutes he found and printed a letter he received from Yisrael Yitzhak Gurman from Bnei Brak, Israel a few years earlier.

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Simcha_Bunim_of_Peshischa

בס"ד יום שלישי ט' אלול תשס"ח לפ"ק

אל כבוד עורך מדור ויתילדו

הנידון: הגה"ק הרבי ר' שמחה בונים מפרשיסחא זיע"א

הכותב הוא מצאצאי הרבי ר' בונים זיע"א. כידוע שם משפחתו ה'ה' בינהארט לרבי ר' בונים ה'ה' לו בן יחיד וכמה בנות? שמי ישראל יצחק גורמן בן ר' נתן ז"ל בר' דניאל ז"ל בר' ישראל יצחק ז"ל בר' נתן ז"ל והיו לו מספר אחים אחד שמו ר' דב בערקע ז"ל שה'ה' חותנו של הגה"ק בעל "ישמח ישראל" מאלכסנדר זצ"ל ואחיו ה'ה' חותנו של הגה"ק בעל "תפארת שמואל" מאלכסנדר זצ"ל ור' נתן האמור ואחיו היו בני ר' יהודה גורמן ז"ל שה'ה' נכד הרבי ר' בונים ואיני יודע האין? אנו בני משפחת גורמן מפולטוסק מתיחסים ונקראים פין די חייצ'יקס על שם הסבתא שקראו לה ח'ה, היא היתאלמנה בצעירותה והייתה עשירה ולקחה לחתנים מורי הוראה וגדולי תלמידי חכמים סיפר הרה"ח ר' משה שלמה וייס ז"ל הנקרא משה בטלן שקראו לו שלמה ע"ש הסבא ר' שלמה שה'ה' מורה הוראה וחתן אצל ח'ה, וכן ה'ה' לה חתן גורמן נכד הרבי ר' בונים, וזה הסיבה שהרה"ק ר' יחיאל מאלכסנדר זצ"ל הישתדך פעמים עם שני אחים גורמן, הודה לך מאד אם תואיל בבקשה לעזור לי ולפנה את הבלתי ידוע לי ובכלל מי היו הבנות של הרבי ר' בונים וכמה הם היו, גורמן הם מאחת הבנות, ולמי הם היו נשואות וילדיהן מי היו.

בתקוה להענות במהרה.

ישראל יצחק גורמן ר' עקיבא 68 בני-ברק פקס-

036163632 ישראל. פ"ג - 03-6194663
0548401717 - 9.י

2. The letter of Israel Yitzhak Gurman

According to the letter (the green area in the family tree below), Yehuda Gurman, grandson of Rabbi R' Simcha Bunim, married the daughter of the rich widow Chaya of Pultusk and had at least three sons.

Nathan Gurman - He is the g-g-grandfather of Israel Yitzhak Gurman of Bnei Brak. Nathan had a son named Israel Yitzchak, and he had a son named Daniel, and he had a son named Nathan, who is the father of Israel Yitzhak Gurman of Bnei Brak.

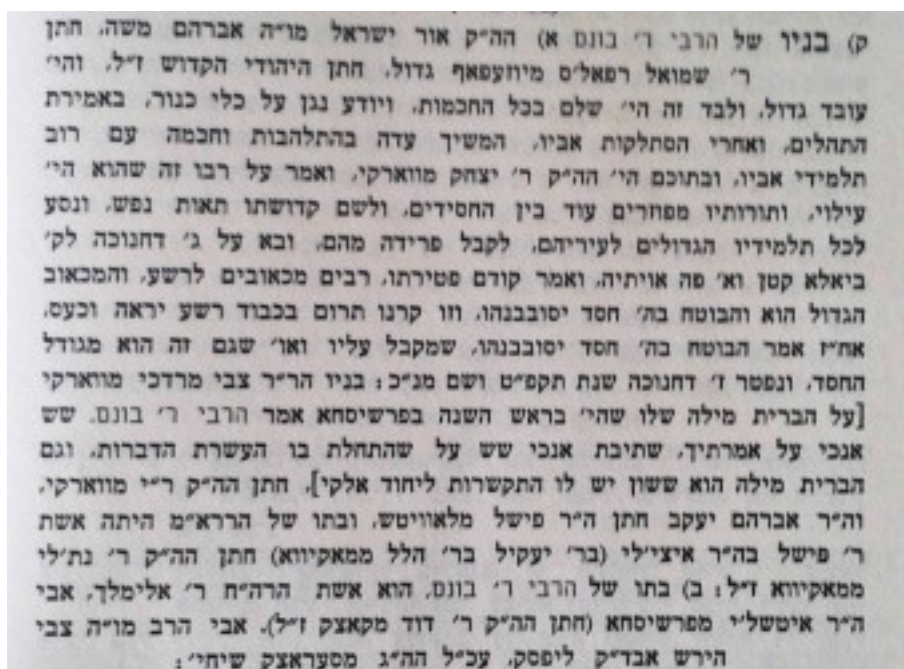
Dov Berka Gurman - was the father of Dvora's who was the wife of the Admo"r Yitzchak Israel Yerachmiel Danzyger, grandson of the Admo"r Shraga Feivel. They were matched because of the bride's attribution to R' R' Simcha Bunim. The Admo"r Yitzchak Yisrael Yerachmiel was the one who had gathered the Chasidim of Alexander, who had come to be one of the two great Chasidic sects in Poland together with the Gur Hasidim.

Yaakov Gurman - was the father of Sarah Rivka, who was the wife of the Admo"r Shmuel Zvi Danzyger, the brother of Yitzchak Yisrael Yerachmiel, and was the mother of Yitzhak Menachem Mendel Danzyger, the last ADMO"R of the direct line of the Alexander Chasidim, who was murdered by the Nazis. In the Chasidic literature, Yaakov Gorman is described as a "mighty," that is to say, very rich, and is called Yaakov Avraham of Pultusk.

It is known that the brothers Yitzhak Israel Yerachmiel Danzyger and Shmuel Zvi Danzyger lived together in Pultusk for many years after their marriage, at the table of their fathers-in-law, and studied together.

In 2015, the writer of the letter, Israel Yitzhak Gorman, was interviewed in Bnei Brak. He said that the Gurmans in Pultusk were descended from the Rabbi Rabbi Simcha Bunim of Przysucha, but he did not know how. According to the letter, Yehuda Gurman is the grandson of Simcha Bunim, but it is not clear which son or daughter is in question. Hasidic literature did not exactly relate to girls unless they married someone famous. In addition, until about 1820 there were no birth records made in Polish towns. However, not all Polish entries are available for search on the Internet today (2016) and we may in the future find more information.

We began looking for records of the Simcha Bunim family in Chasidic literature, with the help of Rabbi Naftali Aharon Vekstein. The information collected from Chasidic literature about Simcha Bunim is shown in blue. Since Rabbi Shraga Fejwel Danzyger, the founder of Alexander's Hasidism, was a disciple of R' R' Simcha Bunim, they matched their children to be married. In the literature of Alexander's Chasidim we see that Levi Yitzchak Danziger married a daughter, whose name is unknown, of R' R' Simcha Bunim. They had no children. In addition, we found several more extensive records, such as in the book Simchat Yisrael, Chapter 1. "happy Light" page 36.



3. The Simcha Bunim family in Simchat Yisrael book, Chapter 1.
 "Happy Light" by Yisrael ben Yitzchak page 36

Let us pause a bit to describe Rabbi Rabbi Simcha Bunim and his importance to Polish Chasidism. (He is the only person called Rabbi Rabbi by Chasidim.)

Chasidism arrived in Poland with R'R' Simcha Bunim Bonhardt of Przysucha². R' R' Bunim was involved in commerce, studying pharmacology, European languages and sciences. After his marriage, he approached Hasidism and became a student of the Visionary of Lublin.

R' R' Boneam used to wear European clothing even when he was with the Admo"rim, and said that he went to theatrical performances during his visits to Danzig [today "Gdansk"] for work.

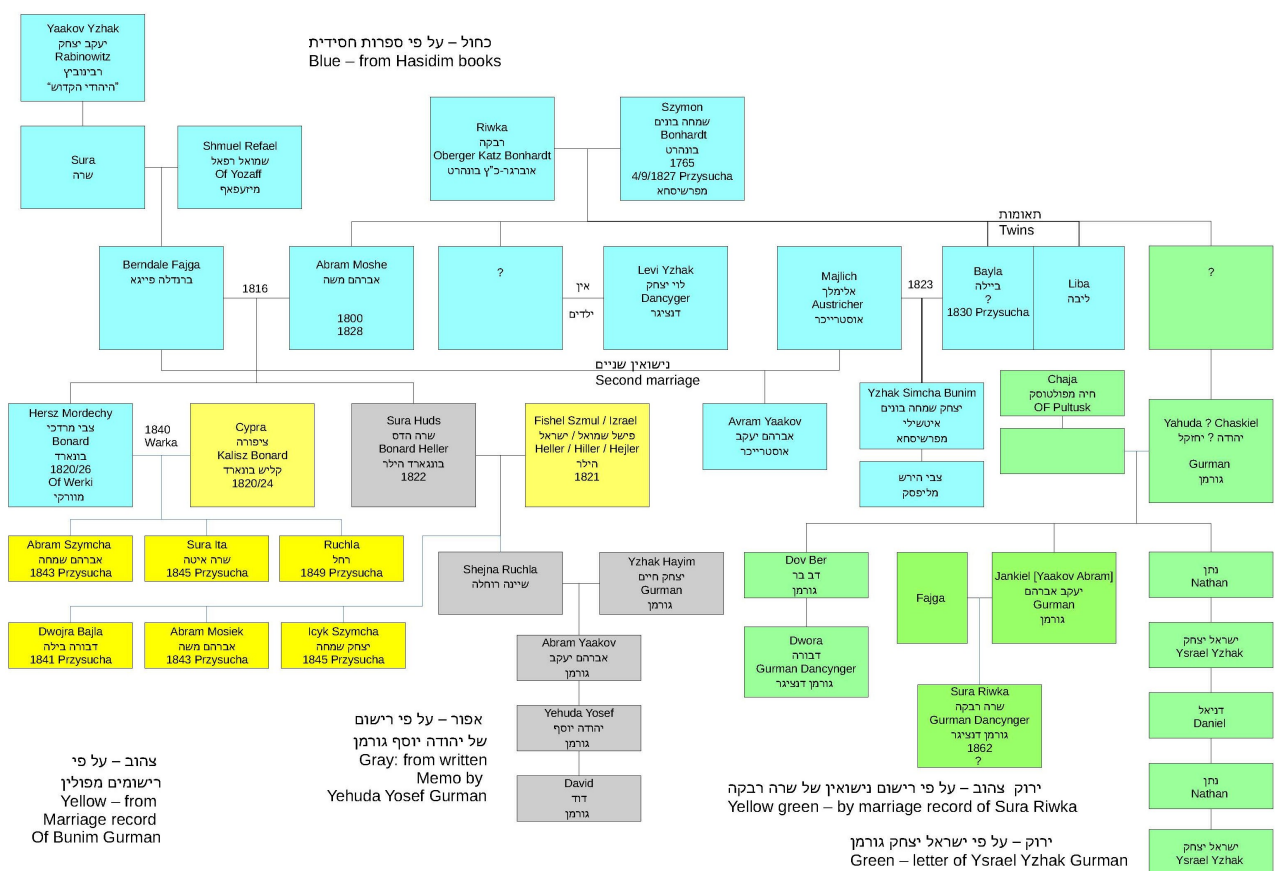
R' R' Bunim developed the "Przysucha method" that required the Chasidim to study the sciences and writings of the Ramba"m, which are not taught by most of the ultra-Orthodox Jews, so some of

² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Simcha_Bunim_of_Peshischa

the ADMOR"IM attempted to boycott him, but failed. The subject of the boycott is remembered as one of many stories that have been collected about R' R' Bunim, in many books written about him and in some doctoral studies that were done about him.

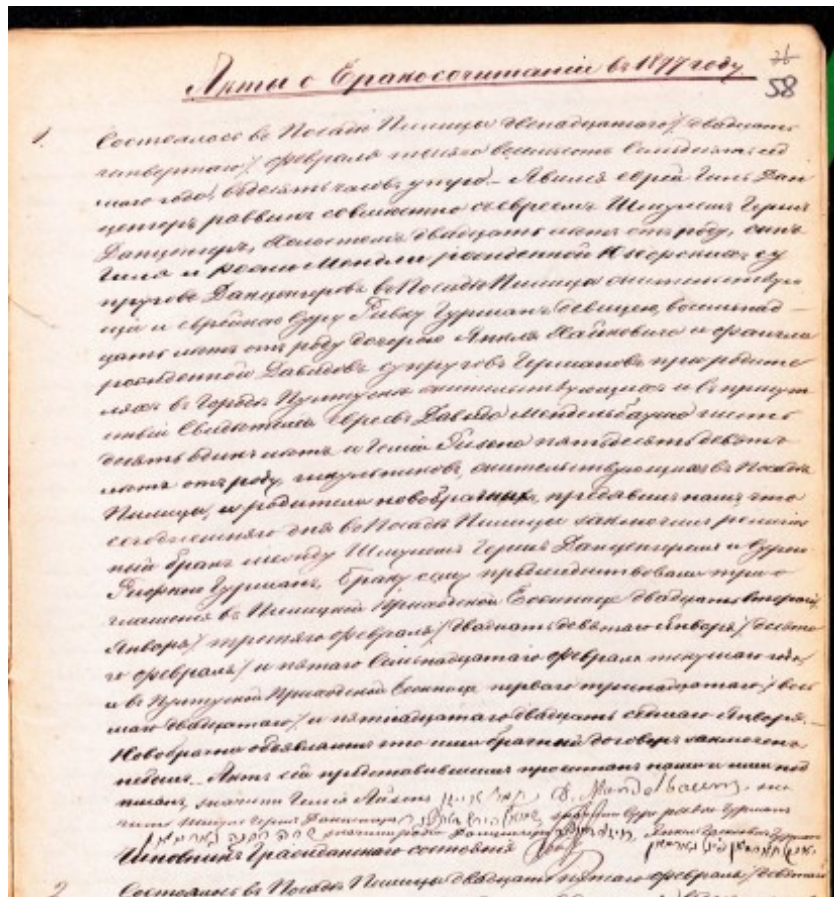
R' R' Bunim had many disciples, among them two Chasidim who founded the two great Hasidic sects in Poland - Rabbi Yitzchak Meir Alter, the author of "Chidushei Harim", and the founder of Gur Chassidism, and Rabbi Shraga Fajwel Dancyger of Grojec. Rabbi Shraga Fajwel or his son Rabbi Yechiel are considered to be the founders of the Alexander Chasidim (Alexander is a suburb of Lodz, Poland). Rabbi Shraga Fayvel was also "mechutan" of R' R' Bunim. as the son of Rabbi Shraga Fayvel married R' R' Bunim's daughter. The Alexander Chasidim mostly perished in the Sohaa, but Gur Hasidim Today has great numbers and follows the path of the Przysucha method. As described in the Sochaczewski family history, we are descendants of Rabbi Shraga Fajwel.

From this it is clear that blood relation to Rabbi Rabbi Simcha Bunim is a great attribution in Chassidic society. Here is the family tree of R' R' Simcha Bunim, which we built after much research:



4. Family tree of Rabbi Simcha Bunim

In the continuation of the study of the Gurman family, we found the marriage of Sarah Rivka Gurman to Shmuel Zvi Danziger.



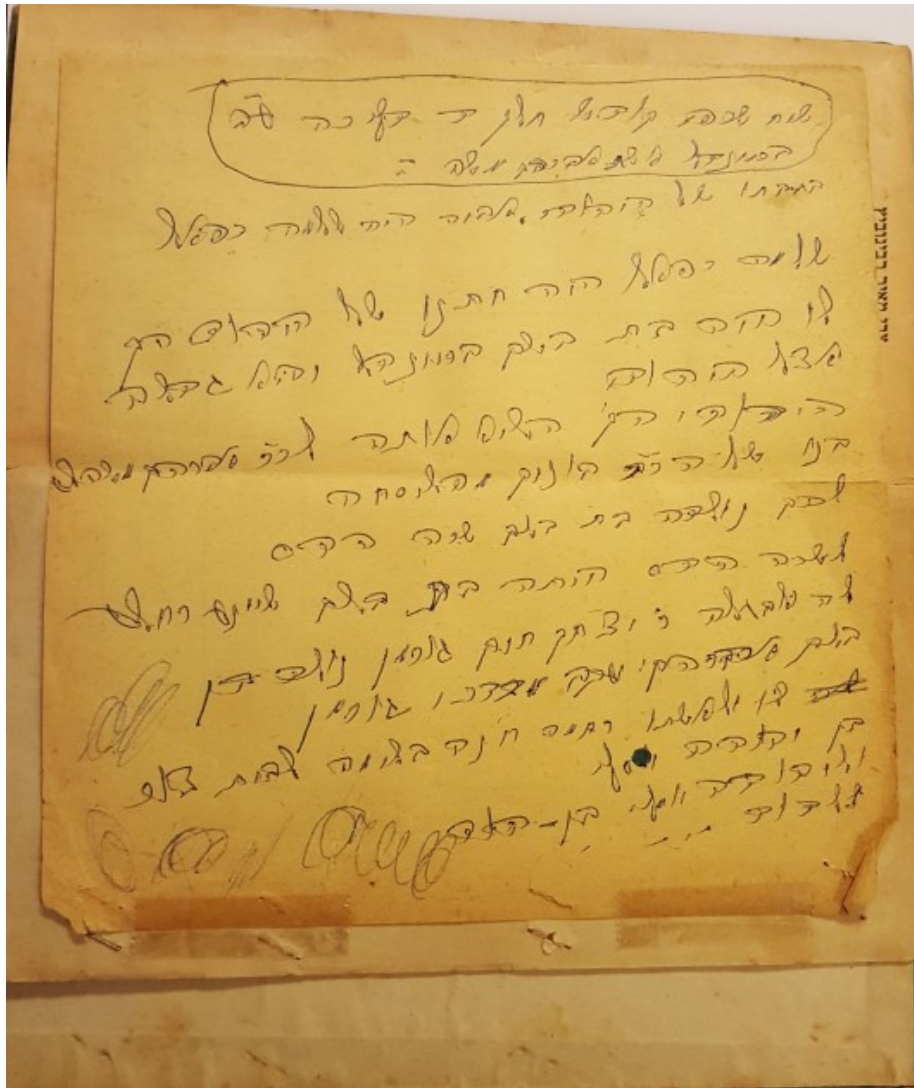
5. The marriage of Sarah Rivka Gurman to Shmuel Zvi Danzyger

The marriage was registered and completed on 12/24 February 1870 in Pilica. Personally present was [The Rebbe ADMO”R] Yechiel Danziger, the rabbi of the local community, and Shmuel Hertz Danzyger, a 20-year-old single, the son of Yechiel and Reizela Mindla, daughter of Yosef, the Danziger couple, who live in Felitza, and Sarah Rivka Gurman, 18, daughter of Yaakov Ben Chaya [Translator note: Son of Chaya??? A few lines down, he is registered as the son of Yechezkel, and I think that Ben Chaya is a mistake] and Feiga daughter of David, the couple Gurman, who lives in the city of Pultusk.....

The matter of "Ben Chaya" fits in with the letter of Israel Yitzhak Gurman, saying that the Gurmans are called "Fin de Chaykes" [From Chaya in Yiddish] after the grandmother Chaya. In other words, the family was called "of Chaya." The same Chaya is known in the history of the town of Pultusk as one of the first Jews to settle in the city, probably before or immediately after the Jews were allowed to live in the city in 1806.

After a while, more information was about that Chaya, see below.

In order to continue our search, we established contacts with the Association of Pultusk Jews in Israel. They meet on Holocaust Memorial Day in the Cholon cemetery just south of Tel Aviv, where there is a monument to the residents of Pultusk who perished in the Holocaust, and they organize a tour of the city of Pultusk and the surrounding area every year. Through them we received names of Gurmans living in Israel and contacted them - initially in letters because not for everyone we had an e-mail or phone information. We met David Gurman in his home in Tel Aviv and he showed a page written by his father, Yehuda Yosef Gurman:

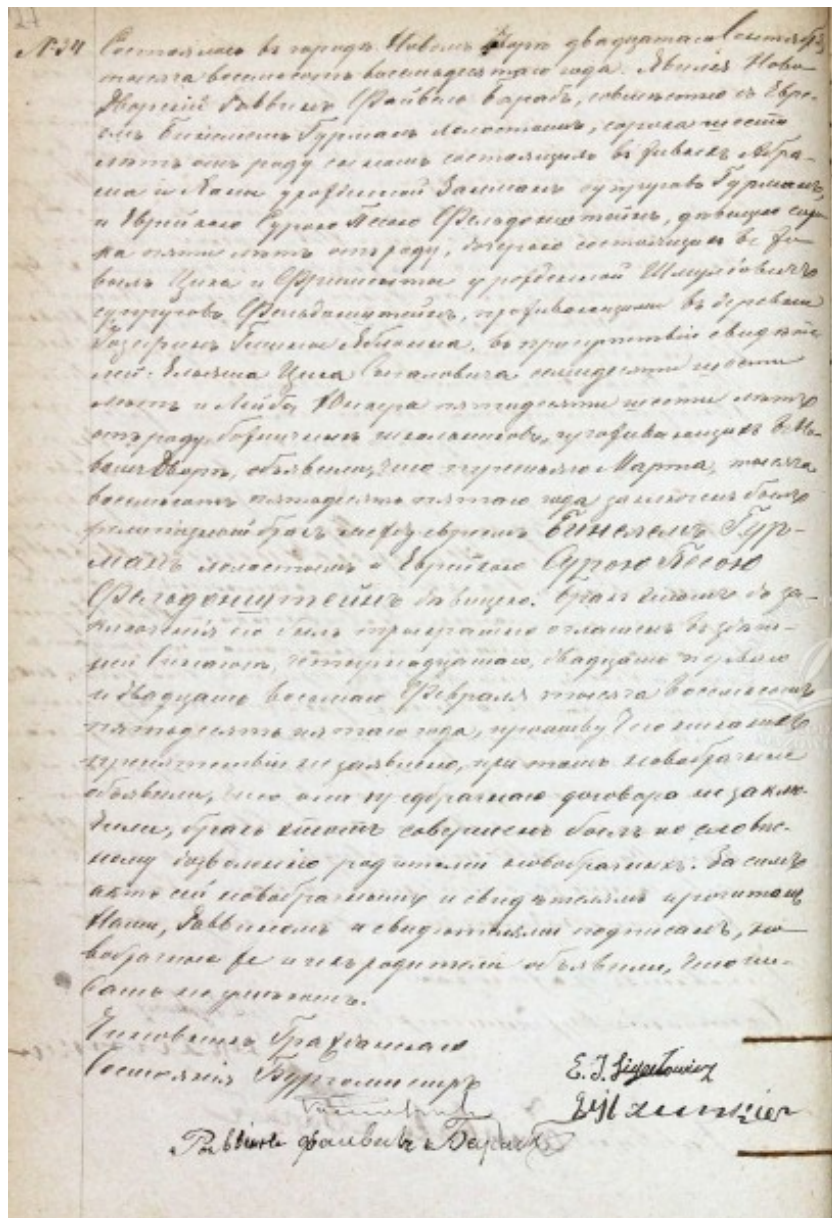


6. A record of the Yehuda Yosef Gorman family

It turns out that this is another branch of the Gurman family from Pultusk. The inscription states that Avraham Moshe, the son of Rabbi Simcha Bunim, married Brandley (in 1826, in the birth record of her son Zvi Mordechai, her name is "Fajga Brandley Bonhardt"), the granddaughter of Yaakov Yitzhak Rabinowitz "the Holy Jew". They had a daughter named Sara Hudes [Hadas], who was known to have married a man called Fishel (the name Sarah Hadas is not mentioned in Hassidic literature, only "the daughter of the RRA" M"— Initials of Rabi Rabi Avraham Moshe"), and she had a daughter named Shajna Rachel. Shajna Rachel married Yzhak Haim Gurman, and they had a son named Avraham Yaakov Mordechai who is the father of Yehuda Yosef who is the father of David Gorman from whom I received this record.

This family branch is shown in the drawing of the family tree in gray color. The records match the Hasidim's books. But we have not yet found a connection between Bunim Gurman, the grandmother of our grandmother and R' R' Simcha Bunim.

Then the Polish researcher that helped our research found a marriage registration of Bunim Gurman, in which his parents were listed as Abraham and Chaya Gurman. We added our family branch to the Gurman tree, fig. 8 below, in yellow.



7. Marriage registration of Bonim Gurman and Sarah Pesia

Record number 34 of marriages in the city of Nowy Dwor in 1880: was held in the city of Novi Dwor on 20 September 1880. Present were Rabbi Feivel Baharav, the rabbi of the Jews in Nowy Dwor and Bonim Gurman, a bachelor at the age of 46, the son of parents who are alive: Avraham Gurman and Chaya daughter of Zalman, And a Jewish woman Sarah Pesia Feldenstein, a single woman aged 45, the daughter of parents who are alive, Yitzhak Feldensztein and Frimata Daughter of Shmuel, who live in the village of Yuzfin in the Yablona region. The two sides announced that a religious marriage between the Jewish bachelor Bonim Gurman and the Jewish single woman Sarah Pessia Feldensztein took place on 13 March 1855. The couple announced that no financial agreement had been signed between them. The record was read to us and signed by the witnesses.

That is, the religious marriage took place 25 years before the official marriage with the state, and until then they were regarded by the law as bachelors! Since we found that the couple's daughter, Bila Gurman, had married in the same city a few months earlier, we assume that the groom's parents

did not want a bride whose parents are legally not married, and demanded that the bride's parents marry before the authorities. The town of Nowy Dwor is close to Pultusk in the north. Also a possibility is that they did marry formally, but as the record burned in the Pultusk fire of 1875, it did not count.

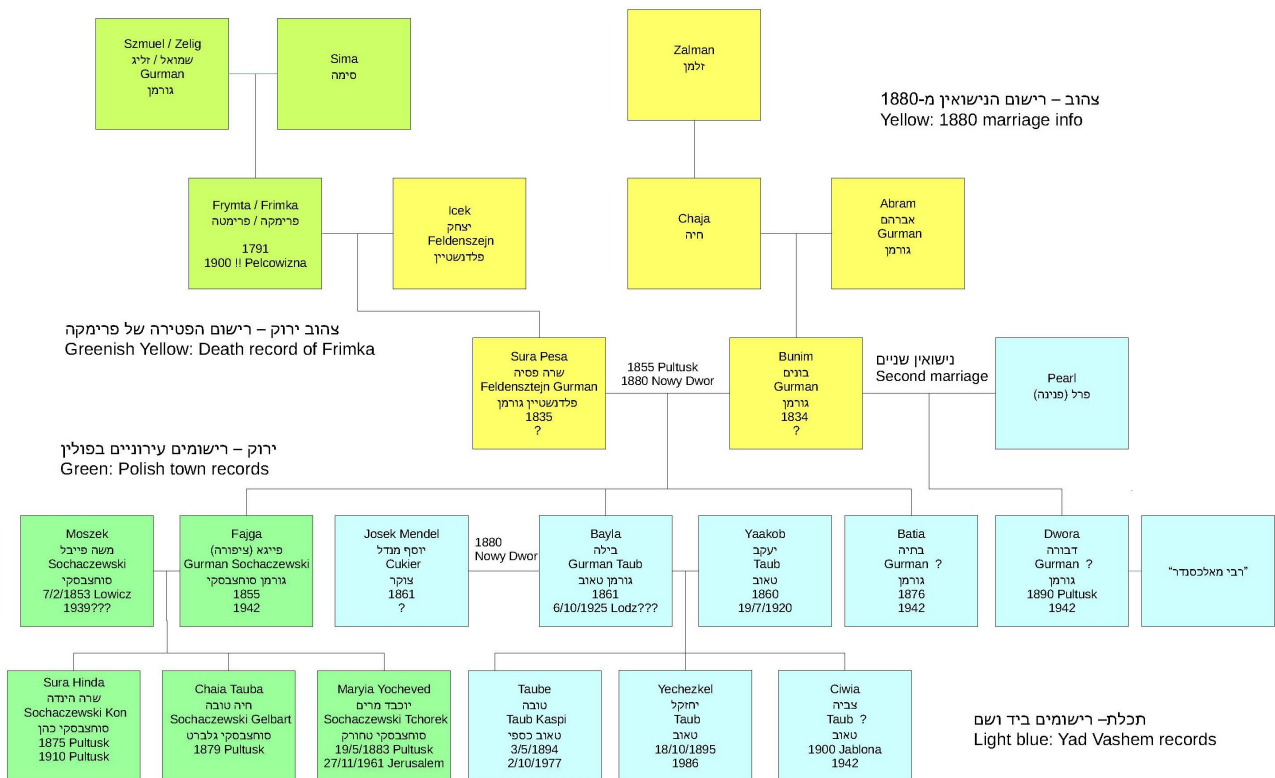
According to the marriage record, it was found that Bunim Gurman was born in 1834. If we remember that Simcha Bunim died in 1827, it is possible that Bonim Gurman was the first grandson or great-grandson to be born after the death of Simcha Bunim, and is therefore named after him.

It is also possible that Abraham is the brother of Yehuda Gorman (in the green highlight in Fig. 4, above)

In addition, it can be assumed that Yitzchak Haim Gurman (in gray, drawing 4) is the brother of the Nathan brothers, Dov Bar and Yaakov Avraham Gorman (in green, drawing 4)

But the big problem - the fire in Pultusk in 1875 - stops research in the city records. As noted, all records in Pultusk before 1875 have disappeared, and probably burned in the Great Fire that destroyed the city that year.

But there are other sources of information. As noted above, we found a memorial record at Yad Vashem regarding Fayga Gurman Sochachevsky, written by Tova Caspi, who describes Fayga as "the mother's sister." The listing was found in search of the value "Sochaczewski". Please look at the Gurman family tree in Pultusk as you continue reading.



8. The Gurman family in Pultusk

After another search on the Yad Vashem website, additional records were found of the sisters of Fayga: Batya, born in 1876, and Devorah, born in 1890. The search was conducted on all the witness records written by Tova Caspi, and the two records we found had the family reference described as "the mother's sister".

The image shows two witness records from Yad Vashem, one for Dvora Gurman and one for Batia Gurman. The records are handwritten forms with typed names and dates. The Dvora record lists her birth in 1890 in Puztusk and her death in 1942 in Warsaw. The Batia record lists her birth in 1876 in Puztusk and her death in 1942 in Warsaw. Both records mention her parents as Bunim and Pnina Gurman.

9. Witness records of Batya and Dvora Gurman, aunts of Tova Caspi

These records are highlighted in light blue in the drawing of the Gurman tree. There were at least four daughters of Bunim Gurman: (a) the mother of our grandmother, Fayga, who perished in the Holocaust at about the age of 87; (b) Bila, wife of the ADMO"R of Yablon, Yaakov Taub, who was the mother of Tova Caspi's, Yehezkel Taub and Zivia Taub, and who perished in the Holocaust; (c) Batia, who lived in Warsaw and perished in the Holocaust; and (d) Deborah, who lived in Alexander and was married to a "Rabbi of Alexander" and also perished in the Holocaust. Deborah was listed as a daughter of Pnina, apparently a second wife of Bonim Gurman. Deborah was born in 1890, 10 years after the formal marriage of Bonim Gurman in 1880. The Polish state will release more documents that will pass the 100-year-old barrier and then we will be able to know who Dvora's husband was, maybe a Danziger.

In a search in a web page that holds many photographs of graves³, we have found the photograph of Tova Caspi's gravestone bearing the names of her parents, Jacob Taub and Billa.



10. The gravestone on Tova Caspi's grave

Yehezkel Taub, the brother of Tova Taub Caspi, is known as the last ADMO"R of Yablon, and he organized the Hasidic aliya in which our family immigrated to Israel, buying land in Kfar Hasidim and Tivon, and the Hassidim settling on them. However, in light of malaria and the fact that they had no experience in farming, Yehezkel Taub emigrated to America, left the religion and became a successful construction contractor, and in the latter part of his life he returned to Israel and died in Israel, but it is clear that he was the cousin of our grandmother Yocheved.

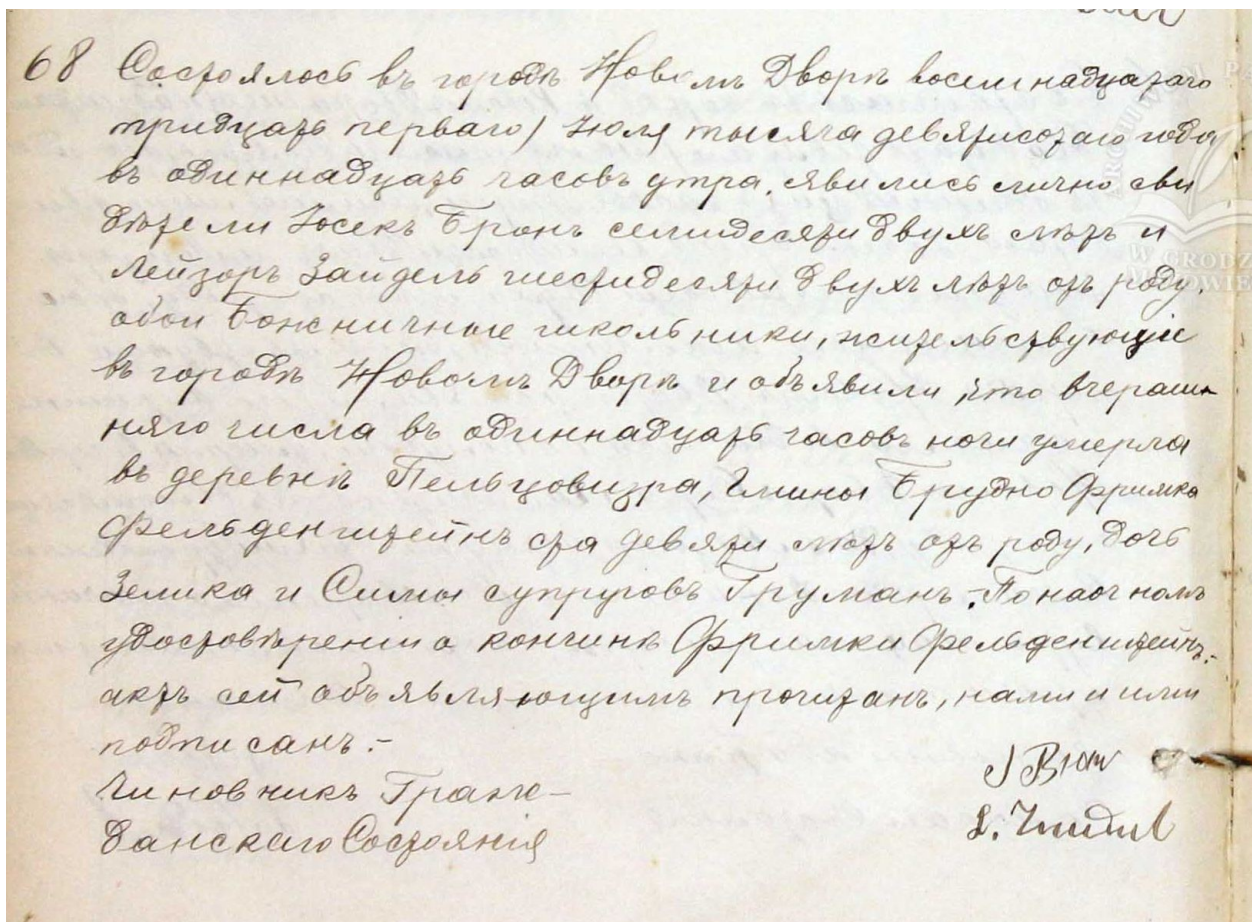
Tova Taub Caspi lived in Kfar Hasidim and was married to Moshe Caspi. Their son Yaakov fell with the platoon of 35 in the War of Independence.

Then the Polish researcher discovered two marriage records from the town of Nowy Dwor in the Yablona region. It turns out that the sister of our great-grandmother, Bila Gurman, married Joseph Mendel Zucker! We now estimate that Bila Gurman and Jacob Taub were married in a second

3 BillionGraves.org

marriage after they were widowed or divorced - their three children were born 14 years after the first marriage of Bila Gurman.

Another search found a death record of Frimka / Primta, the mother of Sarah Pesia, Bonim Gurman's wife:



68 Осролось въ городъ Новомъ Дворѣ восемнадцато
придцать первая) июля тысяча девятисотого года
въ одиннадцатъ часовъ утра, явилась смерно свѣ
дѣтели Зосекъ Бронъ семидесяти двухъ лѣтъ и
лейзеръ Зайденъ шестидесяти двухъ лѣтъ охъ роду,
оба бонимилные школьники, изъ ельсбургскихъ
въ городъ Новомъ Дворѣ и объявили, что всераши
нимо числа въ одиннадцатъ часовъ ночи умерла
въ деревнѣ Фелковизна, имино Брудино Фримка
Фельденштейнъ охъ девяти лѣтъ охъ роду, дочь
Зелика и Сима супруговъ Гурманъ. По наос намъ
двоасовѣреннаго коншинъ Фримка Фельденштейнъ,
ахъ сей объявляющимъ прогизанъ, нами и ими
подписанъ. -
Иновникъ Траппе-
Данскаго Свояннѣ

J. Bron
S. Zaidel

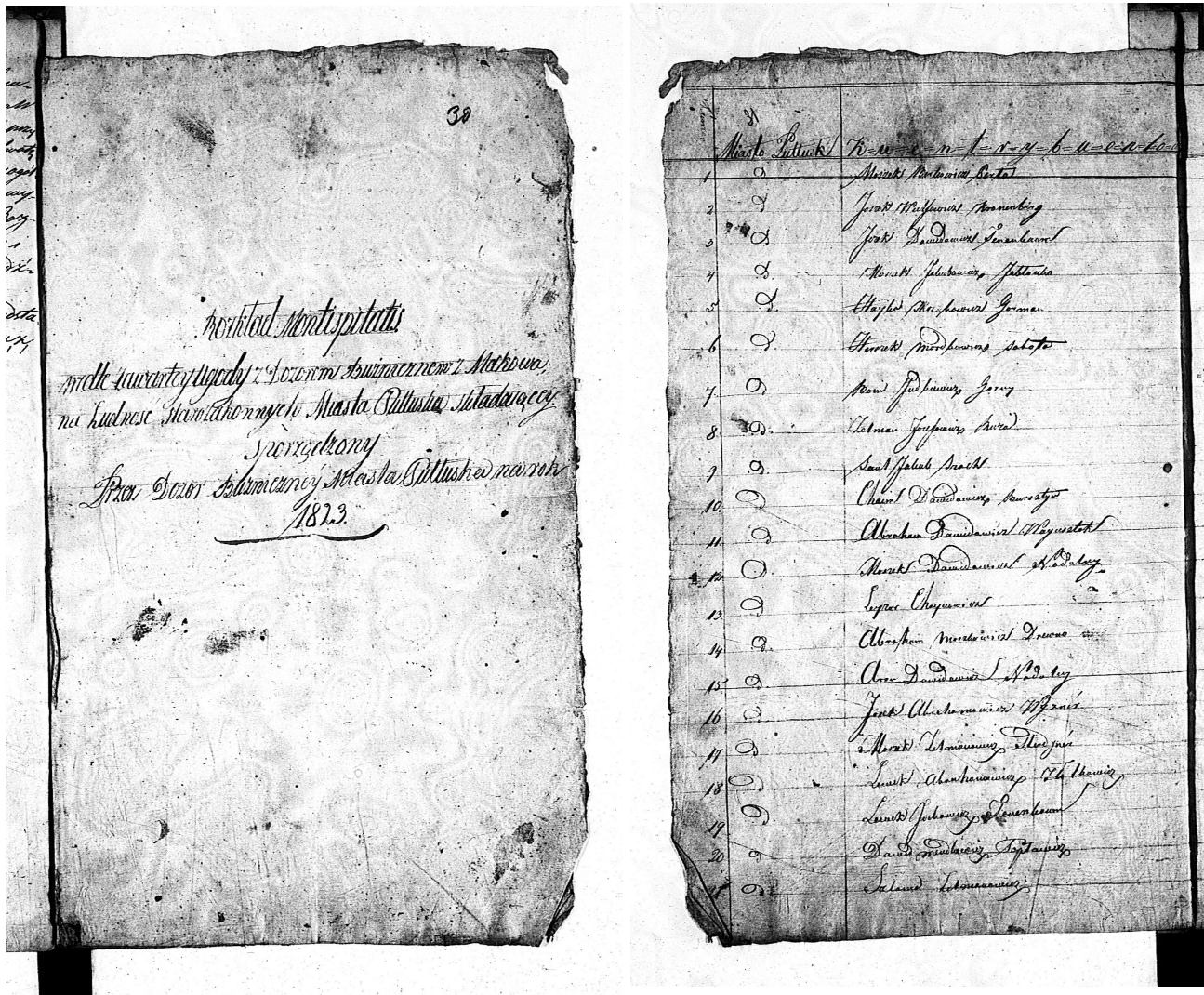
11. Death registration of Frimka / Primta

A record dated 18/31 July 1900 in the town of Nowy Dwor. Frymke Feldenstein, daughter of Zelig and Sima Gurman, died on 17/30 June, 1900, at the age of 109 (one hundred and nine years old!!!) in the Felkowizna neighborhood of the Brodno district

According to this record Sarah Pesia Feldenstein Gurman was born when Primta / Frimka was 44 years old, a possibility. But in light of the errors in the ages we found in other records, one can doubt the age of death.

Interestingly, Frimka's parents were also called Gurman. In other words, it is possible that the parents of Bunim Gurman and Sarah Pesia were relatives.

Information that came later in the study: A book that list Jews who paid taxes to the Jewish community in Pultusk was found.



12. List of taxpayers of the Jewish community in Pultusk in 1823

In line 5, Chaya Herszkovitz Gurman is listed. Obviously it was a widow named Chaya, because otherwise her husband's name would be written there. So we assume that this is the famous widow Chaya. Her father's name was Hersz (Herszkovitz = daughter of Hersz as is customary in writing names in Russia). It is clear that her last name was Gurman, but it is known that she had only daughters - and many members of the Gurman family from Poltosk claim that they descend from sons-in-law of that Chaya! So we assume that some of Chaya's daughter's grooms took upon themselves the last name of her late husband in order to have continuity to the name. It was quite common at that time when many people died at a young age.

The big problem is that changing the surnames, together with the absence of records from Pultusk dating before 1875, is probably an insurmountable barrier to the study of this branch of our family in the early 19th century.

In conclusion, perhaps temporary, there was no recorded connection of our family to R' R' Simcha Bunim. We assume, specifically according to the inscription on the tombstone of Yitzchak Aaron Sochaczewski [the brother of our grandmother Miryam Yocheved], stating that he is a descendant of the ADMO"Rs of Alexander, but not mentioning a connection to R' R' Simcha Bunim, that we must conclude that we are not descended from R' R' Simcha Bunim.

What we did find is a very large Gurman family.