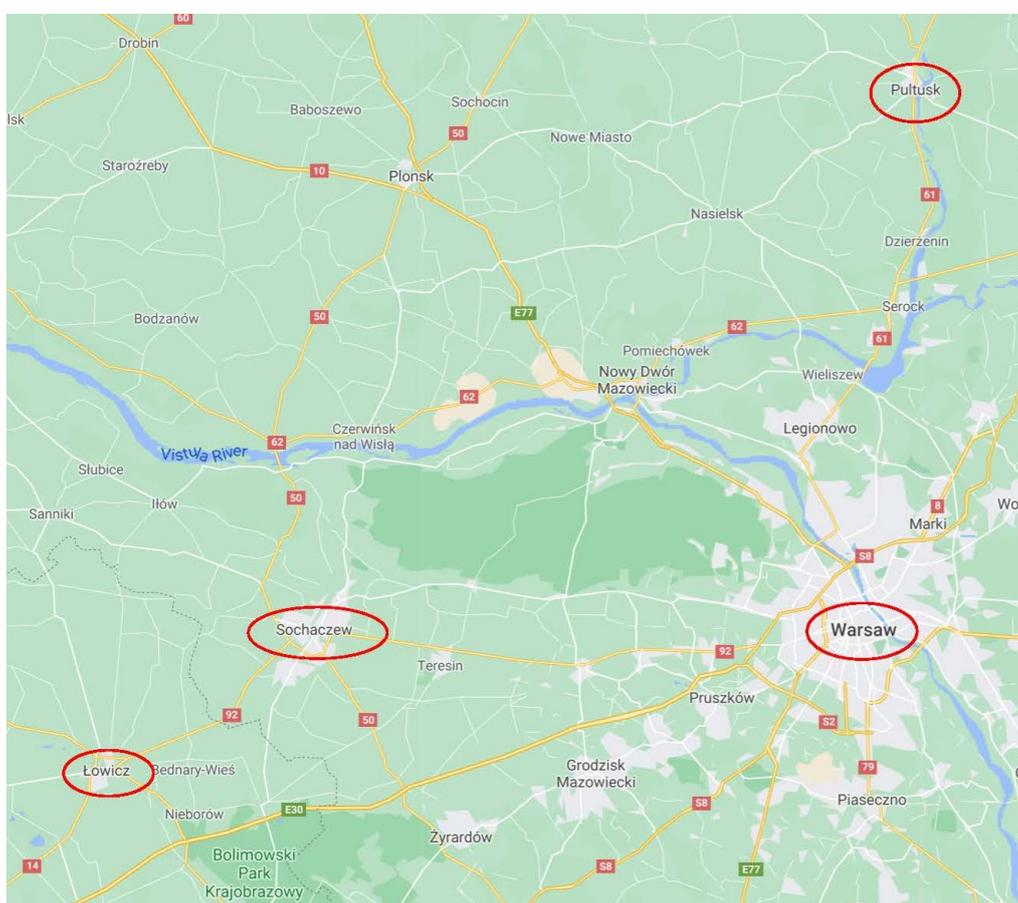


History of the family of Moshe Yisrael Sochaczewski

The family name of our ancestors "Sochaczewski" indicates that they came from Sochaczew¹ (in Polish ski = from), a town 75 km west of Warsaw, Poland. There is indication of Jewish settlement in Sochaczew from 1427, with evidence of an organized Jewish community in 1467. "By 1599 the Jews of Sochaczew owned 20 houses, a synagogue, hospital, mikveh, and cemetery, and engaged in commerce in livestock, leather, and wool, and in such crafts as tailoring and carpentry. A blood libel in 1619 resulted in the death at the stake of one Jew. After the Jewish quarter burned down the following year, the burghers opposed its reconstruction and the Jewish community temporarily came to an end. In 1749 King Augustus III granted permission to certain Jewish merchants and craftsmen from Warsaw to renew the settlement in Sochaczew. They established a tannery, a distillery, and tailoring and shoe-making workshops, and traded in agricultural produce..²" Our ancestors may very well have engaged in one of these trades. Their status is reflected in the fact that a large residential building in the town of Sochaczew was named after the family, as noted in the 1910 death record of Sarah Hinda Cohen, (nee Sochaczewski) who lived in Pultusk³ (see fig. 3 below). We do not know when this building was built.



1. Map of Poland with the cities where the Sochaczewski family lived (Google Maps)

1 Sochaczew 52°14' 20°15'. 50 Km west of Warsaw

2 www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/sochaczew

3 Pultusk 52°43' 21°06'. 50 Km north of Warsaw

Our known family history begins with Chaim Sochaczewski, who was born about 1755 and lived in the town of Lowicz⁴. Conditions improved for the Jews all over Poland in the 16th and 17th century, which historians call "the Golden Age of Polish Jewry". We do not know if Chaim's family left Sochaczew a few generations before he was born, or if they left after he was born. In 1793, with the second division of Poland, Lowicz was part of Prussia, and the Prussian authorities demanded that its subjects take family names. Evidently, Chaim selected the name Sochaczewski to commemorate the town of his family. From 1815 until 1915 Lowicz belonged to Russian-controlled Congress Poland⁵.

We know of one of Chaim's sons, Moshe Aharon, also known as "Rabbi Moshe of Lowicz," who was born around 1778 in Lowicz and died in 1831 in the same town. We shall see below that Moshe Aharon was very wealthy, served in a governmental position, and was exalted in the Torah. Around 1800, Chasidism arrived in Poland, and Moshe was not a Chasid. Among the Chasidim and the Mitnagdim (all those who resisted the Chasidism) were harsh confrontations⁶, culminating in one side informing the authorities about the other side acting against the regime that caused arrests. Moshe Aharon had a number of children. We know of Jacob Kopil, Yehonatan (we are of his descendants), Isaac Shlomo, Elka Bina, Ephraim Fishel, Meir Hirsch and Mira.

Although R' Moshe Aharon Sochaczewski was not a Chasid, he had a special connection with Rabbi Simcha Bunim Bonhardt (known also as Rabbi Rabbi Simcha Bunim), the first Grand Rabbi of Pshisucha⁷, as well as one of the key leaders of Chasidism in Poland. R' R' Bunim had been involved in commerce and had studied European languages, sciences and was a licensed pharmacist. After his marriage to the daughter of a Chasid, he became a follower of the Chozeh (Visionary) of Lublin, who had brought Chasidism to Poland.

Among the many disciples of R' R' Bunim were two who founded the two largest Chasidic groups in Poland: Rabbi Yitzchak Meir Alter, the founder of the Ger Chasidim and author of the commentary on the Talmud *Chiddushei HaRim*, and Rabbi Shraga Fajvel Danzyger of Grojec (we are his descendants), founder of the Alexander Chasidic congregation. A son of Rabbi Shraga Fajwel married the daughter of R' R' Bunim, and R' Shraga Fajwel's daughter married R' Jonas/Yehonatan Sochaczewski, head of the rabbinical court of Lowicz, and our ancestor.

The book *Tiferet HaTzadikim*⁸ includes a story on pages 56-57 about the special connection between Rabbi Bunim and R' Moshe Aharon Sochaczewski.

4 Lowicz 52°07' 19°56'. 75 Km west of Warsaw

5 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Congress_Poland

6 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Misnagdim>

7 Przysucha 51°22' 20°37', Poland

8 www.daat.ac.il/daat/vl/tohen.asp?id=441

תפארת הצדיקים

מעשה נפלא מהגאון הקדוש איש אלפים רבי מנחם
מענדיל זצוק"ל הרבי מקאצק זי"ע .

סיפר דודי המופלג החסיד רבי אפרים פישל ז"ל מפילוב איך זקנינו הנגיד
הקטין המרביץ מופלג בהורה ויראה הר"ר משה זלה"ה מלוביטש שהיה
מחנך ולא דרך מעולם בדרכי החסידות ומ"מ רבינו הרבי ר' בונם זי"ע בכל עת
שהיה בלוביטש הו' אכסניא שלו רק אלל זקנינו הנ"ל. פ"א א"ל רבינו ז"ל ר' משה
במה אכרכס. הלא תורה וגדולה יש אלליכס. רק זאת אכרכס שבניכס יהו' חסידים.
וגם המחומטים שלכס יהו' גדולי ארך פולין. וכן הו' שבנו הוא דודי הרה"ג החסיד
המפורסם ר' יהונתן ז"ל הראבד"ק לוביטש הו' חתן הגאון הקדוש ר' שרגא פ'וויל
ז"ל האבד"ק גרונא. וכן ר' יונתן הנ"ל היה הרה"ג חבידה קדישא רבי יצחק
אדרן ז"ל. וכן השני הרב החסיד ר' אפרים פיישיך ז"ל הו' חתן הרב הקדוש
ה"ר

כט 57 תפארת הצדיקים

ה"ר דוד ממוטעווין זוק"ל זכינו של רא"פ הנ"ל הם האחים אחד הרב הלדיק גדול
בתורה ובחסידות ה"ר משה חיים שליט"א מנהל טרחו בעיר ריווין. והשני הוא
הגביר המופלג בתורה וחסידות ר' לייבלי סאכעטעווסקי שליט"א אחד מהגשאים
שכירושלים עה"ק חובב"א. ועוד בת אחה הנ"ל לזקנינו הר"ר משה הנ"ל שהו' בלחו
של הגאון הגדול ר' מאיר זיליך זוק"ל האבד"ק לאסק. וכן הרביעי הוא זקני הרב
החסיד ר' יעקב קאפיל ז"ל מלוביטש הנ"ל שהיה חתן זקני הרה"ג הלדיק הר"ר
נתן כ"ץ פלאקער ז"ל הנ"ל. ועוד בניו הנ"ל אשר לא ידעתי ספורו לנו וכולם
דרכו בדרכי החסידות.

2. Tiferet HaTzadikim by Shlomo Gabriel Rosenthal Pages 56-57

"A wonderful deed which was told by the holy genius, the man of God, Rabbi Menachem Mendl⁹, a righteous and holy man of blessed memory, the Rabbi of Katzek¹⁰, may his memory protect us. [it is recommended to look at the family tree below while reading].

My [great] uncle, the great Chassid Rabbi Efraim Fishel [Nachman] Sochaczewski of Pilov¹¹, told how our elder (one of our ancestors) the governor, officer, sharp and extraordinarily learned in the Torah and God-fearing Rabbi Moshe Aharon Sochaczewski, may those who remember him merit life in the next world, was a Mitnaged [refused to accept the Chasidic way] and never walked in the ways of Chasidism. Whenever our Rabbi, Rabbi R' [Simcha] Bunim, may his memory protect us, was in Lowicz his lodging was only with our elder named above. Once our Rabbi [Simcha Bunim] may the memory of the righteous be a blessing said: Rabbi Moshe, how can I bless you? There is Torah and greatness in you. Only this is your blessing that your sons will be Chasidim, and that your in-laws will be the greatest of Poland.

And so it happened that his son, my [great] uncle, the great and famous Chassidic Rabbi, Rabbi Yehonatan Sochaczewski, memory of a righteous shall be for a blessing, the head of the court of the Lowicz [Jewish] congregation, became the son-in-law of the holy Genius Rabbi Shraga Feivel Danzyger, head of the court of the Gritza¹² congregation. And the son of Rabbi Yehonatan was the genius Chassidic Holy Rabbi Yitzchak Aharon may the memory of the righteous be a blessing. And his second son, Rabbi Chassid Rabbi Efraim Fishel, was the son-in-law of the holy rabbi, Rabbi David of Tushevitz, a righteous and holy man of blessed memory. And sons of Rabbi

9 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Menachem_Mendel_of_Kotzk

10 Kock 51°38' 22°27' 45 Km north of Lublin

11 Ulway 51°25'00 21°58'00 בידידש: פילוב

12 Grojec, Poland 51°52' 20°52'

Efraim Fishel were Rabbi Moshe Chaim, may he be blessed with a good and long life, is the director of his community in the city of Rivitz, and the second is the outstanding Torah scholar Rabbi Leibli Sochaczewski may he be blessed with a good and long life is one of the presidents in Jerusalem the holy city may it be built and established quickly in our time Amen. And another daughter of our elder mentioned above R' Rabbi Moshe, was the bride of the great Rabbi Meir Zilich, a righteous and holy man of blessed memory the head of the court of the Lask¹³ congregation. And his forth descendant is my elder [in this case - grandfather] Rabbi Chassid Rabbi Ya'akov Koppel may the memory of Righteous be a blessing of Lewicz who was the son-in-law of the gaon Rabbi Natan Platzker [of Plock¹⁴] may the memory of the righteous be a blessing. And there are other sons, whom I did not know, and all of them went in the ways of Chasidism."

The stories in the book were collected, copied, and brought to print by our relative Shlomo Gavriel Rosenthal, grandson of Ya'akov Kopel Sochaczewski. The book was printed in Warsaw in 1909. The author of the book heard the story from the brother of his grandfather, Rabbi Ephraim Fishel, who had heard from the Rabbi of Kotzk. The Rabbi of Kotzk was a disciple of R' R' Simcha Bunim and was a contemporary of Moshe Aharon Sochaczewski. It should be noted here that this story was discovered by Rabbi Nafthali Aharon Vekstein, who helped the research of our family.

Note the superlatives with which R' R' Simcha Bunim describes our ancestor Rabbi Moshe Aharon Sochaczewsky. Not only was he extremely learned and God-fearing, wealthy (we do not know the source of his wealth) but he apparently was appointed by the Czar to stand as the head of the city's Jewish population.

Indeed the blessing of R' R' Bunim came true, and all the sons and daughters of R' Moshe Aharon married with the greatest Jewish families of Poland. We are interested in our ancestor, Yehonatan Sochaczewski ("the great and famous Chasid Rabbi Yehonatan Sochaczewski, memory of a righteous shall be for a blessing, the head of the court of the Lowicz [Jewish] congregation",) [born in 1811 in Lowicz and died there on October 12, 1884]. He married a daughter of Rabbi Shraga Fajwel Dancyger. Rabbi Shraga Fajwel and his son established the lineage of the Admo"rim¹⁵ of Alexander. After his wife's death, the widower Yehonatan married his first wife's sister, a widowed daughter of Rabbi Shraga Fajwel. Yehonatan Sochaczewski was the head of the Jewish legal court of the Lowicz community, that is, the leading rabbi of the community. Family ties to Rabbi Shraga Fajwel Dancyger is a great "yichus" and if one of our children becomes a Chasid, he can receive the best match in the world of Chasidism. (The Dancyger family history was written separately.)

For streamlining the reading, here is a short part of the family tree:

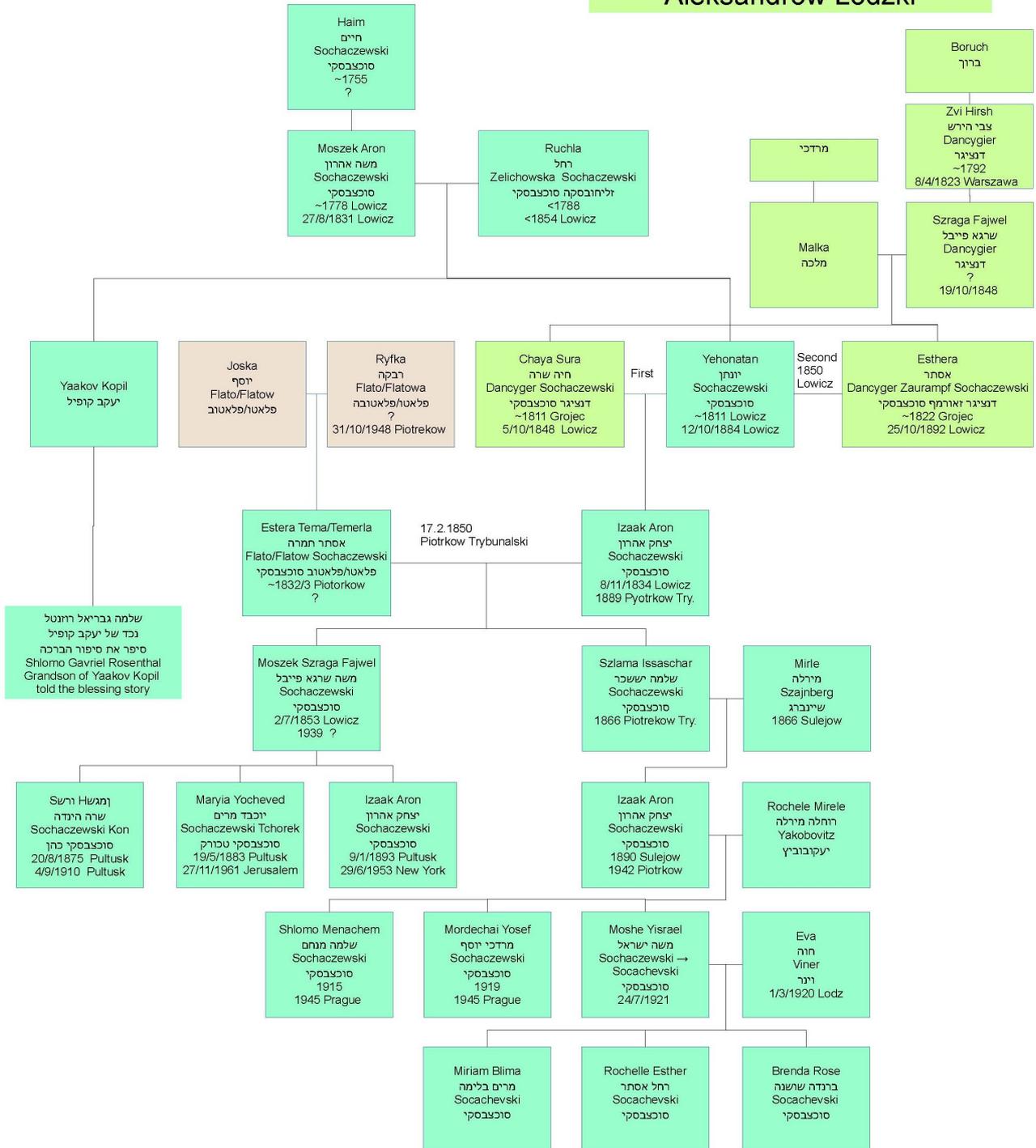
13 Lask, Poland 51°35' 19°08'

14 Plock, Poland 52°33' 19°42'

15 ADMO"R – initials in Hebrew of: Our Lord, Teacher and Rabbi – used in general for a community leader of Hasidim

משפחת סוכצבסקי
Sochaczewski Family

משפחת דנציגר - אדמו"רי אלכסנדר
Dancyger Family – Admo"rs of
Aleksandrow Lodzki



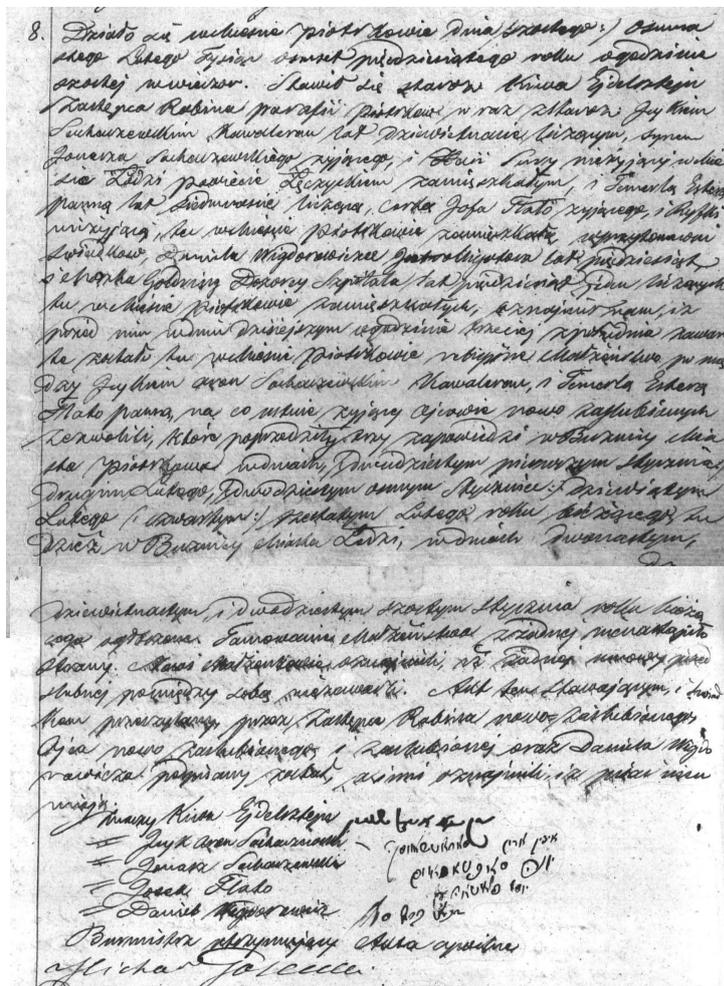
3. The Dancyger and Sochaczewski families from the early 19th century

Yehonatan Sochaczewski had 11 known sons and daughters - from his first wife, Chaya Sura Dancyger (born 1811 in Grojek, died on October 5, 1848 in Lowicz), were born Yitzchak Aharon (our g-g-g-grandfather, who is also mentioned in the story as "the holy genius Rabbi Yitzchak

Aharon may the memory of the righteous be a blessing"), Simcha Bunim, Brucha, Tuvia, Nechama, and Pesach. From his second wife Esther Dancyger (Born about 1822 and passed away in 1892, and who was a widow when they married) were born Fajwel, Chava, Mordechai Yosef, Ruhama, and Sarah. Please note that the first wife died at what would be considered today a young age, but actually lived until the average life expectancy of the period - about 40 years. Yehonatan Sochaczewski and his second wife lived 70 years, which was considered in the 19th century an especially long life.

Yehuda Leib Sochaczewski, who is mentioned in the *Tiferet Hazadikim*: "the great Rabbi of the Torah and Chasidism Rabbi Leible Sochaczewski may he merit a good and long life, one of the leaders of Jerusalem". Yaakov Yehuda Leib passed away in 1916 and was buried in the Mount of Olives, Jerusalem. His tomb is marked on the map of the Mount of Olives in a heritage tour of the Tchorek family. In a synagogue built in Jerusalem by his wife there is an inscription that reveals his full name: Yaakov Yehuda Leib. Detailed information can be found in the Chaim Sochaczewski descendants list.

R' Yehonatan's eldest son, Yitzhak Aharon (born November 8, 1834 in Lubitsch, died in 1889 in Piotrkow Trybunalski), is our ancestor. He married on 18/2/1850 Tamara Esther Plato/Platow (who was born approximately in 1834 In Piotrkow Trybunalski):



4. Marriage registration of Yitzhak Aharon Sochaczewski with Tamara Esther Plato

[Polish] Date of Document/Marriage: Piotrkow [Trybunalski] 6 [Russian] / 18 [General] February 1850, married at 3 pm and registered at 6 pm. The Rebbe: Koby Edelstein, assistant to the rabbi of Piotrkow district. The groom: Yitzchak [Aharon] Sochachevsky Single at the age of 19, the son of Yona Sochachevsky, alive, and Channa [Chaya] Sarah, died, lived in the city of Lodz in the district of Latchika. The bride: Miss Tamarella Esther, 17 years old, daughter of Joseph Plato, alive, and Rivka, died [Piotrkow 1848 D77], lives here in Piotrkow. Witnesses: Daniel Vidgorovitch at the age of 50 and Moshe Goldring, a brother of a hospital at the age of 51, resides [the witnesses resides?] In Piotrkow. Posters were hung in Piotrkow's synagogue on And in the synagogue of Lodz on ...

[Signatures] Itzik Aron Sochaczewski

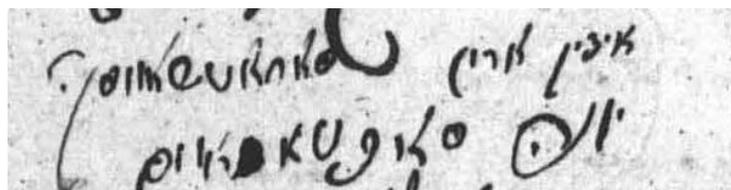
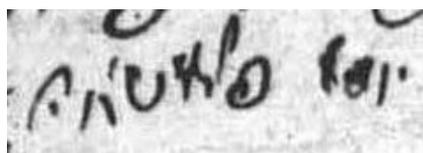
Yona Sakhta?

Yosef Plattab

.....

Note: The bride's last name was written in the marriage record as "FLATO", but the father of the bride signed in Hebrew letters "FLATAW". In the search for information about the family, the couple's children's birth records were found using the family's name "FLATOW". The two spellings of the last name are phonetically different and using just one of the spelling would not have yielded all records.

Note that the groom and his father and the father of the bride signed in Hebrew letters and spelling of Yiddish:



5. "Itzik Aron Sochaczewski" "Yona Sachata?awsk" "Yosef Plattaw"

The writers wrote and signed with a feather pen and ink, or if they were especially rich in pen with a steel nib. In both cases, the writer dips the nib or tip of the feather occasionally in ink. There was a groove in the feather that held a small amount of ink until the ink was drawn to the paper. Sometimes the record was smeared with a drop of ink from the feather, and sometimes there was not enough ink and the text was pale.

The couple had children: Moshe Shraga Fajwel, Avraham Mordechai, Chaya Sura and Shlomo Issaschar. The first son is listed in the municipal records in Poland by the name of Moshe alone, but we shall call him Moshe Shraga Fajwel, as he was called on the gravestone of his son, Yitzhak-Isaac Aharon. The name is composed of the names of his two great-grandfathers. We know that at least one of his grandfathers was alive when he was born. Another son known from Chassidic literature is the famous genius Rabbi Shalom Baruch Soheczewski, one of the rabbis of Lodz, about whom a study was written by Nafthali Aharon Vekstein, but no birth record was found for him.

Those who made the early list of descendants of Chaim Sochaczewski were unaware of the existence of Shalom Baruch and Shlomo Issaschar. Their birth may have never been registered with the authorities. Such people were called "Ne'elam" ("נעלם" disappeared in Hebrew). Also possible that the birth records were lost or has not yet been found.

In search of the family history, we followed Yitzhak Aharon Sochaczewski, the son of Moshe Shraga Fajwel Sochaczewski (it is worth looking at the family tree, Fig. 3 above). A document file was discovered in Yad Vashem in the name of Yitzchak Aharon, number TD259866. According to the file, his profession was fabrics dyeing. He was transferred to the Lodz ghetto on 1/5/1940, and from there he was sent to Auschwitz on 22/8/1944. On the day he arrived in Auschwitz, he probably underwent the infamous Dr. Mengele selection and was apparently deemed capable of working. He was immediately sent to the Dachau camp. He arrived on the night between August 31, 1944 and September 1, 1944, eight days in cattle cars without food and water! In Dachau he was tattooed with the number 96353, and immediately transferred to a camp called Kaufering/Lundberg (Kaufering camp¹⁶, a sub-camp of Dachau that was located near the town of Landsberg, Germany). His son Yechiel, who received number 96354, was in line just after him. Yechiel died on March 24, 1945, about a month before the liberation. Yitzchak Aaron survived and was liberated on April 27, 1945. It is registered that he lived in Stuttgart in several Displaced People (DP) camps and on 7/2/1947 boarded a ship named Ernie Pyle to the USA.

The story of Yitzchak Aaron's trip to the US is interesting: After searching at Yad Vashem, we contacted Brenda Socachevsky-Bacon, who we thought was Isaac's granddaughter, since on his ship travel to the USA he was registered with a son by the name of Israel (Yad Vashem file number TD252130), and this son later had a daughter by the name of Brenda. There was only one problem: Yitzchak Aharon's son was Israel Ber, and the one with him on the ship was Moshe Israel, with different dates of birth. We also saw in the files that Israel Ber died in 1943. Brenda solved the problem: Moshe Israel's father was also named Yitzchak Aharon, and he was a cousin of Yitzchak Aharon about whom we were searching information.

We were able to follow the family of the same Moshe Israel according to information from Brenda Socachevsky-Bacon and records from Poland. It turns out that Moshe Israel's grandfather, Shlomo Issachar Sochaczewski, is the younger brother of Moshe Shraga Fajwel, and is the son of Yitzchak Aharon Sochaczewski and Tamara Esther Plato.

Indeed, in some records, Moshe Israel labels Yitzchak Aharon as an uncle. It seems that Yitzchak Aharon adopted him as a son after all his children had died, and Moshe Israel was an orphan. Adoption by relatives was common during and before the Holocaust, due to a short life expectancy. Brenda related that after the liberation, her father was living with Yitzchak Aharon in Stuttgart, Germany. Yitzchak Aharon worked repairing luggage. A young woman arrived from Bergen Belsen and left a suitcase for repair, which she needed for her trip to the United States, as she was sponsored by her uncle. Moshe Israel was sitting in a side room, looked out and saw her, and it was love at first sight. He asked Yitzchak Aharon when she would return to pick up the suitcase. Yitzchak Aharon told him, and he decided to meet her at the train station. Thus Moshe Israel married Eva Wiener (Yad Vashem file number TD238552), and Yitzchak Aharon was officiated at the wedding. Eva's sister Sally married Moshe Appel. All five, Yitzchak Aharon, Eva, her sister and their husbands received an immigration visa to the US sponsored by an uncle of Eva and her sister, whose name was Isadore Haft. The uncle had to commit to the immigrants' financial needs until they were settled.

16 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kaufering_concentration_camp_complex



15. From Left: Eva (Wiener), Moshe Yisrael, Yitzchak Aharon (standing),
Eva's brother-in-law - Moshe Appel, Eva's sister – Sally Appel.

Yitzhak Aharon had applied for and received residency in the United States in 1950 and lived in Brooklyn. The spelling of his name had changed somewhat into English. He had remarried with a widow who was about his age and they had no children. Brenda Socachevsky-Bacon relates that Yitzchak Aharon's wife owned a building with eight apartments, and her parents with their children lived in a downstairs apartment while Yitzhak Aharon and his wife lived upstairs, so she knew him as a child, and remembers what a nice person he was, and how he loved children.

It is now clear that Moshe Israel is a son of another Yitzhak Aharon, and not the same Yitzhak Aaron with whom he was in the ghetto and traveled to America, so we continued the research to find out what exactly what was the connection between them. According to Brenda the two Yizchak Aharons were cousins, but Moshe Israel presents Yitzhak Aaron as his uncle in the US immigration records:

8-222		AGE	SEX	MARRIED	OCCUPATION	ABLE TO READ WRITE	
NAME Sochaczewski, Israel		25	M	Yes			
PORT OF ENTRY	MANIFEST NO.	CLASS	CITIZEN OF		RACE	PLACE OF BIRTH	
	2-49-15581		Poland				
DATE	S.S.	LINE	VISA OR PERMIT NO.		SECTION	PLACE AND DATE OF ISSUE	
2-18-47	Ernie Pyle	-					
CROSS REFERENCE INDEX CARD							
No.							
NAME AND ADDRESS OF NEAREST RELATIVE OR FRIEND IN COUNTRY whence alien came							
DESTINATION				HEAD TAX STATUS			
BY WHOM PASSAGE PAID				MONEY			
IN U. S. BEFORE		WHEN		WHERE		GOING TO RELATIVE OR FRIEND	
NAME AND COMPLETE ADDRESS OF RELATIVE OR FRIEND							
PURPOSE IN COMING AND LENGTH OF INTENDED STAY						HEALTH	
HEIGHT	COMPLEXION	HAIR	EYES	DISTINGUISHING MARKS			
ACCOMPANIED BY							
Uncle: Isaac Aron, 53							
Wife: Eva, 26 yrs.							

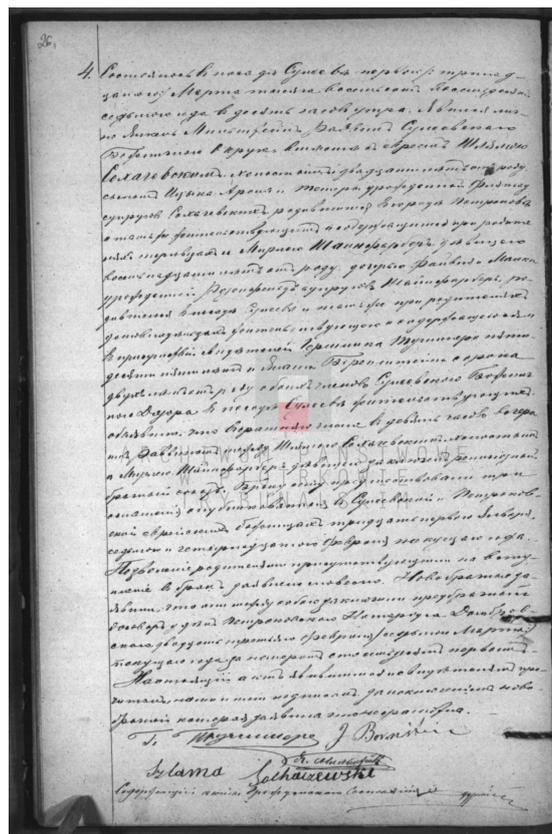
5. Registration of Moshe Israel's arrival in the United States on the Ernie Pyle ship, 18/2/1947

Brenda Sochaczewski compiled a genealogical list that reached her g-grandfather, Shlomo Issachar Sochaczewski:

-1 Szlama Issaschar SOCHACZEWSKI b. 1866 Sulejow, Poland
-+ Mirle SZAJNBERG b. 1866 Sulejow, Poland **m. Sulejow 1887 M4**
-2 Sura Chana SOCHACZEWSKI b. 1888 Sulejow, Poland
-2 Yitzhak Aharon SOCHACZEWSKI b. 1890 B7 Sulejow, Poland Liv. Piotrkow Tribunalsky
-+ Rochele Mirele JAKUBOWICZ
-3 Shlomo Menachem Mendel SOCHACZEWSKI b. 1915 d. 1945
- + Chaya EIZMAN
-3 Mordechai Yosef SOCHACZEWSKI b. 1919 d. 1945
-3 Moshe Yisrael SOCHACZEWSKI → SOCACHEVSKY b. 1921
- + Chawa WINER b. 1920 Lodz, Poland

6. Family tree that resulted from research by Brenda Socachevsky-Bacon

Using the JRI-Poland.org search tool have yielded the marriage record highlighted in yellow above. After a while we also managed to get a copy of the record and had it translated:



7. Marriage Record of Shlomo Issaschar's and Mirle Schinberger

It happened in the town of Solejow¹⁷ on March 13, 1887 at 9 am. Arrived.... with the Jew Shlomo Sochaczewski, a 20-year-old single, the son of a married couple Sochaczewski - Yitzhak Aharon

¹⁷ Sulejow, Poland 51°22' 19°53'

and Tamara nee Plato, who was born in the city of Piotrkow, lives there with his parents and makes living for himself, his parents are merchants - and 20-year-old Mirla Schinberger, a single daughter of a married couple, Schinberger Feibel and Malka, and she [Mirla] was born in the city of Solejow and lives there with her parents who are homeowners The couple signed a prenuptial agreement with Notary Davrovsky in Piotrkow on March 7 this year, number 181.....

Note that the document lists the parents of Shlomo Sochaczewski as a "married couple". Because of the heavy tax on marriage, many Jews married only in a religious ceremony and were considered unmarried by the authorities. The information that Shlomo "makes a living for himself" means that at his young age he is probably already an artisan or independent businessman. His wife's parents are "homeowners", indicating that they are very wealthy. In addition, the existence of a prenuptial financial agreement shows that at least one of the families is very wealthy.

From here we could connect the family trees - Shlomo Issaschar is the son of Yitzhak Aharon and Tamara nee Plato/Platow. It is now clear that Yitzhak Aharon, the father of Moshe Israel, is a first cousin of Yitzhak Aharon, the son of Moshe Shraga Fajvel, as can be seen in Fig. 3. We have added the list of descendants of Shlomo Issachar to the large list of the descendants of Chaim Sochaczewski.

Isaac Aharon's listing as "Uncle" in the Moshe Israel's Immigration Document was probably made so Yitzhak Aharon would be able to travel to the USA on the same emigrant visa as Eva Wiener-Sochaczewski as a close relative.

Brenda Socachevsky heard from her mother that immediately after her father was released from the Theresienstadt concentration camp in May 1945, he began looking for his two older brothers. In November he learned that they were hospitalized in Prague. Unfortunately they died just a few days apart the week before he arrived there. Due to a lack of medication, they did not get good medical care.

To note her father's fiftieth yahrzeit, Brenda Socachevsky Bacon wrote three letters to her father, her grandfather and grandmother, asking for answers to many questions about their lives in Poland and their fate during the Holocaust. The letters were published in *Hedim*, the journal of the descendants of Jews born in Piotrkow. They appear below:

Three Letters: My Zaidie, My Bubby and My Father¹⁸

Brenda Rachel Socachevsky Bacon

In Honor of the Fiftieth Yahrzeit
of My Father Moshe Yisrael Socachevsky



From right to left: James. B. Donovan, lawyer for the Jewish Nazi Victims Organization of America; Robert F. Kennedy, Attorney General of the United States; Charles Silver, representative of the mayor of New York; Moshe Yisrael Socachevsky, my father and Felix Lasky, secretary of the organization. New York, 1962

¹⁸ These letters are the product of a workshop in creative autobiographical/ biographical writing. I would like to thank my teacher, Dr. Michal Goldvicht, for her guidance, feedback and encouragement, and my fellow workshop participants for their support. I would like also to thank Jacek Bednarek for accompanying me to the office of the Piotrków municipality in 2010, where I found the birth certificates of my father's two brothers and the marriage license of his older brother. Since then Jacek continues to search in various archives and has sent me documents that illuminate the life of my family in Poland. Last but not least, I would like to thank my husband, the historian Rabbi Professor Gershon C. Bacon, for translating Polish and Yiddish documents, for helping me find background material, and for always having a listening ear and giving good advice.

A LETTER TO ZAIDIE

Dear Zaidie Yitzhak Aharon,

It is difficult for me to fathom that your life was cut off at such a young age. You did not have the opportunity to know the wonderful family that emerged from my father, your only son who survived the inferno. Sometimes I imagine that had you survived, I would ask you a lot of questions, and I would get interesting answers. But now I am left only with the questions.

I cannot even imagine the answers you would give me, because my father hardly spoke of you. I only know that he admired you and wanted to follow your path in life. And I know that you were the gabbai of the shtiebl of the Alexander Hasidim in Piotrków, who were known for their love of every Jew, no matter what their outlook, and as lovers of Zion. It is unfortunate that you did not live long enough to see how your son inherited these qualities.

And, yet, I will share with you my thoughts and my questions.

This question may seem inappropriate to you, but since Mommy told me you were a well-to-do man, I was surprised, maybe even disappointed when I visited the city in 2010, and saw the sad-looking building where you lived. However, I wondered what were the criteria were for a good standard of living between the two World Wars. Was this building considered as a nice one in your time? Perhaps the condition of the house deteriorated because of the decline of the economy of Piotrkow after the Jews were taken away..

My mother told me you had a big department store on Farna Street. I learned that it was actually a large grocery store.¹⁹ I try to imagine the moment when on Shabbat Shuvah, September 16, 1939 the Nazis looted your shop, and I wonder - how exactly did you react when you found out?

I wonder, too, if when you accompanied your son, Shlomo Menachem, to the huppah in the ghetto, at his marriage to Chaya Eisman, on December 28, 1940, did you think that they would together build a wonderful family? And in 1942, when you wrote a letter to the court in Lodz asking to be removed from the list of merchants because you did not have enough income to pay a member's tax, did you still believe, Zaidie, that the situation would return to what it was before the War?

19 Yaakov Malz and Naftali (Lavie) Lau (Eds.), Piotrkow.Trybunalski and Vicinity, 1985., p. VI.

I was moved by the courage you displayed during the difficult days. I learned from the Piotrków Yizkor Book²⁰ that you built a bunker for friends and neighbors, to hide from the Nazis. Apparently, you also had a great deal of optimism that gave you the strength to act. And, yet, I'm curious to know whether on the day you left the bunker, to search for food and water when they ran out, did you really believe you could return to the bunker safely?

I cannot help but also wonder about the moment when you were shot to death. I know it does not matter anymore, and yet it does make a difference to me ... I really want to believe that you did not see the accursed Nazi Klete, may his memory be blotted out, when he shot you, but rather that you were shot from behind and died instantly without knowing what was about to happen.

Zaidie dear, may your memory be for a blessing.”

My grandfather Yitzhak Aharon Sochachevsky, son of Shlomo Yissachar, was born in 1890 in Sulejów,²¹ a small village near Piotrków Trybunalski. He married Rachel Mirel, nee: Jacobowitz. They had three sons: Shlomo Mendel (b. 1915), Mordechai Yosef (b. 1918) and my father, Moshe Israel (b. 1921). They lived in an apartment house owned by his wife, at 8 Starowarszawska Street and ran a successful store.



8 Starowarszawska St., Piotrkow

20 Ibid., . pp. 291-292. See too, p. 325, about my grandfather's place among the Alexander Hasidim in Piotrkow.

21 About Sulejów Jewry: https://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/pinkas_poland/pol1_00159.html

Yitzhak Aharon was a parnas (member of the kehillah council) of the Jewish community of Piotrkow as well a gabbai of the shtiebel of the Alexander Hasidim. Naftali Lau-Lavie z"l once told me that he remembers my grandfather entering the house of his father, Rabbi Moshe Chaim Lau, when he held discussions on how to respond to the decrees of the Nazis. When the Nazis entered Piotrków, they forbade praying in a minyan, but Yitzhak Aharon nevertheless prayed at the Amshinover minyan on Farna St. on Rosh Hashanah, 1939. He was among the twenty-nine Jews arrested, cruelly beaten and thrown into jail by the Nazis.. We know of this horrendous incident from the account written by Rabbi Shimon Huberband, in his book **Kiddush Hashem** ²² which documents religious and cultural life during the Holocaust.

A LETTER TO BUBBY

My dear Bubby Rachel,

I would be so happy had I known you, if I could have admired you like granddaughters adore and love their grandmothers. But I know so little about you. My father, your only son who survived, did not talk about you. He could not. It hurt him too much. As for me, all I can do is collect only fragments of information, and mainly wonder, ask, and imagine.

When my father's cousin from Montreal, Mendel Kalmanovitz, visited us in order to participate in my wedding, I hoped that he, who knew you, would shed light on who you really were. But the only information he could share with me was that you spent a lot of time in the kitchen, cooking. I tried to imagine you cooking, but I could not even imagine the smell of your delicacies. I try to imagine myself as a young girl sitting next to you on the sofa, asking: "Bubby, tell me how you and Zaidie meet? Was it through a shidduch, or

²² Shimon Huberband, **Kiddush Hashem**, Ktav, 1987, p. 43. Rabbi Huberband lived in Piotrków from the time of his marriage to the daughter of Rabbi Yakow Glazer, the dayan of Piotrkow, but in 1939 left for Sulejow with his family to escape the Nazi bombings. But the Nazi bombed Sulejow, and his wife, son and father-in-law were killed. In his sorrow, he left Piotrkow for Warsaw, where he joined Ringelblum's "Oneg Shabbat" enterprise. He interviewed religious Jews who came to the Warsaw ghetto, and documented their stories. His writings, along with those of others who participated in the project, as well as all sorts of material documenting life in the ghetto, were hidden in milk cans and metal boxes in hiding places and buried in three places in the earth of the Warsaw ghetto. After the war, only two of these three places were found.

on the street, or vacation? If it was in a shidduch, as was customary then, did you love him when you were married?"

I learned from the documents of the draft board before which Zaidie appeared in 1921 that Zaidie was a rather short, thin man, 168 centimeters tall, his chest was only 78 centimeters wide and he was missing 26 teeth. Even if I were sitting in your lap, I would not dare to ask you if he had false teeth. I certainly would not have dared to ask you how you got along with your mother-in-law and your father -in-law. Did they treat you with respect and warmth? And how did you get along with your brother-in-law Yehiel Feivel, whose existence I learned of only recently?

My father did tell me that he had two brothers. Their pictures were displayed on his bedroom chest. So, let me dare and ask you, Bubby, did you miss having a daughter? And how did you feel when you sent the boys to the heder where they studied all day long? From the only picture Daddy had of his two brothers before the War, I can see that they are dressed in a Western style. And what about you, Bubby? Did you wear a sheitel? And did Zaidie have payes? Daddy never described your appearance.

On my trip to Piotrków, in 2010, I found the house at 8 Starowarszawska Street which you, your mother and your siblings inherited from your father , but only last year, did I discover that the name of your father was Mendel Jakubowicz , and that his parents were Michel and Ruchla nee: Moskowitz. From the bill of inheritance, I learned that you had an older brother, Avraham Ber Moskowitz, and two young sisters: Miriam Blaustein (Shaya's wife) and Shifra-Bluma, and that your father left the house to all of you when he passed away in 1913

Look how long it took me after the War to get this information.

I was surprised when I saw that in 1941, the house was owned only by you and your first-born, Shlomo Menahem. I wonder, did you buy the house from your mother and your siblings? In that case, Zaidie's store must have been very profitable, or perhaps you were a shrewd businesswoman. How can I know?. According to the list the Nazis prepared of the occupants of the apartments, Rivka Sochaczewski was also living in your apartment in 1941. Who was she? She was born in 1890, the same year that Zaidie was born. Was she Zaidie's twin sister? Yehiel Feivel's wife? A niece? I wish I knew..

You see, Bubby, from the few details I have, I try, as much as possible, to put together a picture, to tell myself a story, to know you. Only about your end I try not to think, those terrible events that made my father, your son, unable to talk about you and about Zaidie. I try to avoid thinking about it, but it overcomes me. Then, I find myself imagining those

terrible moments and asking myself: What happened to you there, in the bunker that Zaidie built ? How did you react when you found out that he was shot to death when he went out to bring you food and water? And how did you manage to continue? And what went through your mind when you boarded the train to the Ravensbruck concentration camp in Germany? Did you have any hope or only despair in those hours? Did you know you would not come back?

Dear Bubby, may your memory be for a blessing...

Unfortunately as yet I do not have more details as yet to add about the life of my grandmother, **Rachel (Jakubowicz) Sochaczewski**.. It seems that there is very little documentation on the lives of ordinary Jewish women in the past.

A LETTER TO DADDY

Dear Daddy,

On a page in the memorial book of Piotrków, which you dedicated to your family, are the pictures of your handsome older brothers, the only pictures you have of your entire family. You wrote,

For these I weep and bitter is my soul
Their holy and pure memory,
Will forever remain in my heart.²³

Daddy, the more I research and study your past, the more I admire the way you channeled your memory of your painful experiences during the Holocaust into public activity, how you helped survivors , and how you were among the pioneers to commemorate the Holocaust in the United States. I am just sorry that I hadn't been able to express my admiration for you enough times in your life time . And more than that, I am sad that all these years, you told nothing to your daughters about the terrible hardships you suffered. For years I've been trying to trace - with great effort - your past, Daddy, and I still know so little ...

I remember clearly how at the end of a visit by relatives and friends in our home in Brooklyn, you always accompanied them to the door with the words, "Your departure is difficult for me."

23 Above, fn. 2, pp. 1135-36.

How different were those departures in Brooklyn, from the ones from your family in Piotrków, if there were any real departures. Did you know you would never see your father again, when he left to get water for everyone? Did you have the opportunity to say goodbye to your mother before she boarded the train to the Ravensbruck concentration camp in Germany, where she perished?

Did you manage to say goodbye to your older brother Shlomo Menachem and your middle brother Mordechai Yosef? Were you together in the same railroad car on the trip to the Buchenwald concentration camp where the three of you arrived on December 11, 1944. Did you hold on to each other tightly? Did someone on the train advise all of you to declare that your profession was carpentry and that your father was also a carpenter? And how much did you suffer when the accursed Nazis, may their name be blotted out, forced you to carry stones and not to work in carpentry? Mommy once told me that when you bought a suit, extra cushions had to be inserted into the lining of the shoulders because your back had been rounded as a result of the hard work during the War..

I learned only after your passing, from a brief conversation with Mommy, that in May 1945 you were liberated from the Theresienstadt concentration camp in Czechoslovakia and immediately began searching for your brothers. She told me that in November, when you learned that they were in a hospital in Prague, you hurried there, but when you arrived you found out that they had been buried just a few days before. She also told me that when the hospital director told you that your brothers had not received the proper treatment because of a lack of medicine, you began to break the furniture in his office. My heart ached when I heard this. Such a response must have come from the terrible crisis you underwent.



From left to right: My uncles:²⁴ Shlomo Menahem (1915-1945). He married Chaya Eisman in the Piotrkow ghetto in 1941. Esther was murdered in Treblinka; Mordecai Yosef (1919-1945)

Now it is up to me and my sisters to hold onto the memory of our uncles and grandparents whom we never knew.

On the second day of Rosh Hodesh Elul 5779, September 1, 2019, your children, grandchildren and great grandchildren will commemorate your fiftieth yahrzeit. You would be proud to know that your three daughters all immigrated to Israel and fulfilled your dream of living in Israel!

Dear Daddy, may your memory be for a blessing.”



From right to left: my father, Moshe Yisrael Socachevsky; Dr. Brenda Rachel Socachevsky, married to Rabbi Professor Gershon Bacon, lives in Jerusalem; Rochelle Esther Socachevsky, married to Dr. Yossi Templeman, lives in Tekoa; Mriam Blimah Socachevsky, married to Rabbi Ira Shmuel Yehuda Grussgot, lives in Nahariya; my mother, Chava Socachevsky (nee: Wiener), born in Lodz, Poland, passed away in 2014. The Socachevsky sisters have children and grandchildren living in Israel.

My father - Moshe Israel Socachevsky (Sochaczewki) - was the sole survivor of his family. He was born in Sulejów in 1921, but grew up in Piotrków in a family of Alexander Hasidim and studied in their heder. During the War, he worked in a forced labor camp in Piotrków, until he was sent to Buchenwald, then to Schliben, and from there to Theresienstadt. After the liberation he met his wife Chava Wiener, my mother, an Auschwitz survivor born in Lodz. They married in Stuttgart, Germany, on July 4, 1946.

24 Memorial Book. p. 1135-6.

Although my father dreamed of living in Israel, my parents immigrated to the United States, after being sponsored by my mother's uncle in New York. He also sponsored her younger sister Sally, my mother's only sibling who survived The War with her, and her husband Moshe Appel. At first they all lived in a basement apartment in Manhattan, and after a while moved to Brooklyn, New York. My parents had three daughters, all born in the United States. Although it was way beyond their means, they made sure to send their daughters to the best religious Zionist schools.

My father was active in the Piotrkow association in New York, as the picture on pages 959-960 in the Yizkor Book testifies. I remember how my parents would excitedly prepare for the annual Purim party of the association, and how my father would go to meetings, and would then talk about his friends Koslowski and Strikowski.

In 1961, my father founded the Jewish Nazi Victims Organization of America, which aimed to perpetuate the memory of the Holocaust, to fight anti-Semitism everywhere in the world, and to help Holocaust survivors. The organization's lawyer, who worked on a voluntary basis, was James B. Donovan. It seems that his work as a prosecutor in the Nuremberg Trials made a tremendous impression on him and instilled in him the motivation to fight for justice and against evil. In the early 1960's Donovan encouraged my father when he spoke at the Bundestag in Germany to extend the statute of limitations for bringing Nazis to trial.

In order to achieve the goals of his organization, my father organized meetings on Holocaust Remembrance Day. Among the speakers at these meetings were Donovan, the senators Robert F. Kennedy and Jacob Javits, and the mayors of New York: Robert Wagner and then John Lindsay, as well as Jewish notables such as Dr. Hillel Seidman. In 1963, in response to my father's urging, President John F. Kennedy signed a declaration recognizing April 27, the date of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, as Holocaust Memorial Day in the entire United States. How excited we were when Daddy received the pen with which Kennedy signed the declaration!

My father devoted much effort to establishing a housing project in Israel for Holocaust survivors who had moved to the United States but wanted to make aliyah, and even received land in Bat Yam for this purpose. Donovan, then the president of Pratt Institute in New York, directed the architecture department of the institute to design the project. To the dismay of us all, my father passed away suddenly in 1969 at the age of 48 before he could realize his dream.



The first commemoration of survivors in Manhattan in 1960's. The co-organizers were Moshe Israel Socachevsky and Felix Laski (2nd and 3rd from the right). Both were the founders of the **Jewish Nazi Victims Organization of America**.²⁵

Following are selections from a long article appearing in the Yiddish newspaper, *Day Jewish Journal* (דער טאג מארגען זשורנאל) on Tuesday September 2, 1969, under the title "Faithful Jewish Activist from Among the Survivors." Dr. Hillel Seidman, a journalist who wrote a memoir of the Warsaw Ghetto, and the executive committee chairman, eulogized him thus:

"Our life is a burning flame," could have said Moshe Yisrael Sochaczewski about himself. Moshe Sochaczewski was a volcano who was immediately ready to react. A wrongdoing against Israel, an injustice to the Jewish state had him immediately on his feet,. He stormed, he got angry and he mobilized activists, particularly "his Jews", his fellow sufferers from among the survivors, who appeared at various demonstrations.

He was active not only in the open. His interventions with various ambassadors for Jews In trouble and danger in the Arab lands or behind the Iron Curtain are a chapter that we cannot yet talk about in public.

One found in Moshe Socachevsky a warm heart and a helping hand. He founded and led the Jewish Nazi Victims Organization. He was the organization.

He paid no attention to his own health, but worked hard in the most difficult conditions to help Jews. He did not rest and also did not allow other Jews to rest.

Moshe Socachevsky was an Orthodox young man with Hasidic fervor, a ben Torah, a. respecter of rabbis. While his organization was not specifically Orthodox, he put a Jewish stamp on all of its undertakings.

25 New Bulletin. 20(75). Oct-Nov 1988. p.1.

The premature, sudden passing of Moshe Socachevsky of blessed memory is a loss for the community, especially when one considers that he was still young and with endless energies, and certainly could have achieved much more. We will always remember him with an ache and friendship and respect.