

Mendel and Rusha settled on a farm in Divnosa where their seven children were born. His occupation as a woodland inspector for the local graf kept him away from home five days a week, so Rusha raised the children and managed their farm - which was productive enough to allow surplus yield to be sold in neighboring towns and villages. In 1910, Mendel decided to emigrate to America where three brothers and a sister had already settled. He sold the farm and bought a new house four miles away in Dolhinow with the idea that he would send for family members as he became established. The town, which had a population of 3,500 in 1897, was ten miles north of Sosenska. According to Sylvia:

At first sight Dolhinov looked like an oversized village. The main street was no more than a wide dirt highway, without sidewalks or street lamps. In the sub-zero winter, it was [snow] hard and crunchy at times. In the thawing spring it was oozy, thick mud. It is true that Dolhinov was too small to merit a dot on the maps, but it was sort of a crossroad. For travelers between Vilna, on the west and Minsk, on the east, Dolhinov served as a perfect stopover. Also towns and villages, north and south, came to Dolhinov once a week to trade, buy and sell.³⁵

Despite comparatively good relations between the town's various ethnic groups, the war caused old antagonisms to bubble to the surface. Sylvia's account of a near pogrom is a reminder of how many violent outbreaks must have been prevented by sheer coincidence and the intervention of the clergy:

One day in Spring 1915, I was in the home of one of my Christian girl friends. A group of men were sitting around the table drinking vodka. They spoke Polish, believing the children didn't understand. [Sylvia pointed out in a previous section of her manuscript: "In our family, we learned to speak Polish as fluently as Russian...for business and social reasons."] They discussed the war with Germany. The Russians were having reverses. They all agreed the Jews were to blame. Revenge... they plotted to make a pogrom, to raid and kill the Jews... I almost fainted from fright. I waited to calm down. I ran home and told my mother. I saw how upset she was. Mother didn't waste time. We walked across the road to a friendly, Christian neighbor, who was an official in the church. He and his wife were shocked. Since mother had proved her friendship with many practical deeds, they wanted to reciprocate. He led us into his barn. At the further end he swept away hay and dirt, pulled up a door and showed us the stairs to a cellar. "In case of trouble," he said, "you and your family can hide here."

The following Sunday afternoon, those friendly neighbors came over to our house. They both wore a smile. They had taken the matter up with the priest. The priest in turn had devoted his sermon to the severe punishments for robbery and killing. And those who would participate in a pogrom were destined to go to hell.

There was no pogrom.³⁶

Mendel Alperowitz departed from Rotterdam on November 19, 1910 aboard the *Potsdam*, arrived in New York ten days later, and took a train for Bangor the day he cleared immigration. He then spent the next few years working as a peddler raising funds to bring Fannie (b.1894) and then Morris (b.1898) to Maine in 1912 and 1913. After Germany invaded Russia, Dolhinow was flattened and Rusha and the five children who had remained behind escaped to Minsk. Once Mendel determined their whereabouts, money was forwarded and the group commenced a ten month eastward trek through Russia to Japan and across the Pacific to San Francisco.

Merke's youngest children, Israel (b.1884, Yisroel - known as Sroel), and Isidor (b.1886, Isaac - known as Izzy), were the closest in age and, consequently, maintained the closest relationship, until Sroel left home at the age of nine to attend school in Vilna. According to SAD her father, Israel, told her that "he, along with other Jewish boys, worked in a bakery for three rubles a week. The boys were up at three in the morning to help in the bakery and then went to school during the day. At night they slept on shelves around the bakery oven. Meals for these young boys were furnished by Jewish families of Vilna, no matter how indigent the providing family was. This was considered a 'mitzvah' or good deed as commanded by the Bible."³⁷

Merke's circumstances must have been very bleak and Sroel a very sturdy youth, for only those with the toughest of constitutions endured an apprenticeship to a baker for long. In his autobiography, Jacob Maratek described his own experiences as a baker in Warsaw this way:

...the kind of person who voluntarily became a baker was believed to be someone whom even his parents no longer expected to grow up into a human being. Such a boy, after he'd already been thrown out of the house, which I think you know a Jewish family doesn't do lightly, was often apt to end up sleeping on top of the oven in a bakery, which in my day was an almost traditional place of refuge. Then, after he had hung around the bakery for some time and kept his eyes open, as soon as one of the other employees, almost inevitably, collapsed of fatigue or caught pneumonia, he was in a perfect position to inherit the job.

That, however, was not the way it had happened to Mordechai [the author's brother]. He had come to Warsaw innocently, ready to take any kind of honest work and, after hungering for several days, simply had been attracted in passing by the smell of fresh bread.

Almost at the moment he had set foot in the store, half-hypnotized by the intoxicating odors, he had found himself signed up for an apprenticeship of three years, for a salary of ten rubles a year, plus meals and sleeping privileges on the bake-oven. (And if that sounds to you like good money, remember that my father managed to starve very nicely on ten rubles a *month*.)

The word "union," of course, was unheard of, and a good working day could sometimes run for twenty-two or even twenty-four hours. To

make up for all this, however, you were free all Friday night and all day *Shabbos* until sundown. The moment after *havdolah*, though, the boys panted back to the bakery like condemned souls being lashed by demons and didn't see sunlight again till - with luck - the end of the week.³⁸

After completing his education Sroel joined the staff of an underground newspaper for which he worked until he was twenty-four. This operation came to an abrupt end when the police raided the office, smashed the presses and arrested all the employees who were present. Because the raid took place in the middle of the night Sroel was not arrested, but a friend advised him that the police were looking for him. An uncle, who had offered help in the event that an escape from Vilna became necessary, arranged travel to Vienna. Sroel made his way to Liverpool and sailed to New York on the *Carmania*, May 20, 1906.

Little is known about Izzy's childhood except that he attended school from the age of six until his departure from Russia at the age of seventeen. KAG mentions that he became a "yeshivah boche" studying in a school from morning until after dark and was "well read in Hebrew and Yiddish." As a child he was under the control of teachers who typically attempted to produce results from their students by pulling their ears and whippings, but in which village or city this occurred is unknown. (In 1898 there were some 30,000 *heders* - Jewish elementary schools - in Russia and Poland with 350,000 students. These were attended by boys aged three to sixteen.)

It was in one of these schools that Izzy, aged nine, had the misfortune to be seated beside a cast iron stove during a lightning storm when a bolt struck. The stove absorbed some of the shock and Izzy absorbed the rest, with near fatal consequences. The remedy, which seemed as bad as the injury, called for the victim to be buried alive up to his head for twenty-four hours. Izzy survived this ordeal and a later bout with typhus which was contracted when he was going to school in Vilna.

When he was seventeen Izzy joined the massive outflow of draft-age Russians by traveling across Eastern Europe to Germany where he was smuggled across the country on a two day trip in a locked boxcar. He arrived safely in Hamburg from where he sailed to New York on the *Pretoria* on the 5th of August, 1904.³⁹

Three other daughters were born to Maishe and Merke, most likely during the interval that occurred between the births of Shimsel and Leah, but none of these emigrated and all perished during the First World War. One source also suggests that the family included another son, Yankev, who was older than Shprintze and died as a young man, but this could not be confirmed. Merke died, aged seventy, in Smorgon in 1915, probably a casualty of the war.

YANKEV resided for a period of more than thirty years in Dunilowicze where he was initially employed as the business agent for the local graf, perhaps for Dunilowicze himself. His marriage to Itka (maiden name unknown)

was apparently the reason for settling in this town which is located about fifty miles north of Sosenka. Yankev reportedly enjoyed considerable success early in his career; he probably secured his first place through his background in the lumber trade, for he reportedly made frequent trips to Germany to negotiate the sale of timber from the Dunilowicze forests. Later he worked independently, and then in association with other timber concerns, leasing forest tracts and as a surveyor.

After the birth of at least nine children beginning with Samuel H. (b.1873, Simcha) and concluding with twin boys in 1893 (several children did not survive, including a thirteen year old daughter) Itka died, aged forty-two. Alice (b.1880, Shprintze) raised the twins and took care of the house for several years until her father remarried a widow (circa 1898) with children of her own.⁴⁰ Within the same period of time the twins, who were about five years old, died from typhoid. Alice was also stricken; after recovering she emigrated to Maine and joined Sam, who lived in Sangerville.

Sam was the eldest of Yankev's children and the first to leave for America in 1889, at the age of sixteen. At first he resided with his cousin Simon's family in Sangerville, but later moved to Brownville and then Brownville Junction where he operated small department stores. It was Sam who brought his sisters and brother to the States as the circumstances of life in Russia deteriorated. Alice arrived first and helped out in the store in Sangerville before moving to Bangor. She married her first cousin, Jacob Cohen, in 1903 and established a home that became a stopping place for her sisters Annie and Julia who arrived later.

Annie (b.1885, Hannah) left Europe in 1904 via Copenhagen, aboard a boat filled with Russian soldiers deserting the Russo-Japanese War. She arrived in New York and stayed briefly with the Koppelman family in Brooklyn before proceeding to Bangor, where she lived for the next three years. (Morris and Anna Koppleman accommodated a number of family members as they arrived in New York, including Isidor and Israel Alpert, and Anna and Sophie Kappelowitz. Isidor lived with them during part, if not all, of the two years he spent in New York; when his brother Israel arrived from Liverpool, he stayed there as well - the passenger ship manifest recorded his destination in the States as "I. Alperowitz c/o Koppelman, 462 Stone Avenue, Brooklyn, New York." The Kopplemans were related to the Alperowitzes through Anna Koppleman's mother, Neshe Kappellowitz, who was Soshe Esther's sister. Neshe, who lived with her daughter's family in Brooklyn until she died around 1910, was also Yankev Kappellowitz's mother.)

Annie spent another six months in New York working as a seamstress before returning to Maine to live for a time with Alice. About a year was also spent in Brownville Junction where Annie worked with Sam in the store. Julia (b.1886, Yehudeske) left Russia in 1907, accompanying her cousin Shimsel's wife and two babies (to get out, she impersonated a servant of the family). She lived at first with her uncle Simcha's family and then with Alice and Jake for a time before traveling to Chicago where her eldest sister Sophie lived. There she became reacquainted with Louis Saltzman, also from Dunilowicze, whom she married and brought back to Bangor. (The Saltzman family name was originally Cantorovitz but Louis' father, who was the town postman, took

the new name to lead the authorities to believe that he was German and could not be drafted. This ploy worked.)

Yankev's eldest daughter, Sophie (b.1875, Shayne), who was renowned as a great beauty, married a dedicated religious scholar, Louis Bromberg, and remained near Dunilowicze operating an inn until just before the war. Aside from accommodating the occasional traveler, the inn served drinks and sold liquor. It was with her best customers, the Russians, that Sophie waged an ongoing war over liquor: she watered down the drinks, whereas the Russians made a regular practice of stealing the stuff by the bottle. To counteract this she buried the surplus bottles in back of the building, but this hiding place was discovered and the bottles continued to disappear. Only after her eldest son, Abraham (b.1900), substituted the liquor with urine and planted these bottles, which also disappeared, did the thefts stop. (Abe must have taken after his mother, for aside from being impish and practical, he was quite a handsome lad. In later life he told the story that the tsarina's carriage stopped when he was playing beside the road and Alexandra called to get a better look at him. She approved and bestowed a handful of kopecks.)

Sophie was the last of her siblings to leave Russia, traveling through Baltimore in 1913 in route to Chicago where her husband had already established a home. Sons Richard (b.1907, Reuben) and Meyer (b.1910) were born in Dunilowicze; three more children were born to the couple in Chicago including Alex (b.1914), Anne (b.1916) and Ida (b.1918).

Being very religious, it was Yankev's ambition that Robert (b.1891, Reuben) should attend a yeshivah and become a rabbi. Although he was not especially inclined to the religious life, Robert followed his father's wishes until quitting the Dolhinow yeshivah within a year of completing his studies. Because he could read and write Russian he was employed in the forest, working with one of the firm's his father was associated with. At the age of twenty-two he sailed from Hamburg on the *President Lincoln*, leaving on the third day of December, 1913. He arrived in Maine December 18, three days after docking in New York.

A physical disability did not permit Eliohu (b.circa 1877) to emigrate. He married and had several children including one son who became a pharmacist. Another son rose to a high rank in the Soviet army and died during World War Two.

Yankev left Dunilowicze around the time of Sophie's emigration (1913), however, he continued working as a timber surveyor, operating from the villages of Komai and Fashtef until war and then old age forced him to quit. By the early 1920's he was living in the city of Panevezys in the Kovno gubernia of Lithuania. A series of letters written to his youngest brother and children in Bangor documents the last twenty years of his life and the general circumstances of his times (see Book Two, "The Letters of Yankev Alperowitz"). Yankev lived until approximately 1930.

CHIVIA'S husband came from the town of Doksyce, located about thirty-five miles northeast of Sosenka. It was an Old World tradition that weddings