

The Amdurs



Leah

Nissan

Noah

Michael

We have no photo of Hannah to complete this picture

March, 2005

The Strange Story of the Amdur Family

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Preface.

Early in October 2004 I received an E-mail from Mike Ross in Perth, W.A., that he had found some Amdur descendants in Canada that might be related to me. I immediately made contact with Lorraine Bennington in Vancouver and, after a torrid exchange of information, established our relationship – we were, indeed, second cousins. This journey was not made any easier by the fact that there were two brothers who went under the same name – Nathan – so it took some time to establish that there were, indeed, three brothers and two sisters. A little later on, Lorraine's mother led us to Boaz Leviant in Israel and he was able to supply a wealth of information about his grandmother, Leah Ben-Gefen (nee Amdur). However we still have almost no information of the other sister, Hannah, who went to Brazil.

Special thanks must go to Lorraine's mother, Pauline Aronson (nee Amdur), who at 92 has been a fountain of knowledge and a major source of information to help put the puzzle into perspective.

Conditions prevailing in that part of Europe towards the end of the 19th century must have contributed to the dispersal of the Amdur family from Lithuania. An excerpt from a book by Postal and Abramson "Traveller's Guide to Jewish landmarks of Europe", 1972, pages 306-7 gives us a useful overview of the period:

Quote:

After the partitions of Poland at the end of the eighteenth century, nearly 1,000,000 Jews came under Russian rule when the Czars acquired the Ukraine, Lithuania, and White Russia. At the instigation of Russian merchants and the bitterly anti-Semitic Church, Empress Catherine 11 in 1791 confined all her new Jewish subjects to the provinces of their origin, the so-called Pale of Settlement. Later, they were expelled from the villages of the Pale and driven into the crowded towns and cities, where they were in competition with Christian tradesmen and artisans, and with each other.

In the first half of the nineteenth century Russia's Jewish policy was a mixture of forced assimilation and economic oppression. Violence and pressure were employed to compel the Jews to alter their garb and language and to break with their traditional way of life in the hope that they would abandon Judaism. To wean children away from Jewish learning, a government network of secular schools was established. A brutal system of military service dragged boys in their early teens away for twenty-five years of army duty at remote barracks where they were subjected to barbaric tortures aimed at forcing them to become Christians. Simultaneously, arbitrary expulsions that drove thousands from their homes, exclusion from all but a few petty trades and occupations and from the universities and professions, and the imposition of discriminatory taxes created widespread destitution among the Jewish masses. A few privileged Jews were exempt from these disabilities and were allowed to live in the big cities, but the bulk of the Jewish population was condemned to social degradation and economic pauperism.

Some restrictions were temporarily lifted in the reign of Czar Alexander 11 (1856-1881). Jews were admitted to secondary schools and universities; military service for Jewish children was abolished; the interior of the country was opened to selected merchants and artisans; and the insulting features of the oath imposed on Jews in the courts were modified. It was during this period that Jews entered the professions, many of them becoming prominent lawyers, doctors, and even judges, while Jewish industrialists built railroads and factories and Jewish bankers expanded

Alexander's assassination intensified the anti-Semitic phobia of the ruling circle, who suppressed the rising clamour of the lower and middle classes for greater freedom and economic opportunities by attributing all of Russia's deep-seated problems to the Jews. They numbered 5,000,000 when Alexander III became Czar in 1881. The new regime began with widespread pogroms, new curbs on Jews in trade and business, renewed exclusion from the universities and the professions, contraction of the Pale of Settlement, and strict enforcement of every anti-Jewish regulation. The announced objective was to persuade one third of the Jews to emigrate and another third to accept baptism, while the rest would be starved to death.

The brief era of liberalism under Alexander 11 coincided with the beginning of a great cultural renaissance among Russian Jews. This movement, Haskalah (Enlightenment), spread modern European education among the Jewish masses by integrating Jewish thought with secular learning and stimulating a literary revival of Hebrew. The influence of such Haskalah leaders as Isaac Baer Levinsohn, Solomon Judah Rapoport, and Nachman Kohen Krochmal nurtured the generation of Jewish intellectuals, writers, and editors that fathered modern Hebrew and Yiddish literature and the Hebrew and Yiddish press. A remarkable galaxy of poets, novelists, essayists, journalists, scholars, and historians was produced by the Haskalah. Among them were such distinguished figures as Abraham Mapu, Mendele Mocher Sforim, Judah Loeb Gordon, Peretz Smolenskin, Leo Pinsker, Sholom Aleichem, Isaac Loeb Peretz, Chaim Nachman Bialik, Ahad Ha'wn, Zalman Shneour, Abraham Harkavy, and Simon Dubnow. They and their contemporaries created the intellectual climate in which Jewish nationalism, Jewish Socialism and Zionism were able to capture the imagination of an entire generation and to influence the future of Jewish history.

Despite their desperate economic privation, the vast masses of Russian Jews were little affected by the Enlightenment. Cultural changes that threatened religious traditions or undermined established customs and practices were resisted by the rabbis who presided over distinguished academies of Jewish learning. The bulk of the Jewish populace held fast to the old ways, so graphically depicted in the stories and novels of Sholom Aleichem and Sholem Asch, because they sensed that these gave them the inner strength to resist and survive Czarist oppression.

The pogroms of 1881 turned the majority of Jewish intellectuals to Jewish nationalism (which sought the recognition of the Jews as one nationality in a Russian federation of ethnic groups) or to Zionism. Youthful idealists from Russia established the first Jewish agricultural colonies in Palestine in the 1870s and 1880s, and the Hebrew and Yiddish writers of Russia paved the way for the outpouring of enthusiasm that greeted Theodor Herzl in Russia when he founded the Zionist Organization in 1897. A minority of the intellectuals embraced the radical political movements in the belief that liberty for all Russians would also emancipate the Jews.

While Zionists, nationalists, and socialists competed for the support of the Jewish masses, a historic tide of Jewish migration began to roll out of Russia. From a trickle of 30,000 between 1870 and 1880, it became a flood after 1881. By 1900 more than 600,000 Russian Jews had reached the United States and another 250,000 had found their way to England, France, Canada, Australia, South Africa, and Latin America.

Unquote

More illuminating information about this period of Russian history, in *The History of the Jews in Modern Times* by Max Raisin, published in 1919, is as follows:

“

RUSSIA

p163

A tool in the hand of unscrupulous advisers, this last Alexander III (1881-1894) entered upon his reign as the champion of Panslavism which purported ruthlessly to repress all non-Russian sects and nationalities. Loris Melikov, his father's liberal Minister, was dismissed, absolutism was asserted as the only safe principle for the maintenance of the autocracy, becoming a law by an imperial manifesto of May 14, 1881, and Jew-baiting was adopted as a standing policy, both for the suppression of the revolutionary movement and for diverting the people's attention from the government's oppressive measures. Soon after his accession anti-Jewish riots (Pogroms) broke out in Yelisavetgrad, Kiev, Shpola, Ananiev, Wasilkov, Konotop and a hundred and sixty other places, resulting in the sacking and burning of homes, the ravaging of women and the killing or maiming of thousands of men, women and children. As was subsequently shown, these disturbances were inspired and premeditated by the government, which abetted the rioters in their work and hindered the Jews from defending themselves. In Kiev, Governor-General Drentelen refused to protect the Jews, stating that "he would not endanger the lives of his soldiers for the sake of a few Jews," while in nearly every other place the authorities worked hand in hand with the rioters. Notwithstanding the revulsion of feeling these atrocities evoked all through the civilised world, resulting in large indignation meetings which were held simultaneously in London and New York (February 1, 1882) the work of ruin and death was continued. Renewed rioting took place in Warsaw, Nyezhin, Kuzmintzy, Plitovich, Klimov, Okbrimotzy, Lubny and Balta. "The Black Hundreds of the Nineteenth Century put to shame the Haidamacks of the Eighteenth and the Cossacks of the Seventeenth."

*J. S. Raisin, op. cit. p. 269

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World War II June 1941

Hitler's army invaded Russia. At 4.00 pm in the morning Adam Grolsch, a German radio operator, crossed the Meml River into Soviet controlled Lithuania with an advanced armoured unit of the German army.

When Grolsch reached the far side of the river, he saw bodies hanging from the trees. A Lithuanian local explained that they had "already taken care of things": All the Jews in the town had been robbed and hung by fellow Lithuanians. "They had exploited the situation," Grolsch saw. "Hitler is against the Jews anyway. We'll kill them and then take all their stuff". There were about 20 dead. It was a small town".

Nicholson Baker, *Human Smoke* p.344

The treatment of Jews by both the Germans and other central European peoples was similar and recalled the treatment meted out for centuries past but on a vastly larger scale. This book, covering the period 1932 – 1941, makes for compelling reading.

Introduction

It is now clear that our Amdur/Emdur name was given to Avram Lieb to help him avoid military service. His family name was really Kark.

Knowledge of the Kark family begins in the early nineteenth century with Chaim Yaakov Nachman Kark who served as a Chazan/Shochet in the city of Kamai which was near the city of Divinsk (also known as Donnenberg). He married Mina Neche Perel ____? The couple had five children. Chaim was known as a great scholar, a God fearing person, and a man of great integrity. The couple had three sons; Yisrael Nissan, Ephraim, and Avraham, and two daughters; Nechama and Devorah.

Kovno is located near the border of Lithuania, Russia and Belarus and its governance changed hands all too often. The Russians being the most powerful, came to Kovno and many other areas mainly to collect taxes from business people and landowners and to conscript young men into the Russian army, the later event most often led to service far from home, high risk of death and loss of connection to family forever. According to Russian law, one son of a given family was exempted from the draft. To minimize the impact on families and the Jewish community, families often gave their male sons different surnames (last Names) and when a census was taken claimed they were visiting friends, neighbors or nephews.

Because of the danger of being conscripted into the Russian army, the Kark family used the accepted method of changing names. Yisrael Nissan retained the family name of Kark. Ephraim took the name Gafanovitz. Avraham took the name Amdorsky, later Amdur. Most of this large family lived in and around Kovna (Lithuana/ Russia). The Jewish population of this area was near 25,000 and made up about 35% of the total population.

The first generation of Kark known to their widely dispersed descendants therefore consisted of:

1. Nechama who married ? Dribin
2. Avraham Amdorsky who married Etter (Esther) Telg
3. Devorah who married Moshe Morris Smith
4. Ephraim Gafanovitz who married ?
5. Yisrael Nissan who married Chana, daughter of Eliyahu and Dina Abramovitz , a banking family in Kovna

.We know nothing of Avram Lieb except that he died in 1882 and, we understand, Etter remarried. She would have been in her early thirties at the time. Children from this second marriage were highly probable but we have no information to help us here. The second husband did not have a good relationship with the boys and this would have contributed to the emigration. Boaz believes that Etter went to Palestine to die, and is buried on the Mount of Olives (Har Hazeitim) but finding her grave will be a huge undertaking.

Our starting material for the Amdur family is as follows:

Avram Lieb (Louis) Amdur (died 1882) m. #Etter Telg (died 19..?).

Nissan (Nathan, Red)	Lea(h) Miriam	Noah Abbey (Nathan)	Hannah	Michael
b. 1867	b. 1869/70	1873	1875	1878
m. Rachel Hindler m. Rachel Goldfurb/ *(Kalineusis)	m. Jacob Gafanovich 1888/89	m. Miriam Gafanovich 1897	m. ?	m. Milly Grossman 1903
Migrated to USA	Migrated to Israel	Migrated to Canada	Migrated to Brazil	Migrated to Australia

*First husbands surname # or Esther or Tely

Nissan and Michael travelled to England in 1896 and found work as cabinet makers with Lazarus Grossman.

Nissan married Rachel Hindler in London (or did he marry in Kovno and take his wife to England together with Michael?) but finally left there in 1907 for America. Rachel died in 1928. Nissan subsequently married Rachel Kalineusis in either Boston or Bar Harbour, Maine where he lived out the rest of his life. There were no children from this union yet they were known to have raised a young lad named Louis who had been born a Smith but took the Emdur name.

Lea(h) married Jacob Gafanovich in 1888/89 and some time after 1896, when Nissan and Michael had left for England, they moved from Lithuania to manage a flour mill in Dneipopetovosk then, after the revolution, to Kharkov and finally to Moscow in 1921/2. In 1923 they joined their son, Ari Ben Gefen, in Palestine.

Noah married and remained in Europe, became a successful department store owner in Latvia, and only left there in 1913 for a sea voyage to Canada. WW1 prevented their return to Europe until after 1918 when they returned to Lithuania to find their youngest daughter, Pauline, who had been left with family. She was only one year old, too young for the sea voyage, and was 9 years old when finally found and taken to Montreal where the family had settled.

There is no information available concerning the other sister, Hannah except that she finally settled in Brazil. She had one child who died at an early age.

Michael married Milly Grossman in 1903 in London. In 1908, on doctors advice, he moved to Australia where it was supposed to be drier, and therefore better for his health. He obtained work as a cabinet maker in Sydney and in 1909 Milly joined him with their three daughters, Jean, Lily and Minna.

Etter travelled to Israel to die and is buried in Har Hazeitim. Unfortunately at this time we do not have either her married name (second marriage) or the date of death to be able to locate her grave.

The children of Avram Lieb brought out of Europe a jewel that they passed into the keeping of their children and their children's children as they spread across the world – their Jewish heritage.

Chapter 1 – Nissan (Information provided by Steve Smith and Hyam Myers)

According to Ellis Island records, Nissan arrived in New York, alone, as Nathan Amdur on 28 September 1907, having travelled from Southampton on the steamship City of New York. (A note from Steve Smith indicates that Nissan and Rachel were included in the US census of 1902, suggesting that he had moved to America after the 1901 UK census and before the 1902 US census. He and Rachel returned to London in 1903 to give his brother, Michael, away at his wedding). He was 40 years old in 1907 and had been known as Nathan Emdur in London. He reverted to the Emdur spelling some time after arriving in America. The 1901 UK census has him married to Rachel Hindler, aged 44 and hence a year older than Nissan. It is possible that he had applied for, and been accepted, to work as a minister in a Boston congregation. On 21 February 1936, in the Bar Harbour Times obituary to Louis Emdur, Nissan is noted to be a dealer in junk furniture (2nd hand?).

Nissan had trained in Lithuania as a rebbe, probably in Vilnius where one of only two such seminaries in Russia existed. He worked as a cabinet maker in London, and, we assume, augmented his income in Bar Harbour as a second hand furniture dealer by taking high holy day services in that place.

Louis Emdur was born 27 April 1895 in London, England. His real name was Louis Smith, the son of Morris and Devora Smith. He arrived in America in 1910, was adopted by Nissan and Rachel, and changed his name to Louis Emdur. Louis died of pneumonia on 18 February 1936. His line of work was noted as being ‘salesman, novelty store’.

On 20 January 1929, just over twelve months since his first wife had died (suicide?) and living in Bar Harbour, Nissan married Rachel Kalineusis (nee Goldfarb). At this time he would have been 62 years of age with Rachel much younger. He died there on 3 November, 1937, aged 70, the headstone mis-spelling his name as Nathan *Emden*. For further reading of Nissan Emdur see “The Life of Nissan Emdur”

Chapter 2 – Lea(h) (both spellings are correct – information provided by Boaz Leviant)

The children of Lea(h) and Jacob were:

Name	Born	Died	Married to	Born	Died	Married
Ari	1890	1974	Lily daughter of Uri Hafker	1889?	1970	
Mina	1893		Widowed in 1917, 2 nd marriage to Maxim Zetkin			
Riva	1899	1977	Michael Pevzner			
Masha	1903/4	1921	-			
Paula	1906		Menachen Neiman			
Frida	1908	1994	Chaim Leviant	1906	1987	03/1929

Lea(h) was betrothed to Jacob Gafanovich and they married in 1887-88 in Kovno. (It is possible that they were first cousins.) Their first child, Ari, was born in 1890. Mina would have been born soon after, also in Kovno. We can be reasonably certain that they married, and lived for some years, in Kovno on the basis that Michael and Nissan left together for England in 1896. It would have been difficult for them to leave together had they been living in different towns.

Lea(h) and Jacob later moved to Dneipropetrovsk, in Petrogradskaya ulitsa No. 1, now in the Ukraine, The house still exists and a photo is attached. There the family worked a flour mill although how it came into their possession is not known. It is unlikely that they owned it but it may have belonged to one of the rich relatives, or been rented. It was managed by Lea(h) with Jacob responsible for keeping the records and looking after the money. In 1921 Jacob was badly beaten up by a gang of Cossacks during a pogrom and almost died. In the same year Frida, then aged 13, spent one night in gaol for not participating with other school children in the task of street sweeping. By this time the three older girls, Mina, Riva and Masha were not living at home anymore, Mina had been married and widowed (1917), but later remarried. Riva was also probably married and Masha was already living in Moscow. All three girls were very likely already in Moscow by 1922. In that same year (1921) the family moved to Kharkov where they stayed for a year before moving on to Moscow. It is most likely that the mill had been confiscated by the new communist regime so they were quite destitute. They moved to Moscow where they lived in an abandoned apartment belonging to a rich family. This was in Glazumerny Pereugol No. 10. Masha rejoined her parents and the two younger children when they moved to Moscow in 1921/22.

Food was scarce and Masha died of typhus, aged about 17, soon after rejoining the family.

Ari now becomes central to the future life of Lea(h) and Jacob. During WWI, whilst at university in Germany, Ari was interned but allowed to complete his studies after the armistice (between Germany and the new Soviet Union) in 1917 to become a doctor. For some of this time, most likely before the outbreak of hostilities, his sister Mina attended either the same university or one close by as it is known that they spent a lot of time together. To be able to go to Germany, live there and study, Ari received financial assistance from a wealthy uncle (Amdur or Gafanovich?). He migrated to Palestine soon after graduating (perhaps in 1920) and in 1923 brought his parents, together with Frida and Paula, to join him. They all settled in Gedera where Ari founded the sanatorium with funds from the family of his wife Lily who came with him from Germany. By this time Mina had remarried (Maxim Zetkin) and settled in Moscow. Riva married Michael Pevzner and lived in Moscow for the remainder of her life. She was a teacher of chemistry.

In Gedera, Jacob, Lea(h), Paula and Frida settled into a two room house that the girls whitewashed to make presentable. The two girls later moved to Jerusalem where Paula married Menachen Neiman. Frida took work in an eye hospital there, run by the famous Dr Ticho, and also spent some time in a hospital in Gaza as a practicing nurse. She married Chaim Leviant in 1928 or 1929 and they moved back to Gedera where Hanna(1931) and Boaz (1932) were born. During this time Jacob spent his time studying G'mara and Lea(h), now in her 60's, looked after the home. She died of cancer in 1939-40 after a short illness, aged about 70. Following Lea(h)'s death, Jacob spent a few years with Paula in Jerusalem, a few years with Frida, and his last couple of years with Ari. Most of the time he was in Gedera and was taken care of by his children. Yaakov, as he was now known, was in his mid 80's when he died in 1951/2.

Additional information about Lea(h)'s children:

Being a Zionist, Ari decided to translate Gafanovich into Hebrew so changed it to Ben-Gefen upon his arrival in Palestine. Yaakov did not follow suit but on a later Israeli identity card his signature is Ben-Gefen. His grave is similarly marked Yaakov Ben-Gefen

(Riva was born in 1899 and bore twins, Marina and Theodore, in 1926. Marina visited Israel in 1989 with her husband and stayed with Frida for close to one month.. Marina migrated to the US in 1992 following her two sons who had already gone there. The daughter of Theodore – Rita (Margarita)– migrated to Israel with her daughter Oxana. Rita lives in Haifa. Oxana married her Israeli boyfriend (also an emigrant from Russia) and moved to Canada to study at university there. Theodore died in 1975 and Riva in 1977).

The sanatorium in Gedera no longer exists – the buildings demolished to make way for a housing estate of perhaps 40 homes. However, in honour of the contribution of Ari Ben-Gefen to the economy of Gedera, a street is named for him. The sanitorium had specialised in the treatment of lung diseases, particularly tuberculosis.

Chapter 3 – Noah (information provided by Lorraine Bennington)

Noah

Of the three brothers, Noah, the youngest, was the only one who did not leave Lithuania for greener pastures but remained with the family in Lithuania until his marriage to Miriam Gafanovich in 1897. His sister, Leah, had already married Jacob Gafanovich (1888/9) and they, and their first two children Ari and Minna, had moved deeper into Russia. As noted earlier, it is also possible that the children had moved to Kupiskis with their mother after Avram Lieb's death and his widow had re-married (ca 1884?). It would be quite normal for them to move into the new husbands home.

Noah Abbey Amdur married Miriam Gafanovich on 7 March 1897. Both were 25 at the time. Noah died in 1924 of a lung disorder and Miriam in the late 1940's.

The towns shown on the wedding certificate for the domicile of Miriam and Noah Abbey – Novoalexandrov and Kupiskis respectively – are both in the north-east of Lithuania, on the border with Latvia, whereas Kovno is 200 Km south-west. We may therefore assume that Noah had already left the family home and was working in Novoalexandrov, most likely with relatives and possibly in the buying department of a department store. Soon after the wedding, Miriam started her own business, working from home, while Noah travelled and found materials and other goods for her to sell. Some time later they moved to Latvia, where, thanks to the entrepreneurial skills of Miriam, they accumulated sufficient capital to be able to purchase a department store. The location and name of this store is unknown.

The children of this marriage were:

Name	Born	Died	Married to	Born	Died	Married
Leo(n)	1896		Sonia Eiches			
Jack	1898					
Minnie	1904	1932	Frank Amdur			
Eli	1908					
Pauline	1912	2007	Samuel Aronson		28/10/2006	1948
Etta	1915		Abe Etcovitch			

(There is a major discrepancy here. Using the above dates it seems that Leon was born before his parents married in 1897. It is more likely that the marriage was only registered some time after the religious ceremony).

In late 1913 the family embarked on a sea voyage to Canada, leaving their baby, Pauline, in the care of her maternal great-grandmother, Hannah Gafanovich and her son, Zale. WW1 was declared whilst they were away and the ship was unable to return them to Europe. It became clear that they would not be able to return to Lithuania for some time so they settled in Montreal. Again the entrepreneurial skills of Miriam saw the family through this crisis and she entered into the retail clothing industry once again. The story goes that she went into a fabric shop and, in broken English, asked how much a particular piece of material would cost. The sales clerk, thinking that she was penniless, quoted a ridiculously low price for bolts of the fabric. At this point she declared that she would buy half store. As he did not wish to consummate such a foolish transaction, the sales clerk called the manager who agreed that the price had been offered and accepted and must, therefore, be honoured. Miriam and the store owner became firm friends and business associates and Noah continued in his role of acquiring stock for the store. The family once again became affluent and bought a large house on Clark St in Outremont. However things did not go well and in the early 1920's they lost a lot of money on a large shipment of fabrics from overseas. The business never recovered from this disaster and not long afterwards Noah became ill and died. Miriam did not have the heart to start all over again and soon moved to Florida with the youngest, Etta. Etta, their youngest, was the only one born in Canada.

Pauline lived for some years with her brother, Eli, and became business manager of his blouse manufacturing operations in Montreal.

Immediately after the war, Noah returned to Lithuania to find his daughter but it was not until 1921 that she was found living in Kupiskis. Her great grandmother and Zale had both passed away and she had been placed with other relatives who were difficult to find. He returned to Montreal triumphant. It seems that during the years after the war, Pauline was offered the opportunity to migrate to Australia and become part of the Emdur family there. Fortunately for her this did not happen and she was eventually united with her parents and siblings.

During the Russian revolution the family business was confiscated and the family home in Kupiskis requisitioned for government offices. Thus all the wealth that they had accumulated in Lithuania and Latvia was as nothing.

After the untimely death of Noah in 1924 Miriam moved to Florida with Etta, leaving her sons to run the business. She died there in the 1940's. The clothing business has since been sold.

Chapter 5 – Michael Amdur/Emdur (Information provided by Leah Shelton and Hyam Myers)

Born:	Kovno, Lithuania 1878
Known name:	Michael Amdur/Emdur
Hebrew name:	Michal ben Avraham Leib
Married to:	Milly Grossman, 16 June, 1903 Vine St Synagogue, London
Wife's hebrew name:	Malcha bas Eliezer
Born:	Orsa, Russia, 1881
Migrated to Sydney, Australia:	1908/09

The children of this marriage were:

Name	Born	Died	Married to	Born	Died	Married
Jean	25/06/1904	17/10/1969	Mannie Myers	07/07/1900	03/11/1985	09/11/1926
Lily	01/05/1906	?/09/1993	Phillip Friedlander	03/10/1908	31/10/1957	06/12/1934
Minna	11/06/1908	27/07/1999	Archie Blondin	30/04/1901	11/08/1985	10/07/1948
Louis	28/02/1911	12/11/1996	Leah Abrahams	15/06/1911		16/08/1933
Ethel(Ettie)	19/07/1913	19/07/1992	Nathan Collins	06/06/1914	14/08/02	07/02/1937
Naomi	30/01/1916	19/10/1995	Ben Broit	18/02/1916	24/02/2002	28/11/1943
Hyman	29/07/1918		Lois Greenberg	21/07/1926	20/10/2001	27/06/1951

At some time between arriving in London and Michael's wedding in 1903 the spelling changed from Amdur to Emdur for both Nissan and Michael. Why this happened, no one knows. The most logical reason might have been a mis-interpretation of the spelling on the boys travel documents when they arrived in England.

Information from Minna Blondin suggest that Michael's father died when he was 2 – 5 years old and he went to live with an older sister. He attended yeshiva in Vilna, his only schooling, and left for England somewhere between 1896 and 1898. Whether he went there alone or with his brother is not known with any certainty. One story, from another source, suggests that on his way home from yeshiva with his brother Nathan (Nissan), a friend stopped them and advised them to not go home but get out of the country as quickly as possible, the suggestion being that a pogrom was taking place in their village. Another suggestion is that the boys fled Lithuania to avoid conscription into the Russian army. (See "The life of Nissan Emdur" for a more logical answer).

Some time after they arrived in London the boys met a Jewish doctor, Dr Smoolian(?), who introduced them to his cousins, the Grossman family. This is how Michael came to meet Milly and, presumably, how both boys obtained employment with Lazarus Grossman as cabinet makers. Whilst in London, Michael went to night school where he learned to write and speak English. I believe that Michael lived with his brother, Nissan, and his wife at 54 Church St Bethnel Green but he was not listed there in the 1901 census. (Other information from Steve Smith suggests that at the time of the 1901 census, Nathan (Nissan) and Rachel Amdur, together with Michael Amdur, resided at 148 Church St, Bethnal Green, London).

Michael wooed the younger sister, Mary but was rejected. He then wooed Milly and was finally accepted. Apparently Lazarus Grossman was a wealthy man with an invalid wife so Milly ran the household. Mary was snobbish, aloof and, or so we are told, did not help with the household chores.

It must have been sometime in 1907 or 1908 that representatives of a major Sydney department store, Grace Brothers, were in London recruiting cabinet makers. Michael applied and left, alone, for Sydney in 1908. He had a chest condition that doctors at Guys Hospital in London felt would respond to the drier climate of Australia, so this was an opportunity too good to miss. Milly and the three girls arrived in Sydney on 4 October, 1909 and this date became Milly's birthday anniversary.

Their first home was a cottage in Forest Lodge, but they soon moved to a combined shop and dwelling in Glebe Point Rd, Glebe. While still working for Grace Bros he made small pieces of furniture at night for sale in the shop. After about 12 months the family moved to a shop and dwelling on Paramatta Rd, Taveners Hill. A larger shop with more comfortable dwelling, a little closer to the city on Parramatta Rd near Norton St, became available so the family soon moved there. During the day Michael trudged from door to door selling carpets. Later on the family moved to Allen's parade, Bondi Junction and Michael had a cabinet making business in Spring St, Bondi Junction. After WW2 Louis joined him in the business and they moved to a smaller shop on New South Rd, Double Bay where restoration of antique furniture was the major work. In the late 1930's the family moved into a unit closer to the Bondi Junction shopping centre, thence to live with Hymie, Minna and Naomi at Hymie's medical practice/large home in King St Newtown. Michael and Milly moved to a cottage in Balfour Rd Double Bay but, after only a short time, Milly moved back to the house in Newtown where she died. Michael moved back to Balfour Rd where he died on 12/08/1960, still suffering from lung congestion. He was respected by all as a loving, and loved, father, grandfather and friend.

Michael was a founding member of the Bondi Junction Shule, its president, treasurer and board member during the years 1932 – 1941.

Milly was always in Michael's shadow, a dutiful wife who was sickly most of her life yet a wonderful mother, dearly loved by all her children and grandchildren. Until her death in January 1951 she conversed mainly in yiddish yet could communicate quite well in English.

In 1931 Michael embarked on his one and only overseas trip – to Palestine. He was away for 9 months, during which time Hymie was bar-mitzvah and Jane's son, Hyam, was born. A transcription of Michael's diary is attached. Although some of the detail of this visit is sketchy, we know that he had a sister living in Palestine at the time and a nephew, Ari Ben Gefen, who worked as a doctor in a sanatorium in Gedera. It is reasonable to assume that he went to Palestine because of his respiratory problem, to convalesce and have treatment at the sanatorium.

The wedding ketuba and invitation to the reception, of Michael and Milly, are attached.

Chapter 6. The Grossman family.

Lazarus Grossman (Greisman?), born 1850, m. Jane (Jenny) ? in 1871

The children of this marriage were:

Max (Marks)	Milly (Malcha)	Mary	Harry (Abraham)
Married Annie Belaski, 1896	Married Michael Emdur, 1903	Married Morris Berkoff,	Married Leah ?
Remained in UK	Migrated to Australia	Remained in UK	Migrated to America

Nothing is known of the Grossman family prior to their arrival in England. It is known that they originated from Orsha but they may not have been there very long. It was during the mid-1800's that Jews were forced to move into the Pale of Settlement and Lazarus may have soon decided that emigration was the best choice for his young family.

Lazarus (Eliazer) and Jane (Jenny) Grossman arrived in London in 1890 with the four children, Max, Milly, Mary and Harry. One line of information suggests that they arrived in Liverpool via America and may have settled, initially, somewhere in Lancashire (most likely in Liverpool). Another option is that they had come to England from Orsha in Russia and entered England at Hull, just as Max's intended wife had done when she arrived in 1896, and gone directly to London. This journey may have been by train to Rotterdam, where they embarked on a ferry to Hull. Max was born in 1872, Abraham in 1882, Milly in 1885 and Mary in 1887 respectively. The ten-year gap between Max and Abraham has no known explanation. (It may be that there had been other children born in the interim, but it was not unusual at that time for miscarriages and other forms of infant mortality).

It is interesting to note that only people who arrived in England as either first or second class passengers were readily accepted as immigrants. Those travelling third class were, by and large, rejected and deported back to their place of origin. Thus the Grossman's may have been relatively well off or assisted financially by a charity.

Lazarus quickly went about the procuring of premises for his cabinet-making business in London, some time soon after 1890. He was well established in premises at 19 Gibraltar Walk by the time he was joined by Nissan and Michael Emdur, two brothers who had recently (ca 1896) arrived from Lithuania. Their home, in 1901, was at 22 Pedley St, Bethnal Green. Lazarus died 28 April, 1925 in New York (see details below). The cabinet making business had passed to Morris Berkoff sometime prior to 1906. Morris later married Mary Grossman on 20th August 1907 at Bethnal Green Synagogue. It seems that Jane was a rather large lady who did not like housework

and that is why Milly was claimed to have run the household. Jane died in 1902 and it seems that Jean (Jane) Emdur was named after her.

The oldest sibling, Max, married Annie Belaski in London on 29 December, 1896. He was 21 and Annie 20. A photo of the wedding party is attached. The marriage was an arranged one. Annie had come from Orsha, leaving there on 1 July 1896, and setting foot in England at Hull. It is possible that Annie was actually younger than this and the 1901 census indicates her age to be 22 at that time. Hence, she was really only 17 at the time of leaving Russia and may have put her age up to enable her to leave the country legally. The census document showing her birthday to be 2 May, 1876 is testament to this subterfuge.

Max and Annie lived for a time with his parents in Pedley Street, where Kitty (Kate) was born. They later moved to Church St Bethnal Green where Louis was born in 1902/3. A third child was born during 1905 but died on 14 March, 1906, barely 12 months old. Max committed suicide by hanging himself on 28 April 1905. The death certificate records "temporary insanity" but the truth may be that he probably despaired of providing a good life for his wife and children and could see no improvement to this situation and perhaps even the future of Jewry in England (see coroners report attached).

The "alien bill" of 1904 was a disturbing influence on all British Jewry, designed to inhibit the immigration of Jews from Russia where pogroms were still rife. Deportations were also a possibility under the terms of this "alien bill" and would have terrified Max. Winston Churchill was foremost in speaking against this bill but, in 1910, a modified bill was passed. British Jews were not as accepted as one might have supposed and no doubt Max, who seemed to have been a sensitive soul, must have felt alienated and hated by the local Christians. Indeed, in August of 1910 Britain's only pogrom occurred in southern Wales (was not the massacre in York in the 12th century a pogrom?). There were no deaths this time but shops owned by Jews were looted and destroyed in several mining towns, the carnage only stopped by troops that Churchill had organised to move in and restore order. Churchill was an avid supporter of all things Jewish for all of his life, something the Jews of Great Britain had to be very thankful for.

Annie depended, while her daughter Kitty and son Louis were small, on charity from what was then called the Jewish Board of Guardians. As soon as she could she worked as a Cigarette Maker for the Ardath Tobacco Company where Kitty ultimately joined her. They used to earn 2/6 for a 1000 cigarettes. These were made entirely by hand and if they were late for work the doors to the factory were closed and the workers were locked out and as a consequence they lost half a day's pay. They were only admitted after lunch (then called dinner-time) so that they could get at least half a day's pay.

Sometime after Max's death, we are led to believe that there was a fire in the workshop. Lazarus apparently made a claim on his insurance policy and when this was queried, fled to America, arriving at Ellis Island on 25 August 1906. One can only think that the fire was either deliberately lit or the damage magnified. We may never know. Seemingly he was terrified of the potential consequences of making a false claim and fled to America. Lazarus probably lived with Abraham and his family in Kings (New

York) and is buried in the Mt Judah cemetery next to Abraham. The grave number is 2-1-108-R17 Masher and Baronowitz. It is very likely that the decision of Michael and Milly Emdur to migrate to Australia was influenced by these events.

Kitty, married Nathan (Nat) Malofsky/Malafsky on 16th February 1930. He too had come to England from Neishin in Russia when he was a toddler. He was known as 'Nat the Pilot' because he had been in the Royal Flying Corps during the First World War. Later in life (just after the Second World War) he became a British Citizen and changed the family name, officially to Mellows, even though he had assumed that surname for some years previously. Connie is the result of that marriage and presumably they decided to 'throw away the mould' as she had no brothers or sisters.

Kitty's brother, Louis worked for Morris Berkoff for some considerable time until the outbreak of the Second World War. He and his family, (his wife Esther and his two children, Bernie and Jean lived in Hackney (London) and shortly after the War began they moved to Oxford where his two children still live. In 1925 he was offered the opportunity to go to and live with his uncle (Michael Emdur) in Sydney but he never took up this offer.

Mary married Morris Berkoff and had four children – Pearl, Jenny, Sidney and Basil. The only surviving, and youngest child, Basil, currently lives in St Ives, Cambridgeshire U.K.

Abraham (Harry) emigrated to America, arriving from Antwerp on 20 June 1905, and settled in New York with his wife, Leah. He was only 18 when he emigrated and perhaps this was also a consequence of both Max's suicide and the workshop fire. When the children were quite grown they separated and Harry went to live in San Francisco with some of their children. These were Lillian (Bernstein), Jeanette (Belkin), Harold (Grossman) and Evelyn (Marcus). Lillian had two children, Lionel and Alayne, Jeanette had no children, Harold had a son, Arleigh, and a daughter, Sandra and Evelyn had two boys, Leonard and Howard.

Chapter 7 The next generations.

Second generation - The children of Michael and Milly

1. Jean Emdur.

Her children:

Name	Born	Died	Married to	Born	Died	Date married
Jessica Ruth	4/11/1927	06/10/1983	Ben Morris	03/12/1918	12/12/75	07/05/1947
Leah Sonia	19/08/1930		Joe Shelton	28/02/1927	25/01/1993	28/03/1951
Hyam	06/10/31		Shirley	14/04/1933		31/03/1954

			Hymann			
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Jessica worked as an assistant librarian at a local high school, Leah did all the accounting for Joe whilst he was building up his engineering business, and Hyam became a fats and oils technologist.

Jessica had two children, Jennifer now practicing as a psychologist and Michael, an accountant. Jennifer has three daughters and Michael two daughters and a son.

Leah had three boys, Leonard a tradesman now managing director of J. Shelton and Sons, a die making workshop, Stephen a dentist, and Phillip a tradesman and technical director of the family engineering company.

Hyam had a son Paul, a food technologist/computer programmer/maths teacher, Lynne a physiotherapist/speciality candle manufacturer, and Gillian managing director of the Springfields Group of Companies specialising in essential oil products. Hyam still works a few hours each week as a fats and oils technologist.

2. Minna

Name	Born	Died	Married to	Born	Died	Date married
John	23/04/1949		Angela Midder	30/01/1957		22/01/1978

John has a successful magazine publishing business and two daughters, Ellise, GM of Media Titles Pty Ltd and Kya who works at the Film and Television Office. Minna was manager of a jewellery shop (Prouds) in the city for many years then left to become Hymie's nurse (at his medical practice) and look after her aging parents. Minna had been engaged to Archie Blondin before the war but broke it off when Archie enlisted in the army and went to war. They met up again after the war, and a short and unhappy marriage for Archie, and married in 1948.

3. Lily

Name	Born	Died	Married to	Born	Died	Date married
Barry	12/04/1935		Ann Waters			1959
Carole	15/07/1940		Gerold Einfeld	02/03/1929	23/02/1996	12/04/1964

Phillip Friedlander worked as a clerk during the week and penciller, on the weekends, at the horse races

Barry has a daughter, Debbie and a son, Darren.

Carole has two daughters, Kerry and Julie and a son, Anthony.

4. Louis

Name	Born	Died	Married to	Born	Died	Date married
David	08/12/1935	03/12/2004	Faye			18/06/1961

			Ackerman			
Robyn	17/12/1942		Basil Isaacs			04/07/1971

David has two daughters, Nicole, Martine an artist, and a son Larry a TV host show presenter.

Robyn has no children and is now divorced.

5. Ettie

Name	Born	Died	Married to	Born	Died	Date married
Kevin	24/01/1939		Susan Russ/ Bella Sharp	19/01/1944		
Raymond	11/02/1942		Kathy Diamant	30/07/1944		12/02/1967

Kevin is a practising general medical practitioner, and Raymond a solicitor. Kevin had three children from his first marriage, Anthony, John (deceased) and Karen. Raymond had three children Michelle, David and Alexander.

6. Naomi

Name	Born	Died	Married to	Born	Died	Date married
David	01/03/1945		Rene Shaw			07/10/1969
Dennis	14/12/1949		Sharyn Abbott			16/11/1975
Kenneth	01/08/1952		Nadine Blackman	26/07/1960		

David runs a travel business, Dennis is financial controller of a large construction company and Kenneth is an accounts clerk.

David has two daughters, Joanna and Dana.

Dennis has two daughters, Nicole and Lauren and a son Darren.

Kenneth had 2 children, Adam and Alysha. He is now divorced.

7. Hyman (Hyam, Hymie)

Name	Born	Died	Married to	Born	Died	Date married
Phillip	18/06/1952		Shelley			
Susan	14/03/1954		Chris Walder			01/03/1981

Phillip is a pediatrician and Susan a school teacher.

Phillip has two daughters, Sophie and Rebecca.

Susan has twins, a son Michael and a daughter, Kate. Hymie has only recently retired from medical practice as, he jokingly says, he had only one patient left.

22 November, 2004

Appendix 1 – the opening correspondence.

From: "Lauren Bennington" <transformance@mac.com>
To: "Hyam" <hyam@bigfoot.com>
Sent: Friday, 08 October 2004 5:30 PM
Subject: Re: Fw: Hi, cousin

Dear Hyam,

What a pleasure to hear from you! I embarked upon this search in earnest only a short time ago, so I feel really blessed to have found you so quickly. Sallyann Amdur has been an incredible help in connecting me up with Mike (Ross) who gave you my email.

I will tell you what I know and then ask that you tell me as much as possible about Mchael and his descendants.

My mom's dad was Michael Emdur's brother, Nathan Abbey Amdur (or so he called himself in Canada). Do you know if Mchael was older or younger than my grandfather? Was he called Mchael in Europe, or did he go by a Yiddish name? Nathan Abbey was married to my grandmother, Miriam, who was born a Gafanowitz. In 1913 they went on a sea voyage to Canada - their seven year old daughter had died of measles and my grandmother was very sad, so the doctors suggested a sea voyage. They were only supposed to go for some months, but while they were gone the Russian revolution broke out and they could not return, and then of course World War I happened. They had taken all the older children with them, but my mother was only a year old at the time, and so my grandparents left her in the care of my Grandma's mother, Hannah Gafanowitz and also with Zale Gafanowitz, Hannah's son (and my grandma's younger brother). I knew him well and he was a remarkable man. He taught at the Peretz school in Montreal and was my Yiddish teacher.

When the Revolution broke out, I believe the Russians took my grandparents home and made it into government headquarters or something official like that. My grandparents had been quite successful, and had owned a department store in Latvia. Because of the war upheaval my grandparents couldn't find my mom for many years. When they finally did locate her, she was 9 years old and had returned to Kupishkis, Lithuania, to live. Before that my mom (whose name is Pauline, but who also was called Pearl) had met and spent some time with her dad's brother who was on his way to Australia (I guess that was Michael)! He offered to "adopt" her and take her with his family to Australia, but she didn't go, I believe she told me that he already had his own children. (How many were there in all?) Shortly thereafter, her parents managed to locate her, and her father (my grandfather) Nathan Abbey came to Lithuania to get her. They travelled Europe for a few months and then he brought her to Montreal, where they had settled.

My mom's siblings were: Leo (16 years older), Jack (14 years older), Minnie (8 years older) Eli (4 years older) and Etta, 3 years younger, the only one born in Canada. I don't know the name of the little sister who died of measles. Mom is the only one of the children living - she is 92. I have one brother, Richard Norman Aronson, who is 3 years younger than me, and he lives with his wife Tzippy in Toronto. They have two children, Tal (who is 26) and Oded (23). He met her in Isreal (she was born on a kibbutz) and brought her back to Canada 31 years ago.

Strangely enough, even though I didn't know about the family name connection, I named my oldest child Michael! He is 28 years old and is a creative writer at an advertising firm here in Vancouver, Canada. My daughter is only 12 and her name is Alysha Megan Ano'kalia (the rabbi had a hard time figuring out the Hebrew equivalent for the latter, as it is Hawaiian - my husband, Tola, is American, and has Hawaiian roots. Ama is a lovely dynamic young lady who is interested in many creative arts-acting, singing, dancing, drawing and writing.

We lived on the Hawaiian islands for 10 years and have returned to Canada a little over a year ago. So I will close with the Hawaiian version of shalom - a mix of shalom and aloha: Shaloha!

Lorraine