

# THE IVANSK PROJECT e-NEWSLETTER

Issue Number 13

July – August 2005

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- **Progress Report on the Cemetery Restoration Project**

In June the architect presented his design for the cemetery wall and gate (see below). Members of The Ivansk Project Action Committee were very enthusiastic about the model and approved the design. Bids for building the enclosure are currently being solicited from local contractors.

We are approximately \$10,000 short of the \$50,000 needed to reach our campaign goal. Only a few gifts have been received during the past 4 weeks. If you haven't done so already, it's time to "step up to the plate"! Your donation large or small will be significant and without it we won't be able to complete the job!

*Please join your fellow Ivanskers in supporting this important undertaking.*

*Instructions on how to donate to the campaign are found at the end of the e-Newsletter.*



- **Memories Of My Youth by Zvi Weissdorf**

Zvi's memoir of his early years in Ivansk is an invaluable addition to our understanding of who we are and where we came from. His testimony, and that of other Ivanskers, is gradually filling the deep voids in our knowledge of the little town that was *under Haim* (our home) for hundreds of years. Despite their daily struggles to survive, our ancestors maintained a sense of their uniqueness and their dignity. Their values and experiences serve as the framework for our own aspirations and achievements.

- **Ivanskers Seeking Ivanskers**

**Michael Trapunsky** seeks our help in obtaining information about the **SEIDENWAR / ZAIDENWAR Family** from Iwaniska and Tarnow.

## Memories Of My Youth

by Zvi Weissdorf      Haifa, Israel

[ Ed: Zvi Weissdorf was born in Ivansk in 1916. In comparison to the majority of Jewish families, Zvi's parents were relatively well to do, and he was not required to work to help the family survive. Instead, Zvi's parents encouraged him to pursue religious and secular studies. But World War II brought an end to Zvi's sheltered life. He lost his entire family and endured unimaginable hardship in German labor and concentration camps. After the war ended Zvi tried to reach Palestine but without success. He finally achieved his goal and made Aliya to Israel in 1949.

Today, Zvi and his wife Shoshanah live in Haifa. They raised two children, Miriam and Shmuel and have six grandchildren. In Israel Zvi earned a living as a welder. Later in life he worked at the *Technion* [Israel Institute of Technology]. Initially he was involved in soliciting alumni for gifts to support the university. Subsequently, he assumed responsibility for arranging financial aid and scholarship support for students attending the Technion.

"*Memories Of My Youth*" paints a rich tapestry of Jewish life in Iwaniska during the 1920s and 1930s. He presents many interesting characters: the pious and the profane; the rich and the impoverished; the naïve and the scheming; people at the top and at the bottom of the social and economic ladder. We will hear about the bride who was abandoned by her husband the day after their wedding; we'll watch the pranks of an impish *yingle* (boy) who drove his cheder teacher to distraction; and we'll be appalled by the constant in-fighting of the rebbes and their followers competing for authority and recognition. In addition, we will encounter demons dwelling in the ladies' section of the Beis Medrash and in the well beside the shul; superstition will envelop Zvi and his family when they imagine that a hex has been placed upon them because of a misspelled word in the parchment scroll of their mezuzah; and the shtetl will speculate whether the untimely deaths of two men occurred because they dared to offend religious leaders. The script reads as if it was taken from the tales of Sholem Aleichem and Isaac Bashevis Singer. But these were real people and real events in a world that is no more.

"*Memories Of My Youth*" was written in Hebrew in the late 1960s, and we are very grateful to Zvi for sharing his recollections. We are also indebted to several people who helped bring Zvi's story to all of us. Soon after Zvi completed the manuscript, **Lara Zinman** typed it for family and friends. More recently **David Lederman\*** became aware of the document, brought it to our attention and arranged to have **Rena Novack** translate it into English. Zvi's daughter **Miriam\*** proofread the English version to confirm that it adhered to her father's intentions. During the past months **Jacob (Koby) Silberstein\*** met with Zvi on numerous occasions up-dating and clarifying some of the people and events that are described in the memoir. Finally, **David Blumenfeld\*** filmed Zvi recalling some of his memories; presumably portions of the interview will be incorporated into David's forthcoming documentary. ]

**To all, many thanks!!**



Haifa, 2005      Zvi Weissdorf  
Photo provided by David Blumenfeld

## Iwaniska, Poland

Different thoughts pass through my mind as I sit down to write and describe the life in Iwaniska (*Ivansk*), a small town at the end of the train line, with narrower than usual train tracks. Being so minuscule, the town did not even show up on the map of Poland.

In this village my ancestors lived until the total Nazi extermination during the years 1940-1943. Out of nine children I was the lone survivor, after spending three years in all sorts of concentration camps in Nazi Germany.

I was liberated on 13 April 1945 by the US forces when I was in the Buchenwald camp. For a time I was hospitalized in the hospital wards organized by the liberating American army. After transfers from camp to camp, I reached Landsberg, a displaced persons' camp near Munich in Bavaria, Germany. I had no strength upon liberation and was unable to digest any food. I weighed 38 kilo.

Many amongst us who still had the strength to leave the block, broke into the storerooms and grabbed any food they could reach, consuming biscuits and sausages that were meant for dogs. They were afflicted with diarrhea and died with no one to save them. Upon seeing these happenings the Americans began distributing light foods such as barley, semolina, prunes, etc. to every block and no longer allowed people to wander outside. In this way the epidemic was slowly stopped.

Until July 1947 I was employed in Landsberg by "UNRWA" [United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East] in the supplies department. An illegal immigration was organized to Palestine. I left my job and joined "Aliya Bet" [the second wave of Jewish immigration to Palestine in modern era] on the clandestine ship, "*Exodus, 5707*" [5707 refers to the date in the Jewish calendar]. Exodus was a shaky ship that had long been out of use and was prepared anew for the purpose of Aliya Bet. In this "tub" there were approximately 4,500 people in inhumane conditions.

We set sail from *Port de Bouc* on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea in southern France. The British warned us that if we entered the territorial waters of Palestine we would be stopped. But we ignored the warnings and prepared ourselves for actual battle. We were attacked several times, and finally after one battle, the British broke the side of our ship and paralyzed our engines. They then towed us into Haifa port where a representative of the British Mandate informed us that all illegal immigrants were being transferred to Cyprus. So we willingly moved to three British transport ships, "*The Empire Rival*", "*Rinimark Park*", and "*Ocean Vigour*".

We had not yet set sail when the British changed their tone; we were setting sail for Port de Bouc. But after 3 months on the open sea on our way to Palestine we were sent to Hamburg, Germany by order of the British Mandate Government.

After being informed by the Red Cross and by people who had returned to Poland that there no one was left of my family, I waited on French soil for a new opportunity to reach Palestine. In one of the camps I met my wife, Shoshana Aronson, a Holocaust refugee who left Sweden after working 2 years in a hospital in Göteborg organizing a medical clinic for Aliya Bet. Upon her liberation from Bergen Belsen she was taken to Sweden by Polka Bernado's organization [Polka is Swedish for "Count"]. I was full of wounds after 3 months of back and forth on the open sea, and she took care of me with great devotion, and in time we married in Paris on 11 January 1948 in the home of the Dudel Family, distant relatives of my wife.

In February 1949, my wife and I boarded a ship called "Transylvania" (*Aliya Dalet* [4<sup>th</sup> Aliya]). In order to avoid possible detection, my documents listed me as a French widower. Together with us was a 7-year-old girl who had spent the war years in a convent in Poland. The girl was very attached to my wife throughout our entire stay on the ship. Upon our arrival at Haifa Port, the Jewish Agency took her away from us and thus our contact was severed. After the agency dispersed our group "Nocham" (*Noar Halutzi Meuchad* [Pioneer Youth Union]), I decided to stay in Haifa.

Hence began a new life story under poor conditions. At first I began to work as a welder in a factory for heavy constructions, and in March 1949 I was drafted into the army to "Givati" Troop 52 and was released later in 1949. Shoshana obtained a job from the employment agency as a nurse for a paralyzed doctor in Kibbutz HaZorea. But at that time the journey from Haifa to the kibbutz was very dangerous: Arab snipers were active along the roads outside the city and the *Haganah* [underground Jewish defense forces operating in Palestine and during the early years following the creation of Israel] had to provide armored buses for the journey. As a consequence, Shoshanah and I were separated for long periods. We were "reunited" when she was offered a job in Haifa at the Borochov Hospital and later at # 10 Military Hospital with rank of sergeant; she worked until her seventh month of pregnancy.

I maintained correspondence with my friends from the Polish elementary school in Iwaniska until the severance of relations with Poland in 1967 after the Six Day War. I was told that nearly our entire town was burnt down and destroyed with great cruelty at the beginning of the war. Miraculously, our house in the town square still stood. The war broke out with such suddenness that the Poles did not even have time to organize defense, and the German army invaded most Polish territories simultaneously.

At the edge of our town was a Mikve. The walk to the Mikve took approximately 10 minutes. Religious and non-religious people came to the Mikve mainly on Fridays to purify themselves in preparation for the Sabbath. Others came to enjoy the hot steam - by pouring water on the burning stones, from sitting on the second or the higher row of benches, depending on one's ability to bear the heat. They would return from the Mikve red as a beet.

On the way to the Mikve stood Avrohom Weinberg's factory for processing all different types of leather, such as saddles, bridles and reins. The stench from the factory reached afar, and people who lived and worked there were absorbed with the smell of unprocessed leather that was kept for long periods in mud wells and chemical materials. Even in the synagogue where they came to pray the smell of leather floated off of them. Nothing seemed to help, even if they bathed for days and weeks. They were isolated, but this did not stop them from earning their bread. Disgust overcomes me as I recall them to memory.

The boys my age would go to bathe mainly in the river 2 km. away from town. About bathing suits there was nothing to discuss, no man had yet come up with that idea, and so for reasons of modesty neither gentile nor Jewish girls ever showed up at the river.

In nearly every Jewish home people would bathe once a week or more. For this purpose the whole family used a tub or a big basin. Water was heated in kettles and added to the tub. If the water was either too hot or too cold, the bather would often shout making quite a commotion. The pleasure of bathing sometimes bordered on suffering.

And who spoke about toilets when no man was permitted to dream of these? Usually they built toilets out of wood in the courtyard. Underneath the toilet was a deep pit where the garbage collected over a year - until it was sold to a non-Jewish farmer in exchange for potatoes or other

vegetables. This was part of the yearly budget to support a family of 7-12 members. Not once did it happen from negligence or a broken board that someone would fall into the pit full of dung. The stories went from mouth to mouth and the poor guy hid himself from embarrassment and fear that someone might smell the stench on him and give him a nickname for life.

Those that did not have an outhouse had to go relieve themselves outside the village - under the bridge by the river - early in the morning or late at night so no one would see them. One Shabbos morning before davening I went with my friend Gavrielka Rosenbaum to skate on the ice, not far from where R' Yitzchok the Melamed [Reb Yitzchok the teacher] would usually go to relieve himself. Gavrielka prepared a snowball and let it fly when the R' Yitzchok pulled down his pants. R' Yitzchok screamed "Gevalt" [a cry uttered when frightened] when the snowball hit him between the eyes and ran with his pants in his hands cursing the "Sheigetz" [derogatory term for a young gentile male] that did this. I felt R' Yitzchok's pain then, having to hold himself back until it was dark again.

R' Yitzchok taught me *Chumash* and *Rashi*. Until noon I studied in the Polish school, (I was the only Jewish boy there) and in the afternoon I studied at the Rebbe's until very late at night, especially in the winter. His wife, the *Rebbetzin*, helped supplement their income by selling ink to the students; the tuition didn't cover their needs. The Rebbetzin's hands and face were blacker than the ink itself as she would sit by the stove cooking and mixing the ink until it was a homogenous texture. One could hardly tell the color of her eyes that were always sleepy and without hope. Maybe a spark of light would appear in her eyes after we lit the lamp that hung in the middle of the room to continue learning.

R' Yitzchok's house had only one large room on the first floor that was used for everything. The closet, the beds, the table and other furniture were all moved away from the walls because of the bugs crawling the width and the length of the walls. Only the Rebbe's whip hung on the wall, not caring about anything around it.

During the day my fellow cheder students and I took turns filling the wooden barrel in R' Yitzchok's house with water from the well. The well was very deep and it was quite scary looking into it. This was the main water supply for the whole village. Yossel Wassertrager (Yossel the Water Carrier) was one of two water carriers in Iwaniska. He had an only daughter by the name of Chava who was the most beautiful girl in town. In comparison to most other families in Iwaniska, my family was relatively well educated and wealthy and we were considered one of the social elites. Consequently, no one would ever have believed that I, the son of Shmuel Brillis, would be seen walking with the daughter of Yossel Wassertrager. But friends who are always ready to flatter while at the same time slander are found everywhere, and sure enough my father heard about the episode in the Beis Medrash during *Seuda Shlishit* [orthodox tradition of taking refreshments before reciting the *Havdala* at the conclusion of *Shabbos*]. And my reward for being seen with Chava was meted out immediately after *Havdala*. Even my mother's intervention didn't help (begging my father not to hit me so hard). The taste of that walk passed very quickly, and today I don't remember the pleasure and satisfaction I had on that stroll.

R' Yitzchok's single room, for which he paid beyond his ability, was never perfect. The family was absolved from washing the dirt floor. But Gavrielka invented a way to use the floor as a skating rink. He drilled a hole in the water barrel, thus causing the water to flood the floor and turning it into wet, slippery clay. All of the students ran around the room, skating as if on ice. The Melamed was powerless because of the darkness as one of the children had spit on the glass lantern, causing it to explode. The skidding on the wet floor hadn't lasted long when

Gavrielka gave the order to escape outdoors. The screams reached the heavens and it was unclear who was chasing whom - the Melamed chasing us or us chasing the Melamed.

The Rebbetzin's eyes flickered and shone out of her face, black as night, and it was impossible to recognize her.

I don't recall even one day that the Melamed tasted the flavor of a quiet day from Gavrielka's mischief and brilliant innovations. The Melamed knew no rest. He ate only one single meal a day, after finishing classes in the evening, and at times he was denied even tasting that. While the Rebbetzin was cooking the meal, Gavrielka quickly threw a bit of candle into the pot. The Melamed complained to the Rebbetzin that the meal wasn't tasty and that she didn't know how to cook. It was always with the same refrain. We all knew who was to blame, and the Rebbetzin bore everything on her shoulders. We didn't want to know of the pair's great sorrow, and we didn't feel the agony that was plentiful for them. Sometimes I pitied the two, but doubtless I also enjoyed it!

Usually after a long day spent with his pupils, the Melamed was tired and by evening could barely keep his eyes open. With a light snore, his head would nod on the table between sentences, and after repeating this several times he would fall fast asleep. He certainly didn't have a great dream. When he suddenly awoke, with great fright and a shout, it was already too late. Gavrielka had glued the two ends of his beard to the table with wax. No one told him who was responsible for this. The Rebbetzin cut off the part of the beard stuck to the table with scissors.

I didn't learn by R' Yitzchok for very long. My father R' Shmuel, may he rest in peace, lived in hope and belief that his son Zvi was meant to be a genius or a great scholar, and so I began studying with my uncle Moshe Wolff in his house. At first we used his house and later the woman's section of the Beis Medrash. R' Moshe Wolff was a God fearing Hassidic man and was respected in town. Because he did not make ends meet from his iron-tools store, he was forced to become a teacher of small children at a more advanced level, translating prayers from a *siddur* or *machzor*. Thanks to him I began learning Hebrew independently using a series of pamphlets that were referred to as, "Wolkowsky's Letters for Independent Study".

R' Moshe Wolff's wife Tzipora was the youngest of my father's three sisters. She didn't bother much; she cooked in a dark kitchen where there was no air. Anshel, their eldest son, had stopped speaking (the reason was a secret to the end) and wandered the kitchen all day, never leaving it. Meir, their second son, was more successful. Like most boys in town Meir did not learn a trade, and when he married Rachel, the daughter of Yoel, he became a "loan shark". Meir would lend out money from Rachel's dowry to the villagers for a set rate of interest. Thus, we called him "Shylock" and the name "Meir Shylock" was known to all. Moshe and Rachel had two other sons, Avremele Golem and one whose name I don't recall; both were not successful. No one was left of that family. ["Golem" was Avremele's nickname; derived from Jewish folklore, golem refers to an animated being with mystical powers that is crafted from inanimate material. In modern Hebrew golem denotes someone who is silly, stupid or clueless.]

When my uncle decided to have his house whitewashed, we began studying in the women's section of the *Beis Medrash* [study hall] of the Rebbe of Shidlow [the Rebbe came from another shtetl called *Shidlow*]. We had to climb many stairs to reach the women's section. Rebbe Moshe Wolf warned us not to go into the women's section during the afternoon hours because of demons in the shape of humans, praying and learning Torah there. A boy who peeked into that section during those hours was thrown down all of the steps, and he himself could not explain how this happened.

The Rebbe of Shidlow would pray with the first *minyan* in the Beis Medrash. [A *minyan* (quorum) of 10 adult males is required to conduct morning, afternoon and evening prayer services. Based on the time when men set out for work, 3 *minyans* were organized for morning prayers. Those who ventured forth at the crack of dawn attended the first (earliest) *minyan*.] Shlomo Tam also *davened* [prayed] in the first *minyan* because his daily business involved selling eggs, leather, feathers and other goods. But Shlomo was one of those who opposed the Rebbe.

One day Shlomo Tam had *Yahrzeit*. [*Yahrzeit* commemorates the death of a Jew by a mourner. On the anniversary of the death of a child, sibling, spouse or parent the mourner pays homage to the deceased by lighting a *Yahrzeit* candle, reciting the *Kaddish* prayer, visiting the grave and praying before the Ark]. Shlomo began davening before the Ark but did not confine himself to just reciting the prescribed blessings. With the toss of his head, the Shidlower Rebbe immediately ordered the *Shamus* [beadle] to stop Shlomo. Shlomo begged for more time and disregarded the Rebbe's refusal to let him continue. The Rebbe covered his head with his *Tallis* [prayer shawl] over his *Teffilin* [phylacteries] so as not to look at Shlomo and left the room. He went outside into the yard, climbed the stairs to the women's section and waited for the second *minyan* to start before continuing his prayers. That was the first time I remember the Rebbe praying with the second *minyan*.

By coincidence, that same afternoon word came of the death of Shlomo Tam. It was thought that the hand of the Rebbe was at the death, and everyone explained it according to his own imagination.

There was a deep well next to the synagogue. This well had long since been out of use and there was a great fear of passing it at midnight. According to legend if a person's name was called out from the well, he was sure to die. To save himself he would have to take the cane and prayer shawl belonging to the Shidlower Rebbe, enter the synagogue, go up on the *Bima* [the dais where the Torah is read], recite the first and second blessings over the Torah, and then exit backwards from the synagogue. All this had to be done with a covered head and without looking.

My father's eldest sister was Aunt Rivkele, the wife of "Tall Moshe". I loved her very much. She remains in my memory more than all the others. On Sabbath afternoons, a large number of children would sit in a circle in her room to listen to her reading of "*Tzena V'Rena*" ["Go Out and See", a collection of Chassidic legends]. We didn't understand a single word, but the attentiveness was there and even the older children dared not go against her word.

Every year on *Tisha B'Av* [*Tisha B'Av*: the holy day when Jews fast to mourn the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the First and Second Temple (*Beis Hamikdash*) by Babylonians and Romans] Aunt Rivkele would take us to the cemetery. There were two cemeteries in Iwaniska. One was very old and was next to the synagogue on a plot of land belonging to a gentile; the entrance was made possible only by permission of the owner. The second cemetery was approximately two kilometers away from town. Aunt Rivkale gave all of the children small pieces of garlic to place on the gravestones as a sign that we had visited the "near and far" that had passed away many years ago. Of course we didn't forget the Rebbe's crypt [such a crypt is called an '*Ohel*' meaning a "tent" which protects the grave of a distinguished rabbi]. When we left the cemetery we would pull up weeds that grew near the gate and throw them behind us as a "good luck charm" for long life.

We were very obedient children, never asking questions. When told to fast we fasted a half-day, but not Aunt Rivkele! She was weak and sickly, good hearted and sensitive, a righteous woman in the full meaning of the word.

My father was an only son whom everyone loved. Honest, important and respected in the town. He was a “*Talmud Chacham*” [a man who was learned in Talmud] observant of all the commandments, and kept cleanliness on himself and his surroundings. He read the “*Tzfira*” and the “*Heint*” – two popular daily Jewish newspapers published in Poland with articles by Yehoshua Tohn and Yitzchok Greenbaum. [Dr. Yehoshua Tohn was a great historian and a member of the Polish Sejm (Parliament). Yitzchok Greenbaum was an ardent Zionist and head of the Jewish Agency Rescue Division. He became embroiled in controversy when he refused to divert *Keren HaYesod* funds to help save European Jews during the Shoah.]

Most Jews in Iwaniska found themselves with free time- many didn't work; if they did have a business, their wives would often run it. The men would stand around my father in the shul after *Shacharis* [morning prayers] or on the steps near his store to hear his reports and political commentaries from the newspaper. The news between 1928-1930 was mostly anti-Semitic. Anti-Semites sprouted like mushrooms after a rain. Pressure on the Jews from the Polish Government was felt in taxes and false accusations. The place was getting more and more tense by the day and people started talking about Zionism and moving to Israel. My father warned everyone about the hard times coming, but most didn't have the means to leave Iwaniska. Those who did were the young and single - mostly living today in Toronto, Canada. The Ivansker Mutual Benefit Society established in Toronto helped the few survivors that were left after the war.

The Polish people have hated the Jews for generations. Anti-Semitism was spread by many of the Priests in their Sunday sermons. Even in the farthest corners of the village, false accusations were heard. One day R' Binyomin was returning from Stoptza, a small town where he was a bookkeeper, when he was beaten up by some servants from Planta [a large estate]. R' Binyomin wouldn't swat a fly on the wall. He was assaulted simply because he arrived in town at the same moment as the workers on their horses and wagons.

Miraculously “Shilo, the *Baal Hagala*” [Shilo the wagon master] also arrived at the same time and heard R' Binyomin's cries. After listening to R' Binyomin's story, Shilo immediately got to work throwing rocks at the troublemakers; he even threw the pails of Yossel Wassertrager at them. With super human strength he attacked each and every farmer who beat up R' Binyomin. The priest and pharmacist, known anti-Semites, couldn't take seeing this single miraculous event and sent for the police. But by the time they arrived, Shilo had gone. The goyim became afraid. Jewish honor was restored, and it showed that beating a Jew would not go unpunished. I was left with the feeling that Shilo would certainly have a place in the world to come.

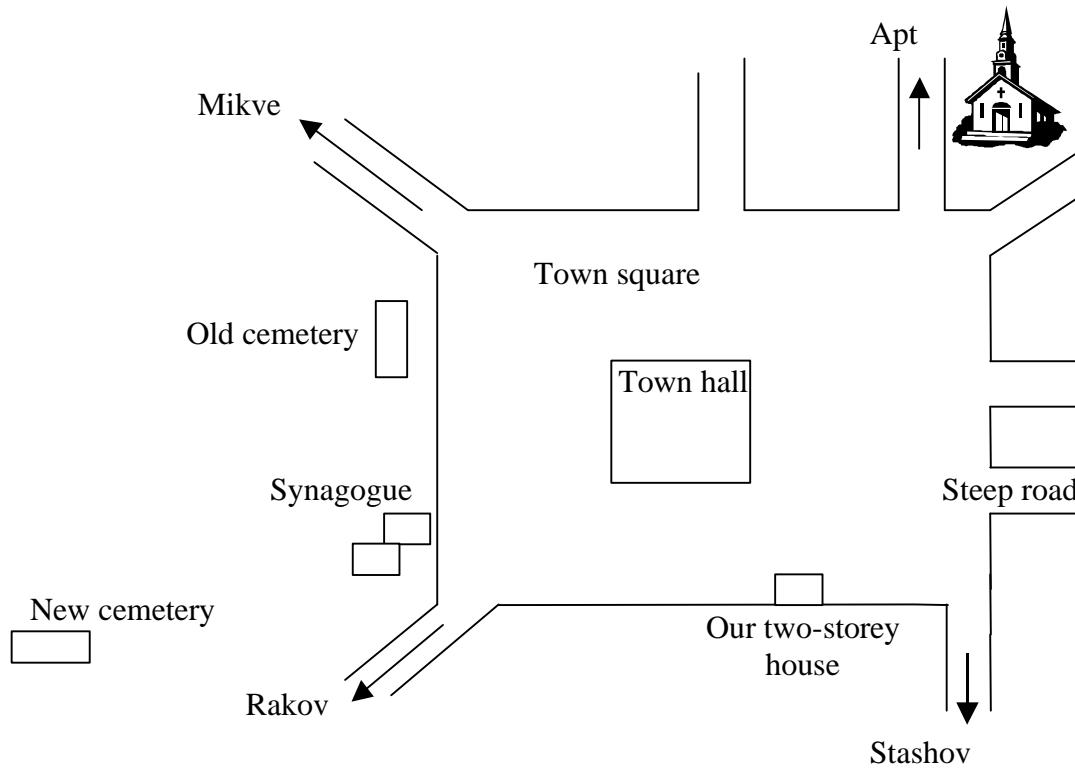
My father was head of the Jewish community and the *Gabai* [rabbi's assistant] for the *Chevra Kadisha* [burial society] until a disagreement arose between the followers of the Rebbe of Shidlow and R' Yankele Arons. The basis for the dispute centered on whether R' Yankele should be acknowledged as the official teacher in the town. Followers of Shidlower Rebbe were against this, and a fight was about to break out between R' Leibish Pracownik and the Rebbe in the middle of the town square. At the last second 3 policemen and their captain prevented the clash.

R' Yankele Arons was a great *Tzadik* [religious scholar]. One of the thirty six *Tzadikim* and a “*Talmud Chacham*”, he studied Torah day and night. Nobody knew when he slept. He seemed to always be pacing in his room carrying on a conversation with G-d until the wee hours of the

morning. He didn't need anything. His wife supported them with a small business selling fabrics as best she could. But one could feel the sparseness in the home, one room home with a small kitchen. In the entrance hall, on top of the door, a square of unfinished paint was left to remember the destruction of the "*Beis Hamikdosh*" [The Temple].

R'Yankele was forced to daven with the second or third minyan in order not to meet the Shidlower Rebbe who always showed up for the first Minyan. When the Rebbe of Shidlow arrived, he always disappeared behind the large square stove in the winter and covered his face with both hands before davening. When he finished he would sit down to learn *Gemara*. He would fast all day. His wife was childless but accepted her lot in life with love. They both knew only long suffering all their lives.

Most of the Jews lived and ran their businesses on the three sides of the village square, either from a storefront or their home. Each Monday there was a town fair to sell or buy clothing, shoes, or food products. Cows or horses were sold in a separate place. "Shuk" [market] day added a little life and mainly a little revenue for the town dwellers. From early morning one felt the village square come alive. The tables and stands were being set up for the various salesmen. The negotiations whether for buying or selling were always exciting. The seller often switched a pair of pants or a suit for cheaper ones, after the customer wouldn't pay the price. They did everything not to lose – pulling sleeves or hems to look longer, according to demand. I don't think this method worked for long.



[Zvi Weisdorf drew this map of the town square from memory. Although it is not entirely accurate, the map gives us a general idea of the central area of the shtetl.]

In the cold and snow of winter the sellers would warm their hands on top of boiling pots of water. Once a seller's dress or slip caught fire; she ran to the middle of the square trying to put it out finally disappearing between the buildings. There was much to tell about the weekly fairs. After many years the village square was finally paved, so the inhabitants wouldn't have to sink in the

mud, G-d forbid. The square looked like a square fortress, enclosed on all four sides by buildings, mostly used for housing. Only three paths led in and out of the square for horses and buggies.

In the middle of the square was the "Moetza" [also referred to as the "roodhouse"], the regional council building, a huge, wide building where 12 families lived and had stores. I don't remember if the Moetza did anything or the name just remained from prior times. One could smell the stink in that building from one end to the other. Also, many feared passing through the square at night because many drunkards hung out there after being thrown out of Zegalowsky's Bar. Zegalowsky was one of the biggest anti-Semites in the town.

The police station was near the road leading to Opatow (*Apt*). Once in a blue moon one of the policemen from Apt would visit Iwaniska; during one of those visits the famous robber Bednarsky was caught and killed on the roof of an isolated house in the forest. Every so often Jews were robbed while traveling on the stagecoach to other town fairs. These hold ups often took place at night in the forest. After Bednarsky was killed the robberies and murders stopped for a while.

In the corner of town leading to Rakov, across from the Shul and Beis Medrash lived two of the best tailors in Iwaniska. For special occasions and for important people Moshe Pesach was the tailor of choice. His house consisted of one narrow room containing beds, a closet, sewing machine, pots cooking on the stove and many clients trying on their clothes. Several weeks before Pesach, Moshe Pesach, with the help of his household worked intensively to finish all his special holiday orders. It was a custom that each child would put on his new outfit for the first night of Pesach so that everyone could see the boy walking to Shul with his father. Moshe Pesach worked day and night in order to finish all his orders so that he too could celebrate the *chag* [holiday] "as a free man". I remember many times when Moshe Pesach would work up to the last minute, exactly when they were starting *Maariv* [evening prayers] in Shul!

Not far from Moshe Pesach's house, on the same street near the shul, lived the two "Shamushim". Every Friday before it was time to light the Shabbos candles, Hershel the Shamus would go around the town where Jews lived announcing "Beit Knesset- Kabbalat Shabbat" ["Welcome Shabbos!"]. Dovid Ber the second Shames would do the same thing on Shabbos morning in his deep voice – "Beit Knesset!"

Before the *tefila* [prayers] religious Jews, such as my father, would go to the mikve summer and winter in order to praise *Hashem* [G-d] with a pure heart and a pure clean soul.

Being a Shamus still didn't bring in enough income for a family, so Hershel also worked as a carpenter fixing chairs and tables. And who would have believed, every so often he'd get an order for a new table or a bench.

Dovid Ber together with his wife also worked as a tailor but without the benefit of a sewing machine. They lived on very little. Their home was in the cellar under the women's section of the Beis Medrash. An older Jew with a long white beard, Dovid Ber never asked anything from anyone; his words were thoughtful and measured; he never hurt a fly on the wall. A heavenly creation was he. Where do we find people like this? There are many doctors, professors, all types of messengers but not "*mentchen*" [people with a pure soul] like Dovid Ber the Shamus. He didn't have much contact with outsiders. His purpose in life was filled according to the law. Like Adam and Eve, he and his wife were happy with the lot G-d gave them, not questioning, not criticizing, and not comparing. G-d's actions down to the last detail. Such questions are not for us mortals.

Besides their main jobs in the Beis Medrash and the Beit Knesset, both Shamushim would go out on Sundays to collect the money promised during "Aliyas Letorah" [Reading before the Torah]. Not much money was collected but a vow had to be fulfilled and they were paid in full.

Every Jewish child was educated to understand that a promise of any kind must be kept; not to throw out words in the air and not to use any tricks vowing or handshakes. We were told that it was disastrous not to keep your vow and that a forgotten handshake would merit the biggest of punishments.

In this spirit we were raised, without knowing what there was to ask for. No one went beyond his boundaries to see what was in the big, wide, modern world. Of course it was very difficult to find a good book to read. In my childhood a library was opened thanks to the stubborn efforts of Yankele Rebbetzin (Shapiro) [the wife of R' Yankele Arons]. Some of the popular books at the time were written by Tolstoy, Gorki, Marx, Lenin, Shakespeare, and Dostoyevsky. With the help of my friend Dovid Jobas (the son of Rochel Yoels), I got to borrow all types of books from the library.

There was no Hebrew language teacher in town, and my father wanted me to know the language. At every opportunity my father stressed the importance of education and with his urging I completed studying the pamphlets, "Wolkowsky's Letters for Independent Study" and was able to translate from Yiddish to Hebrew. Other worries I didn't have, not even helping out with the family's income.

Winter in 1928 was very harsh, the temperature reached  $-32^{\circ}$  C. I was the only Jewish boy in seventh grade. I wore my father's fur coat on those cold days. The German and music teacher showed up in one too. The windows and doors were all frosted over with ice, and I lit the oven to warm my hands. One can't imagine the different pictures of flowers and leaves on the frosted windows. The most talented artist couldn't possibly match the wonder of nature.

The road leading to school was a long one. In the rainy season I took a short cut through the church courtyard that was surrounded by a tall wall. I always looked about on all sides that G-d forbid no one would see me and tell my parents. I then passed the main post office that was next to a two-story house with a "gzustra" [balcony], similar to the one that stood in our town square.

The telephone was the most modern invention in town at that time. Only the police and the Rebbe of Shidlow had one (of course no one really needed one since it was faster to walk to someone's house than to operate the phone.) I remember the one time we were allowed to use the phone; it was in 1931 when my grandfather R' Simcha Zukerman from Kikov passed away and was to be buried in Stopnica [Stopnica]. My grandfather was famous in the whole area for being a religious and generous person. Before Pesach he would send his servants to Stopnica, 7 km. from Kikov with potatoes, matza meal, and vegetables for families in need.

In the village of Kikov there were many Polish farmers who received their land very cheaply from the Government. My grandfather bought his farm from a Polish nobleman. A large wall that fenced in a fruit orchard surrounded the land. The home itself had over 20 rooms. When he bought the plot it came with everything; horses, animals, sheep, two flour mills (one mechanical), a small forest, and 6 fish ponds. Near these ponds my Zeyde (grandfather) built a Mikve according to Halacha.

Every visitor was deeply impressed by the romantically beautiful place surrounded by exotic flowers in a rainbow of colors. Towards winter one of the servants, who was an expert gardener, would wrap the flowers in straw and grass so the plants would survive the cold, harsh winter. Towards spring, in the pure air, the plants would start to sprout anew. The fruit orchard was so dense from the many branches overlapping and plentiful fruit hanging from them, that one could get lost in the great labyrinth and not know how to get out.

My grandfather also owned houses, which he himself built. He managed a business paving roads and from this supported his 10 children and their families. Of course any time one had a problem they turned to Zeyde and were immediately well taken care of.

Near the Mikveh stood an isolated house built in a Gothic style. I believe that the gentile who had owned the house had to sell it because he went bankrupt in a card game. Therein lived two of my grandfather's servants and their families including Dovid with his family.

Dovid "The Milkman" took care of the dairy. He was a simple Jew who knew only how to pray and sign his name. He had a small rounded beard and wore a long coat (customary to the religious); he never came to Shul on Shabbos. The Shul was located in a room set aside in the palace specially outfitted with two Sifrey Tora my grandfather had bought. Only on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur would Dovid and his wife Keyla appear dressed in holiday clothes to hear Kol Nidrei and the Shofer blowing.

According to the contract between Dovid and my grandfather, Dovid would receive all the milk and make the cheese and butter. He ran a small business in the town selling the leftovers (Dovid also sold duck feathers and horse skins in the market). Dovid, his wife and three children lived in one room. A cow and two goats were housed in the second room. In the family room there was constant pandemonium. There was the stink from the animals and feathers flying around like crazy ghosts. This was how they lived their daily lives. They were happy with their lot, and so they taught their children to be. But there's a saying "One who has all, leaves nothing for anyone else." Their only daughter Shprintze was pregnant before her wedding. How does that happen to a good Jewish girl? Incomprehensible!!

One morning my grandmother, who always woke up very early to feed oats to the 16 pairs of horses, caught Shprintze banging her stomach into the wall trying to miscarry. My grandmother, a very bright woman with lots of experience in raising children, immediately sent her servant to fetch Keyla, Shprintze's mother. Between them it was decided to send Shprintze to the next town so that no one would be the wiser. And so Shprintze returned after several years to her single status.

The day WWII broke out, I visited Kikov and saw my family for the last time. Their end was like everyone else's, exterminated by the Nazis, not a memory of them at all. Each time that I reach this point in my story, I lose my temper and cannot continue, and I return to my town Iwaniska for the good and bad.

On Erev Tisha B'Av boys would gather near Shimele Dissenhaus' home on the Road to Rakow. They had hidden piles of large and small stones, and before *Mincha-Maariv* [afternoon-evening prayers] would begin throwing the stones on Shimele's roof. The rocks left holes in the roof, which was made of wooden slats. No one could explain why these boys did this. All the begging not do this didn't help. Without any mercy, the boys would break the roof each year, and each year it would have to be repaired. I didn't join in for two reasons. First, I was aware of my family's position as one of the elite in the town. Second, I studied *Gemara* with Chaim

Dissenhaus, Shimele's son who was a year or two younger than me. I helped him with homework every day.

Shimele Dissenhaus was a learned and a kind man. He didn't take an active role in running the home. His wife Chaya Dobra, was a sickly woman. She suffered from chronic asthma, and once yearly they would go to Szczawnic, a famous resort town to recuperate. All day she would carry around a pump attached to a tube in her pocket; she would put the tube in her nostrils, just like filling a car tire with air. One can only imagine how she suffered; mostly she just sat on the steps of her house taking pleasure from the fresh air.

There were no numbers on the houses on the streets of Iwaniska; it was enough to ask for someone by his nickname to know whom one meant and what was cooking in his pots. The town of Iwaniska had a population of 3,200 people: who would believe that it would take only one hour to pass through and look at all the houses, full of history and not see one happy face.

Once in a blue moon, a traveling troupe of entertainers would come to our town. One time we were privileged to see a play, "The Dibbuk" [Dibbuk: the spirit or soul of a dead person that enters the body of a living person with evil or positive consequences]. The main actress was Chana Rubina z"l. The performance took place in the large hall of the fire station after all the fire-fighting vehicle and equipment were removed. During the two days in which "The Dibbuk" was in town, there was new Jewish life in the hearts of our citizens. The sadness turned to redemption and hope, if even for a short time. After only a few days our troubles returned and we were back to the previous norm.

In the year 1934 or 1935, electricity arrived in our town, and slowly but surely every house became lighter. It is possible, we could have made something out of Iwaniska, but how does one return to his young carefree days, with no worries, clear blue skies, and green fields and forests? From modern inventions in every field we still hadn't heard anything. Maybe here and there was a hint of something. We actually had many talented young people among us, but unfortunately, talent that isn't used slowly but surely goes wasted.

Because of the turbulent times we were living in, I can't stop and remember everything about yesterday. People come and go so quickly. Today they're famous, tomorrow forgotten. Something in my memory comes to mind from my Gemara days, as it says "*In the path a man chooses to go, so they guide him from heaven.*"

In those days we were missing leaders that could teach us the right way to find ourselves, to be creative. There were many from whom I learnt Talmud: Ben Tzion Tepperman, Moshe Lazarus, Godel Yoels. They also read secular literature, secretly of course. Ben Tzion also showed me reports he wrote and invited my opinion. I didn't have too much experience but I encouraged him to send them to the newspaper. Alas, most of the potential talent and knowledge in our town was not used properly. It was indeed a shame.

Late on clear winter nights, one could hear groups of boys walking around the town square clearing their heads after spending many hours in the Beis Medrash. They would discuss their expectations and express their feelings about girls. But never did they walk in public with a girl on the street. No one dared.

On Shabbos Rosh Chodesh and Yomim Tovim, Shlomo Pinchevsky and his choir (his 4 sons) davened before the *Amud* [a portion of the *Shacharis* chanted on Shabbos]. He was also the main accountant for the "Sawdust Mill" in the forest "Planta". He would occasionally arrange marriages for those unfortunates who couldn't handle all the arrangements themselves.

Chana Hennies, the daughter of Henna, a widow for many years had three daughters: Malka, Devora and Freyda and a son Hershel Zilberstein. The British permitted Hershel to legally immigrate to Palestine, and he made Aliya before WWII broke out. In 1933 Devora the middle daughter married a young man from Iwaniska. The ceremony was performed by Shlomo Pinchevsky in the Sawdust Mill. The very next morning the bridegroom left Iwaniska for Canada with Devora's "Nedunia", the bride's dowry made with the family's hard earned money. Devora remained with her 2 sisters, mother and grandmother in their one room home that was used for living, sewing, baking matzos and making Shabbos cholents. With difficulty did they get by working night and day. Like a stone thrown in the sea, the groom never wrote, and never showed any interest in Devora's lot. Devora, from a broken heart, became very sick a short time later.

I accidentally became very friendly with Devora and we became soul mates. Once, we were visiting Gittel in her apartment (Gittle was the Chazan's daughter; she and her parents later immigrated to Canada). Devora suddenly became very ill and Dr. Shtokman (the first trained doctor in Iwaniska) was called. After examining Devora he felt that her condition was critical and that she must be taken to the hospital in Opatow.

The next morning I set out on my bike for Opatow, a 13 km. hike, to hire a taxi to take Devora to the hospital. On my way back to Iwaniska I saw the taxi coming in my direction taking Devora to hospital. She looked very pale, and baffled – without any expression on her face. When I reached Iwaniska, I stopped to rest at the kiosk near the animal market and to have a drink of soda water. It was then that I saw the taxi returning to Iwaniska. With a heavy heart, I couldn't move because I already knew that the worst had happened. Devora had internal bleeding that ended her life and with it all her dreams and hopes that didn't happen.

The news of Devora's sudden death spread quickly throughout the town. Even the police heard. The Police Captain, who ate my mother's carp every Friday night at our table, was convinced by my father not to order an autopsy and to allow her family to bury Devora as quickly as possible.

My father, who was Gabai of the Chevra Kaddisha, arranged the funeral, which took place after the Monday market "gang" had gone home. With only a small crowd, we left for the "new" cemetery to bury Devora in a Jewish way. There was a big white tree at the entrance of the cemetery and in the shadows I imagined that it was a ghost coming my way. Only later did I realize what it was – it was Devora dressed in her "*Tachrichin*" [funeral shroud] with blood on her face. I couldn't put it out of my mind. I spent a long time mourning and crying in an empty room in our house, where nobody would see me. It's so hard for me to believe such an intelligent and honest person who helped everyone, except for herself, was taken from us!  
**BLESSED BE HER MEMORY!**

Freyde, Devora's younger sister, was in love with Shmuel Meiowitz (Majerowicz) who survived the war in the Polish forests. But Shmuel married Pola the daughter of Itche, a baker in Staszow. They moved to Bogota, Colombia, where his brother Alter and wife Chaytche (Lederman) lived. Chaytche was the daughter of the very rich R' Meyer Wolf Lederman, who in the end lost everything in the Holocaust.

R' Myer Wolf's sons, Naftali, Moshe and Binim all emigrated from Poland. Naftali the eldest was the first to leave. Moshe was second leaving for Vienna in 1921 and then moving with his family to Bogota, Colombia in the 1930s [read more about Moshe Lederman in *Mi Vida (My Life)* by David Lederman published in The Ivansk Project e-Newsletter, Issue Number 2, January-February 2004]. Binim, his wife Mattel (Matilde, the eldest daughter of Moshe Shteinman) and

their son also sought a better life in Colombia. Leibish Shtainman, Mattel's brother, married Chaytche (I do not recall her last name) before WWII. Leibish sailed alone for Colombia; Chaytche was supposed to join him in Bogota once he got established. But time ran out when the Germans invaded Poland.

In Colombia Binim Lederman, like many others in a strange land, didn't know the language and became a peddler. But he was constantly on the lookout for better opportunities. Eventually, he went into real estate and became very wealthy. His three sons had the best education possible. The eldest, Bernardo became a famous urologist. The second, Pincho is a Professor in road planning and architecture in the Ministry of Interior in Colombia. The youngest, Yisroel studied in America and became a successful businessman.

On the other hand, Alter and Shmuel Meiowitz and Leibish Shtainman hardly made a living. Alter was the only religious Jew in Bogota to close his store on Shabbat. He also took in many guests from Israel who came around collecting donations. On the rare occasion that a Jew came collecting in Iwaniska, he would usually sleep on a bench in the synagogue. There really was no one who could afford to take him in, and after a day or two, he would continue on his way.

All of R' Meyer Wolf's children left Poland before the war broke out. Only R' Meyer himself and his wife, who were contentedly living from money sent to them by their children, found their bitter end in Iwaniska. After the war very few were left who could describe the suffering of those left behind.

Every town in Poland has its stories, its own way of life and different customs.

There are two ways to see ghosts as told in storybooks. I tried one of the tests: I sprinkled ashes from the wood burning stove around my bed before I went to sleep. In the morning I would see if there were chicken footprints in the ashes: that would prove that ghosts really existed. I stayed up all night from curiosity as well as fear. Well, all those ghost stories went out the window that night like soap bubbles that disappear in a minute, and from then on I started doubting ghost stories and following them with closed eyes.

Our yard bordered on Moshe Zoberman's house. One day while he was walking on the street, he began a debate concerning the on-going dispute between the Rebbe of Shidlow and R' Yankele Arons. Then and there he had a heart attack and was taken from this world.

There was much commotion over his death. Could the Shidlower Rebbe have had something to do with Moshe's death? Different opinions were discussed. Since I had seen him walking in the town square a half hour earlier, I was very curious to learn more. I peeked into Moshe's window and saw him laid out on his bed, his eyes wide open looking as if he was in a coma. Later I saw the corners of his "Tachrichin" (shroud) on his feet as the Chevra Kaddishe was readying him for burial. For weeks, maybe months, I didn't go out to our courtyard at night unless my father accompanied me. The fear took a hold of me and wouldn't let go. My father of blessed memory was my hero, but in this case he couldn't help me. It was something I had to work through on my own.

My younger brother Efraim always liked to fool around with his food, eating very slowly. One Pesach he found a speck of barley mixed in with his meat bones during the Seder. Well, as soon as my father was told, he ran to Rebbe of Shidlow and asked him what to do. The Rebbe told him to set aside all the dishes and pots that had possible contact with the barley until the end of Pesach.

That same evening two more incidents occurred. In the second, my youngest sister Chavtche squashed her finger in my grandfather's door. She screamed and cried until my mother put her to sleep. In the third incident my brother Avrohom Yitzchok came down with whooping cough (the croup). My father immediately sent for the doctor who treated Avrohom Yitzchok successfully.

The next day my father was very depressed from all that had happened the night before; he couldn't relax so he went to the Beis Medrash and read the *Motzei Yom Tov*. When he returned home, he checked our Mezuza and found that it was not kosher: the letter "Vav" was missing from "Vehaya". Immediately a new Mezuza one was put up and all was again well.

We talked about that night of the three incidents for a long time. Everyone agreed that we were very lucky getting off with only a scare. Superstitious beliefs about punishment being meted out for sins (justified or not) were passed around our town from generation to generation. Without delving too deeply on matters of faith, I wanted to write the stories down on paper to show what level we were on at the time.

All the preparations and arrangements for the High Holidays were very serious, much more intense than the other holidays. Yom Kippur exceeded them all. It wasn't so hard for us kids as we only had to fast a half day. We didn't realize what it meant for our parents who believed that our Creator was writing down in his book the sins and good deeds of each and every soul, deciding their fate by the close of Yom Kippur.

Yom Kippur was a very special day indeed. Even before the fast began, from early morning one could feel the holiness of the coming day in every home. The first thing we did was go to the Mikve – the ritual bath. I don't know how many times my father went to the Mikve that day or when they changed the water, but most of the day he spent there helping out. Once he came home bright red, and once pale as a ghost, the reasons connected somehow to the coming day.

On the eve of Yom Kippur *Mincha* prayers (afternoon prayers) were slightly shorter than usual in order to have enough time to go home and eat before the fast began. Inside the Beis Medrash there were two tables with plates for donations to the needy. To atone for one's sins, there was no getting out of giving charity that day. Unfortunately, there were many needy families in our town, and each plate had pseudo names so as to spare those in need of any embarrassment. How much could they possibly collect when most of the town consisted of people who were on the taking not the giving side?

With the final tfila in the Mikve and after the last meal of the day, one could feel the fear in each home. My father would put on his well-pressed "Kittel", white as snow and then proceed to bless each one of us, "*May you be like Efraim and Menashe....*" I started shaking all over. In every corner one felt the holiness of the day.

Large candles were lit and placed in a box of sand, far from any drafts or winds, because it was considered a bad sign if the candles should blow out. Those who didn't have safe places for the candles in their homes would light them in a special corner in the synagogue. A forest of candles would stand on the tables of the Shul for 24 hours. A non-Jew was hired to relight those that blew out from the over crowding and the heat. The thick smoke from the burning wax mixed well with the ammonia some used to stay alert and helped ease the hunger pains of the fast.

"Oy vavoy" if someone's candle would blow out before the end of the final "*Neila*" prayers. The person would just about lose all hope for a good year even though the final decision wasn't until

*Hoshana Raba*. The time between “*Musaf*” and “*Neila*” took forever; as soon as the final Shofar was blown, most of the kids would race home to taste something after the fast. Not so my father, who in my eyes was most courageous. He didn’t hurry home but first made the blessing over the moon. When he arrived home, he would wash his hands and face and make *Havdalah* on the wine, raising his eyes to the ceiling, praying silently.

Once we took a loan with interest from my uncle Moshe Wolff. My father signed the contract but he added and signed a promissory note on the bottom of the contract. This was called the *Heter Iska*; it was printed in Hebrew according to Halachic tradition and was to be returned as a receipt to my father when he had paid off the loan.

Well, when it came time to return the money to Moshe Wolff, my father saw that the bottom portion of the contract was missing – without it he could not prove that he had paid back the loan. Moshe Wolff was ready to swear on his Tallis and Tefillin that he knew nothing of the missing part of the contract and that he wouldn’t hold us responsible for paying him back a second time. It is possible that he was really naïve but my father suspected that Moshe’s son, Meir “Shylock” had cut off the bottom part of the contract in order to collect money from us a second time!

My father wouldn’t budge; he wanted both parts of the contract before repaying the loan! Usually my father gave everyone the benefit of the doubt. He listened to both sides and sometimes they were right. But not this time. Both Moshe “The Tall” and Moshe Shteinman became involved in this matter and tried convincing my father that he could trust Moshe Wolff. My father wouldn’t listen. Many months of arguing back and forth passed until one day my sister Leah overheard Moshe and his wife Tzipora discussing whether their son had removed the bottom part of the contract. And finally the missing “*Heter Iska*” was returned, with all kinds of excuses and apologies. With time the anger finally passed and peace was restored in the family.

At this moment, I can think of all this with a clear head, and I wonder if there is any point in continuing to write. Who will look at this when so much time has passed and everything forgotten? Even so, I think for various reasons that maybe someone will be interested in this narrative about my early life in a small Polish shtetl before WWII.

In the larger towns, the chance to be saved from the Nazis was greater. But in a shtetl like Iwaniska the chances were almost nil. Where could one run? It was almost impossible to break out of the encirclement. One would fall right into the enemies’ hands!

To criticize is always very easy, and each and every one of us can see another’s mistakes. Like it says, when G-d wants to punish a righteous man, he first takes away his intellectual abilities. Why, how, etc. is not for us to ask.

Even with all the past and future debates and arguments on this subject there will never be any satisfying answers to what took place in the world during my youth. In a period of history where technology, culture and science were growing, the Nazis used the crudest means, without mercy to destroy the Jews of Poland, a land where once over 3 million Jews lived.

*These thoughts are left without answers.*

*To what can we compare it?*

*To a clock that stops ticking!*

**Harsel Shmil Baril's/ Zvi Weissdorf**

**Haifa, 1968-1969**

## Ivanskers Seeking Ivanskers

Dear Ivanskers,

I am trying to find anyone who may have known the **SEIDENWAR / ZAIDENWAR** family from Iwaniska and Tarnow. They are the family of my wife, Faige Trapunsky (nee ZAVIN).

**Yakov (Yankel) and Tzipporah SEIDENWAR / ZAIDENWAR** (my wife's great great grandparents) lived in Iwaniska in the mid to late 1800's. They had at least 3 sons and 1 daughter that I am aware of (and possibly a 5<sup>th</sup> child as well). Here is what we know about Yakov and Tzipporah's children:

1. **Meir SEIDENWAR** (my wife's great grandfather) – Moved to Tarnow from Iwaniska around 1929 and died in 1942 at the hands of the Nazis. He was married to **Pearl WAJSWOL** and had 8 children: Pesach Chaim, Chayala, Jack, Mottel, Pinchas, Tzipporah, Joe, and a son who died young in Poland whose name I don't know.



**Meir and Pearl SEIDENWAR and Their Children**

*Pinchas was my wife's grandfather – born in 1916 in Iwaniska. He passed away in NYC in 1975. The rest of Pinchas' siblings also have descendants in the USA as well as Israel.*

2. **Chaim SEIDENWAR** - Moved to Israel and passed way there in 1948. He had four children - Moshe, Yakov, and Tziporrah who live(d) in Israel and Shlomo who died in Europe. His descendants now live in Israel.
3. **Getzel SEIDENWAR** - Had at least two sons: Chaim and Yossel. They were probably killed in Poland but I don't know for sure.
4. **Unknown daughter SEIDENWAR** - She and her family moved to Canada in the early 1900's - possibly to Montreal, Quebec. I don't know what her married name was or anything about her family (if she had one).

5. **Possibly another SEIDENWAR brother** who may have moved to Germany with his family sometime in the late 1800's or early 1900's. I know nothing else about them – or if they even existed.

There is also another Seidenwar / Zaidenwar family from Iwaniska that I am researching whom I am sure are related to my wife's family although I still haven't found the exact connection. They are the descendants of a **Menachem Mendel Zajdenwar** (1875-1943 in Iwaniska) and his wife **Temma Shumacher**. Their children were:

- 1- **Feige Zajdenwar**
- 2- **Rose Aychental**
- 3- **Nachum Zajdenwar**
- 4- **Yechiel (Harry) Zeid**
- 5- **Isaac Zaid**
- 6- **Mottel (Max) Zeid**

Their descendants live in the USA, Canada, and Israel. I have been in touch with some of them, but they too could not make the connection between our 2 families.

If anyone knows anything about these families, I would really appreciate hearing from you!

Thank you very much.

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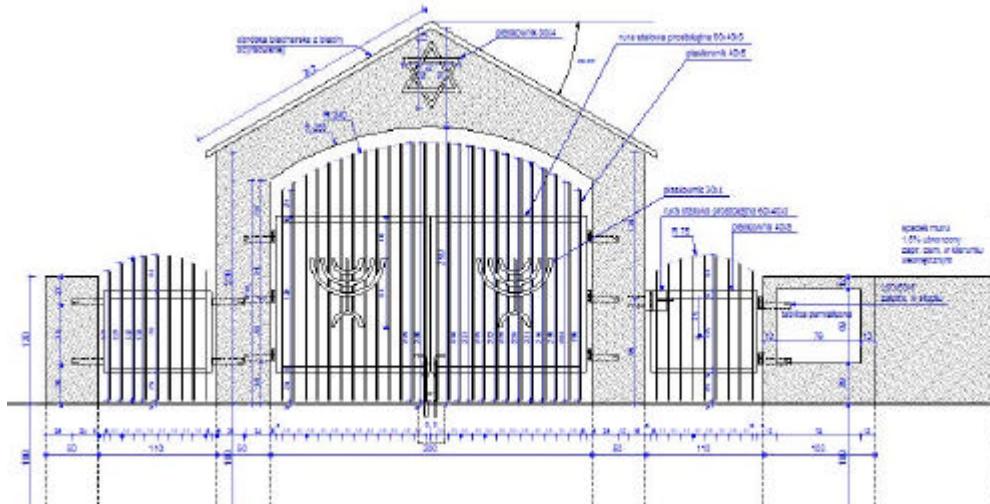
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**e-mail Norton Taichman:**

- With comments, questions, suggestions; to volunteer to write an article for the e-News, etc.
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**IT'S UP TO ALL OF US TO MAKE IT HAPPEN!**

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    - **For agency**, select Poland Jewish Cemetery Restoration Project.
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You can honor someone or send a memorial gift via this site, and the funds will be credited to the Ivansk Project. Your donation will be acknowledged by the Foundation and a tax receipt will be forwarded to you.