Chaim Freedman

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Dimantshtein Family

The Dimantshtein family originated in **Polotsk, Belarus** and moved to various towns in Latvia: **Rekekne (Rezhitza), Daugavpils (Dinaburg/Dvinsk), Riga, Karsava (Korsovka), Ludza (Lutzin).** The family were Leviim.

The family were Chabad Chassidim in Latvia. They were quite prosperous trading in flax, timber and fish. One branch of the family set up a fishery in Aberdeen, Scotland. Some changed the name to Diamond.The earliest generation which has been traced in archival records was **Zev Wulf Halevy Dimantshtein,** born about 1770 In Polotsk and died before 1839. His children were **Greinen, Eliyahu and Moshe**.

Eliyahu was born about 1800 and died before 1885. His children were **David, Avraham, Shmuel and Zev-Wulf.**

Documents in Latvian archives including the 1889 list of Jews who lived in the rural areas of Lutzin district: **David Dimantshtein**, born in 1823 in Polotsk, moved to Korsovka in 1872 from Rezhitza. He must have moved at an earlier date from Polotsk to Rezhitza. He is described in this list as a merchant. According to family tradition he and his wife operated an inn on the outskirts of Korsovka. The circumstances which led to his burial in Lutzin rather than Korsovka are not known. The birthdates and birthplaces of his children are estimated. Information about some of his family taken from a family drawn up in England in 1948 by Norman Nygate.

Tombstone of David, son of Eliyahu Halevy Dimantshtein, Ludza 1901.
(Photographed by Aleksanders Feigmanis, Riga).

Vulf, (son of Elyash) was born in 1839 Polotsk, and moved to Korsovka in 1878.Vulf 's children: **Abram, Elye, Treina, Dveira, Liba, Itka, Musya**. All born between 1869-1885.

David's wife was **Keila-Tsirel**. Her parentage is not known but Genetic testing revealed matches with several families such that she may have been related to families in the Vitebsk region such as Popkovitch, Leviyan (Gamerov), and others. Keila Tsirel was a short woman who had very definite views about bringing up her family. She wanted her daughter Rivka to know how to milk a cow so she had the maid Marfa teach Rivka. David and Keila-Tsirel were wealthy farmers and publicans, operating an inn on the outskirts of Korsovka. Once an inspector paid a visit to the inn and while sampling the food found an insect in a bun. Anxious to save her parents from prosecution, Rivka ate the bun quickly claiming that the insect was only a raisin.

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The family developed widespread trading enterprises supplying the markets in the capital Riga with timber and flax for which trade they held a license. They also marketed herring on a large scale caught in the lakes near Lutzin. These business enterprises took several sons to live in Riga, in particular Tsvi-Hersh and from there expanded the trade to England in the late 1870's which led to several members of the family settling there from 1880.

David and Keila-Tsirel's children were:

1) **Zissa** (c.1844-1932) married **Pesakh Gordin** and lived in **Berzpils.**

2) **Yehudah Leib** c.1848 - 1917 **Korsovka.**

3) **Tsvi Hersh** 1850 -1930 **Riga.**

4) **Rivka (Rashka/Rebecca)** 1851 or 1856-1834 married **Mordekhai Zev Vulf (Max) Bull** 1853-1931 **London** (see separate article).

5) **Reuven** c.1852, died 1934 **London**.

6) **Zev Vulf** 1856-1920 **Korsovka.**

7) **Getzel** c.1857-1890 **Korsovka.**

8) **Moshe (Marks)** 1860 - 1942 **London.**

9) **Yeshaya** c.1860 - 1933 **London.**

10) **Zalman (Solomon)** 1865 -1937 **New York**.

11) **Meir,** b.1865 never married, **Riga.**

12) **Barukh .** Identity unclear. According to Patricia Levitsky's history of the family, Barukh was a brother of her grandmother Rivka Bull. But Llyoyd Nygate's family tree does not include Barukh. He may have been a brother-in-law to Rivka's husband Max Bull, the husband of his sister.

1) Zissa and Pesakh Gordin lived in Berzpils and lost many of their family in the Holocaust. Their son **Yaakov-Zev-Wulf** settled in Korsovka where he was killed by the Nazis together with his children **Raisa, Zalman and Mikhail**. The surviving children **Liuba Kalinkov, Gitta Tsiplevitch and Pesakh-Eliyahu** settled in Israel. Zissa's sons **Mendel** and **Dan** also perished in Berzpils. Mendel's son **Aba Gordin** survived and lived in Korsovka. He possessed a Sefer Torah and took upon himself to organize religious servives for the small community that survived the Holocaust

2) **Yehudah-Leib's** son **Moshe-Eliyahu** operated the family trade from Riga, settling in Lodon in the 1920's where he opened a wooden barrel factory importing timber from Riga. He married his cousin **Sonya**, daughter of his uncle **Getzel Dimantshtein**.

3) Tzvi- Hersh left his hometown Korsovka and moved to Riga to engage in business. He became wealthy and started the Dimantshtein export business to England of herring, timber and flax. With the expansion of this business a number of his relatives immigrated to England. Tzvi' son **Bernard** travelled to Aberdeen, Scotland to conduct his father's business and opened a fish processing plant and a factory to produce barrels from the timber his father exported from Riga. The barrels were sent back to Riga, filled with herring, and exported back to Scotland. Bernard changed his surname to **Diamond**.

4) **Rivka** – see separate article "**Mordekhai-Zev (Max) Bull**".

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About Me

Chaim Freedman

Genealogist specialising in research of Eastern European Jewish families. Lectured at genealogical conferences and societies. Published research in genealogy journals and author of several books

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My activities

Chaim (Keith) Freedman was born in 1947 in Melbourne, Australia to parents of eastern

Mordekhai-Zev and Rivka Bull, 50th Wedding Anniversary, London 1922.

5) Reuven
According to Maurice Bull's memoirs Reuven was very tall, over six feet, and had a large spade beard. He was a very excitable man who once reacted violently to an anti-Semitic remark made in the street. He was a furrier and settled in England in 1897.

Reuven's son **Yehudah-Leib** was killed in the Arab riots of 1929 while working in the Diskin orphanage in Jerusalem.

Details of his death appear in *"Yizkor Am Yisrael et Kedushei Tarpat"* (Berzin and Weiss, Jerusalem 1930).
Literal translation from Hebrew:

"*Yehudah-Leib Dimantshtein of blessed memory was born in 1880 in Russia to his father Reb Reuven Halevy. Yehudah-Leib was educated on the knees of Torah and Chabad Chassidism. However, when he was still young, at the age of seventeen, and desirous of expanding and completing his knowledge of religious learning, his studies were stopped. Because of his bad material situation his father was obliged to emigrate with his family to London. Here Yehudah-Leib bore the yoke together with his father of supporting the family. He worked initially at simple physical labour, afterwards learnt a trade and lived by it for many years. At the same time he `strove in the dust at the feet of the wise', learnt with the Gaon Moshe-Avigdor Chaikin. In his spare time he also laboured for the community, involved in the needs of various societies and institutions. All those years since arriving in London his mind was occupied with his aspiration to settle in Eretz Yisrael. But the obstacles he encountered were too great for him.*

At last Yehudah-Leib overcame all the obstacles and emigrated to Eretz Yisrael in 1922. Upon arriving in the country Yehudah-Leib managed to find work in Jerusalem. He was one of the happy of the world, the sparks of his soul reached a single perfection. He lived by the labour of his hands in Jerusalem, approaching starvation from his meager bread, praying daily with the community of Chabad, set aside hours for Torah.

But his work did not leave him much time. Long periods of want arrived. In the years of depression in the country, 1926-1927, economic deprivation reached the house of Yehudah-Leib, reached its limits. Lacking everything, his father in his letters demanded that he return to London and they would make a living together. "Your son should not go down together with you [to the grave] " was Yehudah-Leib's answer. In the end he went to work at the Diskin Orphanage. He carried out his work faithfully and diligently. While he was attending the orphans of the institution he was obliged to add to them his son, aged four, who was orphaned from his mother who died at the beginning of 5689 [1929] in a car accident.

On Friday 17th of Av, during an attack by Arabs on the Rabbi Diskin Orphanage in the suburb Givat Shaul, Yehudah-Leib was severely wounded. Four days he lay struggling with the suffering of death. He passed away on Monday 20th Av."

Yehudah-Leib's first wife died in London and he remarried in Jerusalem **Minna Moseieff** of an old Hebron family related to the Lubavitcher Rebbe. Their only son **Avraham** was born in 1925. In 1977 attempts were made to trace this son and an elderly official of the Diskin Orphanage related that there was tension between Yehudah-Leib and Minna. She demanded a divorce which

European origins. He was educated at Mount Scopus College in Melbourne. In 1977, he immigrated with his wife to Israel. Chaim is a noted genealogist having lectured at numerous genealogical and historical conferences including The International Conference on Jewish Genealogy, Jerusalem 1984,1994 and 2004. He has published his research in Avotaynu, Sharsheret Hadorot, Search, RootsKey, the Journal of the Australian Jewish Historical Society and Yated Ne'eman. Freedman edited "Jewish Personal Names: Their Origin, Derivation and Diminutive Forms" by the late Rabbi Shmuel Gorr, published in 1992 by Avotaynu. Freedman wrote several books about his immediate family, "Our Fathers' Harvest", a history of the Komisaruk and other families involved in Jewish agricultural colonization in the Ukraine, and "The Pen and the Blade", a history of the Super family. Chaim Freedmans major work "Eliyahu's Branches, The Descendants of the Vilna Gaon and His Family" was published in 1997 by Avotaynu. The book is the culmination of thirty years of research of the Vilna Gaon, and includes 20,000 names with valuable biographical and historical details. Freedman's particular expertise in Rabbinical genealogy was published in 2001 in his book "Beit Rabbanan, Sources of Rabbinical Genealogy". Much of the content of this book appears on the RavSIG site
http://www.jewishgen.org/Rabbinic/
Freedman's presentation of Rabbinical genealogical sources has been published in Avotaynu's "Guide to Jewish Genealogical Research" (2004). Freedman acted as a consultant to Beit Hatefutsot's exhibition on the Vilna Gaon in 1998. He provided material for Beit Hatefutsot's 1983 exhibition "The Jewish Agricultural Experience in the Diaspora". Freedman has lectured to the Israeli Genealogical Society in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv and to the Jewish Family Research Association in Tel Aviv and Petah Tikvah. His lectures always draw a good and attentive audience who appreciate the opportunity to hear of his activities in genealogical research and learn from his wide experience in using a range of valuable sources. Many of his compositions appear on the Internet

Links

- All Poland database
- Ancestry
- Beit Hatefutsot (Diaspora Museum) - Vilna Gaon Exhibition
- Cyndi's List - Jewish
- Early Hebrew newspapers
- Eliyahu's Branches, updates to the genealogy of the Vilna Gaon
- Eshed, Eli - historical articles about the Vilna Gaon and associated families
- Family Photographs
- GeneticTesting - Family Tree DNA
- Holocaust
- Israel Genealogical Society
- JBlog Central - the Jewish and ISraeli Blog Network
- Jewish Agricultural Colonies in the Ukraine
- Jewish cemeteries in Poland
- Jewish cemeteries in Poland
- Jewish Family History Foundation
- Jewish Family Research Association
- Jewishgen
- Jewishgen All UK Database
- Jewishgen Lithuania Database
- Jewishgen Online Worldwide Burial Registry

Yehudah-Leib refused. During a visit to Jerusalem by the Lubavitcher Rebbe Yosef-Yitskhak Shneerson, attempts were made to persuade Yehudah-Leib to give the divorce. The Rebbe summoned him to the Amdursky Hotel and commanded him to grant the divorce. But Yehudah-Leib refused. The situation reached a tragic end with the death of Minna in a car accident on the 17th of Shevat 5689 [1929]. Both Minna and Yehudah-Leib are buried in the Chabad section of the cemetery on the Mount of Olives. The orphan son, Avraham grew up and lived with his family in Beersheva under the Hebrew form of his surname "**Yahalomi**".

6) **Zev Wulf (**also known as Velvel), born 1856, died 1920 in Korsovka.
Operated a farm on the outskirts of Korsovka, perhaps the property which belonged to his father David. This was located near the Jewish cemetery near "Naudas Kalns" the infamous site of the massacre of the Jews in 1941.

Children:
Eda - U.S.A.
Shmuel (1882-1943 Siberia),
Getzel (died in Russian exile)
Avraham (killed in Korsovka in 1941)
Eliyahu (died in Kokand in 1942),
Pessia,
David , Haifa
Yekhezkel or Khatzkel, Kfar Blum.
Gershon (killed in the Holocaust)
Seeka (killed while serving in the Latvian army).

Zev Wulf's son Shmuel
Escaped with his wife across the Latvian/Russian border when the Germans invaded Latvia. Perished from the rigours of life in exile in Siberia.

Family of Shmuel Dimantshetin, Korsovka c. 1934

Shmuel's son Eizik survived the Riga Ghetto and was deported to Stuthoff concentration camp.

Eizik Dimantshtein, Israel 1987.

The few survivors were evacuated to Sweden and liberated en route when the war ended May 8, 1945. Eizik lived for several years in Sweden and then immigrated to Israel where he worked as an engineer. He provided considerable material about his family. The following are excerpts (translated from Hebrew and Yiddish) of an interview in 1987 by Chaim Freedman, published in "The Pen and The Blade".

- Ludza (Lutzin), Latvia
- Mir Yeshivah Students
- National Archives of Australia
- One Step search by Steve Morse
- Panteliat, Benyamin, rabbinic genealogy
- Rabbinical Special Interest Group
- Schelly Dardashti - Tracing the Tribe - The Jewish Genealogy Blog
- Soloveitchik sources
- Vilna Gaon - genealogy of his family
- Warsaw Jewish cemetery
- Yeshivat Har Etzion - Virtual Beit Hamidrash
- Yizkor Books, New York Public Library

My Photos

- http://community.webshots.com/user/chaimjan

Some philosophy - stress avoidance

Learn to delay reacting. You can't always prevent stressful situations from happening, but there are ways to help you prevent stress from taking over your body. Learn to recognize the first small signs of stress in your body, and immediately realize that you don't have to react instantly! Take a deep breath. Take two or three. Look away, clear your head, excuse yourself and go someplace to meditate; do whatever it takes to put a bit of distance between you and your reaction to whatever it is that is stressful for you. Mentally step back and put the situation in perspective and ask yourself if you even need to respond? Will responding do any good? Will it help? Will it make a difference? Or will it make things worse. If it is not necessary for you to respond, let it go and focus on something else. If you do need to take action, consider first what might be best and what the outcome might be, and then make a deliberate choice based not on your emotions, but on your knowledge and the desired outcome. Above all else, take the time you need to step back from the situation before you respond or react in any way.

Torah and Genealogy

Torah and Genealogy By Chaim Freedman Reprinted from **Eliyahu's Branches, the Descendants of the Vilna Gaon and His Family** (Avotaynu 1997) Yikhus (lineage) has always been an integral part of Judaism. In the opening chapters of the Bible, in the weekly Torah portion, the concept of recording the history of mankind appears with the use of the term Sefer Toldot Adam (Book of the history of man), Bereishit (Genesis) 5:1. The Midrash (Midrash Rabba, Parasha 24) explains this term to indicate that Adam, the first man, was given a preview of all the generations that were destined to descend from him: God revealed to Adam each generation with its scholars, each generation and its wise men, each generation and its writers, each generation and its leaders. Adam was the only one who saw the yikhus which descended from him, until the end of all generations. (Yalkut Shimoni) The Midrash asserts that the Messiah will arrive only when all those generations that were predestined to live have in fact been born. The course of the Biblical narrative revolves around the sequence of the

“My grandfather Velvel was married first to Gitta and then to Minna by whom he had four sons. We are Leviim and Chassidim. In our township there were two or three synagogues for the Chassidim and two or three for the Misnagdim. My grandfather and grandmother lived not far from the cemetery and all the time one had to pass their house.
In our township on Simkhat Torah the Chassidim would open the large oven and take out the Tsimmes and walk from house to house. It was a jolly time. That was the way with the Chassidim. The Misnagdim did not act that way. In our town was a secondary school where you could matriculate. Then I served for two and a half years in the Latvian army. Due to the anti-bourgeois feeling in Korsovka after the Soviet takeover in 1940 I went to Riga to work. There my sisters and brother were studying at the university. On the first day of the occupation Zhenia and Gitta were rounded up with large numbers of women, herded to the central prison and killed. Volinka was taken with men to the forest and killed. I was saved since the place where I was living was not included in the roundup.

I was actually in Riga when the war started as were two uncles Getzel and Eliyahu, sisters Zhenia, Gitta and brother Volinka (Zev-Wulf). In Korsovka remained my father Shmuel and Avraham. My father was engaged in the forest trade, timber, produce and flax. He would buy from the peasants and ship to Riga. They called it a “Handler In Vald’. Flax was a rich and honorable trade in Latvia. One needed a government license.

My parents lived in Korsovka with my sister Rivka and they fled as soon as the war started. Those who remained in Korsovka were rounded up and killed. I think Avraham was one of those killed. My father died in Kokand in 1943 of typhus. My mother with Rivka returned to Riga after the war.

I worked in the Riga Ghetto in a factory. When I asked a gentile Latvian from Korsovka about the fate of the Jews there he told me “All the Jews in Korsovka were shot like dogs.” I heard afterwards that they rounded them up in a side street, took all of them, once they had prepared pits in the forest, it was not far from where grandfather had lived, called Naudas Kalns, the “Hill of Silver” and killed them all.

In Riga there were 40,000 Jews, In the Ghetto there were 30,000 until they killed 25,000. 5,000 remained in the “Small Ghetto” and I was amongst them. We worked in the railway freight station. Wagons would arrive. I was supposed to be specialist as I was one of the 600 Jews who were called craftsmen and so they looked after us. We worked there until the Russians approached Riga and then the Germans evacuated us. They came at night and put us in a store and told everyone to undress. In the middle sat one at a table and they called us by the numbers which everyone bore and he had to present himself, that is to run naked with hands in the air and to turn around. Then he would say right or left. They wanted to take the healthiest men who had no blemish on their bodies. That was why we had to turn around. To the right was life; to the left was the world to come.

So they evacuated us to Stutthof near Danzig. They acted relatively better to us because we were specialists and went to work where the railway passed by. Then I saw the crematorium. A German walked with a piece of white chalk in his pocket. In the summer there was no work. They walked around the yards, the German looking around. Whoever didn’t walk well he drew an “X” with chalk on their back. These were sent to the crematorium. We worked for about a half or three quarters of a year. Then the Russians once again approached and they evacuated us. Then I saw the destruction that they had wrought. Mountains and mountains of bodies. That was then the evacuation. Again the Russians approached Danzig and bombed Stutthof and the Germans didn’t want to leave us. I was sick with typhus. That was on the 25th of April. We felt that at any moment the whole business would be over. As is known the war ended May 8th. I had a temperature of 41°. I was in the clinic. There was an epidemic. To my good fortune and that of another Jew (his name was Shmuel and he settled in Australia) we were the first to catch typhus. To my good fortune, what do I mean? They took us to the clinic. Later the Goyim also got sick and then they didn’t take Jews any more to the clinic. All the Jews who had typhus were put in a barrack and it was burned down. I remember that I was on the third floor. Some officers wanted to run away. One said “We are leaving them here.”
We thought “Thank G-d”. I had no more strength. But in the morning came an announcement: they are taking us with them.

We were a few kilometers from the Baltic Sea. There was no port and ships could not approach. People who were sick and could not manage the four kilometers were told: “Don’t worry – stay here and we will take you.” I, after four years in concentration camps, knew about their favours. I went down with difficulty and walked. Those who remained were all shot. Between 27-29th April we embarked on a motor less ship which was towed. What is meant by “embarked” ?. The ship was 100-150 metres from the shore. They placed a narrow bridge of boards. Sick people had to make it. They fell and they killed them. I succeeded; I had been as strong as an ox. I got inside. There we sailed until May 8th. They wanted to take us because if we weren’t with them they would be sent to the front. They wanted to take us to a Baltic port, but everywhere were either the English or the Americans. Until May 8th we sailed on the sea and then the war ended. It is possible to write thousands of pages on the Hell which was there. If there is a Hell then it is a Paradise compared to the Hell which was there. They put in four times the number of people for whom there was space. One on top of the other. Whoever had strength lay on those who hadn’t. At night shouts of Hell were heard from the people who were dying. In the morning the SS came and lowered a rope from above for those who had died to be tied and hauled up top. They slit their stomachs with a knife so that the bodies wouldn’t be washed up, and threw them overboard. On May 8th the German team shouted: “the war is over and you can come out” and they fled.

generations, from the early generations descended from Adam, through the division of the nations descended from Noakh, and down to the Jewish Patriarchs: Avraham, Yitskhak and Yaakov (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob). Each major figure is introduced in the Bible first by a narration of his descent, connecting him with all the previous generations. Thus, the great Jewish teacher Moshe (Moses) is introduced through his father's descent from the tribe of Levi. From the time of the descent of the Children of Israel to Egypt and following their liberation from Egyptian bondage, their genealogy is noted at the very beginning of the book of Shmot (Exodus). Time and time again throughout the Bible, lengthy genealogical lists are recorded. The Torah includes 477 genealogical records. The Prophets and other books of the Bible include 2,756 genealogical records. Divrei Hayamim (Chronicles) is almost entirely concerned with genealogy. For the Jews returning from the Babylonian Exile, it was particularly important that they retained knowledge of their descent. This knowledge conferred upon them their status in society, which was often based on their relationships with prominent families, in particular, the ruling House of David. Those who had assimilated with their non-Jewish neighbours in Babylon found that their lineage was held in suspicion, particularly if they belonged to the priesthood. Such problems are portrayed in detail in the book of Ezra: They sought their genealogical records, but they were no longer available, and so they were banished from the priesthood. Those immigrants could not state which was their father's house or whether they were of the seed of Yisrael. (Ezra 2:62) The Talmud in the Tractate Kiddushin (Chapter 4) stresses the importance of yikhus: Ten lineages emigrated from Babylon. The Holy One, Blessed Be He, does not bestow his Divine Presence, other than on Israeli families of noble Yikhus. Yet the Rambam (Mishne Torah, Hilkhot Melakhim, Chapter 12, Halakha 3) gives hope in the future for those who have lost the records of their lineage: In the time of the king Mashiakh, when his kingdom is established and all Yisrael are gathered, their lineage will be revealed by the Holy Spirit which will rest upon him, and he will announce to everyone in Yisrael to which tribe he belongs. The Torah places importance on yikhus because man is influenced by the qualities and characteristics of his forefathers, both genetically and by the moral values that are passed from generation to generation. The book of Mishlei (Proverbs, 1:8) states: Heed, my son, the moral advice of your father, and do not abandon the teaching of your mother. The Gaon of Vilna comments on this sentence: Man has three partners: the Holy One Blessed Be He, his father and his mother. This theme is taken up in the Talmud (Avot 3:1): Know from whence you came, and where you are going, and to Whom you will have to give account in the future. Only if we know from where we originate in terms of our family heritage will we be in a position to decide what path in life we should take in the future. The late Rabbi Shmuel Gorr, who dedicated his entire life to genealogical research, believed: Just as we perform many Mitzvot as an act of zeikher le'maaseh bereishit (commemoration of the act of the creation), so the study of our family history can be considered as another aspect of this Mitzvah. When we see ourselves obligated to preserve the continuity of our people's existence in the world, so will we fulfill our task as it was prescribed by the Holy One Blessed Be He from the time of the creation of Man. The study of genealogy, therefore, can be considered as an act of zeikher le'maaseh bereishit, as we seek to link ourselves, through the generations of our ancestors, with the first living man, Adam. Yet, from the outset, the

On the 12th of May we reached port in Sweden. There were journalists who photographed us. The wounds will never heal. Twenty to twenty five years came the dreams at night. One cannot forget."

Zev's son Eliyahu's daughter Luba Teitelbaum (Netanya, Israel) described the Nazi invasion of Riga in July 1941. When the Germans invaded the Russians left quickly. Her husband had worked for them and so was given a pass for his family. The Germans occupied half of Riga while the other side of the river Dvina was still held by the Russians so that those who had influence could escape. Liuba and her family travelled by Gorky and then to Kokand in Uzkekistan. Her parents also got passes and joined them. Her younger brother **Shmuel** was in hospital in the German part of the city and he was killed. Her sister **Zelda**'s little boy was in kindergarten in the occupied zone. He was trapped and killed there. In Korsovka relations with the Latvians had been reasonable. But as soon as the Germans invaded the Latvians started a pogrom. The daughter of the rabbi had escaped on foot, but having forgotten something returned and was killed in the street. One German resident Pankiewitz had married a Jewish girl. He saved his wife and her family in a secret chamber he had built in his house. He hid other Jews there including, it is thought, **Marita** the daughter of **Getzel Dimantshtein**. But she left and was presumed to be killed. Liuba's father **Eliyahu** died of illness and deprivation in Kokand in 1942. Her mother and sisters returned to Riga after the war where her mother died in 1947. Liuba and **Zelda** settled in Israel. Her uncle **Getzel** died of disease in the Russian exile together with his son **Pavel.** Her uncle **Avraham** before the war travelled to London but returned to Korsovka where he was killed. Likewise her half-uncle **Gershon** was killed. Her half-uncle **Seeka** was killed serving in the Latvian army.

Liuba also recalled stories of the period before the Revolution. There were three incidents in Korsovka. On one occasion Russian soldiers from one of the warring sides burst into her uncle Shmuel Dimantshtein's house. Liuba nd Eizik were terrified and sneaked through the crowd in the living room to the kitchen where they escaped to Christian neighbours. Shmuel's house was looted and many valuables stolen. On another occasion her father Eliyahu and family took shelter with Christian neighbours who disguised them in peasant clothes. Russian marauders came and demanded to be told which shops in town had liquor and tobacco. They didn't recognize Eliyahu as a Jew and asked him "Are there any Zhids ?" He replied that there weren't. Liuba recalls seeing a Jew shot in the street. In 1920 Eliyahu and Getzel and their families moved to Riga. After the Second World War Liuba returned to Korsovka for a visit. She found most Jewish houses destroyed except for those of her father and her uncle Shmuel. Also the Jewish cemetery was intact.

The Jewish cemetery of Korsovka was photographed for Chaim Freedman by researcher Aleksandrs Feigmanis of Riga. About 300 photographs are held by Chaim Freedman.

Likewise the Lutzin cemetery was photographed and the data can be seen on the Ludza/Karsava Internet site http://www.shtetlinks.jewishgen.org/Ludza/

Ludza cemetery photograph by Zeeva Levy (Israel)

Biblical commentators explained that illustrious lineage alone was not worthy of note. Commenting on the verses of Bereishit 6:9B10: These are the generations of Noakh; Noakh begat three sons. Rashi explains: The essence of the history of righteous men is their deeds. One of the most comprehensive collections of genealogical quotations based on Jewish religious sources appears in Rabbi Yosef Zekhariah Stern's Zekher Leyehosef (1898). The following are some examples: It is worthy of all who seek righteousness to look to the rock from which they were hewn (Yeshayahu, Isaiah 52) and should be Asons of sons are a crown to the elderly, and the glory of sons are their fathers. (Mishlei, Proverbs 17) Like a crown without a kingdom and a gold ring in the nose of one who embraces garbage, so is the value of ancestral Yikhus without personal Yikhus to abandon evil ways. (Yalkut Shimoni; Rashi) If you see a Tsaddik who is the son of righteous fathers, he will not hastily sin (Midrash Mishlei 14) But what of the person who is not descended from ancestry worthy of note? Stern answers: It is important to the Almighty that man should abandon the ways of his ancestors (if they were not worthy) and follow the ways of God about whom it is said, "Peace to the distant, who is the seed of distant ones, but came close."Stern stresses the duty to perpetuate the memory of former generations: How can we not stretch out in our hearts to our ancestors who may be forgotten within two or three generations as if they never existed? In our generation, after our ancestors left the countries where their families lived for many generations and emigrated to other countries, we should perpetuate their history. In particular we have a duty to immortalise the memories of the communities and families that perished for the sanctification of the Holy Name during the Holocaust or during anti-Semitic acts throughout the course of Jewish history: To do justice with the deceased and give them a memory upon the face of the earth. The Midrash (Midrash Rabba, Parasha 37) explains the origin of man's naming system: The early generations that knew their lineage well, gave names to commemorate an event. But we, who do not know well our lineage, give names after our ancestors. The Gaon of Vilna comments on the term used in reference to a deceased person, "May the righteous be remembered for a blessing, and may the name of the wicked decay" (Mishlei, Proverbs 10:7): Remembrance is recalling that which happened in the past, that is, after the death of a righteous person, he is not just a memory, but he is a blessing. But as for the wicked, even his name is contemptible. Throughout Jewish prayer the concept of recalling our ancestors is a recurrent theme. The central prayer of the three daily services, the Shmonah Esreh, begins with: God of Avraham, God of Yitskhak, God of Yaakov...remember the good deeds of our fathers and bring the redeemer to their sons' sons. Amongst the most important statutes given to the People of Israel, the Ten Commandments, is the commandment: Honour your father and your mother.... In the High Holy Day liturgy the relationship between God and man is couched in familial terms: If you regard us as sons, have pity upon us like a father. Our Father, our King.... The tracing of family history is a most effective way to appreciate Jewish history on a

7) Getzel 's son Shmuel (Sam Diamond) settled in London were he was in business. He married his cousin **Devorah (Dora**) daughter of his uncle **Reuven Dimantshtein**.

8) Moshe (Marks)
Held a government contract to supply black bearskin hats to the British army during the Boel War. He was a wealthy furrier who lived in large house in Hackney Downs. According to the 1891 London Census, he immigrated to London about 1880, thereby being the first of the Dimantshtein family to leave Latvia.

9) Shaya
Arrived in England about 1900. made a living as a tallyman (draper). He was a member of the Jewish Socialist Bund in Russia and an ardent Zionist in England. He wrote a ballad in memory of the victims of the Kishinev pogrom in 1903. Shaya was an active Shadkhan (matchmaker) in London. On one occasion he believed that his grandniece Betty Sagon was possessed of a Dybuk (evil spirit) so he carried out a Kabbalistic ceremony of excorsism. Shaya had a tenor voice and acted as a Khazan on the festivals. He played the violin at family celebrations. At one family wedding (possibly Dora Bull's) he danced the Russian Kazatchka and died of a heart attack at the age of seventy three. After his death his widow went to South Africa to join their only daughter.

Other Dimantshteins included the Shokhet **Khaim Dimantshtein** and his son **Nakhum** who perished in the Holocaust in Rezekne. **Shneur-Zalman Dimantshtein** was a butcher in Korsovka, Several of his children survived the Holocaust by fleeing to Rostov. A grandson **David** settled in Israel in 1972. The **Soviet Komissar Shimon Dimantshtein** was born in Sebezh but it is not know if he was related.

Dimantshteins in London 1905; possibly Reuven and Shaya.

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personal level. As we recite in the Hagaddah of the Pesakh (Passover) festival: In each generation man must regard himself as if he himself came out of Egypt, as it is said and you should relate it to your son on that day, saying... People make history by their reaction to the demands and opportunities of their environment. An awareness of personal family history establishes a link in the chain of Jewish existence. Jews left Babylon and Eretz Yisrael and spread out through the Diaspora. Many of their genealogical records were lost. Yet certain families painstakingly preserved their traditions of descent. The scholarly family of the Kalonymides left Babylon about the eighth century, settled in Italy, and then moved to the Rhineland and France in the ninth and tenth centuries. From this family emanated the great Biblical and Talmudic commentator Rashi (1040-1105). Rashi's family and disciples established centers of learning in many towns in Western Europe and later, in the fourteenth century, in Eastern Europe. Thus a vast interrelated dynasty of rabbinic families spread across Europe, establishing a framework for future genealogical research. Sources: Many of the sources quoted above were collected by the late Rabbi Shmuel Gorr as part of an article he wrote titled "Torah and Genealogy."

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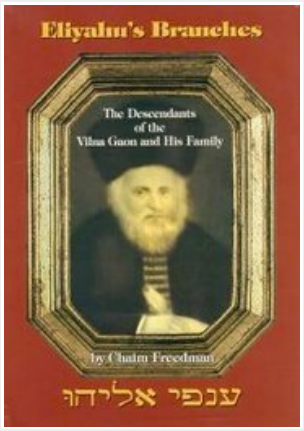
Eliyahu's Branches



The Descendants of the Vilna Gaon and His Family