

Mortke Khazanovich (Max Harry⁴ Singer) (Yehuda³ Khazanovich, Moshe², Yudl¹) was born about 1875 in Nemunaitis, Russia (now Lithuania), and died September 10, 1969 in Brunswick, ME. He married **Bessie Gould** September 02, 1900 in Somerset, NH. She was born 1878, and died June 09, 1970 in Brunswick, ME.



Max's Hebrew name was Mordechai Zvi. He was probably called "Mordkl," a Yiddish variant of the Hebrew name Mortke, and a name that appears in records for a cousin of with the same name.

A few different birth years have been recorded for Mortke, from 1873 to 1875. The year of birth shown on records is probably not meaningful, as family immigrants seemed not to know their birth dates. There are a variety of possible reasons for this, principle of which is that the birth date was apparently not discussed in their families. But the 1875 date is the most likely date.

We know that though Mortke's family was living in Nemunaitis (in Yiddish, Nemoneitz) in 1874. But Mortke did not appear with the other family members in the 1874 List of Males for the town. And we know that the family continued to live in Nemunaitis at least until 1883 when Mortke's younger brother Yankl was born. Therefore we would assume that Max was born in Nemunaitis, in or after 1874.

At the time of Mortke's birth, Nemunaitis was in the Russian Pale of Settlement, in Vilnius Province, Trakai District.

At some time after 1883 Mortke's family moved across the Nemunas River into Suwalki Province in Russian Poland. They settled in the small village of Miroslavas, which was only about 6 miles from Nemunaitis. Miroslavas was called Miroslaw in Polish. Prior to WWI it was also called Slabada, which was probably its Yiddish name. There Max's father Yudl traded furs and operated a tannery. His mother Golde was considered a wise woman in the community.

Daughter Rebecca wrote of her father's education, "In Lithuania very few Jewish children were able to attend their schools so they went to a 'cheder' (kheyder), a school which specialized in Hebrew, the Talmud, etc. They were also taught math and other languages if the town had an educated man." Rebecca said that her father spoke Lithuanian and Polish. His mother tongue was Yiddish, and the family has letters that he wrote in that language.

Daughter Goldie noted in 2002 that before he came to America Mortke was attending a school in Slobodka, where he was learning to be a shokhet, the person who slaughters animals and poultry according to the Jewish rituals of how animals should be killed. This was an admired occupation (see the section *Notes on Life in the Shtetl, Occupations*). Mortke's later 1940 US Census record lists his education as 8 years. [His brother Abraham showed no formal education, Meyer showed "6 years – elementary education" and Jacob showed 8 years. This could all be inaccurate, but Mortke does seem to have more education than is generally found among similar immigrants of his generation.]

Since Mortke emigrated at a young age, probably 13 to 15, he wouldn't have had much time to attend the yeshiva, and probably was there just before he emigrated, between 1888 and 1890. This was in the time when the yeshiva was made famous by Rabbi Nathan Zvi Finkel, the Alter of Slabodka. The Alter had founded the school as a mussar yeshiva in 1884, introducing controversy into the yeshiva system by stressing the need to study personal ethics and character development. He was very involved with all issues of his students.

Slabodka was a Jewish suburb of Kovno, now known as Vilijampole. It was 39 miles to the north of Miroslavas, but only about a mile from Aleksotas, the town where Mortke's cousin Mikhl Gornovsky may have lived at the time, and it's possible that Mortke stayed with Mikhl's family. It was common for people attending a school to stay with a nearby family member and seems more likely with Mortke because the family didn't seem wealthy enough to afford his board in Kovno. If he stayed with Mikhl, it would have been just prior to Mikhl's death in 1890 or 1891, and it's also possible that Mikhl's death could have put an end to Mortke's educational plans and encouraged his immigration.

In 2007 an interesting family coincidence was uncovered when investigating the maternal genealogy for two of Mortke's granddaughters, Pat Singer Moskof and Bobbye Singer van der Walde. Rabbi Finkel of the Slabodka yeshiva had married Gita Wolpert, the great aunt of Shirley Siff, Max's daughter-in-law (wife of Mortke's son Morris).

Max Singer in America

Mortke Khazanovich became Max Singer in the United States.

The family story is that Max came to the United States at the age of 15. This may not be accurate for the simple reason that the immigrants seemed not to know their exact ages. But it was very possible that he was this young.

According to his petition for naturalization, he arrived in Boston on July 4th, 1888. However records show he really arrived in 1892.

The first record is the German ship manifest for Max's trip from Hamburg, departing on the ship Sprite, June 18, 1892, with the destination of Boston (via Liverpool). Below that is the translation of his record.



N	Die zu einer Familie gehörenden Personen sind unter einander zu notiren und durch eine Nummer als stammverhörig zu bezeichnen.		Geschlecht		Alter	Bisheriger Wohnort	In State resp. in der Provinz	Bisheriger Stand oder Beruf	Ziel der Auswanderung (ort und Land ist anzugeben)	Zahl der Personen	Davon sind:		
	Zunahme	Vornamen	männlich	weiblich							Erwachsene und Kinder über 10 Jahre	unter 10 Jahre	Kinder unter 1 Jahr
	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.	
1	<i>Levin</i>	<i>Prive</i>	1	15	<i>Kovno</i>	<i>Rußl</i>	<i>Gen</i>	<i>Spota</i>	1				
2		<i>Gejmanin</i>	1	11					1				
3	<i>Gaus</i>	<i>Lide</i>	1	17					1				
4	<i>Dobakowski</i>	<i>Kalle</i>	1	30	<i>Kuwait</i>				1				
5		<i>David</i>	1	10					1				
6		<i>Kuicel</i>	1	9					1				
7	<i>Davichowski</i>	<i>Israel</i>	1	20	<i>Shwarz</i>		<i>Handl</i>		1				
8	<i>Chazanovich</i>	<i>Morde</i>	1	17	<i>Slabodka</i>				1				

The summary of this record:

Name:	M H Chasanowitz
Gender:	Male
Age:	17
Birth Date:	abt 1875
Departure Date:	20 Jun 1892
Port of Departure:	Liverpool, England
Destination Port:	Boston, USA
Ship Name:	Catalonia

And then lastly is the manifest showing his arrival in Boston on July 4, 1892. Many immigrants said they arrived on July 4th, making a good family story, but Max actually did!

A handwritten ship manifest entry for Max Chasanowitz. The entry is written in cursive and includes the following information: 1. Name: Max Chasanowitz (written as 'Max Chasanowitz'). 2. Age: 17. 3. Nationality: Russian Pole (written as 'Russian Pole'). 4. Residence: Poland (written as 'Poland'). 5. Destination: Massachusetts (written as 'Mass'). 6. Occupation: Laborer (written as 'Lab'). 7. Baggage: 2 pieces (written as '2').

Max's nationality is shown as "RussianPole." At the time, Miroslavas was in Russian Poland. His last residence is listed as Poland. It's unclear why the manifest says this, unless the lines above were just given dittos for expedience. He is shown with the destination of Massachusetts, and as a laborer. He had 2 pieces of baggage.

The family story is that his brother Abraham paid his passage, but that when Max arrived in Lewiston, he didn't live with Abraham, instead being placed in a boarding house. Max's daughter Rebecca noted this was a difficult experience for a boy away from home. [See more on this family story under the notes about Abraham.]

Rebecca passed on through her daughter Judy Kamin in 2002, about Max's trip to America: "He never mentioned being sea sick. There were 3 classes on the voyage-1st, 2nd, and steerage. He was in the latter. He brought herring and pumpernickel bread --these would not get moldy on the trip and he would have something to eat." (Rebecca commented later that the steerage passengers were "very thirsty" because of this diet. She said that the steerage passengers had to bring their own food for the weeklong trip.)

Rebecca's comments continue that Max "was very homesick, especially for his mother. His first night at the boarding house the men there taught him the value of the American dollar. The men at the boarding house gave him a basket filled with notions to sell. (He later paid them back for the supplies.) He saved what money he could and later purchased a horse and wagon, so he could travel with his wares."

At age 16 (according to the family story, but he was more likely 17 according to his ship manifest) Max purchased a new suit and had a photo taken (below), to send to his parents in Lithuania and show them he was doing well.

Rebecca wrote, "Somehow my father didn't talk about his family. I think he missed his parents and never saw them again. I feel he had too much pain to talk about them."

Like his brothers, Max started as a peddler. The first directory listing found for Max locates him in Lewiston in 1893, listed as a peddler, boarding at 68 Lincoln, which was listed as Abraham's home. Abraham had married just 5 months after Max's arrival in 1892.

As a side note regarding this address, according to a 1966 article in the Lewiston Journal, the Markson family was one of the earlier families to arrive, and Mrs. Markson established a boarding house for Jewish peddlers (typically single young males) who had arrived in Lewiston. That boarding house, at 170 Lincoln, became a gathering place and the site where early religious services were held.

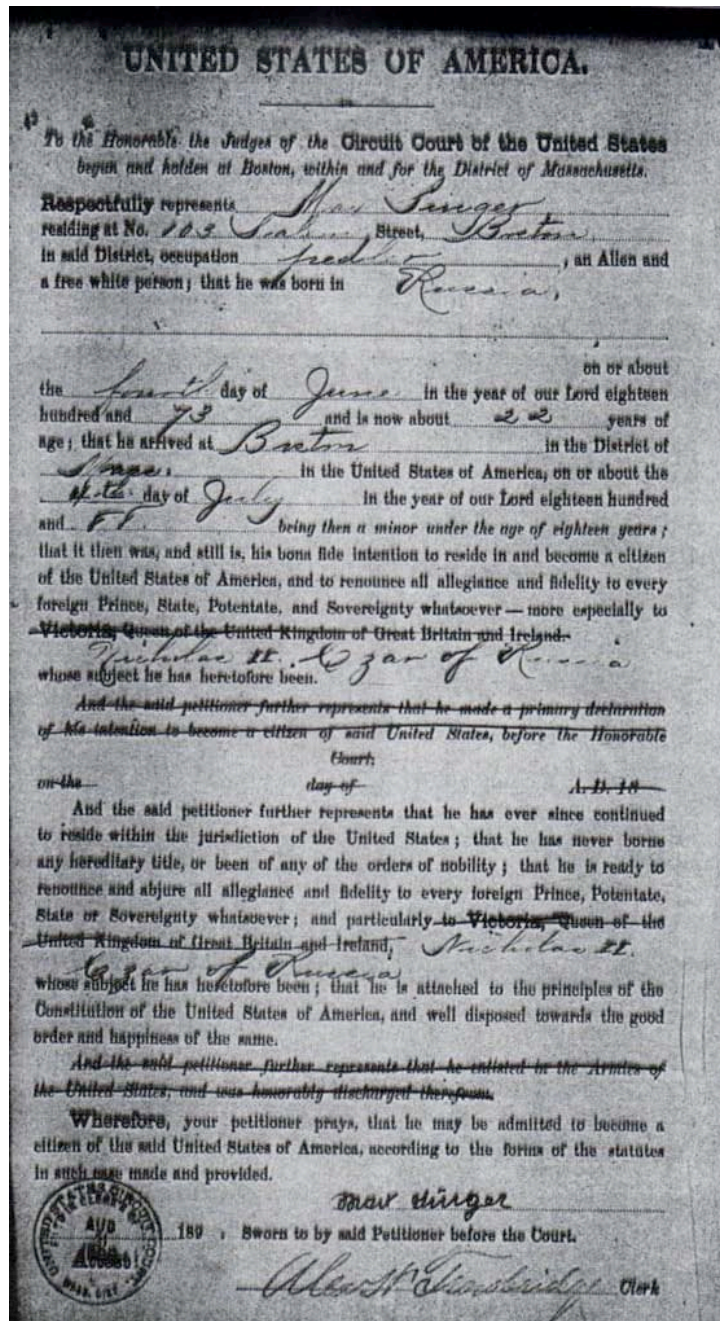
When asked if it was tough to be in Maine and not speak English, Rebecca said that Max "went to night school right off, and learned French and English."



Max became a citizen in 1895. The certificate reads "Know ye, that at a Circuit Court of the United States, begun and holden at Boston, within and for the Massachusetts District, on the fifteenth day of May, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and ninety-five. To wit: on the 31st day of August, A.D. 1895, Max Singer of Boston (sic) in said district, pedler (sic) born at Russia having produced the evidence and taken the oath required by law, was admitted to become a citizen of the said United States according to the Acts of Congress in such case made and provided."

The petition lists Max's address as 103 Salem Street, in Boston, though it appears that he had lived in Lewiston at least since 1893. This Boston address was very near to a dry goods business with which Abraham's store in Lewiston did business.

In 2002 Judy Kamin writes the thoughts of her mother Rebecca and Aunt Goldie on this topic: "The street you could not make out is Salem Street, which is a street where a lot of Jewish people lived. There was a Jewish Society (in Boston) that helped the Jews locate to different areas. They would say there are already too many here--you should go to there. Max did not live in Boston. Maybe Abraham did for a while when he first arrived and the Society helped him."



Max married Bessie Gould September 2, 1900. Judy writes in 2002: "How they met... A salesman visited the store in Lewiston where Max was working and told him of this lady in N.H. he thought Max would like to meet. The salesman drove Max to N.H. to meet her. Thus started the courtship.

"Goldie has the letters that my grandfather wrote to my grandmother when they were dating. The return address on most of the letters that Max sent was: 66 First Street, Auburn, Maine. (Auburn and Lewiston are twin cities). He was writing to her in 1899 and they were married in Sept. 1900. One of the return addresses is Oxford, Maine. He used to go there on selling trips. He especially liked the family he stayed with, because of the great breakfast she gave him."

Their wedding certificate, dated Sept. 2, 1900, shows that they were married in Somersworth, New Hampshire by Rabbi M. Margolies of Boston. (This is the same Rabbi who married Max's brother Abraham, and was a cousin of Abraham's wife Minnie.) On their Certificate of Intention of Marriage, filed on Aug. 31, 1900, Max is shown as being 23 years old (Judy says that he was actually older, and Rebecca said that he was 25), with occupation "merchant," and birthplace "Poland Russia." (He was actually born in Russia.) Bessie is listed as Bessie L. Goold, 19 years of age, occupation "Saleslady," birthplace Russia. Max is shown as residing in Lewiston, ME, and Bessie in Somersworth, NH.

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE.

Certificate of Intention of Marriage.

Between Max Singer and Bessie L. Goold
 Residence, Lewiston, Me Somersworth, NH
 Age, 23 Color, White Age, 19 Color, White
(All last names)
 Occupation, Merchant Saleslady
 Birthplace, Poland Russia Russia
 No. of Marriage, First First
 Widowed or Divorced, _____
 Father's Name, Julius Singer Morris Goold
 " Residence, Poland Russia Somersworth, NH
 " Age, * 58 Living or Dead, Living Age, 49 Living or Dead, Living
 " Color, White White
 " Occupation, Sailor Merchant
 " Birthplace, Poland Russia Russia
 Mother's Name, Salde Ruzel Rose Levin
(Maiden name)
 " Residence, Poland Russia Russia
 " Age, * 55 Living or Dead, Living Age, 22 Living or Dead, Dead
 " Color, White White
 " Occupation, Housewife Housewife
 " Birthplace, Russia Russia

Notice of the intention of marriage between the parties above named was recorded by me, according to law, the thirtyfirst day of August, 1900.
 Clerk of Wm. A. Keays
Somersworth, NH

*if deceased, give age at death.

Certificate of Marriage.

The parties above named were joined in marriage by me at Somersworth, N. H.
 this Second day of September, 1900.
 And I hereby certify that I am a Rabbi (Insert here your official designation.) in good and regular standing, authorized to solemnize marriages by the laws of said State. I reside in the town of Boston county of Suffolk state of Mass.
M. S. Margolies Rabbi

Max and Bessie initially lived in Lewiston following their marriage. According to census records, their first two children, Rebecca and Isadore, were born in New Hampshire, Bessie's home.

Daughter Rebecca wrote in 2002, "I recall that when I was about 4 or 5 [1905-1906] we lived in a tenement house in Lewiston and across the street was a park now called Kennedy Park, named after the President who was killed. This was in Lewiston. None of the tenements had any land. We had indoor plumbing but no bathroom or electricity or hot water.

"We burnt wood in the large kitchen range, and my father on cold nights would get up in the middle of the night to replenish the wood."

(Prior to January 1964 Kennedy Park was called City Park.)

A listing from the Maine Register, showing Lewiston businesses, shows Max appearing once, in 1905-1906, as the owner of a store selling "Dry & Fancy Goods" at 326 Lisbon St. in Lewiston. In the prior directory, this same store was shown as being owned by Abraham, so apparently Max bought the business from his brother, or took it over for him. Deeds in that time often show that a property was bought for one dollar and the purchaser took over the mortgage.

Meanwhile in 1902 Max's younger brother Jacob had opened a dry goods store at 50 Maine Street in Brunswick. In June 1903 Jacob and Abraham bought the property. At the end of 1904 the Maine Street property was signed over to the Singers' brother-in-law, Bennett Berger. Then in 1905 Bennett and Jacob (who somehow still had ownership) sold the property to Telesphore Lapointe, another merchant. Jacob continued to run the dry goods business.

In 1908, Max was still shown in the Lewiston Directory with the occupation "Dry and fancy goods" and the location (probably his home address) as 167 Park.

In about 1907 or 1908 the family moved to Brunswick and took over Jacob's store at 50 Maine Street. Rebecca related that though Jacob had initially been very successful in his business, his finances faltered after he married. Brother Abraham, who apparently had authority as the head of the family, told Max to take over Jacob's business. Rebecca thought that Abraham didn't like having two Singer brothers (himself and Max) in Lewiston. Jacob was instructed to work as an employee for Max.

Rebecca writes, "When we moved to Brunswick we lived in a tenement house that didn't have a bath room. The children could bathe in a small tub but my parents had to be content to sponge wash themselves. My father bought a second hand bathtub. Outside was wooden and inside tin. He drilled a hole in the tub and floor so after a bath the water could flow down but he had to continue boiling water in a washtub. He installed it in our dining room; no other place. My mother was creative so my father was asked to make a cover of wood that could be used to cover the bath. My mother covered the wooden cover with a couch cover and placed 3 pillows as the tub was against the wall. The street we lived on was called Market Lane, and the rent was 6 dollars a month." The family was quite proud to have a tub.



"We burnt wood and coal. The coal heated the kitchen and the dining room." It also provided some heat, but very little for the two adjoining bedrooms, and "we often wore our fleece lined underwear under our night wear, with plenty of blankets to keep us warm. The front room, later called the parlor was shut off in the winter so we used the kitchen all winter. Neighbors frequently came in and my mother served tea and the big molasses cookies she made without eggs or milk. Once a week my mother baked several dozen and for the weekend a sponge cake. My mother was well known for her cookies. Our playmates, when they visited us, would ask if they could have a cookie."

Max's brother Jacob and his family lived at the same location. Rebecca wrote, "We lived on the first floor and he and his family resided above us."

By 1910, Jacob had left Brunswick, moving first to Rumford, ME, and then to Akron, Ohio. According to the Curtis Library in Brunswick, "Our collection of early town records is sketchy and the only (directory) we have between 1907-1911 is 1910. That edition lists Max as "Singer, Max, Dry and Fancy Goods, Cloaks, Suits and Furs, bus. 50 Maine, h. 9 Market."

Rebecca continued, "When I was about 9 [1910], my father bought a house [at 13 Dunlap St.] for \$1,800. Payments were \$100 each year plus insurance and taxes. There was a small apartment on the rear of the upper floor and they paid \$6.00 a month plus the use of the barn that came with the house. The rent took care of the taxes and insurance. We lived frugally so my father was able to pay within 5 years."

(Records show that Max bought the property in May of 1910 and the mortgage was discharged in September of 1919.)

Rebecca continued, "The house to keep warm had 4 stoves. There was a kitchen range. The dining room, which was also used as a living room, had a parlor stove (so called because it was trimmed with fancy metal). My folks had a stove in their bedroom that heated also a small bedroom next to their room. My brothers slept upstairs and there was a small stove in their bedroom.

"During the day my mother kept the stoves burning so the room would be warm and she had a hot water bottle when they went to bed. The old fashioned quilts were heavy and blankets were used under the quilt. After a couple of years my father had installed a furnace. Afterwards, electricity. A hot water tank was connected to the kitchen range.

"I remember my mother saying one of the happiest days of her life was when my father had electricity and hot water installed.

"There were no zoning laws, so we had a cow and chickens. The cow gave us milk, and home made butter and sour cream and cottage cheese. It was too much work for my mother so my father decided to sell the cow, to which he was very much attached. He finally found a farmer who was good to his cattle and he sold him the cow.

"About once a week my father would visit the cow. My father should have been a farmer as he enjoyed animals and gardening."

Grandson Howard Singer remembered that as a child his family visited Max and Bessie. He remembered both as being very kind. He also recalled that his father William used to have the job of taking the family cow out to pasture.

Rebecca said the family was one of only 10 Jewish families in Brunswick. They were Orthodox and kept kosher, so Max had to go to Lewiston to get their meat and bread. Rebecca remembered that he brought it home in a big gunnysack. They didn't own a car, so Max took the "electric car" (trolley) back and forth to Lewiston for 25 cents. The Jewish families worshipped together but there was no rabbi in the area, so they were led by the local Hebrew teacher, who worked for what they could pay him.

The early census reports for Lewiston and Brunswick show towns that are overwhelmingly made up of people from English and French speaking countries – Americans, Canadians, English and Irish.

Rebecca said that Maine was "very snobbish" back in those days. The Jews had friends among the French Canadians because the "aristocrats" wouldn't associate with either. When her father bought his first house, he introduced himself to the neighbor, offering his hand, and the man said "I don't shake hands with Jews." Also, she had a memory as a little girl of a friend (in the family of the same man who wouldn't shake hands) who played with her, but told her she couldn't play when her grandfather was visiting, saying, "I think it has something to do with your being Jewish."

But Rebecca said that the situation improved in subsequent years.

Judy wrote, "Max had two people work for him, then one, and when mother (Rebecca) was in high school, she was the one who worked for him. He did not keep the store in Lewiston after he came to Brunswick." Rebecca wrote, "My father went to Boston and New York to buy merchandise. He only employed one girl and therefore he also waited on the customers. When I was a freshman in high school I kept the books, which was a simple process. A record of invoices was kept in a writing tablet - daily sales in another book. All cancelled checks were retained in another book and charge accounts in a book also."

The 1917-18 directory lists, "Singer, Max (Bessie L.) dry goods 50 Maine h 13 Dunlap"



Rear, L-R: Isadore, Rebecca
Middle, L-R: Morris, Bessie, Goldie, Max
Front, L-R: Joe, Bill

In 1918 Telesphore Lapointe signed over the deed to the store in Brunswick (at 50 Maine St) to Max. Max discharged the mortgage to the Dunlap Street property in 1919. This supports the story from Max's family that the WWI period was a time of prosperity.

The 1920 census shows the family at the same address on Dunlap.

In May of 1920 Max took out a mortgage for the house at 5 Federal Street (built in 1916), and the family moved there. Max and Minnie lived there the rest of their lives, and their daughter Goldie then stayed in the home until long after she retired.

The 1922-23 directory lists, "Singer, Max H (Bessie L) dry goods 50 Maine h 5 Federal"



In January of 1918, Max sold the store at 50 Maine Street to the Pennell brothers, who had been running a men's clothing store at 72 Maine Street. Max's dry goods store remained, but at 47 Maine St.

In September 1928 he bought what had been a novelty store in Bath, on Front Street. As of 1924 Mr. Conley did own Conley's Specialty Store, but it was located at 25 Centre Street, opposite the Bath Department Store, so it's not clear where this store was.

The Novelty store on Front street, recently purchased by Morris S. Povich and once operated by Mr. Conley and later Mr. Butler has been sold to Max Singer of Brunswick, who plans to conduct the business in Bath. Mr. Singer has a dry goods store in Brunswick.

Max operated M. Singer Dry Goods for almost 40 years, and finally decided to sell. Once he made the decision, he sold the store within a week. Daughter Goldie said that none of his children were interested in taking over the store.

The April 1940 census shows the family at 5 Federal Street, and Max is shown without an occupation. Presumably he was retired. His son Joseph, 30, a lawyer, and daughter Goldie, 24, a stenographer in a shoe shop, were living at home.

Max had blond hair and brown eyes, and Rebecca said that her mother Bessie was sorry that none of her children had blond hair and brown eyes like Max. (Rebecca had blond hair, but blue eyes, like her mother.)

Judy writes that Max was "a very quiet, kind man" who loved animals and would care for stray cats. He was a very religious man. He was well versed in the Torah and could conduct local services for the families in Brunswick. All holidays were celebrated in the household. Judy writes, "I can remember the very long seders--all in Hebrew, when I was very young. The Friday night meal was always chicken. The only trip they took was to Michigan to see (his brother) Myer for their 50th wedding anniversary. (This may actually have been Max and Bessie's 40th anniversary, as Myer's wife Leah had died by his time and a note attached to a photo refers to Max and Bessie's anniversary. See below.) Max tended to his garden and chickens. He liked

baseball, but not like Myer." (Two of Max's sons, Joe and Morris, liked baseball and followed the Red Sox.) "Max always drank tea from a glass with lots of milk and lump sugar in his mouth."

He had a large garden with pear, apple and cherry trees, and he had chickens and a cow. Judy remembered going grocery shopping with him. "He would read labels and if he saw a preservative, he wouldn't buy it. He wanted no chemicals in his system."

"He came to Portland to the naming of my daughter in the shul at 6:30 a.m., and also to New Hampshire for the bris of both of my sons. He was a very religious man."

Daughter Goldie said that Max was a good dancer and used to dance to the radio.

In 2002, Rebecca commented that her one regret was that she didn't help her father Max to go back to Lithuania to visit his family (though Rebecca would have been only 13 when Max's mother died, and only 25 when his father died). She remembered a story where Abraham had said that he was going to go back to Lithuania and that he was going to take Max with him, but they never made the trip.

On the topic of different birth dates appearing for Max, Rebecca writes in 2002, "The reason for the discrepancy of the ages about my parents is, not celebrating birthdays, they lost track. On the other hand people lowered their ages. My mother told us she was twenty-one when she married, and my father 25. My mother's father had written the dates of his children in his bible but unfortunately he loaned the book to a neighbor and when he returned the bible he had removed the page of the dates. He was jealous of my grandfather because he was doing better financially. At least that is what the family thought. I recall my mother telling me that (many) Jewish people were superstitious that when the angel of death was looking for victims he favored older people, and so they thought this lie would help them to live longer."

When asked about the Depression, Goldie said that she never felt poor, because they had as much as any of their friends. If they wanted something they couldn't have, it wasn't unusual -- everyone was in the same situation. The 1930 Federal census shows Isadore, Joseph, William and Goldie living at home. (Rebecca had married and Morris was living in Boston.) Max had his store, and Isadore was a salesman in a dry goods store, so probably worked for his father.



Goldie also told the story that during WWII, when her two brothers (Joe and Bill) were in the military, she answered the phone and was told that a telegram had arrived for her mother. Goldie was so frightened that she said her hands were shaking, and if one of the boys had been hurt, she didn't want her mother to hear this way, so she took the message herself. It turned out to be a telegram from Joe, wishing his mother a happy Mother's Day.

L-R Max, Bessie, Fannie, Jacob, Myer

In October of 1940, close to the 40th wedding anniversary of Max and Bessie, they participated in a small family reunion, visiting older brother Myer in Port Huron, MI. Max's brother Jacob and his wife Fannie also came along. This may have been the first time the brothers were reunited since Myer had moved to Michigan and Jacob had moved to Ohio in the early 1900s.

Max and Bessie later celebrated their 65th anniversary, below.



Max died September 10, 1969 in Brunswick, ME. He was buried in Auburn, ME. Bessie died the next year, June 09, 1970 in Brunswick and was also buried in Auburn, ME.

Children of Max Singer and Bessie Gould are:

- + i. Rebecca⁵ Singer, born July 07, 1901 in Somersworth, NH; died March 29, 2003 in ME.
- + ii. Isadore Singer, born June 26, 1903; died October 28, 1996 in Bath, ME.
- + iii. Morris Singer, born November 06, 1904 in ME; died 2000.
- + iv. Joseph Leo Singer, born November 24, 1909 in Brunswick, ME; died November 23, 1996 in Brunswick, ME.
- + v. William Singer, born August 23, 1912 in Lewiston, ME; died December 09, 1995 in Portland, ME.
- + vi. Goldie Singer, born April 06, 1916 in Brunswick.

Bessie Gould

Bessie's name is shown as Goold on her marriage license in 1900 (though the family name is shown as Gould on the 1900 census). Granddaughter Judy Kamin writes: "When my grandfather wrote love letters to his future wife, he addressed them to Bessie Goold. When did Goold become Gould? Mother and Goldie think, perhaps when Bessie's brother went to Harvard and when he said Goold, someone wrote it Gould. They just don't know."



Bessie's marriage certificate shows her parents as Morris Goold, age 49, "merchant" born in Russia, and Rosie Levin, as a housewife, age 22, born in Russia, and having died.

Daughter Rebecca Robinson writes, "I wish I had more information about my Grandmother (Rosie) Gould. She died when my mother was 4 years old. My mother lived with one relative or another and came to America to live with her father."

According to Bessie's marriage certificate (above) Rosie's maiden name was Levin.

Judy writes, "Bessie always talked about sailing into N.Y.," so that was apparently her port of entry. According to the 1900 census she arrived in 1891.

Rebecca continues, "She was very close to her father and when she was 14 he opened a small dry goods store and she worked there while he continued to peddle. She told me some interesting stories about the Jewish people (10 to 12 families) who lived there.

"My Grandfather when he became a widower, married again, -- a sister to his first wife and they had two children, Rose and Louis. My Uncle Louis was only 3 years older than I was.

A marriage record was found which appears to be Morris (listed as Morris Goold), dated June 20, 1892. It shows that at this time Morris lived in Great Falls, N.H. and was a peddler. His father was Samuel and his mother was Fannie, and this was his second marriage. He married Jennie Lape of Boston, age 23, daughter of Aaron and Etta. It was her first marriage.

Morris Goold	Great Falls	41	Peddler	Russia	Samuel Fannie	Second
Jennie Lape	Boston	23	Domestic	"	Aaron Etta	First

(Records show several different names for Morris' second wife – Jennie, Fannie, Annie and with surnames Lape, Mellier and Miller. If she was the sister of Bessie's mother Rose, one would expect her maiden name to be Levin.)

If Bessie was 21 when she married in 1900, Morris would have opened his store about 7 years prior, in 1893, soon after his second marriage.

A translation from one of the Yiddish letters from Max and Bessie's possession shows a letter from "N. Freedman & Bros, Dry and Fancy Goods, 92-96 Salem Street, Boston." Dated 1896, it appears to be a note to Bessie's father Morris, thanking him for a check they had received, noting they had purchased hundreds of different goods in New York, and asking him to come to Boston, where they assure they have "huge bargains for you."

The 1900 census shows her father Morris Gould living in Somersworth, NH, at 10 South Street. He was 45 years old, listed as born in 1855. His wife was Fannie (or possibly Jennie), 29 years old, born in 1871. The couple is listed as having been married 8 years. Both are listed as born in Russia. Fannie had given birth to 2 children, both of whom were living. Morris' immigration date is shown as 1885 and his occupation is "merchant." Their children are listed as Bessie S Gould, 19, born in 1881 in Russia, immigrated 1891 (working as a dry goods clerk); Samuel, 18, born in 1882 in Russia, immigrated 1892 (working as a peddler); Goude (?), 15, born in 1884 in Russia, immigrated in 1900; Rosie, 7, born 1893 in New Hampshire; and Louis, 3, born 1897 in New Hampshire. The daughter shown as "Goude" (?) may have later been known as Anne. Bessie's son Morris later stayed with an aunt, Ann Weiner in Boston, and she would have been the same age.

name	sex	age	birth	place	immigration	occupation
Ernest Thomas	M	45	April 1855	Russia	1885	merchant
Fannie	F	29	Jan 1871	Russia	1891	
Bessie S	F	19	March 1881	Russia	1891	dry goods clerk
Samuel	M	18	March 1882	Russia	1892	peddler
Goude	F	15	1884	Russia	1900	
Rosie	F	7	1893	New Hampshire		
Louis	M	3	1897	New Hampshire		

Bessie was fluent in French, which was an important asset in a town with many French Canadians. Her daughters Rebecca and Goldie told the story that some French Canadian children had stolen items from the store, and then confessed to their priest. The priest came to the store to apologize, and to pay for the items. After speaking to Bessie he asked why he hadn't seen her in church, and she told him that she was Jewish. He couldn't believe that she wasn't French, because she was so fluent. On another occasion Bessie was asked, "Why are you ashamed of being French?" and she replied, "I'm not ashamed. I'm not French!" Goldie said that the French Canadians and Jews got along well in Brunswick, both being minority groups.

Rebecca said that Bessie could have passed for Irish, because she had blue eyes, auburn hair, and a dusting of freckles.

About her own birth in Somersworth, Maine, Rebecca wrote in 2002, "Although maternity units had been established it seemed people preferred to have their children born in the family home, so while I was conceived in Lewiston, my mother went to N. H. to have the stork deliver me there."

Rebecca related two stories about her mother Bessie, both occurring when Max and Abraham's families lived in the same building on Birch Street in Lewiston: First, Abraham's maid was fired by Abraham's wife Minnie, because the maid had taken an egg for breakfast, to which Minnie didn't think she was entitled. The maid ran to Bessie for comfort, and Bessie calmed her and fixed her an egg. Later, Abraham came to talk to the maid and had to offer her a raise in salary (from \$2 to \$3) plus access to the eggs, to get her to return.

[Rebecca may have had the street name wrong, as directories show Abraham's family lived on Ash Street in 1900-1901, and then on Pierce in 1902-1908.]

In the second story, Rebecca said that Abraham's children were fond of Rebecca as a little girl and they played together. Bessie treated Abraham's children well, making cookies for them, etc. In fact, Bessie was known for her molasses cookies (she was called the Cookie Lady, and she made 6 dozen large cookies at a time). Rebecca said that Abraham loved his children and would bring them home a bag of goodies (cookies, fruit, or "whatever"). One day Bessie looked out the window and saw that Abraham had brought home treats for his children and they all gathered around him, along with 2-year-old Rebecca, who also held out her hand. Abraham gave the treats to his own children, but not to Rebecca. When Max got home, Bessie told him, "We're moving." Max asked, "Where can we find another house this nice?" Rebecca said that Max had

no choice, though, because Bessie said they would either move immediately, or she would go home to her father in New Hampshire. And they moved!

More about Bessie's family: In the 1910 census Morris and the family are living at 24 South Street. Morris, age 56, is listed as a retail merchant in the field of dry goods. He is listed as having been married for 31 years (which probably indicates that his first marriage, to Rosie, had been 31 years before, in about 1878-1879). Anne is listed as being married for 18 years. Morris' immigration date is now listed as 1887, and his occupation is retail merchant in dry goods. Fannie is now listed as "Anne," age 37, and she is still listed as having given birth to 2 children. The children living at home are Rosie, 16, and Lewis, 13. In this census the name appears to be spelled as "Goold," but is listed in the index as "Gould." Also living with the family are grandchildren Rebecca R. Singer, age 8, Isadore Singer, age 7, and Morris Singer, age 5. The census was enumerated April 30, 1910.

Goold Morris	Head	56	1854	1887	Canada	Canada	Canada	1887	English	None	None	None
Goold Anne	Wife	37	1873	1891	Canada	Canada	Canada	1891	English	None	None	None
Goold Fannie	Daughter	37	1873	1891	Canada	Canada	Canada	1891	English	None	None	None
Singer Rebecca	Granddaughter	8	1902	1902	Canada	Canada	Canada	1902	English	None	None	None
Singer Isadore	Granddaughter	7	1903	1903	Canada	Canada	Canada	1903	English	None	None	None
Singer Morris	Grandson	5	1905	1905	Canada	Canada	Canada	1905	English	None	None	None

Rebecca writes, "I remember my Grandfather Gould and his offspring very well. Every summer we spent several weeks with my grandparents in New Hampshire and had a real good time. My grandfather would slip me a nickel." "He was a wonderful man." Rebecca added that her grandfather didn't give a nickel to the younger boys, because, she thought, he didn't want his (second) wife to know about it. His second wife was nice to the children, but "on the frugal side." Rebecca related a story where she wanted to buy a paddleball that cost \$.05, but her grandfather didn't give her the nickel that day. So she got up her courage and asked for the nickel. He teased her, asking why she wanted it, and what good a paddleball was-- and eventually gave her the nickel."

"Although most of the family lived in N.H. and the Boston area, we were close until the older members died quite young and I sort of lost track of some of the cousins in my later years."

Morris (listed as Morris Goold) died August 3, 1918 at the approximate age of 67 and the cause of death was listed as apoplexy.

The 1920 census shows Fanny living at 22 South Street, as a widow. She is listed as age 43, and living with her are her son Louis, age 22, her daughter-in-law Dorothy, age 20, and granddaughter Mildred, under 1 year old. Dorothy is listed as born in New York. None of the family members are listed with an occupation.

Goold Fanny	Head	43	1877	1891	Canada	Canada	Canada	1891	English	None	None	None
Goold Louis	Son	22	1898	1898	Canada	Canada	Canada	1898	English	None	None	None
Goold Dorothy	Daughter-in-law	20	1900	1900	USA	USA	USA	1900	English	None	None	None
Goold Mildred	Granddaughter	1	1919	1919	USA	USA	USA	1919	English	None	None	None

The 1930 census index does not show the family in Somersworth.

[Note that the database for the Jewish Advocate newspaper in Boston shows the obituary for a Louis Gould of Somersworth, NY, who died on 01/08/1948. The obituary may have more information about him and about other family members.]

Compiled and researched by Laurel Singer
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