

The Srolowitz (Israelson) Family

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Bessie was born in Sveksna in 1881 to Chana and Srol Srolowitz

Srol had a father called Vulf Srolowitz from Telsai.

Srol's brothers were Ickikas and Chatzkiel who also lived in Sveksna and worked together.

Srol was born in 1832 and died in 1897.

I am not sure how many siblings Bessie had.

Bessie's father Sroel was a timber merchant and owned a timber factory with his brother in Sveksna. The family used to cut down logs from the forest and send them down the river to be used for furniture production.

Bessie travelled to South Africa on 17 March 1894 on a ship called City of Agra, with a group of women from Sveksna. One was her first cousin from the Urdang family., Ickikas Srolowitz's family.

Bessie worked as a babysitter for a wealthy family until her marriage to Nathan Kaplan in Cape Town on 14 January 1900. Nathan was from Taurage and emigrated to South Africa in 1893. Their first child Israel was born in November 1900. They then had six more children Anne (Chaya), Mary (Miriam), Rachel, Dora, Louis (Leib) (my grandfather) and Charles (Chatzkel).

They moved to Bloemfontein in the Orange Free State in 1914 and Nathan owned a General Dealer store.

Bessie died from stomach cancer on 10 March 1946 in Bloemfontein, aged 65.

Nathan died on 10 February 1948 in Bloemfontein, aged 74.

About relatives who remained in Sveksna

Chatzkel (Bessie's uncle) married Kayla and had a son Reuven and a daughter Ita (Urdang). Reuven was involved in two pogroms in Sveksna, in 1920 and in 1933.

Reuven married Paja Meyerowitz and had several sons, Shraga, Mordechai Meir, Sroel, Chatzkel, Moshe Leib, and Joseph.

Moshe Leib and Paje died in the holocaust in August 1941 in the killing site in the village of Saudvica

Chatzkel and his family died in the Kovno ghetto. One son survived and emigrated to Israel.

Sroel and his family were murdered in the Skaudeville Forest on 21 July 1941.

The other brothers survived. One brother, Shraga went to Israel and another Mordechai, to New Zealand

Please see photographs on the next page.

