

A PRECIOUS LEGACY

*Louis Glosser
and
Bessie Greenberg Glosser
1854 - 1929*

Ruth Glosser

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Glosser Bros., Franklin Street, ca. 1922. The sign above the awning on the Locust street side reads: "Johnstown's Greatest One Floor Store." Photo courtesy of Johnstown Area Heritage Association.

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This book is dedicated to my beloved husband, Isadore, "Izzy", Glosser.

Without his support, assistance and foresight this book would not be possible.

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Saul Glosser

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Saul and Eva Hurwitz Glosser's wedding picture, New York, New York, June 28, 1921

Glosser Bros. Store at 118 Franklin Street, ca. 1907

Glosser Bros. interior at 118 Franklin Street, David Glosser behind counter, ca. 1910

Sam and Pearl Apter Glosser's wedding picture, Rehovot, Palestine, February 20, 1919

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Preface

Some may ask my reasons for devoting the time and energy necessary to compile a family history. Why bother? Who cares?

There are many reasons that I care. One reason that I care is because the Louis and Bessie Glosser family survived the worst two anti-Jewish excesses of the twentieth century—the pogroms which took place in the Russian empire and Russian-held Poland, and the Holocaust which exterminated six million Jews during World War II. They survived because they had emigrated. All the members of Louis and Bessie's immediate family were in the United States by 1920. Those Jews who remained in Antopol were not so fortunate. All but seven of the 2000 Jews in Antopol were murdered by the Nazis. Those early emigres from the Pale of Settlement tried to put the memories of the past behind them, to enter fully into the new world. But I feel these memories need to be preserved, because to remember is to defy the objectives of the czarist regime and of the Nazis. The forces of Russian anti-Semitism and Hitler tried to eliminate the Jews and nearly succeeded. To forget our Jewish roots and family past is to allow an added measure of success to the czars' and Hitler's genocide.

Another reason I care is because I feel that my generation is the bridge between the past and the future. My generation can remember parents and grandparents who were born in Poland and czarist Russia. They are the ones who came to this country with virtually nothing but the clothes on their backs. They are the generation who all their lives spoke English with the trace of a Yiddish accent. They are the ones who never knew their actual birth dates. They were born, for example, *erev Pesach* (Passover eve) in the year of the big flood, because the fewer records kept, the more difficult it was for the government to conscript or levy special taxes on them.

There are very few of that generation remaining. I doubt that our children or grandchildren know anyone who speaks with a Yiddish accent. And their comprehension and awareness of the conditions that drove our ancestors from the shtetls of eastern Europe across the ocean to make a new life for themselves here is minimal. It's up to our generation to leave a testimony that affirms what our grandparents experienced. And to help us all to give thanks that our forebears were wise enough and lucky enough to have made that dangerous journey so that we could live in peace and freedom.

As long as our parents and grandparents are alive, we feel that they are our connection with the past. They tell us stories of their childhood, of their parents and grandparents. They give us the traditions and historical context of our own lives.

I can remember as a youngster, my grandfather, Max Weisberg, sitting at the dining room table sipping tea from a glass through a honeycomb, telling stories about his past to which I listened with only partial attention. And then, in my senior year at college, when I came home, he wasn't there. He had died.

When a parent or grandparent dies, a source of our civilization dies. We are cut off. We are startled by how many things we wanted to ask but never got around to asking, by how many

things we heard, but never paid careful attention to. I never asked my mother for whom she was named. I only dimly recall the stories my father told of his life on the Lower East Side of New York where he lived as a boy. We can no longer draw on our parents' memories. Our past seems to shrink or to freeze.

We begin to feel a subtle transition. *We* are now the older generation. We have the responsibility to transmit our culture to our children and their generation. My parents were buffers between me and the hereafter. Now that they are gone, I am to my children what my parents were to me.

And so, with that sense of responsibility I began working on assembling the Louis and Bessie Glosser family story. Initially, I planned only to prepare a descendent outline family tree, but as I began collecting the data, I realized that it was important to transmit as much as possible of the early life experiences of the family before those experiences were lost forever. I was helped enormously in my quest because Izzy had had the foresight to begin taping the recollections of family beginning in 1977. Among those he taped were Bella Glosser Coppersmith, Fritz Glosser Bernstein, Bessie Glosser Silberstein, Nathan Ossip, George Ossip, Frances Weisman Gallin, Eva Hurvitz Glosser, Irving London, Frank Glosser, and a host of others. Virtually all that generation is gone now, but through their tapes we can learn of their anguish, fear and pain. We also learn of how they reshaped their lives in the *Goldene Medina* (the Golden Land). I have made no attempt to follow the family beyond the life spans of Louis and Bessie. This is their story and the story of the precious legacy they left us.

In many respects their early life experiences were unique. In many other ways their experiences represent the shared experiences of most of our ancestors who started life in eastern Europe. What follows is a distillation of their collective stories.

The Early Years in Antopol

Location and Origin of Antopol

Antopol, the first known home of the Glossers, is a townlet situated in what is now Poland. It lies about 600 feet above sea level, at 52° 11'N and 24° 42'E. The town is part of Polesia, known for its marshes and forests. It lies east of Brest-Litovsk. The nearest big city is Kobrin.

There is little documentation, but it is believed that Jews began to settle in Antopol about 1604.¹ The region has undergone many occupations, revolutions and counter-revolutions. The Lithuanians, Poles, Cossacks, Swedes, and Germans have invaded it. Under none of these regimes was life easy for the Jews. From 1703 until 1773 Antopol was part of the kingdom of Poland. In that latter year Russia annexed a number of Polish *guberniyas* (districts) including Grodno. One of the sub-districts of Grodno was Kobrin, and Antopol was then part of the sub-district of Kobrin.

Despite hardships imposed on the Jews during various governmental regimes, Jewish population in Antopol increased steadily:

About 200 years after its establishment, in 1847 the Jewish population numbered 1108 inhabitants. By 1860 they increased to 1259 out of a general population of 1563 ... In 1897 the Jews were already in the majority, 3137 out of 3867. In 1904, when the total population numbered 5235, the Jews accounted for at least half that number.²

Origins of the Glosser Name

Little is known about the origins of the family name, Glosser. For thousands of years Jews, for the most part, lived and raised families without fixed family names. They were identified by their given names, *i.e.* their personal name followed by *ben* or *bat* (son/daughter of ...) and then their fathers' given names ("Rivka bat Schmu'el"). But by the 18th century a new age was beginning to dawn in Europe. In 1787 Emperor Joseph II of Austria issued an edict ordering the Jews of Galicia and Bucovina to adopt permanent family names, the first such law in Europe. The majority of European Jews, however, did not acquire surnames (last names) until the 19th century.

When Russia partitioned parts of Poland in the late 1700's, they acquired over a million Polish Jews—none of whom had surnames. With these new acquisitions came the challenges of governing these Jews, collecting their taxes, and conscripting Jewish soldiers into the Russian Imperial Army. To meet these challenges, legislation was enacted in 1804 requiring every Russian Jew to assume a hereditary family name that must remain unchanged and used in all transactions. This law was not effectively carried out until 1845 when another law was passed with the same mandate.

Knowing that Wolf Laib Glosser and his siblings were born in the mid to late 1850's or 1860's, we can assume that Ephraim Glosser, Wolf Laib's father, was born about the time that last names were mandated. It is difficult for us to say with certainty just what the original Glosser name was. The Immigrant Passenger List for the ship S.S. *Rijndam* which brought Bessie, Wolf Laib's wife, and his three unmarried children, Saul, Sam, and Bella to the Port of New York on July 9, 1906, gave the family name as Glotzer.³ Given the fact that none of the family spoke English when they arrived, and that the Roman alphabet was unfamiliar to them, Glotzer could well be an approximation. On the other hand, the name could have been on the mark. The *Jewish Family Names and their Origins—An Etymological Dictionary* gives these definitions:

Glatzer, from "Glatz, Silesia;" Glatzur, from glaz, glatzes "bald head."⁴

The Family in the Early Years

Wolf Laib Glotzer was born in Antopol to Ephraim and Bess, "Frudl", London Glotzer. It is doubtful that Wolf Laib knew the year he was born. A one page biography of him written in 1918 gives his birthdate as 1854.⁵ On January 15, 1906, when he filed his Declaration of Intention to become a U.S. citizen, he stated that he was 46 when he arrived in Ellis Island in 1903, *i.e.* his birth date was 1857. When he filed his Petition for Naturalization in January, 1910, he gave his birthdate as August 10, 1860. When he was granted his final Naturalization citizenship in August, 1910, he gave his age as 49 which meant his birthdate would have been 1861. Knowing that he was married in 1875, that would mean he was 14 years old at the time of his marriage. It would appear more plausible that his birthdate was either about 1854 which would have made him 21 at the time of his marriage, or 1857, which is the birthdate he gave in his Declaration of Intention. The latter date would mean that he was 18 at the time of his marriage.

Wolf Laib was one of four known children. His siblings were Moses Isaac, "Moshe Yitzhak"; David Joseph, "Dovid Yossel"; and Freda Judith, "Fraydl Yudis" Glotzer.

We have little factual information about either Ephraim or Frudl beyond possessing a picture of Ephraim. It is only possible to speculate about his and Frudl's lifespans. Insofar as the children were born in the mid to late 1850's and 1860's, Ephraim and Frudl were probably born in the mid 1830's, although Frudl could have been born later. It was not uncommon for girls to marry at 14 or 15 in those years. As for their death dates, we can conjecture that they died sometime between 1905 and 1908. In that latter year, when twins were born to Wolf Laib and Bessie's oldest daughter, Jennie, she named them Fred, "Ephraim", and Florence, "Frudl". Jennie had already given birth to three children, the youngest of whom, Harry, "Yoodl", had been born June 15, 1905. It is the custom among Ashkenazi Jews to name children after recently deceased family members.

We know nothing of Wolf Laib's childhood, but we do know from their *Ketubah* (wedding contract), that he married Bessie, "Pesha Aidel", Greenberg on Thursday evening, the 19th day of *Adar* in the year 5635 (February 27, 1875).⁶

Their union produced numerous children, many of whom died in infancy or childhood. Seven lived to maturity. They were: Jennie, "Yenta Gittel"; Rose, "Raisa"; Nathan, "Nayach";

David, "Dovid"; Saul, "Shlomo"; Sam, "Shimon"; and Bella, "Bayle". Bessie would remain at home for a week following the birth of each infant. Then she returned to work. It was left to the two oldest girls, Jennie and Rose, to look after the newborns. Rose was eight when she began to care for the babies. She often told her daughter, Frances, "I loved each one as if he were my own."⁷

Life in Antopol

Existence was a struggle for the family. Their thatched roof house had a dirt floor in the kitchen. Attached to the house was a chicken coop, and the chickens were brought in the house when the weather turned cold. It was Sam's job every Friday to clean and level the dirt floor.⁸ There was, of course, no indoor plumbing. Water had to be purchased as needed. Even by Antopol standards, the family was not well-to-do. Bella Glosser Coppersmith recalled, "I was forever hungry, and that goes for Saul and Sam. At night we used to follow around my mother and keep on saying 'Mom, we're hungry, we're hungry'... and I was always scared and always worried."⁹ Throughout her life she was afraid of dogs because the peasants of Antopol routinely sicced their dogs on the Jewish children.

Nathan Ossip, oldest son of Jennie Glosser Ossip (*Ossipovitz*), recalled Cossack cavalry raids when the Jews of Antopol ran and hid for their lives as the mounted Cossacks, elite czarist soldiers, rode through the shtetl with bayonets at the ready.¹⁰ The family's fear of pogroms, or organized massacres of Jews, was a fear grounded in the reality of the tenuousness of Jewish existence in the Russia of the czars. It was during these years that the head of the "Holy Synod" (the governing body of the Russian Orthodox Church) formulated the objectives of the government when he expressed the hope that "one-third of the Jews will convert, one-third will die, and one third will flee the country."¹¹

To achieve these objectives the government gave support to a series of pogroms accompanied by looting, rape, savage murder and body mutilation against the Jews of Russia. Altogether, between 1903 and 1906, pogroms were perpetrated in 64 towns and 626 townlets and villages. Thousands of Jews were slaughtered and the property of many of the victims was looted or destroyed. One such pogrom took place in Ekaterinoslav where 120 Jews were brutally massacred.¹² This was the town where Nathan Glosser worked as a youth.

Fear of conscription into the Russian army was also a constant in the family:

In 1827 (and thereafter), military service was made compulsory for Jews residing in the czarist empire. Young Jewish boys were included in this conscription with a view to force them to become Christians; individual Jewish communities were made responsible for supplying a quota of such conscripts. Kidnappers, known in Yiddish as *Khapers* (captors of recruits) took Jewish boys, some as young as eight or nine, from their homes, and these children were thus lost to their families and Judaism.¹³

Not only did conscription mean the possibility of death on the battlefield, it also meant religious persecution and a 25 year term of service. A son, Dovid, of Wolf Laib's sister, Freda

Judith Levine, was drafted, and was killed in the anarchy following World War I.¹⁴ Schmucl Glosser, son of David Joseph Glosser, was "grabbed"¹⁵ into the czar's army shortly before the commencement of World War I. He served two years on the front lines before being made a prisoner of war by the Germans. Following three years internment in a German prison camp, he was released after the Armistice and found his way on foot from Germany back to Antopol. Shortly thereafter his family made its way to America.¹⁶

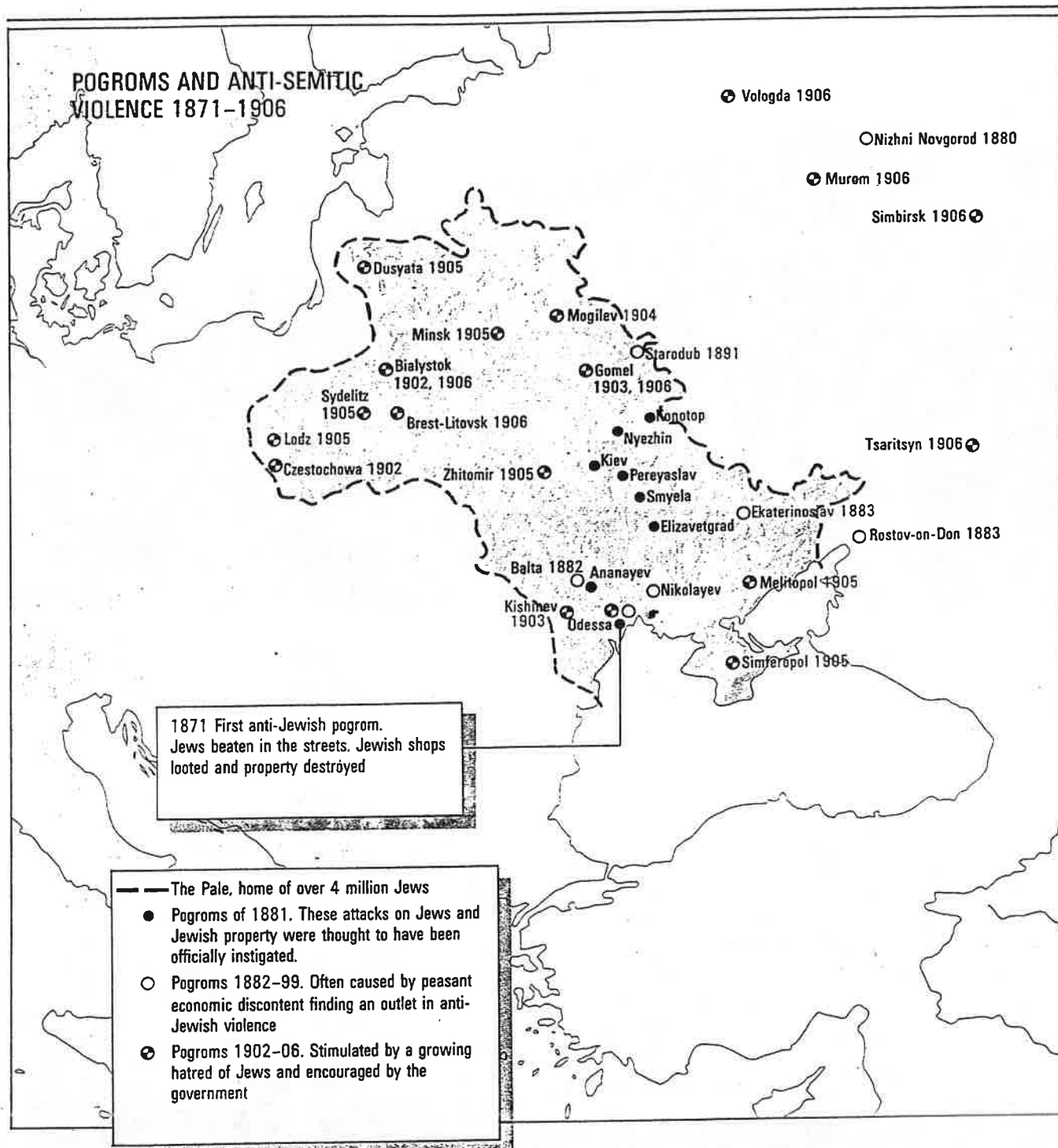
Nathan Ossip, oldest son of Jennie Glosser Ossip and Joseph Ossip, was the first member of the Ossip family to arrive in the United States. He was 14 in 1914, and his grandfather and uncles, already in Johnstown, knew he would be a prime target for conscription. At the same time that they sent for Nathan Ossip to come to America, they also sent passage money for Morris Levine, son of Freda Judith Levine. He was 19 when he departed Antopol. His brother Dovid, was already in the service and Morris was scheduled for induction. The boys had no visas. Soldiers had been bribed to walk them across the borders in the dead of night.¹⁷

In addition to poverty, conscription, and pogroms, the family also endured disease and accidents. Sam was sick with measles as a child and lost the use of his left eye. Bella also had a case of measles so serious that her parents feared for her life.¹⁸ A brother younger than Sam choked to death as a young child on the metal tip of a cane which he had picked up and put into his mouth.¹⁹

The family eked out a living in a small stall in the town square where they sold kerosene, salt, homemade potato bread, dry goods and other small sundry items. Even then Wolf Laib suffered from asthma and was not well. Bessie prepared the dough at night when she got home from the market, letting it rise overnight. Early in the morning she baked it so it would be ready to take to the family stall. It was an exhausting existence. It was her practice at night to recite the entire *Krishma* (*Shma Yisroel*). She would instruct Sam to waken her if she fell asleep before completing her prayers, and to let her know where she had left off. He hated to do so because she was so obviously fatigued but he couldn't disobey his mother.

By the time she was eight, Bella peeled the potatoes for the bread. As a reward, she got to keep the peelings which she sold to a neighbor who fed them to his cow. She also rolled cigarettes which she sold. In cold weather Bessie kept a bucket of heated coals in the stall for tolerable warmth while she and Bella waited on trade and watched that the peasants didn't steal their goods. No wrapping paper was provided for purchases. Customers carried dried fish home by the tail. Bessie advised women who purchased yard goods to put the material close to their bosoms for protection against the elements.²⁰

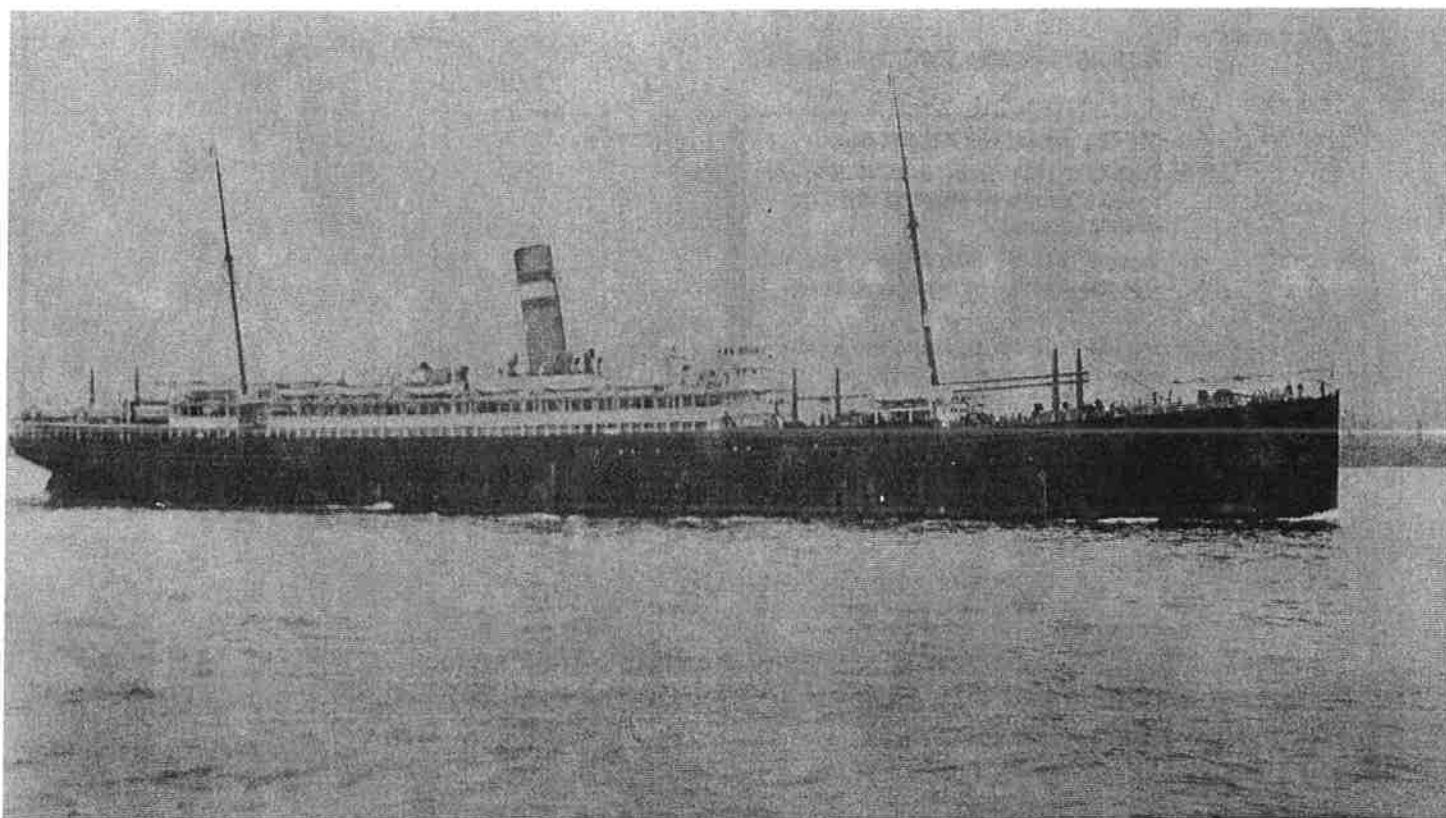
There was no formal schooling for girls. The boys attended *chayder* (Hebrew school) daily. As family debts mounted, Wolf Laib rented space in the house to a *melamed* (teacher) who taught little boys Hebrew and Jewish rituals. Bella loved to recount how she would stay in the kitchen, peeling potatoes and listening to the lessons. Once the teacher caught her whispering an answer to one of the boys. She ran, but he caught her and hit her.²¹



Areas of the Russian Empire Where Pogroms and Anti-Semitic Violence Occurred, 1871-1906.
Source: *The Illustrated Atlas of Jewish Civilization*, Susanna Clarke, Senior Editor. Map courtesy of MacMillan Publishing.



The marketplace in Antopol, Russian Empire. Louis and Bessie Glosser had a stall here from which they eked out a living, ca. 1900. Photo courtesy *Antopol Yiskor Book*.



The S.S. *Rijndam*—Built in 1901 for the Holland America Line. This is the ship which brought Bessie, Saul, Sam, and Bella Glosser to the United States in 1906. Photo courtesy of the Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, MA.

Getting Married and Learning Trades

When the girls reached marriageable age, the parents arranged for their marriages. Jennie, being the oldest, was the first to marry. She was wed to Joseph Ossip (*Ossipovitz*) about 1898. Joseph was a tanner by trade. He worked the hides out from raw skins to finished garments. The newlyweds' home and living arrangements were similar to those of Jennie's family, *i.e.*, a thatched roof, a dirt floor in the kitchen, and chickens who came into the kitchen when the weather turned cold. Attached to the house was a stable where, in addition to the chickens, they had several cows. One inside wall of their house was laid with tiles which helped to maintain heat in winter. They also had an acre of land where they planted vegetables. By Antopol standards they considered themselves middle class.²² Nathan was born in 1900; George in 1901; Harry in 1905; Fred and Florence in 1908; Albert in 1911, Sylvia in 1914; and Sydney in 1916.

Rose was the next to marry. Her husband was Avroham Zelig Weisman, a scholar and teacher. He taught older boys Torah, Talmud and higher level subjects. The Weisman and Glosser families were friends. Rose and Avroham had played together as young children.²³ Frances, born January 15, 1910, was their only child.

The boys, meanwhile, were learning trades. Nathan was a tailor. He was not happy in Antopol and found work in Ekaterinoslav.²⁴ Although he disliked Antopol, he felt close to his parents and visited when he could. David was apprenticed to a shoemaker and Saul to a cap maker. It was the hope of Bessie and Wolf Laib, pious Jews, that Sam would become a rabbi.

A Determination is Made

Conditions in Antopol, however, continued to worsen. Wolf Laib owed significant sums of money to various creditors. He could not make ends meet in the family stall. Bessie went out at night begging for money and asking for loans.²⁵ The increasing frequency of pogroms made matters even worse. And there was no hope that the situation would improve. Doubtless, Wolf Laib consulted the Antopol rabbi who, cognizant of the economic hardships suffered by his flock, urged people "(with the help of God) to take things in their own hands" ... and emigrate to America, "Go ... you will make a living there," adding, "Observe the Sabbath"²⁶ ("an unusual approach, since Orthodox leaders tended, rather, to discourage Jews from going to this 'unkosher land'."²⁷) Given that his brother, Moses, had made the transition to the United States, and faced with a bleak future in Antopol, Wolf Laib decided to leave.

Endnotes

1. *Antopol (Antopolie) Yiskor Book*, edited by Benzion H. Ayolon, published by Antopol committee in Israel, Actively Assisted by the Antepoller Yizkor Book Committee in the U.S.A., Tel Aviv, Israel, 1972, p.13, English section of the book.
2. *Ibid.*, p.15.
3. "List of Immigrant Passengers arriving on the S.S. *Rijndam* sailing from Rotterdam June 30th, 1906. Arriving at the Port of New York July 9, 1906." United States National Archives, Washington, D.C.
4. Heinrich W. Guggenheimer and Eva H. Guggenheimer, *Jewish Family Names and their Origins—An Etymological Dictionary*, 1992, Ktav Publishing House, Inc., Hoboken, NJ, p.282.
5. *Wolf Loeb Glosser*. Author and publisher unknown. A copy in possession of Isadore and Ruth Glosser.
6. "Ketubah of Zev Yehudah, (aka Wolf Laib), son of Ephraim, and Pesha Aidel, daughter of Noach Shalom, of blessed memory, February 27, 1875." Written in Aramaic. Original mailed by Sam Glosser to the Naturalization Department, Post Office Building, Pittsburgh, PA, on December 6, 1935. Copy in the possession of Isadore and Ruth Glosser.
7. Interview with Frances Weisman Gallin by Isadore Glosser, July 24, 1977, at the Gallin home, 526 Woodruff, S.W., Beverly Hills, CA. Original tape recording in the possession of Isadore and Ruth Glosser.
8. Interview with Fred Glosser by Isadore and Ruth Glosser on July 29, 1997, at the author's home.
9. Interview of Bella Glosser Coppersmith and Nathan Ossip by Morton Glosser, March 3, 1971, at the Coppersmith home, 233 Tioga Street. Copy of the tape recording in the possession of Isadore and Ruth Glosser.
10. *Ibid.*
11. *Encyclopedia Judaica*, Keter Publishing House Ltd., Jerusalem, Israel, 1971. Vol. 14, p.446.

12. *Ibid.*, Vol. 13, p.698.
13. Beulah-Rose Gross, "What is Your Name?", *Avotaynu*, Vol.XIII, Number 2, Summer 1997, p.11.
14. Interview of Bella Levine Baum by her children on December 25, 1982, at the home of Arthur and Marcia Conescu in Port Washington, NY. Copy of tape recording in possession of Isadore and Ruth Glosser.
15. Interview with Frank Glosser by Isadore and Ruth Glosser on August 29 and 30, 1992, in Johnstown, PA. Original tape recording in the possession of Isadore and Ruth Glosser.
16. Telephone interview with Harold Glosser, son of Schmuel Glosser, March 5, 1998.
17. Interview with Nathan Ossip by Isadore Glosser, May 4, 1977, in Nathan Ossip's office in Queens, NY. Original tape in possession of Isadore and Ruth Glosser.
18. Interview with Bella Glosser Coppersmith by Isadore Glosser, September 28, 1977, at the Coppersmith home, 233 Tioga Street, Johnstown, PA. Original tape recording in the possession of Isadore and Ruth Glosser.
19. Interview with Fred Glosser, *op. cit.*
20. Interview with Bella Glosser Coppersmith, *op. cit.*
21. *Ibid.*
22. Interview by Isadore Glosser with Nathan Ossip, *op. cit.*
23. Interview with Frances Weisman Gallin, *op. cit.*
24. Now Dnepropetrovsk.
25. Interview with Bella Glosser Coppersmith, *op. cit.*
26. *Antopol Yiskor Book*, *op. cit.*, p.44.

27. Ewa Morawska, *Insecure Prosperity: Small Town Jews in Industrial America, 1890-1940*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 1996, p.29. See also Lawrence S. Glosser, "After the Horse Died: An Historical and Sociological Study of the Glosser Family of Johnstown, Pennsylvania"(M.S. thesis, Hebrew Union College, 1972), p.30.

To the *Goldene Medina*, America

First Stop New York

Insofar as it was not easy for a man who owed significant sums of money to leave town, Wolf Laib departed in the dead of night leaving Bessie and the unmarried children as guarantors to assure their creditors that all of the money due them would be paid back. He sailed from Hamburg, Germany on the S.S. *Moltke* of the Hamburg-America Line on December 26, 1902, and arrived at Ellis Island on January 7, 1903. The ship's manifest declared that he was a Russian Hebrew who could read and write, that he was from Antopol, that he had \$8.00 in his possession, that his destination was New York, and that he was being met by his sister Freda Judith's husband, Schmuel Levine, who lived in New York City.¹

Wolf Laib found work in New York City peddling bananas and other fruit on street corners, and began sending small sums of money back to the family.² Nathan, who hated life in Poland, soon followed his father to New York and secured work in a sweat shop. When he received his first paycheck, he sent part of it to his mother advising her not to pay off any creditor fully, but to give a little money to each so that they would continue to supply her with merchandise.

To Johnstown

Nathan, however, was not happy toiling in a New York sweatshop and went to visit his uncle, Moses Glosser, who was then living in Stoystown, Pennsylvania. Nathan liked the area and found work as a tailor in Johnstown at Mr. Cohen's laundry-tailor shop which was located at 105 Franklin Street near the intersection of Franklin and Washington Streets. To save money, he lived in the back of the store, cooking, eating and sleeping there. Before long he persuaded Wolf Laib to give up his New York job and relocate in Johnstown. Both men lived in the rear of Mr. Cohen's shop. With the help of his brother Moses, Wolf Laib secured a horse and wagon and began to peddle merchandise.

Apparently Nathan impressed Mr. Cohen favorably because after a relatively short time Cohen told Nathan that he was taking his wife to visit her family and he wanted Nathan to run the store for the week he would be away. Nathan was terrified at the prospect of being in charge because at the time his knowledge of English was limited. But Cohen assured him that he could handle matters and made arrangements to leave. Not too long after his return, Cohen offered to sell Nathan the business explaining that his wife wanted to be closer to her family who lived in the Harrisburg area. Nathan was about 21 years old at the time.

Nathan was in a quandary. He wanted to buy the tailor shop, but he had no capital. Everything over and above expenses was going back to Antopol. He turned to Mr. Morris Miller, a leading Jewish merchant who owned Miller's Clothing Store on Main Street, for advice. Miller advised him to buy it for the asking price, \$200.00. When Nathan explained he had no money, Mr. Miller offered to loan him the \$200.00 without collateral. He told Nathan that he had been impressed by his diligence and hard work. The deal was consummated on a handshake and Nathan's assurance that he would repay every penny. In later years, Nathan choked with emotion every time he recounted the story.

The store did well and Nathan expanded to selling second hand clothing. Before long he needed help. Wolf Laib disposed of his horse and wagon and joined in the enterprise. By dint of saving and hard work, they were able to send a steamship ticket to David to join them. When he arrived, they secured a job for him at Max Weisberg & Son's General Store at 201 Broad Street in Cambria City.³ When the business grew sufficiently, they brought David into the store.

The sign in front of the store at that time read: "N. Glosser — Specializing in Trunks and Men's Furnishings." Trunks were an important item in the immigrant culture. Most of the men had left their families in Europe. Once established here, they would purchase trunks and, with each paycheck, add an item or two of clothing to put in the trunks. When the trunks were filled, they would send them back to their families in the old country.⁴

By 1904 Wolf Laib was already actively involved in the Johnstown Jewish religious community. There is an entry in Yiddish dated October 9, 1904, in the *Journal and Minute Book of Rodef Sholom* which describes the decision by members to purchase land for a permanent *shul* (synagogue). Included in the minutes of the meeting is a list of members contributing money towards the purchase of the land. The largest single contributor was I. Schmerin who pledged \$70.00. Two men pledged \$50.00 each. A larger number of members, including M. Weisberg, pledged \$12.00 each. L. Glosser, although he had only been in Johnstown a year and a half, pledged \$6.00.⁵ In all, \$543.00 was pledged that night by the twenty-six members present. The cornerstone was laid in 1905 for the first permanent synagogue of Rodef Sholom Congregation.

In 1905 the story of pogroms in the Russian Empire was described by the Johnstown newspapers, and the efforts that local Jews were making toward relief for the victims. Listed separately were the contributions by members of the Israel Isaiah Lodge No. 280, Order of B'rith Abraham. Among this list are:

Wolf Glosser \$1.50

Nathan Glosser \$1.50⁶

This is the first public listing of Glosser contributions to Jewish communal causes. What is also significant about this listing is the amount ... Within this Lodge, the Glossers were the biggest contributors to the relief fund. Although they may have been more motivated by their concern for their family still in Europe, this set a precedent for the kind of involvement the family would have in future communal causes. Since Wolf Laib had so recently arrived in America and had not yet established himself, ... this was no gesture of charity by a wealthy man.⁷

By 1906 Wolf Laib, Nathan and David had saved enough money to send for Bessie and the unmarried children, Saul, Sam, and Bella. Jennie Ossip and Rose Weisman, who were already married and had families of their own, did not come at this time. Bessie and the unmarried children did not leave Antopol, however, until they had fully repaid all their creditors. Bessie left her stall to her daughter, Rose.

Bessie was now 50, Saul 15, Sam 13, and Bella 9.⁸ They departed from Rotterdam on June 30th 1906, on the S.S. *Rijndam* and arrived at Ellis Island on July 9, 1906. The S.S. *Rijndam*, built in 1901 for the Holland-America Line, carried 280 first class passengers, 200 second, and 1,800 third.⁹ The Glosser family was among those who traveled third class in steerage. The Ship Passenger Arrival List stated that they were Russian Hebrews; could read and write; that Bessie was in possession of \$50.00; and that they were going to Johnstown, Pennsylvania, to reunite with husband and father, W. Glotzer, c/o L. Glazer, 105 Franklin Street, Johnstown, Pennsylvania.¹⁰ Arrangements had been made for HIAS¹¹ to put them and all their possessions on the train to Johnstown. In later years Bella told of how she and her mother had observed how beautifully the people on the train were dressed. They had concluded that all the other passengers were going to an important wedding.¹²

The train pulled into the B & O Passenger Station on Washington Street where a driver with a horse and wagon was waiting to take them to the store which was just around the corner. Nathan, however, had paid the driver extra to first take them on a tour to see the sights of Johnstown.¹³ When they pulled up in front of the store, the first thing Bella saw was her father talking into the wall. She became very frightened as she had never seen a telephone and thought her father had lost his mind.¹³

In anticipation of the family's arrival, the newly renamed Louis Glosser and Nathan Glosser had purchased a home at 18 River Avenue,¹⁴ close to the synagogue and the Pennsylvania Railroad Station, for \$3500. The lot, situated in the 13th Ward, (formerly Millville Borough), was forty-four feet wide and ran back to Garden Alley.¹⁵ The house had neither electricity nor central heating, and it was furnished with second hand furniture, but to the newly arrived immigrants it was a palace. Bella wrote to her sisters that they had wooden floors in all the rooms, rugs on the floor, and a bathroom inside the house.

Nathan and David delighted in initiating the newcomers to the wonders of living in the United States. They brought bananas home and Bessie, who had never seen a banana, declared it was not a kosher food. When they finally convinced her that bananas were not *traif* (non-kosher), Bella attempted to eat one, skin and all—an experience common to many new immigrants. On another occasion they brought ice cream home to the greenhorns. "What cold butter this is." was their observation.¹⁶

The School Experience

Saul, Sam and Bella were enrolled in the third grade in public school. Initially they knew no English and it was an ordeal for the boys, now 15 and 13. Other students taunted them with epithets like "greenhorn" and worse. They were frequently in fights, and before too long they dropped out of school to work with their father and brothers. Their help was useful. The miners and mill men would bring their dirty clothes to the shop, and the boys would take them home where they laid them on the basement floor and scrubbed them.

For Bella, school was a pleasurable experience. She was astounded that girls as well as boys were required to attend school. It amazed her also that time was allocated for recess and lunch rather than continuing non-stop as was the custom in Antopol. At first she understood nothing. Gradually, however, she learned the language and was quickly advanced to her proper age level class.

The fact that she attended school, however, did not excuse Bella from home duties. The housekeeping was her responsibility. Bessie, worn out from years of toil and childbearing, was not in good health, and much of the household work was delegated to Bella. She was up at five in the morning to scrub the floors, get the fire started in the coal stove, and clean the house. At lunchtime she came home, changed out of her one school dress, and did other household chores until it was time to change back into her school dress and return to class. At night, in addition to her homework, she did the ironing for the five men in the house.¹⁷

The Courtship and Marriage of Nathan and Fanny

Even before she left Antopol, Bessie was urging Nathan to get married. Nathan explained he had neither time nor opportunity to find a Jewish wife. Bessie solved the problem by arranging a match with Fanny Nisselbaum, daughter of Yehude Zundel and Hodes Nisselbaum. Hodes sold geese from her stall in the Antopol market.¹⁸ The goose trade was one of the major agricultural industries in Antopol. The geese were imported from Russia and fed and raised in special *poshornies*. When the geese became fat, they were transported to Lithuania or Germany.¹⁹

Fanny's mother's maiden name was Hodes Glotzer, a cousin. We don't know the exact relationship, but it's possible that Hodes and Ephraim were sister and brother. The birth dates are similar.²⁰ That would have made Fanny and Nate first cousins once removed. It was not uncommon for cousins to marry given the limited Jewish marriage pool in a small shtetl like Antopol and the primitive transportation in Congress Poland.

Nathan sent Fanny a proposal of marriage and a steamship ticket to New York. Fanny procrastinated for two years before deciding to accept Nathan's proposal. Meanwhile, she had to find a safe place to hide the steamship ticket which was a prized commodity. She solved the problem by hiding it in the Passover dishes. When Passover was due, she was the one who volunteered to take out the dishes. During Passover she hid the ticket in her shoe returning it to its hiding place in the dishes when the holiday season was over.

The couple corresponded during this time, and after two years Fanny decided to accept Nathan's proposal of marriage. As she was planning her trip to the United States, Fanny sent Nathan a postcard which read in part: "My dear Cavalier, I'm bringing (such and such) clothes. Please tell me what the styles are. If they aren't fashionable, I won't bring them ..."

Nathan, nattily dressed in a black chesterfield coat and gray spats, met Fanny upon her arrival in New York. Fanny stayed with an uncle Eisenberg in New York while Nathan showed her the wonders of the city. She was in no hurry to come to Johnstown as she knew that once married, her parameters as wife and mother would be limited. Finally, Louis wrote and reminded them it was time to come home.

They were married in Johnstown by the Reverend H. Kaminsky on March 22, 1908²¹ and settled into married life at 18 River Avenue. Freda "Fritzi" Glosser was born to them January 24, 1909; Gerald was born July 26, 1911; followed by Bessie who was born August 4, 1912. During this early period of their married life, Nathan and Fanny boarded roomers in the house so that they could save enough to send passage money to family still in Antopol.²²

A Business Opportunity Arises

About this time, Nathan and David had an opportunity to buy Jacob Fisher's storeroom at 118 Franklin Street which was across the street from where they were currently in business.²³ For awhile they debated about the advisability of purchasing it and then decided to do it. They bought the store over the strenuous objections of their mother and Fanny who feared they were overextending themselves.

The store is described in 1910 as:

... clothing and gents furnishings—118 Franklin Street. The business has been established for the last three years and has grown rapidly ... The members of the firm include Mr. David Glosser and Mr. Nathan Glosser, who keep fully abreast of the times in the conduct of their business and cater to the best trade. The stock comprises clothing, gents furnishings, goods and hats of the most famous and reliable manufacture, and only such goods are handled as they are of the best quality and latest style.²⁴

Business was good in the following years. The *Johnstown City Directory* of 1913 lists the family as doing business at three different locations: Glosser Brothers at 118 Franklin Street and 137 Clinton Street, as well as Glosser, L. & Sons, clothing, 105 Franklin Street.

Nathan Becomes Ill

Despite the fact that the business was doing well, it was not the best of times for Nathan personally. He became so ill with asthma that it became necessary to move away from Johnstown. He and Fanny decided to leave Fritzi temporarily in Johnstown with her grandparents while they took the two younger children and moved to a two room apartment in the Bronx. Shortly after

they had settled in, Gerald became ill with diphtheria. Fearful that Bessie might contract the dread disease, David came by train to take her back to Johnstown until Gerald had fully recovered.²⁵

Nathan and Fanny's stay in the Bronx was shortlived. They soon relocated to Detroit, Michigan, where Nathan opened a men's store. While in Detroit in 1919 Fanny and Nathan were reached to sign an affidavit to permit Fanny's sister Minke, her husband Moses Gingold, and their five sons, aged four to twelve, to leave anti-Semitic Brest-Litovsk and come to the United States. They appeared before the Americanization Committee of the Board of Commerce in Detroit and signed an affidavit which said in part:

Fanny Glosser, age 35, and Nathan Glosser, age 37, 298 Kirby Avenue East, Detroit, Michigan, being duly sworn upon their oath, say that they are the sister and brother-in-law of Moses Gingold, age 37, and the aunt and uncle of their five sons ... all residing in Brest, Litowski, Poland and desirous of coming to the United States to join these affiants.²⁶

Nathan Ossip and Morris Levine Arrive in Johnstown

Meanwhile, Louis and his sons had saved enough money to send for two more family members—Nathan, oldest child of Jennie and Joseph Ossip, and Morris Levine, son of Louis' sister, Freda Glosser Levine. The boys, prime targets for conscription in the czar's army, arrived in New York City on March 25, 1914. Nathan was 14; Morris was 19. Nathan later recalled that they came steerage and the voyage took 21 days. HIAS arranged for the boys to go to Philadelphia where Louis met them and took them to Johnstown. Nathan was enrolled in the Johnstown Public Schools. A lad of 14 and separated from his parents, brothers and sisters, Nathan was initially homesick. In later years he confessed to crying whenever he received letters from home. He gradually adjusted, however, to life in his new surroundings. When he had finished eighth grade, he went to work full time. With Sam, he washed clothes in the basement of the house in River Alley. He was paid fifty cents a week plus room and board. Soon he also was at the store which opened at 5:00 a.m. to sell millmen work gloves and other necessities on their way to work. In later years he recalled, as one of the highlights of those times, the occasion when one of the men, who was on his way back to Europe, bought a suit of clothes from him. In 1917 Nathan Glosser asked Nathan if he would come to Detroit to help him in his store. Nathan Ossip went and remained there until 1919 when he returned to Johnstown.²⁷

Nathan and Fanny Glosser brought their family back to Johnstown in 1920 although they returned regularly to Michigan as well as nearby Windsor, Ontario for health reasons. Later they divided their time between Johnstown and Miami Beach where Nathan eventually acquired the Georgian Hotel.

Endnotes

1. "List or Manifest of Alien Immigrants for the Commissioner of Immigration Sailing on the S.S. *Moltke* from Hamburg on December 26, 1902. Arriving at the Port of New York, January 7, 1903." Church of Latter Day Saints, Los Angeles Family History Center, 10741 Santa Monica Boulevard, L.A., CA. File T715, Vol. 343-467. N.B. Shortly after Schmuel Levine met Wolf Laib he won some money in a lottery and returned to Antopol where he "lived off the fat of the land" til his money ran out. He came to the United States several times before he brought his family here to settle permanently. Telephone interview with Ruth Blumenfeld, granddaughter of Schmuel Levine, March 5, 1998.
2. "Business Hall of Fame," a program book of the First Annual Greater Johnstown/Cambria County Business Hall of Fame Dinner held at Sunnehanna Country Club, May 7, 1992. Louis Glosser was one of six honorees. Copy in possession of Isadore and Ruth Glosser.
3. This was my maternal grandfather's store.
4. Material in the preceding five and a half paragraphs in large part from an interview with Bessie Glosser Silberstein and Freda, "Fritzi" Glosser Bernstein, September 15, 1977, by Isadore Glosser at Bessie Silberstein's home, Tioga Street, Johnstown, PA. Original tapes in possession of Isadore and Ruth Glosser.
5. *Journal and Minute Book of Rodef Sholom*, p.355. Book in the archival collection of Beth Sholom Congregation, 700 Indiana Street, Johnstown, PA.
6. *Johnstown Tribune*, November 11 and 13, 1905.
7. Glosser, "After the Horse Died," *op. cit.*
8. These were their approximate ages. Immigrants of that generation rarely knew their exact birth dates.
9. Eugene Waldo Smith, *Trans-Atlantic Passenger Ships, Past and Present, Part 1*, George H. Dean Co., 1947, Boston, MA, p.225.
10. "List of Immigrant Passengers arriving on the S.S. *Rijndam* Sailing from Rotterdam June 30th, 1906. Arriving at the port of New York July 9, 1906." United States Archives, Washington, D.C.
11. Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society.
12. Interview with Bella Glosser Coppersmith, *op. cit.*

13. *Ibid.*
14. Better known as River Alley.
15. "Deed of Sale from Henry Drew *et ux* to L. Glosser and Nathan Glosser," February 27, 1906 (recorded March 1, 1906), State of Pennsylvania, County of Cambria, Deed Book, Volume 187, p.318.
16. Interview with Bessie Glosser Silberstein and Freda "Fritzi" Glosser Bernstein, *op. cit.*
17. Material in this preceding section in large part from an interview with Bella Glosser Coppersmith, *op. cit.*
18. Ronald Sanders, *Shores of Refuge*, Schocken and Holt, 1988, NY,NY, p.378.
19. *Antopol: Yizkor Book*, *op. cit.* p.16.
20. "Descendents of Yechiel Nisselbaum." A family tree prepared by David C. Sloan, December 27, 1996. Copy in possession of Isadore and Ruth Glosser.
21. "Application for Marriage License, No. 84," filed before Alderman Will J. Lamberd, Alderman in the County of Cambria, State of Pennsylvania, March 17, 1908. Marriage certificate filed by Rev. H. Kaminsky on March 25, 1908.
22. Material in this preceding section in large part from the interview with Bessie Glosser Silberstein and Freda "Fritzi" Glosser Bernstein, *op. cit.*
23. The site of the present Glosser Building.
24. *The Story of Johnstown, Pennsylvania*, Illustrated, Clarence F. Weaver, Publisher, *circa* 1911; see also Glosser, "After the Horse Died", p.76. *op. cit.*
25. Interview with Bessie Glosser Silberstein and Freda "Fritzi" Glosser Bernstein, *op. cit.*
26. Sanders, *op. cit.*, p. 378.
27. Material in this paragraph in large part from the interview with Nathan Ossip, *op. cit.*

World War I - The War Years in Antopol

Antopol in the Pre-War Period

Nathan Ossip and Morris Levine, who arrived in the United States on March 25, 1914, were the last members of the Glosser family that Louis and his sons would be able to sponsor to this country until 1920. Before they could send for any other members of the family, World War I broke out in August, 1914. No other Glossers would leave Antopol until two years following the signing of the Armistice in 1918.

In the years preceding World War I life in Antopol followed a steady, albeit uneasy rhythm. Six days a week the boys trudged off to *chayder* (Jewish religious school) which commenced at 8:00 a.m. and continued uninterrupted until 9:00 p.m. except for early dismissal on Fridays. In the winter it was pitch dark when they were dismissed. There was no street illumination; the more fortunate boys had kerosene lanterns to light their way home. The Sabbath was strictly observed. There were several synagogues in Antopol. Nathan Ossip recalled that he went to one which had an early morning Sabbath service. As soon as the service was over he hurried home to watch the younger children while his parents attended services in a larger *shul*.

None of the streets in Antopol was paved. In wintertime people walked in the frozen ruts. When it rained they had to slog through mud which often came up to their knees. In the summer the streets turned to swirling dust which was exacerbated by the herds of cattle which the farmers drove through the streets. To make matters even more miserable, the livestock brought swarms of flying, creeping, biting insects which preyed on the populace. About 1912 someone drove the first automobile through Antopol. People by the score got down on their hands and knees after the car had passed to study the tire tracks and smell the kerosene fumes.¹

Many Jews in Antopol tilled the land behind their houses growing potatoes, onions, carrots and cucumbers. Some worked by themselves and others employed gentile workers. The vegetables were loaded on wagons and sent to markets in nearby towns.² Samuel Levine, husband of Freda Judith Glosser, made his living in this fashion employing gentile workers to help. The family also was involved in other ventures. Bella Levine Baum recalled that they would purchase sixty to one hundred geese each year which they kept in a special area behind their house. They would keep the geese for several months fattening them up for market. In cold weather it was her responsibility, with her siblings, to go out to the pen in the middle of the night to chase the geese around so they would not freeze to death. When the geese were fattened the *shaychet* (ritual slaughterer) was called to kill them. The family then plucked the feathers which they sold; the carcasses were bagged and shipped to Warsaw.³

In the center of Antopol stood the market place with 42 stalls. It was here that Rose Glosser Weisman kept the stall which she had been given by her mother. Fanny Nisselbaum Glosser's mother, Hodes, sold geese from her stall in the market. On Sundays the inhabitants from neighboring villages

would come to Antopol for the weekly fair to exchange goods in the local market. There were also two yearly fairs which were famous throughout the region.⁴

Antopol Becomes a Battleground

All this changed when World War I began. Poland had not been invaded by a foreign power since 1812. With the commencement of hostilities in 1914, however, it was devastated by foreign governments fighting to win control. Antopol suffered during the war years. It was a battleground for Russians, Germans, and Poles and changed hands from Russian to German control several times. The Russians consciously followed a scorched earth policy. In the wake of each advance or retreat, much of the village was burned. Frances Weisman Gallin, who was a child of five when the war began, vividly remembered the first of these engagements. She recalled the terror and fear of running with her parents to escape the conflagration. With the flames literally licking at their heels they sped in the dark from one spot to another until eventually they found the Ossips in a field. The family was huddled on the ground with the children under blankets to protect them from the acrid smoke billowing everywhere. "Make room for my little daughter" ordered Rose as she thrust Frances under a blanket with several of her cousins.⁵ Forever after the odor of smoke evoked in Frances the anguish and horror of that night.

The Weismans returned to their home after the fire had burned itself out only to find it a charred ruin of smoldering ashes. While her parents had other concerns, Frances mourned the loss of her only doll.

Fortunately, the Ossip house was spared and the Weismans lived with them for the duration of the war. Their home was on the main thoroughfare of Antopol where the battles often raged. The families could literally see soldiers blown to pieces and their body parts being strewn around the street. In one such episode the Ossip children and Frances watched horrified as a soldier in front of their house was blasted apart and his entrails were thrown up in the air and impaled over an electric wire where they remained for days.⁶

Another frightening experience for the families occurred when the occupying troops would make house-to-house searches looking for hidden enemy soldiers. Not infrequently the soldiers would shoot any male occupants of the household. When such a knock came on the door of the Ossip household, the men would hide; the children would take cover under tables and chairs; and Jennie would answer the door. On one occasion soldiers apprehended Joseph Ossip and beat him so badly that he was "out of his mind" for a time.⁷

The German Occupation

In September, 1915, the Germans occupied Antopol and it remained under German control until November, 1918. With the establishment of German rule, many of the non-Jewish residents of Antopol fled to Russia.⁸ Any hopes that the Jews of Antopol harbored that the Germans might be more benign masters were soon dashed. The German command commandeered foodstuffs, raw

materials, and precious metals including synagogue objects not only for the occupying forces, but also, as the British blockade tightened its grip on Germany, for the war effort in the homeland. They also began to establish German public schools to spread the German language and culture.⁹ During this period Bella Glosser had to write to her sisters in German which, fortunately, she had learned in public school.¹⁰ Not only did the Germans appropriate supplies from the populace of Antopol, but they also seized and sent young people to labor camps. George Ossip, who had attended *yeshiva* (a Jewish parochial school for religious studies) until the outbreak of hostilities, was conscripted for forced labor.¹¹ The youngest of the Ossip children, born December 25, 1916, was named "Shalom" Sydney, signifying his parents' yearning for peace.

The Ossip and Weisman families were very close and functioned as one family. In quieter moments Rose sold herring and salt in the stall inherited from her mother. Frances and the Ossip children played together. A favorite game was one which they played with horse chestnuts.

Frances had a tutor who taught her Hebrew and German which her parents and the Ossips spoke as well. A.Z. Weisman was a *melamed* (teacher) by profession. He instructed older boys in advanced religious studies. The Weismans owned half a cow. Frances later laughingly reminisced that they must have owned the half that had to be fed. One day while cutting grass for the cow she slashed her finger on the sickle. The cut bled profusely and Frances ran, bleeding, to her mother who was in the store. Rose closed the stall and ran with Frances to a nearby field where she picked leaves of a certain plant and wrapped the leaves tightly around the wound. Frances recalled the leaves were a pretty green with thin white veins and felt like velvet. The bleeding soon stopped.¹²

Underlying the veneer of mundane everyday life, however, an undercurrent of fear was always present. There was always hunger. There was always fear of forced labor and fear of conscription. And Jews were open prey for both the peasants and the occupying troops. One of Frances' most horrible memories involved a childhood friend of hers. One morning there was a lot of whispering in the town about the girl. Rose and Frances ran to her home. Frances recalled seeing blood on a bandage in the house. There was also a strong odor of disinfectant in the room. Rose quickly hurried Frances away. The little girl had been attacked and raped by a peasant. Years later Frances said that whenever she smelled disinfectant, that scene came back to haunt her.¹³

Endnotes

1. Material in this section in large part from the interview with Nathan Ossip, *op.cit.*
2. *Antopol: Yizkor Book, op. cit.*, p.16.
3. Material in this section in large part from the interview with Bella Levine Baum, *op.cit.*
4. *Antopol: Yizkor Book, op. cit.*, p.16.
5. Interview with Frances Weisman Gallin, *op. cit.*
6. *Ibid.*
7. Interview with Nathan Ossip, *op. cit.*
8. *Antopol Yiskor Book, op. cit.*, p.13.
9. *Ibid.*
10. Interview with Bella Glosser Coppersmith, *op. cit.*
11. Interview with George, "Zelig," Ossip, by Isadore and Ruth Glosser April 9, 1977, at George's cabana, Miami Beach, Florida. Original tape in the possession of Isadore and Ruth Glosser.
12. Interview with Frances Weisman Gallin, *op. cit.*
13. *Ibid.*



Ephraim Glosser, Antopol, Russian Empire, ca. 1900.



Louis Glosser, Johnstown, Pennsylvania, ca. 1917



Bessie Greenberg Glosser, Johnstown, Pennsylvania, ca. 1917.



Jennie Glosser Ossip



Rose Glosser Weisman



Nathan Glosser



David Glosser



Saul Glosser



Sam Glosser



Bella Glosser Coppersmith



Saul and Eva Hurwitz Glosser's wedding picture. New York, New York. June 28, 1921.

World War I - The War Years in America

Business in the War Years

Business continued to be good for the family during the war years. The *Johnstown City Directory* of 1915-1916 showed that the store at 137 Clinton Street had been closed, but the Franklin Street store had taken over the next shop at 120 Franklin Street. The address was now 118-120 Franklin Street, and it was selling ladies as well as men's ready to wear. Louis Glosser and Sons was still operating a cleaning and pressing shop at 105 Franklin Street.¹ In the same year Sam Glosser and Max Finkelson were operating a store at 139 Clinton Street in Johnstown.² Sam by then had already had a varied working experience. More than any of the other Glosser children, Sam had "sand in his shoes." He had worked for awhile as a plumber in New York City. An ardent Zionist and in anticipation of possibly making *aliyah* to Palestine,³ he had also worked in New Jersey at Zionist-sponsored agricultural training farms established by Jewish benefactors.

The Courtship and Marriage of David and Sylvia

1915 was the year that David Glosser met, fell in love, and married Sylvia Sacks. Sylvia, born and raised in Burlington, Vermont, was the youngest child of Rabbi Harris and Rachel Sacks. She had come to Boswell, Pennsylvania, situated about 15 miles south of Johnstown, to visit her sister, Sarah Isaacson. The two sisters had traveled to Johnstown to Fainberg's Kosher Butcher Shop on Iron Street⁴ to lay in a supply of meat for the Isaacson family. Another customer in Fainberg's at the time of their arrival was Bessie Glosser. It began to rain as the three women were ready to leave the butcher shop. Sylvia, who had an umbrella, offered to walk Bessie to her destination. Bessie, touched by Sylvia's consideration and attractiveness, told her that she wanted her bachelor son, David, to meet her. As they say, the rest is history. The couple was married by the Reverend H. Kaminsky on June 1, 1916, at the Hendler Hotel in Johnstown. Sylvia was 21 and David was 27 at the time of their marriage.⁵ Bessie made the wedding as Sylvia's mother was no longer living.⁶ Eileen Glosser was born in 1916; Ruth on February 4, 1919; Betty on August 7, 1921; Doris and Naomi on January 13, 1924; and Paul was born on January 22, 1930.

Johnstown Jews in the United States Army

The Jews of Johnstown strongly supported their nation's war effort after it entered on the side of the Allied powers in 1917. Several of the Glosser family served in the United States Armed Forces. One was Nathan Glosser, son of Moses and Ida Glosser. In 1917 Nathan, then twenty four years old, entered the United States Army. He was among the first of the American troops to be sent overseas. He was gassed during the war and although he returned home, the effects of the gas led to his early death from pneumonia on April 8, 1925, at the age of thirty four.

Saul Glosser was also in the armed services during World War I. He entered the army in 1917 going first to Camp Lee, Virginia, where another cousin, Max London, whose father was the brother of Frudl London Glosser,⁷ was stationed. Saul was later transferred to Fort Drum, New York, but the cessation of hostilities in 1918 precluded his being sent overseas.

Johnstown Jews in the Jewish Legion

Sam Glosser also saw service in World War I, but not with the United States Armed Forces. Blinded in his left eye by measles as a child in Antopol, he failed to pass the physical necessary to join the United States Armed Forces. It was about this time, however, that the British government issued a plea for more Jewish support in the struggle against the Central Powers. A Jewish Legion was organized in 1917 at the suggestion of World Zionist leaders, Chaim Weitzman and Vladimir Jabotinsky, to help battle the Turks in Palestine. Sam responded to the Zionist call. By memorizing the eye chart he passed the physical and enlisted in the British Legion on April 29, 1918 along with three other young Jews from Johnstown—Harry Richter, Marcus Sky, and Paul Zazofsky.⁸ In all, ten thousand Jewish men served in the Jewish Legion in World War I. The Jewish enlistees from Johnstown were among the five thousand who came from North America.

Sam left the United States with the Jewish Legion on May 5, 1918 and was shipped to the Middle East where he was stationed in Egypt and in Palestine as a private in the 42nd British Royal Fusiliers opposing the Turkish army. Although the war ended on November 11, 1918, Sam's unit was part of the British occupying force until his discharge on April 20, 1920. His discharge papers indicated in part that his character during this period "was good ... incurred no entries during the above service." His discharge papers also show that he received two blue chevrons, a British War Medal and a Victory Medal.⁹

Sam and Post War Palestine

During his tour of duty in Palestine, Sam traveled extensively throughout the country whenever the opportunity presented itself. Palestine was then a sparsely populated semi-desert except for Jaffa, Haifa and Jerusalem. Jews from Russia and other countries, inspired by necessity and Zionist ideals, were coming to Palestine and founding agricultural settlements there.

Among those who came in this period was Sam's childhood friend, Abe Galfond. Following his discharge from the United States Armed Forces in 1918, Abe made his way to Palestine, not an easy task in those days. He arrived in January 1920 and settled at Ben Shemen where he worked in the fields. The Jewish Legion was then camped close to Lod which was not far from Ben Shemen and the two friends soon found each other.

At that time the Arabs were attacking the Jewish colonies and Sam and other men from the Legion would come to Ben Shemen and "lose" their rifles and ammunition there so that the colonists could defend themselves against attack. The colony was surrounded by a walled square. One side of the square housed the stable. The colonists had made the walls between the stalls wide enough to hide their weapons as British officers sporadically raided the colony in search of

arms. Not all the settlements were walled. Rehovot and other non-walled colonies were attacked by Arabs but the settlers drove them off.

When Sam was discharged from the Legion, he and Abe decided to see the northern part of what is now Israel. The two buddies hopped a freight train of boxcars headed for the small Arab town of Afula. They perched on seats in the front of each car. Halfway there the train stopped. Railroad personnel chased out the Arabs who had been hiding in the boxcars and made Abe and Sam pay for the ride. When the train reached Afula they learned that the train ahead had been fired on by hostile Arabs and the tracks had been torn up. The pair had to walk from there.

The first settlement they came to was Degania which then consisted of six or seven very small one-room houses. The men were stringing barbed wire all around the homes. Sam, who could speak Hebrew, asked if they could stay the night as it was getting late. The settlers responded that they were expecting an attack and suggested they go on to Kinneret which was larger and walled.

When the men reached Kinneret, they found the men armed and the women preparing bandages. Sam and Abe asked for guns to help but there was not an extra one to be had. Undaunted they went to the stable. There Sam found a pitchfork and Abe a club. They were then assigned places on the wall near the entrance gate. Fortunately the attack did not materialize. When the armed Arabs came around the southern edge of Lake Kinneret (Sea of Galilee) they were stopped by British soldiers.

From Lake Kinneret the men walked to Tiberias and on to Nazareth and finally back to the railroad tracks.

In their travels Sam and Abe observed that a significant number of young Russian Jews who had come to Palestine were unable to find work. Consequently, Jewish agencies were resettling them in Argentina and other countries. Sam and Abe discussed the situation and decided that they could be more helpful if they went back to the United States and worked to raise money "instead of staying and keeping ... good men out of jobs which they needed to be able to stay."¹⁰

The Courtship and Marriage of Sam and Penina

It was while he was in the service that Sam met the girl who would become his wife, Pearl "Penina" Apter. She was the Palestine-born daughter of Russian Zionists who had made their way to Palestine in 1890. The family lived in Jaffa which was then comprised mostly of a collection of mud huts.¹¹ According to family who lived in Jaffa, Sam first saw Penina sitting outside her home operating her sewing machine. Her family initially did not encourage her friendship with a British soldier. Upon becoming further acquainted, however, they realized this was a Jewish soldier who spoke Yiddish and Hebrew as well as some Arabic, and acceptance quickly followed. They were married on February 20, 1919, in a tent at Rehovot with Penina's family and Sam's army friends attending. Among those friends was David Ben Gurion who had stood guard duty with Sam many times.

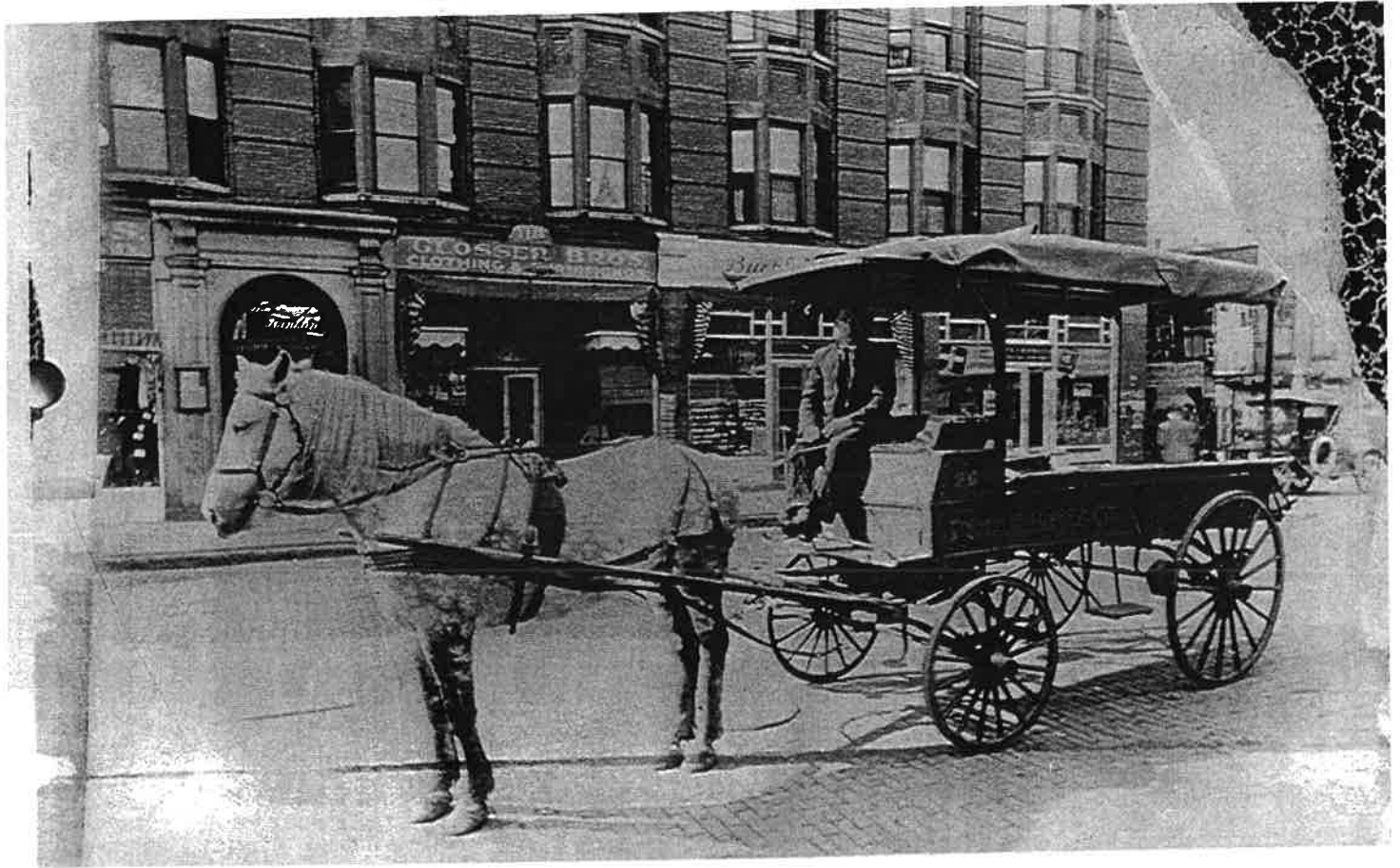
Freda, their oldest child, was born in Jaffa on December 16, 1919. The young couple returned with their baby daughter to the United States in July, 1920, on the ship S.S. *Philadelphia*.

Isadore "Izzy"¹² was born January 31, 1922, at 527 Sherman Street in the Kernville section of Johnstown, as was "Ephraim" Fred who was born on January 8, 1924. In 1924 the family returned to Palestine on the ship, S.S. *Britania*, for a visit. Sam would not return again to Israel until 1949.

Although the Glosser family was always actively involved in Zionist causes, the reality of having a son and a brother, Sam, who served in the military in Palestine was further impetus to this commitment.

Endnotes

1. *Johnstown City Directory*, Pittsburgh, Polk Company, 1915-1916. Copy at the *Johnstown Tribune-Democrat*.
2. Interview with Irving London by Isadore Glosser March 15, 1978, at the London home, 523 Wayne Street, Johnstown, PA. Original tape recording in the possession of Isadore and Ruth Glosser
3. *Aliyah* is the "going up" or permanent migration to the Jewish homeland.
4. Now Walnut Street.
5. "Application for Marriage License, No. 12473, Third Series", filed before Alderman Will J. Lamberd, Alderman in the County of Cambria, State of Pennsylvania, May 24, 1916. Marriage certificate filed by Rev. H. Kaminsky on June 1, 1916.
6. Telephone interview with Doris Glosser Rudolph, daughter of Sylvia and David, August 19, 1997.
7. Ephraim and Frudl were Wolf Laib's parents.
8. Letter from Abe Galfond to Fred Glosser, January 26, 1975. Copy in possession of Isadore and Ruth Glosser.
9. British Certificate of Discharge, No. J4147, Serial Number 12011, issued to Sam Glosser on April 20, 1920. Original in possession of Isadore and Ruth Glosser.
10. Material in this section in large part from the letter of Abe Galfond to Fred Glosser, *op.cit.*, and from an interview with Abe Galfond by Isadore Glosser in Miami Beach, FL, April 6, 1977. Original tape in possession of Isadore and Ruth Glosser.
11. *Ibid.*
12. He was named Isaac "Yitzchak" for his maternal grandfather, Isaac Apter. The name Isadore was conferred on him by his second grade teacher who declared that Izzy, which was what his parents called him, was not a proper name and that henceforth he would be Isadore. Of course, in those years no greenhorn immigrant parents were about to dispute the edict of a teacher.



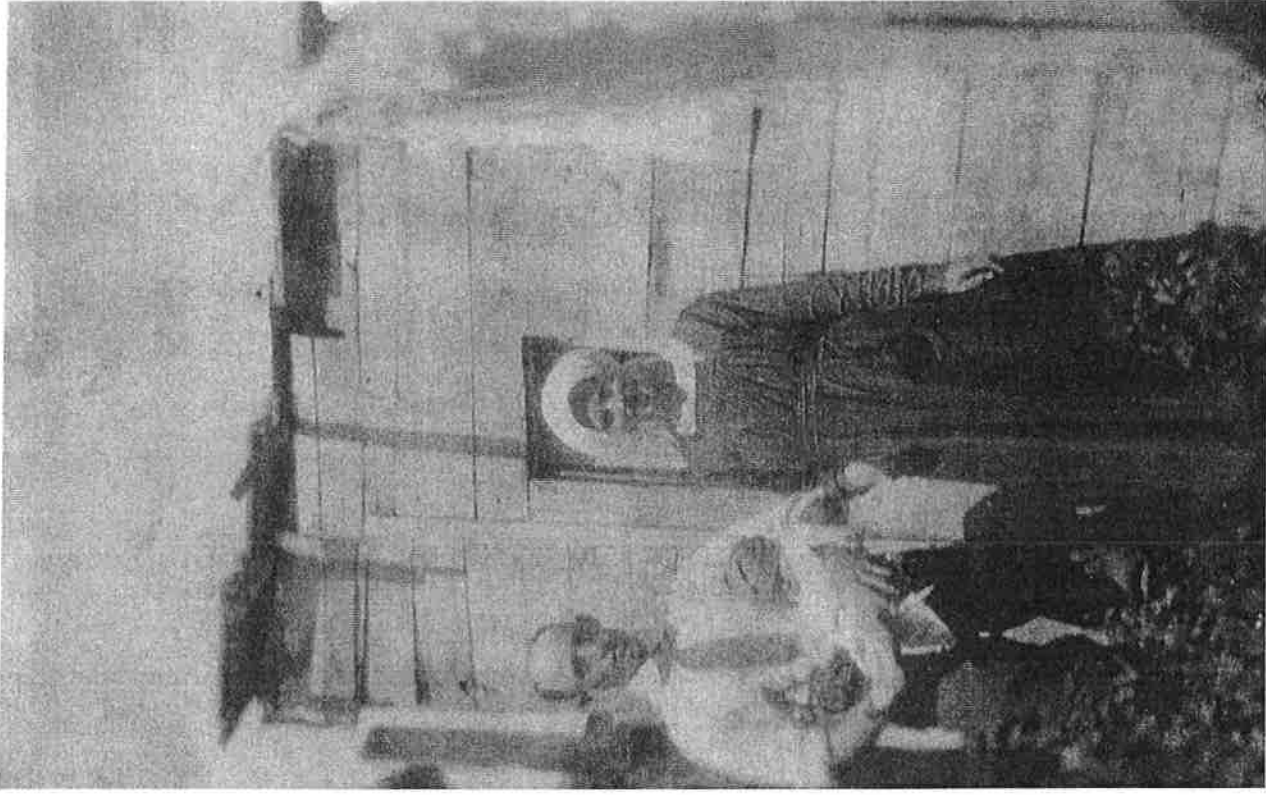
Glosser Bros. Store at 118 Franklin Street, ca. 1907.



Glosser Bros. interior at 118 Franklin Street with David Glosser at left behind counter. ca. 1910.



Sam and Pearl Apter Glosser's wedding picture, Rehovot, Palestine. February 20, 1919.



Sam and Pearl Glosser with infant daughter, Freda. Jaffa, Palestine. ca. 1920.

The Post War Years

Antopol after the Armistice

The signing of the Armistice in 1918 did nothing to restore peace and stability to Antopol. Anarchy spread as the German occupiers returned to the fatherland. In time Poland reassumed control, but their anti-Semitic policies sanctioned the continuance of rioting and looting. In 1919 and 1920, occupation of Antopol seesawed between the Bolsheviks and the Poles with the Poles eventually gaining sovereignty. The Polish policy of anti-Semitism continued unabated. In addition to harassing and assaulting individual Jews, the Polish government passed laws forcing Jewish children into Polish schools and conscripting Jews into military service.¹

Like other Polish Jews, members of the Glosser family suffered. Food was scarce and hunger was rampant. Money sent by the Johnstown relatives helped in the purchase of food, but the misery and uncertainty of everyday life were draining. Anxiety about sporadic anti-Semitic terrorism was always with the family as was worry about conscription into forced labor and the armed services. Frances Weisman Gallin later recalled, "I was such a sad child."² Fear of food deprivation remained a constant for Frances all her life. Even as a mature woman she kept her freezer stocked with loaves of bread far beyond her family's needs.³

During these years the Antopol families were in frequent communication with the family in Johnstown who told them how good life was in America and urged them to come. Finally, by the spring of 1920 whatever reservations the Ossips and Weismans might have had about leaving the familiarity of the shtetl were overridden by the belief that life had to be better in America. The first to leave were George Ossip, a candidate for induction into the Polish army, and the Weismans.⁴ The Ossips followed a few months later. With the passage money sent by Louis and Bessie, the families loaded all their belongings onto a wagon which took them to the railroad station a short distance away. From there the train transported them to Antwerp, Belgium, where they set sail for the United States.

For the Weismans and George Ossip the final Polish anti-Semitic episode occurred on the train ride to Antwerp. As the train slowed to a stop in Danzig all the passengers were ordered out onto the platform. There Polish soldiers began cutting off the beards of Jewish men. (for Orthodox men being bearded is an integral part of their faith). The Weisman family was one of the last to disembark and Avrohom Zelig managed to conceal a good part of his beard with a neckerchief which he pulled up onto his lower face. Fortunately, he was spared this final indignity, but the incident seared itself into the family's psyche.⁵

Johnstown's Economic Growth

The period between the arrival of Louis and Nathan Glosser in the early part of the twentieth century and the arrival of the Ossip and Weisman families in 1920 was a period of dynamic growth in the Johnstown economy. By 1910 Johnstown was counted among the nation's top six steel-producing centers.

The major impetus for its industrial expansion was Cambria Iron Works (Later Bethlehem Steel), founded in Johnstown in 1852. Its mammoth mills turned out 125,000 tons of steel rails and over 300,000 steel ingots annually by the end of the century, and almost four times that amount by the outbreak of World War I. This pivotal industry was supported by the smaller Johnstown Steel Rail Company, the National Radiator Company, brick-, clay- and machinery-manufacturing enterprises, and by nearly fifty coal mines in nearby boroughs and townships.⁶

As Johnstown's industrial parameters expanded so did its population.

During the thirty years from 1880 to 1910, Johnstown grew from a borough of barely 8,000 inhabitants to a town of over 50,000; between the turn of the century and World War I, the population of Cambria and the three adjacent counties more than doubled.⁷

As a consequence of the economic and demographic growth of the area, the city developed rapidly in a short period of time. Between 1904 and 1914 Johnstown saw a new post office, a new city hall, a new library, and other trappings of a booming city, including numerous multi-storey buildings, a new railroad station, YMCA, and a country club.⁸

Glosser's Business Grows

As the Johnstown area flourished, so did the Glosser enterprises. When the Max London family moved to Johnstown in 1917 the Glossers were expanding their business at 118-120 Franklin Street to include another storeroom. The site where the building stood had originally been the location of the Johnstown Opera House which had been constructed in 1893. After the Opera House burned down on October 31, 1903, the present building, originally named the Ellis Building, was erected.⁹ At the time when the Londons came to town the first floor of the building housed, in addition to the Glosser storerooms, a meat market, a piano store, and the American Express company which at that time was called Wells Fargo. The second floor contained the offices of the telephone company and several coal mines. On the third floor were apartments which Irving London, son of Max London, called, with some reticence, "houses of ill repute", while there was a skating rink and "other things" on the fourth floor.¹⁰ In those years the Penn Traffic Company Store "delivered goods of P.T.Co. six times daily to the apartments on the third & 4th [sic] floors" by horse and wagon.¹¹

From this period on the family steadily expanded the business from selling men and women's clothing to becoming a complete department store. In the process they took over all the other stores on the ground level, and, shortly thereafter, they purchased the balance of the building

including the basement. By 1925 the family had closed the cleaning and pressing shop at 105 Franklin Street and was calling the firm Glosser Bros.

With the exception of Bessie, all the family worked at the store in a variety of tasks. David, who had been the only one of the brothers to manage the business during the war years when Saul and Sam were in the armed services and Nathan had been in Detroit, now shared some of those responsibilities with his brothers. When Nathan Ossip returned to Johnstown in 1919, he worked evenings in the store watching the watchman and helping to knock down walls to expand the store. In the daytime he worked in the men's clothing department.¹² At the age of ten Irving London was paid twenty five cents per day for working in Glossers on Saturday afternoons after synagogue services were over.¹³ Bella Glosser worked at a variety of jobs from cleaning the store, to selling, to keeping the books, to writing ads. The only job she disliked was fitting workmen's shoes. When a man came in to be fitted for a pair of shoes he was asked, "Are these for yourself, for work or for Sundays?"¹⁴ Like the Glossers, many of Glosser's customers were foreign born. They felt comfortable coming to Glossers where the family could converse with them in their mother tongue.

In the early 1920's Glossers introduced what was arguably the first self-serve food market in the United States. It was located in a section of the first floor of the store. Called the Glosserteria, it revolutionized the food retailing business by introducing the concept of self service in the grocery business. By 1927 the volume of business had expanded to such a degree that the grocery was moved to the basement where it was enlarged considerably. The meat market remained on the first floor.

Louis and Bessie Move to Westmont

The post war years saw many changes in the personal lives of the family. Although the smoke belching forth from the Bethlehem Steel Works signalled good times for business, it exacerbated Louis' asthma attacks to the point where he had to try to escape the foul air. On May 27, 1919, he purchased a home in Westmont at 233 Tioga Street.¹⁵ Shortly thereafter he, Bessie, Bella and Saul took possession. This remained home for Louis and Bessie for the balance of their lives. While it was not a mansion, it was a far cry from their initial Johnstown residence on River Avenue. Located in the most desirable section of town, it was a spacious, comfortable home which became a magnet for Johnstown's Jewish community.

The Weismans Arrive in Johnstown

When the train brought the Weisman's to Johnstown in the spring of 1920, Saul met them at the station in his automobile and drove them up the steep, winding Millcreek Road to Westmont to reunite them with the family. For ten year old Frances, the experience had the aura of a dream. She had never seen an automobile, let alone ride in one. And to think her uncle owned one. It was already dark when they arrived at her grandparents' home. They entered to a house filled with relatives waiting to greet them. By Antopol standards the rooms were huge; electric chandeliers shed light on the assembled group; beautiful carpets were spread on the hardwood floors and food

was plentiful. When she saw lights shining in a neighbor's house, she assumed that that was where her grandparents' servants lived. Frances was certain that her grandparents were *seignuers* of an estate.¹⁶

Initially the Weismans lived with Rose's parents at 233 Tioga Street. Louis himself enrolled Frances in the Tioga Street School where, with the help of a supportive teacher, she soon became happily acclimated to life in the United States. For Rose and Avrohom Zelig, acclimation never came. As Frances later said, "My parents never sank roots in the United States."¹⁷ Aside from his inability to speak English upon arrival in this country, Avrohom Zelig was not temperamentally suited to working in the family's retail establishment. A learned man who had studied in the Grodner Yeshiva, he was thoroughly indoctrinated in Jewish studies and chose not to expand his area of interest to selling merchandise. Shortly after their arrival a sister of Avrohom who lived in Bridgeport, Connecticut found work for her brother in Connecticut teaching the sons of Meyer and Malka Hurwitz. During the extended period of time that he was away from Johnstown, Rose and Frances lived with Louis and Bessie. When AZ, as he was called, returned to Johnstown the three of them moved to a home the Glosser family owned in Garden Alley downtown. For some years AZ taught in the *chayder* of Rodef Sholom Synagogue. After he had retired from that position he did private tutoring in the homes of many of the Glosser children.

The Ossip Family Arrives in Johnstown

The arrival of the Ossip family completed the reunification of the immediate family of Louis and Bessie in the safe haven of the *Goldene Medina*. Jennie and Joseph and their six younger children arrived in the United States shortly after the Weismans. Their youngest, Sydney, was then three years old. Joseph's brother, Julius, met them at Ellis Island as he had met George a short time before. When the train brought them to Johnstown there was a joyful reunion not only with the extended family, but also with Nathan whom they had not seen since he had departed Antopol as a lad of 14 in March of 1914. The Ossips moved into the house at 18 River Avenue previously occupied by Louis and Bessie. The children were enrolled in the Union Street School. Not being able to speak English, Joseph was employed as a stockman in Glosser Bros. Unfortunately, the air pollution in downtown Johnstown aggravated Jennie's asthma to a degree that necessitated the family's moving from River Avenue to Southmont Borough, a suburb of Johnstown. While living on Dell Street in Southmont the younger children attended Southmont School. As Sydney later recalled, his father kept about 60 chickens in the back yard.¹⁸ By the time that Sydney was twelve years old in 1929, Jennie's asthmatic condition deteriorated to the degree that the family relocated from Johnstown to 10734 116th Street in Richmond Hill, New York. George Ossip, now grown, was the only child of Jennie and Joseph who elected to remain in Johnstown. By the time his parents left, George was the buyer for the men's furnishings department in Glosser Bros., and he remained with the firm until the early 1930's when he and Moses (Moe) Sacks, a brother-in-law of David Glosser, opened the Public Service Department Store in Cumberland, Maryland.

Nathan Ossip Goes into Business for Himself

Nathan had already preceded his parents to the New York area. After his return from Detroit he had worked for awhile in Glosser Bros. However, against the advice of his uncles and grandfather, he decided to go into business for himself. Initially, he and David A. Glosser, son of Moses and Ida Glosser, had opened an auto accessory store on Locust Street in Johnstown. As Nathan later said, "We were a little ahead of the times."¹⁹ David A. returned to his father's business and Nathan acquired a failed haberdashery shop in Windber, a mining town seven miles distant from Johnstown. The store did well and Nathan married his cousin, Betty Greenberg, on June 25, 1922. The couple settled in Windber with the expectation of making it their permanent home. However in September, 1923, Nathan suffered an asthma attack of such severity that he had to sell the store. It was purchased by Morton Sacks, brother-in-law of David Glosser. In November of 1923, Nathan and Betty moved to New York.²⁰

Coping with Sabbath Services from Westmont

Although the move to Westmont offered many benefits for Louis and Bessie, one problem presented itself which had been a non-issue when the family lived on River Avenue. From River Avenue to the Iron Street Synagogue was an easy few minutes walk. With the move to Tioga Street the distance between home and synagogue became a matter of several miles which involved the steepest hill in town. For Louis and Bessie, a walk of that nature was out of the question.

They had to consider two possible alternatives. One option was to drive or be driven to services. The second option would be to ride the Cambria Inclined Plane down the 500 foot high steep Yoder Hill and walk to services from there, reversing the procedure when services were over. The Inclined Plane, constructed as a "lifesaver" after the Johnstown Flood of May 31, 1889, is composed of two sets of tracks implanted on the side of the hill on which two cars run simultaneously one from the bottom to the top and the other from the top to the bottom. It is billed by the Guinness Book of Records as "the steepest vehicular inclined plane in the world."²¹ To drive or be driven to services would have been a desecration of the Sabbath for this strictly orthodox couple. To ride on the Inclined Plane, a public conveyance, while problematic, appeared to be a more feasible option.

Louis took his problem to a *Beit Din* (a decision-making committee of rabbis) in Pittsburgh. The *Beit Din* decreed that it was permissible to ride the Incline provided that the tickets were not purchased on the Sabbath and as long as at least two non-Jews were making the trip.²²

Years later Fritzi Glosser Bernstein fondly recalled how as a child of six she would carry the Inclined Plane ticket, which had been purchased in advance, for her grandparents. As a little child, she was not held accountable to the strict Sabbath standards of her grandparents. She further remembered that her grandmother was so observant that she wouldn't even carry her handkerchief. Rather, she wrapped it around her wrist as an article of clothing.²³

The Courtship and Marriage of Saul and Eva

A.Z. Weisman was the *shadchen* (matchmaker) who brought Saul and Eva Hurwitz together. While living in Connecticut teaching the Hurwitz boys Hebrew, he observed their unmarried sister, Eva, and wrote to Saul "There's a nice young girl here that would be a good match for you". Saul took his brother-in-law's recommendation seriously. Shortly thereafter he came to the Hurwitz home, ostensibly to visit A.Z. Apparently Eva impressed him favorably. He spoke to her parents, Meyer and Malka, about his intentions and then returned to Johnstown to inform his parents. Shortly thereafter Saul travelled back to Bridgeport and formally proposed to Eva. Later Eva asked him, "What made you take me from the country?" Saul responded, "I observed you. You were pretty good." They were married on June 28, 1921, in New York's Lower East Side at Saint Mark's Hall in Saint Mark's Square. Present at the wedding from the Glosser family were Louis and Bessie, A.Z. and Rose Weisman, and David Glosser. Eva was 18; Saul was 29.

After a ten day honeymoon in Atlantic City, the couple returned to Johnstown where they made their home at 243 Tioga Street just two houses away from Louis and Bessie's residence. Their oldest son, Alvin, was born on March 4, 1923, while they still lived there. Shortly after Alvin's birth the couple built a home at 521 Luzerne Street in Westmont. Morton was born July 4, 1926, and William Louis was born August 30, 1929.²⁴

The Courtship and Marriage of Bella and Coppy

Bella and Samuel George Coppersmith, or Coppy as he was called by everyone, first met at the Zionist Hall on Main Street, located near the intersection of Main and Market Streets. Coppy was a relative newcomer to the Johnstown Jewish community. He had come to Johnstown in response to an advertisement by Swank Hardware Company for a salesman to travel the area selling plumbing supplies. Johnstown was his home base and after he had settled in, he asked an acquaintance where Jewish people congregated. When referred to the Zionist Hall he met, among others, Bella.

Some time later he called Bella to ask her for a date. Years later Bella would recall that the first time he called she had answered the phone and, when she recognized his voice, she tried to disguise her voice so that he would think a maid was answering the phone. Her deception did not work. Coppy recognized her voice and told her so in no uncertain terms. The couple started to date. In due time they decided to get married.²⁵ While the family was making wedding plans for the couple, Bella and Coppy decided they wanted to get married with a minimum of fuss. They went to Altoona and were married there on September 29, 1921, by Rabbi Samuel Strauss. Bella was 25 and Coppy was 29 at the time of their marriage.²⁶

The newlyweds made their home at 233 Tioga Street because Louis and Bessie were in failing health and Bella could not leave them. Their three children were born while they lived there. Joyce was born November 7, 1922; Norma was born September 5, 1925; and W. Louis Coppersmith was born on June 19, 1928.

Endnotes

1. *Antopol: Yiskor Book*, *op. cit.*, p.16.
2. Interview with Frances Weisman Gallin, *op. cit.*
3. *Ibid.*
4. Interview with George Ossip, *op. cit.*
5. Interview with Frances Weisman Gallin, *op. cit.*
6. Morawska, *Insecure Prosperity*, *op. cit.*, p.33.
7. *Ibid.* p.34.
8. Glosser, "After the Horse Died", *op. cit.*, p.73.
9. Originally named the Ellis Building, it was renamed the Franklin Building by 1910, and became the Glosser Building in 1926.
10. Material in this paragraph in large part from the interview with Irving London, *op. cit.*
11. Information provided by August "Red" Roos, a driver for Penn Traffic Company, to Isadore Glosser.
12. Interview with Nathan Ossip, *op. cit.*
13. Interview with Irving London, *op. cit.*
14. Interview with Bella Glosser Coppersmith, *op. cit.*
15. Deed of sale from Mae Mattingley to Louis Glosser, May 27, 1919. State of Pennsylvania, Borough of Westmont.
16. Material in this paragraph from an interview with Frances Weisman Gallin, *op. cit.*
17. *Ibid.*
18. Interview with Sydney Ossip by Isadore Glosser on August 30, 1989, at the Sydney Ossip home, 353 Elknud Lane, Johnstown, PA. Original tape recording in the possession of Isadore and Ruth Glosser. N.B. Albert Ossip, in a telephone interview of March 26, 1998, recalled the Ossip's arrival date at Ellis Island as August, 1921.

19. Interview with Nahan Ossip, *op. cit.*
20. Material in this paragraph from an interview with Nathan Ossip, *op. cit.*
21. Johnstown Page, <http://www.johnstown> Inclined Plane - historic, p.1.
22. Interview with Bella Glosser Coppersmith, *op. cit.* See also Glosser, "After the Horse Died", *op. cit.*, p. 102.
23. Interview with Bessie Glosser Silberstein and Freda "Fritzi" Glosser Bernstein, *op. cit.*
24. Material in this section in large part from an interview with Eva Hurwitz Glosser by Isadore Glosser on July 13, 1997, at Eva Glosser's home, 427 Slater Street, Johnstown, PA. Original tape recording in the possession of Isadore and Ruth Glosser.
25. Material in this section in large part from an interview with Bella Glosser Coppersmith, *op. cit.*
26. "Application for Marriage License, Third Series, no. 20723", filed before Alderman Will J. Lamberd, Alderman in the County of Cambria, State of Pennsylvania, September 26, 1921. Marriage Certificate filed by Rabbi Samuel Strauss on September 29, 1921.

WOLF LOEB GLOSSER

A few years ago the civilized world believed that the age of conquest and bloody battles was over. That the only generals the world needed were those giants of commerce who keep the wheels of industry moving; who provide those conveniences and comforts which, during a long era of peace and prosperity, have come to be almost essential.

Now that the world is in the throes of the most gigantic struggle in history, it is to these men that we turn for money, for equipment, for their sons.

So it is with Mr. Wolf Loeb Glosser, whose sons Saul and Simon have answered the call and have gone forth to battle that his country and the oppressed shall be free. Simon Glosser enlisted in the Jewish Legion after being rejected by the U. S. Army and Saul Glosser is with the American National Army, at present stationed at Camp Lee.

Wolf Loeb Glosser was born in Grodno, Gubernie, Russia, in August, 1854. He did not come to America until March, 1902, and

landed in New York with his family and but 27 cents in the world. He succeeded in borrowing a dollar, with which he immediately started peddling junk. This he continued very successfully for two years, when he went to Johnstown, Pa., and engaged in the clothes cleaning and pressing business. By the exercise of the utmost diligence and economy he saved enough capital to open a small store and this venture has grown into the large establishment of which he is the guiding genius today. The firm name is Glosser Brothers, handling ladies' and gentlemen's ready-to-wear apparel.

Mr. Glosser was married in Russia in April, 1877, to Miss Pesha Greenberg and they have a fine family of seven children, four boys and three girls, all of whom reflect credit upon the superior home training which they have received.

Nathan is in business for himself in Detroit, Mich., while David and Solomon are engaged in business with their father. Simon was in business for himself prior to his entry into the army.

The two elder daughters are married and live in Europe, while the younger daughter is at home. She is a graduate of the high school and a very accomplished musician.

Mrs. Glosser's accomplishments and usefulness do not cease with her ideal wifehood and motherhood. She finds time for many social and charitable activities, as well; in fact, she is the leader in all such movements in Johnstown.

Mr. Glosser's affiliations are with Congregation Radof Sholom, Independent Order of B'rith Abraham, and Chamber of Commerce. He contributes liberally to Denver and Los Angeles Hospitals, Immigration Society and all the Yishivas.



Wolf Loeb Glosser, a one page biography, author and publisher unknown. ca. 1918. Found in the effects of Sam Glosser.

25	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
24	OCT. 26								10
23	CAMBRIA INCLINED PLANE CO.								11
22	During Month of.....								12
21	ISSUED TO								
20	Mr. <i>Louis Glosser</i>								
	No. 4314								
	Subject to Conditions Printed on original ticket, of which this is part.								
	CAMBRIA INCLINED PLANE CO.								
	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	

Louis Glosser's Inclined Pass.

DON'T
 GLOSTER
 SELF-GROCCERY
 N

OUT

"PLEASE"
HAVE YOUR
BASKET EMPTY WHEN
COMING IN...

TO SAVE TIME IN
CHECKING PLEASE
KEEP OTHER PURCH-
ASES SEPARATE



A VARIETY OF
PRODUCTS

TAKE A BAKIT
8% *regret.*
1940-1941



Unasda Block
with Milk

TRAV

The Glossetteria on the first floor of Glosser Bros. One of the first self-serve food markets in the United States. ca. 1920.

The Closing Years of Louis and Bessie

Glosser Bros. Becomes a Full-Fledged Department Store

The 1920's saw the family steadily expand the business from selling men and women's clothing to becoming a general clothing store to becoming a complete department store. In the process they continually expanded the store taking over all the other stores on the ground level of the Ellis Building. By 1926 they had purchased the balance of the building including the basement. The firm was now called Glosser Bros. The logo under their name read "Corner Franklin & Locust Sts. — Everybody's Store". Full page ads for the store began appearing regularly in the *Johnstown Tribune* and the *Johnstown Democrat*. By 1927 Glosser Bros. was advertising "lowest in the city prices, five floors, 3 modern elevators, 71 departments, 200 employees".¹ In that year they were one of three full line department stores in downtown Johnstown. The other two were Penn Traffic and Nathan's.

The only reversal that the firm suffered in those halcyon years was the opening of a store at 533-535 Penn Avenue² in downtown Pittsburgh on April 19, 1926. George Ossip was the store manager. The store did not succeed. Its demise was assured by the local newspapers which, under pressure from the retailing competition, refused to accept Glosser advertising.

Despite this setback, however, the firm of Glosser Bros. continued to grow and prosper. Johnstown was a working-class town and Glosser's was a working class store. Blue collar customers felt comfortable shopping at Glosser's where quality assortments of merchandise were offered at popular, affordable prices.

The Death of Louis Glosser

Sadly, Louis Glosser did not live to see the dynamic growth of the firm that lay ahead. He died at his home at 233 Tioga Street on July 31, 1927, shortly after 2:00 in the afternoon. He had been in poor health for the past five months and critically ill the last month of his life.³ Both the *Johnstown Tribune* and the *Johnstown Democrat* gave his age at the time of death as 61. In all likelihood, however, as noted in Chapter One, his probable age at the time of death was between 70 and 73.

Funeral services were conducted at the Glosser home in Westmont at 1:30 p.m. on the following day, August 1, 1927 and at Rodef Sholem Synagogue at 2:30 p.m. Conducting the services were Rabbis Sivitz of Pittsburgh, Rosen of Altoona, and Kaaplander of Johnstown. Cantor Israel Horowitz of Rodef Sholem and I. Kahanowitz of Greensburg assisted.⁴ Burial took place in the Glosser family plot in Grandview Cemetery in Westmont. Surviving Louis, in addition to Bessie, were seven children, twenty-two grandchildren and one great-grandchild.⁵ Glosser Bros. store was closed all day.

The Death of Bessie Greenberg Glosser

Louis and Bessie were a deeply religious couple. Louis had never transacted business on the Sabbath. Their children had gone to business only after first attending Sabbath services at Rodef Sholem Synagogue. In the year following Louis' death, Nathan, David, Saul and Sam had observed Jewish traditional custom by saying *Kaddish* (a prayer said in memory of the deceased three times daily by sons or the closest male relatives during an eleven month period of mourning). Almost to the hour that they completed their last day of saying *Kaddish*, a son was born to Bella and S. G. Coppersmith. He was, of course, named W. Louis Coppersmith. For Bessie, the merging of those two events was an auspicious occasion. She was so excited that she called all her family and friends to tell them of this good omen.⁶

The good omen, however, did not bring *mazel* (good fortune) to Bessie. She died suddenly at home on Tioga Street of a heart attack in the early hours of Friday, October 18, 1929. Funeral services, conducted by Rabbi M.H. Kaaplander, were held that afternoon in the family home.⁷ She was buried beside Louis in the Glosser family plot in Grandview Cemetery.

A 7 ½ inch wide by 9 inch long advertisement bordered in black appeared in *The Daily Tribune* that day which read:

Glosser's Store

Closed Today,

Friday, Oct. 18

Out of Respect to

Mrs. Bessie Glosser

(Mother of Glosser Bros.)

Whose Death Occurred

This Morning⁸

Family Perceptions of Louis and Bessie

Unlike many immigrant families where the young adult children adapted quickly to American ways leaving parents in the backwater of family life, such was not the case in the Glosser family. Louis and Bessie retained their roles as the dominant heads of the household throughout their lifetimes. This role was fashioned on the Eastern European shtetl model of respectful relationships between parents, children and grandchildren. It was not for the most part the close "hands on", "huggy", "kissy" interchange we see today.

There were obligations and expectations for parents, children and grandchildren. Parents were expected to care and provide for the children of their union. Children, especially male children, were important for a variety of reasons including provision for parents in their old age as well as the saying of *Kaddish*. Given the harsh realities of shtetl life, parents could hope but not expect that all their children would grow to adulthood. Children were expected to honor their parents and to contribute to the survival of the family by their labors beginning as young as seven or eight years of age in an often hostile, threatening environment. Grandchildren were valued but subordinate to their parents and grandparents. The roles of men and women were sharply defined and differentiated.

Frances Weisman Gallin recalled that she was in great awe of her grandparents. She always addressed them formally. She had no physical contact with them.⁹ Nathan Ossip appreciated all that his grandparents had done to bring him to America, but he felt that Louis was somewhat quick tempered and not too understanding of the homesickness he experienced as a fourteen year old separated from family and familiar surroundings. On the other hand he appreciated Louis' business acumen. Of his grandmother he said, "Bessie was very smart."¹⁰ George Ossip remembered Louis as a "fine gentleman ... a good level headed business man." Of his grandmother he said, "Bessie was a real old time pious Jewish woman ... She didn't live for herself."¹¹

Eva Glosser recounted how Bessie would ask Alvin, then about 4, and Izzy, then about 5, to recite Hebrew prayers. When they complied she would reward them each with a penny from the deep pocket of the apron she always wore.¹² Izzy Glosser, who was 5 when Louis died, remembered seeing his grandparents but has no extended recollection of any conversation or physical contact with them. His sister, Freda Glosser Sinberg, two years Izzy's senior, remembers going to visit Louis and Bessie at Hanukah. Each of the grandchildren would receive Hanukah *gelt* (money) in the form of silver dollars. Freda further recalls that Bessie taught her the *Krishma*. When she had mastered the *Krishma* in its entirety Bessie gave her a ring.¹³

In terms of physical characteristics, Fritz Glosser Bernstein declared that "Louis was a very handsome man. He looked a lot like King George V of England."¹⁴ Several other family members also commented on the resemblance between the two men. A number of family members also took note of the fact that while both Louis and Bessie were deeply religious, Bessie was even more observant than Louis.

Irving London, who first met Louis in 1917 when Louis was about 60, remembered him as being "... tall and quite stooped. He kept a pair of glasses in his breast pocket. He probably needed them for reading. And when he wore them they slipped down his nose."¹⁵

Perhaps the grandchild with whom Louis and Bessie had the closest relationship in modern day terms was Fritzi Glosser Bernstein. Fritzi lived with her grandparents during the period when Nathan and Fanny had relocated to the Bronx with the two younger children, Bessie and Gerald. Among her many memories of that period, Fritzi told how Louis had a Morris chair with a lever. He would settle himself in the leather chair and put Fritzi on his lap. He would then play with her by shaking her arm so that her hand flopped up and down. Then he would ask her "Is your wrist broken?"¹⁶ During Fritzi's stay with her grandparents Bessie taught her the entire *Krishma* and then boasted to her girlfriends about how bright Fritzi was. Many years later Fritzi reminisced that she had difficulty going to sleep at night without reciting the *Krishma* her grandmother had taught her.¹⁷

Endnotes

1. *Johnstown Directory*, Polk Company, Pittsburgh, PA, 1927.
2. *Pittsburgh Classified Business Directory*, 1927. Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, PA, Reference Department.
3. *Johnstown Democrat*, August 1, 1927.
4. *Ibid.*
5. Lola Ossip Salowitz, daughter of Nathan and Betty Ossip, born February 13, 1925, was that great-grandchild.
6. Interview with Bella Glosser Coppersmith, *op. cit.*
7. *The Daily Tribune*, (Johnstown, PA), October 19, 1929.
8. *Ibid.*
9. Interview with Frances Weisman Gallin, *op. cit.*
10. Interview with Nathan Ossip, *op. cit.*
11. Interview with George Ossip, *op. cit.*
12. Interview with Eva Hurwitz Glosser, *op. cit.*
13. Telephone interview with Freda Glosser Sinberg, February 9, 1998.
14. Interview with Bessie Glosser Silberstein and Freda "Fritzi" Glosser Bernstein, *op. cit.*
15. Interview with Irving London, *op. cit.*
16. Interview with Bessie Glosser Silberstein and Freda "Fritzi" Glosser Bernstein, *op. cit.*
17. *Ibid.*

GB

Again Glosser's Bargain Circus is in town—Bigger, better than ever before. Over half a million dollars' worth of attractive values will be offered to the public at the smallest admission fee on earth. This is not one of those circuses where you spend a lot of money. All you have to have is the desire to save—willingness to join the crowds—and a quickness to get the bargains—for such bargains were never before in captivity. Come one, come all! Doors open promptly at 8:30 o'clock tomorrow morning. Come and meet all your friends.

Big Street Parade Tonight

Our big street parade will leave the store promptly at 7:30 o'clock this evening—passes through Eighth Ward, Maxham, Seventh Ward, Woodvale, Franklin, Coonessough, Cambria City, Morrellville—Now, Don't miss it! Many new features have been added making it the biggest and best ever—clowns, bands, calliopes, monkeys—fun for all!

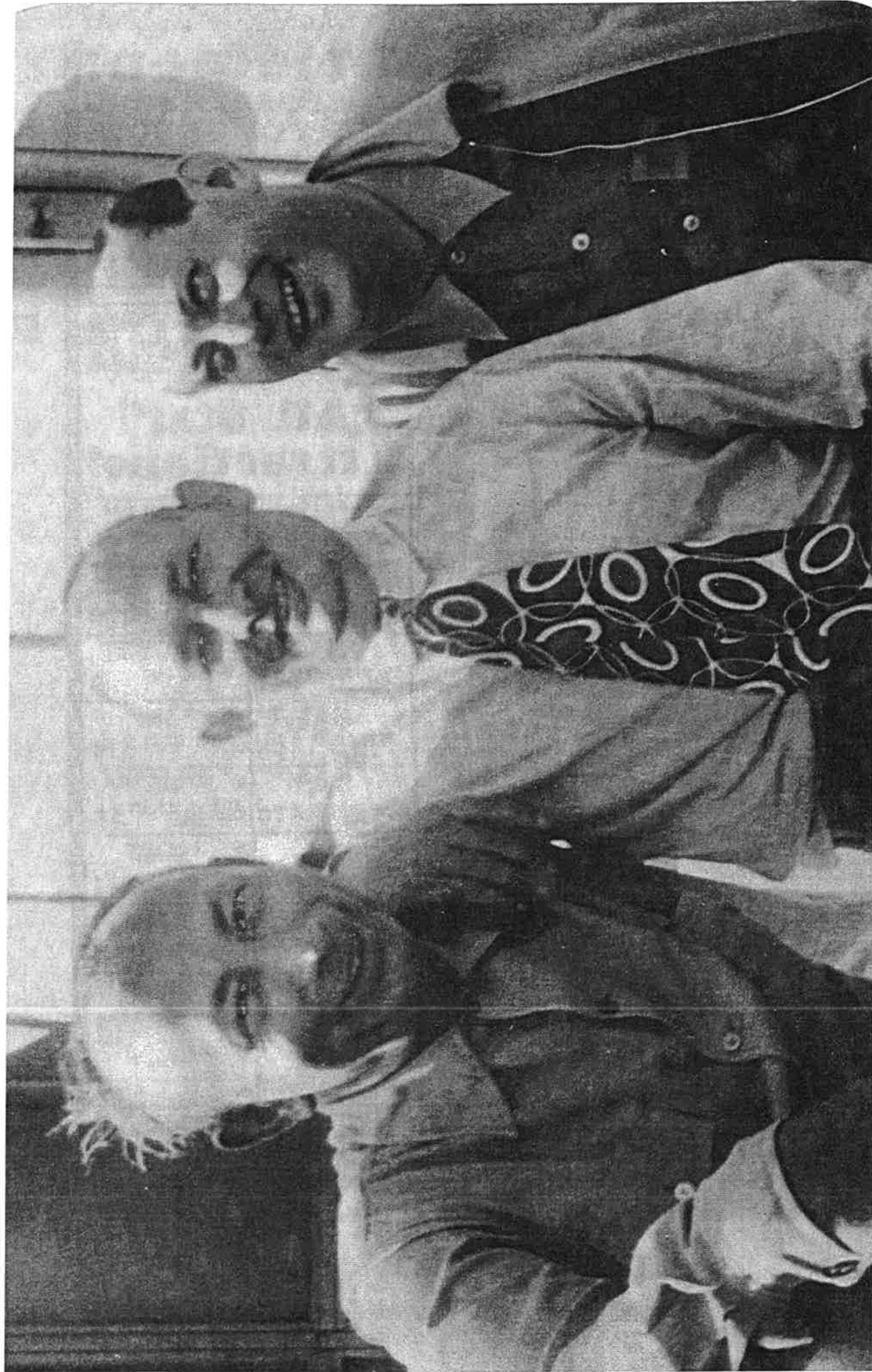
**Circus
Day
LUNCH**
GENUINE HOME STYLE
BAKED HAM
DINNER

Armour's Star Brand, baked
tender with a delicious flavor.
Scalloped Potatoes and Home
Baked Lima Beans. Choice of
Whole Wheat Bread, Rye Bread,
Wheat Bread or Rolls and Butter.
Tea or Coffee—and for 25c.

**Ripe, Juicy
Watermelon
Cut
7c**

"All Star" Attractions!

<p>★ MEN'S DRESS HOSE</p> <p>Five strand pearl seamless, reinforced heels and toes, black or navy blue. Limit 3 pairs to a customer.</p> <p>MAIN FLOOR. 7c</p>	<p>★ REMNANTS YARD GOODS, YARD</p> <p>All kinds of remnants of Crepe, Porella, Cretonne, lengths to 11 1/2 yards.</p> <p>SECOND FLOOR. 5c</p>
<p>★ WOMEN'S UNDERGARMENTS</p> <p>Five piece, rayon, broadcloth, lace and other summer fabrics. Includes: girdles, corsets, slippers, stockings made, all colors.</p> <p>SECOND FLOOR. 19c</p>	<p>★ WOMEN'S SUMMER HATS</p> <p>Lot of about 200 hats taken from our higher priced store. Summer styles. All colors and band trim.</p> <p>THIRD FLOOR. 66c</p>
<p>★ BOYS' WOOL MIXED PANTS</p> <p>Good, workable dark grey, brown and blue material. Our best quality. Limit 2 pairs to a customer. Boys 4 to 14.</p> <p>SECOND FLOOR. 36c</p>	<p>★ O. N. T. CROCHET COTTON, 12 FOR</p> <p>All sizes. All colors—Limit 2 square spoons to a customer.</p> <p>MAIN FLOOR. 79c</p>
<p>★ BOYS' 45c UNION SUITS</p> <p>Superbly made, our White and navy blue. Limit 2 suits to a customer. Boys 4 to 14.</p> <p>SECOND FLOOR. 29c</p>	<p>★ O. N. T. THREAD, SPOOL</p> <p>All numbers, white and colors. Limit 2 spools to a customer.</p> <p>MAIN FLOOR. 31c</p>
<p>★ 18x30 RAG RUGS</p> <p>Made of selected rag material. Washable. 2 to 4 square yards. Limit 1 rug to a customer.</p> <p>FOURTH FLOOR. 17c</p>	<p>★ HANDKERCHIEFS, EACH</p> <p>For men or women. Plain white or fancy colors. Limit 1 dozen to a customer.</p> <p>MAIN FLOOR. 3c</p>
<p>★ ENAMEL CUPS AND SAUCERS</p> <p>For child's ideal for camping. Children's size. Limit 2 pairs to a customer.</p> <p>FOURTH FLOOR. 7c</p>	<p>★ GIRLS' WASH DRESSES</p> <p>Broadcloth, rayon and many other materials. Pretty styles. All colors.</p> <p>THIRD FLOOR. 42c</p>
<p>★ WILLOW CLOTHES BASKETS</p> <p>Large family size, closely woven. Imported willow, strong handles.</p> <p>FOURTH FLOOR. 66c</p>	<p>★ WOMEN'S CHILDREN'S HOSE</p> <p>Special lot of all kinds of hose for women, babies and children. Assorted colors and sizes.</p> <p>MAIN FLOOR. 9c</p>
<p>★ 10-QT. GALVANIZED BUCKETS</p> <p>Heavy galvanized iron with strong handles. Limit 1 to a customer.</p> <p>FOURTH FLOOR. 16c</p>	<p>★ WOMEN'S FINE SILK HOSE</p> <p>Best French silk to wear; all sizes and shades. Pretty pair perfect make. Try. All sizes.</p> <p>MAIN FLOOR. 27c</p>
<p>★ WOODEN CURTAIN RODS</p> <p>Extend to 45 inches. White. Complete with ornamental ends. Limit 1 to a customer.</p> <p>FOURTH FLOOR. 4c</p>	<p>★ WOMEN'S GAUZE VESTS</p> <p>Fine gauze—perfect quality. All sizes.</p> <p>MAIN FLOOR. 10c</p>
<p>★ UNBLEACHED MUSLIN, YARD</p> <p>27 inches wide—suitable for women. All sizes. Special white. Limit 1 yard to a customer.</p> <p>FOURTH FLOOR. 5c</p>	<p>★ MEN'S ATHLETIC UNION SUITS</p> <p>First quality selected materials of heavy flannel, elastic closed waist. Black and navy blue. Limit 1 to a customer.</p> <p>MAIN FLOOR. 29c</p>



Left to right: David, Nathan, Saul Glosser. ca. 1940.



Glosser Bros., Franklin and Locust Streets, 1926. The caption under the original picture read:
 "Surprise Party—winding up the PROGRESS CELEBRATION on May 5, 1926. Store opened from 6 to 9 in the Evening."

GLOSSER BROS

533

535

Opening of Glosser Bros. Pittsburg Store,
April 19, 1926.

Opening of Glosser Bros. Pittsburgh store at 533-535 Penn Avenue on April 19, 1926.

The Legacy of Louis and Bessie

The Foundations of Louis' and Bessie's Beliefs

Although Louis and Bessie in their later years enjoyed an affluence beyond their wildest dreams, the misery, fear and economic deprivation of their earlier years were forever etched into their psyche. As a result, almost from the time of their arrival in the United States, and long before they had achieved financial stability they were already "giving something back" to those less fortunate. The first known involvement of Louis in a charitable fund campaign came, as noted in Chapter Two, in 1905 when he gave \$1.50 toward relief for pogrom victims in czarist Russia. He had only been in Johnstown a short time and was just eking out a living.

The next documented record of Louis' philanthropy was in a 1918 one page biography of him entitled *Wolf Loeb Glosser*. The biography concluded by noting that Louis was a member of Rodef Sholom Congregation and the Independent Order of B'rith Abraham and that he "contributes liberally to Denver and Los Angeles Hospitals, Immigration Society and all the Yishivas."¹ He also contributed monthly to organizations and religious schools in Palestine, among them Tiferes Israel Organization, Palestine, and Eitz Chaim Organization, Palestine.²

This practice of helping needy individuals and worthwhile institutions was rooted in two deeply ingrained segments of Louis' and Bessie's being.

The first was their recollection of the hardship, poverty and uncertainties they had endured in Antopol. Louis and Bessie, born and raised in the shtetl, had known the fear of pogroms. They had suffered losing children to death and disease. They knew what it was like to have to beg for money and to cajole creditors into allowing them more time to pay off their debts. They had been on the receiving end of charity. And they never forgot this.

Also ingrained into the belief system of this deeply religious couple was the concept of *tzedakah*. *Tzedakah* is a deeply rooted Jewish value which dates back to biblical times.

Jews never regarded *tzedakah* in the Protestant sense of charity. (Charity implies a certain moral failure on the part of the person who must receive it.) *Tzedakah*, in a Jewish sense, is an obligation between man and God. Man is commanded to fulfill the *mitzvah*³ of *Tzedakah*, just as he is obliged to fulfill the other traditional *mitzvot*. The world is such that any man can fall upon hard times, and it is a trust in God that will see him through tribulation. *Tzedakah* should never put one man in a subservient or inferior relationship to another, and the highest forms of *tzedakah* (as enumerated by Maimonides) are when the parties are not known to one another, and when a man is given the means, anonymously, to help himself.⁴

Consequently, throughout their sojourn in the United States both Louis and Bessie (although in keeping with the *mores* of the times Louis was always the designated donor), made significant contributions to a large number of worthy causes and individuals. Among the recipients of their *largesse* were a number of institutions and individuals in Antopol. Louis and Bessie contributed regularly to the support of approximately fifty families in Antopol in need of assistance. This practice continued throughout Louis' lifetime.

An example of Mr. Glosser's deep interest in his charitable work is seen in the fact that less than an hour before he passed away, a letter in recognition of a recent contribution, from Antopol, Russia, was read to him and he expressed his sorrow that he could not continue to care for his people any longer.⁵

In reality, Louis' will established a trust fund for the purpose of continuing to support those fifty families.⁶

In addition to contributing regularly to the support of approximately fifty families in Antopol, Louis and Bessie also donated regularly to the following organizations in their native town: the Free Loan Association, Orphans' Asylum, Meier Podot's synagogue and Beth Hamedrosh Hayoshuh.⁷

Among Louis' and Bessie's other philanthropic interests was a commitment to establish a Jewish homeland. Although they died long before the State of Israel came into existence, the need for a Jewish homeland had been of paramount concern to them ever since the tragedy of the brutal pogroms in the latter part of the nineteenth and the early part of the twentieth century. A strong Zionist presence was established in Johnstown soon after the Balfour Declaration.⁸ Louis and Bessie and all their children actively involved themselves in a variety of ways to promote the establishment of a Jewish State. As mentioned in Chapter Four, Sam Glosser, responding to the call of world Zionist leaders, enlisted in the British Jewish Legion in 1918, and saw service in Palestine and Egypt during World War I. In Johnstown, David, Saul, and Bella assumed leadership positions in Zionist causes.⁹

The Last Will and Testament of Louis Glosser

The death of Louis was the occasion for feature articles in both *The Daily Tribune* and the *Johnstown Democrat*. The *Democrat* headline read: LOUIS W. GLOSSER OF WESTMONT, IS CALLED BY DEATH—Prominent Local Business Man Was Contributor to Many Charitable Societies.¹⁰ The *Tribune* headline read: LOUIS GLOSSER IS CALLED BY DEATH IN HIS 61ST YEAR—Passes Away at Home in Westmont After Five Months' Illness—FOUNDED LOCAL DEPARTMENT STORE—Native of Russia, Coming to United States 24 Years Ago.¹¹

Feature stories were made again when Louis' will was filed. Both papers ran lengthy articles about Louis' many bequests with particular emphasis on his contributions to local organizations. Following is Section Nineteen of Louis' will:

I give and bequeath to the following institutions, of which I am a member, the sums herein indicated, to be paid to the said institutions, within one year after my death, unless otherwise provided:

- (a) To the Hebrew Immigrant & Aid Society of the City of New York, Three Hundred (\$300.00) Dollars.
- (aa) To the Denver Hospital for Consumptives, Denver, Colorado, Three Hundred (\$300.00) Dollars.
- (b) To the Los Angeles Sanitarium for Consumptives, Los Angeles, California, One Hundred (\$100.00) Dollars.
- (bb) To the Hebrew Old Age Home of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Two Hundred and Fifty (\$250.00) ...
- (c) To the Hebrew Orphans' Asylum of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Two Hundred (\$200.00) Dollars.
- (d) To the Hebrew National Orphans' Asylum of New York City, New York, Two Hundred (\$200.00) Dollars.
- (e) To the Memorial Hospital of Johnstown, Pennsylvania, Two Hundred (\$200.00) Dollars.
- (f) To the Mercy Hospital of Johnstown, Pennsylvania, Two Hundred (\$200.00) Dollars.
- (g) To the Johnstown Chapter of the Red Cross, Three Hundred (\$300.00) Dollars.
- (h) To the Family Welfare Association of Johnstown, Pennsylvania, Three Hundred (\$300.00) Dollars.
- (i) To the Talmud Torah, Johnstown, Pennsylvania, Five Hundred (\$500.00) Dollars.
- (j) To Rodef Sholem Synagogue of Johnstown, Pennsylvania, Four Hundred (\$400.00) Dollars ...
- (k) To the Association having in charge the restoration of Palestine, commonly known as the Keren Hayesod, having its office in the City of New York, New York, Five Hundred (\$500.00) Dollars.
- (l) To the Hebrew Seminary of Palestine, under the supervision of Dr. Cook, Three Hundred (\$300.00) Dollars.
- (m) To the Trustees of the Cemetery of the Johnstown Beneficial Society, Westmont, Johnstown, Pennsylvania, in which cemetery my burial lot is located, the sum of Five Hundred (\$500.00) Dollars ...
- (n) To the Hebrew School of New York City, known as the Rabbi Itzhok Elchonon, the sum of Three Hundred (\$300.00) Dollars.
- (o) To the Synagogue located in my native town, Antopol, Poland, Known as Meier Podot, the sum of One Hundred (\$100.00) Dollars ...
- (p) To the Synagogue in my native town, Antopol, Poland, known as Beth Hamedrosh Hayoshun, the sum of One Hundred (\$100.00) Dollars ...
- (q) To the Hebrew Orphan Asylum of my native town, Antopol, Poland, The sum of One Hundred (\$100.00) Dollars.
- (r) To the Hebrew Cheder of my native town, Antopol, Poland, the sum of One Hundred (\$100.00) Dollars.
- (s) To the Hebrew National Fund [sic] Jewish National Fund in Palestine, having its office in the City of New York, New York, the sum of (\$100.00) Dollars.

(t) I direct that my Executors hold in trust the sum of Four Thousand (\$4,000) Dollars, the interest from which shall be paid by them annually to the needy of my native town, Antopol, Poland; This trust shall continue during the life of my said wife, Bessie Glosser, and at her death it shall cease and revert to my residuary state.¹²

In Section Twenty-Three of his will, Louis requested his children to continue to pay out of the funds of the Glosser partnership annual membership dues in the organizations above named of which he was a member during his lifetime.¹³

In other sections of his will Louis made disposition of his assets to his children. In addition, in Section Fifteen of his will he directed that the sum of \$500.00 be paid to "each and every one of my grand-children living at the time of my death."¹⁴

While the sums donated by Louis may seem minor by today's standards, it bears noting that \$500.00 in 1927 was the equivalent of \$4,545.00 in 1997.¹⁵

While estate disposition constituted a significant portion of his will, Louis' will was also an ethical will. Not only did he set an example for his children by his charitable bequests, he also enjoined upon them certain moral and spiritual considerations. The final section of his will, Section Twenty-Six, reads as follows:

It has been my aim and purpose in life to keep the family relations harmonious, and I enjoin and admonish my sons to observe the same attitude and spirit in their conduct toward one another, and all other members of the family, to the end that their relations may be mutually helpful and friendly.¹⁶

The Sum of it All

In many respects the life story of Louis and Bessie is the story of all eastern European Jews who came to the United States between 1880 and 1924 before the doors to free and open immigration here swung shut. They came by the hundreds of thousands to escape economic hardships and religious persecution. They came in the hope of making a better life for themselves and their children. Virtually all of them came with little but the clothes on their backs. They came with no knowledge of the English language nor even of the Roman alphabet upon which English is based. In the days before public assistance they struggled by the sweat of their brow to feed and clothe their families and to secure a financial toehold in the American economy. And, unlike many eastern and southern European immigrants who came as sojourners anticipating a return to the old country, virtually all Jewish immigrants came to stay. As Bella Glosser Coppersmith succinctly stated: "Once we left Antopol I never regretted it, and I never wanted to go back to that place, and that's one place I was happy to get rid of."¹⁷

In some respects Louis and Bessie were part of a smaller group among emigrants leaving for America. Unlike three quarters of Jewish immigrants who settled in metropolitan areas, they settled in small-town industrial Johnstown. Like other Jews in this quartile of newcomers, Louis and Bessie came from a small townlet in the countryside rather than from a more urbanized area.

Like other small town Jews they had made their livelihood in petty trade and had everyday dealings and familiarity with peasants who were simultaneously migrating to America in great numbers. Louis and Bessie, like other Jews from small shtetls who settled in American towns, were familiar with the language, habits and needs of their non-Jewish neighbors and re-established their economic interdependence with them.¹⁸

Last but not least, the social life of Louis and Bessie, as with others who settled in small towns, was

... still largely traditionalist. The difference in this regard from the general population of Jewish emigrants was not that the latter did not contain quite large numbers and groupings of traditionalists, but that there were practically no "moderns" or secularists among the immigrants who were to establish the Jewish community in Johnstown.¹⁹

In summary, in many ways the lives of Louis and Bessie were characteristic of the lives of all Jews who came to America in hope of a better life. On a somewhat more selective basis their lives were similar to that smaller segment of eastern European Jews coming from rural shtetls who settled in small American towns. To say, however, that there was nothing special about their existence and the legacy they left would be to misrepresent the essence of their being.

By dint of hard work, perserverance, and honest dealings, Louis, Bessie and their children amassed sufficient financial resources to provide a good living for themselves and their families. To define their life's accomplishments in financial terms only, however, is to diminish the meaning of their legacy. Two thousand years ago Rabbi Shimon said:

There are three crowns: the crown of Torah; the crown of priesthood; and the crown of royalty. But the crown of a good name excels them all.²⁰

Through the example of their lives they exemplified for their children and their children's children the importance of the values of *tzedakah*, a caring, harmonious family life, a personal commitment to make the world a better place, and the value of a good name.

It is indeed a precious legacy.

Endnotes

1. *Wolf Loeb Glosser, op. cit.*
2. *Johnstown Democrat*, August 1, 1927.
3. *Mitzvah* is a significant good deed.
4. Glosser "After the Horse Died", pp. 231, 232, *op. cit.*
5. *Johnstown Democrat, op. cit.*, August 1, 1927.
6. Last Will and Testament of Louis Glosser executed July A.D. 1927. Executors: David Glosser and Max London. Filed August 11th, 1927, #16444, County of Cambria, Register of Wills, 200 South Center Street, Ebensburg, PA 15931.
7. *Johnstown Democrat, op. cit.*, August 1, 1927
8. The Balfour Declaration was a letter prepared in March 1916 and issued in November 1917 by Arthur Balfour, British foreign secretary, which expressed the sympathy of the British government with "the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish People." The immediate purpose was to win for the Allied cause in World War I the support of Jews and others in the belligerent nations and in neutral countries such as the United States.
9. Over the years numerous descendents of Louis and Bessie have assumed leadership positions promoting Zionist and charitable causes.
10. *Johnstown Democrat, op. cit.*, August 1, 1927.
11. *Johnstown Tribune, op. cit.*, August 1, 1927.
12. Last Will and Testament of Louis Glosser, *op. cit.*
13. *Ibid.*
14. *Ibid.*
15. Information provided by the Federal Bureau of Labor Statistics, San Francisco Branch.
16. Last Will and Testament of Louis Glosser, *op. cit.*

17. Interview with Bella Glosser Coppersmith and Nathan Ossip, *op. cit.*
18. Morawska, *Insecure Prosperity: Small Town Jews in Industrial America, 1890-1940*, pp. 28-30.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 30.
20. *Mishna Avot*, 4:13.

In Memory of Those Who Stayed Behind

Not all Jews departed Antopol in the years between 1880 and 1924. While other Jews from Antopol emigrated to America and Palestine in the same time period, some 2000 remained in their native home. World War II and the invasion of Antopol by the Nazi's in June of 1941 changed their lives forever.

In 1972 *Antopol: Yizkor Book*, a memorial book, was compiled and published by former Antopol residents living in America and Israel in memory of those 2000 who perished in the Holocaust. In addition to describing in words and pictures life in Antopol prior to the German invasion, it details in stark terms the slaughter of Antopol Jews by the Nazis. By the time Antopol was liberated in June of 1944 only seven Jews were still alive to bear witness to the massacre.

Dr. Herschel Burton in the foreword to *Antopol: Yizkor Book* says:

It is hard to imagine that only a few decades ago there existed a vibrant, living community called Antopol, with its men, women and children; its market place, stores, schools, *Beth medroshim* (Houses of Prayer), orphanages, *Gamilas Hsodim* ((free loan society for the needy), newspaper stands—all so familiar and so dear to memory. This little town was typical of hundreds of similar smaller and larger communities. And, like Atlantis, or some past people recounted in a saga, it suddenly vanished in the most bloody massacre in history.

In the Yiddish-Hebrew section of the *Antopol: Yizkor Book* on pages 662 to 695, the names of the deceased are listed under the heading: "A List of the Antopol Martyrs Who Were Lost in the Holocaust." While space precludes listing all their names, this book concludes with a list of probable Glosser family relatives who perished. May their names stand as a memorial to all who suffered and died.

GLOTZER

Itzeh, Bella and the children Yenta and Minna

GLOTZER

Isaiah, Hannah and the children Simon, Zelig, Zlaten, Chaytze, and Bella

GREENBERG

Asher, Moses and two small boys

GREENBERG

Chayim

GREENBERG

Jacob, Leah and the children Joseph and Fraydl

GREENBERG

Rayzl

GREENBERG
 Sarah
 LONDON
 Boruch, his wife and two young boys
 LONDON
 Beryl, Golda and young girls Sarah and two others
 LONDON
 Zalman, his wife and young boy
 LONDON
 Chayim-Zelig, Sarah and young boys Laybl, Mendel, Moses, and Meyer
 LONDON
 Joseph, Leah, and young girl Chyke
 LONDON
 Isaac, Zelte, and young boys Ulke and three others
 LONDON
 Israel, Shayndl and young boy
 LONDON
 Naftali
 LONDON
 Akiba, Pelte and daughter Mushe
 LONDON
 Simon and Michla
 LONDON
 Shifra and daughters Ginundl and one other
 LONDON
 Sarah and young boys Chayim and one other
 OSSIPOVITZ
 Ber-Laib, his wife and three young boys
 OSSIPOVITZ
 Brynah and her son Motti
 OSSIPOVITZ
 Pesyeh
 WEISMAN
 Joseph, Rayzl and children Bella, Hannah and Rachel